

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
THE MONGOL EMPIRE

★
VOLUMES I & II

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Chinggis Khan and his progeny ruled over two-thirds of Eurasia. Connecting east, west, north, and south, the Mongols integrated most of the Old World, promoting unprecedented cross-cultural contacts and triggering the reshuffle of religious, ethnic, and geopolitical identities. *The Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire* studies the empire holistically in its full Eurasian context, putting the Mongols and their nomadic culture at the center. Written by an international team of more than forty leading scholars, this two-volume set provides an authoritative and multifaceted history of “the Mongol moment” (1206–1368) in world history and includes an unprecedented survey of the various sources for its study, textual (written in sixteen languages), archaeological, and visual. This groundbreaking Cambridge History sets a new standard for future study of the empire. It will serve as the fundamental reference work for those interested in Mongol, Eurasian, and world history.

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THE CAMBRIDGE
HISTORY OF
THE MONGOL EMPIRE

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VOLUME I

History
&

VOLUME II

Sources

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The Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire is dedicated to the
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Thomas T. Allsen (1940–2019), David O. Morgan (1945–2019),
and György Kara (1935–2022)

Contents

<i>List of Figures in Volume I</i>	page xi
<i>List of Figures in Volume II</i>	xii
<i>List of Maps in Volume I</i>	xiii
<i>List of Maps in Volume II</i>	xiv
<i>List of Tables in Volume I</i>	xv
<i>List of Contributors to Volume I</i>	xvi
<i>List of Contributors to Volume II</i>	xvii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xviii
<i>Notes on Dates and Transliterations</i>	xix
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xx

VOLUME I

Introduction 1

MICHAL BIRAN AND HODONG KIM

PART I

POLITICAL HISTORY

1 · The Rise of Chinggis Khan and the United Empire, 1206–1260 19

RUTH W. DUNNELL

2 · The Empire of the Great Khan: The Yuan Ulus, 1260–1368 107

CHRISTOPHER P. ATWOOD

3 · The Ilkhanate, 1260–1335 181

STEFAN KAMOLA AND DAVID O. MORGAN

4 · The Golden Horde, c. 1260–1502 243

MARIE FAVEREAU AND ROMAN YU. POCHKAEV

Contents

- 5 · Mongol Central Asia: The Chaghadaids and the Ögödeids, 1260–1370 319

MICHAL BIRAN

PART 2

THEMATIC HISTORIES

- 6 · Mongol Imperial Institutions 399

HODONG KIM

- 7 · Imperial Ideology 444

THOMAS T. ALLSEN

- 8 · The Military Machine 460

TIMOTHY MAY

- 9 · Economic Exchange: Money, Markets, and Taxation
in Mongol Eurasia 488

AKINOBU KURODA

- 10 · Religious Exchange 525

JOHAN ELVERSKOG

- 11 · Scientific Exchange 550

MORRIS ROSSABI AND ROBERT G. MORRISON

- 12 · Artistic Exchange 575

ROXANN PRAZNIAK

- 13 · The Climate and Environment of the Mongol Conquest 603

NICOLA DI COSMO

- 14 · Women and Gender under Mongol Rule 628

BETTINE BIRGE AND ANNE F. BROADBRIDGE

PART 3

VIEWS FROM THE EDGES: REGIONAL HISTORIES

- 15 · Mongolia in the Mongol Empire: From Center to Periphery 657

MORRIS ROSSABI

Contents

- 16 · Koryŏ in the Mongol Empire 679
DAVID M. ROBINSON

- 17 · Georgia and the Caucasus 707
LORENZO PUBBLICI

- 18 · The Mongols and Siberia 734
THOMAS T. ALLSEN

- 19 · The Rus' Principalities 753
LAWRENCE N. LANGER

PART 4

EXTERNAL HISTORIES: THE MONGOLS' RELATIONS WITH
UNSUBJUGATED REGIONS

- 20 · The Mongols and Europe 779
NICOLA DI COSMO

- 21 · The Mongols and the Arab Middle East 798
REUVEN AMITAI

- 22 · South Asia and the Mongol Empire 827
TANSEN SEN

- Epilogue: The Mongol Empire, Nomadic Culture, and World History 852
MICHAL BIRAN AND HODONG KIM

VOLUME II

PART I

LITERARY SOURCES

- 1 · Persian Sources 877
CHARLES MELVILLE

- 2 · Chinese Sources 920
BETTINE BIRGE AND XIAO LIU

Contents

- 3 · Mongolian Sources 972
GYÖRGY KARA
- 4 · Arabic Sources 1007
REUVEN AMITAI AND MICHAL BIRAN
- 5 · Rus'ian-Language Sources 1046
DONALD OSTROWSKI
- 6 · Western European Sources 1070
PETER JACKSON
- 7 · Armenian Sources 1114
BAYARSAIKHAN DASHDOND OG
- 8 · Georgian Sources 1135
ROIN METREVELI
- 9 · Turkic and Chaghatay Sources 1149
DEVIN DEWEESE
- 10 · Tibetan Sources 1165
KARÉNINA KOLLMAR-PAULENZ
- 11 · Korean Sources 1185
KANG-HAHN LEE
- 12 · Syriac Sources 1200
PIER GIORGIO BORBONE
- 13 · Uighur Sources 1217
DAI MATSUI
- 14 · Greek Sources 1236
ISTVÁN VÁSÁRY
- 15 · Tangut Sources 1250
RUTH W. DUNNELL
- 16 · Hebrew Sources 1261
NÁ'AMA OHANNA-AROM

Contents

PART 2

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND VISUAL SOURCES

17 · Archaeological Sources: Mongolia and the Yuan 1275

NORIYUKI SHIRAISHI

18 · Archaeological Sources: The Ilkhanate 1312

TOMOKO MASUYA

19 · Archaeological Sources: The Golden Horde 1323

MARK G. KRAMAROVSKY

20 · Archaeological Sources: The Chaghadaid Khanate 1340

ALEXANDER V. PACHKALOV

21 · Visual Sources 1349

SHEILA BLAIR AND SHANE McCAUSLAND

Index to Volume I 1399

Index to Volume II 1453

Figures in Volume 1

2.1	Currency emissions of the Yuan	<i>page</i> 120
2.2	Military farms in the Yuan dynasty (1328 figures)	136
2.3	Seaborne grain transport	137
2.4	Famine events reported during the Yuan dynasty	137
9.1	Minting of silver coinage in London (in kg)	493
9.2	Issuance of paper money by the Yuan (in silver <i>liang</i>)	497
9.3	Multiple strata of monies	507
12.1	Maḥmūd of Ghazna in a robe given by the caliph al-Qādir	576
12.2	A fabric of gold with winged lions and griffins, thirteenth century	586
12.3	The <i>Annunciation</i> (1333) of Simone of Martini	587
12.4	The Vajrabhairava Mandala of the Yuan, 1330–1332	590

Figures in Volume 11

3.1	A page from a reprint of the oldest <i>Secret History</i>	page 100
3.2	<i>Paiza</i> (tablet of authority) with inscription in the 'Phags-pa script	121
17.1	The Serven Khaalga inscription (Chinese characters)	407
18.1	Takht-i Sulaymān, general view.	439
19.1	Belt fittings from Krasny Yar	450
19.2	Saddle arch back with rabbits	451
19.3	Portable cup with dragon head	452
19.4	Gold vessel with handles in the form of water dragons	452
19.5	Turabek Khanum Mausoleum, at Konye-Urgench, Turkmenistan	456
21.1	Blue-and-white porcelain jar depicting the story of Guiguizi descending the mountain	479
21.2	Tiraz fabric made for the Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd and transformed into the burial suit for Duke Rudolf 1 ^v	482
21.3	Fritware dish painted in luster over an opaque white glaze	483
21.4	Tomb of the Ilkhan Öljeitü at Sulṭāniyya	485
21.5	A guardian king and detail of the multilingual inscriptions inside the arch of the Cloud Terrace (Yuntai) of 1342–1345, at Juyongguan pass, Hebei province	487
21.6	Left half of a lampas woven textile, silk, gilded paper, and gilded animal substrate. China or eastern Islamic lands	489
21.7	<i>Episodes from the Career of a Yuan Official</i> (also called <i>Zhao Yu's Pacification of the Barbarians</i>) (artist unknown) (detail)	493
21.8	Mongol enthronement, probably detached from a copy of Rashīd al-Dīn's <i>Compendium of Chronicles</i>	495
21.9	<i>Boghtaq</i> (Mongol women's headdress)	496
21.10	<i>Mandala of Yamantaka-Vajrabhairava</i> . China, Yuan dynasty, c. 1330–1332	497

Maps in Volume 1

0.1	Mongol Eurasia	<i>page 2</i>
0.2	The Mongol commonwealth	3
1.1	Eurasia before Chinggis Khan	22
1.2	Expansion of the United Empire	48
2.1	The Great Yuan	119
3.1	The Hülegü Ulus (Ilkhanate)	193
4.1	The Jochid Ulus (Golden Horde)	255
5.1	The Chaghadaid Ulus c. 1330s	347
6.1	Mongol <i>jam</i> highways	434
16.1	Koryō and the Mongols	686
17.1	Caucasia in the early thirteenth century	712
21.1	The central Middle East, mid-thirteenth century (without political borders)	800
21.2	The Mamluk Sultanate and the Mongol uluses, c. 1300	807

Maps in Volume II

17.1	Map of the main archaeological sites in Mongolia and north China	<i>page</i> 400
17.2	Map of the Avraga ruins	408
18.1	Map of Ilkhanid archaeological sites	437

Tables in Volume 1

1.1	Qa'ans and regents, 1206–1259	<i>page</i> 78
2.1	Rulers of the Great Yuan (Qa'an Ulus)	139
2.2	General administration of the Yuan (roughly 1295–1330)	153
3.1	Rulers of the Hülegü Ulus	197
4.1	Rulers of the Jochid Ulus	253
5.1	The Ögödeids	326
5.2	Rulers of the Chaghadaid Ulus	328
5.3	Chaghadaid Rulers: Descendants of Du'a Khan	349
6.1	<i>Jarghuchis</i> and <i>bichêchis</i> in the four regions at the time of Möngke's accession	426
9.1	Casting of bronze bells in Japan, Korea, and China	512
9.2	New markets and the monetization of tribute in medieval Japan	513
9.3	New markets in Holland and Japan	514
14.1	Marriage relations of Hö'elün, Börte, and the Merkits	635
14.2	Börte's children and the daughters' spouses	636
14.3	The Ilkhanids and their Oirat in-laws	639
14.4	The Ilkhanids and their Kereyit in-laws	640
14.5	Checheyigen's daughters and their husbands	641
14.6	The Ilkhanids and their Qonggirat in-laws	641

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Michal Biran and Hodong Kim

Notes on Dates and Transliterations

- 1 Dates are generally given according to the Gregorian calendar. *Hijrī*, Chinese, or other dates are given only when they have a special relevance. When both *hijrī* and Gregorian dates are given, the *hijrī* comes first, followed by a slash and the Gregorian date.
- 2 Chinese names and terms have been transliterated according to the Pinyin system.
- 3 Arabic words, titles, and names have been transliterated according to the system used in the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. Words and names of Persian origin have usually been transliterated as if they were Arabic (e.g., Juwaynī, not Juvaynī). Common words and place names, such as sultan, Mamluk, Bukhara, Baghdad, are written without diacritical points. Well-known place names are given in their accepted English forms, e.g., Jerusalem, Damascus.
- 4 Russian has been transliterated according to the system of the Library of Congress.
- 5 Names and terms of Mongolian origin have been transliterated according to Antoine Mostaert's scheme as modified by F. W. Cleaves, except for these deviations: č is rendered as ch, š as sh, γ as gh, and ĵ as j; kh is rendered as q, apart from in the word "khan" and its derivatives, which is already common in English. Transcriptions of Mongol and Turkish names usually follow the forms used in *CHIA*. An asterisk (*) to the left of a name represents an uncertain transliteration.
- 6 Other languages were transliterated according to the ALA–Library of Congress system.

Abbreviations

Sources

- Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb Ibn Baṭṭūṭa. 1958–2000. *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa*, tr. Hamilton A. R. Gibb (vols. 1–3) and Charles Buckingham (vol. 4). Cambridge.
- HWC al-Juwaynī [Juvaini], ‘Aṭā-Malik. 1997. *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, tr. John A. Boyle. Manchester [reprint of the 1958 ed. which has two volumes; same pagination].
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- JT/Boyle Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb. 1971. *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, tr. J. A. Boyle. New York.
- JT/Karīmī Rashīd al-Dīn, Faḍlallāh. 1959. *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, ed. Bahman Karīmī, 2 vols. Tehran.
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- JT/Thackston Rashīd al-Dīn, Faḍlallāh (Rasiduddin Fazlullah). 1998–1999. *Jami‘u’t-tawarikh [sic] Compendium of Chronicles*, tr. Wheeler M. Thackston, 3 vols. Cambridge, MA.
- JT/Thackston 2012 Rashīd al-Dīn, Faḍlallāh (Rasiduddin Fazlullah). 2012. *Jami‘u’t-tawarikh [sic] Compendium of Chronicles*. In *Classical Writings of the Medieval Islamic World: Persian Histories of the Mongol Dynasties*, tr. Wheeler M. Thackston, vol. 3. London.

List of Abbreviations

- SH Igor de Rachewiltz tr. 2004, 2006, 2009. *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, 2 vols. Leiden.
- TJG al-Juwaynī, ‘Aṭā-Malik. 1912–1937. *Ta’rīkh-i Jahāngushā*, ed. Mīrzā Muḥammad Qazwīnī, 3 vols. London.
- YS Song Lian 宋濂. 1976. *Yuan shi* 元史, 15 vols. Beijing.

Studies

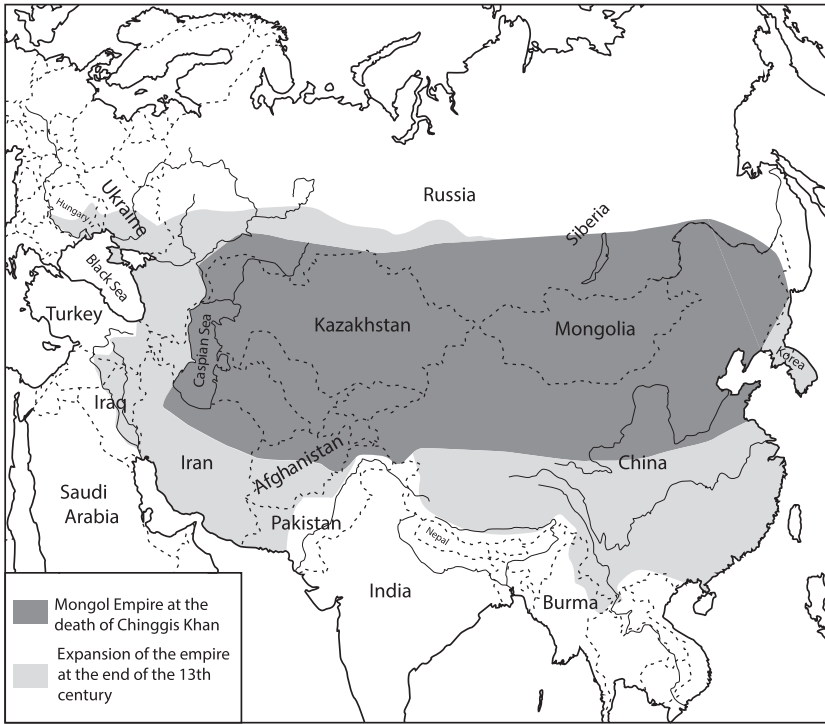
- AEMA *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*
- AOH *Acta Orientalia Hungaricae*
- BSOAS *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
- CAJ *Central Asiatic Journal*
- CHC6 Franke, Herbert, and Denis Twitchett, eds. 1994. *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 6, *Alien Regimes and Border States 907–1368*. Cambridge.
- CHIA Di Cosmo, Nicola, Allen J. Frank, and Peter B. Golden, eds. 2009. *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age*. Cambridge.
- CHI5 Boyle, John A., ed. 1968. *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*. Cambridge.
- El2 *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.
- El3 *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 3rd ed.
- Elr *Encyclopedia Iranica*
- HJAS *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*
- ISK de Rachewiltz, Igor, et al., eds. 1993. *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol–Yüan Period (1200–1300)*. Wiesbaden.
- JAOS *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
- JESHO *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
- JRAS *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
- JSYS *Journal of Song–Yuan Studies*
- REMMM *Revue du monde musulman et de la méditerranée*

Introduction

MICHAL BIRAN AND HODONG KIM

The Mongol Empire changed the world. In the thirteenth century, Chinggis Khan and his heirs created the largest contiguous empire the world has ever seen, an empire that at its height stretched from Korea to Hungary and from Anatolia, Iraq, and Vietnam to Siberia, ruling over two-thirds of the Old World. The Chinggisids connected east, west, north and south, integrating the Old World, promoting cross-cultural contacts of an unprecedented scope and triggering the reshuffle of religious and ethnic identities. It contributed to the discovery of the New World, ushered in the shift from the medieval to the early modern, and left an enduring legacy for later Eurasian empires. What is more, it was the indigenous nomadic culture of the Mongols, notably the mobility and redistribution inherent to it, that played a major and active role in these transformations.

The impact of the Mongol Empire on world history has been debated for centuries, running the gamut from the “Tatar yoke” to the Pax Mongolica, and this discourse has often been loaded with strong nationalist undertones. The merciless destruction that the Mongols left in their wake is still what most people associate with the empire, and there is no reason to pretend it did not happen. Nevertheless, other, no less important, aspects of their complex legacy were hidden or ignored, not least due to the fractured way in which the empire was usually studied up to about two decades ago. In contrast, *The Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire* studies the Mongol Empire from a holistic point of view in its full Eurasian context, putting the Mongols and their nomadic culture at the center. It scrutinizes the Mongol Empire as a multifaceted phenomenon, one that combined elements from various Asian imperial traditions (particularly steppe, Islamic, Iranian, and Sinitic empires) and created a common imperial culture – political, material, institutional – that has had a broad and enduring impact on world history.

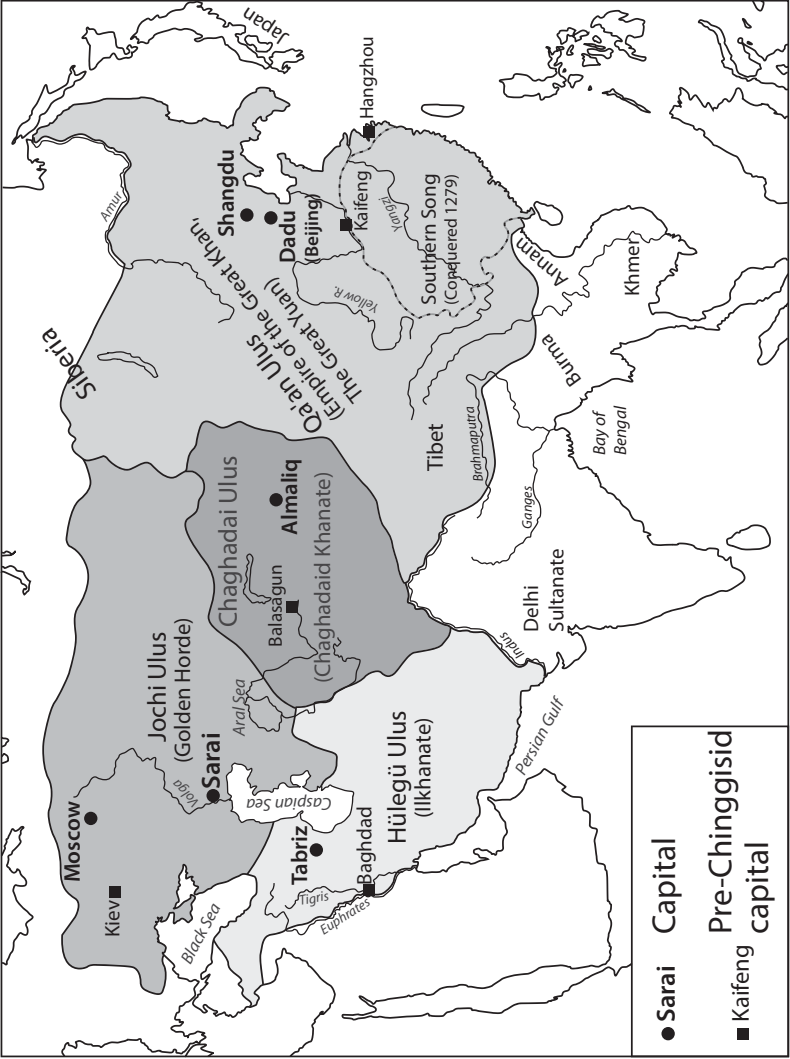


Map o.1 Mongol Eurasia, after Biran 2007, 12–13

Scope

The two volumes of the Cambridge History cover mainly the “Mongol moment” in world history (1206–1368), namely the period from the rise of Chinggis Khan to the retreat of the Great Khans from China in 1368. This rather long moment is commonly divided into two: first, the era of the United Mongol Empire (1206–1260) – when an ever-expanding polity ruled the newly conquered lands from its center in Mongolia; second, the period of “the Mongol commonwealth,” during which the empire to some extent dissolved, resulting in the creation of four regional empires seated in China, Iran, Central Asia and the Volga region, each headed by a different branch of the Chinggisid family. The state headed by the Great Khan or qa’an/qaghan, in Mongolian Qa’an Ulus,¹ was centered in China, to where the imperial capital

¹ *Ulus* in Mongolian originally meant the people subject to a certain lord, and later also became an equivalent of a nation and state (as it still signifies in modern Mongolian today).



Map o.2 The Mongol commonwealth, after Biran 2021a, 238

shifted after 1260, eventually settling in Dadu (Mo. Daidu) – Beijing. It became known as the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) and enjoyed a nominal, though not uncontested, primacy over its counterparts. Hülegü Ulus, known by modern historians as the Ilkhanate (1260–1335), had its center in modern Iran and Iraq; Jochi Ulus or the Golden Horde (1260–1502) was centered in the Volga region; and Chaghadaï Ulus or the Chaghadaïd Khanate (1260–1678) held power in Central Asia.² After the empire's dissolution, there was only one major Mongol expansion campaign, which culminated in the final conquest of Song China (1276–1279). Yet this campaign, which added this richest and most populous country to the Mongol domains, was of tremendous importance, as it enabled the Mongols to connect the Eurasian continental and maritime trade routes, creating a proto-global economic exchange. While the four Mongol polities were often at odds, they retained a strong sense of Chinggisid unity, seeing their – often bloody – conflicts as family feuds between brotherly states. These states shared genealogy, ideology, and institutions (and some personnel), and were closely connected by economic, religious, artistic, scientific, and diplomatic networks that reached far beyond the Chinggisid space.³ In the mid-fourteenth century, all four Mongol empires were embroiled in political and ecological crises that led to the collapse of the Mongol states in Iran (1336) and China (1368), and considerably weakened the two remaining steppe khanates. The fall of the Great Khan's state in China is considered the end of the "Mongol moment," since it brought the Chinggisids back to the steppe and disrupted the economic and cultural exchange typical of Mongol rule. Yet descendants of Chinggis Khan continued to rule in the western steppe, in Muslim Central Asia, and later in India, until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and remained an important factor in Mongolia. Moreover, the memory of the empire, its political culture, and its various institutions, continued to impact imperial formation and rule across Eurasia well into the early modern period.

The Study of the Mongol Empire: Toward a Holistic Paradigm

The study of the Mongol Empire has made enormous strides in the past two decades, and its most notable impact is the shift of seeing the empire not only in national or regional terms but from a holistic perspective, in its full Eurasian

2 The Mongol names of the three *ulus* derive from the names of their founders: two sons and a grandson of Chinggis Khan.

3 See the chapters by Kim, Allsen (on ideology), Kuroda, Elverskog, Prazniak, and Rossabi and Morrison.

context. Due to the gigantic dimensions of the empire, and the resulting bewildering variety of languages in which the history of Chinggisid expansion and rule were recorded, previously scholars tended to choose one corner of the empire, to base their work on sources in one of its two major languages – Persian and Chinese (and sometimes Russian) – and to frame their inquiry in a dynastic or national context, often concentrating on the impact the Mongols had on it. While such works have their merit, this state of affairs can easily lead to portraying the Mongols as barbarian outsiders who threaten, invade, and demolish sedentary civilizations, outside and inside the empire. Moreover, such frameworks can easily underscore the local components of the empire at the expense of its Mongol character. The main reason for this is that the information about the Mongols was mostly penned by their sedentary subjects (or enemies), each bounded in the models of his own civilization and local tradition. Mongolian institutions and policies therefore often tend to be obscured in the sources, whose authors either did not approve of them or were not too interested: Chinese and Muslim historians endeavored to portray the Mongols as a “normal” Chinese or Iranian dynasty while the Russian chronicles adopted the “ideology of silence,” basically ignoring Mongol dominion over their lands. Reading sources from different parts of the empire together, with full awareness of the various historiographical traditions involved, is thus essential for reconstructing a fuller picture of Mongol institutions and policies, and for writing the history of the empire as a whole, together with its constituent parts.

Indeed, the major breakthrough in the study of the Mongol Empire in the last decades came from the works of our late contributor Thomas T. Allsen (1940–2019). Equally familiar with the Persian, Chinese, and Russian sources, and adept in the historical anthropology of steppe nomadism, Allsen looked at the empire from a holistic perspective, putting the Mongols and their nomadic culture at the center of his inquiry. This not only enabled him to write a multifaceted political history of Möngke Qa’an, presenting the United Empire both at its height and on the eve of its dissolution,⁴ but, in his further books, notably *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A History of Islamic Textiles* (1997) and *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (2001), to highlight the cultural and economic exchange that took place under their rule.⁵ Allsen’s work initiated “the cultural turn” in the study of the Mongol Empire,⁶ greatly enlarging the range of research topics, and highlighting the cultural – religious, scientific, artistic, institutional – and economic exchanges that prevailed in Mongol Eurasia, as well as aspects of social and cultural histories, in all of which the Mongols played a central and

4 Allsen 1987. 5 Allsen 1997, 2001, 2006, 2019; Biran 2013. 6 Morgan 2015.

active role. His holistic paradigm is the point of departure for *The Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire*.

In the two decades that have passed since the publishing of *Culture and Conquest*, and the near decade in which *The Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire* was conceived, this new paradigm has been considerably invigorated. Thus, even those focusing on one corner of the empire are more aware of its Mongol character and of what was going on in other parts of Eurasia. Likewise, more people in both east and west systematically integrate sources from across Eurasia, notably Chinese and Persian but also Arabic, Russian, and others. In East Asia, this trend owes much to scholars such as Sugiyama Masaaki, Liu Yingsheng, and Kim Hodong,⁷ and in the West mainly to Michal Biran and her students.⁸ Younger and emerging scholars trained in Israel, East Asia, Europe, and the United States will hopefully make this approach dominant among the new generation of Mongol Empire research.

The thriving of the field is attested to and strengthened by the growing number of reference works⁹ and textbooks,¹⁰ and the translation, editing, and publication of primary sources, as well as more specific monographs, collected volumes, and articles. In particular, Igor de Rachewiltz's translation of the *Secret History of the Mongols*, the only extant Mongolian source for the rise of Chinggis Khan, has been of prime importance. The excellent translation is accompanied by an encyclopedic commentary that deals with nearly every aspect of Chinggis Khan's Mongolia.¹¹ Even beforehand, Wheeler Thackston's translation of the history of the Mongols as recorded in the Persian *Compendium of Chronicles* (*Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*) of Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 1317), a polymath of Jewish origin who served as the Ilkhanate's vizier and wrote the first ever world history (including the histories of the Mongols, Chinese, Indians, Franks (i.e., Europeans), Muslims, Turks, and Jews), has also been of major importance.¹² Rashīd al-Dīn, one of the major cultural brokers of the empire, included data not only on the United Empire and the Mongols in Iran, but also on the other Mongol branches. His methods, political tendencies, debts to other historians,

7 E.g. Sugiyama 2004; Liu 2006; Kim 2005.

8 e.g., Biran 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021a, 2021b; Biran, Brack, and Fiaschetti 2020; Landa 2019; Yang 2019.

9 Notably Atwood 2004, May 2017; Buell and Fiaschetti 2018.

10 Mainly May 2018, 2019; Lane 2018.

11 The work was translated and annotated in 2004 with various reprints; a complementary volume of annotations was published in 2013. Atwood is working on a new, more accessible, translation. See Kara's chapter in Volume 11.

12 *JT*/Thackston, and see Melville's chapter in Volume 11. Even before Thackston's work, however, a Korean translation of Rashīd al-Dīn's Mongol history began to be published in 1992 (Kim 1992–2018).

and other works, both theological and scientific, have attracted considerable scholarly attention in recent years,¹³ yet his central position as the most important historian of the Mongols remains intact.

While other important Persian sources are available in translation – the most recent addition is George Lane’s translation of *Akhhbār al-Moghūl* (Mongol News), a short work copied by the polymath Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1236–1311) and first published in 2009¹⁴ – Chinese sources on the Mongols have been less accessible to non-sinologists. Yet this situation is about to be changed, mainly due to the efforts of Christopher Atwood, who has begun to translate the annals of the official history of the Yuan (*Yuan shi*) in articles that have appeared in the journal *Mongolian Studies*. Additionally, in *The Rise of the Mongols: Five Chinese Sources*, he has translated five short travelogues relating to the time of the United Empire, while his long-awaited annotated translation of the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* (History of the Campaigns of Chinggis Khan) reveals a Chinese chronicle that retained an alternative Mongolian version of the empire’s early years, different from the *Secret History* and used also by Rashīd al-Dīn.¹⁵ A first English translation of a chapter from the *Yuan dianzhang* (Statutes and Precedents of the Yuan), a 1331 compilation written in the challenging Yuan colloquial language, one considerably influenced by Mongolian grammar, was included in Bettine Birge’s recent book,¹⁶ while Buell and Anderson have translated the *Huihui Yaofang*, an encyclopedia of Near Eastern medicine compiled under the Yuan dynasty that partially survived in a Ming dynasty copy.¹⁷ All these activities have benefited from and been augmented by an upsurge of works on primary sources in East Asia, notably China. Thus well-known legal sources from the Yuan dynasty, such as the *Yuan dianzhang* and the *Tongzhi tiaoge* (*Statutes from the Comprehensive Regulations*), were newly studied and rendered easy to understand with punctuated editions.¹⁸ A partial copy of the *Zhizheng tiaoge* (Statutes of the *Zhizheng* Period (1341–1368)), the last legal code promulgated by the Yuan government in 1346, was found in Kyungju, Korea, and was published in a punctuated text with a facsimile,¹⁹ while a team in Nanjing is working on a new annotated edition of

13 Notably Kamola 2019; Brack 2016, 2018, 2020; Yoeli-Tlalim, Burnett, and Akasoy 2013; and the ongoing translation into Chinese of Rashīd al-Dīn’s genealogical work *Shu’ab-i panjgāna*, led by Wang Yidan.

14 Lane 2018, and Melville’s chapter. An earlier seminal translation is Boyle’s translation of Juwaynī: see HWC.

15 Atwood 2017–2018, 2021. More than half of the *Yuan shi*’s biographies are translated in the database of the Jerusalem-based ERC-funded Mobility, Empire and Cross-cultural Contacts in Mongol Eurasia project.

16 Birge 2017. 17 Buell and Anderson 2021.

18 *Yuandian zhang* 2011; *Tongzhi tiaoge* 2009; and see Birge and Liu’s chapter in Volume 11.

19 *Zhizheng tiaoge* 2007.

the *Yuan shi*, the official history of the Yuan dynasty. Another trend, from the other edge of Asia, is the growing scholarly use of Arabic sources, from within the empire and beyond its borders. Notably, the voluminous sources of the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517) are a huge reservoir of information about the Mongols – not only the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde but also the other Mongol polities. Moreover, works compiled in the Ilkhanate, notably in Iraq, in Mongol Central Asia, and even in Yemen and North Africa, add unique details which are of great value, especially for aspects of the social and cultural history of the Mongol states.²⁰ Simultaneously, the study of documents, including edicts, orders, and inscriptions in various scripts, has advanced considerably, and many have been newly translated and reviewed. Studies of the multilingual written materials found in Heicheng (Qara-Qoto) were also published with facsimile editions.²¹ Scholars have paid close attention to epigraphical materials, written in various scripts, e.g., Uighur, 'Phags-pa, Syriac, and Arabic, found in Mongolia, China, and Iran.²²

Among the monographs of the last decade, Jackson's *The Mongols and the Islamic World: From Conquest to Conversion* (2017) is a voluminous and erudite work that combines political, military, and religious history, while Marie Favereau's recent *The Horde: How the Mongols Changed the World* (2021) is an ambitious and accessible history of the Jochid Ulus in its broader Eurasian context. The last decade has also witnessed an upsurge in works dedicated to aspects of social, cultural, and religious histories of the various polities or across the empire,²³ and the same is true of books dealing with art history, notably textiles, both within the empire and through its impact on European art.²⁴ Mongol women and the Mongol marriage system (including the imperial sons-in-law) have merited quite a few monographs.²⁵ The Mongol legacies to their successors in China, Iran, and the early modern empires in general have also been widely discussed.²⁶ New topics that will probably be developed in the coming years include economic history and environmental history, inter alia the

20 See Amitai and Biran's chapter in Volume 11. A considerable number of Arabic sources on the Mongols are available in English translation in the database of the Jerusalem project.

21 E.g., Li Yiyu ed. 1991; Yoshida Zunichi and Chimeddorji 2008.

22 E.g., Matsuda Kōichi, Ochir, et al. 1999, 2013; Haneda and Yokkaichi 2015.

23 Pfeiffer 2013; Golden 2014–2015; Amitai and Biran 2015; Biran 2017, 2019; Biran, Brack, and Fiaschetti 2020; May and Jackson 2016; De Nicola and Melville 2016; Brack 2016, 2018; Hope 2016; Wang Jinping 2018; Favereau 2018; Peacock 2019; Babaie 2019; May, Atwood, and Dashdondog 2021; Maiorov and Hautala 2021.

24 McCausland 2014; Prazniak 2019; Shea 2020; Fircks, Schorta, and Alram 2016; Gonnella, Weiss, and Rauch 2017; Gasparini 2019.

25 De Nicola 2017; Birge 2017; Broadbridge 2018; Landa 2019.

26 E.g., Robinson 2019, 2020; Wing 2016; Crossley 2019; Pines, Biran, and Rupke 2021.

epidemics. While quite a lot of work has recently been devoted to trade and economic exchange,²⁷ we still know too little about other facets of the Mongol economy, notably agriculture and pastoralism. The current global-warming and climate crisis, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, have accelerated the study of environmental and plague history everywhere, and the Mongol Empire is no exception. Climate assisted the expansion of Chinggis Khan's troops and affected the empire's major expansion campaigns while both the Little Ice Age and the Black Death played a role in the mid-fourteenth-century crisis that led to the collapse of the Mongol moment.²⁸ The inclusion of methods from the natural sciences, from the fields of climatology and genetics, have considerably broadened the tool kit available for scholars and entailed a new reading of the historical and archaeological sources. The archaeology of the empire, notably in Mongolia, has also made strides in recent years.²⁹ Yet we anticipate that future use of micro-archaeological methods can also revolutionize our understanding of daily life and population movements in Mongol Eurasia.

The Structure of the Book

The immense dimensions of the empire and the huge variety of its sources imply that the best way of comprehensively studying the Mongols is by an international team of leading scholars from both east and west. More than forty scholars from more than a dozen countries in Asia, Europe, and America took part in this enterprise, and in quite a few cases we paired two scholars for one chapter, in order to fully cover the discussed subject.

The Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire comprises two volumes: a thematic volume and another dedicated to sources for the study of the empire. Volume 1 begins with "Political History," which focuses on the political-military history of the United Empire and its four successor states, centered in China, in Iran, in Central Asia, and on the Volga river, and highlighting the common attributes of the different Mongol polities. This is followed by "Thematic Histories," which refers to the United Empire and the four *uluses* throughout the Mongol moment and studies the imperial institutions; the military machine; ideology; economic, religious, artistic, and

27 E.g., Allsen 2019; Kuroda 2009; this volume; Vogel 2013; Kalra 2018; Biran, Brack, and Fiaschetti 2020.

28 For climate and the Mongols: Di Cosmo's chapter (climate); Pederson et al. 2014; Di Cosmo, Wagner, and Büngten 2021; for the Black Death: Slavin 2019; Green 2014, 2020; Fancy and Green 2021; Barker 2021.

29 E.g. Reichert 2019, 2020; Bemmman and Reichert 2021; Shiraishi 2017; Nakata and Ikeda 2021; see Volume 11, chs. 19–22.

scientific exchange; environmental history; and women and gender. While most of these chapters provide an insightful review of the subject – enriched with new and original research – the chapters on the economy and the environment of the Mongol Empire, two fields the study of which is still in its infancy, do not pretend to cover the whole field, but offer many data that will hopefully encourage further exploration.

The third part, “Views from Edges: Regional Histories,” focuses on particular subjected regions, most of which the Mongols administered indirectly. Besides showcasing the assortment of Chinggisid governing methods, the entries falling under this heading shed light on the “centers” as well as the institutions and policies described in Parts 1 and 2 respectively, by examining their connections to the margins. The first chapter is devoted to Mongolia itself. While the empire’s capital was originally in Mongolia (Qaraqorum), the seat of government was transferred to China in 1260. From that point on, the Chinggisid “homeland” is almost ignored by the research literature. Among the other case studies of outlying territories are Siberia, Georgia and the Caucasus, Korea, and the Rus’ principalities. The final part of this volume, “External Histories,” explores the Chinggisids’ impact on regions outside their empire’s borders. It includes chapters on Western Europe and the Mediterranean, South Asia, and the Arab Middle East. While these lands never succumbed to the Mongols, they could not but be affected by the era’s lone superpower. The arrangement of the volume means that some events and players are described in several chapters, sometimes from different points of view, thereby reflecting the complexity of the historical narratives of the Mongols. While we could not cover every aspect and region, we believe that this wide-ranging and integrated framework results in a rounder and fuller portrait of the empire and its various manifestations.

The second, complementary, volume reviews the literary, archaeological, and visual sources on the Mongol Empire, along with comprehensive bibliographies. This is quite an exception in the history of the *Cambridge Histories*, which usually settle on more modest “bibliographical essays” at the end of the volume or simply a bibliographical list. Such an “anomaly” is, however, required by the unique character of the Mongol Empire: while the research of most empires demands proficiency in one or two languages, the Mongols’ voluminous holdings encompassed a baffling array of languages and terrains, and the sources are thus scattered across different historiographical traditions and various materialities. The discussion of the literary sources, which comprises the lion’s share of Volume 11, is arranged according to the most pertinent languages and includes chapters introducing sources in sixteen

languages. The archaeological sources are arranged geographically, and the visual chapter highlights cross-Eurasian connections. This volume not only enables the reader to follow the Mongols' image in and impact on various texts and artifacts, from Hebrew Kabbala texts from Provence to Japanese animal carpets, but, more importantly, is an effective antidote against the previously fractured character of the study of the empire. Volume II is indispensable for taking first steps in studying the Mongols. Yet it is also of immense value even to old hands specializing in one (or several) corners of the empire, who can now be aware of what is out there in the various other corners, and where and how to find it. We hope that these two volumes will serve as a sound scholarly basis for future studies of the Mongol Empire that will highlight the holistic view of it.

Lastly, while working on this enterprise, we lost three of our eminent contributors, Thomas T. Allsen (1940–2019), David O. Morgan (1946–2019), and György Kara (1935–2022). As noted above, Tom Allsen revolutionized the study of the Mongol Empire and the paradigm shift he initiated has been the starting point for this *Cambridge History*. His understanding of the nomadic cultural complex and its evolution across both time and space, as well as his original thinking, helped liberate the study of the Mongol Empire from its confines in philology and the sedentary–nomad binary opposition, and set it on an innovative new path. His books have already become classics, and his creative choice of research topics – the last being pearls and alcohol in Eurasian history³⁰ – opened new vistas for innovative studies. Pursuing a rather unusual academic career and teaching mostly at the College of New Jersey, Allsen did not train graduate students. Yet he was extremely generous with his time and erudition, from which many of the contributors to these volumes benefited greatly.

David O. Morgan laid much of the foundation for the modern study of the Mongol Empire: his textbook *The Mongols*, first published in 1986 and reprinted ever since,³¹ has often been the first work through which students, scholars, and general readers were introduced to the Mongols. His witty and accessible writing attracted people to the field and shaped future careers. Furthermore, Morgan was not only an influential scholar of Ilkhanid, Iranian, and Muslim history, but also an outstanding teacher and editor. He trained students at both SOAS and the University of Wisconsin–Madison (including our contributor Timothy May), and supported many emerging scholars. His term as the chief editor of the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1987–1999)

30 Allsen 2007, 2018, 2019. 31 Morgan 2007.

made this illustrious journal a venue for many Mongol-related and cross-Asian studies, and his long tenure as the chief editor of the prestigious “Cambridge Studies of Islamic Civilization” series (1991–2013) secured the publication of many Mongol- and steppe-related books, including Allsen’s most-cited books.

When the book was at the copy-editing stage we had to part with another contributor, György Kara (1935–2022), a pre-eminent expert on Mongolic and Altaic philology and a wonderful and devoted teacher. A member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Prof. Kara divided his time between ELTE University in Budapest and Indiana University, training generations of Altaists. A real polyglot who spoke nearly fifty languages, Prof. Kara was first and foremost a Mongolist. His magnum opus, *Books of the Mongolian Nomads: More Than Eight Centuries of Writing Mongolian* (Bloomington, 2005) thoroughly treated all aspects of Mongolian writing and literacy since the thirteenth century, and he was always willing to discuss complicated paragraphs with overawed historians.

We deeply miss these three great mentors and friends, and are proud that their last works are included in *The Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire*. We dedicate this work to their memory.

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VOLUME I

PART I

★

POLITICAL HISTORY

I

The Rise of Chinggis Khan and the United Empire, 1206–1260

RUTH W. DUNNELL

Mongolia and Eurasia to 1205

The Mongol Empire was a by-product of the creation of a Mongol people under the leadership of Temüjin, who became Chinggis Khan in 1206. In the process of ethnogenesis, the particularities of time and place favored the expansion of Mongol sway over neighboring territories, and eventually most of Eurasia. The resources at the disposal of Chinggis Khan and his successors, combined with the latter's dreams of empire, allowed them to establish the largest land-based empire in history. Those resources included a set of widely shared steppe political traditions and social norms, along with an extensive and rich pool of human talent familiar with both steppe and sedentary worlds who worked with the Mongols to create that empire.

In this view, the Mongol Empire was neither inevitable nor anomalous; it evolved from the interplay of historical contingency and local conditions. Fragmentation and instability on the Mongolian plateau and across much of Eurasia in the twelfth century provided fertile ground for the unprecedented unification of the "peoples of the felt tents" across the Eurasian steppe achieved under Mongol auspices by 1241.

Controlling the Inner Asian frontier between the Mongolian plateau and north China played a decisive role in the rise of successful polities in China and in the eastern steppe, including the Mongol Empire.¹ Historically, polities based on mixed economies, as well as pastoral nomadism, arose through interaction with China's Inner Asian frontier, from the forested northeast (Manchuria) across the southern Gobi–Ordos belt west to Xinjiang. Throughout this zone, the stark contrast between nomadic and agrarian societies drawn in the written sources blurs. Jonathan Skaff sees 800 CE as a turning point: up to that time, Chinese states and Eurasian nomads participated in

1 Buell 1979a develops this notion in relation to the rise of Chinggis Khan.

a continuum of practice and ideology “from Korea in the east to Byzantium and Iran in the west.”² From the tenth century on, with the rise of the Khitan Liao empire, Chinese began defining themselves more self-consciously against the northerners, rejecting the elements of military and political culture shared between the Sui–Tang empires and their steppe neighbors.³

The shared frontier legacy was instead inherited and developed by smaller regional or interregional states that emerged across Eurasia after the fall of the Uighur and Tibetan empires in the 840s; Tang China in 907; and the Samanids, ‘Abbāsids, and Khazars in the mid-tenth century.⁴ The majority of these regional polities came under the rule of nomads or post-nomads, owing to a centuries-long westward migration of Turkic peoples out of Mongolia, resulting in the gradual Turkicization of Eurasia.⁵ Interregional polities typically deployed dual, or even multiple, administrative and extractive strategies to manage and exploit their diverse populations, adapting steppe or frontier political culture to sedentary practices. In Nicola Di Cosmo’s periodization of Inner Asian state formation, this characteristic defined the period from the fall of the Tang in 907 to the end of the Mongol Qa’an Möngke’s reign in 1259.⁶ Di Cosmo’s analysis thereby integrates the watershed event of the Mongol conquests conceptually into larger historical processes.

In western and central Eurasia, post-nomad Turks founded dynasties under the Islamicized Seljuqs, Qarakhanids, and Khwārazm-Shāhs, employing local bureaucratic expertise and nomad-dominant armies. Eastern Asia entered another multi-state era, dividing control over the Inner Asian frontier. A reunified inner China under the Song dynasty confronted the Mongolic-speaking nomadic Khitan people to the northeast, while their northwestern frontier fell to the Tangut Xia state (early eleventh century to 1227). Expansion of Khitan power west into Mongolia sent many peoples fleeing, including the early Mongols. Both Tangut and Khitan polities showcased the diverse multicultural and multilingual inclusivist strategies of Inner Asian regional states.⁷

The Jurchens, a Khitan Liao subject people in Manchuria, overthrew their masters in 1125 and absorbed all of north China into the Jin dynasty (1115–1234).

2 Skaff 2012, 4. 3 Standen 2007; for an alternate interpretation: Yang 2019.

4 Biran 2007, 14.

5 On post-nomadism and post-nomads: Wink 2001, 285–95. Janhunen 1996, 138, notes that Turk expansion westward “opened a route for the subsequent Mongol conquest of Eurasia”; that is, was a precondition for it.

6 Di Cosmo 1999, 32–34.

7 On the Khitans: Yang 1991; Twitchett and Tietze 1994; on the Tanguts: Dunnell 1994 and 1996; Li 2005.

Unlike the Khitans but like the Tanguts, they were not full nomads and did not incorporate Mongolia into their empire. A Jurchen minority ruling over a large Chinese population in north China with a Chinese-style bureaucracy, the Jin court's attentions were focused south, on Song China. The Liao legacy instead moved out into Central Asia under a refugee prince, Yelü Dashi.

Bridging eastern and western Eurasia in the pre-Mongol period, the Qara Khitai state founded by Yelü Dashi in the 1130s was a unique amalgamation of Chinese, steppe, and Turco-Iranian Muslim influences that nurtured a relatively peaceful civilization over a wide area covering most of modern Central Asia and western Xinjiang.⁸ Although the majority of Qara Khitai subjects were Muslim, the dynasty remained Buddhist. It evinced no impulse to assert the universalism latent in its imperial tradition of a heavenly destined king with the title of *gürkhan* (universal khan), not unlike its Song Chinese contemporary (see Map 1.1).⁹ When and how that impulse became animated under the Mongols are key political developments of the early United Empire period (1206–1260).

The interregional politics made Mongol success possible, for by the time the Mongols began to attack China, they had collapsed the distinction between “culturally mixed border communities” and “open steppe societies” that earlier theorists like Lattimore and Barfield deployed to explain cycles of foreign conquest of China.¹⁰

Mongolia in the Twelfth Century

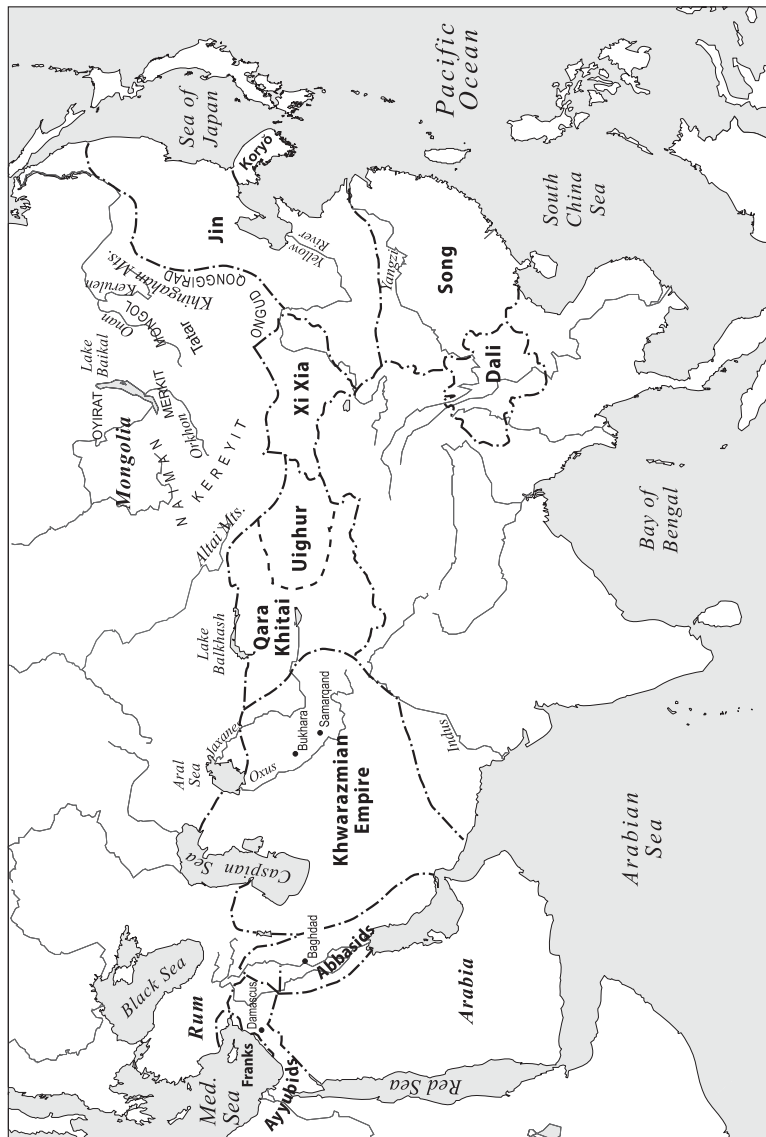
The prehistory of the Mongols and their ethnonym (Ch. *mengwu*) remain shadowy.¹¹ Chinese historical records mention them in the late tenth century, when they migrated from northwestern Manchuria into eastern Mongolia, and settled southeast of Lake Baikal in the Khentii range between the Onan and Kerulen rivers, near the Mongols' sacred mountain, Burqan Qaldun. Over the next hundred years they adopted pastoral nomadism, absorbing elements of local Turk culture and mythology, which they later wove into a genealogy (or several genealogies) enshrined in the *Secret History of the Mongols*. As Allsen has observed, “the medieval Mongols manifestly equated their birth as an ethnicity with their transition to nomadism,” precisely near Burqan Qaldun.¹²

8 Biran 2005a. 9 Biran 2005b, 42–43, 60–80, 204–5.

10 Lattimore 1940; Barfield 1989, 12.

11 Golden 2009, 19–20; Jackson 2009, 26–28; Bold 2001, 3–4, 82. *Jiu Tangshu*, 199B.5358; *Xin Tangshu*, 219.6177.

12 Allsen 1996, 118; Atwood 2012 on early Mongol genealogies.



Map 1.1 Eurasia before Chinggis Khan, after Biran 2007, 24

The immigrants' closest neighbors may have been the Merkits, forest peoples dwelling in the lower reaches of the Selenga river southeast of Lake Baikal, divided into three or four unions each under a chief. Some Merkit groups also inhabited the Burqan Qaldun region.¹³ South and east of the Kerulen river ranged the Tatars, whose nobles provided the Jurchen state with frontier protection services and thereby enjoyed access to wealth and prestige in the form of gifts, titles, and trading rights. Their name ironically became synonymous with the Mongols among Muslim authors, as a label for non-Turk peoples; European authors, being easily assimilated to the Greek *tartarus* (hell); and Chinese writers, whose records continued to refer to the early thirteenth-century Mongols as Tatars (Ch. *dada[n]*).¹⁴

West of the Mongols and Tatars, across the Orkhon river valley, sprawled the Kereyit khanate. Of probable Turkic origin but speaking a Mongolic language, as did most of the plateau's inhabitants by the twelfth century, the Kereyit boasted an extensive political organization, ornate royal trappings, and large armies.¹⁵ Through contacts with the Liao, Xia, and Qara Khitai realms, their elites had acquired wealth, sophistication, and Nestorian Christianity.¹⁶ Instability in the royal family in the latter part of the twelfth century forms the backdrop to the Borjigit Mongols' rise to power.¹⁷ Northwest and across the Altai mountains dwelled the Turkic-speaking Naimans, another powerful but divided nomadic federation, whose relations with the Kereyit and Uighurs likewise yielded familiarity with Nestorianism, Buddhism, literacy, and bureaucracy.

Most of the peoples on the plateau engaged in some trade with the settlers to their south, probably by way of Önggüt or Uighur merchants. Often confused with the Uighurs, the Önggüt were a Turkic-speaking union called in Chinese sources Shatuo or "White Tatars" (in contrast to the Mongol-speaking "Black Tatars" northeast of them). After the Tang dissolution, Önggüt groups dispersed across the Ordos region and eastward along the north China frontier, adopted Nestorian Christianity, and fell under the sway variously of the Tangut, Khitan, and Jurchen states.¹⁸ Önggüt friendship thus became indispensable to Chinggis Khan's success on and beyond the Mongolian plateau.

13 Allsen 1996, 118, citing the YS, 134.3250, biography of the Merkit Kuokuo (Bulihan Halidun).

14 Jackson 2009, 27; SH, 301–2; de Rachewiltz 1996.

15 Togan 1998; Ratchnevsky 1991, 2–3. On linguistic Mongolization of the plateau: Janhunen 1996; Golden 1992, "Introduction," 184–85. Bilingualism was common among nomads in the eastern steppes.

16 Halbertsma 2008, 30–31, dates their adoption of Nestorian Christianity to 1007.

17 See Cheng 1996; Togan 1998; Biran 2005a, 179.

18 On the Önggüt: Buell 1993, 97–98; Atwood 2004a, 424; Hu Xiaopeng 2004; Halbertsma 2008, 35–48; Tang 2011; Atwood 2014.

Biran remarks that “it took Chinggis Khan more time and effort to unite the tribes of the eastern steppe than it took him to conquer half the world.”¹⁹ As vast and sparsely populated as the Mongolian plateau was, with a mostly nomadic population of around 700,000, value was measured in people and animals, not land.²⁰ The collapse of the Liao empire and its retreat from the plateau therefore created turmoil and instability, plunging older inhabitants and new refugees alike into bitter struggles for livelihood. The relatively obscure and poor Mongols seemed the least likely to emerge as unifiers and state builders. If an Inner Asian state arose in part as “a social response to a state of crisis,” then the sources for the early life of Chinggis Khan – the *Secret History of the Mongols*, the Persian and Chinese accounts based on it, and other no-longer-extant Mongol documents – point to just such conditions in Mongolia at that time.²¹

After the establishment of the Jin state, Mongol-led groups began raiding the Jin frontier, in competition with the Tatars for Jurchen spoils. At first promising, these efforts led to defeat and treachery at the hands of the Tatars, the cruel Jurchen execution of a Mongol chief, the death of his successor in battle with the Tatars, and collapse by the 1160s of the first Mongol union. Now the Mongols had to pay tribute to the Jurchens and suffer Tatar insults. Endless raiding, feuding, kidnapping, plunder, and violence imperiled the survival of Mongol households.²² Around this time Temüjin was born, perhaps in 1162, the year that his birth is celebrated in Mongolia today.

The outline and disputed details of the life and times of Temüjin, eldest son of Yisügei, are well known.²³ A nephew of Qutula, last of the ill-fated Borjigit khans, Yisügei was a warrior of the newly established Kiyat lineage (*yasun*). A rival Borjigit lineage, the Tayichi’ut, descended from Qutula’s father’s cousin, Ambaghai. Through conquest and extermination under Temüjin, Yisügei’s Kiyat lineage gradually prevailed over all other Borjigit and Mongol groups.²⁴ In the 1140s, Borjigits began taking wives from the Qonggirat (Onggirat), a people living between them and the Tatars. Yisügei stole his Qonggirat wife, Hö’elün, from her Merkit fiancé, a not uncommon

19 Biran 2007, 27.

20 Allsen 1997b, 4. For estimates of the plateau’s population at the time: Smith 1997, 249; Alexeev 1991, 189–90 favors 500,000; May 2007, 28.

21 Di Cosmo 1999, 14. On the sources: Ratchnevsky 1991, xiii–xvi; *CHC*6, 689–703; *SH*, xxv–cxiii; Akasoy, Burnett, and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim 2013.

22 *HWC*, 21–22.

23 Scholarly life studies published since Ratchnevsky 1991 include Cheng 1996, Weatherford 2004, Biran 2007, and Dunnell 2010.

24 Atwood 2004a, 44–45; Cheng 1996, 161–65, on Qiyān/Kiyat.

occurrence. Her first son, Temüjin (“blacksmith”), was named for a Tatar chief whom Yisügei had just captured. At around this time Yisügei helped the Kereyit prince To’oril to reclaim the throne from his usurping uncle, who fled south into the Tangut lands and was never heard of again.²⁵ Yisügei and To’oril then became *anda*, sworn brothers, an important social bond in an uncertain world.

When Temüjin turned nine, Yisügei delivered him to his in-laws, the family of Qonggirat chieftain Dei Sechen. Accepting hospitality on the way home, Yisügei was poisoned by Tatars and died after reaching his camp. Besides two wives and seven children – four sons and a daughter by Hö’elün, and two sons by a secondary wife of obscure origin – Yisügei also left Temüjin a legacy of enmity with the Tatars and friendship with the Kereyit khan. Abandoned by their Tayichi’ut relatives, Hö’elün’s household fended for itself. By the time a teenaged Temüjin set out to reclaim his Qonggirat bride Börte, he had killed off his elder half-brother (cementing an alliance with the younger, Belgütei), escaped from Tayichi’ut captivity, and recruited his first companion or *nökör*, Bo’orchu. Thus began what Golden has termed the “*nökör-ization* of the steppe.”²⁶

Yisügei’s *anda* To’oril is better known by the title Ong Khan (< Ch. *wang*, king, prince + Tu. *khan*, king), bestowed by the Jin in c. 1196 for helping to pacify restive Tatars. Temüjin renewed Yisügei’s *anda*-ship by presenting Ong Khan a black sable coat, Börte’s marriage gift. Soon Ong Khan was called to assist his young Mongol client in rescuing Börte from Merkit abduction (c. 1182–1184), in retaliation for Hö’elün’s seizure years earlier.²⁷ The successful raid involved a boyhood relation, his earliest *anda* Jamuqa, with whom Temüjin now joined households for a year or so, until their individual ambitions drove them apart. Temüjin’s eldest son Jochi (Mo. “guest”) was born at this time, and though his parents never held his uncertain paternity (probably Merkit) against him, his lineage never competed for the throne of the United Empire.

Subsequently, late in the 1180s, Temüjin was elected khan by his growing band of followers, at the behest of Borjigit elders. Other Borjigits flocked to Jamuqa’s camp, and at some point Temüjin suffered a serious defeat at his *anda*’s hands. Also a client of Ong Khan, Jamuqa lost credibility for his alleged

25 Meng Nan 1998, 40, summarizes Chinese views on the Tangut harboring of Kereyit fugitives.

26 Golden 2006, 59.

27 Cheng 1996, 27–34, reassesses Rashīd al-Dīn’s version of the Börte incident, rejected by Ratchnevsky 1991, 35, as “implausible.”

cruelty and fickle treatment of supposed allies. Ong Khan, meanwhile, was preoccupied with holding the throne against his brothers and Naiman half-siblings, whom the powerful Naiman Inanch Khan supported.²⁸ Ong Khan and his younger brother Jaqa Gambu both endured periods of exile to the south, in the Tangut and Qara Khitai realms. Jaqa Gambu, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, passed some years in the Tangut lands; assumed a position or received a title, hence his epithet *gambu* (commander, in Tangut); may have taken a wife; and reportedly married a daughter to the Tangut emperor.²⁹ Two of his daughters married sons of Temüjin (Jochi and Tolui), and Kereyit ties with border patrols, merchants, and ruling circles in Xia doubtless informed Chinggis Khan's later interests in that direction.

The Tatar campaign of 1196 brought a turning point in the balance of power on the plateau, accelerating conflict and the dissolution of the Kereyit khanate. Joining forces to punish unruly Tatars on behalf of Jin, Ong Khan and Temüjin garnered booty and honorary titles; Temüjin's title of *ja'ut quri*, read "commander of hundreds" by de Rachewiltz, though modest, was nevertheless a new distinction for a Mongol chief.³⁰ There followed a joint attack on the Naimans, in which Kereyit treachery backfired, giving Temüjin another victory and cause for caution toward his ally. Still, in c. 1201 they jointly opposed Jamuqa's effort to assert leadership as a *gürkhan* (the Qara Khitai royal title) over a coalition of Temüjin's enemies. On that occasion Temüjin eliminated his Tayichi'ut rivals, who had sided with Jamuqa, killing their elders and absorbing the rank and file. Crushing the Tatars once and for all in 1202 without Kereyit help, the Mongol khan fulfilled his blood debt by having all male Tatars taller than the "linchpin of a cart" put to the sword, and distributed the remaining women and children among his troops, keeping two sisters as wives for himself.³¹

Relations between the older Kereyit and younger Mongol khans finally dissolved in 1203. Ong Khan's jealous son and heir, Ilqa Senggüm, pressed his father to betray Temüjin. Warned of a trap on his way to seal a marriage alliance with Ong Khan, Temüjin fled with a few followers into the wastes of southeast Mongolia, fighting off a Kereyit rear attack. There the diminished Mongols regrouped, and a loyal band of followers "drank of the bitter water

28 Togan 1998, 65–85; Cheng 1996, chs. 1–2; and *SH*, 548–60, on the complexities of Kereyit royal politics and inter-tribal relationships.

29 Cheng 1996, 74–79; Togan 1998, 76–87; *JT*/Thackston, 52, 64, 101; Meng Nan 1998; Liang Songtao and Yang Fuxue 2008 hypothesize a later dating for Jaqa Gambu's sojourn in Xia.

30 *SH*, 493–94 and 647–48, on the import and use of such titles by steppe chieftains.

31 *SH*, 76–77.

of the Baljuna,” swearing an oath with Temüjin at a river or marsh of that name.³² This experience conferred great privilege on the “Baljuna men” in later years, although in the event prospects appeared bleak. In Mongol ranks at this time figured two Khitans, several Muslims, a Merkit, and several Kereyits.

In the summer of 1203, after a realignment of forces on the plateau had replenished Temüjin’s armies, the Mongols again engaged Kereyit armies, and though they suffered heavy losses, by autumn of that year the Kereyit khanate had collapsed under Mongol stealth and superior tactics.³³ Ong Khan fled west and, disheveled beyond recognition, was killed by a Naiman soldier; his son died in Central Asia, after passing through western Xia territory, proceeding on to Amdo, and ending up in the Tarim Basin.³⁴ Unlike the Tatars and Tayichi’uts, however, Kereyit nobles were spared and their forces absorbed into Mongol armies. Ong Khan’s brother Jaqa Gambu, because of his *quda* (in-law) relationship with Temüjin, was permitted to retain his subjects, but not long after he was executed on grounds of unspecified disloyalty.³⁵

Opposition to Temüjin’s emerging khanate now came only from the western Naimans, their Merkit allies, and Jamuqa’s people. When wooed by Naiman leader Tayang Khan to unite with him, the Önggüt chief Alaqush Digit Quri instead loyally informed Temüjin. By the end of 1204, the Naiman-led resistance had been shattered, its rank and file absorbed, its surviving leaders captured or in exile, to be hunted down and killed in coming years. In the *Secret History* version of his demise, Jamuqa was killed at his own request and without the shedding of blood, an execution reserved for high-ranking or noble enemies.³⁶ To all intents and purposes, the inhabitants of the plateau now constituted a new, united Mongol people.

The balance of power had shifted south of the plateau as well. A declining Qara Khitai power faced an aggressive Khwārazmian expansion and unrest on many fronts. A long peace between the Jin and Xia states began unraveling at the end of the twelfth century. Treaty relations between Jin and the southern Chinese Song court, always strained, lapsed into open war in the first decade of the thirteenth century. The Mongol khan about to become Chinggis and his advisers indeed benefited from these circumstances, but world conquest was not yet on their agenda.

32 Cleaves 1955 is the classic study of the Baljuna event and its remembrance.

33 Allsen 1994, 341, following Cleaves’s reconstruction of the sequence of events (389–91).

34 See Atwood 2014. 35 *SH*, 140, 789.

36 *JT*/Thackston, 107–8, wherein a nephew of Temüjin had him hacked to death.

Managing Institutional and Social Change, 1205–1210

In the first decade of the thirteenth century the new Mongol-led steppe polity acquired its basic infrastructure and social forms, which underwent continuous modification with subsequent military expansion. Through 1218 and arguably to the end of his life, Chinggis's priorities were eradicating recalcitrant hold-outs, raiding sedentary neighbors for booty, punishing the haughty Jurchens, and expanding trade opportunities to enrich his realm and subjects.³⁷

To celebrate their successes and formalize the new steppe power, the Mongol khan convoked a *quriltai* (*qurilta*, assembly) in the spring of 1206 (Year of the Tiger) on the banks of the Onan river, near Burqan Qaldun. There "all the people of the felt-walled tents" gathered, "hoisted the white standard with nine tails," and acknowledged Temüjin as their khan with the title Chinggis ("the fierce"), bestowed by the soothsayer Teb Tengri.³⁸ As in the case of Ong Khan, Chinggis's title became the name used from then on and retrospectively in most records of the era. The title *qa'an* (Great Khan) was conferred posthumously upon Chinggis, probably by his grandson Qubilai in c. 1264.³⁹ The color white and number nine being auspicious among Altaic peoples, the white standard (*tuq*) with nine tails became the khan's exclusive symbol of sovereignty over the steppe peoples. No later than 1211 the Mongols began calling their polity the Great Mongol Nation (*Yeke Mongol Ulus*), meaning Mongol Empire, modeled on the Chinese name of the Jin state (*Da Jin guo*, Great Jin State) and appearing in Chinese records as *Da Menggu guo* or *Da chao* (the Great Court).⁴⁰

Feasting and distribution of rewards, essential elements of any Mongol assembly, articulated and consecrated the constitutional foundation for the imperial establishment and its new ruling elite. A desire to replace lawlessness and violence with order and discipline in Mongol society drove the khan's institutional reforms. The reordering of steppe peoples progressed through the recognition of followers who had performed heroic deeds and noteworthy

37 Buell 2007 opines that although conquest began with Chinggis, empire began with Ögödei.

38 De Rachewiltz 1989; and *SH*, 133, 459–60, on the bestowal and meaning of "Chinggis." *SH*, 759, on the white standard. *HWC*, 39.

39 *YS*, 74.1832 records his canonization as Yuan Taizu in 1264. On the titles khan/*qa'an*: de Rachewiltz 1983.

40 *SH*, 760–61; Xiao 1985 (1994, 23–47) argues that the *yuan* of the dynastic name has precisely the meaning of *da* in *Da Chao*: great. The earliest extant record of the form *yeke mongqol ulus* occurs in the 1246 seal of Güyük Khan. See Munkh-Erdene 2011, 213, 222–23.

acts of loyal service. Chinggis bestowed eighty-eight appointments as commander (*noyan*) of a thousand (*mingghan* or chilarch) on his *nökörs*, some commanders with several *mingghan* under them for a total of ninety-five thousands.⁴¹ Following the decimal tradition of organizing steppe armies, each *mingghan* was further subdivided into units of one hundred, and each hundred into units of ten. Departing from steppe tradition, the reform further redistributed the majority of conquered peoples, each nomad warrior with his household and animals, into new army units within a military organization that partially supplanted previous tribal affiliations. The khan thereby created ninety-five regiments, each theoretically fielding a thousand soldiers, though actual unit strength varied, and effectively incorporated all subjects into the Mongol army, the backbone of society.⁴² Unconditional loyalty was owed to one's superior officer and unconditional obedience to the new laws, or *jasag*.

Heading the ranks of commanders were Chinggis's renowned captains, the "Four Steeds" (Bo'orchu, Muqali, Boroqul, Chila'un) and "Four Hounds" (Jebe, Qubilai, Jelme, Sübe'etei).⁴³ The new noyans included eight sons-in-law (*güregen*) of Chinggis, *güregen* now an honorary epithet appended to one's name. Many *güregen* enjoyed the special privilege of controlling regiments of their own peoples.⁴⁴ Other rewards included the bestowal of women, a special seat close to the khan on ceremonial occasions, or the status of *darkhan* (Persian *tarkhan*) – freed from customary obligations (in tax or labor), or from punishment (the Ninefold Pardon).⁴⁵

At the top of the hierarchy stood Bo'orchu and Muqali, Chinggis's earliest companions, now commanding units of ten thousand (*tümen* or myriarchy, comprising ten *mingghan*) as generals of the right (western) and left (eastern) wings of the army respectively. Muqali's own thousand comprised his Jalayir tribesmen. Both generals received the Ninefold Pardon, exempting them from punishment for up to nine crimes.

At the core and apex of Chinggis's administration was the imperial guard or *kesbig*, now greatly expanded from the day and night guards that in earlier years protected and served his household. Combining domestic or civilian tasks with security functions, and divided as before into day and night guards serving

41 *SH*, 133–34, 763. See *JT*/Thackston, 272–79, for another account of Chinggis's military reform; May 2007, ch. 2; Kim 2013 for discrepancies in the records of these appointments and the units' disposition.

42 Smith 1999, 39–40 n. 2 weighs arguments over relative unit strength.

43 *SH*, 706. De Rachewiltz 1993, 3–12, on Muqali (1170–1223); Buell 1993, 13–26, on Sübe'etei (Sübötei, 1176–1248).

44 See Broadbridge 2018, ch. 4.

45 On the import of *darkhan* and sources discussing it: *SH*, 295.

rotational shifts, the *kesbig* comprised ten thousand men recruited from the sons of regimental commanders as well as from talented soldiers in the ranks. Hostage sons of newly allied foreign rulers also enrolled in the imperial guard, as per the terms of surrender to the Mongol khan. A trusted pool of servitors who guarded access to the khan, the *kesbig* provided entry into the highest circles of the new ruling elite and enjoyed tremendous political influence.⁴⁶

According to the *Secret History*, the task of keeping track of the new order was delegated to Shigi Qutuqu (c. 1180–1260), a Tatar foundling raised in Temüjin's household (Börte's *ordo*) along with other orphaned juveniles rescued over the years.⁴⁷ In this position he may have replaced Belgütei, who at one time served as a "state minister" and *yeke jarghuchi*, according to Chinese sources.⁴⁸ When Tatatonga, an Uighur secretary at the Naiman court captured in 1204, explained the function of his seal to Chinggis, the khan immediately employed him to teach the youngsters in his household how to read and write in a script adapted by Tatatonga for Mongolian.⁴⁹ Although his first pupils may have included Qutuqu, who was accordingly appointed to create records of rewards, appointments, regulations, and legal judgments, scribes under Qutuqu's authority probably did the actual work. Later known as the "Blue Book" (Mo. *köke debter*), these original records are no longer extant, and their relationship to Chinggis Khan's much-invoked *jasag* (*yasa*), or legal ordinances, remains unresolved.⁵⁰

Shigi Qutuqu's prominent position also earned him the Ninefold Pardon, and command of a thousand. Speculation that Qutuqu may have composed the text of the *Secret History* is encouraged by its flattering portrayal of him as an equal to Chinggis Khan, and his long career of administrative as well as battlefield service.⁵¹

The Golden Lineage (*Altan Uruq*)

Although the adopted children of the khan appeared prominently in the ranks of the new military and administrative elite, no Kiyat relative of Chinggis received such appointment.⁵² They presided over their own

46 Hsiao 1978, 39–44; May 2007, 32–36. 47 On Shigi Qutuqu: Buell 1993, 75–95.

48 YS, 117.2905. Atwood 2007a, 8, asserts that *SH* errs in giving Shigi Qutuqu this post in 1206.

49 YS, 124.3048; Buell 1993, 96.

50 *SH*, 771–74; on the *jasag*: 1:568. De Rachewiltz 1993 and Morgan 2005, 291–308, are recent additions to the literature on the *jasag*.

51 Buell 1993, 90–94; Atwood 2007b.

52 On the death of Chinggis's uncles by 1204: *SH*, 652. On the political functions of nomadic kinship designations: Atwood, 2010.

household establishments and troops. Loyalties within the imperial clan were divided: Golden Kin expected to receive appropriate shares (*qubi*) in the fruits of conquest and consult together over the selection of the next khan, while the khan strove to maximize his personal power to apportion shares and assure that the bulk of the family property went to his own sons, in this case those by senior wife Börte.

Initial grants of subject peoples (warriors with households and herds) to the khan's relatives were probably made between 1206 and 1211. Chinggis gave between eight thousand and ten thousand subjects jointly to his mother Hö'elün and youngest brother Temüge Otchigin, the hearth prince who by custom stayed to care for surviving parents.⁵³ Eldest son Jochi received nine thousand, second son Chaghadaï eight thousand, third and fourth sons Ögödei and Tolui each five thousand, younger brother (Jochi) Qasar three thousand; two thousand went to a nephew of deceased brother Qachi'un, and 1,500 to half-brother Belgütei. Grantees had their own campgrounds (*ordo*), but territory did not yet define their status in the new order, except that the khan's mother and youngest brother remained in their ancestral homeland. Son Jochi was soon dispatched to pacify the Forest Peoples, and Siberia became part of the appanage apportioned to him.

Rivalry had intermittently strained the khan's close relationship with his ambitious and brawny brother Jochi Qasar. Teb Tengri, a son of Father Mönglik, an old household retainer, fanned the flames of that rivalry and precipitated his own demise.⁵⁴ A charismatic diviner, Teb Tengri's canny ability to interpret Heaven's intent in favor of Chinggis had earned the khan's respect but inflated the prophet's pride. When Teb Tengri insinuated that Heaven had taken an interest in Qasar, only the intervention of their mother Hö'elün and Börte saved Qasar from a dire fate, and opened Chinggis's eyes to the personal and political threat posed by his prognosticator. Qasar was permitted to sever Teb Tengri's spine, spilling no blood. Although shamans and diviners remained indispensable members of the Mongol khan's retinue of advisers, Teb Tengri's privileged channel to Heaven now opened directly to the khan himself.⁵⁵

53 *SH*, 166–67, 863–65; *JT*/Thackston, 279–81, supplies variant figures: 4,000 for Jochi, Chaghadaï, and Ögödei, while Tolui inherited Chinggis's own army. See Kim 2013 for a reappraisal of these grants.

54 *SH*, 168–74; 869–88; *JT*/Thackston, 89–90.

55 Endicott-West 1999, 224–39, on Mongol use of shamans and other diviners.

Rebels and Subjects in Central Asia

As the Mongol ruler was tightening his authority over the plateau, external challenges also claimed his attention, initially from the refugee Kereyit, Merkit, and Naiman princes. Elimination of these resisters gained the Mongols new partners in Central Asia and valuable intelligence about the Khwārazm-Shāh and his relations with the Qara Khitai. Early border incursions helped to replenish treasuries for bestowing rewards and refurbishing the royal establishment in central Mongolia, while the mushrooming Mongol hunger for resources stimulated the search for expanded trade contacts. A raid on the Jin border for horses, possibly early in 1203 after Chinggis's flight into southeast Mongolia, is recorded in the Chinese biography of Yelü Tuhua, younger brother of Yelü Ahai, two Khitan veterans of Baljuna.⁵⁶ Yelü Ahai participated in or led a raid on the Tangut Xia western border in the spring of 1205, which netted "many people and camels" and other booty.⁵⁷

Whether in pursuit of the Kereyit rebel Ilqa Senggüm, who escaped south in 1203, to punish the Xia for harboring earlier Kereyit rebels, or to probe the Tanguts' western defenses, this Mongol raiding party gathered supplies and intelligence in advance of the 1206 enthronement. Information already at Chinggis's disposal from early Tangut defectors or Tangut officers in the Kereyit Jaqa Gambu's retinue doubtless suggested that Xia Huanzong's court would not welcome a relationship which required the Tangut emperor's subordination to the Mongol khan or betrayal of peace with Jin. A second probe took place late in 1207, after Huanzong's forced replacement on the throne early in 1206 by a cousin (Xiangzong, r. 1206–1211).⁵⁸ Sometime in 1207 Jurchen tribal allies (*jiu* or *jüyin*) along the northwest Jin border with Xia revolted and followed the Önggüt in tendering allegiance to Chinggis, further weakening Jin border defenses.⁵⁹ That winter, Mongol troops attacked the Xia border fortification at Uraqai (Wolohai/Wulahai), strategically located northwest of the Yellow River loop near the Jin border, and withdrew with booty in spring of 1208. With the help of new *jiu* and Önggüt allies, they had identified Uraqai as an important staging base for operations against the Jin, and returned in 1209 to secure it.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ YS, 149.3532; Buell 1979a, 125 n. 21; Buell 1993, 112–121.

⁵⁷ YS, 1.13; YS, 150.3548–50. Ratchnevsky 1991, 106.

⁵⁸ Dunnell 1991; Dai 1924, 26/10b–11a, 12b–13a. The oft-repeated claim that the 1205 Mongol raid led the Xia capital to be renamed Zhongxing is inaccurate (see Dunnell 1989).

⁵⁹ Buell 1979a, 67–69; Dunnell 1991, 182 n. 22 for studies of *jiu*, which included Tangut and other ethnic elements. SH, 300–2.

⁶⁰ Dunnell 1992b on location of Uraqai/Wolohai and the Xia military intendancies.

At the same time, the flight of the Naiman prince Güchülük in 1204 west across the Altai mountains to his uncle Buyirūq Khan, along with Merkit prince Toqto'a and his sons, prompted Mongol operations between 1206 and 1209 under Chinggis's son Jochi and Sübe'etei. These campaigns succeeded in killing Buyirūq Khan and Toqto'a, chasing the survivors from the plateau south into Central Asia (or north into Siberia) by 1208, and securing the allegiance of the Oirats and other groups in western and northwestern Mongolia.⁶¹ Güchülük managed to insinuate himself into the Qara Khitai court of the Gürkhan Zhigulu (r. 1178–1212), at Balāsāghūn, and married the ruler's daughter. He gathered an army from refugees of the Mongol unification, promising to help the gürkhan reimpose his authority over rebellious vassals and menacing neighbors. Instead Güchülük subverted the gürkhan, pillaged, raided, and intrigued with the Khwārazm-Shāh Muḥammad. Finally in 1212 Güchülük usurped the throne; Zhigulu died a captive in 1213.⁶²

The sons of the Merkit Toqto'a, meanwhile, in vain sought refuge with the Gaochang (Beshbaliq) Uighurs, who had just murdered a Qara Khitai Buddhist monk overseer.⁶³ When an emissary from the refugees arrived, the Uighur ruler (*idikut*) had him killed and sent troops, perhaps in support of Sübe'etei's army, to expel the Merkits; one of Toqto'a's sons made his way to Güchülük. Buell suggests that this was when a Mongol army first crossed paths with the Khwārazm-Shāh, though most accounts date the elimination of Merkit remnants under Sübe'etei to 1216.⁶⁴ The Uighur *idikut*, Barchuq Art Tegin, welcomed an envoy from Chinggis Khan in spring of 1209, either before or after the above event, and returned a message of submission and gifts, no doubt hoping to escape the consequences of his rebellion against Qara Khitai authority.

Following up this foray, the Mongols sent an embassy to the Qarluq ruler, Arslan Khan (Lion Khan, a title used as a name) at Almaliq north of the Ili river, to encourage his separation from both Qara Khitai sovereignty and rebels against Chinggis Khan.⁶⁵ The Arslan Khan thus also appeared on the Kerulen river in spring of 1211, when the Uighur *idikut* was presented in person before Chinggis Khan, who honored the Uighur chief as a "fifth son"

61 Buell 1992 addresses chronological confusion in the sources over these events and later engagements up through 1218. *SH*, 1046–49, presents an alternate chronology.

62 Biran 2005a, 74–84.

63 Biran 2005a, 74; Brose 2007, 75–76; Allsen 1983b, 246–47; *JT*/Thackston, 205–6.

64 *SH*, 1049. Buell 1992, 11–14; Biran 2005a, 75, following Allsen's 1994 reconstruction of the events of 1209–10.

65 Biran 2005a, 74–75, 81; Arslan Khan's departure to Mongolia allowed a rival to occupy Almaliq.

and betrothed him to his younger daughter, Altun Beki.⁶⁶ The Qarluq ruler, too, received a Mongol princess, but was demoted in title from a khan to a “Tajik”: Arslan Sartaqtai.⁶⁷ More significant to the Mongols, the cosmopolitan Uighurs contributed invaluable expertise and experience to an expanding Mongol imperial administration.⁶⁸

Preparations for the Jin Campaign

Before the Mongols could track down and eliminate Güchülik, larger-scale operations against the Xia and Jin were unrolled between 1209 and 1211. As a Jin ally and source of supplies, the Xia state had to be made pliable before Chinggis could advance against Jin, his ultimate target. In autumn of 1209, after the Uighur surrender, Mongol troops crossed the Tangut border west of Uraqai, met and defeated a Xia army, and overwhelmed the garrison at Uraqai. Turning south, they advanced into the Alashan, crushed another Tangut army at the capital garrison of Keyimen, and then laid siege to the capital, Zhongxing (present-day Yinchuan). They diverted the waters from several Yellow River canals to flood the city, but the dikes broke, inundating their own camps and ending the siege. Negotiations through some Tangut captives, however, secured the surrender of the Xia ruler (called Burkhan, Buddha king, in the *Secret History*), a princess (Chaqa) for Chinggis, and a large quantity of goods and livestock.⁶⁹ The Mongol army withdrew early the next year (1210). Chinggis had triumphed over a powerful sedentary state and secured his rear flank; careful preparations for the Jin campaign were underway.

In 1210, while Mongol horses fattened up in their summer pastures, the Tanguts began to harass the Jin border and Jin–Xia relations deteriorated rapidly. In the summer of 1211 another coup brought a new Tangut prince to the throne. Shenzong (r. 1211–1223) reigned as the first (and last?) top examination graduate (Ch. *jìnshi*) to become an emperor in East Asia, perhaps not the best qualifications for the job he faced.⁷⁰ Diplomatic relations with Jin

66 Allsen 1983b, 247; Zhao 2008, 167; *YS*, 122.3000; *JT*/Thackston, 76, suggests that Chinggis betrothed Altun to the *idikut* after 1218, for supporting the Western Campaign; in any event that marriage never took place. On Altun/Al Altan: Broadbridge 2018, 119 n. 44.

67 Biran 2005a, 75; *JT*/Thackston, 78, 213; *HWC*, 74–75, places Arslan Khan in Qayaliq, and another Qarluq upstart in Almaliq, who also became a Mongol vassal; 76 n. 5 on Arslan Khan as a title (citing Muḥammad Qazwīnī).

68 Allsen 1983b; Brose 2007.

69 *YS*, 1.14; Dunnell 1991; the *SH* (177–78) and *Shengwu qinzheng lu* accounts (Wang, 74b–75a) are misplaced.

70 *JS*, 134.2871; *SS*, 486/14027.

ended at the close of 1212, and resumed only in 1224. The Jurchens were thus embroiled in armed conflict with Xia after a fruitless war instigated by Song in 1206–1208 had sapped their resources. Disorder at court prompted disgruntled Jin officials to defect to the Mongols. On the Jin throne sat a new ruler, whose disputed legitimacy left him known only as Weishao wang (r. 1208–1213), an arrogant man whom Chinggis had met on a tribute mission and loathed.⁷¹ Chinggis therefore began the Jin campaign by severing tribute relations in 1210. With the neutralization of the Xia frontier and the allegiance of the Uighurs and Qarlucs, the trade routes westward and friendship of merchants were assured.

War in North China

Mongol invasion armies gathered on the Kerulen in spring of 1211, and marched south to the Önggüts' Gobi borderlands, Chinggis's base of operations against north China. Chinggis led the center wing with Jebe and Sübe'etei; Muqali commanded the left (east) wing; and Chinggis's sons Jochi, Chaghadaï, and Ögödei headed the right (west) wing of the army. Crossing the Jin frontier, Muqali's forces overcame key Jurchen fortifications in Hebei, opening the way south to Juyongguan, the critical pass just north of the Jin capital at Zhongdu (present-day Beijing).⁷² Jin defenses collapsed, allowing Mongol troops to pillage the countryside around Zhongdu.

Meanwhile, the right wing of the army, under Chinggis's sons, moved into Jin's western territories in Shanxi to ravage the land and intercept troops trying to march east to defend Zhongdu. Gathering booty and intelligence, the Mongols withdrew in winter to their southern Gobi staging area and then north to their summer pastures, abandoning the towns or territories they had taken, which were soon reoccupied even as defectors streamed to the Mongol camp.⁷³

In autumn of 1212 the Mongols returned; by early 1213 they had recaptured the refortified pass at Juyongguan and pressed southward.⁷⁴ Mongol armies poured over the Jin heartland north of the Yellow River valley, and spent the spring and summer ravaging and ransacking the countryside. Late in the year

71 *CHC6*, 251–52. 72 De Rachewiltz 1993, 4–6; *SH*, 175–77, 888–902.

73 This reconstruction largely follows *CHC6*, 252; and Allsen 1994, 35. See also *JS*, 13, 293–95; *YS*, 1, 15–16; Li 1970, 249–75.

74 De Rachewiltz 1993, 4, suggests that Muqali and Chinggis remained at the base camp directing operations in 1212.

the invaders returned north, this time securing frontier passes and leaving an army to lay siege to the Jin capital at Zhongdu.

The blockade of Zhongdu ended early in 1214, owing in part to Mongol inexperience with siege warfare and an outbreak of disease among troops and animals. Chaos at the Jin court, drought and famine in north China, and a change of throne compelled the surrender of the new Jin emperor, Xuanzong (r. 1214–1223). Suing for peace in spring of 1214, Xuanzong offered the Mongols costly goods (gold, silver, silks, horses) and a royal princess in marriage. Satisfied, Chinggis withdrew from Zhongdu, and sent his brother Qasar and Muqali, along with several Jin defectors, to assist Mongol armies in Manchuria.⁷⁵

A separate invasion army under Jebe had moved into the Liao river valley of Manchuria in autumn of 1212, and by the end of that year had temporarily occupied and plundered Dongjing (Liaoyang), the Jin Eastern Capital. Unrest broke out among the local Khitan population, chafing under Jurchen rule, facilitating the Mongol assault on Jin defenses in the Liao river basin in 1213. By 1215 Dongjing had become the base of a Khitan rebel regime under Yelü Liuge (1164–1220), a Mongol ally. Chinese and Khitans now swelled Mongol forces, and were organized into special auxiliary armies under Jurchen and Khitan commanders.⁷⁶ The Jurchens had effectively lost Manchuria, their homeland, while Shandong and Hebei succumbed to unrest and rebellion in the wake of the Mongol-induced devastation.⁷⁷

Shortly after the Mongols accepted Jurchen peace terms, the Jin court decided to abandon the devastated region of Zhongdu and relocate southwest to their southern capital at Bianliang (Kaifeng), on the south bank of the Yellow River in the fertile agricultural heartland of north China. When this news reached Chinggis in autumn, he ordered an immediate resumption of the siege. Bitter resistance from the remaining Jin garrison prolonged the blockade, bringing Chinggis back to take charge of Mongol operations, now largely waged by contingents of Chinese and Khitan troops under Mongol command. The starving city surrendered in May of 1215, to be sacked and burned. Mongol officers oversaw the orderly inventory of the Jin treasuries, in which effort Shigi Qutuqu gained a reputation for scrupulous probity.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ De Rachewiltz 1993, 5; YS, 119.2930–31.

⁷⁶ Yanai 1963, 74–91, on Mongol operations and local regimes in Manchuria. Prominent among Jin defectors was the family of Shi Tianze (1202–1275), on whom: Hsiao 1993, 27–45.

⁷⁷ Aubin 1987 examines local responses to the turn of events in north China.

⁷⁸ Ratchnevsky 1993, 80–82.

Chinggis returned to the Kerulen in 1216, leaving trusted officers such as Ja'far Khwāja, a Muslim merchant and Baljuna veteran who had negotiated the terms of the Jin surrender in 1214, to serve as Mongol representatives (*darughachi*) in the conquered regions, while Muqali took charge of mopping-up operations.⁷⁹ In 1217, while conferring with Chinggis in Mongolia, Muqali formally received the hereditary title of *gui-ong* (> Ch. *guo wang*, prince of state) and appointment as supreme commander of Mongol forces in north China, with his headquarters at Zhongdu (Yan) and command of 23,000 Mongol and Önggüt troops, supplemented by a large number of Khitan and Chinese auxiliaries.⁸⁰

In the view of some historians, the fall of Zhongdu in 1215 marked a turning point in Mongol behavior vis-à-vis north China; conquest and long-term control, if not outright occupation, took the place of raid and hoped-for tributary relations with a pacified Jin court.⁸¹ Chinggis still viewed the former Jin realm as a source of wealth for Mongol exploitation, not yet as part of an expanding empire, but had adjusted his tactics to developments on the ground. The immensely enriched Mongol treasuries now made new initiatives possible.

Relations with Khwārazm and Sultan Muḥammad

Shortly after the fall of Zhongdu, the contemporary historian of the Delhi Sultanate, Minhāj al-Dīn Jūzjānī, reports that an embassy from the Khwārazm-Shāh, Sultan Muḥammad, reached Chinggis Khan's camp sometime in the latter part of 1215, seeking information about the new Mongol power; he had evidently learned of Zhongdu's submission.⁸² Chinggis sent them back laden with gifts and a request for friendly trade relations. He further took measures to ensure the safe passage of merchants traveling to and from his territories; those with precious wares were to be brought directly to him. Other merchants from Central Asia who found their way to the khan were treated handsomely and encouraged to spread tidings of the Mongols' desire for peaceful commercial exchanges.⁸³ Events to the west now claimed the khan's attention, notably news of Güchülük's military

79 YS, 120.2960–61; Ratchnevsky 1991, 110–11; Allsen 1989, 87; Jūzjānī 1881, 954.

80 De Rachewiltz 1993, 6–7; YS, 119.2932. 81 Biran 2007, 52.

82 Allsen 1989, 87; Jūzjānī 1881, 963–66. *SH*, 1049, dates the embassy to 1216–1217, in which case the envoys would have traveled to Mongolia, not north China; Jūzjānī refers specifically to conditions in north China.

83 *HWC*, 78; Endicott-West 1989a, 127–33, on the antecedents of Mongol merchant associations.

successes in the Tarim Basin (Kashghar and Khotan) and his depredations against the Qarluqs at Almaliq, Mongol allies.⁸⁴ It was time to eliminate the Qara Khitan pretender, who posed a clear threat to Chinggis and to Mongol commercial prospects out west.

Confusion in the sources obscures the order of events over the next two or three years. Sometime in 1216 (or 1217) Chinggis dispatched Jebe against Güchülük. Shortly thereafter he sent son Jochi, separately or with Sübe'etei and other generals, to track down the Merkits under Qudu who had fled into the Qipchaq steppes west of Lake Balkhash. Jochi also quelled an uprising among the Forest Peoples of southern Siberia. After gathering Uighur and Qarluq reinforcements, Jebe defeated a Qara Khitai force at Balāsāghūn and accepted the surrender of several local leaders, who helped them track Güchülük from Kashghar southwest into the mountainous region of Badakhshān in the Pamirs, where he was killed early in 1218.⁸⁵

After successfully completing their mission, the forces of Jochi and Sübe'etei, according to Juwaynī, encountered the army of the Khwārazm-Shāh, and despite Jochi's efforts to avoid an engagement, a battle ensued that frightened the ambitious Muḥammad (perhaps an interpolation of Muslim authors seeking to explain the later disaster).⁸⁶ Whatever actually happened and when, it is certain that Sultan Muḥammad nurtured his own ambitions for the former Qara Khitai realm, and suspicions about Chinggis Khan's intentions. The territories formerly under Güchülük's control in Eastern Turkestan and around Balāsāghūn as well as north to Lake Balkhash had now passed under Mongol suzerainty. Erstwhile Qara Khitai vassals in Transoxania (the former western Qarakhanids) had fallen to the Khwārazm-Shāh by 1212, including the town of Otrar on the Syr Darya (Jaxartes) river, which had resisted the imposition of agents of the sultan, who made his capital at Samarqand.⁸⁷ Qara Khitai ceased to exist, removing the buffer between the Mongols and Sultan Muḥammad and leaving a vacuum in the Ferghana valley separating the two powers. Muḥammad meanwhile turned west to challenge 'Abbāsīd legitimacy (as had his father) by marching on Baghdad in 1218, where a frightened caliph tried to neutralize the Khwārazm-Shāh's force by secretly contacting Qara Khitai soldiers in it. After

84 Biran 2005a, 81–83; al-Juwaynī/ reports that Güchülük killed the Ayalıq ruler Ozar (81 n.174).

85 HWC, 66–68; SH, 844–45; Biran 2005a, 83 n. 188, 194, for sources relevant to these events.

86 HWC, 69, 369–73; JT/Thackston, 235; Ratchnevsky 1991, 118–20. 87 Biran 2005a, 78, 86.

intercepting these communications, Muḥammad decided to abandon Iraq and return to deal with the Mongols.⁸⁸

Following up the Khwārazm-Shāh's earlier embassy of 1215, Chinggis decided to seize the initiative by outfitting a trade delegation to the sultan's land, as a demonstration of goodwill. He instructed his family (sons, daughters, wives) and military officers to select several Muslims from their entourage and supply them with silver and gold "so that they might proceed with this party to the sultan's territory, engage in commerce there and so acquire strange and precious wares."⁸⁹ This party of about 100 persons probably departed at around the same time as the three envoys sent by Chinggis, to deliver a message of friendly intent to the sultan. Central Asian Muslims and probably merchants themselves, the envoys arrived at Bukhara in the spring of 1218, presumably after the sultan had returned from Baghdad.⁹⁰ Although Muḥammad found Chinggis's message insulting, he apparently overcame his suspicions of the Mongols on this occasion, after a close interrogation of one of them, Maḥmūd Khwārazmī (Yalavach).⁹¹ But the proposed treaty of trade and friendship did not materialize.

The Mongols' persistent promotion of trade, the logical destination for a portion of their China spoils, and their employment of merchants in diverse capacities stand out as striking features of their evolving state and of the events that were about to catapult them into the conquest of distant lands. Muslim historians uniformly condemn the Khwārazm-Shāh as a rash and arrogant ruler, hated by many of his subjects and at odds with his own family and followers. Growing awareness of Mongol troops operating to the north and east of his domains with increasing determination and deadly intent exacerbated the sultan's fears over the very tenuous hold he himself exercised over his own recently acquired subjects. Although in the Muslim sources the Mongols are often praised as liberators from religious oppression at the hands of either the Qara Khitai or Güchülük, or even the sultan, in fact the clash between the Mongols and Muḥammad had little to do with religion and everything to do with wealth and power.

88 Biran 2005a, 86–87.

89 *HWC*, 79; his number of 450 delegation members has been rejected by some scholars in favor of 100, reported by Chinggis's Kitan secretary Yelü Chucai (de Rachewiltz 1962 and 1993, 140; Allsen 1989, 91 n. 20).

90 Allsen 1989, 88–89; *JT*/Thackston, 234, states that the ambassadors traveled with the merchants to Otrar.

91 Bartold 1977, 396–97.

Otrar and the Conquest of Central Asia, 1219–1224

Sometime in 1218, Chinggis's trade delegation arrived at the Khwārazmian frontier city of Otrar on the Syr Darya, due west of Balāsāghūn, the former Qara Khitai capital.⁹² The local governor, Inalchuq (Inal Khan or Ghayir Khan), a relative of the Khwārazm-Shāh, detained them and sent a messenger to Muḥammad claiming that the merchants were spies (merchants indeed gathered intelligence to profit their ventures). Whether motivated by greed or by injured pride (he was informally greeted by a trader who knew him), or by authorization of Muḥammad, Inalchuq had the merchants put to death and their goods seized and sent to the sultan.⁹³ One man managed to escape and convey the bad news back to his overlord, who ascended Burqan Qaldun to pray to Heaven for the strength to do what had to be done.⁹⁴

Chinggis dispatched another emissary to Central Asia to reprimand the sultan for his treachery, and to attempt a settlement by requesting the extradition of the guilty Inalchuq along with the confiscated merchandise.⁹⁵ The sultan perhaps understood this notice of the Mongol intention to punish the misdeed as Chinggis's declaration of war. Nevertheless, as the Otrar governor was a brother or cousin of his mother Terken Khatun, a Qangli princess and the real power behind the Khwārazmian throne, Muḥammad refused. His subsequent execution of the Mongol envoy followed a pattern in the tumultuous relationship between the insecure rulers of Khwārazm and their neighbors.⁹⁶ Around 1207 he had killed a Qara Khitai envoy; his father Tekish (r. c. 1193–1200), as a prince, in 1177 executed a royal Qara Khitai emissary but by the 1190s was rumored to be planning to “send the Caliph's head to the Qara Khitai.”⁹⁷ For his part, Chinggis Khan needed no further provocation; merchants and envoys enjoyed immunity on the steppe and such an overt violation of protocol demanded punishment. Preparations for war began at a *quriltai* summoned to plan the campaign.

92 Schwarz 1998, 189; Bartold 1977, 397.

93 Bartold 1977, 397–98, compares the accounts of Ibn al-Athīr and Nasawī. Allsen 1989, 89–990; Ratchnevsky 1991, 122; *HWC*, 79–81; *JT/Thackston*, 234; *YS*, 1.20, dated to the sixth month of 1219, with the Mongol response to the event.

94 In Jūzjānī 1881, 966–67, the survivor was a camel driver.

95 Allsen 1989, 90, citing Muḥammad Nasawī, secretary to the sultan's son Jalāl al-Dīn, on diplomatic exchanges between Chinggis and Khwārazm. In *HWC*, 81.

96 Ratchnevsky 1991, 124; *HWC*, 338–39, 358, 394, 465–68, on Terken Khatun's career (Terken Khatun is evidently a title rather than name). *JT/Thackston*, 145, on Inalchuq's relationship to the sultan. Biran 2007, 55.

97 Biran 2005a, 56, 62, 74.

By the end of 1218 and the start of 1219, the armies of Sübe'etei and Jebe were returning to Mongolia, Jochi's pacification of the Forest Peoples (Oirat, Qirghiz, Buriat) was successfully drawing to a close, and the Tarim Basin and adjacent domains were under Mongol control. The center and right-wing armies began assembling along the upper reaches of the Irtysh river in the Altai mountains of western Mongolia; the left-wing army remained in north China under Muqali. A request lodged with the Tangut court at Zhongxing sometime late in 1217 or 1218 to send troops in support of the Mongol mission met, in the *Secret History* relation of the event, with a brusque dismissal, later invoked in that epic as justification for Chinggis's annihilation of Xia. The episode may be fictional, or may rework a demand to support Muqali against the Jin, with which the Xia complied in 1221.⁹⁸

Before embarking against Muhammad, the roughly sixty-year-old khan was urged by his Tatar wife Yisüi to settle the question of his succession. Although the spirited family discussion recorded in the *Secret History* may be a later interpolation, Chinggis apparently designated in writing that his third son, the affable Ögödei, should succeed him as the candidate most acceptable to all.⁹⁹ When that occurred and whether or not Ögödei's status as crown prince affected the prosecution of the war against Khwārazm remain points of speculation. Clearly the brothers, who all accompanied their father on the campaign, were mindful of their own personal stake in the conquest of new territories.

Joining the khan's personal campaign staff was a newly recruited Khitan adviser and secretary, Yelü Chucai, dubbed "Long Beard" (Urtu Saqal) by Chinggis. His account of the campaign turned up in Japan only in 1926.¹⁰⁰ A literate and cosmopolitan Buddhist, Yelü Chucai earned the khan's respect for his acute powers of prognostication. Yelü Chucai summered with Chinggis Khan on the Irtysh in 1219 and set out with the army in fall, traveling part of the time with Chaghadai. Units of conquered or surrendered peoples from north China and former Qara Khitai vassals reinforced the expeditionary army, including Chinese experts in siegecraft and persons familiar with the route and conditions of travel.¹⁰¹ The size of Mongol forces, always a closely guarded military secret, at this juncture has been estimated at 150,000.¹⁰² The various contingents reassembled on the steppes of Qayaliq and advanced to Otrar.

98 Dunnell 1991, 172–74; YS, 1.20, following JS, 15.334; SH, 189, 937–39.

99 SH, 181–88, 922–37; YS, 2.29; HWC, 185; JT/Thackston, 303–4, has the final settlement occurring during the Tangut campaign of 1225–1227.

100 De Rachewiltz 1993, 138–47. 101 HWC, 82.

102 May 2007, 28; Bartold 1977, 404–58, on the Western Campaign, 404 on the size of the Mongol army.

Reaching the Khwārazm-Shāh's frontier at the Syr Darya, the armies divided; Chinggis left his elder sons to take the city of Otrar and other towns along or north of the river. Jochi was tasked as well with neutralizing the nomadic Qangli and Qipchaq Turks in the steppes north of the Syr Darya who were allied to the Khwārazm-Shāh.¹⁰³ Rather than confront the smaller Mongol forces in open battle and contrary to the advice of his son and officers, Muḥammad divided up his huge army of 500,000 to garrison his urban centers, swelling the population of the cities and inviting lengthy sieges, which raised the casualty rates on both sides.¹⁰⁴

Early in 1220, the five-month siege of Otrar ended in a bloodbath. The Mongols put to the sword some 20,000 resisting soldiers, leveled the citadel, and looted and burned the town after driving its population out onto the plain. Surviving commoners were made to march in the vanguard to absorb attacks, or, if artisans, redeployed elsewhere to ply their trades on behalf of their captors. Women were often distributed as slaves or servants in the *ordos* (camps or households) of Mongol nobles. Otrar's governor, Inalchuq, was delivered to Chinggis at Samarqand, where he met his undisclosed end.¹⁰⁵

With his youngest son Tolui, the khan headed south into Transoxania and oversaw the speedier but just as sanguinary reduction of its two main urban centers, Bukhara and Samarqand, in the first half of 1220. In both cities, which were relatively new additions to the Khwārazm realm, internal tensions and resentment against Muḥammad's heavy hand left the people unprepared for the onslaught.¹⁰⁶ The Mongols exploited fractures within the populace, especially within ruling circles, and, assisted by native informants, Chinggis circulated provocative letters to Terken Khatun, her entourage, and Muḥammad, sowing distrust, panic, and flight on the part of the Khwārazmian ruling elite.¹⁰⁷ Rather than targeting Samarqand first, the khan led his army southwest across the Kizil Kum desert and arrived at the outskirts of Bukhara in February or March of 1220. Along their route, according to Juwaynī, they spread notices to warn the inhabitants against resistance. Some, like the townsmen of Nūr, negotiated relatively favorable surrender terms; others paid for their vacillation.

At Bukhara, 20,000 garrison troops fled the city into the deadly embrace of waiting Mongol troops. The stunned city leaders sent a delegation to offer surrender, and the Mongol khan entered the city. The central mosque courtyard was turned into a manger for hungry horses, and Chinggis

103 Allsen 1994, 356. 104 Bartold 1977, 404–5; May 2007, 117.

105 HWC, 83–86; Ratchnevsky 1991, 130. 106 HWC, 394–96. 107 May 2007, 117–18.

reportedly mounted the pulpit to preach to the assembled notables, detailing the sins of their rulers and their consequences, the city's despoliation. Most of the town's wooden buildings and many of its people perished in the flames and fighting that erupted from Mongol attempts to empty the citadel of its remaining defenders, who put up a tenacious resistance. As at Otrar, survivors were herded out of town and the walls leveled; males were forced to march in the levy against Samarqand, women and children were enslaved. Artisans of useful trades were transported back to Mongolia or behind Mongol lines to service the campaign infrastructure. Others escaped into the countryside to spread the horrific news.¹⁰⁸ Later that year, Chinggis appointed a governor or *darughachi* for the Bukhara region, suggesting that however vivid and inexorable a picture of destruction the sources paint, the Mongols were laying plans to govern (and tax) in the future.

By March of 1220, Otrar and Bukhara had fallen; Muḥammad had fled westward shedding his troops, many of whom were absorbed into the invaders' armies. Jochi and other Mongol commanders continued their operations along and north of the Syr Darya. Ögödei and Chaghadai left Otrar to join Chinggis for the attack on Samarqand, about 280 kilometers east of Bukhara, while the khan sent Jebe and Sübe'etei with three *tümen* (allegedly 30,000 men) to follow Muḥammad across the Amu Darya (Oxus) river into Khurasan and Iraq.¹⁰⁹ Mongol troops then surrounded the newly refortified Samarqand, reportedly garrisoned by 60,000 Turks, supplemented by 50,000 Tajiks and a battalion of elephants.¹¹⁰ After several days of combat, the city's religious leaders notified Chinggis of their desire to surrender.

Following their usual *modus operandi*, the Mongols emptied the town of its people and wealth, razed the walls and buildings (permitting easier access to horses), set the elephants loose to forage on the steppe (where they purportedly starved), and cleared the citadel by slaughtering the garrison. Fire from the use of naphtha destroyed many of the remaining structures. More than 50,000 inhabitants found refuge under the protection of Islamic religious authorities, and of these, several thousand artisans were distributed to Chinggis's family members (and transported northeast). For the rest, who were allowed to re-enter the town upon payment of an impost, Chinggis Khan selected officials from their ranks to oversee collection of the tax and appointed Mongol governors (*shahna*, the Persian equivalent of *darughachi*) to the region. Upon completion of these tasks, the khan moved south into the

108 HWC, 105–7. 109 HWC, 118; Dashdondog 2011, 45–46.

110 HWC, 83; Jūzjānī 1881, 273–74, 969 n. 2.

valleys of the Hindu Kush to pass the summer, fattening the horses and planning his forward movements.¹¹¹

Chaghadaï and Ögödei meanwhile led their forces westward to rendezvous with their brother Jochi, who was heading south along the Aral Sea to lay siege to Urgench (Khawārazm), a flourishing entrepôt in the Khawārazmian heartland along the lower reaches of the Amu Darya.¹¹² Careful preparations and repeated calls to surrender seemed only to incite a desperate populace, abandoned by its rulers, to raise a stubborn resistance. The Mongols engaged in a costly effort to sever the city's water supply, and in vicious street-to-street and house-to-house fighting, with the town burning around them. Discord among Chaghadaï, Jochi, and Ögödei prolonged the siege (it lasted at least five months), causing a high Mongol casualty rate. Presuming that Urgench would be part of his inheritance and loath to inflict unnecessary damage upon it, Jochi opposed Chaghadaï's impatience at the occupants' resistance. Informed of these circumstances, an angered Chinggis Khan sent word that Ögödei should take charge.¹¹³ When Urgench finally fell in spring of 1221 after great slaughter, the survivors were driven out, divided up, and dispatched in the usual fashion. Jochi parted ways with his brothers and moved north into the steppes, ostensibly to subdue the Qipchaq tribes. Khawārazm did revive and became a flourishing Golden Horde commercial center. Chaghadaï and Ögödei returned to join their father in his pursuit of Muḥammad's son, Jalāl al-Dīn, into the mountains south of Ghazna, in Afghanistan.

The Khawārazm-Shāh had taken refuge on an island in the south Caspian Sea, where he died in December 1220 or January 1221. Ill and bereft of supporters, Terken Khatun fell captive to Jebe and Sübe'etei south of the Caspian and ended her life a slave in Mongolia (reportedly forced to walk all the way there), her male progeny killed, their wives and daughters distributed among the Mongol nobility. Only the charismatic Jalāl al-Dīn remained to carry the banner of resistance for ten more years. On their search-and-destroy mission through Khurasan and western Iran, the armies of Jebe and Sübe'etei hunted their quarry from town to town, accepting surrender or punishing recalcitrance with slaughter, and leaving behind Mongol appointees.¹¹⁴

111 *HWC*, 120–22.

112 *HWC*, 124–28, suggests that Jochi was absent from the siege of Urgench; see *JT*/Thackston, 253–55.

113 In *JT*/Thackston, 254, Chinggis sent Tolui to settle the quarrel; Jüzjānī 1881, 1097–1101, 1099 n.

114 *HWC*, 142–47, 150, 375–86.

When Chinggis advanced to Balkh in the spring of 1221, though it had earlier surrendered to Jebe and Sübe'etei, he had the city's populace massacred upon suspicion of harboring sympathizers of the young sultan. Chinggis then dispatched Tolui with a large force to wipe up resistance and unrest throughout Khurasan. At Parvān, north of Ghazna in Afghanistan, the Mongols suffered their most serious setback when Shigi Qutuqu was routed by Jalāl al-Dīn's forces, losing many soldiers.¹¹⁵ A dispute among his commanders, however, sent the young sultan fleeing to Ghazna and beyond.

Pursuing Jalāl al-Dīn southeast into Afghanistan, where Chaghadai and Ögödei caught up with him, the khan marched all the way to the banks of the Indus river. There his quarry again escaped by plunging across the water into India, though without his wives and children.¹¹⁶ The khan dispatched troops to track him. He left India for Iran in 1223, continuing to draw and elude Mongol pursuers to the southern Caucasus until 1231, when, by one account, he fell afoul of Kurdish bandits while fleeing the Mongol general Chormaqan's army.¹¹⁷

Deterred by the terrain and the omens, Chinggis Khan abandoned plans to return to Mongolia by way of northern India and the Himalayas. Winter of 1221–1222 found him camped in the high valleys of the Hindu Kush in Afghanistan, his original mission accomplished. There in the spring of 1222 he entertained an unusual guest, the Daoist adept Master Changchun (Qiu Chuji), summoned from north China to advise the aging khan on the secrets of long life and good government (Changchun was said to be 300 years old). After a month, Changchun returned to Samarqand, where he had spent the previous winter in the company of governor Yelü Ahai, the khan's secretary–prognosticator Yelü Chucai (who recorded several of his sermons), and other transplanted East Asians making the city habitable. Chinggis rejoined him in the region in autumn and winter of 1222, where they met several more times.¹¹⁸ Envoys from Jin and Song also arrived at the khan's camp in 1222 and 1223.¹¹⁹

Chinggis had numerous matters to settle before quitting the region. Transoxania had been pacified and Mongol governors were duly appointed to the conquered towns and their hinterlands. Tolui exacted brutal revenge in Khurasan on those who had dared to defy the Mongols, but many who

115 HWC, 406–8; Rashīd al-Dīn 1952, 221–22; de Rachewiltz 1993, 83–85.

116 HWC, 134–35; on confusion over Balkh in the sources: Jūzjānī 1881, 1016–21 n. 6, 1027 n. 8.

117 HWC, 456, 459; Jūzjānī 1881, 298–99, provides a different end; Jackson 1990.

118 De Rachewiltz 1962, 69–70 n. 168; Waley 1931, 92–104, 112–14; Li Zhichang 1962, *shang* 57b–58a (340–41), *xia* 6a (356).

119 YS, 1.22–23.

surrendered still perished. Chinggis's favorite grandson by Chaghadai had been killed at Bamiyan; in response the khan ordered every living thing extinguished and Bamiyan's name changed to "Bad Town."¹²⁰ The death at Nishapur of Toghachar, husband of one of Chinggis's daughters, brought the daughter with her forces into the town, killing stray survivors and enslaving 400 craftsmen.¹²¹ Beyond death and destruction, the Western Campaign generated steady streams of prisoners and vast quantities of plundered wealth, all to be transported to Mongolia or other parts of Mongol-held territory.

Artisans were especially valued and usually spared, even in the case of Herat, whose people were obliterated for rebelling against their Mongol managers after learning of Jalāl al-Dīn's victory over Shigi Qutuqu.¹²² A thousand Herati weavers of gold brocade who had surrendered in spring 1221 were relocated to the Uighur capital of Beshbaliq after the town's destruction in 1222. In the late 1230s, Ögödei permitted hundreds of them to return home when Herat, long a center of textile production, underwent restoration. By then, precious robes of gold and silver brocade had become a prized gift bestowed in great number by the khan on favored subjects during ceremonial or festive occasions.¹²³

Building and maintaining the transportation routes, post stations, storage facilities, workshops, and farms that made the movement of armies, people, and provisions possible and even expeditious, in the case of special couriers, posed logistical and administrative challenges that occupied soldiers and noncombatants alike. The record of Changchun's journey shows Chaghadai's troops twice engaged in road and bridge repair along the route traveled by the khan.¹²⁴ Translators and interpreters were employed, along with cooks, doctors, siege experts, labor crews, and gardeners. Yelü Chucai assuredly was fluent in Chinese, Khitan, possibly Jurchen, and Mongolian. Another prominent multilingual member of the steppe intelligentsia working behind the lines was the Nestorian Chinqai (c. 1169–1252), of uncertain origin (Kereyit, Önggüt, or Uighur?), possibly an erstwhile merchant, and a Baljuna veteran.¹²⁵ A judge (*jarghuchi*) serving under Shigi Qutuqu, Chinqai also commanded a thousand. Sometime before 1219 he established a colony of mostly Chinese artisans and farmers, called Chinqai Balāsāghūn (City or Granary of Chinqai), along the route through western Mongolia to Central Asia. Chinqai

120 HWC, 132–33. 121 HWC, 177; Broadbridge 2018, 158–60.

122 Pikulin 1970, 139; Jüzjānī 1881, 1049–51 n. 2. 123 Allsen 1997b, 10; Allsen 1997a, 38–40.

124 Waley 1931, 85, 95–96; Li Zhichang 1962, *shang* 37b–38a (300–1), 52b (330).

125 Waley 1931, 33–38; 73–74; Li Zhichang 1962, *shang* 29a–b (283–84); Buell 1993, 93–101.

escorted Changchun's party from western Mongolia to Samarkand, displaying an intimate familiarity with the terrain and difficulties of travel.¹²⁶

On the other side of Central Asia, the intrepid Jebe and Sübe'etei were authorized to continue their gallop around the southern Caspian and into Transcaucasia, where they engaged Georgian armies, scouted out a passage through the Caucasus mountains, and rode north out onto the Pontic steppes. There they fought with Alans, Qipchaqs, Circassians and other local peoples. In late spring or early summer of 1223, after defeating the Rus' and their Qipchaq–Qangli allies in battle on the Kalka river near the Azov Sea, the two commanders led their troops east across the steppes back to Mongolia, and rejoined Chinggis on the Irtysh river in summer of 1224. Their remarkable three-year reconnaissance loop around Eurasia laid the groundwork for a Mongol return to the Caucasus and southern Russian steppe during the reign of Ögödei.¹²⁷

Late in 1222 or early in 1223 Chinggis departed Transoxania and, reunited with his younger sons, passed the summer of 1223 hunting on the steppes south of Lake Balkhash. News of Muqali's death in the third month of 1223, during operations along the Yellow River in western Jin territory, must have reached him by late spring or early summer. The Xia court sent 50,000 troops in November 1221 to support Muqali's army along the Jin–Xia border in Shaanxi, but had evidently withdrawn those forces sometime in 1222 or early in 1223, and was seeking to mend relations with the Jurchens. Those events evidently did not hasten Chinggis's journey northward back home, but he did authorize a retaliatory raid on Tangut territory, undertaken by Muqali's son Bo'ol (1197–1228).¹²⁸ By the summer of 1224 the campaign armies had returned to their staging area along the Irtysh river in western Mongolia. Whether or not Jochi ever met with his father again remains unclear. The misunderstanding at Urgench deepened Jochi's alienation from the family, and he remained in his allotted territories to the west until he expired some months before Chinggis's death in August of 1227.¹²⁹ Jochi was succeeded by his second son, Batu, with Chinggis's approval; his eldest son Orda declined to take his father's place.¹³⁰

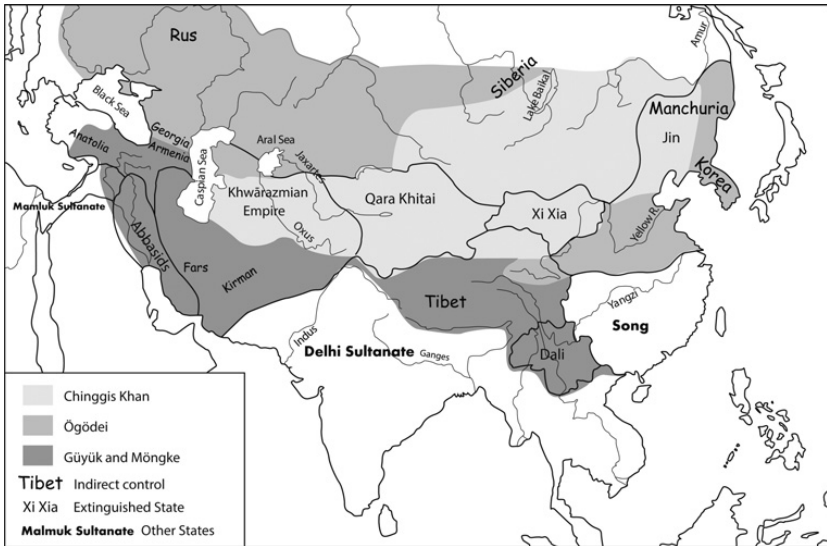
126 Buell 1994.

127 Allsen 1983a, 10–14; Allsen 1987–1991, 11–17; Buell 1993, 19–20; Dashdondog 2011, 43–50; Golden 1985, on the Ölberli Qipchaqs.

128 Dunnell 1991, 174–75; YS, 119.2934–36; 149.3526–27; HWC, 139.

129 Ratchnevsky 1991, 136–37; on Jochi's appanage or *ulus*: Jackson 1999, 23–26; Allsen 2001c, 172, 178.

130 Vásáry 2009, 67–68; Allsen 1985–1987, 8–9.



Map 1.2 Expansion of the United Empire, after Biran 2021, 233

What had begun as a punitive attack on the Khwārazm-Shāh turned into a sustained program of conquest, facilitated by the vacuum produced with the demise of the Qara Khitai and Khwārazm polities. By the spring of 1225, Chinggis Khan was back at his *ordo* on the Kerulen river, resting from the rigors of travel and planning the Tangut campaign (see Map 1.2).

Chinggis Khan's Last Campaign: East Asia, 1225–1230

During the absence of Chinggis Khan and most of the Mongol army in Central Asia, Muqali strove to encourage the surrender and re-employment of Jin subjects, detach the Jurchens' remaining northern cities and western provinces, and thereby pressure an increasingly isolated court at Bian (Kaifeng). These efforts stalled in 1223, owing to Muqali's death; the resilience of major Jin fortifications, particularly at Jingzhou and Fengxiang; policy reversals at the Xia court; and Song opportunism in seizing territories lost a hundred years earlier.¹³¹ Between the end of 1223 and autumn of 1224, Muqali's successor and son Bo'ol (1197–1228) led a punitive raid on the Xia–Jin border town of

¹³¹ Aubin 1987.

Yinzhou, for Tangut treachery in “furtively seeking external help” (contacting Song authorities in Sichuan for a concerted attack on Jin, sending peace feelers to Jin which finally bore fruit in 1224). They captured a former Xia envoy to Muqali, Tahai, who may have been in command of some of the Xia troops withdrawn late in 1222 or early 1223, given the large numbers of people reportedly killed at Yinzhou.¹³²

Conditions for the inhabitants of north China during these years were desperate, as bandits preyed on the ravaged population and local rebel regimes, notably the Red Coats and Li Quan in Shandong, emerged to fill the vacuum created by the collapse of central government functions. Local loyalties fluctuated with circumstances. Many former Jin subjects (Chinese, Khitans, and Jurchens) defected to the Mongols, who retained incumbent officials in their local posts, and appointed others to positions in the ad hoc administration that Mongol commanders created to marshal resources in support of the Jin campaign.¹³³ New servants received new titles, in Chinese and often Mongolian, and tablets of authority (*paiza*), granting privileges and power that they frequently used to their own purposes. The first regional or branch secretariat (*xingsheng*) arose in 1214 after the fall of Zhongdu, as a Mongol adaptation of an early Jin office (*xing shumiyuan*, Branch Bureau of Military Affairs) that duplicated the functions of central authorities in newly conquered territories.¹³⁴ For non-Mongol appointees to the office of *xingsheng*, both office and title were usually hereditary, and men like the Chinese Zhang Rou were integrated into the Mongol military aristocracy through enrollment in the guard, with the requirement to send a son to the *keshig* as a guarantee of loyalty.¹³⁵

The new hybrid governing structures and their agents executed or endeavored to attenuate the Mongols’ frequent and onerous demands on the civilian population, chiefly for provisions and troops to man military operations, especially the costly blockade of Jin cities. Surrender of local strongmen (*shihou*, hereditary lords) with their own forces supplemented recruitment by local authorities working for Mongol commanders. As early as 1213, the *Hanjun* (Han armies) had appeared and within ten years outnumbered the Mongols fighting in north China.¹³⁶ Eventually, the incorporation

132 YS, 119.2934–36; de Rachewiltz 1993, 8.

133 On continuities of local practices across dynastic transitions in north China: Tomoyasu 2010.

134 Franke 1994, 267; Allsen 1994, 361; Schneider 2011, 363–69, analyzes the hybridity of early Jin institutions, a model for the Mongols at this time.

135 De Rachewiltz 1993, 47–59, on Zhang Rou; de Rachewiltz 1966, 107.

136 Hsiao 1978, 12; de Rachewiltz 1966, 108–9.

of locally recruited assistants led Mongol officials in north China, and other agrarian centers, to appreciate the greater yields on their investment that repair of damaged economies could return to their coffers, yielding a very different empire, after 1227, than Chinggis probably ever contemplated.

After Muqali's death, the Jin emperor also expired, and was succeeded by his third son, Aizong (r. 1223–1233), who quickly made peace with Song by renouncing its status as a tributary (Song in fact had withheld annual payments since 1214), in exchange for a halt to Song attacks on Jin. Aizong also abandoned attacks on Xia, and opened peace negotiations with a new emperor in Zhongxing, Xianzong (r. 1224–1226). In the northeast, Muqali's death also tempted the Koryŏ (Mo. Solangqa, the northern Korean peninsula) government to repudiate Mongol agents and demands for tribute imposed in 1219, after Koryŏ supported a Mongol–Jurchen attack on Khitans fleeing the invasion of Manchuria across the Koryŏ frontier.¹³⁷ Early in 1225 the killing of a Mongol envoy on the Koryŏ border severed relations until 1231.

By the time that Chinggis had returned to his *ordo*, then, several troubling developments awaited him: a Mongol envoy had just been slain by Koryŏ, and a Tangut mission visited his camp in March of 1225 to report, most probably, that the Xia ruler refused to surrender a hostage son to Chinggis. The envoy may also have confirmed reports that Xia and Jin were negotiating a new treaty of friendship, to be signed that fall.¹³⁸ Koryŏ could wait; the Tangut threat was more immediate and personal, for Chinggis had taken a Tangut royal wife, and adopted into his household (or Börte's *ordo*) a Tangut foundling, christened Chahan (Chaghan), who had grown up a loyal officer and commander in the khan's service.¹³⁹ The Tangut–Jurchen alliance rankled and threatened years of hard work in north China.

The Fall of Xia and the Death of Chinggis Khan, 1225–1227

In the *Secret History*, Chinggis rides south toward the Xia frontier in winter of 1225, stops to hunt, is thrown from his horse, and suffers injury. Halting to recover, the khan sends envoys to Zhongxing, giving the Tanguts one last chance to atone for their impudence.¹⁴⁰ However inventive and truncated the *Secret History* narration of events, Chinggis's failure to win over the Tangut

¹³⁷ Henthorn 1963, 14–30.

¹³⁸ Dunnell 1991, 175–76; *JS* 17/375–76; 38/869–78; 110/2424, 2433–34; 62/1487–88. De Rachewiltz 1962, 24, 63–64.

¹³⁹ *YS*, 120.2955–56; Meng 2003. ¹⁴⁰ *SH*, 965–84.

throne's loyalties spelled disaster for Xia. He summoned all his armies to campaign in and around Hexi. Yelü Chucai, who was finishing some work in Uighur territory, traveled east to join up with Mongol armies at Suzhou in June of 1226. Sübe'etei led his returning army around through the deserts and mountains west and south of the Gansu corridor, to support operations in the Kokonor region and east of it that year.¹⁴¹

Early in 1226 the main invasion army under Chinggis entered Hexi west of the Yellow River loop, bypassing Uraqai to the east (it had already been secured), to attack the western frontier garrison of Edzina (Qara-Qoto or Heishui) and its neighbors in the Etsin Gol region. The army then turned southwest to march on Tangut outposts at Suzhou and Ganzhou, which resisted stoutly. Chinggis directed operations from a summer camp, possibly in the Qilian mountains south of the Gansu corridor. Given his state of health, it is doubtful that the khan participated personally in the fighting.

Tangut commanders already in Mongol service were on hand at Suzhou and Ganzhou, attempting to secure these cities' surrender, rescue kinsmen, and stem the slaughter.¹⁴² Moving southeast down the Gansu corridor, a Mongol army quickly subdued Xiliangfu (Liangzhou or Wuwei), whose defenders surrendered at once, and towns southeast as far as Lanzhou and east to the Yellow River, south of the capital. Around this time the Tangut emperor died, leaving a luckless kinsman to face the coming onslaught. By autumn Lingzhou, a major garrison south of Zhongxing, was under siege. Another army continued west up the Gansu corridor to Guazhou and Shazhou, which took longer to subdue. When Shazhou finally fell in 1227, Chinggis apparently awarded it to Batu, Jochi's successor. At other places *darughachi* were appointed to implement Mongol policies.¹⁴³

After Lingzhou collapsed in December, the khan left an army to blockade Zhongxing and crossed the Yellow River to oversee operations against districts along the Jin southwestern border with Xia and Song, in the Tao river valley. In spring of 1227 Chinggis camped in the Liupan mountains of southern Ningxia, his last stop. Zhongxing held out for six months; Chinggis sent his Tangut general Chaghan into the city to negotiate, and accepted the Tangut ruler's surrender, but his death shortly thereafter occasioned the mass slaughter and pillage of Zhongxing, perhaps, in part, to keep under wraps the khan's demise.¹⁴⁴

141 De Rachewiltz 1993, 146–47; Buell 1993, 20; YS, 12.2976; Atwood 2014, 29–31.

142 Dunnell 1991, 176–78; Ao 2004; on Chahan and Xili Gambu: YS, 120.2955–56, 122.3011.

143 YS, 60.1450; Bai and Shi 1979 on the Suzhou hereditary *darughachi*.

144 JT/Thackston, 292.

Ögödei reportedly was responsible for the defeated ruler's execution, but Tolun Cherbi enjoys that honor in the *Secret History*.¹⁴⁵ The fact that Ögödei was the khan's heir lends some credence to this claim. Yet it is difficult to credit many of the details regarding Chinggis Khan's death, so multifarious and fanciful are the tales.¹⁴⁶ In the Chinese annals, Chinggis was conferring over the Jin conquest with his officers just before dying.¹⁴⁷ Suffice it to note that his burial place was kept a secret, even unto the present day.

Following the withdrawal from Hexi and funeral at the royal burial ground somewhere in the Burqan Qaldun range, Tolui took charge of Chinggis's *ordo*, perhaps at Awarga in Khentii, while his brothers and uncles departed to their own camps to prepare for the *quriltai* to select and install the next khan. Chinggis's principal wife Börte probably predeceased him, otherwise she would have assumed the regency, as later Khans' wives did.¹⁴⁸

Interregnum, Regency, and Succession

Rashīd al-Dīn relates that in the spring of 1226 Chinggis felt ill and in a private conference with Tolui and Ögödei, appointed (or confirmed) the latter as his heir.¹⁴⁹ Tolui, as guardian of his father's hearth, acted as Ögödei's regent until a *quriltai* could be convened to formalize his succession as the new khan. Apart from preparing for the assembly, he responded to Yelü Chucai's appeals to ameliorate conditions of banditry around Yanjing (the former Jin capital, Zhongdu).¹⁵⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn suggests that there was some hesitation to confirm a new ruler, and he indirectly charges Tolui with initiating controversial land grabs.¹⁵¹ Chinese sources indicate that Chaghadaï, Ögödei, and Tolui each had supporters with aspirations for their prince, and that Tolui was hesitant to call a *quriltai*.¹⁵² Two years elapsed before the *quriltai* took place, though of course it took time for Jochi's sons and other distant notables

145 YS, 120.2955, 123.3025, and 131.3196 (in the biography of Azhulu/Ajul and his grandson Qaidu). Chahan reportedly worked to stem the killing in Zhongxing. SH, 199–200.

146 Jūzjānī 1881, 1085–89 n., disputes claims of secrecy surrounding the Khan's death, after the Tangut ruler had been killed.

147 YS, 1.25.

148 Raverty (Jūzjānī 1881, 1104 n. 5) claims that she did; SH, 334 believes that she predeceased Chinggis; but Atwood 2004a, 46, does not. On the archaeology of Chinggis's *ordo*: Shiraishi 2009.

149 JT/Thackston, 292.

150 YS, 146.3456–57 (Yelü Chucai's biography); Peterson 1993, 180–81.

151 JT/Thackston, 313. Jūzjānī 1881, 1115 n.

152 YS, 146.3457. Atwood 2012, 52, cites Tibetan sources claiming that Tolui "struggled for the throne." Kim 2013, 100–9, suggests the same.

to reach central Mongolia. In the event no one dared contest the will of the founder.

The rapid enlargement of the Mongols' domain and concomitant absorption of many non-nomadic peoples and lands posed problems and opportunities. The original mission behind Chinggis's advance out of the homeland – revenge and raids – had changed; conquest had become a sacred mission.¹⁵³ With the Eurasian steppe sufficiently united under Mongol leadership, a process completed by Ögödei, the sedentary civilizations ringing it would find it difficult to withstand being drawn into the empire that Chinggis's successors went on to build. The constituent parts of that empire, if not its full extent, emerged before Chinggis's death through the mechanism of apportioning lands to his four sons by Börte, who constituted the senior Chinggisid lines (*altan uruq*, imperial family), and shares to other kinsmen. These initial allocations occurred between 1206 and 1227; they continued to grow and new ones appear thereafter, as did the confusing terminology in which they were variously recorded.¹⁵⁴

In an oft-quoted passage, Juwaynī writes that Chinggis assigned each son a *yurt* (Mo. *ordo*), a place of residence or main campsite in the steppes: to Jochi, from Qayaliq and Khwārazm to the Qipchaq steppe north and west of the Caspian Sea; to Chaghadaï, the Uighur realm and Transoxania (Samarqand and Bukhara), with his residence near Almaliq (east of Qayaliq); to Ögödei after his father's death, the Mongol homeland (before Chinggis died, he was to camp in the region of the Emil and Qobaq rivers, northeast of Chaghadaï's *ordo*); to Tolui, as hearth prince, territory adjoining Ögödei's in the center.¹⁵⁵

Jochi and Chaghadaï constituted the princes of the right (west). The Jochid domain or Khanate of Qipchaq came to embrace virtually the entire western Eurasian steppe, south Siberia, the northern Caucasus, and the Rus' principalities. It too was subdivided into right (western) and left (eastern) wings; the west wing, inherited by Jochi's second son Batu, was later dubbed the Golden Horde. The east wing, comprising most of Kazakhstan, passed to Jochi's eldest son Orda and his descendants, whom Rashīd al-Dīn calls the "princes of the left hand" (later known as the White or Blue Horde).¹⁵⁶ Chaghadaï's Central Asian domain abutted Jochi's around the south Aral Sea at Khwārazm.

Ögödei and Tolui constituted the princes of the center, whose domains overlapped their father's. The princes of the left hand appear first in Juwaynī's

¹⁵³ Biran 2007, 63.

¹⁵⁴ Allsen 2001b, 176–77, addresses the complicated vocabulary that emerged.

¹⁵⁵ HWC, 42–43; see also Jackson 1976, 209–11; Jackson 1999.

¹⁵⁶ Allsen 1983a, 5–6; JT/Thackston, 348.

record, and comprised Chinggis's youngest brother, Temüge Otchigin, and the sons of Jochi Qasar and Qachi'un, who predeceased Chinggis; their domains lay in the northeast.¹⁵⁷ This tripartite configuration of right-center-left wings, Sugiyama Masaaki argues, remained the fundamental geopolitical structure of the empire no matter how large and diverse it later grew.¹⁵⁸

The khan retained control over Mongolia and the sedentary lands in north China, Transoxania and Khurasan, and later all of China. From the start Chaghadaï's claims over Transoxania were attenuated. Chinggis and his successors appointed governors over these sedentary regions, and from their productive districts assigned shares (*qubi*) to the princely households, constituted in the income produced by the allotted locale. These shares were understood to be hereditary. Whether or not the founder would have approved of future rulers' efforts to tighten control over revenues deriving from widely distributed shares cannot be known, but certainly that development inspired much contention and historiographical intervention (or invention). A fundamental tension emerged between the Khan's expanded ideological claims and his relatives' sense of entitlement to its disposition, based on customary Mongolian practice.

Tolui in particular occupied an ambiguous, seemingly superfluous, place alongside the designated heir, Ögödei, analogous to Chinggis's youngest brother Temüge Otchigin. Tolui guarded Chinggis Khan's base camp in central Mongolia during the Western Campaign; his own *ordo* lay in north-eastern Mongolia.¹⁵⁹ Tolui, later dubbed the "great commander" (*yeke noyan* or *ulugh noyan*), inherited his father's hearth and possessions, but not the office of khan.¹⁶⁰ His wife, Sorqaqtani Beki (d. 1252), daughter of Kereyit prince Jaqa Gambu, worked after her husband's death in 1232 to correct that ambiguity and assure Tolui's descendants a secure place in the empire.

Ögödei's Enthronement

In autumn of 1228 the *aqā* and *ini*, senior and junior Chinggisid princes, their families, and their closest associates, gathered at Köde'ü Aral on the Kerulen river. Chaghadaï and Batu (Jochi's heir) headed the princes of the right hand;

157 Sugiyama 2004, 40–57, analyzes Mongol imperial geography in the spatial distribution of appanages allotted to the brothers and sons of Chinggis Khan. See also Munkh-Erdene 2011, 223.

158 Sugiyama 2004, 57. 159 *JT*/Thackston, 137, 281, 312, 549; *HWC*, 42; *SH*, 985.

160 *JT*/Thackston, 303–4, 381–86, suggests that Chinggis really wanted Tolui to be his successor; Juwaynī asserts that Tolui "was ever in attendance" on his father (*HWC*, 186), which honor de Rachewiltz believes belongs to Ögödei (*SH*, 932).

Temüge Otchigin, Belgiitei, and the sons of Chinggis's deceased brothers headed the princes of the left hand; Tolui led the princes of the center.¹⁶¹ A lengthy period of feasting and revelry ensued, during which the princes "spoke of the affairs of the realm and the testament of Chingiz-Khan, and read over again and again the written statements made by his sons that the Khanate should be settled on Ögetei."¹⁶²

Ögödei repeatedly refused the throne, as customary, but finally accepted the office and the old Turk title of *qa'an* (khan of khans), his brothers now all being titled khan. Chaghadaï (west), Temüge Otchigin (east), and Tolui (center) presided over the enthronement ritual; the assembled nobles "removed their hats and slung their belts across their backs" as a token of submission, and "knelt three times to the sun."¹⁶³ The bestowal of gifts followed, and the hard-won largesse from years of conquest was liberally shared around. Among the gifts allegedly figured forty beautiful girls from good families, adorned in jeweled gowns and "dispatched together with choice horses to join his [Chinggis's] spirit," presumably at the burial ground, along with offerings of food.¹⁶⁴

Some scholars argue that this *quriltai* of 1228–1229 was the occasion for the initial drafting of the first 268 paragraphs of the *Secret History*, possibly by Shigi Qutuqu, or as Igor de Rachewiltz has more recently suggested, Ögödei himself.¹⁶⁵ Michael Hope argues that the *quriltai*'s essential legitimating function was constituted in both real and symbolic actions, including the reading of Chinggis's will.¹⁶⁶ A *quriltai*, in other words, was no mere rubber stamp.

Emergence of Empire under Ögödei, 1229–1241

Ögödei expanded and institutionalized the Mongols' accomplishments, as concretely manifested in the construction of a capital and extension of the empire's borders to Eastern Europe and Caucasia. Qaraqorum in central Mongolia became a desirable destination for Eurasian travelers and traders. Ögödei's death, however, ushered in an era decried by observers as one of intrigue, dissolution of authority, and declining morale. In bringing to the surface conflicts between and within the now openly competing Chinggisid

161 *SH*, 200, 984–88; *HWC*, 183–89; *YS*, 1.29; de Rachewiltz 1993, 148–49, on Yelü Chucai's role in enthronement.

162 *HWC*, 185. 163 *HWC*, 185, 187. 164 *HWC*, 189.

165 Buell 1993, 92; *SH*, xxix–xl; de Rachewiltz 2013, 3–5; Atwood 2007a defends the 1252 date.

166 Hope 2012, 96–97. See also Hope 2016, ch. 2.

lineages, the 1240s also exposed as never before or after the notable power wielded by women in Mongol politics. Möngke's reassertion of central control in 1251 suppressed but did not uproot that influence. Moreover, the main source of conflict – right of access to power and resources – remained a structural feature of Mongol imperial politics, owing to the incompatibility of the ideology of universal sovereignty asserted by the Mongol ruler, on the one hand, with the principle of Chinggisid partnership in ruling the realm, on the other.

Having confirmed Chinggis's *jasaq* and the appointments of his top officers, Ögödei set out to finish the work bequeathed by his father, as agreed at the recently concluded *quriltai*. Armies headed in all directions to bring north China, Manchuria and Korea, Iran, and the eastern Qipchaq steppe under firm Mongol control. As early as 1229, 30,000 Mongol troops showed up along the lower Volga, scattering the populace. Unable to reach the Bulghar capital on the middle Volga owing to stiff resistance, these operations slowed until reinforcements arrived in 1236.¹⁶⁷

In 1230 Ögödei sent Chormaqan to hunt down the nettlesome Jalāl al-Dīn in western Iran and Transcaucasia.¹⁶⁸ The Khwārazm-Shah's destructive incursions had further destabilized the balance of power in the Georgian and Seljuq lands, playing into Mongol hands.¹⁶⁹ Upon Jalāl al-Dīn's death in 1231, Chormaqan turned his troops against the Seljuqs, Armenians, and Georgians, and reasserted Mongol dominance in Transcaucasia.¹⁷⁰ Chormaqan governed the region until disability led to his replacement in 1242–1243 by Baiju (d. 1259), a Jochid agent and relative of Jebe.

In East Asia, preparations commenced to renew the assault on Jin and bring the northeast under firmer Mongol control.¹⁷¹ Jin envoys were turned away, but early operations in Shaanxi were disappointing. Reorganizing Mongol forces and adopting a new strategy, Ögödei launched a concerted attack to isolate and surround the Jin southern capital at Kaifeng. Troops under Tolui approached from the southwest along the Song border, in tandem with Sübe'etei, whose army was now enriched with a unit of surrendered Qipchaqs, Qanglis, Naimans, and Merkits.¹⁷² Forces under the qa'an moved down through Shanxi; both converged on the Jin capital early in 1232.¹⁷³ The

167 Allsen 1983a, 14–15.

168 JT/Thackston, 313, 318–22. Dashdondog 2011, 51–52, argues, unconvincingly, that Chinggis sent Chormaqan to northwest Iran in 1222. See Lane 2003, 60–61.

169 HWC, 424–59. 170 Golden 1983 (2003), 62–64; Dashdondog 2011, 43–55. 171 YS, 2.29.

172 YS, 121.2976; Allsen 1983, 13–14.

173 CHC6, 262–64; Allsen 1994, 372; Buell 1993, 20–21, offers a slightly different interpretation of Sübe'etei's movements.

defenders opened parley with the Mongol besiegers, but by midsummer peace talks terminated when Jin authorities murdered a Mongol envoy. Tolui and Ögödei, both apparently ill, withdrew from battle to return to Mongolia, leaving operations under Sübe'etei's command.

Shortly thereafter, Tolui died in the ninth month of 1232. Several traditions credit him with readily bearing the venom of his brother's malady by drinking water with which shamans had doused the ailing Ögödei, spawning rumors of poisoning.¹⁷⁴ Tolui's senior wife, Sorqaqtani Beki, took command of her husband's *ulus* and army, whose generals included Shigi Qutuqu.¹⁷⁵ The qa'an's own ambitious qatun, Töregene, may have inspired Ögödei's proposal that Sorqaqtani remarry their son Güyük. The new widow artfully dodged that fate, and maintained equitable relations with Töregene too.¹⁷⁶

Early in 1233, the last Jin emperor, Aizong, fled from Kaifeng south to Caizhou, leaving the capital in the hands of his generals. One decided to surrender to Sübe'etei, after eliminating his loyalist colleagues. Finally, on 29 May, the city opened its gates and underwent a Mongol cleansing, in which all royal Jurchen males died. It took another half-year to subdue Jin holdouts. Aizong committed suicide as the invaders stormed Caizhou and the dynasty formally ended in February of 1234. The Mongols then turned to disciplining Song armies, which had attempted to recover Henan in the course of assisting at the siege of Caizhou.¹⁷⁷

In 1235–1236 Ögödei's second son Köten (d. c. 1251) and a son-in-law of Chinggis, Chikü Güregen, led punitive campaigns in north China and Sichuan as far as Chengdu.¹⁷⁸ His subordinate Anjur struck deep into Tibetan territories and established contacts with local leaders, setting off alarms in central Tibet. In November Köten withdrew to make his headquarters in the Kokonor steppes and north at Liangzhou, in c. 1239.¹⁷⁹ The Onggirat Chikü and his descendants held their appanage around Xiningzhou, contributing to the Mongolization of Kokonor. After gathering local intelligence, in 1240 Köten dispatched a reconnaissance mission into central Tibet under a Tangut, Doorda Darkhan (Tib. Dor-tog or rDo-rta; a variant of Tib. Hurta and Mo.

174 YS, 2.32, 115, 2887; JT/Thackston, 316; SH, 203–5, 1000–1; HWC, 549, assigns the cause to alcoholism. Al Altan, Chinggis's daughter, was later murdered on suspicion of poisoning her nephew (Broadbridge 2018, 187–91).

175 HWC, 550–51; JT/Thackston, 282, 386–87. 176 Rossabi 1979. 177 Chan 1993, 301–2.

178 Atwood 2014–15. YS, 2.34; HWC, 268–69. Many authors identify this person as Ögödei's third son Köchü, which Atwood suggests is an erroneous emendation of the YS.

179 YS, 2.35; 121/2984–85; Davis 2009, 863–64, numbers Köten's army at the overinflated figure of half a million. Petech 1983, 181; Petech 1988, 370.

Qoridai?), resulting in heavy damage and loss of life to several bKa'-gdams-pa monasteries. Köten's summons of the Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan (1182–1251) by the same Doorda was delayed to 1244 by the qa'an's death.¹⁸⁰

Protecting Mongol-held territory in north China fell to the powerful Chinese general Zhang Rou, promoted by Ögödei in 1234 to myriarch with civil and military authority, one of the four top Chinese commanders working under the Mongols.¹⁸¹ Zhang's forces operated in Hubei, the Huai river valley, Henan, and Anhui. In 1238, when the Song retook Xiangyang (Hubei), envoys passed between the Mongols and the Song court seeking a truce, but the Chinese remained wary of Mongol intentions and frustrated by the Mongols' seemingly endless supply of manpower. Throughout the lull in fighting from 1241 to the late 1250s, Zhang commanded all the Han armies in Henan and many other districts. His troops conducted raids into Song territory and established agricultural colonies to improve food supplies in the war-damaged countryside. It did not yet appear that the Mongols were committed to conquering south China.¹⁸²

Addressing the situation farther east, in the fall of 1231 Ögödei sent Mongol troops to Koryŏ. Fighting their way to the main capital, Kaegyŏng (Songdo), the Mongols gained an important local partner with the surrender of Hong Pokwŏn (d. 1258), a northern commander.¹⁸³ Though several garrisons remained defiant, the Koryŏ military lords controlling the throne surrendered. They balked, however, at Mongol demands for a census and levies of precious goods, skins, clothing, horses, and hundreds of noble hostages led by the Crown prince. Early in the summer of 1232, the Koryŏ authorities relocated the capital to Kanghwa Island just off the coast, and killed Mongol commissioners (*darughachi*) stationed in the northwest. The Mongol army returned, but withdrew after its commander died in battle, leaving more commissioners behind. Spring of 1233 brought another Mongol invasion to punish recalcitrant Koreans and reward defectors; turmoil roiled the peninsula and Liaodong, broken by brief bouts of accommodation.¹⁸⁴

180 Petech 1983, 181; Petech 1988, 370, dates a similar invasion to Möngke's reign; Petech 1990, 7–8. An extant letter of Köten to the Tibetan lama has been deemed a forgery (Schuh 1977, 31–41). Han 2008, 640–41. Sam Grupper, "On the Identity of Doorda Darqan, Commander of the 1240 Invasion of Tibet," 1985 unpublished paper.

181 Hsiao 1993, 52–55; Peng Daya and Xu Ting 1962, 26a (515); Olbriht and Pinks 1980, 202.

182 YS, 2.37–38; 147.3474–75; Han 2008, 161–63; Davis 2009, 864–67.

183 YS, 2.31; Henthorn 1963, 61–78, 79–81 n. 1 on the identity of the Mongol commander Sartaq (Sarta Qorchi), 84 n. 10; Ledyard 1964, 2–5, on Sarta Qorchi; 17–19 on the origin, meaning and use of the name Solangqa.

184 Ledyard 1964, 12–13; Yanai 1963, 104–20.

Mongol armies under the qa'an's son, Güyük, meanwhile subjugated the adjacent Eastern Jurchen separatist regime of Puxian Wannu by winter of 1233.¹⁸⁵ After the Mongols reviewed and elaborated their military plans at a *quriltai* of 1234, troops under Tangqut Ba'atur, assisted by Hong Pokwön, renewed operations in 1235, and in 1236 pushed their way down the peninsula.¹⁸⁶ With few options, the court on Kanghwa Island entered into negotiations and pledged submission. Mongol troops withdrew in 1239, providing a respite for the Koreans, who found innumerable excuses to postpone the king's appearance before the Mongol qa'an. Renewed pressure forced the Koryŏ court to name a distant royal relation as Crown prince and pack him off to Qaraqorum in 1241 with General Wuye'er (Üyer), where he successfully impersonated the king's son for fourteen years and married a Mongol noblewoman.¹⁸⁷

After the *quriltai* of 1234, the cousins Batu with his brothers, Güyük, Möngke (Tolui's eldest son) and other junior Chinggisid princes departed to subjugate the Qipchaq steppe and Russian forest zone, guided by the experienced senior general Sübe'etei, to which the narrative returns below.¹⁸⁸ The qa'an remained in Mongolia to oversee the construction of his capital at Qaraqorum and the administration of conquered territories, perhaps too fond of hunting and tipping to overcome Möngke's insistence that he not join the Qipchaq campaign.

Qaraqorum and Ögödei's Administration

Though Persian sources extol Ögödei's generosity to Muslim merchants, Paul Buell suggests that the Mongol treasury was empty when Ögödei came to the throne, presenting a great challenge to a ruler with ambitious plans.¹⁸⁹ Ögödei's liberality, or, in Allsen's analysis, desire to attract traders and their goods to Qaraqorum, indeed fed the fiscal engine of Mongol imperial culture, for he and other Mongol aristocrats gave enormous quantities of silver ingot to the Mongols' Central Asian merchant partners (Mo. *ortoq*, Tu. *ortaq*) to invest.¹⁹⁰

Travel between central Mongolia and the various nerve centers of the empire required secure and reliable transportation, for which purpose

185 De Rachewiltz 1993, 9; YS, 2.32; Yanai 1963, 82–91, on Wannu's regime.

186 Henthorn 1963, 102–4.

187 Henthorn 1963, 105; YS, 2.37; 120, 2968 in the biography of Wuye'er.

188 According to YS, 2.33; JT/Thackston, 324, dates the *quriltai* to the sheep year, 1235, when YS, 2.34 records the dispatch of troops east, south, and west. HWC, 196–99, omits the date. See Allsen 1983a, 18.

189 Buell 1993, 101. 190 Allsen 1989, 96.

Ögödei ordered the expansion of post stations (*jam*) throughout the empire.¹⁹¹ Use of the network was supposedly limited to persons in possession of insignia or documents authorizing a traveler's access to particular conveniences, but unsurprisingly abuse by merchants and those with connections proliferated.

Handsome profits, new patterns of Mongol consumption, and the establishment of a well-maintained network of post stations greased the wheels of commerce and lured merchants to central Mongolia, where a new imperial city arose in the Orkhon river valley. Qaraqorum was built near the site of the eighth-century Uighur capital, Ordubaliq, still littered with ancient stele fragments in Chinese, Uighur, and Soghdian (the nomads' former Central Asian merchant partners).¹⁹² In 1235 Ögödei had the planned space enclosed by walls; construction commenced in the southwest corner on the first palace, named Wan'an Gong (Palace of Myriad Tranquilities) by its Chinese builders but called Qarshī (Palace) by Mongols.¹⁹³ Similar mansions arose around it for Chinggisid princes in the Khan's entourage or visiting Qaraqorum. The Khan held court in this urban setting only twice a year, according to the Persian chroniclers. Ögödei continued to nomadize, hunt, and meet with his officials, generals, and foreign envoys at seasonal encampments in the "peri-urban area" of the capital, where other palaces were erected at sites favorable for hunting game or waterfowl, and entertaining thousands of guests.¹⁹⁴

As the service and supply center for its orbiting Mongol patrons, Qaraqorum expanded over successive years to accommodate its inhabitants. Farmers and artisans from conquered sedentary areas were resettled in the city to provide essential services and daily necessities for the conquest elites.¹⁹⁵ Archaeological evidence and eyewitness accounts testify to the presence of Buddhist monasteries, Daoist temples, Nestorian churches, and a mosque; granaries and storehouses; artisan quarters with kilns, mints, furnaces, anvils, and ateliers for the manufacture of various items; and markets for the frontier boomtown's diverse populace. The earliest coin found bearing the city's name dates to 1237–1238.¹⁹⁶

A new permanent capital notwithstanding, the overall structure of Ögödei's government remained rooted in the imperial guard (*keshig*) and

191 YS, 2.29; SH, 214–15, 1027–29.

192 Erdenebat and Pohl 2009, 137–45; Hüttel 2009, 146; Shiraishi 2004, 105–19. See also Pohl 2009.

193 YS, 2.34; HWC, 236–37; JT/Thackston, 328–29.

194 Shiraishi 2004, 106–8; William of Rubruck 1990, 170–221, on life at Qaraqorum. Many of Juwaynī's anecdotes about Ögödei take place in or around Qaraqorum (HWC, 207, 212–13, 217–20 for examples). See also Atwood 2015.

195 Allsen 1997b, 2. 196 Erdenebat and Pohl 2009, 143.

household establishment inherited almost intact from Chinggis, the core of which followed the Khan on his peregrinations. Ögödei retained the services of Chinqai as head of the imperial chancellery. Chinqai combined military command with his office of *jarghuchi* (judge) and keeper of the Khan's seal, whose stamp validated all official orders and documents.¹⁹⁷ He also supervised the princely representatives to the imperial administrations created to govern north China and Turkestan.

To fund his various ventures, Ögödei undertook a reorganization of administration in these sedentary territories under Mongol control. From 1229 on, comparable fiscal reforms were instituted in Central Asia under the Khwārazmian Maḥmūd Yalawāch (d. 1254), and in north China by the Sino-Khitan Yelü Chucai, working under the umbrella of the chancellery headed by Chinqai, and Shigi Qutuqu, appointed judge over north China in 1234. Though the details of their operations varied, the two regions were intimately connected in Mongol thinking.¹⁹⁸

In Turkestan, Yelü Ahai was governing Samarqand already in 1222, with authority over Bukhara as well. Eyewitness accounts testify to Ahai's work in restoring some semblance of life and production to conquered Samarqand, in part by transplanting East Asian agriculturalists to the region.¹⁹⁹ Upon Ahai's death shortly thereafter (at age seventy-three), his son Miansige inherited the position and remained in Transoxania until he was recalled to serve as *darughachi* of Zhongdu circuit in north China. His reassignment evidently occurred in connection with the turmoil stirred up in 1238–1239 in Bukhara by the followers of a sieve maker from the nearby village of Tarab, who claimed mystical powers of healing.²⁰⁰ The timely intervention of governor Maḥmūd Yalawāch prevented another punitive massacre of Bukhara's populace by Mongol troops.

In 1229 Maḥmūd Yalawāch took command of east and west Turkestan (Transoxania and Khurasan). Working with his son Mas'ūd Beg and resident Mongol governors like Miansige, the new administration strove to repair damage to the cities and countryside, rebuild irrigation systems, resettle scattered populations, and regularize the collection of taxes from them.²⁰¹ Serving in the southwest part of the region was Chin Temür, a former Qara Khitan appointed *darughachi* of Khwārazm in 1222. Ögödei reassigned him to assist Chormaqan in Transcaucasia and Khurasan and in 1232 to govern Khurasan and Māzandarān, the Alborz mountains and coastal plains

197 Buell 1993, 101–2; de Rachewiltz 1993, 152.

198 Allsen 1987, 147; Allsen 1989, 94–103; YS, 2.30, 34; Sugiyama 1996, 292–334.

199 YS, 150.3549; Buell 1979b, 134–39; Waley 1931, 93; Li Zhichang 1962, *shang* 50b–51b.

200 YS, 150.3550; Buell 1979b, 140; HWC, 109–15. 201 Allsen 1997a, 39–40; Allsen 1993, 123.

flanking the south Caspian Sea. The war-ravaged region seethed with unrest. Chin Temür's task was to impose order and collect taxes, for which purpose he had coins of gold and silver minted.²⁰² The senior Chinggisid princes sent agents to represent their interests under Chin Temür, but Batu's officer, Nosal (d. 1240), remained the most influential after the governor's death in 1235. It was with Chin Temür and his successor Körgüz that Juwaynī's father, Bahā al-Dīn, unexpectedly found sanctuary and employment.²⁰³

Supported by Chinqai back in Qaraqorum, the literate Uighur Körgüz replaced his boss in 1235 as regional governor and tax collector, edging out Chin Temür's son.²⁰⁴ Körgüz made his headquarters at Tus (northeast of Nishapur), which he restored.²⁰⁵ Both Chin Temür and Körgüz cultivated good relations with Batu and his men, as well as with the Khan's court. The unsettled state of the region, its distance from Qaraqorum, and the overlapping lines of authority intensified the usual rivalry and intrigue in Mongol administration, divided as it was among imperial appointees and generals, princely agents, and locally recruited allies.

Fiscal reform, often dubbed by modern historians a "centralizing" measure, stirred understandable suspicion among Mongol princes and their allies that the Khan was trying to whittle away their rightful privileges.²⁰⁶ In Turkestan, as in China, this conflict of interest colored, some might say impeded, the development of Mongol administration over sedentary lands. Chaghadaī's *ulus*, overlapping Maḥmūd Yalawāch's jurisdiction, comprised mainly steppe land, fine for pastoralists but yielding little actionable income. Hence Chaghadaī prized the city of Khwārazm as part of his appanage and viewed Transoxania as fair game.²⁰⁷ Restrictions on raiding adjacent sedentary regions under the Khan's authority, or in this instance Yalawāch's solicitous administration, became a source of irritation.²⁰⁸ The tumult of the Ṭārābī revolt of 1238–1239 offered an occasion for Chaghadaī to transfer some of Bukhara's districts to one of his own officers, prompting Yalawāch to inform Ögödei of the unauthorized seizure. The Khan ordered his older brother to explain his action. Upon receiving Chaghadaī's letter of apology, Ögödei granted him the districts anyway as part of his appanage.²⁰⁹

202 Lane 2003, 40; *HWC*, 533–34; Kolbas 2006, 92–94. 203 Lane 2003, 64, 180; *HWC*, 483–84.

204 Lane 2003, 61; *HWC*, 490–500. 205 *HWC*, 501; Kolbas 2006, 108–9.

206 Buell 1979b, 143.

207 Some sources include the Uighur realm and Beshbaliq in Chaghadaī's *ulus* (e.g., *JT*/Thackston, 375); see Allsen 1983b, 248–85.

208 Buell 1979b, 144–45. 209 *JT*/Thackston, 380; Biran 2009, 47–48.

Bad feeling consequently developed between Yalawāch and Chaghadaï. The prince may have encouraged mischief during the Ṭārābī affair to get Yalawāch removed, for shortly thereafter the minister was transferred to China, possibly with Yelü Miansige. Nevertheless, Maḥmūd's son Mas'ūd Beg succeeded him and continued to strengthen imperial administration in Turkestan, while Chaghadaï remained a faithful supporter of his younger brother, the Khan. Ögödei sent his eldest son Güyük to serve in Chaghadaï's guard and consulted with his brother often, over the hunt. The eldest living son of Chinggis, Chaghadaï was famed for his stern temperament, knowledge of Mongol history and law, and strict interpretation of *jasaq* and Mongol ritual practice. His reputation for being hostile to Muslims is perhaps unjust, for he employed them along with others to administer his *ulus*.²¹⁰

When a Chinese-style Central Secretariat (*zhongshu*) was first established in north China in 1231, Chinqai's appointment as senior chief councilor under its sponsor, Yelü Chucai, indicated its actual status as "the Chinese section" of the "Sino-Uighur chancellery" first created by Chinggis and headed by Chinqai.²¹¹ Although most of the chancellery's staff had positions in the *keshig*, or imperial guard, Yelü Chucai did not.

The main functions of the branch administrations (*xing sheng*) previously set up in north China under Mongol commanders, and under imperial commissioners in other conquered areas, were to conduct a census from which tax (*chaifa* in China) and military obligations could be assessed, and to maintain the courier relay stations (Ch. *zhan*).²¹² But in north China the disruptions of the ongoing war against Jin and displacement of people made a census impossible and tax collection a travesty of extortion. In a famous purported discussion in 1229 over whether or not to turn north China into pasture for Mongol herds, Yelü Chucai persuaded the qa'an that he could get richer off a properly managed farming population.²¹³

Thus for several years Yelü Chucai enjoyed some latitude to labor, with mixed results, on reorganizing the administration of conquered areas in north China. He first tried to separate military and civilian authority by establishing tax bureaus in ten districts (*lu*), staffed mainly by former Jin civil officials.²¹⁴ The former irregular tribute levies were to be regularized as taxes at graduated levels, assessed as a poll tax on adults, a land tax on farming households, and

210 Jūzjānī 1881, 1144–48, denounces him with extravagant creativity; JT/Thackston, 374–76, 379–80, finds this prince "awesome."

211 SH, 151. 212 Allsen 1987, 145–46, 154; Buell 1979b, 133.

213 YS, 146.3458; de Rachewiltz 1993, 149.

214 YS, 2.30–31; Allsen 1994, 376; Schurman 1956b, 361–65.

taxes on trade and traditional monopoly commodities such as liquor, salt, iron, and so on. Chucai resisted Mongol arguments for assessing taxes mainly on all male adults, following nomadic custom. But he was less successful in shrinking tax privileges enjoyed by Daoist and Buddhist monasteries, which brandished immunities supposedly granted to them by Chinggis Khan himself.²¹⁵ Nor did local military commanders welcome attempts by the new tax bureaus to cut into their own revenue streams. Only Chucai's ability to deliver the promised amount of grain, silver, and silk in 1231 kept him afloat a while longer in a hostile sea of suspicious Mongols, and prompted the qa'an to permit the creation of a Chinese secretariat (*zhongshu sheng*) headed by Chucai.²¹⁶

Under great pressure to increase revenues, Yelü Chucai tried in vain to impose the same tax obligations on the conquerors and their Central Asian colleagues resident in north China. Instead, frequent special imposts levied by local powers increased the tax burden for those commoners who escaped enslavement by their Mongol overlords, even as war, crop failure, and disease created a huge floating population.²¹⁷ After the Jin demise in 1234–1235, a census of north China was conducted under Shigi Qutuqu, newly appointed judge of north China, using Yelü Chucai's staff.²¹⁸ Over half (900,000) of the reported number of households (1,730,000) belonged to Mongol appanages (Ch. *fendi*). Ögödei concurred with Qutuqu that the remaining households should likewise be distributed as shares to the conquest elite, including Chinese in Mongol service, who all demanded their due reward.²¹⁹

To counter this decentralizing move, Yelü Chucai proposed that officials be appointed to oversee tax collection in those assigned territories and send revenues to a central treasury, before their reallocation to appanage holders. Although approved, no attempts at systematic enforcement of this type occurred until the reign of Qubilai (1260–1294). As Chucai's influence on the qa'an waned from 1236 on, that of the Central Asian merchants active in China and Qaraqorum waxed under the sponsorship of Chinqai, and with the backing of Ögödei's qatun Töregene. The qa'an retreated into alcohol and the chase.²²⁰

215 On the first charter of immunity granted to Changchun: Waley 1931, 119; Li Zhichang 1962, xia 9a (361); de Rachewiltz 1993, 145.

216 De Rachewiltz 1993, 150–52.

217 See Schurman 1956b, 313–18, with the relevant passages from Peng Daya and Xu Ting's report *Heida shiliu*, on conditions in the early 1230s (Olbricht and Pinks 1980, 142–50).

218 Ratchnevsky 1993, 86–87; YS, 2.34.

219 De Rachewiltz 1993, 155; YS, 2.34–35. On the census as a tool of Mongol government: Allsen 1987, ch. 5.

220 De Rachewiltz 1993, 156–59.

The *ortaq* merchants monopolized moneylending and fiscal transactions in north China, and promised Mongol aristocrats good returns on their investments. For any loss of merchandise from theft, they claimed the right, often abused, of restitution by the local populace. In 1239 their leader, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, persuaded Ögödei (through Töregene) that they could greatly increase revenue collection by eliminating the rate limits imposed by Yelü Chucai’s reforms and collecting the dues themselves.²²¹ The qa’an approved ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s appointment of merchants to head the new tax bureaus, effectively farming out tax collection to the highest bidders. The crushing tax burdens, double what Yelü Chucai’s reforms produced, forced many Chinese into debt, borrowing from the very merchants who were collecting, at extortionate rates of interest.²²²

Between 1240 and 1241, however, the qa’an responded to denunciations of the ruinous new policy by firing ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and transferring Maḥmūd Yalawāch from Turkestan to north China.²²³ Yalawāch did not have time to sort out the mess left by the despised ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, and apparently alienated some of his Chinese staff, which, according to Chinese sources, led to his dismissal for misconduct. Persian accounts, however, attribute Yalawāch’s downfall to the death of Ögödei a few months after his appointment, when the widow and regent Töregene replaced him with her man ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.²²⁴ Thus economic conditions in north China did not improve, and Yelü Chucai died in Qaraqorum in 1243, his reputation intact but his fiscal reforms in tatters.²²⁵ He did succeed in reviving Confucian educational institutions in north China, and gained the qa’an’s approval to hold civil service examinations in 1237–1238 to recruit officials and rescue Chinese scholars from enslavement.²²⁶ Yalawāch returned to office in China under Güyük, who during these years was occupied with the Mongol armies in the western steppes and Russian lands.

The Western Campaign from 1236 to 1242

In the latter half of Ögödei’s reign, Mongol armies pushed the empire’s borders to the edge of Europe. The Mongol armies dispatched by Ögödei in 1235 met up on the steppes along the lower Volga in 1236, and began

221 YS, 2.36. Allsen 1989, 101–2. 222 YS, 2.37; Yao Sui, 14/4a. Schurman 1956b, 361–62.

223 YS, 2.37; Allsen 1993, 123–25.

224 Allsen 1993, 125; HWC, 107–8, 241; JT/Thackston, 390.

225 Chucai was buried in Yanjing (northwest Beijing), near the recently discovered tomb of his son Zhu. See de Rachewiltz 2006, 270.

226 De Rachewiltz 1993, 158–59.

methodically to neutralize resistance in the territory east and south of the Rus' principalities (see Map 1.2).²²⁷ Sübe'etei first targeted the stubborn Ölberli (eastern Qipchaq) resistance leader, Bachman, whose forces were defeated on the banks of the Volga. The flight of Qipchaqs westward to Hungary inevitably drew the Mongols into Eastern Europe.²²⁸

While Möngke hunted down the fleeing Bachman, Sübe'etei turned north to besiege the Bulghar capital on the middle Volga, which fell to the Mongols in the winter of 1236–1237. Neighboring tribes succumbed one by one. News of the Bulghars' fate reached Hungarian Dominican missionaries proselytizing amongst the Qipchaqs (Cumans) in the Volga steppes. Dominican efforts to spread their mantle over the eastern nomads offended Batu, their proper lord.²²⁹ King Béla IV welcomed the Cuman refugees, which dismayed his courtiers and undermined defenses against the Mongols.

The lands beyond the Volga now lay open to the invaders, who moved into the Russian northeast and appeared below the walls of Riazan' in December of 1237, after receiving no satisfactory answer to demands for the city's surrender.²³⁰ When Riazan' fell, its population was put to the sword and the town torched and pillaged. Rus' princes scrambled to strengthen the defenses of their own citadels, but Kolomna, Vladimir, Suzdal', Tver', Moscow, Rostov, and many smaller towns met similar fates in the early months of 1238.²³¹ Spring thaws brought a lull in the fighting, and the Mongols withdrew south to rest their animals and reconnoiter. In 1238 and 1239 Mongol forces operated in the Caspian steppes, Crimea, and north Caucasus, neutralizing resistance among the Circassians and Alans (Ossetians or As).²³² A contingent of Alans surrendered and assisted the Mongols in reducing the Alan fortress of Magas. Derbend came under attack early in 1240.²³³ North Caucasia, an ethno-tribal patchwork, remained a hotbed of unrest and resistance to the Mongols.

From their encampments on the Pontic steppes, another army under Möngke targeted towns in the region east of Kiev in 1239, to prepare for their assault on the city.²³⁴ In autumn of 1240 the reunited Mongol troops

227 Fennell 1983, 76–78, 84; and Cherepnin 1970, 185, cite an estimate of the size of Mongol armies at 120,000–140,000. Allsen 1987–1991, 16–17; *HWC*, 553–54.

228 Christian 1998, 409; Morgan 1986 (1990), 138; *YS*, 3.43; *JT*/Thackston, 326.

229 Vászary 2009, 69–71.

230 Fennell 1983, 78–79; Cherepnin 1970, 185–91; Vernadsky 1953, 49–58.

231 Dmytryshyn 1967, 87–91; Zenkovsky and Zenkovsky 1984, 308–18; Fennell 1983, 77–81.

232 Allsen 1987–1991, 17–18; Buell 1993, 23–24, on Sübe'etei's activities.

233 Allsen 1987–1991, 21–22.

234 Fennell 1983, 82, following notices about the fall of Chernigov and Pereyasavl' in the Rus' chronicles.

moved into southwestern Russia and reduced Kiev in December 1240.²³⁵ Then the armies split up: two divisions under Batu, Sübe'etei, Qadan (Ögödei's son), and Büri (Chaghadai's son) headed to Hungary in pursuit of Qipchaq and Rus' refugee nobles; two divisions under Orda (Batu's brother) and Baidar (Chaghadai's son) advanced into Poland.²³⁶ The Polish campaign climaxed in April 1241, when the invaders trounced the Poles and Teutonic Knights at Liegnitz and terrorized the local population, before turning south to rejoin the other Mongol armies converging in Hungary. Crushing the flimsy fortifications and disorganized defenses of King Béla, the Mongols crossed the frozen Danube in December of 1241, razing the fortresses at Buda and Pest, and rode toward Austria early in 1242.

Batu finally received word of Ögödei's death in Mongolia at the end of 1241. To the bewildered but profound relief of the Europeans, the Mongol generals withdrew to their *ordos* to await developments.²³⁷ Six years of military operations in western Eurasia had far-reaching consequences for the Mongols and for Eurasia. A new stage in Russian history commenced; Europeans came face to face with the mysterious and terrifying warriors about whom old rumors now took on frightening urgency. That the Poles and Hungarians ceased to interest the Mongols as a military target is attributed to dynastic and geographical considerations, primarily. Moreover, the strike into Europe was probably more punitive than acquisitive.²³⁸ Europe, evidently, held no strategic or economic advantage over the other regions already in Mongol possession.

More significantly for the Mongols, bitter discord broke out among the commanders over Batu's conduct of battle, engendering deep animosities between Güyük and his elder cousin, whom he openly belittled as an "old woman" (Batu might have been suffering from gout by then). Sübe'etei and Batu also quarreled over the Hungarian campaign.²³⁹ Furious messages traveled to and from Qaraqorum, and at the end of 1240 the ailing qa'an, upholding Batu's right of seniority, ordered his tactless son to return home. Güyük, no longer the qa'an's chosen successor, and Möngke withdrew from Russia before the Polish and Hungarian campaigns, but Güyük did not reach Mongolia before Ögödei's death from overdrinking on a hunting trip in December 1241.

Batu returned to his *ordo* in the Caspian steppes on the east bank of the Volga river, site of his capital, Sarai, to organize the vast Jochid realm and to

235 Zenkovsky and Zenkovsky 1984, 320–23; Sweeney 1994, 34–55.

236 Jackson 2005b, 62–75; Buell 1993, 24–25. 237 YS, 2.37.

238 Christian 1998, 410–11, and Jackson 2005b, 71–4 summarize the arguments.

239 JT/Thackston, 327; SH, 206–9; Buell 1993, 35.

receive the first of many humbled Russian princes and occasional intrepid European travelers.²⁴⁰ He never journeyed to Mongolia again, but continued to wield influence as the senior living Chinggisid prince, second only to his brother Orda (d. c. 1251?), who supported and represented Batu at Chinggisid counsels back east.²⁴¹

Succession Matters: The Troubled Decade 1241–1251

The absence of primogeniture among the Mongols was only one factor contributing to the fluid and often sanguinary succession process. Primogeniture alone would not guarantee a smooth transfer of the complex network of relationships that formed around every Chinggisid prince, and in which political power was constituted.²⁴² Ögödei's demise unleashed a Mongol-style politicking that articulated underlying differences and conflict on several levels: on a material level, over access to economic resources, including manpower; on a social and spiritual level, over identity; and on an ideological or constitutional level, over the interpretation and even articulation of the founder's will, in all the senses of that word. The outcome of these struggles thoroughly colors the sources that historians use to write Mongol history, but the future of the empire, however uncertain at this moment, owed everything to the accomplishments of Ögödei's tenure.

Infighting within ruling circles expressed dynamics long at work: the desire of powerful qatuns to protect their influence by maneuvering sons (or a proxy) onto the throne; the prerogatives of senior leaders (*aqa*) of the Golden Kin, the Jochid khans Batu and Orda along with the Toluid qatun Sorqaqtani Beki, in shaping the succession process; and the growing alarm of the Chaghadaid and Ögödeid princes at being edged out politically and hemmed in territorially (with diminished resources). Chaghadaï's death in 1244 left Batu as the *de facto* senior Chinggisid prince, with Orda acting as Batu's agent. Sorqaqtani's sister Begtutmish Fūjin was Jochi's principal wife, though not the mother of his elder sons.²⁴³ Temüge Otchigin, Chinggis's youngest brother and thus a senior member of the founding family, was nonetheless excluded from the ranks of candidate eligible for the throne, not being descended from Chinggis's primary wife. Yet his powerful northeastern

240 Allsen 1983a, 11–14. John of Plano Carpini provides a vivid description of Batu's encampment in Dawson 1980, 56–57.

241 Allsen 1983a, 14. 242 The classic study remains Fletcher 1986.

243 *JT*/Thackston, 148, 175, 348; she did not bear any of Jochi's elder heirs, and apparently died before her sister. Lane 2003, 66; Jackson 1976, 196.

base and frustrated ambitions prompted him to make a bid for the khanship after Ögödei's death. His punishment by Güyük played into the hands of Batu and the Toluids.²⁴⁴

Also tacitly excluded from succession were Jochi and his descendants, freeing Batu to promote his Toluid proxy for supreme power. Thus the marriage and political alliance of these two houses secured and then legitimated the election (usurpation, in many eyes) of Tolui's eldest son Möngke at the end of the decade, sealing the fate of the middle princely lineages. Congruence of Jochid and Toluid interest was not complete, however, nor were all the consequences of Möngke's candidacy evident in 1250. Moreover, despite the struggle over who should become the new supreme ruler, once in office all early Mongol khans tended to follow the same basic policies of maximizing territory, extending central control over resources, and balancing or constraining the power of other princes.

Töregene's Regency

By Mongol custom, a widow assumed authority over her husband's estate until his heir came of age and, in this case, was confirmed by a *quriltai*. A captive Merkit (or Naiman?) noblewoman, Töregene was the qa'an's second wife, and according to Rashīd al-Dīn the mother of his five senior sons and ruler of his *ordo*.²⁴⁵ An intelligent and strong-willed woman, she already wielded power in Ögödei's name prior to his death. With Güyük absent when his father died, Töregene sent messengers to inform other princes of the qa'an's death and the need for a regent. The clan elders agreed that until a new qa'an could be named, the qatun should "direct the affairs of state."²⁴⁶ Ögödei, and later his son Güyük, were buried on a mountain near their *ordo* (perhaps the one over which Ögödei's favorite wife Möge presided), as Mongol practice decreed, on the upper Irtysh river.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ Kim 2005, 328, 332.

²⁴⁵ *JT*/Thackston, 304; *YS*, 2.38, names her "Sixth Empress" (*liu huanghou*) Naimazhen; Tu Ji, 37.1a, speculates that her mother was a Naiman. De Rachewiltz suggests that both designations are in error (*SH*, 728–29; de Rachewiltz 1999). See John of Plano Carpini's observations in Dawson 1980, 60. Zhao 2008, 63–66; Hu 1990.

²⁴⁶ *YS*, 2.38; *HWC*, 240; Rashīd al-Dīn accuses Töregene of seizing control without consulting the *aqai* (*JT*/Thackston, 390). See Broadbridge 2018, ch. 6.

²⁴⁷ *JT*/Thackston, 330; Boyle 1970, questions *YS* 2.37, 39, notations that Ögödei and Güyük were buried at Qiniangu (in the Khentei mountains) along with all the other khans; Dawson 1980, 12–13 on Mongol burial customs and Ögödei's burial grove. See also Irinchin (Yilinzhin) 1989.

Ögödei never formally designated a successor after the death of his favorite third son Köchü in 1236, but toward the end apparently expressed a preference for Köchü's young son Shiremün to succeed him.²⁴⁸ Töregene favored their first son Güyük, as did other Chinggisids (including Sorqaqtani Beki) in discussions held at Dalan Dabas in 1245, according to the Chinese annals.²⁴⁹

Sometime before Güyük and his troops arrived back from the Qipchaq campaign, however, Chinggis's younger brother Temüge Otchigin, the senior left-hand prince, pressed his claim by advancing with an army toward Ögödei's *ordo*. He was successfully shamed into withdrawing.²⁵⁰ Several years earlier, Ögödei offended this uncle by seizing young women from his *ulus*, an incident described in unsettling detail by Juwaynī, and alluded to at the close of the *Secret History*, where Ögödei apologizes for this "fault" (while blaming it on a woman).²⁵¹ Whatever role the grievance may have played in his failed bid, Otchigin would pay for it.

To protect his claim, upon returning Güyük took up residence near his father's *ordo* at Qaraqorum, over which Töregene presided. According to the Persian histories he did not attempt to influence her decision making during the regency, presumably hoping to gain support by distancing himself from her divisive actions and allies.²⁵² Strong opposition to Güyük's candidacy from several princes found leadership under Batu, whose unwillingness to attend a *quriltai* called after Ögödei's death delayed the election of a new ruler until 1246.²⁵³ Batu did, however, send several Rus' princes to Töregene's court to tender their submission.²⁵⁴

During the interim, the regent oversaw some administrative changes and limited military advances. Whereas Ögödei had previously confirmed his fathers' officials in their posts, to consolidate her authority Töregene targeted and tried to eliminate personal enemies, beginning with Chinqai and Maḥmūd Yalawāch, powerful men who no doubt sought to sideline her over the years of Ögödei's failing health. Ordering the arrest of those two ministers, she reappointed 'Abd-al Raḥmān as chief fiscal officer in north China. Chinqai sought refuge with Töregene's second son Köten, in the Kokonor region, where Yalawāch soon joined him. Infuriated, the qatun

248 Kim 2005, 320–26; JT/Thackston, 304, 329–30. 249 YS, 2.37; HWC, 251; Kim 2005, 320.

250 HWC, 248; YS, 146.3464; Dawson 1980, 25. Carpini reports that a nephew of Chinggis was executed for trying to usurp the khanship.

251 SH, 217, 1034–35; HWC, 235–37; YS, 2.35. 252 HWC, 248; JT/Thackston, 391.

253 JT/Thackston, 360, asserts that Batu set out to attend the 1246 gathering, but elsewhere (392) that his brothers attended in his stead.

254 Fennell 1983, 99; Vernadsky 1953, 142.

demanded extradition of the alleged criminals, but Köten refused to surrender them except at a future *quriltai*, demonstrating the limitations of her power.²⁵⁵

When news of Töregene's personnel changes reached Yalawāch's son Mas'ūd Beg in Turkestan, he departed for Batu's *ordo* until Güyük's election, which the latter did not hold against him, much though he hated Batu.²⁵⁶ Other officers were not so fortunate. After Chin Temür's effective but contention-ridden successor Körgüz lost his protector Chinqai, Chaghadaid nobles whom Körgüz had alienated ordered Arghun, a young Oirat clerk supposedly serving under Körgüz, to seize and surrender him to the regent.²⁵⁷ She returned Körgüz to the Chaghadaid heir Qara Hülegü for execution, and rewarded Arghun (called *amīr* or *aqa*) with the governorship of Khurasan and Māzandarān.

In that distant quarter of the empire, Mongol officers carried on as usual during the regency. Replacing Chormaqan in 1242, Baiju lay siege to Erzurum, the chief city of the Seljuq sultan of Rūm in eastern Anatolia, and reduced it after two months. He withdrew with the loot to his winter camp in Azerbaijan, and returned in summer of 1243 to defeat the Seljuqs at Köse Dagh, drawing Anatolia into the Mongol fold.²⁵⁸ Baiju answered more to Jochid interests than to those of the center, and in Juwaynī's eyes he and Chormaqan "regarded that territory [Māzandarān] as their own property."²⁵⁹ Even Arghun Aqa, who replaced Körgüz in 1243–1244 in Khurasan and remained in office until his death at Tus in 1275, cultivated close relations with the Jochids, whose tax agents were operating with impunity throughout the region into the 1250s.²⁶⁰ Arghun restored order, i.e., resumed the imperially sanctioned collection of taxes, for which purpose in 1244 the now subservient Seljuq and Georgian courts minted new coins bearing a Turkic inscription (in Arabic script) on one side reading "Beg of the Great Mongol Empire," evidently referring to either Arghun or Chormaqan.²⁶¹ Governor Arghun worked in tandem with General Baiju in consolidating Mongol control over Transcaucasia and Anatolia. Judith Kolbas suggests that they proceeded more or less independently of the regent.²⁶²

255 Tu Ji, 37.1b, argues that Köten's mother was not Töregene but the obscure "Third Empress" Qilijhutiēni, who moved to the Kokonor region with Köten's son Mönggedü (YS, 3.45) in 1252, after Köten's death. See de Rachewiltz 1999.

256 HWC, 241–42, 257.

257 HWC, 243, 493–507, is partial to Körgüz, his father's boss and a knowledgeable Uighur, not a low-born Turkestanian upstart. Kolbas 2006, 114–16.

258 Melville 2009, 53–54; Dashdondog 2011, 60–63; Lane 2003, 61–62; JT/Thackston, 41–42; Jackson 1976, 216.

259 HWC, 507–8. 260 JT/Thackston, 460; Lane 2003, 63.

261 HWC, 500–7; Allsen 1987, 176–77; Allsen 2001a, 18–19; Kolbas 2006, 102–16, 122–23.

262 Kolbas 2006, 122–23.

Also keeping his distance from Töregene, Köten maintained cordial relations with Güyük and the Toluids.²⁶³ After Tolui's death in 1232, Ögödei had transferred to this son three chiliarchies of troops originally assigned to Tolui, to bolster Köten's campaign armies and perhaps reduce the number of soldiers now under Tolui's widow, thereby balancing the military power distributed among the princes. To keep peace with the qa'an and his sons, Sorqaqtani Beki persuaded Tolui's commanders, Shigi Qutuqu among them, not to lodge a - complaint.²⁶⁴ Her shrewd diplomacy insured good relations with Köten, who may have harbored hopes of becoming heir after Köchü's death in 1236.

Sometime shortly before or after Ögödei's death Köten followed up his 1240 probe of central Tibet by sending Doorda to summon the elderly Sa-skyā abbot, Pandita Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan. Departing from central Tibet in 1244, the Pandita arrived in Liangzhou with his nephews 'Phags-pa and 'Phyag-nardo-rje in 1246, while Köten was attending the *quriltai* that elevated Güyük to the throne.²⁶⁵ Their first meeting took place in 1247, and the elderly Tibetan cleric resided mainly in Liangzhou until his death in 1251, conducting a correspondence between Köten, on behalf of the Mongol court, and authorities back in Tibet over the terms of their new relationship.

Güyük's Accession and Reign, 1246–1248

Finally, in the summer of 1246 the representatives of the various Golden lineages assembled east of Qaraqorum at Köke Na'ur on the Kerulen river. Representing the Toluids, Sorqaqtani Beki arrived with her household, followed by Köten from Hexi, the left-hand princes from the northeast led by Temüge Otchigin, and the Chaghadaid princes. Batu sent Orda and other brothers to represent the Jochid right-hand princes. Guard commanders and high officials, with their entourages, herds, and baggage trains, along with parties of merchants, swelled the crowds.²⁶⁶ Envoys or travelers like John of Plano Carpini observed the proceedings for over four weeks before the actual ritual of enthronement occurred: the displays of opulent tents and precious goods (textiles especially) presented as gifts to the new ruler and distributed among the nobles; the ceremonial changes of robe – white velvet the first day, red the second and blue the third; and the new emperor's ivory bejeweled throne fashioned by a Russian artisan.²⁶⁷

263 HWC, 251. 264 JT/Thackston, 282, 387; Yu Ji, 16.277.

265 Okada 1962; Petech 1983, 181–82; Petech 1990, 7–10, 11, errs in details of Köten's death and heirs. On Köten: Sugiyama 2004, 425–89; Hu 1992.

266 HWC, 249–50; JT/Thackston, 392. 267 Dawson 1980, 61–67; HWC, 251–54.

Behind the scenes, Güyük meted out Mongol justice and promoted or rewarded supporters. Temüge Otchigin was tried in secret by a tribunal headed by Orda and Möngke, and executed “in accordance with the *yasa*.”²⁶⁸ Allsen notes that this first time a “member of the royal family” was put to death proved but a foretaste of the slaughter to come.²⁶⁹ The Jochids and especially Toluids, in Juwaynī’s eyes, escaped the taint of turpitude under the regency; more importantly, Möngke, who had campaigned with Güyük in Russia, and his mother Sorqaqtani Beki remained on friendly terms with the new qa’an. Güyük then replaced Chaghadaï’s grandson Qara Hülegü, approved by both Ögödei and Chaghadaï, with Yesü Möngke, an anti-Toluid son of Chaghadaï. Thus in the ritual of enthronement, performed on 24 August in a separate golden tent erected on the mountainside, right-hand prince Orda and center prince Yesü Möngke led Güyük, one on each side, to take his seat on the throne. No left-hand princes participated.²⁷⁰

Chinqai regained his position and Maḥmūd Yalawāch was reappointed to head the north China administration as great judge (*yeke jarghuchi*).²⁷¹ Mas’ūd Beg resumed office in Turkestan. Arghun Aqa likewise was confirmed in his position, after delivering to Güyük, as ordered, the unauthorized *paizas* and *yarlighs* issued by opportunistic princes after Ögödei’s death.²⁷² Törege’s appointees were dismissed. Some were arrested and put to death, among them ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and Fāṭima, her influential adviser whose ingenious mode of execution betrayed the seriousness of the charges alleged against her, chiefly slander and witchcraft.²⁷³ Anyone too closely associated with Fāṭima or accused of witchcraft perished. A Khurasani captive removed to Mongolia in the 1220s, Fāṭima’s quick wit and political skills proved useful to Törege, in whose entourage she ensconced herself and grew powerful. It is not surprising that chroniclers heap upon her the blame for Törege’s more provocative acts, and even the death of Köten (who expired almost certainly later, in 1250 or 1251), which supposedly precipitated her arrest and execution.²⁷⁴

268 HWC, 255.

269 Allsen 1994, 386; Allsen 1987, 20. Broadbridge 2018, ch. 6, argues that another royal, Chinggis’s daughter Al Altan, was executed secretly on the same occasion.

270 Dawson 1980, 62–63; HWC, 251–52. 271 Allsen 1993, 125–26. 272 HWC, 255–56, 509.

273 HWC, 245–46.

274 HWC, 245–46; Köten’s second son Mönggedü represented him at Möngke’s enthronement in 1251 (JT/Thackston, 403). Hu 1992, 55, dates his death to between 1247, the date of Köten’s last princely decree, and 1250, when a decree was issued by his first heir, Merkidai (Cai 1955, 16).

According to al-Juwaynī, Fāṭima's patroness and protector Töregene died soon after surrendering Fāṭima to Güyük. The Chinese annals suggest that the empress was reluctant to release her grip on government and may have needed to be removed; her death is not recorded in Chinese sources.²⁷⁵ Both Töregene and Güyük's widow Oghul Qaimish received posthumous honorary titles in 1266, when Qubilai, newly come to power in another civil war, had a Great Temple built in his new capital, Dadu, in which to honor his ancestors.²⁷⁶

The third Mongol qa'an acted in several ways to reaffirm central authority, notably by calling in all fraudulent certificates of authority or decrees, and by seeking to curb the more powerful regional princes, beginning with Temüge Otchigin. The qa'an appointed Eljigidei, a Khurasani officer, to supervise Arghun and Baiju in governing Anatolia, Georgia, Armenia and neighboring regions, with orders to curtail or arrest Jochid agents operating in the area (possibly with an eye to eliminating Baiju). Eljigidei was also to pacify the militant Ismā'īlīs.²⁷⁷ But in striving to outdo his father in generosity by a lavish bestowal of gifts on his followers, Güyük fell deep into debt to the *ortaq* merchants.²⁷⁸ Further conquest may have promised to remedy an empty treasury.

Having restored his father's chief officers and tied the Chaghadaï court closely to him, Güyük announced his military agenda. He sent envoys to the papal court in Europe and the 'Abbāsīd caliph in Baghdad, created *tamma* (vanguard or garrison troops), and dispatched armies to resume the empire's expansion east and west.²⁷⁹ Perhaps the clearest expression of the Mongol ideology of universal sovereignty, if not proof of Güyük's precise intentions at that point, was the letter entrusted to Carpini in 1246 for delivery to Pope Innocent IV. There was nothing ambiguous about "If you do not observe God's command, and if you ignore my command, I shall know you as my enemy. Likewise I shall make you understand."²⁸⁰

When the qa'an himself set out westward in the fall of 1247, the destination and purpose of his action were variously reported and subject to speculation. He died suddenly at age forty-three in the third month of 1248, at Qum Sengir, about a week's journey west of Beshbaliq.²⁸¹ According to Rashīd,

275 HWC, 244–45; JT/Thackston, 391. YS, 2.39. 276 YS, 3.45; 106.2694, 2702.

277 Lane 2003, 62, 64, 66; YS 2.39; JT/Thackston, 39, on the relationship between Arghun and Eljigidei; Jackson 1976, 216–18.

278 Allsen 1989, 103–4; HWC, 259–60.

279 HWC, 256–58; JT/Thackston, 394; Dawson 1980, 65–67, 85–86, for Güyük's 1246 letter to Pope Innocent IV. On *tammachi*: SH, 1002–3; Hsiao 1978, 16, 137 n. 119.

280 Dawson 1980, 67–68, 86. 281 Kim 2005, 329–31 n. 97; YS, 2.39; HWC, 261.

Güyük embarked for his *ordo* on the Emil river for health reasons; Sorqaqtani Beki read his action differently and secretly informed Batu of the qa'an's move.²⁸² Allsen supposes he proceeded to his *ordo* to make preparations for an attack on Jochid territories; once there, he sent Eljigidei to Southwest Asia, and decreed that every hundred Mongol households send one "brave" (*ba'atur*) to serve in the qa'an's vanguard.²⁸³ Batu happened to be near Ala Qamaq southwest of Lake Balkhash, in the western reaches of his *ulus* – whether because he had set out belatedly to attend Güyük's enthronement, or in anticipation of a showdown upon receiving Sorqaqtani's warning, is unclear.²⁸⁴

Just as murky is the cause of Güyük's death, perhaps deliberately so given the tensions between the qa'an and the Toluid–Jochid alliance. But it was only after Möngke came to the throne, Kim Hodong observes, that doubt shadowed the legitimacy of Güyük's election and reign, a result of the successful propaganda effort to justify the Toluid punishment of the Ögödeids. Juwaynī, and following him Rashīd al-Dīn, deny Güyük the title qa'an; neither Güyük nor his brief reign has attracted much positive historical comment. As a leader, however, he displayed considerable potential and continuity of purpose with his predecessors. Like his brother Köten, he suffered from a "sickly constitution," quite possibly a result of the Mongol elite's addiction to alcohol. Rashīd claims, perhaps unjustly, that the brooding Güyük passed his time in melancholic drinking.²⁸⁵

Güyük's Christian sympathies have attracted particular speculation, thanks to Carpini's optimistic Mongol informers, who may have hoped to disarm the papal spy.²⁸⁶ Güyük grew up with Christian attendants; his chief officers Chinqai and Qadaq (a Naiman) were Nestorian.²⁸⁷ Many Mongol nobles patronized the Nestorian Church, which had a strong presence among the eastern nomads, but conversion in the nomadic context did not yet mean abandoning previous or abjuring other religious or philosophical affiliations.²⁸⁸

The Regency of Oghul Qaimish

During the nearly three-year interval between Güyük's death and Möngke's elevation, Batu called the shots. Güyük's chief wife, the Merkit Oghul Qaimish, sent out death notifications and had her husband's body returned

282 *JT*/Thackston, 394–95; Yuan Jue, 34.10b. 283 Allsen 1994, 389; *YS* 2.39.

284 *HWC*, 263, 557. 285 Kim 2005; *HWC*, 251, 254, 259; *JT*/Thackston, 395–96.

286 Dawson 1980, 68. 287 On Qadaq: *HWC*, 511.

288 Jackson 2005a, and Atwood 2004b, offer two perspectives on Mongol attitudes toward religion.

to his *ordo* on the Emil for burial. Condolences poured in: from Sorqaqtani Beki, presents of clothing and a *boghtaḡ* headdress; from the delighted Batu, a message of sympathy confirming the widow's authority to conduct affairs of state, "in consultation with Chinqai and the ministers," until a successor had been named.²⁸⁹ Juwaynī reports that "on the pretext that his horses were lean," Batu was camping at Ala Qamaq, a week west of Qayaliq, where he proposed that all the princes and emirs should assemble to discuss the succession.²⁹⁰

Unsurprisingly, the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid courts considered it improper to hold a *quriltai* at Batu's camp instead of in Mongolia. Nevertheless, the two elder sons of Oghul Qaimish, Khwāja Oghul and Naqu, sent their representatives to Batu with instructions to abide by the decision reached. Sorqaqtani Beki urged her son Möngke and his brothers to hasten in person to their ailing *aqa*. Qara Hülegü, Chaghadaï's displaced heir, also attended, hoping to win back his throne. The assembly opened in the summer of 1250.²⁹¹

After considerable debate, the Toluids bested their opponents, including Oghul Qaimish's belated representative, the Uighur secretary Bala, who argued on behalf of Shiremün. Möngke emerged as the choice of the assembled nobles, and Batu expressed the view that Tolui's eldest son surpassed all in the experience, talent, wisdom, and judgment necessary to become qa'an.²⁹² Möngke's younger half-brother Möge overturned his brother's modest refusals. A ceremony of collective obeisance to the qa'an-elect concluded the proceedings, and the assembled notables departed to their respective residences to prepare for the formal enthronement at a *quriltai* on the Kerulen river the following year. Batu took the precaution of sending Möngke on to Mongolia with a Jochid military escort.²⁹³

The Ögödeid court flailed fecklessly before the Toluid tidal wave. Oghul Qaimish proved unable to rally her husband's progeny behind Shiremün or any alternative, and consoled herself "with the *qam* (diviners) carrying out their fantasies and absurdities." Khwāja Oghul and Naqu set up "two separate courts in opposition to their mother"; spurred on by Güyük's

289 JT/Thackston, 395; HWC, 262–63.

290 YS, 3.44; HWC, 263–64; JT/Thackston, 401–2, does not specify the locale of Batu's meeting with the princes.

291 HWC, 274, 588, 595; YS, 3.44.

292 Kim 2005, 324–25, summarizes the arguments; YS, 3.44; HWC, 558–60.

293 JT/Thackston, 402.

Chaghadaï ally Yesü Möngke, they issued defiant messages to Batu, while ignoring the pleas of Toluid and Jochid relatives to follow the path of peace.²⁹⁴

Möngke's Path to Power

In the sixth month of 1251, after intense lobbying to overcome the reservations of the reluctant courts, the Chinggisids and their entourage gathered in eastern Mongolia to affirm the forty-two-year-old Möngke as their new leader (see Table 1.1). Batu's brothers Berke and Toq Temür represented the Jochids (Orda was evidently dead by then); Ögödei's son Qadan (Qadakhān) and the Chaghadaï prince Qara Hülegü also attended (arriving late), along with others who had maintained good relations with the Toluids, such as Mönggedü, Köten's son. The nephews of Chinggis and the sons of Temüge Otchigin represented the left-hand princes; the family of Sorqaqtani Beki dominated the proceedings.²⁹⁵ Absent and still sulking, Oghul Qaimish, her sons, twice-rejected candidate Shiremün, and their allies diddled. While the assembled princes waited for the holdouts to make up their minds, an auspicious date for the enthronement was fixed, and the ceremony of installation came to pass.

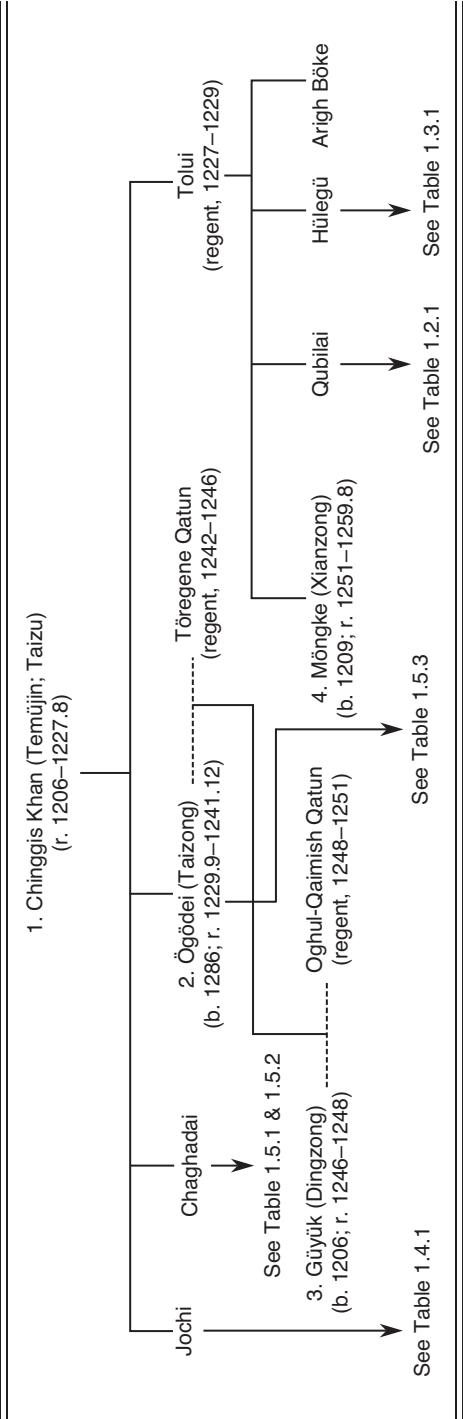
During the days of merrymaking that accompanied these political events, darker matters unfolded. While the grand old minister Yalawāch entertained his royal patrons in a splendid tent whose interior resembled a lush garden under a star-studded night sky, as lesser dignitaries feasted and frolicked elsewhere, a quick-witted falconer searching for a stray camel stumbled upon Shiremün and Naqu. They were camping several days distant, ostensibly on their way to the *quriltai* but deemed, in the Toluid accounts, to be plotting a surprise attack.²⁹⁶ The falconer raced back to alert the unaware assembly. The Mongol great judge Menggeser was sent to investigate, and easily disarmed and arrested the miscreants.²⁹⁷ Thus began the great purge, which nearly wiped out the Ögödeids and crippled their Chaghadaï cousins.

294 HWC, 265–66; the author spent time at the courts of both Oghul Qaimish and Yesü in 1251–1252, in the entourage of Arghun (275).

295 HWC, 562–68; he mentions Köten and Kölgen as sons of Ochigin at 568, but they were not, and Köten did not attend. *JT*/Thackston, 403, lists Köten's son Mönggedü among the attendees, but not Kölgen, Chinggis's son.

296 HWC, 574–76. 297 YS, 3.44–45; 124/3056; HWC, 574–79; Allsen 1987, 26–27.

Table 1.1 Qa'ans and regents, 1206–1259



Möngke's Revolution: Toluid Legitimation

Once the net of imperial justice (*jarghu*, courts) was cast, it ensnared hundreds of suspected conspirators or collaborators, even local clients of the guilty parties. The legitimacy of Möngke's succession – the extent to which it was perceived or presented as adhering to *jasaq* – required a clear demonstration that the election had enjoyed wide support from the Chinggisid *aqā ini* while its adversaries, to the contrary, had violated *jasaq*.²⁹⁸ Evidence of violations emerged from trials, torture, and confessions, resulting in executions and exile. Naturalizing the election also encouraged the writing and rewriting of narratives to portray the outcome as just, and Möngke as disbelieving initial reports of an assassination plot, then wanting to pardon the guilty princes, and finally accepting counsel to have their advisers put to death. Some scholars have argued that the *Secret History* was composed in 1252, a product of Möngke's propaganda machine.²⁹⁹

Princes and qatuns appeared before their peers, for their trials constituted a decisive propaganda platform where disloyalty was defined and deceit exposed. Möngke personally questioned Shiremün and Naqu. The inner circle of plotters was exiled, and although Rubruck reports that they were executed, neither the Chinese nor Persian sources record the deaths of Naqu, Khwāja Oghul, or Shiremün at this time.³⁰⁰ Chaghadaï's grandson Büri had insulted Batu during the Qipchaq campaign years earlier, and was turned over by Möngke to his elder for execution, recompense for Batu's support. (Likewise Möngke tacitly tolerated Jochid occupation of territories south of the Caucasus that became a perpetual bone of contention between the Ilkhans and Jochids.³⁰¹) Shiremün, under house arrest in China, later accompanied Qubilai on campaign against south China in spring 1258, where he was "thrown into the river" at Möngke's order. Oghul Qaimish was tried at Sorqaqtani Beki's *ordo*; she and Shiremün's mother suffered humiliating abuse and were killed or permitted to commit suicide, on suspicion of practicing witchcraft.³⁰²

It is significant that the sources capture in vivid detail the trial and execution of the mothers and senior emirs, such as Chinqai and Qadaq, of the errant princes, but mute or obscure the deaths of the Chinggisids

298 Allsen 1987, 34–44; Hope 2012, 92–94, argues that *aqā* included experienced non-Chinggisids close to the Khan and knowledgeable in the *jasaq*.

299 JT/Thackston, 406; Atwood 2007a.

300 Allsen 1987, 31; William of Rubruck 1990, 169 n. 1.

301 JT/Thackston, 368–69; William of Rubruck 1990, 144–45 n. Yesün-toqa, Büri's brother, "went elsewhere," perhaps also to Batu (HWC, 592). Jackson 1976, 208–9.

302 JT/Thackston, 306; YS, 3.45; HWC, 580–92.

themselves. After all, the purge resulted in nothing less than the dissolution of the *ulus* of Ögödei, sowing the seeds of Qaidu's state-making project in Central Asia that challenged Toluid domination of the empire for decades.³⁰³

Regional clients of the Ögödeids also suffered, including the Uighur *idug qut* Salindi at Beshbaliq, who had promised Oghul Qaimish to support Shiremün's candidacy.³⁰⁴ He was beheaded by his brother and successor, Ögrünch. Bala, Oghul Qaimish's Uighur secretary, was spared owing to Sorqaqtani Beki's failing health, which prompted an amnesty on the day of his scheduled sentencing (she died soon after). Bala lost family and property, and was posted to the inclement climes of Syria on a mission, probably in connection with Hülegü's expedition to Southwest Asia.³⁰⁵ Contestants for power in dynasties such as the Qara Khitai sultans of Kirman, a Mongol vassal state in Iran, found their fortunes rising or falling with those of their imperial patrons.³⁰⁶ In this instance the winner, Quṭb al-Dīn, a subordinate of Maḥmūd Yalawāch, was authorized to replace and punish his cousin and rival, Chinqai's protégé Rukn al-Dīn, snuffing nearly a hundred lives.

Möngke's triumph further necessitated a full exposition of Toluid virtues and sacrifices, especially in observing *jasaq*. A favorite Persian theme in this effort was adulation of Sorqaqtani Beki, the model Mongol mother and qatun, elevated over Chinggis's mother Hö'elün for her sagacity and refusal to remarry, in order to better raise her sons.³⁰⁷ Another narrative thread suggests that Tolui, the youngest son and inheritor of the father's hearth, was the obvious and only true successor to Chinggis. Composition of or revisions to the *Secret History*, ritual acts drawing from the Chinese and Mongolian repertoire of symbolic sovereignty, along with the chronicles of Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn, all bespeak a relentless ideological drive to recast the events that brought Möngke to power as flowing naturally from the very fountain of *jasaq*, Chinggis Khan himself, whose legacy only Möngke could best protect.³⁰⁸ Indeed, to a great extent Möngke lived up to the claims made on his behalf, taking the throne with purpose, vision, and vigor, making his nine-year reign rich in accomplishments that rescued the faltering empire.

303 See Biran 1997. 304 HWC, 48–53; Allsen 1983b, 250–51. 305 YS, 3.45; HWC, 53.

306 Lane 2003, 104–5; HWC, 476–82, on the Kirman dynasts.

307 HWC, 550–53; JT/Thackston, 386–88; Rossabi 1979.

308 See Allsen 1987, 36–43; Kim 2005, 313, 321–26, and the large literature on the *jasaq* cited there; Hope 2012.

Recentralization of Imperial Government

Rewards to supporters in the form of confirmation in office, promotion, and gifts easily elided into a restoration of robust imperial control. Möngke sanctioned reforms that would centralize and augment the resources available to expand the empire. At once he recalled from circulation all previously issued decrees and documents of authority, now declared null and void. The qa'an issued regulations to restrict unauthorized use of the *jam* (postal network), bringing greater scrutiny to the prerogatives exercised by *ortaq* merchants and princely households in their appanages. After paying off Güyük's debts to the merchants, Möngke strove to regulate and tax them. Apart from religious notables enjoying exemptions granted by Chinggis and Ögödei, all other persons with means were to be subject to a graduated tax of an appropriate kind, including merchants.³⁰⁹ Enforcement may have wavered, but never the intention.

Like Güyük before him, Möngke tightened the rein over the Chaghadaid court by reappointing Qara Hülegü as its khan. When the latter expired in 1252 on his way home, Möngke allowed his widow Orghina Qatun, a maternal granddaughter of Chinggis, to rule as regent for their young son Mubarak Shāh and to exact vengeance on her husband's rival, Yesü.³¹⁰ Orghina remained in power for over ten years, marrying her husband's cousin Alghu when he took over as a client of Arigh Böke during the latter's unsuccessful bid for the khanship in 1260–1264.

Because Güyük's brother Köten had supported Möngke and remained on friendly terms with Möngke's mother, his sons were duly reconfirmed in Köten's appanage at Liangzhou and in the Kokonor region, with their Toluid thousands.³¹¹ Möngke allotted the surviving Ögödeid princes residential domains in their father's former *ulus* in 1252, and gave Ögödei's sons Qadan and Malik each a *tümen* of their father's soldiers. Placing his younger brother Qubilai in charge of operations in China, Möngke offered him another appanage in north China. Qubilai chose Jingzhao (Xian), in the Guanzhong region, over Bian (Kaifeng), at the recommendation of his Chinese adviser Yao Shu, whom he sent to establish infrastructure for his military headquarters. He appointed the Uighur Lian Xixian as Jingzhao pacification commissioner in 1254.³¹²

309 YS, 3.45; HWC, 598–600, 605–6. Allsen 1989, 105–9.

310 HWC, 274; JT/Thackston, 55–56, 371, 376.

311 For a decree issued by Köten's eldest son and first heir in 1250, Mergidei (Mielijidai): Cai 1955, 16. JT/Thackston, 306; Hu 1992, 55.

312 HWC, 595; YS, 3.46, 4.58–59, 158.3713; Chan 1993, 392; Hsiao 1993, 483–82.

Qubilai had earlier developed a base in Zhending prefecture in Hebei, which Ögödei bequeathed to Sorqaqtani Beki in 1236 as part of her husband's appanage. Zhending's tax receipts funded the qatun's political campaign to get her eldest son elected qa'an.³¹³ Over the years Qubilai recruited local Chinese to his staff, and implemented more effective economic and tax policies.³¹⁴ When Möngke tasked his brother with the conquest of Yunnan, Qubilai's forces moved out from the pastures of the Liupan mountains, north of his new appanage at Jingzhao, in 1253. The writ of authority hitherto exercised by Köten's domain, as evidenced in princely decrees issued between 1243 and 1250, shrank proportionally to the growth of Qubilai's base in Shaanxi.³¹⁵ After the deaths of Köten in c. 1250–1251 and Sa-skya Pandita in 1251, the Sa-skya relationship was transferred to Qubilai, and Möngke apportioned Tibet's mixed monastic-lay communities as new *qubi* or appanages to the Mongol princes. At Qubilai's invitation, Köten's successor Mönggedü escorted the Pandita's nephews to Qubilai's camp at the Liupan mountains in 1253, where the prince was preparing for his Dali campaign.³¹⁶

In the administrative realm, the policy of divide and balance was matched by the qa'an's effort to regularize a unified taxation system by reaffirming central direction of the joint administrations in north China, Turkestan, and Khurasan (Iran). Möngke confirmed the appointments of incumbents Maḥmūd Yalawāch as a grand judge with authority over north China and headquartered at Yanjing; Mas'ūd Beg in Turkestan at Beshbaliq; and Arghun Aqa in Khurasan at Tus.³¹⁷ Their task was to increase productive output by restoring local economies, minimizing destruction in war zones, and reforming the assessment and collection of taxes. This work began with an empire-wide census, which had initially been ordered by Güyük and was finally carried out over the 1250s.³¹⁸

The branch or joint secretariats and their staffs juggled the demands of the center with those of the regional prince, on whose staff they also served. Other princely agents and the imperially appointed *darughachi* complicated the structure of local authority, producing a dense network of competing interests. In north China, Yalawāch and his successor Bujir worked in tandem

313 YS, 3.35; Rossabi 1979, 161.

314 YS, 4.57–58, 167.3929, biography of Zhang Chu; in 1256 Arigh Böke also held *qubi* (Ch. *fendi*) in Zhending, and resented Qubilai for recruiting Zhang to serve in Jingzhao.

315 Hu 1992, 55; Cai 1955, 8, 13–16. 316 Nakano 1971, 33.

317 Allsen 1993, 127–28; Qarshī 2005, 127–28.

318 Allsen 1986, 500; Farquhar 1990, 367–67; YS, 3.45; Allsen 1994, 399; Allsen 1987, ch. 5.

with Prince Qubilai and his Chinese agents; disagreements over policy naturally occurred. In Turkestan Ma'sūd Beg enjoyed a free hand during the regency of Orghina Qatun, and worked to restore the region's economy. Arghun Aqa's staff included representatives of Möngke and his brothers, Batu, and Sorqaqtani Beki (and the administrators of her *ordo* after her death); after Hülegü established himself in Iran Arghun served him as well.³¹⁹

Allsen has observed that no joint regional administration emerged in Batu's territories after the conquests of the 1230s, which may have influenced Güyük's decision to march against his cousin.³²⁰ The Qipchaq khanate remained effectively beyond the control of the center. A joint administration was evidently designed for mostly sedentary, relatively densely populated regions producing sufficient income to warrant the dispatch of Mongol agents to oversee its collection and distribution. The absence or underdevelopment of these conditions in Jochid territories may explain the scanty evidence for a joint administration there. Likewise, regional princes may have recognized, but also tried to limit, the claims of other princely agents to revenues produced within their territories, while at the same time protecting their own entitlements abroad.

Supervising the far-flung officials and agents of Mongol interests across the still expanding empire required shrewd management from the center. The head of Möngke's court in Qaraqorum was Menggeser (d. 1253/1254?), a Toluid house officer and grand judge under Ögödei, Güyük, and Möngke. He oversaw the regulation of religious constituencies, princely appanages and the joint administrations, finances and the qa'an's treasury, publication of official communications, and ceremonial occasions.³²¹ Under Möngke's watchful government, the heads of the regional administrations such as Arghun Aqa, and even Qubilai, traveled to Qaraqorum on occasion to present accounts, answer questions, or defend their integrity against charges of malfeasance.³²²

Menggeser was succeeded in 1254 by his close associate, the Christian Kereyit Bolghai, bearing the titles of (Ch.) *you cheng xiang* or minister of the right, (Mo.) *cherbi* or chamberlain in the qa'an's household guard, and (Mo.) *yeke jarghuchi*, grand judge.³²³ In Qaraqorum that year, William of Rubruck

319 HWC, 513, 523; Allsen 1994, 398. 320 Allsen 1987, 46.

321 Allsen 1986, 504, 511; YS, 3.44–45; 124.3054–56; Yao Sui, 13.9a. William of Rubruck 1990, 192, 194, 221, 250, 252, observed his successor, Bolghai, at work.

322 On the various intrigues against Arghun Aqa: HWC, xxx–xxxiii, 511–14, 521–24.

323 YS, 3.44, 134.3266, in the biography of his son Yisün Temür, under the transcription Boluhuan (reconstructed as *Borqöl by Pelliot and Hambis 1951, 72, 74). Allsen 1986, 511.

had several encounters with Bolghai, who was “on very close terms” with goldsmith William of Paris, the artificer of Möngke’s magic drinking fountain.³²⁴ Bolghai remained influential in his post to the end of Möngke’s reign, but was purged in 1264 after siding with Arigh Böke.

Particularly well known are the activities and administration of religious communities and clerical elites, important clients of the Mongols. The Mongols invited lectures, and sponsored assemblies and debates among Buddhists, Daoists, Nestorians, and even Muslims. Intense rivalry between Buddhists and Daoists in north China, exacerbated by special privileges granted to the Daoist adept Changchun by Chinggis Khan, resulted in three debates, of 1255, 1256, and 1258, held to determine the merits of their complaints against each other.³²⁵ The Buddhists eventually triumphed over their Daoist detractors.

Expansion of Empire, East and West

Now committed to the conquest of all Asia, Möngke designated Qubilai to head operations in China, and Hülegü to lead a new campaign to bring Persia, Iraq, and adjacent realms under firm Mongol control (see Map 1.2). The Mongols probed northern India under Ögödei and Güyük.³²⁶ Möngke now relegated Hindustan (defined by Rashīd as Balkh, Badakhshān, and Kashmir) to Arghun’s sphere of authority, and ordered the Tatar Sali Noyan to lead an army thither, in conjunction with Hülegü’s expedition, and settle there.³²⁷ Sali’s chief contribution seems to have been to feed the Ilkhanid slave markets with Kashmiri captives. Following up Köten’s initiatives in Tibet, Möngke put Qoridai (Helidai) in charge of the Mongol–Han army tasked with pacifying Tibet. This Qoridai may be the same person as the Doorda (rDo-rta, Dor-tog, Hurta[ng]) of Tibetan sources, who led the first invasion of central Tibet in 1247.³²⁸ His presumed march into central Tibet in 1253 occurred in conjunction with Qubilai’s Dali campaign.

324 William of Rubruck 1990, 192, 194, 196, 208.

325 Jagchid 1980; William of Rubruck 1990, 229–35, for the 1255 debate in Qaraqorum; Chan 1993, 393 for the 1258 debate.

326 *JT/Thackston*, 324, for Ögödei’s dispatch of an army to “pillage Kashmir and Hindustan.” Jūzjāni 1881–1897/1970, 1152–56, on Güyük’s dispatch of Mönggedü, father of Sali, into the upper Indus valley to Uch.

327 *HWC*, 597; *YS*, 3.46–47; *JT/Thackston*, 49, 283, 478, for Sali Noyan.

328 *YS*, 3.45; Petech 1983, 182. Tibetan sources conflate Qoridai’s mission under Möngke with the earlier army sent by Köten (already dead) under a Do-be-ta, which must be Doorda/Qoridai (?)/Hurta.

Möngke also deputed eastern princes to complete the subjugation of Korea, and meanwhile busied himself developing the infrastructure to support these ventures, through the systematic taxation and manpower recruitment methods already mentioned. After establishing a grip on the surrounding territories, the Mongols would be positioned to confront their main prey, Song China.

Pacification of Korea

Taking advantage of Güyük's death, the Koreans persisted in parrying successive Mongol embassies. In 1252 the Mongol qa'an demanded that the king quit stalling and present himself at once to Qaraqorum, and that the court leave its island sanctuary. To encourage compliance, in 1253 armies under Prince Yekü (Qasar's son) pillaged the northern countryside, assaulted its cities, and attacked Kanghwa. In the winter, Yekü was sacked for truculence, and in 1254 Jalayirtai Qorchi took command of the Korean expeditionary army, with Hong Pokwön in his retinue.³²⁹ Negotiations continued between Mongol and Koryŏ authorities. The king's ferrying over from Kanghwa to meet Mongol envoys on the mainland was deemed insufficient evidence of surrender. Jalayirtai's forces invaded southward and by fall of 1255 were camped at the old capital, Kaegyŏng, while raiding parties scoured the countryside. The Mongols also busied themselves building boats and attempting amphibious assaults on coastal islands. Conditions throughout the peninsula deteriorated.

A brief respite at the end of 1257 coincided with changes at the Koryŏ court that overthrew the Ch'oe warlords and restored partial power to the monarch and royal family. Still the Koreans stonewalled; by 1258 the Mongols had decided to occupy Koryŏ, and began laying the infrastructure for doing so in the northeast.³³⁰ Dire conditions of famine and brigandage finally induced the court to turn over Crown Prince Chon as a hostage son, in the third month of 1259. The crown prince never met Möngke, who was away campaigning in Sichuan while he waited at Prince Qubilai's headquarters at the Liupan mountains.

329 YS, 3.46–47, 133.3223. Yanai 1963, 121–23. Henthorn 1963, 112–14, 124–25 nn. 48–49; and Yanai 1963, 124 n. 4, 125 n. 5, on the misdating of Yekü's service and dismissal in the Yuan annals. Yekü resented his subordination to Taghachar (Tachar), Temüge Otchigin's grandson (*JT*/Thackston, 135–37).

330 Henthorn 1963, 127–38, 150–53; YS, 3.51.

Southwest China: Dali and Beyond

Discerning the difficulty of a frontal assault on the Chinese Song regime, Möngke devised a plan to outflank the Song and attack from the southwest.³³¹ This required the submission of the kingdom of Dali (934–1254) in present-day Yunnan province (Mo. Qarajang), which supplied horses for markets along the routes connecting China and Southeast Asia.³³² Disrupting the horse supply to Song and taking advantage of the rich mountain pastures were additional lures. In this operation the relatively inexperienced Qubilai was assisted by Uriyangqadai, son of the legendary warrior Sübe’etei. After performing a military sacrifice, Qubilai moved his troops from the Liupan mountains southwest to Lintao, where he dispatched envoys to the Dali king, Duan Xingzhi (d. 1273).³³³

Three Mongol divisions set out in the ninth month of 1253, Uriyangqadai leading the west, Qubilai the center, and princes Chaqa and *Ejil the east wing. Wang Tiange (Dechen), scion of a Lintao warlord family who had campaigned in Sichuan under Köten, led a vanguard to establish a forward base at Lizhou on the Jialing river, a gateway into Sichuan.³³⁴ Driving south through Sichuan’s rugged terrain, the Mongol forces converged on Dali’s capital in December 1253.

The Dali ruler Duan Xingzhi, a puppet of the dominant Gao family, had fled east to Shanchan (Mo. Yachi, Kunming).³³⁵ Qubilai’s Chinese adviser Yao Shu allegedly dissuaded the prince from massacring the city’s population in retaliation for the murder of several Mongol envoys by minister Gao Xiang. Entering Dali with ease, the Mongols hunted down and killed the guilty Gao. Duan held out for a year, but by 1255 the Mongols had subdued Dali and Shanchan, with much slaughter and great loss of men and horses en route through Sichuan and Yunnan.³³⁶ Qubilai departed in winter of 1254 to report to Möngke and return to the Liupan mountains, leaving Uriyangqadai to garrison Dali and a *darughachi* (Ch. *xuanfu shi*, pacification commissioner), Liu Shizhong, to supervise the Duan court.³³⁷ After his capture Duan was presented to Möngke in 1255, and invested as a vassal ruler with a gold *paiza*.

331 Davis 2009, 869. 332 Herman 2002; Allsen 1994, 405–7; Rossabi 1988, 24–28.

333 YS, 4.58–59; Armijo-Hussein 1997, 151–54, translates the passage in Qubilai’s YS annals.

334 YS, 4.59; YS, 3.46; 155.3650–51. Hambis and Pelliot 1945, 31 n. 9 for the prince *Ejil (Yezhilie); Hu 1999, 153–54.

335 Chan 1993, 252–53; Herman 2002, 302; YS, 3.47, reports that Dali was “pacified.” JT/Boyle, 283 for a description of Yunnan.

336 Yao Sui, 15.9a–10a; 17.14b–15a, describes the rigors of travel.

337 YS, 3.47, 4.59, 121.2979–80.

A year later he returned, probably on the occasion of Uriyangqadai's audience with the qa'an in 1256, to present a map to Möngke, and received the name of *maharaja* (Sanskrit "great king").³³⁸ Duan then acted as a scout for Uriyangqadai's campaign into northern Vietnam.

After securing Dali and the surrounding peoples, and attacking the Song at Chongqing, Uriyangqadai was directed in fall of 1257 to punish the ruler of the Tran dynasty of Dai Viet in northern Vietnam (Jiaozhi) for imprisoning a Mongol envoy.³³⁹ A botched Mongol operation overcame an array of enemy elephants and cavalry on the banks of the Red River, but allowed the escape downriver of the Tran ruler Chen Rijing (Tran Canh), who led troops against the invaders. After briefly occupying Hanoi (Thanh Long), the Mongols withdrew. According to Chinese sources, Chen eventually decided to surrender and turn over the country to his son, who sent a hostage with Uriyangqadai to present tribute at the Mongol court early in 1258. In Vietnamese sources, Tran's armies forced the Mongols to retreat, and did not surrender or send a hostage during this first Mongol invasion.³⁴⁰ Throughout the southwest, Uriyangqadai and his successors encountered considerable local pushback, encouraged by Song authorities, which Mongol authorities never completely overcame.

Hülegü's Westward March

More momentous than any of Möngke's initiatives was Hülegü's destruction of the 'Abbāsid caliphate in 1258 and establishment of Mongol rule over Iran and Azerbaijan as a dynasty of Ilkhans, or "subordinate khans" to the Great Khan in the east (later north China). Whether Möngke intended for Hülegü to stay in Iran or return to his *ordo* in Mongolia is unclear. Later Ilkhan apologists refer to the qa'an's secret design that his brother establish a permanent presence over the region.³⁴¹ The mission's original aims were twofold: first, to eliminate the threat from the deadly Nizari Ismā'īlīs (a Shi'ite sect also known as Mulāhida, Heretics, or Assassins), ruling from secluded citadels along the mountainous south Caspian coast and throughout the region of Qūhistān to its southeast; and second, to secure the compliance and assistance of the Caliph al-Musta'ṣim bi-Allāh at Baghdad in doing so.

338 YS, 166.3910–11 for the biography of Xin, a relative of Duan Xingzhi.

339 Han 2008, 792–93.

340 YS, 3.50, 121.2981. Allsen 1994, 407; Rossabi 1988, 27; Taylor 2013, 124–25.

341 CHI5, 340–55, details Hülegü's conquests; Jackson 1976, 221–22; JT/Thackston, 479.

Complaints about Ismā'īlī terror had reached Qaraqorum, as had rumors of disguised Assassins penetrating the Mongol capital with murderous intent.³⁴²

Hülegü returned to his *ordo* in 1253 to begin preparations for the campaign.³⁴³ A vast army assembled in western Mongolia, recruited in part by the allocation of two men out of every ten from all Mongol armies, and a thousand households of north Chinese siege engineers. Reinforcements came from other Chinggisid lines: one Chaghadaid prince joined the expedition, and three Jochid princes, evidence of Batu's intent to guard Jochid interests in the region. A Mongol officer from Möngke's household, Kitbuqa, commanded actual field operations and departed with an advance force in 1252.³⁴⁴ Messengers fanned out to reserve pasturage along the prince's route, assuring a supply of fresh fodder for the army's herds. Altogether this army may have numbered as many as 170,000 men (with their families, yielding perhaps as many as 850,000 persons) and many hundred thousand horses (generally five per soldier), the units from Mongolia traversing some 5,000 miles.³⁴⁵ Like any large Mongol army, it proceeded in a dispersed fashion, stopping frequently for horses to graze.

Setting out in October 1253, Hülegü's army moved in all deliberate leisure, collecting useful intelligence and impressing upon those through whose territory it traveled the awesome might of their masters. The princely progress was entertained at Almaliq by the Chaghadaid regent Orghina Qatun, then camped outside Samarqand in autumn of 1255 for a long and lavish reception hosted by Mas'ūd Beg. Here and at Kish, south of Samarqand, sumptuous celebratory feasts in elaborate tents framed the prince's audiences with local Mongol clients, such as Malik Shams al-Dīn Kart of Herat, who presented gifts and arranged the submission of an elderly Ismā'īlī leader.³⁴⁶

From Transoxania the expeditionary forces crossed the Amu Darya into Khurasan and wintered in northern Afghanistan.³⁴⁷ Arghun Aqa had joined the party at Kish and attended the prince as he advanced through Khurasan, before departing to Qaraqorum to meet with Möngke. In the spring of 1256 Hülegü's party arrived at Tus, Arghun's headquarters, and was entertained by the absent emir's wives and officers. The army approached the fortresses of the Assassins late in summer. Kitbuqa's vanguard had cleared the way, though rebellious remnants in Qūhistān gave some action to Hülegü's troops.

342 William of Rubruck 1990, 222. 343 Lane 2003, 18–20; *JT*/Thackston, 477–84.

344 Jackson 1976, 220–21; *HWC*, 607–13; *JT*/Thackston, 479–81.

345 Smith 2006, 113–18; Smith 1997, 249; Smith 1984, 334–37. 346 *JT*/Thackston, 482.

347 *HWC*, 613–14.

As was customary, Hülegü attempted to persuade the new Ismāʿīlī leader, Imam Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh, to surrender and dismantle the sects' castles. Rukn al-Dīn had just assumed office over the murdered body of his mad father.³⁴⁸ Perhaps encouraged by Hülegü's seeming solicitude, he requested a year to prepare his submission and offered up a spurious son instead. Undeceived and impatient with the imam's procrastination, the Mongols commenced to assault his castle near Alamūt. In November of 1256 Khūrshāh surrendered, along with several ministers and the notable polymath Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274). The fortress was razed.³⁴⁹ With Rukn al-Dīn in tow, Hülegü marched his army to Alamūt, which fell in December. After clearing out most of the remaining Ismāʿīlī strongholds, Hülegü sent the imam and his family to Qaraqorum. Apparently displeased with his brother's wasteful leniency, Möngke ordered them all executed. Driven underground in Syria, the Ismāʿīlī sect all but disappeared until the nineteenth century; it survives today under its current imam, the Aga Khan.³⁵⁰

After wintering south of Alamūt near Qazvin, Hülegü headed southwest toward Baghdad in March of 1257. Pitching camp at Hamadan, almost midway between Qazvin and Baghdad, Hülegü dispatched messengers to the caliph while gathering his commanders to prepare for the siege.³⁵¹ In Baghdad, which experienced a destructive flood in 1256, turmoil racked the city and divided the caliph's court. From the Mongols came an emissary berating the caliph for not supporting the campaign against the Assassins and threatening punishment for failure to heed Hülegü's demands: turn over the realm to his son, destroy the city's fortifications, and report in person (or send his top officials) to the Mongol khan. Although the caliph coughed up a military escort for the return embassy, given the local inhabitants' hostility to the Mongols, his condescending and dismissive reply, addressing the khan as "young man," enraged Hülegü.³⁵²

Further exchanges having revealed only the extent of the caliph's recklessness, Hülegü consulted his omen readers. When one astrologer predicted six cosmic catastrophes if the prince attacked Baghdad, Hülegü sought a second opinion from Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, who derided these dire warnings. Toward the end of 1257, the three wings of the Mongol army departed following various routes. Baiju and Sughunchaq led the right wing, joined by several

348 *HWC*, 707–13.

349 On Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī: *JT*/Thackston, 459, 483, 485, 492–93; Allsen 2001a, 112, 163, 169, 173, 206, 209.

350 Lane 2003, 24–26; *JT*/Thackston, 482–84; *HWC*, 618–38, 707–25. Morgan 1986, 151.

351 Smith 2006, 118–28; Boyle 1961; *JT*/Thackston, 486–91. 352 *JT*/Thackston, 488–89.

Jochid princes, to cross the Tigris and approach the city from the west. Under Kitbuqa and Ilgei Noyan, the left-wing forces moved up from the southeast; Hülegü advanced with the center wing from Hamadan in the northeast.³⁵³ The right-wing commanders routed the 'Abbāsid vanguard by opening the dikes on a large lake and flooding the plains, drowning thousands of Baghdadis. Late in January of 1258, Hülegü was camped outside the main gates. He ordered a wall built around the city, and a moat dug inside the wall. Taking up positions, the Mongol army commenced the siege on 29 January.

After a week of fierce battle, Mongol troops scaled the walls and enjoined the citizens to assist in demolishing them. Religious leaders had been assured of safety, and reportedly the Christian Iberians enthusiastically helped Mongol troops cleanse the populace of resistance.³⁵⁴ The doomed caliph surrendered on 10 February. During a week of looting and slaughter, Hülegü inspected the caliph's palace and treasury, and distributed harem women and eunuchs.³⁵⁵ The execution of al-Musta'şim, his eldest son, and closest attendants occurred on 20 February, ending 500 years of 'Abbāsid rule. Muslims had generally welcomed the Ismā'īlīs' downfall, but the demise of the caliphate, however weakened and ineffective, sent shock waves throughout the ecumene.

Before departing the battleground, Hülegü appointed two of the caliph's former officials to administer the city, along with a Mongol governor, ordering them to clear out the dead, rebuild Baghdad, and reopen the bazaars. In a letter of 1262 to Louis IX of France, the conqueror himself numbered the dead at 200,000.³⁵⁶ To the task of reconstruction the prince assigned 3,000 Mongol troops under Ilgei Noyan and Qara Buqa. Triumphant, Hülegü returned to Hamadan to rest and consider his next moves. Naşır al-Dīn Ṭūsī, a proven prognosticator, was dispatched to construct an astronomical observatory at Marāgha, south of Tabriz, which became the khan's new capital.³⁵⁷

In September of 1259, Hülegü had not yet learned of Möngke's death in Sichuan the month before. He departed for Aleppo and Damascus, Kitbuqa in the vanguard, Baiju leading the right wing and Sughunchaq the left wing. Aleppo fell by December of 1259 and was thoroughly sacked. Withdrawing back into Iran, the khan sent Kitbuqa to take Damascus, which had signaled its intention to surrender peacefully. With Syria apparently within the

353 *JT/Thackston*, 495, 492–93; Boyle 1961, 154–55. 354 Bar Hebraeus 1932, ch. 10, 431.

355 *YS*, 3.51, reports captives presented to Möngke in the second month of 1258.

356 Morgan 1986, 151; Meyvaert 1980; Jackson 2005b, 116.

357 *JT/Thackston*, 498–99; Boyle 1961, 160.

Mongol orbit, Kitbuqa pushed on toward Egypt, at that time ruled by the Mamluk sultan Qutuz, who boldly had the Mongol emissaries to Cairo sawn in half. In September of 1260 Qutuz's highly trained Qipchaq army repulsed Kitbuqa's force at 'Ayn Jālūt, south of Damascus. The Mongol general's career ended with death in battle, or, in Rashīd's account of his undaunted defiance, his capture and execution at 'Ayn Jālūt. Syria spun out of Mongol control. The defeat at 'Ayn Jālūt established the limits of Mongol advance, and a long pattern of hostile relations between the Mamluks and the future Ilkhans. That hostility in turn fueled friendly relations between Cairo and Sarai, and Ilkhanid diplomacy with the Christian powers of Europe in the illusory hopes of effecting an alliance against Egypt.³⁵⁸

The civil war brewing among the Chinggisids as Möngke's brothers Qubilai and Arigh Böke began jockeying for the succession in 1260 perhaps discouraged Hülegü from reconquering Syria, a task bequeathed to his successors.³⁵⁹ More immediately, tensions surfaced between Hülegü and the new Jochid khan, Berke (r. 1257–1266); Batu died in 1256, and his successor Sartaq and Sartaq's son soon after. Inevitably, the transformation of Southwest Asia into a new Toluid *ulus*, signaled by Hülegü's occupation of his conquered territory, threatened Jochid influence in Transcaucasia and Khwārazm, undermined their position in the rich pastures of Azerbaijan, and upset the delicate balance between the Mongol qa'an and his Jochid relatives.³⁶⁰ With both Möngke and Batu dead, the participation of Jochid armies in Hülegü's expeditionary forces soured. Two of the Jochid princes in Hülegü's army died mysteriously at a banquet. The third prince was accused of sorcery and packed off to Berke, who returned him to Hülegü for execution.³⁶¹ Antagonism between Berke and Hülegü owed far more to the geopolitical situation on the ground between them than to Berke's Muslim affinities (as the first Mongol khan to openly embrace Islam).

Möngke's Death and Legacy: Qubilai and the Song Campaign

By assigning brothers to lead the right and left wings of the Mongol military establishment, Möngke tapped their talents while satisfying their ambitions within limits. He retained ultimate authority over the appointment of their officers, while they enjoyed considerable autonomy as subordinate khans in

358 Smith 1984; Amitai-Preiss and Morgan 1999, 57–72; Jackson 2005b.

359 JT/Thackston, 502–6. 360 Lane 2003, 38–41. 361 JT/Thackston, 506, 511.

administering their realms.³⁶² Hülegü, however, never returned to Mongolia or saw his brother again after departing west, whereas the ambitious Qubilai remained close at hand and chafed under Möngke's alert discipline. The qa'an evidently regarded Qubilai's reforms in north China as a program to build a power base rivaling his own; Qubilai's apparent sympathy with his Chinese advisers antagonized Qaraqorum's conservatives. In 1255 Möngke ordered Qubilai to establish a residence at Longgang, in the steppe frontier a ten-day journey north of Yanjing, to defend the site. The next year Qubilai began to build the city of Kaiping (Shangdu) there.³⁶³ The qa'an took two further actions to adjust the balance of power, both connected with preparations for a concerted assault on Song China.

First, in 1257 Möngke dispatched top officials 'Alamdār and Liu Taiping to investigate the finances of Jingzhao and Henan.³⁶⁴ Whatever the merit of the 142 violations alleged against Qubilai's administration, the investigators seized records, dismissed officials, and peremptorily executed dozens of others.³⁶⁵ Qubilai's revenue-collecting and administrative authority in Guanzhong was suspended. Stung by this reminder of imperial prerogative but cautioned by Yao Shu, Qubilai contritely presented himself before his older brother at the end of the year (or in early 1258), and promised full co-operation in the impending Song campaign. Geopolitically sensitive, Jingzhao remained a thorn in the imperial side.³⁶⁶

Möngke's second action was to personally lead an army into Sichuan, still a stronghold of Song resistance. In 1256, after Song authorities detained a Mongol envoy, Möngke convened the first of several *quriltai* to strategize a massive three-pronged invasion of south China. His audit of Qubilai in 1257 doubtless aimed to secure more revenues from and gain firmer control over this strategic princely domain. Campaign orders went out in 1257, and Arigh Böke, the hearth prince, was left in charge of Qaraqorum, assisted by 'Alamdār.

Commanding the right-wing armies, Möngke had advanced south to summer at the Liupan mountains, Qubilai's erstwhile appanage, by the fourth month of 1258.³⁶⁷ According to Chinese sources, his forces numbered

362 Allsen 1994, 407–8.

363 Rossabi 1988, 31; YS, 3.60; YS, 58.1350, in the geographical treatise.

364 YS, 4.60 dates it to spring; YS, 3.50 dates it to the eleventh month.

365 Chan 1993, 393; Hsiao 1993, 434. Yao Sui, 15.10a–b, dates the investigation to 1256 (*bing chen*).

366 Dunnell 2015.

367 YS, 3.51; JT/Thackston, 414–15. Thackston mistakenly reverses left and right wing in his description of participating princes and emirs; see JT/Boyle 224–26. Rashīd's dates are off by two years and his initial total figure of sixty *tümens* (600,000) in Möngke's

ten *tümen* or 100,000 (theoretically), which further divided into three armies to march through Sichuan along different routes in the summer of 1258. In autumn Möngke had reached Lizhou and crossed the Jialing river. Mongol armies swept through Sichuan, taking cities and leaving surrendered Song officials in charge, or putting Song officers in the vanguard of the combined Han–Mongol armies.³⁶⁸ An advance force under Ni'ürin (Niulin) had already taken Chengdu.³⁶⁹

Meanwhile, left-wing armies were to attack along the middle and lower reaches of the Yangzi river. In command of those forces, Taghachar first marched against Fancheng on the Han river, but withdrew after a week because of heavy rain. In disgust, Möngke directed Qubilai to take Ezhou, east of present-day Wuhan in the central Yangzi valley, at the head of all the Mongol–Han armies.³⁷⁰ After hosting a debate between Buddhists and Daoists at Kaiping in summer of 1258, Qubilai departed in winter to rendezvous early in 1259 with Chinese general Zhang Rou, who had been holding the Mongol line along the Huai and Yangzi rivers. Qubilai reached Ezhou first, in the eighth month.³⁷¹ Other troops under Zhang were reassigned to support Möngke in Sichuan or Taghachar, now tasked to take Jingshan, northwest of Ezhou. Taghachar withdrew again, however, and rejoined Möngke.³⁷² Finally, from the southwest Uriyangqadai was ordered to rendezvous with Mongol forces at Changsha, south of Ezhou, in 1259.³⁷³

Early in 1259 Möngke held a New Year's assembly to drink and discuss campaign strategy. He rejected advice to withdraw from Sichuan due to the muggy climate and threat of disease, already taking a toll on men and horses. Mongol armies pressed on to lay siege to Hezhou (Diaoyucheng), in the hills at the confluence of the Jialing and Qu rivers. The Song commander, Wang Jian, had killed Möngke's envoy and mounted a stout defense for five rainy months. Möngke's death in the seventh month (on 11 August) at age fifty-two, whether from injury or pestilence, shut down the campaign.³⁷⁴ His son Asutai escorted the body back to Mongolia for burial at Burqan Qaldun, alongside Chinggis and Tolui, while his brother Möge hastened to inform Qubilai, who received the news either in the eighth month, while crossing

army and thirty *tümen*s in Taghachar's seems inflated. In the same passage he modifies the size of the Khan's troops to ten *tümen*s, which is in line with YS.

368 YS, 3.52; Yao 1971, 4: 179–82. 369 YS, 129.3144–45.

370 JT/Thackston, 415; JT/Boyle, 247, with slightly different versions of Qubilai's initial release from campaigning owing to gout.

371 Jagchid 1980, 82–84; YS, 3.51, 3.53, 4.61, 147.3476; Hsiao 1993, 54–55.

372 Yao 1971, 4: 182; JT/Boyle, 247. 373 YS, 121.2981–82; Rossabi 1988, 45–46.

374 YS, 3.54; 155.3652; JT/Thackston, 416; Yao 1971, 185; Allsen 1994, 410–11.

the Huai river, or at Ezhou in the ninth month.³⁷⁵ Qubilai was reluctant to break off his incipient assault on the city, but the arrival of Song reinforcements and urgent news from his wife Chabi (Chabui) at Kaiping persuaded him to heed his advisers and accept a Song truce. He withdrew to head north in the eleventh month.³⁷⁶

Like Güyük, Möngke apparently expressed no firm preference about a possible successor; unlike his predecessors, he kept his wives on a short leash, paving the way for confrontation between his two younger brothers. Qubilai was elevated as qa'an in Kaiping in the third month of 1260 (May), with the support of the left-hand princes led by Taghachar, Ögödei's son Qadan, Chaghadaid prince Ajiqi, and others. Shortly thereafter a similar ceremony with a different cast of characters that included most of Möngke's own top officials elected Arigh Böke qa'an in Qaraqorum. These events mark the end of the United Empire.

Allsen makes Möngke bear ultimate responsibility for the civil war "that shattered the unity of the Mongolian empire."³⁷⁷ Chief among his faults were alienation of the Chaghadaids and Ögödeids, and failure to designate a successor. Whether we call these faults or features, the former indeed hastened the formation of independent *uluses* in Central Asia, as did, it bears emphasizing, the dispatch of Hülegü to Persia. Nor would appointing a successor have necessarily prevented the outbreak of conflict between Qubilai and Arigh Böke. The animosities and rivalries simmering below the surface had erupted before and could not be contained indefinitely, given the huge canvas of Mongol activity and the consistent orientation of the qa'an in asserting central prerogative. Mongol political unity had grown fragile, and the problem of overreach had become acute by 1259. More remarkable was Möngke's success in simultaneously enlarging the empire to its greatest extent and holding it together as well as he did, postponing its inevitable partition and extending the life of its constituent parts.

Möngke's reign illuminates a Great Khan's affirmation of the Chinggisid vision as a blueprint for dynamic action. How the Mongols subsequently handled the breakup presents new questions of historical contingency, change, and continuity in the Mongol Empire.

375 Yao 1971, 182; YS, 4.61 gives the ninth month. *JT*/Thackston, 416, provides the eighth month. *JT*/Thackston, 416 (*JT*/Boyle, 228): Chabui here is a mistake for Chubi (YS 106.2694), Möngke's third empress, who died at the Liupan mountains in the ninth month of 1259.

376 YS, 4.62–63; Rossabi 1988, 49–51. 377 Allsen 1994, 411–13.

Conclusion: Assessment of the United Empire Era

The salient features of the imperial polity created by the Mongols in the first half of the thirteenth century had roots in earlier Eurasian history. Yet the scale of deployment, refinement, and integration into the sturdy networks that constituted their empire was so unprecedented as to impress upon observers and students down to the present that this was a remarkable new phenomenon, the end of time and the birth of a new world; or, in recent eyes, a historically precocious leapfrogging into globalization.

At a practical level, these features began with the adaptation of techniques of nomadic hunting, warfare, and social organization to knit together vast expanses of land into a unitary communicative space. Encouragement of commerce and extensive recruitment of talent, wherever found, served to broaden and maintain the channels of that communicative space (trade routes, merchant networks, cultural collaborators), as well as to nourish its human and political resources.³⁷⁸ All these policies embodied and undergirded the core values of a distinctive Chinggisid imperial culture, which evolved its mature characteristics during the United Empire period. *Quriltai*, the periodic gatherings at which Mongol princes made or confirmed policy or new Khans, embodied and displayed the core elements of imperial culture. The Mongols' sartorial and celebratory preferences, for example, showcased newly invented traditions that adapted and transmitted across immense distances elements of the civilizations that they encountered.³⁷⁹

In his own lifetime Chinggis Khan may not have expressed the intention or command to conquer the known world and bring all peoples into submission, but by the end of his successor Ögödei's reign, that mission had been established in Mongol ideology as the impetus to sustain and extend the founder's accomplishment. In their eyes, Tengri (Heaven) chose Chinggis and the Mongol people as agents of righteous conquest, and endowed Chinggis's descendants with the right of universal sovereignty.

The first three rulers of the empire, Chinggis, Ögödei, and Güyük, consciously articulated the relationship, conceptual and practical, between steppe norms and the new imperial society they were building.³⁸⁰ Ögödei extended and consolidated the institutional framework of imperial administration and political culture. His policies expanded the reach of the empire,

378 Allsen 1997b. 379 Allsen 1997a; Allsen 2001a. 380 Buell and Kolbas 2016, 43–64.

and enshrined the precedents that guided future decision making, especially in relation to the diplomatic and legislative articulation of Mongol ideology and legitimation.³⁸¹ The construction of cities and settlements, begun already to support the early conquest infrastructure, advanced with the building of Qaraqorum as the imperial capital. Later Mongol capitals arose in Ilkhanid Iran and the Qipchaq steppe. In Central Asia, while major centers in Transoxania like Samarqand and Bukhara were restored, cities in the steppes around Lake Balkhash disappeared under pasture, their surviving resources rechanneled to other parts of the empire. The location of the Chaghadaid court outside Almalik did attract trade and traffic to that city, but did not favor a restoration of the agriculture that had supported urban life in the steppes before the Mongol conquest.³⁸² Moreover, the Mongols' need for expertise offered new opportunities to local educated elites elsewhere.

Mongol campaigns, infrastructure building, and governing projects entailed the recruitment and transfer of people and resources across Eurasia; warfare further sparked massive refugee flight. The resulting rearrangement of the ethnographic and demographic map of Eurasia took Chinese farmers to Central Asia and the Ilkhanate, and Qipchaq, Alan, and Russian soldiers to Northeast Asia.³⁸³ Cosmopolitan pockets of Mongol civilization arose across Eurasia, linked by imperial transportation networks that kept the Mongol world unified in communicative space even after intra-Chinggisid rivalries led to sporadic warfare among regional khanates, or between khans and the Great Khan in East Asia. Traversing that communicative space, for example, were the Chinggisid agents dispatched to collect their lord's shares of the revenues generated in other territories, whose claims were acknowledged, if resisted up to the fourteenth century. It was all in the family, writ large, even after the family split up.³⁸⁴

The very success of the Chinggisid mission took the Mongols out of Mongolia and, after the United Empire period ended with Qubilai's establishment of the Yuan dynasty, left Mongolia an imperial backwater. What it meant to be a "Mongol" also changed continuously, and was not directly related to being from or living in what is today called "Mongolia." Mongols in many ways became an "imagined community" of "culture and custom" who rightfully ruled other people, wherever they found themselves.³⁸⁵

381 Jackson 2006. 382 Biran 2013. 383 Allsen 2015. 384 Kim 2009.

385 Munkh-Erdene 2011, 224–25.

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The Empire of the Great Khan

The Yuan Ulus, 1260–1368

CHRISTOPHER P. ATWOOD

The Establishment of a New Power Center

The Prehistory of the Power Center

The embryo of the idea of a “Yuan dynasty” within a “Mongol Empire” lay in two allied developments: the building up of a power base centered on north China, and the emergence of a prince or of princes willing to employ Chinese Confucians in positions of power. The two came together with the emergence of Qubilai as viceroy of China in 1251, but traces of both can be seen earlier.

North China as a potential power base emerged in the second half of the reign of Ögödei Qa’an (r. 1229–1241). A series of multiethnic armies under the Mongol flag had divided up north China into appanages. The most important was the *tammachi* army under the family of Muqali which was formed of Khitan, Han (ethnic Chinese), and other troops with Mongolian commanders. Alongside them were Han Chinese myriarchs (commanders of 10,000). In Manchuria were the appanages of the princes of the right hand, Chinggis Khan’s brothers, and their descendants, while Inner Mongolia was divided among Önggüt, Qonggirat, Ikires, and other Mongol houses under Muqali’s reign. All of these units had also swept into their maw immense numbers of captured artisans, slaves, and civilian levies (Chinese *tanya*) from the devastated Chinese lands. But before 1251, no princes of the imperial family were stationed in the north China plain.¹

After the 1234 declaration of war against the Song, Ögödei’s sons Köten and Köchü campaigned in the Hanzhong–Sichuan and Henan–Jiangbei areas

1 The position of Ögödei’s son Köten in former Tangut territory was an exception, probably indicating that Tangut territory was not actually conceived of as part of north China.

respectively. Despite generally prevailing on the battlefield, the seasonality of campaigning and the lack of logistical infrastructure made the two advances, particularly Köchü's, quite disappointing. Köchü died around 1238, and was succeeded by the Tangut commander Chaghan, who became commander over all the forces in north China.² In response to the campaign's disappointing results, he and his subordinate Han generals such as Zhang Rou, began digging into Henan, building waterborne defenses and agricultural colonies (*tuntian*).³ Thus many policies that were to become associated with Qubilai's later regime were appearing already in the 1230s and 1240s in response to the general failure of the anti-Song campaigns.

The second piece of the puzzle was the interest of the prince Qubilai, then in his early thirties, in Chinese thought. In the mid- and late 1240s, Qubilai began inviting Chinese Confucians and Buddhists to his territory in Mongolia. There he engaged in discussions with them about government, with questions that already show a considerable familiarity with Chinese history.⁴ From this time on he began to build an entourage, with men like Liu Bingzhong (1216–1274, Buddhist monastic name Zicong), Zhang Wenqian (1216–1282), and Lian Xixian (1231–1280), an enthusiast of mixed Uighur–Khitan ancestry for the philosopher-Confucian Mencius. Several of them hailed from Xingzhou, a prefecture in the central plains (present-day Xingtai), an appanage belonging to the descendants of Badai and Kishiliq, the two horseherders famous for warning Chinggis Khan of a sneak attack in 1203. Qubilai “lent” the services of Liu Bingzhong and other advisers to the appanage holders, and through reformed administration the number of households began to increase. Chinese administrative methods thus showed they could increase the appanage holder's income.

In 1251, when Qubilai's elder brother Möngke seized power and became the new Great Khan, the scope of Qubilai's experimentation increased dramatically. Previous Mongol policy had avoided employing princes of the blood to supervise the administration of wealthy areas in north China, Central Asia, and Iran, but Möngke appointed his two brothers, Qubilai and Hülegü, as viceroys in north China and Iran respectively. Hülegü's appointment led directly to the formation of the new Ilkhanate, and that of Qubilai led by a slightly more circuitous route to the formation of a China-centered Yuan dynasty.

2 *JT*/Thackston, 73–74; *YS*, 120.2956–57, 2.38. 3 *YS*, 2.38, 3.46, 48.

4 *Su* 1996, 10.206; Erdemütü 1994, 83–91, 101–10, 181–82, 184.

From the beginning the two brothers clashed over what this vicerealty was supposed to accomplish. Möngke Qa'an had installed a mostly Muslim coterie of officials in Zhongdu (modern Beijing),⁵ one that Chinese officials found irresponsible and abusive. In Möngke's view, Qubilai's task was to conquer the south, just as his little brother Hülegü was conquering the west. Möngke's original strategy was to outflank the Song by using the eastern edge of the Tibetan plateau to reach the kingdom of Qarajang (Dali in Chinese) in present-day Yunnan and then attack the Song from the south-west. Qubilai duly complied, subduing the Qarajang kingdom in the campaign season of autumn 1253, to spring 1254.

But Qubilai's real concern was with administrative reform. He returned from Qarajang before the end of the campaign, leaving Uriyangqadai (son of Sübe'etei) to subdue Vietnam and probe the southern boundaries of the Song.⁶ Instead Qubilai began a series of reforms in the Shaanxi area, which was not under the jurisdiction of Zhongdu. New pacification commissions (*xuanfusi*) would reform tax collection to collect payments partly in grain rather than all in silk and silver, issue paper currency, limit interest collections, accord Confucians the same freedom from war captivity enjoyed by Buddhist monks and Daoist priests, build a new residence in Inner Mongolia,⁷ and staff the offices with Confucians from north China, not immigrants from the west.⁸ These measures increased his popularity and made his reforms look suspiciously like a bid to subvert his elder brother's rule. Meanwhile, the conquest of the Song was put on what looked like permanent hold.

*The Death of Möngke and the Emergence of the New Power
Center*

By the spring of 1257, Möngke was very unhappy with Qubilai's conduct. Möngke set up an administration in Shaanxi and appointed a team headed by the immigrant 'Alamdār to audit the books of Qubilai's officials. Qubilai himself was removed from all military authority, ostensibly on the excuse of gout, and a prince of the left hand,⁹ Ta'achar, appointed to replace him.

5 Called by the Mongols Chungdu, after the Uighur pronunciation of its Chinese designation Zhongdu, "Central Capital," under the Jin.

6 Herman 2002; Haw 2013, 364–66. 7 Called Kaipingfu and later Shangdu ("upper capital").

8 I use the term "immigrants" to refer to all persons living within China but deriving from areas outside the traditional bounds of Han settlement, mostly from the west. It is thus more or less equivalent to the Chinese *semuren*. This includes Sarta'ul (a Mongol ethnic term for the mostly Muslim people of the West) but also Uighurs, Önggüts, Tibetans, and others.

9 I use this term to refer to the descendants of Chinggis Khan's brothers, who occupied a distinctive, important role throughout the dynasty's history.

Qubilai's eventual fate was left hanging for nine months, and it was not until January 1258, that a meeting between the two brothers in the former Tangut territory restored their trust. Qubilai replaced Ta'achar in the assault on the Song in the Hubei (middle Yangzi) area, which had not made much progress, while Möngke took the main force to attack Chongqing in the Sichuan basin.

In the end, both armies failed in their objects. An epidemic carried away 5,000 soldiers and Möngke himself, on August 11, 1259. Meanwhile Qubilai had successfully crossed the Yangzi river and was besieging Ezhou (part of modern Wuhan city) on its southern shore when he received news both of his brother's death and of the gathering of Song reinforcements. The unexpected arrival from the south of Uriyangqadai, whose men had cut through Vietnam and the Song realms, was welcome,¹⁰ but did not alleviate the pressure from the Song. Trapped on the southern bank of the vast Yangzi, Qubilai's army too was being ravaged by hunger and disease, eventually losing 40 or 50 percent of its men.¹¹ Meanwhile, Qubilai's main wife Chabi sent news that officials appointed by his youngest brother Arigh Böke, including Qubilai's old enemy 'Alamdār, were recruiting soldiers both in Mongolia and in north China. In this crisis, Qubilai left his army to get out of its predicament as best it could and fled back to Zhongdu. There he set in motion the events that led to his enthronement as new qa'an on April 15, 1260, at a *quriltai* (assembly) of princes and commanders in his Inner Mongolian seat of Kaipingfu.

The initiative behind this barely legitimate coronation came largely from his Han Confucian entourage, but its success depended crucially on the support of the princes of the left hand, who controlled the eastern part of the Mongolian plateau and most of Manchuria. On the right hand, he had the support of a few low-status Chaghadaid and Ögödeid princes. In the next moon (May–June, 1260), Qubilai's little brother Arigh Böke responded by organizing his own enthronement *quriltai* near Qaraqorum, in the traditional seat of Mongol rule.

The contest with Arigh Böke highlighted Qubilai's break with the past. In personnel and policy, Arigh Böke's regime was a continuation of Möngke's regime. Geographically, he controlled the Mongolian heartland, and had the support of the western khanates and Möngke's sons. Militarily, he controlled the right wing of the southern invasion army, which had begun with nominally sixty *tümen*, and was now strung out from western Sichuan

¹⁰ Haw 2013, 366.

¹¹ That the besieging soldiers were beset by hunger is referenced in *YS*, 169.3977–78; Hao 1997, 84. I would like to thank Hong Xuedong of Nanjing University for bringing these references to my attention.

north to the area of the Liupan mountains (on the border of present-day Gansu and Ningxia), limiting Qubilai's access to the northwest.

By contrast, Qubilai's center was in the north China plain and the adjacent areas of Inner Mongolia, isolated from the rest of the Mongol world. Of the Borjigin princes, only the princes of the left hand supported him en bloc. After escaping from his poor position at Ezhou, Qubilai made an armistice with the Song and thus extracted the left wing of the southern invasion army, nominally half the size of Möngke's right wing.¹² But he had his hands on the fiscal engine of the empire, and the support of the Chinese officials who could make that engine run. In the long run, this one fiscal advantage outweighed all of Arigh Böke's strengths.

Qubilai's strategic preparations had four components: (1) use loyal officials to take over the men Arigh Böke's messengers had tried to conscript in north China; (2) blockade Mongolia, preventing the flow of tribute and trade to the empire's traditional heartland; (3) maintain the support of the princes who favored him by lavish rewards; and (4) seize control of the civil administration in northwestern China, and win over as many of the commanders in the right-wing army as possible. Over the summer of 1260 these four preparations were completed. Qubilai appointed Lian Xixian as pacification commissioner in the northwest, and by mobilizing north Chinese commanders like Liu Heima, and the local Önggüt (east Turkic Christian) commander Wang Weizheng in southwest Gansu, he also won over the Mongol army in Sichuan and isolated the troops in the Liupan mountains. They retreated west into the Tangut country and linked up with new troops raised in Mongolia by 'Alamdār. As the fall campaigning season began, Qubilai sent his Mongol army to join those forces already in Shaanxi–Gansu and the combined army decisively defeated Arigh Böke's men at Guzang, on October 27, 1260.

Qubilai then launched two personal expeditions leading mixed Mongol–Han armies into Mongolia proper in that fall and the next. The first in the autumn and winter of 1260–1261 failed to come to grips with Arigh Böke, who wintered in the Tuva region. When the second won a major victory at “Mosquito Lake” (Shimu'ultu Na'ur) on November 27, 1261, Arigh Böke fled again to the northwest. Qubilai's armies' difficulty in trapping their more mobile steppe opponents was exacerbated by trouble on the southern frontier with the Song (see below) that prevented a full mobilization of the armies in north China.

12 On the armistice with the Song, see Jay 1991, 15–17.

What eventually rescued Qubilai from his predicament was the long-term effect of Qubilai's blockade, which forced Arigh Böke to ruthlessly exploit those areas still loyal to him, particularly the Chaghadaid lands. Arigh Böke had seized and killed Qubilai's candidate for Chaghadaid khan, but in the end, Arigh Böke's own Chaghadaid candidate Alghu changed his allegiance to Qubilai. Arigh Böke was forced to fight a two-front war, attacking the Chaghadaids, and steadily lost support. Thus without any further campaigns on Qubilai's part, Arigh Böke, along with Möngke's three sons, surrendered on August 21, 1264. The main western khans all now recognized Qubilai as qa'an, restoring the nominal unity of the Mongol Empire. This victory marked the clear triumph of the resources of north China over anything that could be mustered in Mongolia or Central Asia.

But the civil war with Arigh Böke had damaged the vision of humane governance with which Qubilai had won over his entourage. The exigencies of war and raising a new army meant that his civil officials as well had to ruthlessly extract recruits, draft and riding animals, and taxes from north China. In strategic areas like Sichuan and the northwest, local commanders such as Ni'ürin and the Wang family warlords were given free rein. Thus the Confucian vision of transforming the Mongol Empire into a "provisioning state," active in promoting people's livelihood rather than maximizing revenue and war-fighting capability, was compromised at the very moment of its triumph.¹³

Adding to grim necessities of war were the simultaneous troubles on the southern frontier. Despite the peace with the Song that extricated his army, the Song eventually attacked border prefectures. Although he made a renewed declaration of war on August 26, 1261, in practice Qubilai pursued a policy of appeasement and minimal counterattacks. This defensive attitude was challenged when Li Tan, a Han commander on the border, rebelled and handed over strategic cities to the Song on February 22, 1261. Fortunately for Qubilai, the rebellion was opportunistic, and poorly planned. Li Tan was based in Shandong; after a massive mobilization of the regional Chinese and Mongol frontier armies in the surrounding areas, the rebel was defeated in the field and besieged in Ji'nanfu. His supporters melted away and he was finally captured and executed on May 24.

The Li Tan rebellion further degraded the pre-coronation dreams of Qubilai and his advisers and created a serious breach in Qubilai's trust in Han Confucian officials. Li Tan's father-in-law, Wang Wentong had created much

¹³ On the "provisioning state," see Wong 1994, 59–60.

of the architecture of the new regime's central administration. Qubilai was convinced of Wang's complicity in the rebellion and had him quickly executed (March 14). Immigrant officials used his rebellion as proof that the Confucians' supposed ethics were just a front for disloyalty to the regime. Other officials charged those within the inner circle, such as Lian Xixian, of having recommended Wang Wentong in the first place.¹⁴ Qubilai did not allow the purges to touch his inner circle of Han officials but was visibly troubled by their reluctance to endorse the execution.¹⁵ Even though Han military men played a key role in suppressing the rebellion, the next year, the chief Han general Shi Tianze pre-empted any suspicion by proposing that figures like himself no longer be permitted to hold civil and military posts.¹⁶

Administration in the Early Yuan, 1260 to 1272

By 1264, then, with the suppression of Arigh Böke's rival court and of the Li Tan rebellion, the new regime reached its first form. Tensions and border conflicts with the Song dynasty continued, but no attempt was made to conquer the Song at this time. Pacification of Korea had taken a big step forward when Wang Chǒn, formerly a hostage at the Mongol court, returned to Korea and occupied the throne. Tibet as well had been initially pacified through the intervention of 'Phags-pa Lama, who had been hostage at Köten's *ordo* and later achieved high status in Qubilai's court.

The new regime had two capitals, one in Inner Mongolia and one in the area of present-day Beijing. Qubilai's Inner Mongolian seat of Kaipingfu was renamed Shangdu (Supreme Capital) in June 1263, while in the following year, a month after the surrender of Arigh Böke, the old Jin capital (centered in southeast Beijing) was re-elevated to the rank of capital again with the name Zhongdu. This old capital proved insufficient, however, and in 1267 a vast new construction project was initiated under the supervision of *fengshui* master Liu Bingzhong to move the site slightly northeast and completely redo the area's hydraulic engineering. In March, 1272, the new capital was officially named Dadu (Chinese for "great capital") and the main offices of civil administration were moved there.¹⁷

The resulting city had a rectangular surrounding wall of 28.6 kilometers with eleven gates, each connected by a grid of vast thoroughfares about thirty-seven meters wide. On the southern side of the city was a further

¹⁴ Su 1996, 8.161; 7.132–33; Atwood 2010, 121–22. Also Marco Polo, §134 (Polo 2015, 177; Polo 2016, 118)

¹⁵ YS, 208.4596. ¹⁶ Su 1996, 7.120.

¹⁷ Chen 2015. On the Yuan construction: Watanabe 2017; on its legends: Chan 2008, 1–85.

enclosure, in which the major offices of the administration were placed. Inside that was the *danei* or “Great Inner Palace” where the emperor lived. Two large artificial lakes were formed with an artificial island mountain in the middle of one of them.¹⁸ There is no census figure specifically for the population within the city walls, but it was conventionally believed to have about 100,000 households. By mid- and late Yuan times, the city’s population had doubled to perhaps 230,000 households. The 1270 census figure of commoners for Shangdu Route, including many rural prefectures, is 41,062 households and 118,191 persons; it has been estimated that there were another 28,000 households of military, post-road, and other non-taxable households.¹⁹

Formally, the central administration was based on a threefold division of major offices. In the idealized description of Ye Ziqi, Qubilai

established the Central Secretariat to manage affairs; he established the Bureau of Military Affairs to handle military needs, and he established the Censorate to correct and impeach the officials. [Qubilai] once said, “The Secretariat is my left hand, the Bureau is my right hand, and with the Censorate I keep my two hands healthy.”²⁰

These three offices appear in Mongolian and other non-Chinese sources as the *Shing* (from Chinese *sheng*), the *Ön* (from Chinese *yuan*), and the *Tai* respectively. Despite the Chinese name, the *Shing* organization was actually inherited from the previous Mongol administrations which had established departments or secretariats in Zhongdu, Beshbaliq in Central Asia, and later beyond the Amu Darya in Iran. The *Shing* was directed by two *chingsangs* (from Chinese *chengxiang*), or grand councilors, aided by two *bingjiang* (from Chinese *pingzhang*) or managers.

The *Ön* and the *Tai* were new for the Mongol administration, the former created in 1264, and the latter in 1268. However, due to the secrecy Mongols imposed on military operations, the internal workings of the *Ön* are still poorly understood. The head of the *Ön* had the simple title *zhiyuan*, “director,” but this position was probably far more important than its rare appearance in the record would suggest. Likely despite the Chinese titles and ranks found in the *Ön*’s organizational chart, it was actually simply the original Mongol military organization under alternative names.²¹ By contrast,

¹⁸ Steinhardt 1990, 154–60.

¹⁹ Wu 2000, 288–91; Chen and Shi 2010, 37–38, 190–92. For an innovative study of the capital region as a whole: Ding 2016.

²⁰ Ye 1959, 3B.61; YS, 31.697.

