

**Mediating Sacred Kingship:  
Conversion and Sovereignty in Mongol Iran**

by

Jonathan Z Brack

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(History)  
in the University of Michigan  
2016

Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Kathryn Babayan, Chair  
Assistant Professor Erdem E. Cipa  
Associate Professor Hussein Fancy  
Professor Gottfried Hagen  
Associate Professor Judith Pfeiffer, University of Oxford

Copyright © 2016 by Jonathan Z Brack  
All Rights Reserved

For Smadar, Amitai & Noga

## **Acknowledgments**

As graduate students, we are taught that we must present our work as unique, detached, exclusively our own. There are only a few opportunities that we are permitted to plainly admit that our best scholarship always bears with it a measure of a collaborative effort. Let the reader of this dissertation know that this project took its form, not while the author was confined to a lonesome library carrel blankly staring at a pile of books, but through the endless conversations he had with committee and faculty members at his two academic homes, the University of Michigan and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, when discussing his own scholarship and the scholarship of his fellow graduate students at workshops and conferences, while eavesdropping on fellow coffee lovers, and in his conversations with his partner during those late hours of the night when a graceful stillness fell on their home. Let the reader also know that it was at these moments of scholarly exchange and collaboration that the author fell back in love with this project and all the hard work it entailed. Needless to say that all errors are shared by none of the above individuals. They are all mine.

This project would not have been possible without the support of my advisor Kathryn Babayan. Kathryn's exceptional ability to be both demanding and profoundly nurturing and kind has contributed in countless ways to my scholarship. Her remarkable and creative reading of pre-modern Persian sources and scholarship has tremendously shaped the course of this dissertation. Her generosity of spirit and time, and her inquisitive, yet down-to-earth mind have shown me, time and again, the kind of scholar I wish to become.

Gottfried Hagen was the first to introduce me to Ottoman history, culture and language. His historical skepticism and constructive criticism, and his immense intellectual depth and kindness have guided me and saved me innumerable times from the pitfalls of my own wishful thinking and overactive imagination. I will remember with great fondness our lengthy conversations, which would start with our academic work and end discussing entirely unpredictable topics.

I am grateful to Erdem E. Cipa for his comments, support, and encouragement at the moments I needed them most. I also thank him for his help with the Ottoman sources and for sharing with me some of his forthcoming scholarship. Hussein Fancy offered excellent comments at the final stages of this project. I am grateful to Hussein for encouraging me to consider the larger picture and the perspective of other potential readers of my scholarship. I hope to make use of his advice in the near future. I would also like to thank Judith Pfeiffer for reading through the dissertation and providing thoughtful corrections and remarks.

I started my work at the University of Michigan with the intention of studying medieval Anatolia under the guidance of Rudi Lindner. I am grateful to his generosity and kindness, for sharing with me his passion for numismatics and Ottoman prehistory. His example of erudite and rigorous scholarship continues and will continue to inspire me.

The roots of this project are found in my undergraduate and graduate studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where I was fortunate to study with two exceptional scholars and teachers of Mongol history, Michal Biran and Reuven Amitai. I am ever so grateful to them both for introducing me to Ilkhanid history and for providing me with the foundations to carry out this research. Their support, friendship, mentorship, and relentless advice have continually guided me in the past seven years in Michigan. I hope one day to be able to inspire my students

as they have inspired me. I would also like to thank Julia Rubanovich at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for first introducing me to medieval Persian and for her assistance ever since.

I am indebted to the generosity of the Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fund for providing me three years of funding to carry out my research and writing, and to the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies for providing me with research funding and office space during 2014-2015. A special thanks goes to the Eisenberg Institute's administrator Gregory Parker for his gracious company during my time at the institute. I am also grateful for the funding and support of the Department of History at the University of Michigan, and to the department's helpful and encouraging staff, especially Kathleen King and Diana Denney. A special thanks goes to the staff at the Hatcher Graduate Library, especially the staff at the library's interlibrary loan department. This project would have been inconceivable without their unremitting help. Evyn Kropf, the librarian for Near Eastern and Religious Studies, has been tremendously helpful throughout the years and has taught me a great deal about Islamic manuscripts.

I had the opportunity to present several chapters of this dissertation at a number of forums. I am grateful for the helpful comments and valuable advice from students and faculty at the *Mobility, Empire, and Cross Cultural Contacts in Mongol Eurasia Seminar* (Hebrew University), *IISS* (Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies Seminar at the University of Michigan), and the *MEMS Dissertation Writing Colloquium* (2015-2016). A special thanks is due to the MEMS faculty mentor Christian de Pee. A number of fellow historians of the Mongol Empire have provided me with their counsel and have shared with me their work, insight, and friendship. I would especially like to thank the generosity of Bruno de Nicola, Stefan Kamola, Shai Shir, and Francesca Fiaschetti. This study owes a great deal to Johan Elverskog's excellent work on Buddhism and the Mongols. I thank him for his helpful comments. I wish to thank Christopher

Atwood for our conversations, and for allowing me to use an early copy of his forthcoming work. His excellent study provided this dissertation with a foundational piece, without which it would have been difficult for me to advance my thesis. I reserve special thanks to Christiane Gruber for introducing me to the study of Islamic manuscripts, and for offering me her exceptional insight into Ilkhanid art.

During my time at the University of Michigan and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, I have learnt a great deal from the expertise, scholarship and kindness of many friends and colleagues. I would especially like to thank my fellow “Persian enthusiasts” Derek Mancini-Lander, Michael Pifer, Sarah Hakeem, Marian Smith, Amanda Respass, Cameron Cross, and Golriz Farshi. I am also grateful to Golriz for providing me copies of manuscripts in Iran, and for her help with difficult script and translations. Yanay Israeli, Sara Nur Yildiz, Andrew Peacock, Evrim Binbaş, Dan Sheffield, and Matt Melvin-Koushki have also provided helpful comments and much needed advice. I thank Zara Pogossian for her assistance with Armenian sources.

This dissertation would never have been accomplished without the unwavering support and unconditional love of my family. I am ever grateful to my parents Marcia and Robert Barak, and to my mother-in-law Malka Chaouat, for their encouragement and help. Amtiai and Noga have constantly reminded me what really mattered and have taught me a great deal about real creativity. My greatest gratitude goes to my partner Smadar. Time and again, she has taken time away from her own research to make sense of my incoherent mumblings, share my frustrations, and advise me. Her own scholarly work and anthropological insight have provided me ceaseless inspiration. I cannot imagine accomplishing any of this without her.

## Table of Contents

<b>Dedication</b>	ii
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	iii
<b>List of Figures</b>	x
<b>List of Appendices</b>	xi
<b>Note on Transliteration</b>	xii
<b>Abstract</b>	xiii
<b>Introduction:</b>	<b>1</b>
Muḥammad Seal of the Prophets, and Chinggis Khan King of the Earth	1
Mediating Sacred Kingship at the Ilkhanid Court	7
Methods and Literature	10
Ilkhanid Studies and Mongol Islamization	10
Mongol Political Theology	15
The Mongols and the Early Modern Sacral Sovereign	19
Brokering Difference: Three Ilkhanid Intermediaries	23
The Dissertation: An Overview	31
<b>Chapter I: The Politics of Descent and the Writing of History: Rashīd al-Dīn and the Making of an Abaqaid Dispensation</b>	<b>38</b>
Hülegü’s Wives and the Principle of Seniority in Rashīd al-Dīn’s Narrative	43
The Ilkhanid Succession Protocols: Corporate Sovereignty, Collegiality, and the Khan’s Will	50
Innocent Princes, Conspiring Amirs, and Conflicting Narratives of Abaqaid Usurpation	55
Ala Fireng’s Heresy Trail: Sufi Deviance and Seditious Spirits	60
Abaqaid “Monotheism” and the “Routinization” of Chinggisid Charisma	64
The Sufi <i>Samā’</i> as Investiture	69
Conclusion: Öljeitü at “Ghadīr Khumm”	76
<b>Chapter II: Between Prophet and Law-Maker King: Buddhists, Shī’īs, and a Jewish Vizier at the Court of Arghun</b>	<b>82</b>
Sa’d al-Dawla and His Career in Ilkhanid Historiography	85
A Jewish Vizier and His “Fables”	88



The “Bloody Prophet”: Debating Buddhism and Islam at Arghun’s Court	92
<i>Cakravartin</i> or Prophet: The Reversion of Chinggis Khan	100
Sa’d al-Dawla’s Ṭūsīan <i>Maḥḍar</i> and the <i>Akhlāq-Ethical</i> Model of Kingship	108
Good Omens at <i>Mashhad-i Mūsa</i> : Baghdadi Sectarian Politics and the Ilkhan as Imām	117
The Maḥḍar as a Statement of Mongol Political Theology	124
Conclusion: Ṭūsī’s Law-Maker and Chinggis Khan	130
<b>Chapter III: The King Who Would Revive Islam: Qāshānī’s Perso-Islamic conversion of Ghazan</b>	
<b>Khan</b>	<b>133</b>
The Two Conversion Versions in the <i>Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī</i>	137
Ghazan’s Conversion and Persianate Cyclical Time: Qāshānī and Nizām al-Mulk	147
Ghazan’s Syrian Letter: “the One in Authority” or the <i>Mujaddid</i> ?	152
From Wolves to Shepherds: a Sufī Mirror for Princes and Qāshānī’s Transition From the Apocalyptic to the Providential Explanation	162
The Maḥdī Khan and the Poet of Banākat	171
Contextualizing Qāshānī as Author: Perso-Islamic Synthesis and Ilkhanid Cultural Production	176
Monotheistic Kingship and Mongol Ancestral Belief: Rashīd al-Dīn’s Version	180
Conclusion: The Abrahamic Khan	193
<b>Chapter IV: The Words of the Kings are the Kings of Words: Rashīd al-Dīn’s Muḥammad-Centered Kingship and His Refutation of Reincarnation</b>	
<b>Kingship and His Refutation of Reincarnation</b>	<b>195</b>
The signs of the Šāhib-Qirān King: Nascent Formulations of Öljeitü’s Sacral Kingship in <i>Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya</i>	205
Hierarchies of Perfect Souls and Öljeitü’s Luminous Intellect: Between Rational Intuition and Divine Inspiration	217
Muḥammad’s Splitting of the Moon and the Miraculous Feats of the Šāhib-Qirān Chinggisids	231
Rashīd al-Dīn and the Dharma Revisited	237
Perfect Souls, imperfect Bodies: Rashīd al-Dīn’s Refutation of the <i>ahl-i tanāsukh</i>	244
Öljeitü’s Exceptional Life Cycle in <i>Nafā’is al-afkār</i> and Muḥammad-Centered Kingship	251
Muḥammad’s Abrogation of Buddhism and Rashīd al-Dīn’s Reinterpretation of Mahāyāna Buddhism	255
The Question of Buddhism under Sultan Öljeitü	260
Inter-Confessional Disputations and the Cult of Chinggis Khan in <i>Bayān al-ḥaqā’iq</i>	264
Conclusion	273
<b>Chapter V: The Mongol Maḥdī in Anatolia: Maḥdīs, Mujaddids, and Militant Reformers in the Ilkhanid and Post-Mongol Period</b>	
	<b>276</b>

From Ghazan to Abū Saʿīd: a Brief History of Ilkhanid Reformer Kings	277
The Mongol <i>Mahdī</i> Rebels	282
A Tabrizi Qāḍī in Anatolia and His Intellectual Networks	285
Timurtash and the Armenian Martyrdom of St. Grigoris Karninci	290
The <i>Mahdī</i> 's Historian: Aqsarāʿī and His <i>Musāmarat al-akhbār</i>	298
Reform and Authority from the Ilkhans to the Timurids	303
Conclusion	309
<b>Coda: The Aftermath of the Ilkhanid Experimentation with Mongol-Muslim Sacral Kingship</b>	<b>315</b>
<b>Appendix I: Order of deaths/revolts of Hülegü's offspring</b>	<b>321</b>
<b>Appendix II: 'Abd Allāh Qāshānī's Authorship of Ghazan's Conversion Account in the P</b>	
<b>Recension of the <i>Jāmi' al-tawārīkh</i></b>	<b>322</b>
The two lives of the <i>Jāmi' al-tawārīkh</i>	322
Did Qāshānī author a history of Ghazan?	327
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>347</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Hūlegü's Three Chief Wives and their Offspring	345
Figure 2: Öljeitü's Wives	346

## List of Appendices

Appendix I: Order of Deaths/Revolts of Hülegü's Offspring	321
Appendix II: 'Abd Allāh Qāshānī's Authorship of Ghazan's Conversion Account in the P Recension of the Jāmi' al-tawārīkh	322

## **Note on Transliteration**

For Arabic and Persian words and names, I used the system of transliteration of the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies (IJMES)*. For the sake of consistency, I have used *ḍ* when transcribing the letter ض for both Arabic and Persian. I used the Arabic transliteration system for titles in Arabic, even if the text was in Persian. For Turkic and Mongolian names and words, I used a simplified transliteration, indicating only Turkish short vowels (o/ö, u/ü). I maintained a simplified Roman type for Arabic and Persian terms that are in common use throughout this study such as amir, sultan and Ilkhan.

## Abstract

This dissertation focuses on the fashioning of new discourses on authority and sacral kingship in thirteenth and fourteenth-century Mongol-ruled Iran. It examines how Jewish and Muslim (both Shi'i and Sunni) bureaucrats, court historians, scholars, and courtiers experimented at the Mongol court with Persian and Islamic theological and political paradigms to express, reaffirm, and redefine a Mongol political theology of divine right that invested Chinggis Khan and his offspring with sacral charisma and the charge of world domination. This study argues that in their attempt to mediate the Mongol understanding of the Chinggisid ruler as a source of law and divine wisdom, intermediaries in late medieval Iran laid the foundations for a new idiom of sacral Muslim sovereignty.

This study focuses on two arenas of engagement and exchange: dynastic succession struggles, and the interreligious, cosmopolitan, and competitive Mongol court environment. Religious interlocutors - mainly Buddhists, Muslims, and Jews - competed over influence and access to the Mongol rulers by demonstrating their skills in explaining and reinforcing the claims of their patrons to their inheritance of Chinggisid authority. Cultural brokers at the Mongol court in Iran ingeniously drew on a rich corpus of Perso-Islamic political and Islamic theological writings, to recast their Mongol patrons as law-maker monarchs, *mahdī*-reformer rulers, and sacred Muḥammad-like kings.

Recent scholarship assigns the emergence of a new type of sacred and messianic Muslim emperor from the fifteenth century onwards to the resurgence of Shī'ī and millenarian movements and the proliferation of Sufi and occult discourses following the vacuum in authority created by the fall of the caliphate to the Mongols in 1258. This study, however, argues that it was the Muslim engagement with the Chinggisid claim to exclusive unmediated divine authority that gave rise to a new understanding of the place of kingship in the Islamic salvation narrative. This study is the first, therefore, to uncover the contributions of Mongol political concepts and cultural brokers in late medieval Iran to the sacralization of Muslim sovereignty.

## Introduction:

### Muḥammad Seal of the Prophets, and Chinggis Khan King of the Earth

During the five-week long Mongol occupation of Damascus following Ghazan Khan's victory over the Mamluk forces of Syria and Egypt (27 Rabī' I 699/22 December 1299), the Damascene religious scholar Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymīya (d. 728/1328) appointed himself as an intermediary between the Damascene residents and the occupying Mongol forces.<sup>1</sup> Ibn Taymīya fearlessly ventured beyond the city walls to negotiate the release of the captive Syrians, complaining to the Mongol ruler Ghazan about the atrocities committed by his men, and demanding his protection of the city's populace.

Recorded by the contemporaneous Mamluk chronicles, Ibn Taymīya's oral reports on his negotiations with the Mongols convey the Ḥanbalī scholar's perception of the Mongols' religious convictions in the first few years after the official Ilkhanid<sup>2</sup> conversion to Islam under Ghazan.

---

<sup>1</sup> On the battle of Wādī al-Khaznadār, the Mongol victory, and the composition of the Mongol army, see Reuven Amitai, "Whither the Ilkhanid army? Ghazan's first campaign into Syria (1299-1300)," in *Warfare in Inner Asian History*, ed. N. Di Cosmo (Leiden, 2002), 221-64. The "official" Ilkhanid reason for Ghazan's campaign was the Mamluk raid on Mardin in June-July 1299. Mardin was controlled by the Artuqids, an Ilkhanid vassal. According to the Ilkhanid accounts, the Mamluks indulged in alcohol consumption and other illicit acts including sexual encounters (*ba-fisād mashghūl shudand*) with "the daughters of Muslims in mosques" during their raids, which took place in the holy month of Ramaḍān. They were also reported to have carried away prisoners sold in the markets of Aleppo. After learning of the Mamluk looting, Ghazan became enraged and had the imāms and 'ulamā' issue a *fatwa* ordering the Ilkhanid army to "repel their [the Mamluks'] evil from the Muslim lands in the territory of the king of Islam." The content of the *fatwa* is also noted in Ibn Taymīya's report. Anne Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Mamluk and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge, 2008), 72; Faḍl Allāh Abū al-Khayr Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Rawshan and Muṣṭafā Mūsavī (Tehran, 1373/1994), 2: 1389-1390; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Rashīd uddīn Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh: A History of the Mongols*, trans. W.M. Thackston (Cambridge: Harvard University, Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1998-1999), vol. 3, 644; 'Abd Allāh ibn Faḍl Allāh Vaṣṣāf, *Tajziyat al-amṣār wa-tazjiyat al-a'ṣār* (rpt., Tehran 1338/1959-60 of Bombay edition, 1269/1852-3), 372-3.

<sup>2</sup> The Ilkhans were the Mongol dynasty that ruled present-day Iran, northern Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, and the southern Caucasus, including Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, from about the year 1260 to the dynasty's



One of Ibn Taymīya’s intriguing encounters took place on 25 Jumādā I 699/February 18 1300, with the great Mongol commander Qutlughshah (d. 707/1307).<sup>3</sup> According to the Mamluk historian al-Yūnīnī (d. 726/1326),<sup>4</sup> Ibn Taymīya reported that Qutlughshah was “from the descendants of Chinggis Khan”.<sup>5</sup> He stated that the Mongol was in his fifties, had a “yellowish complexion” (*aṣfar al-wajh*), and not a single hair on his face. Ibn Taymīya, furthermore, said that Qutlughshah claimed that, “God had sealed prophecy [the line of prophets, *khatama al-risāla*] with Muḥammad” and that, “Chinggis Khan was the king of the earth (*malik al-basīṭa*), and whoever turned his back on his command and the command of his descendants is a dissident (*khārijī*)”.<sup>6</sup> Qutlughshah’s statement is also echoed in the second of Ibn Taymīya’s three “anti-Mongol” *fatwas*, where the Syrian scholar states that one of the Mongol commanders who

---

disintegration in 1335. The dynasty was founded by Chinggis Khan’s grandson Hülegü (d. 1265). Numismatic evidence indicates that the title Ilkhan was in use for Hülegü Khan as early as 657/1259. However, the etymology of the title *ilkhān* (in Arabic/Persian transcription, *elkhan/elqan* in Mongolian) is still under discussion. Some scholars have argued that the title meant “subservient or submissive khan” and that it indicated, therefore, Hülegü’s subservient relationship with the Qa’an in China. Other scholars have argued that we should translate *ilkhān* as “the khan who brings peace (*īl*),” or the “peaceful khan,” and one has recently suggested that *ilkhān* is derived from the Turkic title *elkhan* and, therefore, had originally meant simply “ruler.” See Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: the Mamluk-Ilkhānid War, 1260-1281* (Cambridge, 1995), 13-14.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Yūnīnī has this date. Denise Aigle, however, appears to suggest that this meeting took place four days earlier. Aigle, “The Mongol invasions of Bilād al-Shām by Ghazan Khān and Ibn Taymīyah’s three “anti-Mongol” *fatwas*,” *Mamluk Studies Review*, 11/2 (2007), 105-06.

<sup>4</sup> Li Guo suggests that this report was transmitted from the historian Shaykh Imām ‘Alam al-Dīn Ibn al-Birzālī to Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Jazarī (d. 739/1339), on whose *Ḥawādith al-zamān* (which only survives in part), Qutb al-Dīn Mūsā al-Yūnīnī (d. 726/1326) relied in *Dhayl Mir’āt al-Zamān*. For this paragraph: *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: Al-Yūnīnī’s Dhayl Mir’āt al-Zamān*, ed. and trans. Li Guo (Leiden, 1998), vol. 1 (English translation): 157-58 (note 304 for al-Jazarī as a source for this passage), vol. 2 (Arabic text): 119. For Guo’s analysis of the “Jazarī-Yūnīnī tradition,” 1: 41-59.

<sup>5</sup> There is no other reference to Qutlughshah’s descent from Chinggis Khan; however, he was a güregen, a royal son-in-law. Ghazan gave him in marriage one of his half-sisters from his father Arghun, and in 1301 also married him to his cousin, the Ilkhan Geilkhatu’s daughter (perhaps after his first wife died). Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 632, 650.

<sup>6</sup> Other versions of this exchange have the Damascene scholar state that Qutlughshah claimed that Chinggis Khan was himself a Muslim convert. K. V. Zetterstéen, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultanate in den Jahren 690-741 der hagra nach arabischen Handschriften* (Leiden, 1919), 76.

invaded Syria tried to prove the Mongols' sincere adherence to Islam by claiming that Muḥammad and Chinggis Khan were both "great signs [*āya*] coming from God".<sup>7</sup>

For Ibn Taymīya, Qutlughshah's comparison between "God's messenger, the most honorable of the beings, Adam's descendant, and the Seal of Prophets, and an infidel king and the greatest of the polytheists" was a sure sign of the Mongol converts' dangerous deviation from the Muslim creed. Referencing the Mongol myth of origin, according to which Chinggis Khan's female ancestor Alan Qoa was impregnated by a pale yellow being,<sup>8</sup> the Ḥanbalī scholar further argued that the Mongols, just like the Christians' belief in the immaculate conception, consider Chinggis Khan to be a son of God (*ibn Allāh*) since the "sun impregnated his [Chinggis Khan's] mother." Ibn Taymīya concludes, however, that Chinggis Khan must have been a bastard (*walad zinā*). He laments that in spite of his dubious origins, the Mongols venerate Chinggis Khan as "the greatest of God's messengers".<sup>9</sup>

What can we make of Qutlughshah's statement about Muḥammad, Chinggis Khan, and the Ilkhanid demand for full Damascene submission? Ibn Taymīya's report reflects the Damascene scholar's vehement rejection of the validity of the Mongol conversion. Might his account, however, also tell us something about the Islam of the Mongols at the turn of the thirteenth century? Ibn Taymīya's condemnation of Qutlughshah's words as an indication of the Mongol converts' heretical beliefs might seem not entirely "off point." The Mongol commander's statement indeed seems more akin to the formulaic ultimatums sent by the Mongol khans to European rulers. These letters expressed the Mongol khans' belief in Eternal Heaven's

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Taymīya, *Majmū' fatāwā shaykh al-islām Aḥmad Ibn Taymīya*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥman ibn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim (Riyadh/Mecca, 1381-86/1961-67, repr. 1417/1995), vol. 28, 521-22; Aigle, "The Mongol invasions," 113-14.

<sup>8</sup> For the Mongol myth of origin and later appropriations see Denis Aigle, "The transformation of a myth of origins, Genghis Khan and Timur," in Aigle, *The Mongol Empire between Myth and Reality: studies in anthropological history* (Leiden, 2014), 121-33.

<sup>9</sup> Ibn Taymīya, *Majmū' fatāwā*, vol. 28, 521-22. For Chinggis Khan as prophet and his *yasa*, see also chapter two.

(“Sky God,” *möngke tenggeri*) blessing to Chinggis Khan, which conferred on the world conqueror a special good fortune or charisma (*qut* or *su*), and the mandate to rule over the entire earth.<sup>10</sup> Chinggis is described in these letters as the sole lord on earth (*super terram Cingischan solus dominus*), and polities and rulers are divided into willful submitters (*il/el*, peace, harmony, or submission) and those in a “state of rebellion” (*bulgha/bulaq*) against Heaven’s will. This later group awaits a brutal fate at the hands of the Mongol forces.<sup>11</sup>

Qutlughshah’s statement might be read, therefore, as a reiteration of the traditional Mongol demand for unwavering submission to Heaven’s will and Chinggisid rule, expressed now in Islamic terminology.<sup>12</sup> In a similar vein, Qutlughshah’s words can also be viewed as a further indication of the “Mongol deviousness.” The Mongols were renowned for their “habit of

---

<sup>10</sup> On the Chinggisid inheritance and revival of the Turkic “concept of universal nomadic rule sanctioned by Heaven” and their broadening of this ideological platform to encompass both nomadic and sedentary domains, Michal Biran, “The Mongol transformation: from the steppe to Eurasian Empire,” *Medieval Encounters* 10/1-3 (2004): 347; and Peter B. Golden, “Imperial ideology and the sources of political unity amongst the pre-Chinggisid nomads of Western Eurasia,” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 2 (1982): 37-77.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Jackson, “World conquest and local accommodation: threat and blandishment in Mongol diplomacy,” in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods*, eds. eds., J. Pfeiffer and S. A. Quinn (Wiesbaden, 2006), 3-22. Ibn Taymīya’s claim that the Mongol commander’s statement expresses the Mongol converts’ belief that Chinggis Khan was the son of God, too, echoes statements made in the Mongol threatening letters to European rulers. For example, the letter from Qa’an Güyük delivered to the Pope Innocent IV in 1247 contains the following formula: “By the command of the Living God, Chinggis Khan, the dear and revered son of God, says that God, the Highest over all things, is God immortal, and Chinggis Khan is the sole ruler on earth.” Jackson, “World conquest,” 7 (see also the letter from Möngke, *ibid.*, 9). It is worth nothing the dual structure of this statement (God and Chinggis Khan). De Rachewiltz argues that the idea that Chinggis Khan was the “son of Heaven” and the notion of Heaven’s mandate were informed by Chinese imperial traditions, whereas Sanping Chen suggests that the notion of the “son of God” was rooted in a cross-cultural Sinitic, Iranic and Altaic conflation and symbiosis. Sanping Chen, “Son of Heaven and son of God: interactions among ancient Asiatic cultures regarding sacral kingship and theophoric names,” *JRAS* 12/3 (2002): 289-325; Igor de Rachewiltz, “Some remarks on the ideological foundation of Chinggis Khan’s empire,” *Paper on Far Eastern History* 7 (1973): 21-36. For the dating of the Mongol imperial ideology (that is, during Chinggis Khan’s lifetime or only after his death, under his son Ögödei Qa’an/Qaghan [r. 1229-41]), see Reuven Amitai’s discussion in Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement: studies in the relations between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Mongol Ilkhanate (1260-1335)* (Turnhout, 2013), 43-45. For Mongol titular and ideological formulas, also Thomas Allsen, “Changing forms of legitimation in Mongol Iran,” in *Rulers from the Steppe: state formation on the Eurasian periphery*, eds. Garry Seaman and Daniel Marks (Los Angeles, 1991). 223-41.

<sup>12</sup> Thus, the Mongol commander refers to the deniers of the Chinggisid right to world domination with the term *khārijūn*, deviators from God’s path, a term that alludes to the historical Kharijite rebellion against the fourth caliph ‘Alī. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 75-76. As Denis Aigle aptly points out in her discussion of Ibn Taymīya’s *fatwas*, Ibn Taymīya uses the same term *khārijūn* to identify the Mongol converts as “deviating from the laws of Islam,” and thus, was “addressing the same reproaches to the Ilkhans that Ghazan Khān levelled against the Mamluks.” Aigle, “The Mongol invasions,” 113.

exploiting” in their military campaigns “the religious susceptibilities of independent powers for diplomatic and strategic purposes”.<sup>13</sup>

However, this study suggests that we consider instead that Qutlughshah’s statement encapsulates how Islam was conceived by the Mongols as reinforcing, rather than challenging, the Chinggisid claims of legitimation and belief in Mongol Heaven-derived sacral authority. Similar statements can be found elsewhere, for example, in internal Mongol correspondence. The rebellious Chaghadaid prince Yasawur (d. 1320) concludes his letter that finalized his submission to the Ilkhan Abū Sa‘īd, with the statement that, “whoever would contravene in its [their alliance’s] terms is not a member of the family of the world-conqueror emperor Chinggis Khan, nor a follower of the religion of Muḥammad, the messenger of God”.<sup>14</sup> Regardless of whether or not the letter was indeed written by the prince or his chancery, or was the historian’s fiction, Yasawur’s statement reflects an understanding that positions the Mongol converts’ new religio-communal affiliation alongside their membership in the royal Chinggisid family. The contract of mutual trust between a Chaghadaid prince and the Mongol ruler Abū Sa‘īd is accordingly understood as legitimated and regulated by their respective relationships to both Chinggis Khan and the Prophet Muḥammad. Defying the terms of their pledge and their political alliance meant their exclusion from both the Chinggisid “golden line” and the Muḥammadan *ummah*.

The Mongol commander Qutlughshah’s statement outside the city walls of Damascus too grounds the Ilkhanid claim to Syria and even more so, to world domination, in a dual religiopolitical

---

<sup>13</sup> Jackson, “World conquest,” 252, 277.

<sup>14</sup> Translated by Michal Biran, “Diplomacy and chancellery practices in the Chagataid Khanate: some preliminary remarks,” *Oriente Moderno*. Nuova serie, 88/2 (2008), *Les relations diplomatiques entre le monde musulman et l’occident latin (xiie-xvie siècle)*, 393; Sayf b. Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb Harawī, *Ta’rīkh nāmah-yi Harāt*, ed. Muḥammad Z. al-Ṣiddiqī (Calcutta, 1944), 663.

discourse of Mongol “political theology of divine right” and Islam.<sup>15</sup> The Ilkhanid chancery presented the Mongol invasions into Syria as the restoration of a just and righteous Muslim rule eliminating Mamluk corruption, heresy, and oppression.<sup>16</sup> The Mongol invasions and conversion to Islam were depicted as part of God’s salvific plan to revive Islam and set its community aright after its corruption. The Muslim convert Ghazan was fashioned in the Ilkhanid letters to the people of Syria as a divine agent of militant reform, and an heir to Muḥammad’s mission. Ghazan directs the community of believers to the right path of salvation and protects the Islamic faith. What the Ilkhanid letters implicitly, if not explicitly express is the association of Chinggis Khan’s Heaven-decreed mission of world domination with Muḥammad’s mission as God’s final prophet.

Stated differently, it is not that, as Ibn Taymīya outrageously laments, “the infidel king” was compared to “God’s messenger” in the Mongol commander’s statement, but that Muḥammad was compared to Chinggis Khan. In this dissertation, I argue that the Mongols introduce Muḥammad and his prophetic mission into their religiopolitical discourse to legitimize and sanctify Chinggisid rule. Mongol domination is justified by God’s blessing and edict, mediated through the cult of Chinggis Khan, and by the designation of the Mongols as Muḥammad’s successors in guiding the community of believers. Muḥammad and Chinggis Khan are deployed together as the religiopolitical foundation of Ilkhanid rule. As Qutlugshah states in Ibn Taymīya’s *fatwa*, both Chinggis Khan and Muḥammad are “two great signs (*āya*)” from God.

---

<sup>15</sup> I borrow this term from Johan Elverskog. He argues that the early modern Mongols adhered to a “bifurcated religiopolitical framework” of Buddhism and the cult of Chinggis Khan. Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing* (Honolulu, 2006), 40-62, and see discussion below. An identical message of dual Chinggisid-Muslim legitimation is found in the Ilkhanid edicts (*farāmīn*) and letters that, as Ibn Taymīya observes, read: “By the might of God and the auspiciousness of the Muḥammadan community (*bi-quwwa Allāh ta’āla wa-mayāmin al-milla al-muḥammadiyya*).” Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1400; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 689. This dual legitimation is also reflected in Ghazan’s coin reform. In their new-old design, the coins had the *shahādah* and Muḥammad on the obverse, and on the reverse, they read “The coinage of/Ghazan Maḥmūd/by the power/of Heaven.” Judith Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran: Chingiz Khan to Uljaytu 1220-1309* (London, 2006), 323-26.

<sup>16</sup> See chapter three of the dissertation.

Though a seemingly “radical” departure, Mongol conversion is conceived as an expression of continuity with earlier practices and models of Chinggisid charisma. Ghazan’s reign is envisioned as a continuation of both Muḥammad’s and Chinggis Khan’s missions. My reading of Qutlughshah’s statement does not view it as an expression of the “superficial” or “external” adoption of Islam by the Mongols, but rather as an example of genuine commitment of the Mongol converts. Qutlughshah’s speech is no less than a *Mongol shahādah* (the Muslim profession of faith). The Mongol commander’s words are a testimony to a processes of mutual refashioning, whereby Islam and its notions of authority and legitimation were appropriated in support of Mongol concepts of Chinggisid authority, and the Mongols were incorporated into an Islamic salvific narrative, as agents of religious revival and restoration.

### **Mediating Sacred Kingship at the Ilkhanid Court**

*Mediating Sacred Kingship* explores this process of mutual refashioning by examining how three cultural brokers at the Ilkhanid court in Iran, a Sunnī Muslim convert from Judaism, a Jewish physician, and a Shī‘ī court historian, experimented with Islamic paradigms of authority and Perso-Islamic theories of kingship to articulate and negotiate Mongol notions of sacral kingship. I argue that the authority of the Ilkhans rested on their claim to their inheritance of God’s blessing through the empire’s founder Chinggis Khan.<sup>17</sup> The Ilkhanid relationship with

---

<sup>17</sup> DeWeese demonstrates that the Mongols’ claim to exclusive authority was based on the identification of “the person or family of the ruler, as the embodiment of the community.” He explains that “ritual expressions of communal sanctity bound up with sacral dynastic ancestry” and “the ancestral rites of the dynasty itself – takes on enormous importance for the state, and thus, for example, the tombs of the imperial dynasty, as well as the ancestral offerings to royal forebears acquire a double religious significance – participating both in the domestic-style sanctity of any ancestral rite, and in the universal-style sanctity reserved for rites evoking larger communal groupings.” Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, PA, 1994), 524. See also his discussion of ancestral veneration and rituals of libation, from 210ff, where he notes: “the khan and his deceased ancestors’ spirits, whether addressed at the royal burial ground or in some other sanctified reserve, come to represent the whole people, thereby further underscoring the vital communal and political imperatives requiring the veneration of imperial ancestors.” *Ibid.*, 220. See also

Chinggis Khan and God's blessing was sustained and cultivated through their privileged descent, their adherence to Chinggis Khan's (real or fictive) policies and assertions as expressed in his *yasa*,<sup>18</sup> the Mongol code of law attributed to Chinggis Khan, and through their replication of the dynastic founder's exclusive Heaven-derived gift.<sup>19</sup> This gift endowed Chinggis Khan and his offspring with the prerogative of intuitive, divine knowledge, attained through an unmediated communion with God, and designated the Chinggisid ruler as the ultimate source of law. Furthermore, continuation of God's blessing required also the Ilkhanid observance of Chinggis Khan's Heaven-decreed mission of world conquest. In this dissertation, I examine how Muslim (Sunnī and Shī'ī) and Jewish intermediaries at the Ilkhanid court mediated between their patrons' distinct "political theology of divine right" and the Islamic and Perso-Islamic religiopolitical discourses of legitimate authority.

I argue that two central components of Mongol rule in Iran contributed to this process of mutual refashioning. The first is the interreligious competitive and cosmopolitan environment of the Ilkhanid court. Religious interlocutors, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, Christians and others, competed over influence and access at the court by demonstrating their skills, as ritual specialists and cultural intermediaries, to advance the interests of their Mongol patrons. At court debates or at informal conversations, Muslims, Buddhists, and Jews discussed topics such as religious violence and holy war, the nature of prophethood, revelation and scripture, as well as reincarnation, resurrection and the thereafter. Religious interlocutors strove to demonstrate

---

Isabelle Charleux, "From Ongon to icon: legitimization, glorification and divinization of power in some examples of Mongol portraits," in *Presenting Power in Ancient Inner Asia: legitimacy, transmission, and the sacred*, eds. Isabelle Charleux et al. (Bellingham, 2010), 209-60. For the institutionalization of the memory of the dynastic-empire founder and the imitation of his sacred mode of kingship, see Azfar Moin's recent study on Timur's legacy and the Mughals. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: sacred kingship and sainthood in Islam* (New York, 2012).

<sup>18</sup> For knowledge of Chinggis Khan's edicts as criterion for electing the khan, see George Lane, "Intellectual jousting and the Chinggisid wisdom bazaars," *JRAS* 26/1-2 (2016), 246.

<sup>19</sup> No less significant was the ritual aspect, the cult of Chinggis Khan, for which, see my discussion of Johan Elverskog's important contribution below.

during these intercultural exchanges the efficacy of their own traditions in expressing and reinforcing their Mongol patrons' ideas of sacral authority and, in particular, the royal family's relationship with their ancestor Chinggis Khan.<sup>20</sup>

As cultural brokers, they confirmed the Ilkhans' inheritance of Heaven's blessing, for example, by depicting the Mongols as an additional link in a successive chain of divine agents that began with the prophets and continued with Muḥammad's mission, and Chinggis Khan and his offspring. Ilkhanid mediators also experimented with Perso-Islamic ethical models of kingship to express and reaffirm the role of their Mongol patrons as absolute law-maker kings, or deployed theological theories about the exceptionality of the Prophet Muḥammad's soul to translate the perception of the Chinggisid ruler as a source of intuitive divine wisdom. Religious experts at the Ilkhanid court also offered other avenues for claiming access to Heaven's blessing, for example, through the cultivation of close relationships with Sufi shaykhs.

The second aspect that shaped the process of mutual refashioning were the internal Ilkhanid succession politics. I begin this dissertation with a reexamination of the competing dynastic claims of the descendants of the founder of the Ilkhanate, Hülegü Khan. I argue that it was the dynastic feud between the descendants of the second Ilkhanid ruler Abaqa (the Abaqids) and their Hülegüid cousins that gave rise to the Ilkhanid experimentation with Chinggisid sacral kingship. Ilkhanid intermediaries used Perso-Islamic political concepts to support and legitimize the succession of their Abaqaid patrons, and to overcome their lack of seniority within the Hülegüid family.

---

<sup>20</sup> George Lane has too recently described the court debates and intellectual tournaments at the Mongol courts as a "cultural window shopping" and "testing-drives" for local doctrines. He argues that in addition to its role in providing amusement and enabling the acquisition of knowledge and the gathering of intelligence, "the debates could serve as an ideological showcase and present the court as theatre providing potential ideologies that might then be officially adopted." I characterize the court debate as a forum through which other "potential ideologies" were competitively presented and explained as "paralleling" the Mongol political theology, and contributing to the image of the ruler as an "intuitive genius." Lane, "Intellectual jousting," 235-47.



In addition to the execution of their more senior Hülegüid cousins, the Abaquids, who ruled the Ilkhanate from 1284 onwards, also sought alternative avenues to strengthen their claim to rightful Chinggisid succession and sanctified dynastic authority. In an empire inflicted by intense internal competition and rivalry, both among the Mongol successor states and within the ruling families, the Abaquid branch expanded the search for new ways to “routinize,” and claim their exclusive inheritance of Chinggis Khan’s charisma. I argue that the Abaquid family’s patronage of Buddhism enabled them to claim continuity with the Ilkhan Hülegü, and to overcome their problematic succession to the throne. Furthermore, the Buddhists used the dogma of reincarnation and the Buddhist model of universal sacred kingship (the *cakravartin*) to sanctify and reinforce the royal Mongol family’s relationship with the empire’s founder. Ilkhanid cultural brokers also experimented with Islamic political structures to support their patrons’ claims to dynastic legitimacy, and thus, compete with the Buddhists’ influence with the Ilkhans.

This dissertation speaks to four main bodies of scholarship: Ilkhanid history and Islamization, Mongol empire and Yuan studies, the study of early modern Islamic sacral kingship, and the study of cultural intermediacy and brokerage.

## **Methods and Literature**

### **Ilkhanid Studies and Mongol Islamization**

Historians have studied the interactions between Mongol and Islamic worldviews in the Ilkhanate from three main perspectives. Historiography has focused on the military and ideological confrontation and diplomatic correspondence between the Mongols and the Mamluk Sultanate in Syria and Egypt (1250-1517). In addition, cultural, literary, and artistic production at the Ilkhanid court has been studied as sites of assimilation, acculturation, and local legitimation.

And finally, an emphasis has been placed on the Mongol cultural and religious agency in the process of intercultural interactions and exchanges.

In the past two decades, a number of scholars, primarily Anne Broadbridge, Reuven Amitai, and Denis Aigle, have explored the ideological confrontation between the Ilkhans and the Mamluks arguing that, even after the Mongols' conversion to Islam in the last decade of the thirteenth century, Mongol imperial ideology remained the foundation of the Ilkhanid political claims.<sup>21</sup> They have shown, for example, how in his letters and edicts to the Muslim population and the Mamluk commanders of Syria, the Ilkhan Ghazan was presented as the just protector of the Muslim community, and the Mamluk rulers of Egypt and Syria were vilified as corrupt and oppressive kings. These scholars have argued for the continuation of the Mongol ideological program as exemplified in Ghazan's demand for unequivocal Mamluk and Syrian surrender, his continued pride in his divinely favored Chinggisid bloodline, and his ongoing adherence to the *yasa*, the Mongol code of law attributed to Chinggis Khan. Moreover, they have noted that as new converts to Islam, the Mongols did not see contradiction between their new religious affiliation and their Mongol beliefs.<sup>22</sup>

Other scholars have investigated the extensive Ilkhanid literary, historical, and artistic production, focusing especially on the rekindled interest in the *Shahname* in the Ilkhanate. Charles Melville, for example, has drawn attention to the process of fashioning the Mongols into "Iranian kings in Mongol guise".<sup>23</sup> He and other scholars have explored how Iranian literati, artisans, viziers, and a diverse group of Persianate cultural experts followed the earlier Saljūq

---

<sup>21</sup> Amitai, *Holy War*, 63.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 64ff.

<sup>23</sup> For example, Melville, "The royal image in Mongol Iran," in Lynette Mitchell and Ch. Melville, *Every Inch a King: comparative studies on kings and kingship in the ancient and medieval worlds* (Leiden, 2013), 343-69; *idem*, "From Adam to Abaqa: Qadi Baidawi's rearrangement of history," *Studia Iranica* 30 (2001): 67-86. *Idem*, "History and myth: the Persianisation of Ghāzān Khan," in Eva M. Jeremias (ed.), *Irano-Turkic Cultural Contacts in the 11<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Piliscsaba), 2002/3: 133-60.

model of cultural and material patronage. They made use of pre-Islamic Iranian concepts of ideal kingship to furnish legitimacy to Mongol rule, on the one hand, and on the other hand, to guide their Mongol patrons towards the adoption of the same Perso-Islamic norms of government and statecraft. Melville has suggested that Iranian concepts of sovereignty played the role of mediators between the two competing, Mongol and Islamic ideologies, and were therefore, instrumental in the acculturation of the Mongols.<sup>24</sup> In a similar vein, Stefan T. Kamola has recently shed further light on the efforts of the renowned Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn (below) to transform, through his historiographical work, the Mongol rulers into legitimate Perso-Islamic monarchs.<sup>25</sup>

A third approach to the Mongol and Muslim engagement has focused on the question of the Mongols' agency in their relationship with the sedentary cultures they conquered, and in the Mongols' religious transformation in the process. The work of Thomas Allsen has been particularly significant in further probing the question of Mongol agency in the cross-cultural exchanges in the empire. Published at the turn of the twenty first century, Allsen's two books *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire* and *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* were the first in a new line of studies that reassessed and challenged long-held convictions as to the nature of the relationship between the nomadic Mongols and the sedentary cultures and religions they conquered.<sup>26</sup> Disputing "the familiar theme of the conquerors' cultural conquest by

---

<sup>24</sup> Melville, "The Mongol and Timurid periods, 1250-1500," *A History of Persian Literature*, vol. 10 (*Persian Historiography*), ed. Ch. Melville (London, 2012), 191-92. For Mongol acculturation, see also Jean Aubin, *Émirs Mongols et vizirs Persians dans les remous de l'acculturation* (Paris, 1995).

<sup>25</sup> Kamola, *Rashīd al-Dīn and the Making of History in Mongol Iran* (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2013).

<sup>26</sup> Thomas T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: a cultural history of Islamic textiles* (Cambridge, 1997); idem, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge, 2001).

the conquered”,<sup>27</sup> Allsen argued that the Mongols were active facilitators of intercultural exchange and Eurasian integration. He demonstrated that far from passive recipients of sedentary cultures, the Mongols actively initiated and promoted the exchange and relocation of cultural wares, specialists, and technologies between the two ends of Eurasia. Furthermore, Mongol cultural preferences and sensibilities “filtered” and determined which sedentary wares, ideas, and expertise would be mobilized.<sup>28</sup> Their contribution was not limited to the traditional nomadic fields of interest, such as military technologies or the consumption of sedentary luxury goods (golden brocade, for example). The Mongols also had an instrumental role in facilitating exchanges in the fields of the arts, sciences, and historical writing, traditionally associated with sedentary interests.<sup>29</sup>

Scholarship has also shown that the Mongols were not passive recipients in their religious encounters as well. The Mongols were active agents seeking to recruit and repurpose the spiritual resources of the sedentary societies they conquered. Peter Jackson, for example, has questioned the long-lived notion of the Mongols’ alleged indifference to the religions of the people they conquered arguing that Mongol policies of religious tolerance and intolerance were determined either by the perceived efficacy of religious specialists in prayer, divination, and healing, or by the Mongol interest in taking advantage of religious sensibilities to encourage the submission of the people they conquered.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> As Devin DeWeese aptly describes it. DeWeese, “Islamization in the Mongol Empire,” in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age*, eds. Nicola Di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank and Peter B. Golden (Cambridge, 2009), 122.

<sup>28</sup> The Mongols “were culturally conservative at home but open and flexible in conquest, skillfully picking and choosing institutions and technologies from subject peoples that facilitated further military expansion and successful exploitation of their new economic base.” Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 197.

<sup>29</sup> Noted also by Michal Biran, “Introduction: nomadic culture,” in *Nomads as Agents of Cultural Change: the Mongols and their Eurasian predecessors*, eds. M. Biran and R. Amitai (Honolulu, 2015), 1-9. The entire volume builds on Allsen’s trajectories.

<sup>30</sup> Peter Jackson, “the Mongols and the faith of the conquered,” in *Mongols, Turks and Others*, eds. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (Leiden, 2005), 277-78. Jackson, furthermore, observes that while the Mongols “did not persecute

Judith Pfeiffer has used Allsen's critical reassessment of the Mongols' role as selective appropriators of sedentary cultures to offer a new approach to the Ilkhanid conversion to Islam.<sup>31</sup> She argues that the Mongols approached spiritual resources in the same way they approached material, intellectual, and human resources. Conversion to Islam among the Mongols was a process of "selective appropriation of elements that were felt to be enriching with the possible exclusion of others (such as, potentially, the performing of ablutions under running water) that were not approved of from a Mongol point of view or sanctioned by Mongol customs".<sup>32</sup>

Devin DeWeese has also urged researchers to abandon the "measuring" of the inner convictions of Mongol converts, and study in its place, Mongol conversion as stemming from more "mundane," yet equally significant motives. These motives might include social prestige, economic advantages, political legitimation, communal integration, and the specialized knowledge (for example, alchemy or sorcery) and the charisma of the bearers of religion.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, in his seminal study on the Islamization of the Golden Horde, DeWeese identifies Mongol conversion as a process defined by "a two-way assimilation in which Mongol/Inner Asian values and customs make

---

their subjects on the grounds of religion *per se*, they cared only so too much about some practices; and since they intervened in these as means of giving visible and tangible imprint to their political domination, certain of the subject groups at various time experienced Mongol rule as markedly intolerant." Jackson notes for example the obligation to venerate the image of Chinggis Khan and Mongol taboos for example, the prohibition on washing in running water or the *halal* slaughter of animals. Ibid., 259-60. For the practical explanation (the Mongols' interest in "real-time issues," and the efficacy of religious specialists in guaranteeing success etc.), see also Richard Foltz, "Ecumenical mischief under the Mongols," *Central Asiatic Journal* 43/1 (1999): 44-46. On Mongol religious "indifference," David Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford, 1990), 41.

<sup>31</sup> A number of recent studies have focused on conversion to Islam in the Ilkhanate. For example, Reuven Amitai, "The conversion of Tegüder Ilkhan to Islam," *JSAI*, vol. 25 (2001), 15-43; Charles Melville, "Pādshāh-i Islām: the conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghazan Khān," in Ch. Melville, ed. *History and Literature in Iran* (London: British Academic Press, 1990), 159-77; Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "Ghazan, Islam and the Mongol tradition: a view from the Mamluk sultanate," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 59, no. 1(1996), 1-10; Judith Pfeiffer, *Twelver Shi'ism as State Religion in Mongol Iran* (Istanbul, 1999). For conversion to Islam in other khanates, for example, Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, for the Golden Horde; and Michal Biran, "The Chaghadaids and Islam: the conversion of Tarmashirin Khan (1331-34)," *Journal of American Oriental Society*, vol. 122, no. 4 (2002), 742-752, for the Chaghadaids.

<sup>32</sup> Judith Pfeiffer, "Reflections on a 'double rapprochement': conversion to Islam among the Mongol elite during the early Ilkhanate," in ed., Linda Komaroff, *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 371-72,

<sup>33</sup> DeWeese urges us to study the "social, familial and institutional" aspects of the process of conversion to Islam, which Islamic tradition regards as religiously meaningful. DeWeese, "Islamization in the Mongol Empire," 121.

way for Muslim counterparts, while Muslim religious figures make way for infidel habits”.<sup>34</sup> He argues for “the unmistakable process whereby Islam was able to ‘fit into’ and reinforce (rather than oppose) the basic inner Asian religious values.” For example, the Mongols’ new Islamic “status” was “imagined in ways rooted in traditional concepts of communal origin and identity”.<sup>35</sup>

This dissertation combines several of these approaches to argue that the Islamization of the Mongols was not a unidirectional process. The Mongols in Iran sought to selectively appropriate spiritual resources for their own aims, while their religious interlocutors “exploited” their patrons’ political interests and cultural sensibilities, to convert the Mongols, and moreover, gain access, influence, and material resources for themselves and their communities, fame for converting the Mongols, and less mundanely, merit in the afterlife.

### **Mongol Political Theology**

This dissertation also draws from a number of recent studies on Mongol notions of imperial authority, by Yuan (the Mongol successor state in China, 1271-1368) and post-Yuan historians. In his study of the Mongols and Buddhism in Late Imperial China and Mongolia, Johan Elverskog brought attention to the continuous centrality of the cult of the imperial founder Chinggis Khan for the Mongol polities. He argued that the Mongols conceived of “the holding of the state” as “a sacred enterprise,” and “the privilege to rule was conferred only through the right worship and reverence of Chinggis Khan”.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> DeWeese, *Islamization*, 225.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 13, 530.

<sup>36</sup> Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing* (Honolulu, 2006), 50-52. In other words, Chinggis Khan became “from founder of the empire to the sanctified holder of the right to rule.”

After the dissolution of the Mongol Empire and the fall of the Yuan dynasty, the Mongols continued to adhere to the belief in Heaven's blessing, "conferred and confirmed" through the maintenance of a ritualized relationship with Chinggis Khan, as a source of communal authority and a means of maintaining power. However, as Elverskog further shows, from the fifteenth century onwards, the Mongols also based their legitimacy on Buddhist models of ideal rule. Through their adherence to Buddhist ritual and precepts, the Mongols fashioned themselves as ideal Buddhist monarchs and Buddhist universal emperors, *cakravartin* kings. This "bifurcated religiopolitical framework" of the Mongol "political theology of divine right" on the one hand, and the Dharma on the other, can be observed in the representation of Chinggis Khan, who continued to confer Heaven's blessing on his offspring, but also assumed the role of the (original Mongol) Buddhist *cakravartin*.<sup>37</sup>

Christopher Atwood has also explored the Mongol political theology, albeit from a different vantage point. In a study on the development of Mongol religious policies, Atwood has argued that the Mongol approach to the religions was not determined by a universal principle of tolerance, or by Mongol religious indifference, but rather "was based on a series of assertions about Heaven's (or God's) role in human affairs that added up to a coherent political theology".<sup>38</sup> Tracing the origins of the Mongol religious policies as expressed in edicts granting tax exemptions to clergy, to an early series of ad hoc resolutions made by Chinggis Khan during his early campaigns and his encounters with different religious specialists, Atwood demonstrates that a coherent Mongol religious policy was formulated only after the death of the empire's founder. Mongol religious policies developed in the same way that Chinggis Khan's *yasa*,

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 40-62.

<sup>38</sup> Christopher P. Atwood, "Validation by Holiness or Sovereignty: religious toleration as political theology in the Mongol world empire of the thirteenth century," *The International History Review* 26/2 (2004), 238. Atwood further notes that "religions that contradicted it were ignored, if beyond reach, or ruthlessly suppressed, if within."

initially “a series of ad hoc judgments, wise maxims, and stories with explicit morals,” became the precedent that governed how the law was applied throughout the Mongol empire.<sup>39</sup>

The Mongol religious policies were determined by the notion that the goal of religion was to secure blessing through prayer, and that all great religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Daoism, and Islam, whose clergy were exempt from taxation at the order of the khans, “prayed to the same God, more specifically, to the God who had given Chinggis Khan victories”.<sup>40</sup> In other words, the Chinggisid “practical” impulse to find effective prayer experts and marshal the blessing of “holy men,” who could bestow religious charisma upon their rule, crystallized after the death of the empire’s founder into a concrete political theology.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 243, 255. There is a vast literature on the issue of the Mongol *yasa* and an ongoing debate whether the *yasa* was a changing oral tradition, a written, systemized legal code, or a set of royal decrees (such as military directives). A list of references can be found in Peter Jackson, “*Yāsā*,” *EI*. Accessed on June 1, 2016. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/yasa-law-code>; Denise Aigle, “Mongol law *versus* Islamic Law. Myth and reality,” in Aigle, *The Mongol Empire between Myth and Reality: studies in anthropological history* (Leiden, 2014), 134-156; Biran, “The Mongol transformation,” 359-60. While the debate continues, the current consensus appears to be on “the *jasag* being an *ad hoc* collection of decrees and sayings of the khans, combined with unwritten traditions of practice implemented by Mongol and non-Mongol *jarghuchis* judges.” Christopher Atwood, “The Mongol Empire and early modernity,” *forthcoming*. I am grateful to Christopher Atwood for providing me an early copy of his valuable piece. In a 2014 conference paper, Pfeiffer argued that documents from Ardabil indicate that the *yasa* served as a sort of a meta-legal system deciding which cases would be ruled by the Muslim *sharī‘ā* and leaving the possibility to turn to other systems of ruling in case a sufficient judgment could not be made. Judith Pfeiffer, “*Yasa* and *sharī‘a* in the Mongol Ilkhanate,” *New Approaches on the Il-Khans* (Ulaanbaatar, 2014). See also Pfeiffer, “Protecting Private Property vs. Negotiating Political Authority: Nur al-Din b. Jaja and His Endowments in Thirteenth Century Anatolia” In *Ferdowsi, the Mongols and the History of Iran: Art, Literature and Culture from Early Islam to Qajar Persia*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand, A.C.S. Peacock and Firza Abdullaeva (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 147-165.

<sup>40</sup> Atwood further argued that Chinggis Khan did not consider religious practitioners by confessional categories “but solely of ‘this kind of people’ (*na ban ren*), presumably including all those who truly pray to Heaven,” and therefore, “exemptions were granted to individuals rather than to religions.” Only later, were Chinggis Khan’s ad hoc edicts were institutionalized into exemptions by religious communities creating a “canonical list” of exempted religions. Mongolian shamans, on the other hand, were not included in this list and thus, “Mongol religion was put in a different category from foreign religions.” Atwood suggests that this explains the exclusion of Confucianism and Judaism from the list of exempted religions. Neither religion fit the Mongol political theology: Confucianism was not explained to Chinggis Khan as “a form of prayer to Heaven/God,” and therefore, not perceived as clergy, and Judaism “lacked the heavenly validation that sovereign power conferred on all true religion.” Atwood, “Validation by Holiness,” 243-49, 253-55.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 248. The Mongols rejected the notion that God’s blessing had any binding, exclusive address and thus could both argue against religious claims of exclusivity to divine communication (for example, claims made by the Pope or the caliph), and harness the claims of these “local” brokers of Heaven’s blessing. Ibid., 253.



In another, forthcoming piece, Atwood further expands this thesis, exploring how the Chinggisids conceived their own sanctified authority in relation to this distinct political theology.<sup>42</sup> He argues that the Chinggisid khan was perceived as an individual possessing his own independent channel of communication with Heaven, a relationship that required no clerical or scriptural mediation. Furthermore, this communion with Heaven did not “need to be justified in terms of congruence with existing scriptural traditions” since “such congruence was assumed as a matter of definition.” A “direct font of law and wisdom, derived from Heaven itself,” Chinggis Khan and his successors were perceived as untutored geniuses, who with no previous learning or training in the great religious traditions could intuitively replicate and moreover, intervene and correct these traditions in accordance with their own superior understanding. This is expressed in the Mongols’ own statements, for example, in the bilingual Sino-Mongolian inscription from 1338, which states that “even if the present-day Mongol people have not studied letters, every time they say but a word and every time they do a deed, it agrees with the deeds of the ancient sages and wise men [i.e. the writers of the Confucian classics and their commentaries]. If you ask what is the reason, surely it is that they were born by the destiny of Heaven”.<sup>43</sup> Thus, as Atwood shows, Mongol political theology offered a “model of imperial authority independent of any scriptural tradition.”

A “power set above religious law and practice,” the Mongol khan was granted absolute religious and legal autonomy. The period of Mongol rule is often perceived as one of remarkable legal pluralism and religious tolerance across Eurasia. However, as Atwood observes, while the Yuan dynasty allowed for unprecedented communal autonomy in religious and legal matters,

---

<sup>42</sup> Christopher Atwood, “The Mongol Empire and early modernity,” *forthcoming*.

<sup>43</sup> Christopher P. Atwood, “Explaining rituals and writing history: tactics against the intermediate class,” in *Presenting Power in Ancient Inner Asia: legitimacy, transmission, and the sacred*, eds. Isabelle Charleux et al. (Bellingham, 2010), 101; Francis Woodman Cleaves, “The Sino-Mongolian inscription of 1338 in memory of Jigün-tei,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 14 (1951), 30, 69.

Qubilai Khan would, nevertheless, overrule such autonomy when he considered that it contradicted his “intuitive sense of right.” In other words, Qubilai could ban *halal* slaughtering and circumcision (as he did in 1280), while permitting the Muslim *namaz*. As Atwood further explains:

While Mongol rule on paper validated existing systems of rule based on commentarial traditions among the conquered peoples, particularly Islam and Confucianism, in practice they treated these legal traditions as subordinate to the royal will. Due to that will’s [the Khan’s] intuitive congruency with them and other wisdom traditions, rulers could legislate freely without fear [...] of transgressing the essentials of those scriptural traditions.<sup>44</sup>

### **The Mongols and the Early Modern Sacral Sovereign**

In this dissertation, I argue that the Ilkhanid experimentation in mediating between the Chinggisid model of an imperial, unmediated authority, and Persian and Islamic paradigms of authority and theories of kingship facilitated the rise of a new type of the sacral Muslim kingship that significantly shaped later empire-building enterprises in the Islamic world. In the past two decades, a growing number of scholars have come to recognize and explore the early modern period as one defined by the formulation of new Islamic universalist imperial and cosmological ideologies that replaced the earlier caliphal-sultanic model. Studies by Cornell Fleischer and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, for example, explored the emergence and proliferation of an Islamic millenarian political culture during the sixteenth century that extended throughout the Mediterranean and/or more expansively, “from North Africa and the Balkans into South Asia.” This ideological current interlinked “dreams of a ‘universal’ kingdom” with messianic expectations arising from the imminent arrival of the end of the first *hijri* millennium and the

---

<sup>44</sup> “The emperor’s’ communion with Heaven was subject to no clerical control or mediation, nor did it need to be justified in terms of congruence with existing scriptural traditions – such congruence was assumed as a matter of definition.” Religious clergy were still important for the Mongols as they were seen as “possessing the ability to pray effectively but also possessed moral and clerical skills that made them appropriate tutors, informants, and even administrators.” Atwood, “The Mongol Empire and early modernity.”

great conjunction of 991/1583, which marked the end of a 960 year-long cycle.<sup>45</sup> What these studies and subsequent research has pointed out is the remarkably prolific exchange and interconnectedness of personnel, texts, and “powerful myths and ideological constructs” that were circulated and employed as part of empire-building strategies across early modern Eurasian courts and societies.<sup>46</sup>

Other scholars such as Shahzad Bashir and Kathryn Babayan have identified the genealogy of millenarian and messianic discourses in the early modern period in the amalgam of certain strands of Shī‘īsm and Sufism that came to the fore in a messianic upsurge in the fourteenth-fifteenth century (Bashir), or in the historical confluence of ‘Alīd loyalism, Sufism and *ghulāt* systems of belief (Babayan).<sup>47</sup> Babayan has also explored the way in which the fusion of Sufism and sovereignty led, in particular in the case of the Safavids in Iran, to a fierce competition over authority and religiopolitical dominance between “messianic-Sufi-kings” and “messianic-Sufi-shaykhs”.<sup>48</sup>

Azfar Moin has recently invigorated this discussion by providing an in-depth exploration of the ritual and ideological fusion of Sufism and sovereignty in Iran, India and Central Asia from the Timurid era onwards. His study brings to the fore the pervasive popular-devotional and esoteric-cosmological, performative and embodied practices of sacral kingship in light of the millenarian currents of the sixteenth century, the appropriation of ‘Alīd symbols, and the rise of

---

<sup>45</sup> Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Connected histories: notes towards a reconfiguration of early modern Eurasia,” *Modern Asian Studies* 31/3, 735-62; Subrahmanyam, “Turning the Stones Over: Sixteenth Century Millenarianism from the Tagus to the Ganges,” *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 40/2 (2003), 129-161; Cornell H. Fleischer, “The lawgiver as messiah: the making of the imperial image in the reign of Süleymân,” in *Süleymân the Magnificent and his Time*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris, 1990), 159-77.

<sup>46</sup> Subrahmanyam, “Connected histories,” 739. For one example, see Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: narratives of religious change in the early modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, 2011) (especially chapter three).

<sup>47</sup> Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: the Nūrbakhshīya between medieval and modern Islam* (Columbia, South Carolina, 2003), 29-75; Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran* (Cambridge, 2002).

<sup>48</sup> For the struggles between saint and sultan, see for example also Nile Green, “Stories of saints and sultans: remembering history at the Sufi shrines of Aurangabad,” *Modern Asian Studies* 38/2 (2004), 419-46.

shrines as sites of kingly ritual.<sup>49</sup> Moin also examines how the title of Lord of Auspicious Conjunction, the *Şāhib-Qirān*, took on its millenarian connotations through its association with the process of institutionalization of the social memory of the dynastic founder Timur. The *Şāhib-Qirān* became the “brand name” of a Timurid model of sacral kingship, which the Mughal emperors in particular sought to lay claim to.<sup>50</sup>

Matthew Melvin-Koushki has also furthered our understanding of the post-Mongol imperial cultivation and mobilization of sacral authority by examining the central contributions of the occult sciences, primarily lettrism, astrology and geomancy, and in particular through their relationship with Sufism, to securing and corroborating millenarian, eschatological, and cosmocratic imperial claims, in what he defines as an early modern imperial occultist “arm-race.” Melvin-Koushki argues for the emergence of a distinct Timurid astrological-letterist ideological platform, expressed in potent sovereignly titles such as *Şāhib-Qirān* and *mujaddid*, that later became important landmarks in the early modern inter-imperial competition over universal claims.<sup>51</sup> The emphasis on the early Timurid period (fifteenth century) as the “breeding ground” for a new strand of sacral kingship and imperial currents shared across confessional divides, has also recently come to the fore in Evrim Binbaş’s study of the Timurid experimentation with eschatological absolutist claims based on Ibn al-‘Arabī’s unitive cosmography and ‘Alīd sacred symbols. Binbaş suggests that the historical context for the

---

<sup>49</sup> Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*; Moin, “Sovereign violence: temple destruction in India and shrine desecration in Iran and Central Asia,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2015: 57 (2), 467-96.

<sup>50</sup> On this process see also Derek Mancini-Lander, *Memory on the boundaries of empire: narrating place in the early modern local historiography of Yazd* (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2012); and Lisa Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire: memory and dynastic politics in early modern South and Central Asia* (London, 2012).

<sup>51</sup> Matthew Melvin-Koushki, “Astrology, lettrism, geomancy: the occult-scientific methods of post-Mongol Islamicate imperialism,” *The Medieval History Journal* 19/1 (2016): 142-50.

development of these new sacral political models, or “constitutional programs,” in the Timurid and early modern eras, was the succession struggles that ensued from Timur’s death in 1405.<sup>52</sup>

In spite of this recent interest in Islamic models of sacral kingship, scholars have refrained from investigating these themes prior to the Timurid period.<sup>53</sup> Scholarship primarily associates the Ilkhanid period with the elimination of preexisting models of political legitimacy, foremost the extinction of the juristic caliphal model with Hülegü’s execution of the last ‘Abbāsid caliph in 1258. Thus, the Mongol period is envisioned as either inaugurating an unprecedented era of constitutional crisis that later Muslim thinkers sought to resolve, or providing the conditions that generated a larger receptivity for alternative - messianic, Sufi, and Shī‘ī structures of authority - which proved to be more adaptable and flexible than the caliphal model.<sup>54</sup> Accordingly, the Mongols are mostly attributed the vacuum of legitimacy created by the fall of the caliphate, although their contribution of the Chinggisid-descent based principle of authority and the notion of dynastic law are well noted by scholars.<sup>55</sup>

This dissertation shows that the major contribution of the Ilkhanid period is not the political crisis that ensued from the Mongol conquests, but rather the immense political ingenuity and experimentation to which this period bore witness, and which significantly shaped the religiopolitical structures of the post-Mongol, early modern Islamic world.

---

<sup>52</sup> İlker Evrim Binbaş, “Timurid experimentation with eschatological absolutism Mīrzā Iskandar, Shāh Ni‘matullāh Walī, and Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī in 815/1412,” in *Unity in Diversity: mysticism, messianism and the construction of religious authority in Islam*, ed. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (Leiden, 2014), 277-303.

<sup>53</sup> Stephan Kamola’s dissertation is a welcomed exception in this regard. Kamola, *Rashīd al-Dīn*, 171-221.

<sup>54</sup> For the first approach (constitutional crisis), see Binbaş, “Timurid experimentation,” 300. For the later approach, for example, Bashir, 29-41; and Mir-Kasimov, “Introduction: conflicting synergy of patterns of religious authority,” in *Unity in Diversity*, 11.

<sup>55</sup> Guy Burak, “The Second formation of Islamic Law: the post-Mongol context of the Ottoman adoption of a School of Law,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55/3 (2013): 579-602. See furthermore chapter two.

## Brokering Difference: Three Ilkhanid Intermediaries

Thomas Allsen made use of the term “cultural brokers” to consider the role contact specialists and intermediaries played in the Eurasian intercultural exchanges under the Mongols. Focusing on “brokers” such as the famous Venetian merchant Marco Polo, the senior Mongol court official and Yuan ambassador to the Ilkhanate Bolad noyan, and the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn, Allsen showed how intermediaries facilitated the transmission of ideas, knowledge, and technologies to answer the Mongol imperial goals of exploiting the material and cultural resources of their subjects. He further demonstrated how they generated numerous opportunities for cross-cultural Eurasian exchange and comparison, in diverse fields such as medicine, astronomy, agriculture, and historiography.<sup>56</sup>

While Allsen has brought attention to the role of intermediaries as “conduits” of intercultural exchange, recent research on “brokerage” has emphasized the way cultural intermediaries work to fix “the boundaries of the objects they were purported to mediate”.<sup>57</sup> As Helmut Reimitz notes:

Recent studies on (cultural) brokerage have demonstrated that the work of these brokers can never be understood as mediation between different clearly distinguishable and fixed cultural systems. Rather it has to be seen as a creative performance in social contexts characterized by a complicated interplay of local and extra-local influences. But these brokers do not only develop new perspectives for the integration of their societies; they also *maintain the tensions and differences* [my emphasis] between different social groups and identities, which provide the dynamic of their action and the basis of their social prestige. Difference is their stock in trade; but integration is what they offer.<sup>58</sup>

Reimitz’s definition of cultural mediators as “traders” of difference and assimilation touches upon the major function of the cultural broker in this study. I ask how Ilkhanid

---

<sup>56</sup> Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*.

<sup>57</sup> E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: trans-imperial subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, 2012), 5.

<sup>58</sup> Helmut Reimitz, “Cultural brokers of a common past: history, identity, and ethnicity in Merovingian Historiography,” in *Strategies of Identification: Ethnicity and Religion in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout, 2013), 269.

intermediaries worked to identify, establish, and often creatively fashion a “middle ground” between “opposites,” local Islamic and foreign Mongol worldviews, on one hand, and on the other hand, strove to *maintain* Mongol *difference* and alterity. This question is possibly shared by all historians working on cases of foreign rule, for example, in the age of colonialism, but seems to me to be even more pressing and illusive in the case of the Mongols, where one group lays claim to subjecting others through its *difference*, and the other holds the keys to the expression, perpetuation, and outward projection of this *difference*. How then did cultural brokers in the Ilkhanate experiment with, deconstruct and reconstruct, nullify and reaffirm Mongol *difference*?

The first four chapters of this dissertation focus on three chief cultural brokers at the courts of the Ilkhans Arghun (d. 1291), and his sons Ghazan (d. 1304) and Öljeitü (d. 1316): the physician, cook (*ba'urchi*), historian, theologian, vizier and convert from Judaism Rashīd al-Dīn, the Jewish physician, tax collector and vizier Sa'd al-Dawla, and the Shī'ī court historian 'Abd Allāh Qāshānī. The Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh b. 'Imād al-Dawla Abī al-Khayr b. Muwaffaq al-Dawla 'Ālī b. Abī Shujā' al-Hamadānī (ca. 645-718/1247-1318) was born into a Jewish family of physicians who originated from Hamadān.<sup>59</sup> In his history, the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, Rashīd al-Dīn lists his grandfather, the “great physician” Muwaffaq al-Dawla Abī al-Faraj Eli,<sup>60</sup> and his children, among those “released” together with Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274) by Hülegü's forces from the Isma'īlī stronghold of Maymūdiz, where Rashīd al-Dīn claims that his grandfather Muwaffaq al-Dawla was held against his will. Subsequently, Muwaffaq al-Dawla

---

<sup>59</sup> The latest and most up-to-date appraisal of the vizier's biography is Stephan T. Kamola *Rashīd al-Dīn and the Making of History in Mongol Iran* (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2013), 102-27.

<sup>60</sup> For his identification with the Hebrew name Eli instead of 'Ālī, *ibid.*, 104.

and his children joined Hülegü's court.<sup>61</sup> He entered court service in a young age, probably already during the Ilkhan Abaqa's reign, and by 1295 was appointed as governor of Yazd.<sup>62</sup>

After Ghazan's enthronement and the execution of the vizier (and Rashīd al-Dīn's adversary) Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Khālīdī al-Zanjānī in 697/1298, Ghazan appointed Rashīd al-Dīn as an associate/deputy vizier to the vizier Sa'd al-Dīn Sāvajī (d. 711/1312).<sup>63</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn subsequently enjoyed a prominent position at the court and a close, personal relationship with the Ilkhan Öljeitü after the latter's succession of his brother in 1304. The vizier remained in office until his execution in 718/1318, after he was accused of poisoning Öljeitü with a laxative. Rashīd al-Dīn claims to have converted to Islam through his own free will, already as a child, but other accounts suggest that he did so at later stage of his life, when he was 30 years old, or possibly even older.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Faḍl Allāh Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, ed. 'Abd al-Karīm 'Alī Oghlu 'Alī Zādah (Baku, 1957), vol. 3, 35-37; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 483, 485. The Maragha librarian Ibn al-Fuwaṭī praises the family as learnt and greatly respected and takes note of Muwaffaq al-Dawla's skills as a physician, based on the information delivered to him from Muwaffaq al-Dawla's son (and Rashīd al-Dīn's uncle), whom Ibn al-Fuwaṭī had met in Maragha. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī also met Rashīd al-Dīn's physician father 'Imād al-Dawla at his brother's (Rashīd al-Dīn's uncle's) residence in Maragha. Kamāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Razzāq b. Aḥmad Ibn al-Fuwaṭī al-Shaybānī, *Majma' al-ādāb fī mu'jam al-aḷqāb* (Tehran, 1416/1995), vol. 2, 62; vol. 5, 613. Dorothea Krawulsky argues that Muwaffaq al-Dawla and his family were captured by Hülegü's forces when Rashīd al-Dīn was nine years old and that he, subsequently, spent his life at the Ilkhanid courts. Krawulsky, *The Mongol Ilkhāns and their Vizier Rashīd al-Dīn* (Frankfurt, 2011), 119-20. The vizier's father 'Imād al-Dawla might have also served in an official capacity at the Ilkhanid administration as Kamola observes, on the basis of his *laqab* matching the onomastic pattern of other Jews and Christians in Mongol service. Kamola, 110-111. On Rashīd al-Dīn's medical training, *ibid.*, 111-12.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* Kamola makes an interesting point that unlike other viziers, Rashīd al-Dīn's appointment to the office of the vizierate was not "backed" by a specific senior Mongol amir like other viziers, though Kamola also mentions two possible candidates from amongst the Mongol commanders (Qutluḡshah and Chupan) who might have allied themselves with the vizier. *Ibid.*, 118-19.

<sup>63</sup> On the division of labor between the two viziers, *ibid.*, 121-23.

<sup>64</sup> Krawulsky, 123, for his childhood conversion narrative (one might note that it is slightly reminiscent of the Ilkhan Ghazan's conversion). Amitai explores indications that he converted after the execution of Geikhatu in 1295, near the age of fifty. See Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "New material from the Mamluk sources for the biography of Rashid al-Din," in *The Court of the Ilkhans, 1290-1340*, eds. Teresa Fitzherbert and Julian Raby (Oxford, 1997), 26. Kamola, on the other hand, suggests that it more likely that the vizier converted during the later part of Abaqa's reign or during the reign of his successor. Kamola, 117-18. Rashīd al-Dīn is silent about his Jewish past, but there was clearly familiar with Hebrew. Birgitt Hoffmann notes, "although there is no straightforward evidence that he embraced Islam only in his maturity – some scholars think that it was already his father who converted, and Rashīd al-Dīn was raised as Muslim – there can be no doubt that his ancestors were of Jewish origin." Birgitt Hoffmann, "Speaking about oneself: autobiographical statements in the works of Rashīd al-Dīn," in *Rashīd al-Dīn: Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchange in Ilkhanid Iran*, eds. Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim



A talented statesman and astute political player, Rashīd al-Dīn is primarily famed for his authorship of the world history, the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, signaled out as “the most important single historical source for the Mongol Empire”.<sup>65</sup> In his recent dissertation on Rashīd al-Dīn, Stefan Kamola examined the vizier’s historiographical project against the backdrop of the Ilkhanid confrontation with the Mamluks and the Golden Horde. Kamola showed how the vizier deployed Mongol and Perso-Islamic notions of genealogy and geography to support the Ilkhanid regional claim to Iranian sovereignty.<sup>66</sup> In chapter one, I offer a different reading of the vizier’s historiographical project with a focus on Rashīd al-Dīn’s efforts to support the Abaqaid claim to rightful succession within the Hülegüid family.

In addition to his historical writings, Rashīd al-Dīn was also a prolific author in a number of other fields. Allsen has focused on Rashīd al-Dīn’s medical and agricultural writings, demonstrating how the vizier’s productive collaboration with the Mongol chancellor Bolad noyan became a major conduit for the extensive cultural exchange between Iran and China during the Ilkhanid period.<sup>67</sup> The Ilkhanid vizier, however, was also the author of theological, mostly *kalām* works, where he drew on the the great Ash‘arite theologians and *mujaddids* (centennial religious renewers) al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī. These works have been seldom studied in comparison to Rashīd al-Dīn’s better known scientific and especially historical contributions.

---

(London, 2013), 4. See also D.O. Morgan, “Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb,” *Et<sup>2</sup>*. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed June 5, 2016. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/rashid-al-din-tabib-SIM\\_6237](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/rashid-al-din-tabib-SIM_6237). On the Mamluk authors’ usage of the vizier’s Jewish background and late conversion to Islam to criticize the vizier and the Ilkhans, Leigh Chipman, “The ‘Allāma and the Ṭabīb: a note on biographies of two doctors, Rashīd al-Dīn and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī,” in *Rashīd al-Dīn*, 115-126.

<sup>65</sup> Morgan, “Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb.”

<sup>66</sup> Kamola, *Rashīd al-Dīn*, 135-170; also Kamola, “History and legend in the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*: Abraham, Alexander, and Oghuz Khan,” *JRAS* 25/4 (2015): 555-577.

<sup>67</sup> Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 27-8. On the vizier’s translation of Chinese medical works, Vivienne Lo and Wang Yidan, “Blood or Qi circulation? On the nature of authority in Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Tānksūqnāma* (The Treasure Book of the Ilkhan on Chinese Science and Techniques),” in *Rashīd al-Dīn*, 127-72. On his agricultural contribution, Ann K.S. Lambton, “The *Āthār wa ahyā‘* of Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Hamadānī and his contribution as an agronomist, arboriculturalist, and horticulturalist,” in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, eds. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (Leiden, 1998), 126-54.

Kamola has examined the vizier's theological writings alongside his historical work. He identifies a transition from Rashīd al-Dīn's deployment of illuminationist philosophical ideas to describe the Ilkhan Ghazan as the ideal king to his construction of the Ilkhan Öljeitü's image as a sacred sovereign with Shī'ī and emanationist influences.<sup>68</sup> In chapter four, I present a different reading of Rashīd al-Dīn's "political theology" by showing how the vizier appropriated and expanded Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 606/1210) hierarchy of human perfection to create a new rank of Islamic sacral kingship, and reaffirm the Ilkhan Öljeitü's claim to "intuitive knowledge" along the lines of Rāzī's theory of the exceptionality of the Prophet Muḥammad's soul.

Chapter two examines the cultural brokerage of the Jewish vizier Sa'd al-Dawla at the court of the Ilkhan Arghūn. Sa'd al-Dawla mas'ūd, son of Hibat Allāh Abharī,<sup>69</sup> was a Jewish physician (*hākīm*) and local official in Baghdad, whose family probably originated from Abhar in the province of Jibāl. In 683/1284-85, Sa'd al-Dawla was appointed as deputy to the Mongol commander Tonska, whom the Ilkhan Arghun assigned as Baghdad's *shihna*, military governor.<sup>70</sup> His quick mastery of Baghdad's fiscal and financial affairs appears to have threatened the authority of Baghdad's *Ṣāhib-dīvān* al-Malik Nāṣir al-Dīn Qutluḡshah, who deliberately advertised Sa'd al-Dawla's credentials as a physician at the court bringing to Sa'd al-Dawla's assignment to

---

<sup>68</sup> Kamola, *Rashīd al-Dīn*, 171-221.

<sup>69</sup> We do not have a full biographical notice of Sa'd al-Dawla in the remaining volumes of the Maragha librarian Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's biographical dictionary, but Ibn al-Fuwaṭī does refer to him in a different biographical entrance as Sa'd al-Dawla mas'ūd ibn Hibat Allāh al-Abharī. That Sa'd al-Dawla's personal name was mas'ūd has yet to be noted by modern scholarship. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Majma' al-ādāb*, vol. 4, 100. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī also provides a full biographical notice of Sa'd al-Dawla's brother Fakhr al-Dawla, whom the Jewish minister sent to govern Baghdad on his behalf. We learn there that Fakhr al-Dawla İlya was son of Ṣafī al-Dīn Hibat Allāh son of (Muhadhhdhib al-Dawla) Mūsa al-Isrā'īlī. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 572. Bar Hebraeus writes that Sa'd al-Dawla was the "father-in-law of the governor of Baghdad," who had recently died (presumably referring to the Juwaynis?). Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj... Bar Hebraeus*, trans. Ernest A. Wallis Budge (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 478. This detail is not corroborated by other accounts. For other conflicting testimonies on the earliest stages of Sa'd al-Dawla's career, see Walster J. Fischel, *Jews in the Economic and Political Life of Medieval Islam* (New York, 1969), 96-97.

<sup>70</sup> For the development of the office of *shihna/shahna* and its relationship to *basqaq* (a provincial revenue officer), see Michal Biran, *The Empire of the Qara Khitai in Eurasian History: between China and the Islamic world* (Cambridge, 2005), 121-22.

Arghun's service. Sa'd al-Dawla appears to have impressed the Ilkhan with his proficiency in Mongolian and Turkish, as well as his exceptional acquaintance with Baghdad's financial situation. With the promise that he could raise more funds from Baghdad, Sa'd al-Dawla was sent twice to check on the city's finances and collect Baghdad's overdue taxes. Pleased with Sa'd al-Dawla's performance, Arghun assigned Sa'd al-Dawla in Jumāda II 688/June 1289 to the office of chief minister of the entire realm, a position that Sa'd al-Dawla held until his execution in 1291.

Unlike the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn, who left an ample of his writings, Sa'd al-Dawla's role as a cultural broker must be reconstructed through the writings of others, often hostile to the figure of the Jewish minister. While the primary image of Sa'd al-Dawla as retained by Ilkhanid histories is that of a savvy politician who gained considerable influence over the Ilkhan, and had his enemies removed through trickery and deceit, a number of accounts on the vizier, in particular those found in the contemporaneous history of Vaṣṣāf, the *Tajziyat al-amṣār va tazjiyat al-a'sār* ("The apportioning of lands and the passing of time"), enable us to retrieve some of Sa'd al-Dawla's endeavors to mediate the Ilkhan Arghun's authority.

The third cultural broker I investigate is the Shī'ī court historian Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd Allāh al-Qāshānī. Chapter three focuses on Qāshānī's conversion narrative of the Ilkhan Ghazan. We know little about Qāshānī's background and career. He was a member of the Abū Ṭāhir family, a leading family of potters from Qāshān/Kāshān, who are known for their works decorating Shī'ī shrines and mosques in Qom, Mashhad, Najaf and Qāshān. Qāshānī, however,

seems to have worked at the Mongol administration, unlike his potter brother Yūsuf.<sup>71</sup> At least in one instance, Qāshānī refers to himself as *al-mua`rrikh al-ḥāsib*, the historian and accountant.

Qāshānī is primarily known for his history of Öljeitü’s reign, the *Ta`rikh-i ülĵāytū*, in which he narrated in great detail the daily activities of Öljeitü’s court, suggesting that the historian had access to, or was even responsible for maintaining the Ilkhanid court journals. Qāshānī also authored the *‘Arā`is al-jawāhir va-nafā`is al-aṭā`ib*, a treatise on minerals, gems, perfumes, and pottery, dedicated to the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn in 700/1300-01, as well as two additional unedited histories, a world history, and the *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*, a history of the pre-Islamic Iranian dynasties followed by the Muslims, from the Prophet to the end of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate. Rashīd al-Dīn extensively “borrowed” from all four of Qāshānī’s works. Qāshānī himself attested to Rashīd al-Dīn’s reliance on his works when he “notoriously” complained in his *Ta`rikh-i ülĵāytū* that he was the true author of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, and that Rashīd al-Dīn failed to compensate him for his work. The two figures appear to have had a complex and tenuous patron-client relationship, evinced by Qāshānī’s rededication of his *‘Arā`is al-jawāhir* to Rashīd al-Dīn’s associate vizier and adversary Tāj al-Dīn ‘Alīshāh.<sup>72</sup>

The three Ilkhanid brokers studied here were chosen in accordance with two main criteria. They were more prolific than other mediators (mainly Qāshānī and Rashīd al-Dīn) leaving us ample written record to study. In addition, they were involved in some of the more ingenious and enduring experimentations with negotiating Mongol sacral kingship. That these three individuals, a Jew, a Sunnī convert from Judaism, and a Shī‘ī, are all members (or “were” in the case of Rashīd al-Dīn) of confessional and religious minorities is not surprising

---

<sup>71</sup> P.P. Soucek, “Abu’l-Qāsem ‘Abdallāh Kāshānī,” *EI*. Accessed January 7, 2016. [<sup>72</sup> Soucek, “Kāshānī.”](http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abul-qasem-abdAllāh-kasani-historian-of-the-reign-of-the-il-khan-olaytu-r; O. Watson, “Abu Taher,” <i>EI</i>, I/4, 385-387.</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

considering that the role of minorities as intermediaries facilitating interregional contacts has been frequently discussed.<sup>73</sup> As this dissertation shows, in their efforts to mediate between Mongolian and Islamic worldviews, Ilkhanid cultural brokers also made use of resources provided by their diverse sectarian and confessional background.

That two of the three brokers were physicians is, too, not surprising in light of the central place the Mongols attributed to medicine, but also since their positions as royal physicians enabled them to cultivate personal, intimate relationships with the rulers and gain their trust. The Ilkhanid sources also note the role of their linguistic skills (knowledge of Mongolian and Turkish, in the cases of Rashīd al-Dīn and Sa‘d al-Dawla) in gaining the attention of and access to the rulers. Their Mongolian “cultural literacy” was indispensable for undertaking this task of cultural translation and mediation.

Their status as minorities, however, also placed them in a precarious position at court. In the cases of Rashīd al-Dīn and Sa‘d al-Dawla, their Jewish background was often used against them in political intrigues and power struggles. This study, therefore, also emphasizes the social aspects of cultural brokerage at the Ilkhanid court. It shows how these three court agents used their skills as intermediaries to advance and gain entry into courtly milieus (Qāshānī), negotiate religious boundaries and confessional tensions (Sa‘d al-Dawla and Rashīd al-Dīn), and portray their personal services as intermediaries as indispensable for the Mongol rulers (Rashīd al-Dīn).

A salient feature of my discussion of the works of these three individuals is their interactions with other intermediaries at the Ilkhanid court, most notably an eclectic body of Tibetan, Chinese, Indian, and Uyghur Buddhist monks, of whose presence we learn primarily

---

<sup>73</sup> Rothman, 4.

from the Muslim accounts.<sup>74</sup> In chapters two and four, I discuss the Buddhists' role as cultural mediators, especially through their attendance at the Ilkhanid court debate. While the presence of the Buddhists as historical actors at the Ilkhanid court is largely dependent on the outlook of the Arabic and Persian Muslim accounts for the period, the fate of the Buddhists was, nevertheless, more favorable than another important religious group, the shamans. The presence at the court of the latter, referred to with the Turkish *qāms/qāmān*, is rarely noted in the Ilkhanid sources, and always as a non-descript group. Unlike the Buddhists (and other religious experts), not a single shaman is mentioned by name in Ilkhanid histories from the period.<sup>75</sup> I focus on the Buddhists to highlight their prominent role as cultural brokers, their importance for the Abaqaid dynastic project, and their imminent presence at the court debates.<sup>76</sup> As we shall see, a number of Ilkhanid court agents (both Muslim and Jewish) identified their main opponents at court to be their Buddhist peers.

## The Dissertation: An Overview

The dissertation is arranged chronologically. I begin with a summary of the Ilkhanid dynastic struggles that led to the establishment of the Abaqaid dispensation by the end of the thirteenth

---

<sup>74</sup> On Tibetan Buddhists as cultural intermediaries in the Mongol Empire and skilled synthesizers of “varied, disparate and even seemingly contradictory traditions,” especially in the field of medicine, what later became known in China as “Muslim” medicine, see Paul D. Buell, “Tibetans, Mongols and the fusion of Eurasian cultures,” in *Islam and Tibet- interactions along the Musk Routes*, eds. Anna Akasoy et al. (Farnham, 2010), 189-208. On Buddhism at the Ilkhanid court, see chapters one, two and four.

<sup>75</sup> Reuven Amitai-Preiss, “Sufis and Shamans: some remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate,” *JESHO* 42/1 (1999), 40-41. It is possible that like the Yuan court where Tibetan lamas participated alongside Mongolian shamans in shamanic rituals, Buddhist monks also overlapped with or even replaced the shamans at the Ilkhanid court. Buell, 197-98. For the Ilkhanate, Jackson notes that the shamans were often linked to or possibly even confused with the Buddhists (the *bakhshīs*) in Ilkhanid accounts. P. Jackson, “Baḳšī,” *Etr*, vol. 3, 535-536. One might suggest that there was a “division of labor” between the two groups, where the shamans maintained their dominance in the “traditional” rituals related to ancestral veneration and ritual purification from ill fortune. For Ghazan’s participation in Mongolian traditional rituals, see Amitai-Preiss, “Ghazan, Islam and Mongol tradition,” 9-10.

<sup>76</sup> For the Buddhists’ dominant role at court debates in the Mongol Empire, for example, Lane, “Intellectual jousting.”

century, and finish with the revolt of the Mongol governor of Anatolia in the early 1320s. The first four chapters also each focuses on one of the three above discussed intermediaries.

Chapter one explores the narrative strategies and Perso-Islamic concepts of lineal dynastic succession that the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn employed in his history, the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, in order to manage his Abaqaid patrons’ (the descendants of the second Ilkhan Abaqa) lack of dynastic-Chinggisid seniority and to legitimize their succession. I argue that in contrast to the image depicted by Rashīd al-Dīn, who is our main source for the Ilkhanate’s succession history, the descendants of the second Ilkhan Abaqa were in a major disadvantage in comparison to the representatives of the other collateral branches descending from the three chief wives of the Ilkhan Hülegü. I use Rashīd al-Dīn’s account of the Sufi conspiracy of the Ilkhanid prince Ala Fireng (702/1303) to explore the vizier’s efforts to rewrite Ilkhanid succession history and divert the readers’ attention from the contested nature of the Abaqaid usurpation of the government. On the one hand, Rashīd al-Dīn applied Perso-Islamic notions of filial succession to downplay the principle of “corporate sovereignty” in Ilkhanid succession politics. On the other hand, the vizier also worked to solidify the fiction of a cross-Hülegüid agreement over Abaqaid succession. This chapter also offers a historical reading of the Ala Fireng conspiracy beyond Rashīd al-Dīn’s biased narrative, examining how stories about the prince’s partaking in clandestine *samā‘* sessions in Tabriz can inform us about the importance that aspiring Mongol princes saw in the cultivation of intimate relationships with charismatic Sufi shaykhs.

Chapter two focuses on two episodes related to another key figure, the Jewish vizier Sa‘d al-Dawla, in the contemporaneous history of the Ilkhanid author Vaṣṣāf, the *Tajziyat al-amṣār va tazjiyat al-a‘ṣār* (“The apportioning of lands and the passing of time”). In the first, Sa‘d al-Dawla claims that the Ilkhan Arghun had inherited the prophethood of Chinggis Khan, and in the

second, the Jewish minister attempts to collect signatures to issue a document referred to as Sa‘d al-Dawla’s *maḥḍar*/manifesto. I argue that Sa‘d al-Dawla presented the Ilkhan Arghun’s succession as his inheritance of Chinggisid prophethood in order to gain purchase with the Ilkhan, outmaneuver the ruler’s close Buddhist advisors, and redirect the Ilkhan’s policies. Furthermore, I examine how Sa‘d al-Dawla appropriated and experimented in his *maḥḍar* with the *akhlāq-ethical* model of kingship of the Shī‘ī polymath Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, to argue for the Ilkhan Arghun’s role as a divinely designated world-regulator and law-maker king. Through Ṭūsī’s political model, Sa‘d al-Dawla sought to mediate his Abaqaid patron’s claim to an inheritance of Chinggis Khan’s unique Heaven-derived gift, which assigned to the Chinggisid rulers unparalleled wisdom and the right to freely legislate in any given tradition.<sup>77</sup>

In chapter three, I examine the Ilkhanid experimentation with Chinggis Khan’s Heaven-decreed mission of world domination in the Shī‘ī court historian ‘Abd Allāh al-Qāshānī’s conversion narrative of the Ilkhan Ghazan.<sup>78</sup> I situate Qāshānī’s conversion narrative in the context of the emergence of a new Ilkhanid Perso-Islamic cultural synthesis, and demonstrate how Ghazan’s conversion narrative fuses together a Persian model of a cyclical “savior king” found in works of advice literature, and the ideal of an Islamic puritan reformer. Qāshānī’s narrative reflects the convergence of several “rhythms of salvation”:<sup>79</sup> Iranian cycles of dynastic and moral decay and revitalization, Islamic visions of recurrent degeneration and reform, and “eschatological” traditions of periodic cycles of corruption and restoration. I argue that Qāshānī’s depiction of Ghazan as a periodically designated reviver king offers a providential explanation of the Mongol invasions that drew from the Ilkhanid ideological confrontation with

---

<sup>77</sup> My suggestion is that court debates were important forums for presenting and reaffirming the ruler’s “inheritance” and adherence to Chinggis Khan’s “gift.”

<sup>78</sup> I probe the question of Qāshānī’s authorship of this narrative in Appendix II.

<sup>79</sup> I borrow this term from Aziz al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship: power and the sacred in Muslim, Christian, and Pagan politics* (London, 2001), 41.



the Mamluks in Syria and Egypt. As a cultural broker, Qāshānī tapped into the rich Persian and Islamic symbolic and textual resources available to him to express and redefine the Mongol political theology of divine right within a new, Perso-Islamic political idiom.

Chapter three ends with an examination of the changes that Rashīd al-Dīn made to Qāshānī's conversion account of Ghazan. Rashīd al-Dīn realigned Ghazan's conversion narrative to focus on the idea of Mongol ancestral monotheism, which he pursues throughout the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*. I argue that the vizier depicts Ilkhanid conversion as a process of reversion, that is, a return to Mongol ancestral beliefs, in order to present conversion to Islam as continuity with the Chinggisid past.

In Chapter four, I focus on Rashīd al-Dīn's experimentation with the discourse of the khan's "intuitive wisdom." I show how Rashīd al-Dīn employed the Ash'arite theologian, exegetist and philosopher Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 606/1210) hierarchy of human perfection to create a new rank of Islamic exceptional and sacral kingship based on the ruler's divine intellect. Rashīd al-Dīn reaffirms the Ilkhan Öljeitü's claim to "intuitive knowledge" along the lines of al-Rāzī's theory of the exceptionality of the Prophet Muḥammad's soul. By expanding al-Rāzī's theological model to entertain a new rank of absolute kingship that mirrors al-Rāzī's rank of ultimate perfect prophethood, and moreover, by assigning this rank of exceptional Muḥammadan kingship to Öljeitü, Rashīd al-Dīn both "theologizes" kingship in Islam and reconstructs Öljeitü's Chinggisid authority as one entirely Islamic.

Furthermore, I examine Rashīd al-Dīn's explanation of the Dharma and his three refutations of reincarnation, and draw attention to his response to the growing presence of Shī'ī clergy at the court of Öljeitü, following the Ilkhan's conversion to Shī'ism in 1309. I argue that Rashīd al-Dīn utilizes al-Rāzī's hierarchy of sacred souls to advocate for an alternative, Islamic

and Sunnī theological model that could compete with the way that Buddhism and/or Shīʿism were able to negotiate and confirm Mongol conceptions of dynastic Chinggisid sacral kingship.

The fifth and final chapter sets out on a different course from the first four. It examines the “afterlives” of the Ilkhanid experimentation with the Islamic grammar of sovereignty, through a study of the short-lived revolt of Timurtash, the Mongol governor of Rūm/Anatolia, and his self-proclamation as *mahdī* in the early 1320s. I examine how the revivalist paradigm of the reformer king that emerged as a providential explanation of the Mongol invasions in the aftermath of Ghazan’s Syrian campaigns, was appropriated as a political discourse to counter the hegemonic Chinggisid paradigm of sacral sovereignty and descent based authority. Non-Chinggisids adopted the notion of the reviver king to claim their replacement of the descendants of Chinggis Khan as the new address for God’s blessing and the new agents of divine decree.

The Ilkhanid experimentation with different religiopolitical models, from *kalām-theological* sovereignty (or intellectual kingship) and *akhlāq-ethical* kingship to the *mujaddid-mahdī-reformer* models, all reveal how Ilkhanid cultural brokers worked to formulate a new mode of sacral Muslim kingship in light of the Mongol political theology.<sup>80</sup> This new type of ruler was no longer bound by the juristic caliphal-sultanic chain of transmission of sacral authority, or the exclusive claim of the ‘*ulamā*’ to interpret and mediate the sacred law. Rather, his authority rested on his claim to an unmediated relationship with the sources of divine authority such as Muḥammad’s prophethood or the sacred law. Put differently, I suggest that by assigning to the sovereign the absolute right to interpret the sacred law (or the authority to independently legislate), by presenting the ruler as the supreme enforcer of the *sharī*’ order, and by theorizing the

---

<sup>80</sup> Atwood, “The Mongol Empire and early modernity,” *forthcoming*.

king as a font of divine wisdom, these paradigms repositioned kings as true heirs, not to earlier sultans, rulers, or even caliphs, but to the prophetic mission itself.

This new, Ilkhanid mode of sacral authority shares some of the traits of the earlier, Umayyad conception of the caliph as an “independent agent of God,” an individual whose authority is derived from his appointment by God’s decree. The caliph was envisioned as a source of guidance and salvation, and therefore, redemption required full obedience to the caliph. Furthermore, the Umayyad caliph had the authority to formulate and elaborate the Islamic law.<sup>81</sup> The ‘Abbāsīd period, however, witnessed the rise of the class of the religious scholars as the self-appointed exclusive “gatekeepers” of the scripture and the *sunna*, and therefore, also the “erosion” of the institution of the caliphate. The Ilkhanid period might be seen as “reversing” this process, leading to the re-establishment of an earlier mode of unmediated imperial authority as the one evident, for example, in the Umayyad “caliphal absolutism” or the messianic and millenarian claims to authority of the ‘Abbāsīds.<sup>82</sup>

Paradoxically, however, as this dissertation further shows, the Ilkhanid claim to unmediated authority on the basis of a Chinggisid divine right, which negated the need for scriptural agents or intermediaries, could only be expressed through the work of such intermediators and cultural experts. On the one hand, the prestige and power of the Ilkhanid cultural brokers rested on their skillful articulation and perpetuation of their Mongol patrons’ imperial claims to sanctified unmediated authority. On the other hand, however, to establish their patrons’ need for their expertise as

---

<sup>81</sup> Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, *God’s Caliph: religious authority in the first centuries of Islam* (London, 1986), 24-57, 97-99. Crone and Hinds argue that in the Umayyad theory of the caliphate, the caliph was not subordinate to the prophets. Uri Rubin, however, has recently challenged Crone and Hinds arguing that their understanding is rooted in their misreading of the letter of the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd II (r. 743-44). See Uri Rubin, “Prophets and Caliphs: the biblical foundations of the Umayyad authority,” in *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, edited by Herbert Berg (Leiden, 2003), 87-99.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 76. See also Hayrettin Yücesoy, *Messianic Beliefs and Imperial Politics in Medieval Islam* (Columbia, South Carolina: 2009).

mediators, cultural brokers in Ilkhanid Iran also worked to separate and distance the Chinggisids from their exclusive source of divine authority.<sup>83</sup> My conclusion is that the mediation of sacral kingship, and moreover, the sacralization of the institution of Islamic kingship in Mongol Iran, inevitably also involved the demotion, and to a certain degree, even desanctification of the Chinggisids' sacral authority. In the Islamic world, the Chinggisid ruler's unmediated channel to the divine could only be second to the Prophet Muḥammad's mediated revelation and connection to God.<sup>84</sup> We might, indeed, suggest that while the early modern Islamicate world saw the rise of a new royal claim to unmediated, absolutist, and universal imperial authority, it also witnessed the re-emergence of a new class of talented, influential, and self-assured intermediaries and experts who claimed their authority and prestige through their ability to mediate and facilitate, but also delimit and constrain these new imperial universalist and cosmic claims.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> One might suggest that this process of mediation is also comparable to the Weberian concept of the "routinization" (of Chinggisid charisma in this case). See further discussion of "routinization" and Ilkhanid succession in chapter one.

<sup>84</sup> As we will see in chapter two and four, the question of the relationship between Islamic prophethood and Chinggisid kingship became the center stage for the process of situating and defining a place for Chinggisid sacral authority in the Islamicate world.

<sup>85</sup> In other words, whereas Azfar Moin considers early modern millenarian and sacral kingship as arising from the tension between "popular religion" and scriptural Islam, I suggest that the rise of this new type of early modern sacral sovereignty was interlinked with the "traditional" symbiotic relationship and competition over claims to authority between rulers and the class of intermediaries (such as the *'ulamā'* or other scriptural and cultural experts).

## Chapter I: The Politics of Descent and the Writing of History: Rashīd al-Dīn and the Making of an Abaqaid Dispensation

Prince Ala Fireng, the eldest son of the fifth Ilkhan Geikhatu (r. 1291-95), made his unsuccessful bid for the Ilkhanid throne in 702/1303.<sup>86</sup> Two separate reports on the Ala Fireng affair tell a similar tale. Ala Fireng got mixed up with the wrong Sufi crowd in the city of Tabriz. Present during their *samā'* rituals, the prince was allured by a charismatic shaykh named Pīr Ya'qūb Bāghbānī according to the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*,<sup>87</sup> or Maḥmūd Dīwānā according to the Mamluk author Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybeg al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363).<sup>88</sup> The shaykh conspired together with the prince Ala Fireng to overthrow his reigning cousin, the Ilkhan Ghazan. However, shortly after, the plot was revealed leading to the execution of the colluding Sufi/s at the order Ghazan.

While extraordinary for its relatively detailed description, the Ala Fireng conspiracy was far from exceptional in the Ilkhanid political landscape. As we will see in this chapter, the Ala Fireng affair was simply the last in a series of plots and outright rebellions of Hülegüid princes in cooperation with third parties, which the pro-Abaqaid Ilkhanid histories depict as greedy amirs, cunning bureaucrats, or delusional shaykhs.

---

<sup>86</sup> He was Geikhatu's son from his second wife, the Jalayirid Dondi Khātūn (daughter of the Jalayirid Aq Buqa). After Geikhatu's execution, Ghazan married Ala Fireng's mother. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1122-23; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 580.

<sup>87</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1319-19; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 659.

<sup>88</sup> *Al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt*, ed. Helmut Ritter et al. (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1931-), vol. 25, 234; also in *A'yān al-Aṣr wa-A'wān al-Naṣr*, ed. 'Alī Abū Zayd (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1998), vol. 5, 412-13. For the relations between the more comprehensive *al-Wāfi* and the shorter *A'yān*, which only includes the biographies of the author's contemporaries, see Donald P. Little, "Al-Ṣafadī as Biographer of his contemporaries," in D. P. Little, ed. *Essays on Islamic Civilization* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), pp. 190-210.

This chapter offers a revisionist account of Ilkhanid succession history. Although historians have acknowledged the centrality of dynastic struggles in the Ilkhanid political history, they have focused on Ilkhanid lineal (Abaqid) successors to throne, largely due to the nature and bias of our sources and the lack of (non-Abaqid) independent historiography for this period. The impression one receives when reading Ilkhanid political histories is that the course of Ilkhanid dynastic history was rather linear, aside of three short intervals of lateral successions with the reigns of Aḥmad Tegüder (r. 1282-84), Geikhatu (r. 1291-95) and Baidu (e. 1295), who are all represented in negative light in Ilkhanid accounts. Thus, after the death of his father and the dynastic founder Hülegü (d. 1265), Hülegü's son the Ilkhan Abaqa reigned for a long, stable period (r. 1265-82). His reign was followed by two short turbulent years of his brother Tegüder's rule, which ended abruptly with the latter's execution and the succession of Abaqa's son Arghun (r. 1284-91). The latter's period of rule is depicted as less chaotic and more stable. Arghun was succeeded by his brother Geikhatu, who ruled for a short interlude of four years and whose reign also ended with his execution. Geikhatu's death was followed by several months of intense dynastic struggles that ended with the ascendancy and conversion to Islam of Arghun's son Ghazan (r. 1295-1304). His reign is envisioned as one marked by reform and the renewal of political and economic stability and order in the Ilkhanate. It was followed by the smooth and undisputed succession of his brother Öljeitü (r. 1304-16). Öljeitü's enthronement ended the Ilkhanid succession struggles, until the death of his heirless son the Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd (r. 1317-35), which was followed by the dissolution of the Ilkhanate.<sup>89</sup> Modern historiography of the Ilkhanate tends, therefore, to identify the reigns of the lineal-Abaqid (the descendants of the second

---

<sup>89</sup> For example, J.A. Boyle, "Dynastic and political history of the Il-Khans," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge, 1968), 303-421.

Ilkhan Abaqa) successors as more stable and prosperous, and moreover, to follow the pro-Abaqaïd sources in envisioning the succession of Abaqa’s offspring as rightful and legitimate.<sup>90</sup>

This narrative, however, is largely based on the historical reconstruction of the pro-Abaqaïd histories of this period, primarily, Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*. The Ilkhanid vizier’s history is, at the same time, both the most informed account of Ilkhanid tribal and familial affiliations and marriage patterns, and likely the history most tainted by its unwavering pro-Abaqaïd support. In this chapter, I argue that, in contrast to common views, the Mongol political principles of “corporate sovereignty” and seniority placed the descendants of Abaqa at a major disadvantage in comparison to the more senior representatives of other collateral branches descending from the Ilkhanate’s founder Hülegü.

Discussing the seizure of power in the Mongol Empire in the 1250s by Tolui’s (Chinggis Khan’s fourth son, d. 1232) sons and the pro-Toluid faction, Peter Jackson has identified the major problem that beset the Mongol empire as “the efforts of successive rulers, from the founder himself onwards to convert the dignity of Great Khan, or that of head of an *ulus*, into personal property, to be bequeathed to a descendant rather than thrown open to election by all the princes and passed to the next most senior member of the family.” Jackson, furthermore, observes that while the Ilkhanid historian Juwaynī “gives on occasions some prominence to the seniority factor; Rashīd al-Dīn, who wrote at a time when it had long been frequently swept aside, makes no allusion to it at any point where he might thereby seem, even by implication, to challenge the *status quo*”.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, Allsen’s comment on Ghazan’s succession. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 31.

<sup>91</sup> Jackson further notes that while “claims of seniority were undermined more swiftly in those Mongol states which arose in areas of traditionally sedentary culture, China and Iran, where a different practice obtained,” the principle of seniority was not without its adherents, even in the Ilkhanate: thus, Rashīd al-Dīn’s “silence on the brief reign of Baidu in 1295 strongly suggests that as a grandson of Hülegü his claim was superior to that of Ghazan, a great grandson.” Peter Jackson, “The dissolution of the Mongol Empire,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 22/3 (1978), 194-95.

This chapter shows, however, that, contrary to the impression that Rashīd al-Dīn’s history gives, the principle of seniority continued to exert its influence well into Ghazan’s (d. 1304) reign, and possibly even after his death. A view of the order by which the Hülegüid (non-Abaqid) princes revolted and died, beginning with Arghun’s execution of his most senior cousins (Jumghur’s two sons, and Hülegü s. Hülegüid, below) suggests that Hülegüid princes perished in the Ilkhanate by the order of their seniority.<sup>92</sup> I argue that it is Rashīd al-Dīn himself who does the historiographical “sweeping.” As I demonstrate in this chapter, Rashīd al-Dīn conceals the significant lack of dynastic seniority of the Abaqids and diminishes the extent to which the Abaqid usurpation of the Ilkhanate was contested by the collateral Hülegüid branches, starting with Arghun’s seizure of the throne in 1284 and ending with his son Öljeitü’s enthronement two decades later. To resolve their dynastic insecurities, the Abaqids launched, beginning with the later part of Arghun’s reign, a series of purges of their rival cousins and their supporters, who are depicted in the pro-Abaqid histories as unlawful rebels against the rightful Abaqid heirs.

Rashīd al-Dīn deploys in his history a number of key strategies to legitimize the Abaqid usurpation. I examine these strategies in the first half of this chapter. I show how the Ilkhanid vizier manipulates the order of Hülegü’s senior wives to give the reader the impression that Abaqā was Hülegü’s chief son. Rashīd al-Dīn also strives to show that the Abaqid (Arghun, Geikhatu, Ghazan) succession to the throne was undisputed, and enjoyed consensus among the princes to the house of Hülegü, in accordance with the Mongol principle of collegiality. He repeatedly argues for the innocence of the contending princes who “rebelled” against the rightful Abaqid successors, by blaming third parties for tempting or coercing the princes to participate

---

<sup>92</sup> See Appendix I.



in their unlawful conspiracies. Rashīd al-Dīn's success in maintaining the fiction of the Hülegüid solidarity can be gleaned from Aubin's otherwise remarkable study *Émirs Mongols et vizirs Persans*. Aubin focuses nearly entirely on the political skirmishes of Mongol amirs and Persian, mostly Muslim administrators of the Ilkhanate with few, passing references to the other Hülegüids, who are often cast in secondary roles in one conspiracy or the other.<sup>93</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn, furthermore, employs Perso-Islamic notions of filial succession to rewrite the history of the Abaqaid usurpation as legitimate succession, and cast the Hülegüid opposition as illegitimate usurpers of the Ilkhanid throne. In addition, I show how Rashīd al-Dīn equates in his history the Abaqaid line with Islamic monotheism and correct, orthodox belief, and the Abaqaid's princely contenders with disbelief and heresy. I suggest that Rashīd al-Dīn draws on the earlier Abaqaid adoption of Buddhism in support of their dynastic claim when he retrospectively "monothesizes" the Ilkhan Ghazan's pagan Chinggisid ancestors. Rashīd al-Dīn uses the problem of succession of his Abaqaid patrons to "market" conversion to Islam as a means of establishing continuity with, rather than a break from, their Chinggisid ancestors. He presents the ability of Islamic political structures to reinforce and explain the Abaqaid's claim to a superior link to the empire's founder Chinggis Khan. In Weberian terms, Rashīd al-Dīn argues for the superiority of Perso-Islamic principles of succession and Islamic monotheism in "stabilizing" and "routinizing" Chinggisid charisma. Rashīd al-Dīn's historiographical strategies are also designed, therefore, to promote Islam to his Ilkhanid patrons as an alternative to Buddhism.

In the second part of this chapter, I examine how Rashīd al-Dīn employs these strategies to delegitimize prince Ala Fireng, who unlike the other Hülegüid contenders, was a descendant of Abaqa. I use the account found in the fourteenth-century Mamluk biographical dictionary of

---

<sup>93</sup> Aubin, *Émirs Mongols*.

al-Şafadī to bring attention to the role of the Sufi *samāʿ* in the cultivation of relationships between Sufi shaykhs and Mongol princes. Like the Abaqaid branch, other princely contenders too sought ideological support, external to the Mongol political system, for their dynastic aspirations. Sufis and Sufi ritual were particularly attractive for Chinggisid princes, as they added an additional sacred dimension to their political claim and offered an alternative avenue to claiming access to Heaven's blessing.

### **Hülegü's Wives and the Principle of Seniority in Rashīd al-Dīn's Narrative**

In his seminal study on the dissolution of the Mongol Empire, Peter Jackson drew attention to the important role that the principle of dynastic seniority played in determining inheritance and succession in the Mongol Empire, and moreover, in the factors leading to the process of disintegration of the united empire. Jackson observed that seniority in the Chinggisid family was not determined by primogeniture. He defined seniority in generational terms, that is, in “degrees of descent [...] from a common ancestor”.<sup>94</sup> More recently, Judith Pfeiffer argued for a different definition of seniority in what she termed “the Mongol corporate dynasty.” Based on her close examination of the case of the Ilkhan Aḥmad Tegüder (r. 1282-84), she argued that the status of sons was determined by the social standing of their mothers, that is, whether they belonged to the ranks of the chief wives of the ruler.<sup>95</sup> Such a practice of succession would be

---

<sup>94</sup> Jackson demonstrated that the practice whereby the youngest son of the chief wife inherits the father's camp, the *ordu*, was balanced by an emphasis on seniority in the Mongol political system. Peter Jackson, “The dissolution of the Mongol Empire,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 22/3 (1978), 193-95.

<sup>95</sup> Judith Pfeiffer, *Conversion to Islam among the Ilkhans in Muslim Narrative Traditions: the case of Aḥmad Tegüder* (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2003), 172-75 (footnotes 25 and 32). See also Shai Shir, “‘The Chief Wife’ at the Courts of the Mongol Khans during the Mongol World Empire (1206-1260)” (M.A. thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2006, in Hebrew), 57-58, who quotes Alāʾ al-Dīn ʿAṭā-malik Juwaynī, *Taʾrīkh-i jahān gushā*, ed. M. M. Qazwīnī (1912-1937), vol. 1, 29; Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan: the History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J. A. Boyle (Seattle, 1997), vol. 1, 40: “according to the custom of the Mongols the rank of the children of one father is in proportion to that of their mothers, so that the child of an elder wife is accorded greater preference and precedence.”

particularly fitting for a polygynous household, where it is difficult to determine seniority among siblings on the basis of the order of births.<sup>96</sup>

My examination of Ilkhanid succession politics reveals that the Mongol principle of seniority amounted to something in between Jackson's and Pfeiffer's definitions. I further suggest that the status of the mothers of the *ulus*, the wives of Ilkhan Hülegü, had a continuous influence on issues of succession in the Ilkhanate, at least for the first three generations after Hülegü.<sup>97</sup> Any attempt to uncover the principles that determined Ilkhanid succession history is constrained by the nature of the Ilkhanid historical accounts and their strong pro-Abaqid bias. Nevertheless, that the principle of seniority had also a significant place in Ilkhanid succession history is immediately apparent in the great lengths to which Rashīd al-Dīn goes in order to downplay its importance in Ilkhanid succession.

As Shai Shir demonstrates, Rashīd al-Dīn intentionally obscures the order of Hülegü's chief wives and, thus, also the seniority of their sons, by deliberately introducing to the top of the list of Hülegü's wives the Keryait Dokuz Khātūn. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Hülegü had married while en-route to Khurasan ("after crossing the Oxus river") Dokuz Khātūn, the granddaughter of Ong Khān and the allegedly virgin widow of Hülegü's father Tolui.<sup>98</sup> Shir argues that since Hülegü left his wives behind in Mongolia as he campaigned westwards, his marriage to Dokuz had a dual function. Dokuz played the role of a temporary "representative queen" in place of Hülegü's formal chief wife, one that would, furthermore, not upset the

---

See also, Shai Shir, *forthcoming*, where Shir observes that the princes' seniority was determined by their mothers' positions at the court.

<sup>96</sup> Jack Goody, "Introduction," in *Succession to High Office*, ed. J. Goody (Cambridge, 1996), 33.

<sup>97</sup> Dorothea Krawulsky argues that the law of succession in the steppe determined the priority of the ruler's eldest son, eldest brother, or even his uncles creating "permanent struggles between the clan of the eldest son of the ruler, and that of the eldest brother." She does not pay attention to the role of the status of the mothers. Krawulsky, *Mongol Ilkhāns*, 20-21.

<sup>98</sup> Shir shows that Dokuz Khātūn does not confirm to either of the two principles of assigning the position of chief wife: the chronological principle (the first wife the khan had married prior to becoming khan), and the mother of male heirs. Shir, "Chief Wife," 54-63.

internal hierarchy of Hülegü's wives (and their children), especially since she did not bear any children to Hülegü. Second, his marriage to his father's (chaste) widow had also a legitimizing role since it enabled Hülegü to claim his independent standing, as well as his inheritance of the territories conquered by his father Tolui.<sup>99</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn uses Hülegü's marriage to Dokuz to resolve some of the historiographical problems arising from Hülegü's establishment of the independent khanate. As Jackson shows, Hülegü's initial mission to the eastern Islamic world on the order of his brother Möngke probably did not include the establishment of an independent *ulus* in Iran.<sup>100</sup>

By advancing Dokuz from a "placeholder" Khātūn to the formal chief wife, Rashīd al-Dīn also diverts his reader's attention from the low status of Hülegü's son and heir, Abaqa, as a junior Hülegüid prince.<sup>101</sup> An examination of the marriage patterns of Abaqa's siblings, the sons

---

<sup>99</sup> Thus, as Shir observes, Hülegü rules the lands Tolui did not have a chance to rule prior to his death just as he consummates his father's unconsummated marriage to Dokuz. Shir, however, also argues that Tolui might have never been married to Dokuz in the first place and that his son Hülegü possibly married one of his father Tolui's concubines or the women from the *ordus* of Tolui's wives. Shir, "Chief Wife," 119-61; Shir, *forthcoming*. On the levirate marriage, where a widow marries one of her husband's kin, and its significance in the Mongol political system, see George Qingzhi Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression* (New York, 2008), 25ff.

<sup>100</sup> Jackson observes that Hülegü's invasion of Iran was a joint operation and that Hülegü was accompanied by the princely representatives and contingents of the other royal lines, from the *ulus* of Jochi and the Chagatai branch. Hülegü was also accompanied by his brother Sübedei, who died en-route, near Samarqand in 1255. Thus, it seems that Möngke Qa'an did not intend that his brother Hülegü settle in Iran and establish an independent *ulus*, in contrast to Rashīd al-Dīn's representation of the Qa'an's secret plans for his brother's mission. That Hülegü was supposed to return to Mongolia might explain why he left behind his chief wives and senior sons. Hülegü, however, "seized this opportunity, at a point when the war in Mongolia had been under way for some time, to convert his position in Iran from being that of a mere representative of the Great Khan to the status of head of an *ulus* on a par with the rulers of the Golden Horde and of Central Asia." To accomplish this, Hülegü had to remove the Jochid presence and claim to northern Iran as well as receive the Qa'an's official designation and confirmation, albeit after the fact. One of Hülegü's first moves was the slaughter of the Jochid princes and troops who took part in the campaign. Jackson, "The dissolution," 220-221, 232-235. Allsen, on the other hand, suggests that behind Hülegü's mission was Möngke's plan to assert direct Toluid control over Iran and China, the two "richest and most populous parts of the empire," and "the two major preserves of shared interests." Allsen, "Sharing out the empire: apportioned lands under the Mongols," in *Nomads in the Sedentary World*, eds. Anatoly M. Khazanov and André Wink (Richmond, 2001), 172-90.

<sup>101</sup> The Armenian author Vardan Arevelts'i (d. 1271) interestingly reports that Hülegü's Christian wife Dokuz wrote him asking whether it was proper to enthrone Abaqa in Hülegü's place in accordance with Hülegü's will. His answer was that "it is according to scripture to appoint the senior son and that the will was in fact binding." He does not mention why Dokuz should raise such a question, but this reference might suggest that Dokuz sought Christian advice to "circumscribe" the Mongol principles of succession. Vardan Arevelts'i, *Universal History*, trans. Robert Bedrosian. <http://www.attalus.org/armenian/vaint.htm>.

of Hülegü's (three) formal chief wives, confirms this thesis (figure 1).<sup>102</sup> If we were to remove Dokuz from Rashīd al-Dīn's list, we find that Hülegü's chief wife was Güyük Khātūn, the daughter of the Oirat commander Törelchi Güregen (son-in-law of Chinggis Khan) from one of Chinggis Khan's daughters, Chechiyegen.<sup>103</sup> Hülegü had married her in Mongolia, where she also died prior to his campaign. Her son Jumghur, who was left with Möngke Qa'an in Mongolia and was put in charge of his father Hülegü's camp (and wives), died en-route to join his father in Iran.<sup>104</sup> Jumghur's chief wife was his Oirat mother's niece, Tolun Khātūn.<sup>105</sup> Jumghur had two sons, Jüshkeb and Kingshü, who were both executed for rebelling during the reign of Arghun (below).

Hülegü's second wife Qutui Khātūn was the daughter of Chinggis Khan's daughter Tümelün, probably from one of the sons of the Qunqirat (/Onggirad) Derge/i Güregen.<sup>106</sup> Rashīd

---

<sup>102</sup> See Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 962-72; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 471-77. One wonders whether Rashīd al-Dīn's presentation of Hülegü's sons by their alleged order of birth, rather than by their seniority, is also meant to divert the readers' attention from the Abaqaid dynastic situation, just as he does by introducing Dokuz at the top of the list of Hülegü's wives.

<sup>103</sup> Confirmed by Juwaynī, who writes that "Jumghar Oghul, who because of his mother, who was senior to the other wives, [was of superior rank,] he appointed him deputy [*qā'im maqām*] and placed over the *ordu* and army [in Mongolia!]. And of his elder sons he chose Abaqa and Yoshmut to accompany him." Juwaynī, *Ta'rikh-i jahān gushā*, vol. 3, 96-97; Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, vol. 2, 611-12. Anne Broadbridge has recently reached a similar conclusion as to Güyük's status as chief wife, but does not explain how this information might change our understanding of Ilkhanid succession politics. Ann F. Broadbridge, "Marriage, family and politics: the Ilkhanid-Oirat connection," *JRAS* 26/1-2 (2016), 124.

<sup>104</sup> After Jumghur had sided with Arigh Böke. Jackson, "The dissolution," 234. Jumghur's support of Arigh Böke merits further attention as Rashīd al-Dīn might be omitting or obscuring some of the details here to further depict Jumghur in negative light. Rashīd al-Dīn, too, identifies Jumghur as Hülegü's eldest (*buzurgtar*) in his section on the Oirats. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 102 (Oirats: 101-3); Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 57. Rashīd al-Dīn's claim in his section on Hülegü's descendants that Jumghur was Hülegü's second son, born only a month after Abaqa, seems to be another historiographical strategy of the vizier.

<sup>105</sup> This marriage pattern has also been recently noted by Anne Broadbridge, who points out that in the Mongol system such marriages were not considered consanguineous since consanguinity was determined by the male line alone. Thus, such marriages of sons into their mother's families were still considered exogamous marriages. Broadbridge suggests that by wedding her son Jumghur to her niece, Güyük created a "senior line of Oirat in-laws in the Ilkhanate, composed of descendants born from marriages between her own royal offspring (or, later, her half-sister) and those of their brother." However, we might wonder about Güyük's role in establishing these marriage alliances with the Ilkhanid house as this pattern of intermarriage was shared by the three chief wives of Hülegü suggesting a common principle. Broadbridge, "Marriage," 121-35.

<sup>106</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn's account about this Qunqirat line is suspiciously confusing. It seems that Derge/i Güregen was the first to marry Tümelün. He had two children (or more) from her: Mūsā Güregen (originally named Taghai Temür), who married Hülegü's daughter Taraqi Khātūn, and Martai/Mirtai Khātūn, Abaqa's Qunqirat wife. Rashīd al-Dīn

al-Dīn states that Hülegü married her after Güyük's death in Mongolia and that he gave Qutui the deceased Güyük's *ordu*. She had two sons, Tekshin, whom Rashīd al-Dīn describes as sickly, and therefore, unsuitable for the throne, and Aḥmad Tegüder, who arrived in the Ilkhanate with his mother Qutui in 666/1268, and succeeded Abaqa in 1282. Like his cousin Jumghur, Tegüder, too, married his mother's niece of the Qunqirat tribe.<sup>107</sup> Hülegü's third wife was Öljei Khātūn, another daughter of the Oirat Törelchi Güregen. She accompanied Hülegü on his campaign. Her son Möngke Temür (d. 681/1282) was, too, married to his mother's niece.<sup>108</sup>

Hülegü's formal three senior wives represent, therefore, two chief tribes that had established "two-way" marriage relationships with the Chinggisid house: the Oirats and the Qunqirats.<sup>109</sup>

---

states that Qutui was the daughter of Tümelün, and the cousin (likely half-sister) of Mūsā Güregen, suggesting that her father was not Derge/i Güregen. Elsewhere, indeed, the vizier states that Tümelün had (re)married a Qunqirat named Güregen, probably Derge/i Güregen's brother or son. One wonders whether Rashīd al-Dīn is unclear as to Qutui's lineage on purpose. Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol 1: 86-88, 147; vol 2: 476, vol 3: 515; Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, vol 1: 160-61; vol 2: 971, 1055-56.

<sup>107</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn lists Tödegü Khātūn daughter of Mūsā Güregen as his fourth wife, but both Tegüder's first and second wives were also Qunqirat. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1122-1123; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 547.

<sup>108</sup> An additional confirmation of the status of these three chief wives and their sons is found in Rashīd al-Dīn's description of Abaqa's distribution of appanages to Hülegü's chief wives and sons in 678/1279. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, this took place more than a decade after the arrival of Hülegü's wives and sons from Mongolia in 666/1268. Rashīd al-Dīn gives the following order for Abaqa's distribution of shares from Hülegü's realm: first, Qutui Khātūn, Hülegü's chief wife (after the death of Güyük Khātūn), who received Mayyafariqin; she was followed by Öljei Khātūn, Hülegü's third senior wife, who received part of Diyarbakir and Jazīra; and finally, Tolun, the wife of the deceased senior son of Hülegü, Jumghur, and their two sons, who together received Salmas. Rashīd al-Dīn concludes this list with the general statement that other sons by concubines also received shares. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1110; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 541. Shir also draws attention to the evidence for the seniority of Qutui in an earlier paragraph in Rashīd al-Dīn's section that describes the journey of Hülegü's family camp (*arghuq*), from the beginning of the war between Arigh-böke and Qubilai Qa'an, until the camp's arrival at the Ilkhanate, after Hülegü's death. While Rashīd al-Dīn mentions the arrival of Abaqa's own mother Yesünjin Khātūn along with Qutui and her two sons, Jumghur's sons, and other Hülegüids, the narrative focuses almost entirely on Qutui's lament, once she learns of her husband's death. Rashīd al-Dīn, furthermore, notes here that a certain concubine by the name of Argihan from Qutui's *ordu* had traveled with Hülegü and maintained Qutui's share in the spoils. In addition, the vizier points out that Abaqa assigned Qutui a generous stipend from Diyarbakir and Mayyafariqin. Shir, "Chief Wife," 126-27; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 519-20. On the independent *ordus* of the wives and their allocation of lands, wealth, plunder and soldiers, Bruno de Nicola, "Women's role and participation in warfare in the Mongol Empire," in *Soldatinnen. Gewalt und Geschlecht im Krieg vom Mittelalter bis Heute*, edited by K. Klaus Latzel, S. Satjukow and F. Maubach (Paderborn, 2010), 109-112. Bruno de Nicola notes that these *ordus* "remained a hallmark for the economic, political and military support of the ruler" and thus, every new Ilkhan is reported to have nominated a Khātūn in charge of the major wealthy *ordus*, for example, the *ordu* of Dokuz Khātūn. Indeed, these camps played a pivotal role in succession intrigues and merit further attention in future research.

<sup>109</sup> On the "one way" and "two ways" marriage relationships between the imperial family and a number of tribes in the Mongol Empire, Zhao, 24-25. The Qunqirat/Onggirat's "two ways" marriage relationship with Chinggis Khan's



The eldest sons of Hülegü's three chief wives (Güyük, Qutui and Öljei) observe the same marriage pattern. They all married back into their mother's families. Rashīd al-Dīn lists Abaqa's mother, the Suldus Yesünjin Khātūn as Hülegü's fifth wife.<sup>110</sup> However, Abaqa's marriages do not follow the same pattern exhibited by his more senior half-brothers, suggesting that his mother was not one of Hülegü's formal chief wives.<sup>111</sup>

Jumghur, and not Abaqa, therefore, was Hülegü's senior son, an often-overlooked detail that is moreover plainly stated by the historian Juwaynī.<sup>112</sup> Güyük Khātūn's senior status was probably determined by her seniority in the order of marriages (being the first wife Hülegü married), but also independently, through her own matrilineal descent from Chinggis Khan. Her son Jumghur, thus, could make the claim to trace his ancestry to Chinggis Khan through both his

---

(Kiyān) tribe appears to have extended earlier than Chinggis Khan. In Yuan China, thirteen principal empresses were Qunqirat. Ibid., 93-118. The Oirat tribe's marriage relationship with the Chinggisids was established by Chinggis Khan after the Oirat commander's surrender and support, and was maintained by Chinggis Khan's successors. Ibid., 127-48 (135-36, for the marriages of Hülegü's daughters with the Oirat commanders). In case of the Ilkhanate, we might wish to consider these marriage alliances as brokered not with tribes, but with aristocratic families: the Törelchi Güregen (or his son Buqa Temür, who took part in Hülegü's campaign) family and the Mūsā Güregen family. As Christopher Atwood aptly observes, while Rashīd al-Dīn's history "is advertised as a 'tribal' account," it is "more like a peerage of the great families of Ghazan Khan's time with their pedigrees duly established. As result of this arrangement, lineages with no prominent members are given little attention in Rashīd al-Dīn." Atwood, furthermore, argues that the vizier's "tribal-style biographical dictionary" follows East Asian models of organizing historiography by ethno-legal status and lineage, promoting the "meritorious servants, the office holders whose ancestors assisted in the great founding of the empire" under Chinggis Khan. Christopher P. Atwood, "Mongols, Arabs, Kurds, and Franks: Rashīd al-Dīn's comparative ethnography of tribal society," in *Rashīd al-Dīn*, 223-250.

<sup>110</sup> She too remained with the other wives in Mongolia during Hülegü's campaign.

<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, Rashīd al-Dīn states that Yesünjin was from Güyük's *ordu*, which also indicates that she was not one of the Ilkhan's senior wives. Abaqa's chief/first wife is listed as Dorji Khātūn of an unidentified tribe. After her, he married Nuqdan Khātūn of the Tatars (she was Geikhātu's mother). When she passed away, he married in her place Eltüzmish Khātūn of the Qunqirat (the granddaughter of the Qunqirat Abatai Noyan, whom Hülegü had sent to "fetch" Jumghur). After Abaqa's death, Eltüzmish married Abaqa's son Geikhātu and his grandson Öljeitü in accordance with the levirate principle. Abaqa also took Hülegü's wife Öljei in marriage after his father's death. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1055-57; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 515.

<sup>112</sup> See footnote above. Rashīd al-Dīn's "unflinching" portrayal of Jumghur as not only fighting alongside the Ögedeid "rebel" Arigh Böke against his Toluid uncle Qubilai, but also excusing himself from Arigh Böke's service on the pretext of being ill after he learns that his father Hülegü is displeased with his "rebelliousness" against Qubilai, is another indication of Rashīd al-Dīn's bias against the house of Jumghur. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 965-66; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 473.

parents.<sup>113</sup> This seems to have made Jumghur's female offspring particularly attractive for royal marriages. Thus, the Ilkhan Tegüder appears to have married Jumghur's daughter Toghachaq, and the candidate to the throne Möngke Temür (and after him, his son Anbarji) was married to Jumghur's granddaughter Injitai.<sup>114</sup> These consanguineous intermarriages among the houses of the three sons (Jumghur, Tegüder, and Möngke Temür) confirm their status as Hülegü's senior sons.<sup>115</sup>

Our reconstruction of the system of seniority among Hülegü's wives and sons explains the succession of Aḥmad Tegüder, son of the chief wife Qutui, to the Ilkhanid throne after Abaqa's death in 1282.<sup>116</sup> Pfeiffer analyzes in detail the struggles surrounding Tegüder's succession, and shows that Tegüder's candidacy, as the most senior son, rallied the support of the majority of Hülegü's sons and a number of senior Mongol amirs, whereas the support for the two other candidates, Abaqa's son Arghun and Möngke Temür, Hülegü's son from his third senior

---

<sup>113</sup> Aḥmad Tegüder could make a similar claim since his mother Qutui was the daughter of Tümelün daughter of Chinggis Khan. Möngke Temür, on the other hand, could not make a similar claim as his mother was not a Chinggisid offspring like her half-sister the mother of Jumghur.

<sup>114</sup> In addition, after Jumghur's death, another senior prince, his cousin Tekshin, the son of Qutui Khātūn, married his Oirat wife Tolun. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1: 102; 2: 965-66; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 1, 57; vol. 3, 473-74.

<sup>115</sup> That two senior princes, Jumghur and Möngke Temür were intermarried with the Törelchi Güregen family might explain why the Törelchi Güregen family makes nearly no appearances in the vizier's history after the death in 1260 of Törelchi Güregen's son, the amir Buqa Temür (who campaigned with Hülegü and took part in the attack on Baghdad). Rashīd al-Dīn might have downplayed the family's role in Ilkhanid history due to their support of the senior Hülegüid households. In a forthcoming article, Ishayah Landa suggests, on the other hand, that it might have been the Törelchi Güregen family's matrimonial connections to the Jochis and their close cooperation with the Jochi contingents in Hülegü's campaign in 1256 that explains the family's subsequent decline in importance. Ishayah Landa, "Oyirads in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries: two cases of assimilation into the Musim environment," *forthcoming*.

<sup>116</sup> It is difficult to assess questions of succession on the basis of Abaqa's case since as Jackson shows, at the time of Hülegü's death, the status of the Ilkhanate as an independent *ulus*, was still undetermined; in addition, when Hülegü died, most of his sons and wives were still in Mongolia, making their succession to the throne, if we can even call it such, impossible. We might consider viewing Abaqa, like Dokuz, as functioning as a "temporary representative" of the family until their arrival from Mongolia. He continued, nevertheless, to hold on to the position of Ilkhan, until his death, at which point the leadership passed on to the real senior family member. It is worth bearing in mind the case of Abaqa's brother Yoshmut, who too accompanied Hülegü in his campaign in Iran. Rashīd al-Dīn's account suggests that upon Hülegü's death, Yoshmut considered himself a viable candidate to the throne as well. Furthermore, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, Hülegü had divided the conquered lands between Yoshmut and Abaqa. Abaqa ("his eldest and best son") was to govern Iraq, Khurasan, and Mazanderan as far as the Oxus, and Yoshmut was handed over, Arran and Azerbaijan. Yoshmut was Hülegü's son from a concubine from Qutui's camp. Yoshmut died in 1271, prior to Abaqa's death. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1049; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 513, 517, 535.



wife the Oirat Öljei Khātūn, seems to have been mostly confined to commanders linked to the personal retinues of the princes' parents.<sup>117</sup>

### **The Ilkhanid Succession Protocols: Corporate Sovereignty, Collegiality, and the Khan's Will**

Rashīd al-Dīn's description of the council that was held when Tegüder's reign was coming to an end provides the most explicit account of the different succession principles – generational seniority and seniority by the mother's status - that were at play in the political struggles over the Ilkhanid throne.<sup>118</sup> According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the three main candidates that were discussed as potential successors at the meeting were Hülegü s. Hülegü, Jūshkeb s. Jumghur (who was Hülegü's senior son), and Abaqa's son Arghun. Rashīd al-Dīn writes that those supporting the investiture of Hülegü s. Hülegü claimed that “so long as a son [of Hülegü] is around the rule cannot go to grandsons”.<sup>119</sup> The Jalayirid amir Aruq and other amirs, on the other hand, were in support of Jūshkeb s. Jumghur, who commands “the great *yurt*,” since he was senior in age (*ū bi-sāl aqā-st*).<sup>120</sup> Thus, in the case of the candidacy of Hülegü junior and Jūshkeb, we find both principles of seniority at play, that is, by “degrees of descent” and in accordance with the mother's status.

---

<sup>117</sup> Tegüder's succession was supported by his brothers Hülegü and Qonqurtai, his nephews - the sons of Jumghur, and a number of the senior amirs. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Möngke Temür's support came from commanders who were with his mother Öljei Khātūn, and Arghun's main supporters came from the ranks of the Jalayirid commanders such as Buqa and his brother Aruq, who were both attendants of Abaqa (in addition to others of Abaqa's intimates and members of his *keshig*). See Pfeiffer, *Conversion to Islam*, 186-195.

<sup>118</sup> On the circumstances leading to his fall and execution, *ibid.*, 301ff.

<sup>119</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn notes that Hülegü's mother was a Qunqirat concubine from Dokuz's *ordu* and that “at the end, a *boqtaq* was placed on her head,” which usually indicates a woman's “promotion” to the status of a wife. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 975; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 475.

<sup>120</sup> Aruq, who would become governor of Iraq under Arghun, supported Arghun. While this passage is useful as a clear presentation of the principles of succession at work, we should be cautious about attributing the specific suggestions to the individuals that Rashīd al-Dīn ascribes them to.

The strongest argument, however, is made in support of Arghun Khan. The speech delivered by the Jalayirid amir Buqa, member of Abaqa's personal guard, his *keshig*, encapsulates the way Rashīd al-Dīn wishes his readers to conceive of the Ilkhanid succession history, from the "legitimate" establishment of the Ilkhanate as an independent dispensation under Hülegü to the rise of the Abaqaid dynastic line. Buqa states that the Qa'an (Möngke), "who is the king of the inhabited world," had awarded, in full agreement with the heads of the descendants of Chinggis Khan (*ūrūgh*), the rule over the lands of Iran (*mamālik-i īrān-zamīn*) to the "eldest son" (*buzurgtar*) Abaqa, after his father (and Möngke's brother) Hülegü's death;<sup>121</sup> "after him, it should go as inheritance (*az rāh-i irth*) to his true son Arghun, and if busybodies had not meddled in the affair, and he [Abaqa] would have left the crown and throne to his offspring, all of this strife (*fitna*) would not have occurred".<sup>122</sup>

In the Mongol system, succession was determined through an electoral process, based on the idea that the empire was a joint property of the entire Chinggisid family. Martin Dickson has defined this as the "cousin-clan appanage-state," in which apportioned lands, spoils, wealth, and people were "shared out" among the family members.<sup>123</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn presents amir Buqa, who was the main force behind Arghun's takeover of the throne, as vigorously opposing the Mongol principle of corporate sovereignty in support of a linear, filial succession. Buqa identifies the

---

<sup>121</sup> On Abaqa's alleged primogeniture, see discussion above. Rashīd al-Dīn elsewhere states that Jumghur was Hülegü's eldest.

<sup>122</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1145-46; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 558.

<sup>123</sup> Martin B. Dickson, "Uzbek dynastic theory in the sixteenth century," in *Trudy XXV-ogo Mezhdunarдного Kongressa Vosto-kovedov* (Moscow, 1963), vol. 3: 208-17; Jackson, "Dissolution," 191; Allsen, "Sharing out the empire," 172-90. Pfeiffer discusses the coexistence of two principles of succession in this system, in which the locus of power was not an individual but the entire ruling house: primogeniture based (lateral) and patrilineal succession. She, furthermore, argues that "in the appanage system as it played out in the Ilkhanate, lineal succession helped and supported the centralization of power, which is exerted vertically and hierarchically, whereas lateral succession supported a 'horizontalization' and thus spread and decentralization of power, ultimately empowering the amirs and resulting in a geographical split-up of the empire." Pfeiffer, *Conversion to Islam*, 171-83. Joseph Fletcher discusses an additional principle of succession in steppe polities, *tanistry*, according to which the successor is the most qualified member of the clan. Joseph F. Fletcher, "The Mongols: ecological and social perspectives," *HJAS* 46 (1986): 11-50 (especially 16-19).

Mongol corporate sovereignty with internal strife and civil war, and linear (Islamic) succession with the centralization of authority, stability and order.

In Rashīd al-Dīn’s account, the Oirat senior commander and Arghun’s father-in-law Tengiz Güregen, also supports Arghun’s candidacy at the council.<sup>124</sup> He claims that he witnessed Abaqa’s last will (*waṣṣiya*) and that the latter stated that he should be succeeded by Möngke Temür, and after him, by his son Arghun. Conveniently for Rashīd al-Dīn, Möngke Temür had died (quite suddenly) earlier, during the discussions leading to Aḥmad Tegüder’s enthronement in 1282.<sup>125</sup> Through the speeches of Tengiz Güregen and Buqa, Rashīd al-Dīn provides his readers with an “alternative” succession history presenting Tegüder as the “usurper” of his brother Möngke Temür’s right to rule, and claiming that in accordance with Abaqa’s will, as well as for the sake of the realm’s stability and prosperity, the throne of the Ilkhanate should be assigned to Abaqa’s son Arghun. In this narrative, Arghun, too, becomes a “victim” of Tegüder’s “usurpation” of the Ilkhanate, and Tegüder’s execution is justified retribution. Rashīd al-Dīn anchors Arghun’s claim to the throne in Islamic principles of filial succession replacing the Mongol system of corporate sovereignty and the Mongol principle of seniority.<sup>126</sup> He notes that Abaqa was Hülegü’s heir-apparent (*walī al-‘ahd*), and Arghun was Abaqa’s heir-

---

<sup>124</sup> Arghun was married to his daughter Qutlugh Khātūn. Tengiz was married to Güyük Khan’s daughter, and might have been involved in the “Toluid mutiny” after Güyük Khan’s death. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1: 102; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 1, 56.

<sup>125</sup> On Möngke Temür’s death, see Pfeiffer, *Conversion to Islam*, 191 (footnotes).

<sup>126</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn writes that prince Baidu first told Ghazan that the amirs were in agreement on enthroning Ghazan since the government belonged to him by “inheritance and merit” (*irth va-iktisāb*). Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 613. Several decades later, the Mamluk geographer Shihāb al-Dīn al-‘Umarī writes that when envoys from the Golden Horde came to Ghazan asking to reinstate their claim to Tabriz and Maragha. They told Ghazan that they were entitled Tabriz and Maragha through inheritance (*irth*). Ghazan answered that he had become king through conquest and not through inheritance (*mirath*), and such was his claim to Tabriz and Maragha. This claim repeats itself elsewhere in al-‘Umarī regarding Ghazan’s treatment of the Qa’an’s representative in the Ilkhanate and his claim to independent rule. Ghazan in al-‘Umarī’s account is claiming the Ilkhanate as his personal property through conquest, not inheritance, which “contradicts” Rashīd al-Dīn’s promotion of the notion of an Abaqaid inheritance of Ilkhanid government. Al-‘Umarī, 19-20 (for the Arabic text).

apparent.<sup>127</sup> Abaqa’s will and his designation of Arghun as his heir are supported in Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative by the precedent of Chinggis Khan’s designation of his third son Ögedei as his heir-apparent (*walī al-‘ahd*). However, as several scholars have shown, the claim that Chinggis Khan had designated Ögedei as his heir during his lifetime was a later interpolation.<sup>128</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn uses in both cases the Perso-Islamic terminology of linear-filial succession (*waṣṣiya*, *walī al-‘ahd*, *bay‘a*) to support an Abaqaid version of rightful dynastic succession and mask the complexities of the Mongol corporate system of sovereignty. He harnesses for the Abaqaid cause, “the hegemonic Persian historiographical tradition” and its capacity to “obliterate variant social and cultural realities through the power of its language, idiom and genre”.<sup>129</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn, however, appears also to be painfully aware of the limited authority that such a claim had in the Mongol political system. His choice to introduce Möngke Temür into his “alternative” succession theory works like a decoy diverting the readers’ attention from the inherent weakness of Arghun’s claim to the right to rule on the basis of his designation as the heir-apparent of his father. In fact, in this account, as elsewhere in his history, Rashīd al-Dīn reveals his familiarity with the Mongol political culture by supporting the claim to rightful Abaqaid succession with the “principle of collegiality.”

---

<sup>127</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1058; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 517.

<sup>128</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1: 538-39; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 1, 262. Krawulsky and de Rachelwiltz argue that Chinggis Khan’s designation of Ögedei during his lifetime was a later interpolation in *The Secret History*. Krawulsky, 19-28; Igor de Rachelwiltz, trans. *The Secret History of the Mongols: a Mongolian epic chronicle of the thirteenth century* (Leiden, 2004), vol. 2, 923.

<sup>129</sup> Maria Subtelny observes, for example, how later Persian historians “tended to translate Mongolian and Turkic terms into Persian, and in doing so they often obscured the continued existence in post-Mongol Iran of Chinggisid institutions such as the *keshig* or imperial guard corps, and the *yarghu*, or court investigation.” Rashīd al-Dīn might be an exception in that his “obscuring” of Chinggisid institutions is intentional, whereas in other cases, “the fault lies not with the individual historians themselves but with the hegemonic Persian historiographical tradition” which “tended to obliterate variant social and cultural realities through the power of its language, idiom and genre.” Maria E. Subtelny, “The binding pledge (*möchälgä*): a Chinggisid practice and its survival in Safavid Iran,” in Colin Mitchell, ed. *New Perspectives on Safavid Iran: Empire and Society* (New York, 2011), 9.

As Florence Hodous has recently argued, collegiality or the Steppe “consultative tradition” was the underlying principle of Mongol legal and political institutions such as the *qurtilati*, the large gathering of members of the Chinggisid clan, their son-in-laws, and commanders to decide pressing military or government matters such as succession. A “ritualized consultation,” the *qurtilati* was defined by “discussion and persuasion” aimed at achieving consensus rather than the employment of coercive power.<sup>130</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn’s possibly greatest narrative strategy in the service of the Abaqaid cause is his presentation of Arghun’s de-facto coup and usurpation of the Ilkhanid throne as resulting from an Ilkhanid consensus among the amirs and princes. Thus, he writes that the princes and amirs gathered at Arghun’s camp to hold consultation (*kingāj*) to decide on a candidate to replace Aḥmad Tegüder. When the council was unable to reach agreement about the candidate and Arghun was contemplating relinquishing his claim, Buqa had delayed the decision to a later moment. Buqa’s strategy of postponing the decision to achieve “consensus” in favor of Arghun worked. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, when “the ladies and amirs” reconvened in “full” attendance after Tegüder was subdued, they agreed to Arghun’s enthronement and swore allegiance (*bay‘a*) to the prince.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>130</sup> Florence Hodous, “The *quriltai* as a legal institution in the Mongol Empire.” *Central Asiatic Journal* 56 (2012/13), 87-102.

<sup>131</sup> The depiction of Tegüder as a “usurper” is further established in Tegüder’s subsequent trial where he is asked why he attacked Arghun while the latter gave up his rightful inheritance of the throne for Tegüder’s sake. Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative also implies, however, that princes Hülegü s. Hülegü and Jüshkeb s. Jumghur were both not part of the council where Arghun’s succession was decided “in consensus” and that they were contemplating contesting Arghun’s enthronement with their military forces (*sar-i khilāf*). Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1147-48.; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, .559.

## Innocent Princes, Conspiring Amirs, and Conflicting Narratives of Abaqaid Usurpation

The Mongol principles of collegiality and Hülegüid internal consensus over succession seem to have been the greatest challenges for Rashīd al-Dīn's "whitewashing" of the transformation of the Ilkhanate into what was essentially an Abaqaid dispensation, a "neo-eponym clan".<sup>132</sup> In the vizier's account of the conspiracy of amir Buqa Chingsang to dethrone Arghun, we find the beginning of an important narrative strategy in Rashīd al-Dīn's history, the accusation of a third party - a disobedient amir, a greedy bureaucrat, or a demonic shaykh - for "tempting" the "innocent" princes to upset the inter-Hülegüid solidarity and rebel against their legitimate Abaqaid cousins.

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, in the winter of 687/1289, the all-powerful amir Buqa, whose support brought to Arghun's enthronement, felt that he was falling from Arghun's grace. He started conspiring together with a group of his loyalists to replace Arghun with another prince.<sup>133</sup> Buqa's conspiracy shows that the Mongol system of seniority was still in place and that Arghun's enthronement and the Abaqaid dynastic project was far from uncontested. Buqa approached the most senior Hülegüid member, prince Jūshkeb s. Jumghur (Hülegü's senior son). Rashīd al-Dīn writes that in a letter Buqa had written to the prince, he professed his plan to remove Arghun from the throne. Promising his allegiance, Buqa wrote Jūshkeb that "you, from the house of Hülegü (*ūrūgh-i Hūlāgū Khān*), have kingly splendor (*farr-i pādshāhī*)," and that, without his support Buqa will not be able to overthrow Arghun.<sup>134</sup>

Jūshkeb's response in Rashīd al-Dīn's account reveals how the historian worked to cultivate in his history the fiction of the Hülegüid consensus over Abaqaid succession. According

---

<sup>132</sup> For which, see Dickson, 209-10.

<sup>133</sup> On Buqa's fall from power after his alienation of the other amirs and Arghun, Jean Aubin, *Émirs Mongols et vizirs Persians dans les remous de l'acculturation* (Paris, 1995), 38-41.

<sup>134</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1168-69; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 569.

to the vizier, Jüshkeḅ immediately remarked that Buqa was out of his mind to think of enthroning someone instead of Arghun and that Buqa might even covet the throne for himself. Demonstrating his loyalty to Abaqaid rule, Jüshkeḅ, furthermore, wonders out loud how Buqa could have thought that Jüshkeḅ would be “duped” to usurp the throne, He further notes that “this is the same charm he worked on Aḥmad” Tegüder, convincing the latter to assume the throne on expense of the rightful Abaqaid heir Arghun. In the vizier’s narrative, Jüshkeḅ does not covet the throne for himself, but instead tricks Buqa into providing him with a binding pledge (*möchälgä*), a document with the signatures of all the amirs involved in the conspiracy, which he then uses as proof of the plot when he reports it to Arghun.<sup>135</sup> According to the narrative, Jüshkeḅ himself decapitates Buqa reasserting over Buqa’s beheaded corpse the Hülegüid “consensus” over Arghun’s right to rule.<sup>136</sup>

Rewarded at first for his loyalty, Jüshkeḅ is executed a few months later, in June 1289 (Jumādā I 688). After the dramatic account of Buqa’s conspiracy and fall, Rashīd al-Dīn laconically informs us that Arghun felt that “Jüshkeḅ’s heart was not right with him” (*ū rā dil bā-vay rāst nīst*). Arghun, in other words, suspected that Jüshkeḅ was harboring plans to overthrow him. Jüshkeḅ, therefore, might have had a greater role in Buqa’s earlier conspiracy than what Rashīd al-Dīn wants his readers to believe. Jüshkeḅ’s execution was possibly also linked to the amir Nawrūz’s uprising in Khurasan following Buqa’s execution (starting in March-April 1289).<sup>137</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn reports that Jüshkeḅ’s brother Kingshū, who was also

---

<sup>135</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn explicitly states earlier in his narrative that both Jüshkeḅ and Kingshū submitted a binding pledge (*möchälgä*) to Arghun after his enthronement along with everyone else, although they initially did not consent to Arghun’s succession and planed on rebelling. Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 563. By stating that Jüshkeḅ made a binding oath to Arghun, he implies that any binding pledge Jüshkeḅ received from the amirs should be “inadmissible.” On the institution of the *möchälgä* and its post-Mongol afterlife, see Subtelny, “Binding pledge,” 9-29.

<sup>136</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1170; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 570.

<sup>137</sup> On Nawrūz’s revolt, Michael Hope, “The ‘Nawrūz King’: the rebellion of Amīr Nawrūz in Khurāsān (688-694/1289-1294) and its implications for the Ilkhān polity at the end of the thirteenth century,” *BSOAS*, 78/3 (2015),



Nawrūz's father-in-law, reluctantly took part in Nawrūz's revolt.<sup>138</sup> In addition, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, two other senior Hülegüid contenders, Hülegü s. Hülegü and Qara Noqai s. Yoshmut s. Hülegü, also took part in Nawrūz's revolt.<sup>139</sup> The two were arrested in May 30 (8, Jumādā I 688), and were executed a few months later, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan (October 7, 1289).<sup>140</sup> As noted earlier, both Hülegü s. Hülegü and Jūshkeb s. Jumghur (Hülegü's senior son), were potential candidates to succeed Tegüder. The beheading of the all-too-powerful amir Buqa did not only set Arghun free of the latter's control, but seems to have also given the Ilkhan an excuse to embark on a series of executions amongst his most senior cousins.<sup>141</sup>

In Vaṣṣāf's account, a majority of the senior Hülegüid princes, including Hülegü junior, Qara Noqai and Kingshū (who according to Rashīd al-Dīn took part in Nawrūz's revolt), supported Buqa's coup against the reigning Arghun.<sup>142</sup> Vaṣṣāf's narrative does not only suggest a wider Hülegüid opposition to the Abaqaid Arghun, but also indicates that the executions of Jūshkeb, Hülegü and Qara Noqai along with additional thirteen Chinggisid princes were carried out in secret.<sup>143</sup> As we shall see in chapter two, these executions were also timed with Arghun's

---

451-73. Hope argues that the instability from the fall of Aḥmad Tegüder until the rise of Ghazan was fueled by the growing power of the *noyat*, the non-Chinggisid commanders, and their increasing unwillingness to accept the limitations that the Ilkhans imposed on their authority. Yet, we might question the assumption that there was an inherent stability prior to Aḥmad Tegüder's fall.

<sup>138</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 595-96. The vizier claims that Nawrūz used his marriage ties to prince Kingshū s. Jumghur to make the latter take part in the revolt. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Nawrūz issued edicts/*yarlighs* in the names of Hülegü junior and Kingshū (Hülegü possibly being considered the "new Ilkhan"). Kingshū seems to have died at some point during the revolt, as we do not hear of him after the uprising.

<sup>139</sup> Hülegü junior was caught en-route to join Nawrūz in Khurasan and when sent to Arghun, claimed his innocence and denied his involvement with Nawrūz. Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1172-73; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 571.

<sup>141</sup> As discussed in chapter two, this change in the Ilkhan's policy was also linked to the appointment of the Jewish vizier Sa'd al-Dawla to the vizierate shortly after Buqa's execution and a much wider "cleansing of the staples" also amongst the ranks of the civil bureaucracy in the Ilkhanate. Thus, as Aubin aptly notes, in 1289-1290: "La classe vizirale formée sous Abaqa est, au sens propre, presque entièrement décapitée." Aubin, 42.

<sup>142</sup> In addition to Hülegü junior and Qara Noqai, Vaṣṣāf lists Taghay Temür (Hülegü's youngest son), and Anbarji s. Mōngke Temür. Vaṣṣāf, 232; 'Abd al-Muḥammad Ayatī, *Tahrīr-i ta'riḫ-i vaṣṣāf* (Tehran, 1346/1967), 140.

<sup>143</sup> According to Vaṣṣāf's account, the executions of the three princes were made public only several months later, after Arghun became severely ill: when regular remedies failed, an investigation was launched into the state of the princely prisoners (*ahl-i ḥabs*), probably in the hope that showing clemency to the prisoned princes would cure the Ilkhan. The investigation revealed that the three princes were killed together with 13 of the descendants (*avlād-i*



appointment of his Jewish physician Sa‘d al-Dawla as vizier (Jumāda II 688/June 1289) and it is possible that the latter played a role in Arghun’s new policy towards his Hülegüid opposition. While Vaṣṣāf’s account suggests a widespread opposition amongst the Hülegüid princes to Arghun’s succession, Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative breaks down this anti-Abaqaïd front into smaller, detached rebellions, and moreover, depicts the amirs Buqa and Nawrūz as the main guilty parties in leading the princes astray.

Vaṣṣāf’s and Rashīd al-Dīn’s histories similarly differ in their presentation of the conspiracy that involved another senior Hülegüid prince, Anbarji s. Möngke Temür<sup>144</sup>. According to Vaṣṣāf, after his enthronement, the Ilkhan Geikhatu had assigned Anbarji to help Ghazan in Khurasan. However, once Geikhatu left for Anatolia, Anbarji refused to head to Khurasan staying instead in the vicinity of Ray under the pretext of the cold weather.<sup>145</sup> While Vaṣṣāf has Anbarji himself contemplating a takeover of the throne, Rashīd al-Dīn clears Anbarji from fault claiming that the conspirators were the notorious amir Taghachar and his deputy Ṣadr al-Dīn Zanjānī (d. Rajab 697/May 1298). The pair, Taghachar and Ṣadr al-Dīn, would also play a key role in raising Ghazan to the throne in 1295. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the two sent Anbarji a secret message through one of the shaykhs in the prince’s entourage saying that Geikhatu had been defeated and killed by the Karamanids in Anatolia, and that the amirs were in

---

*akhlāf*) of Chinggis Khan. The shamans (*qāmān*) claimed that this is what caused Arghun’s illness; yet, Arghun blamed the amir Sultan Idechi for pressuring him and for independently carrying out the killings. In Rashīd al-Dīn’s account, on the other hand, a group of amirs raise the charge that a shaman had seen in his dream the infant children (*atfāl-i khurd*) of two of Qara Noqai (s. Yoshmut s. Hülegü) and Hülegü (s. Hülegü) appear before the Ilkhan Arghun and ask the Ilkhan why they were executed. In the shaman’s dream, Arghun answers them that the amir Sultan Idechi had killed them without his permission. Once on trial, Sultan Idechi claims that he killed the Chinggisid princes by the order of Arghun, who denies it when Ordu Qaya visits him on his sick bed. Sultan Idechi is executed on April 2 1291. The scapegoat was soon put to trial and executed. Rashīd al-Dīn portrays the accusation of the amir as a plot against Arghun’s Jewish vizier Sa‘d al-Dawla, but also implies that the 13 Chinggisids, who were secretly killed, were the young children (*atfāl-i khurd*) of Hülegü junior and Qara Noqai. Vaṣṣāf, 244; Ayatī, 147; Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1179-80; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 575.

<sup>144</sup> He was the brother of Taiju, and grandson of Hülegü from his third senior wife Öljei Khātūn.

<sup>145</sup> Vaṣṣāf, 241-42; Ayatī, 158-59.

agreement on elevating Anbarji to the throne. Rashīd al-Dīn reports that the “innocent” prince became suspicious of the two schemers, revealing their plot to overthrow Geikhatu.<sup>146</sup> Anbarji, in other words, maintains in Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative the fiction of the solidarity of the Hülegüid family and the agreement over the legitimate succession of the Abaqaid branch.

Rashīd al-Dīn deploys the same narrative strategy in his description of the strong princely opposition led by another cousin, Söge s. Yoshmut s. Hülegü, following Ghazan’s enthronement in 1295.<sup>147</sup> The second major wave of Hülegüid executions under the Abaqaids had a heavy toll: Vaṣṣāf concludes the Söge affair with the statement that, “in one month, 5 princes and 38 amirs, whose names are too long to enumerate here, and a great army, were put to death”.<sup>148</sup> It seems that Ghazan used prince Söge’s revolt as a foil to carry out additional purges amongst the commanders and princes.<sup>149</sup> Just like Jüshkeḅ, Taiju, who showed during the Söge conspiracy his

---

<sup>146</sup> Taghachar and Ṣadr al-Dīn were arrested until Geikhatu returned from Anatolia in the spring (1292). Anbarji and another brother both died before the end of Geikhatu’s reign (1294). Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1193-94; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 581-82.

<sup>147</sup> According to the vizier’s narrative, prince Taiju s. Möngke Temür secretly revealed to the amir Nawrüz, who raised Ghazan to the throne, the plot of princes Söge s. Yoshmut s. Hülegü, Esen Temür s. Qonqurtai s. Hülegü, and Arslan Ke’ün (a descendant of Chinggis Khan’s brother Jochi Qasar), and several amirs to kill Nawrüz in Khurasan and overthrow Ghazan, installing prince Söge in his place. Informed of their plans, Nawrüz was able to repel their attacks capturing and executing the “rebels” one by one. Rashīd al-Dīn implies that Söge, who is earlier noted as a supporter of Ghazan against Baidu, was contemplating rebelling even before he headed for Khurasan. Summoned to court, Söge refused to make appearance. When one of Ghazan’s trustworthy amirs was sent to fetch the reluctant prince, the drunken Söge spoke seditiously against Ghazan. Rashīd al-Dīn notes that Ghazan ignored his intoxicated words and when the prince finally made appearance at court, treated him fairly. Yet, Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative also suggests that Söge and Barula might have been afraid that they were being sent to Khurasan in order to “split our children and wives and give them to the army of Khurasan.” Was Söge so reluctant to go to Khurasan that he devised such an elaborate scheme to overthrow Ghazan? Or was he afraid that Ghazan had something else in mind when he was sent away from the *ordu* to Ghazan’s “home turf” under the supervision of amir Nawrüz, who, by then, was probably notorious for tricking Baidu in favor of Ghazan? Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1263-65; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 631-32. See also Aubin, 63.

<sup>148</sup> Vaṣṣāf, 327; Ayatī, 200. In addition to this large scale purge, a large group of Oirat tribesmen, the offspring of Buqa Temür s. Törelchi Güregen (lead by Tūraqai Güregen s. Buqa Temür) and the men they commanded, migrated to the Mamluk Sultanate in 1296, possibly in the fear of Ghazan. On this group referred to as the *wāfidiyya* (refugees) in the Mamluk accounts and their fate in the Sultanate, see David Ayalon, David Ayalon, “The Wafidiya in the Mamluk kingdom,” *Islamic Culture*, vol. 25/1 (1951): 89-104; Reuven Amitai-Preiss, “Northern Syria between the Mongols and Mamluks: political boundary, military frontier, and ethnic affinities,” in D. Power and N. Standen, (eds.) *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700-1700* (London, 1999), 144-145.

<sup>149</sup> While the so-called ‘rebellion/*fitna*’ was centered in the eastern part of the Ilkhanate, its ripples reached as far as its western frontier, Anatolia. The amir Taghcahar, who was notorious for switching sides and whose fickleness was one of the decisive factors leading to Ghazan’s victory over Baidu, was first appointed governor of Anatolia, but in

fealty to Ghazan, was accused later, in Ghazan's reign, of conspiring to overthrow the Ilkhan with a diviner shaykh and was subsequently executed (below).

Christopher Atwood has recently demonstrated that Rashīd al-Dīn's "tribe to state narrative" was a retrospective construction of the Mongol Empire's past rather than a recording of its history.<sup>150</sup> Rewriting the history of an Abaqaid dynasty under Ghazan and his brother Öljeitü, Rashīd al-Dīn tampers with the order of the mothers of the *ulus* and strategically recasts representatives of the other Hülegüid lines as unsuitable, illegitimate, and unwilling to rule. The Ilkhanid vizier notes, for example, that Taraghai s. Hülegü, father of prince Baidu, Ghazan's main opposition, died by a stroke of lightning when traveling from Mongolia to Iran, which implies the lack of divine support for his son Baidu as well. Rashīd al-Dīn's main strategy involves the demotion of the Hülegüid contenders to a secondary role (at best) in their challenges to Abaqaid rule. In his narrative, the "rebel" princes are innocent by-standers who acknowledge the rightful Abaqaid succession, but are reluctantly dragged into the conspiracies of others - greedy amirs (Buqa and Jüşkeb), cunning bureaucrats (Şadr al-Dīn and prince Anbarji) or deranged shaykhs - ultimately leading to their unfortunate, yet necessary executions.

### **Ala Fireng's Heresy Trail: Sufi Deviance and Seditious Spirits**

Unlike the "conspiracies" of the Hülegüid princes, the Ala Fireng affair poses a unique challenge for Rashīd al-Dīn. Ala Fireng was the son of Geikhatu and a grandson of Abaqa.

---

the weeks after Söge's revolt, was quietly seized and executed by order of Ghazan. According to a single account by Mustawfī Qazwīnī, Ghazan knew that Taghachar was behind Söge's revolt. It is plausible that this was Ghazan's plan all along when he sent the amir to Anatolia, as Rashīd al-Dīn fervently argues that Ghazan was appalled by having to take such a measure, yet there would not have been peace with Taghachar's continuous treachery. Baltu, a senior commander in Anatolia, who took part in the execution of Taghachar revolted in Anatolia soon after. His revolt was the pretext for the execution of yet another Hülegüid prince, Ildai s. Qonqurtai s. Hülegü, Esen Temür's brother. A letter allegedly written by the prince urging Baltu to rebel was presented at his trial proving the prince's guilt. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1263-67; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 631-33; Ḥamdallah Mustawfī Qazwīnī, *Ta`rīkh-i guzīda*, ed. Navā'ī (Tehran, 1362/1983), 603.

<sup>150</sup> Atwood, "Mongols, Arabs, Kurds, and Franks," 223-250.

Therefore, Rashīd al-Dīn could not sweep aside his insubordination as easily as he does with other Hülegüid “rebellions.” In his account of the prince’s Sufi conspiracy and heresy trail, Rashīd al-Dīn seeks to delegitimize Ala Fireng’s challenge to the Abaqa-Arghun-Ghazan line of succession by connecting the Ala Fireng affair with earlier “illegitimate” Hülegüid opposition. Rashīd al-Dīn presents Ghazan as the defender of the Muslim faith from the conniving heretics. I argue that Ghazan’s presentation as the defender of orthodoxy was aligned with Rashīd al-Dīn’s larger project of presenting Ilkhanid conversion to Islam as inseparable from the Abaqaïd dynastic claim.

According to Rashīd al-Dīn’s account, Ala Fireng’s plot was revealed while Ghazan was undertaking a retreat (*khalvat*) in his winter quarters, in 702/1303. A group of Tabrizi Sufis headed by a Pīr Ya‘qūb Bāghbānī had won over Ala Fireng by promising him the throne during their *samā‘* sessions. Their conspiracy was discovered when one of their disciples (*murīd*) named Maḥmūd, who was sent to the court to win over some of the courtiers (*muqarribān*), went around claiming that a “forty yards tall and five yards wide” giant, who regularly visits Pīr Ya‘qūb from the mountains of Marand and Iqān, had divulged to the shaykh secrets, and that Pīr Ya‘qūb had “given” the throne to prince Ala Fireng. Soon enough, the vizier Sa‘d al-Dīn (Sāvajī, d. 711/1312) learnt of the conspiracy and reported it to Ghazan, who ordered the culprits captured and put on trial.<sup>151</sup>

In addition to Pīr Y‘aqūb, the colluders included Nāṣir al-Dīn emissary (*īlchī*) of the Qa’an, Shaykh Ḥabīb, the spiritual representative (*khalīfa*) of Rashīd Bulghārī,<sup>152</sup> and Sayyid

---

<sup>151</sup> Sa‘d al-Dīn Sāvajī was subsequently rewarded by being given the command of a *hazra* of the Mongols and drums (in addition to the vizierate). Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1320-21; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 660. The figure of the vizier Sāvajī has been entirely overshadowed by the figure of his co-vizier Rashīd al-Dīn. I hope to dedicate a separate study to Sāvajī’s political role and cultural patronage in the near future.

<sup>152</sup> Rashīd Bulghārī is possibly the Sufi shaykh Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan al-Bulghārī (603-698/1206/7-1299), who was famous for receiving his *khirqā* from Shams al-Dīn al-Tabrīzī. Bulghārī appears to have had close contacts with the

Kamāl al-Dīn Tamāmat (or Namāmat). Rashīd al-Dīn points out that two of these individuals, Shaykh Rashīd and Sayyid Kamāl al-Dīn were directly linked to the executed vizier Ṣadr al-Dīn Zanjānī (d. Rajab 697/May 1298). Noticing this, Ghazan remarked that even from his grave, Ṣadr al-Dīn continued to stir up sedition and strife (*fitna*). An investigation and trail commenced and at its conclusion, it was decided that Pīr Ya‘qūb and his colleagues held heretic beliefs based on the creed of Mazdak. During a verbal exchange between the Ilkhan and Pīr Y‘aqūb, the latter said: “our lords (*pīrān*) protect us.” And Ghazan, as the defender of Muslim orthodoxy, replied that his lords are Allāh, Muḥammad and ‘Alī. The Shaykh was thrown off the mountain and the rest of the plotters were executed.

A significant element in Rashīd al-Dīn’s account of the trail is the alleged involvement of the executed vizier Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Khālīdī al-Zanjānī in the affair.<sup>153</sup> Ṣadr al-Dīn, who served twice as vizier, once under Geikhatu and for a short period, during the early stages of Ghazan’s reign, is depicted in Ilkhanid accounts as a serial plotter. Together with the amir Taghachar, he conspired to replace Geikhatu with prince Anbarji s. Möngke Temür in the spring of 1292, and the two also played an important role in raising Ghazan to the throne during his struggle with his senior cousin Baidu.<sup>154</sup> Ṣadr al-Dīn’s execution on the accusation of embezzlement and

---

Ilkhanid court and traveled from Kirmān to Tabriz in 698. Jamal J. Elias, *The Throne Carrier of God: the life and thought of ‘Alā’ ad-Dawla as-Simnānī* (New York, 1995), 45.

<sup>153</sup> On Ṣadr al-Dīn’s background as a member of an illustrious family of Qadis from the elite of Qazwin, his service with the amir Taghachar, and his career and failed monetary reform (the paper currency episode), Aubin, 46-51; Karl Jahn, “Paper currency in Iran: a contribution to the cultural and economic history of Iran in the Mongol period,” *Journal of Asian History* 4/2 (1970): 101-135. It is worth noting that Ṣadr al-Dīn was also appointed governor of Tabriz, in addition to the office of the vizierate by Geikhatu, in 691/1292. Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 583.

<sup>154</sup> Ṣadr al-Dīn, in fact, is suggested on several occasions to have conspired with Shaykhs to raise certain princes to the throne: thus, during the intrigues that brought about Baidu’s downfall and Ghazan’s rise to the throne, Zanjānī had attached himself to a Shaykh by the name of Maḥmūd Dinawarī, a former confidant of Arghun Khan and a protégée of Bulughān Khātūn. Ṣadr al-Dīn had used him to send messages to Ghazan from within Baidu’s camp. Before he became Geikhatu’s vizier, Ṣadr al-Dīn was also involved together with Taghachar in an attempt to enthrone prince Anbarji s. Möngke Temür in spring 1292. Rashīd al-Dīn claims that the two sent prince Anbarji a secret message through one of the shaykhs (Jamāl Shīrāzī) of his entourage (*mulāzim*) that Geikhatu was killed in battle with the Karamanids in Rūm and that the amirs were in agreement on enthroning Anbarji. Anbarji, according

corruption in Rajab 697/May 1298 following the executions of the powerful amirs Taghachar (d. 1296) and Nawrūz (d. 1297) suggests Ghazan's wish to rid himself of the main parties that assisted him in his victory over his cousin Baidu. Ghazan was possibly motivated by the fear that the same individuals would try to enthrone another in his place, or support one of the other candidates.<sup>155</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn includes the deceased Ṣadr al-Dīn in the list of plotters alongside Pīr Ya'qūb and prince Ala Fireng in order to refer his readers to Ṣadr al-Dīn's part in earlier Hülegüid attempts to "usurp" the throne. Through Ṣadr al-Dīn's "seditious spirit," the Ala Fireng affair becomes part of an "ongoing" Hülegüid conspiracy to dethrone the rightful Abaqaid kings, in spite of Ala Fireng's own descent from Abaqa. Rashīd al-Dīn's portrayal of the Ala Fireng affair as motivated by Tabrizi heretic Sufīs further links Ala Fireng's short-lived bid for the throne with previous Hülegüid contenders. A similar "Sufi conspiracy" is reported by Rashīd al-Dīn in Jumada II 697/April 1298, when the prince Taiju s. Möngke Temür was executed for plotting against the Ilkhan together with a shaykh who promised to make him king.<sup>156</sup>

A more detailed account of this affair is found in Vaṣṣāf's history. An unnamed shaykh at the service of prince Taiju made a prognostication that the latter would become khan within forty days. Vaṣṣāf describes the shaykh as an ignorant deceiver (*yakī az majāhīl-i mutasallisān*), who believed that he could perform miracles and gain access to the Divine Reality without practicing

---

to Rashīd al-Dīn, reported the plot, and the two were arrested. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1193-94; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 581-82.

<sup>155</sup> Furthermore, Rashīd al-Dīn's account suggests that in addition to the accusations of embezzlement, Ṣadr al-Dīn's fall from grace was also hastened by a personal rivalry with Rashīd al-Dīn and Ṣadr al-Dīn's unsuccessful attempt to level unspecified accusations against Rashīd al-Dīn at a court audience. Rashīd al-Dīn claims that the two had an amicable relationship until a group from the Divan attempted to create a rift between the two by propogating rumors on the two. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, vol. 2, 1283-84; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 641-42.

<sup>156</sup> Taiju had earlier reported another conspiracy against Ghazan (above). Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, vol. 2, 1283-84; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 641. The timing of the death of Pulad s. Taiju is uncertain. In his section on Hülegü's offspring, Rashīd al-Dīn simply notes that Pulad was executed for rebelling/being disloyal during Ghazan's reign, but as far as I can tell, this information is not repeated again in Rashīd al-Dīn's history or elsewhere. Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 475.

any Sufi austerities, and used omens and divination (*taṭayyur, fāl*) to fool the prince into believing his hallucinations (*khiyāl, mālīkhūlya*). Allured by the shaykh's promise, the prince secretly came to terms with his intimates (*ināqiyān, nöker*) to overthrow Ghazan. Learning of the conspiracy, the latter issued a decree to seize and execute Taiju, the shaykh and their culprits.<sup>157</sup>

### **Abaqaid “Monotheism” and the “Routinization” of Chinggisid Charisma**

Rashīd al-Dīn's equation of “correct belief” with the legitimate sovereignty of Ghazan, and heresy with illegitimate, Hülegüid dynastic “usurpation” is in line with one of the main strategies Rashīd al-Dīn employs to legitimize the Abaqa-Arghun-Ghazan succession line. Judith Pfeiffer has noted that in his genealogical charts of the Ilkhanid family in the *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah*, Rashīd al-Dīn promoted the Hülegü-Abaqa-Arghun-Ghazan line by doing away with the lateral successors: he placed Aḥmad Tegüder immediately after Hülegü instead of after Abaqa, and situated Geikhatu after Abaqa instead of after Arghun. He, thus, created the fiction of a lineal succession leading from Abaqa to his grandson Ghazan.<sup>158</sup> Peter Jackson has observed, on the other hand, how Rashīd al-Dīn retrospectively “monothesized” in his narrative the pagan Chinggisids: Chinggis Khan, for example, prays to the “Great God” (*khudā-yi buzurg*) before his Chin campaign in 1211; Tolui supplicates “Eternal God” (*khudā-yi jāwīd*) to exchange his life for his brother the Qa'an Ögödei; and the Buddhist Ilkhan Arghun pleads before “Almighty God” at the grave of Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī to grant him victory over his uncle Tegüder in 683/1284.<sup>159</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn's “monothesizing” efforts, however, target specific members of the Chinggisid family. Among the “monotheists” we find Chinggis Khan, his son Tolui, Tolui's son Hülegü, his

---

<sup>157</sup> Vaṣṣāf, 345; Ayatī, *Tahrīr*, 209.

<sup>158</sup> Pfeiffer, *Conversion to Islam*, 95.

<sup>159</sup> Peter Jackson, “Mongol Ilkhans and religious allegiance: the problems confronting a minister-historian in Ilkhanid Iran,” *Iran*, XLVII (2009): 109-22 (especially 114-15).



son Abaqa and Abaqa's son Arghun, whereas as Jackson notes, Rashīd al-Dīn plays down the validity of the conversion to Islam of the lateral successor, the third Ilkhan Aḥmad Tegüder. Rashīd al-Dīn creates, in other words, a “monotheist” dynasty to match a linear, filial succession pattern extending from Chinggis Khan to Ghazan. As we shall see in chapter three, in his conversion narrative of Ghazan, Rashīd al-Dīn constructs Ghazan's image as an Abraham-like monotheistic king. The vizier presents the conversion of Ghazan, who is driven by his internal rational inclination towards monotheism and Islam in spite of his avid practice and support of Buddhism, as one of reversion, that is, return to an alleged ancestral Mongol belief in monotheism.

I argue that Rashīd al-Dīn uses his patrons' dynastic insecurities, their lack of seniority in comparison to their more senior Hülegüid cousins, to “market” Islam. He establishes the ability of Perso-Islamic concepts of filial succession to support his Abaqaid patrons' claim to legitimate succession making the family's conversion to Islam inseparable from their dynastic ambitions. Hülegüid, and in the case of Ala Fireng, even Abaqaid opposition to the Arghun-Ghazan line of succession becomes un-Islamic and moreover, blasphemous. Rashīd al-Dīn brilliantly intertwines his project of converting the Mongol elite in Iran with his dynastic historiographical project. Rashīd al-Dīn, therefore, establishes Ghazan's conversion-enthronement as the natural culmination of a monotheist dynastic line, leading from Chinggis Khan and his son Tolui to Abaqa and his grandson Ghazan.<sup>160</sup>

According to Max Weber's model, in order that the charisma of a leader will not remain “a purely transitory phenomenon” and become stable, it is necessary for it to be “radically changed,” to

---

<sup>160</sup> On the correlation between the categories of the convert-converter (“Islamizaer”) and the community (religious, ethnic, national) founder in Central Asia, see Devin DeWeese, *Islamization*.



become “either traditionalized or rationalized”.<sup>161</sup> Weber argues that this process is driven by the ideological and material interests of the original followers of the charismatic leader, and especially, the “administrative staff” (or disciples etc.), who stand to benefit from continuing the relationship and community. At the core of the transformation of personal charisma is the issue of succession. One way for a charismatic group to continue is to transform the founder’s charisma into an inherited quality. Since the main motive for the routinization of charisma is the material interests of the followers, the charisma “must be adapted to some form of fiscal organization” and the charismatic group will likely develop into a patrimonial structure “in its decentralized variant or the bureaucratic” one.<sup>162</sup> Applying this model to the Timurid dynasty, Subtelny argues that the Timurid transition “from a loosely administrated nomadic empire based on the charismatic personality of the warlord Temur to a centralized polity organized along more rationalized bureaucratic lines under his successors” entailed also the acculturation of the Timurids and their nomadic supporters to Persian society and culture.<sup>163</sup> I suggest, however, that Mongol acculturation was not simply the byproduct of the need to establish a bureaucratic patrimonial state and ensure a dependable source of income for Chinggisid descendants and followers. I suggest that it was also motivated by an interest to appropriate local, Buddhist or Islamic institutions that could “radically transform” Chinggis Khan’s charisma. Sedentary religious and cultural experts developed a variety of mechanisms and devices to regulate, “stabilize,” and “routinize” such charismas, which they could offer to the descendants of Chinggis Khan.

Pfeiffer suggests that the Mongols approached religion in the same way they approached the sedentary cultural wares, specialists, talents, and technologies they relocated from one end of Eurasia to the other. The Mongols were never passive recipients overcome by the sophisticated sedentary

---

<sup>161</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society: an outline of interpretive sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (New York, 1968), 246.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>163</sup> Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian politics and acculturation in medieval Iran* (Leiden, 2007), 15, 40.

cultures of the societies they conquered, but active and selective appropriators of the sedentary cultures and their wares, whether material or spiritual.<sup>164</sup> Jackson demonstrates that it was the perceived efficacy of religious specialists, for example, in prayer, divination, and healing that defined the Mongols' attitudes towards the religions of the societies they conquered.<sup>165</sup> In an empire fraught by dynastic intriguers, rivalries and wars, methods for anchoring one's claim to a relationship with the dynastic founder's personal charisma would have had a special appeal. "The problem of succession," as Weber notes, "is crucial because through it occurs the routinization of the charismatic focus of the structure. In it the character of the leader himself and of his claim to legitimacy is altered".<sup>166</sup>

Johan Elverskog observes that in the case of the Mongols, Chinggis Khan's "successors understood their rule only within a relationship between themselves and Chinggis Khan, who had the initial right to rule bestowed upon him by God." Chinggis Khan, in other words, "was transformed from founder of the empire to the sanctified holder of the right to rule".<sup>167</sup> I argue that Buddhists and Muslims at the Ilkhanid court sought to demonstrate the efficacy of their traditions in supporting and perpetuating such claims to continuity within the Chinggisid family, and in resolving succession related predicaments by "altering" and "routinizing" Chinggis Khan's charisma. By retrospectively "monothesizing" Chinggis Khan and his (linear) successors, Rashīd al-Dīn makes Chinggis Khan's unstable personal charisma readily accessible to Ghazan and his successors to claim, as a basis for their own dynastic aspirations.

Furthermore, Rashīd al-Dīn's identification of the Abaqaid line with Islamic monotheism seems to draw on the earlier Abaqaid adoption of Buddhism. The extensive support of Buddhism

---

<sup>164</sup> Pfeiffer, "Double rapprochement", 371-2.

<sup>165</sup> Jackson, "The Mongols and the faith of the conquered," 245-90.

<sup>166</sup> Weber, 252-3.

<sup>167</sup> Elverskog, *Our Great Qing*, 50, 52.

by the Abaqaid Ilkhans had also a significant dynastic dimension to it. Rashīd al-Dīn reports that Abaqa personally assigned the Buddhist monks who were to educate and train Ghazan. Rashīd al-Dīn, thus, implies that Abaqa's special attention to his grandson's (Buddhist) education was part of his designation of Ghazan as a rightful heir to the throne. The vizier also notes that the portraits of Ghazan's father Arghun hung on the walls of Buddhist shrines in the Ilkhanate.<sup>168</sup> Furthermore, his brother and successor Geikhatu, the father of the conspiring prince Ala Fireng, followed the advice of the Buddhists at court and used in his edicts and coins his Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist name Iringin Dorji, the "Jewel Diamond".<sup>169</sup>

Ghazan's conversion symbolizes the replacement of Buddhism with Islam at the heart of an Ilkhanid-Abaqaid dynastic ideology: just as Ghazan's training with the great Buddhist masters and his avid support of Buddhist communities in Iran functioned as a token of continuity with the Abaqaid dynastic line leading back to Hülegü and his support of Tibetan Buddhism,<sup>170</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn's retrospective "monothesization" of Ghazan's ancestors makes the case for the adoption of Islam, in the place of Buddhism, as a marker of continuity with the Abaqaid-Hülegüid-Toluid-Chinggisid line.

---

<sup>168</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1357; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 676. For the worship of ancestral portraits and statues of the Chinggisid family as "inhabited portraits" and a religiopolitical symbol connecting the present ruler to past rulers, in particular, Chinggis Khan, Charleux, "From Ongon to icon," 215-19.

<sup>169</sup> The Jewel Diamond is a symbol of Tantric sacred knowledge and power. Samuel Grupper's reading of Geikhatu's investiture as a Buddhist coronation and his claim that the Ilkhan was identifying himself as a Buddhist sovereign is unfounded. It seems to be based on a misreading of Vaṣṣāf. The latter does not state that the Buddhist name Iringin Dorji was conferred on Geikhatu as part of his investiture, only that after his enthronement, "the Chinese (*khatā'iyān*) said that for the sake of the longevity of the Ilkhan's reign, the of the Ilkhan must be written Iringin Dorji on the decrees and letters and minted on the coins." Vaṣṣāf, 260. Samuel M. Grupper, "The Buddhist sanctuary-Vihara of Labnasagut and the Il-Qan Hülegü: an overview of Il-Qanid Buddhism and related matters," *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 13 (2004), 50-62.

<sup>170</sup> See chapter two.

## The Sufi *Samāʿ* as Investiture

Our discussion thus far has focused on the strategies Rashīd al-Dīn employed in his history to legitimize the Abaqaid usurpation, including the “monothesization” of the Abaquids, the appropriation of Perso-Islamic notions of filial succession, the manipulation of the list of Hūlegū’s chief wives, and the establishment of the fiction of a Hūlegūid consensus over Abaqaid succession. Rashīd al-Dīn’s account of the Ala Fireng affair, however, also opens to us the possibility of going beyond Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative strategies, to consider how Ilkhanid princes cultivated relationships with their “co-conspirators,” in this case, with Sufī shaykhs, to support their political claims. In the Ala Fireng conspiracy, we find that the Sufī ritual of *samāʿ* was an important platform for establishing master-disciple and client-patron relationships between Sufī shaykhs and members of the Mongol elite.

The *samāʿ*, the mystical audition or spiritual concert, entailed listening to music and the recitation of poetry, usually accompanied by musical instruments, in order to induce in the Sufī encounters with the Divine Reality (*wajd*), experiences that were often expressed in ecstatic bodily movements.<sup>171</sup> The *samāʿ*, which some considered as one of the more controversial Sufī practices, appears to have particularly appealed to members of the Ilkhanid elite. In addition to the role of the *samāʿ* as a space for cultivating social relationships, the Ala Fireng affair also reveals a more complicated image of the relationships between court politics and Sufī circles in the Ilkhanate. As J. Elias demonstrates in his study of the life and work of the Kubrāwī luminary ‘Alā’ al-Dawla al-Simnānī (d. 736/1336),<sup>172</sup> the Ilkhanid period was characterized by

---

<sup>171</sup> Erik S. Ohlander, *Sufism in the Age of Transition: ‘Umar al-Suhrawardi and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods* (Leiden, 2008), 239-242; Alexnader Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism* (Leiden, 2000), 322-25.

<sup>172</sup> On Simnānī and his relationship with the Ilkhanid court, see chapter two.

increasingly strong ties between Sufi shaykhs, powerful families of administrative officials, and the Mongol and local ruling elites.<sup>173</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn draws attention to Ala Fireng's participation in clandestine *samā'* sessions. According to the vizier, once Ghazan pardoned Ala Fireng, the prince confessed that the disciples of Pīr Ya'qūb had taken him to see Pīr Ya'qūb in Tabriz a number of times, in the pretext of hunting. During their *samā'* performances, they claimed to have the power to perform miracles and had promised him kingship. These covert *samā'* sessions are at the center of another version of the affair found in the contemporaneous Mamluk author Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybeg al-Ṣafadī's (d. 764/1363) biographical dictionary, *al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt*.<sup>174</sup>

According to al-Ṣafadī's informant, the immigrant physician and Sufi 'Izz al-Dīn al-Irbilī (d. 726/1326),<sup>175</sup> the prince Ala Fireng, who was a candidate (*murashshah*) to the throne, had a fondness for dervishes (*fuqarā*). One day, during his visit to the *zāwiya* of one Shaykh Maḥmūd Dīwānā in Tabriz, the prince honored the Shaykh with a feast and a *samā'* session.<sup>176</sup> During their *samā'* session, Maḥmūd Dīwānā beautifully danced whirling on the *zāwiya*'s floor. He pulled the prince towards him. He removed Ala Fireng's Mongol hat (*kulāh*), and put his own

---

<sup>173</sup> Elias, *Throne Carrier*, 53-8.

<sup>174</sup> *Al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt*, vol. 25, 234; also in *A'yān al-Aṣr*, vol. 5, 412-13.

<sup>175</sup> Al-Ṣafadī reports the tale of Maḥmūd Dīwānā and Ala Fireng from the mouth of 'Izz al-Dīn Ḥasan al-Irbilī (d. 726/1326), a Sufi doctor and scholar who immigrated from the Ilkhanate to Damascus and seems to have kept himself informed about events in the Ilkhanate through his contacts with *hajj* pilgrims and merchants who passed through Damascus. Al-Ṣafadī notes that al-Irbilī heard the account from al-Tāj 'Abd Allah al-Ṭibbī, possibly a fellow physician and migrant from the Ilkhanate, or, one of the pilgrims passing through Damascus. Al-Irbilī was one of the informants used by al-'Umarī for his section on Mongol Iran in his encyclopedic *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Faḍl Allah al-'Umarī, *Das Mongolische Weltreich: Al-'Umarī's Darstellung der mongolischen Reiche in seinem Werk Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, ed. and trans. K. Lech (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1968): see Lech's section on al-'Umarī's sources in the introduction, p. 29. Al-Irbilī also penned a short treatise on the Madrasas, Ribats, Mosques and baths of Damascus (published in Damascus in 1947). It is possible that al-Irbilī composed a lost work or an unpublished manuscript on the biographies of doctors, from which the Mamluk historian al-Birzālī (d. 1339) copied some notes

<sup>176</sup> There are a number of possibilities to consider here. Maḥmūd Dīwānā and Pīr Ya'qūb might have been the same individual, or Pīr Ya'qūb could have been the latter's disciple/son and possibly inheriting his master's shrine in Tabriz, which caused some confusion. On the other hand, al-Ṣafadī might have been mistaken regarding the name of the shaykh, although as we will see, a shaykh by the name of Maḥmūd Dīwānā does appear to have been in Tabriz at the time or shortly before.

Sufi cap (*tāqiya*) on the prince's head, at which point, he cried out: "I have given you sovereignty (*al-sulṭana*)." The two, the prince and the shaykh ecstatically danced together. Word about his cousin's secret "coronation" reached Ilkhan Ghazan. According to al-Ṣafadī's version, Ghazan first had his cousin Ala Fireng executed, and then, ordered the Shaykh to be brought before him. Welcoming Maḥmūd Dīwānā as the "Shaykh who enthrones kings with his cap," the furious Ilkhan had the wretched dervish cut into two equal halves.

When reading al-Ṣafadī's version of the Ala Fireng affair, one is immediately struck by the story's affinity to anecdotes reported in hagiographic works.<sup>177</sup> Ilkhanid era hagiographic accounts of the relationships between Sufi shaykhs and the Mongols followed earlier patterns of relationships between Sufis and the ruling elites as depicted in hagiographic and narrative sources. In a reciprocal process Omid Safi terms "bargaining with *baraka*," Sufi saints in Saljūq Iran lent their *baraka*, their blessing, a sanctifying and legitimizing power, to political figures of the Saljūq regime in return for promises of just rule, devotion to the saint, and patronage of his shrines.<sup>178</sup> A "baraka-legitimizing narrative" similar to al-Ṣafadī's version of Ala Fireng's "coronation" is the Saljūq historian Rāwandī's account of Sultan Ṭughril Beg's (r. 1037-63) meeting with the saint Bābā Ṭāhir in 447/1055: after Ṭughril promises to be a just ruler, Bābā Ṭāhir places his ring on the finger of the Saljūq warlord, saying: "I have handed you dominion of the world." As Safi notes, the saint's *baraka* in this narrative legitimizes Ṭughril's fateful conquest of Baghdad shortly after, and by extension, "the whole establishment of the Saljūq dynasty." Ṭughril, according to Rāwandī, kept the saint's ring as a talismanic charm wearing it in

---

<sup>177</sup> Along with the social rise and rapid spread of Sufi groups and increasing popular appeal of Sufism, the Ilkhanid period also witnessed the flourishing of Persian hagiographies. Hagiographies are a rich source for investigating the way Sufi communities viewed and interpreted their interactions with the Ilkhanid elite.

<sup>178</sup> Omid Safi. *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: negotiating ideology and religious inquiry* (Chapel Hill, 2006), Safi, *Politics of Knowledge*, 125-57 (chapter five: "Bargaining with *Baraka*").

the battlefield. The blessed object served “as a physical and tangible documentation” of “the connection between the Saljūq warlord and the saint who has sanctified him”.<sup>179</sup>

Al-Şafadī’s account of the exchange between the prince and the shaykh appears to center on a similar exchange: sovereignty for patronage. Furthermore, just like Bābā Ṭāhir’s ring, Maḥmūd Dīwānā’s cap, the Sufi “crown,” by which he “enthrones” and sanctifies prince Ala Fireng, too carries the “connotations of both regal and saintly rule.” Exchanges of relics, mostly Sufi robes and talismanic charms, between Sufi shaykhs and the Mongols are frequently noted in hagiographic and historical accounts.<sup>180</sup> In the case of Ala Fireng, the material exchange during the *samā’* ritual between Maḥmūd Dīwānā and the Mongol prince seems to, furthermore, function also as a Sufi initiation establishing a master-disciple relationship between the two.<sup>181</sup>

---

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 132-36. As Jürgen Paul shows, similar “enthronement” narratives are also found in later, Timurid court histories, in which the exchange of a saint’s baraka for the patronage of a “ruler-to-be” is made concrete through the exchange of physical objects: Sayyid Baraka, for example, is reported to have handed Timur a drum and a standard before Timur overcame his rival Amir Ḥusayn. Jürgen Paul, “Scheiche und Herrscher im Khanat Cagatay,” *Islam* 67 (1990): 278-321.

<sup>180</sup> The Ilkhan Ghazan, for one, would have had an impressive “wardrobe” of sacred attire. From his convertor Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Ḥammūya/Hamuwayi, he received a robe and a talisman with the words and proverbs of Ṣadr al-Dīn’s famous Sufi father (Charles Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām: the conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghazan Khān,” *Pembroke Papers* 1 (1990), 163); Shaykh Zāhid handed him the shirt off his back to fulfill Ghazan’s wish, a shirt that Ibn Bazzāz claims Ghazan wore when he died and was buried in (Ibn Bazzāz, *Şafwat al-şafā*, ed. Ghulām Riḍā Ṭabāṭaba’ī Majd (Ardabil, 1994)), 208-9; and according to the Mawlāwī hagiographer Aflākī, Ghazan had a mantle with Rūmī’s verses stitched in gold that he wore whenever he sat on the throne. Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad-i Aflākī, *The Feats of the Knowers of God*, trans. John O’kane (Leiden, 2002), 593.

<sup>181</sup> That Ala Fireng maintained a similar relationship (patron/disciple-client/master) with the Tabrizi Sufis (Pīr Ya’qūb /Maḥmūd Dīwānā) appears probable considering not only the close ties between members of the Mongol elite with renown Sufi masters of the period, but also that one of his immediate family members, his sister Qutlugh-Malik maintained such a relationship with the famed Shaykh Ibrāhīm Zāhid Gilānī (d. 705/1305). According to one report, as a disciple (*murīd*) of Shaykh Zāhid, when princess Qutlugh-Malik experienced mystical states that required her shaykh’s (Zāhid) attention during her travels, the princess would describe them in a sealed letter to Zāhid, who would resolve her predicaments the moment he lay his eyes on the letter’s content. His sister, Qutlugh-Malik, was Geikhātu’s daughter from Dondi Khātūn, Ala Fireng’s mother. She was amir Qutlughshāh’s wife. Thackston, vol. 3, 580, note. For her marriage, see Osman G. Özgüdenli, *Gāzān Han ve Reformları* (Istanbul, 2009), EKXXVII. Ibn Bazzāz (1102-3). Her engagement in an intimate Sufi master-disciple relationship with Shaykh Zāhid is possibly overstated in *Şafwat al-şafā* considering that in a different anecdote Zāhid declines to consume or distribute the gifts she sends despite of their permissibility (*ḥalāl*) since they are tainted with “Turkishness and royal origin.” *Şafwat al-şafā*, 899; Pfeiffer, “Reflections on a double rapprochement,” 379. How unique was Qutlugh-Malik’s engagement with Zāhid is unclear: if we are to judge from *Şafwat al-şafā*, a number of Mongols, including Ghazan and sultan Abū Sa’īd, maintained close ties with Shaykh Zāhid or his successor, Şafī al-Dīn. Curiously, Mustawfī Qazwīnī reports a third party in the Ala Fireng plot, the prince’s wife, whom Ghazan drowns for her role

The *samā* ‘ appears frequently in the hagiographic genre as a setting for establishing such relationships between Sufis and the Ilkhanid and/or local elites.<sup>182</sup> As a hagiographic motif, the *samā* ‘ as Sufi initiation and the *samā* ‘ as an investiture ceremony are easily reconciled.<sup>183</sup>

Al-Şafadī’s account of Ala Fireng’s *samā* ‘ sessions, however, ends quite differently from Saljūq and other baraka-legitimizing narratives, with both parties, Ala Fireng and Shaykh Maḥmūd Dīwānā, dead. Instead of crowning the new Ilkhan, Maḥmūd Dīwānā proceeds to lose his own “crown.” The story as reported by al-Şafadī seems to ridicule the Sufi Shaykh Maḥmūd Dīwānā and/or his followers, or perhaps even to offer a more general criticism of the close relationships between certain Sufi circles and the Ilkhanid political elite.<sup>184</sup> Using the same hagiographic motifs as baraka-legitimizing narratives, the story construes the *samā* ‘ as the setting for the shaykh’s failure in delivering his *baraka* to the prince implying that Maḥmūd Dīwānā’s claim to saintliness was fraudulent. Similar to Rashīd al-Dīn’s depiction of the

---

in the conspiracy. Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī translated by L. J. Ward, *The Zafar-namah of Hamdullah Mustawfī and the Il-Khan Dynasty of Iran* (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 1983), vol. 3, 542-43.

<sup>182</sup> A similar account to al-Şafadī’s version of the Ala Fireng is found in an account in the fourteenth-century Mawlāwī hagiography *Manāqib al-‘arifīn* (1318-53/4): one evening, Chelebī ‘Ārif, grandson of the famous mystical poet Jalal al-Dīn Rūmī, is invited to a feast and a *samā* ‘ session at a home in Tabriz. During the *samā* ‘, the host is suddenly overcome by a desire for ‘Ārif’s hat. The whirling ‘Ārif draws near to him and places his “blessed hat” (*kulāh-i mubārak*) on his host’s head. Whispering into his ear, ‘Ārif causes his host to entirely lose his senses to the Divine Reality. ‘Ārif’s dressing of his host with his hat during the *samā* ‘ in *Manāqib al-‘arifīn* becomes an act of Sufi initiation, re-rendering the patron and client relationship between the host and the shaykh into a relationship of master and disciple. Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad-i Aflākī, *Manāqib al-‘arifīn* (Ankara, 1961), 894-5; O’kane, 625-26. For another similar example to the *samā* ‘ and Sufi initiation in *Manāqib al-‘arifīn*, see O’kane, 604-5.

<sup>183</sup> As Shahzad Bashir points out, “as Sufi ideas rose to social prominence in the Mongol and Timurid periods, the Sufi master-disciple relationship acquired new, grander dimensions in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and became one of the primary mechanisms for channeling [spiritual and political] power in Persianate societies of Central Asia and Iran.” Shahzad Bashir, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam* (New York, 2011), 13. On the symbolic interpretations of the twelve-gore red hat, the *tāj* (“crown”), worn by Sufi devotee-soldiers of the Safavid house, and its positioning in cosmic narratives of investiture and transmission of authority from the Prophet to ‘Alī and the Safavid family shaykhs, see Bashir, “The world as a hat: symbolism and materiality in Safavid Iran,” in Orkhan Mir-Kasimov, ed. *Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam* (Boston, 2014), 343-65.

<sup>184</sup> For Sufi narratives justifying the ties between Sufi communities and the Mongol elite, Devin DeWeese, “‘Stuck in the throat of Chingiz Khan’: envisioning the Mongol conquests in some Sufi accounts from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries,” in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods*, eds. Judith Pfeiffer and Sholeh A. Quinn (Wiesbaden, 2006), 23–60. The proliferation of such narratives suggests that some Sufi circles felt the need to defend their close ties with the Ilkhanid elite against public criticism.



conspiracy and trail, al-Şafadī's account might have been intended, therefore, to delegitimize Ala Fireng's challenge to the throne.<sup>185</sup>

In any case, the *samā'* seems to have attracted Ilkhanid family members. Similar to Ala Fireng's clandestine *samā'* sessions, the *samā'* also played a crucial role in establishing the Ilkhan Tegüder's relationship with a certain Qalandar dervish by the name of Īshān Ḥasan

---

<sup>185</sup> Al-Şafadī's identification of the shaykh with the name of Maḥmūd Dīwānā, instead of Pīr Ya'qūb, however, also raises another option for contextualizing this story. Shaykh Maḥmūd Dīwānā and/or his disciples possibly took part in the succession struggles over the famous Shaykh Ibrāhīm Zāhid Gilānī's (d. 705/1305) community and wealth. A Tabrizi Sufi by the name of Maḥmūd Dīwānā resurfaces in the later, sixteenth-century hagiographic compendium of Ibn Karbalā'ī, the *Rawzat al-jinān*, which is devoted to the saints buried in Tabriz. Writing about the domed mausoleum (*mazār* or *marqad*) of one Bābā Maḥmūd at the top of the hill of Vilyānkūy, today's Bilankuh, where one finds several Sufi shrines, Ibn Karbalā'ī relates an anecdote from Najm al-Dīn Zarkūb al-Tabrīzī (d. 712/1313), which identifies the Sufi buried in the site as Maḥmūd Dīwānā. While it seems likely that al-Şafadī's "Maḥmūd Dīwānā" is identical with Ibn Karbalā'ī's "Maḥmūd Dīwānā" (=Bābā Maḥmūd), one should note that Ibn Karbalā'ī states that the shaykh had died in 691/1291, already in Arghun's reign, and more than a decade before his "meeting" with prince Ala Fireng. Nevertheless, it might be worthwhile entertaining the idea that both Ibn Karbalā'ī's and al-Şafadī's Maḥmūd Dīwānā are one and the same Sufi saint. Ibn Karbalā'ī adds another important detail on the shaykh. He reports on Maḥmūd Dīwānā's master-disciple relationship with Şafī al-Dīn Ishāq Ardabīlī (d. 735/1334), the eponym and founder of the Safavid order-dynasty, and the successor of his Sufi master Shaykh Ibrāhīm Zāhid Gilānī (d. 705/1305). According to Ibn Karbalā'ī, Şafī al-Dīn would accompany (*ṣuḥbat dāshta*) Bābā Maḥmūd at the beginning of his Sufi career and would try to gain the latter's attention (*dayūzah-yi khātir*). Another account that appears in Ibn Bazzāz's hagiography of the family of Şafī al-Dīn, the *Şafwat al-şafā* (completed 759/1358), reports on the competition over Shaykh Zāhid's approval between Shaykh Şafī al-Dīn and another Sufi by the name of Maḥmūd Baba (b-b-h), who was also a disciple of Shaykh Zāhid. The story ends with the humiliation of the malicious Maḥmūd Baba and with an indication of Shaykh Şafī al-Dīn's undisputed superior position as Zāhid's chosen disciple and successor. Şafī al-Dīn's succession to the leadership of Zāhid's community and its abundant financial resources indeed appears to have been contested, particularly by Zāhid's children. The hagiographic anecdote about the rivalry between the two disciples, Şafī al-Dīn and Maḥmūd Baba, might have been intended to undermine any claim Maḥmūd Baba, his disciples or those related to him might have made to succession to Zāhid's spiritual authority. Read along Ibn Karbalā'ī's note about Şafī al-Dīn's Sufi training as a disciple of Bābā Maḥmūd (providing that the latter is the same Maḥmūd Baba), the passage in *Şafwat al-şafā* might point towards a rivalry between Şafī al-Dīn and his descendants, and the Tabrizi Bābā Maḥmūd and his followers. If indeed, Maḥmūd Baba (*Şafwat al-şafā*), Bābā Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd Dīwānā (al-Şafadī and Ibn Karbalā'ī) are all one and the same, we have here an example of the way Sufi involvement in Ilkhanid court politics could lead to the alignment of both Ilkhanid and Sufi succession struggles. The succession struggles following Zāhid's death drew the *ordu*'s attention: a Mongol decree from 1320 attests to sultan Abū Sa'īd's involvement in the hereditary disputes among Shaykh Gilānī's descendants. It is possible (though greatly speculative at the moment) that the driving force behind the Ala Fireng affair was not only the meddling of Tabrizi Sufis in Ilkhanid succession politics, but also the personal struggles within these Sufi communities, in particular, rivalries related to the spiritual and material succession to Shaykh Zāhid, whose death in 1301 preceded by only two years the trial and execution of Ala Fireng's co-conspirators. Ḥusayn Ibn Karbalā'ī, *Rawdat al-jinān va-jannāt al-janān*, ed. Ja'far Sulṭān al-Qurrā'ī (Tehran, 1965), 499-500; *Şafwat al-şafā*, 166-68. Najm al-Dīn Zarkūb is primarily known for his *Futuwwat nama*, Lloyd Ridgeon, *Jawanmardi: a Sufi code of honour* (Edinburgh, 2011), 10. On the Ilkhanid attachment to Shaykh Zāhid and his disciples and the succession struggles after Zāhid's death: V. Minorsky, "A Mongol decree of 720/1320 to the family of Shaykh Zāhid," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 16/3 (1954): 515-27; Amitai-Preiss, "Sufis and Shamans," 36; M. Gronke, "La religion populaire en Iran mongol," in Denise Aigle, ed. *L'Iran face à la domination mongole* (1997), 128-40

Mengli, <sup>186</sup> and another shaykh by the name of Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. Rashīd al-Dīn writes that Tegüder paid little attention to managing the state and was instead preoccupied in *samā* ‘sessions with the two shaykhs. Rashīd al-Dīn claims that at these gatherings, Tegüder would address Mengli as his brother (*qarindash*), and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān as his father (*bābā*). Judith Pfeiffer has suggested that in his *samā* ‘sessions, Tegüder was attempting to “create an additional space of authority *outside* of the Mongol customs, established human relationships, and inherited hierarchies.” Linking Tegüder’s disadvantage as a lateral successor with his regular engagements in *samā* ‘ with his new “Sufi kin,” she explains that “like Chinggis Khan before him, and so many (from the Chinggisid perspective even more ‘lateral’) rulers after him, Tegüder cultivated relationships with individuals who were able or claimed to be able to establish a connection to the other world, attaching a sacredness to his rule that could counterweigh such ‘this-worldly’ issues as lateral succession, marriage politics, and *amīrs* ‘ needs for appreciation and reward”. <sup>187</sup>

Tegüder’s regular participation in *samā* ‘ sessions and Ala Fireng’s secret visits to Pīr Ya ‘qūb’s or (Maḥmūd Dīwānā’s) *samā* ‘s in Tabriz indicate the growing centrality of the *samā* ‘ as a forum for the Ilkhanid royal elite to cultivate intimate relationships with individuals who could offer access to sacral charisma and divine confirmation. <sup>188</sup> Another Ilkhanid princely contender, the above-mentioned Taiju s. Mōngke Temür, also enjoyed close ties with a Sufi diviner, who promised him the throne. While Ala Fireng and Taiju used their relationships with Sufi shaykhs to advance their aspirations for the Ilkhanid throne, the Ilkhan Aḥmad Tegüder made use of his close ties with such figures to reinforce his authority since his rule was

---

<sup>186</sup> On Mengli, see Pfeiffer, “Reflections on a ‘double rapprochement,” 383-85; *Ṣafwat al-ṣafā*, 217-19. On the Qalandariyya and dervish piety, Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends* (Oxford 2006).

<sup>187</sup> Pfeiffer, “Reflections on a ‘double rapprochement,” 388-89.

<sup>188</sup> Tegüder and Ala Fireng both appear to share the same “worldly-concern” and dynastic predicament: Ala Fireng’s father, the Ilkhan Geikhatu (brother of Arghun) was a lateral successor to the Ilkhanid throne as well.

dynastically contested. All three Chinggisids sought to harness the religious charisma of the Sufi “holy men” to support their dynastic claims, which explains Ghazan’s harsh reaction to the threat posed by Taiju and Ala Fireng, and their Sufi supporters. Moreover, the three Chinggisids share a similar fate: all three were accused of maintaining a close relationship with deviant, heretical figures in order to secure the Ilkhanid throne.<sup>189</sup> In the Ilkhanate, dynastic divides did not only define the lines separating orthodoxy from heresy, but also the lines separating orthodox, institutional Sufis from antinomian, extremist dervishes, legitimate rituals from illicit *samā*‘ ceremonies, and normative prognostications from fraudulent magic.<sup>190</sup>

### **Conclusion: Öljeitü at “Ghadīr Khumm”**

Rashīd al-Dīn writes that following the investigation and heresy trial at court, Ghazan pardoned his cousin prince Ala Fireng. According to the later Ilkhanid historian Mustawfī Qazwīnī, Ala Fireng was sent to Khurasan, where Ghazan’s brother and future Ilkhan Öljeitü could keep a watchful eye on him. Shortly after, when Öljeitü learnt of his brother’s passing, Ala Fireng was executed in his tent at Öljeitü’s orders.<sup>191</sup> His swift and silent execution suggests that Ala Fireng would have been indeed a viable candidate for the throne, who could jeopardize

---

<sup>189</sup> Thus, Ibn Bazzāz describes Menglī as a vile individual and blames for the Ilkhan Tegüder’s addiction to drugs and indulgence in immoralities. Ibn Bazzāz further claims that Ḥasan Menglī had a particular aversion to Shaykh Zāhid. Envious of Zāhid’s fame, he tried on a number of occasions to poison Tegüder’s mind against the “Zāhidiyān.” *Ṣafwat al-ṣafā*, 217-19.

<sup>190</sup> On the role of institutional, more “established” Sufis in the Ilkhanate, Amitai-Preiss, “Sufis and Shamans,” 27-46. As Pfeiffer notes, however, “a sharp distinction between ‘high’ and ‘popular’ (rudimentarily ‘shamanist’) Sufism is not a meaningful way of categorization.” Pfeiffer, “Reflections on a ‘double rapprochement,’” 387.

<sup>191</sup> According to Vaṣṣāf, after he learnt that Ghazan was on his deathbed, the amir Horqadaq, who had feared Öljeitü, tried to enthrone Ala Fireng in Ghazan’s place. He set spies to inform him of the Ilkhan’s death but got drunk during a feast held at Öljeitü’s court when the news from the *ordu* about Ghazan’s death reach Öljeitü. Since Öljeitü avoided alcohol at the time, he was informed first of his brother’s death, and secretly assembled the army and sent men to kill the contender prince Ala Fireng. Ala Fireng was found in a field and executed there. Vaṣṣāf, 461-62; Ayatī, 271; *Zafarnāma* (trans. Ward), vol. 3, 551-52.

Öljeitü's succession.<sup>192</sup> Ala Fireng's eventless and swift death brought to an end nearly two decades of Chinggisid purges in the Ilkhanate.

Rashīd al-Dīn presents the lack of dynastic dispute and apparent consensus over Öljeitü's succession as a sign of the *shahanshāh* Öljeitü's superior kingship and his divinely aided reign (*ta'yīd-i ilāhī*). He also uses this seemingly smooth political transition to voice his opinion on the bloody succession history of the Ilkhanate that preceded Öljeitü's enthronement. In the introduction to his *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, Rashīd al-Dīn describes Öljeitü as a Šāhib-Qirān, a Lord of Auspicious Conjunction, the like of which has not been seen in no prior age (*qarnī*). According to Rashīd al-Dīn, his Mongol patron deserves this title since Öljeitü's reign (*davr-i salṭanat*) was gained "without a drop of blood being spilled on the ground." Previous rulers, on the other hand, "had subdued most of the kingdoms of the world by dint of blood stained swords and fortress conquering maces, and even if it was granted to some [rulers] through *inheritance (irth)* [my emphasis], it was inconceivable [that it would happen] without contest or dispute, *particularly during the days of the Mongols* [my emphasis], when it is clear and patent to all how much strife and unrest had occurred in every revolution (*inqilāb*), how much blood has been spilled by glittering sword with the outbreak of sedition (*fitna*), how many heads have rolled".<sup>193</sup> For Rashīd al-Dīn, Öljeitü's peaceful succession marked a turning point in Ilkhanid history: from an earlier period of bloodstained dynastic feuds under Ghazan and Arghun, in which the Mongol system of corporate sovereignty stood in the path of rightful inheritance, to a period of auspicious political stability, marked by lineal dynastic succession within the Abaqaid house.

---

<sup>192</sup> The ambitions of the descendants of Geikhatu did not end with Ala Fireng's execution: Ala Fireng's son, Jahān Timūr, "ruled" briefly in the later 1340s (1339-1340). He was enthroned by Ḥasan Buzurg as a puppet Ilkhan in the succession struggles that ensued after the death of Abū Sa'īd. Charles Melville, "Jahān Timūr," *Elr*, vol. XIV, 385-386.

<sup>193</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 5-6; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 5.

The Ilkhanid court historian Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd Allāh al-Qāshānī, author of *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū*, too emphasizes the smooth and undisputed transition of the Ilkhanid government from Ghazan to Öljeitü. According to Qāshānī, in 703/1304 when the Ilkhan Ghazan felt that his moment of death was nearing, he set out in person to Khurasan to reunite for the final time with his brother Öljeitü. Qāshānī describes Ghazan arriving at his brother’s camp between Ray and Qazvin ordering on deathbed that his previous will (*waṣṣiya*) and designation (*naṣṣ*) of Öljeitü as his heir-apparent (*walī al-‘ahd, qā’im maqām*) be publically read before a great crowd of Khātūns, amirs and state dignitaries. Qāshānī explicitly states that, Ghazan had his will “designating (*ta’yīn*) his brother Sultan Muḥammad as his heir” written several years earlier, when he was in good health.<sup>194</sup> Qāshānī’s depiction of Öljeitü’s succession agrees with Rashīd al-Dīn’s establishment of the Abaqaid dynastic line in accordance with the principles of “inheritance and merit.”

Some of the terminology that Qāshānī applies, however, also implies that the author models Öljeitü’s succession on Shī‘ī notions of succession. In particular, the court historian Qāshānī’s assignment of the terms *naṣṣ* and *ta’yīn* to Ghazan’s designation of Öljeitü as his successor could reference Muḥammad’s designation of ‘Alī, as his sole legitimate successor in Ghadīr Khumm (10/632) according to Shī‘ī traditions.<sup>195</sup> That Qāshānī refers here to Öljeitü as Sultan Muḥammad might further support this association between Ghazan’s speech and appointment of his kin as his successor and the event at Ghadīr Khumm. As Pfeiffer shows, Shī‘ī notions of religiopolitical authority, in particular, those pertaining to descent-based claims of authority had a special appeal for Ghazan and Öljeitü. In one example, Öljeitü uses the Shī‘ī

<sup>194</sup> Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd Allāh al-Qāshānī, *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū*, ed. Mahīn Hambalī (Tehran, 1384 [2005]), 10-13.

<sup>195</sup> On Qāshānī’s Shī‘ī background and his career as historian, chapter three and appendix II. Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, “Ghadīr Khumm,” *EI3*. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed June 6, 2016. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/ghadir-khumm-COM\\_27419](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/ghadir-khumm-COM_27419).

principle of ‘Alī as the sole rightful heir of Muḥammad to illustrate before Mongol amirs at a court audience that the government can only be held by a true Chinggisid descendant.<sup>196</sup> Qāshānī is possibly inserting into his narrative his own Shī‘ī background, appealing to Öljeitü’s Shī‘ī proclivities (before or after his conversion to Shī‘ism in 1309), or even presenting the efficacy of Shī‘ī descent based ideas of authority for supporting and reaffirming Öljeitü’s legitimate rule.

Whereas Qāshānī’s narrative shapes Öljeitü’s succession to fit an Islamic-Shī‘ī mold, the author’s list of Öljeitü’s wives also reveals that Mongol political principles, in particular, the principle of seniority, retained their relevance in the Ilkhanid political system, even if only in a symbolic capacity, that is, as reaffirmation of the Abaqaid’s legitimate succession to office. Öljeitü’s wives (figure 2) represent both Hülegü’s senior wives, “the mothers of the *ulus*,” and the new alliances of the Abaqaid clan with the aristocratic families/clans in the Ilkhanate, which facilitated the rise of an Abaqaid dispensation. Öljeitü’s first two wives, Gunjishkab Khātūn and Bujughan (?) Khātūn, were both matrilineal descendants of two of Hülegü’s senior wives,<sup>197</sup> the two daughters of the Oirat commander Törelchi Güregen, Güyük Khātūn and Öljei Khātūn.<sup>198</sup> Öljeitü’s marriage to the two ladies symbolizes his “inheritance” of Hülegü’s *ulus*. In addition, through their patrilineal descent, Öljeitü’s two chief wives also represent the alliances of the Hülegüid house with powerful amirs, who played key roles in the political order and

---

<sup>196</sup> Pfeiffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 129-163.

<sup>197</sup> Hülegü’s second senior wife (and later, after the death of Güyük Khātūn, his first wife), the Qunqirat Qutui Khātūn, mother of Tegüder, is interestingly not represented in the list of Öljeitü’s wives. She might not have had daughters or this might suggest the “disappearance” or omission of a “Tegüder-Qunqirat faction.”

<sup>198</sup> Öljeitü’s chief wife, Gunjishkab Khātūn, was the granddaughter (through her mother Orghutaq) of Hülegü’s chief son Jumghur s. Güyük Khātūn (Hülegü’s chief wife, above) and Tolun Khātūn; Öljeitü’s second wife, Bujughan (?) Khātūn, was the granddaughter (through her mother Papa/Baba Khātūn, sister of the Ilkhanid candidate Möngke Temür) of Hülegü’s third chief wife, the Oirat Öljei Khātūn. Qāshānī notes that Gunjishkab was childless, which indicates that she gained her status as Öljeitü’s senior wife by being the first woman he married. That Gunjishkab retained her status as chief wife in spite of being barren could indicate the ongoing importance of the Jumghur senior line from Hülegü and Güyük in the Ilkhanate, even after Arghun had executed Jumghur’s sons, Jüshkeb and Kingshü, in 1289 (for Sterility as a reason for replacing the chief wife, Shir, “Chief Wife,” 62-84). Qāshānī, 7; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Shu‘ab-i Panjgānah* (MS Topkapı Sarayı Ahmet 3, No. 2937).



administration of the Ilkhanate prior to the consolidation of the Abaqaid line under Arghun and Ghazan.<sup>199</sup>

While Öljeitü's first two wives reflect the earlier Hülegüid project, which joined together the Hülegüid house with the main Ilkhanid power holders from the military ranks, Öljeitü's next two wives in Qāshānī's list can be seen as reflecting the Abaqaid dynastic project. Öljeitü's third wife, Eltüzmiş Khātūn, was the widow of Öljeitü's grandfather Abaqa, and then, the wife of his uncle, the Ilkhan Geikhatu.<sup>200</sup> Öljeitü's fourth and sixth wives, Hājī Khātūn and her sister

---

<sup>199</sup> The father of Öljeitü's chief wife Gunjishkab was Shadi Güregen, the son of the influential Mongol (Suldus) commander and governor of Baghdad (and later Shiraz) Su'unchaq Aqa; and the father of Bujughan (?) Khātūn was Lagzi Güregen, the son of another powerful commander and talented administrator, the governor of Khurasan Arghun Aqa (and brother of Nawrūz). Whereas Arghun Aqa was governor of Khurasan already in 1242, when he was appointed by the regent Töregene Khātūn, and retained his office under Hülegü, Su'unchaq Aqa had arrived only with Hülegü's campaign. Nevertheless, the careers of both amirs exhibit similar trajectories. The two are listed as participating in Hülegü's conquest of Baghdad. A look at Rashīd al-Dīn's genealogical charts of the Ilkhanid dynasty in the *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah*, reveals that under Abaqa, Arghun Aqa and Su'unchaq Aqa both rose to prominence and functioned as the Ilkhan's chief commanders. After Arghun Aqa's death in 1275 and Tegüder's enthronement, Su'unchaq Aqa continued to hold a key position in the administration of the realm appearing as the second amir in Tegüder's list of amirs in the *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah*. On Su'unchaq Aqa, see George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth Century Iran* (London, 2003), 135-41; Aubin, 33-41; Pfeiffer, *Conversion to Islam*, 277-78. Su'unchaq Aqa's advancement is marked by the marriage of his son to the daughter of Hülegü's chief son Jumghur. With Arghun's enthronement, we hear nothing of Su'unchaq Aqa and his son in Rashīd al-Dīn's account until the two die in Maragha in Jumada I 689/May 1290. Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 573. Rashīd al-Dīn's laconic notice on their death appears suspicious considering Su'unchaq Aqa's earlier support of Tegüder's enthronement and Arghun's execution of Buqa and his family just a year earlier (above). On Su'unchaq Aqa's support of Tegüder, Pfeiffer, *Conversion to Islam*, 278. Arghun Aqa's sons Nawrūz and Lagzi, who both married into the Hülegüid house, appear as amirs under Arghun's section in the *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah*. However, in Jumada II 696/April 1297, Ghazan executes Nawrūz and his entire family including Lagzi for the fictitious accusation of conspiring with the Mamluks. Thus, these two powerful aristocratic families, Su'unchaq Aqa and Arghun Aqa and their offspring, with their marriage ties to the Hülegüid house, seem to have been completely erased by the reshuffling of political relations in the Ilkhanate, which began with the fall of amir Buqa in the later part of Arghun's reign and ended with the execution of prince Taiju in 697/1298. *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah*; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 636-37. Nawrūz was married to Abaqa's daughter.

<sup>200</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 580. Rashīd al-Dīn states that Ghazan gave her to Öljeitü and praises her wisdom and qualities. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Kitāb al-sultāniyya* in Rashīd al-Dīn, *Mukhtaṣar-i tavārīkh-i Rashīdiyya*. Istanbul Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi Ms. 3415, f. 126r. Eltüzmiş Khātūn d. Qultugh Temür was the patrilineal granddaughter of the Qunqirat amir Abatai (/Ubetay) Noyan. The latter was sent by Hülegü in 662/1263-64 to summon and lead his son Jumghur and Hülegü's wives to Iran and was subsequently punished by Hülegü for his responsibility in Jumghur's death while en-route to Iran. Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 519. Aside of this suspicious episode that ultimately facilitated the Abaqaid rise, and Abatai's role in Abaqa's campaigns, the amir is primarily known for his female offspring's marriage ties with Abaqaid. Eltüzmiş's sister Karamü Khātūn was married to Ghazan, and inherited Dokuz's ordu. Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 644: they married on Shawwal 698/July 1299 in an impressive ceremony. Her cousin Bülughān Khātūn (d. Otman) was first the wife of Arghun and next, Geikhatu, and finally, Ghazan as well. Melville, "Boloḡān Kātūn," *EI*, vol. IV (1989), 338-339. Bülughān Khātūn facilitated Ghazan's victory over Baidu.

Öljetei, were the daughters of Hülegü's daughter, Tödögech (from a concubine) and the son of the Oirat commander Tengiz Güregen. Tengiz Güregen played an instrumental role in Rashīd al-Dīn's narrative in raising Arghun to the throne following Tegüder's downfall.<sup>201</sup> Viewed together, Qāshānī's list of Öljeitü's wives maps the political transformation of the Ilkhanate from a Hülegüid "cousin-clan appanage-state" to an Abaqaid dynastic dispensation, a process that comes full circle with Öljeitü's succession and his swift execution of Ala Fireng, the last of the princely contender-"rebels".<sup>202</sup>

---

<sup>201</sup> In addition to his Hülegüid wife, Tengiz Güregen's daughter Qutlugh Khātūn was married to Arghun and when she died, Arghun married her niece Öljetei, whom Öljeitü later married. Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 561.

<sup>202</sup> The repercussions of the Abaqaid purge of princes were felt well after the dissolution of the Ilkhanate. Writing in the 1340s, the Mamluk encyclopedist Shihāb al-Dīn al-'Umarī connects the state of the Ilkhanate with the earlier executions of princely contenders: "I asked Ibn al-Ḥakīm and al-sharīf Muḥammad b. Ḥaydara al-Shīrāzī about who they know has remained from Hülegü's descendants and they both said: no offspring with a certain ancestry (*muḥaqqaq al-nasab*) has remained alive except for what they say about Muḥammad, who is related to Anbarji [s. Möngke Temür s. Hülegü], in spite of the great disagreement about him. I [al-'Umarī] said: then, news about the death of this Muḥammad had arrived and was proven true. Niẓām al-Dīn ibn al-Ḥakīm said to me: the people of this house [the Hülegüids] were annihilated by each other because of the fear of the ruler from among them over his reign. Many of the descendants of their kings hid from the reigning ruler, and some of them leaned towards the professions and disgraces [*al-ḥiraf wa 'l-mahānāt*] so that his resolution [to kill them] would be weakened and they would be left [alive]. They made this their means of deliverance and safety. Some became weavers, others tanners and others sold barely and its likes." Al-'Umarī, 21. Muḥammad descendant of Möngke Temür was proclaimed Khan by the Jalayirid amir Shaykh Ḥasan in the struggles that ensued after the death of Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd (d. 1335) as an opposition to the puppet Ilkhan Mūsa, enthroned by the rival party led by the Oirat amir 'Alī Pādshāh. 'Alī Pādshāh's nominated Khan, Mūsa (d. Dhu al-Hijja 737/July 1337), an alleged grandson of Baidu (d. 1295, grandson of Hülegü), is claimed to have been a forty-year-old weaver (*nassāj*) prior to his disputed accession. Melville, *The Fall Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate: a decade of discord in Mongol Iran* (Bloomington, 1999), 46. According to al-Ṣafadī, he was raised and was taught the trade by a Christian in Daqūqa. *A'yān*, vol. 5, 483-4. Muḥammad died in the battle between Shaykh Ḥasan and the Chupanid party shortly thereafter, in 738/1338. According to al-'Umarī, Muḥammad was a son of Tash Temür s. Esen Temür s. Anbarji (page 93). The Mamluk biographer al-Ṣafadī, on the other hand, writes that after Abū Sa'īd killed Anbarji, a concubine claimed she was pregnant from the prince and gave birth to Muḥammad. He was in his twenties when he was enthroned. Anbarji, however, died in 1294, which makes al-'Umarī's version more likely. Melville, *The Fall*, 51; al-Ṣafadī, *A'yān al-aṣr*, vol. 5, 40-41.



## Chapter II: Between Prophet and Law-Maker King: Buddhists, Shī'īs, and a Jewish Vizier at the Court of Arghun

According to the Ilkhanid historian Vaṣṣāf, “deluded by his high rank and power and displaying the arrogance and haughtiness of Pharaoh, Sa‘d al-Dawla, on several occasions, in the form of fables of the ancestors (*dar sūrat-i asāfir al-awwalīn*), raised before the Ilkhan [Arghun] the idea that he had inherited prophethood from Chinggis Khan” (*nubuvvat az chīngīz khān bi-tarīq-i irth ba-vi rasīdah*). Sa‘d al-Dawla next urged the Ilkhan to follow the example, not of Chinggis Khan as one might expect, but that of the Arab prophet (*payghambar-i ‘arabī*). Sa‘d al-Dawla explained that Muḥammad knew that the road to government and religion (*mulk va-mīlāl, dīn va-duval*) is tainted in blood and *Jihad* (*tīgh-i jihād*), and therefore, exerted his companions (*ṣahāba*) to fight and execute raids (*ghazawāt*) on his behalf. Demonstrating his message through the example of the “Battle of the Trench” (*al-khandaq*, 5/627), the Jewish minister noted that in a single day, Muḥammad ordered the beheading of a great many of his enemies. Sa‘d al-Dawla concluded that if Arghun were to appoint him, Sa‘d al-Dawla, as his chief debt collector (*mutaqāzī-i himmat-i ‘ālī*) and exhibit favor to the Ilkhan’s supporters (*arbāb-i muwāfaqat wa-taṣdīq*) but ruthlessly punish his opponents (*aṣḥāb-i mukhālafat wa-takdhīb*), the Ilkhan would find “a rejuvenated [/fortunate] community and a guarded dynasty [/empire that] will endure in time”.<sup>203</sup>

---

<sup>203</sup> *Millatī-yi mutajaddid wa-dawlatī-yi mutahaddid dar rūzgār pāydār gudhār*. Vaṣṣāf, 241. Vaṣṣāf seems to play here on the parallel and contradictory meanings of the roots *j-d-d* and *h-d-d* in Arabic. While *majdūd*, for example, means “possessed of good fortune” or “fortunate,” *maḥdūd* can designate the opposite meaning of “unfortunate” or “withheld from good luck or prosperity,” but also carry a similar meaning to that of *majdūd*: “being guarded from evil.” Edward Willliam Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863), 385, 526. This translation tallies with the use of the term *dawlat* in Persian writings under the Mongols, not just to designate dynasty (derived from its earlier

This chapter focuses on two episodes related to Sa‘d al-Dawla in Vaṣṣāf’s history, the *Tajziyat al-amṣār va tazjiyat al-a‘ṣār* (The apportioning of lands and the passing of time).<sup>204</sup> The first episode includes Sa‘d al-Dawla’s claim that Arghun inherited the prophethood of Chinggis Khan, and the second episode is the Jewish minister’s attempt to collect signatures to issue a document referred to as Sa‘d al-Dawla’s *maḥḍar*/the manifesto. I argue that these two episodes open a window onto the ideological atmosphere at the court of the Ilkhan Arghun. They show how religious interlocutors and cultural brokers at the Ilkhanid court competed over influence and access by demonstrating their ability to mediate Mongol religiopolitical conceptualizations of sacral authority. They sought to demonstrate to the Mongol rulers, for example, how the adoption of Buddhist notions of universal kingship, or Islamic political models, in Sa‘d al-Dawla’s case, the *akhlāq-ethical* paradigm of the law-maker king in Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s work, could rearticulate and reinforce Ilkhanid claims to continuity with Chinggis Khan and with his example “as an intuitive font of wisdom and law”.<sup>205</sup>

I examine how the Jewish physician and administrator Sa‘d al-Dawla used the setting of the interreligious court debate to gain purchase with the Ilkhan, who had developed a particular attachment to the Buddhists at his court. I show how Sa‘d al-Dawla experimented with new ways of expressing and confirming Arghun’s claim to rightful succession of the Ilkhanid throne, in spite of his lack of dynastic seniority as discussed in chapter one. I argue that Sa‘d al-Dawla used

---

uses to signify the ‘Abbasid revolution), sovereignty, or state, but also as a change of fate, or, a “good fortune.” Thus, it was compatible with the Turco-Mongol concepts of *qut/suu*/good fortune, and *keshik*/guard/good fortune. Th. Allsen, “A note on Mongol imperial ideology,” in *The early Mongols: Language, Culture and History*, ed. Denis Sinor (Bloomington: Denis Sinor Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 2009), 6-7; R. Amitai, “Did Chinggis Khan have a Jewish Teacher? An examination of an early fourteenth-century Arabic text,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124/4 (2004): 693-4.

<sup>204</sup> For the early fourteenth-century work and its author, see Judith Pfeiffer, “A turgid history of the Mongol empire in Persia: epistemological reflections concerning a critical edition of Vaṣṣāf’s *Tajziyat al-amṣār va tazjiyat al-a‘ṣār*,” in *Theoretical Approaches to the Transmission and Edition of Oriental Manuscripts*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer and Manfred Kropp (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2007), 107-129.

<sup>205</sup> Christopher Atwood, “The Mongol Empire and early modernity,” *forthcoming*.

the notion of the Ilkhan's prophetic inheritance to express Arghun's continuity with the imperial founder. Through their relationship with Chinggis Khan, the Ilkhans maintained and confirmed their access to and benefit from Heaven's blessing. I, furthermore, situate Sa'd al-Dawla's experimentation with Chinggisid prophethood in the context of the Buddhist presence at Arghun's court. The Buddhist party had ample resources to sanctify and reinforce the Ilkhan's claim to Chinggisid continuity, in particular, the dogma of reincarnation and the Buddhist model of universal sacred kingship (the *cakravartin*).

Sa'd al-Dawla's expression of Arghun's Chinggisid succession in terms of prophethood resonates with other examples where Chinggis Khan was presented as prophet or a near-prophetic figure. I suggest that Sa'd al-Dawla's experimentation with the notion of Chinggis Khan's prophethood indicates that situating Chinggisid exceptionality in the Islamic world required defining the relationship between Chinggis Khan as "law-maker," on the one hand, and prophethood and revelation, on the other. Vaṣṣāf's account on Sa'd al-Dawla reveals how the vizier used the discussions at the court debates and the Ilkhan's dynastic concerns to influence Arghun's policies and align them with Sa'd al-Dawla's own political ambitions.

Building on this earlier episode at Arghun's court, I next examine the Jewish vizier's attempt to issue a document referred to as the *maḥḍar*/the manifesto. In his *maḥḍar*, Sa'd al-Dawla reformulated Chinggisid sacral kingship on the basis of the *akhlāq-ethical* paradigm of kingship in the Shī'ī polymath Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's masterpiece of political ethics, the *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī*. Using Ṭūsī's model, Sa'd al-Dawla redefined Ilkhanid authority in a way that would agree with, but also reconstruct the Mongol understanding of the ruler as an individual who can independently and freely legislate and interpret any scriptural tradition. I, furthermore, situate

Sa'd al-Dawla's Ṭūsīan *maḥḍar* in the context of the minister's attempt to cultivate an alliance with the Shī'īs of Iraq and the Ṭūsī family.

### Sa'd al-Dawla and His Career in Ilkhanid Historiography<sup>206</sup>

Sa'd al-Dawla mas'ūd, son of Hibat Allāh Abharī,<sup>207</sup> was a Jewish physician (*ḥākim*) and local official in Baghdad, whose family probably originated from Abhar in the province of Jibāl. The first notice of Sa'd al-Dawla in Ilkhanid accounts is his dismissal from the supervision of the *waqf* of the Baghdadi hospital of al-Māristān al-'Uḍadī in 682/1283-4.<sup>208</sup> Shortly after, in 683/1284-85, Sa'd al-Dawla was appointed deputy to Tonska, whom the Ilkhan Arghun had assigned as *shihna*, military governor, of Baghdad after Arghun's victory over his uncle.<sup>209</sup> Rapidly mastering Baghdad's fiscal and financial affairs, Sa'd al-Dawla soon came into direct conflict with al-Malik Nāṣir al-Dīn Qutlughshah b. Sanjar, the *mamlūk* of the deceased Ilkhanid historian and governor of Iraq 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā-malik Juwaynī (1226-1283). Qutlughshah had been appointed as Baghdad's *Ṣāhib-dīvān* by the Mongol amir Aruq, Baghdad's new governor.<sup>210</sup> Considering

---

<sup>206</sup> A full discussion of the representations of Sa'd al-Dawla in Ilkhanid historiography is beyond the scope of this chapter, and merits a separate study, which I plan to carry out in the near future.

<sup>207</sup> We do not have a full biographical notice of Sa'd al-Dawla in the remaining volumes of the Maragha librarian Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's biographical dictionary, but Ibn al-Fuwaṭī does refer to him in a different biographical entrance as Sa'd al-Dawla mas'ūd ibn Hibat Allāh al-Abharī. That Sa'd al-Dawla's personal name was mas'ūd has yet to be noted by modern scholarship. *Majma' al-ādāb*, vol. 4, 100. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī also provides a full biographical notice of Sa'd al-Dawla's brother Fakhr al-Dawla, whom the Jewish minister sent to govern Baghdad on his behalf. We learn there that Fakhr al-Dawla Īlya was son of Ṣafī al-Dīn Hibat Allāh son of (Muhadhhib al-Dawla) Mūsa al-Isrā'īlī. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 572. Bar Hebraeus writes that Sa'd al-Dawla was the "father-in-law of the governor of Baghdad," who had recently died (presumably referring to the Juwaynis?). Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj... Bar Hebraeus*, trans. Ernest A. Wallis Budge (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 478. This detail is not corroborated by other accounts. For other conflicting testimonies on the earliest stages of Sa'd al-Dawla's career, see Fischel, *Jews*, 96-97.

<sup>208</sup> Anonymous, *Kitāb al-ḥawādith li-mu'llif min al-qarn al-thāmin al-hijrī* (also known as *Al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi'a wa'l-tajārib*), ed. Bashshār 'Awwād ma'rūf (Beirut, 1997), 469.

<sup>209</sup> For the development of the office of *shihna/shahna* and its relationship to *basqaq* (a provincial revenue officer), see Michal Biran, *Empire of the Qara Khitai*, 121-22.

<sup>210</sup> Malik Nāṣir al-Dīn Qutlughshah was the supervisor of Iraq's finances (*mushrif*) from 685/1286 and Baghdad's *Ṣāhib-dīvān* from 686/1287. Malik Nāṣir al-Dīn Qutlughshah was killed in Tabriz in 688/1289 after Sa'd al-Dawla was appointed vizier. He was buried in the *ribāṭ* he built in the *marshad* of the Salmān al-Fārsī. *Al-Ḥawādith*, 454, 484,

Sa‘d al-Dawla an immediate threat to his position in the city, the *Ṣāhib-dīvān* Qutluḡshah devised a plan to remove Sa‘d al-Dawla from the city. In one of his visits to the Ilkhanid court, Qutluḡshah praised Sa‘d al-Dawla’s qualities as a one of a kind physician claiming that it would be a shame to keep the Jewish doctor from royal service.<sup>211</sup>

Finding himself subsequently in the close company of the Ilkhan Arḡhun while administrating medicine and conducting medical procedures, Sa‘d al-Dawla appears to have impressed the Ilkhan with his proficiency in Mongolian and Turkish, which he reportedly gained during the time he resided in Baghdad, as well as with his exceptional acquaintance with Baghdad’s financial situation. After complaining to Arḡhun about the Mongol governor of the city Aruq’s abuse of the city’s treasury and convincing the Ilkhan that Sa‘d al-Dawla could raise further revenue from Baghdad, Sa‘d al-Dawla was sent twice, along with Arḡhun’s confidant, the Mongol commander Ordu Qaya, to check on the city’s finances and collect Baghdad’s overdue taxes. Sa‘d al-Dawla indeed extorted large sums from the city’s administrators doubling the retrieved treasure on his second visit to the city. Pleased with Sa‘d al-Dawla’s performance and his raise of revenues, Arḡhun assigned Sa‘d al-Dawla in Jumāda II 688/June 1289 (after executing Buqa and Aruq) to the office of chief minister of the entire realm, a position that Sa‘d al-Dawla held until he was executed in 1291, while Arḡhun was on his deathbed.

Contemporaneous historians share little sympathy with the figure of the Jewish minister.<sup>212</sup> Although they acknowledge his contribution to stabilizing the kingdom, his

---

487, 496. Aruq was the brother of amir Buqa, the mastermind behind Arḡhun’s seizure of the Ilkhanid throne and was subsequently the main power-holder in the Ilkhanate until his execution in 1289.

<sup>211</sup> Vaṣṣāf has Sa‘d al-Dawla’s fellow physicians in the *ordu* praising Sa‘d al-Dawla’s qualities as a physician. See also *al-Hawādith*, 487.

<sup>212</sup> In the words of later Ilkhanid author Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, whose uncle (Fakhr al-Dīn) Sa‘d al-Dawla had executed, the Jewish minister had “the appearance of prudence but was in reality treacherous and malignant.” Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī, *Zafarnāma von Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī und Ṣāhnāma von Abu’l-Qāsim Firdausī* (from the Facsimile of the British Library Or. 2833; Teheran/Vienna: Iran University Press and Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1377/1999), 2, 1320; L. J. Ward, *The Zafar-namah of Ḥamdullah Mustawfī and the*

correction of injustices and abuses, and his patronage of literary production in Baghdad (as well as his sponsoring of the Baghdadi *hajj* caravans),<sup>213</sup> Ilkhanid authors generally depict the period of Sa‘d al-Dawla’s tenure as vizier as one marked by administrative efficiency achieved through coercive and forceful measures, a high level of mortality among Ilkhanid governmental ranks,<sup>214</sup> and a rise in tensions between religious communities, particularly among the resident populations of Baghdad.<sup>215</sup> In his capacity as vizier, Sa‘d al-Dawla removed his rivals and filled key posts with his loyalists, mostly his relatives and Jewish administrators.<sup>216</sup> The primary image of Sa‘d al-Dawla as retained in Ilkhanid accounts is that of a savvy politician who gained considerable influence over the Ilkhan and had his enemies removed through trickery and deceit. Anecdotes about the Jewish minister assign his downfall to his arrogant conduct at court and the animosity his efficiency in raising revenue and measures of administrative centralization fostered, especially amongst the Ilkhanid military elite.<sup>217</sup>

---

*Il-Khan Dynasty of Iran* (PhD dissertation, University of Manchester, 1983), 2, 331. Bar Hebraeus is perhaps the most sympathetic to Sa‘d al-Dawla’s tenure viewing the whole affair as an indication that “Islam hath been brought low!” Bar Hebraeus, 479.

<sup>213</sup> Vassaf, 238.

<sup>214</sup> Among the many casualties of Sa‘d al-Dawla’s “cleaning of the stables” were Malik Nāṣir al-Dīn Qutluḡshah, who was the previous governor of Baghdad appointed by Aruq and Sa‘d al-Dawla’s adversary in Baghdad, the reminder of the Juwaynī family, and members of the Simnānī family. Aubin, *Ēmirs Mongols*, 42-3.

<sup>215</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1164-66; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 567-68; Vaṣṣāf, 235-247; Ayatī, 141-8; Bar Hebraeus, 478-91; *al-Ḥawādith*, 450-64. For a recent review of Sa‘d al-Dawla’s career, Reuven Amitai, “Jews at the Mongol court in Iran: cultural brokers or minor actors in a cultural bloom?” in *Cultural Brokers at Mediterranean Courts in the Middle Ages*, ed. Marc von der Nöh et al. (Paderborn, 2013), 39-41; Hend Gilli-Elewy, *Bagdad nach dem Struz des Kalifats: Die Geschichte einer Provinz unter ilhanischer Herrschaft (656-735/1258-1335)* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2000), 86-92; Mustafa Uyar, “Jewish vizier Sa‘d al-Dawla’s centralization reform of Ilkhanid financial policy and the reaction to it,” in *Jewish History Quarterly* (Warszawa), 229 (2009), 5-12. For earlier discussions of the Jewish minister, Fischel, *Jews*, 90-117.

<sup>216</sup> Sa‘d al-Dawla appointed his brother Fakhr al-Dawla together with Muhadhhib al-Dawla and Jamāl al-Dīn Dastajirdānī to govern Baghdad, his brother Amīn al-Dawla to Diyarbakir, Shams al-Dawla to Fars, and Rabīd ibn Abī Rabī‘ to Azerbaijan. According to Vaṣṣāf, if Geikhatu and Ghazan were not in control of Khurasan and Rum/Anatolia, Sa‘d al-Dawla would have also appointed one of his “ignorant relatives” to govern these provinces. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1175; Vaṣṣāf, 237; Fischel, 103-4.

<sup>217</sup> In one account in Vaṣṣāf’s history, for example, Sa‘d al-Dawla and the Ilkhan were playing chess. Sa‘d al-Dawla stretched his legs in front of the Ilkhan in an audacious manner and was reprimanded by amir Toghan, who entered the tent that very moment. Sa‘d al-Dawla explained that he had joint pain and was forgiven by the Ilkhan. According to Vaṣṣāf, Toghan developed a particular animosity towards Sa‘d al-Dawla since this incident. Vaṣṣāf, 238-9.

Most of the research on Sa‘d al-Dawla repeats this account on Sa‘d al-Dawla’s short-lived career as vizier focusing on Sa‘d al-Dawla’s Jewish identity and positioning him in Ilkhanid politics. Aubin, for example, assigns Sa‘d al-Dawla’s appointment to the vizierate after the removal of the all-too-powerful amir Buqa, to the Ilkhan’s wish to create the ultimate vizier: a highly qualified and talented administrator who had no compromising ties to the local Muslim administration or issues with the Mongol tradition (as the Juwaynīs did) on the one hand, and on the other hand, was not a Mongol amir who might overstep his boundaries and accumulate political power on expense of the Ilkhan’s sovereignty as amir Buqa had done.<sup>218</sup> Historians, furthermore, dismiss the possibility that Sa‘d al-Dawla’s tenure as minister had a “cultural impact”.<sup>219</sup> I suggest, however, that the two episodes in Vaṣṣāf’s history discussed in this chapter reveal otherwise.

### **A Jewish Vizier and His “Fables”**

Vaṣṣāf’s hostile attitude towards Sa‘d al-Dawla is also apparent in the author’s account of the Jewish vizier’s exchange with the Ilkhan. The account in *Tajziyat al-amṣār* starts with the statement that Sa‘d al-Dawla “on several occasions, in the form of fables of the ancestors (*dar sūrat-i asāṭīr al-awwalīn*), raised before the Ilkhan [Arghun] the idea that he had inherited prophethood from Chinggis Khan.” Muslim commentators understood the Qur’anic term “fables of the ancestors” (*asāṭīr al-awwalīn*) to mean embellished tales or fancy lies. The term “fables of the ancestors” was associated with Muḥammad’s Meccan opponent, the merchant al-Naḍr b. al-Ḥārith, who according to one tradition, criticized Muḥammad’s revelation as fables challenging the Prophet to offer his audience a better story. Early traditions also link al-Naḍr along with his

---

<sup>218</sup> Aubin, *Émirs mongols*, 42-44.

<sup>219</sup> Amitai, “Jews at the Mongol court in Iran,” 41.