²¹ Later in Yuan history, major coups were instigated by officials heading the *Ön*: Esen Buqa (1323), El Temür Taishi (1328), and Bayan Taishi (1332).

the *Tai* or Censorate was a classically Chinese institution, which traditionally had the power to impeach even the emperor himself for malfeasance. As Qubilai's metaphor of the hands shows, however, he did not see that as the *Tai*'s function, but only the investigation of his officials, civil and military.²²

By the time the *Tai* was established, Qubilai had already decided that a purely Han and Confucian government was impossible. In September 1265, the recriminations at court between Han scholars and immigrant officials grew so vocal that Qubilai sacked them all and replaced them with two young Mongols of high birth, Hantum (Antong) and Bayan.²³ He later relented and called the officials back, but the turn toward Mongols of high birth became permanent. Of his leading Han vassals, the unyielding Lian Xixian was dismissed in 1270 and the more pliable Zhang Wenqian was shunted into less significant positions outside the *Shing*. The monk-Confucian Liu Bingzhong died in 1274 and had no known policy input after 1269. The general Shi Tianze died in 1275 and played little role in his final years.

Outside the three high-prestige offices were a vast number of other offices, many of which gave more direct access to the emperor and hence in practice more real power.²⁴ These included offices connected with the Mongolian patrimonial institutions: the *ordo* or mobile court, the *keshtag* or bodyguard-cum-hostage army, the *ortoq* merchants, and above all, the members of the imperial family.

By the year 1271–1272, Qubilai considered his new system more or less complete and promulgated a number of capstone measures intended to display its universality. In addition to the proclamation of the dynastic title of Yuan (“prime”) on December 18, 1271, Qubilai also banned further use of any precedents derived from the law code of the fallen Jin dynasty.²⁵ In March of the following year, the Chinese name of the capital was changed from its Jin-era designation Zhongdu or “Central Capital” to the new designation Dadu, “Great Capital.”

The same lunar year of 1271–1272 also saw several sweeping regulations of the marriage and inheritance systems that ended up imposing the Mongol custom of levirate and pre-mortem partible inheritance on the Han.²⁶ Two

22 See Polo §97 (2015, 126–27), where the *Tai*'s role is seen as purely related to promotion and demotion of personnel.

23 YS, 6.108; Zhang 2014.

24 Formally, apart from the *Shing*, *Ön*, and *Tai*, only the empress dowager's administration (*huizheng yuan*) and the Buddhist Affair Commission (*xuanzheng yuan*) had the right to directly report to the throne; YS, 2616 (Ratchnevsky 1985, 117). But social occasions supplied many chances to influence the emperor's opinion.

25 YS, 7.138; Ch'en 1979, 3–16. 26 Birge 2017b, 90–98, 218–19; Birge 2017a, 97–100.

years earlier the square script created by 'Phags-pa had been devised as a universal script covering Mongolian, Tibetan, and Chinese. It was immediately proclaimed through the empire with schools set up to teach it, and the issue was reiterated after proclaiming the dynastic title.²⁷ Despite passive resistance, Qubilai continued to enforce the levirate marriage and the 'Phags-pa script on the Han.²⁸

An Empire out of Balance

The year of 1272 marked a major turning point in the formation of the Yuan. Less than a year after the decree announcing the new dynastic title of Yuan in December 1271, Qubilai and his generals began envisioning a vast expansion. Armies and navies swarmed out to south China, Japan, Vietnam, Champa, Burma, and even Java. Meanwhile, the quantity of money printed by the Yuan government exploded. But only the conquest of south China generated lasting income for the Yuan treasury. As military expenses mounted, eventually a harsh reckoning came due, leaving a difficult legacy for his grandson Temür to resolve.

Conquest of the Song Dynasty

Qubilai's subjugation of the Song dynasty was the only significant conquest made by a Mongol successor state after the weakening of the empire's cohesion in 1260. In terms of population and wealth acquired, it was also the largest single conquest in the history of the Mongol Empire. That Qubilai managed to achieve it owes much to both the Mongol and the Han sides of his regime.

By the beginning of 1273, the Song dynasty had already withstood forty years of war with the Mongol Empire, losing only the Hanzhong area and western Sichuan. Möngke Qa'an's 1257 attack on the Song had reaped only Möngke's death and Qubilai's near disaster on the wrong bank of the Yangzi. As Qubilai said to Yao Shu in the midst of the 1272–1276 campaign, "[The Song] family has ruled for three hundred years and before the heavenly mandate came to our family it was theirs – this is not something easy to contemplate."²⁹

After the Li Tan rebellion, relations with the Song settled into a low-level border conflict that was almost uninterrupted. In 1266, a Song defector, Liu Zheng, presented a plan for attacking Xiangyangfu, the most exposed of the major Song fortresses along its riverine defense line. This city had briefly fallen to the Mongol Empire in Ögödei's time and so was treated as

²⁷ *Yuan dianzhang*, 1.7; *YS*, 6.121, 122, 7.129; reiteration, 7.139.

²⁸ 'Phags-pa script: *YS*, 7.142, 102.2615; levirate: Birge 2017b, 219–28. ²⁹ Su 1996, 8.163.

a legitimate target even without plans for full-scale conquest. The next year Qubilai assigned Aju, Uriyangqadai's son, to execute the plan. By 1270, Aju and Liu Zheng memorialized that they would need a navy to take the city, and received approval to create one. Two years later Ariq-Qaya, an Uighur of poor peasant background running the Henan Branch *Shing*, suggested attacking Fancheng, on the near side of the river, first. With the help of Ismā'īl, a mangonel operator from Iraq, this proved successful, and on March 14, 1273, Xiangyangfu's commanding general surrendered the city. The Mongol Empire now had a foothold on the lower reaches of the Han river.

Aju now argued that the Song side was losing its will to fight and that the time had come to finish it off. Qubilai was clearly in favor, but the proposal sparked a year-long debate, almost all of whose arguments were unfortunately not preserved. The Confucian Xu Heng went on record as being opposed and was forced to retire. But opposition must have been widespread enough to hold up the invasion for a year. In the winter of 1273–1274, however, Qubilai finally got the acquiescence he needed to raise ten new *tümen* of troops. The total invasion force was twenty *tümen*, with Aju commanding half, and Bayan, chief official of the *Ön*, the other half, and also taking general command of the invasion. Other forces invested Chongqing and Ariq-Qaya was detached after the taking of Ezhou to conquer Hunan and Guangdong.

In the event, the campaign turned out to be a smashing success. From the setting out of the expeditionary army from Xiangyang in October 1274 to receiving the surrender of the Song emperor and his officials at Lin'an (present-day Hangzhou) on February 19, 1276, took only two campaign seasons and less than a year and a half. Ezhou and its twin city Hanyang, over which Qubilai had such worries, surrendered almost immediately as the Mongol armies and navies appeared on the scene. At the major naval battle of Dingzhou Island (March 18, 1275),³⁰ the combined Mongol army and navy routed the Song commander-in-chief Jia Sidao.³¹ At the battle of Jiaoshan (between Yangzhou and Zhenjiang cities on the Yangzi), on July 26, Aju managed to burn a whole fleet of too tightly anchored Song warships – a trick that southerners were supposed to play on northerners, not the reverse.³²

The seasonal date of the Jiaoshan battle is significant; the last time the Mongol armies had continued attacking the Song in summer was Möngke's ill-fated attack of 1259. Persian sources say that the invasion force was almost 30 percent Mongol and over 70 percent Han;³³ such a composition made the force much

30 Dingzhou Island is near present-day Tongling City, although with the change of the Yangzi riverbed it is no longer an island.

31 YS, 8.162. 32 YS, 8.168; Su 1996, 2.29–30; Davis 1996, 80–82. 33 JT/Boyle, 271.

less vulnerable to hot-weather illnesses. Another important factor was the sheer size of the army. Although the exact number is uncertain,³⁴ it was a vast army by Mongol standards. Yet in naval battles like Jiaoshan they were still outnumbered.

Although the conquest of the Song began with the massacre of Fancheng in 1272, Qubilai intended the advance of 1274 to showcase a new type of Mongol conquest. The emphasis would be on minimizing social disruption: attacking only the resistant, and otherwise enabling commoners to go about their daily business. Only cities that rebelled again after surrendering were explicitly authorized for massacre; the most notorious case was that of Changzhou.³⁵ In general, however, the conquest of the south was vastly less destructive than that of north China.

The response of the Song population to the invasion was contradictory. On the one hand, a long line of Song generals, such as Fan Wenhui, surrendered and were taken into Yuan service. The Song court itself, led by the empress dowager, likewise preferred to surrender peacefully and spare Lin'an (Hangzhou) the horrors of war. But besieged cities like Yangzhou, Chongqing, and Hezhou held out long after the surrender of the capital, and thousands of Song officials and their families and servants committed suicide rather than surrender to the Yuan armies. In the case of Tanchou (modern Xiangtan), the suicides were so many they shocked the commander Ariq-Qaya into calling off a planned massacre.³⁶

Meanwhile, as the Empress Dowager Xie brought the reigning Song emperor to surrender, she also arranged for two of his brothers to escape to the south. In June 1276, Song loyalists enthroned one of these brothers as emperor in Fuzhou. For the next three years, Song naval commanders and Confucian loyalists like Wen Tianxiang operating in Fujian and Guangdong sought to prevent the Yuan consolidation of their victory. Finally, Yuan land and sea forces trapped the remaining 1,000 Song ships at Yaishan on March 19, 1279 (see Map 2.1).³⁷

*The Integration of the South, Monetary Expansion,
and the Administration of Aḥmad*

Although disturbances would last in south China until the end of Qubilai's reign in 1294, the fall of the Song capital marked the end of major military operations. Already in 1278, the units mobilized for the Song conquest were being demobilized.³⁸ The Song armies were reorganized and drafted into the Mongol army as the "Newly Adhered Armies" (*xin fu jun*) and Song money was called in and replaced by Yuan paper money (*chao*).

34 Su 1996, 2.23; cf. JT/Boyle, 271. 35 Davis 1996, 98–101. 36 Davis 1998, 110–12.

37 Davis 1998, 109–10, 123, 167–74, 1–5. 38 Hsiao 1978, 84–85.



Map 2.1 The Great Yuan (Joe LeMonnier, <https://mapartist.com/>)

Paper money had originated in the state finance of Tang dynasty China as a way to get around transportation of the bulky strings of copper cash which were the traditional Chinese currency. By the time of the Mongol conquest, bills were widely used, but with each bill limited by an expiration date and a designated area of use. In 1260, Qubilai's *Shing* began issuing a new type of paper currency, one that had no expiration and was valid through the areas of the central and branch *shing*. Moreover, this currency was denominated not in copper cash coins but in silver *yastuq* (Mo. *süke*, Ch. *ding*), a unit equivalent to 1.9 kilograms of silver, which was the money of account in the Mongol central administration. By making this paper currency both convertible to silver and usable for tax payments, the *Shing* assured its stability.

Figures for the amount of *chao* printed yearly give a clear sense of the fiscal situation of the regime (see Figure 2.1). Before 1274, the highest annual issuance was the equivalent of a little over 116,000 *yastuq* issued in 1265. With the campaign against the Song (and a smaller concurrent campaign against Japan as well), the yearly amount disbursed in 1275 quickly rose to almost 400,000 *yastuq*. The final costs of the conquest, and the demonetization of Song currency, made the amount of currency issued balloon to over a million *yastuq* annually from 1276 to 1278. Afterwards amounts issued continued to be very high, reaching over 2 million in the mid-1280s, four times higher than the 500,000 *yastuq* that became the Yuan court's estimate of the minimal needs of the unified Chinese

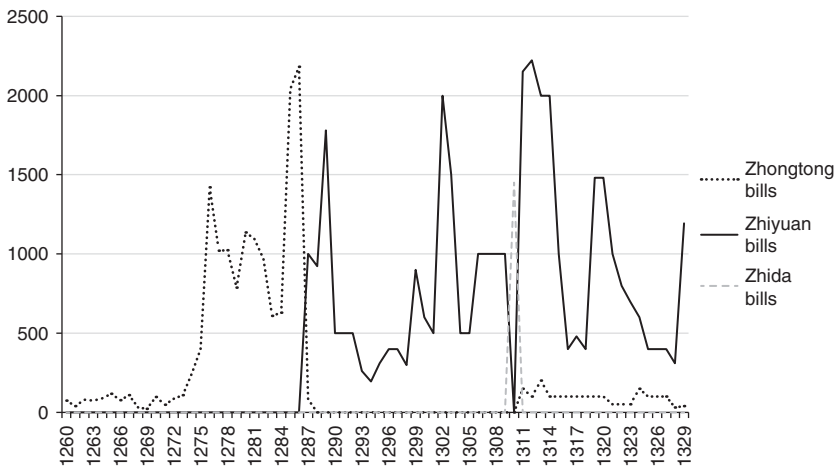


Figure 2.1 Currency emissions of the Yuan

economy.³⁹ These enormous sums are linked in ways whose causal arrows are still unclear to a broad increase in the money supply across Eurasia, to the further military adventures of Qubilai, and to the role of Aḥmad as minister.

Little is known of Aḥmad's origin except that he came from the city of Fanākat in the Ferghana valley. His early expertise was particularly in the metallurgical and salt monopolies, which he parlayed into a position as *bingjang* or manager in the *Shing* or Secretariat. His rise was immediately polarizing and disturbed the equilibrium of government. Up until 1272, Qubilai dealt with these factional struggles by creating special offices for Aḥmad, outside the normal framework of the Secretariat. In 1270, his organization, the *Shangshu sheng* or Department of State Affairs, had taken charge of the census, and added over 200,000 households to the number of taxpaying subjects in a single year.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, the Grand Agricultural Administration was taken out of the hands of the Confucian Zhang Wenqian, and put in the hands of Bolad, a Mongol of the Dörbed family.⁴¹ Over the lunar New Year in 1272, Aḥmad's *Shangshu sheng* was merged with the central *Shing* or Secretariat, with him in the position as manager or *bingjang*. From then on until his death, Aḥmad dominated the fiscal side of Yuan governance.

The conquest of the Southern Song opened extraordinary opportunities for building both government revenues and private fortunes. In a policy meeting in 1275, Qubilai overrode his Confucian advisers and adopted Aḥmad's position that Song paper money should be demonetized, and the northern salt and metal monopolies extended to the south as soon as possible. Tangut and Muslim staff also planned the establishment of a Branch Grand Agricultural Administration (*xing da sinong si*) and the Agricultural Development and Land Management offices (*quannong yingtian si*) to meld south Chinese agriculture with Yuan priorities and take over state land for the Yuan fisc. By 1278, the fiscal officers dispatched to the south to handle the monopolies and other officers under Aḥmad's control exceeded 500 men.⁴² Cultivation of cotton for military uniforms was rapidly promoted through linkages between officials and merchants. Moreover, the demonetization of Song currency was a useful occasion for limiting the convertibility of the Zhongtong paper currency, which opened the gates for more deficit spending.

39 That 500,000 *yastuq* was a particularly important figure appears from its frequency in the lists of annual totals of paper *yastuq* issued given in the *Yuan shi* (Schurman 1967, 141–3).

40 On Aḥmad's role in the census: *YS*, 205.4559, 7.129–30. Wu 2000; Wen 2012.

41 *YS*, 6.122 (Zhiyuan 6, Ⅷ111), 7.132 (Zhiyuan 7, Ⅹ1, Ⅹ11), 7.138 (Zhiyuan 8, Ⅹ). On Bolad: Allsen 1996, 2001, 59–80. On Zhang Wenqian: Su 1996, 7.145. On the new regulations for agriculture: Schurman 1967, 50–53; *Tongzhi tiaoge*, 16.457–66 (§324).

42 *YS*, 205.4561; Chen 1979, 7.42.

On April 10, 1282, there occurred one of the most mysterious events of Mongol Yuan political history: an armed attack on the Dadu palace that resulted in the death of Aḥmad. The attack was led by Wang Zhu, a chiliarch stationed in Yidu (modern Qingzhou city in Shandong), and a Buddhist monk surnamed Gao, who had been employed in the army to teach invulnerability techniques. At the time of the attack, Qubilai and the heir apparent, Chinggisim (1242–1286) were staying in Shangdu.⁴³ The attackers impersonated Chinggisim and his entourage and attempted to seize the Forbidden City in Dadu. Zhang Yi, a high official in the Ōn in charge of security for the capital area that night, unaccountably allowed the imposters into the palace area. In the end the attackers were able only to kill Aḥmad and another high official before being captured and disarmed.⁴⁴

Marco Polo states directly, and Rashīd al-Dīn implies, that the attack was part of an intended uprising against Mongol rule in China, and that Aḥmad was killed as the lynchpin of Mongol control in Dadu. That same year, rumors and anonymous letters spoke of a plan to rebel and fire the reed-covered walls of Dadu. Unnamed opponents charged that Zhang Yi was conspiring with monk Gao to overthrow the Mongols and he was swiftly executed. Chinggisim quashed further investigations and Aḥmad's Han enemies used his death to uncover his lavish lifestyle and appropriation of gifts meant for the emperor. This diverted the emperor's attention from pursuing another potential purge of Han officials, such as had followed the Li Tan rebellion in 1262. Just to be sure, Qubilai Qa'an ordered Wen Tianxiang, a famous Song loyalist being held in the capital and possible focal point of the rumored Song rebellion, executed early in 1283.⁴⁵

Aḥmad's life and death illustrate the complex relationship of ethnicity, ideology, and factionalism in the Yuan administration. He was attacked by the Han and Confucian literati for being greedy and nepotistic – and even his defenders among the Muslim community like Rashīd al-Dīn acknowledge that he embezzled goods. Ideologically, however, his only major difference from his critics seems to have been skepticism about the division of responsibility entailed in the establishment of the *Tai* or Censorate.⁴⁶ In his approach to administration, he was clearly well within the Qubilaid consensus that government revenues would be best increased by a moderate taxation that did not exceed the taxpayers' ability to pay. At the same time, he did the will

43 Chinggisim is Chinese *zhenjin*, "True Gold," pronounced in the Yuan as *jin-gim*. Chinggisim is the Uighur–Mongolian reading of *jin-gim*.

44 YS, 205.4562–63; Su 1996, 11.228, give two differing accounts of the event. Cf. JT/Boyle, 291–93; Marco Polo §85 (2015, 104–8).

45 On rumors of rebellion and Wen Tianxiang's execution: *Song shi*, 418.12539–40. On the reed covering of the walls of Dadu, see Chen 2015, 72, 38–40.

46 YS, 205.4561; Su 1996, 7.135.

of his master in attempting to make sure that every eligible taxpayer was enrolled and no eligible monopoly ignored.⁴⁷ As a Muslim immigrant, his factional supporters were disproportionately other Muslim immigrants, but he also recommended and promoted many local north Chinese officials.⁴⁸ Indeed, while Aḥmad was alive, Qubilai saw him as quite different from other immigrant officials in his combination of broad culture and practical knowledge.⁴⁹ His posthumous disgrace embittered the last decade of Qubilai's life and led to serious instability at court.

Qubilai's Foreign Expeditions

The spectacular success of the expedition to conquer the Southern Song, despite the naysaying of Confucians like Xu Heng, fed a dangerous overconfidence in Qubilai Qa'an. In 1269–1270, Qubilai had to suppress a final revolt in Korea against the Mongols' chosen client king. Beyond Korea, he had become aware of the existence of Japan in 1264, which led to futile attempts to open relations and obtain the submission of the island country.⁵⁰ Eventually in 1274, he ordered the Mongol commander Hindu and a Korean general in Mongol service, Hong Chagu, to attempt an invasion through Korea with 15,000 soldiers. The marines were unable to make headway, however, and returned in defeat.

Further diplomatic exchanges continued until 1280, when the Japanese side put Mongol envoys to death, and Hindu and Hong Chagu requested permission to try to reconquer Japan. Qubilai now built up a vastly larger army, estimated at 100,000, of which only three returned to the Yuan. Under the general command of the Mongol commander Ataghai and the former Song commander Fan Wenhui, the Mongol fleet set sail from sites in south China and Korea, aiming to rendezvous at the shore near Dazaifu on Kyushu Island. The fleet was first shattered by the storms famously labeled *kamikaze* or "divine wind" by Japanese Buddhist chroniclers, in which 70 or 80 percent of the boats were lost. The marines who made it to the mainland were gradually worn down before eventually being all captured and executed (Mongols,

47 Thus at the same time as his *Shangshu sheng* was conducting a new census to expand the tax rolls, one which the *Tai* opportunistically accused of harassing the people (YS, 205.4559), it also proposed that the silver tax quota of 50,000 paper *yastuq* be reduced by 10 percent due to the difficulty civilians had in paying it (YS, 7.129).

48 Judging from the names, his nominees for the monopoly commissioners to be sent to south China included five Muslims, two Jurchen, and four ethnic Chinese (YS, 205.4560).

49 YS, 205.4561.

50 On the invasion in Japanese sources, see Conlan 2001. Surveys based on Yuan sources: Su 1958, 41.561–63; Chen 1979, 4.25–29. On archaeological finds, see Delgado 2010.

Han, and Koreans) or enslaved (the “Tang” or former Song soldiers) by the victorious Japanese. Qubilai refused to accept the finality of this defeat and continued mustering grain, boats, and men in Korea and south China until 1286, when Liu Xuan successfully argued that such preparations would be better diverted to the ongoing wars in Champa and Annam.

Mongol interactions with Annam went back to Prince Qubilai’s initial conquest of the Yunnan-area kingdom of Qarajang in 1254. After Qubilai left, Uriyangqadai passed through the kingdom, then under the Tran dynasty, defeating the Vietnamese army before cutting through Song territory. Diplomatic interactions continued from then on. Up until the conquest of the Song dynasty, however, Qubilai’s court had no realistic designs to implement the conquest. Yet already in 1267 the court had divulged its ideal aims, announcing its six demands (*liu shi*) that would, if fulfilled, turn Annam into a fully co-ordinated client state of the Mongol Empire.⁵¹ Vietnam was willing to call itself a “small country” and concede suzerainty to the Yuan, but resisted the full scale of Mongol demands. With the conquest of the Song, however, it became more and more difficult to finesse the issues.

In the end, however, Vietnam was invaded not on its own account, but as a way to facilitate the invasion of Champa, a Hindu–Buddhist kingdom speaking a Malay–Polynesian language occupying what is now central Vietnam. From 1280 the kingdom had been paying tribute. In the winter of 1282–1283, however, with the Champa crown prince leading a change in policy in the kingdom, Qubilai dispatched a force of 5,000 and a fleet, with instructions to put the older and more submissive father back on the throne. The Mongol commander Sodu entered the capital with his men, but was unable to force the king or his son to agree to more than the usual tributary relation.

Qubilai in 1284 thereupon ordered his son, Prince Toghan, to lead 15,000 men through Vietnamese territory and rendezvous with Sodu’s forces. The Vietnamese refused to submit, thus sparking another lengthy and unsuccessful war to force Vietnam into submission. Prince Toghan’s troops fell to a combination of disease and counterattacks, while Sodu died in a battle with a Vietnamese force. In 1286, Qubilai agreed to a temporary withdrawal but subsequent expeditions began again the next year and lasted until the end of Qubilai’s reign. Prince Toghan and several other generals were banned from the capital for returning without victories to report.⁵²

51 YS, 209.4635. 52 Su 1958, 41.563–64, 570–72; Chen 1979, 5.31–34.

Qubilai's early conquest of Qarajang spawned a number of ancillary campaigns that aimed to expand the area of pacification. Qarajang, or Yunnan, "South of the Clouds," as it came to be known in Chinese, was highly diverse in both topography and ethnicity. Around small lowland areas of intensive cultivation were upland areas settled by peoples often with loose tributary relations to the lowlands, or else defiantly resistant to lowland control. The conquest of the Qarajang and Yachi centers was, therefore only the beginning of a slow securing of full control.⁵³

Campaigns out from the Qarajang valley into the surrounding mountains followed the trade routes southwest into what is now Myanmar or Burma. From 1275 on, the Qarajang (Dali) army and officials began to probe the border between their own center of Qarajang and Pagan, then the capital of the kingdom of Myan. Rulers among the intervening Zardandan ("gold teeth") or Tai chieftainships successively surrendered to the Yuan. Marshal Naṣr al-Dīn's call for an expedition to subdue Myan was approved after the surrender of Chongqing, the last Song fortress in Sichuan. The expedition set out in the winter of 1283–1284 but the regular army fared poorly in the combat environment and native troops from highland south China were ordered to rescue the situation. By the spring of 1287, Yuan armies had reached Pagan, where the new king of Myan, who had deposed his father, agreed to present tribute, at which point the remnants of the Yuan armies withdrew.

The most distant of Qubilai's attempted conquests was that of Java. Issued in response to the mistreatment of a Mongol envoy, the expedition was ordered in the spring of 1292 to proceed from Fujian under the command of Yīghmish Bingjang, who would later serve in Vietnam. The campaign that eventually set out in winter 1293–1294 was quite large, with two *tümen* of soldiers and grain provisions for a full year. The expedition strategically supported a rival candidate for the throne and captured the capital, Majapahit; eventually, however, the kingdom rebelled again and the Mongol forces had to retreat, taking with them the wife of the defeated king and over 100 Javanese officials. When Qubilai died later that year, plans for any continued campaign disappeared without a trace.⁵⁴

How are we to explain the vast variety and scale of these campaigns under Qubilai, virtually all of which ended in defeat, and none of which resulted in anything like the kind of final conquest usual in the earlier Mongol empire? The most important fact to note was that with the exception of the first

53 Su 1958.41.564–69; Chen 1979, 6.35–39.

54 Su 1958, 41.572 (cited in YS, 215.4664–67); Bade 2002.

campaign against Japan, all of these great foreign expeditions happened after the conquest of south China. This conquest, by proving that the Mongol Yuan territory had not yet reached its final form, and by delivering into Qubilai's control vast resources in money, men, and seafaring technology, made possible the following ambitious campaigns.

The Yuan court inherited the Song dynasty's extensive commercial and diplomatic ties in the South Seas. However, as in Korea, the Mongols eventually intended to convert these ties into the kind of client kingdom status that was expected of all who surrendered to the Mongol Empire.⁵⁵ Such demands grossly exceeded the traditional requirements of tribute with China and could only be enforced by overwhelming force, force that the Yuan proved in the end unable to apply successfully outside Korea. To this extent, the overseas campaigns, like the ongoing Mongol–Ilkhanid war with Mamluk Egypt, was evidence of the continuing power of the Mongol ideology, which demanded that campaigns continue until the whole world came under Mongol rule.⁵⁶

At the same time, it marked the temporary defeat of the Chinese Confucians who had been assuming, since their first contacts with Qubilai, that the Mongol realm in north China had reached something like its final territorial shape and would hence transition to a civilian footing. The conquest of the Song delayed this transition until the reign of Qubilai's grandson and successor, who in some of his earliest acts as ruler in 1294 normalized relations with Vietnam and canceled the still ongoing preparations for another attack on Japan. Only then could one say that the Mongol idea of a real world conquest involving actual mobilization of world resources had finally given way to the purely symbolic world conquest of the Chinese foreign-policy ideal in which tributary powers recognized the supremacy of the central empire but were magnanimously allowed to manage their own affairs.

Slightly different were the campaigns in the area of Yunnan and Burma. In this area, the polities facing the Mongols were generally much smaller in scale, and were surrounded by many upland zones that existed in a state of more or less perpetual dissidence against the rice-farming lowland regimes. Here, early campaigns to secure the Mongol hold on the lowland areas and communication routes led naturally into campaigns to subdue more distant lowland kingdoms that could serve as alternative centers of political allegiance for the upland peoples of Yunnan. These campaigns continued past the death of Qubilai into the reign of Temür, and indeed into the 1330s. Yet here, too, the campaigns aimed only at the imposition of tribute and symbolic

55 Henthorn 1963, 194; *YS*, 209.4635–36; Allsen 1987, 114. 56 Amitai-Preiss 1995, 230–32.

humiliation of defeated rivals which marked Southeast Asian international politics.

The Emergence of Mongol Dissidence

On the other side of Qubilai's realm, in Mongolia and Turkestan, dissidence also emerged in this period, necessitating an ongoing military presence, and on two occasions the personal participation of the emperor.⁵⁷ Much of the dissidence was the backwash of the political conflicts that had led to the breakup of the unified empire. Dissidents sought to reverse the verdicts of both the 1251 coup that overthrew the Ögödeid line and the 1264 defeat of Arigh Böke. Just as persistent, however, were the tensions created by the Yuan attempts to control the Chaghadaid Khanate.

The Yuan court considered itself the inheritor of the entire Mongol Empire.⁵⁸ Chaghadaid princes in Turkestan were thus no different in principle from the princes in Shaanxi and Gansu under tight supervision by the Yuan court.⁵⁹ All of the lands of the "northwestern princes" (*xibei zhuwang*) as far as Bahrain, Derbend, Circassia, and Oros (Rus') were seen as part of the empire's territory.⁶⁰ Only the Chaghadaid and Ögödeid princes in Turkestan, Mawarannahr, and central Siberia, however, were close enough to the Yuan center of power to make actually imposing control at all plausible. Border conflicts that sometimes developed into full-scale invasions continued throughout the dynasty.

Finally, dissidence appeared late in Qubilai's reign even among the princes of the left hand, the descendants of Chinggis Khan's brothers, who occupied appanages in the eastern part of the Mongolian plateau and Manchuria. Several princes of these families, particularly Ta'achar, a descendant of Temüge Otchigin, had played a crucial role early in Qubilai Qa'an's reign. The rebellion of his descendant Nayan in 1287 was thus an even more alarming indicator of serious disaffection among the Mongol princes than the persistence of hostility among princes who had never really supported him anyway.⁶¹

The most famous of the dissident princes was Qaidu, Ögödei's grandson, who put together a coalition with the Chaghadaids that eventually took over

57 Chen 1979, 2.13–20. 58 Kim 2015.

59 On the princely establishments in northwest China (modern Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, and Qinghai), see Atwood 2020; Matsuda 1992, 1993, 2003; Daobu, Zhaonasiu, and Liu 1998.

60 YS, 63.1567–74; Lin Meicun 2007, 279–304; Miya 2007, 113–30.

61 I follow here the determination of Tu Ji and Pelliot (Hambis and Pelliot 1945, 39–40), that the Nayan who rebelled was a descendant of Ta'achar and through him of Temüge Otchigin, and is not to be identified with the Nayan in the family of Belgütei.

the Tarim Basin. Assigned by Möngke Qa'an an appanage in the Qayaliq area, Qaidu had been in contact with Qubilai's court from 1260, but refused to pay the personal homage the qa'an demanded. In 1269, Qaidu had brokered an alliance between himself and the acknowledged heads of the Jochid and Chaghadaid branches of the family, Möngke Temür and Baraq, predicated on hostility to the Toluid domination of the best parts of the empire. Baraq launched a failed invasion of the Ilkhanate, and he died shortly thereafter; this led to Qaidu seizing de facto control over the Chaghadaid realm.⁶²

The aims of the allies in 1269 were diverse. Marco Polo is presumably reflecting the received wisdom of the Qubilaid court when he explains that the conflict was ultimately about money and trust. Qaidu had a right to his share of the revenues of China and thought they should be given to him regularly without having to risk his life or freedom on a trip to Qubilai's court.⁶³ But the 1269 *quriltai* mooted broader objections; around that time, "the tributary princes of the northwest" (*Xibei fanwang*) dispatched messengers challenging Qubilai's adoption of Chinese ways: "The old customs of our empire are different from the Han laws. Now with your residence in the Han lands, establishment of cities with walls, and system of civilian courtesies, you are upholding the Han laws. What is the reason for this?"⁶⁴ These were the old objections of Möngke and Arigh Böke's supporters, and they evidently had not disappeared. But it is notable that the 1269 *quriltai* did not depose Qubilai or elect a new qa'an. Neither side was ready for an all-out struggle.

In 1266, Qubilai had responded to the emerging dissidence in the northwest by enfeoffing his son Nomuqan as the Prince of Beiping to garrison the Mongolian frontier with Qaidu. In 1274, the forces were victorious over Negübei, Qaidu's Chaghadaid ally, while Chaghadaid princes like Chübei defected to Qubilai's service. By 1275, the Mongolian situation seemed stable enough to have senior Grand Councilor Hantum, a descendant of Muqali, tour the front with Nomuqan, and in a gesture of peace Qubilai recognized Baraq's death with a posthumous award to him and Qaidu.⁶⁵ Peace seemed at

62 On Qaidu's contacts with the court, see YS, 4.68–69, 6.107, 134.3247–48. On the alliance and Baraq's campaigns, see JT/Thackston, 520–35.

63 Marco Polo, §199 (Polo 2015, 302–3; Polo 2016, 193–94). Polo speaks of Qaidu demanding his share of the conquests in Cathay and Manzi. The former should mean the Ögödeid revenue appanages in Hebei, while the latter probably refers to the Caizhou area in Henan.

64 YS, 125.3073. The biography does not date this communication but implicitly places it soon after 1268. Cf. Biran 1997, 27–28, 144; Biran, this volume.

65 YS, 6.111, 7.144, 8.152, 8.160. Rashīd al-Dīn touches on the defection of Chübei and Qaban: JT/Boyle, 266; JT/Thackston, 535. In Marco Polo §199 (Polo 2015, 303–4; Polo 2016, 194), this appears as the result of a large battle, which I identify with the defeat of

hand just as the conquest of south China was about to bring untold riches into Qubilai's coffers.

But the situation suddenly reversed late in 1276, as Yuan armies were concentrating on finishing off the Song. Shiregi, a son of Möngke serving with Nomuqan in Mongolia, conspired with other princes to seize both Nomuqan and Hantum as well as the *ordo* (mobile courts) of Chinggis Khan which were still recognized as the empire's spiritual core.⁶⁶ With military and spiritual power in Mongolia in their hands, they called on the princes of the right and left hands to meet with the aim of deposing Qubilai and enthroning a new Toluid qa'an, either Shiregi himself or Sarban, Möngke's grandson. To entice their most important prospective allies, Nomuqan was sent to Möngke Temür and Hantum to Qaidu.⁶⁷

Fortunately for Qubilai, Qaidu and Möngke Temür refused the call for a *quriltai*, as did the Yuan princes of the left hand. But the princes of the right hand in western Mongolia joined in the revolt, as did Qonggirat commanders as far south as Yingchangfu in south-central Inner Mongolia, not far from Dadu. No large army was on hand, so Qubilai threw his Qipchaq *qarachin* or clear-koumiss brewers into battle. By September they had recovered the Chinggis Khan shrine and established a line on the Orkhon river. By February 1278, Bayan Chingsang had arrived fresh from the conquest of the south with a large army. After some delay the conspirators were defeated and driven like Arigh Böke before them back into Siberia, where their support disintegrated. By 1282, Sarban (Sarman) had captured Shiregi and surrendered himself to the court. Nomuqan continued to be held at the Jochid court until Möngke Temür passed away and the Jochid princes sent him back in 1284; they also induced Qaidu to send Hantum back at the same time.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, from 1278 on, a separate Yuan force was sent to garrison the Khotan area in force.⁶⁹

But Bayan's advance had been very measured and one of the victorious commanders appears to have charged him with conspiring with the enemy.

the Chaghadaid ruler Negübei mentioned in YS, 8.152. On these events, see Biran 1997, 38–39, 147–48.

66 The place where Nomughan was seized is always given in the Chinese sources as being at "Almalik." This has usually been taken to be the famous Almalik in the Ili valley north of the Tian Shan range. But the geography of the accounts of the seizure found in the biography of Tutqaq makes it clear that the seizure happened in Mongolia. The name Almalik, or "apple orchard," must thus have also designated some place in western Mongolia.

67 YS, 6.111, 7.144, 8.152, 9.191, 12.239, 128.3132; Su 1996, 3.48; JT/Boyle, 266–67.

68 YS, 12.239, 13.265, 127.3113, 128.3132; Su 1996, 1.11, 3.48; JT/Boyle, 267–69.

69 YS, 7.197, 210, 216, 226, 123.3024, 133.3226, 3231, 166.3896, Liu Yingsheng 2012, 481.

In the end, the accuser was himself accused of a capital crime and executed the following year, and Qubilai's high regard for Bayan's loyalty was not ultimately damaged, but this charge appears to have marked a turning point in Qubilai's attitude toward Mongol armies. Tutqaq,⁷⁰ commander of the Qipchaq *qarachin*, was feted as the real hero of the conflict, and Qubilai began to transfer former Qipchaq prisoners of war to the *qarachin* ranks, building them up as an alternative to the Mongol troops.⁷¹

Tensions on the frontier gradually slackened. In 1281, the front in Mongolia had stabilized enough that Qubilai could risk sending another prince, this time his heir apparent, Chinggisim, to do a tour of duty there.⁷² The return of Nomuqan and Hantum in 1284 marked a further thaw in Qubilai's relations with the northwestern princes. Nomuqan and Hantum's confinements were never very severe and the episode shows the relative restraint which the members of the Chinggisid family manifested in their dealings with one another. Even Shiregi was not executed for laying hands on the emperor's son and conspiring to make himself qa'an, but instead dispatched to the southern front in Vietnam.

In 1286, border tensions rose again, with clashes in the Altai and in the Turfan area.⁷³ In this year also, Qubilai formally elevated the new Qipchaq forces under Tutqaq to the level of a guards (Ch. *qin jun wei*) force. The new force had nineteen thousands of guards, along with a large number of estates and vast herds in the capital area, along with the peasants, herds, and cotton fields of Tutqaq's plantations in the Jiangxi, Anhui, and Jiangsu areas. Smaller guards units had been formed in 1281 to conduct punitive expeditions in the Turkestan area, while the Asud or Ossetian guards unit was created in the 1270s with duties in the south. Despite their name these units were evidently intended not only for the personal protection of the emperor, but also for projection of imperial power against obstreperous elements, the most threatening of whom were becoming the Mongol princely aristocracy.⁷⁴

Tutqaq's Qipchaq units were soon put into action. In 1287, the northern part of the Yuan realm exploded into a tangled and multifaceted rebellion that covered the area from present-day Liaoning to the western border of Mongolia. Only after three years and two personal campaigns by Qubilai, along with others by his son Gamala and his grandson and eventual successor

70 His name is given as Tūqtāq in Rashīd al-Dīn's editions, but as Tutqāq in Waṣṣāf's history. Mongolian sources confirm that Tutqaq is correct.

71 Su 1996, 2.20–21, 3.48; YS, 127.3113, 72 YS, 11.222, 234, 127.3113, 128.3132–33.

73 Su 1996, 2.31, 3.49; YS, 128.3124, 3132.

74 Su 1996, 3.48–49; YS, 128.3132–33, 3134; Hsiao 1978, 96–97, 99–100.

Temür, could imperial power be re-established in Mongolia and Manchuria. The rebellion's ringleader was Nayan, but his confederates included several princes of the left hand among the descendants of Temüge Otchigin and Qachi'un. Nayan's prominence was illustrated by his attempts in the lead-up to the revolt to use his social ties with Bayan, Tutqaq, and other powerful commanders in the Mongolian area to gather information, and capture them or win them over. He was thus initially able to use official channels to mobilize all the princes of the left hand in March of 1287 as well as some of the bureaucratic offices in Manchuria, before his orders were countermanded.

Once Nayan openly went into rebellion in May-June, the court acted very quickly. Qubilai set out the next month from Shangdu and by July 14 was sitting in an elephant palanquin overlooking Nayan and his 40,000 troops somewhere in what is now southeastern Inner Mongolia. Qubilai's own forces naturally included his *keshigten* commanded by Ös Temür (also known as Örlüg Noyan), a descendant of Chinggis Khan's companion Bo'orchu. However, following Bayan's advice, Qubilai used as his main force his Han personal guards under the command of Li Ting and Dong Shixuan. Although the qa'an's force was outnumbered, Nayan's men were inexperienced and undisciplined, and in the end were easily scattered. The image of Qubilai on an elephant palanquin illustrated the new resources which had become available to the qa'an as a result of the conquest of the south and left a great impression on contemporaries, being mentioned by both Marco Polo and Rashīd al-Dīn. Although Mongol and Qipchaq troops played the main role in the subsequent campaigns to chase down and capture Nayan and his confederates, the summer victory of the Han troops was an important milestone in the multiethnic evolution of the regime.

Nayan's rebellion had tapped into deep sources of dissatisfaction among the various princes and people of eastern Mongolia and Manchuria and mop-up continued into 1289. Late in the winter of 1288-1289, Qaidu's troops made a belated appearance in the fray; Nayan is said to have been in contact with him from the beginning but he did not respond immediately, and at least one source says that Qaidu did so only at the urging of Malik Temür, one of Arigh Böke's sons and an alumnus of the Shiregi rebellion. Once he entered western Mongolia, Qaidu had more or less free rein until the spring of 1289, when Tutqaq and his Qipchaq soldiers returned to western Mongolia with Qubilai's son Prince Gamala. By July, when Qubilai for the last time went on personal campaign, Qaidu had retreated west. Tutqaq's intervention had kept Prince Gamala safe in one of the battles by the Khangai range, and in the

following feast in the capital, Qubilai insisted that he take precedence over the Mongols, another striking milestone in the changing ethnic hierarchies.⁷⁵

Funding Qubilai's Final Decade

In the last fifteen years of Qubilai's reign, the system he established continued to function, and advanced on several fronts. The work attendant on the integration of the conquered Song lands continued with the inauguration of sea transport of tribute grain between north and south in 1283, the re-creation of the Grand Canal in 1287, the registration of the southern population in 1291, and the compilation of a provisional law code in 1292.⁷⁶ These measures, however, were carried out mostly by the bureaucracy with the encouragement of influential officials, and did not attract the personal attention of the throne.

The death of Aḥmad and even more his posthumous disgrace opened the way for a new rapprochement between Qubilai and his Confucian officials. In May 1282, Qorghosun was appointed the senior grand councilor. Although the heir apparent, Chinggim, had had nothing to do with Aḥmad's fall, it was well known that "the one whom Aḥmad feared was the crown prince alone."⁷⁷ Aḥmad's posthumous disgrace thus redounded to Chinggim's credit as one who had all along opposed the minister's influence. For the next two years, Qorghosun worked with Chinggim and the Policy Deliberation Office (*zhanshiyuan*) set up in the crown prince's establishment to create a "renovation" (Ch. *gengxin*) of the regime. This term has often been used by Chinese writers in the dynastic-history tradition to designate the kind of mid-course renewal that could save a dynasty which had clearly lost its way. To use the term was thus to shout aloud that the new regime, less than a decade after its greatest triumph, the conquest of the south, was in desperate need of new blood and a new direction. Qorghosun took aim at traditional Mongol practices like the *ortoq* or "partner" merchant system that to Confucian scholars represented the regime's most alien features.

Qorghosun was part of a new generation of Mongol officials sympathetic to Confucianism. Qubilai surrounded himself with young scions of Chinggis Khan's old *nökörs*: Hantum of Muqali's Cha'a'ad Jalayir family, Ös Temür of Bo'orchu's Arlad family, Öchicher of Boroghul's Hü'üshin family, and Harghasun, usually called *darqan* and himself descendant of one of the two

75 Su 1996, 2.21–22, 3.42, 49–50, and YS, 127.3114–15, 119.2947–48, 128.3133–34, and 162.3797–98. See also the relevant entries in the Basic Annals.

76 On the 1292 code: Ch'en 1979. 77 YS, 115.2890.

famous *darqans* of the Oronar family, Badai and Kishiliq. Qubilai put three of the four rotating shifts of his *keshigten* under the first three of those families.

These figures maintained cordial relations with the Han Confucians, with whom they shared a distaste for the parvenu ambitions of immigrants like Aḥmad. The scholarly tradition of respect for ancestry gave these aristocrats a recognized role in the Yuan system as the descendants of Chinggis Khan's *ötegü bo'ol* or hereditary slaves. Yet without specific fiscal or military expertise, they occupied roles that, if not actually purely nominal, were more political than functional. Once Qubilai passed away, these figures and their laissez-faire attitude to policy would come into their own.

In the meantime, however, Qubilai was too masterful to allow a *chingsang* out of sympathy with his basic aims to serve for long. Qorghosun's reforms faced widespread opposition and, after a little more than two years, Qubilai dismissed him. For the emperor, the key irritation was fiscal retrenchment: even Aḥmad before he died had attempted to limit spending, and under Qorghosun paper currency emissions were kept under 650,000 *yastuq* of currency annually. This was far below what was needed for continued military adventures, and in 1285 Qubilai imposed a compromise on his followers: Hantum would remain as titular head of the *Shing* but a Han official with experience in running monopolies in the south, Lu Shirong, would be brought in as the *Shing*'s titular number three and real policy engine.

Among the notorious "corrupt officials" of Qubilai's regime, it was Lu Shirong, a Han official from Damingfu, who most embodied the aim of yoking the entire society to producing high revenues. His claim was that with only 932,600 paper *yastuq* budgeted from regular taxes, he would be able to bring in 3 million paper *yastuq* annually by using government funds for various investments. Again, as Aḥmad had early in his career, Lu Shirong demanded control of an autonomous apparatus exempt from censorial supervision. As a Han, however, his political position was weak. On December 24, 1285, after less than a year, Qubilai acquiesced to charges from his old Mongol vassals that the new measures were a cover for corruption and that, in any case, they were not producing anywhere near the revenue promised. Lu Shirong was executed.

Meanwhile, the situation had grown extremely dangerous for Prince Chinggisim. He had received a Chinese education as well as a Mongolian one and was well known for believing that "the words of Confucius are at one with the sayings of the [dynasty's] sacred ancestors."⁷⁸ Late in 1285,

78 YS, 115.2888.

a censor from the south presented a charge against the emperor, that age had rendered him unfit to rule, and that he ought to abdicate in favor of his son. The censorate tried to bury this explosive charge, but Taziku Asan, an old ally of Aḥmad, got wind of it. Through Taziku's intervention Qubilai was informed of the charge, which enraged him and terrified Chinggisim. In the end, Han officials convinced the emperor that Taziku's aim was to use the memorial to overturn the careful balance between ethnicities among the emperor's vassals. On December 30, 1285, Taziku too was executed, a week after Lu Shirong. And a week after that, on January 5, 1286, Prince Chinggisim himself passed away suddenly in circumstances that have never been clarified since.⁷⁹

The two executions and Prince Chinggisim's death re-established Qubilai's undisputed authority in his court. Troops were sent back into Vietnam, and spending remained out of control, reaching a maximum of 2,181,600 *yastuq* currency in 1286. Once again, Qubilai sought an official who could make his policies possible. The last one was Sangga,⁸⁰ an official who started as an interpreter and was nephew of Dynastic Preceptor Damba.⁸¹ Using his position in the Buddhist establishment, Sangga first tightened up the administration of the regime, and reformed the currency, before eventually doing what no one else had been able to do since 1272: convince Qubilai that some kind of retrenchment was unavoidable.

The first and most important reform was to issue a new Zhiyuan currency, which was still convertible, but only at an 85 percent discount.⁸² Further measures focused on improving revenue collection, particularly in the south, where there was still considerable resistance and social turmoil.⁸³ Measures to increase revenue thus went hand in hand with efforts to suppress dissidence, promote cultivations useful to the state such as cotton, and destroy the influence of the remaining members of the former Song dynasty's Zhao family.⁸⁴ In 1288, the quota for grain tribute shipped from the south by sea had been set at 400,000 *dan*; Sangga insisted that next year it must be raised to

79 Miya 2016, although her picture of conflict seems overdrawn.

80 Ch. *Sangge*, from Sanskrit *sangha*, "monastic congregation," which in Mongolian was pronounced *sangga*.

81 On Damba, see Debreczeny 2014.

82 My interpretation follows Vogel 2013, 163–64, 374; see also von Glahn 1996, 63–65; Peng 1994, 478–81; Schurman 1967, 135.

83 Chen 1979, 1.7–12.

84 This was the background of the famous desecration of the Song tombs by the Tangut monk-official Yang Rin-chen-skyabs (Ch. Yang Lianzhenjia); Franke 1981, 321–25. Clansmen of the Song's Zhao imperial surname were deported at this time to Dadu: YS, 15.328.

1 million *dan*.⁸⁵ Even so, in 1289, when Zhiyuan emissions topped 1,780,000 paper *yastuq*, Sangga gave the bad news to Qubilai that spending on this scale was not sustainable. Even though the quotas for the salt, liquor, and other monopolies were drastically increased, from 1290 on, the annual emission of Zhiyuan currency was capped at 500,000 *yastuq*. Fortunately, armies had been withdrawn from Vietnam in 1288 and the princes in Mongolia and Manchuria had been pacified.

Having finally accepted from Sangga what he had not accepted from anyone since 1272 – limitation on his appetite for expansion – Qubilai appears to have grown tired of him. In the autumn of 1290, Mongol aristocrats got at the qa'an while he was out hunting with tales of Sangga's corruption, and by the end of the next March Sangga had lost his head. But no immediate return to the past extravagance was possible in Qubilai's few remaining years of life. Signs of a serious subsistence crisis, the first of what Timothy Brook has called the Nine Sloughs of the Yuan–Ming period, were cropping up all over the empire.⁸⁶ Already in the spring of 1291, a famine struck in Shanxi, Hebei, and adjacent parts of Inner Mongolia; 67,000 refugees thronged the soup kitchens in Datong.⁸⁷ Reports of famine only increased the next year. By 1293, the immediate crisis was over, but grain reserves were vastly depleted; moreover, the south, which had shipped 1,400,000 to 1,500,000 *dan* of grain annually by sea in 1290–1292, was unable to break the million-*dan* mark again until 1302.

Qubilai outlived every significant figure in his generation. When he died on January 18, 1294, one could say that an era had passed, except that in reality, that era, the one of Chinggis Khan's grandsons, had passed a decade or more earlier. Qubilai's legacy to the Mongol Empire lay in two contradictory decisions: the first to adopt the *Han fa* or Chinese law, and the second to follow the Mongol imperative of conquest and bring the south into the empire. Both decisions brought immense fiscal and administrative benefits to the empire's ruling class, and Qubilai's officials had already worked out much of how the two parts of the legacy could be fruitfully dovetailed into a stable dynasty unifying north and south. Visitors like Marco Polo could already experience how the tremendous wealth of south China was transforming the qa'an into the world's richest

⁸⁵ YS, 15.316. One *dan* = ninety-five liters.

⁸⁶ See Brook 2010, 71–74. Brook designates this one as the Yuanzhen Slough. In his later article (Brook 2017, especially 54), he replaces the idea of a Yuanzhen Slough of 1295–1297 with a Zhiyuan Slough of 1268–1272. I find the dating in his earlier study more convincing.

⁸⁷ YS, 16.344, 345.

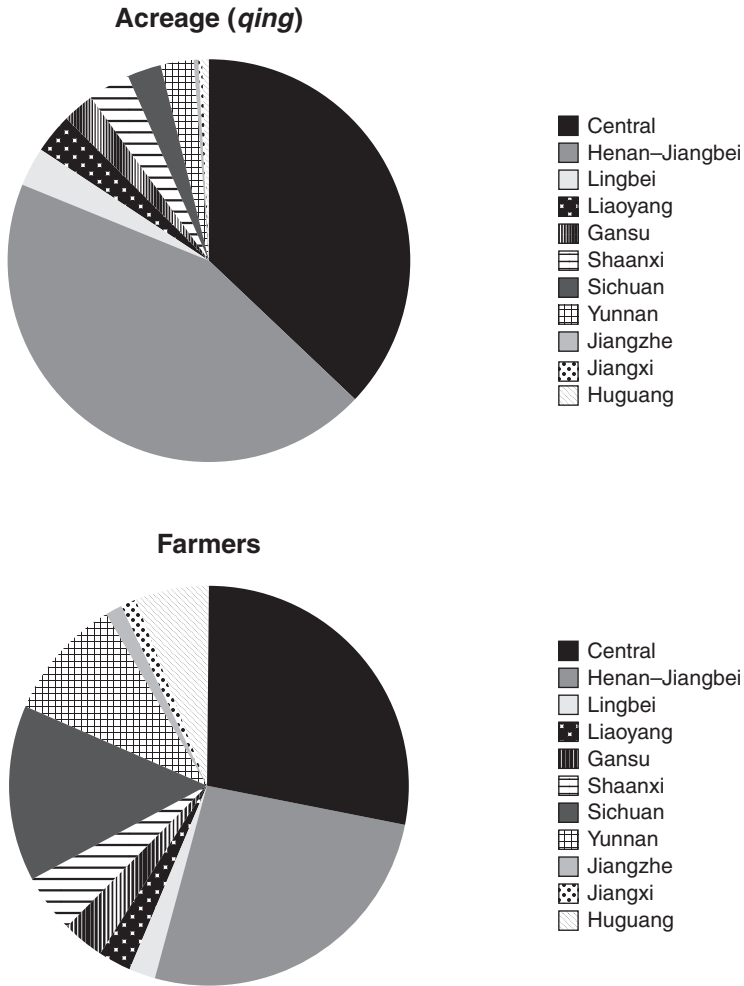


Figure 2.2 Military farms in the Yuan dynasty (1328 figures)

ruler. Alongside the grand hunts and the sumptuous feasts, they praised innovations like paper money and marveled at the splendor of south China's former capital, Hangzhou, and its great port Quanzhou. Presiding over it all was the immensely charismatic qa'an. But it was precisely the qa'an's stubborn physical and mental vitality that delayed the inevitable transition toward a less "kinetic" and personal style of rule for a decade or more, leaving this task to his grandson and successor Temür.

The Empire of the Great Khan

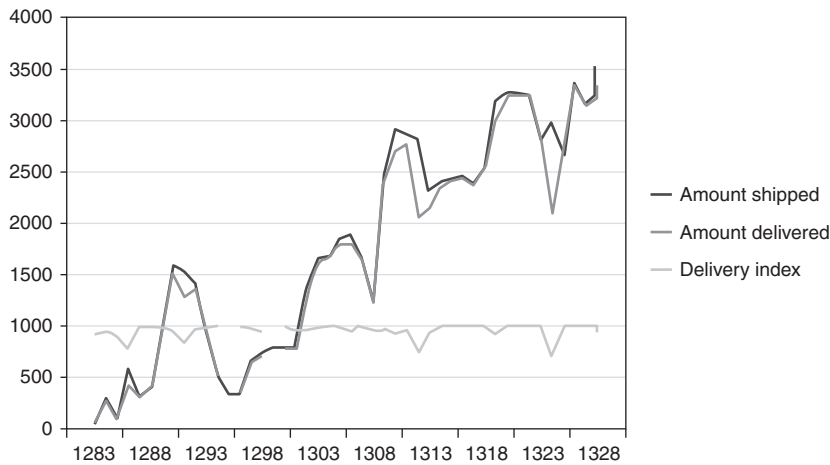


Figure 2.3 Seaborne grain transport

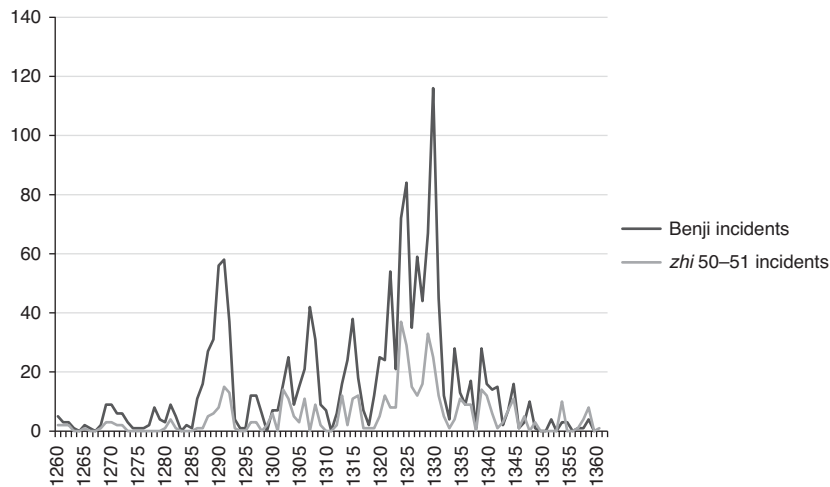


Figure 2.4 Famine events reported during the Yuan dynasty

Although Qubilai Qa'an had nominated Chinggis's youngest son Temür (1265–1307) as his successor, the time-honored process of selecting the new qa'an at a *quriltai* proved unavoidable. Only one other candidate was seriously considered: Prince Chinggis's eldest son Gamala (1263–1303). Both Temür and Gamala had been garrisoning Mongolia, although Gamala's record in the battles with Qaidu was more impressive. The interregnum

was supervised by Bayan Chingsang and Chinggis's widow (d. 1301); Temür's choice was guaranteed when they suggested fluency in reciting *biligs* or Mongolian wise sayings as the decisive test; Gamala had a speech defect, and Temür naturally won.⁸⁸ Temür may have been preferred to Gamala due to his tractable nature, but if so it was a correct choice. Temür's father Chinggis had dreamed of modeling his rule on Chinese emperors who had given the land rest after periods of stormy ambition; his youngest son did just that and so consolidated the imperial system.

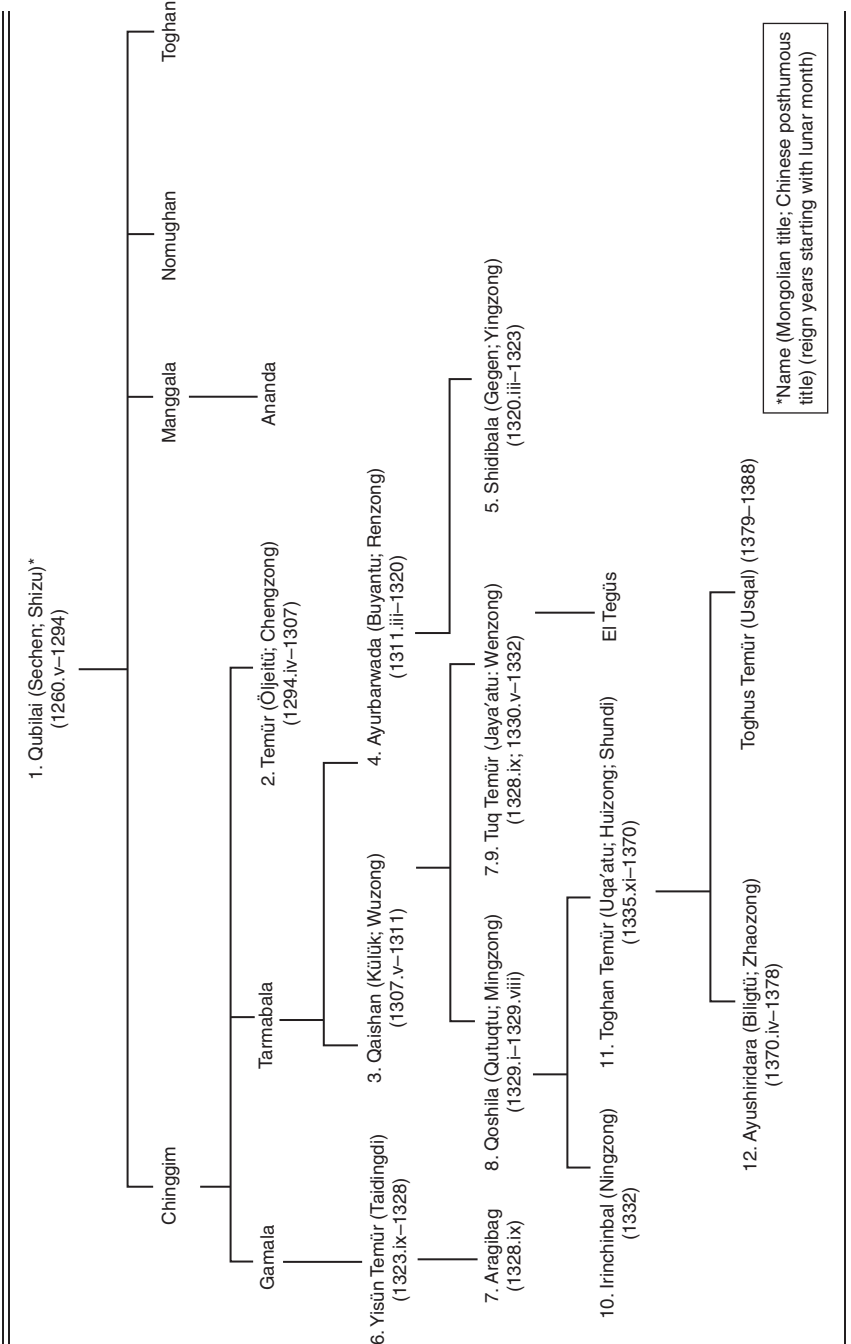
Succession and Political Turmoil, 1302–1340

In conventional historiography, Qubilai's move of the capital to Zhongdu in 1260 marked the decisive "sinicization" of the empire. Other writers have moved this date back to 1294, when Qubilai, the last of the Mongol rulers with a living memory of Chinggis Khan, died. John Dardess, in his pioneering *Conquerors and Confucians*, moved the date when the "Yuan emperor" finally triumphed over the "Great Qaghan" back to 1329. In 1328, Qaishan's son Qoshila, born in the steppe and resident in the Junghar Basin since 1317, had used the military power of the steppe to seize the throne one more time. But after less than a year as emperor in Mongolia, the entourage of his China-raised brother murdered Qoshila and restored power to officials based in China, thus confirming "the decline of the steppe in Yuan politics."⁸⁹

Yet while Dardess's view has much to recommend it, it is still worth noting that despite the acquiescence of the ruling circles in Qoshila's death, it was Qoshila's eldest son, Toghon Temür, who eventually succeeded to the throne. He had been born in 1320 in Jungharia, to a lady from the local Qarluq dynasty of Arslan khans that Qoshila had married while in exile there. And it was figures in Qoshila's entourage, inherited from his father, who maintained power until 1340. Thus when Toghon Temür fled the capital, Dadu, in 1368 to return to Mongolia, he was not going back to some land of his distant ancestors that he knew only from history books, but rather returning to the same lifestyle and environment that he had been born into and known for the first eight years of his life. Thus while the steppe role certainly declined in significance, it never disappeared; in virtually every crisis of the empire, figures with their power in Mongolia made their influence felt.

88 *JT*/Boyle, 321. 89 Dardess 1973, 30.

Table 2.1 Rulers of the Great Yuan (Qa'an Ulus)



Pacifying the Ögödeids

One of the first decisions Temür made on succeeding his grandfather was to cancel current and future overseas expeditions. This decision did not apply, however, to overland expeditions either in the far northwest, where conflict with Qaidu and Du'a continued, or in the far south, where the vague boundaries of Yunnan and Huguang *shings* with the frontiers of present-day Burma and Laos invited continued efforts to subdue border chiefs. While the latter campaigns were seen by classically trained Chinese historians as being the epitome of useless military adventures, the former was acknowledged as necessary for the dynastic legitimacy; expeditions to pacify central Siberia and control the Chaghadaid Khanate played an important role not just in securing the Mongolian heartland, but eventually in the internal politics of succession.

In the final years of Qubilai's reign, the Chaghadaid ruler Du'a had concentrated on seizing the Tarim Basin, which was lost to the qa'an with little fight. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the Uighur kingdoms occupying the Turfan area between the two khanates "are on good terms with them both and render service to both sides."⁹⁰ However, the death of Qubilai loosened some of the bonds of resentment and apprehension that kept many of the princes in the opposition. In the autumn of 1296, two dissident Toluid princes, Ulus Buqa and Yomuqur, surrendered to the Qipchaq *qarachin* commander Tutqaq, then holding the frontier for Temür.⁹¹ Tutqaq died soon after, but the accession of these new troops strengthened the qa'an's forces. A steady buildup on this, the dynasty's only active military front, followed with Kōrgis Güregen of the Önggüt, and several other generals being stationed in the Mongolia area. Tutqaq's son Chong'ur the next year followed through with a move deep into the Ba'arin and Bayad territories along the Imar (modern Ob) river of Siberia.⁹² In the following winter of 1298–1299, however, the overconfident generals were surprised by the stealthy advance of Du'a's forces and Kōrgis was captured.⁹³

90 *JT*/Boyle, 286; Liu 2011, 361–62.

91 Yan 1999b, 267–68 (cf. *YS*, 128.3134); Rashīd al-Dīn 1971, 327–28. The only reference in the *Basic Annals* is to Ulus Buqa receiving a reward in the ninth moon or October of 1296 (*YS*, 19.406). Ulus Buqa was Shiregi's son; Yomuqur was Arigh Böke's son.

92 Chong'ur is read as Jungqur in translations of Rashīd al-Dīn and Chūnqū in Liu Yingsheng's citations from *Qāshānī* (Liu 2005).

93 *JT*/Boyle, 326–28; Yan 1999a (cf. *YS*, 118.2925–26). On the Yuan order of battle: *JT*/Boyle, 285–86. As can be seen from the presence of Kōrgis Güregen and Chong'ur in place of his father, Tutqaq, this battle line actually dates to the reign of Temür, not Qubilai. The only reference to the battle in which Kōrgis was captured is the reward for Dordoqai (Dorduqa in Rashīd al-Dīn's translations) who prevented a wholesale defeat, mentioned in *YS*, 19.421, under Dade 2, x11 (January 1299).

The poor discipline revealed in this debacle led to appointment of new commanders from the court; the emperor's nephew Qaishan replaced Qubilai's son, Prince Kökechü, as overall commander. The newly appointed Grand Preceptor (*Taishi*) Öchicher got his wish to lead in battle and replaced the ailing Gamala as field commander.⁹⁴ In the 1300–1301 campaign season, Qaishan and Chong'ur pushed the dissident princes back west of the Altai. The next year, Qaidu and Du'a themselves crossed the Altai, where they were engaged by all five armies of the qa'an. On September 3–6, 1301, the seesawing line of battle at Tekelgü and Qaragha-Tagh brought virtually all the commanders into hand-to-hand combat;⁹⁵ the qa'an's commanders emerged unscathed, but Qaidu and Du'a were both wounded, Qaidu mortally.⁹⁶

The death of Qubilai previously had removed one obstacle to a peaceful settlement; that of Qaidu removed another. Shortly after the battle Du'a used marriage connections to open negotiations with Öchicher. From then on, negotiations proceeded apace. In September 1303, messengers from Du'a, Qaidu's son Chapar, and the Arigh Bökid Malik Temür arrived with a request for a reconciliation:

We children and grandchildren have not had sufficient tranquility and respect to enjoy [Chinggis Khan's] accomplishment in peace, and have raised armies for years on end in order to slaughter each other . . . It would be better to . . . open the way for friendship as one family, and allow the elderly of our people to be cared for, the youthful to grow up, and the maimed and weary to find rest.⁹⁷

Negotiations proceeded quickly,⁹⁸ and in May 1305 the Ilkhan Öljeitü wrote to the King of France that “brothers have reconciled and from South China where the sun rises to the Sea where it sets the realm has been reassembled and the post-roads knit together.”⁹⁹

94 Only Rashīd al-Dīn (*JT*/Boyle, 326) details the drunkenness that led to the capture of Körgis Güregen. But poor discipline is referred to in vague terms in *YS*, 22.477; and *Su* 1996, 3.45.

95 The battle site is given as Tekelgü (Dieqieligu or Tiejiangu) in *YS*, 22.477, and *Yu* 2004, 233, but the former adds Qaragha-Tagh as a second site. Tan Qixiang locates Tekelgü in the Altai.

96 *YS*, 22.477, 119.2950–51, 128.3136; *Yu* 2004, 233; *Su* 1996, 3.45–46; *JT*/Boyle, 24, 154, 329.

97 *Yu* 2004, 233–34; slight variations in *YS*, 128.3136–37. The language is undoubtedly taken from the text of their actual message to Temür.

98 Envoys from Du'a are recorded in *YS*, 21.454, 462, 463.

99 Translated from Mostaert and Cleaves 1962, 55. This achievement was still remembered by Mongols in the seventeenth century; he (Temür) “made the whole great *ulus* calm and peaceful for the four great states.” *Sa'yang* 1990, 45r.

The statement was, however, premature. Only the Chaghadaid family was unified enough to make their decision for peace stick; Qaidu's descendants and the Arigh Bökids were neither unified among themselves nor consistent in their own attitudes. August 1306 found Prince Qaishan and Öchicher crossing the Altai again; after a major battle on the Irtysh, Malik Temür and his confederates surrendered. Although Chapar and Tökme fled, their followers and family were captured. After wintering on the Irtysh river, Qaishan returned to Mongolia, where he resettled the newly captured people.¹⁰⁰

What was Temür doing in the meantime? According to Rashīd al-Dīn, he had originally planned to be the one to take over the frontier in 1300, but was dissuaded from it by his mother Kökejin.¹⁰¹ In compensation, apparently, he used a coup in Myan (Burma) as an excuse to chastise the kingdom. The campaign went better than expected, but on return many soldiers were lost to ambush by the Tai Gold Teeth (Zardandan) along the frontier.¹⁰²

But the expedition that defined Temür's reign was that against the Tai kingdom of Lan Na (present-day Chiang Rai in Thailand), known to the qa'an's court as the "Eight Hundred Brides Kingdom" (Ch. *Babai-Xifu guo*).¹⁰³ Liu Shen, a veteran of Qubilai's Song conquest and Champa expedition, proposed its conquest to the emperor, contrasting Qubilai's world conquest with Temür's lack of any victories so far – evidently those of Qaishan in Mongolia were not considered Temür's. Yet since Qubilai had once planned to conquer the "Eight Hundred Brides Kingdom" but failed, here was a possible theater in which Temür could exceed his grandfather. The proposal was successful, but the expedition a dismal failure. Liu Shen and his Qarluq colleague Qaradai not only failed to conquer Lan Na, but lost their two-tümen-strong army and drove previously submissive local chiefs in the Yunnan area into rebellion with their requisitions of porters and supplies. In March 1302 the expedition was canceled, and the next year, Liu Shen, Qaradai, and several of their colleagues were executed as a warning.¹⁰⁴

While Temür acquired a reputation as a sickly prisoner of the palace eunuchs from 1305 on, his cousin Qaishan was building up strong connections

100 YS, 22.477–78; Su 1996, 3.46. 101 JT/Boyle, 329.

102 YS, 215.4659, 176.4107, 20.431, 432, 436–37.

103 So-called from the king's notional 800 tributaries, each of whom supplied a bride to his harem. On this kingdom, see Grabowsky 2004.

104 Chen Bangzhan's summary (1979, 36–39) of the Lan Na expedition draws on: (1) the biography of Qaradai in YS, 132.3217, (2) the Basic Annals (YS, 20.433, 434, 435, 436, 439, 440, 21.450), and (3) the accounts of its opponents: Darqan Harghasun (Su 1996, 4.58 and YS, 136.3293), the Han myriarch Dong Shixuan (Wu 1999, 386, and YS, 156.3678), and the censor Chen Tianxiang (YS, 168.3948–50).

in the field with Chong'ur and his *qarachin* guards as well as with Öchicher; he also had the support of Harghasun Darqan, Temür's chief civil official and a strong opponent of the Lan Na fiasco. When Temür died without an heir, Qaishan would be well positioned to seize the throne.

From his experience in Mongolia, Qaishan also knew how a well-supplied Mongolia was essential to any plans to dominate the "princes of the northwest" and play a role in broader Mongolian politics. The vast number of households who had surrendered after the battle on the Irtysh in 1306 overloaded Mongolia's pastures, risking a recrudescence of turmoil. Once Qaishan took the throne in 1307, he followed Öchicher and Harghasun's plans to integrate Mongolia's economy more tightly with that of the Central *Shing* and turn Mongolia into the last new *shing*, that of "Qorum and Chincai," later to be renamed Lingbei.

In 1307, Harghasun and Öchicher implemented a vast plan of relief with funds that were used to purchase livestock and fishnets for the indigent, redeem wives and children that Mongol heads of family had sold into slavery, and expand agricultural colonies. The agricultural colonies in the Great Lakes Basin between the Khangai and Altai ranges were revitalized, but regular shipments of grain from military farms in Datong and Inner Mongolia remained indispensable to feed the great buildup of soldiers in Qaraqorum. Innovative funding methods were applied to raise money locally, through profits on state-funded brewing and moneylending.¹⁰⁵

At one level, the policy was a success and the surrenders continued; a junior Ögödeid, Tümen, had surrendered with Ögödei's family seal in 1308, while Qaidu's son and successor Chapar finally attended court in 1310.¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately, supplies for Qaraqorum had long been an area of official and unofficial corruption,¹⁰⁷ and in 1308 Qaishan ordered Öchicher and Harghasun to stop distributing cash.¹⁰⁸ Yet two years later, in 1310, the Qorum *shing* reported that grain, currency, fishnets, and farming implements had been "wasted" on newly resettled refugees who could not or would not use them. Qaishan ordered an investigation,¹⁰⁹ but since his policy was one of buying support, too tight a fist with aid money was not possible.

105 Su 1996, 4.58–59, 3.46; YS, 22.483–84, 492, 496, 23.510; on financing, see YS, 21.460, 22.485.

106 Tümen: YS, 22.503; Chapar: YS, 23.523, 525, 117.2909–10, 138.3323–22; Liu Yingsheng 2011, 343–48. Tümen's family were enfeoffed as the princes of Yangzhai (their revenue fief in Henan) and became important in imperial politics: YS, 108.2737, 206.2597.

107 See the case of the merchant Fakhr al-Dīn: YS, 21.452–53, 454, cf. 20.442, 176.4100; Xie and Yao 1960, 19.425.9b.

108 YS, 22.496–97.

109 YS, 23.525. Whether the households were collecting excess aid under false pretences, or were merely proxies for merchants taking government aid for resale is unclear.

The Qa'an and the Chaghadaids

From 1308, Qaishan maintained friendly relations with the Chaghadaids; indeed by 1312, officials were complaining of the excessive number of envoys.¹¹⁰ Over the next decade, the *ulus* of Chaghadaï and the Great Khan tended toward a level of political integration unprecedented since the enthronement of Qubilai Qa'an in 1260.

This integration created new tensions, however. When Chaghadaid envoys spoke of their khan Esen Buqa (1309–1320) as issuing *yarlighs* or decrees, the qa'an's border commander Toghachi Ba'atur insisted that only the qa'an could issue a *yarligh*; the Chaghadaï khan's decrees, like those of a prince, were only *lingji* (from Chinese *lingzhi*). The Chaghadaid envoys responded, "Since Esen Buqa is from the *uruq* [of Chinggis Khan], for us he is in lieu of the Qa'an."¹¹¹

Under Qaishan's brother and successor, Ayurbarwada, the ambitions of the qa'an's entourage to control the Chaghadaids increased further. In 1312, Öchicher proposed to the Ilkhan Öljeitü a plan to join like "two tips of a hunting circle" and crush the troublesome Chaghadaid Khanate between them. If successful, such a program would have allowed the qa'an to demilitarize the Mongolia area and offload the cost of subsidizing so many nomads to the oasis cities of Turkestan.

Whether accidentally or on purpose, a messenger passing from the qa'an to the court of the ilkhan let slip the plans while drunk. Esen Buqa closed the border and early in 1314 launched a pre-emptive strike in the Qobaq area (present-day Hoboksair). The qa'an's forces responded by 1316 with overwhelming force, with one column led by Chong'ur marching from the Altai to the Talas and another led by the Chaghadaid prince Könchek setting out from Qamil through Kashghar to the Issyk Köl. In response, Esen Buqa attempted to make up his losses by invading Khurasan in the Ilkhanate.

The great mystery about this campaign, approaching a full-scale restoration of the qa'an's power over the whole empire, is exactly why it failed. Esen Buqa was too preoccupied with the battle over Khurasan and conflict with the rebel prince Yasa'ur to resist the qa'an's armies.¹¹² But when Esen Buqa and Ayurbarwada died in 1320, their successors the Chaghadaid khan Kebek and the qa'an Shidibala quickly re-established peace, although on what terms is unclear.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Liu 2005, 342; Liu 2011, 349–50. ¹¹¹ Liu 2011, 364–65.

¹¹² On this brutal spillover of the 1314–1320 war, see Katō 1991; Allsen 2015, 135–36.

¹¹³ On the events and chronology for this conflict, I follow Liu 2005 and 2011, 359–405. I differ somewhat in my understanding of the conflict's political context.

The likely reason for this surprisingly early end to a major conflict lay in the Chaghadaids' ability to exploit the succession question in the qa'an's realm. When Qaishan seized the throne after Temür's death, he relied on his younger brother Ayurbarwada to deliver control over the Central *Shing*. The result was an agreement by which Qaishan would allow Ayurbarwada to succeed him, but after Ayurbarwada's death, Qaishan's son would succeed Ayurbarwada. Ayurbarwada succeeded his brother in 1311, but in 1316 he appointed his own son as heir apparent. Qaishan's eldest son Qoshila, then sixteen, was to be sent into exile as prince of Yunnan. But in the winter of 1316–1317, Qoshila fled north through Mongolia, before taking refuge with the Chaghadaid khan.¹¹⁴

This flight immediately changed the political calculus of Ayurbarwada's war on the Chaghadaids. Qoshila had close links to the *qarachin* troops and Ögödeid princes in Mongolia; a Chaghadaid threat to use him against the qa'an would be very credible. The details are unclear, but evidently a deal was struck: the Chaghadaids would keep Qoshila in comfortable detention in Jungharia in return for a return to the status quo.¹¹⁵

The murder of the qa'an Shidibala in 1323 by Tegshi, to be discussed below, once again changed the calculus. Tegshi acted in cahoots not with Qoshila but with another imperial cousin, Yisün Temür, the son of Chinggisim's eldest son, Gamala. Yisün Temür's enthronement rendered the quarrel over Qaishan's legacy moot and Yisün Temür made a marriage alliance with Qoshila and munificently received a joint embassy from Qoshila and the new Chaghadaid khan Eljigidei in 1327.¹¹⁶

But the Chaghadaid khan soon had a much better opportunity to intervene in the qa'an's court. When Yisün Temür died in Shangdu in August 1328, the Qipchaq commander, Chong'ur's son El Temür, launched a *coup d'état* in Dadu to seize the throne for Qaishan's sons. A brutal civil war followed between the rebels in Dadu and Yisün Temür's court in Shangdu. Once the Dadu side had won, Qoshila was summoned from Jungharia and set out with his entourage of 1,830 men marshaled by twelve *keshigten* captains.¹¹⁷ The

¹¹⁴ The only two references to this flight are YS, 31.693–94 and 138.3286. Liu 2011, 308–400.

¹¹⁵ YS, 30.680, where Qoshila and the Chaghadaid khan Eljigidei are given rewards in 1327 by the Qa'an Yisün Temür together. On the location of Qoshila's territory, I follow Tu Ji's identification of the Zhayen and Woluowocha with the modern Zhayir Mountain in Tarbagatai and Er'huochu Mountain in the Altai.

¹¹⁶ YS, 31.694, 30.680. Yisün Temür escorted to Qoshila the princess Babusha, the sister of one of Yisün Temür's own junior wives, Sadabala. Both were the daughters of Princess Shouning (d. 1331), niece of Temür Öljeitü Qa'an (YS, 106.2700, 114.2877).

¹¹⁷ For the number, see YS, 33.739.

Chaghadaï khan Eljigidei accompanied him and the border princes joined his standard en masse. This princely train moved slowly east through Mongolia. El Temür had enthroned Qoshila's half-brother Tuq Temür at Dadu in October 1328, but Qoshila and the princes waited until the end of February to have their own enthronement, somewhere in western Mongolia. Originally, the Chaghadaï khan was expected to participate in the enthronement, but left early.¹¹⁸

What did Eljigidei receive from his participation in this parade? Less than he had hoped, almost certainly. By the end of August Qoshila was dead, murdered four days after feasting with his brother's entourage. But Tuq Temür had already acknowledged Eljigidei's presence in his brother's entourage, and once the Chaghadaïd khan returned home in September, Tuq Temür sent generous gifts.¹¹⁹ We know that the Yuan acknowledged Chaghadaïd rule over all of Uighuristan (present-day Turfan), with the qa'an's border generals once again guarding the frontier in Qamil (present-day Qumul or Hami).¹²⁰ That, and the gifts were presumably Eljigidei's price for abandoning Qoshila's cause.

As far as our sources tell us, the rest of the story of the connection of the qa'an and the western khanates seems a rather routine one of exchanging embassies, presenting local goods, and receiving presents in return. But connections did continue, and after Toghon Temür fled back to Mongolia, in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the Chaghadaïds and the Qubilaïds returned to their habit of interfering in each others' realms.¹²¹

The Succession Crises

As can be seen, conflicts within the Qubilaïd family were inseparable from the politics with the Chaghadaïds. Although Temür's enthronement was peacefully decided, the ambitions of other members of the family clearly did not disappear. Eventually descendants of all three of Chinggis's sons ruled for at least one reign. And while supporters of Chinggis's descendants always claimed that by Qubilaï's testament collateral lines had no right to contest the throne,¹²² many of Qubilaï's descendants from other sons did not let that supposed law deter their ambitions.

One of the reasons behind these recurrent succession crises was the frequency of emperors with a short life who were also childless or whose children died young. Qubilaï had reached eighty years of age and had many

118 YS, 31.696, 699, records gifts to the Chaghadaïd khan probably as going-away presents.

119 YS, 33.728, 740. 120 Liu 2011, 575–619; Lin 2007, 293–301. 121 Honda 1958; Kim 1999.

122 For example, Yaqudu's statement in YS, 117.2909, and Li Meng's statement in 175.4085: "That branch lines not rule was Qubilaï's sacred testament."

sons, but of Qubilai's successors in Dadu, only the last, Toghon Temür, lived more than fifty years. Most of the others died in their late twenties or their thirties. And of Qubilai's successors none had more than four sons, and of these no more than two crown princes ever survived to adulthood. George Zhao has argued that this feebleness may be due to the inbreeding induced by the system of marrying into the same in-law families over and over again.¹²³ Thomas Allsen has suggested that declining life spans may be an example of vulnerability to alcoholism among a previously unexposed population.¹²⁴ No solution yet offered is very satisfactory, but the decreasing life spans and fertility of the Yuan khans were a major hidden cause of the repeated succession crises.

The first succession crisis of the mature Yuan regime began in 1307 when the long-ailing Temür passed away.¹²⁵ His major wife, Shirindari of the prominent Qonggirat in-law family, had died childless. After 1305, Temür fell increasingly ill and his second empress, Bulughan of the less prominent Baya'ud in-law house, managed the government. In 1306, Bulughan's son Deshou died, leaving the succession open.¹²⁶ Bulughan's position was precarious; she was from a minor in-law family and Temür had resisted entitling her officially as empress. Temür's nephew Qaishan, with his military victories, was obviously a formidable candidate, and to forestall this Bulughan had ordered his Qonggirat mother Daghui (Ch. Daji) away from court to her younger son Ayurbarwada's fief on the Yellow River.

When Temür died on February 10, 1307, in Dadu, Bulughan secured the support of several high officials and the Arigh Bökid Malik Temür. She then invited Ananda, son of Manggala, Qubilai's third son, to the capital to be the new qa'an.¹²⁷ Meanwhile, the crafty Harghasun Darqan feigned illness while receiving envoys from Qaishan in Mongolia and summoning Daghui and Ayurbarwada back to the capital. They arrived on March 20. Daghui's side had better intelligence and struck first, arresting Ananda and Malik Temür on April 4, and imprisoning them in Shangdu, while executing their supporters.

Everything was now set for Qaishan's coronation – except that Daghui, leaning on the words of soothsayers and the support of some border princes,

¹²³ Zhao 2008, 215–18. ¹²⁴ Allsen 2007, 10.

¹²⁵ For this conflict, we have the invaluable assistance of Waṣṣāf's version: Qiu 2018. The *Yuan shi* data on the succession of Qaishan and Ayurbarwada is assembled chronologically in Chen 1979, 151–56.

¹²⁶ I here follow Rashīd al-Dīn's claim (*JT*/Boyle, 319) that Deshou was Bulughan's son, not that of Shirindari, contrary to the statement of the *Yuan shi* 114.2873. Ruth Dunnell (personal communication) concludes that Deshou's maternity was posthumously altered after Bulughan's defeat and disgrace in 1307 factional conflict.

¹²⁷ Ananda and Manggala had been enfeoffed with lands in present-day Shaanxi and Gansu. Shurany 2017; Dunnell 2014; Matsuda 1979.

now supported enthroning her more pliable younger son Ayurbarwada. When he learned of this development, Qaishan, who had been waiting in Qaraqorum, formed three columns of a *tümen* each and advanced on Dadu. Daghui and her allies did not dare resist, and on June 21 Qaishan was enthroned in Shangdu. As mentioned above, a deal was struck that Qaishan would rule first, then Ayurbarwada, and then Qaishan's son Qoshila.

In the end, Qaishan's reign proved to be a charismatic catastrophe, but it ended early, in the first moon of 1311. His little brother, and behind him their mother Daghui, took the throne. Figures like Ayurbarwada's tutor Li Meng, who had attempted to enthrone his pupil during the spring of 1307, were back in power. The civilian forces, whether Daghui and her supporters or the Confucians who appreciated the restoration of the examination system under Ayurbarwada in 1315, preferred continuing with the emperor's mild young son Shidibala, rather than Qoshila, who seemed likely to follow in his father's footsteps. The emperor went along and, relying on his mother's favorite, Temüder, elevated Shidibala as the heir apparent and exiled Qaishan's sons. Temüder's personal behavior made him a magnet for denunciation from the *Tai* as a second Ahmad or Sangga, and he was dismissed. But Temüder proved essential as a link between Daghui and the outer court and the emperor had to reappoint him; back in power, Temüder was not forgiving to those who had opposed him earlier, and sentenced several to death. When he died in October 1322 and Daghui died a month later, the young Shidibala, aged twenty-one, was on his own. Qaishan's sons were out of the picture, Qoshila having escaped to Jungharia and the Chaghadaid Khanate, and Tuq Temür in exile in the far south on Hainan Island, where the expectation was that the climate would do him in.

A *coup d'état* followed.¹²⁸ Yuan annals blamed the coup on remnants of Temüder's faction, threatened by the prospect of a purge by an emperor entering into his own. But Tegshi, the leader of the coup, was a new creature of Shidibala's and no details are given of his supposed link to Temüder. What is known is that the conspirators reached out early to Yisün Temür in Mongolia and his top official Dawlat Shāh. Yisün Temür was the son of Chinggim's eldest son, Gamala, and since 1302 had inherited his father's title as prince of Jin and his task of caring for the Four Great *Ordos* of Chinggis Khan. Tegshi claimed that Baiju, a descendant of Muqali and a Mongol supporter of Confucian values then dominating Shidibala's court, was ill-disposed to the prince.

128 The *Yuan shi* sources on this coup are assembled chronologically in Chen 1979, 163–65.

The conspirators were well placed, including Tegshi, whom Shidibala had put in charge of the Asud Guard, and the director of the *Ön*, Esen Temür. On September 4, 1323, as the emperor was on the way back from Shangdu to Dadu, the conspirators struck, killing first Baiju and then the emperor in his *ordo*. The director, Esen Temür, brought the imperial seal to Prince Yisün Temür at his compound on Mongolia's Kerulen river; there, on October 4, Yisün Temür was enthroned as emperor before the Great *Ordo* of Chinggis Khan. The new qa'an's enthronement decree defiantly proclaimed, "I alone am the eldest son of Chinggis Qa'an, son of the Sechen Qa'an [Qubilai] who by precedent legitimately may sit on the throne; all the elder and younger brothers contending for the throne are no more."¹²⁹ In their hearts, the Gamala family had never accepted the loss of their rights as the senior line of Qubilai Qa'an.

Of course the statement that all other contenders were "no more" was true only because the business of crowning the successor was for once done quickly enough to avoid any reference to far-off rivals. But whether or not it was Tegshi or the new Qa'an's entourage who first conceived of the coup, it was the latter who benefited by it. Governed undoubtedly by Dawlat Shāh's advice, Yisün Temür first stayed in Mongolia and rewarded all the top conspirators with high office, while sending trusted men to Dadu to announce the happy news of his enthronement to the capital's imperial shrines. Then, on November 4, all the vassal conspirators in Mongolia and Dadu were arrested and executed. The princes involved in killing Shidibala were exiled to Nurkel,¹³⁰ Yunnan, Hainan, and even more remote islands. By December 10, when he arrived in Dadu, the dirty work was over.

As a ruler in a new line, Yisün Temür attempted to win over all the opposing groups by addressing at least some of their past grievances. He won over the Confucians by executing the remnants of Temüder's faction in retaliation for Temüder's executions. He also softened the policy toward Qaishan's children, exchanging envoys with Qoshila and allowing Tuq Temür to leave Hainan and reside in Jiangling (on the Yangzi in present-day Hubei). He had four sons and might have established a new dominant line of Qubilaid princes, except for two unlucky things: the seemingly unending series of natural disasters that struck the realm, and his death in August 1328, at Shangdu, aged thirty-six, after only five years on the throne.

¹²⁹ YS, 29.638.

¹³⁰ Chinese Nu'rgan, the Mongol garrison town at the mouth of the Amur river on the Sea of Okhotsk.

What followed must have seemed like history repeating itself. Two brothers, a senior one nomadizing in the far north and a junior one mastering Chinese literati culture in the south, once again faced off against the evil representatives of a bad line of rival Qubilaid. The brothers won this time too, but certain differing key factors made the long-term result of the succession struggle very different.¹³¹

Once Yisün Temür's death in Shangdu became known, El Temür used his troops to seize power in Dadu on September 8, 1328. Once in charge of the capital, El Temür and his levirate wife, the Chinggisid princess Chakir, arranged to seize power in the provinces. Most crucially they needed to control the Henan–Jiangbei *shing*, in order to rescue Qaishan's son Tuq Temür and get him to the capital. Meanwhile, Dawlat Shāh mobilized the Mongol and *keshigten* armies in Shangdu to attack the rebels in Dadu. Tuq Temür arrived at the capital on October 1, and the Shangdu and Dadu armies had their first clash in the mountains around Dadu a few days later. As combat operations spread all over north China, Tuq Temür acceded to El Temür's insistence and took the throne on October 16. In the ensuing civil war, El Temür relied mostly on the *tammachi* and garrison armies of north China, while Shangdu mobilized the main Mongol and guards armies around the emperor as well as the garrison armies in Liaoyang and Shaanxi. The Shangdu army columns tried to push through the passes to Dadu, but were repeatedly thrown back with great loss of life. The Liaoyang armies reached Dadu's western suburbs but were also driven back; El Temür drafted the city's residents as arrow fodder.¹³² After a month of beating off the enemy's offensives, the Dadu armies went on the offensive and put Shangdu under siege. Dawlat Shāh avoided unnecessary loss of life by surrendering on November 15; his commanding generals, Yisün Temür's son and heir Aragibag, and finally Dawlat Shāh himself, were all killed. The Shaanxi armies continued to battle El Temür Taishi's adherents until December 7, when they received news of the cease-fire.

It was only then, on December 23, that the victorious court in Dadu sent messengers to the northwest to summon Qoshila from Jungharia. On February 27, 1329, Qoshila was enthroned as qa'an somewhere northwest of Qaraqorum, while Tuq Temür accepted his new title and seal as *taizi*, "crown prince." In June, Tuq Temür set out north to meet his half-brother. On August 26, Qoshila and Tuq Temür held a great feast for the princes and officials at Ongghuchatu (the location where their father Qaishan had built

131 Chen 1979, 167–84. 132 Chen 2015, 74.

a short-lived third capital, Zhongdu, southwest of Shangdu). Four days later, there was a violent scene in Qoshila's *ordo*, and El Temür Taishi, the qa'an Tuq Temür, and his *keshigten* and officials fled northeast to Shangdu with the imperial seal, leaving Qoshila dead.¹³³

What happened? Qoshila's son Toghon Temür later publicly charged that Tuq Temür conspired to murder his father with three officials, one of whom, Minglig Tong'a, had early undertaken the top-secret job of fetching Tuq Temür from Jiangling.¹³⁴ These three were presumably the hatchet men who actually killed Qoshila, with Tuq Temür and El Temür Taishi as the master-minds. But at the same time, the lack of reprisals from either side shows that some understanding must have been reached between key members of both sides. El Temür Taishi had arrived at Qoshila's camp on May 5, and by May 21 the Chaghadaï khan Eljigidei had received gifts, presumably on occasion of his departure back to Turkestan; El Temür Taishi must have given him promises enough to ensure that Eljigidei went home satisfied. Without his support, Qoshila's side was militarily too weak to resist and Qoshila himself seems to have been completely unprepared for the task of ruling. Thus the only way to prevent him from dragging the dynasty into another disastrous reign was to kill him and present the empire with a *fait accompli*. The fact that in the official account Qoshila's lady Babusha handed the imperial seal back over to El Temür on the fatal day may mean that she was El Temür Taishi's key contact; if so a deal for her family's safety and the throne for her sons was probably part of the arrangement.

Once Tuq Temür was enthroned again, the question of succession and whether it would go to the deceased elder brother's line occupied court politics just as it had under Ayurbarwada. In 1328, Tuq Temür had shared with Qoshila the claim of having been cheated out of his own rightful succession by a usurping younger brother. This fact made his own position vulnerable to the same charge, one which was already being made by 1330. The next year Tuq Temür's Qonggirat empress Budashiri attacked Qoshila's family, driving his widow to death, and exiling Qoshila's eldest son Toghon Temür first to Korea and then to Guangxi; a rumor was even spread that Qoshila had denied that Toghon Temür was actually his son.¹³⁵

133 These are what seem to be the undoubted facts as found in the lost source of Hu Cuizhong, cited in Chen 1979, 179, Qoshila's Basic Annals (YS, 31.701), the chronology of Tuq Temür's movements (33.737), and the biography of El Temür (138.3332). They arrived in Shangdu on September 2, the third day after fleeing Ongghuchatu.

134 YS, 40.856–57, 858, 186.4266 (repeated in 41.883). El Temür was generally thought to be the culprit: YS, 138.3333; for Tuq Temür's feeling of complicity, see Quan n.d., 1, §1.

135 YS, 38.815, 114.3877; Dardess 1973, 58–59.

In January 1332, Tuq Temür and Budashiri formally chose their own son Aradnadara as heir apparent. But within six months, the heir apparent died. Tuq Temür and Budashiri responded to this loss by the desperate expedient of exchanging sons with El Temür, making their son Gunadara his, and his son Taraghai theirs. But Tuq Temür himself died late in the summer of 1332, at only twenty-nine years of age. Both he on his deathbed and Budashiri after his death evinced fear and guilt over their responsibility for the evils that befell Qoshila's family and insisted over El Temür's objections that one of Qoshila's sons, not their own son El Tegüs, should succeed him. Qoshila's younger son Irinchinbal had not been exiled and was chosen first, but he died after forty-three days on the throne. Budashiri again overruled El Temür, and in summer 1333 installed an eleven-year-old Toghon Temür on the throne. Eventually Toghon Temür outlasted them all, reigning thirty-five years, longer even than Qubilai Qa'an. In 1340, as he achieved majority, a bitter and vengeful Toghon Temür executed the survivors of El Temür's family, exiled Budashiri, and publicly denounced Tuq Temür's persecution of his family. His nephew El Tegüs was exiled to Korea and murdered on the way there. Thus after fifty years, only one man survived of the family of Chinggim.¹³⁶

Policies and Constituencies

From 1294 on, every succession was contested, and hence every emperor was aware that alternative candidates were out there. In those circumstances, the Yuan emperors had to mobilize support, and they did so by appealing to defined political constituencies. These political constituencies were not directly divided by ethnicity, but they were divided by sources of legitimate political authority – and those sources were ethnically marked. Chinese could and did appeal to the legacy of Chinggis Khan and Qubilai Qa'an, while Mongols could and did appeal to the legacy of the Han and the Tang. But an appeal to the Han and Tang as a source of authority advantaged Han and southern scholars, while an appeal to the cult of Chinggis Khan advantaged princes dwelling in Mongolia.

Within the dominant Yuan court ideology, the basic postulate was the saying attributed to Chinggim: "I am impressed by how the words of Confucius are just the same as the sacred instructions [of our ancestors]."¹³⁷ There certainly were Chinese who would disagree and see rule by Tatar

¹³⁶ The sons of Amuga, Tarmabala's son by a minor wife, had avoided the temptations and dangers of political power. With the exception of an uncertain reference in 1357, however, to an Aruq who may be one of Amuga's sons, the last reference to a prince in the line of Tarmabala is found in 1331.

¹³⁷ YS, 115.2888.

Table 2.2 General administration of the Yuan (roughly 1295–1330)

<i>Shing</i> or Secretariat	Ön or Bureau of Military Affairs	<i>Tai</i> or Censorate	Major princely and <i>güregen</i> seats
Central	(Central) Ön	(Central) <i>Tai</i>	Qonggirad prince of Lu Önggüt prince of Zhao Ikires prince of Chang
Lingbei	Lingbei Branch Ön		Prince of Jin Qasarids Qachi'unids Belgüteids
Liaoyang			Oyirad prince Odchiginids Korean prince of Shen
Henan and Jiangbei	Henan Branch Ön		
Shaanxi		Shaanxi Branch <i>Tai</i>	Prince of Anxi/Qin
Sichuan	Sichuan Branch Ön		
Gansu	Gansu Branch Ön		Ögödeids (Jibig-Temür) Chaghadaids (Chübei) Qonggirad prince of Qi Uighur prince of Gaochang
Yunnan			Prince of Liang/ Yunnan
Jiangzhe	Jiangnan Branch Ön	Jiangnan Branch <i>Tai</i>	Prince of Zhennan
Jiangxi			
Huguang			
Korea			Kings of Korea
.....			
Outside <i>Shing</i> –Ön– <i>Tai</i> system:			
Tibet and sources of the Yellow River			Prince of Xiping
(Siberian) Qirghiz lands			Ögödeids
Northwestern princes			Chaghadaids Jochids Hülegüids
Annam			King of Annam
Tributary realms			Champa Klao

Source: *Yuan shi*, chapters 58–63, 86, 108. Listing of princes is not exhaustive. *Güregen* houses shaded. Qubilai princely lines indicated by Chinese titles.

“sheep and dogs” as inherently contradictory to “the words of Confucius.” And there were Mongols, like the northwestern princes, who asked why Qubilai was violating the Mongol legacy with his adoption of the “Chinese

system.” But not only were such voices quite rare in the genuine sources from the time, they were also by definition excluded from Yuan political discourse, and thus shaped no actual constituency in Yuan politics.

Indeed, within the context of the Mongol Yuan system, appeals to Qubilai Qa’an functioned in practice as a call to resist implementing further reforms. Sayings attributed to Qubilai Qa’an explicitly envisioned “Chinese”-seeming features such as division of the government into the *Shing*, *Ön*, and *Tai*, or the assignment of Mongols as *darughachi*, Han as the *songgon* (Ch. *zongguan*) or “route commander,” and westerners as *tungji* (Ch. *tongzhi*) or “assistant prefect.”¹³⁸ After the year 1300, these originally “Chinese” systems were beyond question, even by Mongol princes from the furthest northwestern steppes. But they could appeal to Qubilai’s precedent to block any further use of precedents taken from previous dynasties, and hence undermine the authority of scholars who had mastered the history of those dynasties.

The first to use the legacy of Qubilai Qa’an as a political weapon was Qaishan. He had come to power as a conqueror and faced an urgent fiscal crisis brought on by his continuing military buildup in Mongolia and his need to keep buying the support of his princely backers. He also faced the silent disaffection of those who had backed his younger brother Ayurbarwada. In this situation, Qaishan formed a constituency by deploying Qubilaid revivalist rhetoric. The Yuan emperors since Qubilai had followed the practice of proclaiming special reign titles. Qaishan proclaimed *zhida* or “Perfect Grandeur,” closely recalling Qubilai’s *zhiyuan*, “Perfect Prime.” Like Qubilai again, when faced with a shortage of money, he created a “Department of State” (*shangshu sheng*), independent of the three canonical branches of government. Likewise, his shortlived Zhida currency was presented as simply doing to the Zhiyuan currency system what Qubilai’s later Zhiyuan bills had done to his earlier Zhongtong bills. His coronation decree extolled Chinggis Khan and Qubilai Qa’an and his own legitimate descent from Chinggis, and, particularly in his first years, policy debates recorded in his annals take as their starting point the “established rules” (*dingzhi*) or “old rules” (*jiuzhi*) of Qubilai.¹³⁹

When Qaishan died and his brother came to power, the coronation decree abruptly signaled a new ideological regime. Not only did Ayurbarwada proclaim that evil officials from the newfangled “Department of State” had just been executed, but he also did not mention a single previous Mongol emperor

¹³⁸ YS, 31.697, 6.106. On the *darughachi* and local government under the Yuan, see Birge 2017b, 36–56; Endicott-West 1989.

¹³⁹ YS, 22.479, 480–81, 481, 492, 506.

by name. Instead he recalled how the “previous emperors” served their empress dowagers and Heaven with filiality and kindness. He then proclaimed, “We ought to inspect the policies of the past Zhou, Han, Jin,¹⁴⁰ and Tang dynasties and rectify the throne and palace apartments.” His coronation decree thus separated the realm of morals, where the dynasty’s founders excelled, and institutions, where reference to previous Chinese dynasties was needed. Personnel would be certain – the Empress Daghui, Li Meng, and Temüder were all mentioned in the coronation decree – but policy would be flexible.¹⁴¹

The same position can be seen in a major administrative project, the *Dayuan tongzhi* or *Comprehensive Regulations of the Great Yuan*, begun under the patronage of Ayurbarwada in 1316, although it did not appear until after his death in 1323.¹⁴² This work, whose legal portion survives today as the *Tongzhi tiaoge*, *Statutes from the Comprehensive Regulations*, was in itself an implicit emendation of Qubilai’s legacy – Qubilai himself had always resisted tying himself down with a formal law code. The work’s preface mentioned none of his predecessors’ names, but referred simply to “over a hundred years” of imperial succession. To drive the point home, the preface’s author, Bozhulu Chong, emphasized the importance of adjusting to the times: “The holy court conducts administration appropriately in accordance with affairs and establishes administration in accordance with the times. Times have their momentum, affairs have their transitions.”¹⁴³ Thus moves that Qubilai had found premature, like establishing a formal examination system, were good and correct, if they were “in accordance with the times.” Not that Ayurbarwada was uninterested in dynastic history – he patronized two major histories of the dynasty and was particularly inspired by the life of Tolui,¹⁴⁴ another unappreciated little brother – but for him Mongol history was not about “established regulations” but rather about good rulers of good family responding to new situations.

Tegshi’s *coup d’état* and the ascension of Yisün Temür in 1323 swung the pendulum back to the legacy of Chinggis Khan and Qubilai Qa’an. Yisün Temür was the second generation of the princes in charge of the Four Great *Ordos* of Chinggis Khan and the representative of a line that prided itself on being the senior line among the descendants of Qubilai. Thus his coronation decree, the only one issued in the literal translation style made from the original Mongolian, emphasized that he and his father had “administered the

140 This Jin dynasty (265–420) should not be confused with the Jin dynasty that preceded the Mongols in north China.

141 YS, 24.539–40. 142 Ch’en 1979, 23–30. 143 Bozhulu 2001, 1, 2.

144 On Ayurbarwada and Tolui, see YS, 68.1699, 24.553; Wei Su, “Yuelu-Tiemu’r,” 1477.411; cited in YS, 144.3434.

Four Great *Ordos* of Emperor Chinggis” and “watched over the great territory” (i.e. Mongolia). Moreover, he stressed that under Qubilai “in every affair whatsoever of army and people, the people obtained a peaceful life, because they had kept to the correct way.”¹⁴⁵ And the annals sum up his first general address to the officials after arriving in Dadu by saying, “Everyone must obey the established regulations of the Sechen Qa’an [i.e. Qubilai].”¹⁴⁶

But Yisün Temür’s vast estate in the “great territory” was thoroughly involved in the social and economic world of the larger empire, inhabited by Chinese and western immigrants and colonists, and supplied with goods by *ortoq* or partner merchants. He was a fine Chinese poet; figures of unclear background, but with Muslim names, played a disproportionate role in his entourage before and after coronation. His chief officials Dawlat Shāh and ‘Ubaydallāh paid much attention to an urban constituency defined by immigrant status and Muslim or Christian religion.¹⁴⁷

Such a policy would have been problematic in the best of times, but in light of the droughts then striking the Chinese countryside it was hardly surprising that Yisün Temür’s regime was unable to consolidate its support. His successor Tuq Temür’s coronation decree was the most furiously polemic one yet.¹⁴⁸ Elsewhere Huihui (Mo. Sarta’ul) or western immigrants were singled out for a warning: “all those of the Huihui race who have not participated in [Dawlat Shāh and ‘Ubaydallāh’s] affairs may peacefully go about their business without fear. But on the other hand if there are any who have deluded others, then they will be brought to justice.”¹⁴⁹ Both the acknowledged legal autonomy of Muslim religious communities and the de facto tax exemptions of westerners as a whole were curtailed. Instead of the four religions of Mongolian discourse, summaries of government institutions now emphasized the traditional Chinese “three religions.”¹⁵⁰

Tuq Temür’s coronation decree had been written by the Jiangxi scholar Yu Ji.¹⁵¹ Tuq Temür entrusted to him the organization of a new Kuizhangge (“Pavilion of the Star of Literature”) to draw together many of the most noted scholars of the age and the coeditorship with the Önggüt Zhao Shiyan of a new compendium of the dynasty’s institutions, the *Jingshi dadian* (Great Compendium for Adminstrating the World).¹⁵² Yu Ji’s placement of this new

145 YS, 29.638–39. 146 YS, 29.642. 147 Atwood 2016, 310–13.

148 See the denunciations in Tuq Temür’s coronation decree; YS, 32.709; cf. Langlois 1978, 105.

149 YS, 32.711. 150 Atwood 2016, 313–14. 151 Langlois 1978.

152 Su 1984 is the most comprehensive study of this now lost work. Also Ch’en 1979, 33–35; Hsiao 1978, 67–71; Schurman 1967, ix–xiv.

compendium in institutional history differed sharply from Bozhulu Chong's *Dayuan tongzhi* in 1323. The latter had emphasized the need for flexibility as a way of blunting the restrictive power of Qubilaid precedent. Yu Ji now placed the Yuan dynasty, as a defined institutional style, alongside the institutions of the previous dynasties. In compiling the work, they "deliberated on the *Collected Documents* of the Tang and Song and assembled documents on the [Yuan] dynasty's former affairs." Although they were proud of the Yuan achievements – "we cannot help but think that the Tang and Song can hardly approach the achievements of the [Yuan] ancestors" – the Yuan institutions were being judged point by point against the standards of previous Chinese dynasties.¹⁵³ The difference between the earlier *Dayuan tongzhi* and the *Jingshi dadian* was highlighted by the frequent use of Sino-Mongolian translationese in the former and the purely classical style of the latter.

The death of Tuq Temür in 1332 and the death of his great official El Temür Taishi in 1334 produced the one final revival of pure Qubilaid discourse. With the death of El Temür, the Empress Dowager Budashiri elevated the Merkit commander Bayan to become the new *taishi*. A subject of Prince Chechegtü, a descendant of Möngke Qa'an, he had served under Qaishan in the northwest, and was a *bingjiang* (manager) of Henan province in 1328, where he went over to the rebel side, rising to the position of second in command under El Temür. Now ruling for the teenaged Toghon Temür, Budashiri and Bayan Taishi opened a new regime in the fall of 1335 by deliberately flouting titular conventions. Previous emperors had closely imitated Qubilai's "Perfect Prime" (*zhiyuan*) reign title, but now Bayan Taishi went Qaishan one better and actually proclaimed *zhiyuan* again, with 1335 as *zhiyuan* 1.

At the same time, he eliminated the examination system. Although the total number of literati achieving official rank through the examinations since their reinstitution under Ayurbarwada had been small, it had vast symbolic importance. Its abolition made Bayan the focus of popular rumors, the most extreme of which was that he planned to execute all those bearing the surnames Zhang, Wang, Liu, Li, and Zhao. When rebellions indeed did happen, Bayan used them to purge loyal Han officials. But his purges extended to Mongol officials and princes, even Chechegtü, whose former subject he was. At this point the emperor, now in his twentieth year, linked up with Bayan's able nephew Toqto'a (Toghto) and got rid of all three, Bayan, Budashiri, and El Tegüs, in one fell swoop. Once again, as under Yisün

153 Cited from Yu Ji's preface to the *Jingshi dadian* in *Yuan wenlei* (Su 1958, 40.527–8).

Temür, an attempt to reprimatinate Qubilai's legacy was denounced as "disfiguring the old statutes."¹⁵⁴

Toghoḥ Temür's long *zhizheng* or "Perfect Orthodoxy" era (1341–1368) was not marked by any grand ideological pronouncement. But the emperor and his high officials aimed to resolve the tension between Qubilai and more classically Confucian approaches. Under Bayan's regime, many of the most distinguished Confucians had left court. To win back this crucial constituency, the Kuizhangge was renamed the Xuanwenge, "Pavilion for the Diffusion of Culture," and lavishly funded. The era's biggest cultural project, indeed the largest state-sponsored cultural project of the whole dynasty, was the compilation of the histories of the three previous dynasties – the Khitan Liao, the Song, and the Jurchen Jin. Based on the existing material of those dynasties, the three histories were completed from 1343 to 1345.

Ironically, however, this achievement probably exacerbated tensions between the various legally defined ethnicities. Among the most noted Confucians of the late Yuan, Xie Jisi (1274–1344), Ouyang Xuan (1283–1357), Huang Jin (1277–1357), and Xu Youren (1287–1364), only the last was north Chinese or Han; the other three were all southerners. Southern literati often felt that the Khitan Liao and Jurchen Jin were not actually legitimate dynasties and their histories should be included only as side annals or appendices to the Song history. Han literati from north China were still too numerous for this to be an effective solution, and eventually Toqto'a imposed on the compilers the idea of coexisting legitimate dynasties, a solution which not coincidentally amplified the merit of the Mongol Yuan in reunifying the divided world. But the debates over legitimacy raised again the sore spot of both the Mongol conquest and the court's distrust of southerners in particular.

More so than any other period, court rhetoric in the *zhizheng* period focused on the "ancestors" (Ch. *zuzong*). Since one of the precepts of the dynasty was class and ethnic hierarchy, it is not surprising that *genjiao* or "ancestry," specifically in terms of noble and base, remained a major concern. But giving this concern for the "ancestors" a new edge of tension was the legacy of ethnic polarization left by the Bayan administration. From Bayan's time as *taishi* on, a growing disorder in the south and a growing southern predominance among the Confucians increased the salience of ethnic superordination in the Yuan rhetoric.

154 Ye 1959, 3A.49.

Although powerful ministers like Toqto'a were able to overcome the timidity imposed by the fear of upsetting the ancestors' system, they needed the support of monarchs willing to allow them to make policy. Qaishan was the last emperor to have had experience campaigning in person; from then on, field command was restricted to great ministers. One of Qoshila's old confederates, Alqui Temür, gave Toghon Temür this advice on ascending the throne: "The affairs of the civilized world are very heavy and should be entrusted to the grand councilors to decide; let the mob criticize their achievements. But if you make the final decision yourself, then you will have to bear the resulting ill-fame."¹⁵⁵ Toghon Temür, like his predecessors, followed this advice and it served the emperors after Qaishan reasonably well. But during the great crisis of the fourteenth century, the emperor's willingness to countenance the criticism of "the mob" of petty, carping officials led to disaster.

The Fourteenth-Century Crisis and the Fall of the Yuan

The Yuan dynasty fell in the same crisis that afflicted the entire Mongol Empire and that took the form of the Black Death in non-Mongol Europe and the Middle East. At the same time, the dynasty's end is also a classic example of the kind of collapse emblematic of the chaotic end of Chinese dynasties: increasing banditry, sectarian and millenarian rebellions, roving bands and massacred cities, famine, plagues, the division of the country into warlord regimes, and finally the emergence of a victorious new emperor to give order to the depopulated subcontinent. The one unusual factor in this fall of the Yuan that would distinguish it from the fall of the earlier Han, Jin, Sui, and Tang, or the later Ming, was that the court escaped north to the Mongol steppe rather than remaining in place to be annihilated by the new victorious regime.

Chronic Deficits and Periodic Sloughs

The Yuanzhen Slough, during the late Qubilai–early Temür era,¹⁵⁶ was one of budgetary austerity induced both by the necessity to hold fast the currency value and by a short but sharp subsistence crisis. With the resolution of the subsistence crisis, taxation and expenses soon began to creep up again. First in 1297 and then again in 1302, the quotas for grain deliveries from the south

¹⁵⁵ YS, 38.817. ¹⁵⁶ Brook 2010, 71.

were doubled by imperial order.¹⁵⁷ As a new emperor, Temür had to give generous donatives to the princes and in-laws, increasing the base-level annual gift for princes from Qubilai's fifty tael of gold and fifty taels of silver to 250 taels of gold and 150 taels of silver.¹⁵⁸ By 1298, the empire's budgets were once again being defrayed by deficit spending, moderate at first, only 200,000 paper *yastuq* annually, but on a scale which increased in fits and starts to a crescendo under Qaishan.¹⁵⁹

While Yuan emperors certainly had their share of luxury, the largest items of expense were donatives to the princes and the imperial bodyguard. The *quriltai* that enthroned the frugal and "Confucian" emperor Ayurbarwada in 1311 cost the treasury 39,650 taels of gold, 849,050 taels of silver, 223,279 *yastuq* in currency, and 472,488 bolts of silk cloth.¹⁶⁰ Such donatives continued throughout the reign: the expected regular annual bonuses for the imperial establishment totaled 200,000 *yastuq*. Given the budget issues, however, it was not uncommon for emperors to over-promise aid. Those who received promises of imperial largesse early in the year had a much better chance of actually securing their funds than those whose promises came at the end of the fiscal year, although, if necessary, an emperor could ask an important prince to get the balance of an unpaid donative from some other *shing*.¹⁶¹

Another way to purchase support was through famine relief. Qubilai had begun the practice of issuing grain or cash to those reporting famine; these included not just local governments, but also important princes, imperial sons-in-law, and commanders of armies on the frontier. Emperors knew that such requests from powerful Mongol lords were often bogus, but had to pay them anyway. In 1296, a still young and naive Temür expostulated when his cousin Prince Ananda alone in his region, and for the second year in a row, reported a famine: "If I give it to you, the other princes will think it is unfair, and if I don't give it to you, you say that many people will starve." He sent 10,000 *dan* of grain and hoped the prince would give it to the truly needy.¹⁶²

Construction was another area of major expense. Much attention has been given to the large number of temples related to Tibetan Buddhism and to the imperial cult in the capital, at the Buddhist holy mountain of Wutai Shan

¹⁵⁷ YS, 19.407, 20.437. ¹⁵⁸ YS, 22.480–81.

¹⁵⁹ Deficit spending in the Yuan currency system was referred to as borrowing from the currency reserves; the reserves would then have to be paid back by printing a greater than usual amount of currency to replenish the supplies in the local reserve treasuries.

On such borrowing under Temür, see YS, 19.417, 20.426.

¹⁶⁰ YS, 24.538. ¹⁶¹ YS, 17.367–68, 22.488. ¹⁶² YS, 19.403–4.

(Shanxi) and in the provinces. Halting, at least temporarily, such construction was a common way for emperors to give the appearance, at least, of cutting expenses. Soldiers were the labor of choice for work on such construction sites, and economy-minded officials could also point to the damage such work did to military readiness.¹⁶³ Qaishan began a massive construction project at Wutai Shan that continued from 1307 into the famine year of 1326.¹⁶⁴

But military expenses themselves were another major budget item, although no figures for regular expenses survive. In 1308, during Qaishan's massive military buildup on the northern border, yearly expenses for the military in Qaraqorum, Gansu, Datong, Inner Mongolia, and the two capitals amounted to over 8,200,000 *yastuq*. Three years later at the beginning of his brother Ayurbarwada's reign, the cost was still 6 million or 7 million *yastuq* currency annually.¹⁶⁵

It was under Qaishan that reckless spending reached a crescendo. In addition to the military expenditures just mentioned, Qaishan instituted over 100 new building projects, including a new "Central Capital" (Zhongdu) to be situated on the route between Dadu and Shangdu. The annual tax receipts were about 4 million, of which 70 percent was forwarded to the capital. But within a year of his coronation in 1307, he promised 5.2 million paper *yastuq* in donatives. In 1309, he issued 10 million paper *yastuq* in cash and distributed 3 million *dan* of relief grain. By 1308, the only resort was to dig into the currency reserve, burning through over 8 million paper *yastuq* by 1309.¹⁶⁶ The situation was obviously unsustainable, and the attempted solution was to create a new currency system, with new Zhida bills circulating together with a new copper currency. The experiment lasted only two years; one of his brother Ayurbarwada's first measures early in 1311 was to cancel it, along with the building projects, and return to what he referred to nostalgically as the years of fiscal stability under Qubilai Qa'an.¹⁶⁷

Fiscally, the regime managed to recover from Qaishan's prodigality, although at a significant cost. Even approximate figures are lacking on the budget after 1311, but budget deficits remained chronic.¹⁶⁸ In order to maintain confidence in the currency following Qaishan's fiscally disastrous regime, the printing of fully convertible Zhongtong currency was resumed, albeit in relatively small amounts, alongside that of the Zhiyuan currency,

163 YS, 30.676, 102.2616; cf. Ratchnevsky 1985, 134–35.

164 Wang, 2018, 132, 140–41; Sayang 1990, 45v. 165 YS, 22.495, 24.547–48.

166 Chen and Shi 2010, 753–57; Franke 1949, 137–38; both based on YS, 22.495, 22.510, 23.516.

167 Von Glahn 1996, 66; Peng 1994, 481–82, 509. 168 YS, 35.777.

and Ayurbarwada's government began rapidly withdrawing old bills from circulation.

Thus while Qaishan spent the money, Ayurbarwada bore the burden of the ensuing austerity. Accounts of the 1328 civil war show a great nostalgia for Qaishan, especially in the capital region, nostalgia that focused not on his southern son, Tuq Temür, but on Qoshila in exile beyond the northwestern frontier. "When the people of the two capitals heard that the envoys of [Qoshila] had arrived, they greeted them with dancing and singing, shouting, 'Our Son of Heaven is really coming from the North!'"¹⁶⁹

The enthusiasm of the capital's people for Qaishan's heroic generosity is also a reminder that famine relief functioned as a massive subsidy for north China in general and for the capital zone in particular.¹⁷⁰ Much of Qaishan's donatives were given directly in grain, and shipments from the south under his reign soared from 1.6 million to 2.7 million *dan*. Over the course of the Yuan as a whole, Dadu is far and away the most frequent recipient of grain relief. And although north China, defined as the old Jin territory, comprised no more than 16.5 percent of all the registered civilian households in the empire, it contained all of the top twenty routes in frequency of famine relief.

On the income side, Ayurbarwada realized that the land tax quotas had not kept up with the expansion of the economy and the population in the south. Indirect taxes were capturing something of this increase: back in 1289, Sangga had set the liquor monopoly quota at 100,000 paper *yastuq* for Jiangnan and 50,000 paper *yastuq* for the Central *Shing*. By 1330, the quota for the Central *Shing* had been raised moderately to 59,800 paper *yastuq*, but those for Jiangnan had more than tripled to 328,300 paper *yastuq*.¹⁷¹ In 1314–1315, a strenuous effort was made to capture the increase through direct taxes on landholdings in Henan, Jiangzhe, and Jiangxi. Inevitably, abuses also occurred, resistance was strong, and a rebellion led by Cai Wujiu ("Cai Five-Nine") broke out in Jiangxi. The court gave in and retreated to a program of voluntary reporting.¹⁷² This

169 YS, 31.695. This demonstration took place at a time when Tuq Temür had already seized power in both capitals and re-established peace. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah recounted similar stories of enthusiasm for the exiled emperor coming from the Chaghadaid realm, and his allegiance to "the precepts of the *yasaq*" (Baṭṭūṭa / Gibb, 4: 907–11, quotation at 908). In Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's narrative, his "Piruz" is clearly Qoshila, while the emperor who went on campaign against him is a confused mix of Yisün Temür and Tuq Temür.

170 Chen 2015, 76–77, argues that Dadu was the most exploited region in the empire, but Ding Chao's argument (2016, 333–42) that the capital region benefited from inter-regional wealth transfer is more convincing.

171 Compare YS, 205.4575 to YS, 94.2395–97 (Schurman 1967, 210–11). I have compared the "Jiangnan" of YS, 205, with the Jiangzhe, Jiangxi, and Huguang figures of YS, 94.

172 YS, 93.2352–54; Schurman 1967, 36–38.

defeat put the last nail in the coffin of Qubilai-style efforts to bring the entire economy under the supervision of the fisc, and confirmed the trend to increasing dependence on indirect taxes.

The death of Ayurbarwada coincided with the beginning of another, much more severe, subsistence crisis. Just as in the earlier subsistence crisis the Secretariat responded by cutting back on the printing of paper currency, which fell steadily from the 1320 peak of 1,480,000 paper *yastuq* in Zhiyuan currency and 100,000 in Zhongtong currency, to a 1328 minimum of 310,000 and 30,500 paper *yastuq* respectively. The combined result of famine and austerity was another brief but significant drop in prices that Timothy Brook has identified as the Taiding Slough.¹⁷³

Beginning in around 1320, the number of reported famines, after staying blessedly low through most of Ayurbarwada's reign, began to creep upwards again. After Yisün Temür's *coup d'état*, conditions dramatically worsened. Drought struck Shaanxi in 1325 and flood struck Henan in spring 1326; that August, two of Yisün Temür's top officials, 'Ubaydallāh and Xu Shijing, offered to resign in light of the signs of Heaven's anger, but their offer was declined. By September 1328, cannibalism was reported in Shaanxi, while in Jiangnan massive floods devastated over 800 square kilometers of farmland.¹⁷⁴

Partisans of the 1328 Restoration charged Yisün Temür's illegitimate regime with being the reason for the disasters, but the ensuing civil war itself tipped the scales from hunger to mass famine.¹⁷⁵ Indeed already in June 1329, 1,230,000 civilians and soldiers in Shaanxi were suffering and 100,000 were refugees. Luoyang in Henan reported fifty-one cases of cannibalism, 27,400 hungry, and 7,950 people dead of dearth. The official treasuries were empty, so the only measure available was opening the normally off-limits wilds to gathering, and canvassing the Buddhist and Daoist monasteries for extra grain.¹⁷⁶ In a single Shaanxi garrison, 650 soldiers starved to death, while an agricultural colony reported cannibalism in its ranks and the disappearance of 70 to 80 percent of the farmers due to starvation or flight.¹⁷⁷ By spring 1329, the granaries were exhausted and Tuq Temür ordered seven days of Buddhist prayers for the ongoing famine in Shaanxi.¹⁷⁸

If prayers were for rain, they were effective, but now the problem was floods, with over 2,000 square kilometers flooded and 400,000 people hungry around Lake Tai; the government could issue only 3,000 paper *yastuq* and

173 Brook 2010, 71–72; Brook 2017, 54. 174 YS, 32.723–24, 50.1071, 1079, 30.668, 672.

175 YS, 31.700. 176 YS, 33.733, 50.278, 50.1071, 175.4092. 177 YS, 33.735, 65.1631.

178 YS, 34.756.

“encourage the rich” to provide 100,000 *dan* of grain. By spring 1331, there were still 850,000 hungry people; tenants were encouraged to seek loans from their landlords, and 100,000 *yastuq* was issued to “encourage” donations from the rich.¹⁷⁹ But 1329–1330 were the worst years; in 1331 the number of places reporting famine dropped by half and recovering refugees in Shaanxi were given grain to tide them over while they returned to their livelihoods.¹⁸⁰ For the next decade or so, hunger was only occasionally reported.

Despite the scale of the devastation, the reported deaths seem relatively few compared to experiences like the El Niño droughts and the famines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in north China.¹⁸¹ The vastly lower baseline of population and the much greater availability of wild resources undoubtedly cushioned the worst of the impact. But the Mongol Yuan government undoubtedly deserves credit as well, for using the traditional Chinese mechanisms of famine relief effectively. Yet by the summer of 1329, the famine had emptied out the “war chest” of famine relief, already depleted by Qaishan’s reign, and even in south China local granaries were essentially empty. Given the retreat of the central government from active involvement in the economy, the enormous granaries emptied out were probably never refilled, creating vulnerability when the next climatic disaster would occur.

The 1328 civil war, like Qaishan’s brief regime, also emptied the currency reserves. Military expenses and rewards for the troops were estimated at several times the annual income. The Secretariat thus arranged a currency print run for 1329 of 1,192,000 Zhiyuan paper *yastuq* – much larger than in the preceding Taiding period, but barely half the amount of the previous peaks of 1311–1314.¹⁸² The policy of limiting currency issues, together with the continuation of budget deficits which must have been financed by other means, created the worst of both worlds: continuing inflation once the subsistence situation improved from 1330 or so, together with a disappearance of currency in much of south China.¹⁸³ Under Qaishan, a reserve of 5 million *yastuq* of convertible Zhongtong currency had been considered necessary for a proper functioning of the currency, but in 1341, reaching a currency reserve level of 2,822,488 *yastuq* in Zhongtong and Zhiyuan currency was considered

179 YS, 34.764, 35.780. The encouragement was probably in the form of compulsory sales of grain.

180 YS, 35.781. 181 Davis 2001; Li 2007; Edgerton-Tarpley 2008. 182 YS, 32.719, 31.700,

183 I follow here the summary of Wu Qi’s lost 1353 study of the currency situation, resumed in Yongrong 1933, 1758, with Maeda Naonori’s (1993) conclusions on inflation. See also von Glahn 1996, 65–70.

enough to handle two years' circulation, and cause to stop printing money for the next year.¹⁸⁴ Evidently the central government was achieving its targets of financial reserves at the cost of an increasingly restricted reach of its currency.

The Fourteenth-Century Crisis

In February of 1342, cannibalism was reported in Datong. The usual rains had not fallen in the previous seasons, not just in Datong, but in Zhangde and counties around Taiyuan. Less severe famine was reported in other areas of Hebei.¹⁸⁵ This was the beginning of the Zhizheng Slough, which would become one of the great famine disasters of Chinese history, far worse than the Shaanxi famine of 1326–1330.¹⁸⁶ Unfortunately, the Yuan imperial annals (*benji*) for the dynasty's last reign, covering 1333–1368, were compiled hastily in the Ming dynasty and are far poorer than the earlier ones. While special attention was paid to listing poor weather conditions, much fewer quantitative data are available on the numbers affected or government responses. In listing famine events, the annals use conventional phrases, such as *daji*, "great hunger" or famine, or in the most severe cases *ren xiang shi* or "cannibalism." This latter phrase is used to denote the most severe famines, where there was a complete breakdown of human social relations.

Over the course of the dynasty, reports of cannibalism due to hunger appeared previously in only two circumstances: during the early wars of the conquest of north China, and in the worst years of the Shaanxi famine of 1328–1329. From 1342 to 1349, however, famine to the point of cannibalism was reported somewhere in north China in every year except 1346. Sometimes the cause is specified: drought in Shanxi in 1342 and 1343, the massive Yellow River flood in Henan and western Shandong in 1344, and locusts in Weihui along the Yellow River in 1348.¹⁸⁷ Twenty days of solid rain led the Yellow River to burst its bank in the summer of 1344; over the next few years dikes continued to break down and in 1346 a government agency was created to address the issue.¹⁸⁸

Cannibalism was only the tip of the iceberg of dearth. Little is known of the victims. We know one story from Henan *Shing*: a migrant farm family was

184 YS, 40.862; cf. YS, 23.516. 185 YS, 40.863, 51.1106.

186 Brook 2010, 72; Brook 2017, 54–55.

187 On 1342, see YS, 40.863, 51.1106 (Datong, Shanxi, central Hebei); on 1343, see YS, 51.1110 (Weihui, Shanxi); on 1344, see YS, 41.870, 51.1095, 1104 (floods and heavy rains in western Shandong, Henan; northern Hebei, 51.1110: northern Hebei); on 1345, see YS, 51.1110 (western Shandong, northern Jiangsu); on 1347, see YS, 41.878 (Hebei); on 1348, see YS, 192.4374 (locusts, Weihui Route, over half died); on 1349, see YS, 51.1110 (peninsular Shandong).

188 YS, 66.1749, 41.869, 870, 875–76.

living in Haozhou (present-day Anhui province) when it was struck by drought, locusts, and disease in 1344. The father, mother, and elder brother all died in succession. The survivors were too poor to bury the dead, so a villager helped out. The abandoned younger son, seventeen years old, joined a monastery for a month, before going to the county seat to beg. His story was all too common, but his fate was not: this monk beggar named Zhu Yuanzhang became the first Ming emperor.¹⁸⁹

This outcome highlights the role of the ghastly 1342–1349 famines in the fall of the Yuan. Two things created these famines. The first was an unprecedented “mega-drought,” one which had repercussions on weather all over the world, sometimes good, and sometimes, as in India, Southeast Asia, and China, catastrophically bad.¹⁹⁰ The same weather conditions, although on a much smaller scale, played a role in both the Yuanzhen Slough and the Taiding Slough. The counterintuitive coincidence of droughts with floods one after another is a common trend in north Chinese history.¹⁹¹

The second cause of the Zhizheng famine was the long-term decline over the course of the dynasty in the reserves available to fight famine: both natural, in the form of unused natural resources that could be tapped in time of agricultural distress, and governmental, in the form of monetary and especially grain reserves. Population growth, ironically brought on by peace, prosperity, and effective famine relief, was reducing the first type of reserve while the Taiding Slough and the gradual diminishing of governmental ambitions had diminished the second. Our information is inexact, but it is striking that the Shaanxi famine got to the point of cannibalism only in the fourth year of drought, while Datong reached that point in only the second year.

Did bubonic plague play a role in these deaths? Given the almost contemporary occurrence of the Black Death in the Golden Horde, the Middle East, and Europe, many scholars have looked for plague in the late Yuan as well. And indeed there are many references to various vaguely referenced epidemic diseases causing mass mortality. However, they are as a rule attendant on simultaneous disasters of drought, flooding, or war. A reference from 1331 is typical:

In recent years the counties in Hengzhou Route experienced drought, locusts, and on top of that severe flooding. The people consumed almost

189 Taylor 1975, 31.

190 Zhang et al. 2008; Buckley et al. 2010; Sinha et al. 2011; Campbell 2016, II, 44–45, 283.

191 Davis 2001, 264–65; Li 2007, 286.

all the grass and plants, and there was also pestilence. Nine out of ten died. The Hunan Circuit Pacification Commission requested 10,000 *dan* of relief grain and it was approved.¹⁹²

What is rare or absent is any reference to repeated large-scale plagues that are not either clearly regional (the famous miasmas or malaria of the south) or else attendant on other sparking conditions.

The government did not at first comprehend the scale of the problem. A few years after helping the emperor overthrow Bayan, the minister Toqto'a resigned in 1344 to follow his father into retirement. His replacements were Confucian-trained Mongol aristocrats who attempted to address the crisis by improving the moral quality of local officialdom. Efforts to establish ever-normal and volunteer granaries were too little, too late.¹⁹³ In 1345, the emperor undertook twenty days of fasting and self-reflection in face of the floods in Henan and Shandong and rising banditry.¹⁹⁴ In 1349, the famously dynamic and ambitious Toqto'a was brought back, with the emperor saying, "Among men there is Toqto'a; among horses there is the Frankish horse; both are the most outstanding of their time." Luckily, there were to be three relatively good harvests following, giving Toqto'a a breathing space to address the crisis.

Toqto'a put together a program of extraordinary daring intended to shore up the empire's crumbling Qubilaid foundations. South China was slipping out of the hands of the Mongol government in Dadu politically and financially, which threatened the economic viability of the capital. Traditionally, the south was less vulnerable to famine, and maintaining this lifeline was crucial. But the rise of piracy on the coasts was damaging the sea transport of grain from the south. Under Tuq Temür maritime deliveries had always exceeded 3 million *dan*, but by 1341 they dropped to 2.8 million and a year later to 2.6 million. In 1344, Jiangzhe, which supplied 40 percent of the total shipment, was half a million *dan* short.¹⁹⁵ Since suppressing piracy proved impossible, connection with the south had to be done through the Grand Canal, the other lifeline from Jiangnan to the capital. But the flooding of the Yellow River had rendered the Grand Canal inoperable.¹⁹⁶ Finally, the

192 YS, 35.784; cf. the inaccurate summary in McNeill 1976, 301.

193 YS, 41.869, 870, 96.2467; Quan n.d., I, §§33, 36. Ever-normal and charitable granaries had been an off-again-on-again aspect of Yuan governance since Qubilai's time. But they tended to be established in the wake of a local famine and then neglected until the next crisis.

194 Quan n.d., I, §39.

195 YS, 97.2481–82, 39.843. On Jiangzhe's percentage of the total, see Quan n.d., II, §19; Dardess 1973, 87–89.

196 Dardess 1973, 87; YS, 186.4280, 187.4290–91, 42.887–88, 97.

Zhiyuan paper currency was being replaced by counterfeit currency and other monetary instruments in much of south China, thus making it difficult for the regime to extract resources.¹⁹⁷

Toqto'a's solution was to gather 200,000 men to force the Yellow River back into its old channel. Once that was completed, the Grand Canal could be reopened. The laborers would be recruited through local gentry and paid in a new Zhizheng currency, to be issued in the amount of 6 million paper *yastuq*,¹⁹⁸ plenty large enough to remonetize the economy. The project and the pay for civilians would both prevent disastrous floods and serve as relief for the laborers. Once the south was more firmly tied to the north again, piracy could be suppressed. Beginning in the spring of 1351, a total of 20,000 soldiers and 170,000 civilian laborers recruited from the Hebei and Henan areas labored from the fourth to tenth months and successfully dredged a new channel which the Yellow River would use until the nineteenth century. The cost was estimated at over 1,845,000 paper *yastuq*.¹⁹⁹

Red Turban Rebellions

The victory was pyrrhic, however, as a series of rebellions broke out in Henan. The most immediately successful rebels were animated by prophecies that had been circulating for centuries in the underworld of banned subversive books. One such prophetic book, the *Wugong fu* (Talismans of the Five Lords), circulated during the Yuan in both Chinese and Mongolian. It predicted a period of catastrophe and plague that would begin in the monkey and chicken years and wipe out nine-tenths of the population until a "Lord of Light" (Ch. *mingjun*; Mo. *gege'en qa'an*) appeared in the tiger or rabbit years; this "Lord of Light" would then come from south China to north China and Mongolia and replace the tenth emperor. Toghon Temür was the tenth emperor; 1344 had been a monkey year; and 1351, when Toqto'a's vast river works took place, was a rabbit year.²⁰⁰

The ringleader of the rebellion, Han Shantong, was arrested early in the year, but his comrade, Liu Futong, set up Han's son, Han Lin'er, and raised an insurrection in the Yingzhou area. Even as the water-control project continued, mass uprisings took place in response all around the lower Huai

197 YS, 97.2483–85; Dardess 1973, 97–99.

198 Yongrong 1933, 1758; cf. YS, 186.4271, 186.4280. 199 YS, 66.1646, 1653.

200 *Tongzhi tiaoge*, 28.690–95; *Yuan dianzhang*, 32.1122–25; Ter Haar 2015; Ter Haar 1999, 115–23. As Ter Haar shows, neither the supposed "White Lotus," a term used since the Ming as a catch-all term of abuse for any rebels with a religious cast, nor Manichaeism had anything to do with the Red Turban uprisings. For a Mongolian version of a "Five Lords" text, see Sárközi 1992, 19–43.

and Yellow River area, as well as in Shandong, Shaanxi, Jiangxi, and Sichuan. The rebels wore red turbans and burned incense to avoid the disasters of the evil age.²⁰¹ Many of these rebels shared the same millenarian beliefs, but others as well, like pirate chief Fang Guozhen who had been in rebellion since 1348, joined the attack.²⁰² The dynasty's prestige was shattered by the fall of major cities like Xuzhou, Xiangyang, and Hangzhou, and several high-profile Yuan defeats. Henanese rebels relished the memory of the 6,000 elite Asud (Ossetian) guards shouting "*Yabu! Yabu!*" – Mongolian for "Go! Go!" – to each other as they fled the battlefield.²⁰³ The dynasty's end seemed near.

In fact, the regime did not fall just yet. But although banditry had been growing since Bayan Taishi's time in office, now in 1351 the empire changed from a fundamentally pacified, civilian-ruled society into a remilitarized society divided into armed camps, some flying the dynasty's flag, others flying various rebel flags.²⁰⁴ Ironically, the plebeian, sectarian, and millenarian elements among the early rebels were a lifeline for the regime, rallying respectable Han and southern officials and gentry around the Yuan. Although Toqto'a responded to the rebellions at first by trying to wall off Mongols and immigrants from Han and southerners, very soon Mongol and Han landlords and officials threatened by rebels were forming militias in which ties of friendship and alliance overruled ethnic class distinctions.

From 1352 on, Yuan generals, officials, and militiamen began to gain back ground against the rebels. Toqto'a adapted to the new military landscape and recruited Han salt workers and city toughs to form a "Yellow Army" (so-called from the color of their uniforms) of three *tümen* familiar with the terrain; in August 1352, he recaptured Xuzhou, together with the famous Red Turban leader "Sesame Seed Li" (so-called because his family had not so much as a sesame seed of wealth).²⁰⁵ In 1353, Yuan armies recovered Xiangyangfu and Hangzhou.²⁰⁶ The Mongol commander at Xiangyangfu, Tash Ba'atur,²⁰⁷ beefed up his 3,000 soldiers to three *tümen* by enrolling volunteer officials, yamen staff, landlords, and deserters. Among his recruits were a Naiman *tammachi* soldier, Chaghān Temür, and his landsman, the Han civilian Li Siqu, who joined to form a militia and defeat a Red Turban force in southern Henan.²⁰⁸

Meanwhile, however, the disasters returned, this time as drought, locusts, and accompanying pestilence. The years 1352, 1354, 1358, and 1359 all had

201 Quan, 1, §§52; Ye 1959, 3A.50–53; YS, 42.891 ff. 202 YS, 47.883, 889, 890–92.

203 Quan, 1, §§53, 55. 204 Ye 1959, 3A.47, 51, draws this distinction very sharply.

205 Quan, 1, §§55, 61. 206 Quan, 1, §59; YS, 42.900, 42.903, 43.908; 44.931, 932.

207 Cf. Dardess's Dash-Badulugh (1973, 211 n. 61), which is incorrect.

208 YS, 142.3395, 141.3384; Quan, 1, §62, 11, §9. On his background, see Dardess 1973, 132–33.

districts where famine was so bad cannibalism was reported. Freak cold snaps were also reported: three feet of snow fell in Hebei in April 1350, and the Bianliang river froze solid for three days in late January 1354.²⁰⁹ In 1352, central Hebei's Damingfu prefecture reported that 716,980 households were hungry. Some 100,000 paper *yastuq* were provided, but whether it was new issue and whether it would actually buy anything is questionable.²¹⁰ In 1354, the hunger reached the capital, where pestilence and fathers eating their children were reported. In Henan, drought hit again, and more ominously the drought was now devastating wide swaths of south China as well; in Quanzhou, the ground was so hard that seeds could not be planted.²¹¹ Even if the link to the south was rebuilt, would there be grain?

One solution for the capital was to build agricultural colonies and grow cold-adapted rice strains. This was tried in 1353, with settlers from Shandong being paid 5 million paper *yastuq* in the new Zhizheng issue. However, by next year most of the settlers had fled.²¹² With the feeding of the capital in the balance, Toqto'a launched an attack on Gaoyou, a city which a salt smuggler, Zhang Shicheng, had recently seized, making him the last enemy on the Grand Canal.²¹³ Toqto'a assembled a multiethnic force, and began the siege late in November; on the brink of final victory, on January 7, 1355, he was dismissed by the emperor. Rejecting the advice of his field officers that he finish the siege and then obey, he left his position. His army disintegrated, and the Yuan never reopened the Grand Canal.²¹⁴

This dismissal of Toqto'a came about through the intrigues of the imperial favorite Qamaq. Qamaq and his brother Sosaq were the sons of the child emperor Irinchinbal's wet nurse, so the three shared the same milk, an important relation in Mongolian culture. Qamaq formed a clique of ten, called the "favorites" (Mo. *inaq*), that dominated the inner court and promoted sexual exercises to improve the emperor's health, virility, and life span. Despite past grievances, Qamaq had supported Toqto'a's appointment in 1349, saying, "The reality is, he's the right man." Now, just as the defeat of the rebels was certain, seemed the right moment to deal with this potentially over-mighty subject. But Qamaq and the emperor miscalculated, and the *inaq* clique came to power with the rebels not defeated, but newly energized.

209 Quan, 1, §50, 64; YS, 43.913, 51.1097.

210 YS, 51.1107, 143.3427 (Huai valley), 42.900 (Hebei).

211 YS, 43.918 (the capital), YS, 51.1110 (Zhedong, Jiangdong, Fujian, Jiangxi, Guangxi), and YS, 51.1107 (Huaiqing, Henan, Fujian, Hunan, Guangxi).

212 YS, 43.907; Quan, 1, §58; Dardess 1973, 212 n. 79. 213 YS, 43.909.

214 YS, 138.3346–48; Quan, 1, §67.

Qamaq's ensuing failure to pacify them was predictable and, within a year, he and Sosaq were executed.²¹⁵

The End of Mongol Rule in China

With the dismissal of Toqto'a, the Red Turbans roared back into life. Now, however, they combined their prophetic dreams with more plainly dynastic ambitions. In Bozhou (in northern Anhui), Liu Futong proclaimed a new Song dynasty, with Han Lin'er as the "Little King of Light." In Henan, the Yuan commander Tai-Buqa fell into disfavor due to the brutality of his troops, while Tash Ba'atur first was evacuated to the north and then passed away in 1357. Liu Futong and Han Lin'er occupied Namging (present-day Kaifeng) and sent commanders north across the river to converge on the capital. Mao Gui, advancing from Shandong, approached the capital in April 1358. The city was thrown into a panic but a counterattack threw Mao Gui's army back in defeat. The defenses around Dadu were firmed up and Mao Gui retreated to build up his power in Shandong.²¹⁶ Meanwhile, Master Guan, "Cracked-Head" Pan, and their confederates in the west moved north through Shanxi. Heeding Mao Gui's lesson, they advanced around Dadu as a flying column and instead torched Shangdu on January 8, 1359, before moving on through Manchuria into Korea.

To complete the scene of disaster, 1358 and 1359 saw one final return of the famine demon, exacerbated by the destructions of war. In the north China plain locusts

ate all the crops and vegetation, to the extent that they blotted out the sun, not letting people or horses move forward and filling the ditches and moats. People caught them and ate them, or dried them out for storage, but when that too ran out, people ate each other.²¹⁷

In Baoding and Zhuozhou, the soldiers killed and ate the weak and emaciated as food.²¹⁸

By this time, south China was lost to the Yuan. In 1356, Liu Futong and Han Lin'er had sent their commander, Zhu Yuanzhang, the future Ming emperor, to take Jiankang (present-day Nanjing) from Yuan loyalists. He and other regional warlords had eliminated the last Yuan hold-outs in the Yangzi valley

²¹⁵ YS, 205.4581–85; Quan, 1, §§47, 55, 60, 67; 11, §§2, 6. ²¹⁶ Chen 2015, 121–22.

²¹⁷ For 1358, see YS, 51.1107, 51.1108, and 51.1110; for 1359, see YS, 51.1107, YS, 51.1110, 51.1108. Quote: YS, 51.1108.

²¹⁸ YS, 51.1110. Cannibalism is, of course, a widespread *topos* in Chinese history, but the detail in this case gives it considerable verisimilitude; see Robinson 2009, 88, 278–79.

by the end of 1359. In the southeast port city of Quanzhou, a band of Persian *ispāhi* (Mongolized Persian for “soldiers”) seized the city in 1357 and ruled it for a decade; in 1367, local Chinese armies retook the city and the westerners were massacred.²¹⁹ Canton was still held by a loyalist warlord, and in Yunnan a Qubilaid prince, Vajravarmi (Mo. Basarawarmi) relied on the support of the Qarajang people to hold the province with little challenge. But they were cut off from the court.

At the same time, the Mongolian heartland was also lost to the Qubilaids. After 1359, when Shangdu was burned, the qa’an no longer made the annual trek north of the mountains to Inner Mongolia.²²⁰ In 1360, the Ögödeid prince of Yangdi, Alqui Temür, challenged Toghon Temür: “The ancestors entrusted you with the world. Now how could you have lost more than half of the world? You are not worthy to occupy the ancestors’ throne,” and claimed the imperial seal. A battle ensued, placed variously at Chinqai city in western Mongolia, or an otherwise unknown place, Mürgü Che’üd. Toghon Temür’s army was scattered and the general fled back to Shangdu.²²¹ While Alqui Temür did not follow up on the victory, from this time on the Qubilaid dynasty was no longer in charge of Mongolia, which reverted to the control of Ögödeid and Arigh Bökid princes, and non-Chinggisid commanders of the Oirat house.

The Qubilaid dynasty was thus now confined to north China and Inner Mongolia. After Tash Ba’atur’s death, his army was inherited by his son Bolad Temür, but Li Siqi and Chaghān Temür in Shaanxi broke away and established their own commands. Chaghān Temür’s armies based in Shaanxi now faced off with Bolad Temür’s in the north for the control of Shanxi, one of the few provinces left unravaged. In 1359, Chaghān Temür retook Namging from the Song regime, and then besieged the remnants of Mao Gui’s army in Yidufu in Shandong in the autumn of 1360. He was killed treacherously in the siege but his part-Han nephew and adopted son, Wang Baobao, who took the Mongol name Köke Temür, finished the siege and massacred the city.

Köke Temür and Bolad Temür continued as rivals, each linked with two factions at court. Toghon Temür’s surviving offspring Ayushiridara was the son of his Korean consort Madame Ki. Although Koreans were widely desired as concubines and eunuchs in Dadu, there was opposition to recognizing her as empress, and her son as crown prince. From 1358 on, therefore, the idea of his father abdicating and enthroning Ayushiridara led to severe

219 Chaffee 2018, 157–61; So 2000, 122–25. 220 Chen Gaohua 2015, 121.

221 Quan, 11, §28; *YS*, 45.952–53.

factionalism. Supporters of Madame Ki and the Kereyit official Chosgem faced off against Laodisha, a Qarluq member of the old *inaq* clique and a supporter of the emperor. Köke Temür supported Chosgem and the crown prince, while Bolad Temür supported the emperor and Laodisha.

In 1364, Bolad Temür marched into the capital and purged Chosgem's faction, before being killed by an agent of the emperor. Köke Temür now occupied the capital; the court appointed him supreme commander for a projected reconquest of the south. But Köke Temür seemed more interested in unifying north China under his control than in conquering the south, and the court became more worried about Köke Temür than about the southern armies. In October 1267, the armies of Zhu Yuanzhang's regime, soon to be named the Ming, had unified the Yangzi valley and the next month began moving into Shandong. Operations in Henan followed, while the Yuan court dithered over whether to use Köke Temür or overthrow him. Local Yuan-aligned forces were defeated one by one, until September 9, 1368, when Tongzhou, the prefecture next to Dadu, was captured. On the night of September 10, the emperor gathered his entire court, including the establishments of his empresses and the crown prince Ayushiridara, and set out for Shangdu, a city still mostly in ruins. Four days later Ming armies entered Dadu and renamed it Beiping – the “pacified north.”

Even with the fall of Dadu, however, the Yuan still controlled territory in north China. Köke Temür and his ten *tümen* were driven out of Shanxi that winter. Next year, the Ming armies advanced through the mountains north of Beiping and took Shangdu on August 29, 1369. Toghon Temür fled north again, moving to the walled city of Yingchangfu, in Qonggirat territory, where he died in the next year. Ayushiridara inherited the Yuan seal and title as qa'an, but in June 1370 a Ming army captured his wife and son and he had to flee to Qaraqorum. There he joined Köke Temür, who had continued resistance in Gansu province until May 1370, when he too was defeated by a Ming army and fled north with the bulk of his troops.

The Ming emperor now summoned Ayushiridara Biligtü Qa'an to abandon the Yuan title and accept investiture as a tributary prince. The qa'an refused, however. The Ming emperor sent his generals in the summer of 1372 to invade the Mongolian heartland, where they were soundly defeated. The Ming armies retreated temporarily to a line around what is now the southern border of Inner Mongolia.²²² Biligtü Qa'an continued to hold the Yuan seal and claim the title of Yuan emperor. In 1381 the Ming armies pacified the

222 Dreyer 1982, 74–76.

Ordos region of Inner Mongolia, and in 1382, the Qubilaid Prince Vajravarmi's regime in Yunnan submitted. In 1387, Ming armies entered Manchuria. The Mongol commander Naghachu and the princes of the left hand, descendants of Chinggis Khan's brothers, surrendered. The qa'an was now cut off from Korea. And in 1388, Ming armies surprised the new Yuan emperor Toghus Temür Usqal Qa'an on the shores of Lake Buir, capturing the Yuan seal, along with most of his people.²²³

The date 1368 usually given for the fall of the Yuan is thus to some extent an arbitrary and conventional one. From the Ming point of view, any conceivable Yuan claim ended in 1388, but Chinggisid rulers in Mongolia continued to use the dynastic designation of Yuan and what they claimed was Qubilai's seal up until 1636, when the sons of Ligdan Qa'an handed it over to the emperor of the new Manchu Qing dynasty. But after 1388, the Qubilaid line faced opposition not just from the Ming, but from their old challengers, the other Chinggisid lines. When Ayushiridara and Köke Temür arrived in Qaraqorum, they were now operating in what was effectively Ögöeid and Arigh Bökid territory. Supported by the Oirat commanders who dominated Mongolia, petty Yuan qa'ans would write a new page of turmoil and transition in Mongolian history.

The most important legacy of Mongol rule in China was the Ming dynasty itself. Breaking with the centuries of disunion between northern and southern regimes that preceded Mongol rule, the Yuan dynasty inaugurated the late imperial unification of China, in which the succeeding dynasties based for the most part in the rebuilt Yuan capital, Beijing, dominated East Asia. Despite complaints about the adoption of "Han laws," the qa'an's court set the literary, political, and cultural norms for the rest of the empire. For later Mongols, the union of Tibet, China, and Mongolia under one empire empowered the emerging ideal of Tibetan Buddhist monarchy that shaped art and religion into the twentieth century.²²⁴

Outweighing all his later failures, Qubilai's conquest of south China gave the qa'an's realm a unique position in the Mongol world, embracing both the empire's original heartland of Mongolia and its most far-flung overseas tributaries. Decisively opening the maritime world to the Mongol rulers, the conquest became the capstone in the institutions powering the famed cultural exchange under the Mongols.²²⁵ Through this unprecedented maritime linkage between allied regimes, Toluid rulers in Persia and China forged a unique synthesis of Middle Eastern and East Asian civilizations, one that influenced following Eurasian regimes from Qing China to Ottoman Turkey.

223 Dreyer 1982, 141–44. 224 Debreczeny 2019. 225 Allsen 2019.

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The Ilkhanate, 1260–1335

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The Ilkhanate is the designation used by modern scholars to refer to the dynastic state established by Hülegü (d. 1265), grandson of Chinggis Khan (d. 1227), in the late 1250s. That state lasted until the line of Hülegü's male descendants failed in 1335 and no alternate Chinggisid candidate managed to garner enough support to salvage the dispensation. The term "ilkhan" has been variously interpreted, not for the meaning of "khan," but for that of the prefix, "il-." A general agreement (by no means a consensus) has settled on this prefix as a mark of subordination, rendering in titulature Hülegü's status relative to the position of Great Khan held successively by his older brothers Möngke (1251–1259) and Qubilai (1260–1294). Through Qubilai's reign, the ilkhans relied on his patent to legitimize their rule.¹

"Ilkhan" appears irregularly in contemporary sources, raising doubt not only about its meaning, but also about the consistency with which the Mongols themselves used it.² It certainly appears on coins of Hülegü, unimpeachable contemporary witness to its use in the earliest years of the dynasty. However, there remains some doubt concerning the range of the term's application in those early years.³ The biographer Ibn al-Fūwaṭī attributes to the pen of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274) a letter dated to the year 1262–1263, in which the term "ilkhan" is applied to Chinggis Khan himself, who was clearly not subordinate to anyone.⁴ This may be simply an effort to incorporate the great conqueror into the emerging understanding of a uniquely Ilkhanid lineage, just as happened in the Yuan dynasty that Qubilai established in China. It does suggest that the term "ilkhan" really meant *something* to Ṭūsī

1 E.g. JT/Rawshan 1097 and 1161 for Qubilai's diplomas confirming the accessions of Abaqa and Arghun.

2 Amitai 1991; Hope 2017.

3 Amitai 1991 for an example of its possible use for members of the royal family who did not hold the throne.

4 Ibn al-Fūwaṭī 1995, 3: 319–20, no. 2629; DeWeese 2006, 18.

(or at least to Ibn al-Fūwaṭī, if the letter is fabricated or misattributed), but it does not clarify what that something might have been. Perhaps Ṭūsī took a term that he heard in reference to Hülegü and applied it to Chinggis Khan, where it was wholly inappropriate. We should question, though, whether a scholar of Ṭūsī's stature, and one so central to the formation and function of the early Ilkhanid state, might make such an error. Writing several decades later, Rashīd al-Dīn – who certainly understood the nomenclature of the royal family – tells of soldiers involved in the recent struggle between Jochid princes Noghai and Toqta submitting to the latter and recognizing him as *il Khan*.⁵ In any case, the *il khans* must have known and understood the term, even if its consistent and exclusive application to Hülegü and his royal successors cannot be traced further back than Joseph Hammer-Purgstall's landmark study by that name.⁶

The geographical extent of the Ilkhanid state is almost as ambiguous as its nomenclature. Hülegü's conquest consolidated firm command over the highland regions of northern Iran, which had already been the staging ground for more than two decades of Mongol military operations into the Caucasus and against the Seljuqs of Konya and other dynasties of eastern Anatolia. Hülegü's armies also eliminated two major military and political rivals in the larger region of Iran and Iraq: the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs of the Alborz mountains and Qūhistān and the 'Abbāsīd caliphate of Baghdad. Other local dynasties, such as the Karts of Herat, the Qutlugh Khānids of Kirman, the Ayyūbids of Mayyāfāriqīn, and the Salghurids of Shīrāz, had volunteered their submission to Mongol rule even before Hülegü's campaign.⁷ The result was a state that spread in some form from eastern Anatolia, the Caucasus, and northern Syria to the frontiers of Central Asia and Sind, but whose sovereignty was an uneven patchwork of direct rule, military occupation, and voluntary clientage.

Within this landscape, direct Mongol occupation was relatively localized: highly concentrated in the capital region of Arran and Azerbaijan, with a military presence in various surrounding areas as circumstances required. Of these, the most consistently garrisoned was the eastern front, through which Mongol armies had passed repeatedly since 1220 and which remained a zone of contestation with the Central Asian Mongol state led by the *il khans*' Chaghadaid and Ögödeid cousins. Khurasan thus hosted significant garrisons of Mongol forces, typically – but not always – led by a member of the ruling

5 JT/Rawshan, 746. 6 Hammer-Purgstall 1842–1843.

7 On these client states: Jackson 2017, ch. 9.

family. Such a posting marked a prince as a legitimate, if not the chosen, successor of the current ilkhan. From early in the Ilkhanid period, the eastern provinces became a separate fiscal jurisdiction under the command of these viceregal commanders. Other regions, notably the southern regions of Fārs and Kirman, saw very little Mongol presence at all. Appointed governors, including the occasional Mongol general or prince, oversaw the activities of local dynasties in these territories. Eventually, the Salghurids and Qutluḡ Khānids were replaced by agents thought to be more loyal to the Mongols and thus more suited to manage the significant Ilkhanid landholdings of the southern regions on behalf of their absentee royal owners.

Baghdad, which had been at the heart of the eastern Muslim world for five centuries, remained an important agricultural, artistic, and intellectual center. Politically it became a second city to the new centers in the north, hosting an administrative apparatus that was *de jure* subordinate to the those of Marāgha and Tabriz, but which functioned with significant independence from the northern court for at least forty years. As the Mongol court acculturated to the indigenous society and climate of southern Mesopotamia, the region became a zone of greater royal attention as a result of its significant cultural resources, both its highly skilled population of craftsmen and artists and a wealth of Shīʿī shrines surrounding the city.

This concentration of the Mongol presence in northern Iran and Khurasan was the result both of geopolitical necessity and of the economic realities of pastoral nomadism that underlay the Mongols' lifestyle and military. These were the border regions which needed to be defended against potential and often actual invading enemies, most notably from the Golden Horde to the north, but also at times from the Chaghadaid Khanate to the east. And the north was well placed on the very important trans-Asiatic trade routes which modern writers have termed the "Silk Roads." But there was also the matter of the suitability of the terrain. Most of the summer and winter camps that the ilkhans frequented were located in the rural areas of Arran and Azerbaijan. This transitional zone between the Caucasus and Zagros mountains on the one hand and the plains of the Tigris drainage on the other provided an ecology suitable to vertical transhumance, since winter camps in river bottoms could be situated in relative proximity to high-elevation summer pastures, where grasses matured later and the heat of the summer was less intense. The result was a shift of political gravity from ʿAbbāsīd Baghdad and Seljuq Iṣfahān toward Azerbaijan. A similar process occurred in China as a result of nomadic rule: Qubilai's capital, Dadu, built over the site

of one of the Khitan Liao's and the Jurchen Jin's earlier capitals, monumentalized the site of the modern city of Beijing as a political center.

Looking beyond the frontiers of their patchwork of sovereignty, the ilkhans were beset on all sides by states ruled by other Turko-Mongol military elites, which were more often hostile than not. As part of Chinggis Khan's original dispensation of the territories of his empire, the regions of modern south Kazakhstan and eastern Uzbekistan had gone to his second son Chaghadaï. This had been the corridor for Hülegü's army and others before him between the Mongol heartland and the Middle East, and in the decades between Chinggis Khan's death and the rise of the Ilkhanate, the Chaghadaïd household was the royal court of first recourse for disputes arising in the Mongol-governed Middle East. For most of the Ilkhanid period, the frontier between Iran and Central Asia was unstable. Periodic Chaghadaïd raids were exacerbated by the lingering presence of hostile Mongol garrisons that predated Hülegü's expedition. These troops, known as the Qara'unas or Negüderis, had originally been attached to the family of Chinggis Khan's eldest son Jochi but were displaced violently by Hülegü on his arrival in the region. From their new base in the east of Iran, they came under Chaghadaïd influence – and even leadership at one point – much to the detriment of Ilkhanid efforts to secure the eastern frontier.

The Jochids themselves presented another persistent threat to the north of the Ilkhanate. Here, too, the conflict was rooted in Chinggis Khan's dispensation, which assigned to Jochi and his descendants an ill-defined swath of territory expanding outward from Khwārazm, “as far in that direction as the hoof of Tatar horse had penetrated.”⁸ When in 1231 Amīr Chormaqan came, under the direction of Ögödei, with a new Mongol army to the Middle East, he established his headquarters on the rich pastures of Azerbaijan. From there, he conducted campaigns against local indigenous rulers, in co-ordination with the Jochid efforts to take command of the Volga region to the north.⁹ As a result of these co-ordinated efforts and of their understanding of Chinggis Khan's dispensation of territory, the Jochids considered the region of Azerbaijan as part of their own domain, and they regularly wintered south of the Caucasus range before the coming of Hülegü. The latter's presence, and the persistence of the state he established, flouted the Jochid claim over these pastures, resulting in an off-and-on conflict throughout the period of the Ilkhanate.

8 HWC, 42. 9 [May 2012a](#).

The greatest geopolitical challenge to the Ilkhanate, though, was the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt. This was a military patronage state of a unique type, with origins in the slave army of the Ayyūbids. The Mamluks had seized power from their erstwhile lords only in 1250, a few years before Hülegü's arrival in the Middle East. They retained the Ayyūbid practice of purchasing warriors from the steppes of West Asia, and it was from this corps of slave soldiers that new sultans arose, normally taking power through regicide, rather than dynastic succession.

The regular refreshing of the Mamluk army with soldiers from the steppe had two main consequences for the Ilkhanate. First, it meant that the Mamluks could field an army every bit the equal of the Mongols' in its tactics, technology, and battle-readiness: the Mamluks were the only force to regularly defeat the Mongols in battle.¹⁰ Second, it drove the Mamluks naturally into an alliance of mutual dependence with the Jochids, who now controlled the supply of Turkic slaves and relied on the revenue of their sale. Faced with this Jochid–Mamluk axis, and the separate threat of the Chaghadaid Khanate of Central Asia, the ilkhans regularly reached further afield for allies. The period of the Ilkhanate saw ongoing efforts to coordinate political and military activity both with the Great Khans of Yuan China and with the lands of Latin Christianity, who were steadily losing their remaining Crusader territories to the Mamluks.

In the end, while the Ilkhanid dynasty was not long-lived, the state served as a laboratory for many features of Iranian and Islamic society that carried into later centuries. These included models of authority based both on Mongol collegial practices and on the dynastic charisma of Chinggis Khan, as well as cultural and economic forms that exhibit hybrid origins in the nomadic and sedentary societies that made up the Ilkhanate. There was nothing like it before and has not been since, and the Ilkhanate left a lasting impact on the politics, society, culture, and economics of Southwest Asia.

The Formation of the Ilkhanate

The Ilkhanate in Persia was created, it might be said, as a by-product of an event which had occurred far to the east: the Mongol imperial *coup d'état* of 1251. Much of Persia had been under Mongol rule of a sort since Chinggis Khan's invasion of the Khwārazm-Shāh's empire in 1219–1223. While a coherent Mongol administration over the occupied parts of the Islamic

¹⁰ Amitai 2006.

Middle East and Central Asia had begun to emerge in the 1230s and 1240s, it remained peripheral to the imperial administration until the accession of Möngke. No doubt the Mongol ruling elite expected that they would extend direct command over the region at some point: after all, Mongol political theory held – at least by this time, if not necessarily during the lifetime of Chinggis Khan himself – that the world and the Mongol Empire were, by the decree of Tengri, the Eternal Blue Heaven, coterminous. So the inclusion of the lands of Islam, to say nothing of western Christendom and other areas, was no more than a matter of time. That time came after the coup of 1251.

Quite to what extent Chinggis Khan had laid down a procedure for determining the succession to the Great Khanate is unclear. His third son, Ögödei, seems to have been his choice as successor, though our sources offer different accounts of when this choice was made, and under what circumstances. In any case, Ögödei succeeded to the throne without much apparent difficulty, and reigned between 1229 and 1241. That he would in turn be succeeded by his own son Güyük seems to have been less obvious. Ögödei himself favored as his successor one of his grandsons, but his widow and regent Töregene had other intentions. It took until 1246 for her to mount a meeting of the leading voices in the empire, a *quriltai*, to acclaim her son Güyük as supreme ruler. The latter's cousin Batu, ruling over the earliest form of what would come to be called the Golden Horde, was apparently not happy with this outcome: he and Güyük had fallen out badly in the late 1230s, during the Mongol invasion of Rus' and Eastern Europe. Töregene and Güyük both worked to diminish Batu's influence, particularly over ongoing military and administrative affairs in the Islamic Middle East. This rising conflict was resolved in 1248, when Güyük died while marching westwards, possibly, though not certainly, on his way to a military confrontation with Batu.

After Güyük's death, there were certainly plausible candidates from among Ögödei's descendants to succeed to the imperial throne. It would appear that Batu was determined that this should not happen. He had no wish for the supreme khanate himself, being content to rule the Golden Horde. But he was clear that the Great Khan should be someone with whom he could get on – with whom, indeed, he might in effect share power. Another branch of Chinggis's family was available: that of his youngest son, Tolui. Tolui had left four sons: Möngke, Qubilai, Hülegü, and Arigh Böke, and Möngke had sided with Batu when the latter fell out with their cousin Güyük. The coup was duly organized: Möngke, with the support of Batu, became Great Khan, and there was a general massacre of the great

majority of the house of Ögödei, as well as those members of the house of Chaghadaï who had opposed the coup.

This successful, if bloody, maneuver set the scene for a resumption of Mongol expansion worldwide. Ögödei's reign had seen some advances, notably completing the conquest of north China and the seizure of lands of the Volga basin, providing a land base for what was to become the Golden Horde. But then internal dissension had meant that external expansion had more or less ceased by 1241. Möngke soon signaled his firm occupation of the imperial throne by decreeing that Mongol expeditions, and very major ones, should set off as soon as possible, in both an eastward and a westward direction, with a view to enlarging greatly the extent of the Mongol Empire.

Möngke's program of imperial expansion was the last to be implemented by a ruler of a united empire. Hence it was possible to send major expeditions of comparable size both into China and to the Middle East. The available Mongol forces were divided, with, we are told, two out of every ten available soldiers being allocated to each expedition. The Great Khan's brother Qubilai was to command the advance in China, as described elsewhere in this volume. Another of Möngke's brothers, Hülegü, was to head the march to the west. He was to advance from Central Asia into Persia, and his commission was to eradicate the perceived menace from the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs, otherwise known, at least in western languages, as the Assassins, and then to bring the 'Abbāsīd caliph of Baghdad to submission. The Nizārī danger was not imaginary, if we are to believe our sources. The Franciscan William of Rubruck, who traveled to Mongolia during Möngke's reign, tells us that the Grand Master had sent assassins to Mongolia from his castle of Alamūt, in the Alborz mountains of northern Persia. Their mission was the assassination of the Great Khan himself.¹¹ It would hardly be surprising that such an attempt should provoke the Great Khan to massive vengeance. Less dramatically, the Ismā'īlīs presented competition to the expanding Mongol claims to control the region's resources, primarily its tax revenues.

The caliph, meanwhile, posed a threat of a rather different proportion. The likely objection to him was his position as a potential focus of loyalty independent of, and potentially in conflict with, that of the Great Khan. The Mongols were already very familiar with Muslims and with the Islamic world. The distinct Mongol ideology of divinely sanctioned universal rule meant that the caliph needed to be reduced to the position of vassal, which the Mongols seem to have already considered him. This did not in itself imply

¹¹ William of Rubruck 1990, 222.

that the Mongols were necessarily “anti-Muslim.” What Hülegü was expected to do once he had accomplished these tasks was, and is, not so clear. We know what he in fact did: he established a Mongol kingdom for himself in Persia and Iraq based on the seeds of earlier administrative efforts, and he passed this on in due time to his heirs in the form of the Ilkhanate. But was that what his brother the Great Khan had intended? There seems good reason to suppose that Hülegü was expected, and had been instructed, to return to Mongolia once he had completed the tasks he had been set.

The main reason for believing that the truth was on these lines is that Rashīd al-Dīn says the opposite.¹² His story is that the Great Khan told his brother openly to deal with the Assassins and the caliph, and then to return home. But, says Rashīd al-Dīn, Möngke secretly told Hülegü to remain in Persia and to establish his own kingdom there, subject, of course, to the overall authority of the Great Khanate. This suggests that it was not plausible to deny that the original instructions had been to return: but Rashīd al-Dīn, as the leading official court historian of the Ilkhanate, could hardly suggest that the kingdom he served so well was founded on an act of disobedience. This ambiguity is indicative of the challenge of dealing with our main source for Ilkhanid history, as Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative of the early dynasty regularly portrays the development of the state he served as a convenient inevitability. In the 1250s, such a development was by no means certain. As with so many of Rashīd al-Dīn’s individual episodes, it is possible that the story is simply true, but we can probably never hope to know with any certainty.

Hülegü’s campaign in Persia and Iraq, like Qubilai’s in China, was no blitzkrieg. The army moved very slowly from Mongolia across Central Asia, carefully preparing routes and supplies in advance.¹³ Nor was its advance as destructive as Chinggis Khan’s invasion of the Khwārazm-Shāh’s territory had been thirty years earlier. This was no doubt in part because the expedition was not punitive, as the earlier invasion had been. Instead, this time, the Mongols were coming to stay. Whether Hülegü believed that he was marching into his own future realm or was rather securing the region for his brother’s central administration, he could have little or no interest in unnecessary destruction there. Nor was the expedition entirely unwelcome to at least some in the lands that were invaded. There is, for example, the celebrated story of the *qādī* of Qazwīn, who is said to have appealed to the Mongols to extirpate the Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs: he revealed that he was wearing armor under his clothes, for fear, or so he said, of the Assassins’ daggers.¹⁴

12 JT/Rawshan, 976–77. 13 Smith 2006. 14 JT/Rawshan, 848.

Again, this is perhaps a dramatized version of a *casus belli* that was probably based more in contests over political and economic resources than in the actual threat of assassination. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that, for many Muslims, the Ismāʿīlīs were quite beyond the pale. Whatever damage the Mongols may have wreaked, they were at least given – especially by the historian and Ilkhanid functionary Juwaynī – the credit for removing that serious menace to orthodox Islam.¹⁵ And some may well have reflected on an axiom of Islamic political thought, that tyranny, perhaps even rule by an infidel, was preferable to anarchy, and it could be that rule by Hülegü and the Mongols seemed to promise a degree of stability after decades of uncertainty and worse.

Hülegü set off from Central Asia in 1253, proceeding at no great speed toward Persia. One of his leading generals, Kitbuqa, traveled ahead to begin the assault on the Assassin castles, both those in Qūhistān, in the eastern part of the country, and those in the north, in the Alborz mountains. In some cases resistance went on for years, but for the most part the reduction of the Ismāʿīlīs was fairly straightforward by the time Hülegü arrived in 1256. That was largely because the head of the order quickly surrendered to the Mongols. He was then put to good use by requiring him to order his castles to surrender. He himself asked to be sent to the Great Khan in Mongolia, but Möngke showed no interest in receiving him. He was sent back, and was executed on the return journey.

Hülegü's army, meanwhile, moved on to Baghdad, which it besieged in 1258. The caliph, it is said under the malign influence of his Shīʿī vizier, refused to surrender. The city was taken by storm and sacked – a sack in which many Sunnī Muslims seem to have participated – and the caliph himself was executed, probably by being wrapped in a carpet and kicked or trampled to death. This was, in Mongol eyes, an honorable form of execution for royal captives, in that it did not involve the shedding of the victim's blood, though it is perhaps doubtful that the caliph appreciated the compliment. Many of the city's population were massacred. How many were killed, as is usual when considering Mongol massacres, is uncertain. The later Ilkhanid historian Hamdallāh Mustawfī put it at 800,000. Hülegü himself, in a letter he sent to King Louis IX (1226–1270) of France in 1262, claimed to have killed more than 2 million: probably an unlikely figure to which we will return.¹⁶

What was certain was that the ʿAbbāsīd caliphate was at an end, though the Mamluks of Egypt elevated a member of the family to the caliphate in

¹⁵ HWC, 725. ¹⁶ Meyvaert 1980.

Cairo, and that line – not widely recognized in the Islamic world – endured until the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in the early sixteenth century. In any case, those caliphs exercised little more than nominal authority even in the Mamluk realm. However, the Mamluk Sultanate was itself a new state, and the puppet caliphs helped lend it a sort of legitimacy. Between their coup against the Ayyūbids and the renewed Mongol invasions, the 1250s were a decade of radical political realignment across the region. The process of both of these states establishing a new political norm in the wake of such a period of upheaval was a dominant feature of political history in the Middle East for the remainder of the thirteenth century.

Hülegü marched on into Syria, where the last Ayyūbid descendant of Saladin, al-Nāsir Yūsuf of Damascus, was removed from power and later killed. The two great cities, Damascus and Aleppo, were taken, and the Mongol forces penetrated deep into Palestine. But at this point the Mongol Empire was plunged into political crisis: Hülegü heard news that his brother the Great Khan Möngke had died in 1259 while on campaign in China. Hülegü, with the bulk of his forces, withdrew to the Caucasus in order to be able to monitor the situation regarding the succession. That is at least the obvious reason for his withdrawal: in his letter to Louis IX, Hülegü alleged that he had pulled out of Syria because of the shortage of fodder and grazing. This may well have been one reason later Ilkhanid invasions of Syria never lasted for very long.

The succession to Möngke was not finally settled until 1264. Both of Hülegü's surviving brothers, Qubilai and Arigh Böke, claimed the throne, Qubilai eventually emerging victorious. Hülegü had had the good fortune to side, ultimately, with the successful candidate, who was anxious for his support. This may be at any rate part of the explanation of how Hülegü was able to set himself up as a permanent ruler in Persia, rather than having to return to Mongolia when the commission he had, at least overtly, received from Möngke had been successfully completed. Qubilai had every reason not to alienate his brother, who might, if denied his kingdom, then have gone over to Arigh Böke or at least failed to pose the threat of a second military front against him.

With Hülegü's withdrawal to the Caucasus, a small Mongol force was left in Syria, commanded by the same Kitbuqa who had begun the attack on the Ismā'īlī fortresses. In 1260, Kitbuqa's force had to meet in battle an army from Egypt, led by the Mamluk sultan Quṭuz. The decade since the Mamluk overthrow of the Ayyūbids had not seen stable government in Egypt: no one could have foreseen that the newly installed Mamluk regime would in various forms last for two and a half centuries. This may explain why Quṭuz was able

to rely on the benevolent neutrality of the Crusader states in Palestine as he marched north. The terms of the Mamluk treaty with Louis IX were still formally in place in 1260, and at that moment the Crusaders must have considered the Mongols a far more frightening adversary than the Mamluks were.¹⁷ Battle was joined in the Galilee area, at ‘Ayn Jālūt, the place where (in the Muslim, though not the Jewish, tradition) David had killed Goliath.¹⁸ Kitbuqa was defeated and killed, probably in the battle, though Rashīd al-Dīn here again shows how he reimagines early Ilkhanid history, allowing Kitbuqa to survive long enough to voice a royalist Chinggisiid disdain for the former slave who ruled Egypt.¹⁹ A further defeat later in 1260 settled the matter for the time being: Syria was to be part of the Mamluk Empire, not the Mongol Empire, and if Hülegü had entertained the notion of marching on into Egypt and North Africa, then that was never to be realized. In retrospect, the Mongol Empire had extended as far west as it was to go, though it is doubtful if anyone could have been certain of that at the time.

Creating a Dynastic State

That ‘Ayn Jālūt proved the high-water mark of Mongol expansion in the west was also a consequence of what has been termed “the dissolution of the Mongol Empire.”²⁰ Hülegü’s expedition was the last to be mounted by a united empire, with military contingents from all its parts. Nothing of that sort was possible after 1260. This was in part because of the contested nature of the succession to the Great Khanate after the death of Möngke in 1259. The empire now devolved into what, by something of an oversimplification, may be termed four separate khanates: the Great Khanate in China and Mongolia, the Chaghadaid Khanate in Central Asia, the Golden Horde in the Pontic steppes, and the Ilkhanate. Only the ilkhans recognized Qubilai’s suzerainty: he was Hülegü’s elder brother, after all, and inherited the position of Möngke, who had dispatched the westward campaign. The rulers of the Golden Horde did not do the same, nor did the Chaghadaids. The situation in Central Asia was made even more complex by the establishment, within what had been Chaghadaid territory, of a khanate headed by Qaidu, a member of the displaced house of Ögödei and belligerent adversary of Qubilai.²¹ Hence, and for the foreseeable future, the newly established Ilkhanate had to deal with potential, and often actual, adversaries on both

17 Jackson 1980.

20 Jackson 1978.

18 Thorau 1985.

21 Biran 1997.

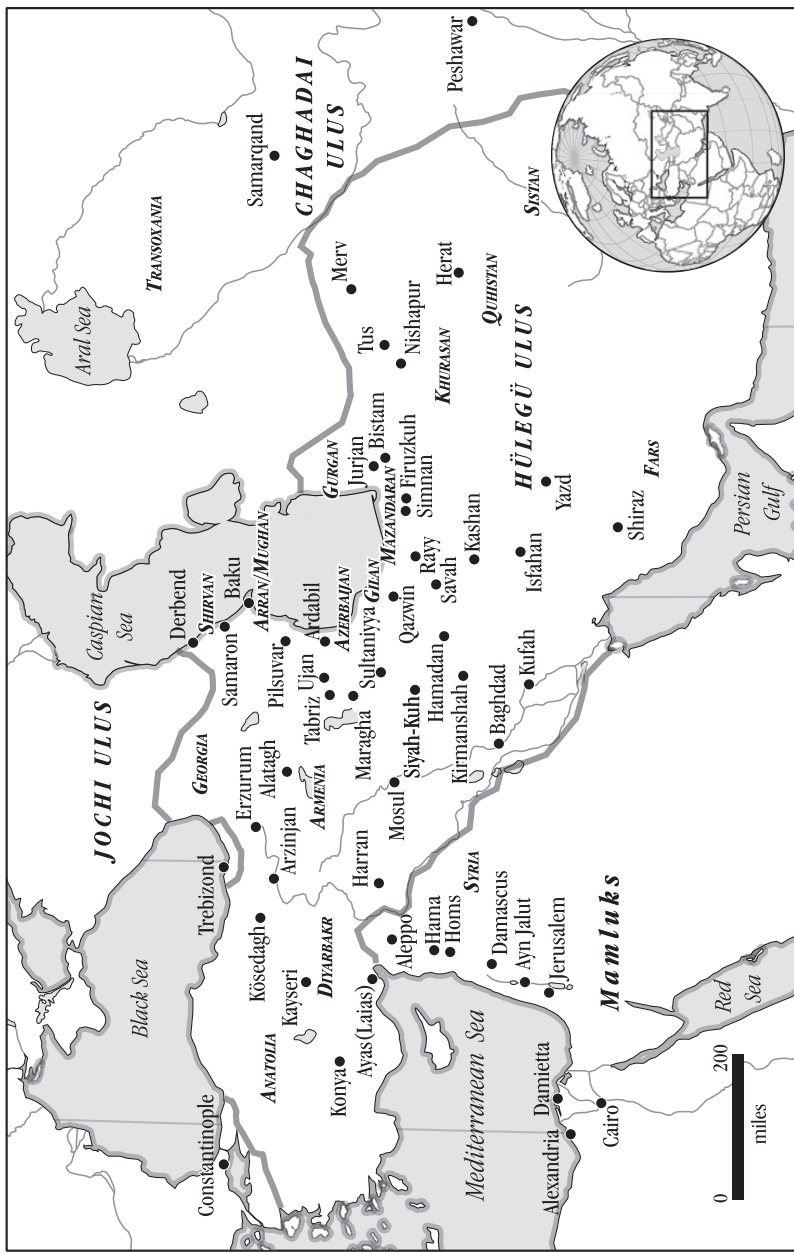
19 JT/Rawshan, 1030–33; Amitai 2013a, 74–79.

its eastern and northern borders, and with the hostility of the Mamluk regime in Egypt and Syria.

Of the other khanates, the most serious danger was presented by the Golden Horde. Batu, who had supported Möngke's coup in 1251, died in 1255. After two ephemeral reigns, he was followed by his brother Berke (r. 1257–1267). Berke and his successors took up the claim that the rich grazing lands of the Caucasus and Azerbaijan, which now formed an immensely valuable part of Ilkhanid territory, were rightfully part of the Golden Horde. Warfare between the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate broke out in 1261 or 1262, and thereafter continued intermittently. In addition, Berke had converted to Sunnī Islam. It was consequently unlikely that he would view with favor the fate meted out by Hülegü to the 'Abbāsīd caliph, the titular head of his new faith. There was also the economic complication of Mamluk dependence on the reliable availability of slave soldiers, leading to their durable alliance with the Golden Horde. From the early 1260s, the western end of the Mongol Empire saw an unprecedented political arrangement: an enduring alliance between a Mongol khanate, the Golden Horde, and a non-Mongol state, that of the Mamluks, against another Mongol realm, the Ilkhanate. In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Mongol expansion to the west ground to a permanent halt, or, as will be described, that the ilkhans looked further west, to Latin Christian allies, to counter this axis.

To cement his control over the favorable pastures south of the Caucasus in the face of Batu's claims, Hülegü built a capital at Marāgha, to the east of Lake Urmia. The new capital's location allowed the ilkhans to continue herding their flocks of sheep, goats, and horses in proximity to urban centers of administration and patronage. At Marāgha he commissioned the first great building project of the Ilkhanate: an astronomical observatory under the direction of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274). Ṭūsī, who had joined Hülegü from the entourage of the last Ismā'īlī imam, assembled a team of scientists from across the Ilkhanid realm and from as far away from China in the task of producing an unprecedentedly accurate set of astronomical tables.

The direct investment of Hülegü and his successors in northwest Iran was not replicated in the south. That region had not been immediately affected by Chinggis Khan's earlier invasion, nor did Hülegü show any desire to rule those parts of the country directly. This allowed comparatively minor local rulers as the Salghurids and Shabānkāra in Fārs and the Qutluḡ Khānids or Qara Khitai in Kirman to, at least for the time being, remain in place, as long as they submitted to the Mongols and contributed the required amounts of tax and tribute – as was also required from the rulers of Armenia, Georgia, and Seljuq Anatolia.



Map 3.1 The Hülegü Ulus (Ilkhanate) (Joe LeMonnier, <https://mapartist.com/>)

This has led some scholars into supposing that large parts of Persia and its rulers genuinely welcomed the coming of the Mongols and the imposition of their rule. It is probably more likely that local rulers – sometimes the mothers of the nominal rulers – who could see that the Mongols were not interested in engaging in unnecessary military conquests were adept at making the best of a situation which they could not hope to alter. Often these local families were tied to the Ilkhanid court through marriage. This was a political and social factor of considerable importance, because the status of women in Mongol society could be very high. Mongol women of the royal house often had their own establishments, properties, retainers, and soldiers, and could exercise much influence at court and elsewhere in the Ilkhanate.²² On the other hand, marriage ties into the Chinggisid family could be one step toward more direct domination: such was the experience of Abish Khatun, the last ruler of the Salghurid dynasty of Fārs, who was married to Hülegü's son Möngke Temür in 1264 and died in captivity in Tabriz in 1286.

In addition to Fārs, Kirman and Yazd came under some kind of direct Mongol rule later in the Ilkhanate because of changes in the politics of the kingdom. But even then, there is no evidence that any of the ilkhans ever actually went to the south of Iran, and the Mongols involved themselves in the south as little as was possible: it was altogether too hot and dry to suit their preferred lifestyle. It is worth noting that the absence of a heavy Mongol hand may well have contributed to a remarkable degree of cultural efflorescence in the region, as will be mentioned.

Hülegü died in 1265. With whatever qualifications and however accidental what happened may in part have been, his achievement was considerable. He was able to bequeath to his successors a reasonably stable kingdom in Iran and Iraq, together with at least overlordship in much of Anatolia and the Caucasus, Afghanistan, and the marches of Central Asia. That kingdom endured for a further seventy years. Hülegü is said to have favored Buddhism, though as his funeral and interment on an island in Lake Urmia was accompanied by human sacrifices – the only Ilkhanid funeral to do so – it may be that his devotion did not run very deep.²³ Eastern Christian sources optimistically portray Hülegü as a Christian by association with his most famous wife Doqуз Khatun and comparison to Constantine and Helena, though such stories are hard to square with his reign, let alone his funeral.²⁴

Hülegü's chosen successor was his son Abaqa, though the latter's pedigree did not establish him naturally in that position. Male leaders in the Chinggisid

22 De Nicola 2017; Broadbridge 2018. 23 Waṣṣāf 1853, 52. 24 Jackson 2017, 313.

house maintained multiple wives and concubines and made distinctions between a cadre of (typically three or four) senior wives and other junior ones. For senior wives, it was common practice to marry their offspring back into their families of origin. This cemented familial bonds between the Chinggisids and a series of prominent nonroyal families without violating the principals of exogamy that extended marriage taboos only to the descendants of one's paternal ancestors.

Hülegü had three senior wives, all of whom married their own nieces to their eldest sons.²⁵ Two of these, Güyük of the Oirat and Qutui of the Qonggirat, had grown sons in 1253, but these families remained in Mongolia while Hülegü campaigned to Southwest Asia. This further suggests that Hülegü embarked with the intention of returning to the steppe after completing his campaign. Indeed, Hülegü had put Jumqur, son of Güyük, in charge of his household in his absence, giving the impression that he was Hülegü's initial heir apparent. Only one of Hülegü's senior wives, Öljei of the Oirat, accompanied her husband, who married a new caretaker senior wife, the Nestorian Christian Doquz of the Kereit, after crossing the Oxus river into eastern Iran. It was a levirate marriage: Doquz was Tolui's widow, and she bore Hülegü no children. Öljei had one sickly son, Tekshin, who died at some point after coming to Iran. Her second son, Möngke Temür, was born in Iran in 1256.

Abaqa was born of a junior wife, Yisünjin of the Suldus, and he in turn married women from various tribes, none of them among his maternal Suldus relatives. His family, therefore, did not fit the typical pattern of political marriages for senior sons. However, he was one of just two mature sons who had campaigned with Hülegü, the other being his half-brother Yoshmut, son of an even more junior concubine. Toward the end of his life, Hülegü delegated responsibility over regions of his realm to various individuals, including local grandees and Mongol military leaders. Of these, Yoshmut was put in charge of the capital regions of Arran and Azerbaijan, while Abaqa was deputized over Iraq, as well as the eastern regions of Khurasan and Māzandarān. At the time of Hülegü's death, Yoshmut and Abaqa were the only grown and experienced sons of Hülegü in Southwest Asia. The Armenian writer Vardan Arewelts'i, who had visited Hülegü a year before the latter's death, reports that Doquz contacted him after her husband's death to ask about the propriety of enthroning Abaqa according to Hülegü's wish.²⁶ It seems that the first ilkhan's choice of his own successor

25 Brack 2016, 43–45; Broadbridge 2018, 261–69. 26 Thomsen 1989, 222.

was driven more by the practical necessity of leaving his nascent state in the hands of an heir who was both capable and present, rather than by strictly observing traditional dynamics of succession within the Chinggisid family. We also hear from Arewelts'i that Doquz referred to Abaqa as Hülegü's senior son. In terms of Chinggisid tradition, this claim could not be sustained: sons of senior wives were at that time en route from Mongolia, while the young prince Möngke Temür was already present, if only nine years old.

Hülegü's senior wife Güyük had died in her husband's absence, but Qutui was, at the time of Hülegü's death, traveling from Mongolia with her husband's main camp and his sons by his senior wives. Güyük's son Jumqur died during the journey, while Tegüder arrived with his mother Qutui after Abaqa had already taken the throne. Once in power, Abaqa reassigned his half-brother Yoshmut to the Caucasus border regions facing the antagonistic Golden Horde, while Yoshmut's brother Tübshin was deployed to the eastern border regions facing the lands of the Chaghadaids.

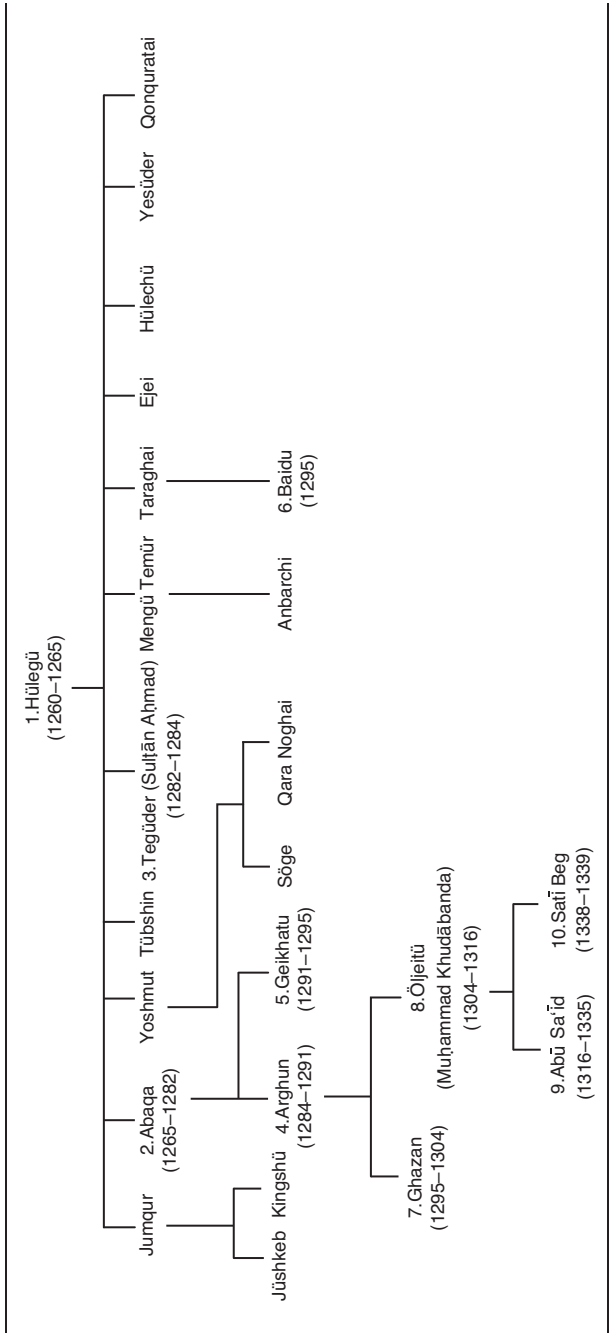
Doquz's reference to Abaqa as the senior son in her correspondence with Arewelts'i can be read either as an appeal to practicality or as the beginning of a campaign that carried through subsequent generations to legitimize Abaqa and his descendants. This required transitioning the house of Hülegü away from the collegial pattern of Chinggisid succession, which was based on a collective assessment of familial allegiances and the seniority of sons by some wives over those of others, and toward a more determined lineal succession in which the personal preference of the ruler was taken as a paramount criterion. By the first years of the fourteenth century, when Rashīd al-Dīn wrote his dynastic history of the ilkhans, it remained important to legitimize the junior line that ran through Abaqa and Arghun to Rashīd al-Dīn's patron Ghazan Khan (1295–1304) (see [Table 3.1](#)). Rashīd al-Dīn does this by recasting Ilkhanid legitimacy as an Islamic rather than a Mongol concern.²⁷

Continuity and Change under Abaqa

Much of Abaqa's reign stands in continuity with the exercise of state established under his father. This is perhaps best symbolized by his retention as chief minister of the Persian bureaucrat Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī and the latter's brother, the celebrated historian 'Atā' Malīk, as governor of Baghdad. These brothers were sons of Bahā' al-Dīn Juwaynī, scions of a family with a long history of service under the Khwārazm-Shāhs. Over nearly two decades, the

²⁷ [Brack 2016](#), 55–60.

Table 3.1 Rulers of the Hūlegü Ulus



Juwaynī brothers built an administrative corps for the young state that was more beholden to Perso-Islamic traditions than to the inner Asian and Chinese practices that had provided the earliest administrative functions of the Mongol Empire.²⁸ This did not come without opposition, and accusations of corruption swirled particularly around ‘Atā’ Malīk. As the result of these accusations, he was compelled, after 1265, to govern alongside an appointed Mongol overseer. It is unclear whether this was a conscious borrowing from Qubilai Qa’an’s use of dual appointments in China or an independent development, born from the distrust felt by Mongol rulers in the northern capitals toward the affairs in the southern city.

In the north, Hülegü’s scientific and political center at Marāgha did not long remain the Ilkhanid capital. Abaqa moved the seat of administration to Tabriz, and his grandson Öljeitü (1304–1316) later created the purpose-built capital city of Sulṭāniyya. All of these were located in the northern territories that so suited the Mongol nomadic lifestyle. Beginning from the reign of Ghazan (1295–1304), the region around Baghdad became a royal destination for the winter season. This corresponded both with an increased reverence on the part of the ilkhan for Shī‘ī shrines south of Baghdad and with Ghazan’s extension of greater direct control over the southern city. Baghdad had enjoyed some degree of *de facto* independence for the first half of the dynasty under the leadership of appointed administrators working in the tradition of the Juwaynī brothers. Ghazan’s choice to winter around Baghdad – a choice that his brother and successor Öljeitü continued to make – marks a departure from the traditional vertical transhumance of the early Ilkhanid rulers. It can perhaps be understood as a sign that latter members of the dynasty were increasingly comfortable with sedentary, urban life, even in areas such as southern Mesopotamia where large-scale pastoralism was impractical. This would certainly accord with the practice of paying Mongol soldiers with arable land that appears in Ghazan’s administrative reforms (discussed below).

The continued nomadism of the early ilkhans does not mean that their summer pastures were devoid of building. Öljeitü’s capital at Sulṭāniyya was built over an earlier collection of buildings constructed by his father Arghun (r. 1284–1291). The same can be said of Ghazan’s urban project on the edge of Tabriz, which also replaced earlier foundations by Arghun, in that case a complex of buildings straddled by two palaces. The only such summer palace construction of the early Ilkhanate that has survived in any form is

28 Aubin 1995, 20–36.

Abaqa's palace on the meadows of Sughurluq. It was built on a site known as Takht-i Sulaymān, over the ruins of a Sassanian fire temple. Under Abaqa, the primary orientation of the site was changed to accord with the Mongol custom of facing their yurts to the south, and a major palace was built with archways overlooking the natural spring that dominates the site.

Enough of the molded and glazed tilework that decorated Abaqa's palace has survived to recognize in it an early effort at rapprochement between the new Mongol military elite and their Perso-Islamic subjects.²⁹ Pairs of phoenix and dragons betray the ilkhans' cultural ties to East Asia, and particularly to the court of Abaqa's uncle, Qubilai. At the same time, images of kings in various activities drew the Mongols visually into the ranks of Iranian and Islamic sovereigns. Scenes of anonymous kings hunting mirrored the activities of Abaqa and his family while encamped in these high pastures, while others depicting the legendary Feridun, the historical Bahram Gur, and quite possibly the more recent Maḥmūd of Ghazna infused Abaqa's palace with the memory of great kings of the Iranian world.³⁰

In addition, the tilework of Takht-i Sulaymān includes numerous citations from the heroic epic *Shāhnāma* of Abū'l-Qāsim Firdawsī (d. 1020). The fragments that survive are not taken from the great dramatic moments of that epic; they are instead a selection of passages from the introductions preceding some of its more memorable portions.³¹ This would have cued the literate Persianate scholar-bureaucrats attendant on the court to remember and recite the subsequent episodes, which they would have memorized as part of their education. In doing so, they were invited to associate their new Mongol lords with indigenous historical and literary traditions, creating a way for the local population to understand this foreign elite.

Not all new construction under Abaqa signaled acculturation. It was probably during this period that a major rock-cut precinct was begun south-east of the future site of Sulṭāniyya. This precinct, known as Viar, demonstrates significant debt to Chinese and Buddhist decorative motifs, and looks to no precedent in Islamic architecture.³² Its exact use is unknown, and in fact the site was abandoned before the precinct was completed, likely because geologic shifting resulted in significant damage to it.

During his seventeen years on the Ilkhanid throne, Abaqa dispatched no fewer than seven embassies to Latin Christian leaders.³³ This was part of

²⁹ Melikian-Chirvani 1997; Masuya 2002. ³⁰ Masuya 2019. ³¹ Melikian-Chirvani 1997.

³² Blair 2013, 139–46.

³³ The indispensable exposition of Mongol diplomatic contact with Western Europe, including bibliography of primary sources, is Jackson 2018, 203–11.

a continued pattern of Ilkhanid attempts to establish a military alliance against the Mamluks of Egypt. Diplomatic contact between Mongols and the Latin west pre-dated the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate, as both Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254) and King Louis IX had sounded out the threat and possible opportunities posed by the sudden appearance of the Mongols in Eastern Europe in 1240.³⁴

After the defeat at 'Ayn Jalūt, Hülegü had initiated contact with the Latin west for joint action against the Mamluks. Hülegü's 1262 letter to Louis IX paints an expansive portrait of Ilkhanid power, exaggerating the scope of the slaughter at Baghdad and downplaying the internecine struggles that had prompted Hülegü's withdrawal from Syria and enabled Kitbuqa's defeat. It is unclear whether Louis received the letter: the embassy was intercepted in Sicily by King Manfred (r. 1258–1266), who was then allied with the Mamluks. A second letter may have simultaneously been sent for Pope Urban IV (1261–1264). Such a letter does not survive, but Urban wrote a response to a message delivered by a Hungarian member of the delegation named John, who arrived in Rome with claims to represent Hülegü but no supporting documentation.

The ill-fated and largely ineffectual embassy of 1262 set the tone for the next half-century of contacts. Shortly after his accession, Abaqa again contacted both the Pope – now Clement IV (1265–1268) – and James I of Aragon (1213–1276). Clement's surviving response to an envoy of 1266–1267, less than two years after both he and Abaqa had risen to their respective positions, indicates already that this was not his first exchange with the ilkhan. When no immediate western aid came to Abaqa's request, he again wrote to Clement in 1268. These promises of Mongol aid against Mamluk Egypt helped spur the mobilization for the Ninth Crusade, in which James's fleet foundered and the French contingent led by Louis was redirected to Tunis. A new embassy from Abaqa to Tunis arrived only after Louis's death and the decision by his brother and successor Charles of Anjou (r. 1270–1285) to return to France. Of the leaders of the Ninth Crusade, only the English lord Edward Longshanks arrived in Outremer. While Abaqa implored Edward to co-ordinate efforts with his own general Samaghar, the resulting campaign was small and ineffective, and ended with Edward's departure from Palestine in 1272.

Abaqa continued to contact western Christian leaders with renewed declarations of interest in joint military action. Embassies to Pope Gregory

³⁴ Jackson 2018, 92–97.

x (1271–1276) in 1274 and to Charles of Anjou in 1276 have left some documentary trace, but made no real impact on the history of either Ilkhanid or Crusader wars against the Mamluks. Abaqa's final effort in 1280–1281 to enlist once more the aid of Edward (now king of England, the first of his name, r. 1272–1307), as well as that of the Latin lords of Tripoli and Cyprus, culminated in an indecisive battle against the Mamluks at Hims on October 30, 1281.

Further Ilkhanid attempts to inspire Latin Christian military involvement against Egypt continued to be ineffectual. Those of Abaqa's son, Arghun, were the most colorful, involving at different times the Syriac ʿĪsā Kelemechi as an envoy from Great Khan Qubilai and the Önggüt Turk monk Rabban Sauma as a representative of Arghun. Both men were members of the Church of the East, commonly called Nestorian. The only return on Arghun's four embassies to the west was a contingent of 800 Genoese shipbuilders, who worked to build a new fleet at Baghdad meant to harass Mamluk shipping on the Red Sea. Even this initiative floundered, as a Genoese alliance with Egypt undercut the project and the brigade of shipbuilders self-destructed in bloody factional fighting. Geikhatu (r. 1291–1294) and Ghazan made further efforts to contact the Latin west, but after the fall of Acre in 1291 and with the steady Islamization of the Mongol elite of the Ilkhanate, prospects for these initiatives could only dim. Ghazan's letters in particular voice growing frustration at tepid western responses, and they return to the chauvinist aggression of Mongol claims to universal sovereignty that Hülegü had set aside in his first letter in 1262 in the hope of a fruitful alliance.

A Mamluk invasion of Anatolia in 1277 resulted in the defeat of Mongol forces there, but Abaqa soon intervened and compelled the Mamluk sultan Baybars to withdraw. At other times, Abaqa was regularly distracted from his war against the Mamluks by affairs on the eastern and southern edges of his state. Möngke's redistribution of Central Asian territories among the surviving princes of the Chaghadaid and Ögödeid families diluted their power, creating a scramble for influence that was polarized by the civil war between the brothers Qubilai and Arigh Böke in the early 1260s. From this maelstrom, the Ögödeid Qaidu and the Chaghadaid Baraq emerged pre-eminent. In 1270, they agreed to a joint invasion of Ilkhanid territory, but when Qaidu held his troops in Central Asia, Abaqa was easily able to defeat Baraq's force at the Battle of Herat. Abaqa followed this victory up with a march into Chaghadaid territory, ultimately sacking the city of Bukhara. Later, the Qara'unas launched periodic raids into the eastern and southern reaches of the

Ilkhanate, requiring periodic Ilkhanid military response but never posing a threat to the core capital region of the northwest.

A Troubled Time: 1282–1295

Abaqa died in 1282, apparently, if we are to believe Rashīd al-Dīn, of delirium tremens after a drinking bout in his tent. The next fifteen years were the most turbulent of the Ilkhanate, in which five of Hülegü's descendants, representing three different lines of descent, took the throne, each of them backed by a faction comprising both Mongol military elites and Perso-Islamic scholar-bureaucrats.³⁵ The struggles of this period demonstrate a shift away from the practice of lateral succession in favor of a lineal dynastic tradition. This shift was necessary to legitimize Ghazan, who emerged from this turbulent period as ilkhān, and was normalized as such in a series of chronicles written for him.

In 1282, Abaqa's son Arghun was stationed as viceroy in Khurasan. On his father's death, some of the Mongol commanders in his entourage supported his claim to the throne. Meanwhile, other commanders attached to Möngke Temür backed their own patron, who, though younger than his half-brother Abaqa, was arguably the senior prince, given the status of his mother. The majority of the Mongol military elite in the Ilkhanate, however, supported the accession of Tegüder, the eldest living son of Hülegü by a senior wife, who had been in transit west when his father had died and Abaqa had been crowned.³⁶

Tegüder was the first Muslim ilkhān. He had converted before his rise to the throne and had assumed the Arabic name Aḥmad. It has sometimes been suggested that Tegüder's conversion to Islam alienated the influential Mongols of the Ilkhanate, and that this meant that he was unable to retain sufficient support to stay in power. This is perhaps unlikely in itself. He was Muslim already in 1282, and so the *amīrs* who supported him knew what they were getting. By comparison, Berke of the Golden Horde had become a Muslim some years previously, without incurring domestic problems, and his immediate successors did not follow his example. The Mongols were not "anti-Muslim" in a religious (as against a political) sense. If Tegüder had simply wished, in his personal capacity, to be converted, this would not necessarily have provoked any kind of crisis. And it was only thirteen years later that the Ilkhān Ghazan became a Muslim, by which time

³⁵ Aubin 1995, 37–51. ³⁶ Brack 2016, 49–50.

it seems that the trend toward conversion among the Mongols of the Ilkhanate was distinctly strong.³⁷

Nevertheless, Aḥmad Tegüder's choice of Islam has served him rather poorly in the historical record, though it must be remembered that most of that record was written on behalf of Ghazan and Öljeitü, members of a different branch of the family that came to power at Tegüder's expense. Since the ideological program of those later ilkhans was deeply rooted in their identity as Muslims, the fact of having been preceded in that religion by a member of a different line of the family must have been quite inconvenient. As a result, the critique of Aḥmad Tegüder written by Muslim authors under Ghazan and Öljeitü focuses on the manner in which he practiced his new faith, rather than his conversion itself. Charismatic Sufi teachers were a prominent feature of the religious landscape of Iran in the thirteenth century, but Aḥmad appears in the sources as overly reliant on their quasi-orthodox spiritual guidance, at the expense of the maintenance of the state and its apparatus of justice. As a result, he is remembered as being entirely unfit to rule.

Further, Aḥmad Tegüder was not content to treat his conversion as a simple matter of individual belief and practice. He considered that it should also have implications for his khanate's foreign policy: in particular, that an attempt should be made to secure peace with the Mamluks of Egypt and Syria. This demarche was not well received by the Mongol *amīrs*, who were invested in the ongoing war. Whether or not they still considered Syria a potentially permanent part of Ilkhanid territory, they did not wish to be denied the opportunity to invade and plunder it from time to time.

Tegüder sent two embassies to Cairo, in the hope of negotiating an end to hostilities. Neither was successful: the Mamluk sultan Qalāwūn viewed Tegüder's overtures with deep suspicion. This was well warranted, as Tegüder's letters to the Mamluk sultan draw heavily on Mongol ideologies of universal rule and call on Qalāwūn to recognize the ilkhan's suzerainty.³⁸ For the Mongols of the Ilkhanate, who had been repeatedly thwarted by an army of slaves, such a submission would restore the natural social and political hierarchy of the inner Asian steppe, in which the experience of slavery and separation from one's kin group vacated any possible claim to political authority.³⁹ Qalāwūn naturally rejected this demand, and Mamluk diplomatic correspondence in subsequent years continued to reject the legitimacy of Mongol authority, even after Ghazan's conversion.

37 Pfeiffer 2006. 38 Allouche 1990; Broadbridge 2008, 38–44. 39 Halperin 2000.

Perhaps the greatest source of Aḥmad Tegüder's failing as an ilkhan was that he was more merciful than many in his family: when he had defeated his nephew Arghun and his supporters, he had not had them executed. A rising against him was therefore still possible, with the same alternative candidate for the throne as before. This duly occurred, and Arghun became ilkhan, reigning from 1284 to 1291. He was evidently not shamed or indeed impressed by his uncle's earlier generosity: he had Aḥmad Tegüder executed.

Nor did Arghun follow Aḥmad Tegüder's example in becoming a Muslim. He seems in fact to have been fairly securely attached to Buddhism, and he also appears to have treated Christians with a considerable degree of benevolence. He also resumed the by now traditional Ilkhanid policy of hostility to the Mamluks, as well as the efforts to enlist the support of the Christian rulers in Western Europe against the common Mamluk enemy. It was in this context that the monk Rabban Sauma was sent to Europe to negotiate on Arghun's behalf. His embassy produced little in terms of a political or military alliance, but it did leave behind one of the most remarkable written works to survive from the Mongol period: Rabban Sauma's travel diary.⁴⁰

Arghun's reign saw the most trenchant factionalism within the civil administration of the Ilkhanate. The antipathy that he – and perhaps more importantly a significant number of his *amīrs* – felt toward Islam led to the quick death of both Juwaynī brothers: Shams al-Dīn by way of execution and the historian 'Ala' al-Dīn apparently by way of apopleptic fit on receiving news of Arghun's accession. In their place, Arghun elevated a Mongol of the Jalayir tribe, Amīr Buqa. On the one hand, Buqa's rise to the vizierate – and his appointment of his own brother Aruq to govern the second administration at Baghdad – is sufficient to warn us against assuming that the Mongols of the Ilkhanate, rough warriors from the steppes to the east, simply relied on Persian bureaucrats like the Juwaynīs and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, to run the administration of their realm for them. The major role that continued to be exercised by Mongols alongside Persian officials is demonstrated by the fact that, throughout the period of Ilkhanid rule and indeed for long after, the Mongol custom of maintaining a household guard, or *kesḡig*, continued to function.⁴¹ This institution went back at least to Chinggis Khan himself. We hear of the *kesḡig*, initially the ruler's bodyguard corps, in the account, in the *Secret History of the Mongols*, of the *quriltai* of 1206. Subsequently the *kesḡig* became the center of Mongol administration: high officials and generals were drawn from it, and it was also used as a convenient way of keeping a close eye

⁴⁰ Rabban Sauma 2013. ⁴¹ Melville 2006.

on hostages (often the sons of subject rulers). Positions in the *keshig* were essentially hereditary, and membership of it was a very significant privilege and obligation. Hence, in the Ilkhanate, the *keshig* constituted a kind of parallel administration to the mainly Persian bureaucracy (with some overlap of personnel: Rashīd al-Dīn mentions that he had been in the same *keshig* as Amīr Qutluḡ Shāh). What this tells us is that the government of Mongol Persia remained, to a very marked degree, Mongol in character. Indeed, there is good reason to think that acculturation between Persians and Mongols was a two-way process, and that much of Ilkhanid politics is best understood as involving struggles between factions which included both Mongols and Persian bureaucrats.⁴²

On the other hand, by 1289, Buqa and Aruq had lost the ilkhān's favor, and were executed for disloyalty and mismanagement. They were replaced in turn by Sa'd al-Dawla, a Jew who had originally come to the attention of the ilkhān for having increased the tax revenues from Baghdad. This may not have made him a popular figure in that city, since, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, his methods of financial extraction included the bastinado and torture. He remained in charge from 1289 until, during Arghun's terminal illness in 1291, he was overthrown and killed. From the point of view of those at court, the main objection to his administration may well have been that he was all too efficient, a trait that was facilitated by his top-to-bottom restaffing of the administration from members of his own family and community.

Sa'd al-Dawla was certainly, so far as the ilkhān was concerned, a great improvement on Buqa. The fact that he was a Jew was also something unlikely to be viewed favorably by Muslims or Christians: and the efficiency and insularity of his administration had the effect of reducing the incomes and the influence of many of the leading Mongols. There is no doubt that he was highly competent: all the sources admit this, hostile to him though they universally are. So he had few, if any, friends, apart from the ilkhān and his own appointees. He is alleged to have behaved with great arrogance, which, if true, is unlikely to have helped his public-relations' profile. Like all Mongol chief ministers, he was entirely dependent on the favor and support of the ruler. He may not have lost that, but it was of no use to him when his master was dying. Sa'd al-Dawla's death precipitated anti-Jewish pogroms in both Tabriz, the capital, and Baghdad, the scene of his earlier successes. As for Arghun, unlike some members of his house he was not killed by overindulgence in alcohol. He listened all too credulously, we are told, to an Indian

42 Aubin 1995.

yogi who put him on a course of medicine, which he alleged to be the elixir of life: sulfur and quicksilver. It was in fact poisonous and led to his death.⁴³

Arghun's successor was his brother Geikhatu (r. 1291–1295). Under his rule, the financial stability of the state again declined sharply. Once more, this was probably not due to a lack of competence on the part of Geikhatu's principal minister, Ṣadr al-Dīn Zanjānī. As with Sa'd al-Dawla, he seems to have been efficient and effective, though he is much maligned in our main sources, which were written either by his replacement, Rashīd al-Dīn, or by the latter's clients. Factors beyond Ṣadr al-Dīn's control accentuated the state's problems under Geikhatu: a serious cattle plague made its own contribution to reducing the Ilkhanate to bankruptcy, and the ilkhan himself was far too taken with the pleasures of his position to bother with its responsibilities. The latter depiction should perhaps be taken with some salt for the same reason as that of Tegüder, namely the allegiance of the authors who wrote about Geikhatu on behalf of his nephews Ghazan and Öljeitü. It does, however, find validation in the Syriac chronicle of Bar Hebraeus, produced apart from the politics of court.

In 1294, Ṣadr al-Dīn, in consultation with the Dörben Mongol Bolad Chingsang, came up with what must have seemed a strikingly imaginative solution to the government's difficulties. Paper currency was well known in China; it was accepted by the people, and for the most part it worked satisfactorily. Why should it not work equally well in Persia? The theory was that, in these circumstances, the use of metal currency would be illegal, and the most appalling penalties would result from defiance of this rule. Consequently, all precious metal, particularly gold and silver, would fall into the hands of the government, whose financial problems would thus be solved at a stroke. The Chinese model for the bills was adhered to closely. The banknotes were given a Chinese name, *chao*, and they had words in Chinese printed on them. Presumably in an attempt to make them locally acceptable to the people of the Ilkhanate, they also had the Muslim confession of faith printed on both sides.⁴⁴

The new currency was, however, a fiscal disaster. While the design of the bills followed their Chinese model, the monetary policy behind them did not: unlike in China, Ṣadr al-Dīn's bills were not backed by a state silver reserve. In addition, they proved far too much of an innovation to be acceptable to the population of the region. In a rare medieval example of the potential power of public opinion, all commerce stopped dead, as almost no one was prepared

43 *JT*/Rawshan, 1179–80. 44 Jahn 1970.

to conduct business using the paper currency, which had to be withdrawn. Significantly, Geikhatu's nephew (and Arghun's son and the future ilkhān) Ghazan, who was governor of Khurasan and Māzandarān at the time, is portrayed by Rashīd al-Dīn to have refused any truck with the paper currency. This gesture – or its invention, given the by now familiar caveat that Rashīd al-Dīn took great measures to depict Ghazan in every possible positive light – no doubt enhanced the prince's prestige by showing his resolve to resist a fiscal policy initiative that ultimately failed.

Şadr al-Dīn Zanjānī achieved the remarkable and unusual feat of surviving the disastrous failure of his financial policy, at least for a time. He returned to office twice in the years after Geikhatu's death, until 1298, when Ghazan, by then three years into his reign, had him executed on a charge of embezzlement.⁴⁵ Geikhatu did not last as long. His cousin Baidu, whom he had gravely insulted, headed a revolt against him, backed by a combination of Mongol military leaders and Persian administrative staff. This coup was the easier to achieve in that, like Aḥmad Tegüder before him, Geikhatu had shown hazardous clemency to his enemies. He was overthrown and killed in early 1295.

Ghazan and the High Ilkhanate

Baidu endured as ilkhān for an even shorter period than his predecessor; shorter, in fact, than any ilkhān until the dynasty's collapse forty years later. Indeed, Rashīd al-Dīn does not even afford Baidu his own chapter in his chronicle: Baidu's reign is instead folded into the narrative of the rise of his successor, Rashīd al-Dīn's patron Ghazan Khan (1295–1304). Rashīd al-Dīn had his work cut out for him in presenting Ghazan as a legitimate sovereign, and the prince's rebellion against his great-uncle was no doubt part of the problem. He was the third in his lineage to come to power at the expense of more senior members of the family: Abaqa was a junior son of Hülegü, while Arghun had risen in revolt against his uncle Aḥmad Tegüder. The image of Baidu as a usurper whose place in history was only as the foil to Ghazan's subsequent rise worked well enough for Rashīd al-Dīn, and has served the historical record ever since.

At the time of his rebellion, Ghazan had an established power base in Khurasan, where his father had appointed him governor. There, he was taken

45 Şadr al-Dīn's second, brief investment as vizier is preserved only in an alternative version of Rashīd al-Dīn's history: [Kamola 2019](#), 40, 56 n. 38.

up with confronting the periodic rebellion of Nawrūz, the son of the Oirat Amīr Arghun Aqa, who had enjoyed a long career as the Mongol governor of the Middle East before Hülegü's arrival. Nawrūz had gone into revolt against the central government at the end of Arghun's reign, worried about reprisals for his association with the disgraced Jalayir administrator brothers Buqa and Aruq. He was a convert to Islam: even his name indicates a level of acculturation far ahead of many of his Mongol contemporaries. Nawrūz is a Persian name, though not, admittedly, one with especially Muslim associations. His father's long period of service in the region probably helps to explain the head start that Nawrūz had in adopting the indigenous culture, including the majority religion.⁴⁶

Nawrūz submitted to Ghazan in the final weeks of 1294 and joined the prince's inner circle of advisers, much to the chagrin of those *amīrs* who had spent so much energy battling him. Once Nawrūz was in Ghazan's favor, he seems to have become the leading voice persuading the prince of the merits of conversion to Islam in the course of his rebellion against Baidu. Ghazan declared his conversion at the beginning of this campaign, and hence he began his reign (1295–1304) as a recently confirmed Muslim. Rashīd al-Dīn paints Ghazan's conversion as sincere, a key feature of establishing the Islamic credentials for a patriline that had repeatedly come to power at the expense of Mongol dynastic tradition. Other accounts suggest that the decision to convert was driven by the need to attract the loyalty of the population and, more to the point, the Mongol military elite. One such account was eventually inserted into a version of Rashīd al-Dīn's chronicle, creating a disjuncture with an otherwise consistent portrayal of the new ilkhan as a monotheist by nature and sincerely convinced of the rightness of Islam at the moment of his conversion.⁴⁷

It used to be supposed that the result of Ghazan's conversion was that the Mongol *amīrs* in his service, and then the Mongols as a whole, duly followed his example in adopting Islam. The model here would be the conversion of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to Christianity, where missionaries would persuade a ruler to convert, and his subjects would then follow suit – with what degree of sincerity there is no way of knowing. But it is now clear that this was not, in fact, what happened in Ilkhanid Persia. The conversion of Aḥmad Tegüder did not result in the mass conversion of the Mongols in his wake. But by 1295, a large proportion of the most important Mongols had become

⁴⁶ Landa 2018.

⁴⁷ Kamola 2013, 89–93, 180–82; Brack 2016, 137–46, 330–44; Kamola 2019, 146–49.

Muslims, as evidenced by a generational increase in the proportion of Muslim names among the Mongol elite.⁴⁸ Ghazan, then, was following, not leading, the Mongols of his kingdom into the Islamic fold.⁴⁹ But it is of course true that he may have gained support as a result of his conversion, the more so in that Baidu was not a Muslim. A central figure in assuring Ghazan that he enjoyed the support of the Mongol *amīrs* in Baidu's service was Shaykh Maḥmūd Dīnāwarī, who remained an influential figure in the intrigues of Ghazan's court, at one point escaping execution on the intercession of the ilkhan's wife.

Of the revealed faiths, the dominant one among the Ilkhanid Mongols before Ghazan appears to have been Buddhism. Ghazan put a stop to that, though in this he may have been directed by the more fully converted Nawrūz. In any case, a decree went out requiring that Buddhists, if they were not prepared to become Muslim, should leave the realm. Buddhist temples were to be destroyed. It is difficult to know how rigorously all this was enforced, and it was relaxed after Nawrūz's fall from grace in 1297. But it is certainly the case that Buddhist structures of the Mongol period are very difficult to trace in Persia, and if they were not destroyed, there ought to be something surviving from three and a half decades in which Buddhism had been favored by most of the ilkhans. There are, it is true, a few relics remaining, the most striking of which are the Viar precinct already described and a series of caves in the hill at Marāgha on top of which Hülegü had built Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's astronomical observatory. These caves are equipped with Muslim signifiers such as *mihrābs*, to point the direction to Mecca, but these seem to have been added after Ghazan's conversion. What exactly the caves originally were has been much discussed. Their resemblance to Buddhist complexes in Central Asia suggests that that is what they, too, may have been.⁵⁰ And of course demolition of excavated spaces like Viar or the Marāgha cave complex was hardly a simple proposition: hence their survival.

Ghazan will have been aware that while there was every reason for a Muslim ruler not to tolerate the practice of Buddhism, the same did not apply to Judaism and Christianity. But things did change to the detriment of Jews and Christians. Under the pagan or Buddhist ilkhans they had enjoyed equality with their Muslim fellow subjects, and the exaction of *jizya*, the tax normally imposed by Muslim governments on "People of the Book," predominantly Jews and Christians, had gone into abeyance. It now returned, and Jews and Christians reverted to their traditional position under Muslim government – that of tolerated but second-class citizens.

48 Pfeiffer 2006. 49 Melville 1990; Amitai 2013a, ch. 3. 50 Ball 1976.

Ghazan's motives for becoming a Muslim are ultimately impossible to determine with certainty. It should not be forgotten, as modern historians sometimes do, that individuals have been known to convert to a new religion simply because they believe it to be true. But equally, Ghazan may have been aiming to reduce the degree of alienation between the ruling Mongols and their Muslim Persian subjects. And it does appear that the varieties of Islam which most appealed to the Mongols were those professed by Sufis. Historians have often suggested, in this and in other cases of conversion to Islam among nomadic peoples, that this preference is due to a similarity between wonder-working Sufis and the nomads' traditional holy men, the shamans.⁵¹ The apparent implication that the new converts were largely unable to tell the difference is possibly a little condescending, but it is certainly true that Sufi masters exercised considerable influence, and were taken very seriously, at the Ilkhanid court. This can be seen in the careers of the influential Sufi mystic 'Ala' al-Dawla Simnānī and of Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn Ardabīlī, the eponymous founder of the Safavid order which, two centuries later, provided Persia with a new ruling dynasty.

Having convinced Ghazan to convert to Islam, Nawrūz was rewarded with extraordinary influence and responsibility. He was named vizier and commander in chief of the realm, and according to Waṣṣāf, even granted the viceregency (*niyābat*).⁵² He was also dispatched to the east to manage the frontier over which he had waged his earlier rebellion, alongside the senior *amīr* Horqudaq and two grandsons of Hülegü. Nawrūz and Horqudaq were jointly responsible for putting down an insurrection that tried to put one of those grandsons, Söge, son of Yoshmut, on the throne of the Ilkhanate, after which Horqudaq was reassigned to collect the revenue of Fārs. That left Nawrūz as the senior *amīr* in the eastern provinces, working alongside the young prince Taichu, son of Möngke Temür. At the time, Ghazan had no apparent heir: his only son, Alchu, was only born in February 1298 (he died eighteen months later), and his brother Öljeitü was just thirteen years old at the time of Ghazan's accession. Nawrūz was a tested leader, the son of the last nonroyal governor of the Mongol Middle East, and guardian of a prince of the blood with a pedigree senior to Ghazan's own. It is doubtful that Ghazan ever intended Nawrūz to succeed him, but he did elevate him as the handler of a potential claimant to the throne in the case of Ghazan's untimely death.

That position did not last. In 1296, Nawrūz fell out with other *amīrs* in the east and returned from the eastern provinces to the capital region without

51 On this issue: Amitai 1999. 52 Waṣṣāf 1853, 325.

being summoned. This earned him the ilkhan's rebuke, and he was soon out of favor. Nawrūz traveled east again, this time in flight, and threw himself at the mercy of the Kartid ruler of Herat, Malik Fakhr al-Dīn, who dutifully arrested him and handed him over to Ghazan's general, Amīr Qutluḡ Shāh, for execution. As part of Rashīd al-Dīn's dramatic narrative of Nawrūz's fall, we hear that the disgraced *amīr* had contacted the Mamluk sultan of Egypt at the time of Ghazan's rebellion to ask assistance against the infidel Baidu. Building on this precedent, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, Ghazan's vizier, Ṣadr al-Dīn, fabricated further letters to implicate Nawrūz in ongoing correspondence with the Mamluk court with the aim of seizing Iran away from Ghazan. Prince Taichu, whom Nawrūz had been appointed to supervise, was arrested and executed "for sedition" seven months after Nawrūz's fall from grace and one month after the birth of Ghazan's son.⁵³ With a male heir of his own and the death of the final prince from a senior line and the powerful kingmaker Amīr Nawrūz, the ilkhan secured his lineage as the single legitimate dynastic line from Hūlegü.

Whatever the truth of Nawrūz's efforts to contact the sultans of Egypt, Ghazan did not follow the example of Aḥmad Tegüder in attempting to make peace with the Mamluks. Indeed, he continued trying to forge an anti-Mamluk alliance with the European powers, though with no greater practical success than his predecessors. Invasions of Syria, or preparation therefor, were a constant element of Ghazan's reign from the summer of 1299 until his death five years later. His first invasion met with a result which seemed, at first sight, to be an astounding triumph. In the first days of 1300, Ghazan received the surrender of the city of Damascus, though the citadel held out against him. This event provided the ilkhan, and his chronicler Rashīd al-Dīn, a potent opportunity to flaunt Ghazan's claim to legitimacy in the face of the Mamluks. In an audience held to accept the surrender of the city, Ghazan made a point of emphasizing the Mamluks' slave origins in contrast to his own royal pedigree.⁵⁴ In subsequent weeks, the Ilkhanid forces drove the Mamluks completely out of Syria and back into Egypt.

The news of the Mamluk loss of Damascus, or perhaps a rather distorted version of what had in fact happened, caused a major sensation in Europe, which was still coming to terms with the final destruction of the Crusader states in Palestine nine years previously. Ghazan's victorious advance happened to coincide with Pope Boniface VIII's declaration that 1300 would be a "Year of Jubilee." Great things were therefore expected, and the expulsion

53 JT/Rawshan, 1283. 54 Kamola 2015, 569–70; Brack 2016, 152–62.

of the Mamluks from the Holy City of Jerusalem could hardly have fitted in more appropriately.⁵⁵ Who knew: perhaps the Mongols could be persuaded to return Jerusalem to Christian rule? But disappointment soon followed, and it is far from clear that anyone in the west had taken Ghazan's conversion to Islam on board.

But Ghazan soon withdrew from Syria, as had all previous Mongol campaigns. It would appear that a substantial proportion of the Mongol army's horses had died; and in any case, Ghazan was very probably faced with the same logistical problems that had affected earlier invaders: the lack of sufficient pasture to support a large cavalry army for the long term. Whatever may have been the truth about this, there was also another recurring difficulty. The Chaghadaids of Central Asia had invaded the eastern lands of the Ilkhanate, taking advantage of Ghazan's absence in Syria. So he had to return eastwards to deal with that dangerous incursion. Hostility to the Mamluks remained a feature of Ghazan's foreign policy, however, even though he was never again to repeat the temporary success of 1300. Each of the remaining winters of Ghazan's life saw an effort to renew this invasion. Two of these efforts failed in the face of winter weather in northern Mesopotamia.⁵⁶

In his final effort, Ghazan turned south in 1302, marching through the region around Baghdad and up the Euphrates river in the spring of 1303. While on this campaign, Ghazan undertook an ambitious program of patronage by which to commemorate his reign and family. Most famously, he commissioned from Rashīd al-Dīn (whom he had appointed deputy vizier in 1298) a dynastic history, telling of the Turko-Mongol tribes of Chinggis Khan's confederacy, and of the royal family from ten generations before Chinggis through to Ghazan himself. This work remains the most comprehensive single source on the Mongol Empire and the Ilkhanate, despite the fact that Rashīd al-Dīn's efforts to depict Ghazan as an enlightened and legitimate Islamic ruler create distortion in his narrative of events. Named after its patron the *Blessed History of Ghazan* (*Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*), this work later formed the first volume of Rashīd al-Dīn's historical compendium, the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*.

Also on this campaign, Rashīd al-Dīn and his colleague in the vizierate, Sa'd al-Dīn Sawājī, introduced to Ghazan the Shīrāzī bureaucrat 'Abdallāh Waṣṣāf, who had completed on his own initiative a three-volume history of the

⁵⁵ Schein 1979.

⁵⁶ Kamola 2019, 60, for the campaign of 1301–1302, which has previously not been counted among Ghazan's campaigns into Syria.

Ilkhanate to that point, picking up where the earlier bureaucrat-historian ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Juwaynī had left off. Ghazan approved of the work and commanded Waṣṣāf to continue it, writing of events as they unfolded and of the pre-Ilkhanid Mongols. Waṣṣāf continued working for two more decades, producing two further volumes in that time. The first of these added volumes – Waṣṣāf’s fourth overall – has survived in his own hand, completed initially in 1312 and subsequently amended with marginalia and interfoliated leaves.⁵⁷

Ghazan also promoted others by patronage at the same time. Abū Sulaymān Banākātī was granted the title “Prince of Poets” (*malik al-shu‘ara*): he would go on to produce an abridged version of the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, supplemented with some of his own verses. ‘Abdallāh Qāshānī, more famous for writing the history of Ghazan’s brother and successor Öljeitü, also began his historical work under Ghazan, assembling a collection of miscellaneous histories, many of which were later inserted – lightly redacted and wholly uncredited – into the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*.⁵⁸

Ghazan’s last campaign, like those before it, had little effect. After a siege of the river fortress Raḥbat al-Sham, Ghazan withdrew his army across Mesopotamia to Tabriz. While planning another campaign, Ghazan fell victim to ophthalmia, which illness led to his death in May 1304.

Ghazan’s Reforms

What made Ghazan in some ways the most notable of the ilkhans was not his military achievements; perhaps not even his conversion to Islam. The really striking character of his reign, unparalleled either before or after, was his highly ambitious and extensive program of administrative reforms. On this we have what is, for the time and place, a peerless wealth of information, from the pen of Ghazan’s historian and minister Rashīd al-Dīn. He tells us not only, in some detail, what it was that needed reform, but also how remarkably effective the reforms were. Most important of all, Rashīd al-Dīn reproduces the texts of Ghazan’s *yarlighs*, the edicts in which the reforms were promulgated. Notoriously, the Islamic Middle East, prior to the Ottoman period, did not leave to us the kind of archival evidence on which historians of, for example, Western Europe so largely depend. There are occasional survivals, such as the documents in the shrine of Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn in Ardabīl, which came to light in the mid-twentieth century. But there is

57 Waṣṣāf 2009. 58 Otsuka 2018.

nothing equivalent to the documentation of central government to be found in the English National Archives or those of the Vatican in Rome. Hence Rashīd al-Dīn's reproduction of Ghazan's edicts is one of the survivals that is nearest to being a genuine documentary mass of evidence on the workings of a major medieval Muslim government.

In the past, historians often tended to take this body of evidence, with due thanks, at something like face value. This was unwise. It was all too easy to forget that Rashīd al-Dīn was joint chief minister as well as, in effect, official historian of the Ilkhanate during the reigns of Ghazan and his successor. He therefore demonstrably had his own agenda: he was not a modern historian, striving for objectivity. It would hardly be surprising if he depicted the state of affairs in the Ilkhanate during the decades before Ghazan's accession in the blackest possible terms, and he would no less have had an interest in assuring his readers that the reforms were a major success. A degree of caution is therefore advisable when using Rashīd al-Dīn's evidence, but there is no reason to suppose that he did not reproduce the reform edicts accurately (indeed, he may very well have drafted them himself, in his capacity as chief minister).

The tone of Ghazan's intentions, at least as they were represented by Rashīd al-Dīn, is well illustrated in the words of a speech which, the historian tells us, the ilkhan made to the leading Mongols of his kingdom:

I am not partial to the Tajiks [i.e. the Persians]. If it were in my interests to pillage them all, no one would be more able to do it than I, and we would pillage together; but if henceforth you expect to requisition supplies and meals, I will reprimand you severely. Just think – if you use violence on the peasants and take their cattle and grain or let your horses graze in their fields, what will you do next? When you beat or hurt their wives and children, just think how dear our own wives and children are to us. Their children are just like that to them; they too are human beings like us.⁵⁹

This appeal does have a certain plausibility; and it contrasts very markedly with what Rashīd al-Dīn says elsewhere about Ghazan, whom he normally depicts as some kind of ideal Muslim sovereign, personally involved in improving the management of the state. It looks as if Ghazan's main message was one of hardheaded realism: that this was perhaps what was most likely to appeal to the Mongols, though the appeal also to human compassion is more surprising. That sentiment is strikingly similar to what Sa'dī (who had recently died) said in the celebrated Persian poem which now graces the

59 *JT/Thackston*, 714.

entrance to the United Nations building in New York. Ghazan's attempt to correct the administrative abuses of the seven decades or so before his accession naturally appealed to his Muslim subjects, as it has to modern historians. Whether it was also likely to appeal to the Mongols of Persia was another matter. It has been suggested that from the point of view of the Mongols, Ghazan's reforms may have been seen not as an improvement, but as marking the end of what they would have regarded as the Good Old Days.⁶⁰ Hence, perhaps, the appeal to realism. This all assumes, of course, that Ghazan actually gave the speech that Rashīd al-Dīn records, and that it was not simply fathered on him by the historian. And if he did give it, in what language did he speak to his fellow Mongols? Was Rashīd al-Dīn there, transcribing the speech (and, if it was given in Mongolian, subsequently translating it into Persian)? These are some of the questions with which we would be wise to approach Rashīd al-Dīn's somewhat eulogistic account of Ghazan and his reign.

Still, there is no getting away from the edicts that Rashīd al-Dīn reproduces: there seems no reason at all to doubt that they are genuine, that they were issued by the government, and that, therefore, a serious attempt to bring about major reforms was indeed made. And the matters dealt with in the reforming edicts do look very much like the areas in which abuses were likely to have grown up over time, and which would need attention. Taxation was inevitably a major concern, dependent as all governments were and are on the receipts from that source. Hence both the rates and methods of taxation were to be firmly regulated, as was the frequency with which they were to be exacted. All village property, it was ordered, should be registered so that tax assessment could proceed efficiently and fairly. The functioning of Mongol government – throughout the empire, not just in the Ilkhanate – depended heavily on the *jam* system, the postal courier network, used not merely for official communications but also for intelligence purposes and for the transport of certain kinds of goods. Among the most eulogistic accounts of the system is what Marco Polo has to say about its operation in China, where, if he is to be believed, it was remarkably efficient and effective. That is not, in general, the impression we have from the sources for the western half of the empire, though this may be because it is discussed for the most part in the context of attempts to reform it. Hence the emphasis tends to be on prevalent abuses of the system, such as its use by *ilchis*, envoys, who were not officially authorized – indeed, some were simply

⁶⁰ Melville 1997, 115.

masquerading as official envoys – but who nevertheless not only made illicit use of the facilities but who also extorted horses and provisions by force and at will. This was all to cease, and detailed regulations regarding how the system was to operate were promulgated.⁶¹

Other reforms included the standardization of weights and measures, the prohibition of the issuing of drafts (*barāt*) on the revenue from the land, the regulation of the activities and payment of judges (*qāḍīs*) in Islamic courts, and a reform of the coinage. Disputes over land ownership were to be resolved, no claim dating back more than thirty years was to be entertained, and tax incentives were to be offered to any who would undertake to bring back into cultivation land which had fallen into waste.

One of the most difficult problems needing to be resolved was how the army was to be paid. While the Mongol Empire was expanding, this was not as much of a difficulty: after all, new lands were being added constantly to those under Mongol rule, and there was an abundance of plunder available to compensate the soldiers for their efforts. But once the empire had effectively reached its geographical limits, this was no longer the case. Booty could perhaps be expected to accrue from the ilkhans' periodic invasions of Mamluk Syria, and this may well have been among the Mongols' motives for continuing to mount such expeditions. But it could hardly be counted on as a regular or inexhaustible means of maintaining the army. Ghazan attempted to solve this puzzle by using an adapted version of an institution which had been of great importance in the Seljuq period, the *iqṭāʿ*. This was done, or was supposed to be done, by assigning to the various army units the lands nearest to their summer and winter pastures. The soldiers were instructed to live on these lands, and to receive their produce in lieu of salary. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, this was a measure that the soldiers adopted with enthusiasm since, so he tells us, most of them were anxious to engage in agriculture.⁶²

It is not easy to say whether we should be inclined to believe what is, on its face, an improbable assertion. Nor is it clear whether or to what extent the distribution of land into military *iqṭāʿ*s of this type actually occurred. The edict establishing all this is dated, and it was issued only a short time before Ghazan's death in 1304. Much the same might be said of the reforms as a whole. What the edicts tell us is that the abuses that existed were known to the central government. What they do not tell us is whether the attempt to put things right was in fact successful. Rashīd al-Dīn, of course, says that they

61 Silverstein 2007, ch. 4. 62 JT/Rawshan, 1476–86; Lambton 1988, 125–29; Amitai 2001.

were effective: but his is far from being objective testimony, coming as it does from the pen of the individual most associated with the reform program. Other Persian historians of the period, notably Waṣṣāf and Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, do give accounts of the reforms, though not in the detail to be found in Rashīd al-Dīn. They regard the program as being of great importance, but the impression they give is not quite as enthusiastic as that one receives from Rashīd al-Dīn's account, nor do they seem quite as confident of the program's success.⁶³

It is interesting to note what Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī remarks, writing as he did more than three decades after Ghazan's death – and more than a decade after Rashīd al-Dīn had passed from the scene. He was a *mustawfī*, an audit official of the financial administration of the Ilkhanate, so he presumably knew what he was talking about over matters of state revenue. According to him, the state revenues at the time of Ghazan's accession amounted annually to 17 million currency dinars. Nine years later, at the time of Ghazan's death and after his reform program had been introduced, they had risen to 21 million.⁶⁴ This is an increase, but one that amounts to only about 2.4 per cent annually for the duration of Ghazan's reign. On its own, that seems like no great feat, though if we believe Rashīd al-Dīn that the soldiers of Ghazan's army were simultaneously being paid out of what would otherwise be taxable agricultural activity, it suggests that Ghazan had succeeded where so many of his predecessors had failed, namely in stabilizing the finances of the state despite the voracious demands of the army.

Öljeitü

It seems likely that Ghazan, with the able assistance of Rashīd al-Dīn, had improved matters during the nine years of his reign over the Ilkhanate. The government was probably more efficient than it had been under his immediate predecessors. It may even have been a more humane regime, by Mongol standards. But it does not seem likely that he managed to transform totally the character of Mongol rule in Persia. That occurred more in the twelve-year reign of his brother and successor Öljeitü (1304–1316). We are obliged to be a little tentative about this, because although Rashīd al-Dīn is said to have written an account of Öljeitü's reign, it does not seem to have survived. What has survived is the chronicle of ʿAbdallāh Qāshānī, who misses no opportunity to malign the character and the actions of Rashīd al-Dīn, who had profited

63 E.g., Waṣṣāf 1853, 386–91. 64 Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī 1919, 33.

in power and in purse by packaging the scholarship of others (chief among them Qāshānī) into the vast historical compendium he presented to Öljeitü in 1307 under the title *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*.

By Mongol standards, Öljeitü's reign was fairly peaceful. Within the realm under his command, he continued the process of consolidation begun by his brother. Ghazan had, near the end of his reign, appointed as governor of Kirman an individual named Shāh Jahān, a grandson of the indomitable Terken Khātūn. The latter had ruled the province for a quarter-century after the death of her husband Rukn al-Dīn, who had initially accepted Mongol suzerainty. Terken Khātūn's sons and grandsons quarreled over her position both during her life and after her death, and they did so both with each other and against the Mongol supervisors sent to manage the turbulent situation. The result was a significant disruption in local economic and agricultural activity. Shāh Jahān took the opportunity of Ghazan's death to try and shake off Mongol overlordship. In return, he was arrested and executed in the spring of 1305. In his place, Öljeitü appointed a member of the Ghūrid dynasty, separating the powerful family of Rukn al-Dīn and Terken Khātūn from their base of power. As much as Shāh Jahān's rebellion must have influenced this decision, it may not be entirely unrelated to the fact that one of Terken Khātūn's daughters was married to Qadaqai, a son of Chaghadaï, and their son Nālīqū later came to the throne of that khanate. The decision to liquidate the continued and contentious power of Terken Khātūn's brood within the Ilkhanate could have only helped reduce the threat of a fifth column in the ongoing conflicts on the eastern front.

Öljeitü's reign also saw the breakup of other local power centers in southern Iran, as well as in Anatolia. The line of the Salghurid atabegs of Fārs had come to an end with Abish Khatun, and at the beginning of his reign Öljeitü appointed Sharaf al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh, a native of the eastern city of Herat, to govern the southern crown lands, known by the Mongol term *emchū*. From the latter term, Sharaf al-Dīn and his descendants became known as the Injuïds. They governed Fārs until the region was absorbed into the state of another Khurasani family, the Muẓaffarids, that had relocated to the south and risen to local authority during the late Ilkhanate. In Anatolia, with the final collapse of the Seljuqs of Rūm in 1307, Öljeitü was faced with the rise of various Turkic *beyliqs* in Anatolia. One of these, the Qarāmānids, proved particularly threatening, and Öljeitü dispatched his general Choban to put it down. This he did, and Choban remained a powerful and loyal military leader in Anatolia throughout Öljeitü's reign, so much so that the sultan named him commander in chief (*amīr al-umarā'*) late in his reign.

Looking further beyond the borders of the Ilkhanate, Öljeitü mounted the last Ilkhanid invasion of Syria – not a successful one – in 1312–1313, and in 1314 he had to march east to fend off a Chaghadaid invasion. In 1307 he mounted a costly invasion of Gīlān in the north of the country, bordering the Caspian Sea, in order to incorporate into his realm that notoriously difficult area, which had until then remained independent.⁶⁵ Even on the wider Mongol scene, his reign saw an effort to re-establish peace and harmony between all the Mongol khanates. At least, Öljeitü claims as much in a Mongolian letter of 1305 to King Philip the Fair of France, which happens to have been preserved.⁶⁶ In reality, this letter was overly optimistic: the next decade saw ongoing conflict with and within the Chaghadaid Khanate, as well as the rise of Özbek Khan (r. 1313–1341) of the Golden Horde, who reasserted his family's claim to the fertile lands south of the Caucasus.⁶⁷

So far as we can judge, Ghazan's reform program continued during his brother's reign: a degree of continuity no doubt helped by the fact that Rashīd al-Dīn remained in office throughout the period. Rashīd al-Dīn's tenure was not as untroubled as it may have been under Ghazan. His long-term ministerial colleague Sa'd al-Dīn Sāwajī fell from power and was executed in 1312. His successor, Tāj al-Dīn 'Alī Shāh, and Rashīd al-Dīn came to be on the worst of terms, so much so that eventually Öljeitü found it necessary to divide the administration of his kingdom into two separate spheres, so that the two ministers' responsibilities should as far as possible not overlap. Rashīd al-Dīn took the center and south, while the north-west, Mesopotamia and Anatolia were allotted to 'Alī Shāh.

What we do have to be grateful for is Öljeitü's interest in Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*. Rashīd al-Dīn presented to him the already completed Mongol history, which Ghazan had commissioned, and the new ilkhān invited him to continue it, as a memorial to Ghazan. He was now to include accounts of all the peoples with whom the Mongols had come into contact. The result was the "world-history" sections of the great work, in which Rashīd al-Dīn recounted the histories of the Chinese, the Indians, the Turks, the Franks, and so on. These sections are of greater historiographical than historical interest. No one would go to Rashīd al-Dīn for a narrative of Chinese political history, though Rashīd al-Dīn does give us some of our best descriptions of such things as Chinese block printing and paper money, technologies that he greatly admired and thought the Islamic world would do well to emulate. As the writings of Rashīd al-Dīn's contemporary court

65 Melville 1999b. 66 Mostaert and Cleaves 1962. 67 Qāshānī 1969, 146.

historian ‘Abdallāh Qāshānī, become available, it also becomes increasingly clear that the vizier appropriated much of his material from the latter without recognition, a fact that inspired vituperous accusations on the part of Qāshānī.⁶⁸ At any rate, the resulting world history remains a remarkable scholarly phenomenon, unparalleled at the time or for long after, and witness to the cosmopolitan diversity of cultural exchange in and around Tabriz during the high Ilkhanate.

Öljeitü’s principal personal claim to memorability lies in the fact that, at one time or another, he belonged at least nominally to almost every currently available religion. Even by the standards of the time, his religious pilgrimage was unusually complex. He was presumably a residual shamanist in some sense, but as a child he was christened as Nicholas, in honor of Pope Nicholas IV, with whom his father, the Ilkhan Arghun, had negotiated. He later became a Buddhist, but with the conversion of Ghazan and the bulk of the Ilkhanid elite to Islam, he followed suit. At first he adhered to Sunnī Islam, favouring the Hanafī and Shāfi‘ī *madhhabs* in turn. But later he became a Shi‘ī.

The move to Shi‘ism, however, was more than just the last stop on a lifelong peregrination of faith. Shi‘ism is rooted in a particular form of genealogical charisma that fit nicely with the Chinggisid dispensation. Ghazan had probably already recognized this: in Baghdad in 1302 a *sayyid*, a biological descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad, was killed by a Sunnī mob. Ghazan responded with an expression of sympathy toward the *sayyids*, proclaiming a policy of religious tolerance for Shi‘ites. In this move, he cited the examples both of Muḥammad and of Chinggis Khan as precedents. He also constructed a series of lodges for descendants of Muḥammad in major cities of the realm.

During the early years of Öljeitü’s reign, Islam was still not universally accepted among the Mongol elite, yet another reminder that Ghazan’s conversion was not a unitary moment of change for the entire society. According to Qāshānī, the chronicler of Öljeitü’s reign, a court debate on the nuances between schools of *sharī‘a* drew an exasperated reply from the Mongol general Qutlugh Shāh, evidently an opponent of Islamization:

What is this that we have done, abandoning the new *yasa* (*yasaq*) and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan, and taking up the ancient religion of the Arabs, which is divided into seventy-odd sects? The choice of either of these two rites (*madhhab*) would be a disgrace and a dishonorable act, since in the one,

68 Ōtsuka 2018; Kamola 2019, 95–102.

marriage with a daughter is permitted, and in the other, relations with one's mother or sister. We seek refuge in God from both of them! Let us return to the *yasa* (*yasaq*) and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan.⁶⁹

After this came Öljeitü's campaign to Gīlān, which experienced great hardship, including a lightning strike that killed members of the royal family. When challenged by members of his court that the shift toward Islam had invoked the wrath of spirits, Öljeitü turned to the advice of Amīr Taramtaz, who assured the ilkhan that, among all the forms of Islam available, Shī'ism cleaved most closely to Mongol tradition and should therefore be favored. For Öljeitü, Shī'ism offered a middle space between Mongol custom and the religion of the subject population.

The political expression of Shī'ism had become anathema in the Seljuq world before the arrival of the Mongols. The 'Abbāsids had faced the dual Shī'ī threat of Fāṭimid Egypt and the Nizārī Ismā'īlī presence in their own territory. For their part, the Seljuqs had come to prominence in part by ousting the Shī'ite Buyid family from their position as *condottieri* of 'Abbāsīd Baghdad. They also faced the threat of assassination from Ismā'īlī fanatics, and their great vizier, Niẓām al-Mulk (himself the first victim of Nizārī knives) took great measures to supplant Shī'ī sympathies through his institutional patronage of Sunnī (and particularly Shāfi'ī) madrasas. One of his clients, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, articulated a theory of sovereignty – the sultanate – that created space for the Seljuqs as divinely ordained rulers alongside the caliphs and at the expense of adversarial Shī'ī dynasties.

Ideas of sultanic power came back into force under Öljeitü. However, in the absence of a Sunnī monopoly over doctrine in the form of the caliphate, Shī'ism, in the decades since 1258, had been significantly elaborated as a political philosophy. Crucial in this regard was Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī, who had previously written for Ismā'īlī patrons but who continued his philosophical work at the observatory in Marāgha. Two of his students, 'Allama al-Ḥillī and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, wrote works that remain central to Iranian Shī'ī theology and philosophy. They were also both active at a mobile college of diverse theologians that Öljeitü maintained at his court. This was itself a reflection of the Mongol tradition of court-sponsored debate, particularly among religious professionals, that looked back at least as far as Möngke and forward to the Mughal emperor Akbar the Great. Öljeitü was clearly curious about religion, but his eventual discovery of Shī'ism was more than simple diletantism. It was the culmination of Seljuq-era developments in the theory

69 Qāshānī 1969, 98.

and practice of political Islam, reinvigorated by the presence of the Mongols, with their inner Asian traditions of charismatic authority.

The ilkhan's adherence to Shī'ism may help to explain the genesis of what is today the most conspicuous and impressive Mongol-period structure in Persia: the tomb of Öljeitü at Sulṭāniyya. The city was a new foundation from the time of Arghun. It is situated on the plain southeast of modern Zanjān; and Öljeitü transferred the capital of the Ilkhanate there from Tabriz. Much of his reign was spent in building the new capital, which was completed in 1313 or 1314. Little now remains of the city, except for the mausoleum. It is said that Öljeitü, having become an adherent of Shī'ī Islam, proposed to transfer the remains of the major Shī'ī martyrs, notably 'Alī and Ḥusayn, to the new mausoleum. The people of the great shrine cities in Iraq, Najaf and Karbala, were understandably unenthusiastic about the prospect of losing their *raison d'être*, not to mention their principal source of income. In the end, the mausoleum became the ilkhan's own tomb.

It should be noted, however, that since Öljeitü maintained the nomadic habits of his ancestors at least to some degree, it might be more accurate to refer to Sulṭāniyya as his chief seasonal residence, rather than implying that it was a sedentary capital of the state. After his first five of winters on the throne, which he spent in the north and during which he regularly visited his brother's shrine tomb at Tabriz, Öljeitü in 1309 took up the practice that Ghazan had initiated seven years earlier of wintering around Baghdad and frequenting the tombs of the first family of Shī'ism at Najaf and Karbala. Whether we believe Ibn Baṭṭūṭa or not when he reports that Öljeitü renounced Shī'ism on his deathbed, his reign brought a stronger integration of Islamic and Mongol theories of faith and power, laying the foundation for an alliance of the two in the figures of later Persianate sultans.

Abū Sa'īd, the Last Ilkhan

Öljeitü's only surviving son, Abū Sa'īd (or in its Mongol form, Bū Sa'īd), succeeded his father in 1316, at the age of twelve.⁷⁰ During the first decade of his reign, the young ilkhan was dominated by his father's commander in chief, Amīr Choban. This was not an entirely voluntary regency: Abū Sa'īd propelled a failed effort by other *amīrs* to remove Choban, but from 1319 until 1327 Choban's position was secure.⁷¹ The same could not be said of Rashīd al-Dīn. The intrigues of his colleague and rival Tāj al-Dīn 'Alī-Shāh finally came

70 On the form Bū Sa'īd: [Minorsky 1954](#). 71 [Melville 1997](#).

to fruition. Rashīd al-Dīn was charged with the improbable crime of having poisoned the late Ilkhan Öljeitü: he was executed in July 1318. Tāj al-Dīn ‘Alī Shāh remained the highest office-holding Persian bureaucrat until his own death six years later. Apparently he achieved the feat – uniquely among chief ministers of the Ilkhanate – of dying of natural causes.

In foreign affairs, Abū Sa‘īd’s landmark achievement during the period of Choban’s domination was to bring to an end sixty years of intermittent warfare with the Mamluk regime in Egypt. Negotiations began in 1320, and were completed in 1322 or 1323. For the remainder of Ilkhanid rule, there was peace on the kingdom’s western frontier; this was paired with Abū Sa‘īd’s cordial relations with the sultan of Delhi, Muḥammad ibn Tughluq.⁷² Real power at court, however, remained in the hands of Choban and his family. Choban himself married a sister of the ilkhan, and most of the provincial governorships were held by his sons. One of them, Temürtash, who was governor in Anatolia, came out in revolt in 1321–1322, but his father marched against him, defeated him, and then had him pardoned and reinstated by the ilkhan.

It seemed that nothing could shake the supremacy of the Chobanids. However, by 1327 Abū Sa‘īd had had enough, and decided to assert his authority. The fall of Choban was mediated through the fates of two of his children.⁷³ A daughter, Baghdad Khatun, had caught the eye of the young sultan, but Choban refused to allow the annulment of her marriage to Shaykh Ḥasan Jalayir in favor of his sovereign. While Abū Sa‘īd did not get his way in this matter until after Choban’s death, it was one of Choban’s sons, Dimashq Khwāja, who became the most strident source of antagonism between ilkhan and *amīr*. Dimashq Khwāja had emerged as an overbearing figure at court, earning the resentment of the vizier Rukn al-Dīn Sa‘in. Despite Abū Sa‘īd’s protestations, Choban refused to rein in his son, instead removing Rukn al-Dīn from court and traveling together with him to Khurasan. Dimashq Khwāja’s continued imperious behavior fueled disaffection among others at court, and he was eventually arrested and executed. In response, Choban led an uncertain rebellion from Khurasan, transmitting alternately bellicose and conciliatory signals to Abū Sa‘īd as he marched west. In the end, most of Choban’s supporters deserted him when confronted with the sultan’s army. Choban took refuge with the Kartid ruler of Herat, who had him killed on Abū Sa‘īd’s orders. Temürtash, the son who had earlier rebelled against the sultan, escaped to Egypt, but there he was put to death in 1328.

⁷² Jackson 1975, 130.

⁷³ Events leading up to Choban’s death have been summarized by Melville 1999a, 12–28.

The details of the drama of Choban's fall reveal many of the dynamics of ruling culture that had developed in the seventy years since Hülegü's conquest. First is the continued significance of certain nonroyal families and their connection both to the royal family and to the management of the state. Choban had come to prominence as a military commander in Anatolia, a frontier region that also saw the rise of the Jalayirid family of Shaykh Ḥasan.⁷⁴ These two military families emerged from the collapse of the dynasty with independent claims to political authority. By the time Abū Sa'īd came to the throne, Choban had been the most senior military leader of the realm for a decade, and the new ilkhan's coronation was delayed until Choban could return from Anatolia. When his son Temürtash rebelled against Abū Sa'īd, he did so from the same province.

Once Choban was threatened by the events surrounding his son Dimashq Khwāja, however, he withdrew not to the province of his early career, but to Khurasan, the traditional base of operations for regents and heirs apparent since the early dynasty. The royal princes Arghun, Ghazan, and Öljeitü had each governed Khurasan and Māzandarān (and Abū Sa'īd had been appointed there, under the supervision of the senior Amīr Sevinch, in the last year of his father's reign), and from there both Arghun and Ghazan had launched their rebellions to take the Ilkhanid throne. Among nonroyal figures, Choban had a precedent for his act in the viceregency that Ghazan had bestowed on Nawrūz when he appointed the latter to the eastern provinces in the early months of his reign. Even while picking as his base of operations the most historically promising region from which to assert royal authority, Choban had attempted to appease the conflict between Abū Sa'īd and his son by removing Rukn al-Dīn from court. The impact of court factions that included both Persian administrators and Mongol military figures was at least perceived to be as important in the early reign of Abū Sa'īd as it had been under his grandfather Arghun.

The army that Choban assembled in the east fell apart, yet he returned there to seek the security of the *de facto* independent city of Herat. Again like Nawrūz before him, he failed in this act of desperation, as the Kartid Malik Ghiyāth al-Dīn chose his allegiance to the Ilkhanid court over the fugitive rebel. The fact that Choban did not simply flee to the Chaghadaid or Jochid realms suggests that he preferred his chances within the political realm that had raised him to prominence.

74 Wing 2016, 52–70.

Choban's fall once more reveals how far Islamic modes and markers of authority had permeated the elite Mongol society of the late Ilkhanate. On his march from Khurasan to confront Abū Sa'īd, Choban enlisted as his mediator the Sufi Shaykh 'Ala' al-Dawla Simnānī. Simnānī had been an influence at the Ilkhanid court for two generations, and had supported Choban's decision not to follow Öljeitü in his conversion to Shī'ism.⁷⁵ After Choban's death, his daughter, Baghdad Khatun, now wife of the sultan, arranged to have the body sent to Medina, where it was buried in 1328.

After the death of Choban, Abū Sa'īd both reigned and ruled, apparently quite effectively, for the second decade of his time as ilkhān. Two very different visions emerge from our sources about the character of the latter half of this reign. On the one hand, this appears to have been one of the most successful of Ilkhanid reigns. Abū Sa'īd himself seems to have been highly regarded, and was unusually cultured by Mongol standards – he is said, for example, to have composed poetry in Persian. The coinage minted during his reign was of unusually high quality, and not just by Mongol-period standards, which suggests a flourishing economy. This image of stability and prosperity is confirmed by significant diplomatic contacts with the Mamluk Sultanate as well as with the Yuan court in China and the Delhi Sultanate. In managing this robust state apparatus, Abū Sa'īd was much aided by his chief minister, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Rashīdī (son of the inimitable Rashīd al-Dīn), who had been appointed to office after the death of 'Alī Shāh.

In religious terms, Abū Sa'īd did not oscillate in his allegiance as his father had done: he stuck firmly to orthodox Sunnī Islam, which no doubt made him more acceptable to his erstwhile enemies in Mamluk Egypt. In conjunction with the peace brokered with the Mamluks, Abū Sa'īd regularly contributed to the patronage of pilgrims and the adornment of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.⁷⁶ His great-aunt, El Qutlugh, had been in correspondence with the Mamluk court for over a decade before formal peace negotiations began, and she immediately embarked on the *hajj* pilgrimage once it was concluded, demonstrating the often unrecognized role that royal Mongol women played in matters of both state and faith.⁷⁷

Abū Sa'īd seems also to have been tolerant in religious terms: for example, the papacy in 1318 set up an archbishopric, with dependent dioceses, in Sulṭāniyya, while a subsequent trade treaty with Venice allowed for the construction of Christian oratories in the Ilkhanate.⁷⁸ This tolerance toward

⁷⁵ Melville 1996, 90; Elias 1995, 15–31. ⁷⁶ Melville 1992. ⁷⁷ Brack 2011.

⁷⁸ On the Latin church in Iran: Jackson 2018, 242–48.

Latin Christians, paired as it was with a new rapprochement with the Mamluks, amounted to a two-pronged strategy to deprive the Golden Horde of important resources. Abū Saʿīd's treaty with the Mamluks enjoined the latter to decrease their reliance on the slave markets of the western steppe, while the cultivation of ties to Italian mercantile states sought to attract more of their activity in the Black Sea away from the grain markets of the Jochid lands and toward the luxury routes that passed through Tabriz. Relations with the Golden Horde remained bad throughout Abū Saʿīd's reign. Choban had fought there before his fall, and at the very end of his reign Abū Saʿīd was advancing to confront the Golden Horde ruler, Özbek, over the latter's renewed claims to the lands of northern Iran. Abū Saʿīd died in 1335 while on this campaign.

A very different vision of the latter half of Abū Saʿīd's reign emerges from the chronicles written at his court. These depict a reign plagued by factional struggles between different groups of Mongol *amīrs* – the Chobanids, the Jalayirs and so forth – that gradually built up until, once the ilkhan himself had departed, the realm almost inevitably collapsed.⁷⁹ Indicative of this view is the fact that Baghdad Khatun, the daughter of Choban and contested wife of Abū Saʿīd, was executed months after her husband's death on the twin charges of having communicated secretly with Özbek Khan and having poisoned Abū Saʿīd. Such a cutthroat vision of Abū Saʿīd's full reign seems unpersuasive. That reign hardly seems more rumbustious than those of a number of earlier ilkhans: indeed, perhaps rather less so than that of Abū Saʿīd's generally lauded uncle, Ghazan. The celebrated Moroccan traveler Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visited Persia during the reign: indeed, he arrived in 1327, and he gives an account of the fall of Choban. He was by no means unaware of the factional problems which were vexing the kingdom. But the impression of the Ilkhanate we get from his account is of an exceedingly flourishing kingdom – and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa had a wide basis for comparison, since he went to almost all parts of the Muslim, and some of the non-Muslim, world, or so he says.⁸⁰

It is true that the chronicle evidence for the reign tends to concentrate on fighting, revolts, and factional struggles. But this may well tell us more about the quality of those sources than it does about the reality of the times. We no longer have Persian sources to compare with the earlier works of Juwaynī, Rashīd al-Dīn and Waṣṣāf – or even, at a lower level, the history of Öljeitü by Qāshānī: writers who, whatever their faults, looked below the surface of

79 Melville 1999a. 80 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, ch. 6.

violent events in a way that those who wrote about Abū Saʿīd's reign did not. A less tangible suggestion, though one that may well contain some truth, is that, after nearly eighty years in Persia, the ruling Mongols were going through something of a crisis of confidence over who and what they were – a question, perhaps, of identity, now that they were Muslims in a Muslim land, ruling in collaboration with Persian bureaucrats who were heirs to a long indigenous tradition. What did it mean to be a Mongol in such a situation?⁸¹ The increasing prominence of nonroyal families such as the Chobanids, the Jalayirids, and the Injuīd governors of Fārs, and of local religious authorities such as Shaykh Ṣafīʿ al-Dīn in Ardabīl or the enigmatic Sarbadar confederacy around Sabzavar, indicates that the mystique of the Chinggisid dispensation had, by 1335, worn rather thin. Abū Saʿīd's death was not a cataclysmic end of the only conceivable model of political legitimacy, but the sputtering out of a family who enjoyed a monopoly only on the symbolism of descent from Chinggis Khan.

All that being said, the death of Abū Saʿīd without heirs proved critical. The Chinggisid dispensation remained a powerful legitimizing platform, even if it was not the only one, and it continued to exercise the imagination of Turko-Mongol rulers in Iran, India, and Central Asia for centuries. Had there been a male heir in the direct line from Hülegü available, there seems no strong reason for supposing that the Ilkhanate would not have continued after 1335.⁸² Attempts were made to find someone acceptable, though Ghazan's bloody pruning of his own family tree between 1295 and 1297 meant that the options were few and far removed from the patriline that he fought so desperately to legitimize.

The arguments and negotiations about the succession that took place after Abū Saʿīd's death are described, in detail that was previously quite unknown, in a letter written by Ghiyāth al-Dīn Rashīdī and preserved in the remarkable manuscript known as the *Safīna-i Tabrīz*, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The immediate heir, promoted optimistically by Ghiyāth al-Dīn, was Arpa Ke'ün, a descendant of Chinggis Khan but not of Hülegü. This did not work, and the attempt cost both Arpa and Ghiyāth al-Dīn their lives. Other Chinggisids were briefly elevated as nominal rulers by various *amīrs*, but none lasted for long. The kingdom was effectively divided between *amīrs* who had the power and following to achieve a supremacy of sorts. Of these, the most powerful were the descendants of Abū Saʿīd's early regent Choban, and those of the Jalayirid Amīr İlgā Noyan.⁸³ The Chobanids took command

81 Melville 2016. 82 Morgan 2009.

83 On the Ilkhanid–Chobanid–Jalayirid nexus of authority: Wing 2016, 63–73.

of the capital region of Azerbaijan, while the Jalayirids established a competing court at the ilkhans' second city, Baghdad.

In the absence of the Ilkhanid dynasty, various margrave families also struck out on their own. In Fārs, the Injuids, whom Öljeitü had appointed to govern the royal lands in the south, expressed their own claim to sovereignty, exemplified in a series of elaborately illustrated books that set the course for Shīrāz to become a pre-eminent center of book arts through the fourteenth century.⁸⁴ The Injuids did not last long, and Fārs was absorbed by 1357 into the expanding Muẓaffarid state.

The last Mongol to hold the title of ilkhan did so in Khurasan only, supported by the Mongol garrisons there. This was Togha Temür, a descendant of Chinggis Khan's brother Jochi Qasar, who was murdered in 1353 at the behest of a curious quasi-Shī'ī local dynasty, the Sarbadarids. Such was the situation until it was bloodily resolved, after some decades, by another invader from the east, Temür – Tamerlane to western writers. It is perhaps not surprising, in view of what followed from the collapse of Mongol rule, that the later reputation of Abū Sa'īd and his rule was high. As one chronicler wrote, "the time of his government was the best period of the domination of the Mongols."⁸⁵

The Demographic and Economic Impact of the Mongols

Writing around 1340, just a few years after the death of Abū Sa'īd, Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī famously asserted,

A comparison may be made in regard to the state of fertility of the land (in past times) and its ruin (in the present day), as a result of the irruption of the Mongols, and the general massacre of the people which took place in their days. Further there can be no doubt that even if for a thousand years to come no evil befalls the country, yet it will not be possible completely to repair the damage, and bring back the land to the state in which it was formerly.⁸⁶

Based on this and other similar testimony in the historical and geographical works of Persian bureaucrats employed by the Mongols, it is possible to see Mongol rule in the Middle East as a disaster. Indeed, many have taken such a view, be they early modern scholars or more recent political figures: Saddam Hussein and Usama bin Laden each compared American intervention in Iraq to

84 Wright 2012. 85 Aharī 1954, 149 (text), 51 (trans.).

86 Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī tr. Le Strange 1919, 34.

the arrival of Hülegü. However, it must be remembered that Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī's comparison was off base, as he was comparing two states with different currency standards, and so he was probably imagining (based on historical ledgers that he saw, applied to a currency system that he knew) an original state of prosperity that never existed.

Despite the efforts of some apologists in the early twenty-first century, there seems no plausible reason to discount the impression that the primary sources convey about the Mongol invasions. There was, beyond reasonable doubt, immense destruction and loss of life. This does not mean that we are under any obligation to regard these sources' numbers as reliable statistics – for example, the 2,400,000 people who, according to the contemporary historian Jūzjānī (writing in the safe sanctuary of the Delhi Sultanate) were killed when the Mongols took Herat. But we can see, by comparison with what similar chroniclers say of the Seljuq invasions two centuries earlier, that it will not do to assert that medieval chroniclers always exaggerate. We are offered no millions of dead in the Seljuq period. Clearly, there had never been anything to compare with the Mongol invasions: the figures are evidence of profound shock, not of someone accurately counting. Even more famously than Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī reported at the end of the Ilkhanate, the Arab historian Ibn al-Athīr commented regarding the areas of Transoxania and Khurasan after Chinggis Khan's initial invasion that

if anyone were to say that since God (glory and power be His) created Adam until this present time mankind has not had a comparable affliction, he would be speaking the truth. History books do not contain anything similar or anything that comes close to it. Perhaps humanity will not see such a calamity, apart from Gog and Magog, until the world comes to an end and this life ceases to be.⁸⁷

The principal distinction between the Seljuq invasions and those of the Mongols would seem to be that the Seljuqs had already lived, for a century, on the borders of the Islamic world, and they had already been converted to Islam. So they knew and understood what they were facing. The Mongols did not. They came too fast to gain an immediate understanding of the society they were attacking, and though they quickly caught on to the value of urban and agricultural economies, by then much damage had already been done.⁸⁸ Agricultural land is not needed for the feeding of flocks and herds, nor cities for nomads to live in, and Chinggis Khan's invasion was more of a punitive

87 Ibn al-Athīr 2008, 202. 88 Fletcher 1986.

expedition – to punish the Khwārazm-Shāh for his misdeeds – than an invasion calculated to lead to permanent occupation. The resulting damage of this early invasion hamstrung the economy of Hülegü's dynastic state.

Once established, the Ilkhanate stretched over a landscape with a deep history of urban and agricultural economic prosperity that had been severely disrupted by early Mongol military activity. Chinggis Khan had already begun forming a new civil administration for the region with his appointment of Maḥmūd Yalawāch, first as governor of Ghazna and then over the imperial branch secretariat in Transoxania. Similarly, Bahā' al-Dīn Juwaynī brought significant experience serving the Khwārazm-Shāhs to his new position. After him, numerous individuals worked to stabilize the economy in spite of the trauma of the 1220s. Their success was mixed, and the end result was ambivalent. Hamdallāh Mustawfī, who laments the lasting damage of Chinggis Khan's invasion, elsewhere praises the prosperity of the latter Ilkhanate.

But, that all said, it is necessary to distinguish between the immediate catastrophic effect of the Mongols, and the nature of their subsequent rule in Persia, in particular after Hülegü, justifiably or not, had established a permanent kingdom for himself and his successors.⁸⁹ Here again there is a traditional view, and again it is for the most part based on testimony internal to the Mongol Ilkhanate: in this case to the great *Jāmi' al-Tawārikh* of Rashīd al-Dīn. For much of the period of Ilkhanid rule, he remains our principal and most persuasive contemporary authority. But as we have seen, he had an agenda, that of glorifying the achievement of his master, Ghazan Khan, at least in part by portraying the pre-Ghazan period in very gloomy colors. Certainly the efforts of Ghazan and his ministers had some effect, but there was probably some damage that was beyond repair.

This damage was only exacerbated by the large numbers of Turko-Mongol pastoralists that the Mongol invasions introduced into Iran. This had an inevitable impact both on the use of land and on the demographics of the region. In all probability, the number of Turks in the Mongol armies of conquest was much greater than the number of Mongols. In fact, it seems likely that many more Turks from Central Asia settled in Persia under the Mongols than had come during the Seljuq period. One of the enduring results of this fact is that the nomadic population of modern Iran retained a significance, which was hardly matched anywhere else in the Middle East.

89 See the comments of [Jackson 2017](#), 417–18.

If the local agricultural economy struggled through the Mongol period, long-distance trade enjoyed a moment of expansion. The Mongol Empire encompassed pretty much the entirety of the traditional “Silk Roads,” though these overland routes of trans-Asiatic exchange had already declined in favor of quicker and more cost-effective ocean routes around India. Under the Mongols, trade between east and West Asia was robust, both along the overland routes and across the Indian Ocean. In part due to Mongol depredations in Iran, Hormuz emerged during this period as the primary entrepôt into the Indian Ocean marketplace.⁹⁰ During the Mongol period, Arabian horses traveled east through the Persian Gulf into India, while Chinese silver flowed west to fill a long-standing shortage in the Islamic world. Midway along that route, India benefited from trade with Toluid states on either side of it.⁹¹

The overland routes had been reunited under the political domination of a nation that excelled at moving people and goods, who fostered strong relationships with merchants from various societies, and who moved the political capitals of east and Southwest Asia northwards, closer to these historic trade routes. This created a late period of “Silk Roads” activity, as evidenced by Francesco Pegolotti’s guidebook for merchants traveling to Qubilai’s capital. It may well be that the status of Tabriz as a trade hub was just as much of an inspiration for Jochid claims over Azerbaijan as was the region’s usefulness for nomadic herders.⁹² Under the ilkhans, Tabriz did become an international emporium, bolstering the state’s economy and fostering the cosmopolitan culture that made possible works like Rashīd al-Dīn’s history of the world.⁹³ How much this is to be credited to Mongol policy is uncertain, as the decline of the Frankish Crusader states also lifted the hindrance of regional conflict from the exercise of trade. Meanwhile, the strong presence of Italian merchants in the Black Sea, itself a product of expanded Latin influence there after the Fourth Crusade, enhanced the prosperity of Tabriz immensely.

As previously mentioned, Italian merchants operating in the Black Sea faced two choices: the luxury markets of Tabriz and the grain ports of the Golden Horde. After 1335, the family of Choban proved more hostile toward traders than the ilkhans had been, and the need for grain outstripped the desire for luxury goods, shifting Italian activity away from Iran across the fourteenth century. That focus on grain, and the general scaling back of European trade with the Mongol world, was directly connected to another

90 Kauz 2006. 91 Yokkaichi 2009. 92 Ciocîltan 2012, 42–55. 93 Pfeiffer 2014.

consequence of Mongol control of the trans-Asiatic trade routes: the transmission of *Yersinia pestis* in the great pandemic known as the Black Death. Giovanni Boccaccio, writing in 1353, was already aware of the source of the disease “somewhere in the East,” and the pestilence continued to affect both Iran and the lands of the Golden Horde for decades.⁹⁴ This immediate impact, combined with the subsequent decrease of trade and the long impact of the early Mongol invasions on the region’s agricultural production, put the Middle East in a difficult economic position, contributing to the region’s long-term stagnation relative to other regions of Eurasia.

The Cultural Impact of the Mongols

A slightly longer version of Ibn al-Athīr’s expression of shock at the violence of Chinggis Khan’s initial conquest would include his lament about having to write “the obituary of Islam” as a result. This fear, it turned out, was misplaced. It is true that Ibn al-Athīr died a quarter of a century before the most dramatic event in the Mongol conquest, namely the killing of the last ‘Abbāsīd caliph at Baghdad, and that he certainly would not have softened his language had he known of the latter event. However, Islam as a religion and as a cultural framework survived and ramified through the period of the Ilkhanate. Ghazan’s conversion in 1295 marked the official alignment between the royal family and the faith, but that alliance was by no means mono-faceted. The first three Muslim ilkhans – Aḥmad Tegüder, Ghazan, and Öljeitü – expressed their faith in ways that would have earned censure by the late ‘Abbāsīds: to differing degrees they embraced charismatic Sufi shaykhs and expressed a reverence for the biological descendants of the prophet that verged on, and under Öljeitü became, Shī‘ism.

Only with Abū Sa‘īd, the last of his line, do we see a rigorously Sunnī ilkhan, though his example would prove the exception rather than the norm in the subsequent history of the Persianate world. In the immediate wake of the Chinggisid period, Sufi shaykhs began to appear as interlocutors at court. This is most evident in Central Asia, where Sufism was even more influential in attracting the Mongols to Islam than it was in Iran. However, the experience of Ghazan and especially of Öljeitü as regents of eastern Iran, on the frontiers of Central Asia, before their accession to the throne meant that the political influence of “God’s unruly friends” was felt further west as well.⁹⁵

94 Fazlinejad and Ahmadi 2018; Schamiloglu 2017. 95 Karamustafa 1994, 56–59.

Sufism as a platform for royal legitimacy was, of course, most fully realized in the Ṣafavid family of Ardabīl. The eponymous Ṣafī al-Dīn was a regular figure at the court of the last three ilkhans, and his order certainly benefited from their personal and geographic proximity to the new center of political life in northern Iran. That the family also embraced Shī'ism is further testament to the new avenues for expressing Islam that opened as a result of Mongol rule. Before the coming of the Mongols, Shī'ī theological and philosophical speculation had not enjoyed open support in the 'Abbāsīd world since the time of the Buyids. With the increased repressions of the Seljuq period, Shī'ī speculative writing had been limited to pockets of Ismā'īlī protection. That is where Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī enjoyed patronage for a significant portion of his career, and from where he brought his polymathic scholarly program under Mongol patronage.

As has already been mentioned, Ṭūsī and his protégés Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī and 'Allama al-Hillī created a framework for Shī'ī theology and philosophy under the umbrella of Ilkhanid patronage. Ṭūsī and Shīrāzī also contributed to the articulation of Illuminationist theosophy. This school had been vigorously suppressed after Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf (Saladin) ordered the execution of its founder, Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl, in 1191, but it found new space in the Mongol milieu, relieved as it was of the monolithic doctrinal limits of the Seljuq–'Abbāsīd alliance.

The Mongol experience even influenced Islamic sciences outside the Ilkhanate. Rashīd al-Dīn attempted to articulate a notion of *jihād* to justify his patrons' ongoing war with the Mamluks of Egypt.⁹⁶ He – and the Ilkhanid state more generally – was met with the withering denunciation of Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328), one of the most important Muslim writers of the medieval period. Many of Ibn Taymiyya's most strident statements about faith, authority, and war were written to address the new Mongol threat to his east, but they became central to later Ḥanbalī doctrine, including the fundamentalist reform movement of Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb (1703–1792).

Beyond Islamic theology and philosophy, the Ilkhanid period was a pivotal moment in the development of various cultural expressions in the eastern Islamic world. This is true both because and in spite of the Mongol presence. Despite the oft-quoted trope of the Tigris river running red with the blood of scholars and black with the ink of scribes, Baghdad was once again an economic and cultural center almost immediately once the dust of conquest

96 Krawulsky 2011, 87–118.

had settled. Some new cultural programs, such as Rashīd al-Dīn's attempt to integrate Chinese medical theory into a culture dominated by Galen and Ibn Sīnā, found no traction.⁹⁷ In other areas, the impact was significant. Starting with Rashīd al-Dīn's world history, we begin in this period to see genealogical myths of Oghuz Khan, the legendary ancestor of the Oghuz Turkic tribes who made up the Seljuq military confederacy.⁹⁸ Such myths had a long life particularly in Anatolian circles, where they provided a deep genealogical legitimacy for non-Chinggisid *beys* such as the Ottomans.⁹⁹

A more profound model of the past appeared decades after the end of the Ilkhanate in the writing of Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406). His theory on nomadic kin networks as a powerful generative force for new states is based on his familiarity with Berber states in his native North Africa. However, knowledge of the Mongol Empire and of the Ilkhanate no doubt influenced his conviction, particularly given his personal interactions with Temūr, who sought to revive a consciously Mongol state. Indeed, Turko-Mongol nomadic traditions lie behind every dynasty to come to power in Iran from the thirteenth century to the nineteenth. While the Seljuq invasion provided some of the biological stock for these dynasties and their armies, the Ilkhanate was a much more attractive and sustainable model for a unified patrilineal sultanate than was the fatally fractious Seljuq Empire.

Only in recent years has the most eloquent evidence for the vitality of cultural life in Mongol Persia come to light. This is a very large manuscript, mentioned earlier, which has been published in facsimile, containing some 209 separate works, two-thirds of them in Persian, the remainder in Arabic. They were collected in Tabriz by a Persian man of letters, Abū al-Majd Tabrīzī, during the reign of Abū Sa'īd, between 1321 and 1335. The compilation is called the *Safīna-i Tabrīz*, literally “The Ship of Tabriz.” It is worth reproducing the list of subjects that are dealt with, which one of the *Safīna*'s students has produced:

Prophetic traditions, ethics and mysticism, jurisprudence, scholastic theology, exegetical literature, history, verse encomiums, lexicography, grammar, literary criticism, philosophy, literary texts containing epic and didactic poetry, surveys of religions and sects, astronomy and astrology, geomancy, mineralogy, mathematics, medicine, epistles and testaments, administrative texts, collections of poetry, collections of quatrains, Persian and bilingual dictionaries, music, cosmography and geography, and several collections of individual poets.¹⁰⁰

97 Berlekamp 2010.

98 Kamola 2015.

99 Binbaş 2010.

100 Seyed-Gohrab and McGlinn 2007, 17.

Research on the *Safīna* has hardly begun, but it is certainly clear, from what is so far known about it, that what may justifiably be termed “civilization” was flourishing in Mongol Persia’s principal city during the later decades of Ilkhanid rule.

A better-studied cultural development from the Ilkhanid period occurred in the area of manuscript illumination and painting. In the decades preceding the Mongol conquest, book illustrations had begun to expand out of the realm of scientific drawings (such as those of astronomical constellations, materia medica manuals, and diagrams of automata) into narrative scenes and dedicatory frontispieces. During the Ilkhanate, book painting took off, probably as a result of several impulses. The patrons of books may have felt a need to transmit the lessons of these works to a new ruling elite for whom Arabic and Persian were foreign tongues.¹⁰¹ The Mongols themselves may have created a demand for decorative arts in all media, as well as the circumstances for such extravagant productions with the concentration of wealth and resources that they controlled. An illustrated copy of al-Birūnī’s *Chronologies of Ancient Nations* from this period reflects contemporary concerns over the questions of ethnography, national identity, and religion raised by the Mongol presence.¹⁰²

Outside influences also played a role in the development of book painting, as Chinese, European, and Indian art, artists, and technologies found their way into the region. Such foreign influences are evident in the two most famous manuscripts of the late Ilkhanid period: a fragmentary Arabic copy of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh* and the now dispersed copy of Firdawsī’s epic, the book now known as the “Great Mongol *Shāhnāma*.” Both of these were produced at the capital city, Tabriz: the former at Rashīd al-Dīn’s own scriptorium and the latter probably by someone involved in the tumult of the late dynasty.¹⁰³ Such heavily illustrated historical manuscripts became a hallmark of the Ilkhanid dynasty, and in the scramble to claim their mantle of legitimacy after 1335, other courts adopted the practice. *Shāhnāma* manuscripts from Injuid Shīrāz seem to respond to the project of the Great Mongol *Shāhnāma*, and under the Injuids Shīrāz became a hub of innovation in illustration and particularly in illumination techniques.¹⁰⁴ In Baghdad, the Jalayirids similarly continued Ilkhanid practices in book making, as did the Turkmen groups that contested with them for command of northern Iran. These competitive patronage programs culminated at the Timurid courts of

¹⁰¹ Blair 1993. ¹⁰² Hillenbrand 2016. ¹⁰³ Blair 1995; Grabar and Blair 1980.

¹⁰⁴ Wright 2012.

the early fifteenth century, where dynastic contestations played out in part through the commission of historical texts, including copies of the *Shāhnāma* and of the works of Rashīd al-Dīn, as well as new texts written for new patrons.¹⁰⁵

Beyond painted books, the influence of Chinese decorative arts is seen in the tilework of Abaqa's summer palace at Takht-i Sulaymān, where, as has been described, the frieze reliefs of Iranian kings were accompanied by paired molded tiles with images of dragons and phoenixes from Chinese models. Some of these tiles were made using the new glazing technique of *lajvardina*, in which gold was applied over a rich blue glaze extracted from cobalt ore. The same cobalt, mined in the eastern reaches of the Ilkhanate, fueled the contemporary emergence of blue-and-white porcelain ware in China under the ilkhans' cousin dynasty, the Yuan. And anyone who has seen the mausoleum in Sulṭāniyya has seen eloquent evidence of the fact that the Mongols were capable of impressive feats of building, as well as demolishing. Cultural transmission may possibly even have continued westward from Sulṭāniyya: some believe that the mausoleum's double-skinned dome may have influenced Brunelleschi's design, a century later, for the dome of Florence Cathedral.¹⁰⁶ There were certainly plenty of Italians in Ilkhanid Azerbaijan who might have noticed the design of the Persian dome and taken their knowledge of it home with them. But cultural transmission as it has now been identified touched many other fields – historiography, geography and cartography, agriculture, cuisine, astronomy, and printing, among others.¹⁰⁷ Much of this exchange occurred between the Mongol kingdoms in Persia and China, which were ruled by the same branch of the imperial family, and ideas traveled in both directions, though predominantly from China to Persia.

So there was a positive side to Mongol rule in Persia, at least as far as those who managed to survive the initial Mongol invasions were concerned. And it is even possible to argue that the Mongols made a significant contribution to the long-term development of Persia into the modern nation of Iran.¹⁰⁸ It is interesting that the Mongols called their Persian kingdom "Iran": the ancient name of the country, which had hardly been used since the Muslim Arab invasions of the seventh century. At the time of the Mongol conquest, no polity called "Iran" had existed for 600 years. And the boundaries of Mongol Iran were much the same as, if somewhat wider than, those established in the sixteenth century by the Safavid dynasty, which in their turn were essentially

105 Binbaş 2016, 165–98. 106 Blair 2013, 153–62. 107 Allsen 2001.

108 Fragner 1997; Fragner 2006.

those of modern Iran. Something similar might be said of the Persian language. It had never, of course, died out as a spoken language, but it largely ceased to be written, having been superseded, among the educated classes, by Arabic, the language not only of the Arab rulers but also of the religion of Islam, which they brought with them to Persia. It is true that, long before the arrival of the Mongols, “New Persian” – Persian written in an adapted form of the Arabic script and with a vast accession of Arabic loanwords – had emerged. But Arabic retained prestige and status, not least because it was the language of the Qur’an and of Islamic law and theology. But that meant little to the Mongols before their conversion to Islam, so their period of rule saw the victory of New Persian over Arabic: indeed, Persian became something of a lingua franca not only in the Ilkhanate but throughout the Mongol Empire.¹⁰⁹ The state founded by Hülegü, despite uncertainties over its original legitimacy and unrelenting challenges both domestic and foreign, survived to leave its mark both on contemporary Mongol states across Asia and on the long-term history of Iran and the wider Middle East.

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¹⁰⁹ Morgan 2012.

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The Golden Horde, c. 1260–1502

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Introduction

The peoples of the Golden Horde are called the Jochid Ulus after the name of Chinggis Khan's eldest son, Jochi. Indeed, Chinggis had given each of his four sons their own subject peoples, personal army, and territories. Jochi first received western Mongolia and the Siberian forests, and later the oasis region of Khwārazm and the western steppe, known as Dasht-i Qipchaq after the Turkic tribes who lived there. Yet the Mongol conquests brought even more than Chinggis had originally planned; especially, they brought under Mongol control the hundreds of thousands of villagers and citizens living in the Russian principalities, Crimea, the Volga–Ural region, and the northern Caucasus. Thus when the Jochid territories became fixed in the early 1260s more than half of their subjects had a sedentary lifestyle – and this would weigh deeply on Golden Horde politics.

The Russian-speaking community called the khan's seat of power *Orda*, the Horde, from the term *ordo* by which the Mongols designated a mobile camp. It is also recorded in sixteenth-century Russian sources as *Zolotaia Orda*, the Golden Horde – an old name for nomadic courts. In fact, depending on the context, the peoples of the Volga–Ural regions used such alternative names as *Orda*, *Zolotaia orda*, *Bolshaia orda*, and Jochid Ulus for the social entity that grew from the warriors and their families descended from Jochi.¹

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¹ The term “horde” (*ordu*, *orda*, *ordo*) has a long history that can be traced back to the time of Early Han. For research on pre-Mongol (Liao) *ordo*: Wittfogel and Fêng Chia-shêng 1949, 19, 508–9, 505–70. On the Turkic–Mongol use of the terms “horde” and “Golden Horde”: Vásáry 2009b, 68; and Kawaguchi and Nagamine 2016, 165–81.

Any descendant of Jochi through the male line had a right to claim the throne of the Golden Horde, yet to rule effectively a pretender had to associate himself with powerful tribal leaders. The dominant tribes of the Jochid Ulus were the Qonggirat, Qiyat, Qatay, Manghit, Saljut, Shirin, Barin, Arghin, and Qipchaq. The heads of these tribes were part of the governing council and bore the Turkic and Mongol title of *ulus beg*. Led by the *beglerbeg*, the eldest or the highest-ranking *beg*, they decided on state matters, and especially on war. Most of them had Jochid origins through their maternal line or belonged to secondary lineages, and they took part in the khan's election together with the other male and female members of the extended Jochid family. While originally they were entirely in the hands of the khan, their political weight progressively increased. In the last quarter of the thirteenth century the khan already had to rule in accordance with the *ulus begs* who, in return, acknowledged his authority because he was a descendant of Chinggis Khan's eldest son.²

The Jochids did not only assert dominance over their territories; they also projected power far beyond their borders. From the 1260s onward, they pursued multilateral diplomacy with their neighbors to promote their own interests, even when these went against those of other Mongol leaders. They built alliances with trade and military partners from the Baltic region, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and Europe. In particular, they attempted to maintain good relations with the Mamluks, the Byzantines, the Venetians, and the Genoese, as it allowed them to invest their own capital in overseas business ventures and to penetrate the Mediterranean markets. Moreover, because the Jochid elites were in high demand for new products and luxuries, they triggered local craftsmanship both inside and outside the Mongol Empire. One major effect of their commercial policies was thus to link local economies and long-distance trade.

The adaption of the Mongols to a new environment – the Qipchaq steppe – gave rise to a unique material culture that archaeologists and historians have labeled “the civilization of the Golden Horde.”³ The Jochid material culture is positively distinctive and yet the wider political economy that sustained local craft production in the Golden Horde shared many features with the other Mongol khanates, starting with the high social status of the artisans. Indeed the Jochids kept close ties with the other branches of the Chinggisid family, even during the periods of tension that arose with the descendants of Hülegü,

2 On the sociopolitical system of the Golden Horde: Fedorov-Davydov 1973; on the “ruling tribes” and the institution of *beg*: Schamiloglu 1984; Atwood 2006.

3 See for instance Kramarovskiy 2003, 66–74; Kul'pin-Gubaydullin 2008, 7–13.

the Ilkhanids. Although it became politically independent, the Golden Horde remained part of Mongol Eurasia and the roads between the *uluses* were never cut off for long. The regular exchange of people, goods, technologies, and animals among the Chinggisids and their subjects shaped Mongol governance at both local and global levels. When the Toluids and the Chaghadaids suffered from internal issues, made alliances, and waged wars, their northern cousins were affected. Any major changes in Central Asia, Mongolia, and China resonated deep into Jochid territories – forcing them to take actions that increased their power and to adopt strategies that would allow them to survive the decline of the Mongol Empire.

The political regime of the Jochids, and specifically their governing policies, originated from the imperial institutions that Chinggis Khan and his successors created in the thirteenth century, but, as their governance developed, the Jochids absorbed more systematically local customs, religions, and ecology, thus adapting the Chinggisid laws to all their territories. These mostly consisted of forests in the north, steppe zones in the center, minor mountains in the south, and in the oasis region of Khwārazm. In each of these territories, the Mongol governance of the sedentary communities was specific. In Khwārazm the Mongols implemented a dual administration that paired members of the local authority with imported officials. But, in the northern zone, the Mongols maintained the Russian elites as long as they agreed to collaborate.⁴

Based in the lower river valleys of the steppe, the Jochids directly controlled and taxed the nomads. They deeply transformed the local equestrian society by integrating the Qipchaq and Qangli families, who were natives of the western steppe, into the Mongol military units through the *tümen*, or decimal system for military units of 10,000. The Jochids differed from those who ruled the region before them – the Pechenegs and Qipchaq or Cuman – for they had stronger control over their nomadic subjects. In the second half of the thirteenth century, the entire western steppe recognized the authority of the Jochid ruler; there, Batu (r. c. 1229–1256) and his descendants' prestige remained untouched until the second half of the fourteenth century – a long-term loyalty that was uncommon in nomadic societies.

The Golden Horde had a deep impact on Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Russia. One of its most important legacies lies in the spread of Islam as it became the dominant religion in diverse parts of these regions during the

4 On the Mongol technologies of governance according to geography: Allsen 2006. The mountain landscape lay in the Caucasus, west of the Caspian Sea, and in the Ustyurt plateau, east of the Caspian Sea.

centuries when the Mongols were in power. The Golden Horde elite started to convert to Islam following Batu's brother Berke (r. c. 1257–1267); from his time onward the Jochid rulers called themselves sultan, a term appearing on their coins next to the title of khan. They also welcomed Muslim literati, jurists, financiers, merchants, mint makers, and administrators who sought employment after the collapse of the Qara-Khitai, Khwārazm-Shāh, Ayyūbid, and 'Abbāsīd dynasties. This seasoned Muslim administrative staff, habituated to working for nomadic rulers and equestrian regimes, would provide the Jochids with the necessary tools to govern the Russians, Volga Bulgarians, Khwārazmians, and other sedentary subjects.⁵ By attracting the skilled artisans and court personnel of the old Muslim dynasties of Central and Western Asia, the Golden Horde developed a functional governance based on a blend of Mongol and Muslim administrative techniques.

A less conspicuous legacy of the Golden Horde, yet a major one, is the emergence of the house of Moscow. After the conquest, the East Slavic elites rapidly became involved in the Jochid power system. The khans, who considered the northern principalities to be a key possession, dealt with the various princes and constantly interfered with their politics. The princes who were supported by the Jochids had matrimonial alliances with the khans and received military support and tax exemption from them. The Russian Orthodox clergy also benefited from the khans' grants and immunities. Progressively the princes of Moscow distinguished themselves and finally gained the khans' trust by showing their ability to levy a tribute for them – the long-term relationship they built with their nomadic masters would benefit the Muscovites beyond all expectations. Finally, the gradual but steady integration of the Slavic world into the wider political and economic system of central Eurasia, which dates from the time of the Golden Horde, can be considered a major outcome of Mongol domination.

During the Soviet Union era, the dominant scholarship analyzed the Mongol period through the prism of the "Tatar yoke" and limited historiographical debate to the impact of the Golden Horde on Russia. In the nationalist view, the Mongols had a negative effect on the creation of the Russian nation. More generally, in Soviet historiography, this period was considered an unfortunate interlude in Russian history, and historians even avoided the name "Golden Horde." After the disintegration of the Soviet

5 Allsen 2006, 130–33.

Union, scholars were free to elaborate new historiographical conceptions and give the Mongol period the place it deserves in the history books.⁶

Now many Muslim peoples living in the Russian Federation and Central Asia see the time of the Golden Horde as a foundation of their history. Most of the origin narratives of the Kazakhs, Turkmen, Bashkirs, Karakalpaks, Tatars, and other Muslim peoples are entangled in the conversion stories of the Jochid rulers and stem from the Golden Horde period. Indeed, Mongol rule accelerated Islamization in the Eurasian steppe, the Volga–Ural region, Crimea, Eastern Europe, Kazakhstan, and southern Siberia. In these regions, Islam socially integrated new communities by shaping everyday life and collective memory and by combining shamanist rituals and homegrown Sufism.⁷

The Mongol khanate of the Golden Horde lasted until the sixteenth century. Four historical periods can be roughly distinguished: 1227–c. 1260 marks the time during which the Jochid Ulus was entirely part of the Mongol Empire and had no financial autonomy; c. 1260–1368 is considered the heyday of the Golden Horde; 1368–1480 coincides with the period of the Jochids' resilience and reorganization after the fall of Yuan China; and 1480–c. 1550 marks their final collapse and the loss of their ancestral lands in the lower Volga. This chapter focuses on the core periods of Golden Horde history, during which the Jochids shaped, consolidated, and finally successfully reformed their *ulus* to adapt to the changeable surrounding world.

The Rise of the Golden Horde

Jochi and the Conquest of the Northwest

Historians have disagreed on how to date and narrate the birth of the Golden Horde. The formative stage of the Jochid Ulus remains obscure to us for two related reasons. First, very little is known about Jochi, the eldest son of Chinggis Khan's first wife, born around 1182 after a Merkit raid against the Mongols. Second, the Toluids, who had appropriated Chinggis's throne, controlled the official historiography of the Mongol Empire from the time of Möngke (1250s), and, according to this official narrative, Jochi played a lesser role in the creation of the empire.⁸ In fact, the Jochids were a very powerful branch of the Chinggisid family, and they appeared as the only challengers to the Toluids. It was thus

6 Kołodziejczyk 2011, xiii–xxix; Favereau and Raymond 2014, 8–11, 30–41.

7 DeWeese 1994, 3–16.

8 Jochi appeared not only as the son of a Merkit chieftain but also as a poor commander who did not deeply involve himself in the Mongol conquests: Atwood 2017, 35–56.

crucial for the Toluids to undermine any claim to the highest office that the descendants of Jochi might have.

Jochi was granted the region of the Irtysh river between southern Siberia and the Altai mountains as a domain to establish his own *ulus*. According to the Mongol inheritance rules, as the firstborn son he had received the territory located farthest away from his father's native lands, which was in the westernmost part of the Mongol Empire. Yet this was not a fixed territory and Jochi was expected to expand it: the first significant extension of his *ulus* dated back to the campaign of 1207–1208 against the *hoi-yin irgen*, the forest people of southern Siberia.⁹ Satisfied with Jochi's victories, Chinggis granted him the newly conquered Siberian forests, and entrusted him with his next task: the submission of the northwestern rebels, especially the Merkit and their allies the eastern Qipchaq, also known as Qangli.

In 1218, when Chinggis Khan launched the Central Asian campaign, he asked his four sons to take part in the attacks against the large empire of the Khwārazm-Shāh. Jochi was ordered to seize control of the region south of the Aral Sea, before joining Chinggis's army near Samarqand. In 1219 he successfully completed his mission by taking the city of Jand.¹⁰ At that time, Chinggis showed great favor toward his eldest son and seemed to consider him his chief heir.¹¹ During the Central Asian campaign, the Mongol Empire expanded dramatically and Chinggis apportioned more lands, warriors, and subject peoples to his sons. Jochi was promised the Syr Darya valley and the Volga–Ural region, the heart of the Qipchaq steppe.¹²

But during the siege of Urgench, the old capital of the Khwārazm-Shāh, Jochi struggled with his brother Chaghadaï and it took them four months to finally enter and sack the city. Chinggis considered this interminable siege a military failure; besides, Jochi and his brothers had divided the population of Urgench among themselves and left no share for their father. After he had forced his sons to provide for him, Chinggis made a significant decision. As planned, he would entrust the Khwārazm area to Jochi but he would also grant Chaghadaï a part of the taxes collected in the local cities. In addition, he withdrew his confidence from Jochi as his successor to the imperial throne.¹³

9 *SH*, §197–99. Allsen 1983, 8–10; Buell 1992, 3–7. On the complex chronology of Jochi's early campaigns due to the conflated narration in *SH*, 734–35, 1045–50.

10 Jochi led the western wing of the Mongol army (*JT*/Thackston, 242–43, 359). *HWC*, 83, 86–90. Bartol'd 1928, 415–16, dates the siege of Jand to 1220; see also Allsen 1983, 11–12; Buell 1992, 26–27.

11 Atwood 2017, esp. 36–38. 12 *JT*/Thackston, 359; Vásáry 2009b, 67.

13 This happened immediately after the Central Asian campaign but the exact reason for Jochi's disgrace remains unsaid. On the conquest of Urgench: *JT*/Thackston, 253–54; Atwood 2017, 50–54.

This may explain why tensions arose between Chinggis and his firstborn soon after the Central Asian campaign. Jochi would never again travel to Mongolia, where his father was waiting for him. In February 1227, while Chinggis, Chaghadai, and Ögödei were riding to Jochi's camp to summon him, he died. Shortly after, Chinggis designated Batu as Jochi's primary heir. Batu was then granted his father's status along with the best half of his lands and peoples. In return for being appointed the new Jochid leader, Batu took over the conquests that Jochi had never completed.¹⁴

Batu and the Great Western Steppe

Batu won the favor of Chinggis Khan's successor Ögödei, and he was able to maintain himself as the head of Jochi's *ulus*. But Batu was younger than Orda – the eldest son of Jochi. Although he was not given political leadership, Orda remained a highly respected member of the ruling family, and a seasoned military commander. Most likely, he did not easily accept abandoning his ruling rights. Jochi's succession had generated trouble to the point that his *keshig* (hereditary guard) split in two to avoid war: half of the warriors stayed with Batu on the lower Volga and the other half went east to serve Orda and his descendants, who lived in the middle Syr Darya and upper Irtysh, where they founded a separate power later known as the “Blue Horde.”¹⁵ Batuids and Ordoids could not claim each other's territories and peoples; they shaped two separate lines of succession that would maintain good relationships with one another for several generations. All agreed that the descendants of Batu had precedence over the descendants of Orda.

In 1229, at the *quriltai* (assembly) for the enthronement of Ögödei, the Mongols decided to subdue the Qipchaqs, and entrusted Batu with supervising the new military operations in the west. His armies took more than ten years to finally gain control of the western steppe. In the early 1240s, Batu dominated the Qipchaq steppe, the Bulghar kingdom, and the Russian principalities. He also had a claim on eastern Anatolia: the Seljuqs of Rûm had submitted to the Mongols after their defeat at Köse Dagħ in 1243, and now paid them tribute. Obviously Batu's aim was to integrate the new conquered lands and peoples into his own *ulus*. The campaigns had brought the sedentary peoples of the Volga valley under his control: Bulghars, Bashqirds, Alans, and Russians, who began to interact regularly with the Mongol herders and warriors. Batu himself had chosen the lower Volga for

14 JT/Thackston, 359–60; Allsen 1983, 13; Atwood 2017, 35–56.

15 See the early fifteenth-century source *Mu'izz al-ansāb* 2006, 39. See also JT/Thackston, 347–51; Allsen 1985–1987, 8–10; HWC, 266–67.

his residence – not only did it provide excellent grass with water and salt, but it was also a safe area and a crossroads of trade routes.

During the interregnum of the khatun Töregene, the widow of Ögödei, Batu had not interfered with her authority in Qaraqorum and, in return, she had let him rule the western steppe on his own. Batu now considered himself to be the supreme master of his subjects; he did not send vassal rulers to Qaraqorum and granted them his own *yarlighs* (decrees).¹⁶ He was also careful to remain in the lower Volga and refused to travel to Mongolia. Thus, at the enthronement *quriltai* of Güyük in 1246, it was Orda who led the Jochid delegation to Qaraqorum and participated in the inauguration rituals.¹⁷

Güyük Qa'an appointed his own governors to oversee the Russian principalities, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Iran. For the Jochids, who considered most of these regions theirs, this was a direct interference in their power. The tensions between Batu and Güyük reached a whole new level and, in 1248, the qa'an launched a military expedition to take control of the Jochid Ulus. But Güyük never reached the lower Volga and died on the outskirts of Samarqand. A few sources claim that the Jochids, who were Güyük's fiercest enemies, had poisoned him.¹⁸

During the regency of Güyük's widow, Oghul Qaimish, the status quo between the center of the Mongol Empire and the Golden Horde changed to the Jochids' advantage.¹⁹ Since the death of Chaghadaï in 1242, Batu was the *aqqa*, the "eldest" of the ruling Chinggisids, and this conferred upon him obvious authority over the Mongol *noyans* (military elites). It is not by chance that Kirakos of Ganjak, an Armenian historian working for the Mongols, called Batu *basileopator*, "the qa'an's father." Batu was then at the height of his powers and, as *aqqa*, he deeply influenced the choice of the new qa'an.²⁰ His candidate Möngke, Tolui's eldest son, was elected in 1251.²¹ At that time, the connections between the Jochids and the Toluids were stronger than ever.

Having discovered a plot to kill Möngke, the Toluids, with Batu's blessing, launched a massive purge against the descendants of Ögödei and

16 HWC, 267. 17 JT/Thackston, 392–93. 18 Kim 2005, 331–32.

19 HWC, 262–63; JT/Thackston, 395.

20 HWC, 561; Kirakos Gandzaketsi 1976, 181 (Kirakos called Batu by the prestigious Byzantine title *Basileopator* – Father of the Basileus). On Batu's status and authority: Allsen 1987, 54–57.

21 Batu's brothers Berke and Toqta Temür attended the election *quriltai* with a large military force, making sure that Batu's candidate was enthroned: HWC, 563; Jüzjānī 1881/1970, 2: 1177–82; JT/Thackston, 402–3.

Chaghadaï.²² After this dramatic episode, it seems that Batu maintained his peaceful relationship with Möngke, who in turn refrained from interfering in the Jochids' internal affairs.²³ Batu and his descendants had abandoned all claim to the throne of Chinggis Khan, but in turn the other members of the family could not appropriate the Jochid lands and peoples. Batu's status of seniority may also explain why the qa'an waited for his death to command that a new census be completed in the Golden Horde to maximize the tax collection for the central treasury.²⁴ In the Russian lands the tribute was called *dan'*, it was levied at a rate of one-tenth, and its main purpose was not only to tax the subjected peoples but also to conscript young men into the imperial armies.²⁵ On top of the tribute, locals had to pay taxes in goods and coin for the *jam* (postal stations), trade, and troops.²⁶ The Golden Horde had to contribute to the wealth of the Mongol Empire as it was entirely part of it.

The Mongols did not conduct any substantial military operations in the northwest between 1242 and 1256 – a long decade of peace that allowed Batu to develop the administration within the conquered sedentary lands. He not only restored destroyed cities but also founded others, along with new routes. Additionally, he developed trade and attracted traders.²⁷ His policies allowed the Golden Horde to form a stronger economic base. Batu integrated into a single system the Volga–Ural communities, the forest people of Siberia, and populations that formerly belonged to the Khwārazm-Shāh. He also considered the Seljuqs of Rūm, the kingdom of Georgia, and northern Caucasians as his subjects and dealt with their elites directly. Finally, the Russian princes who played by the rules prospered within the Jochid regime. As with the other Mongol leaders of the time, Batu did not care about the religions and origins of his subjects as long as they respected the taboos, sent their sons to serve in the army and the *keshig*, paid their taxes, and committed to campaigning with the Jochids.

Batu died around 1255–1256 on the banks of the Volga.²⁸ He had been one of the most powerful leaders of the Mongol Empire. Juwaynī described him

²² HWC, 578–89; JT/Thackston, 401–10.

²³ As Möngke's power grew, Batu's huge financial advantages may have diminished: apparently the qa'an granted Batu fewer silver ingots from the central treasury than he had asked for, and he was advised to spend his own capital more carefully – possibly a late anecdote: YS, 47; Kychanov 2001, 40. On the balance of power in the relationship between Möngke and Batu: Jackson 1978, 207; Allsen 1987, 54–63.

²⁴ Allsen 1987, 61–63, 104. ²⁵ Smith 1970, 67–68.

²⁶ John of Plano Carpini 1955, 38–39; Brosset 1849–1858, 551.

²⁷ On the creation and development of cities under Batu: Egorov 1985, esp. 95–96, 129–30.

²⁸ According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Batu was forty-eight years old when he died in 1252–1253 (JT/Thackston, 361) but Rubruck saw Batu at the end of 1254.

as an independent king whose “bounty was beyond calculation” and “liberality immeasurable.”²⁹ The *yarlighs* issued during the time of Batu were to remain valid for generations, and the rules established at that time shaped the foundations of the socioeconomic organization of the Golden Horde. The Jochid Ulus, however, remained deeply dependent on the Mongol Empire: not only did the Jochids share their revenues and receive a percentage of the imperial revenues, the qa’an also appointed the head of the Golden Horde.

Berke and the First Collective Conversion to Islam

Sartaq was Batu’s firstborn son and designated heir. His father had entrusted him with the Russians and all the Christians living in his territories. After the death of Batu, Sartaq went to visit Möngke to confirm his position as the new leader of the Jochids. But he died soon afterwards. Möngke then nominated Ulaqchi, another direct descendant of Batu. Ulaqchi, who was still a child, ruled under the regency of Boraqchin, Batu’s widow. But he died after a few months and, according to the Arabic sources, Boraqchin turned to Hülegü for protection. Hülegü (r. c. 1255–1265), who was leading the Mongol armies westward, had become the most powerful Mongol leader in the Middle East. Batu’s younger brother Berke, heading a powerful group of Jochid *begs*, accused Boraqchin of high treason. They finally had her executed. Berke subsequently became the new leader of the Golden Horde (see Table 4.1).³⁰

Berke, the sixth or seventh son of Jochi, was Batu’s half-brother. When he inherited Batu’s throne, around 1256–1257, he was in his forties and had reached the status of elder brother. For two decades Berke had actively participated in the military and political life of the Mongol Empire. In 1251, Batu had sent him to Mongolia to supervise the *quriltai* that elected Möngke Qa’an. Back in the west, Berke was apparently asked to oversee the Seljuqs and the Ayyūbid emirs.³¹

A descendant of the Khwārazm-Shāh through his mother, Berke had converted to Islam possibly under the patronage of a *shaykh* from Bukhara.³² In the early 1250s, Berke’s territory lay in the northern Caucasus.³³ There he welcomed the Muslim leaders, religious men, literati,

²⁹ HWC, 267.

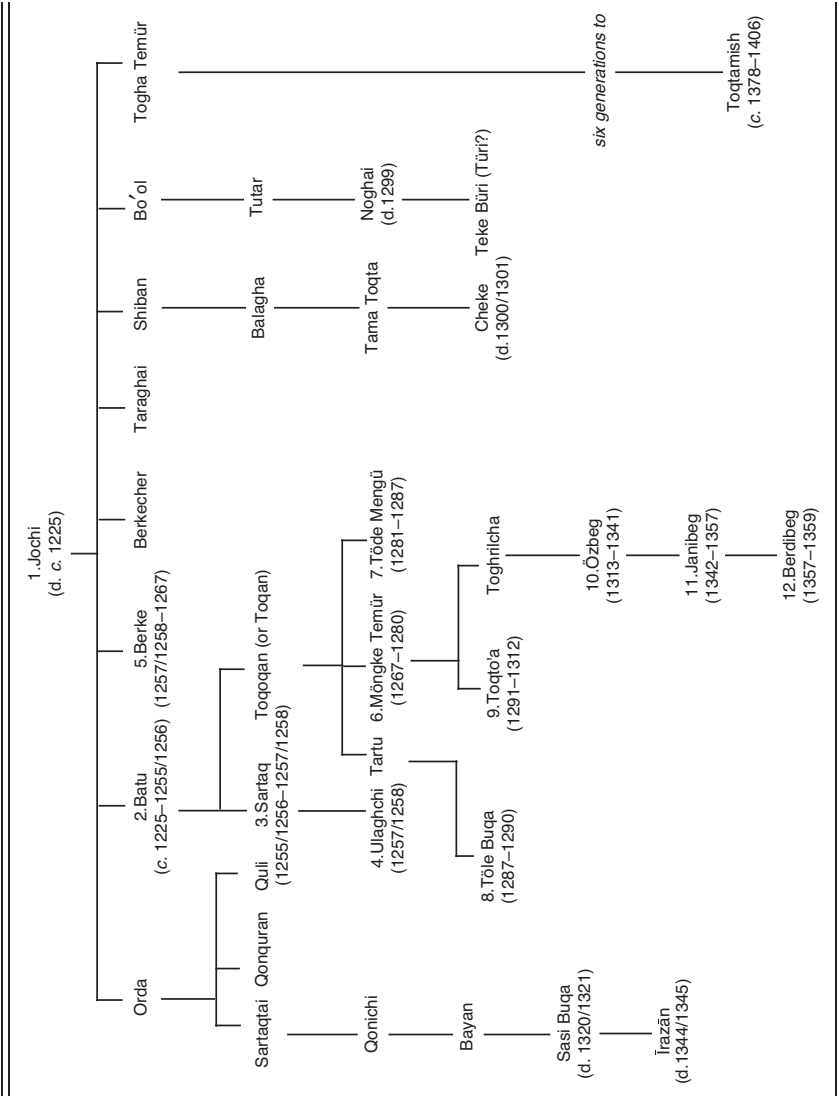
³⁰ HWC, 268. Ulaqchi was either Batu’s fourth son or the son of Sartaq. Boraqchin was Ulaqchi’s mother or grandmother; see details and sources in Favereau 2008, 64–65.

³¹ Vászary 2009b, 75–76. On the origin of the struggle between the Jochids and the Ilkhanids over the Arran and Azerbaijan regions: Jackson 1978, 209; Allsen 1987, 58. A *yarligh* of Möngke’s in favor of the Jochids is mentioned in the letter Özbek sent to Öljeitü in 712/1312: Qāshānī 1969, 146.

³² DeWeese 1994, 83–87.

³³ William of Rubruck 1955, 124. Yet in 1254 Möngke reassigned the Caucasus to Hülegü.

Table 4.1 Rulers of the Jochid Ulus



and administrators who fled the Central Asian and Iranian cities and sought new positions. He obviously saw the 'Abbāsids, Seljuqs, and Ayyūbids as his direct subjects; and the local Muslims seemed to consider him both their spokesman and master.

Möngke had, however, entrusted his brother Hülegü with the new Mongol campaign to the southwest: the Mongols were to attack Iran, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Anatolia, and Greater Armenia. In the fall of 1253, Hülegü's army had departed to Iran. According to a contemporary source, Möngke had ordered that two out of ten Mongol warriors join the conquest army – 300,000 fighters in total, among whom Mongols made up between 70,000 and 170,000.³⁴ Batu, and later Berke, agreed to take part in the operations and sent their warriors like any Chinggisid leaders. The Jochids expected to obtain a substantial share from the 'Abbāsid and Ayyūbid campaigns, and to strengthen their power in the Middle East.

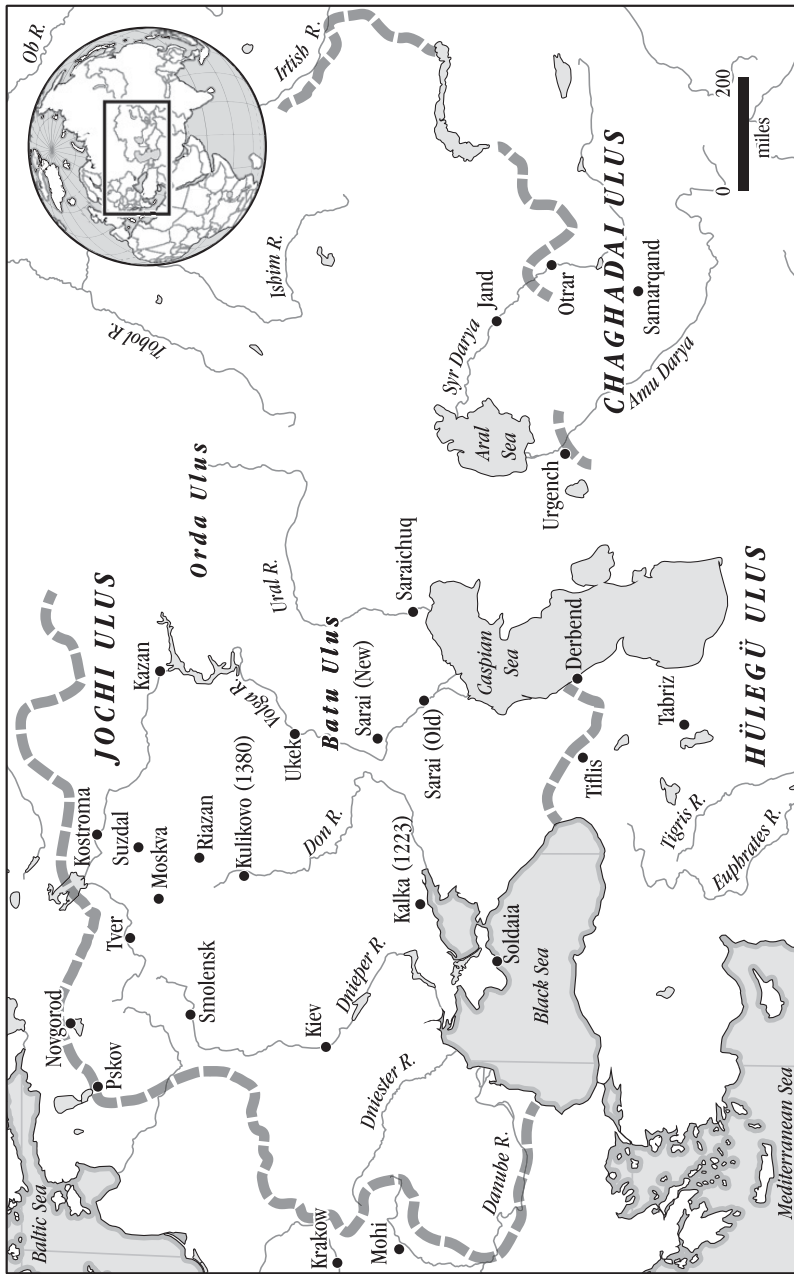
If, on the one hand, Möngke had obviously planned ahead the Middle Eastern campaigns – the ultimate target being Egypt – then on the other hand the nature of his mandate to Hülegü remains ambiguous. Originally, Hülegü was a qa'an appointee and not a ruler himself, but his personal power grew as the Mongol armies successfully advanced. The attack on the Islamic lands interfered with the Jochid positions in the region and Hülegü began to usurp their rights. For now, nothing except his subordinate status to the qa'an limited his ambition.³⁵

Unsurprisingly, when Möngke died tensions arose among the Mongol leaders. Möngke's brothers Qubilai and Arigh Böke began the struggle to succeed him on the throne. Berke sided with Arigh Böke, while Hülegü, whose position was indecisive at first, later turned toward Qubilai. The succession war in Qaraqorum had an impact on the Mongol Empire's western frontier. After less than two years, the Jochid Ulus clashed with Hülegü and his followers. Each side claimed to follow Chinggis Khan's rules and accused the other of disloyalty. Berke complained that Hülegü did not deliver to him his part of the spoils after the conquest of Baghdad, while Hülegü had several Jochid commanders charged with high treason and executed.³⁶ Soon, war broke out near the Terek river, the common border between the Jochids and Hülegü's troops stationed in Transcaucasia (see Map 4.1).

34 HWC, 607–12. On the numbers: Amitai-Preiss 1995, 15.

35 Amitai-Preiss 1995, 13.

36 Kirakos Gandzaketsi 1976, 236; JT/Thackston, 362, 506.



Map 4.1 The Jochid Ulus (Golden Horde) (Joe LeMonnier, <https://mapartist.com/>)

During the years from 1261 to 1263, Berke and Hülegü launched several raids into each other's territories. They reached a stalemate and both sides sought powerful allies.³⁷ At that time, the new Mamluk sultan, Baybars (r. 1260–1277), needed large numbers of warriors to fight both the crusaders and the Mongols in Syria. As soon as Michael Palaiologos, the Byzantine emperor, captured Constantinople from the Latins, Baybars reached an agreement with him. Their first treaty was probably signed between fall 1261 and summer 1262; it established new rules of exchange: emissaries and merchants who were under the Mamluk sultan and the Byzantine emperor's flags were allowed to ship goods, weapons, and slaves from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean and to pass through the straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. The new road from Cairo to Constantinople allowed the Mamluks to bypass the eastern Anatolian circuits now in Hülegü's hands. But Baybars also needed to access Crimea, from where the slave traders used to purchase and ship Mamluks to Egypt. And the southern coast of Crimea, where the harbors were, now belonged to the Jochids.³⁸

In 1261 or 1262, Baybars opened negotiations with Berke through the mediation of Alan merchants. Berke, who was looking for support in his fight with Hülegü, agreed to collaborate with Baybars, Michael Palaiologos, and their allies – the Seljuq sultan 'Izz al-Dīn and the Genoese. This new alliance not only extended the trade road from Cairo to the lower Volga; it also included a complex war plan based on simultaneous assaults against Hülegü's troops: Berke would attack in Syria, Baybars in Transcaucasia, and 'Izz al-Dīn in eastern Anatolia. But in 1263 the Mamluk envoys were blocked in Constantinople. The Byzantine emperor, under Hülegü's threats, had withdrawn from the alliance and detained the Seljuq sultan 'Izz al-Dīn as a prisoner in the city of Ainos in Thrace. While Baybars publicly expressed his anger and frustration, Berke ordered his best commander, Noghai, to make Michael pay for his betrayal.³⁹

Noghai was the son of Tutar, a Jochid prince Hülegü had executed a few years earlier.⁴⁰ After allying with the Bulgharian king, Noghai led the military operations through Thrace, and finally freed 'Izz al-Dīn. The Seljuq sultan, who was under Berke's protection, took refuge with his followers in Crimea, where he remained until his death in 678/1279–1280 CE. Noghai's aim was also to subdue the Byzantine Empire. He took control of the whole region from

37 On the conflict between Berke and Hülegü: Jackson 1978, 233–34; Allsen 1987, 54–63, 218–20; Amitai-Preiss 1995, 78–86; Favereau 2018a, 69–90.

38 On the alliance between Baybars, Berke, and Michael Palaiologos: Favereau 2019a.

39 Pachymérès 1984, 1.234–39, 242–43. Amitai 2008, 359–60. 40 JT/Thackston, 362, 506.

the mouth of the Danube to the Dniester. This strategic move brought the Jochids very close to the Byzantine Empire. In the coming years, Noghai and his people ensured that the straits remained open to Berke's traders and emissaries.⁴¹

Since the Mamluks had defeated them at 'Ayn Jālūt in 1260, the Mongols had left the former Ayyūbid lands, but Hülegü intended to strike back. The primary impact of Berke's choice to ally with the Mamluks – the strongest competitors of the Mongols in the Middle East – was to prevent Hülegü from resuming the conflict with Syria and Egypt. Its secondary effect was the creation of a new Islamic center in the lower Volga. It was not by chance that, in his first letter, Baybars congratulated Berke for his conversion to Islam. After the Mongols had conquered Baghdad and executed the caliph in 1258, Baybars attempted to restore the 'Abbāsīd caliphate in Cairo. At the end of 1262, the sultan enthroned as the new caliph his candidate the 'Abbāsīd al-Ḥākim Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan – whom Berke also seemed to support. Immediately after the enthronement festivities, Baybars sent his envoys to Berke with precious Islamic gifts, including the genealogical tree of the new caliph.⁴²

Berke's conversion had a profound impact during his own time. Indeed, he was the first Mongol leader to embrace Islam. Although the Mamluks claimed to exert an influence upon Berke's choice, this was not the case initially. Berke was raised a Muslim and seems to have received his religious education through the Sufi *shaykh* Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī, who became his mentor.⁴³ His second conversion to Islam at the time he took Batu's throne was a significant political act that expressed both Berke's new symbolic allegiance and his change of orientation. In his first letter to the Mamluk sultan, Berke claimed that he converted along with his four brothers,⁴⁴ and in his second letter he mentioned the names of those who now followed him:

We have all converted to Islam, tribes, clans, individuals, soldiers, big and small people, namely: our younger and elder brothers with their sons; the descendants of Buda Kur, with his children and the people who live in his household; Pulad Kykajas, Janshunuk, and all those who live in their lands; Qudaq, Qarachar, Tanishbugha, Shiremün, Buz Baki, Mingqadur with his armies and servants; Beg Qadaq Binal, Toquz Oghul, Qutluq Temür, Ajji with his children, Durbay and the *tümen* that was sent to the conquest of the

41 Pachymérès 1984, 1.300–13. 42 Broadbridge 2008, 52–53.

43 Jüzjānī 1881, 2.1285–93; DeWeese 1994, 83–87.

44 Berke's letter is summarized in the Arabic sources: see Ayalon 1971, 167–69; Favereau 2011, 101–13.

Khurasan; as well as all those who were with Baiju, such as the *noyan* Bainal and Aykaku.⁴⁵

Most of Berke's allies were the Mongol commanders stationed in Iran, Azerbaijan, and eastern Anatolia before Hülegü arrived and removed them. Among these were the warriors of Baiju, Mongke's commander in Anatolia, killed on Hülegü's order, and the Khurasani troops that joined Negüder, a Mongol commander close to the Jochids who was stationed in eastern Iran. By naming these key figures of the Mongol army, Berke showed that he had strong allies and that Islam was spreading fast in his *ulus*. Although only a part of the nomadic elites did actually convert under Berke's leadership, his religious and political orientations turned the peoples of the Golden Horde into a new community. Indeed, the collective conversion sealed an alliance between the Jochid leader and a number of *begs* and *noyans* who were not Jochids but who all shared the same enemy – Hülegü.

In addition, Berke's choice of Islam did not affect the Jochids' policy of religious tolerance. On the contrary, Berke protected his Christian subjects, which included the Russians, the Armenians, and the Georgians. He not only supported the king of Georgia, who rebelled against Hülegü; he also allowed the Russian Orthodox eparchy to establish itself in Sarai, a new settlement on the lower Volga where he had a palace built.⁴⁶

The 1250s and 1260s saw the formation of an autonomous political body within the Jochid Uls. This was due to both internal and external factors. Berke came to power despite the qa'an's disapproval and he did not visit Qaraqorum to make his enthronement official. His rule laid grounds for a solid and durable socioeconomic organization of the Jochid Uls. His freedom of action came from the fact that the struggle for the qa'an throne captured the focus of central power for four years. In 1264 Arigh Böke finally lost his fight with Qubilai and the Toluid succession conflict ended for the moment. Hülegü died in 1265, followed by Berke in 1266 or 1267.⁴⁷ With a new generation of leaders coming to power, the tensions among the Mongol elites quickly decreased. Berke's successors sought to maintain a middle ground with the Toluids, as they showed a persistent interest in the general matters of the Mongol Empire.

45 Baybars al-Dawādār al-Manşūrī, ed. Tizengauzen 1884, 77, 98–99; Baybars al-Dawādār al-Manşūrī 1998, 82–84. The English translation is ours.

46 *Polnoe Sobranie Russkikh Letopisei* (henceforth PSRL) 1/2, col. 476; PSRL 25, 144.

47 According to the *Mu'izz al-ansāb*, Berke died in 665 H / 1266 CE (*Mu'izz al-ansāb* 2006, 41).

The Heyday of the Golden Horde

Möngke Temür: The First Khan

In 1267, there were at least three candidates for the Jochid throne: a son of Berke and two grandsons of Batu named Möngke Temür and Töde Möngke. The sources disagree on who was Berke's designated heir.⁴⁸ It may have been his son, but according to other versions Berke supported his nephew Möngke Temür in order to bind Batu's followers to him – a strategy that seemed to work during Berke's one decade of rule. However, his succession generated trouble to the point that the Russian sources echo the tensions that followed his death.⁴⁹ After several months, the Jochid elites managed to agree on Möngke Temür and excluded from the throne the members of all the other Jochid lineages, including Berke's descendants.

Möngke Temür was a Batuid and yet he kept the political orientations Berke had initiated. First, he did not comply with the qa'an's orders and conducted his own diplomacy with the other Mongol leaders. Hearing the news of Möngke Temür's election, Qubilai had probably sent his envoys to acknowledge it and grant the new Jochid leader his blessing and investiture gifts, which usually came with a *yarligh* (decree confirming the enthronement) and a seal.⁵⁰ By doing so, Qubilai showed that he still considered himself the overarching ruler of the Mongols. It was in Möngke Temür's interest to maintain good relations with his powerful cousin and to accept his gifts, but times had changed and the Jochid khan no longer needed to visit Qubilai, nor did his enthronement's confirmation imply any form of submission.⁵¹

Around 1267, in Central Asia, a violent conflict broke out between the Ögödeid Qaidu and the Chaghadaid Baraq. Qaidu claimed a substantial part of the Chaghadaid Ulus, targeting especially the cities of Bukhara and Samarqand. Their armies clashed near the Syr Darya river and Baraq won the first round. Qaidu, who needed military help, turned to Möngke Temür and asked for his support. Möngke Temür immediately took sides in the Central Asian conflict and sent 50,000 warriors to Qaidu led by Berkecher, Berke's brother. Indeed the Jochids had strong commercial and political

48 Möngke Temür was the son of Batu's second son Toqan. According to the Arabic sources, Möngke Temür was also Berke's designated heir: Ibn Abi al-Faḍā'il, ed. Tizengauzen 1884, 182, 193; Ibn Abi al-Faḍā'il 1916, 459–60.

49 PSRL 2, 202.

50 On the possible date of Qubilai's embassy and on the seal that he may have granted to Möngke Temür: Belyaev and Sidorovich 2013.

51 JT/Thackston, 435; Qiu 2018, 41–42.

interests in the east and they could not let Baraq destroy Qaidu. The second battle saw the Chaghadaids' defeat and Baraq's escape to the Bukhara and Samarqand area. Baraq did not intend to surrender but to recover his military strength by harnessing local resources, employing craftsmen to build weapons, and raiding villages. Realizing that the region was on the verge of destruction, the winners chose to open peace talks with him.⁵²

In the spring of 1269, the princes representing the descendants of Jochi, Chaghadaï, and Ögödei came to the Talas valley to assemble in a large *quriltai*.⁵³ The three lineages that the Toluids had removed from the succession of Chinggis Khan proclaimed their wish to make peace and their right to act without consulting the qa'an. They reapportioned Baraq's territories and especially Transoxania. There Möngke Temür and Qaidu appropriated one-third of the income, leaving the rest to the Chaghadaids but nothing to Qubilai. Finally, they all agreed that to compensate his loss of income Baraq would seize parts of Abaqa's land.⁵⁴

The following spring, Baraq's troops, reinforced with the 4,000 men that Qaidu had sent, penetrated deep into Khurasan. However, Baraq lost the fight within a few months. Not only did Qaidu's men desert him, but Qaidu himself informed Abaqa that he was withdrawing his support for the Chaghadaid leader. In July 1270, near Herat, Abaqa's army destroyed what was left of Baraq's forces. Baraq managed to flee up to the Bukhara area, but he died there soon afterwards. In the aftermath of the Battle of Herat, most of the Chaghadaid commanders and administrators moved over to Qaidu's service and Baraq's former *ulus* fell into Qaidu's hands. The Chaghadaids' submission would have long-term consequences for the balance of power of the Chinggisid leaders.⁵⁵

Just like Qaidu, who had switched sides when it suited him, Möngke Temür hastened to congratulate Abaqa. In November 1270, the Jochid envoys offered prestigious gifts to the ilkhan, including birds of prey.⁵⁶ The temporary alliance with the Ilkhanids was a side effect of Baraq's defeat. Even more significant, his victory over the Chaghadaid leader bolstered Qaidu and gave him a free hand in his upcoming fight with Qubilai. It may have been part of Möngke Temür's plan to weaken Qubilai and his family but not to destroy the Chinggisid order. For that reason, the Jochids strove to maintain their

52 *JT*/Thackston, 520; Biran 1997, 25–26. 53 *JT*/Thackston, 521–22.

54 *JT*/Thackston, 522. Biran 1997, 26–29. Kim 2009, 26. Hülegü's son Abaqa (r. 1265–1282) was the new Ilkhan.

55 Biran 1997, 30–33. 56 Abaqa sent gifts to Möngke Temür in return: *JT*/Thackston, 535.

diplomatic relations with the Toluids, while at the same time allowing Qaidu's power to grow and threaten Qubilai.

The support of the Golden Horde had been instrumental to Qaidu's success. It was the Jochid troops that had enabled him to crush Baraq in 1268, and it was Möngke Temür's backup at the Talas *quriltai* that confirmed his victory. Moreover, the Jochids acknowledged Qaidu's authority over the Chaghadaid Ulus. Interestingly, this did not prevent the Ögödeid khan from retaining the share of the income from Transoxania that was granted to the Golden Horde in Talas. But it gave the Jochid khan a position of superiority over Qaidu. The fact that they shared an economically active border in the vicinity of Jand, and that the transcontinental trade roads crossed both domains, partly explained why both rulers were keen to remain on good terms. The alliance between the two would continue until the early 1280s.⁵⁷

In the western steppe, Möngke Temür ordered coins to be minted in his own name. They were issued in Khwārazm, Sarai, Bulghar, and Qrim – the four territories of the Golden Horde where traders, bankers, and taxpayers conducted a thriving business. Berke had already minted silver and copper coins which often bore his *tamgha* (brand), the mention of the 'Abbāsīd caliph, and the name of Arigh Böke.⁵⁸ But on the new issues the qa'an was not mentioned, as Möngke Temür intended to rule over his *ulus* without interference.⁵⁹

In 1271 Qubilai dispatched his son Nomuqan with a coalition of princes to Almaliq in order to surveil the western border and keep a close watch on Qaidu's activities. In 1275 Qubilai asked Nomuqan to retrieve the golden *gerege* (tablet of authority) that he had granted earlier to Qaidu, and he summoned Qaidu to surrender and come to his court. Yet in the fall of 1276 the princes who surrounded Nomuqan rebelled against him and his father, and chose to support Shiregi's claim to the qa'anate, for they strongly disagreed with Qubilai's policies. They sent Qubilai's son Nomuqan and his general Antong to Qaidu, who transferred Nomuqan to the Jochid khan. Möngke Temür agreed to hold the prince prisoner in his camp, and he was kept there for eight years.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Biran 1997, 63–65.

⁵⁸ Huletski and Farr 2016, 20–35. On Berke's coinage in the Sarai region: also Petrov, Kravtsov, and Gumaiunov 2018, 145–58.

⁵⁹ See Vásáry 2009b, 76–77; Ağat 1976, 54–55.

⁶⁰ It is also possible that the rebellious princes sent Nomuqan directly to Möngke Temür. On Qaidu's politics and the wider context: Biran 1997, 37–67; Kim 2009, 20–26; Qiu, forthcoming.

It was in Möngke Temür's interest to maintain a balance of power that was directly favorable neither to the qa'an nor to Qaidu, and the Jochid khan, who changed sides several times, was very successful. He provided troops and equipment to Qaidu – a logistic that fell, also, upon the neighboring horde of Orda's descendants with whom the descendants of Batu remained on good terms. More generally, the Jochids supported the Mongol system of domination because they were part of it economically, politically, and socially. Just like Batu in the old days, what they intended to appropriate was the Mongol leadership – which did not necessarily imply taking over the qa'anate but rather holding a status of seniority that gave them precedence over the other Chinggisid branches.

Pursuing Berke's plan for the commercial autonomy of the Golden Horde, Möngke Temür continued the foreign policy his predecessor had initiated. Although he did not convert to Islam, he exchanged embassies with the Mamluks and the agreement with the Byzantines over the straits also remained valid throughout his rule (1267–1282). The war between the Jochids and the Ilkhanids had turned into a cold peace and Möngke Temür maintained relationships with sultan Baybars and his successor.⁶¹ The alliance between the Mamluks and the Golden Horde would last, independently of the khans' religious choice, as it implied fruitful economic benefits for all the partners involved.

At roughly the same time, Möngke Temür established a series of agreements with his sedentary subjects in order to bind them to the Jochids. His first *yarligh* (decree) to the Metropolitan, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, was issued in 1267: it exempted Orthodox priests from military service and tribute. This was directly in line with the policy of "religious toleration" initiated under Chinggis and Ögödei – according to which the priests of certain religions were made *tarkhans*, protected people who were exempt from tax and military conscription. In exchange, the *tarkhans* would pray for the khan and his family. Möngke Temür integrated the Orthodox clerics into the protected peoples but, in return, their primary duty was to support the khan. This policy turned the Orthodox clergy into a useful ally for the Jochids. At that time, the Russian princes called the khan "tsar," but they did not unanimously support Mongol supervision. By making the Russian Church co-operate with the Mongol administrators, Möngke Temür strengthened ties with the Russian principalities and took firmer control of them.⁶²

61 Amitai-Preiss 1995, 89–90.

62 On "Mongol religious toleration": Atwood 2004; on the *yarligh* that Möngke Temür granted to the Russian Church: Zimin 1955, 467–68.

The Genoese also established their first trading post in the Golden Horde territories during Möngke Temür's rule. The largest Crimean harbor was Sudak, which the Latins called Soldaia. Because the Qipchaqs, Greeks, Jews, Alans, Venetians, and others shared the place, the Genoese decided to create their own fortified harbor – around 1275–1280, the khan allowed them to rent lands in Caffa, an old Greek settlement on the southeastern coast of the Crimean peninsula. The Genoese were already competing with the Venetians in the Black Sea; now they challenged them on land: they settled in Crimea and, soon after, at the khan's court on the lower Volga. Crimea was a crossroads that attracted traders and business from neighboring regions. For the Latins, it was the easiest door to the western steppe and, beyond, to the old silk roads now under the control of the Mongols. In the same way that he accommodated foreign priests and friars who supported his power, Möngke Temür welcomed the Latin traders provided that they paid the commercial tax and respected the law.⁶³

Perhaps even more significant at the time, a number of seafaring merchants from northern and Central Europe obtained trading and traveling rights in the Golden Horde territories. Since the mid-thirteenth century, several northern cities, including Lübeck, Hamburg, Cologne, Visby, Bergen, and Novgorod, joined together in a league, known a century later as the "Hanse."⁶⁴ By allying themselves, the large trading houses of these towns dominated trade in the Baltic and the North Sea, especially the vital fish-and-salt trade, and therefore shaped the commercial exchanges of Northern Europe. The Mongols, who now held sway over the greater part of the continent, broadened the commercial circuits across Eurasia to connect their courts to one another and accelerate mobility across their empire. By granting the northern merchants access to his land, the Jochid khan allowed them to penetrate the long-distance circuits of the fur roads and the silk roads at the level of the lower Volga, thereby connecting the continental and maritime routes. In addition, the Mongols provided the merchants with what they most needed: security for trade.⁶⁵ The Golden Horde's privileges to the seafaring houses from the north accelerated the development of their organization and, by doing so, contributed to their success and prosperity in the last quarter of the thirteenth century and in the fourteenth century.

63 Ciocîltan 2012, 152–57.

64 Lübeck, Hamburg, and Cologne are located in modern-day Germany; Visby is in Sweden; Bergen in Norway; and Novgorod in Russia.

65 Valk 1949, 57.

Noghai and the Balkans

After the death of Möngke Temür around 1282, Noghai appeared as the most powerful *beg* of the *ulus*. He was a senior commander who had led key military operations in the Caucasus and the Byzantine Empire. His headquarters were on the lower Danube but he exerted direct political influence on the territories up to the Don river. In the 1260s, he was already a chief of *tümen* – a contingent of up to 10,000 soldiers – which was the highest grade in the Mongol army; a few years later, probably after Möngke Temür's demise, he became a super-*beg* and ran the governing council of the Golden Horde and the army.⁶⁶

Noghai could not be a candidate for the supreme position of khan. He was not a Batuid, which means that he did not enjoy the same status as the sons and nephews of Möngke Temür who were descended from Jochi through Batu's line. As he could not run for the throne, Noghai supervised the careers of three Jochid princes who successively ruled under his patronage. First, Noghai supported Töde Möngke, who became khan around 1282. Together with Töde Möngke and Qonichi, the leader of Orda's descendants, Noghai sought to improve relations with the qa'an. In 1284, the Jochids held a council, decided to release Qubilai's son Nomuqan, and sent him back to China.⁶⁷ Nomuqan had been a hostage with the Golden Horde for eight years; his liberation was a clear sign that the Jochids were temporarily stepping back from East Asian geopolitics to focus more on the west.

Noghai, who officially became Muslim in the wake of Berke's conversion, pursued the interaction with the Mamluks. As early as 1270, he sent his emissaries to inform Baybars that he had converted. Noghai's aim was to revive the alliance with the sultan against the Ilkhanids. Relations between the Jochids and the Ilkhanids again became tense during Töde Möngke's reign, and war between them was about to reignite. A side effect of the alliance with the Mamluks was Noghai's good relations with the Byzantines and the traders who organized transportation to and from Crimea, especially the Venetians and Genoese – they became part of the intermediaries whom the Jochids welcomed as long as they served the Golden Horde's interests.

The Christian world was a patchwork of sovereignties and Noghai took advantage of this fragmentation to strengthen his position. Even before he became the head of the khan's army Noghai projected his personal power

⁶⁶ On the rise of Noghai and on his Black Sea policy: Veselovskii 1922; Ciocîltan 2012, 248–64; Tanase 2004–2005, 272–77. Noghai became a kind of *beglerbeg*, although he did not claim the title.

⁶⁷ *JT*/Thackston, 438. Biran 1997, 64–65.

onto his neighbors by both diplomatic and military means, and made a series of alliances through marriage. As his territory lay on the lower Danube, Noghai first developed diplomatic and economic relationships with the Byzantine Empire. He married Euphrosyne, a daughter of the Byzantine emperor Andronikos II, who had initially been destined to marry Berke.⁶⁸ Soon after, in 1277–1278, Noghai organized joint military campaigns with the Byzantine emperor against the Bulgarians, and in 1282 they fought together against John of Thessaly. In 1285, the new ruler of Bulgaria, George Terter, not only paid tribute to Noghai but minted coins bearing his name. Together with the Byzantine Empire, Noghai took control of parts of Poland and Lithuania and launched several raids between 1275 and 1279. He was also able to subjugate the Russian princes of Suzdal' and Bryansk who now deferred to him directly rather than to the khan.

Noghai did not involve Töde Möngke in his campaigns. Instead he hired Töle Buqa, Töde Möngke's nephew, to lead the troops under his command. Unlike the khan, the old *beg* was a seasoned commander and on several occasions he took the initiative to gather the Jochid armies. Despite Noghai's military successes, Töde Möngke clashed with him over internal politics, especially regarding the Russian principalities: in 1281, Töde Möngke replaced the Grand Prince Dmitri, Alexander Nevski's eldest son, with Andrei, his younger brother, but Noghai supported Dmitri against Andrei and helped him to recapture the throne of Vladimir in 1283.⁶⁹ Unable to overcome his disagreement with the khan, Noghai made alliances with several influential members of the Batuids and, in 1287, made Töde Möngke abdicate in favor of them. They elected Töle Buqa khan but he had to share power with his brother and their cousins, two sons of Möngke Temür.⁷⁰ During the next four years, the Golden Horde was ruled through a council of Batuids, a khan, and Noghai.

Noghai had reached the peak of his power by the mid-1280s. Free to expand his authority through the takeover of new lands and vassals, he successively planned major campaigns in Hungary and Poland. In the winter of 1284–1285, he entered deep into László IV's kingdom of Hungary. According to certain sources, the king himself had called for Noghai's help.⁷¹ Having allied with influential groups of Qipchaqs, László had to face the

68 On the alliance between Noghai and the Byzantine emperor sealed by the marriage and by the gifts of cloth, gold, silver, wine, and fine food that the emperor offered to Noghai: Pachymérès 1984, 1: 25, 3: 302; Tanase 2004–2005, 277.

69 PSRL 25, 153–54. 70 JT/Thackston, 362–63.

71 Tanase 2004–2005, 287–88; Jackson 2005, 204–5.

rebellion of powerful Hungarian barons who were threatening his throne. After he had asked for the Pope's support, he finally rejected it for a more eastern alliance with the Golden Horde – an alliance that brought him the military help he badly needed. The Pope was enraged at László and very suspicious of Noghai, who directly benefited from László's change of political orientation.⁷² But Noghai was now a leading political figure in Eastern Europe and the Roman Catholic Church could no longer ignore this.

Noghai, in turn, had his own reasons for interfering with Hungarian affairs. Hungary was the easternmost land of Latin Christendom and he knew that the westerners were very anxious to expand their influence there. To appease tensions with the papacy and to show that he was a friend of the Catholics, Noghai elected the Franciscans as his primary political partners before the other Christian communities, even the Orthodox.

In Crimea, and more generally in the Golden Horde territories, the variety of Christian communities included Nestorians, Armenians, Georgians, Russians, and Greeks. In line with the Mongol policy of religious tolerance, Noghai integrated the Franciscans into the protected communities. The friars officially established themselves in Caffa and Sarai in 1280 and in Vicina around 1285. Before that date (and no earlier than 1274) the friars were already present at the khan's court and traveled with the nomads.⁷³ Around 1287, Noghai took position against the Muslims who had destroyed the Franciscan church in the Crimean city of Solkhat and forced the local Muslims to finance the reconstruction of the church and provide funds for additional buildings. Around that time, Noghai's chief wife Yaylaq asked to be baptized by the Franciscans in Qirq Yer – a holy site in southern Crimea – and granted the friars protection, cash, and authorization to build a new monastery.⁷⁴

This was Noghai's attempt to create a counterweight to the power of the Orthodox clergy. The Russian Orthodox community was the most powerful of the Golden Horde. Since 1261, the Mongols had allowed them to create a bishopric in Sarai overseen by the Metropolitan of Kiev. The Bishop of Sarai seems to have been responsible for the Russians and Greeks living and trading at the khan's court on the lower Volga. Moreover, on several occasions the bishop was sent to Constantinople to negotiate with the Byzantines. In Crimea, the Greek Orthodox community was already well

72 The repudiation of his wife should be understood as László IV's wish to break his alliance with the house of Angevine supported by the Pope. László was murdered in 1290; Tanase 2004–2005, 288.

73 Golubovich 1913, 2, nb. 14: 262; Tanase 2004–2005, 292–94.

74 Tanase 2004–2005, 269–70, 274, 290–98.

established and had its own bishopric in Soldaia. Thus the Franciscans penetrated the region much later than the Orthodox Christians. But they were quick to establish their own network, as they could draw on an existing Italian presence in the Golden Horde.

Several figures among the Franciscans and the Pope's close entourage wanted to ally with the Ilkhanids instead of the Golden Horde. If such an alliance were to materialize, the Jochids would lose not only the trade benefits they enjoyed with the Italian merchants but also their potential influence in Western Europe, and that would also mean an immediate power gain for the Ilkhanids, who were their most dangerous challengers. Noghai and the Jochids were determined to prevent this by all diplomatic and military means. Yet the campaigns they launched in Transcaucasia proved unsuccessful and Arghun twice repelled the troops of the Golden Horde, in 1288 and 1290. It is not entirely clear whether Noghai was behind these operations as he did not personally take part in them. In any case, in April 1288, the *beg's* emissaries brought a *sharil* (Buddhist relic) to Arghun as a symbol of peace. While Noghai negotiated with the Ilkhanids, the Jochid khan and his *begs* were preparing to attack Arghun's merchants in Derbend and beyond – perhaps the sign of a disagreement between Noghai and the khan.⁷⁵

After the Hungarian campaign, relations between the khan Töle Buqa and Noghai quickly worsened. Töle Buqa had lost many warriors during their retreat in Transylvania and the whole operation had not achieved as much as expected. The next campaign throughout Poland in 1287–1288 was only partially successful, as the Jochid army failed to take Sandomir and Cracow. Töle Buqa again lost a huge number of warriors and horses and finally had to withdraw.⁷⁶ As it was Noghai who planned the operations, the khan blamed him for his personal defeat. Tensions grew between them, and it was probably with Töle Buqa's removal in mind that Noghai made a deal with Toqto'a.⁷⁷

Among the numerous sons of Möngke Temür, Toqto'a was reputed to be the most ambitious. Having understood that he could be a serious contender for the throne, Töle Buqa planned to assassinate him. Conscious of the situation, Toqto'a hid for a while, possibly in the eastern territories of the Golden Horde, and contacted Noghai. They agreed to seize the throne

75 Kim 2009, 26; *JT*/Thackston, 567, 573. Noghai initiated friendship with the Ilkhanids and asked to marry his son Büri to one of Abaqa's daughters (*JT*/Thackston, 365–66).

76 Jackson 2005, 205.

77 Baybars al-Dawādār, ed. Tizengauzen 1884, 83–84 (Russian tr. 106).

together. In 1291, claiming that he was deathly ill, Noghai summoned a *quriltai* to be held near the banks of the Volga. The members of the governing council came and fell into the *beg*'s trap: as soon as they gathered Toqto'a's men attacked Töle Buqa and his brothers and cousins and killed them all. Immediately after the murders, Toqto'a took the throne of the Golden Horde.⁷⁸

During the first two years of his rule the khan remained loyal to the old *beg*, and one after the other he destroyed Noghai's internal enemies. One effect of the purge was, however, increased resentment of Noghai's politics among the nomadic elites. Just like his two predecessors, Toqto'a began to conduct his own politics without following Noghai's views, and progressively withdrew his support for the *beg*. A clear discordance between them first came to light in 1293–1294 within the political context of the northern Russian principalities. Since 1283, Noghai's candidate Dmitri had held the throne of Vladimir, but the khan decided to replace him with Dmitri's younger brother Andrei and dispatched troops to force the grand prince to abdicate despite Noghai's disagreement.⁷⁹

Yet the trigger for the clash between the two leaders came from a more internal issue. Noghai asked Toqto'a to banish Salji'udai Güregen, against whom he had a personal grievance, from the court. However, Salji'udai Güregen was a very influential Qonggirat *beg* and he was Toqto'a's father-in-law.⁸⁰ Thus the khan rejected the banishment request and Noghai took this as a declaration of war.

Noghai's immediate reaction was to appropriate the land between the Dnieper and Don rivers and issue coins on which he claimed the title of khan. He also gave the title of sultan to his eldest son Cheke, whom he designated his heir.⁸¹ Noghai had many enemies among the Jochids and his claim was not unanimously accepted, but Toqto'a also had to face internal resistance and several *begs* left him to join Noghai. At this point it was obvious that nothing but war could determine a victor between the two leaders.

The first battle, which took place on the lower Don in winter 1297–1298, was a success for Noghai and his followers. The following year, however,

⁷⁸ JT/Thackston, 363.

⁷⁹ Led by Toqto'a's brother Tudan, this operation is recorded in the Russian sources as the "raid of Tudan." According to these sources, it was a harsh campaign that devastated Moscow and thirteen other towns (PSRL 1, col. 527; PSRL 18, 82; PSRL 30, 98). On interpolations in the Russian chronicles: Ostrowski 1998, 150–51.

⁸⁰ JT/Thackston, 364.

⁸¹ Petrov 2017, 622–23; Oberländer-Târnoveanu 1987, 245–58; Vásáry 2005, 90–91; Uzelac 2017, 510. Cheke's name has various spellings in sources, such as Jöge.

Noghai sent his troops to Crimea in order to take control of the region and force the Genoese of Caffa to deliver his share of the taxes. His grandson was killed during the operations, so Noghai ordered his troops to punish the inhabitants of Caffa.⁸² The troops attacked several Latin communities in Crimea and brought many captives back to Noghai's horde. Yet Noghai decided to release some of the prisoners for diplomatic reasons, outraging a number of *begs* who had taken part in the Crimean campaign. He lost their support and they switched their allegiance to Toqto'a.⁸³ The khan welcomed them and managed to tip the balance: in the end the one who gathered the highest number of *begs* had a greater chance of winning.

The decisive battle took place on the Kügenlik, a branch of the Bug river, in modern-day Moldavia. Noghai's troops were entirely defeated; he himself was killed and his followers were dispersed. After the Kügenlik battle, Noghai's sons pursued the fight with Toqto'a and it took the khan at least two more years to finally establish his authority over the *beg's* former territory. Fearing Toqto'a's reprisals, Noghai's descendants and peoples fled to the Balkans and Poland–Lithuania.⁸⁴

The war between Noghai and Toqto'a had lasted from 1297 to 1300 and was a heavy blow to the Golden Horde: a high number of warriors died during the battles, and the prisoners were reduced into slavery – many of them ending up on the Mamluks' slave market.⁸⁵ It is not by chance that the Venetian merchant Marco Polo's narrative mentioned the conflict between Noghai and Toqto'a, the number of warriors involved, and how both sides suffered great human losses.⁸⁶ At the time Polo visited the Mongol Empire, Noghai was the most influential Mongol leader in eastern and Central Europe. Noghai supervised the career of three Jochid princes before he turned against them, one after the other. For almost forty years he exerted a growing influence on the Byzantine Empire, the Balkans, and Hungary.⁸⁷ After his death the Jochids kept strong ties with the Bulgarians and Byzantines, but their interest in the rest of the Balkans and Hungary diminished. The *beg's* offspring chose to stay in Eastern Europe although they never had the same authority there

82 Ciocîltan 2012, 161–62. 83 *JT*/Thackston, 364–65.

84 Pachymérès 1984, 3: 289–90 (English translation of Pachymérès's quotation: Uzelac 2017, 512).

85 *JT*/Thackston, 364–66; Uzelac 2017.

86 Polo's narrative even included the fight between Noghai and Toqto'a – although the details of the narrative change depending on the manuscripts; Uzelac 2017, 515–16.

87 Vásáry 2005, 71–98.

that Noghai had enjoyed.⁸⁸ In the fourteenth century, the lower valleys of the Danube, Dnieper, Dniester, and Don remained in the nomads' hands, but the center of gravity of the Golden Horde had moved back from the Black Sea to the lower Volga.

Toqto'a and the Mongol "Peace"

From the late thirteenth century to the early fourteenth was a period of transition for the entire Mongol Empire. Struggles between the Chinggisid princes reached a whole new level. The spark that ignited the fire was the succession conflict that followed the death of Qonichi shortly before 1299. He was the leader of Orda's descendants and had ruled the eastern lands of the Jochid Ulus, also known as the Blue Horde, since the late 1270s.⁸⁹ Qonichi's lands bordered Qaidu's *ulus* in the north, and it seems that he initially allied with Qaidu. But, since the return of Nomuqan to China, the Jochids had maintained good relations with both the qa'an and the Ilkhanids. Qonichi, taking advantage of the new political orientation, sent messages of friendship to Arghun and his successor Ghazan; he also asked for and received financial and military support from Qubilai and probably from his successor Temür (r. 1294–1307). In reaction to this, Qaidu and the Chaghadaid khan Du'a attempted to interfere in the internal politics of the Blue Horde and Qonichi's death was an opportunity that they could not miss.

After Qonichi died, two claimants to the throne were fighting over the succession. Toqto'a supported Bayan, Qonichi's son, while Qaidu and Du'a supported Kubalak (or Küilük), Qonichi's cousin. But while Qaidu provided fresh troops to his champion, Toqto'a was embroiled in conflict with Noghai and failed to supply Bayan with the forces he needed. So Bayan decided to call on the qa'an for help. He even tried to raise an anti-Qaidu alliance that would involve the qa'an, the ilkhan, and the ruler of Badakhshān. This first plan did not materialize as Temür was not yet ready for it. But as soon as Toqto'a defeated Noghai and gained full control over the Batuids, Bayan offered him the chance to coalesce with the Toluids against Du'a and Qaidu. This time, the plan began to take shape. Toqto'a sent two *tümen* to Bayan, which were to link up with the qa'an's men in the upper Irtysh area. Soon after, in September 1301, Temür Qa'an's forces met Qaidu and Chapar's armies near

88 Noghai's son Cheke proclaimed himself ruler of Bulgharia but was killed in Tarnovo around 1301; Vásáry 2005, 92–98.

89 Allsen 1985–1987, 22–25. Biran 1997, 64–66. Although Qonichi and the descendants of Orda acknowledged the primacy of the western Jochids, descendants of Batu, they ruled independently over their internal affairs.

Qayaliq and defeated them. Du'a was wounded and Qaidu fell ill and died shortly after the battle. For a couple of years Chapar tried to resume Qaidu's fight but the exhaustion of the troops, the death of their former leader, and the danger of facing at the same time the Jochids, the qa'an, and the Ilkhanids finally convinced him to negotiate a general truce – which led to the peace accord of 1304.⁹⁰

The Mongols were now willing to end the “Qaidu wars” that had divided them for more than four decades. Toqto'a, Chapar, Du'a, Temür, Ghazan, and his successor Öljeitü involved themselves in the negotiations.⁹¹ Toqto'a seems to have been particularly in favor of a rapprochement between the Mongol leaders. In previous years, he had conducted a very active diplomacy to prevent the end of relations between the Jochids and the other *uluses* when conflicts arose. On several occasions he had sent envoys to Qaidu, the Ilkhanids, and other Mongol leaders.⁹² Most significantly, the relations between the Jochids and Temür Qa'an had greatly improved as Toqto'a increasingly supported the qa'an against Qaidu and his son Chapar. The peace of 1304 not only reasserted the formal unity of the Mongol Empire,⁹³ but it also established new common rules among the main *uluses*. Temür enjoyed nominal leadership over the three other khans, and he was entitled to act as mediator should they struggle against each other.⁹⁴ For the first time in decades, the representatives of all the ruling branches of the Chinggisid lineage had reached an agreement.

In practical terms, the peace did not prevent local skirmishes between Mongol leaders.⁹⁵ In Central Asia, new struggles opposed the Ögödeids and the Chaghadaids, with immediate repercussions in China and Iran. Although the peace was supposed to consolidate the qa'an's nominal seniority over the other Chinggisids, Temür's inability to settle the Central Asian conflicts damaged his prestige to the point where the Jochids considered applying for the qa'anate, at least according to contemporary Mamluk sources.⁹⁶ So far the internal conflict with Noghai had prevented Toqto'a from taking action.

90 *JT*/Thackston, 349–50. Allsen 1985–1987, 23–24. Biran 1997, 65–66; 69–74.

91 Toqto'a, Chapar, Du'a, Temür, and Ghazan were respectively the rulers of the *uluses* of Batu, Ögödei, Chaghadaid, Qubilai, and Hülegü.

92 Kim 2009, 26–27.

93 See the letter in which Öljeitü wrote to the king of France, Philip the Fair, that the Mongols have now achieved peace: Mostaert and Cleaves 1962, 55–57. See also Jackson 2006, 15–16.

94 Liu 2005, 340, 342.

95 In 1306, Du'a and Chapar clashed again over territorial disagreement. See Hsiao 1994, 501–4. On the peace of 1303–1304, the main source is Qāshānī 1969, 32–35.

96 Al-Nuwayrī, ed. Tizengauzen 1884, 140 n. 4, 162 n. 1; Pochekaev 2017, 234.

But now that Qaidu was dead and the tensions with the Ilkhanids seemed appeased, the Jochid khan could fully benefit from the economic advantages of the transcontinental roads of the Mongol Empire, and expand again.

Paradoxically, the peace did not resolve the ongoing conflict in the Blue Horde. Even after Kubalak met his death, possibly in 1305 on the battlefield, the descendants of Orda continued to struggle for several years. It is not known when Bayan died, only that his son Sāsī Buqa took over the Blue Horde throne around 1312, putting a temporary end to the succession crisis.⁹⁷

Although the rapprochement between the Jochids and the Toluids was in full swing, it did not prevent Toqto'a from pursuing his plan of attacking the Ilkhanids. Just before the peace, in 1303, Toqto'a had sent his envoys under the protection of 300 horsemen to the Ilkhanate. Ghazan was holding a meeting in Hilla with the envoys of the Mamluk sultan and he invited the Jochid envoys to attend. According to the Persian historian Mīrkhwānd, Toqto'a's men came to claim Jochid supremacy over Arran and Azerbaijan.⁹⁸ This was not mere provocation, as the Jochids were preparing to enter Ghazan's territory again. During the peace negotiations military actions were on hold, but the Jochid khan actively communicated with the Mamluks.

The Mamluks were involved in the conflict between Jochids and Ilkhanids and they conducted parallel diplomacy with both parties. The Mamluks maintained a strong resentment against the Ilkhanids, whom they were still fighting in Syria, yet to engage in a major war against them was not necessarily in their interest. Thus, in 1304, when Toqto'a offered the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad an alliance against the Ilkhanids on the ground that the descendants of Hülegü had illegitimately appropriated the lands from Khurasan to Tabriz, the sultan postponed his collaboration with the campaign. Despite al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's lack of enthusiasm, Toqto'a offered him 400 Mamluks and 200 slave girls in order to prepare for future military action.⁹⁹

The khan's goal was to take control of the route that passed through Derbend and to appropriate the trade benefices from Tabriz and Baghdad. In his view, opening two simultaneous military fronts – one in the northern

97 Allsen 1985–1987, 24–25.

98 On Toqto'a's diplomatic delegations: *JT*/Thackston, 583, 649, 654; Kim 2009, 26–27. On the relations between the Mamluks and the Ilkhanids at the end of Ghazan's rule: Boyle 1968, 392–93; Broadbridge 2008, 87–93.

99 Favereau 2019b, 355–56. Most of the slaves died during the trip to the Mamluk Sultanate: Behrens-Abouseif 2014, 64.

Caucasus and the other in Syria, on the Mamluk–Ilkhanid border – was the only way to beat the Ilkhanids. The Mamluks were therefore his natural allies. As soon as Ghazan died, in 1304, Toqto'a decided to realize his plan of a joint attack against the Ilkhanate. But when the Jochid envoys came to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, the sultan refused to join because "Allāh had called Ghāzān to him" and "his brother Kharbanda [Öljeitü] was already asking for peace."¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the foreign policy of the Ilkhanids had temporarily switched just after Öljeitü came to power. In 1305, Öljeitü sent emissaries to inform al-Nāṣir Muḥammad that Mamluk merchants were allowed to trade in Persia and he offered the sultan an exchange of captives. For the Mamluks, a temporary truce with the Ilkhanids had the advantage of allowing them to secure the transit of more slave warriors via Tabriz.¹⁰¹

Again, in 1306–1307, Toqto'a sent his envoys to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad asking him to involve the Mamluks in military operations against the Ilkhanids, but the sultan declined to participate.¹⁰² This third refusal was one too many, so Toqto'a took action. In November 1307, he expelled the Genoese traders from the Golden Horde territories and ordered their goods to be confiscated. Indeed, the Genoese, based in Caffa and other places, were key intermediaries between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Golden Horde. The sultan wrote to Toqto'a in September–October 1308, arguing that he had been raising an army when the news came that the khan's troops were stopping to fight in the Caucasus, and therefore had to cancel his military preparations.¹⁰³ The khan did not answer the sultan; at this point, all diplomatic contacts between the Jochids and the Mamluks had ceased.

Toqto'a's troops besieged Caffa for eight months until finally, in May 1308, the Genoese left the city.¹⁰⁴ The Jochids were accusing the Genoese of stealing Tatar and Qipchaq children and selling them on the slave markets. Toqto'a was not opposed to the slave trade, nor was he against selling local children, but certain commercial rules had to be followed. In the empire, kidnapping was forbidden as merchants had to pay taxes on sales and purchases. Reportedly, the Genoese acted too independently and without

¹⁰⁰ Quoted from al-Maqrīzī, *al-Sulūk*, ed. Tizengauzen 1884, 424. See also Broadbridge 2008, 95; Ciociltan 2012, 170.

¹⁰¹ During this period the emirs Sayf al-Dīn Salār and Baybars al-Jāshnakīr were ruling in the name of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and dictated the political orientation of the sultanate. Favereau 2019b, 355.

¹⁰² Broadbridge 2008, 95, 131. ¹⁰³ Ciociltan 2012, 170–73.

¹⁰⁴ Promis 1874, 500–1; also quoted in Ciociltan 2012, 164 n. 83, 163–73, esp. 166 n. 93; al-Nuwayrī, ed. Tizengauzen 1884, 140, 162.

respect for these rules.¹⁰⁵ Therefore Toqto'a attacked Caffa and forced the Latins to leave the Golden Horde. This was due to their illegal trading activities, and perhaps also because he suspected that the Genoese were supplying both the Mamluks and the Ilkhanids with information on the Jochids.

The quarrel with the Mamluks lasted for several years. Finally, in 1311–1312, Toqto'a sent to al-Nāṣir Muḥammad eighty Mamluks, twenty slave girls, and furs. The sultan, in exchange, offered the khan 1,000 suits of armor, including helmets, horse armor, textiles, belts, and headgear.¹⁰⁶ The Mamluk slave traders were back in business and the Golden Horde offered them new advantageous conditions for trading and traveling. This was a consequence of the important reforms Toqto'a had just launched in order to promote the economy of his *ulus*. But in 1312 the khan died suddenly. His nephew Özbek was said to be involved in his death. In any case, Özbek soon succeeded his uncle on the Golden Horde throne.¹⁰⁷

During his rule, Toqto'a had instituted two rather successful policies. The first concerned the Russian principalities. In 1293, with the khan's support, Andrei managed to become grand prince of Vladimir but the tensions among the Russian princes remained high. To appease them, Toqto'a organized a grand assembly that took place in Pereiaslavl' in 1297. Toqto'a's deputy read the khan's *yarligh*, in which he urged the princes to stop fighting.¹⁰⁸ Most importantly, the *lestvitsa*, "seniority ladder," the old succession principle that gave the throne to the eldest of the ruling princes, was reaffirmed. Thus, in 1304, when Andrei died, Toqto'a appointed Andrei's cousin Mikhail of Tver' to succeed him instead of Andrei's nephew Yuri of Moscow, who was in the process of claiming the throne.¹⁰⁹ The upholding of the *lestvitsa* system would temporarily improve the political stability of the Russian principalities.

Toqto'a's other major reform focused on coinage – intended to promote trade and improve tax collection. The monetary system of the Golden Horde was a matter of great concern for the rulers. The Jochid currency included three types of coin: golden (*dinar* or *altyn*), silver (*dirham*, *yardmaq*, or *aqche*) and copper (*pul* or *fals*). The western merchants also called the Jochid dirhams

105 Di Cosmo 2005, 412–13; Ciociltan 2012, 165–67. On the Franciscans who claimed that the Genoese were too independent: Golubovich 1919, 3: 173–74.

106 Behrens-Abouseif 2014, 64–65, quoting Ibn al-Dawādārī 1960, 9: 280–1 (note that there is some confusion in the sources between Toqto'a's last delegation and Özbek's first delegation to the Mamluks).

107 Toqto'a died either by poisoning or in the wreck of his ship on the Volga river; on Toqto'a's shipwreck: Mu'izz al-ansāb 2006, 41.

108 Troitskaia letopis' 2002, 347–48, 351. 109 Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopis' 1950, 92.

aspri barica after Berke, who had launched the first monetary reform. Alongside the Jochid coins, local traders used foreign coins such as the Byzantine hyperpyron and the Venetian ducat. The previous rulers tried to shift from this multiple currency system to a unified system based on units of account denominated in silver. Toqto'a sought to bring these attempts to fruition. He also intended to force the merchants to use local currency when they traded within Golden Horde territories and to prevent them from taking Jochid coins across the border.¹¹⁰

Toqto'a Khan's reform was implemented gradually in the four economically active territories of the Golden Horde – Bulghar (including the Mordvian lands), Qrim, Sarai, and Khwārazm. Each of these regions produced its own coinage and adapted its weight standard to local needs. The khan had no intention of changing the regional system to create a single weight standard for the whole *ulus* or to introduce a common unit of silver. His aim was to unify the monetary system at a regional level by standardizing the weight of the coins, enhancing their silver content, and reducing the number of mints. His ultimate goal was greater control of the mints in order to increase treasury profits and facilitate the circulation of goods and people.

Around 1306–1307, the reform was launched in Qrim and probably at roughly the same time in Khwārazm. In Sarai and the central lands of the Golden Horde, it only started in 1310–1311. In every place, former monetary issues were recalled as old coins were to be replaced with new ones. It took many years to complete the exchange and a number of localities, such as Mukhshi and Bulghar, sometimes continued to use the old silver coins until the early 1330s.

It is possible that Toqto'a conducted his monetary policy in conformity with the more extensive economic framework of the Mongol Empire. Only a few years earlier, Ghazan had launched a monetary reform in the Ilkhanate, and this may have inspired Toqto'a not only to adapt to the dramatic changes that were taking place in Azerbaijan and Iran, but also to seek ways to remain competitive against the flourishing Ilkhanate. Toqto'a's final goal was to establish his *ulus* as a vital hub for merchants trading between Europe and Asia.¹¹¹ And this could not be done without protecting the four most productive regions of the Golden Horde and their local economies.

110 Ponomarev 2011, 167–78. Petrov, Studitskii, and Serdiukov 2005, 142–47; 205. Petrov 2017, 622–24.

111 For a general presentation of the reform: Fedorov-Davydov 1960, 103; Mukhamadiev 2005, 120–23; for recent research and new analysis of the reform: Petrov, Studitskii, and Serdiukov 2005, 145–47.

Özbek and the Rise of Islam

In August 1312 Toqto'a died and his relatives began the struggle for the Jochid throne. According to Mongol succession laws, Toqto'a's brothers, sons, and nephews could all claim the title of khan. For Özbek it was time for a long-awaited revenge. His father was Toqto'a's brother Toghrilcha, who had been executed during the purge of the 1290s. Toqto'a had not only ordered Toghrilcha's killing; he had also remarried his wife Bayalun and exiled their son – Özbek.¹¹² By convincing a number of powerful Muslim *begs* to support him, Özbek successfully removed from power the other candidates, especially Toqto'a's son Tükel Buqa and the descendants of Toqto'a's younger brother.¹¹³ To prevent future uprisings, as soon as he became khan in 1313, Özbek had over a hundred of his rivals and old enemies executed. Yet the struggle for the head of the Jochid Ulus continued for a few years. Indeed, Özbek's accession to the throne meant that Toghrilcha's lineage was now the dominant Jochid lineage while Toqto'a's direct descendants were removed from power, something that they could not easily accept.

Özbek's fame resonated beyond the frontiers of the Golden Horde and especially in the Islamic world. Indeed, he officially converted to Islam around 1313, and took the name Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad.¹¹⁴ The aim of Özbek's conversion may have been to secure the support of the Muslim *begs* and especially the influential Qutluq Temür, to whom Toqto'a granted the highest position in the administration and the title of *beglerbeg*.

While the conversion to Islam certainly helped Özbek in his ascension to power, during his rule the religious policy inside the Golden Horde remained more traditional than the Islamic historiography generally implied, and the Mongol tolerance was maintained. The Jochids had no "state religion" – the very concept being foreign to the Mongols. "Pagans," whether Buddhists or Tengri worshippers, were still numerous among the herders and they were free to practice their religion as long as they followed Özbek's rules. Not only did the khan maintain good relations with his non-Muslim subjects; he also engaged in active diplomacy with the papacy and even let the Franciscan missionaries evangelize the nomads deep into Golden Horde territories.¹¹⁵

The khan reorganized the appanages of Jochi's descendants, apparently by dividing them into ten *uluses* headed by *ulus begs* who were all his loyal

112 Bayalun was Özbek's stepmother: DeWeese 1994, 118–19.

113 DeWeese 1994, 107–15; Tanase 2018, 58–60. 114 DeWeese 1994, 93–94.

115 DeWeese 1994, 94–100; Hautala 2018, 73–76; Tanase 2018, 52–53. Jackson 2018, 354–55.

deputies.¹¹⁶ To further enhance his control, Özbek curtailed the rights of Jochid family members. He prevented them from ruling directly over their sedentary subjects, collecting taxes, and forming their own armies. Depending on their rank and status within the Jochid family, they received payments from the treasury, where taxes were now centralized.¹¹⁷ Finally, Özbek had a new palace built on the Volga river, about seventy-eight miles north of the old Sarai. The new town that soon popped up around the palace was named Sarai al-Jadid, “New Sarai.”

Like most of his predecessors, Özbek appointed his firstborn to succeed him on the throne. After his eldest son Temür died in 1330, he nominated Tinibek, his firstborn from another wife – Taidula.¹¹⁸ At that time, although Özbek had married a number of princesses, including a daughter of the Byzantine emperor, Taidula had established herself as the primary wife and the mother of the khan’s legal heirs. She had two sons old enough to rule – Tinibek and Janibek. Tinibek was the eldest so Özbek entrusted him with the command of troops and sent him to the east, first to the Blue Horde and later, possibly, to the Chaghadaid frontier. From that time onward, foreign rulers had to address their diplomatic letters and gifts not only to Özbek and his wife Taidula, but also to their son and heir Tinibek.¹¹⁹

In 1339, an internal attack against Özbek almost succeeded. The rebels besieged the khan in his palace, set a fire to distract the guards, and broke in. But Özbek had elite bodyguards who repelled the assailants and the attack failed; most of the conspirators were captured and put to death. However, the fact that a number of *begs*, Jochid princes, and foreigners had allied to overthrow the khan was indicative of a strong resentment against his politics¹²⁰ – Özbek’s reforms had generated hostility, even in his inner circle.

116 On the ten *ulus*es of the Golden Horde mentioned in the Arabic sources: Grigor’ev and Frolova 2002, 89–103. On the possible division into seventy *tümen*: the account by a Dominican missionary in the *Book of the Estate of the Great Caan*, who said that Özbek could gather “707,000 horsemen”: Jacquet 1830, 59–60; Yule 1916, 89–90.

117 See Pochekaev 2017, 240. Özbek is also credited with suppressing the *quriltai*. Although the exact divisions and administrative structure of the Golden Horde at this time remain open to question due to contradictory sources and incomplete information, the understanding is that he purged his rivals’ supporters from the administration and court of the *ulus* and replaced them with his own men. For a summary of Özbek’s reforms regarding the government and the administration: Fedorov-Davydov 1973, 89–93, 100–7.

118 Taidula, or Taitoğlu, married Özbek around 1323 and died in 1361.

119 In 1340, Pope Benedict XII sent letters to Özbek, Taidula, and “Duke” Tinibek: *primogenito Magnifici Principis Usbeck* (“firstborn of His Majesty the Prince Özbek”). For the Latin texts of the letters: Wadding 1733, 7: 227–29.

120 Apparently foreign Christians took part in the plot as in a letter Pope Benedict XII thanked the khan for being merciful to several Christian conspirators: Grigor’ev and Grigoriyev 2002, 40–41; Iurkevich 1863, 1003.

During Özbek's long reign, the relations between the Jochids and the Ilkhanids alternated between peace and hostility. The first envoys that the khan sent to Öljeitü asked him to return whatever belonged to the Jochids by order of Möngke's *yarligh* – referring to the territories that the qa'an had supposedly granted to the Jochids before Hülegü appropriated them for himself and his descendants. Although this demand was obviously unfulfilled, Özbek's envoys officially concluded peace with Öljeitü in 1314–1315. In turn, Öljeitü agreed to execute a rebel Jochid prince who had taken shelter with the Ilkhanids.¹²¹

Under Abū Sa'īd (r. 1316–1335) the relations between the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanids quickly deteriorated. In 1320, peace shifted to war and Özbek launched an initial military operation in Azerbaijan. Although Abū Sa'īd was a young and inexperienced commander with fewer warriors than the khan, the Jochid army suffered heavy losses and had to withdraw. In turn, the Ilkhanids attacked the Golden Horde and penetrated into Jochid territory in 1325. Ten years later, Özbek's last attempt to take control of Azerbaijan again proved unsuccessful. The deep political struggles that agitated the Ilkhanids after Abū Sa'īd's death, in 1335, created new opportunities for Özbek's successors.

Due to the conflict with the Ilkhanids, the Transcaucasian commercial roads were only intermittently passable and the khan was keen to maintain alternative routes open to traders. Most importantly, he wanted to secure the long-distance east–west connection. With this in mind, Özbek built peaceful relations with the Yuan and refused to ally with the Chaghadaid Esen Buqa against the qa'an.¹²² In exchange for his support of the qa'an, in 1336 Özbek claimed the revenue from the Batuid possessions in China, which had been stopped on Qubilai's orders. Özbek not only recovered the income from the district of Pingyang in Shanxi province, northeastern China, which had belonged to his lineage since the Mongol final victory over the Jin, but he also retrieved the revenue from Jinzhou and Yongzhou – the latter alone bringing an annual income of 60,000 *liang* of silver.¹²³

For similar reasons, Özbek actively promoted peace with the westerners, as shown in his decision to allow the Genoese to again settle in Golden Horde

121 DeWeese 1994, 92. 122 Liu Yingsheng 2005, 346.

123 Qiu 2018, 33–34; Cai 2009, 120. Jinzhou (in today's Hebei province) and Yongzhou (in today's Hunan province) were Jochid appanages from 1238 and 1281 respectively. Although Qubilai's decision dated back to 1288, the Yuan again started to send income to the Jochid khan after 1339. The authors thank Dr. Yihao Qiu for providing them with precise information on this issue.

territories. For most of the western merchants the door to the Golden Horde was Crimea, thus the new agreement that the khan signed with the Genoese allowed the merchants to rebuild Caffa – a process which began as early as 1316.¹²⁴ A few years later, Caffa was not only a prospering commercial center but also the seat of Christian missionary activities. Under Özbek, the Franciscan missions flourished and spread from Crimea to the lower Volga and beyond, up to the Bashkir lands and western Siberia. The missionaries enjoyed the khan's protection and claimed to have built more than ten convents in Golden Horde territories. The *Codex Cumanicus*, a language handbook for traders and missionaries, was probably compiled in one of them; its glossary, which includes terms in Latin, Italian, Qipchaq Turkic, Persian, and German, reflects the multilingual world of the western Golden Horde.¹²⁵

In 1332, the Venetian ambassador submitted a petition to Özbek in which the Venetian senate requested permission to build a permanent post on Golden Horde land as well as trade privileges for their merchants. It took the khan and the Venetians less than a year to agree on a place and a contract. His *yarligh* of 1333 allowed the Venetians to erect their own settlement in Azaq, at the mouth of the Don river, and redefined the status and rights of the Latin trading community. It is likely that the same rights were granted to the Genoese settled in Caffa. Özbek was keen to promote exchange between the Golden Horde, the Black Sea, and the Mediterranean because the taxes that the Jochids levied on the commercial exchanges increased their income. Besides, in attracting the Latin merchants, the Jochids weakened the Ilkhanids, for whom the Venetians and the Genoese were also key trade partners.¹²⁶

To consolidate his connections with the Mediterranean world, Özbek needed to maintain friendly relations with the Mamluks. His first envoys arrived in Cairo in spring 1314.¹²⁷ They carried a letter informing Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad of Özbek's enthronement and conversion to Islam; the sultan seemed delighted and sent the khan his envoys and gifts. In December 1315, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad further informed Özbek of his wish to marry a Jochid princess.¹²⁸ It was the first time that a Mamluk sultan had made such a

124 Promis 1874, 500–1; Ciocîltan 2012, 178 n. 141.

125 DeWeese 1994, 97–100; Tanase 2018, 53. On Özbek's Black Sea policies: Ciocîltan 2012, 173–99.

126 Mas Latrie 1868, 583–84; Grigor'ev and Grigor'ev 2002, 5–33; Di Cosmo 2005, 411.

127 Al-Nuwayrī 1985–1998, 27: 375; Ibn Abī-l-Faḍā'il, *Al-Nahğ*, 3: 238.

128 Al-Nuwayrī 1985–1998, 32: 224–25, 323.

request to a Mongol khan. Traditionally the Jochids married their sisters and daughters to Mongols and their close vassals, and not to foreign allies. It was thus a significant decision and it took Özbek three years to offer the sultan his relative ʿTulunbāy Khatun in marriage.¹²⁹ Accompanied by a retinue of approximately 3,000, she arrived in Egypt in May 1320. To pay for the dowry and the wedding festivities, the Mamluk envoys had to borrow 27,000 dinars from the khan's merchants.¹³⁰

In Özbek's view, the matrimonial alliance with al-Nāṣir Muḥammad necessarily implied commercial and military agreements between the Jochids and the Mamluks. Thus, soon after the wedding, he asked al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to plan simultaneous attacks against the Ilkhanids. But not only did the sultan refuse to take part in the operations, he even informed Ilkhanid ruler Abū Sa'īd of Özbek's plan. Indeed, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad could not engage in a war against the Ilkhanids for he had just entered into peace negotiations with them.¹³¹ Whereas the relations between the Mamluks and the Ilkhanids improved, the relations between the Jochids and the Mamluks worsened to the point where Özbek ordered the sultan's personal slave trader, a Genoese named Segurano Salvaygo, to be killed and forbade the sultan to purchase slaves among the Golden Horde.¹³² In turn, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, who had divorced ʿTulunbāy Khatun in 1327–1328 and remarried her to one of his Mongol commanders, openly lied to Özbek's ambassadors by claiming that the princess was dead.¹³³ The failure of the sultan's marriage to the Mongol princess accelerated the deterioration of relations between the two rulers.

Since the time of Baybars, the power of the Mamluk sultan had grown. To access the eastern slave markets the Mamluks did not exclusively rely on the Golden Horde, as they now sent their slave traders through the Anatolian and Syrian routes to the Ilkhanate.¹³⁴ Indeed the Mamluk–Ilkhanid treaty signed in 1323 not only established peace between them but also gave new trading rights for their merchants, so they could freely do business on both sides.¹³⁵ Yet the old links between the Jochids and the Mamluks were not so easy to sever, and they would remain strong as long as the Qipchaq steppe

129 ʿTulunbāy Khatun was either the daughter, sister, or niece of the khan. See remarks in Broadbridge 2008, 132 n. 142.

130 Al-Nuwayrī 1985–1998, 32: 324–25.

131 In 1320, negotiations started which allowed the end of the old conflict between the Mamluks and the Ilkhanids around 1323: Amitai 2005, 359, 368.

132 Broadbridge 2008, 134–35. On the Genoese merchant Segurano Salvaygo: Kedar 1976.

133 Broadbridge 2008, 136.

134 Since 1321, the Mamluk troops had occupied Ayas (Laiazzo), a major commercial hub in Cilician Armenia.

135 Amitai 2005, 366–69; Broadbridge 2008, 101–14.

was the largest reservoir of slaves in western Eurasia. This explains why, in spite of the diplomatic tensions, Özbek and al-Nāṣir Muḥammad exchanged envoys and gifts until the end of their reigns.

Özbek also inherited his predecessors' alliances with both the Byzantines and the Bulgarians, and he was keen to maintain a form of control over Noghai's old territories. As the Byzantine Empire witnessed a period of political chaos between 1321 and 1328, Özbek turned to the new king of Bulgaria, George Terter II (r. 1322–1323), and sent him troops to attack Thrace in 1323. After this operation failed, Özbek switched sides and, allying with the Byzantine emperor Andronikos III (r. 1328–1341), married the emperor's daughter. Even more significantly, he supported Basarab, the Valachian *voivode* (local chief), against his suzerain the king of Hungary. In 1330, Basarab destroyed the king's armies at the battle of Posada and temporarily ended the Hungarian claim over Valachia. Under Özbek's protection, Basarab founded a small principality between the Dniester and Prut rivers and up to the mouth of the Danube. This had once been Noghai's territory and numerous nomads still lived there, as well as an increasing number of Genoese merchants whose trading posts popped up in the early fourteenth century on the west bank of the Black Sea. Although the Jochids had obviously lost most of their former control over the Balkans, they remained highly influential in eastern and Central Europe and continued to involve themselves in local politics.¹³⁶

Around that time, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was taking shape on the western frontier of the Golden Horde and extending its territories at the expense of both the Russians and the Jochids. In 1320, Grand Duke Gediminas (r. c. 1315–1341) attacked the Volhynia and Kiev regions. For the Lithuanians, the seizure of Kiev was a major step toward their conquest of all southwestern Russia. Özbek sent his envoys and, in 1324, signed a preliminary agreement with Gediminas. Yet less than a year later the khan had launched his troops against Lithuanian cities to punish Gediminas, who had made an alliance with Poland and elected the new prince of Galicia–Volhynia without involving the Jochids.¹³⁷

Gediminas's expansionist policy was successful as it did not rely on military force alone, but on alliances through marriage, diplomacy, and trade. The last principality of southwestern Russia that had resisted the Lithuanians was Galicia – which they finally occupied in 1340. To consolidate his claim there, the grand duke married his son to a daughter of a Galician prince. As a

136 Vásáry 2005, 122–33, 149–55. 137 Rowell 1994, 112.

general rule, Gediminas avoided frontal war with the Jochids and sought to make arrangements with Özbek.¹³⁸

In exchange for tribute and formal submission, Özbek and his successors allowed the Lithuanian grand duke (and later the Polish king) to control Kiev, Volhynia, and Galicia. But the khan did not permit the Lithuanians to sign their own commercial treaties with the Jochids' competitors, especially the Teutonic Order and the Livonians. Obviously Özbek saw himself as a suzerain whom Gediminas had to consult on war, trade, and foreign politics. This explains why, in 1340, Prussian bishops complained that "the emperor of the Tatars with his princes, especially the rulers of the Lithuanians and the Rus," was obstructing trade with Prussia.¹³⁹ During that period, the Lithuanians became the intermediaries between the Polish and the Jochids. For Özbek the grand duchy was not merely a threat but also a buffer zone that protected the Golden Horde from both the Kingdom of Poland and the Teutonic Order.

As for the Russian princes, they were too divided among themselves to repel the Lithuanians. As in the old days, the Russian leading figure was the grand prince of Vladimir, but his investiture was a source of increasing struggle for the princes. Indeed, according to Mongol rules the grand prince acquired the rights to collect the taxes from all the princes on behalf of the khan, which implied a huge gain of wealth and power for the title holder and his close family. In the early fourteenth century, two dynastic houses – Tver' and Moscow – harshly competed for the title.¹⁴⁰

Unlike Toqto'a, Özbek Khan interfered as often as he could with the politics of the Russian princes. He rejected the succession principle of the *lestvitsa* that promoted the eldest among the ruling princes, and instead granted the throne to his own candidate. In 1317, he removed grand Prince Michael of Tver', whom Toqto'a had appointed, and transferred the throne of Vladimir to Iurii of Moscow (r. 1303–1325), who was both younger and of a lesser status in the hierarchy of princes. The khan consolidated Iurii's position by marrying him to his sister, the Jochid princess Konchaka. He also granted him two *tümen* of Mongol warriors to support his fight with Michael of Tver' and his followers. But when Iurii attempted to invade the principality of Tver', he was heavily

138 On the early Lithuanian expansion and the relations with Özbek: Rowell 1994, esp. 111–14. The Polish would finally conquer most of Galicia in 1349; and they remained the Lithuanians' competitors in this area until their union in 1386.

139 Quoted from Rowell 1994, 114. 140 Vásáry 2009b, 79.

defeated and had to surrender. Michael captured the princess Konchaka, who died in Tver' jail soon afterwards.¹⁴¹

His sister's death infuriated Özbek and he summoned Michael to court. Several charges were made against the prince of Tver', among which were withholding the tribute, not complying with the orders of the khan's envoys, and negotiating an anti-Jochid alliance with "the Germans" – most probably the Teutonic Order. Michael's trial ended after a few months: he was declared guilty and executed in 1318 or 1319.¹⁴² He was later canonized by the Russian Church.

In 1322 it was the turn of Iurii to be removed from power. Dmitri and Alexander, sons of Michael of Tver', accused the grand prince of stealing a part of the tribute, and Özbek consequently transferred the throne to Dmitri and, later, to Alexander. But, in 1327, Özbek became suspicious of Alexander's loyalty and sent Shawkal, his *basqaq* (tax collector) to Tver' in order to investigate the situation and levy the tribute. In Tver', the visit of the *basqaq* and his retinue was not well received, and the locals eventually rebelled against Shawkal and killed him. Shawkal was the khan's relative and a high official – according to Mongol laws, his murder was a major crime that had to be severely punished. Jochids and Muscovites led an army together to repress the rebellion and harshly sanctioned the inhabitants of Tver'. In 1332, Iurii's brother Ivan of Moscow (1325–1340) became the new grand prince of Vladimir.¹⁴³ Within a few years he managed to have Alexander of Tver' executed so that no one could now stand in the way of the house of Moscow.

Until this point, conflicts and divisions among the princes had made the political life of the Russian principalities highly unstable. Özbek's changing politics – at least ten Russian princes were executed in his camp during his reign – reflected this instability. In search of a trustworthy and reliable deputy among the Russian elites, the khan finally gave his support to Ivan of Moscow against his Tver' rivals.¹⁴⁴ On the whole, during Özbek's rule the Russian princes closely collaborated with the Mongols as they still shared common interests and enemies, especially the Lithuanians. The consequences of this policy were enduring, as it allowed the house of Moscow to grow stronger and successively dominate the other principalities. In a few generations, the

141 *Novgorodskaiia pervaiia letopis'* 1950, 338. On Iurii's rule and his relations with the Jochids: Gorskii 2005, 42–59.

142 *PSRL* 25, 163; *PSRL* 15, cols. 410–13.

143 *PSRL* 10, 194; *PSRL* 15, col. 416. On the official position of *basqaq* and its evolution over time: Halperin 1987, 33–43. On Ivan I's rule: Gorskii 2005, 60–67.

144 *PSRL* 25, 161–72; Halperin 1987, 53–54.

princes of Moscow would take control of the greater part of northeastern Russia.

Özbek's almost thirty-year rule left his mark on the regime of the Golden Horde in terms of both Islamization and administrative changes. The khan, assisted by his *beglerbeg* Qutluq Temür, conducted a series of reforms that he could implement due to the duration of his reign, the longest in the history of the Golden Horde. Islam, which was already popular among the nomadic elites, gained more supporters under his rule, although it did not erase the other religions. Visiting the Golden Horde in the 1330s, the scholar and explorer Ibn Baṭṭūṭa was impressed by the number of Muslim buildings erected in Crimea and the lower Volga, including hotels, baths, and Sufi schools.¹⁴⁵ This extensive building program may be seen as a consequence of Özbek's conversion to Islam and as a sign of Islamization; most importantly it showed that the local Muslim communities had increased in numbers, wealth, and prestige. Within the *ulus*, the display of wealth and apparent prosperity of the ruling circles also explains why historians usually consider Özbek's rule the golden age of the Golden Horde.

The Last Batuids

When he heard the news of Özbek's death, which likely occurred in the fall of 1341, Tinibek was in the east, probably preparing an attack against the Chaghadaids. He hurried back to Saraichuq on the lower Ural river to take part in the enthronement *quriltai* and sit on his father's throne. But when Tinibek entered the central lands of the Golden Horde, Janibek's followers killed him. Janibek also ordered the murder of his younger brother. In 1342, the Jochid *quriltai* assembled and Janibek (r. 1342–1357) was elected khan; he was the only eligible Batuid.¹⁴⁶

Like his father, Janibek supported the house of Moscow headed by Simeon (r. 1340–1353) and Ivan (r. 1353–1359), the sons of grand Prince Ivan I (r. 1325–1340). More generally, during Janibek's rule the Jochids remained on peaceful terms with the Russian principalities. The khan allowed only one small-scale military operation in the principality of Riazan'. Iaroslav had asked for the support of the Jochids to expel his cousin Ivan Korotopol from Pereiaslav', the capital of Riazan', in order to usurp his position. This operation, which

¹⁴⁵ Kançal-Ferrari 2018, 191–214.

¹⁴⁶ Saraichuq was considered a sacred place and used for the enthronement and burial ceremonies of the khans. According to a later tradition, Batu founded the city itself: Abū'l-Ghāzī Bahādūr Khān 1871–1874/1970, 181. See also DeWeese 1994, 193–99.

took place soon after Janibek's enthronement in 1342, was quick and successful. After that, the khan needed neither fight nor execute any Russian princes, which meant that the relations both between the Jochids and the Russians and among the Russian princes were stable.¹⁴⁷

At roughly the same time, a significant incident occurred. The Metropolitan Theognostos came to visit Janibek to honor the new master and request confirmation for the rights of the Orthodox Church. The khan asked him to pay certain taxes – exactly which ones is not known – but the metropolitan refused and was forced to pay a fine.¹⁴⁸ As earlier cases show, especially in Central Asia and China, Janibek was not the first khan to breach the tax immunity system of the clergy.¹⁴⁹ Besides, it is likely that Theognostos was asked to pay land taxes, in which case the khan did not attempt to extort a tribute from the metropolitan but to levy regular taxes on estates that the church had recently acquired.¹⁵⁰

Despite the argument with the metropolitan, Janibek continued to protect the Orthodox Church. He sought to maintain the balance of power between the princes and the clergy. On the one hand, his mother Taidula forbade the princes from interfering with church justice, as clearly expressed in the *yarligh* she granted to Bishop John of Sarai in 1347. The Russian metropolitans came to visit her and received grants and gifts. They fulfilled missions to the Byzantine emperor on behalf of the khan, a clear sign that the Orthodox Church and the Mongols shared common interests and goals. Unsurprisingly, the Russian chroniclers named Taidula the “patroness of the Russian Church” and Janibek “the good tsar.”¹⁵¹ On the other hand, Janibek's rule was a period of growing independence for Riazan', Suzdal'–Nizhny Novgorod, and Tver' – which apparently called themselves “grand principalities,” a title that so far had belonged exclusively to the Principality of Vladimir.¹⁵²

At that time Novgorod continued to flourish economically and gained influence. It allied with Nizhny Novgorod, the new seat of Suzdal' principality located at the confluence of the Volga and Oka rivers. Nizhny Novgorod was Moscow's eastern rival and could compete for the overarching throne of

147 PSRL 10, 219–20; on Simeon's rule and the relations between Moscow and the khan: Gorskii 2005, 68–76.

148 PSRL 3, 357; PSRL 4/1, 275; PSRL 6/1, col. 418; PSRL 10, 215.

149 Matsui 2010, 55–66; Matsui 2005, 77.

150 Grigor'ev 2004, 57–66; Priselkov 1916, 70–83; PSRL 25, 174.

151 PSRL 10, 229; Priselkov 1916, 72; Zimin 1955, 467; Grigor'ev 2004, 50–51, 59.

152 Nasonov 1940, 297–99. This point remains open to discussion. According to Gorskii, Nizhny Novgorod and Tver' were able to claim the appellation of “grand principality” only during the 1360s (Gorskii 2005, 69 n. 8).

Vladimir. Thus, when Grand Prince Simeon died in 1353 and his brother Ivan (r. 1353–1359) inherited the Muscovite throne, Ivan claimed the throne of Vladimir but Boris challenged him: Boris was the prince of Nizhny Novgorod and he had Novgorod's full support.

Peace among the Russian principalities was in the Jochids' interests. To prevent the competition for the title of grand prince from leading to war, Janibek intervened on Ivan's behalf and managed to maintain the balance of power between Moscow, Tver', and Nizhny Novgorod. Ivan's final victory was only due to the fact that the khan sustained his commitment to Moscow. Although Novgorod's plan did not succeed, this shows that it had growing political ambition: it was then the biggest commercial hub of northwestern Russia, and the trade route that connected Novgorod to Tver' and Nizhny Novgorod was essential to the Golden Horde's economy.¹⁵³

Janibek had several good reasons to support Moscow instead of Nizhny Novgorod. First, on the southwestern border of the Golden Horde territories, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was increasingly powerful and the Jochids needed strong allies to contain its growth. Nizhny Novgorod was economically active but militarily weak. It was far from the Lithuanian border and showed less interest than Moscow in defending a distant border. In addition, Moscow had created an efficient system to collect the tribute and redistribute it to the khan. Finally the princes of Moscow had served the Batuids for generations, and the Mongols always valued enduring loyalty.

Janibek also confirmed Özbek's *yarligh* to the Venetians as soon as he was enthroned.¹⁵⁴ But a few months later, a street fight overturned the Jochid relations with the Latins. In September 1343, Andreolo Civran, a Venetian nobleman and merchant in Tana, quarreled with a Mongol official called Haji 'Umar who had allegedly humiliated him. Out of revenge, the Venetian and his men ambushed Haji 'Umar and killed him along with his followers and family. Venetians, Genoese, Florentines, and Pisans – Janibek immediately ordered them all to be expelled from Tana, Porto Pisano on the Don, and Soldaia on the Black Sea. The merchants whose goods and ships were confiscated sought shelter in the Genoese fortress of Caffa, where they were followed by Janibek's armies intending to besiege it. Indeed the Mongol *beg* was a *basqaq* and the khan

153 On the relationship between Moscow and the Golden Horde during Ivan II's rule: Gorskii 2005, 77–79.

154 On the *yarlighs* granted to the Venetians under Janibek: Mas Latrie 1868, 584–89; Grigor'ev and Grigor'ev 2002, 34–121.

could not let his official be killed without demanding punishment and serious compensation.¹⁵⁵

The Venetian senate condemned Andreolo Civran and a few others for taking part in the *basqaq*'s murder. All of them were temporarily exiled from Venice and forbidden from going back to Tana. Then the senate sent envoys to negotiate with Janibek. The envoys came back to Venice in April 1344 claiming that the khan was ready to reach an agreement. But negotiations were slow. He left open the possibility of granting a new contract to the western traders, yet he also demanded that a Mongol court judge Andreolo Civran's case according to Jochid rules – a condition that the Venetians could not accept.

To compel Janibek to agree terms, Genoese and Venetians temporarily allied and enforced a *devetum* (trade embargo) on the Golden Horde. The khan responded by sending more troops against Caffa. The siege of the Genoese fortress lasted three years. The inhabitants survived as boats carried supplies to the city through the harbor, which was inaccessible to the Mongols. Janibek's attempt to raise a fleet was a failure as the Genoese destroyed his boats one after another. The siege ended in 1346, with high losses on both sides. An Italian source reported that during the siege an epidemic broke out in the assaulters' ranks, who then catapulted dead bodies inside the fortress. This is allegedly how the bubonic plague, also known as the Black Death, spread to Europe and the Middle East – a secondhand story that no direct witness from Caffa confirmed.¹⁵⁶

It took time to rebuild trust between the Golden Horde and Venice. Finally, in 1347, Janibek granted a new agreement to the Venetians, authorizing them to resettle in Tana, but the *comerclum*, the trade tax they had to pay, was raised from 3 percent to 5 percent.¹⁵⁷ Two years later, Leonardo Bembo, the newly appointed Venetian consul, noted that the merchants had abandoned Tana. The senate discharged the consul, and he left the place and returned to Venice.¹⁵⁸

The Venetian alliance with the Genoese not only was short-lived; it also turned into a war in 1350. Over the next five years, the Genoese successfully prevented the Venetians from going back to Tana. While official exchanges between the western traders and the Golden Horde remained slow and

155 On the crisis of Tana and its wider consequences: Karpov 1996, 33–51; Karpov 1997, 65–77; Karpov 2001, 270–72.

156 Tononi 1884, 144–45; Di Cosmo 2010, 97–98. 157 Mas Latrè 1868, 587–89.

158 Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASVe), Grazie, XII, f.100r–18/VI 1351. Ciociltan 2012, 214–16.

difficult, informal contacts developed from the ground up involving Latins, Mongols, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and other locals from the Black Sea region. The Venetians had found access to Crimea through another door, the small harbor of Provanto, also called Cita Nuova. In 1356, they came to an understanding with Ramadan, Janibek's deputy based at Solkhat, now the Jochid capital of Crimea. Ramadan agreed to allot Provanto to the Venetians. The ships arriving there benefited from a trade tax that was reduced to 3 percent. At that time, Janibek was about to launch an important military campaign in Azerbaijan and thus sought to momentarily appease the old conflicts with the Venetians.¹⁵⁹

In the winter of 1356–1357, Janibek attacked Iranian Azerbaijan and targeted its regional capital, Tabriz. Since the death of Abū Saʿīd, the Ilkhanate had remained politically fragmented and this region now belonged to Malik Ashraf, a descendant of the Mongol commander Amīr Choban. But Malik Ashraf lacked the legitimacy attached to Chinggis Khan's lineage – a legitimacy that was still needed in order to rally the local elites.¹⁶⁰ Several sources thus suggest that it was the Azerbaijani Muslim elites who contacted Janibek and asked him to remove Malik Ashraf.¹⁶¹ But Janibek had his own reasons to expel the Chobanids and appropriate Tabriz.

Janibek had carefully planned his campaign by securing the support of the Shirvānshāh, Malik Ashraf's main rival. The khan understood that it was the only way to open a direct route through the Derbend Shirvan pass that followed the coast of the Caspian Sea down to Tabriz, the endpoint of the southern route that connected China, India, Egypt, and the Mediterranean. Controlling the area would give the Jochids access to this route, and would allow them to divert the circuits of the Latins, especially the Genoese, whose growing presence in Crimea directly threatened the Jochid *ortaq*s (licensed merchants). Finally, the Tabriz region was among the best winter grazing grounds of Eurasia, which the Jochids had long seen as part of their domain that had been usurped by the Ilkhanate.

The campaign was a major success. The Chobanid ruler proved unable to repel the khan's troops – reportedly up to 300,000 warriors, largely outnumbering Malik Ashraf's men – and Janibek seized the wealthiest cities of

159 Mas Latrie 1868, 589–92; Karpov 1996: 37; Di Cosmo 2010, 100.

160 On Malik Ashraf: al-Ahrī 1954, 72–76; Khwāndamīr 1994, 3/1: 133–35; Ḥāfiẓ Abrū 2011, 182–90.

161 Al-Ahrī 1954, 76; Ötemiş Ḥājji 1992, 107–8; Abū'l-Ghāzī Bahādūr Khān 1871–1874/1970, 184–85. See also DeWeese 1994, 95 n. 57.

Azerbaijan.¹⁶² As soon as he took Tabriz, Janibek issued coins in the city to celebrate his victory and exploit it economically.¹⁶³ He also sent an embassy to inform the Mamluk sultan of his victory, and the sultan welcomed the khan's envoys with great honors. Malik Ashraf had been executed and the Azerbaijani emirs had formally submitted to their new master.¹⁶⁴ Janibek had appointed his firstborn son and designated heir Birdibek to head the newly conquered region. Finally he ordered the Chubanid treasure to be carried back to the lower Volga.

Yet Janibek would never enjoy the fruits of his conquest. On his way back to Sarai he was taken ill, and he died in July 1357. His contemporaries suspected that he had been murdered on Birdibek's orders, but the ruler seems to have been on good terms with his heir during and after the Tabriz campaign. According to the Nikonian Chronicle, a late Russian source, it was the *ulus begs* who strangled the khan.¹⁶⁵ This does not necessarily contradict the Persian sources, which ascribe the responsibility for Janibek's death to either Birdibek or the *begs*, who may have considered Janibek too old, or too infirm, to rule the Golden Horde, and so hurried to enthrone young Birdibek. But without direct sources the exact circumstances surrounding Janibek's death are simply speculation.¹⁶⁶

The seizure of the Chobanid domain, which occurred at the very end of Janibek's reign, was a long-awaited conquest and yet a short-term achievement. As soon as the Jochid armies left, along with the young khan, the emir whom Birdibek had appointed governor of Tabriz claimed his independence from the Golden Horde. But he was quickly defeated and killed by the Muḥaffarid ruler Mubārīz al-Dīn Muḥammad, who in turn had to withdraw: the Mongol Jalayirids who were already in control of Baghdad now annexed Tabriz.¹⁶⁷ Seeing that the Jochids had pulled out, the Shirvānshāh switched

162 Broadbridge 2008, 161. The khan's troops numbered 300,000, according to al-Ahrī, who also gives the figure of 17,000–18,000 for Malik Ashraf's army (al-Ahrī 1954, 77). Modern historians tend to believe that Janibek's army was closer to 100,000 or less.

163 Sagdeeva 2005, 29, nb. 264.

164 Not all of the local leaders have accepted even formal vassalage, especially the powerful Muḥaffarid ruler, a former official of the Ilkhanids who controlled the Fārs region in central and western Iran. On the khan's embassy to the Mamluk sultan: Broadbridge 2008, 161–62.

165 PSRL 10, 229; other Russian chronicles mention Janibek's violent death: PSRL 15, col. 66; PSRL 35, 47.

166 Al-Ahrī 1954, 78–79; Zayn al-Dīn, ed. Tizengauzen 1941, 96; Naṭanzī, ed. Tizengauzen 1941, 128–29; Ḥāfiẓ Abrū 2011, 194–95; Abū'l-Ghāzī Bahādūr Khān 1871–1874/1970, 185. On Taidula calling the metropolitan to cure her instead of Janibek: Grigor'ev 2004, 86–87; Grigor'ev and Grigor'ev 2002, 126–27.

167 On the rise of the Jalayirids: Broadbridge 2008, 162–67.

sides and submitted to the Jalayirids. Azerbaijan had been part of the Golden Horde for less than a year.

Janibek's rule had been long enough to achieve a number of significant political and social transformations, among which were many reforms launched under Özbek. In particular, Janibek's support for Islam was consistent and possibly stronger than his father's. Among other things, he is credited with asking his warriors to wear Islamic and Sufi attire, such as turban and mantle. Janibek's Muslim name, mentioned on his coinage, was Jalāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd. The Timurid historiography remembered him as a pious ruler and praised him for the removal of Malik Ashraf, considered a tyrant oppressing the local *'ulamā'*.¹⁶⁸

Janibek maintained Özbek's policy of centralization and attempted to integrate the old territories of Orda even further into the Golden Horde. But, in the eastern wing, the nomads never fully submitted to the Batuids and, in 1342, a local uprising turned into a wider revolt. In 1352, the khan had to fight the Blue Horde again, and it became clear that he would never control the eastern wing.¹⁶⁹

During his reign Janibek had to face a number of new challenges that arose inside and outside Golden Horde territories. At the same time as he maintained peace with the Russian princes, he fought the Latin merchants and partially destroyed their local posts and networks. Between roughly 1343 and 1347, his enemies enforced a maritime blockade, which was followed from 1350 to 1355 by the Venetian–Genoese “War of the Straits.” Thus, for more than a decade, the Black Sea region was the stage of commercial and military conflicts with negative side effects on the trade economy of the Golden Horde. As a consequence, the circulation of metal, especially silver, decreased everywhere in the *ulus* – silver minting even ceased in Azaq and Crimea, not merely owing to a shortage of metal but also because the traders had abandoned their local sites. Not until 1358, after a new agreement was signed between the khan and the Venetians, did the merchants come back to Tana.¹⁷⁰ But at that time Birdibek had replaced his father Janibek on the throne.

The sudden economic drawback that struck the Golden Horde during this period also originated from the plague pandemic of the mid-fourteenth century. The Black Death caused several million fatalities in a few decades. In Europe, historians estimate that one-third of the population perished

168 DeWeese 1994, 95–96 n. 57.

169 Rogozhskii *letopisets* 2000, 63–64; Pochekaev 2017, 252.

170 Grigor'ev and Grigor'ev 2002, 122; Ciociltan 2012, 220.

between 1347 and 1352. At the same time, the plague reached Syria and Egypt, where a source reported up to 20,000 deaths in Cairo daily.¹⁷¹ In the early 1350s, the plague spread into the Russian lands, killing Grand Prince Simeon along with many members of the elite and a huge number of peasants. Due to their way of life, the herders suffered less from the epidemic; Sarai and the inner cities of the Jochids which were not too densely populated were relatively spared in comparison with Moscow, Florence, Paris, and Cairo. But the epidemic deeply affected the Mongols. A Russian source reported that the plague killed people, including “Tatars,” everywhere in the Golden Horde.¹⁷²

It was during these dark times that Birdibek inherited the Jochid throne. He was young and lacked political experience. His grandmother Taidula, who had Birdibek enthroned, probably advised him to continue Janibek’s policy, as he quickly issued a *yarligh* to the Russian metropolitan and confirmed the Venetians’ privileges.¹⁷³ He also attacked his rivals for the throne and had twelve close relatives murdered within a few weeks. Birdibek sought to terminate Özbek’s descendants and especially Janibek’s sons.¹⁷⁴ But he died, probably killed in turn, in 1359, after less than two years of rule.

His contemporaries considered Birdibek to be the last khan to be descended from Batu. Abū al-Ghāzī Bahādūr Khān, a Jochid ruling in Khiva in the mid-seventeenth century, noted, “After him [Birdibek] the lineage of Sain khan [Batu] stopped. The Uzbeks have a proverb which says: ‘the neck of the camel was cut in the person of Birdibek.’ Those who ruled after him descended from the other sons of Jochi khan.”¹⁷⁵

Birdibek was, however, not the last Batuid to rule, as Özbek’s descendant Qulpa soon replaced him.¹⁷⁶ Qulpa remained on the throne only a few months and was obliged to constantly fight off other pretenders who strove to control the lower Volga, the old political center of the Golden Horde, appropriating the symbols of rulership. Within the year 1360–1361, no less

171 Al-ʿAynī, ed. Tizengauzen 1884, 529. For groundbreaking new research on the Black Death: Green 2015.

172 *Troitskaia letopisʹ* 2002, 368.

173 Mas Latrie 1868, 593–95; Grigorʹev and Grigorʹev 2002, 122–67.

174 According to the Nikonian Chronicle (*PSRL* 10: 229), “Birdibek . . . took the throne and killed his twelve brothers.” The Trinity Chronicle (*Troitskaia letopisʹ* 2002, 376) reported, “In that same summer Tsar Birdibek was enthroned in the Horde; he killed his father and his brothers.” According to Ötemish Hājji, Birdibek killed not only his brothers but other relatives as well: Ötemish Hājji 1992, 108.

175 Abū al-Ghāzī Bahādūr Khān 1871–1874/1970, 186.

176 Seleznev 2009, 110. Historians disagree whether Qulpa (Qulna) was a descendant of Özbek. Taidula also supported the khans Khidr and Nawrūz, who were not Batuids. Ötemish Hājji 1992, 112–13; Ötemish Hājji 2017, 51–52.

than six khans minted coins in Sarai al-Jadīd.¹⁷⁷ In fact, the political crisis had already started during Birdibek's rule, when four other khans claimed to rule over various Golden Horde territories.¹⁷⁸ Another sign of deep political change was Taidula's murder around 1360. The empress had dominated the government of the Jochids for twenty years; she had a large income and received her share from the taxes of the Latin traders; she conducted her own diplomacy with the papacy and the Russian clergy. It was thanks to her support and network that Janibek, Birdibek, and Qulpa had had access to the throne. She would be the last female regent of the Golden Horde.¹⁷⁹

In the contemporary mind-set, the end of Batu's lineage did not necessarily imply that the members of the lineage had all died but that the Batuid khans were now unable to dominate the secondary lineages. In the old days, the support of the *begs*, and especially the *beglerbeg*, was crucial for a pretender, but being a direct descendant of Batu through the male line was also a requirement – and that had ceased to be the case.

The Golden Horde after the Fall of the Mongol Imperial System

Advent of the Togha Timurids

For almost twenty years the succession crisis dominated the political life of the Golden Horde. Not only did political assassination reach its peak, but also so many khans ruled simultaneously that their names are not recorded in contemporary sources. This internal crisis echoed the decline of the Chinggisid powers throughout Eurasia. The Jochids had successively to face the fragmentation of the Ilkhanate in Azerbaijan and Iran (1335–1336), the division of the Chaghadaids in Central Asia (1347), and the collapse of Yuan China (1368). In the 1350s, the anti-Mongol uprising in the east and the growing turmoil it caused had already prevented the Golden Horde from maintaining regular exchanges with the qa'anate. Consequently the familial, political, and economic networks of the Jochids shrank rapidly; their old enemies and allies disappeared and, in a few decades, their wider world had changed entirely. The descendants of Jochi still controlled their old territories but they had to adapt themselves to new surroundings.

¹⁷⁷ Vásáry 2009b, 80.

¹⁷⁸ As shown by their coins minted in various regions of the Golden Horde in 1358–1359: Vásáry 2009a, 373.

¹⁷⁹ On Taidula's role and on the political weight of the Mongol khatuns: Favereau and Geevers 2018, 469–70.

In the Golden Horde, the crisis finally led to a profound change in the hierarchy of Jochid lineages. Now that the Batuids had disappeared from the political scene, descendants of Jochi from secondary lines presented themselves as candidates for the throne. Yet not all of them were unanimously accepted. Two lineages dominated the *ulus*: the Shibanids and the Togha Timurids, until the latter were recognized as the primary lineage.¹⁸⁰ The rise to power of the descendants of the youngest son of Jochi, Togha Temür, was an effective political response to the crisis.¹⁸¹ Several factors explained their ascension: first, the Togha Timurids had the support of many influential tribes, including the Qonggirat, Argin, Shirin, Barin, Qipchaq, and Manghit.¹⁸² Second, they benefited from Togha Temür's status of "youngest son."¹⁸³

In the steppe inheritance system, the youngest was "the hearth keeper" who watched over his parents' yurt and herds during their lifetime and inherited them when they died. Thus the Togha Timurids were the keepers of Jochi's *ulus*, gifted with the ability to protect and unify the family members. Moreover, in the second half of the fourteenth century, their territories had spread and bordered the lands of the Batuids around the new and old Sarai – the political center of the Golden Horde – stretching along the lower Syr Darya, included Sighnaq, and northeast of the Aral Sea as far as the Tobol river.

For the Jochid vassals, the succession crisis known as "the times of trouble" (1359–1380) was a turning point. Neighbor and subject peoples took advantage of Mongol political instability to gain more autonomy. In northern Khwārazm, the Sufi-Qonggirats, descendants of one of Özbek's major commanders, seized the local capital, Urgench, and began to rule independently. These Qonggirat elites were among the Chinggisid "in-laws," a prestigious status in the Mongol army and society. The Sufi-Qonggirats founded their legitimacy both on their family connections with the Batuids and on their Islamic credentials, invoked to bolster their authority over the dominantly Muslim Khwārazm.¹⁸⁴

180 Historians disagree on why these two lineages dominated the others. Possibly descendants of Orda and Tangut, two other sons of Jochi, also had a claim to the throne (Mirgaleev 2017, 344). On the rise of the Jochid secondary lineages: Favereau and Geevers 2018, 470–77.

181 The genealogical sources record that Jochi had between thirteen and fifteen sons and that Togha Temür was the youngest, or at least was considered such by his contemporaries: Mirgaleev 2017, 344.

182 Ötemish Hājī 1992, 115; Ötemish Hājī 2017, 55. 183 Mirgaleev 2017, 346–48.

184 On the Sufi-Qonggirats: Landa 2018, 215–31.

In Eastern Europe, the growing power of the Lithuanians forced the Jochids to make new territorial concessions. In 1362, after the Battle of Blue Waters in modern-day Ukraine, the Lithuanians were able to appropriate the supervision of the Podolia region and reinforce their control over Kiev – a city that the Mongols would never again own.¹⁸⁵ In the north, Tver' and Riazan' followed their own policies separately from Moscow. As for Grand Prince Dmitri, he kept the support of the Orthodox Church and the right to levy the tribute. But he took the risk of holding the part that was usually delivered to Sarai.¹⁸⁶

Toqtamish and the End of Political Instability

During the succession crisis, the eastern lands passed under the control of the Togha Timurid Urus Khan while the western lands fell into the hands of the *beglerbeg* Mamai, who had married Birdibek's daughter and remained loyal to the house of Özbek. Mamai associated with various khans and for almost twenty years (c. 1360–1380) ruled de facto parts of the lands north of the Black Sea, Crimea, and the northern Caucasus.¹⁸⁷ Yet he could never fully control the Sarai area and the lower Volga.

Initially Mamai did support Grand Prince Dmitri, who later turned on his mentor. According to the Russian sources, Mamai demanded more tribute than was customary, probably because it included payment in arrears. Dmitri attempted to negotiate but Mamai refused to parley; he was already planning a punitive raid on Moscow when the grand prince's army entered the steppe to prevent Mamai's attack. In 1378, at the Battle of Vozha River, the Russians were able to defeat the Mongols for the first time. In August 1380, Mamai's new attempt to subdue the rebellious grand prince was again a failure: on the field of Kulikovo near the Don river, his army was crushed and he had to abandon the battlefield. Although it would be a very short-lived victory, Dmitri remained famous in the Russian chronicles for his military success at Kulikovo Pole, and he was later named "Donskoi" after the battle site.¹⁸⁸ The Battle of Vozha River, on the contrary, remains surprisingly little known in

185 Mamai may have tacitly authorized the Lithuanian conquest to balance Moscow's power; in any case, the Lithuanians sent a tribute from Podolia to the Jochids until the fifteenth century. On the battle of Blue Waters (*Synia voda*): Kołodziejczyk 2011, 5.

186 On the relations between Moscow and the Golden Horde during the rule of the grand prince Dmitri Ivanovich (1362–1389): Gorskii 2005, 80–118.

187 Mamai's headquarters were in the territory of modern Zaporozhe in Ukraine. Pochekaeu 2010.

188 Vásáry 2009b, 81; Gorskii 2005, 99–100.

popular historiography, although it was the grand prince's first major military victory over the Golden Horde.

Urus and Mamai shared the greatest part of the old Golden Horde lands until their military defeats at the hands of Toqtamish (r. c. 1378–1406), another descendant of Togha Temür. Toqtamish had gained the support of Tamerlane (r. 1370–1405), the new leader of the western Chaghadaids.¹⁸⁹ Even more important, the *els* (hereditary peoples) of the Shibanids had joined his ranks.¹⁹⁰ They believed in both his military strength and his status within the Jochid family. As a prominent member of the Togha Timurids, he was considered able to restore the unity and prestige of the Jochid Ulus. Around 1378 Toqtamish defeated Urus and conquered his capital, Sighnaq, on the Syr Darya river. In 1380 he crushed Mamai's troops on the banks of the Kalka river and won Sarai.¹⁹¹ His personal success on the battlefield came as a confirmation that the Togha Timurids had now fully replaced the Batuids.

Toqtamish Khan possessed the ambition to restore the empire of his predecessors, especially Janibek, who had conquered Tabriz. In the Islamic sources, he is portrayed as a unifier who claimed the leadership of the Blue Horde and the White Horde, the two wings of the Jochid Ulus. In fact Toqtamish had to adjust to the new geopolitical situation. The world had changed: the Ming ruled China; Tamerlane ruled in Central Asia and parts of Persia; while the Turkmen, the Ottomans, and others had replaced the Ilkhanids. Under these challenging circumstances, the khan envisioned a new multilateral foreign policy that allowed the Jochids to expand again.

Toqtamish replaced the traditional alliance with the Venetians by a new one with the Genoese. His first agreement with the Genoese, in 1381, granted them eighteen sites and villages in southern Crimea. His generous land grants aimed at pacifying southern Crimea while he was simultaneously subduing the Russian princes and besieging Moscow in 1382. Grand Prince Dmitri managed to escape but the city was plundered and burned. The Russians had no other choice than to submit again to the Mongols.¹⁹²

To mark his territory and publicize his military prowess, Toqtamish minted coins in various places, some of which he controlled for only a few years. In particular, Toqtamish only intermittently dominated northern Khwārazm, although he started issuing coins there as early

189 On the relations between Tamerlane and Toqtamish: Manz 1989.

190 Mirgaleev 2017, 346.

191 Mamai took refuge in the Crimea; in 1382 he was killed by the Genoese in Caffa: Ciociltan 2012, 229–30.

192 Ciociltan 2012, 225–36; Gorskii 2005, 100–18.

as 1381.¹⁹³ To widen the commercial exchanges, he sent envoys with letters and gifts to the ruler of Lithuania and to the Mamluk sultan. Twice he launched military expeditions in the Caucasus to take control of the Transcaucasian trade route and win back Tabriz. Yet Azerbaijan was now in the hands of Tamerlane, who had more extensive geopolitical plans than the Jalayirids and a much stronger army.¹⁹⁴

Just after Toqtamish attempted to capture Samarqand, Tamerlane launched his first campaign against the khan. So far the repeated attacks of his former protégé had merely slowed down his plans, but now Tamerlane felt directly threatened. In 1387–1388, he reconquered the region of Khwārazm from Toqtamish; this time, however, Tamerlane's aim was to strike deep into Golden Horde territories. In 1391, he defeated Toqtamish in his central lands, near the meeting of the Qundurcha and Volga rivers. Tamerlane took substantial booty away with him, leaving the Golden Horde to Toqtamish and his rivals. The *ulus* was again divided into two political domains: Edigü, the *beg* of the Manghit, governed the east while Toqtamish kept the west.¹⁹⁵

In 1394 Toqtamish again attacked Azerbaijan. Tamerlane retaliated at once and crushed the khan's troops on the Terek river, north of Derbend, in April 1395. While Toqtamish sought shelter in Bulghar on the Volga, Tamerlane's armies targeted the Golden Horde trade centers: Ukek, Sarai, Hajji-Tarkhan, Tana, and Sudak. Not only did they destroy the main commercial hubs of the Jochids; they also ruined the nomads' pasturelands in the lower Volga, the lower Don, and the northern Caucasus.¹⁹⁶ This was the first time the Golden Horde had suffered a series of heavy military defeats – since Batu's time, the Qipchaq steppe had been a safe area for nomads, and the Jochids had never felt seriously threatened by any external power until Tamerlane arrived.

Toqtamish found refuge at the court of Vitautas (r. 1392–1430). The Lithuanian ruler offered the khan's followers the chance to settle in the Vilnius and Trakai regions. These warriors also joined Vitautas's troops, creating a huge army that aimed to reconquer Toqtamish's dominions. They crossed the Dnieper and met with the army of Edigü and his ally Temür Qutluq near the Vorskla river in August 1399. It was a significant defeat for both Toqtamish and Vitautas.¹⁹⁷ Having definitively lost Batu's throne, Toqtamish fled to the Shibanid *ulus* in southwestern Siberia, where he took over Chimgi-Tura and the surrounding region known as

193 For Toqtamish's coinage: Petrov 2017, 626–27. 194 Favereau 2017, 340–42.

195 Trepavlov 2001a, 9–10, 14–15.

196 On the struggle between Toqtamish and Temür: Mirgaleev 2011, 170–82.

197 Kołodziejczyk 2011, 7–8.

Ibir-Sibir.¹⁹⁸ During the following years, he never ceded his claim to Batu's ancestral lands that were now in Edigü's hands, and in 1405 he sent envoys to Tamerlane, who agreed once more to support him. But the khan did not accomplish his will to again unify the Jochid Ulus: they both died soon afterwards – Tamerlane in Otrar and Toqtamish in Ibir-Sibir.¹⁹⁹

In the first years of his rule Toqtamish had accumulated diplomatic and military victories: in 1381, he had granted a *yarligh* to the Genoese and re-established trade contacts with them; in 1382, he had successfully attacked Moscow; a year later, he was able to restore control over northern Khwārazm, which had separated from the Golden Horde in 1361; and, finally, in 1384–1385, he had sent his first embassy to Egypt. By ruling the entire Golden Horde territories, even for a short period of time, Toqtamish proved the supremacy of the Togha Timurids over the other Jochid lines. It is not by chance that, according to several sources, his contemporaries saw Toqtamish as the new Chinggis Khan.²⁰⁰

And yet the end of Toqtamish's reign witnessed his loss of authority. On top of his military defeats against Tamerlane and Edigü, he had made political miscalculations. He had gained the support of the western *els* (hereditary peoples of the Batuids) but lost the backing of the eastern *els* (hereditary peoples of the Ordais and Togha Timurids). Especially, his attempt to rule without the consent of the Manghit, the most powerful nomads of the old Blue Horde, led him to a political dead end. To bind more people, the khan had issued an increasing number of land grants (*soyurghal*) and tax and service exemptions (*tarkhan*) to the local elites – a clear failure as most of them finally turned to his adversaries.²⁰¹

Edigü and the Rise of the Manghit

The Manghit territories covered the region north and east of the Caspian Sea, along the lower Ural and Emba rivers, and deep into Mangystau (modern-day western Kazakhstan).²⁰² At the end of the fourteenth century, the Manghit

198 Chimgi-Tura is modern-day Tiumen in Russia. It was the Shibanid summer encampment and became later the "capital" of the khanate of Ibir-Sibir.

199 Depending on the sources, Toqtamish was killed in a battle against Edigü's son, a rival khan, or Edigü himself: DeWeese 2000, 563; DeWeese 1994, 338.

200 See the epic poem *Idegi* (tr. Lipkin 1990) and Ötemish Hājji 1992, 113–18.

201 Toqtamish's grant of lands to the Lithuanians in return for Vytautas's assistance is a case in point: Kołodziejczyk 2011, 15.

202 On the Manghit initial territory and their successive migrations at the end of the fourteenth century: Trepavlov 2001a, 7–16; on Mangystau as a key region for the Golden Horde economy: Astafiev and Petrov 2017, 101–15.

beg Edigü, the leader of the eastern *begs*, became a dominant political figure in the Golden Horde and the Manghit emerged as a political force in their own right.²⁰³ Edigü was originally one of Toqtamish's chief *amīrs*, a position he used to consolidate the Manghit *ulus* by obtaining from the khan tax immunity and lands for his people. In the early 1390s, he conspired against Toqtamish and convinced Tamerlane to support him against the khan. At the same time, he associated himself with his nephew Temür-Qutluq, a Togha Timurid who claimed the throne of the Golden Horde.²⁰⁴

Exploiting Toqtamish's retreat, the Manghit progressively extended their realm westward. Around 1397, Edigü managed to enthrone Temür-Qutluq Khan and became his *beglerbeg*. Their military headquarters was on the banks of the Dnieper, probably near Kremenchuk in modern-day Ukraine. This was a strategic area for the new khan, who intended to dominate the western *begs*. At roughly the same time, Edigü claimed the headship of the *tümen* of Crimea. He had taken the most important Crimean cities and villages from the western *begs* and subdued the Genoese, who had rebelled against the Jochids and sided with Tamerlane. So far the alliance with the eastern *begs* and Temür-Qutluq had been a highly successful match, and Edigü's influence grew and spread over the greatest part of the Golden Horde.²⁰⁵

After Tamerlane's death, in 1405, Edigü's authority also increased in the Mangyshlaq peninsula and south of the Aral Sea. Taking advantage of the succession struggles among the Timurids, he took over Khwārazm, which he ruled from roughly 1405 to 1412.²⁰⁶ These years witnessed the peak of Edigü's power. In the central lands of the Golden Horde he remained in control: he had deposed Temür-Qutluq and replaced him with a more loyal ruler, soon dismissed and followed by another one of the same lineage. Only Toqtamish's sons remained Edigü's serious adversaries. They were confined to the northern and western margins of the Golden Horde territories, yet they attracted warriors and gained political weight. The Lithuanians, and even the grand prince of Moscow, supported them in order to oppose the *beglerbeg's* plans.

Engaged in simultaneous conflicts against internal contenders, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and Moscow, Edigü could not hold the whole Golden Horde for long. Around 1412–1413, he lost authority over the Crimea, Sarai, Hajji-Tarkhan (Astrakhan), and Bulghar regions. He retreated to Khwārazm

203 On Edigü's biography: DeWeese 1994, 336–52.

204 DeWeese 1994, 337. According to Trepavlov, Toqtamish granted Edigü tax immunity no earlier than 1396–1397: Trepavlov 2001b, 76; Trepavlov 2001a, 15, 18, 22, 47.

205 Favereau 2018b, 186–87. 206 DeWeese 1994, 338.

and, there, allied with the Timurid ruler Shāhrukh, married his daughter, and received the military support he needed. Yet he lost several battles against Temür Khan, the son of Temür Qutluq, and Jalāl al-Dīn, Toqtamish's son, and was finally expelled from Khwārazm. Within a few years, the old *beglerbeg* was reduced to the Manghit homeland – a territory limited to the lower Ural river, including the city of Saraichuq, and the northeastern shores of the Caspian Sea.²⁰⁷

From that time onward, Edigü's focus shifted to the western regions of the Golden Horde where Toqtamish's sons still had territories, warriors, and allies. Ruling from his headquarters at the mouth of the Ural, Edigü remained a charismatic chief and was still militarily active, raiding Kiev and campaigning in western Siberia. He seemed to intermittently rule the Sarai, Hajji-Tarkhan, and Derbend regions as he had coins minted bearing their names. Meanwhile, Qādir-Birdī, the last surviving son of Toqtamish, had established himself in Crimea, where he was supported by the powerful Shirin *els*. Qādir-Birdī led a campaign deep into Manghit territory, and engaged in battle with Edigü. The old *beglerbeg* was finally killed there in 1419.²⁰⁸ Wounded, Qādir-Birdī did not profit from his success and quickly passed away.

After he died, Edigü came to be regarded as the founder of the Manghit *ulus*, also known as the “Noghai Horde.”²⁰⁹ Indeed, his time was marked by the growing influence of the Manghit *els* although they were still part of the Jochid Ulus. For over thirty years, Edigü had been a major political player who even came to dominate most of the Golden Horde for a short while. Finally, his fame within the steppe world stemmed from his exceptional career, despite the fact that he was not a Chinggisid. His prestige was based not only on his status of *beglerbeg* and his military skills, but also on his role as Islamizer.

Edigü's wife made the pilgrimage in 1416 with a retinue of 300, and Edigü himself was credited for being a devoted Muslim, surrounded by Sufis.²¹⁰ For many local communities, his rule was a key stage on the path to Islamization. Edigü's adherence to Islam and support of Muslim figures formed the historical basis for epic tales in which he was portrayed as descending from Baba Tükles, the Sufi saint who had converted Özbek Khan. Such tales began

207 DeWeese 1994, 338–39; Frank 2009, 237–39.

208 DeWeese 1994, 339; Frank 2009, 239–40.

209 The Manghit *ulus* is called the “Noghai Horde” in the Western sources: DeWeese 1994, 343. Historians still do not know how to explain the connection between the names Manghit and Noghai, and if there was any historical link between the Jochid commander Noghai (d. 1299) and the ethnonym Noghai.

210 DeWeese 1994, 340–41.

to take shape as early as the 1430s, and circulated orally and in writing among Central Asian Turkic peoples such as the Noghais and Tatars.²¹¹ Today not only does Edigü remain a major Islamizing figure often linked with Baba Tükles and Özbek, but also his descendants play key roles in the popular historical memory.²¹²

The zenith of the Noghai Horde came in the late fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century. Its emergence was deeply associated with the success of the house of Edigü, whose authority and prestige remained strong in the northern Caspian, Mangyshlaq, and northern Khwārazm regions. Edigü's descendants gave rise to various ruling lineages and held the position of *beglerbeg* for generations.²¹³ The Noghai leaders bore all the political and symbolic legacy of their founding ancestor. In particular, the influential Nūr al-Dīn and Waqqāš Bīy deeply interfered with the politics of the new khanates that took shape in the Astrakhan, Kazan, and Crimean regions after the 1430s.²¹⁴ Paradoxically, the Manghit *els*, who were the strongest supporters of the Golden Horde and fought to maintain its territorial unity and institutions, became the first nomadic confederation to constitute its own separate political entity on a large scale.

The Shibanids–Uzbeks

At the same time as the Manghit–Noghai appeared on the political scene of the late Golden Horde, the “Uzbeks,” another influential nomadic power, emerged. The Uzbeks were linked to the Noghais although they also followed their own trajectory.²¹⁵ Initially, they took shape under the leadership of Abū al-Khayr, descendant of Jochi's fifth son Shiban. Seizing the opportunity of the disorder following Edigü's death in 1419, Abū al-Khayr founded his own *ulus* in the former lands of the Blue Horde and was elected khan in 1429 at Chimgi-Tura. Shiban's old *ulus* was located in the region of Ibir-Sibir, where Toqtamish had spent his last years, but Abū al-Khayr's main support was the Manghit and one of their new leaders, Waqqāš Bīy, became his *beglerbeg*. As Edigü's grandson, Waqqāš Bīy shared Abū al-Khayr's interest in northern Khwārazm. Indeed, it had been Edigü's

211 On “the epic tale of Idige”: DeWeese 1994, 411–20.

212 The roles of Edigü and Özbek, as Islamizers, are often conflated in popular memory: DeWeese 1994, 342.

213 Trepavlov 2001b, 85–139. Edigü was said to have around twenty sons.

214 Trepavlov 2001a, 24–32; Nūr al-Dīn was Edigü's son and father of Waqqāš Bīy: DeWeese 1994, 348.

215 On the links between “Manghit–Noghai” and “Uzbek”: DeWeese 1994, 344–47.

territory for several years and in Waqqāṣ Bīy's view it should be taken back from the Timurids.²¹⁶

Thanks to Manghit help, Abū al-Khayr established himself at the head of the Shibanid *ulus* and occupied northern Khwārazm in 1430. Within a few years, he had created a powerful new *ulus* and was able to interfere in Timurid politics and defeat Shāhrukh's troops. In 1446, he conquered the cities of the lower and middle Syr Darya and made Sighnaq his "winter capital."²¹⁷ Yet in 1457 he suffered a devastating defeat against the Oirats, also called the "Qalmaqs," and many Manghit *els* left him and rallied either to his rivals the 'Arabshāhids or to the emergent Noghai Horde.²¹⁸ Soon after, Abū al-Khayr's *ulus* split again and another large group of nomads fled eastward to his competitors, the Togha Timurid leaders Kiray and Janibek, following them to the Chu valley. They were called the Uzbek-Qazaq, "the Uzbeks who had left their khan."²¹⁹

In 1468, Abū al-Khayr died and the Shibanids began the struggle for his succession. After years of internal wars, Abū al-Khayr's grandson Muḥammad Shibānī Khan (1500–1510) was able to revive the Uzbek *ulus*. In the early sixteenth century, he abandoned the Qipchaq steppe to the Qazaqs and took Transoxania and Khurasan from the Timurids. After the khan's death, the Uzbeks established competing khanates in Khwārazm and Transoxania, and for centuries they remained one of the strongest powers in Central Asia.

Formation of the Regional Khanates

In the central and western lands of the Golden Horde, a number of political powers based on specific territories slowly emerged between the 1430s and the 1460s. The rise of the Shibanids and the Togha Timurids, who were originally secondary lineages, implied new territorial claims, migrations of nomads, and multiplication of throne pretenders. It also generated more competition and armed conflicts among the throne pretenders because they all had the same status. The candidates' genealogies, their alliance with powerful *els*, and their adherence to Islam became key to accessing power.²²⁰

216 DeWeese 1994, 345; Trepavlov 2001b, 97–100. 217 Bregel 2009, 223.

218 The 'Arabshāhids, who ruled Khwārazm, were Shibanids just like Abū al-Khayr but from another branch of Shiban's lineage. Their territory was located east of the Manghit, in the steppe north of the Aral Sea.

219 Kiray and Janibek later conquered the Qipchaq steppe and, in the early sixteenth century, their descendants and followers became known merely as "Qazaqs (Kazakhs)": Bregel 2009, 225–27.

220 On the "genealogical competition" between the descendants of Togha Temür, Shiban, and the Timurids: Favereau and Geevers 2018, 470–77.

Finally, for winning they often had to ally with powerful neighbors. These new leaders had much less power than the Batuids but they had the ambition to reshape Jochi's *ulus*: they were "regional khans" with imperial claims.

After Edigü's death in 1419, the Golden Horde fragmented into a number of khanates. These were later known as the Great Horde; the khanates of Kazan, Astrakhan, and Qasimov; the Sibir khanate; and the Crimean khanate. These regional powers had several features in common: Jochid khans ran them in association with local nomadic leaders identified in contemporary sources as *begs*, *emirs*, or *mürzās*. They were also supported by the *sayyids*, who claimed to be descended from the Prophet Muḥammad, and by larger neighboring powers that provided cash, protection, and military help. While the nomadic elites had relatively fixed territories, the khans themselves moved from one region to another, depending on their political opportunities.

The Togha Timurid khan Ulugh Muḥammad came to power in the Sarai region. With the support of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, he invaded Crimea but failed to keep the throne of Sarai. Around 1438 he captured Kazan and established himself in its surroundings, where he conducted several successful raids against Nizhny Novgorod, Kolomna, and other Russian territories. In 1445 he captured Grand Prince Vasily, whom he would release for a heavy tribute. Obviously his political aim was to bring the northern Russians back into some form of submission, but Ulugh Muḥammad lost his life soon afterwards. His sons would rather maintain peaceful relationships with the Muscovite elites who granted land to one of them, Qāsim, on the left bank of the Oka river. The site became known as Qasimov city, the capital of a new khanate supported by the northern Russians.²²¹

Although he claimed authority over a greater part of the old Golden Horde, Ulugh Muḥammad was later considered to be the founder of the Kazan khanate.²²² As far as is known, during his lifetime he had at least three challengers: Sayyid Aḥmad, grandson of Toqtamish, who ruled in the steppe south of the Russian principalities; Küchük Muḥammad, grandson of Temür Qutluq, who ruled in Astrakhan; and Hajji Giray, another Togha Timurid, who had authority over Crimea. Despite the fragmentation of the Jochid power, the holder of the Sarai region was recognized as the ruler of the "Takht eli," the throne of the Great Horde,²²³ and as the supreme khan. The lands of the lower Volga encapsulated a form of sacred power that boosted a

221 On the Qasimov khanate, Rakhimzianov 2009; Frank 2009, 258–59; Kołodziejczyk 2011, 22.

222 On Ulugh Muḥammad and Kazan, Frank 2009, 246–47.

223 On the Takht Eli Khanate, Trepavlov 2018, 235–47.

khan's prestige and military strength. They conferred a nominal but still attractive status and the regional khans would repeatedly fight to conquer them.

The Stand on the Ugra River

In the second half of the fifteenth century, the descendants of Temür Qutluq were able to keep the Takht eli for themselves. It covered a large stretch of territory from the west bank of the Volga as far as the Dnieper. In the 1460s Aḥmad co-ruled this region with his brothers. After he had conducted successful campaigns against the Uzbeks and killed the son of Abū al-Khayr in 1469, Aḥmad managed to take the lead of the Takht eli and became khan.²²⁴ During his rule, he not only tried to subdue the former subjects of the Golden Horde, such as the Uzbeks and the Russians, but also sought to revive Toqtamish's imperialist foreign policy. He had a clear ambition to reunify the Jochid Ulus.

Khan Aḥmad subsequently suggested that Venice should rally against the Ottomans, who were threatening Jochid positions in Crimea and the lower Danube. But even with Venice on his side, Aḥmad could not win this war without the support of the Polish king and the Lithuanian duke Casimir IV (r. 1440–1492), his powerful western neighbor and natural ally against the Ottomans. The project was finally abandoned as Casimir refused to join, leaving the khan no other choice than to negotiate with Mehmet II (r. 1444–1446, 1451–1481).²²⁵ Part of Aḥmad's greater plan was to control Crimea. In 1476, he helped his nephew Janibek to take control of the peninsula. But, less than two years later, Mengli Giray allied with the Ottomans and won the Crimean throne back. From now on Crimea would remain in the hands of the Giray family and under the influence of the Ottoman sultan.²²⁶

Aḥmad conducted several operations in northern Russia in order to assert his supremacy over the grand prince of Moscow. Apparently, since his enthronement, Ivan III (r. 1462–1505) had not paid the tribute. Even more alarming for Aḥmad, he had launched a process of unification of the lands north of the Oka river to strengthen Moscow's position against the Lithuanians and Jochids. In 1479 Aḥmad sent his tax collectors to Moscow to take what belonged to him, including arrears, but the grand prince refused

²²⁴ Frank 2009, 253. ²²⁵ Zaitsev 1999, 4–15.

²²⁶ Kołodziejczyk 2011, 21. Mengli Giray ruled intermittently between 1466 and 1475 and then remained on the throne from 1478 to 1515.

to obey.²²⁷ Obviously it would take a military conflict to bring Ivan back into line.

Over a period of months, Aḥmad gathered his warriors and prepared to assault Moscow. He had carefully planned this campaign with the ruler of Poland–Lithuania: their armies would launch simultaneous attacks against the grand prince. In the opposite camp, Ivan prepared to repel the assailants and allied with the Crimean khan, who attacked Casimir's troops, preventing them from accomplishing Aḥmad's plan. Aḥmad and his warriors stopped on the banks of the Ugra river, about 150 miles south of Moscow, waiting for the Lithuanian reinforcement and facing the Russians, who stood on the other side. Aḥmad's troops would remain there from the spring to the fall of 1480. In November they left, the khan having received the news that the princes of southwestern Russia had rebelled against Casimir and were now headed toward Sarai. Fearful of being trapped between Ivan's army and the southwestern princes, Aḥmad chose to withdraw.²²⁸

After the retreat from the Ugra river, Aḥmad quickly lost the support of his troops. Ibak, the Shibanid khan of Ibir-Sibir, taking advantage of his hardship, attacked the Great Horde together with the Noghai leaders. Aḥmad was killed during the fight, probably in January 1481.²²⁹ His heirs had neither the ambition nor the means to conduct a policy that would encompass the entire Jochid territories. In addition, the lower Volga was suffering from harsh climatic conditions at the end of the fifteenth century. A period of drought followed a period of frost, harming herds and other local resources. Around 1501 famine was spreading among the herders and Shaykh Aḥmad, the son and successor of Aḥmad, was forced to look for more sustainable pasturelands in the southern Russian steppe. He asked Aleksandr, the Polish–Lithuanian ruler, for help.²³⁰

Having heard of Shaykh Aḥmad's forced migration, Mengli Giray seized the opportunity to attack him and capture the Takht eli. In the spring of 1502, he came to the Sula river, a left tributary of the Dnieper, where Shaykh Aḥmad's camp stood. He defeated the khan, taking over his mobile administration, court, and treasury. Although a great number of Shaykh Aḥmad's people, including his wife and officials, had already left during the winter and asked for shelter at the Crimean court, Mengli Giray considered this a

227 On this possibly legendary episode: Keenan 1969, 33–46; Gorskii 2005, 175–77, 198. More generally, on the relationship between Ivan III and the Jochids: Gorskii 2005, 153–86.

228 *PSRL* 25, 328; Khodarkovsky 1999, 242–48. 229 Trepavlov 2001b, 114–15.

230 Collins 1991, 389, 391–93.

personal victory.²³¹ Immediately afterwards, he made it officially known that he had acquired Batu's throne and the thousands of subjects attached to it, calling himself "the great khan of the Great Horde." From then on, the Giray khans would be the strongest bearers of the Golden Horde legacy.²³²

*From Abandonment of Ancestral Lands in the Lower Volga
to the New Jochids*

The khans' failure to maintain the unity of the Jochid Ulus and the final disintegration of the Golden Horde started with a series of political deadlocks that emanated from the crisis of the mid- to late fourteenth century. The economic drawbacks from which the nomads suffered at the turn of the sixteenth century weakened them even more. By this time, their commercial sphere of influence had shrunk dramatically. Since Ulugh Muḥammad's last diplomatic exchange with the Mamluk sultan in 1427, the Ottomans had blocked Golden Horde access to the straits and established control over the Black Sea²³³ – cutting off the Jochids from the Mamluks and depriving both of the trade, political, and artistic stimulations that their interaction generated.

To compensate for the loss of control over Black Sea trade, the khans did everything they could to maintain terrestrial linkages with Southeastern Europe. The Volga–Ural nomads still possessed and traded huge herds of horses, cattle, and camels. They are known to have exported horses and camels to Persia, and cattle to Europe, in the fifteenth century. There was a well-established cattle road from the Golden Horde heartlands to Germany, which traced the northern littoral of the Black Sea to Poland through the principality of Moldavia. The khans had allied with the rulers of Poland–Lithuania to secure this trade road: *la via de Polonia*, as Italian merchants called it.²³⁴ It was the Mongols' last channel of exchange with the West. Yet resources in the lower Volga were becoming scarce, and epizootics and poor weather conditions triggered a slow but persistent decline. By the mid-fifteenth century, the khan had already forbidden nomadic groups from Kazan to access the pasturages in the lower Volga – available grazing grounds

231 Collins 1991, 391–92. On the khanate of Astrakhan that emerged at that time: Zaitsev 2004, 30–62, who convincingly demonstrates that Astrakhan was part of the Great Horde territories until the early sixteenth century.

232 The Crimean khanate remained in the hands of the Giray until the Russians annexed it in 1783. Shaykh Aḥmad was able to escape and ended his life in poor conditions, probably in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. On the events of 1502: Collins 1991, 361–99; Kołodziejczyk 2011, 10–11.

233 Al-'Aynī, ed. Tizengauzen 1884, 502. 234 Barbaro 1971, 125.

were then more precious than gold and the nomads were fighting each other to survive.

Despite the split into regional competing powers, the Jochids remained influential well into the 1480s. The Takht eli still had serious military resources – according to the Lithuanian ambassador, Shaykh Aḥmad could count on an army of 60,000 warriors.²³⁵ It was only in the sixteenth century that what was left of the imperial formation of the Golden Horde collapsed. Under pressure from the surrounding sedentary powers, the khans' influence in the lower Volga diminished to the scope of a few cities – Kazan, Astrakhan, and Qasimov. Deepening internal conflicts led to massive migrations out of the core Golden Horde territories toward western Siberia, Central Asia, and the Crimean peninsula. The nomads lost their trade routes and allies one after the other, until the Russians seized the all-important markets in the Volga basin and delivered the final blow to the Takht eli. Roughly a century after the Ottomans conquered Constantinople (1453) and deprived the Jochid merchants of their trade rights through the Bosphorus, the conquest of Kazan (1552) and of Astrakhan (1556) by Ivan IV confirmed that the balance of power had switched.

In the once-central lands of the Golden Horde, the nomads who stayed had to acknowledge the authority of the “white tsar” from Moscow. Russians and Ottomans had increased the pressure from the margins, destabilizing ever more the Jochid Ulus. But internal dissensions should not be overlooked in the collapse of the Takht eli. The leaders of the Noghai Horde were the strongest challengers to the Crimean and Astrakhan khans. Edigü's descendants rejected the Jochids' main political institutions: the khanate, the *quriltai*, and the *keshig*. The Noghai made short-term alliances with the Russians and the Ottomans, shifting loyalties when it suited their political plans – and in the first half of the sixteenth century they finally split into the Great and Little Noghai Hordes, the first one favorable to Moscow, the second one close to the Girays and the Ottomans. The failure of the Takht eli was a clear consequence of the discordance between the khans and the various nomadic groups that had supported them and placed them on the throne. In fact, when Ivan IV ordered the annexation of Kazan and Astrakhan in the 1550s, the Jochid Ulus had already abandoned its ancestral core territory for other regions where nomads could grow strong and expand again.²³⁶

²³⁵ Collins 1991, 384.

²³⁶ On the context and consequences of Ivan IV's annexation of Kazan and Astrakhan: Khodarkovsky 1999, 269–86.

Indeed the collapse of the old political center was not the end of the Jochids' domination; it was a sign that the nomads were adapting to changing times. In the sixteenth century, Jochi's offspring contributed to the creation of several khanates in Crimea and Central Asia, giving rise to smaller but resilient powers. In order to survive they adopted diverse strategies; either they sought the protection of larger neighbors such as the Ottoman Empire, Muscovy, and Poland–Lithuania, or they integrated a stronger nomadic formation such as the Noghai Horde, the Uzbeks, and the Kazakh khanate. These were expansionist powers led by both Chinggisid descendants and members of the local aristocracy, and their vitality was mainly due to the influx of manpower from the lower Volga. Even if they stood outside the Jochid core territories, Uzbek and Qazaq carried high the Golden Horde legacy and used it as a springboard to attract warriors and conquer more peoples and cities. While in the west the Giray had very limited possibilities of expansion and were soon sedentarized, in Central Asia a new socioeconomic dynamic was keeping the nomadic society fluid and in motion.

Conclusion: The Empire Within

The Golden Horde was the northwestern part of the Mongol Empire; it shared many common features with the other Chinggisid domains but showed significant differences too. This was due, first, to the specific ecology of the Jochid territories and, second, to their ability to adapt their rule to new environments. The governance strategy that the Mongols adopted for the northwestern lands also depended on the type of resources that they planned to extract. Agriculture was less productive there than in Central Asia and China, and it was more precarious. The density of the population was lower too; settlements were dispersed and sometimes disconnected, especially during the cold season when skis, sleds, and dogsleds were needed even for short-distance travel.²³⁷

The Mongols developed new technologies of governance to control their sedentary subjects. They mixed steppe practices (*keshig*, mobile administration, the decimal system) with foreign techniques of governing and institutions (metal coinage, *gerege*, writing systems) that they did not simply borrow but adapted. This type of governance required seasoned accountants, secretaries, translators, and any kind of administrators who knew the rules of the game in both steppe and sown (nomadic and sedentary). Initially, the Jochids

²³⁷ Allsen 2006, 129.

relied on Khwārazmians who had gained experience serving the Qara Khitai and the Khwārazm-Shāhs, and sent them to the Russian principalities.²³⁸ But, as early as the 1260s, they began to recruit their administrative staff from various communities – Alans, Slavs, Hungarians, Latins, Franciscans, Egyptians, Armenians, and others were involved at various levels of the Golden Horde governing system.

Although the Jochids preferred to rule their sedentary subjects indirectly, they maintained strong connections with them. The eastern Slavic peoples are a case in point. The khan administered them through local princes, yet he sent his own tax collectors whom the princes were asked to protect. Besides, the princes had to visit the court to have their privileges confirmed, or to defend their cases, and the khan communicated with them regularly through envoys. Thus there was no permanent administrative presence and the khan's deputies were commissioned for specific and temporary purposes only. This system did not prevent constant political and economic interactions between the khan's mobile court and the eastern Slavic peoples: princes, clergy, officials, messengers, and merchants traveled back and forth. The sedentary subjects sent military conscripts to the khan's armies but the Jochids also provided troops to the grand prince and, when needed, Mongols and Russians went onto the battlefield to fight side by side.²³⁹

The Jochids exerted power over the Russians for almost three centuries, mainly through the tax system, trade, and ad hoc missions that they sent when they required services, goods, cash, or a workforce.²⁴⁰ These specific methods of governance that they adopted to rule the Russian principalities probably worked because there were precedents. Indeed, as Thomas Allsen has pointed out, the eastern Slavs had already experienced nomad domination.²⁴¹ In fact, the Russians had deep ties with the Mongols' predecessors – the Khazars, Pechenegs, and Cumans or Qipchaqs – who were both their allies and their enemies, and to whom they occasionally paid tribute. They knew that nomads maintained rulers in place as long as these acknowledged the authority of the steppe lords.

The culture of their subjects also influenced the Jochid regime: indirect rule did not necessarily imply a lack of contact. In fact, social, political, and economic interaction was constant between the steppe nomads and the northeastern Slavs, and intermarriage between the Mongol and Russian ruling families happened too.²⁴² On the whole, the connections between

238 Allsen 2006, 130–33. 239 Ostrowski 1998, 36–63.

240 On the evolution of Mongol administration of Russia: Halperin 1987, 33–43.

241 Allsen 2006, 129–30. 242 Halperin 1987, 104–19; Vásáry 2001.

the eastern Slavic and the Jochid worlds were deeper than the later Muscovite sources assert, and it is not by chance that in 1480 no Russian source claimed to be freed from the “Tatar yoke.” The Grand Duchy of Moscow emerged in the fifteenth century as an expanding state that bore the political legacy of the Mongols, and it took three-quarters of a century before the “Stand on the Ugra River” became perceived as a significant date in Muscovite history.²⁴³

The discrepancy between the Golden Horde and the other Mongol dominions reflected their internal ecological, demographic, and political differences. Among the fundamental environmental and historical factors, the Jochids’ indirect mode of governance – in comparison with the more direct ways of Mongol domination in China, Central Asia, and Iran – may explain the greater longevity of the Golden Horde than that of the Yuan or Ilkhanate.

Two other related aspects contributed to the distinctiveness of the Golden Horde: first, its unique location at the intersection of Asia, the Middle East, and Europe; and second, its leaders’ ability to reconcile Islamic and Chinggisid rules. Berke became independent from the qa’an at the same time as he publicly converted to Islam – a shift that did not prevent Berke and his successors from continuing the Mongol politics of tolerance. Under the Jochids, Islam itself was a mixture of practices. Indeed, the Golden Horde was a patchwork made up of several Islamic heritages: the Seljuqs, Turkmens, Volga Bulgars, and the cities of northern Khwārazm left their mark on the monumental, intellectual, craft, and artistic productions of the time. The second half of the fourteenth century witnessed the growing influence of muftis, cadis, and Sufis who acted as mediators between the local Muslim elites and the khan, reflecting the increasing place of Islam in society. On the ground, the Islamic features of everyday life were visible in almost every region of the Golden Horde: from the lower Volga and Ural valleys, to the Crimean, Caucasian, and Khwārazmian regions. There the local Muslims established mosques, schools, Sufi lodges, baths, cemeteries, and caravan-serais within cities and on their outskirts.

Just like the other Mongol leaders, the Jochids used diplomacy as a space to negotiate trade agreements, declare war, and spy on their neighbors; their active multilateral relationships with other rulers stimulated their exchanges with the outside world. Through diplomacy, they obtained from the Mamluks the rights for the Jochid elites, and especially for the princesses,

243 On the Russian and Soviet historiography on the Golden Horde: Halperin 1982a; Halperin 2004. On the construction of the myth of the “Tatar yoke” see also Ostrowski 1998, 135–248. On the late ideological significance of the “Stand on the Ugra River,” see Halperin 1984b; Halperin 1984a.

to perform the *hajj* to Mecca and travel across Mamluk territories;²⁴⁴ they also established trade and monetary accords with the Byzantine emperors, the Genoese, and Venice. On the whole, the Jochids benefited from being in the contact zone between the Mongol Empire and the peoples of the western frontier at the edge of the great Eurasian steppe. They sought to attract and appropriate exchanges with the Hungarians, the Bulgarians, the papacy, the Byzantines, and later the Ottomans and Poland–Lithuania. Only the Ilkhanids stood in the Jochids' way, but the struggle among the Ögödeids, Chaghadaids, and Toluids eventually benefited the Golden Horde. In the first half of the fourteenth century, as the southern route that passed through the Ilkhanate began to decline, the Jochids promoted the northern route that crossed their territories, and they temporarily captured the *tangsuq* – marvels and novelties of the wider world.

Finally, one last important legacy of the Golden Horde is the resilience of nomadism in the territories where the Jochids were in power. During almost three centuries they ran an empire based on a large variety of production patterns, where exchanges among sedentary and nomadic communities were key to the social and economic balance of the regime. Yet in the political arena it was primarily the support of the nomadic elites that the khan needed in order to maintain himself on the throne – the sedentary elites remaining part of the subject peoples. A high regard for nomads, and for their military and cultural achievements, remained the hallmark of the Golden Horde ruling ideology. As described above, in Jochi's *ulus* the level of friction between the sedentary subjects and the nomadic rulers was lower than under the Yuan and the Ilkhanids because the Jochids implemented their own indirect, yet steady, way of governing. The Noghais, Uzbeks, Qazaqs, Turkmens, and other distant heirs of the Golden Horde kept alive the equestrian nomad lifestyle with its strong sense of freedom and kinship-grounded hierarchy – a horde-based power that did not disappear until the twentieth century.

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244 Favereau 2018a, 38.

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Mongol Central Asia

The Chaghadaids and the Ögödeids, 1260–1370

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The Mongol state in Central Asia, usually known as the Chaghadaid Khanate, is by far the least documented of the Mongols' successor states, and hence the least studied. Squeezed in between the other Chinggisid polities, lacking a strong sedentary basis comparable to China and Iran, and home to a pair of competing *uluses*, the Ögödeids and the Chaghadaids, the "Middle Mongolian *ulus*," as the Mongols in Central Asia called themselves, was often plagued by warfare and a "brain drain." Yet this realm not only played a leading role in the dissolution of the Mongol Empire, but also inserted legitimization concepts and political culture that impacted Central Asia up to the nineteenth century as well as promoting the Islamization of eastern Central Asia. Moreover, it was the source of two of the most influential early modern empires, the Timurids (1370–1501) and the Indian Mughals (1526–1857). It also gave its name in its Turkic form Chaghatai to the Eastern Turkic language that emerged under the Timurids and in their aftermath.

The "Middle Mongolian *ulus*" conducted relations – not always friendly – with the other Mongol polities, more distant neighbors such as the Delhi and Mamluk sultanates, and even the papacy, as well as with local rulers in Khurasan, such as the Kartids of Herat, and, more importantly, the Qara'unas, a Mongol group that originated in a garrison force stationed in modern Afghanistan. Combining the scattered references from the sources written in the khanate's neighbors, notably the Persian Ilkhanid and Timurid chronicles and the Yuan and Ming Chinese sources, including the various newly published inscriptions from north China, together with the details

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retained in the Mamluk Arabic sources and among European travelogues, partly compensates for the dearth of indigenous sources. A few edited Arabic, Persian, and Turkic literary works; numismatic materials; and Uighur and Mongol documents from within the khanate provide hints about life in Mongol Central Asia. All these enable the reconstruction of the contours of Chaghadaid–Ögödeid history. The atomistic nature of the information, however, suggests that new findings can eventually transform this picture.¹

As one of the first regions conquered by the Mongols, Central Asian resources – both human and material – were often channeled according to the needs of the ever-expanding empire and at the expense of local interests. Moreover, both the Ögödeid and the Chaghadaid *uluses*, which inhabited Central Asia, were victims of the Toluid revolution of 1251, which transferred the qa'an's position from the house of Ögödei to Tolui's son Möngke (r. 1251–1259). Both *uluses* revived their fortunes during the succession struggle that ensued after Möngke's death, remaining in conflict with the Toluids up to the early fourteenth century. Yet, while the Ögödeid *ulus* was dissolved in the early fourteenth century, despite the considerable restoration efforts of Ögödei's grandson Qaidu (r. 1271–1303), and soon vanished from the historical arena, the Chaghadaids managed to resurrect their power and outlived their more opulent neighbors in China and Iran. The Chaghadaids governed eastern Central Asia, known as Moghulistan, the land of the Mongols (roughly Kirgizstan, south Kazakhstan and most of Xinjiang), up to the late seventeenth century, and significantly stimulated its Islamization, while Chaghadaid princes held power in Hami (east Xinjiang) up to the early twentieth century. This chapter reviews the political history of the two *uluses* during the period of the “Mongol commonwealth” (1260–1370), and briefly explores a few aspects of the institutional, economic, and cultural history of the Mongol “Middle Empire.”

First Resurrection: The Rise and Fall of Alghu's State

When Chinggis Khan divided his empire among his sons, Chaghadaid (d. 1242) received the land stretching from the borders of Uighuria to the Oxus,² roughly equivalent to today's Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kirgizstan, parts of

1 The most detailed description of Chaghadaid history is Liu 2006 (1–40 for sources and previous research); for the early period: Biran 1997 (3–6 for the sources); for Mamluk sources: Biran 2019; numismatics: mainly Petrov 2009. Karaev 1995 and Gulati 2010 are less useful reviews, downgrading Chinese materials. For shorter reviews: Biran 2009; May 2018, 257–79.

2 For the date of Chaghadaid's death: Dang Baohai 2019.

southern Kazakhstan and southern Xinjiang. Ögödei (r. 1229–1241), Chinggis Khan's nominated heir, received a smaller adjacent region between Emil and Qobaq in Jungharia (northeast Xinjiang and southern Kazakhstan), since as the future qa'an he was entitled *ex officio* to the territories that Chinggis Khan had kept for himself, including the sedentary realms of north China and eastern Iran.

When the United Mongol Empire dissolved in 1260, the Ögödeids and Chaghadaids were in a rather inferior position vis-à-vis the other *uluses*, since the Toluid revolution of 1251 took a heavy toll of the previous qa'an's *ulus* and its Chaghadaid allies. The Ögödeid *ulus* was dissolved, many Ögödeids were either executed or exiled, their army was distributed among the other imperial branches, and their territories were mostly incorporated into the qa'an's realm. Only a few minor princes who had supported Möngke received small and widely spaced appanages. The Chaghadaids retained their *ulus* framework but their ranks were considerably thinned, with leading princes and commanders either executed or exiled. The former Chaghadaid khan Yesü Möngke (r. 1246–1251) was deposed by Möngke in favor of his predecessor, Chaghadaï's grandson Qara Hülegü (r. 1242–1246, 1251), who had supported the Toluids. When Qara Hülegü died before reaching his realm, Möngke appointed his widow, Orghina (r. 1251–1259), to replace the former, acting as a regent for their infant son Mubārak Shāh. Orghina, Chinggis Khan's granddaughter and a member of the Oirat tribe that had conducted multiple marriages with the Toluids, led the *ulus* throughout Möngke's reign. While she resided in the Chaghadaids' original court near Almalıq (modern Yining in northern Xinjiang, China), the Jochids manipulated Chaghadaid weakness and extended their control on the western parts of the Chaghadaid realm, including fertile Transoxania.³ Yet for the sedentary population in Central Asia, Möngke's reign was a peaceful and prosperous era, in which Transoxania and Turkestan, governed by the qa'an's competent administrator Mas'ūd Beg (d. 1289), who had survived the Toluid coup, flourished anew.⁴ Certainly in retrospect, Möngke's firm reign, in which the campaigns of conquest took place away from Central Asia, stood in sharp contrast to the following turbulent decades.

The inter-Toluid struggle, which followed Möngke's death, gave the dispossessed *uluses* of Central Asia a chance to restore their fortunes. After two *qurultais* (assemblies) enthroned two of Möngke's brothers as rival qa'ans,

3 On Orghina: De Nicola 2016; Broadbridge 2018, 245–50; on the United Empire period: Allsen 1989, 30–34; Biran 1997, 7–18; Dunnell, this volume.

4 Qarshī 2005, CLXVI; Dhahabī 1982–1988, 23: 364–66; HWC, 96–97, 108–9; *TJG* 1: 75, 84–85.

Arigh Böke in Mongolia and Qubilai in north China, the two contesters both tried to secure Chaghadaid support by appointing their protégés as khans. Qubilai chose Chaghadaï's great-grandson who had been raised in China, Abishqa, son of Büri, sending him to Central Asia either to arrest Orghina (whose sister was married to Arigh Böke) or to marry her. Yet Arigh Böke engineered Abishqa's death before the latter reached Central Asia. Arigh Böke then appointed his supporter, Alghu (r. 1261–1266), Chaghadaï's grandson from his sixth son, Baidar, "who has long served the throne and knows the ways and customs of everything,"⁵ to head the *ulus*, hoping that he would fight for him. We know very little about Alghu's whereabouts beforehand: he was among the lesser Chaghadaid princes who attended Möngke's enthronement, and was too young to be considered dangerous at that time. He was close to Möngke and later to Arigh Böke, in whose coronation he had also participated.⁶ When the struggle between Qubilai and Arigh Böke escalated and Qubilai blocked the transfer of provisions from China to Qaraqorum, Arigh Böke sent Alghu to Turkestan, to guard the frontiers against Qubilai's troops and organize supplies from Central Asia to Mongolia. Taking advantage of the war that broke in 1262 between Berke (r. 1257–1267), the Golden Horde khan, and Hülegü, the qa'an's brother who had been campaigning in the Middle East, Alghu regained the former Chaghadaid territories and much more. He first occupied Almaliq, the Chaghadaid headquarters, taking over the region from there to Talas (modern Jambul, Kazakhstan), Kashghar (southern Xinjiang), and up to the Oxus, reassembling the Chaghadaid troops and wreaking havoc wherever he went. In protest, Orghina left for Arigh Böke's court. Alghu then sent his kinsman Negübei Oghul to govern Samarqand and Bukhara and his general Sādāi Ilchi ("the envoy") to "the borders of Hindustan (India)," while another force was sent to invade Jochid Khwārazm. Negübei tried to protect Transoxania, the richest part of the Chaghadaid realm, retaining the governors (*shihnas*) of Samarqand and Bukhara who had been in office since Ögödei's times.⁷ In the meantime Sādāi brought under his sway the Qara'unas (or Negüderis). Originating in a garrison force headed by the Jochid commander Negüder and centered in present-day Afghanistan, the Qara'unas would continue to play a significant part in Chaghadaid history, trying to remain independent of both the Chaghadaids and the Ilkhans.⁸ While Alghu's power was steadily growing,

5 *JT*/Rawshan, 2: 878; *JT*/Thackston, 2: 422.

6 Waṣṣāf, 1852–1853, 11; *JT*/Rawshan, 2: 875; *JT*/Thackston, 2: 421; Kamola 2019, 78.

7 Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 12; *JT*/Rawshan, 2: 882; *JT*/Thackston, 2: 424–25.

8 On the Qara'unas: Aubin 1969; Shimo 1977; Jackson 2018b.

Arigh Böke sent his emissaries to collect the Central Asian revenues. When Alghu saw the rich inventory they had gathered in Transoxania, however, he confiscated the spoil and arrested them. Simultaneously, around spring–summer 1263 he surrendered to Qubilai.

Alghu's support was a major asset for Qubilai in his war against his brother. In return, Qubilai approved of Alghu's rule of the territory "from the Altai to the Oxus," namely the Chaghadaid and Ögödeid realms. Aware of the strategic effect of Alghu's defection, Arigh Böke hurried to confront him. Alghu won over Arigh Böke's vanguard near Polad and Lake Sairam (next to the modern China–Kazakhstan border), but Arigh Böke's army managed to take over Almaliq, obliging Alghu to find refuge first in Kashghar and Khotan and later in Samarqand. Arigh Böke remained in Almaliq, massacring Alghu's soldiers and plundering his property. This behavior allegedly brought about his commanders' opposition and, together with the harsh winter that inflicted Almaliq in 1263–1264, sealed Arigh Böke's fate. In 1264, he surrendered to Qubilai. Alghu used Arigh Böke's weakness to reassemble his troops.⁹ It was probably then that he sent his commanders to invade Otrar (Utrār), another Jochid dominion. The city, which had been the economic center of south Kazakhstan, was burned to the ground; its mint stopped functioning in 663/1264–1265.¹⁰ Probably then Alghu also eliminated the five Jochid *hazārahs* (units of 1,000 each) that were stationed in Bukhara.¹¹ By that time Orghina, sent back by Arigh Böke to check upon Alghu, had already returned to Central Asia. Alghu married her, thereby completing his takeover of the Chaghadaid Ulus and boosting his legitimation. Moreover, Orghina arrived with Mas'ūd Beg, formerly the qa'an's administrator of Central Asia, and Alghu made him his vizier. By that time Alghu already had at his service quite a few descendants of Chaghadaid's courtiers, such as the scribe (*bichigechi*) Sayf al-Dīn Beg, son of Chaghadaid's vizier Ḥabash 'Amīd, and the Tangut *yarghuchi* (judge) *Abishqa (Ch. Abigu), whose father had been conferred upon Chaghadaid by Chinggis Khan.¹² Alghu's resurrection of the Chaghadaid Ulus, which enjoyed Qubilai's support, seemed highly successful, and even the qa'an's attempts to collect taxes in Bukhara and his census there c. 1264, after which Alghu massacred the Jochid troops, did not seem to endanger it.¹³ Alghu's achievements, however, proved to be

9 JT/Rawshan, 2: 882; JT/Boyle, 258. 10 Petrov, Baipakov, and Voiakin 2014, 257.

11 Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 51; JT/Rawshan, 2: 882 (with too early a date).

12 JT/Rawshan, 2: 882; YS, 120.2957.

13 YS, 135.3283; Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 12, 51; Belyaev and Sidorovich 2010; Jackson 2017, 149, 475 n. 157; Cf. Allsen 2001b, 178.

ephemeral. This was due not only to his premature death in early 1266, but also to the rise of another regional power, that of Ögödei's grandson Qaidu.

Qaidu and the Middle Kingdom

Qaidu was the real founder of the Mongol state in Central Asia.¹⁴ Like Alghu, he used the intra-Toluid struggle to revive his own *ulus*, although the challenge of resurrecting the Ögödeid *ulus* was a much greater one. Qaidu was born to Ögödei's fifth son Qashi (see Table 5.1), and Sebkine of the mountaineering Bekrin tribe, who eventually followed Qaidu. Qaidu's father might have even been Ögödei's first nominated heir: Xu Ting, a Chinese traveler who visited Qaraqorum in 1235, indicates that Ögödei viewed Qashi as his heir (*taizi*) and several thirteenth-century Chinese inscriptions refer to Qashi as the heir apparent.¹⁵ The garbled references to Qashi's mother in the Persian sources may strengthen this view.¹⁶ However, Qashi died before his father, allegedly in Khurasan from excessive drinking. This must have been soon after 1239, when he is said to have conferred the courtesy name (*hao*) "Wrapped in Clouds" (*piaoyun*) to the Quanzhen Daoist master Song Defan (1183–1247), famed for collecting the Daoist canon.¹⁷ Indeed, Chinese inscriptions (and Xu Ting) assert that Qashi read Chinese, studied Confucian and Daoist classics from an early age, and supported Daoism.¹⁸ After his father's death, Qaidu grew up in Ögödei's *ordo*. He inherited his father's title (*taizi*), and the Central Asian historian Jamāl Qarshī reports that Ögödei saw him as his heir.¹⁹ When Ögödei passed away, however, Qaidu was too young to covet any throne.²⁰ Nor do we hear anything about his whereabouts during

¹⁴ Unless otherwise noted, this section is based on Biran 1997.

¹⁵ Peng and Xu 2014, 7–8; Zhou 2013; Liu 2006; Liu 2007. ¹⁶ Qiu 2012; Zhou 2013.

¹⁷ Qarshī, 2005, CLXIV; JT/Boyle, 22; JT/Rawshan, 1: 625–26; Zhou 2013, 142; Liu 2007; for Quanzhen Daoism in this period: Wang 2018, 63–117.

¹⁸ Peng and Xu 2014, 7–8; Liu 2006; Liu 2007; Zhou 2013.

¹⁹ Zu 2000, 2: 43; Qarshī 2005, CLXIV.

²⁰ Qarshī (2005, CLXIV) says that Qaidu was born after his father's death. Yet he also says that Qaidu died in 701/1301–1302 at the age of sixty-eight, after ruling for thirty-three years, and that Qaidu was enthroned in 670/1271 (2005, CLXX–CLXXI). The numbers do not add up: 670 + 33 = 703, not 701; 701 – 68 = 633, i.e. 1235–1236. If Qaidu was indeed born after his father, namely in 1240 (637), then he should have died in 705/1305. However, Chinese and Muslim sources attest that by 1305 Chapar b. Qaidu was ruling after he and Du'a had concluded peace with the Yuan (below). Moreover, in 6th of Sha'ban 702 (March 26, 1303) Ghazan heard of Qaidu's death (JT/Rawshan 3: 1312; JT/Thackston, 3: 642). Qāshānī (1969, 32) also locates Qaidu's death in early 1303 (after Rajab 702) and Waṣṣāf, Rashīd al-Dīn and the *Yuan shi* say that he died soon after the battle with the qa'an in fall 1301 (Biran 1997, 69). Qaidu thus died in early 1303 at the latest, and if he died at the age of sixty-eight, he should have been born in 634/1236–1237, namely before his

Güyük's reign. Apparently he served Möngke,²¹ and in 1252 was among the lesser Ögödeids to whom the Toluid qa'an assigned appanages: Qaidu received Qayaliq, a striving, though small, city between the Emil and Ili rivers (near present-day Kopal in southeastern Kazakhstan), northwest of Alghu's center at Almaliq. His uncles Qadan and Malik, Ögödei's sons by concubines, received Beshbaliq, the Uighur summer capital in northern Xinjiang, and the Irtish river (flowing between north Xinjiang and Mongolia) respectively. In the same year, Möngke also allocated to these three Ögödeids appanages in north China, next to the Jin southern capital of Kaifeng.²² As discussed below, Qaidu must have had another, presumably older, appanage in southeastern Henan (north China).

In 1256 Möngke sent his trusted envoy, the polyglot judge (*jarghuchi*) Shi Tianlin, formerly a member of Ögödei's guard, to Qaidu's Qayaliq, and Shi remained in Qaidu's realm for twenty-eight years.²³ Sending a judge may suggest a certain tension between Möngke and Qaidu, as is the judge's alleged detainment. Yet Shi won Qaidu's favor and seems to have stayed of his free will. Moreover, any disagreements between Qaidu and Möngke must have been settled by 1257 when Qaidu's edict acknowledged Möngke as his overlord. The fascinating edict ordered the restoration of the Daoist Taiqing temple located in Luyi county in Bozhou, southeastern Henan, for the monk Zhang Zhijing (1220–1270), the eighth patriarch of the Daoist Quanzhen sect. The edict was given by "Qaidu the heir apparent" (*Haidu taizi*), and yet it was issued under Möngke Qa'an's authority, even requesting the monk to pray for both Möngke and Qaidu in return for the temple's repair. The edict also reveals Qaidu's connections with Han Chinese, not only the Quanzhen monks favored by his father too, but also Möngke's Chinese officials in Henan. It also demonstrates Qaidu's authority over the appanage's officials – both civil and military – all of whom were instructed not to interrupt the repairs.²⁴ Qaidu's involvement in his appanage's affairs suggests that, like Chaghadaï or Hülegü, he could have recruited professional manpower from his appanage, relocating them to the steppe.²⁵ This suggests that Qaidu was more familiar with the sedentary realm than was previously thought.

father's death. Whether he was born in 1237 or 1239–1240, he was only a toddler by Ögödei's death (1241).

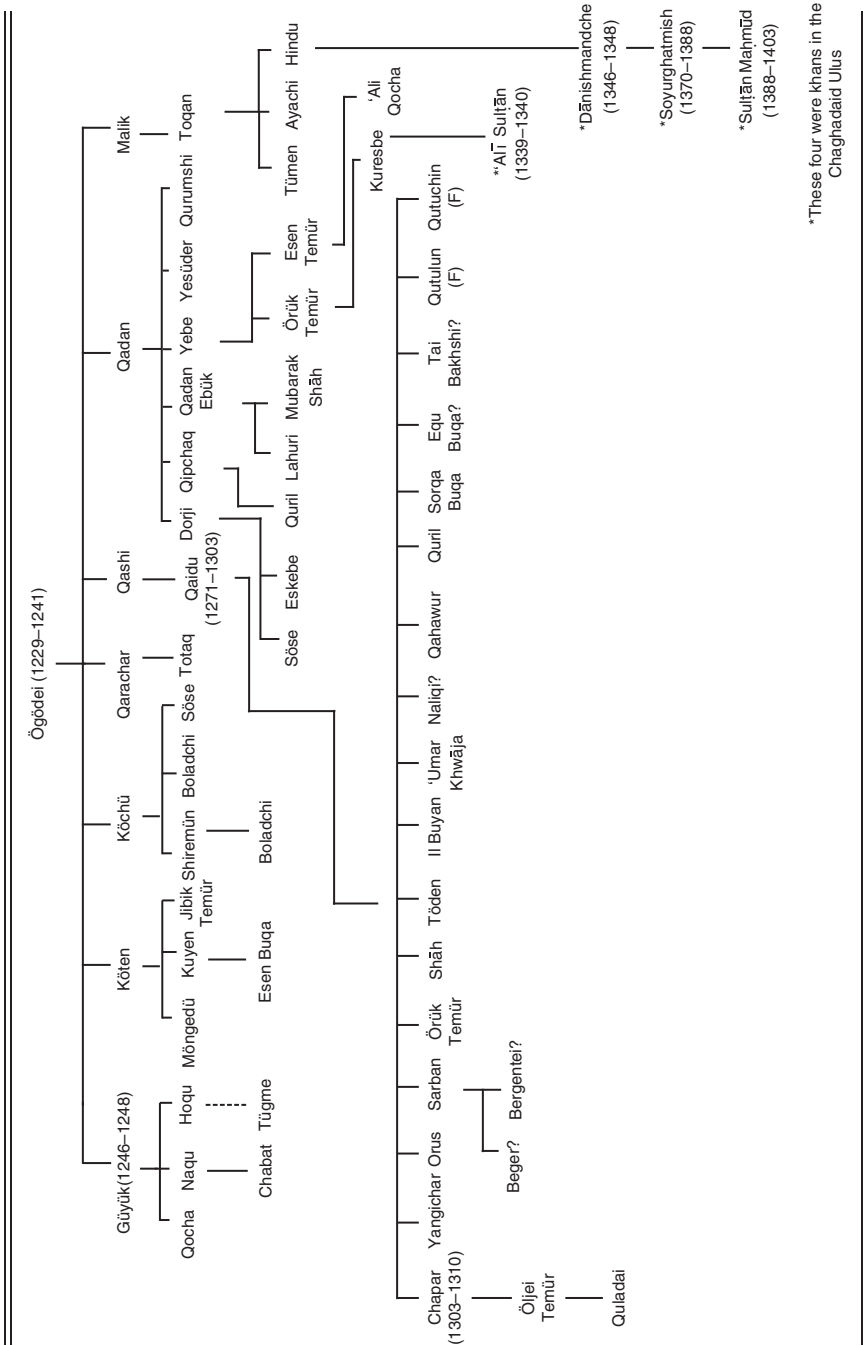
21 *JT*/Rawshan, 1: 625–26; *JT*/Boyle 22.

22 *YS* 95.2416; in Bianliang lu. Qaidu's share is listed under his deceased father Qashi.

23 On Shi: Hodous 2017. 24 Zu Shengli 2000, 2: 43.

25 For Chaghadaï: Dang Baohai 2019; for Hülegü: Isahaya 2020.

Table 5.1 The Ögödeids



The succession struggle between Möngke's brothers, Qubilai and Arigh Böke, enabled Qaidu to restore his *ulus*'s fortunes. He is often described as a supporter of Arigh Böke, but in 1260 he was among the princes to whom Qubilai distributed allowances soon after his coronation. Yet even if Qaidu originally remained neutral, he had good reasons to join Arigh Böke after Alghu had defected into Qubilai's ranks and received from the latter the rights to the Ögödeid realm. After joining Qubilai, Alghu attacked Qaidu several times, as part of his attempts to impose his authority on Central Asia. Qaidu had to abandon Qayaliq, and turned for help to Berke, who had his own reasons for opposing Alghu. Berke provided Qaidu with army and wealth, allegedly promising to secure him the leadership of the Chaghadaid Uluṣ (!) if he vanquished Alghu.²⁶ With his assistance Qaidu managed to rout Alghu once, but was badly defeated in his second attempt, and was saved only by Alghu's death.

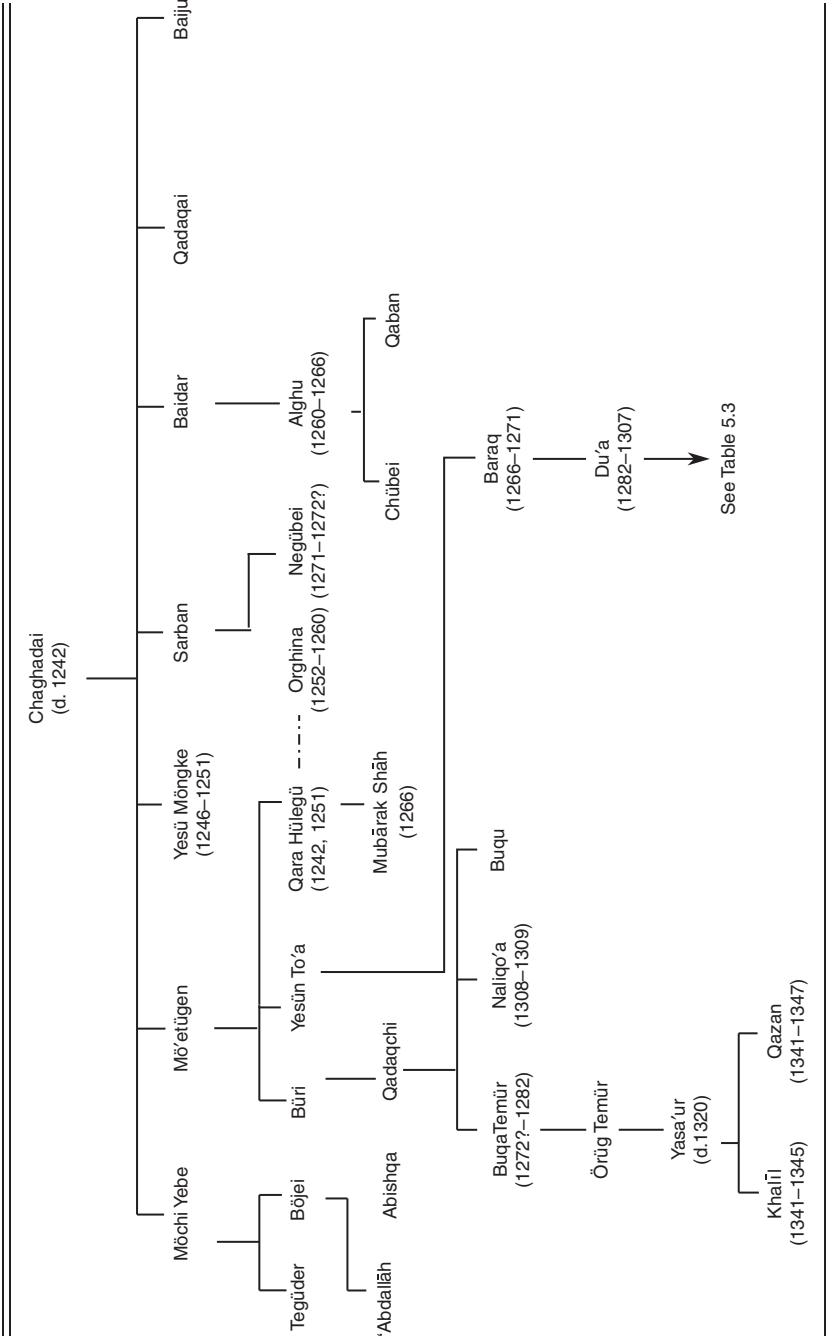
The vacuum in Central Asia after Alghu's demise, coming in close proximity to the deaths of Hülegü (1265) and Berke (1267), as well as Qubilai's preoccupation with China, all played into Qaidu's hands. Refusing Qubilai's repeated appeals to arrive at court, Qaidu expanded his realm westwards to Talas but mostly eastwards, taking over Almaliq and raiding the Uighur domains further east up to Beshbaliq, which Möngke had assigned to the Ögödeid Qadan. Aware of the Ögödeid threat to his legitimacy, Qubilai reacted in 1268. His army pushed Qaidu back first from Almaliq and then from Talas. The burning of Qayaliq, Qaidu's original base east of Talas, from which the city never recovered, was probably part of this campaign.²⁷ This turn of events enforced Qaidu to interfere once more in Chaghadaid politics.

After Alghu's death, in March 1266, Orghina enthroned her son by her first marriage, Mubārak Shāh (r. 1266). A few months later he was deposed by his cousin Baraq (r. 1266–1271), who presented a bigger challenge to Qaidu (Table 5.2). Baraq had grown up in Qubilai's *ordo*, to where his father, Chaghadaï's grandson Yesün To'a, had been banished in 1251. Baraq won Qubilai's favor by performing "praiseworthy services," and sometime after 1263, Qubilai allowed his request to return to Central Asia, hoping to use him against Qaidu. Baraq returned to his family's original appanage near Tirmidh, and gradually won the loyalty of the Chaghadaids' commanders. In September 1266 he deposed Mubārak Shāh, degrading him to the rank of an inspector of those hunting with cheetahs (*barschi*). Whether Baraq did this with an edict from Qubilai

26 Mirkhwānd 1961, 5: 201; Biran 1997, 22.

27 Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 68; Petrov, Baipakov, and Voiakin 2014, 258.

Table 5.2 Rulers of the Chaghadaid Ulus



appointing him as a joint ruler of the *ulus* with Mubārak Shāh, as Rashīd al-Dīn claims, is doubtful. In any case, his first action as the reigning Chaghadaid khan was to replace Qubilai's governors in the Tarim Basin with his own, scaring away Qubilai's garrison and plundering Khotan. Still, in 1268 Qubilai accorded both Baraq and Hoqu son of Güyük a generous grant (60,000 bolts of cloth each), probably hoping to secure their alliance against Qaidu.

Baraq had his own reasons to oppose Qaidu. First, in trying to revive the Ögödeid *ulus*, Qaidu took over territories that Qubilai had allocated to Alghu. More concretely, when Qaidu was forced westward by Qubilai's troops, Baraq feared that he would covet Transoxania, his richest province. Setting an ambush for Qaidu's troops, Baraq imposed a crushing defeat on the banks of the Jaxartes. Once more, Qaidu turned for assistance to the Golden Horde. Its new ruler, Möngke Temür (r. 1267–1280), perhaps fearing the rise of a second Alghu, sent his uncle Berkecher to help Qaidu with allegedly 50,000 men. With their support, Qaidu defeated Baraq near Khujand (modern Tajikistan), on the banks of the Jaxartes, and apparently overran Transoxania.

Baraq fled to Samarqand and Bukhara, trying to rebuild his army by plundering the cities and employing their craftsmen around the clock in manufacturing weapons. In the midst of his preparations, Qaidu's messenger, the Ögödeid prince Qipchaq who had been Baraq's friend, arrived with a peace proposal for the sake of Chinggisid unity, hoping to defend Transoxania from Baraq's looting. Baraq accepted the proposal following his administrators' advice. The princes set up a *quriltai* in the spring, and this took place either in Talas, in the spring of 1269, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, or in the Qatwān plain near Samarqand around 1267, as implied by Waṣṣāf. The *quriltai* decided that two-thirds of Transoxania's revenues would devolve to Baraq and one-third to Qaidu and Möngke Temür, whose representative Berkecher also attended the assembly. The princes agreed to defend the interests of Transoxania's sedentary population, whose administration was entrusted to Mas'ūd Beg. They divided among themselves the Transoxanian troops (*hazārahs*) and artisan workshops (*kārkhānahs*), and assigned pasturelands "in the mountains and deserts," namely outside the Transoxanian cities, with Qaidu stationed next to Bukhara. Unsatisfied with his lot, Baraq proposed to traverse the Oxus the following spring, and take over Khurasan from the Toluid ilkhans. The Chaghadaids had tried to assert their authority in Khurasan since the 1240s, but it did not survive Möngke's purges, and after Hülegü had arrived in Iran he took over the region with Qubilai's blessing.²⁸

28 On Khurasan: JT/Rawshan, 2: 801, JT/Boyle, 177 (Qara Hülegü); Harawī 1944, 127–28 (Yesü Möngke).

Qaidu accepted Baraq's plan, surmising that the conflict's consequences would benefit him anyhow: if Abaqa were vanquished, Baraq would be occupied in Khurasan and much less concerned about Transoxania, and were Baraq defeated, so much the better. Similar calculations probably also guided Möngke Temür, who approved of the *quriltai*'s decisions, despite maintaining a tactical truce with the Ilkhanate. The *quriltai* was concluded by exchanging gold cups and by the princes calling each other *anda* (blood brothers). Even though the *quriltai* dealt with Transoxania, its repercussions, or at least Qaidu's elevated status, were apparent also further east: in 668/1269–1270 for the first time Qaidu's *tamgha* appears on a coin from Almaliq together with Baraq's,²⁹ and in 669/1270–1271 it also appears on a Khwārazmian coin.³⁰

The Talas *quriltai* obviously ignored Qubilai Qa'an's authority, dividing Transoxania, where he had recently conducted a census, without consulting him. From then on, the Central Asian Mongols did not acknowledge the qa'an's sovereignty. While Chinese sources include a reference to the "princes of the Northwest" rebuking Qubilai for remaining in Han lands and adopting Han laws, nothing suggests that these protests originated in the Talas *quriltai*. The princes were obviously more concerned with local interests.³¹

Whatever was argued and celebrated at Talas, however, the *quriltai*'s decisions were soon abrogated. Möngke Temür's army moved toward Transoxania, probably to take possession of the part to which he was entitled (or more?). Qaidu sent his troops against him, thereupon evacuating Bukhara. The enraged Möngke Temür might have considered co-operating with Qubilai against Qaidu, but decided against it, perhaps due to the quality of Qaidu's army or due to the Golden Horde's economic interests. When Qaidu left, however, Baraq rushed to reoccupy Bukhara, and resumed the oppression of its citizens. Creating a major shortage of food, he restrained his demands only after Mas'ūd Beg reprimanded him.

At this stage Baraq had already made several preparations for his invasion of Khurasan. Around 1268–1269, he sent Mas'ūd Beg to the Ilkhanid court, allegedly to collect the revenues from Baraq's and Qaidu's appanages in Iran but actually to spy upon Abaqa (r. 1265–1282). His envoys also contacted the

29 *Tamgha*, literally "stamp," was a symbol originally inscribed upon animals to identify their owner and later on coins minted by Mongol khans instead of their names. For the Chaghadaid and Ögödeid *tamghas*: Petrov 2009, 296.

30 Petrov 2009, 297.

31 YS, 125.3073; Biran 1997, 28, 144–45. The northwestern princes were probably the Toluid princes who rebelled against Nomuqan (below). Cf. Zhou 1986, 152; Atwood this volume.

Chaghadaid prince Tegüder, who headed the Chaghadaid troops that had accompanied Hülegü to the Middle East and remained in Iran as commander of a *tümen* (a unit of 10,000 soldiers). Baraq invited Tegüder to join him, promising to nominate him as the (future) ruler of Chaghadaid Khurasan. Tegüder returned to his appanage in Georgia, planning to link up with Baraq via Derbend. Yet his atrocities among the Georgians and Armenians, and the danger of his desertion, convinced Abaqa to neutralize him before facing Baraq. Challenged by Abaqa's troops and losing his way in the Georgian mountains, Tegüder surrendered in spring 1270, his army then divided among the Ilkhanid divisions. In the meantime, Baraq might have negotiated with Abaqa, asking to assign him the region of Bādghīs up to Ghazna and the Indus river (southern Khurasan, modern northern Afghanistan), which he defined as his forefathers' realm. Whether Abaqa dismissed his claim or was ready to allocate him only the southern part of the requested territory, Baraq decided to fight. Despite his blatant breaches of the *quriltai's* decisions, he asked for Qaidu's assistance. Qaidu complied with Baraq's request, hoping to push him into Abaqa's hands. He sent to his assistance several Ögödeid princes with their troops, but ordered them to return before the battle began. With Qaidu's troops at his vanguard, aware of Abaqa's preoccupation with Tegüder in the west, Baraq crossed the Oxus in early 1270 at the latest. In May 1270 his troops arrived at Nishapur, one of Khurasan's largest cities. While the Ilkhanid troops retreated, awaiting Abaqa's arrival, the Ögödeid princes found an excuse to desert. Qaidu informed Abaqa of this new development.

Abaqa's army, strengthened by auxiliaries from Georgia and Kirman, met Baraq in July 1270, near the city of Herat. Baraq gave a good fight, but was eventually badly defeated, losing much of his army and barely escaping to Bukhara. He died soon after the battle, perhaps with Qaidu's assistance, embracing Islam on his deathbed. Baraq's demise is dated to August 1271, and a month afterwards (August–September 1271) Qaidu was enthroned as khan in Talas.³²

Baraq's loss in Herat played a major role in Qaidu's accession. Not only was his rival's power considerably weakened, but many Chaghadaid commanders and rank and file joined Qaidu, as did Mas'ūd Beg. Co-operation between the two lasted until Mas'ūd's death (1289), and his sons served Qaidu afterwards. Together they presided over the gradual rehabilitation of Qaidu's sedentary territories.

32 Biran 2002a; Qarshī 2005, CLXX.

Although he was enthroned as khan and not qa'an, the local Central Asian writer Jamāl Qarshī named Qaidu's descendants "the Qa'aniyya" ("the qa'an's people"). This appellation, however, is simply a synonym with "the Ögödeids," since Ögödei was the first Mongol ruler to use the title qa'an.³³ While Qaidu's actions and his limited power at this stage suggest that he never saw himself as the Great Khan of the whole empire, the connection to Ögödei played a major part in his legitimacy. It might have also justified the anomaly that already in 1271 Qaidu was empowered to appoint the head of the Chaghadaid Ulus.

Soon after his enthronement, Qaidu appointed Negübei (r. 1271–1272?), Chaghadaï's grandson from his fourth son Sarban, as the Chaghadaid khan, perhaps due to the latter's seniority or for avoiding the choice amongst the various contenders (Alghu's and Baraq's sons, as well as Mubārak Shāh). Yet a year after his coronation, Negübei rebelled against Qaidu and fled eastward. He might have encountered Qubilai's troops in 1274, and was defeated, although, according to Qarshī, Qaidu sent an army after him and in 1272 rewarded the prince who had annihilated Negübei, Chaghadaï's great-grandson Boqa Temür, by installing him as the new Chaghadaid khan (r. 1272?–1282).³⁴

Boqa Temür, however, fell sick soon after his coronation, and was unable to enforce his authority on the leading Chaghadaid princes, who opposed Qaidu's overlordship. Mubārak Shāh deserted to Abaqa soon after the Battle of Herat with a few other princes, and was appointed head of the Negüderi Qara'unas, now apparently under the Ilkhanid aegis. Baraq's and Alghu's sons, however, rebelled against Qaidu (perhaps simultaneously with Negübei) and ravaged the area from Khujand to Bukhara. Their struggles led a local Chaghadaid appointee, who coveted Bukhara himself, to address Abaqa, claiming that the Chaghadaids planned to cross the Oxus once more. Abaqa sent his troops to invade Bukhara, and destroy it "so that nobody would wish to fight for it again."³⁵ The Ilkhanid force arrived at Bukhara on January 29, 1273, and offered to allow its inhabitants to follow them to Khurasan with their property. When they refused, Abaqa's soldiers burned and pillaged for a week, reducing the city to ashes, even though they did not

³³ Qarshī 2005, CLXXII, CLXVI.

³⁴ YS, 8.152; Negübei was a rather common Mongol name, so this might have been another Negübei; Qarshī 2005, CXXV–CXXVI. According to Qarshī, Boqa Temür died in 680/1280–1281. Yet his *tamgha* was engraved on an Almalīqi dirham of 681/1281–1282, suggesting that he died after early AH 681 (April 11, 1282). Petrov 2009.

³⁵ Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 77.

find therein any Chaghadaid or Ögödeid troops. Alghu's sons arrived at the scene by the end of the sack, but, refraining from confronting the retreating Ilkhanid troops, only took over some of their human booty, and continued to plunder the city. The 1273 invasion, described as "the third catastrophe of Bukhara" under Mongol rule (after Chinggis Khan's conquest in 1221 and the Ṭārābī rebellion in 1238), led to a huge emigration, both voluntary and coerced, mainly to the Ilkhanate but also to the Mamluk and Delhi sultanates.³⁶ The reports of the Önggüt monks who visited Qaidu's *ordo* at Talas around 1275 also reveal the turmoil in Transoxania (and further eastwards). Even though they received an edict to secure their passage, the monks reached Khurasan terrified and devoid of much property. Indeed Alghu's sons sacked Bukhara again in 1276, leading to another migration wave.³⁷ The city remained in ruins until 1282, when Qaidu sent Mas'ūd Beg to restore it.

Abaqa's invasion might have encouraged the former khan Mubārak Shāh to go against his new overlord: in early 1276, he and his Negüderi troops invaded Ilkhanid Kirman, but the Chaghadaid prince was defeated by the Kirmanid army, losing his head in the aftermath. In 1277, encouraged by internal struggles in Kirman, Mubārak Shāh's sons and 'Abdallāh son of Böjei, still heading the Negüderis, plundered Fārs and Kirman with Qaidu's consent – by then they had transferred their alliance back to him. Yet when Abaqa himself led the retaliation campaign against them in 1278–1279, these Chaghadaids and their Negüderi troops submitted once more to the Ilkhanate, this time retaining their loyalty for more than a decade.³⁸

Despite all this, by 1282, Qaidu had managed to enforce his authority on most of the Chaghadaids. After Boqa Temür's death he appointed Baraq's son Du'a as the Chaghadaid khan (r. 1282–1307), and their co-operation, which lasted until Qaidu's death, enabled Du'a to reorganize the Chaghadaid Ulus and regain its independence after Qaidu's demise. Alghu's sons, however, chose to defect to Yuan ranks, where they appear as Qubilai's loyal subjects since 1282–1283. Joining a host of Chaghadaid lesser princes who had been stationed in China since Möngke's time or had defected earlier, Alghu's sons settled in Hexi (northwest China, formerly the Tangut realm) and garrisoned

36 Dhahabī, 1982–1988, 23: 364–66; Muminov 2003, 30–34; Biran 2015, 35–36; Biran 2019, 376, 383–84; Hope 2019, 8–9.

37 E.g., anonymous, *Ta'rikh-i Shāhī* 1977, 256–57.

38 *Ta'rikh-i Shāhī* 1977, 248–50; Kirmānī 2016, 69–70; *JT*/Rawshan, 2: 1109; Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 199–204; Mustawfī 1983, 531; Jackson 2018b, 93. For Böjei's [Buchi's?] genealogy: Kamola 2019, 76–77.

the region up to the mid- to late fourteenth century, often, like their Iranian counterparts, holding the Toluid border against their kin.³⁹ But while lesser Chaghadaid branches remained under the Yuan or the Ilkhanate's aegis, most of the Chaghadaid house rallied around Du'a. Qaidu's ability to consolidate his rule and gain Du'a's co-operation had much to do with simultaneous events in the Yuan realm.

In 1271, aware of the events in the west and annoyed by Qaidu's repeated refusals to acknowledge his authority, Qubilai sent a coalition of lesser Toluid princes under his fourth son Nomuqan to Almaliq, to guard the region against Qaidu. Simultaneously, the qa'an was strengthening his hold over the Tarim Basin, which Alghu and Baraq saw as their realm, and over the Hexi region, in order to shorten Nomuqan's supply lines and protect the southern trade route. In 1271 Qubilai conducted a census in Khotan and Hexi; in 1272 he sent artisans to Khotan and Kashghar to mine jade; and in early 1274 he set up thirteen postal stations on the rivers close to Khotan and Yarkand, and another two in the Shazhou (Dunhuang) region. Later that year Qubilai partly exempted the residents of Khotan, Kashghar, and Yarkand from taxes. These actions, however, gave rise to local princely opposition: Prince Hoqu son of Güyük rebelled in Hexi in 1274–1275. Fleeing from Shazhou to Khotan, he devastated the Khotan–Kashghar area. Antong, Muqali's son and Qubilai's general who had been sent to help Nomuqan, eventually crushed Hoqu. While Qaidu denied any connection to Hoqu's revolt, the latter and his descendants eventually – perhaps after another failed rebellion in 1281 – co-operated with Qaidu, accepting his senior position among the Ögödeids.

More important for Qaidu was the fate of Nomuqan's coalition. Between 1271 and 1276, Nomuqan received considerable supplies from China, posing a serious threat to Qaidu. While he did not directly clash with the latter, in 1274 he defeated the “rebellious vassal/minister” Negübei, who might have been Qaidu's rebellious appointee.⁴⁰ Around this time Qubilai also sent an envoy to Qaidu, asking him to surrender, namely to stop military activity, establish post stations, and come to court, assuring him that he was no match for the Yuan troops. The *Yuan shi* claims that the frightened Qaidu withdrew his army and set up postal stations but refrained from arriving at the Yuan court. No doubt the eastern threat of Nomuqan's coalition combined with the

39 For this Chaghadaid branch: Sugiyama 1983; Liu 2006, 475–80; Yang and Zhang 2017; Robinson 2019, ch. 4.

40 *YS* 8.152 and n. 34. Evidence of a battle between Qaidu and Nomuqan appears only in three questionable narratives: Marco Polo (1938, 448–50); Baybars al-Manṣūrī (1998, 262) and hence al-Nuwayrī (1984, 27: 354–55), both dated to 687/1288–1289.

western challenge of Alghu's and Baraq's sons put Qaidu in dire straits. Luckily for him, in fall 1276 the princes who had accompanied Nomuqan, sons of Möngke and Arigh Böke, rebelled against Qubilai's son. They raided Mongolia, planning to enthrone a new qa'an, and sent Nomuqan and Antong to Qaidu, asking for his help. Qaidu sent Nomuqan to the Golden Horde, and welcomed Antong, who became an important member of his administration. He refrained, however, from assisting the rebelling princes: not only was he busy with Alghu's sons who had invaded Bukhara, but he might have rightfully estimated that the princes' coalition included too many claimants to the qa'an's throne. The princes invaded Qaraqorum and plundered Möngke's *ordo*. Qubilai's troops hurried to defend the old capital, but the skirmishes with the princes and among them continued until 1282, and ended only after Qubilai shifted a significant part of the troops who had fought against the Song (who surrendered in 1276 and was fully subjugated in 1279) to the steppes.

While Qaidu preferred not to take part in the Toluid princes' revolt, it certainly benefited him. Not only did it dissolve the coalition against him, but it also opened another front for Qubilai, in addition to the Song one, thereby allowing Qaidu to regain Almaliq and overcome the Chaghadaid opposition. Moreover, while most of the surviving rebelling princes surrendered to Qubilai, others, notably Arigh Böke's sons Malik Temür and *Yomuqur, submitted to Qaidu, together with their considerable troops. As Arigh Böke's realm, which the two had inherited, stretched along the middle Altai (and up to Kirgizstan), including the Oirat appanages, the princes' defection enabled Qaidu to expand his sphere of influence to western Mongolia up to the Khangai mountains.⁴¹ This increase in his power probably facilitated gaining Du'a's support.

At this point the Chaghadaid Ulus lost its independence. Its princes were subject to either Qaidu in Central Asia, the qa'an in China, or the Ilkhanids in Iran. Yet while in China or Iran they were marginalized, in Central Asia they played a dominant role, as the realm was known as that of Qaidu and Du'a, namely of both Ögödeids and Chaghadaids, and the Chaghadaids retained their separate troops and *ulus*.

The 1280s–1290s were the heyday of Qaidu and Du'a, who simultaneously raided several fronts and supported various rebels against different Chinggisid polities. The Yuan border had been a main area of conflict, partly because Qubilai, while temporarily renouncing the attempt to defeat Qaidu

41 Sugiyama 1983, 664; For Malik Temür's troops: *JT*/Rawshan, 2: 943–44; *JT*/Boyle, 313–15.

on the battlefield, tried instead to drain his resources, as he had done to Arigh Böke. Qubilai therefore continued reinforcing Yuan authority in the rich oases that controlled the Silk Roads and could provide for Qaidu's troops in both Uighuria and the Tarim Basin. Since 1278 Qubilai had stationed a garrison in Beshbaliq, the abandoned Uighur summer capital, reinforcing it until 1286, setting military colonies (*tuntian*) in 1283 and 1286, and connecting Beshbaliq to the Datong region in China proper via the postal stations established in 1281. Simultaneously, Qubilai subjugated Uighuria to Yuan direct rule. From late 1276 to 1288, garrisons, postal stations, and military colonies were also established in Khotan, formerly coveted by Chaghadaid and Ögödeid princes. Qubilai also tried to develop the Gansu corridor (in Hexi), which led from China proper to both Uighuria and the Tarim Basin, hoping that its resources would feed the garrison troops and shorten the supply lines. After 1281, Qubilai also halted Qaidu's revenues from his appanages in China.⁴² Qubilai's actions, however, did not have the desired effect, as Qaidu and his allies managed to challenge the qa'an in both Uighuria and the Tarim Basin, as well as in Mongolia. The Central Asian Mongols continuously harassed Yuan China with raids and skirmishes, and in 1285 Du'a's troops, after defeating their pro-Yuan kin, devastated Uighuria. They besieged the Uighur capital, Qara-Qocho, for six months, lifting the siege only after receiving an Uighur princess in marriage. In the following years, the Central Asian Mongols intensified their raids into the Altai and Turfan, and, even when they did not actually replace Qubilai's authority in certain Tarim Basin oases, they managed to gain some of the cities' revenues, thereby undermining Qubilai's economic siege. After the devastation of Uighuria, Qubilai first tried to strengthen the Tarim Basin route, but since 1288 the Yuan troops and artisans (of the military colonies) began to retreat to China, allowing Qaidu and Du'a to gradually annex Uighuria and the Tarim Basin to their realm, a process that continued after Qubilai's passing. In the 1290s Khotanid coins already bore Qaidu's *tamgha*.⁴³

Simultaneously, the Central Asian Mongols supported – at least potentially – other revolts against Qubilai that contributed to the Yuan retreat. In 1285, the Tibetan Buddhist 'Bry-Gung sect, the rival of the Yuan-supported Sa-skyia sect, rebelled against the Sa-skyia and the Yuan government, taking advantage of the instability in Tibet following the death of 'Phags-pa (1235–1280), Qubilai's preceptor and his appointee on Tibet. The 'Bry-Gung applied for the help of "the king of sTod Hor (east Turkestan), Hu-La," who sent prince Rin Chen to

42 Li 2007, 134. 43 Petrov 2010, 134. For this period: Shim 2014, 428–40.

the Tibetans' assistance. Tibetan sources allude to a possible sTod Hor invasion of Tibet in the early 1270s and the stationing of a small Chinese garrison to watch the border in 1281. Hu-La, usually transcribing Hülegü in Tibetan, is probably a garbled form of Du'a, and Rin Chen may be identified with Īrtakīn/Ilizhen (Irinjin), son of Hoqu and grandson of Güyük, about whom we know very little besides his name. The revolt was finally quelled by Qubilai's grandson Böke Temür in 1290, and prince Rin Chen was taken captive, although he might have returned to Qaidu's ranks a few years later.⁴⁴ While it is hard to decide what role, if any, the Central Asian Mongols played in the Tibetan revolt, the Yuan preoccupation with it certainly benefited them.

More dangerous for Qubilai's legitimacy was the rebellion of Prince Nayan, an offspring of Chinggis Khan's younger brother, who in 1287 led a coalition of "the princes of the left hand," descendants of Chinggis Khan's brothers, who opposed Qubilai's attempts to reinforce Yuan central administration on their appanages in Liaoyang (Manchuria). Despite his advanced age and poor health, Qubilai personally went to meet Nayan. Within a month or two, his army had crushed Nayan's troops and he had him executed. When Nayan planned his rebellion, he sought Qaidu's support. Yet the swift suppression of the revolt precluded actual assistance, nor did the Central Asian Mongols support the remnants of Nayan's faction, against whom the Yuan continued to wage war for several years. However, the Yuan's preoccupation with both Tibet and Manchuria enabled Qaidu and Du'a to attack Mongolia. In 1288 three (out of five) recorded raids of the Central Asian Mongols were directed to Mongolia, and in 1289 Qaidu's troops, for the first and last time, occupied Qaraqorum, the former imperial capital established by Ögödei. Qaidu first forced the surrender of the troops of Gamala, Qubilai's grandson and his newly appointed commander of the Yuan garrison in Mongolia, in the Khangai mountains. Qubilai's Qipchaq commander Tutqaq (Ch. Tutuha) came to the rescue of the subjugated army, ordering it to retreat. Yet some of the qa'an's commanders in Qaraqorum preferred to join Qaidu's troops in their pursuit of the withdrawing Yuan army, thereby enabling him to take over the city and endanger Qubilai's rule in Mongolia. The alarmed Qubilai once more set out in person to defend his realm. When he reached Qaraqorum, however, Qaidu had already retreated, and the aged qa'an returned to Dadu. Yet Qaidu still held considerable parts

44 Īrtakīn: anonymous, *Mu'izz al-ansāb* 2006, 58, 40b; Yao Sui, SKQS, ch. 13; I owe this identification to Qiu Yihao; Petrov 2010, 134. For the rebellion: Petech 1990, 26–31.

of Mongolia – the Khangai mountains, the upper Yenisei and the Barin region, between the Yenisei and the Irtysh. During 1290–1293 several skirmishes took place between Qaidu's troops, notably Arigh Böke's sons, and the qa'an's commissioners, with mixed results. In 1293 Tutqaq managed to restore Yuan control of the Yenisei, driving Qaidu away from Mongolia, where postal stations and military colonies were soon established. Thus, while Qubilai was ready to renounce his control in Uighuria and the Tarim Basin, he strove to retain Mongolia, the empire's cradle, under his sway. Qaidu, on the other hand, did not fight to hold Qaraqorum, and while even in 1294 he still managed to threaten Qubilai's troops and revenues in Mongolia, he did not use Qubilai's death (1295) to recapture it. This was at least partially since in the late 1280s–1290s the Central Asian Mongols found themselves deeply involved on other fronts as well.

In early 1288, a large army of Qaidu's – some 30,000 riders – led by the Chaghadaid commander Yasa'ur Noyan invaded Ilkhanid Khurasan. Coming from the river Panj (on today's Afghan–Tajik border), they raided Balkh and Merv and arrived in the environs of Nishapur, apparently retreating without any Ilkhanid reaction, as Ilkhan Arghun (r. 1284–1291) was soon to be pre-occupied with a more dangerous Golden Horde invasion, along with internal uprisings. Further involvement in Khurasan was connected to Nawrūz's rebellion. Nawrūz (d. 1297), the Ilkhanid general famed for his role in the Islamization of Ilkhan Ghazan (r. 1295–1304), succeeded his father Arghun Aqa (d. 1278), who had administered Khurasan under the United Empire and the early Ilkhanate, as the Ilkhanid governor of Khurasan. In 1289, Nawrūz rebelled against Ghazan's father, Ilkhan Arghun (r. 1284–1291), aspiring to assert himself as Khurasan's independent ruler. He first operated in the name of lesser Hülegüid princes, but while contemplating resistance to the Ilkhanid army sent against him, or after actually losing to an Ilkhanid force at Herat, Nawrūz sought Qaidu's friendship. This time, Qaidu was ready to help. This was probably because Nawrūz was a renowned commander, who since 1284 had also headed a *tümen* of the Qara'unas, enjoying "great friendship" among the latter. Moreover, unlike most of the Yuan rebels, Nawrūz was not a Chinggisid, and hence did not pose a threat to Qaidu's legitimacy. His father's service in the Ögödeid *keshig* and the Chaghadaids' claim to Khurasan probably also contributed to Qaidu's decision. Qaidu lent Nawrūz the army of Transoxania, commanded by the above-mentioned Yasa'ur, accompanied by Ögödeid princes headed by Qaidu's son Sarban. Sarban, who was stationed in Badakhshān and Panjab on the upper Oxus, maintained responsibility for the Ilkhanid border in the following years as well. In 1291 Nawrūz

invaded Khurasan, commanding the vanguard of Qaidu's army, backed by a simultaneous Qara'unas invasion and reaching the edges of Mashhad. Nawrūz plundered Khurasan for at least a year, wreaking wholesale destruction. He was also trying to assert his authority in the region, and in the early 1290s minted coins that bore his name and the *tamghas* of Qaidu or Du'a even in far-off Badakhshān.⁴⁵ These invasions coincided with Arghun's death (1291) and the outbreak of a struggle among his successors. Nawrūz was thus able to act relatively freely without contending with the Ilkhanid army. Yet local resistance, especially near Nishapur, also took a heavy toll of the Central Asian army, who blamed Nawrūz for their losses. Nawrūz then turned against Qaidu. Befriending one of the Ögödei princes who accompanied him, Ürük Temür, a grandson of Ögödei's son Qadan, he gave him his daughter in marriage, and apparently also orchestrated his conversion to Islam. Planning to "purify the Oxus vicinity of Qaidu's impure forces and to spread the Islamic religion,"⁴⁶ they therefore set out to fight Qaidu's troops led by Yasa'ur, but were badly beaten. Nawrūz retreated to Herat, from where he issued edicts in the name of both Ürük Temür and himself, still trying to reassert himself as Khurasan's ruler. After recuperating, Nawrūz again laid siege to Nishapur. Frightened by Nawrūz's ambitions, Ürük Temür returned to Qaidu with his army. His defection left Nawrūz devoid of Chinggisid legitimacy and encouraged him to submit to Ghazan, which he did in late 1294. Qaidu executed the treacherous Ürük Temür.⁴⁷

Nawrūz's revolt prompted the desertion of another Ilkhanid commander, Uighurtai, to Qaidu's ranks. Around 1291, Uighurtai, a son-in-law of the former Chaghadaid khan Mubārak Shāh, proclaimed Jurjān and Māzandarān subject to Qaidu, but the Ilkhanid commanders drove him eastward toward Qaidu's realm. Arriving with his Chinggisid wife, Uighurtai subsequently remained loyal to Qaidu.⁴⁸ Uighurtai's familiarity with the roads of Māzandarān allowed Du'a to conduct a large-scale incursion into Khurasan and Māzandarān in early 1295, together with Qaidu's son Sarban, and Ebügen, a descendant of Jochi Qasar. Du'a took advantage of the succession struggle between the future Ilkhan Ghazan and his cousin Baidu (r. March–October 1295), which kept Ghazan away from Khurasan. Plundering the property that Ghazan and his men had left behind, Du'a resided in Māzandarān for eight months, pillaging cities in Māzandarān and Khurasan on his way back east in late 1295. Du'a also attempted, like his father

45 Petrov and Aleksandrov 2011, 8; Landa 2018, 95–96. 46 Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 314.

47 For Nawrūz's rebellion: Hope 2015; Landa 2018.

48 *JT*/'Alizādah, 273; Qāshānī 1969, 18, 54.

a quarter of a century before, to persuade the local ruler of Herat to support him in return for a part of Khurasan. The latter, however, preferred to report to Nawrūz, now one of Ghazan's leading commanders. In the meantime, Du'a's forces attacked the cities of Kusūi and Fushang, south of Herat. Kusūi withstood Du'a's siege and inflicted heavy losses on him, but he managed to subdue Fushang, slaughtering many of its inhabitants and deporting others to Transoxania. From there Du'a turned toward Herat. Refraining from attacking the city, he returned to Transoxania, either due to omens asserting that he would fail there like his father, or because Qaidu asked for his help on the Yuan front.

Even though in the *amān* (safe-conduct document) that he gave to the people of Damascus in late 1299 Ghazan explicitly claimed that he was in agreement with the other Mongol branches, including that of Qaidu,⁴⁹ and despite the rumors about Qaidu's valiant daughter Qutulun planning to marry Ghazan,⁵⁰ in 1300 the Chaghadaid troops took advantage of events preoccupying Ghazan in Syria to launch a massive raid. Together with the Qara'unas, they invaded Kirman and Fārs in southern Iran, penetrating as far west as Tustar and as far south as Hormuz, laying waste and carrying away so many cattle that "each soldier became a shepherd." On their way back they were harassed by the ruler of Hormuz, yet the invasion – and the desertion of several Ilkhanid commanders into the Chaghadaid ranks – was dangerous enough to incite Ghazan to leave Syria and retreat to Iran.⁵¹ In winter 1302–1303 Qaidu's son Sarban led another invasion of Khurasan, hoping to join forces with these Chaghadaid troops, but the weather conditions, which halted the Chaghadaids, enabled the Ilkhanid governor of Khurasan, the future Ilkhan Öljeitü, to thwart this raid. In general, while Qaidu entrusted Sarban to secure his interests on the Ilkhanid border, the Chaghadaids played a more prominent role on this front. Unlike the Yuan frontier, where many military clashes between the invaders and the Yuan army took place, after 1270 the ilkhans mostly refrained from meeting the Central Asian troops in battle, leaving Iranian local rulers to cope with them. This was not only because the main Ilkhanid army was invested in the Mamluk and the Golden Horde's fronts, but also because the Central Asian raids, apparently based on accurate intelligence, were mainly conducted when the Ilkhanid troops were preoccupied with either succession struggles or other borders.

49 Baybars al-Manṣūrī 1998, 336. 50 Biran 2020.

51 Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 368–71 (citation at 371), 427, 433; *JT* / 'Alizādah, 3: 152; *JT* / Thackston, 2: 540; Kirmānī 2016, 129; Teixeira 1902, 160–61 – according to him there were repeated attacks on Hormuz, leading to significant emigrations; Jackson 2017, 197–98.

The invasions of Iran were often connected to another front of Chaghadaid expansion – southwards, toward Ghazna and India. The Ghazna region was originally held by the Qara'unas, whom Qaidu (and the Ilkhans) had tried to control since the 1270s, and later via Nawrūz. Nawrūz's return to the Ilkhanate must have been a blow to Central Asian interests. Yet perhaps in response to Nawrūz's defection, Qaidu and Du'a allocated considerable resources to this front, entrusting Du'a's son Qutlugh Khwāja with five *tümen*, two from Qaidu troops and three from Du'a's. In 1298–1299 Du'a appointed Qutlugh Khwāja to command the Qara'unas or Negüderis (replacing the Chaghadaid 'Abdallāh son of Böjei, whose father defected with Mubārak Shāh), thereby reasserting the Qara'unas's subjugation to the Chaghadaids. The alliance seems to have been cemented in marriage, and the two groups co-operated in the raid on southern Iran, as discussed above. Even beforehand, in the mid- to late 1290s, Qutlugh Khwāja consolidated Chaghadaid control of Ghazna. It became his winter pasture, where he minted copper coins with his name and Du'a's *tamgha*, while his summer pasture was in Ghūr and Ghūrchistan (modern Firūzkūh in northwest Afghanistan). He ruled over a vast appanage that stretched from the Oxus to the latitude of Qandahar.⁵² From then on, Ghazna remained part of the Chaghadaid realm, becoming an important base for invasions, both into Iran and into the wealthy Delhi Sultanate, their only non-Chinggisid front. Similar to the situation on the Ilkhanid border, the Central Asian Mongols seem to have secured good intelligence, probably benefiting from the Qara'unas's earlier experience on this front,⁵³ and this allowed them to exploit the sultan's preoccupation on other fronts.

The earliest recorded operation of the Central Asian Mongols in India is dated to 1297–1298 when Sarban's subordinate, Amīr Keder, invaded the Panjab up to Qasur, in what seems to have been one of many – and not always successful – small-scale Mongol raids into the region.⁵⁴ In 1299–1300 Qutlugh Khwāja's forces posed a greater threat. Advancing directly on Delhi, whose sultan was busy fighting in Gujarat, they defeated the sultanate's army, withdrawing, with many spoils, mainly because Qutlugh Khwāja was fatally wounded. Thus, when the Chaghadaid forces were called out to help Qaidu in the battle against the Yuan in 1301, they had much to lose on the lucrative Indian front, temporarily left without a leader.

52 Thomas 1871, 175–76; Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 367–68 (where Qutlugh Khwāja also ruled considerable parts of Khurasan); *JT*/Rawshan, 1: 758; *JT*/Boyle, 142; Jackson 1999, 218.

53 For the Qara'unas's early raids on India: Jackson 1999, 117–18.

54 Dihlawī 1953, 33–36; Jackson 1999, 231.

Chaghadaid pressure in this direction continued over the next few years, first with small-scale raids, but in 1302–1303 Taraghai, Qutlugh Khwāja's leading commander (*amīr-i ordo*), a Chaghadaid son-in-law of the Qonggirat tribe and probably a Qara'unas himself, led another major attack on Delhi, while its sultan was first busy fighting in Chittor and then recuperating. The numerous Chaghadaid troops, assisted by a Qara'unas force raiding Sīstān, managed to block the ways to Delhi and besiege it for two months. The sultan barricaded his army in the Siri plain, and did not confront the invaders, who raided the city's suburbs but did not take it, afraid of exposing their flanks. After a two-month stalemate, Taraghai suddenly withdrew, a retreat that the Indians saw as a miracle. The severity of the threat is apparent in the response of the Delhi sultan, who, relinquishing attempts to expand southward, strengthened the fortresses lying in the path of the Mongol advance, and initiated reforms in the army, stationing more troops and experienced commanders along the Central Asian border.⁵⁵ While Taraghai's retreat might have been related to Qaidu's death and its aftermath or to attempts of the White Horde to forge a coalition against the Central Asian Mongols, no doubt the potential of the Indian border for Chaghadaid expansion or at least the Chaghadaid economy was made clear during these large-scale campaigns.

Qaidu's relations with the Golden Horde were relatively friendly. Although Möngke Temür had never received his share in the Talas agreement, Qaidu sent Nomuqan to Möngke Temür. Moreover, around the same time, in the late 1270s, Möngke Temür proposed to his Mamluk allies to establish diplomatic relations with Qaidu on the basis of their shared enmity toward the ilkhans. The Mamluk sultan Qalāwūn (r. 1279–1290) indeed contacted Qaidu, and while the diplomatic exchange between the two seems to have declined after 1284, they retained commercial relations: the Central Asian Mongols took part in the burgeoning slave trade between the Golden Horde and the Mamluk Sultanate, selling to Egypt captives from their invasions of the Yuan.⁵⁶ After Möngke Temür's demise, and throughout the Noghai era (1280–1299)⁵⁷ the Horde was afflicted by internal rivalries and temporarily renounced the remnants of its authority in Central Asia. This situation also gave much independence to the horde's eastern *ulus*, that of Jochi's eldest son, Orda, whose realm, from the Jaxartes river to the Ulu Tao

55 Jackson 1999, 222–24; Jackson 2018b, 95; Baranī 2015, 128 ff.

56 Biran 2008, 375–77; Biran 2019, 368–69, 374.

57 For Noghai, a Jochid prince who acted as joint ruler with the Golden Horde's khans: Favereau and Pochekaev in this volume.

mountains, was located north of the territories of Qaidu and the qa'an. The khan of the Orda ulus, Qonichi (r. c. 1277–1299) originally might have supported Qaidu. He also gave refuge to several of the princes who had rebelled against Nomuqan and eventually joined Qaidu's troops. Later on, however, Qonichi strove to improve his relations with the Yuan. In 1284 Töde Möngke, the new Jochid khan (r. 1280–1287), together with Noghai and Qonichi, sent Nomuqan back to his father's court, thereby launching normalization with the qa'an. This rapprochement continued in later decades, when the Central Asian Mongols' invasions of the Yenisei and Mongolia impeded the Orda ulus. Simultaneously, Qonichi also improved his relations with the ilkhans,⁵⁸ thereby encouraging the threatened Central Asians to interfere in the Orda ulus's succession struggles. At the very end of the thirteenth century, Bayan (r. c. 1299–1312) succeeded his father Qonichi, but was challenged by several family members. Qaidu and Du'a supported his nephew Kubalak, who with their help defeated Bayan, taking over part of his realm. Bayan sought assistance from Toqta, the Jochid khan (r. 1291–1312), but the latter, probably preoccupied with fighting Noghai, only requested Qaidu and Du'a to eradicate Kubalak. Then, if not earlier, Bayan addressed Qubilai's heir, Temür Qa'an (Chengzong, r. 1295–1307), suggesting forming a coalition against the Central Asian Mongols that would include the ilkhans, the Golden Horde, and even the shāhs of Badakhshān. Temür rejected the suggestion, but the danger of such a coalition – or even mere co-operation between the Yuan and the White Horde, led Qaidu to station two *tümen* under his sons Shāh and Yangichar and the troops of Malik Temür, Arigh Böke's son, on Bayan's border.⁵⁹

Even earlier, the need to divide the Central Asian troops among various fronts resulted, in the mid- to late 1290s, in a series of defeats at the hands of the Yuan, where Temür, the new qa'an, strengthened border defenses and attracted turncoats from Qaidu's troops. Putting an end to the Yuan's costly and unsuccessful attempts to expand into Southeast Asia, Temür devoted more attention to the northern border's defense. Rashīd al-Dīn described seven garrisons stationed along the Yuan northern frontier, five in Mongolia – led by Temür's two brothers, his son-in-law, and two renowned commanders – and two in the Hexi region and up to Uighuria, led by another brother of Temür's and the Chaghadaid princes Chūbei son of Alghu and Büri's son Ajiqi. The latter two were stationed near Qara-Qocho (modern Turfan), the people of which were on good terms with, and paid taxes to, both Qaidu and the Yuan. Yet while the slow

58 Allsen 1985–1987, 23–25.

59 For the Orda ulus's succession struggles: Allsen 1985–1987, Qiu Yihao 2013.

annexation of the Uighur realm continued (in 1304 Qara-Qocho was described as Du'a's appanage), in Mongolia, in the mid- to late 1290s, the Yuan garrisons inflicted heavy losses on the Central Asian troops.

In late 1298 Du'a set out to redress these setbacks, and, taking Yuan border commanders by surprise, he captured Temür's son-in-law, Körgis, who commanded a garrison west of the Yenisei. The enraged Temür decided to eliminate the Central Asian menace. In 1300 a huge Yuan force under the newly appointed garrison commander, Qaishan (the future Wuzong, Temür's heir), moved to the Altai region to face Qaidu. The decisive battle took place in September 1301 south of the Altai and involved most of Qaidu's and Du'a's troops. After fierce warfare Qaidu won the day but his death shortly afterwards enabled the Yuan to portray it as their victory.

Qaidu's death paved the way for the collapse of the Ögödeid house and the Chaghadaids' return as sole rulers of Central Asia. It also prompted a reconciliation between the Central Asian Mongols and their various neighbors, although the road to peace included nearly two decades of bloody warfare in Central Asia. Despite his many achievements, Qaidu was never strong enough to dismantle the Chaghadaids, who retained their separate army and *ulus* inside his state. Moreover, his continued rivalry with the Toluids in China and Iran became a heavy burden that prevented the Chaghadaids from leveraging their central position in order to gain economic advantages, while their landlocked territory averted their ability to participate in the empire's robust maritime trade. Yet Qaidu played a major role in securing Central Asia's independence from the qa'an and shaping the "Middle Empire's" administration and economy. By 'Umarī's time in the 1340s, however, these achievements of Qaidu were already forgotten: this Syrian writer relates that Baraq replaced Qaidu and was succeeded by Du'a, thereby ascribing to Du'a the revival of the Central Asian Mongol state.⁶⁰ This assessment owes much to Du'a's actions after Qaidu's death.

The Return of the Chaghadaids: The Reigns of the Du'aids (1303–1347)

Qaidu died in early 1303,⁶¹ nominating his son Orus to succeed him and entrusting his sons with Du'a, his loyal ally and the *aqā* (elder male) of Central Asia. Du'a, however, chose to enthrone Qaidu's elder, though much less capable, son Chapar (r. 1303–1310). Despite a certain Ögödeid

60 'Umarī / Lech, 1968, 21. 61 See note 20 above.

resistance, Chapar was solemnly enthroned in spring 1303 in Emil (modern-day southern Kazakhstan, Ögödei's appanage), and the Ögödeids eventually closed ranks behind him. Soon afterwards Du'a led a dramatic shift in Mongol Central Asia's political orientation by pursuing peace with the Yuan. Establishing connection first with the Yuan border commanders, in autumn 1303 Du'a, Chapar, and Malik Temür sent an emissary to seek an end to the fighting, and a year later another emissary announced their submission to the qa'an.⁶² Du'a explained his move in terms of Chinggisid unity, securing the empire's trade routes, relieving the Chaghadaid army and subjects, and renewing Mongol expansion, which had long been halted due to the inter-Mongol conflicts. He suggested India as the future direction of Chaghadaid expansion. More salient reasons were the fear of a joint Mongol attack on Central Asia, which the White Horde again proposed in 1302–1303, and Du'a's wish to free himself of the Ögöeid primacy.

Temür Qa'an gladly accepted Du'a's peace proposal: unlike Qaidu, Du'a posed no threat to the qa'an's legitimacy; the economic and military advantages of appeasing the northern border were clear enough; and after three decades of Qaidu's activities the Yuan had already given up its control of Central Asia. In late 1304 Du'a and Chapar surrendered to Temür, thereby creating an ostensible peace in the Mongol world. The peace, which included also the settlement of other inter-Mongol conflicts (e.g. between the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate, inside the White Horde), was famously celebrated in the letter that Ilkhan Öljeitü sent in 1305 to the king of France, Philippe IV.⁶³ The appellation *Dumadu Mongol Ulus*, the Middle Mongolian Ulus, attested from the early fourteenth century and referring to the Central Asian Mongols – both Ögöeid and Chaghadaid – might have originated in this period.⁶⁴ It not only united the two competing *uluses* under one name, thereby disguising the change in the balance of power in favor of the Chaghadaids, but also proclaimed their new central position among the Mongol states – probably with a hint to the prestigious notion of “the Middle Kingdom” usually denoting China.

Ironically, in Central Asia the peace merely marked the beginning of bloody warfare between the Ögödeids and the Chaghadaids. Chapar failed to reap any benefit from the peace he had promoted: not only was he treated as Du'a's equal, but he also had to hand over part of his territory to the Chaghadaids. Du'a's peace proposal stressed the rights of Chinggis Khan's

62 YS, 21.454, 460; Biran 1997, 71. 63 For the peace: Biran 1997, 70–75; Liu 2006, 318–29.

64 Matsui 2009. For the early use of the “Middle Empire” concept referring to both Ögödeids and Chaghadaids: Qarshī 2005, CLXXII–CLXXXIII.

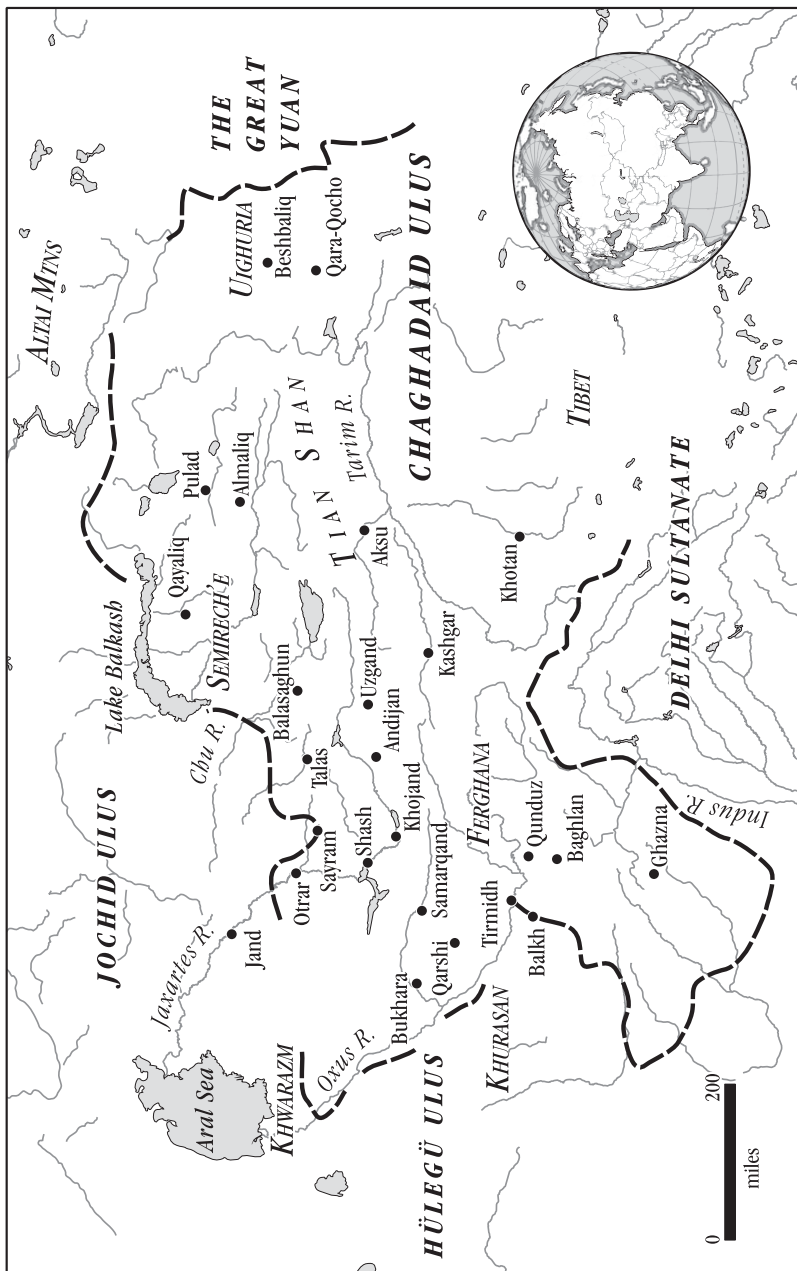
sons to the domains their father had allocated them. Yet when Temür Qa'an confirmed the Chaghadaids' right to "Turkestan," he was not only treating Du'a as equal to Chapar but also subjugating most of the Ögödeids' realm to Du'a.