“fables” to the knowledge of Persian epic or “the stories of the Persian kings and the stories of Rustum and Isfandiyār.” Vaṣṣāf might be using here the label “fables of the ancestors” to ridicule Sa’d al-Dawla and his speech to the Ilkhan as “diverting tales” (*lahw al-ḥadīth*) to imply that Sa’d al-Dawla was a “reincarnated al-Naḍr,” an adversary of the Muslim community. However, as I discuss below, the Ilkhanid historian might also be suggesting that the Jewish minister was using stories of the Iranian past such as the accounts on pre-Islamic Iranian monarchs that feature in the genre of advice literature in order to convince the Ilkhan to pursue certain policies.<sup>220</sup>

Sa’d al-Dawla’s reference to the Prophet Muḥammad’s order to behead his enemies following the victory of the Battle of the Trench (April 627/Dhū al-Qa‘da 5) might too reflect Vaṣṣāf’s animosity towards Sa’d al-Dawla. As noted earlier in this chapter, according to Vaṣṣāf, Sa’d al-Dawla urged the Ilkhan to follow the example of the Prophet Muḥammad, and ruthlessly punish his enemies. Sa’d al-Dawla appears to refer in Vaṣṣāf’s account to the slaughter of the Jewish tribe of Banū Qurayza after Muḥammad’s victory. According to the widely circulated tradition recorded in *Sīra*-literature and *ḥadīth* collections, during the siege on Medina, the Banū Qurayza violated their mutual agreement of non-aggression with Muḥammad and entered into negotiations with the Aḥzāb, the Prophet’s Meccan opposition. Following the Aḥzāb’s hasty retreat from their siege on Media, the angel Jibrīl ordered the Prophet to besiege the Banū Qurayza’s stronghold. The Banū Qurayza, who were led by Ka‘b b. Asad, unconditionally

---

<sup>220</sup> F. Rosenthal, “*Asāṭīr al-awwalīn*,” *El*<sup>2</sup>. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed June 6, 2016. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/asatir-al-awwalin-SIM\\_8355](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/asatir-al-awwalin-SIM_8355). Sarah Bowen Savant, *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran: Tradition, Memory and Conversion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 171-175. Stories of the *Shāhnāma* had a particular appeal to those wishing to gain the proximity and favor of rulers. In his biographical notice of Shams al-Dīn Ḥamza al-Turkmānī, the Syrian author Khalīl ibn Aybeg al-Ṣafadī writes that the al-Turkmānī, who fled (*wāfid*) from the Ilkhanate (“the east”) to Syria, was able to foster a particularly close relationship with the Mamluk governor of Syria Tankiz by learning by heart during the days sections from *kitāb shāh nāma fī akhbār al-Faras* and telling the stories to Tankiz at night time when the two were alone. Al-Turkmānī would even refer to Tankiz as Rustam. Al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān al-Aṣr*, vol. 2, 300-302.



surrendered to Muḥammad after a month of siege. The Prophet appointed Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh of the Aus as an arbiter after the people of the Aus appealed to the Prophet to show leniency to the Qurayza, their former allies. Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh, however, turned against the Banū Qurayza and once Muḥammad had ratified Sa‘d’s harsh verdict, all of the Qurayza men, numbering between 400 and 900 (according to different reports), were executed and buried at Medina’s market; the women and children were enslaved and sold; and the tribe’s extensive property was redistributed among the Prophet’s followers.<sup>221</sup> Sa‘d al-Dawla’s reference to the execution of the Jewish tribe of Banū Qurayza in Vaṣṣāf’s account might indicate, therefore, that Vaṣṣāf was reporting some vicious rumors aimed at slandering the unpopular Jewish minister, possibly in line with popular anxieties about a Jewish vengeance for the execution of the Banū Qurayza centuries earlier.<sup>222</sup>

Furthermore, a few paragraphs later in his history, Vaṣṣāf claims that the Ilkhan Arghun and Sa‘d al-Dawla had co-conspired to turn the Ka‘ba into a destitute (*bī nām*) idol temple and coerce *ahl al-islām* to worship idols. Vaṣṣāf writes that Sa‘d al-Dawla started corresponding to this end with the Jewish tribes of Arabia (*a‘rāb-i yahūd*) and was preparing an army to charge Mecca. He even ordered the construction of ships in Baghdad to carry out this attack. According to Bar Hebraeus, however, Genoese sailors were building a fleet to disturb Mamluk commerce in the Indian Ocean, and not for the sake of an Ilkhanid campaign against Mecca.<sup>223</sup> In his summary

---

<sup>221</sup> As Kister argues, a number of prominent Muslim jurists commented on the tradition of the ‘Day of Qurayza’ and used it as a precedent for their verdicts. Discussing Muḥammad’s leniency and kindness, the eminent Shāfi‘ī jurist al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) rhetorically asks where was the Prophet’s disposition to forgiveness and mercy when he beheaded 700 men of the Banū Qurayza in one single day. Al-Māwardī’s answer is that the Prophet was not permitted to forgive the Jews’ transgression since Sa‘d b. Mu‘ādh’s verdict was God’s order (*ḥuqūq-i Ilāhi*). The renowned Ḥanafī jurist al-Shaybānī (d. 189/805) permitted in his famous compilations of Muslim law, the killing of captured enemies based on the precedent of Muḥammad’s massacre of the Banū Qurayza. M. Kister, “The massacre of the Banū Qurayza: a re-examination of a tradition,” 61-74.

<sup>222</sup> Sa‘d al-Dawla’s death in 1291 was, indeed, followed by large scale anti-Jewish riots in Baghdad (below).

<sup>223</sup> Vaṣṣāf, 242; Bar Hebraeus, 486; P. Jackson, “Arḡūn Khan,” *Elr*. Accessed June 2, 2016.

<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/argun-khan-fourth-il-khan-of-iran-r683-90-1284-91>. Vaṣṣāf, furthermore, claims that Sa‘d al-Dawla had sent his coreligionist Najīb al-Dīn al-Kaḥḥāl to Khurasan with a list of two hundred names of notables to be executed and sent 17 names of religious scholars and notables to his nephew Shams al-

(*tahrīr*) of Vaṣṣāf’s *Tajziyat al-amṣār* (1963), to which modern-day historians often refer in order to decipher Vaṣṣāf’s impeccable prosimetrum, ‘Abd al-Muḥammad Ayatī indeed linked together Sa’d al-Dawla’s claim about the Ilkhan’s inheritance of prophethood from Chinggis Khan and the Jewish vizier’s alleged plans to charge Mecca presenting Vaṣṣāf as stating that Sa’d al-Dawla was planning to establish a new religion with the Ilkhan Arghun as its founding prophet.<sup>224</sup>

However, the later Ilkhanid author Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, who possibly drew on Vaṣṣāf’s work, contradicts Ayatī’s impression of this affair. He writes that the goal of Sa’d al-Dawla’s unexecuted military campaign against the Ka‘ba and ‘Alī’s shrine was to impose Buddhism on the Muslims (and not a new religion).<sup>225</sup> Qazwīnī’s “reading” of this episode seems more correct as some authors, indeed, associated pre-Islamic Arabian idolatry with Buddhism. In his *Life and Teachings of the Buddha*, for example, the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn writes that “before the acceptance of Islam, the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina along with some of the Arabs and Persians were Buddhists (*‘alā dīn Shākamūnī*) and that in the Ka‘ba they had worshipped idols resembling the Buddha, which Muḥammad had then ordered to be destroyed”.<sup>226</sup> Vaṣṣāf’s account might reflect, therefore, resentment over Sa’d al-Dawla’s appointment to the

---

Dawla Abhārī in Shiraz to be executed as well. Was the Jewish minister attempting to uproot the intellectual opposition to his appointment? On Sa’d al-Dawla’s appointment of his relatives and other Jews to key positions, see Fischel, *Jews*, 7-8.

<sup>224</sup> Ayatī, 135. His interpretation here also hinges on Ayatī’s understanding of the following phrase: *millatī-yi mutajaddid wa-dawlatī-yi mutahaddid dar rūzgār pāydār gudhār* as a reference to the establishment of a new religion. My translation of this line differs, however, from Ayatī. I suggest that Sa’d al-Dawla said to the Ilkhan that he would have a “rejuvenated [/fortunate] community and a guarded dynasty [/empire that] will endure in time” if he were to follow the example of Muḥammad. See the first footnote in this chapter. Ayatī’s reading of Vaṣṣāf has remained largely unquestioned by scholars of the Mongol Empire, who have repeated this understanding only to question the reliability of Vaṣṣāf’s alleged claim that Sa’d al-Dawla and the Ilkhan were co-conspiring to found a new religion. See for example Jackson, “Arḡūn Khan.”

<sup>225</sup> Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī, *Ẓafarnāma*, 2, 1323; Ward, *The Zafar-namah*, 2, 338-9.

<sup>226</sup> Quoted by Anna Akasoy, “The Buddha and the straight path. Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Life of the Buddha*: Islamic perspectives,” in *Rashīd al-Dīn*, 187. Arabic: Royal Asiatic Society A 27 (dated 714/1314-15), 2077r, reproduced in Karl Jahn, *Rashīd al-Dīn’s History of India: Collected Essays with Facsimiles and Indices* (London, 1965). See my discussion of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Life and Teachings of the Buddha* in chapter four.

vizierate that embroiled the Jewish vizier's growing influence at the court with Arghun's Buddhist inclinations in a Jewish-Buddhist-Mongol conspiracy threatening Muslim sacred sites.<sup>227</sup>

Two elements, however, stand out in Vaṣṣāf's "tainted" account, namely, the presentation of Muḥammad as a "violent prophet," and the second, Sa'd al-Dawla's "advice" to the Ilkhan in the context of the Ilkhan's Chinggisid inheritance and the elimination of Arghun's enemies for the sake of dynastic prosperity. These two elements resonate with other accounts on Arghun's court and his reign. Situating these two elements within the historical context of Arghun's cosmopolitan court might add to our understanding of Sa'd al-Dawla's role in the service of Arghun.

### **The "Bloody Prophet": Debating Buddhism and Islam at Arghun's Court**

Vaṣṣāf is unclear about when the exchange between the vizier and the Ilkhan took place, but due to its location in his narrative, Aubin assumed that Sa'd al-Dawla approached the Ilkhan with his proposal during the last few months of Arghun's life and Sa'd al-Dawla's career.<sup>228</sup>

However, clues in the episode as narrated by Vaṣṣāf, especially Sa'd al-Dawla's suggestion that the Ilkhan appoint him as his "debt collector" (*mutaqāzī-yi himmat-i 'ālī*), suggest that the

---

<sup>227</sup> Prazniak suggests that the Jewish Sa'd al-Dawla might have been allying himself at court with the Buddhists, who together with the Christian Nestorians were usually in opposition to the Muslim elite. Indeed, according to Vaṣṣāf, at least in one incident, Sa'd al-Dawla was able to convince a Bakhshī to present to the Ilkhan an accusation against his advisory amir Toghan, for which the latter received seventeen lashes. Roxann Prazniak, "Ilkhanid Buddhism: traces of a passage in Eurasian history," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56(3) (2014): 660. The Bakhshī's name is written G/K-R-B-N-D. There is a slight possibility that he is the same Buddhist priest "Paranda Bakhshī," who exerted great influence over Arghun. Vaṣṣāf, 239. For "Paranda Bakhshī," Devin DeWeese, "'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī's religious encounters at the Mongol court near Tabriz," in *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century Tabriz*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer, 63-4; Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1173-4; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 571-2. One way to interpret Sa'd al-Dawla's use of the term *milla* (religious community) alongside *dawlat* (dynasty, empire, turn in power) is to suggest that the former might reflect the notion of the Buddhist community (of monks or more broadly), the *Sangha*, one of the three Buddhist "refuges" or "jewels". Rashīd al-Dīn uses the term *milla* for Buddhism. See Emel Esin, "Four Turkish Bakhshi active in Iranian Lands," *Vth International Congress of Iranian Art & Archeology* 2 (Tehran, 1972), 66.

<sup>228</sup> Aubin, *Emirs Mongols*, 42-4.

reported incident probably should be placed earlier, at some point before Sa‘d al-Dawla was appointed by the Ilkhan as the supervisor of finances of Baghdad in Jumāda I 687/June 1288, and certainly before Arghun made him vizier in Jumāda II 688/June 1289.<sup>229</sup>

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Sa‘d al-Dawla was at court as Arghun’s physician during the autumn of 686/1287, but towards the end of 686/winter of 1287-1288, after convincing the Mongol amir Ordu Qaya and the Ilkhan that, he could raise more revenue from Baghdad, he left the court for the city. He returned to the Ilkhan’s summer camp in Qonqur Öläng with a treasure of retrieved taxes in Jumāda I 687/June 1288, at which point Arghun appointed Ordu Qaya as the amir (*imārat*) of Baghdad and Sa‘d al-Dawla as the city’s supervisor of finances (*mushrif*).<sup>230</sup> It seems, therefore, more plausible to date Sa‘d al-Dawla’s exchange with Arghun either to the period when he served as the ruler’s physician in 1287, or a year later, in June 1288, when he returned from Baghdad for the first time. This later date, Jumāda I 687/June 1288, is significant since it means that the Jewish physician crossed paths at the Ilkhan’s summer camp at Qonqur Öläng with another influential figure in Arghun’s court, the renowned Sufi ‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 736/1336).

A member of a politically influential family of court officials from Simnān, ‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī was in Arghun’s service from the age of 15. In 683/1284, as Simnānī set out to join Arghun’s forces on the battlefield against Arghun’s uncle, Aḥmad Tegüder, Simnānī

---

<sup>229</sup> Vaṣṣāf has Jumāda II 687/July 1288 as the date for Sa‘d al-Dawla’s appointment as chief minister (*ḥākim-i māl va-mulk*) after Ordu Qaya praises the physician’s tax collection skills before the Ilkhan. Vaṣṣāf also identifies this date as the date for Sa‘d al-Dawla’s second return from his treasury inspection trip to Baghdad. Rashīd al-Dīn, however, has a year later, Jumāda II 688/June 1289, as the month of Sa‘d al-Dawla’s appointment to the vizierate. The contemporaneous history of Baghdad, *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi‘a*, confirms Rashīd al-Dīn’s “timeline” with Sa‘d al-Dawla’s first trip to Baghdad on 686, his second inspection of the city’s finances in Muḥarram 687/February 1288 (which included also the removal from office of the city’s governor Qutlughshah), Sa‘d al-Dawla’s appointment as supervisor (*mushrif*) upon his return from his second trip to Baghdad (probably in Jumāda I 687/June 1288) and finally, his appointment as *ṣāhib-i dīvān* in 688 (Jumāda II 688/June 1289 according to Rashīd al-Dīn). Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*/Rawshan, 1164ff; Vaṣṣāf, 236-237; anonymous, *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi‘a*, 450-57.

<sup>230</sup> The *mushrif* seems to have been an independent financial supervising agent. Al-Jamil, 103.

experienced a spiritual vision that left him bewildered and paralyzed. Simnānī subsequently lost all interest in serving the Ilkhan. He began pursuing the life of a Sufi ascetic, fasting and repenting. After spending time away from the *ordu* at his hometown of Simnān, he decided to abandon royal service and head to Baghdad to study with the famous Sufi master Isfarāyīnī. He subsequently set out in Rabīʿ II 687/May 1288, but was detained by the order of the Ilkhan in Hamadān and taken to the Ilkhan’s summer camp. At Qonqur Öläng, he was made, according to his own account, to partake in debates with Buddhist priests. According to Simnānī, the Buddhist clergy, whom he refers to as “the lords of the idol worshippers,” had arrived from India, Tibet, Kashmir and the Uyghur territory in order to debate him. Qunqur Öläng, near where Sultāniyya (originally founded by Arghun) would later be built, was a significantly active Buddhist site where the Ilkhans partook in Buddhist rituals with the *bakhshīs*, Buddhist monks.<sup>231</sup> Simnānī’s detention at the Ilkhan’s camp ended in Shaʿbān 687/September 1288 when he left the court without Arghun’s permission.<sup>232</sup>

One of the fascinating autobiographical accounts left by Simnānī includes a description of his disputation with a Buddhist monk and his subsequent private conversation with the Ilkhan. The account, which is recorded forty years after his detention at the Ilkhan’s court, begins with Simnānī’s bold conduct at the ruler’s presence and his refusal to respond to Arghun’s friendly gestures. When, however, the Ilkhan orders one of the *bakhshīs* to his tent to dispute Simnānī, the latter views this as an opportunity to undo Arghun’s appreciation of the monk and expose the monk’s insufficient knowledge of his own religion. After successfully uncovering the Buddhist

---

<sup>231</sup> Prazniak, 665-6. For the rock-cut site, Arezou Azad, “Three rock-cut cave sites in Iran and their Ilkhanid Buddhist aspects reconsidered,” in *Islam and Tibet: Interactions along the Musk Routes*, ed. Anna Akasoy et al. (Surrey, 2011), 209-30.

<sup>232</sup> On Simnānī’s cultural interactions at the Ilkhanid court, life and career, see DeWeese, “‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī,” 35-76 (48 and 55 for the dates of his detention); Elias, *Throne Carrier*, 15-31.

monk as a fraud, Simnānī was made to accompany Arghun to a private garden where the ruler took his hand and had him sit on the ground beside him.

The friendly and intimate conversation between the two soon arrived at Simnānī's adherence to Islam and its prophet's violent dispositions. First asking Simnānī how "someone like him" could follow a "false religion" (*dīn-i bātil*), Arghun subsequently used Simnānī's earlier refutation of the *bakhshī* and compared the Buddha's precepts regarding the safeguarding of all forms of life from harm, even the "blades of the grass," to the Prophet "Muḥammad's *yasāq*," his command that makes people eager, if not obliged to shed blood. Arghun further explains that Muḥammad commanded his army to combat the infidels on the premise that "if you kill them, you will go to heaven and if they kill you, you will go to heaven," which in Arghun's mind, led to an increase in the death toll on both sides.

Inspired by the garden setting of his intimate audience with Arghun, Simnānī replies with a comparison of the Prophet Muḥammad to a gardener trimming a tree, the Muslims to the good branches and the infidels to the trimmed, bad branches. The Muslims, he explains, cut the bad branches so that the "blessings/graces (*ni' mathā*), which they [the infidels] consume and then act rebelliously (*ma'ṣiyat*), the Muslims would consume and show obedience".<sup>233</sup> As DeWeese notes, Simnānī's accounts of his disputation with the Buddhist monk and conversation with Arghun, as well as his more favorable accounts of his relationships with a prominent Indian Buddhist (Paranda Bakhshī) and an ascetic Jewish Rabbi, highlight the fluid and eclectic religious environment of Arghun's court, but also the staged and ordered nature of Ilkhanid court debates and the tense atmosphere between the different practitioners at the Ilkhan's cosmopolitan camp.<sup>234</sup>

---

<sup>233</sup> DeWeese, "'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī," 48-53; 'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī, *'Alā'uddawla Simnānī: Opera Minora*, ed. W. M. Thackston (Cambridge, 1988), 185-188.

<sup>234</sup> For the competition at the Mongol courts between different religious specialists and knowledge purveyors and the lack of a differentiation between "wise men" and "holy men," and the theme of deriving advice from these figures as

Furthermore, Simnānī's autobiographical accounts demonstrate first the Mongol ruler's personal engagement in comparing the dogmas' of the Buddha and the Prophet Muḥammad, and second that, his view of Islam was mediated through the Buddhist priests he held dear. The Prophet Muḥammad's law (*yasāq*) and supposed promotion of war and violence was probably one argument raised, as an opposition to the religion of Islam, by the Buddhists at court disputations and other interactions with the Ilkhan. Simnānī's answer to the Mongol ruler, who was posing as a promoter of non-violence and peace in the face of a blood thirsty Prophet, is also fascinating in this regard. Simnānī does not only use metaphors from his immediate environment, but also frames his response in terms compatible to the Mongols' division of the world into obedient subjects and illegitimate rebels, implying that the infidels were both enemies of Allāh and the Mongol Ilkhan. In fact, we will see that Sa'd al-Dawla's *maḥḍar* used similar terms in reference to Arghun's role as a world regulator king.<sup>235</sup>

Along with his interest in asceticism and austerities,<sup>236</sup> the issue of violence and government seems to have troubled Arghun.<sup>237</sup> Vaṣṣāf writes that at the beginning of his reign, the Ilkhan developed a particular aversion to killing so that once during a court celebration, Arghun became distressed when his eyes fell on the innocent lamb butchered for the occasion. Arghun's vegetarian proclivities are also intriguingly echoed in a contemporaneous account found in Baybars al-Manṣūrī's Mamluk history, *Zubdat al-fikra*. Referring to the claim that Arghun was poisoned by Sa'd al-Dawla, Baybars al-Manṣūrī writes that it is reported that the

---

a Steppe cultural-political pattern, see also Reuven Amitai, "Hülegü and the wise men: topos or reality?" in *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission*, 15-34.

<sup>235</sup> Peter Jackson, "World-conquest," 3-22.

<sup>236</sup> DeWeese, "'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī," 62. For Arghun's rigorous practice as Buddhist, Prazniak, "Ilkhanid Buddhism," 666.

<sup>237</sup> 'Phags-pa Lama (1235-1280), member of the 'Khon family rulers of the Sa-skya monastery, who enjoyed a close relationship with Qubilai and the Yuan imperial family and was appointed in 1277 by Qubilai as viceroy over Tibet, too advised Qubilai to govern according to Buddhism's moral principles and avoid violence since peace will be obtained by peace alone and "fire must be put out by water, not by fire itself." Sh. Bira, "Qubilai Qa'an and 'Phags-pa Bla-ma," in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (Leiden, 1999), 246.

Ilkhan “adhered to the religion of the *bakhshīs* [Buddhism, *dīn al-bakhshiyya*], and they are the group [*tā’ifa*] famed for idol worshiping and sorcery [*al-sihr*] and he attached great importance to their path [*tarīqa*], particularly to the group [*tā’ifa*] related to the Brahmans of India [*barāhmat al-hind*];<sup>238</sup> he would spend forty days each year in seclusion [*khalwa*] in devotion [*yataḥannatha*] and would avoid eating meat”.<sup>239</sup>

According to Vaṣṣāf, it was under Sa‘d al-Dawla’s influence that Arghun transitioned from an advocate of extreme pacifism to a fervent blood shedder. He relates that, at his orders, a hundred men would be executed for a single, minor crime. In a striking resemblance to Simnānī’s private chat with Arghun, Vaṣṣāf reports that Sa‘d al-Dawla had explained to the Ilkhan the necessity of royal violence and ferocity for maintaining order by comparing the ruler to a gardener assigned with embellishing “the rose garden of the dynasty/empire” (*dawlat*). The gardener must trim the thorns of denial (*khār-i inkār*), that is, the transgressors and evildoers, who wish to harm the kingdom’s (*salṭanat*) splendor.<sup>240</sup>

---

<sup>238</sup> Probably in reference to the Kashmiri Buddhists that were popular at Arghun’s court. Prazniak, “Ilkhanid Buddhism,” 665-6.

<sup>239</sup> Baybars al-Manṣūrī repeats a story found also in Rashīd al-Dīn’s history concerning the Indian (Kashmiri) *bakhshī* who arrived at Arghun’s court with the promise to prepare for Arghun a concoction that would prolong his life. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Arghun took the elixir, made from sulphur and quicksilver, for nearly eight months. Arghun then entered into a forty-day retreat. Following the retreat, Arghun became very sick and was treated. He regained his health but had a relapse after which he died. Interestingly, there are some linguistic similarities between the two accounts; yet, to the best of my knowledge, the Mamluk sources alone mention Arghun’s avoidance from meat during his seclusions. Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta’rīkh al-hijra* (Beirut, 1998), 284-5; Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1179; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 574. The same account appears also in Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (Cairo, 1985) 27, 273-4. Elverskog notes that the prohibition on eating animals was never advocated by the Buddha; it appeared later and was only adopted and applied in China and Buddhist cultures that followed it (Japan and Korea). In his discussion of the Buddha, Rashīd al-Dīn does note that the Buddha forbid drinking wine and eating meat. Elverskog notes this as a confirmation that Chinese Buddhists were present at the Ilkhanid court. However, this account links Arghun’s “vegetarianism” to the Kashmiri Buddhists. Prazniak identifies a gradual shift in the eclectic Ilkhanid Buddhist community under Ilkhanid patronage to a growing influx of Buddhist Kashmiri practitioners, who were less military skilled than the *bakhshīs* of Uyghur Turkic origin, but more “political savvy.” Johan Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road* (Philadelphia, 2010), 161. For the eclectic, diversified and cosmopolitan composition of “Ilkhanid Buddhism,” Elverskog, 117-174, Prazniak, “Ilkhanid Buddhism,” 650-80.

<sup>240</sup> Vaṣṣāf, 242-3.



Vaṣṣāf's account and Simnānī's recollections of his conversations with Arghun indicate that in the summer of 1288, when both Simnānī and Sa'd al-Dawla were present at the Ilkhan's summer camp, the Ilkhan was preoccupied with questions about royal violence and, in particular, what was viewed as Muslim sanctioned violence against non-Muslims. Sa'd al-Dawla's argument that the Ilkhan should follow the example of Muḥammad's harsh treatment of his enemies can be read as a response to a similar charge made by the Ilkhan, or one of his Buddhist debaters in the context of Arghun's court disputations (where religious founders and dogmas were compared), or during Sa'd al-Dawla's less public audiences with the ruler. In Vaṣṣāf's account, Sa'd al-Dawla proves himself to be a shrewd politician linking his own aspirations to advance in the ladder of the administrative service of the realm with the ruler's concerns over the nature of government and dislike of violence colored by his engagement with a trans-regional and eclectic Buddhism. Sa'd al-Dawla uses the example of Muḥammad, of whose conduct Arghun seems to have particularly disapproved, to explain to the Ilkhan the pragmatism of state sanctioned violence: the prosperity of his (religious) community (*milla*) and dynasty/government (*dawlat*) depends on fervently protecting the realm from the Ilkhan's own enemies. But who were these enemies that Sa'd al-Dawla was preaching the Ilkhan in their regard?

In chapter one, I discussed the change in Arghun's policy towards his contending Hülegüid cousins, following Buqa's fall from power in 1289. During the summer and fall of 688/1289, Arghun embarked on a series of executions of his most senior cousins including the prime Ilkhanid candidates for the throne, Jūshkeb s. Jumghur, Hülegü s. Hülegü, and Qara Noqai s. Yoshmut s. Hülegü along with their descendants. According to Vaṣṣāf's account, there was widespread Hülegüid opposition to Arghun's occupation of the Ilkhanid throne. Sa'd al-Dawla played a role in amir Buqa's fall from grace revealing to the Ilkhan the misgivings of Buqa's

brother Aruq in Baghdad. It was Buqa's execution that paved the path for Sa'd al-Dawla's advancement to the vizierate. Arghun's dynastic situation was on the Ilkhan's mind in Qonqur Öläng, during the summer of 687/1288, when the exchange between Sa'd al-Dawla and the Ilkhan appears to have taken place.

Arghun's resolution to resolve his lack of seniority by executing his more senior Hülegüid cousins coincides, therefore, with his appointment of Sa'd al-Dawla to the vizierate in Jumāda II 688/June 1289. Had Sa'd al-Dawla and his penchant for executing his opposition influenced the Ilkhan's decision in this, and was Sa'd al-Dawla using Arghun's dynastic insecurity to remove the vizier's opponents from the bureaucratic ranks as well? I suggest that it was in this context, of Arghun's dynastic insecurities, that Sa'd al-Dawla experimented with the notion of Chinggis Khan's prophethood to support Arghun's claim to rightful inheritance of the Ilkhanid throne and Chinggisid charisma.

Elverskog has argued that we keep in mind the cosmopolitan Buddhist world of the Ilkhanate when we consider distinct developments in Iran under Mongol rule.<sup>241</sup> Sa'd al-Dawla would have surely rubbed shoulders with Buddhist priests and other Eurasian religious interlocutors when he shrewdly climbed his way up to Arghun's side, as did Simnānī when he desperately clawed his way out of the Ilkhan's court. I suggest that it is this religiously eclectic and highly competitive Eurasian court environment – where “Muḥammad's *yasāq*” might be compared to the Buddha's lessons, a Mongol monarch preaches against violence and for vegetarianism, and the support of Buddhist shrines was no less than a political statement of the Abaqaid dynastic project (chapter one) - that we should have in mind when considering Sa'd al-Dawla's claim that the Ilkhan was heir to Chinggis Khan's prophethood.

---

<sup>241</sup> Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam*, 162-74.

## ***Cakravartin* or Prophet: The Reversion of Chinggis Khan**

It is conceivable that the concept of prophethood would come up in such a setting, a conversation or debate at court in the presence of the Buddhists or in relation to the Ilkhan Arghun's Buddhist inclinations. As we will see in chapter four, the relationship between Islamic prophethood and Chinggisid sacral kingship was also a central concern at the court audiences and debates at the court of Arghun's son, the Ilkhan Öljeitü. In his section on India in his world history, the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, Rashīd al-Dīn offers a comparative prophetology. He makes the Dharma comprehensible to his Muslim readers by paralleling Buddhist perceptions of Heaven and Hell to Muslim visions of the afterlife, and by ingeniously presenting the Buddha as a "prophet (*nabī*) with a book" arriving at the end of a progressing line of seven prophets. Rashīd al-Dīn offers his own "reconceptualization of Indian religious history" within a distinctively Islamic framework.<sup>242</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn's efforts in cultural translation possibly had precedents in comparing the Dharma and Islam, as we learn from Simnānī's account.

The Buddha, however, was not the only one recast as a monotheist prophet in Ilkhanid Iran. The association of Chinggis Khan with prophethood is found in several, mostly fourteenth-century Ilkhanid works. The later Ilkhanid author Muḥammad Shabānkāra'ī (d. 738/1337) attributes Chinggis Khan's remarkable success as a world conqueror to God's infinite grace arguing that had the world conqueror embraced the religion of Islam, "one could have said that he had a share in prophethood".<sup>243</sup> As Michal Biran points out, the association of Chinggis Khan with prophethood or a near-prophethood was connected to the broader tendency of fourteenth-century

---

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 154-6.

<sup>243</sup> *Az nubuvvat bā bahra būdah ast*. A few lines later, praising Mongol rule, Shabānkāra'ī adds that "one might say that government and kingship [*salṭanat wa-mamlakat*] culminated in/were sealed with [*khatm shud*] them just as prophethood was sealed with Muḥammad." Muḥammad Shabānkāra'ī, *Majma' al-ansāb* (Tehran, 1363/1984), 223-4; Judith Pfeiffer, "Confessional ambiguity," 157.

Ilkhanid authors to retrospectively “monotheisize” Chinggis Khan’s biography.<sup>244</sup> An account about Chinggis Khan’s early career found in the encyclopedia of the Mamluk official al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333) remarkably combines the depiction of Chinggis Khan as a *ḥanīf*, that is, an original monotheist or proto-monotheist, his semi-prophetic status, and the role of a Jew as a harbinger of his future success. According to al-Nuwayrī, before his rise to power, Chinggis Khan became an ascetic (*tazahadda*) in the mountains after asking a Jew: “what gave Mūsā, ‘Isā and Muḥammad this exalted position [*al-manzala al-‘azīma*] and spread their fame?” and how he, too, could attain their rank. The Jew advised Chinggis Khan to devote himself to God adding that “in our books [it is written] that you will have a dynasty which will triumph [*dawla satuzhar*].” Chinggis Khan follows the Jew’s advice and becomes an ascetic eating only permissible food and receiving pilgrims (*ziyāra*). Al-Nuwayrī further stresses Chinggis Khan’s “Hanifism” by concluding with the statement that even though Chinggis Khan did not belong to any religious community (*milla*), he, nevertheless, had a love for God. The role of the Jew as a harbinger of Chinggis Khan’s triumph is reminiscent of the role of the Jews and the Jewish scriptures as heralds of Muḥammad’s prophethood in the Muslim tradition. Amitai suggests that the story reported by al-Nuwayrī might have originated in the way some Mongols in the Ilkhanate explained their own conversion to Islam.<sup>245</sup>

The retrospective “monotheisization” of Chinggis Khan should also be viewed as a form of post-conversion “reversion.” Atwood discusses in terms of reversion, rather than conversion, the adoption of Confucianism by members of the Yuan dynasty. The “Confucian party among the

---

<sup>244</sup> For example, writing about Chinggis Khan’s war with Ong Khan, Shabānkāra’ī claims that Chinggis Khan had an intimate relationship with God, even though he was not a Muslim, and elsewhere, has Chinggis Khan directly address God. Shabānkāra’ī, 227. The Ilkhanid historian ḤamdAllāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī too compared the escape of the Mongols’ mythical ancestors to the valley of Ergene Qum to Muḥammad’s *hijra*. See discussion and further examples in Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan* (Oxford, 2007), 114-21.

<sup>245</sup> Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 27, 207-8; Amitai, “Did Chinggis Khan have a Jewish Teacher?”, 119-120. Other Mamluk authors, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) for example, used the claim that the Mongols equated Chinggis Khan with Muḥammad even after their conversion to Islam, to accuse the Mongols of blasphemy. Amitai, “Did Chinggis Khan have a Jewish Teacher?”, 698-99; Pfeiffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 158-9.

Mongols” under Qubilai Khan based their patronage of Confucianism on the definition of their turn to Confucianism not as “conversion to foreign, Chinese Confucianism, but ‘reversion’ to the basic traditions of the [Mongol] empire’s founder, recast, of course, as congruent with Confucian political and ritual principles.” Chinggis Khan was “reborn” as a proto-Confucian.<sup>246</sup> By casting Chinggis Khan as a Confucian, conversion to Confucianism and adherence to Confucian precepts becomes a channel for claiming continuity with the empire’s founder’s legacy.<sup>247</sup>

Mongol adherence to Buddhism, in particular, Tantric Tibetan Buddhism was also defined in terms of reversion. The *Shes bya rab gsal* (“The Explanation of the Subject of Cognition”) is a Tibetan Buddhist guidebook composed in 1278 for Qubilai’s second son prince Jin-gim by the influential ‘Phags-pa Lama (Noble Guru, 1235-1280). ‘Phags-pa Lama was a member of the ‘Khon family rulers of the Sakya (Sa-skya) monastery and the Mongols’ imperial preceptor over Tibet. His guidebook situates the Chinggisids within the history of sacred Buddhist kingship of India and Tibet. In *Shes bya rab gsal*, the Chinggisids line appears as the culmination of a history of Buddhist cosmocrats and *cakravartin* kings starting with the divine origins and sacred genealogy of the ‘Khon/Sakya family of Lamas, and with Mahasammata and the mythical Buddhist King Asoka, and encompassing the Buddhist kings of India and Tibet. In addition to connecting ‘Phags-pa Lama’s own lineage to the Mongol dynasty, the text situates, therefore, the Chinggisids within a genealogy of universal sacred Buddhist kingship. Chinggis Khan’s appearance is dated to 3,250 years from the Buddha’s nirvana. His success as world conqueror is credited to the merit he stored in his former lives. Bringing “many countries of different languages and races under his power,” Chinggis Khan is likened to a *cakravartin*

---

<sup>246</sup> Atwood, “Explaining rituals,” 95-100.

<sup>247</sup> Reversion of the ancestors was also based on the notion of the Mongol ruler as an untutored genius who enjoys an innate knowledge of great agrarian religious traditions with no previous training. The Mongol ruler was understood as “an independent and intuitive font of law and wisdom, superior to, but *not* inconsistent [my emphasis] with, the best teachings of the religions.” The superiority of his personal wisdom thus confirmed with the religious written traditions of the conquered. Ibid., “The Mongol Empire and early modernity,” *forthcoming*. I am grateful to Christopher Atwood for sharing with me a draft of this paper.

king, the (iron) wheel turning king, a Buddhist universal emperor. His lineage continues with his son Ögödei Qa'an and Ögödei's son Güyük. Tolui, who "obtained the rank of Khan and ruled supreme," is mentioned next although he had never held the office of Qa'an. Tolui is followed by his sons Möngke and Qubilai, who "ruled over far more dominions than his predecessors" and "after entering the Door of Precious Teaching, has protected his realm according to the Dharma." This history ends with Qubilai's designated heir and second son prince Jin-gim, "who is endowed with all the glory of Heaven," and with a brief note on prince Jin-gim's siblings.<sup>248</sup>

The likening of Chinggis Khan (or Qubilai in other instances) to the *cakravartin* situates the Mongol rulers within the succession line of Buddhist holy rulers, but also articulates and sanctifies the Mongols' own universal claim. It is exactly this universalizing claim of Buddhist cosmocracy that won for the Buddhist party the 1258 debate between the Taoists and Buddhists at Qubilai's court.<sup>249</sup>

Qubilai, who was twice initiated by 'Phags-pa into the Sakya cult, becomes in 'Phags-pa's political theology the "representation or substitute of the original *cakravartin*, Chinggis Khan".<sup>250</sup> The depiction of the imperial founder as a wheel-turning king or Buddhist world emperor was not unique to the

---

<sup>248</sup> 'Phags-pa, *Prince Jiñ-Gim's textbook of Tibetan Buddhism*, trans. Constance Hoog (Leiden, 1983), 39-43.

<sup>249</sup> Sh. Bira, 244-45; Herbert Franke, *From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor and God: the legitimation of the Yuan dynasty* (Munich, 1978), 54-59.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 61; Sh. Bira, 244. In the short treatises dedicated to Qubilai and his family members, 'Phags-pa advises Qubilai about matters of government preaching, for example, against royal violence, and argues that Qubilai rules in accordance with the Dharma. Sh. Bira, 246; 'Phags-pa, *Prince Jiñ-Gim's textbook of Tibetan Buddhism*, 43. Furthermore, 'Phags-pa's works espouse a political theology, which similar to the Persianate "two powers," envisioned a dual system of authority invested in the "two orders" or "principles" of religion and state, *nom-un yosun* and *törö-yin yosun*. 'Phags-pa's division of authority into religious affairs and state affairs corresponded to the twin Buddha/Lama and *cakravartin*/Buddhist king, which were personified by 'Phags-pa Lama himself and Chinggis Khan/Qubilai, as it came to be articulated later, from the sixteenth-century onwards, in the theories of the ideal Mongol-Tibetan state. Franke and Bira both attribute the theory to 'Phags-pa himself. Sh. Bira, 246ff; and Franke, 61. Dunnell, who is less convinced, suggests that "certainly the relationship between 'Phags-pa and Qubilai [...] set important precedents that Mongolian and Tibetan writers of the late-sixteenth century and early-seventeenth centuries systematically propagated." Ruth Dunnell, "The Hsia origins of the Yüan Institution of Imperial Preceptor," *Asia Minor* 51 (1992), 108. For the later, sixteenth century bifurcated nature of Mongol authority – when "Mongol political authority came to be ritualized through parallel systems of legitimacy: God's blessing and the Dharma," see Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing* (Honolulu, 2006), 42-62. Interestingly, Sa'd al-Dawla promised Arghunin Vaṣṣāf's account a rejuvenated or fortunate community (*milla*) and a fortunate dynasty/empire/state (*davlat*) (above), which might correspond to such a division into *nom* and *törö* or Dharma and state, another indication that Sa'd al-Dawla's exchange with the Ilkhan was related to debates between Muslims and Buddhists at the Ilkhan's camp.

Mongols. Buddhism provided a plethora of semiotic resources to couch an emperor's life in Buddhist idioms. The *cakravartin* was seen as the flip side of the coin of the Buddha: the same amount of merit accumulated in previous lives awarded one with the choice between the two parallel career paths.<sup>251</sup>

In *Shes bya rab gsal*, 'Phags-pa' presents Buddhism as a Chinggisid family affair, beginning with Chinggis Khan and ending with the heir-apparent prince Jin-gim, who is favorably presented here as an avid Buddhist supporter, and as Qubilai's eldest, in spite of his being Qubilai's second son. Furthermore, the incorporation of Tolui as well into the sacral line of Buddhist Chinggisid monarchs reveals the author's intention to sanctify and promote a specific linear succession pattern leading from Chinggis Khan to Qubilai and Jin-gim, while disregarding other competing family branches. The Tibetan Buddhist textbook, thus, uses Buddhist models of sacral authority to present the relationship of the prince, Qubilai's designated heir, with his charismatic ancestor Chinggis Khan, in both hereditary Mongol and Buddhist terms. It supports the prince's future claim to rightful succession on both Chinggisid and Buddhist grounds.

In his study of the cult of Chinggis Khan, Elverskog has observed that "the holding of the state was a sacred enterprise of the Mongols, and the privilege to rule was conferred only through the right worship and reverence of Chinggis Khan [...]"<sup>252</sup> Furthermore, he suggested that Chinggis Khan's "successors understood their rule only within a relationship between themselves and Chinggis Khan, who had the initial right to rule bestowed upon him by God" and

---

<sup>251</sup> The Buddha is "a world emperor *in potentia*, a sort of photonegative emperor." Craig J. Reynolds, "Power," in *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*, ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Chicago, 2005), 220-21. Yongjia considers the *cakravartin* kings in terms of cosmocrators, kings who (in contrast to the stranger-kings) are "supra-social hosts." Liang Yongjia, "Stranger-kingship and cosmocracy; or, Sahlins in Southwest China," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 12/3 (2011): 236-54.

<sup>252</sup> Elverskog, *Our Great Qing*, 53-54.

that, Chinggis Khan, therefore, became “from founder of the empire to the sanctified holder of the right to rule”.<sup>253</sup>

The ability of Buddhists, Confucians, Muslims and other religious interlocutors to successfully re-create, sustain, and reinforce with their own traditions claims to a direct link to Chinggis Khan was a particularly valuable skill for the Mongols, in an empire fraught by constant succession struggles and recurring attempts to establish new dynastic dispensations. “Reversion” of Chinggis became, therefore, a means for both supporting dynastic claims of continuity and legitimate inheritance of government, but also for “converting” the Mongol patrons.<sup>254</sup>

The Abaqaid family in Iran too adopted Tibetan-Tantric Buddhism. However, whereas Qubilai sponsored the Sakya sect of central Tibet to consolidate his rule over Tibet, Hülegü financially supported from the mid-1250s the monasteries of the two Kaygü suborders (Drigungpa and Pakmo Drukpa) that were located in his territories in western Tibet.<sup>255</sup> Franke notes that the influence of the Sakya sect probably did not penetrate beyond the Yuan imperial family,<sup>256</sup> and that, there is no indication that members of the sect or ‘Phags-pa’s ideological texts had traveled to the Ilkhanate.<sup>257</sup> However, the Yuan and Ilkhanid courts did maintain close ties under the two Buddhist rulers, Arghun and Qubilai. Qubilai appears to have backed Arghun, even before the latter overcame the Muslim Aḥmad Tegüder in 1284. During Arghun’s reign, two embassies arrived from China in a relatively timely manner.

---

<sup>253</sup> Ibid., 50, 52.

<sup>254</sup> Elverskog furthermore demonstrates how the early modern Mongols held a dual system of legitimacy to sanctify and confirm Mongol political authority – one through maintain the ritualistic cult of Chinggis Khan, which mediated divine sanctification/God’s blessing, and another, through the model of ideal Buddhist rule (*cakravartin*). Ibid., 54-58. See also introduction here.

<sup>255</sup> Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam*, 149; Prazniak, “Ilkhanid Buddhism,” 655. For the dominance of Kashmiri Buddhism at the Ilkhanid court from Arghun onwards, ibid., 662-3.

<sup>256</sup> Franke, 58.

<sup>257</sup> Yoeli-Tlalim has, however, singled out some possible indications for the significance of Tibetan input, or more likely, “an Ilkhanid variation of Tibetan Buddhism” for Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Life of the Buddha*. For one, Rashīd al-Dīn speaks of the Tibetans and Tanguts as having “a pure religion.” See Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, “Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Life of the Buddha*. Some Tibetan perspectives,” in *Rashīd al-Dīn*, 197-211.



The first embassy that took only seventeen months to arrive included Bolad noyan, a praised confidant of Qubilai and senior official at the Yuan court, who had earned the prestigious title of *ch'enggg-hsiang* (“chancellor”).<sup>258</sup> The second embassy, which arrived in January 1286 bearing Arghun’s patent of investiture from the Qa’an Qubilai (and the amir Buqa’s title of *ch'eng-hsiang*), was headed by Ordu Qaya (Urdūqiyā). Arghun had sent him earlier to China to gain the Qa’an’s support, before overtaking the throne from his uncle.<sup>259</sup> While Bolad’s interactions with Rashīd al-Dīn have been determined as “the major conduit of cultural exchange between Iran and China,” it is also plausible that other individuals such as Ordu Qaya conveyed certain ideas from Qubilai’s environment.<sup>260</sup>

Ordu Qaya was also Sa’d al-Dawla’s main culprit at the Ilkhanid court. The two had met at the Ilkhan’s camp in the summer after Ordu Qaya’s return, where, as Rashīd al-Dīn notes, Sa’d al-Dawla, who at the time served as Arghun’s physician, observed the Ilkhan’s appreciation of Ordu Qaya. Sa’d al-Dawla used Ordu Qaya’s close relationship with the Ilkhan to bring before the ruler the issue of Baghdad’s overdue taxes. Sa’d al-Dawla and Ordu Qaya left together for Baghdad shortly after. Ilkhanid historians depict the pair as constant plotters involved in numerous political intrigues in their short time in power.<sup>261</sup>

The question of direct contacts between the two courts aside, the support of Buddhism in the

---

<sup>258</sup> Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 27-8.

<sup>259</sup> According to the *Shu’ab-i panjāna*, Ordu Qaya was a Uyghur commander (and therefore, likely Buddhist as well) and a *sükürchi* (parasol bearer). *Shu’ab-i panjāna* (Arghun’s commanders).

<sup>260</sup> Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 27-8.

<sup>261</sup> In Vaṣṣāf’s account, Sa’d al-Dawla is sent on official duty to Baghdad after taking advantage of his private engagements with the Ilkhan while performing Arghun’s medical procedures to raise before the latter the issue of Baghdad’s finances and the misgivings of amir Aruq, who was according to the Jewish doctor, keeping the city’s revenue in his own treasury. On the other hand, Vaṣṣāf writes that Ordu Qaya spoke favorably about Sa’d al-Dawla to the Ilkhan when the Jewish doctor and the amir returned from Baghdad after their second trip and that since the Ilkhan considered Ordu Qaya a trustworthy advisor, Arghun promoted Sa’d al-Dawla to chief minister of the realm (*ḥākim-i māl va-mulk*). According to Vaṣṣāf, from that moment on, Sa’d al-Dawla did as he wished in running the state and appointing trusted governors. Vaṣṣāf, 236-7. Ordu Qaya might have, therefore, served as a channel between Sa’d al-Dawla and the ideological atmosphere at Qubilai’s court.

Ilkhanate was never without political connotations.<sup>262</sup> The extensive financial and material support for the construction and maintaining of Buddhist complexes in Ilkhanid territories indicates that the patronage of Buddhist communities was also “an essential part of early Ilkhanid political vision”.<sup>263</sup> Furthermore, as discussed in chapter one, the support of Tibetan Buddhism appears to have had a significant dynastic-Abaqid dimension in Ilkhanid Iran.<sup>264</sup> Buddhist patronage provided the Abaqids with a means of claiming continuity with Hülegü, and overcoming their problematic succession to the throne. Furthermore, I suggested that Rashīd al-Dīn’s identification in his history of the Abaqid-Hülegüid-Toluid-Chinggisid line with monotheism drew on the earlier Abaqid appropriation of Buddhism, as part of its dynastic project.<sup>265</sup>

Was Sa’d al-Dawla following the example of the Buddhist clergy at the court, who translated and fortified Arghun’s claim to dynastic inheritance, and was seeking to offer an alternative model that would enable him to gain the Ilkhan’s proximity at the expense of Arghun’s Buddhist advisors?<sup>266</sup> Sa’d al-Dawla, in other words, seems to have been using the

---

<sup>262</sup> Was Qubilai using Buddhism to consolidate the Toluid seizure of the Mongol Empire from both its ends, China and Iran? Samuel Grupper suggests that from its onset, Hülegü’s support of Buddhist communities in Western Tibet and especially his establishment of the monastery of Labnasagut (in Ala-Tay mountains in Armenia, near his summer residence) carried a dynastic dimension. Grupper, furthermore, identifies Hülegü’s Buddhist “leniencies” as part of a larger trend in the Mongol imperial circles (“the building programs undertaken by Hülegü suggests that on the level of architecture and iconography he made Labnasagut a priority and that he clearly was the equal of Mongke and Qubilai when it came to sponsoring Buddhist monasteries and places of worship” (39)) suggesting that, in general, the support of Buddhism was aligned with the Mongol imperial project. Grupper, “The Buddhist sanctuary,” 5-77.

<sup>263</sup> Prazniak, “Ilkhanid Buddhism,” 658ff. Prazniak describes “the Buddhist revival” under the Ilkhans in terms of a “corridor of Buddhist temples between the Black Sea and the are south of the Caspian Sea, along routes that linked Anatolia to the Indus River Valley and Uighurstan.” Among the sites in the Ilkhanate, we find Buddhist building in Ala-Tagh, Khoi, Tabriz, Maragha, Takht-i Sulayman and Sultaniyya.

<sup>264</sup> As noted, Abaq personally assigned the Buddhist monks who were to educate and train Ghazan, suggesting that Abaq’s special attention to his grandson’s education was part of his designation of Ghazan as a rightful heir to the Ilkhanid-Abaqid throne. The portraits of Ghazan’s father Arghun hung on the walls of Buddhist shrines in the Ilkhanate. His brother and successor Geikhatu followed the advice of the Buddhists at court and used in his edicts and coins his Buddhist Tibeto-Mongolian name Iringin Dorji.

<sup>265</sup> We might wonder, therefore, if Sa’d al-Dawla’s claim that Arghun inherited prophethood from Chinggis Khan akin to Rashīd al-Dīn’s retrospective “monothesization” of the Chinggisids along a succession line from Chinggis Khan to Ghazan.

<sup>266</sup> It should not surprise us, therefore, that according to Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative, Sa’d al-Dawla’s fall from power begins with a Buddhist monk (*bakhshī*). The latter serves Arghun, who had just recovered from near fatal illness, several goblets of wine causing the ruler’s relapse. With Arghun on death-bed, Sa’d al-Dawla loses his protection at

notion of prophethood to reinforce Arghun's claim to rightful inheritance of the Ilkhanid throne and to place Arghun's claim to a sacred link with the empire's founder above the claims of other contending senior Hülegüid princes. Vaṣṣāf's account suggests, indeed, that Sa'd al-Dawla was successful in manipulating the Ilkhan and ascribes to the Jewish vizier Arghun's transition from his earlier Buddhist-inspired pacifist policy to his later blood-thirsty attitude. Sa'd al-Dawla's experimentation with the model of Chinggisid prophethood, nevertheless, appears to have been short-lived, as the Jewish vizier in Vaṣṣāf's account subsequently sets out to ground the Ilkhan's sovereignty in a different and more elaborate political model, one that he appropriates from Ṭūsī's *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī*.

### **Sa'd al-Dawla's Ṭūsīan *Maḥḍar* and the *Akhlāq-Ethical* Model of Kingship**

The Jewish vizier's advice to the Ilkhan is followed in *Tajziyat al-amṣār* by a different account about Sa'd al-Dawla's attempt to issue a document, referred to as Sa'd al-Dawla's *maḥḍar*, the manifesto. Vaṣṣāf starts this report with the statement that out of his hatred of the Muslims and desire for fortune, the Ilkhan Arghun issued an edict (*yarlīgh*) prohibiting all Muslims from working in the *dīvān* and from entering the *ordu*, the Ilkhanid court.<sup>267</sup> Subsequently, we are provided with a first-hand testimony from Vaṣṣāf's patron Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Khālīdī al-

---

court and finds himself arrested and executed shortly before the Ilkhan's death. Rashīd al-Dīn's plot leading to the Jewish vizier's death includes the dream of an unspecified shaman (*qāmī*). A co-conspirator of the Mongol opposition to the pair of Sa'd al-Dawla and Ordu Qaya, the *qāmī* dreams that infant children (*aṭṭāl-i khurd*) of two of Arghun's executed cousins (Qara Noḡai and Hülegü s. Hülegü) appear before the Ilkhan asking him why they were executed. In the shaman's dream, Arghun accuses another Mongol commander of executing them without his permission. The latter is put on trial and accuses the Ilkhan of ordering it. In Rashīd al-Dīn's narrative, the subsequent execution of the commander leads to Sa'd al-Dawla's arrest and execution. Ultimately, it was the animosity that Sa'd al-Dawla's policies generated with some of the Mongol commanders at court that led to his demise. Vaṣṣāf, 244; Ayatī, 147; Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1179-80; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 575.

<sup>267</sup> This is also confirmed by Bar Hebraeus, who writes that when Arghun recognized that the "deceit" of the Arab scribes, he appointed Sa'd al-Dawla, who was at the time Baghdad's governor as "chief of the scribes [...] in all the dominion of his kingdom," and ordered that "governors should never, never appoint the Arab [Muslim] to be a scribe, but only the Christian and the Jew." Bar Hebraeus blames this policy for the growth of anti-Christian resentment among the Muslim population. Bar Hebraeus, 484-5.

Zanjānī (d. Rajab 697/May 1298), who would later replace Sa‘d al-Dawla as vizier and take part in the Ilkhanid succession struggles.<sup>268</sup> According to Zanjānī’s testimony, during this period of tribulations, when the Muslims were prohibited from entering the *dīvān*, Zanjānī had a chance meeting with Sa‘d al-Dawla. Privately conferring with Zanjānī, Sa‘d al-Dawla presented before him the *maḥḍar*.

The *maḥḍar* consists of a public manifesto confirmed and signed by a number of eminent scholars, copied and circulated or read out loud in public. The thirteenth-century historian Juwaynī reproduces one such *maḥḍar*, the manifesto that was issued in Baghdad in 402/1011, and targeted the Fatimid dynasty’s *sayyid* ancestry claiming it a forgery. The document was co-signed by Baghdad’s principal “*sayyids, qāḍīs and ‘ulamā’*,” who bore witness to its content.<sup>269</sup> The best-known example of a *maḥḍar*, however, is the Mughal emperor Akbar’s 987/1579 *Infallibility Decree*. Signed by the leading ‘*ulamā’* at Akbar’s court, it announced Akbar’s supreme authority to resolve disagreements between legal interpreters (*mujtahidīn*).<sup>270</sup> Intriguingly, Sa‘d al-Dawla’s document promoted a similar statement of Ilkhanid sovereignty to Akbar’s *Infallibility Decree*.

Zanjānī related to Vaṣṣāf that at the end of Sa‘d al-Dawla’s “forced manifesto” (*maḥḍar-i zūr*) as he refers to it, several prominent figures (*a’imma-yi islām wa-a’yān-i davlat*) signed their names as a confirmation of its content.<sup>271</sup> However, their statements, as Zanjānī noticed,

---

<sup>268</sup> See chapter one for Zanjānī’s role in the Ilkhanid succession struggles.

<sup>269</sup> Juwaynī, *Ta’rīkh-i jahān gushā*, vol. 1, 159-160, 173-177; Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, trans. J. A. Boyle, 651, 659-60. For the “Baghdad Manifesto” and its historical context, see for example, Farhad Daftary, “The Ismaili *Da‘wa* outside the Fatimid *Dawla*,” in *L’Égypte Fatimide. Son art et son histoire*, ed. Christian Décobert (Paris, 1999), 38.

<sup>270</sup> R. M. Eaton, “Abu’l-Fazl Allami,” *EI*. Accessed January 31, 2016. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abul-fazl-allami-historian>.

<sup>271</sup> The question of the authenticity of this “document” in Vaṣṣāf’s account is worth bearing in mind. Vaṣṣāf shows himself in a number of other instances to be a highly reliable preserver of Ilkhanid documents. For example, among the many documents Vaṣṣāf records in his work, are also a number of lengthy letters in Arabic sent by the Ilkhanid court to the Mamluks. As Pfeiffer shows, a comparison of several of these letters with their near identical versions in the Mamluk sources, shows that Vaṣṣāf was faithfully copied them. Pfeiffer, “turgid history,” 121-122. This does

alluded to a different conviction. One of the *'ulamā'*, for example, added in writing the Arabic proverb “people have the religion of their kings” implying a measure of implicit coercion in confirming the edict. To Zanjānī’s dismay, Sa’d al-Dawla asked him to add his signature to the document. Pleading with Sa’d al-Dawla in the name of their long-standing friendship and with the promise of future favors, Zanjānī was able to convince Sa’d al-Dawla to exclude him from his list without seemingly upsetting Sa’d al-Dawla. According to Vaṣṣāf, the core of Sa’d al-Dawla’s *maḥḍar*, which included lengthy prefaces and conclusions, announced that:

It is true that the rank of prophethood is the final rank of man, it reaches [the state of] conjunction/convergence with the realm of the souls of the angels, and the human soul becomes a recipient of Divine Government. [However,] Divine Wisdom, God, requires that in every age, there would be *a lord of auspicious conjunction of the Divine Law* [my emphasis] and that his fortunate existence be necessary for the order and harmony of the world. In accordance with the requirements of the day and the common good, he manifests the sign of law and the basis of the path. Through [man’s] motives of sociability and hindrances of fear and punishment, he calls the beings to the abodes of friendship and obedience and removes them from the rough sea of insubordination and abstention. The signs of these virtues and the characters of these qualities are evident in the existence of the just Ilkhan [Arghun].<sup>272</sup>

---

not negate the possibility that Zanjānī or someone else had falsified the document, which Vaṣṣāf incorporated into his work. It is difficult, however, to see how the *maḥḍar*’s content as is (that is, as reported by Vaṣṣāf) might serve as “incriminating evidence” against the Jewish minister. In fact, it is only once we attempt to contextualize the document and read it along its main textual basis (the *Akhḷāq-i nāṣirī*) that we realize why Zanjānī and others might have seen the document’s statement as problematic, so that they would be willing to risk Sa’d al-Dawla’s rage by not complying with his request to sign their name. Furthermore, as we shall see, Sa’d al-Dawla’s *maḥḍar* was not the only one circulating at the time, offering further support to the notion that Sa’d al-Dawla indeed had attempted to collect signatures for his document. Ilkhanid authors did not have to go far to find grievances against the Jewish minister, usually targeting his coercive measures and recruitment of Jews to key administrative positions to criticize Sa’d al-Dawla.

<sup>272</sup> *Maṣḍūqah an kih rutbat-i nubuvvat kih akhirīn-i marātib-i bashar ast va-bi-ufq-i nufūs-i malā’ika muttasīl-i iktisābīst va-nafs-i insānī qābil-i siyāsāt-i rabbānī uftādah kimāl-i ḥikmat ḥakīm-i qādir iqtidā’ mīkunad kih dar har zamānī ṣāhib qirānī-yi nāmūs-i ilahī bāshad va-vujūd-i mas’ūd-i ū mūjib-i nizām va-iltiyām-i ‘ālam gardad va-‘alā muqtaḍā al-ayyām va-maṣāliḥ al-anām shi’ār-i sharī’atī va-asās-i ṭarīqatī paydā kardānad va-bi-davā’ī-yi istīnās yā bi-zavājir-i rav’ va-ba’s khalā’iq rā bi-ma’na-i mushāya’at va-ma’had-i muḥāva’at khavānd va-az khibāb-i tamarrud va-ijtināb dūr dūr rānad va-makhā’il-i tīn faḍā’il va-shamā’il-i tīn khaṣā’il dar vujūd-i ilkhān-i ‘ādil mavjūd ast. Vaṣṣāf, 241.*

Sa‘d al-Dawla’s *maḥḍar* exhibits a careful work of borrowing from Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s (d. 1274) masterpiece of political ethics, the *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī* (*The Nasirean Ethics*).<sup>273</sup> Ṭūsī had originally composed the work in 633/1235, at the service of the Isma‘īlī ruler of Quhistān, the Muḥtasham Naṣīr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, after whom the work was first named (*Akhlāq-i muḥtashamī*). Commissioned initially to translate into Persian the eleventh-century Twelver Shī‘ī philosopher Ibn Miskawayah’s Arabic work of ethics, the *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, Ṭūsī ultimately decided against a translation of Ibn Miskawayah, producing in its place a more comprehensive book on practical philosophy dealing with the three branches of ethics, economics, and politics, and broadly based on the works of Ibn Miskawayah (d. 421), Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) and al-Fārābī (d. 339/950). Ṭūsī re-issued and re-edited the work two decades later, when he came into the service of Hülegü. Its dedication to his Ismā‘īlī patron was replaced with a new preface claiming that, Ṭūsī was forced to stay with the Ismā‘īlīs. A skillful synthesis of Greek practical philosophy with Islamic views, the *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī* became one of the most influential work of Persian advice literature, a broad term that includes diverse modes of didactic writing.<sup>274</sup>

---

<sup>273</sup> Terms such as *siyāsāt-i rabbānī/ilahī* (divine government), *kimāl-i ḥikmat* (divine/perfect wisdom), *nāmūs-i ilahī* (divine law/commandment), *davā‘ī* (human motives), and *mushāya‘at* (friendship) clearly point towards the *Nasirean Ethics* as a model for the decree. The *nāmūs-i ilahī* is particularly important to the *Nasirean Ethics*: according to Ṭūsī, justice cannot be maintained without divine commandment (*nāmūs-i ilahī*). Naṣīr al-Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī*, 238-250, 298-301; *Nasirean Ethics*, 187-195, 226-9. The reference to *maṣāliḥ-i al-anām* in the decree appears to relate to Ṭūsī’s development of the common good/public interest/welfare (*maṣlaḥat-i ‘umum*) in an Aristotelian perspective, for which see Sa‘id Amir Arjomand, “Medieval Persianate political ethic,” *Studies on Persianate Societies* 1 (2003): 19. In Islamic political theory, *maṣlaḥa* was “a political concept, according to which pragmatic, mundane considerations of public benefit and communal welfare take priority over idealized notions of moral leadership.” Asma Afsaruddin, “*Maslahah* as a political concept,” in *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft*, ed. Mehrzad Boroujerdi (Syracuse University Press, 2013), 38.

<sup>274</sup> Wilferd Madelung, “Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s ethics between philosophy, Shī‘ism and Sufism,” in *Ethics in Islam*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Malibu, 1985), 85-6; G. M. Wickens, “Aḳlāq-e Nāṣerī,” *Elr*, vol. I, fasc. 7, 725; Maria E. Subtelny, “A late medieval Persian summa on ethics: Kashifi’s *Akhlāq-i Muḥsinī*,” *Iranian Studies* 36/4 (2003): 604-5; Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam* (London, 2003), 46-54.

The manifesto as reported by Vaṣṣāf refers to two separate sections of the *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī*.<sup>275</sup> The majority of the *maḥḍar* is based on the introduction to the third discourse (*maqālat*) of the *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī* on state and society (*siyāsāt-i mudun*),<sup>276</sup> in which Ṭūsī makes extensive use of al-Fārābī's articulation of Aristotelian ideas.<sup>277</sup> The foundational layer of Ṭūsī's theory of political ethics, an understanding that was shared by most, if not all medieval Muslim authors, was that the sole means of guarantying that man's natural disposition towards the violent domination of others does not threaten the social equilibrium and prevent man, who is civic by nature (the Aristotelian "political animal"), to cooperate with others, is a regulating force, a "custodian of the body-social".<sup>278</sup>

In the introduction to the third *maqālat*,<sup>279</sup> Ṭūsī writes that a type of management (*tadbīr*)<sup>280</sup> is required "to render each one content with the station which he deserves" and restrain man from infringing on others' rights.<sup>281</sup> After briefly discussing Aristotle's four types of government, Ṭūsī argues that the government of the king and government of the community are

---

<sup>275</sup> The author appears to have drawn his inspiration for the first sentence of the decree from Ṭūsī's discussion of man's status as the noblest of beings (*ashraf-i mavjūdāt*) in his first discourse (*maqālat*) on ethics. Ṭūsī writes that the highest degree of mankind is reached when an individual becomes knowledgeable about truths through revelation and inspiration (*vaḥy va-ilhām*). This state (*manzalat, rutbat*) of man "is the inception of conjunction (or union, *ittiṣāl*) with the nobler world ('*alām-i ashraf*), and intersection (*wusūl*) with the ranks of the sanctified angels (*marātib-i malā'ika-yi muqaddasa*) and the abstract intelligences and souls ('*uqūl va-nufūs-i mujarrada*)". This is the rank of the prophets and saints (*anbiyā va-avliyā*). Naṣīr al-Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī* (Lahore, 1952), 30-34; Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *The Nasirean Ethics*, trans. G. M. Wickens (London, 1964), 63. Ṭūsī is following here Ibn Miskawayah's discussion of the *marātib al-uṣq al-insānī* (levels of the human realm). Abū 'Alī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb Miskawayah, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, ed. 'Imād al-Hilālī (Freiberg, 2011), 300; *The Refinement of Character*, trans. Constantine K. Zurayk (Beirut, 1968), 61-64.

<sup>276</sup> "On the reason for man's need for civilized life (*tamaddun*) and an exposition of the nature and virtue of this branch of science".

<sup>277</sup> Madelung, "Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī," 86.

<sup>278</sup> The absolutist imperative of medieval Islamic political thought was, thus, rooted in a "pessimistic anthropology" of the human nature as al-Azmeh explains. al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 115 ff.; Subtelny, "Kashifī's *Akhlāq-i Muḥsinī*," 604-8.

<sup>279</sup> Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī*, 238-50; *The Nasirean Ethics*, 187-95.

<sup>280</sup> On the husbandry (*tadbīr/siyāsāt*) of humans in Islamic political thought, see al-Azmeh, 117-119.

<sup>281</sup> If such management encourages the social ranks towards cooperation it is called government (*siyāsāt*) and if such *tadbīr* also leads towards "the perfection (*kimālī*) which is in potency is species (*naw'*) and individuals, it is called Divine Government (*siyāsāt-i ilahī*)." Indeed, in Sa'd al-Dawla's decree, it is stated that prophets are the recipients of Divine Government (*siyāsāt-i rabbānī*) (above).

alike since they both cannot be achieved without positive laws (*awḍā`*) and/or rational commandments (*aḥkām-i `aqlī*). An individual “distinguished from others by divine inspiration (*ilhām-i ilahī*)” is needed in order to determine the positive laws. This individual is the lawgiver (*ṣāḥib-i nāmūs*) of the ancients (the Greek philosophers), whose laws are called the *Divine Law/nomos* (*nāmūs-i ilahī*), and the prophet (*shāri`*) of the moderns (Muslim philosophers/political theorists),<sup>282</sup> whose positive laws are called the *sharī`a*. At the other end of this equation is “an individual distinguished from others by divine support (*ta`yīdī-yi ilahī*),” who is required “in order to determine rational commandments (*taqdīr-i aḥkām*)”.<sup>283</sup> He is equated with the absolute king (*malik `alā al-iṭlāq*) of the Greek philosophers, the *Imām* of the moderns, Plato’s Regulator of the World (*mudabbir-i `ālam*), and Aristotle’s civic man.<sup>284</sup>

In Ṭūsī’s al-Fārābī-derived philosophical and ethical formulation this regulator, a philosopher-king, who is supported by divine charisma (*ta`yīdī-yi ilahī*), is a necessity without whose existence, society falls apart and tyranny and social havoc rule.<sup>285</sup> This regulator king has the authority to determine “the particulars of the Law in accordance with the best interest of every day and age [*ū rā vilāyat-i tasarruf būd dar juzviyāt-i namūsī bi-ḥasab-i maṣlahat-i har vaqt*],” an idea expressed also in Sa`d al-Dawla’s document. Furthermore, in striking resemblance to Sa`d al-Dawla’s *maḥḍar*, Ṭūsī juxtaposes the irregular appearance of the prophets with the periodic, regular designation of the absolute monarchs:

Not every age and generation has a need of a Lawgiver (*ṣāḥib-i nāmūsī*) [= a prophet], for one set of positive laws (*vaḍ`*) suffices for the people of many periods (*ahl-i advār*); but the world does require a Regulator (*mudabbirī*) in every age, for if management (*tadbīr*) [= government] ceases, order (*niẓām*) is taken away likewise and the survival of the

<sup>282</sup> Madelung, “Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī,” 94.

<sup>283</sup> The duty of this individual is to safeguard the hierarchical structuring of society, that is, that each class remains in its proper place according to Divine Wisdom (*ḥikmat-i ilahī*). Al-Azmeh, 118: “moral differentiation is the precondition of sound morality.”

<sup>284</sup> Ibid., 190-192.

<sup>285</sup> See also Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam? The importance of being Muslim* (Princeton, 2016), 462-67.



species (*nav*) in the most perfect manner (*bar vajh-i akmal-i šūra*) cannot be realized. The Regulator undertakes to preserve the Law (*ḥifẓ-i nāmūs*) and obliges men to uphold its prescriptions [...]<sup>286</sup>

Sayyid Amir Arjomand concludes that Ṭūsī's division of authority between prophets and regulator-rulers (*mudabbir*) in the *Akhlāq-i nāširī* was an elaboration on the earlier Persianate *akhlāq* theory of the "two powers," which divided order into the political and religious, kings and prophets. Ṭūsī's work joins in this regard an earlier "trend" in the genre of Persianate advice/*akhlāq* literature from the twelfth-century onwards. Ṭūsī re-articulated this earlier theory as a synthesis of Greek practical philosophy and the Persian-Indian tradition of statecraft, with a clear absolutist direction.<sup>287</sup> Ṭūsī's *akhlāq-ethical* model did not only provide Islamic monarchy with its own ethico-legal basis as an autonomous political order, but also offered a reconfiguration of the division of labor between monarch-sultans and prophets, assigning to the former group growing "responsibilities" in the field of Islamic salvation as well.<sup>288</sup>

---

<sup>286</sup> Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i nāširī*, 235. Modified from Wickens' translation. *Nasirean Ethics*, 192. The contemporary Baghdadi Jewish philosopher Ibn Kammūna makes a similar observation as to the rare occurrence of prophethood, but does not address the ruler's role as sustainer of order in-between prophetic revelations: "inasmuch as such a prophet is of a kind whose existence will recur but infrequently since matter susceptible of such perfection occurs in but a few temperaments it is necessary that he should enjoin the people to perform repeatedly, at short intervals, acts and deeds that he has stipulated for them." *Ibn Kammūna's Examination of the Three Faiths*, trans. Moshe Perlmann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 30.

<sup>287</sup> Arjomand, "Medieval Persianate political ethic," 20-21. An earlier example of what Arjomand refers to as the "two powers" model is found in of al-Ghazālī's political treatise *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*: "Know and understand that God Most High chose two categories of mankind, placing them above others: one is prophets and the other kings (*mulūk*). He sent the prophets to His creatures to lead them to him. He chose the kings (*pādshāhān*) to protect men from one another and made the prosperity (*maṣlaḥat*) of human life dependent on them [...] and therefore, you hear in the traditions that "the ruler is the shadow of God on earth" [...] one must know that it is incumbent on people to love one whom God has bestowed kingship and Divine *farr*. One must obey the kings." Al-Ghazālī, *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, ed. Humā'ī (Tehran, 1367/1988), 81-2; *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings (Naṣīḥat al-mulūk)*, translated by F. R. C. Bagley (London, 1964), 45. Similar statements were also made by authors such as the famed Ghaznavid official and historian Bayhaqī and the Saljuq vizier Niẓām al-Mulk. Arjomand, "Persianate political ethic," 8-11. Arjomand argues that this ideal emerged from the Islamic reception of the Indo-Persian tradition of political ethic and statecraft and was "amplified by the selective reception of the Greek political science." Arjomand, "Perso-Islamicate political ethic in relation to the sources of Islamic law," in *Mirror for the Muslim Prince*, ed. M. Boroujerdi (New York, 2013), 84-86.

<sup>288</sup> Arjomand identifies a gradual transition starting in the twelfth-century onwards, from the "two powers theory" to "Islamic royalism." In this later autocratic conception of authority, the ruler-sultan is envisioned as the "king of Islam," who maintains both orders. Thus, as will be discussed further in the next chapter, in his section on advice for kings in his Sufi manual *Mirṣād al- 'Ibād* (the path of God's bondsmen), the thirteenth-century Sufi Najm al-Dīn

Yet, Ṭūsī's *akhlāq-ethical* model of kings and prophets might have had additional roots as well. In his third discourse of the *Nasirean Ethics*, Ṭūsī makes an additional important distinction noting that “in the terminology of some [*qavm*], the first of these persons is called the Speaker (*nāṭiq*), and the second the Foundation (*asās*)”.<sup>289</sup> As Madelung observes, this terminology is distinctly Ismā‘īlī: the Speaker is the prophet who initiates a new cycle of law, and the Foundation is his successor, the founder of the community. The latter knows the inner meanings of the religious law.

Reading Ṭūsī's work from an “Ismā‘īlī perspective” underscores the significance of Ṭūsī's assertion that the world regulator is assigned the responsibility to expound the Divine Law in accordance with the changing circumstances.<sup>290</sup> In an earlier section in the *Nasirean Ethics*, Ṭūsī argues that “the detailed implementation of each item, at any moment of time and on any occasion, and in any circumstance and regard, will vary as the prophets and the scholars of independent legal judgment [*‘ulamā-yi mujtahid*], who are heirs of the prophets may expound [*bayān-i ān mīkunand*]; the mass of mankind, to keep [*muḥāfazat*] the Commandment of the Truth (Exalted is His glory!), is under the obligation to submit to them and to conform to their

---

Rāzī Dāya (d. 1256) argued that *salṭana* (kingship/monarchy) is “the caliphate and lieutenancy of God.” Similar statements can be found, for example, in the work of the twelfth-century jurist and philosopher Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. This new political framework received significant impetus after the Mongol conquests with the rise of the model of “post-caliphal sultanism.” Arjomand, “Medieval Persianate political ethic,” 3-28; Arjomand “Legitimacy and political organization: caliphs, kings and regimes,” in *Cambridge History of Islam* (2011), 240-254. Persian works of advice literature often addressed the affinity between prophets and kings. See Louise Marlow, “Kings, Prophets and the ‘Ulamā’ in medieval Islamic advice literature,” *Studia Islamica* 81 (1995): 106-8. Viewed differently, one might suggest that the Sunni-Jama‘ī “prophetic-caliphal” notion of authority conceded to a “sacral model,” in which the ruler was directly appointed by God and sanctified through divine support. John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu* (Salt Lake City, 1999, revised and expanded), 4-7.

<sup>289</sup> Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i nāsirī*, 235.

<sup>290</sup> For Ṭūsī, Divine Law (*nāmūs-i ilahī*) is changeable. It changes in accordance with the age and circumstances since like the “agreed opinion of the community,” the divine law is rooted in “position” (*vaḍ‘*)—only that its cause is “the exigency of the opinion of a great man, fortified by Divine assistance, such as a prophet or an imam.” Madelung, “Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī,” 90-7. See also Christian Jambet, “Idéal du politique idéale selon Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī,” in *Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī: philosophe et savant du XIIIe siècle*, ed. N. Pourjavady et al. (Tehran, 2000), 31-57. For *nāṭiq* and *asās*, see H. Halm, “Asās,” *Elr*. Accessed March 2, 2016. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/asas-pl>.

course [*inḡiyād-i va-mutāb ‘at-i īshān*].<sup>291</sup> Madelung suggests that Ṭūsī refers here to the bifurcation of authority over the interpretation of the law between the prophets and their heirs, the Imāms (rather than the *‘ulamā*). Further support for this thesis is found in Ṭūsī’s statement in the third discourse that in referring to a “king” (*malik*) he is not speaking of one who possess “a cavalcade, a retinue or a realm,” but the one “truly deserving of kingship” (*mustahiqq-i mulk*), even if no one pays attention to him. Furthermore, in what seems to be a reference to the Imām’s role in implementing justice, Ṭūsī continues that “if someone other than he was to manage [the realm], tyranny and disorder become widespread.” As Madelung argues, therefore, one might suggest that for Ṭūsī, the regulator kings, the “custodians of the body-social,” are the Ismā‘īlī or Shī‘ī Imāms, who interpret and enforce the law, and must be rewarded with complete obedience.<sup>292</sup>

Sa‘d al-Dawla’s manifesto espouses a similar absolutist imperative to Ṭūsī’s *akhlāq-ethical* model: prophetic authority aside, each age requires not a prophet, but a divinely assisted world monarch in order to maintain the order, *nizām-i ‘ālam*,<sup>293</sup> a term used by Ṭūsī as well. His role is to sustain social harmony, enforce and interpret the law in accordance with the times and public interest, and to guide mankind towards cooperation, friendship, and most importantly, obedience. The qualities of this absolute world-regulator or monarch are evident, according to the author of the *maḥḍar*, in the *just* Ilkhan Arghun. Sa‘d al-Dawla’s *maḥḍar*, therefore, closely follows Ṭūsī in promoting a vision of the ruler as the supreme enforcer of law, who has also the jurisdiction to interpret what is defined as the Divine Law/Institute, the *nāmūs-i ilahī*. Yet, if

<sup>291</sup> Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī*, 125; *Nasirean Ethics*, 103.

<sup>292</sup> Ṭūsī frequently also oscillates between different traditions making it difficult to unequivocally assign him commitment to one specific framework. This comparative (and cross-sectarian) synthesis explains, in turn, the great popularity of Ṭūsī’s work, but also challenges Madelung’s reading of Ṭūsī.

<sup>293</sup> The notion of *nizām-i ‘ālam* receives additional significance for the authors of Ottoman *nasihatname*, where it underlines Ottoman theoretical concepts and discourses of legitimate authority. In these works, the notion of *nizām-i ‘ālam* is “construed as a divine remedy for a problem caused by weakness intrinsic to human nature,” that is, man’s tendency towards enmity and conflict. It is a “divinely ordained order as a primary condition, which is then disrupted because of human greed and weakness.” Gottfried Hagen, “Legitimacy and world order,” in *Legitimizing the Order: the Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power* (2005), 61-62.

Ṭūsī's political model was, indeed, also read as a statement of Imāmī authority, might have Sa'd al-Dawla's *maḥḍar* also meant to carry a similar message? Indeed, one historical account implies that the circumstances leading to Sa'd al-Dawla's decision to issue the *maḥḍar* were linked to the sectarian scene in Baghdad.

### **Good Omens at *Mashhad-i Mūsa*: Baghdadi Sectarian Politics and the Ilkhan as Imām**

Sa'd al-Dawla's *maḥḍar* seems to have been preceded by another *maḥḍar* circulated in Baghdad in the year 689/1290 and shortly after Sa'd al-Dawla's appointment as vizier. According to the contemporaneous anonymous author of *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi'a* (the pseudo-Ibn al-Fuwaṭī), which records the history of the city of Baghdad during the thirteenth-century, the Baghdadi manifesto was issued by several prominent Baghdadi figures (*a'yān al-nās*). It leveled unspecified accusations against Sa'd al-Dawla quoting extensively from the Qur'an and the *ḥadīth* (*akhbāran nabawiyyan*) against the Jews. When Sa'd al-Dawla learnt of the *maḥḍar* and got hold of a copy of the document, he presented it to Arghun, who gave him the authority to pronounce the verdict of all those who signed the document. Sa'd al-Dawla, however, decided to wait for the right moment to avenge his name. Only one individual, Jamāl al-Dīn b. al-Ḥalāwī, was publically crucified in Baghdad for authoring the *maḥḍar*.<sup>294</sup> Sa'd al-Dawla's efficiency and harsh measures in collecting revenue from the city for the Ilkhanid treasury and his appointment of his relatives and Jewish loyalists to key positions explains the growing resentment towards the minister and the Jewish community in the city.

Baghdad was certainly ripe for interreligious strife with extensive riots against the city's Jews taking place only a few years earlier, after rumors about the Jewish philosopher Ibn

---

<sup>294</sup> *Al-Ḥawādith*, 499; Fischel, *Jews*, 110-117.

Kammūna’s compilation of the *Examination of the Three Faiths* spread throughout the city (1284).<sup>295</sup> In Šafar 687/March 1288, about a year before the Baghdadi *maḥḍar*, riots broke out when a group (*jamā‘a*) of Tbilisi Jews relocated to the city to manage the inheritance (*tarikāt*) of the Muslims.<sup>296</sup> The dissatisfaction that amassed during Sa‘d al-Dawla’s tenure erupted again, shortly after the vizier’s death in 690/1291. Sa‘d al-Dawla’s brother Fakhr al-Dawla was imprisoned and masses looted his home and the houses of the Jews of Baghdad. Another Jew and Sa‘d al-Dawla’s appointee, Muhadhhib al-Dawla Našr al-Māsha‘īrī, was caught, dismembered limb by limb and paraded through the streets.<sup>297</sup> The anti-Jewish rioting continued for three straight days spreading to the rest of Iraq, even after the newly appointed governor was able to restore order in Baghdad.<sup>298</sup>

According to one of the reports in *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi‘a*, the short-lived “triumph” of Sa‘d al-Dawla and the Jews was the result of Sa‘d al-Dawla’s visit to the shrine of Imam Mūsa al-Kāzīm (al-Kāzīmāyn). In 688/1289, before he headed to the *ordu* where he was about to be appointed to the vizierate, Sa‘d al-Dawla visited the mausoleum of *Mashhad-i Mūsa* and opened there a copy of the Qur’an seeking a good omen (*mutafā‘il*). He received the following verse (Ta-ha, 80): “oh children of Israel, we delivered you from your enemy, and we made a covenant on the right side of the Mount and we sent you down Manna and quails.” Interpreting it as a sign of good

---

<sup>295</sup> According to the anonymous author, Ibn Kammūna secretly left the city in a coffin, so he would not be burnt alive. As noted by Schmidtke, Ibn Kammūna completed *Tanqīḥ al-abḥāth li’l-milal al-thalāth* four year earlier and therefore, his persecution might have had more to do with the fall of his chief patrons, the Juwaynīs, shortly before the riots commenced. *Al-Ḥawādith*, 476-77; Sabine Schmidtke, “Ibn Kammūna, Sa‘d,” *Encyclopaedia of the Jews of the Islamic World*, ed. Normal Stilman (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 504-505.

<sup>296</sup> According to *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi‘a*, the Tbilisi decreed that relatives of the maternal-side do not inherit. When the riots erupted, they fled the city fearing their lives. *Al-Ḥawādith*, 492.

<sup>297</sup> The *Divan* of the thirteenth-century Baghdadi poet Eleasar ben Jaakob ha-Babli includes a poem dedicated to Muhadhhib al-Dawla al-Māsha‘īrī (Yitskhak). The poet praises his generosity and describes his two sons. *Diwan of Eleasar ben Jaakob ha-Babli*, ed. H. Brody (Jerusalem, 1935), 10.

<sup>298</sup> *Al-Ḥawādith*, 501-3.

tidings, he paid the Shī‘īs (‘*alawiyyīn*) in *Mashhad-i Mūsa* and the shrine’s caretakers a sum of a hundred dinars. Subsequently, he arrived at the court where he was, indeed, made vizier.<sup>299</sup>

*Mashhad-i Mūsa* was an important site of ‘Alīd veneration. The author of *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi‘a* tells the story of the mysterious light that appeared one night in Ramadan 677/1278 above Baghdad’s outskirts. The next morning, a grave of a descendant of Ḥasan b. ‘Alī was discovered nearby. Baghdad’s residents left their businesses and hurried in mass to the site, where they started assembling an impromptu structure around the sacred remains. Dreams and visions swept through the city and stories about mysteriously healed diseases were daily reported in Baghdad. To calm the excited masses and restore the city to order, the governor ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā-malik Juwaynī had the buried Sayyid relocated to the graveyard of *Mashhad-i Mūsa*.<sup>300</sup>

*Mashhad-i Mūsa*, however, was not just a site of popular veneration, but also the burial grounds of several influential figures, some of whom such as the Shī‘ī vizier Ibn al-‘Alqamī (d. 656/1258) and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), were closely associated with the Mongol court and moreover, embodied the alliance between the Shī‘ī communities of Iraq and the Mongols.<sup>301</sup> After their death, their heirs continued to play important roles in Ilkhanid administration and government. Ṭūsī’s sons, for example, continued to hold key positions and maintained close ties with the Mongol rulers, particularly with the Ilkhan Arghun and his sons. According to the Maragha Liberian and biographer Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, Ṭūsī’s youngest son Fakhr al-Dīn Abū al-Qāsim Aḥmad (*al-munajjim al-ḥakīm*) was in the service of Arghun as early as 681/1282, when he accompanied the future Ilkhan to Iraq to inspect on the province’s revenues.<sup>302</sup> When Arghun

---

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 494.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 441.

<sup>301</sup> Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī was allegedly buried in a lavish empty grave prepared for the Caliph al-Nāṣir. Ibid., 416, 362.

<sup>302</sup> Upon inspection of the city’s revenues, great discrepancies were found, and since those liable were unable to pay the amounts, the people of Baghdad had to come to their rescue and a sum of ten thousand dinars was delivered to Arghun for their lives. *Al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi‘a* further reports that whoever hid from Arghun’s men was caught and his

took over the throne, he appointed Fakhr al-Dīn as supervisor (*mutawallī*) of the *awqāf* of the entire kingdom restoring to the Ṭūsī family control over the *awqāf* of the Ilkhanate. The Ṭūsīs lost their hold over this important post earlier, when the Muslim convert Aḥmad Tegüder succeeded to the throne and implemented reforms that restored the *waqf* properties and rights in Baghdad. Tegüder's reforms curtailed the Ṭūsīs' ability to redirect revenue from the kingdom's endowments towards the payment of salaries of the astronomers at the Maragha observatory, as Ṭūsī had done under the previous Ilkhans.<sup>303</sup> Upon his reassignment as *mutawallī* of the *awqāf*, Ṭūsī's son Fakhr al-Dīn appears to have implemented new measures in the management of the endowments of Baghdad that allowed for greater liberty in dispensing their profits.<sup>304</sup>

As Pfeiffer discusses, the hereditary right to Baghdad's revenues (as Abaqa's *injū*) was at the center of the succession struggles between Aḥmad Tegüder and his nephew Arghun. Arghun's reappointment of the Ṭūsīs to the management of the endowments after his uncle's execution indicates the restoration of the earlier Abaqaid order with the Ṭūsī family back at its original position of power.

---

dwelling was ransacked. Similar measures were also carried out in al-Ḥilla, Basra and al-Wāsit. In addition to raising funds, Arghun was clearly also signaling to his uncle the Ilkhan his claim to Baghdad as an inheritance from his father Abaqa. *al-Ḥawādith*, 461-2. On the competing claims of Arghun and Aḥmad Tegüder over the city, see Pfeiffer, *Conversion to Islam among the Ilkhans*, 251ff.

<sup>303</sup> Pfeiffer suggests that under Hülegü and Abaqa, Baghdad's *waqf* properties were made into *injū*. In the early Ilkhanate, *injū* could either mean "personal property" of the Ilkhanid ruler or prince, "crown land" or "immediate vassal" attached to a ruler or prince. As Pfeiffer discusses, the definition of the *injū* properties of Baghdad were at the heart of the struggle between Arghun and Tegüder as the former was arguing that Abaqa's "personal" right over the city should pass on to his son and not to this brother and heir to the throne as Tegüder asserted. Pfeiffer further suggests that Tegüder's Islamic reforms, which transformed "*injū* land into *waqf* property," probably affected Mongol amirs and local elites that benefited from their claims to the land, thus alienating the Ilkhan and advancing his downfall. *Ibid.*, 251-266.

<sup>304</sup> Ann K. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in medieval Persia: aspects of administrative, economic, and social history, 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century* (Albany, 1988), 151-2. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī states that when Fakhr al-Dīn came to Baghdad in 683 with amir Aruq and found that city's inhabitants were suffering from a major famine while the Imams were enjoying the benefits of their endowments, he ordered that the fruits of the endowments be circulated more widely. On the other hand, according to *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi'a*, when appointed to the position, he reduced the *dīwānī* taxes/shares in the endowments so that more profit remained for those managing the endowments (*arbāb*). He died in Sivas in the year 700 and buried in Maragha. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Majma' al-ādāb*, vol. 2, 553; *al-Ḥawādith*, 478. Aḥmad Tegüder seems to have been on bad terms with the family. Rashid al-Dīn writes that Ṭūsī's two sons, Ṣadr al-Dīn 'Alī and Aṣīl al-Dīn Ḥasan, advised Tegüder against setting out on a military campaign against Arghun on the basis of heavenly portents. Tegüder scolded the two and had them punished. Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 555. For Ṭūsī's misappropriation of *waqf* property to finance his observatory, see Pfeiffer, *Conversion to Islam*, 260-63.

As Sa‘d al-Dawla was likely aware, the Ṭūsīs would have made a strong ally at Arghun’s court, and their control over the endowments of Baghdad would have been instrumental in raising further revenue from the city. The story about Sa‘d al-Dawla’s visit to the shrine and the Qur’anic “prophecy” might have been based on a rumor that expressed popular resentment over the Jewish doctor’s appointment to the vizierate. Yet, it also connects Sa‘d al-Dawla to the Shī‘ī communities of Baghdad, and was perhaps even rooted in an actual visit of Sa‘d al-Dawla to *Mashhad-i Mūsa*. Sa‘d al-Dawla was perhaps looking to gain favor with the city’s resenting populace, by presenting himself as a supporter of the Muslim shrine (as he did with his support of the *hajj* caravans). On the other hand, the vizier might have been signaling with this gesture to potential allies within the Shī‘ī community.

The Mongol period was marked by a significant improvement in the status of Shī‘ī communities in Iraq, and Baghdad was not alone in seeing the flourishing of Shī‘ī intellectual life.<sup>305</sup> In addition to the Ṭūsī family’s close ties with the Ilkhanid regime, a number of Shī‘ī communities sought, early on, to benefit from cooperation with the Mongols. During the Mongol siege of Baghdad, the Twelver Shī‘ī community of al-Ḥilla sent to the Ilkhan Hülegü a delegation of prominent Shī‘ī clergy and scholars (‘*alawiyyīn* in *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi‘a*), including the scholar Majd al-Dīn b. Ṭā‘ūs/Ṭāwūs,<sup>306</sup> and the father of ‘Allāma al-Ḥillī, Sadīd al-Dīn Ibn al-Muṭahhar. According to Vaṣṣāf’s account, the delegation delivered to Hülegü a letter stating that ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib had predicted the Mongol sack of Baghdad, the fall of the corrupt ‘Abbasid Caliph, and the restoration of justice by Mongol rule. The prophecy was realized when Hülegü’s forces took hold of the city. Delighted with this message, Hülegü in response promised to spare the

---

<sup>305</sup> Tariq al-Jamil, *Cooperation and contestation in medieval Baghdad (656/1258-786/1384): relationships between Shī‘ī and Sunnī scholars in the madīnat al-salām* (PhD diss., Princeton, 2004).

<sup>306</sup> On Majd al-Dīn b. Ṭā‘ūs/Ṭāwūs, his welcoming of the Mongols, and the family’s prominent position under early Mongol rule, see Etan Kohlberg, *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work: Ibn Ṭāwūs and his Library* (Leiden, 1992); Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, 32-33; al-Jamil, 65ff.



lives and fortunes of the Shī'ī residents of al-Ḥilla. That the fates of the denizens of al-Ḥilla and Kūfa were spared from the Mongol onslaught thanks to this delegation is also confirmed by other accounts.<sup>307</sup> Al-Ḥilla flourished under Mongol rule.<sup>308</sup>

Al-Ḥilla also served as the asylum for the Jewish Philosopher Ibn Kammūna, who escaped the Baghdadi masses that demanded his head. According to *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi'a*, Ibn Kammūna's son worked as a secretary in al-Ḥilla, where the Jewish philosopher appears to have remained until his death. We know from Ibn Kammūna's works that he corresponded with and earned the esteem of several Muslim scholars including Ṭūsī, one of the teachers of Ṭūsī's student 'Allāma al-Ḥillī (son of above mentioned Sadīd al-Dīn Ibn al-Muṭahhar), and other Twelver Shī'ī scholars from al-Ḥilla.<sup>309</sup> Ibn Kammūna's contacts with Muslim, particularly Shī'ī scholars, might have been an exception in Jewish-Muslim relations. However, Ibn Kammūna's son resided in al-Ḥilla, and at least one prominent member (Kamāl al-Dīn Abū Ṭālib Aḥmad) of the Twelver Shī'ī Ḥilla community, whom the Maragha Liberian Ibn al-Fuwaṭī had met in person in Ḥilla in 687/1288, worked in Sa'd al-Dawla's administration.<sup>310</sup> We, therefore, have here possible indications of a broader relationship between the Jewish community or Jewish individuals and the Twelver Shī'īs of Iraq, shedding further light on Sa'd al-Dawla's visit at the shrine of Mūsa al-Kāzīm.

The question of Shī'ī-Jewish contacts under the Ilkhans aside, Sa'd al-Dawla was probably following the example of 'Aṭā-malik Juwaynī, the previous governor of Baghdad. As

---

<sup>307</sup> *Al-Ḥawādith*, 139-142; Judith Pfeiffer, "Faces like shields covered with leather: Keturah's sons in the post-Mongol Islamic eschatological traditions," in *Horizons of the World: Festschrift for Isenbike Togan*, ed. Ilker Evrim Binbaş and Nurten Kılıç-Schubel, 557-594. That the lives of the residents of al-Ḥilla and Kūfa were spared is also confirmed by *al-Ḥawādith*, 360. Al-Jamil, 33.

<sup>308</sup> Ibn Battūta, *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325-1354*, trans. H.A.R. Gibb (London, 1929, reprinted in London, 2005), 98-99.

<sup>309</sup> *Al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi'a*, 476-77. Sabine Schmidtke, "Ibn Kammūna," 505. 'Allāma al-Ḥillī, the son of Sadīd al-Dīn Ibn al-Muṭahhar, who was of the Ḥilla delegation, spent time in Baghdad studying after he left Ṭūsī's observatory in Maragha. Schmidtke, "Ḥelli."

<sup>310</sup> Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Majma' al-ādāb*, vol. 4, 100.

Hadi Jorati shows, ‘Aṭā-malik Juwaynī developed a strategic alliance with the Twelver Shī‘īs of al-Ḥilla and maintained close ties with Ṭūsī and his family. Sa‘d al-Dawla’s visit to *Mashhad-i Mūsa* and his gift to its caretakers and resident Sayyids also echoes Juwaynī’s project of expanding the shrine of ‘Alī in Najaf. Like the former governor of Baghdad, Sa‘d al-Dawla might have identified the Shī‘īs of Iraq and the Ṭūsī family as potential allies and was attempting to cultivate an alliances with them.<sup>311</sup>

Sa‘d al-Dawla’s decision to use Ṭūsī’s work in the *maḥḍar* and depict the just (*al-‘ādil*) Ilkhan as a just *Imām-like* figure might have been, therefore, a deliberate choice. Considering the manifesto alongside Sa‘d al-Dawla’s symbolic gesture (as well as financial homage) in a prime site of ‘Alīd veneration that was also associated, through its buried dead, with the historical “Shī‘ī alliance” with the house of Hülegü, Sa‘d al-Dawla was possibly addressing the Shī‘ī populace, if not also signaling to specific influential families such as the Ṭūsīs. Sa‘d al-Dawla, in other words, was possibly taking advantage of Sunnī-Shī‘ī confessional tensions in Baghdad to gain the support of the Shī‘īs and suppress resistance to the measures he employed as vizier.

Sa‘d al-Dawla’s choice of Ṭūsī’s *akhlāq-ethical* model for the *maḥḍar*, however, was related not only to his precarious position in Baghdad and lack of allies at the court. Rather, Sa‘d

---

<sup>311</sup> Hadi Jorati, *Science and Society in Medieval Islam: Nasir al-Din Tusi and the politics of patronage* (PhD diss. Yale, 2014), 146-155. The Shī‘īs’ ties with the Mongols might have also been informed by the affinities between Shī‘ī notions of religiopolitical authority and Mongol ideals of sacral kingship. Pfeiffer argues that in contrast to the common view of the Ilkhanid period as one marked by confessional ambiguity, at the height of Ilkhanid rule, the tendencies toward confessional polarization and the demarcation of sectarian boundaries within Muslim communities were further strengthened. Certain Shī‘ī notions of religiopolitical authority, in particular, those related to descent-based claims of authority (such as support of *ahl-i bayt*, the Prophet’s descendants) seem to have appealed to the Chinggisids, who considered genealogy a principle of sacral authority. These ideological affinities allowed Shī‘ī agents to gain considerable influence at the Ilkhanid court and the upper hand over their Sunnī rivals. Shī‘ism offered the Ilkhans a way of translating their Mongol religiopolitical authority into Islamic idioms of power by paralleling, for example, Shī‘ism/*sayyidism* with Chinggisidness and Sunnism with the claims of non-Chinggisid Mongol commanders. It appears that even before Öljeitü’s conversion to Shī‘ism and propagation of Shī‘ī tenets in the Ilkhanate, the compatibility of certain Shī‘ī religiopolitical principles with the Mongols’ conceptualizations of authority and their “genealogical consciousness” was noticed by those wishing to gain purchase with the Ilkhanid court or to appeal to certain communities and individuals with strong ties to the Mongol ruling elite. Pfeiffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 129-163.

al-Dawla's *maḥḍar* indicates that the vizier continued to refine and experiment with political theories that could articulate Mongol notions of sacral kingship, and reinforce the Ilkhan's claim to continuity with Chinggis Khan. Sa'd al-Dawla's *maḥḍar* and its repurposing of Ṭūsī's work should be read in light of the Mongols' conceptualizations of religiopolitical authority more broadly, and specifically, in the context of the Ilkhan's interest in articulating his relationship and reinforcing his relationship to Chinggis Khan.

### **The *Maḥḍar* as a Statement of Mongol Political Theology**

The central theme in Sa'd al-Dawla's *maḥḍar* as presented in Vaṣṣāf's history is the differentiation between the prophets and the world regulator kings, whose appearance is more consistent, as they are required for maintaining order and society. The world regulator monarch, the Ilkhan Arghun, is defined in the *maḥḍar* in terms of the *ṣāḥib qirānī-yi nāmūs-i ilahī*, a *Lord of Auspicious Conjunction of the Divine Law/nomos*. In the corresponding section in the *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī*, Ṭūsī refers to prophets as *ṣāḥib-i nāmūsī*, lawgivers. The author of the *maḥḍar* seems to play here on the title of the lawgiver to further privilege the rank of the Ṣāḥib-Qirān regulator king.

The appropriation of the title of Ṣāḥib-Qirān for Ṭūsī's periodic world regulator is befitting as since the title denominates a similar understanding of time as recurring, revolving around, and ordered by the rise and demise of kings, dynasties and empires. The potent royal title of Ṣāḥib-Qirān designated a ruler whose rise in fortune was signaled by the celestial conjunction (*qirān*) of Saturn and Jupiter. Timurid and post-Timurid authors linked the title of Ṣāḥib-Qirān to the specific patrimonies of Alexander and Tīmūr (*Iskandar-i thānī*), who were both celebrated as divinely ordained world conquerors. The great conjunction of 991/1583, which marked the end

of a 960 year-long cycle that started in 571 C.E., around the time of the Prophet Muḥammad’s birth and coincided with another event of immense cosmic import, the turn of the Hijrī millennium, further invested the title of Ṣāḥib-Qirān with particular messianic and millenarian significances for early modern Eurasian audiences.<sup>312</sup> In the thirteenth and fourteenth-centuries, the usage of Ṣāḥib-Qirān was less restricted, both in the range of individuals to whom it was attributed, and the spectrum of meanings that were assigned to the title.<sup>313</sup> Nevertheless, for Ilkhanid authors such as Rashīd al-Dīn, Ṣāḥib-Qirān was never quite a static or “generic” title, even if it did not “index a vigorous or singular millenarian claim associated with a specific set of cosmic events” or conjured a definitive ideology of religiopolitical authority.<sup>314</sup> As we will see in chapter four, Rashīd al-Dīn uses the title of Ṣāḥib-Qirān in his theological compendia to designate a rank of exceptional kingship in his formulation of Öljeitü’s sacral persona. Furthermore, while in Rashīd al-Dīn’s works (nor as far as I can tell, in any other Ilkhanid work), the Ṣāḥib-Qirān does not seem to designate a specific astrological event as it did in the post-Ilkhanid era, Rashīd al-Dīn does link in *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* the title of Ṣāḥib-Qirān to pre-Islamic Iranian cosmocrator-rulers. He designates Jamshīd, Afrīdūn, Anūshirvān and Alexander/Iskandar as divinely aided (*mu’ayyad min ‘ind Allāh*) just Ṣāḥib-Qirān kings (below).

---

<sup>312</sup> The association of the title with the mythic Iskandar often went hand in hand with claims of being Ṣāḥib-Qirān. For Timurid/Mughal usage of the title, Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*; S. Chann, “Lord of Auspicious Conjunction: origins of the *Ṣāḥib-Qirān*,” *Iran and the Caucasus* 13 (2009): 1-39. For the Safavids, Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 295-308 (Shah Ismā‘īl as Ṣāḥib-Qirān); Mancini-Lander, *Memory on the boundaries of empire*, 244-67. In the case of the Ottomans, Muṣṭafa Ālī differentiations between *mu’ayyad min ‘ind Allāh*, a sovereign who has never been defeated in battle (due to divine favor) - a term he awards Selim I and Süleyman, and Ṣāḥib-Qirān, a world conqueror, a term awarded to only three – Iskandar, Chinggis Khan and Timur. There appears to have been some controversy whether or not Selim I deserved the title of Ṣāḥib-Qirān. Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton, 1986), 279-81 (especially note 16). See also Kaya Şahin, *Empire and Power in the Reign of Suleyman* (Cambridge, 2013), 61-2. See also Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Connected histories,” 756-58.

<sup>313</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn refers to himself as Ṣāḥib-Qirān. Kamola, 102, 248. Qāḍī Bayḍāwī too appears as Ṣāḥib-Qirān in the introduction to this history. Qāḍī Bayḍāwī, *Nizām al-tawārīkh*, ed. Bahman Mīrza Karīmī (1935), 2.

<sup>314</sup> Mancini-Lander, 249. One Ottoman secretary and author (Jalālzāda Muṣṭafā) depicted the yearning for the title of Ṣāḥib-Qirān as a competition on a global-scale, encompassing not just the Ottoman and the Safavid courts, but also Hungary (Archduke Ferdinand) and Spain (Charles V). Şahin, 188-190.

Rashīd al-Dīn, moreover, locates Chinggis Khan and his Mongol patron Öljeitü in this list of Iranian Šāhib-Qirāns, transforming his Mongol patrons from foreign Stranger-Kings to indigenous Iranian cosmocrats who lay claim to the glorious Iranian royal past and universalist claims.<sup>315</sup>

For Rashīd al-Dīn and possibly his predecessor in office Sa‘d al-Dawla, the title of Šāhib-Qirān referenced a genealogy of pre-Islamic Iranian universal and just kingship, linked in particular to the figure of the just king Anūshirvān (531-579). His mythic reign coincided with the “Scorpio” conjunction of 571 C.E., the *qirān al-milla* that foresaw the advent of Islam.<sup>316</sup> It is worth noting that the Syriac Maphrian Bar Hebraeus takes note of a major Saturn-Jupiter conjunction in 1284, just before Arghun’s ascension, but links it instead to the poisoning of the Saljūq Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kaykhusraw III (r. 1265-84) in Erzincan.<sup>317</sup>

In any case, Sa‘d al-Dawla’s usage of this title for his manifesto might have also been linked to his interest in past Iranian monarchs. Vaṣṣāf claims that Sa‘d al-Dawla’s used “fables of the ancestors” (*asāṭīr al-awwālīn*), a term linked to Persian epic literature or “the stories of the Persian kings” (above), to convince the Ilkhan of his prophetic inheritance from Chinggis Khan. We should also consider the possibility that Vaṣṣāf refers in that instance to Sa‘d al-Dawla’s

---

<sup>315</sup> On Stranger-Kingship and Rashīd al-Dīn, see chapter three.

<sup>316</sup> Mancini-Lander, 258; E.S. Kennedy, “The world-year concept on Islamic astrology,” in *Studies in the Islamic Exact Sciences*, ed. Kennedy ([Beirut]: 1983), 29, 34. Furthermore, Juwaynī in his *Ta’rīkh-i jahāngushā (History of the World Conqueror)* designates the Great Khan Ögedei (r. 1229-41) as ‘Lord of Auspicious Conjunction’ explaining that in every age appears a Šāhib-Qirān just as in earlier times there were Hātim al-Ṭā’ī (the famous pre-Islamic Arab poet and warrior) and the king Anūshirvān, thus connecting Ögedei to two pre-Islamic figures known for their just rule. Juwaynī, vol. 3, 190; Juwaynī/Boyle, 234. As will be discussed in chapter five, in his account on the revolt of the Mongol governor of Anatolia Timurtash, the hagiographer Aflākī writes that “I am *Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction* [my emphasis, *man šāhib-i qirānam balki mahdi-yi zamānam*]. Why indeed, I am the Mahdi of Time!’ Moreover, in giving away wealth he had no equal and in dispensing justice he was a second Anūshirvān.” Aflākī, *Manāqib al-‘arifīn*, vol. 2, 977; trans. O’kane, *The Feats*, 684.

<sup>317</sup> “During the winter [of 1284] the seven wandering stars (i.e. planets) were gathered together in the Zodiacal Sign of Capricorn, in the *anabibazon* (i.e. the upper part of the Zodiac), and behold, the whole world trembled and quacked at this event, for it was the year of the conjunction of the two supreme [stars] Kronos [Saturn] and Zeus [Jupiter] in the Zodiacal Sign of Aqurius, for they make their conjunction in the summer.” Bar Hebraeus, 473. On Ghiyāth al-Dīn’s death and its Anatolian context, Charles Melville, “Anatolia under the Mongols,” in ed., Kate Fleet, *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 1: *Byzantine to Turkey, 1071-1453* (New York, 2008), 73-74.

reliance on Persianate works of ethics and statecraft, which often evoked accounts on paradigmatic pre-Islamic Iranian kings. Ilkhanid rulers were portrayed as heirs to Iranian kingship and its epic history.<sup>318</sup> The title of Şāhib-Qirān in the *maḥḍar* incorporates the Ilkhan Arghun in an Iranian genealogy of moral cosmocracy, just as ‘Phags-pa Lama’s *Shes bya rab gsal* integrates Qubilai and his son into a line of Buddhist sacred cosmocrats (above).

As discussed earlier, Sa‘d al-Dawla’s *maḥḍar* espouses a similar absolutist imperative to Ṭūsī’s *akhlāq-ethical* model. Ṭūsī’s work promotes a vision of the world regulator as the supreme enforcer of law, one who has the jurisdiction to interpret what is defined as the Divine Law, the *nāmūs-i ilahī* and, thus, transgress into the “exclusive” domains of the ‘*ulamā*’ (“his is the authority of jurisdiction over the particularities of the Law”). As Shahab Ahmed explains, Ṭūsī claims the ruler’s discretionary authority “in regard to the laid-down Divine Law.” The ruler has “the dispensation to *specify* and *particularize* that law ‘according to what is needed for welfare [*maṣlahat*] in each time and circumstance’. In other matters, the ruler has absolute authority to make original law with a view to general welfare”.<sup>319</sup> Muzaffar Alam notes that the ideal just ruler in Ṭūsī’s theory and in the works of later authors who appropriated and repurposed the *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī*, is independent from the *sharī‘a* and any other scriptural source of law. In *akhlāq* texts, justice, understood as “social harmony, and the coordination and balance of conflicting claims of diverse interest groups that may comprise people of various religions,” existed outside of the *sharī‘a*, surely in its narrow legalistic sense, and so was the king, the “all powerful center of societal organization.” The ruler’s pursuit of justice was judged by human reason, and not a

---

<sup>318</sup> See for example, Melville, “The royal image in Mongol Iran,” in *Every Inch a King: comparative studies on kings and kingship in the ancient and medieval worlds*, eds. Lynette Mitchell and Charles Melville (Leiden, 2013), 343-71.

<sup>319</sup> Ahmed, 466-67.

religious legal code.<sup>320</sup> In the later, post-Mongol *akhlāq* formulations of Ṭūsī's *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī*, the “law-making function of the Sultan,” which was based on the ruler's human reason, was made to conform to “universal principles of the *sharī'a*,” that is, to work towards the welfare of society. They conceived of a ruler's *siyāsa* as an integral expression of the *sharī'a*.<sup>321</sup>

Ṭūsī's model of the world regulator/law-maker king corresponds also to the Mongols' view of the ruler as a cosmopolitan “power set above religious law and practice”.<sup>322</sup> The Chinggisid ruler was understood to have the authority to legislate in any given tradition since his rulings were both congruent with, superior to, and independent from any scriptural tradition or human intermediacy.<sup>323</sup> He was the supreme legislator, who derived his authority from Heaven's blessing transferred to him through his “inheritance” of Chinggis Khan's charisma. I suggest that it was this prerogative, the right and innate gift allowing the Mongol ruler to intervene and correct scriptural traditions that enabled Arghun to determine Simnānī's belief (Islam) to be a “false religion” (*dīn-i bāṭil*). The structured inter-religious debates at the courts of the Mongol rulers were an opportunity to “mobilize and monopolize the spiritual forces of the realm”,<sup>324</sup> but also to display and reaffirm the ruler's “innate gift” of Heaven-derived wisdom. What was at stake in the inter-ecumenical disputes, then, was not the veracity of one tradition or the other, but its congruency

---

<sup>320</sup> Alam, furthermore, suggests that Ṭūsī's work exhibits an altogether different understanding of *sharī'a* since the *nāmūs-i ilahī* “manifests itself in the *sharī'a*.” In fact, for later Timurid and Mughal authors, the three terms of *nāmūs*, *sharī'a* and the *sharī'a* of the prophets were often interchangeable. Alam, 49-60.

<sup>321</sup> Ahmed, 469-71.

<sup>322</sup> See introduction

<sup>323</sup> “Due to that will's [the Khan's] intuitive congruency with them and other wisdom traditions, rulers could legislate freely without fear [...] of transgressing the essentials of those scriptural traditions.” Atwood, “The Mongol Empire and early modernity,” *forthcoming*. One might argue that this Mongol ideology of the Chinggisid ruler as a lawmaker sovereign had to do with the process of empire formation in the steppe. As Fletcher argues, “in steppe empires the underlying potential for continuing autocracy was greater [than in agrarian empires]. If the empire survived from generation to generation at all, it was because each successor tried not to be a successor in the agrarian empires' sense but rather a *refounder* [my emphasis] [...] a steppe empire ruled by an autocrat had good chances for survival but a steppe empire ruled by an oligarchy – which the monarch's personal power did not dominate – was in danger of reversion to a confederation or even to a “nation” without a supratribal polity”. This was the basis for custom of Tanistry in the Mongol polity. Fletcher, “Ecological and social perspectives,” 24.

<sup>324</sup> Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 200. See also chapter four.

with the ruler's supreme understanding and its applicability for confirming the Khan's absolute prerogative.

Reaffirming the Mongol ruler's "innate gift" was essential to his claim of authority since it also established his continuity with and a replication of Chinggis Khan's own "gift".<sup>325</sup> The Mongol king's "royal prerogative" was, thus, a sign of God's blessing granted to Chinggis Khan and mediated through him. The Mongol institution of the court debate, where the khan's "gift" was tested and demonstrated, was part of Chinggisid ritual of kingship through which the "semantic chain" linking Chinggis Khan and Heaven's blessing was "re-created".<sup>326</sup> For Arghun to claim his succession of Chinggisid charisma and rightful rule, he also had to "perform" this role of the Chinggisid legislator ruler, and "confirm" his inheritance of Chinggis Khan's intuitive knowledge of the scriptural traditions. His claim to government was predicated on his demonstration that his will as khan was the ultimate law, and thus, in line with the empire's founder Chinggis Khan's precedent.

Sa'd al-Dawla experiments in his manifesto with Ṭūsī's *akhlāq-ethical* model not only in order to grant the Ilkhan liberties that would enable his vizier to eliminate his enemies, or to appeal to certain Shī'ī sensibilities and potential allies in Baghdad and at the Ilkhanid court. Rather, I argue that Sa'd al-Dawla's Ṭūsīan-absolutist *maḥḍar* was primarily designed to state, recast, and reaffirm Mongol political theology, and the Ilkhan Arghun's link to the empire's founder. Ṭūsī's dual model of the prophet-world regulator enables Sa'd al-Dawla to mediate Arghun's claim to continuity with Chinggis Khan, albeit in a more refined and elaborate scheme than his earlier, bold claim that Arghun had inherited his ancestor's "prophethood."

---

<sup>325</sup> Atwood, "Explaining rituals," 101. See for example, the bilingual Sino-Mongolian inscription from 1338 translated by Cleaves quoted in the introduction. Cleaves, "Sino-Mongolian inscription," 30, 69.

<sup>326</sup> Elverskog, *Our Great Qing*, 48ff.



Sa‘d al-Dawla might have deliberately retained here the ambiguity in Ṭūsī’s model to address multiple audiences with his manifesto: his enemies at home, the Ṭūsīs and the Shī‘ī communities of Baghdad, and the Ilkhanid elite including the Buddhist Ilkhan himself. Sa‘d al-Dawla left the prophet in his *maḥḍar* unidentified, but by declaring the regulator king to be the Ilkhan Arghun, he was plainly indicating that the law-giver in his document is non-other than the “*yasa*-maker” Chinggis Khan.<sup>327</sup> Zanjānī, who was unwilling to sign his name on the document, surely disapproved this message.

### **Conclusion: Ṭūsī’s Law-Maker and Chinggis Khan**

The *maḥḍar* evinces that Sa‘d al-Dawla was a talented and effective cultural mediator. Sa‘d al-Dawla seems to have identified early on the potential of Ṭūsī’s political formula to redefine the relationship between kings and the revealed law and its scriptural experts, the jurists, and to establish the status of the ruler as a law-maker. Over the course of the centuries following Ṭūsī’s death, the *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī* would “be routinely invoked, paraphrased, and elaborated upon in discussions of the relation of the ruler to law-making” becoming the seminal work of political theory in “the Balkans-to-Bengal complex”.<sup>328</sup> One scholar has gone as far as to suggest that in Mughal India, where Ṭūsī’s work was particularly popular, “the tradition of the

---

<sup>327</sup> The notion of the *yasa* as revealed law is found in the *History of the Nation of the Archers*, completed by 1273 by the Armenian priest Grigor Aknerc’i. The latter writes that Chinggis “received all the commandments of God in his own language” from a gold-feathered, eagle-like angel, and that “this is the law of God which was established among them which they call Yasax.” Zaroui Pogossian suggests that Grigor Aknerc’i was alluding here to Muḥammad’s first Qur’anic revelation from the archangel Jibrā’īl (Gabriel), and intended this “as a diatribe against Muhammad,” the seal of prophesy in Islam. Pogossian links this comparison between the *Yasa* and the *sharī‘a* as revealed, divine law, to the Armenian anti-Mamluk alliance with the Mongols. Zaroui Pogossian, “An ‘Un-known and Unbridled People’ with a biblical genealogy, original homeland and no religious worship: the thirteenth century Armenian Theologian Vardan Arewelc’i and his Colophon on the Mongols,” *Journal of the Society of Armenian Studies* 23 (2014), 36-37. However, this account might also reflect attempts to translate Chinggis Khan’s role as a divinely supported law-maker king into a familiar religious language of revelation and prophethood. It demonstrates in other words, the ambiguities between the notion of the ruler as law-maker and the prophet as conveyer of revealed law.

<sup>328</sup> Ahmed, 462.

Nasirean Ethics [...] proved to be an important support to facilitate stable and enduring Mughal rule in the complex religiopolitical conditions of India”.<sup>329</sup>

It would not be an exaggeration to state that Ṭūsī’s influence on the relationship of the early modern rulers with the sacred law is only comparable to the influence of the Chinggisid legacy of the *yasa* and *töre* on the emergence of the notion of the dynastic law in the post-Mongol imperial polities.<sup>330</sup> The Ṭūsīan *akhlāq-ethical* model and the dynastic-law model,<sup>331</sup> which provided together the grounds for the early modern relationship between dynastic rule and the legislating authority, were both, therefore, principally rooted in the specific historical context of Ilkhanid rule, as well as in the broader Muslim engagement with the Mongols’ own politicoreligious conceptualizations.

With this larger scheme in mind, Sa‘d al-Dawla’s *maḥḍar* can be seen as an initial attempt to test the waters for the model of the law-maker king, whose authority was derived from the dynasty and its founder, rather than the *sharī‘a* and prophetic revelation.<sup>332</sup> Sa‘d al-Dawla’s experiment might have failed in the short-run, yet it succeeded in the long-run. Three centuries

---

<sup>329</sup> Muzaffar Alam, “The Muslim state in a non-Muslim context: the Mughal case,” in *Mirror for the Muslim Prince*, 181; Ahmed, 462ff. For Ṭūsī’s influence on Timurid and Safavid advice manuals, Ann K. S. Lambton, “Early Timurid theories of the state: Hāfīz-i Abrū and Niẓām al-Dīn Šāmī,” *Bulletin d’Études Orientales* 30, (1978): 1-9; Subtelny, “A late medieval Persian summa,” 601-613. For Ṭūsī’s importance for Ottoman authors, Linda Darling, *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East: the circle of justice from Mesopotamia to globalization* (New York, 2013), 131, 134, 140; and Hagen, “Legitimacy and world order,” 55-83.

<sup>330</sup> Guy Burak links the Chinggisid heritage to the emergence in the early modern period of the “state *madhhab*,” that is, the adoption of one *madhhab* by a dynasty, for example, the Ottomans and the Ḥanafī School, and the dynastic intervention and regulation of the *madhhab*’s doctrines and structures. Guy Burak, “The Second formation of Islamic Law,” 579-602. See also his discussion of reemergence of “the *yasa* discourse” in the confrontation over the autonomy and authority to legislate between Mamluk jurists and the Ottoman dynasty and its supporters in Burak, “Between the *Ḳānūn* of Qāyṭbāy and Ottoman *Yasaq*: a note on the Ottoman’s dynastic law,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 26: 1 (2015), 1-23.

<sup>331</sup> These two strands are often unseperable in later works, for example, Ottoman treatises of political theory, where Chinggis Khan and Mongol *yasa*-based rule become representatives of a model of “purely rational rule according to customary law” and the dissolution of the Mongol Empire become a proof of the unatinality of rule that is not based on divine revelation. Some Ottoman writers, however, claimed that rational rule too had *sharī‘a* roots. Hagen, “Legitimacy and world order,” 69-70. The claim made by Ottoman authors might underscore the increasing Islamization of the notion of the law-maker ruler, for which, see Ahmed, 467ff.

<sup>332</sup> For the post-Mongol Ottoman ruler’s lineage-based legal authority, see Burak, “note on the Ottoman’s dynastic law,” 18.

later, in 987/1579, the Mughal emperor Akbar's *maḥḍar*, the *Infallibility Decree*, signed by the leading 'ulamā' at Akbar's court, announced the emperor's supreme authority to resolve disagreements between legal interpreters (*mujtahidīn*). The next chapter examines another Ilkhanid experiment with a new legitimizing paradigm, the reformer-king model. As we shall see, unlike Sa'd al-Dawla's *maḥḍar* and its Ṭūsīan model, which promoted a type of kingship that was autonomous from the *sharī'a*, the reviver king model associated Mongol rule, after Arghun's son the Ilkhan Ghazan's conversion to Islam, with the restoration and revival of *sharī'a* order, by casting Chinggis Khan's mission of world domination as succeeding the Prophet Muḥammad's prophetic mission.

### Chapter III: The King Who Would Revive Islam: Qāshānī's Perso-Islamic conversion of Ghazan Khan

Although there is only one *shāh* in Iran, in the *dīvān* there is not one calendar. For the start of the year (*sar-i sāl*), each has a different system by which to date the work of the kingdom. Some choose to keep their records according to the *hilālī* [the lunar-*hijrī*] calendar, others reckon according to the *kharājī* calendar, and others use neither, and calculate the beginning of the year from the month of *fūrdīn*. The name of this is the New Year system and it dates from the days of Cyrus. Some count by the *iskandarī* calendar and others calculate by the *jalālī*.<sup>333</sup> I will cast all these calendars (*tārīkhha*) aside and make a new one and call it the *khānī*. The beginning of the year will be Nawrūz at spring [...] the world will be fully balanced [by the new calendar], and the new spring will be the time for work and business [...] since *īrān zamīn* has only one king, there will be one reliable way for measuring time. Since the people will have a calendar to work with, my name will be preserved through it.<sup>334</sup>

In the above passage, the later Ilkhanid historian Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī writes of Ghazan's noble attempts to perpetuate his regal legacy, first, by commissioning a history of the Mongols, and second, by initiating the Khānī calendar in the year 701/1302.<sup>335</sup> According to Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī, Ghazan's motivation in the new calendar was his desire to standardize and centralize a divided and poorly managed realm. Ghazan's Khānī era marked the re-founding and regeneration of a unified land of Iran, *īrān zamīn*, under a single autocratic ruler: one land,

---

<sup>333</sup> The (solar) *jalālī* calendar that was named after the Saljūq sultan Jalāl al-Dawla Malikshāh and was instituted in 467/1075, reformed and corrected flaws in the earlier Zoroastrian Yazdgerd calendar (which was adopted after the taxation *kharājī* calendar proved insufficient). S. H. Taqizadeh, "Djalālī," *El<sup>2</sup>*. Accessed March 6, 2016. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/djalali-SIM\\_1950](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/djalali-SIM_1950); and Stephen Blake, "History and chronology in early modern Iran: the Safavid Empire in comparative perspective," in Ali M. Ansari, ed. *Perceptions of Iran: History, Myths and Nationalism from medieval Persia to the Islamic Republic* (London, 2014), 47-9.

<sup>334</sup> Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī, *Zafarnāma*, 2: 1414-15; Ward, *Zafar-namah*, 2: 540-41.