The tension in Central Asia deteriorated into open conflict when the Chaghadaids attempted to supplant Chapar's troops in various regions. A series of skirmishes opened in Transoxania, Semirechye, and Afghanistan. The tension between the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid troops facing India not only led to mutinies among the Chaghadaid supporters of Qaidu's son Sarban, but also hampered an attack on Delhi in 1305. Du'a sent his son, the future khan Esen Buqa, to take over Qutlugh Khwāja's rebelling troops, leading Sarban to submit to the Ilkhanate in 1306, thereby leaving the Indian front to the Chaghadaids. The following Chaghadaid raids into India, however, resulted mainly in piles of Mongol skulls, which forced the remaining troops to retreat to Ghazna.⁶⁵ More decisive was the situation on the Yuan frontier, where Orus, Qaidu's nominated heir, was stationed with his father's crack troops. Only with Yuan help were the Chaghadaids able to win this front: in June 1306 a joint force of Du'a and the Yuan commander in the Altai, the future qa'an, Qaishan, whom Du'a had manipulated into believing that Orus had plotted against him, badly defeated Orus. Many of his troops, including leading princes in Qaidu's entourage, notably Malik Temür, defected to the qa'an, while pillaging Chapar's *ordo*. A considerable part of the Ögödeid army submitted to the Yuan and was dissolved among its garrisons, simultaneously with the surrender of others of Qaidu's supporters either to the Golden Horde or to the Ilkhanate. Hearing about Orus's defeat, Chapar mobilized troops against Du'a, but the latter once more summoned the Yuan border commanders, including Alghu's grandsons. The Yuan troops defeated the Ögödeids, plundering Chapar's *ordo*, and Qaishan even divided Chapar's daughters and property among the campaign's commanders. The qa'an's troops thus took over the Irtish and the Altai regions and their nomadic population, formerly under Chapar. In 1307 these regions, together with most of Mongolia, were organized into the Yuan's new Lingbei province. The helpless Chapar was thus forced to submit to Du'a in late 1306.⁶⁶

Du'a assigned Chapar an appanage and a stipend. He captured the leading remaining Ögödeids, executing quite a few, including Qaidu's daughter Qutulun. Incorporating several lesser Ögödeid princes into his army, Du'a

65 Jackson 1999, 224–31; Waṣṣaf 1852–1853, 510, 517.

66 Biran 1997, 74–76; Biran 2009, 54–55; Yuan 1999, 335; Landa 2019, 120.



Map 5.1 The Chaghadaid Ulus c. 1330s, after Biran 2013, 259 (Joe LeMonnier, <https://mapartist.com/>)

fought others near Samarqand. He also continued to split the Ögödeid ranks, deposing Chapar in a huge *quriltai* held in early 1307 in favor of another son of Qaidu, Yangichar, and conferring special status upon Güyük's grandson. Simultaneously, since 706/1306–1307 the Ögödeid *tamgha* began to disappear from Central Asian coins, first in Almaliq and later elsewhere. Only Du'a's demise soon after the *quriltai* temporarily prevented the complete dissolution of the Ögödeid *ulus*.⁶⁷

Du'a was succeeded by his son Könçek (r. 1307–1308) (see Table 5.3), who had been stationed in Uighuria and enthroned near Almaliq. He remained on good terms with the new qa'an Qaishan (r. 1307–1311), who sent quite a few emissaries to Central Asia during Könçek's short reign. The appeasement, however, also meant that the qa'an demanded his share of the revenues of the Central Asian cities – such as Samarqand, Talas, and Shāsh (Tashkent), according to the divisions allegedly allocated in Chinggis Khan's times.⁶⁸ Könçek also had to cope with the ongoing princely feuds in Central Asia, as Ögödeid–Chaghadaid struggles continued in Transoxania and among the troops. Taking advantage of these last-mentioned conflicts, and annoyed by small-scale invasions into its realm, the Delhi Sultanate attacked the Central Asian troops headed by Könçek's brother Esen Buqa, reaching almost up to Ghazna.⁶⁹ Könçek's untimely death did little to quell the chaos. The Chaghadaid throne was taken by Naliqo'a (r. 1308–1309), brother of Böke Temür, the Chaghadaid khan who had preceded Du'a, and a Muslim like his mother, a Kirmanid princess. Opposition began among his immediate family, and was given force by his non-Du'aid descent and pro-Muslim policies. The opponents rallied around Du'a's younger son, Kebek, who was by then in Quyas, near Almaliq. Naliqo'a began to purge the Du'aids, but Kebek managed to arrange Naliqo'a's assassination at a banquet (*toi*) in 1308–1309, with the assistance of Naliqo'a's Du'aid commanders.⁷⁰

These inter-Chaghadaid struggles gave Qaidu's sons a last chance to resume power. While lesser Ögödeids continued to defect to the Ilkhanate or the Yuan, in 1308 one of them even delivering Ögödei's seal to the qa'an,⁷¹

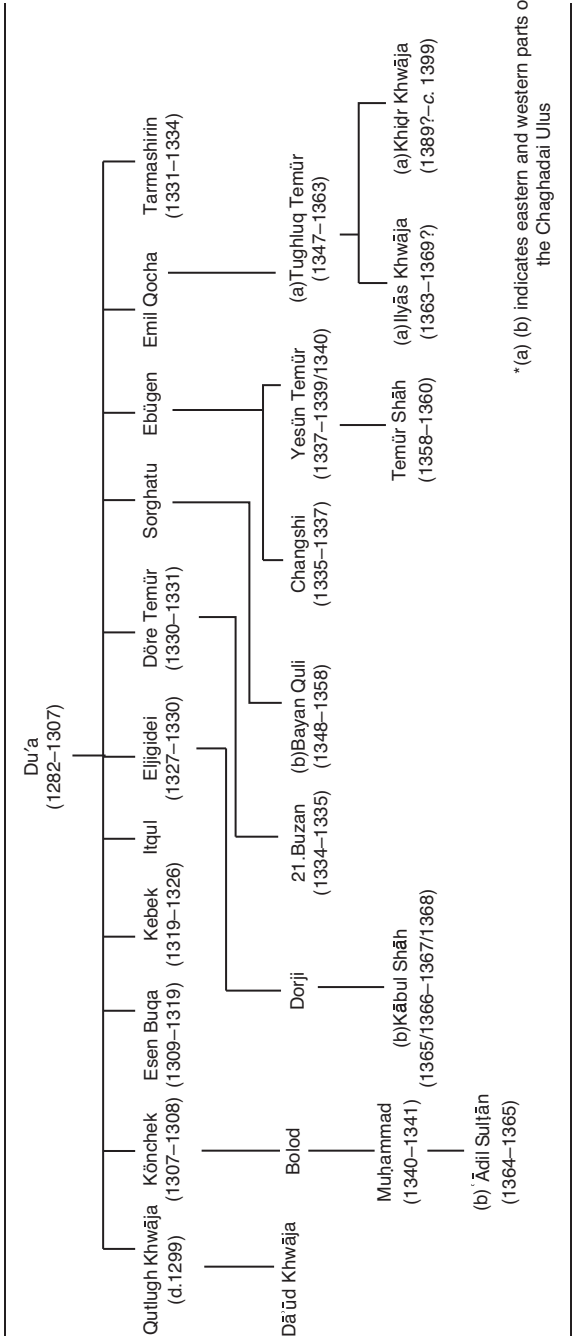
67 Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 510–12; Qāshāni 1969, 33–36, 54; Biran 1997, 73–78; Biran 2009, 55; Liu 2006, 348–49; Petrov 2009, 301.

68 YS, 22.502–3; Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 518; Waṣṣāf 2009, 4: 285. 69 Jackson 1999, 230.

70 Biran 2009, 55. On Naliqo'a: Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 369, 450, 518; Kempiners 1988, 177–79.

71 YS, 22.503; This was Tümen, grandson of Malik son of Ögödei, who was enthroned as Prince of Yangdi. In 1360 his descendant, Alqui Temür, advancing from the Irtysh to the vicinity of Shangdu, demanded the seal back from the last Yuan emperor Toghon Temür. Yet in 1361, betrayed by his family and troops, he was handed over to the Yuan. YS, 45.952–53, 140.3371, 206.4596–97; Robinson 2009, 96–97.

Table 5.3 Chaghadaid Rulers: Descendants of Du'a Khan



in 1309 Chapar, Orus, and Güyük's grandson Tökme attacked Kebek, who had just concluded his war with Naliqo'a. They gained an initial victory near Almalıq, but eventually Kebek managed to beat them, mastering the whole Chaghadaid army, including Naliqo'a's former troops and some Ögödeid collaborators.

Therefore in 1310 the defeated Chapar (with Orus and Yangichar; the latter died en route) submitted to the Yuan, which had still treated him as the Ögödeid khan. Chapar's arrival at the Yuan court, a journey that Qaidu had refused to make since 1264, was solemnly celebrated in Dadu, where Chapar received Qaidu's frozen revenues from his Chinese appanages and in 1315 was even enthroned as prince of Running (in Henan), a title which he passed down to his son and grandson. The latter, however, was executed in the civil war of 1328, and henceforth we have no information on Qaidu's descendants in China.⁷² The year 1310 thus marked the end of the Ögödeid state: Qaidu's domains south and west of the Altai were taken over by the Yuan, whereas most of the remaining Ögödeid realm was annexed to the Chaghadaid Khanate. Ögödeid princes served in the ranks of the Yuan, the Chaghadaids and even the Ilkhanate, but they no longer had their own political framework, leaving Mongol rule in Central Asia to the Chaghadaids.

After defeating Chapar, in 1309 Kebek orchestrated the enthronement of his older brother, Esen Buqa (r. c. 1309/1310–1319), who was called back from the Indian border. As a reward, Esen Buqa let Kebek choose the khanate's best warriors for his personal guard and sent him westward to administer Ferghana and Transoxania, thereby sowing the seeds for the khanate's future dissolution.⁷³ Another brother, soon replaced by Dā'ūd Khwāja, Qutlugh Khwāja's son, was sent to assert Chaghadaid control over the Qara'unas and on the Indian frontier. Early in his reign Esen Buqa also had to cope with a Jochid attack, led by Khan Toqta and allegedly co-ordinated with the qa'an. This might have been connected to the death of the Orda ulus's pretender, Qonichi, which Mamluk sources dated to 1309–1310, and perhaps paved the way for the White Horde's expansion into the Jaxartes region (Otrar, Sighnaq) which is attested in 1320 at the latest.⁷⁴ Yet the main challenge to Esen Buqa's rule came from the Toluid realms of China and Iran, both now strengthened with a considerable number of defeated Ögödeids. The first

72 Yangichar's enthronement is mentioned only by Qāshānī (1969, 41); cf. YS, 22.502; Biran 1997, 77–78.

73 Qāshānī 1969, 149–50; Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 518–20; Naṭanzī 1957, 107; Kato 1991, 103; Jackson 2018b, 92. Kebek did not reign in 1309 despite Qāshānī's allusions; Petrov 2009, 301.

74 al-'Umari/Lech 1968, 79; for the White Horde: Allsen 1985–1987, 25–26; Jackson 2017, 188–89.

confrontation was with the Yuan and related to pastureland rights. The Yuan's annexation of Chapar's eastern realm disrupted the division of grazing lands in Central Asia, so that the winter and summer pastures of several Chaghadaid princes came under Yuan control. Moreover, the proximity of the Yuan and Chaghadaid troops in Uighuria and the Altai, stationed opposite each other "like teeth of a comb,"⁷⁵ created multiple opportunities for conflict. The simultaneous Yuan attempts to limit the volume of trade from Central Asia added to the tension, as did the Chaghadaids' tendency to see their khan as equal to the qa'an rather than his subordinate. Esen Buqa tried to solve the problem locally, negotiating pasture rights with the Yuan garrison commanders, but in vain. He also feared a Yuan–Ilkhanid coalition against him, especially after a drunken Yuan emissary raised this possibility. Moreover, in 1312 Esen Buqa's viceroy in Afghanistan was attacked by combined Ilkhanid and Qara'unas forces. The initiative came from the Qara'unas despite their long submission to the Chaghadaids and their marital connection to Du'a. It might also have originated in competition over pasturelands, probably a reaction to Dā'ūd Khwāja's attempt to restore his father's realm, in which the Qara'unas's pastures were included. Expelled from his winter and summer quarters, Dā'ūd Khwāja escaped across the Oxus, asking for Esen Buqa's help.⁷⁶

This incident, which occurred simultaneously with the failure of the Chaghadaid khan's negotiation with the Yuan border commanders, increased Esen Buqa's fears of a joint coalition. He reacted by detaining the Yuan and Ilkhanid envoys passing through his realm and confiscating their property, arresting three missions during 1313–1314. Simultaneously he tried – twice and in vain – to ally the new Golden Horde khan, Özbek (r. 1313–1341), as a counterweight to the alleged Ilkhanid–Yuan coalition. Esen Buqa tried to manipulate his way among the various Yuan commanders, suggesting peace to some but attacking the commander who had formerly wrecked the negotiation (Toghachi). Not only did he lose the battle, however, but also this maneuver united all the Yuan garrisons against him. In 1315 they penetrated deep into the Chaghadaid realm and took over the Turfan depression, reinstalling the Uighur *idiqu* in Gaochang in 1316.⁷⁷

To make up for this loss, Esen Buqa decided to invade Khurasan both in retaliation for Dā'ūd Khwāja's earlier expulsion and because he had estimated that the Ilkhanate was much weaker than the Yuan. Assembling a huge force,

75 Qāshānī 1969, 202. 76 Qāshānī 1969, 152; Kato 1991, 104.

77 Qāshānī 1969, 145–46, 174–76; Liu 2005, 346; Allsen 1983, 259–60.

allegedly 60,000 men, headed by the princes of Transoxania led by Kebek, the Chaghadaids easily repulsed the Khurasani forces, chasing the Ilkhanid troops up to Herat. Kebek wanted to continue westward, but the Muslim prince Yasa'ur preferred not to fight in the holy month of Ramaḍān. Yasa'ur, son of Böke Temür Khan, hence a non-Du'aid, had been the senior Chaghadaid commander in Transoxania prior to Kebek's arrival, and the two were often at odds. Before they could settle the dispute, Esen Buqa's envoys arrived, reporting that the Yuan commanders had renewed their attack. For the first time since the 1260s the qa'an's army invaded the Chaghadaids' core territories, plundering Esen Buqa's summer pasture at Talas and his winter pasture near the Issyk Köl, capturing families and property. Kebek and most other princes hurried back to rescue their kin, but Yasa'ur found an excuse to stay behind.

The Yuan forces soon withdrew from the Chaghadaid lands, but they improved their positions on the borders, retaking Qara-Qocho. Small-scale warfare on the Yuan–Chaghadaid frontier, including the region of Khotan, continued until the end of Esen Buqa's reign in 1319.⁷⁸ Against this background, in winter 1316–1317, Esen Buqa welcomed Qaishan's son, Qoshila (later Mingzong, r. 1328), who had escaped from his uncle, the reigning Yuan emperor Ayurbawarda (Renzong, r. 1311–1320). In 1316 Ayurbawarda had appointed his own son the heir apparent, thereby abrogating his agreement with his late brother Qaishan, according to which Qaishan's sons would succeed Ayurbawarda. The qa'an had exiled Qoshila to Yunnan (southwest China), but the latter escaped to the Chaghadaid realm. Esen Buqa bestowed on Qoshila winter and summer pastures and a place to plant spring crops in the Tarbaghatai region, near the Yuan border.⁷⁹

By that time, however, Esen Buqa's western front was also turbulent. In 1316, after the Yuan attack and an elaborated negotiation with Ilkhan Öljeitü, Prince Yasa'ur plundered Transoxania and crossed the Oxus to Khurasan, accompanied by a *tümen* of his personal troops, around 30,000–40,000 other warriors and their families, and numerous Transoxanian peasants whom he had forced to relocate. Esen Buqa finally complied with Kebek's request to attack Yasa'ur, but since the latter had secured Ilkhanid help, Kebek's troops managed only to grab back some of the deported population, many of whom perished during the conflict. The defeat also cost the Chaghadaids the temporary loss of their rule in Badakhshān, next to which the fight between

78 al-'Umarī 1968, 79; Yuan Jue n.d., 34: 512–13; Qāshānī 1969, 202–5; Liu 2005, 339–53.

79 YS 30.680, 31.694–95; Liu 2005, 350.

Kebek and Yasa'ur took place.⁸⁰ Ilkhan Öljeitü gladly appointed Yasa'ur over the whole of Khurasan (from the Oxus to Māzandarān), a nomination confirmed by Öljeitü's heir, Abū Sa'īd (r. 1317–1335). Yasa'ur had trouble asserting his authority, especially over the local rulers of Herat and Sīstān, as well as the Qara'unas, but he fostered grand aspirations, which included Iran and Iraq. In 1319, taking advantage of Abū Sa'īd's internal and external difficulties, Yasa'ur openly revolted against him. The Kartid ruler of Herat, the Ilkhanid vassal closest to Yasa'ur, turned to the Chaghadaids for help. Kebek (r. 1319–1326), who in early 1319 inherited Esen Buqa's throne, was happy to comply. In spring 1320 Kebek's troops entered Khurasan and executed Yasa'ur, winning back most of his commanders and offspring, who returned to Transoxania, resettling them in their family's appanage near Samarqand.⁸¹

Kebek, whose reign is known as the zenith of the Chaghadaid Khanate, began his reign in full vigor. In 1321 he renewed the Chaghadaid invasions into India after a considerable break, but without much success. In the same year, he agreed to ally with the Ilkhanid regent Choban against the Jochid khan Özbek. Soon after this unmaterialized alliance, however, Kebek chose to collaborate with Özbek against Choban, invading Khurasan in 1322, probably for winning back the Qara'unas and the rebellious shāh of Badakhshān. Whether the Mongol invasion of Kashmir in 1323 was also on Kebek's initiative or a domino effect of his former invasions it is harder to determine. This invasion devastated Kashmir, but when the Mongol army left after eight months loaded with captives, it ran into a storm that annihilated many of them.⁸² The invasion of Khurasan, however, might have triggered an Ilkhanid retaliation attack on Kebek's brother and commander in Afghanistan, the future khan Tarmashirin. In 1326, the Ilkhanid *amīr* Ḥasan b. Choban badly routed Tarmashirin and his troops plundered the tomb of Mahmūd of Ghazna (r. 999–1030), although Ghazna remained in Chaghadaid hands.⁸³

Since his accession, Kebek pursued peace with the Yuan, aware of the economic advantages of such a move, but he had first to quell the opposition of his eastern *amīrs*, who preferred to continue raiding. In 1323 Kebek was

80 Qāshānī 1969, 164, 211–18; Harawī 1944, 640, 643–44; Ḥāfiẓ Ābrū 1971, 113–15; Kato 1991; Petrov 2009, 302–3; Liu 2005, 349–50; Biran 2009, 56–57; I follow Liu's chronology.

81 On Yasa'ur: Kempiners 1985; Kato 1991; the previous note.

82 Pandit 1991, 42–43; Wink 2004, 3: 122.

83 Biran 2002b, 743; Biran 2009, 57; al-'Aynī, in Tizengauzen 1884, 491, 494; Ward 1983, 650–52.

finally able to submit to the Yuan, thereby establishing tribute relations which continued for several decades. As part of the deal, Kebek might have promised the new emperor, Ayurbawarda's son Shidebala (Yingzong, r. 1320–1323) to keep the latter's potential rival Qoshila strictly in Chaghadaid custody. In return, he probably regained Uighuria, since in 1326 a Mongolian document from Turfan cites his orders.⁸⁴ The agreement with the Yuan brought peace to Central Asia, which Kebek used to restore his war-inflicted realm. Indeed he is famous more for shaping the *ulus*'s internal affairs than for his active foreign policy. Unlike his predecessors, he took up residence in Transoxania, building a Chaghadaid western capital in Qarshī (Tu. "castle"), near Nakhshab, and strove to restore agriculture, trade, and urban life. In Transoxania, he minted new coins that for the first time in Chaghadaid history were eponymous. He also launched a new administrative division of the khanate into *tümen*, areas supporting roughly 10,000 soldiers, assigning appanages to his *amīrs* and taking great pains to limit their powers, thereby earning a reputation as a just ruler.⁸⁵

Around late 1326 Kebek was succeeded by his brother Eljigidei (r. 1327–1330). Eljigidei, an experienced warrior and sympathizer with both Buddhism and Christianity, returned to Almaliq, and was more interested in his eastern front. In 1328–1329 he became involved in Yuan politics, accompanying Qoshila, who after the death of his uncle Yisün Temür Qa'an (Taiding Huangdi, r. 1323–1328) coveted the Yuan throne. After Yisün Temür's death, the Yuan Qipchaq minister El Temür orchestrated a coup to restore the house of Qoshila's father, Qaishan. In fall 1328 the rebels enthroned Qoshila's younger brother Tuq Temür (Wenzong, r. 1328–1329, 1329–1332), and summoned Qoshila to assume the throne. Eljigidei escorted Qoshila to Mongolia, where the latter was enthroned in early 1329, his abdicated brother becoming his heir apparent. Qoshila took the job seriously, replacing key officials with his own men, but the rebels did not let him reap the fruits of their victory. Less than six months after his coronation, when Qoshila arrived at his brother's court near Beijing, he was poisoned by El Temür, who returned the crown to his protégé.⁸⁶ Eljigidei returned to his own realm soon after Qoshila's death, and the new Yuan emperor conferred upon him generous

84 Cerensodnom and Taube 1993, 183; Franke 1962, 404, 406; Liu 2005, 351–53; Atwood, this volume.

85 Biran 2009, 57; Biran 2013, 271–72; Petrov 2009, 301–4.

86 Hsiao 1994, 542–47; Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's garbled report of the rebellion of Prince Fīrūz, son of the qa'an's paternal uncle, probably refers to Qoshila's affair: Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 4: 907–10; Uno, Muraoka, and Matsuda 1999, 56–57.

gifts to secure his support. The Yuan confirmation of Chaghadaid rule over Uighuria, attested under Eljigidei's successor, was probably also part of the deal.⁸⁷ In the meantime, in 1328–1329, Eljigidei's brother and viceroy in the west, Tarmashirin, raided India, perhaps in retaliation for the attack of the newly enthroned Delhi sultan, Muḥammad b. Tughluq (r. 1324–1351), on Peshwahr and Hashtnagar, near the Chaghadaid border, and his attempt to build an alliance with the Ilkhanate against the Chaghadaids. Taking advantage of the poor situation of the frontier due to a revolt in Multān, Tarmashirin advanced almost up to Delhi, gathering huge spoil before retreating to Tirmidh.⁸⁸ Despite this accomplishment, however, Eljigidei was succeeded by another of his brothers, Döre Temür (r. 1330–1331). He is commemorated in the contemporaneous Yuan map as the ruler of the territory stretching from Uighuria to the Oxus, but not much more is known about his short reign.

Tarmashirin (r. 1331–1334) succeeded Döre Temür. Like Kebek, he resided in Transoxania and promoted agriculture and trade. Unlike Kebek, Tarmashirin was a devout Muslim who actively disseminated Islam among his troops (many of them already Muslims), and used the new religion to facilitate diplomatic and commercial relations with the Mamluk and Delhi Sultanates. Tarmashirin maintained friendly relations with the Yuan, but, perhaps mistrusting his eastern commanders, he refrained from visiting the eastern part of his realm, nor did he convene the traditional *toi* (banquet). This attitude, which the eastern *amīrs* saw as abrogating the *yasa*, combined with his Muslim and pro-sedentary policies and his unfortunate family position – he was the last in a long line of lateral successors to Du'a (see Table 5.3), which meant that the lineal descendants of the former khans all had a potentially good claim to the throne – led to his swift fall. Around summer 1334/early AH 735, Tarmashirin's nephew, Buzan (or Buzun), son of Döre Temür, heading the eastern *amīrs*, deposed Tarmashirin.⁸⁹

With Tarmashirin's fall the khanate entered a confused period, in which even the identity of the reigning khan is not always clear, a fact attested by the growing impotency of the khans vis-à-vis the *amīrs*. Natural disasters, including epidemics that might have been the beginning of the plague, contributed to the chaos. The period is characterized by bitter succession struggles, including an Ögöeid usurpation; by rulers with different religious and

87 YS, 30.680, 31.699–701, 33.740, 34.754, 139.3352; Hsiao 1994, 541–47.

88 Jackson 1975, 118–26; Jackson 1999, 232; Biran 2002b, 744; Yazdī 1972, 81a, claims that Tarmashirin reached also Gujarat.

89 Biran 2002b; Petrov 2009, 305–7.

geographical orientations, sometimes practicing joint rulership; and by the broadening of Chaghadaid authority in Khurasan. This, however, favored mainly the *amīrs* of the Qara'unas, one of whom eventually deposed the khan in 1347.⁹⁰

Some sources acknowledge Buzan as khan, but there is no numismatic record to support this or vouch for the other pretenders (including even a Toluid candidate) mentioned in the literary sources.⁹¹ In December 1335, however, Changshi (r. 1335–1337), Du'a's grandson from his son Ebügen, took the throne. Changshi, a devout Buddhist who also favored Christianity, moved back to Almaliq, but less than two years after his accession, he was murdered by his brother and heir Yisün Temür (r. early 1337–1339 or 1340). Muslim sources describe Yisün Temür as a mad ruler, famous for cutting off his mother's breasts, but a Mongolian document from Turfan indicates that he had an active administration, and the many coins that bore his name attest that his authority prevailed throughout the Chaghadaid realm, from Almaliq to Transoxania, including also Otrar, Tirmidh, and Badakhshān.⁹² He had, however, to deal with severe droughts in 1336–1339, as well as with an epidemic, which afflicted the Issyk Köl region, the Chaghadaid major winter pasture, in 1338–1339. This was recently identified as an early upsurge of the Black Death which later infected the Golden Horde, Europe, and the Middle East.⁹³ All this probably contributed to the deterioration of Yisün Temür's rule, and in 1339 or 1340 he was deposed by the Ögödeid 'Alī Sulṭān (r. c. 1340–1341), son of Ürük Temür, Nawrūz's collaborator.

'Alī Sulṭān is remembered mainly as a fanatic Muslim who massacred the Christians in Almaliq in 1340. He also presented himself as a *faqīr*, dervish, perhaps attempting to win legitimacy for the first Ögödeid ruler since the collapse of Qaidu's state thirty years earlier, and in contrast to the Buddhist tendencies of his predecessors. 'Alī Sulṭān's authority, however, was probably limited to Almaliq and Otrar, and certainly did not reach to the Chaghadaid southern realm, centered in Tirmidh, where the name of the Chaghadaid khan Muḥammad Pulād (Bolod) (or Muḥammad b. Pulād), son or grandson of Du'a's heir, Könçek, appeared on the coins. 'Alī Sulṭān was soon killed by

90 Bartold 1956–1962, I: 51–54, 134–38; Manz 1989, 21–57; Liu 2006, 430–50; Biran 2009, 58–59.

91 Anonymous, *Shajarat al-atrāk*. MS Harvard University Pers 6F, fol. 114a; Petrov 2009, 307–8.

92 Biran 2009, 59; Petrov 2009, 308; Vér 2016, 267–70.

93 Petrov 2009, 308; Slavin 2019; Wang et al. 2017, 21–22.

the Chaghadaid *amīrs*, and in Sha‘ban 741/January 1341 Almaliq coins already bore Muḥammad’s name.⁹⁴ These upheavals encouraged the Golden Horde to interfere in Central Asia, and only Özbek’s death in 1341 abolished a planned large-scale campaign.⁹⁵

Muḥammad, however, also did not last long on the throne, and from 742/1341–1342 there were again two ruling khans, Khalīl (or Khalīlallāh) and Qazan, both apparently sons of Prince Yasa‘ur. The two brothers struck coins inscribed with both names in 742–745/1341–1342–1343–1344, where Khalīl is usually called *khaqan* and Qazan *khan*, yet only Khalīl’s name appears on Bukharan coins, and only Qazan’s name occurs in Tirmidh and Badakhshān. While Qazan is mentioned in various literary sources, Khalīl is known only from Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s travelogue and later hagiographic sources. These sources present Khalīl as the teacher of Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband (1318–1389) the eponym of the leading Central Asian Sufi order since the fifteenth century, who allegedly convinced Khalīl to return to the political scene. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s record of Khalīl’s acts, such as fighting Buzan (a decade earlier) and raiding Beshbaliq and Qaraqorum, is hardly plausible (although Khalīl might have made an earlier attempt on the throne, as Ibn Baṭṭūṭa implies). His report on the rebellion of Khudāwand-zādah, the ruler of Tirmidh whom Khalīl had appointed as his deputy in Almaliq, and later executed, may be supported (and dated) by the coinage of Almaliq in 744/1344–1345 that omitted Khalīl’s name and *tamgha*, which appeared on the city’s earlier coins. Whether afterwards Khalīl tried in vain to assert his authority over the Kartid ruler of Herat who had supported his accession, and ended his life as the latter’s captive, as Ibn Baṭṭūṭa recounts, is unclear. But in any case, by 745/1344–1345 Khalīl had disappeared from the numismatic and the political scene.⁹⁶ Qazan ruled for two more years, during which he was challenged by the Qara‘unas *amīr* who eventually deposed him, taking over the western realm of the Chaghadaid Khanate.

Qazan is described in the Timurid sources as a “bad last ruler” – an evil tyrant notorious for executing his *amīrs* by his whims – and we have no alternative evidence to balance this view. We know, however, that he built a new fortress city, similar to Kebek’s Qarshī, in Zanjir Sarai (Tu. “the stony palace”; but Persian Zanjīr Sarāy, “the chain palace”), two days’ journey from

94 Yule 1967, 3: 31–32, 212; Petrov 2009, 309; Jackson 2017, 356–57, 386; Jackson 2019, 366–67.

95 Al-Shujā‘ī 1985, 2: 214, 234.

96 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 565–67; Paul 1990, 284–91; Petrov 2009, 310–13; Jackson 2019, 366–67. Jackson suggested identifying Khalīl with Juki, the only son of Yasa‘ur other than Qazan known from Ilkhanid and Timurid sources.

Qarshī on the road to Bukhara,⁹⁷ and had tried to strengthen the Chaghadaids' hold on Khurasan after the Ilkhanate's collapse. Yet the political instability, combined with unforgiving climate, led the khanate to its own version of "the fourteenth-century crisis," which embroiled all Mongol politics in the mid-fourteenth century. The khanate's economic situation also seems to have deteriorated: already by March 1345 Venetian traders in Caffa complained that the road to the Middle Empire, i.e. the Chaghadaid realm, was ruined.⁹⁸ This was probably affected by the dissemination of the plague that might have spread from the Tianshan region in the early 1340s.⁹⁹ Certainly the affliction of the Black Death in the Golden Horde soon afterwards did not improve the khanate's economic situation. Simultaneously, the rebellions in Yuan China, especially the mutinies in the Altai, probably harmed also the khanate's eastern trade, if not its connections with Gansu in northwest China.¹⁰⁰ The main danger for Qazan, however, came from within the *ulus*, and from the south, where in 1347 the *amīr* of the Qara'unas, Qazaqan, succeeded in deposing Qazan on his second attempt.¹⁰¹ If indeed the Black Death hit the northern part of the Chaghadaid realm in the early 1340s, then it might have contributed to the rise of the Qara'unas, whose southern realm seems to have been less affected. In any case, with Qazaqan's accession, real power in Transoxania shifted from the khans to the *amīrs*, although he and his heirs continued to appoint puppet khans – Ögödeids and Chaghadaids. Simultaneously, in the eastern part of the khanate, the *amīrs* of the Dughlat tribe enthroned Tughluq Temür Khan (r. 1347–1363), a suppositious grandson of Du'a. Once more, the khanate was divided into eastern and western realms.

The Rule of the *Amīrs* and the Failure of the Last Unification (1347–1370)

Struggles among east and west, north and south, khans and *amīrs*, and a retribalization of the armies, characterized the last phase of the Mongol moment in the Chaghadaid realm. While in the west the Chinggisids were

97 Biran 2013, 272–73, 278. 98 Slavin 2019, 72, 78. 99 Slavin 2019.

100 For continuous mobility between Chaghadaid Xinjiang and Gansu during this period: Vér, forthcoming.

101 Jackson 2018b, and below.

reduced to puppet khans, in the east Tughluq Temür, perhaps meant to have been a puppet khan, proved himself a capable leader, who for a short while even managed to unite the eastern and western parts of the khanate for the last time (1360–1363). His centralization policies, however, alienated some of his powerful commanders. One of them, Qamar al-Dīn, rebelled soon after Tughluq Temür's death and headed Moghulistan for two crucial decades, which made the dissolution of the khanate permanent. The western realm, ruled from 1370 by Temür (Tamerlane, r. 1370–1405), continued to call itself *Ulus Chaghatay*,¹⁰² and referred to the eastern Chaghadaids as *jete* (bandits). The eastern realm, where the Chaghadaid khans resumed power in the late 1380s, called itself *Moghuls* ("Mongols") and referred to the western realm as *Qara'unas* ("half-breeds") due to their non-Chinggisid leadership and the prominent role of the *Qara'unas* among them.

The *Qara'unas* amīr Qazaqan ruled over the western Chaghadaid realm for eleven years (1347–1358), and Timurid sources praise him as a just and pious ruler who brought peace and prosperity to Transoxania. The *Qara'unas* remained subject to the Chaghadaids from Kebek's campaign to Khurasan in the 1320s, retaining their separate *tümen* and *amīrs* and their original location in Afghanistan. The *Qara'unas*'s importance in the Chaghadaid military increased due to the khanate's southwestern orientation since Kebek's reign, the disintegration of Khurasan after the Ilkhanate's collapse, and their proximity to the Indian border, which served as a reservoir for booty and military engagement. Moreover, the Tughluqid Delhi sultans (1320–1413) might have been of *Qara'unid* ancestry and therefore often supportive of the *Qara'unas*.¹⁰³ All this, stimulated by Qazan's cruelty, his enforcement of his authority in Tirmidh and Badakhshān next to the *Qara'unid* territories, a drought since 1344, and perhaps also the effects of the plague, probably encouraged Qazaqan's mutiny. Qazaqan had challenged Qazan first in 1345–1346, when the former was defeated and wounded, but in 1347–1348 he killed and replaced the Chaghadaid khan. As a non-Chinggisid, Qazaqan had to legitimate his rule, and he imitated the legitimization techniques already adopted by the Ilkhanids' successor states, such as the Jalayirids (1335–1432) or the Chobanids (1335–1357), namely appointing a puppet Chinggisid as khan

102 Chaghatay is the Turkicized form of Mongol Chaghadaid.

103 Jackson 2018b, 99; on Qazaqan: e.g. Hāfiẓ Ābrū 1993, 182–88, 211–12, 216, 226–35, 248–50, 307–8; Naṭanzī 1957, 113–17, 201–4, 261–63; Shāmī 1937–1956, 1: 14–15, 2: 6–11; Manz 1989, 33–34, 43–44, 158–61. These positive assessments also suggest that the plague preceded Qazaqan's accession.

and connecting himself to the Chinggisids by marriage. When he replaced Qazan, Qazaqan married Qazan's young wife (or daughter?), Sarai Mulk Khatun, thereby becoming a Chaghadaid *güregen*, imperial son-in-law. Even beforehand, when he started challenging Qazan, "since the words of Chinggis Khan about kingship and fortune were like a religious law for the [Mongols],"¹⁰⁴ Qazaqan chose a Chinggisid puppet khan to formally head the rebellion. This was the Ögödeid Dānishmandche b. Hindu b. Toqan b. Malik b. Ögödei, whose father fought in Qaidu's ranks. Soon after his victory, however, Qazaqan was obliged to replace his Ögödeid protégé, since his *amīrs* demanded a Chaghadaid ruler. Dānishmandche was executed in 1348 and replaced by Bayan Quli Khan (r. c. 1348–1358), an offspring of Du'a's infamous son Surghatu. Bayan Quli, remembered mainly for his still-standing mausoleum in Faṭḥābād, near Bukhara, fought alongside Qazaqan in his major campaigns, earning a reputation as a just and pious ruler like his patron.¹⁰⁵

Qazaqan's center of power remained his original lands – he was wintering around Sali Sarai (modern Panj in Tajikistan, near the Tajik–Afghan border), and spending the summer near Qunduz and Baghlan in northern Afghanistan. Timurid sources state that he ruled from Khurasan to Kashghar and recruited an army from Kashghar to Andkhūd (a town between Merv and Balkh),¹⁰⁶ thereby suggesting that Qazaqan's authority was limited not only in the east but also in the north. East of Kashghar, the Moghuls enthroned another khan, as discussed below. But while Qazaqan stationed his son 'Abdallāh in Samarqand, and Bayan Quli's coins were minted in Yangi Talas, Qazaqan's commanders originated in the khanate's southern realm – belonging to the Arlat, the Apardi tribes, the Khutallani *amīrs* and the shāhs of Badakhshān. The tribes pasturing in northern Transoxania, such as the Jalayir, the Barlas, and most of the Sulduz, did not take part in his campaigns.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, Qazaqan strove to expand the Chaghadaid realm to the southwest. His first challenge was the Kartids of Herat, whose ruler Mu'izz al-Dīn Ḥusayn (r. 1332–1370) tried to break free from the collapsing Chinggisids, and managed, already in 1342, to defeat his west Khurasanid rivals, the Sarbadarids, a dynasty ruling under a puppet Chinggisid. In the late 1340s Mu'izz al-Dīn coveted the

104 Ḥāfiẓ-i Ābrū 1993, I: 183–84; for the post-Ilkhanid situation: Wing 2016.

105 Bernardini 2013; for Bayan Quli's tomb: Babajanov 1999; Blair 2019.

106 Naṭanzī 1957, 113; Ḥāfiẓ Ābrū 1993, I: 228–35; Jackson 2018b, 99; Bernardini 2013.

107 Ḥāfiẓ Ābrū 1993, I: 228 (citation); Manz 1989, 44; Petrov and Kamushaev 2019.

Chaghadaids' Khurasani territories. Several times the Kartid ruler attacked the Chaghadaid *amīrs* of the Arlat and Apardi, who had been stationed near Bādghīs in Khurasan, leaving mountains of skulls behind and reaching up to the Oxus. Enraged by a *tajik* aspiring to become a *pādshāh*, and encouraged by other Khurasani groups like the shaykhs of Jam, Qazaqan attacked Mu'izz al-Dīn in 1351, inflicting a heavy defeat on his army. Acknowledging his inability to take fortified Herat, however, Qazaqan suggested a truce that Mu'izz al-Dīn happily accepted. Indeed, in 1351 Herat issued coins bearing the name of Bayan Quli Khan. Mu'izz al-Dīn presented a huge tribute and promised to come to Transoxania in the following year. When he did, however, it was to ask for Qazaqan's help against his brother, whom Mu'izz al-Dīn's commanders had enthroned in his stead. Qazaqan intended to assist the Kartid ruler, but the Chaghadaid commanders were much less enthusiastic and even planned to assassinate Mu'izz al-Dīn. The latter returned to Herat on his own, and in 1353 regained his throne.¹⁰⁸ The tension with Herat did not prevent Qazaqan from sending troops in 1350–1351 to assist the Delhi sultan Muḥammad b. Tughluq against local rebels in what proved to be Muḥammad's last campaign. When Muḥammad died in early 1351, before the war was over, Qazaqan's troops returned home, escorted by quite a few former Mongol migrant soldiers, some of whom, including Tarmashirin's son-in-law Firūz, had been in Delhi for decades. The returning migrants convinced the retreating Chaghadaid force to loot the leaderless Indian troops, and the Chaghadaids plundered a considerable amount of people, livestock, and property before the new Delhi sultan Firūz Shāh (r. 1351–1388) opposed them successfully.¹⁰⁹ We know little about Qazaqan's whereabouts in the next years, but it was an inter-Qara'unid conflict that eventually brought about his fall. Qazaqan refused to give the leadership of the Boroldiyya, the Qara'unas *tümen* originating in the troops of Amīr Boroldai who had preceded Qazaqan as the Qara'unas *amīr*, to Boroldai's son, Qutluḡ Temür, who was also Qazaqan's brother-in-law, allegedly for not wanting to be guilty of nepotism. The enraged Qutluḡ Temür ambushed Qazaqan when the latter was hunting – one of his favorite undertakings – and murdered him, only to be put to death himself by Qazaqan's loyal *amīrs* soon afterwards. Qazaqan's son, 'Abdallāh, succeeded his father in 1358. One of his first actions was to

108 Hāfiz-i Ābrū 1959, 38–47; Yazdī 1957, 24–30; Aubin 1976, 29, 35–37; Jackson 2018b, 99.

109 Baranī 2015, 327–29; Hāfiz-i Ābrū 1993, 326–27.

execute the capable and popular khan Bayan Quli, perhaps because he had coveted the latter's wife, replacing him with Temür Shāh (r. 1359–1360), son of Yisün Temür Khan. The assassination, together with 'Abdallāh's inexperience, and mostly his attempt to enforce his authority also on the northern tribes, alienated many of the Ulus Chaghatay's *amīrs*. Less than two years after his accession, 'Abdallāh was deposed by a northern coalition, led by Bayan Sulduz and Ḥājji Barlas, his puppet khan also killed during the mutiny. Bayan Sulduz became the *amīr* of Transoxania, but he did not choose a khan, nor did he manage to enforce his authority. Instead, each commander tried to enlarge his local appanages at the expense of his neighbors, and Transoxania fell into turmoil.¹¹⁰ This situation was exploited by the khan of Moghulistan, Tughluq Temür, who invaded Transoxania in 1360, thereby beginning a last attempt to reunite the Chaghadaid Khanate.

Tughluq Temür, an acclaimed grandson of Du'a,¹¹¹ was enthroned in Aqsu (modern northern Xinjiang), simultaneously with Qazaqan's accession, by the *amīrs* of the hitherto obscure Dughlat tribe, who had held power in the Tarim Basin oases and became Moghulistan's most powerful tribe. Although the young khan owed his throne to the Dughlat, Tughluq Temür soon took real power into his own hands. He shifted his residence to the vicinity of Almaliq, the Chaghadaid capital, and the high number of his edicts (mostly from the early 1350s) that were preserved in Turfan suggests that he firmly governed Uighuria, by then among the most fertile regions in his realm. The edicts dealt with issues related to agriculture, pasturelands, the postal system, and commanding the Uighur *iduq qut*.¹¹² Tughluq Temür's ambitions, however, went far beyond Uighuria. He is most famous as the one who brought Islam to Moghulistan, and indeed around 1354 the khan embraced Islam, through Arshad al-Dīn, a Sufi from the local Katakiyya order, whose father had allegedly encountered the khan even before his accession. The new religion increased the khan's legitimacy: as a foundling with a questioned genealogy, born after his mother had been expelled from his father's princely *ordo*, he certainly benefited from another source of legitimation. It also allowed him to reinforce his authority over his commanders, who had to

110 E.g., Shāmī 1937–1956, 2: 11–12; Abū Ghāzī 1970, 162; Naṭanzī 1957, 113–17, 203–5, 261–64.

111 Ḥaydar (d. 1551), our main source on Tughluq Temür, claimed both that he was a son of Esen Buqa Khan b. Du'a (r. 1310–1319) and that he was born around 1330, which is impossible chronologically (Ḥaydar 1996, 2: 6, 14); in Yazdī's (d. 1457) *Zafarnama* (1957, 1: 33) and the fifteenth-century *Mu'izz al-ansāb* (2006, fol. 33b) his father is Imīl Khwāja, a younger and otherwise unknown son of Du'a; cf. Abū Ghāzī 1970, 164–65.

112 Vernadsky 1936; Cerensodnom and Taube 1993, 173–79; Vēr 2016, 261–63.

choose between either embracing Islam with the khan, or losing their heads. Moreover, Islam created a common ground between the khan, the Muslim Ulus Chaghatay and the Transoxanian population, thereby facilitating his attempt to reunify the khanate.¹¹³ In February–March 1360, when Transoxania was shattered by internal rivalries after Bayan Sulduz’s usurpation, Tughluq Temür invaded with a considerable force. He did not encounter much opposition as the *amīrs* either escaped to Khurasan or joined the Muslim Chinggisid khan. Among the latter was the still anonymous Temür. Temür manipulated the flight of his tribe’s leader, Ḥājji Beg Barlas, to Khurasan and his own contacts (one of Temür’s wives was a Dughlat), to secure from Tughluq Temür the rights to his father’s appanage in Kish and to the Barlas *tümen*. Tughluq Temür returned to Moghulistan leaving his commanders to rule Transoxania, but the latter fell out among themselves and also retreated eastwards. Taking advantage of the vacuum, Amīr Ḥusayn, Qazaqan’s grandson and ‘Abdallāh’s nephew, led a coalition – which included Temür and some northern leaders – against Bayan Sulduz, forcing the latter to Badakhshān and proclaiming himself the *amīr* of Transoxania. Tughluq Temür reacted quickly and in March–April 1361 invaded Transoxania again, determined to enforce his rule on the whole Chaghadaid realm. He set out against Amīr Ḥusayn, defeating him near the Wakhsh river, and chasing him into the Qara’unas’s strongholds in Qunduz and Baghlan. Tughluq Temür plundered the region up to the Hindu Kush pass, where he spent the spring and summer. Coins with his name were issued in faraway Badakhshān up to 765/1363–1364, while more central Transoxanian mints ceased their work due to the upheavals.¹¹⁴ In autumn 1361 Tughluq Temür returned to Samarqand. He eliminated quite a few of the region’s powerful *amīrs* before heading back eastwards, thereby causing others, including Ḥājji Beg Barlas, to escape the khan’s wrath. On this second invasion Tughluq Temür reconfirmed Temür’s right to Kish and the Barlas, and with the flight of Ḥājji Beg, who was killed by bandits in Khurasan, Temür became the uncontested leader of his tribe. Before heading eastwards this time, however, Tughluq Temür left his son Ilyās Khwāja to rule Transoxania from Samarqand, backing him with a considerable Moghul force. Yet Ilyās Khwāja did not manage to consolidate his hold in Transoxania for long. Strong opposition was raised by his attempts to restrain the Transoxanian tribal leadership, and by the uncharacteristic bloodshed

113 Haydar 1996, 2: 8–11; Kim 1999, 299–304; DeWeese 2009, 132; Jackson 2017, 331–32, 358–59.

114 Haydar 1996, 13–14; Yazdī 1957, 44–45; Shāmī 1937–1956, 1: 14–15; Petrov 2009, 316.

that accompanied the Moghul conquest, and many local *amīrs*, including Temūr, preferred to migrate westwards and plot revenge. The Moghul menace united the northern and southern tribes of the Ulus Chaghatay, and in 1363 Amīr Ḥusayn and Temūr, both after regrouping in Khurasan, led the *amīrs'* opposition and confronted Ilyās Khwāja in the vicinity of Kish. They won a first victory but the battle was not fully decided when Ilyās Khwāja was informed of his father's death and returned eastwards.¹¹⁵ In the ensuing vacuum, Amīr Ḥusayn convened a solemn *quriltai* in 1364, enthroning himself once more as the *amīr* of Transoxania. This time he appointed a puppet khan, Kābul Shāh son of Dorji son of Eljigidei Khan, who had been living as a dervish and was famed for his poetry, only to execute him less than a year and a half afterwards in favor of 'Ādil Sultan (r. 1366–1370), probably a son of Muḥammad Pulad Khan, who survived as khan for the next five years.¹¹⁶

In the meantime, in spring 1365, Ilyās Khwāja, now the Moghul khan, headed back to Transoxania. Ḥusayn and Temūr went to meet him near Tashkent. They won a first victory but the Moghuls managed to recuperate, and in May 1365 defeated the Transoxanian *amīrs* and sent them fleeing beyond the Oxus. The Moghuls' victorious re-entry to Transoxania, however, was short-lived as a serious horse plague obliged most of the army to retreat to Moghulistan, while the small force sent to Samarqand was surprised by civilian resistance and soon withdrew as well.¹¹⁷ The next five years saw the final competition between Temūr and Amīr Ḥusayn, which ended with the former taking over the Ulus Chaghatay in 1370. During these years Temūr often found assistance in "the Moghuls," notably Transoxanian *amīrs* who had joined the Moghuls in the early 1360s and remained under their sway. Among others, Temūr secured for his son, Jahāngīr, a daughter of one of these *amīrs*, whose mother was a cousin of Tughluq Temūr, thereby forging connections with the Chinggisids. The Moghuls thus played a significant role in Temūr's rise to power first inside his tribe and later in the Ulus Chaghatay. Yet after defeating Ḥusayn, Temūr married the former's wife, daughter of Qazan Khan, thereby becoming a Chaghadaid son-in-law (*güregen*), a title he used from then on.¹¹⁸

115 E.g., Ḥaydar 1996, 2: 14–15; Yazdī 1957, 45–64; Natanzi 1957, 209–21; Shāmī 1937–1956, 1: 16–27; Manz 1989, 47–50.

116 Bernardini 2013, 172–73.

117 Yazdī 1957, 85–86; Shāmī 1937–1956, 1: 32, 2: 22; Naṭanzī 1957, 222–32; Ḥaydar 1996, 20; Manz 1989, 51.

118 Manz 1989, 53–54, 57.

Temür also claimed connection to the Chaghadaids through his ancestor, one of the four commanders that Chinggis Khan had bestowed upon Chaghadaï, Qarachar (whose importance is vastly exaggerated in Timurid sources in contrast to his marginality in earlier works). Qarachar and Chinggis Khan shared a common ancestor, Tumbina Khan, father of Chinggis Khan's forefather, Qabul Khan, and his brother, Temür's ancestor, Qachulai. This connection is hardly mentioned in Temür's time, but after his death it evolved into an alleged agreement between the two brothers, according to which Qabul's descendants would rule, while Qachulai's heirs would be their military and administrative commanders. This was supposedly reassured in Chinggis Khan's and Qarachar's era and retained as a document up to 'Alī Sulṭān's turbulent rule (1339–1340).¹¹⁹ More important for Temür's legitimacy, however, was the Chinggisid puppet khan he appointed before his final conflict with Amīr Ḥusayn. This was the Ögödeid Soyurghatmish (r. 1370–1388) son of Dānishmandche, Qazaqan's first puppet khan. While Temür's historian, Nizām al-Dīn Shāmī (d. 1411) writing under Maḥmūd b. Soyurghatmish, described Soyurghatmish's accession as part of Temür's restoration of Chaghadaid rule, at this stage the Ögödeid affiliation of the puppet khan was an advantage rather than a problem. It allowed Temür to claim seniority over the Chaghadaid Moghuls and justify his right to rule over all parts of the Mongol Empire once governed by Ögödei and the following qa'ans.¹²⁰ Soyurghatmish was succeeded by his son Maḥmūd (r. 1388–1403). Both father and son took part in Temür's wars, won great respect (Maḥmūd famously capturing the Ottoman sultan Bayazid in the battle of Ankara in 1402), and – unlike most of their predecessors – died of natural causes. Yet when Maḥmūd passed away, Temür, already confident in his own charisma, did not choose a new khan. A few ephemeral puppet khans, both Chaghadaids and Ögödeids, were enthroned during the succession struggles after Temür's death, but when his son Shāhrukh (r. 1409–1449) consolidated his rule, he put an end to this institution and the Timurids were content with the legitimacy of their founding father and their Islamic religion. The Chaghadaids were thus extinguished as rulers in Transoxania.¹²¹

In Moghulistan the Chaghadaids survived much longer, though not unchallenged. Not long after Ilyās Khwāja returned to Moghulistan in

119 On Qarachar: e.g., Khwāndamīr 1994, 3: 12–20; Manz 1988, 111, 122; Woods, 1990; on the agreement: Yazdī 1972, 81a; anonymous, *Shajarat al-atrāk*, MS Harvard University Pers 6F, fol. 114a; Woods 1990.

120 Shāmī 1937–1956, 1: 58; Manz 1988, 110–14. 121 Bernardini 2013.

1365,¹²² he was deposed by the Dughlat *amīr*, Qamar al-Dīn, the brother of Amīr Bolaji who had enthroned Tughluq Temūr. When Bolaji passed away, Qamar al-Dīn expected to succeed him as the leading *amīr* (*beglerbegi* or *amīr al-umarāʾ*). Tughluq Temūr, however, chose to appoint Bolaji's seven-year-old son Khudāyādā, Qamar al-Dīn's nephew, thereby enabling the khan to curb the power of his *amīrs*. Qamar al-Dīn kept quiet during the rest of Tughluq Temūr's reign, but sometime after Ilyās Khwāja's troops returned from Transoxania with their tails between their legs, he openly went against the khan and his family, allegedly killing eighteen princes in one day and enthroning himself as khan. Moghulistan fell into chaos. Although, as a non-Chinggisid *qarachū* (member of the rank and file), Qamar al-Dīn never managed to win full legitimation, he held power for more than two decades. His long rebellion put an end to the Moghuls' attempts to revive the unified khanate. Moreover, it allowed Temūr to consolidate his power in Transoxania and gave him a pretext to repeatedly invade Moghulistan in the 1370s–1380s. Around 1387, Qamar al-Dīn even allied with the new khan of the Golden Horde, Toqtamish (r. c. 1380–1397), Temūr's former protégé and now rival. Yet even when pursuing him with a great force in 1389, Temūr was unable to catch the Moghul leader, who eventually escaped to the Altai.¹²³

Furthermore, Qamar al-Dīn's rebellion also prevented the Moghuls from taking advantage of the Yuan dynasty's retreat to Mongolia in 1368 and expanding their realm eastwards. When the rebellion ended, the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) had already consolidated its power in China and defeated the northern Yuan in Gansu (1372) and Qaraqorum (1380). The Yuan collapse, the rebellion, and the Moghuls' search of a khan who could unite the khanate brought back to Central Asian politics the Yuan Chaghadaids, notably Alghu's descendants, whose appanages had been centered in Gansu. Certain commercial and religious contacts between Gansu and Moghul Turfan are attested at least up to Tughluq Temūr's reign.¹²⁴ Around 1388 or beforehand, two Moghul chieftains contacted Gunashiri, a prince of Alghu's line who had escaped to Mongolia, inviting him to become the new Moghul khan. In 1388 they contacted the Ming founder, Zhu Yuanzhang (r. 1368–1398), asking him to secure Gunashiri's travel via Hami. Gunashiri indeed went

122 Ḥaydar 1996, 2: 19–20; Kim 1999, 299–300; Ilyās Khwāja appears as the khan in a Turfan edict from 1369 (Franke 1962, 408–9), yet the impression from the Timurid sources is that he was deposed closer to his return. Naṭanzī (1957, 125) placed his death in 765/1363–1364, which seems too early.

123 Kim 1999, 305–7; Ḥaydar 1996, 2: 20, 22–25; Yazdī 1957, 1: 194–204.

124 Vēr, forthcoming.

toward Moghulistan and contacted the Ming, but hearing that his inviters had perished in Temür's 1389 attack he sought the Ming aegis and settled in Hami, where his descendants held power to 1513 and Chaghadaid princes ruled until the early twentieth century.¹²⁵ Simultaneously, however, around 1389 the Chaghadaids regained power in Moghulistan under a different candidate. Amīr Khudāyād, Qamar al-Dīn's nephew and rival who became the Dughlat leader, enthroned Khidr Khwāja (r. c. 1389–1399), Tughluq Temür's younger son, whom Khudāyād allegedly had hidden from his uncle in the khanate's southern periphery, either near Lop Nor (south of Khotan) or in the Badakhshān mountains. Khidr Khwāja, the forefather of all future Moghul khans, had to submit to Temür, to whom he paid tribute throughout his reign, and gave his daughter in marriage in 1397.¹²⁶ Yet while Temür justified his invasion of Khwārazm and Khurasan in the early 1380s by restoring the Chaghadaids' rights, and despite his continuous raids into Moghulistan, Temür never tried to incorporate it into his realm.¹²⁷ This was probably due to Moghulistan's economic marginalization – in comparison to the former Ilkhanid realm – and amid Temür's inferior legitimation vis-à-vis the Moghuls.

After Temür's death, in 1407 Khidr Khan's son, Shamḡ Jahān, tried in vain to secure Ming support for a planned invasion of Samarqand, which he defined as his ancestors' realm. Both he and his son and heir Muḥammad invaded Transoxania, but never managed to seriously threaten the Timurids. Thus with Temür's accession the dissolution of the Chaghadaid Khanate became permanent. The Timurids retained the prestige of the name Chaghatay, which denoted both their elite and the written Turkic language that evolved under their sway. The Timurid era (1370–1501) has been considered one of the heydays of Muslim Central Asia, a cultural renaissance which had an enduring impact on the early modern Muslim empires.¹²⁸ In contrast, the Moghuls, while ruled by Chaghadaid khans until 1678, declined into "the most remote and insignificant people," as their sole known sixteenth-century historian attested.¹²⁹ In fact, the Moghuls contributed to the Islamization of eastern Central Asia, including Turfan and Hami, which became a goal of their expansion (often fighting against the descendants of the Yuan Chaghadaids), and retained close relations with the Ming dynasty, greatly benefiting from the ongoing lucrative trade with China. Yet the

125 Kim 1999, 309–13.

126 On Khidr Khwāja, the story of his youth is suspiciously similar to that of Tughluq Temür: Haydar 1996, 2: 20, 28–31; Naṭanzī 1957, 115, 130–31, 418.

127 Manz 1998. 128 E.g., Subtelny 2007; Manz 2018. 129 Haydar 1996, 2: 86.

Moghuls suffered from endemic succession struggles, often resulting in joint rule, and the continuous power of the Dughlat as kingmakers. Another major threat was the coveting of their northern pasturelands by other, often newly founded, nomadic confederations – such as the Oirats, Uzbeks, Qirghiz, and Kazakhs. These new forces gradually pushed the Moghuls into the oases of the Tarim Basin, limiting their ability to sustain a considerable nomadic army and eventually forcing these “true Mongols” to settle down, their new centers being Yarkand and Turfan. Despite their growing weakness, however, the Moghuls’ noble Chinggisid descent made them desirable marriage partners to the neighboring dynasties, from the Timurids to the Oirats, the Kazakhs, and even the Naqshbandi Sufis who inherited the Dughlat as kingmakers and eventually replaced the Moghuls in 1678. One late marriage alliance between the Timurids and the Moghuls became especially significant when Babur, son of a Timurid father and a Moghul mother, migrated from Timurid Ferghana to India in the early sixteenth century. Escaping from the Uzbeks and accompanied by quite a few Moghul *amīrs*, he established the celebrated Indian Mughal (or Moghul) dynasty (1526–1858).¹³⁰

Institutions, Army, Economy

In many ways the Mongol Middle Kingdom, devoid of strong local imperial tradition like that of Iran or China, remained closer to the United Empire in its institutions, armies, and administration.

Despite the meager information on Central Asia’s internal organization, the major Mongolian institutions clearly continued to function up to Temür’s rise to power (and often later). These include the mobile court (*ordo*) that, due to its amalgamation of experts, became a main arena for cross-cultural exchange (see below), and the royal guard (*keshig*), which retained its core functions of securing and serving the ruler. Khans and princes had their own guards and these units sometimes preserved their identity after their founders’ death. The *keshig* was headed by the “commander of the commanders” (Arabic *amir al-umara’*, Tu. *begleribeg*), who headed the four commanders of the guard’s four shifts. Under Tarmashirin those included the khan’s deputy (*nā’ib*, i.e. the *begleribeg*), the vizier, the chamberlain, and the seal keeper,

130 For the Chaghadaid Moghuls: E.g., Millward 2009; Anooshahr 2018; Haydar 1996; for Babur and the Moghuls, e.g., Dale 2004. The Indians called this dynasty Mughal/Moghul (i.e. Mongols), as they denoted any northern invader. Babur’s descendants, however, while retaining several Chinggisid features, defined themselves as *al-Timūriyya*, the Timurids: Balabanlilar 2012.

thereby attesting also to the guard's major role in the administration.¹³¹ Chaghadaï was famed as an expert in the *jasaq* (*yasa*), the law code ascribed to Chinggis Khan, and indeed the Mongol court (*yarghu*) and its judges (*yarghuchis*) are attested even after the Islamization of the western khanate and into Qazan's times. Moreover, the *mahkama* (court) to which Amīr Qazaqan devoted much of his mornings probably also refers to the *yarghu*, perhaps combined with *al-maẓālim* (the sultan's court dealing with injustices), which existed side by side with the *shar'ī* courts.¹³² The postal system (*jam*) continued to connect the khanate's realm. While some of its stations were permanent, others were mobile, located in tents and manned by nomads, thereby enabling a change of location according to season, weather, or political upheavals which impacted the trade routes. Both Qaidu and Du'a invested in its maintenance and Uighur documents from Turfan have preserved important details on its functioning and complex upkeep during the fourteenth century.¹³³

The armies of Mongol Central Asia, famed as superb warriors, remained mainly nomadic troops of mounted archers. Both Qaidu's and the Chaghadaïds' armies were reassembled in Central Asia after Möngke's purges and hence were quite different from the original Ögödeïd and Chaghadaïd troops. Qaidu, Alghu, and Du'a were all described as gathering their armies during their rise to power.¹³⁴ While each army included a nucleus of the descendants of the original troops bequeathed by Chinggis Khan to his third and second sons, this was only part of their armies,¹³⁵ and none commanded the whole of the Ögödeïd and Chaghadaïd princes, some of whom (more Chaghadaïds than Ögödeïds) had chosen to live in other realms, mainly under the Yuan. Other components of the Central Asian troops were those "gathered together." These included princes from other realms, especially descendants of Tolui and Jochi Qasar who had joined Qaidu, often with their commanders and troops; the Mongol garrisons who were stationed in Central Asia before 1260 (at least the ten *tümen* that remained in Bukhara and probably more) that were divided among Qaidu, Baraq, and Möngke Temür after the Talas *quriltai*; and local Central Asian troops (nomads and probably also Mamluks of the Transoxanian urban elites); as well as other

131 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 557–58; Manz 1989, 34, 83, 164–65; Grupper 1992–1994.

132 E.g., *JT*/Rawshan, 2: 882; *JT*/Thackston, 2: 424; Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 367; Shāmī 1937–1956, 2: 6, 10; Ḥāfiẓ-i Ābrū 1993, 1: 183, 308.

133 Shim 2014; Vér 2016, 2019.

134 Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 12 (Alghu); *JT*/Rawshan, 1: 757; *JT*/Boyle, 152 (Du'a); *JT*/Rawshan, 1: 625–26; *JT*/Boyle, 24 (Qaidu).

135 Qaidu: Biran 1997, 81; Du'a: *JT*/Rawshan, 1: 607; *JT*/Thackston, 1: 294.

defectors and captives gained through raids. While after Baraq's demise many of his commanders joined Qaidu, after Du'a's accession and throughout Qaidu's and Chapar's rule there was a clear distinction between the Ögödeid and the Chaghadaid armies. After Chapar's surrender to the Yuan, the Ögödeid army was dissolved mainly among the Yuan.¹³⁶ The Qara'unas, enumerating several *tümen*, also remained a distinct component in the Central Asian army. Since the 1290s they were also subject to Qaidu and Du'a, and after the early 1320s to the Chaghadaids, until they usurped their throne. Unlike either the Yuan or the Ilkhanate, the Central Asian army used local auxiliaries only rarely and relatively late: the Shāh of Badakhshān contributed contingents to the Chaghadaid army that invaded Khurasan in 1316, and to Qazaqan's troops in the later 1350s; while the local ruler of Tirmidh joined Khalīl Sultan in the 1340s with allegedly 4,000 Muslim troops.¹³⁷

The limited use of auxiliaries – which in the other realms were often infantry – might have been related to the nomadic character of the Central Asian army, mostly composed of mounted archers. The records highlight the army's mobility, speed, and nomadic tactics, such as fake retreats and ambushes that often compensated for their relative lack of manpower and their smaller resource base.¹³⁸ Yet the nomadic character of the troops made them more vulnerable to climate and disease, as was apparent, for instance, in 1365 when the victorious Moghul army had to retreat in haste from Transoxania due to a horse plague.¹³⁹ It also limited their ability to capture fortified cities: the repeated Chaghadaid failures in siege warfare suggest that they lacked such expertise, remaining closer to typical steppe warriors.¹⁴⁰ These nomadic characteristics also explain why the preferred mode of warfare of Mongol Central Asia was raids rather than decisive battles, in which it was much harder for them to win. Similarly, and especially since they were surrounded by strong polities with their own nomadic troops, it was not easy for them to hold multiple fronts simultaneously (as proved, for example, in the 1290s). Moreover, due to their central location, a coalition among their rivals was a serious threat. Such coalitions hardly ever materialized, but the mere menace of their existence impacted Central Asian politics.

136 Biran 1997, 81–83; Dhahabī 1982–1988, 23: 369 for Bākhharzī's Mamluks; Jackson 2017, 187.

137 Harawī 1944, 629–30; Ḥāfiẓ-i Ābrū 1993, 1: 229; Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 565.

138 E.g., Biran 1997, 89–91; Ḥāfiẓ-i Ābrū 1959, 39; Baranī 2015, 157, 159.

139 See n. 116 above.

140 Biran 1997, 83–84, 89–90; Ḥāfiẓ-i Ābrū 1959, 40–42.

Thus, in 1299–1300, the chance of a coalition of the Yuan, the Ilkhanate, and the Golden Horde was among the factors that encouraged Du'a to propose the peace; in 1314 Esen Buqa, fearing an Ilkhanid–Yuan coalition, tried to ally Özbek Khan; and the Delhi sultan's offer to ally the ilkhans against the Chaghadaids in 1328–1329 might have encouraged Tarmashirin's Islamization.¹⁴¹ Similarly, a coalition of the Golden Horde and the Chaghadaids, combined with the Mamluks, haunted Ilkhanid chronicles.¹⁴² Aware of the dangers of their strong neighbors, the Central Asian Mongols invested heavily in acquiring intelligence – via scouts, spies, defectors, and travelers. Such intelligence allowed them to become acquainted with the invaded terrain and time their raids to their rivals' preoccupation on other fronts. The expansion of their territories, after the formative years of Alghu and Qaidu, therefore came not by large-scale conquests but by raids and migration followed by slow infiltration – to Khurasan, Uighuria, and Sind (on the borders of Delhi).¹⁴³

Already under Qaidu and at least until Esen Buqa's reign, the khan commanded the Yuan front while nominating trustworthy princes (sons, brothers, nephews) to head other fronts, notably Transoxania (facing the Ilkhanate) and Afghanistan (facing India and leading the Qara'unas). Similar to the situation in the Yuan and the Ilkhanate, the princes who manned these border posts were often leading candidates for the throne. When Kebek moved westwards, he had trouble asserting his authority on the Yuan frontier. Tarmashirin, who also resided in Transoxania, did not have a loyal commander in the east, and from his reign on, the Qara'unas were subject not to a prince but to an *amīr*, the growing power of whom culminated in Qazaqan's usurpation.¹⁴⁴ The rising power of the *amīrs* vis-à-vis the princes is also apparent in the references to the Central Asian armies, which, like other Mongol forces, retained the decimal military units (of 10, 100, 1,000, 10,000). Up to the early fourteenth century, the Central Asian army – both Ögödeid and Chaghadaid – is described as composed of princes' armies (e.g., the *tümen* of Sarban, the *tümen* of Qutlugh Khwāja), and their commanders are mentioned by their name, status (e.g., *güregen*), or occupation (e.g., *yarghuchi*).¹⁴⁵ In the post-1347 period the designation changed to local armies (the *tümen* of Kish, etc.), commanded by *amīrs*, to whom the Timurid and Moghul sources usually specify tribal affiliation (e.g. Ḥājjī Barlas; Bayan Suldus) in sharp contrast to earlier designations. If not a result of the shift into the indigenous

141 See above. 142 See above. 143 E.g. al-'Umarī 1968, 39–40; Biran 1997, 92.

144 Biran 2009, 60.

145 E.g. Waṣṣāf 1852–1853, 367; Harawī 1944, 765–68; and many more.

Central Asian sources of the Timurids, these transformations might have been affected by the thinning of the available princes after the Ögödeids' dissolution and the wars that preceded it, and by Kebek's division of the khanate into administrative *tümen*, areas from which the revenues were required for supporting one *tümen* of troops, which might have led to the troops' identification with their *tümen*'s location.¹⁴⁶ Tribal contingents in other Mongol *uluses* were usually led by Chinggisid sons-in-law (*güregens*). Indeed Qaidu and the Chaghadaids conducted marriage alliances with their military commanders, including the Qara'unas, and several *güregens* played an important role in the Central Asian armies long before Temür's rise to power, as well as among the khans' trusted diplomatic envoys. However, the tribal affiliation of these *güregens* is mostly unknown, nor do we find multiple generational connections between the khans and specific tribes that were apparent in other *uluses*.¹⁴⁷ Thus it is unclear whether these *güregens* headed tribal contingents or otherwise, as in the Qara'unas's case, nor do they seem connected to the army's retribalization. Indeed both Qazaqan and Temür became *güregens* only *after* they usurped the throne (unlike the Ilkhanid case). While most of the major tribes which constituted the Ulus Chaghatay in the mid-fourteenth century (Barlas, Jalayir, Suldus, Arlat, but not the Dughlat) were attested in Qaidu and/or the Chaghadaid realm beforehand,¹⁴⁸ the personal, *nökör*-like character of the reassembled Central Asian army did not favor tribal power. Thus the retribalization probably reflected "nökörization," namely a situation in which the troops subject to a commander of a certain tribe call themselves after his tribal affiliation regardless of their original tribal provenance.

The sedentary population of Mongol Central Asia was administrated by the Yalawāch family throughout the thirteenth century, with Mas'ūd Beg (d. 1289) continuing from serving the qa'an to serving Alghu and Qaidu, and passing the post to his sons, one of whom served Chapar in the early fourteenth century. The bureaucratic struggles and factions so prominent in Ilkhanid and Yuan politics seem to have been far less dominant in the Ögödeid–Chaghadaid realm. Beneath these administrators, several local dynasties remained in power (e.g., in Almaliq, Badakhshān, Tirmidh, Uighuria) and local notables (*šadrs*) held prominent positions in other cities (e.g., Kashghar, Bukhara). The administration also included tax collectors and

¹⁴⁶ Biran 1997, 99–100; Matsui 2005, 79. ¹⁴⁷ Landa 2019, ch. 5; Biran 2008, 377.

¹⁴⁸ Biran 1997, 83.

inspectors of trades and artisanship, especially with regard to the weapon-preparing workshops.¹⁴⁹

Chaghadaid administration in the post-Yalawāch period seemed to develop (in a typical Mongol fashion) out of the *keshig*. Under Tarmashirin, a vizier, who was also one of the four main *keshig* commanders (i.e., an *amīr*), was probably responsible for the sedentary administration. At least in Ghazna, the responsible *amīr* employed deputies (*nuwwāb*), perhaps identical to the local governors (*shihna/darughachi*) who were stationed in certain cities. At least in Turfan, there was a complicated hierarchy of tax collectors and postal station supervisors.¹⁵⁰

Qazaqan is praised for demanding *only* the *qubchur* (poll tax) and the '*ushr* (one-tenth, probably the tax on trade (*tamgha*) and land (*kharāj*)), which might have been equivalent to the *alīm birīm*, the general tax on trade and land attested in Turfan's Uighur documents.¹⁵¹ This praise suggests that other rulers demanded various ad hoc imposts, and indeed the Turfan documents include a complicated terminology of such levies, including the *qalan* labor tax and a variety of specific levies for maintaining the postal systems.¹⁵² While Chinese paper money was used in Uighuria, most deals there were made by barter and taxes were paid in kind (wine, leather, cotton, wheat). Yet during the latter half of the thirteenth century, the most common form of payment shifted away from cloth and copper coins toward silver.¹⁵³ In the 1340s Pegolotti advised his readers to leave Europe with cloth, but replace it with silver ingots in Urgench (Khwarazm), before entering the Chaghadaid realm, and then to paper money when entering China.¹⁵⁴ Indeed west of Uighuria most taxes were paid in cash, and a developed monetary economy was apparent. Already in the 1220s the Mongols strove to revive the Central Asian monetary economy, and under Möngke the wide-scale minting of gold, silver, and copper coins resumed in Almaliq. In 1271, simultaneously with Qaidu's enthronement, Mas'ūd Beg led a currency reform in Central Asia, minting coins with high percentage of silver. The coins appeared first in Otrar, Talas, and Khujand, but with the stabilization of Qaidu's rule in 1281–1282, they proliferated in various mints in Transoxania and Ferghana, as well as in Almaliq and Kashghar. Although these coins were anonymous and not uniform in iconography, they bore the *tamghas* of the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid rulers. Moreover, their identical weight, purity and basic design

149 Biran 1997, 98–99.

150 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 557–58, 589; Qāshānī 1969, 205; Biran 2009, 61; Vér 2016, 2019.

151 Ḥāfiẓ-i Ābrū 1993, 1: 211, 308. 152 Biran 2009, 61; Vér 2016; Vér 2019.

153 Moriyasu 2004. 154 Jackson 2018a, 267.

suggest centrally supervised minting.¹⁵⁵ Minting throughout the Chaghadaid realm, but mainly in Qaidu's centers in Talas and Otrar, was severely harmed by the princes' struggles after Qaidu's death.¹⁵⁶ Kebek, the first khan to mint eponymous coins, introduced a further monetary reform that contributed to the restoration of the *ulus*'s economy. In Transoxania (in Bukhara and Ordu Bazar, i.e., Kebek's mobile court, from 721/1321, in Samarqand from 725/1325) he minted silver coin equivalent to six smaller silver coins (dirhams) with a new weight. While these coins became popular also in the Golden Horde (hence the name *kopeks* for one denomination of Russian money), Kebek's reform was limited to Transoxania, and only under Tarmashirin did eponymous coins in the new weight become common in the whole Chaghadaid realm.¹⁵⁷

Throughout the "Mongol moment," the Central Asian Mongols remained nomads living mainly by pastoral nomadism, and struggles over pasturelands had been a recurring issue in the Middle Mongolian Ulus, creating tension between Qaidu and Baraq in the 1260s, Esen Buqa and the Yuan in the 1310s, and the Qara'unas and the Chaghadaids in the same decade.¹⁵⁸ Yet, in the first half of the fourteenth century, quite a few princes and commanders added supplementary agriculture to pastoralism. This was true not only in Transoxania, where in the 1320s Mongol *amīrs* owned villages, gardens, and mills, and were generally more willing to live next to sedentaries,¹⁵⁹ but also further east in the Issyk Kōl and the Tarbaghatai mountains.¹⁶⁰ Central Asian agriculture, while restored after the initial Mongol conquests, suffered from the constant wars and the multitude of pastoralists, although there were also successful attempts at recovery after Qaidu's stabilization (in the 1280s–1290s) and under Kebek and Tarmashirin (1320s–1330s), this time with only partial success. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, who visited in the 1330s, stresses the ruins in Bukhara and Samarqand, but also notes that Tirmidh exported wheat and barley to Khwārazm, and that Wabkent, a Bukharan suburb, exported raisins to India and China. Bukharan melons and Turfan wine continued to be celebrated in the fourteenth century.¹⁶¹ The border areas of Qaidu's realm, notably Khurasan and Uighuria, suffered from ongoing raids in the thirteenth century, and somewhat revived after the 1320s, but in Semirechye, much agricultural land had become pasture already in the 1250s, and the wars of the early and mid-fourteenth century, augmented by uncompromising weather

155 Biran 1997, 101. 156 Petrov, Baĭpakov, and Voiakin 2014, 258–59.

157 Petrov 2004, 76–77; Petrov 2009, 303–4; cf. Davidovich and Dani 1998, 406–8.

158 E.g. Qāshānī 1969, 210. 159 Chekhovich 1965, 58, 65, 67, 68, 75, 83, 84, 107; Manz 1983.

160 Naṭanzī 1957, 108; YS, 31.694. 161 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 542, 550, 569; 'Umarī 1972, 49.

and the plague, led to a serious decline of the region's agriculture and urban centers.¹⁶²

Trade had been a major source of income for Mongol Central Asia, which ruled over the main land routes connecting east with west (China with Iran and Europe) and north with south (Russia with India). The various continental routes flourished during the United Empire, benefiting from the Mongols' encouragement of trade and their postal system. However, Central Asia's internal turmoil in the 1260s–1270s, and its continuous conflicts, notably with China and Iran, damaged the Central Asian Mongols' ability to reap the full fruits of their central location. Moreover, the conquest of the Southern Song in 1276–1279 enabled the Yuan to shift a considerable part of the east–west trade into the maritime routes, which were inaccessible to the landlocked Chaghadaids. Even at the height of the conflict, however, Qaidu and Du'a strove to keep the trade routes functioning, such as by establishing postal stations in the 1280s, shifting the commercial traffic to less dangerous routes, building the city of Andijān to serve as Ferghana's commercial center, and restoring other cities in Turkestan and Transoxania.¹⁶³ Chaghadaid raids reached thriving port cities like Hormuz (1300) and perhaps also Gujarat (1329), but these were too distant from the khanate's centers to provide it with a sea outlet. The decline of the continental roads vis-à-vis the seaborne routes certainly encouraged Du'a to make peace with the Yuan. The traffic along the continental routes intensified soon after the 1304 peace, with all the khanates allegedly connecting their postal roads, and flourished after Chapar's surrender to the Yuan in 1310. By then the large and frequent Central Asian embassies to China even roused Yuan officials' opposition.¹⁶⁴ Both east–west and north–south continental traffic reached its zenith in the 1320s–1330s with the peace with the Yuan and the Ilkhanate under Kebek, and when the Muslim Tarmashirin abolished the commercial duties not sanctioned by Muslim law and improved the relations with the Mamluk and Delhi sultanates, both enjoying stability and prosperity by that time.¹⁶⁵ Pegolotti's notorious statement in the 1340s that “the road you travel from Tana [in the Golden Horde, where the Don flows into the Sea of Azov] to Cathay (north China), is perfectly safe whether by day or night,” referring to the east–west road passing through the Chaghadaid realm, probably relates to this period.¹⁶⁶ From the mid- to late 1340s, however, the mid-fourteenth-century crisis,

162 Biran 2009, 63.

163 Shim 2014, 431–34; Naṭanzī 1957, 106; Mustawfī, tr. LeStrange 1915–1919, 239.

164 Shim 2014, 441–51; Liu 2005, 342–43.

165 Biran 2002b; Biran 2009, 62; al-'Umarī 1972, 48–49. 166 Yule 1967, 3: 152.

affecting both the Chaghadaids and their commercial partners, seriously harmed this burgeoning trade, which revived in the fifteenth century under the Timurids and Moghuls.¹⁶⁷

The main trade routes passing through the Chaghadaid realm were “the Tatar road,” starting in Europe and the Golden Horde, and running via Otrar (on the Jaxartes, on the Chaghadaid border) to Almaliq and Qara-Qocho (near modern Turfan, the Uighur capital), and from there to Ganzhou (in Yuan’s Gansu) and Dadu (Beijing). Alternatively, one can take a slightly southern route, popular among those coming from Iran, from Samarqand to Talas, and from there often via the Chu river, Balāsāghūn, and the Issyk Köl to Almaliq. According to ‘Umarī, the journey from Samarqand to Almaliq took forty days with another eighty required to go from Almaliq to Dadu, and forty more to reach the port city of Hangzhou by either land or sea. A more southern route originating in Iran via Khurasan went through Bukhara, Samarqand, and Kashghar, and along the southern Tarim Basin to Qara-Qocho and China (or via Khotan to Tibet). From Almaliq one can also pursue a more northern road leading to Mongolia, via either the northern Tian Shan mountains (Lake Sairam, Beshbaliq, the Irtysh, the Altai) or the more northern route on the northwestern fringes of the Junggar Basin via Bolad, Emil, Qobaq, the Irtysh, and the Altai. An even more northern route, the only continental east–west road that bypassed the Chaghadaid realm, known as the “Fur Road,” led from China to Qaraqorum and the Yenisei (on the White Horde–Yuan border), across southern Siberia through the Bashkir lands, to the Kama river in Volga Bulgharia. A major north–south route, taken, for instance, by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (who had made a detour to Khurasan, though), led from Urgench in Khwārazm, via Bukhara, Samarqand, Kish, Tirmidh, Balkh, Qunduz, and Ghazna, to the Delhi Sultanate and India. From Khwārazm the road continued via the Golden Horde and the Black Sea to Western Europe or Egypt.¹⁶⁸ The high amount of Jochid coins found in the Chaghadaid realm and the khanate’s political orientation suggest that much of the Chaghadaid trade went through the Golden Horde.¹⁶⁹ Yet the alternating roads enabled the continuation of the trade despite political upheavals, although the growing dangers certainly impacted merchants and travelers.

167 E.g. Jackson 2018a, 259–60; Kauz 2005.

168 Al-‘Umarī 1968, 30, 75, 77, tr. III, 142, 143; Baṭṭūṭa / Gibb 3: 540–88; Jackson 2018a, 258–60; Shim 2014; Allsen 2019, 147–49.

169 E.g., Martínez 1990; Koshevar 2011; Slavin 2019, 79.

Central Asian traders were among the first supporters of Chinggis Khan and many of them became useful participants in the Mongol imperial venture: the Yalawāch family of Mas'ūd Beg was originally a family of Khwārazmian traders, and Chaghadaï's trusted minister Ḥabash 'Amīd made a fortune in trade.¹⁷⁰ Most of the *ortoq* merchants – traders acting on behalf of or financed by the capital of a Mongol (or other) notable and in return sharing profits with their patron – who were active under the United Empire and the Yuan were either Central Asian Muslims or Uighurs.¹⁷¹ While we have no information about Qaidu or the Chaghadaid khans employing *ortoq* (unlike their counterparts in the other Mongol polities), they probably did. Moreover, the *ortoq* – as well as private traders – must have kept contacts in their original hometowns, thereby facilitating Central Asian commerce.¹⁷² In the 1330s Ibn Baṭṭūṭa found traders from India, Iraq, and Syria in the Chaghadaid realm, some of them heading to China or the Golden Horde. In the same decade Italian merchants, Genoese and Venetian, were found in Almalīq and Ghazna respectively; they did not, however, always return home safely.¹⁷³ One local international trader was al-Sharīf al-Samarqandī, who spent a considerable time in Yuan China, the Delhi Sultanate and Mamluk Syria, where he became a trustworthy source for the Mamluk writer al-'Umarī (d. 1349), while many local traders accompanied the Chaghadaid tribute missions to China from the 1320s.¹⁷⁴ A commercial infrastructure of loans, hospices, road maintenance, post stations, and load animals (mainly donkeys) for hire existed throughout the khanate.¹⁷⁵

Central Asia played an important role in the transit trade from China and India to Europe, Iran, and the Middle East. Its own export included agricultural products (fruits, grains), animals (livestock such as horses, camels, and sheep, but also hunting partners and exotic animals), jade, jewels, furs, medicinal herbs, textile, wine, and slaves.¹⁷⁶ While the khans maintained workshops and the region continued to produce textiles, jewelry and

170 Allsen 1993; Ibn al-Fuwaṭī 1962–1965, 4.3: 297; HWC, 273–75.

171 Allsen 1989; Endicott-West 1989.

172 See, e.g., the solidarity of the Ilkhanate's Kashghari merchants: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī 1962–1965, 4.2: 861, 1201–2.

173 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 546–48; Yule 1967, 3.152; Jackson 2018a, 268–69.

174 al-'Umarī 1968, 28, 30, 31, 32, 45, 59; al-'Umarī 1972, 46, 48–49; *Yongle dadian* 1960, 19420.2.

175 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 542–69, esp. 549; al-'Umarī 1968, 47; Liu 1995, 202, 209; Dang 2006, 15–22; Biran 2007–2008; Vér 2016.

176 E.g. al-'Umarī 1972, 49; Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 542, 550; YS, 24.550, 551, 555; 27.620, 629; 28.631–32; *Yongle dadian* 1960, 19420.2, 14; al-'Umarī 1968, 47–48; al-Dhahabī, 1982–1988, 23: 368; al-Nuwayrī 1984, 354–55.

weapons, most of the exported products were raw materials, thereby suggesting that Central Asian manufacture did not fully recover from the large-scale transfer of its artisans to Mongolia and China during the United Empire.¹⁷⁷ Among these goods, slaves were a major item: the main source of Chaghadaid slaves was captives gained during their frequent raids, who were sold across the continent. From the 1270s slaves from Qaidu's wars with the Yuan reached Mamluk Egypt, and some of them were probably sold on the way in the Black Sea markets; the diplomatic missions of Mongol Central Asia to the Mamluk Sultanate included slaves as both gifts and merchandise.¹⁷⁸ Slaves attained by invasions of India and Kashmir were sold also in China – the Kashmir chronicle reports that slave traders heading to Cathay even accompanied the invading Chaghadaid troops. After 1258, slaves from Baghdad, including the caliph's daughter, were sold in Bukharan slave markets, and in 1326 these markets offered Chinese, Indian, Russian, and Mongol slaves.¹⁷⁹ The international trade contributed also to the khanate's cross-cultural exchange.

Culture and Religion

Central Asia had been a multicultural, multilingual, and multireligious region long before the Mongol conquest, but Mongol rule broadened and intensified cross-cultural connections that resulted in significant Islamization, new legitimization concepts, and in the long run an ethnic reshuffling that impacted the region up to the modern era. The two apparent trends of the period were the retention of the Mongols' nomadic culture, which promoted cross-cultural contacts, and the Islamization of the khans and even before that a considerable part of the rank-and-file Mongols.

The Mongols in Central Asia remained nomads throughout the period under discussion, as did their culture. They held mobile courts and welcomed their guests with generous banquets in lavish golden tents. Even when Kebek built a new capital in Qarshī it was a walled fortress with plenty of room for tents inside the wall, as was Qazan's Zanjir Sarai. The mobile courts included the usual Mongol amalgamation of experts: physicians (Muslim, Chinese, European), astronomers and diviners (both Chinese and Muslim), scholars, poets, merchants, and military specialists. These experts derived mainly from local elites, skilled captives, imported experts from the princes' appanages,

¹⁷⁷ Allsen 1997. ¹⁷⁸ Biran 2019, 374.

¹⁷⁹ Pandit 1991, 42; Chekhovitz 1965, 109, 148; Ibn al-Fuwaṭī 1995, 5: 112.

detained emissaries, and migrants.¹⁸⁰ Hunting remained a popular and respected activity of the khans,¹⁸¹ and women held a central place in Chaghadaid politics and patronage: thus Naishi Khatun, the wife of Yesü Möngke Khan (r. 1246–1248), handled the *ulus*'s affairs for her drunken husband; Orghina (r. 1251–1259), Qara Hülegü's widow, practically ruled the *ulus* during Möngke's reign as a regent for her minor son Mubārak Shāh. Tini Khatun, Tughluq Temür's wife, built his mausoleum in Almaliq, while Qaidu's valiant daughter Qutulun was famed for her warrior skills and led her own *hazārah*.¹⁸² The widow of the local ruler of Almaliq in Chinggis Khan's times played a major role in defending the city; the wife of the Chaghadaid governor of Shāsh is described as the pillar of his rule; the governor's wife built a mosque in Balkh; and women enjoyed access to the khan if they wanted to submit a petition.¹⁸³

Mongolian remained the main language of the edicts of the Chaghadaid khans at least until 1369, although Turkic examples exist. Yet, already in Chaghadaid's time, his court was called *ulugh ef* (Tu. "great house"), the khans Kebek and Tarmashirin spoke Turkic, and Turkic appeared on Chaghadaid seals. One such seal from Tughluq Temür's reign includes the word *Allāh* in Arabic, a message in Turkic ("May your reign be fortunate") written in the 'Phags-pa script invented under the Yuan, and Du'a's *tamgha*, itself derived from an upside-down Tibetan letter read *cha*, demonstrating the court's multiculturalism.¹⁸⁴ Moreover, in Turfan and the Tarim Basin the daily chancellery (as opposed to most royal edicts) was conducted in Uighur, and Persian probably played the same role in the *ulus*'s western realm. Most Chaghadaid coins bore Arabic legends – though Chinese and Tibetan scripts existed in rare cases – and monumental inscriptions were written in Arabic and Persian.¹⁸⁵ Below the ruling circles, cultural production was composed in Arabic, Persian, Uighur, Syriac, Mongolian, and eastern Turkic, later named Chaghatay, and translations to Mongolian and Uighur were made in Turfan from Chinese, Tibetan, Uighur, and even Arabic.¹⁸⁶

180 Biran 2009, 63; Dang 2019.

181 E.g. Shāmī 1937–1956, 2: 9–10; Hāfiz-i Ābrū 1993, 1: 307–8.

182 *JT*/Rawshan, 2: 760; *JT*/Thackston, 2: 372; De Nicola 2016; O'Kane 2004; Biran, 2020.

183 Qarshī 2005, CLXII–CLXIII, CCVII; Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 557, 572.

184 Biran 2009, 63; Franke 1962, 407–8.

185 Biran 2009, 63; Vér 2019, 43–44; Wang 2004; Matsui 2007.

186 Elverskog 1997; Kara 2003, 28–34; Cleaves 1959; and DeWeese's, Matsui's, Borbone's, and Amitai and Biran's chapters in Volume 11.

Contrary to Bartold's statement that the Chaghadaid realm had no tradition of secular sciences,¹⁸⁷ the existing evidence indicates the continuation of scholarly activities in Mongol Central Asia in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, medicine, poetry, philology, and divination. The courts brought together astronomers, diviners, and physicians of different backgrounds, but scholarly production continued also outside them. The region's sound scientific infrastructure is attested by the several leading scientists of Transoxanian or Turkestanian origin who were active in either Yuan China, Ilkhanid Iran, or the Delhi Sultanate.¹⁸⁸ Despite – or because of – the ongoing emigration, the Chaghadaid Muslim scholarly community was closely connected at least with those of the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate: thus Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī (d. 1347) who in the early 1330s had taught in Herat, in 1347 completed in Bukhara an encyclopedia of sciences that included logic, theology, and astronomy. He referred to the Ilkhanid astronomical works of Ṭūsī (d. 1274) and Shīrāzī (d. 1311) as well-known textbooks, which served as the basis upon which he developed his own contributions.¹⁸⁹ Similarly, in Bukhara in 1342–1343, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Akhawī (d. 1401), a Khujandi scholar who later migrated to al-Madina, studied the work of rhetoric *The Resumé to the Key* (*Talkhīṣ al-miftāḥ*), a commentary on the famous work of Chaghadaī's minister al-Sakkākī (d. 1229) *The Key of Sciences* (*Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm*). This commentary was composed only a few years earlier by the Damascene scholar ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Qazwīnī (d. 1338).¹⁹⁰

Interfaith contacts also existed in the Chaghadaid realm: while most of the Chaghadaid subject population was Muslim, it also contained significant communities of Buddhists and Christians, as well as occasional Jews and others. Some of these communities, for instance the Nestorian Christians and the Buddhist Uighurs, inhabited Central Asia long before the Mongol invasion, while others – such as the Catholics or the Tibetan (and perhaps also Chinese) Buddhists – were newcomers, just like a significant number of Muslims in the khanate's eastern realm, e.g., the Muslim artisans whom the Mongols transferred to Beshbaliq. While Buddhists were the majority in Uighuria and Muslims in the western khanate, the various communities – Buddhists, Christians, and Muslims – often shared the same space. This was sometimes a source of tension, as was Chaghadaī's strict enforcement of Mongol norms opposed to Muslim law. But despite several cases of Muslim

187 Bartold 1956–1962, 2: 5.

188 E.g., Biran 2009, 63; Dallal 1995, 1–10; Kara 2003, 28–34; Yang 2017.

189 Dallal 1995, 9–10. 190 Amir 2020, 293–94.

or Buddhist zealotness,¹⁹¹ the pluralistic attitude of Qaidu and the Chaghadaids encouraged coexistence at least before Chaghadaid Islamization.¹⁹²

Apart from Uighuria, smaller Buddhist communities existed in Khotan, Kashghar, and Qayaliq.¹⁹³ Tibetan Buddhism, popular in Yuan China and introduced to Eastern Turkestan via lamas, pilgrims, and merchants, found many adherents among Uighurs and Mongols alike, as proved by the number of Uighur and Mongol Tantric texts unearthed in Turfan, and partly compensated for ongoing Uighur emigration. The Uighurs held close connections with Buddhists in Yuan China, including the Uighur diaspora there, notably centers like Dadu, Hangzhou, and the closer Gansu, where the Chaghadaid branch subject to the Yuan patronized Buddhist translations and monasteries.¹⁹⁴ Several Chaghadaid khans personally favored Buddhism, mainly Du'a, who gave his son the Buddhist name Tarmashirin (*Dharmasri*, "venerable in the Dharma") and granted very generous exemptions to Buddhist monasteries, and Changshi, who allegedly "put up Buddhist sculptures in every mosque."¹⁹⁵ Other khans, such as Eljigidei and Yisün Temür, also patronized Buddhism, inscribing Tantric Buddhist symbols (*vajra*) on their coins. A decree ascribed to the Muslim khan Muḥammad Polad asserted the safe transit of a high Tibetan lama from Yuan China in the Chaghadaid domains in the 1340s, and even after his Islamization Tughluq Temür is said to have invited a Tibetan Buddhist teacher (and miracle maker) to his court.¹⁹⁶ Yet Mongolian and Uighur documents unearthed in Turfan, such as a Mongolian version of the Alexander romance and an Arabic sand divination work translated into Uighur, as well as Uighur poems which included references (sometimes polemic) to Islam, and Arabic and Persian words, all suggest that western cultural influence reached even the Chaghadaids' most eastern and Buddhist realm.¹⁹⁷

Nestorian communities in pre-Mongol Central Asia had metropolitanates in Samarqand, Kashghar, and Nawākit (near the Issyk Köl). Nestorians prevailed especially in Semirechye and Samarqand and later in Almaliq and the neighboring Ilibaliq, as well as among the Uighurs, who retained connections with their diaspora in China up to the mid-fourteenth century. The

191 Yule 1967, 3: 31, 212; Naṭanzī 1957, 114; for the United Empire: Jüzjānī 1963–1964, 2: 171–73, 215–17.

192 Biran 2009, 64–65; Elverskog 2010, 133–37, 182, 189. 193 Liu 2006, 555–64.

194 Ligeti 1972, 115–83; Liu 2006, 555–64; Matsui 2008; Matsui 2016; Biran 2007–2008.

195 Naṭanzī 1957, 114; Biran 2007–2008.

196 Cleaves 1954; Roerich 1949–1953, 2: 504; Biran 2007–2008; Petrov, 2010.

197 Ligeti 1972, 184–207; Biran 2009, 64–65; Zieme 2011, 180–84; Vér, forthcoming.

Issyk Köl community was eliminated around 1338–1339 due to a combination of the plague, ‘Alī Sulṭān’s massacres, and a gradual process of Islamization, but tomb inscriptions attest to a Nestorian presence in Almaliq up to the mid-to late 1360s, while the Nestorian presence in Samarqand continued into Temür’s time.¹⁹⁸ The Catholic mission flourished in Central Asia in the 1320s–1330s despite Tarmashirin’s conversion – mainly under Eljigidei and Changshi. While it began as a by-product of the mission in China, when bishoprics were established in Almaliq (mid-1320s) and Samarqand (1329), they were subject to the Archbishop of Sulṭāniyya in the Ilkhanate. The missionaries included friars from Europe (Italy, Spain, France) and Alexandria as well as European merchants; they learned Turkish, bought and baptized pagan slaves, and tried to stay in touch with their co-religionists in India and China. We have no information about the missionaries’ relations with the Nestorians, but the Latin priests seem to have been closer to the Chaghadaid khans, serving as Eljigidei’s emissaries to the Pope, and as Changshi’s ministers. This friendly attitude and the permission to build churches and a friary in Almaliq aroused the anger of the local Muslim population. The Almaliq bishop and his companions were massacred like their Nestorian counterparts in 1339 by ‘Alī Sulṭān, and their attempts at revival evaporated after the Islamization of the Moghuls and the collapse of the mission in China after the Yuan fall.¹⁹⁹

We have more information on the culture of the khanate’s Muslim majority: despite the ongoing scholarly emigration, significant Muslim activity continued inside the khanate. Before Chaghadaid Islamization, local Muslim dynasties in Almaliq and Tirmidh recruited Muslim scholars; the Jaxartes region became more prominent with centers also in Sighnaq and Ferghana, and Muslim jurists and shaykhs were active even more eastward, in such towns in Semirechye and Xinjiang as Qayaliq, Bārchkand, and Emil, teaching and compiling books and commentaries.²⁰⁰ In the established Muslim centers of Transoxania, religious learning continued, often led by notable families, some of whom originated in the pre-Mongol period and headed the scholarly community throughout Chaghadaid rule. A good example is Ṣāhib al-Hidāya al-Marghīnānī (d. 1197), whose descendants took part in Chaghadaī’s administration and held religious posts in Samarqand well into the Timurid period. Similarly, the Maḥbūbī Ṣadrs played a

198 Liu 2006, 543–44; Niu 2008, esp. 57–66; Biran 2007; Matsui 2016; Slavin 2019; Stewart 2020.

199 Yule 1967, 31–32, 34–35, 81–88, 213–14; Ryan 1998; Biran 2007–2008.

200 Qarshī 2005, CCVIII–CCIX; Sakhāwī 1966, 2: 194–95; Ibn al-Fuwaṭī 1995, 2: 284, 303–4.

dominant role in Bukhara's Hanafi circles from 1238 to 1347.²⁰¹ Bukhara in particular retained some of its pre-Mongol prestige as a center of Hanafi law and Sufism through luminaries such as Shams al-A'imā al-Kardārī (d. 1244), his brightest student Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn al-Kabīr (d. 1294), whose family continued its prominence in the scholarly community up to the Timurid period, and the above-mentioned Maḥbūbī Ṣadrs, while Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī (d. 1261) became famous for converting the Golden Horde khan Berke (r. 1257–1267). The tombs of these religious luminaries, and quite a few other contemporaries, remained a site of veneration at least into the fifteenth century.²⁰²

The Mongols and their appointees established scholarly institutions in Central Asia: Möngke's wife founded an important *waqf* in Bukhara for Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī, which remained under the administration of the shaykh's family until the mid-fourteenth century, accumulating considerable economic power. Some of its riches were used for the purchase, conversion, and manumission of slaves. Both Möngke's wife and Mas'ūd Beg built colleges in Bukhara that were thriving institutions allegedly serving 1,000 students in the 1250s. Madrasat al-Khānī was still functioning in the 1340s, while al-Mas'ūdiyya was burned in 1273 but rebuilt later. After Tarmashirin's conversion, his viceroy established many colleges in Ghazna.²⁰³ The curriculum of such madrasas, even in the more peripheral Khujand, included, apart from religious sciences, also basic mathematics, medicine, and literature (all subjects favored by the Mongols), and most of the texts studied in Transoxania belonged to an "eastern" curriculum, i.e., originating in Transoxania and, to a lesser extent, Khurasan, Iran, and Iraq.²⁰⁴ Moreover, the many emigrants, often Hanafi scholars who easily found a job in various realms – such as the other Mongol polities or the Delhi and Mamluk sultanates – brought local works with them. Thus Transoxanian masterpieces of the pre-Mongol and early Mongol periods, such as the main twelfth-century legal compilations, notably *al-Hidāya* by al-Marghīnānī and the *Fatāwā* of Qādī Khān (d. 1196), or *Miftāḥ al-'ulūm* by al-Sakkākī, continued to be studied and appreciated across the Muslim world.²⁰⁵ Students from the Chaghadaid realm moved freely among the different centers inside the khanate and in the Golden Horde *fi ṭalab al-'ilm* ("in search of knowledge"), but I have found only a few cases of people from outside, mainly from Khurasan, who came to learn

201 Biran 2019, 380–81.

202 Biran 2009, 65; Biran 2019, 380–84; Mu'īn al-Fuqarā' 1960, 21, 31, 33, 36–37, 40, 53–54, 55, 56, 71, 75.

203 Biran 2007–2008, 39–42. 204 Biran 2019, 382; Qarshī 2005, CLXXVIII–CCX.

205 Biran 2019, 378; Musawī 2015.

in Bukhara or the Chaghadaid realm in general, in contrast to the situation in the pre-Mongol period.²⁰⁶

Sufis also played a leading role in the khanate's social and intellectual life and its cross-cultural contacts. While individual shaykhs (later defined as the local Katakīyya order) were active in the eastern khanate, and some of them are credited with Tughluq Temür's conversion, Bukhara was a center mainly of the Kubrāwī order. Apart from al-Bākharzī and his family mentioned above, another major disciple of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 1220) was Bābā Kamāl Jandī (d. 1273). He was Mas'ūd Beg's shaykh, preached also in the Jaxartes region and beyond, and is even credited with the conversion of Kashmir. Itinerant Bukharan Sufis were also active in India, Kashmir, China, and the Volga region, while the rise of the eventually dominant Yasawīyya and Naqshbandīyya orders took place mainly under the Timurids.²⁰⁷ Sufis and scholars were closely connected: al-Bākharzī was also a Hadith scholar, while the family of Ḥāfiẓ al-Dīn al-Kabīr, the eminent scholar of the thirteenth century, was connected to both the Sufis who converted Tughluq Temür and the Timurid Naqshbandi Khwājas.²⁰⁸

Both scholars and Sufis frequented the Mongol courts and administration and played a major role in the khanate's Islamization. While the extant conversion stories suggest that Mongol Islamization began with a royal conversion and then spread downward, the current scholarly consensus is that it was a bottom-up process, namely that Mongol khans accepted Islam in the wake of their rank and file. The existence of abortive Muslim khans, such as Mubārak Shāh, Baraq, and Nali'qoa, who preceded Tarmashirin, credited with bringing Islam to Transoxania, and Tughluq Temür, who converted Moghulistan, reinforces this assumption. No known agent is responsible for Tarmashirin's conversion, but that of Tughluq Temür is ascribed to local Sufi shaykhs.²⁰⁹ The political reason for the khans' adoption of Islam were discussed above. No less interesting are the factors stimulating the rank-and-file conversion, where once more scholars and Sufis played a major role: the scholarly elite appropriated the Mongol conquerors as "God's party" (*ḥizb allāh*), and treated Chinggis Khan in messianic terms long before Mongol Islamization,²¹⁰ thereby enabling the newly converted Mongols to remain proud in their Chinggisid identity. The high mobility of both scholars and

206 Biran 2007–2008, 42; Amir 2020; e.g., Qarshī 2005, CLXXVIII–CCX; Dhahabī 1995–2004, 57; 86, 58; 116.

207 Biran 2009, 65; DeWeese, 1994, 2009.

208 Dhahabī 1982–1988, 23; 363–70; Subtelny 2001. 209 Biran 2002, DeWeese 2009.

210 Qarshī 2005, CLXIII, CLIX.

Sufis enabled them to meet the Mongols, who were often located in the pasturelands outside the cities. Moreover, on the local level, Sufis played a major role in social conversion, establishing communal connections for the new converts. The Sufis offered social bonds (framed in family terms or as master and disciple); mediated the adoption of new political, economic, and ritual frameworks; asserted correspondence between Mongol and Muslim genealogical and historical traditions; developed narratives of Islamization; and, in general, embodied Islam for the nomads by providing them with a new communal identity.²¹¹ Furthermore, the highly Islamized landscape of Mongol Central Asia, which was dotted with colleges, Sufi lodges, winter and summer mosques, shrines, and mausoleums, often venerated by both Mongols and Muslims, must have been instrumental in attracting the Mongols to Islam, especially since some of the shrines also served as Sufi bases.²¹² While in the Ilkhanate lucrative painting played a major role in encouraging Mongol conversion, in poorer Central Asia it was stories of the prophets (*qışaş al-anbiyā'*), a kind of Muslim equivalent of Christian saints' stories and Buddhist *jataqas*, that were used to attract the Mongols further into Islam. The main surviving work, the first Chaghadaid Turkic version of these stories, was completed in 1311 by Naşīr ad-Dīn al-Rabghūzī, a certain Transoxanian judge (*qāḍī*). It was commissioned by Toqbuqa/Dorbuqa Bek, a young Mongol Muslim commander from Ghazna, whom DeWeese identified as Tarmashirin's future deputy mentioned by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa. The text includes not only the stories of the Israelite prophets and kings, Jesus, and St. George – all of whom are prophets in Islam – but also Alexander the Great, a figure highly popular among the Mongols. Moreover, unlike most books of this genre, Rabghūzī's *Stories of the Prophets* also includes the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, the rightly guided Caliphs and 'Alī's sons, thereby encapsulating everything the new converts needed to know about Islamic salvation history. It also gives pride of place to local heroes whose shrines must have been familiar to the audience.²¹³ All these came, like in the other Mongol khanates, against the background of ongoing contact between Mongols and Muslims mostly in the Chaghadaid armies, part of whom – the remnants of the Qaraghanid and Khwārazmian armies, the Mamluks of Transoxanian notables – probably joined the Mongol army as Muslims. Moreover, the garrisoned Mongol troops who had joined this army – such

211 DeWeese 2009, 2018.

212 Qarshī 2005, CLXXVIII–CCX; Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 540–88; Chekhovitz 1965.

213 Rabghūzī 2015; DeWeese, in Volume 11; Biran, forthcoming.

as the qa'an's troops in Transoxania or the Qara'unas – had already been stationed for decades in close proximity to a vibrant Muslim population.

Despite all this, however, it took longer to bring Islam to the *yasa*-oriented Chaghadaids than to the Ilkhanids or Golden Horde khans. Moreover, Tarmashirin's failure to combine Islam with the Mongol tradition led to his deposition by his eastern commanders, despite the many political and economic advantages the new religion secured him in Transoxania. Two decades later, Tughluq Temür managed to successfully combine Islamic and Chinggisid legitimations, but the Moghuls continued to take pride mostly in their Chinggisid descent, which was becoming less common among rulers after the mid- to late fourteenth century. The khans' conversion in turn accelerated that of their subjects both in the army and among civilians. Chaghadaid Islamization was also manifested in Muslim domed mausoleums (for Bayan Quli and Tughluq Temür), which became a common motif in the material culture of Mongol Eurasia, and a precedent for the magnificent Timurid architecture.²¹⁴ While after the Moghuls' Islamization there were few attempts to enforce Islam on the Buddhist Uighurs (e.g., under Khidr Khan), up to the 1420s Buddhist temples and Islamic mosques existed side by side in Eastern Turkestan. Later on the Moghuls, by then under the influence of Naqshbandi Sufis, took pride in their forced conversion of the idolatries of Turfan.²¹⁵ This, in turn, encouraged Uighur migration or Islamization, and contributed to the evaporation of the Uighur ethnic identity, as was the fate of other steppe people under Mongol rule.²¹⁶

In conclusion, the Ögödeid–Chaghadaid reign embedded Mongol imperial culture and its legitimization concepts in Central Asia, where they remained valid up to the nineteenth century. Mongol Central Asia took part in the thriving economic and cultural exchange typical of the “Mongol moment,” albeit a more modest one than its central location suggests. Squeezed between formidable Chinggisid polities, lacking a strong sedentary basis comparable to China and Iran, and home to a pair of competing *uluses*, the Middle Mongolian Ulus is usually seen as the loser among the Mongol polities, partly because, unlike its counterparts in China, Iran, and Russia, no modern state inherited the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid realms. Yet Mongol Central Asia left its mark on Mongolian and world history, and not only through its endurance. The Ögödeids' and Chaghadaids' opposition to Qubilai's authority made the dissolution of the United Empire permanent and encouraged the intensification of maritime trade routes, a development

214 Blair 2019. 215 Elverskog 2010, 189–200. 216 Biran 2015.

that eventually encouraged the landlocked Chaghadaids to seek peace, and in retrospect preceded the age of explorations. It contributed significantly to the Islamization of eastern Central Asia, notably its nomadic population, and indirectly to the dissemination of Central Asian Hanafi works throughout the Islamic world. Moreover, the Central Asian Mongol state was also the root of what became two of the most influential empires of the late medieval and early modern worlds, the Timurids and the Moghuls. The cultural heyday of Central Asia under Temür and his heirs owed something also to the scholarly and commercial infrastructure created under the Chaghadaids. Their enduring prestige in Central Asia is attested by the naming of the Eastern Turkish literary language Chaghatay after Chinggis Khan's second son.

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VOLUME I

PART 2

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THEMATIC HISTORIES

Mongol Imperial Institutions

HODONG KIM

As the regional *uluses* became increasingly independent, sometimes falling into conflict with each other, the Mongol Empire gradually lost its political unity. Scholars tend to view this process as the dissolution of a unitary Mongol empire and the emergence of independent regional states, which, rapidly adopting indigenous cultures and institutions, were subsequently transformed into regional dynasties. We should remember, however, that throughout the gradual changes they underwent, these regional Mongol polities continued to hold to the institutions inherited from the earlier united imperial period, which were deeply rooted in their pasts.

The so-called imperial institutions that we examine here are restricted to those that were anchored in the Mongols' own past and that originated in their nomadic tradition. Nonetheless, their scope is quite extensive, ranging from the basic principles of imperial structure and the organization of the court to military and civil administration in the conquered regions. These institutions appeared very early on, right after Chinggis Khan ascended the throne in 1206, and were later applied to the entire empire. Even after the political unity of the empire was considerably impaired, the new Mongol rulers continued to employ these imperial institutions, while modifying them to a form more appropriate to their own environments.

However, our present knowledge does not seem to be sufficient to comprehend the origin and transformation of various Mongol imperial institutions as well as their regional variations. Moreover, it is extremely difficult, due to the lack of relevant sources, to obtain an in-depth understanding of those institutions in the *uluses* of the Jochids and the Chaghadaids. So our discussions cannot but be limited more or less to the other two *uluses*.

Thus we first survey how the *uluses*, the fundamental building blocks of the Mongol Empire, were formed and transformed. Next, we examine the composition and peculiarities of the *ordos*, the itinerant court composed of numerous tents. This is an important topic not merely because it was a residential space for monarchs, but also because it was the very core of politics and diplomacy. Then we explain the military and the civil administrations, both crucial features if we are to understand how the Mongols conquered and ruled the sedentary regions. Finally, to understand how the Mongols overcame the barriers to communication in terms of language and geography, we explain the chancellery practices and the postal system.

Imperial structure: *Ulus*es

Chinggis Khan and his heirs called the empire they created *Mongol ulus* or *Yeke Mongol ulus*. To understand how the Mongols perceived their empire, we first need to understand what *ulus* meant at that time. The French scholar C. d'Ohsson long ago offered the definition "a multitude of people who obey a Mongol sovereign,"¹ which indicates correctly that its fundamental meaning was "people." However, the word *ulus* had another connotation: "nation," "state," or "realm." These two layers of meaning do not seem to have been clearly distinguished, even among the Mongols, and the term has been understood in both ways. A passage (§121) in the *Secret History of the Mongols* (*SH*) is a good example. There a certain Qorchi came to Temüjin and prophesized his becoming a powerful ruler in the future, saying, "Together Heaven and Earth have agreed: Temüjin shall be 'lord of *ulus* (*ulus-un ejen*)'!" Here, the word *ulus* can be interpreted either as "people" or "state."²

The fact that the word *ulus* had a double connotation is extremely important when we examine the transformation of the political structure of the Mongol Empire. When Chinggis Khan ascended the throne in 1206, he organized all the nomads under his rule into ninety-five chiliarchies (*mingghan*), but shortly before he launched a campaign against the Jin dynasty in 1211, he apportioned almost half of them to his sons and brothers as their *qubi* (share). The two most important sources – the *Secret History* and *Jāmi' al-tavārikh* (*JT*) – do not agree on the names of the recipients or the number of chiliarchies apportioned to them. Setting aside the difference in the details,

1 D'Ohsson 1824, 83.

2 See de Rachewiltz's English translation in *SH*, 48; for the early Ming Chinese translation: Wulan 2012, 102.

we should note that there is an important disagreement concerning the number of *uluses*: according to the *JT* there were seven *uluses* in total, while in the *SH* there were nine.³

In the twelfth century, several *uluses* had existed in the Mongolian plateau, such as Kereyit, Tatar, Merkit, and Naiman. Then, with the unification by Chinggis Khan, all other *uluses* dissolved and the Mongol Ulus became the one and only *ulus* in Mongolia. By allotting “shares” to his sons and brothers, however, a single *ulus* came to be divided into several *uluses*. This division did not result in the extinction of the Mongol Ulus, but it was transformed into a conglomeration of multiple *uluses*. Later, as the lords of these *uluses* further divided their own *uluses* and bequeathed them to their descendants, the number of inner, secondary, *uluses* increased.

In this sense, we need to be careful about our common conception about the “dissolution” of the Mongol Empire. Although it used to be – and frequently still is – asserted that the year 1260, when Qubilai and Arigh Böke began contending for the imperial throne, was critical for the division of the empire, Peter Jackson’s study has shown that in view of the Chinggisid custom of distributing “shares,” the seed of the division was inherent from the beginning, and that the transformation of the imperial political structure was actually a long-term process.⁴

Nevertheless, around the beginning of the fourteenth century we see the crystallization of four large *uluses*: in the east there was the domain under the direct jurisdiction of qa’an called the Ulus of the Qa’an, and in the west three other *uluses*, that of the Chaghadaid, the Jochid, and the Hülegüid. They are commonly called “successor states” or the “four khanates”; yet this may mislead us into conceiving of the Mongol Empire as if the empire itself had collapsed and been divided into four independent regional states. The Chinggisid rulers, and ordinary Mongols too, probably did not think that the *Yeke Mongol Ulus* had broken down and disappeared around 1260; neither did they regard the four *uluses* as being equal in terms of political status. The general consensus among the Mongols was that the qa’an in the east inherited the mantle of Chinggis Khan and his authority, while the rulers of the three princely houses in the west accepted his superior status, however nominal that may have been. So we need to examine how these four *uluses* were formed out of the original nine *uluses* at the time of Chinggis Khan.

Let us first examine how the Jochid Ulus came to emerge as a dominant polity in the western Eurasian steppe and Russia. The original abode of the

3 For a more detailed discussion and relevant studies: Kim 2019. 4 Jackson 1978, 1999.

Jochid Ulus in 1206–1211, when Chinggis Khan divided his *ulus*, was somewhere around the Irtysh region. Its extension toward the west occurred later: as Juwaynī wrote, when the empire became of vast extent, Chinggis Khan “gave the territory stretching from the regions of Qayaliq and Khwārazm to the remotest parts of Saqsin and Bulghar and as far in that direction as the hoof of Tartar horse had penetrated.”⁵ Considering that most of the regions indicated here were not fully incorporated at the time of Chinggis Khan, we can assume that such a statement reflects the situation of the later period when Juwaynī wrote his work.

In 1235 Ögödei decided to launch a campaign to subjugate the rebellious Qipchaqs and Bulgars and to conquer the western Eurasian steppe. The troops were conscripted from all the four sons’ *uluses* and each house sent the eldest son to command their soldiers. The army consisted of two wings: the right wing from the Jochids and the Chaghadaids, and the left wing from the Ögödeids and the Toluids. Although Batu was nominally the supreme commander, in practice what he practically controlled was only half the army, along with Büri from the house of Chaghadaid, while the other half was in the hands of Güyük and Möngke.

The campaign started in 1236, and continued until the summer of 1241 when the left wing, by the order of Ögödei, withdrew from the front and began its return march. By that time most of the Russian cities were devastated and the combined forces of the Poles, Germans, and Teutonic Knights had met a crushing defeat in Liegnitz. At the end of 1241, however, before the left-wing army had reached its destination, Ögödei died in Qaraqorum. The Chinggisids were then embroiled in a protracted succession struggle, and the military operation on the European front came to a halt until a new qa’an was enthroned. In the end it was Güyük, with whom Batu had had a serious quarrel on the Danube front, who succeeded his father, in the spring of 1246.⁶

At that time, John of Plano Carpini, a Franciscan friar, on his way to Qaraqorum, passed through the Pontic steppe, where he met Batu and other Mongol leaders. He mentions a prince named “Mauci” on the bank of the Dnieper, and, as Pelliot surmised,⁷ this was probably Mochi Yebe, the eldest son of Chaghadaid, replacing Büri, who had sided with Güyük and had a violent quarrel with Batu. If his hypothesis is correct, we can assert that the right-wing army was still stationed in the Qipchaq steppe, which makes sense because the Western Campaign had never been formally terminated. In fact, Güyük, right after the enthronement, decided to accomplish the unfinished

5 HWC, 42. 6 Kim 2005; Dunnell, this volume. 7 Pelliot 1973, 38.

mission and marched to the west, but met sudden death in Central Asia. Up to this time the Qipchaq steppe, not to mention Russia, was not considered the realm of the Jochids. However, the situation quickly changed after Möngke became the next qa'an.

Batu, as the elder (*aqā*) of the Chinggisids and commanding a large and powerful army in the west, supported Möngke, who needed his endorsement to become qa'an. No wonder that Möngke remarked to William of Rubruck, another Franciscan friar visiting his court in 1254–1255, "Just as the sun spreads its rays in all directions, so my power and that of Baatu are spread to every quarter."⁸ Owing to the elevation of Batu's status as kingmaker, the Jochid Ulus finally took hold of the Pontic steppe as their *yurt*, which extended from the Ob and Irtysh basins to the Danube river.

However, this vast realm of the Jochid Ulus was not a single homogeneous polity. First of all, it was divided into right and the left wings. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Jochi's eldest son Orda and Udur, Toqa Temür, Senggüm, and Sinqor formed the left (east), while Batu and other princes formed the right (west) wing. The ruler of the right was regarded as the nominal head of the entire *ulus* but the two wings were in fact independent and autonomous. Sources suggest that the right wing was further divided into several *uluses*; beside the *uluses* of Berke and Shiban, the *ulus* of Batu seems to have been split again into two halves of the left and the right. Although we do not know for certain, it is possible that the *ulus* of Orda and other princes of the left was also divided into several smaller *uluses*.⁹

Now let us turn to the Hülegü Ulus, whose genesis, compared to other *uluses*, is very peculiar. As mentioned above, Mongol *uluses* were normally created from the *qubi* (share) given by Chinggis Khan, but the origin of the Hülegü Ulus was not his *qubi* but rather the troops under his command when he started the expedition by order of Möngke Qa'an in 1252–1253. These troops were conscripted from the entire Mongol army and represented major Chinggisid families.

So how could Hülegü and his successors transform those conscripted troops into their *ulus*? We can examine this process from two different angles: first, how they actually appropriated those troops, and second, how they legitimized such a usurpation. Although the conscription of the campaign army was empire-wide, only the Jochid and Toluid princes took the leadership. Princes of the other two families were completely devastated due to

8 William of Rubruck 1990, 180.

9 For the multifarious formation of the Jochi Ulus and diverse opinions: Allsen 1985; Fedorov-Davydov 1973, 55–60; Akasaka 2005, 121 ff.

Möngke's persecution. While the campaign was in progress, Hülegü took the drastic measure of eliminating three Jochid princes – Balaghai, Tutar, and Quli – and converted the campaign army into his own.¹⁰ The Jochid troops in the campaign army under their command either took flight to the Qipchaq steppe via Derbend or fled to Khurasan. Berke, who succeeded Batu in 1254 as the lord of the Jochid Ulus, was enraged by his action and drove his army to the south. War broke out between them, but ended in 1264 without an apparent victor when both Berke and Hülegü died. By that time, however, Hülegü had become the de facto lord of an *ulus* stretching “from the river of Amu Darya to the gate of Egypt.”

Of course, the Jochids in the Pontic steppe and the Chaghadaids and the Ögödeids in Central Asia had never stopped challenging the rule of Hülegü and his successors, and so it was crucial for the Hülegüids to demonstrate the legitimacy of their rule. In other words, they had to produce proof that the Mongols under their command were in fact their own *ulus*. It was the *emchü* theory that they put forward for their defense. In 1270, Hülegü's son and successor Abaqa was confronted by the Chaghadaid khan Baraq (r. 1266–1270), who demanded Khurasan be handed over, claiming that it belonged to him and his ancestors. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, to this demand Abaqa sent the following message: “This land came to us by inheritance from our dear departed father and is our *enchü*. Today we hold it by the sword.”¹¹ Here in the English translation *enchü* (*injū* in Persian texts) is actually *emchü* in Mongolian, meaning “private property.”

How, then, could he make the claim that Iran, and thus the Mongols therein, were *emchü* that he had inherited from Hülegü? Again, Rashīd al-Dīn provides a clue: Möngke Qa'an ordered that of all the troops that Chinggis Khan had divided among the brothers and nephews, two of every ten soldiers who had not entered the count should be taken out and given as *emchü* to Hülegü.¹² So it was not Chinggis Khan but Möngke who gave them to Hülegü and initiated the creation of an *ulus*. Rashīd al-Dīn further reinforces this claim with the assertion that Tolui had inherited 101 out of 129 chiliarchies, and thus the troops accompanying Hülegü had originally been those of the Toluids.

Of the three large western *uluses*, the Chaghadaid Ulus was the last to take on its final form, stabilizing only around the beginning of the fourteenth century. Needless to say, this was one of the primary *uluses* instituted by Chinggis Khan but, in the wake of the Toluid takeover in 1250, its power was

10 JT/Thackston, 362, 506. 11 JT/Thackston, 523; JT/Rawshan, 1071–72.

12 JT/Thackston, 283, 478; JT/Rawshan, 615, 975.

drastically diminished. In the 1260s, however, the Chaghadaids under the leadership of Alghu seem to have regained their strength and vitality, and his nephew Baraq continued to pursue the policy of expansion. After he made an agreement with Qaidu and Möngke Temür in 1269, he drove his army down into Khurasan. This, however, ended in fiasco and Baraq died in 1271, shortly after the withdrawal.

Baraq's sudden death opened the path for the rise of Qaidu. Although it took about a decade for him to quell the opposition of the Chaghadaid princes, in 1282 he was able to install Du'a, Baraq's son, as the leader of the Chaghadaid Ulus. Chübei and Qaban, Alghu's sons, who had challenged this alliance, sought asylum in the realm of Qubilai with a large number of followers. In this way there emerged two *uluses* of the Chaghadaids, one in Transoxania and the other in the Hexi corridor, although both had lost political independence.¹³

The coalition of the houses of Chaghadaid and Ögödei in Central Asia was maintained for almost two decades, menacing the western borders of the Qa'an Ulus until the death of Qaidu around 1303. Then the situation was reversed in favor of the Chaghadaids and it was Du'a who began to play Qaidu's role of twenty years previously. Qaidu's sons and the other Ögöeid princes were badly divided and could not agree whom to elect as their leader. It was Du'a, as *aqā* (elder) of the two houses, who chose Chapar, whom he thought would be easy to manipulate. However, the conflict between the two led Chapar to take refuge in the Ulus of the Qa'an in 1310. It is reported that soon almost "a million people" came to submit.¹⁴ Now the Chaghadaids had secured hegemony over Central Asia and their *ulus* became the sole and undisputed polity in that region.

Now, finally, let us examine the emergence of the Ulus of the Qa'an and the fate of the eastern *uluses* headed by Chinggis Khan's brothers. The term "Ulus of the Qa'an" is not attested in Mongol sources, but is found in Persian sources in the form *ūlūs-i qā'ān*, used to designate the realm of Qubilai and his successors.¹⁵ Its origin goes back to the "Center Ulus" (*ghol-un ulus*) that was directly under the control of Chinggis Khan, composed of three myriarchies: Right Wing, the Left Wing, and the Middle. In terms of size it was about half of the entire Mongol army formed in 1206. When Ögödei succeeded to the throne, he inherited it as the possession of the qā'an, not as his *qubī* – because the latter he already possessed.

¹³ Biran 1997, 32–33; Sugiyama 2004, 288–333. ¹⁴ Liu 2006, 343–48.

¹⁵ Kim 2015, 295–98.

The war between Qubilai and Arigh Böke in 1260–1263 changed the status and the position of the Center Ulus. When Möngke led a campaign to the Southern Song, most of the troops belonging to it, especially those of the Right and the Middle, accompanied him, and after his sudden death the majority of them sided with Arigh Böke, who assumed the regency in Qaraqorum. Qubilai could only take control of the army belonging to the Left Wing, especially the troops of the so-called “Five Tribes” of the Jalayir, Uru’ut, Mangqut, Qonggirat, and Ikires. Beside these, he gained the support of Önggüts, Olqunu’uts, Qongghotans, and Barulas. The army of the eastern *uluses* belonging to the descendants of Chinggis Khan’s brothers also endorsed him.¹⁶

Many of the soldiers under Arigh Böke were killed or fled during the civil war, and the army of the Right and the Middle virtually collapsed. Of course, some of them submitted to Qubilai and were incorporated into his army. Thus, after the war, the army now under the command of Qubilai did not resemble the preceding Center Ulus. Namely Qubilai’s army was not the one he inherited as qa’an but rather the one that he had personally collected and subjugated during the war, and it became virtually his *emchü* over which other Chinggisid houses could not claim their right; in other words, they were now Qubilai’s *ulus*. The imperial capital was also transferred from Mongolia to “Khitay,” located in the extreme east of the empire: its location was no longer at the “center.”

What, then, had happened to the eastern *uluses* given to Chinggis Khan’s brothers? As mentioned above, they supported Qubilai in his fight with Arigh Böke and could enjoy their political autonomy even after his enthronement. The key incident that affected their fate occurred in 1287 when Nayan, Temüge Otchigin’s descendant, rose against Qubilai, who personally led the army to put down the rebellion. Qubilai executed some of the princes and disbanded their troops, but did not dismantle their *uluses*. Their existence is confirmed in Chinese sources; princes with the title *Liao wang* (“prince of Liao”) of Otchigin’s house and *Ji wang* (“prince of Ji”) of Qasar’s house maintained their *uluses* and domains. These *uluses* continued to exist up to the end of the fourteenth century and were transformed into the “Three Uryangqad Commanderies” in the early Ming period.¹⁷

In conclusion, the Mongol Empire was not from the outset a homogeneous polity under a single monarch but a conglomeration of multiple *uluses* ruled by the Chinggisids. The qa’an, the supreme ruler of the empire, at first

16 Sugiyama 2004, 114–15; Shi 1998, 131–32. 17 Kim 2019, 308–10.

exercised unswerving power over these princes, but as the size of the empire increased and conflicts among the princes continued to break out, not to mention the recurrent struggle over the qa'aniship, the formation of the *uluses* was significantly altered. As a result, there came about three large *uluses* in the west, that of the Jochids, the Hülegiüids, and the Chaghadaids, while the Center Ulus of the qa'an was transformed into the Ulus of the Qa'an, dominated by Qubilai and his successors. And within these four *uluses* there existed quite a few enclaves of smaller *uluses*: for example, within the realm of the qa'an we can find the *uluses* of the Ögödeids in Mongolia, those of the Chaghadaids in the Hexi corridor, and those of Chinggis Khan's brothers in Manchuria. The Ulus of Jochi was also divided into left and right wings, and then further divided into smaller *uluses*.

The Moving Court: *Ordos*

As the Mongols continued to broaden the borders of their empire, many of them, including princes and nobles, moved into conquered areas and began to live in the new environments. They did not give up their nomadic way of life, however, and so selected localities that abounded in pasture and water and continued seasonal migrations with their families and livestock.

When he was not on campaign, Chinggis Khan practiced seasonal migrations in eastern Mongolia. Present-day Awarga, located in today's Khentii Aymaq, was where his winter camp was found: the place name itself comes from the word *a'uruq*, meaning "base camp" or "encampment," and scholars have found sites and relics of his palace there. After he had spent winter in Awarga, when the spring came he moved to the summer camp in Qara Tun on the upper Tola river by way of the Sa'ari Keher steppe, a round trip of approximately 420 kilometers.¹⁸

This custom of seasonal migration was maintained by his successors. Ögödei, who shifted the capital to Qaraqorum, moved around the Khangai area; in spring he left his capital city to go up to the lake Gegen Chaghan, located about forty kilometers to the north, and then to the pasture of Örmegetü in the Khangai mountains. When winter approached, he went to the south near the Onggin river.¹⁹ Güyük's reign was too short for us to find much information about his migration pattern, but for Möngke we can confirm that he had a similar pattern of movement around Qaraqorum.

¹⁸ Shiraishi 2001, 99–100. ¹⁹ Boyle 1974.

Qubilai and his successors continued seasonal migrations even after the imperial capital was moved from Qaraqorum to the land of Khitay. He built Dadu and Shangdu, which became his winter and summer capitals, and made a regular migration between these two cities; in general, he left Dadu for Shangdu in the fourth month and came back in the eighth or the ninth month.²⁰ The routes between these two cities extended for about 300–400 kilometers and a one-way trip took around twenty to twenty-five days. About twenty lodgings, called *nabo*, were established on the roads.²¹

The custom of seasonal migration was also practiced by other Chinggisid princes within the realm of the Qa'an Ulus. Mangghala, Qubilai's son, was enfeoffed as *Anxi wang* and sent to the Hexi region, later succeeded by his son Ananda. Outside the city of Jingzhao (present-day Xi'an) a palace was built where they spent the winter: according to an excavation report, the total length of the palace wall was 2,283 meters. And there was another palace at Kaicheng in the Liupan mountains, where their summer residence was located.²²

In the western *uluses* we can find a similar pattern of migration. For example, Batu moved along the eastern bank of the Volga, and his son Sartaq along the river Don. Rubruck, who passed through this area in 1253, wrote, "He moves up – as do all the rest – to the cold regions from January to August, and in August they begin to turn back."²³ After Hülegü had completed the campaign, he spent the summer at Alatagh and the winter at Chaghatu.²⁴ His son Abaqa made Tabriz his capital and moved between summer camps in Alatagh and Siyāhkūh and winter camps in Arrān, Baghdad, and Chaghatu. This pattern was continued by Arghun and Ghazan. Öljeitü moved the capital to Sulḡāniyya in the meadow of Qongghur Öleng. He spent the summer there or a bit further north in Üjān, while in the winter he resided mostly in the plains of Mūghān and Arrān, or in Baghdad.²⁵

When the qa'an and princes migrated between the seasonal camps, a large number of people, herds, tents, and carts moved together with them. This huge complex of tents was called *ordo* or *ordu*. This word is already attested in the Turkic inscriptions of the early eighth century: "The hostile Oguz suddenly attacked the camp (*ordu*)," and Kül Tegin fought with them and "did not surrender the camp" (Kül Tegin Inscription, north 8–10 ll.).²⁶ We

20 Ye Ziqi 1959, 64; Xiong 1983, 204–5. 21 Chen and Shi 2010.

22 Matsuda 1979, 44–45.

23 William of Rubruck 1990, 130. 24 Honda 1991, 359–60.

25 Honda 1991, 357–81; Melville 1990. 26 Tekin 1968, 271.

also find quite extensive mentions of *ordo* in the sources on the Qarakhanids and in the dictionary of Maḥmūd Kāshgharī.²⁷ In the case of the Khitan Liao (907–1125) we have an especially rich source of information: the *Liao shi* defines *ordo* as “palace” (*gong*) and lists the names of twelve *ordos* owned by Khitan emperors.²⁸ In the *SH* we find numerous mentions of *ordo* or *ordo ger*: for example, Chinggis Khan attacked Toqto’a, the Merkit chief, and “seized their many herds of horses and palatial tents [*ordo ger*].”²⁹ This shows that in the twelfth century nomadic chiefs owned a complex of big tents which were called *ordo*.

When he ascended the throne in 1206, Chinggis Khan reorganized the *ordos* and made it one of the distinctive Mongol institutions. He is reported to have had nearly 500 wives and concubines, but the chief wives were four – Börte, Qulan, Yisüi, and Yisügen – each having her own *ordo*. This was accordingly called the “Four Great *Ordos*” (*dörben yeke ordos*), to which all the ladies were assigned. The senior wife of each *ordo* was called *khātūn* (*qatun* in Mongolian), and *huanghou* in Chinese. The concubines were called *egechi* (“sister”) in Mongolian, or *feizi* in Chinese, and the Turkic term *quma* was also used. Even though wives of princes were often called khatun, the term khatun was officially applied only to the qa’an’s senior wives. So Kökejin, Chinggisim’s wife and Temür Qa’an’s mother, was called Bairam Egechi. Rashīd al-Dīn mentions many concubines in the court of the Hülegü Ulus carrying the title *egechi*. It appears that each *ordo* was headed by a khatun with many *egechis* belonging to it.³⁰

Chinggis Khan assigned special guards to each of the Four *Ordos*. In 1206 he enlisted 10,000 *keshigs*, royal guards, of which 1,000 were night guards (*kebte’ül*), and it was they who took the responsibility of protecting the *ordos* together with the people and property therein. They were divided into ten units of a hundred apiece, each commanded by a centurion.

Ögödei and Möngke also had four *ordos*. For example, after Möngke died during the campaign in Sichuan, his corpse was carried to Qaraqorum, and the funeral ceremony was held in the four *ordos*, each day his body being brought to a different *ordo*, where “they placed the coffin upon a throne and wept and wailed bitterly.”³¹ And the *YS* shows unequivocally that Qubilai also had four *ordos*.³² So we can conclude that the institution of the four *ordos* introduced by Chinggis Khan was upheld by his successors, at least until the time of Qubilai.

27 Kashgharī 1982, 1: 148. 28 *Liao shi*, 363, 1544. 29 *SH*, 99.

30 *JT*/Thackston, 471–72.

31 *JT*/Thackston, 416. 32 *YS*, 2697–99.

However, we cannot say for certain whether Qubilai's successors and other princes in the west also maintained this tradition. One Chinese source writes that the Yuan emperors had, besides a "senior empress," two more empresses, i.e., the second and the third, and that the emperors visited each of them every three days.³³ There is no other source confirming that the number of *ordos* was fixed to three. On the contrary, we know that Qaishan had five *ordos*³⁴ – although this appears to be an exceptional case.

For the western *uluses* it is also not easy to confirm whether the four-*ordos* system was a typical formation, although we do know of a few cases that were. As attested by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, for instance, Özbek Khan of the Jochid Ulus had four *ordos*, and Hülegü also had four, if we can believe Rashīd al-Dīn's statement.³⁵ On the other hand, we can find many cases that contradict our expectations. For example, examining the khatuns of the ilkhans, we find that Abaqa had seven, Tegüder four, Arghun six, Geikhatu six, Ghazan six, and Öljeitü eleven. How can we explain this phenomenon?

To answer this, we need to understand two peculiar customs of the Mongols at that time; levirate and the *ordo* guardianship. When a ruler died, his brother or son succeeded the throne and married some of his khatuns. Then their *ordos* became the property of the new ruler. Those khatuns who did not marry again were allowed to keep their *ordos*, but if they passed away the ruler could appoint one of his ladies as khatun and make her take the guardianship of that *ordo*. However, if he did not appoint a guardian khatun, then that *ordo* ceased to exist. So, for example, of the seven *ordos* of Abaqa, four were those of the khatuns whom he married, one he obtained through levirate, and the remaining two were those that he entrusted to his wives after his father's wives had died. A similar phenomenon is also observed in the Qa'an Ulus, but we do not have enough information to understand its detailed mechanism.³⁶

Those who witnessed the *ordos* of the Mongol rulers on the move were deeply impressed by their size and expanse. Rubruck wrote about Batu's *ordos*, "His own dwellings had the appearance of a large city stretching far out lengthways and with inhabitants scattered around in every direction for a distance of three or four leagues."³⁷ When the qa'an departed from Dadu

³³ Ye 1959, 63. ³⁴ YS, 2290.

³⁵ Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 482–89. Although Rashīd al-Dīn did not specifically mention the four *ordos* of Hülegü, putting together his information we can conclude that his four chief wives were Doquz Khatun, Qutui Khatun (who succeeded Güyük Khatun, who died in Mongolia), Öljei Khatun, and Yisünjin Khatun. See JT/Thackston, 471–72; JT/Rawshan, 963–64; Bruno 2017, 91–94.

³⁶ Ma 2012; Gao 2013.

³⁷ William of Rubruck 1990, 131; on the *ordos* of Uzbek Khan: Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 2: 482.

almost 100,000 people accompanied him, including his wives, concubines and princes, a multitude of officials, 10,000 *keshig* soldiers, and the merchants who also participated in the march.³⁸

Thanks to Rubruck's detailed description we can reconstruct the general plan or arrangement of the *ordos*, at least for the case of Batu. He had twenty-six wives and each of them possessed a large tent and about 200 wagons. When they pitched camp, the tent of the chief wife stood at the westernmost end and the others were set up east of it according to rank. The smaller tents of their maids were pitched behind. The distance between the tents of these wives was about a stone's throw.³⁹

In the *ordos* one can find a number of people who were serving khatuns and *egechis*. *SH* (§ 232) writes that Chinggis Khan ordered the night guards to take charge of the female attendants (*cherbin ökid*), sons of the household (*ger-ün kö'üd*), the camel keepers, the cowherds, and the tent carts.⁴⁰ According to Rashīd al-Dīn, when Chinggis Khan gave Ibaqa Beki to Kehti Noyan, after he had had a bad dream, he gave him all the horses, servants, followers, household slaves (*iv oghlānān*), herds and flocks, and treasures and stores, except for one cook and one golden goblet.⁴¹ From these two examples we can conjecture what kind of people worked in the *ordos*. Especially noteworthy is the group called *ger-ün kö'üd*, in Turkic *ev oghlan*. Their origin was in most cases *injes* (*yingzhesi* in Chinese), i.e., the persons who went with the bride as part of her dowry.⁴² Owing to their close personal ties with their lords, some of them became very powerful and influential. Aḥmad Fanākātī, a *ger-ün kö'ü* of Chabi Khatun, became the minister under Qubilai.

Mongol rulers usually spent a night at one of these *ordo* tents, and then next morning the court opened there. In this sense, the *ordo* was not only their residence but at the same time a focal point of politics, where they met ministers and generals and discussed important matters of state. A number of documents recording such meetings show who would be present in the tent; beside the ruler and his wife, usually there were chiefs of *keshig* units, the official who brought the memorials, and translators and scribes.⁴³ This kind of tent meeting was quite different from the formal assembly in a wide and open palace court that we see in the case of many sedentary dynasties. Only a small group of people belonging to the inner circle could participate in the meeting and make decisions.

38 Shi 1996, 265–66; *YS*, 768. 39 William of Rubruck 1990, 74. 40 *SH*, 160.

41 *JT*/Thackston, 148; *JT*/Rawshan, 304. 42 Liu 2014, 1: 246–73; *SH*, 280. 43 Li 2003, 8–9.

Military Supremacy: *Mingghan*, *Tammachi*, and *Keshig*

It is well known that Yelü Chucai advised Ögödei, “One can acquire the world on horseback but one cannot rule it on horseback.” Later, Liu Bingzhong repeated this advice to his master Qubilai.⁴⁴ These stories are often cited to show the changes in the Mongol rulers, who gradually became adjusted to the new environment of the conquered regions. However, for the Mongols, military supremacy was crucial if they hoped to maintain their rule. There were three pillars of the Mongol army: chiliarchy army, *tammachi* troops, and *keshig* guards.

As mentioned above, in 1206 Chinggis Khan organized ninety-five chiliarchies (*mingghan*), each of which was divided into hundreds (*ja'un*) and tens (*harban*). Although such a decimal organization had existed in the Eurasian steppe from long before, the system that Chinggis Khan introduced was radically different. Among the ninety-five chiliarchies, except for those commanded by a few “sons-in-law” (*güregen*) who had voluntarily submitted to him and were allowed to keep their people, the majority were not merely regroupings of existing tribal units, but newly organized units of nomads who had become disbanded and scattered after a long and destructive war. He grouped together these ninety-five chiliarchies into three larger units called *tümen* (myriarchy): the Middle in central Mongolia, the Left on the slopes of the Khinggan mountains, and the Right around the Altai mountains.

The chiliarchy organization based on this tripartite formation continued to operate up to the reign of Möngke: when he launched a campaign against the Southern Song, he commanded the Middle and the Right Wing, while entrusting the Left at first to Taghachar and then to Qubilai. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the army under Möngke numbered sixty *tümen* and marched in the direction of the Liupan mountains and Sichuan, while thirty *tümen* were sent to Henan and in the direction of the Hui river under the command of Qubilai. Beside these two, there was another unit of five *tümen* under Uryangqadai which took the Yunnan route to attack the rear of the Southern Song.⁴⁵

Immediately after Möngke's sudden death in 1259 a series of events ensued that eventually led to the collapse of the tripartite formation. As explained

44 Su Tianjue 1996, 76; YS, 3688.

45 Compared to the three myriarchies in the time of Chinggis Khan, these ninety myriarchies are enormous. There is no doubt that after the conquest of north China, huge numbers of Han Chinese, Khitans, and Jurchens were incorporated. And by this time, the number of soldiers in one myriarchy was far less than 10,000.

above, after Qubilai had defeated his brother Arigh Böke, the so-called “Five Tribes” that had been under Muqali’s command became the main pillars of his military might. Of these, the Qonggirats were located to the north of Dadu and administratively belonged to the circuits of Yingchang and Quanning. To their northeast were the Ikires, where the circuit of Ningchang was established. The other three tribes – Jalayir, Mangqut, and Uru’ut – were situated in the area around present-day Liaoning. Beside these five tribes, there were also the Önggüts in Inner Mongolia. These were the central components of the imperial army. After Nayan’s rebellion in 1287, the army of the eastern *ulus* also became incorporated into the imperial force.⁴⁶

In order to supplement the shrunken Mongol nomadic forces, Qubilai enrolled huge numbers of non-Mongol troops into his army. The conscription of soldiers from the conquered people had been practiced since the time of Chinggis Khan, who levied the inhabitants of Central Asian cities by force and made them march in front of the Mongol soldiers as arrow fodder, called *hashar*.⁴⁷ When Ögödei and Möngke waged war against the Jin and the Southern Song, they levied more than 300,000 Han Chinese. They were those who had been categorized as “military households” (*junhu*) based on the census. More than 200,000 Han soldiers were conscripted during the reign of Qubilai.⁴⁸

After he had conquered the Southern Song, Qubilai enlisted a part of the surrendered soldiers, about 200,000, as the newly submitted army (*xinfu jun*). As will be explained later, he also organized several *tümen* of special guards made up of “sundry peoples” (*semuren*), such as Qipchaqs, Qanglis, Alans, and others. While these non-Mongol troops were enlisted and organized, the chiliarchy system continued to function as an important principle of military organization. The units of myriarchy (*wanhu*) and chiliarchy (*qianhu*) were differentiated into three levels: upper, middle, and lower. The upper myriarchy had about 7,000 soldiers, the middle 5,000, and the lower only 3,000.⁴⁹

We know that the Hülegü Ulus also maintained the chiliarchy system, although it is difficult to find detailed information. Fortunately, however, in Rashīd al-Dīn’s explanation of the soldiers’ fiscal crisis and of Ghazan Khan’s reform measures designed to solve the problems, we are able to glimpse their situation. In this respect, an edict issued in the name of Ghazan that contains nine items of reform is particularly valuable.⁵⁰

46 Shi Weimin 1998, 67–70. 47 Smith 1993–1994, 329–34. 48 Chen 1991, 130–31.

49 YS, 2310–11. 50 JT/Thackston, 730–36; JT/Rawshan, 1476–89.

First of all, ethnically there were two different groups in the army, the Mongols and the “Tajiks,” i.e., Iranian-speaking Muslims. We do not know how many troops there actually were; probably this was a secret. The soldiers in general were called *cherig*, a Mongol word frequently used in the *SH*,⁵¹ and frequently found in later Persian sources. The assertion that this term is used by Juwaynī in the sense of “irregular forces collaborating with the Mongols” is misleading.⁵² As in the other *uluses*, the army in Hülegü Ulus was organized into ten thousands (*tümen*), thousands (*hazāra*), hundreds (*šada*), and tens (*daha*). They were stationed in Khurasan, Fārs, Kirman, Baghdad, Diyarbakr, Rūm, and Derbend. The Mongol troops were more or less concentrated in the northwestern (Azerbaijan) and the northeastern (Khurasan) frontier regions, while the Tajik soldiers were located in Fārs, Kirman, and Baghdad. We can also find this kind of ecologically oriented army distribution in China: the Mongol troops were concentrated in the drier northern plains while non-Mongol soldiers were stationed in the hot and humid regions to the south of the Huai river.

We can also confirm the ubiquitous presence of the chiliarchy system in other *uluses*, such as those of Chaghadaids and Ögödeids. Chapar, an Ögödeid prince, ordered Saljītai Güregen “to flog the commanders of myriarchy, chiliarchy and century, so that the outbreak of rebellion could be thwarted.”⁵³ And Du’a, faced with Chapar’s opposition, asked for military support from Temür Qa’an, who sent Toghachi Chingsang with ten *tümen* of the army. So the units of a thousand belonging to Du’a and the allied forces confronted those of Chapar, face to face across the Ili river.⁵⁴

We have already mentioned that in Jochid Ulus the chiliarchies apportioned by Chinggis Khan were divided into two wings. It is not easy to find relevant sources describing the situation in detail, but we know that they extended this chiliarchy system to Russia and utilized it as a system for collecting taxes. They organized a unit called *disiatok* (ten) which was made up of about 200 adult males and was supposed to provide ten soldiers, while a unit of *t’ma* (ten thousand) comprising about 200,000 males was to provide 10,000 soldiers. Before the rise of Toqtamish, altogether forty-three *t’mas* are known to have existed in Russia.⁵⁵

The Mongol chiliarchies did not remain in the sedentary region after their campaigns but returned to Mongolia, and so another type of army was needed to be stationed in the conquered area to continue the military

51 Poppe 1967, 512–13. 52 HWC, 97, 465. 53 Qāshānī 1969, 36. 54 Qāshānī 1969, 38.

55 Vernadsky 1953, 216–19.

operation and to secure Mongol rule. The Mongols called this type of army *tamma* or *tammachi*, *lashkar-i tamma* in Persian, while in Chinese sources it was transcribed as *tanmachi*, or rendered in Chinese *zhenshou jun*, “garrison army.” Although there are different opinions on the origin of this word, it seems to have come from the military vocabulary of the Song period, specifically *tanma*, literally meaning “horse searching for enemy” or “horseman scouting at the front.”⁵⁶

According to the YS, in the early period of the empire there were two types of army, i.e., the Mongol and the *tammachi* armies. The one was made up of “people of the nation,” the Mongols, and the other was “of the various tribes.”⁵⁷ While there have been debates surrounding what the term “various tribes” might mean, we should read the phrase as “various [Mongol] tribes,” i.e., not an army levied from non-Mongol people.⁵⁸ The troops under the command of Muqali, known as “Five Tribal Tammachi Army,” were made up from the Jalayir, Qonggirat, Mangqut, Uru’ut, and Ikires, which were all Mongol tribes. It was Ögödei who expanded the *tammachi* army and dispatched it to the far corners of the empire. In the SH (§281) he boasts of his four achievements, one of which was to establish scouts (*alginchin*) and garrison troops (*tammachin*).

In 1227, having conquered the Tongguan area in north China, Ögödei left there an army of *tammachi* under the command of Bahadur, of Tangut origin.⁵⁹ In 1230 Ögödei himself led the campaign against the Jin dynasty, and as he returned he stationed another army there as *tammachi*. Of these two armies, the latter was conscripted from the Five Tribal Tammachi Army that Muqali had commanded. They were stationed in various locations to the north of the Yellow River, and were made up of four *tümen*, so it was called *dörben tümen* in Mongolian and “Four Myriarchy Mongol (or Mongol–Han) Army” (*siwanhu Menggu Hanjun*) in Chinese. Although it was called the “Four Myriarchy,” in fact there were thirty-four chiliarchies – fifteen Mongol and nineteen Han.⁶⁰ After 1303 it was renamed “the General Regional Military Command of Henan and Huaibei Mongol Army” (*Henan Huaibei Menggu jun duwanhu fu*) and based in Luoyang. In addition to the two above-mentioned *tammachi* armies, there were several others; the general military commands of (1) the Shandong and Hebei Mongol Army based in Yidu; (2) the Shaanxi Mongol Army based in Fengxiang, Wenzhou, and Yan’an; and (3) the Sichuan Mongol Army based in Chengdu, Chongqing, and Jiading.

56 Matsuda 2012, 38–39. 57 YS, 2508. 58 Ebisawa 1966; Hsiao 1978: 16; Ōba 1987.

59 JT/Thackston, 313. 60 Matsuda 2012.

In this way, the Mongol and the *tammachi* armies were posted in various regions north of the Yellow River while the armies of the northern (*Hanjun*) and the southern Chinese (*xinfu jun*) were stationed to the south of the Huai river. This is exactly what the *Jingshi dadian* states: “Generally speaking the Mongol and the *tammachi* armies are stationed in the Middle Plains, while the Han armies are stationed in the Southern region and with them the Newly Adhered armies were also mingled.”⁶¹

Ögödei also dispatched *tammachi* armies to the western part of Eurasia. According to the *YS*, in 1228, a year before his accession, Chormaqan was dispatched with 30,000 troops to crack down on the resurgent Jalāl al-Dīn, and was stationed in Azerbaijan. In 1229, Ögödei gave 20,000 soldiers to Mönggedü, Huqutur, and Dair Bahadur, stationing them in Hindustan and Kashmir. In 1242 Baiju, who replaced Chormaqan, delivered a crushing defeat on the Seljuqs at the battle of Kösedagh. According to the Armenian historian Grigor of Akanc, soldiers from Armenia and Georgia were also included in Baiju’s army.⁶²

To complete the conquest of West Asia, Möngke dispatched Hülegü, who incorporated the two *tammachi* units into his armies, one in the northwestern India and Afghan region and the other in Azerbaijan. The first one was made of two myriarchies stationed in the areas of Qunduz, Baghlan, and Badakhshān. Its commander, Mönggedü, was replaced after his death by Huqutur, who was succeeded in turn by Sali Noyan. This army participated in the siege of Baghdad and after the conclusion of the campaign returned to Khurasan, being stationed between the Amu Darya and the Indian borders. They were also called Qara’unas. Of the two myriarchies of the Khurasan *tammachi* troops, one was taken as *injū* by Abaqa, who, when returning to Tabriz to become khan in 1265, made them accompany him. The other myriarchy remained in Khurasan and later came under the command of Nawrūz until Ghazan became khan. Nawrūz helped Ghazan to take power, and, after he was enthroned, these remaining Qara’unas troops were transformed into a royal guard unit.⁶³

The last of the three pillars of the Mongol military force was the *keshig*, the royal guard. It is referred to as early as 1189, shortly before the Battle of Dalan Baljut, but no details are given. In 1203 Chinggis Khan formally organized the guard units into eighty night guards (*kehte’ül*), seventy day guards (*turqa’ud*), and 1,000 “braves” (*ba’atud*); in 1206, he expanded this *keshig* into 10,000: 1,000 night guards, 1,000 quiver bearers (*qorchi*), and 8,000 day guards. Although

61 Su Tianjue 1996, 41.60b. 62 May 2004, 319. 63 Shimo 1977.

the numbers had grown more than tenfold, he did not change the basic organizing principles. First, the *keshig* members were enlisted from the sons and brothers of the commanders of ten, hundred, and thousand units. Second, it was basically made up of the three categories of night guards, day guards, and quiver bearers (“braves” in 1203). And third, these *keshig* soldiers were divided into four units that were on duty for three days and nights in rotation.

Their principal task was to watch over the security of Chinggis Khan and his *ordos*. At the same time, they took care of miscellaneous works related to his daily activities and other household chores. Thus a number of *keshig* titles ending with a *-chi* suffix show their special duties: stewards (*ba’urchi*), grooms (*aqtachi*), doorkeepers (*e’üdenchi*), liquor managers (*darachi*, *qarachi*), falconers (*siba’uchi*), camel herders (*teme’echi*), and so on. At first, most of their jobs related to life on the steppe, but later as administrative jobs became more in demand, we begin to see the titles of civil administrators, such as scribes (*bichēchi* < *bichigechi*), decree writers (*yarlighchi*), interpreters (*kelemechi*), and others.⁶⁴

The formation and the operating principles of the *keshig* were not much changed by the succeeding qa’ans until the accession of Qubilai in 1260. When he built the new capitals of Dadu and Shangdu, 10,000 *keshigs* were not sufficient to cover the perimeters of the palaces and guard the long city walls. Moreover, since he quickly adopted Chinese bureaucratic institutions, it was no longer necessary for the *keshig* members to discharge the functions that were related to household works and administrative duties.

As a result, the military functions of the *keshig* were now entrusted to a newly organized “imperial guard army” (*shiwei qinjun*). Initially, in order to fight Arigh Böke, in 1260 Qubilai mobilized 6,500 Han troops and organized them as *wuwei* (military guards), and in 1279 after the conquest of Song he expanded this to five guards, about 50,000 strong in total. The number of guards was further increased and in 1294 it became twelve guards of 100,000 in total, which became 200,000 in the reign of Tuq Temür (r. 1328–1329). Around the end of the empire the total number of guards reached thirty-four units (*wei*). Of these pretorian guards twelve units were made of the *semuren* group and five were the Mongols, while the remaining seventeen units were recruited from the Han people. Especially important were the *semuren* guard units of the Tanguts, the Qipchaqs, the Qanqlis, and the Alans (As), which performed crucial roles in the enthronement of a new emperor. They

64 Hsiao 1978, 37–38.

were stationed in the northern vicinity of Dadu, while the Han guard units were positioned both north and south of Dadu.⁶⁵

As the military aspect of the *keshig* gradually decreased, it became more like a cadet corps for privileged families, i.e., those who had “great roots” (Mo. *yeke huja’ur*, Ch. *da genjiao*). The young elites in the *keshig*, close to the qa’an and ready to serve him, came to form personal ties with him and were often appointed as high officials in the government. According to YS, “officials of the various offices of *sheng* (secretariat) and *bu* (ministry), who were [also] registered as *keshig*, administered the [governmental] works in daytime but took the duty of night guard at night.”⁶⁶ For example, among the fifty-two *amīrs* of Qubilai listed in *Shu’ab-i panjgāna*, at least nineteen were from the *keshig*.⁶⁷

We know that the Hūlegü Ulus also maintained the *keshig* institution, but the available sources do not allow us deeper insights. According to Grigor of Akanc, when Hūlegü was campaigning in West Asia he enlisted “handsome and youthful sons” of Armenian and Georgian princes into the *keshig*.⁶⁸ And we can find frequent mentions of his dispatching envoys, usually paired civil and military personnel, carrying titles like *bichigechi*, *qushchi*, *akhtachi*, *sükürchi*, and so on. Many of them appear to have been members of his *keshig*. For the period from Abaqa up to Ghazan we can also find mention of the activities of the *keshigs*. They took the side of a candidate among competing princes and their support was significant in the power struggles, as attested in the confrontation between Aḥmad and Arghun.⁶⁹

We have more detailed information on the *keshig* during the reign of Ghazan. This was divided into four units (*chahār kezīk*), each commanded by an *amīr* who was given a black seal. These *amīrs*, beside their guard duties, also acted as guarantors of the ilkhān’s decrees, putting their seals on the reverse side of the edicts.⁷⁰ This custom is proven by a letter sent by Ghazan to Pope Boniface VIII in April 1302.⁷¹

We do not know the size of the *keshig* army in Ghazan’s times, but he seems to have endeavored to expand his personal royal guards. He ordered the *amīrs* of military units and *keshig* members to yield one or two brothers or sons not already listed in the military rolls. In that way he obtained 100 or 200 soldiers from every chiliarchy, and the total number, along with the chiliarchy of the center (*hazāra-i qōl*), amounted to 2,000 or 3,000. They attended on the khan together with the existing *keshig*. Ghazan also ordered the purchase

65 Hsiao 1983, 59–112. 66 YS, 2616. 67 Kim 2014–2015. 68 Melville 2006, 146.

69 JT/Thackston, 551–52; JT/Rawshan, 1129–32.

70 JT/Thackston, 726; JT/Rawshan, 1467–69. 71 Cleaves 1952, 478.

of the Mongol youth sold in bondage to the “Tajiks” and had them organized as a unit of *kebte’ül*, attending him as night watch. He entrusted them to the command of Bolad Chingsang.⁷²

We can also find a similar institution of *keshig* in the other *uluses*. For example, the fourth wife of Qonichi, a Jochid ruler, was reported to be a descendant of “the chief of the *qorchis* of Chaghadai.”⁷³ Rashīd al-Dīn writes that this Qonichi was so corpulent that his “*kezikten* used to watch over him night and day to prevent his sleeping, lest some fat should come out of his throat and he should perish.”⁷⁴ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa leaves us an interesting remark on Tarmashirin’s *keshig*. When Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visited Tarmashirin’s *ordo*, he found that outside the tent

there were men ranged to right and left, the *amīrs* among them [seated] on chairs, with their attendants standing behind and before them. The rest of the troops [too] had sat down in parade order, each man with his weapons in front of him. There was a detachment on duty, who would sit there until the hour of afternoon prayer, when another detachment would come and sit until the end of the night.⁷⁵

It is noteworthy that the time of the shift changeover was not sunset but the afternoon prayer, which indicates the influence of Islam. We know that other Chinggisid princes also maintained their *keshigs*. Malik Temür, Arigh Böke’s son, had four *keshigs*, each of which was under the command of an *amīr*.⁷⁶

Interestingly, the Koryō kings followed the example of the Mongol *keshig* system and introduced it to their kingdom. Right after his coronation in 1274, King Chungryōl divided the *turqaqs*, i.e., “dayguards,” who had accompanied him, the sons and brothers of noble families, into a few units, let them take the night watch, and named them *qorchis*.⁷⁷ These *qorchis* were at first organized into four units, but in 1275 were changed into three. Simultaneously, various *keshig* offices were introduced in the Koryō court, such as *bichēchi*, *tuqchi* (standard bearer), *ba’urchi*, *sükürchi*, and so on. In King Chungsōn’s case, not only he himself but also his Mongol wife had her own *keshigtei*, until the qa’an’s court ordered the merger of the two. The case of

72 JT/Thackston, 735–36; JT/Rawshan, 1486–89.

73 JT/Rawshan, 712. In JT/Thackston (349) and JT/Boyle (101) one cannot find “Chaghadai.”

74 JT/Boyle, 101; JT/Rawshan, 712. 75 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 557–58.

76 JT/Rawshan, 943–44; JT/Thackston, 462; JT/Boyle, 313–15. Boyle omits the name of Süke.

77 Chōng 1972, 82.2a–2b.

Koryŏ thus suggests that other subject states may have emulated the *keshig* institution of the Mongol court.

Civil Administration: *Darughachi* and *Jarghuchi*

The Mongol Empire took over a number of institutions from those whom they had conquered. In China it utilized the central administrative organs devised during the preceding dynasties, such as the Central Secretariat (*zhongshu sheng*), the Bureau of Military Affairs (*shumi yuan*), and the Censorate (*yushi tai*). In Iran the office of the *dīwān* was inherited and continued to function as the central financial bureau. Nevertheless, the Mongols also retained several important administrative institutions that sprang from the steppe tradition. For example, in the sphere of civil administration they utilized a whole array of officials, such as the *darughachi*, *jarghuchi*, *bichigechi*, *bularghuchi*, and others. Since it is impossible to explain all of them here, we will take only the two most exemplary cases: the *darughachi* and *jarghuchi*.

The earliest mention of the *darughachi* is found in the YS. In 1214, to attack the walled cities of the Jin dynasty, Chinggis Khan appointed Ambuqai (Anmuqai) as “*darughachi* of artillerymen in various circuits.”⁷⁸ We can also find mentions of *darughachi* in 1215 when he attacked Beijing (present-day Ningcheng) and Zhongdu (modern Beijing),⁷⁹ which shows that Chinggis Khan had already begun to appoint *darughachis* in 1214–1215 when he attacked the Jin. However, Rashīd al-Dīn suggests that this office might have appeared a little earlier, when Chinggis Khan went to campaign against the Tanguts. He writes that in the autumn of 1210 Chinggis Khan took Erīqay and a number of other cities and fortresses, and stationed there *shahna* and armies in order to “defend” the region.⁸⁰ Later, the term *shahna* was used to denote officials whom the Mongols stationed in the conquered cities to superintend, as a synonym of *darugha(chi)*.

As for the origin of *darugha*, it has been hypothesized that its origin is to be found in earlier dynasties such as the Qarakhanids, the Qara Khitai, or the Seljuqs. Certainly there were *shahnas* and they had functions similar to those of the *darughachi*, and yet there seems to be no consensus on this question.⁸¹ In this context, it is interesting to note a record in the *SH* that suggests a possible Mongol origin of this institution. In §232 we see the word

78 YS, 3010. 79 YS, 3542, 2961. 80 JT/Thackston, 73; JT/Rawshan, 135.

81 Buell 1979, 124 n. 15; Morgan 1986a, 109; Vásáry 1978, 201–6; Endicott-West 1989, 151 n. 55; Biran 2005, 119–23.

darughala- is used in the meaning of “to take care of; to supervise.” This is a verbal form derived from the noun *darugha*, which stemmed from the verb *daru-* (“to press”). Similarly, another verb, *jarghula-* is used, which derived from *jarghu*.⁸² These usages in *SH* suggest that the nouns *darugha* and *jarghu* already existed and were used – maybe not yet as official titles – among the Mongols at the time of Chinggis Khan’s enthronement.

We may reconstruct the development of the *darugha* institution in the following way. When the Mongols first conquered the territory belonging to the Tangut and the Jin and began to collect tribute, they stationed officials entitled *darugha*, probably from the early 1210s. Later, when Chinggis Khan launched a campaign against Khwārazm, they found officials called *baqaq* or *shaḥna* performing similar duties, where these terms had been in use as synonyms from the time of the Qarakhanids. So, among the indigenous people, the *darughas* appointed by the Mongols naturally came to be called by such titles as well. The *Rasulid Hexaglot* compiled in fourteenth-century Yemen lists these three titles as synonyms.⁸³

After subduing Samarqand, Chinggis Khan appointed a certain Tūshā Bāsqaq to the command and governorship (*imārāt wa shaḥnagī*) of the district of Bukhara.⁸⁴ “Tūshā” here is a garbled rendering of a Chinese title *taishi*, and this was no other than the Khitan official Yelü Ahai.⁸⁵ According to Juwaynī, before leaving for Khurasan Chinggis Khan ordered the surviving people of Samarqand to pay 200,000 dinars and appointed several *shaḥnas* to be stationed there.⁸⁶ While dispatching armies to pursue the Khwārazm-Shāh and himself chasing his son Jalāl al-Dīn, he ordered that a letter of safety and a *shaḥna* be given to those cities that voluntarily submitted. The Mongols stationed *shaḥnas* in Ghaznin, Balkh, Radkan, Sarakhs, Herat, Hamadan, and other cities to the south of the Amu Darya, as attested not only by Persian sources but also by the *Shengwu qindinglu* and the *SH*.

In the *SH* (§§263, 278) we find two terms, *darugha* (pl. *darughas*) and *darughachi* (pl. *darughachin*), used in parallel. Early Ming translators rendered the first as “he who garrisons and defends” and the second as “the title of the officer who garrisons and defends.” In other words, one is the person and the other is the title. Of these two words, *darugha* became more widely used, but whenever this word was written in Chinese script it was set as *darughachi*.

82 Cleaves 1953, 254. 83 Golden 2000, 202. 84 HWC, 107. 85 Buell 1979.

86 HWC, 107, 122; TJG, 83–84, 96.

However, in Chinese–Mongolian bilingual steles, the word *darughachi* in the Chinese text is translated, with only rare exceptions, as *darugha* / *daruqa* in the Mongol text,⁸⁷ written either in Uighur or 'Phags-pa script, which shows that the Mongols in China preferred to use *darugha*, not *darughachi*.

The examples of *darugha* appointed by Chinggis Khan during the campaigns against the Jin and Khwārazm demonstrate the characteristics of this office in the early years of the empire. First of all, the *darughas* were stationed to take control of the subjugated region. Second, one or a few *darughas* were appointed to each city, but as we see in the case of Tūshā Bāsqaq a superior *darugha* was assigned to a wider area embracing several cities. Third, the *darughas* were also installed among certain groups of people, as evidenced by the examples of the *darugha* of the artillerymen in north China and those of the wealthy people in Bukhara.⁸⁸ At this early stage their first duty was to collect human and material resources, and they were not permanent resident officials but ad hoc supervisors and collectors. Later, however, their task became more comprehensive, including the supervision of the census, the recruitment of soldiers, and the establishment of *jam* stations.⁸⁹

The institution of *darugha* was further expanded after the death of Chinggis Khan and up to the time of Möngke. According to the *SH*, “having appointed resident commissioners in Namging, Jungdu, and in cities everywhere, he [Ögödei] peacefully returned home, setting up camp at Qaraqorum.”⁹⁰ One Chinese source also writes, “in the eighth year of Taizong (1236) supervisors (*jian*) were appointed to all the chiefs of districts (*zhou*) and counties (*xian*).” The Chinese words *jian*, *jianguan*, and *shaojian* were other synonyms of *darugha(chi)*, and appointees oversaw the local administration of the entirety of north China. However, their duties were not restricted to the civil administration, as shown by the revolt of Ṭārābī in Bukhara in 1238–1239.

After Qubilai took power, the *darughas* in the Qa'an Ulus became more focused on civil rather than military affairs. This change was largely caused by the rebellion of Li Tan in 1261–1262. Alarmed by the potential threat of the Han feudal lords (*shihou*), who had monopolized civil, fiscal, and military power, Qubilai decided to detach the military from the civil administration. Thus, in 1265, he issued a famous edict, “The Mongols are to be assigned as *darughachi* in every circuit, the Han Chinese as director general (*congguan*),

87 Cleaves 1953. 88 HWC, 104–5. 89 Bartold 1977, 401. 90 *SH*, 205.

and the Huihais (Muslims) as associate director (*tongzhi*), and this should be upheld as a permanent principle.”⁹¹

It appears that this order was not fully implemented, however, since we find not a few *darughachis* drawn from the Han Chinese even after the edict.⁹² After the Southern Song was incorporated in 1276, Qubilai appointed *darughachis* in the newly conquered region, including several Han people. For example, a local gazetteer of the Zhenjiang circuit shows that between 1275 and 1289, among the twenty *darughachis* of this circuit, there were only two Mongols, while there were three Han, one Jurchen, and eighteen *semuren* people. As for director generals, Mongols numbered two, *semuren* five, Han eleven, and so on. There is no doubt that Qubilai’s 1265 edict should be viewed as a “guideline” rather than the “law.”⁹³

In the western *uluses* the institution of *darugha* was also introduced, but not exactly in the same fashion as seen in the east. In the early stage of his campaign Hülegü appointed some *darugha* or *shaḥna*; right after the fall of Baghdad he dispatched ‘Alī Bahādur into the city as *shaḥna*. Moreover, the learned ‘Alids in Hilla came to visit Hülegü and asked him to send a *shaḥna* to their city.⁹⁴ After taking Aleppo, Hülegü appointed Tükel Bakhshi as *shaḥna*, and when Damascus voluntarily submitted, Kitbuqa assigned a Mongol *shaḥna*, appointing three local Muslims as his assistants (*nökör*), to take charge of city affairs.⁹⁵

After Mongol rule was fully established in West Asia, *darughas* were placed in many cities. For example, reports from Aḥmad’s reign show their existence in Tabriz, Rayy, Shīrāz, and Isfahan.⁹⁶ Arghun appointed Tūnskā as *shaḥna* of Baghdad in 683/1284–1285, and also put *shaḥnas* in Tabriz and Isfahan.⁹⁷ During the reign of Ghazan, when Nawrūz rose in revolt, in order to strengthen his power he assigned and stationed *shaḥnas* in Rayy, Baramin, Khar, Simnan, Damghan, and Bistam. When Ghazan campaigned against Syria in 1299–1300, he appointed a *shaḥna* to Damascus upon the request of the city elders.

The *darughas* were supposed to supervise general affairs, collecting revenues and maintaining the security of the region. Although they did not possess their own troops, with a few exceptions like those in Baghdad, when riots broke out, they requested the dispatch of the army or took command of military units. For instance, in 1278 when two thousand “Negüderian” cavalry

91 YS, 106. 92 Jagchid 1980, 1: 554–94; Cho 2012. 93 Endicott-West 1989, 80–81.

94 JT/Thackston, 499; JT/Rawshan, 1019. 95 JT/Thackston, 503; JT/Rawshan, 1037.

96 JT/Thackston, 548, 553, 555, 558; JT/Rawshan, 1124, 1134, 1139, 1144.

97 JT/Thackston, 567, 572, 577; JT/Rawshan, 1164–65, 1174, 1183.

made a surprise attack on Fārs, a certain Bulghan, *shahna* of the region, along with other *amīrs* led the army and went out to fight.⁹⁸ Another duty of the *darughas* was judicial; when an incident took place, they participated in the process of investigation and trial, although they were limited to cases not directly related to Islamic law. One of the examples of the appointment of *basqaqs* included in *Dastūr al-kātib* demonstrates this point well: “From now on We entrust him to the post of *shahna*, i.e., *basqaq*, of that place, and so he should administer the matters of the *yārghū* and the affairs of *yasaq*.”⁹⁹

The Mongols also applied the *darugha* institution to Russian cities. We know that they stationed officials called *baskak(i)* soon after they had conquered the region, as witnessed by Carpini, who passed through the Pontic steppe in 1245. He reported that if the Russians did not obey, these *baskaks* summoned the Mongol troops and destroyed the area and its inhabitants.¹⁰⁰ As late as 1254–1255 we see references to *baskaks* in Russian chronicles. The YS also confirms that in 1257, during the reign of Möngke, a certain Kitai was dispatched to Russia as *darughachi*.¹⁰¹ The primary functions of the *baskaks* in this period were the supervision of censuses, the collection of taxes and tribute, and the conscription of troops.¹⁰²

From the early fourteenth century, however, mentions of the *baskakis* dwindle in the Russian sources, and instead of *baskaki* we begin to encounter officials called *darugi* supervising the affairs of Russian cities. It is puzzling how this change could have happened. A number of Russian scholars have considered these two officials as having slightly different functions: perhaps based on such reasoning, Donald Ostrowski argues that *darugha* and *shahna* were civilian governors while *basqaq* and *tammachi* were military governors, and that the Mongols probably adopted this dual administration from China.¹⁰³ It is not possible to go into detail here, but this hypothesis seems to be untenable. The job of *darugha* was not limited to civil affairs, and, as mentioned earlier, *tammachi* was not the title of an official but a name for a type of army.

Charles Halperin approaches the question of the transition from *baskaki* to *darugi* from a different perspective. He thinks that the transition reflects a change in the method of the Mongol administration of Russian cities; *darugi* were not stationed *in situ*, but stayed in Sarai, the capital of the *ulus*, and supervised the Russian cities under their jurisdiction. So, he writes, “If the

98 JT/Thackston, 540; JT/Rawshan, 1108. 99 Nakhchivani, 2: 35–39.

100 John of Plano Carpini 1955, 40. The Latin texts write this title incorrectly: *bastac*, *bascat*, *bascar*, and *baschath*. See *Sinica Franciscana*, 1: 86.

101 YS, 50. 102 Vernadsky 1953, 211–12. 103 Ostrowski 1998, 36–63.

baskaki can be likened to British colonial viceroys, the *darugi* resembled State Department desk officers.”¹⁰⁴ If we combine his observation with the fact that *darugha* and *basqaq* were actually synonyms, we may draw an interesting conclusion: in the early fourteenth century, the Mongols stopped dispatching *darugi*, whom local Russians used to call *baskaki*, and began to administer Russian affairs from Sarai, where they received and met Russian nobles who visited there and who began to call them by their proper Mongol title, *darugi*. We also should not forget that the institution of *darugha* continued to operate in the Chaghadaid Ulus up to the mid-fourteenth century, as attested both in Muslim sources (e.g., *Ẓafar-nāma*) and in the Turfan documents.¹⁰⁵

Now let us look at another official, called *jarghuchi* (Ch. *zhaluhuchi*; Persian *yārghūchī*). The stem of this Mongol word is *jarghu*, meaning “decision or judgment [in legal cases],” appended by a nominal suffix *-chi*. In the *SH* (§154) *jarghu* was translated as “judgment” (*duanshi*) and *jarghuchi* as “judge” (*duanshiguan*).¹⁰⁶ The *YS* writes that when Chinggis Khan first ascended to power there was no complicated business in the state, and so he “made the myriarch to command the army and the *jarghuchi* to judge on legal matters, and only one or two royal nobles or senior ministers were appointed to the task.”¹⁰⁷

In fact, we can find two persons who were appointed by Chinggis Khan as *jarghuchi* in the very early stage: his half-brother Belgütei and the “sixth brother” Shigi Qutuqu. Shigi Qutuqu he entrusted with two duties, “dividing the shares and judging the judicial matters (*qubi qubilaghshan, jarghu jargulaghshan*),”¹⁰⁸ and he was ordered to write down his decisions on these two matters in the “Blue Book” (*kökö debter*). The two duties were in fact closely interrelated, because when there was strife over the shares he had to resolve the dispute by passing a legal judgment.¹⁰⁹

Shigi Qutuqu continued to work as *jarghuchi* in the reign of Ögödei, who in 1234 appointed him the *jarghuchi* of north China (*zhongzhou duanshiguan*). But, at the same time, we can find *jarghuchis* of non-Mongol origins. For example, Yüril Temür and Tang Renzu were Uighurs, Sayyid Ajjal a Muslim, and Shi Tianlin Han Chinese.¹¹⁰ Hesimali (Ismā‘īl), either a Khitan or a Turk (or Persian?), was the *basqaq* of Kasan under the Qara Khitai, but in 1239 Ögödei appointed him *jarghuchi*.¹¹¹ These people, mentioned above, were employed because Ögödei needed their service in dealing with various matters in the process of war, such as the violation of military rules, the management of

104 Halperin 1987, 39. 105 Yazdī 2008, 1: 701, 913, 942; Cerensodnom and Taube 1983, 176.

106 *SH*, 572–73. 107 *YS*, 2119, 2187. 108 *SH*, 135. 109 Yokkaichi 2005.

110 *YS*, 3050, 3253, 3063, 3619. 111 *YS*, 2969–70.

conquered people of different ethnic origins, and the resolution of juridical disputes.¹¹²

During the reign of Ögödei the entire conquered region was divided into three large provinces, of east, central, and West Asia. After Möngke ascended the throne, these three regions were called the “branch secretariat” (*xingsheng*) of Yanjing, Beshbaliq, and Amu Darya. We should not forget, however, that “branch secretariat” presupposes a “central secretariat” such as we find in Qubilai’s era. During the time of Möngke there was no such term, but without doubt Mongolia, centered in Qaraqorum, should be regarded as the region administered by the “central secretariat.”

Based on this assumption, we can interpret a report in the YS in a new light; in 1251, right after his accession, Möngke appointed Menggeser as *jarghuchi* aided by Bolghai, and sent other high officials to the three provinces.¹¹³ There is no mention of their official titles, but we can conclude that they were *jarghuchis* and *bichēchis* of the four provinces.¹¹⁴ The details are given in Table 6.1.

The institution of the *jarghuchi* was considerably changed after Qubilai took power, the office being ramified into diverse central and regional administrative units. First of all, the affairs conducted by the *jarghuchi* in the steppe were now administered in the “High Court for Mongols” (*da zongzheng fu*), first established in 1265. The High Court covered every crime related to princes, sons-in-law, Mongols, and *semuren* people, but for crimes committed by Han Chinese only those of specific categories were dealt with, such as rape, fraud, poisoning, and kidnapping. However, in 1272 Qubilai

Table 6.1 *Jarghuchis* and *bichēchis* in the four regions at the time of Möngke’s accession

	<i>Jarghuchi</i>	<i>Bichēchi</i>
Mongolia	Menggeser	Bolghai
East Asia	Yalawāch, Bujir, Wolubu, Tutar	Sayyid Ajjal, Niẓām al-Dīn
Central Asia	Noghai, Taraqai, Mas‘ūd	‘Abd Allāh Uzun, Aḥmad, Yedi Shah
West Asia	Arghun Aqa	Fakhr al-Dīn, Niẓām al-Dīn

112 Jagchid 1980, 1: 247–52. 113 YS, 44–45; cf. HWC, 596–98.

114 YS, 45–46; JT/Thackston, 40, 412; JT/Rawshan, 847; William of Rubruck 1990, 194, 208, 221, 250, 252; Allsen 1986, 503–4.

ordered the High Court to administer only cases involving Mongols. *Jarghuchis* were also posted at various bureaus of the central and the regional administration, such as the Central Secretariat, the Bureau of Military Affairs, and the Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs (*xuanzheng yuan*). They were also placed in the domains of the princes, sons-in-law, royal families, and meritorious ministers.

The bifurcation of *jarghuchis* into two different offices, one the High Court for Mongols, and the other covering the various central and regional administrative organs, could be understood as an evolution from the earlier division of *jarghuchis*, i.e., those who dealt with nomads in the steppe and those who administered cases in the conquered areas. However, we should note that the *jarghuchis* at the High Court performed both the judgment of legal cases and the distribution of wealth, while those who were posted at other administrative bureaus took care only of judicial affairs.

The appointment of *jarghuchi* and the application of two different legal systems was not a phenomenon unique to the Qa'an Ulus. In the Hūlegü Ulus we can find not a few persons who carried the title of *yārghūchī* or *amīr-i yārghū*. The duty of the *yārghūchī* is most succinctly described in the *Dastūr al-kātib*, where we can find three specimens of the appointment of *amīr-i yārghū*.¹¹⁵ The text contains descriptions of the court of interrogation (*yārghū*), the duties and the importance of the *yārghūchī*, the matters that require attention and caution, and admonitions for high officials.¹¹⁶ It thus appears that to the Mongols the *yārghū* was similar to the *sharī'a* court among the Muslims, and that legal judgment was to be made based on the *yasaq* of Chinggis Khan. The *yārghūchīs* were therefore supposed to be familiar with his *yasaqs* and admonitions (*qūtātghū bilik*), as well as with the various ordinances (*tūrahā*), and were to make fair and righteous judgments based on such knowledge. When the *yārghū* was opened, the concerned parties had to answer honestly not only to the *yārghūchīs* but also to their assistants and scribes who were preparing a "court report" (*yārghū-nāma*).¹¹⁷

Yet the *yārghūchīs* mentioned in these records were those who worked in the great *ordos* (*amīr-i yārghū-yi ōrdō-yi mu'azzam*). They resided in the court of the ilkhans and took charge of cases among the Mongols. Legal cases arising among the Muslims were no doubt taken care of at the court of *sharī'a* presided over by a *qāḍī*. When he visited the court of Qutluq Temür, governor of Khwārazm, belonging to the Jochid Ulus, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa observed

115 See English translation in Vásáry 2016.

116 Nakhchivanī 1964–1976, 2: 29–35; Lambton 1988, 89.

117 Lambton 1988, 83–90; Hodous 2012, 85–96.

that in his audience hall, opposite the *qāḍī*, accompanied by the jurists and clerks, “one of the great *amīrs*” was sitting, probably the *yeke jarghuchi*, “accompanied by eight of the great *amīrs* and *shaikhs* of the Turks, who are called [*y*] *arghujīs*.”¹¹⁸ He added, “The people bring their disputes to them for decision; those that come within the jurisdiction of the religious law are decided by the *qāḍī*, and all others are decided by those *amīrs*.”¹¹⁹ However, sometimes it was not the ethnic background but the nature of the case that became the criterion of which court should be responsible. Cases of embezzlement and sedition belonged to the *yarghu* court, not the *qāḍī*, even when the persons involved were not Mongols.¹²⁰

As mentioned above, the most important basis of legal judgment in the court of the *yārghū* was *jasaq*, or *yāsā* in Perso-Turkic pronunciation. In the *SH* this word is translated as *fadu*, meaning “regulation, institution, and rules.” However, beyond this usual meaning, it was understood as an inviolable law with strong restrictive power. Since the critical studies of David Ayalon not a few scholars have contributed to broadening our understanding of the characteristics of *jasaq*, but at the same time sharp dissent continues to be expressed. On this question it seems there are basically two schools of thought: one arguing that Chinggis Khan’s “great *jasaq* was not a statute embodied in book form but a collective term denoting a number of decrees and commands,”¹²¹ and the other asserting that it was a legal code consisting of Chinggis Khan’s orders on government, the military, law, and the distribution of booty, compiled after his death.¹²²

Chancellery Practices: *Yarligh* and *Üge*

In the early thirteenth century, when they founded their empire, the Mongols did not have their own script. However, Chinggis Khan realized the importance of this and adopted the Uighur script, and later Qubilai commissioned a high Tibetan monk to invent a new script. Thus in 1269 the so-called ‘Phagspa script, named after its inventor, was promulgated as an official imperial script. It did not, of course, completely replace the other scripts which had been utilized since the time of Chinggis Khan: the Mongols continued to use the Uighur script, while the Han Chinese kept using the Chinese characters and the Muslims in Central and Western Asia used the Arabic. The Önggüts, Nestorian Christians in Inner Mongolia, used the Syriac script, as we see on

118 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 545. 119 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 545. 120 Lambton 1988, 87.

121 Ratchnevsky 1974; Morgan 1986b; Morgan 2005. 122 De Rachewiltz 1993; cf. Uno 2002.

their tombstones. The 1345 inscription on the inside wall of the Juyongguan, north of present-day Beijing, is made up of six different scripts: 'Phags-pa, Uighur, Chinese, Tangut, Tibetan, and Sanskrit. A stone inscription of 1348 found in Dunhuang, and the hexaglot dictionary compiled for a Rasulid king of Yemen in the late fourteenth century, attest to the multilingualism of the Mongol Empire.¹²³

Obviously, Mongol chancellery practices had already begun during the reign of Chinggis Khan. As recorded in the YS, when he vanquished the Naimans in 1204, he captured Tatatonga, who had been keeping a golden seal and taking care of the revenue on behalf of the Naiman king. Chinggis Khan made him stay close to him and use the seal when he issued decrees.¹²⁴ The fact that the seal was actually used along with his decree is shown by Juwaynī's description of how Jebe and Sübedei gave to the envoys of Nishapur, when they came to express their submission, an *al tamgha* ("vermilion seal") inscribed in the Uighur script and a copy of a *yarligh* of Chinggis Khan intended for the people of Nishapur.¹²⁵ Qiu Chuji, a Daoist master who had an audience with Chinggis Khan in 1222 in the Hindu Kush, received a "letter with imperial seal (*xishu*)."¹²⁶

In Ögödei's reign, the realm of the empire was vastly expanded and the conquered sedentary regions were divided, as mentioned above, into three large provinces. The multilingual chancellery practice became daily business and was further systematized. Professional scribes, *bichēchi* or *bitigchi*, were needed who could write orders in Chinese, Uighur, and Persian. Peng Daya, a Song envoy who visited the Mongol court in 1232, mentioned that Chinqai and Yelü Chucai were taking charge of Muslim and Khitay affairs.¹²⁷ In the report by Carpini we can find the same Chinqai at the court of Güyük; he worked with Bala and Qadaq, whom he called "protonotaries" of the empire, as well as with "many other scribes." Carpini gives us a vivid description of how Chinqai and Qadaq meticulously supervised the translation of imperial edicts into Latin and Persian so that their meaning and intention could be transmitted exactly without alteration.¹²⁸

During the reign of Möngke, despite the sudden shift of power to the Toluids, the chancellery tradition established by the preceding rulers continued without much change. Chinqai, the chief secretary, was replaced by Bolghai, who had Möngke's trust. Even after the creation of the Hülegü Ulus, and in spite of the growing autonomy of the western *uluses*, important

123 Hujerileitu and Sarula 2004, 453; Golden 2000. 124 YS, 3048. 125 HWC, 145.

126 YS, 4524–25.

127 Zhao 2009, 366. 128 John of Plano Carpini 1955, 66–67.

features of the chancellery works remained unchanged. It is noteworthy that, despite the growing political fragmentation during the last four decades of the thirteenth century, chancellery practices display a remarkable level of continuity.

The format and the contents of the decrees are a good example. First, let us briefly examine how the decrees were prepared and issued. Decrees at that time can be classified into two categories: in Mongolian, these can be termed the *jarliq* ("edict") issued by the qa'an, and the *üge* ("word," i.e., order) issued by princes and other nobles. In Turkic they were called *yarligh* and *söz*. In Chinese the classification became more elaborate, so that the qa'an's *jarliq* (*yarligh*) was divided into two kinds: *shengzhi* transmitting his verbal commands in a "direct" (or hard) Chinese translation, and *zhaoshu*, which were based on his commands but now written in elegant Chinese. The *üge* also received different terms depending upon who issued them: the *lingzhi* of a prince, *yizhi* of an empress or princess, *junzhi* of the Central Secretariat, and *fazhi* of high monks.

Before being issued and taking effect, the decrees had to be validated by two processes: confirmation of contents and affixing of a seal. Of course, it was impossible for the qa'an to review every edict with his own eyes, but he did peruse at least the important ones and sometimes gave instruction that certain expressions be changed.¹²⁹ Even if the qa'an did not check his own edicts, key administrative offices like the Central Secretariat or the Censorate usually reviewed the contents.

When this process of confirmation was completed, the qa'an's seal was affixed. We have mentioned above how Chinggis Khan let his seals be affixed on the edicts and given to the Daoist monk Qiu Chuji. When Ögödei was enthroned, he ordered Tatatonga to take charge of the jade seal.¹³⁰ It seems that the Mongols introduced the Chinese-style jade seal alongside the golden seal of Naiman origins. Qubilai also had two different seals, one made of jade that was used for edicts given to the highest officials of the first and the second ranks, and the other made of gold that was used for those given to the third-, fourth-, and fifth-ranking officials.¹³¹ According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Ghazan introduced four seals (*tamgha*) made of different materials and of different sizes for various categories of grandee and official: a large jade seal, a small jade seal, a large gold seal, and a small gold seal.¹³² There is no doubt

¹²⁹ YS, 3773, 3855. ¹³⁰ YS, 3048. ¹³¹ YS, 95.

¹³² JT/Rawshan, 1468; JT/Thackston, 726.

that his seal reform, like other reforms that he introduced, was inspired by the institutions of the Qa'an Ulus.

Some of the ilkhan's edicts and letters were affixed with seals inscribed in Chinese characters. For example, Abaqa and Arghun used a seal ending with the two characters *zhibao*, which means "treasure seal," and Ghazan also had a similar seal with the same phrase. Traditionally, in China, seals containing the expression *zhibao* could be used only by the emperor, but the Mongols were apparently not so strict and the qa'ans used to bestow such seals on powerful princes. For example, Ögödei gave Chaghadaï a seal inscribed *huangxiong zhibao* ("treasure seal of emperor's elder brother").¹³³ Probably the two seals used by Abaqa, Arghun, and Ghazan were also made in the Qa'an Ulus and bestowed on them.¹³⁴ However, it is hard to regard another seal used by Öljeitü and Abū Sa'īd, also ending with *zhibao*, as being bestowed by the qa'an because of its obvious imperial pretensions: it reads "Treasure seal of the emperor with true mandate and pacifying myriad of barbarians."¹³⁵ It is more likely that it was made by order of the last ilkhans, who internally were posturing as emperors but externally acting like princes (*waiwang neidi*).

In the Hūlegü Ulus, high officials like powerful *amīrs* or viziers put their seals or signatures on the back of documents before the edicts were issued. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Ghazan stipulated certain procedures to ensure the veracity of the edicts.¹³⁶ Thus Ghazan put his own seal, called the "vermillion seal" (*al tamgha*), on the front of the edict while the *amīrs* of the four *keshigs* put their "black seals" (*qara tamgha*) on the reverse. In fact, Ghazan's letter of 1302 sent to Pope Boniface VIII had a countersignature (*üjig*), though not a "black seal," of the four *amīrs*.¹³⁷ We can also find a similar institution of *al tamgha* in the Chaghadaid Ulus, as attested by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa,¹³⁸ and in the Jochid Ulus we see the same custom of ensuring the authenticity of the decrees issued by the *amīrs* of the four *keshigs*.¹³⁹

Finally, let us take a brief look at the structure of the edicts and orders issued by Mongol rulers and nobles. We have several decrees and letters preserved in the Vatican, Paris, and Tehran, and also a large number of documents found in Ardabīl. In China, although we do not have original documents, there are numerous stone inscriptions copying the original. These sources show a surprising degree of uniformity in terms of structure,

133 YS, 3352. 134 Mostaert and Cleaves 1952. 135 Cf. Allsen 2001, 36–37.

136 JT/Thackston, 725–26. 137 Mostaert and Cleaves 1952. 138 Biran 2008, 388.

139 Atwood 2006.

irrespective of which *ulus* they were made in and in what language they were written.¹⁴⁰

For example, the writing style called *taitou* (“elevating the head”) in China was widely adopted in the decrees of the Mongol period. Where one encounters words referring to Heaven, the emperor, or other revered objects, the line of the text stops and a new line starts, elevated between one and three characters above the height of the regular line. There are also other variations of *taitou* such as leaving an empty space in front of a revered word, not changing lines, or putting a blank for such a word and writing that word at the head of the line. Sometimes the scribes used ink of different colors, gold or red, for such words. Although this *taitou* format did not originate in the steppe tradition, it was adopted by the Mongols and became a standard chancellery practice during the Mongol period in all the *uluses*.

In terms of structure, the decrees consisted of three parts: initial protocol, main text, and ending part. In particular, many Mongol decrees begin with a set phrase invoking heavenly support, *möngke tenggri-yin küchün-dür* (“In the power of eternal heaven”). This was then followed by another phrase praying for the protection of an ancestral spirit, *yeke suu jali-yin ibegen-dür* (“By the protection of the blessing of great [ancestors]”), or for protection by the qa’an, *qa’an-u suu-dür* (“By the good fortune of qa’an”). The initial part also includes the name of the one who issued the decree (*intitulatio*) and of those to whom it was addressed (*publicatio* and *inscriptio*). The name of the issuer usually comes with a phrase like *yarligh manu* (“Our edict”) or *üge manu* (“Our word”) – the former for the qa’an and the latter for princes or nobles. The main text includes the background of the decree, i.e., why and how it came to be issued (*narratio*), and then its actual contents (*dispositio*). Finally, the decree ends with the name of the place where it was written and the year in the animal cycle and the month when it was drawn up, sometimes adopting the emperor’s reign year or the *hijrī* calendar.

The Postal System: *Jam*

The postal system of the Mongol Empire, the *jam*, was introduced during the reign of Chinggis Khan, as attested in the records of Qiu Chuji and Yelü Chucai, who traveled through the steppe and availed themselves of it.¹⁴¹ Zhao Gong, a Song envoy, mentions two different kinds of *paiza* possessed by the Mongols: golden *paiza* of a tiger head and silver *paiza* inscribed in

¹⁴⁰ Matsukawa 1995; Herrmann 2004; Biran 2008; Usmanov 1979.

¹⁴¹ For the routes taken by these two: Shim 2014.

Chinese with the phrase “Heavenly bestowed edict of Chinggis Khan.” As a matter of fact, very similar *paizas* were found in north China, and some of them bore an inscription in the Khitan script, “riding horse” (*zouma*).¹⁴² There is no doubt that the Mongol postal system in its early stage was inspired by the Khitan and Jurchen models.

The transformation of the postal system into a particular Mongol style took place during the period of Ögödei. In the autumn of 1229, right after his enthronement, he ordered that storehouses be established and postal relay stations be set up. His special attention to this problem was closely related to the establishment of the new capital, Qaraqorum, which could not be sustained without an uninterrupted influx of people and materials. Thus he needed to construct an expeditious and extensive transportation and communication network over the entire imperial realm. He urged Chaghadaï and Batu to set up their own postal stations and connect with each other so that envoys could travel and every corner of the empire be connected. Ögödei regarded the establishment of the *jam* as one of his four great achievements.¹⁴³

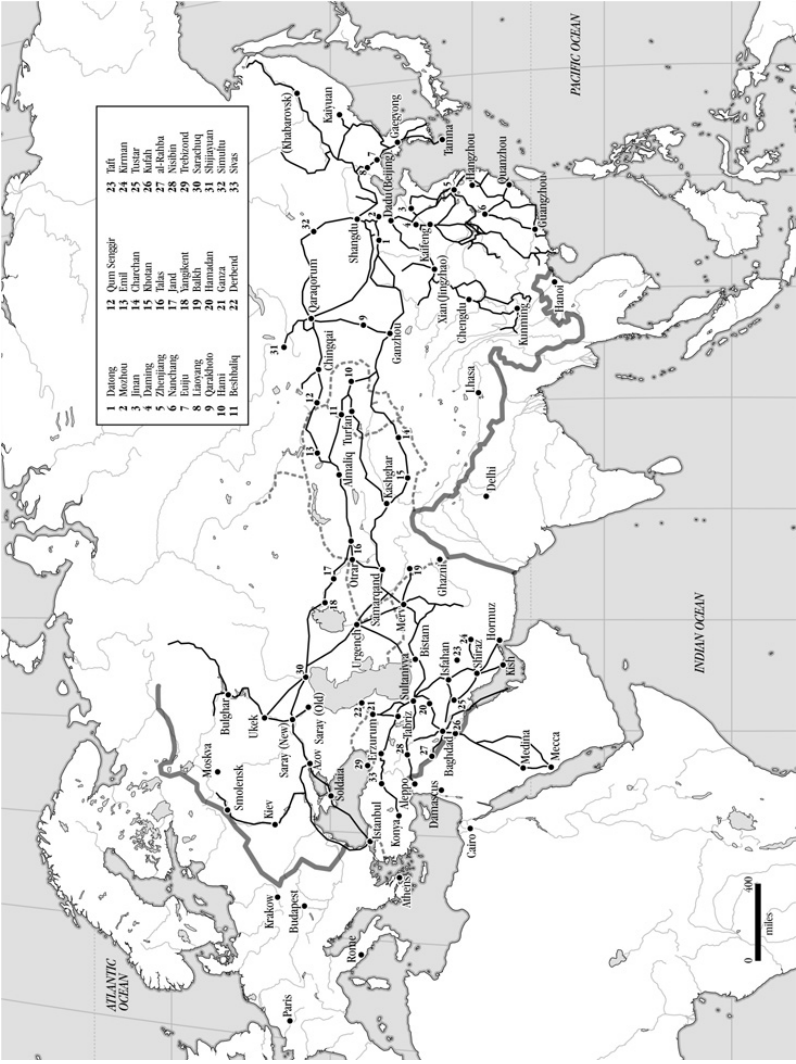
The *jam* stations were also established in West Asia from around the end of 1239 or the beginning of 1240. Körgüz “established *yams* in various places complete with horses and other necessities” so that the Mongol *amïrs*, envoys and army should not extort such items from the peasants.¹⁴⁴ The network connecting north China and Qaraqorum was constructed as well. Rashïd al-Dïn mentions that Ögödei ordered the establishment of two *jam* routes called *bayan* (rich) and *narin* (narrow). Every five *färsang* (about thirty kilometers) a station was established, and there were thirty-seven stations in total.¹⁴⁵ In a later period, according to the YS, there existed three *jam* routes connecting two regions that were named after the means of transportation; *tergen* (cart), *morin* (horse), and *narin*. The last was used exclusively for urgent military matters. On the three routes altogether 119 stations were set up.¹⁴⁶

Later, during Möngke’s reign, the postal system was further expanded to the sedentary regions. Juwaynï wrote, “throughout the length and breadth of the land they established *yams*, and made arrangements for the upkeep and expenses of each *yam* . . . All this they shared out amongst the *tümen*, each two *tümen* having to supply one *yam*.”¹⁴⁷ So already before the accession of Qubilai the extensive imperial postal network was already fairly well established, and the Franciscan friars who traveled from Western Europe to

¹⁴² Dang 2001, 39–40. ¹⁴³ SH, 214–15. ¹⁴⁴ HWC, 501–2.

¹⁴⁵ JT/Rawshan, 671; JT/Boyle, 62–63; JT/Thackston, 328–29. Boyle and Thackston opted for *tayan*, not *bayan*.

¹⁴⁶ YS, 1383. ¹⁴⁷ HWC, 33.



Map 6.1 Mongol jam highways (Joe LeMonnier, <https://mapartist.com/>)
Source: based on the data found in Tan 1982–1987, vol. 7 (Yuan–Ming); Qazwīnī 1919; Morihira 2013, and others.

Qaraqorum left vivid descriptions of its operation and efficiency.¹⁴⁸ For example, Rubruck left Batu's camp on the bank of the Volga on September 15, 1253, and arrived at the court of Möngke on December 27 of the same year. It took 100 days to cover about 4,500 kilometers, which means that every day he traveled an average of forty-five kilometers. Given the terrain he had to cover, including desert, mountains, and gorges, not to mention the severe weather, it certainly would have been impossible had it not been for the Mongol postal system.

However, due to the internal strife starting from 1260, communication across the continent was often interrupted. Marco Polo writes that he escorted a Mongol princess and other envoys via the Indian Ocean because the land route was blocked. Öljeitü boasted in his letter to King Philip of France that the Mongols had finally ended the family feuds that had lasted forty-five years and thus succeeded in reconnecting the *jams* across the empire.

Postal communication within each *ulus*, on the other hand, was not much impaired; on the contrary, because of increased traffic these systems had to be improved. In the Qa'an Ulus, for instance, a Bureau for Communications (*tongzheng yuan*) was established in 1276, but as the conditions of the *jam* system became increasingly precarious, in 1311 the bureau was abolished and the Ministry of War in the Central Secretariat took over its task. Later, the bureau was reintroduced and *jam* affairs were taken care of by the two offices together.

According to a source, about 1,400 stations existed in the Qa'an Ulus; most of them were horse stations (*mazhan*; 928 stations) and water stations (*shuizhan*, 424 stations), followed by other stations – ox, cart, hound, and so on. The total number of *jam* households varied depending on how many were allotted for the upkeep of a *jam*; 200 households per *jam* would make about 300,000 households, while 500 would make 750,000.¹⁴⁹ These households had responsibility for supplying the *jams* with lodges, horses (or boats), food (*süsi*), fodder, personnel (*ulaghchi*), and other necessities.

Who, then, was entitled to use the *jam* facilities? First of all, those who were performing duties related to the emperor or his court: for example, ministers and officials summoned by the emperor, envoys dispatched to princes in outer regions or carrying tribute, and merchants transporting goods for the Chinggisids. Although ordinary merchants were forbidden to have recourse to the stations, many of them managed to conduct their

148 John of Plano Carpini 1955, 27; William of Rubruck 1990, 140. 149 Chen 1991, 159.

business at the public's expense.¹⁵⁰ Second, if urgent matters arose, Mongol princes, princesses, and sons-in-law could use the *jam* facilities provided they had the legal documents. They dispatched regular envoys to their own fiefs (*touxia*, or *aymaq*) to receive their dues, and these so-called "officially dispatched personnel" (*gongcha renyuan*) had the right to use the *jams*. Lastly, civil and military officials who were traveling to a new post or to perform official duties also had right of usage.¹⁵¹

In order to use the *jam* facilities one had to carry a *paiza* showing one's status, as well as the necessary official documents, called *puma zhazi* and *belge* ("certificate"), stating the purpose of travel, the number of people, and the route to be taken. However, since so many nobles and merchants resorted to the postal stations, frequently traveling for matters that were not officially approved, it was very difficult for the *jam* households to make ready all the items which they were charged with supplying. Although they had been exempted from land tax, up to four *qing* (about 6.67 hectares) per household, and other miscellaneous levies, the soaring price of horses and the illegal abuses rendered their lives more and more unbearable. For example, according to a report of the Central Secretariat, from September to December of 1308, Liangxiang station near Dadu had to provide more than 13,300 horses, which means that an average of 130 horses were levied *every day* during those four months. It was stipulated that this station should maintain 124 horses, so even if all these horses were mobilized day after day without rest this was still insufficient to meet the demand.¹⁵² It is no surprise that many *jamchis* ran away and that the postal system was already beginning to falter by the beginning of the fourteenth century.

The situation was not much different in the Hūlegü Ulus. We know that Körgüz and Arghun Aqa set up postal stations: however, the sources do not give much information about the functioning of the *jam* system. From the time of Hūlegü to Ghazan's era, there are only a few scattered records. For example, Grigor of Akanc mentions Hūlegü's introduction of the *jam* system in Armenia,¹⁵³ and we also have an edict issued by Abaqa to the envoys of Pope Nicholas III, ordering officials on their routes to provide "postal horses (*ulagha*), drink (*umda*) and rations (*sigüsü*)."¹⁵⁴

The *jam* institution in Iran also seems to have come under heavy abuse that prevented normal operation. The major causes were too many envoys (*ilchi*) exploiting the *jam* facilities, and the illegal and unjust administration of

150 Allsen 2010, 255–56. 151 Dang 2006. 152 *Zhanchi*, 8–2, 9–1; *Zhanchi*, 4–1, 4–2.

153 Blake and Frye 1949, 345; Silverstein 2007, 156. 154 Mostaert and Cleaves 1952, 433–44.

the local officials who, even though enormous expense was devoted to the upkeep of the *jams*, never stopped squeezing ever more money from the peasants on the same pretext. Envoys who could not maintain sufficient provisions quickly resorted to extortion and plunder from whomever they encountered, and the conditions deteriorated so far that, as Ghazan deplored, even if there had been 5,000 (!) horses at every *jam*, it still would not have been enough to provide adequate service to the envoys passing through in such multitudes. Of course, as David Morgan warns us, we should be mindful of Rashīd al-Dīn's tendency to exaggerate the situation before the time of Ghazan.¹⁵⁵

Thus, with the help of Rashīd al-Dīn, Ghazan introduced reform measures. First of all, he prohibited Mongol nobles from dispatching envoys and making use of the *jam* if they were not equipped with authentic and proper documents, specifically a letter in his writing (*khaṭṭ-i mubārak*) affixed with his own gold seal (*āltūn tamghā-i khāṣṣa*) or signature (*nishān*). And for use in case of unexpected emergency, he issued documents (*matkūb*) stamped with his golden seal that allowed the holders to expropriate postal horses from *jam* stations.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, to stop local officials' extortions from the peasantry, he ordered that envoys should receive their expenses, calculated according to the stipulations, from the central government. They were supposed to purchase whatever was necessary for their travel themselves, and not to use the postal horses or stations, which were reserved only for official emergencies. It is quite probable that his postal reform was implemented along with other reform measures, many of which were inspired by the models in the Qa'an Ulus through the mediation of the "cultural broker" Bolad Chingsang.¹⁵⁷

The rule and the legacy of the Mongol Empire have been the subject of controversy, as aptly symbolized by the two rival catchphrases, the "Tatar yoke" and the "Pax Mongolica." It is true that in recent times it is the latter aspect which has tended to receive more emphasis, but this must be understood as more than a simple reaction to the prejudice of the past generations. As demonstrated by numerous studies during the last thirty years,¹⁵⁸ stimulated by the pioneering works of Thomas T. Allsen, the "Pax Mongolica" was certainly more than a fancy chapter title for world-history books or a "brilliant simplification."¹⁵⁹ Though likewise we should be careful not to

¹⁵⁵ Morgan 2000, 383–84. ¹⁵⁶ JT/Thackston, 714–18.

¹⁵⁷ Silverstein 2007, 157–64; Allsen 1996. ¹⁵⁸ Jackson 2000; Biran 2013; Morgan 2015.

¹⁵⁹ Franke 1966, 50.

negate or underestimate the dark chapters of the Mongol conquest and devastation that it brought about.

Wherever the truth may lie, what we need for an accurate and balanced appraisal of the Mongol Empire and its legacy is a thorough understanding of the reality of their rule, for which studies of imperial institutions are indispensable. In the preceding pages we have dealt with only some of the more prominent and important features of imperial institutions, but we hope that the description of these subjects, despite the apparent limitations of our knowledge, may explain important aspects of Mongol rule and demonstrate the significance of imperial institutions. Moreover, some of the imperial institutions were inherited by the post-Mongol states and established new traditions which would endure for a long time to come. In this sense, the imperial institutions should play a pivotal role in our study of the Mongol Empire.

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Imperial Ideology

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The Doctrine and Its Dissemination

While the Mongols, like other empire builders, relied heavily on military might, often ruthlessly applied, they nonetheless sought ideological sanction for their conquest and rule. The most striking feature of this ideology is its extreme brevity:

Möngke Tengri-yin küchün-dür
Qa'an-u su-dur
By the might of Eternal Heaven
By the good fortune of the qa'an

This claim first appears in the latter half of Chinggis Khan's reign and for steppe peoples the message was clear: Heaven bestowed upon the Mongolian ruler a mandate for universal dominion on Earth and a special good fortune that guarantees its success. Consequently, refusal to submit to Mongolian authority constituted, in their eyes, rebellion against Heaven's design and was punished accordingly.¹

Ideologies of legitimation can be usefully divided into two types: the systematized doctrines enunciated by bookmen and buttressed by appeals to philosophy, cosmology, and theology and a far more diffuse variety that arises from, and is transmitted through, popular culture and religion. That of the Mongols clearly belongs to the second.

The imperial ideology of the steppe peoples, first articulated in the inscriptions of the Turk Qaghanate (552–742) and the Uighur Empire (744–840) is virtually identical with, and antecedent to, the Mongolian formulation.²

^{*} This chapter is based in part on my previous publications: [Allsen 1991](#); [Allsen 1996](#); [Allsen 1997](#), 58–60; [Allsen 2006](#), 161–63; [Allsen 2009](#).

¹ The basic work is [de Rachewiltz 1973](#). ² For Turkic ideology: [Golden 1982](#).

Between these two eras of empire in the eastern steppe there was, however, a 375-year hiatus, a period of minimal states without written languages, during which time this ideology was not “operative” but “held in reserve.”³ The centrality of the oral tradition in its preservation and dissemination is brought out by Peng Daya, a Song envoy, who reports in 1237 that the Mongols constantly say, “Relying on the might of Eternal Heaven and the good fortune (*fiyin*) of the emperor.”⁴ Such usage in daily conversation strongly suggests that the formula was a familiar element of an inherited folk tradition and that the Mongolian rank and file accepted these doctrines at face value.

In its written form, their ideological message first appears in Mongolian, Chinese, and other languages in the reigns of Chinggis Khan’s immediate successors, Ögödei (r. 1229–1241), Güyük (r. 1246–1248), and Möngke (r. 1251–1259) in an increasingly standardized formula. It was widely broadcast in the opening lines of their orders of submission, with their thinly veiled threats of imminent invasion, which the Mongols sent to foreign courts from Korea to Europe. From these documents, it is apparent that in the Mongols’ notion of interstate relations there was no room for diplomatic parity.

Following submission or conquest, the written word continued to play a vital role in the communication of the Mongols’ political doctrines, especially to the adherents of world religions who constituted the great majority of the sedentary population of the empire. The primary vehicle of transmission was tax immunities first bestowed on Daoist priests in 1223 and thereafter extended to Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim clerics, a privilege that many churchmen found attractive since the Mongols made heavy demands on their subjects.⁵ These immunities are best documented in north China, where substantial numbers were issued throughout the Yuan period in Mongolian, Tibetan, and Chinese, all of which open with some version of their ideological formula. As these texts make clear, through studied repetition, in return for this imperial favor the beneficiaries were “to invoke Heaven and pray for the good fortune (*fu*)” of the emperor.⁶

Since the immunities were engraved on stelae or temple walls, they were public documents which local inhabitants could read. Of far greater importance, however, these edicts served as constant reminders for clergymen to remember the Chinggisids in their prayers and, of course, to share these sentiments with their congregations.

3 On this concept: [Salzman 1978](#). 4 [Peng and Ting 1975](#), 488.

5 For the policy: [Atwood 2004](#). On its attractive power: [de Rachewiltz 1962](#), 32–33.

6 [Cai 1955](#), 21, 25, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, etc.; [Chavannes 1908](#), 372, 373, 376, 378, 388, 391, etc.; [Poppe 1957](#), 47, 49, 52.

Although we do not know what was actually said in the temples, churches, and mosques of the empire, it is evident that at Mongolian courts clerics publicly affirmed the Chinggisids' right to rule. In 1251, for example, Nestorian, Muslim, and "idolater priests" all hailed Möngke's elevation and thereafter followed his court, forecasting "his good fortune."⁷ This rare display of medieval ecumenicalism, however contrived, dramatically showcased Heaven's approval of the new qa'an's universal dominion.

In one case at least, such professions of support were undoubtedly sincere – those offered by the Christian clergy in the largely Muslim domains of the ilkhans. From Hülegü (r. 1256–1265) to Öljeitü (r. 1304–1316) the Mongolian court in Iran issued patents of investiture to the hierarchy of the eastern churches, granted them tax immunities and building funds, and honored them in public ceremonies. In return they expected and received their loyalty and blessings; that is, their open acknowledgment of Mongolian legitimacy.⁸

For their intercessors, the Mongols chose well. Only the clerical classes had the spiritual authority as well as the organizational and communications capabilities to promulgate the approved message to the Mongols' diverse and hard-pressed subjects.

That message, although issued in authoritative Mongolian texts, was always subject to adulteration, which began as soon as it was translated. At times, this led to serious misunderstanding. In diplomatic documents sent to the papacy and Mamluk Egypt the key Mongolian term, *il*, "submission," was translated into Latin as *pax* and Arabic as *sulh*, both meaning "peace." On other occasions mistranslation facilitated acceptance. In the Tibetan versions of Mongolian imperial edicts, the term *su*, "good fortune," is rendered by *bsod-nams*, "accumulated merit" (*punya*) which, following earlier Turkic precedent, gave the formula meaning within the Buddhist worldview.⁹

Some reinterpretations were incidental, but in time the blending of Mongolian ideology with the traditions of subject peoples became more extensive and calculated. During the reign of Qubilai (1260–1294) his lamaist advisers began transforming Chinggis Khan into a *chakravartin-rajā*, a "wheel-turning universal emperor," thereby linking him to Tibetan and Indian dynastic lines reaching back to Aśoka, the Mauryan monarch of the third century BCE. For Buddhists, the sacralization of Chinggis Khan meant that his

7 William of Rubruck 1990, 187; cf. *TJG*, 3: 21; and *HWC*, 2: 561.

8 Budge 1928, 144–45, 152–55, 161, 163–64, 198, etc.; Grigor of Akanc' 1949, 341, 343.

9 Schuh 1977, 122, 127, 145, 166; Zieme 1992a, 322.

accumulated merit, his charisma or good fortune, continued to be operative and accessible after his death.¹⁰

There was no equivalent attempt in Iran to retroactively make the Mongolian founder a Muslim, but with Ghazan's conversion Ilkhanid ideological formulas and titulature began to include more Muslim elements, which by dynasty's end claimed a dominant position. Still, there was always an undercurrent of Chinggisid imperial pretensions and some curious admixtures which sought to draw on both traditions. This is well illustrated in the ideological posturing of Yasa'ur, a Chaghadaid convert to Islam and ally of the ilkhans who in the course of his efforts to carve out an independent state in Khurasan between 1314 and 1320 presented himself to his Persian subjects as "The light in the eye of mankind, the light in the eyes of the Chinggisids, Emperor of Islam, Yasa'ur Khan, may God prolong his grandeur."¹¹ Even more unorthodox is the Mongolian formula on an edict the Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd sent to a prominent Muslim family in 1320:

Möngke Tengri-yin küchün-dür
Muqamad baighamber-ün imadur
Yeke su jali-yin ibegen-dür
By the might of Eternal Heaven
By the support of the of the Prophet Muḥammad
By the protection of the Great Fortune Flame¹²

There were, obviously, solid precedents for the later efforts of Temür (Tamerlane, r. 1370–1405) to exploit both Mongolian and Islamic sources of legitimacy.¹³

Given the immense size and cultural diversity of the empire, the question whether the Mongols consciously projected different ideological faces to different constituencies naturally arises. For the steppe zone the answer is that little adaptation was necessary. What is more surprising, however, is that many elements of the Mongolian ideology were shared with their sedentary subjects. This was so because the steppe's political culture formed in the centuries before the CE out of numerous local variants which in time became increasingly homogeneous through recurrent interaction with one another and with their sedentary neighbors.¹⁴ Consequently, notions about legitimacy, its symbols, and its rituals were often convergent and remained recognizable despite adaptation and reinterpretation. To cite but two examples: in the political and spiritual life of the Mongols and Chinese the worship of

¹⁰ Franke 1978, 52–72; Cf. Zieme 1992b, 77–78. ¹¹ Harawī 1944, 659.

¹² Cleaves 1953, 26–27. ¹³ Manz 1988. ¹⁴ Khazanov 2004, 493–94.

mountains and ancestors was of great importance, and not surprisingly both assumed prominent roles in the state ceremonies of the Yuan dynasty.

How the basics of Mongolian ideology – the heavenly mandate, good fortune and universal rule – played out in different parts of the empire is the crucial issue. In the absence of anything like public-opinion polls, the only alternative is to identify political concepts and terminology of subject peoples that were congruent or compatible with those of the Mongols to gauge the degree to which the conquered could slot the conquerors' ideological claims into their own political traditions.

Heavenly Mandates and World Empires

The proposition that the gods grant a particular dynasty the right to rule over their world (*oikoumene*) and the genius to implement this divine plan was both ancient and widespread. It was assuredly not the property of any single culture or ethnicity. The Scythians and other early nomads developed ideas concerning mandates that were similar to, but independent of, the more famous Chinese doctrine. And, regardless of origin or priority, these concepts were long-domesticated among nomads and sedentaries and therefore held to be indigenous by all parties.

The Mongols' own understanding and acceptance of this notion were not instantaneous but rather evolved with the empire. The use of imperial titles only appears after the death of Chinggis Khan; in 1229 Ögödei became a qa'an, "emperor," in the hallowed tradition of the steppe, and his successor Güyük adopted equally grandiose titles, "Ruler of the Great Mongol Nation" (*Yeke Mongol Ulus-un qan*) and "Oceanic [Universal] Emperor" (*dalai-yin qan*).¹⁵ These changes were certainly inspired by the spectacular conquests of the 1230s and 1240s, an achievement which fueled a strong belief in the mandate. Their attitude was nicely captured by Rubruck, who states that the Mongols have "reached a level of arrogance that they believe the whole world is longing to make peace with them."¹⁶

Further evidence of their embrace of the mission is found in the Mongols' eagerness to tell others of their mandate. This they did in endless written and oral communications with subjects, travelers, and foreign princes. Since versions of the Mongols' ideological formula are found in thirteenth-century texts in Chinese, Tibetan, Persian, Arabic, Syriac, Latin, Old French,

¹⁵ De Rachewiltz 1983. ¹⁶ William of Rubruck 1990, 172–73.

Armenian, and Georgian, their message was certainly received, but how was it understood?

For one group of the empire's subjects, the Turkic-speaking nomads, comprehension was easy since they, too, worshipped the granting agency, Tengri, which they, like the Mongols, approached as a Sky/Heaven cult, not as a personal God. The same can be said of the Chinese, for whom *Tian*, "Heaven," had roughly equivalent characteristics and functions. In the monotheistic world, however, Tengri was regularly taken to be the Supreme Deity and translated by the Latin *Deus* and the Persian *Khudā-i buzurg*. Their modified perception of Tengri did not, however, preclude understanding or even acceptance of the mandate. It did mean, however, that the Mongols' adherents in Islamic lands had to explain matters in recognizable terms. One who tried to do so was 'Atā-Malik Juwaynī, a mid-level official of the Mongolian administration in Iran. Writing in the 1260s, he asserts that the "secret of the mandate (*manshūr*) was ascribed and made manifest on the brow of the dominion of Chinggis Khan and his progeny" and cites *Sura* iii.26, "Thou givest sovereignty unto whom thy wilt" to buttress his point with Qur'anic authority.¹⁷

As a paid spokesman for the Chinggisids, his pronouncements might well be dismissed, but this is mistaken since contemporaries, not so inclined, held the same view. In the 1240s, Armenian and Georgian princes, who fully understood that the Mongols claimed a heavenly mandate, reluctantly came to the conclusion "that God was giving power and victory to them," and thereupon ceased their resistance and submitted.¹⁸ Two decades later, Jūzjānī, a Turkestani refugee in India bitterly hostile to the Mongols, was also constrained to admit that they possessed a "heavenly mandate" (*qaṣā-i āsmānī*), and that "by the decrees of Heaven and commands of Divine Destiny the turn of world sovereignty (*jahānbānī*) passed from the Rulers of Iran and Turan to Chinggis Khan and his descendants."¹⁹

In China, selling the mandate was easier. Here this familiar doctrine was communicated in a number of ways, including public inscriptions in Chinese. In the opening lines of these texts, often honoring loyal servitors, it is proclaimed that the emperor reigns by the "beneficent mandate of Heaven Above" (*shang tian juan ming*), a pronouncement acceptable to both Mongols and Chinese.²⁰ The receptivity of the latter is affirmed by the fact that Zhu

17 *TJG*, 2: 130; and *HWC*, 2: 400; *TJG*, 3: 138–39; and *HWC*, 2: 638.

18 Grigor of Akanc' 1949, 291, 297.

19 Jūzjānī 1864, 324, 344, 380; and Jūzjānī 1970, 869, 1006, 1070.

20 Chavannes 1908, 312–13, 328–29, 342–43.

Yuanzhang (r. 1368–1398), the founder of the Ming dynasty, acknowledged the legitimacy of his predecessors' rule and the validity of their mandate.²¹

The acceptance of this precept, no matter how begrudging, was closely linked to the Mongols' claim of universal rule, a claim that was susceptible to measurement in earthly terms.

By late antiquity universalist religious and political doctrines were well established in China, India, the Near East, and the Mediterranean world. The Mongols' assertion of "imperial dominion" extending "over the whole face of the earth" was, therefore, hardly new.²² The importance the Mongols attached to these pronouncements, delivered in oral and written communications, is reflected in the efforts they made to dramatize the extent of their conquests. According to Rubruck, they often took foreign envoys on "circuitous routes" and "that their intention in doing this was to prolong the journey and give an inflated idea of their power."²³ Perhaps more common and more effective, the Mongols, from the very beginning of the empire, were quick to supply foreigners with lengthy catalogues of the rulers, peoples, and lands they had subdued in order to document their miraculous success.²⁴

The Mongols were in fact incessant publicists of their own achievements and their message disseminated in a multitude of languages. The reactions of foreigners and subject peoples to this particular claim can best be assessed by comparing their inherited images of past world empires with the realities of the Mongols' conquests.

The first thing to be noted in this regard is that long before the Mongols there was among settled and nomadic peoples a commonly held set of standards and expectations for measuring imperial greatness. These notions, embodied in the theory of the "Four Empires," which go back to India in the age of Aśoka, the third century BCE, found frequent reflection in later Buddhist, Chinese, Tibetan, Turkic, Iranian, and Islamic formulations. At the base of these traditions is the concept of four great empires ruling contemporaneously across Eurasia. Although the number and cast of characters vary, one is always located in the steppe and the others in China, India, Iran, or Rome.²⁵ In the twelfth-century Persian version of the theory, the Sassanid ruler Anūshīrvān (Khusrow I, r. 531–579), was said to keep four golden thrones, one for himself and three ready to

21 Dardess 1978, 6–11; Brose 2006, 344.

22 On these claims: Boyle 1963, 245, 247, 251–52. Cf. TJG, I: 28; HWC, I: 39.

23 William of Rubruck 1990, 170.

24 For examples: TJG, I: 95; HWC, I: 121–22; Skelton et al. 1995, 85, 104–6; Meyvaert 1980, 249, 253–57.

25 Pelliot 1923.

receive the rulers of China, Byzantium, and Khazaria should they come calling.²⁶ There was, then, in the collective historical memories of the peoples of Eurasia a shared belief that the existence and coexistence of four centers of imperial rule was part of the natural political order. Consequently, the Chinggisids' sudden seizure of three of the recognized "seats of empire" was not only unprecedented but extraordinary, something decidedly unnatural.

It was made all the more extraordinary because in those earlier times, claims of universal empire were theoretical; that is, statements of potential. For the Chinese, "All-under-Heaven" was restricted to the territories controlled by successful, expansive dynasties like the Han and Tang, while for the nomads the conquest of the "Four Corners," claimed by the Turk Qaghanate, meant only the steppe zone.

To what extent was this quantum leap in the scale of empire appreciated by contemporaries? Many, in fact, did so, openly affirming that the "world conquests" of the Chinggisids far surpassed those of the legendary and model rulers of antiquity. Rashīd al-Dīn, for one, fully understood the magnitude of the break, calling Chinggis Khan "the king of world conquest" (*pādishāh-i jahān-satān*) and asserting further that his ascent to power heralded a new age "in the long course of history."²⁷ Another Persian historian, Muḥammad Shabānkārā'ī, writing at the end of the Ilkhanid era, states emphatically and at length that no Iranian or Chinese emperor, no Indian sovereign, no sultan, caesar, caliph, raja, or qaghan, ever achieved such power and domination as Chinggis Khan and his descendants, an achievement that for him could only be understood as a bestowal of "divine favor and grace."²⁸

Again, as servitors of the ilkhans they were expected to say such things, but their basic arguments are nonetheless valid, for the Mongols did create something quite unique in world history – the first "empire of empires." Not too surprisingly, contemporaries, whatever their attitude toward the Mongols, never tried to explain their explosive, record-shattering expansion through worldly, geopolitical factors, but only by heavenly dispensations and their extraordinary good fortune.

Kings, Charisma, and Good Fortune

The possession of supra-human qualities, charisma, understood as genius or good fortune, was a natural accompaniment of sacral kingship. It was so for the Mongols, who saw in their qa'an a direct mediator between Heaven and

26 Ibn al-Balkhī 1921, 97. 27 JT/'Alizādah, 1/1: 1, 59–60. 28 Shabānkārā'ī 1984, 223.

Earth whose charisma assured the success of the imperial venture and the prosperity of his people. In Mongolian this was termed *su/suu*, which was further strengthened by the addition of *jali*, “flame” or “spirit,” a clear allusion to the solar-like brilliance of the ruler, his nimbus or aureole.²⁹ Although they did not wear crowns of gold, Mongolian rulers still radiated a brilliant light: Chinggis Khan possessed an “aura” (*havā ī*) which affected the course of battle, and Mongols always spoke with awe and reverence of their qa’an’s “golden face.”³⁰

For the steppe peoples, Eternal Heaven was the ultimate source of good fortune (Turkic *qut*). There were, however, secondary sources stored in particular territories, the control of which was a necessary precondition for successful empire building. The major repository was the Orkhon valley, the *Ötügen yish* of the Turkic inscriptions and the political center of the Turk and Uighur empires. The Mongols, therefore, took great pains, including archaeological excavation and historical research, to insure that their capital, Qaraqorum, was appropriately located in order to tap into the *qut* accumulated by previous nomadic empires. And once the Mongols’ own center was correctly sited and built, it, too, became an active “fount of good fortune.”³¹

Ancestors were another store of good fortune. If properly honored and propitiated, they brought prosperity to the living.³² Since the good fortune of founders and rulers continued to be operative after their demise, the Mongols systematized the worship of Chinggis Khan and his successors, first in their burial sanctuary at Burqan Qaldun in northeastern Mongolia and later in temples at Dadu. The ceremonies conducted in these locales allowed sitting emperors to monopolize and harvest the *su* of ancestors. That of Chinggis Khan was, moreover, readily transportable, for following his death his white battle standard, *tugh*, appropriately renamed *sülde*, became a further repository of his charisma.³³

In varying measures, *su* was found in everyone, nobles, commoners, and non-Mongols, and individual portions could be augmented through contact and sharing. In the words of Rashīd al-Dīn, Chinggis Khan’s “brilliant lineage” produced many “awesome sovereigns each of whom was the heavenly seal of power and the center of a circle of good fortune (*bakht-yārī*).”³⁴ Quite naturally, the sovereign’s expansive fund of *su* rubbed off on those closest to him, his imperial guard, the *keshig*. The mechanism for transference was gift exchange, a regular practice at Chinggisid courts. Any presentation from

29 Skrynnikova 1997. 30 TJG, I: 93; HWC, I: 119; Qāshānī 1969, 38.

31 Qāshānī 1969, 34.

32 Tardy 1978, 91. 33 Skrynnikova 1992–1993. 34 JT/Karīmī, I: 184.

the khan's treasury or hand, commonly elegant robes and drinking vessels, was thereby imbued with residual amounts of his charisma. Such a gift was "enhanced" and its spiritual value thereby far exceeded its material worth.³⁵ Because of the lavish redistribution of the ruler's material and spiritual wealth within the guard, the term *keshig* acquired the additional meaning of "blessing" or "good fortune," and *keshigten*, "imperial guardsmen," that of "blessed" or "fortunate ones."

Not only could *su* be stored and shared; it could also be manufactured. This is clearly expressed in a thirteenth-century Chinese source which states the Mongols "take white to be the *cause* of good fortune (*fu*)."³⁶ For this reason the Mongolian elite made extensive use of white things – clothing, pearls, "mares white as snow," and koumiss – in political-religious rituals. The resulting increase of *su* was then bestowed upon the land and its people. As Marco Polo well understood, Qubilai made regular libations of koumiss to the air and the earth to bring fertility and productivity to his realm.

Although all Chinggisids inherited good fortune from the founding father, the shares were variable and subject to fluctuation. Thus when Qubilai emerged triumphant in the struggle for the throne he "succeeded to the fortune," while the defeated, Arigh Böke, suffered "a decline of his good fortune."³⁷ Throughout the Mongolian domains fortune always favored the victorious, and for all Chinggisid princes *su* remained, to the end of the empire and beyond, a prized and essential attribute of rulership. And, for the most part, this conformed to their subjects' understanding of high politics.

The closest fit was found, of course, in the steppe. In some form, the idea of good fortune was current among the early Iranian nomads and their Hunnic successors. Its exact properties, however, are unclear. With the advent of the Turk Qaghanate and literacy in the steppe a more accurate characterization becomes possible. Comparison of the key terms *qut* and *su* reveals a number of affinities: both have a similar semantic range – individual soul, life force, protective spirit, and royal glory; both inhere in lands as well as people; both are associated with the idea of radiance or flame (Turkic *yalin* and Mongolian *jali*), the aureole of the ruler; and both are used in forms of address reserved for divinities and royal persons. By the Mongolian era the convergence was nearly complete, for *su* and *qut* are used in the same Uighur document as attributes of the Yuan emperor.³⁸

35 For comparative data: Gurevich 1992, 104–7, 178–79. 36 Su 1967, 57.12a, my italics.

37 Su 1967, 24.11a; JT/Karīmī, 1: 627; JT/Boyle, 260. 38 Zieme 1992b, 73.

The situation in Iran and Transcaucasia was similar. Here, from ancient times, it was held that the land, people, and rulers possessed, as a divine gift, good fortune. In Old Persian, the term *khvarənah*, which combined the concepts of “good fortune,” “splendor,” and “glory,” became in Sassanian times a conspicuous attribute of divinities and kings who are regularly portrayed with aureoles. This was the divine gift that permitted them to carry out their missions.³⁹ In the post-Islamic period, new dynasties eagerly forged connections, real and fictive, with these earlier empires and the royal glory of their storied rulers. Thus when the Mongols arrived on the scene, the concept of imperial good fortune was still very much alive in the region. This allowed local spokesmen to explain the Mongolian conquest in familiar and time-honored terms, which included the new Persian *farr* and the Armenian *p’ark’*, both from *farrah*, the Middle Persian form of *khvarənah*.⁴⁰

Although the concept of dynastic good fortune, unlike that of the Mandate of Heaven, was not a central feature of Chinese political doctrine, it was well known and used regularly in political discourse from Han times to indicate the rise and fall of states and dynasties. Moreover, since this was a primary component in the ideologies of the many inner Asian polities that formed along the Chinese frontier, the Han population of the north had long been exposed to such ideas. And it was from this population that the Mongols recruited the majority of their Chinese officials.

Religious terminology and imagery also sustained the Chinggisids’ claim of special good fortune. Buddhism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, and Nestorianism, all of which penetrated inner Asia in the pre-Mongol era, attributed this same property to their deities and messengers, all of whom are pictured with aureoles. The influence of these beliefs was particularly profound among the settled populations of the region. As a result, many of these peoples, most importantly the Uighurs, whom the Mongols heavily recruited as administrative personnel, were preadapted to accept such doctrines.

This was also the case in the Islamic lands, for here too kings were held to be men of exceptional good fortune, a bestowal of God that could be inherited within a ruling line.⁴¹ There was, then, no reason for a Mongolian ruler converted to Islam, such as Ghazan, to give up his most cherished inheritance from the founder, Chinggis Khan, whose incomparable fund of

39 Skjærvø 1983, 251–55; Gnoli 1990. 40 TJG, I: 16; HWC, I: 23; Artsruni 1985, 365–66.

41 Meisami 1991, 212–15; Abū’l Fidā’ 1983, 61.

good fortune, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, the ilkhan's chief adviser, "was preordained and increased through time."⁴²

Long-Term Legacies

Even after the empire disintegrated in the fourteenth century the Chinggisid principle retained its power. In the steppe, a number of successor states emerged headed by rulers claiming or fabricating Chinggisid credentials. The pervasive influence of this principle can be seen in the emergence and longevity of Chinggis Khan cults in the steppe, a form of ancestor worship operating on an unprecedented scale.

The persistence of this legacy inhibited the restoration of nomadic unity in several ways. First, the ongoing proliferation of Chinggisid princes led to endless struggles and the fragmentation of political authority, a phenomenon not lost on sedentary rivals. Second, rulers without the proper pedigree increasingly sought legitimacy in imported religions, which led, by the mid-eighteenth century, to the segregation of the steppe into two camps, Mongolian-speaking Buddhists in the east and Turkic-speaking Muslims in the west. The once common ideological foundations of steppe political unity were seriously compromised.

Over the course of these same centuries new empires replaced the old. In the eastern steppe Mongolian rulers of Chinggisid descent continued to proclaim their good fortune and legitimacy but were now forced to acknowledge that neighboring sedentary rulers possessed the same attributes. The former age of coexistent and coequal empires had returned. There was, however, a new member, Muscovy. Steppe peoples signaled their acceptance of Russia into the family of empires by styling their tsar *chaghan khan*, the "white khan," namely the Ruler of the West. He, too, presided over an expanding state and enjoyed good fortune, a claim first advanced during the reign of Ivan III (1462–1505). Its wording, "by the grace of God . . . and the luck (*zdovie*) and good fortune (*schastie*) of Grand Prince Ivan Vasilievich," represents an assimilated but still recognizable variant of the traditional Mongolian formula.⁴³ And, appropriately enough, with Russia's expansion eastward, tsarist envoys to Mongolian rulers regularly attributed their successes to their sovereign's good fortune.⁴⁴ It was, of course, fortunate Russian and Manchu khans from the forest zone who in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries divided the steppe between them and brought an

42 JT/Karīmī, I: 419. 43 Sreznevskii 1989, 3/I: 864. 44 Slesarchuk 1996, 172, 330.

end the military dominance of the nomads in Eurasian history, an age that had lasted for two millennia.

For people beyond their imperial frontiers, the Chinggisids exerted a different but still powerful afterimage. In European eyes, the greatness of the "Tartar Cham" long survived the disintegration of the empire. These images of wealth and prosperity, which stimulated Europe's quest for eastern trade, with all its consequences, were fueled in large part by travelers' accounts, real and fictive. Of these, none was more influential than that of Marco Polo. Sometimes dismissed as a fabricator or cast as an early agent of western imperialism in Asia, he is far better understood as a fellow traveler of the Chinggisids, one who enthusiastically trumpeted their achievements. He was in truth overawed by the Mongols' imperial venture, its unparalleled military success, its reach and riches, and its external glitter, an effect produced by carefully stage-managed ceremony and display. That he often exaggerates, overstates the case, further testifies to the Mongols' ability to attract and "turn" foreign servitors and to their skill at projecting their majesty and splendor across time and space.

Conclusions

The Mongols' heavy investment in the propagation of their ideological message and in the mobilization of the spiritual resources of their realm yielded substantial returns. For the inner core, who actively promoted the ideology, its precepts justified their leadership roles and provided a convincing and comfortable legitimacy for their imperial enterprise.

The same message, terse and repeatable, served as a critical tool in the mass mobilization of the steppe peoples, one that attracted support, fostered a sense of solidarity, and built morale. These doctrines also provided ideological inducement and "cover" for the sedentary elites and bureaucrats that the Mongols needed in order to exploit effectively the economic and cultural resources of their domains. For their subjects at large, who were not willing participants in their enterprise, their doctrines helped encourage a passive acceptance of Mongolian authority.

The Mongols' ideological message achieved these ends because it was highly syncretic, an amalgam of mythologies, religious beliefs, and political precepts. Since most of these were real phenomena with an extended geographical range, they were recognizable and comprehensible, despite variations in detail, to a wide array of peoples.

In sum, like other premodern empires, that fashioned by the Mongols consisted of a central core of committed activists, a much larger circle of enthusiastic and calculating recruits, and a great number of subjects who bowed, usually with great reticence, to the unfathomable designs of their gods and the unsurpassed good fortune of their conquerors.

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The Military Machine

TIMOTHY MAY

The Mongol military was indubitably one of the greatest fighting forces in world history. Built upon proven tactics used by steppe nomads for centuries, the Mongols added new wrinkles, more consistent leadership, strict discipline, and improved organization. Yet the Mongols did not remain complacent or rely solely on one form of warfare or warrior. As their empire expanded, they found ways to incorporate non-nomads without altering their own art of war. Although the core of Mongol warfare revolved around the traditional nomadic horse archer wielding a formidable composite bow, new units and weapons that proved useful found a place in the empire's military. Often the location dictated what was used. In short, the Mongols did not attempt to place square pegs in round holes.

As a result, while the basic composition of the Mongol military remained the same throughout the history of the empire and its immediate successors, regional needs dictated some changes and an evolution of the military. What was successful in Eastern Europe was not necessarily effective in Southeast Asia.

The United Army

By 1206, Chinggis Khan had united the various nomadic polities of the Mongolian plateau under his leadership. It had not been an easy process and not necessarily one that he had planned. Much of Chinggis Khan's success had been due to his ability to learn from not only his own mistakes, but also those of others. Chinggis Khan then instituted a series of reforms that permitted his army to improve significantly over those of his enemies. These same reforms also allowed Chinggis Khan to emerge victorious over much

larger populations and armies that he encountered in the sedentary realms of the Xi Xia, the Jin empire, and the Khwārazmian empire.

Among the most significant reforms was discipline. The first major step occurred in 1202 with Temüjin's actions against the Tatars. Prior to the battle, Temüjin made his men swear an oath that no one would plunder until victory was won.¹ Although Temüjin had suffered few defeats on the battlefield, complete victory over enemies had been elusive as armies stopped pursuit in order to acquire their share of plunder. The issue of this new decree had its intended effect. Those who disobeyed lost their share. With the entire Mongol army focused on fighting rather than pillaging, the Mongols finally ended their decades-long feud with the Tatars.²

The "Thou shalt not plunder" command was not the only directive that Chinggis Khan issued to ensure discipline. During the Khwārazmian campaign, the commander Toquchar disobeyed Chinggis Khan's orders and pillaged a region ruled by an *amīr* who had submitted to the Mongols. As a result, Amīr Khan Malik rebelled against the Mongols. Chinggis Khan then stripped Toquchar of his command and reduced his status to that of a regular soldier.³ Later Mongol khans also recognized that while their commanders could instill and maintain discipline, the Chinggisid princes technically out-ranked them and thus might not heed even the most experienced general or even another Chinggisid prince. Thus princes who disobeyed orders or caused issues that threatened the success of a campaign were sent directly to the khan.⁴

Discipline also blended in with the organization of the Mongol army. Chinggis Khan, using his experience from serving under Toghril Ong Khan, and perhaps even the Jin empire, appreciated decimal organization. After assuming power in 1206, Chinggis Khan assigned commanders to the various units. Although many of the commanding posts became hereditary, it was theoretically possible for any warrior to rise through the ranks and achieve a command position. The primary unit was of 1,000 men, or a *mingghan*, which consisted of ten companies of 100 (*ja'un*), which consisted of ten squads of ten (*harban*). Many of the units assigned already existed and consisted of tribal warriors such as the Uru'ut and Mangqut. As they had served Chinggis Khan loyally, they continued to exist but now in decimal units. Due to his long connections with the Kereit, Chinggis Khan also permitted them to maintain unit integrity. Yet most groups that Chinggis Khan defeated, such as

1 SH, §153. 2 SH, §153. 3 SH, §257; TJG, 137; HWC, 174.

4 SH, §199, §275–76; Kim 2004, 317–20.

the Naiman and Merkit, were divided among several units so that they could not form a cohesive force. Furthermore, once assigned to a unit one could not leave it.⁵ This restriction against transferring to other units assisted Chinggis Khan in dissolving old tribal identities under the new identity of the *Yeke Mongol Ulus*, or Great Mongol State.

As other nomads were encountered and defeated, they too experienced this process and became part of the Mongol military machine. Sedentary forces also underwent reorganization into the Mongol military system, but formed separate units, often referred to as *cherig*, usually based on ethnicity or region. The key reason was that often these units fought in different modes than the Mongols and other nomads. Han Chinese infantry could not merge with Mongol horse archer units. While the Khitans and Jurchen typically were cavalry, their forces fought in different ways, including serving as heavy cavalry. They kept their separate unit identity as the Mongols simply viewed them as a different tool to use in combat. As the empire increased in size and manpower, the *tümen* or 10,000 became the core organizational unit of the empire. They tended not to be at full strength – when sources refer to a *tümen* one can make a safe estimate that it was at roughly 60 percent strength.⁶

Although the Mongols and other nomads had many inherent martial skills from their life as pastoralists, it took more than archery skills and equestrian abilities to become an army. At an early age, the nomads learned to ride as well as shoot the composite bow, with the size and strength of the bow increasing with their age and ability. Women also learned archery and riding from their youth as they often had to defend the herds and flocks as well as themselves when men were absent. Hunting became a favored form of training as it combined discipline, archery, communication, command and control abilities, and teamwork, as well as herding skills.⁷ During the mass hunts, known as *jerge* or *nerge*, the Mongols formed a massive circle that stretched for kilometers, which then gradually contracted, forcing the game into the center.⁸ Anyone who permitted an animal to escape, which included everything from rabbits to tigers, suffered punishment, regardless of rank. Hence commanders ensured that their men maintained their positions and herded the animals forward in the gradually contracting circle. Signals, such as flags, torches, and whistling arrows, were used to co-ordinate movement between units. In such a hunt, herding skills became paramount as prey and predators became intermingled in an increasingly confined area. Once the

5 *TJG*, 24; *HWC*, 32. 6 Allsen 1987, 198–206; Hsiao 1978, 17–18.

7 John of Plano Carpini 1929, 49–50; Dawson 1980, 18; Zhao 1975, 65–66.

8 Doerfer 1963, 1: 290–93; Allsen 2006, 26, 216–17.

circle was complete, individuals demonstrated their bravery and abilities by fighting animals such as wolves or tigers. Then a general slaughter began, but with archers putting their marksmanship and other martial skills on display for the khan or general in charge. Eventually, leaders appealed to the khan to end the hunt and the remaining animals were permitted to escape.⁹ A great feast was held afterwards.

The Mongol army in the years of the unified empire consisted of five major groups: *alginchi* (plural *alginchin*) and *tamma*, the regular army, non-nomadic troops, *qara'ul* or *qaraghul*, and the *keshig*. The first group, the *alginchin* and *tamma*, were units stationed near the frontier and in volatile areas.¹⁰ The regular army was exactly as one might expect, an army of invasion and conquest. It consisted of nomads. Non-nomadic elements were grouped into armies of similar types and were generally referred to as *cherig*, a Mongolian word for soldier or warrior that quickly entered Persian with the same meaning.¹¹ The *qara'ul* or *qaraghul* "combined the function of frontier guards and highway patrol" and may have functioned as part of the main army.¹² Finally, the *keshig* or bodyguard of the khan served not only as the personal guard of the ruler, but also in many other capacities as well.

The *tamma* first came into existence with the troops Chinggis Khan left behind with Muqali to defeat the Jin empire. These consisted of an amalgamation of nomadic groups stationed on the frontier between the two states, essentially the line between the steppe and the sown.¹³ Muqali's force operated under the directives of extending Mongol domination through either conquest or influence. Those who served in the *tamma* were known as *tammachi*. While most of the *tammachin* (plural) were kept together, some forces had to be spread out based on pasture and strategic needs. The *alginchin* were scouts who maintained communications between the various *tammachin* camps and carried out functions similar to the *qara'ul* or *qaraghul*. *Alginchin* existed in other military forces as well, but in the sources they are frequently mentioned in connection with the *tamma*.¹⁴ The *alginchin*, however, do not appear to be synonymous with the *qara'ul*, which will be discussed in more detail below.

The composition of the *tamma* was unique as well. Although Muqali's force came from very specific tribes, most *tamma* consisted of a general levy from the whole of the Mongol military. This may have consisted of specific *mingghad* or simply one or two from every ten or hundred, depending on the

9 May 2006, 619–22. 10 Aubin 1969, 72, 78; Boyle 1963, 242; Ostrowski 1998b, 266, 276.

11 De Rachewiltz 1972, 39, 43; *SH*, §§100, 107. 12 Amitai 1999, 140. 13 Buell 1980, 45–47.

14 Buell 1977, 68.

needs. This was the one situation where a Mongol soldier could leave his unit. The drawback was that the regular army rarely ever reabsorbed the *tammachin*. Indeed, if one was assigned to a *tamma*, it was assumed that they would stay in that position forever, as would the next generation.¹⁵ As the frontier of the empire moved, so did the *tamma*.¹⁶

The regular army was derived from the reorganization of the Mongols by Chinggis Khan in 1206 and comprised a center with two wings.¹⁷ Unless in the field, the Mongol army was rarely fully assembled. Units could be mobilized in haste, but most of the soldiers resumed their normal lives when not on campaign. This enabled ordinary Mongols to maintain their nomadic lifestyle and provide for their family by tending their flocks and herds. While they were on campaign, the women, young boys, and old men attended to those duties.

As the empire expanded, so did the army. The Mongols assimilated nomadic Turks into the army, who often comprised the bulk of the military force on any given campaign. As part of their induction and to make them easily identifiable, the recruits received a haircut that marked them as a Mongol warrior – a modified tonsure, which permitted two braids along the sides and behind the ears. In addition, the front was completely shaved except for a tuft.¹⁸ While the ritual made the new recruits “Mongol,” with such an easily identifiable hairstyle it was difficult for anyone to desert.

Although the Mongols used non-nomadic troops (*cherig*) extensively, these were rarely incorporated into the regular army. The term was not a synonym for the Persian *hashar*, who tended to be lightly armed or militia.¹⁹ *Hashar* could be *cherig*, but not all *cherig* were *hashar*, as the *cherig* forces could also be heavy cavalry or infantry, not to mention professionals. Although the term originally referred to a warrior or soldier in Mongolian, it became the term for non-nomadic troops. They also became the primary armies of occupation in sedentary regions, mirroring the *tamma*.²⁰ The primary reason was that the regular army fought as horse archers and used tactics employed by steppe nomads for centuries. For societies with a strong equestrian and archery tradition the transition was conceivable, but for most it was high impossible to do without years of training. Thus the Mongols tended to use non-nomads in formations and fighting in their own native styles. For instance, in the east the Mongols made regular use of Han infantry when fighting in China, as well as Khitan and Jurchen heavy cavalry.²¹ There was a risk of rebellion as

15 JT/Thackston, 49; JT/Karīmī, 66. 16 May 2016, 33–34, Buell 1992, 19. 17 SH, §202.

18 Dawson 1980, 6–7, 101–2; William of Rubruck 1990, 88.

19 Buell 1977, 73–75; Steingass 1996, 420–21. 20 Buell 1977, 73–75. 21 Buell 1977, 74–76.

they often were commanded by their own leaders. While a Mongol commander might be in charge of the entire operation, army commanders of the same type were necessary as lieutenants could only receive orders in their own language. Furthermore, they understood the fighting methods of the men they commanded. In addition to regular ethnic units, non-nomadic troops (*cherig*) also comprised most of the engineering corps and siege teams. Although Han and Central Asian Muslims formed the bulk of these groups, some Mongol engineers existed as well. Ethnic groupings still predominated among the engineers and siege teams, there was also intermixing as the siege weapon crews also were categorized by their machines. Thus one might be a trebuchet or a ballista crew member regardless of ethnicity.²²

As indicated earlier, the *qara'ul* or *qaraghul* "combined the function of frontier guards and highway patrol."²³ The *qara'ul* first appear in the *Secret History of the Mongols* as scouts or picket lines of the advancing Mongol army.²⁴ While it is not said directly, one may infer from some of the references that the *qara'ul* performed patrols, as in the case of the Naiman *qara'ul* Qori-Sübechi, who captured and killed Toghril Ong Khan.²⁵ While the *qara'ul* and the *alginchin* had similar functions, it is clear in the *Secret History* that they are not synonyms, although both terms can be translated as "scout." The primary difference between the two is that the *alginchin* appear to have been specially designated troops. *Qara'ul*, however, appears to be a term for a role that warriors could be assigned. Thus, just as the *manglai* was the vanguard of the Mongol army but not a specific unit, the *qara'ul* were not specific units. Rather, they were warriors from the main army assigned to function as *qara'ul* at a given time. Nonetheless, more research on the role of the *qara'ul* is needed.

The *keshig* held many responsibilities in addition to guarding the khan. Numbering 10,000 and sometimes even more, the *keshig* functioned as the household staff of the Mongol khan, although a select *mingghan* always accompanied the khan into battle.²⁶ The *keshigten*, as members of the *keshig* were known, were drawn from the sons and brothers of commanders and vassal rulers. In theory, less prestigious figures also had the opportunity to join it after a close screening.²⁷ Nonetheless, the bulk consisted of the sons of generals and vassals, thus transforming them into hostages. At the same time, the hostages were not there solely to ensure good behavior, but their

22 Hsiao 1978, 75; Bar Hebraeus 1932, 419; Allsen 2002, 276–78. 23 Amitai 1999, 140.

24 SH, §§142, 158, 188, 193, 195; de Rachewiltz 1972, 62, 74, 96, 101, 103.

25 SH, §188; de Rachewiltz 1972, 96. 26 Allsen 1986, 507, 519; Hsiao 1978, 93.

27 Allsen 1987, 73–74, 114.

presence also allowed the Mongol khans to groom potential replacements. Indeed, the majority of the governors and generals within the Mongol Empire emerged from the *keshig*. As members of the guard, they were known to the khan at a personal level.

Indeed, the *keshigten*, in addition to their duties as guards, also tended the flocks and herds of the khan, served his table, poured his drinks, and performed a host of other mundane duties. These chores provided the khan and senior commanders an opportunity to observe the men in quotidian activities and how they handled lesser obligations, while at the same time ensuring that only vetted individuals had access to the khan's person. In their guard capacity, the *keshigten* were broken into three distinct categories, *kebte'ül* (night guards), *turqa'ut* (day guards), and *qorchin* (quiver bearers). The guards rotated their shift so that on any given day only 2,500 men performed guard duty while the rest carried out the other functions.²⁸ In addition, the *keshigten* received training to be commanders and governors. In relation to the other military units, the *keshigten* outranked the *mingghad* commanders.²⁹ In battle, the *keshigten* were considered elite troops and tended to be better equipped than the average Mongol warrior. While most of the *keshig* remained to guard the khan's *ordo*, one *mingghan* accompanied him into battle. These men were known as *ba'atud* or "braves."³⁰

Initially, the Mongols proved to be inept at siege warfare and the capture of well-fortified cities proved difficult.³¹ Their military success on the battlefield, however, attracted deserters who understood siege warfare and could build siege weapons. By 1214, the Mongols began to engage in more aggressive forms of siege warfare rather than simply blockading a town until it submitted. Despite this, the Mongols made sieges a secondary objective, often bypassing strongholds. In doing so, their fast-moving columns made strategic locations ineffective through isolation. Using the *nerge* formation, the Mongols raided and pillaged while seeking out the enemy's army, preferring to eliminate it early in the invasion. Attacking the outlying towns and villages, the Mongols massacred the population or drafted it as *corvée* labor, or the population fled as refugees toward a stronger location. As the Mongols herded the *corvée* laborers before them, the townspeople found themselves providing manpower for sieges.³² The contraction of the *nerge* drove refugees to the main cities, bringing not only terrifying stories of the Mongols with them, which undermined morale, but also consuming

28 SH, §§224–29. 29 SH, §228. 30 SH, §§192, 226; Hsiao 1978, 36, 94.

31 John of Plano Carpini 1929, 83–84; Dawson 1980, 37–38.

32 Zhao 1975, 67; Nasawī 1953, 117–18.

provisions and water. While they may have provided additional manpower for the city's defense, they also hastened the city's demise through the consumption of resources.

The Mongol army then descended on the city on all sides and demanded the submission of the city. If it was refused, the siege began. Using their corvée labor, they usually built a wall around the city, which masked some of their activities.³³ The garrison then had to kill the laborers in order to prevent the wall from being built or filling any ditches or moats that comprised the city's defensive works.³⁴ Besides ladders and battering rams, the Mongols also used traction trebuchets, powered by men pulling ropes, as well as giant crossbows or ballistae. When the Mongols encountered counterweight trebuchets in the Middle East, they adopted them as well, spreading the weapon to China by the late thirteenth century.³⁵ Although the Mongols surrounded the city, they focused their siege weapons at one point to create a breach. Meanwhile roving patrols ensured that their siege operations were not interrupted by a relief force.

Once inside, the massacre began. Often, the commander turned the city over to pillaging for a determined number of days after separating leaders and skilled workers from the population. These were ransomed or sent to camps to manufacture items for the Mongols. A general massacre also took place, with the population divided into decimal units so that any given Mongol warrior was responsible for killing only ten individuals, excepting those needed as labor for the next siege.³⁶

With the dissolution of the Mongol Empire, the polity split into four regional, yet still massive, khanates. While changes certainly occurred, the Mongol military did not change tremendously, but adopted new methods, units, and tactics to meet regional needs. The overall structure remained similar – *alginchin*, *qara'ul*, and *keshig* units continued to exist, as did *cherig*. The *tamma* may have faded as new conquests were rare, but the core component of the military, however, remained the horse archer.

The Ilkhanate

In the Ilkhanate, Mongolian and Turkic horse archers comprised most of the army. Prior to the arrival of Hülegü, large numbers of Mongols troops were already stationed in the region. The largest force was that of Chormaqan's

33 Nasawī 1953, 95–96; John of Plano Carpini 1929, 83–84; Dawson 1980, 37; Zhao 1975, 67.

34 Zhao 1975, 67; Nasawī 1953, 113–14. 35 Polo 1993, 2: 159; Haw 2013a, 37–38.

36 Allsen 2002, 266, 6; Dawson 1980, 175–77; Khudiakov 1991, *passim*; Li 1963, 72; Perlee 1985–1986, *passim*; Perlee 1957, 43–52; William of Rubruck 1990, 209–10.

(and then Baiju's) *tamma* stationed in the Mūghān steppes of Azerbaijan and a *tamma* in Afghanistan. These were then augmented by Hülegü's army of approximately 150,000 troops, drawn from the armies of all of the Chinggisid princes. Additionally, Uighurs (sedentary Turks) and 1,000 "Khitayan," probably Han Chinese, engineers accompanied him.³⁷ Additionally, there were certain specialist units such as the *qāyāchī*. These *qāyāchī* were primarily Bäkriin/Mäkriin or perhaps even Merkit troops and were used in mountain warfare.³⁸ The ilkhans also made extensive use of the patrols known as *qaraghul* or *qara'ul*, particularly along the frontier with the Mamluk Sultanate.³⁹

With the outbreak of the Ilkhanid–Jochid War, the Jochid troops that accompanied Hülegü deserted. While some made it back to Jochid territory, others deserted to the Mamluk Sultanate and others into Afghanistan. Those in Afghanistan became somewhat autonomous and became known as Negüderis, after their commander Negüder, and sometimes as Qara'unas. The latter later term may not have been an exact synonym for the Negüderis as the Qara'unas also included Dayir's *tamma*. Nonetheless, these forces formed a part of the Ilkhanid military. There is no indication that they fought differently from the Mongol forces. The Qara'unas and Negüderis, however, increasingly acted independently and eventually joined the Chaghadaids.⁴⁰

The ilkhans also had other non-Mongol/non-nomadic troops as well. In Anatolia, Seljuqs joined Mongol troops, although the Mongols doubted their reliability against external foes, such as the Mamluks.⁴¹ Against internal threats, such as rebellious Turkmen, however, Seljuq troops served alongside the Mongols. The Ilkhanids used Georgian troops against the Mamluks and Jochids. Their frequent appearance on the battlefield also indicates their effectiveness. As with all non-nomadic troops, the Georgians fought in their own style. Armenians, particularly from Cilicia, were used frequently in Syria, particularly during the establishment of the Ilkhanate.⁴² Franks, mainly from Antioch, also found service, although their numbers were insignificant in the larger scheme of things.

Less information is available on non-nomadic troops used in Iran or against the Chaghadaids. Certainly, *cherig* forces were used, such as the Ghürīd troops mentioned in the sources dealing with Herat and other regions of the eastern Ilkhanate.⁴³ However, it is not clear how these were used beyond

37 TJG, 92–93; JT/Boyle 608; JT/Thackston, 478; Cf. Haw 2013a, 35; Allsen 2002, 278.

38 Borbone 2009, 290–98. 39 Amitai-Preiss 1995, 62, 147; Amitai 1999, 140.

40 See Aubin 1969; Shimo 1977. 41 May 2016, 30. 42 Martinez 1986, 149–51.

43 Biran 2002, 196.

garrison and defensive duties as the Mongols did not invade Chaghadaid territory frequently. Abaqa, at least, even deployed Georgian troops at the Battle of Herat in 1270.⁴⁴ During the establishment of the Ilkhanate, Kirmani and other Iranian troops joined Hülegü's armies.⁴⁵

The army remained organized in decimal fashion. Although the old tribal identities were mostly supplanted with the Mongol identity, tribal names did not disappear altogether. Indeed, they still remained relevant and were used in the decimal organization. Groups such as the Oirats and Jalayirs were among the most predominant groups, with many Oirats deserting to the Mamluks after a fall from grace in internal politics in the 1290s. The Jalayir gradually ascended as well.⁴⁶ Other groups also emerged and identified with their *noyan* or commander (*amīr*). As the *noyan*'s position became inheritable, the affinity of the rank and file became increasingly tied to that of their commander and his ability to provide for them, assuming an almost tribal identity.⁴⁷

The Ilkhan Ghazan (r. 1295–1304) introduced military reforms intended to ameliorate the financing of the military as the Ilkhanate experienced constraints on the acquisition of wealth. Frequent wars and the lack of new conquests resulted in the army, not paid a regular salary, pillaging the peasants and towns.

Perhaps at the suggestion of his vizier, Rashīd al-Dīn, Ghazan turned to the Islamic land grant known as the *iqṭāʿ*.⁴⁸ Land was allocated to commanders to provide wealth for their men as the taxes from the *iqṭāʿ* went directly to the military units rather than to the treasury.⁴⁹ Although some scholars have interpreted the shift to *iqṭāʿ* as a sign that the Mongol military became sedentary and transitioned to a medium or heavy cavalry to better combat the Mamluks, there is no evidence that the troops settled on their allotment or switched from being light horse archers.⁵⁰

For the most part, the Ilkhanid Mongols used the same tactics and strategies that served them so well during the imperial period. There was little reason to alter them while fighting Jochid or Chaghadaid armies. Indeed, with immense armies of horse archers on both sides the winner was determined by the best generalship and by luck. Dealing with the Mamluks, however, required some changes. As the Mamluks made concerted efforts to deny the Mongols pasture to mobilize large armies in

44 Biran 2002, 192. 45 Shīrāzī 2010, 23–24; HWC, 626; TJG, 119. 46 Wing 2016, 40–43.

47 Wing 2016, 84. 48 JT/Karīmī, 1476–79; Manz 1991, 97.

49 Petrushevsky 1968, 518–19.

50 Martinez 1986, 183–200; Amitai 2001, *passim*; Amitai 2016, *passim*.

Syria, as well as setting up a series of fortresses as tripwires, the Mongols had several obstacles.⁵¹

Due to the sophisticated Mamluk system of communication, laying siege to the border fortresses had to be undertaken with alacrity before reinforcements arrived. As the lack of pasture limited the Mongols' armies, they rarely had sufficient forces to deal with sieges and a relief force. After several failed sieges, the Mongols switched strategies for invading and focused on raiding and pillaging to weaken the enemy.⁵²

The Chaghadaid Ulus

The Chaghadaid army consisted primarily of nomads. Although some siege engineers and *cherig* forces existed, the focus of the Chaghadaid army remained similar to the army of the early Mongol empire. During the height of the Mongol Empire, *mingghad* and *tümed* were stationed in the region as part of Chaghadaï's army. When Chinggis Khan allotted troops to his sons, he bequeathed 8,000 troops to Chaghadaï. This was augmented by those of the *noyad* Qarachar, Müge, Möngke, and Idoqudai, who were assigned to him with their units. Additionally, Köke Chos accompanied Chaghadaï as an adviser. It is not clear, however, whether these commanders were part of Chaghadaï's 8,000 men or in addition to them.⁵³ Chaghadaï then incorporated regional groups such as Uighurs, Qarluqs, Qangli, and Qipchaqs, along with Oghuz Turks. While the Uighurs provided *cherig* troops when required, the nomads were incorporated into the decimal structure of the Mongol military and assigned to units.

There is no indication that the Chaghadaid armies deviated from the imperial system of warfare, as demonstrated in the wars with the Yuan as well as the few invasions of the Ilkhanate.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, by the late fourteenth century, the Chaghadaid Mongol military had declined, particularly in siege warfare and leadership.

As the Chaghadaids retreated into the steppes and increasingly viewed Mawarannahr as a region from which to extract wealth, they seemingly lost connection with the sedentary populations that had siege-engineering expertise. While the Chaghadaids ruled a number of caravan cities, there is scant evidence of using complex siege engines on a regular basis.⁵⁵ To be sure, they

51 Amitai-Preiss 1995, 202–12; Amitai 2016, *passim*; Raphael 2011, 210–11.

52 Raphael 2011, 70–73. 53 *SH*, §202, §243; *JT*/Thackston, 279–80; *JT*/Karīmī, 410.

54 Biran 2002, 192–212; Polo 2016, 193–97; Manz 1991.

55 Haydar 2013, 27; *JT*/Thackston, 526; *JT*/Karīmī, 754–55.

still executed sieges, but by the mid-fourteenth century there is a dearth of information regarding siege warfare. More to the point, the Chaghadaids demonstrated a declining ability in siege warfare compared to the pre-dissolution period.⁵⁶ It is not certain why the Chaghadaids ceased to engage in protracted sieges. Temür-i Leng proved the exception and used a variety of siege weapons, but it is not clear whether the engineering expertise came from the Chaghadaid Ulus or from the former Ilkhanid domains. The Chaghadaids may have not needed siege engines either. As internecine warfare in these regions appears to have been primarily field battles, if the defending force lost, then the city submitted to mitigate further damage.⁵⁷ Additionally, the victor had little interest in destroying a resource beyond the obligatory victory pillaging. As the armies of the region primarily comprised nomads, protracted and heavily involved sieges were less attractive when the nomadic troops could simply harass and blockade routes to a particular city. It should be noted, however, that, in the early sixteenth century, siege towers and sapping techniques were still in use.⁵⁸

Military decline also manifested in leadership. Although the *keshig* had long served as a military school, for the Chaghadaid dynasty it appears that it ceased to function in that capacity, at least on a consistent basis. Although capable generals existed, the art of war seemingly became static. With a lack of innovative military leadership, the Chaghadaids found themselves pressured and unable to combat other expanding powers, whether it was the Timurids, Uzbeks, Qazaqs, or Oirats. Eventually, the Chaghadaids disappeared and were absorbed into these groups in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, even though Chaghadaid khans still existed in name.⁵⁹ Even though their generalship and siege abilities declined, the demand for their manpower indicates that their abilities as horse archers at the tactical level, however, had not declined, as demonstrated in raiding. They simply needed someone who knew how to use them effectively at the strategic or operational level.

The Jochid Ulus

According to the *Secret History of the Mongols*, the Jochid army originally consisted of the 9,000 bequeathed to Jochi by Chinggis Khan as well as the *mingghad* of Qunan, Möngke'ür, and Kete.⁶⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, however,

56 Biran 1997, 89–90; Biran 2002, 206. 57 Haydar 2013, 7–12, 14–18, 27, 31; Biran 2002, 206.

58 Haydar 2013, 142. 59 Bregel 2009, 229; Millward 2009, 267–70. 60 *SH*, §243.

indicates that Jochi received four *mingghad*, rather than nine regiments. The commanders of these were Münggü'ür (who corresponds with Möngke'ür), Kinggutai Qunan Noyan, Baiqu Sinqor, and Hushidai.⁶¹ Jochid manpower increased with the incorporation of the conquered after the Western Campaign (1236–1241) when a massive army of at 150,000 men marched through the Qipchaq steppe and defeated the Bulgars, Qipchaq Turks, Rus', and Alans, and then continued into Hungary and Poland.