<sup>335</sup> The (solar) Khānī calendar began on 13 Rajab 701 Hijri and was intended as a replacement for the various calendars used in the Ilkhanid domains, in particular the *jalālī* calendar which was used for financial matters and taxation. There were only minor differences between the Khānī and *jalālī* calendars. Numismatic and textual evidence suggest that the Khānī count continued to be used into the reign of the Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd (d. 1335). For the Khānī calendar, see Osman G. Özgüdenli, *Gāzān Han ve Reformları (1295-1304)* (Istanbul, 2009), 344-47.

one calendar, one king.<sup>336</sup> In this account, the meaning of Ghazan’s reign, and by extension, of the Mongol conquests and rule in the eastern Islamic world, is interpreted by modes of temporality and administrative machinations that organize and signify the flow of time. Time is revealed here to be a contingent ideological and cultural product.<sup>337</sup> By imagining Ghazan’s initiation of the Khānī calendar as a moment of political, geographical, and temporal unification of *īrān zamīn*, Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī integrates the Mongol ruler into an Iranian kingly genealogy, picturing his reign as the beginning of a new cycle of Iranian monarchy.

Judith Pfeiffer observes how contemporaneous Muslim Ilkhanid authors viewed Ghazan’s conversion and reign as a watershed moment that marked the “resumption and continuity” of Islamic and Persian historical time. This vision is best illustrated in the way Ghazan’s conversion brought about an abrupt end to the historiographical silence that ensued after the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258. Ghazan’s conversion released “an unprecedented amount of historiography,” which paved the path for the integration of the Mongols into Islamic history.<sup>338</sup> In this chapter, I examine the two earliest Ilkhanid conversion narratives of Ghazan that appear in two different recensions of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*, the first volume of the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn’s famous historical compendium, the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*.

I argue that the earlier recension of Ghazan’s chapter in the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* was either authored by, or based on another work that was authored by the Ilkhanid court historian Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd Allāh al-Qāshānī. Qāshānī’s narrative of the Ilkhan appears to have

---

<sup>336</sup> “Acts of foundation or of innovation or vitalization were regarded as acts of re-foundation and of restoration, usually related to a particular genealogy through which typology operates, a genealogy which was sometimes – but with monotheistic religions, at a certain stage in their evolution, invariably – marked by the beginning of a calendar. Persian kings were [...] also the initiators of new epochs, which signaled the regeneration of their countries.” Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 42.

<sup>337</sup> Shahzad Bashir. “On Islamic time: Rethinking chronology in the historiography of Muslim societies,” *History and Theory* 53 (2014), 521.

<sup>338</sup> Pfeiffer, “The canonization of cultural memory,” 59, 68.

been first incorporated, with little change, into Rashīd al-Dīn's *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*, but at a later stage, significantly revised and altered by the vizier to match his larger agenda in his *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*. While the two conversion versions are intertextually linked, each narrative uses a different temporal perspective on Ghazan's conversion to Islam, one Perso-Islamic and cyclical, and the other linear and Abrahamic, to integrate and translate Ilkhanid *difference*.<sup>339</sup>

I examine the divergences between the two narratives in order to explore how each author deployed and drew on similar and different symbolic, genealogical and textual resources in order to shape the Ilkhan's conversion in accordance with a specific ideological program. In his conversion account, Qāshānī fuses together the Iranian model of a cyclical "savior king" with the notion of a periodically designated Muslim militant puritan reformer. He situates the Ilkhan's conversion at the convergence of several distinct "rhythms of salvation": Iranian cycles of dynastic and moral decay and revitalization, Muslim visions of recurrent degeneration and reform, and eschatological traditions of periodic cycles of corruption and restoration. I explore the textual resources that Qāshānī deployed in this process, from the Saljūq vizier Nizām al-Mulk's *Siyāsatnāma* (*Siyār al-mulūk*) to the Ilkhanid letters during Ghazan's Syrian campaign in 1299, and Najm al-Dīn Rāzī Dāya's *Mirṣād al-'Ibād*. Through his conversion of Ghazan into a reviver Perso-Islamic king, Qāshānī offered a providential explanation of the Mongol invasions and conquests that allowed for the "normalization" of Islamic time. I argue, furthermore, that Qāshānī used this account to integrate and situate the Heaven-decreed Chinggisid mission of world domination, and moreover, the Mongol "political theology of divine right," within a Perso-Islamic salvation history.

---

<sup>339</sup> On these "two temporal modes" and "imaginings of the cosmos" (monotheistic and dualist, Abrahamic and Persianate), see Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs*, Preface (especially, xxix-xxxvi) and chapter 2 (9-45).

While Rashīd al-Dīn relied on Qāshānī's earlier account, Rashīd al-Dīn's later conversion narrative is anchored in his broader project of modeling Ghazan into a Mongol monotheistic king. I situate Rashīd al-Dīn's conversion narrative to Islam within the larger theme of Mongol ancestral monotheism in his *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*. I argue that the portrayal of Ghazan's conversion as deriving from the Ilkhan's innate monotheistic proclivities arises from one of the strategies, namely, ancestral reversion, employed by the pro-Muslim faction in the Mongol elite. Rashīd al-Dīn appropriated this approach with the aim of further solidifying his patrons' conversion to Islam. I argue that the vizier's account represents the Mongol conversion to Islam as a process that reinforces the Ilkhans' connection with their Mongol past, and moreover, with the empire's founder Chinggis Khan. His targeted audience appears to be the Mongol elite and foremost, Ghazan's brother and successor, the Ilkhan Öljeitü. Furthermore, I suggest that the salvific linearity and genealogical perspective that infuse Abrahamic constructions of time, within which Rashīd al-Dīn locates Ghazan's conversion, offer a medium for further consolidating and grounding his brother Öljeitü's dynastic claims.

I, furthermore, contextualize the production of the two narratives within social webs of patronage arguing that each author also addresses with his conversion account a different audience. Qāshānī's conversion is informed by his occupational aspirations and tenuous relationship with his (actual or potential) patron, the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn, who appropriated and incorporated much of Qāshānī's work into his *magnum opus*, the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*. Situating his conversion narrative of the Ilkhan within the broader trends of cultural modes of production of the time, I consider Qāshānī's conversion narrative as an explanation of the Mongol invasions and rule primarily addressed at the intellectual and bureaucratic civilian Ilkhanid elite, through whom Qāshānī wished to gain entry into the court milieu and enjoy its benefits. By presenting

Ghazan's conversion as the resumption of Perso-Islamic cycles of history and kingship, the narrative offered the intellectual-bureaucratic Ilkhanid elite a means of justifying their persistent loyal service to the Mongol overlords.

### The Two Conversion Versions in the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*

Research on the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*'s various recensions is still in its infancy.<sup>340</sup> However, recent scholarship suggests that, at least in the first two decades of the fourteenth century, the text was an evolving and fluid work.<sup>341</sup> The *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* contains two volumes. According to Rashīd al-Dīn's introduction to the work, the first volume, being the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*, a history of the Mongol and Turkic people leading to Chinggis Khan and his successors

---

<sup>340</sup> Extensive work on the topic has been carried out by Japanese scholars; however, their work remains largely unavailable in western languages. One exception is Satoko Shimo, "Ghâzân Khan and the Ta'rîkh-i Ghâzânî – concerning its relationship to the "Mongol history" of the Jâmi' al-Tawârîkh" *The Memoirs of Toyo Bunko*, 54 (1996), 93-110. Kamola is currently carrying out a thorough study of the transmission history of the work.

<sup>341</sup> Kamola, for example, identifies the interpolations of a scribe (*nāsukh*), who identified himself as Rashīd Khwāfi (or Muḥammad b. Ḥamza), in the copies he made of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. Khwāfi's interpolations in the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* include, for example, a chronogram of the death of Shams al-Dīn Kurt of Ghur, additional information about an earthquake in Nishapur during the reign of Abaqa, and an account of the scribe Khwāfi's own ill-fated attempt to receive justice from the Ilkhan Aḥmad Tegüder for an incident that took place earlier, when Khwāfi served the Juwaynī family, and in which, a Mongol officer stole from him a slave he owned. Khwāfi also tampered with the division of the two first volumes of the work, "reediting" the first volume, the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* by including at the end of Ghazan's reign a brief account of the Ilkhan Öljeitü's reign. In a note at end of Ghazan's section, Khwāfi delineates the three-volume plan of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*: the first volume being the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*, a history of the Mongols in the name of the deceased Ghazan, the second volume, a world history (*Tārīkh-i ālam*) in the name of Öljeitü Sultan, which was also to include Öljeitü's reign from Öljeitü's birth to his death (*in future tense*), and a third, geographical volume. Khwāfi writes that whereas Öljeitü's reign is found in the second volume of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, the world history, he decided to include Öljeitü's reign as a *dhayl* in the first volume, the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. Khwāfi explains that his intent is that whoever copies the first volume from Khwāfi's copies and is unable, due to the sheer size of the entire *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, to copy the second volume, but wishes to end the first volume with Öljeitü's reign, would be able to do so by following Khwāfi. Khwāfi subsequently includes a brief account of Ghazan's public appointment of his brother Öljeitü as heir apparent (*valī al-'ahd*) and Öljeitü's assumption of the throne in Tabriz. Khwāfi's tampering with the format of the text and with the chronological choices of its author reveals the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* to be in its early textual phases an evolving work, one that invited interventions, either in the form of filling in gaps in the text or factual additions, or a more substantial reordering of its sections. For example, by filling the third empty section of Aḥmad Tegüder's reign. Kamola, 231-36; London, British Library ms. Add. 16688, folios 291r-293r (for the Khwāfi manuscript's explanation of his "reordering" of the volume and the section on Öljeitü's reign). Intriguingly, in the illustrated Timurid manuscript (*Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Supplément persan, 1113), this empty third section is filled instead with a depiction of Aḥmad Tegüder sitting with a shaykh, possibly shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥman (202r). Khwāfi's interventions in the text are one example of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*'s complicated history of compilation, editing and copying.



in China and Iran, was commissioned by the Ilkhan Ghazan, but completed only after his death. The second volume, a world history (*Tārīkh-i ‘ālam*) consists of a history of the pre-Islamic rulers, a history of the Muslims from the Prophet to the last ‘Abbāsīd caliph followed by the independent dynasties in the eastern Islamic world, and a history of the rest of the people of the world (Oghuz Turks, Chinese, Jews, Franks and Indians). This volume was also supposed to include a history of Öljaitü’s reign. However, this section is missing from all extant volumes. Rashīd al-Dīn notes that Ghazan’s brother and successor, Öljaitü Sultan, ordered this volume to be added as a second volume to the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*, in addition to a third volume on geography that remains missing.<sup>342</sup>

The existence of two different recensions for the chapter (*dastān*) on the Mongol ruler Ghazan (in the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*’s first volume, the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*), was already noted by the Czech orientalist Karl Jahn (d. 1985). He included both versions in his 1941 edition of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. Jahn assigned the letter “S” to one recension for its Istanbul manuscript (Revan Köşkü 1518),<sup>343</sup> and marked the second recension with the letter “P” for its illustrated (Timurid era) Paris manuscript (BnF 1113).<sup>344</sup> The “S” recension became the main iteration for a number of recent editions of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*.<sup>345</sup>

<sup>342</sup> Or was never completed. See Charles Melville, “Jāme‘ al-Tawārīkh,” *Elr*, vol. XIV, Fasc. 5, 462-468.

<sup>343</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Geschichte Gāzān-Ḥān’s aus dem Ta’rīḥ-i mubārak-i-gāzānī*, ed. Karl Jahn (London: Luzac & Co., 1940), xi-xvi. The manuscript *Codex vindobonensis palatinus mixtus 326* in the Austrian National Library in Vienna appears to be from the same family as Revan Köşkü 1518. See Kazuhiko Shiraiwa, “Rashīd al-Dīn’s primary sources in compiling the Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh: a tentative survey,” in *Rashīd al-Dīn*, 50-51.

<sup>344</sup> The current consensus is that the Paris manuscript of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* (Bibliothèque Nationale, Supplément persan, 1113) was copied (by two hands) in the early Timurid period. Shiraiwa revised his earlier dating of the manuscript, from 1308-1314 to 1416-1417, and suggested that its illustrations were completed by 1425.

Kazuhiko Shiraiwa, “Sur la date du manuscrit parisien du Ğāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh de Rašīd al-Dīn,” *Orient: Report of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan* 32 (1997), 37-49. For dating the illustrations, see also Francis Richard, “Un des peintres du manuscrit Supplément persan 1113 de l’histoire des mongols de Rašīd al-Dīn identifié,” in Denise Aigle (ed.), *L’Iran face à la domination mongole* (1997), 307-320; Kamola, 89-93.

<sup>345</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, and Karīmī’s edition: *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, ed. Bahman Karīmī (Tehran, 1338/1959-60). Thackston’s translation, on the other hand, makes use of both iterations following Jahn’s edition, but confuses the two in a number of instances and in some places, chooses to translate one account over the other. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Rashīd uddīn Fazlullah’s Jami‘u’t-Tawarikh*, trans. W.M. Thackston.

The main differences between the two “P” and “S” iterations of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* appear in the first half of the *dastān* of Ghazan, which details the events leading up to Ghazan’s victory and enthronement.<sup>346</sup> While the “S” recension has often been addressed as the “main” version of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* of Rashīd al-Dīn, the “P” recension, and in particular, the first half of the chapter (*dastān*) on Ghazan, appears to represent another, earlier work authored by the Ilkhanid court historian Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd Allāh al-Qāshānī. The majority of the section detailing Ghazan’s conversion, however, is missing from the fragmentary Paris manuscript that Jahn used for his edition (BnF 1113). Kamola has recently noted the existence of this “alternative” conversion account in a St. Petersburg manuscript (dated to Rajab 4 984/1576, and marked with the letter “B”). This text was edited and published as an appendix to ‘Alī Zādah’s Soviet edition from 1957.<sup>347</sup> Kamola has concluded that while the manuscripts of the “P” recension postdate that of the “S” recension, they reflect, nevertheless, “an early iteration of the text, one that was redacted out of the version found in most manuscripts” of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*.<sup>348</sup> I discuss in appendix II, the evidence in support of the argument that Qāshānī was the author of the section on Ghazan in the “P” recension.

The crux of Rashīd al-Dīn’s conversion narrative of Ghazan (the later “S” recension) is the presentation of the Ilkhan as a “crypto-monotheist.” According to this conversion version, in spite of excelling in his Buddhist lessons during his youth and his enthusiastic support of the Dharma, Ghazan had always doubted the sincerity of idol worshiping and was secretly drawn to monotheism. His undisclosed leanings toward monotheism and his appreciation of the Muslim creed become manifest during his struggle with his cousin Baidu over the Ilkhanid throne, when

---

<sup>346</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 1-96.

<sup>347</sup> Faḍl Allāh Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, ed. by ‘Abd al-Karīm ‘Alī Oghlu ‘Alī Zādah (Baku, 1957), vol. 3, 579-619 (appendix 5). The editor notes that the manuscript, preserved at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts at the Russian Academy of Sciences, is dated Rajab 4 984/September 27 1576. *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>348</sup> Kamola, 89-93.

his once rebellious opponent and now powerful ally amir Nawrūz, suggests to Ghazan to convert to Islam.<sup>349</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn is at pains to stress that Ghazan followed the amir's advice, not for political external pressures or his precarious situation during his dynastic struggles with his contender cousin, but for his internal convictions regarding the veracity of the Muslim belief. He converts under the close guidance of Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya. In contrast to his own account reported in the contemporaneous Mamluk histories, Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya is described by Rashīd al-Dīn as a regular member of Ghazan's entourage.

The account implies a top-down model, where Ghazan's conversion initiates a mass conversion among the Mongols: Ghazan pronounces together with all the amirs the profession of faith (*kalimah-yi tavḥīd*) at the presence of the shaykh.<sup>350</sup> This narrative has been deemed the "official" Ilkhanid version of Ghazan's conversion and thus, considered in line with Ilkhanid propaganda. It is, therefore, also seen as historically less reliable than Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya's independent eyewitness account. The narrative has yet to be subjected to a rigorous examination. I discuss with greater attention some of the main themes which the author utilizes in order to align Ghazan's conversion with a specific political-religious program.

Unlike Rashīd al-Dīn's conversion narrative of the Ilkhan (the "S" recension), Qāshānī's conversion narrative (the "P/B" recension) presents Ghazan's conversion as a two-stage process -

---

<sup>349</sup> The amir was the son of the influential Ilkhanid governor of Khurasan Arghun Agha. George Lane, "Arghun Aqa: Mongol bureaucrat," *Iranian Studies* 32:4 (1999): 459-82; Hope, "The 'Nawrūz King'," 451-73.

<sup>350</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 619-622; Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1253-56. As Melville notes, however, the independent eyewitness account of shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya does not support this. The shaykh speaks to the presence of a significant party (*jamā'a*) of Muslim converts among Ghazan's forces and the officer ranks. Melville concludes that Ghazan, who was in the midst of a struggle over the Ilkhanid throne with his cousin Baidu, did not initiate a Mongol mass conversion as the Ilkhanid accounts propose, but rather, was securing the support of the Mongols who had already embraced Islam, most significantly amir Nawrūz himself. By the time of his final advance against Baidu, Ghazan's army seems to have been fully identified with the Islamic faction. Melville, "Pādshāh-i Islām," 171-172. Pfeiffer's study of onomastic changes in Rashīd al-Dīn's genealogical work, the *Shu'ab-i panjgāna*, indicates a rise in the number of Perso-Muslim names in the group of chief Ilkhanid commanders for the reign of Ghazan's predecessor, the Ilkhan Geikhatu (r. 1291-1294), which possibly confirms Ṣadr al-Dīn's observation that the Islamization of the Ilkhanid elite was already on its way when Ghazan had converted. Pfeiffer, "Reflections on a double rapprochement," 374.

the “ruby episode” and the conversion episode - which both center on the relationship between the future Ilkhan and his convertor ally. This two-stage process is also confirmed by the Sufi shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya’s independent eyewitness report in the Mamluk sources.<sup>351</sup> Ṣadr al-Dīn reported that when Nawrūz first addressed him on the issue of Ghazan’s conversion, the amir stated that he had previously already spoken with Ghazan about the matter. He was uncertain whether the prince would follow through on his promise and convert.

In Qāshānī’s detailed account, several key events lead to Nawrūz’s initial proposal to Ghazan.<sup>352</sup> Nawrūz, who was appointed as Ghazan’s “Atabeg” in Khurasan when the Ilkhan Arghun came to power, was in a state of open rebellion against Ghazan and his father from January 1289 (after the Ilkhan Arghun’s execution of amir Buqa) until late 694/1294, when an alliance was brokered between the rebel amir and Ghazan. In Rabī‘ al-Awwal 694/March 1295, Ghazan learnt that his uncle, the Ilkhan Geikhatu, was deposed and executed by a number of Mongol amirs who conspired together with Ghazan’s senior cousin Baidu. Initially encouraged by an emissary from Baidu reporting that Baidu and the amirs had decided to enthrone Ghazan in place of his uncle Geikhatu, Ghazan headed from Khurasan to Iraq to claim the throne, but learns en route that Baidu has occupied the throne with the support of the “seditious” amir Taghachar.<sup>353</sup> Qāshānī’s narrative gives a detailed account of the correspondence and negotiations between Ghazan and Baidu leading to an initial military clash between the two parties followed by further negotiations

---

<sup>351</sup> See Appendix II.

<sup>352</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn’s report (“S” recension) of these developments is far less detailed than the “P” recension version. See appendix II.

<sup>353</sup> Ghazan consults with his commanders at this juncture. Nawrūz carries out a prolonged speech before the prince, in which he promises to raise Ghazan to the throne and speaks of Baidu’s weak and malleable character and the great influence of the amirs on him. Qāshānī’s account devotes a long section to the correspondence between Ghazan and Baidu. Baidu refuses Ghazan’s demand that the amirs who conspired against his uncle be sent to Ghazan for trial, and explains that while initially he had no intentions on taking on the throne for himself, he was persuaded to do so by the amirs. Intimidated by Baidu’s clear numerical advantage, Ghazan, subsequently, contemplates returning to Khurasan. Nawrūz, however, entices Ghazan and the men to bravely meet Baidu on the battlefield.

between the two contenders.<sup>354</sup> It is at this point in Qāshānī's narrative, when an agreement between Baidu and Ghazan is nearly achieved, that the first part of Ghazan's two-stage conversion narrative takes place.

Taking advantage of Ghazan's precarious position, Nawrūz raises before the prince the matter of Ghazan's conversion: "if the *Pādshāh* converts to Islam, all the Muslims immediately would preoccupy themselves with pray for and praise of [your] reign (*davlat*) and would know that they are obliged to aid [you] and make [you] victorious." According to Qāshānī's version, in response, "Ghazan placed the hand of compliance and agreement on the breast of truth and expressed his blessed acceptance of his [Nawrūz's] wish. Ghazan promised that when this terrible danger ends, he would follow on this request to its end." Nawrūz, then, presents the prince with a precious radiant, crisp (*tarāvat*) ruby (*pārah-yi la'l*) weighing 10 *mithqāl* (about 50 grams). He prostrates and says: "although it is not acceptable for a commoner (*qarājū*) to present an advice/gift (*bīlik*) to royal family (*urūq*), but for natural kindness and supreme grace, this ruby has guided and advised His Majesty's/God's servants (*bar sabīl-i bīlik va-nishān pīsh-i bandagān-i ḥaḍrat bāshad*) until the time of his arrival. He [Ghazan or Nawrūz] entrusted/deposited (*sipard*) the ruby with one of the intimates (*ināqān*) of His Majesty".

---

<sup>354</sup> The two armies meet for battle near Qurbān Shīra on Rajab 5 694/May 21 1295. After the initial clash, where Nawrūz is able to secure the higher ground and Ghazan's forces seem to have the advantage, Baidu decides at the advice of his commanders to invite Ghazan for truce talks as a ruse for gaining further time to gather his forces. Baidu's envoy to Ghazan appeals to the rival princes' shared ancestry and offers Ghazan the throne "for it is better for a son to take the place of his father." Baidu offers Ghazan in exchange for a truce control over Iraq, Kirman and Fars in addition to Khurasan and Mazandaran, and the *ordus* of Ghazan's father, his uncle Geikhatu and their wives. Ghazan agrees to his terms and the two sides meet to conclude a peace treaty. Both parties swear an oath not to attack each other, though Nawrūz's unwillingness to swear over a golden goblet with wine in accordance with the Mongol tradition (*rasm-i mughūl*) becomes a cause of concern for Baidu. The discussion over Ghazan's enthronement is postponed, however, until the feast on the next day. In spite of these measures, tensions remain high between the two factions until the parties meet the next day at the tent of Today Khātūn and the negotiations resume. During the day a number of Baidu's forces switch sides giving Ghazan a slight numerical advantage. However, this changes during the nighttime as Baidu's reinforcements arrive from Baghdad and Mughan. When Baidu realizes that Ghazan is thinking of heading back to consolidate his own forces, he sends his son Qipchāq with a number of amirs to stall the prince. They pledge their allegiance to Ghazan and present him with gifts (*tagishmishī*), and suggest that Ghazan and Baidu celebrate their agreement with a feast before Ghazan leaves in order to refute any suspicions as to the endurance of the enmity between the two parties. Qipchāq, however, is sent back to Baidu on the pretext that this would be an inauspicious (*maqrūn*) day for feasting.

Nawrūz’s ruby returns in the second part of Ghazan’s conversion narrative in Qāshānī’s account, when the ruby that was earlier entrusted for safe-keep, is returned to Nawrūz and possibly gifted to Ghazan just prior to his conversion. The function of the ruby at this point of the narrative is not entirely clear.<sup>355</sup> Qāshānī appears to suggest that the precious gem was used as assurance that Ghazan fulfills his promise to convert and was, therefore, entrusted with one of the men until Ghazan’s actual conversion. The promise of the rare gem appears to cement the exchange that was at the center of the relationship between the commander and the prince, the throne for Ghazan’s conversion.<sup>356</sup>

Following the episode of the ruby in Qāshānī’s narrative, Ghazan and the amirs, become suspicious of Baidu’s attempts to prolong the celebrations of the “truce,” and devise a ruse to delay the celebrations in a day, while Ghazan secretly rides out of Baidu’s reach to consolidate his forces. Qāshānī provides next a long section describing Nawrūz’s interrogations as Baidu’s

---

<sup>355</sup> In Islamic narratives, the fate of exquisite rare gemstones is often discussed in the context of dynastic and political transitions as the famous precious stones also passed along with other treasures to the possession of the new imperial powers. One such example is the enormous celebrated pearl *al-yatīma* (*the Orphan* or one of its kind), which was transferred from the Umayyad dynasty to ‘Abbāsīd hands, and came to be “the Abbasid royal insignia.” In ancient and medieval times, precious stones were understood to be able to shine like lamps. One ninth-century author claimed that a red ruby was placed at the top of the Dome of the Rock to shine on its environs. Thus, the idea that the ruby had “guided” the Mongol believers or “Nawrūzian” faction might have been linked to the ideal of the radiant gem. Avinoam Shalem, “Jewels and journeys: the case of the medieval gemstone called al-Yatima,” *Muqarnas* 12 (1995), 45-46, 49. One might suggest that the ruby in Ghazan’s conversion narrative functions as a royal artifact heralding Ghazan’s reign (*dawlat*). This idea finds affirmation in another exquisite gem, an inscribed royal red spinel weighing 361 carats (about 72 grams) that was given by the Safavid Shāh ‘Abbās (d. 1629) to the Mughal emperor Jahāngīr (d. 1627). The gem bears the names of Shāh ‘Abbās and Jahāngīr, but also that of the Timurid prince Ulugh Beg and the later Mughal emperor Alāmgīr (Aurangzeb) and Aḥmad Shāh Durrani suggesting that the precious stone had a particular appeal to monarchs who claimed to be heirs to Timur’s sovereignty. The gem is currently part of the collection in Dār al-Athār al-Islāmiyyah, Kuwait City. “Inscribed royal spinel” in *Explore Islamic Art Collections*. Place: Museum With No Frontiers, 2015.

[http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=object;EPM;kw;Mus21;27;en](http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;EPM;kw;Mus21;27;en)

<sup>356</sup> Kamola notes that this episode, Nawrūz’s initial presentation of the ruby to Ghazan, was omitted from the “main redaction” of Rashīd al-Dīn’s work (the “S” recension), which was also translated by Thackston. Kamola, 182; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 620. However, this episode, or the first part of the two-stage of Ghazan’s conversion, is not entirely missing from the “main” iteration. Rashīd al-Dīn combines the two sections into one episode and omits some of the details (for example, noting that “the Muslims swore on the Qur’an and the Mongols swore on the gold” and omitting the names of the amirs Nūrīn and Qutlughshāh who swore on the golden goblet and Nawrūz, Būrālaghī and Mūlāy, who swore on the Qur’an). This divergence agrees with the Rashīd al-Dīn’s general effort to make Qāshānī’s narrative more concise and clearer (see Appendix II).

captive, Baidu's attempt to win over Nawrūz, and Nawrūz's final deception of Baidu.<sup>357</sup> Baidu's attempt to gain Nawrūz's support through the mediation of Nawrūz's brother (and Baidu's supporter) backfires. Nawrūz does not only outright refuse to break his oath to Ghazan, but also secretly succeeds to forge an alliance with Baidu's main supporter and key co-conspirator, the amir Taghachar. Nawrūz tricks Baidu to believe that he turned sides and swears to bring back with him Ghazan's head. Set free, Nawrūz is reunited with Ghazan, and it is at this point that the scene of Ghazan's conversion takes place.

According to Qāshānī,<sup>358</sup> Ghazan consults his commanders about how to overcome Baidu and each amir presents his thoughts. Then, “inasmuch as amir Nawrūz had earlier [already] presented the gift/advice (*bīlik*),<sup>359</sup> he kneeled and said”:<sup>360</sup>

“It is reported from the religious scholars (*‘ulamā-yi islām*), the astrologers and the composers of almanacs (*aṣḥāb-i nujūm wa-arbāb-i taqwīm*) that a great king (*Pādshāh-i buzurḡ*) was to appear around the year 690 (/1291) and this king was to strengthen the religion of Islam, and the Muslims (*muslimānī*), who have been weakened [*mundaris gashṭa*, literally: “worn out”], were to be revived and renewed (*tāzah va ṭarī shavad*) through his guidance. From the inclusiveness of the justice of this king, the sheep will be protected from the harm of the wolf and the gazelle from to the oppression of the hound; from the comprehensiveness of his equity, the feeble finch will be safe from the grip of the royal falcon and the partridge from the force and the dread of the falcon. The crown and throne of kingship will be his for many years. Time and again it has come to the mind of this slave that he [this king] is Ghazan Khan since the sign of his qualities and the marks of his appearance are manifest and shining from the shape of the state and the face of the impressions of the shining forehead (*jabīn-i mubīn*) of the prince.<sup>361</sup> If the

<sup>357</sup> This section, which includes a number of lengthy quotes by Nawrūz and other protagonists, appears only in a brief outline in the later “S” redaction.

<sup>358</sup> As noted earlier, this segment is partially missing from the Paris manuscript used by Jahn (see Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 76, where the narrative is cut off). ‘Alī Zādah’s edition picks up the missing segment (Rashīd al-Dīn/‘Alī Zādah, 603-607).

<sup>359</sup> The author refers to the gift of the ruby here, probably as an allusion to Islam.

<sup>360</sup> Kamola has translated the conversion narrative in an appendix to his dissertation. My translation differs from Kamola’s on several points. See Kamola, appendix B.

<sup>361</sup> This statement is echoed in Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, where the vizier mentions that a king who would be fortunate enough to rule, “the marks of kingship would shine/be evident (*lā ‘ih*) from his forehead.” *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, ed. Hāshim Rajabzāda (Tehran, 1391 [2013]), 246. The vizier makes a similar statement in a story about a prediction of Chinggis Khan’s rise in the so-called tribal section of the *Jāmi ‘ al-tawārīkh*. He writes that Chinggis Khan’s kingship is predetermined since “Heavenly assistance and regal splendor (*farr-i shāhī*) shine (*lā ‘ih*) patently on his forehead (*jabīn*).” Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1: 181; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 1, 97.



prince were to convert to Islam and adhere to the tenets and tracts of the faith, he would certainly be *the one in authority of the age* [*ūlī al-amr-i 'ahd, ruler of the age*, my emphasis] and he would enable the Muslims, who are enslaved in the lowest baseness and the lowest of places, to safely rise and fittingly thrive so that aiding the *mavālī* in victory and subduing the enemies by the spreading of religion and the provisioning of justice, and full (*az bun dandān*), unsolicited obedience [to the prince] would become an individual duty for all Muslims (*farḍ 'ayn*), moreover, it will be the fountainhead of duty (*'ayn-i farḍ*). All the Muslims would seek you and love you and on account of the sincerity of [their] endeavors and heartfelt inclinations, God Glorious and Exalted will make you victorious. The religion of Islam, which has been weakened [“worn out”] by its subjugation to the infidel (*kuffār*) Tatars and the domination of the tyrants and offenders (*zālimān va fāsiqān*), will be revived through the prince’s support.”

When God Glorious and Exalted had adorned and enlightened the heart of the prince with the light of oneness (*nūr-i tavḥīd*) and his noble existence became the treasury of the sacred secrets (*asrār-i quds*) and the bearer of gnosis (*ma'rifat*), and the dawn of eternal felicity broke over him, and the veil [*ghastāva*, mistakenly read for: *ghashva?*] of defect and doubt was lifted from his eye of discernment, the wise speech of Nawrūz left its mark on his blessed heart [...] and he [Ghazan] said: “The inclination to this purpose and the splendor of this motive have always been set before the eyes of my mind since how could it be in accordance with reason for an intelligent person (*khiradmand*) to put his head to the ground before a created inanimate object and not endeavor to gain proximity to and favor from God in the perfect soul (?), but seek instead assistance in a desire from a person/body (*shakhsī*) that this idol is his image? It is disdainful to humble oneself before an idol and perform the terms of kissing and the rituals of osculation. Idol worshiping is the worst of errors and ignorance and the stuff of *istifvā* (?) and derision. The religion of Islam is the best of religions and the substance/choicest of the divine laws (*khulāṣa-yi navāmīs-i ilahī*), but the unceasing and continuous attachments and hindrances were an obstacle to the guidance of the light of faith (*nūr-i īmān*) [...]”

Nawrūz’s proposal was heard and granted and he [Nawrūz] asked for the ruby that was entrusted [with one of the intimates]. On the fourth of Sha‘bān in the year 694 (19 June 1295) in a palace (*kūshkī*) that had been the [summer] palace (*takhtgāh*) of Arghun, in the meadow of Lār in Damāvand, they organized a great feast and the prince washed and performed the ritual ablutions and dressed in clean garments. He ascended to the top of the elevated palace (*qasr*) and he stood like a candle at the foot of the throne as a servant of God. Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm, the true successor of Sa‘d al-Dīn Ḥammūya, mercy be upon him, instructed [Ghazan] to pronounce the Shahāda. Prince Ghazan recited the words of Sincerity (*ikhhlāṣ*, in reference to surat al-ikhhlāṣ) with full resolution from the true innermost secret (*sirr*) of his heart and several times, with clear speech (*lisān-i faṣīḥ*) like the Messiah (*masīḥ*) repeated the profession of the unity of God (*tavḥīd*) and extolled God (*takbīr*).

The prince raised his finger, declared the unity of God



And all the amirs and soldiers, close to one hundred thousand disobedient polytheists, became believers (*mu`min va muvaḥḥid*). Although the *bakhshīs* [Buddhist monks] had instructed him [Ghazan] during the time of his youth and childhood in the worshiping of idols, and he had remained steadfast and constant in it, nevertheless when he converted to the religion of Islam and listened with the ear of intellect (*gūsh-i hūsh*) and consent (*sam`-i riḍā*) to the Muḥammadan community (*millat-i nabavī*) and the Ḥanafī religion, and he established [them] in his bosom [*dar sakīna-yi sīna*, literally: the knowledge and purity in one’s bosom/heart], he [Ghazan] became truer in his sincerity than Uvays and Salmān. In this joy and happiness, they celebrated and feasted for some time, and out of sincerity and faith, all the peoples – Turks and *‘ajam* [Persians] – were scattering dirhams and dinars, precious gems and desirable objects, over the blessed throne and chanting:

The wealth, health, years, portents, origins, descent, fortune and throne  
 Let they be yours (*bādat*) in kingship, stable and eternal:  
 Abundant wealth, good health, fortunate portents, joyous years,  
 Firm origins (*aṣl-i rāsī*), immortal descent, sublime fortune, and an obedient throne<sup>362</sup>

Qāshānī’s narrative continues with Ghazan ordering appointments and stipends for the shaykhs, imams, and sayyids, and the building of Sufī lodges (*khānaqāh*) and shrines (*mashāhid*). Ghazan then observed the fast of Ramadan. The narrative ends with the statement that thereafter, with accordance to the “authority verse” (“O you who believe! Obey Allāh, and obey the Messenger, and those in authority from among you (*ūlī al-amr minkum*)”) (4:59), submission to Ghazan became obligatory for “the kings and sultans of Islam.”

Qāshānī’s conversion narrative shares a number of key themes with Rashīd al-Dīn’s version, foremost, Ghazan’s early childhood experiences with the Buddhists and his internal leaning towards monotheism and Islam prior to his conversion. However, Qāshānī’s narrative also touches upon a number of important themes that do not appear in Rashīd al-Dīn’s “official” version, mainly, Nawrūz’s “prophecy” and the presentation of the convert Ghazan as a reviver-savior king. To unpack some of these themes, we need to consider Qāshānī’s conversion narrative in light of the textual resources the author used.

---

<sup>362</sup> This is the end of a poem in praise of Sultan Malikshāh (?) by the Saljuqīd laureate Mu`izzī (d. ca. 542/1148). See Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām,” 173; Mu`izzī, *Dīvān*, ed. ‘Abbās Iqbāl (Tehran, 1318/1938), 315-16.

## Ghazan's Conversion and Persianate Cyclical Time: Qāshānī and Niẓām al-Mulk

In Qāshānī's account, Nawrūz's advice (*bilik*) to Ghazan begins with a prediction made by the *'ulāma* and astrologers alike concerning the appearance of a great king (*Pādshāh-i buzūrg*) who is to revive and renew (*tāzah va ʔarī shavad*) a weakened (*mundaris gashta*) Islam, and introduce utopian justice. Qāshānī situates Ghazan's conversion within recurring cycles of the corruption of order, government and religion, followed by their revival and restoration, in which the appearance of a great just "rejuvenator" king marks the beginning of a new cycle.<sup>363</sup>

It is significant that Qāshānī designates astrological experts in addition to the *'ulāma* as the bearers of this prognostication. Kathryn Babayan shows how cyclical visions of time permeate the Persianate world and its historical imaginations.<sup>364</sup> Meisami, on the other hand, cautions us about the use of the term "recurring cycles" since "Muslim historians do not conceive of history as cyclical: history has a beginning – the Creation – and a terminus – the End of Days" and "while the linear progression of history may be divided into ages in which certain event-types recur – the most prominent being the rise and fall of states – it is more accurate to speak of successive cycles of power as one group replaces another".<sup>365</sup>

I read Qāshānī's conversion account as reconciling these two distinct and overlapping temporal regimes. With one, Ghazan's conversion is imagined as the beginning of a new stage in

---

<sup>363</sup> Babayan quotes al-Bīrūnī, who states that when the early Muslim community debated what dating system to use, they inquired about the Persian system and rejected it since "as soon as a new king arises among the Persians he abolishes the era of his predecessor." Babayan, 9-11; al-Bīrūnī, *The chronology of Ancient Nations* (London, 1879), trans. and ed. Edward Sachau, 34. Note also the quote from Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī about Ghazan's initiation of the Khānī calendar in 701/1302 with which this chapter started. One of the earliest illustrated reproductions of Bīrūnī was copied in the Ilkhanate in 707/1307-8. A recent study noted that this manuscript along with its 25 illustrations is one of the earliest sets of images on the topic of the life of the Prophet. The manuscript is an example of the Ilkhanid "fusion of the Arab style of painting with Chinese pictorial devices and motifs." Teresa Kirk, "The Edinburgh al-Biruni manuscript: a holistic study of its design and images," *Persica* 20 (2005): 39-81.

<sup>364</sup> Babayan further notes that "astronomy, along with its particular astrological implications, was one channel through which components of a Persianate universe survived." Babayan, 9-45; Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*, 28-31.

<sup>365</sup> Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Edinburgh, 1999), 10-11. See also al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 41.

God's salvific plan for his weakened community, and with the other, the conversion is predetermined by the recurring cycles of political-social-religious decline and renewal that are caused and predicted by celestial movements.<sup>366</sup> Qāshānī's conversion narrative utilizes these historical imaginations to offer a providential explanation of Ghazan's conversion and of the Mongol invasions, and the destruction and havoc they inflicted. Ghazan's conversion amends the crisis that ensued from the Mongol conquests. Qāshānī employs these Perso-Islamic imaginations of history and divine agency to normalize the watershed moment of the Mongol invasions and rule, by envisioning Ghazan's conversion as "restarting" Islamic time and "revitalizing" Iranian history.<sup>367</sup>

The narrative depicts Ghazan as a cyclical "savior/reviver king," modeled on the ideal just philosopher king of the Persianate genre of advice literature (the *akhlāq-ethical*). As I discuss below, one particular work that inspired Qāshānī's narrative was the Sufi mirror for

---

<sup>366</sup> Arjomand demonstrates how Persianate authors reconciled in their writings two distinct approaches to historical change: on one hand, an Indo-Sasanian based deterministic theory, a "political astrology," according to which, major historical turns unfold from natural, celestial phenomenon (astral conjunctions); and on the other hand, an ethico-normative interpretation of time, which views political transition (*dawlat*) and revolution (*inqilāb*) as the products of the moral degeneration of dynasties and the failure of their rulers to sustain justice, withhold usurpation and manage social difference (or maintain the rigid social stratification). Saïd Amir Arjomand, "The conception of revolution in Persianate political thought," *Journal of Persianate Studies* 5 (2012): 1-16. See also Meisami, 285. That these two divergent theories of history, which situate human agency within a larger web of intricate forces, were viewed as compatible rather than opposing is illustrated already in the work of the ninth century astrologer Abū Ma'shar al-Balkhī (d. 886), who used a classification of the frequency of the cyclically recurring auspicious conjunctions (*qirān*) of Saturn and Jupiter (960, 240 and 20 years) and the inauspicious conjunctions of Mars and Saturn (every 30 years) to determine the magnitude of political turns and explain dynastic changes and religious transitions. In Abū Ma'shar's influential astral theory, planetary positions influenced the ruler's political conditions, prosperity, moral attitudes as well as the reactions and character of his subjects Arjomand, "conception of revolution," 6-7; Keiji Yamamoto and Charles Burnett, ed. and trans., *Abu Ma'shar on Historical Astrology: The Book of Religions and Dynasties* (on the Great Conjunctions) (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 72-81. Ibn Khaldūn explains it in the following terms: "the great conjunction [reoccurs after 960 years] indicates great events, such as a change in royal authority (*mulk*) and dynasties (*dawla*) or a transfer of royal authority from one people to another. The medium conjunction [reoccurs after 240 years] [indicates] the appearance of persons in search of superiority and royal authority; the small conjunction [reoccurs after 20 years] indicates the appearance of rebels and propagandists (*al-khawārij wa 'l-du'ā*), and the ruin of towns or of their civilization." 'Abd al-Raḥman ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima* (Beirut, 1900, third edition), 335-6; *The Muqaddimah, an Introduction to History*, translated by Franz Rosenthal and edited by N. J. Dawood (Princeton, 1969), 260-1. For a discussion of Ibn Khaldūn and conjunction astrology, Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*, 28-31.

<sup>367</sup> Pfeiffer, "The canonization of cultural memory," 59, 68.

princes of Najm al-Dīn Rāzī Dāya (d. 1256), the *Mirṣād al-‘Ibād* (the path of God’s bondsmen).

The extent to which Qāshānī draws on advice literature is further evident by his choice of framing the prelude to the conversion account as the amir Nawrūz’s *advice* to his benefactor Ghazan.

The notion of a “savior king” whose appearance is predetermined by both God and conjunction astrology is shared by one of the most influential works of Persianate political ethics, the Saljūq vizier Nizām al-Mulk’s *Siyāsatnāma* (*Siyār al-mulūk*). Chapter forty of the *Siyāsatnāma* begins with the “ominous” assertion that “at any time, some celestial event/accident (*ḥadītha-yi asmānī*) may overtake the kingdom through the evil eye and the turn in power (*davlat*) is transferred from one house to another and thrown into disorder through sedition (*fitna*) and tumult (*āshūb*) [...]”.<sup>368</sup> Next, writes Nizām al-Mulk, chaos, the breakdown of social order and oppression (*ẓulm*) ensue from this political instability: the nobles are disposed while the miserable become kings and viziers, the king’s wives give commands, Divine Law and the work (*kār*) of the Sharī‘a are weakened, and the military is oppressive. This decline, however, is followed and arrested by the appearance of a “savior king”: “when through celestial good fortune, the evil times pass, God Most High will bring forth a just (*‘ādil*) and wise king from royal stock (*abnā-yi mulūk*) [...] and gives him turn in power (*dawlat*) to vanquish his enemies [...].” In a possible allusion to his own *Siyāsatnāma*, Nizām al-Mulk states that this king will

---

<sup>368</sup> It is suggested that Nizām al-Mulk added chapter forty along with ten more chapters a year after completing the work in 484/1091 (which originally included thirty-nine chapters), and shortly before he was dismissed by Malikshāh and assassinated. According to the librarian’s note for the revision of *Siyār al-mulūk*, Nizām al-Mulk had added another eleven chapters “because of the constant anxiety that was in his mind on account of the enemies of this dynasty.” Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 145-162. The authorship of *Siyār al-mulūk* by Nizām al-Mulk has been recently questioned by Alexey Khismatulin, who presented compelling evidence to suggest that the Saljuq court poet Mu‘izzī Nishābūrī (d. ca. 542/1148) had fabricated the work on the basis of the contract of employment of the Saljūq vizier, attributing the text’s authorship to the latter. For the meantime, until this question is fully resolved, I maintain here the traditional attribution of the authorship to Nizām al-Mulk. Alexey Khismatulin, “Two mirrors for princes fabricated at the Seljuq court: Nizām al-Mulk’s *Siyār al-mulūk* and al-Ghazālī’s *Nasīhat al-mulūk*,” in Edmund Herzig and Saraf Stewart, eds. *The Age of the Seljuqs: the idea of the Iran* (London, 2015), 94-130.

read books and learn the enactments of former rulers; he will reinstate the proper social hierarchies, ascertaining that, all are appointed to suitable positions and maintain justice; he will be the friend of religion and enemy of heresy.<sup>369</sup> According to Nizām al-Mulk, predictable planetary movements determine the rhythms of cycles of moral degeneration and political corruption followed by the revival of order and justice heralded by the appearance of a “savior king.”

The relationship between “political astrology” and dynastic cycles is further underlined when we compare chapter forty with chapter one. Chapter one of the *Siyāsatnāma* presents a similar narrative of political and social decline and restoration at the hands of a “savior king,” who is chosen by God and “endowed with kingly virtues”.<sup>370</sup> In chapter one, God is the only agent deciding these cycles of political change and transition.<sup>371</sup> The ruler is his instrument, and the absence of a righteous and just king is God’s punishment.<sup>372</sup>

The two chapters are also set apart by chapter forty’s admonishing tone. Whereas in chapter one, Nizām al-Mulk identifies this/his era as the age of the “savior king” (hinting that

---

<sup>369</sup> Arjomand, “revolution,” 9-10; Nizām al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings, the Siyāsat-nāma or Siyar al-Mulūk*, trans. Hubert Darke (New Haven, 1960), 143-44; *Siyāsatnāma*, eds. Murtaḍā Mudarrisī and Muḥammad Qazwīnī (Tehran, 1336 [19551]), 46-7.

<sup>370</sup> In chapter one of the *Siyār al-mulūk*, Nizām al-Mulk explains that after a period of corruption, bloodshed and discord, “by divine decree (*tavfiq-i izadī*) one human being acquires some prosperity and power (*s’ādātī wa-davlatī*) and according to his deserts the truth bestows good fortune (*iqbālī*) upon him [...] he may employ his subordinates every one according to his merits and confer upon each a dignity and a station proportionate to his power”. *Book of Government*, 9-10.

<sup>371</sup> This recurrent cycle of “revival-corruption-revival” is derived from God’s need to punish and chasten his subjects for “any disobedience or disregard of the divine laws (*sharī’a*).” God’s punishment is the removal of good kingship, which is followed by anarchy, strife and bloodshed, until the sinners and the innocent alike are destroyed. The period of the “absence of kingship” is followed by a chosen “savior king,” who through the good fortune (*iqbāl*) bestowed on him by God, is able to quell rebellions and guarantee political stability and justice. This theme appears also in chapter forty, where in addition to restoring order, this king will also be “the friend of religion and the enemy of oppression, he will assist the faith and remove vanity and heresy (*havā va-bid’at*).”

<sup>372</sup> As Simidchieva furthermore observes, in Nizām al-Mulk’s “reviver king” model, “a ruler – any ruler – is an instrument of God’s will [...] a king represents God’s blessing upon His righteous and obedient servants. A rogue ruler is a conduit of God’s wrath against a sinful and rebellious lot, an unwitting agent of divine purpose [...] and] digression from the religious norms is very closely aligned with political transgression.” Marta Simidchieva, “Kingship and legitimacy in Nizām al-Mulk’s *Siyāsatnāma*, fifth/eleventh century,” B. Gruendler and L. Marlow, eds. *Writers and Rulers: perspectives on their relationship from Abbasid to Safavid times* (Wiesbaden, 2014), 101-2.

Malikshāh fills in the shoes of the latter), in chapter forty, Nizām al-Mulk transforms his earlier praise of his Saljūq patrons into reprimand intertwined with a latent warning as to the dynasty's future decline. Celestial movements function here both as the causation of and the ominous signs heralding the moral corruption and the subsequent fall and decay of dynasties and regimes.<sup>373</sup> Thus, we find in the *Siyāsatnāma* both agents, God and celestial movements, ordering together cycles of political and moreover, religious degeneration, punishment, and rejuvenation within a “rhythm of salvation history,” in which “righteous kingship” constitutes “an agency of restoration”.<sup>374</sup> Nevertheless, the *Siyāsatnāma*'s vision of kingship is one that derives its authority from *farr* and reason.

By casting Ghazan in the role of “savior king,” Qāshānī explains the Mongol invasions and the Ilkhanid conversion that followed half a century later, as part of a sequence of recurring cycles of moral decay and renewal synced together by a divine program to salvage the community. The description of the utopian justice of Nawrūz's predicted just reviver king in Qāshānī's conversion narrative (“from the inclusiveness of the justice of this king, the sheep will be protected from the harm of the wolf [...]”) is also reminiscent of statements made by Iranian monarchs, who epitomize the Iranian ideal of just kingship, in the *Siyāsatnāma*. In the *Siyāsatnāma*, for example, Anūshirvān (531-579), whom al-Ghazālī (or rather, pseudo-Ghazālī) described as surpassing “the kings who ruled before him in justice, equity and government,”

---

<sup>373</sup> As Simidchieva notes, this warning is made explicit in the next chapter (41) on “not giving two appointments to one man...” where Nizām al-Mulk states: “the dynasty has reached its perfection; your humble servant is afraid of the evil eye and knows not where this state of affairs will lead.” *Book of Government*, 164; Simidchieva, 106.

<sup>374</sup> It is significant that these recurring cycles were not envisioned as eternal. As al-Azmeh further states, “monotheistic religions, under the decisive influence of Zoroastrianism and the no less decisive but still poorly appreciated influence of Manicheanism, recast this in a manner that enclosed time by postulating an end to it. In this model, the alternance of righteousness and wickedness, the succession of virtuous and evil kings and times, will end and yield to the undisturbed and perpetual reign of order as decreed by divinity.” Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 41. While the two agencies at play might represent two different “temporal modes”, one Abrahamic and the other Persianate, as Babayan notes, they nevertheless “converge at moments of grand transformation [...] for they share the paradigm of an imminent messiah.” Babayan, XXXV (introduction) and 34.

states before his court that “I shall protect the ewes and lambs from the wolves [...] I shall remove evil-doers from the face of the earth and fill the world with justice and equity”.<sup>375</sup>

Ghazan is identified by Nawrūz as this reviver king whose actions will lead not just to the restoration of justice, but also to the revitalization of a “weakened” Islam. In Ghazan’s conversion narrative, these distinct cyclical systems – the cycles of religious deterioration, divine retribution and restoration directed by God, and the cycles of political chaos and revivalism, driven by astral conjunctions, along with the recurring pattern of the moral degeneration of dynasties – all converge, forming together a new circular synthesis, even more so than in the *Siyāsatnāma*.

### **Ghazan’s Syrian Letter: “the One in Authority” or the *Mujaddid*?**

Qāshānī’s conversion narrative, however, also needs to be considered alongside an additional text that offers a more elaborate version of Qāshānī’s vision of Ghazan as a combined Iranian “savior king” and a Muslim puritan “religious reformer.” The text in question is one of the several threatening letters sent by Ghazan to the people of Syria during his short-lived occupation of Damascus. On 27 Rabī‘ I/22 December 1299, the Mongol army headed by the Ilkhan Ghazan defeated the Mamluk forces in Wādī al-Khaznadār near Homs.<sup>376</sup>

---

<sup>375</sup> Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsatnāma*, 40; Nizām al-Mulk, *Book of Government*, 41.

<sup>376</sup> Amitai, “Whither the Ilkhanid army?” 221-64. The Ilkhanid forces went on to occupy the city of Damascus for five weeks. Ghazan appointed as the city’s governors two Mamluk renegades (Qipchaq and Baktimur), who had earlier sought refuge at the Ilkhanid court, and heavily taxed the Damascene population. The Mongol forces looted and destroyed (allegedly without Ghazan’s authorization) Damascus’ outskirts and are reported to have raided as far as Hebron and Jerusalem. The Ilkhanid occupation of Damascus, however, came to an abrupt, eventless end by the middle of Jumādā II 699/early February 1300, shortly after Ghazan headed back and left in charge the new governors and his Mongol officers. When the Mongol commanders and the two Mongol armies abandoned Syria as well heading back east after Ghazan’s departure, the two Mamluk rebel-governors were quick to switch sides once again, transferring their allegiance back to the Mamluk sultan and putting an end to the Ilkhanid conquest of Syria. Ibid., 73. For a discussion of conflicting loyalties in the Mongol short-lived occupation of Damascus, see Reuven Amitai, “The Mongol occupation of Damascus in 1300: a study of Mamluk loyalties,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden, 2004), 21-41.

During Ghazan’s first Syrian campaign, the Ilkhanid chancellery issued several ideologically charged documents that were preserved in the Mamluk chronicles (in Arabic). As discussed by Anne Broadbridge, the documents depict Ghazan as the guardian of Islam and accuse the Mamluks of being unfit to rule and devoid of divine support.<sup>377</sup> Ghazan’s second undated text, addressed at the Mamluk commanders and the people of Syria. It stands out in comparison to the rest of the documents. The ideas presented in the letter show substantive links to Qāshānī’s conversion narrative. Both texts draw on the same work, Najm al-Dīn Rāzī Dāya’s (d. 1256) *Mirṣād al-‘Ibād* (below). One possible explanation for these intertextual ties between the letter and the conversion narrative is that Qāshānī had access to the letter and used it for constructing his conversion account. The letter, in any case, allows us to explain and historically situate several of the ideas that appear in Qāshānī’s conversion narrative.

The letter starts by offering its readers a succinct Islamic salvation history. The letter positions Ghazan and the Ilkhanid campaign in Syria in relation to a history of the successive missions assigned by God to the Abrahamic prophets and their culmination in Muḥammad’s prophethood.<sup>378</sup>

In every age (*zamān*), the turn of time (*al-dawr*) requires that God, may He be exalted, send a prophet to guide the world and direct man towards the right path and staying in lines in the communities of the religion (*ḥifẓ al-asāfīr fī milal al-dīn*). [However,] prophecy ended with the seal of the prophets Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā, whom He sent with guidance and the true religion to proclaim it over all religions, even if the polytheists detest it [*al-Tawba*, 33],

---

<sup>377</sup> For a detailed discussion of the five texts related to Ghazan’s occupation of the city (the guarantee of peace/*amān* to the Damascene population, Ghazan’s letter to the Syrian population and military commanders, the two decrees/*firmāns* appointing the city’s governors, and finally his “state of the Khanate address”), see Broadbridge, 73-80. Broadbridge argues that the documents “all promulgated the Ilkhan’s new Muslim identity as Guardian of Islam, but simultaneously echoed with a Mongol imperial ideology reminiscent of earlier Ilkhanid letters” (74). As we shall see in this chapter, the documents reveal the synthesis of ideals of Perso-Islamic kingship with Mongol “political theology of divine right.” Broadbridge also makes the unlikely argument that the documents were probably issued in Mongolian but recorded in Arabic. I believe that the documents were originally written in Persian.

<sup>378</sup> On the question of the finality of prophethood with Muḥammad, see the excellent discussion by Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous: aspects of Aḥmadī religious thought and its medieval background* (Berkeley, 1989), 49-82.



and sent him to all the beings to guide all of mankind from the darkness of infidelity to the light of Islam, lead them from their corporal bonds to the spiritual corners (*min 'alā'iq al-juthmāniyyāt ilā zawāyā al-rūhāniyyāt*), and adorn them with the perfection of religion and the refinement of character [...] It is incumbent for all to follow this prophet and comply with his law (*sharī'atihi*). Whoever disobeys him, will find his abode in hell and suffer from a wretched fate. From the start of his mission and the beginning of his message until this time whenever degeneration (*khalal*) appeared in the matters of religion and weakness (*wahn*) spread in [the community's adherence to] the Muslim law (*sharī'at al-muslimīn*) and man approached disobedience and was persistent in oppression, God brought forth an individual from amongst those in authority (*ūlī al-amr*) who would strengthen the religious matters and reproach all of the beings, forbid them from wrong (*yanhāhum 'an al-umūr al-mustankara*), and send them back to the straight, agreeable paths. Before our time, the infidels, the idol-worshippers, and the group [the Mamluks] who were reprehensible (?) for being from the Muslims who say amen with their mouths, but do not believe in their hearts – appeared, and they tyrannized and acted unjustly [...] and God ordained as a Prophetic Muḥammadan miracle (*min al-mu'jaz al-nabawī al-muṣṭafawī al-muḥammadī*) that we, of the descendants of Chinggis Khan the great who ruled the majority of the great climates, should enter this true religion and the straight path without coercion (*bi-ghayr taklīf*); nay, the light of the guidance of God and the religion of the Prophet al-Muṣṭafā shined in our hearts, God honored us with Islam, and distinguished us for justice and good deeds. He ingrained in our hearts the love of the true religion, and made us successful in our endeavor (*jihād*) to kill the polytheists, the idol-worshippers, and the transgressors [the Mamluks], destroy the idol houses, repel the evilness of the oppressors, and command right and forbid wrong [...]<sup>379</sup>

The Mongol invasions of the Islamic world gave rise to a variety of responses and religious explanations. Penitential responses that viewed the Mongol conquests as a divine punishment for the Muslims' wrongdoings, and providential explanations that interpreted the Mongol conquests and rule as a necessary step before the exceptional expansion and proliferation of Islam, were a few of the more enduring and widespread explanations of the Mongol success. Exploring a particular strain within the group of penitential explanations - the assertion that a certain saintly personage was responsible for summoning the Mongols in order to punish the straying community - DeWeese argues that such explanations were responses of some communities, in this case, specific Sufi circles, to concerns and anxieties over their relationship

---

<sup>379</sup> Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta'rikh al-hijra* (Beirut, 1998), 333-334.

with the Mongols. As discursive strategies, such accounts advanced the possibility of reconciliation with the Mongol overlords and allowed Sufi communities to sanction accommodation and cooperation with the conquerors.<sup>380</sup>

The letter's conversion narrative clearly falls within this group of providential explanations. As a providential explanation, however, Ghazan's letter also stands out. First, it skips over the stage of destruction and havoc inflicted by the Mongol invasions in the eastern Islamic world and leads straightforward to a divinely orchestrated Mongol conversion to Islam. Second, the letter explicitly situates the Mongols' conversion in relation to the notion of the "corruption of religion" and moreover, designates Ghazan (without mention of the caliphate!) as a direct substitute for the prophets - a chastising or reformer king, while simultaneously asserting the sincerity of the Mongols' conversion and its miraculous nature.

Friedmann analyzes the Islamic dogma of the finality of prophethood with Muḥammad (*khatm al-nubuwwa*) and the challenges it posed for the Muslim tradition. In Muslim thought, successive missions of prophets were indispensable for continually communicating God's wishes to the community and enabling mankind to work towards his salvation. Once the dogma of the finality of prophethood took its place as one of the chief articles of the Sunnī creed, the continuous link between the Muslim community and the source of divine inspiration was threatened. The issue of the cessation of prophethood with Muḥammad became an even greater challenge as the notion of the deterioration of the Muslim community after the golden age of the first generation of Islam gained growing popularity. After Muḥammad's age, "each successive generation was inferior to that which preceded it" and thus, "a process of almost irreversible decline set in".<sup>381</sup> While some Muslim thinkers, most

---

<sup>380</sup> Devin DeWeese "Stuck in the throat of Chingiz Khān," 23-60.

<sup>381</sup> As Friedmann demonstrates, "the idea that with the passage of time things deteriorate rather than improve is frequently encountered in Muslim thought and literature." Friedmann, 77.

significantly, Ibn al-‘Arabī questioned (to some extent) the validity of this dogma,<sup>382</sup> more generally, the Muslim tradition found substitutes or “alternative channels through which divine guidance could reach the Muslim community after Muḥammad’s death”.<sup>383</sup> Friedmann situates within this context the *mujaddid* tradition, according to which the Prophet reported that “God will send to this community at the turn/on the eve of every century a person who will renew its religion” (*inna allāh yab’athu li-hadhihi al-umma ‘alā ra’s kull mi’a sana man yujaddid lahā amr dīnihā*). According to Friedmann, this process of deterioration that set in immediately after Muḥammad’s death was accompanied by an eschatological layer: the gradual process of decay and decline “will persist until the Day of Judgment, when it will reach its nadir, the world will become full of wicked infidels and will abruptly come to an end”.<sup>384</sup> By revitalizing the religion of Islam each century, the cyclical *mujaddid* (the centennial renewer/reformer) could arrest and indefinitely postpone the final religious decay, the catalyst leading to the Day of Judgment.<sup>385</sup>

In her inspection of Ghazan’s letter, Broadbridge raised the possibility that the sequence of arguments presented by the letter implied that Ghazan was the *mujaddid*, though she acknowledged that that the term itself is not explicitly noted in the letter or in any other Ilkhanid reference.<sup>386</sup> That Ghazan’s Syrian campaign took place at the turn of the eighth Hijri century might, indeed, support such a suggestion. However, as Ella Landau-Tasseran convincingly shows, the *mujaddid* tradition was never a central idea in Muslim medieval thought. There were no formal criteria for appointing or identifying such centennial restorers. Painstakingly tracing the early transmission history of the *mujaddid* and related traditions, Landau-Tasseran concluded

---

<sup>382</sup> Ibn al-‘Arabī argued that only legislative prophecy ended with Muḥammad, and that God continued to appoint non-legislative prophecy from among the Muslim community. *Ibid.*, 72-4.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

<sup>386</sup> Broadbridge, 77.

that the *mujaddid* primarily functioned as an honorific title, (unsystematically) bestowed on a number of religious scholars. She suggested that it originated within specific Shāfi‘ī circles as an attempt to legitimize al-Shāfi‘ī’s teachings. Landau-Tasseron further showed the eschatological classification of the *tajdīd* tradition to be a later, fourteenth-fifteenth-centuries innovation found in the writing of religious scholars, in particular, the work of the famous Egyptian scholar al-Suyūfī. These authors attempted to furnish an explanation for the *mujaddid* tradition, if not also to lay their own claim to the title. Furthermore, only few scholars (the fourteenth-century al-Ṭaybī for one) seem to have linked the continuation of revelation after the cessation of prophethood to the *mujaddid* tradition.<sup>387</sup>

The question of the origins of the *mujaddid* tradition aside, the Ilkhanid sources do not appear to support Broadbridge’s suggestion that the letter alluded to Ghazan’s role as a *mujaddid* king. It appears that in the Ilkhanid period, the term was still limited to scholarly ranks. Vaṣṣāf, for example, lists the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn as the *mujaddid* of the eighth Hijri century.<sup>388</sup> Furthermore, when the idea of the reform or “rejuvenation of the religion” is applied to the Mongols, Ilkhanid authors appear to tend to use the term *iḥyā’ al-dīn* rather than *tajdīd* or *mujaddid*. For example, Vaṣṣāf extols the amir Nawrūz as *muḥyi-i dīn*.<sup>389</sup> Finally, the fact that the title *mujaddid* does not explicitly appear in the letter is significant as well. After the dissolution of the Ilkhanate, when rulers do make a claim to the title, the title always explicitly appears, usually accompanied by the quoted tradition, in part or in full.

---

<sup>387</sup> Ella Landau-Tasseron, “The ‘Cyclical Reform’: a study of the *mujaddid* tradition,” *Studia Islamica* 70 (1989), 79-117. Friedmann, too, noted that in spite of the strong likelihood that the tradition originated in connection to eschatological expectations, “its eschatological content was not very prominent throughout the centuries.” Friedmann, 97.

<sup>388</sup> Vaṣṣāf, 539.

<sup>389</sup> Qāshānī, too, refers to Ghazan stating that he had “revived Islam” (*iḥyā’-i mavāt-i islām*). Qāshānī, *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū*, 13.

The Syrian letter, therefore, does not depict Ghazan as the *mujaddid*, the Islamic centennial renewer. It does, however, situate the new convert within a successive line of rulers (*ūlī al-amr*) who are sent periodically and continuously in order to lead back the community from its stray path and undue its corrupt ways, as the prophets did beforehand. The letter casts Ghazan's conversion as a transformation into a "reviver king," a successor to the Prophet. This depiction of Ghazan as a periodically designated reformer ruler also resonates with the Mongol "political theology of divine right." In the introduction, I have examined the Mongol commander Qutlughshah's statement, made before Ibn Taymīya outside the city walls of Damascus. I suggested that Qutlughshah's statement championed a dual discourse of sacral kingship: through their link to Chinggis Khan, "the king of the earth," the Ilkhans inherit and re-create Heaven's blessing, and through their link to Muḥammad, "the Seal of the Prophets," they inherit the prophetic mission of protecting the Islamic faith.<sup>390</sup>

Like Qutlughshah's statement, the letter equates Muḥammad's mission with Chinggis Khan's charge of world domination legitimized through Heaven's selection and blessing, and carried out by his offspring. It integrates Chinggisid exceptionalism into Muslim history, and moreover, situates Ilkhanid kingship at the center stage of the Islamic salvation schema. The letter's conversion narrative of Ghazan, furthermore, speaks to Ghazan's continuation, both in terms of his Chinggisid heritage of a divine mission by Heaven's design, and in reference to the Prophet Muḥammad's mission to the believers. In other words, Ghazan (and by extension also Chinggis Khan) is introduced into the Islamic salvation history, and the Prophet Muḥammad is recruited in support of the Ilkhanid claim to exceptional kingship. As agents of God, the Chinggisids are now in charge of upholding the Islamic faith. They are integrated "to a successive chain of a hereditary divine legacy"

---

<sup>390</sup> As discussed in the introduction, Qutlughshah claimed that God had sealed prophecy [the line of prophets, *khatama al-risāla*] with Muḥammad," and that "Chinggis Khan was the king of the earth (*malik al-basīṭa*), and whoever turned his back on his command and the command of his descendants is a dissident (*khārijī*)."

that goes back to the Prophet Muḥammad, and through him, also connects the Chinggisids to “the universal chain of the prophets, the bearers of the authority”.<sup>391</sup>

This dual system of legitimation is expressed not only the presentation of the Chinggisid mission of world domination as a continuation of the Prophetic missions, but also in the letter’s insistence on full Mamluk submission on the basis of Ghazan’s sacred Chinggisid bloodline. The Mongol demand for submission finds concrete expression when it is explicitly linked to the “authority verse.” The letter reproaches the Mamluks stating that once they had realized that “we are the descendants of the sultans of [the habitable] quarter of the Earth’s climates and that we

---

<sup>391</sup> The letter’s narrative bears resemblance to famous letter of the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd II (r. 743-44). In *God’s Caliph*, Crone and Hinds examined the letter arguing that it situated the Umayyad caliphate within a history of salvation that started with God’s prophetic missions, continued with Muḥammad as the Seal of the Prophets, and ended with the era of the caliphate, after the death of Muḥammad. They suggested that the letter argues that “God raised up deputies to administer the legacy of His prophets,” and implement and observe God’s *sunna*. As with Ghazan’s second Syrian letter, most of al-Walīd II’s letter is devoted to arguing for the importance of full obedience to God’s caliphs. Severe punishment awaits the disobedient. Crone and Hinds further argued that in the letter, “caliphs are in no way subordinated to prophets (let alone the Prophet). Prophets and caliphs alike are seen as God’s agents, and both dutifully carry out the tasks assigned to them, the former by delivering messages and the latter by putting them into effect [...] Their [the caliphs’] authority comes directly from God. In other words, formerly God used prophets, now He uses caliphs.” They further suggest that the letter espoused a conception of the relationship between caliphs and God, in which “there is no sense here [...] that the caliphate is a mere *Ersatzinstitution*, a second-rate surrogate for the direct guidance which they enjoyed in the days of Muḥammad [...] Messengers belonged to the past: the present had been made over to caliphs.” Crone and Hinds, *God’s Caliph*, 27-8, 116-26. Uri Rubin, however, has recently challenged Crone’s and Hinds’ reading of the letter. He argued that the letter espoused “the idea of successive history.” The letter both stresses the idea that “the prophets have belonged to a successive chain of hereditary divine legacy, which in the letter is identified as the Islamic faith,” and that the caliphs “have inherited the universal legacy of the prophets [...] put in charge of God’s religion after Muḥammad’s death, and their duty is to protect it from distortion and pass it on to the coming generations through their own chosen pedigree.” Rubin suggests that this is the context within which the Umayyads received the title of God’s deputies. While Rubin’s reading of the letter as stressing continuity between the “universal and supra-national” stage and Islam, and between Muḥammad and the caliphs, is strikingly different from the understanding of Crone and Hinds, they, nevertheless, all seem to agree that the letter’s authors saw in the caliphs agents appointed directly by God. It is this understanding, I suggest, that Ghazan’s Syrian letter similarly espoused (albeit with the Mongol kings, and the caliphs) and that enabled the integration of the notion of the Chinggisid mission by Heaven’s decree into the Islamic salvific schema, and furthermore, as part of “a successive chain beginning with Muḥammad.” Uri Rubin, “Prophets and Caliphs: the biblical foundations of the Umayyad authority,” in *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, edited by Herbert Berg (Leiden, 2003), 87-99. The choice of *ūlī al-amr* is too significant in this regard. Rubin notes the use of the term *amr* in al-Walīd II’s letter: the term denotes “government” or “authority,” but also suggests that the caliphs (or in our case, the Mongol rulers) were put in charge of divine legacy/God’s government. *Ibid.*, 90-91.

are [now] Muslims and aiders of the religion of Islam,” it was incumbent upon them to obey the Mongols in accordance with God’s command in the “authority verse”.<sup>392</sup>

A similar idea, that after Ghazan’s conversion all Muslims would be required to submit to the Ilkhanid ruler, is also made in Qāshānī’s conversion narrative as stated above. Such a view corresponded with the traditional Mongol understanding of the world order, reiterated repeatedly in the Mongol correspondence with European forces and in the Ilkhanid diplomatic exchange with their Mamluk neighbors and rivals: Heaven’s blessing invested the Chinggisids with a special good fortune (*qut* or *su*) and domination over the entire world. On the basis of this universal mandate, Mongol imperial ideology classified other polities and rulers into willful submitters (*il*, peace, harmony or submission) and those in a “state of rebellion” (*bulgha*) against the imperial house and divine will.<sup>393</sup>

Furthermore, in the letter, the (Qur’anic) demand for obedience explicitly draws on Ghazan’s sanctified bloodline. The importance of the Chinggisid royal lineage to the Ilkhanid claim to authority is evident in both the Ilkhanid issued documents and Ilkhanid accounts about the campaign. Ghazan’s royal lineage was contrasted with the Mamluk Sultan’s low ethnic origin.<sup>394</sup> Thus, the final surviving document from Ghazan’s first Syrian campaign begins with a declaration of the Chinggisids’ divinely supported bloodline:

Our grandfather Chinggis Khan was a king and the son of a king to seven degrees in the Mongol lands. When God, may He be exalted, supported him, he took over the inhabited quarter of the world with his sword. Nowhere in the histories since the time of Adam to today, has it come to us that anyone ruled the territory that Chinggis Khan ruled, or was

---

<sup>392</sup> al-Manṣūrī, *Zubdat al-fikra*, 334-35.

<sup>393</sup> Peter Jackson, “World conquest,” 3-22. For diplomatic exchange between the Mamluks and Ilkhans, Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*.

<sup>394</sup> According to Rashīd al-Dīn, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Rabī‘ II /January 3, all of the people of Damascus set out to greet the Ilkhan. The Ilkhan asked the populace: “who am I?” and they answered in one voice that he is Shah Ghazan and detailed his lineage leading back to Chinggis Khan. Ghazan, then, asked the Syrians about the lineage of the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn (r. 1293-4, 1299-1309 and 1310-1340). The crowd fell silent once they realized that the Mamluk sultan had no royal noble lineage after his father Sultan Qalāwūn and that “these people’s sultanate was gained by accident (*ittiḥāqī*), not by merit (*istiḥqāqī*) and they [the Qalāwūnids or the Damascene inhabitants] were all slaves of the renowned urugh of the king of Islam’s forefather [Chinggis Khan].” Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1393-4; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 646.

supported with such divine support (*ta'yīd*). We [Ghazan] are the sixth king [descending from] his loins.<sup>395</sup>

In the previous chapter, I noted the compatibility of Shī'ism with its promotion of hereditary-based claims to religio-political authority, to the Chinggisid descent-based ideology. Under the Shī'ī convert Ilkhan Öljeitü, these ideological affinities offered a way of converting the Chinggisid claim to a lineage-driven legitimacy into “local currency” by comparing it to the precedence of *ahl al-bayt*.<sup>396</sup> The notion of legitimacy by pedigree is also paramount to the Persian tradition of kingship, where “divine grace [*farr*] follows channels of hereditary entitlement”.<sup>397</sup> Adding to this vision of Chinggisid hereditary kingship, the idea of their divine support (*ta'yīd*), the letters draws on the Persian *akhlāq-ethical* vision of what constitutes legitimate, worthy, and ideal kingship.

The author/s of the letters and Qāshānī use Perso-Islamic conceptions of ideal ethical kingship, drawn from Persianate political advice, to articulate and renegotiate Mongol conceptualizations of the sacrality and divine right of Chinggis Khan's bloodline. In his discussion of changes in political authority in Ilkhanid Iran, Melville suggests that “it is possible to see Iranian concepts of sovereignty mediating between these competing ideologies,” namely, Muslim and Chinggisid. By Ghazan's reign, the “reactivation” of Iranian conceptions of kingship

---

<sup>395</sup> Baybars al-Manṣūrī, 337-8; Broadbridge, 79.

<sup>396</sup> See Pfeiffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 129-163. Michael Hope, too, noted the ideological similarities between the Chinggisids' hereditary-based authority and the Shī'ī “advocacy of the hereditary nature of political/spiritual authority in opposition to elective councilor systems.” Hope also notes in this regard Ghazan's generous support of pro-'Alid shrines and his designation as the “friend of the *ahl al-bayt*”. Michael Hope, *Sulṭānate or Amīrate? The transmission of Chinggisid authority in the early Mongol empire and the Ilkhānate of Iran* (PhD diss., Australian National University, 2013), 521-24.

<sup>397</sup> Simidchieva, 128. Simidchieva investigates the change in approach towards noble pedigree in Nizām al-Mulk's *Siyāsatnāma*: whereas in chapter one, we find the (Persian) notion of pedigree de-emphasized for the sake of a “classical Islamic concept of God-given just rulership,” in the opening to the second, later section of the *Siyāsatnāma*, we see Nizām al-Mulk reasserting the centrality of pedigree for royal legitimacy and the demand to guard the rights and privileges of old nobility. Nizām al-Mulk's savior king must be of “royal/princely stock (*abnā-yi mulūk*)” and one of the principles by which he abides is the protection of “ancient families” and the honoring of “the sons of kings.” Several didactic historical accounts in the *Siyāsatnāma* stress hereditary succession as a prerequisite for rightful and just government. *Ibid.*, 108, 112.



went hand in hand with the “restoration of Muslim rule”.<sup>398</sup> Perso-Islamic concepts might, furthermore, be seen as bridging two types of explanations of Mongol invasions and rule, from the penitential to the salvific-providential. Both Ghazan’s Syrian letter and Nizām al-Mulk’s *Siyāsatnāma* attribute to kingship the ability to reinstitute and restart a previous order (social, political, religious). An examination of a third text used by Qāshānī, Najm al-Dīn Rāzī’s Sufi guide-mirror for princes, will allow us to further contextualize the vision of the Ilkhan as a reformer king in the transition from the penitential explanation of the Mongol invasions to the providential.

### **From Wolves to Shepherds: a Sufi Mirror for Princes and Qāshānī’s Transition From the Apocalyptic to the Providential Explanation**

Ghazan’s second Syrian letter and Qāshānī’s conversion narrative both draw on the lexicon of Persianate genre of advice literature. Therefore, they refer to Ghazan in similar terms. In the letter, Ghazan is the one from the *ūlī al-amr* designated by God for the mission of eradicating the Mamluks’ corruption and oppression. In the conversion narrative, Ghazan is referred to as the one in authority of this age (*ūlī al-amr-i ‘ahd*). The title of *ūlī al-amr* derives from the Qur’anic “authority verse” (4:59): “O those who believe, obey God and the Messenger and those in authority among you (*ya ayyuhā alladhīna amanū, aḥī ‘ū Allāh wa-aḥī ‘ū al-rasūl wa-ūlī al-amr minkum*).

---

<sup>398</sup> Charles Melville, “The Mongol and Timurid periods,” in *A History of Persian Literature, vol. X: Persian Historiography*, ed. Melville (London, 2012), 187, 191-2. There is no doubt that Iranian conceptions of kingship were more readily available for legitimizing and assimilating the foreign conquerors, certainly prior to their conversion to Islam, and that the cultural milieu of the Ilkhanate found them useful in these endeavors. However, the Mongol invasions and Ilkhanid rule also provided a significant impetus for articulating with better clarity, if not more audacity, ideas about Islamic kingship that were already developing from the eleventh century in the eastern Islamic world. As noted in the previous chapter, Arjomand refers to the specific theoretical-practical constellation, the type of autocratic regime, in which the king was envisioned as maintaining both spheres of politics and religion, as “Islamic royalism.” Arjomand, “Legitimacy and political organization,” 245-250. Arjomand furthermore notes that Ghazan adopted Islamic royalism and that thereafter, this type of “post-caliphal sultanate” regime prevailed in the eastern Islamic world (657/1258 to 906/1500).

In the first two centuries of Islam, the Qur’anic phrase *ūlī al-amr* was interpreted as referring to religious scholars (“people of knowledge and discernment”) and to military commanders who were appointed by the Prophet himself. From the ninth century onwards, the term was expanded to incorporate also political leaders.<sup>399</sup> Authors such the famous eleventh-century jurist al-Māwardī understood the verse to mean the requirement for unconditional obedience on part of the Muslim community to their appointed leaders.<sup>400</sup> Ghazan’s conversion narrative, indeed, ends with the statement that in accordance with the “authority verse,” *all* the Muslim kings and sultans were obliged to show their obedience to Ghazan. According to the narrative, Nawrūz claimed that if Ghazan were to convert, and become the *ūlī al-amr-i ‘ahd*, “full (*az bun dandān*), unsolicited obedience [to the prince] would become an individual duty for all Muslims (*farḍ ‘ayn*).” The Syrian letter, which references the “authority verse” no less than three times, links the verse, too, to the Ilkhanid demand for full Mamluk submission, and moreover, accuses the Mamluks of transgressing God’s command by repeatedly disobeying and killing “those in authority” from amongst them. Furthermore, the letter seems to draw a link between the obligation to follow the Prophet and the necessity to obey the ruler, in this case, Ghazan.

Authors of Persian advice literature considered the “authority verse” to be particular significant, not just for the authority it conferred upon the community’s political leaders, but also as evidence for the proximity of the rank of kingship to the rank of prophethood. In the thirteenth century influential mirror for princes, the *Laṭā’if al-ḥikma* of Sirāj al-Dīn Urmawī (d. 1283), the verse is interpreted to mean that kings are the associates (*qarīn*) of the prophets. Since the verb *aḥī ‘ū* separates in the verse Allāh from the prophets, but not the prophets from “those in

<sup>399</sup> Asma Afsaruddin, “Obedience to political authority: as evolutionary concept,” in M. A. Muqtedar Khan, ed. *Islamic Democratic Discourse* (Lanham, 2006), 49-50.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-7.

authority,” the author concludes that except for the prophets having precedent over kings (*taqdīm*), there is no difference between the authority (*amr*) of the prophet and the king.<sup>401</sup>

Marlow identifies two major trends in medieval advice literature. The first includes attempts to claim similarity between prophets and kings, and the second entails the ranking of kings and prophets in a cosmic hierarchy. From the standpoint of the first approach, which prevailed in Persianate advice literature, prophets and kings were regarded “as equally important players in the divinely ordained cosmos”.<sup>402</sup> A similar interpretation to that of Urmawī is also found in the early thirteenth-century celebrated Sufī manual of Najm al-Dīn Rāzī Dāya (d. 654/1256), the *Mirṣād al-‘Ibād*. Najm al-Dīn Rāzī states that “kingship over others is the deputyship and vicegerency (*niyābat va-khilāfat*) of God and is second (*tilw*) only to prophethood [...] God Almighty has threaded obedience to a just king together on a single string with obedience to Himself and obedience to His messenger”.<sup>403</sup> Najm al-Dīn subsequently quotes the “authority verse” as proof for his assertion.

As mentioned earlier, Najm al-Dīn Rāzī’s work had a strong influence over Qāshānī’s conversion narrative of Ghazan. A disciple of Majd al-Dīn al-Baghdādī, who was one of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā’s (d. 618/1221) senior disciples, Najm al-Dīn Rāzī had originally composed the *Mirṣād al-‘Ibād* as a gift for the Saljūq ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Qayqūbad in 620/1223. According to his own account, Najm al-Dīn followed the recommendation of Shihāb al-Dīn ‘Umar al-Suhrawadī (d. 632/1234), whom he encountered by chance in Malatya when he fled the Mongol onslaught in the east. Najm al-Dīn wrote the work with the aim of gaining the patronage of Alā’ al-Dīn

---

<sup>401</sup> Marlow, “Kings, prophets and the ‘*Ulamā*’,” 108; Sirāj al-Dīn Maḥmūd Urmawī, *Laṭā‘if al-ḥikma*, ed. Ghulām Ḥusayn Yusūfī ([Tehran], 1351/1972), 226-7.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid., 106-7.

<sup>403</sup> Najm al-Dīn Rāzī Dāya, *Mirṣād al-‘ibād min al-mabdā’ ilā al-ma‘ād*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad (Tehran, 1984), 246; Rāzī, *The Path of God’s bondsmen from Origin to Return*, translated by Hamid Algar (Delmar, 1982), 412. On the relationship between kingship and prophethood and on the combination of the two (Solomon and David), Rāzī, *Mirṣād al-‘ibād*, 232ff; *God’s bondsmen*, 395ff.

Qayqūbad and finding asylum at his court. Other accounts (Ibn Bībī), however, suggest that Najm al-Dīn completed the work and dedicated it to the sultan prior to his arrival at Malatya and alleged meeting with al-Suhrawadī.<sup>404</sup>

The work includes chapters on the order of creation, prophethood, Sufi ritual, training and practices, as well as on dreams and visions. The fifth and final part of the work also offers a long exposition on “the wayfaring of kings and the lords of command” (as well as advice as to the conduct of ministers, merchants, tradesmen and other professions), which combines Perso-Islamic political theory with Najm al-Dīn’s Sufi orientation. Thus, kingship is described as the best means of attaining proximity to God.<sup>405</sup> Lambton draws attention to *Mirṣād al-‘ibād* for its Sufi interpretation of the philosopher king. For Najm al-Dīn, ideal kingship is achieved when the “kingship of the faith and the kingship of the world were united in one person,” a rank achieved according to *Mirṣād al-‘ibād* by King David.<sup>406</sup>

Kamola has drawn attention to the possible relationship between the *Mirṣād al-‘ibād* and the chapter on Ghazan in the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, pointing out that “Najm al-Dīn Rāzī’s prescription for an ideal ruler fits neatly with the reform program that Rashīd al-Dīn attributes to

---

<sup>404</sup> Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, however, did not seem to have fared well at the Saljūq court and he “retracted” his praise of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Qayqūbad in a work he composed shortly after in Erzincan. Nevertheless, his masterpiece, the *Mirṣād al-‘ibād*, gained after its author’s death in 654/1256 considerable popularity and fame for its eloquent presentation and comprehensive treatment of Sufism and Sufi training. The work reached India with Chishtī Sufis already in the fourteenth century and spread as far as China, where it was one of the most popular works among Muslim Chinese. In the seventeenth century, *Mirṣād al-‘ibād* was translated into Chinese. Algar, “Dāya Rāzī.”

<sup>405</sup> Algar, *Path of God’s bondsmen*, 19 (introduction by Algar); Algar, “Dāya Rāzī,” *El3*. Brill, 2015. Accessed December 2, 2015. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/daya-razi-COM\\_26068](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/daya-razi-COM_26068).

<sup>406</sup> Lambton, “Justice in the medieval Persian theory of kingship,” *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962), 110-115. Rāzī, *Mirṣād al-‘ibād*, 246; *God’s bondsmen*, 412. Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, however, argues that the king should not pursue Sufi ascetic practices or busy himself with constant devotion: “it is not the proper mode of devotion for a king that he should busy himself with supererogatory worship, such as prayer, fasting [...] and spend most of his time in solitude and seclusion, thus neglecting the interests of the people [...] and abandoning his subjects to the control of oppressors [...] the proper mode of devotion for a king is rather this, that after fulfilling all obligatory duties of worship [...] he should attend to the affairs of his kingdom [...]” Just kingship, in other words, becomes a means of attaining proximity to God. Rāzī, *God’s bondsmen*, 420. For kingship as a means of cultivating praiseworthy qualities, *ibid.*, 402-3.

Ghazan Khan”.<sup>407</sup> Qāshānī’s conversion narrative indeed draws directly from *Mirṣād al-‘ibād*. Moreover, I argue that Qāshānī’s account is in dialogue with Rāzī’s understanding of the political situation of his time.

Writing of the king’s conduct towards his subjects, Rāzī refers to the well-known comparison of the king to the shepherd (*shabān*) who protects his flock of sheep (*rama*), his subjects, from the evil wolves (*gurg*), found in prophetic traditions. The wolves, explains Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, are the accursed polytheists (*kuffār-i malā‘īn*), “who have become predominant/powerful (*mustavlī*) in these hard times (*‘ahd-i sukht!*),” and whose evil the king and the amirs must eradicate. Furthermore, “even if the unbelievers cause no trouble it is incumbent on the king to go forth in war (*ghazā*) to conquer the lands of unbelief and make Islam prevail”.<sup>408</sup> However, in addition to the infidel wolves, within the shepherd’s flock, there are also horned rams (*qūch ṣāhib-i qarn*), tyrants (*zālimān*) – ranging from commanders and troops to officials, tax collectors and Qadis - who wish to oppress the king’s subjects. The king must be on constant alert for their recurring corruptions (*fisād*) and look into cases of oppression for the sake of his subjects.

An identical division of evildoers from whom the king must safeguard his subjects is apparent in the conversion narrative. Qāshānī states that “the religion of Islam, which has been weakened [“worn out”] by its subjugation (*istīlā*) to the infidel Tatars (*kuffār-i tatār*) and the domination of the tyrants and offenders (*zālimān va fāsiqān*), will be revived through the prince’s support.” By following Rāzī’s division of enemies from whom the king must beware, Qāshānī’s conversion narrative also addresses Rāzī’s apocalyptic interpretation of the events that took place in the eastern Islamic world in the first half of the thirteenth century. Qāshānī’s

---

<sup>407</sup> Kamola, 183.

<sup>408</sup> Rāzī, *Mirṣād al-‘ibād*, 248-49; *God’s bondsmen*, 415-16.

narrative offers an “alternative ending” to Rāzī’s dark doomsday vision of the state of the Islamic world in the aftermath of the Mongol invasions. Addressing his reasons for composing the *Mirṣād al-‘Ibād* in the prelude to the work, Najm al-Dīn wrote about the Mongol (*kuffār-i tatār* and *kuffār-i malā‘īn*) attacks in 617/1220, their subjection (*istīlā*) of the eastern Islamic world, and the unprecedented chaos and ruin they inflicted.

Viewing the Mongol destruction as a penitential response for the “ingratitude for the blessing of Islam,” Rāzī claimed that their destruction and massacres “resemble only the catastrophes that shall ensue at the End of Time (*fitnahā-yi ākhir al-zamān*) foretold by the Prophet.” Najm al-Dīn, then, quotes the following tradition: “the hour of resurrection shall not come until you fight the Turks (*al-turk*) and they are people with small eyes, red faces and flat noses. Their faces like shields covered with leather (*wujūhuhum al-mijānn ak-muṭraqa*)”.<sup>409</sup> While such facial features and traditions are usually associated with the Turks, Najm al-Dīn identifies the apocalyptic villains with the Mongols (*kuffār-i malā‘īn*) arguing that “in truth, this event is none other than that which the Messenger of God, upon whom be peace, foresaw with the light of prophethood.”

As proof, Rāzī mentions the fate of his hometown Rayy and the extensive destruction the Mongols inflicted there. Rāzī urges the political leaders of his age (*mulūk va-salāḥīn*) to join in union and protect the Muslims from the undergoing *fitna*, warning that if they disregard their

---

<sup>409</sup> This tradition appears in al-Bukhārī and these facial features are usually identified with the Turks. Pfeiffer discusses another apocalyptic tradition that appeared in the letter of submission from the Shī‘īs of al-Ḥilla during the conquest of Baghdad in 1258. As reported by Vaṣṣāf, the letter stated that according to a tradition from ‘Alī, a group of horsemen would lay ruin to Baghdad (“mother of tyrants and abode of oppressors”). These will be the Banū Qanṭūra, who “have faces like shields covered with leather and trunks like the trunks of elephants and there is no country they reach which they will not conquer.” The Shī‘ī delegation claimed that this meant that Hülegü will be victorious and would rule these lands. A similar tradition is found in the Shī‘ī collection of traditions, the *Nahj al-Balāgha*. Pfeiffer studies the application of the Banū Qanṭūra tradition to the Mongols as an example of genealogical engineering and as a “step in the integration of the Mongols into Muslim eschatological tradition and cosmology,” as well as into the fold of the “known” Abrahamic world. Pfeiffer, “Faces like shields,” 557-594 (page 579 for al-Bukhārī’s tradition).

fundamental obligation as Muslim kings and as the shepherds (!) of their communities, “Islam will be completely eradicated” and even in the few lands where it still remains, it would give way to infidelity.<sup>410</sup>

Rāzī’s lamentation, implicit condemnation, and plea to the leaders of his age convey a sense of immediacy and urgency at the face of what he viewed as a near certain annihilation and looming apocalypse. When Rāzī compares later on in *Mirṣād al-‘Ibād*, the king to the shepherd (*shabān*) who protects his flock, and presents the wolves as the accursed polytheists (*kuffār-i malā‘īn*), “who have become predominant/powerful (*mustawli*) in these hard times (*‘ahd-i sukht*),” he is clearly referring to the Mongol invasions. When Qāshānī, therefore, refers to the weakening of Islam due to its subjection to the infidel Tatars (*kuffār-i tatār*), he builds on Rāzī’s apocalyptic interpretation of the Mongol conquests half a century earlier, but offers a different explanation in its place.

Ghazan’s conversion becomes the key for unlocking, and moreover, reversing the decline of the Muslim world. Rāzī envisioned his introductory words as an invitation (if not an explicit demand) for the Muslim rulers of his age to take action in the face of the Mongol menace and imminent apocalypse. Through Qāshānī’s conversion narrative, Ghazan responds to Rāzī’s desperate call for a savior. Qāshānī replaces the penitential, apocalyptic interpretation of the Mongol conquest with a providential, salvific one. Instead of Rāzī’s apocalyptic prophecy delivered from the Prophet predicting Mongol destruction, Qāshānī provides the readers with a

---

<sup>410</sup> Rāzī, *Mirṣād al-‘ibād*, 8-9; *God’s bondsmen*, 39-41. These apocalyptic overtones are further established in Najm al-Dīn’s *Marmūzāt-i Asadī dar Mazmūrāt-i Dā‘ūdī*, which he dedicated to the Mengūjek ruler of Erzincan, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Dā‘ūd (r. 622–5/1225–8). The *Marmūzāt-i Asadī* (“Subtle indications provided by al-Asadī [Dāya Rāzī] concerning the Psalms of David”) is largely based on *Mirṣād al-‘Ibād* with its Sufi portion of the work significantly reduced and the sections on advice for kings further expanded. The final chapter of the *Marmūzāt-i Asadī* deals with traditions on the Signs of the Hour, which Najm al-Dīn invokes as proof for his interpretation of current events as the heralding the last days. Among the traditions that Najm al-Dīn interprets we also find the tradition about Banū Qanṭūra, whom he identifies as Mongols (Tatars). See *Marmūzāt-i Asadī dar Mazmūrāt-i Dā‘ūdī*, ed. Muḥammad Shafī‘ī Kadkanī (Tehran, 1381), 143-159 (for the Mongols as Banū Qanṭūra, 151).

prognostication foretelling the revival of Islam and its community. Ghazan's conversion, in other words, answers earlier apocalyptic expectations arising from the Mongol invasions; it reverses the process of decline and destruction that began with Ghazan's forefathers' invasions.<sup>411</sup>

In addition to the *kuffār-i tatār*, Qāshānī also mentions “the tyrants and offenders” (*zālimān va fāsiqān*) as those responsible for the decline of Islam in *Miršād al- 'Ibād*. The latter group is identified with the tyrants (*zālimān*) or the horned rams (*qūch šāhib-i qarn*), which threaten the king's subjects from within his flock in *Miršād al- 'Ibād*. In the letter as well as in Qāshānī's narrative, the Mamluks follow the scripted role of the “tyrant rams.” For example, the letter condemns the Mamluks not only on religious grounds, but also for their oppression of their subjects and unjust usurpation of their property. Ghazan, on the other hand, takes on the role of *Miršād al- 'Ibād*'s ideal philosopher king.

The letter recognizes Ghazan's role as the shepherd whose duty is to provide security to his subjects and protect them and their property from the unjust Mamluks. It explicitly references in this regard the prophetic *hadith* “each one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock” (*kullukum rā 'in va-kullu rā 'in mas 'ul 'an ra 'iyyathih*).<sup>412</sup> The letter specifies the Mongols' effort to establish just law (*qawā 'id al- 'adl*) and abolish (the Mamluks') evil/forceful customs (*qawānīn al-zūr*). Rāzī makes a similar statement. The letter subsequently quotes the Qur'anic verse: “O David, we have made you vicegerent/caliph upon earth [so rule among men with justice]” (38:26) as a justification for the Ilkhanid encroachment into Syria. Najm al-Dīn Rāzī devotes an extensive discussion at the start of his chapter on kingship to this verse for its equation of *salṭāna* with *khilāfa*, and its emphasis on the centrality of justice for kingship.

---

<sup>411</sup> Judith Pfeiffer has recently suggested that conversion narratives were used “as a discursive strategy in countering unfulfilled apocalyptic expectations widespread among Muslims vis-à-vis the Mongol conquerors.” Pfeiffer, “The canonization of cultural memory,” 61.

<sup>412</sup> Rāzī, *Miršād al- 'ibād*, 249; *God's bondsmen*, 414-15.



Furthermore, as noted earlier, Rāzī argues for the duty of the king to set on *ghazā* and spread the religion of Islam. Similarly, the letter claims that Ghazan’s conversion and reign was preordained by divine will, since his name is derived from the root of the word *ghazw*. Ghazan, indeed, had pledged to fight (*al-ghazw wa ’l-jihād*) the polytheists, the dissidents (*al-khawārij*), and the oppressors.<sup>413</sup> Other examples suggest that *Mirṣād al-’Ibād*’s influence also extended to the rest of the documents issued by the Ilkhanid chancellery during the occupation of Damascus.<sup>414</sup>

One of the chief Ilkhanid arguments against the Mamluks in the letters is the Mamluks’ unfitness to rule due to their low, slave origins, their ignorance in the matters of kingly behavior (*adab al-mulūk*, *’awā’id al-mulūk*), and their disregard for proper, diplomatic protocol.<sup>415</sup> This focus on the Mamluks’ kingly conduct and courtly etiquette might have had also to do with the letter’s reliance on works of Persianate political ethics and their views on proper royal conduct.<sup>416</sup>

---

<sup>413</sup> It is also worth noting the importance with which Rāzī views the requirement to enjoin the good and forbid the wrong, which is repeated several times in the letter as one of the chief tasks of the convert Ghazan as the chosen *ūlī al-amr* of the age. Rāzī writes that if the king acts wrongfully towards his subjects, “the people of corruption will be fortified and the task of enjoining good and forbidding wrong will suffer, for none will be able to enjoin the good.” Rāzī, *God’s bondsmen*, 416. On enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong and its political implications, see also chapter 5.

<sup>414</sup> For example, in the first text issued in the campaign, the guarantee of peace (*amān*) from Ghazan to the people of Damascus (for which, see Broadbridge, 75-77), it is stated that Ghazan pledged to eradicate the Mamluk injustice and abide by God’s order (*al-amr al-ilāhī*) to do justice (*’adl*), do good deeds (*al-iḥsān*) and be generous to one’s kinsfolk (*īā’i dhī al-qurbā*). These are the same first three rules for the relationship between kings and their subjects in Najm al-Dīn’s *Mirṣād al-’ibād* (Rāzī, *Mirṣād al-’ibād*, 249-50; *God’s bondsmen*, 413-14). Najm al-Dīn, in particular, explains that generosity to one’s kinsfolk (*īā’i dhī al-qurbā*) consists of “respecting the rights of all subjects, for subjects stand in relation of kinship to the king.” The document subsequently states that God forbids “abomination, evil and wrongdoing” (*al-faḥshā’ wa ’l-munkar wa ’l-baghy*). Najm al-Dīn uses the exact same terms for warning from the bad conduct of kings (Rāzī, *Mirṣād al-’ibād*, 254; *God’s bondsmen*, 416, 420). For the letter, Zetterstéen, *Beiträge*, 62-4.

<sup>415</sup> Broadbridge, 74, 80; see for example, the last document issued in the campaign, what Broadbridge refers to as Ghazan’s “state of the Khanate address,” where the Mamluks’ unstable succession system is criticized and their lack of kingly conduct (*ḥuqūq al-adab*) is condemned. For example, Ghazan complains that the Mamluks have yet to send their congratulations and gifts for the Mongols’ conversion to Islam a few years earlier. Baybars al-Manṣūrī, 338.

<sup>416</sup> The relationship between the documents issued by Ghazan’s chancery during his Syrian campaign and Perso-Islamic political ideals has also been briefly noted by Denis Aigle, who in her study of Ibn Taymiya’s “anti-

The author(/s) of the Syrian documents, therefore, appears to have used Rāzī’s advice for the kings in his Sufi manual, the *Mirṣād al-‘Ibād*, as a prescriptive model. It functioned as a script he deployed to cast Ghazan’s Syrian campaign as the fulfillment of the Ilkhan’s duties as a Muslim king and, moreover, as the predestined *ūlī al-amr* of the age. The Mamluks, on the other hand, were cast as the corrupt oppressive rulers that the king must bring under control. Through this discursive strategy, Ghazan’s domains as the ideal Perso-Islamic monarch are extended beyond the Ilkhanate into Mamluk Syria, presenting the Mamluks merely as oppressive and insubordinate local rulers under the just king’s rule.

### **The *Mahdī* Khan and the Poet of Banākat**

The transition from a penitential to providential explanation of the Mongol invasions and rule, evident in Qāshānī’s “response” to the apocalyptic in *Mirṣād al-‘Ibād*, is further apparent in the work of another Ilkhanid historian active at Ghazan’s court at the time. The court poet Abū Sulaymān Dā‘ud b. Abī al-Faḍl Muḥammad al-Banākatī (d. 730/1329-30) was a native of the village of Banākat in Transoxania. According to Banākatī’s own testimony, he inherited his position as court poet from his brother Sayyid Niẓām al-Dīn ‘Alī, who passed away on the eve of Ghazan’s first Syrian campaign in Rajab 699.<sup>417</sup> Rightfully considered an abridgment of Rashīd al-Dīn’s world history, to which the author Banākatī wholeheartedly admits at the introduction to his history,<sup>418</sup> the *Rawḍat ūlī al-albāb fī ma‘rifat al-tawārīkh wa’l-ansāb* (completed Shawwāl

---

Mongol” *fatwas* suggests that the first document issued by the Ilkhanid chancellery, “the text of the *amān* presents Ghazan Khan as a sovereign boasting all the qualities of the ideal prince portrayed in the Islamic ‘mirrors for princes’ genre.” Aigle, however, did not attempt to link this portrayal of Ghazan to specific advice literature works. Denise Aigle, “The Mongol invasions,” 109.

<sup>417</sup> Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd Banākatī, *Rawḍat ūlī al-albāb fī ma‘rifat al-tawārīkh wa’l-ansāb* (Tehran, 1348/1969), 462-3.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

717/1317) has drawn only minor scholarly consideration.<sup>419</sup> Banākatī does, however, make his own contribution to what is predominantly the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*’s narrative by including samples of his and his brother’s poetry.

Describing Ghazan’s extravagant celebration in Ūjān, Azerbaijan, at the end of Dhū al-Qa‘ida 701 (June-July, 1302), Banākatī mostly follows the account in the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*.<sup>420</sup> Banākatī adds, however, that he too was among the Ilkhan’s invitees. Furthermore, he claims that the Ilkhan awarded him the title of “king of poets” (*malik al-shu‘arā*) for a poem (*qaṣīda*) he read in praise of the *sultān-i islām*. In the poem, Banākatī extols Ghazan’s justice and beneficence:

The world has become so joyous from the justice of the Pādshāh  
The Khusrav, the Khusrav like king, the sultan of the world, Khān Ghazan  
The Ilkhān, the greatest Khāqān, the brave world conqueror  
The Pādshāh of the inhabited world, the Khusrav, the Ṣāhib-Qirān  
His generosity during the feast put to shame  
The mine and overcame the sea and the mine

Banākatī harnesses the imagery of the Khan’s magnificent gold covered tent in Ūjān as a canvass for his praise of Ghazan. The poet compares the ruler’s temporary court in Ūjān to paradise. His dome is likened to a staircase leading to heaven functioning as a sort of *axis mundi*, connecting the court and the Ilkhan to divine realms. In addition to his play on different celestial

---

<sup>419</sup> Peter Jackson, “Banākatī, Abū Solaymān,” *Elr*. Accessed December 4, 2015.  
<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/banakati-abu-solayman-dawud-b>.

<sup>420</sup> According to the latter, an enormous tent of golden brocade and a gold-made throne, on which craftsmen were laboring for three years, were delivered from the workshops in Tabriz to the camp in Ūjān and constructed in the middle of a green meadow. The tent was installed at the Ilkhan’s orders at the center of a square shaped garden divided into equal portions, and was filled with pools, ponds, and all sorts of wildlife. A complex with towers and a bathhouse rose above these beautiful settings. Trees were planted alongside the plot to demarcate paths for the guests. Before Ghazan’s reception started, sayyids, imams, Qāḏīs and shaykhs were admitted to his presence. Next came Ghazan’s speech of gratitude to his Maker before entering his golden shelter followed by the lavish feast and the ruler’s dispersal of wealth to his many guests in the form of gold and textiles. For three days and nights, the Qur’an was recited out loud and each religious group worshiped according to its own rites. As described by Rashīd al-Dīn, on the day of the banquet, the Ilkhan was seated on his golden throne, clad in his gold brocade garments, and crowned with his precious jeweled crown, surrounded by the princes, ladies (*khavātīn*), amirs and his courtiers. Once the festivities came to an end, Ghazan proceeded to discuss state affairs with his commanders and intimates. Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 651-652; Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1303-6.

imaginary, Banākatī also locates the ruler’s court in Ūjān at the center of the Ilkhanid kingdom (“The city of Islam Ūjān became the heart of the kingdom and the *ordu* of the soul of the world is at the eye of the Khān’s Ūjān”) and compares it to the flourishing Ilkhanid center of Tabriz.<sup>421</sup> The tent in Ūjān is, hence, also situated in the specific Iranian-Ilkhanid synthesis of royal geography, in *īrān zamān*. The common praise for the ruler’s virtues, justice, benevolence, and military might is interwoven into his description of the Ūjān celebration. Not unlike other panegyrists, Banākatī resorts to both Iranian and Central Asian sovereignty concepts and titular. The Mongol ruler is, on the one hand, the Pādshāh, the Khusrav, and the Šāhib-Qirān, and on the other, the Khaqan (Qa’an) and Khan of Khans. To these two eminent expressions of imperial power, Banākatī adds, towards the end of his poem, an additional locus of Ilkhanid sovereignty. He defines Ghazan’s imperial stature in Islamic idioms as well:

Oh Heaven, fortune of the path of kingship, it has been determined  
 By the words of the Prophet that you are the Khusrav, the master of the age (*Šāhib-zamān*)  
 You are the *mahdī* of the End of Time as is evident, oh king, by the palm of your hand  
 For you have endless fortune from ‘Alī, lion of God<sup>422</sup>

Ghazan is the master of the age (*Šāhib-zamān*) as anticipated by the Prophet Muḥammad the *mahdī* of the End of Time since he shares ‘Alī’s precious good fortune (*naṣīb*). Ghazan’s Muslim kingship in the poem is indebted to a dual ancestry, a realization of both Muḥammad’s prophecy and ‘Alī’s qualities. That Banākatī sees the marks of Ghazan’s *mahdīhood* in the palm

<sup>421</sup> For the centrality of Tabriz in the Ilkhanate, see the volume edited by Judith Pfeiffer: *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century Tabriz* (2014).

<sup>422</sup> You have cultivated the world with your justice and generosity and the justice  
 Of a hundred like Kisrās serving at your court  
 You are the Khān of Khāns of the world and delivered to you is  
 The fortune of this world and the next (*davlat-i dunya va-dīn*), with them you are a fortunate king  
 Since I, the pride of Banākat, is the least of the Shah’s eulogists  
 Praise day and night, from the depth of soul and heart, according to law and reason  
 All have become rich from the generosity of the Shah of the world  
 How would it ever be possible for me to be deprived from being among them [...]

Banākatī, 465-66.

of his hand is also significant. As I note in appendix II, Banākatī summarizes Qāshānī's conversion narrative, where the amir Nawrūz argues that the signs on Ghazan's forehead indicate that Ghazan is the predicted savior-reviver king. Ghazan's scripted roles as the anticipated "reviver king" in the conversion narrative and in the Syrian letters tally well with traditions which attribute certain tasks to the eschatological redeemer. For example, Qāshānī's description of the anticipated reviver king's absolute justice is common to Islamic eschatological traditions. They depict the *mahdī* as an extraordinarily just ruler, who is constantly on the watch to make sure that no exploitation or corruption are carried out in his name. According to one early *hadith* collection, *al-Muṣannaḥ* of the eighth century scholar al-Ṣan'ānī, under the just rule of the *mahdī*, "the lamb would live happily with the lion" – a theme we find in Qāshānī's account as well ("the sheep will be protected from the harm of the wolf").<sup>423</sup>

In addition to his distribution of utopian justice, in many 'Abbāsīd-era prophecies, the *mahdī*'s rule signifies the universal spread of the authority (and mission) of Islam, either through military feats, or according to variant traditions, through voluntary submission to his rule.<sup>424</sup> Other traditions locate the figure of the *mahdī* at the turn of a three stage cycle, from prophetic missions to the dominium of tyrannical kings, and finally with the arrival of the redeemer/reformer *mahdī* - in other words, from revelation to corruption of that revelation and religious deterioration, and to purification and restoration.<sup>425</sup> The *mahdī* is envisioned as a militant religious reformer, a puritan who will restore Islam to its original, pristine purity. The

<sup>423</sup> 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, edited by Shaikh Ḥabiburrahman al A'zami (Johannesburg, 1983), vol. 11, 400-401; Hayrettin Yücesoy, *Messianic Beliefs and Imperial Politics in Medieval Islam* (Columbia, South Carolina: 2009), 46.

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-7.

<sup>425</sup> David Cook, "Moral apocalyptic in Islam," *Studia Islamica* 86 (1997), 53-54. In one eschatological tradition, for example, it is reported that the Prophet predicted such cycles of tyranny and reform/revival: "Woe to this community from tyrannical kings (*jabābira*) – how they kill and hollow the people out [...] when God will desire to return Islam to glory, he will break every stubborn tyrant and he is able to do as he pleases – to set the community aright after its corruption." *Ibid.*, 45; Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Īsā al-Irbīlī, *Kashf al-ghumma fī ma'rifat al-a'imma* (Beirut, 1981), vol. 3, 272.

*mahdī* was understood not only as the eschatological redeemer, whose appearance marks the End of Time, but the title also signified the penultimate reformer king.<sup>426</sup>

It is, furthermore, interesting to see how the poet interlinks Ghazan's sacral Chinggisid pedigree with his embodiment of this reformer-*mahdī*. Banākatī reports to have recited another poem in a celebration in Tabriz on Muḥarram 703/August 1303, where Ghazan's daughter was given in marriage to her cousin (Ghazan's nephew), Biṣṭām. After thanking God for delivering such a mighty, world conquering monarch and a fortunate Ṣāhib-Qirān, Banākatī sets out to chart Ghazan's medley of kingly pedigrees:

Shāh Ghāzān son of Arghun son of Abāqā son of  
Shāh Hūlāgū Khān son of Tolui Khān son of Chinggis Khān  
The just Khusrav, Sulaymān of the time, Jamshīd of the age  
A second Kistrā, Ghāzān Maḥmūd, the sultān of the world  
The master of the king of the kings of the seven climes  
The subduer of the enemies of religion and the *mahdī* of the End of Time

This line of kingly titular signifies several distinct and competing lineages of universal kingship, from Ghazan's Chinggisid ancestry, to the Mongol ruler's personification of mythic Iranian monarchs (Jamshīd, Kistrā) and monotheist prophet-kings (Sulaymān), and finally to his expression of universal aspirations and (penultimate) Islamic religiopolitical claim of authority. The *mahdī*, in other words, is the culmination of Ghazan's sovereignly identities.

Banākatī's *mahdī* encapsulates a historical vision, according to which, a certain process of decline and revival culminates in the figure of the Ilkhan. It identifies Ghazan's reign as an exceptional moment in time, an initiation of a new era, but also, much like the term *ūlī al-amr-i 'ahd*, places Ghazan (and the Mongols) within (intelligible) historical time, as part of recurring

---

<sup>426</sup> Yücesoy, 47-9. See also chapter five.

cycles of divine punishment and salvation. According to Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, such a ruler, of both the temporal and the spiritual, epitomized the best happiness and greatest fortune (*davlat*).<sup>427</sup>

Read alongside the Syrian letters and Banākātī's poetry, Qāshānī's conversion narrative offers an Islamic version of the Iranian "savior king," a prophesized periodic reviver or reformer monarch. Ghazan's conversion is, thus, situated at the convergence of several "rhythms of salvation":<sup>428</sup> Iranian cycles of dynastic and moral decay and revitalization, Islamic visions of recurrent degeneration and reform, and Muslim "eschatological" traditions of periodic cycles of corruption and restoration. He functions as both the restorer of the religion of Islam (and justice), and the reviver of Iranian kingship. Ghazan, after all, has been also identified as the first ruler to take on the title of the *Pādshāh-i Islām*, a fitting Perso-Islamic synthesis. Each of these "strands" is further developed in the later legendary refashioning of Ghazan – on the one hand, as the re-initiator of Iranian history, and on the other, as a reformer-*mujaddid* king.<sup>429</sup>

### **Contextualizing Qāshānī as Author: Perso-Islamic Synthesis and Ilkhanid Cultural Production**

I have suggested that it is likely that Qāshānī had access to and made use of Ghazan's Syrian letters for his conversion narrative. Qāshānī's narrative reflects, therefore, Ghazan's expansionist ideology within the context of the Mamluk Ilkhanid rivalry. It appears that it was in this context, of an ideologically charged war, that the need to explain Ghazan's conversion to Islam as part of a providential plan had arisen. The arguments in the second Syrian letter offer a

---

<sup>427</sup> Rāzī, *Mirṣād al- 'ibād*, 234.

<sup>428</sup> Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 41.

<sup>429</sup> For the *Mujaddid* kingship, see chapter 5. For Ghazan as the initiator of a new era of Iranian history, see for example, Melville's "History and myth: the Persianisation of Ghazan Khan," where he discusses the legendary refashioning and the "Persianisation" of Ghazan's figure in the later, Jalayirid Ghazan-nāma (composed between 758/1357-763/1362). "History and myth: the Persianisation of Ghazan Khan," in *Irano-Turkic Cultural Contacts in the 11<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, ed. Eva M. Jeremias (Piscataway, 2003), 133-60.

compelling providential explanation for Ghazan's conversion (and the preceding Mongol invasions), which might have been initially designed to gain the support of the Syrian populace. One of the main points stressed in both the narrative and the letters, is the need for complete compliance with Ghazan's rule.

While drawing on the letter, however, the conversion narrative does not appear to be targeting critics of the Ilkhanid regime from outside the Ilkhanate, but rather to address the uncertainties of the Ilkhanid administrative and literary elite in Mongol service. Through its application of the "savior king" model, the narrative seeks to explain and justify their support and loyalty to the Mongol rulers, and thus alleviate some of the concerns about their close relationship with the Mongols.

Qāshānī's narrative should be considered within its specific Persian literary and cultural milieu. In the Ilkhanate, viziers often served as literary and artistic patrons. There are indications that Qāshānī had attempted to, and seems to have been, at least for a while, successful in gaining the patronage of the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn. Qāshānī dedicated his treatise on gems and minerals, the *'Arā'is al-jawāhir va-naḥā'is al-aṭā'ib*, which he originally composed in 700/1300-01, to the vizier (whom he highly praises in the preface to the work). Qāshānī, however, later rededicated the work to Rashīd al-Dīn's rival, Tāj al-Dīn 'Alīshāh, probably after the latter's appointment as vizier in 711/1312.<sup>430</sup> The rededication was probably linked to the Qāshānī's tense relationship with Rashīd al-Dīn. Qāshānī claims that he was the real author of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, which the vizier presented to Öljeitü on the fifth of Shawwāl 706 (/April 9 1307). Rashīd al-Dīn was generously rewarded for this work by the sultan and although he promised to appropriately

---

<sup>430</sup> Following the execution of (Rashīd al-Dīn's rival) the vizier Sa'd al-Dīn Savajī. Soucek, "Abu'l-Qāsem 'Abdallāh Kāshānī," *Elr*; Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd Allāh Kāshānī, *'Arā'is al-jawāhir va-naḥā'is al-aṭā'ib*, ed. by Īrāj Afshār (Tehran, 1345/1966), 359-371.



compensate Qāshānī for his labor (according to the latter at least), Qāshānī claims that he never saw a dime from this treasure.<sup>431</sup>

Situating Qāshānī as an author within the context of negotiations of patronage relationships at the Ilkhanid court sheds a different light on Qāshānī's writing. Qāshānī's conversion account of Ghazan, communicated via a didactic historical narrative heavily influenced by the literary genre of advice literature, and imbued with Sufi motifs, is compatible with the literary and intellectual tastes, sensibilities, and values of the cultural milieu of the Ilkhanid administrative and (civilian) governing ranks. Similar combinations to that of Qāshānī's narrative are found in the works of other authors, equally or less skillful than Qāshānī, who sought to use these literary strategies and devices to secure patronage and positions, gain remuneration for their work, or advertise their credentials and skills, and more broadly, their cultural-literary "fluency". Marlow argues that the fluidity of the genre of advice literature (within some literary constraints) allowed authors to tailor their work to certain ends, and negotiate relationships with current or potential patrons.<sup>432</sup>

Didactic historical narratives appear to have had a special appeal or "market value" in thirteenth- and fourteenth-centuries Ilkhanid Iran where "the preservation and transmission of historical

---

<sup>431</sup> *Ta'rikh-i ūljāytū*, 54-55; 240-41. In the second instance, Qāshānī refers to the work he authored as the *dhayl-i Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* (possibly the history of Ghazan or *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*? Or perhaps to his *Ta'rikh-i ūljāytū* though there is no indication, as far as I know, that the vizier has access to this work). See Appendix I for further discussion of Qāshānī's claim to have authored the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*.

<sup>432</sup> One Ilkhanid example for advice literature combined with Sufi tendencies is *Minhāj al-wuzarā' wa-sirāj al-umarā'* (*The Way of Viziers and the Lamp of Commanders*) of Aḥmad al-İşfahbadhī. The *Minhāj al-wuzarā'* was dedicated to the son of Rashīd al-Dīn, the Ilkhanid vizier Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 736/1336), who was an avid supporter of literary and artistic production and was also known for his strong interest in Sufism. One Ilkhanid author, indeed, addressed Ghiyāth al-Dīn as "the Sufi vizier." Marlow suggests that *Minhāj al-wuzarā'* belongs to a "derivative genre" of political advice literature, which was more-or-less comprised of compilations of carefully selected texts and was directed less by didactic impulses, and more by the authors' intentions on securing employment. Louise Marlow, "The Way of the Viziers and the Lamp of Commanders (*Minhāj al-wuzarā' wa-sirāj al-umarā'*) of Aḥmad al-İşfahbadhī and the literary and political culture of early fourteenth-century Iran," in *Writers and Rulers: Perspectives on their Relationship from Abbasid to Safavid Times*, eds. B. Gruendler and L. Marlow (2004), 169-192; Marlow, "Teaching wisdom: a Persian work of advice for Atabeg Ahmad of Luristan," in *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft*, ed., M. Boroujerdi (2013), 141.

knowledge and an appreciation of the instructiveness of the past flourished”.<sup>433</sup> Marlow finds that “categories of historical narrative and moral counsel constitute less distinct genres than variants of a single literary continuum that served to define, consolidate, and perpetuate a distinct cultural-political elite”.<sup>434</sup> Qāshānī’s conversion narrative of Ghazan and moreover, his explanation of the Mongol invasions and rule, on the basis of the advice literature model of the periodic savior king should be viewed as part of the broader trend of the cultural modes of production of the time that promoted a particular strand of cultural-ethical ideals and was primarily addressed at the intellectual and bureaucratic civilian Ilkhanid elite.

It is through this elite, rather than the Mongol governing elite, that Qāshānī sought to gain entry into the court milieu and enjoy its material advantages.<sup>435</sup> Qāshānī’s conversion narrative with its convergence of different “salvific rhythms” and providential explanation of the Mongols’ invasions represents, thus, a specific-Ilkhanid cultural conceptualization of time, an understanding that is in-itself also historically contingent.<sup>436</sup> One might, furthermore, suggest that through this specific temporal regime, Ghazan was also understood to be the “reviver” or “initiator” of a particular Perso-Islamic culture.<sup>437</sup>

---

<sup>433</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid., 156. Melville further observes that whereas “in earlier times, works of ethical and practical advice, or ‘mirrors for princes,’ were mostly a separate branch of writing [...] in the Mongol period the historians absorbed almost completely this overtly didactic role and presented, however implicitly and often seemingly with heavy irony a vision of ideal kingship”.<sup>434</sup>

<sup>435</sup> See for example, Marlow: “Artistic prose was appreciated as a kind of literary display that engaged its audience through its opposite citations, allusions, tropes, and metaphors and evoked pleasure by means of particular literary effects. In social and cultural terms, the production and appreciation of artistic prose was closely linked to the affirmation of a set of cultural ethical ideals and constituted a mark of belonging to the courtly elite”. Ibid., 136. Marlow points out in particular to the combination of “moral instruction through historical narrative” and “the chancery style or artistic prose.” Ibid., 142.

<sup>436</sup> See Bashir’s advocacy for “a “time-sensitive” rethinking” of historians’ approaches to Islamicate temporalities and historical narratives. “On Islamic time,” 519-544.

<sup>437</sup> Consider, for example, Melville’s “History and myth: The Persianisation of Ghazan Khan.”

## **Monotheistic Kingship and Mongol Ancestral Belief: Rashīd al-Dīn’s Version**

Unlike Qāshānī’s chancery prose style in Ghazan’s *dastān* (the “P” recension), which conforms to the artistic literary canons of the time, the later version of the chapter on Ghazan by Rashīd al-Dīn (“S” recension) offers the readers a more direct and less ornate presentation, though not entirely devoid of literary embellishments. One significant difference we find between the two versions is that Rashīd al-Dīn’s version uses far less Arabic.<sup>438</sup> Furthermore, Rashīd al-Dīn’s version offers a narrative that is easier to follow, especially at points where Qāshānī’s account appears overburdened by excessive detail. One notes this in two important places in the conversion account: first, the rendition of Qāshānī’s two-stage conversion narrative into a one-stage process, and second, in the diminished role of the amir Nawrūz in the later conversion narrative, and the generally hostile attitude towards the amir.

In addition, while Rashīd al-Dīn’s version is more overall concise than the earlier recension, we find Rashīd al-Dīn adding details, in particular additional genealogical clarifications and amendments. One striking difference relates to the position of Ghazan’s wife Bulughān Khātūn, who was his father Arghun’s widow, in the list of the Ilkhan’s wives. We find the later iteration “correcting” Bulughān Khātūn’s position, “demoting” her from the Ilkhan’s chief wife to the position of wife number five.<sup>439</sup> This change corresponds to the list of Ghazan’s wives in the *Shu‘ab-i Panjgānah*, which seems to have been a later addition to the historical compendium of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*. Bulughān Khātūn retained considerable power into the reign of Ghazan’s brother Öljeitü. She died in the month of Sha‘bān 709/January 1310, the same year for which we have the first mention of the *Shu‘ab-i Panjgānah* as part of the *Jāmi‘ al-*

---

<sup>438</sup> On the stylistic differences and other divergences between the two versions, see Appendix I. The *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*’s (“S” recension’s) “simpler” style might also account for the relative lack of interest in the work by later generations in comparison to other Ilkhanid histories such as Vaṣṣāf’s work. See Pfeiffer, “Canonization,” 69; Ron Sela, “Rashīd al-Dīn’s historiographical legacy in the Muslim world,” 213-222.

<sup>439</sup> See Appendix II.

*tawārīkh*. Her changing status between the two recensions, therefore, might reflect the influential Khātūn's demise.

I suggest in appendix II that these and other observations indicate that the "S" recension was not only a later version, but also that it reflects changes made after the work was presented at Öljeitü's court, at which point corrections were offered. At this point, efforts were also made to make the work more accessible to the Mongol elite. Ghazan's conversion narrative in the later version of Ghazan's *dastān* agree with the broader aim of Rashīd al-Dīn's oeuvre. As Pfeiffer notes, Rashīd al-Dīn's historiographical, genealogical, philosophical and even medical writings exhibit a shared vision which promotes "cohabitation, integration, and indeed respect for the culture of his patrons".<sup>440</sup>

I argue that the reorientation of Ghazan's conversion narrative in the later iteration indicates that the aim of the editor/author was not to impress his literary peers and potential patrons from amongst the administrative-intellectual ranks (which, as I suggested, Qāshānī's narrative aims to do). Rather, it communicates a message to the Mongol elite of the Ilkhanate. The genealogical clarifications and amendments in this recension reflect a "Mongol audience." Atwood urges us to "read Rashīd al-Dīn's genealogical material as primarily a by-product of the need of the Mongol peerage to document their status" as "meritorious servants." The meticulous observance of genealogical details in Rashīd al-Dīn's writing reflects the social efforts of members of the non-Chinggisid Mongol elite to secure and legitimate their positions in the service of the Ilkhanid dynasty by tracing their lineage back to an ancestor who gained his status during the foundational moment of the empire.<sup>441</sup>

---

<sup>440</sup> Pfeiffer, "Canonization," 63.

<sup>441</sup> Atwood, "Mongols, Arabs, Kurds, and Franks," 243-250. Atwood's conclusion appears to align with one Shiraiwa's suggestions, namely that one can discern in the later, "revised" iterations of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* a number of passages "as oral traditions added to the main [presentation] text" and that these traditions

Although Rashīd al-Dīn’s conversion narrative references similar ideas about the cycles of decline and revival to that of Qāshānī’s account, the focus of the later conversion narrative is on the depiction of Ghazan’s inclination towards Islam and monotheism prior to his conversion.<sup>442</sup> The presentation of Ghazan as an Abrahamic-monotheistic king in his conversion narrative is echoed throughout the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*. It is, moreover, aligned with the vizier’s broader project of presenting the Mongols as monotheists (*muvaḥḥidān*) prior to their conversion, and thus, their conversion to Islam as a natural progression.

I suggest that this notion of the Mongols ancestral monotheism was rooted in how the pro-Islamic party within the Ilkhanid ranks was “marketing” conversion to Islam among the Mongols as a form of reversion, return (rather than a radical departure from) to the belief of the “ancestors”.<sup>443</sup> Atwood has shown that the Confucian party at the Yuan court employed a similar strategy. Considered along these lines, Ghazan’s conversion narrative should be viewed as a narrative designed to promote and encourage Mongol Islamization.

Pfeiffer observes the central role conversion narratives play in the structural aspects of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*. Two conversion narratives frame his universal history: the conversion narrative of Oghuz Khan at the beginning and Ghazan’s towards its end.<sup>444</sup> Several parallels are drawn between the two conversions in the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*. Both conversions of Oghuz and Ghazan initiate a top-down “mass conversion.” Furthermore, according to the conversion narrative of Oghuz in the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, the Mongols are descendants of “some of the uncles

---

“touch on people other than Chinggis Khan and his direct ancestors” – implying a broadening of the genealogical framework of the work for the sake of other, not necessarily Chinggisid actors. Kazuhiko Shiraiwa, “Rashīd al-Dīn’s primary sources in compiling the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*: a tentative survey,” 49-51.

<sup>442</sup> See also chapter one.

<sup>443</sup> For reversion narratives in conversion to Islam, see for example, Rebekah Lee, “Conversion or continuum? The spread of Islam among African women in Cape Town,” *Social Dynamics: a journal of African Studies* 27:2 (2001): 62-85.

<sup>444</sup> Pfeiffer, “Canonization,” 61-2.

and nephews” who opposed Oghuz and migrated east after Oghuz’s successful overthrow of his father and two uncles. These Mongol ancestors were infidels at first, but overtime became monotheists (*muvaḥḥid*) together with their families (*ūrūgh*).<sup>445</sup> These kinship ties aside, Oghuz and Ghazan also share the notion of an innate monotheist conviction, which makes their conversion a “formal” affirmation of their natural, preordained disposition (a “non-conversion,” in other words).

In the Oghuz narrative in the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, the newborn Oghuz refuses to consume his infidel mother’s breast milk. Only after she agrees in a dream to her son’s plea to secretly worship and love the one God, does Oghuz agree to feed once again. The *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*’s choice of words gives the impression that the infant Oghuz was preaching a vague crypto-monotheism, rather than a specific denominational and dogmatic identity. Ghazan’s conversion narrative starts with a description of the conversion as a preordained design.<sup>446</sup> Ghazan is destined by God to realize the true reality of things through his divinely granted means of discrimination and faculties of contemplation. The narrative situates Ghazan’s conversion within a two-stage divine plan to eradicate the corruption and decay that took hold in the lands of Islam:

“Since divine favor and will necessitated that the lassitude and the weakness, which had invaded the borders of the Islamic nation through the vicissitudes of months and years and the succession of days and nights, should be rectified by one of his particular servants, who would take over the rule of towns and cities, and should be followed by an individual of kingly attributions, He made Ghazan Khan the happy recipient of the lights of guidance and divine inspiration (*anvār-i hidayat va-ilhām-i rabbānī*).”

This two-stage schema, according to which, corruption and weakness in the Muslim world are eradicated by a world conqueror followed by a Muslim convert king, also echoes an earlier

---

<sup>445</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 50-51; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 28-29. On the Oghuz narratives, see Ilker Evrim Binbaş, “Oğuz Khan narratives,” *EI*. Accessed January 20, 2016. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/oguz-khan-narratives>.

<sup>446</sup> Titled: “The expansion of the blessed breast of the Pādshāh of Islam Ghazan Khān by the light of faith and the profession of faith by him and the amirs in the presence of the Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya Juwaynī.” Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1253-56; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 619-622.

passage in the opening paragraph to the section of Chinggis Khan's biography in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīk*:

[...] Since with the passage of eons all things must fall into lassitude and with the turning of days and nights nations and realms must fall into ruin, in every epoch (*qarnī*) a great and mighty (*azīm shavkat*) lord of auspicious conjunction (*ṣāhib qirānī*)<sup>447</sup> be singled out by heavenly assistance (*makhṣūṣ bi-ta'yīd-i asmānī*) and garbed in a raiment of power in order to do away with that lassitude (*khalal*) and degeneration and [...] to lay anew the foundation and base, to cleanse the field of realms [...] of the defilement of all types and sorts of evil and self-serving men, and to cause the dust of sedition (*fitna*) and corruption to settle.<sup>448</sup>

Since “the bonds of the orderly rule (*jihāndārī*) had been damaged by strife and discord (*takhāluf*),” Rashīd al-Dīn continues, eternal wisdom necessitated the world domination of the mighty warrior Chinggis Khan. By superior force, remarkable near-supernatural feats, and extensive bloodshed, he subjects all. Chinggis, then, takes on the role of the lawgiver and establishes, arranges and codifies a new foundation of law, the imperial *yāsāq* (law) and *yūsūn*

---

<sup>447</sup> For Chinggis Khan as a world-conqueror Ṣāhib-Qirān, see for example, Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, vol. 1, 222; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 1, 116. I discuss at the length the Ilkhanid use of the title of Ṣāhib-Qirān in chapters two and four.

<sup>448</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, vol. 1, 287-90; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 1, 141-2. It is significant that Rashīd al-Dīn speaks of Chinggis Khan's military might in terms of *shavkat*, raw power. The eleventh-century al-Ghazālī uses the notion of the Central Asian Turks' *shavkat/shawka*, unparalleled brute and raw force, to explain the need for the Saljūqs' protection of the Caliphate and ultimately to legitimize Saljūq dominance. Safī, *Politics of Knowledge*, 112, 121; Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, *Faḍā'ih al-bātiniyya*, edited by 'Abd al-Raḥman Badawī (Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmiyya, 1383/1964), 182-4. Rashīd al-Dīn is, thus, situating the Chinggisids within a historical pattern of Turkish-Central Asian dynasties ruling the heartland of the eastern Islamic world. Interestingly, depicting in his geographical section on Europe (*mamālik 'ubād al-ṣalīb*) in his encyclopedic *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (Routes toward insight into the capital empires) the German emperor, the Mamluk secretary and author Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī (d. 749/1349) notes that the German emperor is the most powerful among the European kings in terms of military force/valor on the battle field (*shawka*) but also assigned to him the idea of the “circle of justice”: “In spite of his great oppression and his perpetuation to such a degree that it is as if he will never die, he surrounds his subjects with justice and charitable/good actions and stops any person tyrannizing them, even if they are his deputies and his armies [*kunūdihi wa-'asākirihi*] and soldiers and all groups of people; and none of them is able to oppress one of his subjects [...] and they [the subjects] are with him in the convenience of protection and justice [...] and with this, their property became numerous and their possessions became abundant and their riches became plenty and their lands were built and their enemies were conquered and their lives became good [...]”. Thus, as with Chinggis Khan, the German emperor combines raw (magical and evincible) force and (raw) just rule suggesting that the two might have been intrinsically linked in the minds of some Muslim authors. Curiously, al-'Umarī also describes the Germans as “the *Tatars* of the Franks for their large numbers and their great courage and their preference to hard conditions and their endurance.” Published as a separate section with translation to Italian by M. Amari (ed. and trans.), “Condizioni degli Stati cristiani dell'Occidente second una relazione di Domenichino Doria da Genova,” *Atti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei*, Ser. 3, vol. 11 (Rome, 1883), 67-103. This section is also found in a facsimile of the Süleymaniye (Istanbul) manuscript: Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, ed. Fuad Sezgin (Frankfurt, 1988), vol. 2, 112-23.

(custom), and promotes the practice of justice towards the subjects and the reinforcement of social order so that “the gates of beneficence and reward be opened to all classes of people.” Chinggis Khan is conceived here as “Stranger-King,” who by brutal force and semi-magical power trumps the claims of autochthonous rulers (the caliphate), but after his conquest, redirects this power towards revitalizing the society and restoring justice and order.<sup>449</sup>

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, God’s salvific plan does not end with the strange conqueror, but continues with the conversion to Islam of his descendant Ghazan, whom the vizier describes as the *Pādshāh-i islām* (king of Islam) and *Shahanshāh-i anām* (emperor of mankind), the shadow of God. A Muslim convert, Ghazan is presented as the cosmocrator ruler, the cultivated Perso-Islamic civilizer, who converts and eliminates the polytheists and all forms of tyranny and injustice.<sup>450</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn offers a concise salvation narrative modeled on a Stranger-King structure in which the *yasa* is construed as an intermediary stage in a divine plan towards the re-implementation of the *sharī‘a*. Rashīd al-Dīn’s introduction to the life of Chinggis Khan presents the Ilkhans as exceptional insider-outsider rulers. Furthermore, this narrative is compatible with

---

<sup>449</sup> Marshal Sahlins has identified as the “universal cultural blueprint” of the Stranger-Kingship to express both the Ilkhans’ autochthonous claims to Irano-Islamic authority and their commitment to Chinggisid legitimation. Sahlins identified a recurring cultural pattern in a remarkable number of societies, in which a barbaric outsider overtakes the kingdom with brutal force, violence and magic, and is subsequently domesticized, socialized and transformed from the terrible to the benefactor. From dominating the local, the Stranger-King’s foreign force turns outwards, towards the protection and expansion of the kingdom; his brutality is deployed towards order, prosperity and justice; and his sacredness and out-worldliness recharge and revitalize the kingdom. A “synthesis between the complementary opposites,” Stranger-King politics offer “a total structure of reproduction” in which the “acquisition of alterity is the condition of both fertility and identity.” Marshall Sahlins, “The Stranger-King or, elementary forms of the politics of life,” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 36/105 (2009): 178. Ian Caldwell and David Henley, “Introduction: the stranger who would be king: magic, logic, polemic,” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 36/105 (2009): 165. Alexander/Iskandar is the stranger-king, the insider-outsider par excellence. Mancini-Lander, 239-241.

<sup>450</sup> Sahlins envisions the culmination of Stranger-Kingship in cosmocrator rulers, who “synthesize the ontological and theological dualisms that mark stranger-king polities to produce a distinctive system of totalized and centralized rule.” Sahlins, 185. Discussing kingship narratives in the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms of Southwest China, Yongjia argues for a structural distinction between Sahlins’ extra-social stranger-king and the supra-social cosmocrator: “Contrary to the kin-killing incestuous stranger-king, these enfeoffing kings or *Cakravartin* Kings [the cosmocrators] were presented as morally superior and universal. These kings also represented a form of cosmological centring of power instead of the power derived from an outsider from another territory.” Yongjia, “Stranger-kingship and cosmocracy,” 236-54.



the Mongols' own political theology of Chinggis Khan's divine right. This penitential-providential explanation is imbued with a cyclical understanding of time as composed of recurring cycles of decay and rejuvenation, similar to that explored earlier for Qāshānī's narrative.

Returning to Ghazan's conversion narrative, Rashīd al-Dīn, next, transitions into what becomes the main focus of the conversion account, that is, Ghazan's Abrahamic mission. The author begins with a description of Ghazan's childhood, when his grandfather Abaqa entrusted Ghazan's education to several great Buddhist monks (*bakhshī-yi buzurg*). Within a short time, Ghazan masters their teachings to perfection. Ghazan, however, "gazed into the secrets of idolatry and contemplated the truth of various religions and communities (*adyān va-milal*)" and through "the rays of the lights of the Muḥammadan religion," was inclined toward the nation of God/truth (*millat-i haqq*). Nevertheless, Ghazan fervently continues on the Buddhist path (*tarīqa*) and builds lofty idol-temples in Khurasan.<sup>451</sup> The narrative, then, proceeds to Ghazan's struggle with Baidu, Nawrūz's proposal to Ghazan to convert, and Ghazan's positive response, which is followed by Nawrūz's presentation of the ruby.

Rashīd al-Dīn's version presents a more hostile attitude toward the amir Nawrūz.<sup>452</sup> He limits the amir Nawrūz's role in the conversion shifting the "spotlight" to Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the shaykh was not only present at that moment in Ghazan's camp, which according to Ḥammūya's own account, was due to the efforts of Nawrūz,

---

<sup>451</sup> That Rashīd al-Dīn's narrative gives such prominence to the Ilkhan's Buddhist training and patronage of Buddhism is another indication of the important Abaqaid-dynastic dimension of the support of Buddhism.

<sup>452</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn's narrative "skips" over the lengthy, lauding, and nearly heroic depiction of Nawrūz as he is faced at Baidu's camp with dangers and overcomes with insightful deceit his ill-wishers (and thus, redeems himself from his earlier "crimes" of disloyalty towards his benefactor Ghazan), which we find in the earlier recension/Qāshānī's account. Instead, he briefly summarizes it and depicts this episode in negative light, as Nawrūz's failure to fulfill his promise to Ghazan to hand him Baidu's head. Furthermore, it notes that Ghazan was about to rebuke the amir for his return without results, just as Nawrūz decided to raise before the prince the issue of his conversion. See also Appendix I.

but was, in fact, usually in the attendance on the prince Ghazan, who would inquire with him about the religion of Islam. Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya, thus, is positioned in the later narrative as the main agent in Ghazan’s conversion (apart from the Ilkhan himself).

Closely following Qāshānī’s conversion narrative, Ghazan, who is guided by the light of the faith, carries out a speech in which he criticizes adultery and idol-worship for their foolishness, inefficiency, and lack of reason (“for a rational person to place his head down before an inanimate object is utter ignorance and stupidity”), and praises Islam as “very strong and obvious (*matīn va-mubīn*).” Announcing his commitment to reject polytheism, Ghazan pronounces together with all the amirs the profession of faith (*kalimah-yi tavḥīd*) at the presence of the shaykh. Subsequently, he celebrates his conversion with a banquet, devotional acts, granting gifts to the sayyids and shaykhs, building mosques, and fasting in Ramadan. Unlike Qāshānī’s account which ends with a declaration of the requirement to comply with Ghazan’s authority as the *ūlī al-amr-i ‘ahd*, Rashīd al-Dīn ends his conversion narrative with a reaffirmation of the sincerity (*ikhhlās*) of Ghazan’s conversion claiming that “with all his greatness and might (*shavkat*), compulsion (*ijbār*) in his conversion cannot be conceived.”

The departures from Qāshānī’s earlier narrative suggest how Rashīd al-Dīn re-crafted Ghazan’s conversion narrative to meet his agenda. First, the vizier lifts the “ruby episode” (Nawrūz’s first suggestion to the Ilkhan) and relocates it to the (later) conversion narrative, creating a more effective one-stage conversion narrative.<sup>453</sup> Nawrūz’s role in the conversion is, thus, significantly curtailed. Rashīd al-Dīn, furthermore, expands and elaborates a brief paragraph in Qāshānī’s account concerning Ghazan’s early Buddhist training, repositioning it as the crux of the conversion account. It, thus, throws into greater relief the polemical function of

---

<sup>453</sup> This, however, also leaves in the text visible fault lines of the “copy-and-paste” process.

Ghazan's conversion narrative as it situates Buddhism (and polytheism more generally) as the main obstacle for the conversion of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate. Another significant departure from Qāshānī's narrative is the elaboration on Ghazan's pre-conversion inquiry into the various religions and his internalized, unaided (at least not by human agency) arrival at the truth of the Muslim belief.

This depiction of Ghazan the monotheist is, furthermore, interlinked to his presentation as a "Mongol Abraham" in the introduction to the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. Ghazan, who "like Abraham, God's friend, sought to be free from the infidels, with his own hand he smashed the idols and he completely blocked the way to infidelity and polytheism [...] therefore, they broke [by his order] the idols and tore down the idol-temples, building mosques and houses of worship in their places".<sup>454</sup> The comparison of Ghazan to the idol-smashing monotheist (*muvaḥḥid*) Abraham is, moreover, situated within a broader historical narrative that aligns Ghazan with Abraham and Muḥammad. This section starts with a discussion of Abraham, who "alone among all his polytheistic and idolatrous kith and kin became a monotheist worshipper of God." Abraham becomes the father of nations and according to the narrative, charges his children with the task of keeping a record of their genealogical tree (*shajarah-yi nasal-i avlād*) generation after generation and forbids them from intermarrying with other nations.<sup>455</sup> Since they maintained this custom, the narrative argues, it is clear that since "the time Abraham's sons began to beget and multiply [...] all the prophets, kings, and elite of religions and nations have been – and will be until the Day of Resurrection – of his progeny." Alluding, hence, to the

---

<sup>454</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 29; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 16.

<sup>455</sup> Compare with Rashīd al-Dīn's claim that "it is a Mongolian custom to preserve one's relationship to one's father and forefathers, and every child born is taught and inculcated with his genealogy [*nasab*] like all others in that nation [...] peoples [*aqwām*] other than the Mongols do not have such a custom – except for the Arabs, who also keep their genealogy." Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 1, 113; Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, vol. 1, 215. See discussion of this passage in Atwood, "Rashīd al-Dīn's comparative ethnography," 231ff.

argument that the Chinggisids/Mongols, too, were members of the Abrahamic clan, the narrative continues with the noblest of Abraham's descendants, Muḥammad, whom God sent with the promise that all "would follow his religion." Moreover, in Rashīd al-Dīn's account, the three "avatars," Abraham, Muḥammad and Ghazan, are all rallied against the same familiar enemy, which the vizier identifies as Buddhism.<sup>456</sup>

The narrative, then, echoes the providential narrative found at the start of the Syrian letter discussed at length earlier in the chapter. In every age, when controversy befalls the people of Islam and the Muslim go astray from the right path, it is divine will that they be chastised and punished (*ta'dīb*) and that, "the foundation of the work of the Muslims be renewed." Thus, the Mongols enter into this salvific plan. It was preordained that "the chastisement (*ta'dīb*) of the Islamic peoples would be at the hand of a nation (*tā'ifa*) that would be monotheistic (*muvahhid*) and God-fearing, not polytheistic or the enemies of the religion." Furthermore, divine will's intention was that "through the might (*shavkat*) of these terrifying peoples," the community of Islam would be strengthened, and that "through the blessing of an innate disposition to monotheism (*tavhīd-i jibillī*)," they would convert and make all comply with God's commandments. At this point, Islam would spread and be firmly rooted. The author considers as proof the rise of Chinggis Khan's descendants and their joint world dominium. The cycle of decay, chastisement, and restoration is completed by the Ilkhan Ghazan, who after his conversion "caused all his soldiers, some of whom were Mongol monotheists and others of whom were idolatrous [...] to convert to Islam." We witness in this narrative not only the expansion of

---

<sup>456</sup> Thus, it is not only Ghazan who set out to demolish their statues of the Buddha, but the Prophet Muḥammad as well. See chapter two: in his *Life and Teachings of the Buddha*, Rashīd al-Dīn writes that "before the acceptance of Islam, the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina along with some of the Arabs and Persians were Buddhists (*'alā dīn Shākamūnī*) and that in the Ka'ba they had worshipped idols resembling the Buddha, which Muḥammad had then ordered to be destroyed." Quoted by Akasoy, "The Buddha," 187

Abrahamic genealogy to include the Mongols,<sup>457</sup> but also the aligning of Ghazan with other monotheist founders such as Oghuz Khan.

Peter Jackson has compared Rashīd al-Dīn’s approach to the Mongols’ traditional beliefs to the approach of the earlier historian ‘Aṭā-malik Juwaynī. Unlike Rashīd al-Dīn, he refrains from describing Chinggis Khan or the Mongols as worshipers of the one God revered in Islam, though he does depict the Mongols as the instrument of divine fury and agents of God’s scourge.<sup>458</sup> While the Mongols believed in eternal *tenggeri* (heaven, sky), they also revered a host of supernatural beings in an elaborate system of domestic rites. Jackson suggests that Rashīd al-Dīn’s unfounded distinction between the “monotheistic” Mongols and other idol worshiping nations such as the Uighurs reflects “the means whereby the newly-converted Mongols sought to reconcile Islam with the cultic beliefs of their forebears [...] a continuation of the old syncretistic and pluralistic attitudes”.<sup>459</sup> I argue that Rashīd al-Dīn’s depiction of a Mongol “ancestral monotheism” and his explanation of Ghazan’s conversion as deriving from innate monotheistic proclivities reflect the strategy employed by the “pro-Muslim party” within the Mongol elite of the Ilkhanate in order to propagate conversion to Islam and explain their own conversion in favorable terms.<sup>460</sup>

Another case of monotheistic reversion is found in Rashīd al-Dīn’s account of Qubilai’s grandson, the Muslim convert and ruler of the province of Anxi, prince Ananda (d. 1307).<sup>461</sup> In

---

<sup>457</sup> For the expansion of the Islamic cosmos through genealogy in Rashīd al-Dīn’s works and the integration of the Mongols into the Abrahamic family tree (and the Muslim eschatological tradition) by linking them to Abraham’s wife/concubine Keturah, Pfeiffer, “Faces like shields,” 557-594.

<sup>458</sup> Jackson, “Mongol Ilkhans and religious allegiance,” 111-114.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>460</sup> As discussed in chapter two, reversion was one of the means by which the “Confucian party” in Yuan China explained their conversion to and patronage of Confucianism, which were viewed not in terms of “conversion to foreign, Chinese Confucianism, but ‘reversion’ to the basic traditions of the [Mongol] empire’s founder, recast, of course, as congruent with Confucian political and ritual principles.” Atwood, “Explaining rituals,” 95-100.

<sup>461</sup> On the prince, Vered Shurany, “Islam in Northwest China under the Mongols: the life and times of prince Ananda (d. 1307)” (MA thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2014).

the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, Ananda was given in childhood to a Muslim man from Turkistan for his education. The man's Muslim wife, Zulaykha, was also Ananda's wet-nurse, and "therefore, Islam took firm root in his heart" (echoing Oghuz's refusal to suckle on his mother's breast until she "converts"). Ananda is portrayed as a devout Muslim, who converts to Islam a hundred and fifty thousand Mongol soldiers. However, Sartaq, one of his commanders and an opponent (*munkir*) of the Muslims, complains to the Qa'an Temür Öljeitü that Ananda spends his time worshiping and studying in the mosque and has circumcised the Mongol children and converted his men. Temür Öljeitü forbids Ananda from worshiping and urges him to bow down to the idols. Ananda declines, giving a speech, not too different from that Ghazan carries out in his conversion narrative, as to the senselessness of idol veneration and polytheism. He is, subsequently, imprisoned at the Qa'an's orders.

In spite of these afflictions, Ananda remains steadfast in his convictions insisting that: "our fathers (*pidarān-i mā*) were all monotheists; they considered God to be one and worshiped him. It was due to that right belief/good doctrine/orthodoxy (*barakat-i ān nīkū i 'tiqād*) that the Ancient God (*khudā-yi qadīm*) rewarded them with the entire face of the earth and made them kings and leaders of the human beings [...] they never bowed before an idol." Summoned before Temür Öljeitü, Ananda refuses to acknowledge that he was guided to Islam by a demon and refers to the Ilkhan Ghazan's conversion as proof of God's agency in Ananda's own conversion. In consideration of Ananda's great support among the ranks of the Muslims of the Tangut region, Temür Öljeitü releases the prince and awards him the land of Tangut. Ananda follows the example of Ghazan in going to great lengths to propagate Islam and the commander Sartaq, who once opposed the Muslim belief, converts as well.<sup>462</sup> Ananda's figure functions in the *Jāmi' al-*

---

<sup>462</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 950-53; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 465-7.

*tawārīkh*'s narrative as an avatar of Ghazan. He reaffirms the sincerity of Ghazan's conversion, as well as the seniority of the convert Ilkhan in Islam. Ghazan's fame is depicted as instrumental in Ananda's consolidation of Islam in the Tangut region.

Faced by the Qa'an's opposition to his adoption and propagation of Islam, Ananda chooses to argue that it is he, and not the Qa'an, who remained loyal to Mongol "ancestral beliefs": the Mongol ancestors were always monotheists (*muvaḥḥid*); moreover, they received the right to rule the earth on account of their correct, monotheist convictions. Rashīd al-Dīn makes Heaven's blessing to Chinggis Khan and his offspring contingent on Mongol monotheism equating Eternal Heaven and Allāh. Ananda is employing in this account similar measures to that employed by the "Confucian party" at Qubilai's court. Reversion is employed as a meaningful way of claiming authority in conversion. Ananda's speech, furthermore, conflates the Chinggisids' monotheistic ancestral belief with the notion of *nīkū i 'tiqād* (good-doctrine, right faith, orthodoxy), and the *baraka* granted to Chinggis Khan and his descendants. Omid Safi discusses how historians of the Saljūq dynasty depicted the Saljūqs as possessing "orthodoxy" in "a dual process of legitimizing irresistible power by empowering orthodox knowledge".<sup>463</sup>

Lurking behind such claims of "right faith" in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* is Rashīd al-Dīn's Abaqaid dynastic project. In chapter one, I have shown how Rashīd al-Dīn attempted to create a "monotheist" dynasty to match a lineal succession pattern extending from Chinggis Khan to Ghazan. Monotheism and *nīkū i 'tiqād* function as strategic discourses in charting a clear dynastic line of succession. Rashīd al-Dīn, furthermore, equates orthodoxy with the legitimate sovereignty of Ghazan, and heresy with illegitimate, Hülegüid dynastic usurpation.<sup>464</sup>

---

<sup>463</sup> Safi, *The Politics of knowledge in Premodern Islam*, xxiv.

<sup>464</sup> See chapter one.

## Conclusion: The Abrahamic Khan

The re-aligning of Ghazan's conversion narrative with its "new" focus on Ghazan's innate predisposition towards monotheism does not only reduce the agency of others (aside from God) in Ghazan's conversion, but also situates Ghazan at the juncture of two overlapping genealogical chains: on the one hand, a Chinggisid-Toluid-Abaqid linear dynastic succession line, and on the other, a monotheistic chain binding together Abraham, Muḥammad and Ghazan (and Oghuz). Ghazan's place in this successive monotheistic line is furthermore established via his "consanguineal" relationship with Abraham. Rashīd al-Dīn states that "all the prophets, kings, and elite of religions and nations have been – and will be until the Day of Resurrection – of his [Abraham's] progeny." Monotheistic-Abrahamic time, with its salvific linearity, genealogical perspective, and centralizing vision (one god = one king), is utilized by Rashīd al-Dīn in an attempt to resolve some of Ghazan's dynastic challenges and reinforce his (and his brother's) claim to descent-based legitimation. However, the main protagonist against whom Ghazan is positioned is neither his dynastic opposition (Baidu) nor the Muslim heretics. Rather, it is Buddhism and the Buddhist monks who are envisioned as the main hindrance to Ghazan's true conversion, and against whom Ghazan unleashes his monotheistic zeal.<sup>465</sup> In the next chapter, I examine Rashīd al-Dīn's theological writings and anti-Buddhist polemics to show how the vizier competes with the Buddhist cultural brokers by grounding his patron Öljeitü's Chinggisid sovereignty in a *kalām-theological* foundation.

I started this chapter with Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī's paragraph on Ghazan's initiation of the Khānī calendar in 701/1302. For Qazwīnī, Ghazan's Khānī era and rule marked a

---

<sup>465</sup> It is worth entertaining here al-Azmeh's observation as to the polemical context of "polytheism" and idol-worshipping: "the notion of polytheism itself appears as a polemical notion arising from monotheistic self-definition, and is of doubtful systematic and analytical value." Aziz al-Azmeh, "Monotheistic monarchy," in *The Times of History: Universal Topics in Islamic Historiography* (Budapest, 2007), 271.



temporal-geographical unification of a mythic *īrān zamīn* under a single autocratic ruler. Rashīd al-Dīn’s message of Mongol monotheistic kingship too lends itself to a similar autocratic universalism. Aziz Al-Azmeh argues that late antique monotheistic kingship, within which he also includes Muslim kingship and the caliphate, granted the ruler “a charter for imperial autocracy” on the basis that “the existence of one Caesar on earth corresponded to the dominion in heaven of only one Lord”.<sup>466</sup> One might suggest that Rashīd al-Dīn’s presentation of Ghazan as a monotheistic king also offered a venue for dynastic centralization, and the consolidation of Ilkhanid authority at the hands of Ghazan.

---

<sup>466</sup> Aziz al-Azmeh argues that “sacral kingship, in its variety of forms and representations one of which is monotheistic kingship, might in anthropological terms be regarded an Elementary Form of socio-political life [...] in which sovereign and deity are related by manners and degrees of identification and mimesis”. Ibid., 281; *Muslim Kingship*, 31. Monotheistic kingship is furthermore a “form of artificial sociality” where the caliph-king imposes culture and order and maintains this order by force. According to this view, “kingship and prophecy – are the corrective” of man’s insubordinate and evil qualities and the caliph-Muslim king, “the demiurge of sociality,” is the civilizer who stands above and beyond his civilized subjects: he is “the untamable tamer and the savage domesticator, continuously exercising the corrective primal violence”. Al-Azmeh, “Monotheistic monarchy,” 283. The monotheistic king’s relationship with the society that he rules, is one of an insider-outsider, a stranger-king, or rather his more domesticated version, the cosmocrator ruler, which Sahlins discusses.

## Chapter IV: The Words of the Kings are the Kings of Words: Rashīd al-Dīn's Muḥammad-Centered Kingship and His Refutation of Reincarnation

The sign of this prince [the Ṣāḥib-Qirān prince] is that the acts that appear from him [during childhood] are in the level of the signs that some of the prophets exhibited during their childhood, until revelation gradually (*bi-tadrīj*) reached them and they became [adult] prophets. For example, Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him, who also perceived during his childhood the falseness of the belief of his father and his people [...] and Yūsuf, peace be upon him, who at the beginning when he was still a child had a dream, and he told it to his father, and his father interpreted it and said: do not tell your brothers [...] and the states (*aḥvāl*) of the Seal of the Prophets [Muḥammad], prayers be upon him, from whom they witnessed miraculous things at the beginning [of his path] and during his childhood [...]

At the time of his [Öljeitü's] blessed birth, this weak slave [Rashīd al-Dīn, the author] was in attendance of state (*davlat*) dignitaries. Since his blessed birth took place in the desert between Marv and Sarakhs, there was no water at all nearby, and two months of spring had passed by with no rain. There was a long drought, and people gave up hope from the lack of rain. At the moment of his birth at that desert [...] a great cloud suddenly appeared and it rained so hard that the entire desert filled with water and canals of water appeared. So much water came down on the *ordu* and tents that the carpet spreaders [*farrāshān*] collected all the woolen carpets (*zīlūhā*) and piled them up and spread their possessions on them. Until \_\_\_\_\_ [incomplete, Öljeitü] came to the world in a blessing and fortunate horoscope, they sat on them and took a firm hold while the water gathered beneath them. Since it is the custom [to wait] until everything calms down, they camped there [...] an endless amount of fodder appeared there, and since everyone witnessed the wonder, the blessing, and the joy in the blessed arrival of \_\_\_\_\_ [Öljeitü], they all together praised and extolled him [...] wherever his blessed feet reached, there appeared an ample of fodder, greens and sweet basil, and in truth, they said that his auspicious name should be blessed feet and for that reason, he was named \_\_\_\_\_ [Öljeitü].<sup>467</sup>

---

<sup>467</sup> From *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* in Rashīd al-Dīn, *Mukhtaṣar-i tavārīkh-i Rashīdiyya*, Istanbul Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi Ms. 3415, ff. 119v-122r. The scribe seems to have left room in the manuscript for Öljeitü's name to be filled in later, probably in gold, which was not carried on. We are, thus, left with blank spaces whenever Öljeitü's name is mentioned. In Mongolian, Öljeitü means auspicious/blessed (the possessor of good fortune/blessing, *Öljei*). Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkisch und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, 1 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1963), 174. A very similar account is found in Qashānī's *Ta'rikh-i Üljāytü*, 16. In fact, it is clear that Qashānī had access to Rashīd al-Dīn's *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* and used its preface for his history. For example, Qashānī's description of Öljeitü's feats (*manāqib*) follow closely, though with stylistic differences, Rashīd al-Dīn's parallel accounts in *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*. *Ta'rikh-i Üljāytü*, 227ff.

In the above quoted passage from Rashīd al-Dīn’s introduction (*fātiḥa*) to his *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* (*The Book of the Sultan*, penned in 706/March 14 1307), the Ilkhanid vizier sets the Ilkhan Öljeitü’s miraculous birth story alongside the childhood miracles of the prophets, reading it as a sign of his future position as a member of an exceptional rank of absolute kings (*muṭlaq pādishāhān*), and Şāhib-Qirāns, Lords of Auspicious Conjunction. In this chapter, I examine Rashīd al-Dīn’s formulation of Öljeitü’s sacred persona in his theological compendia. I argue that the vizier experiments with Islamic paradigms to express and redefine his patron’s Chinggisid sacral kingship, in particular, the notion of the Mongol ruler as heir to Chinggis Khan’s gift of intuited knowledge and direct link to Heaven/God.

I explored how Sa’d al-Dawla, the Jewish vizier of the Ilkhan Arghun, used in his *maḥḍar* (manifesto) the distinction between the two ranks of lawgivers and world regulator-absolute kings in Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s (d. 1274) *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī* (*The Nasirean Ethics*) as a political model that would be compatible with the Mongol understanding of the ruler “as an intuitive font of wisdom and law,” who can independently legislate and interpret any scriptural tradition.<sup>468</sup> Similar to Sa’d al-Dawla’s establishment of Arghun’s sovereignty on the basis of Ṭūsī’s *akhlāq-ethical* paradigm, Rashīd al-Dīn provides Öljeitü’s Chinggisid authority with a *kalām-theological* foundation. I examine how Rashīd al-Dīn introduced a new rank of exceptional kingship into the twelfth century influential Ash‘arite theologian, exegetist and philosopher Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s (d. 606/1210) hierarchy of human perfection. I show how the vizier ingeniously positioned the souls of his Chinggisid patrons alongside the sacred perfect souls of the ranks of the saints and the prophets using al-Rāzī’s theoretical scheme.

---

<sup>468</sup> See chapter two.

Rashīd al-Dīn presents the Ilkhan Öljeitü as a perfect king and a luminous soul, through whom divine wisdom reaches his subjects. Öljeitü has likewise the ability to perfect the souls of others, a particular attribute of the prophets in al-Rāzī's thought. Rashīd al-Dīn, furthermore, constructs Öljeitü's exceptional kingship as a reflection of Muḥammad's exceptional prophethood. He establishes Öljeitü's supreme position within a hierarchical system of kingship that parallels the Prophet's position as the Seal of Prophethood in a hierarchy of human intellectual and moral perfection. I argue that Rashīd al-Dīn appropriates al-Rāzī's theory of human perfection, which "reconciled ancient and Islamic philosophical ideas about the soul's perfection with Sunni ideas about prophetic guidance".<sup>469</sup> He experiments with a novel political model, a Muḥammad-centered kingship,<sup>470</sup> through which the vizier mediates between Islamic revelation and sources of authority, and the Mongols' understanding of the Chinggisids' exceptionality as untutored prodigies, in possession of a direct channel to the Heavens. By expanding al-Rāzī's theological model to entertain a rank of absolute kingship that mirrors al-Rāzī's rank of absolute perfect prophethood, and assigning this new rank of Muḥammadan kingship to the Ilkhan Öljeitü, Rashīd al-Dīn both "theologizes" kingship in Islam, and reconstructs Öljeitü's Chinggisid sovereignty as distinctively Muslim.

In his theological writing, Rashīd al-Dīn uses al-Rāzī's theory of the perfect soul of the Prophet Muḥammad as a design for a new type of sacralized intellectual kingship. Rashīd al-Dīn appropriates key concepts from al-Rāzī's thought to present Öljeitü as a radiant soul, a recipient

---

<sup>469</sup> Tariq Jaffer, *Rāzī: master of Qur'ānic interpretation and theological reasoning* (New York, 2015), 212.

<sup>470</sup> While drawing such a comparison is not without its challenges, there is something to be said about parallels between the vizier's theological-grounded Muḥammad-centered model of kingship and the early Christian model of monarchy as "Christ-centered kingship." Ernst Kantorowicz identified in the late medieval period a transition from a "more christocratic-liturgical concept of kingship" to "a more theocratic-juristical idea of government" (93). It seems to me that this later idea already existed in the Islamic world in the Persian *akhlāq-ethical* paradigm of government and that, in contrast to the "evolutionary change" Kantorowicz identifies here, Rashīd al-Dīn's innovation lies in the creation of a theological foundation for kingship, and thus, a novel Islamic political theology. Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: a study in mediaeval political theology* (New Jersey, 1957), 42-93.

of divine inspiration, an individual in possession of a superior intellect, that enables the Ilkhan, without the need for previous learning or even literacy, to gain intuitive knowledge/revelation that is unattainable to others, but nevertheless, adheres and espouses the essential truths of Islamic theological convictions. This vision of Öljeitü directly corresponds with the understanding of the Chinggisid ruler as gifted by Heaven's blessing with a form of intuitive knowledge and reason. In Rashīd al-Dīn's works, both Islamic theological concepts and Chinggisid conceptualizations undergo a process of cultural translation and mutual refashioning.

Thus, while the vizier endeavors to elaborate a theological foundation for a new category of Islamic sacral kingship for his Mongol patrons, he also strives to restrict the scope of his patron's claim to sanctified authority by delineating, through his discussion of Muḥammad's prophethood, the boundaries of this new category of kingship. In spite of Rashīd al-Dīn's extravagant presentation of this novel rank, Öljeitü's new role as a Chinggisid-Muslim sacred king can only be seen as a demotion from the earlier Chinggisid model of unmediated authority. It sets with Muḥammad's prophethood a clear limit to the Ilkhan's authority and power. In Rashīd al-Dīn's "prophetology," Öljeitü's unmediated channel to the divine can only be second to Muḥammad's mediated revelation and link with God. Rashīd al-Dīn's work as a cultural broker is also about demarcating and establishment of clear boundaries, as much as it is about transgressing earlier theological and political borders. His mediation of Chinggisid kingship must also be understood as part of the vizier's larger project of converting the Mongols through reversion.<sup>471</sup>

---

<sup>471</sup> See chapter three.

Rashīd al-Dīn fuses together the Chinggisid claim to a superior intellect and an “intuited wisdom”,<sup>472</sup> with the efforts of al-Rāzī and his predecessors from the tradition of the Ash‘arite *mutakallimūn* to demonstrate the congruency of scripture and transmitted knowledge (*naql*) with reason (*‘aql*). In Rashīd al-Dīn’s theological writings, Ōljeitū is presented as the chief advocator for reason (*‘aql*) and rationally-based knowledge,<sup>473</sup> and by extension, for *kalām* as well;<sup>474</sup> and

<sup>472</sup> Atwood, *forthcoming*.

<sup>473</sup> For example, Rashīd al-Dīn, *Bayān al-ḥaqā’iq*, ed. Hāshim Rajabzāda (Tehran, 1386[2008]), 87.

<sup>474</sup> I follow here Sabra’s definition of 14<sup>th</sup> century, post-Rāzī *kalām* as “an argumentative approach to religion which sought, through discussion and discursive thought, to interpret and transform the content of the Islamic revelation into a rationally-based doctrine” (11). *Kalām* developed in the context of intense intra- and inter-religious controversies; yet, Sabra demonstrates that *kalām* was more than a mere “intellectual pursuit,” but that it conceived itself as “a genuine knowledge”: “All *Kalām*, whether that of the Mu‘tazila or the later, “orthodox,” Ash‘arites, declares itself against the passive by the name of *taqlīd* (the imitation or unquestioning following of authority), and which it seeks, expressly and as a matter of principle, to replace by a state of knowledge (*‘ilm*) rooted in reason (*‘aql*).” The most important problem faced by the *mutakallimūn* is how to reconcile “its claim to be a rational inquiry with its ultimate concern with revealed truth.” According to Sabra, by the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the *mutakallimūn* conceived themselves as victors in their arguments with the philosophers and they sought to incorporate *falsafa* and the sciences (e.g., astronomy). Sabra references in this regard the work of the Ash‘arite *mutakallim* ‘Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 1355) as the fullest expression of *kalām*’s ontological self-appreciation. In his influential work on *kalām*, the *Kitāb al-Mawāqif fī ‘ilm al-kalām* (composed 1330), al-Ījī states: “the questions of *kalām* comprise every theoretical judgment concerning an object of knowledge which is either one of the religious beliefs depends. (*Kalām*) is the highest science, and, as such, it contains no principles which are proved in another science; rather its principles are either self-evident or they are proved in it and thus belong to it as questions.” Sabra also points out that al-Ījī’s *al-Mawāqif* evinced the influence of philosophy on *kalām* (according to Ibn Khaldūn (s.1382), by the fourteenth century, *kalām* and *falsafa* were, in fact, indistinguishable): both for its role as an organizing tool in al-Ījī’s work and in the appropriation of *falsafa* terminology and methodology throughout his text. A. I. Sabra, “Science and philosophy in medieval Islamic theology: the evidence of the fourteenth century,” *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften*, 9 (1994): 1-42 (11 for al-Ījī’s quote). On al-Ījī, see Sabra, 13 (footnote). For al-Ījī’s skeptical approach to the reliability of astronomical observations, Robert Morrison, “What was the purpose of astronomy in Ījī’s *Kitāb al-Mawāqif fī ‘ilm al-kalām*?” in *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge*, 201-229. Morrison notes that for al-Ījī, “*kalām* seems to have demanded a level of demonstrative certainty often unattainable by astronomy” (206), but that al-Ījī’s stand “represents a point in a debate,” rather than the (final) position of *kalām* on science. That al-Ījī and his family had connections with Rashīd al-Dīn is well known. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī notes that al-Ījī came to the court in Sulṭaniyya in 706 and caught the attention of the vizier, subsequently entering into his service. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī writes that al-Ījī followed Rashīd al-Dīn’s cues and manners, until he became addicted to the consumption of wine. He would “*yatafalsafu*” (as Ibn al-Fuwaṭī has it) and stopped following Muḥammad’s *sharī‘a*. Rashīd al-Dīn was blamed for the corruption of al-Ījī’s morality. *Majma‘ al-ādāb*, vol. 1, 411-12. This story might be a fabrication as Rashīd al-Dīn’s son Ghiyāth al-Dīn was likely involved in al-Ījī’s appointment as chief Ilkhanid Qāḍī under Abū Sa‘īd. J. van Ess, “al-Ījī,” *El<sup>2</sup>*. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed February 1, 2016. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-idji-SIM\\_3486](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-idji-SIM_3486). Al-Ījī also enthusiastically “endorsed” Rashīd al-Dīn’s Qur’ān commentary in *Kitāb al-tawḍīḥāt*. See Dorothea Krawulsky, *Mongol Ilkhāns*, 90. Morrison notes that in her 2009 Habilitationsschrift (*The Post-Avicennian Philosophical Tradition and Islamic Orthodoxy*), Heidrun Eichner shows how late Ilkhanid period works of *kalām* were influenced by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s *al-Mulakhkhas fī al-ḥikma*, (205). Sabra noted a relationship between the organization of *al-Mawāqif* and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa’l-muta’akhhirīn* (15-17). Ayman Shihadeh in his study of al-Rāzī, too, briefly notes that al-Ījī heavily relied on the latter’s works. Ayman Shihadeh, “From al-Ghazāī to al-Rāzī: 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century developments in Muslim philosophical

the proclamation of the belief in the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*) is rationally explained through the Mongol demand for the absolute obedience to Chinggisid rule.<sup>475</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn repeatedly invokes in his theological writings the proverb *kalām al-mulūk mulūk al-kalām* (“The words of kings are the kings of words”) in order to depict Öljeitü’s insight as divinely originated and argue for his *kalām*-infused rule.<sup>476</sup>

This chapter focuses on Rashīd al-Dīn’s largely neglected textual legacy, his *kalām*-oriented compendia of miscellaneous treatises.<sup>477</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn identifies his miscellanea as belonging to the fields of “theological, metaphysical and scientific” (*shar‘iyyāt, ḥikmiyyāt, ‘ilmīyyāt*) writing.<sup>478</sup> Birgitt Hoffmann suggests that one reason why these treatises have remained little studied is that “in contrast to his well-conceived and structured *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, the theological, philosophical and medical writings are less coherent”.<sup>479</sup> However, a closer look

---

theology,” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15 (2005): 175 (footnote 131). Another scholar who was greatly influenced by al-Rāzī’s Qur’ānic exegesis and his Ash‘arite *kalām* is the Shi‘ite Qur’ānic exegetist and author of scientific astronomical work Nizām al-Dīn al-Nīsābūrī (d. c. 1330), who, too, was present at the Ilkhanid court from the year 1305. The latter’s patron was Rashīd al-Dīn’s rival and vizier Sāvajī. Nevertheless, Nīsābūrī dedicated a work to one of Rashīd al-Dīn’s sons and appears as one of the Rashīd al-Dīn’s debaters in Rashīd al-Dīn’s *As‘ila va ajviba*. On the politics of patronage of scientific works at the Ilkhanid court and its relationship to the rivalry between two viziers, see Robert G. Morrison, *Islam and Science: the intellectual career of Nizām al-Dīn al-Nīsābūrī* (New York, 2007), 37ff. We should consider al-Ījī’s and al-Nīsābūrī’s reliance on al-Rāzī as an indication of the great influence of al-Rāzī on the intellectual circles of Rashīd al-Dīn.

<sup>475</sup> For example, *Bayān al-ḥaqā‘iq*, 127. In other words, Chinggisidness becomes an expression of Islamic monotheism. This relationship between Mongol demand for absolute obedience and monotheism is also found in the letters of the Mongol khans to European rulers. In the letter from Möngke to Louis IX it is stated that: “in Heaven there is only one eternal God; on earth there is only one lord, Chinggis Khan.” See Amitai, *Holy War*, 45.

<sup>476</sup> “Since the wise/rational-one (*‘āqil*) never forgets that ‘the words of the kings are the kings of the words,’ which originates from the source [the *ḥadīth*] ‘The hearts of the kings are the treasuries of God.’” Rashīd al-Dīn, *As‘ila va ajviba-yi rashīdī*, edited by R. Sha‘bānī (Islamabad, 1993), 416. See also Pfeiffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 96 (footnote 95). It is, furthermore, possible to see in Rashīd al-Dīn’s *kalām*-infused presentation of Öljeitü’s kingship an additional step in the Islamization of the Persian-Indian tradition of statecraft offering further Islamic grounding for a growing claim to a close affinity between prophethood and kingship (see chapter two).

<sup>477</sup> The works in questions are part of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *magnum opus*, the *Jāmi‘ al-taṣānīf al-Rashīdī* including the four works that comprise his *al-Majmū‘a al-Rashīdiyya: Kitāb al-tawḍīḥāt* (1304-6), *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr* (1304-6), *Kitāb al-sultāniyya* (1307-8), and *Laṭā‘if al-ḥaqā‘iq* (1307-8); and his *Bayān al-ḥaqā‘iq* (1309-10). An additional work is the *Kitāb al-as‘ila wa‘l-ajviba*, which is not part of the *Jāmi‘ al-taṣānīf*. For the dating of the works, see Kamola, 205ff., 285-7. For description of these works, see also Josef Van Ess, *Der Wesir und seine Gelehrten* (Wiesbaden, 1981), 12-21; and Krawulsky, 77-86.

<sup>478</sup> Hoffman, “Speaking about oneself,” 3.

<sup>479</sup> Hoffmann argues that “they are in fact anthologies of independent treatises with a high proportion of recurrent topics and redundant argumentation.” Hoffmann, “Speaking about oneself,” 8. In addition, a number of the vizier’s



at the vizier's Qur'ānic exegesis and theological treatises reveals that Rashīd al-Dīn identified with the aims of the Ash'arite *mutakallimūn* in promoting the interpretation of "the content of the Islamic revelation" as a "rationally-based doctrine".<sup>480</sup>

The vizier situates himself in his theological writing alongside, if not "on a par with" the great Ash'arite theologians and *mujaddids* (centennial renewers) al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī.<sup>481</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn particularly draws on al-Rāzī's influential synthesis of *kalām* and *falsafa* (below).<sup>482</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn's (post-Rāzī) *kalām*-informed approach is discernable in the statements he makes

---

theological works have only recently been edited and published. One exception to the general disregard of these works is Krawulsky's discussion of the vizier's approach to *Jihād* and abrogation in his Qur'ānic interpretation in *Kitāb al-tawdīhāt*. Krawulsky, 87-99.

<sup>480</sup> Sabra, 11. See, for example, Rashīd al-Dīn's treatise on *Sharḥ-i 'ulūm-i ma' aqūl va-manqūl* in *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*, where he argues for the conformity of the transmitted knowledge (the scriptural canon), that is, the Qur'ān, the words of the Prophet, and the followers, with the rational ("furthermore, the transmitted knowledge is the manifestation and the purest of the rationalistic sciences"). In this treatise, he presents his anti-*taqlīd* stance. *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*, 401-402. Elsewhere, Rashīd al-Dīn claims that "the best Jihad" and the greatest support for Islam is removing the misled and corrupted beliefs of different groups (for example, in matter of the afterlife and resurrection) through rational and scriptural/transmitted proofs. *As'ila va ajviba-yi rashīdī*, 5. On Rashīd al-Dīn's reliance on al-Rāzī's methods of rational exegesis, see Krawulsky's note. Krawulsky, 91. On al-Rāzī's reconciliation of reason and the content of scripture, see Jaffer, *Rāzī*, 84ff. Mamluk authors accused the vizier of distorting the meaning of the Qur'ān by basing his Qur'ān commentary on philosophy. As we shall, this accusation is not far from the truth as the vizier followed closely al-Rāzī. Chipman, 121.

<sup>481</sup> Felix Klein-Franke, "Rashīd al-Dīn's self-defense through his commenting on al-Ghazālī's 'Reply to the opponents of the 'Proof of Islam', ' A philosophical interpretation of the Koranic expression 'al-amāna', " *Le Muséon* 115/1-2 (2002): 199-214; Hoffmann, "Speaking about oneself," 11; Kamola, 209-212. On his own "reputation" as a *mujaddid*, see below.

<sup>482</sup> Shihadeh observes a gradual development in al-Rāzī's works, from a primarily *kalām* outlook and critical stance on philosophy, towards a rich synthesis of arguments and views from both *kalām* and *falsafa*, and finally, away from an apologetic *kalām* perspective to a *falsafī*-inspired adoption of a theory of human perfection, on which, I argue, Rashīd al-Dīn draws for his philosophical-theological explanation of sacred kingship. Shihadeh, "From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī," 70-77. Tariq Jaffer, on the other hand, argues that al-Rāzī adopted the Mu'tazilite conception of "human reasoning as an autonomous source of religious knowledge" and their practices of figurative and allegorical interpretation of the Qur'ān (*ta'wīl*) and prophetic traditions ("upgraded [...] by grounding it in Avicennian philosophical resources") with the aim of transferring "philosophical concepts and methods across disciplinary boundaries." Jaffer finds that al-Rāzī used *kalām* as an intermediary in his project of "importing philosophical concepts and methods into Qur'ānic exegesis" and thus, raising Ash'arism "to higher philosophical standards." Jaffer, 54-83. In spite of his incorporation of Mu'tazilite (as well as Sufī) conceptions and methods and his oscillation between *kalām* and *falsafa* (or merging of the two), it seems that later authors continued to identify al-Rāzī's contribution within the domains of *kalām* (al-Ījī, for example, whom Shihadeh notes to have synthesized al-Rāzī's philosophical and *kalām* oriented works). For our own purposes here, it might be significant that Rashīd al-Dīn appears to have identified al-Rāzī as one of the later *mutakallimūn*, whom the Ilkhanid vizier highly regarded. See Rashīd al-Dīn's treatise on *Tahqīq-i mas'ala-yi jabr va-qadr* in *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, ed. Hāshim Rajabzāda (Terhan, 1391 [2013]), 200.



throughout his writings,<sup>483</sup> in the content he addresses in his theological treatises,<sup>484</sup> and his argumentative style. This later aspect is also related to the fact that his discussions are depicted as the vizier's responses to questions that were presented to him by religious scholars and members of the educated elite (including, on a number of occasions, Buddhists and Christians) or

---

<sup>483</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn argues, for example, for the superior rank of the *mutakallimūn* “who are the *ḥukamā-yi Islām* and argue that the rational (*m'aqūl*) matches that which is transmitted (*manqūl*), since it [reason/*kalām*] does not uncover defect in the transmitted knowledge (*naql*), but to the contrary, it strengthens it.” Below them is the rank of those who follow the philosophers and learn their books, and follow their rules, some of which are contrary to the *sharī'a*. Further beneath these two groups (of the *ḥukamā*) are the *'ulamā* and *fuḥhā* (the traditionalists), who do not study the rationalistic texts (*m'aqūlāt*, philosophy or theology), and follow the texts (*nuṣūs*), and finally, the commoners who blindly follow (*taqlīd*) the principles of religion. *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*, 353-54. In this taxonomy of the Muslim learnt elite, the vizier clearly self-identifies with the first group of the *mutakallimūn*, and shows his hostility towards *taqlīd*, a theme repeated throughout his works (the priority of reason and knowledge rooted in reason). A different example is found in his praises of Ghazan in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, where he states that the Ilkhan Ghazan, in spite of his accomplishments and perfection in “every imaginable science,” did not “fall prey to pride” and repeatedly said that “the essence/purest (*khuālaṣa*) of the sciences is theology/science of divinity (*ilāhiyyāt*); the object in learning other sciences and crafts is to pronounce the name of perfection (*kamāliyyat*) over it [theology, that is, “to top it off”]. Not knowing is imperfection. Therefore, one must know something about everything in order not to be imperfect [...] He [the Ilkhan] is even now engaged in teaching and learning.” Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1340-41; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 668-69. Rashīd al-Dīn appears to be placing in the Ilkhan's mouth a statement that reflects al-Rāzī: Shihadeh notes that al-Rāzī considered in his philosophical-theological works that “the route to human perfection [...] involve[s] only those questions related to God's existence, His attributes and acts, including creation, prophecy, and the afterlife, constituting what al-Rāzī terms the ‘science of divinity-proper’ (*al-ilāhiyyāt al-maḥḍa*). The great overlap between these topics and those of *kalām* seems to have determined the nature of al-Rāzī's synthesis [...]” Shihadeh, “From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī,” 177. Rashīd al-Dīn's opposition to the *falsafa* can be gleaned from the endowment deed for his *Rub 'i Rashīdī*, where he barred the teaching of philosophy and those interested in engaging with it from the madrasas he endowed in the *Rub 'i Rashīdī*. Rashīd al-Dīn was also “unsympathetic” towards astronomy. Morrison, *Islam and Science*, 39-40.

<sup>484</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn's *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, for example, covers much of the same topics covered by the sixth part of the 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's (d. 1355) *al-Mawāqif*, which is considered the fullest example of the fourteenth century expression of *kalām* (above): “matters of tradition (*sam'īyyāt*): prophecy, prophetic miracles, angels, holy men, resurrection, divine punishment and reward, repentance, intercession and forgiveness, the meaning of faith and the nature of unbelief.” In al-Ījī's work, an additional sub-section is devoted to the leadership of the community. Sabra, 16-17. Klein-Franke had also observed that the questions Rashīd al-Dīn was made to answer in *As'ila wa ajwiba* “can be classified into two classes: questions which concern philosophical and scientific problems and questions which point to apparent inconsistencies that appear in the holy scriptures, i.e. contradictions within one and the same Koranic verse (a), between two Koranic verses (b), between Koranic verse and a dictum of the Prophet Muḥammad (c), and in a Prophetic tradition itself (d).” Felix Klein-Franke, “The relation between knowledge and belief in Islam. Annotations to Rashīd al-Dīn's ‘Book of questions and answers’,” *Le Muséon* 113/1-2 (2000): 205-19. Furthermore, the goals of Rashīd al-Dīn's theological treatises often appear to be the rational explication of the principles of the faith and the refutation of deviant convictions and doctrines. A more thorough study of the vizier's theological writing and treatises on *tafsīr*, which is beyond the scope of this study, would give us a better understanding of the extent to which Rashīd al-Dīn was influenced by al-Rāzī and furthermore, the former's place in the debates over *kalām* in the fourteenth century, especially in light of the role of Shī'ī scholars at the court. Morrison, for example, has noted that the vizier's *Epistle of Astronomy in al-As'ila wa'l-ajwiba* draws on al-Rāzī's *tafsīr*. Morrison, *Islam and Science*, 40, 207 (footnote 33).

by the Ilkhan Öljeitü himself during court audiences and debates.<sup>485</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn's choice of a *kalām* approach matches the competitive court environment in which the vizier sought to advance himself and subsequently retain his position. Through their polemical engagement and dialectical argumentative tone, Rashīd al-Dīn's works are thus closer to the "original" meaning of *kalām* as a means of elucidating and defending the tenets of the faith against the deniers and unbelievers.<sup>486</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn's theological compendium gives visibility to the court debate as central institution where religious interlocutors, mainly Buddhists, Jews and Sunnī and Shī'ī Muslims rivaled for access and influence.<sup>487</sup> I argue that they did so by demonstrating the congruency of Buddhist, Muslim or other religio-political models, with the notion of the Chinggisid ruler's intellect as a source of law and divine wisdom, and with the ideal of the sacrality of the Chinggisid bloodline and state project. Court disputations were an ongoing and well-established tradition both in the Muslim world and at Eurasian courts, where it was considered essential for the display of kingship. At the court of Öljeitü and more generally at the Mongol courts, however, the institution of the court debate was more than "a channel and stage for royal patronage" or a setting for acquiring knowledge and providing entertainment and amusement to the ruler and his court.<sup>488</sup> Court disputations at Öljeitü's court were sites of interpretive contests

---

<sup>485</sup> See his introduction to *Laṭā'if al-ḥaqā'iq*, where he discusses the nature and manner of debates, the characters of those who question him, and his own civility (and gratitude) when answering his contenders. This treatise carries a highly apologetic tone. *Laṭā'if al-ḥaqā'iq*, ed. Ghulām Riḍā Ṭāhir (Tehran, 2535 [1976-77]), 1-25.

<sup>486</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn, indeed, employs dialectical arguments and syllogisms throughout his refutations of transmigration. Hanne Schönig, "Kalam," *Brill's New Pauly*. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed February 23, 2016. <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/kalam-e605450>; L. Gardet.

"'Ilm al-Kalām," *Et*<sup>2</sup>. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed February 23, 2016.

[http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ilm-al-kalam-COM\\_0366](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ilm-al-kalam-COM_0366).

<sup>487</sup> See chapter two.

<sup>488</sup> Lane, "Intellectual jousting," 235-47; Corinne Lefèvre, "the *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī* (1608-11): Dialogue and Asiatic otherness at the Mughal court," *JESHO* 55 (2012): 260.

between religious interlocutors and cultural brokers and spaces of cross-cultural negotiation and contestation.

Reading Rashīd al-Dīn's theological writing through the contextual lens of the Ilkhanid court debate invites us also to pay closer attention to how this corpus of theological writings was interlinked with the vizier's improvisations, experimentations and strategic claims as a cultural mediator and an astute political player. I argue that Rashīd al-Dīn's theological outlook was informed by the court disputations and interpretive contests that took place at the courts of Arghun and his son Öljeitü. I explore Rashīd al-Dīn's works on the Dharma and his refutations of the Buddhist belief in reincarnation, and draw attention to his responses to the growing presence of Shī'ī clergy at the court of Öljeitü, following the Ilkhan's conversion to Shī'ism in 1309. In both instances, Rashīd al-Dīn utilizes al-Rāzī's hierarchy of sacred souls to advocate for an alternative (Islamic and Sunnī) theological model that could compete with the way that Buddhism and/or Shī'ism were able to negotiate and reaffirm Mongol conceptions of Chinggisid sacral kingship and continuity. It would be a mistake, however, to define this interpretive contests solely as inter-ecumenical (Islam versus Buddhism) or inter-confessional (Shī'ism versus Sunnism), and ignore their deeply personal dimensions. Rashīd al-Dīn strategically uses his theological conceptualization of Chinggisid authority to claim to himself the exclusive position of Öljeitü's chief intermediary in an environment dominated by inter-religious, inter-sectarian and inter-personal power struggles.

Rashīd al-Dīn presents Öljeitü at these court debates and audiences not as a passive observant or silent arbiter but as an active disputer claiming his own superior authority in

resolving theological disputes, in accordance with his divinely inspired reason.<sup>489</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn repeatedly claims that the Ilkhan’s brilliant questions and insightful theological speculations guided himself and other scholars to new and better revelations and truths. Rashīd al-Dīn’s “Öljeitü” conceives of his own superior “intuited wisdom” as worth recording and explaining. According to the vizier, he was repeatedly ordered to record his patron’s observations and use them as a basis for developing new theological arguments.

Rashīd al-Dīn’s experimentations with the political languages of Islam was not the product of his own fascination, but rather part of a historical context of the Ilkhanid court and court disputations, where religious interlocutors and members of the Mongol elite investigated, negotiated, contested and redefined the relationship between Mongol notions of sacral kingship and Islamic doctrinal and cosmological convictions.

### **The signs of the Şāhib-Qirān King: Nascent Formulations of Öljeitü’s Sacral Kingship in *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya***

The introduction (*fātiḥa*) to Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Kitāb (Risālat) al-sulṭāniyya fī marātib al-nabawiyya*<sup>490</sup> contains one of the earliest, and possibly most extensive attempts of the vizier to conceptualize and articulate Öljeitü’s unique kingly rank, one that also precedes his later arguments on the topic. Furthermore, it demonstrates how Rashīd al-Dīn worked towards interpreting and mediating the Ilkhanid understanding of the ruler’s sacred persona and his exceptional status. It is, therefore, worthwhile providing an outline of the vizier’s chief arguments in the introduction to *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* as a basis for our subsequent discussion of the main strands of Rashīd al-Dīn’s construction of Öljeitü’s sacred persona.

---

<sup>489</sup> In the case of the Mughal court, Corinne Lefèvre also points out that: “in the hand of the emperor, dialogue was a powerful didactic tool that aimed to convince his interlocutors of his superiority, both temporal and spiritual.” Lefèvre, 262.

<sup>490</sup> For the full title of the work, see *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, ff. 117v-118r.

The work, also known as *Fawā'id al-sulṭāniyya* and *Mabāḥith al-sulṭāniyya*,<sup>491</sup> is primarily devoted to a discussion of prophetic miracles and revelation in the Muslim tradition, for example, the distinction between *wahy* (revelation) and *ilhām* (inspiration), and the differences between the ranks and types of prophets (*nabī*, prophet, *ūlū al-'azm*, prophets who establish a law (*sharī'a*), and *rasūl*, messenger), saints, and the perfect individuals (*arbāb-i kamālāt*).<sup>492</sup> The treatise concludes with a discussion of reward and punishment and the fate of the individual's soul in heaven or hell, as well as a limited discussion of the issue of the gathering of the bodies on the Day of Judgment, a topic that the vizier addresses more extensively elsewhere.<sup>493</sup>

The core treatise (*aṣl*) on prophethood and revelation is followed by two additional segments (*dhayl-i Kitāb-i sulṭāniyya*). The first is Rashīd al-Dīn's *Risālat Nafā'is al-afkār* (The Precious Thoughts, see below), in which the vizier answers questions on the issues of the afterlife and resurrection.<sup>494</sup> The *Nafā'is al-afkār* is presented as a sequel to an earlier treatise Rashīd al-Dīn composed on “The debates that Muslims and the other of People of the Book [Jews?] have with the people of transmigration (*ahl-i tanāsukh*) and some of the people who deny the gathering of the bodies (*ḥashr-i ajsād*) [on the day of resurrection]” found in his *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr* (below). The second text is a detailed list of the prophets and their descendants, categorized according to their rank, followed by the Prophet Muḥammad, the first four caliphs, a list of the Prophet's companions (similarly categorized according to rank), the remaining caliphs (including the Fāṭimid caliphs), and famous religious scholars (*ulamā' va-mashāyikh*). This

---

<sup>491</sup> For a short description of the work and its manuscripts in Persian and Arabic (translation), see Van Ess, *Der Wesir*, 17-19. I have used the Persian manuscript, Istanbul Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi Ms. 3415. To date, I was unable to access the Paris manuscript of the work.

<sup>492</sup> *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, ff. 147v-290r.

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*, ff. 290v-320r.

<sup>494</sup> The order of these two segments depend on the manuscripts. See Van Ess, *Der Wesir*, 18-19.

information is, subsequently, also provided in the format of a genealogical tree (*mushajjar*), which Evrim Binbaş has recently discussed.<sup>495</sup>

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* originated in a wager (*girav*) that the Ilkhan Öljeitü made with a number of unidentified religious scholars. Rashīd al-Dīn reports that on Wednesday the ninth of Ramaḍān 706 (/March 14 1307), a number of scholars gathered at Gāvbarī, near Mūghān, for an audience with Öljeitü,<sup>496</sup> and were questioned by the Ilkhan. Concerned, at first, with the relationship between new, contemporaneous interpretations of the Qur'an (*tafsīr* and *ta`wīl*) and earlier interpretations, Öljeitü's interrogation soon turned to the subject of prophethood in the Islamic tradition. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the Ilkhan, who was interested in learning the most correct doctrine (*i`tiqād*), asked about the number and identity of the messenger prophets, about the differences between messengers and non-messenger prophets, and about the mechanisms of revelation, mission and prophethood. Finally, Öljeitü also inquired why the Prophet Muḥammad was considered the most perfect from amongst the prophets.

The vizier writes that one of the scholars responded with an explanation that the difference between prophets and messengers is that prophets receive revelation without the mediation (*bī-vāsiṭah*) of angels, whereas messengers receive revelation through angels (like the Prophet Muḥammad). Öljeitü responded by asking what made mediation or the lack of mediation better. According to Rashīd al-Dīn's account, Öljeitü's question caught the scholars off guard and they requested time to further consider the matter. Öljeitü, subsequently, issued an edict stipulating the scholars to write an answer to this question together with the vizier Sa'd al-Dīn Sāvajī, and asserting that he himself will also consider this question and write an answer together

---

<sup>495</sup> *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, ff. 370r-444v. On the genealogical tree see discussion by Binbaş who refers to it as the *shu`ab-i anbiyā`*, Ilker Evrim Binbaş, "Structure and function of the genealogical tree in Islamic historiography (1200-1500)," in *Horizons of the World*, 494-99.

<sup>496</sup> *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, ff. 147v- 150r. Rashīd al-Dīn states that the group came together for the *tāgishmishi* (an interview) with the Ilkhan.

with the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn. According to the terms of wager, if the scholars' answer would be found to be superior to answer by Öljeitü and Rashīd al-Dīn, the Ilkhan would hand them an honorary robe (*jāma*); yet, the scholars would be obliged to give the Ilkhan a robe instead if they loose. After the conditions of the wager were set, Rashīd al-Dīn explains that he sat down to write an answer to the Ilkhan's questions noting that while he himself (Rashīd al-Dīn) lacked official training in theology and philosophy, and could not compete with the superior knowledge of the scholars, he wrote down that which God had brought to his mind. Rashīd al-Dīn, thus, positions the *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* in the historical context of courtly competitions and royal interrogations, in which the Mongol ruler is presented as seeking to take an active role.

Rashīd al-Dīn prefaced this discussion of prophethood and revelation in *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* with an extensive *fātiḥa*, in which he elaborated the main proofs (*barāhīn*) of Öljeitü's unique status of exceptional kingship, with a focus on his childhood and early years of rule. The first sign the vizier lists as proof of the praiseworthy qualities (*akhlāq-i ḥamīda va-ṣifāt-i pasandīda*) of the Ilkhan, “whose outside and insides are lit by the divine lights (*anvār-i ilahī*),” is the prophetic tradition, according to which “God will send to this community at the turn/on the eve of every century a person who will strengthen its religion” (*inna allāh yab'ath li-hadhihi al-ummah 'alā ra's kull mi'a sana man yuqawwī lahā amr dīnihā*).

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the tradition confirms Öljeitü's perfect rank (*martaba-yi kamāl*) “since it is clear that prior to him, for a period of a hundred years, there was no one who strengthened the religion of Islam (*muqavvī az an dīn-i Islām*), but a group of unbelievers from the idol worshipers and the people of other faiths (*adyān va-milal*), whose religion was abrogated, began making a useless effort (*ḥarakat al-madhbūh*) [literally: the movement of the slaughtered], and they rebuilt their places of worship, which had been destroyed, and during this

hundred years, day after day, they were strengthened” until “all the traces of these unbelievers were effaced with the ray of light of the sun-faced” Öljeitü. Rashīd al-Dīn explains that Öljeitü’s enthronement was marked by a remarkable increase in the numbers of Mongol converts to Islam, and gives the example of the great Qa’an’s idol-worshipping emissaries residing in Ilkhanid Iran, who chose to convert to Islam knowing that they would be reproached and punished for this when they return to the Qa’an’s court in Yuan China.

The prophetic tradition Rashīd al-Dīn refers to is the *mujaddid* (the centennial renewer) tradition, according to which the Prophet said “God will send to this community at the turn/on the eve of every century a person who will renew its religion.” Rashīd al-Dīn, however, replaces the verb *yujaddid* (renew) with *yuqawwī* (strengthen), a choice that echoes the Ilkhanid court historian Qāshānī’s earlier salvific conversion narrative of Öljeitü’s brother and precursor, the Ilkhan Ghazan, which appears in one of the iterations of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. As discussed in the previous chapter, Qāshānī uses Ghazan’s conversion narrative to depict the Ilkhan as a cyclical reformer-savior king. He writes that the amir Nawrūz told Ghazan that “it is reported from the religious scholars, the astrologers and the composers of almanacs that a great king was to appear around the year 690 (/1291) and this king was to strengthen the religion of Islam, and the Muslims, who have been weakened were to be revived and renewed through his guidance [...] Time and again it has come to the mind of this slave that he [this king] is Ghazan Khan.”

Both Qāshānī and Rashīd al-Dīn use the same term (*muqavvī-yi dīn-i Islām*) to identify this prophesied king. As we saw in chapter three, Qāshānī’s conversion narrative combines several “salvific rhythms” (Iranian cycles of dynastic and moral decay and revitalization, Islamic visions of recurrent degeneration and reform, and Muslim “eschatological” traditions of periodic



cycles of corruption and restoration), but does not appear to indicate that Qāshānī had conceived of Ghazan in terms of a *mujaddid* king, a title we find appropriated by rulers, mainly from the Timurid era (fifteenth century) onwards.<sup>497</sup> Our investigation determined that in the Ilkhanid period, the term *mujaddid* was still exclusively used for the scholarly ranks. Rashīd al-Dīn used the earlier account by Qāshānī to outline a new conversion account for Ghazan, one focused on the Ilkhan’s pre-conversion inclinations towards Islam and monotheism. This account was aligned with the vizier’s broader project of reversion of the Mongols in the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*: the presentation of monotheism as an ancestral belief of the “monotheist” Mongols (*muvaḥḥidān*). Qāshānī’s salvific account of Nawrūz’s “prediction” of the Ilkhan’s conversion and restoration of the Muslim community was redacted in Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative, perhaps also due to this later version’s critical stance towards the amir Nawrūz.

However, in his *Kitāb al-sultāniyya*, the vizier repurposes Qāshānī’s providential explanation of Ghazan’s conversion and attributes it to the latter’s brother and heir. Furthermore, Rashīd al-Dīn grounds the “prophecy” in a more formidable tradition, albeit with a significant change: the prophet announces not the *renewal* of the religion each century, but the *strengthening* of the religion. This subtle, yet significant change might have been determined by an additional consideration, as Rashīd al-Dīn himself was considered by a number of his contemporaries as the *mujaddid* of the eighth Hijri century.<sup>498</sup> It is worth noting that this significant change notwithstanding, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first instance the *mujaddid* tradition is attributed to a ruler.

---

<sup>497</sup> See our earlier discussion on the title of *Mujaddid* in chapter three, as well as chapter five.

<sup>498</sup> For example, Vaṣṣāf, 539.

The second proof of Öljeitü's "perfect rank" that Rashīd al-Dīn lists in the preface to *Kitāb al-sultāniyya* is the comparison of Öljeitü's childbirth miracle account with the childhood miracles of the prophets. Rashīd al-Dīn explains:

There is no doubt that revelation (*vaḥy*) did not reach any of the messengers (*anbiyā' rasūl*), whose rank is the highest human rank, during their childhood, but [nevertheless] in most cases, extraordinary and rare things originated (*ṣādir*) from them [during childhood]. Although the rank of kings does not reach the rank of prophethood, nonetheless, in accordance with His order "Obey Allāh, and obey the Messenger, and those in authority from among you (*ūlī al-amr minkum*)" [4:59, "authority verse"], He gave the absolute kings (*muṭlaq pādishāhān*) a relation (*nisbat*) to the prophets and even to Himself [God]. Therefore, there is no doubt that [the kings's] rank can be great, especially, a king who is just, perfect, and wise (*az ūlū al-albāb*).<sup>499</sup>

Not every prince is worthy of being a king [...] Most of them [the princes] perish and die. Since no one knows during the childhood of a prince if God almighty had chosen him for kingship in eternity, all princes appear equal [...] but a prince who will be from amongst the kings in the level of the Ṣāhib-Qirān [kings, Lords of Auspicious Conjunction], and that is – that aside of kingship, he will also have an intimate relationship (*khuṣūṣiyyat*) and closeness to God, and He [God] created him [the Ṣāhib-Qirān king] in eternity in accordance with what He wishes and what He wills so that he [the king] will become the means through which matters become great (*vāsiṭah-yi umūr mu'azzam shavad*), and therefore, the Prophet alluded to him [the Ṣāhib-Qirān prince-king] in his saying "every hundred years [God will send to this community a person who will strengthen its religion]"<sup>500</sup> – the sign of this prince is that the acts that appear from him [during childhood] are in the level of the signs that some of the prophets exhibited during their childhood, until revelation gradually (*bi-tadrīj*) reached them and they became [adult] prophets.

Rashīd al-Dīn proceeds to Öljeitü's miraculous birth story with which this chapter began, and establishes it as paralleling the childhood miracles of Muḥammad, Yūsuf, and Ibrāhīm.<sup>501</sup> Just as

<sup>499</sup> On similar interpretations of the authority verse by advice literature, see chapter two.

<sup>500</sup> As it appears in the beginning of the introduction, "God will send to this community at the turn/on the eve of every century a person who will strengthen its religion" (*inna allāh yab'athu li-hadhihi al-umma 'alā ra's kull mi'a sana man yuqawwī dīnahā*). The tradition originally reads "God will send to this community at the turn/on the eve of every century a person who will renew its religion" (*inna allāh yab'athu li-hadhihi al-umma 'alā ra's kull mi'a sana man yujaddid lahā amr dīnihā*). Rashīd al-Dīn changes *yujaddid* to *yuqawwī*. See my discussion of this below.

<sup>501</sup> For the childhood of prophets and saints, Gottfried Hagen, " 'He never took the path of pastime and play': ideas of childhood in Ottoman hagiography," *cripta Ottomanica et Res Altaicae. Festschrift für Barbara Kellner-Heinkele zu ihrem 60. Geburtstag*, herausgegeben von Ingeborg Hauenschild, Claus Schönig und Peter Zieme (Wiesbaden, 2002), 95-118.

these early signs foresee their later careers as recipients of revelation, so does Öljeitü's birth miracle anticipate the prince's distinct rank as a Şāhib-Qirān.

Rashīd al-Dīn carries out this comparison between the Ilkhan and the prophets into the third indication of Öljeitü's rank. Quoting the phrase "The titles descend from the heavens" (*al-alqāb tanzilu min al-samā*'), the vizier explains that God entrusts an individual, who is divinely aided (*mu'ayyad*), from the moment of his birth with certain attributes, and when they manifest as rare and exceptional things, this individual also receives by divine command a new name (*nāmī*) that would match his new state. Rashīd al-Dīn gives the examples of Ibrahīm, who was first named Abram and later Ibrahīm ("father of the nations in Hebrew"), Ya'qūb (Isrā'īl), and other biblical prophets (and Muḥammad, "who had many titles and names"), but also states that some of the great Şāhib-Qirān kings who were divinely aided (*mu'ayyad min 'ind Allāh*) such as (the Sasanian) Jamshīd, Afrīdūn, Iskandar, Anūshirvān, and Chinggis Khan,<sup>502</sup> who was first named Temūjin, had a new name descend from the sky to match their new state. The vizier points out that Öljeitü was also first named Öljei-Buqa, and later was called Temüder, Kharbanda, Khudābanda and finally, upon his enthronement, due to his blessed feet, Öljeitü Sultan.<sup>503</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn concludes that Öljeitü is a divinely aided monarch, a Şāhib-Qirān ruler, and a miracle worker (*şāhib-i karāmāt*), and sets out to demonstrate this by listing the miracles manifested through Öljeitü.<sup>504</sup> These include Öljeitü's surprising defeat of the armies of the

---

<sup>502</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn explains that his first name was Temūjin, and later, the Khitani title *j'aut-quri*, and then, the title of Chinggis Khan "that is, the great king of the kings since *ching* means one/singular (*vāhid*), and *chinggīz*, a body of water (*jam 'i āb*).” Rashīd al-Dīn seems to support Pelliot's argument that Chinggis Khan's etymology is derived from *Tenkiz* (Turkic for Ocean) and hence in the meaning of Oceanic and universal. See Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 39.

<sup>503</sup> *Kitāb al-sultāniyya*, ff. 122r-123r. On Öljeitü's conversions (his baptism as a Nestorian Christian at the age of 8, and subsequent conversion to Buddhism, followed by his conversion to Islam), Judith Pfeiffer, *Twelver Shī'ism*, 3-4. In Mongolian, Öljeitü means auspicious/blessed (the possessor of good fortune/blessing, *Öljei*). Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkisch und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, 1 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1963), 174.

<sup>504</sup> *Kitāb al-sultāniyya*, f. 124r.

Chagatai Du'a and Qaidu (in 1302) in Khurasan through the prince's "*nūr-i ilhāmī*" in spite of the Central Asian armies' numerical advantage,<sup>505</sup> and another instance where "by the means of his sacred soul (*nafs-i qudsī*)," Öljeitü identified and pointed out to his entourage a thief dressed as a shaykh hiding inside a great crowd assembled at the fortress of Tabriz. Rashīd al-Dīn also attributes to Öljeitü's kingly rank the great peace accord between the Mongol khanates and the end of the Mongo civil war (*fitanhā*) that extended throughout a period of fifty years, even though the Ilkhans had no part in brokering this agreement.<sup>506</sup> Of more miraculous nature is Rashīd al-Dīn's argument that it was due to Öljeitü's sacred persona that the Ilkhanate did not suffer from a rise in food prices in spite of a continuous drought throughout the provinces (*vilāyat*). Furthermore, although Saturn was in the rise during Öljeitü's reign, which according to the astronomers, indicates a rise in food prices, the force of the enlightened soul of Öljeitü blocked the inauspicious influence of Saturn, "which is one of the greatest celestial bodies".<sup>507</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn summarizes this section by arguing that Öljeitü "showed such miracles and states that no Şāhib-Qirān and saint (*valī*) had shown prior to him".<sup>508</sup> According to the vizier, just as prophets and saints only gradually reach their full potential and gain revelation, so does Öljeitü's rank as a Şāhib-Qirān king gradually increase towards perfection. Furthermore, he explains that "this perfection will appear at the age of forty, and after this, the understanding, the knowledge and the wisdom gained in one year [added] could be equal to ten or twenty or more years [of knowledge earned]".<sup>509</sup> Another indication of Öljeitü's growing wisdom is his

---

<sup>505</sup> The invasion was led by Qaidu's son Sarban. Michal Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Surrey, 1997), 60.

<sup>506</sup> Following Qaidu's claim to the title of Qa'an. *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, ff. 129r-130r. Öljeitü and the Ilkhans were not involved in peace negotiations, but were informed of the peace accord in 1304 by the Qa'an's emissaries. Biran, *Qaidu*, *ibid.*

<sup>507</sup> *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, f. 130.

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 132v.

<sup>509</sup> Öljeitü, born in 680 /1281-82, was in his twenties at the time of the vizier's composition of *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*.

exceptional questions (since “the good question is half the knowledge”), “questions and answers that no one before had considered and answered”.<sup>510</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn, furthermore, attributes to the Mongol ruler his own achievements in the field of theology. He claims that the “many perfections” he achieved, including his two works, the *Tawḍīḥāt* and the other is *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, came to him “through (*bi-vāsīṭa*) the ray of the light of his [the Ilkhan’s] life-giving breast and soul”.<sup>511</sup>

The vizier further demonstrates the ability of the ruler Öljeitü to lead others towards perfection through his insightful questions, with the example of the Ilkhan’s question about the priority (*ashraf*) of knowledge or reason. Öljeitü’s question was so unprecedented that “the religious scholars and the wise (*ḥukamā*)<sup>512</sup> [including the vizier] in all the kingdoms were preoccupied with it,” and competed in writing treatises to resolve this question: “they achieved many benefits and subtleties from it, and the benefits of this remain for eternity”.<sup>513</sup> Furthermore, comparing the ignorant to the dead and the knowledgeable to the living, Rashīd al-Dīn claims that, through his internal light and by inspiring knowledge, “the *masīḥ*-like Öljeitü has revived and will revive thousands and thousands of deceased and this is a great miracle (*karāmatī*), [though] one cannot call it prophetic miracles (*mu‘jaz*).”

---

<sup>510</sup> And therefore it has been said, “The words of the kings are the kings of the words” (*kalām al-mulūk mulūk al-kalām*).

<sup>511</sup> “He [Öljeitü] is so perfect that many perfections are achieved by anyone who serves him, and a clear proof and example of this are the states of this slave [Rashīd al-Dīn], who had never before previously penned down any explanation of the truths of the meanings [theology], and through (*bi-vāsīṭa*) the ray of the light of his [the Ilkhan’s] life-giving breast and soul, which is not an exaggeration, since what life could be better than the life of knowledge and perfection [...], the insides of this poor one were enlightened, and he [Rashīd al-Dīn] writes these words and meanings and in clarifying the truths, says a few words, and he [Rashīd al-Dīn] composed two books, one is the *Tawḍīḥāt* and the other is *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr* that have reached and continue to reach the consideration of the great [scholars].” Ibid., f. 132v.

<sup>512</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn uses *ḥukamā* as a title that encompasses both the philosophers (“those who the books of the philosophers”) and the theologians/*mutakallimūn* as both groups employ discursive reasoning and reason. See Rashīd al-Dīn, *As‘ila va-ajviba*, 3.

<sup>513</sup> *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, f. 135r.

Rashīd al-Dīn develops this depiction of Öljeitü as a unique genius whose miraculous, brilliant queries guide the Islamic scholarly community towards uncovering new truths in his next report of his intimate conversation he had with the Ilkhan. Discussing “the insight (*firāsāt*) and inspiration (*ilhām*) that reach his [the Ilkhan’s] blessed mind,” the vizier argues that one should not speak of this with ignorant individuals (*jāhil*) since they will not be able to comprehend, but also that, one cannot conceal this from those capable (*musta‘idd*) of receiving benefit from it. The vizier explains that on one occasion, Öljeitü had secretly (*bi-ṭarīq-i sirr*) confided with Rashīd al-Dīn and told him:

In the past, I would obtain everything by [applying] analogy (*qiyās*) [or syllogism, below] and experience/empirical knowledge (*tajriba*), and now, there is no doubt that this empirical knowledge grows day after day; by these means, things that remain hidden to everyone else become known to me; but, I do not wish to display this, lest some people deny it, and even if people deny it, since I tell them states of each kind that were hidden from others and were recurrently (*mutavātir*) revealed [to me], there is no doubt that they would rely on it and their problems would be resolved.<sup>514</sup>

Öljeitü further relates to Rashīd al-Dīn that he is able to read the minds of his servants at the court “from their appearance (*hay‘at*), states, bearing (forehead, *nāṣiyat*), and their features (*shamā‘il*)” before they start speaking to him. The Ilkhan Öljeitü explains that each individual has fixed signs (*nishān*), which he follows to understand their intentions and their thoughts, and that if he were to repeat those, the wise would know that his understanding is correct.<sup>515</sup> With the promise to reveal these signs to the vizier so that he too would be aware of these secrets, Öljeitü also calls to his presence the great amir Amīr ‘Alī, the commander of the falconers

---

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn similarly ascribes to Ghazan the ability to predict the future (the external appearance of an envoy or prisoner, or that bad or good news were arriving) and links it to his status as a Ṣāhib-Qirān king, who was granted fortune and happiness. The vizier also argues that the Ilkhan was educated in geomancy, horses’ collarbones and teeth reading, and “various fortune-telling (*fāl*) devices practiced by every nation and country.” Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1348-49; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 671-72.

(*qushchiyān*).<sup>516</sup> He repeated his secret to Amīr ‘Alī as well and promised to the two, the Mongol commander and the vizier, that they are the only individuals who know his secret.<sup>517</sup>

Surprised by Öljeitü’s statement, Rashīd al-Dīn notes that while he had never beforehand heard of any individual with such abilities, since the Ilkhan entrusted him with his secret, he felt compelled to respond. Rashīd al-Dīn interprets Öljeitü’s words within an Islamic framework, arguing for the Ilkhan’s combination of saintly and kingly ranks:

None of the prophets, who were subject to revelation (*ṣāhib-i wahy*) and had reached the rank of prophethood, and the saints, who were subject to inspiration (*ṣāhib-i ilhām*) and had reached the rank of miracles (*karāmāt*), had full revelation and inspiration at first, but only gradually, and most of the prophets until they were forty, fifty, sixty and seventy years old did not receive revelation; at the beginning, each of them, either through dreams or in stories and matters that suddenly reached them, and things that they [suddenly] knew, and the capacity (*isti dād*) that was in them was moving them. Now, \_\_\_\_\_ [Öljeitü], may God prolong his reign, in spite of his youth, had preoccupied himself with and devoted most of his time to knowledge and proficiencies (*hunar*), and there was not a single moment without learning, and he is compassionate and just; and the king of Islam, praise be to God, is worthy, and a saint (*vālī*), and a miracle worker. The saints alone have the level of sainthood (*vilāyat*). This [his] rank [of sainthood] is, therefore, proven (?), and it is further proven that [he has] both the rank of sainthood and the rank of the rulers (*ülū al-amrī*); and in spite of his youth, I reached all these meanings that I have comprehended, from \_\_\_\_\_ [Öljeitü], may God prolong his reign.<sup>518</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn concludes, therefore, that Öljeitü shares the rank of the saints, which is proven through his capacity to perform miracles, most significantly, his supramundane knowledge of hidden things, a power still in its infancy.

As will be discussed, Rashīd al-Dīn’s depiction of Öljeitü’s exceptional intellect and aptitude for miraculous feats in *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* integrates two contrasting epistemic schemes following Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. The first is a rationalistic explanation that relies on Avicennian philosophical concepts, and according to it, the Ilkhan possess a unique intellect that enables him

---

<sup>516</sup> He was in Öljeitü’s company since an early age and was regarded highly by the Ilkhan, and a commander of a thousand and son of the great amir Baibuqa *qushchi* (falconer).

<sup>517</sup> *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, f. 135v.

<sup>518</sup> *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, f. 136v.

to acquire, with no effort (but nevertheless through his own superior intellectual capacity), intuitive and theoretical knowledge that is superior to the knowledge acquired through human agents or books. The second is an inspirational model that al-Rāzī assumes through the Sufi-oriented works of al-Ghazālī. According to this scheme, inspirational knowledge is bestowed upon the Ilkhan's soul in the form of light and divine inspiration (*ilhām*).<sup>519</sup>

The first of these two models, the philosophical-rationalistic proved particularly significant to Rashīd al-Dīn's conceptualization of Öljeitü's sacral kingship. The Ilkhan is presented not only as an ultimate philosopher-king, but is also integrated into al-Rāzī's Avicennian model of a hierarchy of human perfection. Rashīd al-Dīn expands al-Rāzī's model to include a new rank of perfect kings, whose souls are nestled alongside the perfect sacred souls of the saints and the prophets. Drawing affinities between the Mongol ruler and the Prophet Muḥammad, Rashīd al-Dīn coopts the Prophet himself to confirm Öljeitü's unique rank. Rashīd al-Dīn, however, ultimately relies on both models (the rational and the inspirational) to mediate the Mongols' own understanding of the Chinggisid ruler's intellect as a source of divine wisdom and law, and as possessing a direct link to God.

### **Hierarchies of Perfect Souls and Öljeitü's Luminous Intellect: Between Rational Intuition and Divine Inspiration**

In the opening treatise to his later *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* (1309-10), Rashīd al-Dīn notes that since he occasionally would repeat before the great scholars and the wise some of the observations he would hear from the Ilkhan Öljeitü, they would often respond in wonder. They asked how it was possible that the Ilkhan, who had never studied any of the sciences or read any of the books, had such a perceptive understanding of the different sciences. Rashīd al-Dīn's

---

<sup>519</sup> Jaffer, 160-68.



answer divides knowledge into two kinds, *'ilm-i fiṭrī*, natural knowledge, and *'ilm-i muḥtasabī*, learnt/acquired knowledge. Man cannot exist without the *'ilm-i fiṭrī* or acquire the *'ilm-i muḥtasabī*. There are many levels of *ilm-i fiṭrī* and the more natural knowledge an individual has, the more learnt knowledge he is able to acquire.<sup>520</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn argues for the superiority of *'ilm-i fiṭrī* over *'ilm-i muḥtasabī*: the teacher of the former is the perfect omnipotent God, while the teacher of the latter is the defective poor servant.<sup>521</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn ridicules the scholars for wondering how knowledge that, is not learnt from books or from human teachers could be superior to acquired knowledge.

The main proof Rashīd al-Dīn presents in this treatise for the superiority of the *'ilm-i fiṭrī*, and therefore, of Öljeitü's untutored wisdom, is the example of the illiterate (*ummī*) Prophet Muḥammad. His rank and perfection were so great that he had no need to learn from anyone (defective individuals, *nāqiṣān*), aside for God.<sup>522</sup> The link between Muḥammad's "gifted" illiteracy to Öljeitü's superior *'ilm-i fiṭrī* is further established in another treatise in Rashīd al-Dīn's *As 'ila va-ajviba* (date Dhū al-Qa'ida 710/April 1311). The treatise is an account of Rashīd al-Dīn's answers to a list of questions formulated by the Ilkhan during one Friday audience, when the vizier was absent due to medical reasons.<sup>523</sup> According to the vizier, none of the scholars present at Öljeitü's audience was able to answer the Ilkhan's questions, and therefore, the Shī'ī scholar Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥillī (682-771/1283-1369), son of the Imāmi jurist and theologian

---

<sup>520</sup> The vizier links the existence of different levels of natural knowledge to the Peripatetic notion of human capability (*musta'idd/isti'dād*) noting that "all the distinctions/gradation (*tafāvut*) in perfection in people, from the prophet to the common, are in this manner."

<sup>521</sup> "Who even if it can be imagined that he, too, has in him perfection, it is like a drop or less than a drop of water in an ocean."

<sup>522</sup> *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*, 83-5.

<sup>523</sup> This particular treatise is not found in the published edition of the work (*As 'ila va-ajviba-yi rashīdī*, edited by R. Sha'bānī, Islamabad, 1993), but in an unpublished Ayasofya manuscript. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Kitāb al-as 'ila wa'l-ajviba al-rashīdiyya b'il-fārisiyya* (MS Ayasofya, No. 2180), fol. 33-34, 37-40.

‘Allāma al-Ḥillī (648/1250-726/1325),<sup>524</sup> suggested they convey Öljeitü’s questions to the vizier.<sup>525</sup>

According to the vizier, Öljeitü’s first question was concerned with the prophetic *ḥadīth* “poverty is my pride” (*al-faqr fakhrī*). The Ilkhan commented that “there is no doubt that wealth is better than poverty, and yet, there is also no doubt that the Prophet’s words are true.” Rashīd al-Dīn starts his answer by explaining that due to the abbreviated nature of the Ilkhan’s comment and, moreover, that his comment was not formed as a question, no one aside for Rashīd al-Dīn was able to comprehend the true meaning of Öljeitü’s comment. Rashīd al-Dīn juxtaposes the Prophet’s poverty with *‘ilm-i fīṭrī*, and wealth with *‘ilm-i muktasabī*, knowledge that is physically gained through learning and hard work. Rashīd al-Dīn argues that what the Ilkhan Öljeitü had perceived through his “internal light” was that, the Prophet had prided himself as being set apart from the rest of mankind for his absolute human perfection (*muṭlaqan kamāl-i insānī*). He explains:

The greater natural knowledge one has, he has less of a need for exhorting himself with physical learning (*bī-vāsīṭah-yi badan*), which is the acquired knowledge (*‘ilm-i muktasabī*), and in accordance with his saying “over every possessor of knowledge, there is one who is more knowing” (*wa-fawqa kull dhī ‘ilm ‘alīm*, Surat Yūsuf, 76), they [people] have great many ranks [of knowledge], and there is no doubt that since their states in this world are finite (*mutanāhī*), there is an end to human perfection; therefore, there is necessarily an individual in whom human natural knowledge (*‘ilm-i fīṭrī-yi insānī*) reaches its end [perfection]. The attribute of this individual is that he could have no need

---

<sup>524</sup> Van Ess, *Der Wesir*, 47-48. According to the librarian Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥillī was present at the Ilkhan’s court from 710/1310-11. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Majma‘ al-ādāb*, 3, 134-135. ‘Allāma al-Ḥillī participated in a number of discussions with the vizier and even raised two questions before the vizier on one occasion. His name also appears on a list of recipients of gifts from the Ilkhan. Sabine Schmidtke, “Ḥelli, Ḥasan b. Yusof b. Moṭahhar,” *Elr*. Accessed March 20, 2016. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/helli-hasan-b-yusof-b-motahhar>. On the alleged roles of ‘Allāma al-Ḥillī and his son in converting Öljeitü to Shī‘ism in the later (mostly Safavi) accounts of the Ilkhan’s conversion, Pfeiffer, *Twelver Shī‘ism*, 11-13.

<sup>525</sup> The notion that the vizier alone was capable of answering Öljeitü’s questions, which eluded others at the court, is a common feature of the vizier’s writings. See Kamola, 216, and discussion below. Similarly, Rashīd al-Dīn states that Ghazan amazed the learnt and philosophers who gathered at court with his questions. He notes that “although he spoke in the idiom (*iṣṭilāḥ*) of the Mongols, and not everyone immediately understood, nonetheless when what he said was repeated and interpreted, some understood and many did not comprehend.” Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1337; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 667.

whatsoever for acquired knowledge, and since he is free from it, he is also free from perfecting himself through his body.<sup>526</sup> As this can be the attribute and rank of finality (*martaba-yi khātimīyyat*) [...] there is no doubt that absolute human perfection (*muṭlaqan kamāl-i insānī*) was sealed with the Seal of the Prophets [...]<sup>527</sup>

These passages in Rashīd al-Dīn's *As 'ila va-ajviba* and *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* betray the vizier's appropriation of key concepts from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210). As Tariq Jaffer has recently demonstrated, al-Rāzī draws in his commentaries, most notably, his Qur'ān exegesis, and works on *kalām* (theology) and *falsafa* (philosophy), on core ideas of Aristotelian-Avicennian philosophy and Mu'tazilism, and naturalized them into Sunnī theology with the aim of setting Sunnī exegesis on rational foundations.<sup>528</sup> In his theorization of prophethood, Rashīd al-Dīn draws on al-Rāzī's construction of a "teleological model of prophecy that assumes key Avicennian principles".<sup>529</sup>

In his argument for the necessity of prophethood, al-Rāzī too adopted the Avicennian principle that if a human attribute is found in deprivation, by necessity it must also exist in perfection. Thus, al-Rāzī foregrounds his argument for the existence of prophethood in a "hierarchy of human perfection". Al-Rāzī argues for the unequal distribution of the intellect's capacity to achieve theoretical knowledge.<sup>530</sup> Ayman Shihadeh examines how al-Rāzī delineates a "hierarchy of human souls according to their theoretical perfection," in which the highest levels

---

<sup>526</sup> Shihadeh, *The Teleological Ethics of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Leiden, 2006), 124: "in this, he follows Ibn Sina, who maintains that the purpose of the soul's attachment to matter, and of its having a practical intellect, is the perfection of its theoretical aspect, which alone leads to happiness."

<sup>527</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn presents himself also, in parallel to the Ilkhan, as uneducated, "intuitive theologian." See below.

<sup>528</sup> Jaffer, 10-14.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid., 203-4; Shihadeh, *Teleological Ethics*, 135-140.

<sup>530</sup> "We have shown that perfection and imperfection appear in various degrees and disparate levels among people. Therefore, as we are able to see individuals, who have reached great proximity to cattle and beasts in imperfection, stupidity and heedlessness, similarly, on the side of perfection, there will have to exist perfect and virtuous individuals. Necessarily, there will exist among them an individual who is the most perfect and virtuous of them. He will be the last stages of humanity and the first stages of angelhood." Translated by Shihadeh, *ibid.*, 138.

of happiness are occupied by souls that have reached demonstrative knowledge.<sup>531</sup> Al-Rāzī considers the main goal of theological speculation, through which one attains knowledge on the nature and existence of God and his relationship with the world, to gain happiness (*sa'āda*) and perfection (*kamāl*).<sup>532</sup> Al-Rāzī observes that “the soul is perfected by knowledge, and that it realizes, by this acquisition, a happiness that surpasses all sensory pleasure.” After death, the soul will experience “posthumous happiness or misery in accordance with its level of perfection or imperfection.” Al-Rāzī’s understanding of the afterlife is central to Rashīd al-Dīn’s refutation of the Buddhists’ belief in reincarnation as well.

Al-Rāzī’s equation of the attainment of perfection through theological reflection with “human good” comprises the basis of his understanding of the prophet as “a man who invites people to this perfection.” The goal of revelation is, thus, to perfect the imperfect souls.<sup>533</sup> Al-Rāzī describes a higher level of “rare intellects that have a special ability to attain knowledge with little effort and discursive reflection.” This level includes the prophets and the saints, who “require neither learning nor the instrument of logic to attain theoretical perfection.” These individuals discover knowledge intuitively, without the need for a guiding teacher.<sup>534</sup>

---

<sup>531</sup> Al-Rāzī explains that one can reach the demonstrative/discursive level through learning, assistance from others, or by reliance on logic and other “discursive procedures” – in other words, theological speculation. According to al-Rāzī, the rational soul uses the body solely as an instrument for achieving perfection. Ibid., 117.

<sup>532</sup> Al-Rāzī earlier held as other Ash‘arites *mutakallimūn* that rational reflection on God is legally obligatory for those capable. In his later work, however, al-Rāzī moved away from his earlier *kalām* outlook and made the legal obligation a secondary purpose of rational reflection. Shihadeh, “From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī,” 173-74

<sup>533</sup> “Theology is no longer viewed as being in the service of scriptural creed, by providing theoretical support. Instead, Revelation itself becomes primarily a means to the ultimate goal of intellectual perfection, rather than to communicating theological knowledge to men [...]”. Ibid.

<sup>534</sup> Shihadeh, *Teleological Ethics*, 125-6. According to Avicenna, the prophetic faculty has an exceptionally powerful aptitude for intuition (*ḥads*) which allows it to achieve theoretical knowledge. People differ in their capacity to attain knowledge. See Jaffer, 139. Al-Rāzī supports Avicenna’s epistemological theory of intuition: “since we notice that the degrees of this aptitude differ in power and weakness and smallness and greatness, then it not impossible that there exists a soul that extends to the furthest degree in power and quickness of aptitude for the apprehension of the true natures of things such that this person comprehends knowledge of things without searching or wanting [...] that faculty is called the sacred [prophetic].” Translated by Jaffer, 140.

Due to their intellectual and moral perfection, the prophets are also endowed with the distinct aptitude to perfect the souls of the imperfect (*takmīl al-nāqīṣīn*).<sup>535</sup> Thus, in al-Rāzī's hierarchy of human souls, the lowest level is occupied by the majority of human beings, who are imperfect and defective (*nāqīṣ*), the second level by the rank of the saints, *avliyā'*, who "have both theoretical and practical perfection, but are incapable of perfecting others",<sup>536</sup> and the final level by the prophets, who are also capable of perfecting the souls of the imperfect. Just as common human beings can vary in their imperfection, saints and prophets, too, vary in their degrees of perfection and in their capacity to perfect others. According to al-Rāzī, prophets are more perfect than saints, for the prophet is endowed with absolute perfection, *kamāl muṭlaq*.<sup>537</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn's approach to the *ilm-i fīṭrī* is informed by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (Avicennian) ideas about the differences (*tafāvut*) of the intellect's capacity to attain perfection. In his *Laṭā'if al-ḥaqā'iq*, for example, Rashīd al-Dīn defines natural knowledge, *ilm-i fīṭrī*, as a primordial type of knowledge that God had taught human beings at the beginning (*dar mabda'-i fīṭrat*). Although all individuals are endowed with a share of God's teaching, "divine emanation/effluence (*fayḍ*) is distributed to each individual in accordance with his state [and] in agreement with his capacity (*isti'dād*) and aptitude (*qābiliyyat*) [...] and in this [in the levels of intellectual and moral capacity] there is the possibility of a great variety (*tafāvut*)".<sup>538</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn's concept of natural, intuitive knowledge draws on al-Rāzī's representation of hierarchical system of knowledge.

---

<sup>535</sup> On the way al-Rāzī synthesizes Avicennian notions with Ghazālīan concepts to further explain the prophet's moral perfection and ability to perfect others by curing their moral and intellectual depravity, see Jaffer, 205ff. In al-Rāzī's thought, the proof of prophethood via necessity is superior to the proof from miracles. Shihadeh, *Teleological Ethics*, 135.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>537</sup> Al-Rāzī, thus, "took to construct a conception of the prophet's soul that reconciled ancient and Islamic philosophical ideas about the soul's perfection with Sunni ideas about prophetic guidance." Jaffer, 212.

<sup>538</sup> *Laṭā'if al-ḥaqā'iq*, 38-9. This variety must be finite,

In *Kitāb al-jabr*, al-Rāzī postulates that “all acquired (*muktasab*) knowledge will depend on self-evident [a priori] (*badīhī*) knowledge that the mind knows immediately and spontaneously, not by choice.” Al-Rāzī argues that self-evident knowledge is not produced through human will or control, implying that its origins are divine.<sup>539</sup> Muslim theologians define *‘ilm badīhī* (self-evident, *a priori* or direct knowledge) as one type of the two kinds of the *‘ilm ḍarūrī*, necessary knowledge (primary/immediate knowledge). The latter is defined in contrast to acquired knowledge (*muktasab*) as knowledge “occurring without man’s having power to produce and prove it”.<sup>540</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn’s notion of the priority of *‘ilm-i fiṭrī* is, indeed, in accordance with al-Rāzī’s view that, knowledge and certain theological convictions that are obtained through man’s “primordial nature/disposition” (*fiṭra*) are “preferable to knowledge obtained through speculative arguments”.<sup>541</sup>

In the above noted treatise in the *As’ila va-ajviba*, Öljeitü’s high level of *‘ilm-i fiṭrī*, knowledge that enables him to arrive at theological speculations with no previous training or study, is confirmed through the example of the Prophet Muḥammad himself. Rashīd al-Dīn interprets Öljeitü’s comment on the prophetic tradition to relate and confirm Muḥammad’s perfect *‘ilm-i fiṭrī* and exceptional intellect by equating “poverty” with natural, intuitive knowledge. By presenting the Mongol ruler as preaching for the Prophet Muḥammad’s unique rank, Rashīd al-Dīn has Muḥammad Khudābanda (Öljeitü) reaffirm his own rank as one of the rare gifted intellects that can effortlessly and intuitively uncover hidden knowledge.<sup>542</sup>

---

<sup>539</sup> Shihadeh, *Teleological Ethics*, 31.

<sup>540</sup> Abrahamov concludes that “necessary knowledge” has five features: “a. occurrence without one’s power; b. necessity; c. production by God; d. absence of doubts; e. absence of speculation.” A few theologians, however, regard necessary knowledge as the object of man’s will and power. Binyamin Abrahamov, “Necessary knowledge in Islamic theology,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 20: 1 (1993), 20-32 (21). Sabra defines necessary knowledge as “made up of self-evident truths and common, undetachable, experience.” Sabra, 21-22.

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-6.

<sup>542</sup> We find similar statements made by Rashīd al-Dīn for the Ilkhan Ghazan, though not nearly as elaborate as is the case with his brother Öljeitü. Thus, the vizier describes Ghazan as possessing perfect knowledge and wisdom. He

The vizier uses the case of Muḥammad’s illiteracy (*ummīyya*) not just to prove Öljeitü’s intellectual excellence, but also Rashīd al-Dīn’s own position as an “autodidact,” an “intuitive theologian.” In a short treatise in *Laṭā’if al-ḥaqā’iq*,<sup>543</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn explicates how he first began to compose theological works and grounds his authority as an author in his visionary experiences. Similar to his presentation of Öljeitü and the Prophet as illiterate prodigies, who enjoy a higher level of natural knowledge, which they gain through communication with the divine,<sup>544</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn presents himself in this treatise (and in others) as an uneducated individual. With no previous proper training in the sciences, Rashīd al-Dīn instinctively gains “philosophical-theological literacy”,<sup>545</sup> and achieves a deeper understanding of theological matters. He narrates the gradual process by which he came to trust his own theological “voice,” and the external encouragement he received from scholars (Tāj al-Dīn Mu’minān), and furthermore, the confirmation he gained from the Prophet Muḥammad himself, and from ‘Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn in a dream, which he dates to 26 of Ramaḍān, 705 (August 18, 1305). They motivated him to commit his ideas to paper, starting with his treatise on the true meanings of the Prophet Muḥammad’s illiteracy, which he alleges to have completed within a short span of half an

---

writes that the Ilkhan would spend his time engaging in discussion with the learnt, and the in-depth comprehension he would show in these discussions/debates (*mabāḥith*) went “far beyond the comprehension of any philosopher or wise man.” Rashīd al-Dīn enumerates Ghazan’s knowledge as encompassing the conditions of various religions, languages (Arabic, Persian, Hindi, Kashmiri, Tibetan, Chinese, “Frankish, and all other languages”), the manners of past kings, the history of the Mongols and their ancestral trees, battle strategies, crafts (goldsmithing, blacksmithing, painting and more), the art of alchemy, medicine, knowledge of minerals, spells, and astronomy. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1335-41; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 664-69. A similar statement as to the Ilkhan Ghazan’s intuitive (“natural disposition”, *fiṭra*) insight into the rational sciences with no previous learning made by Rashīd al-Dīn is also reported in Mamluk accounts. See Amitai-Preiss, “New material,” 25.

<sup>543</sup> *Laṭā’if al-ḥaqā’iq*, 35-51. Hoffmann comments that “these narratives function as a way of compensating or even over-compensating for a lack in conventional Islamic scholarship and his status as a convert to Islam.” “Speaking about oneself,” 10.

<sup>544</sup> Which he refers to as renewed knowledge (*dānishī mujaddad*). *Laṭā’if al-ḥaqā’iq*, 42.

<sup>545</sup> As the vizier himself explains that “although the meaning of illiteracy is not knowing how to write or read, if an individual does not learn a science, he is illiterate in that science, and there are many sciences that this poor one [the vizier] has not learnt from teachers and has not read.” *Ibid.*, 50.



hour.<sup>546</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn, moreover, directly ascribes his intuitive knowledge to the Prophet claiming that Muḥammad had granted him a minute portion of his own “illiteracy”.<sup>547</sup>

In addition to Öljeitü’s intuitive intellect, Rashīd al-Dīn also promotes the image of Öljeitü as the champion of reason, “the king of *kalām*.” Rashīd al-Dīn repeatedly states in his regard that *kalām al-mulūk mulūk al-kalām* (“The words of kings are the kings of words”). In his *tafsīr*, al-Rāzī reconciles two apparent oppositional and autonomous sources of knowledge, arguing for the compatibility of human reason (*‘aql*) or knowledge, obtained through rational means or experience, with the transmitted knowledge (*naql*), which is contained in the Qur’ān and the prophetic traditions. Seeking to “close the conceptual gap” between the two through *ta`wīl*, figurative and allegorical reading of the Qur’ān, al-Rāzī argues for the priority of reason over transmitted knowledge when the apparent sense of scripture contradicts conclusions reached through discursive reasoning.<sup>548</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn follows al-Rāzī in arguing for the congruity of human reason and scripture. He accordingly conceives of Öljeitü’s intellect as a source of human reason, presenting the Ilkhan as campaigning for reason in his court audiences and debates, and forcing all the present to follow the ironclad fist of reason.<sup>549</sup>

Öljeitü’s campaign for reason aside, Rashīd al-Dīn also employs more direct Avicennian terminology when narrating Öljeitü’s unique intellect. He attributes to the Ilkhan a strong “intuitive capacity,” which Ibn Sīnā considered as one of the three elements that constitute prophethood (together with strong imaginative revelation and powerful practical faculty). Ibn

---

<sup>546</sup> This treatise is found in the vizier’s *Kitāb al-tawḍīḥāt*, to which, unfortunately, I have not yet gained access.

<sup>547</sup> *Laṭā’if al-ḥaqā’iq*, 50.

<sup>548</sup> Jaffar, 84-117.

<sup>549</sup> The Sultan Öljeitü, he writes, “ordered that anyone who says something [at court audiences and debates], must say rational things that cannot be denied, or else, they [their words] will not be accepted. If you, or any other person from the astronomers, the philosophers and the wise speak, what you say must appear true to one’s mind, and explain it through [rational] proofs until it is clear; after that, it will be accepted.” *Bayān al-ḥaqā’iq*, 87. See also Rashīd al-Dīn’s treatise on *Sharḥ-i ‘ulūm-i ma’ aqūl va-manqūl* in *Bayān al-ḥaqā’iq*, where he argues for the conformity of the transmitted knowledge with human reason. *Ibid.*, 401-402.



Sīnā explained “intellectual revelation,” *ḥads* (“quick wit,” “intuition”), as the capacity to gain, by hitting “on the middle term of a syllogism,” “instantaneous scientific knowledge without having to expend any effort in learning or formulating arguments”.<sup>550</sup> Ibn Sīnā found that “it is possible that there is a person amongst human beings whose soul has been rendered so powerful through extreme purity and intense contact with intellectual principles that he blazes with *ḥads*.” This individual possesses a “holy intellect”.<sup>551</sup> In Rashīd al-Dīn’s account of the Ilkhan’s secret confession (above), Öljeitü employs Avicennian terminology to speak of his gradual progress, from applying his exceptional capacity to attain syllogisms (*qiyās*) and his experience (*tajriba*)<sup>552</sup> in order to gain new insights, to the state in which the Ilkhan could effortlessly attain secrets that remain hidden from others through his “intuitive capacity.” Moreover, he can read the minds of his companions and servants in accordance with certain signs and appearances.

As discussed above, in al-Rāzī’s hierarchy of human souls, the perfect souls of the prophets are also capable of perfecting the souls of the imperfect (*takmīl al-nāqiṣīn*). Shihadeh observes that according to al-Rāzī, “the prophet’s ability to perfect others lies in the prophet’s soul itself.” In his Qur’anic commentary, al-Rāzī describes the perfect souls of the prophets “emanating their lights on the souls of the deficient,” and compares this to the sunlight emanating from “the substance (*javhar*) of the sun” on earthly bodies. Prophets are souls that have “reach[ed] perfection and illumination (*ishrāq*) to the point that it becomes perfecting of

---

<sup>550</sup> “To find the link the combines two independent propositions into a compelling rational argument.”

<sup>551</sup> Frank Griffel, “Muslim philosophers’ rationalist explanation of Muḥammad’s prophecy,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Muḥammad*, ed. Jonathan E. Brockopp (Cambridge, 2010), 169-74.

<sup>552</sup> Compare with Ibn Sīnā’s statement about the significance of direct experience in comparison to syllogism: “All sensible and intellectual matters have aspects that can be known through syllogism (*bi’l-qiyās*) and characteristic states that are known [only] by experience (*bi’l-tajriba*). Just as neither flavor nor the ultimate nature of sensory pleasure can be captured by syllogism – for at most, syllogism can apprehend the affirmation of their [existence] devoid of specific details [...] as for their specific characteristic, however, it can only be known through direct appreciation (*mubāshara*), to which not everyone is guided.” Translated by Alexander Treiger, *Inspired Knowledge in Islamic Thought: al-Ghazālī’s theory of mystical cognition and its Avicennian foundation* (London, 2012), 60-61.

those who are deficient (*mukammilat al-nāqīṣīn*)”.<sup>553</sup> Al-Rāzī, furthermore, writes that the Prophet Muḥammad’s soul “was a powerful, luminous, pure and radiant soul. So if Muḥammad supplicates [God] on [people’s] behalf [...] effects of his spiritual power will emanate upon their souls. Their souls will become illuminated by this, their spirits will become purified, and they will be transformed from darkness into light, and from corporality into spirituality”.<sup>554</sup>

Al-Rāzī appropriates the Avicennan theory of intellectual development and explicates Ibn Sīnā’s interpretation of the Light Verse (*āyat al-nūr*) as a representation of the process through which the rational soul achieves theoretical knowledge and perfection (*istikmāl*). Yet, as Jaffer demonstrates, in addition to his adoption of a rationalistic and philosophical outlook, al-Rāzī also embraces and refines al-Ghazālī’s method of Qur’ānic exegesis, assuming basic Sufi principles that diverge from the Avicennian epistemic scheme. Thus, al-Rāzī also endorses the idea that “a person’s religious belief can be strengthened through divine inspiration and the notion that religious knowledge of the divine is bestowed upon an individual’s heart rather than achieved through the intellect’s self effort”.<sup>555</sup> Drawing on al-Ghazālī, al-Rāzī holds that knowledge can be bestowed on the believer’s soul through inspiration (*ilhām*), and that this divine/inspirational knowledge (*ma’rifā*) is represented by light: the more knowledge one attains, the more light one’s

---

<sup>553</sup> Al-Rāzī explains that the lights emanating from the sacred pure souls of the prophets do not reach the unbelievers since just like a body can only receive sunlight once it faces the sun, the soul of the deficient, too, must be directed towards the prophets. In addition, according to al-Rāzī, just as bodies receive sunlight in accordance with their distance from the sun at the end of which are those who remain in full darkness, so there is an infinite “distribution of the levels of the souls for receiving these lights from the souls of the prophets.” Al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 16 (Cairo, 1938), 116-117. For this passages in al-Rāzī’s discussion of the ranks of the soul, see Jaffer, 206ff.

<sup>554</sup> Shihadeh, *Teleological Ethics*, 142. On al-Rāzī’s appropriation of the light motif from al-Ghazālī, see Jaffer, 131-168. On Muḥammad’s luminous body as a major motif in legendary accounts on the Prophet, Uri Rubin, “Pre-existence and light- aspects of the concept of Nūr Muḥammad,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975): 62-119.

<sup>555</sup> Jaffer, 167.

heart gains. The lack of divine knowledge is likened to darkness, and the reception of knowledge is considered illumination.<sup>556</sup>

Just as al-Rāzī uses light as a representation of belief (*imān*) and knowledge, Rashīd al-Dīn configures Öljeitü as a radiant soul emanating light that eradicates disbelief and polytheism, and revives the ignorant-dead by imparting wisdom and knowledge. Furthermore, in the introduction to *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, Rashīd al-Dīn demonstrates Öljeitü's capacity to perfect others through his intellectual and moral perfection. Rashīd al-Dīn, for examples, writes of his own "interior" being lit (*nūrānī gasht*) by the light emanating from Öljeitü's soul, and attributes his accomplishments as an author of philosophical and theological treatises to Öljeitü's perfecting aptitude.<sup>557</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn also follows al-Rāzī by drawing on both the Avicennian rationalistic conceptualization of "intellectual revelation" as discussed and the Sufī (Ghazālīan) inspirational model, according to which knowledge is bestowed upon the individual's soul through divine inspiration (*ilhām*).<sup>558</sup> As noted earlier, Rashīd al-Dīn establishes the figure of Öljeitü as drawing

---

<sup>556</sup> Ibid., 160-1. Al-Rāzī, for example, explains that the reason for praising and thanking the prophets and angels before the students commences reading to his teacher his assignment is to "strengthen the attachment between his spirit and these sacred pure spirits so that through the strength of this attachment, something from the lights and remnants [of the prophets' spirits] might appear in the spirit of the student, and something from the lights emanating from them will become firm in his intellect and his spirit will become strong with the aid of this emanation [and capable] to perceive the inspirational knowledge and sciences." Al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, 16 (Cairo, 1938), 183.

<sup>557</sup> In his *Dhayl-i risāla-yi ziyārat in Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*, Rashīd al-Dīn discusses the lights he witnessed emerging from Öljeitü's feet one evening in Sha'bān 710/December 1310, when he and the Ilkhan camped on their way to visit to the shrine of Salmān al-Fārisī in al-Madā'in. The purpose of their journey was to examine whether the popular tradition according to which, on the night of the fifteenth of Sha'bān (*al-Layla al-Mubāraka*), light appears over the shrine, was true or not. The vizier is tasked with explaining the light they witnessed and he does so by using al-Ghazālī's theory of lights (a luminous entity that can only be seen by the "inner eye") and al-Rāzī's reinforcement of the latter's theory with philosophical principles. Thus, the vizier equates light with perfection, morality and good appearances, and explains that saints and prophets, in various degrees, may emit light that can only be seen by a select few in accordance with their capacities. Their souls continue to produce light after their death. *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*, 331-40; Jaffer, 145-53. The witnessing of lights emerging from or descending on sacred tombs is common to both Jewish and Muslim accounts of shrine visitation. Josef W. Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in medieval Syria* (New York, 2002), 20ff.

<sup>558</sup> Al-Ghazālī, too, conceives of two modes of cognition, one attained by learning and acquisition (*iktisāb*) and another through divine inspiration (*ilhām*) in the case of the saints, or revelation in the case of the prophets. In addition, his conception of *ilhām* follows Ibn Sīnā's *ḥads*. Treiger, 64ff.

his authority from divine inspiration. He concludes that Öljeitü's secret confession in *Kitāb al-sultāniyya* indicates that the Ilkhan is subject to *ilhām*, and that this, in addition to the rest of the miracles the Ilkhan has performed, evinces that Öljeitü occupies both the rank of the rulers and the rank of sainthood (*wilāya*).

However, in his later *As'ila va-ajviba*, Rashīd al-Dīn integrates *ilhām* into the Avicennian philosophical system and conceives of divine inspiration as a property of the rank of the *absolute kings and sultans (muṭlaq mulūk va-salāṭīn)*. In the treatise dated to Dhū al-Qa'da 710/April 1311, Rashīd al-Dīn answers Öljeitü's question about the unique properties of the kings in comparison to the prophets.<sup>559</sup> He writes that “the rank (*martaba*) of a king who has perfect knowledge and reason (*'ilm va-'aql*), and whose interior is lit by the light of sacred meanings (*nūr-i ma'ānī-yi qudsī*) is extremely great, especially if he is Muslim.” The proof of this is found in a tradition of the Prophet Muḥammad, who expressed his pride in being born at the age of the just Sasanian king Anūshirvān (531-579), in spite of the latter's arrival “prior to Islam”.<sup>560</sup> If, like

---

<sup>559</sup> This is Öljeitü's fourth question in a line of questions about the differences between the properties of God and human beings, prophets and kings, and kings, prophets and ordinary subjects. The vizier keeps his answers terse with the exception of question four. The vizier starts with the division of prophets into the categories of *nabī* (prophet), *rasūl* (messenger), and *ulū al-'azm* (prophets endowed with constancy). The Qur'anic *ulū al-'azm* were understood to be either prophets who establish a law (*sharī'a*) such as Noah, Abraham, Moses and Muḥammad or those who suffered the worst trials (adding Jacob, Joseph, Job and David to the list). For this term and a general discussion of the divisions of prophets, Uri Rubin, "Prophets and Prophethood," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (general editor) (Brill Online, 2014), accessed 06 November 2014.