By dominating the Qipchaq steppe, the Jochid Ulus had access to perhaps the greatest resource in the Mongol Empire – an abundance of Qipchaq Turks. Although thousands fled into Eastern Europe to escape the Mongols and others were enslaved and sold to the slave markets of the Middle East, the vast majority remained in the domains of the Jochid Ulus and were incorporated into the Mongol military.⁶² Their numbers vastly augmented the Jochid armies, as well as the Chaghadaid and Ögodeid militaries.⁶³ By the early fourteenth century, it was estimated that the Jochids had forty-three *tümed*. Even at a conservative estimate of 65 percent strength, the Jochids could assemble 279,500 mounted archers.⁶⁴ This did not include *cherig* forces of Rus', the Bulgars, or the Alans.

The Jochid military was organized decimally and appears to have retained that organization throughout its existence. It was also divided into separate *ordo* or camps, forming left and right wings. The White Horde (right wing) lay west of the Volga and is typically considered the Golden Horde in later chronicles and by modern scholars. This was the *ulus* of Batu. East of the Ural or Yaik river lay the Blue Horde (left wing), the *ulus* of Orda, Jochi's eldest son. Some Persian sources confused the positioning, thus causing misunderstanding in the scholarship as well.⁶⁵ For most of the Jochid Ulus's history, the entire region was subordinate to the khan of the White Horde. Thus troops from the Blue Horde served in campaigns in Eastern Europe and against the Ilkhanids. Certain *noyans* (*amīrs* or *begs*) also developed sizeable followings of their own, particularly in periods of weak Chinggisid authority, such as Noghai (c. 1280–1299), Mamai (r. 1370–1380), or Edigü (c. 1398–1491), but the military primarily centered on the *ordo* of Chinggisid princes.

The commercial cities of Sarai, Sarai Jadid, Bulghar, Urgench, and Caffa ensured that the Jochids had access to professional blacksmiths, bowyers, and fletchers. Although much of their weaponry was made by the nomads themselves, access to other materials and supplies enabled the Jochids to

61 JT/Thackston, 279; JT/Karīmī, 408–9. 62 Golden 1992, 295–97; Vásáry 2005, 63–70.

63 Golden 1992, 292–93. 64 Allsen 1987, 198, 201, 204. 65 Golden 2009, 114.

supply their armies adequately with material goods in addition to the food supplies provided by the nomadic lifestyle.

In terms of tactics and strategy, the Jochids fought much as the Mongols did prior to the dissolution of the empire. Like the Chaghadaids, they had access to a reservoir of nomadic horse archers as well as *cherig* units. Alans (the As) provided units that operated as heavy cavalry when needed. The Rus' also provided troops, particularly for campaigns into Eastern Europe and against the Lithuanians, but against the ilkhans as well. Although the Rus' started off as infantry and medium cavalry with more emphasis on spears, swords, and axes, after the Mongol conquest of their cities the Rus' increasingly shifted to a horse-archer-based army.⁶⁶ Rus' militaries included large numbers of infantry, a necessary component in the forests, but they learned well the lesson that the best way to fight the Mongols was to fight like the Mongols.

Although the Chaghadaids had lost the ability for sustained sieges by the fourteenth century, the Jochids carried on the tradition throughout the fourteenth century, as demonstrated at the sieges of Caffa in 1307–1308 and 1343–1347.⁶⁷ While the latter is better known as the Mongols allegedly catapulted corpses over the walls, in 1307–1308 the Mongols attacked Caffa in another dispute with the Genoese.⁶⁸ The Genoese strengthened Caffa's fortifications, preventing the Mongols from sacking Caffa in the second attack. Nonetheless, the first instance reveals that the Genoese had to take strong measures to stymie the Jochids' siege capabilities. The sacks of Tana (1343) and Tabriz (1357), and then Toqtamish's sack of Moscow (1382), all reveal a siege capability that went beyond blockades similar to the pre-dissolution era.

Bulgharia was the westernmost appanage of the Jochids and demonstrated the Jochids' ability to penetrate Europe. Despite a number of raids into Eastern Europe (1277, 1285, 1286–1287), there is no indication that they sought to conquer more of Europe. More importantly, the Mongols seemed indifferent to the rising power of Lithuania, which even encroached into Jochid territory. The Jochids occasionally retaliated, but it is clear that the loss of a few Rus' cities was not a priority compared to regaining Azerbaijan. The recovery of Jochid-claimed territory in Azerbaijan took priority over new conquests. Based on the numerous battles fought in the Caucasus region, it is clear that neither side could gain a significant advantage against the other.

66 Ostrowski 1998a, 51. 67 Ciocîltan 2012, 164–65, 202. 68 Mussis 1994, 17.

Indeed, the Jochids only gained Tabriz after the disintegration of the Ilkhanate.

The Yuan Empire

The army of the Yuan empire, or the Khanate of the Great Khan, proves to be the most complex and diverse post-dissolution military. It also possessed a markedly different approach to the military than the other post-dissolution states, reflecting the influence of Chinese institutions as well as geography. The prominence of the nomadic horse archer did not diminish, nor did traditional tactics and strategies lose their importance. The major changes, however, occurred in the organization and supervision of the military.

While the ruler could summon troops from the various Chinggisid princes and local dynasts, those soldiers remained associated with their respective prince. The Yuan, however, attempted to nationalize the army.⁶⁹ After Li Tan's rebellion in 1262, Qubilai no longer trusted Han military commanders, and he attempted to reduce their authority and independence. Many Chinese commanders were dismissed from their positions, particularly those whose subordinates comprised relatives. Their armies were then incorporated into the Mongol military machine. While Han generals continued to serve in the Mongol military, they were closely vetted and observed through a bureaucratic system quite different from the original Mongol military system.

In the original Mongol military, commanders were directly responsible to their superior officer and ultimately the khan.⁷⁰ Under the new system, the khan was still connected to the military, but removed from intimate contact with all but the highest-ranking commanders. While the military had been the key institution in the founding and organization of the Mongol Empire, through these measures the Yuan military came under the authority of the civil government through the Bureau of Military Affairs, known as the Shumi yuan in 1263, an institution that had existed in previous dynasties.

In doing so, the military became part of the bureaucracy of the empire. While Qubilai attempted to remove dynastic Chinese warlords within his realm, the Mongol officer class remained hereditary. Although the title of *noyan* remained hereditary, the Shumi yuan made decisions on promotion and demotion, as well as on salary and on where officers were stationed.⁷¹

69 Hsiao 1978, 14–15. 70 Hsiao 1978, 14. 71 Hsiao 1978, 14.

With the creation of the Shumi yuan, how the government compensated soldiers also changed. While booty was still an option, the conquests of the *Yeke Mongol Ulus* were a distant memory. Like other successor khanates, the Yuan did not benefit from vast conquests after 1279, and the flow of plunder came to a trickle. Thus the Yuan government derived new means of compensation, many based on existing models in East Asia, such as land grants or military colonies, as well as the tribute system. Additionally, the Yuan government paid the new *xin fu jun* (southern Chinese “newly attached troops”) armies from the treasury and did not provide land, in an effort to prevent the return of warlords such as Li Tan.⁷²

According to the *Yuan shi*, the Mongolian soldiers received agricultural land to support themselves. The Mongols did not become sedentary, however, as slaves worked the land.⁷³ The Yuan model was probably based on the Jin empire’s practice of allocating land to the Jurchen troops (much like the Qing did with their banner troops). As Hsiao Ch’i-ch’ing indicates, it is unlikely that Qubilai or any Yuan emperor expected the Mongol troops stationed in the lower and middle Yellow River valleys to actually farm.⁷⁴ Rather, the land allocation provided them a location to garrison and provided the Yuan true Mongol armies within China. In 1295, land was also allocated in Shandong.⁷⁵ Hsiao Ch’i-ch’ing also notes that the allotted land did not include the pastures that the Mongols already used for grazing, which was considerable.⁷⁶ Between the allocated land and the pastures, the Yuan could station a sizeable Mongol army within north China as well as Yunnan. As the intent was to make the armies self-sufficient yet tied to the government, one might wonder whether the *iqṭāʾ* plan discussed by Rashīd al-Dīn was based on ideas introduced from the Yuan, perhaps imparted to Rashīd al-Dīn by Bolad Chingsang (d. 1313).⁷⁷ Ultimately, the demands on the military made it impossible to be self-sufficient as their military obligations outstripped their ability to finance themselves.⁷⁸

As Hsiao Ch’i-ch’ing has noted, the bureaucratization of the Yuan military was a slow process and extended well beyond China. As Qubilai defeated rebellious relatives such as Arigh Böke, Nayan, and the descendants of Chinggis Khan’s brothers, their military forces were systematically brought into the new Yuan military system. Yet this process was neither easy, nor quick, nor complete, as the Mongol commanders and princes resisted its implementation. Concessions were necessary and many Mongol princes

72 Hsiao 1978, 20; Rossabi 2009, 99. 73 Hsiao 1978, 17–18. 74 Hsiao 1978, 20.

75 Hsiao 1978, 21. 76 Hsiao 1978, 21–22. 77 For more on Bolad: Allsen 2001, 72–80.

78 Hsiao 1978, 30–31.

continued to hold their appanages and were able to field troops, but their military capabilities were greatly reduced.

The overall composition of the Mongol military consisted of five primary components: *Menggu jun* (Mongol army), *tanmachi jun* (*tammachi* army), *keshig*, *Hanjun* (northern Chinese), and *xinfu jun*. The first was the traditional Mongol army, primarily composed of nomadic horse archers, while the *tanmachi jun* comprised Muqali's original *tamma*, which consisted of Jalayir, Onggirat, Ikires, Uru'ut and Mangqut troops. These five clans were collectively known as the five *touxia*, *touxia* being the domain under Mongol leaders.⁷⁹ Not all of the *touxia* served in the *tanmachi jun*, however. Some units became the *keshig* of the crown prince in 1284. The *keshig* continued in its regular capacity, albeit expanded to 12,000 during the reign of Qubilai and then to 15,000 by 1311.⁸⁰ The *keshig* was reinforced by an imperial guards corps (*shiwei qinjun*), garrisoned in the regions surrounding Dadu and Shangdu and forming an imperial army "directly under the central government" based on the model of previous dynasties.⁸¹ The *shiwei qinjun* included units comprising various ethnicities, including Alans (Asud) and Qipchaqs. The *shiwei qinjun* numbered, at least on paper, 340,000 troops.⁸² The *Hanjun* eventually consisted not only of northern Chinese forces, but also of Jurchen, Khitans, and Tanguts.

With the conquest of the Song empire, the Mongol military absorbed thousands of Song soldiers who then formed the *xinfu jun*, in part because they needed their numbers simply to control the newly acquired territory. Mongol and northern Han officers commanded these units, rather than former Song officers who may have harbored loyalties to the Song dynasty.⁸³ With the creation of the *xinfu jun*, the Mongols could then keep the *Menggu jun* and *tanmachi jun* north of the Huai river, where there was adequate pasture. It also lessened tensions in the newly conquered southern Chinese territories. With the acquisition of the Song territories, the population provided an almost inexhaustible resource of infantry and labor for sieges. While the decimal organization continued, when dealing with the Han the Mongols conscripted one out of every twenty, rather than ten.⁸⁴ Additionally, China provided engineers, materials, and industry.⁸⁵

Other regions also provided much-needed military resources. Retaining the Mongolian steppes as well parts of modern Xinjiang provided the Yuan

79 Hsiao 1978, 16. 80 Polo 2016, 76; Polo 1993, 379–81; Hsiao 1978, 40.

81 Hsiao 1978, 44–47. 82 Hsiao 1978, 45. 83 Hsiao 1978, 15.

84 Hsiao 1978, 17–18, 73.

85 Wright 2007, 407.

a troop reservoir of horse archers and breeding grounds for their horses. Mongolia, however, became increasingly rebellious, contributing to a horse shortage in the late Yuan period. Korea provided not only ships and the materials for building them, but also horses. Indeed, at one point a Mongol official requested that the emperor stop requisitioning Korean horses and women before he incited a rebellion.⁸⁶ Other resources came from Yunnan or the former kingdom of Dali. Unlike southern China, Yunnan had a climate and terrain suitable to the Mongols and their horses. Thus the Mongols stationed a sizeable army in the region, using Yunnan as an operational base for mounted archers' campaigns into Southeast Asia, as evinced by the campaigns of Nāṣir al-Dīn, Sayyid Ajall's son, against the kingdom of Burma (Pagan (849–1297)).⁸⁷

While the horse archer still comprised the basis of the Yuan army, other units (often in greater numbers) were also necessary. During the conquest of the Song empire, the Mongols quickly learned that the terrain, extensive fortifications, and often the climate limited the effectiveness of the traditional Mongol army. To that end, the Mongols incorporated massive numbers of Chinese infantry and built a navy. This continued to be the practice even after the fall of the Song. In the wars with Qaidu on the Yuan's western frontier, as well as with rebellions in Mongolia and Manchuria, the Yuan emperors depended on horse archers but augmented them with infantry. The reverse was true elsewhere. In the invasions of Japan, Java, and Southeast Asia, the Mongols utilized naval power, large units of infantry, and Mongol cavalry. In short, the Mongols adapted to the conditions and modified their armed forces as necessary.

No other Mongol khanate created a navy. While the former Jin domains provided some naval capabilities, Song renegades and deserters proved more useful in the naval theater. Of greater importance, however, were the resources of Korea. Korean ships proved to be better manufactured and Koreans were better sailors as well.⁸⁸ The Mongol fleets consisted not only of oceangoing vessels, but also of large fleets for riverine warfare, necessary for the reduction of the Song empire. Furthermore as the Mongols conquered China, they incorporated the Song's navy into their own.

Indeed, Song ships comprised a large portion of the fleet that attacked Japan in 1281. As the Mongols brought the defeated Song navy into their own, the ships were carefully inspected and repaired, as archaeological evidence

86 Duncan and Haboush, 2009, 44–45.

87 Polo 2016, 110–112; Polo 1993, 2: 98–104; Rossabi 2009, 214–15.

88 Sasaki 2015, 37–40, 143–44; Delgado 2008, 152–55.

attests.⁸⁹ Despite the storm-wracked invasion of Japan of 1281, the invasions of Java, as well as naval operations against Dai Viet and Champa, indicate that the navy remained an important, albeit underappreciated, facet of the Yuan military. While one must be careful with inflated numbers in the sources, archaeological evidence tends to suggest that the Mongols possessed a fleet of 4,000 ships for the invasion of Japan.⁹⁰

The variety of ships and designs demonstrates that Qubilai Khan's naval commanders had flexibility in the tactics and strategies they could employ in naval warfare. These included flat landing craft, patrol ships, combat junks with ramparts, and tower ships with superstructures to provide commanders with a view of the fleet and fighting platforms, as well as a variety of raiding ships, patrol boats, and others.⁹¹ The floating-fortress formation used by the Yuan navy in Japan in 1281 suggests a lack of imaginative operations, leaving the navy exposed to fireships and hit-and-run attacks.⁹² As naval historian Delgado has noted, it also prevented the Mongol ships from being cut off, surrounded, and destroyed or captured by the swarming small boats of samurai.⁹³ While the floating fortress was an easy target for fireships, it also allowed the Mongols a wide field to disable the Japanese ships before they reached the Mongol fleet. If a ship caught fire and the Mongols were unable to contain it, the ship could be cut free so the fire did not spread. Furthermore, the floating fortress allowed the Mongols to better bring their infantry and numbers into play in defending the ships. It only became detrimental when the *kamikaze* hit the fleet.⁹⁴

One must also consider the ingenuity of Mongol naval operations during the Song war. Not only did the Mongols use a navy to blockade fortresses and transport, but also they quickly realized that the navy allowed them to resume a war of mobility, rather than a static war. At the battle of Yaishan (1279), the naval battle that ended the Song war, the Mongols used the momentum of the tides to bring their ships into the conflict from both the South China Sea and the coast.⁹⁵ The Mongols also invaded the kingdom of Champa via the sea. The Mongol general Sögetü landed with a small army that secured Champa, but then used it to invade Dai Viet from the south.⁹⁶ Although the invasion of Java of 1293 did not end as planned, it nonetheless demonstrated the reach of the Yuan navy.⁹⁷

89 Sasaki 2015, 138–40; Delgado 2008, 147–51. 90 Sasaki 2015, 34. 91 Sasaki 2015, 34–35.

92 Conlan 2001, 268–69. 93 Delgado 2008, 106. 94 Delgado 2008, 110.

95 Davis 2009, 956–57. 96 Polo 2016, 147–48; Polo 1993, 2: 266–67; Delgado 2008, 158.

97 Polo 2016, 149; Polo 1993, 2: 272–74; Bade 2013, *passim*.

Whether it was in naval warfare, against steppe opponents such as Qaidu, or warfare in the jungles of Southeast Asia, the commanders of the Yuan demonstrated an ability to adapt to the circumstances and a nimbleness of the mind to find the proper strategies. Although it did not always mean battle-field success, the fact that most territories immediately bordering the Yuan empire sought to pay tribute or seek peace indicates that Yuan military forces still upheld the reputation of the Mongol armies that had marched before them.

Gunpowder and the Mongols

Although the Mongols preferred the traditional methods of steppe warfare, they did not eschew new technology either. The Mongols first encountered gunpowder weaponry during their conquest of the Jin empire. Gunpowder had been in use in China since the eleventh century, but it is difficult to assess its efficacy in warfare, although incendiary forms of gunpowder certainly were effective in naval warfare.⁹⁸

Although firearms did not exist prior to the 1280s in the Yuan empire, other weapons did, cannon did spread rapidly with Yuan-based designs appearing in Europe in the fourteenth century.⁹⁹ The Mongols used gunpowder weapons, such as bombs, against the Jin and the Song. Evidence suggests they may have also used gunpowder bombs in Japan.¹⁰⁰

While the Mongols indirectly facilitated the spread of gunpowder weapons and incorporated them into their arsenal, gunpowder was only a minor aspect of the Mongol art of war.¹⁰¹ Thus far, there has been no archaeological evidence to support the Mongols' use of gunpowder outside East Asia, nor is there significant evidence in sources for the use of gunpowder prior to the fourteenth century outside East Asia.

Nonetheless, some scholars posit that the Mongols used gunpowder in Hülegü's campaign and perhaps even earlier, although gunpowder was not manufactured in the Islamic world until 1291 at the earliest.¹⁰² In terms of weaponry, Allsen notes that gunpowder weapons (rockets) were not uncommon in the Ilkhanate in the early fourteenth century.¹⁰³ Although it has been suggested that the Mongols introduced gunpowder to India via Central Asia

98 Lorge 2008, 29–31. 99 Chase 2003, 32; DeVries and Smith 2012, 138–39.

100 Conlon 2001, 12, 73; Sasaki 2015, 69. 101 Allsen 2002, 285–86.

102 Haw 2013b, *passim*; Haw 2013a, 35–38; Needham 1981, 39; Needham et al. 1986, 325 n. F; Allsen 2002, 274, 278–83; Khan 2004, 3.

103 Allsen 2002, 282.

in the late thirteenth century, there is no evidence of gunpowder weaponry until the mid-fourteenth century.¹⁰⁴ The thirteenth-century introduction appears to have been fireworks, without intentional military utility. A sixteenth-century source indicates that these accompanied Hülegü (*sih hazār ‘arrada-i ātishbāzi*), but it is uncorroborated.¹⁰⁵

Sources that mention the use of gunpowder weapons outside East Asia lack supporting evidence to verify it. For example, Thomas Allsen notes that the *Yuan shi* indicates that the Mongols used *huojian* (“fire arrows”) against ships on the Amu Darya in 1220 during the Khwārazmian war and that, by the thirteenth century, *huojian* referred to rockets, rather than to a literal fire arrow.¹⁰⁶ While the *Yuan shi* remains an indispensable source on the Mongol Empire, it was written over a century after the 1220 incident and no Islamic sources pertaining to the event corroborate it. Thus, while it could have happened, by no means is it certain. Even if it did occur, it remains an isolated incident, forcing us to wonder why the Mongols did not continue to use these weapons in the Khwārazmian campaign.

The most often cited evidence of the Mongols’ use of gunpowder weaponry takes place during Hülegü’s assault on the Ismā‘īlī fortress of Maymūn Diz. Those arguing that Hülegü used gunpowder weapons recognize Juwaynī’s vague terminology, but argue that it is possible that the Mongols used gunpowder in rockets or bombs.¹⁰⁷ The linchpin for the Mongols’ use of gunpowder weapons rests on the presence of a *mingghan* of ostensibly Chinese engineers to serve as crews for catapults (*manjanīq*) and as naphtha throwers (*naft andāzān*).¹⁰⁸ Those that favor the Mongols’ use of gunpowder during this campaign view these engineers as having expertise with gunpowder weapons and augmented arrows and ballista missiles with gunpowder.¹⁰⁹

Yet it is difficult how see how a gunpowder-enhanced fire arrow surpassed arrows with naphtha. Those who also point to Juwaynī’s flowery description of “meteoric shafts” being shot from the *kamān-i gāv* or ox’s bow, a type of ballista, as evidence of gunpowder-assisted technology, fail to consider Juwaynī’s proclivity for purple prose throughout his work.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, neither Juwaynī nor Rashīd al-Dīn explicitly mention gunpowder or any new technology that could be related to gunpowder. Both were in positions to observe unusual technological innovations. For instance, when discussing

104 Khan 2004, 11, 191. 105 Khan 2004, 18. 106 Allsen 2002, 279.

107 Allsen 2002, 280–81; Lorge 2008, 39; Haw 2013a, 34–37. *JT*/Karīmī, 711; Khan 2004, 19.

108 *TJG*, 92–93; *HWC*, 608; *JT*/Karīmī, 686; *JT*/Thackston, 478; *JT*/Karīmī, 711; *JT*/Thackston, 496.

109 Allsen 2002, 278–79; Khan 2004, 202–3. 110 *HWC*, 630–31; *TJG*, 128.

the mangonels (*manjanīq*) that the Mongols brought with them, Juwaynī commented that they had a greater range and power than normal due to their construction, perhaps referring to counterweight trebuchets.¹¹¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, who wrote his account decades later, as vizier to the Ilkhans Ghazan and then Öljeitü, was also privy to state secrets. Rocket-propelled ballista bolts would have been notable, and yet they are not mentioned in Juwaynī, Rashīd al-Dīn, or later writers within the Ilkhanate or in the Mamluk sources.¹¹² For these reasons, several scholars have concluded that gunpowder was not used outside East Asia and was not a significant factor in the Mongol art of war.¹¹³ Until unambiguous evidence comes to light, such as archaeological evidence, the Mongols' employment of gunpowder weaponry outside East Asia remains speculation.

Conclusion

The Mongol military separated itself from traditional nomadic armies through the reforms of Chinggis Khan and the development of consistently talented and trained generals such as Sübedei, Chormaqan, Muqali, Noghai, and Bayan. Although the standard steppe horse archer remained the nucleus of the Mongol military for the duration of the empire, as the empire encountered new technologies and military systems the Mongols freely incorporated what was useful and discarded what was not. Furthermore, they recognized that warfare was malleable – they used military units in the way that best suited them. Rather than attempting to turn Han townspeople into horse archers, they used them as infantry. The Rus' adopted the Mongol art of war and transformed their own military into a sedentary horse archer rather than maintaining their previous style.¹¹⁴ Although the change was not immediate, the transition also demonstrated what all learned: that in order to defeat the Mongols you had to fight like the Mongols. The Mamluks are perhaps the best example of this, but one can also look at the opposite end of the empire and view how the Japanese transformed from fighting as individuals to adopting unit tactics after their encounters with the Mongols.¹¹⁵

Mongol success was remarkable, but so was the sudden halt to the conquests. A number of factors contributed to this. The first and foremost was the dissolution of the *Yeke Mongol Ulus* after the death of Möngke.¹¹⁶ The

111 TJG, 93; HWC, 608. 112 Raphael 2009, 362.

113 Raphael 2011, 61; Raphael 2009, 359–62; May 2007, 141; May 2012, 146–52.

114 Perfecty 1973, 61–62; May 2012, 143–44. 115 May 2012, 140–41, 145.

116 Jackson 1978, *passim*.

military reforms of Chinggis Khan, the *tsunami* strategy, and a social revolution that transformed Mongolian society, and then the conquests, set the empire on a path to military success, allowing the Mongols to maximize their forces without being bogged down in occupation duties. By the reign of Möngke, the empire had reached its apogee in terms of both bureaucratic and military abilities – able to marshal the resources of the empire to send several massive armies against the Song as well as the Middle East.

The post-dissolution Mongol military decline was not apparent, even though the military retained most of its abilities. The key factor was that instead of a single hyperpower, the empire's resources became divided between five and then four superpowers. While they were still momentous, wars between the Mongol states, as well as rebellions, distracted the Mongols. The Jochids' singleminded determination to reclaim Azerbaijan diverted men and resources from expanding their territory westward. While the naval campaigns ended in military failure, the Yuan restored the tribute system in East Asia and, beginning with Temür Öljeitü's reign, the Yuan emperors were content to receive tribute rather than military glory.

Environmental factors also played a role. While military resistance by the Mamluks, the Delhi Sultanate, and the kingdoms of Pagan, Dai Viet, and Champa all played their part, environmental conditions also prevented expansion. The inadequacy of pasture contributed to the failure of the Mongols to annex Syria.¹¹⁷ In south and Southeast Asia the humid weather also limited Mongol military efficacy as it weakened their composite bows. These regions were often unsuitable for cavalry and the Mongols often faced war elephants, but a larger factor was climatic. Neither the Mongols nor their horses did well in these humid regions due to lack of pasture, the heat, the wet climate, and disease. Considering the affection of the Mongols for their horses (and their own well-being) it is not surprising that they abandoned long-term occupation and instead accepted tribute and raiding. Environmental conditions may have even played a role in protecting Europe from Mongol conquest as excessively wet conditions in Hungary may have contributed to the Mongol withdrawal as the terrain became increasingly swampy, which again affected pasture.¹¹⁸

Although climatic factors influence events, monocausal explanations do not reveal the entire picture. Just as a pluvial period permitted lush pastures in Mongolia during the rise of Chinggis Khan and the Mongol Empire,

¹¹⁷ Morgan 1982, 231–33; Amitai 1999, 140–41; Amitai 2002, 258–60.

¹¹⁸ Büntgen and Di Cosmo 2016, 3–7.

allowing for increases in livestock, not only horses for war but also camels for transport, detrimental weather was not the sole factor in the end of the conquests.¹¹⁹ After all, without the military and organizational genius of Chinggis Khan, it is unlikely that the Mongols would have been as successful. Rather, they would have been another empire such as the Xiongnu or Uighurs – relegated to the steppes and not stretching across Eurasia.

Just as the Mongols used *cherig* armies against the Song, they could have used similar forces to occupy Europe, Syria, Southeast Asia, and India. Hülegü's attempts in Syria were doomed in part by the unreliability of Syrian *cherig* troops, necessitated by lack of pasture. The efforts by the ilkhans to secure an invasion by various European potentates also demonstrates their own understanding of their limitations.¹²⁰

A key factor in the decline of the Mongol conquest was the rise of the *qarachu*, or hereditary military commander. While the *noyad* began as a meritocracy, many positions quickly became hereditary. During the period of the *Yeke Mongol Ulus*, most of the commanders served in the *keshig* and developed a strong sense of loyalty to the *altan uruq*. In the post-dissolution empire, their loyalties shifted. As the empire divided, so did the *altan uruq*, which allowed the *qarachu* to increase their influence.¹²¹ Whereas new generals emerged from the *keshig*, the *qarachu* jealously guarded their positions. Talented commanders still appeared, but the *keshig* ceased to serve as a form of military academy, meaning that the overall consistency and quality of commanders declined, although the sharing of information led to innovative strategies and tactics.

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119 Pederson et al. 2014, 4375–79. 120 Jackson 2005, 165–86.

121 Schamiloglu 1984, 288; Atwood 2006, 155–57; Hope 2016, 118; May 2018.

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Economic Exchange

Money, Markets, and Taxation in Mongol Eurasia

AKINOBU KURODA

Commensurability across Eurasia

The Mongol regime, for the first time in human history, built a bridge connecting different monetary systems by linking civilizations that had each kept their own monetary systems until the late thirteenth century. In the preindustrial period (or, more to the point, prior to the proliferation of banking systems), monetary systems consisted of separate means of exchange for lower-level (or local) markets and upper-level (or interregional) markets. In general, the two systems worked independently on account of the significant differences between proximate and distant exchanges in size, frequency, and seasonality.¹ The Mongolian regime did not seriously affect lower-level markets, but its empire-wide tribute transfers, in combination with a unified system of measurement, served to build commensurability in distant exchanges, and subsequently led to a series of global transformations of entire exchange systems.

Until the mid-thirteenth century, there was no commonly accepted unit of exchange across Eurasia, even in upper-level markets. Following the collapse of the Roman Empire, where gold, silver, and bronze had circulated, Western European minting came to depend exclusively on silver. In the eastern Mediterranean, including the Byzantine world, the Roman system continued, while in West Asia and South Asia precious metals were used alongside non-precious materials as currency. Although preferences varied locally, broadly speaking, in West Asia silver served as the most popular currency and unit of account. A variety of coins sharing the name “dirham,”

¹ A horizontal contrast between monetized urban and self-sufficient rural economies blinds us to the vertical multiplicity of exchanges and the complementarity of different monies. Kuroda 2008b.

and composed of silver-copper alloy or silver-coated copper, circulated widely in the mid-thirteenth century. The continuous debasement of silver, known to numismatists as “the silver famine,” caused some regions of West Asia to revive gold as a monetary unit. It is also worth noting that in 1221 the Mongols minted a coin called the “khani dirham,” the first Mongol-issued coinage in Samarqand, but despite being called a dirham, it consisted mostly of copper.² Until the late thirteenth century, the Mongols brought few significant changes to previously existing monetary systems in regions under their rule.

In the eastern part of Eurasia, however, the use of silver as currency and monetary unit was quite limited. Chinese dynasties had almost never minted silver coins, depending instead on copper coinage for local exchange and silk for interregional transfer. Silver ingots were used only as a supplement to silk. Surrounding countries followed Chinese practice, and documents from east Turkestan strongly suggest that both taxation and commerce in the region were conducted in terms of cloth or copper coins.³

Many societies in the thirteenth century used goods as their principle units of exchange, among them Novgorod, which, as discussed below, relied on fur. In particular, certain grains or fabrics were commonly used for transactions in local markets. For example, the twelfth-century islanders of Rügen, off the coast of Germany, used linen as currency.⁴ Thirteenth-century peasants in Xiuzhou (Jiaxing) county, China, brought rice to a market town, Weitangzhen, to exchange for salt or oil.⁵ Even in long-distance trade, many merchants used portable commodities like spices rather than precious metals.⁶

In the last quarter of the thirteenth century, however, the use of silver suddenly became common across the entire Eurasian landmass. The circulation of silver continued to increase during the first half of the fourteenth century, when silver appears to have been far more abundant than it would become in the fifteenth century. In conjunction with the increased circulation of silver across Eurasia during this period, taxation increasingly came to be collected in silver as well. Although Eurasian states generally did not replace all previously existing forms of taxation with taxation based on silver, most

2 Kolbas 2006, 34.

3 For Europe: Spufford 1988; for China, Kuroda 2008a; for Central Asia: Moriyasu 2004. I use the term “copper coin” instead of “bronze coin” to avoid the confusion of referring to Chinese coinage as bronze prior to the mid-sixteenth century and brass (as used in the *jiaqing tongbao*) after that point.

4 Sargent and Velde 2002, 11. 5 Fang 1971, 698. 6 Lopez and Raymond 1955, 145.

came to collect at least some of their revenue in silver. Taxation denominated in silver did not, of course, always mean actual payment in silver. In many cases, payment was actually made in grain, cloth, copper coins, or paper money, based on their value in terms of silver. In places where silver was only infrequently used in tax payments it also remained rare in local commerce.⁷

Even if the popularization of silver from the late thirteenth through the mid-fourteenth centuries emerged principally due to its use in taxation rather than as a unit of exchange, this age of silver surely encouraged commercialization across the continent. Though data are spotty, the supply of currency, including silver, appears to have reached its highest pre-sixteenth-century peak during this period. Along with this expansion of the currency supply, rural markets seem to have emerged in greater density than in any previous period. This proliferation of marketplaces must have been closely connected to the increasing monetization of taxation across Eurasia. However, the unprecedented expansion of long-distance trade and the proliferation of marketplaces in rural areas were probably independent phenomena. In other words, the process of silverization under the Mongols mainly affected upper-level markets.

In the 1570s silver from Potosí (presently in Bolivia) abruptly began to circulate literally around the globe. It has been argued that the global spread of precious metals in the sixteenth century should be seen as an epoch heralding the rise of the capitalist world.⁸ However, though the circulation of gold also increased, its use as money remained geographically limited. It was not precious metals generally, but silver alone, which really acted on a global scale. Why did silver circulate so widely? This chapter will argue that the rise of silver in Eurasia during the height of Mongol Empire paved the way for the global rise of silver three centuries later.

Unlike the late sixteenth-century silver boom, in which silver circulated physically, the pan-Eurasian growth in the popularity of silver that began in the late thirteenth century was based on its function as a common unit of account, even as real silver did not circulate widely. In the earlier period, there was a mutual dependence between the prevalence of silver as a unit of account and its use in taxation, even as silver was not commonly used in either local markets or long-distance trade. It is this gap between the

7 Abu-Lughod demonstrated the importance of silver under the Mongol regime. However, she did not offer serious consideration of the multiplicity of currencies in use and the substitutive function of paper money. See Abu-Lughod 1989.

8 Keynes argued that this precious-metal influx caused the profit revolution in Western Europe. Keynes 1971, 135–45.

popularity of silver as a unit of taxation and its comparative lack of physical circulation that would lead to the spread of silver globally three centuries later.⁹

Before the Eurasian Silver Century: Silver as a Substitute for Silk

Without understanding the monetary role played by silk we cannot understand the function of silver in the eastern part of Eurasia during the ancient and medieval periods. Beginning after the fall of the Eastern Han (25–220 CE), it was silk that played the principal role in transferring tax revenues from local authorities to the central government. Silver began to take over silk's monetary role to a limited extent during the Tang. It was in the Northern Song period (960–1127), however, that silver clearly took on a role as more than an ornamental item. During the Northern Song, silver ingots were cast at a higher frequency than in previous periods, suggesting that silver had become a more popular form of currency than ever before.

The silver-mining boom happened in conjunction with an increase in the minting of copper cash. During the Yuanfeng period (1078–1085), the Song state issued 6 million strings (*guan*) – i.e., 6 billion coins – of copper cash every year, the largest quantity of copper cash minted at any point in Chinese history. Copper mines active in this period generally also produced silver ore, though the reverse was not true. This, together, with the absence of silver minting at this time, suggests that the increased production of silver in the Northern Song was not planned, but rather a by-product of the increased minting of copper cash.¹⁰

Although silver mines were mostly located in southern China, a significant quantity of silver made it to the north and west. Along with the horse–silk trade, the power of northern nomadic dynasties relative to the Song led to

⁹ This chapter, in part, aims at offering corrections to Kuroda 2009, and supporting its main hypothesis with new facts, including data derived from archaeological excavations. In that paper, I failed to notice the importance of remittance from *tauxia* estates and the unified system of measurement in postal relay stations. Von Glahn 2010 has already argued that the Yuan establishment of silver as the principal unit of account eventually led to increased actual use of silver in China in later periods. But his paper does not focus on the competitive relationship between silk and silver prior to the Yuan, nor on the complementary relationship between paper money and other measures of value.

¹⁰ Though published in the late sixteenth century, *Tiangong Kaiwu*, a scientific encyclopedia, described copper ore as containing silver, suggesting that silver was seen as a by-product of copper production. Song 1978, 356.

streams of silver flowing north. The treaty of Chanyuan between the Liao and the Song in 1004 resulted in annual tribute payments of 200,000 bolts of silk and 100,000 *liang* of silver from the Song to the Liao.¹¹ In a similar treaty between the Xi Xia and the Song, the Qingli treaty of 1044, the Song promised to make annual payments of 50,000 *liang* of silver, 130,000 bolts of silk, and 20,000 *jin* of tea to the Xi Xia. This means that, all told, on an annual basis, six metric tons of silver would have been sent to the two nomadic dynasties in the mid-eleventh century.

Northern China under the Jin (1115–1234), the state which the Mongols would eventually replace, was the first state in Chinese history to use silver as a unit of account. However, silver worked in tandem with silk as the main medium for tax payments, and there was even paper money, denominated in terms of silk, issued during the transition between the Jin and the Mongols.¹² Recently a metal format for printing local paper currency denominated in terms of silk, and dated to 1250, was found in northern China.¹³ It proves that silk still functioned as money in mid-thirteenth-century China and suggests that the Mongols did not stick to exclusively using silver.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a cache of uncoined Chinese-style silver was unearthed from the remains of medieval Brandenburg. The dates on the European coins found together with the silver suggest that it may have been left there as late as the end of the eleventh century.¹⁴ Although significant quantities of Chinese silver may already have been moving along Eurasian trade routes, payment in silver was far from common until the late thirteenth century, when circumstances changed drastically.

The Eurasian Silver Century: Emergence and Collapse

Beginning in 1273, the Royal Mint in London maintained annual records of silver coinage. As shown in Figure 9.1, large peaks in the issuance of silver currency appeared in 1278–1288, 1300–1314, and 1344–1355. The quantity of silver minted annually in this period was larger than in any other period prior to the Napoleonic wars.¹⁵ Though they kept far less consistent data, other

11 One *liang* is equivalent to 40 grams, and one *jin* to 640 grams (Matsui 2004, 158).

12 Abe 1972, 98. 13 Gao 2016.

14 Silver lumps were found in small linen bags, as seen in late nineteenth-century China. Friedel 1896, 5. I thank Dr. Linda Twerdk for bringing my attention to this reference.

15 Spufford 1988, 204–5.

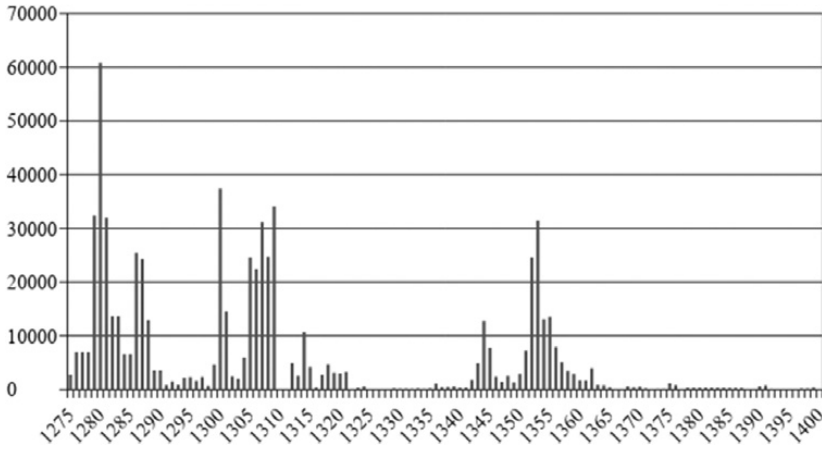


Figure 9.1 Minting of silver coinage in London (in kg)

Source: Miskimin 1983, 90–92

mints in Western Europe, such as those in Paris and Flanders, appeared to have similar surges in silver coinage around 1350.¹⁶

Let us examine developments in silver usage in the last quarter of the thirteenth century from west to east. In Tunis, silver became cheaper than gold in 1278, a fall in silver price that seems to have occurred at the same time as a similar shift in Genoa.¹⁷ Egypt appears to have emerged from a period of silver shortage at this time. A hoard from Moldova contained silver Golden Horde coins from the last two decades of the thirteenth century, as well as Byzantine gold coins.¹⁸ In Caucasian hoards from the thirteenth through fourteenth centuries, silver is dominant, while in other periods only gold coinage from Byzantium is found. Under the Ilkhanate, silver output appears to have increased beginning in the 1280s.¹⁹ Perhaps an even more important shift was in the quality rather than the quantity of silver coinage in parts of West Asia where the silver dirham had been dominant. Silver coins of higher fineness with whiter appearance rapidly replaced blacker ones of lower fineness during the late thirteenth century. In the case of Transoxania the transformation can be clearly dated to a distinct starting point. In 1271–1272, the governor Mas'ūd Beg banned the use of silver-coated copper dirhams, and thereafter established a high standard (80 percent) for silver dirhams. There was also an increase in the number of silver mints in the 1280s.²⁰ The

16 Miskimin 1983, 87–89, Munro 1983, 136. 17 Spufford 1988, 178–79.

18 Boldureanu 2007; Watson 1967, 18. 19 Martinez 1984, 155.

20 Davidovich and Dani 1998, 406.

Delhi sultans began to issue silver rupees on a large scale in 1295.²¹ Documents unearthed from east Turkestan reveal that, during the latter half of the thirteenth century, the most common form of payment shifted dramatically away from cloth and copper coins and toward silver.²² The official history of Korea described the circulation of uncoined silver beginning in 1287, following another Mongol expedition to the peninsula.²³ None of these localized changes is conclusive on its own, but taken as a whole they suggest that silver usage became popular across Eurasia in the late thirteenth century. This shift originated in China proper.²⁴

We should keep in mind the important difference between the use of coined and uncoined silver, the value of which was determined by weight. From the establishment of their empire on, the Mongols issued silver coins, which are also attested archaeologically.²⁵ The usage of coined silver was later continued by the western khanates.²⁶ The Mongols thus stand in stark contrast to other dynasties in China, most of which had been reluctant to issue silver coins and instead used silver only by weight. However, the conquest of the Southern Song led the Yuan to deviate from its initial policy toward silver. In 1276, the capture of the lower Yangzi, the most prosperous region of China, where Hangzhou, the capital of the Southern Song, was located, must have brought the Yuan court a large amount of confiscated silver ingots. The Yuan minister Bayan is said to have ordered that the soldiers' bags be searched for silver to be taken for Qubilai's use.²⁷ The existence of a silver ingot dated 1276 and inscribed with the word "confiscated" seems to support this story.²⁸

There is no way to determine how many silver ingots the Mongols took during their conquest of southern China. Yet after the defeat of the Southern Song, the Yuan abandoned the minting of silver coins. Thereafter, throughout Yuan territory, silver was used by weight. This transition coincided with a rapid increase in the Yuan's printing of paper money, which began precisely in 1276, the year of the conquest. At this time, the Yuan switched from using woodblocks for printing paper money to using copper plates, which would have enabled the dynasty to issue far more paper currency.²⁹ The face value of paper money continued to be denominated in terms of copper cash, as it had been during the Song, though the Yuan administration calculated these

21 Deyell 1983, 209. 22 Moriyasu 2004. 23 Ch'ông 1972, 736–39.

24 The exchange rate of silver against gold in China dropped from 5:1 in the first half of the thirteenth century to 10:1 in the latter half. Von Glahn 1996, 60–61.

25 Whaley 2001, 52. 26 Wang and Zhong 2007, 16, 23. 27 Tao 1959, 377.

28 Whaley 2001, 59. 29 Maeda 1973, 49–50.

values in terms of silver by weight. In short, given that the Yuan's main use for silver was to serve as backing for an increased quantity of paper money, it had no particular reason to melt silver ingots and reissue them in the form of silver coins, which, in any case, had never been very popular in China proper, particularly in the former Southern Song territory.

The year 1276 was a turning point, when a set of institutions built on taxation in terms of paper money helped bring about the continent-wide circulation of silver, as will be discussed later in this chapter. From 1263 to 1311 (except for 1284 through 1287), the Yuan prohibited the use of silver in private commerce, though Mongolian aristocrats were allowed to use it for both commerce and religious activities. For such monopolization to succeed, the 1282 policy of registering gold and silver craftsmen must have been effective, though it is impossible to imagine that there were none left unregistered.³⁰

In contrast to the late thirteenth century, when Yuan policy focused on the acquisition of hoarded silver, in the first half of the fourteenth century newly mined silver from Yunnan was more important. According to the *Yuan History*, compiled under the Ming, in 1328 Yunnan paid 735 silver *ding* (about 1.4 metric tons) of tribute to the Yuan government, making up half of the entire empire's silver tribute for that year.³¹ By 1340, Yuan influence stretched deep into Burma via Yunnan, and the increased silver production there coincided with a surge in the minting of silver rupees by the sultan of Bengal, which began soon after the Bengali sultan gained independence from the Delhi dynasty.³² Since there was no silver mining in Bengal, it is likely that the silver which the sultan minted originated in Yunnan. Thus there may be more of a geographical bias in the abundance of silver coins during the mid-fourteenth century than in previous periods.

Based on tax records of the Rasulid dynasty of Yemen, which show the taxes collected on commodities from China, it appears that during the period in question, Chinese ships voyaged at least as far as Aden.³³ A large quantity of porcelain was brought via Aden to Egypt, where a number of blue-and-white ceramics have been unearthed.³⁴ During the 1340s, imitation *gigliate*, a type of coin minted by the king of Naples using Sardinian silver, circulated widely in the east Mediterranean region. Unlike genuine *gigliate*, counterfeit ones were mainly minted in towns located along the eastern end

30 Vogel 2013, 162. 31 YS, 2383–84. 32 Jackson 2009, 26.

33 In 1279 an embassy with gifts was sent to the Chinese emperor. Al-Shamrookh 1996, 256–57, 321, 329–31.

34 Mikami observed several hundred pieces of high-quality blue-and-white porcelain in the Foustat remains. Mikami 1969, 25.

of the Mediterranean.³⁵ The large number of silver bars unearthed from sites in Moldova dating to the 1340s through 1360s suggest that the production of imitation *gigliate* may have been made possible by the influx of eastern silver, a theory that will be explored in more detail below.³⁶ Furthermore, between 1337 and 1353, the Byzantine Empire issued a particularly large type of silver coin called the *stavraton*, weighing eight to ten grams.³⁷ As shown in Figure 9.1, at a continental level, London mint records suggest that the 1340s through 1350s represented the last medieval peak in the issuance of silver coin.

The conclusion of this silver age can be defined precisely. At the end of the 1350s, anti-Yuan rebels occupied the lower Yangzi core region, which provided a large quantity of grain to Dadu and produced silk and porcelain for export.³⁸ Already at this time, after several decades of stability, the value of paper money had begun to fall sharply. Copper coins, which had been formally abandoned, came back into use, with their value in relation to paper money varying by locality within the lower Yangzi region.³⁹ Silver would retreat from use in China for more than half a century, until the 1436 Ming introduction of silver taxation, called *jinhuiyin*.

In Bengal, the issuance of silver rupees stagnated after the 1360s, and Delhi also began to suffer from silver scarcity in the late fourteenth century. In 1359, the basic unit of silver in Aden was decreased in weight;⁴⁰ in the 1360s, Egypt fell into a silver shortage severe enough to force it to switch to reliance on minted copper, Italian cities appeared to experience an outflow of silver on account of the Levant trade, and the minting of silver in London decreased sharply.⁴¹

A consistent source of data for the change in currency supply in this period is the distribution of dates of Venetian *tornesello* coins unearthed in Greece. Containing little silver, *tornesello* coins were almost entirely composed of bronze alloy, though they were denominated in silver. Mid-fourteenth-century Venice issued the *tornesello* exclusively for use in its Greek colonies and increased its production toward the end of the fourteenth century.⁴² In this period, then, the Aegean Sea region appears to have relied predominately on copper alloy coinage with little silver available. Given that prior to 1350, as

35 Spufford 1988, 155, 284–85. 36 Boldureanu 2007. 37 Grierson 1982, 315.

38 Maeda 1973, 75. 39 Kong 1987, 25. 40 Al-Shamrookh 1996, 304.

41 On Egypt: Bacharach 1983. Allen estimates that silver circulation in England fell from between £700,000 and £900,000 in 1351 to between £150,000 and £200,000 in 1422. Allen 2001, 607.

42 Stahl 1985, 24–25.

Pegolotti has noted, there were a number of types of silver coins in circulation in Cyprus, the rapid retreat of silver in Greece during the second half of the fourteenth century appears to share a cause with the shift in currency availability in Egypt mentioned above.⁴³ In Caffa the inferiority of the *asper*, a type of silver coin, produced after 1380 caused local authorities to mark coins from later than that date with a special stamp.⁴⁴

Thus the Eurasian continent appears to have undergone a shared and sudden collapse in the availability of silver after 1360, and silver would not be found in abundance again through to the end of the fifteenth century.

The emergence and disappearance of silver abundance across Eurasia that I have described above occurred synchronically. As Figure 9.2 shows, during the late thirteenth century, following a lag of several years after the beginning of widespread issuance of paper money by the Yuan, there was a large surge in the output of minted silver in London. During the mid-fourteenth century, the peak of silver rupee issuance by the sultans of Bengal was followed by a similar peak at the London mint, once again with several years' delay.⁴⁵

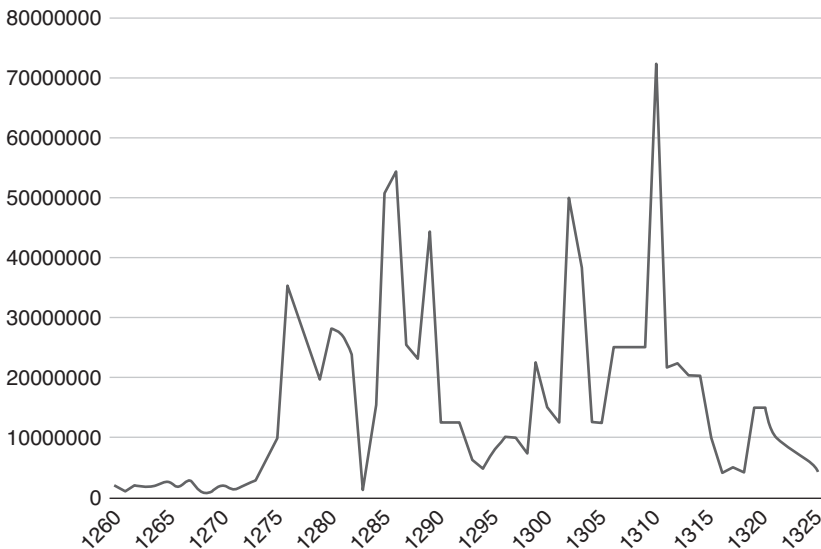


Figure 9.2 Issuance of paper money by the Yuan (in silver *liang*)

Source: YS, 2371–73.

43 Grierson 1979, 491. 44 Di Cosmo 2005, 415. 45 Kuroda 2009, 253–54.

One possible source of additional evidence is that silver of Chinese origin may have contained relatively high levels of antimony, allowing us to track where it was circulating, but this possibility remains to be examined scientifically.⁴⁶ A mechanism operating behind the scenes under the Mongol regime helped to increase the silver usage across the Eurasian continent. It is important to pay attention to this institutional setting, as we will see in the next section.

Institutions behind the Silverization of Eurasia: Taxation, Remittances, and Measurement

The taxation and public finance of the Mongol Empire, at a basic level, followed the model of previous nomad-founded Chinese states. The basic principle of military organization was units of 100, 1,000, and 10,000 men with provisions for soldiers distributed through unit commanders. Meanwhile, in territories that had belonged to past Chinese dynasties, the Mongols organized both census and taxation on the basis of the household unit, following the Chinese model. The Golden Horde, the Chaghadaid Ulus and the Ilkhanate conducted their census based on the individual as the census unit.⁴⁷ In both cases, corvée obligations were also imposed on the respective basic unit. Levies based on production were imposed in certain cases, as with tribute taken from fur-producing tribes; Novgorod, for instance, made fur-producing tributaries pay one-tenth of what they produced in tribute.⁴⁸

In ruling agrarian regions, the Mongols collected taxes on land, either in kind or in cash, depending on the situation. For example, under the Ilkhanate, land tax was mostly collected in kind, while it was paid in cash in the areas around Baghdad and Shīrāz.⁴⁹ However, unlike former Chinese dynasties, which made the land tax their primary source of revenue, Mongol states depended mainly on commercial taxes and tribute. The Yuan, in particular, relied to a large extent on the salt revenue. For example, in 1309, the annual expenses of the Yuan were approximately 5 million *ding* in Zhongtong *chao*, the paper currency then in use (equivalent to 25 million *liang* of real silver), while in 1307, its entire revenue was 4 million *ding* and its issuance of paper money was a million *ding*. In 1308, Yuan revenue from the salt monopoly was

46 Blake 1937, 328.

47 The census registers surely existed. In 1308, an official from Samarqand and other cities presented to the Yuan court the blue census registers made at the time of Chinggis Khan. YS, 502–3.

48 Abe 1972 *passim*; Michell and Forbes 1914 *passim*. 49 Petrushevsky 1968, 531.

3.25 million *ding*, which likely amounted to more than 80 percent of the total revenue in cash.⁵⁰

Across the Mongolian Empire, taxation on merchants, including the *tamgha*, was common. The term *tamgha* may have referred to different forms of taxation in different regions of the empire: it appears as a sales tax in Turfan and Georgia, a tax on the capital of city dwellers under the Ilkhanate, and a customs tax in Novgorod.⁵¹ Regardless of any local variation, though, the basic principle was the same: commercial profits were to be taxed. This made it similar to the *yashui* tax in China, a sales tax discussed below. Unsurprisingly, commercial taxes were collected in currency. The tax for markets in Anatolia under the Ilkhanate was called *tamgha*.⁵² It would stand to reason that dependence on commercial taxation would have encouraged silverization under the Mongols. However, even more effective was a requisition-oriented tax imposed on all subjects, called *baoyin* in China proper, *qubchir* in the western khanates, and *zapros* in Novgorod.⁵³

The tax policy imposed by the Mongols immediately following their conquest of Samarkand reflects their principles of financial administration. They kept the existing exchange system, in which merchants conducted business in terms of gold, while people depended on copper-based currencies, and imposed taxes in gold on merchants and in copper coins on commoners.⁵⁴ This policy was likely the result of Chinggis Khan accepting the advice of local Muslims who were “skilful in the laws and customs of cities.”⁵⁵ However, importantly, the empire’s rulers also introduced taxation in terms of silver for Mongols and their trade circuits. The Mongol government thus combined the use of a common unit of exchange across the empire with a practical flexibility that allowed existing local systems to continue, with some modifications.

Here we should pay attention to the unified system of measurement applied to the postal system across the entirety of the Mongol world, from Korea to Eastern Europe, a system which contributed to the commensurability of various local currencies. As was common in the preindustrial era, even under a strong political administration, a plethora of measures, scales, and weights were used side by side, despite the standardization of the unit of

50 Miyazawa 2012, 58, 60. Zhongtong *chao* continued to be issued after the Zhongtong era (1260–1264), in association with Zhiyuan *chao*, and remained a major unit of account in transactions throughout the Yuan period.

51 Matsui 2005, 75; Allsen 1987, 158–62; Michell and Forbes 1914, 95. 52 Köprülü 1992, 67.

53 Vernadsky 1953, 222. 54 Kolbas 2006, 68. 55 Allsen 2001a, 5.

taxation. For example, a Venetian merchant visiting Sarai in 1345 observed that merchants used different measures depending on the commodity.⁵⁶

However, because it crossed a variety of administrative regions, the postal relay system used a single set of measurement units in order to avoid substantial differences in the amounts of grain and liquor supplied to messengers, amounts which had been standardized by Ögödei Qa'an.⁵⁷ For example, according to the regulation on the postal relay system, across the Mongol Empire, the daily provision per person was one *jin* of meat, one *jin* of flour, one *sheng* of liquor and one *sheng* of rice.⁵⁸ Thus, even as local variations in measurement remained in local markets, there was a standard measurement system across the entire Mongol Empire for use in official business that crossed regional administrative boundaries, as the postal relay system did. This same sort of unification at the level of the empire and diversity at the local level could also be found in both taxation and currency. Transcontinental trade conducted along relay post routes created unprecedented prosperity during Mongol rule.

The Mongols inherited the requisition system in silver (*baoyin*) or in silk (*siliao*) from the Jin dynasty. *Yin* means silver; *bao*, according to Abe Takeo, meant that ordinary households responded to one-time requisitions by the ruler designed to support soldiers and artisans.⁵⁹ Originally *baoyin* or *siliao* would have been a contribution in silver or silk paid once a year to cover all requisitions. Based on its name, the *baoyin* system likely originated from occasional or additional requisitions by a nomad army, though "occasional" certainly did not mean minor or supplemental. Later it would become a fixed tax. There seems to have been local variation until 1255 when Möngke issued a decree introducing *qubchir* throughout the empire,⁶⁰ with each household required to pay four silver *liang*.⁶¹ This universal imposition of taxation in terms of silver paved the way for the establishment of currency commensurability across Eurasia.

This decree may have had an effect as far as Russia. In 1257 Mongol census officials enumerated all Suzdalian land, as well as the land of Riazan' and Murom', and divided the population of the country into tens, hundreds, thousands, and ten thousands for the purpose of determining the number of

56 Lopez and Raymond 1955, 152–53. 57 Matsui 2004 *passim*.

58 Matsui 2005, 197. One *sheng* is equivalent to 0.84 litre (Matsui 2004, 158).

59 Abe 1972, 148–49.

60 *Qubchir* means "collecting" in Mongolian. Doerfer 1963, 387. I thank Dr. Matsui Dai for his instruction.

61 Abe 1972, 131.

taxpayers and recruits for the Mongol armies.⁶² The chronicle of Novgorod records that in 1257 the Mongols required Novgorod to count households in preparation for paying *tamgha* and the one-tenth tax to the Mongols.⁶³ In spite of strong opposition by the people of Novgorod, Russian ruler Aleksandr Nevskiĭ succeeded in imposing the Mongol will: the census was completed and the tax collected.⁶⁴ Novgorod had at first paid tribute to the Mongols in fur, but later began to pay silver as a substitute for fur. Perhaps not coincidentally, the earliest coinage in Golden Horde-ruled Bulghar appeared soon after this change.⁶⁵ In the Chaghadaid Khanate, meanwhile, silver-plated copper coins were minted from 1253 to 1254.⁶⁶ As Thomas Allsen has argued, the census, *qubchir* taxation, and currency issuance were part of one set of linked policies, just as they were in northern China.⁶⁷

At the start of Mongol rule over northern China, requisitions were made largely in terms of silk. Then, as mentioned above, paper money denominated in silk began to circulate in some regions. Although the establishment of the *qubchir* system in 1255 meant that, in principle, requisitions should have been collected in silver, this does not seem to have occurred. In 1260, Qubilai's government began to issue paper money, the Zhongtong *chao*. A 1263 decree permitted households to pay paper money in place of the four silver *liang baoyin*.⁶⁸ The face value of the Zhongtong *chao* was denominated in copper cash, but it also had an official value in terms of silver *liang*, with two *guan* (nominally a string of 1,000 copper coins) of Zhongtong *chao* considered equivalent to two *liang* of silver for the purposes of tax payments, or to one *liang* of uncoined silver.⁶⁹ The Yuan did not abandon the principle that the *baoyin* should be paid in silver, but because paper money was allowed to substitute for uncoined silver, Zhongtong *chao* began to circulate as a standard currency and was the currency with the highest total value (in terms of silver) in circulation in Yuan territory. The contribution of the *baoyin* to the total revenue of the Yuan decreased over time, but the existence of this requisition in combination with the ability to pay it in paper money worked to promote silverization.⁷⁰

Prices of salt vouchers also reflected this transition from payment in real silver to payment in paper money. A price quoted in 1263 was in real silver, while one in 1277 was already in paper money.⁷¹ Given the importance of salt revenue to Yuan public finances, this change would have increased the acceptance of paper money more generally. Doubtlessly, the significant

62 Fennell 1983, 113. 63 Michell and Forbes 1914, 95. 64 Fennell 1983, 118.

65 Allsen 1987, 179. 66 Allsen 1987, 175. 67 Allsen 1987, 185. 68 Abe 1972, 168.

69 Abe 1972, 167. 70 Abe 1972, 210–11. 71 Miyazawa 2012, 48.

increase in the issuance of Zhongtong *chao* after 1276 accelerated this transition.

A similar taxation framework appeared outside China proper as well. Documents from Turfan suggest that it too was subject to *qubchir*, in addition to the land tax, commercial tax, and labor service. In Turfan, *qubchir* was used to support the cost of the postal relay system and military expeditions.⁷²

The major difference between developments under the Yuan and in the western khanates is that, while silverization in taxation was accompanied by actual payment in paper money under the Yuan, the western khanates did not issue paper money, and so collected taxes in real silver. The Ilkhanate tried to introduce a paper money system in 1294, but in vain.⁷³ This contrast in currency systems affected cross-regional trade. Typically, Italian merchants brought linen to Sarai or Urgench, where they exchanged it for silver, specifically the *somo* silver ingots of the Golden Horde, and then advanced to China, where they converted silver for paper money, with which they could purchase silk and porcelain, a process described by Pegolotti.⁷⁴ Visitors from Europe, including Marco Polo, unanimously concurred in noting that paper money circulated stably in China. Yet, we must ask, where did the silver used in Sarai or Urgench come from?⁷⁵

The purchase of goods like horses from nomads may have caused silver to flow westward from China, but no concrete information exists regarding the export of horses to China. As explained below, there is little possibility that the commercial import of any commodities caused a significant quantity of Chinese silver to move west.

Moving beyond the purchase of commodities, investments might have caused silver to move west. Until 1311, the Yuan formally permitted only Mongol nobles to use silver for private business. Merchants, many of them Uighur, Muslim, or Armenian, who were business partners (called *ortoq*) of Mongol nobles thus likely acquired significant quantities of silver. Central and western Asian merchant associations supported by the Mongol state were known to non-Mongolian merchants under the Yuan by the Chinese

72 Matsui 2005, 78.

73 The use of metal currencies was prohibited in the same way as under the Yuan. The compulsory use of paper money, called *chao*, led to a collapse of trade in the Ilkhanate, leading the Ilkhanate to abandon this policy after only two months. Makhdumi 1988, 52–53; Jahn 1970. In the same year, the output of silver decreased. Martinez 1984, 165.

74 Lopez and Raymond 1955, 358.

75 Halperin suggested that the Russians paid between 3,000 and 5,000 silver rubles a year. However, it is not certain whether these numbers excluded payments in commodities like fur that were denominated in terms of silver. Halperin 1985, 77.

term *quanfusi*.⁷⁶ Since Russian princes often borrowed silver from Tatar merchants, a similar system also existed in the western khanates, and local authorities were frequent targets of investment, often through tax farming.⁷⁷ In West Asia many urban nobles and bureaucrats invested a portion of their income with the great wholesale merchants.⁷⁸ Some scholars suggest the possibility that silver entrusted to *ortoq* merchants may have flowed westward from China.⁷⁹ However, there is no clear evidence that businesses tied to these merchants carried a significant amount of silver from China to Sarai or Urgench, particularly in the periods around 1280, 1300, and 1340. Logically, under the condition that the most profitable commodities were silk and porcelain in the period, any large investment from the east to the west sounds strange.

One bit of evidence suggesting westward silver flow is the remittance of tribute from estates in China proper, called *touxia*, to the western khanates.⁸⁰ Beginning with their defeat of the Jin and occupation of northern China, the Mongols allotted estates to their princes and nobles, which they could use to raise horses and from which they could collect labor and grain. After conducting an empire-wide census in 1257, Möngke apportioned land from across Eurasia among his nobles. Subsequently, the rulers of the Mongol khanates held appanages across the entire Mongol world. The Yuan possessed appanages in Iran, while western khanates had their own in China.⁸¹ The movement of silver between these estates and their owners would have been the most important cause of long-distance silver transfers.⁸² During Möngke's reign, this system brought few significant changes to the economy, but after 1276 the incorporation of south China and the acquisition of its hoards of silver ingots by *touxia* estate holders led to transregional silver transfers at an unprecedented scale. The late thirteenth century through the mid-fourteenth century was the only period during which nomad lords based in northern and Central Asia could have directly collected revenues from estates in wealthy southern China.

There are a few cases concretely demonstrating that tribute was brought from Chinese appanages to the western khanates. For example, in 1281, a tribute called *wuhusi* was sent from an estate in Taiyuan, Shanxi, controlled

76 Otagi 1973, 200. 77 Moshenskiy 2008, 187; Martinez 2009, 99.

78 Petrushevsky, 1968, 509. 79 Otagi, 1973; Allsen 1989, 121.

80 The most detailed work on the *touxia* system is Sugiyama 1993. According to his analysis, based on evidence from stelae, the administration of these estates was almost entirely independent of the central Yuan state.

81 Allsen 2001b, 176–78. 82 Martinez 2011, 93.

by the Yongning king, to Beshbaliq, Turkestan.⁸³ This was the year in which the postal relay system was extended from Beshbaliq to the Caucasus region.⁸⁴ It is perhaps not coincidental that many *touxia* were established that year. The same year the Yuan granted appanages in south China containing a total of 1,048,107 households.

In 1281 Qaidu received a fief of 60,000 households in Xinzhou, which was known for its silver production during the Song period. If each household had paid 0.5 *liang* in paper money (0.25 *liang* in silver) according to the decree,⁸⁵ then Qaidu would have received 15,000 *liang* of silver (600 kilograms). In the same year the Chaghadaid khan received 67,330 households at Lizhou.⁸⁶ As discussed above, by this time it was permissible to pay *baoyin* in paper money. However, outside Yuan territory, no paper money was in circulation. Thus the revenue from these fiefs in the lower Yangzi must have been remitted to the western khanates in the form of silver ingots. Otherwise the revenue would have been unusable for the princes who received it.

The first peak in the establishments of fiefs in south China began in 1276, and resulted from the conquest of the Southern Song. Between 1276 and 1285 new appanages totalling 1,242,000 households were established in the lower Yangzi. According to the rate of tribute, 0.5 *liang* in Zhongtong *chao* per household, the total tribute amounted to 310,000 *liang* in silver (more than twelve metric tons).⁸⁷ The establishment of new fiefs was suspended between 1285 and 1298. Its resumption followed the surrenders by Yomuqur and Ulus Buqa, important allies of Qaidu, to the Yuan court in 1296.⁸⁸ The next year the Yuan increased their appanages in order to encourage further surrenders from the Qaidu camp.⁸⁹ Importantly, Temür Qa'an already raised the rate of tribute per household from 0.5 *liang* to two *liang* in paper money (one *liang* in silver) in 1294,⁹⁰ and resumed the establishment of new *touxia* in the lower Yangzi in 1298.

It was not only the establishment of new *touxia*, but also the resumption of transfers from the existing *touxia*, that was likely responsible for the second surge in silver minting in west Eurasia. The ilkhan Ghazan (r. 1295–1304) dispatched envoys with gifts to the Yuan in 1297–1298 and they returned with silks from Hülegü's holdings in China.⁹¹ Coin specimens in museums also show that Ilkhanate silver minting had a sudden peak around 1300.⁹²

83 Muraoka 2002, 158, 160. In 1283 the office for issuing paper money was established there. Maeda 1973, 77.

84 YS, 231. 85 YS, 2411. 86 Li 2007, 134. 87 YS, 2411–44. 88 Matsuda 1983.

89 YS, 408–9. 90 YS, 382. 91 Allsen 2001a, 49–50. 92 Martínez 1995–1997, 153.

In addition to peaks in silver transfers resulting from the establishment of new fiefs, the resumption of tribute transfers through the *touxia* system in 1339, following a previous suspension, resulted in a spike in silver transfers to the Golden Horde. That khanate owned fiefs in Pingyang, Jinzhou, and Yongzhou in China, and according to the official history of the Yuan, beginning in 1339, Zhongtong *chao* (paper money) valued at 2,400 *ding* were given to the Golden Horde annually.⁹³ This amount is equivalent to 2,300 kilograms of silver.

In 2007, a pot containing sixty-five silver bars was excavated in Orheiul Vechi, a fortress town of the Golden Horde in Moldova. The pot is thought to date from between 1340 and 1360, and the bars have two features suggesting a connection to China. The first is their weight, which at around 200 grams is equivalent to five *liang*, i.e. one-tenth of a silver *yuanbao*.⁹⁴ This suggests that these are examples of the silver bars that contemporaries called *somo*. Another Chinese feature is the bubbled surface of the bars, which is similar to the surface of Chinese silver ingots.⁹⁵ This find strongly suggests that tribute in silver from China reached the Golden Horde.

In the background, Venice succeeded in lifting the papal ban on trade with the Mamluks in 1345 and caused the trades connecting the Golden Horde and Egypt through Venetian merchants to increase. Venetians had wanted a safer trade route since 1335 when the Ilkhanate politically fragmented.⁹⁶

Thus there were two silver flows crossing Eurasia under Mongol rule. Some silver moved east, to China proper, to be used to buy silk, porcelain, and other commodities. This silver was converted to paper money as soon as it arrived. Flowing west, some silver may have been used to purchase goods from the western side of Eurasia, like horses and cobalt, the trade in which is described below. However, the main westward stream of silver was not tied to the purchase of goods, but rather resulted from the remittance of taxes collected at *touxia* estates located in China proper, but owned by the western khanates.

During the 1270s, a contrast emerged between the monetary systems of the western khanates and that of the Yuan due to the proliferation of paper money in China proper. Two different currencies denominated in terms of silver became common: silver coinage like the *somo* in the western khanates and paper money like the Zhongtong *chao* in the Yuan. As long as paper

93 YS, 2906. 94 Boldureanu 2007.

95 The author examined and weighed sixty-five silver bars at the National Museum of History of Moldova on September 21, 2016.

96 Martinez 2011, 102.

currency in terms of silver could substitute for silver itself in the eastern part of the Mongol domains, it was inevitable that physical silver would be sucked toward the western part through some means, whether remittance or investment.

The unprecedented scale of tribute transfers made through *touxia* channels was made possible by the transport of large-denomination silver bars. These silver bars had an entirely different function from silver coins previously in circulation, like the dirham and the denarius. Unlike silver coins, which were of use in both interregional trade and local transactions, silver bars like *somo* were used exclusively for long-distance exchanges. The large-scale movement of silver bars across Eurasia meant that, for the first time, humans had a unit of account for interregional settlement that transcended civilizational boundaries.

Silver bars called *grivna* weighing between 140 and 160 grams and hexagonal in shape had already existed in Kievan Rus',⁹⁷ meanwhile, the weight of *grivna* circulating in Novgorod is around 200 grams and in shape they are long bars exactly the same as the *somo*. The usage of the silver bars became popular when Novgorod shifted the payment of tribute to the Golden Horde from fur to silver.⁹⁸ The *grivna* was the original form of the ruble, a term derived from the word *rubit'* ("to cut"), which designated a silver bar. It thus may not be coincidental that the two *grivna* from Novgorod owned by the British Museum each are approximately half the weight of a *somo*.

Given that silver bars were the most popular form of liquid wealth in Bruges until the late fourteenth century, when they were replaced by gold among Italian merchants, *somo* may have played the leading role in the silverization of the western part of Eurasia.⁹⁹ Indeed, the German Hanse trade monopolies connected Novgorod with Bruges through long-distance trade.¹⁰⁰

In the first half of the fourteenth century, moving from west to east across Eurasia there was a chain of commensurable currencies: the gold florin or large silver *gross* in Western Europe, the silver *somo* in the western khanates, and the silver *yuanbao* (counted by *ding*) in China proper. Five florins were equivalent to one *somo*. The gold coin reappeared in Western Europe for the first time after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire and was part of this chain. It actually began to circulate as early as the 1340s, at the time of the third peak in the issuance of silver coinage.¹⁰¹ The increasing issuance of large silver coins in the eastern end of the Mediterranean, and the corresponding

97 Zubko 1999, 44–45. 98 Martin 1978, 406. 99 Murray 2005, 132.

100 Ogilvie 2011, 97; Abu Lughod 1989, 79.

101 Gold became significant in Bruges, the financial center of medieval Europe, only after 1340. Murray 2005, 295–96.

reduction in the use of gold there, may have increased the movement of gold to Western Europe.¹⁰² At the same time, ten *somi* were equivalent to one silver *ding*. Thus, along a major route of interregional trade from Western Europe to the Korean peninsula, there was a set of currencies that could be converted easily (Figure 9.3). Intermediaries between units of local and interregional exchange of this sort might have often appeared. For example, in 1313, the Ilkhanate minted lighter *asper*, which appears to have facilitated exchanges between European silver coinage and Indian gold coinage.¹⁰³

Needless to say, a silver bar of 200 grams worked quite differently than a silver coin of around three grams, like the dirham. It was convenient for a long-distance trader engaged in large-scale trade in valuable goods, but was far from practical for the daily transactions of ordinary people. In lower-level markets, as we will see in the next section, there were many different local currencies in circulation.

We have already seen that, in the eastern part of Eurasia, real silver was not much used. Transactions were so dependent on paper money, especially in northern China, that prices were often given in terms of Zhongtong *chao*. Paper money was used to pay for taxes denominated in terms of silver and could be exchanged for silver bars brought to China by merchants from the west. When paper money fell out of use in China proper, the institutional

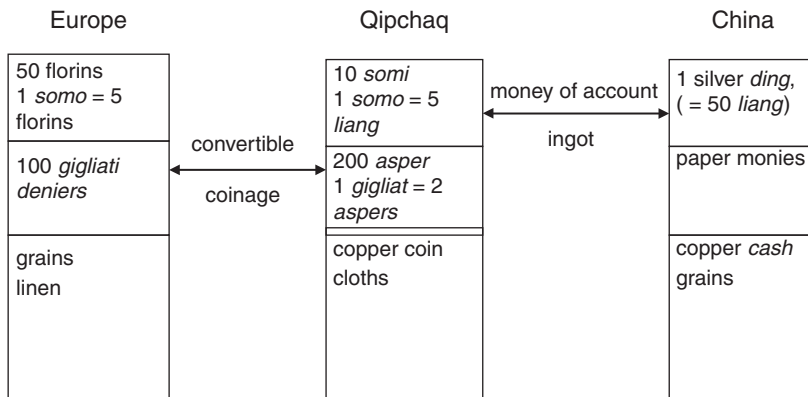


Figure 9.3 Multiple strata of monies

102 The Rupenid mint at Cilicia offered higher rates of gold for foreign silver. Martinez 1995–1997, 226–27.

103 Martinez 1995–1997, 190.

setting in which silver bars moved along trans-Eurasian trade routes collapsed, a process that took place in the 1360s.

Figure 9.2 shows changes in paper money issuance by the Yuan in terms of real silver. We should ignore the isolated peak of 1311, since that number reflects extraordinary changes in the monetary system that were discontinued within two years. The first peak begins in 1276, coinciding with the conquest of the lower Yangzi, as already discussed. The peaks beginning in 1276 and 1298 overlapped with the creation of new *touxia* estates, and these peaks were also followed by increases in the amount of coined silver issued by the London mint.

All three peaks of silver mintage in Europe from the late thirteenth century to the mid-fourteenth century overlapped with the peaks of remittance from the *touxia*. An understanding of the institutional background makes it clear that these temporal patterns are more than just coincidence.

The proliferation and stratification of markets

The Mongol period is known as an age in which both caravan and maritime trade across the Eurasian continent reached unprecedented heights.¹⁰⁴ A number of famous travelers, most notably Marco Polo, made their way along these trade routes and recorded their observations.¹⁰⁵ Flourishing long-distance trade between the western and eastern ends of Eurasia was accompanied by the rise of regional maritime trade, including the Baltic Sea and China Sea trades. Over the course of the thirteenth century, the number of merchants in Novgorod doubled in conjunction with the development of the fur trade with the Golden Horde.¹⁰⁶ As mentioned, the German Hanse trade monopolies connected trade in Novgorod with that in Bruges.¹⁰⁷ And this trade represents just a small part of the developments occurring across the Eurasian continent.

There are a number of cases which shed light on the unprecedented development of communication between the two ends of Eurasia. In spite of wars between the Yuan and Japan, the East China Sea trade enjoyed a period of prosperity never seen before. One of the most important exports from Japan in this period was gold, and Mongol elites were very fond of

104 Merchants could use the postal relay system unless they impeded the flow of military orders. Allsen 1989, 97.

105 Vogel 2013 has persuasively confirmed that the observations of Polo largely reflect reality.

106 Moshenskiy 2008, 182. 107 Ogilvie 2011, 97; Abu Lughod 1989, 79.

clothes decorated with gold thread. This fashion was brought to the west. Simone Martini of Siena's 1333 painting *Annunciation* shows the angel Gabriel wearing a Mongol-style white-and-gold robe. The Sienese textile industry was influenced by the Mongol fashion of gold-threaded fabrics, which resulted in Martini depicting it in his painting.¹⁰⁸

Cobalt of high quality is an example of commodity flow in the opposite direction. As is well known, the blue-and-white porcelain produced in Jingdezhen used cobalt to produce its beautiful blues. Chemical analysis has identified the cobalt used in such porcelain as identical to that found in ores from Germany and Italy, as well as ores from Xinjiang and Gansu in northwestern China. Cobalt of the same chemical characteristics has been detected in Chinese porcelain found in Delhi, and the usage of finer cobalt in Jingdezhen seems to have begun only after 1325, peaking around 1350.¹⁰⁹

It is not entirely clear, though, what commodities drove the flourishing of trans-Eurasian trade. Silk from China appears to have been the most important and profitable commodity moving west (mainly through the overland caravan trade), and it transformed the existing silk industry in areas of West Asia like Gilan, though we have no way to measure its volume and thus cannot identify any temporal trends.¹¹⁰ In contrast, porcelain from China, another major commodity that traveled west (in this case mainly along the maritime routes), left enough records that we can say something about its development. With regard to the porcelain trade bound for western Eurasia, volume peaks occurred simultaneously with periods of abundant silver. Large quantities of porcelain excavated from Egypt and Iran demonstrate that porcelain imports around the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf increased in the late thirteenth century and declined in the late fourteenth century after maintaining a consistently high volume in the first half of the fourteenth century.¹¹¹ In addition to the highest-quality blue-and-white porcelain from Jingdezhen mentioned above, a large quantity of blue porcelain from Longquan and white porcelain from Fujian made its way west during this period.¹¹²

The eastbound movement of commodities is hard to track. Merchants from Italy and Novgorod brought linen and fur east to Golden Horde cities

¹⁰⁸ Finlay 2010, 155. ¹⁰⁹ Chen, Guo, and Chen 1994, 14–19.

¹¹⁰ Pegolotti showed that merchants from Genoa could get nineteen to twenty Genoese pounds of Chinese silk in exchange for one silver *somo*. Lopez and Raymond 1955, 358. On the Gilan silk industry: Petrushevsky 1968, 504.

¹¹¹ Mikami 1969; Mori 2012; Margariti 2007, 65, 137; and generally Finlay 2010.

¹¹² Mori 2012, 2–4.

like Sarai, but there was little demand for these products in China proper. As Ibn Baṭṭūṭa observed, cowries from the Maldives transported by Arab merchants in exchange for Bengali rice reached Yunnan and circulated there, but their value could not have been very high.¹¹³ Cobalt, some of which was of European origin, was brought to southern China for use in decorating blue-and-white porcelain, as mentioned above, but its value could not have been high enough to equal the value of westbound porcelain.

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa also witnessed the export of horses from the Black Sea region to India via Arabia, as well as the same trade through Kish along the Persian Gulf.¹¹⁴ Horses raised in the steppe regions controlled by the western khanates probably were an important part of eastbound trade, and it seems likely that high-quality horses from the Golden Horde made their way to India, via the Arabian peninsula, to meet an increasing demand driven by wars on the subcontinent. However, there is no clear evidence showing that any significant number of horses from the west reached China during this period, except for gifts from the Ilkhanate to the Yuan.¹¹⁵

Given the data that we have regarding trans-Eurasian trade, it seems likely that there was an imbalanced structure in which unidirectional silver tribute payments from the estates in China proper (*touxia*) to the western khanates created a silver surplus in the west that was settled through the importation of silk and porcelain from southern China. Because of the use of paper money in the Yuan and of silver currency in the west, silver that reached China would have been likely to quickly flow back out.

We have already seen that paper money substituted for silver in China. However, not only silver but also copper coins were driven out of use in local markets as paper money grew in popularity. This second type of substitution caused unprecedented transformations in societies across the South and East China Seas. Without paying attention to the flow of copper coins, it is impossible to determine the scale of overseas trade in the China Seas during this period.

After incorporating the territory of the Southern Song, the Yuan was faced with an overabundance of copper coins. Generally speaking, the Yuan engaged in the demonetization of copper coins to an even greater extent than had the Jin, which had followed the same policy. However, the extent of demonetization varied widely by region. In Fujian and Guangdong, for instance, the Yuan permitted the continued use of copper cash and made

113 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 827. 114 Chakravarti 1991, 170–74, 179, Digby 1971, 30.

115 Allsen 2001a, 44; Yokkaichi 2009.

little effort to circulate paper money. This compromise probably resulted from the huge stock of copper coins in circulation in former copper-producing regions as well as the high levels of maritime trade in southeast China.¹¹⁶ Quanzhou, for instance, was a major porcelain-exporting port, where many Muslim merchants, including the famous Pu Shougeng, who aided the Mongol conquest of south China, conducted business.¹¹⁷

In the lower Yangzi, however, the Yuan actively worked to demonetize copper coins, thereby surely decreasing their use. The lower Yangzi was not just China's most commercialized region, but also the Yuan's largest source of salt revenue. Thus heavy use of paper money was necessary in the lower Yangzi, and one contemporary source suggests that the possession of copper cash by people dropped by 90 percent in the region through the transitional period from the Southern Song to the Yuan.¹¹⁸ Another contemporary source, meanwhile, suggests that under the Yuan about half the currency in circulation was copper cash and half was paper money, and that in the former Southern Song territory, copper coins retained an important role.¹¹⁹ It is hard to judge these claims, because no statistics exist showing how many coins actually were taken out of circulation. One potential clue is the molding of temple bells. As shown in Table 9.1, the peak of bronze bell molding in China came at the same time as paper money became popular and fell dramatically when the Yuan collapsed and copper currency once again became dominant.¹²⁰

The demonetization of copper coins in China increased their export abroad, especially to Japan. During the tenth through fourteenth centuries Japan is not believed to have produced any of its own copper. The high rate of bronze bell molding in Japanese temples during this period (Table 9.1) suggests that a large number of old coins were likely imported from China, and it is not coincidental that the proportions of copper, lead, and tin in the Kamakura Great Buddha perfectly coincide with the proportions in Northern Song coins like the Yuanfeng *qian*.¹²¹ Isotope analysis of the lead in the Buddha further indicates that its source was in southern China.¹²² In addition, analysis of lead isotopes in bronze items produced in medieval Japan demonstrates that lead of southern Chinese origin had been used since the late

116 Maeda 1973, 72–75. 117 Kuwabara 1989.

118 Maeda 1973, 85. Maeda cited a memorial by Cheng Jufu on the situation of monetary usage in the lower Yangzi. Cheng visited there in 1286.

119 Maeda 1973, 76.

120 Tsuboi 1970. Tsuboi relied not on bells themselves but on descriptions found in local gazetteers, making accurate comparisons between China and Japan impossible.

121 Mabuchi 1998, 16. On the composition of *yuanfeng tongbao*: Zhou 2004, 71–73.

122 Hira0 2008b.

Table 9.1 Casting of bronze bells in Japan, Korea, and China

	Japan	Korea	China
I00I-	0	3	9
I026-	0	4	2
I05I-	0	3	5
I076-	0	I	9
I10I-	0	I	I3
I126-	0	0	I8
I15I-	4	I	II
I176-	6	2	I2
I20I-	9	7	IO
I226-	9	9	5
I25I-	22	2	I8
I276-	3I	3	20
I30I-	33	6	20
I326-	36	0	30
I35I-	36	0	8
I376-	42	I	9
I40I-	26	0	5
I426-	28	0	II
I45I-	26	0	9
I476-	25	0	I6
I50I-	I6	0	9
I526-	I7	0	4
I55I-	I8	I	4
I576-	I5	2	5

Sources: Japan: Tsuboi 1970, 305-55; Korea: Tsuboi 1974, 265-68; China: Tsuboi 1984, 462-550

twelfth century, when Chinese coins began to appear in large numbers in Japan.¹²³

Thus the demonetization of copper coins in China supplied the material needed to meet religious demands in Japan, where rice and cloth had functioned as money since the tenth century. In the same period, copper coins gradually came to be used as currency in many regions of Japan as well. Particularly in areas far from the capital, tribute to aristocrats started to be denominated in copper cash, replacing payment in kind, a process called *daisenno*, and setting prices in terms of

¹²³ Hirao 2008a, 29.

Table 9.2 New markets and the monetization of tribute in medieval Japan

	New periodic markets	Tribute changing to coin payment
1176–	1	
1201–	3	
1226–	4	5
1251–	8	9
1276–	8	30
1301–	8	81
1326–	21	43
1351–	16	31
1376–	10	26
1401–	12	
1426–	3	
1451–	1	
1476–	1	

Sources: market: Toyoda 1952, 112–18; tribute: Sasaki 1972, 352–62

copper coins became popular. In conjunction with the spread of copper currency, local markets, typically held every ten days, proliferated. As shown in Table 9.2, the emergence of new marketplaces peaked in the first half of the fourteenth century. We can thus see that the growth of marketplaces followed the rise of copper-denominated tribute payments, which itself followed the increased production of molded bronze bells.¹²⁴

Strong demand for Chinese goods like silk and porcelain had always been present in Japan. However, from the late twelfth century through the fourteenth century, copper coins seem to have been the largest type of import from China. In exchange for copper, timber for temple building, sulfur for gunpowder, and decorative gold for ornaments, particularly for ornamenting cloth, were all exported to China.¹²⁵ In spite of the political hostility between the Yuan and Japanese authorities deriving from the two attempted Mongol invasions of western Japan in the late thirteenth century, Sino-Japanese trade rose to unprecedented levels. The Sin'an wreck off southern Korea is a ship which left Ningbo in 1323

¹²⁴ The causality appears to be in opposition to the common presumption that the development of markets was followed by an increase in the supply of money. Toyoda 1952; Segal 2011.

¹²⁵ Mongol use of gold cloth in their imperial ceremonies accelerated the demand for gold from Japan. Allsen 1997, 37, 65, 97, 101.

carrying twenty-eight tons of copper coins, tin bars, and ceramics, providing us with a snapshot of the thriving East China Sea trade.¹²⁶

The sudden abundance of copper coins was not limited to Japan. As shown by a 1350 copperplate inscription, land contracts in Java began to be denominated in terms of copper coins.¹²⁷ The circulation of *ganza* (a tin–copper alloy) in the Malay peninsula and Indonesia began in the thirteenth century, usually in the form of unminted bars with a boat-like shape reminiscent of the *somo* silver bars of the western khanates.¹²⁸ In Korea, however, the importation of copper coins was much more limited and, as shown in Table 9.1, trends in temple bell molding in Korea hint at different conditions from those in China and Japan.

From the above evidence, we can infer that the substitution of paper money for copper cash in China stimulated the growth of markets in Japan and other overseas regions to the east and south. If this claim is true, might it not also be the case that the outflow of silver from China to the west stimulated market growth in western Eurasia? Table 9.3 shows the growth of new marketplaces in Holland, where the trend is so similar to that of Japan that it appears almost synchronic. In both places, the establishment of new markets peaked in the fourteenth century, before stagnating in the fifteenth century. England also experienced a peak in market establishment in the fourteenth century,¹²⁹ meaning

Table 9.3 New markets in Holland and Japan

	Holland	Japan
before 1200	1	1
1201–1250	7	7
1251–1300	13	16
1301–1350	29	29
1351–1400	27	26
1401–1450	11	15
1451–1500	8	2

Sources: Holland: Dijkman 2011, 43; Japan: Toyoda 1952, 112–18

126 National Maritime Museum of Korea 2006, 204. 127 Reid 1993, 96.

128 Mitchiner 1979, 397–98. The weight is thirty grams, lighter than a *somo*.

129 As the dense distribution of marketplaces in the West Midlands shows, local markets in England appeared to have most proliferated in the early fourteenth century. Hilton 1983, 172–73.

that, in all three countries, market establishment closely tracked rates of currency issuance.

Unfortunately, we do not have the same sort of statistical data on marketplaces in the regions under direct Mongol rule, although marketplaces attracting peasants existed in many regions. All we can say for sure is that both ends of Eurasia simultaneously experienced a rapid increase in the number of rural markets, and that this trend came to an end at around the same time. Though the metals involved were different, silver in the west and copper in the east, both regions received these metals from China proper, whence they tended to flow outward due to the dominance of paper money.

We can call the period from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth centuries the Eurasian age of commerce, during which there was an unprecedented rise in long-distance trade. Among other things, interregional slave trade also grew. Selling children during periods of famine was common throughout Chinese history. However, particularly in this period, children were sold far away and Beijing held slave markets.¹³⁰ Thriving slave markets existed across the Mongol realm, furnished by the huge number of captives and the growing demand: the introduction of debt slavery in both the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde would also have increased the scale of the slave trade, while the demand for Mamluks (military slaves) in Egypt and Delhi made slaves a major export commodity, especially for the Golden Horde.¹³¹

In some regions, the growth of local markets accompanied the development of long-distance trade, but the two trends occurred under different organizational frameworks and thus do not converge perfectly. In other words, during this period, the proliferation of commercial activities occurred separately on a variety of levels. Let us now examine how markets were stratified from top to bottom in accordance with the type of money used for transactions.

As mentioned in the preceding section, at the highest levels of transcontinental trade, uncoined silver was the main unit of exchange. The *yuanbao* ingots of China proper and its surrounding regions and the *somo*, a silver bar, from the region stretching from Turkestan to Eastern Europe, both seem to have circulated widely. However, the weight of silver contained in these unminted forms was not identical.

The weight of sixty-five silver bars unearthed at Orheiul Vechi ranges from 173 to 227 grams.¹³² The weights appear to be distributed around 200 grams, but the variance is rather large. Similar variance is found in the case of

¹³⁰ Ebisawa 1983. ¹³¹ Martinez 2009, 94; Amitai 2008.

¹³² The hoard is preserved at the National Museum of History of Moldova, inventory number 24875 (1–65).

yuanbao ingots, distributed around a mean weight of fifty *liang*.¹³³ The irregular distribution of weight among seventy-two silver ingots found in the tenth-century Intan shipwreck near Java suggests that uncoined silver never circulated in ingots of uniform weight in China.¹³⁴

It is important to remember here that silver had originally been a substitute for silk, as argued above. Few would worry about small differences in the length or weight of a bolt of silk when making a transaction. Similarly, neither the *yuanbao* in the east nor the *somo* in the west was defined by any precise standard. Unlike transactions conducted according to the fixed measures adopted by mercantile states in later periods, economic activities under the Mongol regime did not depend on intrinsic properties of silver. Rather, silver served primarily in a conceptual role as the unit of account. The use of gold as money in Western Europe in the mid-fourteenth century occurred along the same lines. Items listed in terms of gold in merchants' ledgers were not actually purchased with real gold.¹³⁵

The conceptual function of silver as unit of account was the basis of currency commensurability across the continent and developed in tandem with the creation of a division between currency used for interregional settlement and that used in local transactions. Even if we can confirm that late thirteenth-century bills of exchange could be used to enable transactions between some cities, like Genoa and Tabriz,¹³⁶ across western Eurasia, the *somo* must have played a significant role as a means of bridging the gap between different local currencies. At the same time, this sort of link did not mean that prices converged across different local markets connected to each other through silver-denominated trade. The connections between local markets were quite loose and prices of most goods moved independently in different places.

The *tamgha* was popular under the Golden Horde, but not the sole currency in use for local transactions. Novgorod had *den'gi*, a subunit of the *grivna*. With one *grivna* worth 100 *den'gi*, silver coins inscribed with dates from the late thirteenth century, found in the Chaghadaid Khanate and weighing 1.8 to 2.0 grams (almost half a *gigliate*, or one-twentieth of a *liang*) may have been seen as equivalent to *den'gi*, rather than to the *tamgha*.¹³⁷

133 The weights of Yuan silver ingots that are marked as weighing fifty *liang* show substantial variation. Vogel 2013, 482–84.

134 Flecker 2002, 84–85.

135 This can be seen in account books for 1339–1369 of a merchant in Montauban. Lopez and Raymond 1955, 138.

136 Moshenskiy 2008, 197. 137 Wang and Zhong 2007, 17–18.

These silver coins must have been minted after the reforms of Mas'ūd Beg, which set a uniform weight of 2.1 grams for the *tamgha*.¹³⁸

In the case of Tana on the Sea of Azov, the *somo* was used to purchase goods in long-distance trade, while the mint used the silver from a single *somo* to coin about 200 *aspers* for local use. Meanwhile, in Caffa on the Black Sea, a single *somo* was exchanged for 120 *aspers*.¹³⁹ A Genoese statute of 1304 treated the Golden Horde *asper* as equivalent to ten Genoese *deniers*. The Byzantine *folleri*, a copper coin valued at one-sixteenth of an *asper*, was used to purchase vegetables and small items for daily use.¹⁴⁰

As the case of Tana demonstrates, commercial exchange tended to be divided into three layers, each with its own distinctive currency. Uncoined silver like the *somo* was used at the top layer to conduct interregional trade. A local mint would issue silver coins, like the *asper*, made from melted-down ingots, for local uses like tax payments. Meanwhile, even the smallest denominations of silver coins were still too valuable to be used by most people in daily life, and so various coins made of other metals, like the copper *folleri*, were used in most small transactions. The three currencies thus worked in concert to handle all levels of commerce; their relationship was not substitutive but complementary.

Thus transactions in daily goods remained largely independent of transactions mediated by officially recognized currencies. The boundaries between layers were not clear and would have shifted depending on the situation. A Korean guidebook to north China, *Nogŏldae* (Ch. *Laoqida*), published in 1340, provides us with a snapshot of a variety of transactions, including both paying for a night in an inn and the sale of Korean ginseng, with all payments denominated in terms of the paper Zhongtong *chao*. It described in detail how traders calculated the *yashui*, or sales tax, and made payment in paper money, confirming that paper money was used to collect taxes. Meanwhile, the smallest transaction was the purchase of one *jin* of pork, the value of which was given as one *liang*. From this it is possible to determine that even if paper money was common in northern China, it could not have handled most daily transactions.

The popularity of paper money thus did not mean that officially produced currency completely dominated private transactions. The *Nogŏldae* shows that merchants often ignored the face value of a bill, negotiating the value of paper money depending on its appearance, and local practice usually

¹³⁸ Davidovich and Dani 1998, 406.

¹³⁹ The exchange rate in 1289 at Caffa was 112 *aspers* per *somo*. Balard 1973, 52.

¹⁴⁰ Lopez and Raymond 1955, 356; Yule 1914, 159.

trumped official regulations.¹⁴¹ Transactions described in Yuan stelae further reveal that, not infrequently, even people in north China still carried out business in terms of copper coins.¹⁴² Thus not only in small-scale transactions, but even at higher levels of commerce, private trade often worked according to its own principles, independent of the principles of taxation and administration. This is why, for instance, following the collapse of Yuan rule, the use of copper coins quickly revived in the lower Yangzi, in spite of the official prohibitions lasting for more than half a century.¹⁴³

Multiple layers of commercial activity, using a variety of types of currency, appeared across Eurasia during the Mongol period. In Yuan territory, paper money appears to have circulated widely, as required by official regulation. However, a lower layer of transactions still existed, making use of several local currencies. As mentioned above, copper coins continued to play a significant role in the former Southern Song territories and in towns across Central and West Asia, while in Yunnan, cowries, shell money from the Maldives, were more important for local commerce. Meanwhile, in regions like northern China, with no available currency of small enough value to be used in daily life, various monetary substitutes, including wooden tablets and scrips, provided by merchants, served to supplement official paper money.¹⁴⁴ In addition to these examples, in rural areas, grain continued to be used as currency.

Toward the Global Silver Century

There are very few direct links between fourteenth-century Eurasia and our contemporary world in terms of the topics of this chapter – money, markets, and taxation – though the Russian state did inherit the Mongol method of tax assessment,¹⁴⁵ and consequently certain Mongol terms, like *tamgha*, continued to be used in Russia, Iran, and Central Asia for centuries.¹⁴⁶ Yet, despite the lack of direct connections, the fourteenth century marked the start of certain significant trends that would enable later global transformations.

Taxation denominated in monetary terms was not rare in pre-thirteenth-century states, even if, in many cases, payments were actually made in kind. In this sense, the Mongol taxation system was not a significant departure from older ones, except insofar as it covered an exceptionally large territory.

141 Funada 2001. 142 Ichimaru 2008, 97–99. 143 Kong 1987, 25.

144 Fang 2001, 437; Kuroda 2009. 145 Vernadsky 1953, 358.

146 Halperin 1985, 91; Halperin 1983; Fragner 1997.

However, it is important that, under the Mongols, the unit of account for taxation came to coincide with the unit of account for transcontinental and interregional trade.

After the collapse of Mongol rule, China, the largest producer of goods for continental trade, once again established a taxation system based on silver in the early fifteenth century, under Ming rule. Foreign purchasers of Chinese goods would also need to use silver in trade with China. Thus the common unit of account in terms of silver discontinued after the collapse of the Mongol regime, but it paved the way for the global silver march starting from South America and terminating in China in the late sixteenth century.

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Religious Exchange

JOHAN ELVERSKOG

The Mongol Empire fostered a degree of religious exchange unprecedented in world history. Indeed, on account of a range of factors – such as Mongol religio-political theories of state and the ease of Eurasian travel made possible by the empire – the Mongols changed forever the religious landscape of Eurasia.

Of course, while most readers will no doubt have readily understood the preceding paragraph, it is perhaps relevant to pause and query the seemingly simple phrase “changed forever the religious landscape.” Since although everyone presumes to know what “religious,” or a “religion,” entails, the fact of the matter is that the meaning of the terms “religion,” “religions,” and “religious” is far from clear.¹ Indeed, what religion is, much less how it interacts with other aspects of human experience – art, culture, economics, politics, society – is an ongoing scholarly debate. Many scholars, for example, contend that the category of religion is a modern construct.² One, moreover, that was largely a Protestant creation emanating out of the colonial encounter.³ Thus in many ways what is today generally defined or understood as being religion or religious is very often the restricted and narrow imaginings of nineteenth-century European intellectuals.

In the past, however, such distinctions were rarely made. Rather, as has often been pointed out, few languages actually have a term for “religion.”⁴ Moreover, the notion that anyone in the premodern world would separate “religion” from politics, the state, astrology, medicine, economics, or any other facet of human activity is open to query. Or, as one scholar has

1 Smith 1998. 2 Dubuisson 2003; Nongbri 2013. 3 Chidester 2014.

4 Josephson 2012.

succinctly put it, separating religion from these other realms would be like “taking the gin out of a gin and tonic.”⁵

Yet that is how religion is often conceived: as a distinct and identifiable domain of human thought and action separate from all the other realms that make up our lives.⁶ And as such, these particular concatenations of ideas and practices are then further categorized into identifiable units like Buddhism, Christianity, and Daoism, the so-called “world religions.”⁷ In turn, it is within such frameworks that we can begin to speak about religious exchange. Thus we can imagine a Buddhist meeting a Muslim, or perhaps a Christian engaging with a Confucian, and as such it is these types of encounter that make possible various forms of so-called “religious exchange.”

Such encounters certainly did take place during the Mongol Empire. Nevertheless, what precisely happened during such meetings, or what the actual religious consequences may have been of such encounters, is another issue entirely. Indeed, we may well wonder whether it is even appropriate or viable to separate out “religion” from other forms of intellectual exchange that may have occurred from the meeting of peoples from two different faith communities. For example, what should we do in a case where, say, a Muslim taught a Confucian about astronomy, optics, cartography, or calendars?⁸ Is that a religious exchange, or a scientific one? In most cases, scholars today would most likely put such an exchange in the history-of-science category, even though invariably all of those practices were at the time imbricated within religious worldviews.

Even so, it is this approach that will be adopted in what follows; namely religion will be artificially separated from these other activities. And such other exchanges – commercial, scientific, technological – even though invariably done in many cases across faith boundaries, will be addressed elsewhere in this volume. Of course, by pointing this out here at the outset the aim has been to highlight the fact that when approaching the history of religious exchange in the Mongol Empire we need to keep these issues in mind. By artificially separating out religion the aim herein is not only to ideally improve our understanding of religious exchange in the Mongol Empire, but also to help us think about the question of religion – what it is, how it works, and where it belongs – in terms of both the past and the present.⁹

5 [Armstrong 2014](#), 12. 6 [Strenski 2015](#).

7 [King 1999](#); [Masuzawa 2005](#). On the modern creation of Buddhism, for example: [Almond 1988](#); [Walters 1998](#); [Lopez 1995](#); [McMahan 2008](#).

8 [Isahaya 2009](#), 2013.

9 [Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, and Van Antwerpen 2011](#); [Gorski et al. 2012](#).

The Mongols and Religion

Based on our available sources it is unlikely that the early Mongols had a distinctive category or conceptual paradigm parallel to our modern category of religion. In fact, it does not seem as if they had a specific word for “religion.”¹⁰ Which, however, is not to suggest that they did not believe or act in ways that can be identified as religious. Nor is it to suggest that they did not recognize that such activities were different from other spheres of human activity. Indeed, the ancient inner Asian tradition of conducting religious debates, which the Mongols famously adopted, belies the fact that within steppe societies the activities of people we today identify as “Buddhists,” “Daoists,” and “Christians” were clearly a distinct sphere of human activity. And as is the case today, the Mongols recognized that such knowledge was clearly different from that related to monetary policy or siege warfare. Nevertheless, at the same time, the Mongols did recognize that religious specialists – be they Christian, Buddhist, Daoist, shamanist, or whatever – had knowledge, and attendant practices that were important and powerful.

Yet how the Mongols actually understood the distinctive knowledge of these specialists is hard to gauge, though it is certainly the case that the Mongols wanted them to pray on their behalf, and those that did were in fact given tax-exempt status. And as such, one gets an inkling of the Mongol view of religion, in that not only were all religions potentially efficacious, but also the phenomenon of religion was universal. Or, as Möngke Qa’an put it,

“We Mo’als,” he said, “believe that there is only one God, by whom we live and by whom we die, and towards him we direct our hearts . . . But just as God has given the hand several fingers, so he has given mankind several paths . . . So, then, God has given you the Scriptures, and you do not observe them, whereas to us he has given soothsayers, and we do as they tell us and live in peace.”¹¹

While such a categorical distinction of religion is important to note, so too is the universal claim of parity. In short, Möngke Qa’an seemed to be saying that not only do all humans have religion, but also that all religions are similar in that they can be efficacious if followed properly.

On a certain level such a vision appears to be quite modern. Indeed, it is a rather ecumenical, or even Jungian interpretation of religion. In fact, it is very likely that such universalist proclamations played an important role in fostering the early modern notion – as well captured in the work of Edward

10 De Rachewiltz 1972; Kara 2009. 11 William of Rubruck 1990, 236–37.

Gibbon – that the Mongols promoted a form of religious freedom, or even religious tolerance.¹² And based on other sources, especially those written by individuals situated within the monotheistic world of the Abrahamic traditions, the Mongols did seem to promote a radical form of religious relativism.

[Chingiz Khan] eschewed bigotry, and the preference of one faith to another, and the placing of some above others; rather he honoured and respected the learned and pious of every sect . . . And as he viewed the Moslems with the eye of respect, so also did he hold the Christians and idolaters [i.e. Buddhists] in high esteem. As for his children and grandchildren, several of them have chosen a religion according to their inclination . . . But though they have adopted some religion they still for the most part . . . do not swerve from the *yasa* [law] of Chingiz-Khan, namely, to consider all sects as one and not to distinguish them from one another.¹³

Yet, as Möngke's earlier statement actually makes clear, and as Mongol religious policy confirms, there actually was a religious hierarchy, since for the Mongols there was truly only one God, their own, Tengri, and other religions and their specialists were to be left unmolested as long as they too prayed to Tengri.

This theological claim is made explicit in the Ilkhanid ruler Arghun's (r. 1284–1291) rejection of Pope Nicholas IV's call for him to be baptized:

You have sent a message saying "... Other peoples of the world, men praying according to their own religion and books are praying falsely. The religion of the Messiah is the true one that worships God. Now let the Il-khan enter the religion of the Messiah." . . . We descendants of Chinggis Khan say that if our Mongol subjects are willingly baptized or do not do so, eternal Heaven alone [decides] . . . Now, since I have not been baptized, you are angry and thinking thoughts in your head. If one prays only to eternal Heaven and thinks rightly, is it not like being baptized?¹⁴

In fact, as well attested in the *Secret History*, for the Mongols nothing happened – including the rise of Chinggis Khan and the very formation of the Mongol state – without Tengri.¹⁵

During the imperial period this political theology was widely known. So much so that Christian and Islamic scholars would draw parallels between

¹² Atwood 2004. ¹³ HWC, 1958, 26. ¹⁴ Mostaert and Cleaves 1952, 450–51.

¹⁵ Such as when Chinggis Khan confirms the monotheistic power of Heaven to shape events by declaring, "Because of this, 'the door was opened and the reins were loosened' for me by Eternal Heaven" (*SH*, 139). For other passages imploring or confirming the power of Heaven: 8, 19, 22, 43, 52, 64, 66, 82, 85, 117, 128, 139, 140, 165, 173, 176, 185, 209.

Mongol worship of Heaven and their own God,¹⁶ and Buddhists would incorporate the worship of Tengri into their own ritual practices.¹⁷ Of course, as attested in numerous travel accounts, the Mongols also engaged in many other activities – such as ritual purification with fire – that reflect a far more complicated religious world than one controlled simply by God.¹⁸ The Mongols’ engagement with monks, priests, astrologers, shamans, and thaumaturges of all kinds belies a far more complicated understanding of the cosmos, its workings, and ultimately its control than is espoused by the monotheistic Heaven model.¹⁹

Yet how all these diverse practices fit into a unified whole – if they ever did – is today sadly beyond our grasp. In fact, any attempt to reconstruct some supposedly unified religious system of the pre-empire Mongols – a “shamanism,” for example – seems misguided,²⁰ especially since that category is itself inherently problematic.²¹ More interesting for our purposes, however, is the fact that when the Mongols actually did acquire a word for religion in the mid-fourteenth century – *nom*, from the Uighur Buddhist word for dharma – and began using it to implement policies, they made some curious decisions.²² In fact, some distinctions they made parallel modern ones, such as recognizing some traditions as religions – for example, Buddhism, Christianity, Daoism, and Islam²³ – but not others, such as Confucianism. Of course, whether Confucianism is a religion or not is still greatly debated today,²⁴ as are some of the other intellectual categorizations that the Mongols made in their religious policy. For example, they deemed not only that their own religious specialists – “the shamans” – and their practices were not religions, but neither were Chinese astrologers, soothsayers, and *yin–yang* masters.²⁵

Of course, what should be deemed a “religion,” or else a “cult” or “superstition,” or otherwise a “folk custom” or “popular religion,” is something that is still debated today, and clearly the arguments behind such distinctions carry distinct intellectual, moral, theological, and legal implications. It was no different for the Mongols and their subjects. Unfortunately, however, the actual logic that made the Mongols consider Daoism a religion, but not Zoroastrianism, is unclear. Nevertheless, as is the case today, one can

16 JT/Boyle 1971, 295. 17 Kapstein 2011. 18 John of Plano Carpini 1966, 8–14; Roux 1984.

19 Bira 2003.

20 Which is not to suggest that many are not trying to do so in contemporary Mongolia (Humphrey and Onon 1996; Pedersen 2011; Buyandelger 2013).

21 Tomášková 2013; Alberts 2015. 22 Poppe 1957, 47, 50, 55. 23 Allsen 1987, 121–22.

24 Jensen 1998; Sun 2013. 25 Endicott-West 2000.

well imagine that simple demographics, as well as perceived economic and political power, presumably played a role.²⁶ Moreover, it may be the case that the intersection between religions and the Mongol sociopolitical organizational unit of the *ulus* also played a role.²⁷ Regardless, within this process of categorization it does seem unlikely that any particular theological claims made by any particular religious tradition played a role. Since by definition not only did all peoples have a religion, or religious practices, but also as such they and their tradition(s) were by definition subject to the power of Heaven and in turn to Mongol power.²⁸

Yet, as with the formation of any state system, certain groups, peoples, and languages invariably come to take precedence on account of their perceived abilities, or what they could offer to the new regime. It was thus through such developments that particular groups were no doubt recognized as being worthy of being recognized as religions, or not. Moreover, connected with such categorizations was clearly the recognition that identifying one group or another in this manner inherently involved control since it brought these groups into the orbit of the imperial center. Thus not only were certain groups thereby disenfranchised, but also those groups who did accept such a definition – and its requirements (such as praying to Tengri) – became a vehicle or means for local control. Thus it is not surprising that in China the Yuan state not only created distinct bureaus to represent all recognized religions, but also stipulated that in legal affairs these groups were represented in court by representatives of their respective traditions.²⁹ Such a strategy belies not only a recognition on the part of the Mongols of the differences between these religions, but also the implementation of a policy that effectively exercised control over these same groups.

Nevertheless, above and beyond such issues of imperial control, what these Mongol policies also did by putting these traditions on equal ground is that it relativized them. As such, by taking all theological and truth claims out of the equation in dealing with these groups, the Mongols were able not only to deal with the enormous diversity within their realm, but also to foster an unparalleled exchange between them since all religions technically met on common ground.³⁰

26 Mongol religious policies were no doubt informed by earlier dynasties such as those of the Western Liao and Xi Xia (see, for example, Biran 2005; Dunnell 1996).

27 Elverskog 2003; Elverskog 2006. 28 Vogelín 1940–1941. 29 Cho 2014.

30 Elverskog 2013.

Religious Interaction

While Mongol conceptualizations of religion and their attendant implementation in imperial policies played a theoretical role in shaping the unprecedented religious exchanges that occurred across Eurasia during the Pax Mongolica, there were invariably other factors that played a role as well. Indeed, much has already been written on these various factors and the realities of religious exchange during the empire period.³¹ And one element that is often highlighted in this scholarship is the Mongols' quest for knowledge, since it invariably brought with it power. Thus, as has now been well attested, the Mongols were the primary agents of commercial, technological, and intellectual exchange in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,³² and invariably these processes also fostered much religious exchange.

Nevertheless, it is unclear whether such religious exchanges were a part of state policy, or whether such interactions had a particular goal.³³ Even so, it is certainly the case that on account of the very nature of Mongol rule and their voracious interest in the world and its workings, the empire fostered an environment whereby people of many different faiths came into contact. In the case of Chinggis Khan's court, for example, it is clear from the Baljuna Covenant of 1203 that it included not only followers of their own Mongol tradition, but also Buddhists, Christians, and Muslims.³⁴ Moreover, Chinggis Khan subsequently invited to his court the Daoist Changchun,³⁵ as well as Tantric Buddhists from the Tangut realm.³⁶ And it is precisely this kind of intellectual curiosity – or thirst for knowledge and power – that is found throughout the early imperial period. Möngke Qa'an, for example, invited the Tibetan lama Karma Bakhshi to his court. Similarly, Qubilai Qa'an invited Buddhist and Christian missionaries to his capital, Dadu; held debates between Buddhists and Daoists; and established numerous institutions for the Islamic intellectual elite in Yuan dynasty China (1272–1368 CE), such as the Muslim Medical Office (established in 1270), a Directorate of Muslim Astronomy (1271), and a Muslim School for the Sons of the State that taught Persian (1289).³⁷ And all the early Mongol rulers followed this ecumenical model. Hülegü in Iran, for example, supported both the Shī'a scholar Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī, Tibetan Buddhism, and Christianity.³⁸ Moreover, as with his brethren in the east, he too held multi-confessional religious

31 May 2012, 172–98. 32 Allsen 1997; Allsen 2001; Allsen 2002. 33 Jackson 2005a.

34 Cleaves 1955. 35 Waley 1931. 36 Sperling 1987; Dunnell 1992.

37 Rossabi 1988, 36–43. 38 Sperling 1990; Lane 2003; Elverskog 2010; Prazniak 2014.

debates at his court, which was a tradition that was famously continued by his successors.³⁹

Such debates invariably fueled the possibilities of religious exchange under the auspices of Mongol state power. Indeed, in many ways it is precisely such practices that shape our vision of both Mongol religious tolerance and the exchange between faiths that it enabled. Yet such possibilities of exchange were not simply engineered at the imperial courts. Rather it was also enabled by the remarkable mobility made possible by the Pax Mongolica. Thus, as is well known, all the famous travel accounts from the empire period are filled with descriptions – as well as denigrations – of other religions and their practices. Be they by Christians in the east or west,⁴⁰ or Confucians in Central Asia and Mongolia,⁴¹ or Japanese Buddhists in China,⁴² or Muslims in China,⁴³ all of them experienced religious difference and wrote about it.

One can therefore acquire a poignant sense of the realities of such religious encounters by reading these accounts. And what is striking about many of them is how straightforward they are; namely they lack any critical reflection. Of course, underlying such descriptions of other traditions is no doubt the assumption that such ideas and practices are inherently wrong; however, there is also little reflection on the implications of these encounters with the Other. As an example of this phenomenon one can look at how two Armenian Christians described the practice of Buddhism at the Mongol court in Iran. The first is by Kirakos Ganjakec'i (1203–1271):

He [Hülegü], also built a huge dwelling for enormous idols, having mustered there all sorts of skilled workmen: for masonry, for carpentry, and for painting. There is a lineage among them, the so-called *toyins*. These [*toyins*] – sorcerers and wizards, by their magical art compel horses and camels, corpses and felt images to speak. They are all priests, and shave the hair and beard, wear yellow vestments on the breast, and worship everything, but most of all Sakmoni (Sakyamuni) and Madrin (Maitreya).

They deceived him, promising him immortality, and he lived, moved, and mounted a horse at their bidding, entirely having given himself over to their will. Many times a day he bowed and kissed the ground in front of their leader, and was fed [food] which was consecrated in their heathen temple, and extolled him more than all the rest. And therefore, he had intended to build a temple of their idols in particular magnificence.⁴⁴

39 DeWeese 2014. 40 De Rachewiltz 1971; Rossabi 1992.

41 De Rachewiltz 1962; Olbricht and Pinks 1980. 42 Robinson 2009, 206.

43 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 4: 888–910. 44 Grupper 2004, 31–32.

The second is by Vardan Arewelc'i:

For he was deceived by the astrologers and priests of some images called Sakmonia, who has been, they say, God for 3,040 years. He will still have another 37 tomans, a toman being 10,000. Then, they say, another Mondri [Maitreya] will carry him away. They called Toyin these priests in whom he believed and at whose command he went out to war, or did not go out. They said, "You will long remain in your body, and when you attain a great old age, you will be put on another new body." They had him build a temple for those images. He used to go there to pray, and they worked whatever witchcraft they decried on him.⁴⁵

These are two remarkable passages in many respects, not only because they accurately portray Buddhism for a Christian readership (i.e. reincarnation, the Mahāyāna deification of the Buddha, and Maitreya worship), but also because they capture this ethnographic objectivism of the Mongol period. There is thus no real interpretation of these practices with regard to either Buddhism or Christianity, much less any critical reflection on the implications of this particular encounter. And, as such, one can truly wonder whether these encounters actually involved any real religious exchange.

Indeed, what is it that we mean by "religious exchange"? Does the act of simply recognizing and recording the existence of another count as a form of religious exchange? Or does such an exchange actually have to entail change, namely a modicum of doctrinal, intellectual, or ritual re-evaluation of one's own tradition? Or perhaps even a dialogue fostering some level of inter-ecumenical dialogue or reinterpretation?

Nowadays it is probably such intense levels of engagement that we think of as being real religious exchange. And if that is the case, then how should we consider the Armenian Christians in this regard? Since although they have left us a remarkable record of their interactions with other religious traditions, they also fiercely refused to engage with them on any meaningful level.⁴⁶ Thus should we recognize such interactions as examples of religious exchange, or something else?

Of course, in this regard the Christians were certainly not alone. Rather, one can find examples of the same phenomenon among the followers of every tradition, including, and perhaps especially, among those who were expressly involved in religious exchanges. Such was certainly the case with 'Alā' al-Dawla al-Simnānī, who famously engaged in religious debates at the Ilkhanid court and subsequently wrote about them in his autobiographical

45 Thomson 1989, 221. 46 Jackson 2005b, 256–89.

works. Yet even though he had unparalleled access to people of other faiths, and knew their traditions quite well, his writings

remind us that however much he may have explored other religions at one point early in his life, Simnānī did not become a freethinking believer in the truth of all spiritual paths. He was, rather, a Muslim whose experience at the Mongol court if anything increased his conviction regarding the superiority, and exclusive access to the highest spiritual attainments, of his own religious community.⁴⁷

Yet such a phenomenon was obviously not exclusive to Muslims, as is well evidenced in the *Examination of the Inquiries into the Three Faiths* (*Tanqīḥ al-abḥāṭ li-l-milal al-thalāth*) written by the Jewish Baghdadi scholar Sa'd Ibn Maṣṣūr Ibn Kammūna (1215–1285).⁴⁸ Thus, in thinking about the realities of religious exchange in the Mongol Empire period, what does the case of Simnānī and Ibn Kammūna tell us?

Similarly, in thinking about religious exchange in its various forms we must also recognize that such interactions may lead to negative and even violent responses. Russian Christian authors, for example, turned inwards and thus completely ignored the realities of religious exchange in the Mongol Empire.⁴⁹ Moreover, rather than idealizing the purported religious ecumenicalism of the Mongol Empire – which is so common today – in both Christian Europe and the Muslim Middle East the very existence of the Mongols and their ecumenical religious policies fueled instead apocalyptic visions of the end times.⁵⁰ Similarly, the coming of Mongol rule generated not only certain manifestations of religious tolerance, but also religious resistance and animosities against both the Mongols and other religious traditions, as evidenced in both Iran and Tibet.⁵¹ Moreover, the very mobility that enabled so much religious exchange also generated nativist sentiments, such as in China, where the Han publicly mocked Islam,⁵² and Chinese Buddhists came to vilify Tibetan Buddhists.⁵³ Yet such sentiments were not the exclusive domain of the subject peoples; rather, Möngke Qa'an decreed the extermination of the Ismā'īlī, and Qubilai Qa'an banned both Daoist books and *halal* meat.⁵⁴

47 DeWeese 2014, 72. 48 Perlmann, 1971. 49 Halperin 1985.

50 DeWeese 1978; Lerner 1983. 51 Bausani 1968, 548; Fiey 1975, 90–95; Gentry 2010.

52 Franke 1967. According to Muslim sources Ögödei Qa'an not only banned such performances, but in doing so also declared that the Han were no better than donkeys (HWC, 1958, 207).

53 Inaba 1975; Franke 1981. 54 Thiel 1961; Cleaves 1992.

In thinking about religious exchange, such actions, reactions, and counteractions invariably have to be included. Indeed, it is precisely such give-and-take that in many ways is taken to lie at the heart of any form of religious exchange and its consequences – a dynamic that invariably includes not only the possibility of conversion, as was famously the case with the Mongols and Islam,⁵⁵ but also the transformation of traditions in the process of such engagements, as was again the case with Islam and its radical transformations in the wake of the Mongol Empire.⁵⁶

Yet, at the same time, it is important to keep in mind that in many cases such events occurred far away from the imperial centers of power where they could be recorded for posterity. Rather, most religious exchanges during the Mongol Empire invariably happened in daily interactions in more mundane realms. Thus, even though the bulk of our evidence for religious exchange during this time invariably comes from written sources documenting “the Other” within elite circles, there were clearly other avenues and venues for such experiences to become manifest. And a glimpse of such everyday exchanges is well captured in an episode where William of Rubruck was asked to expel demons.

As William and his party traveled through steep and jagged rocks, his guide requested “a prayer which could chase away the demons because in this place the devils were known to carry away men without their knowing what was happening to them.” William did not interrogate the guide’s fears, or suggest that the real culprits might be bandits. Demons were expected in the wilderness. “Then we sang loudly ‘*Credo in unum Deum*’ [I Believe in One God] and by the grace of God we passed through safe and sound.” The guide and his men, impressed, requested that William write out charms for them to wear on their heads, as one might ask of a soothsayer. Instead, William offered to teach them the Credo and the Lord’s Prayer. When his interpreter could not translate either one, William wrote them out.⁵⁷

Of course, although it is unlikely that this particular interaction had any profound consequences in any historical sense, it nevertheless points to the value of looking for manifestations of religious exchange beyond the more conventional – and elite – frames of reference. This is evidenced, for example, in the less well known writings of Riccoldo da Montecroce, who, after living in Baghdad and interacting with Muslims, not only came to recognize the superiority of Islam regarding eschatology, but also lauded Muslim praxis.⁵⁸

55 Richard 1967; Pfeiffer 1999; Amitai 2001; DeWeese 2004; Pfeiffer 2006.

56 Moin 2012; Pfeiffer 2014. 57 Barnes 2005, 32. 58 George-Tvrtković 2012.

But such day-to-day face-to-face interactions were only one aspect of the religious exchange that occurred within the Mongol Empire. Another important venue for such exchanges – and ultimately intellectual negotiations – occurred among the many migrants in the empire. Indeed, immigrants all over the world today too have to grapple with the tensions inherent between holding onto old traditions or accommodating to new social realities. It was no different in the Mongol Empire, and one can catch a glimpse of such negotiations among the Muslims who moved to south China, where they had to grapple with how to reconcile their Islamic faith with their new Sino-Confucian host society.

Such negotiations, however, were not simply a Muslim affair, but also involved the Chinese as well. In Xu Youren's description of the Muslim Heshu grappling with Confucian values, for example, one gets a sense of this dynamic of accommodation.

When our house of Yuan launched expeditions against the countries of the northwest, the Western Regions were the first to become part of our realm. Accordingly, many more natives of the West were accorded high positions than those of other lands. Great merchants monopolized advantages in operating profitable enterprises on land and sea. They occupy key places in well-known cities and regions throughout the empire, and enjoy their large incomes, but few are successful in adapting themselves. They live in this country, are clothed and fed here, but they still cling to the customs of their own countries. Heshu, however, declared: "I do not dare to alter our customs, and thereby become estranged from my own people. I wish only to change what is contrary to moral principles. I have lived in this country, been clothed and fed here, and shared the life of its people. I take no pleasure in altering our ways in order to conform to the customs of this area. But when I reach a decision about them, I wish to conform to that which is right. One of my ancestors came to China as an ambassador and his bones lie buried here. Can I afford to ignore the Odes, History, Rites and Music? When customs are dissimilar due to differences in underlying principles, should I follow them?" Ah! Heshu was certainly good at adapting himself in the way Mencius proposed [a reference to where Mencius tells the story of people who reformed non-burial of the dead simply by natural feeling, without ever being taught to conduct burials]. According to their mores [that is, Muslim ones], they did not erect monuments at the tombs of their ancestors, but he did so.⁵⁹

59 Ch'ên 1966, 243.

Yet, as many an immigrant has invariably asked, was becoming more Confucian, or “Chinese,” a good thing?⁶⁰

Such religious and cultural accommodations are invariably a profoundly fraught endeavor. Yet such conundrums are the fate not only of immigrants, but rather also of all religious believers since there are inevitably encounters that force re-evaluations. Indeed, in many ways that is the basis of any religious exchange of the more profound kind noted above. And as such, some may see such developments as positive. The Chinese scholar Wang Li (1314–1389), for example, thought that such religious entanglements made the world a better place:

The language and tastes of the people of the Western Regions differ from those of the Chinese. Although since the days of Han and Tang intermarriage has occurred, still each retained his own racial allegiance and could not live permanently in the other’s domain. How could those born in the lands of the West be interred in Jiangnan [the lower Yangzi area]? Now under our imperial house of the Yuan, when the foundation of the empire was being laid, the people of the Western Regions rendered valuable service. By the time of the Renovating Founder [that is, Qubilai Qa’an], the land with the Four Seas had become the territory of one family, civilization had spread everywhere, and no more barriers existed. For people in search of fame and wealth in north and south, a journey of a thousand *li* was like a trip next door, while a journey of ten thousand *li* constituted just a neighborly jaunt. Hence among Western people who served at court, or who studied in our south-land, many forgot the region of their birth, and took delight in living among our rivers and lakes. As they settled down in China for a long time, some became advanced in years, their families grew, and being far from home, they had no desire to be buried in their fatherland. Brotherhood among peoples has certainly reached a new plane.⁶¹

Of course, others could see such exchanges and the subsequent transformations as a problem – or a distortion of the “true” tradition – and thus something to be resisted. Indeed, during the Yuan dynasty the question of Muslims “becoming Chinese” was an issue that both Islamic and Confucian scholars saw as a problem.

Such questions of purity and the possible realities of change are invariably an important component of any religious exchange. And one can get an interesting sense of these dynamics as they unfolded in the Mongol Empire

60 Who or what the “Chinese”/Han were/are is another question entirely (Mullaney et al. 2012; Vasantkumar 2012).

61 Ch’ên 1966, 252.

from the writings of Sadula, a Central Asian Muslim born in Shanxi (c. 1300–1380). His father and grandfather had both been famous military men, but Sadula received a traditional Confucian education and passed the civil service examination in 1327. He then served in several minor government posts but came to be known less for his political acumen than for his poetry about the cliché concerns of the Chinese literati: landscapes, leisure, reclusion, and religious transcendence. The last of these concerns was one Sadula discussed at length with his good friend, the Daoist Leng Qian (c. 1310–1371), but it is also one he brings to the fore in his description of the famous Buddhist cave complex of Longmen.

But, instead of approaching Longmen's 100,000 Buddha images from the standard Muslim viewpoint that condemns idols and idolatry, Sadula begins his account by lamenting that so many statues have been destroyed. Yet he does so not out of regret or sorrow, but rather in order to level the standard Confucian critique against Buddhism: it is a waste of money. But Sadula's critique does not stop there. He claims that the Buddhists have actually perverted the transcendental truth of the Buddha:

I have heard that Sakyamuni . . . practiced through strict discipline to attain Buddhahood. In his own words "no self-existing characteristics"; "all forms are empty"; "joy in nirvana." His mind was totally devoid of desires, so how could he have wanted to waste other people's wealth, exhaust their energies, chisel and carve into the structure of mountains, mutilate their Primal Energy (*qi*), and take senseless rocks, decorate them with gold, and paint them in colors in order to frighten people?

Indeed, those who practice Buddhism are following false views and are confused as to the truth . . . If Buddhahood were gloriously manifest in the world, those who achieve it would certainly be rewarded and those who harm it would certainly receive retribution . . . I have therefore recorded a general description of this place and then added an essay on it in order to dispel the confusion of Buddhists. Furthermore, I wish to caution those who practice Buddhism not to violate their master's doctrines by seeking Buddhahood in external things while not seeking the Buddha within. By illuminating the mind and seeing into one's nature, one can come closer to being a disciple of the Buddha.⁶²

Again, this is a remarkable passage on many accounts; however, the fact that Sadula, a Muslim, could make such a cogent critique of Buddhism from a Confucian and Buddhist perspectives captures well the possibilities of religious exchange within the Mongol Empire.

62 Strassberg 1994, 267–68.

Yet such critical forms of engagement and the implications that they may have had on the particular people and religions involved were not exclusive to the Muslims of China. Rather, the enormous movement of people made possible by the empire – as well as the imperial policy of population transfers – meant that peoples of various religious traditions came into contact with one another whether they wanted to or not. And invariably not all of these encounters were necessarily amicable. For example, when the Mongols moved 50,000 Muslims to Beshbaliq, the Uighur Buddhist capital,⁶³ the tensions between the two groups were rather raw. Juwaynī thus claims that “none [are] more bigoted than the idolaters [Buddhists] of the East, and none more hostile to Islam,”⁶⁴ and William of Rubruck claimed that Muslims “shun them [Buddhists] to the point that they are unwilling even to talk about them. Consequently, whenever I asked the Saracens about these people’s religion they were scandalized.”⁶⁵

At the same time, however, although such tensions existed, it is also the case that some dialogue must have occurred since Juwaynī also offers a rather informed description of Buddhism.

The *toyins* [noble monks] call a reading from their [holy] book *nom*. Now the *nom* contains their theological speculations and consists of idle stories and traditions; but excellent homilies are likewise to be found in it such as are consonant with the law and faith of every prophet, urging men to avoid injury and oppression and the like, to return good for evil and to refrain from the injuring of animals, etc. Their dogmas and doctrines are manifold; the most typical is that of reincarnation. They say that the people to-day existed several thousand years ago: the souls of those that wrought good deeds and engaged in worship attained a degree in accordance with their actions, such as that of king, or prince, or peasant, or beggar; while the souls of those that had engaged in debauchery, libertinism, murder, slander, and injury to their fellow creatures descended into vermin, beasts of prey and other animals; and so they are punished for their deeds.⁶⁶

While this may not be as sophisticated an engagement with the dharma as found in the work of Sadula, it nevertheless confirms again the possibilities of exchange that could occur on a daily basis within the Mongol Empire.

In most cases, however, such interactions are now invariably lost to the historical record. However, as with William of Rubruck’s demon expelling, one can find tantalizing hints of these possibilities and their implications in

63 Biran 2005, 177 n. 53. 64 HWC, 60.

65 William of Rubruck 1990, 151.

66 HWC, 60.

the available sources. One such example is when Marco Polo recounts the story of the Buddha and then declares, "For truly if he had been a Christian he would have been a great saint with our Lord Jesus Christ."⁶⁷ Another is captured in Rashīd al-Dīn's lengthy exploration of Buddhism, wherein he goes so far as to assert that the Buddha is a prophet with a book and thereby akin to Muḥammad.⁶⁸ Both of these examples show well how the relativizing nature of the Mongol Empire had made possible a level of religious comparison that would have been previously unimaginable.

Indeed, what is clear from the entirety of Rashīd al-Dīn's presentation of the dharma is that he was earnestly trying to make the dharma comprehensible, and possibly even palatable, to a Muslim audience. Thus in order to foster commonalities Muslim terms are often used in relation to Buddhist terms. For example, the Buddhist demon Mara, who tempts the Buddha, is called Iblīs, the devil of Islamic lore who incites humans to commit evil through deception. Similarly, when Mara/Iblīs sends down his daughters to tempt the Buddha they are called *huris*, the beautiful maidens of Islamic lore. Similarly, in describing the Buddhist world Rashīd al-Dīn transposes common Muslim elements, such as when a hell realm is described as being for those who destroy *madrasas* or *ribāts*. Or when the famous Jetavana grove of Buddhist lore is said not only to contain a "*madrasa*, *khanqah*, *sauma'a* and a hospital," but also to be open to all "Sufis, Bakshis, and Dervishes."⁶⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn also describes a Buddhist heaven in terms of the Garden of Eden, and in the best example of this sort of comparison he also explains the experience of Nirvana in relation to Sufi conceptualizations.⁷⁰

Yet Rashīd al-Dīn not only tries to make Buddhism understandable in Islamic terms, but he also tries to accurately – and objectively – portray Buddhist practice:

Shākamūnī said that the Exalted Creator had commanded temples to be built and images of Shākamūnī to be placed in them. At the times of prayer candles should be lit (before the images), perfumes burnt and the people should (come to) pray there. "For verily, I must then appear there. Therefore make gifts to charitable institutions and give alms freely, for I will receive them all! And it is seemly that only pure gifts should be brought there by those who have severed themselves from their connections (with the world), so that I may appear there, may hear their invocations and grant their prayers. And of each one who prays in these temples I know the extent of his meritorious participation in it. Verily it can neither be calculated nor measured."⁷¹

⁶⁷ Polo 1976, 409. ⁶⁸ Elverskog 2010; Akasoy 2013. ⁶⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn 1980, 78.

⁷⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, 1980, 94. ⁷¹ Jahn 1965, lxxiv.

Of course, the main reason why Rashīd al-Dīn was able to present such an accurate – and even sympathetic – description of Buddhist ritual was that he had access to Buddhists in Ilkhanid Iran. And as such, what is further evident from his account is not only that these Buddhists were involved in a wide array of practices, such as the worship of Maitreya, as already noted by the Armenian Christians, but also that they came from distinct Buddhist traditions.⁷²

Thus, as is well known, even though the Mongol court in Iran patronized Tibetan Buddhism there were Chinese Buddhists in Iran as well. Rashīd al-Dīn, for example, describes of the worship of the Buddha Amitabha in terms of the key Chinese Pure Land text, the *Guanwu liang shou jing* (T 365):

And it is said that every man who recites the Book of *'b.r.m.tāy* daily, dons a clean garment of white muslin and performs the daily ablutions, will live long and, when he dies, will be taken to *Amita-Burkhān* in the Paradise already mentioned. And every one who hears what is recited from this Book will also go to Paradise when he dies.⁷³

Rashīd al-Dīn also describes the Chinese worship of Guanyin, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, in terms of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra*, which was “translated by T’ien-hsi-tsai in 1000, [and] represents the height of Kuan-yin glorification.”⁷⁴

In this book it is said that *Shākamūnī-Burkhān*, when he became a prophet, sent the above-mentioned to Hell (*hajīm*), commanding him to purge it of those who were there. And he purged Hell of its inhabitants. And on his way there each part of the Hell-fire which he touched with his foot changed into roses and flowers. And when the inhabitants of Hell saw his face, they were all freed from the pains of Hell and entered into Paradise. And the guardians of Hell went to their chief and told him that someone had come to them who had redeemed Hell and who was able to take them to Paradise. When the chief guardians of Hell entered Hell and saw *Khv.nshī* [Guanyin] they threw themselves before him and joyfully obeyed his commands.⁷⁵

Yet the most striking evidence of Chinese Buddhist influence in Iran is borne out by Rashīd al-Dīn’s elaboration of the worship of the Big Dipper.

It is said that he who recites this book and with lights and candles implores the stars, which he zealously worships, for help, will speedily have his wish fulfilled, whether it concerns a person or a thing, and that future trials and misfortunes will be spared him through the goodness of *Allāh* the Exalted.⁷⁶

72 Schopen 1982. 73 Jahn 1965, lxxi. 74 Yü 2001, 324. 75 Jahn 1965, lxxii.

76 Jahn 1965, lxxiii.

The fact that this Buddhō-Daoist cult – which had become an important part of the multireligious court culture of the Yuan dynasty⁷⁷ – was described in terms of Allah in Iran captures again the realities of religious exchanges that were possible within the Mongol Empire.

The reality of Muslims grappling with different Buddhist traditions belies yet another important dimension of religious exchange in the empire, which is those exchanges that occurred within particular traditions. Thus while the intermingling of Tibetan, Kashmiri, Uighur, Chinese, and Indian Buddhists in Iran is reflected in Rashīd al-Dīn's work, we do not really know how the interaction between these groups informed – or changed in any degree – their own religious ideas and practices. In China, however, there is ample evidence that various Buddhist traditions changed and evolved as the interaction between them increased. Leading scholars of the Chan tradition, for example, started to engage with the pioneering thought of the medieval Buddhist scholar Zhongmi and other philosophical schools.⁷⁸ Similarly, the multilingual effort to reprint the Chinese Buddhist canon under Qubilai Qa'an led not only to the incorporation of Tibetan materials in the Chinese canon, but also to the inclusion of Chinese materials in the Tibetan canon.⁷⁹ And such exchanges belie the fact that the encounter between Chinese and Tibetan Buddhists was not only one of rancor, but rather could also foster some interesting attempts at fusing these two distinct traditions.⁸⁰ Such fusions, however, were not limited to developments within traditions, but also across traditions, as is most famously evidenced in the interactions between Buddhists, Confucians, and Daoists that helped fuel the development of "Three-in-One" thought, which was subsequently to shape so much of Chinese intellectual history.⁸¹

Not everyone, however, lauded such exchanges and the transformations they wrought. Rather, certain people and groups invariably saw such cosmopolitan and pluralist mixing of traditions as a perversion of some imagined "true" or "pure" tradition. In the Buddhist world, for example, the puritanical turn of Tsongkhapa (1357–1419) was certainly a reaction to both the political and the religious upheavals fostered by the Mongol Empire. And a similar response can be seen in the Muslim world in the case of Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328).⁸² He condemned the recently converted Muslim Mongols since he saw their continued adherence not only to non-Islamic Mongol rituals,⁸³ but also to Mongol laws that contradicted the *shari'a*,⁸⁴ as evidence of their impiety.

77 Elverskog 2007. 78 Jan 1982; Yü 1982. 79 Franke 1994. 80 Linrothe 2009.

81 Sun 1981; Liu and Berling 1982. 82 Raff 1973, 38–59; Aigle 2014, 283–305.

83 Amitai 1996, 9. 84 Aigle 2014, 134–58.

Moreover, since the Mongols were less than true believers Ibn Taymiyya claimed that the Mongols could righteously be fought. Famously, and more controversially, he also asserted that anyone who had dealings with the Mongols, even if they were Muslim, could also be killed.⁸⁵

All Muslims did not agree with Ibn Taymiyya, and not only about his justifying the killing of innocents. Many also opposed Ibn Taymiyya's other puritanical interpretations of Islam, such as his rejection of music, of dancing, and of relic worship.⁸⁶ Thus when Ibn Taymiyya tried to stop the worship of Muḥammad's footprint in Damascus in 1304 he was driven away by an enraged mob who accused him of impiety.⁸⁷ Such diverse reactions both within and across the Islamic traditions capture well both the possibilities and the potential consequences of the religious exchanges that occurred on account of the Mongol Empire.

Religious Consequences

In many ways the criticisms of Tsongkhapa and Ibn Taymiyya were correct: the Mongols and their empire changed forever not only how and where religions were practiced across Eurasia, but also how religion was to be understood within the broader matrix of human activity. In terms of the former, for example, one need look no further than the Muslim world, where the destruction of the 'Abbāsid caliphate and the Mongols' subsequent conversion to Islam paved the way for the rise not only of Sufism, but also of Shi'ite political power⁸⁸ – two developments that were to profoundly shape the historical realities of the Muslim world in the early modern period, and indeed still resonate today. Similarly, the Mongols not only fueled and transformed the religious imagination of Christians in Europe, but in doing so also opened up a whole new perspective on humanity that was fundamental in both creating and shaping the early modern world.⁸⁹

But such profound and lasting consequences of the religious exchanges fostered by the empire were not limited to the Abrahamic faiths of western Eurasia. Rather, the Mongols' institutionalization of Zhu Xi's neo-Confucianism within the imperial examination system changed forever the religio-political world of East Asia from Korea to Vietnam.⁹⁰ Similarly, the intellectual ferment of Yuan dynasty China that fostered the development of

85 Michot 1994; Michot 1995a; Michot 1995b. 86 Menon 1976; Michot 1991; Olesen 1991.

87 Hassan 1993, 341; Little 1975. 88 DeWeese 1994; Amitai 1999; Green 2012.

89 App 2010; Abate 2013; Ristuccia 2013.

90 Dardess 1973, 35–37; Dardess 1983; Woodside 2006; Muller 2015.

“Three-in-One” thought was to shape East Asian religious practices down to the present day. Moreover, the fact that Tibetan Buddhism is practiced from China to Brazil is also a clear legacy of the Yuan court’s support of the tradition.⁹¹ Indeed, it would probably not be too much of an exaggeration to say that our contemporary religious world grew out of the religious exchanges made possible by and fostered during the Mongol Empire.

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91 Franke 1996; Van der Kuijp 2004; Tuttle 2005.

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Scientific Exchange

MORRIS ROSSABI AND ROBERT G. MORRISON

The Mongols were eager to adopt foreign cultural innovations that benefited them and facilitated rule over the populations they had subjugated. Yet, equally important, the Mongols principally craved foreign scientific and technological discoveries that had tangible results. Idle scientific speculation would not necessarily secure Mongol support. They favored the concrete rather than the theoretical. However, the societies that were under the rule of the Yuan, the Golden Horde, the Chaghadaids, and the Ilkhanids in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and enjoyed Mongol patronage were the site of significant, fascinating scientific activity and exchanges. Some of the scientific activity that occurred in these khanates is of indubitable general significance. For instance, the work of the diverse scholars affiliated with the observatory at Marāgha in northwest Iran, an institution constructed in early 1259 and patronized initially by the first Ilkhanid ruler Hülegü (d. 1265), Qubilai's brother and the founder of the Ilkhanid dynasty, are routinely recognized in general histories of astronomy.¹ The Marāgha Observatory attracted numerous foreign visitors; in particular, the visit of Gregory (né George) Chioniades (d. c. 1320) has attracted much scholarly attention.² The entire scientific culture of these societies communicates a great deal about all dimensions of culture in the khanates and about the relations among them.

Because the Mongol rulers' patronage of non-Mongol scholars was of supreme importance for the growth of science and for scientific exchange in the khanates, it is impossible to isolate completely the focus of the current chapter from earlier encounters between Islamic societies and east and inner Asia. The Persian word for paper (*kāghadh*) is derived from the Chinese *guzhi*, and paper-making technology, over the course of several centuries, traveled from China to Central Asia, where it was widespread by

1 Dreyer 1906, 248; North 2008, 205–11. 2 Tihon 2008.

the eighth century.³ There were other early scientific exchanges between Islamic societies and East Asia.⁴ Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* contains a report from Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā' al-Rāzī (d. 925 CE) of a Chinese scholar who stayed with him for about a year and who learned Arabic in the space of five months! That scholar produced a copy or Chinese translation of the Arabic version of Galen's *Sixteen Books*, although it is unknown whether the text reached China. In fact, from the eighth century until the Mongol conquests, contacts between the Islamic world and China proliferated.⁵ Still, the Mongol conquests were unprecedented in that they connected the Islamic societies of West Asia to East Asia, changing the relationship of one to the other. In addition to the fact that the Mongols linked large swaths of territory, Mongol resettlement policies brought human transfers that Thomas Allsen has seen as a vector of scholarly exchange.⁶

The Ilkhanids outshone the other Mongol khanates in Islamic lands, namely the Golden Horde and the Chaghadaids. But the culture of the Golden Horde and the Chaghadaid Khanate, even though information about scientific life in them is hard to come by, manifests some of the same characteristics of scientific exchange found elsewhere.⁷ The ravages of the bubonic plague in the fourteenth century may have stunted cultural life in the Golden Horde.⁸ Still, in a description of Old Sarai, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa mentioned the hospice of Nu'mān al-Dīn al-Khwārazmī, a scholar of medicine whom Ibn Baṭṭūṭa met there.⁹ The mid-fourteenth-century Golden Horde capital at New Sarai featured canal and reservoir networks.¹⁰ These building activities created a scaffolding for intellectual life. In the town of Khwārazm (aka Kunya Urgench), then part of the Khanate of the Golden Horde,¹¹ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa found a hospital with a director named al-Ṣahyūnī who hailed from Ṣahyūn in Syria.¹² The Golden Horde hosted eminent scholars of philosophy and *kalām* (rational speculation into the nature of God), fields related to the natural sciences. Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1365) was active at the court of the Golden Horde, and Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 1389), who was born in Khurasan, dedicated to Janibeg Khan (r. 1342–1357) his *Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ* (Summary of the "Key").¹³ Janibeg was also the dedicatee of the commentary by Kamāl al-Dīn al-Turkmānī, who was born in Cairo, on Jaghmnī's *al-Mulakhkhaṣ*, an Islamic introduction to Ptolemaic astronomy that attracted the attention of many scholars elsewhere.¹⁴ The presence in the Khanate of the Golden Horde of scholars

3 Bloom 2001, 47.

4 See Chemla 1994.

5 Park 2012.

6 Allsen 2009, 142–43.

7 Spuler 1943, 425.

8 Schamiloğlu 1993, 448–52.

9 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 2: 516.

10 Balodis 1926, 21.

11 Bosworth 2014.

12 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 541–42.

13 Von Hammer-Purgstall 1840, 305; Ibn 'Arabshāh 1979, 82–84.

14 Fazlhoğlu 2007a.

who were born elsewhere attests not only to the khanate's cultural life, but also to the level of intellectual exchange between regions.

One reason why the Ilkhanate became the pole of Mongol intellectual life in West Asia was because the Mongol conquests upended the prevailing religious hierarchy. Hülegü departed Mongolia in 1253, and defeated the Ismā'īlīs at Alamūt in 1256 before conquering Baghdad at the beginning of 1258, toppling the 'Abbāsid caliph. The Shī'ī polymath Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's (d. 1274) political skills brought him from Alamūt, as the emissary of the Ismā'īlīs, to Hülegü's attention, and then into Hülegü's counsel. Al-Ṭūsī's talents clearly served the rulers and helped him flourish in the distinct intellectual climate of the Ilkhanate. Mongol rulers often adopted the religion of those whom they conquered, and the Ilkhanids' vacillation between Sunnism and Shī'ism, among other religions, stoked a competition of religious ideas.¹⁵ As religion was a subject of discussion at court, in this period, Muslim scholars in the Ilkhanate, beginning with al-Ṭūsī, understood their work on science to be in conversation with fields such as *kalām* (philosophical theology), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), and *tafsīr* (Qur'an commentary).¹⁶ The Marāgha Observatory was the institution at which al-Ṭūsī would cement a reputation as the most renowned Shī'ī scholar in the sciences and philosophical theology.¹⁷ For example, al-Ṭūsī's treatise on finance, prepared for either Hülegü or Abaqa (r. 1265–1282) is an attempt to reconcile earlier Islamic methods of taxation with the customs of a new Mongol ruler.¹⁸ Praise for Hülegü's patronage of scientists was a *topos* borrowed from steppe culture pre-dating the Mongol conquest of the Islamic lands, but was also rooted in reality.¹⁹ Al-Ṭūsī's polymathic achievements, and those of later scholars affiliated with the Ilkhanids, continued an earlier tradition of polymathy in Islamic societies; one of al-Ṭūsī's final teachers, at Mawṣil, had been Kamāl al-Dīn ibn Yūnus (d. 1242), a polymath whose skills ranged from *fiqh* to cryptology to the study of the *Almagest*. Still, scientific activity and exchange can be grouped under a few key headings.

Body and Medicine

Leading a demanding and often perilous lifestyle, the Mongols were concerned about their bodies. Movement around considerable terrains, preparation for and engagement in hunts and battles, and other physical hardships

15 Pfeiffer 2006. 16 Morrison 2007. 17 Ragep 2000. 18 Minorsky and Minovi 1940.
19 Amitai-Preiss 2014, 16.

led, on occasion, to injuries or disabilities. Prior to their conquests, they often relied on shamans for treatment or cures. As they emerged from Mongolia, however, they learned about physicians and sought their counsel. Also, as they moved into the sedentary empires that they had conquered and occupied, they began to reward themselves with the luxurious lifestyles in these civilizations. Such hedonism prompted them to consume vast quantities of food and liquor. Foreigners who visited the Mongol domains, including Marco Polo and John of Plano Carpini, repeatedly described elaborate banquets and drunken orgies, setting the stage for massive physical problems. One scholar has asserted that such dietary decadence translated into early deaths, especially for the khans and possibly others in the elite.²⁰

Starting as early as Chinggis Khan and stretching at least to his grandson Qubilai, Mongols sought relief from ailments or a promise of longevity. Chinggis, having been told that a certain Changchun had secret formulas for prolonging life, invited this renowned Daoist to join him on his expedition to Central Asia. Although Changchun revealed that he had no such prescriptions, he did offer advice to the Mongol ruler on living a better life and avoiding the killing of others, both animals and humans.²¹ Chinggis also sought to recruit physicians by offering them tax-free status. Similarly, Chinggis Khan's descendants searched everywhere for treatments for and the causes of their ailments. On the severe sickness of Ögödei (r. 1229–1241), Chinggis Khan's son and successor, the *Secret History of the Mongols* reads,

When he [Ögödei] lost his speech and was in great distress, various shamans and soothsayers were ordered to divine the cause of the illness. They said, "The lords and rulers of the land and rivers of the Kitat are raging violently against the Qa'an now that their people are plundered and their cities and towns are destroyed."²²

The *Secret History*, written in Mongolian probably before Ögödei's death and certainly before the Mongols' conquest of Baghdad, had linked Ögödei's illness to an earlier spell of disease. This disease was perhaps an outbreak of typhus caused by slaughtering large populations in north China.²³ In addition, the economic devastation that followed the conquests motivated a search for the most sophisticated path to recovery, a path that included attention to applied sciences along with exact sciences and medicine. Qubilai, for his part, suffered, in particular, from gout, a debilitating illness due to excesses in diet and drink, and tried to recruit Korean, Ceylonese, Tibetan, and Indian

20 Smith 2000, 46–49. 21 Waley 1931, 101, 109, 114. 22 SH, 203. 23 SH, 995.

physicians to treat him and other Mongols.²⁴ Other Mongols and Chinese secured the services of Uighur doctors and drugs.

Nestorian Christian, as well as Persian Muslim, physicians and pharmacologists played major roles in introducing foreign medical practices, beliefs, and medicines into the Mongol and Chinese worlds. A Nestorian physician named 'Īsā Kelemechi (Jesus the Translator), together with others, helped to found an Office of Western Medicine (*xiyu yiyao si* or *jingshi yiyao yuan*), which was renamed the Broadening Benevolence Office (*guanghui si*) in 1273 and treated Mongols in Dadu and Shangdu, providing them with the drugs that they required. Placed under the supervision of the Academy of Medicine (*taiyi yuan*), it persisted through much of the Yuan under Nestorian leadership, though Muslim physicians were also involved.²⁵ In 1262, the Yuan court began to establish medical schools and devised rules for them. The Academy of Medicine devised medical-service examinations for medical administrators and regulations for physicians and medical households, whom Qubilai Qa'an relieved of labor service. Qubilai and a distinguished physician named Xu Guozhen initiated a practice of interviewing candidates for the academy.²⁶ The academy had access to thirty-six volumes of Muslim medical texts in the Imperial Library. *Soup for the Qan* (*Yinshan zhengyao*), by Hu Sihui, the court physician who spoke a Turkic language, was also available to some doctors in the early fourteenth century and consisted, among other material, of recipes for a healthy diet.²⁷ An early Ming dynasty text which had supplementary insertions from the post-Mongol era, *The Collection of Muslim Prescriptions* (*Huihui yaofang*), added to China's knowledge of Muslim medicines.²⁸

The study and practice of medicine also flourished under the Ilkhanids. Just as Chinggis Khan had brought his own physicians with him on his conquests, physicians from East Asia arrived with Hülegü. Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 1318), who had begun to serve the Ilkhanids during the reign of Hülegü's successor Abaqa and rose eventually to co-chief minister, compiled some of what he learned from these physicians in his *Tanksūq-nāma* (*The Treasure Book*). The *Tanksūq-nāma*, Persian translations of Chinese texts on medicine, represented Rashīd al-Dīn's attempt to revitalize Islamic medicine with information from China.²⁹ It was the first instance of the translation of Chinese medical classics in West Asia.³⁰ The Mongols were very interested

24 On Yuan relations with India: Sen 2006, 299–326; Chōng 1909, 3: 519; YS, 148.

25 Allsen 2001, 149–50. 26 Shinno 2016, 36.

27 Anderson and Buell, 2000; on the medical service examinations: Shinno 2016, 72.

28 Franke 1970, 12–13; Buell 2007, 283–86. 29 Allsen 2009, 139; Lo and Wang 2013.

30 Klein-Franke 1998, 427.

in diagnosis based on the pulse, as health, in Chinese medicine, depended on the interaction of *qi* with the body.³¹ The main source for the *Tanksūq-nāma* was the *Mai jue* (Secrets of the Pulse), and there are also quotations from the medical texts *Nan jing* (Classic of Difficulty) and *Su wen* (Basic Questions).³² Finally, the *Tanksūq-nāma* is significant as evidence for Rashīd al-Dīn's awareness of the scale of the Ilkhanids' ambitions in science. In the introduction to the book, he made parallels between his own intent to transform his milieu through translation and the Translation Movement that flourished under the 'Abbāsids.³³

Along with Rashīd al-Dīn's interest in Chinese medicine came his acquisition of Chinese materia medica and the use of a Chinese chef.³⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn co-operated with Bolad, a Mongol emissary from China with extensive administrative experience, to restore Persian agricultural production by using seeds from India and China and East Asian agricultural techniques.³⁵ Improving agriculture was part of Ilkhan Ghazan's plan for shepherding the Ilkhanate through an economic crisis.³⁶ The movement of medical knowledge was part of a broader exchange, as medical knowledge from West Asia went east due in part to the prominence of Nestorians in China and the political alliance between the Ilkhanids and the Yuan dynasty.³⁷ As mentioned above, there was an Office of Western Medicine in China from Qubilai's reign until the end of the Yuan dynasty, and Ibn Sīnā's *Canon* may have been translated into Chinese in the second half of the thirteenth century.³⁸ Though there is little evidence that Chinese medicine ever supplanted Islamic medicine in Islamic societies,³⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn's cultural influence might have been an important reason why Ghazan preferred Chinese medicine.⁴⁰

The principal medical innovations from West Asia took the form of medicinal drugs. Muslim physicians traveled in various parts of China and dispensed medicines to both the elite and ordinary people. In addition, in 1292 the Yuan established Muslim Pharmaceutical Bureaus (*huihui yaowu yuan*) in Dadu and Shangdu. Even beforehand, the Mongols had organized Muslim Benevolence Pharmacies (*huimin yaoju*) in many provinces and cities to provide medicines for the nonelite. Confucians and Buddhist and Daoist monks also handed out drugs, partly through these pharmacies, and participated in medical care. The medicines themselves consisted of an array of drugs from west and Central Asia. As one contemporary stated, "The

31 Allsen 2009, 148. 32 Klein-Franke 1998, 440, 443. 33 Berlekamp 2010, 210–22.

34 Lambton 1999, 17. 35 Allsen 1996, 14–15. 36 Lambton 1999, 128–52.

37 Allsen 2001, 146–51. 38 Allsen 2001, 151. 39 Berlekamp 2010, 213–14.

40 Allsen 2001, 143.

medicinal drugs of the northwest all cure illnesses in an excellent way.”⁴¹ Many of these drugs had been imported into China before the Yuan, but an increasing awareness and use of these medicines appeared during this era.

One such drug was the Arabic *sharbat* (sherbet), a sugary liquid, which was mixed with other medicines. It was prescribed as a laxative and to counter colic, and eventually became popular as a refreshing drink and not merely as a drug. Medicines for gastrointestinal disturbances constituted the largest number of such imports, and drugs for colic, coughs, and respiratory ailments were also prominent. Naturally Chinese medicines, including rhubarb (again prescribed for gastrointestinal ailments), reached West Asia.⁴²

The western and Central Asian impact on Chinese drugs and practices did not translate into transformation of the traditional Chinese medical system. The two approaches differed considerably, with the West Asian based on ancient Greek beliefs and the Chinese centered on the *yin-yang* and Five Elements theory. Thus there was a limit to Chinese borrowing from Muslim medicine in Mongol times and vice versa. Such changes were precluded.⁴³ One change in the Yuan era was the higher status of physicians in China, due both to the suspension of the civil service examinations, the traditional route to official careers, and to the elevated position of doctors. Foreigners again played a role in this development. By “rendering support to men with a working knowledge of medicine, Mongols and *Semu* [mostly Muslims] collaborated with Chinese in creating the most hospitable dynasty for elite physicians in pre-modern Chinese history.”⁴⁴ Some Confucian temples housed medical schools, known as the Temples of the Three Progenitors.⁴⁵ Association with these temples offered doctors a higher status. At the same time, the Mongols founded four Muslim medical schools in Dadu, which emphasized a Persian-style curriculum. The result of this medical diffusion was that doctors “were exposed to new food, drugs, and medical theories.”⁴⁶

Breadth

The Mongols’ interest in the space they conquered followed their immediate concern for their bodies and afflictions. Having resided in a specific and not highly developed land, they now found themselves to be masters of a vast domain with oases and large cities, plentiful arable land, daunting mountains, and inhospitable deserts. If they planned to succeed in ruling this territory,

41 Quoted in Schottenhammer 2013, 80.

42 Foust 1992.

43 Allsen 2001, 156–57.

44 Shinno, 2007, 95; Hymes 1987, 9–66.

45 Shinno 2016, 56–61.

46 Shinno 2016, 121.

they required considerable knowledge about this new space they had subjugated. They needed to know about the routes that linked the various territories as well as the natural barriers that hindered access to specific locations. Before setting forth on military campaigns, they were required to gather information, via espionage and questioning of travelers, about the enemies and areas they would be attacking. They recognized the importance of descriptions and sketches of these sites. As soon as they gained control over a region, they gathered the maps produced by the defeated enemy and used them for their own purposes. Within China itself, they had maps of the postal stations, which facilitated rapid communication of intelligence information and co-ordination of military tactics. As rulers, they naturally valued cartography and maps of the areas they governed in addition to the world beyond their domains.

Unlike China, the Islamic world had a long tradition of cartography. The Chinese had not fashioned a world map before the Yuan dynasty, while Muslims had produced a number. Their interest in and knowledge of geography, especially at the height of the 'Abbāsid period, is well known. As early as the ninth century, the 'Abbāsid caliph had commissioned the development of a world map, which is no longer extant. In the thirteenth-century Islamic world, Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī produced a geography, which contained world maps. These grid-based maps located sites based on longitude and latitude. Although latitude and longitude co-ordinates had been found in earlier maps, Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī innovated in his use of a grid. A Chinese map included in the *Yuan jingshi dadian* (Great Compendium for Adminstrating the World) resembles Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī's map in its use of grids, its siting of places in latitude and longitude co-ordinates, and its general position and placement of specific locations. It also lists major cities in Central and West Asia and delineates the four khanates, the Yuan, Chaghadaid Central Asia, the Golden Horde, and the Ilkhanate of West Asia, of the Mongol domains.⁴⁷ The question of influence remains unanswered: which preceded and influenced the other? Experts differ on this issue.

One answer may be the large number of Muslims who arrived in China and contributed their skills and knowledge of geography and cartography. Jamāl al-Dīn, who had earlier worked in Central Asia, was the most renowned of these foreigners. Known as an astronomer, he was also interested in geography. In 1267, he presented Qubilai Qa'an with seven astronomical instruments, one of which was a wooden terrestrial globe.⁴⁸ This extraordinary instrument was the first representation of the world as a globe ever brought to China and depicted

47 Park 2013, 141–43. 48 YS, 999.

70 percent of the earth as water, portrayed in green, and 30 percent as land, drawn in white. Although it neither altered the Chinese perception of the world, nor led immediately to Chinese depictions of the Earth as a globe, it was divided into grids and, in particular, used longitude and latitude and may have introduced the latter conceptions to Chinese cartographers. Moreover, the arrival of Jamāl al-Dīn and other skilled Muslims who accompanied him offered greater information about other areas in the world to their Chinese associates, leading to an important proposal.

In 1286, as director of the Palace Library, Jamāl al-Dīn, in a memorial to Qubilai, called for an empire-wide project to produce a work on the entire Mongol Empire, which would provide descriptions of lands beyond China. As the Great Khan who claimed to govern the vast Mongol domains, Qubilai appeared pleased and rapidly approved of this plan, resulting in the extensive 1,300-chapter work known as *The Treatise on the Great Unified Realm of the Great Yuan* (*Da Yuan da yitong zhi*). It was completed in 1303, but only the introduction is extant. Neither its accounts nor its maps have survived, but the introduction strongly implies that it had sections on foreign areas, especially the Islamic world.⁴⁹ The participation of Jamāl al-Dīn and his Muslim cohorts ensured that the text would include the Islamic world. They also brought Islamic books on geography and maps to China. The blending of Islamic and Chinese knowledge led to the production of this map and a heightened knowledge of the world's geography.

The culmination of these extraordinary exchanges between the two cultures was the so-called Korean World Map or the *Map of Integrated Regions and Terrains and of Historical Countries and Capitals* (*Honil gangli yŏkdae gukdo jido*), which was completed in Korea in 1402. Drawing on Yuan dynasty maps and knowledge, it depicts the coast of Africa and the contours of West Asia and locates a number of cities in the Islamic world.⁵⁰ It is far from perfect in its representation of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian peninsula. Yet the creation of such so-called world maps, however imperfect, even as far away as Korea, was a major step in cartography.⁵¹

Beyond

The Mongols, despite the lack of their own system of astronomy, took the study of the heavens seriously. Hülegü had brought Chinese astronomers with him to Iran, suggesting an interest in the subject that pre-dated his

49 Park 2013, 134–35. 50 Kauz 2013, 162–64. 51 Allsen 2001, 103–14; Park 2012.

patronage of the Marāgha Observatory.⁵² But, yet again, part of this fascination stemmed from pragmatic considerations. They recognized that study of astronomy offered tangible information about the weather and the natural environment they faced as herders and, to a lesser extent, farmers. In addition, however, they viewed astrology as a vital and reliable guide to the future, and part of their interest in astronomy centered around divination. Both astronomy and astrology drew the Mongols in the Yuan to support exchanges with the Islamic world.

Although a few West Asian astronomers had reached China before Qubilai's accession, most of the significant developments and support for astronomy occurred during his reign. Several of his most important advisers, including Liu Bingzhong (1216–1274) had advocated government support for astronomy. Liu, perhaps Qubilai's most influential counselor, had actively promoted the construction of observatories in China. A Buddhist monk, Liu had long been one of Qubilai's closest confidantes not only on Buddhist and Confucian issues but also on secular matters.⁵³ Yet it was the West Asians who, in addition, played vital roles in Yuan astronomy. In 1267, Jamāl al-Dīn built seven astronomical instruments and presented them to the court. Four years later, Qubilai established an Institute of Muslim Astronomy, with the redoubtable Jamāl al-Dīn as its superintendent. Within a few years, he placed an earlier Chinese Institute of Astronomy in the Muslim Institute, and, in 1274, the consolidated institute became part of the Imperial Library, with Jamāl al-Dīn as temporary director. The institute's placement in such a high position in the government reveals the importance that the Mongols attached to astronomy.⁵⁴

The Yuan court must have been aware of the advanced status of astronomy in West Asia. The Marāgha Observatory turned out to be a lively center for studies of astronomy. Al-Ṭūsī, whose proximity to Hülegü facilitated his appointment as the director of the observatory at Marāgha, and Mu'ayyad al-Dīn al-'Urḍī (d. 1266), who came to Marāgha from Syria and was responsible for the construction of the observatory's instruments, each produced the earliest successful solutions of a serious theoretical problem in Ptolemaic astronomy. Ptolemy (fl. 125–150) had found that certain motions of the celestial orbs were not uniform about their centers, even though those orbs revolved in place. Rather, the axis of those orbs' uniform revolutions passed through a different point, a point that came to be known as the equant point. Although Ptolemy had determined the equant point mathematically, the idea

52 Allsen 2001, 161–62. 53 Chan 1967, 102–3. 54 Park 2013, 133.

that an orb would revolve uniformly in place on an axis that did *not* pass through the orb's center was a physical contradiction. The novel configurations of orbs that al-Ṭūsī and 'Urḍī proposed were highly innovative because they proposed only orbs that revolved uniformly about axes passing through the orbs' centers. Yet the motions combined to produce a revolution that was uniform about the equant point. Al-Ṭūsī and 'Urḍī's solutions had the virtue of not only accounting mathematically for observations, as Ptolemy's models did, but also functioning in the physical world, which Ptolemy's models did not.

Al-Ṭūsī's solution depended on an innovation that modern scholars call the Ṭūsī couple. Two orbs revolving in opposite directions, with one twice the size of the other and with the smaller revolving with twice the angular velocity of the larger, combined to cause a point to oscillate in a straight line in a plane or almost on an arc on the surface of an orb. When the orbs of the Ṭūsī couple were embedded in an even larger orb that revolved uniformly with the velocity of the large orb in the Ṭūsī couple, the motion of the oscillating point would appear uniform about the equant point. The Ṭūsī couple appeared at first in Persian and Arabic texts that al-Ṭūsī wrote before coming to Marāgha. Al-Ṭūsī's *al-Tadhkira fī 'ilm al-hay'a* (Memoir on Astronomy), written at Marāgha, contained al-Ṭūsī's most thorough presentation of his theories.⁵⁵ The *Tadhkira* was also influential as a textbook. Parameters in manuscripts of the even more influential textbook *al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-hay'a al-basīṭa* (Epitome of Plain Astronomy) by al-Jaghmīnī (early thirteenth century) were updated with those from *al-Tadhkira*.⁵⁶

'Urḍī's solution depended on his insight, now called the 'Urḍī lemma, in which an additional epicycle revolved within a larger revolving orb, both moving with the same angular velocity, with the center of that larger orb being halfway between the center of the cosmos and the Ptolemaic equant point.⁵⁷ The result was that the motion of a point on the additional epicycle was virtually uniform about the old Ptolemaic equant point. Copernicus was perturbed by the equant problem, and the parallels, including the use of the Ṭūsī couple and a reliance on the 'Urḍī lemma, between his models and those of the Marāgha astronomers are legion.⁵⁸

While theoretical astronomy at the Marāgha Observatory has received more attention, observational astronomy at Marāgha provides excellent evidence of scientific exchange. A central genre for observational astronomy was the *zīj* (pl. *azyāj*) an astronomical handbook with tables. At Marāgha, al-Ṭūsī produced

55 Ragep 1993. 56 Ragep 2007. 57 Saliba 2007, 151–55. 58 Saliba 1984.

the *Zīj-i Īlkhānī* (The Ilkhanid Astronomical Handbook with Tables). While the *Zīj-i Īlkhānī* turned out to serve as an important point of reference for subsequent *azyāj*, there is no evidence that it incorporated observations from Marāgha. Yet the *Zīj-i Īlkhānī* was one of at least three *azyāj* connected with Marāgha that described the Chinese–Uighur calendar.⁵⁹ The Chinese–Uighur calendar featured characteristics of the Song and Jin dynasty calendars (e.g. the insertion of a leap month) and of the Uighur calendar (e.g. the use of a recent epoch for calculations instead of a grand conjunction in the past, e.g. over 88 million years before Chinggis Khan’s accession to the throne), which would have been discovered by the Mongols when the Uighurs began to work for them around 1209.⁶⁰ Notably, this information, originating within the Chinese astronomical tradition, came to the interest of one of the greatest astronomers of Islamic societies.⁶¹

The *zīj* of Muḥyi al-Dīn al-Maghribī (d. 1283), who came to Marāgha from the western reaches of the Islamic world, also contained information on the Chinese–Uighur calendar; in fact, he wrote a separate treatise on the subject.⁶² Maghribī’s observational astronomy was, throughout, on a very high level, featuring complex recomputations of the parameters of the planetary and lunar models.⁶³ Some transmission of the information about the Chinese–Uighur calendar antedated the foundation of the Marāgha Observatory as information about the calendar exists in the *zīj* of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Baghdādī, which was completed in 1258.⁶⁴ But a likely source for much of this information in al-Ṭūsī and al-Maghribī’s *azyāj* was the presence of a Chinese scholar, perhaps named Fu Mengzhi, active at the Marāgha Observatory, who worked under al-Ṭūsī. Overall, *zīj* production and practical astronomy were intense at Marāgha.⁶⁵

The arrival of Chinese scholars at Marāgha went along with the presence of Muslim scholars farther east. One of the astronomers who came to Iran with Hülegü, Ḥusām al-Dīn, had originally traveled to Mongolia from West Asia.⁶⁶ ʿĪsā Kelemechi, the Nestorian physician mentioned above who was Qubilai’s envoy in 1285 to Pope Honorius IV and who accompanied Bolad to the court of the Ilkhan Arghun (r. 1284–1291), was also a scholar of astronomy.⁶⁷ Most important, Qubilai had also employed Jamāl al-Dīn (fl.

59 Kennedy 1964, 442–43. 60 Van Dalen 2002, 334–36.

61 Van Dalen, Kennedy, and Saiyid 1997, 112–13. 62 Comes 2007.

63 Saliba 1983; Mozaffari 2014. 64 King and Samsó, with Goldstein 2001, 44.

65 Van Dalen 2002, 334; Isahaya 2020; Rashīd al-Dīn 1971, 22; Haddad and Kennedy 1971, 100.

66 Allsen 2001, 166. 67 Jackson 2005, 169.

1255–1291) to work at the Institute of Muslim Astronomy in Beijing.⁶⁸ As mentioned above, Jamāl al-Dīn presented Qubilai with a number of astronomical instruments and important Arabic scientific works.⁶⁹ After Jamāl al-Dīn's death there was a 1383 Chinese translation of a Persian *zīj*, entitled *Huihuili* (Islamic Astronomical System).⁷⁰ The original does not survive.

Activity at the Marāgha Observatory tapered off after al-Maghribī's death in 1283, but the Ilkhanid enterprise in astronomy endured.⁷¹ The Ilkhan Ghazan (r. 1295–1304) studied science, and an anonymous Persian treatise *Risālat al-ghāzāniyya fī al-ālāt al-raṣādiyya* (The Ghazanid Treatise on Observational Instruments) credited him with the invention of twelve instruments that may have been used at the Marāgha Observatory.⁷² But Ghazan also ordered the construction of a new observatory in Tabriz, the Mongol capital since the reign of Abaqa (r. 1265–1282), and that observatory seems to have become the primary center of astronomical activity in the Mongol lands, if not the world. Moreover, there is a report in Rashīd al-Dīn's *History* that more Chinese astronomers, who also brought knowledge of medicine and astrology, came to the observatory at Tabriz during Ghazan's reign.⁷³

Working both at Marāgha and subsequently in Tabriz, al-Ṭūsī's student Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 1311) composed several works of astronomy of a complexity that has yet to be fully grasped. In two texts, *Nihāyat al-idrāk fī dirāyat al-aflāk* (The Highest Attainment in Comprehending the Orbs) and *al-Tuhfa al-shāhiyya* (The Imperial Gift), which he completed in Asia Minor after leaving Marāgha and before returning to Tabriz, al-Shīrāzī proposed the first known post-Ptolemaic model for the motions of Mercury, a project that had stumped al-Ṭūsī, in addition to a new lunar model. Al-Shīrāzī's models for the other planets turn out to be identical to those of al-'Urḍī, another of al-Shīrāzī's teachers. Al-Shīrāzī's final work on astronomy, *Fa'alta fa-lā talum* (You Did It So Don't Blame [Me]), completed in the first decade of the fourteenth century, was a polemic against a putative commentator on *al-Tadhkira* named al-Ḥimādhī who may, in fact, be al-Wābkanāwī. Al-Shīrāzī accused him of plagiarizing and misunderstanding the *Tuhfa*.⁷⁴ Al-Wābkanāwī, who worked both at Marāgha and at Tabriz, was the author of *al-Zīj al-Muḥaqqaq al-Sultānī* (The Correct *Zīj*

68 Yang 2017; Sivin 2009, 144, questioned whether Jamāl al-Dīn was actually the director of the bureau.

69 Van Dalen 2004, 24–25. 70 Van Dalen 2007. 71 Ragep 2014, 233–34.

72 Mozaffari and Zotti 2012. 73 Rashīd al-Dīn 1971, 23. 74 Ragep 2014, 244.

for the Sultan), the contents of which are still being studied.⁷⁵ *Fa'alta* named several other contemporary astronomers, about whom we otherwise know little, showing that the scientific ferment of Marāgha and Ilkhanid Tabriz extended beyond the luminaries whose texts have come down to us.

The same scholars who mastered astronomy were also scholars of note in other scientific fields. Al-Ṭūsī's best-known achievement in geometry was his attempt to prove Euclid's (fifth) parallel postulate, which held that if a line segment intersects two lines, the two lines will meet on the side where the two angles at the intersections sum to less than 180 degrees. Earlier scholars, among them 'Umar Khayyām, had also attempted to prove this postulate, for any successful proof would show that Euclid's presumption was correct, but also that the postulate was not a postulate.

On a practical level, al-Ṭūsī's recensions of the Arabic translations of Euclid's *Elements* and other mathematics textbooks, like his recension of the Arabic translations of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, made the original works much more accessible. Al-Shīrāzī's Persian translation of al-Ṭūsī's recension of the *Elements* introduced new material.⁷⁶ In the related field of music theory, Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Urmawī (d. 1294) was the first significant writer on music in Islamic societies since Ibn Sīnā. Urmawī dedicated his second treatise on music theory, *al-Risāla al-Sharafīyya* (The Sharafian Epistele), to Sharaf al-Dīn Juwaynī (d. 1286), who succeeded his uncle as the Ilkhanid governor of Baghdad.⁷⁷

Al-Shīrāzī suggested to his student Kamāl al-Dīn al-Fārisī (d. 1319) that he study Ibn al-Haytham's (d. c. 1040) *Optics* (*Kitāb al-Manāẓir*). Al-Fārisī showed through experiment that rainbows were produced by a double refraction of light, and not through reflection as Ibn al-Haytham had written.⁷⁸ Al-Fārisī's recension (*Tanqīḥ*) of the *Optics* marked the first sustained engagement with Ibn al-Haytham's magisterial work in Islamic societies and was the point of departure for subsequent work on Ibn al-Haytham's theories.⁷⁹ Al-Fārisī also wrote on number theory.⁸⁰ Another student of al-Shīrāzī, Jalāl al-Dīn al-'Ubaydī (d. 1350), wrote a commentary on al-Ṭūsī's *Tadhkira* and another on Jaghmnī's *al-Mulakhkhaṣ*. The breadth and chronological scope of the theoretical innovations of astronomers at Marāgha are notable because important scholars such as Ṣaḍr al-Sharī'a al-Thānī al-Bukhārī (d. 1347) and Ibn al-Shāṭir (d. 1375) built directly on their achievements, despite working elsewhere in

75 Mozaffari 2013. 76 Brentjes 1998; De Young 2001. 77 Neubauer 2012.

78 Rashed 2008. 79 Sabra 2007, 120. 80 Brentjes 1991.

the lands of the Ilkhanids' rivals, the Chaghadaids (for Bukhārī) and enemies the Mamluks (for Ibn al-Shāṭir). Al-Shīrāzī, like Al-Ṭūsī, exhibited prowess in fields that spanned the modern definitions of science and religion. He was a *qāḍī* in Sivas under the Anatolian Seljuqs, and composed a lengthy Qur'an commentary and a commentary on Suhrawardī's *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* (The Wisdom of Illumination). Al-Shīrāzī's breadth of achievement characterized also the career of another student of his, Niẓām al-Dīn al-Nīsābūrī (d. c. 1330), who had come to Tabriz in 1303 ostensibly to work with al-Shīrāzī.⁸¹

Polymaths flourished under the Chaghadaids, as the renowned cities of Bukhara and Samarqand had returned to being sites of intellectual life by the end of the thirteenth century. Moreover, scholars who flourished elsewhere came from these cities. For example, Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad al-Zaydī al-Bukhārī (fl. 1255–1291), who may have worked at the Islamic Astronomical Bureau in Beijing, hailed from Bukhara.⁸² Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Wābkanawī (twenty kilometers from Bukhara; d. 1316), an astronomer who worked at Marāgha, and Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. 1302) were born in the lands of the Chaghadaid Khanate. We know little about the life of al-Samarqandī. He was an early commentator on al-Ṭūsī's *Tadhkira*, and the author of an original work on astronomy that no longer survives.⁸³ Samarqandī's text on geometry entitled *Ashkāl al-ta'sīs* (Fundamental Theorems) comprised thirty-five propositions from the *Elements*.⁸⁴ On the matter of the (fifth) parallels postulate, the text provides a new proof. A slightly later scholar from Bukhara, Shams al-Dīn Mīrak al-Bukhārī (d. c. 740/1340), commented on *Ashkāl al-ta'sīs*. Mīrak's *sharḥ* (commentary) on *Ḥikmat al-'ayn* by Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī (d. 657/1276), himself a scholar of logic who helped establish the Marāgha Observatory, contained numerous complimentary references to Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī.⁸⁵ Once again, we see that the competition between khanates did not preclude these intellectual links.

Just as Marāgha attracted scholars from far afield, so did Tabriz. A report in Rashīd al-Dīn's *Compendium of Chronicles* (*Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*) read, "There were gathered under the eyes of the *pādishāh* of Islam [i.e. Öljaitü] philosophers, astronomers, scholars, historians, of all religions, of all sects, people of Cathay, of Machin [South China], of India, of Kashmir, of Tibet, of the Uighur, and other Turkish nations, Arabs and Franks."⁸⁶ There was

81 Morrison 2007.

82 Sivini 2009, 142, is cautious about identifying Jamāl al-Dīn al-Bukhārī with the Jamāl al-Dīn associated with Qubilai. See also Sayılı 1960, 191.

83 Fazlıoğlu 2007b. 84 De Young 2001. 85 Al-Bukhārī 1974.

86 Translated in Sayılı 1960, 230.

a context for such contacts as, in the generation before the Ilkhanids' invasion of Iran, there had been contact between scholars in Mosul and the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen (d. 1250).⁸⁷ The Ilkhanids and the Christians of the Latin west shared the common enemy of the Mamluks, a common cause that led to several decades of contacts between them. Tabriz, by the end of the thirteenth century, was the commercial hub and the focal point of the activities of Italian traders.⁸⁸ Gregory Chioniadēs, who was born in Constantinople and came to Tabriz in 1295 from Trebizond, was appointed bishop of Tabriz for the significant Christian communities in the Ilkhanate.⁸⁹ Chioniadēs was a physician and a scholar who took a deep interest in the activities of astronomers patronized by the Ilkhanids. What Chioniadēs gleaned from his time in Iran comes to us in the form of *azyāj* and, perhaps, a theoretical text, the *Schemata*. Even if Chioniadēs did not write the *Schemata*, it still reflects the transmission of Islamic material, probably from al-Ṭūsī's *Risālah-i mu'iniyya*, to a Byzantine scholar probably more comfortable with Persian than with Arabic.⁹⁰ Apart from the *Schemata*, Chioniadēs is known for transmitting *azyāj*, notably the *Zīj-i Ṭikhānī* but also the *Zīj al-'Alā'ī* and the *al-Zīj al-Sanjārī* into Greek. Chioniadēs's informant was Shams al-Dīn al-Bukhārī, who has been provisionally identified as al-Wābkanawī, the target of al-Shīrāzī's *Fa'alta* and a critic of al-Nīsābūrī's scientific competencies.⁹¹ Al-Wābkanawī's Persian treatise on the astrolabe may be the basis of a Greek text attributed to Shams al-Dīn.⁹²

In addition to these exchanges with China, the Mamluks, the Latin west and other Mongol lands, there is also evidence of contact between Hülegü's court and al-Andalus.⁹³ Jewish scholars came to know of al-Ṭūsī's work, though not necessarily via direct contact with the Mongols.⁹⁴ A theorem mathematically equivalent to the Ṭūsī couple appeared in a Judeo-Arabic text on theoretical astronomy produced in Iberia around 1400, and Gersonides (d. 1344), a Jewish scholar in Provence, was aware of the Pseudo-Ṭūsī commentary on Euclid's *Elements*, and possibly of the authentic one too.⁹⁵ These fourteenth-century intellectual connections between al-Andalus and the Ilkhanids help account for a later instance of the transmission of the Ṭūsī couple from the Ottoman Empire to the Veneto.⁹⁶

Evidence for the revival of intellectual life in Bukhara under the Chaghadaids, despite its alleged devastation at the time of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's visit in 1333,⁹⁷ is the work of Ṣadr al-Sharī'a al-Thānī al-Bukhārī (d. 1347).

87 Hasse 2000. 88 Jackson 2005, 297. 89 Tihon 2008. 90 Ragep 2014, 242–43.

91 Ragep 2014, 243–44. 92 Ragep 2014, 243–44. 93 Comes 2004.

94 Langermann 2011, 444. 95 Lévy 1992, 90–91. 96 Morrison 2014, 51–56.

97 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 550.

Şadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī is best known for producing innovative astronomical models that drew on the theories developed at the Marāgha Observatory. Scholarship on Şadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī has found that he was most likely educated at Bukhara as part of a long line of religious scholars, as well as at Herat, where he taught under the Kart dynasty, which itself was not under direct Ilkhanid control at the time.⁹⁸ By building on and combining components of the models of al-Ṭūsī, ʿUrḍī, and al-Shīrāzī, Şadr al-Sharīʿa al-Thānī proposed novel models for the motions of the Moon and Mercury, as well as for the planets' motions in latitude. His model for the upper planets was that of al-ʿUrḍī (and al-Shīrāzī). His major composition, titled *Taʿdīl al-ʿulūm* (The Adjustment of the Sciences), was divided into three sections: astronomy, logic, and *kalām* (philosophical theology). Thus the very form of *Taʿdīl al-ʿulūm* reflects the conversation between religion and science that had characterized the thought of many of the scholars at Marāgha.

An especially intriguing example of scientific exchange involving the Chaghadaids is *Al-Zīj al-Sanjufīnī*, composed in 1366 in Arabic in Tibet by Abū Muḥammad ʿAṭā ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Khwāja Ghāzī al-Samarqandī al-Sanjufīnī. His name indicates a connection to Samarqand. *Al-Zīj al-Sanjufīnī* shared a common source and twenty tables with the *Huihuili*.⁹⁹ The star table, in fact, is the only other fully fledged Islamic star table not derived from Ptolemy's.¹⁰⁰

Patronage was the force at Tabriz that it had been at Marāgha. Whether in medicine or in the exact sciences, Rashīd al-Dīn also contributed to scientific exchange as a patron and correspondent of scientists, among them Nisābūrī, Shīrāzī, and a European physician (*ḥakīm-i firangī*), perhaps Chionides, with all of whom he discussed philosophical and theological matters.¹⁰¹ Scholars adjusted to shifts in the hierarchy of patrons. For example, al-Shīrāzī's *al-Tuhfa al-Saʿdiyya* is a commentary on the first part of Ibn Sīnā's *Qānūn* and refers to the work of Ibn Rushd, a rare reference to Ibn Rushd in the Islamic east.¹⁰² But al-Shīrāzī dedicated this important text not to Rashīd al-Dīn but to Saʿd al-Dīn Sāvājī, Rashīd al-Dīn's co-minister, whom Rashīd al-Dīn ordered executed in 1312. Yet al-Shīrāzī later became a correspondent of Rashīd al-Dīn, so he was able to navigate the rivalry between ministers and engage Rashīd al-Dīn in his areas of interest.

The Yuan court, perhaps inspired by Marāgha, approved of the construction of observatories in Dadu and in Gaocheng in Henan province. The Dadu

98 Dallal 1995, 9–10. 99 Van Dalen 2000, 148; Van Dalen 2002, 336–39.

100 Van Dalen 2000, 150. 101 Van Ess 1981, 52. 102 Mimura 2013.

observatory followed Chinese architectural principles and had a library, offices for astronomers and astrologers, and space for education and research, as well as maps and astronomical instruments.¹⁰³ Its structure differed from that at Marāgha, but it appears to have received its inspiration from its West Asian counterpart. Most of the astronomical instruments were of Chinese origin, but a scaphe sundial derived from the Islamic world. To be sure, the Chinese built the instruments, most of which had earlier Chinese models, and the observatories, but Mongol sponsorship and the West Asian presence contributed to the interest in astronomy and astrology.

Guo Shoujing (1231–1316) was one of a cluster of Chinese luminaries who planned or participated in the construction and work of the Dadu observatory. Several, such as the notable Confucian scholar Xu Heng (1209–1281), were more renowned for other pursuits, but they nonetheless promoted or actually took an active part in this project.¹⁰⁴ Guo was responsible for the building of most of the observatory's instruments. The Chinese sources fail to cite an Islamic relationship to the observatory, but such traditional accounts often omit mention of foreign contributions. It strains credulity to assume that Jamāl al-Dīn and his Muslim associates, who clearly had Qubilai's confidence, would not have been involved in the planning of the observatory and the design of the astronomical instruments.

The most important product of Yuan astronomy was the season-granting system (*shoushi li*). In 1276, Qubilai had commissioned an analysis of astronomical data that would lead to a treatise, which reformed earlier computations and conceptions. This season-granting treatise was presented to him in 1280 but in an incomplete form. The composers of the treatise included discussion of earlier systems of computations and supplemented them with their own analysis. Nathan Sivin, the distinguished historian of Chinese science who translated the treatise and offered commentaries about it, confirmed that the calendar and the descriptions of and annotations on eclipses in the treatise were more accurate than in earlier Chinese writings. He then noted that observations on the winter solstice, the lunar and solar motions, and numerous other phenomena added to China's knowledge. Yet he showed that the astronomers scarcely contributed to the understanding of the planets because they apparently did not consider such observations a high priority. Thus they simply copied the sections on planets from the system used in the Song dynasty.¹⁰⁵ The season-granting system remained dominant until the arrival of the Jesuits in the seventeenth century.

103 Steinhardt 2013, 109. 104 Sivin 2009, 151–70. 105 Sivin 2009, 558.

Controversy over the Islamic influence on Yuan dynasty astronomy, including the calendar and other elements of the season-granting system, persists. One interpretation is that the lack of mention in the Chinese sources of Muslims collaborating with the Chinese attests to scant Islamic impact. Moreover, nearly all of the observatory instruments were Chinese and had no Muslim antecedent. On the other hand, the Yuan organized an Institute of Muslim Astronomy, which continued as a Bureau of Muslim Astronomy in the Ming dynasty.¹⁰⁶

Why would it preserve these agencies if they had no function and did not play a role in the diffusion of Muslim knowledge into Chinese astronomy? In addition, one of the principal Islamic works on astrology, the *Mujmal al-uṣul fī ahkām al-nujūm* or *Compendium of Principles in Astrology* by Kūshyār ibn Labbān (971–1029), was translated into Chinese in the early Ming (1383), another indication of the long-lasting influence of the Yuan collaboration between the Chinese and the Muslims in astrology and astronomy.¹⁰⁷ The Ming also translated the Muslim calendar (*Huihuili*), and the Chinese transcriptions of the Persian names for months yield fairly accurate representations of the Persian sounds.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps even greater evidence of the impact of Islamic astronomy in East Asia was the transmission of the *Huihui lifa*, which consisted of a translation of Chinese Islamic astronomical tables. The original 1348 text was lost in China but introduced in Korea during the reign of King Sejong (1418–1450). It continued to be a source in Korea longer than in China.¹⁰⁹

In West Asia, scientific exchange moved in a different direction. The scholars who worked under the Chaghadaids and the Golden Horde helped form an intellectual bridge between the Ilkhanids and the later scientific efflorescence at Samarqand under the Timurids. Intellectual life at the *madrasa* at Herat, where Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa studied, connected Samarqand's *madrasa* and observatory with the earlier institutions at Marāgha and Tabriz.¹¹⁰ Despite the changed contexts of politics and patronage, scholars in fifteenth-century Samarqand continued the earlier intellectual tradition. For example, one figure who worked at the Samarqand observatory and *madrasa*, Qāḍīzādah Rūmī (d. after 1440), wrote a commentary on Jaḡhmīnī's *al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-hay'a*, a text that had attracted the attention of al-Shīrāzī's student al-ʿUbaydī, as well as al-Turkmānī working in the Golden Horde. The

¹⁰⁶ Ho 1969, 137–57.

¹⁰⁷ Yano 1997 offers a generally accurate translation into English of the Chinese translation entitled the *Mingyi tianwen shu*.

¹⁰⁸ Ho 1969, 148–49. ¹⁰⁹ Shi 2003, 51. ¹¹⁰ Fazloloğlu 2003.

intellectual link is clearest in the career of ‘Alī Qushjī (d. 1474), a scholar at Samarqand who wrote important works on astronomy and a noted commentary on one of Al-Ṭūsī’s texts in *kalām* entitled *al-Tajrīd fī ‘ilm al-kalām*. In that work on *kalām*, Qushjī argued that astronomy could be based solely on mathematics and observation, with no need for recourse to peripatetic philosophy. Although Qushjī’s model for Mercury is technically impressive, his most enduring contribution in astronomy is a brief text about retrograde motion. An important proof from this text about the equivalence of two explanations for retrograde motion reappeared in the work of the European astronomer Regiomontanus (d. 1476).¹¹¹ Without that proof, which reappears in Copernicus’s work, Copernicus could not have demonstrated his heliocentric arrangement of the planets.

The conclusion of Qushjī’s career at the court of Mehmed the Conqueror (r. 1444–1446, 1451–1481) indicates the connection between science under the Mongols and science in the Ottoman Empire. It was the potential for such exchanges between khanates and, in retrospect, even with the rulers who succeeded the Mongols which accounted for the significance of the scientific culture of these khanates in the broader history of science in Islamic societies.

In sum, the Mongols facilitated Sino-Islamic scientific interchanges. Medicine, maps, and geographical knowledge, as well as astrology and astronomy, were all influenced. China benefited from Muslim innovations, but the basic principles underlying Chinese science, theories, and therapies were not overturned. China accepted specific techniques, treatments, and knowledge from the Islamic world and chose, rather than accepting *in toto*, practices, ideas, and beliefs that fit in with or promoted China’s economy or health. Moreover, Chinese officials might commission an Islamic product, such as the *Huihuili*, or Islamic calendar, but they designated the Chinese-developed calendar, the *shoushi li*, as official. Scholars in the Ilkhanate gained knowledge of Chinese calendars and Chinese medicine, particularly through the Chinese texts that informed Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Tanqīh-nāma*.

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¹¹¹ Ragep 2005.

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Artistic Exchange

ROXANN PRAZNIAK*

Introduction

The rise of the Mongol Empire was a dramatic event in cultural as well as political terms. Although Mongol authority built its empire through military and administrative conquest, the cultural construction of empire happened through artistic exchange. Visions of desire, beauty, and power, as well as the materials that made creativity possible, were essential to the ideological projects of Mongol imperial reach. That reach was considerable. The Great Empire of the Mongols (*Yeke Mongol Ulus*) under the Chinggisid lineage from 1206 to 1368, geographically constituted a cultural contact zone wherein artistic activity became an agent of cultural transformation for the conquerors, the conquered, and the accidental traveler.

As governors of a Eurasian-wide commercial empire, Mongol rulers required effective visual representations of their power that could easily be understood by diverse audiences. This could be achieved through widespread dissemination and integration of material culture. Reliance on already recognizable symbols of authority that could be adapted and repurposed for contemporary political goals was both expedient and effective. Highly crafted royal robes of honor that had long played a role in central Eurasian politics could be employed to carry the aura of Mongol authority to legions of potential and existing supporters already familiar with this material and visual mode of political discourse (see [Figure 12.1](#)). Similarly, imperial authority could quickly mobilize skilled artisans from Central and East Asia for textile production that blended weaving techniques and motifs into new statements of Mongol identity and prestige. These might then be adapted to local tastes and linked to trends and fashions across the empire and beyond, affecting an integrative field of images. Commercial empire and a political command system were equally essential to the Mongol impact on the arts. Merchants and their goods moved more freely under Mongol

* See also the “Visual Sources” chapter in Volume 11.



Figure 12.1 Maḥmūd of Ghazna in a robe given by the caliph al-Qādir. Miniature from Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*. Edinburgh University Library

maintenance of roads and postal stations; imperial orders that transported thousands of artisans to state-managed workshops produced a quantum leap in the volume and quality of goods. The scope of this production and distribution was unprecedented and generated unique historical consequences. After the Mongol capture of Samarqand in 1220, around 10,000 artisans and craftsmen were moved to a colony north of Beijing and later put under the authority of the Gold Brocade Office of the Yuan dynasty; textile workers from Herat in Afghanistan were moved by state order to Beshbaliq in 1221, and when the ilkhans captured Baghdad in 1258, they appropriated the city's workshops and asserted their control of the local weavers, glassmakers, and metalworkers.¹ In this way, an integrated but not standardized visual field emerged as one of the distinctive markers of the Mongol era. Motifs and themes circulated among various genres, including textiles, metalwork, and painting, creating images that spoke as much to each other as to regional ideological and aesthetic preferences. Increased access to paper made possible the widespread transfer of motifs from one artistic genre to another, as well as the transport of these designs across geographic spaces. Artisans often conveyed highly technical aspects of their work to apprentices through rhythmic oral instruction that measured complex patterns and dye formulas.

1 Allsen 2002, 4, 6.

The Mongol love of quality artistry was uncomplicated by previous religious or philosophical dispositions; consequently, Mongol rulers embraced the painted, woven, or engraved image with unqualified enthusiasm and used it as a means of cultural translation among diverse groups, stimulating an innovative, politically driven creativity with few internal limits and much financial support. Early Mongol and Turkic nomadic groups initially followed shamanistic beliefs and ancestor worship. Without a text-based religious tradition, there was little tension between word and image in choices about how to represent the divine or the divinely inspired. When it came to allocating state financial resources, both the Yuan and the Ilkhanate spent a considerable amount of their state revenues (up to half in certain years) on art and architecture, much of it Buddhism-related.² The sheer volume of luxury textiles and robes produced as gifts for distribution along designated ties of political patronage was extravagant, motivated by visions of global authority and responsibility.

Interplay between materials and ideas proved critical to innovation in artistic creativity. Coincidental with the heightened pace of commercialization during the Mongol era was an upsurge of paper production that affected every aspect of craftsmanship and the arts. Jonathan Bloom tells us that in the thirteenth century, “illustrated books begin to appear in greater numbers in larger formats, and artists begin to use paper not only as a medium for sophisticated painting and drawing but also as an intermediary medium for the creation of works of art in other media.”³ Intricate designs, including calligraphy, could now be worked out on paper and applied to architecture, painting, textiles, ceramics, or metalwork. In this commercial and political environment, patterns and designs moved easily from one art form to another and from one place to another. The same animal pair or star pattern, for example, might be found on textiles, pottery, and metalwork. Sheila Blair has detailed the Mongol-era “separation of designer from the artist or craftsman who actually made the object,” and the consequent increased importance of designated design studios.⁴ With these arrangements, artistry was less bound by strict categories according to craft or skill set. Inspired designs, both past and present, might easily migrate through many genres utilizing different materials. Many of the textile motifs that became the signature features of Mongol artistry were adapted from Central Asian metalwork designs, such as Seljuq patterns of interacting animals reproduced in Yuan-sponsored imperial workshops.⁵ Motifs including the phoenix, not

2 Boyle 1968, 380; Jing 2004, 216–17. 3 Bloom 2006, 289. 4 Blair 2014, 287.

5 Wardwell 1988–1989, 109.

unknown during pre-Yuan dynasties, through artistic adaptation appeared more energetic and engaging and became more popular through the Yuan rulers' system of workshop production and widespread dissemination through commercial and diplomatic channels. While much of this exchange of materials and images took place through official gift-giving practices among the courts and their elite social stratum, an equally significant development of the period was the growing mid-range market for luxury arts and crafts. Ceramics, for example, were produced for a "middle-class" consumer and were not considered a courtly art form.⁶ This middle layer of commercial activity functioned in relation to the royal workshops in a symbiotic mode since the products of the latter were considered markers of social status. Upwardly mobile aspirations and the new wealth they generated stimulated demand for everything from luxury pottery and decorated books for personal libraries to imitation versions of courtly textiles. In this process, for example, Central Asian motifs found their way into Italian silk designs destined for the new urban commercial elites.⁷ The circulation of materials and designs and their multiple local variations were heavily dependent on activity beyond courtly missions. As David Jacoby has noted, merchants working to expand their share of market profit promoted consumption of "oriental"-style designs and local imitations of the same.⁸

Metalwork

Metalwork recovered from the Golden Horde territories provides some of the most convincing evidence of the extent of artistic exchange during the Mongol era and the degree of cultural integration that characterized the visual arts. Archaeological finds at Simferopol demonstrate the extensive contact of Golden Horde communities with Iran, India, Yuan territories, the Red Sea, the Levant, Venice, and Genoa. In addition to prayer book cases, coins, and beads, the most commonly found items are belt buckles, drinking vessels worn on the belt, and silver gilt saddle arches with animal and floral designs. Such items were standard nomadic fare, and hence produced in abundance, but also served as indicators of status in a hierarchy of political relations.

A thirteenth-century engraved drinking cup held today by the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg displays motifs from Song imperial dragon symbols, Buddhist lotus and plant designs, and references to the Hijra

6 Watson 2006, 325. 7 Wardwell 1988–1989, 113. 8 Jacoby 2016, 109.

with Turco-Tartar script.⁹ This cup also demonstrates another common feature of artistic transfer during the Mongol period. With access to a wealth of new images and a vision of power that depended on the incorporation of multiple cultural references into one visual articulation, artisans often borrowed and blended with great aesthetic skill designs that caught their eye. Yet they had little knowledge of the designs' contextual meaning, beyond a general understanding that these images were symbols of status, associated with secular and divine authority. Decorating a cup with the lotus flower did not necessarily suggest an association with Buddhism or a favoritism in that direction. Script about the Hijra was not necessarily readable by either the maker or the owner of the cup. These were elite, designer emblems blended into aesthetically desirable items for everyday show of noble status. All bases were covered; some designs might be accented more than others in overall composition, expressing regional preferences that changed over time according to political vicissitudes and the flux of technical skills among local craftsmen.

Another elaborate drinking vessel from the late thirteenth to the early fourteenth century intended not to be worn on a belt but for a table setting at a festive occasion consists of eight lobes around the circumference of a silver cup that stands on a squat stem with the effect that the entire piece simulates the opening of a lotus flower. Around the lobes that define the drinking vessel, the artisan engraved a seated sphinx of Middle Eastern popularity, a deer with antlers in an East Asian style, a lotus flower and fallow deer of Buddhist association, and an eagle-headed griffin reminiscent of Iranian art of the previous century. Metalwork also flourished in the Iranian parts of the Mongol Empire. While Ilkhanid metalwork might illustrate scenes from Iranian literature such as the *Shahnama*, a work's compositions clearly integrated animal and floral designs from Iranian and Liao/Jin examples.¹⁰ Here, too, motifs included the general stock of images of cloud patterns, dragons, lotus flowers, and trees.

Eurasian-wide revival and development of filigree work offers exquisite evidence of artistic exchange percolating through the diplomatic and commercial centers of the Mongol Empire and neighboring territories. This art

9 [State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg 2001](#). Organized with the State History Museum, Moscow, and the Voronezh Region Inspectorate for Historical and Cultural Heritage, this was the first exhibit devoted to the artistic life of the Golden Horde, displaying over 1,000 items recovered from nineteenth- and twentieth-century archaeological sites.

10 [Kadoi 2009](#), 79–87.

form of fine silver decorative metalwork, often for jewelry or embellishment on other metal items, had a tradition in Byzantium before the Mongol era. A disruption in production due to the crusader occupation of Constantinople in 1204, followed by a subsequent resumption of the craft after crusader withdrawal in 1261, appears to have stimulated innovation through contact with Islamic and Western European examples of filigree work. Specific changes in composition that characterize Byzantine work from the early fourteenth century can also be found in the Golden Horde, Central Asia, and the Yuan territories. Most distinctive of the new composition was “the appearance of granulated rosettes in the eye of the spiral.”¹¹ Other motifs such as the lotus and interwoven patterns are associated with East Asian designs. Patterns found in filigree work of this period, such as the three-lobed petal flower, are also found in Islamic tile patterns, Armenian illustrated manuscripts, and Iranian ceramics particular to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.¹² The State Hermitage Museum collection of Golden Horde artifacts contains a pectoral, or chest piece, for women’s clothing, from the early fourteenth century, made of engraved gold with granulation, filigree, and rock crystal. In a display of elite class internationalism the “Cap of Monomakh,” a mid-fourteenth-century Russian crown stylized to suggest a bush blooming with pearls, bears striking similarities to Song imperial court female hair ornaments with lotus pattern motifs.¹³ Appealing imagery circulated by Mongol rulers and associated with their wealth and power carried automatic cultural cachet.

Ceramics

In ceramics, evidence of transcontinental cross-fertilization of motifs and materials in artistic production is equally abundant. Blue-and-white porcelain, a distinctive creation of the Mongol Empire, achieved the skill level of the highest-quality brushwork more typically associated with literati painting. Artisans selected from theatrical narratives and copybook motifs to create composite images that had popular appeal. We have examples of ceramic work in the blue-and-white style, as well as painted ceramic pillows from Cizhou and built-pottery pillows found in Anhui province that depict theatrical scenes in remarkable detail.¹⁴ The pieces from Anhui echo architectural designs in their three-dimensional construction of stage sets. The vivid blue

¹¹ Marshak 1992, 184, 188.

¹² Marshak 1992, 188–89.

¹³ Kramarovsky 1992, 195–96.

¹⁴ Sun 2010, 62, Figure 87; Watt 2010, 272, Figure 294.

in these designs derived from cobalt ore imported by Iranian merchants from Kashan in the 1330s. The Yuan-sponsored workshops at Jingdezhen became centers of production for large quantities of blue-and-white porcelain bound for domestic markets as well as overseas to Southeast Asia and the Persian Gulf.

Ceramic art among the Islamic communities of the Ilkhanate and the Chaghadaid Khanate appeared in vessels and plates of the period, but was most prominent in tilework for public and private buildings, including mosques and residences. In widespread use before the Mongol Empire, ceramic tile production flourished during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A 1301 manuscript from Kashan in Iran, an established tile production center, detailed the process for producing a high-quality mixture of quartz, clay, and glaze known as *faience*.¹⁵ The greater plasticity of this material allowed artisans to produce wares with more complex shapes and more refined surface decoration. Elegant spouts and handles, candlesticks, and small add-on figures became possible. Motifs and styles from the Yuan found their way into local production in the Ilkhanate pottery centers and were then carried westward via Tabriz into Byzantium and the Iberian peninsula, from where they entered Western European regions as rare items that were coveted by the elites. Patterns from Mamluk brass designs migrated into Yuan blue-and-white porcelain products as well.¹⁶

Architecture

Mongol destruction of cities was widespread during the early years of imperial expansion and conquest. Failure to submit to the orders of advancing Mongol military units was generally devastating for populations and urban centers. Samarqand lost much of its architectural magnificence, and Kaifeng and Baghdad suffered losses in the aftermath of siege and surrender. While most cities revived under active reconstruction programs, some, like Nishapur, did not. Others, like Kashghar, which the Mongol forces occupied but did not destroy, and Beshbaliq, which submitted early, remained largely intact. Although the Mongol rulers in every part of the empire built city palaces and structures, they remained to one extent or another nomadic, following seasonal pastureland for their herds and dwelling in palatial yurts often in the suburbs of their urban centers.

¹⁵ Watson 1985, 32.

¹⁶ Notice of the British Museum, Islamic Art Room permanent exhibit; also [Vainker 1991](#), 137–40.

After the period of conquest, governance began and the rulers of the Mongol Empire undertook massive construction projects to create splendid cities with architecture fit for a world empire. They began with their first capital at Qaraqorum, located in the Orkhon river valley, sacred spiritual homeland of the steppe peoples for generations. Although some travelers, such as William of Rubruck, were not favorably impressed, many found the city remarkable even from afar as it rose out of the steppe lands surrounded by numerous prosperous agricultural villages and commercial towns. In 1236, a year after defeating the Jin, Ögödei Qa'an decreed the building of the Palace of Myriad Peace (Chinese: Wan'angong) at Qaraqorum, a majestic structure that moved some to poetic expression.¹⁷ Local ceramic kilns produced items for "Chinese-style" Jin and Liao architectural designs that seem to have dominated the city. Archaeological finds show evidence of blue-and-white pottery from the Yuan territories in Qaraqorum dating from the early fourteenth century. There was also a memorable drinking fountain designed by Paris silversmith Guillaume Boucher, captured in Hungary, that decorated a central courtyard at Qaraqorum and served drinks through four spouts under a winged and trumpeted angel – wine, a fermented rice drink, distilled fermented mare's milk, and a drink like mead made with honey.¹⁸ Qaraqorum rose to splendor as the Mongol fortunes multiplied.

In 1260 Qubilai began the process of moving the capital from Qaraqorum to Shangdu (Xanadu, "upper capital") and in 1272 inaugurated the city of Dadu ("great capital," modern Beijing) as the imperial capital, leaving Shangdu as a summer capital. Dadu and Shangdu were both inspired by Song, Liao, and Jin architecture as the imperial standard of the day. Surrounded by a wall with inner and outer sections, Shangdu had many parks and wildlife areas for imperial recreation and hunting. The qa'an had two dwellings, one made of wood and the other of gold cane that could be dismantled and moved around at his order. In 1267, as qa'an, Qubilai ordered that the palace complex at Dadu be surrounded by a wall with gates to define a new imperial city.¹⁹ He employed Liu Bingzhong and Yeheidie'er (Ikhtiyār), a Muslim at court, to create the new imperial center. The architecture itself modeled features from the Jin and Liao palace structures, including elevated terraces, bracketing systems, and roof ornamentation. In 1279 a Buddhist temple, the Miaoying Baita, constructed at Dadu by Nepalese craftsmen, followed Tibetan Buddhist architectural designs. All of these buildings accommodated Mongol nomadic life but also competed with existing

17 YS, 2.34. 18 William of Rubruck 1990, 209–10. 19 Masuya 2013, 236, 239.

imperial standards which drew on multiple religious and philosophical traditions as well as architectural styles.

In the Ilkhanate, the Dome of Sulṭāniyya stands as one of the remarkable architectural achievements of the Mongol era. Built between 1302 and 1312 as a mausoleum for the Ilkhan Öljeitü, the structure is noted for its remarkably large 200-ton dome that stands forty-nine meters above its base and is the third-largest brick dome in the world. The interior and exterior design of the building featured Islamic architectural elements, including mosaics, faience, and murals. Intricate geometric patterns, calligraphy, and forms based on the study of light were the mainstay of decorative motifs for Islamic architecture. God was light, and God was beauty. From this practice emerged a wealth of scholarship that simultaneously developed sophisticated mathematical and optical formulas for expressing the divine in complex architectural features such as the *muqarnas* and the arabesque.²⁰ Hans Belting suggests that because Islam conceived of God as light that suffused physical reality, his presence could not be captured except as reflected patterns, and this was highly evolved in Islamic architecture.²¹ Prior to their Islamization, the ilkhans also undertook extensive Buddhist temple construction that incorporated architectural elements from western Tibetan and Uighur styles.²²

Architectural projects undertaken by the Mongol rulers of the Golden Horde and Chaghadaid territories created seasonal camps, elaborate tent compounds, and walled cities. Tombs and shrines honored legendary rulers and poets. Urban construction at Sarai demonstrated nomadic court culture through palatial tent structures based on Mongol designs alongside more permanent structures with Islamic architectural features. Together these sustained an urban core of diverse ethnic groups that produced considerable prosperity attested to by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa and other travelers. The great city of Samarqand was a major center of Islamic building styles with ornate tilework and extensive gardens prior to Mongol destruction of the city in 1220. After the establishment of the Chaghadaid Khanate and some restoration projects, the city, although a shadow of its former self, still retained its ability to impress. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa reported that he

journeyed to Samarqand, which is one of the largest and most perfectly beautiful cities in the world. It is built on the bank of a river where the inhabitants promenade after the afternoon prayer. There were formerly great palaces along the bank, but most of them are in ruins, as also is much of the city itself, and it had no walls or gates.²³

20 Vesely 2008, 225 n. 3, 228.

21 Belting 2011, 4, 244, 260.

22 Prazniak 2014, 661–66.

23 Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1957, 174.

The great architectural reconstruction of palaces and mausoleums took place under the rule of Temür (1336–1405) when he set out to make Samarqand the splendid capital of his own empire.

Textiles

Textiles were perhaps the most widely circulating artisan products. This was true in terms of both their geographic distribution and the volume and varied qualities of textiles reaching diverse socioeconomic groups. Embroidered luxury fabrics, tapestries, and silk cloth first created for tents and palaces became abundant fixtures in churches and temples patronized by fashion-conscious elites and upwardly aspirant groups. Textiles served in addition as valued items in diplomatic exchange and were bestowed in recognition of patronage relations and status. In order to enforce rank-specific uses of luxury textiles, ordinances issued and recorded in the *Yuandianzhang*, a Yuan imperial book of regulations, carefully defined the fabric designs, patterns, and colors for households of different ranks and specific occasions. Women who appeared at official functions in clothes that did not conform to regulations could be compelled to ride on an “unsaddled cow” in public and forfeit their marriage.²⁴ Qubilai Qa’an himself restricted the use of sun, moon, tiger, and dragon motifs to silks produced for the imperial household.²⁵

Similarly, while sumptuary laws in some Tuscan towns attempted to limit to certain social classes the consumption of fine silk clothing and household furnishings, this was a losing battle during times of rapid commercial and political change.²⁶ As was the case with other artisan products of the period, techniques, designs, and motifs circulated among workshops without restraint. Evidence of this transcontinental range can be found in the 1295 papal inventory that included silks manufactured in Tabriz, and the wardrobe of Emperor Rudolf IV of Habsburg (d. 1365), who was buried in silk fabric woven in Tabriz between 1319 and 1335.²⁷ The nobleman of Verona known as the Cangrande della Scala was buried in 1329 in fabrics of silk and gold produced in Central Asia’s workshops.²⁸ Carpets and cushions, long a mainstay of nomadic tent life, became increasingly popular as features of sedentary palatial décor and mosque furnishings. These too often combined Iranian and Liao/Jin styles.

24 Allsen 1997, 21. 25 Allsen 1997, 108. 26 Prazniak 2010, 197.

27 Jacoby 2010, 72–73. 28 Watt and Wardwell 1997, 129, 132.

Transmission and innovation of weaving techniques tell much of the story of textile exchange during the Mongol era. With the already mentioned movement of weavers to state-sponsored workshops came a mixing of skills and methods. Silk tapestry weaving known as *kesi* (“cut silk”) appears to have been an expertise of the Uighur people of eastern Central Asia that the Yuan rulers promoted to produce Buddhist art. With this technique patterns could be created that did not require even rows. Details could be placed at will for compositions as complex as individual portraits. *Kesi* woven with repeating decorative patterns could be used for special garment pieces, including the sleeves and skirts of robes. Many of these tapestries used motifs of western Central Asian inspiration, such as lions and palmette designs. Patterns woven with gold thread introduced a host of technical choices. To make gold thread, metallic gold could be wrapped around either silk, as tended to be the practice in western Iran, or paper, as was more typical of methods in eastern Central Asia and Liao/Jin territories. Under the Ilkhanate, demand for gold thread in weaving and embroidery establishments exceeded supply and it had to be imported from centers in Genoa, Lucca, and Montpellier.²⁹ Yuan workshops eventually produced a gold brocade of the highest quality known as *nasij* that combined both Jin and eastern Central Asian techniques, producing a fusion of artisanal skills and innovative textiles of stunning quality. An extant fabric from the mid-thirteenth century with rondels, winged lions, dragons, cloud scrolls, vines, and palmette designs exemplifies the fusion of an overall Persian design with Liao and Jin elements (see [Figure 12.2](#)). While some brocading techniques used gold weft thread for contained design elements set in a solid color background, *nasij* employed a lampas weave technique of eastern Iranian origin. Lampas was a compound weave with extra warp and weft. With this method gold thread ran continuously as weft and floated along the back of the fabric when it was not worked into the motif on the right side of the material. The gold thread had to be worked into the warp and weft of a silk foundation. Motifs could be evenly distributed on a solid colored silk background or they could be asymmetrically arranged, affording flexibility in compositional choices.

These fabrics became the standard of excellence across Eurasia. By the late thirteenth century, weavers in Lucca, Italy had reverse-engineered the construction process of luxury textiles and produced lampas fabrics in the Mongol style for local markets in Tuscany and the Mediterranean.³⁰

29 Jacoby 2014, 104–5. 30 Cantelli 1996, 64, 68.



Figure 12.2 A fabric of gold with winged lions and griffins, thirteenth century. Cleveland Museum of Art (purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund, 1989)

With relatively fewer resources to commit to acquiring large treasure troves of luxury textiles, European centers at this time highlighted panel and fresco painting as a less expensive way to possess and display the material wealth of the Eurasian emporium. Franciscan orders, with their commitment to poverty, found in painted textiles a way to both invoke elite fabrics to honor their spiritual figures and limit the actual acquisition of such items. These fabrics were often painted in enough detail that the viewer could identify specific weaves and techniques. Siennese artist Simone Martini, for example, in his depiction of the *Annunciation* (1333), chose to give the Archangel Gabriel a cloak of brilliant *nasij* fabric, the highest-quality gold silk brocade produced in the Mongol imperial workshops, known in the land of the Franks as Tatar cloth (see [Figure 12.3](#)). Initially, he had a problem: how to translate the brilliance of this fabric into his own artistic medium. Through experimentation, Martini developed innovative painting techniques that



Figure 12.3 The *Annunciation* (1333) of Simone of Martini. The Uffizi Gallery, Inv. 1890 nos. 451, 452, 453

allowed him specifically to mimic the construction and visual effects of *nasij*, including its ability to reflect light in different directions.³¹ This desire to mimic complex textiles in painting was particularly strong during the Mongol period.

Painting

Portraiture

Under Mongol governance, there emerged a new emphasis on human agency in history and the human relationship to nature. While each region of the empire entered this transformative era with its own cultural idioms, there was also a shared sense of a contemporary “modern” idiom to which culture makers and trendsetters aspired. In thirteenth-century Islamic literature, author portraits that had previously been scarce suddenly enjoyed widespread new popularity and innovative development. Under the Yuan dynasty, artistic creativity took a turn in portraiture that marked a clear demarcation from the artistry of the previous Song dynasty (960–1279). In Western Europe during this period, individualized portraiture and naturalistic styles suddenly became popular among the nobility.

Much of the appeal of portraiture derived from the potential for verisimilitude that East Asian artistic traditions brought to the practice. A belief in physiognomy (*xiangshu* or *xiangkan*) motivated early East Asian artists to compose facial features that demonstrated a cosmic destination for greatness through signs in bone structure and skin markings.³² According to literary sources, the founder of portrait painting in the “Chinese” art tradition was Gu Kaizhi (344–406), who sought to reveal personality and not just likeness in commemorative portraiture. Gu Kaizhi became a reference point for Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322), who received special patronage from Qubilai Qa’an. Zhao himself produced unique work based on his understanding of Gu’s art. As a member of the literati who chose to join the Mongol court when Sino-Tibetan art was gaining influence, Zhao clung to classical portraiture in the tradition of Gu but also reinterpreted that tradition to express a contemporary sense of self as a scholar of Han ethnicity and artist in service to a nomadic, Mongol conqueror.³³ For his part, Qubilai Qa’an highly prized the aesthetics of painting and the realistic invocation of ancestors as he sought to win Chinese literati support for his rule. The *Xiexiang mijie* (The Secrets of

31 Hoeniger 1991, 154. 32 Seckel 1993, 16. 33 McCausland 2014, 114–15.

Portrait Painting), a fourteenth-century treatise by Yuan dynasty art critic Wang Yi (b. 1333), offered this advice:

their [the subject's] expression and colour will be different according to the Four Seasons. Only during a lively conversation will they show their original and genuine character . . . The uncultured painters of modern times . . . ignore the laws of change and movement. They ask [the living model] to sit stiffly erected with his garments orderly arranged like a statue of clay and then start painting.³⁴

Wang placed a new emphasis on subjectivity achieved through animated strokes rather than stationary outlines.

At the Yuan court the Supervisorate-in-Chief of All Classes of Artisans (*Dadu renjiang zongguan fu*) oversaw workshops that produced religious images and imperial portraits for the imperial Portrait Hall. Artisans of the highest skill captured in portrait format each of the Yuan rulers and their primary wives. The premier artist of the Yuan court at Dadu was Anige (1245–1306), a Nepalese painter, architect, and sculptor of the highest order. He worked in a style that integrated Nepalese, Chinese, and Indian Pala elements.³⁵ With imperial encouragement, Anige sponsored large communities of highly regarded Nepalese and Tibetan artists at Dadu. The Nepalese artists belonged to the hereditary caste of distinguished craftsmen concentrated in the Kathmandu valley. When Qubilai Qa'an died in 1294, Anige painted posthumous portraits of Qubilai and his wife Chabi that were later transferred at great cost and time (three years) to the more highly prized silk textile *kesi* medium that required greater skill and was associated with Buddhist portraiture. Anige's innovation integrated Buddhist art and imperial portraiture. His imperial portraits "represent the watershed between pre-Yuan and later imperial portraits."³⁶ The Vajrabhairava Mandala (1330–1332) with imperial portraits from the Yuan royal family is another example of Tibetan Buddhist-inspired portraiture on silk tapestry (see [Figure 12.4](#)). Yuan portraits achieved direct eye contact with the viewer and were full-frontal poses rather than the traditional three-quarters pose, creating a new sense of shared psychological space and enhanced subjectivity. Post-Yuan portraiture would retreat to more formal and less subjective styles of representation.

Preference for three-dimensional portraiture sculpted in statue format was strong among the Mongol elite. A few hundred life-size stone statues from this period representing dead nobles have been found in eastern Mongolia.

34 Franke 1950, 29–30. 35 Jing 1994, 49, 53. 36 Jing 1994, 77.



Figure 12.4 The Vajrabhairava Mandala of the Yuan, 1330–1332. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace gift, 1992)

Their robes, boots, caps, and postures are very similar to those in mural or manuscript paintings that represent members of the Mongol elite.³⁷ Aside from some literary references to statues, we have no surviving examples that depict the Mongol rulers. Benedict the Pole visiting the camp of Batu in the

³⁷ Charleux 2010, 2–3.

Golden Horde reported in 1246 seeing a golden statue of Chinggis Khan that stood on a chariot and was moved around for worship.³⁸ The next year Carpini described a similar scene in central Mongolia where a statue of the Khan resided outside the imperial tent and was ceremoniously offered food every day.³⁹

In the Golden Horde and the Chaghadaid Khanate portrait art and illustrated manuscripts have not survived. Possibly there was not as much of it to begin with; at this point no conclusions can be drawn. From the Ilkhanate, extant examples of portraiture have come to us primarily through narrative manuscript illustrations.

Illustrated Manuscripts

Between 1200 and 1350, the number and quality of illustrated manuscripts increased dramatically in regions as diverse as the Persian-, Arabic-, Chinese-, and French-speaking areas of Eurasia. New opportunities for bookmakers and buyers created by expansive Mongol commercial policies contributed to a proliferation of illustrated popular texts and a growing book-owning population. Artistic exchange crossed ethnic and religious boundaries with ease, as we see in the thirteenth-century illustrated version of *Bilawhar wa Budhasaf*, originally translated from Arabic literature on Buddhism in the eighth century. Inspired by contemporary Ilkhanid Tabriz manuscript workshop styles, Christian Arabs in northern Syria produced illustrations for this text and consequently contributed to the renewed popularity of these Christianized stories of the Buddha's life.⁴⁰

In narrative art, Tabriz workshops devoted to illustrated manuscript culture became a powerhouse of multiethnic and multireligious intellectual activity. An illustrated world history, the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* (Compendium of Chronicles), produced in the workshops of Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 1318), the Ilkhanid vizier, and the Great Mongol *Shāhnāma* (The Book of Kings) (1330) were among the finest artistic creations of the era. Intended as a guide to princely behavior, the *Shāhnāma* was a Persian classic that recounted stories of model rulers for the education of young princes. The Great Mongol *Shāhnāma* pushed the boundaries of conventional visuality, not only by creating new images for previously only lightly illustrated texts, but also by creating visual dialogues between historical accounts and contemporary Ilkhanid politics. Abolala Soudavar argues that scenes from the Great Mongol *Shāhnāma* were selected for illustration based on parallels with

38 Benedict 2008, 80. 39 John of Plano Carpini 1996, 9. 40 Smine 1993, 205, 207.

events in more recent Mongol history.⁴¹ The *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, on the other hand, was a newly compiled work that attempted to include the histories of all known peoples into a story culminating in Mongol rule. The artistic challenge was to create visually a sense of cohesion and historical continuity. This was crucial in the diverse and potentially divisive social environment, where the ilkhans had recently ruled as Buddhists or Nestorians or Muslims over a Muslim majority. Illustrations for the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, it can be argued, visually underscored the ideological message that Christianity, Buddhism, and other beliefs were all valuable traditions that had been superseded in recent history by the ilkhans' eclectic approach to diverse perspectives. The historical Buddha appears in Arabic attire, Muḥammad's birth resonates with images of the birth of Christ, and Alexander the Great and the Roman popes all share Mongol facial features and dress. Blurred ethnic identities attempt visual and hence ideological integration. Large numbers of Arabic and Persian texts were also widely illustrated for the first time and were especially popular at court. Prior to the Mongol period, illustrations were generally limited to scientific manuscripts. We have literary references to illustrations of the *Kalila and Dimna* animal stories, but the earliest extant copies are from the thirteenth century, suggesting that more were produced under Ilkhanid rule, ensuring a better survival rate.⁴²

Portraiture also gained new acceptance in association with Islamic literature. In the Islamic manuscript tradition of historical biographies, subject portraits were not typically included. Audiences were expected to visualize the person by transforming the narrative text into an object of contemplation.⁴³ Although Muḥammad was not to be represented, stories that describe people identifying him through prophetic pictures, created by the hand of God, not man, were part of Islamic narrative literature.⁴⁴ The earliest extant image of Muḥammad appears in a Persian manuscript (c. 1250) of Ayyuqi's eleventh-century romantic work "The Poem of Warqa and Gulsha." Illustrated by 'Abd al-Mu'min al-Khuwayyi (of Khuy, Iran) in Seljuq Anatolia, Folio 70/69b of the manuscript held in the Topkapi Sarayi Library shows Muḥammad appearing at the tomb of Warqa and Gulsha, two ill-fated lovers; in a second folio, 71/70a, Muḥammad offers a prayer at their tomb, prompting their immediate resurrection and joyful reunion into a lifetime of happiness.⁴⁵ The scenario and the depiction are both unique. Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* was the first work to contain numerous

41 Soudavar 1996, 97. 42 Rice 1959, 207–9. 43 Cooperson 2001, 17. 44 Soucek 1972, 9.

45 Romance of Warqa and Gulshah, by 'Urwa b. Huzām al-'Udhri, with paintings by 'Abd al-Mu'min al-Khuwayyi, Topkapi Palace Library, Haz. 841.

illustrations of Muḥammad's life, including one in which he rededicates the black stone at the Ka'aba in Mecca. In the genre of author portraits, images of Socrates or Sophocles had previously accompanied translations of classical Greek texts into Arabic, but during the Ilkhanate this practice was for the first time extended to include portraits in texts by Muslim authors. The double frontispiece of Ikhwān al-Safā's *Rasā'il* manuscript (1287) produced in Baghdad under Ilkhanid rule is a well-known example of thirteenth-century artistic innovation in Islamic author portraiture. Commenting on the striking humanism of this work, Robert Hillenbrand has written, "And all this is achieved within a credible built and human environment, rather than in an abstract vacuum. The effect is to humanize learning while maintaining intact its prestige, indeed its charisma."⁴⁶ Contemporary society provided many incentives for moving toward a broader application of the previously limited practice of author portraits. Extensive market-based networks resulting from the Mongols' commercial empire made possible the widespread production and circulation of illustrated Arabic and Persian manuscripts and stimulated increased demand.⁴⁷ In the two centuries after the decline of the Mongol Empire, interest in portraiture within Islamic societies did not continue to find favor; the faces of Muḥammad and others who inhabited Mongol-era manuscripts were erased. However, illustration of Persian court literature, such as Nizami's *Haft Paykar*, continued apace into the next centuries and extended into South Asia as well.

French-speaking regions of Europe with diplomatic and commercial connections to Mongol centers contemporaneously experienced an upsurge of interest in portraiture and illustrated books. Often traced to the monastic movement of the ninth century, when they were chanted, French Books of Hours prior to 1200 were typically not illustrated or were minimally decorated and used mostly by the clergy. Beginning in the thirteenth century, however, *Hours* were produced for laypersons among the elite. These prayer books functioned as meditation aids to remind the owner of his or her relationship to Christ. Blanche of Burgundy (1296–1348), Countess of Savoy and granddaughter of King Louis IX, in 1330 commissioned an illustrated Book of Hours that Roger Wieck has called "a stupendous creation, and in its encyclopedic, almost epic nature, unlike any Book of Hours previously produced." This manuscript, with its 187 miniatures (fourteen to twenty were the norm) became a trendsetter with its extensive and innovative use of portraiture that included eighty portraits of Blanche. Wieck states that

46 Hillenbrand 2006, 211; Hoffman 1993, 8, 15. 47 Robinson 2001, 87.

“Blanche did more than break with precedent by filling a book with portraits of herself: with equal audacity she invaded divine space . . . [Her book] represents a dramatic change and a new vision of the manuscript’s function.”⁴⁸ The chronological placement and the family connections surrounding Blanche’s sudden commission of such an innovative work, with its emphasis on portraiture, raise viable questions regarding connections to artistic and intellectual contact zones that included the workshops in Tabriz. Highly decorated, illuminated, and expensive, these books satisfied a popular desire among the elite for personal, high-fashion self-representation for which entire folios were devoted to finely crafted images.⁴⁹

Pictorial devices such as the “window view” created a new sense of space and physicality, introducing the subjective, autonomous human “gaze” that might integrate multiple perspectives or alternatively suggest a single viewpoint. A scene from the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh* of the siege of Baghdad represented a multiplicity of gazes without a commanding single viewpoint, rendering problematic a viewer–subject dichotomy. French Books of Hours frequently employed the “window view” and single-vanishing-point perspective to achieve a sense of intimacy with biblical narratives. Interest in pictorial construction of historical and natural spaces intrigued a broad spectrum of artists during the Mongol period. Oleg Grabar has noted that because of the conventional Islamic preference for stories that describe pictures *without* showing actual pictures, there existed “a significant contrast between two layers in the reality of images, a layer of physical, tangible presence and that of cerebral knowledge.”⁵⁰ Seyyed Hossein Nasr differentiates between perspective *artificialis* and perspective *naturalis* in his description the “imaginal world” (*ālam al-khayāl*) of Persian miniatures that continued after the Mongol era.⁵¹ *Artificial perspective* attempts to create the illusion of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface; *natural perspective* attempts to transform that same two-dimensional space using geometric relationships to guide the viewer not to a view organized around a single point of reference but to a plane that mediates between the sacred and the profane, a higher reality that resembles but transcends physical reality, integrating at least two perspectives simultaneously and invoking a heterogeneous experience of space. By contrast, the illusionistic aspect of single-point perspective suggested a more literal rendering of spiritual narratives.

48 Wieck 1991, 159, 166. 49 Perkinson 2008, 142. 50 Grabar and Natif 2003, 36.

51 Nasr 1969, 133.

Portraits in Nature

Animal representations and landscape elements offer further evidence of widespread artistic exchange through the Mongol Empire. The Ilkhanid *Kalila and Dimna*, produced in Tabriz between 1317 and 1335, highlights some of the particular shifts that took place in illustration arts during the Mongol era. Jill Sanchia Cowen has called the *Kalila and Dimna* images “dynamic Ilkhanid portraits of nature,” and notes further, “Even taking into consideration the Islamic and Eastern propensity for rendering animals with more sympathy than humans, the animals of the *Kalila wa Dimna* are exceptional for their lifelike force and strength of expression.”⁵² “Portraits of nature” had a long history in Central and East Asian artistic practice. Beginning with the work of Mani (216–276 CE), who himself produced beautifully illustrated texts, the association of superior art with religious practice was front and center. A tendency to invest nature and its creatures with a spiritual essence and individual characteristics existed among nomadic communities, while Buddhist thought, with its continuum of creation, similarly sought to capture visually the cosmic vitality of natural phenomena. Under the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE), with its Turkic nomadic origins, artist Han Gan produced “portraits” of horses that conveyed individual temperament and physical features. Cultural exchange during the Mongol Empire opened artistic experience to the sensibilities and styles of animated natural elements.

In this context, landscape and portraiture shared an intellectual space where contemporary political and social issues might find artistic expression. In 1287, Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322) drew on textual sources to interpret Gu Kaizhi’s lost painting the *Mind Landscape of Xie Youyu*, with its political themes and naturalist style, to offer his own statement on morality and good government in the context of Yuan court politics. Zhao depicted a scholar surrounded by a grove of trees to define the “wilderness mentality” that characterized the upright scholar’s position at the Yuan court. There the scholar was essentially *in* the government without being entirely *of* it, holding a position of critical observer from a measured distance.⁵³ The imagery spoke as well to an aesthetic appreciated by the Mongols, for whom trees carried positive energetic value. The *lianlimu* or “trees of conjoined cosmic pattern” highlighted the intertwined forces of harmonious governance and good rule from the top. Another work, *Mirror of Painting, Ancient and Modern* (1280s) by Tang Hou (1250s–1310s) spoke to the contemporary perspective that informed Zhao’s work. If art had

52 Cowen 1989, 27, 29. 53 McCausland 2003, 174.

a political and ethical responsibility to reflect reality, then the new circumstances of Mongol dominance required a new relationship to past artistic forms. Zhao could simultaneously connect with a pre-Mongol past and create a platform from which to express a critical perspective on the present.

The expressive quality of human emotional display observed in body language and facial features was especially pronounced in Persian, Italian, and French illustrations during this period. Innovative ways of creating psychological contact between individuals through gaze and gesture can be found in the Great Mongol *Shāhnāma* (1335), in which figures in “Mourning over the Coffin of Alexander the Great” and “Isfandiyar’s Funeral” display powerful emotional release. In the latter illustration, three finely detailed geese suggesting Buddhist iconography carry the soul to heaven. The emotionally neutral images of pre-1200 European art suddenly in the early fourteenth century inclined toward similar use of gesture and gaze to signal strong emotional connections. Simone Martini’s *Crucifixion* for the Orsini Polyptych (1335) includes an array of emotional tones, from the swooning Mary and the small child pointing to the looks of disbelief and confusion on the faces of soldiers nearby. Similarly, Mary Magdalene’s upheld arms in *Carrying the Cross*, also by Martini, convey extreme grief rather than the conventional use of this pose in medieval European art to indicate a quiet moment of prayer.

Conventions for representing water, mist, clouds, trees, and mountains had long been parts of the Buddhist landscape art repertoire.⁵⁴ Their presence in Iranian and European art gained popularity during the Mongol era. Working as court-sponsored artisans and increasingly as independent craftsmen, illustrators and painters experimented with natural effects such as fire, smoke, water transparency, cloud formations, water flows, mist, and even snow. Experimentation with ways of representing rocks and water was especially widespread. Scenes of Jonah being cast into the sea attempted to show his body through the water, unlike previous renderings that were clearly symbolic with no expectations of lifelike representation. In the History of India section of the *Jāmi’ al-Tawārīkh*, fish swimming in a confluence of Indus river waters clearly resemble those in the marketplace. New attention to atmospheric effects also appeared in mural art. Ambrogio Lorenzetti depicted both snowfall and snowball in the *Allegory of Winter* (1338) at the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena.⁵⁵ Even grasses and flowers appeared across

54 Jungeon Oh 2005, 107. 55 Meoni, Luzi, and Muzzi 2005, 28.

Eurasian artistic venues during these centuries with innovative uses as philosophical reflection and the invocation of natural surroundings.

Calligraphy

A review of artistic exchange during the Mongol era would not be complete without mention of calligraphy. In all of the above art forms from ceramics and metalwork to textiles and architecture, calligraphy enhanced the beauty and meaning of objects. We have seen this already in some of the specific items discussed above. With long-standing literary traditions by the thirteenth century, Arabic/Persian, Sanskrit, Tibetan, and classical Chinese scripts held a high cultural value. The written word possessed an aura of its own that mediated between the seen and unseen worlds. Once committed to written form by scholars, texts were rarely disposed of not only because of their costly production and status value, but because the written word was sacred. This was true to a lesser extent of Latin and Greek as well. The Mongols did not have a strong written tradition when they initially found themselves the rulers of a vast empire. Their Uighur-based script was a problematic match for spoken Mongolian. Around 1269 Qubilai Qa'an began the process of developing a more adequate Mongolian script for empire-building purposes when he employed the Tibetan Lama 'Phags-pa to create a new script for Mongolian based on Tibetan-Indic script that would be known as 'Phags-pa. This official Mongolian script appeared on documents, *paiza* passports, coins, seals, and steles. A kind of imitation 'Phags-pa-Arabic script was copied onto brass plates, ceramics, and lacquer work. In Giotto's nativity scene painted for the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, the *tirāz* trim of the Madonna's dress clearly displays a version of the pseudo 'Phags-pa-Arabic script.⁵⁶

In temple and secular architecture, the art of calligraphy appeared in design and decorative motifs. Through elaborate ceramic tile artistry, calligraphy became integral to Islamic architecture. Qur'anic script and poetry often ran in ribbons of tile along interior and exterior walls. Buddhist traditions tended to display calligraphy on banners and painted wall hangings rather than as surface design on architectural structures. Intimately connected to the practices of ink and brush painting, calligraphic skills were prized as a feature of valued manuscripts and woodblock print books. A valuable painting might also be enhanced by the addition of lines of poetry in the hand of an

⁵⁶ Tanaka 1984, 8–10; Tanaka 1989, 221–24.

accomplished calligrapher, and entire scrolls might be dedicated just to calligraphic display. Beautiful handwritten script stood as a marker of refined status and authority throughout most of Mongol Eurasia. Sheila Blair has elaborated on “the intricate interplay between word and image that runs through medieval Persian art.”⁵⁷

Conclusions

In this review of artistic exchange during the Mongol era, it has become apparent that some sectors of the empire were more engaged with artistic projects than were others. Although Islamic manuscript traditions were the starting point for state-sponsored projects in both the Ilkhanid and Chaghadaid regions, in the Ilkhanate illustrated manuscripts claimed the foreground of intellectual work while the Chaghadaid rulers did not cultivate the art of manuscript illustration. The rulership of Qaidu and others among the Chaghadaid elites sought an autonomy from the Yuan that may have precluded strong interest in the Chinese arts that proved so innovative in the Persian court context. Perhaps the fact that Qaidu was not an “ideological warrior,” in Michal Biran’s words,⁵⁸ meant that he was not inclined toward elaborate funding of state projects designed to capture the ideological high ground of cultural pre-eminence. He may have simply not had enough resources given a less productive trade base. Politically closer to the Yuan than were the Chaghadaids, the ilkhans also enjoyed more contact with the Yuan dynasty’s rich artistic inheritance, including greater receptivity to Buddhist pictorial traditions. After 1269, the Chaghadaid rulers made it clear that they were less interested in urban cultural pursuits and artistic innovation.

The Mongol era was a defining passage for the arts. Exchange of material and intellectual culture exposed extant artistic traditions to innovative possibilities. Consequently, the visual worlds that emerged from that era, while retaining regional distinctions, were dramatically different from their pre-Mongol forms. Sherman Lee has written, “the accepted standards and appearance of Chinese painting were radically altered in the fourteenth century. No historically accepted painting of importance executed after the Yuan dynasty looks very much like any painting of a previous time.”⁵⁹ This applies in different measures to the art of the post-Mongol Muslim world – Timurid Central Asia, Safavid Persia, Mughal India, and the Ottoman

57 Blair 2014, 289. 58 Biran 1997, 107. 59 Lee 1968, 26.

Empire, along with the kingdoms, principalities, and city-states of Europe. European art continued to develop lifelike representations of natural phenomena and portraiture. Islamic art turned away from portraiture but continued to produce elaborately illustrated manuscripts of literary classics, as seen in Persian books of the Jalayirid dynasty (1335–1432). Ming dynasty (1368–1644) landscape and portraiture moved toward more abstract styles within a framework of scenes of nature and human activities. Mongol rule not only accentuated specific motifs and themes; it also accelerated the general commercialization of art. Although court patronage of the arts was critical to the innovative and quality-related features of artistic exchange during the Mongol era, the unparalleled, expanded commercial opportunities under Mongol rule occasioned a broadening of consumer access to art objects with consequences for social competition that further impacted market dynamics. Across post-Mongol Eurasia, art became more closely tied to market growth and market values than ever before. Artistic exchange during the Mongol Empire was a dramatic cultural intervention with irreversible consequences and Eurasian scope.

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The Climate and Environment of the Mongol Conquest

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Introduction

The still unresolved question of the rise of the Mongol Empire under Chinggis Khan has, in the past, generated several hypotheses. Among these, the argument that a climatic downturn, more specifically a severe drought, pushed the Mongols outside their natural habitat has been lingering for several decades, since scientific data from Greenland ice cores became available, and appeared to support this theory.¹ Recent research, however, based on a variety of paleoclimatic proxies, including high-resolution tree-ring data, has supported a different hypothesis, namely that the rise of Mongol power was linked to warm and humid climatic conditions.² Therefore the connection between the Mongol conquest and climate is beginning to emerge as a critical issue that could benefit from a more wide-ranging exploration of climatic data.

From a paleoclimatological perspective, the Mongol conquest took place at a time in which the northern hemisphere was transitioning from the general warmer regime known as the Medieval Climate Anomaly (MCA, or Medieval Warm Period), dated approximately from the ninth century to the thirteenth, to a colder period known as the Little Ice Age (LIA), whose onset, duration, and intensity differed across various climatic zones, and in northern China and Mongolia may have begun as early as the thirteenth century. Moreover, environmental impacts differed based on precipitation and moisture. In arid Central Asia and Siberia, it appears that the climate, from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, was generally warmer and drier,

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¹ Jenkins 1974. ² Pederson et al. 2014; Wu et al. 2009; Putnam et al. 2016.

leading to a lowering of the levels of lakes; palynological studies also suggest a decrease in forest coverage in favor of grasses and shrubs. At the same time, the presence of high mountain ranges contributed to regional variations due to the effects of local orography on climate, especially in the Pamir, Tian Shan, and Altai regions. Finally, we have signs of short “pluvial” periods within generally dry longer trends that partly coincide with the time of the Mongol conquest, but are only captured by sensitive and high-resolution proxy records. It is worth bearing in mind that, because of the very nature of the science involved, paleoclimatic reconstructions remain open to different interpretations, since they are based on data that include variable, and at times elevated, degrees of uncertainty, depending on the proxies and their quality, spatial extension, and timescale. This is the case with the analysis presented here, whose conclusions must be regarded as preliminary, and subject to substantial modification when better data become available.

From the standpoint of historical methodology, correlations between climatic events and historical events have often been used to build hypotheses that might explain the invasions and conquests of China by northern nomads.³ However, most studies fall short of providing satisfactory answers, given their tendency to reduce causality to natural events, irrespective of social, economic, and political realities. That said, efforts to investigate the climatic aspects of areas affected by the Mongol conquest should not be rejected in principle, since they can provide insights into both the capacity of the Mongols to extract resources from the countries they invaded and the impact of the conquest on the environment. Considering the special requirements of the Mongol army, which operated over vast stretches of land and needed a large number of horses, it is clear that reliance on local pasturage and water resources constituted a critical aspect of its military operations. In other words, climatic reconstructions, as generic or specific as they may be, constitute a source of information about the physical aspects of the conquest that may cast a light on Mongol strategy and military outcomes not available from the scant documentary sources. If we assume that environmental conditions provided both limitations and opportunities during various phases of the conquest, then three aspects, broadly speaking, have the greatest relevance: carrying capacity, seasonality, and specific weather events; that is, contingencies that may favor or hinder tactical operations.

While estimating *carrying capacity* can be problematic unless it is strictly contextualized, we can postulate that its variability affects the relationship

3 Zhang et al. 2005; Bai and Kung 2011; Chen 2014; Pei and Zhang 2014; Pei et al. 2019.

between a pastoral economy and the society that it supports. On a yearly basis, a steady and abundant grassland production is essential to maintain an adequate number of horses and other animals to supply both the mounts and the food for a society with a high level of military mobilization, and engaged simultaneously on multiple fronts. In the context of the Mongol conquest, the relationship between the carrying capacity of the land and military mobilization extends to two aspects. First, not only does the actual acreage per animal depend on the available nutrients, but the general health of the herds is also dependent on their food intake. Drought and scarcity of nutrients during the summer and autumn months, for instance, would weaken the animals and increase their mortality rate in cases of excessive cold and snowfall during the winter, thus leading to a potential shortfall of horses. Second, during military campaigns the carrying capacity of a given territory, especially at times of protracted activity in a contained area, such as siege operations, would affect the size of the army and the length of time during which it could support itself. In addition, whether large armies were able to operate for long periods in the field was linked to the availability of suitable water resources.

Pastoral nomadism is dependent on *seasonality* based on optimal pasture availability, which determines the migratory cycle of their herds, whose movements vary in terms of distance, time, and territory according to local conditions. Seasonality also controls the life cycle of the animals, conditioning them for the rigors of winter, regulating births, and guaranteeing their overall well-being. In planning a military campaign, the length of time and geographical distance involved in the military operations also mean that the timing of the campaign must be co-ordinated with the life cycle of the animals and with the seasonal productivity of the land. Typically, the animals are weakest during the early spring – which is also the time when they give birth – and strongest in late summer and autumn, having been fed abundantly over the spring and summer months. Therefore, not unlike premodern war in general, seasonality is a critically important element in wars carried out by pastoral nomads. Not just the general environmental conditions, but also the specific movements of the army (available water and fodder en route), number of animals, maximum density of troops, and possibility to travel quickly and co-ordinate operations over large distances doubtless posed challenges that military commanders had to take into consideration.

Finally, the Mongols often incorporated environmental aspects dependent on climate when determining their tactics, including “weather magic” to summon the power of the elements to inflict damage on

the enemy.⁴ For instance, a particularly frigid winter might have allowed them to cross frozen rivers much more easily than if they had had to build bridges or ford them. Greater volume of water in a river was exploited as a tactical device to try to flood an enemy city by diverting its course, as in the case of the siege of the Xi Xia capital, or damaging the local infrastructure by destroying a dam, as in the case of the city of Urgench. Inversely, an inhospitable terrain may determine tactical changes and even long-term strategies, as in the case of the Mongol withdrawal from Hungary, discussed below.

This chapter aims to illustrate the environmental and climatic conditions in which the initial phases of the Mongol conquest took place (approximately 1209–1242). The chronological span is dictated by two considerations. First, the historical debate about a possible causal link between climatic conditions and the rise of the Mongol Empire has so far been confined to Chinggis Khan's early campaigns outside Mongolia after 1206. Second, the climatological literature pertaining to the Mongol period has been concerned as well with the early phases of the conquest, while the later periods and especially the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries have yet to receive adequate treatment.⁵ Because of the current state of the relevant literature, this chapter focuses on the period and debates pertinent to the rise of the Mongol Empire, while expanding the geographic range of the climatic analysis to include the main regions that the Mongols invaded until the conclusion of their campaigns in Russia and Europe in 1242. These discrete zones will be arranged in four sections: Mongolia, north and northeast China, arid Central Asia, and Russia and Eastern Europe.

The first section focuses on the latest reconstructions of Mongolian climate itself and attendant environmental changes at the time of the rise of the Mongol Empire, immediately after the unification of the Mongols under Chinggis Khan, which have been assumed in the past to be causally linked to the conquest. The second section examines climatic conditions in northern China with special reference to the areas in which the Mongols conducted military operations. The third section includes the large swath of land and different environmental zones from the Gobi Desert on the east to the Aral

4 Molnár 1994.

5 A partial exception is the study of hurricane patterns related to the Mongol attempted invasion of Japan. On this: Woodruff 2015. The connection between climate and the spread of diseases (such as the Black Death) in lands ruled by the Mongols is an especially vast and important area of research that would require a separate study; on this topic: Hymes 2016.

Sea to the west, including the Tian Shan, Tarim, and Altai regions, which were important areas for the military campaign against Khwārazm in 1219. The fourth region includes the Volga–Ural region and the south Russian steppes, as well as northern Russia and Hungary, which were theaters of Mongol operations from 1221 to 1242. From a historical perspective, the climate of the areas invaded by the Mongol armies played a different role with respect to the climatic effects within Mongolia. Rather than being causally implicated in the rise and expansion of the Mongols – or, in other words, acting as a potential “push factor” – environmental dynamics affecting the conquest zones should be regarded as integral to the conquest itself; that is, as factors that may have hindered or favored the operations, tactics, and strategy of the Mongol armies.

Mongolia

While research on the paleoecology and historical climatology of Mongolia has made enormous progress over the past twenty-plus years, a study of temperature and precipitation, as well as regional differences that could enable a complete reconstruction of the climate of Mongolia at the time of the Mongol conquest neither is available at present, nor will be available at any time in the near future, given the complexities related to the collection and interpretation of natural proxies. What is known from climatological studies, however, provides sufficient evidence for a general hypothesis of the environmental conditions potentially affecting Mongol political and economic life in the early thirteenth century. Mongolian climate generally speaking showed a warming trend from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fifteenth centuries.⁶ Regional differences included a combination of warm and wet climate that provided optimal conditions for grassland productivity, albeit distributed unevenly across the Mongolian steppes. However, a direct relationship between long-term northern hemisphere climatic changes and local variability is difficult to assess and requires additional regional data.

Several tree-ring chronologies have been acquired. An early study based on Siberian pine trees from the Solongotyn Davaa (“Sol Dav”) site in the Tarbaghatai mountains established a 1,738-year span chronology that found an extended warm period in the early thirteenth century.⁷ The chronology acquired from the Ondor Zuun Nuruu site in northern Mongolia, to the west of Hovsgol Lake, also enables the long-term temperature reconstruction that

6 Davi et al. 2015. 7 D’Arrigo et al. 2001.

correlates with other chronologies in Mongolia, the Altai, and Siberia.⁸ Here too the data register a warming trend starting in the late twelfth century, peaking in the early fifteenth century.

Tree-ring research in central Mongolia, focusing on the Orkhon valley, has provided critical information about precipitation, identifying an extended period of enhanced moisture from 1210 to 1225.⁹ Wet conditions have also been inferred from pollen and diatom records of peat sediments from northern Mongolia. These records, while having a much lower resolution that does not allow a precise alignment with the Mongol conquest, indicate wet conditions that coincide with a warmer period (the Medieval Climate Anomaly) dated between 900 and 1240.¹⁰

Climatic data constitute the evidential basis for the argument of a transition from a generally dry climate during the twelfth century to a wetter trend in the early thirteenth century, with higher levels of precipitation during the second and third decades. Studies in grassland ecology have focused on the density of animals with respect to the carrying capacity of the land to calculate population variability.¹¹ In a condition of increased grassland productivity, whose main driver is rainfall, and presumed absence or at least low-level competition among species for reduced resources, it correlates with increases in livestock. Not all herbivores, however, increase in the same way, and it has been argued that horses increase at a higher rate than cattle and sheep, thus providing valuable insights into the changing economy of Mongolia during warm/wet periods.¹²

Finally, we need to consider another aspect of Mongolia's climate; that is, its regional diversity. Several studies have noticed the presence of regionalized droughts in tree-ring reconstructions of Mongolia's climate, especially between the eastern region (Kherlen and Yeruu river basin) and, moving west, the north-central region that includes the Selenge river basin.¹³ An east-west regional variability in the Mongolian hydroclimate was established by comparing the May–September streamflows of the Selenge (western) and Yeruu (eastern) river basins from the year 1700 to 2000, based on tree-ring analysis.¹⁴ This study, supported by previous analyses of the drought history of Mongolia, shows that in the western part of central Mongolia precipitation is subject to wider swings between extremes, while in the eastern part the climate is subject to lesser volatility in both dry and wet regimes. Such differences are attributed to the Mongolian orography, whereby climate is

8 Davi et al. 2015. 9 Pederson et al. 2014. 10 Fukumoto et al. 2012. 11 Vetter 2005.

12 Dangal et al. 2017, 2937–38. 13 Pederson et al. 2001; Davi et al. 2006; Leland et al. 2013.

14 Pederson et al. 2013.

influenced by the Khentii mountains in the east and by the Khangai mountains in central Mongolia. While the reconstructions of regional hydroclimate in this and other studies do not extend to the period of the Mongol conquest, they show a regional variability that might account for historical phenomena such as the establishment of political centers and military deployments.

In sum, a survey of the climatic characteristics of Mongolia allows us to argue that, a few years after the unification of the Mongols under Chinggis Khan, the climate of at least some regions of Mongolia transitioned to a period of general warming and increased precipitation. Higher temperatures and elevated moisture are regarded as important drivers for greater grassland productivity, which presumably led to an increase in the number of animals and especially (if the model quoted above is correct) horses.¹⁵ At the same time, we may expect regional differences that affected both biomass and livestock production.

The linkage between environmental and political aspects of the rise of the Mongol Empire can be construed in multiple ways. A highly productive grassland area was necessary to sustain the density of a large political gathering or the assembly of an army in preparation for a military expedition. Under favorable climatic conditions, Mongolia might have provided several areas that served this purpose. Climatic data would also support the notion that the transfer of the political center of the Mongol Empire from the eastern part of Mongolia (the Onon and Kherlen river basins) to the Orkhon valley might have been a response to more productive climatic conditions in the Khangai region.¹⁶ The *Secret History of the Mongols* provides a rare reference to the environment in a passage that refers to the gathering of military forces under Chinggis Khan near the Onon river in 1203: “Tell this to my father the Qan: ‘We have pitched camp east of Tüngge Stream; the grass is good and our geldings have gained strength.’”¹⁷ This quote shows a correlation between the abundance of water and grass (which would not have been possible in a drought situation) and a political event, namely the use of natural resources to strengthen the horses on the eve of a major battle. Moreover, regardless of the authenticity of this record, and regardless of the availability of scientific evidence that proves that 1203 in the Onon region was an especially wet year, the fact that it is reported that people congregated in one place because water

15 Illius and O'Connor 2000.

16 Di Cosmo 2014–2015. Note that the Orkhon valley is also a wetland. Therefore an analysis of climatic factors may have to consider considerable swings from dry to wet conditions and their impact on human activities.

17 *SH*, 96, 636. On this issue: also Cleaves 1955, 386.

and grass had become abundant provides us with a clear insight into a key connection between Mongol politics and climate. The leader's ability to concentrate people, and therefore his political power, to a degree depended on the productivity of the land.

A constant supply of horses would have been needed to engage in the series of campaigns that were launched by Chinggis Khan from 1209 onwards. The frequency and geographical extension of the wars presumably would have led to considerable mortality of horses during the campaigns, either in battle or because of other hazards. The losses could only be sustained, at least initially, by relying on replacements available in Mongolia. Of course, the Mongol army also relied on the use of allies and local resources, including horses, but the expeditions against the Xi Xia and the Jin dynasty originating in Mongolia could not have been launched time and again without a steady rise in the breeding of horses, allowing Chinggis Khan and the Mongol high command to plan and execute wars for several years.

Finally, the results of archaeobotanical studies at Qaraqorum during the Mongol Empire point to a large number of cultivated plants such as *Panicum miliaceum* (millet), *Hordeum vulgare* (barley), *Triticum aestivum* (wheat) and *Setaria italica* (foxtail millet), all grown locally.¹⁸ It is possible that a warmer climate and enhanced precipitation favored an expansion of agriculture in central Mongolia, and thus a more diverse and productive economy, although it is worth bearing in mind that the different crops do not have the same sensitivity to climatic variability, especially in terms of resistance to drought.

While a reconstruction of Mongolia's paleoclimate, especially in terms of regional variations, requires more high-resolution records, the available data show, at the start of the Mongol long-range campaigns, a positive ratio between economic resources and the political and military possibilities that such resources enabled.

North China and Manchuria

Recent climatic studies have tried to collate and compare the data available from a number of climatic reconstructions across China for the period that falls within the chronological bounds of the Medieval Climate Anomaly (c. 900–1300 CE). However, the results do not indicate unified patterns, but rather generic trends within which timing, duration, and intensity vary considerably.¹⁹

¹⁸ Rösch, Fischer, and Märkle 2005. ¹⁹ Ge and Wu 2011.

In terms of temperature, northern China in the thirteenth century was generally warm, with maximum temperatures reached in the first half of the thirteenth century.²⁰ In terms of precipitation, a comprehensive study on hydroclimatic changes in China that examined seventy-one proxy paleo-moisture and paleo-precipitation records separates two discrete zones, the first to the east, influenced by the East Asian monsoon, which was wetter, and a western one, influenced by the westerlies, which was drier.²¹ The eastern region extended from the great bend of the Yellow River to eastern Inner Mongolia and Manchuria, while the western zone included parts of western Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Gansu, and most of Tibet. Increased moisture during the warm period correlates with better environmental conditions, which are usually attested by an increased biomass in sediment cores.

For the northwestern zone, a tree-ring-based reconstruction from the Qilian mountains shows a warm anomaly only for the years 1065–1150, while lower temperature values are registered between the 1160s and 1330s.²² A high-resolution record from the Badain Jaran Desert, whose recharge rates for groundwater from 800 to 1300 were slower than average, indicates dry conditions in the western part of north China.²³ This desert is located south of the eastern Altai and north of the Qilian mountains, spanning the provinces of Ningxia and Gansu. What this amounts to is that, possibly, temperature was lower than average, and water resources may have been somewhat scarce during Chinggis Khan's campaign against the Xi Xia in 1225–1227.

The environment of Manchuria and northern China to the east of the Yellow River, on the contrary, enjoyed favorable climatic conditions, being relatively warm and humid throughout the initial period of military operations in the early thirteenth century. Pollen analysis from the Erlongwang Maar Lake in Jilin province shows that the climate in the first half of the millennium, and in particular during the medieval period, was warm and humid, contributing to an increase in the vegetation biomass.²⁴ Additional records, such as a study of paleosols conducted in the Hunshandake Desert in eastern Inner Mongolia, support these results, indicating that between 650 and 1250 CE (1.3–0.7 ka BP) warm temperatures and increased moisture prevailed.²⁵ A pollen-based paleoclimatic study of the Maili Bog, also in northeast China, shows above-average moisture levels between 950 and

20 Ge and Wu 2011. 21 Chen et al. 2015. 22 Liu et al. 2007.

23 Ma and Edmunds 2006. 24 Li et al. 2013. 25 Jin et al. 2004.

1270 CE, which coincide with an increased density of vegetation, consisting of both trees, such as oak, birch, and pine, and herbaceous plants such as artemisia.²⁶ Finally, sediment cores from Lake Sihailongwan, in the Changbaishan mountain range, south of Changchun, show warm conditions before 1260.²⁷ These various climatic reconstructions agree that the climatic conditions in the region of eastern Inner Mongolia and Manchuria favored a general increase in vegetation growth due to warmer and more humid conditions.

Looking at the early campaigns in northern China, we can see that both the frontier zone along the northern bend of the Yellow River and Manchuria (including the Liaodong peninsula) were used by the Mongols as bases from which to launch campaigns against the Jin. In particular, the area north of the Yellow River and the Ordos region inhabited by the Önggüt people, who pledged allegiance to Chinggis Khan in 1207, at this time were likely benefiting from an optimal or near-optimal climatic regime.²⁸ The 1211 campaign against the Jin dynasty was launched from Mongolia in the spring, but actual military operations began in August, after the Mongol army had rested along the frontier controlled by their allies.²⁹ Moreover, it can be surmised that the campaign by Muqali in the northeast was meant to consolidate Mongol control of this region as an area suitable to feed military herds in anticipation of a new campaign against the Jin upon the return of Chinggis Khan from Central Asia. In other words, the climate data raise the question of the extent to which northern and northeastern China permitted the assemblage of large cavalry armies, and how Mongol strategy included a resolute and deliberate effort to secure such bases before venturing into a war against the Jin dynasty.

Arid Central Asia

Mongol military operations were undertaken in the Balkhash and Semirechye regions in 1211, leading to the submission of Güchülük in 1218. In 1219 a major expedition was mounted against the Khwārazm-Shāh, when the Mongol armies in a short span of time crossed into Transoxania and defeated the Muslim kingdom. To investigate the environmental and climatic situation of this region it is essential to rely on a variety of data that are open to much uncertainty and the subject of extensive debates among paleoclimatologists.

26 Ren 1998. 27 Chu et al. 2011. 28 Buell 1979. 29 Buell and Fiaschetti 2018, 26.

Arid Central Asia includes, for the purposes of this chapter, the following regions: the Altai mountains, the Tian Shan mountain range, the Tarim Basin, the Kazakh steppe, and today's Uzbekistan, reaching westward as far as the Aral and Caspian Seas. Most paleoclimatic studies are based on lake sediments, with some high-resolution data from tree rings and speleothems. In climatic terms, Central Asia is dominated by the westerlies, rather than by the monsoons. Orographic characteristics, however, and in particular high mountain ranges, as well as variations in the north Atlantic oscillation and other climatic regimes, contribute to regional variability across this vast continental region. Moreover, as we have mentioned above, most climatic reconstructions posit a transition from a warm to a cold regime around or after the year 1200, which increases the degree of uncertainty at the decadal or subdecadal timescale. A tree-ring-based reconstruction from junipers in the Qaraqorum mountain range showed that after 1139 growth declined steadily, with particularly cold conditions obtaining until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³⁰

A recent survey of Eurasian paleoenvironments described the climate of the Central Asian region in general as milder and less continental between the ninth and twelfth centuries, followed by colder conditions from the thirteenth century to the nineteenth, with a warmer interval in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.³¹ Studies based on multiple proxies, including tree rings, ice cores, lake sediments, lake levels, and glacier accumulation, have characterized the climate of Central Asia during approximately the period between 900 and 1500 as dry and relatively warm, although not everywhere.³² What follows is a sketch of climatic conditions in the major areas of arid Central Asia.

The Altai

An extensively researched region in Central Asian paleoclimatology, the Altai mountains straddle the territories of China, Mongolia, and the Russian Federation. Different climate regimes can be found, which makes a synthesis of the general conditions in the early thirteenth century quite challenging, and as yet not available at a level that historical analysis could confidently rely upon.

While precipitation in arid Central Asia is mostly determined by the amount of moisture carried from the north Atlantic by the westerlies,³³ the

30 Esper, Schweingruber, Winiger 2002. 31 Solomina and Alverson 2004.

32 Yang et al. 2009; Chen et al. 2010. 33 Chen et al. 2008.

Altai region comprises several climatic zones that include a northern, western, and eastern one.³⁴ To these a southern one, in Xinjiang, should be added. Each of these zones has a different climatic history known mostly from low-resolution data. As a general premise, we should note that, in the southern Altai region (Kanas Lake, Xinjiang), the landscape became increasingly open, with less forest and more steppe, from the second millennium BCE, with greater representation of herbaceous plants such as artemisia. Humidity did not decrease significantly but the recession of the forest was caused by cold events, heavy snowfalls, and glacial advances at higher elevations, while in basins and plains humidity generally rose. Increases in the presence of artemisia may also indicate that the warmer climate pushed upwards regional herbaceous vegetation.³⁵ The extensive steppic areas that were formed in the Altai provided pasturage to nomadic peoples for millennia, and presumably served the Mongol armies that moved through the Ili valley in the direction of Central Asia in 1219, although conditions in the early thirteenth century may have been somewhat drier than the previous period.

Focusing more closely on the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we find that, according to high-resolution data, the southern Altai entered a relatively high moisture phase around the year 1000 CE, lasting until 1250, when a dry phase begins, marked by extremely dry conditions, that lasts until 1600.³⁶ A tree-ring-width chronology from the Russian Altai provides summer temperatures showing for the early decades of the thirteenth century a transitional phase between the warmer Medieval Climate Anomaly and the colder Little Ice Age, with cold events becoming more frequent from 1300.³⁷

Taking a wider look, additional paleoclimatic data from Lake Baikal, Lake Balkhash, and the Aral Sea provide a fairly consistent illustration of the climate of Central Asia and Siberia, although there are also substantial differences and questions relative to the length and intensity of climatic variations. Lake Baikal's diatom analysis seems to confirm the existence of a broadly warmer period in the Medieval Warm Period (800–1200), while an assessment of precipitation remains uncertain.³⁸ In the following period (the Little Ice Age, 1200–1800) we have a turn to cold and dry conditions.³⁹ While the thirteenth century does not seem to register temperature extremes, conditions for the growth of trees in the Altai–Sayan region worsened and the mortality of trees increased.⁴⁰ Other high-elevation records, however,

34 Rudaya et al. 2009. 35 Huang et al. 2018. 36 Yang et al. 2019.

37 Büntgen et al. 2016. 38 Mackay et al. 2005, 293. 39 Mackay et al. 2005.

40 Myglan, Oidupaa, and Vaganov 2012, 79.

mention a glacier advance in the Altai in 1200–1300, which, according to the authors, may be caused by lower temperatures rather than by increased precipitation.⁴¹ With the thinning of forests, it is possible that grass coverage and pastureland increased.

Moreover, the climatic reconstructions based on a pollen sediment core from Lake Balkhash show that conditions were moderately dry and warm for the period from 150 to 1300 CE (1800–650 BP), but turned cold and wet in the following period.⁴² In the Russian Altai (south Siberia), the prevailing climate from the third to the twelfth century was warm, with smaller glaciers and a higher tree line than we have today, thus indicating in general a more abundant biomass. This situation remained unchanged until the early thirteenth century.⁴³ Contrary to this generally dry picture, in the eastern Altai (Mongolia) the analysis of sediments (diatoms) from several lakes shows increased humidity in the warm phase in the early 1200s.⁴⁴ Thus a more abundant and expanding steppe-like vegetation would have provided optimal conditions for high grass production in western Mongolia until the early phase of the conquest.

While this bird's-eye view of the Altai mountain ranges shows remarkable variability, the most likely scenario toward the end of the Medieval Climate Anomaly is one of a relatively warm climate, with a prevalence of humid conditions in the northern part and dry conditions in the southern zone.

Tian Shan and the Tarim Basin

The Tian Shan and the Tarim Basin also present a complex picture. A stalagmite record from western Kyrgyzstan (Ferghana valley) shows that the early thirteenth century was warm and characterized by abundant precipitation in the winter months. The wet winters in the western Tian Shan region may be correlated with the positive – that is, characterized by a stronger Atlantic jet stream – phase of the north Atlantic oscillation and consequent weakening of the Siberian High, which therefore prevents the dry and cold air from the Arctic from reaching this region.⁴⁵ Such conditions seem to have obtained in the relatively stable medieval period.