[http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-the-quran/prophets-and-prophethood-EQCOM\\_00160](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-the-quran/prophets-and-prophethood-EQCOM_00160). Rashīd al-Dīn stresses that while all prophets are full prophets (*hama dar muṭlaq-i nubuvvat*), there exists a clear hierarchy between the *nabī* (prophet) and *rasūl* (messenger). In addition to *nubuvvat*, some have also the ranks of *mursal*, *ulū al-'azm* and kingship. Answering the previous question, Rashīd al-Dīn explained that revelation (*wahy*), prophethood (*nubuvvat*), and prophetic miracles (*mu'jiz*) are particular to the prophets. As to the rank of kings, the vizier first explains that that royal customs (*'adat va-rasm*), thrones and crowns are all particular to kings.

<sup>560</sup> “I was born in the age of the just king, Anūshirvān.” Anūshirvān is listed among the four just Sasanian kings in the second part (“guide for princes”) of the *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, the political treatise of the great Slajūq-era scholar and intellectual Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). Al-Ghazālī (or rather, pseudo-Ghazālī) also discusses this *ḥadīth* noting that the Prophet was born during the age of Anūshirvān, “who surpassed the kings who ruled before him in justice, equity and government” and “made the world prosperous.” According to the author, Anūshirvān's just rule was part of the Prophet's blessings. Anūshirvān lived two more years after the Muḥammad's birth. *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*, 83, 98-99. There is an ongoing debate about the authorship of this second part of *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*. However, even if al-Ghazālī was not its author, the two sections, as Crone argues, were joined together already in the second half of

Anūshirvān, “kings are also Lords of Auspicious Conjunction (*Ṣāhib-Qirān*), their rank can be great. Because of *absolute kings and sultans (muṭlaq mulūk va-salāṭīn*, my emphasis), the Prophet would say: ‘the hearts of kings are the treasuries of God’ (*qulūb al-mulūk khazā`īn Allāh*) [...] God adorned his [Öljeitü’s] blessed interior with sacred lights and assorted wisdoms so that such subtleties of truths and secrets of varied wisdoms (*daqā`iq-i ḥaqā`iq va-asrār-i ḥikmathā*) reach the beings from his blessed soul”.<sup>561</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn, furthermore, argues that within this rank of *absolute kings and sultans* there is also a great variety of ranks, and that some kings are held in such a high regard that they receive “different kinds of inspirations (*ilhām*),” each in accordance with his specific capacity and aptitude.<sup>562</sup> The vizier, thus, positions *ilhām*, divine inspiration, as the final stage within a hierarchical system of sacral kingship that is based on the Avicennian model of the unequal distribution of intellectual capacities.

Drawing on al-Rāzī’s appropriation of diverse interpretive schemes, Rashīd al-Dīn conceptualizes Öljeitü’s intellect within different, parallel frameworks – from the Ilkhan’s natural knowledge (*ilm-i fiṭrī*) to his “intuitive capacity” and reception of divine inspiration.

---

the twelfth-century. Patricia Crone, “Did al-Ghazālī write a mirror for princes? On the authorship of *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 10 (1987): 167-191; Safī, *The Politics of Knowledge*, 115-121; Savant, *New Muslims*, 141-144. For Anūshirvān as the model of the just king and his famed reforms, see Darling, *A History of Social Justice*, 42-45.

<sup>561</sup> Al-Rāzī adopts al-Ghazālī’s conception of the heart as the seat of divine lights and knowledge. Jaffer, 161. Rashīd al-Dīn adds that people say regarding this rank that “the rulers are divinely inspired” (*aṣḥāb al-duwal mulhamūn*).

<sup>562</sup> Such kings whose shining hearts are like “polished mirrors” (*āyina-yi maṣqūl*) must have great perfection, otherwise God would not have ordered in their matter the Authority Verse (above). For al-Ghazālī’s discussion of this verse as referring the “holders of military power and command,” see Safī, 120. I devote a full discussion to the uses of the “Authority verse” in chapter 3. Rashīd al-Dīn concludes his answer by returning to the difference between prophets and kings. He argues that these absolute-perfect kings (*pādshāhān-i muṭlaq*) alone are assigned the titles of the “shadow of God on earth” (*zill Allāh*) and caliph (*khilāfa*) - quoting here the Qur’anic command: “O David, we have made you viceregent/caliph upon earth so rule among men with justice” (38:26). Even the best of the prophets is not assigned these two particular titles. Öljeitü, according to the vizier, is God’s Mongol caliph and his shadow on earth. The conflation of “caliphal” titular with kingly status should possibly not surprise one after all since both were manifestations of the divine. As al-Azmeh notes, caliphs and kings “had the same repertoire of attributes, of relations to subjects, and of relations to divinity. Both the caliph and the king were represented as incommensurable, omnipotent, beyond reciprocity and measure [...] Both king and caliph are God’s shadow, elected by God, God’s vicars, for the very fact of political authority is a manifestation of the divine, of vicarage first bestowed upon Adam.” Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 163.

Depicting Öljeitü's illuminated intellect as drawing on these different autonomous sources of knowledge (philosophical, inspirational), Rashīd al-Dīn also positions the Mongol king in relation to the Prophet.

### **Muḥammad's Splitting of the Moon and the Miraculous Feats of the Şāhib-Qirān Chinggisids**

Rashīd al-Dīn assumes al-Rāzī's idea of a hierarchy of human perfection as the theoretical basis for elaborating on Öljeitü's sovereignty in *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* and in his later works. Through al-Rāzī's appropriation of Avicennian principles, the Ilkhanid vizier makes room for a new rank of sacral kingship amongst the ranks of the sacred souls of the prophets and saints.

Rashīd al-Dīn's emphasis on the gradual progress of prophets and saints towards revelation/inspiration and the full adult station of prophethood/sainthood in the introduction to the *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* is the basis for the vizier's claim of the gradual progress of Öljeitü towards his future achievement of his full potential in the rank of perfect kingship. Using the Avicennian argument for prophecy that if a human attribute is found in deprivation, it must also necessarily exist in perfection, he establishes a hierarchical system of kingly ranks that runs in parallel to that of the prophets and the saints. This system culminates in Öljeitü's prestigious rank amongst the absolute kings (*muṭlaq pādishāhān*).<sup>563</sup> The term *muṭlaq pādishāh/malik* is in

---

<sup>563</sup> Thus, in *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*, the vizier explains the existence of a near-endless hierarchy of ranks within of the category of absolute kingship: Although God endowed the absolute kings (*muṭlaqan pādishāhān*) with wisdom, perfection and honor that he did not give any other of their kind (*aṣnāf*), and their rank is so great that they were included in the class for whom it was commanded: "Obey Allāh, and obey the Messenger, and those in authority from among you" (*ūlī al-amr minkum*) [4:59, "authority verse"] and [one wonders] how it could be possible to conceive of a position (*manṣab*) greater than that of the people whose name and position is stated alongside God and the messenger prophets - nevertheless, this is a rank that all the kings share. But a king who is a perfect in intellect, knowledge, justice and good qualities, his rank could be the most perfect of the ranks of the kings. And although it is said: "The words of the kings are the kings of the words" (*kalām al-mulūk mulūk al-kalām*), which means that just like the kings are the kings of the people so are their words [the kings' words] the kings of all other words; and this

itself an appropriation of al-Rāzī's concept of the "absolute perfection" (*kamāl muṭlaq*) of the souls of the prophets. The foundation of this new rank of sacral kingship is the example of the Prophet Muḥammad's exalted rank: if Muḥammad is the culmination of human perfection (*kamāl-i insānī*) and he occupies the best rank of prophethood, Öljeitü similarly occupies the most perfect rank of kingship. Rashīd al-Dīn, therefore, positions Öljeitü's miraculous feats alongside prophetic miracles.

According to Ibn Sīnā, the souls of the prophets have the capacity to cause change in objects outside of their own bodies, from the ability to bring about storms and cause earthquakes to the capacity to split the moon.<sup>564</sup> The vizier claims that by imparting wisdom and guiding individuals to new truths through his remarkable questions and astute observations, "the *masīḥ*-like Öljeitü has revived [from ignorance] and will revive thousands and thousands of deceased and this is a great miracle (*karāmatī*)" (above). While Rashīd al-Dīn is diligent in *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* in emphasizing the distinction between prophetic miracles (*mu'jaz*) and Öljeitü's own saintly miracles (*karāmat*), he also positions Öljeitü's supernatural feats, for example, his miraculous birth story in relation to the childhood feats of the prophets.

In another example in the vizier's treatise on "the falsity of the transmigration of souls (*buṭlān-i tanāsukh*) and the validity of the gathering of the bodies on the Day of Judgment" in his *As'ila va-ajviba*,<sup>565</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn depicts the differences between the Chinggisid "Şāhib-Qirān Kings" and the Prophet Muḥammad as quantitative rather, than qualitative. The account starts with Rashīd al-Dīn's report of a surprise visit of the Ilkhan Öljeitü ("like the sun that fills the world

---

weak slave, Rashīd Ṭabīb, says: "a king who among all the other kings in accordance with what we see [in Öljeitü] is so perfect in his intellect, knowledge, justice and good qualities, that is, that his blessed words are the kings of the words of the kings – although the rank of the kings is great in accordance with what we said, nevertheless, not every king can be wise, just and endowed with good qualities like this king [Öljeitü]." *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*, 83.

<sup>564</sup> Griffel, 172-73.

<sup>565</sup> *As'ila va-ajviba*, 1-37. The same treatise also appears in *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*, 351-92.



with light and the spirit that revives the body”) to his tent one evening on Rajab 711 (November-December, 1311), while Rashīd al-Dīn was working on his treatise on “the falsity of transmigration.” Rashīd al-Dīn was delighted by the Ilkhan’s wish to see his treatise and remarked to the Mongol ruler that “time and time again it has been proven that the King of Islam is a performer of miracles (*ṣāhib-i karāmāt*)”.<sup>566</sup> However, after a short while of reading out loud, Rashīd al-Dīn was interrupted by the Ilkhan’s question. Reaching the point in the treatise where he explains that one’s wrongdoings and sins might block the influence of auspicious and inauspicious stars over one’s fortune, Rashīd al-Dīn compares the stars to a sharp blade and the sins to the stone, and argues that “no matter how sharp a sword of steal is, it will not leave a big mark on things that are very strong.” Öljeitü, then, challenges the vizier with the question: “if there were something that was sharper than the blade, what could that be?” Rashīd al-Dīn, then, responds that the only thing sharper than a blade is:

The perfect sacred souls (*nufūs kāmila muqaddasa*), like the souls of the prophets, saints (*avliyā*) and Ṣāhib-Qirān Kings; and such kings are like your [Öljeitü’s] excellent ancestor Chinggis Khan and his descendants such as the King of Islam [Öljeitü] that the stars have no influence over their perfect souls [...] and it is determined that some of the souls of the perfect are even more perfect and more noble (*sharīftar*) than the heavenly bodies (*aflāk*); their honor with God is so great that the souls of some of the perfect ones can leave a mark (*athar*) on the heavenly bodies and the stars. An indication of this is that the most perfect man, the Seal of the Prophets, the best of prayers be upon him, split the moon (*inshiqāq-i qamar*). A property (*khāṣṣiyat*) of the souls of the Ṣāhib-Qirān Kings is that kingship is theirs for a long period (*muddathā*), and anything that takes place during their reign, happens favorably, in accordance with their wishes. There is no doubt that although this success is in accordance with the horoscope (*tāli*), it was not possible that the stars of misfortune (*naḥs*) have their gaze (*naẓar*) [on earth] alongside their [the kings’] horoscope

---

<sup>566</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn explains that he was working on his interpretation of the Qur’anic verse: “Those who deny Our verses/signs and treat them with arrogance, the doors of heaven shall not be opened to them (*lā tufattaḥu lahum abwāb al-samā*)” (Surat al-a’raf, 40), According to the vizier, since Öljeitü arrived like the shining sun at the vizier’s dwelling at the very moment that Rashīd al-Dīn was engaged in explaining how the gates of Heaven could be closed or opened, and how the stars of good fortune (*kawākib-i sa’d*) might or might not influence the horoscope (*tāli*) of an arrogant person (*mutakabbir*), it is a sign, first, that God has opened before the vizier the gates of Heaven (*darhā’-i āsmān*); and second, that Rashīd al-Dīn was granted this great blessing for refuting the claims of *ahl-i tanāsukh*.



for a lengthy period of time, and moreover, even if this would occur, they [inauspicious heavenly bodies] could not have influenced their horoscopes.<sup>567</sup>

The hierarchical system of miracles established by Rashīd al-Dīn in this passage positions the Ṣāhib-Qirān kings on the same supernatural spectrum of the prophets, even if they are found at its opposing, extreme end. This passage also illustrates the extent to which Rashīd al-Dīn was preoccupied with elucidating the relationship between the Prophet Muḥammad and the house of Chinggis Khan, foremost the Ilkhan Öljeitü.

As discussed in chapter two, the Ilkhan Arghun's vizier Sa'd al-Dawla attempted in his *maḥḍar* to articulate Arghun's image as a superior, absolute monarch. He did so through the "division of labor" between lawgiver prophets and absolute kings (*malik 'alā al-iṭlāq*, or world regulators, *mudabbir-i 'ālam*) in Ṭūsī's *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī* (*The Nasirean Ethics*). That Rashīd al-Dīn, too, was preoccupied two decades later with defining the place of Chinggisid kingship in relation to the rank of prophethood (and sainthood) is apparent not only from his positioning of the Chinggisid souls alongside the perfect souls of the prophets, or from his comparison between Öljeitü's childhood miracles and the early premature signs of prophethood, but also from the overall layout of *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*. Whereas the work is largely devoted to the vizier's discussion of the science of prophetology, that is, the different ranks of prophethood and proofs

---

<sup>567</sup> *As'ila va-ajviba*, 23-5. This final element echoes the vizier's earlier claim in his introduction to the *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* (above) where he argues that Öljeitü was able to protect the Ilkhanid realm from the destructive influence of Saturn that was to herald droughts and hunger. Shihadeh notes that al-Rāzī adopted the approach of the twelfth-century philosopher Abū al-Barakāt and "talismán specialists" and argues that the souls of the moving planets are the sources for human souls and that each planet soul is characterized by a specific essence that also determines the essence of the souls that it produces. Each planet soul or "archetype" is characterized by different qualities (*ṣifa, khāṣṣa*) in a perfect way, and these qualities appear imperfectly in the human souls that originate from it. Furthermore, the planet soul considers the human souls like a father thinks of his children and assists them. Shihadeh, *Teleological Ethics*, 118.

(*barāhīn*) of Muḥammad’s finality of prophethood, Rashīd al-Dīn devotes his extensive introduction in *Kitāb al-sultāniyya* to the proofs (*barāhīn*) of Öljeitü’s sacral kingship.<sup>568</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn’s extensive engagement with the topic of prophetic ranks, Öljeitü’s “own” inquiries into the relationship between prophets and kings, in addition to Sa‘d al-Dawla’s similar engagement with defining Chinggisid kingship in relation to prophethood, all indicate that the relationship between prophethood and Chinggisid authority was a concern at the Ilkhanid court. These discussions played an instrumental role in situating Chinggisid kingship within the Islamic salvation history. One of the main objectives of Rashīd al-Dīn’s “theological project” was the negotiation of Chinggisid notions of sanctified, Heavenly decreed authority into Islamic ideas about the sources of authority, but its final outcome was a novel way of “theologizing” kingship within Islam through prophethood, that is, as Muḥammadan kingship. Rashīd al-Dīn, in other words, creates a Muḥammad-centered political theology.

Rashīd al-Dīn’s appropriation of key concepts of al-Rāzī’s theological and philosophical writing to present Öljeitü as a radiant soul and recipient of divine inspiration, who can with no previous learning or literacy, gain intuitive knowledge/revelation that is unattainable to others, but nevertheless, adheres to the essential truths of Islamic theological convictions, corresponds with the Mongol distinct political theology. The conviction that the Chinggisid rulers were “untutored geniuses who without book learning replicated the great traditions of learning in their realm” was a central aspect of the Chinggisid charisma, as discussed in the introduction.<sup>569</sup>

This idea is also attested in the way members of the Chinggisid Yuan dynasty in China approached Confucianism asserting that their “early dynastic ancestors had instinctual inborn

---

<sup>568</sup> That Rashīd al-Dīn employs the term *barāhīn* to discuss the proofs of Öljeitü’s exceptional kingship is telling as well since it reminds his readers of the philosophical and theological discussions over the proofs (*barāhīn*) of prophethood.

<sup>569</sup> Atwood, *forthcoming*.

knowledge of the vital Neo-Confucian ideas of principle and ritual”.<sup>570</sup> The adoption of Confucianism in the later Yuan dynasty was not understood in terms of conversion, but rather conceived as reversion to Mongol ancestral beliefs. Furthermore, the Mongols understood the Chinggisid ruler’s personal superiority to result from his “directly intuited wisdom,” which broadly conformed to the scriptural traditions of the people he ruled. His reception of divine guidance, a direct and unmediated channel to the Heavens, was free from the intervention of established clergy or ritual experts. Rashīd al-Dīn’s presentation of Öljeitü’s unmediated link to God closely follows this understanding of the Chinggisid ruler as an untutored prodigy.<sup>571</sup> He makes use of al-Rāzī’s Aristotelian-Avicennian theory of human perfection to reconstruct the figure of the Chinggisid ruler in a manner that would agree with the Mongols’ own understanding of Chinggisid exceptionality, but also in a way that re-conceptualizes Chinggisidness within Islam.

I argue that Rashīd al-Dīn saw in this endeavor, this project of cultural translation and mediation, a necessity stemming from the highly competitive inter-religious and inter-confessional environment of the Ilkhanid court. His access to the Ilkhan hinged, among other things, on his claim to being the latter’s exclusive intermediary, the sole individual able to comprehend and articulate the sovereign’s words, and mediate between Öljeitü’s “own” perceptions of his authority (as Rashīd al-Dīn’s presents them) and Islamic notions of authority.

Similar to Sa‘d al-Dawla, Rashīd al-Dīn identified the influence of Buddhists, and in particular their dogma of reincarnation, as one of his main competitors at court. Next in this chapter, I explore how the vizier uses al-Rāzī’s ideas about perfect souls and their afterlife to

---

<sup>570</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>571</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn states, for example, that Ghazan had such great knowledge of the different religions and beliefs that during debates with religious experts, they could only respond to nine out of ten questions he asked, whereas he knew the answer to all. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1337; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 667.

refute the Buddhist belief in the transmigration of souls and to establish an alternative to their mediation of Chinggisid kingship. I identify three strategies Rashīd al-Dīn deploys to refute Buddhism by appropriating al-Rāzī's theory of human perfection and applying it to the Chinggisid afterlife: (a) undermining the Buddhist dogma of reincarnation; (b) proposing an alternative to Buddhism's mediation and support of Chinggisid kingship; and (c) explaining the Buddhist path with familiar terms, and in a way that would subject Buddhism to the superiority of the Prophet Muḥammad and his message. Rashīd al-Dīn brilliantly marries together the Chinggisid claim to absolute political authority with Islamic supersessionist claims. He makes the idea of deserting the Muslim belief and monotheism akin to discarding Chinggisidness.

### **Rashīd al-Dīn and the Dharma Revisited**

Whereas Rashīd al-Dīn's three treatises on the transmigration of the souls and the resurrection of the bodies have not been addressed in modern scholarship, the vizier's engagement with Buddhism, namely his *Life and Teachings of the Buddha*, is well-known. The work is regarded as the best-informed account of Buddhism in the medieval Muslim world. Rashīd al-Dīn, however, viewed both his description of the Dharma and refutation of the Buddhist's doctrine of reincarnation as inherently interlinked (below). It is, therefore, important that we briefly consider, before approaching his apologetic works, his presentation of the Buddha's life and the Dharma.

As a number of scholars have remarked, what made Rashīd al-Dīn's example of "inter-ecumenical writing",<sup>572</sup> his exploration of the Dharma and the life of the Buddha in the second

---

<sup>572</sup> Atwood defines "inter-ecumenical writing" in the Mongol period as the outcome of the increasing interactions of people and ideas under Mongol rule. Atwood, *forthcoming*.

section of his account on India in the second volume of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*<sup>573</sup> so exceptional is that unlike his predecessors, for example, al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048) in his history of India, Rashīd al-Dīn had access to actual living Buddhists. Rashīd al-Dīn names one particular Buddhist informant for his account of the Dharma, a Kashmiri monk by the name of Kāmalashrī.<sup>574</sup>

Most scholars have studied Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Life and Teachings of the Buddha* to determine what kind of Buddhism was being practiced in Ilkhanid Iran and the Mongol Empire more broadly.<sup>575</sup> There is strong evidence to indicate the influence of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism (Varjayāna) in Rashīd al-Dīn’s account, for example, his praise of Varjayāna Buddhism as a superior teaching. However, there are also compelling indications that the author relied also on Sanskrit Nikaya and Chinese Buddhist texts for their sources. As Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim has recently noted, we should, nevertheless, bear in mind that even when we can ascertain the identity of a specific text (the *Devatāsūtra* for example) that was incorporated into Rashīd al-Dīn’s presentation of Buddhism, we are unable at this stage to determine with certainty whether the text used by Rashīd al-Dīn and/or Kāmalashrī had originated with Tibetan, Sanskrit, Chinese or Uyghur sources, especially since these texts were transmitted between different languages, and at times, both textually and orally.<sup>576</sup> These methodological concerns notwithstanding, Rashīd al-

---

<sup>573</sup> For a detailed description of the twenty chapters (in the Persian and twenty-one in the Arabic version), see Karl Jahn, “Kāmalashrī - Rashīd al-Dīn’s “Life and Teachings of the Buddha”: a source for the Buddhism of the Mongol period,” in Jahn, *Rashīd al-Dīn’s History of India: Collected Essays with Facsimiles and Indices* (London, 1965), xxxi-Ixxvii. See also discussions in Ana Akasoy, “The Buddha and the straight path. Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Life of the Buddha*: Islamic perspectives,” in *Rashīd al-Dīn: Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchange in Ilkhanid Iran*, ed. Anna Akasoy et al. (2013), 173-196; and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, “Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Life of the Buddha*. Some Tibetan perspectives,” in *Rashīd al-Dīn*, 197-211.

<sup>574</sup> For some theories about the identity of Kāmalashrī, in particular, in light of the connections between Tibetan Buddhism and Kashmiri Buddhism, see Yoeli-Tlalim, 202-204. One theory is that Kāmalashrī was a Kashmiri based in China. It has been suggested that we should view Rashīd al-Dīn’s presentation of Buddhism more as a collaborative work of cultural translation between the two than a single authored text. Akasoy, 189.

<sup>575</sup> Thus, Jahn argues that: “In my opinion, it is scarcely open to doubt that the account given by *Kāmalashrī* of *Buddha* and his teaching convey a picture of the religious opinions and conceptions which were commonly held by the Mongols of Iran.” Jahn, “Kāmalashrī - Rashīd al-Dīn,” xxxiii.

<sup>576</sup> Yoeli-Tlalim, 207-208.

Dīn's account indicates that Buddhism as practiced in the Ilkhanate was drawn from diverse Buddhist traditions from across Asia.<sup>577</sup>

Aside for several exceptions such as the account of the Buddha's achievement of nirvana in a dome-shaped structure made of pure crystal (*gunbadī az bullūr-i pāk*),<sup>578</sup> the three main foci of Rashīd al-Dīn's account - the Buddha's biography, the Wheel of Life, and the worship of Maitreya - are rather faithful and straightforward accounts of the Buddha's life and Buddhist doctrines. Johan Elverskog observes that Rashīd al-Dīn's account pays extra attention to Buddhist ideas of reward and punishment, as well as to Buddhist notions of heaven and hell. He wonders whether this is on account of its correlation with Islamic tradition, or of Rashīd al-Dīn's attempt "to make the Dharma comprehensible and possibly even palatable to a Muslim audience".<sup>579</sup> It is evident that Rashīd al-Dīn generously utilizes Muslim terms to explain Buddhist ideas, thus, fostering certain commonalities between Buddhism and Islam. For example, the Buddhist demon Mara is addressed as *Iblīs*, and the Buddha's spiritual advancement is cast in Sufi terminology.<sup>580</sup>

---

<sup>577</sup> As Elverskog notes, it is important to remember that "the Mongol empire brought together not only the Buddhist and Muslim worlds; it also brought together for the first time Buddhists of many different cultural backgrounds and religious affiliations [...] and it is precisely this rich Buddhist diversity of Il-khanid Iran that the *Compendium of Chronicles* captures [...] and] that is too often obscured when modern scholars try to make distinctions based on narrow definitions of either doctrinal affiliation or modern ethnolnational identifications." Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam*, 162. Elverskog, however, also details a number of instances where there would appear to be stronger Central-Asian and Chinese influences in the text (*Ibid.*, 157-160) whereas Yoeli-Tlalim seems to prefer the Tantric Tibetan perspective, perhaps even channeled through Uyghur Buddhism. Yoeli-Tlalim, 210-211.

<sup>578</sup> Jahn, "Kāmalashrī - Rashīd al-Dīn," xlviii. I used the reproductions of the facsimiles of the (soul) Arabic and Persian manuscripts included in Jahn's *Rashīd al-Dīn's History of India*. For the death story of the Buddha and for the light in the shape of a pillar that rose out of the top of the dome see, Arabic: Royal Asiatic Society A 27 (dated 714/1314-15), 2077r; and Persian: MS Topkapi Sarayi, 940-Hazine 1654 dated (717/1317), 345r. For the use of crystal lamps in the Islamic world, Avinoam Shalem, "Fountains of light: the meaning of medieval Islamic rock crystal lamps," *Muqarnas* 11 (1994), 1-11. For illustrations of these edifices in the manuscripts, see Sheila R. Canby, "Depictions of Buddha Sakyamuni in the *Jamī 'al-Tavarikh* and the *Majma 'al-Tavarikh*," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993), 304-05.

<sup>579</sup> Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam*, 152-54.

<sup>580</sup> Akasoy, 173-190; Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam*, 154; Jahn, "Kāmalashrī - Rashīd al-Dīn," xlv; for example, he uses such terms as *mukāshafāt*, *ma'rifa*, *'ulūm yaqīniyya*, *khalwa*, and *mujāhada*. See Royal Asiatic Society A 27 (Arabic), 2073v.

The most striking attempt, however, to establish parallels between Muslim and Buddhist doctrines is the presentation of the Buddha Shakyamuni as a prophet with a book, who just like Muḥammad and the Qur'an, arrives at the end of "the same evolutionary prophetic progression as in Islam",<sup>581</sup> Shakyamuni being the seventh and final prophet in this successive line. Rashīd al-Dīn, furthermore, notes that Kāmalashrī had told him that "according to Shākyamūnī, the meaning (*ma'nā*) of all the prophets is one and the same. They come in every age and renew (*yujaddidūn*) their religion [...] and the meaning of all of it is in the book *Abhidharma*".<sup>582</sup> It is further stated that the teachings of the previous prophets were all true, but that their corrupt followers misinterpreted them. As Elverskog observes, Rashīd al-Dīn creates a new historical framework for Buddhism, fitting it neatly into Muslim conceptions about prophetic missions and communication with the divine through revelation. The so-called Buddhist holy book, the *Abhidharma*, however, is not a collection of the words of the Buddha, but rather a compilation of exegesis on the Buddha's teaching.<sup>583</sup>

The idea of viewing together both bodies of writing, Rashīd al-Dīn's *Life and Teachings of the Buddha* on the one hand, and his polemical anti-metempsychosis treatises on the other, are born from Rashīd al-Dīn's own statements, which indicate that in his mind they were, indeed, inseparable. Thus, in spite of the ample attention that Rashīd al-Dīn's account on Buddhism has received, it has been poorly noted that the vizier chose to end his account of the Dharma by adding a treatise on the topic of transmigration, copied from his earlier *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr* (*Key to the commentaries*). Rashīd al-Dīn identifies this treatise as an examination of "the debates that Muslims and the other of People of the Book [Jews?] have with the people of transmigration

---

<sup>581</sup> Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam*, 155-56

<sup>582</sup> This appears in the first chapter on Buddhism. For the Arabic text and English translation, Akasoy, 190-196.

<sup>583</sup> Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam*, 156. As Elverskog further notes, "the question of whether a religious group had a prophet and/or a holy book had always been a part of earlier Muslim taxonomies of Indian religions, and in this regard Buddhism had always come up lacking."

(*ahl-i tanāsukh*) and some of the people who deny the gathering of the bodies (*ḥashr-i ajsād*) [on the day of resurrection] and the materialists/eternalists (*dahrīyān*)<sup>584</sup> and the others.”

Explaining his reasoning for appending this earlier work as the final cord for his account on the Buddha, Rashīd al-Dīn writes that “since the history of Shākyamūnī and the state of his religion, which is the pure religion of transmigration [*maḥḍ dīn al-tanāsukh*], has come to an end, we wished to add at this point the treatise that was previously written by this poor one [Rashīd al-Dīn] regarding the refutation of the transmigration of the souls, and on the weakness of their [the people of transmigration] religion and creed.” He, furthermore, explains that he added this treatise, which disproves “their false claims,” at the end of the description of the Buddha’s life and his doctrine so that it would be “like medicine for the disease” for the readers, who have read his section on Buddhism, uncovering before the readers the depravity of their beliefs.<sup>585</sup>

---

<sup>584</sup> The *dahrī* (externalist) thinkers in the early Islamic period are described as believing in a cosmology with no God, but are often also remarked as holding a belief in some form of reincarnation as well. The *dahrīs* are often coupled in the sources with *zindīqs*. According to al-Jāhiz, the “pure *dahrī*” did not believe in the creator, resurrection or any life after death. They likely owed their name to verse 45:24 in the Qur’an: “there is nothing apart from this life. We die and we live, and nothing but time [*al-dahr*] destroys us.” The *dahrīs* are accused of believing in the heavenly sphere divine, but not to have worshipped them. They are considered by the heresiographers as “rationalists of the reductionist type.” The sources note an affinity between “Dahrism” and pre- and early Islamic period Iranian beliefs such as Khurramdīnism, or Manichaeism. From the tenth century onwards, the main “debate” with the *dahrīs* was concerned with the existence of the afterlife. Patricia Crone, “Dahrīs,” *EI3*. Brill, online. Accessed April 2, 2016. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/dahrīs-COM\\_25780?s.num=9&s.start=0](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/dahrīs-COM_25780?s.num=9&s.start=0); Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: rural revolt and local Zoroastrianism* (Cambridge, 2012), 247-49.

<sup>585</sup> Royal Asiatic Society A 27 (dated 714/1314-15), 2077v; MS Topkapi Sarayi, 940-Hazine 1654 dated (717/1317), 345r-345v. Rashīd al-Dīn’s decision to repeat at the end of his *Life of the Buddha* his earlier treatise against transmigration from *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr* seems a particularly fitting choice as one can make the case that the vizier’s *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr* was linked to Ilkhanid court disputations between Buddhists and Muslims. As we noted, in his *Life and Teachings of the Buddha* Rashīd al-Dīn pays particular attention to Buddhist notions of karma and reincarnation (the Wheel of Life), reward and punishment, and the Buddhist perceptions of heaven and hell. *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr* addresses the same set of topics, albeit from the Muslim perspective. Hence, the first epistle in the second section (*qism*) of *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr* is titled “on good and evil,” and discusses questions such as why God created good and evil, do pure evil and pure good exist, and will evildoers and good doers be punished or rewarded in this world or the next, and in what manner. The second epistle focuses on “the rewards of good and bad actions.” The third epistle deals with “the hour of death and length of life, and on charity that could repel misfortune,” whereas the fourth examines “the question of predestination” (*jabr va-qadr*). This is followed by Rashīd al-Dīn’s first treatise against the transmigration of souls, which the vizier appended to the end of his *Life and Teachings of the Buddha*. The final



The treatise starts with an outline of the main points of disagreement between the two parties, the “people of transmigration” and the “People of the Book”:

The people of transmigration (*tanāsukh*) believe in the pre-existence (*qidam*) of the souls and that every soul that leaves the body, immediately joins (*ta'alluq*) another body in accordance with the actions of that person. They even say that every soul that reaches a lower level joins vile bodies to the extent that [they say that] it also joins the bodies of vile animals, until they reach the level of a mosquito. And every soul that *reaches perfection* [my emphasis] joins a body that is nobler (*ashraf*) than its earlier body, and also a few souls that reach perfection join nobler bodies *until they reach the degree of kings and prophets* [my emphasis]. And the school/dogma (*madhhab*) of the Muslims and the rest of the People of the Book is that the soul does not pre-exist, but is temporally created (*muḥdath*), and the resurrection of the bodies (*ḥashr-i ajsād*) will definitely take place, but in the same body that the soul left. The people who do good deeds, will go to heaven, and the people who do bad, will go to hell.<sup>586</sup>

The main points of disagreement according to Rashīd al-Dīn are, therefore, the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul in contrast to the temporal origination of the soul;<sup>587</sup> and the transmigration of the souls into new bodies after death, in accordance with the individual's accumulation of karma and his/her station of perfection, in contrast to the fate of the souls in

---

epistle is particularly intriguing as it mirrors the Buddhist discussion of karma and good fortune by exploring the subtle differences between “capacity/capability (*isti'dād*), happiness (*sa'adat*), fortunate horoscope (*tāli'-i mas'ūd*), good fortune (*iqbāl*), turn of fortune (*davlat*), and divine favor (*tavfiq*)”. Rashīd al-Dīn combines here a diverse body of dispersed and overlapping categories of good fortune (Neoplatonic, Iranian, Islamic, and astronomical) and places them into a ranked order, from the most general (*isti'dād*) to the most distinct (*tavfiq*). Towards the end of his discussion, he illustrates this hierarchical setting through the example of the process of attaining kingship: from an individual who has the most basic capacity (*isti'dād*) for kingship, through the quality that he shares with the other commanders and chiefs of the state (happiness, *sa'adat*), to the moment when he is able to successfully sit on the throne (fortunate horoscope, *tāli'-i nīk*), and fully act as a king (turn of fortune, *davlat*), and finally, when he is able to keep the throne until his natural death in old age and bequeaths it to a son (divine favor, *tavfiq*) (246). Rashīd al-Dīn appears to construct here a model of a gradually increasing and ever-more exclusive stages of good fortune that could explain kingly success in a way that would both speak to and compete with a Buddhist explanation of kingship, as well as be compatible with the Mongol understanding of Chinggisid success based on the unique “good fortune” (*qut/suu*) that Chinggis Khan and his offspring were granted. *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, 127-24 (239-49 for his discussion on *isti'dād*). Allsen, “A note on Mongol imperial ideology,” 6-7. Thus, on the one hand, these treatises deal with what might constitute (“classical”) *kalām* topics, but on the other hand, this particular combination of topical treatises in *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, which end with the treatise against metempsychosis, might suggest that the vizier had drawn from materials possibly collected earlier for the purpose of Muslim-Buddhist disputations. Naturally, both explanations complete, rather than contradict each other.

<sup>586</sup> *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, 211.

<sup>587</sup> For the ranging approaches of Muslim thinkers, specially Illuminationist thinkers from al-Suhrawardī onwards, to the question of metempsychosis and in particular, the temporal origin versus the pre-eternity existence of the soul, Sabine Schmidtke, “The doctrine of the transmigration of soul according to Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (killed 587/1191) and his followers,” *Studia Iranica* 28 (1999): 237-54.

heaven or hell in accordance with an individual's actions and the resurrection of one's soul in the same body on the Day of Judgment. Rashīd al-Dīn's statement, however, also points towards one of the main advantages of Buddhism at the Mongol courts, that is, the ability the Buddhist doctrine of reincarnation (the Wheel of Life) to explain and confirm the exceptionality of the Chinggisids, and guarantee their future rank.

That the Buddhist clergy argued at the Ilkhanid court that the Ilkhans gained kingship through their souls' accumulation of merit and their self-perfection in past lives is found in a letter composed by the Buddhist monk Togdugpa (d. 1267) of the Tibetan Kaygü monastery of Drigung, which the Ilkhan Hülegü had financially supported. In the letter addressed to the "Bodhisattva prince Hülegü," it is stated that:

In general, these days, being born into a lineage of princes, you are one of great merit, *but this is the result of having accumulated a great store of merit in past lives* [my emphasis]. Such roots of virtue have made you the lord of all the monks who are following Sakyamuni, and more specifically by taking ownership of this precious Kaygü school you have accumulated a great wave of accumulated merit [...] Keeping virtue in the beginning, middle and end, the ritual services for the bodily health of the princely father and sons will result in great merit, such that *there will be a transmission/rebirth of only wheel-turning kings (cakravartin kings)* [my emphasis] and it will serve as cause of one day becoming a completely awakened Buddha.<sup>588</sup>

The letter provides Hülegü and his offspring with a moral, karma-based theory of kingship. It promises Hülegü's and his descendants' future reincarnation as Buddhist universal emperors, *Cakravartin* kings, or even fully awaked Buddhas, in exchange for their patronage of the Buddhist community and adherence to Buddhist precepts and ritual. Rashīd al-Dīn appropriates al-Rāzī's theory of ethical perfection in order to redefine Ṣāḥīb-Qirān-kingship as a new category of sacred perfect souls positioned alongside the souls of the saints and the

---

<sup>588</sup> Translation by Jampa Samten and Dan Martin, "Letters to the khans: six Tibetan epistles of Togdugpa addressed to the Mongol rulers Huleu and Khubilai, as well as to the Tibetan Lama Pagpa," in *Trails of the Tibetan Tradition, Papers for Elliot Sperling*, eds. Roberto Vitali (Dharamshala, 2014; republished in *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 31 [2015]), 310.

prophets. Rashīd al-Dīn offers, therefore, an alternative ethical model to the Buddhist model of moral sacral and universal kingship.<sup>589</sup> Yet, he also uses al-Rāzī's model to undermine the very basis of the Buddhist explanation of Chinggisid kingship, namely that the accumulation of perfection requires corporal reincarnation.

### **Perfect Souls, imperfect Bodies: Rashīd al-Dīn's Refutation of the *ahl-i tanāsukh***

Judith Pfeiffer has noted that in his treatises against transmigration, "Rashīd al-Dīn discussed the Muslim perspective and past Muslim debates on the topic just as much as the perspective of his Mongol interlocutors".<sup>590</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn's counter arguments in his three treatises against transmigration and on the issue of the resurrection of the bodies, indeed, appear at times to be directed at a varied and unspecified audience that includes not just Buddhist practitioners, but also, for example, those who deny the existence of the afterlife, heaven and hell, and resurrection altogether.<sup>591</sup> The first treatise on "the debates that Muslims and the other of People of the Book have with the people of transmigration (*ahl-i tanāsukh*) and some of the people who deny the gathering of the bodies (*hashr-i ajsād*)" in *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr* is structured as a hypothetical debate or conversation with an unidentified, probably imaginary contender (*mu'arīd*).

It starts with a discussion of the question of the eternity of the soul.<sup>592</sup> The vizier, next, approaches the question of corporal "indwelling" (*hulūl*) and links it to the question of bodily

---

<sup>589</sup> See also my discussion of the Buddhist *cakravartin* kingship and the Jewish vizier Sa'd al-Dawla's utilization of the title of *Ṣāhib-Qirān* in his *maḥḍar* and *akhlāq-ethical* model of the Ilkhan Arghun's kingship.

<sup>590</sup> Pfeiffer, "Canonization," 66-67.

<sup>591</sup> On the belief in reincarnation among Iranian communities in the early Islamic period, Crone, *Nativist Prophets*, 233-252. On the continued belief in *tanāsukh* amongst medieval and early modern Iranian *ghulāt*, Kathryn Babayan's discussion of the Nuqtavis, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 57-117 (for example, 107-8).

<sup>592</sup> Which the vizier answers in summary since he notes to have addressed the topic of the temporal origination of the soul (*muḥḍath/mu'allaf*) in his *Kitāb-i tavḍīḥāt-i rashīdī*. *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, 212.

resurrection. One of the main arguments the vizier introduces concerns the exclusive interrelationship between specific souls and specific bodies on the basis the Avicennian notion of the unequal distribution of intellectual capacity: no single soul has the same capacity and, therefore, there can only be one compatible body for each soul, and vice versa.<sup>593</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn concludes from this that “on the day that the angel Isrāfīl blows his trumpet,” the souls must be reunited (*ḥulūl*) with and resurrected in the same bodies.<sup>594</sup>

In response, the adversary raises the following hypothetical question, which appears to reflect the Buddhist doctrine of reincarnation:

You explained that at the beginning, the soul joins a body that matches this specific soul [...] and the body must be specific and match this soul; and we accepted this meaning; but when the soul reaches perfection, the body that it had at first, does not match this perfection; so it has to join another body that matches this later perfection [...]<sup>595</sup>

The vizier’s answer is that since he showed earlier that “the resurrection of the bodies (*ḥashr-i abdān*) will happen in the last body that the soul had left, there is no doubt that at that moment [of resurrection], the body will match it [the soul’s level of perfection].” Rashīd al-Dīn uses here the notion of “that by which the solubles [that dissolve] in the body are substituted” (*badala mā yataḥallalu*),<sup>596</sup> which he addressed earlier as a proof for how bodies can change over time, during an individual’s lifetime. He argues that God’s reasoning for this process is “that an

---

<sup>593</sup> Thus, he explains that “if one were to wonder how it is possible that the same body parts that were joined to the elements, would be gathered together once again [with the resurrection], I say that it is even more astounding that the same body parts would *not* be gathered together for the body of that [same] soul and instead of it, have other body parts rejoined [on the Day of Resurrection].” Since it is agreed that no two things are entirely identical, and “each soul and each body have a special capacity/aptitude (*isti`dād-i khāṣṣ*) that is different (*dūn*) from other aptitudes, and that the parts of the elements match each [specific] body, and the soul that matches this [body] attaches itself to it, each [body and soul] have a [specific, exclusive] aptitude/capacity for each other.”

<sup>594</sup> Since the soul cannot change (*mutabaddil*) and the body must exactly match the soul, no single component of the body can change as well. Ibid., 217-19.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid., 219-20.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid., 216-17. This expression is also found in Ṭūsī. Joep Lameer, *The Arabic Version of Ṭūsī’s Nasirean Ethics* (Leiden, 2015), 275.

individual's body would match the perfection and states of his soul; since existence without compatibility between the two is impossible.”

Rashīd al-Dīn, however, is challenged once again by his theoretical adversary, who asks: if bodies gradually change, just like when a person grows old and his body gradually disintegrates and weakens, but his morality becomes even stronger (*adabtar*),<sup>597</sup> that is, his soul advances in perfection, but also the soul will inhabit a body that is the best fit for its state at the time of resurrection, how, then, could this perfected soul return on the Day of Judgment to the feeble body it had left earlier? Rashīd al-Dīn's answer is that “the states of perfections of men, and their reward and punishment differ greatly during their lifetime.” On the Day of Resurrection, all of the individuals' sins and good deeds will be weighed against each other and a balance (*mīzān*) will be received, and the body will be prepared and arranged (*murattab*) in accordance with the received balance. Thus, the vizier explains that when he speaks of the compatibility of the body to the soul, he refers to its compatibility to the soul in the original state (*asl*), to the compatibility of “every body part, each moment, to each action” of an individual, and finally, to the weighing of sins and good deeds in the Final Judgment.<sup>598</sup>

The vizier's answers are informed by al-Rāzī's thinking. Shihadeh notes that al-Rāzī also directed his theory of the intellectual-moral perfection of the soul through the acquisition of knowledge to the souls' fate after death: “the soul also survives the death of the body, and experiences posthumous happiness or misery in accordance with its level of perfection or imperfection”.<sup>599</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn follows this equation by explaining that those who gradually

---

<sup>597</sup> This can be compared with one of the proofs al-Rāzī lists for the immateriality of the soul, that “intellectual power, if bodily, would get more and more weakened with old age. However, the opposite is in fact the case.” Jules Janssens, “Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī on the soul: a critical approach to Ibn Sīnā,” *The Muslim World* 102 (2012), 576.

<sup>598</sup> *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, 220-21.

<sup>599</sup> “As knowledge becomes the constituent of the soul's perfection, the pursuit of knowledge, i.e., rational reflection, becomes almost intrinsically good.” Shihadeh, “From al-Ghazāi to al-Rāzī,” 173.

reach perfection and knowledge in their lifetime, through the instrument of the body and by gaining empirical knowledge/experience and learning, will enjoy, when they reach haven (*bihishtīyān*), a perfect intellect and knowledge as well as a perfect body, due to their good actions. The same, he argues, applies to those who go to hell (*dūzakhīyān*), whose entire body parts will match their actions and “will be intermixed with punishment” when they are resurrected.<sup>600</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn seems to concur here with the Buddhist understanding that as the soul attains a higher level of perfection, it is also in a need for a corresponding body. He, thus, focuses on disputing the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth by arguing for the changeability of the (same) body to match the soul, both during one’s lifetime, and at the moment of resurrection.

In his second treatise composed two or more years later, the *Nafā’is al-afkār* (*The Precious Thoughts*), Rashīd al-Dīn returns once more to the question of how the perfected soul can return on the Day of Resurrection to its imperfect body. Here again al-Rāzī’s influence is clearly discernible. In this second work, we see that Rashīd al-Dīn further ventures in the particular details about the soul’s whereabouts and actions in the afterlife, and its relationship to the body after its disembodiment.<sup>601</sup>

Al-Rāzī believed that the soul retains its perfection when it departs from the body, and moreover, that some souls that perfected themselves to a certain degree in this lifetime, will

---

<sup>600</sup> Ibid., 222.

<sup>601</sup> At the beginning of the treatise, the vizier presents the questions that the *mu’arid*, the contender had supposedly asked him following the first treatise:

You showed that each human soul after it leaves the body must attach itself to a body and its attachment will be to the same body, and you determined that this would take place on the Day of Resurrection. Then, where does the soul reside until the Day of Resurrection, after it had disembodied, and what are its states?  
*Second:* if in its first existence (*nash’at*) [literally: growth], the soul cannot be without a body, how can we conceive of it existing without a body from the moment of corporal death to the Day of Resurrection?

*Third:* can we conceive or not of the disembodied soul achieving a different perfection than that which it achieved through a body in this world? And if so, at the time that the soul does not have a body (*tajrīd*) can the soul enjoy in heaven or in hell perfection and advancement (*taraqqī*) or experience reward and punishment?

Ibid., 254-55. Rashīd al-Dīn starts his answers by arguing that the soul does need a place after its departure (*az jā mustaghānā*) since it is not material (*jism va-jismānī*).

continue to increase in perfection in the afterlife, even without a body.<sup>602</sup> In *Nafā'is al-afkār*, Rashīd al-Dīn explains once more that the purpose of the rational soul's link to the human body is to use it as an instrument for acquiring knowledge, and attaining theoretical perfection and happiness. One's actions, good or bad, and the perfections achieved through the body, are carried within the soul (*dar dhāt-i ū*) into the hereafter.<sup>603</sup> On the basis of these perfections reached in the lifetime, the departed soul continues to achieve new kinds of eternal perfections in the afterlife.<sup>604</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn addresses once more the question how the soul (*nafs-i sharīf*) that had undergone further perfections, can return to the same base body (*badan-i khasīs*) it had earlier discarded. The vizier's answer is that if at first the soul needed the body to achieve perfection, in the second round (*nash'at-i thānī*), after the resurrection, the body is in need of the soul to gain its perfection.<sup>605</sup> The vizier develops here the idea that the soul perfects (*takmīl*) the body in accordance with the rewards and punishments it gained during an individual's lifetime. He, furthermore, links the soul's role in watching over and perfecting (*takmīl/tarbiyat*) the body to the ability of certain souls to ascend to heaven with their bodies: when the soul is strong enough it can perfect the body to such a degree that the body ascends (*'urūj*) with the soul and the soul carries the body with it.<sup>606</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn's reference to the body-soul ascension in *Nafā'is al-afkār* relies on his earlier discussion of the exceptionality of the Prophet Muḥammad's ascension. In his epistle on

---

<sup>602</sup> Shihadeh, *Teleological Ethics*, 117.

<sup>603</sup> *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, 263.

<sup>604</sup> See Rashīd al-Dīn's discussion of the possibility of attaining new, eternal perfections without a prism of the body (yet on the basis of the knowledge and intellectual-theoretical perfections achieved with the body), which he refers to as *kamāl-i thānī*. Ibid., 264-5.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid., 260.

<sup>606</sup> The vizier explains that a strong perfect soul can perfect the body to the degree that it is with it like "the sugar that dissolves in water." Ibid., 275.



*Bayān al-mi'raj* (the explanation of the Prophet's ascension) in *Kitāb al-tawḍīḥāt*, the vizier discusses the question of the prophet's ascension with the soul or the body and argues that the Prophet's ascension (*mi'raj*) was superior to the ascensions (*'urūj*) of other prophets. In addition to his corporal ascension, which other prophets share with him, Muḥammad also "ascended (*'araja*) through the ranks and perfections so that no level of human perfection remained for him to ascend [...] and this is the reason for the superiority of his illiteracy (*ummīyatihī*) since he had no need to study the sciences and achieve perfection in this world through the body".<sup>607</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn follows al-Rāzī here in arguing that the Prophet's *mi'raj* was both corporal and spiritual.<sup>608</sup> The superiority of the Prophet is gauged through his lack of a need for a body to attain perfection, a quality not shared by other prophets. The vizier, further, explains that:

Since he was a prophet prior to his attachment to the body, and prophethood is the final [stage of human] perfection, we learn that his perfection was not achieved through the body, as full perfection (*muṭlaq al-kamāl*) is conceived and proven to be without the body. As long as [his] perfection is attached to a body and he does not exceed the human rank [of perfection], he [the Prophet] needs the body, but when he ascends beyond the [point of] human perfection and exceeds it, God's gifts (*mawāhib*) continuously flow to him without the [mediation of the] body.<sup>609</sup>

---

<sup>607</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn's understanding is based on al-Rāzī, who divides the Prophet's ascension to two stages from the visible, corporal world, to the invisible, spiritual world, and from the invisible to the more invisible world (*'ālam ghayb al-ghayb*): "the world of the spirits is infinite, and that is since the final ranks of the spirits are the human spirits, then, you rise in the ascension of perfections (*mi'raj al-kamālāt*) and the level of happiness until you reach the spirits that are linked to the sky of the world [...] until you reach the spirits who dwell in the levels of the throne, and they too vary in their superiority." Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Taḥṣīn al-kabīr*, 1 (Cairo, 1938), 275-76.

<sup>608</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn appropriates a number of al-Rāzī's rationalistic proofs for the Prophet's accession in both spirit and body, in contrast to Ibn Sīnā's allegorical understanding of the Prophet's *mi'raj* as only spiritual and not physical. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Taḥṣīn al-kabīr*, 20, 145-52. On Ibn Sīnā's understanding of the *mi'raj*, Peter Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā): with a translation of the Book of the Prophet Muḥammad's Ascent to Heaven* (Philadelphia, 1992). The question of the Prophet's corporal ascension continued to be debated in the Ottoman period as well. The Ottoman author Veysī, for example, also saw in the doubts cast on the Prophet's ascension from the arena of physics a "very real, highly debated, and quite timely issue." Hagen, "Skepticism and forgiveness: The *Mi'raj* in Veysī's *Dürretü t-tāc*," in *The Prophet's Ascension: cross-cultural encounters with the Islamic mi'raj tales*, eds. Christiane Gruber and Frederick Colby (Bloomington, 2010), 206-24.

<sup>609</sup> Christiane J. Gruber, *The Prophet Muḥammad's Ascension (mi'raj) in Islamic Art and Literature, ca. 1300-1600* (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2005), Appendix 1: Rashīd al-Dīn, *Majmū'a*, BnF Arabe 2324, folios 129r-129v.





Rashīd al-Dīn notes that the people of transmigration (*ahl-i tanāsukh*) take the Prophet's words to mean that "he had been in a body since eternity, and now he is in another body." He argues that the Qur'anic verse (18:110) "I am but a man like yourselves" shows that "revelation and prophethood are not attached to a body since [...] the body of those who have revelation and prophethood does not have any additional advantage over other bodies." He explains that the Prophet's intention was to state that his prophethood was predetermined and awaited him until the moment of his mission, when he was granted perfect knowledge and intellect.<sup>612</sup> If Muḥammad's exceptional prophethood is incorporeal so is Öljeitü's exceptional kingship in Rashīd al-Dīn's thought. Öljeitü's kingship becomes in this way an argument against the Buddhist reincarnation.

### **Öljeitü's Exceptional Life Cycle in *Nafā'is al-afkār* and Muḥammad-Centered Kingship**

Rashīd al-Dīn argues against the soul's need for a new body to retain its moral and intellectual perfection or in order for it to gain further perfections after death. He uses this to dispute the foundation of the Buddhist theory of Chinggisid kingship. Rashīd al-Dīn's second approach aims to offer an alternative theory, one that could accommodate Chinggisid exceptionality both in this life and in the hereafter.

In *Nafā'is al-afkār*, we see the vizier establishing the exceptionality of Öljeitü's soul through Rashīd al-Dīn's discussion of the experiences of the soul in the afterlife. While the central themes in *Nafā'is al-afkār* largely correspond with his first treatise on the topic of transmigration and corporal resurrection, the work also differs with its greater emphasis on the stratification of human souls and bodies, both in this world and in the afterlife, and the pre-

---

<sup>612</sup> Ff. 216r-216v. In the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, Rashīd al-Dīn reports Ghazan making a statement as the falseness of idol worship arguing that it is a mistake to worship the body of perfect men by making idols in their shape, since the soul is the essence, and once it leaves the body, the body disintegrates. Rather, instead of focusing on the body's condition, one should focus on the afterlife, and the "states of the holy spirits;" through this, one can attain perfection. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1334; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 664-65.

determined exceptionality of some soul-bodies in the grave.<sup>613</sup> For example, Rashīd al-Dīn employs al-Rāzī's theory of human perfection to describe the journey of the soul after it disengages from the body. According to Muslim traditions, as the spirit leaves the body, it travels to behold the seven heavens and the seven hells, and journeys back to be reunited in the grave with the corpse.

With the soul dwelling in it or by it once again, the corpse returns to a semblance of life with consciousness in the grave, though not entirely alive. Next, the first judgment, the inquisition of the grave takes place, where two angels, Munkar and Nakīr, ask the dead about his/her religion and question him/her on points of dogma. Most theologians seem to believe that the soul remains in the grave with the body or by the body until the Day of Resurrection. In accordance with one's sins and good deeds during his lifetime, the corpse and soul experience the torture of the grave (*'adhāb al-qabr*) cleansing the soul from its sins until the Day of Judgment. This stage is called the *barzakh*. In its life in the grave, the spirit experiences the torture of its personal hell or the bliss of its personal paradise. Its state in the grave reflects its actions in lifetime and the future that awaits it in the "real" heaven or hell after the Day of Judgment.<sup>614</sup>

---

<sup>613</sup> Thus, he explains that "the souls of the prophets, the saints, the perfect kings (*pādishāhān-i kāmil*), the religious scholars and the elite (*afāḍil*) differ greatly from the souls of commoners in relations to their primal nature (*dar aṣl-i fitra*)" and "their capacity/aptitude," and although this difference is not observable during their childhood, when they grow up, they reach different levels of perfection through their body in accordance with their initial capacity. As for "the states of the body" in the afterlife and its relationship to the varied perfections of the souls, the vizier illustrates this with the example of a bridge set above a river (death) that all, from kings to beggars, need to pass, and therefore, everyone have equal rights and duties in regards to the bridge (*huqūq-i pul*); but since the kings, the amirs and fortunate ones have with them greater treasures and possessions than others (perfections), they gain more by passing the bridge and have greater rights and duties with regards to the bridge (*huqūq-i pul bar īshān bīshṭar*). Once they safely pass the bridge with their valuables, they show their gratitude by building new bridges from their private riches. *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, 260-61.

<sup>614</sup> A.J. Wensinck, and A.S. Tritton, "'Adhāb al-Ḳabr,'" *ET*<sup>2</sup>. Brill, online. Accessed March 22, 2016. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/adhab-al-kabr-SIM\\_0301](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/adhab-al-kabr-SIM_0301); Lior Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave: death rites and the making of Islamic society* (New York, 2007), 197-225.

In *Nafā'is al-afkār*, Rashīd al-Dīn explains that all souls, be they perfect or deficient (*kāmil va-nāqis*), first undergo the “hell” (*dūzakh*) of the grave, but that their experience of the torments of the grave widely differs. Thus, a highly selective group of souls are entirely exempt from the torments in the grave. For these souls, the stage of being questioned by Munkar and Nakīr, which all souls undergo, constitutes their personal hell. When these souls are released from the questioning and are purified, “they become perfect” in accordance with their rank, and the ranks of their perfection, too, vary greatly, each according to their previous lives. Some of these souls’ perfection is so great that they are immediately, entirely freed from experiencing a personal hell (*dūzakh-i khūd*), and they are sent directly to their personal heaven (*bihisht-i khūd*) in the grave; and for an individual whose perfection is of the greatest kind (i.e., the Prophet Muḥammad), the heaven of the grave constitutes the hell he will experience in the grave.<sup>615</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn strives to point out here that “the souls of the prophets, the saints, the perfect kings (*pādishāhān-i kāmil*), the religious scholars and the elite (*afāḍil*) differ greatly from the souls of commoners in relations to their primal nature (*dar aṣl-i fiṭra*)” and “their capacity/aptitude” to achieve perfection, and that this has a major bearing on their experiences and fate after death.<sup>616</sup>

He, thus, implies that the favorable and moreover, exceptional fate of his Mongol patron Öljeitü, to whom he ascribes a perfect rank of kingship, is a matter of certainty.<sup>617</sup>

---

<sup>615</sup> *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, 262.

<sup>616</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

<sup>617</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn further develops this understanding of a hierarchical experience in the afterlife in his discussion of the system of rewards and punishments in heaven or hell, after the final judgment. In his third and final treatise on “the falsity of the transmigration of souls (*buṭlān-i tanāsukh*) and the validity of the gathering of the bodies on the Day of Judgment” in the *As’ila va-ajviba*, he explains that on the Day of Judgment, individuals will be collected together into groups (*tā’ifa*) according to their bad and good actions, the type of sins they committed and their level (*martaba*). God will, then, pass a single verdict (*hukm*) for each group, if their fate is the bliss of paradise or the pits of hell. Thus, the two groups of the dwellers of hell and the dwellers of paradise are further differentiated into smaller subgroups: there are different degrees of bliss in paradise, divided between the top garden and the lower spheres, just as there are different levels of degradation in hell. According to the vizier, this stratified division of souls will also reflect their division into social classes in this world and especially the class of kings, “who are the shadows of God and God’s caliphs on earth, and whom God designated with qualities similar to his own: when they

These passages explain why Rashīd al-Dīn chose to end (*dhayl*) his discussion of prophethood in *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* with his treatise of *Nafā'is al-afkār*.<sup>618</sup> As examined earlier, the vizier dedicates the introduction (*fātiḥa*) of *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* to a discussion of the miracles and proofs of his patron Öljeitü's exceptional rank of perfect kingship, from the Mongol ruler's miraculous birth story to his exceptional, divinely inspired intellect and wisdom, which has the capacity to perfect the intellects of others. With his refutation of metempsychosis in *Nafā'is al-afkār*, Rashīd al-Dīn brings into the afterlife his earlier discussion of the exceptionality of Öljeitü's radiant soul on the basis of al-Rāzī's theory of a hierarchy of human souls. As noted above, the core of *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* is devoted to an extended discussion of prophethood, from the differences between revelation and inspiration to the various ranks of the prophets. The main purpose of Rashīd al-Dīn's extensive discussion of prophethood in *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* is the demonstration of the superior, perfect rank of the Prophet Muḥammad.<sup>619</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn, thus, frames Muḥammad's exceptional prophethood with the exceptional life cycle of his Mongol patron Öljeitü. The work that starts with the Ilkhan's miraculous moment of birth, which foretells his future rank, ends with his promised bliss in the life in the grave awaiting the Final Judgment, and in paradise after the resurrection.

Rashīd al-Dīn constructs Öljeitü's exceptional kingship as paralleling the finality of Muḥammad's prophethood: a "Muḥammad-imitating king." He does not only replace the Prophet

---

show kindness and mercy and honor the slaves/subjects, and especially when they labor in the general managing of the kingdom." And this is in accordance with verses 51:20-21: "On the earth are signs for those of assured Faith. As also in your own selves: Will you not then see?". Rashīd al-Dīn, thus, implies that the Ilkhan Öljeitü's favorable fate in the paradise in the grave and in paradise after the resurrection is, guaranteed by his kingly rank. *As'ila va-ajviba*, 8ff. On the hierarchisations of hell and paradise, and the way they reflect the moral and social order of this world, Christian Lange, *Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions* (New York, 2016), 154-162.

<sup>618</sup> See above, and also *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, 254.

<sup>619</sup> For example, *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, 126, 129, 131.

through his leadership of the community, but also has an ontological semblance to the Prophet.<sup>620</sup> both Muḥammad and Öljeitü are positioned at the extreme ends of a hierarchy of human perfection; their illiteracy and lack of previous learning are part and parcel of their perfect intellect and intuitive knowledge; they communicate with the divine through revelation (Muḥammad) or inspiration (Öljeitü); they perform miracles, from Muḥammad's splitting of the moon to Öljeitü's protection of the realm from calamities; and they are each assigned the task perfecting the souls of others. Öljeitü's "Muḥammad-imitating" kingship, nevertheless, is a double-edged sword. It sets with Muḥammad's prophethood a clear limit to the Ilkhan's authority and power. In Rashīd al-Dīn's "prophetology," Öljeitü's unmediated channel to the divine can only be second to Muḥammad's mediated revelation and link with God.<sup>621</sup> In other words, Rashīd al-Dīn "sacralizes" Öljeitü's kingship in Islam, but he also "desacralizes" Öljeitü's sacral Chinggisid status. Öljeitü's new rank of sacral Muslim kingship is a demotion, not a promotion.

### **Muḥammad's Abrogation of Buddhism and Rashīd al-Dīn's Reinterpretation of Mahāyāna Buddhism**

Describing his methods when engaging with the Buddhists at court, Rashīd al-Dīn provides the following explanation in *Nafā'is al-afkār* (*The precious thoughts*):

If [there is] a group of idol worshipers [the Buddhists] or a different group that does not believe in prophets and sacred scriptures (*kutub-i rabbānī*) and are deniers (*munkir*), it is necessary to rationally discuss (*ma'qūl baḥṭh*) with them and prove it [prophethood] to them with rational proofs (*dalā'il va barāhīn-i 'aqlī*). And time and time again it happened to this poor one [the vizier] that he discussed with people who are renowned for wisdom and knowledge, and are the leaders of the idol worshipers, and learnt their method, secrets, truths and inner secrets, in which they believe. And since I was occupied with writing the

---

<sup>620</sup> Compare with the medieval Christian world, where according to Kantorowicz: "it was the language of christological exemplarism which was used throughout to proclaim the king as a *typus Christi*. This typology actually covered two aspects of the royal office, one ontological and the other functional, and both were reflected in the honorary titles which so often exalted the mediaeval ruler: 'image of Christ' and 'Vicar of Christ'." Kantorowicz, 88-89.

<sup>621</sup> Thus, we might wish to consider in this light Rashīd al-Dīn's choice to start his discussion of prophetology in *Kitāb al-sultāniyya* with the Ilkhan's question on the superiority of mediated or unmediated revelation (above).

*Compendium of Chronicles*, I requested to learn their states [history], and by these means, also gain knowledge about their states, stories and the principles of their creed, and during this, I intellectually discussed with them each matter. Since they have a wise and tender (*laṭīf*) nature and they listen to reason and speak with reason, it became known from their words that their school/dogma (*madhhab*), too, does not say that the world is completely ancient and they, too, believe it is impossible that the world is completely eternal and uncreated; but they say that it will exist for a great, endless number of years, and although they do not believe in the deluge of Noah, they do agree with the general deluge (*tūfān-i kullī*) and the resurrection.<sup>622</sup>

Reading this passage, one's attention is immediately drawn to Rashīd al-Dīn's claim to have employed rationalistic arguments (*ma'qūl baḥth*) and rational proofs (*dalā'il va barāhīn-i 'aqlī*) in his engagement with the Buddhist monks at the court.<sup>623</sup> What does the vizier mean by rational speech and rational proofs? Is he referring here to *'ilm al-kalām*, theological reasoning,<sup>624</sup> to philosophical argumentation, or possibly to his assumption of the theories of one of the great *mutakallimūn*, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī?

It is interesting in this regard to consider the way Rashīd al-Dīn uses al-Rāzī's hierarchy of souls not only, as discussed earlier, in his refutation of Buddhism, but also in his explanation of the Buddhist path. Indeed, Rashīd al-Dīn links in the passage above between his presentation of the Dharma in the *Life and Teachings of the Buddha* and his endeavor to convince the

---

<sup>622</sup> *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, 282-3.

<sup>623</sup> Writing of his experiences at the multilateral court debate that took place in 1254 at the court of the great Qa'an Möngke, the Franciscan William of Rubruck reports that the disputation at the Mongol court was comprised of two stages: first, the different parties were required to submit written statements explaining their doctrines; second, an oral exchange between the various parties. We should consider, therefore, the possibility that Rashīd al-Dīn's description of the Buddhist doctrine took its initial form as a translation of such a "written statement" made by the Buddhist monks at the court. Rashīd al-Dīn's above-quoted statement implies that the identification of common grounds through doctrinal discussion with the Buddhists was one step in the process of demonstrating the veracity and superiority of the Muslim faith and refuting core tenets of Buddhism such as the transmigration of souls. Simnānī, for example, claims that his success in refuting the Buddhist dogma of reincarnation triggered his Buddhist discussants' conversion to Islam. See 'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī, *'Alā'uddawla Simnānī: Opera Minora*, ed. W. M. Thackston (Cambridge, 1988), 37; Benjamin Z. Kedar, "The multilateral disputation at the court of the Grand Qan Möngke, 1254," in Hava Lazarus-Yafeh et al. *The Majlis: interreligious encounters in medieval Islam* (Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), 169.

<sup>624</sup> *Kalām* originated as a means of elucidating and defending the tenets of the faith against the deniers and unbelievers.



Buddhists of the veracity of prophethood and revelation and the falsity of their doctrine of reincarnation.

A little noted aspect of Rashīd al-Dīn's presentation of the Buddha as a prophet (above) is the vizier's "rationalistic" explanation of the classification of the Buddhist paths and the superiority of tantric Buddhism (the Varjayāna path). In the first chapter in his account on Buddhism, the vizier explains that "the followers (*al-tābi 'ūn*) of Shākyamūnī" include three groups. The first group, the *śrāvaka/Shrāvaka* ("auditors"), who "belong to a low class, imitate [blindly] (*muqallidūn*) and say: Shākyamūnī guided us to a difficult path, and we reach [our aim] only through diligence and endeavor. So how can we guide the people to the right path, if we are working so hard to redeem ourselves?" The second, middle group is the *pratyekabuddha* ("solitary awakened ones"): "They believe that they save mankind from misfortunes and that they help and support them." The third group, the *samyaksambuddha*, claim that they "are on the highest level and [have reached] the most remote horizon (*al-ufq al-aqsā*); all of them guide (*yurshidūn*) men and perfect the defective souls (*yukammilūn al-nufūs al-nāqiṣa*) by leading them from the level of animals and devils (*al-martaba al-ḥaywāniyya wa'l-shayṭāniyya*) to the level of the angels and of holy intellects (*al-'uqūl al-qudsiyya*). This group dedicates itself to the secrets, signs, investigations, discoveries (*al-mubāḥathāt wa'l-mukāshafāt*) and the wisdom that Shākyamūnī acquired".<sup>625</sup>

Scholars have noted that Rashīd al-Dīn's description of the three groups that follow the Buddha Shākyamūnī reflects a Mahāyāna, or rather Varjayāna (Tantric Buddhism) perspective. The two *śrāvaka* and *pratyekabuddha* paths are envisioned as inferior to the *samyaksambuddha*, the perfectly enlightened Buddha, the focus of the Mahāyāna. The final, superior group that

---

<sup>625</sup> Text and translation in Akasoy, 190-196.



dedicates itself to learning the “secrets” of the Buddha and aims to bring to the enlightenment of others, appears to be the sub-group of the Varjayāna, which the author identifies here as identical with the Mahāyānists in general.<sup>626</sup>

This Mahāyāna (or rather Varjayāna) informed division of the followers of the Buddha, however, also corresponds with Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s classification of souls in accordance with their level of perfection: commoners, saints and prophets. The first group (the *śrāvaka*/auditors), the blind imitators strive in the path of self-redemption, but cannot assist or guide others and are, therefore, the commoners; the second (*pratyekabuddha*/solitary awakened ones) are equivalent to the saints, who perform miracles and save individuals, but cannot perfect others. They are inferior, therefore, to the final group, the *samyaksambuddha*, the perfectly enlightened Buddhas, who are identical to al-Rāzī’s prophets: they work towards perfecting the defective and guide them towards the holy intellect.<sup>627</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn appears, therefore, to identify core commonalities between the pedagogical goals of Varjayāna and al-Rāzī’s theory as to the position of the prophets in the hierarchy of human perfection.

I argue that Rashīd al-Dīn did not simply identify commonalities or used Islamic terminology to explain Buddhism in a “palatable” way to his Muslim readers. Rather, the vizier explained Buddhism in familiar terms in order to incorporate Buddhism into a supersessionist narrative of Muḥammad’s prophecy.<sup>628</sup> Anna Akasoy has pointed out that Rashīd al-Dīn does not

---

<sup>626</sup> Yoeli-Tlalim, 205.

<sup>627</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn also uses the term “the perfect man” (*al-insān al-kāmil*) for the Buddha Shākyamūnī. See his chapter on the “distinguishing marks and characteristics of the perfect man according to the words of the Buddhist monks (*bakshīs*)” where he enumerates 32 signs of the “perfect man” and prophet that we were all found in Shākyamūnī. Jahn, xli.

<sup>628</sup> The idea of explaining the Buddhist doctrine in terms that would be compatible with Islam is also found in the autobiographical accounts of the Sufi Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 736/1336), which as discussed in chapter two, contain important details about the inter-ecumenical disputations at the court of the Ilkhan Arghun. In a number of these instances, we find Simnānī deploying a similar strategy in identifying common grounds with Buddhism, specifically by comparing the Buddhist path toward the attainment of self-perfection to the Sufi path. Simnānī, too, identifies a number of the same commonalities that Rashīd al-Dīn does. Simnānī notes, for example, that Buddhism shares the

only identify compatible elements in the two traditions, but also establishes “the limits of compatibility with Islamic beliefs and creates borders by explicitly rejecting certain doctrines”.<sup>629</sup> Thus, Rashīd al-Dīn uses in his account of the Indian religions and Buddhism the term *nabī*, but not *rasūl*, messenger sent with a divine message: *nabī* implies someone who receives divine inspiration, but is not necessarily a *rasūl*.<sup>630</sup> Presenting the Buddha Shakyamuni as a prophet with a book also brings Buddhism into the fold of the evolutionary prophetic scheme. Rashīd al-Dīn can, thus, situate the Buddha’s “mission” within an inferior hieratical position in relation to Muḥammad’s final revelation.

---

Muslim belief in heaven and hell, in the resurrection, and in the unity of God (*yagānagī-yi haqq*). However, unlike Rashīd al-Dīn’s depiction of Shākyamūnī as a prophet with a book, Simnānī notes as a point of disagreement that the Buddhists believe that any individual can attain the rank of the Buddha through ascetic practices and spiritual exercises, whereas the Muslim doctrine is that prophets are sent by God. On the question of their belief in transmigration, Simnānī develops an interesting argument in his *al-‘Urwa li-ahl al-khalwa wa’l-jalwa* (completed in 722/1322). He starts by noting that in his discussions over transmigration with “the wise men of India who traverse the path of al-Shakmānī and who believe in the path of transmigration and in attaining the unity (*al-ittihād*),” they told him that “the transmigration of souls ends in the attainment of the goal of the perfection in the unity, and that they refer to the person who attains this goal as *burkhān* (i.e., “Buddha”).” In addition, he reports that the Buddhists “claim that attaining the goal of perfection is not possible without shedding the base, bestial, animal, satanic and other qualities that man possess, and [that] it is impossible for man to shed and relinquish them without casting off his body and attaching himself to a new one.” Simnānī notes to have answered their claims by comparing the Buddhist transmigration to the Sufī path, where the disciple also sheds the vile and bestial qualities and attains the praiseworthy and angelic qualities, but without having to be reborn into a new body. He, furthermore, explains that the Sufis experience certain images during their spiritual advancement, for example, by visualizing their appetitive and irascible (*al-shahwiyya wa’l-ghaḍbiyya*) animal faculties as frightening beasts that are weakened through the disciple’s hard work until they entirely perish. Simnānī argues that the Buddhists had misread books of images (*kutūb ṣuwar*) as literal representations of actual experiences of the Buddha and were misled by their teachers to take these images at face value, instead of correctly viewing them as allegorical representations. Thus, he argues that when the Buddha spoke of the different bodies that his soul inhabited, he did not refer to the actual “annihilation of the body of the bird and the attachment of his soul to the human body in this world,” but instead, was describing examples of the different visions (*al-wāqī‘āt*) he experienced in the path to enlightenment, similar to the visions the Sufī novices (*arbāb al-sulūk*) experience as they advance in the spiritual path. By casting the Buddhist dogma of reincarnation as a misinterpretation of the Buddha’s original intentions, Simnānī claims a better understanding of Buddhism than the Buddhists at the court, and moreover, implies that the Buddhist path was essentially identical to the Muslim path, were it not corrupted. Simnānī’s strategy of recognizing commonalities between the two religions, but at the same time, “ridding” Buddhism of certain misconceived tenets such as the belief in transmigration, which cannot be reconciled with the Muslim perspective, appears to have been shared by Rashīd al-Dīn as well. DeWeese, “‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī,” 68ff. Simnānī, *Al-‘Urwa li-ahl al-khalwa wa’l-jalwa*, ed. Najīb Māyil Haravī (Tehran, 1362/1983), 482-3 (Arabic text). Compare with the account in Simnānī, *‘Alā’ uddawla Simnānī: Opera Minora*, 36-7.

<sup>629</sup> Akasoy, 188.

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

An example for this is found in *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, where Rashīd al-Dīn assumes the supersessionist view of Muḥammad’s prophetic mission as abrogating (*nāsikh*) the laws (*sharā’i*) of Christianity and Judaism. He argues that both the Jewish and Christian traditions acknowledge their own deficiency (*nuqṣān*) through their demand for constant reform (*iṣlāḥ*) and a perfecter/reformer (*mukammil/mutammim*) whereas Muḥammad’s perfection, and by natural extension, that of Islam, is attested by the finality of prophethood with Muḥammad.<sup>631</sup> By extending a similar understanding to Buddhism, through his depiction of the Buddha Shakyamuni as a prophet with a book arriving at the end of a line of prophets that were sent on a mission to “renew/reform (*yujaddidūn*) their religion,” Rashīd al-Dīn subjects Buddhism to the same historical understanding of Muḥammad’s mission as abrogating previous religions. The underlying message is that conversion to Islam is identical with the moral and intellectual self-perfection of the soul. In this, too, Rashīd al-Dīn draws parallels between Muḥammad and Öljeitü: Muḥammad becomes the abrogator of previous religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism too!) perfecting them with his new, final message, whereas Öljeitü is presented as putting an end to a century of Christian and Jewish revival (“those whose religion was abrogated”), and heralding a period marked by mass conversion to Islam of the Mongols, also from Buddhism (above).

### **The Question of Buddhism under Sultan Öljeitü**

Rashīd al-Dīn’s level of investment in inter-religious disputations at the Ilkhanid court can be assessed from his composition of three different treatises devoted to the refutation of metempsychosis. However, to the best of my knowledge, aside for his exposition of his “rationalistic” methodology when engaging with the Buddhists and other deniers, Rashīd al-Dīn rarely references specific interactions with Buddhist monks in his philosophical and theological

---

<sup>631</sup> *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, ff. 224v-227r.

treatises.<sup>632</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn’s “silence,” thus, raises the question of the significance of the Buddhist presence at the post-conversion Ilkhanid court, especially at the court of Öljeitü, and Rashīd al-Dīn’s motivation in disputing the Buddhists’ doctrines.

There is no evidence that inter-religious court disputations with Buddhist parties continued during the reign of Öljeitü, a decade after his brother Ghazan’s “official” conversion of the Ilkhanate and the Ilkhanid elite to Islam.<sup>633</sup> Nevertheless, nearly half a decade of Ilkhanid dynastic support for Buddhism and a strong presence of Buddhist experts left a tangible mark on the Ilkhanid court making the Mongols’ earlier predilection towards Buddhism, a dormant, but still viable threat in the mind of Rashīd al-Dīn. Öljeitü, as other Chinggisids, had converted to Islam from Buddhism.<sup>634</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn realigned the Ilkhan Ghazan’s conversion narrative in the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* to focus on the Ilkhan’s alleged pre-inclination towards Islam and monotheism, even while he publically (and enthusiastically) supported Buddhism in the Ilkhanate and in spite of his childhood experience as a talented disciple of great Buddhist masters. I suggested that Rashīd al-Dīn’s reconstruction of the conversion account throws into sharp relief the role of Ghazan’s conversion narrative as a polemical device as it situates Buddhism (and polytheism more generally) as the main obstacle for the conversion of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate. Regardless of the true state of Buddhism at the Ilkhanid court in the

---

<sup>632</sup> As far as I can tell, the only instance where he refers to being questioned by a Buddhist monk (at the court of Arghun) is in *Laṭā’if al-ḥaqā’iq*, where he reports that “one day, one of the monks (*bakshī*) that were in the retinue of the great king, the deceased Qa’an, Arghun Khan, in order to test me at the presence of the king, asked me: is the bird from the egg or the egg from the bird? And he thought that I would not be able to answer this question.” Rashīd al-Dīn reports that he had never heard this question before, and was, indeed, perplexed for a short while, until God revealed to him the answer. Rashīd al-Dīn writes that “although the person [the monk] who asked this was incapable of perceiving this [his answer],” the vizier, nevertheless, had gained much from pondering on the question, on which he elaborates further on in the treatise through the analogy of the createdness of Adam. Rashīd al-Dīn belittles the monk who asked him the question, but nevertheless, appreciates the question itself for its ability to direct the vizier to new considerations and meanings. *Laṭā’if al-ḥaqā’iq*, 36-7.

<sup>633</sup> The vizier discusses the questions of a European physician (*ḥakīm firanjī*) in *As’ila va ajviba*. See Klein-Franke, “The relation between knowledge and belief,” 213.

<sup>634</sup> See Pfeiffer, *Twelver Shi’ism*, 4.

beginning of the fourteenth century, Rashīd al-Dīn clearly saw in the Ilkhanid Buddhist legacy an obstacle for the continuous conversion and Muslim education of the Mongol elite.<sup>635</sup>

That Buddhism maintained a lingering “presence” amongst the Mongol elite is seen in the following account of a conversation between Öljeitü and the vizier that the latter relates in his second treatise against transmigration (*Nafā'is al-afkār*). Rashīd al-Dīn writes that Öljeitü told him one day:

In the past, I followed the example of my good father (*pidar-i nīkū*) [Arghun] and lived for a while in accordance with the path of the idol worshipers, and learnt some of their states; and one of these was that when the people burn [the bodies of] the idol worshipers, they find in the ashes of each individual, who is famous among them for his good character and perfection, something in the size of a pea, and sometimes it is bigger and other times smaller, and the size and weight of this object depends on the level of the [dead] individual; and this thing is very hard, and they call it *shārīn* [*Śarīra*]; and it is very rare, and is very dear to them [...] They believe that whomever has it in his possession, gains different benefits, and that individual [in whose relics, they find the *Śarīra*] must be pure and have attained this through great karma [...] Our good father had a few of these. Although now we do not believe [in the Buddhist creed], I have seen it [with my own eyes] and I tested it, and no fire, metal or anything else leave a mark on it; and not even a diamond leaves a mark on it [...] Now, I would like to know how it is possible that the people of Islam do not have such a thing.<sup>636</sup>

Öljeitü refers here to the *Śarīra*, jewel-like relics reportedly found after the cremation of the bodies of Buddhist sages and adepts.<sup>637</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn’s answer to Öljeitü is divided into three parts. First, he argues that one cannot know that Muslim bodies do not have this quality since it is not their custom to cremate their bodies. If they were to do so, it is likely that they would find there something better and greater than in the ashes of the Buddhist monks. The vizier also argues that the *Śarīra* constitutes a warning from God to the infidels that “their bodies ought to be perpetual and eternal.”

---

<sup>635</sup> Alternatively, we must also consider the possibility that Rashīd al-Dīn, a Jewish convert himself, used this anti-Buddhist polemical writings and Ghazan’s conversion to construct his own authority as a “newcomer” to Islam.

<sup>636</sup> *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, 272-4.

<sup>637</sup> Jacqueline I. Stone, “Death,” in *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism* (Chicago, 2005), 60.

Rashīd al-Dīn also argues that while the Buddhists claim to find indestructible pea-sized objects in the ashes of their perfect dead, “the bodies of our perfect ones [the Muslims] arrived at such a level that nothing disturbs their bodies, not even a hair from their head or a hair from their body.” Rashīd al-Dīn gives the example of Ibrāhīm, who was not harmed by the fire into which Namrūd had thrown him, and argues likewise that there is a great number of Muslims shaykhs “who have walked in fire, and have eaten fire, and it did not harm them”.<sup>638</sup> According to Rashīd al-Dīn, this serves as proof that living Muslim bodies have supernatural qualities, superior to that of the Buddhists’ “special dead.” Rashīd al-Dīn declares “Islam” as victorious over “Buddhism” in a hypothetical “fire-ordeal,” a theme that as Devin DeWeese shows, strongly resonated with the Inner Asian societies, particularly the Mongols.<sup>639</sup> His answers give the impression that for Rashīd al-Dīn, the Muslim competition with Buddhism was not entirely a matter of the past, and

---

<sup>638</sup> Like his predecessors, Öljeitü too developed an attachment to a number of charismatic, antinomian dervishes. See for example the case of the Anatolian dervish Barāq Bābā, Pfeiffer, *Twelver Shi’ism*, 20-24. For a discussion of the role of antinomian mendicant Sufis in the Mongol’s conversion, see Amitai-Preiss (who argues for a more limited role in comparison to the more institutional, moderate-ilk shaykhs), “Sufis and Shamans,” 27-46.

<sup>639</sup> *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, 274-5. Consuming or walking on fire is associated with the Rifā’iyya Sufi order. According to one fourteenth-century pro-Rifā’i biographical dictionary, al-Wāsiṭī’s (d. 1343) *Tiryāq al-muḥibbīn*, Hülegü and his entire army had converted to Islam at the hands of two Persian shaykhs (Muḥammad al-Darbandī and al-Khāja Ya’qūb Makhdūm Jahāniyān) allegedly associated with Sayyid Aḥmad al-Rifā’i, after they drunk together with their disciples before the ruler liquefied copper and walked in a great fire without harm. Taqī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Wāsiṭī, *Tiryāq al-muḥibbīn fī ṭabaqāt khirqat al-mashāyikh al-‘arifīn* (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Miṣr, 1305/1887), 18. On the motif of the fire test in Inner Asian and Islamic societies (the hagiographical motif and the Abrahamic paradigm) and its relationship with the Mongols’ rituals of purification (passing between two fires) as well as the appeal of this narrative for the Mongols, see DeWeese’s thorough discussion in his *Islamization*, 244-62. That the vizier mentions specifically that “not even a hair from their head or a hair from their body” get burnt in the fire is particularly interesting considering DeWeese’s analysis of the fire ordeal of the “hairy” saint Baba Tükles in the conversion narrative of Özbek Khan. The conversion account specifically states that not a hair of Baba Tükles’ hairy body was harmed by the fire-pit. *Ibid.*, 543. The Purificatory fire ritual was still practiced in the Ilkhanate during the reign of Öljeitü. According to Qashānī’s conversion account of Öljeitü to Shī‘ism, after lightning strikes Öljeitü’s camp, the Mongol amirs appeal to the Ilkhan to pass between two fires in accordance with the “Mongol custom.” The *bakhshīs* (in this case, shamans) were summoned to conduct the ceremony. They blamed the ominous storm on the Ilkhan’s conversion to Islam and argued that he must abandon Islam, repent and pass between the two fires for this inauspiciousness to be lifted. *Ta’rikh-i Üljāytü*, 98-99; DeWeese, *Islamization*, 260-61; Pfeiffer, *Twelver Shi’ism*, 10. An Ilkhanid era illustration of Ibrāhīm’s trail by fire possibly had particular appeal to the recently converted Mongol audience. Teresa Fitzherbert, “Religious diversity under Ilkhanid rule c. 1300 as reflected in the Freer Bal’amī,” in *Beyond the Legacy*, 398-99.

that Öljeitü's "memories" of his Buddhist past could easily trigger the vizier into arguing for the superiority of Islam.<sup>640</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn's disputation with the Buddhists was, therefore, not just about who would lay claim to the fate of Chinggisid souls and bodies –reincarnated or resurrected. Rather, it was over access, power and influence with the ruling elite. The assumption of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Razī's model of a hierarchy of human souls, and its expansion to include an additional rank of the Chinggisid "Ṣāhib-Qirān kings" enabled Rashīd al-Dīn to provide Öljeitü's authority with an Islamic theological foundation. The cooption of al-Razī's hierarchy of perfection and its adaptation into a mechanism for assimilating and legitimizing Chinggisid rule allows Rashīd al-Dīn to offer a compelling paradigm with which Rashīd al-Dīn could challenge the models offered by other contenders at the court, primarily the Buddhists, and position Rashīd al-Dīn as the exclusive intermediary of Ilkhanid kingship. In the final section of this chapter, I argue that Öljeitü's conversion to Shī'ism also saw a major change in the nature of the courtly competition over the mediation of Chinggisid kingship, namely the transition from inter-religious competition to inter-confessional rivalry.

### **Inter-Confessional Disputations and the Cult of Chinggis Khan in *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq***

The Ilkhan Öljeitü's conversion to Shī'ism around the year 709/1309-10 marked a moment of political ascendancy for Ilkhanid Shī'ī communities, as well as a rise in confessional polarization in the Ilkhanate. Öljeitü viewed his new confessional affiliation as a "political statement," propagating his Shī'ī message by changing the kingdom's coinage and by embarking

---

<sup>640</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn also provides a scientific explanation to dismiss the Buddhist claims noting that "we see that from the putridity of the air and its friction from the force of the heat, something appears that has the same nature as the *shārīn* and is very strong, and fire leaves no mark on it." *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, 272-5.



on elaborate building projects.<sup>641</sup> As Stefan Kamola has noted, the vizier's later collection of treatises, the *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*, which roughly corresponds to the year of the Ilkhan's conversion, bears the marks of Öljeitü's assumption of his new confessional identity.<sup>642</sup> The corresponding pro-Shī'ī changes of the human configuration of the Ilkhanid court are apparent in *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*. In this work, the vizier takes note of the presence of the prominent Iraqi Shī'ī theologian Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Muṭahhar, al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī (648/1250-726/1325), and his son Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥillī (682-771/1283-1369), to whom a number of later accounts attribute Öljeitü's conversion.<sup>643</sup>

*Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* also attests to Öljeitü's court as a site of inter-sectarian competition and rivalry. In his treatise on the tradition of the Prophet, "I am the city of knowledge and 'Alī its gate," the vizier writes about a royal interrogation that was initiated by Öljeitü in 710/1310 in Sulṭaniyya. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, during a preaching in the Friday mosque, some praises were said about 'Alī, at which point an individual from Khurasan rose from the crowd and asked a question about this tradition: since 'Alī, the commander of the faithful, is the gate to this city, who are its walls, floors and ceilings? Since Öljeitü, "whose great soul is the site of the descent of lights and the home of divine secrets," was displeased by the preacher's terse answer, he requested two scholars to answer the question. The first scholar to answer was Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥillī, for whose sake the question was translated into Arabic, and the second scholar to answer

---

<sup>641</sup> Pfeiffer, "Confessional ambiguity," 129-163; on the conversion, Judith Pfeiffer, *Twelver Shi'ism*.

<sup>642</sup> Kamola draws particular attention to the vizier's treatise on the Prophet's mantle (*khirqā*) in the work as an expression of the Ilkhan's new Shī'ī belief. Kamola, 216-220.

<sup>643</sup> On al-Ḥillī's stay at the court and engagement in theological discussions with various figures including the vizier, see Sabine Schmidtke, *The Theology of al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325)* (Berlin, 1991), 23ff.



was the chief Qāḍī of the Ilkhanid realm (*Qāḍī quḍāt al-mamālik*) Nizām al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Malik (d. 716).<sup>644</sup>

Nizām al-Dīn was an offspring of a distinguished family of Qazwīnīs, who throughout the 13<sup>th</sup> century held the position of chief Qāḍī of Maragha. The family’s ties to the Ilkhanid political-intellectual elite were also consolidated through Nizām al-Dīn’s marriage to Ṭūsī’s granddaughter.<sup>645</sup> According to Qāshānī, however, it was Nizām al-Dīn’s relationship with the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn (and not with the Ṭūsī family) that paved the path for his appointment as chief Ilkhanid Qāḍī (*Qāḍī al-quḍāt-i mamālik-i irān*).<sup>646</sup> Nizām al-Dīn’s undisputed supremacy at the debates at court won over the Ilkhan, who “converted” under his influence from the Ḥanafī school of law to the Shāfī’ī *madhhab*. Nizām al-Dīn is best known, however, for his debate with the Ḥanafī scholars that supposedly led to Öljeitü’s doubts about the Muslim creed and his conversion to Shī’ism.<sup>647</sup> Still, Nizām al-Dīn’s influence on Öljeitü was believed to be so great that Qāshānī claims that were it not for his absence from court for the business of the *awqāf* of Azerbaijan during the winter of 709/1309-1310, Öljeitü would never had finalized his conversion

---

<sup>644</sup> Nizām al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, vol. 5, 80-81 (biographical notice: 4678). The case of this family, whose history can be traced through Ibn al-Fuwaṭī’s dictionary seven generations back from Nizām al-Dīn, is a remarkable example of the continuity of life under Mongol rule and, furthermore, of the opportunities of social mobility that it offered. Their forefather ‘Imād al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Qazwīnī migrated with his wife/family, probably in the eleventh century, from Qazwīn to Tabriz, where the family became prominent Qāḍīs. The family traced their lineage to the Daylami Saḥābī Fayrūz (Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, vol. 2, 90-91). Nizām al-Dīn’s grandfather, Quṭb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Najm al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh (d. 683/1284), inherited the position of Qāḍī of Maragha in 648/1250-1251, after the death of his cousin ‘Imād al-Dīn Mas‘ūd, who himself had inherited the position from his father, Kimāl al-Dīn Abī Muḥammad b. ‘Imād al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Qazwīnī. Quṭb al-Dīn seems to have had held this post until his death in 683/1284. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, vol. 3, 360: notice 2758; for the cousin: vol. 2, 175: notice 1277.

<sup>645</sup> Ibn al-Fuwaṭī notes that he saw Nizām al-Dīn in the company of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274). This was Ṭūsī’s granddaughter from his second son, Aṣīl al-Dīn Ḥasan. See Qashānī, *Ta’rīkh-i Ūljāytū*, 96. Aṣīl al-Dīn, too, held prominent positions at Ghazan’s and Öljeitü’s courts. According to the Mamluk biographers, Aṣīl al-Dīn came with Ghazan to Syria and was appointed over *awqāf al-shām* during the short Mongol conquest (where he also met Ibn Taymiyya); he was then given *niyābat Baghdad* but was later demoted for his transgressions while in office. See editor’s footnote 5 in Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, vol. 1, 228-9.

<sup>646</sup> According to Ibn al-Fuwaṭī’s biographical dictionary, Nizām al-Dīn’s brother, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, who was born in Maragha in 662/1263-64, served as *Qāḍī quḍāt al-irāq* (vol. 2, 308).

<sup>647</sup> Judith Pfeiffer, *Twelver Shi’ism as State Religion in Mongol Iran* (Istanbul, 1999), 8-9; Qashānī, *Ta’rīkh-i Ūljāytū*, 96.

to Shi'ism.<sup>648</sup> Nizām al-Dīn, in other words, was a direct opposition to the Shī'ī presence, represented at court by al-Ḥillī. By having Nizām al-Dīn and al-Ḥillī each answer the question concerning “I am the city of knowledge and ‘Alī its gate,” Öljeitü positioned this disputation as an inter-confessional (Shī'ī- Sunnī) competition.<sup>649</sup>

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, who himself was absent from this ordeal, neither side prevailed in this debate. Unsatisfied by the (uncreative) answers of neither the Shī'ī nor the Sunnī contender, Öljeitü himself commented on the functional nature of the gate (‘Alī), which sets it apart from other parts of the city noting that without the gate, no one can enter or leave the city, and no benefit can be attained from the city (knowledge, the Prophet). Öljeitü ordered Rashīd al-Dīn to write down his insights, and Rashīd al-Dīn, indeed, devoted the remainder of the short treatise to explaining Öljeitü's terse commentary on the tradition. Rashīd al-Dīn, thus, positioned himself in this treatise above the inter-confessional competition at the court. As he repeatedly does in other treatises, Rashīd al-Dīn claims to himself unique access to the ruler and portrays himself as the sole individual at the court capable of interpreting and mediating Öljeitü's extraordinary intellect and intuitive wisdom.

Pfeiffer has recently demonstrated how Shī'ī claims for descent-based political-religious authority (such as support for *ahl-i bayt* and the right to rule of ‘Alī and the Prophet's descendants) had a special appeal for Öljeitü, for whom, like other Chinggisids, the sacrality of the Chinggisid bloodline was a central tenet in their claim to legitimate rule and rightful succession. Thus, similar to the Shī'ī imams, who were descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad and ‘Alī, Chinggis Khan's “successors understood their rule only within a relationship between

---

<sup>648</sup> Ibid., 96-100. Qashānī refers to him in this context as “the barrier of the Gog and Magog of this fitna.”

<sup>649</sup> *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*, 393-399. Later Shī'ī biographical accounts describe the superiority of al-Ḥillī in these inter-confessional debates, especially over Nizām al-Dīn. Schmidtke, *Theology*, 27-30. Both al-Ḥillī (and his son) and Nizām al-Dīn were appointed to Öljeitü's mobile school (*madrasa sayyāra*). The school included only six distinguished teachers (including the above mentioned al-Ījī). Qashānī, *Ta'rikh-i Ūljāytū*, 106.

themselves and Chinggis Khan, who had the initial right to rule bestowed upon him by God”.<sup>650</sup> In one instance, for example, we see Öljeitü expressing his insecurities as a ruler by comparing the option that a non-Chinggisid amir would assume the Ilkhanid throne to Abū Bakr’s “illegitimate usurpation” of the caliphate after Muḥammad’s death.<sup>651</sup> Shī‘ī agents appealed to the Chinggisid sensibilities by linking confessional identity to genealogy (thus, identifying Shī‘ism with Muḥammadan descent, sayyidism) and by demonstrating to the Mongol rulers the compatibility of Shī‘ī and Mongol views on descent-based authority. They translated “Shī‘ī claims to political authority into Mongol political thought” leading Öljeitü to recognize the superiority of Shī‘ī Islam.<sup>652</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn, too, draws affinities between the exceptional prophethood of Muḥammad and the exceptional rank of kingship of his patron-ruler Öljeitü, translating the Chinggisid status of sacral kingship into al-Rāzī’s hierarchy of perfect souls. Was the presence of the Ḥillīs (father and son) and other Shī‘ī protagonists, who gained political ascendancy following the Ilkhan’s conversion, encroaching on Rashīd al-Dīn’s position as mediator of Ilkhanid political theology? In *Bayān al-ḥaqā’iq*, we see indications that the vizier saw a threat in the ability of Shī‘ī genealogical-oriented notions of authority to mediate the Chinggisid worldview, and that he sought to “reclaim” his position as Öljeitü’s exclusive intermediary by rearticulating the sacrality of the Chinggisid bloodline and Chinggisid ancestral veneration through al-Rāzī’s theory of perfect souls.

Thus, *Bayān al-ḥaqā’iq*’s ninth treatise is the vizier’s discussion of “The benefits of visiting the shrines and graves of the great ones” (*ziyārat-i mashāhid va-turbathā-yi buzurgān*).

---

<sup>650</sup> Chinggis Khan “was transformed from founder of the empire to the sanctified holder of the right to rule”. Elverskog, *Our Great Qing*, 50-2.

<sup>651</sup> Pfeiffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 159.

<sup>652</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

The treatise follows the Ilkhan's visit to the shrine of Salmān al-Fārisī in al-Madā' in in 709/1310 in the company of Rashīd al-Dīn and al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī, whom the vizier praises as "the one of his kind and exemplar of Iran." According to Rashīd al-Dīn, al-Ḥillī asked him the following question: "there is no doubt that we believe in visiting the graves of the great, but since the essence of man is the soul, which leaves the body and no trace of it remains in the body [after death], what is the point of visiting the grave?"

Rashīd al-Dīn's answer employs al-Rāzī's hierarchy of human souls and repeats much of the earlier discussion. Rashīd al-Dīn explains that the souls of the perfect are able, in accordance with the level of their perfection and their power, to aid individuals, who seek their intervention and help in removing obstacles in the way of attaining fortune and rank (*amvāl va-aḥvāl*).

Although disembodied souls are free from place and time, they are able to influence this world. The vizier stresses the need for pure intentions when supplicating the "special dead" for aid, noting too that one does not have to be present at their grave to attain the wanted result. Rashīd al-Dīn, however, also explains that gravesites are more effective spaces for gaining the help of the perfect souls since the perfect soul pays special attention to its buried remains.<sup>653</sup>

Yet, in addition their buried remains, "the souls of the perfect dead" also maintain an attachment and pay attention to the souls of some of the living, and grant them greater assistance, especially if they supplicate the dead with a "pure heart." Rashīd al-Dīn explains that a special attachment between the dead and the living might develop between kin-related souls: parents, offspring, siblings, and married couples, as well as those maintaining kin-like relationships such as shaykhs and their disciplines, and teachers and their students. The vizier stresses in this regard the relationship of departed fathers with their offspring, noting that this fact is well known and

---

<sup>653</sup> First, since it had attained perfection through its body and "this body, like a mantle tinged with Musk, becomes enlightened from the perfection of that soul," and second, since the soul will return to its body in the resurrection.

tested (*mujarrab*) among the people (*'umūm*) since at times of hardship, one sees his parents in a dream, which is an indication of their influence. Rashīd al-Dīn also mentions in this context the Prophet's relationship to his offspring, and cites Qur'anic verses that indicate that prophets and saints pray for their offspring. He repeats that, if the offspring is righteous (*ṣāliḥ*), performs worthy services (*khidmā-i shāyista*), and pleads for aid with pure intention, the influence of the "perfect dead" in removing calamities, hardships and obstacles before their offspring would be the strongest, for "the intellects (*'uqalā*) watch over the children and offspring of the perfect and hold them dear." Here, too, Rashīd al-Dīn argues for a hierarchical order, in which there is a great variance in the levels of aid exhorted by the dead in accordance with their own rank of perfection.

Rashīd al-Dīn's treatise on the supplication of the dead offers, therefore, a more expansive view, referring to the descendants of prophets and saints as enjoying a privileged position, the support of their perfect dead ancestors, rather than solely, to Muḥammad's descendants. In his explanation of the merits of shrine visitation, Rashīd al-Dīn's deploys al-Rāzī's categorization of the perfect souls of prophets and saints, referencing once again the idea that the soul maintains its perfection, even after it departs from the body. While the vizier does not mention his third category of sacred perfect souls, the Ṣāḥib-Qirān kings, which include the Chinggisid dynasty, his emphasis on the relationship between the souls of departed fathers and their living sons (regardless of their prophetic or saintly status) in the context of Öljeitü's shrine visitation implies that Rashīd al-Dīn's explanation would have applied to the Chinggisid fathers and sons as well.

As Johan Elverskog shows, the Mongols considered the veneration of Chinggis Khan and Eternal God/Heaven essential for conferring and maintaining legitimate rule: "the present ruler's legitimacy and the Mongol state were re-created in a semantic chain purely through this sacred

lineage.” This link between the ritualized reverence for Chinggis Khan, who alone could transmit the initial blessing of God, and Mongol sanctified rule was maintained both by Chinggis Khan’s immediate successors and under the Yuan dynasty in China, as well as in the post-Yuan period. Qubilai, for example, established during the 1260s an ancestor-worship complex, where the remains of Chinggis Khan and his offspring were maintained and rituals were performed four times a year.<sup>654</sup> Evidence for the continuance of the cult of Chinggis Khan under the Ilkhans in Iran is more difficult to come by; yet, this does not negate the possibility that imperial rites of Chinggisid ancestral veneration were also retained in Iran. Öljeitü’s itinerary includes repeated visits to his brother’s tomb and possibly other Chinggisid burial sites.<sup>655</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn’s emphasis on the supplication of sons to their fathers, and his reference to the “worthy services” (*khidmāt shāyista*) that should be carried out are possible indications that, Öljeitü too valued the veneration of his Chinggisid ancestors as his father Arghun did. Was the vizier, then, trying in his discussion of *ziyārat* to include the cult of Chinggis Khan within the fold of the veneration of the dead in the Islamic tradition? Since the reverence of Chinggis Khan and Chinggisid sanctified kingship were deeply intertwined, one might suggest that making room for Chinggisid notions of sanctified rule within al-Rāzī’s hierarchy of human perfection would also entail the inclusion (and by extension, Islamization) of the Chinggisid “special dead.”

Rashīd al-Dīn’s treatise on shrine visitation should also be read against the backdrop of the intensification of inter-confessional rivalries at the court that came to the fore in power struggles over the management of sacred spaces in the Ilkhanate. The changing confessional

---

<sup>654</sup> Elverskog, *Our Great Qing*, 48ff.

<sup>655</sup> As DeWeese notes, we do have evidence of the practice of establishing and maintaining tomb-*qoruqs*, “off-limit” burial grounds for the khans (though the term has an additional meaning of a forbidden hunting or recreational preserve), in the Ilkhanate. Öljeitü’s itinerary includes visits to *qoruq* sites. The burial site of Arghun was also designated *qoruq*. His daughter established there a Sufi sanctuary, which DeWeese discusses as an “intrusion” of the Sufi community, and a sign of conversion of the sacred space. *Qoruq* sites were also linked to enthronement sites. DeWeese, *Islamization*, 181-203.

power balance at the court is reflected too in Rashīd al-Dīn’s treatise on *ziyārat*. The vizier states that it was al-Ḥillī who asked him the question since “he thought highly” of the vizier. As elsewhere in *Bayān al-ḥaqā’iq*, Rashīd al-Dīn is suspiciously at pains here to show the lack of hostility and competition between the new member of the Ilkhan’s entourage, al-Ḥillī, and himself, as well as to indicate that the former highly regarded Rashīd al-Dīn.<sup>656</sup> On the other hand, in his commentary on the tradition “I am the city of knowledge and ‘Alī its gate” (above), al-Ḥillī’s “disappointing” performance at the royal interrogation leads Öljeitü to ask Rashīd al-Dīn to write a treatise on the topic, thus, demonstrating the vizier’s superiority. One’s impression is that Rashīd al-Dīn was intimidated by al-Ḥillī’s “incursion” and that the vizier’s treatise should be viewed in the context of the inter-sectarian court disputations and interpretive contests.<sup>657</sup>

Rashīd al-Dīn’s treatise on shrine visitation foresees the confessional struggle over the management of the shrine of Dhū al-Kifl (Ezekiel) near al-Ḥilla, in which the vizier was embroiled two years later, in 711/1312. The struggle involved Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn Āvajī, chief of the Twelver Shī’īs, who was employed by Rashīd al-Dīn’s rival, the vizier Sa’d al-Dīn Sāvajī, and is credited by Qāshānī with the conversion of Öljeitü to Shī’ism.<sup>658</sup> After Tāj al-Dīn Āvajī was appointed as an overseer of the shrines of the Ilkhanate, the Shī’ī sayyid took hold of the

---

<sup>656</sup> One example for this is found in his treatise on explaining lights, Rashīd al-Dīn references the works on the topic of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Razī and al-Ghāzālī. At the end of the treatise, he adds an additional treatise. He explains that Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī, “who was ordered from Ḥilla by a royal edict (*yarlīgh*) to the service of great lord,” was also writing a *risāla* on this topic (since all the scholars of the age were ordered to do so by a royal edict), and started conversing with the vizier on it. Al-Ḥillī listened to a couple of words by Rashīd al-Dīn and found them agreeable. Rashīd al-Dīn’s tone might suggest that he saw in al-Ḥillī a competition as the vizier claims that the latter begged (*ilmās*) him to add these thoughts to Rashīd al-Dīn’s treatise so all would benefit from them. *Bayān al-ḥaqā’iq*, 266.

<sup>657</sup> One might also note that al-Ḥillī devoted a work to the vizier’s rival Sa’d al-Dīn Sāvajī (the *Risāla al Sa’diyya*). That al-Ḥillī appears on the list of recipients of gifts from Rashīd al-Dīn (712/1312/13) and that he received a larger sum than others listed does not necessarily contradict my suggestion that the vizier saw in al-Ḥillī’s position at court an incursion, but rather speaks to the Mongol ruler’s high regard of the Shī’ī scholar. Schmidtke, *Theology*, 28-29.

<sup>658</sup> Qashānī, *Ta’rīkh-i Ūljāytū*, 99.

*mashhad* of Dhū al-Kifl, a site that was venerated by both Jews and Muslims, and administrated by the Jewish community, and constructed there a minbar, mihrab, and a minaret. Enraged by Tāj al-Dīn Āvajī's seizure of the shrine, Rashīd al-Dīn plotted to have Āvajī and his sons executed by Öljeitü with the accusation that Āvajī's sayyid genealogy (*nasab nāma*) was a forgery. According to Qāshānī, Rashīd al-Dīn outmaneuvered his adversary by asking Tāj al-Dīn about his sayyid credentials (*'alavviyat*) during a court disputation (*munāzara*); when Tāj al-Dīn responded that his authority is attested in his genealogy (*nasab nāma*), the vizier asked to examine it; that night, Rashīd al-Dīn erased Tāj al-Dīn's name from the text and then, rewrote it, presenting it to the Ilkhan the next morning as proof of Tāj al-Dīn's fraudulent claim to sayyid descent.<sup>659</sup>

## Conclusion

Rashīd al-Dīn's *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* and the Dhū al-Kifl affair call attention to the politicized nature of the court debate under the Ilkhan Öljeitü. Theological disputations at Öljeitü's court became the center stage where political intrigues, personal rivalries and ecumenical and confessional power struggles played out. We see this in Qāshānī's narrative, where a heated court dispute between the Ḥanafī scholars and the chief Qāḍī Nizām al-Dīn, who represented the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, over the legal permissibility of engaging in intercourse with a female relative (mother or sister), ultimately leads Öljeitü to inquire about the Shī'ī creed, and subsequently, convert to Shī'ism under the guidance of Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn Āvajī. The central place occupied by the institution of the theological debate at the court of Öljeitü is visible not only in *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq*, but also in the rest of Rashīd al-Dīn's theological compilations.

---

<sup>659</sup> Pfeiffer, "Confessional ambiguity," 152-3, 159-60,



This chapter demonstrates that, Rashīd al-Dīn understood these disputations as a setting where he could safeguard and consolidate his claim to the exclusive position as the Ilkhan's chief intermediary and spokesperson, who explains and makes accessible and legible the divine truths transmitted by the Mongol king. By establishing Öljeitü's unique authority, Rashīd al-Dīn also claims his own superior rank by his side. Thus, when he compares Öljeitü to the just Sasanian philosopher-king Anūshirvān and repeats the claim that he alone was able to understand the meaning behind the Ilkhan's brilliant comments, the physician-vizier Rashīd al-Dīn also claims to himself the rank of the paradigmatic Sasanian minister-physician Buzurgmihr, who too was credited with being the sole individual able to answer Anūshirvān's queries.<sup>660</sup>

About a century after Rashīd al-Dīn outlined in his writings a theological model of absolute, unmediated kingship for the Ilkhan Öljeitü, the Timurid prince Mīrzā Iskandar attempted to cultivate his own sovereignty "along the lines of Ibn 'Arabī's theological absolutism," and eschatological and 'Alīd symbols. Examining Mīrzā Iskandar's unique political theology, Evrim Binbaş has suggested that, "if the rise of absolutist politics is one of the benchmarks of early modernity [...] Mīrzā Iskandar was the first early modern absolutist sovereign, albeit an unsuccessful one".<sup>661</sup> Matthew Melvin-Koushki has further argued that Mīrzā Iskandar's claims to his own status of a "spiritually perfected philosopher-scientist" (in addition to his involvement in the intellectual debates of his time) alongside his cousin Ulugh Beg's (r. at Samarkand, 1409-49) identification by one of his astronomers as the "philosopher-sultan" marked the genesis of a

---

<sup>660</sup> *Kitāb al-sultāniyya*, f. 15v; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Kitāb al-as'ila wa'l-ajwiba al-rashīdiyya b'il-fārisiyya* (MS Ayasofya, No. 2180), ff. 33-44. For Rashīd al-Dīn as Buzurgmihr in Hamd Allāh Mustawfī's *Zafarnāma*, Kamola, 276-78.

<sup>661</sup> Binbaş, "Timurid experimentation," 277-303. There are a number of interesting parallels between Rashīd al-Dīn's depiction of Öljeitü and Mīrzā Iskandar's "self-portrait." See, for example, Binbaş, 291. One might, furthermore, suggest that Mīrzā Iskandar's theological questionnaire sent to two of the leading intellectuals of his time, the Sufi Shaykh Shāh Ni'matullāh Valī and the theologian Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī (philosophical theology versus mystical theology), was structured as a court disputation by correspondence.

distinctive Timurid model of sacral kingship, centered on the ruler's patronage of astrology, astronomy and the occult sciences.<sup>662</sup>

Yet, it seems to me that it was Rashīd al-Dīn's extensive experimentation with al-Razī's prophetic absolutism as a basis for sacral Muslim kingship that ushered, perhaps even defined an era of joint Ilkhanid-Timurid experimentation with a new brand of the "philosopher-king." Thus, whereas Rashīd al-Dīn's model of Muḥammad-centered kingship might to have "died out" with the Ilkhanid period, this mode of sacral authority that was defined by the ruler's endowment with a unique, intuitive and even divine form of intellect that allowed him to gain access to all knowledges and sciences via direct intuition, a power expressed through the ruler's patronage and involvement in intellectual debates, retained considerable power in the Timurid period. Timurid intellectuals and court clients might be seen, therefore, as "rebranding" this new style of intellectual kingship in a far more appealing and persuasive packaging, for example, through astrology and lettrism, than the Ilkhanid vizier's *kalām*-based vision of the philosopher-king.

---

<sup>662</sup> Matthew Melvin-Koushki, "Early Modern Islamic Empire: new forms of religiopolitical legitimacy," *forthcoming*. See also A.C.S. Peacock's discussion of the notion of the "Suhrawardian ruler endowed with cosmic knowledge" in late fourteenth Anatolia in his "Metaphysics and rulership in late fourteenth-century Central Anatolia: Qadi Burhān al-Dīn of Sivas and his Iksīr al-Sa'ādāt," in *Islamic Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Anatolia*, eds. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız (Würzburg, 2016), 101-36.

## **Chapter V: The Mongol *Mahdī* in Anatolia: *Mahdīs*, *Mujaddids*, and Militant Reformers in the Ilkhanid and Post-Mongol Period**

This chapter continues where we left off in chapter three by tracing the course of development of the paradigm of the reviver king in the decades after the Ilkhan Ghazan's conversion to Islam. In chapter three, I argued that the notion of the ruler as a periodically sent puritan reformer, a chastising substitute for the prophets, emerged in the context of the Ilkhan Ghazan's expansionist policy in Syria. Translating the Chinggisid mission of world domination into the Islamic salvific scheme, Ghazan's letters during the Syrian campaign depicted the Ilkhan as a new type of Muslim salvation king, a direct appointment of divine will. From the 1320s onwards, the revivalist paradigm was appropriated to challenge and oppose the dominance of the Chinggisid principle of descent.

During the later Ilkhanid and post-Mongol periods, ambitious princes, rebellious commanders, and the intellectual networks that supported their political claims, tapped into the revivalist discourse to contest the Chinggisid claim to descent based authority, and offer a religiopolitical platform from which to launch their own independent political bids. I focus in this chapter on the short-lived revolt of the Mongol governor of Rūm, Timurtash the son of amir Chupan, and his self-proclamation as *mahdī* in the early 1320s Anatolia, to examine the dissemination and transformation of the revivalist model. I use multiple points of view on the revolt to argue that the Mongol rebel sought to harness through his claim to *mahdīhood* the Ilkhanid political idiom of religious reform, and challenge Ilkhanid sovereignty in Anatolia.

Expressed through the titles of the *mujaddid*, the religious centennial renewer, and the *mahdī*, the militant redeemer-reformer, the reviver king model thrived in the post-Mongol ideological imperial scene. It was one of the dominant religiopolitical structures alongside emerging and overlapping paradigms of the Shī‘ī-Sufī model of authority and shrine-centered kingship, which fill the void left behind by the disappearance of the “caliphal-sultanic-jurisprudential model” after the Mongol invasions during the mid-thirteenth century. Together, these political models laid the ideological foundation for the early modern era of eschatological absolutist claims, millenarian politics, and the inter-imperial occultist competitions.<sup>663</sup>

### **From Ghazan to Abū Sa‘īd: a Brief History of Ilkhanid Reformer Kings**

In chapter three, I examined how the Ilkhanid court historian Qāshānī responded in his conversion account of Ghazan, to the Sufi Najm al-Dīn Rāzī’s (d. 654/1256) earlier apocalyptic interpretation of the Mongol campaigns and his explicit call to the rulers of his age to save Islam from the Mongol onslaught.<sup>664</sup> Qāshānī replaced Rāzī’s penitential interpretation of the Mongol invasions in Rāzī’s *Mirṣād al-‘Ibād* with a providential, salvific narrative that was anchored in Ghazan’s fulfillment of the prophecy about the appearance of a reviver king. In Qāshānī’s narrative, Ghazan “answers” Rāzī’s plea from half a century earlier, to restore the Muslim community and revive Islam (*tāzah va ṭarī shaved*). In the poetry of the Ilkhanid court poet and historian Banākātī, the attribution of the title of the *mahdī* to Ghazan encapsulated a similar historical vision, according to which, a certain process of decline and revival culminated in the figure of the Ilkhan, and his conversion and just rule. This revivalist framework situated Ghazan and the Mongols at the pinnacle of a cycle of salvation history.

---

<sup>663</sup> For example, Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*; Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs*; Subrahmanyam, “Sixteenth-century millenarianism;” Binbaş, “Timurid experimentation;” Matthew Melvin-Koushki, “Astrology, lettrism, geomancy,” 142-50.

<sup>664</sup> See chapter three.

The identification of the Mongol royal convert as a reviver king was also appropriated by the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn. Rashīd al-Dīn argued that Ghazan’s successor Öljeitü’s superior rank is evident from the prophetic tradition: “God will send to this community at the turn/on the eve of every century a person who will strengthen its religion” (*inna allāh yab’ath li-hadhihi al-ummah ‘alā ra’s kull mi’a sana man yuqawwī lahā amr dīnihā*).<sup>665</sup> According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Öljeitü’s reign confirms to this tradition since it is preceded by a period of a hundred years of infidel revival, until “all the traces of these unbelievers were effaced with the ray of light of the sun-faced” Öljeitü. Rashīd al-Dīn draws inspiration from Qāshānī’s conversion narrative of the Ilkhan Ghazan in depicting Öljeitü in his place as the periodic *muqavvī-yi dīn-i Islām*. Rashīd al-Dīn significantly altered the *mujaddid* (the centennial renewer) tradition by replacing the verb *yujaddid* (renew) with *yuqawwī* (strengthen), possibly since Rashīd al-Dīn was himself envisioned as the centennial renewer of the eighth Hijri century.

Öljeitü was depicted as reenacting the reformer-king not only through the reshuffling of narrative tropes between the court historian Qāshānī and his patron the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn, but also in the repeating of some of the same regulatory measures that inaugurated his brother Ghazan’s reign. Behind these measures was Ghazan’s convertor and kingmaker, the amir Nawrūz (below). The measures were primarily directed towards the non-Muslim communities of the Ilkhanate and symbolically positioned the new Ilkhan as the restorer of *shar’ī* rule. They included the destruction and looting of churches, idol temples and synagogues throughout the Ilkhanate, and the issuing of decrees reinstating the *jizya* (poll-tax) and re-enforcing the distinguishing dress code (*ghiyār*) on the *dhimmīs*.<sup>666</sup>

---

<sup>665</sup> Discussed in chapter four.

<sup>666</sup> Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām,” 170-71; Foltz, “Ecumenical mischief,” 62-5; Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)* (Brill, 2011), 197.

The later Ilkhanid historian Mustawfī Qazwīnī writes that Ghazan’s brother and heir Öljeitü too reinstated at the beginning of his reign, the *jizya* on the Jews and the Christians (*tarsā va-jahūd*) and re-enforced the *ghiyār*.<sup>667</sup> The Armenian colophons confirm the reports about Öljeitü’s reinstatement of the anti-*dhimmī* policies. They accuse Öljeitü of being a “servant of Satan” and the anti-Christ planning to “efface Christianity from Armenia and Georgia” by issuing orders “that levies should be collected from all Christians on account of their faith in Christ, and that a blue sign should be sewn on the shoulders of the believers”.<sup>668</sup> According to the work of the Nestorian Rabban Sauma, it was only through the intervention of Öljeitü’s uncle, the Kerayit amir Irenjin,<sup>669</sup> that the Nestorian monasteries and churches in Tabriz were spared from becoming mosques and endowments by the order of the Ilkhan.<sup>670</sup> Both the history of Rabban Sauma and the Armenian colophon, however, note that after sending high ranking clergymen to Öljeitü, they were able to persuade the Ilkhan to reverse his decision on reinforcing the *jizya*, just as Ghazan had done earlier.<sup>671</sup> Qāshānī claims that Öljeitü reinstated similar policies at the court as well. He writes that the Ilkhan Öljeitü, together with his commanders and his intimates, refrained from consuming alcoholic beverages like Kumis.<sup>672</sup>

While Öljeitü’s son, the Ilkhan Abū Sa’īd’s reign falls largely beyond the scope of the major Ilkhanid histories, it appears that he followed the footsteps of his father and uncle fashioning himself

---

<sup>667</sup> Mustawfī Qazwīnī, *Guzida*, 606-7.

<sup>668</sup> Avedis K. Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 1301-1480* (Cambridge, 1969), 52 (dated to 1307), and 60 (dated 1318, Monastery of Varag).

<sup>669</sup> Aqsarā’ī describes Irenjin as a tyrant and a villain based on his time as governor of Anatolia. See below.

<sup>670</sup> Ernest A. W. Budge, trans., *The Monks of Kūblāi Khān, Emperor of China: The History of the Life and Travels of Rabban Šāwmā* (London, 1928; repr., New York, 1973), 255-60.

<sup>671</sup> Sanjian, *Colophons*, 60-61. That these churches were exempted from paying the *jizya* after the “lobbying” efforts of high ranking clergy with the ruler suggests that the traditional Mongol understanding to the function of the religions was still determining the Mongols’ religious policies, even after their conversion to Islam in the Ilkhanate. Thus, as Atwood shows, religious clergy were exempt by royal decree only after their representative visited the court, bestowed his blessings on the khan and his family, and showed that they were praying for the khan’s success. Atwood, “Validation by Holiness,” 237-56.

<sup>672</sup> Qāshānī, *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāyū*, 25.

too as a reformer-king. Mamluk histories report that early on in Abū Saʿīd's reign, a deadly hailstorm hit the city of Sulṭāniyya in Shaʿbān 720/Septmeber 1320. The Ilkhan was convinced by the *fuqahā* that this was a sign of divine rage and ordered the immediate closing of all brothels and taverns throughout the Ilkhanate. In Sulṭāniyya alone, more than ten thousand wine barrels were collected, emptied and burnt. According to a merchant who witnessed the events, this public display of repentance and piety was also carried out, although less fervently, in Tabriz and Mosul. Churches in the vicinity of Tabriz were destroyed, old mosques were repaired, and new ones constructed. These events repeated themselves in Baghdad the following year, in the month of Jumādā 2/July, as Syrian merchants astoundingly reported: the bazaar was ransacked; the prostitutes were forced to repent and marry; all wine was poured onto the earth; the guilty parties were publicly executed and their bodies desecrated; and each day a number of Jews and Christians publicly converted to Islam.<sup>673</sup>

Abū Saʿīd's declaration of a war against illegal actions and moral vices was also part of a larger change taking place in the Ilkhanate during the first years of the young Ilkhan's reign. Abū Saʿīd was possibly responding not just to one isolated freak hailstorm, but to a wider crisis that enveloped Ilkhanid society, and resulted from a series of environmental disasters, including a deadly two year long drought and extensive depopulation in Diyar Bakr, Iraq, Jazira, and a series of raids on Ilkhanid borders and rebellions, most notably, the revolt of the amirs in 1319.<sup>674</sup> Abū Saʿīd's declaration of war

---

<sup>673</sup> Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol. 32, 333-4; vol. 33, 35. Fearing for this position as the supreme combater of vice, the Mamluk sultan soon followed with his own measures in the sultanate. Ch. Melville, "The year of the Elephant: Mamluk-Mongol rivalry in the Hejaz in the reign of Abū Saʿīd (1317-1335)," *Studia Iranica*, vol. 21, no. 2 (1992), 205.

<sup>674</sup> These "climatic events" resulted in a severe depopulation of an area that produced about a quarter of Ilkhanid revenue during the first years of Abū Saʿīd's reign. According to al-Nuwayrī, who attained his account from ʿAlam al-Dīn al-Birzālī, Diyar Bakr, Mosul, Mardin, Jazira and Mayyafarqin had it worse than Sanjar and Iraq. The drought was accompanied by a severe rise in food prices and food shortage, locust and freak hailstorms. The disasters seem to have also triggered raids by nomads from Syria and Kurdish tribes into the Ilkhanid territories, making matters even worse for the agricultural settlements. Al-Nuwayrī, vol. 32, 290-92; Sarah Kate Raphael, *Climate and Political Climate: environmental disasters in the medieval Levant* (Leiden, 2013), 16, 67-69. It might be worth noting that Timurtash's revolt seems to have overlapped, or slightly preceded a major drought that extended from Damascus to Aleppo (tagged by Abū al-Fidā' as the "red year"). Raphael, 8-9. For the distribution of Ilkhanid revenues according to

against alcohol consumption and moral transgressions might have been an attempt to win over the public, who perhaps attributed these disasters to failures of public morality. The first decade of Abū Saʿīd's reign also saw the peace negotiations between the Ilkhans and the Mamluks alongside a growing interest amongst members of the Mongol elite in the *hajj* and in Islamic patronage and expressions of piety more generally. In fact, while a peace treaty was negotiated and finalized, the rivalry between the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk sultanate was carried over to the Ḥijāz, where the two empires fought over the supreme patronage of Islam.<sup>675</sup>

Charles Melville suggests that in his regulatory measures in Anatolia, the Mongol governor Timurtash followed orders issued at the court of Abū Saʿīd.<sup>676</sup> I argue, however, that Timurtash's puritan policies in Rūm were tied to his rebellion and self-proclamation as a *mahdī*-reformer shortly after. Timurtash sought to harness the political language that identified the Ilkhanid kings, through their claims to reform and puritan measures, as continuers of the prophetic missions,

---

regions, see I. P. Petrushevsky, "The socio-economic condition of Iran under the Ilk-khans," in *The Cambridge History of Iran: vol. 5, The Saljuq and Mongol periods* (1968), 498.

<sup>675</sup> The religious rivalry in the Ḥijāz has been thoroughly studied by Melville ("year of the Elephant") and Broadbridge (chapter 4). Melville suggests that religious prestige was not the only reason for the renewal of Ilkhanid interest in the *hajj* but that "the revival of the Iraqi *rakb* [caravan], and the presence of Mongol notables as well as Persians [at the *hajj*], also indicates the extent to which Islam was taking hold in the newly converted Ilkhanate." A number of Mongol officers were so anxious to perform the religious duty of the *hajj* that they were willing to risk their lives and undertake the *hajj* already in 1319-20, before the peace negotiations even began. The regulation of Ilkhanid participation in the annual *hajj* was one of the major issues negotiated in the early stages of the peace talks. Melville, "year of the elephant," 203, 211.

<sup>676</sup> Melville, "Anatolia," 91. It is also worthwhile noting the possible role Timurtash's father, the amir Chupan, carried in Abū Saʿīd's campaign of moral regulation. As Melville shows, Chupan was interested establishing his own position as a charitable Muslim patron. Early on in the 1320s, Chupan, who was independently corresponding with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, requested from the Mamluk sultan unused land in Egypt to establish a *waqf* for the Haram complex in Mecca. Chupan was also behind a number of ambitious architectural projects in the holy cities: in Medina, a public bath and a school next to the prophet's mosque, which included also a tomb complex for himself; and in Mecca, the project for which he is best renowned and which caused great trouble with the jealous al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the remarkable restoration of a spring outside of Mecca (which was restored just on time as most of the wells in the city went dry). Chupan himself made the pilgrimage with the Iraqi caravan of 725/1325. Melville characterizes Chupan as a complicated individual: on the one hand, a "Mongol of the old school," a competent military man, who is more comfortable at the battlefield than with the intrigues at court, susceptible to schemers and impulsive under pressure, while on the other, a firm believer, unusual among the Mongols for his commitment to Islam, concerned with the welfare of the Muslims and promoting justice and Islamic values. A devoted servant of the crown, he, nevertheless, often found himself torn between his commitment to his family and his sense of dynastic loyalty. Melville, "Wolf or Shepherd? Amir Chupan's attitude to government," in J. Raby and T. Fitzherbert (eds.), *The Court of the Il-Khans 1290-1340* (Oxford, 1996), 79-93; idem, "year of the elephant," 206; Broadbridge, 114-17.



poles of Islamic salvation in their own right. This model of a salvation king offered Timurtash an alternative legitimizing paradigm to the Chinggisid descent based model, from which he could launch his own claim to independent rule.

### **The Mongol *Mahdī* Rebels**

Timurtash had initially accompanied his father Chupan to Anatolia in 1315. The Ilkhan Öljeitü dispatched the latter to Anatolia, after news of the Karamanid Turkmen's insubordination and their conquest of Konya had reached the *ordu*. The Karamanids retreated from Konya to Larende after his arrival. However, Chupan remained in Anatolia reinstating Ilkhanid rule in Konya. Learning about Öljeitü's death in 1317, Chupan headed back east leaving his son Timurtash in charge in Kayseri. Timurtash was heading to Niğde to deal with another Karamanid insurrection, when he was warned by his vizier Jalāl al-Dīn (Rashīd al-Dīn's son) about the uprising of the preceding governor of the Anatolia, the amir Irenjin (Öljeitü's uncle), against his father Chupan and the recently enthroned Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd. He fled to Danishmand lands until he learnt of his father's victory.<sup>677</sup> Once the revolt was resolved, Timurtash was reinstated in office. However, shortly after, in 722/1322-1323, he orchestrated his own rebellion.

According to the Ilkhanid historian Mustawfī Qazwīnī, in 722/1322-1323 reports reached the Ilkhanid court that the governor of Rūm Timurtash declared himself *shāh-i islām*, and had his name added to the *khutba* and minted on the coins. Mustawfī Qazwīnī further writes in his *Zafarnāmah* that he was recruiting an army to overthrow the reigning Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd and was corresponding with the Mamluks to that end.<sup>678</sup> Timurtash had also declared himself *mahdī*.

---

<sup>677</sup> Melville, "Anatolia," 90-91 (based largely on Aqsarā'ī). For the revolt of the amirs, see Melville, "Abū Sa'īd and the revolt of the amirs in 1319," in Denise Aigle, ed. *L'Iran face à la domination mongole* (Tehran, 1997), 135-77.

<sup>678</sup> Timurtash might have indeed harbored grander aspirations in his rebellion, as Mustawfī Qazwīnī implies. One contemporary Mamluk author, Mūsā b. Muḥammad al-Yūsufī, justified the Mamluk Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's

In his bid for independence, Timurtash joined earlier failed Ilkhanid rebels, who taking advantage of the distance from the *ordu* and their long standing connections to the region, used Anatolia as a base for claiming their own independent rule.<sup>679</sup> Like the rebellions of his precursors, Timurtash's revolt too was short lived. When his father amir Chupan, who was at that time the *de facto* ruler of the Ilkhanate, learnt of his son's insubordination, he personally headed an army mid-winter to Rūm and dragged his defiant son back to the court, where the young Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd had little choice but to pardon the rebel. Shortly after, Timurtash was reinstated for a second time as governor of Rūm. According to the *Zafarnāmah*, two of Timurtash's culprits were blamed for instigating the uprising: an unidentified amir by the name Hūkārjī (or Sūkārjī), and a Qādī by the name of Najm al-Dīn Ṭashtī.<sup>680</sup> Repeating much of Qazwīnī's account, the later Timurid historian

---

execution of Timurtash after the Mongol commander had sought asylum at al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's court in 1327, with a letter al-Nāṣir Muḥammad reportedly received from the Karamanid Bey. The latter implored al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to kill Timurtash for his crimes against the Beyliks in Anatolia, informing al-Nāṣir Muḥammad moreover that "a number of astrologers from the people of the east informed him [Timurtash] that he will rule the east [the Ilkhanate] and Egypt and encouraged his greediness for many things." Mūsā b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥya al-Yūsufī, *Nuzhat al-nāṣir fī sīrat al-malik al-nāṣir*, (Beirut, 1986), 439. Abū al-Fidā' too notes Timurtash's oppression and tyranny of Anatolia as one the reasons for his arrest and execution by the Mamluk sultan: "the sultan heard that he had taken the possessions of the people of Anatolia and oppressed them abominably. So the sultan seized him and placed him under arrest." He also describes Timurtash as "very arrogant because of his noble descent among the Mongols and his high position, and [that] he lacked sense to guide him, so that he regarded himself, rather than God Most High, as his creator". 'Imād al-Dīn Ismā'īl b. 'Alī Abū al-Fidā', *The Memoirs of a Syrian Prince: Abu'l-Fidā', Sultan of Ḥamāh (672-732/1273-1331)*, trans. P. M. Holt (Wiesbaden, 1983), 90. For an analysis of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's motives for breaking his earlier promise to Timurtash, Broadbridge, 117-25.

<sup>679</sup> Melville, "Anatolia under the Mongols," in ed., Kate Fleet, *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 1: *Byzantine to Turkey, 1071-1453* (New York, 2008), 82-7. A number of additional studies have addressed the amir Sülemish's (grandson of the Mongol commander Baiju) rebellion in 1298 and his attempt to recruit Karamanid and Mamluk support to resist Ghazan. See, for example, Angus Stewart, *The Armenian Kingdom and the Mamluks: war and diplomacy during the reigns of Het'um II (1289-1307)* (Leiden, 2001), 128-36; Rudi Lindner, "How Mongol were the early Ottomans?," in Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David Morgan, eds. *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy* (Leiden, 2000), 282-89.; Broadbridge, 70-72. The amir Baltu's earlier "revolt" (Melville, "Anatolia under the Mongols," 82) is noted in chapter one, where I suggest that we cannot trust Rashīd al-Dīn's narrative on the anti-Ghazan "insubordinations."

<sup>680</sup> *Zafarnāmah-i Hamd Allāh Mustawfī* (1999), 1460-1; trans. Ward, *The Zafar-Nāmah*, vol. 3, 644-45; Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Al-'Umarī's Bericht über Anatolien in seinem Werke Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, ed. Franz Taeschner (Leipzig, 1929), 51-2 (Arabic text). On Ṭashtī, see discussion below.

Ḥāfiẓ Abrū adds that Chupan had the amir and the Qāḍī executed together with several others for conspiring with his son.<sup>681</sup>

Although Timurtash's actions and policies in Rūm are noted in a variety of sources, from Ilkhanid and Mamluk histories to Armenian accounts, we lack a detailed historical account on the revolt itself and on the instigators' convictions. Timurtash's rebellion and self-proclamation as *mahdī* have, therefore, received little attention.<sup>682</sup> In his study of Anatolia under Mongol rule, Charles Melville argues that Timurtash's messianic claim was "designed to win the support of the religious classes (if not also of the Turkmens and dervishes, who were more successfully cultivated by the Safavid *ṣeyhs* Haidar, Junaid and Isma'īl at the end of the fifteenth century)".<sup>683</sup> Linda Darling, on the other hand, suggests that the revolt was an indication that "fighting against the Mongol regime had by that time taken on an apocalyptic significance that it did not seem to have had earlier".<sup>684</sup>

Two new pieces of evidence, however, shed a different light on Timurtash's uprising. The first is the identification of Qāḍī Najm al-Dīn Ṭashtī, who was tried and executed for the

---

<sup>681</sup> Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jāmi' al-Tavārīkh Rashīdī*, ed. Khānbābā Bayānī (Tehran, 1350, second edition), 160. For Ḥāfiẓ Abrū's use of the *Ẓafarnāma* for the period under discussion, Ch. Melville, "Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī's *Ẓafarnāma* and the historiography of the late Ilkhanid period," in ed., K. Eslami, *Iran and Iranian Studies* (New Jersey, 1998), 1-12 (for Timurtash's uprising, 5).

<sup>682</sup> The reign of Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd (r. 1317-35) falls unfortunately beyond the scope of the comprehensive histories of Rashīd al-Dīn and Vaṣṣāf al-Ḥaẓra and we must contend with later, less informed works. The Mamluk sources might offer detailed accounts about the events leading to the downfall of the Chubanids (1327-8) and Timurtash's arrival at the court of the Mamluk Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (and subsequent execution), as well as some useful insights onto the appearance of the Timurtashid imposter nine years later (1337-8) and the instrumental role the "fake Timurtash" played in the factional struggles that ensued after Abū Sa'īd's death, but they appear to show very little interest in (or simply, to have been less informed about) Timurtash's rebellion and only few mention his messianic self-proclamation. For example, the sultan's warm reception of Timurtash and the events leading to and following his execution have been recently thoroughly studied by Broadbridge, 117-25. Finally, the main Anatolian historical account of this poorly documented period, Karīm al-Dīn Aqsarā'ī's *Musāmarat al-akhbār wa musāyarat al-akhyār* ("Night time narratives and keeping up with the good"), ends with Timurtash return to office after the revolt of the amirs in 1319 and although completed during the height of Timurtash's prestige and messianic claim (1323/722), would seem at first glance to furnish little information about Timurtash's revolt and messianic convictions.

<sup>683</sup> Melville, "Anatolia," 91.

<sup>684</sup> Linda T. Darling, "Persianate sources on Anatolia and the early history of the Ottomans," *Studies on Persianate Societies*, vol. 2 (2004), 136. Anooshahr has also recently suggests *ghaza*/Jihad against the Mongols and Timur to be a central theme in Anatolia at the time. My reading of the historian Aqsarā'ī differs very much from that of Anooshahr (more bellow). Ali Anooshahr, *The Ghazi Sultans and the Frontiers of Islam* (London, 2009), especially chapter 6.

rebellion. I argue that Ṭashtī’s intellectual milieu and ties suggest that the targeted audience of Timurtash’s claim was not the antinomian, dervish communities of Anatolia, but the “mainstream” intellectual networks and urban public spheres in the Ilkhanate and in Ilkhanid, post-Saljūq Anatolia.<sup>685</sup> The second is the Armenian *Martyrdom of St. Grigoris Karninci, bishop of Theodosiopolis/Erzurum*, which speaks to Timurtash’s persecution of Christian communities, Greek Orthodox and Armenians in Anatolia, just prior to his outright rebellion. Considered alongside additional sources, primarily the Anatolian historian Karīm al-Dīn Aqsarā’ī’s *Musāmarat al-akhbār wa musāyarat al-akhyār* (“Night time narratives and keeping up with the good”),<sup>686</sup> Timurtash’s course just prior to his revolt shows that the Mongol officer was using the new political language that had its roots in the Ilkhanid experimentation with Islamic salvation history and the Mongol “political theology of divine right,” in order to support, as a non-Chinggisid, his bid for independent rule.

### **A Tabrizi Qāḍī in Anatolia and His Intellectual Networks**

An additional account of Timurtash’s revolt that mentions the Qāḍī Ṭashtī is the *Manāqib al-‘arīfīn* by Shams al-Dīn Aflākī, a disciple of Amīr ‘Ārif, a great grandson of the thirteenth-century Persian mystical poet Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (1207-73).<sup>687</sup> In *Manāqib al-‘arīfīn*, a hagiography of Rūmī and his offspring, Aflākī situates Timurtash’s self-proclamation as *mahdī* in the midst of the Mongol governor’s military campaign in 723/1323 in Konya.<sup>688</sup> According to Aflākī, a disciple of

<sup>685</sup> Based on Aqsarā’ī’s account, Şevket Küçük hüseyin also argues that Timurtash was addressing his (pro-Islamic) message to the primarily Muslim administrative ranks of Anatolia against the background of the crisis it was experiencing for three decades since the collapse of Seljuk rule. Şevket Küçük hüseyin, *Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung im Prozess kultureller Transformation* (Wien, 2011), 233

<sup>686</sup> Aqsarā’ī, *Musāmarat al-akhbār wa musāyarat al-akhyār* (Ankara, 1944).

<sup>687</sup> Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad-i Aflākī, *Manāqib al-‘arīfīn* (Ankara, 1961), vol. 2, 977-8; trans. John O’kane, *The Feats of the Knowers of God* (Leiden, 2002), 684-5.

<sup>688</sup> Aflākī has 720 for the retaking of Konya; this, however, appears to be a mistake as *Ta’rīkh-i al-i Saljūq* (and other sources) notes the date as 723. Anon. (ca. 765/1363), *Ta’rīkh-i al-i Saljuq dar anāṭūlī* (Tehran, 1999), 132. Ahrī too ties Timurtash’s attacks on the Karamanids to his insubordination. He writes that after conquering fortresses

Rūmī's great grandson Amīr 'Ārif, after retaking Konya, Timurtash proclaimed (*da 'wa kardī*): "I am the Lord of Auspicious Conjunction; why indeed, I am the Mahdī of time!" (*man ṣāhib-i qirānam balki mahdī-yi zamānam*). In spite of Timurtash's harsh treatment of Rūmī's great grandson Chalabī 'Ābid, Aflākī nevertheless describes Timurtash as "a young man firm in religion and chaste (*javānī būd mutadayyin va-pāk dāman*)".<sup>689</sup> One of the most intriguing details in Aflākī's account is the widespread support the Mongol rebel received. Aflākī lists a group of prominent men (*jamā 'ī az kubarāyi dahr*), Qāḍīs, religious scholars and shaykhs "from every city" (Tūqāt, Qaysariyya, Niğde, etc.), including the Qāḍī lashkar and the khaṭīb of Kayseri, who according to him, out of greed, went to great lengths in praising the Mongol amir and ha urged others to pay obedience to him. The first name in Timurtash's list of supporters is that of *Mawlānā* Najm al-Dīn Ṭashṭī.<sup>690</sup> His is also the only name that resurfaces in other accounts as well.<sup>691</sup>

The Maragha librarian Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's (642/1244-723/1323) remarkable biographical dictionary, the *Majma ' al-ādāb fī mu 'jam al-alqāb*, refers to Najm al-Dīn Ṭashṭī in several instances.<sup>692</sup> In the first example, Ibn al-Fuwaṭī notes that during his stay in Baghdad in

---

and raiding against the Karaminds, "he became aware of his power in Rūm and conquered fortresses [and] he started a rebellion and had his name written on the edge of the dirham of Abū Sa'īd." Abū Bakr Ahrī, *Ta 'rīkh-i Shaikh Uwais*, trans. J. B. van Loon (The Hague, 1954), 53 (translation), 152 (Persian). Coins with Timurtash's name have yet to resurface.

<sup>689</sup> Timurtash's decision to order Chalabī 'Ābid, Rūmī's great grandson, to head as an envoy to the amirs of the Uj (frontier) might have been linked to complaints about the unorthodox and immoral conduct and reputation of Rūmī's descendants and followers in Konya, and therefore, to Timurtash's role as a "reformer" and moral regulator. In *Manāqib al- 'arifīn*, Aflākī repetitively addresses such accusations. Aflākī argues that it was 'Ābid's failure to "check on" Timurtash that enabled the community's enemies ("the envious back biters and the spiteful") to poison Timurtash's mind against 'Ābid and the Rūmī community. Aflākī, vol. 2, 977-8.

<sup>690</sup> Aflākī lists the following individuals: Ṭashṭī, Shaykhzāda Tūkātī, "the late" Zāhir al-Dīn the *khaṭīb* of Kayseri, Shaykh Nāṣir-i Šūfī, Mawlānā Amīr Ḥasan-i Ṭabīb, Qāḍī Shihāb-i Nakīdī, Qāḍī Lashkar Vayghānī, Vā 'iz Ḥusām-i Yārjanlaghī.

<sup>691</sup> Ṭashṭī's death is confirmed by the fact that elsewhere in *Manāqib al- 'arifīn*, he is referred to as: "the most excellent of later day men (*al-muta khkhirīn*), the blessed martyr (*al-sa 'īd al-shahīd*) the Qāḍī Najm al-Dīn-i Ṭashṭī." Aflākī seems to introduce here Ṭashṭī since the latter like Rūmī was known as *Mawlānā*. Thus, Ṭashṭī is made to state that the title *Mawlānā* has become particular to Rūmī: "all religious scholars are addressed as *Mawlānā*. At present, when the name *Mawlānā* is employed, it is *Mawlānā* [Rūmī] who is meant." Aflākī, vol. 2, 597; O'kane, *Feats*, 409.

<sup>692</sup> Ṭashṭī does not appear in our main historical source for early fourteenth-century Rūm/Anatolia, Aqsarā 'ī's *Musāmarat al-akhbār*.

711/1311, Mawlānā Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭashtī al-Tabrīzī had copied the poems of an early thirteenth century Baghdadi poet by the name of Taqī al-Dīn ‘Alī from a Māliki *faqīh* at the Mustanṣiriyya *madrasa*, whom Ibn al-Fuwaṭī praises for his supreme handwriting.<sup>693</sup> In the second and more interesting reference, under the biographical notice of Muḥyī al-Dīn ‘Īsa al-Shirwānī, a resident of Erzincan in Rūm,<sup>694</sup> Ibn al-Fuwaṭī mentions that he met together with Muḥyī al-Dīn the “excellent” Qāḍī Mawlānā Najm al-Dīn Abī Bakr b. Muḥammad al-Ṭashtī, at the dwelling (*dār*) of the chief Qāḍī of the Ilkhanid realm (*Qāḍī quḍāt al-mamālik*) Nizām al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Malik (d. 716) in 716/1316.<sup>695</sup>

Ṭashtī’s full biography is not found in what remains of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī’s extensive work, though the latter appears to have personally known the Qāḍī. Nevertheless, Najm al-Dīn Ṭashtī emerges as part of the lively scholarly scenes of Tabriz and Baghdad. Ṭashtī’s name appears on two documents from the period. The signature of an individual by the name of M. b. M. b. Abī Bakr al-Ṭashtī al-Tabrīzī is found on a copy of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Kitāb al-tawḍīḥāt*, the first book of his *Majmū‘a*, dated to Ramadan 714/1314. Rashīd al-Dīn stipulated that each copy made of the *Majmū‘a* had to be confirmed by a Tabrizi Qāḍī.<sup>696</sup>

More significant, however, is an autograph *ijāza*, a teaching certificate, issued in 701/1302 by Ṭūsī’s most famous student from Maragha, the physician, philosopher, astronomer and overall polymath, Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311). The *ijāza* was granted to Najm al-Milla wa’l-Dīn M. b. M. b. Abī Bakr al-Tabrīzī, whom Shīrāzī honors with the titles *quḍwat al-a’imma al-mujtahidīn* (exemplar of the *mujtahids*) and *malj’ akābir al-muḥaqqiqīn* (refuge of the great inquirers). The *ijāza* lists the works Ṭashtī had studied with Shīrāzī giving us insight into Ṭashtī’s

<sup>693</sup> Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Majma‘ al-ādāb*, vol. 3, 515 (biographical notice: 3097).

<sup>694</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, 498 (biographical notice: 4304). Muḥyī al-Dīn ‘Īsa al-Shirwānī was the son of Majd al-Dīn, resident of Tabrīz and Qāḍī of Shirvan.

<sup>695</sup> Ibid., vol. 5, 80-81 (biographical notice: 4678). On Nizām al-Dīn at the court of Öljeitü, see chapter four.

<sup>696</sup> Krawulsky, 82; Van Ess, *Der Wesir*, 37.

religious and intellectual background. They include several well-known *ḥadīth* compilations and philosophical studies such as Shīrāzī's own commentary on Suhrawardī's philosophy of illumination, Ṭūsī's commentary on Ibn Sīnā, and the first book of Ibn Sīnā's *al-Qānūn (Canon of Medicine)*. Shīrāzī explicitly states that he also grants his student permission to transmit all of his works.<sup>697</sup>

Additionally, there are a number of parallels between the careers of Shīrāzī and Ṭashtī. In the 1270s, after spending nearly a decade in the company of Ṭūsī (up until 1268), Shīrāzī was appointed chief Qāḍī of Malatya and Sivas, a position that he likely held into the reign of the Ilkhan Arghun.<sup>698</sup> Yet, in spite of the distance, Shīrāzī maintained close ties with the court, and in 681/1282, he was sent by the Ilkhan Aḥmad Tegüder on a diplomatic mission to the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn.<sup>699</sup>

Qāshānī refers to Ṭashtī as chief Qāḍī of Rūm (*Qāḍī al-quḍāt-i mamālik-i rūm*).<sup>700</sup> Like Shīrāzī, Ṭashtī was also sent by the Ilkhan on a diplomatic mission. In 716/1316, Öljeitü chose him from amongst the men of Tabriz, as Qazwīnī writes, for a mission to the Chagatai rebel prince Yasawur, who had fled from Central Asia to Khurasan with the intention of submitting to the Ilkhan.<sup>701</sup> Before delivering to the Chagatai prince the letter concluding the agreement between the Ilkhan and Yasawur (*ahdnāmah*), Ṭashtī stopped at Abū Sa'īd's camp to report on his mission. Qāshānī has an interesting account of Ṭashtī's mission in *Ta'rīkh-i Ūljāyṭū*. At Yasa'ur's camp, the Qāḍī was questioned by a group of imminent scholars from Bukhara and Samarqand on matters of legal theory and jurisprudence. They were impressed by his answers and reported back

---

<sup>697</sup> Reza Pourjavady and Sabine Schmidtke, "Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311) as a teacher: an analysis of his *ijāzāt* (Studies on Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī III)," *Journal Asiatique* 297.1 (2009): 24-27.

<sup>698</sup> Pourjavady and Schmidtke, "Shīrāzī as a teacher," 15-17.

<sup>699</sup> Pfeiffer, "Reflections on a 'double rapprochement'," 386.

<sup>700</sup> Considering Timurtash's ties with Ṭashtī, one might speculate that amir Chupan appointed him during his campaign against the Turkmen in Rūm and his retaking of Konya from the Karaminds in the summer of 714/1314. See Melville, "Anatolia under the Mongols," 89-90.

<sup>701</sup> Ṭashtī's name is misread as Ṭabshī. Ward, *The Zafar-Nāmah*, vol. 3, 606-8.



to Yasa'ur, who showed Ṭashtī great favor. Qāshānī implies that the mission's success was on account of the impression Ṭashtī had left on the Mongol prince.<sup>702</sup>

In sum, a student of the famous polymath Shīrāzī, Najm al-Dīn Ṭashtī, whom Chupan had executed for instigating his son's revolt, was a Tabrizi Qāḍī, who was appointed as chief Qāḍī of Rūm. He appears to have had close ties to the Ilkhan Öljeitü's court and to the court of his heir, Sultan Abū Sa'īd. His signature on a copy of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Kitāb al-tawḍīḥāt*, Shīrāzī's *ijāza* and Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's note about Ṭashtī's presence at the home of the chief Qāḍī of the Ilkhanid realm, all indicate that Ṭashtī was a member of the central intellectual circles of the Ilkhanid court. The question remains, however, what role the *Qāḍī al-quḍāt-i mamālik-i rūm* play in Timurtash's rebellion and his self-proclamation. Was he simply the scapegoat for the Mongol commander's insubordination?

In Aflākī's list of Qāḍīs and *'ulamā* headed by Ṭashtī, nearly all of individuals listed appear only once, in this instance, in Aflākī's extensive hagiography of the Rūmīs. How did Aflākī, a Sufi disciple of the Rūmī family in Konya, come up with this detailed list of the names of supporters of Timurtash? One possibility, which seems to be supported by Aflākī's account, is that their names were made public through the issuing of a decree or a statement in support of the Mongol governor on the eve of his campaign in Konya against the Karamanids. I have discussed Sa'd al-Dawla's (d. 1291) attempt to collect signatures from eminent Muslim scholars and other Ilkhanid public figures (*a'imma-yi islām wa-a'yān-i dawlat*) to confirm the content of a document that Vaṣṣāf refers to as the *maḥḍar*, a manifesto.<sup>703</sup> I suggested that Sa'd al-Dawla's *maḥḍar* was linked to the circulation of another *maḥḍar* in Baghdad in 689/1290, which raised various allegations against Sa'd al-Dawla and quoted from the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* against the Jews.

---

<sup>702</sup> Ṭashtī's name is misread here as Najm al-Dīn Ṭayyibī. *Ta'rikh-i Ūljāytū*, 218-19.

<sup>703</sup> See chapter two.



The case of Sa‘d al-Dawla’s *maḥḍar* is an indication of the complex relationship between the Muslim public sphere, religious minorities and the Ilkhanid rulers: a means of voicing the public’s, or rather its religious elite’s dissatisfaction with the ruling strata, its representatives or policies, the *maḥḍar* could also function as a source of political authority and legitimacy furnishing the regime with a potential tool for influencing public opinion “from within.” As such, the *maḥḍar* or similar signed declarations might also offer ideological support for acts of political subversion and dissent. Did the Tabrizi Qāḍī with his intellectual and political ties orchestrate the issuing of such a “*maḥḍar*-like” document designed to win Anatolian public support for the Mongol governor-rebel? While the existence of such a document is uncertain, Ṭashṭī and other religious figures in Ilkhanid Anatolia would have easily stood behind Timurtash’s message of moral regulation, puritanism, and the restoration of a deteriorating social and religious order in Anatolia.

### **Timurtash and the Armenian *Martyrdom of St. Grigoris Karninci***

Another unstudied account on Timurtash’s actions in Rūm is the Armenian *Martyrdom of St. Grigoris Karninci, bishop of Theodosiopolis/Erzurum*. According to the text, in 1321, after raiding Armenian Cilicia, Timurtash pillaged and burnt down the Armenian church of Etchmiadzin.<sup>704</sup> Thereafter, he proceeded to Kayseri, where he plundered and ruined churches

---

<sup>704</sup> Timurtash’s invasion of Sis followed a Mamluk invasion in early April-May 1320 (which included the Aleppo forces and the prince of Hamah Abū al-Fidā’). Later that year, in November-December, Timurtash sent ambassadors to the Mamluk court and possibly also sent a message to the Mamluk governor of Aleppo requesting Mamluk military support for his campaign against the Armenians. Toward the end of 1321, Timurtash joined forces with the Karamanids (according to Abū al-Fidā’) and invaded Sis. His forces remained there for nearly a month ravaging and plundering before they returned to Anatolia. The Mamluks do not seem to have responded to Timurtash’s messages, but this did not prevent them from reaping the benefits from his attack. Although they collected a tribute from the Armenians (who were now seeking to replace their alliance with the Ilkhans, with Mamluk protection), they also launched later that year another campaign against the Armenians conquering a number of key fortresses that the latter repetitively refused to hand over to the Mamluks. ‘Imād al-Dīn Ismā‘īl b. ‘Alī Abū al-Fidā’, *The Memoirs of a Syrian Prince: Abu’l-Fidā’, Sultan of Ḥamāh (672-732/1273-1331)*, trans. P. M. Holt (Wiesbaden, 1983), 81-82; Abū al-Fidā’ ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa’l-nihāya* (Beirut, 1988), vol. 14, 100, 102; Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī’l-Faḍā’il, *Āgypten und Syrien zwischen 1317 und 1341*

and killed Greek Orthodox priests. The hagiographer then takes us to the city of Erzurum in eastern Anatolia, where a wicked Qāḏī obtains from the Mongol governor Timurtash a decree ordering the forced circumcision and conversion to Islam of one local Bishop named Grigoris and his uncle. We learn about the ordeals the poor Bishop bravely withstands at the hands of the cruel Qāḏī and his tyrant accomplice, the Mongol amir. The account ends with the Bishop's martyrdom and subsequent Christ-like resurrection, which is dated in the text to 20 June 1321.<sup>705</sup>

Timurtash is primarily known for his aggressive anti-Beylik policy that he perused while in office in Rūm.<sup>706</sup> It seems that his retrieval of Konya from the Karamanids in 723/1323 indeed marked a strategical shift, the start of his extensive military campaigns against the Turkmen Beyliks,

---

*in der Chronik des Muḥaddal b. Abī l-Faḏā'il*, ed. and trans. S. Kortantamer (Freiburg, 1973), 11 (Arabic text); Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 117-8.

<sup>705</sup> The text is not dated and only one manuscript of it has been preserved. It was copied after 1567. Hayoc' nor vkanere [New Armenian Martyrs] (1155-1843), ed. Y. Manandean and H. Ačarean (Ejmiacin, 1903), 121-8. I am grateful to Zara Pogossian and Ishayahu Landa for their help with reading this text. Korobeinikov links this persecution to the decline of the Orthodox church in Kayseri. Dimitri A. Korobeinikov, "Orthodox communities in Eastern Anatolia in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. Part 2: the time of troubles," *al-Masāq*, 17:1 (March, 2005), 6. The fourteenth century saw a massive decline in the Christian communities and the presence of the Orthodox Church in Anatolia. Vryonis has emphasized the role of dervish communities, syncretism, and conversion in this religious transformation of Anatolia. Korobeinikov, however, suggests that the key to this steep decline in Christian presence was the "sedentarisation of the Turkish people *en masse*" and the political instability and military campaigns in the region, which brought to the decline of Greek-city-dwellers in Anatolia (in contrast to the survival of Greek population in rural areas). *Ibid.*, 18; Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1971), 351-402 (in particular).

<sup>706</sup> Timurtash's campaigns in Anatolia left their impression not only on the terrorized Beyliks. In al-'Umarī's geographical section on Anatolia, Timurtash is noted to have dramatically changed the balance of power between the Turkmen Beyliks and the Ilkhanid government in Anatolia. Al-'Umarī lists the Beyliks he conquered and notes, for example, that the Beylik of Eshrefoglu did not recover Timurtash's campaign in 1326 and the gruesome death of its ruler. He writes of Timurtash's tyranny towards his neighbors and use of both military force and ruses in order to annexe the Anatolian Beyliks. He gathered such great riches during his campaigns and as result of revenue from taxes of the conquered territories that it did not fall behind that of the Seljuk rulers of Anatolia. Declaring his independent rule, he had nine Tumans (military units) of Mongol and Turkmen at his service. Al-'Umarī reports this account from Balbān the Genoese, a freedman (*atīq*) of a Mamluk officer and a former member of a ruling family in Genoa (the Duryea [?]), who al-'Umarī was lucky enough to interview when fate brought the two together in a Cairean jail. According to al-'Umarī, Balbān had full knowledge of Anatolia. We can imagine that the latter worked as a Genoese merchant at Anatolia probably trading along its shores and harbor cities. That stories about Timurtash's fame and terror traveled so far was in itself quite remarkable and reveals somewhat of the drama that his actions brought upon Anatolia. Al-'Umarī, 21,30-31, 36-39, 51. For Timurtash's military advancements, Melville, "Anatolia," 91-2; for the Beyliks, Rudi P. Lindner, "Anatolia, 1300-1451," *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 1, 107-117.

which continued throughout the 1320s.<sup>707</sup> Timurtash's career as governor, however, began differently, with the persecution of Christians in Rūm and his invasion into the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, possibly with Turkmen-Karamanid support. In fact, an Armenian colophon dated to 1314, around the time Timurtash and his father were dispatched to Rūm, describes similar events taking place in Erzurum: “[these are] grievous and bitter times, when our Armenian nation fell under the yoke of levies [...] in this city [Theodosiopolis = Erzurum] they demolished many churches; and some individuals, abandoning their faith in Christ, joined the wicked nation of the Ismaelites and others sold their children and fled to various places, but they found refuge nowhere [...]”<sup>708</sup>

The accusations leveled in the martyrdom against the Mongol Timurtash and the wicked Qāḏī culprit might have also been rooted in the transformation of the urban environment and demography of the city of Erzurum under Ilkhanid rule. At the end of the thirteenth century and the first decades of the fourteenth century, Erzurum experienced a remarkable surge in religious building projects making it “the greatest concentration of madrasas recorded in Anatolia in this period, as well as the peak of this kind of activity under Ilkhanid rule, whether in Iran or Anatolia”.<sup>709</sup> One of the most monumental buildings erected during the reign of Öljeitü, was the

---

<sup>707</sup> Karaman was one of the most powerful rising Turkmen Beyliks at the time in Anatolia and its leaders had an alliance with the Mamluk Sultans. Al-‘Umarī, nevertheless, emphasizes that were it not for Chupan’s arrival a year later to deal with his rebellious son, divine protection and the Mamluk sultan’s auspicious patronage on the Karamanids, with all their mighty forces, the Karamanids would not have been able to survive Timurtash’s military might. Al-‘Umarī, 29 (text); Abū al-Fidā’, 90.

<sup>708</sup> Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts*, 58. Was Timurtash simply following the measures his father had instituted earlier in Anatolia? Vryonis notes that between the years 1315 to 1318, eleven patriarchal acta documents of the Orthodox Church refer to times of “confusion, invasions, upheaval, turbulence [...] captivity, destruction, and attacks by foreigners,” in Anatolia, with specific references to localities such as Amsaia and Melitene (Erzincan) in eastern Anatolia. Vryonis argues for a correlation between this “documentary testimony” and the emergence of the Beyliks and suggests that “this period of upheaval was in large measure responsible for the final destruction of the ecclesiastical structure in Anatolia.” Vryonis, 311. The years 1315-18 were also the years Chupan and Timurtash were in Anatolia. Was Ṭashī’s appointment as chief Qāḏī of Rūm also related to the worsening conditions of the Christian urban communities?

<sup>709</sup> Patricia Blessing, *Rebuilding Anatolia after the Mongol Conquest: Islamic architecture in the lands of Rūm, 1240-1330* (Burlington, 2014), 129-30. Did the rise in investments in public religious building in Erzurum express

Yakutiye Medrese, established in 710/1310 “from the benefits of the benefaction” of the Ilkhan Ghazan and his wife Bulughan Khātūn, by Jamāl al-Dīn Khawāja Yāqūt al-Ghāzānī.<sup>710</sup> As Patricia Blessing observes, this peak in Islamic patronage in Erzurum indicates that the city, with its surrounding pastures and central location on the trade routes to Tabriz, gained considerable importance. It was, she argues, “the Ilkhanid gateway into Anatolia” connecting the Ilkhanate with the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.<sup>711</sup>

The urban transformation of Erzurum into a center of Islamic learning might have not been directly related to an increase in interreligious tensions in the city and persecutions of local Christian and Armenians that is attested to in the *Martyrdom of St. Grigoris*. However, these changes in Erzurum are an indication of the increasing significance and visibility of the city and more broadly eastern Anatolia under later Ilkhanid rule. Whether or not Timurtash was indeed personally involved in the persecution of the Armenian Bishop of Erzurum as the *Martyrdom of St. Grigoris* claims, the hagiography suggests that the Armenian communities of eastern Anatolia experienced a change in Mongol attitude, which is also attested in other Armenian accounts as noted above.<sup>712</sup> The growing presence of Erzurum in the Ilkhanate might suggest that this change

---

earlier changes in the human configuration of the city, for example, the city’s growing Islamization and demographic and confessional changes, or, were these projects aimed at encouraging such a change by inviting migrant scholars and students to the city through the promise of lodge and patronage? The answer might be altogether different. This surge in building and endowing might have originated in the wish of individuals who had achieved considerable wealth and political power under the Ilkhans, to guarantee that their offspring would benefit from their property. The mechanism of the *waqf* was seen as promising continuity and stability at a time period in which central government in Anatolia was increasingly destabilized and weakened, as Saljūq rule under the Mongols was nearing its end (1307). See, for example, Pfeiffer, “Protecting private property,” 152.

<sup>710</sup> Jamāl al-Dīn Khawāja Yāqūt al-Ghāzānī seems to have been the Ilkhanid governor of Erzurum and Bayburt Or an Ilkhanid merchant, perhaps a partner merchant of the Ilkhan Ghazan, and hence his title al-Ghāzānī.

<sup>711</sup> Blessing, 123-63.

<sup>712</sup> Similar events related to the Armenian community seem to have taken place in Erzincan in 1314 (the same date as the colophon from Erzurum lamenting the state of the Armenians). Three Franciscan missionaries, who were preaching to Muslims in the city, approached the Qādī of the customs house (*dogana*) denigrating the Prophet Muḥammad and the religion of Islam. The Qādī along with a group of religious men and “*faqīrs*” argued with them at length. Later that day, a trial was convened and the three missionaries were sentenced to death. Interestingly, the head of the Franciscans in nearby Trebizond reported that their burial was arranged by the Armenian community. The Armenian patriarch of Erzincan “canonized” the Franciscan martyrs, and had his community fast to

in Mongol attitude towards the Christian communities was also aimed at propagating a message to Ilkhanid as well as Anatolian audiences. It presented the new governor Timurtash as the enforcer of public morality, perhaps even, surpassing in his puritan measures and persecutions of the Christians the measures enforced by the Ilkhan Abū Sa‘īd.

Furthermore, Timurtash’s involvement in these persecutions speaks to a larger campaign enforcing public morality that the Mongol governor had undertaken in Rūm just prior to, or in the early stages of his rebellion. The Anatolian historian Karīm al-Dīn Aqṣarā’ī (on whom, below), who devoted his didactic history to Timurtash, but chose to end it just prior to the amir’s revolt, explicitly links Timurtash’s restoration of order and justice in Anatolia and his implementation of regulatory measures in Rūm, in particular, his prohibition on alcohol consumption, with the signs of the manifestation of the *mahdī*. Aqṣarā’ī writes in the conclusion of his *Musāmarat al-akhbār* that “one of the signs of the manifestation of the *mahdī* is that he [Timurtash] has obliterated like this the wine, which is the mother of all evil [...] from the lands and countries” (*az amārāt-i zuhūr-i mahdī yakī an ast ki shirāb rā... az bilād va-diyār chinān zā’il gardānīda ast*).<sup>713</sup>

---

commemorate their death. Norman Scott Johnson, *Franciscan Passions: Missions to the Muslims, Desire for Martyrdom and Institutional Identity in the later Middle Ages* (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2010), 320-22. The persecution of the missionaries took place roughly at the same time that the Greek Orthodox church lost its place in Erzincan (Celtzene). According to patriarchal acts from the period, the metropolitan of Melitene (Malatya) received the metropolitan seat of Erzincan since “the latter had been deprived of the consecrated seat by foreigners.” The metropolitan of Erzincan lost all its property in the area aside for one monastery. Vryonis, 289-90. Öljeitü’s reign was also marked by a deterioration in the relations between the Mongols and the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia related to the assassination of King Het’um II by a Mongol commander named Bularghu, who was stationed in Cilicia. Timurtash also attacked Cilicia after he was reinstated as governor of Anatolia in 1319. For the assassination, Angus Stewart, “The assassination of King Het’um II: the conversion of the Ilkhans and the Armenians,” *JRAS*, 15/1 (2005), 45-61.

<sup>713</sup> This section in Aqṣarā’ī’s history starts with Chupan’s arrival in Anatolia in 1314 in order to repress the Turkmen (*atrāk bī-pāk affāk saffāk*) uprisings. In contrast to Aqṣarā’ī’s vilification of the former governor of Anatolia, the amir Irenjin, Chupan is described as the embodiment of justice: with his arrival at Anatolia, “the shadow of grace was cast over the *vilāyat*.” He was successful in securing the submission of most of the Turkmen except for the Karamanids, whom he expelled from Konya. Returning to the *ordu* after learning of Öljeitü’s death, he appoints in his place his “pure progeny”, *khusruv-i pīrūz takht* Timurtash. With the arrival of spring and the period of revival, Timurtash takes his place in Kayseri. Aqṣarā’ī follows this with a description of the revolt of the amirs in 1319, led

Aqsarā'ī, furthermore, praises the Mongol governor for enforcing the *ghiyār*, the distinguishing dress code, on the Jews and Christians of Rūm, “who had become so alike the Muslims in their appearance that they could not be told apart.” The centrality of these measures for Aqsarā'ī, and moreover, for his historical vision, can be further gleaned from the way the author chose to end his history. *Musāmarat al-akhbār* ends with a long quote from Ibn al-‘Arabī’s (d. 1240) letter of counsel (*naṣīḥa*) to the Saljūq sultan ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykā’ūs I (r. 1211-19), enumerating the various regulations of *shurūt ‘umar* (“the pact of ‘Umar”). Aqsarā'ī urges his pious patron Timurtash to enforce the “pact” in its entirety on the *dhimmī* communities of Anatolia.<sup>714</sup> Aqsarā'ī’s *mahdī* is not the eschatological redeemer, but a synthesis of the ideal Perso-Islamic monarch (philosopher

---

accordingly by the tyrant Irenjin, who is blind to the fate that awaits him. Warned by his vizier, Timurtash flees to Danishmand territory until his father defeats Irenjin through “divine support” (*ta’yid ilahī*). Aqsarā'ī takes great pleasure in depicting the defeat of the “second Pharaoh” and “new Abrahah al-Ḥabash,” Irenjin. He uses this episode as a moral lesson about the fickleness of fate and against haughtiness. Timurtash then returns under “the shining light of divine providence” to purify the land from the dirt of corruption and administer justice: the wicked collaborators of Irenjin in Anatolia are rewarded with the sherbet of death (since *ba nīk nīk ba bad bad bāyad budan*); evil disappears while the *khusruv-i ‘ādil*. He sets out to vanquish the repressors and sets the law (*qānūn-i dawlat-i ū*) on the basis of justice. Peace descends on Anatolia as Timurtash is able for a while to pacify the Karamanids and all are safe in their lands (*dar vaṭan-i khūd*). Returning the following year (1320) from a visit to the *ordu* where he pledges his alliance to the Ilkhan, his oppression of repression and rebellion, good deeds, and strengthening of Islam are so great that the sign of the actions and states of the Mahdi become manifest through them (*az athār-i khayr [...] amārat-i af‘āl va-ahvāl-i mahdī bi-zuhūr payvast*). Aqsarā'ī, 310-27; Melville, “Anatolia,” 89-90. On Irenjin’s role as leading conspirator in the revolt that was possibly supported by the young Abū Sa‘īd against the strongman Chupan, Melville, “Abū Sa‘īd and the revolt,” 100ff.

<sup>714</sup> Aqsarā'ī, 327-9. Ibn al-‘Arabī had an intimate relationship with ‘Izz al-Dīn Kaykā’ūs I serving as his spiritual guide and teacher. The letter of counsel (*naṣīḥa*) to Kaykā’ūs I is found in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* (The Meccan Revelations). Sara Nur Yıldız and Haşim Şahin point out that Ibn al-‘Arabī’s discussion in his letter to Kaykā’ūs I of the enforcement of *shurūt ‘umar*, which forbade Christians from building or repairing churches and monasteries, sell alcoholic beverages, carry arms, or to draw attention to their religious ceremonies, “seems to be directly related to the sultan’s struggle to quell the Christian rebellion in Antalya, breaking out in 1212, the year the letter was written.” Ibn al-‘Arabī’s counsel, they observe, expresses the sultan’s fear from Christian dominance that “should be understood in accordance with his self-proclaimed role of reviving Islam in face of Christian expansion into Muslim lands, during a time when Crusades in both Spain and the Levantine coastal region posed a real threat to Muslim sovereignty.” On Ibn al-‘Arabī’s time in Anatolia (a total of five-six years between 1205-1222) and relationship with Majd al-Dīn Işhāq (d. 1220), his influence at the Saljūq court, and his letter of counsel (*naṣīḥa*) to Kaykā’ūs I, ] Sara Nur Yıldız and Haşim Şahin, “In the proximity of sultans: Majd al-Dīn Işhāq, Ibn ‘Arabī and the Seljuk court,” in A.C.S Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız. Eds. *The Seljuks of Anatolia: court and society in the medieval Middle East* (London, 2013), 173-205. An important recent study of the origins of the *shurūt ‘umar* and their enforcement is Milka Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire: from surrender to coexistence* (New York, 2011). The enduring influence of *shurūt ‘umar* in the later medieval period is attested in the manuals guiding the *muhtasibs*, the inspectors of public spaces and the markets. The manuals referenced the *shurūt ‘umar* as the main source of authority for determining the *dhimmī* communities’ obligations. Kristen Stilt, *Islamic Law in Action: authority, discretion, and everyday experiences in Mamluk Egypt* (Oxford, 2011), 109-26.



king) and the ultimate moral regulator, the commander of right and forbiddener of wrong (*al-amr b'il-ma'rūf*).

Michael Cook defines commanding right and forbidding wrong (*al-amr b'il-ma'rūf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar*) as “a duty of unusual character” since “it is an integral part of the mainstream scholastic tradition of Islamic societies; and yet it retains a marked potential for violence” and subversion. Based on the idea that “an *executive power* of the law of God is vested in each and every Muslim,” commanding right grants each believer the right and obligation to invert “the prevailing hierarchy of social and political power”.<sup>715</sup> This was case for the founder of the Almohad movement Ibn Tūmart (d. 524/1130), whose reform movement was interlinked with his claim to *mahdī*hood. As Mercedes Garcia-Arenal observes, for Ibn Tūmart, “the practice of *al-amr b'il-ma'rūf* thus became an instrument of political opposition, used of this purpose by those who assumed the role of censor or reformer of customs, and immediately recognized as such by his audience and by the political authority of the day.” Garcia-Arenal further notes that “Ibn Tūmart’s behavior as a censor or reformer of customs prepares the ground for his proclamation as a Mahdi, the greatest possible reformer”.<sup>716</sup>

In Sunni Islam, the *mahdī* came to denominate an eschatological figure, an apocalyptic world-ruler. However, the *mahdī* also designates a cyclical reformer, or “a *mujaddid*-like *mahdī*,” who appears periodically to set the community aright after its corruption and restore morality and

---

<sup>715</sup> Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge, 2001), 583. Cook argues that “what we see here is the presence, within the mainstream of Islamic thought, of a strikingly – not say inconveniently – radical value: the principle that an *executive power* of the law of God is vested in each and every Muslim. Under this conception the individual believer as such has not only the right, but also the duty, to issue orders pursuant to God’s law, and to do what he can to see that they are obeyed. What is more, he may be issuing these orders to people who conspicuously outrank him in the prevailing hierarchy of social and political power.” Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>716</sup> Mercedes Garcia-Arenal, *Messianism and Puritanical Reform: Mahdīs in the Muslim West*, trans. Martin Beagles (Brill, 2006), 165.

order.<sup>717</sup> This understanding of the *mahdī* is already found in the eighth century. As Hayrettin Yücesoy concludes in his study of ‘Abbāsīd messianism, “the idea of *tajdīd*, religious renewal and restoration, emerged as one of the fundamental components of messianic discourse since the second Islamic century.” Claims of reform and the purification of the faith provided rulers and rebels alike an ideological basis for their political actions.<sup>718</sup>

By “obliterating the wine,” enforcing the *ghiyār*, destroying churches, and generally speaking, forbidding wrong, Timurtash the governor-rebel stepped into the shoes of this Sunni cyclical militant reformer and periodic moral regulator, the *mahdī*. Furthermore, Aflākī’s claim that Timurtash proclaimed himself “Lord of Auspicious Conjunction,” a world conqueror, in addition to the title of the *mahdī* further supports the suggestion that the Mongol rebel was claiming the title in the sense of a militant reformer.

Aflākī’s list of Timurtash’s supporters from amongst the Qāḍīs and leading religious figures suggests that his reformist message might have been propagated through the circulation in Rūm’s urban centers of a “*maḥḍar*-like” document that included the names of Qāḍī Ṭashtī and other individuals in support of Timurtash’s campaign. What better way to pronounce Timurtash’s independent government, moralistic and new aggressive anti-Beylik agenda, than declaring his campaign to rid Anatolia from its immoral Christians and impure Turkmen over the pulpits of Konya, set free once again from the Karamanid menace? Our reconstruction of the

---

<sup>717</sup> Ibid., 20; Patricia Crone, *God’s Rule: Government and Islam* (New York, 2004), 250-2.

<sup>718</sup> Hayrettin Yücesoy further observes that while social, political and intellectual developments in the ‘Abbāsīd period charged the *mahdī* with the notion of militant reform and revival, “the chronological relation of the *mahdī* at the end of time and his sectarian and genealogical affiliation did certainly display flexibility, which encouraged a wide range of aspirants.” Yücesoy, *Messianic Beliefs*, 133, 139-40.



historical context of Timurtash's revolt indicates, therefore, that his *mahdī* scheme entailed "a political ideology of militant piety".<sup>719</sup>

### **The *Mahdī*'s Historian: Aqsarā'ī and His *Musāmarat al-akhbār***

A close reading of the work of the Anatolian author Aqsarā'ī, who as we noted earlier associated Timurtash's prohibition on alcohol and campaign of public morality with "the manifestation of the signs of the *mahdī*," shows how members of the local Persianate elite in Anatolia reacted to Timurtash's bid for independence seeking to harness Timurtash's campaign for their own causes, in particular, the restoration of a Persianate order in Anatolia. A native of Aksaray and a *munshī* at the local bureaucracy, Karīm al-Dīn Aqsarā'ī provides in *Musāmarat al-akhbār* a local, Anatolian point of view of the events taking place in the Ilkhanate and Ilkhanid Anatolia. Caught up in a number of the turbulent incidents at the end of the thirteenth century, Aqsarā'ī emerges as a politically involved member of the administrative ranks, the local Persianate elite, after the collapse of Saljūq rule. Under the Ilkhan Gāzān, he was appointed to the position of administrator of the *awqāf* of Rūm, an office, which as Melville notes, probably brought him both influence and wealth and even a greater measure of trouble and financial duties. He was a commandant of Aksaray and had his own fort at Sālima.

Melville defines *Musāmarat al-akhbār* as a work that combines both an Anatolian local view and an emphasis on contemporary events, with a model of a "general" history. Aqsarā'ī writes that he intended the work as a gift for his patron Timurtash as it is the custom of the

---

<sup>719</sup> Ibid., xii. The notion of "purification" is central to Aqsarā'ī's presentation of Timurtash's missions in Anatolia: enforcing Islamic public morality, especially with regards to alcohol and the Christian communities, and removing the "filth" of the Turkmen, whom Aqsarā'ī often refers to as impure. In Qāḍī Burhān al-Dīn- al-Anawī's *Anīs al-Qulūb* (completed in 1211), a history of the prophets with an extensive section devoted to anti-Armenian polemics, the Armenians are described as "the filthiest, most unclean and ill-fated of all the Christians." See Andrew Peacock's excellent study of this unpublished work, A.C.S. Peacock, "An interfaith polemic of medieval Anatolia: Qāḍī Burhān al-Dīn- al-Anawī on the Armenians and their heresies," in *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, edited by A.C.S. Peacock, Bruno de Nicola, Sara Nur Yildiz, (Burlington, 2015), 233-61 (240 for this verse).

educated to award their masters gifts, yet a poor and humble servant, he could not think of any other appropriate gift than this history. He expresses his hope that, readers at court would convey the contents of this *majmū‘a* to the blessed ears of Mongol commander: “for the value (*fā’ida*) of history is the pleasure it gives to kings and potentates, while weary or relaxing, to listen to stories of the past [...], what the various kings had and [...] how each was rewarded for his good or evil deeds [...]”. Intending to encourage his patron to incline towards to good and shun the evil, Aqsarā’ī finds that there is no better time to end his history than the present (1323) as there is no ruler finer than the present prince (*shahriyār*) Timurtash.<sup>720</sup>

The didactic message of his history tallies with other Ilkhanid historians who, too, sought to steer their Mongol patrons towards acculturation and embracing the practices and cultures of their Persianate subjects.<sup>721</sup> Historians of Ilkhanid Anatolia, Ibn Bībī, Aqsarā’ī, and to some degree, also the anonymous author of *Ta’rīkh-i āl-i saljūq*, actively participated in this project encouraging the intended audience of their works, be they government officials or Ilkhanid governors and rulers, to promote justice and strengthen Islam, by reporting positive and negative examples of previous rulers and state servants.<sup>722</sup> In his history, Aqsarā’ī appears particularly invested in this project emphasizing the just rule of the Ilkhans (both non-Muslims and Muslims). In *Musāmarat al-akhbār*, even Chinggis Khan is praised for his God-fearing nature in contrast to the arrogance of the Khwārazmshāh.<sup>723</sup>

---

<sup>720</sup> Melville, “Persian historiography,” 145-6; Aqsarā’ī, 3-6. In the *dibācha*, Aqsarā’ī praises Timurtash as *mudabbir al-mamlaka [...] al-mu‘ayyad min al-samā’ al-muzaffir ‘alā al-a‘dā’ muzhir kilmāt Allāh al-‘ulyā [...] mālik riqāb al-ummam mumahhid arkān al-rahma mahdī al-zamān nāṣir al-ḥaqq [...] dārāy-i jahān Timurtash nūyān*. Ibid., 4.

<sup>721</sup> Melville, “From Adam to Abaqa,” 67-86.

<sup>722</sup> Melville, “The early Persian historiography of Anatolia,” in eds., J. Pfeiffer and S. A. Quinn, *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods* (Wiesbaden, 2006), 153-57.

<sup>723</sup> Ibid., 155-56.

Aqsarā'ī's didactic attitude in *Musāmarat al-akhbār* is further evident in his account of the final clash between the forces of Baidu and Ghazan. Aqsarā'ī takes Qāshānī's conversion narrative of Ghazan into a salvific revival king, a step further by depicting the military clash as a scene from the Hour of Calamity that precedes the Final Hour.<sup>724</sup> In Aqsarā'ī's account, Baidu's emergence (*khurūj*) is a *fitna*, a distortion of time, nature and social relations.<sup>725</sup> When Baidu becomes ruler, "shrines and convents that were places of gathering and sanctuaries for the shaykhs and the worshipers became the abode of the lewd group of Patriarchs and Buddhist priests (*bakhshiyān*);" *madrasas* lost their splendor from neglect while prayer niches were violated, transformed into brothels and idol-houses; seeking haven in caves and fortresses from the sedition and misfortune that take hold in the Ilkhanid lands, Muslim believers are trampled by monks and the Buddhist; and the Islamic market and trade are corrupted. Aqsarā'ī further writes that in accordance with "divine grace and celestial assistance," Baidu's tyrannical rule, which is "the darkness of the day of resurrection (*qiyāma*)," precedes the rise of "the morning star of safety," the "greatest Khaqan Ghazan," a Lord of Auspicious Conjunction (*khusruvi ṣāhib qirān*), the like of whom has never been seen before.

Baidu and Ghazan meet on the battlefield for an Armageddon battle: an army of angels aids Ghazan against Baidu's dark forces. The drums of the battlefield are the blowing of the Trumpet (*nafkh-i ṣūr*) of angel Israfeel on the day of resurrection. The clash between the two armies on the battlefield and the havoc it causes are likened to the resurrection of the dead (*ḥashr*). The depiction of this battle as an apocalyptic moment is evident not only from the images of (Qur'anic) cosmic cataclysms and catastrophes (the transfigurations of the earth and mountains, the blackening of the sky and Saturn), but also from Aqsarā'ī's use of Qur'anic

---

<sup>724</sup> Chapter three.

<sup>725</sup> See Saïd Amir Arjomand, "Islamic Apocalypticism in the Classic Period," in *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism*, eds. Bernard McGinn et al. (New York, 2003), 380-87.

references, scattered throughout the text.<sup>726</sup> Baidu's "Tatar army" is defeated and his sedition is put to rest. The seal of Sulaymān (*khātim-i sulaymānī*) passes from Baidu to the auspicious Ghazan Khan. Emptied from the accursed idol worshipers, the Muslim "abodes or prayer" are returned to their previous glorious state.

The apocalyptic overtones of Aqsarā'ī's narration of the dramatic clash between Baidu's and Ghazan's forces is further accentuated by Aqsarā'ī's stark silence on the topic of the Ilkhan's conversion. Whether Aqsarā'ī conceived of Ghazan's victory as an event of eschatological import or was simply using the apocalyptic allusions as metaphors to further dramatize the clash, or to show his skills as an author, Aqsarā'ī's account of Ghazan's triumph cannot be separated from the author's didactic goals directed towards his *mahdī* claimant patron, whose attention Aqsarā'ī wishes to draw by gifting his history. Aqsarā'ī offers Ghazan as a model of the militant reformer for Timurtash the rebel to emulate. For Aqsarā'ī, like other Ilkhanid historians, the figure of Ghazan as a "savior king" combines the ideal just Perso-Islamic ruler and the militant reformer. In Aqsarā'ī's account, after overcoming his cousin in a doomsday battle, Ghazan sets on reinstating justice and building projects in the Ilkhanate. As elsewhere in his history, Aqsarā'ī equates justice with building (*imārat*, quoting for example 'Abd al-Malik's dicta: "fortify it with justice") revealing the concerns of a Persianate urban elite in the aftermath of the collapse of Saljūq rule in Anatolia.

---

<sup>726</sup> Aqsarā'ī uses Qur'anic images such as "the plucked tufts of wool" and "the scattered moths," both of which are derived from Surat al-Qāri'a ("the clatterer/calamity," Q. 101) that was identified by early commentators as another term for the Day of Resurrection. The short Sura thus reads: "The calamity; what is the calamity?; And what will explain to you what the calamity is?; It is the day on which men shall be as scattered moths; mountains like the plucked tufts of wool; then, as for him whose measure of good deeds is heavy; he shall live a pleasant life; as for him whose measure of good deeds is light; his abode shall be abyss; and what will make you know what it is?; a burning fire." These Qur'anic references continue with "the edict of fate was seized and the cycle of time wrote/inscribed the letters of 'scattered floating dust' [Q. 25:23] unto the sheet of his government". The latter refers to Surat al-Furqan ("the Criterion"), where relating to the final of judgment of man, it reads: "and we shall turn to whatever deeds they did [in this life], and we shall make such deeds as floating dust scattered about." For the signs of the Hour in the Qur'an. Arjomand, "Islamic Apocalypticism."

Ending abruptly, just prior to Timurtash's revolt or possibly even at the very moment Timurtash openly proclaimed his political aspirations, Aqsarā'ī's history finishes with an optimistic note, praising Timurtash's good government in Anatolia. Aqsarā'ī's praise of Timurtash plays a prescriptive role, in addition to its descriptive function, urging the Mongol governor to live up to his historian-client's expectations. Aqsarā'ī's comments express the main concerns of a Persianate urban elite in Anatolia in the aftermath of Saljūq collapse. Writing first of the rebellious Turkmen (*jins-i ṭā'ifa-yi mutamrriḏān*), Aqsarā'ī explains that the sultan, who is the shadow of God on earth (*ẓill Allāh*) and the administrator of justice, strengthened by divine assistance (*bi-ta'yīd-i ilahī*), destroys the Turks and cleans the land from the filth and impurity of the Turks. He praises Timurtash for his diligence in this matter. Aqsarā'ī follows this with a homily on the importance of banning wine, which Aqsarā'ī views as a danger for good governance. He argues that it is essential that the sultan serve as an example in this matter. The rules of justice must apply to him too since "a just sultan is better than heavy rain." Rain might not fall everywhere whereas the rays of the sun of justice include both the weak and the strong. Aqsarā'ī equates justice with building (*'imārat*) as it invigorates the world.<sup>727</sup>

Finally, Aqsarā'ī also praises Timurtash for ordering the Jews and Christians to wear yellow turbans, hats and strips, stating that religion is strengthened through kingship and that the king with the strength of religion keeps his seat. As noted above, in the final passages of the text, the author quotes Ibn al-'Arabī's (d. 1240) letter of counsel (*naṣīḥa*) to the Saljūq sultan 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs I (r. 1211-

---

<sup>727</sup> This title (*khusruv-i 'ādil*) also appears in Anatolian inscriptions dedicated to Timurtash: for example, on a fountain in Sivas completed in 723. On other hand, on a mosque built in Samsun (723), it is noted the mosque was built during the days of the great sultan Abū Sa'īd and the time of the "Noyan Timurtash may his victory be glorious," probably referring to his conquest of Konya in 723. M. Zeki Oral, "Anadolu'da İlhanî devri vesikalari. Temurtash Noyin zamanında yapılmış eserler ve kitabeleri," in *V. Turk Tarih Kongresi*, ser. 9, no. 5 (Ankara, 1960), 208-15.

19), a homily on good practice that repeats the Pact of ‘Umar.<sup>728</sup> Like Najm al-Dīn Rāzī’s personal plea to the rulers of his age to save Islam after the Mongol destruction of his hometown of Rayy, Aqsarā’ī’s history too enmeshes together the author’s plea for the implementation of just rule, the restoration of the urban centers of Rūm, and the implementation of moral regulation with his own, personal grievances and requests.<sup>729</sup>

### Reform and Authority from the Ilkhans to the Timurids

While Aqsarā’ī implies that Timurtash should follow the example of the ideal Perso-Islamic and reformer king Ghazan, Timurtash might have followed the footsteps of another, the Mongol commander, rebel and “reformer,” amir Nawrūz. The accounts found in the contemporary Christian sources, which unanimously blame Ghazan’s convertor, the amir Nawrūz, for the violent persecution of Christian communities early in Ghazan’s reign, are

---

<sup>728</sup> Aqsarā’ī, 325-29.

<sup>729</sup> Aqsarā’ī’s grievances are linked to Timurtash’s predecessor, the amir Irenjin (uncle of Öljeitü). The latter was dispatched by Öljeitü with a powerful force to protect the Anatolian frontier in 1305. Aqsarā’ī, just recently appointed administrator of the *waqfs* of Rūm, complains excessively of the latter’s mismanagement and tyranny (*maẓālim, fitna va-āshūb*). He is largely concerned with Irenjin’s actions in Aksaray. The latter seems to have found an accomplice in a local (Turkish?) amir, Valad Shankit (?), with whom the author appears to have been on bad terms. The first account (*qaḍiyya*) of Irenjin and Shankit’s evil doings reveals how Aqsarā’ī establishes this conflict as a cultural one (“un-Islamic” Turks versus the Persianate Muslims). It appears to have evolved around the repairs of the Khan ‘Alā’ī, situated on the road between Aksaray and Konya. Captured by a Karamanid rebel, two of its towers were destroyed blocking the road: appointed administrator of the *waqfs*, Aqsarā’ī paid from his own pocket a sum of ten thousand to repair the building hoping that the money would be returned to him from *waqf* profits. Two years later, the repairs were finished and history repeated itself: a Turk amir rebelled against Irenjin capturing the newly repaired castle and entrenching himself in it. Irenjin spent two months besieging the fort at the company of twenty thousand men with little luck. Aqsarā’ī blames Shankit, who belongs, according to Aqsarā’ī, to those people (*na-ahl*, Turks?) whose existence requires destruction for urging Irenjin to hold the poor Aqsarā’ī (*īn ẓa’īf*) responsible for the entire affair claiming that were he not to repair the castle, the rebel would not have entrenched himself in it. Aqsarā’ī was charged for another sum of six thousand as blood money for the Mongols who lost their lives in the siege. Aqsarā’ī vehemently protests to his readers the reverse logic (*ma’kūs*) of this event arguing that it is the role of the *mutawallī* and furthermore, an Islamic requirement (*sharā’i-i islām*), to repair and build. He uses this example as a moral lesson lecturing on the obligations of the ruler. The other accounts of Irenjin’s tyranny follow the same line: Shankit abuses under Irenjin’s authority the public treasury of Aksaray; he heads violent clashes in the streets of the city; bodies pile up in Aksaray’s streets, and personal property of the author is plundered; the shameless unbeliever Shankit burns a mosque; and complaints of the dignitaries of the city to Irenjin have little effect. Aqsarā’ī’s narrative of these events evolves around personal and local injustices carried out by Irenjin and his agent. Aqsarā’ī clearly pleads here for justice both on the personal (monetary compensation for himself) and public levels. Aqsarā’ī, 304-9; Melville, “Anatolia,” 88.

remarkably reminiscent of the narrative of Timurtash's persecution of the Christians in the *Martyrdom of St. Grigoris Karninci*.<sup>730</sup> Furthermore, according to the Mamluk biographer Ṣalāh al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybeg al-Ṣafadī, Nawrūz entertained messianic aspirations as well. Al-Ṣafadī states that the conflict between Nawrūz and Ghazan, which led to the former's downfall, arose from the amir's belief that the time of the rise (*khurūj*) of the *mahdī* has come and that Nawrūz will pave the path before him (*al-mumhhid lahu*).<sup>731</sup>

I have discussed how both the Ilkhanid authors Rashīd al-Dīn and Vaṣṣāf made use of Qāshānī's earlier history of Ghazan and his conversion narrative, in which he credits Nawrūz with the Ilkhan's conversion. Rashīd al-Dīn's narrative and conversion account of Ghazan in the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* express a hostile attitude towards the amir Nawrūz presenting the latter in negative light by omitting and rewriting portions of Qāshānī's narrative. The Ilkhanid historian Vaṣṣāf, however, maintained in his *Tajziyat al-amṣār* Qāshānī's approach in his earlier narrative, extensively dwelling on Nawrūz's pivotal role in the Ilkhan's conversion and enthronement.<sup>732</sup> While Vaṣṣāf writes that it was the prince Ghazan's order, immediately after

---

<sup>730</sup> Melville, "Pādshāh-i Islām," 170-71; Foltz, "Ecumenical mischief," 62-5; Dashdondog, 197. For Nawrūz's persecution of the Christians with a focus on Tabriz and Maragha, see for example, the reports in Rabban Sauma's history, where he states that Nawrūz had issued an edict stating that "the churches shall be uprooted and the altars overturned, and the celebrations of the Eucharist shall cease, and the hymns of praise, and the sounds of calls to prayer shall be abolished; and the heads of the Christians, and the heads of the congregations of the Jews, and the great men among them shall be killed." Budge, *Monks of Kūblāi Khān*, 210ff. According to Rabban Sauma, Nawrūz's reinstatement of the poll-tax was overturned shortly later by the Ilkhan. Bar Hebraeus also blames Nawrūz for the violent measures, the persecution of Christians and desecration and looting of churches throughout the Ilkhanate. He states that the Christian communities and institutions in Tabriz and Baghdad were especially subject to anti-Christian violence, but notes that the Jews were also attacked and that "it was twice as fierce, many times over, on the priests who were worshippers of idols [the Buddhists]. And this after the honor to which they had been promoted by the Mongol kings, and which was so great that one-half of the money which was gathered together in the treasury of the kingdom had been given to them [...]" He also notes that many of the "pagan priests," the Buddhist clergy converted because of their harsh persecution. Bar Hebraeus also writes that edicts were sent from Ghazan "to every country and town to destroy the churches and to loot the monasteries." Bar Hebraeus, 506-08. See also the Armenian Bishop Stepanos Orbelian's history, which too "vindicates" Ghazan while maintaining Nawrūz's guilt for the persecutions. See Stéphanos Orbelian, *Histoire de la Siounie*, trans. M. Brosset (Saint Petersburg, 1864), 261-62.

<sup>731</sup> *Al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt*, 25: 230-31. Al-Ṣafadī also mentions Timurtash's messianic aspirations. See his, *A'yān al-Aṣr*, 2: 112.

<sup>732</sup> On the relationship between Vaṣṣāf's and Qāshānī's conversion narratives, see Appendix II.

his victory over Baidu's coalition, to plunder the churches, synagogues and Zoroastrian temples of Tabriz, it is the amir Nawrūz's edict (*yarlīgh*) following Ghazan's enthronement in *Tajziyat al-amṣār* that proclaims and enforces the Mongol "official" conversion to Islam.<sup>733</sup>

According to Vaṣṣāf, Nawrūz's edict ordered that "all the Mongol and Uyghurs, both young and old, who had [previously] considered themselves free from obeying the *sharī'a* and permitted themselves the consumption of pork and other [unlawful] carcasses in opposition to the Qur'an," will sincerely pronounce the *shahāda*. The Christians were to utter the verse "He begetteth not, nor is He begotten" (surat *al-Iklhāṣ*), the polytheists and Zoroastrians were to be killed for their idolatry, and the Jews were to be granted safe haven as long as they pay the *jizya* and wear the *ghiyār*. According to Nawrūz's edict, their synagogues and churches were to be looted and made into mosques.<sup>734</sup>

In addition to his image as convertor and restorer of Islamic order, Nawrūz, who was the semi-independent governor of Khurasan, is also praised by Vaṣṣāf, as well as by other local Khurasani histories for his cultivation of agricultural production in Khurasan and his protection of the local sedentary population from the incursions of the Central Asian Chagataid forces and the exploitation of Ilkhanid commanders and military. As Michael Hope demonstrates, through his favorable treatment of the local population in Khurasan, Nawrūz was able to gain their instrumental support and resist the forces of Arghun and his son Ghazan.<sup>735</sup> According to Vaṣṣāf, the amir's enforcement of the *sharī'a* on the Mongols and on the non-Muslim populations of the

---

<sup>733</sup> In the Ilkhanate, *yarlīghs*, royal decrees, were only issued by the Chinggisid rulers. The edict of the amir was referred to as *sōz* reflecting the hierarchy: the commander rules by authority of the Ilkhan. Elsewhere in his history, Vaṣṣāf is more diligent about maintaining this differentiation. Thus, he states that when Nawrūz joined forces for a short while with the Ögödeid Muslim prince Ürüṅ Timur after Nawrūz's disagreement with Qaidu, and the two had taken over Herat, Nawrūz sent out decrees (*yarlīghhā*) in the name of Ürüṅ Timur and had his name added as the governing commander (Nawrūz *sözündin*). Vaṣṣāf, 315; Ayatī, 191-92. For the hierarchical systems of Ilkhanid documents, Gottfried Herrmann, *Persische Urkunden der Mongolenzeit: Text- und Bildteil* (Wiesbaden, 2004), 10-13.

<sup>734</sup> Vaṣṣāf, 322-25.

<sup>735</sup> Michael Hope, "Nawrūz king," 3-9.



Ilkhanate and his friendly policies in Khurasan made Nawrūz worthy of titles such *ghāzī*, “reviver of religion” (*muḥyi-i dīn*), “second Abū Muslim,” and *mahdī*, a reformer.<sup>736</sup>

Whether or not Nawrūz was using, as Hope argues, his precedence and seniority in conversion to Islam to assert his authority over the recent convert Ghazan and overcome the limitations imposed on his authority as a non-Chinggisid amir (*noyan*),<sup>737</sup> the association of Ilkhanid conversion with reform and the restoration of a *sharī‘a* order clearly struck a chord with Ilkhanid historians, beginning with Qāshānī’s providential conversion narrative of Ghazan into a Perso-Islamic reformer king. A former client of the Salghūrid dynasty of Fārs and an employee of the Ilkhanid financial administration, Vaṣṣāf might have also idealized the figure the Mongol commander and convert-converter Nawrūz to provide a model that later Mongol rulers could emulate, similar to the way in which Aqṣarā’ī depicted his patron Timurtash as the ideal Perso-Islamic and reformer king with specific aims in mind.<sup>738</sup>

Timurtash’s and Nawrūz’s anti-*dhimmi* measures and persecution of Christian communities, which are also evinced by independent Christian accounts, suggest, however, that the two commanders were invested in their role as puritan reformers. Timurtash’s uprising and self-proclamation indicate that, the discourse of revival and reform offered a message that would strongly resonate with the Persianate Muslim administrative elites of the post-conversion Ilkhanate and Anatolia (and hence its resurfacing in Ilkhanid histories and court poetry).

The incorporation of the Heaven-decreed Chinggisid mission into the Islamic salvation schema and the interpretation of Mongol rule as the continuation of the prophetic mission envisioned the Ilkhans as reformer and reviver kings. The Chinggisid kings were the new agents

---

<sup>736</sup> Vaṣṣāf., 313-14.

<sup>737</sup> Hope, 14-23.

<sup>738</sup> Peter Jackson, “Waṣṣāf,” *EL*<sup>2</sup>. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed May 6, 2016. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/wassaf-SIM\\_7890](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/wassaf-SIM_7890).

of God's salvific plan for mankind. The expansion of the foundation of the Chinggisid universalist claim into Islamic religiopolitical idioms, however, also had unexpected results. It opened new possibilities for challenging and destabilizing "from within" the claim of Chinggis Khan's offspring to divinely-decreed exceptionality and exclusivity. Thus, while Ilkhanid authors such as Qāshānī and Rashīd al-Dīn used this discourse in support of Chinggisid rule casting Ghazan as an anticipated *ūlī al-amr-i 'ahd*, or his brother Öljeitü as a centennial *muqavvī-yi dīn-i Islām*, the universalist paradigm of the reformer ruler and that of *al-amr b'il-ma'rūf*, with its strong egalitarian basis, also became the ideological platform from which Mongol rebels could challenge and counter the Chinggisids' claims to descent based authority. In other words, in his claim to *mahdīhood*, the Mongol governor Timurtash appropriated the Ilkhanid experimentation with the Perso-Islamic grammar of kingship to portray himself as the new address of God's blessing, in place of the reigning Chinggisid Ilkhan. The Mongol *mahdī* had no need for the cultivation of the cult of Chinggis Khan to access and sustain divine charisma. His policies and measures as God's designated puritan reformer confirmed his leading role in salvaging the believers.

That, in the post-Mongol period, the paradigm of the reviver king became further oppositional, rather than complimentary to the Chinggisid principles is also demonstrated by Timur's son, Shāhrukh's (811-50/1409-47) championship of the restoration of Shar'ī order and the abrogation of Chinggisid customs and law. Shāhrukh's claim to Sunni revival was further expressed by his espousal of the title of the *mujaddid*, the centennial reformer of the ninth Hijri century. The earliest text to attribute the title of the *mujaddid* to Shāhrukh is the *Naṣāyiḥ-i shāhrukhī* (completed 813/1411-820/1417), a juristic oriented Persian mirror for princes. The work was written for Shāhrukh by the distinguished Ḥanafī jurist, preacher and overall "Sunni

propagandist” Jalāl al-Dīn Qāyīnī (d. 838/1434-35). The latter had joined the scholarly circles of Herat in 813/1410-11, at the beginning of Shāhrukh’s reign. In 818/1415-16, Shāhrukh sent Qāyīnī to his native Qūhistan to restore Sharī‘ī order and expose heterodox elements and heretical believers in the region. After his return to Herat, Qāyīnī was appointed by Shāhrukh to the office of the *muhtasib*, the inspector of public spaces of Herat, a position his son would inherit. As Herat’s *muhtasib*, Qāyīnī enforced adherence to the Sharī‘a throughout the city.<sup>739</sup>

In *Naṣāyih-i shāhrukhī*, Qāyīnī declares Shāhrukh’s denunciation of Mongol court law (the *yarghu*) and Chinggisid customary laws (*rusūm-i töre*) and his restoration of the Sharī‘a in 813/1411. Qāyīnī argues that Shāhrukh’s pouring out of the wine and destruction of the wine vessels are demonstrations of his *mujaddid-hood*. He quotes the *mujaddid* tradition arguing that Shāhrukh is the centennial renewer since his reign began in 811/1408-09, nine centuries after the Prophet’s *hijra*. Maria Subtelny notes that Qāyīnī’s *Naṣāyih-i shāhrukhī* draws from both the Persianate genre of advice literature and from works of the religious sciences, in particular, Ḥanafī and Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence and Qur’anic exegesis. Qāyīnī argues that he intended to assemble in his work “whatever pertained to rulers from the religious and rational sciences”.<sup>740</sup> Qāyīnī’s counsel for Shāhrukh, which as Evrim Binbaş points out, “is arguably the first Timurid political treatise,” and his description of Shāhrukh as wine-pouring *mujaddid* constitutes a *muhtasib*’s formula for an ideal Perso-Islamic-Sunni reviver king. Shāhrukh’s (or the master-mind Qāyīnī’s) *mujaddid-hood* overlaps with the meanings and measures that were associated

<sup>739</sup> Maria Eva Subtelny, “The Sunni revival under Shāh-Rukh and its promoters: a study of the connection between ideology and higher learning in Timurid Iran,” *Proceedings of the 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Haneda Memorial Hall. Symposium on Central Asia and Iran, August 30, 1993* (Kyoto: Institute of Inner Asian Studies, 1993), 14-23; idem, “The curriculum of Islamic higher learning in Timurid Iran in the light of the Sunni revival under Shāh-Rukh,” *Journal of American Oriental Society* 115/2 (1995), 210-36; Beatrice Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 210-11. On the *muhtasib*, see Stilt, 38-72.

<sup>740</sup> Subtelny, “Sunni revival,” 19; İlker Evrim Binbaş, *Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī: Prophecy, Politics, and Historiography in Late Medieval Islamic History* (PhD diss. University of Chicago, 2009), 338-39. Qāyīnī’s work exists in one manuscript (the actual presentation copy) found in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, dated to 820/1417. I was unable to gain access to the manuscript at this stage.

with Timurtash's claim to *mahd̄hood*. It had little to do with the usage of the title of the *mujaddid* to designate a religious renewer from amongst the scholarly ranks. As noted above, the Anatolian historian-administrator Aqsarā'ī similarly argued that Timurtash's obliteration of alcohol consumption and his broader campaign of promoting public morality in Anatolia were signs of the manifestation of the *mahd̄*.<sup>741</sup>

## Conclusion

The Ilkhanid court historian Qāshānī's conversion of the Ilkhan Ghazan into a Perso-Islamic reviver king came full circle a century later, with the Timurid jurist Qāyinī's program of Sunni revival under Shāhrukh. Whereas Qāshānī's account of a prophesized reformer king integrates the Mongol "political theology of divine right" into a Muslim providential schema of decline and renewal, the "Sunni propagandist" Qāyinī defined *mujaddid* kingship in oppositional terms to the mode of sovereignty that Chinggis Khan's rule exemplified. Qāyinī enlists the *mujaddid* Shāhrukh to abrogate Mongol court law (the *yarghu*) and Chinggisid customary laws (*rusūm-i töre*), and to reinstitute the Muslim Sharī'a as the absolute legal authority. Qāyinī's Timurid *mujaddid* realizes the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn's two-stage salvific scheme in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*. Rashīd al-Dīn envisioned Chinggis Khan's establishment of a *yasa* based order at the start of the thirteenth century as inevitability leading to the reintroduction of righteous and just *sharī'a* order through Chinggis Khan's offspring Ghazan and his conversion to Islam at the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>742</sup> For Qāyinī and Rashīd al-Dīn, in other words, the concept of reviver or *mujaddid* kingship also offered a vision of assimilation of the Turkic-

---

<sup>741</sup> Furthermore, we can speculate that the Qādī Ṭashfī, who was tried and executed for Timurtash's short-lived insubordination, had a similar role to Qāyinī's in orchestrating the reformist message of Timurtash's political claims.

<sup>742</sup> See chapter three.

Mongol Timurid conquerors into Muslim society, and their adoption of Turkic-Mongol modes of government.

The designation of Shāhrukh as *mujaddid* was also repeated by Timurid historians, for example, Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī, and ‘Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, heirs to a rich corpus of Ilkhanid historical writing and thus, to the Ilkhanid paradigm of the periodic reformer king that Ilkhanid histories espoused.<sup>743</sup> Indeed, one might note that a short distance separates Rashīd al-Dīn’s appropriation of the *mujaddid* tradition for Öljeitü and his designation of the latter as the centennial individual who would “*yuqawwī lahā amr dīnihā*,” and Qāyini’s deployment of the the original *mujaddid* title and tradition for Shāhrukh, a century later.<sup>744</sup> In fact, we might view the Ilkhanid and Timurid appropriations of the titles of *mujaddid* and *mahdī* as one continuous experimentation in defining a new type of king, a fusion of Iranian cyclical

---

<sup>743</sup> Binbaş, *Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī*, 313-14, 337-41. ‘Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī (d. 887/1482), for one, quotes in his entry for the year 844/1440-41 in *Maṭla‘-i sa‘dayn va majma‘-i bahrayn* the *mujaddid* tradition identifying Shāhrukh as the *mujaddid* since he was appointed as ruler (*salṭanat*) of the kingdom of Khurasan in the year 800. Furthermore, he claims that Shāhrukh deserves the title since, from when he was a child until when “he sat on the throne of the world caliphate (/kingship, *khilāfat-i jahān*),” who worked towards strengthening the religion and enforcing the sharī‘a. He followed the divine scripture by refraining from forbidden pleasures and avoiding together with his intimates the consumption of alcohol. Samarqandī claims that under his rule, all repented and refrained from drinking, and notes Shāhrukh’s appointment of Qāyini to *muhtasib*. Furthermore, he states that Shāhrukh enforced in person his policy over the countless brothels of the Timurid princes Muḥammad Jūkī (d. 848/1444-45) and Rukn al-Dīn ‘Alā’ al-Dawla (d. 865/1460). ‘Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, *Maṭla‘-i sa‘dayn va majma‘-i bahrayn* (Lahore, 1360-68/1941-9), 2/2: 739-41.

<sup>744</sup> There a number of isolate instances where the *mujaddid* title was used for rulers prior to Shāhrukh. For example, the odd history of Qāḍī Aḥmad of Niğde, *al-Walad al-shafīq*, composed in Niğde (Anatolia) during the first half of thirteenth century, lists the Saljūq Kılıç Arslan II among the *mujaddids*. A. C. S. Peacock, “Aḥmad of Niğde’s “al-Walad al-shafīq” and the Seljuk past,” *Anatolian Studies* 54 (2004): 102. The Qalāwūnid Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Şāliḥ (d. 1345) was also attached to the title *mujaddid* in a prose panegyric by a scribe named Ibrāhīm b. al-Qaysarānī (d. 1352). To resolve the fact that al-Malik al-Şāliḥ’s reign was mid-century, the author created a centennial historical scheme where the “*tajdīd* clock” starts with the last Ayyubid ruler of Egypt, a century before al-Şāliḥ’s reign. Jo Van Steenbergen points out that “Ibrāhīm b. al-Qaysarānī did not just actively engage with the dominant discourse of Qalāwūnid legitimacy, wittingly contributing to the innovative religious imagery of the *mujaddid* that was slowly establishing itself as a functional legitimating device.” Jo Van Steenbergen, “Qalāwūnid discourse, elite communication, and the Mamluk cultural matrix: interpreting a 14<sup>th</sup>-century panegyric,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 43 (2012): 1-28. Interestingly, the Ilkhan Ghazan is described in the Safavid hagiography *Şafwat al-şafā* as the *mujaddid min al-mulūk* (“a *mujaddid* king”) of the hijri seventh century alongside Şafī al-Dīn as the “Sufi *mujaddid*” of the seventh century. Ibn Bazzāz, *Şafwat al-şafā*, 55-58.

models of kingship with the notion of Islamic puritan reformer.<sup>745</sup> This new model of Muslim kingship filled the void left by the Mongols' execution of the last caliph and the subsequent disappearance of the earlier "caliphal-sultanic-jurisprudential model." It encapsulated a providential explanation for the infidel Mongol invasions that enabled Ilkhanid authors to "resume" the flow of Islamic time after the Chinggisid rupture. The Ilkhanid-Timurid *mujaddid-mahdī* constellation and the eschatological rhetoric employed by Ilkhanid and Timurid historians had more to do with the normalization of time following Chinggis Khan's and Timur's devastating campaigns, and the restoration of the Islamic history than with foreseeing its unequivocal and finite end. The puritan, militant, and universalist reviver paradigm, in other words, did not transcend or break away from previous historical models, but was imagined as their historical culmination. Kings were now the new poles (alongside the prophets) of Islamic salvation history.

Evrin Binbaş suggests that we situate Shāhrukh's *mujaddid* kingship in the context of the Timurid dynastic struggles following Timur's death. Moreover, he argues that the two competing political ideologies, Sunni *tajdīd* and Chinggisid ideals, were aligned with Timurid dynastic fault lines. In contrast to his brother and contender Mīrānshāh, who was a strong supporter of the

---

<sup>745</sup> See chapter three. The relatedness of the concepts of the *mujaddid* and *mahdī* and their denotation of the idea of reform and puritanism is evident already in the case of the Umayyad caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (r. 99-101/717-20), who institutionalized the *shurūṭ* 'umar at the beginning of the eighth century and was celebrated as a symbol of justice and righteousness. He was also considered by some of his contemporaries as the *mahdī*, while others reported that he was a *mahdī* ("rightly guided") in his time ("kāna mahdiyyan wa-laysa bihi"). It is this later interpretation, "a *mahdī*," the ultimate moral regulator as 'Umar II is remembered, that I argue we should adopt for Timurtash and Nawrūz as well. W. Madelung, "al-Mahdī," *EI<sup>2</sup>*. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed May 4, 2016. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-mahdi-COM\\_0618](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-mahdi-COM_0618). 'Umar II is also considered the first *mujaddid*, the centennial renewer of religion, after the Prophet. Hayrettin Yücesoy also observes the connection between *mujaddid* and *mahdī*. Yücesoy, 133, 139-40. My suggestion, however, is that this is not a "revival" of the earlier 'Abbāsīd model, but rather that the Ilkhanid and post-Ilkhanid "reviver king" had its roots in the Islamization of the Iranian savior king, as discussed in chapter three, and in the specific historical context of the Mongol conquests. Hence, the notion of a reformer-reviver –salvific king "preceded" to some extent the Ilkhanid search after a term that would best encapsulate this idea. Thus, only in the post-Mongol period, could the titles *mujaddid* and *mahdī* easily channel the vision of the ruler as a reformer-king and dynastic founder.

Chinggisid principles, Shāhrukh seems to have assumed the title of the *mujaddid* as an ideological platform from which he would be well positioned to launch his own Shāhrukhid dispensation.<sup>746</sup>

The Mongol governor of Anatolia Timurtash's revolt and his self-proclamation as *mahdī* in the early 1320s marked a moment of transition. The revivalist political discourse that emerged in an Ilkhanid courtly context was appropriated and rebranded during the fourteenth century as oppositional to the prevailing Chinggisid models, that it was originally envisioned to reiterate. Furthermore, the identification of the reformer ruler, who inaugurates a new cycle, with the foundation of a new dispensation or the establishment of a new dynasty applies to the revival of Timurtash's religio-political claim almost a decade after his death. Timurtash was executed in 728/1327 at the court of the Mamluk Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad where he fled in search of a safe haven after Abū Sa'īd ordered the execution of his family in the Ilkhanate.<sup>747</sup> In 738/1337-8, nine years after his death and shortly after the death of Abū Sa'īd, Timurtash's son Ḥasan used the remarkable resemblance of one of Timurtash's former slaves to his master to claim that Timurtash had in fact escaped his executors at the Mamluk court. The ruse appears to have worked: Ḥāfiẓ Abrū and Ahrī both note that the emergence of the doppelgänger caused great

---

<sup>746</sup> Binbaş, "Timurid experimentation," 278-79; idem, *Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī*, 341. For Shāhrukh's contention of Mīrzā Iskandar's designation as *mahdī* in one of the recensions of Naṭanzī, idem, "Timurid experimentation," 298 (especially footnote 67). The Aqquyunlu Ūzūn Ḥasan's "Sunni *tajdīd*" appears to have been part of his claim to establishing of a new dispensation defining his reign as a reformer king as the reversal of the previous immorality and heresy of the Qaraqyunlu. Ūzūn Ḥasan was theorized as the *mujaddid* of the ninth/fifteenth century and reenacted puritan measures enforcing the Sunni *sharī'a*. He was presented as cracking down on vices such as fornication and gambling, suppressing extreme antinomianism, and extensively supporting the religious establishment. The Armenian colophons, indeed, complain of Ūzūn Ḥasan's enforcement of the distinguishing dress code and the *jizya*. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu*, 100-106, 140.

<sup>747</sup> For the sultan's warm reception of Timurtash and the events leading to and following his execution, Broadbridge, 117-25. The execution of Timurtash drew the attention of a number of Mamluk authors. Al-Yūsufī, for example, reports that he saw one of the astrological calculations that Sa'īd b. al-Baghdādī (d. 737), whom he defines as a rare expert in a dying art, had composed for the Mamluk amir 'Iz al-Dīn al-Khaṭīrī. He claims that Baghdādī wrote in his entry for the month during which Timurtash came to Egypt that "a lord from the lords of the East would be expelled to Cairo and would die there, and so it happened." Al-Yūsufī, 391-2. On the fall of the Chupanids, Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate, 1327-37* (Bloomington, 1999).



commotion and that the crowds and the riffraff (*arādhil va-avbāsh*) gathered around the latter and started a *fitna*.<sup>748</sup>

In the factional struggles that ensued after the dissolution of the Ilkhanate following the last Ilkhan Abū Sa‘īd’s death, the Chupanid faction sought creative avenues for claiming political authority based on, and independent from Chinggisid principles.<sup>749</sup> In spite of the short duration of Timurtash’s rebellion, the Mongol governor’s claim to reformer-*mahdī*hood was too harnessed to promote a Chupanid dynastic line. According to reports that arrived at the Mamluk court, the imposter was sighted with yellow banners (possibly in the Mamluk manner) reading: “there is no God but God alone, Muḥammad is the messenger of God, Timurtash is the freedman of God (*‘atīq Allāh*).” It was further reported that the “resurrected” Timurtash rode in a great procession hidden from all sides by his children, and that he had his face covered, supposedly in order to protect him from al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s assassins (*fidāwiya*).<sup>750</sup> The veiling of the face, however, was also considered a sign of the awaited *mahdī*, who would conceal his true identity waiting for the right moment of unveiling.<sup>751</sup> Reviving Timurtash’s claim, the doppelgänger seems to have taken

---

<sup>748</sup> Hāfiẓ Abrū, 202; Ahrī, 65 (translation), 165 (text).

<sup>749</sup> Ḥasan’s brother and successor Malik Ashraf (r. 1343-57/744-58) established a Chinggisid puppet, a wardrobe keeper by the name of Anūshirvān, an alleged offspring of Chinggis Khan. Malik Ashraf ordered that a chain with bells be attached to the window of his chamber. The chain was named “justice” (*‘adl*) and any person who had a complaint that was not addressed, could pull on the chain to inform Malik Ashraf of his grievance. A similar chain existed, we are told in this account, during the time of the celebrated sixth-century Sassanid king, the Just Anūshirvān. Broadbridge, 158-59.

<sup>750</sup> Shams al-Dīn al-Shujā‘ī, *Ta’rīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad Ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥī wa-awlādihī* (Wiesbaden, 1977), vol. 1, 122-3; Ibn Abī ‘l-Faḍā‘il, 71-3; al-Ṣafadī, *A’yān al-aṣr*, vol. 2, 26-7, 115.

<sup>751</sup> To be used later by the Shāh Ismā‘īl and Humāyun. Moin, 125, 172, 212, 217. The success of the imposter is also an indication of Timurtash’s lasting charisma in Iran and Anatolia. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s impulsive reaction to the news of Timurtash’s “revival” is further indicative. The paranoid and weary sultan became extremely troubled believing that he was fooled by his intimates who were entrusted with the execution of his guest. After all the missions he sent to the Ilkhanate to investigate the matter measurably failed, the desperate Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ordered the exhumation of Timurtash. Ibn Taghrī Birdī places the frantic sultan in front of his astrologers and diviners (*al-munajjimīn wa-ghayrihim miman yaḍribu al-mandal*) with Timurtash’s bones pleading before them: “*is the owner of this [corpse] dead or alive?*” In another version, the sultan wonders before his *majlis* how it is possible that Timurtash is still alive after he himself had just stamped on his corpse. Jamāl al-Dīn Abū ‘l-Maḥāsīn Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa-al-mustawfa ba‘da al-wāfi*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1984-2000); Ibn Abī ‘l-Faḍā‘il, 107-8. According to al-Shujā‘ī, the doppelgänger was killed by Timurtash’s wife and offspring after four years of government, since he conspired to rid himself of them. Al-Shujā‘ī, vol. 1, 122-3.



Timurtash's messianic agenda a step further indicating that the latter's short-lived fame as a *mahdī*-reformer was indeed seen as having the potential to offer an alternative source of political authority.

## Coda

### The Aftermath of the Ilkhanid Experimentation with Mongol-Muslim Sacral Kingship

In his *Tawārīkh-i āl-i ʿUthmān*, the sixteenth-century Ottoman historian and grand vizier Luṭfī Pasha (d. 1563) rearranges the history of the House of Osman in accordance with a Sunni *mujaddid* schema. The centennial renewers in Luṭfī Pasha’s history are all reviver kings, who arrive at the turn of each century to reform and renew Islam after its corruption by their malicious counterparts, the “anti-*mujaddids*”.<sup>752</sup> Luṭfī Pasha’s sixth-century and seventh-century *mujaddids* overlap. They are the convert Ilkhan Ghazan and Osman Ghāzī (d. 1326). Both set out to correct and reverse the evils inflicted by the rise (*zuhūr, khurūj*) of Chinggis Khan, and the restoration and revival of Christianity and idol worshiping in the Islamic world in the century that followed the Mongol campaigns.

Osman Ghāzī is followed by his offspring. The eighth renewer Beyazid Yildirim (d 1403) battles Timur and revives (*tajdīd*) Islam after it was weakened by Timur’s emergence (*khurūj*) and heresy. And the ninth *mujaddid* Selim I (d. 1520) restores the Sunna after the sedition, disorder, and religious degeneration that ensued from the emergence of Shāh Ismāʿīl in the

---

<sup>752</sup> In Luṭfī Pasha’s account, the second *mujaddid* (after the Prophet) is the righteous Umayyad Caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (r. 99-101/717-20), who restores (*iṣlāḥ*) Islamic belief the corruptions and innovations (*bidʿa*) committed by his Umayyad kin. He is followed by the ʿAbbāsīd Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 218-27/833-42), who overturns the heresies (*rafʿ*) of his two brothers Amīn and Maʾmūn. The fourth Sunni *mujaddid*, the ʿAbbāsīd Caliph al-Qādir (382-422/991-1031), banishes the heresy of the Fāṭimids in the Egypt and Syria, while the fifth reviver of religion, the Saljūq Sultan Muḥammad s. Malik Shāh (r. 1105-18), battles the Ismāʿīlis (*mulāḥida*). Luṭfī Pasha, *Tawārīkh-i āl-i ʿUthmān* (Istanbul, 1341/1925), 6-12.

east.<sup>753</sup> Luṭfī Pasha re-contextualizes the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry depicting Selim I as a reformer ruler rescuing Islam from eastern heresy, just as his forefather Osman did in the century after Chinggis Khan’s campaigns. In Luṭfī Pasha’s historical scheme of Ottoman *mujaddid* kingship, Timur and Shāh Ismā‘īl are avatars of Chinggis Khan, whereas the Ottoman sultans are the Sunni savior rulers. In resemblance to the salvific narrative of Ghazan’s second Syrian letter,<sup>754</sup> the successive line of *mujaddid* kings in Luṭfī Pasha’s account receive their authority from their succession to the prophet Muḥammad’s mission to protect, guide, and salvage the believers. The Ottomans also lay claim to an imperial inheritance through their reform-kingship. As the new poles of salvation, the Ottomans inherit the *tajdīd* legacies of the Umayyad, ‘Abbāsīd, Saljūq, and Ilkhanid rulers.

The Ilkhanid experimentation with the Mongol political theology of divine right and the integration of the Chinggisid mission of world domination into the Islamic narrative of revelation and salvation gave rise to a new political paradigm in the post-Mongol Islamic world. Imperial ambitions were expressed in terms of promises to reform and revive a declining religious and socio-political order. In this schema, kings were not only tasked with the responsibility to sustain the conditions for the Muslim community to strive for salvation, but were assigned with the mission of actively guiding the *ummah* to redemption. Rulers were imagined as puritan reformers, *mujaddids*, *mahdīs*, caliphs, poles (*qutb*), and Ṣāhib-Qirāns, “Starlords and Letterlords,” all arriving at a crucial moment in similar narratives of deterioration and restoration

---

<sup>753</sup> Ibid. Luṭfī Pasha also brings two poems which he claims to report from the ‘*ulmā*’ of Transoxiana. In these poems, Selim is accredited with being the *mahdī* of the End of Time (or ruler of the time) for his victory over the Safavids, his removal of Shāh Ismā‘īl’s heresy, and his protection of the Muslim community and religion. Thus, Luṭfī Pasha too seems to conflate the titles of *mujaddid* and *mahdī* as signifying the same type of kingship. Selim is the reviver-savior king.

For a different view, see Cornell Fleischer’s discussion of the two poems in Luṭfī Pasha as an “evocative form of testimony to Selim’s apocalyptic pretensions.” Fleischer, “lawgiver,” 159-77.

<sup>754</sup> See chapter three.

that increasingly received grander dimensions, from the moral decay of the human subjects to astrologically predictable millennial-cosmic cycles of degeneration. In the post-Mongol era, the reviver paradigm was repackaged and rebranded by progressively more complex, ostentatious, and persuasive iterations that drew on a rich pool of prophetic traditions, Perso-Islamic political theory, conjunction astrology, and occult sciences.<sup>755</sup>

However, the appeal of this model of reform-kingship in the post-Mongol period was not merely due to the elaborate messianic predictions, astronomical calculations, or other cosmological machinations that, both couched and encouraged rulers' imperial and universalist aspirations. It also derived from the ability of the revivalist paradigm to evoke a simple, recognizable, and equally powerful message, a narrative that strongly resonated with Muslim generations after the Mongol conquest of Baghdad and the fall of the caliphate, and that gained the attention of rulers and their courts. The revivalist claim became one of the main strategies for imperial legitimation, a political idiom in which claims to sacral sovereignty and dynastic authority simply had to be voiced in the post-Mongol era. This Sunnī reform-centered kingship further developed in the post-Mongol period alongside other, competing and corresponding political paradigms, for example, a new post-Mongol brand of intellectual kingship,<sup>756</sup> the Shī'ī-Sufi political synthesis, and shrine-centered kingship, which constituted “a new style of Muslim sovereignty that was anchored in sainthood,” and assumed Sufi rhetoric, ritual, and Sufi modes of sanctity and authority.<sup>757</sup> Ibn 'Arabī's unitive theosophy and his reintroduction of the concept

---

<sup>755</sup> Thus, in the post-Mongol world, the Chinggisid model was seen as one “marker of religipolitical prestige” alongside “Islamic, Solomonian or Imamic, Sunni, or Shi'i, Sufi or scholarly, occult or manifest, Arabic or Persian, Persian or Turkic” markers that early modern monarchs assembled in their courts in an unprecedented manner. Particularly noteworthy is the development of the “dual astrological-lettrist ideological platform” at early modern courts by occult philosophers. Matthew Melvin-Koushki, “Early Modern Islamicate Empire: new forms of religipolitical legitimacy,” *forthcoming*.

<sup>756</sup> See the conclusion in chapter four.

<sup>757</sup> Azfar Moin, “Sovereign violence,” 467-96.

of the caliphate at the center of an Islamic cosmography were also borrowed and subsumed into the political lingua of a post-Mongol era.

The most radical departure in the Ilkhanid period, however, was not the reviver king paradigm, nor was it Rashīd al-Dīn's *kalām*-based vision of the philosopher-king, which seems to have gained little traction.<sup>758</sup> Rather, it was the notion of the ruler as an independent, rational law-maker. Ṭūsī's vision of the ruler as a supreme interpreter of the law or the Sharī'a in accordance with the community's best interests,<sup>759</sup> and the establishment of the independent institution of dynastic law drawing from the precedent of Chinggis Khan's *yasa*,<sup>760</sup> were both rooted in the Ilkhanid historical context and drew from the process of mediation of the notion of the Chinggisid ruler's independent and superior legal authority due to Heaven's exclusive gift. Ultimately, however, these two models of law-making kingship, which shaped the post-Mongol dynastic relationship with the sacred law, were also made to surrender to the Sharī'a legalistic framework. Later authors who appropriated Ṭūsī's political theory argued that the decisions of the Ṭūsīan law-maker world-regulator naturally conform with the general, universal principles of the Sharī'a,<sup>761</sup> and the jurists who worked on compiling and codifying the Ottoman dynastic law (*qānūn*) made the latter reconcile with the sacred law.<sup>762</sup> This process might have also paved the path for a reconciliation of the paradigm of the reformer king as the supreme enforcer of the Sharī'a, and the notion of the ruler as an independent law-maker, as was the case for the Ottoman Sultan Sulaymān.<sup>763</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn's "premonition," in this sense, was not far off: the

---

<sup>758</sup> However, as I note in chapter four, Rashīd al-Dīn's extensive experimentation with al-Razī's prophetic absolutism as a basis for sacral Muslim kingship can be seen as defining an era of joint Ilkhanid-Timurid experimentation with a new brand of intellectual kingship.

<sup>759</sup> See chapter two.

<sup>760</sup> See Guy Burak, "The Second formation of Islamic Law," 579-602.

<sup>761</sup> Ahmed, 471.

<sup>762</sup> Fleischer, "lawgiver."

<sup>763</sup> Ibid.

establishment of Chinggis Khan's *yasa* indeed led to re-instituting the Shari'a as the foundation of a new mode of sacral kingship.<sup>764</sup>

The role of the Mongol religiopolitical concepts in this process of minting new political terminologies and the re-appropriations of earlier terms should be understood as a "filtering mechanism," to borrow from Thomas Allsen. They facilitated the promotion of particular concepts of sovereignty, just as other ideas that were considered less meaningful from the Mongolian point of view, were made to fade away. Mongol concepts of sacral authority and Ilkhanid cultural brokers, therefore, participated together in a process of experimentation and negotiation that gave rise to a new mode of Islamic sacred kingship that proliferated from the fifteenth century onwards.

The extensive mobilization and intermixing of symbols and idioms from multivalent repertoires to express the sacred personas and universal aspirations of Muslim rulers across Eurasian imperial courts, should not be considered as an indication of the weakness and shaky foundations of the post-Mongol institution of Islamic kingship. The experimentations in idioms of kingship in the post-Ilkhanid period should be attributed, less to the crisis that allegedly ensued from the fall of the caliphate in Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258, and more to a realization that the concept of Muslim kingship had yet to reach its full potential as a political, social, cosmic, and salvific foundation of Islamic society. I suggest that while the integration of Chinggisid kingship in the Islamic world inevitably led to the erosion and restriction of the Chinggisid claim to exclusive, unmediated divine authority, the institution of Islamic kingship emerged from its engagement with the Mongol political theology of divine right much better equipped and far more comfortable and self-assured in its Islamic foundations, certainly in

---

<sup>764</sup> See chapter three.

comparison to its pre-Mongol predecessor. The post-Mongol kings were not defined by their relationship to caliphs or the other intermediaries and the “gatekeepers” of the divine, but rather as God’s agents and successors to the prophets in God’s salvific plan. The Ilkhanid era of political experimentation and innovation, therefore, laid the foundation for a new type of Islamic kingship.

## **Appendix I: Order of deaths/revolts of Hülegü's offspring**

Jüshkeb s. Jumghur (June 1289)\*

Hülegü s. Hülegü, with his children (October 1289)\*\*

Qara Noqai s. Yoshumut, with his children (October 1289)

Taghay Temür s. Hülegü (participated in Buqa's conspiracy; died in 1289?)\*

Kingshü s. Jumghur (rebels with amir Nawrüz, missing date of death, probably in 1289)\*

Anbarji s. Möngke Temür ("rebels" in 1291-2, dies in 1294, unspecified cause of death)\*

Gere s. Möngke Temür (dies shortly before his brother in 1294, unspecified cause of death)\*

Baidu s. Taraghai (1294-1295)

Ildar s. Ajai (1296)

Söge s. Yoshmut (1296)

Esen Temür s. Qonqurtai (1296)

Ildai s. Qonqurtai (1296)

Taiju s. Möngke Temür (1298)\*

Pulad s. Taiju (with his father, in 1298?)\*

\* Descendants of one of Hülegü Khan's three chief wives

\*\* First generation sons of Hülegü



## Appendix II: ‘Abd Allāh Qāshānī’s Authorship of Ghazan’s Conversion Account in the P Recension of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*

### The two lives of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*

In spite of recent efforts, the question of Rashīd al-Dīn’s authorship of the two volumes of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh* remains open. The main objection to the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn’s sole authorship of the work arises from Qāshānī “notorious claim”, which he repeats on several instances, that he was the true author of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*.<sup>765</sup> In his *Introduction a l’histoire des mongols* (1910), the French orientalist Blochet concluded in favor of Qāshānī’s claim after comparing parallel sections of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*’s second volume (the world history envisioned by Öljeitü according to the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*’s preface), with an unpublished manuscript of Qāshānī’s *Zubdat al-tawārīkh* (on this work, see below). Blochet showed that Rashīd al-Dīn copied rather faithfully from the later work, omitting certain sections and changing in some instances the phrasing.<sup>766</sup> Blochet argued for the superiority of Qāshānī’s *Zubdat al-tawārīkh* over Rashīd al-Dīn’s later, “redacted” version in the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh* declaring that unlike Rashīd al-Dīn, Qāshānī “was a professional historian and not an amateur”.<sup>767</sup>

---

<sup>765</sup> David Morgan, “Rašīd al-Dīn and Gazan Khan,” in D. Aigle, ed. *L’iran face a la domination mongole* (Tehran, 1997), 182-183.

<sup>766</sup> Thus Blochet states: “Non seulement les divisions des deux ouvrages ont rigoureusement identiques, non seulement l’arrangement et la classification des faits sont complètement les memes dans les deux histoires, mais il suffit de collationner leurs textes pour voir que Rashid ed-Din a tout simplement fait recopier le livre d’Abd Allāh el-Kashani en se bornant à changer quelques rares expressions d’une façon assez maladroite et à supprimer, sans aucune raison plausible, des passages entiers qui ne manquaient cependant pas d’intérêt historique.” E. Blochet, *Introduction a l’histoire des mongols de Fadl Allāh Rashid ed-Din* (London, 1910), 133-150 (quoted from page 145).

<sup>767</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

Nevertheless, Qāshānī's work as a historian and his central contribution to Ilkhanid historiography has received little attention to date, and there is still considerable confusion over the question of his authorship. This confusion has prevailed since Qāshānī's works remain unpublished and are dispersed in a number of manuscript collections. Bartol'd dismissed Blochet's theory on Qāshānī's authorship arguing that the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* was written by an individual with direct experience of the events, and not by a trained historian like Qāshānī. For Bartol'd, Qāshānī's contribution to the work was limited to a secondary role and it was Rashīd al-Dīn who was its main author.<sup>768</sup> Since Bartol'd's dismissal of Blochet's argument, Qāshānī's claim has been addressed by several scholars. The prevailing consensus is that Rashīd al-Dīn had a group of research assistants, among them Qāshānī, who researched and compiled for him several sections of the compendium, which explains the stylistic unevenness of the work. According to this view, the work as a whole should, nevertheless, be attributed to Rashīd al-Dīn.<sup>769</sup>

It is worthwhile, however, revisiting some of Blochet's early observations. One of the key components in Blochet's argument was an untitled manuscript authored by Qāshānī and held in Berlin.<sup>770</sup> Blochet identified this work as Qāshānī's unpublished *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*.<sup>771</sup> In the

<sup>768</sup> See Kamola, 246-7; Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion* (London, 1977), 47. Jahn, on the other hand, was not impressed by Qāshānī's skill as a historian. See Jahn, "Study on supplementary Persian sources for the Mongol history of Iran," 201.

<sup>769</sup> For example, Morgan, "Rašīd al-Dīn," 182-3. See also Pfeiffer, "Canonization," 62 (lead editor-cum-contributor). Kamola has recently concluded that Qāshānī was likely the prime compiler of the second volume of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, the universal history. Kamola, 248.

<sup>770</sup> Staatsbibliothek ms. Pertsch 368/Minutoli 23. A number of folios are missing at the end of the Berlin manuscript. On the other hand, another manuscript of the work found at the *kitābkhānah-yi markazī-yi dānishgāh-i tahrān* (ms. 5715) is missing a significant portion from the beginning of the manuscript. Muṣṭafā Dirāyatī, *Fihristvārah-yi dastnīvishthā-yi īrān (Dīnā)* (Tehran, 1389/2010), vol. 5, 1214-1215.

<sup>771</sup> It is unclear if this is the title that Qāshānī gave the work (though Qāshānī does refer to it as the history of "the choicest (*zubdat*) of the seven climates (*kishvar*)"). Mustawfī Qazwīnī lists "*Zubdat al-tawārīkh* by Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Qāsim Kāshī" as one of the sources for his *Ta'rikh-i guzīda* (completed circa 1330). Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, *Ta'rikh-i guzīda*, ed. Navā'ī (Tehran, 1362/1983), 7. Kātib Chelebī might be referring to the same work when he mentions a *Zubdat al-tawārīkh* (in Persian) authored by Abū al-Qāsim Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-

preface to this work, which Blochet quoted in full, after praising the auspicious reign of Öljeitü, Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Qāshānī (as he identifies himself) states that since he (Qāshānī) had already finished compiling his history of the rest of the world (*sāyir-i ‘ālam*) and the renowned nations of mankind (*jamāhīr-i mashāhīr-i banī adam*) of the seven climates, from east to west:

He [the author Qāshānī] wished (*khvāst*) [in accordance with royal decree and the vicissitudes of time] to compose, in abridgment and concision, the history of the fourth climate (*iqlīm*), which is the choicest (*zubdat*) of the seven climates (*kishvar*) [...] encompassing the states of the kings (*pādshāhān*) and sultans of every age, the lords and rulers of this land of Iran (*zamīn-i īrān*) and the states of the kings (*mulūk*), the prophets and the caliphs of each era from Adam *ṣaḥī*, peace be upon him, to the end of the period (*tā ghāyat-i vaqt*), which is the lunar year 700, according to the Muslim count.<sup>772</sup>

Qāshānī, furthermore, explains that this Perso-Muslim history (or, in other words, the *zubdat-i haft kishvar*) was to include a history of the pre-Islamic Iranian dynasties followed by the history of the Muslims, from the Prophet to the end of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate. It was gathered from a selection of famous histories such as the comprehensive chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233), *al-Kāmil fī al-ta’rīkh*. Qāshānī states that his aim was that this history would become “the completion and supplement of the *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh* (*tamīma va-ḍamīma-yi Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*).”

As Blochet aptly notes, Qāshānī contrasts here a “new” Perso-Islamic history, which he dedicates to Öljeitü, with a work he had completed earlier. Qāshānī designates this new Perso-Islamic history, which appears to have been identified early on, with the title *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*, as a *dhayl*, a continuation of the universal history he had completed earlier. Qāshānī’s phrasing appears at first confusing as he addresses this universal history with the title *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*.

This confusion is easily resolved, however, once we consider the possibility that Qāshānī named

---

Kāshī, who died in 836 (more than a century later than Qāshānī). Kātib Chelebī, *Kitāb kashf al-zunūn ‘an asāmī al-kutub wa’l-funūn* ([Istanbul], 1892), 6. See also Blochet, 148-9.

<sup>772</sup> Blochet, 140-144; Staatsbibliothek ms. Pertsch 368/Minutoli 23, folios 1v-2r. My translation slightly differs from Kamola’s translation of this passage. See Kamola, 246.

this universal history, which he dedicated to Ghazan and completed before Öljeitü's reign, the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* (that is, before Rashīd al-Dīn named his "own" compendium *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*). Rashīd al-Dīn, in other words, did not only extensively "borrow" from Qāshānī's works, but also appropriated the title of this work.

Further support for this suggestion is found in the introduction to Qāshānī's history of the Ismā'īlīs (*Ta'rīkh-i ismā'īliyya va-nizāriyya va-mulāhida*), an excerpt from Qāshānī's universal history that was edited and separately published in 1965.<sup>773</sup> Qāshānī's introduction to this section reiterates the same ideas he expressed in the above-quoted passage from his *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*, but also unequivocally refers to his earlier universal history as the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*. Qāshānī (identifying himself here as Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad *al-mu'arrikh* al-Qāshānī) explains that after completing in accordance with the order of Ghazan Khan the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh-i sāyir-i umam-i ālam va-zumrah-yi banī adam*, he decided to compose another history, of the Ismā'īlīs, so it may be "fastened as the saddle-straps (*fitrāk*) to the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*." Qāshānī, furthermore, refers to the content of this *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* as encompassing the history of the Turks and *tāzīk*, the Indians, the Jews, the lands of *khitāy*, *khutan* and *manzī* (south China), and the Europeans (*afrinja*), the Christians, the Muslims and *tarsa* (Christians or fire worshipers), the Arabs and Persian, and the east and the west. It is noteworthy that according to Qāshānī, this *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, commissioned by Ghazan, whom Qāshānī praises for

<sup>773</sup> According to Morton, this edition of Qāshānī's history of the Ismā'īlīs was published from the Tehran manuscript of his general history. Ḥāshim al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūqnāmah*, ed. A. H. Morton ([Warminster], 2004), 24 (introduction). The manuscript in question is the *kitābkhānah-yi markazī-yi dānishgāh-i tahrān* ms. 9067. The beginning of the manuscript is missing as well as a number of folios throughout the text. Copied in 989/1581, the manuscript includes both a portion of the *Zubdat al-tawārīkh* and Qāshānī's general/world history and therefore, was labeled *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*. The editor of the 1977 edition of the section on the Ismā'īlīs also gave the work the title *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*; however, this section clearly belongs to Qāshānī's general history (and thus, is missing from the Berlin manuscript of the *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*). Abū al-Qāsim Kāshānī, *Ta'rīkh-i ismā'īliyya: bakhshī az zubdat al-tawārīkh-i Abū al-Qāsim Kāshānī*, ed. M. Taqī Dānishpizhūh (Tabriz, 1343/1965); Dirāyatī, *Dinā*, vol. 5, 1214-1215.

elevating the banner of Islam and eradicating idol worshiping and polytheism, did not include a history of the Mongols.<sup>774</sup>

In his introduction to the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, Rashīd al-Dīn writes that this title was given to the entire two volumes, which included a world history (the second volume) commissioned and authored in the name of Öljeitü, and a Mongol-dynastic history, the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*, commissioned by and named after Ghazan. However, Qāshānī appears to have already authored a general history titled the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* that predated Rashīd al-Dīn's efforts in that regard.<sup>775</sup> Even without having access to Qāshānī's history of Ismā'īlī sects, Blochet was able to demonstrate that the two early works by Qāshānī, the Perso-Islamic history (*Zubdat al-tawārīkh*), and the world history (the "original" *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*), directly corresponded to two sections (*faṣl*) in the second volume (*mujallad*), the so-called universal history of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*:<sup>776</sup> a general summary of the history of all the prophets, caliphs, and kings (*pādshāhān*), beginning with Adam and ending with the year 700, and a detailed history of every nation in the inhabited quarter.<sup>777</sup> A thorough comparison between the *Zubdat al-tawārīkh* and

---

<sup>774</sup> *Ta' rīkh-i isma' īliyya*, 3-4.

<sup>775</sup> Morton reached a similar conclusion on the basis of the preface to the *Ta' rīkh-i isma' īliyya* though he does not appear to have noticed that Qāshānī also refers to this general history as the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* in the preface to the *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*. Morton's conclusion that "there was truth in Qāshānī's accusations against Rashīd al-Dīn, and that the latter may have taken the title of his work as well as part of its contents from Qāshānī" has not received proper scholarly attention. Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūqnāmah*, 25.

<sup>776</sup> The second volume is made of two chapters. The first chapter includes the history of Öljeitü from his birth the moment of binding of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*. The second chapter (*bāb*) includes two sections (*qism*). The first section has also two sub-sections (*faṣl*): a general summary of the history of the prophets, caliphs, and kings, from Adam to the year 700, and a detailed history of every nation in the inhabited quarter. This is followed by another *qism* consisting of a *dhayl* with the history of the reign of Öljeitü from the time the book was bound until his death. This latter *qism* is presumably Qāshānī's history of Öljeitü (below, and see Morgan, "Rašīd al-Dīn," 183). Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 1, 8-9 (introduction); Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 19-20.

<sup>777</sup> Blochet's thesis that Rashīd al-Dīn had copied (though with changes and omissions) these two histories composed by Qāshānī into the second volume of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* is also supported, to some extent, by Morton's comparative study of the sections on Saljūq history in Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* and Qāshānī's unpublished general history. As Morton demonstrates, the section on the Saljūqs in Qāshānī's world history was mistakenly identified by its editor (Ismā' īl Khān Afshār) as the original *Saljūqnāma* of Zāhīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī and published accordingly in 1332/1953. See Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūqnāmah* (Morton), 23ff. Morton concluded that both sections were closely related, relying on the same pool of sources, foremost the *Saljūqnāma* of Zāhīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī. However, his impression is that although "a high proportion of the verbal alterations and factual additions

Qāshānī's world history ("original" *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*), and the parallel sections in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* might yield further insights.

### **Did Qāshānī author a history of Ghazan?**

Rashīd al-Dīn's incorporation of Qāshānī's two histories into his second volume of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* reveals an important pattern of relationship between Qāshānī's "corpus" and Rashīd al-Dīn's compendium, as well as between the two historical figures, the client historian Qāshānī and the Ilkhanid vizier and Qāshānī's (actual or potential) patron Rashīd al-Dīn. Qāshānī's claim to have authored the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* is well known. In a number of instances in *Ta'rikh-i ūljāytū*, Qāshānī criticizes Rashīd al-Dīn, and even uses the latter's Jewish heritage to damage the vizier's reputation.<sup>778</sup> Qāshānī's critical stance towards his former patron was probably linked to his outrage at Rashīd al-Dīn's appropriation of his work. According to Qāshānī, Rashīd al-Dīn presented the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, "which was the composition of this poor one," that is, Qāshānī, to Öljeitü on the fifth of Shawwāl 706 (/April 9 1307), with the help of a number "repulsive Jews" (*jahūdān-i mardūd*). Rashīd al-Dīn was generously rewarded for this work by the sultan and although he promised to appropriately compensate Qāshānī for his

---

that are found in the two texts are common to both," the phrasing of Qāshānī's Saljūq history is, by and large, "less close to the original *Saljūqnāma*" than that of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*. On the other hand, the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* has more factual additions but also "shows more signs of confusion in some ways than Qashani's history." This "can be taken to be due to the fact that the former was the work of a team, probably including not only Rashid al-Din and Qashani but others too." Morton speculates that these differences derive from the fact that Qāshānī's earlier original Saljūq section provided much of the material for Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, but that Qāshānī might have continued working on and re-edited his history independently from the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* producing the version found in his universal history. Morton suggests that this is also evident by the stylistic unevenness of the work. Nīshāpūrī, *Saljūqnāmah* (Morton), 29; Alexander H. Morton, "Qashani and Rashid al-Din on the Seljuqs of Iran," in *Living Islamic History: studies in honour of Professor Carole Hillenbrand*, ed. Yasir Suleiman et al. (Edinburgh, 2010), 166-177.