A multiproxy study of the hydroclimate of the Tarim Basin by Putnam et al. concluded that the region entered a more humid regime in the late twelfth century, resulting in a greater volume of water delivered to the steppe

41 Chernykh, Galakhov, and Zolotov 2013. 42 Feng et al. 2013.

43 Agatova et al. 2012. 44 Shinneman et al. 2010. 45 Fohlmeister et al. 2017.

grassland, which in turn improved productivity.⁴⁶ The humid phase replenished groundwater deposits and, this study suggests, led to a southward expansion of steppe grasslands, which may have facilitated the military campaigns of the Mongols against the Xi Xia. At the same time temperatures dropped, as the onset of the Little Ice Age in this region is dated from 1200. While the historical inferences of this study cannot be shared, since the military campaigns against the Xi Xia were not carried out across the Tarim Basin, the presence of higher volumes of water in the system may have led to an expansion of the availability of pastoral resources, thus facilitating Mongol operations in the region during the campaign against the Qara Khitai.⁴⁷

A climate reconstruction of the past two millennia from the glacial Harnur Lake in the Tian Shan mountains, which is located at a higher elevation, and should reflect conditions pertaining to the water sources ultimately feeding middle- and low-altitude pastures and oases, confirms a warm and dry regime for the Medieval Warm Period, dated here from 700 to 1270.⁴⁸ Consistent with a warm and dry climatic picture, several studies report low levels of water in the lakes of northwest China during the thirteenth century. A sediment analysis from Lake Ebinur, in Xinjiang, located to the north of the Tian Shan mountain range and close to the border with Kazakhstan, finds that the 1100–1300 period was marked by high water alkalinity – i.e., higher values of oxygen and carbon isotopes in sediments – reflecting low lake levels and drier conditions.⁴⁹ Moreover, sediment analysis from the Bosten Lake, located on the southern slope of the Tian Shan, finds a warm and dry climate before 1500.⁵⁰

Contrariwise, there is evidence of humid conditions on both slopes of the Tian Shan range. Increased presence of aquatic plants in three sediment cores from the northern slope of the Tian Shan indicate warm and humid conditions obtained in the Medieval Warm Period (dated here from 600 to 1400 CE). A study based on carbon isotopes of plant remains from the Tarim Basin finds increased humidity in the early thirteenth century, although the record is only dated back to 1236.⁵¹ Similarly, other studies have found, based on the pollen analysis of several lakes, that the northern slope of the Tian Shan

46 Putnam et al. 2016. 47 Biran 2005.

48 Lan et al. 2018. The geographic definition of high Central Asia, as opposed to arid Central Asia, that we find in some of these studies, refers to elevation and not to latitude.

49 Ma et al. 2011. 50 Chen et al. 2006. 51 Liu et al. 2011.

mountains was humid and warm, indicating that the thirteenth century fell, in every case analyzed, within a humid period with abundant plant growth.⁵²

While temperature reconstructions show generally warm conditions – albeit often at a transitional stage between the Medieval Warm Period and an early phase of cooling – hydroclimate records indicate high regional variability and a mosaic of local conditions. In part, the problem with paleoclimatic reconstructions based on sediments is that the multi-centennial scale masks short-term variations that are present in each one of the records. For instance, the level of salinity of the Suge Lake, in the northern part of the Tibetan plateau, which is used to reconstruct moisture levels, can be seen to have registered a strong pluvial period in the first decades of the thirteenth century (1200–1230), which is also captured by other proxies such as the tree-ring-based reconstruction from the Qaidam Basin.⁵³ That said, other studies do not seem to agree, with one registering a transition to a considerably cold and wet climate in 1200,⁵⁴ and another registering a long warm and dry period from 700 to 1400.⁵⁵ Since the same pluvial period is not captured by other proxies in Central Asia, the geographic extent of this wet period cannot be determined.

In sum, the record for the Tarim and Tian Shan regions remains difficult to interpret. In very general terms, the early thirteenth century is a transitional period between a warm and a cooler regime, with varying levels of precipitation. It still appears that pasture and grass coverage most likely benefited from greater humidity, which allowed plant growth in the most arid zones, especially in the Tarim depression, as well as on the northern and southern slopes of the Tian Shan, and from a concomitant shrinking of forest coverage at higher altitudes. If this is the case, then we can assume that the environmental conditions were no impediment to, and possibly favored, a large army moving across the Tian Shan, the Ili valley, and the Altai mountains.

The Aral Sea Region

Several studies have investigated the medieval conditions of the Aral Sea. This region is especially relevant to this study because it was for a long time believed that the low levels of the Aral Sea were due to the impact of the Mongol conquest, which disrupted irrigation systems and caused the course of the Amu Darya to be diverted during Chinggis Khan's invasion, in 1221 CE.⁵⁶ Both paleoclimatic and archaeological evidence, however, show that

52 Zhang et al. 2009. 53 Chen et al. 2009. 54 Qiang et al. 2005. 55 He et al. 2013.

56 Boroffka et al. 2005.

low water levels comparable with present-day conditions were the result of a long process of aridization. At the time of the Mongol invasion, the level of the Aral Sea had dropped to twenty-nine meters above sea level. Such regression resulted from a long period of warm and dry conditions.

The present-day dramatic shrinkage of the Aral has allowed archaeological research conducted at the Kerderi site to reveal that the medieval regression was as deep as the present one, albeit caused by natural factors rather than due to human intervention.⁵⁷ High salinity is registered between 1000 and 1400 CE, and carbon-14 dates show that the beginning of the lake's decline must date back to the year 1000, and therefore cannot be attributed to the Mongol destruction of the earthen dam at Urgench. Dinoflagellate cyst records, rather, point to a gradual regressive phase which would not match a catastrophic event resulting from the destruction of dams in the Amu Darya delta, and rather speak for a progressive lowering of the lake's water level for the 920–1230 CE period. Salinity levels, high in the 920–1230 period, tended to decrease after 1230, as a result of more abundant precipitation.⁵⁸ These results seem also to correlate well with tree-ring-width analysis from the Satpara valley (Pakistan), which also points to low temperatures.⁵⁹ According to other studies, the regression ended in 1220, after which human factors (i.e., the Mongol conquest) were the main cause of hydrological changes.⁶⁰ For instance, the reactivation of the Sarykamysh delta was artificial and resulted from the disruption of the irrigation system and the diversion of the Amu Darya caused by the Mongol invasion.

Russia and Eastern Europe

The Mongol campaigns in Russia followed the invasion of Khwārazm, when, in the 1220s, Mongol armies reached the Volga–Ural region.⁶¹ Military operations continued in the 1230s and reached the level of a full invasion in 1236, when several armies engaged in the conquest of the Russian principalities, and stormed the major cities. From a general paleoclimatic perspective, this period is again a transitional one, which presents different characteristics in southern and northern Russia, with the north being generally drier, and the southern part (the lower Volga region) experiencing an increase in precipitation.⁶²

57 Krivonogov et al. 2014. 58 Sorrel et al. 2006.

59 Esper, Schweingruber, and Winiger 2002. 60 Oberhänsli et al. 2007. 61 Allsen 1983.

62 Schamiloglu 2016.

Reconstructions of the climate of the lower Volga steppes, based on paleosols, indicate a gradual increase in humidity through the twelfth century, reaching a peak in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and resulting in an expansion of the dry steppe zone.⁶³ During this period the mean annual precipitation has been calculated at 370–420 millimeters, which exceeds modern values by between thirty and eighty millimeters. Climatologists have attributed the migrations and movements of nomadic people that took place in this period to a general increase in productivity of the steppe, but clearly the same advantages were enjoyed by an invading army that required plenty of grass. The same region was subsequently chosen by the Golden Horde khans as their main residence and base of operation, and site of their capital, Sarai. According to records from Lake Saki, the wettest period in the history of Crimea over the past 1,500 years occurred between the 1050s and the 1250s.⁶⁴

In northern Russia, reconstructions based on wood isotope analysis from samples sourced from the Kola peninsula (northwest Russia) support warming during the Medieval Climate Anomaly, and indicate that between 1000 and 1300 CE summers were warmer and precipitation decreased in both summer and winter.⁶⁵ Those results generally align with the view of a warm and dry prevailing climate in northern Russia, which may have favored the northward political and commercial expansion of Novgorod, the international fur trade, communication between Russia and the northern regions of Karelia and Bjarmaland during the Mongol invasion, and finally the growth of Russian settlements in the north by people fleeing the Mongol onslaught.⁶⁶ A warming phase is also registered, based on the analysis of various types of sediment (macro-charcoal, pollen, and peat) in Central European Russia, south of Novgorod.⁶⁷ Here the temperature rose between 900 and 750 BP (1050–1200 CE), coinciding with a reduction of woodland coverage due to human activity, and contributing to an expansion of agriculture and deforestation. A high-resolution, tree-ring-based reconstruction of the medieval climate in the Novgorod region between 1160 and 1416 CE shows that the period after 1221 was one of the warmest in the whole series, with 1221 and 1228 being the absolute warmest, showing especially favorable conditions that lasted throughout the Mongol invasion.⁶⁸

Historical records on crop failures, climate trends, and weather events do not show any especially critical famine or climatic events during the conquest of Russia in the Novgorod area and Ladoga. The paleoclimatic data are

63 Demkin et al. 2006. 64 Solomina et al. 2005. 65 Kremenetski et al. 2004.

66 Koskela Vasaru 2012, 47; Halperin 1987, 75–76. 67 Novenko et al. 2016.

68 Helama et al. 2017.

drawn from two tree-ring-based reconstructions of temperature and precipitation from southern Finland. These, together with the documentary evidence, show a degree of congruence, although several events registered in one of the data sets did not find corroborating evidence in the other. Neither set, however, shows that during the Mongol conquest, in the late 1230s and the 1240s, this area was affected by either famines or climatic extremes. The famines that affected Russia, as well as most of Europe, in 1230–1231 occurred before the Mongols' arrival. Instead, the temperature and precipitation records seem to indicate a generally warming trend and a moister climate after c. 1231.⁶⁹

A general survey of the paleoclimate of the Russian plain based on various proxies shows that the general climate was warm from the eleventh century to the fourteenth, except for the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, which experienced a cold spell, according to pollen analysis.⁷⁰ Lakes' and rivers' levels regressed during this period. The resolution, however, is not sufficiently high to set clear dates, and it may be that by the late 1230s a warming trend started again or that local variations significantly affected the environment in discrete regions. In terms of the Mongol advance, lower precipitation and cooler temperatures might have facilitated military deployments by lowering the volume of water in rivers, and contributing to their freezing in winter.

In Eastern Europe, the lightning blitzkrieg of 1241 was carried out in generally warm and dry weather, and the invasion of western Hungary in the winter of 1241–1242 was facilitated by very low winter temperatures that froze the Danube, turning it to ice, across which the Mongol army could easily ride. However, concomitant heavy precipitation and snowfall resulted in water freezing on the ground. Because the hydrogeology of Hungary historically made its river plains prone to flooding,⁷¹ and because of its soil composition, the melting of the ice and snow in the spring of 1242 resulted in a large amount of excess surface water that could not be absorbed and turned large swaths of the country into swamps and marshes. This affected both the offensive effectiveness of the Mongol army (such as siege maneuvers), whose success rate dropped dramatically, and its general operational capabilities.⁷² While the argument that climate-related events constituted a primary or contributing factor in the Mongol withdrawal remains hypothetical, the high-resolution records that can be brought to bear, by allowing detailed climatic

69 Huhtamaa 2015. 70 Solomina and Alverson 2004.

71 Drainage works under the Habsburgs changed the situation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

72 Büntgen and Di Cosmo 2016.

reconstructions, point to environmental factors as critical to the Mongol decision to abandon Hungary.

In conclusion, the Mongol armies operating in both northern and southern Russia in the 1220s and 1230s experienced a warm climate with wet conditions in southern Russia and partially drier and cooler conditions in the north. It is not surprising that the campaigns of 1221–1224 could unfold with relative ease in the south Russian steppe and the Volga–Ural region. While there is no reason to doubt that strategic considerations, starting with the early incursions into Qipchaq lands, were paramount, the reconnaissance of these regions, carried out especially in 1223–1224 by Jebe and Sübedei, provided information not just about the people and territorial features but also about the quality of the land and its resources. It is therefore likely that peak grassland production in these regions, and the availability of abundant water and grasses, might have played a role in the Mongol planning of these campaigns in 1229 and 1236–1237.⁷³

In the late 1230s, drier conditions in northern Russia were not extreme, and generally the climate does not seem to have been a relevant factor that either hindered or facilitated military operations. Because the Mongols did not engage in prolonged sieges to reduce cities such as Kiev and Moscow, and did not settle in the north or west of Russia, climatic considerations were possibly not pre-eminent in their strategy, except for mobility. In Hungary, however, where the Mongols might have been planning to settle, the combination of a frigid winter and heavy precipitation, resulting in pooling of water and marshy conditions, may have been responsible for their retreat.

Concluding Remarks

The hypothesis that available climate data support, albeit with a high degree of uncertainty and with marked differences from zone to zone, is that environmental changes that took place from around 1200 in Mongolia and surrounding areas played a potentially significant role in the military activities of the Mongols. The warm regime in north China and Mongolia, together with increases in precipitation registered especially in Mongolia and northeast China, altered the steppe environment by generally increasing the volume of energy upon which pastoral production relies; that is, water and grass.

Just as environmental and natural proxies have led researchers to reassess the relevance of climate in the rise of the Mongol Empire, the same data must be

⁷³ Allsen 1983.

interrogated to gain a better understanding of the contribution of climatic factors in the territorial expansion of Mongol power. In order to ascertain the significance of the impact of climatic factors, the relationship between conquest and environment also requires a more accurate analysis of the timing, routes, and tactical choices made by Mongol commanders at every stage of their campaigns.

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Women and Gender under Mongol Rule

BETTINE BIRGE AND ANNE F. BROADBRIDGE

Gender relations and social organization on the Mongolian steppe were crucial to Mongol military successes and the rise of the world empire. In particular, women managed the nomadic camps that were the heart of Mongol society, which provided men with the ability to specialize in war. Moreover, individual women played critical roles in the emergence and consolidation of the Mongol Empire itself. Among the elite, women participated in policy decisions at the highest levels and, like elite men, might control large estates and armies. In addition, some women were Christian, Muslim, or Buddhist, and served as patrons of these religions for their nomadic followers and for conquered people. Imperial women also influenced politics and policies through their marriage ties, which could empower these women's female and male relatives for multiple generations. The considerable authority and respect accorded to many women in Mongol society is reflected in the creation myth of the original Mongol tribe and Chinggis Khan's own lineage within it, the Borjigin. The Mongols' own narrative of their origins, as recorded in the *Secret History*, recounts that the ancestral line passed through a woman, Alan Gho'a, not exclusively through men.¹

This chapter addresses women and gender relations in the Mongol Empire. It starts with a discussion of nomadic women on the Inner Asian steppe during the expansion of the United Empire, which includes marriage practices, women's work, women's participation in governance and politics, and examples of powerful women in Mongol history. The second section covers elite women in the western khanates, and the third looks at women and gender in China under the Mongols.

1 *SH*, §17, §20–21.

Women and Gender Relations on the Steppe during Mongol Imperial Expansion

Marriage Practices

The basic structure of Mongol marriage practices resembled that of other nomadic societies. Marriage was exogamous, meaning that men and women had to find partners outside their clan and tribe, since members of a tribe were considered to share kinship relations, even though these were often more fictive than real. Tribal alliances were built through exogamous marriages, and it was not unusual for particular lineages to intermarry across several generations. In theory, Mongol men could have multiple wives (i.e., polygyny), but in reality most could afford only one. In cases where polygyny was practiced, the first wife was usually the senior or chief wife, and she and her children enjoyed special authority and privileges.

The most common form of marriage for free Mongols of all classes was by mutual agreement. The groom's family prepared a relatively large payment to the family of the bride in the form of brideprice. In exchange, the bride returned with the groom to his camp and set up a new household with him. The bride's family might outfit her with a trousseau of clothing, jewelry, and household items, but among the nonelite majority a wife did not usually bring a large dowry into her marriage. Rather, she received such goods as livestock and jewelry from her husband and his parents, which became her personal possessions.² Dowry was not completely absent, however, and especially among the elite it could be significant: Chinggis Khan's chief wife Börte brought a black sable coat into her marriage, which he later used to cement a political alliance with the powerful Kereyit ruler Ong Khan. More generally an elite bride's dowry consisted of livestock, goods, and human attendants from her own tribe, and formed the core of her household.³ These last in particular provided important support for her, since marriage often took her far from her parents.

A prospective husband usually worked in his in-laws' household for a period of a few months if he had paid a full complement of marriage gifts, or years if he had not. Thus Temüjin, the young Chinggis Khan, labored for his future father-in-law, Dei Sechen, in order to marry Börte. But shortly into his stay Temüjin heard that his own father had been murdered, and he departed precipitously, perhaps before finishing his time. Scholars have

2 Rockhill 1967, 77; Holmgren 1986, 129–31.

3 Atwood 2004, 240; Miyawaki-Okada 2001, 82–89.

conjectured that this may explain Dei Sechen's later reluctance to let Börte join Temüjin. It also implies that Temüjin's father Yisügei was not wealthy.⁴

A second form of marriage in steppe society was by capture, which solved the problem of high brideprice, but had the potential disadvantage of creating political rancor. Before the rise of Chinggis Khan, hostilities were endemic on the steppe, and raiding was a frequent means of procuring goods and people. Women seized through raids became their captors' wives. If such a woman were her captor's first wife, or of high status or great beauty, she became the senior wife with requisite privileges, despite the involuntary and assaultive way she had entered the family. Chinggis Khan's mother Hö'elün was famously obtained in this fashion, which led to long-standing enmity between her new husband's Mongol tribe and the Merkits, from whom she had been abducted (see below). In this scheme, virginity or even youth was not of highest importance, in sharp contrast to practices in the sedentary societies the Mongols conquered.

Women could only be captured from enemy groups. Within the tribe or encampment, by contrast, sexual mores were not permissive. Franciscan Friars who visited the Mongol court in the thirteenth century relate that, by Mongol law and custom, adultery was punished by death for both the man and the woman. With many soldiers frequently absent on long campaigns, these practices helped protect Mongol wives from other men's predations.⁵

A third form of marriage was through inheritance, by a process called the levirate. When a man died, his wife could be inherited by a younger male relative, such as a brother, cousin, nephew, or son. (A son could not marry his own mother, but could inherit his father's other wives.) This male relative was the levir. The levirate was an important institution, used by the vast majority of Mongols. As mentioned, a wife obtained herds and possessions from her husband and her in-laws when she married, which became her property to dispose of as she pleased. If she left the marriage for any reason (if divorced or widowed, for instance), she could take her flocks and possessions with her. The levirate therefore provided economic and social benefits for Mongol families by keeping a widow, her property, and her labor within the camp of her husband, while it also protected widows and children from abandonment on the steppe. The institution was reinforced by a common belief among Mongols that a husband and wife would be reunited after death, and a woman who married her deceased husband's relative was not

4 Holmgren 1986, 131–34; *SH*, §66, §69, §94. 5 Dawson 1955, 17, 105.

considered to have betrayed him. The levirate also saved the expense of brideprice for younger sons.⁶

Nevertheless, some social classes did avoid the levirate, among them the very poor. With few possessions, a widow and her children could burden an impoverished camp, which might abandon them to fend for themselves. This seems to have been the case for Chinggis Khan's mother Hö'elün, whose brother-in-law did not marry her through the levirate after Yisügei's death, but left her and her children to endure years of hardship.

On the other end of the spectrum, among the elite, the levirate also operated irregularly. In some cases, the levirate could keep powerful women within the highest circles of government. Thus Hülegü, the third son of Tolui (d. 1233), inherited his father's secondary wife Dokuz, who became very influential (see below).⁷ By contrast, Tolui's senior widow Sorqaqtani successfully resisted a proposed levirate marriage to her nephew Güyük, son of Ögödei Qa'an, even though this would have united Tolui's and Ögödei's lines. Other elite women avoided levirate marriages and remained single widows with control of their substantial resources. The Mongol practice of elite widow chastity later influenced marriage law in China.⁸

Marriage through the mutual agreement of families and the payment of brideprice was the type favored in the political matches that linked unrelated clans and tribes to one another. Indeed, women were instrumental to Mongol politics, for the family ties created through strategic weddings reinforced specific political alliances among men. The key was the concept of the in-law (*quda*), which implied a mutual relationship of trust, affection, and co-operation. Throughout steppe society, male leaders sealed political alliances with one another through marriages involving children, siblings, or themselves. Under the Mongol Empire in particular, any man honored with marriage to a Chinggisid woman received the title of imperial son-in-law (*güregen*). Sons-in-law enjoyed heightened personal relationships to the ruler, military privileges like larger units composed of their own followers, and the social and political benefits of marrying their own children back into the imperial family thereafter.⁹ The Chinggisid khans also liked to marry offspring to members of their retinues and thereby strengthen bonds with their followers.

6 Dawson 1955, 7, 104; William of Rubruck 1990, 91–92; Serruys 1987, 174; Holmgren 1986, 129–31, 152–53.

7 Dokuz was Hülegü's second senior wife after the death of Chinggis Khan's granddaughter Güyük. See Broadbridge 2016, 126–27.

8 Rossabi 1979, 155–66; Holmgren 1985, 161–67; Birge 1995; Birge 2002, ch. 4.

9 Broadbridge 2018, chs. 4, 5.

A common political marriage pattern among the Chinggisids was the exchange marriage, in which a Chinggisid prince wedded a woman from another lineage, then later married a daughter back into the mother's lineage in "exchange" for the mother's marriage. That is, the daughter married her mother's brother's son (her own first cousin). Meanwhile a Chinggisid son might simultaneously marry a female cousin, also from the mother's side.¹⁰ This pattern then continued for generations. Although these marriages were consanguineous by modern standards, they fit Mongol rules about exogamy, since the two fathers (the bride's father and the groom's father) were not related by blood. It was this preference for linking Chinggisid children back to the mother's natal family that created the long-lasting consort lineages that arose during the Mongol period. Supreme among these was the Qonggirat lineage of Chinggis Khan's chief wife Börte, which dominated marriage politics for decades in the United Empire and the successor khanates. Börte's daughters married into the Ikires, Oirat, Önggüt, and Uighur ruling lineages, which created new consort families, many of whose children in turn married back among the Chinggisids.

Women, Work, the Camp, and War

In Mongol society, labor was divided between women and men. Men cared for horses, made koumiss, hunted, engaged in politics and rule, and went to war. Women managed the nomadic camps that were the center of nomadic life. Most importantly, women organized and carried out the seasonal migrations between summer and winter camps. They drove the carts, pulled by oxen or camels, and loaded and unloaded them. They erected their round dwellings (yurts or gers) on arrival and broke them down again before departure.¹¹ Once a nomadic camp was set up, women diversified into additional tasks. They handled food and the hearth: they made butter, cheese, and other milk products, and dressed and tanned skins into leather and sewed it into boots and clothing with thread made of animal tendons. They also produced the felt of which their homes were made. In addition, women cared for animals other than horses, and bore, raised, educated, and helped marry children. Like Mongol men, women rode from childhood and learned to shoot.

Among the Mongol nobility, each wife of a khan (*khatun*) had her own household (*ordo*), or palace tent compound. These consisted of a main round dwelling for the khatun herself, and smaller ones behind it for her children, attendants, and slaves. The palace dwellings were arrayed in order of wifely seniority from west to east, and the khan spent the night with each wife as he

10 Uno 2009, 176, 179–80. 11 William of Rubruck 1990, 74–75, 90–91.

chose, while his bodyguard watched both the entire compound, and the ger or yurt sheltering the khan.¹² One contemporary observer noted that these extensive establishments required “funds for the ladies’ board, provisions, necessities of wardrobes and mounts . . . funds for supplies for the department of potables and stables, for camels and pack horses, and for wages of maids, eunuchs, custodians, kitchen help, caravan drivers, muleteers, and other servants and retinue [of each lady] as necessary.”¹³ Each imperial wife might need between 200 and 400 wagons to store and transport her belongings, and could manage a staff that numbered anywhere from several hundred to 10,000 people.¹⁴

Both individual *ordos* and the great combined *ordo* were powerful economic centers. Each elite wife brought servants and livestock to her *ordo* from her parents (her *inje*), as well as the presents from her husband’s family at the time of marriage. To these she then added new gifts from her husband, whether at the birth of a child, or after military campaigns. These could include male and female servants and slaves, or a share of booty captured in battle. On the highest scale, the female kin of khans were granted appanages, which might include artisans, mines and miners, or farmers and farmland, and could generate great wealth from taxes on these conquered populations. These economically powerful women augmented their riches through commercial dealings and investments with *ortoq* merchants. Often an *ordo* stayed intact after the khatun’s death. A khan might install a new wife there, or it could be inherited by her youngest son, or by female kin.¹⁵

When men departed the *ordo* to hunt or fight, select wives accompanied them to create smaller traveling camps, especially on the long campaigns of the Mongol expansions. But many wives remained behind to maintain the great camps in the men’s absence. It was therefore not unusual for visitors to find themselves in settlements populated and run predominantly by women, with the largest, containing “hundreds and thousands of wagons and tents,” being those of the khatuns.¹⁶ The wives of khans thus exercised considerable authority and assumed high leadership roles within the camp and beyond, while even the wives of lower-ranking men were responsible for providing taxes and labor to

12 William of Rubruck 1990, 74; Andrews 1999, 324–28; Atwood 2004, 426; Miyawaki-Okada, 2001, 82–89; De Nicola 2017, 130–39.

13 *JT*/Rawshan, 1508; *JT*/Thackston, 746.

14 William of Rubruck 1990, 74; Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 482; Moule and Pelliot (1938) 1976, § 82.

15 Atwood 2004, 426. For Dokuz’s niece Tuqitani inheriting her *ordo*: *JT*/Rawshan, 963; *JT*/Thackston, 472.

16 Waley 1931, 71.

the imperial government, or sending military supplies or even men from their households to battle. These routine assumptions of leadership by Mongol women set the stage for wives to take over their husband's position upon his death, which they did in many instances, both in the United Empire and in the conquered territories. The frequent regencies of Mongol khatuns also reflect the accepted custom of a wife assuming her husband's leadership in his absence.

The gender division of labor in Mongol society most clearly affected the history of the empire when it came to military mobilization. Mongol men are best known for their extraordinary string of military victories. One reason for Mongol successes on the battlefield was the high percentage of able-bodied men who fought, as compared to those in sedentary societies. The wide range of essential activities performed by Mongol women greatly facilitated men's ability to specialize in war.

Women, Politics, and the Formation of the Empire

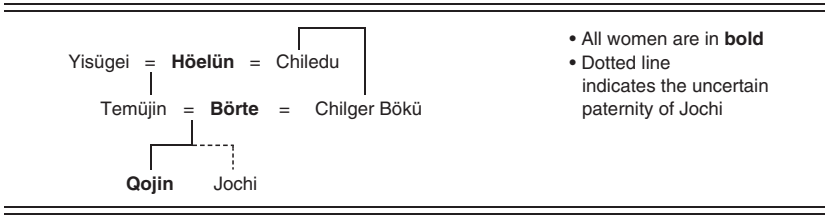
Among the Mongols, women and men both engaged in politics, although their roles varied. Women routinely advised the khans politically; joined men to receive ambassadors and diplomatic missions or hosted diplomats independently; and corresponded with administrators, vassals, and allies in other regions.¹⁷ Chinggisid women regularly attended the grand conclaves (*quriltais*) in which campaigns were planned, policies were determined, and succession was decided. Although women could not be elected in their own right, imperial widows with sons could become regents or act as khanmakers, whether in the United Empire or in the successor khanates.

A number of powerful women exerted particular influence on the formation of the United Empire, politically, logistically, and economically. First was Temüjin's mother, Hö'elün, of the Olqunu'ut clan, who married Chiledü of the Merkits, then was kidnapped by the Mongol Yisügei in about 1161. Hö'elün soon bore Temüjin (later Chinggis Khan) with Yisügei, followed by three more sons and a daughter. But when Temüjin was still a boy, Yisügei died unexpectedly and left the family in poverty. Abandoned by Yisügei's family and not taken in levirate marriage, Hö'elün and her junior counterpart, a second widow with two more sons, were left to raise the children on the inhospitable steppe. Hö'elün provided Temüjin with sage political advice as he began his rise as a leader.

Since Hö'elün's marriage to Yisügei had been through the irregular channel of kidnap, she did not enjoy the advantages of a union agreed upon

¹⁷ See the subsequent example of Kelmish Agha in this chapter. JT/Rawshan, 779–80; JT/Thackston, 382; JT/Boyle, 160; Rossabi 1988, 109.

Table 14.1 Marriage relations of Hö'elün, Börte, and the Merkits



between families. She may have been cut off from her own family until well after Yisügei's death, she probably never received a dowry, she did not marry Temüjin to one of her nieces, and her clan did not join Temüjin politically until after 1200. In addition, Hö'elün's forced marriage to Yisügei complicated Temüjin's rise because of the hostility it created with the Merkits.

The Merkit problem became acute for Temüjin's senior wife, Börte, the second important woman to the formation of the empire, who married Temüjin in about 1178. Börte was not from Hö'elün's Olqunu'ut family, as tradition preferred, but rather came from the Qonggirats, and had met Temüjin by chance. Like Hö'elün, Börte advised Temüjin on political matters throughout his career. She also bore nine healthy children: five daughters and four sons. The paternity of one son, however, was ever in question, since early on the Merkits abducted Börte and forced her to marry the younger brother of Hö'elün's first husband as revenge for Hö'elün's previous kidnapping. Although Temüjin rescued his wife with the help of important political allies, Börte's first son Jochi, born soon after her captivity, was never fully accepted as Temüjin's progeny (see Table 14.1). This contributed to Temüjin's later harsh treatment of the Merkits, and demonstrates the long shadow of Yisügei's theft of Hö'elün.

Nevertheless, as adults, all nine of Börte's children helped their father acquire and control territory. Not only did Börte's four sons – Jochi, Chaghadaï, Ögödei, and Tolui – participate in the conquests, but Chinggis Khan made them "princes in charge of a domain," by giving them each a large appanage to rule. He also chose Ögödei to succeed him as great khan. None of Chinggis Khan's sons from junior wives became princes in charge of domains, although they received smaller appanages.¹⁸ Meanwhile, Börte's five daughters, Qojin, Checheyigen, Alaqa, Tümelün, and Al Altan, made excellent strategic marriages that linked the Chinggisids to important in-law families: the Ikires

¹⁸ SH, §270.

(Qojin), Oirats (Checheyigen), Önggüts (Alaqa), Qonggirats (Tümelün), and Uighurs (Al Altan; see Table 14.2). Three of these marriages in particular allowed Temüjin peacefully to absorb independent nearby realms: the Oirats to the northwest, the Uighurs to the southwest, and the Önggüts bordering northern China. All the daughters provided their father with imperial sons-in-law to participate in military ventures. Oirat guides helped the Mongols pursue Naiman and Merkit enemies in 1207, while an army of Uighurs under Chinggis Khan's son-in-law, the ruler (or *idiqu*, lit. "holy fortune"¹⁹) Barchuk, helped invade Khwārazm in 1219. Meanwhile Alaqa married multiple Önggüt husbands in succession, and first they and then later she herself, ruling as a widow, supported two of Chinggis Khan's invasions of northern China (1211–1215, 1217–1223). Chinggis Khan's daughters from junior wives or concubines married lesser rulers and similarly contributed to expansion.

Several of Chinggis Khan's junior wives also made their mark on the empire. Some managed to care for their own people even after conquest, like the Tatar sisters Yisüi and Yisügen, who succored the Tatar women and children living as captives among the Mongols after the Tatar men had been killed. Other junior wives wedded Chinggis Khan to seal political pacts, like the Tanggut and Jin princesses, whose weddings brought the Xi Xia and Jin empires partially under Mongol control. Similar political matches later took place in the successor khanates, although in general these outsider wives never wielded the power enjoyed by well-connected nomadic women.

Table 14.2 Börte's children and the daughters' spouses

Börte = Temüjin			
Jochi	Chagatai	Ögedei	Tolui
Qojin = Butu (Ikires)		Törelchi = Checheyigen (Oirats)	
		Önggüts* = Alaqa	
			Tümelün = Chigü (Qonggirats)
			Barchuk = Al Altan (Uighurs)

• All women are in **bold**
 • Alaqa had several Önggüt husbands in succession

¹⁹ Allsen 1983, 246.

Other captured wives exerted considerable political influence in the United Empire. One such was Töregene, first the wife of a Merkit ruler, then a junior wife to Ögödei, who later became Ögödei's senior wife after bearing five sons. She eventually took over management of the empire from her alcoholic husband whenever he was incapacitated by his excesses. After Ögödei's death from drinking in 1241, Töregene became regent and openly opposed Ögödei's choice of heir (a grandson, Shiremün) in favor of her oldest son, Güyük. After five years of maneuvering, she was able to place Güyük on the throne (r. 1246–1248), despite fierce opposition.

Another influential woman was the Kereyit princess Sorqaqtani, who became the senior wife of Börte's son Tolui (d. 1233), after Chinggis defeated her uncle, the Kereyit ruler Ong Khan. After her husband's death, Sorqaqtani refused remarriage and allied herself with her nephew Batu Khan of the Jochids, where her sister Begtutmish was a senior widow (although not Batu's mother). When Güyük died, she conspired with Batu to place her son Möngke on the throne as great khan (r. 1251–1259). Subsequently, Möngke drastically purged the Ögedeid and Chaghadaid branches of the family and secured the position of great khan for Sorqaqtani's descendants thereafter.

Western Khanates

The three western khanates of the Jochids, Chaghadaids and Ilkhanids arose after the establishment of the United Empire. Although the historical trajectories of each khanate varied, women's activities within them remained consistent. First came the initial invasions that established each khanate, when large groups migrated into each region. There women formed peaceful camps for daily pastoral work unrelated to fighting. Men left these camps, sometimes with certain women along to create smaller traveling camps, during the fighting season of winter. In spring men returned to the larger camps to rest and fatten the horses, reconnect with family, and plan invasions for the following winter. Once khanates were established, however, camp movements among the Mongol ruling elite returned to standard seasonal patterns, even though many subject peoples in these khanates themselves resided in stationary villages, towns, and cities.

As in the United Empire, the most senior royal women in the khanates managed the camps. Residents included a woman's relatives and children, her husband's junior wives, concubines, and offspring, along with servants, staff,

guards, military commanders, and some soldiers. Senior wives were responsible for their husband's children in the camp, both their own and those of other women. During the establishment years of each khanate, the senior wives of the khan might be accompanied to the new territories by a brother, who worked as a military commander in the conquering armies. Later these senior wives could marry some of their princely offspring to their nieces and nephews, which ensured the continuation of the woman's natal family as a consort clan within the khanate (see Tables 14.3 and 14.4).²⁰ The senior wife in a camp may also have helped arrange marriages for the offspring of her husband's other wives and concubines.

Royal women ran their camps with extensive staff, including military officers from their husbands' bodyguards, who were specifically appointed to help oversee these establishments (as camp commander, *amīr-i ordo*).²¹ As in the United Empire, it was women and their staff who arranged the annual migrations from summer to winter sites. When necessary, women might also oversee the logistics of unusual travel, such as in the Ilkhanid case when Hülegü's widow Qutui moved her dependents and flocks from Mongolia to Iran in the mid-1260s.

Running the largest camps was the task of only the most senior matrons. But any elite woman could receive gifts of property from the ruler after military campaigns. Women might have agents to manage these properties when they themselves were absent; thus Hülegü's widow Qutui sent a concubine ahead to prepare her campsite in Iran, while leaving two of Hülegü's sons to hold the one in Mongolia from which she had departed.²²

In terms of politics, royal women routinely attended gatherings (*qur-iltai*), as mentioned above. Evidence suggests that some men did not consider such gatherings valid unless the khatuns were present.²³ Especially when succession was concerned, women could work behind the scenes to gather support for a candidate, or speak out publicly in a man's favor. Royal women also hosted important celebrations. At more routine times, highly placed women collaborated with military commanders or civilian bureaucrats about political, administrative, and financial matters. In the Ilkhanate, for example, Qutui Khatun, mother of Aḥmad

20 This has been demonstrated for the Ilkhanids, and may be conjectured for the Jochids and Chaghadaids. Broadbridge 2016.

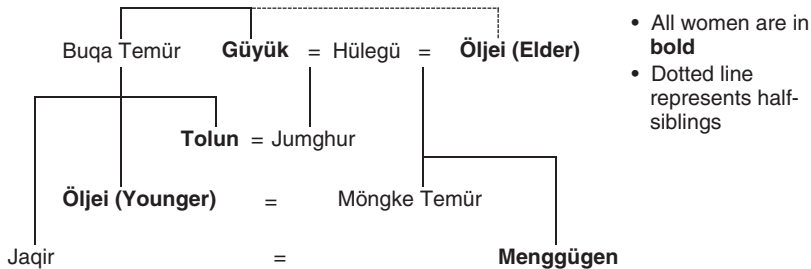
21 Broadbridge 2018, ch. 4.

22 JT/Rawshan, 940, 1024–25; JT/Thackston, 461, 519–20; JT/Boyle, 312.

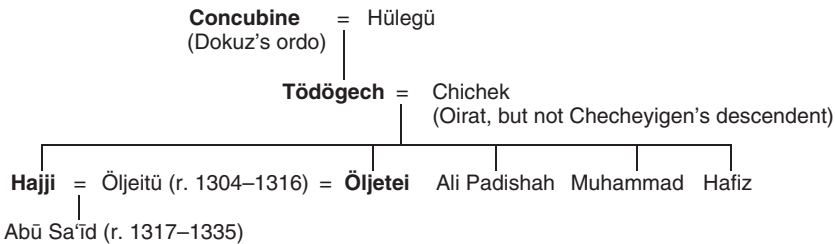
23 JT/Rawshan, 1146; JT/Thackston, 558.

Table 14.3 The Ilkhanids and their Oirat in-laws

A) The Senior Line



B) The Junior Line

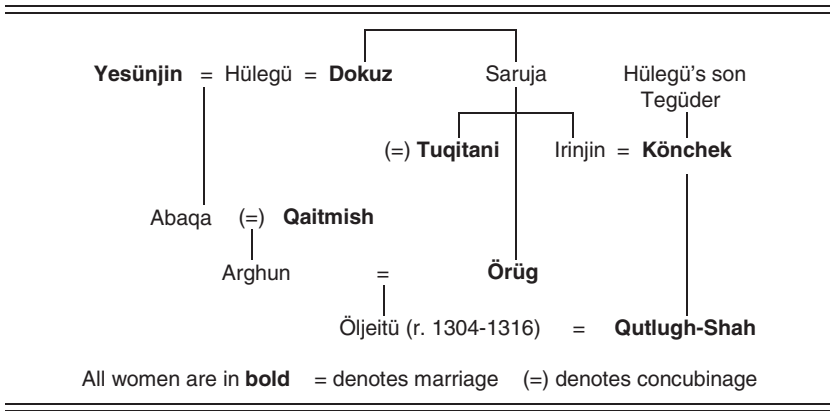


Tegüder (r. 1282–1284), partnered with a minister to handle finances, while Öljei Khatun co-operated with a commander to train her son, prince Möngke Temür, as governor in the Caucasus.²⁴ Royal women also regularly interceded with rulers on behalf of petitioners, or privately discussed politics and gave advice.

As for religion, although the Mongol religious milieu tended toward shamanism, royal women always participated in other religions if they chose, and could act as patrons of their favored faith, with influence over the fates of ordinary coreligionists. Royal women might regularly patronize holy or scholarly figures, distribute charity to the needy, own or contribute to the construction of religious architecture, and arrange gatherings of religious readings and other spiritual pleasures.²⁵

²⁴ *JT*/Rawshan, 1062–63; *JT*/Thackston, 519. ²⁵ De Nicola 2017, ch. 5.

Table 14.4 The Ilkhanids and their Kereyit in-laws



The Ilkhanids

The Ilkhanate was established by Hülegü in his long campaign across Iran during the 1250s, on which he was accompanied by two important wives: the Kereyit Dokuz, and the Oirat Öljei. A third wife, the Qonggirat Qutui, followed in the 1260s. These women's families – the Oirat, Qonggirat, and Kereyit consort lineages – dominated Ilkhanid marriage politics for decades. The Oirats descended from Börte's daughter Checheyigen, whose daughter Güyük was Hülegü's senior wife until her early death in Mongolia. Güyük's half-sister and co-wife Öljei thereafter maintained the Oirat in-law family by marrying her own and Güyük's children to the offspring of their brother, Buqa Temür, one of Hülegü's commanders. Later collateral lines of the Oirat consorts also rose to prominence. But a series of early deaths and low birth rates among the Oirat families meant that the only Chinggisid–Oirat prince actually to rule was Abū Sa'īd (r. 1317–1335; see Table 14.3). The second in-law family was the Qonggirats, descended from Börte's relatives. They saw their zenith under the Chinggisid–Qonggirat Aḥmad Tegüder, whose mother Qutui married him to four Qonggirat wives, but this zenith was cut short by his downfall and execution (see Table 14.6). Third were the Kereyits, who originated with Dokuz, Hülegü's second senior wife after Güyük and a cousin of Sorqaqtani. Dokuz herself was childless, but she intermarried the children of her brother Saricha, another of Hülegü's commanders, with Hülegü's offspring to produce the Kereyit in-law family and, ultimately, the Chinggisid–Kereyit ruler Öljeitü (r. 1304–1316; see Table 14.4).

Table 14.5 Checheyigen's daughters and their husbands

Jochi	Chagadai	Ögedei	Checheyigen	Tolui	
Batu	Mö'etügen				
				Elchiqmish = Arigh Böke	
	Qara Hülegü = Orqina		Güyük	=	Hülegü
Toqoqan			Köchü		
	Möngke Temür				

- All women are in **bold**
- Note that Checheyigen married no daughters to Ögödei's house

Table 14.6 The Ilkhanids and their Qonggirat in-laws

Hülegü = Qutui (Qonggirat)	
Ahmad Tegüder = Töküz (Qonggirat)	• All women are in bold
Daughter	
= Tödegü (Qonggirat)	
Daughter	
= Tö dai (Qonggirat)	
= Armini (Qonggirat)	
Three daughters and two sons	
= 2 other wives ; some concubines	
Tegüder's remaining two children	

Although other nomadic families engaged in Ilkhanid marriage politics, few seriously challenged the first three. Only two consort houses later rose to similar prominence: the Jalayirs and the Chobanids. The Jalayirs first married among the Ilkhanids in the 1290s, but their real opportunity came when princess Öljetei, a sister of the ilkhan Öljeitü, wedded two Jalayir commanders in succession. It was Princess Öljetei's son, Shaykh Hasan, who later established the Jalayirid dynasty. Meanwhile the Chobanids included Abū Sa'īd's great commander Choban and his many offspring. Even after Abū Sa'īd purged much of this family in 1328, Choban's daughter Baghdad Khatun kept the remainder alive and assumed significant power for herself, even

though, or because, Abū Saʿīd had wedded her against her will. Meanwhile, some Ilkhanid princesses married favored vassals like the king of Georgia, while Ilkhanid princes might accept wives from regional dynasties like the Byzantines at Constantinople, the Seljuqs in Anatolia, the Urtuqids in Mardin, the Salghurids at Fārs, and the Qutlugh Khanids in Kirman. In further evidence of Mongol comfort with women in positions of authority, the Ilkhanids allowed their female Qutlugh Khanid vassal, Qutlugh Terken, to govern Kirman for years (r. 1257–1283), and later briefly considered Abū Saʿīd's sister Sati Beg as a candidate to rule the Ilkhanate after his death.

Religion in the Ilkhanate also demonstrated women's participation. The most prominent of many royal Christian women was Dokuz, a Nestorian, who heard religious services every day and had a moveable chapel in her camp.²⁶ It is probable that she influenced Hülegü to spare the Christian population of Baghdad during its sack in 1258. After Islam became the dominant religion in the Ilkhanate under the convert Ghazan (r. 1295–1304), many members of the ruling elite, female and male, became Muslim, and some highly placed women performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. But older practices still continued, as when Ghazan wedded his father's widow Bulughan in a levirate marriage that directly contravened Islamic law.

The Jochids

Women participated in the years of campaigns into Central Asia, Russia and Eastern Europe (1236–1242) that created the Jochid Khanate, later known as the Golden Horde. Because historical sources discussing the Jochids are few and often composed by outsiders, however, our view of Jochid women's activities is severely curtailed, and our conclusions apply largely to the elite. In marriage politics, the situation appears to have been a story of Qonggirat ascendance. That is, two Qonggirats from Börte's lineage produced Jochi's senior sons, Orda and Batu. For the next several generations Qonggirat consorts dominated: nearly every Jochid khan had a Qonggirat senior wife, who bore the next ruler(s). The exceptions are Batu, whose senior wife was a Tatar, and Möngke Temür (r. 1267–1280), whose mother was an Oirat–Chinggisid daughter of Princess Checheyigen (see Table 14.6). Qonggirat commanders worked in the Jochid armies, may have been related to the Qonggirat royal wives, and, if so, perhaps intermarried their children with their royal nieces and nephews to continue the consort family over time.

One example of this important consort family is Princess Kelmish Agha, Tolui's granddaughter through a junior son, Qutuqtu. Kelmish Agha married

²⁶ De Nicola 2017, ch. 5.

a commander from the Jochid branch of the Qonggirat consorts, then later wedded her daughter Öljeitü to Möngke Temür Khan. Öljeitü's own son Toqta (r. 1290–1312) eventually ruled, possibly encouraged by his grandmother, who was alive during his reign. Kelmish Agha was also active as a Toluid: she corresponded with her Ilkhanid cousins, and facilitated the repatriation of a captured son of Qubilai Qa'an (r. 1260–1294) to China.²⁷

Junior Jochid consort lineages included the Kereyits, Oirats, Jajirats, Oghuz, Qipchaqs, Ushin, Tatars, Suldus, and Togolas. The Jochid khans also occasionally wedded outsider princesses like the Byzantines for political alliances.²⁸ Similarly some Jochid princesses wedded favored vassals. As imperial sons-in-law, vassals visited the Jochid royal encampment regularly, often with their princess wife and children. At times they accompanied khans on campaign, as when Prince Gleb of Belozero helped Möngke Temür attack the Ossetians in 1278. In turn, sons-in-law could borrow Mongol troops, as in 1317 when Prince Yuri Danilovich of Moscow and his Chinggisid wife Konchaka set out against Tver' with Mongol military support. A princess might convert to her husband's religion and take a new name: thus Konchaka was baptized as the Russian Orthodox Agatha at her wedding, while her relative Ṭulunbāy, who wedded the Mamluk sultan of Egypt and Syria in 1320, either was already, or became, a Muslim.²⁹

The Chaghadaids

Little is known about either Chaghadaid men or women. Records are thin, while what remains barely illuminates the elite. Even the names of Chaghadaid's wives are unrecorded, except for his beloved senior wife, Yesülün, another Qonggirat from Börte's family, who bore many children, and whose sister married Chaghadaid after her death. Other consort families included the Uighurs, Oirats, and Jalayirs; later the Chaghadaids married into other Chinggisid branches, or among their own commanders, or among the Turkic Qipchaqs of western Central Asia and the Qutluğ Khanids of Fārs, or into Dughlat or Saghrichi families, as well as into the Timurid and Uzbek dynasties.³⁰

Fortunately, the life of the most famous Chaghadaid woman does illuminate elite women's behavior: this was Orqina, another daughter of Princess

27 JT/Rawshan, 601, 722, 741, 779–80; JT/Thackston, 277, 352, 363, 382; JT/Boyle, 109, 124, 160.

28 For one example: Baṭṭūta/Gibb, 488.

29 Zenkovsky and Zenkovsky 1984; Broadbridge 2008, 136 and note 159.

30 Mu'izz al-Ansāb, British Library OR 467, fols. 29–32 (not in *Shu'āb-i Panjānah*); Babur 1996, 52, 54, 62.

Checheyigen, who married Chaghadaï's grandson and heir Qara Hülegü when her sisters married into the Toluid and Jochid families (see Table 14.5). Qara Hülegü was passed over as khan after Chaghadaï's death in 1242 in favor of his uncle Yesü Möngke (r. 1246–1248), whose wife dominated the scene.³¹ But after Möngke became great khan in 1251, he sent Qara Hülegü to take control of the Chaghadaid polity and execute Yesü Möngke. When Qara Hülegü died en route, Orqina continued the journey, had Yesü Möngke killed, and assumed rule over the Chaghadaids, nominally as regent for her young son, Mubārak Shāh. She reigned for about a decade, during which she royally hosted Hülegü, Dokuz, and Öljei as they crossed her territories on the Iran campaign of the 1250s. During the Mongol civil war of the 1260s, Orqina personally represented the Chaghadaids at the election of Arigh Böke as great khan. Soon, however, her political fortunes waned. She vigorously opposed Arigh Böke's nominee for the position of Chaghadaï khan, Alghu. When she and Alghu finally met, Alghu married her, possibly against her will, and they shared power until his death in 1266. Thereafter Orqina reassumed independent control of the Chaghadaids as regent until her son, Mubārak Shāh, was ousted by his cousin Baraq. Although Mubārak Shāh received a consolation appointment as keeper of the hunting cats, he later fled to the Ilkhanids under Abagha (r. 1265–1282).³² Orqina's fate is unclear, although she disappeared from historical view in the mid-1260s.³³

Thereafter Chaghadaid political history is tumultuous and poorly recorded, both when the Ögödeid house was re-establishing itself nearby under Qaidu (r. 1271–1303), and when the Chaghadaids took over from Qaidu's descendants after his death. In Transoxania, the Chaghadaids were eventually ousted by non-Chinggisid commanders (*qaraunas*), followed by the Mongol warlord Temür, although these men maintained Chinggisid puppets to legitimate themselves. In the eastern territories Chaghadaid khans continued to rule, but in both areas women's activities are nearly impossible to discern. All we know is that throughout these decades ambitious non-Chinggisid commanders sought out Chinggisid princesses because marrying one would elevate her husband to the useful status of imperial son-in-law.

China

When the Mongols invaded China in the thirteenth century and founded the Yuan dynasty in 1271, they brought their attitudes toward women and women's

31 JT/Rawshan, 760, 767; JT/Thackston, 372, 376; JT/Boyle, 143, 149.

32 JT/Rawshan, 767–72; JT/Thackston, 376–78; JT/Boyle, 149–54.

33 De Nicola 2014, 107–20.

roles with them. Women of the royal family continued to be active in politics and have power and influence, in some cases comparable to that of men. Among the population at large, some women had opportunities for leadership that were unprecedented in Chinese history. Through their wives and daughters, Mongol khans also formed marriage alliances with certain Mongol tribes and other states, and in particular with the Koryŏ court in Korea. Non-Mongol women in China led lives very different from those of their Mongol sisters, but in the realm of marriage law, Mongol rule brought about lasting change to China.

Mongol Imperial Women

Political Influence

As in the United Empire and the western khanates, Mongol royal women in China could control substantial resources and exert considerable political influence. They attended *quriltai* councils and openly participated in politics. Their households, or *ordos*, were large corporate entities with hundreds of personnel; and their appanages, which they administered directly, provided taxes and other revenues with which they conducted lucrative business and trade. Some empresses were provided ships by the court for this latter purpose.³⁴

As the human and material assets of the principal empresses proliferated, the court in 1296 established a central office to help administer their appanages and the subject populations within these. It was called the Empress's Palace Office (*zhongyu fu*), with the high grade of 3A, and was staffed by numerous bureaucrats. In 1300 the name was changed to the Bureau for the Empress's Administration (*zhongzheng yuan*) and raised to grade 2A. From 1311 to 1313 the office was temporarily combined with another, then reinstated with a grade of 1A, equivalent to the highest level of civil administration under the emperor.³⁵ The extent of the independent economic, military, and political power base of the principal empresses in Yuan China can be understood from this large and complex establishment. The bureau included all manner of administrators to supervise and collect revenues and services from farmers, artisans, hunters, falconers, and other special hereditary households. Over time, the court assigned to this office additional lands and groups of artisan households in different locations, with their own local officials, as gifts to the empress, leading to an ad hoc, overlapping, and complex bureaucratic structure.

Mongol empresses and other imperial wives could issue edicts in their own name. There was a special term for these: *yizhi* or "esteemed decrees."³⁶ The

34 E.g., YS, 38.824. 35 Farquhar 1990, 324 ff.

36 For examples of such edicts: Cai 1955, 7 and Plate 2; *Yuan dianzhang* 17: 15a.

empresses also held special seals of office used to verify and enforce their orders. An office within the Bureau for the Empress's Administration, the Empress's Seal Office (*zhongrui si*), kept these seals from 1310 on and issued the empress's edicts.³⁷ Imperial princesses also had their own seals and could issue seals to officials they appointed. In 1958, a seal for the director general of Hebei was unearthed in a village in southern Inner Mongolia, stating, "Seal of the Director General of Hebei Appointed by the Princess Regent." This princess was Alaqa (or Alahai Beki), Chinggis Khan and Börte's third daughter (mentioned above), who married in succession several men of the Önggüt tribe, some in a levirate union, then later ruled a large area on her own in what is now north China and Inner Mongolia.³⁸

In addition to enjoying independent sources of wealth and influence, the principal empresses were usually trusted advisers to their husbands, the Yuan emperors. First and foremost was Chabui (Ch. Chabi), principal wife of Qubilai Qa'an (Emperor Shizu, r. 1260–1294), a Qonggirat woman from Börte's family. Both the Chinese and Persian historians praise Chabui for her sage wisdom, and she had a profound influence on Qubilai's reign. She is famously credited with urging Qubilai not to let farmlands around the capital, Dadu, be transformed into pastureland. And she stepped up to protect the Song Empress Dowager Xia and Empress Quan, who had been captured in 1276 and who were held in captivity in the capital until their deaths in 1283 and 1296 respectively. Moreover, Chabui was an ardent Buddhist and contributed to Qubilai's tolerant religious policies in general, and helped develop his relationship with the Tibetan monk 'Phags-pa in particular. She was also instrumental in getting Qubilai elected great khan, by quickly summoning him from the south to counter his brother Arigh Böke when the Great Khan Möngke died.³⁹

After Chabui died in 1281, Qubilai began to rely heavily on one of his other wives, Nambui, also from the Qonggirat tribe and a distant cousin of Chabui's. In 1283 she was elevated to the position of principal empress, and as Qubilai's health declined, he may even have allowed her to issue edicts in his name.⁴⁰ The chief wives of other emperors were also trusted advisers to their husbands, but perhaps the most notable is Lady Qi, a Korean who gained the favor of the last Yuan emperor, Toghon Temür (Shundi, r. 1333–1368). She rose from the rank of concubine early in Toghon Temür's reign, obtaining the title of second empress (*di'er huanghou*) in 1340, when she took the Mongol name Öljei Qutuq (Ch. Wanzhehudu), and at the end of 1365 the emperor

37 Farquhar 1990, 324. 38 Ding Xueyun 1984; Kessler 1993, 154; Zhao 2008, 150–55.

39 YS, 114.2871–72; Rossabi 1979, 167–71; Rossabi 1988, 67–69.

40 YS, 114.2873; Rossabi 1988, 225.

elevated her to principal empress, against the objections of his Chinese ministers. For the last decades of the Yuan, she strongly influenced court policy and politics across Northeast Asia. At her urging, her son the crown prince launched a failed invasion of Korea in 1362 to install her relatives in power.⁴¹

The role of these imperial wives became critical when the emperor was ill or aging. When Qubilai's wife Nambui was elevated to principal empress in 1283, his health was already declining. Qubilai moved into her *ordo*, and all communications with the emperor were transmitted through her, so that for the last eleven years of his reign, from 1283 to 1294, Nambui effectively controlled the government on Qubilai's behalf.⁴² Similarly, Bulughan, principal empress of Emperor Temür (Chengzong, r. 1295–1307), handled affairs after her husband fell ill in 1301. Chinese historians praised her for maintaining a stable and fair government, and for trusting the advice of the high minister Harghasun.⁴³ Along the same lines, at the end of the Yuan dynasty, the above-mentioned Lady Qi gained enormous influence over the government. Her husband, the Emperor Toghon Temür, once vigorous and assertive, had by this time lost all interest in ruling and let Lady Qi take over many policy decisions from 1340 onwards.⁴⁴ On two occasions, in 1358 and 1365, she tried to force Toghon Temür to abdicate for her son, the crown prince, but each time the emperor's ministers or generals thwarted the plans.⁴⁵

Like the great khatuns of the United Empire, the wives of Yuan emperors played a major role when an emperor died. Succession battles to determine the next sovereign were frequently fought between powerful women, each trying to install her own candidate. Some also ruled directly as regents. After 1294, no more *quriltai* councils were held to validate the succession; rather, empresses formed alliances with ministers and generals and together engaged in palace intrigue and violent conflict to determine the next great khan.

When Qubilai died in 1294, Empress Nambui, who had held the reins of government for eleven years, tried to become regent and install her ten-year-old son Temechi as emperor. But she was outmaneuvered by Kökejin, the widow of Qubilai's favored son and the former Crown Prince Chinggisim. Kökejin had the support of Qubilai's general Bayan and other ministers, and with them she wrested control of the government away from Nambui. After

41 YS, 41.883; 114.2880–82; 140.3370. Robinson 2009, 118–29, 245–51; Zhao 2008, 81–86; Zhao and Guisso 2005, 36–39.

42 YS, 114.2873; Rossabi 1988, 225. 43 YS, 114.2873–74; Zhao and Guisso 2005, 27–29.

44 YS, 114.2880–81. 45 YS, 46.970; 140.3370–71; 114.2881; Robinson 2009, 121, 247.

three months, she managed to have her son Temür enthroned as great khan (Emperor Chengzong, r. 1294–1307).⁴⁶

When Temür died in 1307, his wife Bulughan, who as we saw above had been managing affairs of government since 1301, tried to become regent. But she had to contend with another royal widow, Daghui (Ch. Daji, d. 1322), the widow of Temür's older brother, whom Bulughan had previously exiled as a precaution. Daghui prevailed, and her two sons became the next two emperors. Bulughan and her candidate for the throne, Prince Ananda, were killed. As empress dowager, Daghui continued to wield tremendous power. She is said to have operated a shadow government that was the true power behind the throne, especially during the reign of her second son, Ayurbarwada (Emperor Renzong, r. 1311–1320). Daghui lost the next succession battle against her grandson Shidebala, who became emperor Yingzong (r. 1321–1323). She died in 1322, but her faction continued to be powerful, and its members murdered Emperor Yingzong in 1323 in the famous Nampo incident, which installed Yisün Temür (Taiding Di, r. 1323–1338) on the throne. When Yisün Temür died, his widow Babughan tried to have her son Aragibag enthroned, but he reigned for just one month in 1328 (Emperor Tianshun) before the Daghui faction regained control and installed one of her grandsons, Tugh Temür, as emperor (Wenzong, r. 1329–1332).

During these years of the middle Yuan, royal women such as Nambui, Bulughan, and Daghui dominated the court. After the murder of Yingzong in 1323, however, the Yuan court descended into factional struggles involving alliances of royal women, generals, and ministers. Empresses could be on the winning or losing side of these. Empress Danashiri, one of the wives of the last Yuan emperor Toghon Temür, was murdered after an unsuccessful coup by her brothers in 1335.⁴⁷ Toghon Temür also moved against his aunt Budashiri, the widow of Tugh Temür Qa'an (Emperor Wenzong, r. 1328–1332), who had continued to exert great influence over the court as the Great Empress Dowager (*taihuan taihou*). In a move against her faction, Toghon Temür had her banished, then executed.⁴⁸

Marriage Ties

Royal women were important to the Yuan state by their marriages, which helped forge ties with other Mongol tribes and neighboring states. As during

46 JT/Rawshan, 946–47; JT/Thackston, 463–64; JT/Boyle, 320–21; YS, 127.3115; Cleaves 1956, 169–71.

47 YS, 138.3334. Zhao and Guisso 2005, 32–33.

48 YS, 40.857. Zhao and Guisso 2005, 32–35.

the United Empire, and as seen in the western khanates, the Yuan emperors all married women of the Qonggirat tribe. Moreover, nearly every woman elevated to the position of principal empress was Qonggirat. Marco Polo attests that Qonggirat women were favored as consorts and concubines. He writes that every other year Qubilai had 100 of the most beautiful women of the Qonggirat tribe brought into his harem.⁴⁹ The brothers and other relatives of these consorts gained positions as trusted generals and advisers. And the children of these Qonggirat consorts often married back out into the Qonggirat tribe, creating new in-law families and an ongoing pattern of two-way exchanges with the tribe of Börte, Chinggis Khan's principal wife. The Yuan court also followed the practice of the Chinggisids in the United Empire by using strategic marriages to forge ties with the principal in-law lineages of other Mongol tribes, such as the Oirats, Önggüts, and Ikires.

Qubilai and his successor khans in the Yuan also reinforced alliances with the Uighurs by allowing their leaders to marry Mongol princesses. (Interestingly, Qubilai mostly chose imperial princesses from Ögödei's line to wed into the Uighur royal family, rather than his own Toluid line.)⁵⁰ As in the United Empire and the western khanates, male relatives of imperial consorts and husbands of princesses gained political power and influence as generals or ministers and often received fiefs or other resources from the Yuan court. Imperial princesses who married out were instrumental in establishing good relations with neighboring states. Most notable are the ties of marriage between the Yuan court and the Korean state of Koryŏ. One of Qubilai's daughters, Qutluq Kelmish, married King Ch'ungyŏl of Koryŏ (r. 1275–1308), initiating a succession of marriage ties with the Korean royal house and generating in-law family relations with the Korean rulers. Five of the seven kings of Koryŏ married Mongolian princesses, seven in all. These women were often highly influential at the Korean court and sent back reports to the Mongol emperor. Through these marriage alliances, the state of Koryŏ was able to maintain a unique relationship with the Mongol Empire. The Yuan first established a branch secretariat (*xingsheng*) for Korea in 1282, suggesting its full incorporation into Yuan territory. Nevertheless, the Persian chronicler Rashīd al-Dīn describes Korea as a "separate kingdom"; indeed the Koryŏ king retained the right to collect taxes and appoint officials and thereby maintained the independent sovereignty of his state.⁵¹ Royal marriages were also an occasional political strategy for the Yuan court to maintain alliances with the

49 Moule and Pelliot (1938) 1976, §82 or p. 205, as cited in Rossabi 1979, 171–72.

50 Zhao 2008, 173–76.

51 Farquhar 1990, 399–400; JT/Rawshan, 909; JT/Thackston, 445; JT/Boyle, 281–82; Zhao 2008, 179–205; Xi 2003, 1–13.

Ilkhans in Persia. Marco Polo famously returned to Europe on a ship carrying a Mongol princess to be the wife of the ruler of the Ilkhanate.⁵²

Female Officials in the Yuan

The practice among the Mongols of a wife taking over a position of authority in place of her husband can be seen to have carried over to China in isolated cases. Perhaps because of the Mongols' general acceptance of women being involved in government and politics, the Yuan government on a number of occasions confirmed women as officials in local government or deputized wives to act in the place of their husbands in official capacities, practices found in no other period of Chinese history. An early example was preserved on a stone stele in a Daoist temple in north China that records an order dated 1240 from Boraqchin, the primary empress at that time of the Great Khan Ögödei, and the unnamed wife of the late heir apparent. In their joint empress edict ("esteemed decree," *yizhi*), Boraqchin and the unnamed consort of the heir apparent order the local Mongol agent (*darughachi*) of Pingyang prefecture in Hebei to see that the civilian Chinese governor, named Du Feng, prints Daoist texts and builds an edifice to house them. The edict adds, "If you do not have the time, your wife should act as director (*tiling*) and handle the matter."⁵³

We find scattered references in the sources to women acting in place of a deceased husband or father and being confirmed as a civil or military official, with all the requisite accoutrements of authority. One of the most remarkable is a woman named Shazhi, who in 1284 was confirmed by Qubilai in the post of director general (*zongguan*, grade 3A) of Jianchang circuit in southwest China, at her own request. She had previously taken over the military post of a myriarch (*wanhu*) from her late father and had received a tiger tablet (*hufu*) from the court, the highest badge of authority granted to officials. She thus occupied both the highest civilian post and the highest military post possible outside the court.⁵⁴ During her rise to power, while her father was still alive, she married a rival local chieftain, Azong, and together they controlled a large swath of non-Han tribal territory in Yunnan, southwest China.

Chinese records describe two other women who inherited high positions from their husbands, both also non-Han of the southwest, among whom the practice may have been more acceptable. The first woman, Shigu, became

52 Moule and Pelliot (1938) 1976, §18.

53 Cai 1955, 7 and Plate 2; Cleaves 1960. Cai Meibiao (2012) demonstrates conclusively that the edict is not from Töregene, as scholars have all assumed, but from Boraqchin. See also Liu Yingsheng 2015.

54 YS, 61.1471–73. Farquhar 1985, 22–23.

a director general of a circuit and received a tiger tablet in 1303, after her husband, a prefect in the area, was killed in a rebellion. The second, Piaomo, was the wife of the pacification commissioner for the Luoluo tribal area (and a Luoluo himself). Upon his death, she took over his “official affairs” and sent her son as an envoy to the court. The Yuan dynastic history records this event but does not say whether Piaomo received official sanction of her position or a tiger tablet, as other female officials had done.⁵⁵

Women also gained positions of formal power under conditions of war during the Mongol conquests. In the 1220s, in Daming circuit in north China, a Mongol prince in charge of the conquest ordered Ran Shouzhen, the wife of the late governor of the circuit, to take over her husband’s duties “temporarily.” A Chinese military commander, Wang Zhen, commanded troops under her direction.⁵⁶ A remarkable woman, Yang Miaozen (c. 1193–1250), inherited a rebel army from her brother, married another local leader, and went on to control a large swath of land from Shandong province down to the Yangzi river. She gave nominal allegiance to the Southern Song dynasty but eventually allied with the Mongols, who appointed her governor of Shandong province. She even had an audience with the Great Khan Ögödei in 1232.⁵⁷ In a third case, a non-Han woman in Yunnan, Shejie, inherited troops from her chieftain father and staged a rebellion. This is the rebellion that killed the husband of the female leader Shigu, mentioned above, leaving Shigu to inherit her husband’s position and become director general of the circuit. This left two women leaders to fight against each other until Shejie was captured and executed in 1303.⁵⁸ During the Yuan dynasty, as in Chinese dynasties, there was no regular path by which women could enter the civil service; nevertheless, capable women could in some cases substitute for a husband or father and thereby attain high civil and military posts, reaching positions even above what their male relatives had previously held.

Non-Mongol Women in the Conquered Territories

In China under the Mongol Yuan dynasty, Mongolian women and Chinese women led very different lives. Mongolian women of all classes were physically fit, rode horses, and did much of their work outdoors. By contrast, Chinese women traditionally occupied themselves with indoor tasks of spinning, weaving, and doing embroidery. Moreover, new ideals and practices were taking hold among the Chinese during the centuries before the Mongol invasion that

55 YS, 61.1470; 28.630. Farquhar 1985, 24.

56 YS, 152.3592 (biography of Wang Zhen); Farquhar 1985, 22. 57 Wu 2002.

58 YS, 162.3812. Farquhar 1985, 24.

intensified this dichotomy. Visual and textual sources from the earlier Tang dynasty (618–907) portray elite women as portly, well fed, and playing polo on horseback, whereas those of the Song dynasty (960–1279) emphasize a slim, even frail, look. Horse riding became unheard of for women and even rare for men, as the Jurchen and Mongol encroachments cut off the northern horse pastures from Chinese control. Among elite families, seclusion became the norm for wives and daughters. Although nonelite women were forced by circumstances to take on roles outside the home, in farming, shopkeeping, and so on, over the next centuries, women were much less likely to be seen in public. During the Song dynasty, footbinding also began to appear among the female population. Its origins remain obscure, and it was practiced somewhat differently in different parts of China, but both textual and archaeological evidence points to its taking hold in the twelfth century and spreading quickly from the elite to all classes of Han Chinese women (Hakka, Uighurs, Manchus, and other minorities over the centuries never practiced footbinding).⁵⁹ Its beginnings during the centuries of successive foreign occupation of China suggest that it may have functioned as an assertion of Han civilized culture and ethnic identity in the face of non-Han encroachment from the north. The Mongol occupation also had long-term consequences for Chinese marriage law. Qubilai Qa'an in 1271 legalized the Mongol practice of the levirate for all peoples, and in the face of fierce legal battles and a flood of lawsuits, widow chastity emerged as a legal means for Chinese women to resist levirate marriages.⁶⁰ Over time, the levirate was again outlawed for Chinese, but new laws supporting widow chastity lasted to the end of the imperial era in China.⁶¹

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59 Ebrey 1993, 37–43; Ko 2005, ch. 4.

60 Yuan dianzhang, 18: 23a–28a; *Tongzhi tiaoge* 2001, 3: 40; Birge 1995; Birge 2002, ch. 4.

61 Birge 2003.

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VOLUME I

PART 3

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VIEWS FROM THE EDGES
Regional Histories

Mongolia in the Mongol Empire

From Center to Periphery

MORRIS ROSSABI

Mongolia, with its lush vegetation and pristine environment, offered a sustainable livelihood for the Mongols, although winter snow and ice and summer droughts, on occasion, threatened them and their animals. Nonetheless, they returned to their homeland both after trade with peoples in China and after wars with the Xia or Jin dynasties. The Mongolian landscape resonated with them. Changes in their lifestyles started with their successful campaigns against the Khwārazm-Shāh in the far distant lands of Central Asia. Seeking direct rule over territory that had put up stiff resistance, Chinggis Khan left behind an occupying force to govern the region. His son and successor Ögödei (1186–1241) stationed troops in China and in the more distant territories in Russia that the Mongols had subjugated. Yet Ögödei, his son and successor Güyük, and his nephew Möngke, all of whom became Qa'ans, spent most of their lives in Mongolia and maintained their courts in the steppes. Because the Qa'an's residence was, in theory, the focal point of this growing empire, Mongolia remained the center until the reign of Qubilai Qa'an.

The Mongols Build a Capital

Mongolia developed settlements and towns during this era, which challenges the typical image of the country as the home of pastoral nomads. The very construction of a capital in Qaraqorum signaled a change in Mongol policies and would eventually generate unforeseen difficulties. Nomadic pastoralism, the Mongols' traditional style of life, did not require a central location for government. By the time Qaraqorum began to be built in 1235, the Mongols had conquered and occupied much of Central Asia, Manchuria, and north China and had made forays in Korea. Ögödei Qa'an planned additional campaigns to the west, which culminated in the conquest of much of

Russia. He recognized that rule, rather than plunder of this domain, required an administrative center. Moreover, the establishment of a capital would contribute to greater Mongol legitimacy as rulers rather than plunderers. Yet Mongolia itself did not become centralized, as it remained the migrating pastoralists' domain. Despite the descriptions in the Yuan sources about government agencies founded in Mongolia, difficulties in transport and bitter winters precluded control over the vast majority of the herders who roamed over vast distances to find grass and water for their animals.

Ögödei had decided to construct his capital in Mongolia near the Orkhon river. A precedent for pastoral nomads to build a center in the steppes existed. The Uighurs (744–840) had established a capital city as early as the eighth century, and the Khitan Liao dynasty (916–1125) had built capital cities in the steppes in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The Uighur capital, Qarabalghasun, was only about twenty-five kilometers from Qaraqorum, the site Ögödei chose for his capital, a site which some scholars believe was selected due to Uighur influence.¹ Even earlier, the Mongols had ordered the establishment of settlements. In 1212, the Nestorian chancellor Chinqai (c. 1169–1252) had moved farmers and artisans, who were mostly Chinese, to an area in western Mongolia between the Khangai and Altai mountains. The site became known as Chinqai Balghasun (“granary of Chinqai” or “city of Chinqai”).² The Mongols also recruited goldsmiths and jewelers for Bai Baliq, a town allegedly near the Selenge river,³ and they marched weavers captured in Samarqand around 1221 to found a new town in Xinmalin near Kalgan in Inner Mongolia.⁴

Ögödei started to build strong city walls around what would be Qaraqorum in 1235. The most prominent buildings would be the Wan'angong, his palace, which was surrounded by walls and was isolated from the rest of the town, and a Buddhist temple, but the latter was not completed until 1256. The court moved craftsmen and construction workers from various parts of its domain to construct the capital. Thousands of Chinese, Central Asians, Persians, and perhaps other groups collaborated on the structures, with the result that Qaraqorum was a multicultural and multireligious center. A Muslim bazaar, mosques, and a Chinese artisan area also attested to the city's cosmopolitanism.⁵

1 See the evidence in Allsen 1996, 126–28. 2 Buell 1993, 100.

3 Allsen 1997, 35. Liu 2011, 153–54, identifies the site as Ber Baliq around the modern town of Mulei in Xinjiang, which is quite a distance from the Selenge river.

4 Pelliot 1927, 261–79.

5 Erdenebat and Pohl 2009; Bemmman, Erdenebat, and Pohl, 2010.

The variety of peoples in the town is readily confirmed in numerous writings, but sources on religion among the Mongols are limited. Yet the scarce data indicate the presence of diverse groups. Buddhism had certainly been an important part of Mongolia after its contact with China, and it is no accident that a Buddhist temple in Qaraqorum was one of the most important buildings in the town. Support for Buddhism persisted well into the fourteenth century. In 1311, the five-storied pagoda was repaired, and in 1342, the Yuan dynasty emperor again ordered its restoration. In 1346, inscriptions in Chinese and Mongolian, which described the history of the site and asserted that the Great Khans Ögödei and Möngke “made it desire not to relish killing” – Buddhist sentiments but unlikely the true beliefs of the two Qa’ans, were placed near the pagoda.⁶ The discovery of Buddhist statues in sections of the site provides additional confirmation of the religion’s significance. Although the Mongols in China favored Tibetan Buddhism, the Chinese forms of the religion were dominant in Qaraqorum.⁷ An Islamic cemetery in Qaraqorum yields even greater evidence of the variety of religions in Mongolia. Moreover, several ceramics were adorned with attempts to produce Arabic script, still another indication that foreigners of Islamic faith had reached Mongolia. The 1341–1342 (AH 742) inscription which details the establishment of a Sufi lodge (*khānqāh*) in Qaraqorum, initiated by a Muslim from Beijing but supported by the local community, attests to the continuous presence of Muslims in Qaraqorum.⁸ Evidence of Nestorian Christianity is limited, but the written sources confirm that the religion had appealed at least to Mongol elite women, and Qaraqorum would have a small population of believers.⁹ Written sources confirm that the native spiritual practices, be they called shamanism or by another term, persisted. Festivals associated with the New Year; commemorations of Tengri, the Sky God, and of the ancestors; and the scattering of mare’s milk and other rituals at the onset of military campaigns remained significant.¹⁰ Ögödei himself favored Daoism, and his patronage allowed the Daoists to engage in “appropriation of Buddhist temples and destruction of Buddhist images.”¹¹ His wife even sponsored the printing of the Daoist canon. Later qa’ans, including Qubilai, sided with the Buddhists in this conflict with the Daoists.

Although Ögödei signaled his intention to govern by setting up a capital city in Qaraqorum, this site in Mongolia was too far from the center of the

6 For this phrase and for the inscriptions: Cleaves 1952, 1–123.

7 For a general summary: Heissig 1980. 8 Uno, Muraoka, and Matsuda 1999.

9 William of Rubruck 1990, 150–56. 10 William of Rubruck 1990, 240–45.

11 De Rachewiltz 1981, 52.

Mongols' newly subjugated domains. Moreover, it would require vast expenditures of resources to supply the city because it was not in an economically viable area for a growing population. Although the government encouraged agriculture by providing tools for farmers and awards for successful cultivators, the weather, the short growing season, and the limited arable land precluded efforts to sustain a large population. In a 1260 memorial to Qubilai Qa'an, who had just acceded to power, his Confucian adviser Hao Jing (1223–1275) wrote that "the central government ought to be based in North China because that was the true heartland, but a subsidiary administration should be retained in Khara Khorum [*sic*] and military districts should be established on the border."¹² Liu Bingzhong (1216–1274), another of Qubilai's Confucian advisers, is credited with suggesting the selection of a site near modern Beijing for the capital.¹³ Dadu, the name of this capital, had good defenses and, via an extension of the Grand Canal, had access to food and water; it was also farther north than traditional Chinese capitals and thus closer to the Mongols' homeland.

The Decline of Qaraqorum and of Mongolia?

The conventional view concerning Qaraqorum and Mongolia after the transfer of the Mongol capital to Dadu, starting in the late 1260s, is that the region increasingly became a backwater. Conflicts between Qubilai Qa'an (1215–1294) and his brother Arigh Böke and later his sons, as well as Ögödei's grandson Qaidu (c. 1236–1303), allegedly led to chaotic conditions. The occupations of Qaraqorum by Qaidu and others persisted into the reigns of Qubilai's grandson Temür (1265–1307) and contributed to an instability that undermined the fragile economy in an already difficult and often life-threatening environment. The destruction wrought in the steppes and in Qaraqorum harmed the Mongol population. The attacks and then withdrawals from Qaraqorum and other locations in Mongolia by hostile forces contributed to insecurity and to a need to resettle defeated migrants.¹⁴ Such disturbances, together with the demanding environment, led to economic difficulties, compelling the Yuan court to waive taxes and provide food and other necessities to the population. Qubilai himself sent grain to craftsmen based in the upper Yenisei region in 1269 and three years later he provided tools and animals and settled a group of Chinese to the same region to

¹² Rossabi 1988, 70; see also Schlegel 1968; Lynn 1993, 348–70.

¹³ See Chan 1993, 245–69.

¹⁴ Dardess 1972–1973, 145, 149.

establish a military agricultural colony (*tuntian*) to supply food for themselves and the nearby area.¹⁵

Yet recent archaeological excavations in Qaraqorum seem to belie this image about that capital. Archaeologists have confirmed that the old capital had been a flourishing center until its destruction by Ming dynasty forces. It did not impress the Franciscan friar William of Rubruck (1210–1277), who visited the city in the early 1250s and wrote that “discounting the Chan’s palace, it is not as fine as the town of St. Denis, and the monastery of St. Denis is worth ten of the palace.”¹⁶ However, the imposing religious buildings, bazaar, palace, and extensive craftsmen’s quarters, which produced remarkable sculptures, ceramics, and gold objects, attest to a lively artistic and commercial life in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Blue-and-white porcelains, fragments of wall paintings, metal vessels, a silk bonnet, bowls, and plates have all been excavated over the past fifteen years. Confirmation of relations with the so-called Western Regions may also be found in the ceramics. As the leading archaeologist of the city mentions about a particular vessel, a “floral pattern possibly contains Islamic influences and presumably derives from the Near East.”¹⁷ Occupations of the city appear not to have overwhelmed it or to have ended its role as a center for the Yuan and the Mongols until a Ming dynasty army destroyed it in the 1380s. Several regional centers, such as Jingzhou and Yingchang (see below), whose rulers collected taxes and maintained the peace, also survived for much of the Yuan period.

One possible reason for its survival, and indeed for the survival of much of the Mongol steppelands, was the scale of warfare during this time. The size of the armies in these battles is scarcely mentioned, and even if it is, the records may not be entirely reliable. The Chinese texts are notorious for their exaggerations in citing numbers of soldiers, casualties, and booty. The actual engagements probably consisted of relatively few troops because the steppes and Qaraqorum could not support a substantial force. Battles were likely small-scale events, which may explain the limited damage in Qaraqorum and other locales in Mongolia.

Mongolia’s need for assistance thus may have little connection to the battles. Such natural disasters as bad winters and the subsequent deaths of countless numbers of animals, which often afflicted the Mongols, compelled them to seek food and other supplies from China and necessitated the Yuan

15 Dardess 1972–1973, 150. 16 William of Rubruck 1990, 221.

17 Bemmman, Erdenebat, and Pohl 2010, 58.

court's attention. Droughts and the dreaded *zuds*, which consisted of a variety of climatic conditions including a buildup of ice that prevented the animals from reaching the life-preserving grasses, plagued herders.¹⁸

The Struggle for Power

In any event, the conflicts in Mongolia developed from the fragmentation among the Mongols. A struggle for power was initiated between the descendants of Chinggis Khan's principal sons, especially Tolui (1192–1232) and Ögödei, after the latter's death in 1241. Conflict persisted for a decade and was temporarily resolved with the accession of Tolui's son Möngke (1209–1259) to the Great Khanate in 1251 and his unleashing of a purge against his opponents.¹⁹ The number of victims cannot be ascertained, but hundreds of Möngke's enemies were certainly killed. However, Ögödei's descendants retained a substantial force, especially in Central Asia.

Still another war erupted after Möngke's death in 1259 between his two brothers, Qubilai and Arigh Böke (1219–1266), over the Great Khanate. Yet it was more than a struggle for power. As Möngke's youngest brother, Arigh Böke was granted rule over parts of the Mongol homeland and, lacking experience and involvement in sedentary life, he was a staunch defender of the Mongol heritage and culture.²⁰ On the other hand, Qubilai had spent much of his life in the sedentary world. When he was twenty-one years old, his uncle, the Great Khan Ögödei, provided him with an appanage in Xingzhou in the province of Hebei. Instead of exploiting his Chinese subjects or converting their arable land to pasture, Qubilai supported the peasants in an effort to foster production and thus more revenue through taxation. He sought advice from Chinese counselors even before he became emperor, recruited many foreigners for a variety of positions, adjudicated a dispute between Buddhists and Daoists, and led a successful campaign to bring the Dali Kingdom, in modern Yunnan, under Mongol control. Such a portrait of his views and activities reveals that he had a wider frame of reference than his younger brother, who had scarcely set foot out of the steppes.²¹ The conflict between the two brothers was extraordinarily significant. If Arigh Böke had emerged victorious, the center of power in East Asia would have remained in Mongolia, but if Qubilai won, the center would shift to China. On the one hand, Qaraqorum and Mongolia could have vital political and military roles,

18 E.g. Endicott 2005. 19 Allsen 1987, 30–34. 20 Dardess 1972–1973, 121.

21 For additional details: Rossabi 1988.

but on the other hand, they could be subsidiary parts of the Mongol domains. The stage was set for conflict when both Qubilai and Arigh Böke were enthroned as the Great Khan in 1260.

Because this four-year civil war, with its major impact on Mongolia, would shape the history of East Asia under the Yuan dynasty, a consideration of Qubilai's strategy is critical. His principal objective was to cut off supplies, which Arigh Böke and his forces desperately needed. Rashīd al-Dīn, the great Persian historian, wrote that 500 carts daily reached Qaraqorum with provisions for its inhabitants.²² If Arigh Böke had any hopes for success, he would have to safeguard the supply lines. Yet Qubilai had substantial advantages because of the availability of the resources of the sedentary civilization of China. Thus he could act decisively to put Arigh Böke on the defensive. He allied with Qadan, one of Ögödei's sons, who controlled the Uighur territories with a base in Beshbaliq. Qadan denied Arigh Böke a critical and nearby region, and he went one step farther by occupying the province of Gansu, another source of supplies. Qubilai himself controlled Yan (the area around modern Beijing) and stationed additional troops there as he departed to confront Arigh Böke. One of the few remaining sources of supplies was the Yenisei valley, northwest of Qaraqorum. Arigh Böke was compelled to move there and abandon parts of Mongolia. His principal opportunity was alliances with the neighboring leader in Central Asia, a hope which would eventually be dashed. First, in 1260, Qadan defeated and killed Alamdar, Arigh Böke's ally and Qubilai's foe ever since he had accused Qubilai of retaining tax revenues that should have been sent to his brother Möngke's court, in Xiliang, an important location in northwest China that had links with Central Asia. Alamdar was no match for the forces of a Chinggisid descendant.

Arigh Böke then turned to Chinggis's son Chaghadaï's grandson Alghu (d. 1265 or 1266), who resided in his encampment. He had encouraged Alghu to compete for the position after ordering the murder of Abishqa, Chaghadaï's great-grandson, whom Qubilai had supported and sent toward Central Asia.²³ Alghu, in fact, ascended to the Khanate, and Arigh Böke, who had paved the way for Alghu, expected the support of the new Chaghadaïd khan. He anticipated, in particular, the transfer of tax revenues and the provision of supplies. Instead Alghu refused to turn over the taxes and to provide supplies. War broke out between the two, mostly in modern Xinjiang. Neither could gain a permanent advantage, but Arigh Böke controlled territories that did

22 *JT*/Boyle, 62. 23 Biran 2009, 49.

not have sufficient supplies. His troops suffered from the ensuing famine in the winter of 1263, leading the sons of Möngke and Hülegü, his erstwhile allies, to desert him. Isolated and surrounded by Alghu and Qubilai, Arigh Böke surrendered to his elder brother, who now would be accepted as the major Great Khan in East Asia. Simultaneously, Mongolia would no longer be the center of the Mongol Empire because it did not have the resources to sustain a large population.²⁴

Qubilai Qa'an and Mongolia

Yet some of the Mongolian and Turkic steppe inhabitants had gravitated toward walled towns, which Qubilai and the Yuan court could more readily govern. Jingzhou, a town 500 miles east of the old Tangut (or Xi Xia dynasty) city of Qara-Qoto (Marco Polo's Edzina, modern Ejina in Inner Mongolia) became the center of the Önggüt peoples, a Turkic group that had submitted to Chinggis Khan. Yingchang, a site about seventy miles north of Qubilai's summer capital, Shangdu, was principally a settlement for the Qonggirat who provided the consorts for the Chinggisid Great Khans. Shangdu, originally Qubilai Qa'an's summer palace, had a population of over 100,000.²⁵

After the defeat of Arigh Böke, Qubilai sought to stabilize Qaraqorum and the areas around it and to bring these regions under central government control. He set up a Pacification Commission and General Regional Command (*xuanwei shisi du yuanshuaifu*) and attempted to promote the local economy. He was also eager to have Qaraqorum supply itself instead of having to transport hundreds of carts a day to provide food and other basic necessities for this old capital city. In pursuing this objective, he established agricultural colonies in the regions and furnished them with tools and draught animals. Within his lifetime, Qaraqorum had a thriving agricultural base, but it was still insufficient to feed its relatively large population. The court still needed either to allocate funds for the purchase of grain or to order shipments from north China. However, it repeatedly encountered perfidious officials and soldiers:

In 1290 . . . wealthy Mongols were posing as paupers and obtaining grain . . . under false pretenses. In 1301, the granary officials at Qara Qorum were indicted for illegal embezzlement of grain . . . In 1303 . . . a government transport contractor was indicted by the Censorate for having stolen

24 See Rossabi 1988, 46–52; Dardess, 1972–1973. 25 YS, 1350.

250,000 piculs of grain and 130,000 ingots of cash in the course of supplying grain for the Qara Qorum garrison.²⁶

On the other hand, Mongolia's need for grain and manufactured products gave the Yuan some control over the Mongols. The Yuan also set up other agencies, such as a Price Stabilization Office (*pingzhunku*) in Qaraqorum in 1283, to exert more influence, but it is unclear how effective these offices were.

The court also organized garrisons in various areas in Mongolia to keep the peace. Deserters and dropouts from the armies of Qaidu, who had had to withdraw from Mongolia, fled to the court's forces and sought protection, which they were often provided. Again, the court dispatched grain or cash to supply its former enemies. Once its soldiers were confident that the new arrivals were loyal, they provided agricultural implements for farmers, animals for herders, and weapons for hunters and fishermen.²⁷

Qaidu and Mongolia

Qubilai emerged victorious in 1264, but Arigh Böke's descendants remained a thorn in Qubilai's side. Qubilai's Yuan court was on good terms only with the Ilkhanate in West Asia, and the other Mongol khanates were hostile to Qubilai. Like their progenitor, Arigh Böke's descendants resided in parts of Mongolia and repeatedly challenged Qubilai's rule in the Mongols' homeland. At the same time, Ögödei's grandson Qaidu made forays into Mongolia and, on several occasions, attacked Qaraqorum.

Although some of Ögödei's descendants were killed when Möngke took power, Qaidu actually survived and eventually gained territory in Central Asia. He first had to contend with Baraq, whom Qubilai had sent to Central Asia and had become Chaghadaid khan from 1266. A temporary truce between Baraq and Qaidu had been brokered at a *quriltai* in 1269. However, Baraq, seeking additional land, crossed the Oxus river and challenged the Ilkhanate's control of Khurasan. The Ilkhan Abaqa, one of Tolui's descendants, accepted the challenge and routed Baraq at a battle in Herat in 1270. Baraq retreated into Transoxania with his troops but subsequently died in 1271. Qaidu capitalized on this opportunity, and in 1271 ascended the Ögödeid throne and dominated the Chaghadaid Khanate. Tensions between Qaidu and Qubilai had erupted even before his ascension. Qaidu had supported Arigh Böke in his struggle with his older brother Qubilai. Although

26 Dardess 1972–1973, 156. 27 Dardess 1972–1973, 158.

Qubilai considered this to be a betrayal, he allotted Qaidu funds extracted from a region in China. He also invited Qaidu to come to his court, but to no avail. Shortly thereafter, the two leaders were at war. In 1268, Qubilai's troops took the initiative and compelled Qaidu to abandon Almaliq, a traditional capital of the Chaghadaid Khanate, forcing him to move westward.²⁸

In 1271, Qubilai then ordered his son Nomuqan (d. 1292 or 1301), along with several other Chinggisid princes of his generation, to Almaliq to consolidate his authority, especially north and south of the Taklamakan desert.²⁹ He provided food and other supplies to his son, but demanded that Nomuqan obtain supplies locally.³⁰ Nomuqan sought to ensure supplies from the Tarim river basin by occupying and establishing postal stations to Khotan (which was approximately 450 miles away), conducting a census through which he levied taxes, and beginning to set up supply lines from the central part of China. Qubilai then dispatched Antong, his wife's nephew, to help in confrontations with Qaidu.³¹ However, his troops scarcely encountered Qaidu, and an even worse outcome was the defection of several princes in Nomuqan's entourage, including Möngke's son Shiregi, in 1276. They secretly devised a successful plan to detain Nomuqan and, perhaps with the assistance of Qaidu, sent him to the Golden Horde for punishment.³² Shiregi also briefly occupied Qaraqorum in 1277 and five years elapsed before Yuan dynasty forces defeated and captured him. Meanwhile, Nomuqan was fortunate that a female cousin, descended from his grandfather Tolui, was at the Golden Horde court, comforted him during his captivity, and lobbied for his release. After almost eight years, she succeeded in her efforts, and in 1284 Nomuqan returned to Dadu, where Qubilai honored him with the title of *beian wang* or "Prince for the Pacification of the North" for all the difficulties he had endured.³³

Qubilai had not remained idle during Nomuqan's captivity. Instead he attempted to dominate the Tarim river basin in the south, the Uighur lands in the north, and the Gansu corridor in the east. He set up garrisons to avert raids and assaults by Qaidu and his erstwhile ally Du'a (r. 1282–1307), Baraq's son whom Qaidu had appointed as the Chaghadaid khan, and established agricultural colonies (*tuntian*) to provide necessities in these lands instead of depending on lengthy supply lines. The population supplemented the agricultural colonies with postal stations to link their regions to the central part of China. Qubilai sought to isolate Qaidu and prevent him from acquiring

28 For a comprehensive study of Qaidu: Biran 1997. 29 YS, 265; Pelliot 1959–1963, 795.

30 YS, 144. 31 Pelliot 1959–1963, 127. 32 JT/Boyle, 266.

33 JT/Boyle, 160; Hambis 1954, 94.

sufficient provisions for his forces. Qubilai's strategy was clever, but his troops could not implement it. Qaidu, Du'a, and their allies repeatedly broke through this ineffective blockade and defeated Qubilai's forces in the Tarim Basin and in the Uighur territories, compelling them to abandon such vital oases and towns as Kashghar, Khotan, and Beshbaliq by the 1280s. Qaidu was then master of many of these territories: Qubilai was limited to Mongolia.

Qaidu's forays into Mongolia did not achieve the same results as in the western areas. Having expelled most of Qubilai's troops from what the Chinese referred to as the "Western Regions," Qaidu now challenged the Great Khan's control over Mongolia. Here Qubilai mounted stiff resistance and was able to prevent the occupation of this region by his dreaded enemy. He resolved to preserve domination over Mongolia not for strategic or economic reasons but for symbolic ones. Anyone who aspired to be Great Khan needed to govern the traditional Mongolian homeland. Legitimacy of his position as qa'an depended, in part, on his rule over Mongolia. Although Mongolia was not the economic center of his domains and indeed required considerable economic assistance, its visceral connection even to the most sedentarized Mongols was critical. Qubilai needed to defend the Mongolians' birthplace.³⁴

Qaidu and Du'a each threatened Mongolia but eventually pulled back.³⁵ In 1288, they dispatched troops on a number of occasions into Mongolia, and in the following year, Qaidu actually occupied Qaraqorum. Qubilai, who could not afford to lose Qaraqorum, headed rapidly to oust Qaidu. His move prompted Qaidu to abandon the old Mongol capital. Yet Qaidu was not eliminated and remained in various regions in Mongolia. Within a year, Qaidu and his allies Yomuqur and Malik Temür, who were Arigh Böke's descendants, initiated raids, and in 1292 Qaidu attacked and occupied western Mongolia and the Yenisei valley. The Yuan court perceived these assaults as serious and, with superior forces, recaptured the Yenisei valley and conclusively pushed Qaidu's troops out of Mongolia. Qaidu's threat persisted for a time due to the Yuan court's concern over a rebellion in Manchuria and an expansionist campaign in Java.³⁶ Qubilai himself had deteriorated in his old age and was afflicted by gout and alcoholic excesses, further impeding the

34 For this struggle: Biran 1997 and Dardess 1972–1973.

35 See Biran 2009, 52, for other campaigns they sanctioned against the Ilkhanate in the early 1290s.

36 For the Manchurian crisis: Yao 1983, 74–82; Rossabi 1983, 3–11; and Moule and Pelliot 1938, 196, 198; on Java: Bade 2002.

court's efforts and policies.³⁷ In any event, these engagements against Qaidu were not major battles, as the Yuan court did not dispatch a large number of troops to suppress him. Indeed, like so many steppe leaders, he eluded the often more numerous Yuan forces.

Qubilai's death and his grandson Temür's enthronement as the Yuan emperor in 1294 led to a more strident policy for the protection of Mongolia and for campaigns against Qaidu. By capitalizing on Qaidu's conflicts with the Ilkhanate of West Asia and leaders in Central Asia, Yuan forces defeated him on several occasions from 1294 to 1297. In 1300, confident that it could once and for all eliminate Qaidu, the court allegedly assembled a sizeable army to overwhelm him. Qaishan (r. 1308–1311), who later succeeded Temür as Emperor Wuzong of the Yuan, was assigned to overwhelm Qaidu, and in the fall of 1301 he encountered the leader of the Ögödei line in an indecisive battle. Shortly thereafter, Qaidu died of natural causes. Yet he had preserved the independence of his domain in Central Asia and caused the Yuan court to divert resources to defend its northwestern border. The conflicts may also have somewhat impeded Yuan dynasty trade with Iran and West Asia. However, such interruptions should not be exaggerated because Eurasian commerce reached its height during the Mongol era.³⁸ The Yuan court's principal victory was to preserve control over Mongolia.

Qaidu's death was the harbinger of the decline of Ögödei's descendants. The Chaghadaid khan Du'a, who had been second in command to Qaidu, now became the dominant figure in Central Asia. He displayed his power by choosing a less able successor, Chapar, one of Qaidu's sons, and helped to enthrone him as the new leader, deliberately precipitating a rift with Qaidu's other sons. Du'a also decided on a less aggressive policy, partly due to his own fear of encirclement by the Yuan and Mongol allies in Russia and Persia. In 1304, he and the other two negotiated a peace agreement, hoping to end the hostilities that had weakened all of them. Chapar opposed this rapprochement, partly because he had to cede some of his territory to the Chaghadaid line. Chapar's brother challenged Du'a's dominance, but a combined army composed of Du'a's forces and the Yuan defeated him in 1306. Shortly thereafter, Chapar surrendered to Du'a. Yet Du'a's death in 1307 prompted other struggles between the lines of Ögödei and Chaghadaid. In 1310, the Chaghadaid line emerged victorious and defeated Qaidu's sons. Külüg

³⁷ On Qubilai's ailments: Rossabi 1988, 224–28.

³⁸ Shim 2014, 441, notes, "The post stations restored in Mongolia from the seventh month of 1303 [after Qaidu's death] were actively utilized from then on." Merchants often used the postal stations on their travels on trading expeditions.

Qa'an, or the Wuzong (r. 1307–1311) Emperor of the Yuan, had supported the Chaghadaids. Recognizing that he had lost the support of the Yuan court, Chapar submitted to the Wuzong Emperor, who eventually rewarded him with the title of a prince in the province of Henan and offered him the revenues that had been diverted from his father Qaidu.³⁹

Yuan Efforts at Governance

Even earlier, in 1307 the Yuan court had devised a new administrative structure for the inhabitants of Mongolia, as well as for the soldiers, as a result of the conflict between the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid lines. It is difficult to judge how effective this bureaucratic structure would actually have been ruling the steppes. Nomadic pastoral families and groups were scattered throughout the vast domain of Mongolia. If the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) and the Mongolian People's Republic (1924–1990), which sought and failed to collectivize the herds from 1928 to 1932, could not enforce their will on the herders, it seems unlikely that the few small towns, the surrounding regions, and the almost endless grasslands abided by the policies to be described. Moreover, although the Mongolians at the Yuan court in Dadu originally derived from the steppes, many had lived in the sedentary world for quite a time, and some had spent their entire lives in China. They had lost touch with their nomadic pastoralist cousins and had different interests and policy preferences. It is difficult to determine whether the administrative structure devised by these Mongolians and their Chinese advisers at the Yuan court could be effective in the steppes.

In 1307 the Yuan court established a province known as Lingbei instead of the Pacification Commission and General Regional Military Command (*xuanwei shisi du yuanshuai fu*) by which it had earlier ruled Mongolia. The new structure meant that Mongolia would be a regular part of Yuan China and not a military outpost or colony. The court set up a Branch Central Secretariat for Lingbei (*Lingbei xing zhongshu sheng*) and the surrounding regions. Unlike other provinces, it was not divided into *xian* or *fu* or other lesser administrative units except for the local government of Qaraqorum. The court thus recognized that Mongolia differed from the regular local areas it administered. Princes often dominated local areas. Nonetheless, within a few years, the court established a Recorder's Office (*zhaomo suo*) for registrations, including births and deaths; a Judicial Proceedings Office

39 See Liu 2005, 339–58, for later conflicts between the Chaghadaids and the Yuan court.

(*liwen suo*) for legal matters; an Administrator of the Archives (*jiageku guan-guo*) to preserve court records, and a Superintendency of the Confucian Schools (*ruxue tijusi*) presumably to promote Confucian learning and perhaps sinicization among the Mongols. It also established a Myriarchy for Agricultural Colonies (*tuntian wanhufu*) in the 1320s ostensibly to organize approximately 4,600 military households, but also to promote agriculture in the region.⁴⁰ It is difficult to determine how effective these agencies were in controlling the nomadic pastoral population.

Part of the reason for the establishment of a bureaucracy was greater control. Some of Qaidu's soldiers and subjects who had been defeated by the Yuan forces, on occasion, fled to Mongolia, but the largest number of defectors arrived after the conflicts in the first decade of the fourteenth century and sought the security provided by the establishment of Lingbei province in 1307. These refugees needed to be carefully scrutinized. The population in and around Qaraqorum increased dramatically, and Yuan officials feared that the refugees were creating an overpopulated steppe region and could not be included in the pastoral economy.⁴¹ They thus settled the refugees as farmers and fishermen, allegedly contributing to the economy of Mongolia while providing security. The Yuan court also required revenues for such undertakings and for all its governing responsibilities in Mongolia. It imposed taxes on farmers, fishermen, and herders, but the collection of such imposts, especially on the far-flung nomadic pastoralists, with the relatively rudimentary communications and transport facilities, would be difficult and not particularly successful.

A more irritating imposition on the population was maintaining and provisioning of postal stations, which would require food and drink, fodder for animals, fresh horses for official messengers, and facilities for lodging.⁴² The Mongols valued postal stations because communications and rapid spread of intelligence information had been keys to their military successes. Even after their military conquests and occupations, the Mongols prized these stations, which could relay information about disturbances or threats in a local region to officials or merely to provide descriptions of natural disasters or economic failures. Mongol officials therefore demanded that the postal stations in Mongolia be kept in good repair and well supplied. This demand was an onerous burden on local inhabitants not only due to the frequent collections of goods but also because they had to staff the stations.

40 Farquhar 1990, 396–97. 41 Dardess 1972–1973, 157. See also Liu 2005.

42 On the significance of these postal stations: Olbricht 1954.

Even in the busiest times of the herding or agricultural cycles, they had to serve in the stations to care for official messengers.⁴³

The Yuan Court and Its Problems

In addition to the difficulties of governing a mobile population in Mongolia, instability at the Yuan court after Qubilai Qa'an's reign added to the difficulty of ruling Mongolia and attempting to ensure the bureaucracy's success. Repeated struggles for succession as emperor contributed to the disarray in Mongolia. *Coups d'état* and assassinations resulted in turmoil. Shidebala (Emperor Yingzong, r. 1320–1323) was the only Mongol to accede peacefully to the position of emperor through the principle of primogeniture, and even then a cabal assassinated him in 1323. Different Chinggisid lines strove for power after nearly every death of an emperor. Struggles centered, in part, on conflicts between those favoring Mongol representatives from the steppe and others supporting the adoption of Chinese bureaucratic patterns. Ayurbarwada (Emperor Renzong, r. 1311–1320) tended to be receptive to Chinese governmental processes, while his successor, Yisün Temür (Emperor Taiding, r. 1323–1328) opposed sinicization and imported Mongols from Mongolia to help him govern. The emperors who represented the steppes were, on occasion, enthroned in Mongolia. In any event, from 1304 to 1329, imperial reigns were brief, and at least two emperors were murdered. Powerful ministers met similar fates, as they were frequently replaced, exiled, or executed. Such repeated changes in administration also undercut consistent governance over Mongolia.

A crisis arose in 1328–1329 when two brothers claimed the throne. One was poisoned, and the other's reign lasted for three years before his death.⁴⁴ The last emperor, Toghon Temür, who took power in 1332 at the age of thirteen, ruled for more than three decades, but authority often lay in the hands of his varying chief ministers. Yet outbreaks of violence in various parts of China were recorded almost from the start of his reign. Natural disasters were, in part, responsible. Cold winters resulted in "famines . . . [which] were recorded for almost every year of Toghon Temür's reign, leading to great mortality . . . These natural disasters created huge numbers of uprooted and impoverished people, fodder for the revolts that wracked the realm in the 1350s."⁴⁵ Yet the

43 Dardess 1972–1973, 159.

44 A spectacular mandala was created to commemorate a temporary peace between the two brothers. See Watt and Wardwell 1997, 95–100.

45 Dardess 1994, 585.

court itself was largely responsible for the instability: "The recurrence of succession crises and the rise of bureaucratic strongmen and factionalism added to the turbulence and volatility of the period and weakened the government. But the government was also plagued by such problems as a swollen but increasingly inefficient bureaucracy, financial shortages and inflation."⁴⁶ Considerable corruption exacerbated these problems.

One element in these disputes was the role of the Mongol princes. Qaishan (Emperor Wuzong, r. 1307–1311) offered the title of prince to a large number, from both the Chinggisid and other lineages, imposing a substantial burden on the economy. The princes received appanages and considerable annual payments of gold and silver from the state in the early fourteenth century, thereby creating a great drain on court revenues. Ayurbarwada sought and failed to end such subsidies. The establishment of the Lingbei province may have been an attempt to rein in the princes and foster the development of a new bureaucratic elite. The effort failed, as the Mongol princes remained in a strong position and drained revenues from the state. Fiscal problems persisted, as the government was unable to prevent tax evasion and lack of land registration on the tax rolls even in central China. In Mongolia, the revenue shortfalls were even more pronounced, as the government was less dominant. The court could not extract sufficient revenues from the pastoral nomads, who were difficult to track because of their mobility, and from the princes in order to sustain its manifold responsibilities and projects. It also faced hostility from traditionally minded steppe leaders and princes who perceived the Mongols in China as having abandoned their own people and lands in order to rule the Chinese, a long-term enemy of the Mongols, and feared that the latter would "diminish their hereditary political and financial privileges."⁴⁷

Thus peace did not prevail in Mongolia. Even the Chinese sources indicate that a few disturbances persisted. The Yuan court, on several occasions, suppressed so-called bandits near the walled towns. It is unlikely that they truly controlled the nomadic pastoralists in the various corners of Mongolia. Although outbreaks were scarcely recorded in the Chinese accounts, the independence and likely hostility of the herders toward the Yuan dynasty is attested by the relative dearth of Chinese officials who reached the region. Most of the Yuan officials stationed in Mongolia were soldiers. Thus, despite the creation of a Chinese-like province, the Chinese sources on Mongolia are skimpy and give a misleading impression of Chinese control.⁴⁸

46 Hsiao 1994, 559. 47 Hsiao 1994, 534.

48 These exaggerated sources mirror the descriptions of the five military campaigns of the Yongle Emperor (r. 1403–1424) against the Mongols in Mongolia. The *Ming Veritable*

Environmental changes have often been suggested as factors that may explain developments in Mongolia, and weather and climate have certainly influenced the steppes and the people who seek to survive in a generally daunting habitat. The latest research on tree rings in Mongolia may offer tantalizing clues about conflicts in various regions. Researchers have discovered that substantial rainfall in the early thirteenth century provided lush pastures for the herds and, in particular, for the horses that would be essential for the Mongol campaigns in north China and Central Asia. However, aridity characterized the rest of the thirteenth century until the collapse of the Yuan in 1368, and drought often plagued Mongolia during that time. This implies that the available pastures were scarce, considering the number of herders and the damage the land had incurred as a result of military campaigns. Indeed, the conflicts described above may have been prompted by struggles over the grasslands. Yet it will require additional research to verify this finding and confirm its implications.⁴⁹

Disunity after the Return to Mongolia

In any event, the disunity that plagued the Mongols who were spread out from Korea to Russia also characterized Mongolia. Four warring khanates in Russia, West Asia, Central Asia, and East Asia undermined the Mongol Empire, and internecine disputes and conflicts further weakened them. Although the Yuan court itself allegedly ruled Mongolia and had set up a bureaucratic structure to achieve peace, collect taxes, administer justice, and maintain the infrastructure for herders, it could not prevent the dissolution that preceded Chinggis Khan's unification of the Mongols. The Kereyit, the Naiman, the Önggüt, and the other groups that Chinggis Khan either subjugated or won over gave way to different alignments in Mongolia.

The disunity of the Yuan and its financial problems permitted Zhu Yuanzhang to found the Ming dynasty in 1368 and compelled the Yuan ruler Toghon Temür to abandon China and flee northward. Two years later, Toghon Temür died in Yingchang, sixty miles north of Shangdu,

Records (Ming shilu) described these incursions into Mongolia as smashing successes, citing the deaths of an extraordinary number of dead or captured Mongols. Yet there was no major battle; there were only raids and incursions, as the relatively small Mongol forces fled farther into the steppes and avoided engagement with Chinese troops. On Yongle's military campaigns: Franke 1954, 1–54; Franke 1951–1953, 81–88; Kasakevich 1943; Pokotilov 1947–1949; and Rossabi 1998, 229–31.

49 Pederson, et al. 2014, 4375–4379; Pederson 2003, 1474–1479; Di Cosmo 2014; and Rossabi 2017.

Qubilai's summer capital, and the court, under his son Ayushiridara (r. 1270–1278) traveled farther to the north to Qaraqorum, creating what is known as the Northern Yuan dynasty. Despite their exile, the Northern Yuan rulers laid claim to China. They retained the title of “emperor” and adapted the names of Chinese titles into Mongolian. For example, the term *taishi*, which designated the top official in the government, derived from Chinese. Initially, the Mongols in Mongolia posed a threat to the Ming rulers. In 1372, they defeated a Ming army heading toward Mongolia, and Naghachu, a Mongol commander, occupied Liaoyang and Shenyang in Manchuria from 1375 to 1388. They also controlled the Yuan's jade seal and tablets of investiture and considered themselves to be the legitimate dynasty. The Ming continued to send forces throughout the 1370s and 1380s to defeat the Mongols.

Finally, a more concerted Ming effort and internal fragmentation undermined the Northern Yuan and precluded any hope of restoring control over China. In 1388, a Ming army defeated a major Mongol force in the steppes, allegedly capturing 80,000 Mongols, and destroyed the capital at Qaraqorum. At the same time, the Mongols harmed themselves through their own fractiousness. Toghon Temür's son Ayushiridara succeeded his father for eight years, but a certain Yesüdei killed Ayushiridara's brother and successor Toghus Temür (r. 1378–1388) in 1388. After 1388, powerful commanders dominated in the Northern Yuan and enthroned Chinggisid figures as the khans. After this defeat, Northern Yuan khans or emperors “generally lacked the military power, religiopolitical charisma, and international standing that their predecessors enjoyed. The Great Khan no longer controlled a unified steppe, much less did he exercise any measure of control over irredenta in distant territories.”⁵⁰

Conflicts among the various Mongols derived from a variety of factors. One entailed the struggles between the Mongols who returned from China and those who had remained in Mongolia. The exact number of refugees from China is unknown, but a minimal figure is 100,000. This new group competed for pastureland, water, and herds with the residents. Food and essential supplies were thus in short supply. The early Ming attacks through 1388 had further generated additional shortages because land, as well as the supply center in Qaraqorum, had been damaged. In addition, the Ming dynasty limited trade, compelling the Mongols to raid China to obtain the goods they required. Simultaneously, the Mongols remained disunited. The Oirat, one of the western Mongol groups who had been marriage allies of the

⁵⁰ Robinson 2019, 87.

Mongols, challenged the Chinggisids and the so-called Eastern Mongols. They joined with Arigh Böke's descendants in struggles against them, with such disunity limiting the possibility of the Northern Yuan regaining authority over China.

By the onset of the Ming dynasty in China, three overall divisions had developed. The Eastern Mongols included the group that withdrew from China once the Ming took power. The Oirat or Western Mongols became vaunted enemies of the Ming through the late seventeenth century. Finally, Mongols resided in Inner Mongolia, and the Gobi Desert prevented major confrontations between them and the Mongols in Mongolia. Each of these groups was further subdivided into other units.

Such divisions challenged the Ming dynasty's fear of a renewed Chinggisid invasion from Mongolia. It was concerned that a charismatic figure would arise and launch an attack on China. Its policies along its northern frontiers centered on this misleading perception. However, the divisions among the Mongols were deep-rooted, precluded the unity that frightened the Ming, and prevented them from contemplating a full-scale attack on China. Intermittent raids and skirmishes over trade relations erupted, but the Mongols did not attempt a full-scale assault. On the other hand, the Ming court, based on a faulty conception of the Mongols' strength, launched five campaigns into Mongolia during the Yongle Emperor's reign (1403–1424) and a disastrous one in 1449 during which the emperor was captured.

Considering the Ming's fears of the Mongols, it is surprising that its policies toward Mongols living within China were so liberal. A small minority of Mongols had not returned to China after the collapse of the Yuan dynasty. It is difficult to determine whether they had become sinicized or still retained their Mongol identities. In any event, the Ming court trusted them sufficiently to incorporate some of them into its army, stationing them either on the frontiers or around the capital city. The court offered them paper money and rice or pasturelands in which to herd. It also employed them as envoys, translators, and guards.⁵¹ Chinese civilization surely affected the Mongols, but the influences were mutual. The Ming adopted some Mongol military tactics, organization, and strategy, became interested in Tibetan Buddhism, and on occasion wore Mongol costume. Like the Mongols, the Ming commissioned geographies and the creation of maps, encouraged artisans, and set up an Astronomical Bureau led by Muslims.⁵²

51 See the important works of Serruys 1957, 137–90; Serruys 1959, 1–328; Serruys 1961, 59–83; and Serruys 1966, 394–405. Also: Robinson 2001.

52 Robinson 2008, 365–411; for additional sources: Rossabi 2013, 200–23.

Were the Mongols who returned to Mongolia as influenced by Chinese civilization? The answer would generally be negative. The Mongols adopted the same nomadic pastoralist economy that they had practiced before they initiated their conquests, although at least initially the Northern Yuan retained Chinese reign titles and seals. It is true that they still required trade with China, and the elite had developed an appreciation for Chinese luxuries – for example, desiring and trading for silk. They were also exposed to Tibetan Buddhism. Yet Mongolia remained independent for more than three centuries after the Mongols' withdrawal from China, and even during the Yuan dynasty, Mongolia was frequently free from the control of the court.

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- YS. See Abbreviations.

Koryŏ in the Mongol Empire

DAVID M. ROBINSON

Introduction

Koryŏ (as Korea was known during these centuries) resembled several other tributary polities within the Mongol Empire; after subjugation it retained a native ruling house that co-ordinated the extraction of labor and material resources on the Chinggisids' behalf. Yet some facets of the Koryŏ–Chinggisid relationship were distinctive. After a destructive war of nearly three decades (1231–1259), in 1274 the Koryŏ royal family formed a marriage alliance with the imperial Chinggisid throne that lasted a century. The Chinggisids established marriage alliances with some early allies and regional rulers (Qonggirats, Uighurs, etc.) and engaged in extended warfare with several polities (the Jin dynasty, the Song dynasty, the Mamluk Sultanate), but in no other case were both forms of interaction, war and marriage, so conspicuously combined. Indeed, by the mid-fourteenth century, Koryŏ had become a bulwark for the Chinggisids in Northeast Asia, and by the 1380s Koryŏ was the only state in East Asia to recognize the Chinggisids' standing as a legitimate polity.

The changing nature of Koryŏ–Mongol relations directly influenced Koryŏ's political, social, cultural, and economic history, while careful attention to Koryŏ yields insight into the evolving Chinggisid polity.¹ Koryŏ and other subjugated kingdoms were not only essential to the empire's operation; they also changed its nature. Mongol specialists rightfully call for putting more Mongols into the picture and for understanding the Chinggisid empire through the eyes of the Mongols rather than relying exclusively on the testimony of subjugated peoples such as the Persians and

¹ Breuker 2007 provocatively argues that Koryŏ's experiences with the Mongols shed light on twentieth-century Korea's experiences under Japanese colonial rule and vice versa.

Chinese. At the same time, however, systematic attention to how the Mongols incorporated smaller polities, such as Uighuristan, Armenia, and Korea, enhances our overall understanding of Chinggisid strategies and institutions of governance across the empire. Such a perspective also shows the inadequacies of bifurcated resistance narratives that cast Mongols as oppressors and Koreans as victims. The Mongol Empire, like many previous and later empires, relied on the co-operation of “outsiders” for almost everything. Korean personnel not only provided agricultural labor and produced essential goods; they also campaigned in Chinggisid armies, acted as political advisers, offered religious sustenance, served as intimate attendants in the imperial palace, and married into the empire’s elite families, including the ruling Chinggisid line.

This chapter is organized into three parts: first, a brief political narrative of Koryŏ’s experience of the Mongol Empire; second, thematic discussions of the military, personnel, and cultural exchange; and finally, some concluding comments, including the ambiguous legacy of the Mongol period for Korea. Before beginning, however, a historiographical note is useful.

Specialists in Korean history have dominated scholarship on Korea during the Mongol period. They tend to focus on the impact of Mongol rule on Korean politics, society, economics, and culture, and Korean sovereignty during the age of “Yuan intervention” (*Wŏn kansŏp*), an academic term that first gained currency in the 1990s.² Until recently, they evinced little concern for the internal operation of the Mongol Empire, its ruling elite, or other polities, such as Georgia, Cilician Armenia, or the Uighurs, subjugated by the Mongols. Perhaps because the Mongols seized Chinese lands and appropriated elements of Chinese political culture, Koryŏ’s ties with the Mongols were commonly treated as another instance of Sino-Korean relations, which were understood to operate through the “tributary system.”³ More recent work has stressed the distinctive features of the Mongol period and examined Koryŏ’s dual status in the wider Chinggisid polity as both a vassal state and a politically independent kingdom,⁴ sparking productive debate among Korean specialists about the nature of Korean–Mongol relations and the status of the Koryŏ king and his kingdom.⁵

2 Kim Tangt’aek 1998 is an insightful political history that uses such a framework.

3 For recent defense of the tributary model, albeit an expansive version that acknowledges considerable historical variation: Yi Ikchu 2009.

4 An influential attempt in this direction is Kim Hodong 2007.

5 For recent historiographical review: Yi Kaesŏk 2013, 13–61.

First Contact

Although the basic facts of first contact between the Mongols and Koryŏ are relatively straightforward, their interpretation is fraught.⁶ Early in the thirteenth century, Chinggis Khan's armies sharply challenged the military, political, and economic control of the Jurchen Jin dynasty (1115–1234), forcing the Jin in 1215 to abandon its northern capital (today's Beijing).⁷ The Mongols' military expansion into what is today roughly equivalent to the PRC provinces of Liaoning, Heilongjiang, and Jilin destabilized the region, eroding Jin control, flaming local ambitions, and precipitating military conflict. Several men, including Khitan nobles, exploited the Jin's troubles to organize nascent polities.⁸ When the Jin court dispatched a military commander to re-establish imperial control, he instead established yet another dynasty, the Dongzhen (or Eastern Jurchens). As Mongol military presence increased in the mid-1210s, some groups chose to ally with the Mongols, while others clung to their autonomy.

During the winter of 1218, two sizeable armies, one Mongol and one Dongzhen, appeared at Koryŏ's northeastern border. Their mission was the suppression of a large group of Khitans, who, rejecting the Mongols and their Khitan ally, had sought instead an alliance with the Koryŏ, and, having been rebuffed, began a series of raids that culminated in the occupation of several walled cities in northeast Koryŏ.⁹ The Mongol and Dongzhen armies drove the Khitans from all but one city before heavy snows rendered the roads impassable, raising hopes among the Khitan defenders that they would be able to wait out their pursuers, who were running low on grain supplies. The Mongol commander requested troops and provisions from local Korean military authorities. The wary Koryŏ court feared that assistance against the Khitan would lead to closer ties to the Mongols but agreed to supply 1,000 bushels of grain, which were delivered under armed escort by 1,000 troops.

The Mongol commanders did in fact repeatedly propose an alliance, praising their Korean counterparts in the field and voluntarily adopting the subordinate role of "younger brother" during a series of banquets. When the Koreans broached the topic of annual gifts, one Mongol commander volunteered to send envoys each year to collect the tribute to save the Koreans the

6 The first attested contact was in 1211, when Mongol soldiers killed a Koryŏ envoy to the Jin court.

7 Allsen 1994, 350–52, 357–60.

8 The following narrative paragraphs draw heavily from Henthorn 1963.

9 Biran 2014, 159–61; Ch'oe Yunjŏng 2011, 110–17.

trouble. After the last Khitan holdouts were either killed or taken captive, the Mongol commanders pointedly reminded the Koreans, “Our two nations shall eternally be brothers and the descendants of 10,000 generations will not forget this day.” Gifts were exchanged, and a Koryŏ delegation submitted a written proposal for peace, presumably formalizing the arrangement. Shortly later a fully armed Mongol commander strode into the Korean royal palace to deliver written confirmation of the terms directly into the hands of the king at the capital in Kaegyŏng (present-day Kaesŏng), an act the Koreans considered a gross violation of court protocol. When Mongol military forces withdrew from Koryŏ territory, they left behind several dozen men, including Dongzhen personnel, to learn the Korean language, suggesting that they viewed this as an ongoing relation. Between 1219 and 1224, delegations of Mongol and Dongzhen envoys arrived in Kaegyŏng several times a year to collect goods ranging from textiles and silverware to rice, otter pelts, and horses.

Debate surrounds the nature of early Koryŏ–Mongol relations.¹⁰ Perhaps the most common interpretation is that the 1218–1219 alliance inaugurated Koryŏ’s status as a tributary state to the Mongols, which with some interruptions continued until the Mongol Empire’s collapse. As a subjugated kingdom, Koryŏ was in this view obligated to meet all Mongol demands for tribute items and military assistance.¹¹ In contrast, a growing number of Korean scholars have argued that the 1218–1219 alliance and the early years of the Koryŏ–Mongol relation must be understood in light of conditions at the time when Mongol leaders sought out locals as allies against the Jin and as building blocks for the Mongols’ consolidation of regional power. Thus, just as the Mongols allied with the Dongzhen regime and some Khitan nobles, they also wished to forge a similar relation with Koryŏ.¹² Such ties were not exclusive. The Koryŏ court mulled an alliance with Dongzhen and continued to use the Jin dynasty’s calendar until 1224; in 1226 the Jin court ordered Kaegyŏng to subjugate a renegade Jin general. Finally, one scholar has argued that the early Koryŏ–Mongol alliance should be understood in terms of Mongolian political culture; rather than a Chinese-style, hierarchical tributary relation, oaths of brotherhood sworn between Mongol military commanders and Koryŏ officers constituted an *anda* or sworn-brother relation.¹³ Although understating the unequal power relationship between Koryŏ and the Mongols, such an interpretation reminds us that the ambitions and

10 Yi Kaesŏk 2011. 11 Yun Ŭnsuk 2012, 120–23.

12 Yi Kaesŏk 2011, 15–26; Yun Ŭnsuk 2012, 124–27. 13 Yun Ŭnsuk 2012.

expectations of the Mongols in 1219 were less expansive than those of later decades.

The perceptions and political cultures of both the Mongols and Koryŏ demand consideration. Even if Mongol field commanders understood the alliance as an *anda* relation, Koryŏ authorities may well have seen things differently. Far more accustomed to the protocols and rhetoric of investiture relations, which commonly included the presentation of tribute, regular exchanges of envoys, and ritual acknowledgment of subordinate status, Koryŏ decision makers likely understood the Mongols as yet another powerful northern regime whose demands could be managed through diplomatic accommodation, determined negotiation, and, if need be, military confrontation.¹⁴ On the eve of contact with the Mongols, Koryŏ maintained economic, diplomatic, and/or cultural ties with both the Chinese Song dynasty (960–1279) and the Jurchen Jin dynasty.¹⁵ Relations with the Khitan Liao dynasty (907–1125) also figured prominently in Koryŏ historical memory and diplomatic practice. Having arisen at approximately the same time as the Koryŏ dynasty, the Khitan polity initially served as a barbarian foil to Koryŏ, but later the two developed close ties.¹⁶ It was not immediately obvious that the Mongols represented anything new; the Koryŏ court initially expected that diplomatic protocols, rhetoric, and expectations drawn from recent interactions with the Liao, Song, and Jin dynasties were enough to reach a *modus vivendi* with the newest disruption to the regional order, the Mongols. As Koryŏ policy makers realized that the Mongols represented unprecedented problems, they adopted a strategy of nearly constant probing and recalibration, attempting to negotiate nearly all demands through delay, obfuscation, and pleading. In other words, relations were highly contingent. Mongol demands did on occasion change in response to Korean efforts, which in turn shifted future expectations on both sides. Chinggis Khan and his successors did not have a master plan for Korea from the outset; it is dangerous to attribute retroactively every facet of Koryŏ–Mongol relations to the omniscient genius of Chinggis or Qubilai.

Between Alliance and War

From 1219 to 1229, Koryŏ policy makers, field commanders, and concerned observers debated how to respond to the Chinggisids. Koryŏ was ruled by the royal Wang family, but late in the twelfth century a family of military

¹⁴ Yi Ikchu 2009; Yi Kaesŏk 2011, 13; Breuker 2012, 66–67. ¹⁵ Rogers 1959; Rogers 1961.

¹⁶ Breuker 2011.

commanders, the Ch'oes, had seized power. The Ch'oe house kept the Wang family on the throne; maintained existing administrative structures, including the civil service examination system; and retained most officials in their posts. However, the Ch'oe house not only maintained private troops and cultivated close ties with several elite military units; it also established a powerful administrative center located within its family residence that decided key matters of personnel and policy for the government as a whole.¹⁷ Thus, although the Mongols had formed an alliance with the Koryŏ king, the Ch'oe house usually determined policy.

Beginning in 1220, Ch'oe U (1179?–1249), the head of the Ch'oe house, gradually strengthened Koryŏ's defenses, walling several northeastern cities and bolstering the capital's fortifications.¹⁸ Such efforts responded to the disruptive, sometimes violent, behavior of Mongol envoys to Kaegyŏng, but regional instability was the more fundamental motivation. Jin forces repeatedly raided Koryŏ border cities; Koryŏ relations with the Dongzhen regime remained volatile (several Koryŏ military officers revolted and sought refuge with the Dongzhen regime); at least one regime coalesced around a Khitan noble family with Chinggisid backing.¹⁹ Finally, with the 1223 death of Muqali (Chinggis's military viceroy in the east) and Chinggis's extended absence on the Western Campaign, Mongol control seemed vulnerable. Early in 1225, Koryŏ–Mongol relations were severed after a Mongol envoy was killed on the return leg of a mission to Korea to collect tribute gifts. Koryŏ officials insisted that the murderer had been a bandit, whereas Mongols saw the Koryŏ government's hand. Perhaps more important was Koryŏ's refusal to contribute military forces to the Mongols' campaign against the Dongzhen regime in 1229; in fact Koryŏ had been attempting to negotiate a peace settlement with the Dongzhen. In response to what the Mongols considered a flagrant betrayal (reminiscent of Xi Xia's refusal to contribute military assistance in 1217 to Chinggis's Western Campaign), they suspended the Dongzhen campaign, and in the summer of 1231 a powerful Mongol army crossed the Yalu river, initiating nearly thirty years of warfare on the peninsula.²⁰

17 Shultz 2000, 54–93; Yagi 2008, 26–31. 18 Henthorn 1963, 28–30.

19 Henthorn 1963, 23–29.

20 In 1224 the Xi Xia and Jin dynasties became Brother Nations allied against the Mongols, providing the immediate impetus for Chinggis's decision to destroy Xi Xia. See Han 2008, 2: 94–97.

The Long War

Between 1231 and 1259, Mongol forces repeatedly campaigned across the northern two-thirds of the Korean peninsula. Rather than attempt a detailed narrative of each campaign, this section treats them in the aggregate with occasional reference to illustrative incidents.²¹ From the outset, the Mongols fielded composite armies composed of Mongolian, Central Asian, Chinese, Khitan, Jurchen, and Korean personnel that included not only cavalry forces but also infantry units and siegecraft specialists who used catapults, cloud ladders (for scaling city walls), and mining techniques to tunnel under fortified walls. The diversity and sophistication of Mongol armies only increased in time. During the first campaign of 1231–1232, Mongol forces smashed or bypassed Koryŏ's northern cities and within four months had laid siege to the capital, Kaegyŏng, which prompted the Koryŏ government to sue for peace. Koryŏ military commanders, civil officials, local elites, and common subjects quickly discovered that pitched battles usually led to destruction, slavery, or death. More effective were such strategies as relocating populations to mountainous regions and nearby coastal islands or highly decentralized guerrilla warfare that exploited detailed knowledge of local conditions.²² Sanguinary exceptions, when local commanders stubbornly defended walled cities against concerted Mongol attacks (sometimes in direct violation of the court's orders to end hostilities) were celebrated for both their valor and rarity.

Surrender, of course, was costly. After Koryŏ submitted in 1232, the Mongol commander delivered a long list of demands that included gold, silver, pearls, 10,000 small horses, 10,000 large horses, 10,000 bolts of purple gauze, 20,000 otter skins, and clothing for a million men. Further, the Mongols demanded as hostages the king's sons and grandsons, his daughters, as well as 500 boys and 500 girls as gifts for the Great Khan. Senior officials too were to deliver a daughter to the Chinggisids. The Koryŏ crown prince was to ride at the head of this vast procession for presentation at the Mongol court.²³ The Mongols further demanded census information regarding population and the installation of Mongol resident overseers (*darughachi*). These demands – tribute, hostages, census information, and governors – were all standard measures to enhance Mongol control and bind subjugated regions to the empire.

21 For detailed narratives: Henthorn 1963; Yun Yonghyŏk 1991; Yun Yonghyŏk 2000.

22 Breuker 2012, 71–85. 23 Henthorn 1963, 68.



Map 16.1 Koryŏ and the Mongols

In the following decades, the Koryŏ court seldom met the Mongol demands in full. It usually delivered most of the designated tribute but often pleaded that as a small country with limited resources it simply could not meet the Mongols' demands. The Koryŏ court wrote impassioned memorials, dispatched envoys (including members of the royal family) to make its case in person, and distributed gifts among Mongolian nobles and visiting officials. The issue of hostages was especially sensitive, and the usual Koryŏ strategy involved repeated delay, requests for forgiveness, and on occasion subterfuge, as when in 1241 a minor member of the royal family posing as the crown prince presented himself as a hostage in Qaraqorum.²⁴ The Chinggisids sent envoys demanding Koryŏ's submission. They recalled the Mongols' military assistance against the invading Khitans in 1218–1219 and the Brotherhood Alliance when Koryŏ and Mongols were united as "one house." They also enumerated Koryŏ's recent transgressions and promised harsh punishment for the recalcitrant.²⁵

Despite its ostensible surrender, Koryŏ relocated its capital beyond the Mongols' reach. As early as 1231, Ch'oe U had begun to consider following the example of his officials who were evacuating their families to the safety of Kanghwa, a large island just off the western coast. After heated deliberations with senior military and civil ministers, in June 1232 Ch'oe U concluded that the capital at Kaegyŏng could not be defended against Mongol attacks. The Koryŏ government, including senior officials, the royal family, the Ch'oe house, and senior military commanders, with hundreds of carts and wagons in tow, relocated to an expanding base on Kanghwa island, where it would remain until 1270. Simultaneously, officials traveled to provinces to oversee the evacuation of local populations to mountain forts and coastal islands. Finally, the Koryŏ government executed Mongol resident overseers who had been stationed in the northern half of Koryŏ after the majority of the Mongol armies had withdrawn as part of the peace settlement. Mongol forces responded almost immediately, swiftly moving as far south as present-day Suwŏn, where a stray arrow struck and killed their commanding officer Sartai, prompting a withdrawal from Koryŏ territory early in fall 1232. The Mongols soon resumed their campaigns, which did not end until the final peace settlement of 1259.

Remarkably, the Koryŏ dynasty survived repeated Mongol campaigns for nearly three decades, but by the 1250s doubts had deepened whether the status quo could be maintained. Mongol military forces periodically laid

24 Ledyard 1964, 4, 12–14. 25 Ledyard 1963.

waste to agricultural fields and seized large numbers of captives, more than 206,000 in 1254, according to one widely quoted claim.²⁶ Agricultural production, the foundation of Koryŏ's economy, suffered; during these decades hundreds of thousands of people repeatedly, if temporarily, fled their homes and fields for the comparative safety of mountain forts or coastal refuges. Such disruptions, coupled with the precarious extractive capacity of local government, played havoc with the collection and delivery of tax grain and other commodities to the central government. Acute food shortages and weakened social controls led to local unrest, including slave revolts. Some subjects exploited weakened state power, concluding that the Mongol campaigns meant *de facto* suspension of tax collection.²⁷ Further, questions swirled about the competence and legitimacy of the royal family and the Ch'oe house for their signal failure to protect Koryŏ subjects against Mongol predation while still enjoying the privileges of office from the safety of Kanghwa.²⁸ By the mid-1250s the state treasury was nearly empty, and in 1257 famine occurred. Under the weight of increasing fiscal straits, unremitting Mongol military pressure, and a crisis of confidence, the Ch'oe house imploded in May 1258; conspirators, including both civil and military personnel, assassinated Ch'oe Ŭi (the last head of the Ch'oe house) and his chief supporters, made a display of turning power over to the king, and confiscated the wealth and property of the Ch'oe house. The way was now opened for change.

Negotiations with the Mongols had continued through the decades of warfare. Thus, when the Ch'oe house fell, the debate about peace terms, including whether to send the crown prince, was well advanced. A majority of civil officials felt that a settlement with the Mongols, although distasteful, was preferable to further warfare and suffering. Although some military men agreed, many more believed that the fight must continue. As debate on Kanghwa unfolded over the next ten months, Mongol forces pillaged the peninsula and further consolidated their control through the establishment of military commands, which incorporated increasing numbers of Koryŏ military personnel who transferred their allegiance to the Mongols. Finally, in May 1259, the Koryŏ crown prince, Wang Chŏn (1219–1274), presented himself at the Mongol court, agreed to destroy Kanghwa's fortifications, and promised to return the capital to the peninsula, thus averting another Mongol incursion, the preparations for which were well advanced.

²⁶ KS 24.20a–b. ²⁷ Lee 2007, 88.

²⁸ On contending evaluations of the evacuation to Kanghwa: Yoon 2006, 44–50.

Integration into the Empire

Wider developments in the empire directly influenced Koryŏ's changing status. While Crown Prince Wang Chŏn was en route to meet with Möngke, the Great Khan died in August 1259, and a civil war ensued between two of Möngke's brothers, Arigh Böke (d. 1266) and Qubilai (1215–1294), both of whom claimed to be Möngke's successor as Great Khan. Qubilai met the crown prince in Kaifeng on his way to Shangdu and soon declared the audience evidence that foreign countries, even those beyond Mongol control, recognized him as the rightful successor. When the crown prince received news that his father the king had died, Qubilai ordered him home to take the throne, hopeful that he had found the key to securing a strategically important region that had eluded all his predecessors.²⁹ In June 1260, Wang Chŏn ascended the throne (from which point it is common to call him by his posthumous title, Wŏnjong), and shortly later he received a series of edicts from Qubilai that limned Koryŏ's position in the empire and its obligations. The Mongols insisted on the abolition of Kanghwa and the return of the capital to Kaegyŏng but agreed to withdraw Mongol troops and resident overseers from the peninsula and release several thousand Koryŏ captives. Qubilai also ordered that Koryŏ retain its customary clothing and headdress, which was later interpreted as a broad injunction to preserve Koryŏ's status quo, from the institution of slavery to land tenure practices.³⁰

If the succession crisis between Arigh Böke and Qubilai had facilitated initial integration into the Mongolian polity, the demands of an ambitious empire soon made clear the weight of Koryŏ's new responsibilities. Beginning in 1268, Qubilai began to issue orders detailing Koryŏ's role in the planned assault on Japan. The Koryŏ king would twice oversee the construction of ships, assemble foodstuffs, and raise a military force, an effort that continued sporadically for more than a decade and a half. As military preparations for the Japanese campaigns intensified, Qubilai established institutions of Mongol control on the peninsula, including an office to supervise military agricultural colonies in 1271 and the Headquarters for the Eastern Campaigns in 1280. The former was soon abandoned, but the latter served as an enduring feature of Mongol–Koryŏ joint administration for the next seventy years.³¹

29 Kim Hodong 2007, 83–92.

30 Kim Hodong 2007, 92–101; Yi Ikchu's formulation of "The Established Institutions of Shizu (Qubilai)" as the structural framework guiding Mongol–Korean relations has broadly influenced Korean scholarship. See Yi Ikchu 1996.

31 Ko Pyŏng'ik 1970, 184–292; Chang Tong'ik 1994, 13–109.

At the same time Wŏnjong faced pressure from Qubilai, the king also confronted challenges at home. In July 1269, a military officer and former supporter, Im Yŏn (d. 1270), unhappy with Wŏnjong's accommodation with the Mongols and the decision to return the capital to Kaegyŏng, launched a *coup d'état*, removed the king from power with almost no protest from senior Koryŏ court ministers, placed him under house arrest, and put another more biddable royal clansman on the throne, retaining for himself the most senior position in the military command structure.³² Im explained to Qubilai that in light of Wŏnjong's poor health, the king's younger brother had taken the throne. The loss of an ally in Koryŏ would have disrupted Qubilai's larger plans in East Asia, so he dispatched a military force to remove Im Yŏn and restore Wŏnjong to the throne.³³ The coup's details need not detain us, but the incident reflects the Koryŏ king's precarious position within the empire. He and his advisers might attempt to negotiate specific demands, but they still answered to the Mongol Great Khan, to whom they owed their power and status. At the same time, even with Mongol backing, the king faced defiance at home from the military, aristocratic families, and striving nouveaux arrivistes who cultivated their own patrons at the Mongol court. For instance, ostensibly in protest against Im Yŏn's coup, in 1269 a relatively minor figure from the Northwest Military Command transferred his allegiance to the Mongol court, which promptly appointed him to oversee a broad swath of territory in the northwest, which was organized into the newly created Directorate General of Tongnyŏngbu, an administrative-military unit largely autonomous from the Korean throne.

Wŏnjong's decision to abandon Kanghwa alienated many key military commanders and their units, including the Three Extraordinary Watches (*sambyŏlch'o*), stalwart defenders against the Mongols.³⁴ The Three Extraordinary Watches felt that the return to Kaegyŏng and a lasting peace agreement with the Mongols left Koryŏ vulnerable and undercut the military's power and status.³⁵ In 1270, the Three Extraordinary Watches denounced Wŏnjong, named another member of the Koryŏ royal family as the new king, and relocated their base (and much of the population of Kanghwa island) first southward to Chindo island (located on international trade routes but still vulnerable to attack from the mainland) and then much further offshore to T'amna (present-day Cheju island).³⁶ Because the Three Extraordinary Watches threatened shipping lanes, their continued resistance

32 Kim Tangt'aek 1997a. 33 Kim Hodong 2007, 107–9.

34 For the revolt: Yoon 2000. Translating *Sambyŏlch'o* as "Three Extraordinary Watches" follows Breuker 2012.

35 For Korean historiographical debate: Yoon 2006, 53–55. 36 Breuker 2012, 86–95.

delayed Qubilai's planned attack on Japan until 1273, when a joint Koryŏ–Mongol force crushed the rebels in a maritime campaign, an experience that likely facilitated operations against Japan in 1274.

Marriage ties between the Chinggisid and Koryŏ ruling houses further complicated the king's position. In 1274, Crown Prince Wang Sim married one of Qubilai's daughters, Qutulugh Kelmish. The crown prince had initially proposed the marriage during the 1269 Im Yŏn coup to secure Qubilai's military support to restore the throne to Wŏnjong. Although Qubilai agreed in principle, the marriage did not happen until 1274. During those five years, the crown prince served in the imperial bodyguard (*keshig*), perhaps winning Qubilai's personal trust. Viewed in wider geopolitical terms, securing Koryŏ's support as a source of ships, naval personnel, and maritime knowledge; denying an ally to either the Song dynasty or Japan; and using Koryŏ as a counter to the ambitions of the Three Princely Houses of the Eastern Regions (the descendants of Chinggis' three brothers) were also factors in Qubilai's decision to marry his daughter to the crown prince. In any case, when Wang Sim succeeded to the throne, he was both the king of Koryŏ and a Chinggisid son-in-law. In the coming decades, seven Chinggisid women married into the Koryŏ ruling house and three Koryŏ kings were born of Chinggisid princesses.³⁷

Although scholars agree that the royal marriages deepened ties between the Chinggisids and the Wangs, interpretation of the new relationship varies. For some, the marriage alliances were a Chinggisid tool of control that extended power into subjugated lands by binding the local ruling house to the Mongol Empire. In this view, Chinggisid princesses and their entourages constituted an arm of empire with unprecedented access to intelligence from the Koryŏ court and the ability to bend the king to conform to Chinggisid interests.³⁸ Others argue instead that the marriage lifted the Koryŏ ruling house into the ranks of Eurasia's new elites. As members of the Chinggisid family, Koryŏ kings and their sons enjoyed personal access to the Great Khan (the most treasured form of political capital), won higher status among the empire's elite, suffered less direct interference from Mongol officials in domestic affairs, and secured the military and political backing of the world's most powerful polity.³⁹ The Koryŏ king's status, especially whether the king

37 Kim Hyewŏn 1990, 203–4.

38 Hsiao 2007, 766–89. Most studies argue that the marriage alliance was both an instrument of Mongol control and an avenue to advance the Koryŏ court's interests. For instance: Zhao 2004.

39 Morihira's essays on intermarriage, the hostage system, and the Koryŏ king's shifting status have been widely influential in Korean- and Japanese-language scholarship. See Morihira 2013, 22–201.

ruled the Korean peninsula and its people in his own right or as appanage granted by the Chinggisids, has sparked debate among Korean scholars as it bears directly on a question of passionate interest, whether Koryŏ remained a sovereign nation during the Mongol age or was reduced to a tributary state.⁴⁰ Such debates aside, the marriage drew Koryŏ even more deeply into the wider politics of the empire. Succession in Koryŏ often became tied to court rivalries in Dadu; to rule effectively at home, Koryŏ kings needed to cultivate support not only in Kaegyŏng but also in Dadu and Shangdu.

Integration into the Mongol Empire brought change to Koryŏ's administrative structures. The Yuan court insisted that the Koryŏ government humble itself by adopting administrative titles that were overtly subordinate to those used by the Yuan state, or by avoiding Yuan titles. The Central Secretariat and Chancellery were combined and renamed the new Grand Chancellery, which came to incorporate the Department of State Affairs. The Ministries of Personnel, Revenue, War, and Punishments were also given more modest names. The Koryŏ king abandoned certain well-established expressions for himself (We, Our) and his kingdom for terms that signaled a ruler and polity of lesser status than the Yuan emperor and the Yuan dynasty.⁴¹ At the same time, however, the Koryŏ government reorganized some administrative structures to more closely follow Yuan practices, for instance consolidating its Ministries of Personnel and Ritual into a single unit, the Ministry of Personnel and Rites, and its Hanlin Academy and Historical Office into a new consolidated office, the Royal Academy of Letters and Archives.⁴² Additionally, the Koryŏ court selectively appropriated Mongolian administrative structures and nomenclature for units in the king's royal guard and heir apparent's personnel, palace guards, royal falconers, royal attendants, and retainers within the Mongolian princesses' entourage, among others.⁴³

Much anglophone scholarship has focused on Koryŏ resistance to the Mongols, its initial incorporation into the Mongol polity, and its role in the abortive Japanese campaigns. However, just as the Mongol Empire continued to change, so did Koryŏ and its place in the Chinggisid order. Beginning with King Ch'ungsŏn (r. 1298, 1308–1313), several Koryŏ rulers spent considerable time as youths in Dadu, where they developed political and social networks that extended beyond the Great Khan to include other members of the Chinggisid family, prominent Mongol nobles, and ambitious

40 Yi Kaesŏk 2013, 33–48. 41 Yagi 2008, 18. 42 Yagi 2008, 359.

43 Pelliot 1930; Kim Taemyŏng 2013, 100–6.

men of Turkic and Chinese background. The political fortunes of King Ch'unghye (r. 1330–1332, 1339–1344) were directly tied to his relations with powerful figures at the Yuan court like the Qipchaq El Temür, the Mongolian nativist Bayan, and the Koryŏ-born Empress Ki, while King Kongmin (r. 1351–1374), celebrated for his ostensibly anti-Yuan propensities, gained the throne only through the support of Empress Ki and other powerful backers at the Chinggisid court.⁴⁴

However, Mongol power in Koryŏ was not limitless. Mongolian names, dress, music, and dance gained popularity at the Koryŏ court and to a lesser degree in Koryŏ society, but basic social, economic, and political structures proved highly resilient to change.⁴⁵ As was true elsewhere in Eurasia, incorporation into the Mongol Empire broadened Koryŏ's existing trade ties (primarily to China) and extended them to wider interregional networks.⁴⁶ Finally, as identification between individual Chinggisid nobles and the territories where they ruled began to overshadow the sense of the empire as a unified polity under the rule of a single Great Khan, some in the Yuan dynasty felt that Koryŏ should be integrated into Yuan administrative structures as a province rather than continue as an independent vassal state.⁴⁷ Although abortive, such efforts reflect how Koryŏ's status mirrors the changing dynamics of the Chinggisid polity.

Military and Royal Authority

In recent decades, scholars have broadened our understanding of the Chinggisid empire by drawing attention to cultural exchanges and innovation, the use of advanced technologies of governance, and the movement of people across the length and breadth of Eurasia. Military conflict, with its multifaceted demands and consequences, however, remains a central feature of the Mongol period. Beginning in 1218 and continuing for 170 years, Koryŏ alternately warred with and aided the Mongols in theaters across the continent, the peninsula, and the archipelago. The consequences of both military resistance and co-operation deeply shaped Koryŏ society, economics, and political dynamics.

As noted above, Koryŏ's first military involvement with the Mongols in 1218–1219 drew Korea into closer political co-operation. Later military crises expanded the Ch'oe house's purview, and the end of war with the Mongols posed an existential threat to the Three Extraordinary Watches, which in turn sparked an abortive coup. Long decades of conflict with the Mongols

44 Kwŏn Yongch'ŏl 2014. 45 Chang Tong'ik 1994, 83–89; Yun 2006.

46 Yi Kanghan 2013; Robinson 2009, 48–49; Chen 1991. 47 Kim Hodong 2007, 112–20.

expanded the military role of gentry families, who often organized and funded local militias and guerrilla forces.

Like the rulers of Georgia and Cilician Armenia, the Koryŏ throne gained strength in part because it became a military consolidator, mobilizing military labor and war material for the Mongols' wider military actions. The Koryŏ king headed the Branch Secretariat for the Eastern Campaigns, and he vetted the commanders who headed the myriarchies or *tümen* established on Koryŏ soil. Qubilai's abortive campaigns against Japan probably represented the heaviest economic and labor burdens to the peninsula. For the 1274 campaign, the Koryŏ king produced 300 ships and 35,000 shipwrights and raised a military force of 8,000 soldiers and 6,700 sailors. For the 1281 expedition, Koryŏ produced 900 warships. Such a mobilization represented an exercise of royal authority, even if it was in the context of coercive pressure from Qubilai. Recent work by underwater archaeologists suggests that the Koryŏ ships were smaller and better constructed than the massive and hastily built craft from Jiangnan, which may explain why a higher percentage of Korean ships survived the shattering storms that destroyed much of Qubilai's fleets.⁴⁸

The demands of empire stimulated change in Koryŏ's own military. Having been brought under the Mongolian military umbrella, the Koryŏ court cut its standing army and ceded much local control to *tümen* or myriarchy commanders. Rulers like King Ch'ungsŏn experimented with new forms of military organization and social control by emulating the Yuan military household system he knew from his years in Dadu to guarantee sufficient military labor.⁴⁹ Half a century later, as rebellion spread in areas along the Chinese Grand Canal in 1354, King Kongmin dispatched several thousand Koryŏ royal troops to aid Mongol armies in its suppression. When, during the late 1350s and early 1360s, Chinese rebels spilled into northern Koryŏ, the king and his court were driven out of the capital, the royal government lost control over much of the peninsula, and military generals gained new power and prominence that would in time contribute to the fall of the Koryŏ and establishment of the Chosŏn dynasty.⁵⁰

The Movement of People and Its Consequences

Like in most empires, not only did military commanders, civil administrators, and enterprising merchants travel from the metropole; also personnel from other subjugated regions such as west and Central Asia served the empire in

48 Delgado 2008, 99–103, 148–55. 49 Yi Kanghan 2013. 50 Robinson 2009, 220–51.

Koryŏ, while people from Koryŏ sojourned in major Yuan urban centers.⁵¹ The Mongol Empire created an extensive Koryŏ diaspora, which ranged from the royal family, educated elite men, and daughters of leading aristocratic families to military personnel, Buddhist clergy, adolescents of humble background, and ordinary farmers. They settled for various lengths of time everywhere from the Liaodong frontier region and the capitals of Dadu and Shangdu to the cities of Jiangnan far to the south. Fourteenth-century scholars traveling to the Mongol capitals wrote glowingly of the Yuan as a civilizational epicenter; they brought home Neo-Confucian writings, encyclopedias, technical manuals on agriculture, and more.⁵² Recent work has also shown the importance of women, eunuchs, and warriors, whose experiences are less well attested in surviving sources but often enjoyed access to key political figures and formed informal networks of influence.⁵³

The Koryŏ diaspora began with settlements in Liaodong. Late in the summer of 1231, the Koryŏ military commander Hong Pogwŏn submitted to advancing Mongol forces, bringing with him some 1,500 households.⁵⁴ The Mongols quickly appointed Hong to positions of authority, such as supervising the Western Capital (present day P'yŏngyang). When Mongol control of the Western Capital wavered in the face of Koryŏ, Dongghzhen, and Khitan pressure late in 1233, Hong won permission to relocate Korean communities under his supervision west of the Yalu river to the region stretching between Liaoyang and Shenyang, formerly the Jin heartland. The Mongols formalized Hong's status, appointing him Senior Official of Koryŏ Military and Commoner Populations. He and his descendants administratively oversaw an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 former Koryŏ subjects. Thirty years later, in 1263, the Mongol court divided control over the Korean population in Liaodong between the Hong family and a member of the Koryŏ royal family, and in 1292 it appointed another Koryŏ royal clansmen to oversee approximately 10,000 Koreans in Shenyang.⁵⁵ Sizeable Korean communities in Liaodong continued even beyond the Koryŏ dynasty's collapse in 1392.

The Koryŏ royal family established residences in Dadu, where it patronized Confucian scholars, Buddhist monks, military men, and political advisers. To provide ready cash for living expenses, the royal residence engaged in trade in the affluent cities of Jiangnan. Most Koryŏ kings served in the Great Khan's *kesbig* in Dadu and Shangdu before taking the throne in Kaegyŏng.

51 Yun 2002. 52 To Hyŏnch'ŏl 1998; Breuker 2014, 56.

53 Among the first broader considerations is Chang Tong'ik 1994, 133–234. See also Cho Myŏngje 2008.

54 Pirozhenko 2005. 55 Yang Ŭisik 1996; Kim Kujin 1986; Robinson 2009, 28–29.

Dadu was usually where they met the Mongolian women who became their wives and consorts. In Dadu generations of Koryŏ royalty and their advisers learned how to cultivate patronage across linguistic, ethnic, and political lines. For instance, early in the fourteenth century, the Prince of Sim (a member of the Koryŏ royal family) recommended a Chinese scholar as lecturer in Chinese studies to the Mongol emperor Shidebala (r. 1321–1323).⁵⁶

By the fourteenth century, Koryŏ-born eunuchs working in the Yuan imperial palace had become significant political actors. In past Chinese dynasties, eunuchs served as caretakers for the imperial family's personal needs. However, the *kesbig* performed those functions, rendering eunuchs superfluous. Nonetheless, perhaps as part of his selective appropriation of Chinese imperial traditions, Qubilai began to use eunuchs in small numbers. The first well documented example of a Koryŏ-born eunuch is Pang Sin'u, who began service in the household of Qutulugh Kelmish, Qubilai's daughter, who had been married to King Ch'unghyŏl (r. 1274–1298). Pang's career spanned seven reigns and two empress dowagers, ending in 1342.⁵⁷ Throughout much of the fourteenth century, the Yuan court regularly demanded the submission of Koryŏ-born eunuchs from Koryŏ. Some such palace eunuchs secured aristocratic titles for themselves and male relatives from the Koryŏ throne, indicating their political influence. Fourteenth-century Chinese and Korean educated men felt that Koryŏ eunuchs wielded excessive power through their privileged access to the imperial family, complaining that Yuan officials regularly offered gifts to Koryŏ-born eunuchs to secure their support at court.

More senior palace eunuchs, including those from Koryŏ, oversaw administrative bureaus that procured goods and services for the imperial family, including the considerable land and revenue portfolios held by imperial consorts, empresses, and empress dowagers. During the mid-fourteenth century, Empress Ki entrusted much of her administration to Koryŏ-born eunuchs such as Ko Yongbo and Pak Bulhua (Buqa). Ko and Pak also served as Yuan envoys to Koryŏ, where they conducted matters of state on behalf of the Chinggisids such as the requisition of young girls for service in the Yuan imperial palaces, deliberated with the Koryŏ king, and tended to family matters such as entertaining Empress Ki's parents.⁵⁸ On occasion, their duties included socializing with the Koryŏ king. One day in 1343 Ko invited King Ch'unghye to watch polo matches and wrestling competitions.⁵⁹ Such

56 Wang Feng 1988, 501. 57 Ko 1984. 58 KS, 36.560; KSCY, 25.31a–32b, 649.

59 KS, 36.562; KSCY, 25.32b, 649.

entertainment hid their visit's real purpose – the king's apprehension, dethronement, and delivery to Dadu,⁶⁰ in other words, the highly sensitive political mission of replacing the sovereign of an allied kingdom. Because of their close personal ties to the imperial family and their experience in running key bureaus, some Koryŏ-born eunuchs sat on the *kesbig's* deliberative councils, which suggests their importance to the empire's operation.⁶¹ Eunuchs also figured in religious patronage and social welfare on behalf of both palace women and themselves. A Koryŏ-born eunuch is listed among the donors inscribed into Uighur, Tibetan, and Chinese accounts of the construction of the famous Juyong Pass, an emblem of dynastic resurgence constructed in the mid-1340s on a key imperial highway linking Dadu to the north.⁶²

Although the most closely studied instances of intermarriage are those between the Chinggisid and Koryŏ ruling houses, other inter-elite marriages occurred. One study has documented thirty-seven instances of women from prominent Koryŏ families married to Yuan officials.⁶³ At least two Koryŏ kings and one royal clansman married daughters to Chinggisid nobles and senior Yuan officials.⁶⁴ In some cases, such marriages resulted when the Chinggisid throne redistributed Koryŏ women as rewards in recognition of meritorious service. This is how the Qangli Turk Yanzhen (Alchin?), who had been captured as a boy by Mongol forces and given to Chinggis's mother, and later became one of Qubilai's intimates, came to marry the Koryŏ woman Kim Chang'a, a former palace attendant. The union produced five sons, most of whom later held posts in China that drew on their sound education in Chinese classics.⁶⁵ One grandson, Berke Buqa, would serve at the princely court of Qoshila (1300–1329), in the *kesbig* of Ayurbarwada (Renzong, r. 1311–1320), and later in the Central Secretariat. He would marry a woman from another elite Koryŏ family.⁶⁶ The Koryŏ court attempted to use Berke Buqa's ties to Koryŏ by dispatching cousins bearing gifts to win his support; however, it is unclear whether he was sympathetic to Korea or to family interests. In other cases, the "regifting" of women involved both the Chinggisid throne and the Koryŏ king. The Koryŏ king had given a Koryŏ woman to Sangha, Qubilai's influential finance minister. After Sangha's political fall and

60 KS, 36.562–63; KSCY, 25.33a, 650. 61 Yi Kaesŏk 2010. 62 Murata 1955, 241, 278, 315.

63 Xi 2003, 136–79. See also Pak Kyŏngja 2010, Chart 2, 53–54, for twenty-two attested examples.

64 Pak 2010, 54. These were Kings Ch'ungsŏn and Ch'unghye.

65 Xi 2002, 123; Ma 2002, 94–95.

66 Yi Kaesŏk 2011, 28–42. Another of Buhumu's sons also had a Koryŏ-born consort. See Ma 2002, 94–95; Xi 2003, 169–70.

execution in 1291, the Yuan throne seized his assets, including his women. Qubilai then granted the Koryŏ woman to an Indian prince from Ma'bar, who had sought the emperor's patronage and taken residence in the international port city of Quanzhou.⁶⁷ Some Koryŏ families and Yuan officials arranged matches independently of both the Yuan and Koryŏ thrones. In any case, elites from subjugated countries formed multigenerational ties that grew from Chinggisid conquest but ultimately came to sustain the empire. Finally and least well documented are the estimated 2,000 Koryŏ tribute females, few of whom gained great social status and economic privilege as wives or consorts of the Chinggisid nobility or high-ranking members of the Yuan political elite. The majority served as attendants in Yuan palaces or affluent elite households and quite likely married locally.

When Koryŏ-born eunuchs and young girls took up their duties in the Yuan palace, they introduced preferences in food, clothing, language, and religious practice to the Chinggisid imperial family and leading court ministers, which spread such habits in China.⁶⁸ During the mid-fourteenth century, "everywhere clothes, shoes, hats, and utensils all follow the Koryŏ style," as one Chinese writer opined.⁶⁹ In some elite circles, a Koryŏ bride or consort carried great social cachet.⁷⁰

During the fourteenth century, Koryŏ women in the Mongol Empire were a charged issue for many educated men. Korean writers like Yi Kok (1298–1351) and Yi Chehyŏn (1287–1367) considered them emblems of Koryŏ's subjugated status. In his 1335 proposal to prohibit the collection of tribute girls from Koryŏ, Yi Kok described grief-stricken parents, watching helplessly as Yuan envoys seized their daughters. The girls were to serve thousands of miles away with no chance of returning to Koryŏ or caring for their mothers and fathers in their old age.⁷¹ In contrast, for some Chinese and Turkic men, Koryŏ women possessed an exotic, erotic appeal. In one mid-fourteenth-century poem of social criticism, the Qarluq poet, Nasen, contrasted a pampered Koryŏ consort drunkenly calling for her eunuch servant to add incense to her censer at the foot of her bed in the imperial palace to an impoverished Chinese woman in rags whose sons variously risked life and limb in Yuan armies and construction gangs.⁷² Chinese writers sometimes used Koryŏ women to illustrate the moral depravity of senior Mongol figures at the Yuan court, noting the susceptibility of powerful minister and military commander Bolod Temür to the sexual wiles of Korean women working for

67 Ma 2002, 95. 68 Pak Kyŏngja 2010, 41. 69 Quan and Chonguye 1991, 96.

70 Quan and Chonguye 1991, 96; Ye 1997, 63. 71 *KS*, 109.304–5; *KSCY*, 25.8a–11a, 637–39.

72 Nasen 1981, 1.33b–34b, translated in Robinson 2009, 54–55.

Empress Ki.⁷³ Finally, after the Mongol Empire collapsed, Chinese men found evocative the image of Koryŏ female entertainers surviving by entertaining foreign men in the inns of China, separated from family, struggling to communicate in an alien tongue, and completely dependent on the uncertain kindness of strangers.⁷⁴ Whatever the impressions of educated male writers, Koryŏ-born women and eunuchs formed an important element of capital society during the mid-fourteenth century. The challenge for historians is to strike a balance in assessing their experiences, which are poorly documented and often first recorded to score rhetorical points.

Thus Koryŏ subjects were not just absorbed into the Mongol Empire; they came to constitute the empire. Rather than passive cogs in the machine, they often wielded some control over the levers of power, especially from the 1320s to the 1360s. They did not take over the Yuan dynasty, but a portion of Koryŏ-born women, eunuchs, military commanders, and the ruling house did become essential elements of the Chinggisid enterprise in East Asia.⁷⁵ This perspective complicates the facile binary of conqueror and conquered and highlights the need to consider change over time within the empire. Further, it facilitates comparisons with other empires that integrated a wide variety of actors, some of whom came to see their interests as compatible with those of the empire. Obscuring more than they illuminate, such categories as collaborationist or traitor were established as historiographical convention in works that postdate the Mongol period, such as the *Official History of the Koryŏ Dynasty*, which were compiled in the mid-fifteenth century, and reinforced in recent scholarship produced in the wake of Korea's Japanese colonial experience.

Legacies

In the immediate wake of the Mongol Empire's fall, Koryŏ's relations with the new Ming dynasty (1368–1644), which supplanted the Yuan dynasty in China, frequently foundered on Koryŏ's ties to the Chinggisid empire, both past and present.⁷⁶ A functioning, albeit much diminished, Yuan court survived on the steppe decades after its withdrawal from Dadu in 1368 and bolstering its alliance with the Koryŏ court was essential to Chinggisid dreams of revival.⁷⁷ Through the 1380s, the Koryŏ remained bound to the

73 YS, 114.2881. 74 Robinson 2009, 202–3. 75 Yi Kaesŏk 2011, 14.

76 Hwang Unyong 1980; Kim Sŏnho 1996; Yun Ŭnsuk 2010; Kim Kyŏngnok 2007; Ch'oe Chungŏk 2010.

77 Cao 2001; Hu 1984.

Yuan through formal and informal ties of family, diplomacy, military interest, and shared history.⁷⁸ Control of Liaodong, home to large expatriate Korean communities, accustomed to self-rule under members of the Koryŏ royal family and the Hong family, posed challenges to the Ming court, which had its own strategic objectives in the region. More broadly, through the mid-fifteenth century, ambitious steppe leaders continued to appeal to Koryŏ's status as a son-in-law kingdom in the Mongol Empire to win the Chosŏn court's allegiance, thus reminding the Ming court of the peninsula's Chinggisid ties and alerting us to the Chinggisids' lasting legacy.

More important for Korean history is that many key political, military, and intellectual figures that figure in the establishment of the Chosŏn dynasty grew to maturity under the Mongols. The family of Yi Sŏnggye (1335–1408), the Chosŏn dynasty's founder, held hereditary military posts in Ssangsong commandery, which the Mongols had established in the northeast corner of Koryŏ in 1258. He and his forefathers cultivated local ties with both Korean and Jurchen families and likely developed ties with the descendants of Otchigin (Chinggis's younger brother) and other powerful Mongol nobles whose sphere of influence extended into northern Koryŏ.⁷⁹ Yi's strong military roots in a strategic region appealed to ambitious scholars who envisioned a different future that would require force to realize. Koryŏ's political and military ties to the Mongol Empire facilitated the flow of books and ideas in China to the peninsula, providing men like Cho Chun (?–1405), Chŏng Mongju (1337–1392), and Chŏng Tojŏn (1342–1398) access to recent developments in Neo-Confucian thought and other intellectual developments, either through books brought to Kaegyŏng or through personal experience during their missions to the Yuan court in Dadu, which contributed to their vision for the new Chosŏn dynasty in areas from land tenure, the proper role of the state, and the place of Buddhism to the ideal relation between ruler and minister.⁸⁰ Integration into the Mongol Empire provided access to military, intellectual, or political resources used to pursue local, personal interests on the Korean peninsula. Given the importance of the Mongol legacy, more systematic consideration is needed of the Chosŏn dynasty in a broader Eurasian context as one of many “post-Mongol” polities founded in the wake of the empire's collapse.⁸¹

78 Yun Ŭnsuk 2010; Ikeuchi 1918; Ch'oe Chungŏk 2010; Kim Tangt'aek 1997b.

79 Yun Ŭnsuk 2012. 80 To Hyŏnch'ŏl 2013; Breuker 2014, 57; Robinson 2016.

81 Robinson 2015.

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Georgia and the Caucasus

LORENZO PUBBLICI

Before the Mongols

Caucasia is a region that extends north and south of the parallel mountain ranges known as the Caucasus. It is a vast isthmus that separates the Black Sea from the Caspian Sea and Europe from Asia, and is located – from north to south – between the Sea of Azov and northern Armenia. At the widest point, only 500 kilometers separate the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea.

The natural barrier formed by the mountains, which on the summit of Mt. Elburz reach 5,642 meters in height, has divided the region into two areas whose historical evolution has been very dissimilar over the centuries: North Caucasus or Ciscaucasia, and South Caucasus, Subcaucasia or Transcaucasia. Since antiquity, North Caucasus – innervated in the Eurasian steppe belt – experienced close contact with nomad peoples. Since the mid-eleventh century, the Turkic Qipchaq confederation spread in the north Pontic and Caucasian area, attaining a dominating position in the region.¹ South Caucasus benefited from connections with the Fertile Crescent first, then with the Hellenic, Roman, and Iranian civilizations. The geographical location of Subcaucasia favored the birth of centers of collective power influenced by neighboring states.

In the Caucasian region, local identities have survived and sometimes thrived despite the efforts of the three major monotheistic religions that have actively tried, in vain, to dominate it.² Since their Christianization in the early fourth century, Georgia and Armenia, together with the Albanians (in the eastern part of Subcaucasia, on the Caspian coasts), have formed Christian Caucasasia.³ Islam penetrated part of the Caucasus in the seventh century, accentuating the role played by the two Christian states as the eastern frontiers of the Byzantine Empire. For centuries the Caucasus was neatly divided between Christian and Muslim, and only

1 Golden 1992; Golden 2011. 2 Tosi 1996. 3 Toumanoff 1963.

from the second half of the ninth century could Armenia and Georgia take advantage of the decline of the Caliphate to expand and consolidate their borders.

The Turkic infiltrations in Caucasia throughout the eleventh century started disintegrating the political unity of the Caucasian kingdoms. If, on the one hand, Armenia suffered heavily from the nomad invasions, particularly by the Seljuqs, Georgia came out stronger because of the new political changes.⁴ In particular, the Bagratid house of Georgia concentrated most of its efforts on strengthening their power over the high aristocracy, which was eager to erode the royal house's political hegemony.

The Battle of Manzikert (1071), where the Seljuq Turks defeated the Byzantine army, precipitated a massive exodus of Armenians toward Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Georgia. The Rupenids, a minor branch of the Bagratid dynasty, founded a new kingdom on the Gulf of Alexandretta (present-day southern Turkey), and declared its formal independence from Byzantium. During its three centuries of life – from 1080 to 1375 – this kingdom – Cilicia, or Lesser Armenia – represented both a central outlet for the Mediterranean trade system with its ports – Korikos, Ayas, Mamistra – and a military stronghold for western Christianity, being often a close ally of the Crusaders since the first expedition to the Holy Land in 1098.⁵

The First Mongol Invasion in Caucasia: 1220

In the early 1220s, on the eve of the first Mongol invasion, the kingdom of Georgia represented the focal point of power in the Subcaucasian region. The sovereignty of Georgia stretched, west to east, from the eastern coast of the Black Sea to Derbend and West Shirvan. The Seljuqs ruled over Asia Minor from their capital, Konya. Their dominion extended as far as the cities of Erzurum and Erzinjan. The Ayyūbids controlled the eastern Mediterranean shores and the very south of Caucasus, down to Aleppo. Armenian princes (*ishkhans*) ruled over central Subcaucasia to the borders of Azerbaijan.

The Mongols arrived in the Caucasus in the fall of 1220 from the southern shores of the Caspian Sea, passing across Tabriz, then the steppes of Mūghān, in southeastern Azerbaijan.⁶ According to Armenian historian Kirakos Gandzakets'i (d. 1271/1272), the Georgians and the Armenians were

4 Golden 1984, 46–47. 5 Mutafian 2002; Ghazarian 2000.

6 Ibn al-Athīr 2008, 214; JT/Thackston 2012, 107; Dashdondog 2011, 45.

misinformed, believing the Mongols to be Christians.⁷ Kirakos also describes the ferocity of the Mongols.⁸ A courier sent by the Atabeg Iwanē came to the Georgian King George IV (“the Resplendent,” r. 1212–1223),⁹ warning him about the arrival of this new, violent people who were ravaging all the countries.¹⁰ The Armenian cleric Vardan Arewelts’i (c. 1200–1271/1272) confirms the information given by Kirakos and states that there were some 20,000 men in the Mongol army who destroyed everything and then quickly retreated.¹¹ We find the same account in the *History of the Nation of Archers*, written by the Cilician scholar Grigor of Arkner (c. 1250–1335).¹²

The territorial nobility tried to mount a defense. George IV attempted to assemble a robust resistance. General Ivane (described by Kirakos as *hazar-apet*, i.e. commander of 1,000)¹³ was in charge of halting the enemy’s advance, and the clash occurred on the plain of Khunan, near the river Kotman and fortress of Terunakan, i.e. in northern Armenia.¹⁴ George IV was defeated and only saved himself by fleeing the battle.¹⁵

After the defeat, Georgia was placed under harsh control. The aristocracy was forced to pledge an oath of allegiance to the new rulers and a regimen of heavy taxation was imposed on the people. The ruling dynasty of Cilician Armenia preferred to surrender without fighting the Mongols, opting instead for a bloodless acceptance of subservience. The kingdom was thus spared from destruction by the Mongol invasion.

It is still unclear whether the invasion of 1220 was a well-engineered operation intended for permanent conquest of the Caucasus,¹⁶ as a part of Chinggis Khan’s mission of world conquest,¹⁷ or whether instead it was

⁷ Kirakos 1986, 166. ⁸ Kirakos 1986, 165–66.

⁹ Iwanē was the brother of Zakare Zak’arian. Both military leaders and very successful during the expansionistic campaign of Tamara against the Turks in northeastern Armenia, the two brothers were rewarded with the administration of many districts they had liberated. Bedrosian 1997, 254.

¹⁰ According to the Georgian chronicler the Mongols are “a strange people, speaking a strange language.” Brosset 1849, 492. The “territory of Gag” is probably the area of Mount Gag in modern Azerbaijan, at the northeastern border with Armenia, where the ruin of the Saint Sargis Monastery is found. Korobeinikov 2014, 174.

¹¹ Vardan Arewelts’i, tr. Bedrosian 2007, 141–42.

¹² Grigor Arknerts’i, tr. Blake and Frye 1949, 293.

¹³ Kirakos 1986, 167; Brosset 1849, 493–94; Ibn al-Athīr 2008, 214.

¹⁴ The location of this place is still problematic today. According to Manandian (1952, 183), both the toponyms “can be found along the banks of the river Kur” (Dashdondog 2011, 48 and n. 36). Dashdondog quotes the work of Galstyan (1976, 114), who states that the river Kotman “is the modern river Touz, which passes through the fortress of Terunakan” in northern Armenia.

¹⁵ Vardan Arewelts’i, tr. Bedrosian 2007, 142. Grigor Arknerts’i (tr. Blake and Frye 1949, 293–95) writes that the king of the Georgians confronted the enemy with 60,000 cavalry.

¹⁶ Dashdondog 2011, 44. ¹⁷ Amitai-Preiss, 2000; Allsen 1987.

a preparatory invasion aimed at acquiring a better understanding of the Caucasian region before committing their main armies.¹⁸

In May 1223, the Mongols advanced to the north, pursuing the nomadic union of the Alans.¹⁹ After defeating them, they proceeded and entered Kievan Rus'. Here they outflanked a Russian–Cuman army in the noted Battle of the Kalka River, where many Russian princes perished. After their victory, the Mongols headed back east.

The first Mongol expedition that ended in the Caucasus left quite a few refugees, who now moved southwards: the Qipchaqs broke into Georgia and were defeated by an Armenian–Georgian army.²⁰ Jālāl al-Dīn, the son of Khwārazm-Shāh Muḥammad, who had fled to India, invaded part of eastern Georgia, and defeated a composite army made of Alans, Lazs, Cumans, and others and headed by the Georgians. In March 1226 he captured and pillaged the capital, Tiflis, massacring its population.²¹

In 1223, George IV had died from the wounds he had suffered in battle the previous year. Power in Georgia was placed in the hands of his sister Queen Rusudan (r. 1223–1245). The political situation in the Caucasian state was rapidly deteriorating. The Mongol invasion had damaged the power structure in the region, but few realized how seriously. The conquest of Tiflis by Jālāl al-Dīn was just one episode in a wider context; he poured a mass of troops and civilians (14,000, according to the author of the Georgian chronicle²²) into the eastern borders of the Caucasus, specifically in the region of Ganja, which was devastated.

The Final Conquest of Caucasia

The Mongol incursion of 1220, as well as the invasion of Jālāl al-Dīn in 1225–1226, further weakened the Caucasian leadership's ability to restore an efficient military system. At this point, Azerbaijan was almost entirely in the Mongols' hands. In the late 1220s, the kingdom of Georgia – the last bastion of defense against foreign attacks – was just beginning to reorganize its military structure.

18 Bedrosian 1979, 94. 19 On the Alans: Alemany 2000; Bachrach 1973.

20 Kirakos 1986, 168–69; Ibn al-Athīr 2008, 237–39; Dashdondog 2011, 51. On the Cumans in Georgia: Golden 1984, 84–86.

21 Ibn al-Athīr 2008, 269; Brosset 1849, 504–5.

22 Figures are, of course, not reliable for these times, especially when the sources are so scarce, but these numbers can give us an idea of the chronicler's perception of the historical events. Brosset 1849, 495.

In 1231, Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn was murdered under mysterious circumstances.²³ With no more serious opponents around, the Mongols planned to complete the conquest. General Chormaqan (d. 1241) was entrusted with operations.²⁴ The Mongol commander arrived in Caucasia in 1235 with three *tümen*, supposedly 30,000 men,²⁵ and devastated the whole region up to the Derbend gate. The Mongols started to ravage the territories of Georgia from the Caspian coast, then moved on to menace the kingdom directly.²⁶ Queen Rusudan fled Tiflis and went to Kutais in the northwest. The takeover of Georgia was violent and the impression left on its contemporaries significant.²⁷

The Georgian aristocracy in general did not react to the Mongol attack, but rather retreated to their fortresses, leaving the conquerors free rein.²⁸ The Mongols took the districts one by one, and occupied them permanently. Chormaqan summoned a *quriltai* (assembly) to divide the “countries” among the “one hundred chiefs.” In fact, the conquered lands were divided into three parts, each one given to a Mongol military leader (*noyan*).²⁹

In 1242, Ögödei Qa’an (c. 1185–1241) replaced Chormaqan, who, according to Armenian sources, had gone deaf.³⁰ In his place, Baiju Noyan (fl. 1230–1260) was appointed. Baiju recruited men from all the territories under his rule and all able-bodied males were enrolled in a military machine created to conquer the west.³¹ The conquest continued. In 1242, the Mongols attacked Erzurum, which had been in the hands of the Seljuq sultans since the Battle of Manzikert of 1071. The densely populated city was destroyed and all of its inhabitants put to death in a siege that lasted two months and devastated many districts.³²

After a short break, probably due to the cold season, military action started again. In the spring of 1243, Baiju decided to attack the sultan of Rūm, Ghiyāth al-Dīn. According to Kirakos, the sultan spread rumors about an imminent attack on the Mongol camp in Mūghān. The Cilician monk Hayton states that when the sultan heard about the coming of the Mongols he recruited an army of mercenaries.³³ In fact, the nobility of Aleppo, Trebizond, Nicaea, and Cilicia, as well as the Franks of the Latin Empire, took part in the sultan’s army. The battle occurred in June 1243 at a village near Köse Dagħ, and the

23 Dashdondog 2011, 53. 24 On Chormaqan: May 1996. 25 Kirakos 1986, 194.

26 Brosset 1849, 513–14. 27 E.g., Kirakos 1986, 201.

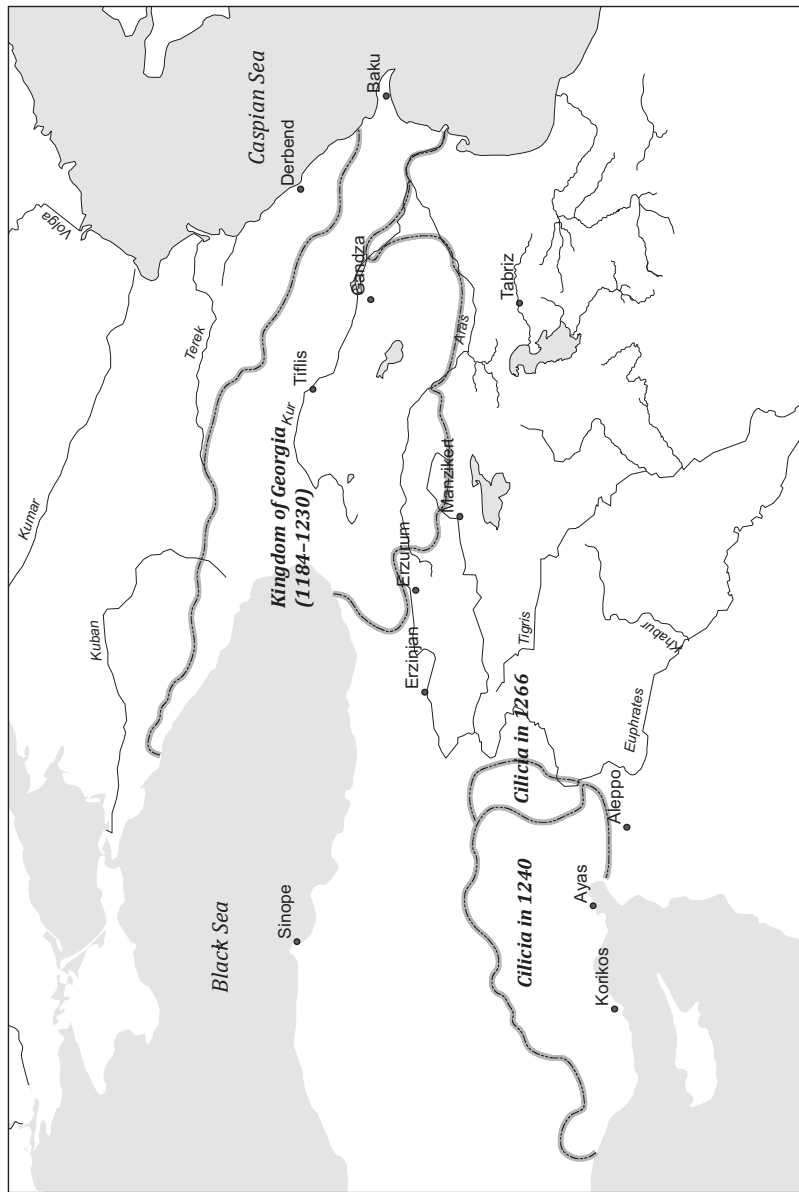
28 Likely they hoped to avoid a massacre of civilians. Kirakos 1986, 200–1.

29 Grigor Arknerts’i, tr. Blake and Frye 1949, 301–3. For the debate on the Mongol conquest of Gandzak (Ganja) and its dating (probably 1231): Dashdondog 2011, 53–54.

30 Kirakos 1986, 240. 31 Dashdondog 2011, 60; On Baiju: Melville 2009.

32 Kirakos 1986, 241; Grigor Arknerts’i, tr. Blake and Frye 1949, 309.

33 Hayton 1906, 154–55.



Map 17.1 Caucasasia in the early thirteenth century

Mongols achieved a decisive victory, after which the Sultanate of Rūm was subdued. After success in Asia Minor, Baiju became the representative of the Great Khan in Caucasia, Syria, Rūm, and western Iran.³⁴

The Mongol conquest of Subcaucasia pushed thousands of people westwards in the hope of finding safe haven. Many fled to Cilician Armenia, where King Het'um I, probably encouraged by the nobility, chose to submit to the Mongols and became their ally. The negotiations in Caesarea began in 1243 between the Armenian noble baron Kostandin on one side and Baiju, with Altuna Khatun (Chormaqan's wife) on the other.³⁵

The Mongols in Caucasia: Rule and Co-operation

Early Mongol rule in Caucasia can be divided schematically into four main phases. The first, from 1236 to 1243, was a preparatory period of domination. The second phase started with the measures adopted by the new qa'an Güyük (r. 1246–1248). A third phase began after the election of Möngke Qa'an in 1251.³⁶ The fourth and last stage of this period can be situated between 1256 and 1261.

In the first phase, the ongoing and widespread war was violent and the whole region was brought to its knees. Massive human loss, economic stagnation, and a devastated countryside caused irreparable damage to agriculture and entire villages were destroyed. During the second phase, functionaries were sent throughout the empire in order to reorganize the fiscal system and take a census for military purposes. Sources depict this period as harsh; the population was in the hands of the Mongol officers, who applied levies and taxes arbitrarily, imposing very onerous constraints on the Caucasian aristocracy. Nonetheless, under certain conditions, it was also beneficial. The nobles who had voluntarily submitted to the Mongols maintained their territories and collected taxes for the Qa'an. In exchange, they had to deliver troops to the Mongols, provide relay stations (*jam*) and personally visit the Mongol court. The third period was marked by Möngke's unified vision of the empire and the massive effort for a general census and more regular taxation (1252–1259). The Qa'an entrusted the Amīr Arghun Aqa (c. 1210–1278) to establish the fiscal system in Caucasia.³⁷ The fourth and last phase can be placed roughly between the aftermath of the creation of the Ilkhanate and its first clash with the Golden Horde.

34 Kirakos 1986, 244–46; Vardan Arewelts'i, tr. Bedrosian 2007, 88; Dashdondog 2011, 62–63; Cahen 1968, 138.

35 Dashdondog 2011, 66 (and chs. 2–3). 36 On Möngke Qa'an: Allsen 1987.

37 Lambton 1987, 97–123; Lane 1999, 459–82; On Arghun Aqa: Lane 1999; Pubblici 2010; Landa 2018.

Caucasia did not belong to the *ulus* of Jochi. In the period that preceded the creation of the Ilkhanate, i.e., 1236–1256, Subcaucasia was put under the control of a military governor, the first of which was Chormaqan. The Mongols organized Caucasia into five *vilayets* (provinces): Georgia (Gurjistan), Greater Armenia, Shirvan, Arran, and Mūghān.³⁸ Georgia was divided into eight *tümen*.³⁹ Greater Armenia was composed of “quasi-independent” Armenian principalities, and included the territories of Sasun and Vaspurakan, with Karin/Erzurum at the center.⁴⁰ Cilicia was fundamentally a single unit under the control of its king, Het’um, who, as mentioned above, secured an alliance with the Mongols in 1243 and became the Qa’an’s vassal.

The Armenian and Georgian aristocracy chose to concede to the Mongols largely to protect their people from annihilation and preserve their personal interests. Furthermore, the local aristocracy needed to preserve as much power as possible in times of war: protecting land and resources and, when possible, even increasing their territories. In order to do so, an oath of submission was required. The Mongols rarely planned to entirely replace the local aristocracy with a new power, especially early on in their domination.

Thus the Armenian and Georgian nobles developed relations *in loco* with the Mongol *noyans*, and with the qa’an in Qaraqorum, to protect themselves and their patrimony.⁴¹ Nonetheless, voluntary submission did not always preserve cities from destruction or civilians from liquidation.⁴² For the local nobility, submission to the Mongols entailed accepting the status of *injü* (*īnjū*) (the qa’an’s personally owned people),⁴³ which carried with it a certain autonomy of government and tax exemptions.

Submission to the invaders by single Armenian nobles facilitated Mongol rule in Caucasia.⁴⁴ Relations among the Armenian aristocracy had always been troubled and this played into the hands of the Mongols, who did not

38 Dashdondog 2011, 102–3.

39 The *tümen* (10,000 in Mongolian) was a military unit of, nominally, 10,000 men, as well as a subdistrict capable of providing 10,000 soldiers.

40 Bedrosian 1979, 125.

41 E.g., when the Armenian noble Awag, ruler of Kayen, offered his loyalty to Chormaqan and was welcomed with honor by the Mongols. Brosset 1849, 516.

42 E.g., in 1236, during the siege of Kars, the city surrendered to Chormaqan. Yet some inhabitants were massacred, others were enslaved, and the city was destroyed. Kirakos 1986, 220; Dashdondog 2011, 58.

43 The term originated in the Mongol word *emchü*, meaning “private property.” In the *Secret History*, this includes those who belonged to Mongol aristocrats, or the patrimony of the princes (Vladimircov 1948, 128). In the Ilkhanate *inje* refers to the khan’s entire household, including inherited people, landed property, and subjects levied from outer subjects. Atwood 2004, 240; Dashdondog 2011, 75, n. 19, quoting Rashīd al-Dīn.

44 Dashdondog 2011, 59.

want a strongly united leading class in the territories. They increased tensions by distributing land and rights unequally amongst the aristocracy.

In Cilicia, as already mentioned, King Het'um I attempted to prevent the Mongol conquest. In 1243, he sent his brother and father to Baiju to offer obedience and submission. Baiju demanded that he should be delivered the mother, wife, and daughter of Kay-Khusraw, who had escaped from the Mongols to the Cilician court. Het'um accepted. The Cilician king traveled with a Mongol delegation to the qa'an, and Het'um's brother, Sparapet Smbat, visited Güyük's court in 1248.⁴⁵ Smbat brought back to Cilicia the qa'an's commitment to preserve the territorial integrity of the Cilician kingdom and a promise of his support against the Seljuqs.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, Güyük demanded that Het'um appear in person to pay tribute and the Armenian king acted accordingly. The journey was fruitful. Möngke Qa'an – who succeeded Güyük – gave Het'um full protection.⁴⁷ The agreement was settled with Möngke's decision to exempt all churches and monasteries from taxation.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, Georgia was going through a complex political phase. In order to secure the throne for her son David (Narin, the Younger, 1225–1293), Queen Rusudan sent him to Batu Khan to formally submit.⁴⁹ Simultaneously, the Georgian nobles chose George IV Lasha's illegitimate son David (Ulu, the elder, 1215–1270) as king, assuming that Rusudan's son was dead. Lasha's son was crowned king in the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and sent to the Great Khan's camp in Qaraqorum to obtain official recognition. David Ulu was held in the Mongol capital for five years, and there he met his cousin, David Narin. Güyük nominated David Ulu as king of the Georgians, and Narin as his coruler.⁵⁰ Thus Georgia found itself with two sovereigns who ruled together for a while.⁵¹

In this phase of Mongol domination in Caucasia, the unequal position of the nobles under the new rulers together with heavy and arbitrary taxation caused increasing social tensions. A first rebellion by the Armenian and Georgian aristocracy was planned for late 1248, but Prince Awag Zak'arian (d. 1250), son of Atabeg Iwanē, intercepted the plot and informed the

45 Dashdondog 2011, 81–82; Jackson 2005, 98–99 and n. 100. On the journey: Boyle 1964.

46 Het'um's journey to the Great Khan is also attested in a 1256 colophon, originally from the monastery of SS. Apostles in Muš "[The pious Armenian King Het'um] after having made himself a vassal [of the Mongols], taking on himself the Cross of Christ, traveled for the Good of the Christians. And he remained there for four years." Sirinian 2010, 510.

47 Kirakos 1986, 301–8; Boyle 1964, 175–89; Dashdondog 2011, 86.

48 De Nersessian 1962, 653; Dashdondog 2011, 86. 49 Kirakos 1986, 262–63.

50 Kirakos 1986, 264.

51 Queen Rusudan had died in 1245. "First Dawit', son of Lasha George, the elder of the two; then following his death, his father's sister's son, the other Dawit', son of Rusudan, should he still be alive." Kirakos 1986, 264.

Mongols, who promptly suppressed the initiative.⁵² The failure of the plot did not discourage the Caucasian nobility from wanting to dismantle the new political order. In 1259–1261 another plot was arranged due to the introduction of new taxes. Part of the Caucasian nobility was involved in the revolt.

Arghun Aqa quelled it with bloodshed. But since he failed to capture the rebels' leader, King David, Arghun lashed out against the nearest Georgian provinces. The damage was extensive.⁵³ It was an Armenian noble, Prince Smbat Orbelian, who finally stifled the revolt, after receiving Arghun's support. The Mongols' punishment for the revolt was severe. The Georgian queen, Gontsa (wife of David Ulu), and Zak'are, son of another Armenian prince, Shahanshah, were executed. Shahanshah himself was liberated only after a ransom payment.

Despite these tensions there were also numerous cases of marriage between Georgian and Armenian nobles and the Mongols, often personally arranged by the Qa'an.⁵⁴ The Armenian church never opposed these alliances. The partnership between the Armenian and the Georgian nobility on the one hand, and the Mongols on the other, was, in this phase, the result of a precise, well-studied strategy, which benefited both sides. The creation of the Ilkhanate gradually altered the situation.

Mongol Administration in Caucasias

In all the conquered lands, the Mongols had to transform their military domination into political government. In Caucasias, years of war had left widespread destruction, from which it took decades to recover. According to Grigor Arknerts'i, the Mongols arrived in the Caucasus with an idea for a fiscal and administrative structure.⁵⁵ After Chinggis Khan's death in 1227, all the conquered lands west of the Irtysh river became the appanage of Ulus Jochi, Chinggis Khan's eldest son. The Caucasus was excluded and was put

52 Kirakos 1986, 267: "The T'at'ar army happening to be in the place was informed about it and the army notified its chiefs."

53 Dashdondog 2011, 92.

54 As was the case of the Georgian king Demetre's daughter, who married Bugha Noyan. Prince Awag and Smbat Sparapet both married Mongol wives. The former was given his wife directly by Güyük. Chormaqan's son married the daughter of Hasan Jalal. Dashdondog 2011, 94–95.

55 "[The Mongols] give us *tzghu*, *mal*, *t'aghar*, and *ghp'ch'ur*": Grigor Arknerts'i, tr. Blake and Frye 1949, 301. The *tzghu* was a tribute in the form of a gift (Cleaves 1949, 442). The *mal* (Mongolian for "cattle/livestock") was a tax on property in Caucasias calculated by measurement (Dashdondog 2011, 117). The *t'aghar* was a tax paid in grain "for the military caste and the army in a given district" (Petrushevsky 1968, 533). The *qubchir/qubchur* was a general tax imposed on property (Petrushevsky 1968, 533; Lambton 1986; Smith 1970).

under the control of Chormaqan, the Qa'an's representative, who held both military and administrative authority, and was provided with a permanent garrison, the *tammachi*.⁵⁶

As stated above, the whole of Caucasia was divided into five provinces, and one of these, Gurjistan (Georgia), was divided to eight *tümen*, namely eight districts capable of each providing 10,000 men to the Mongol army. Of these *tümen*, five were Georgian and three were Armenian. Initially, the Mongols did not replace the local ruling class. This happened later, gradually and sporadically, beginning from the second half of the thirteenth century, when some of the conquered lands were taken by the Mongol nobility as *emchü* / *injü*.⁵⁷ The Mongols needed to control, even if indirectly, the subjugated lands to take advantage of their resources and have access to an always available army.

Before the creation of the Ilkhanate, Mongol administration of Caucasia varied, but, in general, the new ruler did not intervene directly in local affairs. The *vilayet* of Gurjistan was run by the Georgian Crown, which now depended directly upon the Great Khan and governed it through the Zaka'arid princes (*ishkhans*) who commanded the *tümen*.⁵⁸ The rest of Greater Armenia was administered, on behalf of the Great Khan, by a Mongol governor, who could be a general (*tamghachi*), or, below him, a *darughachi* (or *basqaq*), who also exercised wide powers.⁵⁹ The tablet of authority (*paiza*) granted the Mongol governor official legitimacy through the central political authority.⁶⁰ These administrators could command *in loco* every kind of obligation from the local aristocracy: food, herds, and even military service. The abuses suffered by civilians, and not only in the Caucasus, induced the Great Khan to limit the prerogatives and privileges enjoyed by the local nobility.

Güyük Qa'an had tried to revamp the fiscal system in the Mongol Empire already in the mid-1240s. However, it was Möngke Qa'an who codified the political, economic, and administrative state through a general institutional reorganization. As stated above, a census was necessary. This may not have been the first initiative that the Mongol court took in Caucasia, but it was certainly the best-documented one. In 1254, when Möngke sent Arghun Aqa to Caucasia, a systematic census was assigned as one of his tasks. Mongol officers visited cities and villages, and registered

56 Dashdondog 2011, 101–2 and nn. 14, 15.

57 Petrushevsky 1968, 487; Dashdondog 2011, 102–3. 58 Dashdondog 2011, 106–7.

59 On these offices: Atwood 2004, 134; Morgan 2007, 94–95.

60 Morgan 2007, 91–92; Atwood 2004, 433–34; Lane 2009, 34.

all the male inhabitants from the ages of fifteen to sixty.⁶¹ They imposed harsh taxes that heightened the process of general impoverishment in the region. Soon afterwards, the local aristocracy began to collect taxes on behalf of the Mongols. Kirakos Gandzakets'i writes that the nobles of the districts collaborated in levying taxes with too much zeal and for their own profit.⁶² Artisans in both villages and cities were taxed. The Mongols demanded precious metals for themselves, and the tributes were calculated annually.⁶³ They also taxed the merchants and arrogated themselves all the salt mines, but nothing was taken from the clergy.⁶⁴ Fiscal exemption was an instrument that the Mongols used regularly as an incentive to insure the church's collaboration.⁶⁵ Taxation was a means of feeding the administrative apparatus, mostly the army.

In 1256, the Caucasus was put under the command of Hülegü (c. 1218–1265), Chinggis Khan's grandson and brother of both Möngke and Qubilai. Hülegü had been sent westward to stabilize the Middle East. After Hülegü had taken over from Baiju, the administrative situation gradually changed. The peripheral *uluses* developed increasing political autonomy from the Great Khan and the administrative machinery was, year after year, molded to local requirements; the census soon became an instrument of the Ilkhanid treasury and was organized according to local urgencies.⁶⁶

Records of the taxation system adopted by the Mongols in the Caucasus are insufficient to reconstruct a clear picture of the situation. Yet, in the first decades following the conquest, taxation was arbitrary and harsh, and exacerbated the crisis already evident in the 1220s. The Mongols overturned the fiscal system of Subcaucasia, imposing new levies and sometimes modifying existing ones. Control over resources and productivity was a priority for the Mongols, and they soon learned how to build and organize the administrative machinery.⁶⁷ Throughout the decades, the fiscal pressure was essentially unchanged; however, taxation became more systematic.

Between the 1220s and the final conquest of the Caucasus, a continuous realignment of the boundaries in the whole region, together with the destabilization of the centers of power directly related to the battles, was exacerbated by the lack of a centralized power able to exert its supremacy in rural

61 Grigor Arknerts'i, tr. Blake and Frye 1949, 325–26. 62 Kirakos 1986, 299.

63 Kirakos 1986, 299–300. 64 Brosset 1949, 308; Kirakos 1986, 300.

65 Allsen 1987, 121; Dashdondog 2011, 109.

66 After 1254, few other censuses were taken in Armenia and Georgia. Probably in 1273 and 1314. Dashdondog 2011, 110.

67 Allsen 1987, 121.

areas. For decades following the Mongol conquest, the condition of the countryside worsened and agrarian production diminished as agricultural lands reverted to pastures.⁶⁸ The cities also were involved in the decline and demographic collapse, especially impacting the male population.

Military Co-operation

Subcaucasia was directly affected by the succession struggles that followed Möngke's death in 1259. The fragile political equilibrium between the Jochids and the Toluids – i.e., the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate – was shaken and forced the Caucasian aristocracy to recalibrate its alliances. The relations between the Golden Horde and the local aristocracy were, all in all, peaceful, and they became even better when Batu died (1255) and his Christian son Sartaq (r. 1255–1257) succeeded him. The situation changed again when Sartaq died, under suspicious circumstances, and his Muslim uncle Berke (r. 1257–1267) assumed power. Finally, it was Hülegü who changed the political situation by putting Iran under his direct rule and creating the Ilkhanate. The Georgian and Armenian aristocracy now was bound tightly to the Mongol leading class and the military became of primary importance.

The Mongols forced their subjects to participate in their military campaigns. For the local aristocracy, it was sometimes necessary to contribute in order to get some immediate advantages from them. Therefore the intervention of Armenian and Georgian forces in Mongol military operations was not an isolated incident. In general, it was profitable for both the Caucasian aristocracy and the Mongols themselves. The benefits mostly accrued to King Het'um I of Lesser Armenia, who needed backing against the regional Islamic powers. Greater Armenia and Georgia were in a more complex position. They both suffered heavily during Hülegü's campaign of the 1250s in Iraq and Syria and especially later on, during the war between the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde.

Around mid-1200, the whole Caucasian region was gripped by Mongol power on one side and the Muslim independent states on the other; the Ismā'īlīs (Assassins) in the territory between Syria and northern Iran, and the Caliphate of Baghdad. When Hülegü began the military campaign against the caliphate, the Armenian and Georgian aristocracy took the opportunity to eliminate the menace and joined the Mongol armies. The attack on the

68 This can be extrapolated from the situation in Iran: Petrushevsky 1968; Lambton 1991; Lane 2003.

Assassins' stronghold in Alamūt – which ended with the fall of the city in November 1256 – was planned and executed with the aid of David Lasha. Prince Zak'are, son of Shahanshah, participated in the operations against Baghdad in 1258 and the Armenian aristocracy was fully involved as well.⁶⁹ Eastern Christianity embraced the conquest of Baghdad by Hülegü's army as divine revenge.⁷⁰ The Mongols massacred the Muslim population of the city but spared the Christians.⁷¹ Hülegü gave the palace of the Dawādār (vice chancellor) to the Nestorian patriarch Makhika. Kirakos describes the fall of Baghdad in joyful terms and states that all the oriental Christians were exulting because after 647 years the "Muslim tyranny" had finally ended.⁷²

In the summer of 1258 in Marāgha (Azerbaijan), Hülegü received all his principal vassals, including the Armenian and Georgian princes. It was probably on this occasion that Het'um I asked Hülegü to intervene in the liberation of the Holy Land, and Hülegü accepted.⁷³ By 1259, the Mongols had started a campaign against Syria.⁷⁴ The Armenian Prince Prosh Khaghbakian, together with units of the Cilician army, participated in the siege of the fortress of Mayyāfāriqīn in the spring of the same year.⁷⁵ David Ulu, king of Georgia, refused to participate. Het'um, however, zealously participated in the operations and victoriously entered Damascus on March 1, 1260. The rewards from this military victory were enormous for the little kingdom of Cilicia as Het'um received land and fortresses in Cappadocia, Mesopotamia, and Syria, all fruits of the Mongol booty.

By mid-1260 Hülegü and the Mongols appeared invincible. But on September 3, 1260, a decisive battle occurred in 'Ayn Jālūt (in north Palestine).⁷⁶ Many Georgians and Armenians died in the conflict.⁷⁷ The defeat suffered by the Mongols in Syria also marked the end of Het'um's dreams of expansion. The Cilician king had to withdraw and fight to contain the Mamluk power in the region, especially after his repeated attempts to conquer the territories in northern Syria all ended in failure.

The constant need for money to fund the military campaigns in Syria and Egypt prompted hard levies and continuous requests for troops. These factors were at the heart of the revolt of the Georgian nobility against the Mongols, which started in 1259 and was settled in 1262, when the Georgian king, David Ulu, went back to Tiflis and accepted Mongol sovereignty.

69 Kirakos 1986, 315–16; Dashdondog 2011, 129.

70 Grousset 1965, 430; Gilli-Elewy 2011, 356. 71 Gilli-Elewy 2011, 367.

72 Kirakos 1986, 315–16. 73 Dashdondog 2011, 136; Amitai 2004, 24–25.

74 Amitai 2004, 16–17. 75 *JT*/Thackston 2012, 360–61; Dashdondog 2011, 134.

76 Amitai-Preiss 1992. 77 Amitai-Preiss 1992; Amitai 2004, 26–48.

That same year marked the clash between the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate. Berke's claim on Transcaucasia, especially on the rich pastures of Azerbaijan, ended in a forceful attack in the north of the country. The Georgians were compelled to grant military support and a garrison was sent to preside over the fortress of Siba (today in the Iranian district of Kukherd) in 1263, and in 1265 an army comprising Georgians and Armenians defeated Berke in Shirvan.⁷⁸

Hülegü's death (February 8, 1265) gradually altered the conditions of the Caucasian aristocracy. The foreign policy of Hülegü's son and heir Abaqa was less aggressive than that of his predecessor. He focused more on defending and consolidating the Ilkhanate's borders than on expansion. The new ilkhan nominated the son of Chormaqan, Shiremün, as supervisor of Georgia and Greater Armenia; Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī, brother of the historian 'Aṭā-Malik, remained as treasurer (vizier). The new policy of Abaqa Ilkhan corresponded with the decline of the influence, at court, of the Armenian Zak'arian family, who failed to collect the required amount of taxes. On the other hand, the Artsrunids – one of the oldest Armenian noble families, which had its own district in Vaspurakan – increased its influence.⁷⁹ Sadun Artsruni (d. 1284) was the military commander of Awag Zak'arian and had fought with the Mongol army in Syria.⁸⁰

The Armenian and Georgian aristocracy were always involved in the war between the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate. However, a new menace emerged from the Orient; the Chaghadaid Khanate, led by Baraq Khan (r. 1266–1271), had attempted to penetrate Iran and take advantage of the conflict between the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate. The latter now had to confront two dangers simultaneously.

The only non-Toluid army in Iran was at this time under the command of the Chaghadaid prince Tegüder, who had accompanied Hülegü to Iran and received an appanage in Georgia. After Hülegü's death, Tegüder joined the Chaghadaid cause. Trying to join Baraq via Derbend, Tegüder asked to return to his Georgian appanage. King David v refused and Tegüder remained stuck there. David Narin sheltered him in Imereti, but his behavior in Georgia – pillaging villages and caravans and insulting the clergy – provoked the rage of the local population, who urged Abaqa to summon him back. When Tegüder refused (or because he had found out about his plans) Abaqa attacked him, defeating him in 1270, with the help of the Georgian and Armenian troops headed by King David v.⁸¹

78 Dashdondog 2011, 154. 79 Dashdondog 2011, 166. 80 Dashdondog 2012, 21.

81 Biran 2002, 187–88; Kartlis Tskhovreba 2014, 364; Grigor Arkneris'i, tr. Blake and Frye 1949, 377; Jackson 2017, 148–49.

In 1270 both Het'um I and David Ulu died. The politics of the Cilician kingdom did not change and continued with Het'um's heir, Lewon II (r. 1269–1289). Since the mid-1270s the Mamluks made several raids into Cilicia, especially near the coasts, inflicting huge damage to its economy.

In 1277, 3,000 Georgians participated in the battle of Abulistan, where the Mamluk army defeated the Mongols.⁸² Again, Caucasian forces played an important role in the Ilkhanid army that fought the Mamluks in the Battle of Homs in 1281.⁸³ Abaqa could not participate in the battle since he was fighting against the Golden Horde's army in the Derbend area.⁸⁴ The Mongol–Caucasian army suffered a harsh defeat at Homs. Abaqa received the news and decided to counterattack as soon as the political and military situation of the Ilkhanate allowed him to do so. In March 1282, Abaqa moved the army to Hamadan, but on April 1 he died.⁸⁵ Abaqa's death marked the end of the collaboration between the Ilkhanate and the Caucasian powers, especially the Armenians.⁸⁶

The Mongols and the Caucasus in the Later Ilkhanate

On May 6, 1282, Tegüder (r. 1282–1284), Hülegü's younger son and Abaqa's brother, was elected ilkhan. Tegüder was a zealous Muslim, but not always hostile toward Christians. He adopted the title sultan in addition to ilkhan and took the name of Aḥmad.⁸⁷ The Armenian aristocracy supported Tegüder's rival, Arghun, Abaqa's elder son. The majority of the Georgian aristocracy, except for King Demetre (r. 1270–1289), was bound to Alinaq,⁸⁸ Tegüder's son-in-law, and supported the latter. Tegüder was executed on August 10, 1284. The party of Arghun, championed by the Armenians, had won. Arghun (r. 1284–1291) was favorable to the Armenian nobles and to the church in particular. According to Stephannos Orbélian, 150 monasteries were tax-exempt.⁸⁹ On the other hand, the situation became difficult for the Georgians; in 1289, Arghun executed the Georgian King Demetre the Devoted, and personally chose the new king of Georgia, Vakhtang II (r. 1289–1292), grandson of Queen Rusudan, in

82 "And there were present with the Tatars three thousand Iberians, and as the result of the great resistance which they offered, two thousands of them were killed": Bar Hebraeus 1932, 536; Tsurtssumia 2014: 105–6.

83 Amitai 2004, 195. 84 Dashdondog 2011, 174. 85 Amitai 2004, 201.

86 Dashdondog 2011, 175. 87 JT/Thackston, 389.

88 According to Rashīd al-Dīn (JT/Thackston, 47), Alinaq was the son of Tügür Bitigchi, commander of a hundred at Hülegü's service.

89 Stephannos Orbélian, tr. Brosset 1864, 229–30; Dashdondog 2011, 181.

collaboration with Qutluğ Buqa, son of the Armenian noble Sadun Artsruni. Arghun was succeeded by his brother and viceroy in Anatolia Geikhatu (r. 1291–1295).⁹⁰ In the same period, Lewon II (r. 1269/1270–1289) died in Cilicia and power devolved to Het'um II (r. 1289–1293). Since the Mamluk conquest of Syria and Palestine, Ayas had become one of the most important hubs for long-range commerce and a fundamental link between Central Asia and the Western European markets.⁹¹ Therefore it became a target of the Mamluks, who attacked it many times with varying results from 1275. Particularly in the 1290s, Cilicia suffered from the increasing expansion of the Mamluks in the Mediterranean.

The Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate achieved peace in 1294. In 1295, Geikhatu died,⁹² and his successor was Baidu, whose rule lasted for just nine months.⁹³ The election of the next ilkhan deeply affected the economic and social picture in the Caucasus: after eliminating Baidu, the Muslim Ghazan Ilkhan took power in 1295, thereby making Islam the state religion of the Ilkhanate.⁹⁴ Ghazan reformed the treasury and reorganized the taxation system. As soon as he was elected, Ghazan appointed Nawrūz, Arghun Aqa's son and a devout Muslim known for his hostility toward Christians, as first emir.⁹⁵ The anti-Christian repression was systematic in the years spanning the thirteenth and the early fourteenth centuries and it provoked frequent revolts by the Caucasian nobility. The situation became so tense that in 1297 Ghazan expelled Nawrūz to Khurasan and replaced him with the more moderate Qutluğ Shāh (d. 1307).⁹⁶ The latter reached an agreement with the Caucasian nobility, in particular with the Georgian King David VIII (r. 1293–1311). However, King David was compromised since he had supported Ghazan's rival, Baidu, during the fight for the Ilkhanid throne. In fact, David VIII was deposed by Ghazan in 1299. King George V (the Brilliant, r. 1299–1302, 1314–1346) was selected as David's replacement. Young George had been brought up by the *atabeg* of Meskhia (southwestern Georgia), but was deposed in 1302 after incurring Ghazan's wrath.⁹⁷

90 *JT/Thackston*, 408; Boyle 1968, 372. 91 De Nersessian 1962, 655.

92 *JT/Thackston*, 415. 93 Dashdondog 2011, 189; Melville 2007, 54–55.

94 On Ghazan: Luisetto 2007; Melville 1990; Boyle 1968, 379–97.

95 Jackson 2017, 369–70; on Nawrūz: Boyle 1968, 380; *JT/Thackston*, 440. Step'annos Orbelean, tr. Bedrosian 2012–2015, 238–39.

96 Dashdondog 2011, 197. According to Step'annos Orbelean, Nawrūz plotted against Ghazan. His plan was discovered with the help of Armenian princes and Nawrūz was executed with his family in 1297.

97 Lang 1955, 75.

Ghazan was also a fervent Muslim and during his rule Islam thrived in the whole Ilkhanate.⁹⁸ Under Ghazan's Muslim heir, Öljeitü (r. 1305–1316), the two tendencies mentioned above – strong concentration of resources on internal affairs and increasing affirmation of Islam – became the Ilkhanate's distinctive features. After 1308 these measures were eased and Christians at large were exempted from taxation.⁹⁹

George's successor to the Georgian throne was, in this period, the son of David VIII, known as George the Little (1273–1313), but the latter was assisted by his predecessor, who would rule alone again only from 1314. Öljeitü's rule coincided with increasing fiscal pressure on Greater Armenia, as confirmed by a colophon written in Erzurum in 1314.¹⁰⁰ Another colophon written in the monastery of Glajor in the same year states that the Mongol tax collectors arrived and registered "even those children who were a month old."¹⁰¹

Taxation on non-Muslims (*jizya*) was permanently reintroduced in the Ilkhanate by Abū Sa'īd (r. 1316–1335).¹⁰² A colophon written in the monastery of Varag in 1318 recounts that the ilkhan issued orders that all Christians should be taxed "on account of their faith in Christ . . . and they collect more levies from us ecclesiastics without the specific instructions of the xan."¹⁰³

In these years, the hostilities between the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde reached a climax. In 1318–1319 the army of Özbek Khan (r. 1313–1341) infiltrated the region, arriving at the Kura river, having passed through Arran and Shirvan. The Ilkhanid forces retaliated and in 1325 Choban (d. 1327),¹⁰⁴ the powerful minister of Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd (r. 1316–1335), headed to the Caucasus in order to pillage the Golden Horde's southern territory.¹⁰⁵

The relations between Georgia and the Ilkhanate improved during the second reign of George V. The king cemented the relationship with the Mongol governor of Georgia and succeeded in limiting Ilkhanid presence in Georgia to just a military garrison of one *tümen*.¹⁰⁶

In the same years, Georgia was becoming an object of increasing interest to western Christians, and that convinced King George of the necessity of securing his borders and keeping the aristocracy under control. The papacy tried to retain Georgia under its sphere of influence and bring the

98 On Ghazan's conversion: Sirinian 2010, 512–13 (colophon from the monastery of SS. Apostles in Muš).

99 Jackson 2017, 371. 100 Sanjian 1969, 58; Dashdondog 2011, 208.

101 The author of another colophon written in 1315 confirms the situation. "We have become feeble and lean, emaciated and languished; we are nearing death and hell, and our loins have been lowered to the ground": Sanjian 1969, 59.

102 Jackson 2017, 372. 103 Sanjian 1969, 60. 104 On Choban: Melville 1999.

105 Tizengauzen 1941, 100–1, 142–43; Lang 1955, 80. 106 Al-Qalqashandī in Lang 1955, 77.

autocephalous church of Georgia back to Roman Christianity. Pope John XXII's appeals fell on deaf ears. Nonetheless, Tiflis was made a diocese by Pope John XXII in 1329. The Dominican John of Florence was the first Roman Catholic bishop of Tiflis.¹⁰⁷

Choban fell into disfavor with Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd and was executed in Georgia in 1327. The good relations that George V established with Choban began to deteriorate and the next commander of Gurjistan – Iqbāl Shāh¹⁰⁸ – was not as close to the Christian king as his predecessor had been. The sources are divided on the consequences of Choban's execution. According to the Georgian ones, the Christian king succeeded in exploiting the weak Mongolian protection to his advantage and, one after another, he regained all the lost territories, to the point that "in all of Georgia there were no more Tatars."¹⁰⁹ The Arab and Persian sources, however, offer a very different version: Choban's death and the progressive disintegration of the Ilkhanate produced an inexorable weakening of George's power and the king was never able to reacquire the lost territories.¹¹⁰ The Armenian colophons confirm this reconstruction. If, until 1323, George V is described as the king of Georgia and Great Armenia, only a few years later he is awarded the sole title of king of Georgia. From 1332, the name of the sovereign definitively disappears from the Armenian sources.

In the late 1330s, Georgia still paid tribute to the ilkhans, but the amount was much lower than had been paid previously.¹¹¹ According to the Persian Qazwīnī (1281–1349) – who wrote a geographical survey in 1339–1340 – Georgia paid the Ilkhanid treasury 1,202,000 dinars in 1336. Before the Mongol invasion, the Georgian treasury collected, in a comparable territory, almost five times as much.¹¹² Although the figures provided by the Persian historian for the first decades of the thirteenth century are not reliable, the author certainly emphasizes the drastically lower sum paid.

In the first half of the fourteenth century, there were two active mints in eastern Georgia: one in Tiflis (Tbilisi) and another in Kahezia, near the border with Shirvan.¹¹³ The currency issued by the two institutes, of which an almost uninterrupted series is preserved – from the Ilkhanate of Abū Sa'īd to the mid-fourteenth century – is identical to that issued by Ilkhanid mints in the same period. If George V had achieved independence from the ilkhans, he would never

107 Lang 1955, 81; Richard 1998, 173–74.

108 Qutluğ Shāh's son, elected in 1327. Lang 1955, 83.

109 Lang 1955, especially 82–90; Charachidzé 1971, 133.

110 Hafiz-i-Abru, tr. Bayani 1936, 2: 107, 131, 136, 148; Lang 1955, 84. 111 Suny 1994, 44.

112 Qazwīnī 1915–1919, 94. 113 Lang 1955, 85.

have issued coins in the name of the Mongols. Thus, in the mid-fourteenth century, Tiflis and eastern Georgia were strictly subjects of the Ilkhanate.

Several attempts by the Georgian monarchy to recover from continuing Mongol domination were frustrated by a series of traumatic events. The plague devastated Europe and did not spare Caucasia, where it arrived in the 1360s. The campaign of Temür (Tamerlane, r. 1370–1405), which had started against the Qipchaqs, soon moved to the Caucasus (1380s), and the Mongol armies invaded Georgia several times. The consequences of the Timurid incursions in Georgia and Greater Armenia were enormous, not only due to their intensity, but also because the monarchy was weak and the population exhausted. The recovery was very slow and involved at least the first two decades of the fifteenth century.

Conclusions: Mongol Legacy in the Caucasus

The consequences of Mongol domination in the Caucasus were manifold, and in some cases reverberated through the following centuries. However, the costs were often less significant compared to other areas of the Mongol Empire. Specifically, the dominant political role acquired by the kingdom of Georgia at the dawn of the thirteenth century was significantly reduced by the harshness of the conquest and the mode of domination. The Christian kingdom never did recover the status reached with the Bagratid branch of King David IV and Queen Tamara. The patient policy carried out by George V in the fourteenth century, when the Ilkhanate was losing its authority in Caucasia, led to a sort of partial and ephemeral unity among the Georgian aristocracy. In Armenia, the upshots of the Mongol domination were even starker. Armenia was, at the time of the Mongol invasion, a complex system of power tied to the Georgian crown by vassalage bonds. Because of the collaborative posture of the local nobility, Caucasia did not suffer the destruction that occurred in other areas of the empire (Russia, Central Asia, and China). From the beginning of their rule, the Mongols relied upon an indirect administrative model, preferring to control instead of govern personally. After the formation of the Ilkhanate, the focal point of power moved southwards and the political conduct of Caucasia became more indirect and relied on the local aristocracy. The end of the Ilkhanate did not immediately correspond to the end of Mongol rule in the Caucasus. Instead it started a process of political readaptation that resulted in the fragmentation of power and the disappearance of a hegemonic center. The situation was different for Lesser Armenia because from the early 1240s it profited from collaboration

with the Mongols, to reinforce its borders against the menace coming from the surrounding polities – especially from the Mamluks – and to grant security to its international trade seaports. Yet the Ilkhanid–Mamluk peace signed in 1323, and the following collapse of the Ilkhanate, accelerated the decline of Cilician Armenia, which fell in 1375.

The creation of the Mongol Empire represents a seminal event in the history of medieval international trade which had direct consequences for the Caucasus. The Mongol conquest opened new trade routes, and international commerce was revitalized in areas almost unknown to Western Europe. The Mongols destroyed many important economic centers in the Caucasus, but moved the focal point of production and exchange elsewhere, causing the growth of cities like Tabriz and Marāgha that had previously been marginalized in international trade.

The unification of a territory that, at its zenith, covered two-thirds of Asia and one-third of Europe was an authentic cultural revolution. The better-prepared Italian cities (especially Venice and Genoa) abandoned Constantinople as the arrival point for trade and brought their investments to the Black Sea, creating trade centers that in some cases became real homelands away from Italy (e.g., Caffa in Crimea, Tana on the Azov Sea, or Savastopoli in Georgia). The Mongol domination in Subcaucasia favored the mobility of merchants; the security of the trade routes was enhanced and in some areas productivity increased. Specialized manpower was forcibly moved from its native countries to workshops at the court of the Great Khan. Production became better organized, as evidenced by the records produced by the Italian notaries and merchants active on the eastern coast of the Black Sea in these decades. The new domination did not invent a large-scale market, but made it much more substantial than it had been. The records show how the Mongols not only favored trade and traders but also directly participated. The *Pratica della mercatura* of the Italian merchant Francesco di Balduccio Pegolotti is a marvelous example of how normal it had become to work in these areas of the world.¹¹⁴ The Caucasus was a natural frontier and, at the same time, the connection between Europe and Asia, especially for the Italian traders who had their ships docked in Savastopoli, Kerch, Tana, or Trebizond.¹¹⁵

The Mongol legacy for Caucasian culture is less evident, but not entirely insignificant.¹¹⁶ It is interesting to note some changes in Caucasian religious architecture during the Mongol period. From the second half of the

¹¹⁴ Pegolotti 1936.

¹¹⁵ Several names of the Mongol ilkhans were borrowed in Italy. Jackson 2005, 315.

¹¹⁶ Allsen 2009.

thirteenth century, private commissions – particularly by local noble families – increased. The churches, in particular, were financed by the aristocracy, who wanted to appear as patrons and visibly display their power, wealth, and proximity to the ruling class. In other words, the sacred buildings became symbolic of the social status of the patron. The decorative sculpture of the sacred buildings became increasingly significant. The churches were constructed in more isolated places and were generally taller rather than larger, as the architectural focal point moved to the outside. The monastery of Gandzar, today in the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh, is one of the best-preserved examples of this trend.¹¹⁷ Local aristocracy bound to the Mongols improved its position and became relatively wealthier.

We can find Mongol influence also in Caucasian medieval literature. The several Armenian chronicles and the Georgian records are selected examples. But poetry too was affected by Mongol domination, as documented by several Armenian authors. The Mongols became part of the Armenian and Georgian collective imagination and contributed to the strengthening of local identity based on religion. In the works of Armenian poet Kostandin of Erzinka (Erzinjan), who was active between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Mongols are a constant presence.¹¹⁸ In a poem written in the aftermath of Ghazan's death, Kostandin focuses on human mortality and the emptiness of material wealth. The central corpus of this poem refers to the ilkhan's death at only thirty years of age. Despite his favorable judgment of Ghazan as a statesman, Kostandin describes him as a vacuous man, intent on pursuing wealth and power, both ephemeral glories, destined not to last. Only nature represents permanent beauty, since it is a divine creation, a sign that the Ilkhanid court lived in luxury and an abundance of material goods. In Kostandin's work the Mongols represent the political power that, no longer tyrannical and oppressive, remains alien to the population and far from the True Faith.¹¹⁹

The Mongols are also a constant presence in the *oeuvre* of Armenian poet Frik, a contemporary of Kostandin.¹²⁰ In a poem composed in the early fourteenth century, the author describes the figure of Ilkhan Arghun. The Mongol ruler is legitimately in power since God's will installed him. He is cruel to Christians, and during his reign the fiscal weight yoked to them is unbearable. Nonetheless, Frik utterly criticizes the attempted coup of Bugha (Buqa, Arghun's minister), who is depicted as a symbol of the devil.

¹¹⁷ Lala Comneno 2010, 582–86. ¹¹⁸ Dadoyan 2013, 114–16; Van Lint 2010, 457.

¹¹⁹ Van Lint 2010, 465–66. ¹²⁰ Van Lint 2010, 468–73.

According to Frik, the Ilkhan's hostility toward the oppressed Armenian people does not justify the overthrow of a power seen by the poet as legitimate. In the first decades of the fourteenth century, the authors had elaborated literary models to represent the ruling elite.¹²¹

Politically, the consequences of Mongol domination in the Caucasus were certainly negative, even though it is still difficult to establish to what extent the Chinggissid invasions were the direct cause of subsequent events, or how they accelerated processes started earlier. In fact, from the mid-thirteenth century, Caucasia lost its political center. As stated above, the power fragmentation consistently increased and – together with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the Empire of Trebizond in 1461 – reduced the two major Christian kingdoms in the region to an even more marginal role, accelerating the progressive Islamization of the Caucasus.

At the end of the fourteenth century, the Caucasus was exhausted and had to face a new enemy, the Ottomans. In the following decades, Europe would now have to confront this new, much closer threat.

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121 Van Lint 2010; Van Lint 2013.

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The Mongols and Siberia

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The histories of the Mongolian Empire and Siberia are closely entwined. Indeed, the toponym “Siberia” is derived from *Sibir*, the name of a people living between the Ob and the Yenisei which first appears in the *Secret History of the Mongols*, a work of the thirteenth century. By the fifteenth century, *Sibir*, in Russian usage, came to designate the Ob and Irtysh region and, with their rapid advance to the east, all the northern lands from the Urals to the Pacific.¹

In Mongolian nomenclature the *Sibir* were numbered among the many forest people (*hoi-yin irgen*) who inhabited a vast tract of territory from the upper Amur to the Volga–Kama basin. To understand the role these northern lands played in the formation of the Mongols’ transcontinental empire, we must briefly examine the long-term interactions of steppe nomads with forest peoples on both sides of the Urals.²

The Northern Frontier

When we think of the nomads’ relations with the outside world, what first comes to mind are their confrontations with the great sedentary civilizations in the south, struggles embodied in the Persian literary construct “Iran and Turan,” and more concretely in the Great Wall of China. In the history of the steppe, its northern flank is the forgotten frontier, out of sight, or at least slighted, largely because its manifold interconnections with the forest zone are so poorly documented. This is most unfortunate since the north, its peoples, and its products were vitally important in the development of nomadic polities, whatever their level of complexity.

Like all frontiers of historical consequence, the forest–steppe interface was culturally dynamic, its inhabitants participating in exchanges with one

1 Pritsak 1989, 271–73; Golden 1997, 531–33.

2 This chapter draws on my previous publications: Allsen 1984; Allsen 1985–1987; Allsen 2006a; Allsen 2006b.

another and, through intermediaries, with more distant centers of civilization. It was also characterized by significant cultural and environmental diversity that offered options and required choices. True, there was an ecological divide between the horse–sheep nomadism of the steppe fueled by grass and the reindeer nomadism of the taiga and tundra fueled by moss and lichen. But even in this instance it is hard to draw a sharp line since fingers of the steppe extend into the taiga and tundra-like environments are found in elevated areas of the steppe.

The transition zone, appropriately called *lesostep*, “forest–steppe,” in Russian, was home to numerous small-scale political–ethnic formations with mixed economies combining, in varying proportions, agricultural, pastoral, and hunting–gathering components. The very diversity of their subsistence systems allowed forest peoples a measure of flexibility in the face of crises or opportunities. When they moved out into the steppe the pastoral component of the economy increased, while the agricultural decreased. When moving in the opposite direction, pastoralism decreased and more settled forms of agriculture increased. And, in either case, the hunting–gathering component retained its relevance, though the methods of acquisition and resources harvested changed in new environments.

Two examples illustrate the composite character of these frontier formations. First is the Kimek Confederation, a large-scale polity formed by Turkic-speaking nomads who controlled western Siberia between the ninth and eleventh centuries. They successfully extracted products from the forest zone, their principle external resource base, and at the same time absorbed many cultural traits and ethnic elements from their Ob-Ugrian and Samoyed subjects.³ And, as the second example shows, such cultural syncretism and ethnic union was also the case when the steppe was politically fragmented. The Uriyangqai, who inhabited northeastern Mongolia and the Barqu plain east of Baikal in the years before the Chinggisid unification, were composed of two branches, a “steppe” and a “forest.” The southern branch were horse nomads while the northern used skis, herded reindeer, and hunted for food and fur. There may even have been a linguistic division with Mongolian-speakers in the steppe and Tungus-speakers in the taiga.⁴ But despite their internal differences, the Uriyangqai constructed a collective identity which tells us that in the contact zone political–ethnic formations were hybrids perpetually “in-the-making,” merging, dividing, and assimilating as a means of negotiating changing political and environmental pressures.

3 Arslanova 1985, 63–67. 4 Pelliot 1959, 336–37; Uray-Kóhalmi 2002, 253–62.

It is therefore hardly surprising that movement into and through this fluid and porous frontier was commonplace. One of the peoples most identified with the steppe, the Mongols, were originally of the forest, and a plausible case can be made that the core of the Xiongnu confederation, the first nomadic empire (c. 200 BCE–200 CE), were Paleo-Siberians from the region of the Kem or Yenisei river.⁵ Such movement, moreover, was a two-way street. The Bulgars, Turkic-speaking nomads of the western steppe, began their penetration of the forest in the eighth century, a process that took several centuries to complete. The result was the creation of a sedentary, urbanized, and literate Bulgar state on the middle Volga ruling many Finno-Ugrian peoples. Over an even more extended period, around the tenth to sixteenth centuries, the ancestors of the Yakuts, also Turkic-speakers, moved from the forest–steppe of the Baikal region into the northern taiga, where they retained many steppe traditions and dominated indigenous hunter–gatherers, a migration in slow motion that fundamentally transformed the culture history and ethnic configuration of the huge Lena basin.

Political–military relations between forest and steppe were likewise continuous and variable. On occasion, forest peoples posed a serious threat to the nomads. In 840 the Yenisei Qirghiz destroyed the Uighur Empire in Mongolia, scattering its people far and wide, and then returned to the forest. And in 965, the Rus' destroyed the Khazar Empire and also returned home. In combination, these two forest “interventions” had profound and prolonged consequences: no new steppe-based nomadic empire formed in the east for 360 years and in the west for 275; that is, until the rise of the Mongols.

For the most part, however, the balance of power between forest and steppe favored the latter. Even small nomadic polities like the Altan Khans, a minor dynasty in northwestern Mongolia, from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, dominated the forest dwellers in the Altai–Sayan region. And, naturally, during periods of imperial integration in the steppe, the nomads' supremacy over the forest was greatly magnified.

The importance of the forest zone to nomadic empire builders is brought out forcefully in the ethno-genetic myth of the Western or Oghuz Turks recorded in the early fourteenth century but containing much older material. According to this narrative, in his rise to power, Oghuz, their eponymous hero, first eliminates opposition within his family and then defeats his steppe rivals, after which he campaigns northward into the “Land of Darkness” (*zamīn-i tārīkī*) and lastly turns attention to the rich agricultural societies of

5 Vovin 2000, 87–104.

the south, Iran and Byzantium.⁶ Though cast in the epic tradition, the sequence of events depicted here accurately describes the basic stages in the growth of historical steppe empires, the Xiongnu, Turk, and Uighur, all of whom subjugated forest peoples before undertaking sustained operations in the south. And, despite the centuries-long break in the steppe imperial tradition, the Mongols, too, followed the same pattern of expansion.

Forest Products

For nomads, the forest offered an array of resources essential to their political economy, particularly during phases of state formation. The package of northern products was not, however, uniform throughout the length of the frontier. Commodities such as honey, wax, and slaves, staples west of the Urals, are absent in central Siberia, where salt and horses were important. There was a more generalized demand for grain produced in the forest zone to supplement the nomads' food and fodder requirements, but most widely circulated were the prestige goods of the far north – furs, hunting birds, and ivory (walrus, narwhal, and fossil mammoth tusks). These commodities were not only the mainstays of north–south exchange; they also entered the east–west commercial networks, both overland and maritime.

The demand for these goods was elevated because their source, the Land of Darkness, was a place of great extremes that not only made acquisition difficult but also endowed all its products with special properties that further enhanced their value in the south. Even the method of exchange, the so-called “silent trade,” noted from the western slopes of the Urals to the island of Sakhalin, was shrouded in myth and mystery. Consequently, to obtain these treasures of the Land of Darkness the nomads were dependent upon infrastructure, institutions, and connections built up over time by peoples living along the forest–tundra frontier, the *lesotundra*. Their employment parallels the Mongols' extensive recruitment of merchants, scribes, and bureaucrats from north China, Turkestan, and Iran who enabled them to unlock the treasures of agricultural societies south of the steppe.

Equally important, the forest was also home to technical specialists who supplied the steppe with much of its metalwork. Rich in ores and fuel, the forest zone played a prominent role in the spread of metallurgy across the Old World. By the Middle Ages, this ancient and mysterious craft was well developed in the Amur basin, Baikalia, and, most particularly, the Altai and Yenisei, where it was

6 Rashīd al Dīn, tr. Jahn 1969, 26–28 and fol. 592 r–v.

a specialized and independent branch of the economy, producing everything from iron tools to steel weapons, from tin tableware to gold jewelry.⁷

The vital importance of the forest's metallurgical resources was permanently ingrained in the nomads' collective historical memory, which is rich in allusions to a northland teeming with productive mines and metalworkers, an image of natural wealth and supernatural skills.⁸ Consequently, in the steppe world, possession of iron – a commodity that sedentary states from China to Byzantium tried to deny them – signaled control over strategic raw materials and the artisans who magically transformed them, and was thus a convincing statement of reach, wealth, and political and military power.

Finally, Siberia was a welcome source of military manpower. As population density in the eastern steppe was far lower than in China, the nomads sought additional recruits in the north through alliance and impressment. Since the subsistence systems of forest peoples relied in part on stock raising and hunting, they, too, were equestrian archers readily integrated into nomadic armies.

In sum, there was a kind of strategic "natural selection" operating here; any steppe ruler with imperial ambitions needed access to the resources of the north in order to successfully pressure the agricultural societies of the south.

Northern Conquests

Although composed of heterogeneous ethno-linguistic formations differing in level of political integration and degree of sedentarization, the Mongols treated the forest peoples as a unitary and separate ethnic category. Included were a number of peoples – Qori Tumat, Merkit, Buriat, Oirat, Qirghiz, Tubas, Telengüt, Ursut, and Bajigit (Bashkirs) – who can be traced in the historical and ethnographic record, and some – Bayit, Tuqas, and Kesdim – on whom there is extremely limited information.⁹

The Mongols, while certainly aware of the differences between themselves and their northern neighbors in habitat, population distribution, and religious practices, nevertheless felt a close kinship with them. This is expressed forcibly in wisdom attributed to Chinggis Khan which affirms that all boys born in the Barqu plain were manly and brave without need of encouragement or training and all girls clever and beautiful without need of makeup or adornment.¹⁰ In these pronouncements, there is at least a hint that Mongols

7 See Sunchugashev 1979, 118–46; Kyzlasov 1993, 78–81.

8 Boodberg 1936, 180–83; *JT*/Alizadah, 1/1: 160, 359–62, 500–1.

9 Hambis 1956, 285–96; Hambis 1957, 27–34; Cleaves 1956, 390–406; Zoriktuev 2000, 110–27.

10 *JT*/Karīmī, 1, 440.

viewed their forest friends as “noble savages” preserving the simple virtues of an earlier age.

Their sense of affinity and attraction occasions little surprise, since the Mongols came to the steppe from the forests of northwestern Manchuria and their culture, as reflected in the *Secret History*, shares many features with the forest peoples.¹¹ Nor is it any surprise that in the earliest Chinese and European accounts of the rise of the empire, based on information supplied by the Mongols, the subjugation of the forest folk receives equal billing with their more famous campaigns in China, the Islamic world, and Russia.

The Mongols’ military engagement with the forest zone pre-dates Chinggis Khan by several generations. At the center of these early hostilities were the Merkits, the Mongols’ traditional enemy, who inhabited lands south of Baikal. As the struggle for control of the eastern steppe intensified in Chinggis Khan’s day, the Merkit and other forest peoples were increasingly drawn into the conflict; many formed alliances with steppe factions and their homelands served as places of refuge for the defeated. The incessant warfare continued until 1204, when Chinggis Khan won a decisive victory over the last of his steppe rivals, the Naiman, who then fled with their Merkit supporters to the Irtysh to continue the fight. Since a secure northern flank was a necessary precondition for successful state formation in the steppe, the stage was now set for the Mongols’ conquest of the forest.

In 1207, a year after the proclamation of the empire, and before major operations commenced in the south, the Mongols sent envoys demanding submission of the Yenisei Qirghiz, who complied without resistance. Shortly thereafter, Chinggis Khan ordered his eldest son, Jochi, to bring the remaining forest peoples under control.¹² His campaign, aided by surrendered Oirats, soon forced others to offer tribute and accept, at least temporarily, Mongolian suzerainty.

The next stage in the subjugation of the forest began a few years later as part of a general assault on the Jin dynasty. While the main Mongolian armies struck at the Jurchen heartlands, Jochi Qasar, a brother of Chinggis Khan, led several supporting operations into their northern territories. The last of these, conducted c. 1214–1215, reached the Sungari and Nonni rivers, bringing further forest dwellers into the fold.

The Mongols’ hold on the forest zone was, however, soon challenged by an outbreak of unrest in 1217 that quickly spread across central Siberia. The

¹¹ Uray-Köhalmi 1970, 247–64.

¹² The fullest account of these campaigns is Buell 1992, 1–32.

uprising, initiated by the Qori Tumat in Barqu, was fueled by heavy Mongolian demands and the continuing stream of anti-Chinggisid refugees northward. The commander dispatched to the scene was defeated and the Qirghiz, ordered to come to his aid, revolted as well. At this point, Chinggis Khan placed Jochi in charge of the pacification campaign and further enjoined him to subdue all the forest peoples, including those beyond the Urals. With some difficulty Jochi had quelled the Siberian uprisings by 1219, but did not complete his full commission before his death in 1226. The death of Chinggis Khan the following year further delayed these operations. Only in 1236–1241, under the leadership of Jochi's son Batu, the first ruler of the Golden Horde (r. 1236–1255), were the Bashkirs, Volga Bulghars, and Rus' principalities brought under Mongolian rule.

The forest frontier had been closed. This marked the first time a single power achieved predominance throughout the forest zone from the Pacific to Poland, a feat only duplicated by the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century.

Remote Control

To the south of the steppe, the Mongols seized and modified pre-existing state structures through which they extracted resources from agricultural societies. But in the north conditions were substantially different; here populations were widely scattered and political structures weakly developed. In these circumstances, Mongolian strategies of governance were indirect and often based on ad hoc arrangements. The end result was a patchwork administration involving local elites, Mongolian princes, and military authorities whose jurisdictions were generally ill-defined and frequently in competition.

The Mongols placed many territories in the north under the authority of local ruling houses or tribal chieftains co-opted or created for that purpose who were then held responsible for meeting their overlords' demands for goods and services. In the early empire this was the preferred method of control since it required little by way of administrative investment and brought quick returns in the form of tribute. The technique, in fact, was first used with the Yenisei Qirghiz and thereafter in other parts of the empire, most notably the Rus' principalities.

Other territories in Siberia were placed under the jurisdiction of military governors supported by garrisons of nonnative troops. The largest and best-documented of these, the Regional Military Command for the Subjugation of

the East (*dongzheng yuanshuai fu*), was established around 1250 on the lower Amur at Nurgal (Nuergan), a locale that had previously served as the northernmost outpost of the Liao and Jin dynasties. From here the Mongols tried to control the peoples of eastern Siberia and Sakhalin – Jurchens, Gilyaks (Nivkh), Ainus, and others. Throughout the latter half of the thirteenth century, Mongolian forces regularly operated in Sakhalin, perhaps from specially built fortified camps, to support the Gilyaks against repeated Ainu attacks. The purpose of all this was to ensure the steady flow of furs and hunting falcons acquired through trade and tribute.¹³

Garrisons in remote areas of Siberia and inner Asia always posed difficult problems of supply. The Mongols' standard solution, one implemented in the Yenisei, was the deployment of Chinese troops to establish theoretically self-supporting military-agricultural colonies (*tuntian*). But even with these in place, their garrisons, perennially short of resources, asserted control over local economic assets, in this particular instance by placing a commodity tax (*kecheng*) on the region's extensive salt production.¹⁴

Control over subject populations in the north was also exercised by means of military mobilization. Many forest peoples from the Uriyangqai in Transbaikalia to the Mordvins in the Don–Volga region were pressed into service. As in the steppe, such mobilization placed soldiers and their families under military discipline. Moreover, foreign duty meant the removal of many adult males and their families, thereby reducing the likelihood of revolt in their partially depopulated homelands. The experience of the Oirat, who inhabited an area west of Baikal, provides dramatic evidence of this. After their submission to Chinggis Khan, they were formed into decimal units and served for several decades in and around Mongolia. In the early 1250s, an Oirat contingent accompanied Hülegü to the Middle East, a posting from which they never returned. No numbers are given, but as they are described as an "army," it is evident that thousands of Oirat households were permanently removed from their home territory.

The Yenisei was one region where the Yuan tried to introduce, albeit in limited form, Chinese-style government north of the steppe. There were several reasons for this. First, the Qirghiz land was the most densely populated and urbanized zone in Siberia.¹⁵ Second, it was part of the Yuan's outer defense perimeter against hostile Chinggisid lines in inner Asia. And lastly, because of this threat, it was under the immediate jurisdiction of Qaraqorum,

13 Trekhsviatkyi 2007, 138–45. 14 Yang Yu 1360, 3a.

15 Cleaves 1956, 398–403; Kyzlasov 1989, 400–6.

the administrative center of the eastern steppe. But even under these special circumstances, the experiment with civilian rule introduced in the 1270s in the form of a protectorate (*duhufu*) under a Chinese bureaucrat proved impossible to sustain owing to distance and logistics and was soon abandoned.¹⁶ Thereafter, the Yuan court relied on more indirect methods of control – a series of messengers and temporary missions dispatched from Qaraqorum and Dadu (Beijing) as need dictated.

Beyond the Qirghiz land, in the region of the upper Irtysh and the Ob, lay the Yuan frontier with the Golden Horde. Its eastern wing, the domains of the descendants of Jochi's sons Shibān, located just east of the Urals, and Orda, centered on the upper Irtysh, exercised authority over western Siberia and the adjacent steppe. According to the sparse data available, their relationship with forest peoples followed traditional patterns; these princes wintered in the south along the Aral Sea and the Chu river and migrated north for the summer.¹⁷ Thus, like the earlier Kimek Confederation and the later Kazakh Hordes, their domains were organized along a north–south axis that allowed them to combine an annual political round with the extraction of agricultural, pastoral, and forest resources from a succession of ecological zones.

This method of acquiring forest products is better documented in the Jochid territories west of the Urals. Here, too, the ruling line and their chief officers wintered in the south near the Black and Caspian Seas and, following the river systems, summered in the north. The actual collection of forest resources was left in the hands of local rulers whose activities were overseen by Mongol-appointed residents (*darughas/basqaqs*). Fur, of course, was the primary form of tribute the Mongols demanded from their subordinates in the Rus' principalities and Volga Bulgharia, who, in order to meet their assigned quotas, were forced to impose additional levies on northern peoples on both sides of the Urals. In each case, these demands reactivated and extended systems of exchange and extraction that had existed centuries before the arrival of the Mongols.¹⁸

By means of such "relay tributes," similar to those used by the Liao, Jin, and Yuan in eastern Siberia, the Golden Horde indirectly dominated commodity exchange in the subarctic. It was this kind of remote control that led European and Muslim contemporaries to believe that the Jochids had invaded and occupied the Land of Darkness.

16 Dardess 1972–1973, 149–51. 17 Akhmedov 1965, 41, 63.

18 Martin 1978, 401–21; Lantzeff 1947, 1–10; Vásáry 1982, 249–51.

To exercise this influence in the far north, the Mongols seized and/or built population centers across the southern margins of the forest zone. In the Mordvin land the Golden Horde built an outpost called Moksha, which, by the early fourteenth century, had become a major exchange center and official mint site. In western Siberia, there were three such centers, Tiumen (Chingi Tura) on the Tura, Isker on the Irtysh, and Tontur on the Om, in which the descendants of Shiban and Orda placed their residents.¹⁹ In the Yenisei, the Yuan occupied some existing towns and established economic colonies peopled with Chinese agriculturalists and artisans. One, known as Den Terek, built in the first half of the thirteenth century, contained over 120 dwellings, administrative offices, and metalworking shops. Colonies of this kind produced food and weapons for Mongolian garrisons as well as craft goods for local consumption.

To convey the forest products south to centers of consumption and exchange necessitated special transportation arrangements. In the Bulghar lands dogsled relays were used and in the domain of Orda horse relays terminating in collection points deep in the taiga were organized. From the shores of the north Pacific, gyrfalcons, the raptor of choice among the elites of Eurasia, came south, live cargo that required very careful handling. To provide this, Qubilai, around 1260, established twenty-four “falcon stations” (*haiqing zhan*) with support personnel, riders, horses, fodder, and bird feed (mutton), a dedicated system that reached from north China to the lower Amur. In Ming times, and likely during the Yuan as well, dogsled relays were used in the initial collection of this tundra-dwelling species on Sakhalin and other offshore islands.²⁰

Following earlier patterns, these northern products entered east–west commercial networks. In the Mongol era, the change in direction might occur even before the goods left the forest zone, for there was now a trade route running from the Kama river across western Siberia through the Yenisei and then south to Qaraqorum and Dadu.²¹ Though long and arduous, it was nevertheless well traveled since it was often the only secure east–west overland passage during the frequent periods of princely conflict in Central Asia.

The Frontier Reopened

Beginning in the 1250s, latent political rivalries among Chinggisid princes led to major military confrontations between the emerging and increasingly autonomous regional khanates. Most notable, and noticed, are the series of

19 Egorov 1985, 106–7, 128, 131, 139, 208. 20 Trekhsviatkiy 2007, 145–53.

21 al-ʿUmarī 1968, 75, 77, Arabic text, 142–43, German translation.

conflicts between the Golden Horde and the ilkhans in Transcaucasia and between the Chaghadaids and the ilkhans in Khurasan, and the clashes of the Ögödeids and their Chaghadaid allies with the Yuan in Mongolia and Uighuristan. These costly civil wars, fought over matters of succession and access to resources, regularly spread into the forest zone. The forest–steppe frontier, temporarily closed by the Mongolian conquests of the early thirteenth century, was again open, providing political space and an economic base for independent-minded princes and a refugium for the defeated.

The first of these were the Ögödeids, who in 1251 attempted a counter coup against Möngke Qa'an, the successful Toluid candidate for the imperial throne. When discovered, many fled to the Yenisei, where they were hunted down by a force of two *tümen*, nominally 20,000 troops, organized into a huge hunting battue (*nerge*). Following Möngke's death in 1259, two of his brothers contended for the succession; Qubilai, who relied on the resources of north China, eventually defeated Arigh Böke, who controlled the eastern steppe. Once again, the losers sought, and briefly found, sanctuary in the Yenisei.

Next, Qaidu, a grandson of Ögödei, carved out a state in inner Asia that included territory west of the Qirghiz. Until his death in 1303, his armies, which contained forest peoples, fought repeated engagements with Yuan forces between the Altai and the Irtysh. Qaidu also tried to succor Nayan, a Chinggisid in Manchuria, who launched an uprising against Qubilai in 1287 that attracted adherents among the Water Tatars and Jurchens. Though the revolt collapsed with Nayan's death, many of his supporters escaped, providing leaven for further rebellions in the forest zone along the Yalu, Tümen, and Ussuri rivers.²²

Following forty-five years of princely confrontations and rebellions, the Chinggisids finally came to an agreement in 1305 that restored a semblance of unity and peace among the now independent khanates. The respite, however, did not prove lasting. In 1316, when conflict resumed with the line of Chaghadaid over Uighuristan, the Yuan sought to turn the enemy's northern flank by sending a large force from their home station on the Qobaq river in Jungharia to the upper Irtysh. After establishing a base camp (*a'uruq*) there, they soon defeated and dispersed the opposition armies.²³ As was typical of the era, a princely confrontation that began south of the steppe was settled, if only temporarily, in the forest zone.

Analogous patterns are found within the Jochid domains. This is well exemplified in the struggles of two rulers from the line of Orda, Urus (r.

22 Biran 1997, 40–56, 81–92; Reckel 2009, 134–35. 23 Qāshānī 1969, 202, 205–8.

1361–1377) and Toqtamish (r. 1377–1397). Both were toppled by Temür (Tamerlane), and both found temporary refuge in western Siberia, where they died attempting to retrieve their fortunes.²⁴ In the political vacuum which followed, Shibanid princes began to seize territories in the region, three of them emerging as independent rulers. These new polities, located on the middle reaches of the Irtysh, Ishim, and Tobol rivers, controlled mixed populations, some living in permanent settlements in which the princes stationed residents to collect taxes and tribute.²⁵

These developments proved to be a portent of the postimperial future – the political fragmentation of the forest–steppe frontier and the establishment of nomadic polities with core territories in the forest zone.

Forest Legacies

Questions concerning the “Mongol impact” on Russia, China, and Iran continue to provoke scholarly debate and division, some of which is colored by nationalist sentiment and official ideology. The situation is somewhat different in the case of Siberia, on which there is considerable consensus. Populations here were small and mobile, and the pressures and demands the Mongols placed upon them had, it is widely agreed, far-reaching ethnolinguistic consequences. These changes, moreover, closely resemble the Chinggisids’ sweeping reconfiguration of steppe peoples.²⁶ Indeed, the two are closely entwined, for throughout the imperial era populations were on the move, continuously leaving and entering the forest.

We begin in the east, the Amur region, which offers an instructive contrast, a place where forest people largely stayed at home. One reason for its relative stability is that the local Tungus populations, known in the Chinese sources as the Mohe, later as the Five Nations (*wuguo*) and Water Tatars, were long-term participants in the tributary systems of the Liao and Jin, who to some extent fashioned these “colonial tribes” for ease of administration. Their arrangements proved remarkably durable; the Yuan took them over, followed by the Ming, which gradually asserted its influence in the region, creating a commandery at Nurgal in 1409 and thereafter established regular relations with the populations of the Amur and Sakhalin island. The other and perhaps principal reason for the stability in this part of the forest

²⁴ Uskenbai 2013, 210–20; Serbina 1950, 70.

²⁵ Akhmedov 1965, 42–44, 48, 62–63, 93–94, 103, 161. ²⁶ Golden 2000.

was its distance from the steppe. But for forest peoples fronting the steppe, change, not continuity, was the rule.

There were a number of forces at work that account for the discontinuities. One of the most powerful was military defeat. The Merkit, longtime enemies of the Mongols, who disappeared completely from their home ground, serve as the prime example. In their case, the cause is obvious: in consequence of decades of bitter conflict, in which they were on the losing side, their land was repeatedly plundered and their population dispersed. As allies of the Naiman they were heavily defeated in 1204 and their depopulated territories given to others. Still, they persisted; in 1209–1210 or 1216–1217 (the chronology is disputed) the remaining Merkits fled into the central steppe, where they were finally defeated by the Mongols. Following this, an exasperated Chinggis Khan, in the words of the *Secret History*, “had the [surviving] Merkit distributed here and there down to the last one.”²⁷ But while this act, as intended, effectively destroyed their collective identity, the Merkits did not vanish; submerged for a time, they resurface as components in many post-imperial ethno-political formations of the forest and steppe – Siberian Turks, Tian Shan Qirghiz, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Noghais, and Bashkirs.²⁸

Even for those who submitted, forced relocation was still a real possibility since the Mongols, like other steppe nomads, were great “herders of people.” The motives underlying this practice varied but prominent among them was the quest for specialized labor. Such was the case in 1293 when Qubilai transferred Urusud, Qamqanas, and Qirghiz households from lands between the Ob and the Yenisei to Manchuria for the sole purpose of catching a species of fish favored by the court! No figures are provided but those transported were of a sufficient number to require construction of a “new city” to accommodate them.²⁹ In any event, given the low population densities of the forest zone, the transfer of even 500 households could dramatically alter ethnic balances in home territories as well as in their new stations.

A more common reason for removal was military service, which resulted in postings far from home, a fate that befell many early supporters of the Mongols. The Oirats, for one example, depart the forest only to reappear in Jungharia in early Ming times as a fully nomadic political and military power. While questions concerning their reconstitution in the steppe remain, the circumstances of their departure are clear enough. Besides the thousands of

27 *SH*, 1:126 (§198), 2:729 ff.

28 On their dispersal: Kuzeev 1974, 311–12, 465, 468–69, 487, 509; Sultanov 1987, 31, 38, 42, 49.

29 Cleaves 1956, 395–98.

military families deployed to the Middle East, other units, stationed in Mongolia, became embroiled in the Chinggisid civil wars. In the 1260s many Oirats supported Arigh Böke and suffered heavy losses when he was defeated. Later on, another contingent went over to Qaidu, who, it is relevant to note, controlled Jungharia at the time. All in all, it is hard to resist the conclusion that by the early fourteenth century there were few Oirats left in the forest.

The Qirghiz present yet another instance of a people who seemingly disappear from their home ground. The cause, however, differs somewhat from that of the Oirats. Qirghiz were mobilized for military service, but on a more limited scale. What set them in motion were the recurrent clashes between Yuan and Ögödeid forces in the Yenisei region that produced flight and hardship, followed by cycles of rebellion and suppression. One such uprising broke out in the latter decades of the thirteenth century; in response, the Yuan court in 1293 ordered the Qipchaq commander Tutqaq, then in Qaraqorum, to retake the Qirghiz territory. Following the spring thaw, he launched an attack, overcame the resistance, and set up garrisons to secure the country. But as soon as he left, Qaidu, learning of these events and the ongoing unrest, quickly launched an invasion, plundered the entire country and captured the head of the Yuan occupation forces.³⁰

Under these circumstances, it is extremely unlikely that the Qirghiz viewed either side as allies or liberators since in time of war their struggles produced much loss of life, material damage, and social dislocation, and in time of “peace” the occupying forces made incessant demands for supplies and services. The result was the growing impoverishment of the Qirghiz and the erosion of their economy, which occasional Yuan relief measures could not reverse. This grim picture is fully confirmed by archaeological evidence indicating that by the fourteenth century the Yenisei area had suffered declines in population density, craft production, and number of urban sites.³¹

The connections between the Yenisei Qirghiz and those later located in the Tian Shan are unclear and recent opinion tends to disassociate the two. Certainly, there is no evidence of a mass migration southward but it is still likely that in the rapidly deteriorating conditions produced by decades of civil war, the more mobile, pastoral elements among the Yenisei Qirghiz decamped in search of new and secure surroundings, which they found in the Tian Shan.

The complexity of ethnic relations between steppe and forest dwellers is revealed in the origin and nomenclature of the Turkic-speaking peoples who

³⁰ YS, 128.3134. ³¹ Khudiakov 1985, 98.

appear in southern Siberia in the postimperial era. As a result of long-term processes, the south Siberian Turks came to bear a wide array of ethnonyms, some ancient, some recent and geographical, some reflecting self-designations, while others derive from external sources, labels applied by imperial regimes.³² And, in conjunction with changes in their ethnic names and territories, the south Siberian Turks were progressively assimilating indigenous Siberian peoples, Samoyeds, Kets, and others. At the same time, their languages were being transformed by heavy lexical borrowings from their Mongolian overlords and by the influx of Qipchaq-speaking steppe dwellers into the forest.³³

Comparable ethno-linguistic shifts are found west of the Urals. The Mongols brought with them new elements, including forest peoples from the east, and their assaults set many forest peoples in motion. The Bashkirs, the Volga Bulgars, and their Finno-Ugrian subjects were pushed to the north and east. The Qipchaqs, too, were displaced and many fled into the forest. As in Siberia, this resulted in intensified interaction with the indigenous populations, Turkic and non-Turkic, and in the "Qipchaqization" of their languages.³⁴

Although specific causes – defeat, flight, forced resettlement, military mobilization, and civil war – seem dominant in certain cases, other ethno-linguistic shifts are not so readily explained. The Uriyangqai well illustrate the problems involved. In the postimperial period they are no longer mentioned in their earlier home, the Barqu plain, and their ethnic name is now borne by Turkic-speakers in the Altai–Sayan region, by Jurchen-speakers in eastern Manchuria and by Mongolian-speakers along the Great Wall.³⁵

Like many other forest peoples the Uriyangqai were subject to military mobilization, but by itself this seems an inadequate explanation for their reconfiguration into three distinct and widely separated ethno-linguistic formations. Other processes – migration and assimilation – may have been in play as well. Nor does this exhaust the possibilities. In the case of the Altai–Sayan Uriyangqai, it seems likely that this was an external, Mongolian-inspired designation and that the Turkic-speakers in the region, following historical precedent, continued to call themselves Tuba/Tuva. It is also possible that non-Uriyangqai appropriated their ethnonym for political and prestige purposes, a plausible hypothesis since the Uriyangqai were held in high esteem by Chinggis Khan and following his demise were assigned to guard his tomb at Burqan Qaldun, a singular honor. With the proliferation of

32 Menges 1956, 161–75. 33 Potapov 1969, 172–76. 34 Kuzeev 1992, 67–70, 74–80, 99–102.

35 See, provisionally, Wilhelm 1957, 172–76.

Chinggis Khan cults in inner Asia in the aftermath of empire, their association with this former duty continued to confer prestige. We should therefore number the politically motivated transfer and appropriation of ethnonyms among the Chinggisid legacies in the region.

Another and equally consequential legacy was the introduction of new religions into the forest zone. Islam, of course, spread among the Volga Bulgars before the rise of the Mongols but had yet to gain a following among forest dwellers of Siberia. Perhaps the initial step in this direction occurred in 1252 when Möngke Qa'an allotted territory on the Irtysh to a son of Ögödei, Malik, who, to judge by his name, was a convert, a conclusion supported by the fact that he was tutored in his youth by Dānishmand Ḥājib, a trusted Muslim official at the early Mongolian court.³⁶ More certainly, the formation of Muslim merchant colonies astride the trade route across southern Siberia did much to spread the faith in these parts.³⁷ Naturally, the definitive conversion of the Golden Horde in the fourteenth century served to consolidate Islam's outposts in eastern woodlands. The assimilation of the new faith was always lengthy, with older shamanist and animist beliefs retaining a hold on the populace for centuries. This was true as well of the spread of lamaism into Transbaikalia that began somewhat later.

For our purposes, what is most significant is that these changes in religion underscore again the centrality of the steppe for the cultural history of Siberia. This is evident from the fact that prior to the Russian conquests and the introduction of Christianity, Siberian peoples who accepted world religions regularly followed patterns of conversion found among the nomads; that is, lamaism in the eastern steppe and Islam in the central steppe.

Aftermath

Though the religious and ethnic alignment along the forest-steppe frontier had changed dramatically by postimperial times, preimperial patterns of political interaction resurfaced: a series of nomadic polities, Chinggisid and non-Chinggisid, each asserting its right to poach on a particular section of the forest zone. By the fifteenth century these included, from west to east, the Noghais, Uzbeks/Shibanids, Kazakhs, Tian Shan Qirghiz, Oirats/Junghars, and various Qalqa Mongolian princes. Of diverse origins and at different levels of political integration, they all extracted essential resources from the peoples of the taiga. Their means of doing so varied: some ruled directly from

36 YS, 3.45; JT/Boyle, 28. 37 Kyzlasov 1963, 203–10.

permanent centers in the forest while others remained in the steppe collecting tribute at a distance. Just how successful they were can be inferred from the quantities of Siberian fur that the first Oirat Empire sent to the Ming court, the largest of which, in 1446, consisted of 130,000 squirrel skins, 16,000 ermine pelts, and 200 sable pelts.³⁸

These traditional arrangements continued into the sixteenth century, albeit with some change in the cast of characters, principally the emergence of Khanate of Sibir just east of the Urals. What fatally disrupted these relationships was the arrival on the scene of Muscovy. The initial step in their penetration of Siberia came in 1552 with the conquest of Kazan, the successor state of the Bulgars, in consequence of which Ivan IV acquired many new subjects in the forest zone. The basis of Russia's relationship with these Turkic and Finno-Ugric communities is clearly set forth in Ivan's testament of 1572 in which he bequeathed to his son and heir these new territories, ordering that all obligations of the population – various customs duties and taxes in kind – were to be continued according to the practices of their “former *tsary*,” that is, the recently defeated Tatar khans.³⁹ This, in turn, established a firm precedent for Russia's subsequent expansion eastward: from the Urals to the Amur, Muscovite authorities persistently contested and ultimately took over the nomads' exactions (*iasak*) from the forest peoples.

The success of this policy deprived the nomads of a rich source of commercial and prestige goods essential to their political economy. And of equal importance, Russian control of the taiga in the course of the seventeenth century and the nearly simultaneous Manchu assertion of authority in northern Manchuria and the Amur basin forever changed geopolitical relationships in Inner and North Asia, changes that contained and finally broke nomadic military power. The forest had triumphed over the steppe.

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38 Serruys 1966, 29, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 47, 55, 61. 39 Howes 1967, 168, 344–46.

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The Rus' Principalities

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On the eve of the Mongol invasions, Kievan Rus' was a loose association of princely domains with no fixed hierarchy of power or central administrative structure.¹ Between 1150 and 1200 there were thirty changes of power in Kiev and in the five years between 1235 and 1240 Kiev changed rule seven times, leaving a dangerous political vacuum that precluded any hope of a unified response to the Mongols.²

The Mongols first appeared in southern Rus' in 1223 following their conquest of Khwārazm and their campaign through Azerbaijan, the Caucasus, and Crimea. The shock of their arrival was captured by the Novgorodian chronicler who wrote, "for our sins, there came unknown peoples, and no one knows who they are, from where they came, their language, their tribe, and their faith; they call them Tatars, others call them Taurmen, and others Pechenegs . . ."³ After refusing an alliance with the Mongols against the Cumans and foolishly executing a contingent of Mongol envoys, the Rus' engaged the Mongols at the Kalka river only to suffer a humiliating defeat. The Mongols are said to have suffocated Grand Prince Mstislav Romanovich of Kiev along with two other princes under boards upon which the victorious commanders enjoyed a meal. Kiev lay prostrate but the Mongols were only on a reconnaissance mission and left Rus' to rejoin Chinggis Khan and the return to Mongolia.⁴

The Invasion of Rus': 1237–1241

The decision to begin the invasion of the western territories was made at a *quriltai* in 1235. Led by Batu, the grandson of Chinggis Khan, the army may have numbered around 80,000 warriors rather than the usual estimates of

1 Franklin and Shepard 1996, 369–71. 2 Franklin and Shepard 1996, 343; Fennell 1983, 74.

3 NPL, 264. 4 NPL, 266–67; Fennell 1980, 21, 29–30; Fennell 1983, 67–68.

120,000 to 140,000 that are sometimes given because of the presence of twelve to fourteen Chinggisid princes, each theoretically leading a *tümen* (military division of 10,000 troops).⁵ A *tümen*, however, was generally at only 60 percent strength and the size of the army was further limited by the accompanying numbers of horses and livestock, and the need for available pasturage, which was made more difficult in winter and in the forests of northeastern Rus'.⁶

After the defeat of the Volga Bulgars, some of whom may have been incorporated into the army as heavy cavalry,⁷ the Mongols secured control of the middle and lower Volga river and invaded Rus' in December 1237. Riazan' fell after a five-day siege with a frightful loss of life as the Mongols compelled the town to pay a tithe – a tenth – of its population, horses, and livestock.⁸ Riazan's fate was to serve as an example of the futility of resistance. With Riazan' in ruins the Mongols drove into the grand principality of Vladimir-Suzdal' (also referred to here as Suzdalia), taking Kolomna and then Moscow, an important fortress for the defense of Suzdalia, whose population was slaughtered. Vladimir, the titular capital of northern Rus', fell after a short siege on February 7, 1238. Grand Prince Iurii Vsevolodovich had earlier withdrawn with a small force deeper into the Rus'ian forest to the Sit' river, leaving behind his family; the Mongols killed Iurii's wife and daughter along with many townspeople who had sought shelter in the Cathedral of the Dormition. Other townspeople were brought outside the city and executed.⁹ On March 4, 1238, the Mongols defeated Iurii's army at the Sit' River; Iurii was likely killed and decapitated either by the Mongols or by his own men. The Mongols then spread their armies out in a hunting ring and systematically took one town after another, coming within 100 *versts* (sixty miles) of Novgorod when they turned south, possibly fearing an early thaw but also requiring fodder for their horses.¹⁰ Novgorod, in any case, lay beyond the limits of the ring.

From the summer of 1238 through the winter of 1238–1239 the Mongols regrouped in the steppe and launched attacks against the peoples of the north Caucasian steppe and Crimea. In March 1239, they returned to pillage southern Pereiaslav', only to once again reconnoiter in the steppe.¹¹ In October 1239, the Mongols put Chernigov to the fire and returned to the steppe, from which raids were carried into Murom and along the Kliaz'ma

5 Koshcheev 1993, 131–32; Kargalov 1967, 75; Fennell 1980, 84.

6 Sinor 1972, 178, 181–82; Morgan 1986, 141; Morgan 1979, 86; May 2007, 27.

7 May 2007, 40.

8 NPL, 74–75, 287–88; PSRL, 1: 460; JT/Boyle, 59, records a three-day siege.

9 PSRL, 1: 462–64. 10 Iain 1982, 158. 11 PSRL, 1: 469, 5: 175.

river, effectively marking what would become the geographic boundaries between Suzdalia and the Mongol steppe. In November–December 1240, the Mongols began the campaign against Kiev, which fell on December 6, 1240, with its populace put to the sword.¹²

Duplicating their tactics in southwestern Rus', the Mongols proceeded *tümen* by *tümen* in a hunting ring until Volynia and Galich were taken, after which the invasion of Poland and Hungary could begin. On April 9, 1241, one division defeated a Polish and Teutonic Knight army at Liegnitz, and two days later the main Mongol army annihilated the Hungarians at the Battle of Mohi. In December 1241, the Mongols left the Hungarian plains, whose grasslands, unlike the Cuman steppe, were likely insufficient to support the army, families, and animals.¹³ With the army just south of Vienna, Batu learned of Ögödei's death and was required to return, but did not go, to Mongolia for the election of a new qa'an, bringing, nevertheless, the invasion of Europe to an end.

The Thirteenth Century: A "Dark Age"

Recent scholarship has tended to minimize the impact of the invasions, noting that out of some 300 towns, the chronicles record only the destruction of fourteen major cities in the north.¹⁴ For John Fennell, there was "disruption," but "things returned to normal, or to near-normal, in a remarkably short time." The picture Fennell paints is one of resilience and recovery, certainly not a holocaust.¹⁵ Donald Ostrowski also questioned the degree of destructiveness and economic depression in the thirteenth century and whether such sources as the destruction of Kiev in the thirteenth-century accounts of John of Plano Carpini can be trusted.¹⁶ He also credited a Pax Mongolica for fostering a fourteenth-century economic revival.¹⁷ Charles Halperin has argued that by the middle of the fourteenth century the economy had begun to grow, which he credited to Mongol fostering of international commerce. The puzzle, however, is that economic recovery had to rest on a demographic recovery, which, he admitted, "flies in the face of the well-known fact that the Black Death struck Russia during this period."¹⁸ In fact the onslaught of the plague curtailed whatever economic recovery may have occurred by the second half of the fourteenth century.

12 PSRL, I: 470. 13 Morgan 1986, 141.

14 Gumilev 1989, 466; Ostrowski 1998, 109; Martin 1995, 147. 15 Fennell 1983, 88–89.

16 Ostrowski 1990b, 522, 548. 17 Ostrowski 1998, 127, 130–31.

18 Halperin 1985, 78, 83–84.

With the notable exceptions of Moscow and Novgorod most regions of northeastern Rus' stagnated or even slipped into an economic depression.