<sup>778</sup> Kamola, 252.

labor (according to the latter at least), Qāshānī claims that he never saw a dime from this treasure.<sup>779</sup>

It is unclear, however, if Qāshānī refers here to his “original *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*,” his universal history, or to the two-volume *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*. In his preface to the *Ta‘rīkh-i ūljāytū*, Qāshānī writes of the completion of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh* and encourages his readers to view his history of “the blessed reign” of Öljeitū as the completion and supplement (*tamīma va-ḍamīma*) of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*. However, he describes the content of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh* in different terms than what he used in his earlier works. Qāshānī describes the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh* not as a universal history (which did not include the Mongols!) as he did earlier, but as the history of Chinggis Khan and his descendants, in other words, as the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*, the first volume of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*.<sup>780</sup> This statement probably reflects his changing perception of the work and its scope following Rashīd al-Dīn’s appropriation of his earlier histories, but also possibly, his direct involvement in the authorship of Rashīd al-Dīn’s first volume, the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*.

In addition to the two histories of Qāshānī, it has been also suggested that Rashīd al-Dīn might have made use in his *al-Athār wa’l-ahyā’* of Qāshānī’s *‘Arā’is al-jawāhir va-nafā’is al-aṭā’ib*, a treatise on minerals, gems and perfumes (including information about their value and prices). Qāshānī composed *‘Arā’is al-jawāhir* during Ghazan’s reign, in 700/1300-01 while in Tabriz. Qāshānī refers to himself in the preface to this work as *al-mu’arrīkh al-ḥāsib* (the historian and accountant). Soucek notes that these epithets and his interest in the prices of gems suggest that Qāshānī had an administrative position at the time. Qāshānī belonged to the Abū

---

<sup>779</sup> *Ta‘rīkh-i ūljāytū*, 54-55; 240-41. In the second instance, Qāshānī refers to the work he authored as the *dhayl-i Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh* (possibly the history of Ghazan or *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*? Or perhaps to his *Ta‘rīkh-i ūljāytū* though there is no indication, as far as I know, that the vizier has access to this work).

<sup>780</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-4.

Ṭāhir family, a leading family of potters from Qāshān/Kāshān, who are known to us primarily from their works decorating Shī'ī shrines and mosques in Qom, Mashhad, Najaf and Qāshān. While he was not a practicing potter like his brother Yūsuf (of whom we know from specimens of his work produced between the years 705 and 727), Qāshānī included in his *'Arā'is al-jawāhir* a detailed account about ceramics, glazes and decorative techniques used in pottery.<sup>781</sup> Qāshānī's attention to the prices of rare stones might explain the peculiar passage about the ruby the amir Nawrūz gave to Ghazan in Ghazan's *dastān* in the "P" recension of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. As noted in chapter three, the author (Qāshānī) provides here the reader with the exact weight of the luxurious gem. In addition, the same expressions for describing rubies appear in both works.<sup>782</sup> The *'Arā'is al-jawāhir* also provides additional evidence for Qāshānī's strained patron-client relationship with the Ilkhanid vizier: Qāshānī had dedicated the work to the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn (whom he praises highly in his preface) in 700/1300-01. However, he rededicated the work to Rashīd al-Dīn's rival, Tāj al-Dīn 'Alīshāh, probably after the latter's appointment as vizier in 711/1312.<sup>783</sup> This rededication clearly reflects the changing relationship between Qāshānī and his patron Rashīd al-Dīn.

Rashīd al-Dīn appears, therefore, to have used three of the four known works of Qāshānī: *'Arā'is al-jawāhir*, *Zubdat al-tawārīkh* and Qāshānī's world history (the "original" *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*). In addition, Qāshānī's fourth work, the *Tārīkh-i ūljāytū*, might have been intended to fulfill the role of the history Öljeitü's reign, which was supposed to be part of the second volume

<sup>781</sup> O. Watson, "Abu Taher," *Elr*, vol. I, 385-387.

<sup>782</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 72-73, 78-79; Kāshānī, *'Arā'is al-jawāhir*, 61-3. In addition, the author of the "P" recension writes that Baidu's supporters tried to gain the amir Nawrūz's support because they knew that the stability of the realm depended on it since "without lead one cannot work with diamonds" (*bar ilmās juz usrub kārgar nayāyad*) (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 617; Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 73). Qāshānī explains this expression in his *'Arā'is al-jawāhir*, where he states that the origins of this proverb are clear to diamond polishers who place lead, wax, or paper on the anvil so that when they hit the anvil (placed on the stone) with a hammer, the anvil would not break. *'Arā'is al-jawāhir*, 82-3.

<sup>783</sup> Following the execution of (Rashīd al-Dīn's rival) the vizier Sa'd al-Dīn Savajī. Soucek, "Abu'l-Qāsem 'Abdallāh Kāshānī"; *'Arā'is al-jawāhir*, 359-371.



of the vizier's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*. The extent to which Rashīd al-Dīn relied on Qāshānī's work raises the question whether Rashīd al-Dīn used in the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* additional, unknown works of Qāshānī.<sup>784</sup>

I suggest that Qāshānī had possibly authored a fifth work, a history of Ghazan's reign that perhaps even bore the title *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* (the blessed history of Ghazan), just like Qāshānī's world history was first named the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*. The existence of two different recensions for the chapter (*dastān*) on the Mongol ruler Ghazan (in *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*'s first volume), the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*, was already noted by the Czech orientalist Karl Jahn (d. 1985), who included both versions in his 1941 edition of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. Jahn assigned the letter "S" to one recension for its Istanbul manuscript (Revan Kōşkü 1518),<sup>785</sup> and marked the second recension with the letter "P" for its illustrated (Timurid era) Paris manuscript (BnF 1113).<sup>786</sup> The "S" recension became the main iteration for a number of recent editions of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*.<sup>787</sup>

---

<sup>784</sup> Morgan has also raised this question: "could there have once been other Qāshānī works, relating to other sections of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, which have not survived but which embodied most of the real work involved in the production of the great history?" Morgan, "Rašīd al-Dīn," 182-3. Morgan, furthermore, asks whether Qāshānī's history of Öljeitü is the missing end of Rashīd al-Dīn's second volume and concludes that "this can hardly be true: as it stands, it simply would not fit, either stylistically or in terms of the way in which it is organized." Morgan raised the possibility that Qāshānī's history of Öljeitü should be viewed as "the research assistant's draft, the collection of material on the basis of which the busy chief minister would have produced his own version, with his own perspective imposed and his own polish." I do not see evidence for this thesis. In general, there is no support for the view of Qāshānī as an assistant, rather than an independent historian, whose work was commissioned by the vizier and incorporated into the latter's work.

<sup>785</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Geschichte Gāzān-Ḥān's aus dem Ta'rīḥ-i mubārak-i-gāzānī*, ed. Karl Jahn (London: Luzac & Co., 1940), xi-xvi. The manuscript *Codex vindobonensis palatinus mixtus 326* in the Austrian National Library in Vienna appears to be from the same family as Revan Kōşkü 1518. See Kazuhiko Shiraiwa, "Rashīd al-Dīn's primary sources in compiling the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*: a tentative survey," in *Rashīd al-Dīn*, 50-51.

<sup>786</sup> The current consensus is that the Paris manuscript of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* (Bibliothèque Nationale, Supplément persan, 1113) was copied (by two hands) in the early Timurid period. Shiraiwa revised his earlier dating of the manuscript, from 1308-1314 to 1416-1417, and suggested that its illustrations were completed by 1425. Kazuhiko Shiraiwa, "Sur la date du manuscrit parisien du *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* de Rašīd al-Dīn," *Orient: Report of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan* 32 (1997), 37-49. For dating the illustrations, see also Francis Richard, "Un des peintres du manuscrit Supplément persan 1113 de l'histoire des mongols de Rašīd al-Dīn identifié," in Denise Aigle (ed.), *L'Iran face à la domination mongole* (1997), 307-320; Kamola, 89-93.

<sup>787</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, and Karīmī's edition: *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, ed. Bahman Karīmī (Tehran, 1338/1959-60). Thackston's translation, on the other hand, makes use of both iterations following Jahn's edition, but confuses the

The main differences between the two “P” and “S” iterations of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* appear in the first half of the *dastān* of Ghazan, which details the events leading to Ghazan’s victory and enthronement.<sup>788</sup> While the “S” recension has often been addressed as the “main” version of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* of Rashīd al-Dīn, the “P” recension, in particular, the first half of the chapter (*dastān*) on Ghazan, appears to represent an earlier version. My thesis is that the “P” recension represents an earlier history of Ghazan that was authored by the Ilkhanid court historian ‘Abd Allāh al-Qāshānī. Rashīd al-Dīn had initially incorporated this work with little change into his history of the Mongols (the “P” recension). However, he had it later substantially redacted and altered to meet the Rashīd al-Dīn’s own historical agenda and certain demands from the court (the “S” recension). As I discuss below, the first half of the chapter on Ghazan in the “P” recension stylistically and organizationally is more in-tune with Qāshānī’s *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū*, than with the rest of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. It is important to note that with one exception discussed earlier (in his later *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū*), Qāshānī indeed does not mention that he had composed a history of the Mongols (prior to Ghazan), nor does it seem likely that the court historian would have had the resources, contacts and knowledge required to compose the sections leading to Ghazan’s reign in the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. We might therefore stipulate that Rashīd al-Dīn should be credited with the authorship of the majority of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*.

One of the main indications of Qāshānī’s authorship of a history that was incorporated into the first half of the *dastān* of Ghazan (“P” recension) are the stylistic differences in this section between the two iterations of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. The “P” narrative generally features more ornate and artistic prose and exhibits a more extensive use of direct speech. It lacks the concise

---

two in a number of instances and in some places, chooses to translate one account over the other. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Rashīd uddīn Fazlullah’s Jami’u’t-Tawarikh*, trans. W.M. Thackston.

<sup>788</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 1-96.

style, which is the “hallmark” of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. A number of detailed passages in the “P” recension appear in the “S” recension in a summarized and redacted form, or are omitted altogether from the text allowing, at certain points, for a more straightforward and succinct account of the events, one less burdened by the “P” recension’s recurring attention to minute details.<sup>789</sup> It is conceivable that, as Kamola suggests, the author of the “P” recension, with its detailed accounts of day-to-day activities, had access to Ilkhanid court journals for the reign of Ghazan.<sup>790</sup> This, too, points towards Qāshānī’s authorship as we find that he employed a similar method in his *Ta`rīkh-i ūljāytū*.<sup>791</sup>

The “P” and “S” recensions also differ in their vocabulary preferences. A comparison of near identical paragraphs reveals the “P” author’s preference to Arabic loan words alongside a recurring use of rhyming prose (*saj`*), in distinction from the “S” author’s leaning towards a

---

<sup>789</sup> A particular example for this is found in Ghazan’s conversion narrative. Kamola noted that Nawrūz’s initial presentation of the ruby to Ghazan in the “P” recension was omitted from the “main redaction” (“S”) of Rashīd al-Dīn’s work. Kamola, 182. However, this episode, or the first part of the two-stage conversion account of Ghazan, is not entirely missing from the “S” iteration. The author of this later recension (likely Rashīd al-Dīn) combined the two sections into one episode and omitted some of the details (for example, noting that “the Muslims swore on the Qur’an and the Mongols swore on the gold” and omitting the names of the amirs Nūrīn and Qutlughshāh who swore on the golden goblet and Nawrūz, Būrālaghī and Mūlāy, who swore on the Qur’an in the “P” recension). Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 72-73, 78-79. Another example of such an omission in “S” is found in the details of Nawrūz’s first embassy to Ghazan: the wording is similar in both instances, but whereas “P” mentions the names of several individuals sent by Nawrūz in addition to Satlimish, the “S” recension mentions the latter as the sole envoy. Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 44, 49.

<sup>790</sup> The recently published *Akhbār-i mughulān* is an important example of the Ilkhanid practice of court journals. Penned (but might not have been authored) by the famous Sufi polymath and physician Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 1311), *Akhbār-i mughulān* is a collection of notes and observations pertaining to the political history of the early Ilkhanate ordered annually and ending with Aḥmad Tegüder’s dispute with Arghun and Tegüder’s subsequent demise. The Shīrāzī codex was originally part of the library of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Rab`-i Rashīdī* in Tabriz and includes in addition to the anonymous chronicle *Akhbār-i mughulān*, poetry in Persian and Arabic, sayings by Plato, quotations from Persian and Greek thinkers and other miscellanea. The original chronicle was composed between 1281 and 1285 probably by one author. The question of Shīrāzī’s authorship of the text remains open. The work is incomplete with gaps of various lengths throughout the chronicle (for example, a seven-year gap between the years 667 and 675). Lane notes that the *Akhbār-i mughulān*’s language is “plain, direct and stripped of the usual Persian excesses and hyperbole so characteristic of the style of that time” (545). George Lane, “Mongol News: the *Akhbār-i mughulān dar Anbāneh Qutb* by Qutb al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Mas`ūd Shīrāzī,” *JRAS*, series 3, 22, 3-4 (2012): 541-559; *Akhbār-i mughulān dar Anbānah-yi mullā Qutb*, ed. Iraj Afshar (Qom, 1431/2010); Kamola, 91.

<sup>791</sup> For *Ta`rīkh-i ūljāytū*’s detailed accounts of the Ilkhan’s day-to-day movements and court diary likeness, see Melville, “The itineraries of sultan Öljeitü, 1304-1316,” *Iran* 28 (1990), 55-70.

(relatively) more plain and direct Persian style.<sup>792</sup> This “simplification” of the narrative - from omission of certain passages in their entirety to the replacement of Qāshānī’s heavy use of *saj*’ with a more comprehensible and plain phrasing - appears to have characterized Rashīd al-Dīn’s editorial approach to the Qāshānī “corpus” as a whole. Thus, if we were to compare the preface of Qāshānī’s *Zubdat al-tawārīkh* with the introduction to the second volume of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, we find that the *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*’s preface was an abbreviated version of Qāshānī’s preface, “simplified of much of Qāshānī’s baroque *saj*’ rhetoric and scrubbed of any reference to Qāshānī himself”.<sup>793</sup>

A comparison of Qāshānī’s *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū* and the “P” recension section on Ghazan reveals not only their similar stylistic preferences (heavy use of *saj*’ prose and Arabic loan words), but also common phrasing. A number of these examples are quite distinctive.<sup>794</sup>

<sup>792</sup> Consider, for example, the nearly identical paragraphs in the two recensions concerning the return of Ghazan’s emissary from Baidu and the information that the emissary Ura Temür Idāchi delivered to Ghazan. Note, in particular, how the “S” recension has Persian words in place of Arabic loan words in the “P” recension (*tajāvuz va-tajannub namūdah*, for example, is replaced with *bāz gardīdah*) and lacks the excessive word repetitions of the “P” recension (for example, instead of *’arḍ dāsht va-namūd*, the “S” recension has just *’arḍah dāsht*, or to keep with its concise style, instead of Baidu’s name has “ū”, him). Thus, the “S” recension reads: “*Ura Temür Idāchi az pīsh-i Baidu bāz āmad va ’arḍah dāsht kah ū az sukhan-i khūd bāz gardīdah va-hūs-i pādshāhī dar dimāgh-i ū bā-dīd āmadah*,” whereas the “P” recension reads: “*Ura Temür Idāchi az pīsh-i Baidu \*barasīd va-hāl-i ḥādītha-yi hilākat-i Geikhatu\* ’arḍ dāsht \*va-namūd\* kah Baidu az sukhan-i khūd \*tajāvuz va-tajannub namūdah\* ast va-hūs-i pādshāhī \*va-havāyi shaharyārī\* dar dimāgh-i ū \*rāsikh va-mutamakkin gashtah\*.” Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 57 (“S” on the left column and “P” on the right). (\*\*) mark phrases that differ.*

<sup>793</sup> Kamola, 248. Found in the manuscript London British Library mss. IO Islamic 3524, fol. 1v. Furthermore, not only is any trace of Qāshānī’s authorship of the text erased from the preface, but also the title of his earlier world history (the “original” *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*) is conveniently altered in the “new” preface. Instead of referring to Qāshānī’s *Zubdat al-tawārīkh* as “the completion and supplement of the *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh* (*tamīma va-ḍamīma-yi Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*),” the “new” preface mentions that this section will become “the completion and supplement of the books of history (*tamīma va-ḍamīma-yi kutub-i tavārīkh*),” in other words, simply replacing the word *Jāmi’* with *kutub*.

<sup>794</sup> Less significant instances include for example phrases such as: *bi-bahādurī va-dilāvarī ma ’rūf va-mavšūf* (*Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū*, 8; Rashīd al-Dīn/’Alīzādah, 584), *ma ’hūd va-mu ’tād* (*Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū*, 240; ’Alīzāda, 619), *faṣīḥ masīḥ* (*Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū*, 50; Rashīd al-Dīn/’Alīzādah, 605; Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 4), *tāza va-tarī shavad* (*Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū*, 17; Rashīd al-Dīn/’Alīzādah, 604). In addition, a strikingly similar paragraph to the description of the anticipated reviver king in the conversion narrative (“From the inclusiveness of the justice of this king, the sheep will be protected from the harm of the wolf and the gazelle from to the oppression of the hound [...]”) is found in Qāshānī’s description of Öljeitū’s justice in his *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū* (page 232). To complicate the relationship between Qāshānī’s and Rashīd al-Dīn’s works even further, I found a number of indications that Qāshānī had access and used the vizier’s *Kitāb al-sultāniyya* (mainly the introduction). This possibility seems rather likely (and does not contradict my suggestion that Rashīd al-Dīn used Qāshānī’s work on Ghazan) considering the suggestion that

Significantly, in both works we find the author expressing his particular aversion to the Jews with the same, rare derogatory expression *jahūd juhūd* (hideous Jews), a term that perhaps unsurprisingly (considering Rashīd al-Dīn’s Jewish background) is missing from the corresponding paragraph in the “S” recension.<sup>795</sup>

The chapter on Ghazan in the “P” recension of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* also features more literary allusions referring, for example, to the fable of the rivalry between the owls and crows in *Kalīla va-Dimna* or to the *Shāh nāmāh*.<sup>796</sup> As discussed in chapter three, the Persianate genre of mirrors for princes appears to have been a central source of inspiration for Qāshānī. For example the tenuous relationship between the amir Nawrūz and the prince Ghazan is used by Qāshānī as a stage to set some of the main themes of the genre of advice literature.<sup>797</sup> The didactic and moralistic attitudes of Qāshānī’s work are compatible with a larger literary trend of the Ilkhanid period.<sup>798</sup>

---

Qāshānī’s *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū* was “commissioned” by the vizier to be included in his *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*. I plan on investigating these relationships in the near future.

<sup>795</sup> In the “P” recension, in the context of Ghazan’s destruction of idol houses, churches and synagogues (*knishit*) of the *jahūd juhūd*. Rashīd al-Dīn/Alī Zāda, 614. The author of “P” also uses the expression: *juhūd hanūd yahūd*. Ibid., 616. It is also worth noting that in the parallel passage in the “S” recension, this derogatory term is omitted (though the “S” recension does retain the specific term *knishit* for synagogue). Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 85. In *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū*, Qāshānī uses the phrase in the context of Rashīd al-Dīn’s stealing of his work (below), where he states that the latter had a number of Jews lie on his behalf to disprove Qāshānī’s authorship. *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū*, 240-41. A simple internet search shows that this term appears only once, in *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū* (!). Qāshānī also uses the expression *jahūdukī* for the Jewish physician Najīb al-Dawla. Ibid., 131. He uses the more favorable designation, *banī isrā’īl*, for example, when he refers to the conversion to Islam of a group of Jewish physicians headed by Najīb al-Dawla at the Ilkhanid court. *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū*, 49.

<sup>796</sup> For example, Rashīd al-Dīn/Alī Zāda, 602-3; Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 74-75; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 618-619.

<sup>797</sup> One example that appears in the “P” recension alone is the moral counsel (*naṣā’ih*) of Nawrūz’s wife, the Chinggisid princess Toghan, Ghazan’s aunt, to her husband urging him to submit to Ghazan and beg for mercy for his crimes against his benefactor (*valī-yi n’imat*). The notion of *valī-yi n’imat*, the purveyor of divine bounty, is a central precept in the cultivation of the ethos of the relationship of fidelity between the king and his subjects in Persianate literature, where ingratitude to the ruler (*kufṛān-i n’imat*) is often equated with blasphemy (*kufṛ*) and considered the cause of injustice and disorder in the realm. In this lengthy passage, the princess Toghan advises her remorseful husband as to the merits of one’s perseverance when faced with the fickleness of fate and speaks in favor of submitting to the merciful and praiseworthy prince Ghazan. Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 44-48; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 607-8. For *kufṛān-i n’imat*, see Hani Khafipour, *The Foundation of the Safavid State: fealty, patronage, and ideals of authority (1501-1576)* (Phd diss., University of Chicago, 2013), 20-62 (chapter 1).

<sup>798</sup> See discussion in chapter three.

Qāshānī's authorship of the "P" narrative is also supported by the existence of Sufi overtones in the "P" recension's conversion narrative, in particular, the use of common light related Sufi terms such as *nūr-i imān*.<sup>799</sup> One detail on Qāshānī that, to the best of my knowledge, has not been noted by modern day historians is that Qāshānī was probably the brother of the Sufi shaykh 'Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāhir al-Kāshī/Kāshānī al-Naṭanzī (d. 735). The latter is primarily known for authoring the *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah wa-miftāḥ al-kifāyah*, a Persian adaptation of 'Umar al-Suhrawardī's Sufi guide the *'Awārif al-ma'ārif*, and a number of other well-known Sufi works. 'Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd was the disciple of several shaykhs associated with the Suhrawardī *silsila*.<sup>800</sup> While there are no direct links between the "P" conversion account and the *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah*, references to the *nūr-i imān* and to the symbolism of unveiling of the darkness of disbelief are also abundant in 'Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd's work.<sup>801</sup> In any case, this familial connection between Shaykh 'Izz al-Dīn and Qāshānī might suggest that the latter, too, had some Sufi training, or was exposed to Sufi works. This suspicion is confirmed by Qāshānī's use of Najm al-Dīn Rāzī Dāya's Sufi manual, the *Mirṣād al-'Ibād*, in his conversion account of the Ilkhan.<sup>802</sup>

Some of the statements that Qāshānī makes in his *Ta'rīkh-i ūljāytū*, in particular, one where he compares Mu'āwiya and 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ to the devil, indicate that Qāshānī came from

<sup>799</sup> Kamola suggests that this "reveals an additional layer of illuminationist rhetoric and symbolism." Kamola, 180.

<sup>800</sup> *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah wa-miftāḥ al-kifāyah*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Humā'ī (Tehran, 1367 [1988]). For 'Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd's Sufi teachers, see introduction by Humā'ī, 13-14, and for the work's relationship with *'Awārif al-ma'ārif*, see introduction, 19-40. 'Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd is not identified as a member of the Abī Ṭāhir family in *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah*. However, he does appear under this name in Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's biographical dictionary, the *Majma' al-ādāb* (vol. 1, 336), though the brief notice does not note his Sufi credentials or any other significant detail on him. For his identification as an Abī Ṭāhir, see also Ismā'īl Bāshā al-Baghdādī al-Bābānī, *Hadīyyat al-'ārifīn* (Baghdad, 1972?), vol. 2, 408.

<sup>801</sup> For example, *Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah*, 75-6.

<sup>802</sup> See chapter three.

a Shī‘ī background.<sup>803</sup> As noted above, his family took a number of projects in veneration sites related to the *ahl al-bayt*. A possible indication of the “P” author’s Shī‘ī inclinations is found in Ghazan’s conversion narrative when Nawrūz states that he saw the marks of the anticipated reviver king “manifest and shining from the shape of the state and the face of the impressions of the revealing (/clear/shining) forehead (*jabīn-i mubīn*) of the prince.” The term *jabīn-i mubīn* is familiar from a Shī‘ī tradition about the resemblance of Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī to his grandfather, the Prophet Muḥammad. According to this tradition, during the dark nights, light would spread from the Prophet’s forehead, *jabīn-i mubīn*, and people would recognize him by his illuminated forehead.<sup>804</sup>

The idea that Qāshānī had authored a separate history of Ghazan and that this work (whether completed or in draft) was available to Rashīd al-Dīn and possibly to others at the court finds further support in another Ilkhanid history, Vaṣṣāf’s *Tajziyat al-amṣār*. It is evident from Vaṣṣāf’s succinct conversion narrative of Ghazan that he had access to and made use of Qāshānī’s work.<sup>805</sup> Vaṣṣāf, however, offers a different chronology for Ghazan’s conversion. He condenses Qāshānī’s lengthier narrative of the correspondence between Ghazan and Baidu and Ghazan’s several consultations with Nawrūz and the amirs into one short and concise paragraph that includes only one discussion and exchange between Ghazan and Nawrūz. Thus, in Vaṣṣāf’s account, Ghazan converts immediately after his first discussion with the commanders and Nawrūz.<sup>806</sup>

---

<sup>803</sup> *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū*, 130-131. Further examples for his anti-Umayyad sentiment and pro-‘Alīd convictions are found in his *Ta’rīkh-i isma‘īliyya*, for example, 8-12.

<sup>804</sup> See Shaykh ‘Abbās Qumī, *Muntaha al-āmāl* (Tehran, 1996), vol. 1, 536.

<sup>805</sup> Melville, too, noted that in the case of Ghazan’s conversion narrative, “the language used by Vaṣṣāf is [overall] similar to Banākatī’s” and Banākatī’s version of Ghazan’s conversion is, in fact, based on the “P” recension conversion narrative (below), Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām,” 173 (footnote 4).

<sup>806</sup> For the sake of illustrating the extent of Vaṣṣāf’s “editing,” one can note that in Jahn’s edition of the “P” recension, this first consultation is found on page 58, whereas Ghazan’s full conversion is only on page 67.



According to Vaṣṣāf, when learning that “Baidu Khan caused Geikhatu to taste the sherbet of annihilation and took over the throne,” Ghazan was unable to decide what to do and consulted with Nawrūz, who stated: “I, your slave, will raise the prince to the throne of the fortunate blessed state/dynasty.” This and the next line are nearly identical to Nawrūz’s words in Qāshānī’s narrative.<sup>807</sup> In Vaṣṣāf’s version, however, instead of Nawrūz’s lengthy diatribe against Baidu, Nawrūz makes Ghazan’s conversion a condition for his support of the prince,<sup>808</sup> a statement that is not made in Qāshānī’s account. Ghazan, next, converts to Islam in Firuzkuh.<sup>809</sup> Vaṣṣāf’s phrasing here, too, clearly echoes the language of Qāshānī’s conversion narrative.<sup>810</sup>

<sup>807</sup> The “P” recension (Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 58) writes that Nawrūz *iltizām namūd kah bandah-yi kamīna shahzādah rā bar sarīr-i davlat-i kāmkar va-kāmran binishānid va-Baidu rā bā a ‘vān va-anšār chūn hijāb-i kufr az miyān bar dārad*. Vaṣṣāf (*Tajziyat al-amšār*, 316-317) writes: *iltizām namūd kah \*man\* bandah shahzādah rā bar sarīr-i davlat-i \*rūz afzūn\* kāmkar \*binishānam\* va-Baidu rā bā \*lashkar-i bisyār\* va-a ‘vān \*kah chūn tirāz jāmah bar siyārand\* chūn hijāb-i kufr az miyān bar \*dāram\**. \*\* marks words added or changed by Vaṣṣāf (for example, changing the verbs’ subject from third person to first).

<sup>808</sup> Vaṣṣāf follows this with the famous saying (in Arabic here) of the founder the Sassanid Empire Ardashīr (d. 242) that “religion and monarchy are twins; religion sustains monarchy and monarchy protects religion.” As Hope notes, while the Ilkhanid narratives mostly (Vaṣṣāf and his pro-Nawrūz account being an exception in this regard) describe the rapprochement between the two as the unconditional submission of the amir to the prince, “Ghazan was in no position to demand the submission of Nawrūz, whose armies had repeatedly resisted his attempts to drive him out of Khurasan.” Hope views this as “a strategic alliance, not a political capitulation” and relies on Vaṣṣāf’s version to suggest that Nawrūz’s conditioned his service to the prince on the latter’s conversion, an offer which Ghazan initially declined, but later, during the prince’s conflict with Baidu, accepted. Indeed, as Hope further notes, Nawrūz had made a similar, yet unsuccessful bid earlier to enthrone the Ögödeid prince and Muslim convert Ürüng Temür (who also married one of Nawrūz’s daughters). Hope further argues that Nawrūz was making an ultimatum to the prince and “was giving Ghazan a clear choice between accepting a shared authority, under Nawrūz’s spiritual primacy or defeat.” Hope, “Nawrūz King,” 14-15, 17-18. However, if Vaṣṣāf’s account is indeed, as I suggest here, not based on independent information, but on Qāshānī’s version, then we might wish to tread more carefully when making assertions about the relationship between the two on the basis of Vaṣṣāf’s version.

<sup>809</sup> Damavand, where the “P” recension notes Ghazan’s conversion to had taken place and where his father’s summer palace seems to have been, was on the route to Firuzkuh. Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām,” 167-8, 175.

<sup>810</sup> Thus, Vaṣṣāf writes: *zabān-i shahzādah bar kilamayn-i ikhlāṣ kilmah-yi ṭayyibah-yi tavhīd sarāyīdan girift*. The “P” recension has: *shahzādah [...] kilamh-yi ikhlāṣ sarāyīdan girift [...] kilamh-yi tavhīd lafz-i takbīr irād kard*. The next line in Vaṣṣāf concerning the mass conversion of two hundred thousand (one hundred thousand in the “P” recension) Mongols after Ghazan’s conversion too draws from the distinctive language of the “P” recension, referring to the Mongol men as *mushrik-i mutamrīd* and stating that they all became *muvahhīd*. *Tajziyat al-amšār*, 317. Vaṣṣāf’s narrative continues with a second embassy, after Ghazan’s conversion, from Ghazan to Baidu, demanding that Baidu hand over the amirs who executed Ghazan’s uncle, the Ilkhan Geikhatu, so they go on trail according to the *yasa* for their transgressions against the Chinggisid household (*urūgh/q*). The wording of Ghazan’s message to Baidu here is identical to that of the message Ghazan sends Baidu in his first embassy after learning that Baidu took over the throne in Qāshānī’s narrative. Qāshānī’s version of this episode, however, is longer and includes details missing in Vaṣṣāf’s account, for example, the names of the two Mongol emissaries who delivered the message to Baidu. In the “P” recension, this episode follows Ghazan’s first consultation with Nawrūz, and not



Vaṣṣāf, in other words, borrows whole sentences from Qāshānī, while also significantly altering his extensive narrative and chronological sequence, for example, by relocating Ghazan’s conversion to an earlier moment.<sup>811</sup> Vaṣṣāf’s borrowing from Qāshānī should allow us to offer a *terminus ante quem* to Qāshānī’s narrative. The problem, however, is that Vaṣṣāf presented his work at the Ilkhanid court on two separate occasions. He first presented it to Ghazan in Rajab 702/3 March 1303 and nearly a decade later, in 712/1312, to Öljeitü in Sultāniyya. It is not clear at which point he presented each section of the work. It seems that Vaṣṣāf presented the first three volumes of his history, which included Ghazan’s reign up to the year 700, already in Rajab 702/3 March 1303.<sup>812</sup> Vaṣṣāf appears to have had, therefore, access to Qāshānī’s narrative prior to 702/1303, but certainly no later than 712/1312.

---

Ghazan’s conversion narrative, which appears much later in the “P” narrative, after an extensive back and forth between Baidu and Ghazan.

<sup>811</sup> A more thorough comparison must be done before we can determine the extent to which Vaṣṣāf relied on Qāshānī. Kamola has noted certain “structural similarities” between the *Tajziyat al-amṣār*’s third volume (especially the final account of the building projects of Ghazan) and the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. Kamola concludes that Vaṣṣāf’s work “provides part of the immediate historiographical precedent for the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*,” yet, it seems more likely that both relied on Qāshānī. Kamola, 144. For Rashīd al-Dīn’s and Vaṣṣāf’s patron-client relationship, *ibid.*, 252-3.

<sup>812</sup> In the fourth of volume of *Tajziyat al-amṣār*, Vaṣṣāf writes of his arrival on 13 Rajab 702/3 March 1303, shortly before Ghazan’s death, at the Ilkhan’s camp in ‘Āna, which was located in a distance of two days from Raḥibat al-Shām on the frontier with Mamluk Syria. He presented his history to Ghazan at the presence of the two viziers, Rashīd al-Dīn and Sa’d al-Dīn Savajī, and received praises for the work from all those present and honors and gifts (including a brocade cloak and a golden *Tamgha*) from Ghazan. According to Vaṣṣāf, at this instance, an order was delivered to him from the Ilkhan to remain in Mawṣal until the return of Ghazan from his third campaign against the Mamluks in Syria so he may complete during this interval another history with the beginning and end of the Mongols’ history (*afsānah-yi dīgar bar āghāz va-anjām-i muḡhūl*). Vaṣṣāf complained that he would be unable to complete such a work within such a limited time frame and received an extension and numerous resources to complete the new volume. The common view is that Vaṣṣāf presented in 702/1303 only the first *qism* of his history, which covered Ilkhanid history from Hülegü to Aḥmad Tegüder, and completed the three other volumes by 712/1312, when he presented the work to Öljeitü in Sultāniyya. Pfeiffer, “A turgid history,” 107-8; Vaṣṣāf, *Ta’rīkh-i vaṣṣāf al-ḥadrat: jalad chihārum*, ed. ‘Alīriḍā Ḥājjiyān Nazhād (Tehran, 1388/2009), 24 (introduction). However, as far as I can tell, Vaṣṣāf does not clarify which volume/s he presented before Ghazan in 702/1303. He refers to the work he presented simply as *in kitāb, maktūb-i vaṣṣāf, ta’rīkh*, or *kitāb-i ta’rīkh*. Vaṣṣāf, *Ta’rīkh-i vaṣṣāf al-ḥadrat: jalad chihārum*, 25-29, 343. It seems to me more likely that Vaṣṣāf presented the first three volumes to Ghazan in 702/1303. According to his introduction to *Tajziyat al-amṣār*, Vaṣṣāf intended his work to continue (*dhayl*) from where Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā-malik Juwaynī’s *Ta’rīkh-i jahān gushā* ends, that is, with Hülegü’s campaign against the Ismā‘īlīs, until the current date, that is, late Sh’abān 699. Vaṣṣāf, *Tajziyat al-amṣār*, 4-6. This time period is, indeed, covered in the first three volumes. The second work, commissioned by Ghazan in 702, appears to have become the *Tajziyat al-amṣār*’s fourth volume, which includes the end of Ghazan’s reign (from the year 700, where the third *qism* ends), the reign of his successor Öljeitü, miscellaneous treatises by Vaṣṣāf, and a summary of the *Ta’rīkh-i*

I have argued that Qāshānī had authored a history of Ghazan, parallel in scope, style, and goals to Qāshānī’s *Tārīkh-i ūljāytū*, and that Rashīd al-Dīn initially incorporated it with little change into the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* (“P” recension). The question remains, however, why the Ilkhanid vizier felt later the need to reedit and extensively redact it (leaving us with the “S” recension). Answering this question might also help us better understand Rashīd al-Dīn’s work process. Aside for the two distinct conversion narratives, one of the most significant differences between the two recensions of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* is that a number of sections appear in the “P” iteration alone, particularly, episodes related to the role of the amir Nawrūz in raising Ghazan to the throne.<sup>813</sup> As Kamola observed, the “P” recension appears to include more details about the events that took place in the eastern provinces, from the start of Nawrūz’s revolt in 1289 to Ghazan’s enthronement in 1295, and especially, regarding Nawrūz’s uprising, the subsequent rapprochement between him and Ghazan, and their joint struggle against Baidu. The “P” recension also includes details on a number of local rulers as well as on some early administrative measures of Ghazan, which are absent from the later recension.<sup>814</sup>

The hostile attitude towards amir Nawrūz in the later recension of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* is attested not only in the omission of extensive paragraphs featuring the amir (in recension “P”), but also in Ghazan’s conversion narrative itself. Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative “skips” over the lengthy, lauding, and nearly heroic depiction of Nawrūz as he is faced at Baidu’s camp with dangers and overcomes with insightful deceit his ill-wishers (and thus,

---

*jahān gushā*. In other words, it expands Vaṣṣāf’s history into the later and earlier periods of Mongol rule (or *āghāz va-anjām-i mughūl*) and accomplishes what Ghazan ordered. Thus, it seems more plausible that Vaṣṣāf presented Ghazan with the first three volumes of the work in 702/1303, and that he presented the four volumes together to Öljeitü in 712/1312.

<sup>813</sup> For example, Nawrūz’s experiences at Qaidu’s camp; Nawrūz’s imprisonment by Baidu and his deceit of the latter; and amir Nawrūz mounts the vanguard. In the “S” recension, this last section is redacted and condensed together with the previous section on Shaykh Maḥmūd’s embassy from Baidu into one section in the “S” recension, which was titled: the imperial banners of Ghazan proceed towards Baidu for the second time. Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 24-26, 73-75, 90-96, 80-89.

<sup>814</sup> Kamola, 89-92.

redeems himself from his earlier “crimes” of disloyalty towards his benefactor Ghazan), which we find in the earlier recension/Qāshānī’s account. Rashīd al-Dīn briefly summarizes it instead and depicts this episode in negative light, as Nawrūz’s failure to fulfill his promise to Ghazan to hand him Baidu’s head. Furthermore, it notes that Ghazan was about to rebuke the amir for his return without results, just as Nawrūz decided to raise before the prince the issue of his conversion.<sup>815</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn’s attempt to reduce Nawrūz’s significance in the rise of Ghazan to the throne, if not also to “tarnish” his legacy, also leads the vizier to collapse the “two-stage” conversion narrative of Ghazan in Qāshānī’s account into a single episode (by relocating the ruby episode to the actual conversion moment): he reduces the extensive section detailing Nawrūz’s efforts to bring about Ghazan’s conversion and presents Nawrūz’s agency in the conversion as negligible.

We should also note that Qāshānī’s “two-stage” conversion account, which credits Nawrūz with the Ilkhan’s conversion, is confirmed by the independent eyewitness report of Ghazan’s convertor, Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. Sa’d al-Dīn al-Ḥammūya/Hamuwayi.<sup>816</sup> Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Hamuwayi reported his involvement in the Ilkhan’s conversion to the

---

<sup>815</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 79; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 620.

<sup>816</sup> Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm’s father, Sa’d al-Dīn (d. 650/1252?), was the celebrated disciple of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā. Ṣadr al-Dīn was well connected to the Ilkhanid civic elite: he married the daughter of ‘Aṭā-malik Juwaynī, the famed historian and governor of Baghdad in 671/1272-3. Ṣadr al-Dīn studied with Ṭūsī and with the father of ‘Allāma al-Ḥillī. Melville suggests that his “varied spiritual pedigree is an indication of the fluidity of sectarian categories in the early Mongol period.” Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām,” 165. Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm’s role in the conversion, however, seems to have been not for to his “special skill as an expounder of doctrine in a fashion suitable to Mongol tastes,” but rather, for “his social and familial prominence,” that is, as a marker of social prestige. DeWeese, “Islamization in the Mongol Empire,” 124. Elias too suggests that Ṣadr al-Dīn’s standing in Ilkhanid circles was primarily due to his father’s reputation as a Sufi and author. It should furthermore be noted that Ṣadr al-Dīn’s reputation was primarily as ḥadīth collector (especially pertaining to the Prophet’s family, and hence, the attribution of Shi‘ite tendencies to his figure) and not a Sufi. Ṣadr al-Dīn had little contact with other members of the Kubrawi Sufi path aside his father and Simnānī. Ṣadr al-Dīn is not even listed as a main disciple of his father. Sa’d al-Dīn’s association with Kubrawi circles seems to have been tenuous and he seems to have been rejected by the latter due to his self-association with the Damascene circle of Ibn ‘Arabī and the influence of Ibn ‘Arabī on his thought. Jamal J. Elias, “The Sufi lords of Bahrabad: Sa’d al-Din and Sadr al-Din Hamuwayi,” *Iranian Studies*, 27/1 (1994): 53-75. Considering the conclusions of Elias, we should beware from identifying Sufi Kubrawi tones in Ghazan’s conversion narratives as well as in his actual conversion. Kamola, 180ff.

Mamluk historian ‘Alam al-Dīn al-Birzālī (d. 739/1339) in 695/late 1295 when he arrived at Damascus after completing the *hajj*.<sup>817</sup> Ṣadr al-Dīn notes the central role of amir Nawrūz in facilitating the Ilkhan’s conversion and in providing the Ilkhan with directions and explanations during the ceremony itself as well as instructing him on the tenets of Islam after the act. Ṣadr al-Dīn, furthermore, speaks to Nawrūz’s knowledge of Islamic traditions (*zuhdiyyāt*, *adhkār* and *ḥikāyāt*). Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya also notes that Nawrūz’s Chinggisid wife, Toghan Khātūn, the daughter of Abaqa and Ghazan’s aunt, played a role in pursuing Ghazan’s conversion alongside her husband.

In addition to applying a critical stance towards amir Nawrūz, Rashīd al-Dīn also added new details.<sup>818</sup> One example for this is found in the section on Ghazan’s birth and childhood, and the description of Ghazan’s wives. A segment with poetry describing the newborn Ghazan’s attributes is accounted for only in Qāshānī’s version,<sup>819</sup> but Rashīd al-Dīn includes several additional details missing from the earlier versions, for example, an identification of one of the family members of Ghazan’s second nurse Ashtai,<sup>820</sup> and the corresponding Mongol date for Ghazan’s birth.<sup>821</sup>

---

<sup>817</sup> Melville translates the fullest version of the account given by the Syrian author al-Jazarī in *Jawāhir al-sulūk* (which is still in manuscript). A slightly shorter account is found in the anonymous chronicle (“Author Z”). Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām,” 159-177 (160-63 for the sources); Zetterstéen, *Beiträge*, 34-36. Earlier that year, Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya joined Ghazan’s retinue from his native town of Bahrabad in order to secure safe passage to the *hajj* at which point amir Nawrūz approached Ṣadr al-Dīn about delaying his departure for the *hajj*. According to Ṣadr al-Dīn, Nawrūz hoped that the latter’s presence at the Ilkhanid camp would encourage Ghazan to follow through an earlier promise he had made Nawrūz to convert to Islam. Ṣadr al-Dīn reported to al-Birzālī that Ghazan pronounced the Shahāda dressed in the Shaykh’s robe (*qamīs*) and a woolen cloak on Friday 2 Sha‘bān 694/17 June 1295 (or 4 Sha‘bān in Banākatī’s history) at Arghun’s summer residence near Damavand. Ṣadr al-Dīn attests to the anticipation among Ghazan’s men and to the great joy that overtook the party once the ceremony was completed, and the impressive celebration that followed.

<sup>818</sup> In addition, I identified at least two places, where the “S” recension breaks a long section with new section headings, which are missing from the “P” recension, a possible indication of the work of later editing. Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 31, 37.

<sup>819</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 4-7; BnF 1113, fol. 211r.

<sup>820</sup> Both recensions read: “he was given to the mother of Ḥasan, the amir of tughchis [standard bearers], of the Suldus tribe. The name of Ḥasan’s father was Ashtu (“P” has Ḥasan instead, possibly a mistake) and the name of his mother was Ashtai (“P” reads ṭsanbāy).” “S” adds here: “and the son of Ashtu is Tolai, who serves as idāchi and ba’urchi.” This suggests that the author/editor of “S” had a more up to date knowledge of position holders in the Ilkhanate.

<sup>821</sup> In addition, the “P” recension has Ghazan’s birthdate as the 29<sup>th</sup> of Rabī‘ II 670, whereas the “S” recension as the 29<sup>th</sup> of Rabī‘ I 670 (/November 4, 1271). This, however, might simply be a scribal mistake.

Striking differences are found in the section on Ghazan's wives, where the order of the wives in the two recensions differs.<sup>822</sup> Particularly significant is that Qāshānī places Bulughan Khātūn, who was Ghazan's father Arghun's (and uncle Geikhatu's) widow, as Ghazan's first-chief wife. He plainly states that before marrying Ghazan, she was "his father's wife" (*zan-i pidar-i ū*). In the "S" recension, however, Bulughan Khātūn appears correctly as wife number five.<sup>823</sup> It is not stated here that she was Arghun's wife, although this detail and the controversy (and subsequent resolution) over Ghazan's marriage to his father's widow are addressed shortly after in this recension.<sup>824</sup> There are additional genealogical details that appear only in the later iteration.<sup>825</sup> Moreover, the order of the wives in the "S" recension corresponds to the order of Ghazan's wives in the *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah* (Five Genealogies), the accompanying genealogical trees of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*.<sup>826</sup> Furthermore, the author/copyist of "S" (Rashīd al-Dīn) was possibly

<sup>822</sup> In the "S" recension the order of the wives is as follows: Yedi Qurtqa, Bulughān Khātūn Khurāsānī, Eshil Khātūn, Kōkāchi Khātūn, Bulughān Khātūn al-mu'azzama (widow of Arghun), Dondi Khātūn, and Kārāmū Khātūn. In the "P" recension, the order of the wives is: Bulughān Khātūn al-mu'azzama, Bulughān Khātūn Khurāsānī, Yedi Qurtqa, Eshil Khātūn, Kōkāchi, Kārāmū Khātūn, Dondi.

<sup>823</sup> In his study of the institution of the senior wife in the Mongol Empire, Shir demonstrates that according to Mongol custom, the chief wife was either the first woman married to the prince, or, the mother of sons (who alone had a right to claim the throne). Bulughān Khātūn, therefore, could not have been Ghazan's senior wife. Shai Shir, "'The Chief Wife' at the Courts of the Mongol Khans during the Mongol World Empire (1206-1260)" (in Hebrew, M.A. thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2006), 54-62. On Bulughan Khātūn al-mu'azzama daughter of Otman, the second of the three Ilkhanid Bulughāns and the significance role she played in Ghazan's rise to power, see Melville, "Boloḡān Kātūn," *Elr*, Vol. IV, Fasc. 4, pp. 338-339.

<sup>824</sup> For a discussion of the crisis over Ghazan's decision to marry his father's widow, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "Ghazan, Islam and Mongol tradition," 1-10. Amitai examines the details in Ghazan's biographical notice in the Mamluk author Ṣalāh al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybeg al-Ṣafadī's (d. 764/1363) fourteenth century two biographical dictionaries. According to al-Ṣafadī's account of the crisis that ensued from the convert Ghazan's decision to marry his father's widow, Bulughān Khātūn, in accordance with Mongol traditions, as reported by 'Izz al-Dīn Ḥasan al-Irbilī (d. 726/1326), Ghazan intended to abandon Islam were he not permitted to marry his father's widow. The matter was resolved when one of the '*ulamā*' offered a legal opinion that since the Ilkhan's father Arghun was a pagan, the latter's marriage to the lady was illegal and therefore, Ghazan may marry her in accordance with Muslim law. In addition, the "S" recension alone adds that the lady's daughter (from Ghazan), Öljäi Qutluḡ, was betrothed to her cousin (Bisṭām, son of Öljeitü). The two were betrothed on Safar 703 (September 1303). Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 658.

<sup>825</sup> For example, "S" alone gives the full lineage of Yedi Qurtqa, Ghazan's first and chief wife in "S," leading back to one of Chagatai's sons.

<sup>826</sup> The *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah* remains in a single, sixteenth century manuscript, MS Topkapi Sarayi Ahmet 3, No. 2937. It encompasses the genealogies of the Mongols, Arabs, Jews, and European and Chinese emperors. For the *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah* as a summary of the first two volumes of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, see Binbaş, "Structure and function of the genealogical tree in Islamic historiography (1200-1500)," 489-494. The *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah* appears to have been planned at a later stage than the rest of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*.

referencing the *Shu 'ab-i Panjgānah* when he stated at the end of his list of Ghazan's wives, that this list is confirmed by the *jadval-i shu 'bah-yi farzandān-i ū*, the table of the branch of Ghazan's descendants, which corresponds to the title of Ghazan's section in the *Shu 'ab-i Panjgānah*.<sup>827</sup>

As a final point, it might be worth to briefly consider Rashīd al-Dīn's work process. Based on the preface to the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* and to the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*, Shiraiwa argues for a gradual process of compiling and editing. A draft of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*, the first volume, which according to Rashīd al-Dīn's preface, was ordered by Ghazan, appears to have existed as early as 702/1302. Already in 703/1303, copies of sections of the work were under preparation to present to Ghazan. However, it was only after Ghazan's death, in 703/1304, that drafts of sections of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* were finally presented at the *ordu*, to Ghazan's successor, Öljeitü (704/1304-5). According to the preface, Öljeitü made major corrections and changes to the work. He also ordered that two more volumes, a universal history and a geographical volume in his name, would be added to the volume named after Ghazan.<sup>828</sup> Based on this description from the preface to the work, Shiraiwa urges us to consider Öljeitü's role in this process as that of the "publisher or commissioning editor," who oversaw and made editorial interventions in the production of the work.<sup>829</sup>

While we might wish to refrain from assuming the Ilkhan Öljeitü's direct involvement in the text, Shiraiwa's chronology does correspond with the two-stage incorporation of Qāshānī's

---

<sup>827</sup> Interestingly, in the corresponding section on Ghazan in the *Shu 'ab-i Panjgānah*, Bulughān Khātūn's earlier marriage to Geikhatu is noted, but not her marriage to Arghun (!). Since our earliest reference to the *Shu 'ab-i Panjgānah* as part of the historical compendium of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* is as late as 1310, this reference might also serve as a clue towards dating the later, "S" recension of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. Kamola observed that the *Shu 'ab-i Panjgānah* is not mentioned in the preface to the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, but only in the description of Rashīd al-Dīn's collected works in a manuscript completed in 1310 (Paris ms. arabe 2324). Kamola, 213-214, 286.

<sup>828</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1-8; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 1-6.

<sup>829</sup> Kazuhiko Shiraiwa, "Rashīd al-Dīn's primary sources in compiling the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*: a tentative survey," 51-52.

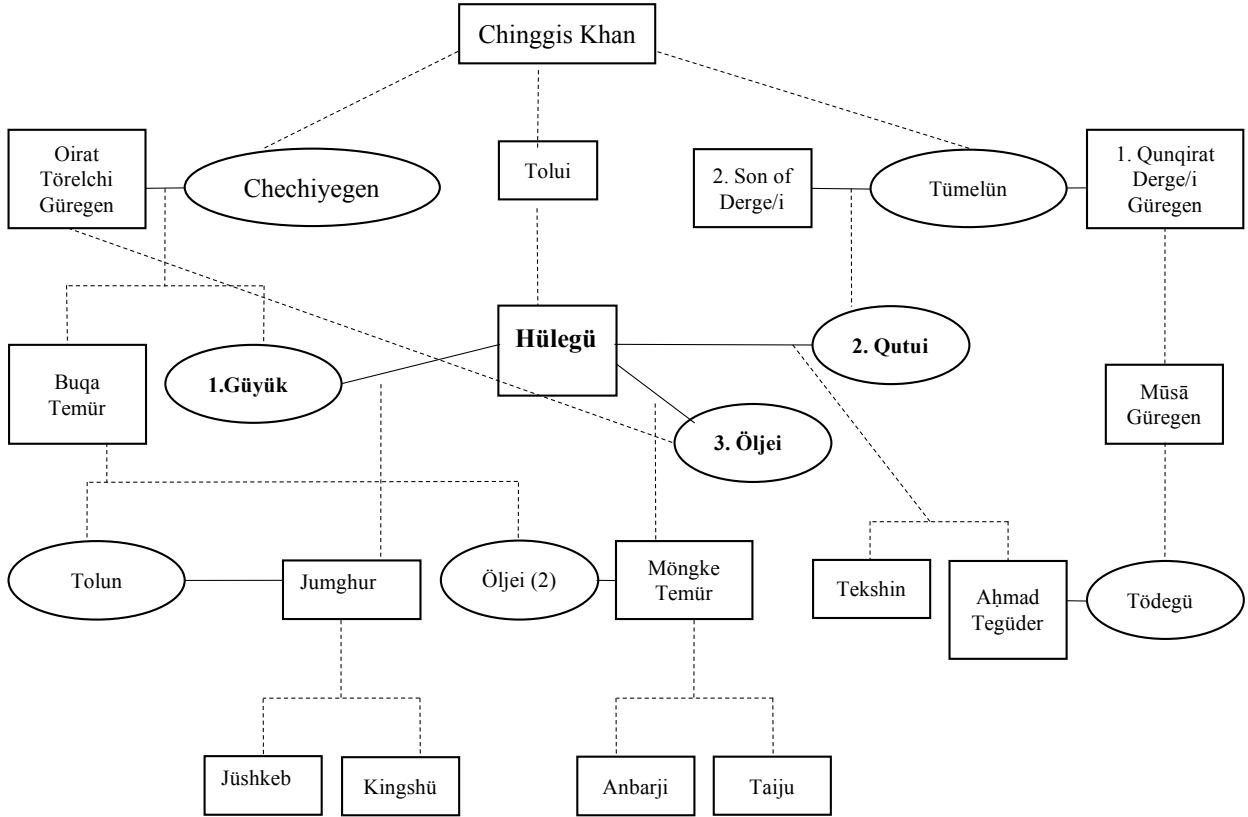
history of Ghazan into the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. The later version (“S”) includes several indications that the text was revised in accordance with the comments, corrections, and instructions made at the court, after its initial presentation there: its “less than enthusiastic” view of the amir Nawrūz (who was executed by Ghazan in 1297), and the omission of a number of key passages, significant for portraying the amir’s central role in raising Ghazan to the throne; its more concise and straightforward narrative and its inclination towards a more plain Persian, unburdened like Qāshānī’s writing, by a rich Arabic vocabulary. This rendered the work more accessible to an audience who might have been familiar with Persian, but probably uneducated in Arabic, for example, members of the Mongol elite; and finally, the additional genealogical details in the later version.<sup>830</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn’s later version and especially its conversion narrative also appear to complement other sections of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*, especially Rashīd al-Dīn’s promotion of the notion of Mongol ancestral monotheism in his introduction to the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*.<sup>831</sup>

---

<sup>830</sup> In addition, I identified at least two places, where the “S” recension breaks a long section with new section headings, which are missing from the “P” recension, indicating again the work of a later editing. Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 31, 37.

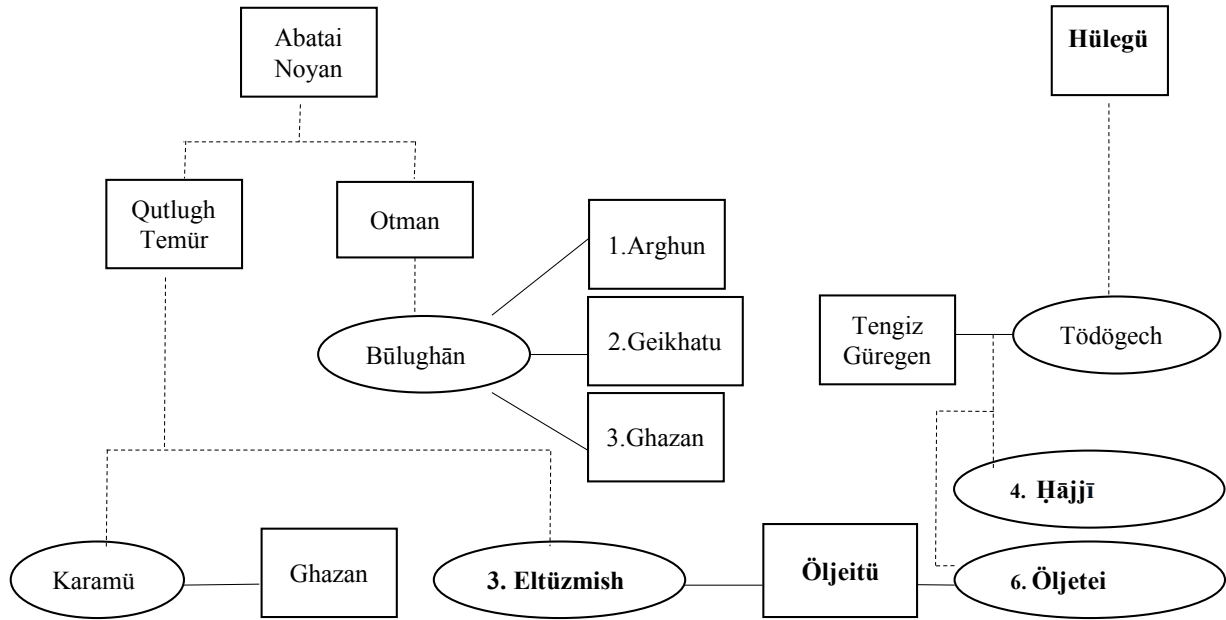
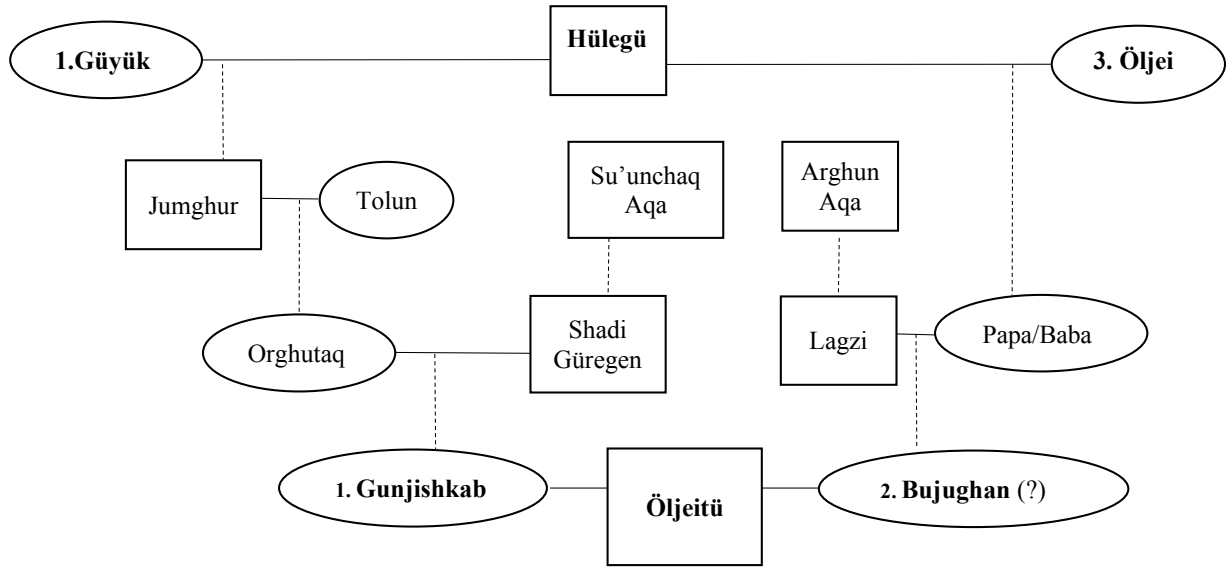
<sup>831</sup> There is further evidence that the process of editing the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* was a gradual one. The Ilkhanid court poet Abū Sulaymān Dā‘ud b. Abī al-Faḍl Muḥammad al-Banākatī’s (d. 730/1329-30) *Rawḍat ulī al-albāb fī ma‘rifat al-tawārīkh wa’l-ansāb* (completed Shawwāl 717/1317) is mostly an abridgment of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, to which Banākatī wholeheartedly admits at the introduction to his history. Yet, a comparison of Ghazan’s section in Banākatī’s work and the two recensions shows that Banākatī used Qāshānī’s version from the start of his chapter on Ghazan until his conversion narrative. With one exception, the section on Ghazan’s birth and wives, where Banākatī faithfully follows the later, “S” recension. Unless Banākatī gained access to both recensions, it seems that Banākatī made use of an intermediary version of the *dastān* of Ghazan, which included the “correct” order of Ghazan’s wives, but still maintained much of Qāshānī’s history of the Ilkhan. Banākatī, *Rawḍat*, 451-54. Melville observed that the *Rawḍat ulī al-albāb*’s conversion narrative significantly differs from the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh* (the “S” recension) and contains “useful independent details” and “more circumstantial description of the occasion,” and is the closest in detail to Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya’s independent report in the Mamluk sources. Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām,” 159-161.

**Figure 1: Hülegü's Three Chief Wives and their Offspring**





**Figure 2: Öljeitü's wives**



## Bibliography:

### Primary sources:

Abū al-Fidā', 'Imād al-Dīn Ismā'īl b. 'Alī. *The Memoirs of a Syrian Prince: Abu'l-Fidā', Sultan of Ḥamāh (672-732/1273-1331)*. Translated and edited by P. M. Holt. Wiesbaden, 1983.

Aflākī, Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad. *Manāqib al-'arifīn*. Edited by Tahsin Yazici. Ankara, 1961. 2 vols.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Feats of the Knowers of God*. Translated by John O'kane. Leiden, 2002.

Ahrī, Abū Bakr. *Ta'rīkh-i Shaikh Uwais (History of Shaikh Uways): an important source for the history of Adharbaijan in the fourteenth century*. Translated by J. B. van Loon. The Hague, 1954.

Anon. *Kitāb al-ḥawādith li-mu'llif min al-qarn al-thāmin al-hijrī*. Also known as *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi'a wa'l-tajārib*. Edited by Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf. Beirut, 1997.

Anon. (ca. 765/1363). *Ta'rīkh-i āl-i saljūq dar anāṭūlī*. Edited by Nādirah Jalālī. Tehran, 1999.

Anon. *Akhbār-i mughulān dar Anbānah-yi mullā Quṭb*. Edited by Īraj Afshār. Qom, 1431/2010.

Aqṣarā'ī, Karīm al-Dīn. *Musāmarat al-akhbār wa musāyarat al-akhyār*. Edited by Osman Turan. Ankara, 1944.

Arevelts'ī, Vardan. *Universal History*. Translated by Robert Bedrosian. <http://www.attalus.org/armenian/vaint.htm>.

Ayatī, 'Abd al-Muḥammad. *Tahrīr-i ta'rīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*. Tehran, 1346/1967.

Ha-Babli, Eleasar ben Jaakob. *Diwan of Eleasar ben Jaakob ha-Babli*. Edited by H. Brody. Jerusalem, 1935.

Babur. *The Baburnama: memoirs of Babur, prince and emperor*. Translated and edited by W.M. Thackston. New York, 2002.

Banākatī, Abū Sulaymān Dāwūd. *Rawdat ūli'l-albāb fī ma'rīfat al-tawārīkh wa'l-ansāb*. Edited by Ja'far Shī'ār. Tehran, 1348/1969.

- Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj... Bar Hebraeus*. Translated by Ernest A. Wallis Budge. London, 1932.
- Al-Bīrūnī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad. *The chronology of Ancient Nations*. Translated and edited by Edward Sachau. London, 1879.
- Al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid. *Faḍā'ih al-bātiniyya*. Edited by 'Abd al-Raḥman Badawī. Cairo, 1383/1964.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*. Edited by Humā'ī. Tehran, 1367/1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings (Naṣīḥat al-mulūk)*. Translated by F. R. C. Bagley. London, 1964.
- Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū. *Dhayl-i Jāmi' al-Tavārīkh Rashīdī*. Edited by Khānbābā Bayānī. Tehran, 1350, second edition.
- Ḥajjī Khalīfa (Kātib Chelebī). *Kitāb kashf al-zunūn 'an asāmī al-kutub wa'l-funūn*. [Istanbul], 1892.
- Harawī, Sayf b. Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb. *Ta'rīkh nāmah-yi Harāt*. Edited by Muḥammad Z. al-Ṣiddiqī. Calcutta, 1944.
- Ibn Abī'l-Faḍā'il, Mufaḍḍal. *Ägypten und Syrien zwischen 1317 und 1341 in der Chronik des Mufaḍḍal b. Abī l-Faḍā'il*. Edited and translated by S. Kortantamer. Freiburg, 1973.
- Ibn Baṭṭūṭa. *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325-1354*. Translated by H.A.R. Gibb. London, 1929. Reprinted in Abingdon, 2005.
- Ibn Bazzāz, Darwīsh Tawakkulī. *Ṣafwat al-ṣafā*. Edited by Ghulām Riḍā Ṭabāṭaba'ī Majd. Ardabil, 1994.
- Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, Kamāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Razzāq b. Aḥmad al-Shaybānī. *Majma' al-ādāb fī mu'jam al-alqāb*. Edited by Muḥammad al-Kāẓim. Tehran, 1416/1995. 6 vols.
- Ibn Kammūna, Sa'd. *Ibn Kammūna's Examination of the Three Faiths*. Translated by Moshe Perlmann. Berkeley, 1971.
- Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Fidā' 'Abd Allāh. *Al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya*. Beirut, 1988. 14 vols.
- Ibn Karbalā'ī, Ḥusayn. *Rawḍat al-jinān va-jannāt al-janān*. Edited by Ja'far Sulṭān al-Qurrā'ī. Tehran, 1965.
- Ibn Khaldūn, 'Abd al-Raḥman. *Muqaddima*. Beirut, 1900, third edition.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Muqaddimah, an Introduction to History*. Translated by Franz Rosenthal and edited by N. J. Dawood. Princeton, 1969.
- Ibn Miskawayah, Abū ‘Alī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad. *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*. Edited by ‘Imād al-Hilālī. Freiberg, 2011.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Refinement of Character*. Translated by Constantine K. Zurayk. Beirut, 1968.
- Ibn Taghrī Birdī, Jamāl al-Dīn Abū ‘l-Maḥāsīn. *Al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa-al-mustawfa ba ‘da al-wāfi*. Edited by Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn. Cairo, 1984-2000.
- Ibn Taymīya, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad. *Majmū ‘fatāwā shaykh al-islām Aḥmad Ibn Taymīya*. Edited by ‘Abd al-Raḥman ibn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim. Riyadh/Mecca, 1381-86/1961-67, repr. 1417/1995.
- Al-Irbīlī, Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Īsā. *Kashf al-ghumma fī ma ‘rifat al-a‘immah*. Beirut, 1405/1985. 3 vols.
- Juwaynī, Alā‘ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā-malik. *Ta ‘rīkh-i jahān gushā*. Edited by M. M. Qazwīnī. Leiden, 1912-1937. 2 vols.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Genghis Khan: the History of the World Conqueror*. Translated by J. A. Boyle. Seattle, 1997. 2 vols.
- Kāshānī, Abū al-Qāsim. *Ta ‘rīkh-i isma‘īliyya: bakhshī az zubdat al-tawārīkh-i Abū al-Qāsim Kāshānī*. Edited by M. Taqī Dānishpizhūh. Tabriz, 1343/1965.
- al-Kāshī/Kāshānī al-Naṭanzī, ‘Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭāhir. *Miṣbāh al-hidāyah wa-miftāḥ al-kifāyah*. Edited by Jalāl al-Dīn Humā‘ī. Tehran, 1367[/1988].
- Lutḥī Pasha. *Tawārīkh-i āl-i ‘Uthmān*. Istanbul, 1341/1925.
- Al-Mansūrī, Baybars. *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta ‘rīkh al-hijra*. Edited by D. S. Richards. Beirut, 1998.
- Mu‘izzī. *Dīvān*. Edited by ‘Abbās Iqbāl. Tehran, 1318 [/1939-40].
- Nīshāpūrī, Ḥāshim al-Dīn. *Saljūqnāmah*. Edited by A. H. Morton. [Warminster], 2004.
- Nizām al-Mulk. *Siyāsatnāma*. Edited by Murtaḍā Mudarrisī and Muḥammad Qazwīnī. Tehran, 1336 [/19551].
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings, the Siyāsat-nāma or Siyar al- Mulūk*. Translated by Hubert Darke. New Haven, 1960.
- Al-Nuwayrī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Waḥhāb. *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*. Cairo, 1985. 33 vols.

- Orbélian, Stéphanos. *Histoire de la Siounie*. Translated by M. Brosset. Saint Petersburg, 1864.
- ‘Phags-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan dPal-bzañ-po of the Sa-skyapa. *Prince Jiñ-Gim's textbook of Tibetan Buddhism*. Translated by Constance Hoog. Leiden, 1983.
- Al-Qāshānī, Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad. *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*. Staatsbibliothek ms. Pertsch 368/Minutoli 23.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ta’rīkh-i ūljāytū*. Edited by Mahīn Hambalī. Tehran, 1384 [/2005].
- \_\_\_\_\_. *‘Arā’is al-jawāhir va-naḡā’is al-aṡā’ib*. Edited by Īrāj Afshār. Tehran, 1345/1966.
- Qazwīnī, Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī. *Ta’rīkh-i guzīda*. Edited by Navā’ī. Tehran, 1362/1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Zafarnāma von Ḥamdallāh Mustaufī und Šāhnāma von Abu’l-Qāsim Firdausī*. From the Facsimile of the British Library Or. 2833. Tehran/Vienna, 1377/1999. 2 vols.
- Qumī, Shaykh ‘Abbās b. Muḥammad Riḡā. *Muntaha al-āmāl*. Tehran, 1996. 2 vols.
- Rabban Sawma. *The Monks of Kūblāi Khān, Emperor of China: The History of the Life and Travels of Rabban Šāwmā*. Translated by Ernest A. W. Budge. London, 1928; reprinted New York, 1973.
- Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb. *Geschichte Gāzān-Ḥān’s aus dem Ta’rīḡ-i mubārak-i-gāzānī*. Edited by Karl Jahn. London, 1940.
- Rashīd al-Dīn, Faḡl Allāh Abū al-Khayr. *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*. Third volume. Edited by ‘Abd al-Karīm ‘Alī Oghlu ‘Alī Zādah. Baku, 1957.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*. Edited by Bahman Karīmī. Tehran, 1338/1959-60.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Laṡā’if al-ḡaqā’iq*. Edited by Ghulām Riḡā Ṭāhir. Tehran, 2535 [/1976-77].
- \_\_\_\_\_. *As’ila va ajviba-yi rashīdī*. Edited by R. Sha‘bānī. Islamabad, 1993. 2 vols.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*. Edited by Muḥammad Rawshan and Muṡṡafā Mūsavī. Tehran, 1373/1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Rashīd uddin Fazlullah's Jami ‘u’t-Tawarikh: A History of the Mongols*. Translated by W.M. Thackston. Cambridge: Harvard University, Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1998-1999. 3 vols.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Bayān al-ḡaqā’iq*. Edited by Hāshim Rajabzāda. Tehran, 1386 [/2008].

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*. Edited by Hāshim Rajabzāda. Terhan, 1391 [2013].
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*. London, British Library, Ms. Add. 16688.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh* London British Library, Ms. IO Islamic 3524,
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. Bibliothèque Nationale. Supplément persan, 1113.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Shu‘ab-i Panjgānah*. Topkapi Sarayi, Ahmet 3, Ms. 2937.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, in *Mukhtaṣar-i tawārīkh-i rashīdiyya*. Istanbul Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, Ms. 3415.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Kitāb al-as‘ila wa‘l-ajwiba al-rashīdiyya b‘il-fārisiyya*. Ayasofya, Ms. 2180.
- Rāzī, Najm al-Dīn Dāya. *Marmūzāt-i asadī dar mazmūrāt-i dā‘ūdī*. Edited by Muḥammad Shafī‘ī Kadkanī. Tehran, 1381/1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Path of God’s bondsmen from Origin to Return*. Translated by Hamid Algar. Delmar, 1982.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Mirṣād al-‘ibād min al-mabdā‘ ilā al-ma‘ād*. Edited by ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad. Tehran, 1984.
- Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn ‘Umar. *Al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*. Cairo, 1938. 32 vols.
- Al-Şafādī, Şalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybeg. *Al-Wāfi bi-al-wafayāt*. Edited by Helmut Ritter et al. Wiesbaden, 1931- . 30 vols.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A‘yān al-Aşr wa-A‘wān al-Naşr*. Edited by ‘Alī Abū Zayd. Beirut, 1998. 5 vols.
- Samarqandī, ‘Abd al-Razzāq. *Maṭla‘-i sa‘dayn va majma‘-i baḥrayn*. Lahore, 1360-68/1941-9. 2 vols.
- Al-Şan‘ānī, ‘Abd al-Razzāq. *Al-Muşannaf*. Edited by Shaikh Ḥabiburrahman al A‘zami. Johannesburg, 1983. 12 vols.
- Sanjian, Avedis K. Trans. *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 1301-1480*. Cambridge, 1969.
- Simnānī, ‘Alā‘ al-Dawla. *Al-‘Urwa li-ahl al-khalwa wa‘l-jalwa*. Edited by Najīb Māyil Haravī. Tehran, 1362/1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *‘Alā‘uddawla Simnānī: Opera Minora*. Edited by W. M. Thackston. Cambridge, 1988.

- Shabānkāra'ī, Muḥammad. *Majma' al-ansāb*. Edited by Mīr Hāshim Muḥaddith. Tehran, 1363/1984.
- Al-Shujā'ī, Shams al-Dīn. *Ta'rīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥī wa-awlādihī*. Edited and translated by Barbara Schäfer. Cairo, 1978. 2 vols.
- Al-Ṭūsī, Naṣīr al-Dīn. *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī*. Lahore, 1952.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Nasirean Ethics*. Translated by G. M. Wickens. London, 1964.
- Al-'Umarī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Faḍl Allāh. *Al-'Umarī's Bericht über Anatolien in seinem Werke Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*. Edited by Franz Taeschner. Leipzig, 1929.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Das Mongolische Weltreich: Al-'Umarī's Darstellung der mongolischen Reiche in seinem Werk Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*. Edited by and Translated by K. Lech. Wiesbaden, 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*. Edited by Fuad Sezgin. Frankfurt, 1988.
- Urmawī, Sirāj al-Dīn Maḥmūd. *Latā'if al-ḥikma*. Edited by Ghulām Ḥusayn Yusūfī. [Tehran], 1351/1972.
- Vaṣṣāf, Sharaf al-Dīn 'Abd Allāh ibn Faḍl Allāh. *Tajziyat al-amṣār wa-tazjiyat al-a'ṣār*. Rpt., Tehran 1338/1959-60 of the Bombay edition, 1269/1852-3.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ta'rīkh-i vaṣṣāf al-ḥadrat: jalad chihārum*. Edited by 'Alīriḍā Ḥājjiyān Nazhād. Tehran, 1388/2009.
- Al-Wāsiṭī, Taqī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥman. *Tiryāq al-muḥibbīn fī ṭabaqāt khirqat al-mashāyikh al-'ārifīn*. Cairo, 1305/1887.
- Al-Yūnīnī, Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā. *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: Al-Yūnīnī's Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography*. Edited and translated by Li Guo. Leiden, 1998. 2 vols.
- Al-Yūsufī, Mūsā b. Muḥammad b. Yahya. *Nuzhat al-nāzir fī sīrat al-malik al-nāṣir*. Beirut, 1986.
- Zetterstéén, K. V. *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultanane in den Jahren 690-741 der hīgra nach arabischen Handschriften*. Leiden, 1919.

### Secondary Sources:

- Abrahamov, Binyamin. "Necessary knowledge in Islamic theology." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 20/1 (1993): 20-32.

- Aigle, Denise. "The Mongol invasions of Bilād al-Shām by Ghāzān Khān and Ibn Taymīyah's three 'anti-Mongol' fatwas." *Mamluk Studies Review* 11/2 (2007): 89-120.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The transformation of a myth of origins, Genghis Khan and Timur." In *The Mongol Empire between Myth and Reality: studies in anthropological history*, 121-33. Leiden, 2014.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Mongol law versus Islamic Law. Myth and reality." In *The Mongol Empire between Myth and Reality: studies in anthropological history*, 134-156. Leiden, 2014.
- Afsaruddin, Asma. "Obedience to political authority: as evolutionary concept." In *Islamic Democratic Discourse*, edited by M. A. Muqtedar Khan, 37-60. Lanham, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Maslahah as a political concept." In *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft*, edited by Mehrzad Boroujerdi, 16-44. Syracuse, 2013.
- Ahmed, Shahab. *What is Islam? The importance of being Muslim*. Princeton, 2016.
- Akasoy, Anna. "The Buddha and the straight path. Rashīd al-Dīn's *Life of the Buddha*: Islamic perspectives." In *Rashīd al-Dīn: Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchange in Ilkhanid Iran*, edited by Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, 173-96. London, 2013.
- Alam, Muzaffar. *The Languages of Political Islam*. London, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Muslim state in a non-Muslim context: the Mughal case." In *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft*, edited by Mehrzad Boroujerdi, 160-89. Syracuse, 2013.
- Algar, Hamid. "Dāya Rāzī," *El3*. Brill, 2015. Accessed December 2, 2015. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/daya-razi-COM\\_26068](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/daya-razi-COM_26068).
- Allsen, Thomas. "Changing forms of legitimation in Mongol Iran." In *Rulers from the Steppe: state formation on the Eurasian periphery*, edited by Garry Seaman and Daniel Marks, 223-41. Los Angeles, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: a cultural history of Islamic textiles*. Cambridge, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia*. Cambridge, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Sharing out the empire: apportioned lands under the Mongols." In *Nomads in the Sedentary World*, edited by Anatoly M. Khazanov and André Wink, 172-90. Richmond, 2001.



- \_\_\_\_\_. "A note on Mongol imperial ideology." In *The early Mongols: Language, Culture and History*, edited by Denis Sinor, 1-8. Bloomington, 2009.
- Amari, M. "Condizioni degli Stati cristiani dell'Occidente second una relazione di Domenichino Doria da Genova." *Atti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei*, Ser. 3, vol. 11 (Rome, 1883), 67-103.
- Amir-Moezzi, Mohammad Ali. "Ghadīr Khumm," *El3*. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed June 6, 2016.  
[http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/ghadir-khumm-COM\\_27419](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/ghadir-khumm-COM_27419).
- Amitai, Reuven. "The conversion of Tegüder Ilkhan to Islam." *JSAI* 25 (2001): 15-43.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Whither the Ilkhanid army? Ghazan's first campaign into Syria (1299-1300)." In *Warfare in Inner Asian History, 500-1800*, edited by N. Di Cosmo, 221-64. Leiden, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Mongol occupation of Damascus in 1300: a study of Mamluk loyalties," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, edited by Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni, 21-41. Leiden, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Did Chinggis Khan have a Jewish Teacher? An examination of an early fourteenth-century Arabic text." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124/4 (2004): 691-705.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Jews at the Mongol court in Iran: cultural brokers or minor actors in a cultural bloom?" In *Cultural Brokers at Mediterranean Courts in the Middle Ages*, edited by Marc von der Nöh et al., 33-46. Paderborn, 2013.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Holy War and Rapprochement: studies in the relations between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Mongol Ilkhanate (1260-1335)*. Turnhout, 2013.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Hülegü and the wise men: topos or reality?" In *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century Tabriz*, edited by Judith Pfeiffer, 15-34. Leiden, 2014.
- Amitai-Preiss, Reuven. *Mongols and Mamluks: the Mamluk- Īlkhānid War, 1260-1281*. Cambridge, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Ghazan, Islam and the Mongol tradition: a view from the Mamluk sultanate." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 59/1(1996): 1-10.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "New material from the Mamluk sources for the biography of Rashid al-Din." In *The Court of the Ilkhans, 1290-1340*, edited by Teresa Fitzherbert and Julian Raby, 23-37. Oxford, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Sufis and Shamans: some remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate." *JESHO* 42/1 (1999): 27-46.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Northern Syria between the Mongols and Mamluks: political boundary, military frontier, and ethnic affinities." In *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700-1700*, edited by D. Power and N. Standen, 128-52. London, 1999.
- Arjomand, Saïd Amir. "Medieval Persianate political ethic." *Studies on Persianate Societies* 1 (2003): 13-28.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Islamic Apocalypticism in the Classic Period." In *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism*, eds. Bernard McGinn et al., 380-87. New York, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Legitimacy and political organization: caliphs, kings and regimes." In *Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 4, edited by Robert Irwin, 225-73. Cambridge, 2010.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The conception of revolution in Persianate political thought." *Journal of Persianate Studies* 5 (2012): 1-16.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Perso-Islamicate political ethic in relation to the sources of Islamic law." In *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft*, edited by Mehrzad Boroujerdi, 82-106. Syracuse, 2013.
- Atwood, Christopher P. "Mongols, Arabs, Kurds, and Franks: Rashīd al-Dīn's comparative ethnography of tribal society," in *Rashīd al-Dīn: Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchange in Ilkhanid Iran*, 223-250.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Validation by Holiness or Sovereignty: religious toleration as political theology in the Mongol world empire of the thirteenth century." *The International History Review* 26/2 (2004): 237-56.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Explaining rituals and writing history: tactics against the intermediate class." In *Presenting Power in Ancient Inner Asia: legitimacy, transmission, and the sacred*, edited by Isabelle Charleux et al., 95-129. Bellingham, 2010.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Mongol Empire and early modernity," *forthcoming*.
- Jean Aubin, *Émirs Mongols et vizirs Persians dans les remous de l'acculturation*. Paris, 1995.
- Al-Azmeh, Aziz. *Muslim Kingship: power and the sacred in Muslim, Christian, and Pagan polities*. London, 2001.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Monotheistic monarchy." In *The Times of History: Universal Topics in Islamic Historiography*, 267-89. Budapest, 2007
- Ayalon, David "The Wafidiya in the Mamluk kingdom." *Islamic Culture* 25/1 (1951): 89-104.
- Azad, Arezou. "Three rock-cut cave sites in Iran and their Ilkhanid Buddhist aspects reconsidered." In *Islam and Tibet: Interactions along the Musk Routes*, edited by Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, 209-30. Farnham, 2011.
- Al-Bābānī, Ismā'īl Bāshā al-Baghdādī. *Hadiyyat al- 'ārifīn*. Baghdad, 1972.
- Babayan, Kathryn. *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran*. Cambridge, 2002.
- Balabanlilar, Lisa. *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire: memory and dynastic politics in early modern South and Central Asia*. London, 2012.
- Bartol'd, V.V. *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*. Trans from the Russian with the assistance of H.A.R. Gibb. London, 1958.
- Bashir, Shahzad. *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: the Nūrbakhshīya between medieval and modern Islam*. Columbia, South Carolina, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam*. New York, 2011.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "On Islamic time: Rethinking chronology in the historiography of Muslim societies." *History and Theory* 53 (2014): 519-44.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The world as a hat: symbolism and materiality in Safavid Iran." In *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam*, edited by Orkhan Mir-Kasimov, 343-65. Boston, 2014.
- Binbaş, İlker Evrim. *Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī: Prophecy, Politics, and Historiography in Late Medieval Islamic History*. PhD diss. University of Chicago, 2009.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Structure and function of the genealogical tree in Islamic historiography (1200-1500)." In *Horizons of the World: Festschrift for Isenbike Togan*, edited by İlker Evrim Binbaş and Nurten Kılıç-Schubel, 465-544. Istanbul, 2011.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Timurid experimentation with eschatological absolutism Mīrzā Iskandar, Shāh Nī'matullāh Walī, and Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī in 815/1412." In *Unity in Diversity: mysticism, messianism and the construction of religious authority in Islam*, edited by Orkhan Mir-Kasimov, 277-303. Leiden, 2014.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Oğuz Khan narratives." *Elr*. Accessed January 20, 2016.  
<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/oguz-khan-narratives>.
- Bira, Sh. "Qubilai Qa'an and 'Phags-pa Bla-ma." In *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, edited by Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan, 240-49. Leiden, 1999.
- Biran, Michal. *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia*. Surrey, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Chaghadaids and Islam: the conversion of Tarmashirin Khan (1331-34)." *Journal of American Oriental Society* 122/4 (2002): 742-752.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Mongol transformation: from the steppe to Eurasian Empire." *Medieval Encounters* 10/1-3 (2004): 339-61.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Empire of the Qara Khitai in Eurasian History: between China and the Islamic world*. Cambridge, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Chinggis Khan*. Oxford, 2007.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Diplomacy and chancellery practices in the Chagataid Khanate: some preliminary remarks." *Oriente Moderno*. Nuova serie, 88/2 (2008), *Les relations diplomatiques entre le monde musulman et l'occident latin (xiiie-xvie siècle)*: 369-93.
- Biran, Michal and Reuven Amitai. Eds. *Nomads as Agents of Cultural Change: the Mongols and their Eurasian predecessors*. Honolulu, 2015.
- Blake, Stephen. "History and chronology in early modern Iran: the Safavid Empire in comparative perspective." In *Perceptions of Iran: History, Myths and Nationalism from medieval Persia to the Islamic Republic*, edited by Ali M. Ansari, 47-64. London, 2014.
- Blessing, Patricia. *Rebuilding Anatolia after the Mongol Conquest: Islamic architecture in the lands of Rūm, 1240-1330*. Burlington, 2014.
- Blochet, E. *Introduction a l'histoire des mongols de Fadl Allāh Rashid ed-Din*. London, 1910.
- Broadbridge, Anne F. *Kingship and Ideology in the Mamluk and Mongol Worlds*. Cambridge, 2008.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Marriage, family and politics: the Ilkhanid-Oirat connection." *JRAS* 26/1-2 (2016): 121-35.
- Buell, Paul D. "Tibetans, Mongols and the fusion of Eurasian cultures." In *Islam and Tibet: Interactions along the Musk Routes*, 189-208.

- Burak, Guy. "The Second formation of Islamic Law: the post-Mongol context of the Ottoman adoption of a School of Law." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55/3 (2013): 579-602.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Between the *Kānūn* of Qāyrbāy and Ottoman *Yasaq*: a note on the Ottoman's dynastic law." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 26/1 (2015): 1-23.
- Caldwell, Ian, and David Henley. "Introduction: the stranger who would be king: magic, logic, polemic." *Indonesia and the Malay World* 36/105 (2009): 163-75.
- Canby, Sheila R. "Depictions of Buddha Sakyamuni in the *Jami' al-Tavarikh* and the *Majma' al-Tavarikh*." *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 299-310.
- Chann, S. "Lord of Auspicious Conjunction: origins of the *Ṣāhib-Qirān*." *Iran and the Caucasus* 13 (2009): 1-39.
- Charleux, Isabelle. "From Ongon to icon: legitimization, glorification and divinization of power in some examples of Mongol portraits." *Presenting Power in Ancient Inner Asia*, 209-60.
- Chen, Sanping. "Son of Heaven and son of God: interactions among ancient Asiatic cultures regarding sacral kingship and theophoric names." *JRAS* 12/3 (2002): 289-325.
- Chipman, Leigh. "The 'Allāma and the Ṭabīb: a note on biographies of two doctors, Rashīd al-Dīn and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī." In *Rashīd al-Dīn: Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchange in Ilkhanid Iran*, 115-126.
- Cleaves, Francis Woodman. "The Sino-Mongolian inscription of 1338 in memory of Jigūntei." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 14 (1951): 1-104.
- Cook, David. "Moral apocalyptic in Islam." *Studia Islamica* 86 (1997): 37-69.
- Cook, Michael. *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought*. Cambridge, 2001.
- Crone, Patricia. "Did al-Ghazālī write a mirror for princes? On the authorship of *Naṣīhat al-mulūk*." *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 10 (1987): 167-191.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *God's Rule: Government and Islam*. New York, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: rural revolt and local Zoroastrianism*. Cambridge, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Dahrīs." *El3*. Brill online. Accessed April 2, 2016.  
[http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/dahris-COM\\_25780?s.num=9&s.start=0](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/dahris-COM_25780?s.num=9&s.start=0)

- Crone, Patricia, and Martin Hinds. *God's Caliph: religious authority in the first centuries of Islam*. London, 1986.
- Daftary, Farhad. "The Ismaili *Da'wa* outside the Fatimid *Dawla*." In *L'Égypte Fatimide. Son art et son histoire*, edited by Christian Décobert, 29-43. Paris, 1999.
- Darling, Linda. *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East: the circle of justice from Mesopotamia to globalization*. New York, 2013.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Persianate sources on Anatolia and the early history of the Ottomans." *Studies on Persianate Societies* 2 (2004): 126-44.
- Dashdondog, Bayarsaikhan. *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220-1335)*. Leiden, 2011.
- DeWeese, Devin. *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition*. University Park, PA, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. " 'Stuck in the throat of Chingiz Khan': envisioning the Mongol conquests in some Sufi accounts from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> centuries." In *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods*, edited by Judith Pfeiffer and Sholeh A. Quinn, 23–60. Wiesbaden, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Islamization in the Mongol Empire." *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age*, edited by Nicola Di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank and Peter B. Golden, 120-34. Cambridge, 2009.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī's religious encounters at the Mongol court near Tabriz." In *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge*, 35-76.
- Dickson, Martin B. "Uzbek dynastic theory in the sixteenth century." In *Trudy XXV-ogo Mezhdunarдного Kongressa Vosto-kovedov*, vol. 3, 208-17. Moscow, 1963.
- Dirāyatī, Muṣṭafā. *Fihristvārah-yi dastnivishthā-yi īrān (Dinā)*. Tehran, 1389/2010. 12 vols.
- Doerfer, Gerhard. *Türkisch und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*. Wiesbaden, 1963. 4 vols.
- De Nicola, Bruno. "Women's role and participation in warfare in the Mongol Empire." In *Soldatinnen. Gewalt und Geschlecht im Krieg vom Mittelalter bis Heute*, edited by K. Klaus Latzel, S. Satjukow and F. Maubach, 95-112. Paderborn, 2010.
- Eaton, R. M. "Abu'l-Fazl Allami." *Elr*. Accessed January 31, 2016.  
<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abul-fazl-allami-historian>.
- Elias, Jamal J. "The Sufi lords of Bahrabad: Sa'd al-Din and Sadr al-Din Hamuwayi." *Iranian Studies* 27 (1994): 53-75.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Throne Carrier of God: the life and thought of 'Alā' ad-Dawla as-Simnānī*. New York, 1995.
- Elverskog, Johan. *Our Great Qing: the Mongols, Buddhism and the state in late imperial China*. Honolulu, 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*. Philadelphia, 2010.
- Van Ess, Joseph. *Der Wesir und seine Gelehrten*. Wiesbaden, 1981.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Al-Īdjī." *El<sup>2</sup>*. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed February 1, 2016.  
[http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-idji-SIM\\_3486](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-idji-SIM_3486)
- Esin, Emel. "Four Turkish Bakhshi active in Iranian Lands." *The Memorial Volume of the Vth International Congress of Iranian Art & Archeology*, vol. 2: 53-73. Tehran, 1972.
- Explore Islamic Art Collections*. Place: Museum With No Frontiers, 2015.  
[http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=object;EPM;kw;Mus21;27;en](http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;EPM;kw;Mus21;27;en)
- Fischel, Walster J. *Jews in the Economic and Political Life of Medieval Islam*. New York, 1969.
- Fitzherbert, Teresa. "Religious diversity under Ilkhanid rule c. 1300 as reflected in the Freer Bal'amī." In *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, edited by Linda Komaroff, 390-406. Leiden, 2006.
- Fletcher, Joseph F. "The Mongols: ecological and social perspectives." *HJAS* 46 (1986): 11-50.
- Fleischer, Cornell H. *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*. Princeton, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The lawgiver as messiah: the making of the imperial image in the reign of Süleymân." In *Süleymân the Magnificent and his Time*, edited by Gilles Veinstein, 159-77. Paris, 1990.
- Foltz, Richard. "Ecumenical mischief under the Mongols." *Central Asiatic Journal* 43/1 (1999): 42-69.
- Franke, Herbert. *From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor and God: the legitimation of the Yuan dynasty*. Munich, 1978.
- Friedmann, Yohanan. *Prophecy Continuous: aspects of Aḥmadī religious thought and its medieval background*. Berkley, 1989.

- Garcia-Arenal, Mercedes. *Messianism and Puritanical Reform: Mahdīs in the Muslim West*. Translated by Martin Beagles. Leiden, 2006.
- Gardet, L. “‘Ilm al-Kalām.” *El<sup>2</sup>*. Brill Online. Accessed February 23, 2016.  
[http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ilm-al-kalam-COM\\_0366](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ilm-al-kalam-COM_0366).
- Gilli-Elewy, Hend. *Bagdad nach dem Struz des Kalifats: Die Geschichte einer Provinz unter ilhanischer Herrschaft (656-735/1258-1335)*. Berlin, 2000.
- Goody, Jack. “Introduction.” In *Succession to High Office*, edited by J. Goody. Cambridge, 1996.
- Golden, Peter B. “Imperial ideology and the sources of political unity amongst the pre-Chinggisid nomads of Western Eurasia.” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 2 (1982): 37-77.
- Green, Nile. “Stories of saints and sultans: re-memembering history at the Sufi shrines of Aurangabad.” *Modern Asian Studies* 38/2 (2004): 419-46.
- Griffel, Frank. “Muslim philosophers’ rationalist explanation of Muḥammad’s prophecy.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Muḥammad*, edited by Jonathan E. Brockopp, 158-79. Cambridge, 2010.
- Gronke, M. *Derwische im Vorhof der Macht*. Stuttgart, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “La religion populaire en Iran mongol.” In *L’Iran face a la domination mongole*, edited by Denise Aigle, 205-30. Tehran, 1997.
- Gruber, Christiane J. *The Prophet Muḥammad’s Ascension (mi ‘rāj) in Islamic Art and Literature, ca, 1300-1600*. PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “The Ilkhanid *Mi ‘rājnāma* as an illustrated Sunni prayer manual.” In *The Prophet’s Ascension: cross-cultural encounters with the Islamic mi ‘rāj tales*, edited by Christiane Gruber and Frederick Colby, 27-49. Bloomington, 2010.
- Grupper, Samuel M. “The Buddhist sanctuary-Vihara of Labnasagut and the Il-Qan Hülegü: an overview of Il-Qanid Buddhism and related matters.” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 13 (2004): 5-77.
- Halevi, Lior. *Muhammad’s Grave: death rites and the making of Islamic society*. New York, 2007.
- Halm, H. “Asās.” *Elr*. Accessed March 2, 2016.  
<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/asas-pl>.
- Hagen, Gottfried. “‘He never took the path of pastime and play’: ideas of childhood in Ottoman



- hagiography.” In *Scripta Ottomanica et Res Altaicae. Festschrift für Barbara Kellner-Heinkele zu ihrem 60. Geburtstag*, herausgegeben, edited by Ingeborg Hauenschild, Claus Schönig and Peter Zieme, 95-118. Wiesbaden, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Legitimacy and world order.” In *Legitimizing the Order: Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, edited by Maurus Reinkowski and Hakan Karateke, 55-83. Leiden, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Skepticism and forgiveness: The *Mi‘rāc* in Veysī’s *Dürretü t-tāc*.” In *The Prophet’s Ascension*, 206-24.
- Heath, Peter. *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā): with a translation of the Book of the Prophet Muḥammad’s Ascent to Heaven*. Philadelphia, 1992.
- Herrmann, Gottfried. *Persische Urkunden der Mongolenzeit: Text- und Bildteil*. Wiesbaden, 2004.
- Hoffmann, Birgitt. “Speaking about oneself: autobiographical statements in the works of Rashīd al-Dīn.” In *Rashīd al-Dīn: Agent and Mediator*, 1-14.
- Hodous, Florence. “The *quriltai* as a legal institution in the Mongol Empire.” *Central Asiatic Journal* 56 (2012/13): 87-102.
- Hope, Michael. “The ‘Nawrūz King’: the rebellion of Amīr Nawrūz in Khurāsān (688-694/1289-1294) and its implications for the Ilkhān polity at the end of the thirteenth century.” *BSOAS*, 78/3 (2015): 451-73.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sultānate or Amīrate? The transmission of Chinggisid authority in the early Mongol empire and the Ilkhānate of Iran*. PhD diss., Australian National University, 2013.
- Jackson, Peter. “The dissolution of the Mongol Empire.” *Central Asiatic Journal* 22/3 (1978): 186-244.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “The Mongols and the faith of the conqueror.” In *Mongols, Turks and Others*, edited by Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran, 245-90. Leiden, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “World conquest and local accommodation: threat and blandishment in Mongol diplomacy.” In *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East*, 3-22.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Mongol Ilkhans and religious allegiance: the problems confronting a minister-historian in Ilkhanid Iran.” *Iran* XLVII (2009): 109-22.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Banākātī, Abū Solaymān.” *Elr*. Accessed December 4, 2015.

- <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/banakati-abu-solayman-dawud-b>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Arġūn Khan.” *Elr*. Accessed June 2, 2016. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/argun-khan-fourth-il-khan-of-iran-r683-90-1284-91>
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Yāsā.” *Elr*. Accessed June 1, 2016. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/yasa-law-code>.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Waṣṣāf.” *El<sup>2</sup>*. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed May 6, 2016. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/wassaf-SIM\\_7890](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/wassaf-SIM_7890).
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Baḡṣī.” *Elr*. Vol. 3: 535-536.
- Jaffer, Tariq. *Rāzī: master of Qur’ānic interpretation and theological reasoning*. New York, 2015.
- Jahn, Karl. *Rashīd al-Dīn’s History of India: Collected Essays with Facsimiles and Indices*. London, 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Paper currency in Iran: a contribution to the cultural and economic history of Iran in the Mongol period.” *Journal of Asian History* 4/2 (1970): 101-135.
- Jambet, Christian. “Idéal du politique idéale selon Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī.” In *Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī: philosophe et savant du XIIIe siècle*, edited by N. Pourjavady et al., 31-57. Tehran, 2000.
- Al-Jamil, Tariq. *Cooperation and contestation in medieval Baghdad (656/1258-786/1384): relationships between Shī‘ī and Sunnī scholars in the madīnat al-salām*. PhD Diss., Princeton, 2004.
- Janssens, Jules. “Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī on the soul: a critical approach to Ibn Sīnā.” *The Muslim World* 102 (2012): 563-79.
- Johnson, Norman Scott. *Franciscan Passions: Missions to the Muslims, Desire for Martyrdom and Institutional Identity in the later Middle Ages*. PhD Diss., University of Chicago, 2010.
- Jorati, Hadi. *Science and Society in Medieval Islam: Nasir al-Din Tusi and the politics of patronage*. PhD Diss., Yale, 2014.
- Kamola, Stephan T. *Rashīd al-Dīn and the Making of History in Mongol Iran*. PhD Diss., University of Washington, 2013.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “History and legend in the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*: Abraham, Alexander, and Oghuz Khan.” *JRAS* 25/4 (2015): 555-577.

- Kantorowicz, Ernst H. *The King's Two Bodies: a study in mediaeval political theology*. New Jersey, 1957.
- Karamustafa, Ahmet T. *God's Unruly Friends*. Oxford, 2006.
- Kedar, Benjamin Z. "The multilateral disputation at the court of the Grand Qan Möngke, 1254." In *The Majlis: interreligious encounters in medieval Islam*, edited by Hava Lazarus-Yafeh et al., 162-83. Wiesbaden, 1999.
- Kennedy, E.S. "The world-year concept on Islamic astrology." In *Studies in the Islamic Exact Sciences*, edited by Kennedy, 357-71. Beirut, 1983.
- Khafipour, Hani. *The Foundation of the Safavid State: fealty, patronage, and ideals of authority (1501-1576)*. PhD Diss., University of Chicago, 2013.
- Khismatulin, Alexey. "Two mirrors for princes fabricated at the Seljuq court: Niẓām al-Mulk's *Siyar al-mulūk* and al-Ghazālī's *Nasīhat al-mulūk*." In *The Age of the Seljuqs: the idea of the Iran*, edited by Edmund Herzog and Saraf Stewart, 94-130. London, 2015.
- Kirk, Teresa. "The Edinburgh al-Biruni manuscript: a holistic study of its design and images." *Persica* 20 (2005): 39-81.
- Kister, Menahem. "The massacre of the Banū Qurayẓa: a re-examination of a tradition." *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 8 (1986): 61-96.
- Klein-Franke, Felix. "The relation between knowledge and belief in Islam. Annotations to Rashīd al-Dīn's 'Book of questions and answers'." *Le Muséon* 113/1-2 (2000): 205-19.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Rashīd al-Dīn's self-defense through his commenting on al-Ghazzālī's 'Reply to the opponents of the "Proof of Islam",' A philosophical interpretation of the Koranic expression 'al-amāna'." *Le Muséon* 115/1-2 (2002): 199-214.
- Korobeinikov, Dimitri A. "Orthodox communities in Eastern Anatolia in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. Part 2: the time of troubles." *Al-Masāq* 17:1 (March, 2005): 1-29.
- Kohlberg, Etan. *A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work: Ibn Ṭāwūs and his Library*. Leiden, 1992.
- Kolbas, Judith. *The Mongols in Iran: Chingiz Khan to Uljaytu 1220-1309*. London, 2006.
- Knysh, Alexnader. *Islamic Mysticism*. Leiden, 2000.
- Krawulsky, Dorothea. *The Mongol Īlkhāns and their Vizier Rashīd al-Dīn*. Frankfurt, 2011.

- Krstić, Tijana. *Contested Conversions to Islam: narratives of religious change in the early modern Ottoman Empire*. Stanford, 2011.
- Küçükhüseyin, Şevket. *Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung im Prozess kultureller Transformation*. Wien, 2011.
- Landau-Tasseron, Ella. "The "Cyclical Reform": a study of the mujaddid tradition." *Studia Islamica* 70 (1989): 79-117.
- Lambton, Ann K.S. "Justice in the medieval Persian theory of kingship." *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962): 91-119.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Early Timurid theories of the state: Hāfiẓ-i Abrū and Nizām al-Dīn Šāmī." *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 30 (1978): 1-9.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Continuity and Change in medieval Persia: aspects of administrative, economic, and social history, 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century*. Albany, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Āthār wa aḥyā' of Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Hamadānī and his contribution as an agronomist, arboriculturalist, and horticulturalist." In *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, 126-54.
- Lameer, Joep. *The Arabic Version of Ṭūsī's Nasirean Ethics*. Leiden, 2015.
- Landa, Ishayah. "Oyirads in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries: two cases of assimilation into the Musim environment." *forthcoming*.
- Lane, Edward William. *An Arabic-English Lexicon*. London, 1863.
- Lane, George. "Arghun Aqa: Mongol bureaucrat." *Iranian Studies* 32:4 (1999): 459-82.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth Century Iran*. London, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Mongol News: the *Akhbār-i mughulān dar Anbāneh Qutb* by Qutb al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Mas'ūd Shīrāzī." *JRAS*, series 3, 22, 3-4 (2012): 541-559.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Intellectual jousting and the Chinggisid wisdom bazaars." *JRAS* 26/1-2 (2016): 235-47.
- Lange, Christian. *Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions*. New York, 2016.
- Lefèvre, Corinne. "The *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī* (1608-11): Dialogue and Asiatic otherness at the Mughal court." *JESHO* 55 (2012): 255-86.

- Levy-Rubin, Milka. *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire: from surrender to coexistence*. New York, 2011.
- Lindner, Rudi. "How Mongol were the early Ottomans?". In *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, 282-89.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Anatolia, 1300-1451." *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 1: *Byzantine to Turkey, 1071-1453*, edited by Kate Fleet, 102-37. Cambridge, 2009.
- Little, Donald P. "Al-Ṣafadī as Biographer of his contemporaries." In *Essays on Islamic Civilization*, edited by D. P. Little, 190-210. Leiden, 1976.
- Lo, Vivienne and Wang Yidan. "Blood or Qi circulation? On the nature of authority in Rashīd al-Dīn's Tānksūqnāma (The Treasure Book of the Ilkhan on Chinese Science and Techniques)." In *Rashīd al-Dīn: Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchange in Ilkhanid Iran*, 127-72.
- Madelung, Wilferd. "Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's ethics between philosophy, Shī'ism and Sufism." In *Ethics in Islam*, edited by Richard G. Hovannisian, 81-105. Malibu, 1985.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "al-Mahdī," *El<sup>2</sup>*. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed May 4, 2016.  
[http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-mahdi-COM\\_0618](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-mahdi-COM_0618).
- Mancini-Lander, Derek. *Memory on the boundaries of empire: narrating place in the early modern local historiography of Yazd*. PhD Diss., University of Michigan, 2012.
- Manz, Beatrice. *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran*. Cambridge, 2007.
- Marlow, Louise. "Kings, Prophets and the 'Ulamā' in medieval Islamic advice literature." *Studia Islamica* 81 (1995): 101-20.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Way of the Viziers and the Lamp of Commanders (*Minhāj al-wuzarā' wa-sirāj al-umarā'*) of Aḥmad al-Iṣfāhbādī and the literary and political culture of early fourteenth-century Iran." In *Writers and Rulers: Perspectives on their Relationship from Abbasid to Safavid Times*, edited by B. Gruendler and L. Marlow, 169-192. Wiesbaden, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Teaching wisdom: a Persian work of advice for Atabeg Ahmad of Luristan." In *Mirror for the Muslim Prince*, 122-59.
- Meisami, Julie Scott. *Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelfth Century*. Edinburgh, 1999.
- Melville, Charles. "Pādshāh-i Islām: the conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān." In

- Persian and Islamic Studies in Honour of P.W. Avery*, edited by Melville, 159-77. Cambridge, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The itineraries of sultan Öljeitü, 1304-1316." *Iran* 28 (1990): 55-70.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "From Adam to Abaqa: Qadi Baidawi's rearrangement of history." *Studia Iranica* 30 (2001): 67-86.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The year of the Elephant: Mamluk-Mongol rivalry in the Hejaz in the reign of Abū Sa'īd (1317-1335)." *Studia Iranica* 21/2 (1992): 197-214.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Wolf or Shepherd? Amir Chupan's attitude to government." In *The Court of the Il-Khans 1290-1340*, edited by J. Raby and T. Fitzherbert, 79-93. Oxford, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Abū Sa'īd and the revolt of the amirs in 1319." In *L'Iran face à la domination mongole*, 135-77.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī's *Zafarnāma* and the historiography of the late Ilkhanid period." In *Iran and Iranian Studies*, edited by, K. Eslami, 1-12. New Jersey, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate, 1327-37*. Bloomington, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "History and myth: the Persianisation of Ghazan Khan." In *Irano-Turkic Cultural Contacts in the 11<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, edited by Eva M. Jeremias, 133-60. Piliscsaba, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The early Persian historiography of Anatolia." In *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East*, 135-66.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Anatolia under the Mongols." In *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 1: *Byzantine to Turkey, 1071-1453*, 51-101. ‘
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Mongol and Timurid periods." In *A History of Persian Literature*, vol. X: *Persian Historiography*, edited by Melville, 55-208. London, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The royal image in Mongol Iran." In *Every Inch a King: comparative studies on kings and kingship in the ancient and medieval worlds*, edited by Lynette Mitchell and Charles Melville, 343-70. Leiden, 2013.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Boloḡān Kātūn." *Elr.* Vol. IV: 338-339.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Jahān Timūr." *Elr.* vol. XIV: 385-386.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Boloḡān Kātūn." *Elr.* vol. IV: 338-339

- \_\_\_\_\_. “Jāme‘ al-Tawāriḳ.” *Elr.* vol. XIV: 462-468.
- Melvin-Koushki, Matthew. “Astrology, lettrism, geomancy: the occult-scientific methods of post-Mongol Islamicate imperialism.” *The Medieval History Journal* 19/1 (2016): 142-50.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Early Modern Islamicate Empire: new forms of religiopolitical legitimacy.” In *The Wiley-Blackwell History of Islam and Islamic Civilization*, edited by Armando Salvatore and Roberto Tottoli. *Forthcoming*.
- Meri, Josef W. *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in medieval Syria*. New York, 2002.
- Minorsky, V. “A Mongol decree of 720/1320 to the family of Shaykh Zāhid.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 16/3 (1954): 515-27.
- Mir-Kasimov, Orkhan. “Introduction: conflicting synergy of patterns of religious authority.” In *Unity in Diversity*, 1-22.
- Azfar. Moin, A. *The Millennial Sovereign: sacred kingship and sainthood in Islam*. New York, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Sovereign violence: temple destruction in India and shrine desecration in Iran and Central Asia,.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 57/2 (2015): 467-96.
- Morgan, David. *The Mongols*. Oxford, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Rašīd al-Dīn and Gazan Khan.” In *L’iran face a la domination mongole*, 179-88.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb.” *El<sup>2</sup>*. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed June 5, 2016. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/rashid-al-din-tabib-SIM\\_6237](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/rashid-al-din-tabib-SIM_6237).
- Morrison, Robert. *Islam and Science: the intellectual career of Niẓām al-Dīn al-Nīsābūrī*. New York, 2007.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “What was the purpose of astronomy in Ījī’s *Kitāb al-Mawāqif fī ‘ilm al-kalām*?” In *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge*, 201-30.
- Morton, Alexander H. “Qashani and Rashid al-Din on the Seljuqs of Iran.” In *Living Islamic History: studies in honour of Professor Carole Hillenbrand*, edited by Yasir Suleiman et al., 166-177. Edinburgh, 2010.
- Ohlander, Erik S. *Sufism in the Age of Transition: ‘Umar al-Suhrawardi and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods*. Leiden, 2008.



Oral, M. Zeki. "Anadolu'da İlhanî devri vesikalari. Temurtash Noyin zamanında yapılmış eserler ve kitabeleri." *V. Türk Tarih Kongresi*, ser. 9, no. 5 (Ankara, 1960): 208-15.

Özgüdenli, Osman G. *Gâzân Han ve Reformları*. İstanbul, 2009.

Paul, Jürgen. "Scheiche und Herrscher im Khanat Cagatay." *Islam* 67 (1990): 278-321.

Peacock, A.C.S. "Aḥmad of Niğde's "al-Walad al-shafīq" and the Seljuk past." *Anatolian Studies* 54 (2004): 95-107.

\_\_\_\_\_. "An interfaith polemic of medieval Anatolia: Qāḍī Burhān al-Dīn- al-Anawī on the Armenians and their heresies." In *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, edited by A.C.S. Peacock, Bruno de Nicola, Sara Nur Yıldız, 233-61. Burlington, 2015.

Petrushevsky, I. P. "The socio-economic condition of Iran "under the İlk-khans." In *The Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 5: The Saljuq and Mongol periods* (1968), 485-537.

Pfeiffer, Judith. *Twelver Shi'ism as State Religion in Mongol Iran*. İstanbul, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Conversion to Islam among the Ilkhans in Muslim Narrative Traditions: the case of Aḥmad Tegüder*. PhD Diss., University of Chicago, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Reflections on a 'double rapprochement': conversion to Islam among the Mongol elite during the early Ilkhanate." In *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 369-89.

\_\_\_\_\_. "A turgid history of the Mongol empire in Persia: epistemological reflections concerning a critical edition of Vaṣṣāf's *Tajziyat al-amṣār va tazjiyat al-a'ṣār*." In *Theoretical Approaches to the Transmission and Edition of Oriental Manuscripts*, edited by Judith Pfeiffer and Manfred Kropp, 107-129. Würzburg, 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Faces like shields covered with leather: Keturah's sons in the post-Mongol Islamicate eschatological traditions." In *Horizons of the World: Festschrift for Isenbike Togan*, 557-594.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Protecting Private Property vs. Negotiating Political Authority: Nur al-Din b. Jaja and His Endowments in Thirteenth Century Anatolia." In *Ferdowsi, the Mongols and the History of Iran: Art, Literature and Culture from Early Islam to Qajar Persia*, edited by Robert Hillenbrand, A.C.S. Peacock and Firuza Abdullaeva, 147-165. London, 2013.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Yasa and shari'a in the Mongol Ilkhanate." *New Approaches on the Il-Khans*. Conference presentation, Ulaanbaatar, 2014.

Pogossian, Zaroui. "An 'Un-known and Unbridled People' with a biblical genealogy, original homeland and no religious worship: the thirteenth century Armenian Theologian



- Vardan Arewelc'i and his Colophon on the Mongols." *Journal of the Society of Armenian Studies* 23 (2014): 7-48.
- Prazniak, Roxann. "Ilkhanid Buddhism: traces of a passage in Eurasian history," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56(3) (2014): 650-80.
- De Rachewiltz, Igor. "Some remarks on the ideological foundation of Chinggis Khan's empire." *Paper on Far Eastern History* 7 (1973): 21-36.
- Raphael, Sarah Kate. *Climate and Political Climate: environmental disasters in the medieval Levant*. Leiden, 2013.
- Reimitz, Helmut. "Cultural brokers of a common past: history, identity, and ethnicity in Merovingian Historiography." In *Strategies of Identification: Ethnicity and Religion in Early Medieval Europe*, edited by Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann, 257-301. Turnhout, 2013.
- Reynolds, Craig J. "Power." In *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*, edited by Donald S. Lopez Jr., 211-28. Chicago, 2005.
- Richard, Francis. "Un des peintres du manuscrit Supplément persan 1113 de l'histoire des mongols de Rašīd al-Dīn identifié." In *L'Iran face à la domination mongole*, 307-320.
- Ridgeon, Lloyd. *Jawanmardi: a Sufi code of honour*. Edinburgh, 2011.
- Rothman, Natalie E. *Brokering Empire: trans-imperial subjects between Venice and Istanbul*. Ithaca, 2012.
- Rosenthal, F. "Asāfir al-awwalīn." *El<sup>2</sup>*. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed June 6, 2016. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/asatir-al-awwalin-SIM\\_8355](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/asatir-al-awwalin-SIM_8355).
- Rubin, Uri. "Pre-existence and light- aspects of the concept of Nūr Muḥammad." *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975): 62-119.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Prophets and Prophethood." In *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe (general editor), Brill Online, 2014. Accessed 06 November 2014. [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-the-quran/prophets-and-prophethood-EQCOM\\_00160](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-the-quran/prophets-and-prophethood-EQCOM_00160).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Prophets and Caliphs: the biblical foundations of the Umayyad authority." In *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, edited by Herbert Berg. Leiden, 2003, 73-99.
- Sabra, A. I. "Science and philosophy in medieval Islamic theology: the evidence of the fourteenth century." *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften* 9 (1994): 1-42.

- Sahlins, Marshall. "The Stranger-King or, elementary forms of the politics of life." *Indonesia and the Malay World* 36/105 (2009): 177-99.
- Safi, Omid. *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: negotiating ideology and religious inquiry* Chapel Hill, 2006.
- Şahin, Kaya. *Empire and Power in the Reign of Suleyman*. Cambridge, 2013.
- Samten, Jampa and Dan Martin. "Letters to the khans: six Tibetan epistles of Togdugpa addressed to the Mongol rulers Huleu and Khubilai, as well as to the Tibetan Lama Pagpa." In *Trails of the Tibetan Tradition, Papers for Elliot Sperling*, edited by Roberto Vitali, 297-331. Dharamshala, 2014; republished in *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 31 [2015].
- Savant, Sarah Bowen. *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran: Tradition, Memory and Conversion*. Cambridge, 2013.
- Schmidtke, Sabine. *The Theology of al-'Allāma al-Hillī (d. 726/1325)*. Berlin, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The doctrine of the transmigration of soul according to Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (killed 587/1191) and his followers." *Studia Iranica* 28 (1999): 237-54.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311) as a teacher: an analysis of his *ijāzāt* (Studies on Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī III)." *Journal Asiatique* 297/1 (2009): 15-55.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Ibn Kammūna, Sa'd." *Encyclopaedia of the Jews of the Islamic World*, edited by Normal Stilman, 504-505. Leiden, 2010.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Ḥelli, Ḥasan b. Yusof b. Moṭahhar." *Elr*. Accessed March 20, 2016. <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/helli-hasan-b-yusof-b-motahhar>
- Schönig, Hanne. "Kalam." *Brill's New Pauly*. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed February 23, 2016. <http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/kalam-e605450>
- Simidchieva, Marta. "Kingship and legitimacy in Niẓām al-Mulk's *Siyāsatnāma*, fifth/eleventh century." In *Writers and Rulers*, 97-131.
- Shalem, Avinoam. "Fountains of light: the meaning of medieval Islamic rock crystal lamps." *Muqarnas* 11 (1994): 1-11.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Jewels and journeys: the case of the medieval gemstone called al-Yatima." *Muqarnas* 12 (1995): 42-56.
- Shihadeh, Ayman. "From al-Ghazāī to al-Rāzī: 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century developments in Muslim philosophical theology." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15 (2005): 141-79.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Teleological Ethics of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī*. Leiden, 2006.
- Shir, Shai. “‘The Chief Wife’ at the Courts of the Mongol Khans during the Mongol World Empire (1206-1260).” M.A. thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2006 (in Hebrew).
- Shiraiwa, Kazuhiko. “Rashīd al-Dīn’s primary sources in compiling the Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh: a tentative survey.” In *Rashīd al-Dīn: Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchange in Ilkhanid Iran*, 39-56.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Sur la date du manuscrit parisien du Ğāmi’ al-Tavārīkh de Rašīd al-Din.” *Orient: Report of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan* 32 (1997): 37-49.
- Shimo, Satoko. “Ghâzân Khan and the Ta’rīkh-i Ghâzânî – concerning its relationship to the “Mongol history” of the Jāmi’ al-Tawārīkh.” *The Memoirs of Toyo Bunko* 54 (1996): 93-110.
- Shurany, Vered. “Islam in Northwest China under the Mongols: the life and times of prince Ananda (d. 1307)”. M.A. thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2014.
- Soucek, P.P. “Abu’l-Qāsem ‘Abdallāh Kāšānī.” *Elr*. Accessed January 7, 2016.  
<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abul-qasem-abdAllāh-kasani-historian-of-the-reign-of-the-il-khan-olaytu-r>
- Van Steenbergen, Jo. “Qalāwūnid discourse, elite communication, and the Mamluk cultural matrix: interpreting a 14<sup>th</sup>-century panegyric.” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 43 (2012): 1-28.
- Stewart, Angus. *The Armenian Kingdom and the Mamluks: war and diplomacy during the reigns of Het’um II (1289-1307)*. Leiden, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “The assassination of King Het’um II: the conversion of the Ilkhans and the Armenians.” *JRAS*, 15/1 (2005): 45-61.
- Stilt, Kristen. *Islamic Law in Action: authority, discretion, and everyday experiences in Mamluk Egypt*. Oxford, 2011.
- Stone, Jacqueline I. “Death.” In *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*, 56-76.
- Subrahmanyam, Sanjay. “Connected histories: notes towards a reconfiguration of early modern Eurasia.” *Modern Asian Studies* 31/3 (1997): 735-62.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Turning the Stones Over: Sixteenth Century Millenarianism from the Tagus to the Ganges.” *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 40/2 (2003): 129-161.

- Subtelny, Maria E. "The Sunni revival under Shāh-Rukh and its promoters: a study of the connection between ideology and higher learning in Timurid Iran." *Proceedings of the 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Haneda Memorial Hall. Symposium on Central Asia and Iran, August 30, 1993*, 14-23. Kyoto: Institute of Inner Asian Studies, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The curriculum of Islamic higher learning in Timurid Iran in the light of the Sunni revival under Shāh-Rukh." *Journal of American Oriental Society* 115/2 (1995): 210-36.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Jews at the edge of the world in Timurid-era *Mi 'rājnāma*: the Islamic ascension narrative as missionary text." In *The Prophet's Ascension*, 50-77.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "A late medieval Persian summa on ethics: Kashifi's *Akhlāq-i Muḥsinī*." *Iranian Studies* 36/4 (2003): 601-614.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian politics and acculturation in medieval Iran*. Leiden, 2007.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The binding pledge (*mōchālgā*): a Chinggisid practice and its survival in Safavid Iran." *New Perspectives on Safavid Iran: Empire and Society*, edited by Colin Mitchell, 9-29. New York, 2011.
- Taqizadeh, S. H. "Djalālī." *El<sup>2</sup>*. Accessed March 6, 2016.  
[http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/djalali-SIM\\_1950](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/djalali-SIM_1950)
- Treiger, Alexander. *Inspired Knowledge in Islamic Thought: al-Ghazālī's theory of mystical cognition and its Avicennian foundation*. London, 2012.
- Uyar, Mustafa. "Jewish vizier Sa'd al-Dawla's centralization reform of Ilkhanid financial policy and the reaction to it." *Jewish History Quarterly* (Warszawa) 1 (2009): 5-12.
- Vryonis, Speros. *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*. Berkley, 1971.
- Ward, L. J. *The Zafar-namah of Hamdullah Mustaufi and the Il-Khan Dynasty of Iran*. PhD Diss., University of Manchester, 1983. 3 vols.
- Watson, O. "Abu Taher." *Elr*, I/4: 385-387.
- Weber, Max. *Economy and Society: an outline of interpretive sociology*. Eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. New York, 1968.
- Wensinck, A.J. and A.S. Tritton. "'Adhāb al-Ḳabr." *El<sup>2</sup>*. Brill, online. Accessed March 22, 2016.

[http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/adhab-al-kabr-SIM\\_0301](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/adhab-al-kabr-SIM_0301)

Wickens, . M. "Aḳlāq-e Nāṣerī." *EI*, vol. I: 725.

Woods, John E. *The Aqquyunlu*. Salt Lake City, 1999, revised and expanded. Edited by

Yamamoto, Keiji and Charles Burnett, eds. and Translated by *Abu Ma'ṣar on Historical Astrology: The Book of Religions and Dynasties*. Leiden, 2000.

Yıldız, Sara Nur and Haşim Şahin. "In the proximity of sultans: Majd al-Dīn Işhāq, Ibn 'Arabī and the Seljuk court." In *The Seljuks of Anatolia: court and society in the medieval Middle East*, edited by A.C.S Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız, 173-205. London, 2013.

Yoeli-Tlalim, Ronit. "Rashīd al-Dīn's *Life of the Buddha*. Some Tibetan perspectives." in *Rashīd al-Dīn*, 197-211.

Liang, Yongjia. "Stranger-kingship and cosmocracy; or, Sahlins in Southwest China." *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 12/3 (2011): 236-54.

Yücesoy, Hayrettin. *Messianic Beliefs and Imperial Politics in Medieval Islam*. Columbia, South Carolina: 2009.

Zhao, George Qingzhi. *Marriage as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression*. New York, 2008.