For the thirteenth century, efforts to portray an urban renewal fade against the archaeological evidence. Some areas did escape the Mongol onslaught, namely Novgorod, Pskov, Smolensk, and Polotsk, but of the seventy-four towns examined by the 1980s, Batu's armies destroyed forty-nine, fourteen of which never recovered and fifteen of which deteriorated into agrarian settlements.¹⁹ It is estimated that two-thirds of the towns of Kievan Rus' were destroyed and of these almost one-third were never settled again.²⁰ The once heavily settled areas along the Dnestr and Dnepr rivers and their tributaries all show severe population decline, while much of Suzdalia remained sparsely populated into the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.²¹

At Torzhok the archaeological spade has uncovered a grim layer with human bones and burnt icons dating from the town's conflagration in 1238. Its once thriving suburb remained desolate for the next two and a half centuries.²² Areas of Vladimir also suffered a process of de-urbanization as the town was unable to restore its pre-invasion population level,²³ while Rostov stagnated in the fourteenth century.²⁴

Some areas in the northeast, however, displayed modest growth and recovery by the end of the thirteenth century. In Moscow a number of villages were abandoned in the second half of the thirteenth century,²⁵ but the rural *volosts* (districts) of Voria and Pechkorka show a slow recovery by the end of the thirteenth century.²⁶

Tver', an important town and rival of Moscow, has left little archaeological evidence from the thirteenth century.²⁷ The chronicles record several thirteenth-century wooden churches and the stone cathedral of the Transfiguration of Our Savior built in 1287.²⁸ There were, however, no extensive projects to strengthen the urban fortifications until 1317 when Tver' was at war with Moscow. Nizhny Novgorod constructed several wooden and stone churches before the Mongol invasions. However, there are no chronicle records of any urban construction in the town between 1237 and 1350. In contradistinction to the many towns that stagnated in the thirteenth century, Kolomna enjoyed an impressive growth by the end of the century.²⁹ The *Tale of the Destruction of Riazan'* does note the rebuilding and repopulation of Riazan', but the *Tale* refers less to Old Riazan', the town

19 Kuza 1985, 60. 20 Kuza 1985, 104. 21 Kuza 1985, 120, Table 20, 121, Table 21.

22 Malygin 2003, 95. 23 Zharnov 2003, 52–53, 57. 24 Leont'ev 2003, 45.

25 Krenke 2003, 151, 165–66. 26 Chernov 2003, 219, 221–22. 27 Malygin 2003, 94–95.

28 PSRL, 10: 166–67, 15: 34–35. 29 Mazurov 2003, 83, 89.

plundered by the Mongols, than to the founding of a new town some fifty kilometers to the west – Pereiaslavl'-Riazanskii. As for Old Riazan', it resembled, according to David Miller, a ghost town. Miller's study of monumental building in stone or brick confirms the urban decline of northern Rus'. In the fifty years between 1238 and 1287, the chronicles record only five projects, two of which were in Novgorod. During the next fifty years, 1288–1337, there were thirty new or rebuilt structures but the total remained well below the fifty-year period before the Mongol invasions.³⁰ Nor were any new towns other than Pereiaslavl'-Riazanskii founded.

Mongol sovereignty over Rus' took several concrete forms. First and foremost Rus'ian princes were required to appear and submit before the khan of the Golden Horde, who would grant (or not) his *yarligh* (patent or charter), conferring a prince's legitimacy to be grand prince of Vladimir (titular head of northern Rus') or to rule his own principality. Political legitimacy was now a prerogative of the khan and superseded the Kievan traditional practice of lateral succession, whereby a throne passed along the line of the deceased ruler's brothers before transferring to the next generation. Tradition also dictated that if the founding head of a ruling house, such as Daniil of Moscow, had never acquired the grand principality of Vladimir, then all succeeding princes were barred from ruling Vladimir. In the Muscovite case, Daniil's son, Iurii, received the khan's *yarligh* in 1318 and became the first Muscovite grand prince of Vladimir, although by Kievan tradition he was an illegitimate claimant.

Mongol sovereignty was also conveyed through the imposition of the census and payment of the tribute, and by princely participation in Mongol military campaigns. Ordinary Rus'ians could be conscripted into the Mongol army or into slave labor, especially if they were skilled artisans.³¹ Princes often traveled to the Golden Horde, sometimes remaining there for months and even years. In the period between c. 1242 and 1445, ninety-nine princes and three princesses would take 250 trips to the Golden Horde.³² Five princes married into the Mongol elite, including Fedor Rostislavich of Iaroslavl' and Smolensk, who spent over ten years at the Golden Horde.³³

At first some princes were required to travel to Qaraqorum. Oleg of Riazan' journeyed to Mongolia in 1243, while Grand Prince Iaroslav Vsevolodovich that year went to the Golden Horde. In 1245, Iaroslav, together with his brothers and other princes of Rostov, appeared at

30 Miller 1989, 368–69. 31 Martin 1995, 148–49. 32 Seleznev 2013, 304.

33 Lenhoff 2015, 21–24; Fennell 1983, 155.

Qaraqorum, as did his sons, Andrei and Aleksandr Nevskii, three years later in 1248. The Mongols often intervened in Rus'ian politics and, if required, executed princes, particularly those deemed too powerful or insufficiently loyal, especially if they were thought to have withheld payment of the tribute. Three princes died while traveling home: Iaroslav I Vsevolodovich (d. 1246) from Mongolia and Aleksandr Nevskii (d. 1263) and his brother Iaroslav Iaroslavich (d. 1271) from the Golden Horde, all of whom may have been poisoned. Mikhail Vsevolodovich of Chernigov was martyred in 1246 at the Golden Horde for refusing to participate in Mongol rituals. The Mongols executed several princes of Tver', which enabled the Muscovite princes to secure the *yarligh* to Vladimir. Grand Prince Iaroslav Iaroslavich of Tver', as we noted, died returning from the Golden Horde. His son Mikhail, who was also grand prince of Vladimir, was executed in Sarai in 1318, which enabled Iurii of Moscow to acquire the *yarligh*: Iurii had accused Mikhail of withholding the tribute, of disloyalty to Khan Özbek, and of being responsible for the death of Khan Özbek's sister, Iurii's wife. Mikhail's son, Dmitrii, murdered Iurii at the Golden Horde, but was himself executed in 1326; Dmitrii's brother, Aleksandr, and Aleksandr's son, Fedor, were both executed in 1339.

After the great invasions of 1237–1241, the next major Mongol campaign into Rus' occurred in 1252 as two military expeditions were dispatched against Daniil Romanovich of Volhynia and Galicia and Grand Prince Andrei Iaroslavich, both of whom had attempted to resist Mongol rule. Aleksandr Nevskii accused his brother Andrei of not delivering the tribute and was consequently awarded the grand principality of Vladimir. Aleksandr, the hero of military victories in Novgorod over the Swedes in 1240 and the Teutonic Knights in 1242, would become complicit in securing Mongol rule in Novgorod and Suzdalia.³⁴ In 1253, Daniil received a crown from Pope Innocent IV and periodically fought the Mongols for four years (1256–1260), precisely when the Mongols imposed their census on Rus'. Daniil died in 1264 but the Mongols retained control over the southwest until the mid-fourteenth century.

In the second half of the thirteenth century the Mongols intervened and took advantage of Rus'ian civil wars to launch attacks and plunder much of Rus'. At least five campaigns were undertaken into the southwestern lands of Volhynia and Galicia in the 1250s,³⁵ while in the north, the 1252 campaign against Andrei helped pave the way for the implementation of the Mongol tributary system, completed between 1257 and 1259. In the last quarter of the

34 Fennell 1983, 116. 35 Seleznev 2010, 38–42.

thirteenth century, there were more than a dozen major Mongol attacks into northeastern Rus', most of which were closely linked to the civil wars during the reigns of Vasilii Iaroslavich (r. 1271–1277) and his two nephews Dmitrii Aleksandrovich (r. 1277–1294) and Andrei Aleksandrovich (r. 1294–1304), all of whom were more than willing to call upon Mongol troops for help. The most affected towns and their surrounding countryside included Vladimir, Suzdal', Iur'ev-Pol'skii, Pereiaslavl', Kolomna, Moscow, Mozhaïsk, Dmitrov, Tver', Riazan', Kursk, Murom, Torzhok, Bezhetsk, and Vologda.³⁶ Of these attacks, the great invasion of Batu, 1237–1240, and the campaigns of 1252, 1281, and 1293 were the most ruinous.³⁷ The insecurity of these years is clearly reflected in the decision of the metropolitan in 1299 to move his seat, because of "Tatar violence," from Kiev to Briansk and then to Vladimir.³⁸

In 1245 (and perhaps also in 1247), the Mongols carried out a limited census on a panicked population that was likely confined to Kiev and its environs,³⁹ which may have followed the pattern of forced exactions of tithes (sing. *desiatina*) first imposed on Riazan' where the Mongols took a tithe of "men, princes, horses, and everything."⁴⁰ Such early exactions are commensurate with the limited censuses first conducted in China and Western Asia.⁴¹ John of Plano Carpini reports that it was Mongol practice to take "a tenth part of everything, men as well as possessions. They count ten boys and take one of them, and they do the same with girls, and, taking them away to their country, they keep them as slaves; the rest they number and dispose of according to their custom."⁴² In Rus', however, the exactions were even more severe, as for every man who had three sons, one was taken away, as were all unmarried men, and women who had no legitimate husbands. The surviving population was then numbered so that everyone, rich and poor, even newborn children, was liable for a tribute in furs.⁴³ In the early reigns of Ögödei (r. 1229–1241) and Güyük (r. 1246–1248), precisely the years of the first census in Kiev, the Mongols exploited the conquered areas for their tribute with little regard for long-term consequences.⁴⁴ The archaeological evidence corroborates John of Plano Carpini's accounts of the devastating impact of the invasions. In the last three decades of the thirteenth century, Rus' was plunged into a deep economic depression. Judging from the paucity of thirteenth-century church construction and iconographic and literary

36 Seleznev 2010, 36–60; Kargalov 1967, 171, 193; Kargalov 1965, 53; Langer 2007, 115–16.

37 Kargalov 1965, 54. 38 PSRL, 1: 485, 15: col. 407; TL, 349 (c. 1300); Ostrowski 1993, 92–95.

39 NPL, 298; PSRL, 5: 182. 40 NPL, 74. 41 Allsen 1987, 117, 125, 130.

42 Dawson 1955, 39. 43 Dawson 1955. 44 Kwanten 1979, 198–99.

production, Rus' became a virtual cultural wasteland. It is not exaggerated hyperbole to describe the thirteenth century in Rus' as a "dark age."

The Mongol Tribute

In an effort to minimize the destruction of the population in the war zones, restore economic vitality to the devastated areas, and assert imperial authority over the conquered territories, Great Khan Möngke in 1252 called for a census throughout the entire empire.⁴⁵ The financial administration of the empire was under the control of the Central Secretariat, which contained three regional secretariats or administrations for north China, Turkestan, and Iran. The evidence of a fourth secretary for the Golden Horde and Rus' is indecisive but likely existed.⁴⁶

In 1257, the Mongols conducted a census in the lands of Suzdal', Riazan', and Murom, establishing officials of tens (*desiatniki*), hundreds (*sotniki*), thousands (*tysiashchniki*), and ten thousands (*temniki*), but all church and monastic lands, including all ecclesiastical servitors, were excluded.⁴⁷ The *tümen* as an administrative unit was designed to provide for the needs of a *tümen* (Rus' *t'ma*, pl. *t'my*) of soldiers and served as the basis of military recruitment.⁴⁸ The chronicles record fifteen *t'my* in 1359/1360 for the grand principality of Vladimir and seventeen in 1399 for the grand principality of Moscow, excluding Novgorod, Pskov, Tver', and Riazan'. But how many people, or households, or taxes collected this represented is not at all clear.⁴⁹ My own estimation for the total Mongol tribute is around 10,000 rubles – a *t'ma*.⁵⁰ In Russian sources a *tümen* was understood to mean a rural *volost* responsible for a certain portion of the tribute. Rus'ian armies, however, did not incorporate divisions of ten thousand as their armies were generally too small. The office of chiliarch (*tysiastskii*) existed earlier in Kievan Rus' with military and administrative functions that continued into the Mongol era in Novgorod, but in Moscow the position of chiliarch had been eliminated by 1373. However, on the local level, the *volost* taxable population was organized into divisions of ten under the jurisdiction of hundredmen (sing. *sotskii*) and tenmen (sing. *desiatnik*).⁵¹

In Novgorod, the Mongols in 1257 demanded but failed to impose the *tamgha* (commercial tax) and tithe; the next year they completed the census in

45 Allsen 1987, 85. 46 Allsen 1986, 499–500; Allsen 1987, 104.

47 PSRL, I: 474–75, 524, 15: 32; other chronicles place the census in 1255 (PSRL, 5: 188).

48 Biran 1997, 99; Allsen 1987, 209. 49 PSRL, 15: 68, 22: 423. 50 Langer 2007, 125.

51 Langer 2017, 530–33; Vászary 1976, 187–97.

Vladimir, and in 1259, with the help of Aleksandr Nevskii, they succeeded in taking a census in Novgorod by counting the number of households along the city's streets. The populace was bitterly divided between *boiars* (nobility), who believed the tribute would fall lightly on them, and lesser folk (the *menshie*), who would bear the brunt of the burden.⁵² The Mongols also demanded a *tuska* (likely "gifts" for the provision of Mongol emissaries),⁵³ which caused a great upheaval in the city and "much evil" in the rural *volosts*. The *tuska* was perhaps a punitive impost that *boiars* paid in silver but then collected from the *chernyi liudi* (free commoners) at a 20 percent interest rate. The tithe or *desiatina* may have been retained as the basis of Novgorod's tribute at least until after 1270, when the tribute was standardized.⁵⁴

In the thirteenth century the Mongols took tithes of people, animals, and goods, but by the fourteenth century the tribute was primarily paid in silver and furs, and at some point later in the century only in silver ingots. These early efforts at census taking in Rus' were no doubt based on the *qubchir* (Mongol-imposed exactions, in Rus' *dan'* or *vykhod*), which included collections in coin or kind (particularly furs), and the conscription of artisans as slave craftsmen or of men for military purposes. Traditional non-Mongol imposts retained by the Mongols (Mongol *alban*, Uighur *kalan*, Rus' *poshlina*) included such transit taxes as the eighth (*os'mnichee*) and the toll (*myt*).⁵⁵ Other major Mongol taxes in Rus' included the *tamgha* and *jam* or post tax.⁵⁶ The tribute apparently also included a poll tax, which is implied in a later 1448/1449 document that states that the khan's tribute should be taken according to the inventory and number of people (*vykhod po opisi, po liudem*).⁵⁷ The harshness of the thirteenth-century tribute, often administered by Muslim tax farmers, was certainly the cause of the massive 1262 riots that coursed through Rostov, Vladimir, Suzdal', Iaroslavl' and Pereiaslavl'.⁵⁸ Nevskii persuaded the Mongols not to send a punitive expedition as he brought the uprising to an end and established some degree of normalization between Rus' and the Golden Horde. In 1261, a bishopric was founded in Sarai and in 1267 the church obtained the first of its *yarlights*, exempting it from Mongol taxation and conscription in return for its prayers for the well-being of the khan.⁵⁹ In 1269, the chronicles record for the first time the activities of the

52 NPL, 309–11.

53 The term may be derived from the Turko-Mongol word *tuzghu* meaning "offering of food." JT/Boyle, 64 n. 284.

54 Krivosheev 1999, 175–78; Vernadsky 1953, 221; Ianin 1983, 99. 55 Allsen 1987, 153–54.

56 Ciociltan 2012, 220; Allsen 1987, 161. 57 DDG, 157 (no. 52). 58 PSRL, 1: 476, 5: 190.

59 Martin 1995, 155.

great *basqaq* of Vladimir, who took part in a campaign with Novgorod against Revel and who represented Mongol authority in Rus'.⁶⁰

Perhaps in response to the 1262 riots, Khan Möngke Temür (r. 1267–1280) of the Golden Horde attempted to regularize the tribute system and allow freer movement of commerce. The policy is reflected in the well-known charter (dated 1266–1272) of Iaroslav of Tver' to Riga, which references Möngke Temür's guarantee for Riga merchants to travel and trade unhindered throughout Iaroslav's *volosts* (that is, the grand principality of Vladimir).⁶¹ It is also reflected in a 1270 treaty between Novgorod and Tver' ensuring Novgorod's merchants commercial access to Suzdalia.⁶² Herein lies the paradox of Mongol rule in Rus': ruthless military attacks, thousands killed or taken off into captivity, exactions of tribute in silver and furs, coupled with the encouragement of trade.

The Mongols imposed a host of taxes, which can be gleaned from the extant Mongol immunity charters given to the church. Exempted from the 1257 general census, the church received immunities in the *yarligh* of 1267 from the *dan'* (tribute), *korm* (provisions), *jam* (post tax), *tamgha*, *popluzhnoe* (agrarian tax based on the plow – *plug*), *podvoda* (cart tax), and *voina* (military tax or actual service), all of which belonged to what was called the primary circuit (*put'*).⁶³ That the tribute included an agrarian tax, at least in the thirteenth century, is also reflected in Tatishchev's observation in his eighteenth-century history of Russia that a second major census was carried out in 1275 based on a rate of one-half *grivna* (silver coin of account) per *sokha* (plow) with one *sokha* counted as two men working.⁶⁴

After 1275, there is no information on any further Mongol census, but the taking of a census remained a practice of Muscovite and other princes. Census takers (*pistsi*) and collectors of the tribute (*dannitsi*) and post tax (*iam'shchitsi*) were important officials in all the principalities. The testament of Ivan 1 of Moscow notes a category of recorded or enrolled people (*chislennyi liudi*) who are the joint responsibility of his sons. In addition, the sons are to care for the purchased people (*liudi kuplenii*), who are recorded in the Great Roll (*velikii svertok*), which was tied to the collection of the tribute. Muscovite royal princes also received shares of the *dan'* through a complicated system of thirds, with subdivisions into smaller portions of the tax receipts. The church's *yarlighs* after 1267 no longer note the plow tax, which may now have been under the jurisdiction of the princes rather than

60 NPL, 88. 61 GVNiP, 57 (no. 30). 62 GVNiP, 13 (no. 3).

63 Pliguzov and Khoroshkevich 1990, 92; PRP, 3: 467.

64 Tatishchev 1962–1968, 5: 51; PSRL, 4: 42, 10: 152.

the *basqaqs*. The fact that no Mongol census was taken again after 1275 (or perhaps even 1257–1259) suggests that the census and tribute were the prerogatives of the grand prince; that is, the Mongols were primarily interested in obtaining a final lump sum, leaving it to the princes to administer the tribute. The will of Ivan 1 (written perhaps in 1339) already records that the *tamgha* could be bequeathed and shared by his heirs.⁶⁵ In effect, the grand prince of Vladimir had become the chief tax farmer for the collection of Mongol taxation.

Historians generally agree that Mongol *basqaqs* were installed in the 1250s or 1260s – perhaps following the 1262 rebellions – and then removed in the fourteenth century following either the uprisings in Rostov (1320) or Tver' (1327).⁶⁶ The *basqaqs* are thought to have been replaced by *darughas* stationed in Sarai, who were responsible for overseeing the tribute from individual Rus' principalities.⁶⁷ Envoys (*posoly*) now represented the Mongols in Rus' and appeared as needed.

The *basqaqs*, however, were not entirely withdrawn in the fourteenth century, as in the 1340s and 1350s and even into the 1380s they remain a constant presence in Riazan' and Kolomna.⁶⁸ In the first half of the fourteenth century the Muscovite princes and Mongols shared revenues as the *tamgha* in the city of Moscow became a princely prerogative and was used to support the widows of the grand princes.⁶⁹ The withdrawal of the *basqaqs* to the frontier zones coincided with the expansion of the Muscovite administration of the Mongol tribute and taxes, providing Moscow a window of opportunity to increase and consolidate its revenue base.

The administration of the tribute required an expansion of the circuit or way (*put'*) administration. The primary *put'* (also known as the tribute *put'* at the turn of the thirteenth century⁷⁰) in the fourteenth century was also designated as the senior *put'* (*stareishnii put'*) and was responsible for the collection of the tribute, *tamgha*, and other taxes. The *puti* were managed by *boiars* (*putnye boiare*), who were outside the jurisdiction of the *dvorskii* (majordomo).⁷¹ Michel Roublev has argued that central Muscovy was spared from the tribute, but Muscovite practice suggests that the tribute in central Moscow was levied but not turned over to the Mongols; rather the revenues of the senior *put'* went directly into the grand prince's coffers.⁷²

65 DDG, 8 (no. 1). 66 Krivosheev 1999, 214.

67 Nasonov 1940, 105; PRP, 3: 473; Vernadsky 1953, 228; Halperin 1985, 39–40.

68 ASEI, 3: 341 (no. 312), 343 (no. 313); DDG, 29 (no. 10); Krivosheev 1999, 211–12.

69 Kashtanov 1982, 177–78, 184–85. 70 ASEI, 3: 15 (no. 1). 71 Vášáry 1976, 193–96.

72 Roublev 1970, 50–53, 56.

The Fourteenth Century

The Muscovite principality at the end of the reigns of Daniil (d. 1303) and Iurii (d. 1325) had tripled in size, having acquired the territories of Serpukhov, Kolomna, and Mozhaisk, and control over Pereiaslavl'–Zalesskii and Kostroma.⁷³ The reign of Ivan I (r. 1325–1341) marks a fundamental turning point in the rise of Moscow. In 1327, Ivan joined the Mongols in suppressing a Tver' rebellion. The city was plundered and its prince, Aleksandr, fled, unable to return to Tver' until 1337; two years later Özbek executed Aleksandr and his son at Sarai. Tver' would not challenge Moscow again until the 1370s. Most scholars believe that sometime during Ivan's reign, Özbek withdrew the *basqaqs*, leaving Ivan with the primary responsibility for collecting the tribute.

Ivan generally enjoyed the support of the church and its metropolitan, Petr, who in 1325 took up residence in Moscow and was buried the following year in the Cathedral of the Dormition; his tomb soon after became a shrine. In 1354, the official seat of the metropolitan was moved from Kiev to Vladimir, in effect signifying Moscow, because the metropolitan resided in the city, as the center of the Orthodox Church.

The decades following the sack of Tver' in 1327, until the 1360s, were years of relative peace from Mongol incursions and were also a period of economic recovery in Rus'.⁷⁴ In 1349, the chronicler noted that towns in Tver' began to be rebuilt and the population of the principality increased.⁷⁵ The pattern of Mongol incursions also began to change as Tatar attacks were increasingly confined to the border territories of Riazan' and Nizhny Novgorod; the major exceptions to this trend were the pillaging of Moscow in 1382 and 1408. Nonetheless, the number of towns in Suzdalia in the fourteenth century was less than what had existed in Kievan Rus' in the 1230s.⁷⁶

The economic recovery by the middle of the fourteenth century, however, was cut short by the Black Death, which first appeared in Rus' in 1352–1353, killing Grand Prince Semen, his sons, his brother, and Metropolitan Feognost. This first pandemic was followed by five other major outbreaks in 1364–1366, 1417, 1419, 1421–1422, and 1424–1427. There were also numerous localized epidemics as well as famines, which often accompanied plague.⁷⁷ Although statistical evidence, such as census data or tax rolls, is lacking, the periodicity of plague and famine likely meant a sharp population decline, perhaps on the order of what had occurred in Western Europe.

73 Martin 1995, 144.

76 French 1983, 263.

74 Langer 2010, 187–201.

77 Langer 1975, 53–67; Langer 1976, 351–68.

75 PSRL, 10: 221; Rikman 1951, 71–84.

One clear sign of economic difficulties in Rus' is the references to abandoned fields (*pushtoshi*), which begin to be noted from the late 1380s. In order to retain and attract peasant labor, immunity grants were given exempting peasants from the tribute and other taxes, usually for five to ten years. But when necessary, princes resorted to forced labor, as did Dmitrii Donskoi, who utilized peasants to transport stone to Moscow in the building of a stone kremlin in 1367.⁷⁸

During the reigns of Ivan's sons, Semen (r. 1341–1353) and Ivan II (r. 1353–1359) Muscovite expansion largely ground to a halt. With the murder of Khan Berdibeg in 1359 the Golden Horde sank into a twenty-year period of civil wars and assassinations known in Rus'ian sources as the "Great Troubles." The combination of plague and civil wars greatly weakened the Golden Horde. Moscow had come to rely on the support of the Golden Horde but Tatar backing was no longer assured as political and military rivalries within the Golden Horde allowed other principalities, particularly a revived Tver' and the principality of Suzdal'–Nizhny Novgorod, to challenge Moscow, especially since its prince, Dmitrii Donskoi, was only nine years old when his father, Ivan II, died. Moscow also faced new rivals in the west from Lithuania and Poland, which were expanding in the southwestern and southern areas of what was once Kievan Rus' and which had been under Mongol rule. By the mid-1370s, Dmitrii was able to beat back the challenges of Tver' and Suzdal'–Nizhny Novgorod and in 1375 Mikhail Aleksandrovich of Tver' was obligated to recognize Dmitrii as his "elder brother."

Within the Golden Horde, Mamai, a non-Chingissid warlord, rose to power in the western lands of the Golden Horde, while in the east he was threatened by a Chingissid, Toqtamish. Relations between Moscow and Mamai grew strained as Dmitrii ceased to make tribute payments, largely because of the Hanseatic League's ban on silver exports to Novgorod between 1373 and 1375. The Golden Horde also faced the dismantling of its major trade routes: first, the collapse of the Yuan dynasty in China in 1368 and the decline of the Ilkhanate from 1335 undermined commerce along the Silk Road; and second, raids by Novgorodian brigands (*ushkuinniki*) threatened the fur and slave trade along the Volga river. In 1375, Moscow and Suzdal'–Nizhny Novgorod together seized Bulghar and imposed their own *doroga* and *tamgha* officials, which was a direct challenge to the Golden Horde.⁷⁹

In 1378, Moscow defeated a Tatar force subject to Mamai at the Vozha river, while Toqtamish that year captured Sarai. In an effort to reassert his

⁷⁸ Sakharov 1959, 132. ⁷⁹ TL, 401–2.

authority over Rus', Mamai demanded payment of the tribute and in 1380 sent an army northward. Dmitrii engaged Mamai at Kulikovo Pole ("snipes' field") and won a great victory, but the true winner was Toqtamish, who defeated and executed Mamai in 1381 (or Mamai fled to Caffa, where he was killed). In 1382, Toqtamish led a huge army north and sacked Moscow as Dmitrii fled the city. Kulikovo, however, changed little. Dmitrii retained the *yarligh* to Vladimir but was obligated to pay a higher tribute, while his son, Vasilii, the future Muscovite grand prince, was sent as a hostage to Toqtamish. (He escaped one year later.)⁸⁰ Nonetheless, there was a subtle, if not a dramatic, change in that for the first time a grand prince of Vladimir, Dmitrii Donskoi, would bequeath in his will the title to his son without prior approval of the khan.

The Fifteenth Century: The Decline of Mongol Rule in Rus'

The fundamental shift in Rus'–Mongol relations occurred in the aftermath of Tamerlane's defeat of Toqtamish in 1391 and again in 1395 when he sacked Sarai, Astrakhan, and the towns of the Golden Horde. The Golden Horde would never fully recover despite the emergence of such powerful emirs as Edigei, who besieged Moscow in 1408 but was driven out of power in 1411 and killed in 1419. It was in the reign of Dmitrii's son, Vasilii I (r. 1389–1425) that Mongol rule over Rus' ebbed. The change can be seen in Vasilii's coinage, which styled him as "grand prince of all Rus'."⁸¹

In the 1420s, the Golden Horde began to disintegrate as first Crimea slowly separated itself, ultimately founding the Crimean Khanate under Hajji-Girey in 1449. Two years earlier, Mahmutek founded the Khanate of Kazan after murdering his father, Ulu-Muhammad. The remnants of what was once the Golden Horde, now known as the Great Horde, retained the old capital, Sarai, until 1502, when the Crimean Tatars defeated the Great Horde.

Vasilii I died in 1425 and was succeeded by his ten-year old son, Vasilii II (r. 1425–1462). Vasilii's uncle, Iurii, challenged Vasilii's right to rule on the now outmoded principle of lateral succession. Civil war would rage on and off again until 1453 when Vasilii secured the Muscovite throne. In 1431, Vasilii and Iurii resorted to Mongol tradition when they brought their dispute before Khan Ulu-Muhammad, who confirmed Vasilii as grand prince. Vasilii would be the last prince to appear before a khan to receive the *yarligh*. In 1445, at the

80 Martin 1995, 213–15; Halperin 2013a, 854. 81 Noonan 1997, 502–4.

Battle of Suzdal', Tatars belonging to Ulu-Muḥammad captured Vasilii, who paid a huge ransom for his own release. Ulu-Muḥammad's son, Kasim, in 1452 was given land and revenues along the Oka river – the area became known as the Khanate of Kasim, whose troops would eventually serve the Muscovite grand prince. But neither the Tatars, nor Iurii or his sons, nor any other Rus'ian principality could dislodge Vasilii as the political and military leader of northern Rus'. Moscow's autonomy from the Horde is apparent in Vasilii's coinage, which bore the title "sovereign of all Rus'" and then "sovereigns of all Rus'" after he named his son, Ivan, coruler.⁸²

The long reign of Vasilii's son, Ivan III (r. 1462–1505), saw major reforms that set the foundations for the Muscovite military–fiscal state. Ivan and his son Vasilii III (r. 1505–1533) completed the Muscovite incorporation of the principalities and the republics of Novgorod and Pskov. Moscow emerged as the "new Jerusalem," the center not just of Orthodoxy but of the Christian world, whose church and ritual derived from but superseded Constantinople.

In 1480, a Muscovite army faced the army of the Great Horde at the Ugra river. After two weeks of minor skirmishes, Khan Ahmed retreated. In the sixteenth century, the standoff at the Ugra was celebrated as the end of the so-called "Tatar Yoke" (a term not found in contemporary sources). The confrontation at the Ugra was not very different from such engagements in the past.⁸³ But it was the last time the Great Horde would attack Moscow and, with the Crimean destruction of the Great Horde in 1502, the events of the Ugra took on greater significance. Moscow in fact continued to pay tribute to the khanates of Crimea, Kazan, and Astrakhan, the successor to the Great Horde, but from at least the 1420s Moscow was no longer under Tatar rule.

For over two centuries, the lands of Rus' served as an economic hinterland for the Golden Horde and the Mongol Empire. One of the problems hindering Rus'ian international trade was its lack of coinage. Rus' possessed no gold or silver mines and was dependent on imports for its precious metals. The so-called "coinless period" spanned almost 350 years when the minting of coins ceased in the 1030s. (One could also date the coinless era from the 1140s when west European deniers ceased to be imported.)⁸⁴ The absence of coinage in Rus' is all the more remarkable since much of Europe between the 1160s and 1330s witnessed a veritable explosion of silver minting, as mines such as those at Kutná Hora in Bohemia were producing twenty to twenty-five tons of silver per year.⁸⁵ In the absence of coins, Rus' employed what has been

82 Martin 2006a, 178. 83 Ostrowski 2006, 235–38. 84 Pavlova 1994, 375–76.

85 Spufford 1988, 110–11.

termed “goods money,” which generally took the form of furs. Novgorod, the major importer of silver, did not mint its own silver coinage until 1420.⁸⁶

The Golden Horde began to mint silver coins as early as the 1240s and 1250s, but, significantly, no hoards of Mongol coins have been found in Suzdalia dating from the thirteenth century.⁸⁷ Where one might expect Mongol rule to encourage long-distance commerce, Rus’ian merchants, according to George Vernadsky, may have been locked out of Sarai, perhaps until the reign of Möngke Temür (r. 1267–1280), or even later in the reign of Özbek (r. 1313–1341).⁸⁸ However, some commercial exchanges between Rus’ and Sarai did exist in the thirteenth century as Golden Horde pottery, silverware, cornelian beads, boxwood combs, cowrie shells, and even some silk have been found in northeastern Rus’.⁸⁹ But such exchanges could not offset the economic decline in the thirteenth century. Rus’ians were still taken away as slaves, although the Tatar sack of Caffa in 1308 may have disrupted the slave trade on the Cuman steppe. It is possible that the number of Rus’ians bound for the slave market in Crimea may have declined in the second half of the fourteenth century as the bulk of those taken were, according to Michel Balard, Tatars.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, Mongol raids into Riazan’ and Nizhny Novgorod remained a constant threat. According to Alan Fisher, Caffa exported 10,000 slaves between 1414 and 1423 to be sold in Venice, and most slaves purchased in Europe were in fact Rus’ian.⁹¹

But if Rus’ did not have coins, it had silver ingots, which often took the place of coins in international exchange. Novgorod’s silver ingot was one of four standard ingots in international commerce. It weighed up to 206 grams but generally averaged 196.2 grams, which was close to that of the *sommi* used in Caffa and Tana that were exchanged in China for paper money.⁹² Janet Martin has estimated that, in the fifteenth century, Novgorod’s rent-tax system brought in over 200,000 squirrel pelts per year, which were traded to the Hansa for silver, bringing in from 2,000 to as much as 4,000 to 6,000 rubles per year, sufficient to pay a tribute of 5,000 rubles, leaving a net income of from 600 to 700 rubles to perhaps as much as 1,200 to 2,100 rubles a year.⁹³

The silver imported through Novgorod served as the basis for a revival of coinage in Suzdalia from the second half of the fourteenth century, but it occurred at a time of plague in Europe and what Peter Spufford has termed a bullion-famine in silver, which brought the economy of Europe to

86 NPL, 412. 87 Mellinger 1987–1991, 163; Fedorov-Davydov 1960, 95, 101–2, Map 1.

88 Vernadsky 1953, 343. 89 Noonan 1983, 201–64. 90 Balard 1978, 790–96.

91 Fisher 1972, 576–78. 92 Spufford 1988, 219–20. 93 Martin 1986, 157, 159, 162.

a grinding halt.⁹⁴ In Rus' the bullion-famine is reflected in the debasement of coinage from the end of Dmitrii Donskoi's reign through that of Vasilii II. Even Novgorod in the 1430s protested the quality of silver it was receiving from the Hansa.⁹⁵ Ironically, just as Rus' sought to revive the minting of silver coins, Europe was moving toward gold coinage, which only further isolated Rus' from western international markets.

There is no evidence that Rus'ian merchants participated in the formation of *ortoqs* or commercial trading partnerships, which primarily consisted of Muslim merchants, who were generously paid in order to supply the Mongols with winter fodder, textiles, and manufactured goods.⁹⁶ There were, of course, some wealthy Rus'ian merchants, such as the *gosti-surozhane*, who in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries traded with the Golden Horde and with the Italian colonies in Crimea and the Sea of Azov, but they did not spark a commercial revolution as had occurred earlier in the west. There were no merchant or craft guilds in Suzdalia and no struggles for urban political autonomy. In fact, monasteries more often provided some elementary banking functions, underscoring the limited use of banking and credit for commercial transactions in Rus'. What information we do have on merchant trade comes primarily from the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries and shows that most Rus'ian merchants engaged in the Crimean and Azov trade were in fact not wealthy.⁹⁷

The Rus'ian economy stagnated in the fifteenth century as the number of newly founded towns declined.⁹⁸ Much of the commercial wealth of Rus' was primarily concentrated in Novgorod and Moscow, which together accounted, according to David Miller, for an astonishing 88 percent of all monumental urban construction in the plague years from 1363 to 1437.⁹⁹ Outside the lands of Moscow and Novgorod, urban construction slowed. Most churches were quite modest in size and simple in structural detail, particularly when compared to the churches of pre-Mongol Rus'.¹⁰⁰

By the middle of the fourteenth century, Rus' was showing signs of economic recovery from the dislocations of the thirteenth century, as evidenced by the beginning of the minting of coins, but plague, famine, inter-necine wars, and periodic Tatar incursions took their toll on an economy that, despite some decades of apparent growth, remained largely stagnant or even mired in a depression until the 1460s and 1470s.¹⁰¹ Rus' during the Mongol era may not have attained its pre-1237 economic level, which is in

94 Spufford 1988, 362 and ch. 13. 95 Khoroshkevich 1963, 286; Langer 2012, 85–101.

96 Allsen 1989, 83–126; Khazanov 1990, 1–15. 97 Martin 1985, 21–38.

98 Kuchkin 1990, 77, 81. 99 Miller 1989, 371–74, Figure 4, 383. 100 Miller 1989, 374–75.

101 Langer 2015a, 32–48.

keeping with I. P. Petrushevsky's assessment of the Mongol economic impact on Iran. Generally, in Iran urban life declined, but some large towns prospered because of income from exports and the transit trade.¹⁰² Likewise, in fifteenth-century England, the combination of plague and warfare resulted in a decline in national wealth or, at best, economic stagnation, but some larger urban areas, such as London, grew at the expense of smaller towns.¹⁰³ Much the same can be said for Rus'; that is, Moscow in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries enjoyed some economic expansion, but elsewhere in the northeast the economy stagnated, at least until the reign of Ivan III. Novgorod retained commercial ties to the west and relative prosperity but may have had little economic growth in the fifteenth century.

Mongol Rule and Rus'

It remains unclear whether Rus' was part of the Jochid Ulus. Save for Mongol *basqaq* representatives in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries and the periodic appearance of *posols*, the Mongols were not interested in settling in northern Rus' as the forests were inhospitable for their steppe horse culture. Consequently, Rus' was not one of the twenty-two to twenty-three territories (*uluses*) within the Jochid Ulus.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, the Rus' were thoroughly familiar with the concept of the *ulus*, often referring to themselves as having once been part of the *ulus* of the Golden Horde.¹⁰⁵ Despite the absence of Mongol settlements in Rus', it was understood that the Mongols ruled Rus', as evidenced by the granting of *yarlighs* and payment of the tribute. The Rus' were thoroughly familiar, as Charles Halperin has put it, with the realia of Tatar rule,¹⁰⁶ but as the Mongols relinquished the administration of the tribute to the grand princes of Vladimir, the bookmen could gloss Mongol sovereignty and engage in what Halperin has termed an ideology of silence. The bookmen acknowledged Mongol plunder and destruction of towns. They used terms such as "pagan oppression" and "bitter slavery," but they studiously avoided concepts of subordination and rule.¹⁰⁷

Rus' was thoroughly familiar with Mongol customs, yet the Mongols remained outsiders to Rus'ian society, although Tatars entered into Muscovite society and even founded *boiar* clans. Some scholars, such as Donald Ostrowski, have argued that Rus' copied virtually intact the

102 Petrushevsky 1968, 483, 507. 103 Palliser 1988, 10–11; Postan 1973, 41–48.

104 Seleznev 2013, 144–45. 105 Halperin 1982, 257–63.

106 Halperin 2013b, 381; Halperin 1986, 169.

107 Halperin 1985, 68–69; Halperin 1986, 40, 73.

administrative apparatus of the Golden Horde. But on close examination there was no Rus'ian equivalent of the office of vizier or of Tatar dual administration of military and civilian authorities. The Muscovite Boiar Council did not function like the council of four *ulusbeys* or *karachi beys*. The conversion of the Golden Horde to Islam in the reign of Özbek set a religious and cultural divide that could not be overcome. It was one of the fundamental reasons that prevented Rus' from adopting the *dīwān* system of Iran, which may have existed in the Golden Horde.¹⁰⁸ The medieval Muscovite administration drew upon household servitors, some of whom were slaves, and *boiars*, who served as military commanders and governors. The Mongol tribute was incorporated into a traditional household management, not unlike those found in medieval Europe, but the importance of the Mongol tribute is reflected in the Russian language, where such common words as *den'ga*, coin, and *kaznachei*, treasurer, are drawn from Mongol terminology. The Mongols also deeply influenced the organization and armaments of the Muscovite army, Muscovy's diplomatic forms and postal service, and some aspects of its criminal punishment, but these practices were adopted to fit Muscovy's own specific needs.¹⁰⁹ The khan of the Golden Horde offered one model of rule, but so too did the Byzantine emperor, both of whom were referred to as "tsar."¹¹⁰ The khan or tsar was accorded due respect, his well-being prayed for in the dyptychs. Chinggisid lineage within Muscovy was honored and associated with nobility, but for all of Muscovy's association with the Golden Horde, Muscovy was not a replica of a Mongol state.¹¹¹ For at least two centuries the princes of Rus' had to learn how to protect their own populations and to husband their economic and human resources. To that end, the Muscovite princes were the most adept as they learned how to live and work with the khans of the Golden Horde.

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¹⁰⁸ Halperin 1985, 94; Halperin 2000, 237–57; Ostrowski 1990a, 525–42.

¹⁰⁹ Halperin 1985, 90. ¹¹⁰ Cherniavsky 1970.

¹¹¹ Cherniavsky 1970, 95; Halperin 2011, 5–20.

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VOLUME I

PART 4

★

EXTERNAL HISTORIES

The Mongols' Relations with Unsubjugated Regions

PART 4

★

EXTERNAL HISTORIES

The Mongols' Relations with Unsubjugated Regions

The Mongols and Europe

NICOLA DI COSMO

Introduction

The literature on the relations between the Mongols and Europe is immense and no general survey can do justice to its depth and scope.¹ Most scholars have concentrated on discrete topics, such as religious missions, diplomatic affairs, political history, and commercial relations. This chapter will attempt to trace the main areas that defined the nature of the interaction between Mongol conquerors and European powers as it unfolded from the beginning of the conquest to the dissolution of the Pax Mongolica in the mid-fourteenth century.

In the thirteenth century, European kings and popes were forced to confront the terrifyingly destructive, utterly alien, and seemingly unstoppable power of the Mongol armies. The Mongol invasion of Russia and Eastern Europe launched under Ögödei Qa'an generated apocalyptic anxieties and political disorientation within the Christian world, already reeling from the impasse in the Holy Land and the conflict between the Holy Roman Empire and the papacy. Diplomatic correspondence and eyewitness accounts documented both the political and military collapse of an essentially defenseless Europe, and the harsh treatment visited by the invaders upon the population of several countries: Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Poland, and Hungary. Extensive documentation on the Mongols was collected in the Benedictine monastery of St. Albans, near London, by Matthew Paris (d. 1259). His *Chronica Majora* includes several pieces of news and information coming from religious and other networks. That England, far away and

1 Among the earlier and especially later studies we find numerous important milestones, from the study by Johann Lorenz von Mosheim (1741) and Jean Pierre Abel de Rémusat (1824) to the fundamental contributions of the twentieth century by Pelliot, Richard, Dawson, Schmieder, de Rachewiltz, and Jackson, among many others.

protected by the sea, is so central to our knowledge of the Mongol conquest shows the deep echo it generated as apocalyptic news reverberated throughout Europe.²

The shock of the invasion and the fear of more devastations were followed by an intensification of diplomatic relations. After the election of Innocent IV to the papal see in 1243, Europe engaged the Mongol menace by dispatching envoys and collecting information. Fact-finding missions were sent to the Mongol lands and courts in the 1240s and 1250s, which served to pave the way for future engagements and, more importantly, produced a knowledge-based approach to relations with the Mongols rather than one inspired by prophecies and legends.³

In the following period (the 1250s and 1260s), which coincides with the further expansion and consolidation of Mongol rule in Russia (the Golden Horde) and the Near East (the Ilkhanate), European attitudes became interdependent with the evolution of the Mongol Empire's internal politics. Notwithstanding the permanence of a Mongol threat, and difficulties in communication, Europeans came to terms with the Mongol presence on Europe's eastern frontiers, and eventually took advantage of it to exploit unprecedented opportunities to bring the Christian faith from the Black Sea to China, and to extend their trade to markets radiating across Asia.

Albeit divided into separate realms sometimes hostile to each other, the Mongol Empire retained a basic unity in terms of interregional communication, *linguae francae*, administration of trade, monetary exchange, and cultural features. The Mongols also opened the door to the establishment of Christian footholds in Asia, far beyond the European frontiers. Openness to religion, cultural inclusiveness, and active encouragement of commercial activities became hallmarks of Mongol rule that Europeans recognized and exploited.

On the political side, several diplomatic openings might have led to co-operation between the Mongols and the European powers – in particular France, the papacy, and England – but such alliances never materialized regardless of theoretical convergences of interest. Mistrust, miscommunication, and extremely intricate internal politics on both sides militated against the formation of political alliances or extensive military co-operation. Mongol leadership became decentralized after 1260, and the partition of the empire meant that the different *uluses* sought different objectives in their foreign policy. In Europe, the endemic rivalries across the political landscape

2 Saunders 1969; Bigalli 1971. 3 Dawson 1995; Richard 1977; de Rachewiltz 1971.

likewise prevented any unified action. Even in the context of the wars in the Holy Land, where Mongol military aid might have been decisive, Christian kings could not find a unified position.

While political agreements proved unattainable, Europeans were able to seize newly available opportunities for a massive broadening of their range of commercial and religious activities. The European expansion into Asia spearheaded by the Christian missionary orders and the Italian maritime republics in the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries was a sustained effort in which geographic exploration, commercial investments, political relations, and religious zeal combined to produce a greater European presence in Asia, and a more relevant role of Asia in western affairs.

From the latter part of the thirteenth century, Europe's engagement with the Mongols was no longer limited to popes and kings. One exceptionally important development derived from the stable presence of European bases in lands ruled by the Mongols. European presence in Asia reached its zenith between c. 1280 and 1350, a period when Latin communities in Crimea, Tabriz, and Khanbaliq (today's Beijing) flourished. At this time, treaties were signed and partnerships forged with the active support of Mongol rulers. The end of the Pax Mongolica, from the collapse of Mongol rule in Iran to the political disintegration of the Golden Horde and of the Yuan dynasty in China in the second half of the fourteenth century, led to the decline of the European presence in Asia, while some bases, such as the Genoese colony of Caffa, in Crimea, continued to operate on a regional basis, disconnected from the cities and routes of greater Asia.

The Mongol Invasion of Europe and Early Contacts

During the campaign against the Khwārazm-Shāh carried out by Chinggis Khan in 1219–1221, Mongol forces under two redoubtable commanders, Jebe and Sübedei, attacked Azerbaijan and Georgia, and defeated joint Russian and Cuman forces on the Kalka river in 1223. In pursuit of the Khwārazm-Shāh, the Mongols reached beyond the Caspian Sea and scouted the lands in the Caucasus and southern Russia.⁴ On the strength of that knowledge, and while Mongol troops were already operating in the Caucasus, in 1235 Ögödei Qa'an, now a permanent resident in the capital, Qaraqorum, in central Mongolia, launched a campaign against the west under the formal command of Jochi's son, Batu.

4 Allsen 1983, 5–24.

The probable reasons behind Ögödei's campaign against the west can be summarized in a few salient points. At the death of Chinggis Khan an allocation of current and future territorial conquests had been made by dividing the known world into four parts, and assigning them to Chinggis's four sons: Jochi, Ögödei, Chaghadai, and Tolui.⁵ The idea of an empire in which multiple regional governments coexisted as virtually independent realms, albeit nominally subject to a supreme leader, was consistent with the steppe political heritage. Aside from Chinggis's testament, increasing the size of the empire was probably a political necessity given the tensions brewing among the sons and grandsons of Chinggis Khan. The west was assigned to Jochi and his heirs, and the intelligence previously gathered in the south Russian steppes was likely to persuade the Mongols of a speedy campaign, given the availability of ample pasturage and the ease with which the local armies had been defeated. Moreover, once the campaigns in northern China and eastern Central Asia had been concluded with the conquest of the Xi Xia regime and the Jin dynasty, the Mongol high command could divert substantial forces and redeploy expert commanders like Sübedei to the western front. Yet another reason may have been the need to eliminate independent nomadic peoples in Central Asia and south Russia with which the Mongols had previously come into contact, and in particular the Volga Bulgars.⁶ In terms of "imperial ideology," the Mongol conquest was sustained by a belief in their Heaven-granted right to world domination, as reported in several pieces of diplomatic correspondence with foreign powers.⁷ These conditions, whereby internal and external political contingencies are supported by military impetus and ideological drive, constitute a credible basis to explain Ögödei's decision to pursue a western campaign in 1235.

The invasion of Russia proceeded without meeting much resistance, and Russian cities fell in rapid succession: Riazan' in 1237, Vladimir in 1238, and Kiev in 1240. The requests of Russian princes for military assistance from other Christian powers went unheeded, a sign of the deep divisions among European powers, and also between Catholic and Orthodox Christianity. In 1241 Mongol forces moved to invade Hungary and Poland, forced the Hungarian king Béla IV to flee, and established themselves in the Hungarian plain. The known reasons for the Mongols' invasion of Eastern Europe and Hungary in particular belong to the classic repertoire of the *casus belli* in steppe politics. First, the Mongols demanded the restitution of the fugitive Cumans; that is, nomads from south Russia that the Mongols

5 Jackson 1999. 6 Zimonyi 1992, 347–55. 7 Jackson 2006, 3–22.

regarded as their subjects. Second, they protested the fact that Mongol envoys sent to Hungary had failed to return, and no embassy had been sent from the west to repay the courtesy.

In pursuit of the Cumans, and bent on punishing the Hungarians, Batu's army quickly gained control of the area east of the Danube, causing widespread devastation. In late January 1242 the Mongols crossed the frozen Danube and invaded western Hungary, but in the spring Batu withdrew with all his forces from Hungary and returned to the lower Volga region, where his capital, Sarai, was established, to the north of today's Astrakhan. Several reasons have been suggested to explain the sudden withdrawal from Eastern Europe. The classic explanation is that the death of Ögödei on December 11, 1241, opened a succession crisis that forced the Mongol leadership to regroup for the general assembly (*quriltai*) that had to take place in Mongolia, where the new qa'an would be elected. It has been noted, however, that Batu only returned to Russia and did not proceed to Mongolia. Besides this political explanation, other reasons also have been proposed, such as that the Hungarian plain was not suitable for long-term Mongol occupation.⁸

Undoubtedly Hungary suffered extensively from the Mongol occupation, as documented in various sources, such as the *Carmen Miserabile*, the chronicle of the invasion compiled by Rogerius, an Italian prelate active in Hungary. European reactions to the shock of the Mongol invasion laid bare rifts that were political, religious, and personal. The Hungarian king Béla IV in flight from the Mongols received little support from Austria, and at a heavy price. Religious divisions prevented the Catholic powers from assisting Orthodox Christians in the east. Pope Gregory IX (r. 1227–1241) authorized a crusade against the Mongols in 1241 but by the autumn of that year the army had disintegrated because of the lack of trust between the Pope and the German king Conrad (1228–1254), son of Frederick II. In sum, the Mongol invasion left Russia and the Caucasus under Mongol rule, and the rest of Europe free of Mongol occupation but entirely exposed to further assaults.

Knowing the Mongols

The shock of the invasion left the west painfully aware of its vulnerability. At the same time, it provided urgency and purpose to make a deliberate effort to acquire information about the Mongols, initiate a dialogue, and establish

8 Rogers 1996; Jackson 2005, 71–74, Büntgen and Di Cosmo 2016.

relations, in part building on the sparse knowledge gained in the 1230s.⁹ Following the death of Pope Gregory IX in 1241 and the election of Innocent IV in 1242, new plans were set in motion to find a “remedy against the Tartars,” and Dominican and Franciscan clerics were dispatched eastward on fact-finding missions.¹⁰ The most important reports to reach us are authored by John of Plano Carpini, whose mission on behalf of the Pope took place in 1245–1247; by Benedict of Poland, who traveled together with Carpini; by Simon of Saint-Quentin, who was a member of a mission by Friar Ascelin sent also by the Pope to the Mongol commander Baiju in 1245–1248; and William of Rubruck, who traveled to the Mongol capital in 1253–1255 at the behest of King Louis IX. Franciscans and Dominicans belonged to newly established missionary orders devoted to the propagation of the Christian faith, but their missions had political goals as well.

These missions collected a wealth of information about the Mongols, but their results on the political and diplomatic planes were mixed at best. The Mongols’ presumption of wielding a divine right to rule the world sat uncomfortably with the Roman Catholic Church and European rulers, who rejected the notion that they had to pay homage to the qa’an or face the consequences. The defiant posture of Friar Ascelin in front of the Mongol commander Baiju, which nearly cost him his life, exemplifies the latter.¹¹ On the cultural side, the missions provided invaluable information about the society, customs, and economy of the Mongols, thus familiarizing them in Europe to an unprecedented degree. The descriptions by Rubruck and Carpini belong to a new ethnography of Asia and convey the fresh taste of direct and often painful personal experience.

In terms of their evangelical activity, the missionaries brought back knowledge of the existence of Christianity among the Mongols, since some among the Kereyits, Naimans, and Önggüt had adhered to Nestorianism, but could not make any progress that widened their acceptance of Christianity, notwithstanding the Mongols’ general openness in matters of religion and philosophy.¹² From a Eurasian perspective, the west was probably quite marginal in the Mongol worldview, compared with the Chinese and Islamic civilizations, and the growing influence of Buddhism. Indeed, Carpini, an eyewitness of the enthronement of Güyük in Qaraqorum on August 24, 1246, reported that thousands of eminent

9 Dorrie 1956, 125–202.

10 From the brief of January 1245 by Innocent IV, in which a “*remedium contra Tartaros*” was cited. Aigle 2015, 45.

11 Guzman 1971, 249. 12 Allsen 2001, 147.

people from every country had flocked to pay homage to the Mongol qa'an. The contrast between the power exuding from such a spectacle and the absence of European royalty (or their envoys) must have been striking, insofar as it showed the marginalization of Europe on the stage of world politics.

The most celebrated source of information about the Mongols to reach and circulate in Europe, however, was not of a religious nature. Its author, Marco Polo, was the young son and nephew of two Venetian merchants, the brothers Maffeo and Niccolò Polo, who previously had visited China, and were returning to Qubilai's court as envoys of Pope Gregory x (r. 1271–1276). Marco, a teenager at the time of his journey, spent over twenty years in Mongol-ruled China. His book of memoirs, known variously as *The Travels of Marco Polo*, *Il Milione*, and the *Book of Marvels*, was dictated to a writer upon his return from Asia during his captivity in Genoa. It contains by far the most extensive collection of information about Asia, including Central Asia, China and South Asia, available in Europe. Geographic, cultural, ethnographic, and economic information drawn either directly or indirectly from his experiences in Asia constitutes the first comprehensive account of China under Mongol rule, and opened a window on a thus far unknown world. Most of this information, especially that of a geographic and economic nature, is accurately collected and reported, often in fine detail. Some anachronisms and faulty information also were included, probably due to his reliance on indirect sources.

By the beginning of the fourteenth century the Europeans had acquired a substantial amount of information about the Mongols and Asia, which have come down to us in various forms, including commercial handbooks. The book known as *Pratica della mercatura* (Practice of Commerce), by Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, a Tuscan banker with extensive experience throughout Europe, shows detailed knowledge of trade with Asia in the early decades of the fourteenth century, including routes, costs, merchandise, and exchange rates.¹³ The *Codex Cumanicus*, a work probably of Genoese origin of approximately the same time, is a small book of words and phrases in three languages: Latin, Persian, and Turkish (Cuman), that represents one of the linguistic instruments to proceed into Mongol-ruled Asia.¹⁴ The contents of the book reflect a mercantile and religious usage, and illustrate the linguistic competence of European merchants and missionaries on the routes of continental Asia.

¹³ Balducci Pegolotti 1936. ¹⁴ Schmieder and Schreiner 2005.

Diplomatic Relations

Exploratory missions to the Mongols, as we have seen, were sent from the 1240s to seek knowledge, but also to initiate formal contacts.¹⁵ European powers and Mongol rulers and commanders repeatedly attempted to establish diplomatic relations against the backdrop of a common interest in fighting the Muslims. The Mongol military operations in the Near East and the Crusaders' wars in the Holy Land appeared to provide fertile ground for co-operation, and several efforts were made to forge an alliance, which often involved multiple envoys, go-betweens, and back channels. Nestorian monks and Genoese merchants were recruited by the Mongols in their diplomatic dialogue with the west, and other forces on both sides pressed for a political convergence. For instance, the Christian king of Cilician Armenia Het'um I (1226–1270), having surrendered to the Mongols and visited the court of Möngke Qa'an in 1254–1255, repeatedly tried to champion the cause of a Mongol rapprochement with the west.¹⁶ In almost every case, however, the first move was made by the Mongols.

In 1247, the Mongol commander in Persia, Eljigidei, approached King Louis IX through Christian envoys with the proposal to join forces against the caliphate. The diplomatic overture wished for cordial relations and intimated the possibility that the Mongols would protect the Christians who lived in the Muslim lands they would conquer.¹⁷ King Louis IX of France followed suit by sending to the Mongol court in 1249 the Dominican André de Longjumeau.¹⁸ This met with the regent Oghul Qaimish, the widow of Güyük Qa'an, but received no other comfort than an indifferent letter with the standard Mongol request for unconditional submission. Whatever the original intention by Eljigidei, an alliance was not supported by the central command of the empire, which, after the death of Güyük, was about to enter a turbulent and bloody period of civil war.

A second attempt at forging an alliance occurred in the context of Hülegü's campaigns in the Near East, in 1262, in a letter addressed to Louis IX whose transmission and reception remain uncertain.¹⁹ The letter included the routine injunction to submission, but it also proposed to join forces against the Mamluks, and requested that the Franks attack the Mamluks in Egypt. The

15 On Mongol diplomacy, particularly: Voegelin 1940–41, 378–413; Aigle 2008, 395–434; Aigle 2005, 143–62.

16 Boyle 1964, 175–89. 17 Jackson 2005, 98–99. 18 Guzman 1971.

19 Meyvaert 1980, 245–60.

hypothesis of an alliance was favored by the Mongols' determination to destroy the caliphate, their sack of Baghdad in 1258, and their opposition to the Mamluks in Syria and Palestine. The defeat suffered at 'Ayn Jālūt in 1260 demonstrated the non-invincibility of the Mongols, and splitting the Mamluk forces on two fronts was a sensible military strategy.²⁰ At the same time, the short but savage raid of Poland and Lithuania launched by Batu's brother Berke in 1259–1260, followed by Berke's request to King Louis IX to submit, rekindled fears of a Mongol invasion. This situation, together with clashes between Mongols and Crusaders in the Holy Land, was bound to inspire caution. Hülegü's ambiguous offer to deliver Jerusalem to the Franks, sent to Pope Urban IV and the kings of France and England, eventually failed to persuade.

The ilkhans continued to seek diplomatic alliances with the West. The Ilkhan Abaqa (r. 1265–1282), son of Hülegü, sent envoys in 1274 to the Second Council of Lyon convened by Gregory X. An agreement was reached but the alliance did not materialize due to the Pope's death. Especially important is the embassy led by the Nestorian priest Rabban Sauma, sent by the Ilkhan Arghun (r. 1284–1291) as his envoy to the Pope and the kings of France and England in 1287.²¹ Rabban Sauma, a Nestorian priest born in China, had accompanied his pupil, the Nestorian Catholicos Mar Yabhallaha III, to Persia, and from there proceeded to Europe. Besides the journey to the European capitals, he spent several months in Genoa, evidence of the economic power of this maritime city-state in the east and of its role as a go-between in diplomatic relations. This embassy was followed by a second, a year later (1289), headed by Buscarello de' Ghisolfi, a Genoese in the service of the ilkhans. He visited Pope Nicholas IV (1288–1292), the king of France Philip the Fair, and the king of England Edward I, confirming European willingness to participate in a joint campaign against the Mamluks in Syria. The death of Arghun in 1291, however, nullified such plans, and the later ilkhans no longer pursued such intense diplomatic activity. In the fourteenth century, diplomatic embassies between Mongols and European courts petered out, and although envoys continued to be exchanged with the papacy, no new initiatives to seek military co-operation were undertaken. Instead, especially in the Golden Horde and Persia, diplomatic activity concentrated on limited treaties that favored the establishment and operations of European bases in Mongol territory.

20 Jackson 1980, 481–513; Paviot 2000, 308. 21 Rossabi 2010, 99–138.

Trade and Traders in Mongol Lands

While it is abundantly clear that without Mongol support the Europeans would not have been able either to trade or to proselytize in Asia, an essential step was the establishment of the Italian colonies on the Black Sea. The expansion of the range of commercial activities of Italian maritime powers, in particular Genoa and Venice, brought Mediterranean Europe into direct contact with the Mongol rulers of Russia and Persia. The Genoese gained control of access to the Black Sea after the Treaty of Nymphaeum (1261) with the Byzantine Empire, and thus opened the way to the Italian colonization of the Black Sea region and to the exploitation of trade opportunities over Eurasian continental routes. Long-distance connections and international exchange networks flourished in the market-oriented climate favored by the Mongols. The commensality of European merchants and Mongol rulers was the defining feature of a new form of interaction, inspired by mutual benefit rather than by fear and violence.²²

In the *ulus* of Jochi, or the Golden Horde, the maritime powers of Genoa and Venice established their main settlements in Caffa, on the Crimean peninsula, which was predominantly Genoese, and Tana, on the Sea of Azov, which remained the main Venetian base.²³ Other bases, such as Soldaia (Sudak), were scattered along the coast of the Black Sea. Key to their success were the concessions from the Mongol khans provided in treaties that fixed land grants, commercial duties, legal guarantees, and protection along the caravan routes. Favorable economic conditions, low risks, and the measureless possibilities offered by markets across Asia fueled the activity of many Italian merchants and fortune seekers. These colonies on the Black Sea were inherently multiethnic and polyglot, and a meeting point of different cultures and religions.

Trade in the Black Sea colonies was regulated by bilateral treaties, with the oversight of Mongol as well as European authorities, in the form of consular representatives. Beyond the jurisdiction of Genoese and Venetian state authorities, merchants venturing on continental routes could only rely on the Mongols for protection and support. However, relations were not always smooth. The Italians were expelled from the Golden Horde, and trade was interrupted, on two occasions, in 1308 (until 1315) by the khan Toqto'a (r. 1291–1312) and in 1343 by Janibeg (r. 1341–1357). In both cases the Mongol reaction was due to real or alleged legal transgressions. However, after a few years,

22 Di Cosmo 2005, 391–424. 23 Balard 1983, 31–54; Berindei and Veinstein 1976, 110–201.

relations were resumed and trade conditions were restored. Another threat came from the constant tensions between Venice and Genoa, which flared with special violence in the 1350s.

In the Ilkhanate, Italian merchants, among whom the Venetians probably arrived first but were soon outnumbered by the Genoese, created a thriving merchant community in Tabriz from the late thirteenth century, and prospered especially in the reigns of Öljeitü (r. 1304–1316) and Abū Saʿīd (r. 1317–1335). Trade in the Ilkhanate was connected to the maritime routes through the Black Sea port of Trebizond, and through the southern Anatolian port of Laiazzo (Ayas), on the Cilician coast. If Tana was the departure point for Central Asia and Cathay, then Tabriz was the stepping stone on the route to the Persian Gulf and India.²⁴

The situation changed dramatically in 1336, as the Ilkhanate suddenly collapsed. The order and security guaranteed by the Mongol rulers vanished together with the basic conditions that permitted foreign merchants to operate. Venice issued a *devetum* against trading in Persia in 1338, followed shortly afterwards by Genoa. Later attempts to attract foreign merchants back to the Persian markets failed because of robberies and generally unsafe conditions. The merchants' desertion of the Persian commercial routes was followed a few decades later by the end of contacts with China, with the fall of the Mongol dynasty in 1368, and by a general collapse of intercontinental trade. The Italian bases in Crimea proved, however, more resilient, partly because of the strategic interest in importing wheat and other staples from the Black Sea region, and partly because they continued to retain an important regional role as the main outlet of imports to Europe. Caffa became largely independent from Genoa in political and economic affairs, and managed to survive the campaigns of Tamerlane, faring better than Tana, which was destroyed in 1395, though it soon recovered.

The Missionary Presence in Mongol Asia

From the beginning of the fourteenth century several bishoprics and archbishoprics were established in Mongol territory, among which Caffa, Tana, Sudak, Almaliq, and Khanbaliq were the most important. The favorable environment created by the Mongols toward different religions allowed the establishment of Catholic dioceses, evangelical activity, and the fostering of Christian communities in the heart of pagan Asia. In addition to the early

24 Wing 2014, 301–20; Preiser-Kapeller 2014, 251–99.

missions by Carpini, Rubruck and others, additional missions in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries increased the presence of Catholicism in Asia, even though the results were short-lived.

In 1289, in the wake of the flurry of diplomatic embassies sent back and forth between Arghun and Pope Nicholas IV, the latter charged the Franciscan John of Montecorvino with a mission to Cathay.²⁵ Because the land route was interrupted by the wars between Qubilai and Qaidu, Montecorvino proceeded by sea through India and south China. In the Chinese capital, Khanbaliq (Dadu, Beijing), he built a church and began to convert locals, but suffered for several years from isolation from Europe, given that communication on the caravan routes had been interrupted due to political turbulence. Once news of Montecorvino's successes reached Avignon, Clement V (1305–1314) appointed several friars as bishops and dispatched them to China in support of the mission, while Montecorvino was named archbishop. Strengthened by the arrival of the friars (some had died en route) the archbishopric of Khanbaliq grew in size and importance.

During Montecorvino's tenure as archbishop, another monk, Odorico da Pordenone, made the journey to China (c. 1318–1330), leaving a long report that he dictated upon his return.²⁶ Odorico's *Relatio* is a travelogue with the description of the places he visited and his own personal experiences which constitutes, with Marco Polo's *Milione*, the most important and influential work on Mongol Asia in circulation in Europe. Clement V in 1307 also commissioned another work on Mongol history, the *Fleur des histoires*, by the Armenian prince Hayton (Het'um), which had also a very large audience in a Europe wide open to knowledge from Asia.

Montecorvino died in 1328 but a new archbishop did not arrive in Khanbaliq for several years. The one who had been designated in 1333, the Franciscan friar Nicholas, traveled to Almaliq but failed to reach Khanbaliq, and we know nothing of his fate. Thereafter, the Yuan emperor Toghon Temür (r. 1333–1370), at the request of the Alans – originally Orthodox Christians from the Caucasus serving on the imperial bodyguard who had been converted to Catholicism – sent an embassy to the Pope to request that a new archbishop be appointed in Khanbaliq. Led by another Genoese, Andalò da Savignone, also known as Andrew the Frank, it reached the papal seat in Avignon in 1338, and Pope Benedict XII decided to send a mission in return headed by the Franciscan friar John of Marignolli.²⁷ Marignolli's journey to Asia lasted altogether fourteen years, with several

25 De Rachewiltz 1971, 160–73. 26 De Rachewiltz 1971, 179–86. 27 Franke 1966, 57–58.

years spent in China and in India. Marignolli's *Chronicle*, compiled upon his return, provides an illuminating eyewitness account of his long journey to the east, but received less attention than other works.

The Mongols and Europe: Material and Cultural Influence

To a European world still confined mainly to its Mediterranean shores and routes to northern capitals and fairs, the Mongol conquest opened a new vista on cultures, regions, and peoples, especially in the east. In the work of Marco Polo, as well as in books of travel and literature, Asia was no longer a place of mythology but a place of powerful rulers, large populations, and commercial opportunities. Moreover, material culture from the east penetrated European markets and new technologies were brought to the attention of Europeans. While Mongol influence was less evident in Europe than in the Middle East and the Islamic world, it was nonetheless characteristic of the openness of the empire to exchange and free circulation of people, goods, and ideas.

One of the most momentous discoveries in history, gunpowder, was undisputedly invented in China (with different recipes) and used for military purposes already in the twelfth century, but it was during the Mongol wars in the thirteenth century that gunpowder weapons were greatly improved.²⁸ The Mongols encountered gunpowder technology in their campaigns in China, and adopted it during the Yuan dynasty at the end of the thirteenth century. At the same time, the Mongols appear to be responsible for the transmission of gunpowder to the Islamic world and India.²⁹ In Europe gunpowder recipes appear in the second half of the thirteenth century already in the right proportions, and firearm technology does not appear until the early fourteenth century; that is, when Mongol–European commercial relations were flourishing. While direct and explicit evidence of the manner of transmission and route of gunpowder from Mongol-ruled Asia to Europe has not been found, it is hardly possible that an established technology, over a hundred years old, commonly used in Asia and known in Islamic regions, would be discovered independently in Europe exactly at the time of increased commercial and political contacts with Asia. Indeed, the opinion of specialist historians is that the Mongols were responsible for the transmission of gunpowder to Europe.³⁰ Surely the history of gunpowder and guns in general

28 Andrade 2016, 44–72. 29 Khan 1996. 30 Chase 2003, 58–60.

in Europe and Asia diverged, but the seed of what would be later on an essential component of the European “military revolution” was planted during the “Mongol exchange” thanks to increased trade and communication between Europe and Asia.

Another area in which European material culture was deeply influenced by “oriental” innovations and taste is the production of luxury textiles. Elaborate silken fabrics adorned with gold thread had become popular in the lands ruled by the Mongols, who employed a wide variety of artisans in workshops across their empire. The oriental imports of the Tartarian clothes (*panni tartarici* in the Italian sources) gave rise to a fashion exclusive to the aristocracy and generally limited to imported goods; however, a Venetian ordinance of 1334 that forbade the local production of *nassik* (a term adapted from the Arabic *nasij*)³¹ shows that local imitations were present and was possibly intended to suppress “fakes” that could be sold as imported goods.³² Fabrics of this type of especially elaborate and precious silk, also known as *nacchi* in Italian, entered Europe in the mid-thirteenth century, and became valuable commercial items in the later part of the century, eventually reaching the French and English courts.³³

Surely one of the most important aspects of the impact of the Mongol conquest on Europe concerns the realm of currency, and in particular the use of silver. Economic historians have noted the much greater circulation of silver due to the Mongol conquest, which, in the words of Kuroda, “heralded the emergence of a world economy.”³⁴

Partly as a response to the wider diffusion of travel literature, and to the information transmitted by merchants and missionaries, European cartography evolved, adding new regions to the classic geography of the world, or *imago mundi*. Together with textual discoveries, the information that was provided by merchants and travelers revolutionized European geographic knowledge and was the stimulus leading to the compilation of two maps of the world (*mappae mundi*). The more famous one, known as the map of Fra Mauro, originated in Venice in 1450, in the monastery of St. Michael in Murano. Written in vernacular Venetian, it was extremely detailed and included large tracts of Asia. Its value was considerable and a few years later the Portuguese court ordered a reproduction, which is now lost. The second map is anonymous, dates back to 1457, and is preserved in

31 Allsen 1997, 2–3. 32 Baldissin Molli 2011, 106. 33 Jacoby 2010, 87–89.

34 Kuroda 2009, 268.

Florence. In addition to written sources, cartographers collected oral accounts.³⁵

In art, the work of Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1282–1348) reveals sensitivities to Asian influences that connect Siena, whose entrepreneurs and bankers participated in the flourishing silk trade in Italy and across Europe, to the Mongol world.³⁶ It has been noted that some of the art of Lorenzetti reveals influences from Ilkhanid Persia.³⁷ But it is especially Lorenzetti's depiction of the *Martyrdom of the Franciscans* that brought a fresh representation of a Mongol court, with attire, bodily features, and architectural details, in front of a European audience, and in an especially prominent place, a grand fresco painted in 1343 for the chapter house of the Basilica of San Francesco in Siena, where it can be seen to this day. The implicit political and religious message of the painting has been the object of debate, as has the location of the martyrdom, which in the acute analysis of Roxann Prazniak referred to the execution of the Franciscans in Almaliq, in the Chaghadaid Khanate, in 1339. If that is the case, it would prove the rapid circulation of news from east to west and, in turn, the high level of “connectivity” along the commercial routes that joined the Mongol Empire with the Mediterranean world.³⁸

The representation of oriental goods in European art is shown also in other paintings, such as the *Annunciation* (1333) of the Sienese painter Simone Martini, who based the representation of textiles with gold and silver by copying imported Mongolian fabrics (the aforementioned *panni tartarici*).³⁹

Artistic influences from Ilkhanid Iran in the representation of Mongols and Tartars in European art attest to the openness of Europe to eastern motifs associated with an Orient that was, in the general imagination, dominated by powerful Mongol rulers and khans. A group of miniaturists working in France in the early fifteenth century shows the presence of such motifs in the European pictorial repertoire well after the end of Mongol Empire.⁴⁰ The painting of a Mongol rider by Pisanello da Verona in his fresco of the Church of St. Anastasia in Verona and a drawing of the same figure show a realistic representation that was, according to some critics, painted from life, therefore attesting to the presence of Mongol types in Renaissance Italy, wearing their costumes and serving as archers.⁴¹

35 Cattaneo 2016, 39 36 Ertl 2006, 255. 37 Prazniak 2010, 192.

38 Prazniak 2010, 201–15. 39 Hoeniger 1991, 164. 40 Kubiski 2001, *passim*.

41 Olschki 1944, 101.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we may ask what was the overall importance of Europe in relation to the Mongol Empire. Once the shock of the invasion had been overcome, relations developed on political, commercial, and religious planes. While political and diplomatic initiatives did not produce tangible results, the penetration of Asian markets by Italian maritime powers opened the continental Eurasian routes to a mutually beneficial commerce and, through the nodal points of the Black Sea colonies and eastern Mediterranean ports, connected Europe and Asia.

However, merchants and missionaries remained singularly insulated from the society in which they operated, and firmly embedded within the Mongol elite. For instance, we learn very little from the various missionaries, or from Marco Polo, about the large majority of the Chinese subjects of the Mongols, and, vice versa, their activities left few traces in the Chinese records. Europeans operating in the Mongol Empire joined the Turco-Mongol elites; learned the languages they spoke, chiefly Turkish and Persian; and served them in a variety of capacities, as advisers, commercial partners, envoys, translators, and counselors. It is therefore not surprising that, with the end of the Pax Mongolica, Europeans all but disappeared from the polities that succeeded the Mongols.⁴²

In terms of cultural exchange, the main scientific and philosophical dialogue within the Mongol Empire was between Islam and China, while Europe remained marginal to the main intellectual encounters that occurred at the Mongol courts. The Mongols may have been responsible for bringing to Europe Chinese inventions such as gunpowder, but that transmission remains questionable.⁴³ Once Mongol rule was gone, Europeans soon disappeared from the caravan routes of Inner Asia. The Europeans' total dependency on Mongol protection and failure to connect with the local societies was probably responsible for this outcome.

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42 Petech 1962, 549–74. 43 Haw 2013, 441–69.

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The Mongols and the Arab Middle East

REUVEN AMITAI

Introduction

News of the first Mongol invasion of the Khwārazm-Shāh's kingdom in 1219 soon reached territories now considered part of the Arab world.¹ Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233), writing in Mosul, gave eloquent expression to how this eruption was perceived:

For several years I continued to avoid mention of this disaster as it horrified me and I was unwilling to recount it . . . One of the greatest disasters [the history books] mention is what Nebuchadnezzar did to the Israelites, slaughtering them and destroying Jerusalem. What is Jerusalem in relation to the lands that these cursed ones [the Mongols] destroyed, where each city is many times larger than Jerusalem? . . . Perhaps humanity will not see such a calamity, apart from Gog and Magog, until the world comes to an end and this life ceases to be.²

Mosul was part of the Jazīra,³ a region that, together with Iraq (al-'Irāq),⁴ came under Mongol rule almost forty years later. Another large and important area, al-Shām (historical Syria), was twice briefly conquered by the Mongols, in 1260 and 1300, and clearly was affected by them, not just because of these short occupations. The history of Egypt and Arabia (including Yemen) was also certainly influenced by the nearby presence of the Mongols. This chapter will thus focus on the interaction of the Mongols with Syria, Egypt, and Arabia, and less so with the Jazīra and Iraq, which were integrated into the Mongol Empire after their conquest in 1258–1259.

1 The use of "the Arab Middle East" and "Arab world" for this time is clearly anachronistic, but the meaning is clear and saves a further discussion on geographical terms.

2 Ibn al-Athīr 1965–1967, 12: 358–59; translation from Ibn al-Athīr 2005–2008, 3: 202.

3 Derived from the Arabic word for "island," referring to upper Mesopotamia, including territories now in modern-day Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.

4 Representing the southern part of modern-day Iraq.

First Encounters

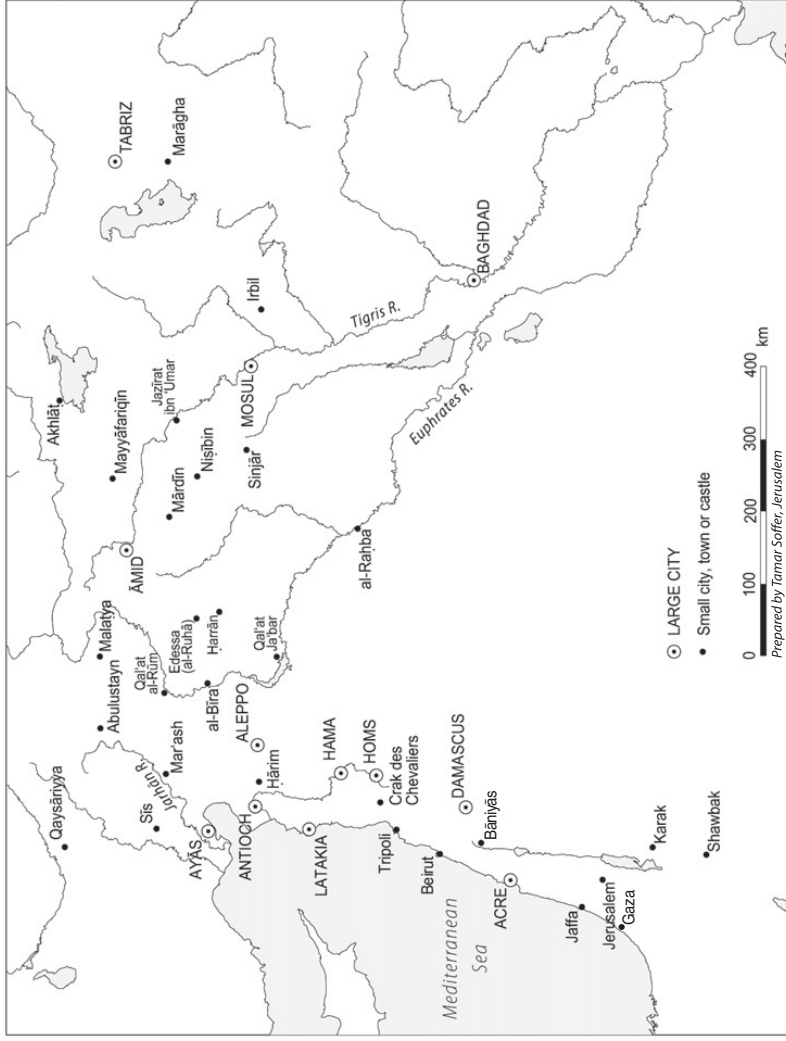
Mongol forces pursuing the Khwārazm-Shāh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad had first approached the Jazīra early in 1221, but turned north to the Caucasus before entering the region. For the time being, there was no direct contact between the Mongols and the Fertile Crescent, although news of them continued to reach the area and beyond. By the early 1230s, the Mongols were back in the region, taking advantage of the pasturelands of nearby Azerbaijan, and pursuing ‘Alā’ al-Dīn’s son, Jalāl al-Dīn, defeating him near Āmid in 1231 (see Map 21.1). Even after this last Khwārazm-Shāh’s death later that year, Mongol forces remained nearby; Azerbaijan soon became their forward headquarters. During the 1230s the Mongols raided frequently in the Jazīra, and in 1243 they gained control over Seljuq Anatolia in the aftermath of the victory of Köse Dagħ, giving them a wider front with the Jazīra and Syria; the following year they raided near Aleppo and also attacked Mayyāfāriqīn, Āmid, Edessa (Ruhā), and Ḥarrān; the last two mentioned were raided again in 1252.⁵ The environs of Baghdad were also the focus of a small Mongol campaign around 1245.⁶

These small-scale operations were enough to propel some local rulers to find diplomatic accommodations with the Mongols. As early as 1244, the Ayyūbid rulers of Aleppo (al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, grandson of Saladin) and Damascus (al-Ṣāliḥ Ismā‘īl, his nephew) sent envoys to Arghun Aqa, the senior Mongol official in the Middle East, then in Tabriz; a year later, the former was paying tribute to Baiju, the Mongol commander in the region. In 1246, al-Nāṣir dispatched to the Great Khan’s court in Qaraqorum a relative who returned with *yarliḡs* (royal orders). In 1250, yet another mission was sent to the Mongol capital, returning a year later with confirmation of the vassalage of al-Nāṣir (now ruler of Aleppo and Damascus) to the new Great Khan, Möngke; around this time, more tribute was sent to Baiju. Additional Ayyūbids (and other local rulers) also submitted in the 1250s: al-Kāmil Muḥammad of Mayyāfāriqīn paid a visit to Qaraqorum in 1253; when he arrived, he found the heirs apparent of Mosul and Mārdīn, as well as a prince of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia. William of Rubruck, arriving at the end of this year, encountered someone who claimed to be an envoy of the Ayyūbid ruler of Karak in Transjordan, al-Mughīth ‘Umar.⁷

5 Humphreys 1977, 220, 227, 234; Krawulsky 1978, 439, 441, 452; Jackson 1978, 218–19; Ibn Shaddād 1978, 472–73.

6 Bar Hebraeus 1932, 1: 410 and others, cited in William of Rubruck 1990, 246 n. 4.

7 Amitai-Preiss 1995, 20–21; Humphreys 1977, 335, 466 n. 42; *TJG*, 2: 224; *HWC*, 2: 508; Ibn Shaddād 1978, 237–42, 472–73, 485; William of Rubruck 1990, 184.



Map 21.1 The central Middle East, mid-thirteenth century (without political borders)

The Caliph al-Mustaʿīm also appears to have also tendered some type of submission to the Mongols early on. Already in 1246 envoys from him had arrived before Güyük making an expression of obedience.⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn writes that Hülegü was directed later by the Great Khan Möngke to secure this submission; this explains why Hülegü, who entered the Middle East in 1256, had ordered the caliph to join him in the campaign to conquer the Ismāʿīlī castles. Al-Mustaʿīm, however, ignored this call, angering the khan.⁹ The caliph's pretensions – albeit vestigial – of universal rule also surely grated on the Mongols. Ineffectual negotiations did not improve matters, and the confused and fractured situation at the caliphal court (including the vizier, Ibn al-ʿAlqamī, most likely in secret communications with Hülegü) made it impossible to adopt an effective policy regarding the Mongols. At the very beginning of 1258 Hülegü and his armies converged on Baghdad from all sides. Fighting began in earnest in mid-January; the city was taken on February 10 when the caliph left his palace and surrendered to Hülegü. Looting and killing then commenced in the city; the caliph and most of his family were executed soon after.¹⁰

In the aftermath of the conquest of Baghdad, Hülegü and most of his army returned to the pastures of Azerbaijan. Soon there was to be a flurry of diplomatic activity vis-à-vis al-Nāṣir Yūsuf in Damascus: the ilkhan – as we might now call him¹¹ – called on the sultan to confirm his previous submission. In his responses, al-Nāṣir vacillated between accepting Mongol hegemony, and expressions of resistance and even truculence. The result of such indecision, partially due to disagreements among his advisers on the policy to be adopted toward the Mongols, meant both the impossibility of any credible military option for al-Nāṣir Yūsuf and the bringing of Hülegü's anger upon him.¹²

Syria, and even beyond, had long been in the sights of the Mongols. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Möngke early in his reign had commissioned Hülegü to “observe Chinggis Khan's *rusūm* [rules], *yosun* [custom] and *yasa* [law] in all matters large and small. From the river Oxus up to the further

8 Bar Hebraeus 1932, 1: 411; Ibn al-ʿIbrī 1992, 256. Also John of Plano Carpini 1995, 118 (Latin text); 217 (translation); Dawson 1955, 62. A decade later, William of Rubruck (1990, 246–47), meeting an ambassador of the caliph in Qaraqorum, heard reports of the submission to the Mongols by the caliph, who was called to destroy his fortifications.

9 Boyle 1961, 151–52.

10 Boyle 1961; Boyle 1968, 345–50; Spuler 1985, 46–48; on some mitigating factors to the overall violence in 1258: Biran 2016.

11 For the early use and meaning of this title: Amitai-Preiss 1991; Erdal 1993; Krawulsky 2011, 53–62.

12 Humphreys 1977, 337–44; Amitai-Preiss 1995, 21–24.

edge of Egypt, treat kindly and affectionately and reward sufficiently whoever obeys and submits to your orders.”¹³

This same author later states that after the conquest of Baghdad, Hülegü sent booty to the Great Khan, with a message that he intended to ride on to Egypt and Syria.¹⁴ The ilkhan, however, was in no rush. First, the cities of the Jazīra needed to be pacified: Mosul, long ruled by the wily old Badr al-Dīn Lu’lu’, had submitted even before the taking of Baghdad, his sons and troops participating in that siege, and he facilitated the taking of Irbil. Other cities were not so co-operative. Mayyāfāriqīn, whose ruler al-Kāmil had ostensibly yielded to the Mongols, now resisted. A siege under the command of Yoshmut, Hülegü’s son, began at the end of 1258, but the city was only taken in spring 1260. Āmid to the north fell in 1259, again through the efforts of one of Lu’lu’’s sons.

Hülegü, with the main army, left his *ordu* for Syria in September 1259, sending ahead his general Kitbuqa with the advance force. Jazīrat Ibn ‘Umar submitted, but other cities and castles on the eastern bank of the Euphrates and further inland – Edessa, Ḥarrān, etc. – were less co-operative, and were subject to conquest by force and subsequent destruction and killing. The strong fortress of al-Bira, also on the eastern bank and guarding an important ford, surrendered after some opposition. The roads to Aleppo were now open.¹⁵

The Mongols took Aleppo after a week’s fighting, and its citadel after a month. While there had been much looting and killing in the city, the citadel’s defenders were uncharacteristically pardoned in recognition of their bravery. Meanwhile, Mongol forces spread out through the north of Syria, taking various cities and castles; some – such as Homs – surrendered and were spared; others, Ḥārim for one, resisted and suffered accordingly. Hülegü himself remained up north, while Kitbuqa was sent south with a *tümen* (a division theoretically of 10,000). Damascus submitted, but its citadel resisted, as did that of Baalbek; these foci of opposition, however, were soon eliminated. Mongol raiders rode through Transjordan and Palestine, returning with much booty. In the former they reached the country north of Karak, while in the latter they got as far as Gaza and Hebron, stopping at Jerusalem in the process. Pro-Mongol Ayyūbid princes were installed in Homs and the Baniyās in the Golan, while their cousin

13 *JT*/‘Alizādah, 3: 23; translation based on *JT*/Thackston, 2: 479.

14 *JT*/‘Alizādah, 3: 65; translation in *JT*/Thackston, 2: 501. For more references: Amitai-Preiss 1995, 16–17.

15 Humphreys 1977, 344–45; Boyle 1968, 349–50; Spuler 1985, 50–51.

ruling in Karak submitted. Throughout most of occupied Syria, Mongol administration was established. A *modus vivendi* was worked out with at least some of the local Franks, although there were also cases of small-scale fighting with them. While most of the Franks on the coast had reservations about Mongol rule, Prince Bohemond VI of Antioch embraced it enthusiastically, along with his father-in-law, King Het'um of Cilician Armenia. Whether these two actually made it to Damascus – as suggested in one Frankish source – is highly doubtful.¹⁶

Hülegü's goal was probably to advance on to the rich country of Egypt, using Syria – now integrated into the Mongol Empire – as a base. We have seen that Egypt was most probably already in the ilkhan's sights, and this is confirmed by his very belligerent message, likely from the late spring of 1260, to its ruler calling for unconditional surrender. These plans, however, were never realized. In the late winter Hülegü and most of his army withdrew from Syria to Azerbaijan, leaving just Kitbuqa near Damascus with a division and assorted other troops, including some Armenians and local Syrian soldiers pressed into Mongol service. Perhaps this withdrawal was due to news of the death of Möngke (September 1259) reaching Hülegü; some writers – Mamluk and modern – have suggested that he was heading back to Mongolia to take part in the elections of the new Great Khan.¹⁷ As Hülegü got no further east than Azerbaijan, it is unlikely that this was his real aim. Tensions with the Mongols of the Jochid Ulus in the trans-Caucasian steppes had been mounting, and possibly Hülegü foresaw an outbreak of fighting; indeed, this is exactly what happened in the winter of 1261–1262.¹⁸ Some scholars have suggested that Hülegü's withdrawal was based on logistics: there was not enough pasturage and water during the summer in Syria to maintain a large army based on cavalry; Hülegü thus pre-empted this problem by moving most of his forces back to Azerbaijan.¹⁹ While logistics were certainly taken into consideration by the Mongol leadership, it remains an open question whether it was the primary reason for this withdrawal; in any case Syria could have supported in the long term a force larger than that left with Kitbuqa.²⁰ Perhaps there was an "intelligence failure": Hülegü and his

16 Humphreys 1977, 348–58; Jackson 1980, 490–500; Amitai 1987; Amitai-Preiss 1995, 24–35; Amitai-Preiss, 1995–1997; Amitai 2007b; Amitai 2011a, 91–94. For the Frankish source: Gestes des Chiprois 1906, 751; translation in Gestes des Chiprois 2003, 34.

17 Nuwayrī 1984, 390; Boyle 1968, 351; Weiers 1986, 303.

18 Boyle 1968, 351; Amitai-Preiss 1995, 29.

19 Smith 1984, 1998; Morgan 1985; Jackson 2005, 178–79.

20 This matter of logistics will be discussed below.

advisers did not conceive that there was any force in the region that could seriously challenge Kitbuqa.

Since 1250, Egypt had been run by officers from among the mostly Turkish corps of Mamluks, soldiers who had started off as slaves, and were manumitted when they completed their training. This had been a decade of significant internal political turmoil, as well as conflicts with the Ayyūbids of Syria.²¹ In the letter from Hülegü to Sultan Quṭuz (r. 1259–1260) in the late spring or early summer of 1260, we see that the Mongol leadership had some knowledge of the regime in Egypt:

Let al-Malik al-Muzaffar Quṭuz, who is of the race of the Mamluks who fled before our swords to this region, enjoyed it comforts and then killed its rulers, know . . . that we are the army of God on this earth.²²

The Mongols, however, had not counted on this ruler rejecting the demand for surrender, killing their envoys, and then rallying the Mamluk leadership and troops to set out on a campaign to Syria. In this, Quṭuz was supported by an old enemy, Baybars al-Bunduqḍārī – now back in Egypt with a group of supporters after years of exile in Syria. In mid-July, the Mamluk army set out from Cairo. At Gaza, the advanced guard commanded by Baybars ran into a small Mongol force under Baydar, and drove it back. The entire Mamluk army moved up along the coast. At Acre (‘Akkā), the Mamluks received some provisions, but overall the Franks there adopted a neutral stance.²³

The Mongols in Syria had not been idle. When news of the Mamluks’ arrival in Syria reached Kitbuqa, he gathered his army and moved south. The Mongols took up position in the north of Palestine, in the Jezreel valley, near ‘Ayn Jālūt (Arabic: “the spring of Goliath”), about ten kilometers northwest of Beth Shean. The Mamluks arrived from the further northwest, and the two armies met early on the morning of September 3, 1260. After long and hard fighting, the Mamluks emerged the undisputed victors. The death of Kitbuqa in the fighting, the presence of mind and heroism of Quṭuz, his army’s small numerical advantage, and the fleeing of impressed Syrian soldiers from the

21 For the establishment of the Mamluk Sultanate and its first decade of rule: Irwin 1986, 1–36; Thorau 1992, 1–58; Levanoni 1990; Loiseau 2014, 112–16.

22 Maqrīzī 1934–1973, 1: 427; translation in Lewis 1974, 1: 84. The sentence refers to the importing of Mamluks from the steppe region north of the Black Sea in the aftermath of the Mongol conquests of that area, and that in 1250 they murdered the new Ayyūbid ruler of Egypt, Tūrānshāh.

23 For Frankish attitudes in Acre: Jackson 1980, 503–7; Irwin 1986, 32–34; Thorau 1992, 75–76.

Mongol side all played their part in the latter's defeat. Probably more important was the ability of the Mamluks to deal with the Mongols on their own tactical ground: masses of disciplined mounted archers launching wave after wave of attacks in which considerable salvos of arrows played a major role.²⁴ Contemporary and later Mamluk writers seem to refer to this when noting the similarity of Mongols and Mamluks – due to their common steppe origin: not only were the Mamluks victorious at 'Ayn Jālūt, but also they thus generally maintained the upper hand over the following decades.²⁵

The Ongoing War with the Mamluks

The victory at 'Ayn Jālūt had important consequences for the Mamluks: control over all of Syria up to the Euphrates (with the exception, meanwhile, of the Frankish territory along the coast), prestige and legitimacy, and dismantling the myth of the invincible Mongols. For the Mongols this was surely a surprising and embarrassing setback. Hülegü's first response was to send off a small force, which was also defeated decisively in December 1260, near Homs in central Syria, by a smaller Syrian army.²⁶

The two clashes of 1260 were the first round of a conflict between the ilkhans and the Mamluk sultans that was to last some sixty years before its resolution. Between major field battles every twenty years or so, there was much raiding and skirmishing along the frontier and beyond; espionage and subterfuge were employed by both sides, as well as plenty of diplomatic sparring and psychological warfare; each side used ideology both for internal consumption and against the enemy. Finally, both the Ilkhanid Mongols and the Mamluks made concerted attempts to find allies among foreign powers, whether to open a second front or to obtain other assistance. For all their efforts, the ilkhans were unsuccessful in reoccupying Syria, let alone continuing on to Egypt and destroying the Mamluk Sultanate.²⁷

Raids along the frontier and into Syria were an important part of Mongol strategy vis-à-vis the Mamluks. These incursions and probes were most intensive up to the second battle of Homs in 1281, becoming more intermittent in the following decades. At first, the Mongols were content to have the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, a staunch Ilkhanid vassal, take the initiative, by

24 Amitai-Preiss 1992a; Amitai 2007a; cf. Thorau 1986; Prawer 1970, 2: 421–36; Herde 2002.

25 Abū Shāma 1947, 208; Ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umarī 1968, 70–71 (text), 139–40 (translation); Ayalon 1971–1973, part C1, 117–24.

26 Amitai-Preiss 1995, 49–52; Boyle 1968, 352.

27 Morgan 1989; May 2003; Amitai-Preiss 1995; Amitai 2007c; Amitai 2013.

launching a series of raids into north Syria in the early 1260s. These forays were repulsed by local Mamluk forces, and led to destructive Mamluk attacks into Cilicia. Armenian forces would participate in the later large Mongol campaigns into Syria, but henceforth did not engage in attacks on their own.²⁸

In 1264, 1272, and 1275, Hülegü and then Abaqa (r. 1265–1282), launched attacks on the fortress of al-Bīra, in a small enclave of Mamluk-controlled territory to the east of the Euphrates (today in southeast Turkey), which, along with al-Raḥba to the south, bore the brunt of many Mongol raids and sieges. These campaigns invariably involved a Mongol force of some 10,000 men equipped with siege machines (*manjānīq*) led by the commander from the Jazīra or Anatolia, at times reinforced with troops from the Seljuq vassal state in Rūm (Anatolia). Each time, the defenders (both the garrison and civilians) put up a resolute fight, and always a large relief force – in 1272 and 1275 under the direct command of the sultan – was soon on its way. Twice the news of the approaching Mamluk column was enough to convince the Mongols to give up their siege (although logistical difficulties may have played a role in 1275), while in 1272 there was fierce fighting at the river near the fort. Overall, the Mamluks enjoyed the advantage on the frontier between Syria and the Jazīra (see Map 21.2).²⁹

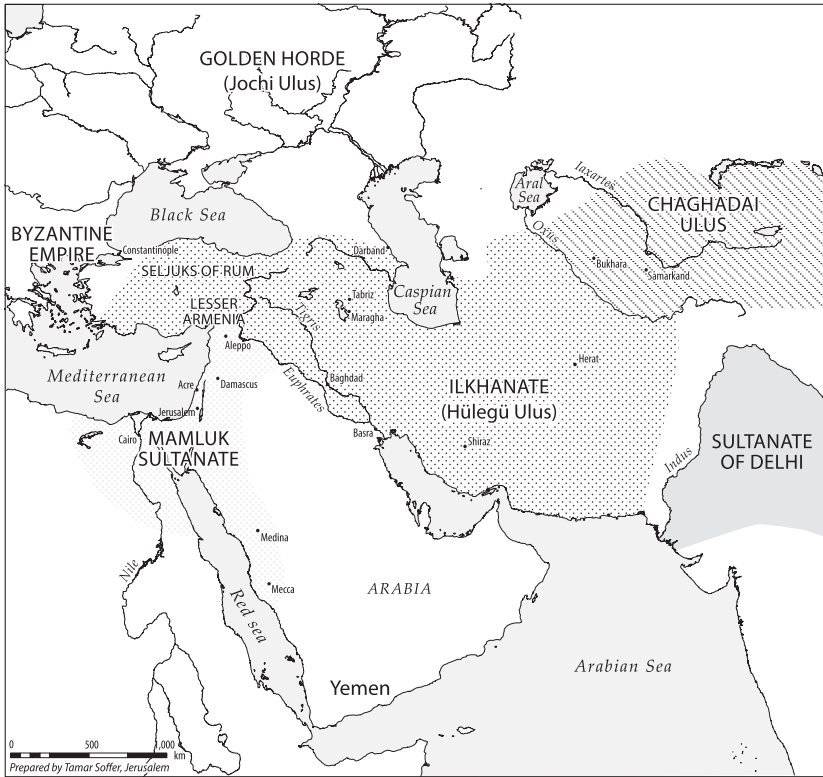
The ilkhan also occasionally sent forces deep into Syria, starting first in 1269 when the Mongols raided in strength, reaching as far as the environs of Aleppo. In 1271, about 10,000 Mongol and subject Seljuq troops approached Syria. The main force remained near the northern frontier, but an advance guard of some 1,500 horsemen penetrated as far as the region of Antioch. This particular operation was launched in expectation of co-ordination with Prince Edward of England (see below); nothing came of these hopes, and the Mongols withdrew with the approach of a large Mamluk force under the sultan. In the summer of 1280, relatively large Mongol forces converged on Syria from different directions, but withdrew when expected support from dissident Mamluk commanders and Bedouin leaders did not materialize.³⁰

The ilkhans also committed large forces several times in hope of a decisive win against their Mamluk enemies, leading to the final conquest of Syria and perhaps beyond. Yet, even when victorious, the Mongols were unable to

28 Dashdondog 2011, esp. 143–57; Stewart 2001, esp. 43–61; Stewart 2014; Amitai-Preiss 1995, 54, 106–7; Amitai 2014.

29 Amitai-Preiss 1995, 111–14, 129–31; 136–37; for the role of the Rumi contingent: Cahen 1968, 285–86. For details of the campaign of 1264: Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir 1976, 221–27. For 1272: Baybars al-Manṣūrī 1998, 137–38, who fought there as a young Mamluk; cf. a pro-Mongol account: Waṣṣāf 1959–1960, 87–88.

30 Amitai-Preiss 1995, 183–85.



Map 21.2 The Mamluk Sultanate and the Mongol uluses, c. 1300

occupy Syria in the long run. The first of these large confrontations was in the plains north of Homs in 1281. The larger Mongol army was commanded by Abaqa's brother Mengü Temür, and the Mamluks were under Sultan Qalāwūn (r. 1279–1290); a tough battle was fought over a wide front that ended in a Mamluk victory. Plans for another Mongol invasion were canceled with the death of Abaqa the following year.³¹

Ghazan (r. 1295–1304) not only renewed the Mongol war efforts, but was the most serious opponent ever faced by the Mamluks. He had converted to Islam not long before taking the throne, yet this did not interfere with the traditional Ilkhanid enmity toward the Mamluks. Ghazan was the self-styled *Pādshāh-i Islām* ("emperor of Islam") and fought the Mamluks as both a Chinggisid and the rightful Muslim ruler. Spurred on by a Mamluk

31 Boyle 1968, 363–64; Amitai-Preiss 1995, 185–201.

incursion into the Jazīra and their interference in affairs in Mongol-controlled Anatolia, and encouraged by some senior Mamluk officers who had recently deserted, the ilkhan launched an invasion of Syria in the late fall of 1299. On December 22, the two armies met in the plain north of Homs, in a battle known as both Wādī al-Khaznadār (“the treasurer’s valley”) and Majma‘ al-Murūj (“the assembly of the plains”). The Mongols were under the direct command of the ilkhan, while the Mamluks were led by a consortium of officers – the sultan, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, being a teenage puppet ruler. The Mamluks had an initial advantage, finding the Mongols spread out to forage for their many horses. However, under Ghazan’s energetic command, they rallied and drove the Mamluks from the battlefield; the latter fled in complete disorder back to Egypt, abandoning all of Syria to the Mongols. Ghazan and his army advanced to Damascus, which, now bereft of defenders, opened its gates. The citadel, however, remained in the hands of Mamluk troopers, who managed to hold out throughout the three months of Mongol occupation. A modicum of Mongol administration was established in the country, while raiders reached as far as Gaza and Jerusalem. Evidently allied Armenians also made it to Jerusalem, wreaking havoc there and in the northern Damascus suburb of Ṣālihiyya. Perhaps for logistical reasons or maybe due to pressing matters back home (including an incursion from the Chaghadaid Mongols), Ghazan withdrew with most of his army in early February. Within two months the remainder of the Mongol army had left the country. The Mamluks, having regrouped in Egypt, soon regained possession of the city and country.³²

Ghazan, however, was not finished with the Mamluks. Already later the same year, he launched another campaign, but due to particularly harsh winter rains, his army got bogged down in northern Syria; in the aftermath of dying horses, other logistical problems, and perhaps disintegrating composite bows, the Mongol army was forced to turn around. The Mamluks coming from Egypt encountered the very same weather; unable to make headway in Syria, they returned to Cairo.³³

This was not the end of it: late in 1302, Ghazan organized yet another army to invade Syria. This time, the ilkhan did not command the main invasion force, but remained near the frontier fortress of al-Raḥba, receiving its formal submission. The main Mongol army under the general Qutluḡ Shāh advanced deep into the country, passing Damascus. Syrian forces from the

32 Melville 1990; Boyle 1968, 387–89; Smith 1984, 324–25, esp. n. 53, 329–30; Amitai 2002, 2004, 2006.

33 Boyle 1968, 389; Irwin 1986, 101; Bowlus 1996.

various cities – including from Damascus – withdrew southwards, joining the larger Egyptian army. The enemies met at Marj al-Şuffar to the southwest of the Syrian capital in April 1303. This too was a hard-fought battle, but now the Mamluks came out on top, with the Mongols fleeing the field, leaving many dead and prisoners behind them.³⁴ The ilkhan was obviously disturbed by this news, but undeterred, planned a fourth campaign to Syria; his unexpected death the following year put an end to these preparations.

Öljeitü (r. 1304–1316) launched the last major Ilkhanid campaign against the Mamluks in 1312. Encouraged by Mamluk deserters led by Qarasunqur, erstwhile governor of Aleppo, the ilkhan brought a large army to the frontier and crossed the Euphrates. This entire force took up position around the border fortress of al-Raḥba on December 23. More than a month later, with supplies running low and disease spreading among horses and men, the Mongol army withdrew. According to pro-Mongol sources, the ilkhan received the symbolic surrender of the fort before crossing the river back to his kingdom. This is confirmed by the Mamluk historians, but this submission is noted as completely meaningless: the Mongols left no governor and had no subsequent control over the fort and its environs.³⁵ The lackluster performance at al-Raḥba in 1312 might be taken to be a sign of Ilkhanid decline, but perhaps it is more a reflection of Öljeitü's own weak leadership and lack of decisiveness, along with poor planning. Ilkhanid armies would prove their mettle on other fronts in the next two decades.

The struggle against the Mamluks was accompanied by ongoing diplomatic efforts vis-à-vis Latin Europe, aiming to initiate a joint campaign against their common enemy. Hülegü had commenced this effort in 1262, and it was continued with enthusiasm by Abaqa, who dispatched at least five delegations, the high point being that sent to the church council at Lyon in 1274; other missions to the west were in 1266–1267, 1268, 1276–1277, and 1281. Tegüder Aḥmad (r. 1282–1284) did not send any emissaries, not surprising given his diplomatic *démarches* toward the Mamluks. Arghun (r. 1284–1291), however, returned to this policy of trying to organize a co-ordinated campaign, sending out four delegations (1285, 1287, 1289–1290, and 1290). The most noteworthy of these was led by Rabban Sauma in 1287, which made it to Rome, and continued on to the courts of France and England. Ghazan (1295–1304) renewed these efforts after his Syrian campaign in 1299–1300, and his brother and successor Öljeitü sent three missions from 1305 to 1313. This last

34 Boyle 1968, 392–95; Irwin 1986, 101; Smith 1984, 330, 340–44.

35 Boyle 1968, 403; Amitai-Preiss 1996, 29–31.

mentioned was apparently the final missive dispatched westward by an ilkhan.³⁶

Little of substance was accompanied by these diplomatic efforts, although we know of three instances of western attempts to organize a common campaign with the Mongols, two of them during Abaqa's reign. In 1269, James of Aragon sent an expeditionary force with a flotilla, but most of this was dispersed and sunk by a storm soon after leaving Barcelona. Two years later, Edward, prince of England (the future king Edward I), arrived in Acre in the aftermath of the failed crusade to Tunis led by Louis IX of France. No effective co-ordination was made with Abaqa (who, as noted above, sent some troops into Syria), and Edward wasted his forces on pointless raids in Palestine.³⁷ In the early 1290s, several hundred Genoese sailors arrived in Iraq, and built two ships to head down the Tigris to reach the Indian Ocean and then prey on shipping heading for Egypt; nothing came, however, of this interesting idea.³⁸

The ilkhans also maintained diplomatic contact with the Mamluk sultans, sending letters in Arabic that usually called for the submission of the latter. Beyond his letter to Qutuz in 1260 noted above, Hülegü sent no envoys. Abaqa twice had a lively exchange with Baybars, first in 1269 and then again in 1272. In 1269, it appears that the ilkhan thought that the Mamluks were ready to submit:

You have presented and petitioned: "We will submit [*našīru il*] and give [over power]." We are pleased by [this expression] of yours. For from the rising of the sun to its setting, in the entire world, there are those who come forth, become loyal and enter into servitude [to the Mongols].

Baybars rejected this out of hand in disparaging tones, including a reference to 'Ayn Jālūt: "As for what [Abaqa] mentioned: From the rising of the sun to its setting, [all] have become loyal. What happened to Kitbuqa Noyan, and how was he annihilated?"³⁹

The Muslim Tegüder Aḥmad renewed this correspondence, sending off a missive to Sultan Qalāwūn soon after his accession that called for the establishment of peace between the two rulers. In spite of the Islamic language in which this letter was couched and its apparently irenic tone, it remains

36 Sinor 1972; Sinor 1975; Boyle 1976; Schein 1979; Meyvaert 1980; Rossabi 1992; Jackson 2005, 165–95; Aigle 2014a.

37 Röhrich 1890, 373–78; Amitai-Preiss 1995, 93, 97–98; Amitai 2001b.

38 Sinor 1975, 542; Jackson 2005, 169–70.

39 Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir 1976, 340–41. See also Amitai-Preiss 1994; Amitai-Preiss 1995, 118–29.

a demand for surrender – albeit more subtle than any of its predecessors. The Mamluk leadership understood the implicit truculent message, and returned an answer that was polite but rejected these overtures. Tegüder tried again, with another letter of a more conciliatory nature. Yet by the time it arrived at the Mamluk court, this ilkhan was dead and had been replaced by his nephew, Arghun. During the latter's reign there is no evidence of Mamluk–Ilkhanid diplomacy.⁴⁰ Only at the time of Geikhatu does this reawaken: the ilkhan sent a letter with envoys that he intended to return to Aleppo, which had been conquered by his ancestor Hülegü; if his demand was refused he would take all of Syria. The Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl (r. 1290–1293) – fresh from his conquests of Frankish Acre in 1291 and of Armenian Qal'at al-Rūm in 1292 – responded belligerently, threatening the invasion of Iraq and the retaking of Baghdad, and goading on the ilkhan: who would be first to gain his goal? There is no record of a Mongol response to this message.⁴¹

The diplomatic arena reawoke after Ghazan's first successful campaign in Syria: in the summer of 1301, the ilkhan addressed a letter to the titular sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. This letter is an interesting combination of newly adopted Islamic rhetoric and older Mongol motifs. The Mamluks are censured for their turpitude and lack of religiosity, while Ghazan is presented as the rightful Muslim ruler. At the same time, traditional Mongol claims to sovereignty and absolute surrender are not forgotten. The Mamluk response soon arrived, dismissing Ghazan's claims, casting aspersions on his conversion and rejecting his assertion to rule over the Muslims; the misdeeds of the Mongols (and those under their aegis, particularly the Armenians) during their brief occupation of Syria were duly noted. Another Mongol embassy arrived in Cairo in the summer of 1302, again carrying a letter calling for the sultan's submission. A Mamluk mission was sent in response, again with a message of complete refusal of the Mongol demands and with some of their own.⁴² Nothing was to come of this exchange of letters, and the matter was left to the battlefield. The encounter, and Mamluk victory, at Marj al-Ṣuffar was the result.

The last round of Ilkhanid–Mamluk diplomacy during this time of war was initiated by Öljeitü soon after his accession to the throne. His message was an apparently conciliatory one, but from the larger context we see that the new

40 Holt 1986; Allouche 1990; Amitai 2001a, 30–34; Broadbridge 2008, 38–44; Pfeiffer 2006.

41 Broadbridge 2008, 44–49; Maqrīzī 1934–1973, I: 786; translation in Quatremère 1837–1847, 2.1: 150.

42 Broadbridge 2008, 73–90 (also a good discussion of Ghazan's proclamations upon conquering Syria). For the wider picture: Aigle 2014b; Aigle 2014d; Amitai 2013, 71–80, 109–15.

ilkhan was biding his time, working both to mend his fences with other Mongol rulers and to reach an agreement with western rulers. The attack on al-Rahba in 1312 revealed Öljeitü's true colors, as did Mongol thrusts at the Hijaz (see below).⁴³

Overall, the Ilkhanid Mongols were not successful in this decades-long struggle with their Mamluk adversaries. True, under Ghazan they defeated the Mamluks in late 1299 at Wādī al-Khaznadār, but the subsequent occupation of Damascus lasted barely three months. In 1260 (twice), 1281, and 1303 the Mongols were bested in open battle in Syria, and they had little success in frontier warfare. A comprehensive explanation of this tactical and strategic failure was offered by the late John M. Smith Jr., who suggested two interrelated reasons. First, there was the relative superiority of the Mamluk troops, with better training and equipment, and larger horses. The Mongols, on the other hand, were an army of the people: average men, with mainly homemade equipment and on smaller – if hardy – horses. These shortcomings could be made up for by extremely large numbers, as the Mongols were wont to bring on campaigns. Second, the Mongols, however, were stymied by logistical difficulties: Syria was limited in the number of nomadic troops it could “host,” even when these brought with them only their horses, and not their families and herds. The two constraints were pasture and water, and this became particularly critical as summer approached, as invariably in Syria this season is without rain, and both grasslands and riverbeds dried up. Thus large numbers of Mongols could be brought in to fight the Mamluks – and even defeat them – but the majority of the army had to withdraw in a timely way, before the dry season commenced. This is what happened in 1260 and again in 1300. The Mongols, then, were condemned by mediocre troops, by climate, and by geography.⁴⁴

This logistical approach, combined with a comparison of the two armies and the individual troopers, may at first glance make much sense, but it presents only part of the problem, and reduces much of the matter to geography, without giving due attention to human agency. The Mamluks, in any case, did not see themselves as inherently superior, and this explains the frenetic and serious effort that Baybars and his successors made to prepare their army to deal with the Mongols.⁴⁵ As for the logistical

43 Boyle 1968, 399; Broadbridge 2008, 94–98.

44 Smith 1984; Smith 1998. Also: Morgan 1985; Jackson 2005, 178–79.

45 On the comparison of the Mamluks to the Mongols: Amitai-Preiss 1995, 214–25. For Baybars's appreciation of the high quality of the Mongol soldiers: Ibn al-Mughayzil 2004, 84–85.

challenges, one might wonder whether they were as severe as is suggested. If they were, why did the Mongols keep coming back: it was surely with the hope of besting the Mamluks and establishing their control over the country. Logistical considerations may explain why Hülegü did not leave his entire army in Syria in the spring of 1260, but not why he left only 10,000 troops. Other concerns, including faulty intelligence regarding the Egyptian army – i.e., its quality, size, and resolve – surely contributed to that decision. Another matter to consider is the logistical problems of the Mamluks: most of their army was normally concentrated in Cairo, and every campaign to meet the Mongols meant challenges similar in many ways to those faced by their Mongol adversaries. Water in large quantities was a problem for both sides.⁴⁶

One explanation of the long-term results of this war might be how the Mongol leadership in Iran and the surrounding countries viewed it: the Mamluks were one important concern, annoying and embarrassing at times, but they often had their hands full with various matters, including dealing with other Mongol entities. At the top of this list would be the Jochids, but this also included the Chaghadaids (supported at times by Qaidu) and the Negüderis in the eastern borderlands.⁴⁷ Hülegü and Abaqa's preoccupation with the Golden Horde until 1267 prevented an early serious response to the defeats of 1260, at a time when Baybars's regime was still in the early stage of crystallization.⁴⁸ These external distractions were a frequent feature of Ilkhanid political and military life, and often kept the ilkhans from devoting themselves to the struggle with the Mamluks, as did fighting among the Mongols of the Ilkhanate themselves (such as the 1290s until Ghazan's accession).⁴⁹ Yet there is no doubting the strategic goal of the ilkhans to take Syria and then bring the Mamluk Sultanate to heel, which is certainly clear from the pugnacious rhetoric of the letters sent by the Mongol rulers to the sultans. Also telling are the fourteen delegations sent to popes and selected rulers in the west, calling for a co-operative effort to attack the Mamluks. Can there be any other explanation for this effort but a true desire to compel the Mamluks to submit?

Probably no less important in determining the lack of Mongol success in this conflict was the resolve that the Mamluk leadership devoted to the war, from Qutuz to the early years of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's third reign (1310–1340). From

46 Amitai-Preiss 1995, 225–29; Amitai 2006; Amitai 2013, 29–35.

47 Boyle 1968, 356–60; Spuler 1985, 61–64; Biran 2002.

48 Boyle 1968, 352–54, 356; Spuler 1985, 55–57, 60–61. For the date of the outbreak of hostilities: Jackson 1978, 233–35, and *passim* for this conflict's background.

49 Boyle 1968, 370.

the Mamluk point of view, this was a struggle of existential proportion, in which the fate of the sultanate and of Islam (and their status as a military–political elite) hung in the balance. Under the energetic leadership of Sultan Baybars (1260–1277), the groundwork for an effective anti-Ilkhanid policy was laid: expanding and improving the large standing army based mainly on mounted archers; the strengthening and manning of select fortresses along the border and inside the country; improving internal communications and routes; the creation of an effective foreign-intelligence service and the judicious use of subterfuge in enemy territory; the integration of the Syrian Bedouin into the Mamluk political and military system; and cultivating a powerful anti-Mongol ideological message, including by resurrecting a puppet ‘Abbāsid caliphate in Cairo. At times, the war was taken into the enemy camp. Usually these were small-scale operations, but in 1276–1277 Baybars launched a major operation into Mongol-controlled Anatolia, leading to the defeat of local Mongol forces at Abulustayn (today Elbistan) in April 1277. After a sweep through the country, the sultan returned to Syria, dying soon afterwards, having destabilized Mongol rule in the area. These policies worked well enough, generally keeping the Mongols at bay, and were thus adopted and continued by Baybars’s successors.⁵⁰

The Mamluk leadership was certainly aware of the rifts in the Mongol world, particularly the deepening conflict between the ilkhans and the Jochid khans; the crucial importance of a second front preoccupying the ilkhans was clear to them. At times, the ilkhans even showed surprising candor on this matter. Thus Abaqa wrote to Baybars in 1268, “Between our older and younger brothers [i.e., the senior and junior Chinggisid rulers and princes], there was conflict. Because of this we could not ride towards you.”⁵¹ Now he reports newfound unity among the Chinggisids. This was wishful thinking: any rapprochement between the branches of the Chinggisid family was short-lived, and the tension on the Ilkhanid–Jochid border soon returned, at times turning into open warfare.

Baybars and later sultans did their best to fan these fires of intra-Mongolian enmity, looking for mutual strategic goals and if possible for common religious interests. Baybars initiated communications with Berke (r. 1257–1266), Muslim ruler of the Jochid Khanate, in mid-1262, and subsequently envoys went back and forth, although at times with difficulty. This continued into the reigns of their successors. A practical joint strategy was never worked

50 Thorau 1992; Northrup 1998; Amitai-Preiss 1995, chs. 3, 5, 6, 7, 9; Amitai 1988; Amitai 2011a; Tritton 1948; Hiyari 1975.

51 Ibn ‘Abd al-Ẓāhir 1976, 340–41; Amitai-Preiss 1994, 16–21.

out, but it must have been encouraging to both sides to know they were fighting against a common enemy. Even more important was that the Jochid khans permitted the export of young male and female slaves – mostly Qipchaq Turks, but including some Mongols and other ethnic groups – to the Mamluk Sultanate via the Crimean peninsula and the Black Sea, and then through the Bosphorus. The boys were the recruits to the Mamluk army and the girls their future wives and concubines. This lively trade was maintained through the efforts of both the Genoese, who increasingly became the main conveyers of the young Mamluks, and the Byzantines, who permitted this commerce through the Bosphorus.⁵²

There are some indications that, in the 1310s, particularly after the disastrous siege of al-Raḥba in 1312, some senior Mongols, along with a few high-ranking Iranian bureaucrats, began to wonder about the wisdom of continuing the war with the Mamluks. Evidently with the tacit agreement of the new ilkhan, Abū Saʿīd (r. 1316–1335), informal contacts were initiated by the Mongols in 1317, through the good offices of al-Majd al-Sallāmī, an international merchant with strong connections with both the Mamluk and Ilkhanid elites. By 1320, conditions were ripe for the opening of official negotiations. The Mongols, who usually initiated the conflict with the Mamluks, were now ready to accept the existence of the independent Mamluk state and the status quo along the frontier. In 1323 a treaty was ratified, and Mamluk–Ilkhanid relations entered a new phase, including a dramatic increase in people crossing the border in both directions, and thus more interaction in various spheres. In the mid-1220s, no one on either side expected that this new situation would be short-lived, with the collapse of the Ilkhanate in 1335.⁵³

Arabia

Syria and both sides of the Euphrates frontier were not the only arenas in the Arabic-speaking countries for Mamluk–Ilkhanid skirmishing and more serious encounters. The Ilkhanids tried more than once to interfere in the Hijaz (northwestern Arabia), home to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Already in the mid-1260s, some Syrian Bedouins caused disorder in the area, part of the time reporting back to the ilkhan. In 1269, a Mongol (*al-tatār*) force

52 For Mamluk–Jochid relations: Spuler 1965, 44–49; Zakirov 1966; Amitai-Preiss 1995, 78–91; Broadbridge 2008, 50–63; Favereau 2018. For the slave trade: Saunders 1977; Ehrenkreutz 1981; Holt 1995, 123–24; Amitai 2008a; Barker 2019; William of Adam 2012, 32–35.

53 Amitai 2005; Melville 1992, 202, 204; Melville 1996.

headed for the Hijaz, intending “thus to reconnoiter the roads and to loot these areas . . . With [these troops] were a group of Mongols (*al-mughul*) who did not recognize Allah and his Sanctuary [i.e., the Ḥaram in Mecca] . . . Their aim was to spill the blood of the pilgrims in the Sanctuary.” Baybars, however, had advance word of this operation, and thus planned his own pilgrimage for this time. Hearing of his approach, the Mongol raiders withdrew.⁵⁴ At the same time, and despite the overall tension, early on there are records of pilgrimage caravans setting out from Iraq, although not every year. Ghazan, as part of his public persona of a just Muslim ruler, had ordered Qutluḡ Shāh in 1302 to prepare an expedition of 1,000 riders to protect this caravan, and presumably to interfere in Arabian affairs; after the Mongol defeat in 1303, this plan was dropped. Öljeitü also tried to influence matters in the Hijaz in the mid-1310s, supporting a dissatisfied scion of the leading family in Mecca, Ḥumayda b. Abī Numayy; he was sent back with some Mongols, but was defeated by Bedouins loyal to the Mamluks. Meanwhile, Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad also vigorously reacted to this Mongol initiative, sending a senior officer at the head of an expeditionary force to the holy cities. Öljeitü’s death in 1316 (just before Ḥumayda’s defeat) put an end to Mongol attempts to interfere in the Hijaz.

The coming of the Mongol–Mamluk peace did not mean a stop to Ilkhanid efforts to influence the area. Already in 1319, during the time of preliminary peace feelers, a particularly large *hajj* caravan set out from Iraq, and even larger ones came in subsequent years. With the final ratification of the Ilkhanid–Mamluk peace in 1323, these caravans became a regular occurrence. In 1325, Choban, the strongman of the Ilkhanid regime, himself participated in the *hajj*, and in its aftermath remained a while in Mecca in order to repair the local water system; he had a *madrasa* (religious college) and a bath constructed in Medina. Two years later, Choban was killed in a struggle with Abū Saʿīd; his body was brought by the Iraqi pilgrimage caravan that year, and buried in Medina. In the following years, the ilkhan himself was surely behind the large and at times ostentatiously equipped caravans – in 1330 there was even an elephant! – from Iraq.⁵⁵

There was no direct interference by and presence of the Mongols in Yemen, but even in this corner of Arabia their influence was felt. Since Ayyūbid times, Yemen had been ruled by the Rasūlid dynasty, known for a key role in the Indian Ocean trade, its resulting wealth, and cultural and

54 Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir 1976, 354–58 (citation at 356); Amitai-Preiss 1995, 68, 124.

55 Melville 1992; Amitai-Preiss 1995, 212–13.

intellectual effervescence.⁵⁶ The Mongol impact on Indian Ocean commerce is seen in one particular work that was not only composed in Yemen, but by a Rasūlid ruler, al-Malik al-Afdal ‘Abbās (r. 1363–1377). This is a dictionary now known in English as the “Rasūlid Hexaglot,” with word lists in Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Mongol, Greek, and Armenian.⁵⁷ Not only does this reflect the dynamic and cosmopolitan nature of the Indian Ocean trade, but it also demonstrates – yet again – that one can find important evidence for the Mongols, their culture, and their language, in unexpected places.

The breakup of the Ilkhanate in the aftermath of Abū Sa‘īd’s death in 1335 drastically altered the political and military situation in the region, with different senior officers jockeying for power behind the facade of puppet Chinggisids. The Mamluks exploited the new situation to assert their authority over the frontier and beyond as they had not been able to do before, both in the Jazīra and in southeast Anatolia. In the former, we see already that Tankiz, the powerful Mamluk governor of Syria, was able to take Qal‘at al-Ja‘bar on the east bank of the Euphrates in 1335–1336. This same governor provided at least tacit support to the Dhu’l-Qadirid Turcomans who in the late 1330s set up a small state to the north of Syria under the Mamluk aegis.⁵⁸ We will not attempt here even a cursory survey of Mamluk activities in the area in the immediate post-Ilkhanid era, but will just note that overall the situation was highly convenient from a Mamluk point of view,⁵⁹ as we see with the final eradication by the Mamluks of an independent Armenian kingdom in Cilicia in 1375.⁶⁰ The confusion in Iran and the surrounding countries after 1335 had another impact on the Mamluk Sultanate: there was a surge of refugees and immigrants to Syria and Egypt. Many of these were scholars and others high officials in the Ilkhanid bureaucracy (these categories overlapped).⁶¹

The disappearance of a serious opponent to the east and north certainly influenced internal Mamluk politics: perhaps some of the political instability and infighting that characterize the sultanate in the decades after al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s death in 1340 can be explained by the lack of a serious enemy at this time.⁶² This changed toward the end of the fourteenth century with the arrival on the scene of Tamerlane (Temūr-lang), who might be considered

56 On the Rasūlid dynasty, officially vassals of the Mamluks, but with whom they often had an uneasy relationship: Smith 1995.

57 Golden 2000. For other relevant sources from Rasūlid Yemen: Amitai and Biran’s chapter in Volume 11.

58 Sourdél 1965; Mordtmann and Ménage 1965. 59 Wing 2007; Wing 2015, 1–2.

60 Bournoutian 1997, 288–90.

61 Lech’s introduction to Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-‘Umarī 1968, 17–41.

62 For Mamluk politics at this time: Van Steenbergen 2006; Levantoni 2010, 250–57.

a continuation of the Mongol phenomenon (he was certainly seen as such in the Mamluk sources). The Mamluks went out to Syria to meet him at the end of 1400, but withdrew back to Egypt before the battle could take place, due to tension among the commanders, and between them and the young sultan, al-Nāṣir Faraj. This was certainly a different type of Mamluk army and leadership than had met the Mongols at 'Ayn Jālūt some 140 years before. Tamerlane occupied Damascus in mid-March 1401 and after a few weeks withdrew, permitting a Mamluk return to the country and a reassertion of their control.⁶³

Non-military Contacts and Conclusions

Mention has been made of the somewhat porous nature of the frontier between the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate, even at the time of war. More than just pilgrimage caravans from Iraq to the Hijaz were involved in this. Immigrants (sometimes as refugees), civilians and soldiers (mostly into the sultanate, but there were opposite cases too), religious figures (scholars and Sufis), and merchants were part of this movement of peoples. The extent of the cross-frontier commercial traffic has recently become clearer with the publication of the extant part of the biographical dictionary by Ibn al-Fuwaṭī (d. 1323). One scholarly luminary from the Ilkhanate who paid a visit to the sultanate was Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, who in 1282 arrived in Cairo as part of the delegation sent by Tegüder Aḥmad. Another outstanding figure was Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥammūya, who, having facilitated the conversion of Ilkhan Ghazan to Islam around 1295, performed the *ḥajj* to Mecca, and visited Damascus before returning to the Ilkhanate. Around this same time, Zayn al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān, the brother of the famous Ḥanbalī scholar in Damascus, Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya, was visiting in Tabriz. During their stays, such visitors were in contact with local religious figures and thus we can see some cultural and intellectual interaction in spite of the ongoing war.⁶⁴ The advent of peace in the early 1320s led to further relations and exchanges in these realms, mainly through travel and immigration. One prominent example of the latter category was the scholar and philosopher Shams al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1348), hitherto based in Tabriz, who moved to Damascus after performing the pilgrimage in 1325, and later took up residence in Cairo, dying in the mid-century Black Death.

⁶³ Roemer 1986, 74–76.

⁶⁴ Amitai-Preiss 1995, 207–13; Amitai 2015, 242–43; Gil 2015; Melville 1990.

Al-İṣḫānī was soon caught up in scholarly activities, including teaching, and in Cairo successively became the “director” (*shaykh*) of two of the important Sufi centers (*khānqāhs*) while continuing his philosophical work. Thus scholars in the sultanate were exposed to the best that late Ilkhanid Tabriz had to offer, while al-İṣḫānī himself had ample opportunity to learn from colleagues and books in his new homes.⁶⁵ Cultural exchange was not limited to scholarly and intellectual matters. We know, for instance, of an unnamed architect or master builder from Tabriz brought over in the 1320s by the Mamluk envoy, Aytamish al-Muḥammadī, who was responsible for several minarets in Cairo, including perhaps those on the mosque of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.⁶⁶ Since we have mentioned Aytamish, we might also note that he was of Mongolian origin, proficient in spoken and written Mongolian, an expert in Mongolian lore and customs, and a frequent envoy to the Ilkhanid court. There were many Mamluks of Mongol origin, but not all were fluent in the written language and experts on “Mongol affairs.”⁶⁷ The history of cultural and intellectual interaction between the Mongols and the Mamluks, during the war and after it, has just begun to be written, but it will not be surprising to learn that the examples given above form just a small part of a much larger phenomenon.⁶⁸

How do we sum up the impact of the Mongols in what is today seen as the heartland of the Arab world? There was obviously the destructive nature of the conquests themselves, particularly in 1260. In Syria, at least, this effect was not critical, due to the short term of the Mongol occupation, and the assertion of Mamluk control afterwards. Demographic changes took place in the aftermath of the coming of the Mongols to the whole region, including migrations to Syria and Egypt from Iraq, the Jazīra, Anatolia, and beyond. There was some – maybe substantial – cultural interaction over the Mamluk–Ilkhanid frontier, certainly increasing with the “peace process” of the early 1320s. The opening of Asia from one end to the other by the Mongols certainly impacted the sultanate, and, as we have seen, Yemen too. However, if one must pick one influence in particular, then it is how the Mongols prepared the way for the Mamluk takeover of Syria and the establishment of their rule there. Had the Mongols not eradicated the Ayyūbids of Syria in 1260, and then presented themselves as an existential challenge to the Mamluks – true, in an attenuated form with Hülegü’s withdrawal to Azerbaijan that year – the Mamluks might never have left

65 Lech’s introduction to al-‘Umarī 1968, 32–34; Al Ghouz 2016.

66 Rabbat 1995, 265–66; Maqrīzī 1934–1973, 2: 320–21.

67 Little 1979. For Mamluks of Mongol provenance: Amitai 2008b. 68 Bent 2020.

Egypt or gained control over Syria; they had not succeeded in the previous decade in dislodging the Ayyūbids. The continued danger from the Mongols helped unite the Mamluks and influenced the militant, militaristic, and centralized nature of their state; it was these combative Mamluks who slowly but surely eradicated the Franks in the Levant, in part because they were seen as partners of the Mongols.⁶⁹ On the other hand, it was the Mongols of the Jochid Golden Horde who permitted the necessary supply of young Mamluks to the sultanate. Thus there can be no study of the history of the early Mamluk Sultanate without taking the Mongols into consideration.⁷⁰ At the same time, the Mamluks played a not insignificant role in the history of the Mongols in West Asia, not only as enemies and allies, but also as the home for many writers of Arabic who have left us important – and often unique – evidence on the Mongol world empire and its successor states.

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69 Amitai-Preiss 1992b. 70 On this: Ayalon 1971–1973, part C1, 114–17.

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South Asia and the Mongol Empire

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Unlike much of Eurasia, southern Asia, especially the regions east and south of the Indus river, was not incorporated into the Mongol Empire. This, however, did not mean that it escaped military incursions by Mongol troops, or that the Mongol rulers never contemplated invading the region. In fact, Chinggis Khan (d. 1227) at the inception of the empire and Temür (Tamerlane, r. 1370–1405), at its very end, came close to incorporating what are present-day Pakistan and parts of northern India into their realms. These attempts and even the mere presence of the Mongols in the frontier regions had significant impact on the political, social, and cultural lives of the people in South Asia. In the far south, the coastal regions, including the island of Sri Lanka (Ceylon), were fully integrated into the long-distance trading and diplomatic networks that connected the Yuan empire (1271–1368) in East Asia to the Ilkhanate (1256–1335) in the Persian Gulf.

This chapter outlines three aspects of South Asia's encounters with the Mongol Empire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The first part examines the military skirmishes and diplomatic exchanges that took place during these two centuries. The second section focuses on the commercial interactions between South Asia and the Mongol khanates, especially trade with Yuan China and the Ilkhanate. The final part of the chapter explores the cultural connections, particularly in respect of Buddhism and Islam, that were also integral elements of the relationship between South Asia and the Mongol Empire.

Military Encounters and Diplomatic Exchanges

It was the region south of the Hindu Kush, extending from present-day Afghanistan to the Leh–Ladakh areas, that was most intimately connected to the Mongol Empire. By 1229, some places west of the Indus river had already been occupied by Chinggis Khan's forces. These areas eventually formed part of the Ilkhanate established by Hülegü (r. 1256–1265), Chinggis

Khan's grandson. It was from this western periphery of South Asia that several Mongol incursions into the territories of the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526) took place.¹ Marco Polo (1254–1324), whose travel between Venice and China during the second half of the thirteenth century epitomized the integrated world of the Mongols, suggested that Qubilai Qa'an (Shizu, r. 1260–1294), ruler of the Yuan Empire, may have also considered invading parts of South Asia.² However, except for the Chaghadaid raids and a brief conquest of Delhi by Temür in 1398, most of South Asia remained free from Mongol subjugation.

Diplomatic interactions between individual Mongol khanates and various polities in South Asia took place frequently and with multiple objectives. These exchanges were facilitated by the development of shipbuilding technologies and advances in navigational skills during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.³ The commercial networks operated by Muslim, Hindu, and Chinese merchants contributed to the diplomatic interactions. Moreover, people from far-flung regions of the Afro-Eurasian world, such as Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (1304–1377), also participated in these exchanges.

The earliest encounter between the expanding Mongol forces and South Asia took place in 1221–1223. After conquering the Khwārazmian Empire (1077–1231), Chinggis Khan is reported to have pursued Jalāl al-Dīn (r. 1220–1231), the last Khwārazm-Shāh, to the banks of the Indus. Jalāl al-Dīn escaped the Mongol onslaught by swimming across the Indus river and sending an envoy to seek asylum from his once arch-rival Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish (r. 1210–1236), the reigning sultan of Delhi. Iltutmish, however, responded by promptly executing the Khwārazmian envoy. For the next three years, Jalāl al-Dīn tried to form alliances, often using military force or threat, with rulers in the Punjab and Gujarat areas. Chinggis Khan, for his part, did not venture beyond the Indus, but sent an embassy to Delhi requesting passage to Mongolia through the Himalayas. It is not clear what happened to the embassy or how Iltutmish responded to it, but the Mongols decided to retreat, perhaps on account of the heat, as suggested by Minhāj-i Sirāj Jūzjānī (1193–c. 1270), the court chronicler of the Delhi Sultanate.⁴ The *Yuan shi*, on the other hand, tells a story of Chinggis encountering a unicorn, which prevented the great conqueror from entering India.⁵

After the death of Chinggis Khan in 1227 and the subsequent emergence of contending khanates led by his descendants, the place of South Asia in the

1 Jackson 1975; Jackson 1990; Jackson 1999.

2 Marco Polo 1938, I: 138 [309]; Sen 2006b, 305 n. 17. 3 Lo 2012.

4 Jackson 1990; Jackson 1999, 32–34. 5 YS, 3456.

politically fragmented Mongol Empire became more complex. Between 1235 and 1241, Chinggis's son Ögödei (d. 1241) made the first serious attempt to penetrate the regions east of the Indus river. Although the Mongols entered Kashmir and captured Lahore, they decided to withdraw, once again possibly for climatic reasons. Over the next two decades, military incursions continued, resulting in substantial gains for the Mongols in the northwest frontier regions of the Delhi Sultanate. These military skirmishes and occupations eventually culminated in the dispatch of diplomatic envoys from Hülegü to the Delhi Sultanate in 1260, which temporarily stilled the conflict between the two polities.⁶

Military confrontations between the Delhi Sultanate and the Mongols (and their allies) resumed in the 1280s and continued until the first quarter of the fourteenth century. Qaidu (d. 1303), the grandson of Ögödei, operating from Central Asia, emerged as the main adversary of the Delhi Sultanate during this period. Several key collaborators of Qaidu, including Du'a (d. 1307) and Taraghai, led invasions into South Asia, but with mixed results. While Du'a seems to have been unsuccessful in making any significant gains, Taraghai reached Delhi and laid siege to the city in 1303 for about two months before suddenly withdrawing his troops.⁷

There were also instances when the Delhi Sultanate, under 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh Khaljī (r. 1296–1316) and Muḥammad Shāh b. Tughluq (r. 1324–1351), launched military offensives against the Chaghadaid Khanate or its allies.⁸ In fact, the latter's advances into the regions west of the Indus river led to the resumption of military conflict between the Delhi Sultanate and the Chaghadaids. In the late 1320s, a major battle ensued between Muḥammad Shāh b. Tughluq and the future Chaghadaid khan Tarmashirin (r. 1331–1334), in which the Delhi sultan reportedly routed the Mongol forces.⁹

The final and the most successful Mongol invasion of the territories belonging to the Delhi Sultanate took place under Temür in 1398. Temür, who was not a direct descendant of Chinggis Khan but had incorporated the territories of both the Chaghadaids and the Ilkhanate into his empire, entered Delhi and massacred several thousand captives. He also brought to an end the reign of the Tughluquids in that city that had began in 1320. Similar to his predecessors, however, Temür withdrew after plundering the region.¹⁰

The absence of a common frontier and the difficult geographical terrain may have generally precluded military conflicts between the Yuan khanate in China

6 Jackson 1999, 103–10. 7 Jackson 1999, 217–24; Biran 2013, 90. 8 Jackson 1999, 228–35.

9 Jackson 1975; Jackson 1999, 232; Biran 2002, 744. 10 Jackson 1999, 311–14; Manz 1989.

and the South Asian polities. However, as noted in several sources, Qubilai Qa'an, like other Mongol rulers, had also contemplated invading South Asia. Marco Polo, for example, reports seeing about 15,000 ships on the Yellow River that were waiting to transport Qubilai's armies to "the islands of Indie in the Ocean sea whenever there is need, if they rebel; or to any remote and distant region."¹¹ Similarly, the Persian official and historian Rashīd al-Dīn (1247–1318) noted that Qubilai had sent diplomatic missions to various polities in South Asia demanding that they "submit" to the Yuan court.¹² Chinese sources, as noted below, also confirm these attempts by Qubilai to force South Asian polities into subjugation through the dispatch of court representatives.

Sometime in 1278–1279, against the backdrop of the Yuan court's military conflicts with Japan, the Chaghadaids, and Bagan in Myanmar, an Uighur Buddhist monk named Jialu'nadasi (Karandas?) presented a memorial to Qubilai Qa'an requesting him to consider diplomacy instead of military operations against maritime polities such as Ma'bar (on the Coromandel coast) and Kollam (on the Malabar coast). "It would be better," he wrote, "to send embassies and discuss the calamities of warfare and benefits of submitting peacefully."¹³ Qubilai seems to have accepted Karandas's suggestion and sent embassies, led mostly by his military generals, to Ma'bar and Kollam. Between 1280 and 1296, thirteen diplomatic missions were sent to these two polities by the Yuan court. In response, a similar number of missions arrived at the Yuan court from Ma'bar and Kollam.¹⁴

The official who led several of these Yuan missions to Ma'bar and Kollam was a person named Yang Tingbi. Yang had previously served as a military officer under the famous Mongol general Sögetü. In fact, both Yang and Sögetü were dispatched on diplomatic missions in 1280, with the former traveling to South Asia, and the latter to Champa (present-day central Vietnam) in Southeast Asia. Upon his arrival in Kollam in April–May 1280, Yang is said to have quickly secured "conditions of surrender" from the ruler named Binadi (Pāṇḍya?), who pledged to send a tributary mission to the Yuan court within a year. In the latter half of 1280, Kollam, along with Ma'bar, Champa, Java, and Annam (present-day northern Vietnam) sent representatives to the Yuan court. However, the court noted that Kollam had failed to "submit" and Yang Tingbi was sent again to demand an explanation.¹⁵

11 Marco Polo 1938, 1: 138 [309]. It is not clear what specific region of the Indian Ocean Marco Polo is indicating here. "Islands of Indie" here could also mean the maritime region of Southeast Asia.

12 *JT*/Boyle, 272. 13 *YS*, 3260–61. 14 Sen 2006b, 302–13; Rockhill 1914, 419–47.

15 *YS*, 4669; Sen 2006b, 306–7; Mukai and Fiaschetti 2020.

The second mission to South Asia in early 1281 that Yang Tingbi led was with the newly appointed commissioner of the Pacification Office of Kollam named Qasar Qaya. The mission, however, failed to reach its destination due to unfavorable winds. This resulted in a third mission to South Asia by Yang in early 1282, when he secured an acceptable acknowledgment of submission not only from the ruler of Kollam, but also from several other polities and merchant communities in the region. Yang's success in South Asia extended to the Coromandel coast, where he seems to have been personally involved in the defection of a high official of the Ma'bar polity named Abū 'Alī (aka Sayyid).¹⁶ This defection of Abū 'Alī to the Yuan court may have been related to the broader geopolitical objectives of Qubilai. While he used diplomacy to secure submissions, Qubilai's attacks on Champa in 1281 and on Java in 1293 suggest that he was not reluctant to use naval force if specific demands for submission, including stipulations that the rulers of the submitting polities personally lead the tribute missions, were not met.¹⁷ The strategy with South Asia was somewhat different perhaps because of the distance involved and due to the fact that Qubilai's naval offensives had all been disastrous. By granting asylum to Abū 'Alī, Qubilai may have intended to gain strategic and military insights into the coastal regions of South Asia that were vital links to the Ilkhanate, his ally in the war among Chinggis Khan's descendants.

This important intermediary role of South Asia in the diplomatic exchanges between Yuan China and the Ilkhanate can be discerned from various sources. Marco Polo, during his return voyage to Venice from China in 1291, was reportedly assigned the task of escorting the Yuan royalty named Kökejin to Arghun Khan (r. 1284–1291), the Ilkhanate ruler and Qubilai's grandnephew. According to Marco Polo, the embassy transited at Kollam before proceeding to the Ilkhanid town of Abhar. Although neither Marco Polo nor Kökejin are mentioned, a Chinese record found in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) work *Yongle dadian* (Great Encyclopedia of the Yongle Period) also reports a diplomatic mission ordered by Qubilai in 1290, which proceeded to Mongol Iran via South Asia (the Coromandel coast instead of Malabar is mentioned in this record).¹⁸ Several years later, in 1297, the Ilkhanate ruler Ghazan (r. 1295–1304) sent an embassy to the Yuan court through coastal South Asia. During the return voyage, the person leading the mission died near Ma'bar and was buried in a tomb that was said to be “near that of his uncle.”¹⁹ The coastal regions of

¹⁶ YS, 4669–70; Sen 2006b, 307–13.

¹⁷ Rossabi 1994, 484–85; Rossabi 1988, 213–19. On Mongol naval attacks on Đại Việt and Champa see Vu 2017; and Hung et al. 2022 on the evidence from Java.

¹⁸ Vogel 2013, 80–84. ¹⁹ Waṣṣāf 1966, 3: 45–47.

South Asia, as discussed below, were clearly also important transit locations for long-distance trade between the Persian Gulf and Yuan China.

Diplomatic exchanges also took place between the Ilkhanate and polities in South Asia. The Persian historian Waṣṣāf (1264–1329) reports that after the earlier “sentiments of goodwill” expressed toward the rulers in Delhi by the Mongol rulers Chinggis Khan and Ögödei through the dispatch of diplomatic missions, the reigning Ilkhan Öljeitü (r. 1304–1316) sent two ambassadors to the Delhi Sultanate to establish friendly relations in 1311. Öljeitü also asked for one of the princesses in marriage from ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh Khaljī, the sultan of Delhi. However, the “tyrant” sultan, according to Waṣṣāf, had the ambassadors imprisoned and several of their attendants were “trodden under the feet of elephants.”²⁰

A decade and a half later, in 1327/1328, Muḥammad Shāh b. Tughluq sent an envoy to the Ilkhan Abū Sa‘īd Bahadur Khan (r. 1316–1335) proposing an alliance against Tarmashirin. Although no such collaboration seems to have ensued, Abu Sa‘id responded with a diplomatic mission of his own that was headed by a person named Sayyid ‘Aḍud al-Dīn of Yazd.²¹ Following this, Muḥammad sent annual embassies to Abu Sa‘id. According to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, Muḥammad also dispatched diplomatic missions to the court of Tarmashirin that may have ended the acrimonious relationship between the Delhi Sultanate and the Chaghadaid Khanate.²²

There is also an earlier, albeit historically questionable, episode involving Rashīd al-Dīn visiting the Delhi Sultanate as an ambassador of the ilkhan ruler Ghazan. This episode appears in the so-called “Letters of Rashīd al-Dīn,” which have been dismissed as unreliable.²³ Scholars have also questioned some of the narratives found in the records of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, who led a diplomatic mission from the Delhi Sultanate to Yuan China. The Moroccan had traveled through the Mongol khanates in Persia and Central Asia and reached Delhi in 1333. From 1334 to 1341, he worked at the court of Muḥammad Shāh b. Tughluq and led an affluent life in the city. According to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, an embassy from the Yuan court arrived in Delhi in 1340 with gifts that included slave girls, velvet clothes, musk, swords, and other precious objects for the sultan. The embassy sought permission to build a Buddhist temple in the Himalayas. Although Muḥammad refused to grant the permission, he decided to respond with a diplomatic mission of his own to the Yuan court. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa was asked to lead this mission, which

20 Jackson 1999, 225. 21 Jackson 1999, 184, 233.

22 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 562; Biran 2002, 746. 23 Morgan 2001.

carried an immense amount of return gifts for the Yuan ruler Toghon Temür (Shundi, r. 1333–1368).²⁴

The Ibn Baṭṭūṭa-led mission, however, encountered several mishaps and misfortunes. The most severe of these was the ship carrying the sultan's gifts and slaves sinking just as it was to set sail from Calicut. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa survived the disaster and continued his travels alone.²⁵ He reached Quanzhou, the flourishing coastal port of Yuan China, in mid-1346. Although Ibn Baṭṭūṭa records that he traveled to Dadu, the Yuan capital, and met the Mongol ruler, modern scholars have judged this part of his account to be apocryphal.²⁶

While Ibn Baṭṭūṭa may have failed to complete the diplomatic mission, his travels, as well as those by Marco Polo during the second half of the thirteenth century, demonstrated the integrated Mongol world within which regions of South Asia were the targets of military invasion, the subjects of cross-regional diplomatic interaction, and destinations for long-distance travelers crisscrossing the Mongol Empire. The commercial and cultural exchanges outlined below similarly indicate the intricate connections between South Asia and the Mongol world.

Commercial Links to the Mongol World

Commercial links between South Asia and the Mongol Empire were pursued through networks belonging to several different groups of merchants. There were, for example, the networks of Muslim and Tamil traders, the shipping facilities of the Chinese seafarers, and the diasporic linkages of the Syrian Christians. These commercial interactions took place through various conduits: the maritime routes of the Indian Ocean, the overland roads across Myanmar and Tibet into the territories of the Yuan khanate, and the passes of Afghanistan that connected Delhi to Ilkhanid Iran. The types of commodity traded and the patterns of commerce also varied greatly. Silver, horses, spices, porcelain, textiles, and slaves were some of the main commodities traded between South Asia and the Mongol khanates. Sometimes these items were exchanged directly between South Asia and individual Mongol khanates, and at other times the South Asian ports and markets were merely transit hubs within the larger Afro-Eurasian commercial setting. The ports on the Malabar coast, for example, were important transshipment centers for commodities exchanged between the Yuan khanate and the Ilkhanate. This

24 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 4: 773; Ahmad 1961; Sen 2006b, 320–24. 25 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 4: 815.

26 Dunn 1986; Morgan 2001.

intermediary role of South Asia emerged and was sustained over time due to the pattern of segmented trade, whereby merchant groups concentrated on particular sectors of long-distance commerce.²⁷

The establishment of the Mongol Empire coincided with the emergence of Chinese trading and shipping networks in the Indian Ocean. Thus, while the formation of the Mongol Empire facilitated long-distance commercial activity through the overland routes, the ships belonging to Chinese sailors contributed to a growth in maritime trade and travel during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In fact, it had only been in the twelfth century that Chinese seafaring traders had become active participants in Indian Ocean commerce, with some of them traveling all the way to the Persian Gulf. Yuan China's engagement with the coastal regions of South Asia, in the spheres of both trade and diplomacy, was augmented by the existence of these maritime networks and the advances in shipbuilding technology.²⁸

The Chinese traveler Wang Dayuan's (c. 1311–?) work entitled *Daoyi zhilüe* (Brief Records of the Island Barbarians), completed in 1349, is one of the key sources on the shipping and commercial networks that linked Yuan China to South Asia. Born in 1311, Wang sailed with Chinese merchants between 1330 and 1334 and then a second time between 1337 and 1339. Several regions of South Asia are mentioned in this work, including Bengal, the Coromandel and Malabar coasts, Sri Lanka, and even the hinterland areas.²⁹ Wang was primarily interested in the economic and commercial aspects of the coastal regions he visited. Of Bengal in the eastern coast, he notes,

The Five Ranges [the Rajmahal hills] have rocky summits and are covered by a dense forest. The people [of the kingdom] reside around these [hills]. [The people] engage in plowing and sowing throughout the year, so there are no wastelands. The rice fields and arable lands are spectacular. Three crops are harvested every year. Goods are all reasonably priced. During ancient times, it was the capital of Sindu.

The climate is always hot. The customs [of the people are to be] extremely pure and honest. Men and women cover their head with a fine cotton cloth and wear long skirts.

The official tax rate is twenty percent. The kingdom mints silver coins called *tangjia* [tangka], two of which weigh eight hundredths of a *tael* [Chinese ounce], that are circulated and used [by the government]. They can be exchanged for more than 11,520 pieces of cowrie shells. The lightness of the coins is convenient and very beneficial to the people.

27 Chaudhuri 1990. 28 Sen 2006a. 29 Ptak 1996; Sen 2006a, 433.

[The kingdom] produces [fabrics such as] *bibu* [*bairami/bafta*], *gaonibu* [*kain* cloth?], *tuluojin* [*malmal*], [and also] kingfishers' feathers. [The Chinese traders] use southern and northern [varieties of] silks, pentachrome taffetas and satins, cloves, nutmegs, blue and white China-ware, white tassels and such things [to trade with native merchants].³⁰

It is clear from Wang's record that Bengal was becoming a major trading center for Chinese traders venturing from Yuan China into the Bay of Bengal. At the same time, however, the Malabar coast and Sri Lanka were seen as vital locations for the wider Indian Ocean trade. Wang Dayuan writes that Calicut was the "most important of all maritime centers of trade. It is close to Sengjiala [Sri Lanka] and is the principal port of the Western Ocean."³¹

The records of Marco Polo and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa confirm the existence of extensive maritime networks between Yuan China and South Asia. Also highlighting the significance of Calicut to Indian Ocean commerce, for instance, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa writes that the port was "visited by men from China, Jāwa, Ceylon, the Maldives, al-Yaman and Fārs, and in it gather merchants from all quarters. Its harbor is one of the largest in the world."³² Additionally, he mentions seeing Chinese ships in Calicut, which according to him were built in either Quanzhou or Guangzhou in southern China. The two authors also stress the importance of Kollam in maritime trade. A major producer and exporter of pepper and indigo, Kollam, according to Marco Polo, was a prominent transshipment center, where seafaring traders from various regions of the Indian Ocean world congregated. It was, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa notes, "the nearest of the Mulaibār towns to China and it is to it that most of the merchants [from China] come."³³

Tamil merchants also engaged in maritime commerce between South Asia and Yuan China. Archaeological evidence from Quanzhou indicates the existence of a Tamil merchant guild that may have been established there sometime in the eleventh century. The members of this guild subsequently built a Brahmanical temple at the port and carried out commercial activity until the fall of the Song dynasty. Military conflict between Qubilai's troops and the remnant Song forces in Quanzhou in the late 1270s seems to have driven many of the foreign merchants, including these Tamils, out of the port city. The diplomatic missions by the Yuan court mentioned above, in addition to seeking tributary missions from South Asian polities, may also have been sent to entice the return of these foreign traders. Thus we find that

30 Wang 1981, 330 (Sen 2006a, 434). 31 Wang 1981, 325 (Rockhill 1915, 454; Sen 2011, 59).

32 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 4: 812–14. 33 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 4: 817.

shortly after Yang Tingbi visited the coastal regions of South Asia, a bilingual inscription in Tamil and Chinese, dated April 1281, was erected in Quanzhou.³⁴ The inscription records the installation of an idol of the god Śiva at a local Brahmanical temple for the welfare of a Yuan royalty. It reads:

Obeisance to Hara [Siva]. Let there be prosperity! On the day [having] the Chitra [asterism] in the month of Chittirai of the Saka year 1203 [April 1281], the Tavachchakkaravatigal alias Sambandhap-perumal caused, in accordance with the firman of Chekachai-Khan, to be graciously installed the God Udayar Tirukkadalisvaram Udaya-nayinar, for the welfare of the illustrious body of the illustrious Chekachai-Khan.³⁵

The Mongol ruler “Chekachai-Khan” mentioned in the inscription was probably either Qubilai Qa’an or his eldest son Jurji (or Dorji, d. 1284/1285), whom both Marco Polo and Waṣṣāf suggest was to inherit the throne from Qubilai.³⁶ This inscription, in addition to the remains of a Brahmanical temple which has stylistic features similar to the temples in the Tamil hinterland, confirms not only the commercial connections between the Coromandel coast and Yuan China,³⁷ but also the spread of Brahmanism to one of the Mongol khanates. Other such religious connections are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

To the west, South Asia’s maritime connections extended through ports such as Kish in the Persian Gulf into vibrant towns such as the Ilkhanate capital, Tabriz. Horses and porcelain were two of the main items in the exchange which took place through this route. These commodities formed part of a larger trading network linking China to the Persian Gulf. South Asian ports were intersecting points of two segments of this network, i.e., the Persian Gulf–South Asia segment dominated by South Asian and Middle Eastern merchants, and the South Asia–China segment, where Tamil, Chinese, and Southeast Asian seafarers operated. Arabian horses were regularly exported to the Malabar coast, from where they were transshipped to Yuan China. Merchants from Kish played an important role in supplying these horses to South Asia. In fact, some of the Kish traders established their guilds in South Asia and tried to extend their network all the way to China. This attempt by Kish traders to bypass the middlemen in South Asia and control the lucrative trade all the way from the Persian Gulf to China can be seen from Ghazan’s embassy to the Yuan court in 1297 that was led by a Kish merchant named Fakhr al-Dīn. A similar effort seems to have been made

34 Sen 2006b, 312. 35 Subramaniam 1978; Sen 2003, 227–31.

36 Karashima 1988; Yule 1871, 1: 321–22. 37 Lee 2009.

from the Yuan side as the ruler *Temür Qa'an*, in response to the Ilkhanid embassy, sent a person called *Yang Shu*, who returned with various commodities from *Hormuz*, including a white horse.³⁸ Given the arduous nature of sea travel, dictated by monsoon winds and the logistics of long-distance sailing, however, profits from direct commercial links between the Ilkhanate and Yuan China would have been difficult to sustain.

The lucrative nature of the trade in horses is underscored in the works of *Waṣṣāf* and *Marco Polo*. *Marco Polo* mentions that “some, indeed most of them fetch fully two hundred pounds of *Touraine* apiece.”³⁹ *Waṣṣāf* reports that the agreement between *Jamal al-Dīn*, the father of *Fakhr al-Dīn* who led the embassy to Yuan China, and the Pandyan ruler named *Sundara* on the Malabar coast included the sale of 1,400 horses at the price of 220 dinars of red gold each, including those that might be lost at sea. According to *Waṣṣāf*, 10,000 horses were exported annually from the Persian Gulf during the reign of *Atabeg Abu Bakr* (r. 1226–1260) to ports in South Asia. The revenue from such exports amounted to 2,200,000 dinars.⁴⁰

South Asia played a similar role in the trade in porcelain between Yuan China and the Ilkhanate. Similar to horses, porcelain was already an important commodity in long-distance maritime commerce prior to the establishment of the Mongol Empire. While there were some prized blue-and-white wares traded before the twelfth century, it was with the introduction of cobalt from the Persian Gulf during the Yuan period that the trade in this type of porcelain, including those that were produced at the famous *Jingdezhen* kilns in eastern China, became widespread throughout the Afro-Eurasian ports and markets. Arab, Persian, Chinese, and South Asian traders were all involved in the procurement and sale of porcelain. Also involved in this trading activity were craftsmen from different regions of the Mongol world, who were responsible for the transfer of ceramic technologies and the transmission of designs and motifs.

Increased production of blue-and-white wares, the emergence of Chinese shipping networks, and the sustained demand for the commodity in the Persian Gulf significantly boosted the influx of porcelain into the South Asian ports during the Mongol period. This development is evident from the archaeological finds in the coastal regions as well as the hinterland areas of South Asia. In the port of *Periyapattinam* on the southern coast, for example, about 1,500 shards of ceramics dated to the thirteenth or fourteenth century have been found. These included Yuan blue-and-white shards and

38 Yokkaichi 2008, 89–90; Kauz 2006. 39 Digby 1982, 148. 40 Digby 1982, 148.

celadon.⁴¹ Similar pieces have also been found in Kollam and territories under the Delhi Sultanate. Indeed, ceramic pieces discovered in different regions of the Indian Ocean indicate the connections, commercial as well as technological, that existed between the kiln sites in Yuan China, the South Asian ports, and markets in the Ilkhanate, including those in Kashan and Sultanabad.⁴²

The overland trade routes between Yuan China and South Asia passed through the difficult mountainous terrain of Tibet and Assam. Marco Polo suggested that horses from the Yunnan region of Yuan China were exported to Bengal through Bagan in Myanmar.⁴³ These imported horses were not only for local use, but also transshipped along the maritime routes, from Bengal to coastal China. Cowries and silver were two other commodities traded through these overland routes. While cowries, originating in the Maldive islands, were transported through Bengal to the Yunnan region, silver flowed in the other direction, from the mines in Yunnan to Bengal.⁴⁴

In Rashīd al-Dīn's incomplete botanical work *Āthār wa aḥyā*, several products exported from South Asia to the Ilkhanate are recorded. These included cinnamon, camphor, black pepper, sandalwood, betel nuts, and indigo.⁴⁵ While some of these items originated in South Asia, others came from China or Southeast Asia. In one of his other works, Rashīd al-Dīn (as well as Ibn Baṭṭūṭa) suggests sporadic flow of gold from the Ilkhanate to South Asia.⁴⁶ Through the overland routes connecting the Ilkhanate cities of Tabriz, Shīrāz, and Herat to Kashmir and the territories of the Delhi Sultanate, aromatics, dyes, medicines, rock crystals, and musk from Tibet were traded. Fur originating from Bulghar in the Qipchaq khanate (Golden Horde) reached South Asia through Sarai and Central Asian towns. According to Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, ermine was the most beautiful type of fur from Bulghar that was sold in the markets of South Asia. An ermine coat, he reports, sold for a thousand dinars.⁴⁷ Textiles from South Asia were marketed in the other direction to various Mongol khanates.⁴⁸ Traders involved in these overland trading activities were as diverse as those traversing the maritime routes and similarly included Muslims and Hindu merchants and their networks.⁴⁹

In sum, the trade in a wide range of products, marketed by traders belonging to diverse ethnic groups and transported along a range of terrain

41 Karashima and Kanazawa 2002, 109–10. 42 Soucek 1999, 127–36.

43 Chakravarti 1999, 202.

44 Vogel and Hieronymus 1993; Yang 2004; Deyell 2010; Hussain 2013. 45 Lambton 1999.

46 Masson-Smith and Plunkett 1968, 276. 47 Martin 1978, 416.

48 Allsen 2002. See Allsen 2019 on the circulation of pearls in the Mongol Empire.

49 Prazniak 2013, 177.

and routes, linked South Asia to the Mongol Empire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Some of the imported goods were for consumption in South Asia, while others were transshipped to markets elsewhere. Similarly, goods from South Asia exported to one of the Mongol khanates were used locally and/or re-exported to regions further away. These extensive commercial activities between South Asia and the Mongol Empire contributed to the circulation of people, ideas, technologies, and, as discussed below, religious doctrines and cultural traditions.

Religious and Cultural Links to the Mongol World

The circulation of beliefs, paraphernalia, and people associated with Buddhism and Islam between South Asia and the Mongol Empire was as noteworthy as the military, diplomatic, and commercial connections discussed above. Followers and artifacts belonging to other religious traditions, such as Brahmanism and Catholicism, also crisscrossed these regions. These religious exchanges facilitated the transmissions of a broad range of ideas, including those related to medicine, astronomy, art, and literary traditions.

By the time Qubilai Qa'an established the Yuan dynasty in China and Hülegü founded the Ilkhanate, Buddhist monastic sites in several regions of South Asia had decayed. The process of de-urbanization in parts of the Gangetic plains during the second half of the first millennium CE that severed the avenues for donations was one of the main reasons for the collapse of some of these monastic institutions. The popularity of Brahmanism and the spread of Islam also weakened Buddhism in South Asia. Even after these setbacks, Buddhism continued to survive in places such as Kashmir, the Bengal-Bihar region, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Monks, texts, and various types of religious paraphernalia continued to circulate between South Asia and the wider Buddhist world. Yuan China and the Ilkhanate were part of these Buddhist connections that persisted during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Two Buddhist monks from South Asia exemplify the above connections between South Asia and the Mongol world. The first was a monk from Kashmir called Kamalaśrī who went to the Ilkhanate sometime in the early fourteenth century and became the main informant for Rashīd al-Dīn about the life and teachings of the Buddha, which is included in his work *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* (Compendium of Chronicles).⁵⁰ The second monk, whose name in

50 Jahn 1965, xxxi–lxxvii; Canby 1993; Elverskog 2010, 145–62; Akasoy 2013; Yoeli-Tlalim 2013.

Chinese sources appears as Zhikong and Chanxian (Dhyana**bhadra**?), studied at the Nālandā Mahāvihāra in Bihar and traveled to Yuan China in the second decade of the fourteenth century. Dhyana**bhadra** had audiences with the rulers of the Yuan khanate and was responsible for the spread of Buddhist doctrines in China and Korea.⁵¹

Buddhism was already present in Mongol Iran and China before these two monks reached their respective destinations. In fact, Hülegü was already a believer and supporter of the Buddhist cause before he founded the Ilkhanate.⁵² Similarly, Qubilai was an avid adherent of Buddhism prior to the conquest of the Song dynasty in China. Kashmir and Tibet as vassal polities of the Mongols were important centers of Buddhist doctrines, monks, and paraphernalia for Hülegü and Qubilai. Both chose Tibetan lamas, albeit from different schools, as their religious preceptors and actively sponsored the construction of Buddhist temples and monasteries in their lands. In addition to their faith in Buddhism, the two may have employed the religion for political legitimization within the greater Mongol Empire.

After founding the Ilkhanate, Hülegü sponsored the construction of several Buddhist complexes, including those in Labnasagut, Khoi (in Azerbaijan), and Marāgha near Tabriz. Hülegü's successors Abaqa Khan and Arghun Khan (r. 1284–1291) continued to patronize Buddhism and monks from South Asia. Rashīd al-Dīn reported Arghun's devotion and support for Buddhism in the following way:

Arghun Khan was highly devoted to the *bakhshi* and followed their path. He constantly patronized and favored them. One *bakhshi* came from India and claimed to have lived a long time. In order to show his fervor, he [Arghun] built lofty idol temples at Bhabushan in Khurasan, and he performed his duties in such a way that all the *bakhshis* and monks were astonished by his degree of asceticism and rigor.⁵³

Buddhism continued to be popular in the Ilkhanate until 1295, when Arghun's successor Ghazan converted to Islam and ordered the destruction of all non-Islamic complexes, including Buddhist temples. Kamalaśrī's travel to the Ilkhanate after Ghazan's conversion, however, suggests a lingering presence of Buddhism in the region during the early fourteenth century. In fact, the monk's visit and Rashīd al-Dīn's writing of the life of the Buddha may have been connected to the new ruler Öljeitü's initial interest in Buddhism and the attempts by some Buddhists to revive the religion in

51 Duan 2007; Dziwenka 2010. 52 Sperling 1990; Grupper 2004; Azad 2010; Prazniak 2014.
53 Prazniak 2014, 666. See also Akasoy 2013; Yoeli-Tlalim 2013; and Elverskog 2010.

the Ilkhanate.⁵⁴ In addition to Kamalaśrī, Rashīd al-Dīn received input about Buddhism from two Chinese informants. As a result, the description of Buddhism given by the Ilkhanate writer is that of a diverse religion, with multiple forms of teachings, which existed not only in South Asia, but also in Yuan China and Tibet. Indeed, Rashīd al-Dīn's narration reflects a Buddhist world of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century that had become fragmented doctrinally, but which remained intimately interconnected.

The multiplicity and interconnectedness of the Buddhist world during the time of the Mongols is also apparent from the activities of Qubilai Qa'an, including his attempts to acquire Buddhist paraphernalia from South Asia. The Tibetan lama 'Phags-pa (1235–1280) consecrated Qubilai in 1235 and anointed him and Chinggis Khan *chakravartins*, Buddhist universal monarchs.⁵⁵ The Uighur monk Karandas, who was said to be conversant “in the religions and various languages of Tianzhu” (i.e., India), had advised Qubilai, as mentioned above, not to attack Indian Ocean polities sometime in 1278–1279.⁵⁶ Another Uighur named Yiheimishi (Yighmish) was dispatched to South Asia on four occasions, including in 1284 to bestow gifts on the Buddha's alms bowl relic in Sri Lanka. Marco Polo also confirms Qubilai's interest in this Sri Lankan relic.⁵⁷ And Wang Dayuan reports that Qubilai had sent three missions to “fetch” the alms bowl from the island. For some of these ventures to Sri Lanka, Qubilai may have collaborated with the Ilkhanate rulers. The *Yuan shi* reports that in 1273 Qubilai requested the ilkhan ruler Abaqa to purchase medicines from Sri Lanka on his behalf.⁵⁸ Given the common interest in Buddhism at this time among the Yuan and Ilkhanate rulers, it is conceivable that the veneration and the quest for the Sri Lankan relics may have been pursued jointly by representatives of the two courts.

Other Buddhist activities undertaken by Qubilai, especially during the final few years of his life, are described in Chinese Buddhist sources. Shortly before his death in 1294, for example, Qubilai had an audience with Yuanyi, a Chinese monk who had recently returned from a pilgrimage to South Asia. Qubilai asked the monk if there was a Buddha in the Western Heaven. Yuanyi replied, “The present ruler of eastern lands is no different from Siddhartha of the Western Heaven.” Yuanyi repeatedly told Qubilai

54 Prazniak 2014, 667. 55 Rossabi 1988, 143–46.

56 YS 3260; Franke 1994, 290–91; Sen 2006b, 305–6.

57 YS 3198–3199; Wang 1981, 244; Marco Polo 1938, 411. 58 YS 148.

that the Buddha lived in China and it was none other than the Mongol ruler himself.⁵⁹

Buddhist exchanges between Yuan China and South Asia continued after the death of Qubilai. The most noteworthy was the arrival of Dhyanaḥadra, who met the Yuan ruler Yisün Temür (Taiding, r. 1324–1328) and was subsequently invited to lecture at the court by emperors Tugh Temür (Mingzong, r. 1328–1332) and Toghon Temür (Shundi, r. 1333–1368). Active in the present-day Yunnan and Sichuan regions, as well as in Korea, Dhyanaḥadra contributed to the transmission of Tantric and Chan teachings.⁶⁰ Furthermore, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, when reporting Toghon Temür's request to repair a Buddhist temple in the Himalayas, also suggests this sustained interest in Buddhism among the Yuan rulers after Qubilai.

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa is also a key source for the connections between South Asia and the Mongol world through the movement of Muslim clerics and traders. Similar to Buddhism, the Islamic connections between the regions under Mongol occupation had existed for several centuries. Muslim traders, some from the Persian Gulf and others settled at the South Asian ports, were intimately involved in the commercial and diplomatic interactions across the Indian Ocean from the late seventh century. In the northern regions, military incursions by Islamic forces in the early second millennium had already transformed the religious, political, and economic lives of the people living in the areas that extended from Sind to Bengal. These incursions eventually resulted in the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate as the main political entity in northern India, which during the course of Mongol expansions developed into the epicenter of Islamic activity and exchange.

The central position of Delhi in the Islamic world, especially as a sanctuary for Muslims from “all sides of the world,” is highlighted in Minhāj al-Dīn ibn Sirāj al-Dīn al-Jūzjānī's *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, composed sometime in 1259–1260. On the one hand Jūzjānī intended to praise his erstwhile master, the Delhi sultan Iltutmish, for attracting Muslims from foreign lands; and on the other hand he may have been commenting on the displacement of Muslims caused by the Mongol invasions in the early thirteenth century. Jūzjānī was not alone in his portrayal of Delhi as a sanctuary for the fleeing Muslims, especially those from the areas around present-day Afghanistan. Ziyā' al-Dīn Baranī, writing a century later, also reported the influx of Muslim refugees into Delhi as a result of Mongol military activities. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, himself a migrant living in

59 Nianchang 1344, item 2036, 723a.27–29. 60 Duan 2007; Dziwenka 2010.

Delhi in the fourteenth century, witnessed the continued arrival of Muslims in Delhi due to political instability in other parts of the Mongol world.⁶¹

The earlier group of Muslim immigrants displaced by Chinggis Khan's military expansions included artisans, embroiderers, craftsmen, merchants, and physicians. Later, there were also Muslim converts from the Mongol elites in the Ilkhanate who arrived in Delhi during the reign of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balbān (r. 1266–1287). Baranī calls this second group of migrants "neo-musalmāns," some of whom were given financial aid and others nominated to official posts.⁶² The immigrants mentioned by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa came from Transoxania and numbered about 40,000. These included family members of Tarmashirin and Mongol military commanders, many of whom, according to Baranī, had money, jewelry, and horses conferred upon them after they swore allegiance to the court in Delhi.⁶³

Muḥammad Shāh b. Tughluq, who ruled Delhi at the time of the migrations from Transoxania, was actively in contact with leading foreign Muslim rulers, officials, and religious scholars, giving them gifts or receiving them at his court. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, for instance, reports his sending 10,000 silver dinars to a mystic in Shīrāz named Majd al-Dīn.⁶⁴ Tarmashirin's conversion to Islam is also credited to the diplomatic overtures of Muḥammad, which, as noted above, resulted in the establishment of cordial relations between the Chaghadaids and the Delhi Sultanate.⁶⁵

Islamic connections between the Delhi Sultanate and the Yuan khanate were maintained mostly through the travels of preachers and merchants. Reporting on the Muslims in Quanzhou, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa pointed out that he met a merchant named Sharaf al-Dīn from whom he had borrowed money in Delhi. He also saw Mawlānā Qiwām al-Dīn, whom he knew had previously visited Delhi with his maternal uncle. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa mentions another Muslim preacher in Yuan China called Burhān al-Dīn whom Muḥammad Shāh b. Tughluq wanted to invite to India.⁶⁶

The port of Quanzhou was also the site where Abū 'Alī, the refugee from Ma'bar to Yuan China mentioned above, resided. Abū 'Alī most likely belonged to a group of merchants who had migrated to South Asia from the Persian Gulf.⁶⁷ It was when Abū 'Alī met the Yuan envoy Yang Tingbi in 1281 that he expressed his intention to defect to Yuan China. The Abū 'Alī episode exemplified the intersecting diplomatic, commercial, and religious

61 Jackson 1999, 234; Kumar 2007, 127–28, 190.

62 Pfeiffer 2006, 374–75; Kumar 2007, 114 n. 37, 191. 63 Jackson 1999, 234.

64 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 677. 65 Biran 2002, 746. 66 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 4: 811, 832, 827, 904–5.

67 Chen 1980; Liu 2000; Kauz 2006, 65; Sen 2006b, 317–18.

connections that existed between South Asia and the larger Mongol world. Several gravestones of Muslims found in the coastal regions of South Asia and China that bear similarities with regard to design and the places of origin of the occupants of the graves, as well as mosques in these regions with common architectural features, also reflect these overlapping links and Islamic connections between the Persian Gulf and China through South Asia during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁶⁸

The movements of Muslim preachers, traders, and immigrants facilitated diverse types of cultural exchange that were reflected in literary works, architecture, medical prescriptions, and so on. South Asia's cultural interactions with the Islamic territories occupied by the Mongols were particularly complex and multifaceted. This was not only because of the pre-Mongol connections, but also due to the continuous migration of Muslims from these regions to Delhi and various South Asian port cities. Following the conversions of Ghazan and Tarmashirin to Islam, such connections increased significantly, with a constant flow of people, local innovations, and, in some cases, reverse transmissions of cultural traditions from South Asia to the Mongol territories in Central Asia and the Middle East. The great Sufi scholar Amīr Khusrau Dihlawī (1253–1325), whose father took refuge in Delhi after Chinggis Khan's forces invaded his hometown in Central Asia, is one example of these complex connections. The Mongol threat and context within which Khusrau lived and wrote his literary pieces can be seen from his Persian works such as *Vasaṭ al-Ḥayāt* (The Middle of Life), which eulogized his master Muḥammad Khan, who was killed in a battle against the Mongols, and *Ā'inah-i Iskandarī*, which includes a fictionalized portrayal of a battle between "Alexander" (referring to the Delhi sultan 'Ala al-Dīn) and the Khāqān (Great Khan) of "Chīn."⁶⁹ Such literary works by Khusrau and others produced during the Delhi Sultanate period reflect both the realities of Mongol expansion and the psychological impact these violent events had on the migrant communities and other residents of South Asia.

Perhaps because similar violent encounters did not take place between the South Asian polities and the Yuan, the cultural relationship between the two regions was markedly different. One of the noteworthy facets of this relationship was the transmission of artistic traditions from South Asia to the territories of Qubilai undertaken by a Nepali artist named Anige (1245–1306). In 1260, after proclaiming himself the Great Khan of the Mongols, Qubilai initiated several construction projects associated with Buddhism under the

68 Shokoohy 2003. 69 Brend 2003, xx–xxii.

direction of his religious preceptor 'Phags-pa. Artisans from South Asia were solicited to build a stupa dedicated to the fourth Buddhist patriarch Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan (1182–1251). Anige was part of a group of artisans from South Asia sent by the king of Nepal to Qubilai. Anige was sixteen years old when he arrived in Qubilai's stronghold, Kaiping, in 1262. During the next four decades, Anige is credited with creating three stupas; nine "great" Buddhist temples; two Confucian shrines; one Daoist temple; and several other ritual halls, objects, and paintings. Some of his renowned contributions were the portraits of Qubilai and his wife Chabi, the White Stupa in Beijing, Buddhist temples at Mount Wutai, and several astronomical instruments. Anige also held an official post at the office of All Classes of Artisans, where he trained local craftsmen.⁷⁰

In addition to the above religious and cultural exchanges, knowledge associated with medicine, astronomy, and geography also circulated between South Asia and the Mongol world. Gunpowder-making technology originating in China, for example, spread to South Asia with the expansion and establishment of the Mongol Empire. The earliest notices on the use of gunpowder in South Asia date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and appear in the regions that were in contact with Mongol territories.⁷¹ The writings of Rashīd al-Dīn also indicate the diffusion of botanical and medical knowledge from South Asia to Ilkhanid Iran, some of which seems to have been subsequently retransmitted to Yuan China. The so-called *Huihui yaofang* (Collection of Muslim Prescriptions) circulating in Yuan China, for example, show a South Asian origin of medical ingredients that were subsequently influenced by Arabic, Persian, and Tibetan elements before their eastward transmission.⁷² In the same manner, the Persian miniature paintings, influenced by Chinese traditions during the Mongol period, were then transmitted to South Asia and became identified with Mughal art.⁷³ These are all indicative of a highly connected world within which people, ideas, and objects from South Asia and the Mongol Empire intermingled.

Concluding Remarks

World historians have highlighted the contribution of the Mongol Empire in facilitating cross-regional interactions and exchanges. The travels of Marco Polo and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa are often cited as underscoring the interconnectedness of Afro-Eurasia brought about by Chinggis Khan's conquests and the

70 Jing 1994. 71 Khan 1996. 72 Buell 2010. 73 Titley 1983.

establishment of Mongol khanates stretching from Europe to East Asia. The violence associated with these events, the long-distance travels and migrations that ensued, and the expanding networks of commercial exchange were all contributing factors in this interconnectedness that defined the world of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Within this broader context of world history, South Asia's connections to the Mongol Empire were complex and wide-ranging. They included military engagements, diplomatic exchanges, commercial interactions, and cultural encounters.

Geographical contours and climatic factors may have prevented the Mongols from subjugating South Asia. Although military incursions into the territories of the Delhi Sultanate were frequent and punitive, the Mongols never were able to establish prolonged political control over any of the regions east of the Indus river. Nonetheless, their actions triggered the migrations of Muslims from the Middle East and Central Asia into South Asia. These migrants and their descendants played a significant role in the cultural lives of people throughout most of South Asia. Similarly, the mercantile networks operating from several of the Mongol khanates in times of both war and peace helped integrate the ports and markets of South Asia into the larger Afro-Eurasian world. The geographical location of South Asia was also conducive to shaping and facilitating these economic connections with the Mongol Empire, both directly and as a crucial intermediary between the various khanates.

South Asia also had important religious and cultural links to the Mongol Empire. Buddhist and Islamic exchanges between various regions of South Asia and the Mongol khanates were common and involved the movement of monks and preachers and the flow of artistic and literary traditions. Various other forms of knowledge transmission also took place between these regions. These exchanges and transmissions were often multidirectional and carried out by people belonging to diverse ethnic groups. Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of South Asia's interactions with the Mongol Empire was not the vast geographical space they integrated, but the diversity of the peoples who were participants in these remarkable exchanges.

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Epilogue

The Mongol Empire, Nomadic Culture, and World History

MICHAL BIRAN AND HODONG KIM

The Mongol Empire was a watershed in world history. The cross-Eurasian connectivity that Mongol policies promoted resulted in massive transformations – cultural, religious, economic, geopolitical, and ethnic – across the Old World. Moreover, the Mongol imperial enterprise bequeathed a varied and pragmatic tool kit to future Eurasian empires that was used long after the fourteenth century. In retrospect, all this ushered in the transition from the medieval to the early modern world, helped trigger the Age of Exploration, and, paradoxically, also sowed the seeds for the decline of nomadic political power. The main engine of these transformations was the Mongols' nomadic culture, with its stress on mobility, adaptability, and redistribution.

Yet any discussion of the Mongols' impact on world history cannot avoid the merciless destruction that they left in their wake, which is still what most people associate with the empire. Indeed, this did happen, and certainly it contributed to the revolutionary changes caused by the empire.¹ Yet the devastation and massacres on an unprecedented scale that accompanied the conquests should not be interpreted as wanton cruelty. The violence was also a strategic ploy that went beyond psychological warfare. Initially, the destruction and massacres were brutal yet effective means for compensating for the Mongols' numerical inferiority and preventing future resistance. More specifically, the empire ravaged far more territory than it kept, thereby creating a wide belt of destruction around its frontiers. This buffer, or "tsunami strategy," protected Mongol territory from future incursions, facilitated their continuous expansion, and increased their pasturelands.²

1 For recent analyses of Mongol atrocities in north China and the Muslim world respectively: Wang 2018, esp. 1–14; Jackson 2017, 153–81.

2 May 2007; May, this volume; Biran 2015.

Even in the traumatic initial invasions, however, the pragmatic destruction was limited in both extent and duration. Cities and tribes that capitulated peacefully were spared, though their manpower and riches were channeled for the needs of the ever-expanding empire. Moreover, as soon as the Mongols understood that they could get more from their lands by taxing them instead of ravaging them – and this was felt already in the reign of Chinggis Khan's heir Ögödei (r. 1229–1241) and became apparent with the accession of Chinggis Khan's grandson Möngke (r. 1251–1259) – they consciously attempted to limit damage. This does not mean that there were no exceptions, as the devastation in north China, subjugated in 1234, and the bloody conquest of Baghdad in 1258 aptly demonstrate. Furthermore, regions that became buffer areas between the Mongols and their enemies (such as upper Mesopotamia on the Mamluk–Ilkhanid border, or Poland on the Jochids' western borders) or between the rival Mongol khanates (e.g., Khurasan between the Ilkhanids and the Chaghadaids, Uighuria between the Chaghadaids and the Yuan, the Caucasus between the Hülegüids and the Jochids) certainly suffered from multiple raids throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and regions that the nomads turned into mainly pasturelands (e.g., Semirechye) were badly harmed even in the long run. However, recent archaeological studies suggest that in some cases, such as that of Otrar in south Kazakhstan, the site of the 1218 incident that brought the Mongols into the Islamic world, the literary descriptions of Mongol violence might have been vastly exaggerated, even when referring to Chinggis Khan's invasions: the city's archaeological record detected none of the atrocities the Mongols are accused of – there was no burning, scorching, or fire damage on the buildings, and no sign of looting, flooding, or leveling buildings.³ Medieval authors might have embellished Mongol desolation with literary tropes that contributed to the empire's barbarian image. Yet such descriptions were probably embraced by the Mongols, who understood their value as propaganda and psychological warfare. More important, however, is that some of the most productive areas in thirteenth-century Eurasia – south China and southern Iran – were not severely damaged, due to their late conquest or peaceful submission respectively. This certainly helped in restoring the Eurasian economy and encouraged the development of maritime trade, notably in the Indian Ocean between the South China Sea and the Persian Gulf.

3 Campbell 2020; Waugh 2017.

Furthermore, together with calculated or accidental devastation, there were also positive attempts by the Mongol khans to restore the productivity of their lands. In some areas, the restoration was as quick and potent as the destruction, and was facilitated by the multiple possibilities of regional and international trade: Otrar's archaeological record, for example, documents its thriving since the late thirteenth century, when it became an important post on the Silk Roads. Thus while a few cities never fully recovered from Mongol atrocities (e.g. Urgench in Khwārazm; Nishapur in Khurasan), even urban areas that were severely harmed, such as Samarqand or Baghdad, resumed functioning and thrived economically (though not politically) soon after their bloody conquest, not least due to Mongol efforts.⁴ Certainly Mongol capitals, even when built in formerly devastated areas (as in the case of Dadu (Beijing)), became bustling hubs of economic, diplomatic, and cultural exchange.

The Chinggisid Exchange: Cultural, Economic, and Religious Transformations

The Mongols promoted cross-cultural exchange on an unprecedented scale. This was first due to the immense size of the empire, the largest contiguous empire in human history, which brought major components of three civilizations, the Sinitic, Islamic and Orthodox Christian, in addition to the steppe's nomadic culture, under the Mongols' direct authority. Moreover, as the only superpower of the thirteenth century the Mongols had a noticeable impact on regions and civilizations outside their purview, such as Japan, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, the Arab Middle East, and much of Europe. Yet it was Mongol policies, notably mobility, that enabled them both to create and to rule such a huge empire and to play a dominant and active role in the Eurasian exchange, which we term here the Chinggisid exchange.⁵

Scholars often used the term *Pax Mongolica* (Latin: "Mongol peace") to refer either to the whole of the Mongol moment or to most of the Mongol commonwealth era from roughly 1260 or 1280 to 1360, namely the period that

4 For Samarqand: Biran 2007, 66–67; Baghdad: Biran 2016; Biran 2019b.

5 This is following May (2012, 21–22 and *passim*), who coined the term "the Chinggis exchange." Favereau (2021, 6–7 and *passim*) prefers the term "Mongol exchange," stressing the post-1260 exchanges (i.e., after Chinggis Khan's time and after the end of the western conquests). While we highlight the difference between the United Empire and the post-1260 periods, obviously the United Empire set the stage for major transformations and hence our Chinggisid exchange covers the entire Mongol moment.

followed the end of the great campaigns of conquest.⁶ We find the term misleading for two reasons. First, neither of the periods mentioned above was especially peaceful, and wars, notably the imperial campaigns of the United Empire, were powerful catalysts of change. Second, the Mongols' role in the Eurasian exchange was much more dynamic than the term *Pax Mongolica* implies. We hence prefer the "Chinggisid exchange," which highlights the Mongols' active role in Eurasian transformations, beginning with the empire's founding father.

Among the Mongol policies that propelled the Chinggisid exchange, mobility played a major role. Mobility saturated all levels of Mongolian life and culture, from their pastoral nomadic economy adapted to steppe ecology, through their unprecedented military success, up to the shaping of their imperial institutions. The only way by which the Mongols, who by the time of Chinggis Khan numbered less than a million people, were able to create and rule such a huge empire was by fully mobilizing the resources – both human and material – of the regions under their control. Originating in sparsely populated Mongolia, where wealth was measured in people (and livestock) rather than territory, the Chinggisids regarded humans and human talent as a form of booty, to be shared out across the empire and amongst the family like material goods. Thus myriads of people – followed by goods, techniques, institutions, texts, and ideas – were sent across Eurasia to provide for the empire's needs – military, civil, and cultural.

The scope of these huge population movements was especially enormous during the United Empire, where more migrations were coerced, political, and collective, whereas under the Mongol commonwealth there were more voluntary, economic, and individual migrations of a smaller but still considerable scope. Under both periods, however, one can find a full spectrum of migrations, of unprecedented distance and scale. Several types of population movements can be discerned among these various migrations: military deployment; refugees; repopulation or civil transfer; relocations of experts, namely labor and scholarly migrations; slaves or human trafficking; and nomadic migrations.

The first and most potent instrument of Mongol mobilization was the army, as the Mongols spread across Eurasia, appropriating part of the defeated and submitted populations, both nomad and sedentary, and organizing them in decimal units that were assigned to Mongol commanders and often sent to fight across the continent. The advance of this formidable army

6 E.g., Di Cosmo 2010; Favereau 2021, 6–7.

in turn instigated a massive flight of people, as refugees of all classes and professions tried to escape the approaching Mongol threat, before or during each of their major campaigns (and later escaped their censuses and internal conflicts). Furthermore, the empire transferred thousands of farmers and artisans to repopulate and revive the devastated areas. Another major group sought by the Mongols were experts with various skills – in fields as varied as administration, military technology, trade, religion, craftsmanship, science, the arts, and entertainment – who were gathered and redistributed across Eurasia. The recruitment of professionals was systematized as early as the late 1230s by means of a census in which people were classified according to vocational skills. Human trafficking also flourished under the Mongols. Originally manned by the huge number of captives taken during the United Empire's campaigns, the continuous supply of cheap manpower accelerated the demand for slaves across Eurasia, not least among the Mongols themselves, and including military slaves (*mamlūks*), in demand mainly in the Mamluk and Delhi sultanates. Thus, when the great campaigns ended after the 1270s, other means (such as raids, kidnapping, and even child levies) were sought to fulfil the growing demand. Nomadic migrations, not least those of the Mongol *ordos* (mobile courts) with their accompanying merchants, scholars, and courtiers, also continued throughout the Mongol moment, facilitating both temporary and permanent migrations.⁷

This torrential human flow connected people within and beyond the empire and generated countless opportunities for cross-cultural exchange. Most of what was conveyed throughout the empire was not the Mongols' own culture, but rather elements from the cultures of their sedentary subjects. However, it was the Chinggisids who initiated the bulk of these exchanges. The prime movers of this exchange were imperial agents, and the particular cultural goods that diffused across Eurasia were those compatible with Mongol norms and beliefs. The Mongols were not an almighty "Big Brother" controlling cultural commodities, nor were they bystanders allowing a *laissez-faire* exchange. Instead, they actively selected from the multicultural reservoir at their disposal the elements most worthy of importing for the empire's sake. In Allsen's terms, the Mongols were the agents of exchange, the filter that determined what would be diffused across and beyond their empire. Hence cross-Eurasian connectivity owed much to the Mongols' outlook, both on their own empire and on other cultures.

7 Allsen 2015b; Biran 2015; Biran 2021b.

Like other Eurasian steppe nomads, the Mongols conceived their empire as the joint property of the whole royal clan, and the qa'an was therefore expected to share its wealth and territory with his kin. This redistribution in turn contributed both to the dissolution of the empire into various polities and to the ongoing connections among these successor states. Thus, even when the empire dissolved around 1260, and despite the various – and often bloody – conflicts among the various *uluses*, they still saw themselves as brotherly states, parts of a common Chinggisid space, and held on to the ideal of Chinggisid unity. Even at the height of the inter-Mongol conflicts in the last decades of the thirteenth century, the rival khanates referred to each other in kinship terms (*aqā* and *ini*, older and younger brothers) and considered their conflicts family feuds, which were never intended to eliminate their rivals. Moreover, the various *uluses* all retained the main institutions of the United Empire, such as the mobile court (*ordo*); the decimal division of the army; the royal guard (*keshig*), which was also the nursery of future military and administrative leaders and a powerful tool of acculturation; the postal system (*jam*); the judges (*jarghuchi*); and the local governors (*darughachi*). These often existed side by side with the (very different) local institutions (e.g., in China or Iran), thereby creating important regional variants, and sometimes also with institutions that originated in other realms controlled by the Mongols (e.g., the Chinese census expanded in the United Empire period to most Mongol-ruled territories). Yet the common Mongolian institutions maintained a basic unity between the four successor states and encouraged integration. Furthermore, the various Chinggisids continued to regularly exchange gifts, messengers, and revenues; to promote trade even in times of war; and to compete for and exchange specialists in order to optimize the economic and cultural wealth of their sedentary lands and enhance their kingly reputation.⁸

The Mongols did not force their own culture on their subjects. In typical Eurasian steppe nomadic fashion, they saw multiculturalism as a natural state of affairs, and were pragmatically willing to learn from foreigners – subjects, neighbors, visitors – regardless of their ethnicity, religion, status, or gender – to foster their empire's stability, wealth, and splendor. This was obvious in the military field – the navy established for the conquest of Song China is by far the best example – but is true in other fields as well, often resulting in the amalgamation of specialists (e.g., physicians, astronomers, cooks) of diverse origins and skills in the various Mongol courts. Moreover, the Mongols,

8 Kim 2009; Kim, this volume.

especially during the United Empire and in Yuan China, often preferred non-local administrators, who were more likely to remain loyal, and their attempts to ensure these officials “a taste of home” in their new environment further enhanced cross-cultural exchange. Thus the flow of people, ideas, and artifacts across Eurasia was determined to a large extent by the Mongols’ affinities and needs.⁹

This outlook, combined with the huge population movements instigated by the empire, resulted in integration on a Eurasian scale and an unprecedented connectivity that extended well beyond the empire’s frontiers. The main axes of Mongol cross-cultural exchange ran between the Sinitic and Islamic civilizations, whereas the Orthodox Christians were a relatively marginal partner in this exchange. This was mostly because China and the Muslim world were roughly equivalent in their cultural resources, so that they had much more to offer the Mongols than the hinterland of Orthodox Christianity under their rule, but also because the Mongols did not share the same territory with their Russian subjects, rather ruling them indirectly, in contrast to their relations with their Chinese or Muslim subjects.

Yet another facet of the cross-cultural exchange was the direct impact of Mongolian culture on their subjects and neighbors. The Chinggisids’ unparalleled success spawned imitation throughout Eurasia in terms of Mongolian names and naming patterns, clothes, hairstyle, diet, and music. Notably, for example, “Tatar dress” (the medieval equivalent of blue jeans) was adopted in fourteenth-century England, in Yuan and Ming China, in Ilkhanid and post-Ilkhanid Iran, in Chaghadaid and Timurid Central Asia, in Mamluk Egypt and Syria, and in north India. Tent furnishings like rugs and tapestries, which the Mongols used to make their palaces resemble tents, became high fashion among ruling elites from the Pacific to the Adriatic. Eurasian elites became well versed in Chinggisid lore, and Mongol social norms, such as levirate marriage or the high position of women, also penetrated their subjects’ lives. In other words, the booming cross-cultural exchange resulted in a common Eurasian culture – political, material, administrative – albeit with important local variants.¹⁰

Not everything that was exchanged was received with open arms or had a lasting impact. Notably, intellectual property or scientific theories (e.g., of medicine, astronomy), the reception of which would require the receiver to question his own tradition, did not travel well, and sometimes – for example –

⁹ Allsen 2001; Allsen 2009.

¹⁰ Biran 2015; Biran 2019b; see Blair and McCausland, Volume 11.

the Mongols preferred to separate Muslim astronomers from Chinese ones to ensure that they would have independent “second opinions.” Yet practical aspects, such as the use of medicinal plants, the grid system for drawing maps, or calendrical calculations, could easily be adapted into existing theoretical frameworks. The Mongols thus promoted scientific transfer.¹¹

Among the things that were disseminated more easily was technology: most notably, the Mongols introduced gunpowder from China to Europe and southern Asia, even though at this stage it was far from a military game changer. However, counterweight trebuchets from the Middle East that were brought to China by Iranian engineers played a leading role in wrecking Song fortifications. More mundane technologies such as alcohol and sugar distilling, the wheelbarrow, and even improved types of paper also moved across Eurasia. Yet the attempt to introduce Chinese-style paper money – and through it the technique of printing – to Iran failed miserably as the people refused to replace metals with paper.¹²

Material culture, especially art, was often well received and adapted to local conditions and tastes. The enduring influence of Chinese painting on Persian art is a well-documented legacy of the Mongol period, which left its mark even in Europe. Moreover, under Mongol rule, for the first and last time in the history of Muslim art, we find visual representations of Muḥammad (and other prophets), often imitating Buddhist or Christian models. Chinese painting also flourished in Yuan China with Mongol encouragement. The foreign influences on it are less apparent, but the Mongols’ lack of artistic orthodoxy allowed a burst of original paintings of various types. Other media, notably textiles, were similarly diffused. Even architectural styles, for example the domed mausoleums that became popular after Mongol Islamization, the most monumental example of which was Öljeitü’s mausoleum in Sultaniyya, were disseminated across the continent, and might have inspired later Muslim masterpieces such as Tamerlane’s grave (Gūr-i Amīr) in Samarqand, the Indian Taj Mahal, and perhaps also European cathedrals.¹³

Mongol eclectic tastes and migrant diasporas encouraged exchange in fields of cuisine and entertainment: thus noodles and sherbets, originating in the Middle East and favored by the Mongols, spread into both China and Italy, and rice traveled from China to Iran and westward,¹⁴ while Mongol

¹¹ Allsen 2009; Buell and Anderson 2021; Rossabi and Morrison, this volume.

¹² May 2019, 99–100; May, this volume.

¹³ Blair 2004; Blair 2019; Prazniak, this volume; Blair and McCausland, Volume 11.

¹⁴ In all cases, this was not the food’s first appearance in the new location, but the scope of the exchange localized it.

imperial cuisine developed out of the nomads' crude diet of "mice and dogs" to a sophisticated fusion cuisine. Musicians, performers, and wrestlers from all over Eurasia frequented the Mongol courts, making the Mongols the forefathers of Beijing opera on the one hand and of international athletic competitions on the other. Exchanges in the fields of economy and religion will be described separately below.

These extensive exchanges and the continuous voluminous movement of people, objects, texts, and ideas throughout Eurasia not only encouraged Eurasian integration, but also inspired the creation of tools such as multilingual dictionaries, travel literature, and maps that facilitated further contact both within and outside the empire. For example, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, multilingual dictionaries could be found not only in Iran and China, but also in Armenia, Korea, north India, Egypt, Yemen, and Crimea. Likewise, the two most famous travelogues, those of Marco Polo and of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, were compiled by natives of Venice and Tangier respectively. The broadening of intellectual horizons finds visual expression in maps, like those produced in mid-fourteenth-century China and Korea with the help of Muslim cartographers. These maps included more than 100 places in Europe, over thirty in Africa, and many more in the Middle East.

Another example of the broadening of horizons – both geographical and intellectual – was the first true world history, compiled for the ilkhans in Persia by their vizier Rashīd al-Dīn, a polymath of Jewish origin whose diverse interests included medicine, theology, cooking, agriculture, history, and geography. His *Compendium of Chronicles*, which is by far the most cited source in this volume, offered not only a detailed history of the Mongols from the pre-Chinggisid period to the reign of Qubilai's successor, but also sections dedicated to the annals of China, India, the Muslim world, the Jews, and the Franks, as well as comprehensive genealogical and geographical appendices. The book was also richly illuminated, and its unique illustrations included scenes from biblical stories, the life of the Buddha, and the Prophet Muḥammad's biography, as well as portraits of popes, Chinese emperors, and Muslim rulers, all dressed like Mongol khans. Moreover, the book's multiple scenes of enthronements, warfare, and piety were an effective tool for Mongol propaganda and helped in disseminating the work.¹⁵ The result was a quantum leap forward in information about the world (especially East Asia) that was available in the Muslim Middle East. Correspondingly, the

¹⁵ Biran 2004; Biran 2015; Hillenbrand 2011; Melville, Volume 11; Rossabi and Morrison, this volume. On Rashīd al-Dīn's questioned authorship of the *Compendium*: Otsuka 2018.

European picture of the world also became broader, and included central, south, and especially East Asia. Moreover, the closer acquaintance with multiple cultures promoted cultural and religious relativism, apparent, for example, in Rashīd al-Dīn's description of the Buddha as "a prophet with a book."¹⁶

True, part of this cosmopolitanism and cultural effervescence originated in coercion and violence: the Samarqandi artisans transferred to north China, or the European smiths resettled in Qaraqorum, probably mourned their ruined homeland and the murder of their kin rather than rejoicing at the opportunity to exchange techniques with their Chinese counterparts. However, later on, under the khanates, craftsmen also migrated voluntarily, attracted by prosperity and new markets, as did the Persian potters who came to Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province in southeast China, where in the mid-fourteenth century they co-operated with local Chinese potters.¹⁷ Thus at the same time as the Mongols were mercilessly destroying human and cultural resources, they were also creating conditions in which long-distance cultural exchange flourished on an unprecedented scale.

Religious Changes

Even the Mongols' harshest critics praise them for not forcing their native religion on their subjects, and yet their policies transformed the religious landscape of Eurasia, resulting mainly in a huge expansion of Islam and the flourishing of Tibetan Buddhism. The unprecedented expansion of the Mongol Empire was understood by the Mongols, as well as by their subjects, neighbors, and enemies, as Heaven's will. According to Mongol political theology it was Tengri, the sky god of the steppe, who conferred upon Chinggis Khan and his heirs the right to rule over the Earth and the charisma required to pursue this goal. Perceiving world religions as various ways of addressing Tengri, and well aware of the importance of religion for co-opting their subjects, the immanent Mongols practiced religious pluralism, subsidized religious experts of various creeds, and presided over religious debates, thereby encouraging religious relativism. Mobilizing the spiritual resources of their domains for the sake of the empire just as they did with their human and material resources, the Chinggisids promoted religious exchange on an unparalleled scale.¹⁸

¹⁶ Elverskog, this volume.

¹⁷ Blair 2019, 349; Blair and McCausland, Volume 11.

¹⁸ Elverskog, this volume.

The Mongols formed a huge reservoir of potential converts for the different world religions, and missionaries were among those who roamed the open routes of the Mongol Empire. So long as the empire remained united, Mongol indigenous religion, often termed shamanism, remained the sole faith of the ruling class. However, after its dissolution, each khanate adopted a world religion either to ingratiate itself with the local population or, conversely, to accentuate its ideological independence. Muslim civilization, by far the most mobile, mercantile, and cosmopolitan society in the empire, which had already amassed considerable experience assimilating people, including nomads, was the great winner in the conversion race. The Islamization of the three western Mongol khanates – the Ilkhanate in 1295 and the Golden Horde and the Chaghadaids over the next fifty or so years – was a gradual and complex process, stemming mainly from the deep ties between the Chinggisids and their Muslim troops, notably the Turkish soldiers that comprised the bulk of the Mongol armies, and supported by assimilation and the preaching of charismatic Sufis and more mundane religious scholars. Moreover, disseminated through a variety of migrants – merchants, soldiers, refugees, transferred artisans, experts, captives, and slaves – Islam also made strides into other regions, including China, India, Southeast Asia, Africa, and Siberia, mostly before the western *uluses*’ Islamization. Thus, while Mongol rule had begun with a series of blows to the world of Islam, culminating in the elimination of the ‘Abbāsid caliphate (750–1258), eventually one of the noteworthy unintended outcomes of Mongol population movements was a huge expansion of Islam.¹⁹

Simultaneously, Tibetan Buddhism made headway in Yuan China, and remained part of the imperial cult therein ever after. Attracted by its political aspects, universal appeal, colorful rituals, and talented agents like Qubilai’s teacher ‘Phags-pa lama (1235–1280), the Chinggisids adopted this form of Buddhism. While at this stage it did not reach most of the rank-and-file Mongols, the artistic and architectural forms of Tibetan Buddhism became integral components of Yuan palaces. The Mongols oversaw the completion of Tibet’s unseating of India as the center of Buddhism, and the beginning of theocratic rule in Tibet.

Moreover, Mongol rule, which brought together experts of various creeds, resumed direct contact between Buddhists (of various origins and doctrines) and Muslims (of various creeds) at an unprecedented scale and across Eurasia, pitting Tibetan Buddhism as the main rival to Islam first for converting the

¹⁹ Biran 2007, 93–98; Biran 2015.

Mongols and later – notably after the second conversion of the Mongols in the sixteenth century – among the steppe nomads.

In contrast, plagued by doctrinal schism, stressing exclusivity, less adept in magic and expecting the khans to accept the Pope's superiority, Christianity in its various forms failed, despite intensive missionary efforts, to translate the freedom of worship and access to new territories under the Chinggisids into durable achievements.²⁰

Economic Exchange

The mobility of goods across Mongol Eurasia was fueled by redistribution, another major feature of nomadic culture. Trade was essential to nomads, both economically and politically, since their own resources did not always cover all their needs and because nomadic political culture requires leaders to redistribute wealth among their followers to assert authority. Moreover, the Mongols did not believe in accumulating riches but in circulating them to generate further revenue, satisfy their subordinates, and promote good fortune. The khan distributed territory as appanages (*qubi*) to his family members after each major conquest – and these appanages' revenues continued to circulate among their (often absent) owners, now residing in a different khanate. He also routinely redistributed wealth among his followers during assemblies (*quriltais*), feasts, and hunts or through the military elites. Each recipient in turn trickled the riches down to his subordinates. The process also had a spiritual dimension: the khan's gifts, often luxurious textiles or valuable drinking vessels, were also imbued with residual amounts of his charisma – so much so that the term for the khan's guard (*keshig*), which enjoyed lavish and frequent gifts, became a synonym for good fortune.²¹ The redistribution continued throughout Mongol rule, attained first from the loot of the conquests and later from taxation and tribute, gifts, raids, and trade. In fact, when the conquests ended by the late thirteenth century, participating in the economic system of the empire (e.g., by providing tribute) became an equivalent to submission (*il*), formerly acquired through military means, and the importance of trade for state revenue significantly increased.²²

Aware of the value of trade, from the very beginning of their expansion the Mongols invested in commercial infrastructure and tried to provide security to merchants moving through their realm. Their postal system (*jam*) played a major role in these efforts, and since some of its stations were mobile tents,

20 Biran 2015. 21 Allsen, this volume (ideology); Favereau 2018; Favereau 2021.

22 Biran 2021a; Favereau 2018.

the system was flexible enough to react to various political upheavals and shift routes to avoid war zones.²³ When the need arose, the nomadic Mongols even built towns and cities to facilitate trade, notably in the Volga region but also in Central Asia. Such improved infrastructure also meant that for the first time in history, individual merchants and travelers could, and did, travel far longer distances instead of limiting themselves to relay trade, as they had in the pre-Mongol period. Marco Polo and his kin, going from Venice to Beijing (Khanbaliq), are an obvious example, while Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Greek slave girl, who ended her life in the harem of the sultan of Java, attests that people traveled long distances also as commodities.²⁴

Simultaneously, the Mongols, as both individuals and rulers, also took active part in trade as both investors and consumers. The Mongol elite used merchants as another channel of circulating wealth. They entrusted part of their capital to commercial agents called *ortoqs* (partners), namely traders (or trading companies) acting on their behalf in return for a share of the profits. This investment facilitated long-distance transactions and enabled the Mongols to expend some of their profits on the lavish consumption that typifies the *nouveau riche*. The Mongols also nurtured connections with other merchants within and beyond their empires. These included private merchants of various ethnicities and religions (e.g., Uighur, Chinese, Indian, Armenian, European, but mostly Muslim), and, after the empire's dissolution, also government-backed Italian merchants defended by state treaties, who were allowed to establish colonies: notably Caffa and Tana on the Black Sea shores of the Crimean peninsula controlled by the Golden Horde, and Ilkhanid Tabriz. The presence of European merchants along the Silk Roads, and direct connection between Europe and China, were also an innovation of the Mongol period.

Yet the Mongols' most important contribution to the economic exchange was linking the various Eurasian trade routes – both continental and maritime – together to a web of commercial networks that crisscrossed the entire Old World. From 1251 and certainly from the conquest of Song China in 1279, and despite their disastrous record in further naval campaigns, the Mongols not only invested heavily in shipbuilding and promoting maritime trade, but also connected the various maritime routes to the continental routes. Thus the Indian Ocean routes were closely connected to the caravan roads leaving from Hormuz, Ma'bar, or Aden that headed inland from the Indian, Iranian, or Arabian coasts, especially during seasons unsuited to sailing. The Black Sea routes linked not only to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic but also to the

23 Shim 2014; Allsen 2019. 24 Tolmateva 2017; Biran 2021b.

Fur and Silk Roads that imported goods from the northern, southern, and eastern edges of Asia (and also from Eastern Europe). Moreover, the busy ports of south China and Iran had also to service the Mongol capitals, located closer to the steppe, that became hubs of redistribution and international, mainly trans-civilizational (east–west), trade. In addition, these capitals also practiced trans-ecological trade (south–north) with the forest peoples of the far north. Thus the commercial networks invigorated by the Mongols connected east, west, north, and south.

While the far northern trade was administrated by traditional tribute and barter, it was in the southern ports that sophisticated market-driven exchange prevailed. For example, Yuan workshops exported cobalt from Northern Europe and Iran to produce blue-and-white porcelain, which was in high demand in the Muslim world and Southeast Asia. This proto-globalization was also apparent in the fiscal realm: the period spanning the 1280s and 1360s – from the conquest of south China to the fall of the Yuan – is known as “the Silver Century,” since it bore witness to a sharp rise in the use of silver across Eurasia, from England and Japan to Bengal and North Africa. Uncoined silver became the standard unit for pricing transactions throughout Eurasia, even when paid by other means, whether paper money in China, silver coins, gold ingots, silk, or cowrie shells.²⁵

Yet it would be misleading to portray the Mongol economy only in rosy colors. While the Mongols cultivated economic ties that extended well beyond the empire’s borders, and were actively involved in their subjects’ economies more than other contemporary polities, controlling craft production, currency, trade, and crops, and at least in China presiding over extensive state monopolies (on weapons, alcohol, and so on), their main interest was increasing their own revenues. They were aware that a thriving economy would benefit both them and their subjects, and, for example, invested heavily (but not always successfully) in restoring agriculture in north China, Iran, and Central Asia, or respected their subjects’ sensitivities by minting coins familiar to locals and thus easily used in existing circuits of exchange. Yet they hardly differentiated between their personal purse and state coffers, and when their need for more revenues increased, due to military expenditures, building projects, maintenance of the postal system, the never-ending redistribution of wealth among a growing number of Chinggisids, or the natural disasters that were especially frequent in the mid-fourteenth century, they did not hesitate to raise taxes or demand new levies, often driving their subjects to destitution, that could – and did – lead to rebellion.

25 Kuroda 2009; Kuroda, this volume; Allsen 2019; Favereau 2021.

Moreover, proto-globalization also had its dangers, as bacteria like those causing the Black Death also moved more freely in the Mongols' relatively open world. While the story of the Jochid Mongols disseminating the plague by catapulting infected corpses into the besieged Italian colony of Caffa in 1346 has proved to be an unsubstantiated myth,²⁶ the plague probably originated in Mongol-ruled territories near the Tian Shan mountains in modern Kirgizstan. In the 1340s it was disseminated via the fur and grain trades, with their accompanying rats, fleas, and bacteria, into the Golden Horde, reaching Constantinople in autumn 1347, only after the Golden Horde, Venice, and Genoa had concluded peace and resumed the grain trade. The plague then spread to Europe and the Middle East, causing severe depopulation and urban decline.²⁷ Moreover, the plague came on the heels of the Ilkhanate's collapse (1335), which international exchange survived by shifting the trade routes northward to the Golden Horde. Yet the upheavals in the Golden Horde following the plague, combined with the fall of the qa'an state in China (1368) that was the engine of economic exchange, seriously undermined the Mongol international system of trade, as well as ending the Mongol Moment. The close of Mongol rule in the sedentary realms was greatly impacted by the climate change of the fourteenth century and the unprecedented natural disasters that accompanied it, hurting both nomads and farmers. Climate thus both contributed to the rise of the nomadic Mongols and accelerated the collapse of their empire. The ecological crisis, in turn, escalated the political crisis of the Mongol khanates, expressed in the rise to power of military commanders in the western khanates and in popular rebellions in China. This derives mainly from the erosion of the Mongols' military power and legitimation due to the halt of the expansion, to succession struggles, and to the deteriorating economic situation, accelerated by the needs of redistribution. The nomadic culture of the Mongols thus both raised them to power and played a role in their fall. All this, however did not eliminate the broadening of the geographical and intellectual horizons, nor eradicate the Mongols' imperial legacy.

Institutional and Geopolitical Transformations

The institutional legacy of the Mongols is easily overlooked, since what they left behind was not their ethnic culture, such as language, or a religion of their

²⁶ Barker 2021.

²⁷ Barker 2021; Green 2014. Green 2020 argues that the Mongols brought the plague from Central Asia already in the thirteenth century, notably during Hülegü's campaign in the 1250s.

own, but a complex and heterogeneous imperial culture that combined indigenous, local, and foreign elements. Moreover, their imprint was different in the various realms over which they ruled, the deepest impact being on the regions where they ruled the longest and those without a strong indigenous tradition of a centralized state, namely Central Asia and Russia. Furthermore, while some of their successors (e.g., Timurid Central Asia, Mughal India, Qing China,) cherished their debt to the Chinggisids, others (e.g., Ming China, Muscovy) eventually rejected it altogether. Yet the viable imperial tool kit that the Mongols bequeathed to their inheritors facilitated ruling over both steppe and sown. It contributed not only to the Mongols' direct successor states but also to other regional empires, and facilitated the emergence – especially from the sixteenth century onward – of a group of regional empires (the Mughals, Ottomans, and Safavids; Ming and Qing China; Muscovite Russia) that were vaster and more enduring than most pre-Mongol polities.²⁸ These empires were also more stable than the Mongol states in the sedentary realms, being less consumed by the endemic succession struggles and the need for constant redistribution typical of nomadic empires, while simultaneously being equipped with better technology, some of it – notably gunpowder – originally diffused by the Mongols. Still, these early modern polities owed much to the Mongols' imperial repertoire, which included elements of political culture, the law, and military, financial, and administrative institutions.

The basic tenet of Mongol political culture was the Chinggisid principle, according to which only descendants of Chinggis Khan were eligible to become khans (rulers). Creative manipulations notwithstanding, in Central Asia this remained valid until the eighteenth century, also influencing monarchical behavior and social hierarchies in Qing China, Moghul India, Muscovy, and even the Ottoman Empire. The ever-evolving *yasa*, the law code attributed to Chinggis Khan, played a significant role in Muslim Central Asia, notably in the fields of political and criminal matters, despite various glaring contradictions with Islamic law, and might have also encouraged the promulgation of the Ottoman codex of “secular” law, the *qānūn*. Moreover, in the Muslim world, the Mongol period resulted in a new image of the imperial Muslim ruler. Fashioned after the Mongol charismatic ruler, and highlighting the ruler's unmediated connection to the Divine, this new model of auspicious, sacred, cosmic, and messianic rulership was later adopted by the early modern Islamic empires from the Timurids (1370–1501) onward. Yet as Brack

28 Biran 2004, 358–61; Biran 2015; Neumann and Wigen 2015; Crossley and Garthwaite 2016.

has convincingly shown, the roots of the Muslim political theology of divine selection are also found in the post-conversion Ilkhanate, when cultural brokers – notably Rashīd al-Dīn, mentioned above – strove to integrate Mongol concepts of sacred kingship into an Islamic framework.²⁹ Like the Mongol khans, the early modern sacred kings could legislate their own laws and were less dependent on the religious scholars, who, while often continuing to mediate the ruler's new image to his subjects, did so mainly as imperial agents, subject to the ruler's will, not as an independent source of religious authority. The subjugation of the religious establishment to a sacrosanct emperor was also the case in post-Mongol China (a notable example is the Qing emperors' confirmation of the various Buddhist incarnations in Mongolia and Tibet), although in the Chinese realm this was not an innovation. Furthermore, court ceremonies and diplomatic protocols, namely symbols of hierarchy and power, from Moghul India to Muscovy and Ming China owed much to their Chinggisid precedents.³⁰

Other borrowings of Mongol institutions were of a more utilitarian nature. The Mongols developed efficient means to rule an empire, and this fact was not overlooked by their successors. Notably, the imperial postal system was adopted in Ming and Qing China, Safavid Iran, and Muscovy, and in some areas functioned until the nineteenth century; the empire's military organization was adhered to in Ming China and Muscovy (up to the rise of firearms); Chinese provincial borders date back to Yuan times; and the many Mongolian loanwords related to finances in Russian, Persian, and Turkic suggest that the empire's commercial, taxation, and monetary policies deeply affected Russia, Iran, and Central Asia. This institutional legacy contributed to the geopolitical changes instigated by the Mongols.

The Mongol conquests broke down the existing political orders across Eurasia, and integrated various cultural regions into one giant political framework. Thus, in the United Empire, Beijing (at the time called Dadu or Khanbaliq), Moscow (then a small principality), and Baghdad (albeit for just two years) were all ruled from the Mongol capital, Qaraqorum. When the empire eventually dissolved into four main *uluses*, however, the Mongols created new, vast regional empires that left a more enduring imprint on future geopolitics and ethnic identities.

The Mongols united China, after 350 years of separation between north and south, a unity that has survived ever since. Moreover, they extended the borders of China proper, which from the Ming dynasty onwards also

29 Brack 2018; Brack 2019. 30 E.g., Balabanillar 2012; Robinson 2008; Robinson 2019.

included Yunnan in the southwest, Gansu in the northwest and Liaodong in the northeast. Moreover, Yuan rule created a precedent for including large swaths of Inner Asia – Tibet, Manchuria, (Inner) Mongolia and Xinjiang – under Beijing’s rule,³¹ and for China as a multiethnic empire which included – and after the fourteenth century often absorbed – people from across Eurasia, notably from among the neighboring steppe peoples.

The Mongols also contributed to the emergence of Iran as a distinct polity within the Muslim world, reviving the political meaning of *Īrān-zamīn* (the land of Iran), a concept of the Sassanian Empire (224–651) not used during early Muslim rule in Iran, but later adopted by the Safavids (1501–1722). Here, too, the Mongols impacted the shaping of Iran’s borders from the early modern period onwards. Under Mongol rule, the Persian language finally became supreme over Arabic as a vehicle for writing history, and soon became the written lingua franca of most of the Turco-Mongolic world. The ethnic composition of the population in this region became much what it has since remained, namely it included many Turkic and Turco-Mongolian nomads, among whom most of the local Mongols were eventually subsumed.³²

The advent of Russia as a Eurasian power, as opposed to the few European principalities of Kievan Rus’ times, can be traced back to the legacy of the Golden Horde. While the Mongols’ contribution to the rise of Muscovy is still debated, Mongol rule justified Muscovite expansion eastwards. Moreover, similar to the situation in Iran, it revived the concept of the “Russian Land” (*Ruskaia zemlia*), which now refers to the patrimony of the prince of Moscow and eventually to the expanding territory of Muscovy. Yet despite (or because of) its great debt to the Mongols, from the sixteenth century onward, Russia used the Mongols – or Tatars as they referred to them – as its significant other, developing the concept of the Tatar Yoke, and defining Russian identity in opposition to it.³³

With respect to Central and Inner Asia, where Chinggisid dynasties ruled until the modern period, the main effect of the Mongol period was a major ethnic reconfiguration. Thus Chinggis Khan turned the various Mongol tribes into a Mongolian nation, for which he also adopted a script related to

31 Dardess 2003; Atwood, this volume. Inner Mongolia remains part of the PRC, while Outer Mongolia, a dependent of China in Qing times, became the independent Republic of Mongolia in 1921.

32 Fragner 1997; Kamola and Morgan, this volume.

33 Halperin 1980; Halperin 1985; Ostrowski 1998, 1–27, 244–48; Favereau 2021; Favereau and Pochekaev, this volume.

steppe empires. Even though keeping this nation united in the post-imperial period proved to be a formidable task, it eventually gave rise to the contemporary Republic of Mongolia, as well as the PRC's autonomous region of Inner Mongolia.³⁴ Across the Eurasian steppes, Mongol rule resulted in a major reshuffling that gave rise to the contemporary Central Asian peoples. Mongol policies, especially the devastation that accompanied the initial conquests, the mobilization of the army, the formation of new administrative divisions, ruling through foreigners, and finally imperial disintegration, which forced many new collectivities to refashion their identities, were crucial for the ethnic changes. These circumstances all led, from the late fourteenth century onward, to the dispersion of many long-established steppe peoples, such as the Tanguts, the Uighurs, the Qipchaqs, and the Khitans, who were either assimilated in the sedentary civilizations surrounding them, mainly in China or Iran, or reduced to clan or tribal units in the new collectives established by the Mongols. These emerging collectivities coalesced mainly around the leadership of a certain – dead or alive – Chinggisid prince (e.g., Özbek, Noghai, Chaghadaï), whose members saw themselves as his *nökörs* (followers), and eventually formed the basis for many of the modern Central Asian Muslim peoples, e.g., the Uzbeks and Kazakhs, as well as the “pockets” of Muslims in contemporary Russia, such as the Tatars and Noghais.³⁵

While most of these new steppe peoples originated in the territory of the Golden Horde, another legacy of the Jochid Ulus was the inclusion of North Asia – up to Siberia – under imperial rule. First, the Mongols relocated the capitals of the khanates toward the northeast, probably due to the nomads' preference for residing closer to the steppe and the location of the first imperial capital, Qaraqorum, sometimes with enduring results. Thus the Chinese capital was transferred from Kaifeng and Hangzhou to Beijing; in the eastern Islamic world it shifted from Baghdad to Tabriz (in Iranian Azerbaijan); Kiev first gave way to Sarai (southeast of Kiev, closer to the steppe) but ultimately to Moscow (northeast yet again); and in Central Asia, Balāsāghūn (in Kirgizstan) ceded to the Almaliq region (in northern Xinjiang). While Samarqand had superseded Almaliq in Central Asia by the late 1300s, Azerbaijan retained its importance up to the end of the sixteenth century, and the pre-eminence of Beijing and Moscow remains unchallenged.³⁶

34 The division between Inner and “Outer” Mongolia (i.e. the Republic of Mongolia) goes back to the Qing conquest of the seventeenth century: Perdue 2005.

35 Golden 2000; Biran 2004. 36 Biran 2004.

This new location of the capitals also facilitated connections with the far north: the Mongol Empire was the first to rule over all the “forest peoples” in the northern lands from the upper Amur to the Volga–Kama basin, operating the local Fur Roads, and impacting the regions’ ethnic and linguistic characteristics. This precedent in turn encouraged Russian expansion northeastwards, from the sixteenth century onwards (again in imitation of the Jochid Ulus’s policies). Such expansion created a major strategic change in the balance between nomads and sedentaries: up to the Russian conquest of Siberia, the sparsely populated north was mainly a no-man’s-land in which steppe nomads could find refuge when threatened by sedentary southern empires. After the Russians took over Siberia, the steppe nomads were squeezed between two post-nomadic empires, Qing China (1644–1911) and tsarist Russia (1721–1914). Equipped with the imperial tool kit they inherited from the Mongols and with gunpowder technology, and benefiting from the division of the nomads between Muslims and Buddhists, which prevented a unification under Tengri’s standard, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Qing China and Tsarist Russia divided the steppe between them, thereby finally breaking the political and cultural power of the nomads.³⁷

The Mongol Empire also transformed various smaller polities that were ruled indirectly. Some of those were subsumed into the Mongol khanates during “the Mongol moment,” notably the Iranian dynasties in Fārs and Kirman and the Seljuq Sultanate of Rūm (Anatolia, 1171–1307), the collapse of which facilitated the rise of the Ottomans (1299–1918), who eventually presented themselves as the Seljuqs’ successors.³⁸ Others retained their political framework but were heavily impacted by Mongol rule, not only culturally and economically but also politically. We already mentioned the rise of Muscovy, but other polities on the fringes of the khanates – e.g., Georgia, Armenia, and Korea – were mostly weakened. Thus in the Caucasus, Mongol rule led to a fragmentation of power, while in Korea, after a military confrontation that lasted almost three decades, the final submission to the Mongols led to the downfall of the military clique that had dominated the Koryŏ court, and the resuscitation of the royal power under Mongol protection. However, since the Koryŏ court was so dependent upon and intertwined with Mongol power, with the Yuan collapse in the latter half of the fourteenth century it immediately faced internal challenges, which ultimately led to the change of dynasties from Koryŏ

³⁷ Allsen 2015a, this volume (Siberia).

³⁸ For the relations between the Ottomans and the Mongols: Neumann and Wigen 2018, 144–50.

(918–1392) to Chosŏn (1391–1912).³⁹ As for Tibet, Mongol rule created the administrative institutions that unified the country, induced a flourishing of art and literature, and, as mentioned above, set up a precedent both for theocratic rule and for later incorporation into a China-based empire.⁴⁰

Yet the geopolitical imprint of the Mongol Empire was not limited to the empire's realm. Some of the polities that effectively withstood the Mongols, notably the Mamluk and Delhi sultanates, used their successful resistance as a major component in their legitimation and state formation, and benefited from migrant refugees, the supply of slave soldiers, and commercial networks. A similar process (minus the slave soldiers) also took place in Lithuania. In the Middle East this meant that Egypt replaced Iraq as the major center of Arabic culture, although with the fall of the 'Abbāsid caliphate in 1258 the whole Islamic world was now (and up to the eighteenth century) ruled by Turks or Mongols.⁴¹ In other cases, the Mongol menace, even when successfully checked, promoted social and economic tensions that contributed to the fall of enduring entities. This took place notably in Southeast Asia and Japan. Thus the charter states of Pagan (849–1297) in Burma, Singhasari in Java (1222–1292), and the Cambodian Khmer empire (802–1431) collapsed or were considerably weakened following the Mongols' invasions, and even the Kamakura shogunate collapsed in 1333.⁴²

Indirectly, the Mongols also affected Western Europe. Indeed, it avoided the initial destruction, and (unlike India and Egypt) after 1260 was hardly bothered by Mongol raids or the threat of them. Western Europe's own economic growth enabled it (or, rather, the Italian city-states) to fully benefit from the new channels of trade and travel opened by the Mongols, and to broaden its geographical and intellectual horizons. Travelogues like Marco Polo's opened a new vista for the Europeans on eastern cultures, regions, and peoples, depicting the Orient not as a place of monstrous mythical creatures but as a reservoir of luxurious riches, which in turn encouraged the Age of Exploration, leading to the discovery of the New World. After all, when Columbus set out on his first voyage in 1492, his main objective was to find the oriental land of the "Great Khan" that emerges from the book of Marco Polo, which he ardently admired.

Yet the Mongol legacy was global in more than one sense: their promotion of cross-cultural contacts that generated a quantum leap forward in

39 Publicci, this volume; Robinson, this volume.

41 Sen Tansen, this volume; Amitai, this volume.

40 Petech 1990, 139–42.

42 Lieberman 2011.

knowledge – geographical, linguistic, commercial, scientific, artistic and otherwise – and triggered cultural and religious relativism; the promotion of long-distance commercial and financial exchanges, including a growing role for maritime trade; the formation of new collectivities due to ethnic and religious changes; and the notion of universal empire headed by sacred kingship, were all instrumental in ushering in the transition from the medieval to the early modern world.⁴³

In sum, the Mongols proved that, in contrast to the famous Chinese cliché, it is possible to rule an empire from horseback. Moreover, mobile rule from horseback, while not devoid of its own drawbacks, proved to be highly transformative. After the initial colossal onslaught, it resulted also in cultural effervescence; integration on a Eurasian scale; thriving commerce; technological, scientific, and artistic innovation; a new religious, ethnic, and geopolitical landscape; and a sophisticated institutional legacy, embraced by empires in both steppe and sown. The Mongols may not be able to get entirely rid of their barbarous image, part of which they justifiably earned, that has been fostered by the vicissitudes of modern nationalist sentiments. Yet in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, these imperial nomads changed the world, setting the stage for our own globalized age.

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VOLUME II

PART I

★

LITERARY SOURCES

I

Persian Sources

CHARLES MELVILLE

Some sort of history of the Mongol Empire, though a very unsatisfactory one, could perhaps be written without reference to the *Secret History* or to Chinese sources. It is hard to see, however, how anything of worth could be written about the empire as a whole if the Persian chronicles of the period had not survived.¹

Introduction

The history of Iran took a decisive turn in the wake of the Mongol invasions under Chinggis Khan in 1219–1221 and his grandson Hülegü forty years later. In different ways, the long-term consequences of the conquests were as fundamental in reshaping Iran's identity, politics, and religion as the Arab invasions of the seventh century, which destroyed the Sassanian Empire and replaced Zoroastrianism with Islam and Pahlavi with Arabic, introducing a new scripture and a new script. The Iranian plateau was once again incorporated into the empire of an alien people, this time hailing from Inner Asia rather than the Mediterranean world. Whereas, in the case of the Arab invasions, "Iranshahr" essentially ceased to exist even in name as a political reality, despite being a land closely associated with an ancient urban civilization and a highly sophisticated culture, the same attributes made Iran distinct from the neighboring territories of the Mongol Empire and the country was rather quickly able to emerge as an independent kingdom (or khanate). In short, the Mongol conquest of the eastern Islamic world, the destruction of the 'Abbasid caliphate and the reorientation of Iran towards Central Asia created the situation in which Persian culture could once more flourish in its own space. This space was now called "Iran-zamin,"

1 [Morgan 2007](#), 15.

reviving in at least a symbolic way a reminiscence of the pre-Islamic Persian empires.²

This resumption of Iran's autonomous existence – albeit under the hand of foreign and initially non-Muslim overlords – was not, of course, a total transformation, as many aspects of politics and society continued in recognizable forms. Nevertheless, one of the most immediate consequences of the severance of Iran from the caliphal lands, now centered in attenuated shape within the territory of the rival Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt, was a great florescence of literary works written in Persian, accelerating a trend that had already begun in the tenth century. Not to ignore or diminish the achievements of the previous era, it would be reasonable to assert that Persian came of age in the Mongol period as a literary and scholarly language, particularly so in the field of historiography.

It is axiomatic that all literary works are necessarily products of their time and context and that they reflect, whether consciously or not, the characteristics of the age, be it the political situation, economic life, its outward and inner religious and spiritual sentiment, creative and artistic impulses, or philosophical and scientific mentality. Writings in all these fields could rightly be regarded as sources that inform us of the temper of the times. They also reveal something of the role of patronage and the circulation of ideas both within the realm itself and flowing in from outside. One remarkable volume that incorporates a sample of much of the learning of the period is the *Safīnā-yi Tabrīz*, a miscellany of over 200 scientific, historical, religious, and literary texts in prose and verse, compiled in Tabriz in 1321–1323. Among many early witnesses to well-known texts, it includes several historical documents and letters that throw light on the events of the period.³

Clearly, this chapter cannot address this vast literary output as a whole, for which adequate general surveys, such as those of E. G. Browne, Jan Rypka, and Dhabīḥallāh Ṣafā, can still be consulted with profit.⁴ It will focus instead on the literature in prose and verse that aims most directly to record the events and document the history of the Mongol Empire, chiefly in the form of chronicles, supplemented by geographical works, manuals of government, and hagiographies that narrate the lives of the holy men of the time, in their urban or rural contexts, and especially their interactions with the political and bureaucratic elites. The poetry of the period can also express important insights into the mentality of the time, such as the increasing turn to

2 Kamola and Morgan in Volume 1; Fragner 2006, 68–80, Krawulsky 2011b, 43–51.

3 Abu'l-Majd 2003; Seyed-Gohrab and McGlinn 2007; Al-e Davud 2007.

4 Browne 1928; Safa 1973; Rypka 1968, 246–78.

Sufism, as well as provide more specific information or commentary on events; one thinks in this respect of Sa'dī's ode on the fall of Baghdad, or Pūr-i Bahā's "Mongol odes," or the work of Ibn Yamīn and the satirist 'Ubaid-i Zākānī,⁵ but it will not be practical to include such works, or poetic output in general, within the scope of this chapter.

One reason for the richness of Persian literature is the fact that Iran was incorporated into a huge empire which not only extended from Eastern Europe to the China Sea, but also opened up the whole continent of Asia to the transmission of men and merchandise, stimulating an exchange of goods and ideas across the region. Persian historical writing is important partly for its quantity and quality, but also because it does not simply refer to the political history of Iran, but to the Ilkhanate's interactions with neighboring powers and particularly with other Mongol khanates in the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as the more distant branches in Mongolia and China. At its peak, Persian historical literature reflected the geographical extent and aspirations of the Mongol world empire. It is in this context that Persian literature takes its place as one of the most valuable sources for its history.

The chapter follows a chronological division into three periods, each surveying the main literary sources, noting the editions, translations, and some of the main studies that are available. As each author does not necessarily describe only his own times, the record becomes incremental, as later authors may cover the same ground as earlier works and bring them down to their own period. This allows us to see how the historians used the sources available to them, and maybe rewrote or reinterpreted history to reflect the changing contexts in which they wrote – and finally how the period seemed in retrospect to authors writing in the fifteenth century. V. V. (W.) Barthold provides an admirable survey of this material in his pioneering *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*,⁶ all the more so for the fact that most of the works he discussed were at that time still lacking critical printed editions. The present chapter aims to bring Barthold's work up to date, taking account of more recent work. Although there are several serviceable surveys of Persian historical writing in the Mongol period, they tend to be cast in the framework of the development of the genre within Persian literature, concerned with some of the themes and characteristics of the writing of the period.⁷ Others provide extracts from a selection of texts,

5 Minorsky 1956a; Minorsky 1956b; Browne 1928, 2: 29–30 (Sa'dī), 3: 211–22 (Ibn Yamīn); Javadi 1985, esp. 16–24.

6 Barthold 2007, 38–58.

7 Murtaḍawī (Murtaḍavī) 1980; Melville 2004; Melville 2012b, 155–208.

with a brief description and commentary on the works themselves.⁸ Here I will concentrate on the authors and their works for what they might tell us of the history of the Mongol Empire, rather than as examples of literary activity. That does not mean, however, that the works are only valued in so far as they provide historical “facts,” for all such works, as noted earlier, can reveal something of the times of which they are a product. It should be noted also that there is a distinction to be made between works of “universal” history, that cover the whole period from the rise of Islam (and before), and those which deal only with aspects of the Mongol period – the latter being very much the exception rather than the rule. Despite their potential interest for the study of how earlier periods of history were presented and repackaged by later authors (especially how caliphal history looked from the retrospective vantage point of post-1258 and the fall of Baghdad), we will only consider the contemporary sections of the universal chronicles in this survey.

For the present purposes, the Mongol Empire is considered to have ended with the fall of the Ilkhanate in Iran (by c. 1353) and the Yuan dynasty in China (c. 1368), despite the fact that dynasties of Chinggisid origin continued to rule in parts of Central Asia (until the late eighteenth century) and southern Russia (sixteenth century) for some time to come, and Persian sources continue to be essential for the history of these regions, especially Central Asia.⁹ The Timurid and Mughal empires, both of “Mongol” character and inspiration, are also not considered here.

From the Mongol Invasions to the Reign of Ghazan Khan

As noted by Barthold,¹⁰ the only three Muslim historians contemporary with the Mongol invasions were Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1234), Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nasawī (c. 1242), and Minhāj al-Dīn al-Jūzjānī (d. c. 1265), of whom the first two wrote in Arabic (see [Chapter 4](#), this volume). Nasawī’s history of Jalāl al-Dīn the Khwārazm-Shāh was translated into Persian in c. 680/1281,¹¹ one of several examples of the way Iranian history was to be recovered for Persian audiences in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; most of these are translations of works that refer to the pre-Mongol period, and need not detain us here.¹²

8 Dabīrī-Nezhād 1991; Navā’ī 1997. 9 Bregel 2004; McChesney 2012, 503–31.

10 Barthold 2007, 38. Storey 1970, 68–71, 260–66, for the first Mongol-period works.

11 Anon. 1965, editor’s intro., xxxvi. 12 Melville 2004, 349; Daniel 2012, 114–20.

Minhāj b. Sirāj al-Dīn Muḥammad Jūzjānī was born in Firuzkuh in 589/1193; he entered the service of the ruling Ghurid dynasty and had firsthand experience of the irruption of the Mongols into the eastern Islamic world.¹³ He took part in various diplomatic missions to the Ismaʿilis of Quhistan and was involved in the defense of the citadel of Tulak near Herat. In 624/1226–1227 he took refuge from the Mongols and came to Delhi, then ruled by Sultan Iltutmish. On three occasions he became chief *qadi*. He also participated in military events, such as the relief of Uch in 643/1246, and it was not until 658/1260 that he completed his *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, for his patron, sultan Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd-Shāh (1246–1266);¹⁴ that is, shortly after the fall of Baghdad, an event that clearly signaled the definitive conquest of the eastern Islamic world.

As implied by the title *Ṭabaqāt*, this work is written in the framework of a survey of successive dynasties, and their generations, starting with Adam and the pre-Islamic Persian empires. It is the final, twenty-third, section, covering the Mongol invasions, that is of greatest interest here,¹⁵ although the latter parts of *ṭabaqa* 16 on the Khwārazm-Shāhs and 17 on the Ghurids are also relevant,¹⁶ as is his coverage of the Delhi Sultanate in *ṭabaqas* 20–22.¹⁷ The manner of composition is incremental, for on many occasions the same events are mentioned more than once in the history of the different dynasties involved at the same time, but with additional levels of detail that provide interest and avoid repetition.¹⁸ If some of this information is contradictory, that is not a flaw unique to Jūzjānī, but is in fact rather more common than not in such works of wide coverage and scope, especially when they rely mainly on the author's own testimony or a number of eyewitness (oral) sources. Furthermore, Jūzjānī wrote some time after the events recorded, which has no doubt enhanced the telling of impregnable fortresses holding out to the last man, usually falling to treachery or disease. The author several times refers to his own presence, and frequently to trustworthy persons (*thiqāt*) for his information, in addition to a few specific individuals.¹⁹

The *Ṭabaqāt* contains unique and independent information about Mongol military campaigns in Ghur and eastern Khurasan, and later in north India.

¹³ Siddiqui 2010, 94–101.

¹⁴ Jūzjānī 1963–1964, tr. Raverty 1881; for brief appraisals: Morgan 1982, 110–13, Morgan 2013, 120–25.

¹⁵ Jūzjānī 1963–1964, 90–221; tr. Raverty 1881, 2: 869–1296.

¹⁶ For Jūzjānī's history of the Ghurids: Jackson 2000, 207–37.

¹⁷ Jūzjānī's coverage of the Delhi sultans and the Mongol raids on India is discussed by Jackson 1999, esp. 45–49; Nizami 1983, 71–93.

¹⁸ Siddiqui 2010, 146. ¹⁹ Siddiqui 2010, 145–46.

Jūzjānī is aware of the more positive aspects that account in large part for the remarkable military success of the Mongols, while constantly affirming the moral strength of Islam and reporting anecdotes of the miracles (*karamāt*) wrought on behalf of the Muslims. The final pages of the text confirm this thread of his narrative, by recording the conversion of Berke Khan to Islam.²⁰

Although writing at exactly the same time, ‘Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī (Juvaynī, 1226–1283) was a much younger man than Jūzjānī, writing closer to his direct experience of Mongol affairs, and in some respects with similar service as a courtier, both before and after the Mongol conquest of Iran. He first appears in history aged twenty-two, accompanying his father Bahā al-Dīn to Mongolia, turning back at Talas on the news of the Great Khan Güyük’s death (1248), but he made two subsequent visits, including a lengthy stay at the court of Möngke Qa’an in 1252–1253, during which he began his *History of the World-Conqueror*.²¹ Following Hülegü’s conquest of Baghdad, Juwaynī was appointed governor of the city and the surrounding province, under the authority of the Mongol *noyan* (*amīr*) Sughunchaq, a position he held with a brief interruption until his death, partly brought on by the schemes of his enemies at court, notably a certain Majd al-Mulk.

The *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā* was completed in 1260, shortly after the fall of Baghdad, to which he does not refer: Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s account was later added to manuscripts of Juwaynī’s work,²² which covers the rise and conquests of Chinggis Khan and the powers that were swept away, particularly the Khwārazm-Shāhs. Juwaynī also provides largely firsthand evidence of the interim administration of various viceroys in Iran, colored by his own experiences in their service, which leads to some events being recorded several times in different ways as a result of his changing loyalties.²³ The final section covers Hülegü’s invasion of 1255 and his destruction of the Isma‘ilis’ stronghold at Alamūt, in the course of which Juwaynī took the opportunity to mine the famous library for work useful to his purpose. This is essentially *engagé* historical writing, as the author’s presence is strongly felt throughout the book in his comments and opinions, in which he strives to find a reason and an explanation for the upheavals of the times. He invites the reader to read between the lines, not only asserting the vitality of Persian culture through his literary technique and poetic allusions, but also (like Jūzjānī) seeking to find advantage to Islam through its misfortunes, and juxtaposing descriptions of brutal violence with exhortations to justice and

20 Morgan 1982, 113. 21 TJG; HWC, xxvii–xxxvii; Rajabzadeh 2011, 61–63.

22 Boyle 1961; Wickens 1962; Jorati 2014, 253–64. 23 Manz 2013, 114–19.

generosity.²⁴ While narrating the destruction of the great cities of Transoxania and eastern Iran, such as Bukhara, Samarqand, Merv, and Nishapur, with details of the casualties that are certainly inflated but bear witness to the psychological impact that these events created, by ending his history with the downfall of the Ismaʿilis, the heretical state within a state that had been a source of aggravation since the Seljuq period, Juwaynī was able to conclude on a positive note and find some benefit to Islamdom from the general catastrophe.²⁵

Juwaynī's firsthand experience of the second wave of Mongol invasions and the administration that preceded it makes his evidence of comparable importance to that of Jūzjānī, but his work was far more influential, not only for its literary merits but also as a source for later authors, notably Rashīd al-Dīn, and entered the mainstream of Persian historical literature. Given his important rank in the Mongol administration, matched by that of his brother Shams al-Dīn the *ṣāhib-dīvān*, their elevated bureaucratic pedigree and high literary culture, the Juwaynīs were able to stimulate historical writing by their contemporaries, apart from exercising their patronage more generally.²⁶ The overall program could be seen as an attempt to reassert the norms of bureaucratic government and a sense of Persian cultural tradition. ʿAlā al-Dīn ʿAḩā-Malik is named as the patron and inspiration for the work of the Anatolian chronicler Ibn Bībī, whose history of the Seljuqs of Rūm, completed before Juwaynī's death in March 1283, was named *al-Awāmir al-ʿalāʾiyya* partly in his honour.²⁷ The work traces approximately a century of Anatolian history in a highly bombastic style that certainly outdoes Juwaynī's own rather attractive literary creation. Both authors were *munshīs* and trained in the bureaucracy, relying also on the testimony of their fathers. Juwaynī left a collection of *inshāʾ* documents, themselves of some historical importance.²⁸ Ibn Bībī clearly sets out to emulate his patron's work, of which it appears to be conceived as a continuation. It shares with the *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā* (and the *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*) the quality of personal reminiscence as much as detached reporting, a strong didactic undertone emphasizing the praiseworthy exercise of justice, and an optimistic finale, with the return to Anatolia of the exiled prince Masʿūd, son of Sultan ʿIzz al-Dīn, from the Crimea and the anticipated restoration of a centralized administration in the Perso-Islamic tradition. Above all, it remains a source of firsthand importance for the early history of the Mongol conquest and occupation of Anatolia, otherwise scarcely documented.

24 Melville 2008a, esp. 381. Cf. Kolbas 2016. 25 Morgan 1982, 118.

26 Ravalde 2016; Lane 2003, 177–212. 27 Melville 2006; see below. 28 Paul 1999.

Another author to benefit from the patronage of the Juwaynīs was Qāḍī Bayḍāwī, whose *Nizām al-tawārīkh* concludes with a passage extolling the virtues of Shams al-Dīn and his Mongol partner, Sughunchaq. Bayḍāwī (d. c. 1316) was essentially a religious scholar and, as is clear from his title, a *qādī* from a family of local judges in his native Fārs. He is famous chiefly for his commentary on the Qurʾān, the *Anwār al-tanzīl wa asrār al-taʾwīl*. His brief history was written in Persian, “so that its benefits might be more widespread.”²⁹ It is a short compendium of the different dynasties to rule Iran from the Pishdadiyan onwards, in four sections, of which the second (on the pre-Islamic Persian empires) and the fourth (on the dynasties that ruled Iran under the Caliphate) are the most substantial, covering over 70 percent of the text and clearly emphasizing not only the continuity of government on the Iranian plateau (from the Euphrates to the Oxus) but especially the principles on which it had been based, namely justice and cultivation. The first recension of the work was written in 674/1275, in the reign of Abaqa Khan, and contains no information on the Mongols that cannot be found elsewhere; a second recension, written at the time of Ghazan Khan’s accession to the throne in 694/1295, contains a few items of interest in its brief account of the reigns of Aḥmad Tegüder up to the accession of Ghazan, and especially Baidu, who in some later historiography is not counted among the Ilkhans.³⁰ The main interest of Bayḍāwī’s work, however, is in its portrayal of Iranian kingly traditions at a time when these were threatened by the pagan Mongol conquests.

The recently published work entitled *Akhbār-i Mughūlān* provides a brief account of Mongol rule up to the reigns of Hülegü and Abaqa, ending with the death of Aḥmad Tegüder in 683/1284 and the accession of Arghun Khan three days later.³¹ The author of this brief tract is uncertain, but the manuscript was copied by Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (1236–1311), the well-known polymath attached to the observatory at Maragha, who later studied in Anatolia before returning to Tabriz.³² He is reported to have met the Ilkhan Arghun in summer pastures near Van and to have showed him a map of the Mediterranean and Anatolia, which greatly pleased the khan.³³ The chronicle, if it can be so designated, is arranged annalistically, but now has several years

29 Bayḍāwī 2003, 3; Melville 2001, 75–76. None of the three current editions takes account of the earliest available manuscripts.

30 Melville 2007b, 17.

31 Anon. 2010; translation in Lane 2018; for a summary of Shīrāzī’s career, and a synopsis of the work: Lane 2012, 541–59.

32 For the compilation by Shīrāzī, which at one point belonged to the library of Rashīd al-Dīn: Pourjavady and Schmidtke 2007, esp. 284–88.

33 JT/Rawshan, 1178.

missing from the text, notably 668–674/1269–1275 inclusive. It is written in a simple and direct language more in line with the style of Bayḍāwī than of Juwaynī, and is of interest in occasionally supplementing our information about several events in this early period of the Ilkhanate, notably the role of cholera in the fall of the Ismaʿīli castles and in the siege of Baghdad,³⁴ the tribulations of the Juwaynī brothers due to the schemes of Majd al-Mulk,³⁵ and the conflict between Aḥmad and his nephew Arghun. The latter reads like a daily diary of events, although omitting much of the information found in the account of Rashīd al-Dīn.³⁶ Quṭb al-Dīn was actively involved in political affairs at this time, being sent on a mission to Cairo by Aḥmad Tegüder in 681/1282 to invite the Mamluks to offer their submission to the Mongols;³⁷ the fact that this is not referred to in the *Akhbār-i Mughūlān* is perhaps the strongest sign that Quṭb al-Dīn Shirāzī was not the author of the work.

Writing before the conversion of Ghazan Khan, these early sources provide important details of the rise of the Mongol Empire, and its impact on Iran – for Jūzjānī and Juwaynī, the two main works, these are not only impacts on the government and political transformation of Iran, first into a satellite administration of a polity centered in Qaraqorum and then subject to the Great Khan based in China. Apart from documenting the progress of the two Mongol invasions under Chinggis Khan and Hülegü, the authors are obliged to come to terms with the situation and offer acceptable interpretations, identifying the shortcomings of the previous regimes and the virtues of the Mongols that guaranteed their success. Jūzjānī extols the superiority of Islam even under threat, whereas Juwaynī is more conscious of a whole Persianate culture facing a crisis. Bayḍāwī provides almost no factual information of any value, but the whole concept of his work is designed to accommodate the Mongols into the roll-call of Iran's dynastic history and emphasizes the virtues of justice and good works to maintain rule in conformity with Persian traditions, reflecting the outlook of his Juwaynī patrons. Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī's preservation of quite a precise record of events with which he must have been familiar up to the time of writing, in 685/1284, goes some way to fill the gap between the work of Juwaynī and of Rashīd al-Dīn, whose work might have drawn on this text, which was housed in the Rashīdiyya library, or – given the similarity of much of the detail provided – have used a source common to both works. As it stands, Shīrāzī's narrative is as sparing with perceptions as Bayḍāwī's history is sparing with facts.

34 Anon. 2010, 32. 35 Anon. 2010, 50–51. 36 Anon. 2010, 57–65. 37 Allouche 1990.

Ghazan Khan to the End of the Ilkhanate (1294–1353)

This period covers the heyday and collapse of Mongol rule, though after the 1320s the focus of the Persian sources contracts to cover mainly events in Iran and the interactions with her immediate neighbors in the Caucasus and Transoxania, becoming less useful for the empire as a whole.

The history of the interval following the histories of Jūzjānī and Juwaynī, written in 1260, is filled by a substantial number of writers who not only cover the immediately contemporary period but also go back to the rise of the Mongol Empire and the history of the conquered peoples.³⁸ In addition, a number of local histories supplement the sources available and provide evidence of the nature of Mongol rule and regional affairs distant from the *ordu*.

The towering figure in this elaboration of Mongol history is the doctor-cum-statesman Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍlallāh (c. 1247–1318), one of the few Persian historians to be the subject of many individual studies, which still continue, not least in the manuscript tradition of his *oeuvre*. Of Jewish origin, Rashīd al-Dīn “Ṭabīb” converted to Islam and entered the service of Abaqa Khan before rising to high office as joint vizier under Ghazan and Öljeitü. Although he is valued first and foremost for his “universal” history, his enquiring mind and wide interests led him to write on a variety of topics (such as medicine and agriculture) that also reveal something of the intellectual life of the age and its international dimensions – particularly the interactions with China.³⁹ It is his main work, the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh* or *Compendium of Chronicles*, that is the focus of our attention here, however.⁴⁰

Just as the initial volume commissioned by Ghazan Khan, on the history of the Mongols, can be seen as a conscious effort to preserve the memory of Mongol origins and traditions, so the second part, commissioned by Öljeitü, on the peoples with whom the Mongols came into contact, can be seen as an attempt to record the summation of Iranian and Islamic history. Each of these

38 Storey 1970, 71–85, 266–71.

39 Allsen 2001, esp. 144–45 on the *Tansūqnāma*; Lambton 1999 on the *Āthār wa aḥyā*; Pfeiffer 2014.

40 For an overview of the work, its editions, translations, and secondary literature: Melville 2008b, 466–67; the most complete text, by Rawshan and Mūsavī, replaces most of the earlier editions. For vol. 1, on the history of the Mongols and Ilkhans, the Russian text and translation by Alizade and Arends (1957) remain valuable, as does the edition of Blochet (1911) and its translation by Boyle (1971), as is the complete English translation by Thackston (1998–1999). For vol. 2, the series of German translations by Karl Jahn (e.g. Jahn 1980) cover the people the Mongols encountered. Further: Krawulsky 2011a; Kamola 2015, 555–77; Kamola 2019.

elements must to some extent have appeared to be threatened by the other – the Mongols’ past in danger of being obliterated by the higher cultural values of China and Iran and Persianate Islamdom in danger of being transformed by the alien rule of its non-Muslim conquerors and their brutal and unaccustomed ways. In the latter case, however, Ghazan’s conversion to Islam in 1295 had paved the way for the Mongols’ identification with the religion of their subjects, and although this process had a very long way still to go, Rashīd al-Dīn was contemplating a situation very different to that faced by Juwaynī in 1260. This was witnessed also by the uncontended succession of Öljeitü to the khanate in 1304 and the continuity of stable rule that this represented. Ghazan’s conversion of the Mongols to Islam justified and explained God’s purpose in Chinggis Khan’s career of conquest, which was now fulfilled.

This does not mean, however, that the didactic and ethical elements of the “lessons of history” could now be ignored; in fact, Rashīd al-Dīn’s chronicle is arranged systematically in such a way as to record the details of each reign followed by a collection of anecdotes about the rulers’ conduct, character, and good sayings. This latter section is the vehicle for exemplary stories. This reaches its peak in the final section of the history of Ghazan’s reign and the reforms that he instituted, no doubt inspired by Rashīd al-Dīn himself, and envisioning a perfected centralized government ruling justly and with the welfare of the subjects at heart.

Part One (the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghāzānī*) opens with an account of the Turkic and Mongol tribes that inhabited the region between the Altai mountains to the west, the Gobi desert to the south, the Onon river valley to the east, and Lake Baikal to the north, an area hemmed in by these natural barriers from which the tribes emerged following years of internal struggle and unification under the leadership of Chinggis Khan. The data provided by Rashīd al-Dīn derives from both written and oral sources, made accessible to him by Ghazan Khan himself and by Pūlād Chinksank (Bolad) and other informants.⁴¹ Part Two covers the life and times of Chinggis Khan, followed by Part Three on his successors in the east down to Temür Qa’an (1294–1307). Part Four is the history of the Ilkhans from Hülegü to the death of Ghazan. Writing as he does at the Ilkhan’s request, it is hardly surprising to find a highly flattering picture being presented of Ghazan, whose numerous intellectual accomplishments seem to match the author’s own, and that Ghazan’s father and grandfather, Abaqa and Arghun Khan, receive a more sympathetic treatment than Aḥmad Tegüder, Geikhatu, and Baidu (who is

41 Allsen 2001, esp. 72–107.

not even acknowledged as an Ilkhan). A significant amount of the narrative of affairs is devoted to the machinations at court against the Juwaynīs, led by Majd al-Mulk, an intrigue that does little credit to Arghun and especially to Juwaynī's colleague and friend Buqa, but which was naturally a matter of concern to Rashīd al-Dīn, given the hazards of government service and indeed anticipating his own fate, condoned by the ruler (in his case, Abū Sa'īd) after being abandoned by his former patron (Amīr Choban [Chupan]).⁴² Rashīd al-Dīn's account of the Ilkhanate before Ghazan's conversion is relatively dispassionate and neutral; it is only in his discussion of Ghazan's "reforms" that a starker picture emerges of the state of affairs in the early Mongol period.

Rashīd al-Dīn's compendium is more than just a history of Iran, but contains and transmits valuable information about Mongol rule throughout the empire; it is his work that David Morgan has in mind when he refers to the "unparalleled range of some of the Persian chronicles."⁴³ The even more "universal" aspect of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* comes in Part Two, commissioned by Öljeitü, covering first the history of the prophets and kings up to the death of Ghazan (i.e., essentially bringing al-Ṭabarī up to date), and second the "history of every nation"; that is, the Turks, the Chinese, the Jews, the Franks, and the Indians. Inasmuch as these peoples interacted to a greater or lesser extent with the Mongol Empire, the information that Rashīd al-Dīn acquired about them is of interest and also shows the availability of collaborators at court, such as the two named Chinese informants and, in the case of India, the Buddhist Lama from Kashmir, Kamalashri.⁴⁴ All these sections of Part Two of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* have now been edited, including the first part on the history of the kings and prophets, although it should be noted that the text printed here is certainly from a manuscript of Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, not Rashīd al-Dīn.⁴⁵ The chapters on Islamic history and earlier dynasties (the Buyids, Ghaznavids, Samanids, etc.) are mainly of historiographical interest, as evidence of Rashīd al-Dīn's use of his sources and what he has chosen to retain and omit from his survey. Except for the section on the Isma'īlis, so far little attention has been paid to this question.⁴⁶

The *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* was due to conclude with a history of the reign of Öljeitü, which seems not to have been completed – at least, not by Rashīd al-Dīn (see below). The final part (Part Three) of the work is advertised as

42 Melville 2012a, 73–80. 43 Morgan 2007, 15.

44 For Rashīd al-Dīn on India: Nizami 1983, 94–106, esp. 95–99; the rest is based on the *Mukātibāt* (Letters) of doubtful authenticity.

45 Rashīd al-Dīn 2013; Melville 2016. 46 Daftary 1992.

a geography of the lands and routes, but if it was completed, as some assert, it is lost, though much of the material he collected may have found its way into later works.⁴⁷ Another text, probably intended as an annex to the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, is the *Shu'ab-i panjgāna* (Fivefold Genealogies), which covers the Franks, Jews, Arabs, Chinese, and Mongols. It clearly relies on sources supplementary to the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* and was in turn the main source for the Timurid-era *Mu'izz al-ansāb* (Honoring Descendants).⁴⁸

Evidence of Rashīd al-Dīn's concern for the dissemination of his work, as well as of his activity as a benefactor, is the remarkable endowment deed he drew up for the quarter he established in Tabriz, the Rab'ī Rashīdī. The text has survived and reveals the extent of his wealth, the scale of the establishment he maintained, and how it was financed. This is itself a source of considerable historical interest.⁴⁹

Like the Juwaynīs, Rashīd al-Dīn was also a patron and inspiration for other writers. The least significant of these is Fakhr al-Dīn Banākātī (d. 730/1329), known as a poet and historian. He wrote the *Rawḍat ulī'l-albāb fī ma'rīfat al-tawārīkh wa'l-ansāb* (Garden for Those with Intellects in the Knowledge of Dates and Descents), generally known as the *Tārīkh-i Banākātī*, a general history from Adam to the beginning of the reign of Abū Sa'īd, to whom it is dedicated, in nine sections (*qism*).⁵⁰ It was put together on Shawwāl 25, 717/December 31, 1317, although at the end of the work he refers to Abū Sa'īd's enthronement at Sultaniyya in Rabī' 11, 718/June 1318.⁵¹ His history is essentially a digest of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, which Banākātī acknowledges (on the first page) was his main source for both Mongol history and that of the other nations. He reverses the order of his source, dealing first with ancient and early Islamic history and then the Persian dynasties contemporary with the 'Abbasids, followed by sections on the Jews, the Christians and the Franks, the Indians, and the Chinese, before turning to the Mongols.⁵² His scheme, therefore, excluding the other nations, follows the format found in Bayḍāwī's *Nizām al-tawārīkh*, concluding with the Mongols as the last in the chain of Persian dynasties. The only valuable part of the *Tārīkh-i Banākātī* is his account of the reign of Öljeitü,⁵³ which begins with a relation of his birth, wives, and children, along the lines of Rashīd al-Dīn's schema. There follows a brief annalistic record of the reign,

47 Allsen 2001, 103–4; Melville 2012b, 164–74. 48 Allsen 2001, 92–93; Quinn 1989, 244–45.

49 Rashīd al-Dīn 1978; also Blair 1984; and Hoffmann 1997; and the partial translation by W. M. Thackston in Blair 1995, 114–15.

50 Banākātī 1969. 51 Banākātī 1969, 478. Jackson 1988; Storey 1970, 79–80.

52 For which, Banākātī 1969, 360 ff. 53 Banākātī 1969, 472–76.

almost entirely concerning notable deaths, the dates of which do not always agree with the reports in Qāshānī (see below). The text is interspersed, as in earlier reigns, with some of the author's own poetry; particularly extended examples of this are found in praise of Ghazan Khan and in mourning for his death.⁵⁴

Abū al-Qāsim Qāshānī's *Tārīkh-i Ūljāytū* is a more substantial account of the reign up to the sultan's death (Ramaḍān 27, 716/December 13, 1316).⁵⁵ The author's relationship with Rashīd al-Dīn is controversial, for he claims credit for much of the latter's work, for which he gained no recognition or reward.⁵⁶ The consensus on this question, which has attracted much scholarly discussion, is that Rashīd al-Dīn must certainly have employed research assistants to gather material for his work, and that Qāshānī may well have been one of them. While his awkward style and unattractive use of language differ from Rashīd al-Dīn's, the tripartite format of the work (*muqaddima*, *maqāla*, *risāla*) is similar, starting with the sultan's wives, children, and senior officials, followed by an account of the reign and concluding with anecdotes about the ruler's qualities. It is here, in the context of the sultan's generosity, that he repeats his claim about Rashīd al-Dīn being unfairly rewarded. It is notable that Qāshānī refers frequently to the Chinese animal calendar for the first five years of Öljeitū's reign, a practice also followed by Rashīd al-Dīn.⁵⁷ The prevalence of dates, often on a more or less daily basis, suggests that Qāshānī's work was based on a diary of events and may be a rough draft of the history of Öljeitū intended for volume II of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, which was to be compiled and appended to the work as it went along.⁵⁸

As it stands, Qāshānī's history, arranged in annals, provides a detailed narrative of the reign, with occasional excursions, such as the description of Gilan that prefaces his account of the ill-fated Mongol expedition of 706/1307,⁵⁹ the recent history of Irbil and events in Hormuz. There are also substantial accounts of events in Transoxania and the Chaghadaid Khanate,

54 Banākātī 1969, 462–63, 465–66, 468–69, 470–72. He also gives a chronogram for the death of Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzī at 475, which agrees with the report in Qāshānī 1969, 118, quoting a different poem.

55 Qāshānī 1969. For the author: Soucek 1985, 362–63. His chronicle is not included in the surveys of either Dabīrī-Nezhād 1991 or Navā'ī 1997.

56 Qāshānī 1969, 5, 54–55, 240–41, refers to his text as a digest of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* and claims his authorship.

57 Melville 1994, 83–98.

58 JT/Rawshan, 20; cf. Qāshānī 1969, 2–6, outlining the scope of the work, begun while Öljeitū was still alive. Allsen 2001, 100, notes that this technique of compiling daily records was typical of Chinese historiography.

59 Melville 1999, 73–125.

Oljeitü's interest in Shi'ism and religious vacillations, and also information about the Delhi Sultanate.⁶⁰ The author's antipathy for Rashīd al-Dīn is brought out in his praise for Tāj al-Dīn 'Alīshāh, Rashīd's rival and nemesis, who became vizier in 711/1312 and to whom Qāshānī dedicated his work on minerals and gems.⁶¹ Qāshānī's other known work, a general history entitled *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*, is a general history down to the fall of Baghdad and is not therefore a major source for the history of the Mongol Empire; it has only been partly edited, but seems to provide evidence to support Qāshānī's claims to priority in compiling the second volume of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, while Ghazan was still alive.⁶²

A more important source that covers not only the reign of Öljeitü, but also the history of the Mongols up to the time of writing, from 655/1257 to 728/1328, is the *Tajziyat al-amṣār wa tazjiyat al-a'sār* (The Apportioning of Lands and the Passing of Times) by Sharaf al-Dīn Waṣṣāf al-ḥaḍrat (Waṣṣāf-i Ḥaẓrat) Shīrāzī, 663–730/1265–1330).⁶³ The work is conceived as a sequel to Juwaynī's *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*, which ended before the fall of Baghdad. Waṣṣāf viewed his history in large part as a literary exercise and a vehicle for the author's display of his rhetorical skills, to provide a "compendium of all the arts of learning, a register of the marvels of literary attainment, a model of eloquent style and a canon of examples of excellence."⁶⁴ It is certainly in this vein that the work has been received and valued by later writers, as witnessed by the proliferation of copies of the text, and indeed it goes considerably further than Juwaynī, his model, in its literary sophistication. As repeatedly remarked, the difficulty of the text not only has impeded its use but also explains the lack of any modern critical edition, which is long overdue for a work of such historical value. The initial point of entry to Waṣṣāf's history for most researchers remains the invaluable digest by 'Abd al-Muḥammad Āyatī, which retains the basic narrative of events.⁶⁵

The work is organized in five parts; the first opens with the death of Möngke Qa'an and the succession crisis that followed, with a brief survey of events in the Chaghadaid Khanate under Alghu, the succession of Qubilai Qa'an and after him Temür Qa'an; the date of composition at this point is

60 Pfeiffer 1999, Jackson 1999. For India: n. 70 below.

61 Qāshānī 1969, 47–48, 122, 134, 194–97, etc. on Tāj al-Dīn 'Alīshāh; for the value of the work on gems: Soucek 1985.

62 Morton 2004, 23–25; Otsuka 2018.

63 Waṣṣāf 1853 (tr. Hammer-Purgstall 1856). The correct title of the work is actually *Tajribat al-amṣār* (The Experience of the Lands . . .). For a detailed appreciation of this important source and its historiography: Pfeiffer 2007, 107–29.

64 Waṣṣāf 1853, 147; tr. Pfeiffer 2007, 113. 65 Āyatī 1967.

given as 698/1299. The remainder of Book One is devoted to the conquest of Baghdad and the establishment of the Ilkhanate, down to the reign of Arghun and the fall of Juwaynī. Book Two switches to a history of the Salghurid dynasty of Fārs, ending with the death of Abesh Khatun, the last of the semi-independent rulers of the province, before returning to the reign of Arghun and the vizierate of Saʿd al-Dawla. There follows an excursus on the *atabegs* of Lur. Book Three includes the reigns of Geikhatu, Baidu, and Ghazan, interspersed with an account of the rulers of Kirman, the island of Hormuz, the Delhi Sultanate, and the Mamluks of Egypt – the latter as a preamble to the account of Ghazan’s expeditions that follow in Book Four. This was composed after the death of Ghazan, as it opens with a dedication to Öljeitü, and was completed in Shaʿbān 711/December 1311, being presented to the sultan, under the auspices of Rashīd al-Dīn, in Muḥarram 712/May 1312.⁶⁶ The strange mixture of contents of the volume can only be explained by the fact that it was being compiled contemporaneously with or shortly after the events it records, namely Ghazan’s invasions of Syria and other occurrences of his reign; an excursus on the Shabānkāra; events in Kirman, Fārs, India, Central Asia, and the Mamluk Sultanate; and details of the reign of Öljeitü up to his fruitless attack on Raḥba in Ramaḍān 711/January 1313. Rather more surprisingly, Book Four ends with an appendix (*dhayl*) to the *Jahāngushā*, going back to a brief account of the Tatar (i.e. Mongol) tribes, the rise of Chinggis Khan, and the Mongol conquests up to Hülegü’s campaign to the west and the destruction of the Ismaʿilis – that is, effectively a summary of Juwaynī’s work up to the point where Waṣṣāf himself resumed the story at the outset of Book One.⁶⁷ Book Five, finished in 728/1328, completes the reign of Öljeitü and the succession of Abū Saʿīd down to the revolt of the amirs in 719/1319, and ends with more contemporary reports from the Delhi Sultanate.

Although enjoying the patronage of Rashīd al-Dīn, who introduced the author first to Ghazan Khan and subsequently to Öljeitü,⁶⁸ his work is independent of his patron’s and an original source of the first importance, in many respects as valuable as the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* for the period it covers. In

66 The author’s autograph copy of Book Four, [Waṣṣāf 2009](#), attracts attention to this particular volume; see the detailed introduction by Osman Ghazi, at 48–49, on Waṣṣāf’s work in general and this text in particular, with a preliminary note of some of the differences between the MS and the Bombay lithographed edition.

67 A comparison of Waṣṣāf with his model Juwaynī has not been undertaken but would be of some interest.

68 [Waṣṣāf 1853](#), 405–6, 544–49; [Āyatī 1967](#), 244–45, 304; the latter missing from the autograph of 711/1311, [Waṣṣāf 2009](#), 498 (fol. 249v).

the first place, like Rashīd al-Dīn, his coverage is not restricted to Iran, but contains particularly important information about Central Asia,⁶⁹ as well as India,⁷⁰ and in addition is also almost a local history of his native province of Fārs and southern Iran more broadly. Second, it is not an official history written at court and under the eye of the ruler, who anyway was clearly unable to understand a word of it. This means that Waṣṣāf could be more forthright about the nature of Ilkhanid government and its economic impact, particularly in the rich province of Fārs, which was not even directly ruled by the Mongols to begin with. As a local official and *mustawfi*, Waṣṣāf was particularly well placed to write with authority about fiscal and economic affairs and his work has been properly recognized and used in this regard.⁷¹ He was also acutely aware of the merits of some Mongol officials compared with the venality and corruption of the Persian administrators and he provides informed insights into the factional fighting at court.⁷² As noted by Judith Pfeiffer, his history is also interesting for a number of epistles on various topics and for the Arabic documents that he transcribes.⁷³

A work of similar qualities but on a lesser level than Waṣṣāf's is the *Majma' al-ansāb* of Muḥammad b. 'Alī Shabānkārā'ī, author of a general history that survives in three recensions with different dedicatees, the first to Ghiyāth al-Dīn son of Rashīd al-Dīn in 736/1335, revised after the fall of the minister and its loss in the sacking of the Rashīdiyya that year, with a new version completed in 738/1337 and the dedication left blank, and the third in 743/1343, dedicated to the Chobanid Pīr Ḥusayn.⁷⁴ The similarity lies in the facts that it is not an "official" court history and that it has a strong focus on southern Iran, including chapters on the Shabānkārā *maliks*, and the local rulers (*atabegs*) of Fārs, Kirman, Luristan, Yazd, and Hormuz, before turning to the history of the Mongols. Like the history of Jūzjānī, the *Majma' al-ansāb* (Collection of Genealogies) is arranged in *ṭabaqāt* and subsections. The printed edition includes only the sections on the rulers contemporary with the 'Abbasids – that is, from the Saffarids onwards – thus once more following the model set out by Qāḍī Bayḍāwī.

The final *ṭabaqa* on the Mongols is divided into two sections, first on "the Mongol sultans who today rule over the kingdoms of the face of the earth";

69 Kempiners 1988, 160–87.

70 Jackson 1999, 49, 103. Waṣṣāf's account, 1853, 300–13, is essentially repeated by Rashīd al-Dīn 2005, 36–67; and Qāshānī 1969, 180–89, including quotation of the same verses.

71 Lambton 1986, Lambton 1987; Aigle 2005. 72 As fully exploited by Aubin 1995.

73 Pfeiffer 2007, 110–11, 121–22.

74 Shabānkārā'ī 1984; Storey 1970, 82–83. For an analysis of these versions: Aubin 1981, 213–24.

that is, the Great Khans from the rise of Chinggis Khan to the reign of Möngke and the succession of Qubilai.⁷⁵ This includes a summary of the conquests of Chinggis Khan, similar to that found in Waṣṣāf, Book Four, and, like Waṣṣāf, evidently based on the work of Juwaynī.⁷⁶ The second section is on the “sultans and kings who exercise rule over the regions”; that is, the Ilkhans. This becomes a highly important primary source, if relatively brief, for the reign of Abū Saʿīd – omitted from the first and second recensions – and the immediate aftermath up to c. 740/1340, around the date of the third recension.⁷⁷ As noted by Aubin, who made substantial use of Shabānkāraʾī’s work, the most original sections are on the rulers of Luristan and the princes of Hormuz.⁷⁸

The last of the substantial historical works written during the Ilkhanate are by Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī (Qazvīnī) (d. c. 744/1344). Like Shabānkāraʾī, his work straddles the last years of Abū Saʿīd and the collapse of Ilkhanid rule, but although the most valuable part of his *oeuvre* is for the reigns of Öljeitü and Abū Saʿīd, he also has some original information about the earlier period of Mongol history and, like his mentor and patron, Rashīd al-Dīn, whose learned discussions inspired him to write history, he covers the rise of Chinggis Khan and the reigns of his successors.⁷⁹

Mustawfī, as his name implies, was, like Waṣṣāf, an accountant and had access to official documents especially concerning tax revenues; in 711/1311 Rashīd al-Dīn put him in charge of the finances of Qazvin, Abhar, Zanzan, and Tarum. This is most clearly reflected in his geographical work, the *Nuzhat al-qulūb* (Heart’s Joy), which contains a considerable amount of useful historical information, including tax revenues of the different provinces and cities.⁸⁰ His first and best-known work is the *Tārīkh-i guzīda* (Selected History), dated 730/1330, a world history from the Creation to the date of composition, covering the Prophets, the pre-Islamic Persian kings, and the Islamic world arranged by dynasty, in four chapters (*bāb*) and many subsections (*faṣl*), of which the fourth *bāb* covers the rulers of Iran in the Islamic period, including the Salghurids, the Qara Khitai in Kirman, the *atabegs* of Luristan, and finally the Mongols.⁸¹ This was dedicated to Rashīd al-Dīn’s son, the vizier Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad, as a prose epitome of his major work, the *Ẓafar-nāma*

75 Shabānkāraʾī 1984, 224–59.

76 Shabānkāraʾī 1984, 225, 245, 247, 264. Interestingly, there is no specific reference to Rashīd al-Dīn for the period after Juwaynī finishes.

77 Shabānkāraʾī 1984, 272–73. For the *Dhayl*, see briefly below.

78 Aubin 1981, 213–14, 222; also used in the chapter on the Shabānkāra in Aubin 1995, 69–80.

79 Storey 1970, 81–84; Melville 2003b, 631–34.

80 Storey 1972, 129–31; Mustawfī 1915; see below. 81 Mustawfī 1983, 10–13.

(Book of Victory) then still in progress (see below). Mustawfī provides a detailed list of his sources, which mainly deal with the history of the caliphate up to the sack of Baghdad. For the Mongol period, he immediately cites Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* and follows his general layout with the account of the tribes, Chinggis Khan, and his successors (580–88), followed by the Ilkhans (588–623), but his presentation of events is different and we might note, for instance, a much less sympathetic view of Juwaynī and his downfall. The *Tārīkh-i guzīda* is an important independent source for the period after the death of Ghazan. The narrative ends on an optimistic note with the elevation of Ghiyāth al-Dīn to the vizierate and the return of the rule of justice. An extra dimension to the work comes in the final chapters (*bābs* five and six), devoted to biographies of prominent scholars and poets, and an account of Qazvin's history, antiquities, and leading families (including his own); this gives the work the quality of a local history as well as a universal chronicle.

As noted, the *Tārīkh-i guzīda* was conceived as a summary of the *Zafar-nāma*, a verse chronicle in about 75,000 *bayts*, completed after fifteen years' effort in 735/1334, when the author was fifty-five.⁸² The work is intended to be a continuation of Firdawsi's *Shāhnāma* from where the poet left off with the collapse of the Sassanian Empire, and is similarly written in the *baḥr-i mutaḳārib* meter. The *Zafar-nāma* relies heavily on the work of Rashīd al-Dīn and also shares features with another contemporary verse chronicle, Shams al-Dīn Kāshānī's *Shāhnāma-yi Chingīzī* (see below). Both works claim that Hülegü's invasion of Persia took place at least partly in response to the entreaties of Muslim merchants desiring security and the rule of law,⁸³ and both share a pronounced didactic tone. Mustawfī even inserts twelve chapters of advice (*paṇḍ*) that Rashīd al-Dīn is supposed to have addressed to Ghazan Khan,⁸⁴ and indulges in conventional literary moralizing at every twist of fate in the narrative. Nevertheless, for the reigns of the Ilkhans Öljeitü and Abū Sa'īd, the *Zafar-nāma* is an original firsthand account, based on the author's own observations and use of oral sources.⁸⁵ Although it has been hardly used in secondary scholarship, his material is familiar from the *Dhayl-i Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* by the Timurid historian Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū (d. 1430), who

82 A facsimile edition of the British Library MS Or. 2833, which dates from 807/1404, has been published: Mustawfī 1999; see fols. 735v–736r for the completion of the text. A useful but unreliable translation of the final section, on Mongol history, was made by Ward 1983. Only the first two volumes have been edited: Mustawfī 2001.

83 Mustawfī 1999, fol. 583r–v; cf. Kāshānī, *Shāh-nāma-yi Chingīzī*, MS Bibliothèque nationale de France suppl. persan. 1443, fols. 177v–178r.

84 Mustawfī 1999, fols. 684r–692v. 85 Murtaḍawī 1980, 559–62.

absorbed Mustawfī's narrative into his work almost wholesale, without acknowledgment.⁸⁶ One drawback of Mustawfī's text is the almost total absence of dates, although the sequence of events can be followed quite easily, e.g., with reference to Qāshānī's history of Oljeitü. The *Ẓafar-nāma* ends on a positive note, with the suppression of the revolt of Maḥmūd-Shāh Injū against Abū Sa'īd and the apparent tranquillity in the kingdom.

Mustawfī returned to the vexed period embracing the death of Abū Sa'īd in 736/1335 in a prose continuation (*Dhayl*) of the *Ẓafar-nāma* covering the subsequent anarchy in Persia up to the time of writing – that is, after the murder of Shaykh Ḥasan-i Kuchik the Chobanid in 744/1343 – which was left unfinished.⁸⁷ The work is punctuated by several long poems, though he did not believe that verse was appropriate to record the calamities that afflicted the kingdom;⁸⁸ they are, rather, poems of personal distress within a long autobiographical passage on his disastrous visit to Shiraz and the lawlessness characterizing the anarchy of Injūid and Chobanid rivalries in Fārs.⁸⁹ Once more, this information (excluding the autobiographical material) was incorporated almost verbatim into Ḥāfiz-i Abrū's work.

Insofar as Mongol rule continued in Iran and elsewhere beyond the collapse of the Ilkhanate in the 1330s, it is worth drawing attention to other continuations of the Ilkhanid sources, notably continuations of the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* and of Mustawfī's *oeuvre*, almost all of which seem to have been collected into the histories of Ḥāfiz-i Abrū (see below). Before doing so, we should first consider other verse chronicles.⁹⁰ Mustawfī's *Ẓafar-nāma* was not the first of its kind, and he was certainly aware of the earlier efforts of Shams al-Dīn Kāshānī (d. c. 1328), whose *Chingīz-nāma* or *Shah-nāma-yi Chingīzī* goes down to the start of the reign of Öljeitü, although the historical narrative disappears in a flurry of didactic homilies before this point.⁹¹ Kāshānī claims not only to be inspired by Firdawsī's *Shāhnāma* but also to be specifically transposing Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* into verse, on the express orders of Ghazan Khan.⁹² It is difficult to substantiate this claim; what is interesting about the text is that it reveals how Chinggis Khan and the Mongols had become absorbed into the Persian epic tradition within a century of the establishment of the Ilkhanate, together with a highly exemplary tone that

86 Melville 1998, 1–12. 87 Mustawfī 1978; Mustawfī 1986. Melville 1998, 2–3.

88 Mustawfī 1978, 435; Mustawfī 1986, 90.

89 For these details: Melville 2003b, 632; Aigle 2005, 173–75.

90 Murtaḍawī 1980, 547–625; Melville 2004, 350; Melville 2012b, 192–97.

91 The text has not been edited; there are two MSS, in Paris, suppl. persan, 1443, and Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eseleri Müzesi, no. 1953.

92 Esp. Melville 2007a, 45–65.

referred to the rulers as Shahanshahs and their advisers, especially Rashīd al-Dīn, as *mobads*, and that depicted the Mongols themselves as paragons of virtue. A third verse chronicle, the *Shāhanshāh-nāma*, independent of these two, was composed by Aḥmad-i Tabrīzī in about 18,000 couplets dealing with the history of Chinggis Khan and his successors.⁹³ It was commissioned by Sultan Abū Saʿīd but completed after his death, in 1337, seemingly at the Jalayirid court, and dedicated to the vizier, Masʿūd-Shāh Injū. It is full of factual detail about the last years of the Ilkhanate, and a work of greater complexity, in both language and structure, than those mentioned above. So far, it has only received the attention of art historians, as the only surviving manuscript was finely illustrated.⁹⁴ Verses from Aḥmad-i Tabrīzī's poem are quoted by Ḥāfiz-i Abrū in his continuation of the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*.⁹⁵

Also in this genre is the *Daftar-i dilgushā* (The Exhilarating Record), written in 1320 by a certain Šāḥib, who was a scribe and for a while *šāḥib-divān* at the court of the Shabānkāra rulers of Fārs. His work covers the history of the Shabānkāra down to the reign of Mubārīz al-Dīn (r. 1226–1260), ending with a plea from the lord of the Ismaʿīli fortress of Girdkuh, seeking support against the oncoming Mongols. The work has been very little used, but contains firsthand information about the relations between the Shabānkāra and the Salghurids and once more throws interesting light on the independent political and cultural life of southern Iran prior to its absorption into the Ilkhanate's central administration.⁹⁶

A later product of the Jalayirid court is the *Ghāzān-nāma* of Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad Azhdarī, composed between 758 and 763/1357–1362.⁹⁷ This loosely follows the sequence of events reported by Rashīd al-Dīn and shows something of the process whereby Ghazan Khan was given a legendary persona and portrayed as the founding figure of the post-conquest, Persianized phase of Turko-Mongol rule in Iran. In this respect, it matches the sentiment of both Kāshānī's and Mustawfī's verse chronicles insofar as they concern Ghazan Khan, but goes several steps further in mythologizing his rule.⁹⁸

Geographical works may also contain important historical information, and this is particularly true of Mustawfī's *Nuzhat al-qulūb*, referred to earlier.⁹⁹

93 Aḥmad-i Tabrīzī, *Shāhanshāh-nāma*, MS British Library, Or. 2780.

94 E.g., Meredith-Owens 1973, 14 and Plate 2; for the complete manuscript: e.g., Wright 2004, 65–84.

95 Melville 1998, 7. 96 Šāḥib 1965; Aubin 1981, 216 n. 23; Melville 2012b, 196.

97 Azhdarī 2002; Melville 2000b, 383. 98 Melville 2003a, 133–60.

99 Complete text, lith. Bombay, 1311/1894. For the geographical section (*maqāla* 3): Mustawfī 1915, 1919; and Mustawfī 2000, which omits the sections on routes, physical geography and marvels. Storey 1972, 129–31.

It was completed in the interregnum after the death of Abū Saʿīd (the fiscal years 35 and 40 *khānī*, 736 and 741 AH are referred to, and the last date mentioned is Jumādā I, 741/November 1340).¹⁰⁰ Mustawfī says he was encouraged to write by his friends, disclaiming any particular competence other than an interest in the subject and some experience of travel (e.g., to Baghdad, Tabriz, Isfahan, and Shiraz). He also thought that an accessible work in Persian would be valuable, as most of the sources of geographical information on Iran (which he lists) were in Arabic. Mustawfī presents a view that is partly traditional and conventional of Iran as part of an Islamic world centered on the Hejaz rather than an element in the Mongol Empire, and repeats some information derived directly from the Arab geographers of the ninth and tenth centuries. But he is also partly aware of new realities and altered circumstances, including changes in the names and prosperity of places.¹⁰¹ He describes *Īrān-zamīn* as an independent entity with defined borders controlled by the Ilkhanate from a new capital at Sultaniyya that was the hub of the route network. His elaborate detail of the revenues due to the central treasury and his misleading impression of geopolitical unity following the improvements under Ghazan and his successors could be an attempt to preserve a nostalgic image of an Ilkhanid Empire that was already collapsing by the time he wrote, perhaps in the hope that some strong figure would be found to restore order along the same lines.

We have already seen that both the universal chronicles such as those by Shabānkāraʿī and Mustawfī (for Qazvin) and the more dynastically focused work of Waṣṣāf can have a strong component of local history and provide a regional perspective on Mongol rule in the provinces. Southern Iran has already been identified as one such area, and in addition to the works mentioned is a local history of Shiraz by Muʿīn al-Dīn ibn Zarkūb, whose *Shīrāz-nāma* was completed in 744/1343 with the main aim of glorifying the city and pointing out its merits (*faḍāʿil*) vis-à-vis other cities, specifically Baghdad.¹⁰² The history of the city opens with the Buyids and continues with the Salghurids and Injuids up to the reign of Abū Ishāq Injū, of whose activities he paints a very flattering picture. It nevertheless gives a detailed account of the disastrous infighting that broke out among the rival contenders for power in the vacuum left by the death of Abū Saʿīd. The second section is devoted to the lives of the religious figures associated with Shiraz and their shrines. This is arranged in the form of *ṭabaqāt*; that is, the

¹⁰⁰ Mustawfī 2000, III; cf. Melville 2003b, 633–34. ¹⁰¹ Cf. Melville 2012b, 165–69.

¹⁰² Ibn Zarkūb 1971; Storey 1970, 351; Aigle 2005, 61–62.

generations succeeding the Prophet. The abundance of saints and learned scholars is naturally considered to be an example of the merits of the city.

Also from the south of Iran, and recording the exploits of the local dynasty, in this case the Qutlugh-khans (Qara Khitai) of Kirman, are two consecutive works, first the anonymous *Tārīkh-i Shāhī*, written c. 690/1291 for Pādshāh Khatun (r. 1292–1294) and tracing the history of the dynasty up to the time of her mother, Terken Khatun (Qutlugh Terken, r. intermittently 1259–1283).¹⁰³ The first, substantial, part of the book contains a discussion of the ideal qualities of kings and the viziers and scribes in their service; the second part, on the history of Kirman, starts by setting the reign of Teken Khatun against these criteria (such as justice, benevolence, miraculous powers, courage, clemency, etc.), from the fall of Baghdad in 1258 onwards. The work has a strong narrative flavor, being couched in a sequence of anecdotes (*qiṣṣa*) in a loosely chronological order, ending, out of sequence, with an account of Abaqa Khan's expedition to meet the attack of the Chaghadaid khan Baraq on Khurasan in 668/1270, the text breaking off unfinished.

The second, conceived as a continuation of the *Tārīkh-i Shāhī*, is the *Simṭ al-ʿulā li'l-haḍrat al-ʿulyā* (The Eminent Necklace for the Highest Presence) by Nāṣir al-Dīn Munshī Kirmānī, completed in 716/1316.¹⁰⁴ He was head scribe in the Divan of Pādshāh Khatun, and after her demise wrote and dedicated his history to the Mongol *amīr*, Isen Qutlugh (d. 1318). Nāṣir al-Dīn expanded the text in 720/1320 with a cynical afterword on the method of raising taxes dedicated to the ruler of Kirman, Quṭb al-Dīn Nīkrūz, but later sought patronage at the central court, offering a history of the vizierate to Abū Saʿīd and Amīr Choban. This was completed in Ṣafar 725/February 1325 and includes a section on the viziers serving the Mongol Empire, from Maḥmūd Yalawāch to Tāj al-Dīn ʿAlīshāh,¹⁰⁵ in 1330 he presented another work, the *Durrat al-akḥbār* (Reported Pearls), a concoction of translated passages and additions to the work of Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Zayd Bayhaqī, to Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad, evidently still seeking patronage.

After an introductory section on the province of Kirman and something of its longer-term history, Nāṣir al-Dīn starts on the history of the Qara Khitai dynasty, arranged by reign, from the founder, Qutlugh-Sulṭān Baraq Ḥājib (d.

103 Anon. 1976, editor's intro., ix–xii, on the question of its authorship and whether it is the *Tārīkh-i Shāhī* referred to by Nāṣir al-Dīn 1949, 6; also Aigle 2005, 63–64. For both the Qara-Khitay princesses: Lambton 1988, 278–87, based largely on these two local sources.

104 Nāṣir al-Dīn 1949, and the annotated 2016 edition.

105 Nāṣir al-Dīn 1985, 7 (dedication), 100–17 (Mongol viziers) and the editor's intro.; also Marlow 2004, 185–86.

632/1235). Without both these sources, and especially the *Simṭ al-ʿulā*, our knowledge of events in the Kirman area and its local rulers would be seriously limited.

The same is also true of a series of local histories written in Anatolia (Rūm).¹⁰⁶ First is the history of Ibn Bībī referred to above, dedicated to Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī. This comprises a history of the Seljuqs of Rūm from c. 584/1188 down to 679/1281, by which time they were eclipsed by the incoming Mongol administration that still found it useful, nevertheless, to retain the sultans as figureheads and employ a policy of divide and rule. As befitted a scribe in the Seljuq chancery, Ibn Bībī's language is extremely ornate and his rhetorical style includes substantial passages of poetry; even in his lifetime, the work was given a more accessible reworking.¹⁰⁷ The history has a loose structure based on the succession of rulers, has very few dates, and takes the form of a semi-personal narrative, probably based almost entirely – in the absence of written sources – on his own experiences and oral information, especially from the 1270s. Despite its length, the *Awāmīr* is by no means a continuous coverage of events; it is nevertheless a vital account of the period and must have served as a source for the later writer, Karīm al-Dīn Āqsarāʾī, although this is not acknowledged.¹⁰⁸ Āqsarāʾī was also a *munshī* in the Seljuq Divan, and under Ghazan Khan was appointed administrator of the *awqāf* (pious endowments) of the province. He completed his work, the *Musāmārat al-akhbār wa musāyarat al-akhyār* (Nighttime News Stories and Going Along with the Good) in 723/1323 and dedicated it to the Chobanid warlord Timurtash, the governor of Rūm, shortly before his rebellion against Abū Saʿīd.¹⁰⁹ Although it is conceived as a universal history, 75 percent of the text concerns the Mongol period, which he represents as one of considerable financial mismanagement, including the abusive and inefficient duplication of offices and the importation of officials from outside the province. Writing fifty years after Ibn Bībī, his perspective on the events of the period before Ghazan's conversion to Islam is rather different, and his view of the Seljuqs is naturally in hindsight of a regime that had disappeared, rather than one to be supported and emulated.

A third, much briefer, history of the province is the anonymous chronicle of the Seljuqs, the *Tārīkh-i Āl-i Saljūq dar Anāṭūlī*, which covers the Mongol assault first in connection with the defeat of the Khwārazm-Shāhs and then

¹⁰⁶ Köprülü 1992, 10–13; Melville 2006, 135–66.

¹⁰⁷ Ibn Bībī 1956; Ibn Bībī 1957; Ibn Bībī 2011. For the anonymous abridgement: Houtsma 1902; repr. Mashkūr 1971, 2–337.

¹⁰⁸ Melville 2006, 144–45. ¹⁰⁹ Āqsarāʾī 1944.

with the succession of Seljuq sultans who reigned under the shadow of the Mongol presence in Anatolia. It was completed in 765/1363, probably by a later author; the core of the narrative goes down to the start of the reign of Ghazan Khan and the revolts in Anatolia in 698/1299.¹¹⁰ It is arranged by reign but has a strong chronological framework. It appears to be an independent record of events, with a strong emphasis on the centrality of Konya, but has some gaps in its narrative, as between the years 664/1266 and 675/1276, reflecting the same dearth of source material evident in the account of Ibn Bībī and Āqsarā'ī.¹¹¹ Finally, it is worth noting the somewhat unusual work of Aḥmad of Niğde, *al-Walad al-shafīq* (The Affectionate Child) (733/1333).¹¹² It is dedicated (in all but name) to the Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd, although it contains material and expresses a point of view that could hardly be considered sympathetic to the Mongol regime.¹¹³ While containing much of interest about the intellectual currents of fourteenth-century Anatolia and particularly the town of Niğde, there is only one section that is specifically historiographical, namely Chapter Two on “the kings of Iran,” starting with Kayumars (fol. 69v onwards) and carrying on in the form of an extended series of date lists of different dynasties. The end of the ‘Abbasids (fol. 136v) is followed by the Ilkhans and a brief account of the rise of Chinggis Khan and Hülegü's invasion, based on the author's *Chingīz Khān-nāma* (fols. 138 r–139v). The section on the Seljuqs of Rūm contains a date list of events relevant to the Mongol period, from the activities of the Khwārazm Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn and the battle of Yassi Çiman in 1230,¹¹⁴ and Köse Dagħ in 641/1243, down to the demise of the line,¹¹⁵ including information about his own family. As Peacock puts it, the author “totally fails to reflect the reality” of the government of Anatolia under the Mongol protectorate.¹¹⁶ As is the case with other similar literary productions with a local focus, especially those of a provincial nature, however, the work is of intrinsic interest for a “view from the wings” of Mongol-period history.

Another area of strong local sentiment and a correspondingly vigorous historiographical tradition is the Caspian provinces.¹¹⁷ Ibn Isfandiyyār's *Tārīkh-i Ṭabaristān* was written in 613/1216, on the eve of the Mongol invasions, and

¹¹⁰ Anon. 1999, 74–78, 90–133. ¹¹¹ Anon. 1999, 101.

¹¹² Aḥmad of Niğde, *al-Walad al-shafīq*, MS Suleimaniye Library Fatih 4518.

¹¹³ For an analysis of the work: Peacock 2004a, 95–107; Peacock 2004b, 115–25.

¹¹⁴ Aḥmad gives the date as 617, whereas Ibn Bībī has 627/1230; Cahen 1988, 83–44, has 628/1231. For an examination of this early period before the Mongols appeared: Redford 2013, 151–70.

¹¹⁵ Aḥmad of Niğde, *al-Walad al-shafīq*, fols. 148v–151v. ¹¹⁶ Peacock 2004a, 104.

¹¹⁷ Further: Melville 2000a, 45–91.

need not detain us here, although there is an important continuation of the work that covers the Ilkhanid period down to c. 760/1359, and shares many characteristics with a local history of overlapping contents, the *Tārīkh-i Rūyān* of Awliyā'allāh Āmulī.¹¹⁸ In practice, these are works with a very inward-looking gaze, and although they are of first importance for the complex local history of the Caspian provinces in the Mongol period, they throw little light on the wider empire or its impact on the region. There is the barest hint of Sultan Öljeitü's efforts to conquer Gilan in 706/1306 and no real interest in events at court. The anonymous continuator and Āmulī do, however, indicate the insecurity of life under Mongol rule (and especially its collapse), and provide some information about the rise of the Sarbadars, their efforts to penetrate Māzandarān under Mas'ūd, and their clash with the Kart rulers of Herat.¹¹⁹

The Kart dynasty (1245–1389), which had the distinction of governing the province throughout the Ilkhanate, is the main topic of a local history of Herat by Sayfī Harawī (Haravī), with a focus on the political narrative of events from the first invasions under Chinggis Khan down to c. 721/1321.¹²⁰ This inevitably covers considerable interactions between the Mongol *uluses* in Transoxania and Iran, especially in the reigns of Öljeitü and Abū Sa'īd, for which it is an essential contemporary source. It was commissioned by Malik Ghiyāth al-Dīn (d. 1329), who also gave the author access to archival materials; in addition to his own eyewitness or oral sources, he also refers briefly to the work of both Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn, as well as a now lost verse chronicle, the *Kart-nāma* of Rabī'ī Bushanjī (c. 702/1302).¹²¹ As noted by the editor, much of the material in Sayfī's history was absorbed verbatim into the work of Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū and later authors, notably Mu'īn al-Dīn Zamchī Isfizārī's *Raudat al-jannāt fi awṣāfi madīnat Harāt*, which provides little material on political history after the point where Sayfī Harawī left off.¹²² As with the other local histories mentioned, Sayfī's work is not exclusively a dynastic chronicle, but contains topographical and other information about cultural life and artistic patronage, in this case the building works commissioned in Herat under the Karts, as well as providing an interesting repository of contemporary poetic literature.

118 Ibn Isfandiyyār tr. Browne 1905, 258 ff.; Āmulī 1969; discussed in Melville 2000a, 75–86.

119 Āmulī 1969, 182 ff.; Browne 1905, 264–68; cf. Masson-Smith 1970, 117–20. The latter (at 43–45) is unaware that Mara'shī's information is essentially derived from Āmulī.

120 Sayf b. Muḥammad 1944, editor's intro., x–xxiv; Storey 1970, 354–55; Paul 2000, 99, 102–3; and esp. Paul 2004, 217–19. For the Kart dynasty: Spuler 1985, 758–60.

121 Sayf b. Muḥammad 1944, editor's intro., xi, xv.

122 Isfizārī 1959, 522; vol. 2, 1960, comprises the topography of the city.

As we have seen, local histories may also focus on the religious figures associated with the locality in question, notably the *Shīrāz-nāma* of Ibn Zarkūb. Hagiographical literature provides a fertile source of information about social conditions and the spiritual climate of the times; that is, evidence of popular piety, the formation of Sufi brotherhoods, the evolution of influential shrines, and the interaction of Sufi shaykhs with the secular powers. These are all particularly characteristic aspects of the Mongol period, and this is reflected in a number of works devoted to the lives of individual saints.¹²³ Among them we may note the life of Amīn al-Dīn Balyānī in Fārs (d. 745/1345), written by a follower of the Kazaruni order, Maḥmūd b. ʿUthmān, in 748/1348.¹²⁴ The work gives many examples of his sanctity and command of spiritual powers used to help the people in their everyday lives, of his activities as a builder, and of his interactions with the authorities.¹²⁵ It also provides evidence of the loyalty of the people of Shiraz for the Injūid family in the turbulent competition for power in southern Iran.

Hagiographical works are also available for two rather better-known shaykhs, namely the Sufi poet Mawlānā Jalāl al-Rūmī (Balkhī) (d. 1273) and Ṣafī al-Dīn Ardabīlī, ancestor of the Safavids (d. 1334). Rūmī and his descendants are memorialized in the hagiography by Shams al-Dīn Aflākī (d. 1360), a disciple of the Mevlevis, who started collecting anecdotes in 1318 and probably completed his work in the 1350s.¹²⁶ The *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn* is full of stories that reflect the current political and social context of Konya in the third quarter of the thirteenth century, and Rūmī's interactions with many of the elite of Konya in the last flowering of Seljuq government shortly before the Mongols adopted a more direct rule in the province. The figure of the Parvāna Muʿīn al-Dīn is particularly prominent,¹²⁷ and there are various anecdotes of Rūmī's encounters with the Mongols, including after his death. Naturally, the work is mainly a vital source for the life of Rūmī and his mystical teaching and poetry, and for his successors down to Chelebi Amīr ʿĀbid (d. 1338), whose life coincided with the collapse of the Ilkhanate after the death of Abū Saʿīd. Many of their anecdotes refer back to the *dicta* of Jalāl al-Dīn.¹²⁸

123 Paul, 2002, 537–38, building on the pioneering work of Jean Aubin and Paul 1990, 17–43.

124 Maḥmūd b. ʿUthmān 1997; Manzūr al-Ajdād 1999, 7–10; Aigle 1997, 231–60.

125 Aigle 1997, 245–50.

126 Aflākī 1951–1961; tr. Huart 1978; tr. O'Kane 2002; also Huart 1922, 309–17; Peacock 2013, 206–26.

127 As also to some extent in Rūmī's "table talk," Rūmī 1951; tr. Arberry 1961; and more so in his letters, Peacock 2013, 210–21.

128 The outstanding biography of Rūmī and his times remains that of Lewis 2000.

Of similar historical importance is the hagiography of Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn, composed from a large range of oral reports by his adepts and disciples and especially his successor, Ṣadr al-Dīn (1334–1391). The author, Ibn Bazzāz, completed his text in 759/1357, at almost exactly the same time as Aflākī's lives of the Mevlevīs.¹²⁹ It contains a considerable amount of valuable material not only on the rural economy and society of the time, but also on the impact of the influx of Turkish-speakers in the district round Ardabil and Miyāna (Garmrud); Ibn Bazzāz's anecdotes are also richly populated with historical personages and interactions with the *ordo* as it passed through the region on the way to pastures in the Mughan plain, supplementing the chronicles with information from a different perspective.¹³⁰

The shrine at Ardabil is important also for the rich collection of archival documents preserved there, including a large number of decrees and legal records that attest to the shrine's assets and its increasing importance after the death of Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn. Many of these decrees have been analyzed and recent detailed studies throw more light on the socioeconomic history of Iran and chancery practices under Mongol rule.¹³¹

Later Fourteenth Century to c. 1430

These hagiographies have taken us into the troubled period of the breakdown of the Ilkhanate and its aftermath, when the importance of Sufi shaykhs and local dynasties was accentuated in the absence of strong central control. This section will look briefly at works written after the end of the Ilkhanate that still serve as important sources for the period, often taking the form of continuations of earlier texts. By concluding the survey with the *oeuvre* of Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, already mentioned, we can begin to see how the historiography of the Ilkhanid period was received by the next generation of authors, how the perception and narrative of Mongol history developed and became consolidated and the canon more or less fixed.

The rapid change of patrons that affected the dedication of the successive versions of Shabānkārā'i's *Majma' al-ansāb* continued to embarrass later authors, not least Mu'īn al-Dīn Naṭanzī, who composed a "world history" from the Creation down to 1405 for the Timurid prince-governor of Shiraz

129 Ibn Bazzāz 1994; Zirke 1987; also, Mazzaoui 2006, 303–10.

130 Nikitine 1957, esp. 391–93; Aubin 1989, 5–17. Gronke 1997, 205–30, is based largely on the *Ṣafvat al-ṣafā*.

131 Especially Herrmann 2004; and Haneda and Yokkaichi 2015, with reference to earlier work; also Aubin 1976–1977 for the landholdings of the shrine.

Iskandar Mīrzā in 1413. When the prince was deposed by his father Shāhrukh the following year, Naṭanzī quickly revised the text, removing the passages in praise of Iskandar and presenting the new version to Shāhrukh on Rajab 22, 817/October 7, 1414.¹³² Like Jūzjānī's *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāširī*, Naṭanzī's *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh-i Mu'inī* is arranged in sections by dynasty; the revised version contains a series of tables that summarize the qualities found in the rulers of each dynasty.¹³³ Jean Aubin's edition, based on both versions, includes only the more contemporary sections, covering the local rulers of southern Iran, such as the Shabānkāra, Hormuz, Kirman, Yazd, and Luristan, followed by the Jochids of the Golden Horde and Chaghadaid khans in Transoxania, the Ilkhans in Iran, and the rival dynasties exercising power before the advent of Temūr, down to his death in 1405.¹³⁴ Naṭanzī provides much original material on cultural and administrative life in fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Iran and, most importantly, preserves a viewpoint seemingly based mainly on oral traditions transmitted by members of the Turko-Mongol military aristocracy originating from Mongolia who had been stationed in Shiraz in the early fifteenth century, which was later smoothed over.¹³⁵

Another product of the period is the work of Abū Bakr Quṭbī Ahrī, once again a "universal" chronicle written in the name of, and dedicated to, Sultan Shaykh Uways (Uvays) the Jalayirid ruler (r. 1356–1374).¹³⁶ The aim of the work is to provide the just ruler with the most useful knowledge after that of the *sharī'a*, namely "the vitae of kings and the histories of pādshāhs."¹³⁷ The chronicle is in two broad sections, covering pre-Islamic Iran and the Islamic period, the latter subdivided into five *ṭabaqāt*: the Prophet and the orthodox caliphs; the Umayyads; the Marwanids; the 'Abbasids and those who governed during their rule in Khurasan, Azerbaijan, Syria, and Anatolia; and the Mongols. Unfortunately, the end of the unique manuscript is defective, stopping with the events of 760/1359, so it is unclear when the author completed his work, if indeed it was completed. As it is, there is valuable and original material on the Ilkhanate and, unusually, this is presented alongside information about the contemporary rulers of the Golden Horde. It is particularly useful for covering events in Azerbaijan after the death of

¹³² Woods 1987, 89–93; Aigle 2014. ¹³³ Aigle 1992, 67–83.

¹³⁴ Naṭanzī 1957; the 2004 "edition" by Istakhrī reproduces Aubin's text without the critical apparatus.

¹³⁵ Woods 1987, 93.

¹³⁶ Ahrī 1954 is a partial text and summary translation; the complete text is in Ahrī 2010. The actual contents differ slightly from those stated in the author's preface (possibly due to lacunae in the MS).

¹³⁷ Ahrī 2010, 22.

Abū Saʿīd, especially the dominion of the Chobanids and their rivalry with the Jalayirids; the material is organized by reign, but also annalistically, and although rather telegraphic, it contains information not found elsewhere.

At the same time, in the south of Iran, the Muzaffarids (1314–1393) were competing for power with the Injuids and finally eclipsed them in 758/1357 with the capture of Shiraz.¹³⁸ A history of the dynasty was written by Muʿīn al-Dīn Muʿallim Yazdī (d. 789/1387), entitled *Mawāhib-i ilāhī dar tārikh-i Āl-i Muẓaffar* (Divine Gifts in the History of the Muzaffarid Family), carried down to the battle between his patron Shāh-i Shujāʿ (r. 1358–1384) and his brother Maḥmūd-Shāh in 767/1366.¹³⁹ This was written in a very artificial and ornate literary style that was considered too difficult to understand by the later author, Maḥmūd Kutubī (or Kutbī), who rewrote it in easier language, in the way that Ibn Bibī's chronicle was given a more comprehensible form. The first part follows Muʿīn al-Dīn's text quite closely, but the latter portions, after 1366, are entirely original and occasionally based on the author's own eyewitness experience. Kutubī was writing in 823/1420 and brought the narrative down to the destruction of the Muzaffarids by Temür in 795/1393.¹⁴⁰ It is a narrative history, arranged according to the sequence of rulers and a fairly regular supply of dates, written in a simple style interlaced with occasional passages of poetry. Apart from making Muʿīn al-Dīn's work more accessible, Kutubī also considered himself to be following the example set by Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī, "a more useful and disciplined history than which had never been written," and included his text within a copy of the *Tārikh-i guẓida* that he was transcribing.¹⁴¹

Mustawfī's work generated several other continuations, apart from his own prose continuation of the *Zafar-nāma* noted earlier. His son Zayn al-Dīn Qazwīnī compiled a chronicle that starts with the events of autumn 742/1341 and continues to Rabīʿ I, 795/January 1393.¹⁴² This is a brief annalistic record of events mainly in northern Iran, involving the struggle between the Chobanids and the Jalayirids and the affairs of the rulers of the Golden Horde up to the arrival of Temür and his first onslaughts on western Iran. As such, it covers much the same ground as Ahrī's *Tārikh-i Shaykh Uways* and indeed there are many passages that are almost identical in the two texts.¹⁴³ Another continuation has since been published under the name *Dhayl-i Tārikh-i guẓida*, starting with the summer of 734/1334, the invasion of

138 Wing 2014. 139 Yazdī 1947; Storey 1970, 277–78; Aigle 2005, 64–65. 140 Kutubī 1985.

141 Kutubī 1985, 27; Mustawfī 1910, 1913, I: 633–755, for a facsimile of this MS, 2: 151–207, for an abridged translation.

142 Zayn al-Dīn 1993. 143 Zayn al-Dīn 1993, editor's intro., 9–10.

Özbek Khan and the death of Abū Saʿīd, down to January 1393.¹⁴⁴ This is a greatly amplified version of Zayn al-Dīn's text by an anonymous author who is considered by the editor to be most probably Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū,¹⁴⁵ with whose *Dhayl-i Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* there are many passages in common. This text has still to be incorporated into the secondary studies of the period before the rise of Temür.

We may conclude this section by considering the extent to which Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū consolidated most of these chronicles into his own historiographical *oeuvre*, conceived principally as a continuation of Rashīd al-Dīn.¹⁴⁶ His *Dhayl-i Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* exists in several versions, one down to 736/1335 and one to 795/1393.¹⁴⁷ It is the major source for the history of Iran in the fourteenth century, told in a narrative, episodic form with an underpinning of firm chronological data. We have already remarked on his incorporation of Mustawfī's *Zafar-nāma* for the period from the death of Ghazan Khan to 1334, as well as the verse chronicle of Aḥmad-i Tabrīzī and Sayfī Harawī's history of Herat. For the period after the death of Abū Saʿīd and the end of the Ilkhanate it shares and synthesizes material also found in the chronicles of Ahrī and Zayn al-Dīn Qazwīnī, as noted above. Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū also incorporated sections on the Sarbadars and the events in Khurasan in the second half of the century into his larger works, the *Majmū'a*, the *Jughrāfiyā* and Volume 1 of the *Zubdat al-tawārīkh*.¹⁴⁸ It should also be noted that the sections on Fārs and Kirman in the *Jughrāfiyā* contain detailed narratives of the local rulers of the Mongol period, the Salghurids, Injūids, Qara Khitai, and Muzaffarids. In the latter, he relies on Kutubī's history to a large extent, for example narrating the events of the years 748–753/1347–1352 and the defeat of Abū Ishāq at the hands of Mubārīz al-Dīn, parallels in wording suggesting that Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū was using Kutubī rather than the *Muwāhib-i ilāhī* of Mu'īn al-Dīn Yazdī.¹⁴⁹

Almost contemporary with Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū, but evidently written in ignorance of his book, the work of 'Alī Yazdī (d. 858/1454) also provides an account of the Mongol Empire before the advent of Temür, in the long preface (*muqaddima*) to his **Tārīkh-i Jahāngīr*, written between 822/1419 and 831/1428 as part of a project that was never realized.¹⁵⁰ Unlike his *Zafar-nāma*,

144 Anon. 2005, 21–145. 145 Anon. 2005, editor's intro., 29–30.

146 Woods 1987, 96–99; Subtelny and Melville 2002.

147 Woods 1987, 96, refers to one of the four extant MSS of the still unpublished first continuation; for the later version: Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū 1971.

148 Masson-Smith 1970, esp. 25–32. For these separate accounts: Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū 1959, 2010.

149 Compare Kutubī 1985, 50–60, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū 1999b, 107–26; Kutubī 1985, 84–86, Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū 1999a, 227–31. Also Storey 1972, 132–33, Aigle 2005, 186–88.

150 Binbaş 2012, esp. 394–97, 408.

a masterpiece of literary elegance, and unlike also his stylistic models, Juwaynī and Waṣṣāf, the *muqaddima* is couched in plain and simple language, covering the genealogy of Temür going back to Adam and the prophets and the tribes of the Turks. This adds little, if anything, to the material provided by his sources, as for instance in the case of his account of the *yasa* of Chinggis Khan, clearly derived from Juwaynī.¹⁵¹ After narrating the rise and conquests of Chinggis Khan, Yazdī gives a brief history of the khans of the Golden Horde (Dasht-i Qipchaq), the Ilkhans and their immediate puppet successors down to Sulaymān Khan, and the descendants of Chaghadaï, all essentially to provide a background for the rise of Temür. Yazdī's *muqaddima* has not been much studied for its contents, and its main interest would be to see how he represents the history of the Mongol Empire from the perspective of the Timurid realm that replaced it.

Conclusions

The foregoing brief survey of the main sources written in Persian that bear on the history of the Mongol Empire is necessarily far from complete. This is so not only with regard to the number of works actually mentioned, but also with regard to their study as texts in their own right. Furthermore, they contain many details that have not found their way into the secondary studies of the period. In other words, only selective use has been made of most of them; they have been more or less systematically scrutinized and utilized to provide a narrative history of the period in its main outlines and most significant developments, but almost without exception they have not been studied from the historiographical perspective of the authors' outlook, priorities, use of sources, and local knowledge, and the circumstances in which they were writing that determined not only their access to information but also their attitude to it. Apart from such as is provided in the editors' introductions to these texts, we have little sense of the manuscript witnesses to their work, its popularity and dissemination, and the factors that facilitated its survival. The way the history of a period is written is itself part of its history.

Despite this, it should be clear from this chapter that Persian authors provide a considerable range of historical literature contemporary with events, covering the political and military activities of the governing elite, both at court and in the provincial centers, and in the religious circles that enjoyed varying degrees of wealth, autonomy, and popular esteem. They

¹⁵¹ Yazdī 2008, 92–95; TJG, 16–24.

permit an assessment of the character of the period and the nature of Mongol rule as seen from the center, the periphery, and even the rural milieu. Although the wider picture of the empire as a whole comes into focus in the work of Rashīd al-Dīn and some of his immediate contemporaries, such as Waṣṣāf, the view is generally restricted to Iran, but nonetheless valuable for information about the neighboring Mongol khanates of the Golden Horde and Transoxania, at least insofar as this affected Iran. Despite David Morgan's enthusiastic appreciation of the Persian source material quoted at the outset of this chapter, it must be acknowledged that they would be of little use for the internal history of Yuan rule. In addition, the Jochid regions never developed a strong historiographical tradition and the Central Asian khanates only did so much later. But in Iran the period saw a great flourishing of Persian historical writing, partly stimulated by the example of statesmen such as the Juwaynīs and Rashīd al-Dīn and his son Ghiyāth al-Dīn, motivated by the desire not only to record the history of their times but to educate and inform the rulers whom they served. This didactic dimension to historical writing – purveying the “lessons” (or benefits) of history – was not, of course, new to the Mongol period, but it took on a particular urgency in the face of the alien and unfamiliar nature of the new rulers.

The various manuals that were produced in the course of this period also bear witness to the need to uphold traditional bureaucratic and financial practices in danger of being undermined. Thus Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's memorandum on finance was aimed to encourage Hülegü or Abaqa Khan to introduce order into the administration of taxation and government expenditure;¹⁵² the same could be said for Māzandarānī's *Risāla-yi falakiyya* of 765/1363.¹⁵³ By the end of the period, such works as Muḥammad Nakhjawānī's (Nakhjavānī's) *Dastūr al-kātib*, started at the request of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Rashīdī but not completed until 767/1366, also reflect the way in which government and the work of the chancery had changed, by explaining the function of new offices and the introduction of new Turkic-Mongol terms with which the clerks and scribes needed to be familiar.¹⁵⁴

Persian histories of the Mongol Empire naturally continued to be written long afterwards, and the work of Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū was absorbed successively by 'Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī (c. 1469),¹⁵⁵ and via him into Mīrkhwānd's famous

¹⁵² Minorsky 1940; Minorsky 1940, 64–85.

¹⁵³ Māzandarānī 1952; Remler 1985, esp. 162–65 on the supposed date and value of the compilation.

¹⁵⁴ Nakhjavānī 1964–1976; Morgan 1996, 113–14.

¹⁵⁵ 'Abd al-Razzāq 1974; Storey 1970, 293–98.

compilation, the *Rawḍat al-ṣafā* (Garden of Purity), continuing to around the same date.¹⁵⁶ The latter, especially, being widely available before many of the contemporary texts had been identified and edited, has been considered to be an important source for the period; rather little attention has been paid to how much additional information these late sources provide and, even in the absence of new material, to the ways in which exactly they have reworked the writings of their predecessors.¹⁵⁷ Such a study would at least reveal how the perception of the Mongol Empire changed with the passage of time and from the perspective of a society in which the legacy of the Mongol Empire had largely been assimilated into a new Perso-Turkish synthesis.

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¹⁵⁶ Mīrkhwānd 1960; Storey 1970, 92–101.

¹⁵⁷ Masson-Smith 1970, 32–49, for one example of such a close analysis; Woods 1987 for Timurid histories.

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Chinese Sources

BETTINE BIRGE AND XIAO LIU

When the Mongols first invaded China in the twelfth century and later founded the Yuan dynasty (1272–1368), China had a long and sophisticated tradition of historical and bureaucratic writing and a large population of literate elites who produced written records in great numbers and various genres. Chinese records, together with those in Persian, provide the largest trove of sources available for the Mongol Empire. These include transmitted sources, often reprinted in later centuries; stone inscriptions surviving from the Mongol era; and newly excavated sources. Among these are official histories, unofficial histories, bureaucratic documents, contracts, travelogues, miscellaneous notes, and other literati writing; contracts and other documents produced by social interactions; and assorted literary outputs relating to the Mongols that provide valuable evidence of the Mongol era. Moreover, Mongolian texts such as the *Secret History of the Mongols* are preserved in Chinese characters, used phonetically to represent Mongolian words. Taken together, these represent a rich store of materials, many of which have not been fully utilized. This chapter provides an overview of available sources in Chinese, organized roughly by genre.

Official Histories

*The Official History of the Yuan (Yuan shi) and Later
Rewrites*

The *Yuan shi* (Official History of the Yuan)

The *Yuan shi* (Official History of the Yuan), covering the years 1206–1369, is the foremost source in Chinese for the study of the Mongol Empire. It was completed in two parts, in 1369 and 1370, by a committee of officials under the

general direction of the Confucian scholar Song Lian (1310–1381), and was compiled according to the same basic principles as the official histories of other dynasties, namely comprising (1) Basic Annals (*benji*); (2) treatises or monographs on specific topics such as law, economics, geography, or military organization, sometimes supplemented by tables; and (3) biographies of important personages including empresses, high officials, and famous scholars.¹ It differs from other dynastic histories, however, in several respects. First, it was compiled in great haste, much more quickly than other dynastic histories, in the very early years of the succeeding Ming dynasty (1368–1644). Second, many of the documents and chronicles on which the history was based were in Mongolian, but none of the main editors knew Mongolian. Third, the founder of the Ming dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang (r. 1368–1398), who ordered the compilation, closely supervised the editing of the *History*. The result is a text that has numerous errors and mistranslations and some significant omissions reflecting Zhu Yuanzhang's influence.²

Nevertheless, these elements, which provoked much censure from later historians, also make the *Official History of the Yuan* particularly valuable as a primary source. Because of the haste in which it was prepared, it is less redacted and less edited than other dynastic histories. It also contains many sections taken wholesale from official documents of the time, without the usual condensing, providing material that is preserved nowhere else in the historical record. Modern research has established the source documents for most parts of the *Official History*, adding to its value.³

The most definitive edition to date of the *Yuan shi* is that first published by the Zhonghua shuju (China Publishing House) in 1976 with punctuation and annotation.⁴ This was based on the *baina* (“hundred patches”) edition published in 1935 by the Commercial Press, which photo-reproduced the earliest extant printings for each section of the *Yuan shi*. The Zhonghua shuju, in addition to adding punctuation, cross-referenced the text with other editions and known source material. For the annotation, it further consulted a large body of textual scholarship. This edition has been reprinted numerous times with minor updates. As of 2020, the Zhonghua shuju was preparing a major revision of the *Yuan shi* based on new scholarship.

1 Yang 1961; Wilkinson 2022, Chapter 49; Beasley and Pulleyblank 1961.

2 Chen 2005; Fang 2004; Liu Xiao 2006, 279–82; Han Rulin et al. 1985, 143–45; Wilkinson 2022, sections 64.2, 64.5. As an example of errors, sometimes one person has two biographies under slightly different names, e.g. *juan* 121 Subutai and *juan* 122 Xuebutai; *juan* 131 Wanzhedu and *juan* 133 Wanzhedu Badu.

3 E.g., Wang Shenrong et al. 1991; Liu Xiao 2004b; Chen 2012. 4 YS.

Modern scholars have made further efforts to correct and annotate the *Yuan shi*. The most important and comprehensive is a massive project originally directed by Prof. Liu Yingsheng at Nanjing University and involving numerous scholars and students. It consists of a fully corrected and annotated text of the *Official History of the Yuan*, titled *Yuanshi jiaozhu* (Revisions and Annotations of the *Yuanshi*), and a bibliography of the relevant secondary scholarship in Chinese, Japanese, and Western languages. When completed, this enterprise will provide the most definitive edition of the *Yuan shi* and invaluable additional resources for the study of the Mongol–Yuan dynasty and the Mongol Empire.

The *Yuan shi*, like other official dynastic histories, is widely available online, including at many free sites. Notably, the Zhonghua shuju edition is available with original pagination indicated on the two foremost Chinese document databases: the Scripta Sinica, Hanji dianzi wenxian ziliaoku (Electronic Database of Chinese Documents), developed and hosted by the Academia Sinica in Taiwan,⁵ and the Zhongguo jiben gujiku (Database of Chinese Classic Ancient Books), developed in Beijing and hosted by the Airusheng shuzihua jishu yanjiu zhongxin (Erudition Digital Technology Research Center).⁶ These are both fully searchable, thus rendering the various older indexes and concordances for the *Yuan shi* unnecessary,⁷ and are available by subscription through major libraries.

Several sections of the *Official History of the Yuan* have been translated into Western languages. Christopher Atwood has produced superb translations of the Basic Annals (*benji*) for the first four Great Khans, Chinggis, Ogödei, Güyük, and Qubilai (the last up to the surrender of Arigh Böke), which appear in the recent and upcoming issues of *Mongolian Studies*. In addition to informative introductions and annotation, these include invaluable glossaries of names and terms in Mongolian, Pinyin romanization, and Chinese characters.⁸ Three of the treatises have been published in Western-language translations with extensive annotations. The earliest is an English translation of the “Treatise on Economy” (*Shihuo zhi*), Chapters 93 and 94 of the *Yuan shi*, done by Herbert Franz Schurmann in 1956. The text describes Yuan taxation and fiscal administration, including the paper currency system.⁹ The “Treatise on Punishments” (or “Treatise on Penal Law,” *Xingfa zhi*), Chapters 102 to 105 of the *Yuan shi*, was translated into French by Paul Ratchnevsky, who published Volume 1 in 1937

5 See <http://hanji.sinica.edu.tw>. 6 See <http://ero7.com>.

7 For these and other invaluable databases: Wilkinson 2022, section 45.5.

8 Atwood 2017–2018. For a German translation of Chapters 2 and 3: Abramowski 1976, 1979.

9 Schurmann 1956.

and completed three more volumes with the help of Françoise Aubin between 1972 and 1985.¹⁰ The work is titled *Un code des Yuan*, but the treatise is not actually a law code. It is an overview of Yuan penal law copied from a massive compendium of administrative materials completed in 1331, titled *Jingshi dadian* (Great Compendium for Administering the World).¹¹ Other treatises in the *Yuan shi* were also copied from or based on the *Jingshi dadian*, including the “Treatise on Economy.” Ch’i-ch’ing Hsiao (Xiao Qiqing, 1937–2012) translated into English the “Treatise on the Military” (*Bing zhi*), Chapters 98 and 99 of the *Yuan shi*, which was published in 1978 as *The Military Establishment of the Yuan Dynasty*.¹² These chapters cover the system of military service in both Mongolia and China, the imperial bodyguard (Mo. *keshig*) instituted by Chinggis Khan, and the all-important garrison system. Rough English translations of the biographies of empresses and imperial concubines, Chapters 114 and 116 of the *Yuan shi*, can be found in Appendix 11 of *Marriage as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression: Mongolian Royal Marriages from World Empire to Yuan Dynasty* by George Qingzhi Zhao.¹³ And the part dealing with Mian (Burma) is translated by Geoff Wade.¹⁴ Finally, Louis Hambis (1906–1978) in 1945 and 1954 produced French translations of Chapters 107 and 108 of the *Yuan shi*, those on the genealogies of the Mongol imperial family and on fiefs granted to members of the imperial family and court ministers. Chapter 107, on genealogies, includes notes by Hambis’s teacher Paul Pelliot.¹⁵

There is a complete translation into modern Chinese of all the official dynastic histories. The main drawback of these is that they do not include annotation. The translation of the Yuan history, however, like the others, renders alternative forms of characters, common in Yuan writing, into standard forms and can serve as an aid in reading the original.¹⁶

Later Rewrites of the *Yuan shi*

The shortcomings of the *Yuan shi* were not lost on later scholars of the imperial era. Historians already in the Ming (1368–1644) and especially in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) sought to revise and augment the official Yuan history. Most of these works will be superseded by the new forthcoming editions described above. Nevertheless, some of the late Qing works, especially those influenced by the Evidential Studies (*kaozheng*) movement, have continuing value for modern scholarship. The two of greatest value were reprinted

10 Ratchnevsky and Aubin 1972–1985. 11 Liu Xiao 2004b. 12 Hsiao 1978.

13 Zhao 2008. 14 Wade 2009. 15 Hambis 1945; Hambis 1954.

16 Xu Jialu et al. 2004.

together in photo-reproduction in 1989 under the title *Yuanshi erzhong* (Two Books of Yuan History). These include *Xin Yuanshi* (New History of the Yuan) in 257 chapters by Ke Shaomin (1850–1933), first published in 1922, which covers the years from 1206 to 1307,¹⁷ and *Mengwu'er shiji* (Historical Records of the Mongols) by Tu Ji (1856–1921), published in final form in 1934, which covers both the history of the Yuan dynasty and that of the Mongols after the Yuan.¹⁸

Official Histories of Other Dynasties

While efforts to compile the official histories of previous dynasties began already in Qubilai's times, disagreements about legitimization issues (e.g., which dynasty should the Yuan succeed) delayed the enterprise. Only in 1343–1345, Mongol grand councilor Toqto'a (Ch. Tuotuo, 1314–1356) headed a commission that resumed the work, and they published the official histories of the Liao (916–1125, including Western Liao 1124–1218), the Jin (1115–1234) and the Song (960–1279), declaring the Mongols successors to all three. All three histories include valuable information about the Mongols and their conquests, though the Mongol editors put their own stamp on the narratives, as did editors of other dynastic histories. The Jin history in particular was heavily redacted, and the Liao history is quite brief, there having been a relative scarcity of written records for the Khitan Liao dynasty.¹⁹

The best current editions of these three histories are the same as those for the *Yuan shi*, the *Zhonghua shuju* punctuated and annotated editions. The Liao and Jin histories have already been published in new updated editions in 2017 and 2020 respectively.²⁰ The Song history should soon follow, though as of this printing the original 1977 edition remains definitive.²¹ All are available on online databases, and the *Scripta Sinica* allows word searches in the *Zhonghua* editions.

Other Court-Sponsored Histories and Miscellaneous Writings, Diplomatic Diaries, Travelogues

Other Court-Sponsored Histories and Miscellaneous Writings

Beginning as early as the sixth century, when a new emperor came to the throne his ministers would compile an annalistic record of day-to-day events

¹⁷ Ke Shaomin (1922) 1989.

¹⁸ Tu Ji (1934) 1989. For more on premodern works meant to supplement the *Yuan shi*: Liu Xiao 2006.

¹⁹ Chan, 1981. ²⁰ Tuotuo (1974) 2017; Tuotuo (1975) 2020. ²¹ Tuotuo 1977.

of the previous reign, based on materials collected during that reign. These were called Veritable Records (*shilu*), and became the basis for the chronological annals, the Basic Annals, in the official dynastic histories. During the Yuan, Veritable Records were compiled for the first thirteen emperors, all but the last. They were used to compose the Basic Annals of the Yuan *shi* (*Official History of the Yuan*).²² None of the Veritable Records for the Yuan survive, but a Mongolian text that survives in Chinese translation from 1369 appears to be an early draft of the Veritable Records of the reigns of Chinggis Khan (Taizu, r. 1206–1227) and his son Ögödei Qa'an (Taizong, r. 1229–1241), known to have been presented to Qubilai (r. 1260–1294) in 1288. This text is titled the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* (Record of the Personal Campaigns of the Holy Warrior), also called the *Shengwu qinzheng ji* (Account of the Personal Campaigns of the Holy Warrior). It can be shown also to have been a basic source for the Annals of Chinggis Khan in the *Compendium of Chronicles* (*Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, c. 1304) by the Persian minister Rashīd-al-Dīn (1247–1318). Although the *Shengwu* covers roughly the same years as the *Secret History of the Mongols* (described below), the *Shengwu*, like Rashīd al-Dīn's chronicle, leaves out unsavory incidents in the early life of Chinggis Khan found in the *Secret History*, as would be expected of an official court chronicle. On the other hand, it includes some of the most accurate accounts of the conquest of north China and other events in the history of the Mongol Empire. Comparing parallel passages in the *Shengwu* and Rashīd al-Dīn's chronicle, we find that the Chinese translators of the *Shengwu* misunderstood the Mongolian in numerous places. Mongolian names were further mixed up in the transmission of the text.²³ Nevertheless, the text is a detailed and invaluable record of the Mongol conquests. It counts among the most important sources for the history of the Mongol Empire.

A number of scholars in China and Japan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced edited and annotated editions of the *Shengwu*, attempting to resolve some of the problems with the text. For many years, the most definitive of these was that of Wang Guowei (1877–1927) in his *Shengwu qinzhenglu jiaozhu* (Record of the Personal Campaigns of the Holy Warrior: Critical Edition with Annotation), published in 1926, a year before his suicide.²⁴ In 2020, an updated critical edition by the late Jia Jingyan (1924–1990), which had long circulated in mimeograph, was published by the Zhonghua shuju.²⁵ A translation into French of the portion pertaining to

22. For the language of these *Shilu* (Chinese): YS, 4674; Chen 2012, 4–7.

23. Atwood 2004, 499; Wilkinson 2022, section 64.2. 24. Wang Guowei (1926) 1962b.

25. Jia Jingyan 2020.

Chinggis Khan, with annotation reflecting new scholarship of the time, was made by Paul Pelliot (1878–1945) and later published by his student Louis Hambis.²⁶ Christopher Atwood has produced a definitive English translation, titled “Campaigns of Chinggis Khan,” with extensive commentary on the text and detailed stemmatic research, but as yet it remains unpublished. Nevertheless, a Chinese translation of Atwood’s commentary by Ma Xiaolin will accompany a new Chinese edition of the *Shengwu* from the *Zhonghua shuju*.

The *Secret History of the Mongols* (Ch. *Menggu mishi*, also *Yuanchao bishi*; Mo. *Mongqolun niucha tobcha’an*), although originally a text in Mongolian, deserves mention here because it only survives today as transcribed into Chinese characters used phonetically, each representing approximately one syllable of a Mongolian word. Understanding the text is aided by running interlinear notes in Chinese characters containing the meaning of each Mongolian word and summaries of each section in colloquial Chinese of the time. The Bureau of Interpreters of the early Ming dynasty produced this version to use for language instruction. The text is a great monument of Mongolian literature. It contains much information not found in any other source, including unflattering episodes in the life of Chinggis Khan (such as his fear of dogs and his killing of his half-brother). However, its descriptions of the Mongol conquests are not as accurate as those in the *Shengwu qinzheng lu*, suggesting that they were recalled from memory years after the events. The date of the text has been a subject of debate, but recent scholarship argues convincingly that the text dates to 1252.²⁷

The first modern edition was by Ye Dehui (1864–1927) in 1908. Two Mongolian scholars first published a modern facsimile edition in Hohhot in 1980 with later reprints.²⁸ In 2012, the eminent Mongolist Wulan (Mo. Ulaan) published a critical, annotated edition in beautiful color facsimile with up-to-date scholarship and emendations, which is now the definitive edition of the work.²⁹ Francis Woodman Cleaves (1911–1995) completed the first English translation, using the language of the King James Bible.³⁰ Igor de Rachewiltz (1929–2016) produced a translation into modern English with encyclopedic annotation and commentary in three volumes.³¹ A new, eminently readable translation by Christopher Atwood, informed by the latest scholarship, is due

26 Pelliot and Hambis 1951.

27 Atwood 2007; cf. de Rachewiltz 2008; also Kara’s chapter in this volume.

28 E’erdengtai and Wuyundalai 1980. 29 Wulan 2012.

30 Cleaves 1982. For an abridged, modern adaptation: Kahn 1998.

31 De Rachewiltz 2004–2013.

out soon. Scholars in Japan have produced complete concordances of Chinese and Mongolian words, as well as a detailed annotated translation by Ozawa Shigeo.³²

The Southern Song historian Li Xinchuan (1166–1243) wrote a discerning history up to the year 1217, titled *Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji* (Random Notes from Court and Country since the Jianyan Years (1127–1130)), which includes the earliest known records of Chinggis Khan's conquests. The relevant excerpts have been extracted by Christopher Atwood and translated into English with invaluable annotation. It appears in his *Rise of the Mongols: Five Chinese Sources*, which allows one to compare it to other accounts of the early Mongol Empire.³³ A good edition of the original Chinese was published by Zhonghua in the year 2000.³⁴

According to the *Yuan shi*, after the Southern Song surrendered in 1276, the Yuan court commissioned the compilation of “Records of Conquering the Jin and Song” and the work was undertaken by various officials.³⁵ The *Ping Song lu* (Record of Conquering the Song), reputedly by Liu Minzhong (1243–1318), is thought to be this officially sanctioned chronicle, one of only a few works of official historical writing surviving from the Yuan. The work is also extant under the titles *Bingzi ping Song lu* (Record of Conquering the Song of the Bingzi Year (1276)) and *Xinkan Da Yuan hunyi Jiangnan shilu* (New Edition of the Veritable Records of Unifying Jiangnan by the Great Yuan). The National Library of China (*Zhongguo guojia tushuguan*) and the Library of Peking University preserve manuscript copies of the *Ping Song lu*, and a later, printed version is preserved in the great Qing collection, the *Siku quanshu*. The Qing edition changes the transliteration of the foreign names from what is found in the manuscript copies, and later editions are based on this, using the changed names.³⁶

One of the great achievements of Qubilai's reign is the Astronomical Reform of 1280. The final product of this great scientific endeavor was recorded in the massive treatise *Shoushi li* (Granting the Seasons). The reform established a more accurate solar and lunar calendar, predicted eclipses and other celestial phenomena, and bestowed on Qubilai the legitimacy and charisma of traditional Chinese imperial authority, which claimed connection to a cosmic order. The historian of science Nathan Sivin (1931–2022) produced an erudite and masterful translation into English with a detailed

32 Kuribayashi 2009; Kuribayashi 2012; Kuribayashi and Coyijungjab 2001; Ozawa 1984–1986.

33 Atwood, 2021. 34 Li Xinchuan 2000. 35 Xiong Yanjun 2014.

36 Liu Minzhong 1968; Liu Minzhong 1983.

study of Chinese astronomy and predictive science, not just in its technical aspects but also in its political, social, and intellectual dimensions.³⁷

In 1330, the court dietary physician, Hu Sihui, presented to the emperor an extraordinary culinary work, the *Yinshan zhengyao* (Proper and Essential Things for the Emperor's Food and Drink), filled with prescriptions for nutritional health plus recipes for fine delicacies at the court. This tome reveals the wide variety of foodstuffs made available by the Mongol conquests and the foreign influences on diet, medicine, and material culture of the Mongol–Yuan. A splendid scholarly translation into English with commentary and detailed studies by Paul Buell and Eugene Anderson includes a facsimile of both the original Chinese text and the woodcut illustrations. A bonus section provides adaptations of the recipes for cooking today.³⁸

Diplomatic Diaries

The earliest written account of the Mongol conquests in any language, and the only one recorded during the lifetime of Chinggis Khan, is the *Meng Da beilu* (A Complete Record of the Mongol Tatars) written in 1221 by Zhao Gong (also called Zhao Hong, fl. thirteenth century). Zhao led a diplomatic mission from a border region of the Southern Song to the area of Yanjing (modern Beijing), then under Mongol control, where he met with the Mongol commander Muqali (1170–1223). At the time, the Song saw the Mongols as potential allies against the Jurchen Jin, who still occupied the areas north of the Huai river, along the Song's northern border. The book, in seventeen chapters completed just after Zhao's return, records the ethnic diversity among the Mongols, their various social customs, the exploits of members of the royal family and their top generals, the military institutions of the Mongol state, and the life of Chinggis Khan. The work includes both Zhao's direct observations and information he picked up from his interlocutors. Zhao was a keen observer on a friendly mission, and his account has points not mentioned in any other source.

The best edition of the *Meng Da beilu* is still that of Wang Guowei, included in his 1926 collection *Menggu shiliao sizhong* (Four Sources of Mongol History).³⁹ Vasilii P. Vasiliev (1818–1900) published a Russian translation in 1857, but this is superseded by the 1975 translation of Nikolai Ts. Munkuyev (or Munkuev,

³⁷ Sivin 2009.

³⁸ Buell and Anderson 2010. For an annotated edition with translation into modern Chinese: Hu Sihui 1988.

³⁹ Zhao Gong (1926) 1962. The work was originally attributed to Meng Gong and is sometimes listed under that name, but Wang Guowei definitively established Zhao Gong's authorship.

1922–1986), taking into account more recent scholarship, notably Wang Guowei's annotations. Munkuyev provides a full translation of Wang Guowei's annotation as well as an introduction and long separate commentary of his own. The book also includes a beautiful photo-reproduction of Wang Guowei's original Chinese text (with the pages of text, reading right to left, bound somewhat confusingly in left-to-right order as in a western book).⁴⁰ In 1980, Peter Olbricht and Elizabeth Pinks published a translation into German, with annotation based on the research of the great Mongolists Erich Haenisch (1880–1966) and Yao Congwu (Yao Ts'ung-wu, 1894–1970).⁴¹ A definitive, updated English translation by Christopher Atwood, titled "A Memorandum on the Mong-Tatars," is included in his *Rise of the Mongols*.⁴²

The Song continued to send other missions to the Mongol court after Zhao Gong's visit. In 1233 and 1234 the Southern Song emissary Zou Shen zhi (fl. thirteenth century) led delegations to the Mongol plateau, by which time the Song regarded the Mongols as rivals and potential enemies. The delegation included the two authors Peng Daya (d. 1245) and Xu Ting (fl. thirteenth century), who each wrote separate accounts of the visits. Afterwards they combined their writings into one volume, titled *Hei Da shilüe* (Concise Facts Concerning the Black Tatars).

The work is in forty-eight short entries, each of which describes some aspect of Mongol society or government, such as food, clothing, and housing, as well as matters of interest to the Song state, such as weapons, military organization, and conquests. It has more detail than the *Meng Da beilu*. As with the *Meng Da beilu*, Wang Guowei annotated the work and published it as part of his *Four Sources of Mongol History*.⁴³ Olbricht and Pinks translated it into German.⁴⁴ A definitive edition of the original Chinese appeared in 2014, edited and extensively annotated by Xu Quansheng.⁴⁵ This work includes comparisons to all extant versions, and references to related premodern texts and to Chinese and Western scholarship. An English translation titled "A Sketch of the Black Tatars" is included in Atwood's *Rise of the Mongols*.⁴⁶

Travelogues

In addition to diplomatic emissaries, other travelers to Mongol-controlled regions left records of their visits. These travelogues provide additional information on the history, geography, peoples, and customs of that period.

40 Munkuyev 1975 (also available electronically). 41 Olbricht and Pinks 1980.

42 Atwood 2021, 71–92. 43 Peng and Xu (1926) 1962. 44 Olbricht and Pinks 1980.

45 Peng and Xu 2014. 46 Atwood 2021, 93–130.

The *Xiyou lu* (Record of a Journey to the Western Regions) was authored by Yelü Chucai (1190–1244), a scion of the Khitan Liao royal family, who had joined Chinggis Khan's retinue as an astrologer and councilor after serving the Jin dynasty (1115–1234).⁴⁷ In 1219 Yelü Chucai accompanied Chinggis Khan on his first campaign in the western regions, traveling widely in Inner Asia for the next five to six years. According to his introduction, he decided to write the *Xiyou lu* because many people asked him about these western regions after he returned in 1227. His *Xiyou lu* was first published in 1229.

For years, only an abridged version circulated, preserved in a collection by the Yuan official Sheng Ruzi.⁴⁸ This short version, of only 800 characters, included only the work's first section, on the geography of the western regions. In 1888, Emil Bretschneider (1833–1901), a physician of German descent serving in the Russian legation in Beijing in 1866–1883, translated this short version into English.⁴⁹ Then, in 1926, the Japanese scholar Kanda Kiichirō (1897–1984) discovered a hand-copied unabridged manuscript in the library of the Japanese imperial household, which included a long second section. This contains Yelü's extended disparagement, in dialogue form, of the Daoist master Changchun, whom he had originally recommended to Chinggis Khan (see below). Kanda published the whole book, and subsequently various editions came out in China. Yao Congwu published the unabridged edition with annotation in Taiwan in 1982.⁵⁰ The most widely cited edition today is that annotated by Xiang Da, first published by the *Zhonghua shuju* in 1981.⁵¹ Igor de Rachewiltz, already in 1962, produced a complete English translation of Kanda's unabridged version, with comprehensive introduction and annotation, and a photo-reproduction of the original hand-copied manuscript.⁵² A valuable companion piece is the long inscription for the spirit path of Yelü Chucai's tomb, by the Yuan official Song Zizhen (1186–1266), included in Atwood's *Rise of the Mongols*.⁵³

The *Changchun zhenren xiyouji* (Record of a Journey to the West by the Daoist Master Changchun) recounts the journey of Qiu Chuji (1148–1227), known as Changchun ("eternal spring"), who was an acclaimed Daoist master of the Quanzhen (Complete Realization) school. In 1219, Chinggis Khan summoned him to an audience. Changchun, who by then was over seventy, set off from his home in Shandong in 1220 and made the arduous journey across Inner Asia to Chinggis Khan's military camp, then far away in the Hindu Kush (modern Afghanistan) where the khan was resting during his

47 See de Rachewiltz 1962b; de Rachewiltz et al. 1993, 136–72; Liu Xiao 2001.

48 Sheng Ruzi 1939. 49 Bretschneider (1888) 2000, 1: 9–24. 50 Yelü Chucai 1982.

51 Yelü Chucai 1981. 52 De Rachewiltz 1962a. 53 Atwood 2021, 131–62.

western campaigns. Changchun arrived in 1222 and had a series of meetings with Chinggis Khan, who as he aged is reported to have wanted to know the secrets of Daoist longevity. Although his teaching of mediation, refraining from killing, and sexual abstinence was quite contrary to Chinggis Khan's lifestyle, the sage earned the khan's respect.

Changchun returned to China in 1223, and his followers secured decrees from Chinggis Khan giving Changchun authority over north China's Daoist and Buddhist monks.⁵⁴ Changchun died in 1227, the same year as Chinggis Khan. In 1228, Changchun's disciple, Li Zhichang (1193–1256), who had accompanied Changchun on part of his journey, produced a complete record of the trip in diary form. The first part describes the journey out west, while the second relates (somewhat briefly) Changchun's discussions with Chinggis Khan and the journey back east.

The book lay long forgotten until 1795, when the Qing scholar Qian Daxin (1728–1804) rediscovered it. Wang Guowei annotated the work in his *Four Sources of Mongol History*.⁵⁵ The earliest translation into a foreign language was into Russian in 1866, by the Russian Orthodox monk and learned sinologist Palladius (born Pyotr Ivanovich Kafarov, 1817–1878). Bretschneider made a translation from this truncated Russian version into English in 1888.⁵⁶ Arthur Waley (1889–1966) produced a translation in 1931, based on Wang Guowei's unabridged, annotated text, but excluding the text's many poems.⁵⁷ Superseding all of these, Ruth Dunnell, Stephen H. West, and Shao-yun Yang have produced a complete, annotated English translation with parallel text in Chinese and an interactive online map, to be published by Oxford University Press.⁵⁸

In addition to the two major works just described, a number of shorter accounts of travels during the United Mongol Empire survive. Although not as detailed or informative as the longer works, they nevertheless contain noteworthy particulars and can verify information in other sources. Two of the following are available in English translation.

Beishi ji (Notes on an Embassy to the North) is found in Chapter 13 of a work of miscellaneous notes (*biji*) by Liu Qi (1203–1250), titled *Guiqian zhi* (Records from My Return-to-Seclusion Studio). It is the account of the Jurchen official Wugusun zhongduan (d. c. 1234),⁵⁹ who was dispatched by

54 For a French translation of the decrees: Chavannes 1904–1908, and the list and references in Waley (1931) 1963, 158–60. Some of the original decrees survive in stele inscriptions: Cai Meibiao (1955) 2017, 1–2.

55 Li Zhichang (1926) 1962. 56 Bretschneider (1888) 2000, 1: 35–108.

57 Waley (1931) 1963. 58 Dunnell et al. 2023.

59 For his biography: Tuotuo (1975) 2020, 124.2701–2.

the Jin emperor to Chinggis Khan in 1220 to sue for peace, after the Mongols' conquest of the Jin's central capital at Beijing in 1215. Wugusun set out north for Mongolia in 1220, but had to follow Chinggis Khan across Central Asia to present-day Afghanistan. He returned at the end of 1221. His account, as recorded by Liu Qi, describes the peoples and places he encountered and the hardships of the difficult journey. It does not include his actual meeting with Chinggis Khan, but records of this meeting are found in other sources.⁶⁰ Liu Qi claims to have heard the account directly from Wugusun upon his return, but he might have copied it from another source.⁶¹

The *Beishi ji* is available in several punctuated editions. Wang Guowei reproduced it in his *Guxingji sizhong jiaolu* (Critical Edition of Four Premodern Travelogues), first published in 1927 and available in his collected works.⁶² The *Guiqian zhi* by Liu Qi, in which is found the original *Beishi ji*, has been reprinted in several punctuated modern collections.⁶³ Emil Bretschneider produced an English translation with annotation in 1888.⁶⁴

In 1247, the then prince Qubilai summoned the Chinese official Zhang Dehui (1195–1275) to his palace encampment in Mongolia for an audience. Upon his return, Zhang in 1248 composed the short work *Saibei jixing* (Notes of Travel North of the Pass), or just *Jixing* (Notes of Travel), describing his journey and the people and places he encountered in the northern regions. He comments, for instance, on how the Mongols ate mostly meat. As might be expected, he also gives a favorable view of Qubilai. The text was included as Chapter 8 of a collection of miscellaneous writings titled *Yutang jiahua* (Splendid Words of the Jade Halls) by the early Yuan literatus Wang Yun (1227–1304), and survives today as Chapter 100 of Wang's collected works.⁶⁵ A stand-alone modern edition was published in Sichuan in 2002 but is not readily available.⁶⁶ The best and most accessible edition of the *Yutang jiahua* is that punctuated by Yang Xiaochun, with notes comparing different editions and correcting the text, as part of the series *Yuan Ming shiliao biji congkan* (Collected Historical Sources from Yuan and Ming *Biji* Writings).⁶⁷ The *Saibei jixing* is also reproduced, under the alternative title *Lingbei jixing* (Notes of Travel North of the Mountains), in simplified Chinese characters with copious annotation by Jia Jingyan, in his 2004 collection of travelogues

60 For the *Yuan shi* account: Bretschneider (1888) 2000, 1: 33–34.

61 Bretschneider (1888) 2000, 1: 25. 62 Wang Guowei (1927) 2009.

63 Liu Qi (1983) 1997; Liu Qi 2012. 64 Bretschneider (1888) 2000, 1: 25–34.

65 Wang Yun 1965a, 100: 933–35; Wang Yun 2014. 66 Zhang Dehui 2002.

67 Wang Yun (2006) 2011, 174–76.

from the Five Dynasties, Song, Jin, and Yuan periods.⁶⁸ A fine English translation with annotation is included in Atwood's *Rise of the Mongols*.⁶⁹

Another important travelogue is *Xishi ji* (Notes on an Embassy to the West) by the early Yuan official Liu Yu (fl. thirteenth century). In 1259 Möngke Qa'an (1251–1259) dispatched an envoy to his brother Hülegü (d. 1265) to gather information and report on the campaigns in West Asia. This envoy was the Chinese official Chang De, who served in Hülegü's appanage in north China, at modern-day Anyang in Henan. Chang De set out in the first month of 1259 and returned about a year later. In 1263, Liu Yu recorded his account of the journey and the western regions. The narrative recounts the military campaigns, notably the Mongol conquest of Baghdad (1258), and describes the countries and realms conquered, including local products, animals, and various marvels. It serves as a corroborating source for other records of the western conquests.

The *Xishi ji* was included by Wang Yun in his Yuan collection *Yutang jiahua*, and the earliest surviving edition is found in Chapter 94 of Wang Yun's collected works.⁷⁰ The text was also preserved in other collections from the early Ming on, several of them still extant. Wang Guowei annotated and included the *Xishi ji* in his work of four premodern travelogues.⁷¹ The recommended modern edition is that punctuated and annotated by Yang Xiaochun, in Chapter 2 of Wang Yun's *Yutang jiahua*,⁷² or Chen Dezhi's annotated edition.⁷³ Bretschneider translated the complete text of the *Xishi ji* into English, juxtaposing it with comparable translated texts from the *Yuan shi* and Rashīd al Dīn's Persian account.⁷⁴

In addition to the above Chinese accounts of travels north to the steppe during the United Empire, several travelogues survive from the Yuan dynasty describing journeys to the south. The following two are of particular note.

In 1296, the Yuan sent a delegation to the Khmer Empire (Ch. Zhenla), modern Cambodia. The official Zhou Daguan accompanied the mission and resided in Cambodia for about a year before returning in 1297 and writing the *Zhenla fengtuji* (Record of Cambodia: The Land and Its People). Zhou's work provides a vivid firsthand account of the people and geography of Angkor civilization, including its palaces, state administration, social customs, livelihoods, religion, slave system, flora and fauna, and so on. It also informs us of Yuan–Khmer relations. Sections on the Khmer Empire are missing from the *Yuan shi*, so this work is particularly valuable. The *Zhenla fengtuji* was

68 Jia Jingyan 2004, 333–53. 69 Atwood 2021, 163–76, 183–84.

70 Wang Yun 1965a, 94.895–98; Wang Yun 2014. 71 Wang Guowei (1927) 2009.

72 Liu Yu (2006) 2011, 58–62. 73 Chen 2015. 74 Bretschneider (1888) 2000, 1: 109–56.

preserved in the *Shuo fu* (On Matters Near and Far) by Tao Zongyi (1329–1410), and this is the only version surviving today. The best modern edition is that punctuated and annotated by Xia Nai (1910–1985).⁷⁵ Peter Harris produced an English translation in 2007.⁷⁶

In 1330 and 1337, Wang Dayuan (c. 1311–1350) twice made long voyages by merchant vessels, stopping at ports as far east as the Philippines and as far west as the coast of Africa. Upon his return, he wrote the *Daoyi zhilüe* (Brief Records of Island Peoples) with 100 entries, describing 220 places and 347 tradable goods. He also recounts the geography, social customs, and local products and conditions of the locales he visited. The best modern edition is the critical edition annotated and punctuated by Su Jiqing (1891–1973).⁷⁷ Much of the work was translated into English by William Rockhill in a series of articles published in 1913–1915.⁷⁸

Unofficial Histories and Private Historical Writing from the Yuan Dynasty

The Mongol conquest of north China is documented in two rare eyewitness accounts, one describing the fall of Bianliang (modern Kaifeng) in 1233 and the other the fall of Caizhou (Cai prefecture) in 1234, which together brought the Jurchen Jin dynasty to an end. The Jin dynasty official Liu Qi (1203–1259) fled the capital at Beijing with the emperor and his court in the face of the Mongol invasion south to Kaifeng, where they endured the subsequent Mongol siege. His harrowing account is found in Chapter 11 of his literary collection *Guiqian zhi*, available in several modern punctuated editions.⁷⁹ Erich Haenisch and Peter Olbricht include a German translation in their 1969 work *Zum Untergang zweier Reiche: Berichte von Augenzeugen aus den Jahren 1232–33 und 1368–70* (The Downfall of Two Empires: Eyewitness Accounts from the Years 1232–33 and 1368–70).⁸⁰

The *Runan yishi* (Reminiscences of Runan (Caizhou)) by Wang E (1190–1273) describes the siege and capture of Caizhou in 1234, in the south of modern Henan, to where the Jin emperor Aizong (r. 1224–1234) escaped with remnants of his administration after Kaifeng fell. There the Jin made a last stand against a brutal Mongol siege until February 1234 when the town fell, bringing the Jurchen Jin dynasty to a final end. Wang E was resident in Cai prefecture and kept a diary of the siege, from which he later wrote the *Runan*

75 Zhou Daguan (1981) 2000.

76 Zhou Daguan 2007.

77 Wang Dayuan (1981) 2000.

78 Rockhill 1913–1915.

79 Liu Qi (1983) 1997; Liu Qi 2012.

80 Haenisch and Olbricht 1969.

yishi, Runan being a historical name for Cai prefecture. The *Runan yishi* survived only in manuscript until it was copied into the great Qing compendium the *Siku quanshu*, from which later reprints exist.⁸¹ Hok-lam Chan produced an English translation of the work titled *The Fall of the Jurchen Chin: Wang E's Memoir on Ts'ai-Chou under the Mongol Siege (1233–1234)*, with annotation and an introduction detailing Wang E's life and career.⁸²

In the third month of 1260, Qubilai became Great Khan of the Mongol Empire. In the ninth month of that year, he summoned to his appanage headquarters at Kaiping (later Shangdu) members of the Central Secretariat, then residing in Yanjing (modern Beijing). The official and literatus Wang Yun was one of those who made the journey, returning to Yanjing in the ninth month of the next year. Wang's work the *Zhongtang shiji* (Records of the Central Hall) details this journey in diary form. It additionally preserves documents regarding the organization and operations of the Central Secretariat, including regulations relating to the issuance of edicts. These materials reveal Qubilai's efforts to set up a working bureaucracy using Chinese-style institutions. The work is preserved as Chapters 80–83 in Wang Yun's collected works, which are available in various editions.⁸³ Jia Jingyan published a thoroughly annotated, punctuated version under the alternative title *Kaiping jixing* (Notes of Travel to Kaiping), in simplified characters, drawing on other historical sources, including Persian chronicles.⁸⁴ Yan-shuan Lao produced an annotated English translation as his PhD dissertation at Harvard University in 1962, which is available on microfilm.⁸⁵

The *Guochao mingchen shilüe* (Brief Records of Famous Officials of the Dynasty), by the Yuan distinguished literatus and official Su Tianjue (1294–1352), with a preface dated 1329, contains biographical material on forty-seven Yuan personages. Su drew on more than 120 biographical sources from contemporary genres of writing, such as biographical accounts (*xingzhuang*), funerary inscriptions (*muzhiming*), tomb or spirit-path inscriptions (*shendao-bei*), and genealogies (*jiazhuan*). Many of these original sources were subsequently lost and thus survive only as quoted in this work. Numerous biographies in the *Yuan shi* were based on Su's work, often copied verbatim. And the *Yuan shi* copies Su's arrangement of the biographies in the order of Mongols, Inner Asians (*semu*), and lastly Chinese and other residents of north China (*hanren*). (The *Yuan shi* adds a category for southern Chinese, *nanren*.)

81 Wang E 1975; Wang E 1967. 82 Chan 1993. 83 Wang Yun 1965a; Wang Yun 2014.

84 Jia Jingyan 2004, 313–32. 85 Lao 1984.

In 1962, the Zhonghua shuju issued a photo-reproduction of the 1335 Yuan block-print edition with a critical introduction by Han Rulin (1903–1983), under the title adopted after the Yuan of *Yuanchao mingchen shilue* (Brief Records of Famous Officials of the Yuan).⁸⁶ In 1996 the Zhonghua shuju published a modern edition punctuated by Yao Jing'an, under the same title.⁸⁷

The *Beixun siji* (Personal Records of the Northern Inspection Tour) is a firsthand account of the flight of the last Yuan emperor, Toghon Temür (Shundi, r. 1333–1368), from 1368, when the Yuan capital, Dadu, fell, until 1370, when he died. The author, Liu Ji (dates unknown), had been serving in the Bureau of Military Affairs (Ch. *shumiyuan*), and he accompanied the emperor on his flight north, enduring the hardships of his final days. Liu's euphemistically titled account describes in addition to the harsh travel conditions the infighting and continued court politics in the last days of the Yuan dynasty, all of which he witnessed personally. The book survived only in manuscript form until 1913, when Luo Zhenyu (1866–1940) included it in his printed collection *Yunchuang congke* (Cloud Window Collected Printings), published in Japan.⁸⁸ In 1994, Bo Yinhu and Wang Xiong produced a punctuated edition as part of their compilation *Mingdai Menggu hanji shiliao huibian* (Compilation of Ming-Period Materials on Mongolia in Chinese).⁸⁹ Previously, Erich Haenisch translated the work into German, and it was published in 1969, revised and annotated by Peter Olbricht.⁹⁰

The *Gengshen waishi* (Unofficial History of the Gengshen Emperor), by Quan Heng (fl. fourteenth century) is an annalistic account of the reign of the last emperor of the Yuan, Toghon Temür, completed in 1369. Shundi was called the Gengshen Emperor because he was born in the *gengshen* year (1320), according to the sixty-year cycle of named years used in the traditional Chinese calendar. The author, Quan Heng, was a contemporary of the events described, and his account includes many details not found in other sources, notably a wealth of information about the uprisings at the end of the Yuan. The work survives in various editions with some differences between them. But, in 1991, Ren Chongyue published a definitive critical edition that compares versions and annotates the text with a large body of evidence from other historical sources.⁹¹ Previously, the German scholar Helmut Schulte-Uffelage translated the work into German.⁹²

86 Su Tianjue, 1962. 87 Su Tianjue, 1996. 88 Liu Ji 1914. 89 Liu Ji 1994.

90 Haenisch and Olbricht 1969. 91 Quan Heng 1991. 92 Schulte-Uffelage 1963.

An important source for the fall of the Yuan is the *Guochu qunxiong shiliu* (Brief Records of the Heroes at the Founding of the [Ming] Dynasty), by Qian Qianyi (1582–1664) of the Ming. Two centuries after the events, Qian gathered together excerpts from a large number of sources extant at the time pertaining to the uprisings and alliances between local warlords that led to the Yuan fall and the founding of the Ming. Many of these sources survive today only in this compilation. In 1982, the Zhonghua shuju published a punctuated, critical edition by Zhang Dexin and Han Zhiyuan.⁹³

Administrative and Bureaucratic Writing

Before the Mongol and other northern invaders arrived, the Chinese had developed a sophisticated bureaucracy suitable for governing a large, settled, population. Much of this machinery of government remained in place or was re-established after the Mongols took power, although there are notable exceptions and many innovations that the Mongols introduced. The process of administering the empire entailed the promulgation of an abundance of documents, and with printing well established by this time, a significant quantity survives to this day.

Official Administrative Publications

The most important official publication of the Yuan was the *Jingshi dadian* (Great Compendium for Adminstrating the World), also called *Huangchao jingshi dadian* (The Imperial Dynasty's Great Compendium for Adminstrating the World), completed in 1331. This was a massive collection in ten volumes (*bian*), including four for "Matters Concerning the Emperor," and six for "Matters Concerning Officialdom." The first four volumes covered imperial titles, edicts, regulations, and genealogies. The last six included multi-chapter treatises (*dian*) on governance, taxes, rites, administration, law, and public works. At the beginning of major sections, the work included a summary of its contents.

The compilers of the *Yuan shi* in the early Ming drew heavily on the *Jingshi dadian*. For instance, its "Treatise on Punishments" and the "Treatise on Economy" can be shown to have been copied from the *Jingshi dadian*. Nevertheless, sometime in the late Ming period, the *Jingshi dadian* was lost.

Scholars have made various attempts to reconstruct it, including fragments found in the comprehensive Ming encyclopedia of 1408, the *Yongle dadian*

93 Qian Qianyi 1982.

(Great Encyclopedia of the Yongle Period) (1403–1424), which itself has largely been lost through warfare during dynastic changes or pilfering by scholar-officials with access to imperial libraries.⁹⁴ The Taiwanese scholar Su Zhenshen laid the foundation for the reconstruction work in 1984.⁹⁵ Then, in 2020, three Chinese scholars published a definitive critical edition that includes all known fragments from all sources. This supersedes all other sources of *Jingshi dadian* material.⁹⁶

The *Liutiao zhenglei* (The Six Categories of Administration) was a large-scale official publication compiled in 1347 at the command of the last Yuan emperor. The book is primarily a selection of official documents from the archives of the Central Secretariat. The “six categories” probably referred to the Six Ministries or were related to the six volumes (*bian*) of “Matters Concerning Officialdom” in the *Jingshi dadian*. Like the latter, the *Liutiao zhenglei* was used as a source for the *Yuan shi*, and it was later lost. Now only fourteen chapters survive, preserved in the *Yongle dadian*.⁹⁷

In the fourteenth century, the central government produced several collections of documents detailing the operations of the Censorate, a branch of government with broad powers of investigation and surveillance of the bureaucracy. These were the *Xiantai tongji* (Comprehensive Records of the Censorate) with documents dating from 1268 to 1336; the *Xiantai tongji xuji* (Supplement to the Comprehensive Records of the Censorate), covering 1236 to 1352; and the *Nantai beiyao* (Important Documents of the Southern [Jiangnan] Branch Censorate), with material dating from 1273 to 1353. All three works have been lost, but most of their content is preserved in the *Yongle dadian*, and from there has been collected and published in two modern, punctuated editions.⁹⁸ These also include a longer work by the literatus official Wang Yun (1227–1304), with documents detailing his years working as an investigating censor (*jiancha yushi*), from 1268 to 1272, preserved in his collected works and titled *Wutai bibu* (Notes from the Bird’s-Eye Terrace [the Censorate]). The Yuan expert Hung Chin-fu (1946–2019) collected these four works and eight others related to the Censorate and published them with punctuation and annotation in 2003.⁹⁹

Some other official administrative publications of note survive from the Yuan. The *Mishu jianzhi* (Annals of the Imperial Library Directorate) records the workings of the Imperial Library, which oversaw imperial collections of

94 Xie Jin et al. (1986) 1994; Wilkinson 2022, section 73.1.2.3. 95 Su Zhenshen 1984.

96 Zhao and Yu 2020. 97 Xie Jin et al. (1986) 1994, *juan* 19, 423; Liu Xiao 2004a.

98 Zhao Chengxi 2002; Zhao Chengxi 2006; Xie Jin et al. (1986) 1994, *juan* 2608–11.

99 Hung Chin-fu 2003.

books, paintings, and maps; produced imperial publications and official seals; and for a time oversaw the Institutes of Astronomy. It is available in a modern, punctuated edition.¹⁰⁰ The *Miaoxue dianli* (Regulations and Rituals of Confucian Schools) contains official documents concerning Confucian schools, in chronological order from 1237 to 1301. These describe the placement of school officials, the treatment of Confucian householders, and so on. The text we have today is taken from the *Yongle dadian* and other sources and is available in a modern, punctuated edition together with two similar Yuan texts. These are the *Yuan hunli gongju kao* (Yuan Wedding Rituals and Imperial Examinations) and the *Yuantong yuannian jinshi lu* (List of the *Jinshi* Examination Graduates of 1333).¹⁰¹ The latter includes not only information on seventy-three of the eighty-three graduates of the 1333 civil service examinations, but also thirteen of the policy essays from the examination answers.

Unofficial Administrative Publications

Administrative documents of all kinds are preserved in the collected works of various Yuan officials. A notable example is the *Yuan wenlei* (Classified Writings of the Yuan Dynasty), compiled by Su Tianjue and originally published in the Yuan as the *Guochao wenlei* (Classified Writings of the Dynastic State). An original 1342 Yuan printing is preserved in the first series (*chubian*) of the *Sibu congkan* collection.¹⁰² Not quite as extensive but still valuable is the *Tianxia tongwenji* (Collected Works of Colleagues throughout the Land under Heaven), compiled by Zhou Nanrui around the turn of the fourteenth century. This work is preserved in the *Siku quanshu* and other collections, and is available electronically.¹⁰³ A similar compilation is the *Sheng Yuan mingxian bofang xuji* (Supplemental Collection of Writings by Virtuous Worthies of the Sage Yuan Dynasty), which was preserved only in Japan but has been reprinted recently in China.¹⁰⁴

A work dating to 1301, titled *Lixue zhinan* (Guidebook for Clerks), provides a glossary of more than 2,000 terms used in Yuan administrative and legal documents. It was compiled as a primer for those aspiring to enter Yuan officialdom through the avenue of a yamen clerkship, which was allowed only during the Mongol–Yuan dynasty in China. It records invaluable information on all aspects of Yuan government and society. It is available in two

100 Wang Shidian and Shang Qiwen 1992. 101 *Miaoxue dianli wai er zhong* 1992.

102 Su Tianjue (1922) 1967; also Su Tianjue 1993.

103 Zhou Nanrui (1915) 1983; Zhou Nanrui (1915) 1989.

104 *Sheng Yuan mingxian bofang xuji* 2015.

punctuated editions. That of 1988, punctuated by Yang Ne, is combined with three other Yuan administrative works of note.¹⁰⁵

Three important private works relating to the civil service examinations and how to prepare for them are the *Qingyun ti* (Ladder to the Blue Clouds),¹⁰⁶ the *Huang Yuan dake sanchang wenxuan* (Selected Writings of the Three Rounds of the Civil Service Examinations of the August Yuan Dynasty) compiled by Zhou Fu,¹⁰⁷ and the *Xinkan leibian lieju sanchang wenxuan* (New Edition of Classified Writings of the Three Rounds of the Examinations with Examples) compiled by Liu Zhen et al.¹⁰⁸ The last two only survive in collections outside China, but all three are available in modern editions.

Collections of Memorials

Communications with the emperor in China took the form of a document called a “memorial.” These included policy suggestions, reports of disasters and other urgent matters, and requests of all kinds. Imperial edicts were usually issued in response to a memorial. Several works survive that collect memorials, providing a rich source of Yuan political, economic, and social history. The most famous is the *Taiping jinjingce* (Golden Mirror of Policies of Great Peace) by Zhao Tianlin (fl. thirteenth century), which survives in both Yuan and Ming editions.¹⁰⁹ Two other collections are the *Taipingce* (Policies of Great Peace) by Zheng Jiefu (fl. thirteenth century), which no longer survives, and the *Danxi dudui* (Facing Alone the Red Steps [of the Palace]), compiled by Wu Fu (1426–1485), half of which survives in Peking University’s library. The main contents of these and other collections can be reconstructed from the massive Ming work *Lidai mingchen zouyi* (Memorials of Famous Officials of Each Dynasty), which contains excerpts of 8,000 memorials mostly from the Song and Yuan, though broken up and divided into a confusing sixty-seven categories. The 1989 modern reprint in five volumes, however, includes a convenient index of authors.¹¹⁰ Three modern scholars have reconstructed the Yuan memorials in the *Lidai mingchen zouyi* and reprinted them with punctuation in a volume titled *Yuandai zouyi jilu* (Collected Memorials of the Yuan Period), thereby solving the inconvenience of using the previous works.¹¹¹

105 Xu Yuanrui 1979; Xu Yuanrui 1988. For these and other works not detailed here: Will 2020.

106 Qingyun ti 1972; Qingyun ti 1999. 107 Zhou Fu et al. 2015. 108 Liu Zhen et al. 2015.

109 Zhao Tianlin 2002.

110 Huang, Yang, et al. (1964) 1989. On the reconstruction of the *Taipingce*: Li Mingfei and Zhang Fan 2009.

111 Chen Dezhi, Qiu Shusen, and He Zhaoji 1998.

Legal Writings

The Yuan dynasty is unique among major dynasties in China in that it never promulgated a formal legal code. Instead, in 1291 Qubilai issued a short compilation of administrative rules aimed at controlling official corruption and malfeasance, a chronic problem for Qubilai and his successors. This work was the *Zhiyuan xingge* (New Statutes of the *Zhiyuan* Period (1264–1295)), drafted by Qubilai's Chinese adviser He Rongzu (fl. thirteenth century). The original work is no longer extant, but two scholars, Paul Ch'en and Uematsu Tadashi, independently reconstructed the text from surviving fragments. Huang Shijian provides a convenient punctuated edition. Paul Ch'en published an English translation of the entire text with annotation, a monographic introduction, and original Chinese text keyed to the translation.¹¹²

When efforts to produce a formal legal code failed, the Yuan turned to issuing collections of edicts, statutes, and precedent-setting legal decisions, which, from the beginning of the dynasty, officials had already been using as sources of law in adjudication.¹¹³ In 1323, the court issued the *Da Yuan tongzhi* (Comprehensive Regulations of the Great Yuan), in four sections: *zhizhao* (edicts), *tiaoge* (statutes), *duanli* (judicial precedents), and *linglei* (miscellaneous orders), dating from the beginning of the dynasty to 1316. The work does not survive in its entirety, but in the early twentieth century, the then-named National Library of Beiping (*guoli Beiping tushuguan*) discovered an early Ming manuscript copy of the "statutes" section, which they published in 1930 under the title *Tongzhi tiaoge* (Statutes from the *Comprehensive Regulations*). In 2001 Fang Linggui produced a definitive punctuated edition, which includes valuable annotations.¹¹⁴ Previously, two Yuan specialists in Japan published an annotated translation.¹¹⁵

In 1364, the court published what can be taken to be an enlarged and revised version of the statutes section of the *Da Yuan tongzhi*, called the *Zhizheng tiaoge* (Statutes of the *Zhizheng* Period (1341–1368)), containing documents dating to 1346. A fragment found at Qara-Qoto suggests that the Yuan court also issued this work in Mongolian.¹¹⁶ The work was thought to be lost, but in 2002 Korean scholars discovered a partial Yuan edition in a private family library in Gyeongju. In 2007, the Academy of Korean Studies published

112 Ch'en 1979; Uematsu 1972; Huang Shijian 1988, 9–34.

113 Birge 2002, 208–17; Birge 2010; Birge 2017, 47–56.

114 *Tongzhi tiaoge jiaozhu* 2001; also *Tongzhi tiaoge* 1986.

115 Kobayashi and Okamoto 1964–1976.

116 Munkuyev 1970; Kara 2003; also Birge 2017, 56 n. 43.

a photo-reproduction in two volumes, together with a typeset, punctuated edition.¹¹⁷

The great administrative compendium the *Jingshi dadian*, discussed above, included a section on law, titled the *Xiandian* (Judicial Institutions). It listed laws established by the central government and punishments for infractions, not unlike a standard legal code, but was never promulgated as a formal code. Nevertheless, it was copied into the *Yuan shi* as the *Xingfazhi* (Treatise on Punishments) and includes many of the decisions found in the *Tongzhi tiaoge* and the *Zhizheng tiaoge*. This treatise was translated into French by Paul Ratchnevsky and published as *Un code des Yüan*.¹¹⁸

In addition to legal compilations issued by the court, scholar-officials also worked to produce legal collections to clarify the law and aid magistrates in adjudication. The most important such work is the massive compendium called by its short title *Yuan dianzhang* (Statutes and Precedents of the Yuan),¹¹⁹ which contains imperial edicts, judicial decisions, and legal case records dating from 1257 to 1322, organized under headings for each of the Six Ministries. It provides details of quotidian life for people of all classes and ethnic groups in the Yuan and is a rich source on every aspect of Yuan administration.

The case records contain testimony from witnesses, plaintiffs, and defendants, recorded in Yuan-era vernacular, unlike later such records, which reworded such testimony into standardized written Chinese. They also include mutually contradictory decisions made by multiple offices, revealing confusion and disagreement over the law within the Yuan government. Many passages are in Sino-Mongolian, a form of direct translation of Mongolian words into Chinese characters preserving Mongolian syntax, used to record verbatim any speech or writing originally in Mongolian, such as that of the Mongol khans or officials.¹²⁰

A single Yuan-era woodblock print edition survives of the *Yuan dianzhang*, dating to 1322, held in the National Palace Museum (*gugong bowuyuan*) in Taipei. In 1972 the museum published a string-bound facsimile edition, followed in 1976 by a facsimile edition with modern binding in three volumes.¹²¹ These have been further reprinted in China in 1998 and 2002.¹²²

117 Han'gukhak Chungang Yŏn'guwŏn 2007.

118 Ratchnevsky and Aubin 1972–1985. For a Japanese translation: Kotake and Okamoto 1962.

119 Full title *Dayuan shengzheng guochao dianzhang* (Statutes and Precedents of the Sacred Administration of the Great Yuan Dynastic State).

120 For details on the *Yuan dianzhang*: Birge 2017, Chapter 3.

121 *Yuan dianzhang* 1972; *Yuan dianzhang* 1976.

122 *Yuan dianzhang* 1998; *Yuan dianzhang* 2002.

An earlier edition compiled by Shen Jiaben (1840–1913), first published in 1908, is based on a flawed manuscript and contains many errors, though due to convenient reprints has found its way into many libraries.¹²³ In 2011, Chen Gaohua, Zhang Fan, Liu Xiao, and Dang Baohai of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences produced the first punctuated modern typeset edition, in four volumes, with annotation and appendices containing bibliographic information.¹²⁴ Subsequently, Hung Chin-fu (Hong Jinfu) of the Academia Sinica in Taipei published his own punctuated and annotated edition, also in four volumes.¹²⁵ In 2007, legal scholars in Japan, under the direction of Iwai Shigeki, published a Japanese translation of three chapters of the work, from the Ministry of Rites section.¹²⁶ In 2017, Bettine Birge produced an annotated English translation of the chapter on “Marriage” with a detailed introduction about the text and its social and legal context.¹²⁷

Legal sources of a different nature also survive from the Yuan. A work from the Song for memorizing the Song law code, the *Xingtongfu* (Ode to the Song Code) was widely reprinted in the Yuan. Most importantly, at least ten new works annotating this book appeared in the Yuan. One of these in particular, the *Xingtongfushu* (Commentary on the *Xingtongfu*) by Shen Zhongwei (fourteenth century), reproduces many statutes and judicial precedents of the Yuan period. This and three other similar works surviving from the Yuan were collected and published by Shen Jiaben in 1913.¹²⁸ They can also be found in modern reprints.¹²⁹ A work of medical forensics from the Yuan, the *Wuyuan lu* (Record of Removing Wrongs) by Wang Yu (1261–1346), continues a tradition of such forensic writings produced in the Song and contains valuable Yuan legal materials.¹³⁰

Surviving prefaces and sections of other legal works from the Yuan are conveniently collected in a 1988 volume edited by Huang Shijian, *Yuandai falü ziliao jicun* (Collection of Yuan Legal Materials).¹³¹ This book also extracts Yuan legal materials found in other works, and it contains surviving templates for how to file lawsuits and so on. These last attest to a general increase of legal literacy among the population and the proliferation of private legal specialists for hire by common folk.

¹²³ Shen Jiaben (1964) 1974.

¹²⁴ Chen Gaohua et al., 2011. From 1964 to 1990, Japanese scholars published punctuated editions of the Ministry of Punishments and Ministry of War sections: Iwamura and Tanaka 1964–1972; Terada 1986–1990.

¹²⁵ Hung Chin-fu 2016. ¹²⁶ Gendai no hōsei kenkyū han 2007–2008. ¹²⁷ Birge 2017.

¹²⁸ Shen Jiaben 1913; Shen Jiaben 2006. The other three works are *Xingtong fujie* (Explanations of Ode to the Song Code), *Cujie xingtongfu* (Rough Explanations of Ode to the Song Code), and *Bieben xingtongfu* (Alternate Edition of Ode to the Song Code).

¹²⁹ Shen Zhongwei 1994; Yang Yifan 2004, vol. 1.

¹³⁰ Wang Yu 1987; also Huang Shijian 1988, 123–160. ¹³¹ Huang Shijian 1988.

Literary Collections (*Wenji*)

Scholar-officials in China produced large quantities of short pieces of writing, both privately and in their official capacities. These were often collected and published, sometimes in their lifetimes but more commonly after their deaths. These collections as a whole are called *wenji* (“collected works” or “literary collections”). They include a range of genres, always starting with classical poetry (*shi*), attesting to its prestige and importance in literati and official life. Other categories include memorials to the throne, prefaces, funerary inscriptions, elegies, letters, and many others. Some of the works discussed in this chapter have been transmitted to us through their authors’ *wenji* collections.

There are about 300 surviving *wenji* collections by individual Yuan authors. Some of the more important individual collections, in order of birthdate, are those of Yuan Haowen (1190–1257), Yelü Chucai (1190–1244), Xu Heng (1209–1281), Hao Jing (1223–1275), Hu Zhiyu (1227–1295), Wang Yun (1227–1304),¹³² Yao Sui (1239–1314), Cheng Jufu (1249–1318), Wu Cheng (1249–1333), Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322), Yuan Jue (1266–1327), Liu Guan (1270–1342), Yu Ji (1272–1348), Jie Xisi (1274–1344), Huang Jin (1277–1357), Ma Zuchang (1279–1338), Ouyang Xuan (1283–1357), Xu Youren (1287–1364), and Su Tianjue (1294–1352).¹³³ These are all available in standard collections and in electronic databases.

Most Yuan literary collections are indexed in *Yuanren wenji pianmu fenlei suoyin* (Classified Index of Titles in Collected Works of Yuan Authors), though this only includes titles of entries.¹³⁴ Full-text searches of *wenji* are now possible from electronic databases. Another invaluable reference work for primary sources on Yuan personages is the *Yuanren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* (Index to Biographical Materials of Yuan Figures), which mostly indexes materials from *wenji*.¹³⁵ When studying a Yuan personage, this is a good starting point. Another good source, especially for non-Han figures, is Igor de Rachewiltz and May Wang’s *Repertory of Proper Names in Yüan Literary Sources*.¹³⁶ The *Quan Yuanwen* (Complete Prose Writing of the Yuan) finished in 2005 in sixty-one volumes plus an index collects the prose works of 3,000

132 For a critical edition of his works: Wang Yun 2014.

133 For a critical edition of his works: Su Tianjue 1997. 134 Lu Junling (1979) 1984.

135 Wang, Li, and Pan (1979–1982) 1987. These materials and a wealth of other biographical data can be accessed from the open-source China Biographical Database (<https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/cbdb>).

136 De Rachewiltz and Wang 1988–1996.

Yuan authors in a modern, punctuated edition.¹³⁷ Some authors' works have been published in more complete and accurate editions, but the *Quan Yuanwen*, with its index, is still the easiest point of access for most Yuan collected works.¹³⁸ Moreover, it includes works culled from sources other than *wenji*, like gazetteers or inscriptions. The *Quan Yuanwen* does not include classical poetry, part of every *wenji*, but such poetry is collected in the sixty-eight-volume *Quan Yuanshi* (Complete Poetry of the Yuan), which contains 140,000 poems by 5,000 authors, representing about a fifth of the total written in the Yuan, according to the editors.¹³⁹ The Yuan dynasty is famous for the development of drama, a precursor to Peking opera. Dramas were not included in an author's *wenji*, but plays and song lyrics of 270 Yuan writers are found in *Quan Yuanqu* (Complete Dramas of the Yuan), compiled in 1998.¹⁴⁰

Miscellaneous Notes (*Biji*, *Suibi*)

An important genre of private writing that was not included in an author's *wenji* is that of *biji* or *suibi*, translated variously as "miscellaneous notes," "miscellaneous writings," "notebooks," or "jottings." These consist of both nonfictional and fictional writings on multiple subjects, such as history, literature, folklore, the supernatural, gossip, rumors, and random commentary and opinions of the author, as well as complete or partial works by other authors that the writer thought worth preserving.¹⁴¹ Some Yuan works preserved in miscellaneous notes have been introduced above.

The main *biji* useful for historical studies have been punctuated and annotated by leading Chinese experts in the series *Yuan Ming shiliao biji congkan* (Collected Historical Sources from Yuan Ming *Biji* Writings), from the Zhonghua shuju, starting in the 1950s and ongoing.¹⁴² Since *biji* collections contain both nonfictional and fictional writings, useful Yuan materials can also be found in the series *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan* (Grand Overview of *Biji* and Fictional Writing of the Song and Yuan), from Shanghai guji chubanshe (Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House).¹⁴³ These are available in digitized form. For initial research using *biji* sources, most important is the

137 Li Xiusheng et al. 1998–2005. An e-version can be found on HathiTrust and CHANT.
For the index: Fenghuang chubanshe 2005.

138 For other editions: Zhou Qingshu 1983. 139 Yang Lian et al. 2013.

140 Xu Zheng et al. 1998. 141 For more on this genre: Wilkinson 2022, Chapter 53, 64.3.9.

142 *Yuan Ming shiliao biji congkan* 1960–. 143 Shanghai guji chubanshe 2007.

Guoxue baodian database (National Studies Treasure House), which includes 931 nonfiction *biji*, of which 277 are from the Song and Yuan.¹⁴⁴ This includes far more than those in the above series and allows full text searching of any term within them, though it is entirely in simplified characters.

One of the most valuable *biji* collections for Yuan and early Ming history is the *Nancun chuogeng lu* (Records of Nancun Made during Respite from the Plow) of 1366, known by its abbreviated title *Chuogeng lu*. The author, Tao Zongyi (sobriquet Nancun, 1316–1403), was a deeply learned man who made extensive notes on his own historical research, contemporary affairs, and currently circulating anecdotes, including much information on the Mongols and other peoples of the Mongol Empire. Included in his *biji*, moreover, are excerpts of other works preserved for us nowhere else. Zhonghua published a punctuated, annotated edition in 1959, with later reprints.¹⁴⁵

Previous to his *Chuogeng lu*, in 1361 Tao compiled an extraordinary collection of works titled *Shuofu* (Writings on Matters Near and Far), in which many invaluable Yuan works are preserved, few of which survive elsewhere. Tao himself continued to add to his encyclopedic anthology, and others continued after his death, though some later editions expurgated earlier material. A fine modern compilation from Shanghai *guji* in ten volumes includes facsimile editions of both earlier and later versions.¹⁴⁶

Yuan *biji* collections of particular note are the *Caomuzi* (Master of Grass and Woods) by Ye Ziqi (fl. 1378), which includes writings by prominent late Yuan authors not found elsewhere, and *Shanju xinyu* (New Talk from One Dwelling in the Mountains) by Yang Yu (1285–1361), an official in the capital who recorded political developments, both available in punctuated editions.¹⁴⁷ Other important Yuan collections of miscellaneous notes, all readily available, are the *Guiqian zhi* (Records from My Return-to-Seclusion Studio) by Liu Qi (1203–1250), the *Qidong yeyu* (Words of a Retired Scholar from the East of Qi) and *Guixin zazhi* (Miscellaneous Records from the Guixin Quarter [of Hangzhou]) both by Zhou Mi (1232–1308),¹⁴⁸ the *Zhizheng zhiji* (Frank Records of the Zhizheng Era) by Kong Qi (fl. fourteenth

¹⁴⁴ *Guoxue baodian* 2005–.

¹⁴⁵ Tao Zongyi (1959) 1997. For an enumeration of the contents: Wilkinson 2022, section 53.1, taken from Mote 1954a; Mote 1954b.

¹⁴⁶ Tao Zongyi 1988. On this work: Atwood 2017; Chang Bide 1979. Some editors categorize this work in the *leishu* (encyclopedia) tradition, discussed below.

¹⁴⁷ Ye Ziqi (1959) 1997; Yang Yu 2006. For a German translation of the latter: Franke 1956.

¹⁴⁸ On these two works: Balazs and Hervouet 1978, 316–17, 340 respectively. The latter includes a description of the Mongol siege of Xiangyang and the looting of the Song imperial tombs.

century), *Suichang shanqiao zalu* (Miscellaneous Records by the Woodcutter of Suichang Mountain) by Zheng Yuanyou (1292–1364), *Nongtian yuhua* (Superfluous Talk while Cultivating the Land) by Changgu Zhenyi, and *Lejiao siyu* (Private Words from Pleasant Pastures) by Yao Tongshou (fl. fourteenth century).

Geographic Records

When Emperor Taizong of the Song dynasty (r. 976–997) completed the reunification of the Chinese Empire, he ordered the compilation of a comprehensive gazetteer to celebrate the achievement. This work started a trend to include in geographic works not just administrative information such as place names, population, and tax obligations, but also a wealth of cultural information, such as biographies of famous people, lists of examination degree recipients, literary works, customs, local products, and so on. Authors of local gazetteers also adopted this format, making them invaluable sources for historical research.

In 1285, Qubilai followed Song precedent and ordered the compilation of a comprehensive gazetteer of his empire, to celebrate its great size and prove that it had “no equal in the world.”¹⁴⁹ The work came to be known as the *Da Yuan yitong zhi* (Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Great Yuan) or *Da Yuan da yitong zhi* (Great Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Great Yuan) and other titles.¹⁵⁰ It was finalized in 1303 and first printed in 1346. The work contained extensive material from earlier dynasties as well as the Yuan and included color maps. The original work has been lost, but fragments were recovered from the *Yongle dadian* and first published in a modern edition in 1936, reprinted in 1994.¹⁵¹ Another reconstruction was published by the National Central Library of Nanjing in 1947, then republished in 1966 under the title *Yuan yitong zhi*.¹⁵²

A similar work compiled privately is the *Da Yuan hunyi Fangyu shenglan* (Overall Survey of the Great Yuan Unified Territories) edited by Liu Yingli (d. 1311) and printed in 1307 as part of Liu’s large encyclopedia. It was successively re-edited and is available in a definitive edition of 2003.¹⁵³

Only fourteen local gazetteers survive from the Yuan. Twelve were reprinted in photo-reproduction in 1990, in *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan* (Collection of Song and Yuan Gazetteers)¹⁵⁴ Modern, punctuated editions of these were published by Sichuan University Press in 2007 and 2009 in the

149 Wang and Shang 1992, *juan* 4, cited in Wilkinson 2022, section 16.3.3.

150 For these: Wilkinson 2022, section 64.3.3.1. 151 Bolanxi et al. (1936) 1994.

152 Bolanxi et al. (1947) 1966. 153 Liu Yingli 2003. 154 *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan* 1990.

first two parts of its *Song Yuan zhenxi difangzhi congkan* (Collection of Rare Song and Yuan Gazetteers).¹⁵⁵ Zhu Shijia compiled an index to biographies found in Song and Yuan local gazetteers, indexing almost 4,000 biographies found in thirty-three gazetteers.¹⁵⁶ Most Yuan gazetteers can now be found in online databases, such as *Zhongguo fangzhiku* (Database of Chinese Gazetteers) by Airusheng, which includes 10,000 premodern gazetteers, or *Zhongguo shuzi fangzhiku* (Digital Database of Chinese Gazetteers) by Eastview, which includes close to 7,000 gazetteers based on the National Library of China's collection.

Some otherwise lost local gazetteers have been preserved partly or in full in the *Yongle dadian* encyclopedia. Many of these were collected and published in 2004 in *Yongle dadian fangzhi ji* (Lost Gazetteers from the *Yongle dadian*).¹⁵⁷ A more recent work titled *Song Liao Jin Yuan fangzhi ji* (Lost Gazetteers of the Song, Liao, Jin, and Yuan) collects previously lost gazetteers specifically from the Song and Yuan periods, including 179 from the Yuan.¹⁵⁸

Gazetteers in general contain material from earlier dynasties. Accordingly, much information on the Yuan can be found in the gazetteers of the Ming, Qing, and Republican periods.¹⁵⁹

Stone Inscriptions

The Chinese have always venerated the written word, and Chinese historians of all periods have paid particular attention to words carved in stone, those meant to last across the ages. These inscriptions often preserved calligraphy of renowned masters, making them even more prized. The Evidential Learning movement, beginning in the seventeenth century, led Qing scholars to search out inscriptions of all kinds. Thousands of collections of transcriptions and rubbings have helped preserve epigraphical texts that no longer survive in their original stone or metal medium. Others were preserved in literary works of all kinds, including gazetteers. Local gazetteers in particular contain large numbers of inscriptions and should be consulted for any research using them as a source.

In 1977, Xinwenfeng publishers in Taiwan began a series of reprints of inscription collections, titled *Shike shiliao xinbian* (Newly Edited Sources of Stone Inscriptions). Between 1977 and 2006, this massive project produced a total of four series, in 100 volumes, containing photo-reproductions of more

¹⁵⁵ Wang Xiaobo et al. 2007; Li, Wang, and Zhou 2009. ¹⁵⁶ Zhu Shijia (1963) 1986.

¹⁵⁷ Ma Rong 2004. ¹⁵⁸ Liu Weiye 2011.

¹⁵⁹ These are well described in Wilkinson 2022, sections 16.3.3–16.4.

than 1,000 collections of stone inscriptions.¹⁶⁰ The first three series are arranged by province, while the fourth is arranged by subject. The Japanese scholar Takahashi Tsuguo produced invaluable indexes of book titles and authors in this work, included as an appendix to his much larger, comprehensive index of extant inscription collections.¹⁶¹ Even with Takahashi's indexes, however, using the *Shike shiliao xinbian* is rather unwieldy, especially since it does not divide contents by time period.

In the year 2000, the National Library of China, Inscriptions Department (*jinshizu*), published five separate compilations, in sixteen volumes, containing the texts of over 15,000 stone inscriptions arranged by dynasty, together titled *Lidai shikeshiliao huibian* (Collection of Stone Inscriptions from Successive Dynasties). The fourth compilation, consisting of three volumes, covers the Liao, Jin, and Yuan and includes indexes at the end of the first volume.¹⁶² It was republished separately in 2003, under the title *Liao Jin Yuan shike wenxian quanbian* (Complete Collection of the texts of Liao, Jin, and Yuan Stone Inscriptions) and contains about 2,000 Yuan inscriptions.¹⁶³ The entire sixteen-volume series has been digitized and is available online.¹⁶⁴

Libraries around China hold large numbers of rubbings of inscriptions. The National Library of China (formerly the Beijing Library) has the largest holdings. From 1989 to 1991 they conveniently published a large collection arranged by time period, titled *Beijing tushuguan cang Zhongguo lidai shike taben huibian* (Collection of Rubbings of Chinese Stone Inscriptions of Successive Dynasties Held in the Beijing Library). It consists of 100 volumes plus one volume of indexes.¹⁶⁵ In all, these contain facsimiles of 20,000 rubbings, which cover about one-fifth of the entire holdings. Volumes 48 to 50 contain 500 inscriptions from the Mongol–Yuan. (In comparison, the collection contains more than 4,000 from the Tang.) The work is available on HathiTrust. In the United States, the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago and the C. V. Starr East Asian Library at the University of California, Berkeley, have the largest collections. Temples, museums, and monuments in China hold many examples of steles as well, largely uncatalogued.

160 Xinwenfeng 1977–2006.

161 Takahashi 2009; Takahashi 2013; also Takahashi 1995, which is a Chinese translation of his 1994 index of the *Shike shiliao xinbian*'s first three series.

162 Guojia tushuguan shanben jinshizu 2000; Wilkinson 2022, section 2.10.4.

163 Guojia tushuguan shanben jinshizu 2003; Wilkinson 2022, section 64.4.2.

164 Guojia tushuguan shanben jinshizu 2013. The original 2004 digitization is available as a computer file.

165 Beijing tushuguan jinshizu 1989–1991.

In addition to their published series, the National Library of China has been putting all of their holdings online. The Guojia tushuguan jinshi tapian shumu shujuku (Bibliographic Database of Rubbings of Inscriptions in the National Library) contains 260,000 rubbings of all kinds (from stone, metal, and oracle bones), of which images of 30,000 stone inscriptions are available to the public, with 3,000 added each year. They also maintain a database known as Beitie jinghua (Splendor of Rubbings) or Zhongwen tapian ziyuanku (Database of Rubbings in Chinese). In Japan, Meiji University in Tokyo has a database of Chinese inscriptions, put out by the Chūgoku sekkoku bunbutsu gōdō kenkyūkai (Combined Research Group for Chinese Inscriptions).

Chinese scholars have published a number of works containing inscriptions of specific types. Among the most useful are *Yuandai baihuabei jilu* (Collected Steles in Colloquial Language from the Yuan Period) by Cai Meibiao, and *Daojia jinshi lue* (Short Collection of Daoist Inscriptions on Metal and Stone) by Chen Yuan and Chen Zhichao.¹⁶⁶

As archaeological excavations in China have stepped up in recent years, archaeologists have unearthed large numbers of steles carved with tomb inscriptions (*muzhi*). Many of them have been published in the ongoing series *Xinzhongguo chutu muzhi* (Newly Unearthed Tomb Inscriptions of China) by Wenwu Publishers in Beijing, which provides facsimile reproductions of epitaphs from each province of China, beginning with Henan in 1994.¹⁶⁷ In addition, provincial publishing houses have produced collections of inscriptions found locally. Of particular note is a massive ongoing series from Shanxi province started in 2009, the *San Jin shike daquan* (A Complete Collection of Stone Inscriptions from Shanxi).¹⁶⁸ It has published more than fifty volumes so far and includes much Yuan material. The *Longxi jinshilu* (Collected Inscriptions on Metal and Stone from Longxi County (Gansu province)) from 2011 contains fifty Yuan inscriptions, including noteworthy material about the Wang family of Gongchang.¹⁶⁹

Excavated Documents and Documents Found on the Back of Other Paper

In addition to transmitted documents, discussed in this chapter, archaeological finds in the last century have unearthed many Mongol–Yuan-related writings.

¹⁶⁶ Cai Meibiao (1955) 2017; Chen Yuan 1988. ¹⁶⁷ Zhongguo wenwu yanjiusuo 1994–.

¹⁶⁸ Liu, Li, et al. 2009–. ¹⁶⁹ Wang Kai 2011.

The most famous unearthed documents of the Mongol–Yuan era are those found at Qara-Qoto (“black city”; Ch. Heicheng, or Heishuicheng, “black-water city”) in the Ejina Banner of western Inner Mongolia (known to Marco Polo as the city of Edzina). Qara-Qoto documents were first explored in the early twentieth century by the Russian archaeologist Pyotr Kuzmich Kozlov (1863–1935),¹⁷⁰ followed by the British explorer Marc Aurel Stein (1862–1943) and the China–Sweden Northwest Scientific Research Team led by Sven Hedin (1865–1952) and Xu Bingchang (1890–1976). Later archaeologists continually discovered fragments of documents over time in Qara-Qoto, including a Chinese research team that in 1983 and 1984 found a large trove of records, mostly from the Yuan period.

The Qara-Qoto discoveries gave tremendous new momentum to the study of the Xi Xia (982–1227) and the Mongol–Yuan, as the various finds have been published. Chinese documents found in 1983 and 1984 were first published in *Heicheng chutu wenshu: Hanwen wenshujuan* (Documents Excavated from Qara-Qoto: Documents in Chinese), edited by Li Yiyou, which contains black-and-white images of more than 760 fragments of documents now housed in China and transcripts of their contents.¹⁷¹ In 2008, the National Library of China published the ten tomes of *Zhongguo cang Heishuicheng Hanwen wenxian* (Documents in Chinese from Qara-Qoto Held in China). This massive work has clear, color plates and includes many more documents than Li’s 1991 publication.¹⁷²

The Yuan documents found by Kozlov and Stein have been reproduced in several publications. In 1996, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences began publishing Kozlov’s main trove, held in St. Petersburg, Russia, completing the thirtieth and final volume in 2021, of which the first six contain documents in Chinese. The series is known by its short title, *Ecang Heishuicheng wenxian* (Documents from Qara-Qoto Held in Russia).¹⁷³ Two valuable guides to the Chinese documents in these six volumes, including studies of them, are provided by Sun Jimin et al., and by Zhang and Yang.¹⁷⁴ Stein’s discoveries are reproduced in the series known as *Yingcang Heishuicheng wenxian* (Documents from Khara-Khoto in the British Library), published between 2005 and 2010 jointly by the British Library, Northwest Minzu University, and Shanghai guji chubanshe,¹⁷⁵ and also in *Sitanyin disanci Zhong Ya kaogu suohuo Hanwen wenshu* (Chinese Documents Found by Aurel Stein during his Third Central Asian Archaeological Trip) published by Shanghai cishu

170 Kozlov 1923. 171 Li Yiyou 1991; Li Yiyou 1992. 172 Ta, Du, and Gao 2008.

173 Eluosi kexueyuan dongfang wenxian yanjiusuo et al. 1996–2021. The other volumes are Tangut documents.

174 Sun, Song, and Chen 2012; Zhang and Yang 2015. The latter addresses legal texts.

175 Xie and Wood 2005; Li and Wood 2010.

chubanshe.¹⁷⁶ In addition, Chinese scholars have identified as Qara-Qoto documents more than 130 documents published in the work known as *Ecang Dunhuang wenxian* (Dunhuang Documents Held in Russia).¹⁷⁷

In addition to the rich Qara-Qoto finds, some scattered Yuan materials have been found in other excavations. Some Yuan contracts and family division records were discovered among the voluminous finds of Huizhou district in Anhui province.¹⁷⁸ Six items, including commercial contracts and official records, were found in 1999 in the Gezidong cave of Longhua, Hebei.¹⁷⁹

Another source of newly found historical materials has been writings on the backs of the pages of unrelated contemporaneous books. The Chinese bureaucracy produced large quantities of documents, and when these were no longer needed, officials sold the paper to publishers (sometimes their own presses) to be reused for printing books. Chinese book makers of the time generally printed two pages on one side of a sheet of paper, folded it in two, and bound the pages together at the open edge.¹⁸⁰ In this way, the document printed on the back of a sheet was not visible to the reader. In the early twentieth century, Chinese and Japanese scholars began discovering these hidden writings.¹⁸¹ In 1973 Chikusa Masaaki published an article that lists thirty-five Song, Yuan, and Ming books held in Japan printed on the backs of official documents. He also transcribes and discusses legal records of a murder case, found on the back of a Yuan-era book.¹⁸² In more recent years, Chinese scholars discovered the Yuan household registers for Huzhou circuit on the backs of pages of a Yuan book in the Shanghai library.¹⁸³

Genealogical Materials

Since the Song dynasty (960–1279), literati families began producing comprehensive genealogies of their extended families, and this trend accelerated in the Yuan.¹⁸⁴ Genealogies were meant to promote the reputation and connections of elite families, but in addition to genealogical data (sometimes fictive), they contained all sorts of valuable material for historical study not found elsewhere, including official documents, legal contracts, and prefaces. Genealogies in China

¹⁷⁶ Sha and Wood 2005.

¹⁷⁷ Eluosi kexueyuan dongfang yanjiusuo et al. 2001. For a catalogue of these documents: Tai, Ma et al. 2019.

¹⁷⁸ Liu Hehui 1984. For photo-reproductions of the original documents: Liu Boshan 2015.

¹⁷⁹ Longhua minzu bowuguan 2015. ¹⁸⁰ Birge 2017, 57–59.

¹⁸¹ Ye Dehui (1920) 1957, juan 8, 10; Sugimura 1936.

¹⁸² Chikusa 1973, 14–25. For an English summary of the murder case: Hansen 1995, 121–24.

¹⁸³ Wang Xiaoxin and Zheng Xudong 2015. ¹⁸⁴ For more on this process: Morita 1979.

are preserved in various museums and libraries or held by individuals, both as manuscripts and as printed books. In the year 2000, the Shanghai Library began a major effort to catalogue those found in library and museum holdings in China and abroad. The resulting ten-volume work published in 2008 catalogues more than 50,000 genealogies and is available on the library's website.¹⁸⁵ The Shanghai library also has an open-access website, *Shangtu jiapu* (Genealogies in the Shanghai Library), with complete photo-reproductions of more than 8,500 genealogies, searchable by title, author, place, and so on.¹⁸⁶ The subscription service Airusheng (Erudition) offers a searchable database, *Zhongguo pudie ku* (Database of Chinese Genealogies), which is projected to include 50,000 full-text genealogies from the Song to the twentieth century, of which about 10,000 are currently available.¹⁸⁷ The Genealogical Society of Utah has on microfilm a massive collection of genealogies from China, including 9,000 in print editions and 7,000 in manuscript. The catalogue is available online, and the texts can be viewed in any one of their Family History Centers worldwide, including one now in the Shanghai Library.¹⁸⁸ These genealogies, however, are mostly from the post-Yuan era. The Shanghai and Beijing Libraries (the latter now the National Library of China), plus various provincial and municipal museums and research centers in China, have also produced catalogues of their individual holdings.¹⁸⁹ Beyond these, genealogies with Yuan material are still being discovered in private family libraries.

Much good scholarship on the Mongol–Yuan has been based on genealogies. The genealogy of the Ding family from Quanzhou, Fujian, yielded land contracts that have been matched to the Yuan legal system,¹⁹⁰ and that from the Jin family of Huizhou contained official documents pertaining to the *kesbig* and the coup of 1335.¹⁹¹ Genealogies also yield material on non-Han peoples. The genealogy titled *Shushanji* (Collection of Narrating Good) by the Tangut Tangwu Chongxi (aka Yang Chongxi, 1300–1372) tells of his Xi Xia refugee family,¹⁹² and genealogical materials tell of Khitan survivors of the Liao who moved to Yunnan.¹⁹³

Encyclopedias

As the publishing industry blossomed during the late Song and the Yuan dynasties, a genre of encyclopedic work called *leishu* (lit. “categorized” or “classified writings”) became popular. *Leishu* collected excerpts or sometimes

185 Wang Heming et al. 2008; Wang Heming et al. 2011 for a guide to the catalogue.

186 Shanghai Tushuguan Shanghai shixue jishu qingbao yanjiusuo 2015–2021.

187 *Zhongguo pudie ku* 2016. 188 See www.familysearch.org/search/catalog.

189 For a list of these: Wilkinson 2022, section 7.1.2.2. 190 Shi Yikui 1957.

191 A and Zhang 2015; Liu Xiao 2015. 192 Jiao and Yang 2001. 193 Meng Zhidong 1995.

full texts of works that contained all manner of information for the literate class in both their official and daily lives, neatly classified under topical headings.¹⁹⁴

The most important of the surviving Yuan encyclopedias is the *Shilin guangji* (Expanded Compilation of Myriad Matters), which is first attributed to the Fujian man Chen Yuanjing (c. 1200–1266) of the Southern Song but survives beginning in the Yuan. In the Yuan and Ming dynasties, anonymous editors published revised and expanded editions, each with slightly different contents.¹⁹⁵ Two Yuan editions are conveniently available in modern photo-reproduction: one from 1330–1333 printed in Kyoto and another from 1340 printed in Beijing.¹⁹⁶ The *Shilin guangji* includes all manner of primary sources for the study of the Mongol–Yuan: maps of Yuan territory and each province, legal statutes and case records, lists of Mongolian names, a Mongolian–Chinese dictionary (the *Menggu yiyu*), and so forth.

Other Yuan encyclopedias of note, all available in modern editions, include *Xinbian shiwen leiju hanmo quanshu* (Newly Compiled Complete Guide to Letter Writing with Brush and Ink Arranged Topically),¹⁹⁷ *Jujia biyong shilei quanji* (Complete Classified Collection of Must-Use Information for Domestic Life),¹⁹⁸ *Xinbian shiwenleiyao qizhaqingqian* (Newly Compiled Forms of Correspondence as Good as Ready Cash Arranged Topically),¹⁹⁹ and *Duoneng bishi* (Multi-purpose Guide to Everyday Affairs).²⁰⁰ These include not only practical knowledge for daily life but also information on popular beliefs and religious practices. Niida Noboru (1904–1966) early on used these for an important study of village wage laborer contracts.²⁰¹ All of these Yuan encyclopedias can be found in modern electronic databases. Airusheng's huge *Zhongguo leishuku* (Database of Chinese Encyclopedias) contains 800 *leishu*,²⁰² and the *Zhongguo chuantong leishu ziliaoku* (Database of Traditional Chinese Encyclopedias) allows comparisons of the *leishu* contents with the original transmitted texts from which they were excerpted.²⁰³ Since most Yuan *leishu* were preserved in the *Siku quanshu*, they can also be searched in databases that include that foundational collection.

194 For a thorough introduction to this genre: Wilkinson 2022, section 72.1.

195 Morita 1993. 196 *Shilin guangji* 1988; *Shilin guangji* 1999.

197 Liu Yingli 1997; Liu Yingli 2002. 198 *Jujia biyong* 2002.

199 For the earliest extant Yuan edition: Niida 1963. For a more complete later edition: *Xinbian shiwenleiyao qizhaqingqian* 2002.

200 Liu Ji 2002. 201 Niida (1962) 1991. 202 *Zhongguo leishuku* 2016.

203 CHANT (CHinese ANcient Texts) Database. 2013.

Modern Reference Works

There are several modern reference works, in English and Chinese, that are indispensable for the study of Chinese sources on the Mongol Empire. Some have been cited above but all deserve further introduction here.

By far the most important is the encyclopedic *Chinese History: A New Manual*, by Endymion Wilkinson. The last print edition is the sixth (2 vols., 2022), but the *Manual* is continually updated and available as an e-book on the Pleco smartphone application and soon will be as a curated Web platform. The *Manual* introduces primary sources for all periods of Chinese history and relevant secondary sources, and discusses problems of research and interpretation. It includes reference works and journals, and has an essential chapter on how to keep up to date. In addition to Chapter 64 on Yuan history, in Volume 2 one will also find relevant information in genre chapters, such as *Biji* (Chapter 53) or *Leishu* (Chapter 72), and in Volume 1 under subjects such as agriculture, technology, and trade (Books VI, VII, VIII). This work is the best starting point for both students and advanced scholars, and it serves as a constant companion for even the most seasoned researcher.

Expository introductions to selected major sources for Yuan studies are found in Frederick Mote's bibliographic essay in *The Cambridge History of China*, Volume 6.²⁰⁴ Biographies of main personages from the early Mongol period, with sources listed after each, are presented in *In the Service of the Khan*, by Igor de Rachewiltz and others.²⁰⁵

Two useful Chinese encyclopedic works are Qiu Shusen's *Yuanshi cidian* (Dictionary of Yuan History),²⁰⁶ and the recently updated compact mini-encyclopedia, with entries conveniently in alphabetical order by Pinyin romanization, *Yuan shi* (Yuan History) by Han Rulin and others.²⁰⁷ A book in Chinese introducing historical sources for the Mongol Empire in all languages (not unlike this volume) is Chen Dezhi's *Meng Yuan shi yanjiu daolun* (Introduction to Research on Mongol and Yuan History), also available as an e-book.²⁰⁸ Chen Gaohua also produced a fine guide to Yuan primary sources, as part of a larger work on all of Chinese history.²⁰⁹ And a work that focuses on secondary scholarship in Chinese but with a section on editions and studies of primary texts is Liu Xiao's *Yuanshi yanjiu* (Research on Yuan History).²¹⁰

204 Mote 1994. 205 De Rachewiltz, et al., 1993. 206 Qiu Shusen 2000.

207 Han Rulin (1985) 2019. 208 Chen Dezhi 2012. 209 Chen Gaohua (1983) 2016.

210 Liu Xiao 2006.

A number of electronic databases where Yuan primary sources are found have been mentioned above. Six main ones are listed in the Bibliography with full information: Scripta Sinica (aka *Hanji dianzi wenxian ziliaoku*), *Zhongguo jiben gujiku* from Airusheng, *Diaolong*, *Guoxue baodian*, CHANT (CHinese ANcient Texts), and HathiTrust. Wilkinson describes these and others in his section on digital tools and has a separate index listing the 242 introduced in the *Manual*.²¹¹ Major academic libraries in the US for Asian studies, such as at Harvard, Princeton, and Columbia, have comprehensive guides to databases on their websites.

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Mongolian Sources

GYÖRGY KARA

Ironically there are many more contemporaneous non-Mongol than Mongol sources extant on the history of the Chinggisid empire. It had more than one alphabet for its official Mongol tongue: the Uighur letters since the early thirteenth century (1206) and 'Phags-pa's square script created by Emperor Qubilai's order (1269).¹ Although, after the fall of Mongol rule, many Mongol written records perished, those that survived are still significant and sometimes even crucial for a better understanding of the political and cultural history of the Old World's vastest intercontinental and polyethnic empire. Recent research – for instance, the exploration of the northern caves of the Mogao site at Dunhuang and new excavations in the ruins of Qara-Qoto – have uncovered numerous monuments written in the Middle Mongol language in Uighur script or in 'Phags-pa's alphabet. The existing monuments may be classified according to the writing system used in them, according to their content, their genre, the time they belonged to, where they were found, and where they were written. They may be divided into primary and secondary sources. The primary sources comprise historical narratives (chronicles, biographies); genealogies; epigraphic monuments, including memorial inscriptions and epitaphs; imperial decrees; edicts of empresses and princes; and legal and commercial documents (for instance, loan contracts). The secondary sources are practically all Mongol written records of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries which, though indirectly, may convey information about the society, culture, and everyday life in imperial times. Such are, for instance, private letters, name lists, and literary works. Among them are Sonom Gara's Mongol version of Sa skya paṇḍita's *Treasury*, a moral guide for the noble and prudent,²

1 The Golden Horde fragments of a Mongol poem in Uighur script on birch bark also bear the remainders of a few words in square script, showing that this alphabet was known even at the western end of the empire: Poppe 1941b.

2 Sonom Gara's Mongol version of Sa skya paṇḍita's Tibetan *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi* (*Sa-skya Legs-bshad*) survived in block print fragments from Turfan (three fragments in Berlin, strophes 3–5, 52–58, 59–64: Cerensodnom and Taube 1993, nos. 8–9; one in Helsinki: strophes 5–8: Aalto 1952; Bosson 1961, 1969; Ligeti 1964; cf. Hujeriletu and Sarula 2004,

and the anonymous translation of the Confucian classic the *Book of Filial Piety*,³ fundamental for the public order. Also important are afterwords attached to Mongol translations of Indo-Tibetan or Chinese religious or secular writings with information about patrons, translators, scribes, and so on – for instance, Chos-kyi 'Od-zer's benediction for the new emperor Ayurbarwada and his empire in the colophon to the 1312 print of his Mongol translation of, and commentary on, the Buddhist poem *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. Even those Sino-Mongol and other bilingual or polyglot glossaries and phrasebooks of the Middle Mongol language which were compiled under the Yuan or early Ming, or in the western successor states of the Mongol Empire up to the fifteenth century, by non-Mongols but with Mongol assistance may, with some restriction, be counted as sources of cultural history (for instance, the Ming dictionary *Mengu yiyu*, also known as *Zhiyuan yiyu* in the *Shilin guangji*, "Ample Records on a Forest of Matters" encyclopedia, where the entries *cherbi* "high official," *darughachi* "overseer, governor," *jarghuchi* "judge," for instance, are arranged in thematic order, and Darwish Muḥammad's 1492 copy of a tetraglot – Arab, Persian, Chaghatai Turkic, and Mongol – glossary and phrasebook added to Zamakhsharī's *Muqaddimat al-adab*).

As to their territory of origin, the sources may be classified as those compiled in what is now Mongolia, the core of the empire, roughly between Lake Baikal and the Great Gobi, if not the Great Wall; those written in the eastern (Chinese and Tibetan) parts of the empire under Qubilai and his successors, also comprising documents from Qara-Qoto and Dunhuang; sources originating in the Chaghadaids' and Qaidu's domains (Turkestan, mostly in its eastern half, namely Xinjiang, especially the Turfan area); sources written in the Ilkhanate; and those originating in the Golden Horde's territories. A number of documents unearthed in the Turfan area, Dunhuang, and Qara-Qoto, such as the large Turfan fragment of the 1312 print of Chos-kyi 'Od-zer's Mongol *Bodhicaryāvatāra*,⁴ are originally from the empire's eastern part. Many imperial

no. 48: 1–4) and from Dunhuang (another edition; the upper part of eleven lines from quatrains 313–16; Otgon 2011: 5, B163: 3).

3 Fragment of the *Xiaojing*, Mo. *Taqimtaghu* (*bichig*), a discourse of Confucius (*Kungvusi*) and Zengzi (*Singsi*), Chapters (*bölüg*) 1–XVIII with quotations from the *Shujing*, the Book of Documents, as *Shangshu bichig*, the *Shijing*, the Book of Odes, as *Maushi bichig*. Xylograph, Mongol and Chinese text, 38 ff., now in the Beijing National Library. Lubsangbaldan 1961; Cleaves 2001; de Rachewiltz 2004; Cleaves 2006, with further references.

4 Chos-kyi 'Od-zer (Chosgi Odsir)'s Mongol translation of, and commentary to, Śāntideva (Shanta-diu-a)'s *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (*Bodistv-a chary-a avatar*). The translator's colophon in fine alliterative quatrains mentions Chinggis Khan (*Chinggis qaghan*) and his sixth-generation successor, the "eightieth (or eighth?) ruler of the great empire," Emperor Ayurbarwada, by whose order the book was printed in 1312 in the Great Monastery of

edicts issued in the Yuan main capital, Dadu (Taydu in square script), or the “Upper Capital,” Shangdu, granting privileges for Chinese and Tibetan religious institutions were kept in these places, either in the original manuscript form or thoroughly copied and carved in stone. Some important Mongol monuments whose originals are lost are known from contemporary Chinese, Persian, Tibetan, or Latin translation. Such are, for instance, the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* (Record of the Personal Campaigns of the Holy Warrior), a record of Chinggis Khan’s campaigns in Chinese; his statements (*bilig* “wisdom”) about alcoholic drinks and the importance of birthday celebration and so on preserved in Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Compendium*; the contents of Batu’s letter sent to King Béla IV of Hungary and Hülegü’s to King Louis IX of France that are only known in Latin translation;⁵ the contents of Güyük’s letter of 1246 to the Pope of which only the Persian version survived. The same is true for many narrative parts of the *Yuan shi*, e.g., the biographies of Bayan and Sübedei, or Qubilai’s decree about the introduction of the square script. Mongol edicts issued for Russian Orthodox churches survive in Russian translation.⁶

No Middle Mongol versions of ’Phags-pa’s short Tibetan works, tracts, benedictions, and so on written for Mongol princes are known, although they were probably translated for the illustrious patrons into their native Mongol language. An exception is his treatise *Shes-bya rab-gsal* (Lucid Exposition of What Ought to Be Known) (1278), compiled for Prince Chinggisim: its Middle Mongolian translation is preserved in an early seventeenth-century manuscript copied for the Manchu prince Yunli,⁷ and in a square-script xylograph fragment from Qara-Qoto.⁸ It also enumerates the Mongol sovereigns from Chinggis Khan to Qubilai, and mentions the latter’s sons.

Extant and Lost Chronicles

The most important extant Mongol historical writing of the era is the *Secret History of the Mongols* (*Mongqolun niucha tobcha’an*/*Mongqol-un ni’ucha tobcha’an*),⁹ henceforth MNT, translated into Chinese as *Yuanchao bishi*

the White Stupa of Dadu. Large fragment in the Berlin Turfan Collection. Cerenodnom and Taube 1993, nos. 10–21.

5 Voegelin 1941; Meyvaert 1980; also Lockhart 1968 on the Ilkhans’ English relation.

6 Cf. Grigor’ev 1978; Grigor’ev 1987.

7 Uspensky 2006; Bareja-Starzyńska 2002; Bareja-Starzyńska 2005.

8 Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 061. Identified by Otgonbaatar 2014; Kara 2016.

9 The first transcription reconstructs the pronunciation as it was offered for the students of the Bureau of Interpreters; the second and more common one reconstructs the Uighur orthography.

(The Secret History of the Yuan Dynasty), an “epic chronicle” of the ancestors, life, and deeds of Temüjin or Chinggis Khan and Emperor Ögödei, his third son and first successor. Written for the Golden Clan, it contains details not meant for the public eye, hence secret, an attribute in the title added by outsiders. When the time of a major event is defined, the *MNT* uses the twelve-year cycle; strange as it is, the first such “exact” date is here the hen year (1201) of the khan’s rival Jamuqa’s enthronement as *gürqa* (*gürkhan*).

As the work begins with the words *Chinggis qahannu huja’ur*, “the origins of Chinggis Khan,” it is possible that this was the title of the chronicle or of the first, genealogical, part of it, although the same can be interpreted as the introductory phrase of the khan’s genealogy: “As to the origins of . . .”. If these words were the original title of the entire chronicle, it may mean that the part about Ögödei’s reign is a later addition. This leads to the still debated question of the work’s dating. According to its colophon, it was written down in the roebuck month (the seventh lunar month according to the Ming Chinese translation) of a rat year at the great assembly (*yeke quriltai*) on the Ködö’e Aral of the Kerülen river. If this belongs to the chronicle of Chinggis Khan, the first possible rat year is 1228, but the great assembly that enthroned Ögödei convened in the next year, 1229, an ox year, which is the most likely date of composition.¹⁰ If the colophon belongs to the entire work, then the rat year around the enthronement of Emperor Möngke when the great assembly convened in the summer on the Kerülen, namely 1252, may be that of the composition. Ligeti assumed that this version of the khan’s story, with the supplementary final chapters dealing with Ögödei’s reign, was compiled around Möngke’s enthronement from the original *Altan Debter* (Golden Book) (lost, mentioned by Rashīd al-Dīn), by the partisans of Tolui’s sons, while the original version may have been finished in 1228 (if the postscript belongs to the original version). The occurrence of a later Chinese place name in the Mongol text suggested to Hung to date the work from the 1260s, but, according to Ligeti, this minor change could have been done by the early Ming users of the text. The *MNT* mentions the fall of Kiev (Men Kermen¹¹), which happened at the end of 1240, and the Hungarian king(dom), *raral*, read *keral* (< Hung. *király* “king,” identified by Pelliot), among the subdued peoples, which, if not an interpolation, implies 1241 as a date *post quem*.¹² Atwood favors 1252.¹³

10 De Rachewiltz 2013, 1–2

11 Róna-Tas 1994; Ostrowski 1998.

12 But see Aalto 1982.

13 Atwood 2007a; Atwood 2007b; Hung 1951; Ligeti 1962b.

In all probability, the MNT was originally written in Uighur script and certainly in the thirteenth century in a Middle Mongol dialect. Its extant form is preserved in a system of transcription in which full-size Chinese characters, logograms or ideograms, are used as syllabograms, and small ones as coda markers in the lines or as diacritics on the left side of the syllables, all according to Old Mandarin (*zhongyuanyin*) phonology, in a system elaborated in the early Ming Bureau of Interpreters, where the monument became a textbook. It was supplied with interlinear Chinese translations – word by word and, regarding the markers for syntax, plurals, mood, and tense, morpheme by morpheme (Figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1 A page from a reprint of the oldest *Secret History* https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Secret_history.jpg

This bilingual version has its own eventful history of transmission: being incorporated into the Ming encyclopedia *Yongle dadian*, it was copied before most of the latter perished. The Chinese transcription of the Mongol text shows a number of phonetical changes that happened between the written and the living language (for instance, *ke'e/kē* “to say” and *gü'ün* “man, person” versus Uighur script forms *keme-* and *kümün*), but it still has such archaic features as the reflection of the female gender of the subject in some perfective finite verbal forms and in some attributes, or as some oblique forms of the lost third-person pronouns absent from the later language.

The *MNT* was divided into twelve (in Ye Dehui's edition) or fifteen chapters (for instance in the Pankratov manuscript) and altogether 282 sections (paragraphs) of varying length, growing apparently with the students' increasing skills. Each section is provided with a summary translation in the Old Mandarin “colloquial” language, as was used in the Yuan's Chinese-language decrees. Two-thirds of the *History* were copied by Blobzang bstan-'dzin into his mid-seventeenth-century *Golden Summary* (Lubsangdanjin's *Altan Tobchi*) from a now lost Uighur script manuscript. Alternating forms of names (for instance, *Boroqul* and *Boro'ul*, *Qudu* and *Qutu*, *Erdis* and *Erdish*) in the early Ming transcription of the Mongol text suggest that the transcribers used a Uighur script manuscript, not one in square script.¹⁴ Persian chronicles, Juwaynī's *History of the World Conqueror*, Rashīd al-Dīn's *Compendium of Histories*, the Chinese *Yuan shi* (some of its parts were translated from Mongol sources), and the *Shengwu qinzheng lu* offer parallel narratives. Comparison of these sources reveals cases of interpolation and other deliberate changes as well as errors in the *MNT* by copyists and later editors. A deliberate alteration ascribes a statement to Chinggis Khan about the possible change of succession if Ögödei's “seed” is not apt (12:255), while Rashīd al-Dīn cites a written statement promising to Güyük that his “seed,” even if inapt, will inherit the throne.¹⁵

The early Ming Chinese summary translation of the sections had also been published separately, without the Mongol original. The first full modern translation of the Mongol text was edited by Naka in Japanese (1907). The first full European-language interpretation was published by Haenisch in German (1940). It was followed by Kozin's Russian translation (1941).

¹⁴ In the *MNT* there is no trace of voicing of some initials seen in the square-script monuments, as in *jingis qan* for Chinggis Khan; *zara* for *sara*, “moon,” *dëjri* for *tngri* (*MNT tenggeri*), “Heaven.”

¹⁵ Verkhovskii et al. 1960, 119.

Cleaves's old-style English rendering with an important introduction was set in type in 1957, but not published until 1982. The best English version with an exhaustive commentary and extensive bibliography is the work of de Rachewiltz.¹⁶ Cerensodnom gave one of the latest Modern Mongol translations with commentary;¹⁷ Choimaa offered a new comparison of Lubsangdanjin's *Golden Summary* and the *MNT* and another Modern Mongol version of the *MNT* with commentary.¹⁸

The *MNT* gives no hint about its author. Was it one person or a team? Shigi Qutuqu, the Tatar foundling raised in the Golden Clan to become an important and self-confident member of Chinggis Khan's court, scribe, and also judge perpetuating the sentences approved by the khan on "the white paper of the blue book," was seen by Ratchnevsky as "the probable author," and recently by de Rachewiltz as still "the most likely candidate," but he also ventured the idea that Ögödei himself may have written the original version.¹⁹ According to Hung, the silence in the *MNT* about Shigi Qutuqu's prominent role in the campaign in Western Turkestan "speaks" against his authorship. For Gumilëv, who viewed the *MNT* as a "political pamphlet," the author(s) belonged to "the old military lobby" supporting Otchigin.²⁰ The extant version is certainly a zealous argument against Ögödei's descendants and in favor of Tolui's son Möngke's right to the throne.

The chronicle embodied oral poetic tradition, oral history, personal and transmitted reminiscences, and probably also earlier (now lost) written sources. It encompasses quite a few internal genres, such as:

- brief stories*, e.g., Dobun Mergen's and Alan the Fair's story in the genealogy at 1:4–22 and the story of how Bo'orchu helped Temüjin in the quest for the eight fallow geldings at 2:90–93;
- myths*, e.g., the ancestral couple of the Bluish Wolf and the Fallow Doe at 1:1, the One-Eyed Duwa, Alan the Fair and her divine night visitor departing as a yellowish dog on the rising sun's beam of light at 1:21;
- messages*, e.g., Ambaqai's at 1:53, Chinggis Khan's to Ong Qan [Khan] at 6:177;
- speeches*, mostly in alliterative verses, e.g., Temüjin's speech on the victory over the Merkits at 3:113, Yisüi's question about the khan's heir at 11:254, the Qashin Burqan Qan (Khan)'s speech at his submission at 11:249;
- confessions*, e.g., Temüjin on his fright at 2:103, Ögödei about his merits and demerits at 12:283;

16 De Rachewiltz 2004; de Rachewiltz 2013. 17 Cerensodnom 2000.

18 Choimaa 2002; Choimaa 2011.

19 Ratchnevsky 1993a; Ratchnevsky 1993b; de Rachewiltz 2013, 3–5. 20 Gumilëv 1970.

proverbs, e.g., Bodonchar's saying "the body *should* have a head . . ." at 1:33, "the bush protects the little bird" at 1:85, proverbs in metaphor, such as "men's troubles are one *and the same*" at 2:90, "is not a Mongol yes an oath?" at 3:108;

idioms and metaphors, e.g., "fire in the eyes, light on the face" at 1:62, 1:66, 1:82, 3:114; "no companion but *our* shadow . . ." at 1:76, 3:125; "to consider someone an eyelash in the eye . . . (= a thorn in one's flesh)" at 2:76; "the deep water has dried up, the bright stone has become frail" at 2:72; "to vomit the white [= milk] and choke on the black [meat]," a metaphor of senescence, at 5:167);

songs (e.g. newly wed but abducted Hö'elün's wailing for her husband at 1:56; Jamuqa's battle song at 3:106; the lament of Chilger, the Merkit man who received the abducted Börte at 3:111, with refrain-like repetition: "I, the base Chilger";

odes, eulogies (e.g., of his Qonggirat people by Dei the Sage at 1:64, Jamuqa on Chinggis Khan's "Four Dogs" at 8:195, the khan's eulogy for his elder guards at 10:230).

Other genres are *mocking rhyme* (e.g., Ambaqai's widows to Hö'elün at 2:71), *reprimands* (e.g., Hö'elün on Temüjin's fratricide at 1:78), *oath or vow* (e.g., Altan's and Quchar's at 3:123), *prayer or vow* (e.g., Temüjin's at 2:103), *prophecy* (of Qorchi at 3:121), *dialogue* (e.g., Jamuqa and Chinggis Khan at 8:200–1), *genealogy* (at 1:1–3) with brief stories on some of the "branches" of the family tree, *registers* (e.g., the list of the ninety-five chiliarchs at 8:202), *records of appointments and rewards* (at 8:203–9), and *regulations* (at 7:192, 11:229, 10:232–33, 12:278–79).

The main values respected are fame, reputation ("how to die without fame?" 2:80), Heaven's grace, physical strength, power, loyalty, fidelity, friendship, courage, bravery, wit, wisdom, skills, youthful or feminine beauty, and material wealth.

The prose narrative is profusely interwoven with line-initial and half-line-initial alliterative verses (epic fragments, songs, and so on; bound form preferred in messages, oaths, proverbs, idioms). Verse emerges from prose where passions rise and where versified oral tradition is quoted. Strong parallelism and sequences of couplets are frequent; some verses are near-strophic (e.g., Chilger's lament).

The lost *Golden Annals* (Altan Debter) is cited in Rashīd al-Dīn's Persian *Compendium of Histories*; he narrates the Mongol rulers' deeds, quotes from their wise sayings (*bilig*), and tells anecdotes about them. Some of these

have parallels in later Mongol historical sources. A *Yeke tobcha'an* (Great Summary) is mentioned in the Tibetan *Red Annals* (*Deb ther dmar po*) of 'Tshal pa Kun-dga' Rdo-rje (1346) and a *Tuobochiyan* (Tobchi'an) in Chinese sources.

The late sixteenth-century *White History* (*Arban buyantu nom-un Chaghan Teüke*) of Qutughtai Sechen Qungtayiji of Ordos may contain elements of much earlier historical tradition,²¹ but the claim that it goes back to Qubilai's time or was authored by him cannot be justified.²²

Uighur-Script Inscriptions: Edicts, Memorial Inscriptions, Graffiti, Seals, Coins

One of the earliest monuments is Qasar's son Prince Yisüngge's five-line inscription ("Chinggis's Stone"), perhaps from the middle of the thirteenth century.²³ Found in the ruins at the Kirkira river in the region of Nerchinsk, it commemorates Yisüngge's archery skill shown at the Buqa Sochighai camp where Chinggis Khan convoked all the lords of his empire after his long campaign in Western Turkestan, i.e., after 1224 or 1225.²⁴

In some cases a few Mongol phrases appear on the side of documents written in other languages, obviously as a kind of verification. Such is the three-line Mongol closure (actually a threat against disobedience) of Empress Töregene's Chinese edict dated to a rat year, 1240, addressing the overseer (*darughachi*) of Pingyang and trusting the printing of the Daoist canon (*Daozangjing*) to a local official of Qinzhou or his wife.²⁵ Alike are the Mongol note *ene bichig ün*, "this letter is true," at the end of Tolui's widow Sorqaqtani's Chinese edict granted to a Daoist priest in a *dingwei* year (1247),²⁶ and another, three-word Mongol note at the end of the Second

21 Sagaster 1976; Bira 2002, 50–71. 22 Kollmar-Paulenz 2001, 130–31.

23 Many of the documents mentioned in the next sections appear also in Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2006, a great collection of Uighur script Middle Mongolian documents, inscriptions, edicts, letters, and fragments of various texts in Romanized transcription, with references. The system of transcription is paleographically less accurate than the one introduced by Ligeti and indicates vowel length wherever the late bookish reading-style pronunciation has it. The readings offered by the square-script monuments and the Chinese transcriptions are mostly ignored. It is illustrated with many plates of facsimiles; transcription of seventy texts, but some monuments are repeated or treated in several entries.

24 Stele now in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Russia: de Rachewiltz 1976; translation in de Rachewiltz and Rybatzki 2010, 162.

25 The Chinese and the Mongol texts of the edict, both in a rather cursive hand, were carved on a stele at the Daoist temple Shifang Daziweigong in Jiyuan, Henan. The full text of the Mongol original did not survive. Cleaves 1960–1961.

26 Dang 2010; Hong 2008.

Crown Prince Qubilai's Chinese edict (*er dawang lingzhi*) titled *Dongxiandong ji*, "Notice on the Eastern Immortals' Cave" (1241), a Daoist place in Taiyuan.²⁷ The shorter Mongol part (five lines) of the much later Qaraqorum Sino-Mongol inscription (1348) that mentions Prince (*ching ong*, or Qing Wang) Ümekei of the Great Palaces (*yekes ordas*) and others, as well as the two fragmentary lines on the Chinese inscription of Ghamju Qaya, overseer (*darughachi*) of Irghai, from Zhongwei, Ningxia, 1348,²⁸ seem to have a similar function.²⁹

An early symbol of Mongol imperial power is the red imprint of the qa'an's seal with six lines including the phrase *dalay-in qan-u jrlgh*, "order of the universal ruler" on Güyük's Persian letter of 1246 to Pope Innocent IV.³⁰

Emperor Möngke's edict (*aman yarligh*, "oral order") of 1254 was conveyed by Turughtai and Buqa to the supervisor abbot³¹ of the Buddhist monastery of Shaolin (*Sheulim*) to regulate the monks' travel to Qaraqorum.³²

The three-line benediction of Bars Töge for Emperor Möngke on the left side of the Chinese inscription of 1257 was found at the ruins of Shijiayuan, "Śākya Court," a Buddhist shrine in the district of Arbulag, Khöwsgöl.³³

Originals or translations, the Mongol texts of the Sino-Mongol inscriptions offer the right forms of the non-Chinese names and terms according to the Mongol tradition; the Chinese names and terms appear in them according to the contemporary Uighur system (for instance, the letter *tzadi* substitutes all Old Mandarin affricates). The Mongol versions of the fourteenth-century Sino-Mongol inscriptions of the Great Mongol Empire (*Yeke Mongghol ulus*) also show the strong influence of traditional Chinese officialdom.

Emperor Qubilai's two Sino-Mongol edicts (*qaghan jrlgh manu*, "our imperial edict") have the Mongol text in Uighur script: one was issued in Kaibingvu (Kaipingfu, later Shangdu) in a hen year, 1261, with simple invocation (*möngke tngri-yin küchün-dür*, "by the force of Everlasting Heaven"), was promulgated to the provincial administrations, Buddhist monks and lay people (*sönviis-te . . . toyid-ta irgen-e dughulghaqui jrlgh*), and given to the abbot of Shaolin and other elders (*ötögüs*). It grants exemption from taxes and levies (*shui tamgha*, *alba ghubchir*) and provides juridical autonomy to their monastery. From the earlier Mongol rulers' edicts only Chinggis Khan's is

27 Kind information by Dr. Funada Yoshiyuki. 28 Cleaves 1967; Dobu 1983, no. 16.

29 Matsukawa 1997; Oyun 2001.

30 Now in the Vatican. Mostaert and Cleaves 1952; de Rachewiltz 1983.

31 *Dusingsing changlau* = Ch. *dusengxing zhanglao*.

32 Fifteen lines carved on a stone stele, now in Dengfeng, Henan. Nakamura and Matsukawa 1993; Dob and Junast 1993.

33 Stone stele, now in Ulaanbaatar. Poppe 1961; Ligeti 1971; Dobu 1983.

mentioned. Qubilai places the Buddhist monks of northern China (the land of the *Jauqud*) under the Tibetan Sa-skyā priest 'Phags-pa (*Bagisba baghshi*).³⁴

The other edict has double invocation (*möngke tngri-yin küchün-dür/yeke suu jali-yin ibegen-dür*, “by the force of the Everlasting Heaven, under the protection of the Great Splendor”) and was issued at the Köke Aghula (“blue hill”) of Dadu in a dragon year, 1268. Promulgated to the overseers of cities and boroughs, to Buddhist monks and lay people (*balghad-un silteged-ün darughas-ta . . . toyid-ta irgen-e dughulghaqui jrlgh*), it was given to the head of the monks in Henan, to be held and applied (*bariju yabughai jrlgh*). It repeats the privileges and duties of the Shaolin Buddhist monastery mentioned in the edict of 1261 and reasserts 'Phags-pa's authority.³⁵

The Uighur script Mongol text of the Sino-Mongol inscription of Köten's son Prince Jibik Temür's edict (*üge, bichig*) issued in an ox year, 1282, in Yongchangfu (Üngchangvu), has double invocation (“By the force of the Everlasting Heaven, by the Splendor of the Emperor”) and seal (*al tamgha*, “red seal”; in the Chinese text “gold seal”). It grants tax exemption and privileges to Daoist priests of Chaghan Balaghasun, “White City” (Zhendingfu). The Chinese text carved below the Mongol one has the date *dinghai*, Zhiyuan (1287), when the stele with the two texts was erected.³⁶

To the genre of large memorial inscriptions belong the epitaphs of Zhang, Jigünte, and Hindu: the Sino-Mongol epitaph (*bii tash*) of Chang Ying Shui (Zhang Yingrui), serviceman of Nachin Noyan and his son Olochin Küregen (imperial son-in-law), erected in the third year of Yuantong (*Ön tung*) of the Great Mongol Empire (*Yeke Mongghol ulus*), 1335, recounts Zhang's ancestry, and his and his sons' careers.³⁷

The Sino-Mongol epitaph of a tiger year, the fourth of Zhiyuan (*Chi ön*) of the Great Mongol Empire called Da Yuan (*Dai Ön kemekü Yeke Mongghol ulus*), 1338, written in memory of Prince Diwubala's serviceman, the overseer (*darughachi*) Jigünte, relates his and his descendants' life and deeds.³⁸

34 Thirty-nine lines carved by the beneficiaries on stone stele in Shaolin. Nakamura and Matsukawa 1993; Dob and Junast 1993; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2006, 12–13.

35 Forty-nine lines carved by the beneficiaries on stone stele. Nakamura and Matsukawa 1993; Dob and Junast 1993; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2006, 13–14; Dang 2011.

36 Twenty-three lines with numerous lacunae. The square-script heading is *tay “oy lij ji (dawang lingzhi)*. Now in Huxian in Shaanxi. Dobu, Junast, and Liu 1998; Matsukawa 2002.

37 Fifty-seven lines. Heading (*manglay-yin bichig*) in Chinese, in square script, four lines. Stele at Guogongfen, northeast of Ulaghanqada, Inner Mongolia. Cleaves 1950; Dobu 1983, no. 12; names of compilers and translators known: Kudara and Zieme 1985; Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 100.

38 Thirty-seven lines; Mongol heading in three lines. Stele near Boroqota, Ongnighud Banner, Inner Mongolia. Cleaves 1951b; Dobu 1983, no. 13.

We have also the Sino-Mongol memorial inscription (*bii tash*) of Xining Prince Hindu (*Si-ning ong Intu*) of a tiger year, the twenty-second year of Ching (Zhizheng), 1362. Ui Suu (Weisu)'s Chinese text was translated into Mongol by Esenbuqa. Ui Suu, a colleague of Oron, Prince Hindu's second son, first mentions the family's Uighur ancestry. Oron's great-grandfather, Qalqanligh Qara Dodogh (Tu. *totoq*, explained as *ötegüs-ün guilogho*, "guolao, nationwide respected senior of the elders") of Beshbaliq advised the Uighur ruler Barchugh Ard Idugh Qud (*Barchuq Art iduq-qut*) to join Chinggis Khan's forces; Oron's grandfather Ataibuqa fought against the rebelling princes Du'a and Busma. Also mentioned are Ataibuqa's wife Shumagha and mother-in-law Taghai Qunchui, with their titles. Ataibuqa's third son Hindu's career is related, and his wife Buyanjin's titles and their sons (the fourth, Tughlugh, became governor of Isina) and grandsons (all serving in various offices) are enumerated; then follows the description of Oron's career.³⁹

Unique is the Mongol inscription (*üge, lingji on bui tash*⁴⁰) of the Yunnan Prince (*Ūn nam ong*) Arugh, dated to a dragon year, the sixth of Zhiyuan (*Chi ön*), 1340 (in Kunming, Yunnan). The prince tells about the sufferings the local people saw before his arrival, under the warring princes Bayighu, Aguuu, and Tükel; quotes the words of the locals about the restitution of their normal life; and mentions the people's benevolence and their gratitude to him, which the prince considers undeserved. Remembering the support he received from his parents and an imperial princess, he makes a long-term deposit in the Buddhist monastery Küngjüsi (Qiongzhusi) and orders the recital of the Chinese Buddhist Canon by the yearly interest of the deposit of his own money (*'emchüs sükes*), incontestable by brothers or other relatives (*urugh tari*), his retainers (*nökör següder*), or his slaves (*boghal aran*).⁴¹

The inscription of the Qaraqorum Buddhist monastery, 1346, also on the history of the first Mongol capital, represents a different genre. It mentions Chinggis Khan and Möngke, and the officials Örütemür, Budashiri, and Yiu Shim (Youren; *bi maghui boghol Yiu Shim*, "I, the base slave, Youren"), author of the Chinese original.⁴²

39 Fifty-four lines; Mongol heading in four lines. Summary in eight alliterative strophes with end rhymes attempted. Stele at Gubeigou, Wuwei, Gansu. Cleaves 1949; Dobu 1983, no. 17.

40 Sino-Turkic compound for stele.

41 Twenty lines. No Chinese parallel. Two lines of Chinese heading in square script: *"ün nam 'uañ cañ giñ bué* – "stela of the Prince of Yunnan about reciting the Buddhist Canon." Luvsanbaldan 1962; Kara 1964; Cleaves 1965.

42 Fragments, thirty-six lines. A copy of the full Chinese text is preserved in a local history. Cleaves 1952; Ligeti 1972b, 1: 22–26; Kotwicz's note in Tulisow et al. 2012, 375–84.

Mongol legends in Uighur script on coins issued by Mongol rulers for the western lands of the empire, with or without the symbol (*tamgha*) of the ruler, sometimes with an image of an animal or similar, accompany the Arabic legend on the same or the other side of the coin. The Mongol words usually appear in rather clumsy, often distorted letters. A pattern repeated on several Ilkhanid coins is seen, for instance, in *Qaghanu / nereber / Arghun-u / deledkegülig/-sen* – “In the name of the qa’an (qaghan). Minted by Arghun’s order.” Another is *Tngri-yin / küchündür / Ghasan-u / deledkegülig/-sen* – “By the force of Heaven. Struck by Ghazan’s order.”⁴³ Until Ghazan, the formula “In the name of the qa’an” indicated the ilkhans’ recognition of the Great Khan’s authority. Under him, it was replaced with the formula showing the ruler’s celestial legitimation. After him, the Uighur script Mongol legend, if any, was no more than the ruler’s name; all the rest was in Arabic. Some Golden Horde coins have the ruler’s name only; some have the name + genitive + *deledkegüligsen* (“minted by . . .”) formula.⁴⁴

Pilgrims’ graffiti, twenty-eight short inscriptions, on the walls of the Dunhuang grottos are transcribed by Tumurtogoo,⁴⁵ but not all of them are preclassical (one is from 1756). Some are partly deteriorated; the reading of some is problematic. One dated to the *Chi chi ghaqai jil* (*zhizhi*), the swine year, 1323,⁴⁶ was made as a token (*belge*) of homage paid to the Buddha by Ong Baghshi and other pious visitors from the city of Sügchü (Suzhou).⁴⁷ Another, dated a tiger year, keeps the memory of the pilgrimage of Prince Irinchin’s envoy Temürbuqa.

Uighur Script Letters of Mongol Rulers to Foreigners

The following letters sent by the Ilkhans Abaqa, Arghun, Ghazan, and Öljeitü show their growing independence from the center and the increasing influence of the Arabo-Persian Muslim world.

- Abaqa’s order (*üge*) issued in a hare year, 1279, at Aras is a safe-conduct letter for the returning papal envoys led by Barajirard (Fra Gerard).⁴⁸

43 Mo. *deledkegül-* is a double causative of *deled-*, “to strike.”

44 Seifeddini 1968; Weiers 1978; Nyamaa 2005. 45 Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2006, 34–38.

46 Tumurtogoo reads *Ji jing* = *Chi ching* = *Zhizheng*.

47 Kotwicz 1926; Ligeti 1972b, I: 33–34.

48 Sixteen lines. Kept in the Vatican. Mostaert and Cleaves 1952; de Rachewiltz 2005; Rybatzki 2006, p. 263b.

- Arghun's letter (*üge*) of an ox year, 1289, written at Köndelen and sent with Musqaril (Buscarello) the Quiverbearer to Philip the Fair of France (*Ired Barans*, "rey de France") is a response to the king's proposal of a joint campaign against Egypt. Arghun plans to reach Damascus and is willing to leave Jerusalem to his French ally if the campaign succeeds. He requests luxury presents from the land of the Franks (*Baranggud*): falcons and gems ("various colored stones").⁴⁹
- Arghun's letter (*bichig*) of a tiger year (1290), written at Urumi to Pope Nicholas IV on Christianity (*silam*, "baptism"; *Mishiq-a-in nom*, "the Messiah's teaching"), proudly refutes the Pope's request not to hurt Christians and repudiates his interference in the Mongols' religious beliefs.⁵⁰
- Ghazan's letter (*jrlgh*, *bichig*) of a tiger year, 701/1302, written at Qosh Qabuq and sent with imperial son-in-law Kökedei, Bisqarun (Buscarello), and Tümen, is about a joint campaign against the Mamluks' answer to the letter brought by Bisqarun from Pope Boniface VIII.⁵¹
- Öljeitü's letter (*soltan üge manu*, "our word, the sultan's word") of a snake year, 704/1305, written at Alivan and sent with Mamalgh and Toman to Philip the Fair, King of France (*Iridivarans soltan*), concerns the reconciliation of the quarreling Chinggisid princes (*Chinggis qaghan-u urugh-ud*) and the plan of a joint campaign against the Mamluks.⁵²

Monuments from Qara-Qoto

All Mongol manuscripts or prints, fragments, and a few complete texts that were found in the ruins of Qara-Qoto by Kozlov's expedition of 1909 are kept in the St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

More than eighty Mongol texts discovered in Qara-Qoto during 1983 and 1984 by the Inner Mongolia Archaeological Institute and edited by the team of Yoshida and Chimeddorji are kept in Hohhot.⁵³ These are loan contracts, sales

49 Thirty-four lines. Now in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris. Mostaert and Cleaves 1962.

50 Thirty-four lines, some fragmentary. Kept in the Vatican. Mostaert and Cleaves 1952.

51 Fourteen lines in elegant cursive hand, with scribal notice on the reverse. Kept in the Vatican. Mostaert and Cleaves 1952.

52 Forty-two lines, with scribal notice on the reverse. Kept in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris. Mostaert and Cleaves 1962; Ligeti 1971, 1:252–55.

53 In these documents: Esina, Isinai, Yisina, Yicinay, Marco Polo's Edzina, name of Tangut origin: *SH* 2: 971; Kara 2003, 40. The city itself may have been called Basar in Middle Mongolian.

contracts, private letters, official documents from the provincial archives, narratives, divinatory calendars, and Buddhist and Daoist texts. Most of the manuscripts are written in cursive hand – most in Uighur letters, some in square script. Almost all are fragments,⁵⁴ except three contracts.⁵⁵ These monuments contain many personal names of Mongol, Turkic, Chinese, Arabo-Persian, Indian, Tibetan, and Tangut origin. Their reading is often problematic.

The loan contracts found in Qara-Qoto follow the pattern known from Uighur script Turkic documents of Eastern Turkestan:⁵⁶ the date (year, month, day), the name(s) of borrower(s) who speak(s) in first person, I (*bi*) or we (*ba*); a statement of the need (*keregtü bol-*), the name of the lender, the name and quantity of the lent goods; conditions of payment and warranty; a “signature” (personal mark) of the borrower (*ene nishan bi . . .* – “this seal/mark [is for] me . . .”) followed by the name and a personal mark, a “signature” of the guarantor,⁵⁷ if any (*ene nishan bi . . .* etc.), and the “signatures” of the witnesses (*gerechi bi . . .* – “I, witness, . . .”); followed by their names and personal marks. The text is usually written with a wooden pen in cursive hand. The lines of the “signature” section begin lower than the rest.

Here follow a few notes on some of the Qara-Qoto documents of particular interest.

- A personal letter sent by an *alban*, “(someone in) service,” from Dadu to the overseer (*darughachi*) Ananda in Basar.⁵⁸
- In a letter of Batuqan (?) to Changsu, an elder relative (*aqā*), the sender mentions his old mother and nine younger siblings, asks for help, and complains that having no horse he cannot visit the addressee.⁵⁹
- A loan contract, signed in a dragon year by Shing Quli and Shing Ishinambu, records their borrowing wheat from Suu Temür.⁶⁰ It has the “signatures” (*nishan*) of the two borrowers, their guarantors (*baushin*), and their witnesses (*gerechi*). The measure *yabuqu temür-tü shim* – “current iron-bound pint” – is mentioned.⁶¹

54 Some reused, after the fall of the empire, as slipper insoles.

55 Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, nos. 001, 003, 005.

56 For classification of the Uighur contracts: Yamada 1993, 2: xiii–xv.

57 In some documents: *baushin* (Chin. *baoren*).

58 Ten lines in large, vigorous, thick-line cursive hand. Fragment in St. Petersburg, Mong. G 117; Kara 2003. Read *daghariqu*, “passing through” instead of *taqiqu* (l. 2), *sögöǰchü*, “kneeling” (l. 4).

59 Fifteen lines in small-size, dense cursive hand. In St. Petersburg, Mong. G 108. Kara 2003.

60 According to Cleaves: Degür. Read *qoy[a]ghula*, “(‘we’) two together” instead of *Sochqula*.

61 Full text, twenty-two lines, in St. Petersburg, Mong. G 106. Cleaves 1955; Kara 2003.

- Two loan contracts (*bichig*) appear on the same scroll of paper. In the first, made in a monkey year, Sarambai/Saranbai borrows wheat. He signs, together with his younger brother and guarantor, Taghambai/Taghanbai, and two witnesses. In the second contract dated on the same day, Shara borrows wheat from Temür. Signed by Shara, his guarantor (*tunsudai baushin*) Qarabuqa, and two witnesses.⁶²
- A contract of sale from a sheep year is about buying grain and pawning (*tutughla-*; *tutugh bichig ög-*) landed property, the location and the use of which are described.⁶³
- A contract issued in a swine year confirms the exchange of Saban's fifteen-year old younger brother Abdula ('Abdallāh) for Ging Bau's four three-year-old sheep. Signed by Saban, his guarantor Alqudai, the younger brother Abdula, and their witness (*gerechi*) Arajabsha (Rajab-shāh). It is signed after the date by the scribe Bayan and two more witnesses.⁶⁴
- An order (*üge*) issued by officials (*songgon vuu [= zongguanfu]-yin noyad*) of Esina province (*lu/chölge*), referring to an imperial edict and a crown prince's order (*qaghan-u yarligh*; *qong tais-i-yin linji*), dispatches the messengers (*elchi*) Öljei Temür and Quubitai to the hungry poor (*ügegün dutaghun ulus*) living at the lakes Qabunki and Qara Tash.⁶⁵
- Several Sino-Mongol documents (*bichig*) were sent to the Isina provincial administration to allocate appanage for the nobility. One sent by Boralki in a snake year requests provisions for Lady (*khatun*) Bulughan;⁶⁶ another sent by Tükel in 1317, a snake year with an intercalary month (*shün sara*), requests provisions for Prince Sanggashiri;⁶⁷ a further fragment mentions Nadun *visi* (Ch. *feizi*, "imperial concubine");⁶⁸ another orders the remuneration (fifty pieces of *süke chau* for the provisions of three months) for Lady (*khatun*) Arghui arriving in Isinai.⁶⁹

62 Fourteen + thirteen lines. Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 003.

63 Thirty-eight lines. Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 001.

64 Eighteen lines. Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 005.

65 Fragment, sixteen lines. Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 016.

66 Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 029. Pieces of the document survived as slipper insoles.

67 Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 022. Analogous documents sent by Tükel are nos. 018, 021, 023, 024.

68 Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 040.

69 Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 025. *Chau* is the Mongolian transcription of *chao*, Chinese paper money; *süke*, literally "axe," is Mongolian for silver bar (Tu: *yastuq*; Pers: *bālīsh*), since the silver bar's shape looks like an axe blade

- The order (*üge*) of a Turkic prince (*tegin*) requests clothing (*auji*), lady's headgear (*boghtaq*), a cloak or veil (*bürincheg*), and footwear (*ghutusun*), and offers payment in cash (*chau*).⁷⁰
- In a letter (*bichig*) written to an elder kinsman (*naghachu*, "relative on the mother's side," *aqa* "elder brother"), the sender, a woman, entrusts her son to the addressee and requests robes as presents for her daughter's wedding.⁷¹

There are a few narratives among the Qara-Qoto fragments.

The words "If our lord, Chinggis Qa'an had not been born . . ." are from a lost poem with alliteration.⁷²

A didactic narrative has Chinggis Khan's discourse with Boghorchu and Quyildar Sechen; it also mentions Boralki and Arqai.⁷³

A fragment with dialogue has the enigmatic phrase *degel-ün jaq-a döregen-e*, "the collar of the robe on/to the stirrup."⁷⁴

Uighur Script Edicts and Other Documents from the Ilkhanate and Its Vassals

While Ilkhanid chancellery was mainly conducted in Persian and Arabic, a few Mongolian edicts survived, and some Arabic and Persian documents compiled by Ilkhanid governors and vassals contain Mongolian notes. They are listed here roughly in chronological order.

- The Mongol note on the Arabic letter of Ötemish Sayf al-Dīn, vice governor of Karak, of 1262 served as verification for Mongol eyes.⁷⁵
- Ilkhan Abaqa's edict of 1265–1266, referring to his father (*manu sayin 'echige*) Hülegü's edict (*jrlgh*), answers Elege's petition concerning the protection of merchants (*ortoghud*) who bought landed property.⁷⁶

70 Reminders of eight lines in regular cursive hand. Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 070.

71 Reminders of twelve lines in large, regular cursive hand. St. Petersburg Mong. G 107. Kara 2003.

72 Reminders of five lines in elegant thick-line cursive. St. Petersburg, Mong. G 114. Kara 2003.

73 Reminders of fifteen lines with alliterative verses in thin-line cursive hand on the reverse of the St. Petersburg xylograph fragment Mong. G 110. Kara 2003.

74 Reminders of seven lines in cursive hand. Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 071.

75 Known from a copy of Muḥammad al-Nasawī's history of Jalāl al-Dīn Mengübirni, Khwārazm Shāh. Cleaves 1953a; Hambis 1962; Ligeti 1972b, 1: no. XXV:1.

76 Probably a copy, sixteen lines in elegant cursive hand. Fragment from Ardābil, Iran. Doerfer 1975, A1.

- A copy of Abaqa's edict⁷⁷ of a sheep year, 1271, issued in Aqar (Ahar) in protection of merchants (*ortogh-ud*), Elege's subjects, orders what had been given by them to Elege to be turned over to Shigtür, the ilkhan's *amīr*. The offenders are called "idiots, bastards, enemies."⁷⁸
- Arghun's edict issued in a swine year, 1287, at Qongghor Öleng (Sharūyāz) bears the notice (*barvan-a*, Persian *parwāna*, "order") of Bolad, Master of the Horse (*adughuchi*) Ashitu, and others on the back.⁷⁹
- In two Mongol letters written in a regular, thick-line cursive hand, the Seljuq governor of Qirshahir (Kirshahir, in Turkey), *amīr* Nūr al-Dīn, son of Jaja, donates his estate as an endowment (*waqf* > Mo. *uqb*) for the upkeep of a caravanserai. The letters, both of which also have parallel Arabic versions, comprise one complete and one incomplete document; the latter is a partial repetition (nine lines). The complete document has two parts. The first part, dated a monkey year (1272), lists more than ninety names of witnesses (lines 1–61); the second, dated a hen year (1273), is an endorsement of the first (lines 62–67).⁸⁰
- Busayid Baghatur Qan (Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd)'s edict in Mongol and Persian, issued in an ox year, 725/1325, at Ujan is addressed to *Ardabil irgen-ü nayibud*, "vice-governors (*nā'ib*) of the people of Ardabil"; *mutasaribud*, "mutaşarrif," "tax inspectors"; *bichigechin*, "(financial) secretaries"; *Barur balaghasun-u irayyad*, "subjects (*ra'īyat*) of the town of Barūr"; *kaiquwas*, "householders" (Kurd. *kayxu*^{wa}); and others. It affirms the amount of tax (*mal* < *māl*) in *dīnārs* (*altad*) to be paid by the town, and entrusts (*dāghul*-) the town to Asan (Ḥasan), Chaghircha's son. The text includes many other Arabo-Persian terms: *qanun*, "qānūn, rule, law"; *tasarub*, "taşarruf, possession"; *yeke diwan*, "the Great Council"; and so on.⁸¹
- Another edict (*üge*; *altan gerige al tamghatai jrlgh*) issued by the same ruler in Sulṭāniyya in a monkey year, 720/1320, contains the rare compound *sibaghuchin barsuchin*, "falconers and tiger-tamers," and many Arabo-Persian elements.⁸²
- The edict of Shaykh Uways (Uwais Baghatur Qan; *üge manu*, *bichig manu*) of a dog year, 759/1358, in Mongol and Persian, addressed to the officials of Qani

77 Mong. *jarligh-un savad* (< Persian *savād*, "copy").

78 From Ardabil, Iran. Twenty-two lines in elegant cursive hand. Doerfer 1975, A2.

79 Fragment from Ardabil, Iran. Twelve lines in cursive hand, with small square seal above and large square seal with Chinese legend below. Doerfer 1975, A3.

80 Kept in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Istanbul. Temir 1989, esp. 159–219, Figures 5–10, 12; Ligeti 1971, I: no. xxv:2; de Rachewiltz 2013, 91–93; Shiraiwa 2020.

81 From Ardabil. Doerfer and Herrmann 1975; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2006, 188.

82 Fragment kept in Tehran, forty-five lines with a four-line notice on the back, all in elegant cursive hand; Cleaves 1953b.

Bili (Khān-i Bīlī), issued in Tawris (Tabriz), affirms the receipt of 100 dīnārs, grants tax relief to the people of the city of Shaqiyar, and threatens the wrongdoers with excommunication, anathema, and perdition (a modified Qur'an quotation). The Mongol text (thirty-one lines) contains many Arabo-Persian terms: *nayib*, "nā'ib"; *mutasarib*, "mutaşarrif, tax inspector"; *shayigh*, "shaykh, sheikh"; *idirar*, "idrār, rent"; *waqv*, "waqf"; *Maghmad baighambar-un din*, "the faith (dīn) of prophet (Persian: paighambar) Muḥammad"; and so on. Its quadrangular seal quotes the Muslim credo in Arabic.⁸³

- Some Persian documents from Ardabīl have short Mongol notices called *barvana*, Persian *parwāna* (order), on the reverse.⁸⁴ The seals (*belge*, *gerige belge*) on some of them have Mongol legends.⁸⁵ On the back of Akhījūq's Persian edict of 759/1359 the name Chaghircha appears inside the contours of the word *belge* itself.⁸⁶
- The preamble of an edict reflects the issuer's Muslim faith: *mongke tngri-yin küchündür / Muqamad baighambar-un imadtur / yeke suu jali-yin ibegendür* – "by the force of the Everlasting Heaven, by the grace (*himmat*) of Prophet Muḥammad, under the protection of the Great Splendor."⁸⁷
- A Mongol genealogical note is found in a manuscript of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*.⁸⁸

Official Documents in Uighur Script from the Turfan Area

Compiled according to a given pattern, these documents begin with the superscription (*intitulatio*): the name and title of the issuer, the name of the document's type (in some cases this superscription is preceded by a reference to a higher decree). In the next part, in lines beginning on a lower level than those of the superscription, the involved people, addressed officials, and beneficiaries are notified (*publicatio*, *promulgatio*). The exposition (*narratio*) explains the case, and an imperative statement (*dispositio*) quotes the order. A threat of punishment (*sanctio*) may also follow. The quotation ends with the mention of the kind of seal used. The final protocol indicates the date and place of issue.⁸⁹ Quite a few refer to Chaghadaid khans in what is now

83 Herrmann and Doerfer 1975. 84 Doerfer 1975, A6, A8, A9, A 11, A12.

85 Doerfer 1975, A4, A7, A12. 86 Doerfer 1975, A14, Herrmann 2004, Abb. 89.

87 Fragment in Tehran: Cleaves 1953b. 88 Ligeti 1972b, I: 266.

89 For the structure of the Turfan official documents: Cerensodnom and Taube 1993, 165–67.

All texts are kept in the Berlin Turfansammlung unless indicated otherwise.

Xinjiang, and include seals of various colors and forms, often containing the Chaghadaid *tamgha*.

- Kebek Khan's order (*üge*) issued in a tiger year (1326) at Chibinligh was given to Kōk Buqa to exempt him from a payment already taken by the messenger Alghui.⁹⁰
- A St. Petersburg Turfan fragment is from a copy of the Chaghadaid khan [Yisün Te]m[ü]r's order (*üge*) issued in a hare year (1339) at Bolad Örö (?); it deals with a grievance of the Yogācārya monastery concerning its landed property.⁹¹
- An order (*üge*; *nishatu bichig*) of Temür Satilmish and other accountants and commissariat officers (*toghachin shügüsüchin*) to the senior officers of the postal road service (*jamud-un ötögüs*) refers to Yisün Temür's edict. It was issued in a tiger year (1338) in Türgen to provide provisions and horses for Kōk Buqa and other wine growers (*borchin*) who travel to Qocho.⁹²
- From the three known edicts (*üge*) of Tughlughtemür (Tughluq Temür Khan, r. 1347–1363), one was issued at Minglagh in a snake year (1353) and sent to Bolad Qaya and other officials to provide horses, wine, and food for Qabuuq Baliqchi and other messengers.⁹³ Another, issued in a dragon year (1352) at Yürüng-chin (present-day Ürümqi) is addressed to Chingtemür, the Uighur ruler (Iduqud) of Qocho, to overseers and other officials to let people return to their landed property in three villages (*silteged*) and share the lands without bias.⁹⁴ A third, issued in a rat year (1348 or 1360) at Berk Chimken, is also addressed to Chingtemür, overseers, and other officials. It regulates Asan (Ḥasan, or 'Esen)'s right to use the water of Qocho and Yūs Qanch-a.⁹⁵
- Bigemür's order (*üge*), referring to an imperial edict (*qan-u yarligh*), is addressed to Iduqud Chingsang and other dignitaries. Issued at Bolad in a sheep year, it requests wine, brandy (*bor araki*), and horses from the wine grower (*borchi*) Sevinch Buqa for Industan and the other messengers with him.⁹⁶

90 Ten lines in cursive hand. Cerensodnom and Taube 1993, no. 76.

91 Seventeen lines in regular cursive hand. Clark 1975; Kara 2003.

92 Fourteen lines in cursive hand. Cerensodnom and Taube 1993, no. 74.

93 Twelve lines in hastily written, thin-line cursive hand, some fragmentary. Cerensodnom and Taube 1993, no. 72.

94 Nineteen lines in elegant, thin-line cursive hand, some fragmentary. Cerensodnom and Taube 1993, no. 70. For Yürüng-chin, see Matsui 2013.

95 Fragment of sixteen lines in elegant, thin-line cursive hand. With four imprints of seals, a quadrangular one has the Chaghadaid *tamgha* in the middle, *Allāh* in Arabic on the top, and the Turkic sentence *oron qudluq bolsun*, "Let the place be blessed," in square script on the two sides and below. Cerensodnom and Taube 1993, no. 71.

96 Seventeen lines in thin-line cursive hand. Cerensodnom and Taube 1993, no. 73.

- Kedme Baghatur's order (*üge*), referring to Ilasqoja's (Ilyās Khwāja khan, Tughluq Temür's son, r. c. 1353–1365) edict (*jrlgh*) issued in a hen year at Basar to Merkid, Senggüm, and other officials of Singging (Xinjing), grants tax exemption to Tegür, who was moving to Bish Balaghasun (Beshbaliq).⁹⁷
- A fragment of a draft document issued in a hare year (1303 is the first possible year in the fourteenth century) requests to take the royal camels (*q-an-u temeged*) and bring goods from [Qar]a Qoja for an offering (*tayil tabigh*).⁹⁸
- An edict issued in a snake year at Ulqun ("hill") grants tax exemption to the enlisted clergy (the *shas-in aighuchi* = Tu. *shazın ayghuchi*, "preacher," and his *tesi-ner*, "disciples") and the estate of the Buddhist monastery with the Turkic name Ulugh tngrilig torma tib, "Isle [of the] Great Divine Offering." It mentions *unin*, "smoke," and *saghalgha*, "dairy" among the kinds of taxes.⁹⁹
- Two fragments kept in the Yürinkan Museum, Kyoto, were deciphered by Herbert Franke. One is the beginning of a document referring to an imperial edict (*qaghan-u jrlgh-iyar*) sent to the officials of the court (*ongvuu*) of Sultanshaa (Sultān Shāh), Prince of Xining (*Sining ong*);¹⁰⁰ the other is a fragmentary army document about [unidentified] stock, rank, and file.¹⁰¹
- A Turfan document, order, or narrative mentions Tigin Savchi Üge (Tu. "Prince Messenger the Sage"); *egün-i uqaju j-e*, "certainly understood this"; Tengriken, name or title; *ghadaghun aghur küiten kemeldüjü*, "telling to each other that the air outside (was) cold"; *Bish Balaghasun* (Beshbaliq); *cherigüd*, "troops"; *buu darutughai*, "do not suppress."¹⁰²

Documents in Uighur Script from the Dunhuang Mogaoku Northern Caves

All are small manuscript fragments. Here are the most interesting:

Regulations about providing timber (*modud*), provisions (*künesün*), payment (*kölösün*), and tallies (*vuu*) affirmed by a letter with seal (*nishan-tu bichig*) and the threat of severe punishment (*kündü eregütü*).¹⁰³

97 Twenty lines in cursive hand. Cerensodnom and Taube 1993, no. 68.

98 Ten lines in brush-written careless cursive hand on the reverse of a page of a Chinese Buddhist xylograph. Photograph in Huang 1958, Figures 17–18; Franke 1971.

99 The last twelve lines; thin- and thick-line cursive hand. Cerensodnom and Taube 1993, no. 69.

100 Five lines; Franke 1965. 101 Seven lines; Franke 1970.

102 Reminders of the beginnings of six lines in brush-written, large, beautiful cursive. Cerensodnom and Taube 1993, no. 80.

103 Otgon 2011, 1: B119.7.

An official document mentioning a *darughachi* and someone who sells oneself.¹⁰⁴ The beginning of Kedmen-baghatur's order (*üge*), referring to [. . .]Bolad's edict (*jrlgh*), grants free movement, protection to the anointer and national preceptor Lama Rdo-rje Bkra-shis Dpal-bzang-po (*gon ding gui shi Dorji-kireshis bal-sangbu lam-a*), who with his disciples (*shabinar*) travels to Bars Köl and Beshbaliq in the direction of Qara-Qocho.¹⁰⁵ Prince Aradnashiri's order (*lingji*), referring to an imperial edict (*qaghan-u jrlgh*), mentions "people, subjects" (*ayimagh*), elders (*ötegüs*), the seal of the Pacification Office (*zhaotaosi, chautausi-yin tamgha*), office (*yamun*), and "troops" (*cherig*).¹⁰⁶

Square-Script Monuments

Square-script official documents, inscriptions, and secular or religious texts are found on stone (steles, or, in the case of the Juyongguan Buddhist inscription, on the inner walls of the gateway), rock, paper (manuscripts or block prints), birch bark,¹⁰⁷ metal badges, metal or stone seals, or other objects (e.g., a wine jar).¹⁰⁸

Most of these are edicts. Their original form is seen in the documents preserved in Tibet (without Chinese parallels) and in the fragments at Guangzhou's Nanhuasi Buddhist monastery.¹⁰⁹ They are written on scrolls of paper appliquéd to cotton fabric with a silk border. The edicts granting tax exemption and privileges to religious institutions follow the same pattern as Qubilai's Uighur script edict of 1261.¹¹⁰ They usually begin with the two- or threefold invocation: "By the force of Everlasting Heaven (*moṅkaḡa dēṅriyin kūchündür*), by the Splendor of the Emperor (*qānu sudur*)," with or without "Under the protection of the Great Splendor (*yēke su jaliyin ihēndür*)." The name of the issuer and the type of the edict (*yarligh*, imperial edict; *iji*, Ch. *yizhi*, edict issued by an empress; *üge*, edict of a prince; *faji*, Ch. *fazhi*, edict of an imperial preceptor) are given next (*intitulatio*). The lines listing the addressees (*publicatio*) begin much lower (level 3) than those of the invocation (level 1) and of the descriptive parts: *narratio*, *dispositio*, and *sanctio* (level 2); in these the words

104 Beyebeṅ qudaldughda[gh]chi. Otgon 2011, 2: B127.11.

105 Matsui 2008; Otgon 2011, 3: B163.42.

106 Thirteen incomplete lines. Otgon 2011, 4: B163.46. 107 See note 1.

108 Poppe 1941a; Poppe 1957; Pelliot, 1949; Ligeti 1971; Junast 1991; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010. Hujegiletu and Sarula 2004 (transcription and Chinese translation of fifty-eight texts); Everding 2006; Hao 2008 (Chinese ed. of Poppe 1957).

109 Junast 1989; Hujegiletu and Sarula 2004, nos. 15–16; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, nos. 15–16.

110 Everding 2006, 1: 3–6.

requiring deference (*bidana*, “for Us”; imperial or other holy names, such as *Jiŋgis qan*, *Sechen qān*, *Shakemuni burghan*, *Shigemoni*, *yarligh*) are highlighted by writing them at the beginning of a new line. The *narratio* refers to, and quotes from, the edicts of the earlier Mongol sovereigns, beginning with Chinggis Khan. In some edicts the second ruler is referred to by the title *qān* only. Güyük and Möngke do not appear in any known square-script edict. The *dispositio* contains the names of the beneficiaries of the given edict; details their privileges; enumerates the taxes, levies, and duties they are exempt from and the types of their protected movable and landed properties, mills, hostels, baths, and pawnshops; and requests prayers (*dēŋriyi jalbari*-) and benedictions (*hirü’er ögün a*-). In Prince Manggala’s edict of 1276 and in Emperor Qubilai’s edict of the summer of 1277 or 1289, the exemption is not extended to land tax (*caŋ*) and commercial tax (*tamqad*).¹¹¹ The *sanctio* deters the beneficiaries from taking unfair advantage of the grace received. The last lines indicate the date; this closes the edict and begins on level three if it is longer than one line. In Öljeitü’s edict of 1294, it is in the same last line after the long space left empty following the words *yarligh manu*, “our edict.” No punctuation known from print fragments is applied. Though the structure and contents of these edicts are alike, sometimes they have such local elements in the list of the kinds of privileged property as *gžisga*, “estate” (< Tib. *gzhis-ka*), or *umsu*, a cross-breed of yak and cattle (< Tib. *mdzo*), in edicts issued for Tibet; or *shirge könörge*, “vinegar and yeast,” and *qulud oŋqochas*, “bamboo groves and boats,” in some issued for the Chinese part of the empire.¹¹² The list of the addressed officials and people may differ too. In several edicts the representatives of Islam (*dashmad*, *tashmad* < Pers. *dānishmand*) are omitted from the list of the privileged clerics. The full list is *doyid érke’üd senshiŋjud dashmad*, “Buddhist monks, Christian priests, Daoist priests and Muslim sages.”

The earliest of the more than thirty known edicts dealing with religious institutions is the order of the Anxi wang Manggala (*ghonji* ’Ansi *uŋ* ’üge *manu*, “this is our word, the word of the Emperor’s son, prince of Anxi”; *liŋji*, order of a prince) of 1276, issued in Giŋchêwfu (Jingzhaofu) for Daoist priests in Pingyang.¹¹³ The last is Emperor Toghon Temür’s edict of 1368, issued for

¹¹¹ See Hugejiletu and Sarula 2004, no. 3; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, no. 4.

¹¹² Vinegar and yeast: Toghon Temür’s Sino-Mongol edict of 1335, Hugejiletu and Sarula 2004, no. 22; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, no. 30; bamboo groves and boats: Toghon Temür’s Sino-Mongol edict of 1336, Hugejiletu and Sarula 2004, no. 23; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, no. 31.

¹¹³ Stela now in Hancheng, Shanxi. Hugejiletu and Sarula 2004, no. 32; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, no. 1. There are also three garbled Mongol lines on the left of Anxi Wang’s Chinese edict (*lingzhi*, with the inappropriate heading *shengzhi*) issued in Zhiyuan 20, 1283, stele in Yongshou, Shaanxi. Hugejiletu and Sarula 2004, no. 33.

the Zha-lu monastery in Tibet. It mentions the famous abbot Bu-ston's merits and demise, and orders the building of a stūpa (*suburghan*) for him, the making of his likeness (*körḡ*), and the holding of yearly services (*don-chod*) with offerings in his memory.¹¹⁴

Some of Toghon Temür's edicts issued between 1324 and 1351 offer the longest list of the Mongol temple names of his predecessors: Jīngis qan, Ögödeë/Öködeë qān, Sechen qān, Öljeëtü qān, Külüg qān, Buyantu qān, Gegēn qān, Qutuqtu qān, Jayātu qān, Rinchen/Rēnchen-dpal qān). Such is, for instance, his edict of 1345 issued for Rcaṅ (Gtsang) herders (*'brog-ba*) of estates (*gžis-ga*) belonging to the Buddhist priests Kun-dga' Chos-skyong and Dkon-mchog Bzang-po in Tibet.¹¹⁵

Two edicts issued for Tibet grant authority over taxation: the edict of 1328 of Yesün Temür (Yuan Taiding Huangdi, r. 1323–1328) for the myriarch 'Od-zer Rgyal-mtshan¹¹⁶ gives him a great badge/token (*yēke kerē*) and seal (*tamqa*) with authority in matters of taxes and levies;¹¹⁷ Toghon Temür's edict of 1362 appoints Yon-tan Rgyal-mtshan to supervise taxation as *jew-taw-shī* (*zhaotaoshi*, pacification commissioner).¹¹⁸ No mention is made of earlier emperors.¹¹⁹

The edict (*'iji*) of Empress Dagi, widow of Qubilai's grandson Dharmabala, was issued in 1320, entrusting estates (*gžis-ga*) to Grags-pa Rgyal-mtshan for the celebration (*tus/dus-mchod* = Tib. *dus-mchod*) of Ma-gcig, a Tantric goddess. Mention of interpreters (*kelemechid*) and Tibetan officials (*garba* (Tib. *sgar-ba*, "customs officer"), *rbon-rgias* (*dpon-sgya*, "officer"), and *hon-dras* (*hor-'dra*, "duty collector"),¹²⁰ all with Mongol plurals, makes the addressees' list distinctive.¹²¹

114 Sixty-two lines on paper, with several obvious errors. Has red imprints of imperial seal; no Chinese parallel. Kept in Lhasa. Hujieletu and Sarula 2004, no. 29; Everding 2006, 91–93, Plates 12–14; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, no. 37.

115 Fifty-six lines on paper. With red imprints of imperial seal. No Chinese parallel. Kept in Shigatse, Tibet. Hujieletu and Sarula 2004, no. 26; Everding 2006, 1: 69–80, pl. 8–9; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, no. 34.

116 'Od-zēr/zir Rgel-mcan.

117 Fragment, the last thirty-one lines on paper. No Chinese parallel. Kept in Lhasa. See Hujieletu and Sarula 2004, no. 21; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, no. 29.

118 Head of Office of Pacification (*zhaotaosi*). The addressees include Mongol and Tibetan officials and subjects as well as Buddhist monks, Bon priests (*bon-bu*, Tib. *bon-po*), spell-masters (*dharmichid*) and members of the clergy (*lha-sdi*, Tib. *lha-sde*) of Bon-'bor sgan che-chuṅ (the greater and lesser ridges).

119 Forty-five lines on paper. With red imprints of imperial seal. No Chinese parallel. Kept in Lhasa. Hujieletu and Sarula 2004, no. 28; Everding 2006, 81–89, pl. 10–11; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, no. 36.

120 Cf. Tib. *sgar-dpon* in Roerich 1984, 2: 277; Rybatzki 2006, 568 reconstructs Tib. *mkhar-pa*, "Stadtbewohner." Rybatzki 2006, 651.

121 Thirty-four lines on paper; kept in Lhasa. Hujieletu and Sarula 2004, no. 30; Everding 2006, 99–107, pl. 16–17; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, no. 23.

The edict (*faji* = *fazhi*) of the Imperial Preceptor (*dishi* = *dishi*) Kun-dga' Blo-gros Rgyal-mtshan Dpal-bzang-po (1299–1327) was issued in Dadu in 1321, for Gji-ziaŋ (Jixiang), a Buddhist priest of Tënniŋzi (Tianningsi) in Sünjīw (Junzhou).¹²²

Several Qara-Qoto fragments of official documents in cursive square script request provisions for Mongol nobles. Among them, fragments of some Sino-Mongol documents sent to Yiçinay (Qara-Qoto) request provisions for Lady (*f[i]i*)/[*f[ei]zi*], “imperial concubine”) [*N*]ātu/Nadong.¹²³ Similar is the content of another fragment requesting the due appanage (*keshig*) for Prince (*ke'ü* = *dawang*) Sanggashiri.¹²⁴

The Istanbul (Topkapı Sarayı) fragment of Qubilai's edict, copied into a book, is but a distant echo of the Mongol square script culture.¹²⁵

Minor Mongol official monuments in square script include inscriptions on badges as well as notes of restriction (*bang bichig*, Ch. *bang*) attached to edicts in Chinese.

Gold, silver, iron, and bronze badges or tablets of authority (*kerē* in the square script, Mong. *gerege/gerige*, Ch. *paizi*), some round (Tib. *sgor-mo*), some oblong, with short square-script Mongol inscriptions, were found in eastern Ukraine, Crimea, Siberia, China (including Inner Mongolia), and Tibet (Figure 3.2).¹²⁶ Most are monolingual, with the usual legitimation and warning: “By the force of Everlasting Heaven. The Emperor's Order. He who does not obey should perish” (*moŋka dəŋriyin kuchiündür qānu yarligh ken ēse buşhirēsü aldatuqai*) or “... should be punished, should die” (... *ken ülü buşhiregü aldaqu ükügü*), or “By the force of Everlasting Heaven. Be blessed the Emperor's name. He who does not obey should be punished, should die” (*moŋka* [or, by error, *moŋqa*] *dəŋriyin kuchiündür qān nere qutuqtaı boltuqai ken ülü buşhiregü aldaqu ükügü*).¹²⁷ Another type has the Mongol legend “Order. Avert the evil ones!” (*jar tunqaq ma'uni seregdekü*; this also in Uighur script: *jar tungghagh maghun-i seregdekü*, as well as with Persian and, on the reverse, Chinese parallels).¹²⁸ A third type is defined by

122 Twenty-nine lines. With Chinese parallel. Stele in Junxian, Henan. Hugejiletu and Sarula 2004, no. 37; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, no. 25.

123 Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 042–48.

124 Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 051. Uspensky 2006, f. 2a, 2: 15–20.

125 Tuna and Bosson 1962. Additionally, the Khüiten-Gol inscription in square script and Uighur letters is said to be the fragment of an edict: black ink on a rock, eight lines, only fragmentary words. The invocation has *ibēn* instead of the usual *ihe'en*, “protection.” Hugejiletu and Sarula 2004, no. 51; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, no. 46 (the Uighur script text is not cited in Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2006). If genuine, it is a rare Mongolian monument in square script found in Mongolia.

126 Hugejiletu and Sarula 2004, nos. 42–47; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, nos. 60–69.

127 Hugejiletu and Sarula 2004, nos. 42, 43.1–3, 44.1–4.

128 Hugejiletu and Sarula 2004, no. 46.



Figure 3.2 *Paiza* (tablet of authority) with inscription in the 'Phags-pa script, China, late thirteenth century. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (purchase, bequest of Dorothy Graham Bennett, 1993)

its legend as a “patrolling badge” (*muquriq kerē*), with Persian and Chinese parallels.¹²⁹ Alternatively, it has also a Tibetan parallel and the Mongol legend repeated in Uighur script (*muḡuriḡu gerege*).¹³⁰

The square-script Mongol legend of the quadrangular seal on the Persian edict of amīr al-umarā' Qutluḡ Shāh, issued in Öljeitü's name in 707/1307, is a rare example from the Ilkhanate: *Qudluḡ Shāyin belge*, “token/seal of Qutluḡ.”¹³¹

From the two Mongol parts of the Juyongguan hexaglot inscription of 1345, celebrating the construction of a Buddhist reliquary tower, only eight long lines with eight full and two fragmentary quatrains on the eastern wall and fourteen long lines comprising sixteen quatrains (some fragmentary) on the western wall inside the Juyong gate of the Great Wall at Badaling have survived. In them Qubilai appears as the Bodhisattva Sechen qān, the holy (*sutu*) one with vast wisdom (*örgön biligtü*), whose living eighty years was prophesized (*nayan nasulaqu kēn wiyagrid ögtegsen*). Like Chos-kyi 'Od-zer in his postscript to the print of 1312, the authors of the poem on the west wall offer a benediction for the “Bodhisattva

129 Hugejiletu and Sarula 2004, no. 45.

130 Hugejiletu and Sarula 2004, no. 47; de Rachewiltz 1982.

131 From Ardabil. Doerfer 1975, A5.

Emperor” (*dēŋriyin kübe’ün kü’ünü ejen qān bodisiwid*) of the day, their patron, the Son of Heaven (in this case Toghon Temür), by whose order (*dēŋriyin ke’ünü jarlikiyar*) they worked. The end of the text is damaged and the role of the persons mentioned in it, among them the monk (*ayaqa degimlig*) Irinjindorji gabshi (Tib. Rin-chen Rdo-rje dge-bshes), disciple (*teji*) of Namsiŋ Lama, is not clear.¹³²

Badges (Mo. *Gerege*, *Kerē*, Ch. *Paizi*) in Uighur and Other Scripts

The Golden Horde rulers used the imperial term *jrlgh* (= *yarligh*) on the tablets of authority, as seen on Toqto’a’s silver and gold tablet from the region of Astrakhan, issued between 1290 and 1312 (kept in St. Petersburg), on Özbek’s silver tablet issued between 1312 and 1340, on Abdulla’s silver tablet issued between 1362 and 1369 (found in Grushevka in the region of Ekaterinoslav/Dnipropetrovsk, kept in St. Petersburg),¹³³ and on Keldibeg’s tablet issued before 1362 (found in Simferopol, kept in Moscow).¹³⁴

Known are also four-script and trilingual round bronze badges (square-script *jar tungqaq ma’uni seregdekü*, Uighur script *jar tungghagh / maghun-i seregdekü* (“Order. Avert the evil ones”), Persian and Chinese), one in St. Petersburg (originally from Beijing), another in Ulaanbaatar; the inscription of a round bronze “patrolling” badge found in Khorchin territory reads in five scripts, the Mongol legend, in both square script (*muquriqu kerē*) and Uighur letters (*muquriqu gerege*), is accompanied with an Arabic-script Persian legend on the same side, Tibetan and Chinese on the other.¹³⁵

Xylographs in Square Script or in Uighur Letters

The Qara-Qoto fragment, five lines in square script with interlinear parallel in Yuan Chinese vernacular, is all that is left from an unidentified narrative, or more likely a phrasebook.¹³⁶ There is also a Qara-Qoto fragment of an unidentified law book in Uighur script, translated from Chinese.¹³⁷

132 Poppe 1957, nos. XII–XIII; Ligeti 1972b, III; Hugejiletu and Sarula 2004, nos. 39–40; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, nos. 39–40.

133 Pozdneev 1896, 124–25; Pozdneev 1897, 150–51; Ligeti 1972b, 284–77.

134 Münküiev 1977. 135 See above, note 127.

136 Kept at Tenri University, Japan. Franke 1973; Hugejiletu and Sarula 2004, no. 49; Tumurtogoo and Cecegdari 2010, no. 50.

137 Four lines with three interlinear Chinese characters: *zhou*, Mo. *chui*, “province”; and *tui guan*, Mo. *chui gon*, “investigating officer.” Now in St. Petersburg, Mong. G 110. Munkuev 1970; Kara 2003.

Seven larger and nine smaller fragments of calendars with an astrological guide (*jiruqai*) showing the proper and improper days for various activities, more than 200 lines long, were found in the Turfan area, but presumably were printed in the Yuan realm. They have a divinatory wedding diagram.¹³⁸ Similar fragments were unearthed in Qara-Qoto.¹³⁹

All extant Middle Mongol sources, large or small, complete or fragmentary, known and investigated long ago or recently discovered, offer precious pieces of information and challenging tasks for several generations of students to come. And there is some hope that more such sources now hidden in yet unexplored sites will be found.

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¹³⁸ Franke 1964; Kara 1979; Cerensodnom and Taube 1993, nos. 49–67. A small Qara-Qoto booklet contains a manuscript divinatory calendar with a turnable paper wheel for wedding forecast. Unedited. Sazykin 1988, no. 2177 (G 105, Kozlov 1).

¹³⁹ Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008, no. 62, 63.

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Arabic Sources*

REUVEN AMITAI AND MICHAL BIRAN

From the first half of the nineteenth century, scholars of the Mongol Empire have had recourse to the evidence in the vast Arabic-language sources of the time. In many cases, these sources provide valuable and unique information, not only about the Mongols in the Middle East, but also about the entire empire. Yet even today the Arabic sources are not always fully used for the study of the Mongol Empire and its various successor states.

The systematic study of the Arabic sources begins with the pioneering work of A. C. M. D'Ohsson in the 1830s,¹ and the extensive notes to the partial edition by Étienne Quatremère of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* that same decade.² A significant advance was the publication of the collection of long passages, and their translation into Russian, from Arabic works – almost all then in manuscript – on the Golden Horde by the Russian savant Vladimir Tiesenhausen (Tiezengausen) from 1884.³ While almost all of these works have since been published in reasonable editions, the assembling of these texts, along with the translations, still holds many scholars in good stead, particularly if they do not read Arabic. Several scholars – Edward Browne and Bertold Spuler certainly come to mind – working in the early and mid-twentieth century also paid attention to

* A number of conventions have been adopted in this chapter. (1) Only the accepted short forms of authors' name are used; full names are in the bibliography. (2) AH stands for *anno hegirae*, the year according to the *hijrī*, or Muslim, calendar. (3) We have opted for *ibn* ("son of"), instead of the "b." often used by specialists. (4) The Arabic definite article *al-* is disregarded in all alphabetization in the Bibliography. Most of the cited Arabic works can now be found online in Arabic databases such as al-Shamila or al-Warraq or by a simple Google search (in Arabic), although these texts may need to be checked against proper printed editions.

1 D'Ohsson 1834–1835. 2 Quatremère 1836.

3 Tiesenhausen 1884; Tiesenhausen 2005; Turkish translation with Arabic text: Tiesenhausen 1941.

selected Arabic sources.⁴ During the late 1960s and the 1970s, important publications by Klaus Lech, David Ayalon, and Ulrich Haarmann appeared that were largely based on Arabic material, each in their way laying the groundwork for further research.⁵ In the general works on the Mongol Empire produced in the 1970s and 1980s, there is some mention of Arabic sources, although perhaps these were not always fully appreciated.⁶ In recent years, a number of scholars have made a serious effort to explore the value and nature of such sources, as well as apply them to the study of the Mongols and how they were perceived in Southwest Asia and North Africa.⁷

The Arabic sources that are relevant to Mongol studies were written in different regions of the Middle East and occasionally beyond, over a long period and in different genres, mostly from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries C.E. All of these writers were heirs of a rich tradition of self-conscious Arabic historical writing, composed in several genres.⁸ A few of the authors were “internal,” i.e., writing within the Mongol realm, generally in the western Ilkhanate (Iraq and the Jazīra).⁹ Others wrote in these regions and Syria before the Mongol invasions. Perhaps most important were the historians living in the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria (1250–1517). The sheer quantity of the writing of history (*ta’rīkh*) under the Mamluks was probably unsurpassed, and much of it was of the highest quality.¹⁰ This certainly is reflected in the value and quantity of material relevant to the study of the Mongol Empire. Works from the Mamluk Sultanate include chronicles, biographical dictionaries, single biographies, geographical works, and encyclopedias; works of the last category invariably had a historical component (at times arranged as a chronicle), besides containing much other information which a modern historian can use – not the least the texts of authentic or model documents. Many other

4 Browne 1964, 2: 427–72, 3: 32–64; Spuler, 1965; Spuler 1985.

5 Lech 1968; Ayalon 1971–1973; Haarmann 1975.

6 Spuler 1968, 18–19; Saunders 1971, 257; Weiers 1986, 22–24; cf. Phillips 1969, 157–58. Morgan 2007, 185.

7 E.g. (in reverse alphabetical order): Pfeiffer 2006; Melville 1990; Melville 1992; Melville 1996; Irwin 1999; DeWeese 2006; Brack 2011; Biran 2002a; Biran 2002b; Biran 2007; Biran 2015; Biran 2016a; Biran 2016b; Biran 2019a; Biran 2019b; Amitai 1994a; Amitai 1995; Amitai 1996a; Amitai 1996b; Amitai 2001; Amitai 2004a; Amitai 2007a.

8 For general introductions to Arabic and Islamic historiography: Khalidi 1996; Robinson 2003. The essays in Lewis and Holt 1962 are still very useful.

9 Iraq, as it was used in the Middle Ages, refers to the south part of the modern country. The Jazīra is upper Mesopotamia, today divided between southeastern Turkey, north-eastern Syria and northern Iraq.

10 A good introduction to general historical writing of this period is Little 1998; also Haarmann 1968; Little 1968; Ashtor 1961.

works were not composed as history per se, but have great value for the scholar of the Mongols: travel reports, legal works, belles-lettres compositions, and more. Outside the core area of Egypt and Syria, other relevant important works were composed in Arabic, especially in Rasūlid Yemen and in North Africa, as well as in Mongol Central Asia. Epigraphy and fortuitous caches of documents are also important.

External Sources

Early Arabic Writers in the Time of the United Mongol Empire (to c. 1260)

Before the first Mongol campaign into the Islamic countries in 1219, contemporaneous Arabic sources give the distinct impression that Muslims and other residents of the heartlands of the Islamic lands did not have an inkling of Chinggis Khan's earlier activities in the eastern steppe, or were not even aware that the Mongols were drawing closer. Only with the beginning of Chinggis Khan's advance to the realm of the Khwārazm-Shāh in 1219 did such writers begin to take notice of the Mongols, who henceforth were usually referred to as *al-Tatar*/*Tatār* – and occasionally as *al-Mughul*. At times, when describing this campaign, writers take the opportunity to go back and describe the Mongols' early history.

One of the most famous statements regarding the Mongols is the proclamation of grief and bewilderment by Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233), written *sub anno* 617/1220–1221.¹¹ Ibn al-Athīr was born into a well-known family of scholars and officials based in Mosul, in the Jazīra, where he spent most of his life. The author of several works, he is most famous for his vast chronicle *al-Kāmil fī al-ta'rikh* (The Completion of History), which started with the Creation, and reached the year 628/1230–1231.¹² He begins his long account of the initial encounter between the Muslim world and the Mongols in a highly stylized and evocative lament of the effects of the first conquest,¹³ following this with

¹¹ The usual organization of an Arabic chronicle was by the years of the Hijrī calendar, with year one starting in 622 CE, with Muhammad's Hijra (flight) from Mecca to Medina. Within this framework, the author might begin by listing all the important rulers, then giving in a rough chronological order the significant events, followed by an account of all the noteworthy people who died that year, accompanied by short biographies.

¹² The standard edition was edited by Tornberg; *Ibn al-Athīr 1851–1876*; *Ibn al-Athīr 1965–1967* (with subsequent reprints) is based on it. For an excellent translation of the last 140 years of this work by Richards: *Ibn al-Athīr 2005–2008*.

¹³ *Ibn al-Athīr 2005–2008*, 3: 202.

some information on the earlier history of the Mongols and their relations with the Khwārazm-Shāh. Ibn al-Athīr continues with a more detailed rendition of the entire Mongol campaign to Transoxania and Khurasan, and the adventures of the advance force under the command of Sübe'etei and Jebe, who reached western Iran before turning north, reaching the steppe region via Azerbaijan and the Caucasus. In the yearly reports for the next decade, the Mongols continue to figure prominently in his account. Ibn al-Athīr's importance, beside the clear and detailed writing, is that he is "uncontaminated" by later events (notably the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258 and the Mamluk victory at 'Ayn Jālūt in 1260). His deep apprehension of the Mongols is authentic and telling.¹⁴

His younger contemporary and enthusiastic reader (who took the liberty of correcting him in a few places)¹⁵ was al-Nasawī (d. 1249–1250), the secretary and biographer of the last Khwārazm-Shāh, Jalāl al-Dīn Mingbīrnī (d. 1231). Even before he entered Jalāl al-Dīn's service as a secretary in 1225, al-Nasawī experienced the Mongol menace in his hometown, which finally surrendered in 1223. He then followed Jalāl al-Dīn in his escape from the Mongols, serving as his envoy to Alamūt in 1230 and trying to enlist help in 1231 in Mayyāfāriqīn, where he heard of Jalāl al-Dīn's death. He later joined the Khwārazmian general Berke Khan and served as his secretary until the latter's death in 1246, spending his last years in Aleppo.¹⁶

Al-Nasawī's major work, which dates from 1241–1242, is known today as *Sīrat al-sulṭān jalāl al-dīn mingīrnī* (The Biography of Sultan Jalal al-Dīn Mingirni). In fact, it begins with the rise of the Mongols and covers also most of the reign of Jalāl al-Dīn's father, 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Khwārazm Shāh (r. 1200–1221), Chinggis Khan's archenemy. Al-Nasawī is one of the most knowledgeable sources on the Mongol invasion of Central Asia. He consciously avoided too much repetition of Ibn al-Athīr's information (e.g., lengthy descriptions of Mongol destruction), focusing instead on local "Central Asian" details (e.g., the desertion of Muḥammad's Qara Khitai troops to the Mongol army and their futile attempt to assassinate Muḥammad). He is at his best when telling the whereabouts of his patron, the only Muslim ruler to seriously challenge the Mongols at this stage. Al-Nasawī's firsthand acquaintance with the events and players – based on both memory and notes he had made during his journeys with Jalāl al-Dīn – adds much to the book's historical value, despite his panegyric tone.

¹⁴ Richards 1982; Richards 1996; Rosenthal 1971a; Ahmad 1962, 88–90; Gabrieli 1962, 103–4.

¹⁵ Nasawī 1953, 25, 34, 379; Shabo 2013, 5. ¹⁶ Jackson 1993.

The book, broadly arranged thematically, has been popular since the thirteenth century onward, cited by a number of Ayyūbid, Mamluk, and later authors beginning with Abū Shāma,¹⁷ and was translated into Persian a few decades after its compilation.¹⁸ The first critical edition, including also a French translation, appeared already in 1850,¹⁹ and quite a few editions and translations have appeared since then.²⁰

Al-Nasawī and Ibn al-Athīr's younger contemporary was Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1256), son of a Baghdadi Mamluk and maternal grandson (hence the moniker *sibṭ*) of the famous scholar Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1201). Like his grandfather, Sibṭ was a famed orator, although "his fame now rests primarily on his historical works," meaning his universal chronicle *Mir'āt al-zamān fī ta'rīkh al-a'yān* (The Mirror of the Era [as Reflected] in the History of the Notables), which devoted much of each yearly entry to *wafāyāt*, death notices of prominent men, mostly scholars. *Mir'āt al-zamān* is not so important for the original Mongol invasion, but rather for the troublesome activities of the Khwārazmiyya, both before and after Jalāl al-Dīn's death, and Mongol raids in the area of Syria, Iraq, and the Jazīra, the latest being in 1252–1253.²¹ There is, however, no mention of Hülegü's westward campaign in the middle of the 1250s.²²

Another scholar of this generation is Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd al-Madā'inī (d. 1258), a Baghdadi scholar whose monumental *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha* (A Commentary on *nahj al-balāgha*), a tenth-century collection of speeches, letters, and maxims attributed to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, included information on the Mongol invasions into the Middle East up to 1245.²³

The scholar and official Ibn Wāṣil (d. 1298), a native of Hama in Syria, enjoyed strong ties to the late Ayyūbid and early Mamluk establishment, moving during his long career to several cities in Syria and Cairo.²⁴ He spent

17 Abū Shāma 1974, 122.

18 Nasawī 1965; Nasawī 1996. The Persian text, produced after 1261 by an anonymous translator, omits some material, particularly of an autobiographical nature.

19 Nasawī 1891–1895.

20 E.g., Nasawī 1953, with good index. Bunniatov's annotated edition accompanied by Russian translation and detailed indices is highly recommended (Nasawī 1996). Recent Uzbek editions are also available.

21 There is a facsimile edition of the important last, eighth, section; Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī 1907. This was the basis for the first printed edition Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī 1951–1952. The best edition of the whole work is Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī 2013 (vols. 13 and 14 are relevant for the Mongols), which also includes the *Dhayl* (Continuation) by al-Yūnīnī (see below). Sevīm edited a selection of excerpts on the Seljuqs; Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī 1968.

22 Cahen 1971a; Humphreys 1977, 395.

23 Djebli 1995 for the references to the Mongols and a French translation. On Ibn Abī Ḥadīd: Vecchia Vaglieri 1971.

24 El-Shayyal 1971; Hirschler 2006, 18–28 and *passim*; Ahmad 1962, 94–95; Ibn Wāṣil 2010, XII–XIX.

most of the turbulent 1250s in the latter location; in 1261 he was sent by Sultan Baybars to King Manfred of Sicily, son of Friedrich II, in Sicily, recording the visit in his work.²⁵ In his chronicle *Mufarrij al-kurūb fī akhbār banī ayyūb* (The Gladdening of Sorrow about News of the Ayyūbid Family),²⁶ Ibn Wāṣil has important things to say about the Mongols from their first coming to the Muslim world (he begins his rendition s.a. 616/1219) through Hülegü's campaign (including precious information on the events leading up to 'Ayn Jālūt) and the beginning of the subsequent struggle between the Mamluks and the Ilkhanate. Based on Ibn al-Athīr for the early period, but adding important information, Ibn Wāṣil's work is of particular importance for the relations of the Ayyūbids of Syria, Jazīra, and eastern Anatolia with the Mongols, as well as their activities in these areas from the early 1230s to Hülegü's arrival. Ibn Wāṣil provides one particularly interesting tidbit of information, during his description of the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in early 1258: according to him, "Among the Mongols, this Chinggis Khan had the rank of prophet,"²⁷ a point returned to later by Ibn Taymiyya (see below). Ibn Wāṣil's chronicle reaches up to the end of the *hijrī* year of 661 (1263), and is then continued by his townsman Ibn al-Mughayzil (d. 1302), up to 695/1295–1296.²⁸ This latter work is less detailed, but still contains information of interest, e.g., Baybars comments on the high quality of the Mongol army he encountered at the battle of Abulastayn in 1276.²⁹

Two other "late Ayyūbid, early Mamluk" historians should also be noted. The first is Abū Shāma (d. 1268),³⁰ the Damascene scholar most famous for his biographical work on Nūr al-Dīn ibn Zengi and Saladin, known as *al-Rawḍatayn* (The Two Gardens). What interests us here, however, is his own continuation of this work, the *Tarājim rijāl al-qarnayn al-sādis wa'l-sābi' al-ma'rūf bi'l-dhayl 'alā al-rawḍatayn* (The Biographies of the Men of the Sixth and Seventh [*hijrī*] Centuries, Known as the Continuation of the "Two Gardens"),³¹ which continues up to the year of his death, containing both a yearly survey of events – in which the Mongols frequently appear – and many death notices. This is an important source for the run-up of events to the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt, including the Mongol occupation of Damascus in 1260. Abū Shāma provides us a short but important analysis of the reason for

25 Ibn Wāṣil 1954–1977, 4: 234, 248–51.

26 Ibn Wāṣil 1954–1977 (up to 645/1248); Ibn Wāṣil 2004 (646/1248–661/1263). Most of these years of the last volume are also covered in Ibn Wāṣil 2010.

27 Ibn Wāṣil 2004, 213. 28 Published as Ibn al-Mughayzil 2004.

29 Ibn al-Mughayzil 2004, 85–86. 30 Ahmad 1960, 1: 150; Hirschler 2006, esp. 28–42.

31 The continuation was published as Abū Shāma 1947, 2010; for an earlier partial edition and French translation: Abū Shāma 1906.

the Mamluk victory at ‘Ayn Jālūt: the Mongols were defeated because their Mamluk opponents were cut from the same cloth, i.e. both sides originated in the nomadic milieu of the Eurasian steppe, and thus were of the same “race” (*min jins wāḥid*).³²

We should note the historical work of the Christian Egyptian Ibn al-‘Amīd (d. 1273), an official in the financial and military offices in the late Ayyūbid and early Mamluk governments. His chronicle *Kitāb al-majmū‘ al-mubārak* (The Book of the Blessed Compilation) reaches back to the origins of the world and continues up to the very beginning of Baybars’s rule towards the end of October 1260. For his own lifetime, his work becomes a precious source, including for matters related to the Mongols.³³ The author was in Syria at the time of the Mongol invasion of 1260, and fled Damascus to seek refuge in Crusader Tyre. Later on, he spent some time in prison, possibly due to a false accusation of spying for the Mongols. The author’s Christianity does not seem to have affected his reports on the Mongols.³⁴

Finally, *Aḥwāl mulūk al-tatār al-mughūl* (The History of the Tatar–Mongol Kings), a work ascribed to a certain Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī al-Baṭṭī, was recently published in Iran. The short work – twenty-four folios – was supplemented to a manuscript of Tehran’s Majlis-i Sanā library copied in 898/1493, and is allegedly dated to early 858/1260. Not much is known about the author, who might have been a Shi‘ite from Istarābād; nor is his role as a compiler clear cut, since the information is ascribed to a certain Muḥammad al-Khaḥfāf (“the shoemaker”), who was active in Qaraqorum and allegedly close to the Mongol rulers. The book relates the history of the Mongols from the rise of Chinggis Khan up to the aftermath of the fall of Baghdad (but before ‘Ayn Jālūt). It includes interesting details regarding Ja‘far Khwāja, a Muslim merchant who became Chinggis Khan’s governor in the Jin capital, Yanjing (Beijing); a quite positive description of Hülegü; some noteworthy details about the caliphate’s relations with the Mongols and Isma‘ilis before 1258; and a highly literary description of the fall of Baghdad. However, the very unusual transcriptions of Mongol names and a few anachronisms (e.g., referring to Yanjing as Khanbaliq, describing ‘Abbasid princes as seen only by their mothers) raise questions about the work’s credibility.³⁵

32 [Abū Shāma 1947](#), 208; [Abū Shāma 2010](#), 2: 150–51.

33 The annals for the later years were published by Cahen: Ibn al-‘Amīd 1955–1957; French translation: [Ibn al-‘Amīd 1994](#).

34 [Browne 1964](#), 2: 470–71; [Cahen and Coquin 1991](#), 6: 143–44; [Amitai 1995](#), 154; [Ibn al-‘Amīd 1994](#), 7–15.

35 [Al-Baṭṭī 2015](#), esp. 70, 83–84, 88–95. The volume includes an edition, a facsimile, an index, and an introduction and summary in Persian.

Mamluk Sources

Mamluk-era writers hailed from several backgrounds: officials in the civil Mamluk administration of Syria and Egypt, religious scholars outside the bureaucracy, sons of Mamluks, and even the occasional Mamluk officer. These categories overlapped (for example, officials by nature were also trained in the religious sciences, and many of the Mamluks' sons were qualified scholars), but they help us understand the different perspectives that various authors could bring to bear, as well as their access to diverse sources of information.

Such a survey must begin with Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir (d. 1292), a key figure in the early Mamluk administration, as well as the source for many later writers. As the trusted *kātib al-sirr* ("privy secretary") of Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars (r. 1260–1277) and his successors, as well as director of the Chancery (*ṣāhib dīwān al-inshā'*), Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir not only had access to state secrets, but personally penned many important documents. His *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fi sīrat al-malik al-zāhir* (The Flowering Garden Regarding the Biography of al-Malik al-Zāhir [Baybars]) is packed with information about the relations with the Mongols during Baybars' reign;³⁶ one example is the exchange of letters in Arabic with Abaqa in 1268–1269.³⁷ This work is the basis for several major later chronicles for these years. No less important is his biography of the next major sultan, al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (1279–1291), *Tashrif al-ayyām wa'l-ʿuṣūr fi sīrat al-malik al-manṣūr* (Glorifying the Days and Times of the Biography of al-Malik al-Manṣūr).³⁸ This work's first section is missing up to early 1282, but the extant part is important for Mongol affairs, especially for the letters exchanged between the sultan and Tegüder Aḥmad in 1283–1284.³⁹ Finally, we have a fragment of a royal biography of Qalāwūn's son, al-Ashraf Khalīl (1290–1293), *al-Altāf al-khāfiyya min al-sīra al-sharīfa al-sulṭāniyya al-malikiyya al-ashrafiyya* (Hidden Benevolences from the Noble Biography of Sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf), that also contains some interesting tidbits on the Ilkhans, the Seljuq commanders in Mongol-controlled Anatolia, and border warfare with the Mamluks.⁴⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir's works are unabashedly tendentious regarding their royal patrons, but the level of detail and the insider's view make it highly rewarding to work through them in a critical way.⁴¹ Shorter, but more balanced, are the two sultanic biographies by his nephew Shāfi' ibn 'Alī al-Asqalānī (d. 1330): *Ḥuṣn al-manāqib al-sirriyya al-muntaz'a min al-sīra al-*

36 Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir 1976. The partial edition and translation by Sadeque (Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir 1956) should be used with extreme care.

37 Amitai 1994b. 38 Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir 1961. 39 Holt 1986. 40 Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir 1902.

41 Pedersen 1971a; Holt 1982.

zāhiriyya (The Beauty of the Secret Virtues Extracted from the Biography of al-Ẓāhir [Baybars])⁴² and *al-Faḍl al-ma'thūr min sirat al-sultān al-malik al-manṣūr* (The Virtue Transmitted from the Biography of the Sultan al-Malik al-Manṣūr [Qalāwūn]).⁴³ The former is an abridged, yet critical, reworking of Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir's *Rawḍ* (with the occasional new detail thrown in), while the latter is basically an original work, independent of his uncle's biography, also with regard to the Mongols. Shāfi' ibn 'Alī was present at the battle of Homs in 1281, receiving an arrow wound that left him permanently blind.⁴⁴

A completely independent biography of Sultan Baybars was written by Ibn Shaddād al-Ḥalabī (d. 1285) which also carries the title (like Ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir's work) *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī sirat al-malik al-zāhir*, although *Ta'riḥ al-malik al-zāhir* (The History of al-Malik al-Ẓāhir [Baybars]) is also applied to it.⁴⁵ Only the second part of this work has survived (from AH 671 onward), but later writers cite the lost earlier part. This work contains especially important information on Mongol-controlled Anatolia, which is crucial for understanding the background to Baybars's 1276 invasion of that country. Ibn Shaddād had been an official in the service of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, last Ayyūbid sultan of Syria, and in this capacity was even sent as an envoy to the Mongols active in the Jazīra in 1259, providing much precious evidence about these.⁴⁶ These adventures – and much information about the Mongols – are recorded in his second major work, this of a historical–geographical nature: *al-A'lāq al-khaṭīra fī dhikr umarā' al-shām wa'l-jazīra* (The Precious and Important Things Regarding Notices on the Commanders of Syria and Jazīra).⁴⁷ This is a particularly important text for the fate of the Jazīra in the Ilkhanate's early years.⁴⁸

A major chronicler for the early decades of the Mamluk Sultanate was Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Dawādār (d. 1325), a Mamluk of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn, who worked his way up the ranks until gaining the highest commission in the Mamluk army, as well as the governorship of the province of Karak in Transjordan (1286–1291), the post of *dawādār* (a kind of supervisor of the civilian administration with other responsibilities, 1293–1296, 1299–1305), and

42 Shāfi' ibn 'Alī 1989.

43 There are two editions: by Tadmurī (Shāfi' ibn 'Alī 1998) and by Lewicka (Shāfi' ibn 'Alī 2000). An interesting extract is translated in Lewicka, 1998.

44 Holt 1997; Northrup 1998, 28–33. 45 Ibn Shaddād 1983. 46 Amitai 1991.

47 This large work has come out in a number of partial editions: vol. 1, part 1: Aleppo (Ibn Shaddād 1953); vol. 1, part 2: north Syria except Aleppo (Ibn Shaddād 1984); also vol. 1, parts 1 and 2: Aleppo and north Syria (Ibn Shaddād 1991); vol. 2, part 1: Damascus (Ibn Shaddād 1956); vol. 2, part 2: Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine (Ibn Shaddād 1963); vol. 3, parts 1 and 2: the Jazīra (Ibn Shaddād 1978). Partial translation of vol. 1 by Eddé (Ibn Shaddād 1984); partial translation of vol. 3 in Amedroz 1902.

48 Sourdel 1971; Cahen 1934; Cahen 1940, 75–76; Antrim 2007.

briefly the *nā'ib al-salṭana* (viceroys to the sultan) in 1311 (until his arrest in 1312, and then prison for five years). Baybars al-Manṣūrī was thus well situated to record important information in the military, political, and diplomatic arenas. He provides extensive coverage of relations with the Ilkhanate, as well as events within the Golden Horde.⁴⁹ His two works, written in very sophisticated literary Arabic, are the comprehensive *Zubdat al-fikra fī tar'ikh ahl al-hijra* (Choice Thoughts on the History of the People of the Hijra),⁵⁰ which runs until AH 724/1323–1324, and the shorter *al-Tuhfa al-mulūkiyya fī ta'rīkh al-dawla al-turkiyya* (The Royal Gift for the History of the Turkish [Mamluk] Regime),⁵¹ which ends in AH 711/1311–1312. These works overlap, and should be read in tandem.

Another historian (and geographer) hailing from the political elite – albeit of a different section – was Abū al-Fidā' (d. 1333), who served as autonomous Ayyūbid ruler of Hama in Syria, even enjoying the title “sultan,” under the clear suzerainty of the Mamluk sultan in Egypt. Abū al-Fidā''s chronicle, *al-Mukhtaṣar fī ta'rīkh al-bashar* (The Summary of the History of Humankind) is particularly important for his own lifetime,⁵² including with regard to the Mongols, since he was present at so many important events (the siege of Acre, the fighting against the Mongols in Syria in 1303, and so on); the earlier annals for the Ayyūbid period are taken from Ibn Wāṣil (who was also one of his teachers). An excellent partial translation by P. M. Holt makes this work extremely useful for non-Arabists.⁵³

We now come to a group of several writers active in Damascus in the early fourteenth century, who knew each other well, often exchanging drafts and influencing one another. These were eyewitnesses to the Mongol invasions of the country – some, as youths, even of the invasion of 1260, but certainly of Ghazan's occupation of the city in 1300. They are clear representatives of the *'ulamā'*, with connections with the urban “middle class” of merchants and craftsmen, and therefore exemplify a kind of Syrian “petit bourgeois” perspective. We will not go into each in too much detail, but will just note essential information.⁵⁴

49 Ashtor 1960; Little 1998, 423–24; also the introduction in Baybars al-Manṣūrī 1998.

50 Baybars al-Manṣūrī 1998. Tiesenhausen 1884 provides extensive Russian translations. Elham 1977 is a partial edition and translation for the years AH 693–98 (1293–1299).

51 Baybars al-Manṣūrī 1987.

52 Abū al-Fidā' 1907; new edition by Dayyūb (Abū al-Fidā' 1997); partial edition and translation by de Slane (Abū al-Fidā' 1872).

53 Abū al-Fidā' 1983. For the author: *ibid.*, 8–10; Gibb 1960. Abū al-Fidā' also authored a comprehensive geographical work: Abū al-Fidā' 1840.

54 For these historians in general: Little 1998, 427–30; Little 1968, 42–73; Haarmann 1968, 85–118; Li Guo 1998, 41–96.

- Al-Yūnīnī (d. 1326), *Dhayl mir'āt al-zamān fī ta'rīkh al-a'yān*. This is a continuation (*dhayl*) of the above-mentioned chronicle by Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, and covers the year 655/1257–711/1312.⁵⁵
- Al-Jazarī (d. 1338), *Ḥawādith al-zamān wa-anbā'uhu wa-wafāyāt al-akābir wa'l-a'yān min abnā'ihī* (Events and Notices of the Ages and Death Notices of the Greats and Notables), runs from 689/1290 to 699/1300.⁵⁶
- Al-Dhahabī (d. 1348), *Ta'rīkh al-islām wa-wafāyāt al-mashāhīr wa'l-a'lām* (The History of Islam and the Death Notices of the Famous and Notable People). A work of remarkable scope, encompassing seventy (!) volumes, one each for each decade of Muslim history from the Hijra up to 700/1300–1301; these, in turn, are organized by year, then conclude with ten years' worth of death notices.⁵⁷ Al-Dhahabī relates much material from the otherwise lost works of the physician 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī, who has important material regarding the arrival of the Mongols in the area, including the conquest of Baghdad in 1258.⁵⁸
- Al-Birzālī (d. 1339), *al-Muqtafā li-ta'rīkh al-shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Abī Shāma* (The Sequel to the History of the Master Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Shāma).⁵⁹ The work runs from 665/1266–1267 to early 729/1329.
- Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373), *al-Bidāya wa'l-nihāya fī al-ta'rīkh* (The Beginning and the End in History). Only the last two volumes of this fourteen-volume universal history are relevant to the Mongols. While most of the notices are summaries of his earlier contemporaries, here and there we find original information.⁶⁰

Translations are available for certain relevant matters from these sources: the conquest of Baghdad (1258),⁶¹ the biography of the Mongol general Kitbuqa (*sub anno* 658/1260),⁶² the battle of Wādī al-Khaznadār (1299),⁶³ and the Mongol occupation of Damascus (1300).⁶⁴

55 Until recently, we were dependent on a remarkably poor (and partial) Hyderabad edition; al-Yūnīnī 1954–1961. This is now superseded by careful scientific edition (al-Yūnīnī 2013), vols. 16–23 of Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī 2013. For partial editions and translations: Melkonian 1975; Li Guo 1998 (AH 697–701/1297–1302).

56 Al-Jazarī 2006. A partial edition and translation (AH 682–687/1283–1289) in Haarmann 1968; a summary translation in Sauvaget 1949.

57 Al-Dhahabī 1987. This author composed a *Dhayl* for succeeding years, as well as other historical works that might be of relevance for Mongol affairs, especially the biographical dictionary *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*; Ben-Cheneb and de Somogyi 1965.

58 Cahen 1940, 61–62; de Somogyi 1933–1935; de Somogyi 1936. 59 Al-Birzālī 2006.

60 Ibn Kathīr 1332–1339; Ibn Kathīr 1985. 61 De Somogyi 1933–1935; de Somogyi 1936.

62 Amitai 2007a. 63 Li Guo 1998, 1: 132–34, 136–37.

64 Li Guo 1998, 134–60; de Somogyi 1948, 1: 353–86.

This is an appropriate place to note the important contribution to Mongol studies of the great scholar and communal leader Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328). Born in Mongol-controlled Ḥarrān in the Jazīra in 1263, as a boy he emigrated to Damascus with his family. The colorful yet controversial career of this personality (who also spent long stints in jail), as well as his extremely rich and varied *oeuvre*, cannot be discussed here.⁶⁵ Yet during the short-lived Mongol rule over Damascus in 1300, Ibn Taymiyya was the de facto civilian leader of the city, negotiating a reasonable surrender. Throughout the occupation, he maintained a respectful attitude towards the new rulers, but more than once complained to senior Mongol commanders that they were not carrying out the conditions of the submission.⁶⁶ Following the Mamluk reoccupation of Syria, Ibn Taymiyya was called to provide a judicial opinion (*fatwā*) on an important matter: how can the Mamluks continue fighting the Mongols of the Ilkhanate if these have become Muslims? What had been hitherto a clear struggle between Muslim holy warriors (*mujāhidūn*) and infidels (*kuffār*) was now a battle between groups of Muslims, and thus for the Mamluk elite ideologically more difficult. In a series of three *fatwās*, Ibn Taymiyya provides a thorough review of Mongol political culture and religious beliefs, including a discussion of the Mongol *yasa* as he understood it. This presentation is an intellectual and cultural tour de force, but the bottom line is very practical: the Mongols in Iran may claim to be Muslims, but they remain loyal to various tenets of traditional Mongol political and religious culture (the *yasa*, the striving for world conquest, Chinggis Khan believed to be a prophet, and so on). Thus the Mamluks were justified in their ongoing struggle with their Ilkhanid enemy.⁶⁷

Another early fourteenth-century author, active in Syria but of Egyptian origin, is al-Nuwayrī (d. 1333): his *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (The Highest Aspirations in the Categories of Culture)⁶⁸ is a thirty-three-volume-long and extremely varied encyclopedia. However, from Volume 13 onward, this compendium is devoted to history. Unlike most other contemporaneous histories, however, this is not arranged strictly by years, but rather chronologically by dynasty. About 120 pages are devoted to the Mongols in Volume 27. Much of this is derived from well-known sources; e.g., al-Nasawī and Ibn al-Athīr, but

65 Laoust 1971, 3: 951–55; Little 1973. 66 Amitai 2004b.

67 Raff, 1973; Aigle 2014b; Amitai 2013, 78–80; Ibn Taymiyya, 1961–1967, 28: 501–52; partial translation: Michot 1994–1995.

68 Al-Nuwayrī 1923–1997. Partial edition and translation of events from AH 693–698 (1293–1299) in Elham 1977. For Nuwayrī's biography: Chapoutot-Remadi 1995; for an analysis of this encyclopedia: Muhanna 2018. For a translation of the passage on the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt, from vol. 29: al-Nuwayrī 2016, 250–52.

here and there we find information not known elsewhere. For example, an interesting story is told of how Chinggis Khan met a Jewish teacher who set him on his path to greatness. The emphasis of this section on the Mongols is on the story of the Great Conqueror and his descendants in Iran, but there are also chapters devoted to later Great Khans and other successor states.⁶⁹ Additional information on the Mongols is found in later volumes, interspersed in the sections devoted to the Ayyūbid and Mamluk dynasties.

Two contemporary works were written by those affiliated with the Mamluk military class. The better-known is by Ibn al-Dawādārī (fl. late 1330s), whose grandfathers were both Mamluk officers, and his father a middle-ranking military functionary. His nine-volume *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmiʿ al-ghurar* (The Treasury of Pearls and the Collection of Finest Things) ranges from cosmological concerns and pre-Islamic history, to the story of the Prophet Muḥammad and the early caliphs, to events of his own time.⁷⁰ This is a sycophantic work: the author was anxiously hoping to curry favor with the ruling sultan, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, and was also at times flexible about attributing information gained from various sources to his own father. In spite of a heavy dependency on Syrian contemporaries (see above), unique evidence is found. In Volume 7 we have a long rendition of Turkish and Mongol myths of origin,⁷¹ and in Volume 9 there is a lengthy text of a conversation between the Ilkhan Ghazan and a Mamluk envoy,⁷² and a detailed description (not necessarily all true) of the adventures of a deserter to the Ilkhanate, Qarāsunqur al-Manṣūrī, formally a Mamluk officer of the highest rank.⁷³

Qirṭāy (or Qaraṭāy) al-Khaznadār appears to have been a fully fledged Mamluk, but beyond that we know little about him; he seems to have been active from the middle of the second decade to the fourth decade of the fourteenth century. His work, *Taʾrīkh majmūʿ al-nawādir mim mā jarā l'il-awāʾil wa'l-awākhir* (The History of the Collection of Rare Things from What Happened to the Early and Later People),⁷⁴ commences with the year 616/1218–1219 and continues to 693/1293–1294. More than one modern author

69 Amitai 2001; Amitai 2004a; Armstrong 2006.

70 Ibn al-Dawādārī 1960–1994; vols. 7–9 are relevant for the Mongols. For a partial edition and translation of the years 682–687 (1283–1289): Haarmann 1968. For an epitome, with some original material: Graf 1990. For the date of these works: Holt 1991.

71 Haarmann 1976; Haarmann 1975; Frenkel 2015, 60–66; Graf 1990, 183–203 (German text).

72 Amitai 2013, 109–115.

73 Little 1968, 112–35. For more on Ibn al-Dawādārī: Haarmann 1968, 61–84; Little 1998, 424–25.

74 Two editions of this work were published independently and concurrently: Qirṭāy 2005a and Qirṭāy 2005b. Qirṭāy 2008 covers pre-Islamic and early Islamic history.

has noted that sometimes Qirṭāy lets his imagination run wild, reflecting a less scholarly approach than is usually found in Mamluk historiography.⁷⁵ A detailed summary by the editors of one edition enables even the casual reader to note the rich data on the Mongols. One interesting story is a discussion between Hülegü (here called Hulāwūn) and a group of wise men (*ḥukamāʾ*) of various provenance (including Jews).⁷⁶

Three other contemporary historians were:

- Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil (fl. late 1350s). A Christian writer active in Egypt, possibly the nephew of Ibn al-ʿAmīd, whose work he continues. *Al-Nahj al-saḍīd waʾl-durr al-farīd fīmā baʿd taʾrīkh ibn al-ʿamīd* (The Correct Method and the Unique Pearl in What Comes after the History of Ibn al-ʿAmīd) is a straightforward chronicle running from the assassination of Sultan Qutuz in 1260 until 1341.⁷⁷ It derives most of its information from various well-known authors, but here and there provides unique reports, including on events among the Mongols (e.g., strife among the Ilkhanate leadership in 1319).⁷⁸
- Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 1377). His *Durrat al-aslāk fī dawlat al-atrāk* (Stringed Pearls Regarding the Turkish Regime)⁷⁹ and *Tadhkirat al-nabīh fī ayyām al-manṣūr wa-banīhi* (The Discerning Mentioning of the Days of [Sultan] al-Manṣūr [Qalāwūn] and his Descendants)⁸⁰ often highlight relations with the Mongols.⁸¹
- Ibn Duqmāq (d. 1406–1407?).⁸² Only part of his universal chronicle, *Nuzhat al-anām fī taʾrīkh al-islām* (The Amusement of Humankind in the History of Islam) is extant,⁸³ for the years AH 628–659/1230–1261, but these are critical years for the encounter between the Mongols and the Muslim world and can be profitably consulted, as can an extant section of his *al-Jawhar al-thamīn fī siyar al-khulafāʾ waʾl-mulūk waʾl-salāṭīn* (The Valuable Jewel about the Lives of Caliphs, Kings and Sultans), annals for AH 637–805/1239–1402.⁸⁴

We now come to two major writers, the works of both having had significant impact on the study of the Mongol world empire, not only in Southwest Asia. The first is Ibn Faḍlallāh al-ʿUmarī (d. 1349), scion of an important Syrian administrative family and himself a senior official,⁸⁵ whose twenty-five-volume

75 Irwin 1989, 237–40; Amitai 1992, 63–64. 76 Qirṭāy 2005b; Amitai 2014, 28–30.

77 Ibn Abi al-Faḍāʾil, 1919–1928 (for 1260–1317, with French translation); Ibn Abi al-Faḍāʾil 1973 (for 1317–1341, with German translation). For his biography: Den Heijer 1993.

78 Ibn Abi al-Faḍāʾil 1973, 61–63. 79 Ibn Ḥabīb 2014. 80 Ibn Ḥabīb 1976–1986.

81 Brinner 1971. 82 Pedersen 1971b. 83 Ibn Duqmāq 1999b. 84 Ibn Duqmāq 1999a.

85 Little 1998, 430–31; Salibi 1971.

encyclopedia (organized now in fourteen published tomes), *Masālik al-abṣār fi mamālik al-amṣār* (The Ways of Discernment in What Regards the Provinces of the Inhabited Areas) is a rich source of information regarding the Mamluk Sultanate and far beyond.⁸⁶ For our purposes, the most important part is a large section on the Mongols, which was edited by Klaus Lech in a remarkable edition, with 120 pages of Arabic text, a very detailed German summary (virtually a full translation), and hundreds of pages of annotation.⁸⁷ One important contribution in the introduction is that Lech noted the various sources, oral and written, that al-ʿUmārī used for his work. In addition, other sections (such as on musicians, philosophers, and so on) in this vast encyclopedia can be searched for information for important individuals working in the Ilkhanate and beyond, and showing the vitality of intellectual and cultural life under the Mongol aegis.⁸⁸ A much smaller book, *al-Taʾrīf biʾl-muṣṭalaḥ al-sharīf* (Information on Royal Usage),⁸⁹ is a chancellery manual, providing models of letters to foreign rulers, including Mongols, and some choice reports on communications with the Ilkhanid frontier, and how grasslands were burnt to pre-empt Mongol invasions in Syria.

Al-Ṣafadī (d. 1363) frequently cited his friend al-ʿUmārī in his two great biographical dictionaries *Al-Wāfi biʾl-wafāyāt* (The Completion of the Death Notices)⁹⁰ and *Aʿyān al-ʿaṣr wa-aʿwān al-naṣr* (The Notables of the Age and the Supporters of Victory).⁹¹ The former serves as a supplement (in thirty-two volumes, including indexes) to the famous biographical compilation by Ibn Khallikān (d. 1282),⁹² while the second is devoted to some 1,900 of the author's contemporaries. The two works overlap, but both should be consulted, since often certain information is only found in one of them.⁹³ By the thirteenth century, the genre of the biographical dictionary had undergone a transformation, and it was no longer devoted almost exclusively to scholars. A number of modern scholars have already begun mining these sources for Mongol history, and doubtless there is plenty of evidence regarding the Mongols waiting to be uncovered.

The impact of Ibn Faḍlallāh al-ʿUmārī is also felt on the encyclopedia by al-Qalqashandī (d. 1418), *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā fi ṣināʾat al-inshāʾ* (Dawn for the Night-Blind in the Matter of the Art of the Chancery), a fourteen-volume compendium,

86 al-ʿUmārī 2010. The numerous partial editions of various parts of this work are not noted here, except for Lech 1968.

87 Lech 1968. 88 Biran 2016b.

89 Ibn Faḍlallāh al-ʿUmārī 1988; an older edition of vol. 1 – al-ʿUmārī 1894–1895 – is still frequently cited.

90 Al-Ṣafadī 1931–2013. 91 Al-Ṣafadī 1998; Little 1976. 92 Ibn Khallikān 1977.

93 Little 1998, 431–32.

who copied most of his Mongol-related information from al-Umarī.⁹⁴ There are also verbatim texts of some letters exchanged between the Mamluks and the Mongols, although these are generally also found elsewhere; it may be, however, that al-Qalqashandī's versions are superior, or at least worth comparing with others. This is a work that needs to be consulted, but carefully.⁹⁵

We will mention in passing one of the giants of Arabic and Islamic thought and literature of all times, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406), a native of North Africa who immigrated to Egypt in 1382, taking up a series of teaching and judicial positions. In his *Ta'rikh* (History),⁹⁶ both the more theoretical first volume known as *Muqaddima* (Prologue) and the extended recounting of Mongol history in Volume 5, as well as the autobiography entitled *Ta'rif* (Memoir),⁹⁷ Ibn Khaldūn refers frequently to the Mongols, and has a relatively extended discussion of the Chaghadaid Khanate.⁹⁸

We will conclude this section with a short discussion of four important and well-known historians, all writing in Egypt in the fifteenth century (though in the first case surely also at the end of the fourteenth century).

- Ibn al-Furāt (d. 1405) is known for his comprehensive *Ta'rikh al-duwal wa-l-mulūk* (The History of Dynasties and Kings), also called *Ta'rikh ibn al-furāt*, much of which has unfortunately been lost. Two important volumes, dealing with AH 648–659/1250–1261 and then 660–671/1261–1273, are still only found in manuscript.⁹⁹ Two subsequent volumes, running from AH 672 to 696 (1273–1297), have been published.¹⁰⁰ Ibn al-Furāt is a consummate

94 There is an excellent edition of this work: [Qalqashandī 1963](#); and later editions, e.g. [Qalqashandī 2006](#). [Björkman 1928](#), gives a convenient summary translation of the whole work.

95 [Little 1998](#), 444; [Bosworth 1978](#).

96 Certainly easier to use than the full title: *Kitāb al-‘ibar wa-dīwān al-mubtada’ wa-l-khabar fi ayyām al-‘arab wa-l-‘ajam wa-l-barbar wa-man ‘āsarahum min dhawī al-sultān al-akbar*, “The Book of Examples and the Collection of Subjects and Predicates Regarding the History of the Arabs and Persians and Berbers, and Their Contemporaries Who Hold the Highest Authority.”

97 Until recently, all editions of this work were based on the early version issued in Cairo: [Ibn Khaldūn 1867–1868](#). We have word of a recently completed fully fledged scientific edition produced by a team led by Ibrahim Shabrūh in Qairouan, Tunisia. For an excellent translation of the *Muqaddima*: [Rosenthal 1967](#). For Ibn Khaldūn's autobiography, which includes a detailed rendition of his meeting with Tamerlane in Damascus: [Fischel 1952](#). For a collection of the chapters dealing with the Mongols: [Ibn Khaldūn 2013](#). Among the almost boundless modern scholarship on this figure: e.g., [Talbi 1971](#); [Fromherz 2010](#); [Irwin 2018](#).

98 [Fischel, 1956](#); also: [Pistor-Hatam 2003](#); [Amitai 2015](#); [Van den Bent 2016](#).

99 [Ibn al-Furāt, MS Vatican](#); [Ibn al-Furāt, MS Vienna](#).

100 Vols. 7 and 8: [Ibn al-Furāt 1942](#); [Ibn al-Furāt 1939](#) respectively; there is then a hiatus in the extant volumes until late in the fourteenth century. A partial edition and translation dealing mainly with the Crusaders is [Ibn al-Furāt 1971](#).

historian, providing long, accurate citations from earlier – sometimes lost – works, scrupulously naming his sources, and noting when he merely summarizes. For the important period of the late 1250s to the 1270s it is unsurpassed for Mamluk–Mongol relations.¹⁰¹

- The chronicle of al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442), an extremely prolific scholar, is still better known and more consulted than Ibn al-Furāt's for early Mamluk (and thus Mongol) history. This is mainly due to the complete state of his *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk* (The Book of Paths to the Knowledge of the Dynasties of Kings), published in a very good edition,¹⁰² and partially translated with copious annotations, in the nineteenth century by Quatremère.¹⁰³ For late Ayyūbid and early Mamluk history (and thus relevant to the Mongols), al-Maqrīzī's chronicle is mainly a summary of Ibn al-Furāt, and not always an accurate one. It thus has virtually no value as an independent source for this period, and should be used with caution for these decades.¹⁰⁴ Al-Maqrīzī's topographical work on Cairo, *al-Mawā'iz wa'l-i'tibār bi-dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa'l-āthār fī miṣr wa'l-qāhira* (Admonitions and Reflections on Mentioning the Quarters and Monuments in Fuṣṭāṭ and Cairo) also contains some well-known evidence for the Mongols, particularly with regard to the *yasa*.¹⁰⁵ However, Ayalon showed that this material was taken – unacknowledged – from al-'Umarī's *Masālik al-aḥṣār* (who in turn borrowed from Juwaynī's Persian-language history of Chinggis Khan), with al-Maqrīzī changing some of the evidence for his own purposes.¹⁰⁶
- Al-'Aynī (d. 1451) was a well-known scholar and official and an associate of several Mamluk sultans. His *'Iqd al-jumān fī ta'rīkh ahl al-zamān* (The Necklace of Pearls about the History of the People of [This] Time) is a comprehensive account of the Mamluk era until his lifetime. Most of the volumes relating to the early sultanate (and thus parallel to the Ilkhanate and other Mongol successor states) have been published in

101 Ashtor 1961, 13–24. Cf. Little 1998, 433; Cahen 1971b; Northrup 1998. Unique information from an eyewitness about Hülegü's occupation of Syria in 1260 and the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt is found in Ibn al-Furāt, MS Vatican, and was edited in Levi della Vida 1935; and translated to English in Lewis 1974, 1: 89–96.

102 Al-Maqrīzī 1934–1973.

103 Quatremère 1837–1845. There is also a translation of the Ayyūbid dynasty, of uneven quality; Broadhurst 1980. For his account of the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt: Lewis 1974, 1: 84–89.

104 Amitai 2003; Little 1998, 436–38.

105 al-Maqrīzī 1853–1854. This edition was until recently the only complete one readily available, but now there are several proper editions, e.g., al-Maqrīzī 2002–2003.

106 Ayalon 1971–1973; Bauden forthcoming.

a good edition.¹⁰⁷ Al-ʿAynī, also a Turkish-speaker, was careful to cite most of his sources; the majority of these are known (Baybars al-Manṣūrī, al-Nuwayrī, and so on), but here and there we find information not found elsewhere (such as the story of the Öljeitü's war in Gīlān and the death of his general Qutlugh-shāh in 1305–1306).¹⁰⁸

- Ibn Taghrī Birdī (d. 1470) was the son of an important Mamluk officer, and thus familiar with the Mamluk regime and its elite's culture. The author of two important chronicles (of which only one is relevant here) and a biographical dictionary, he incorporated evidence from earlier writers (who are often named), including material no longer available (such as the first part of the biography of Baybars by Ibn Shaddād al-Ḥalabī). His important chronicle is *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk miṣr wa'l-qāhira* (The Shining Stars Regarding the Kings of Fuṣṭāṭ and Cairo), which reaches back until early Islamic times in Egypt, and runs up to his own era.¹⁰⁹ The work is organized around the reign of each sultan, about whom there is a biographical summary, along with a yearly rendition of events. This is indispensable for the early Mamluk relations with the Mongols, but also contains further information about the latter. Ibn Taghrī Birdī's biographical dictionary, *al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa'l-mustawfī ba'd al-wāfi* (The Clear Pool and the Completion of the Wafi), referring to al-Ṣafadī's dictionary, also contains biographies of various Mongol rulers (not just Ilkhans) and officers.¹¹⁰

We will mention briefly some other biographical collections. The Christian Ibn al-Ṣuqā'ī (d. 1326), *Tālī kitāb wafāyāt al-a'yān* (Follow-Up to the Book *Wafāyāt al-a'yān*) is a short compendium.¹¹¹ This work's small size belies its importance as a source for the Mongols in Syria and nearby regions (the early history of Mosul under the Mongols, relations of the last Ayyūbid sultan of Syria with Hülegü, and so on). A more substantial biographical dictionary is by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 1449). His *al-Durar al-kāmina fī al-a'yān al-mi'a al-thāmina* (The Hidden Pearls Regarding the Notables of the Eighth [hiḡrī] Century) supplements al-Ṣafadī's works noted above,¹¹² also with regard to the Mongols. This, in turn, was followed the following century by

107 Al-ʿAynī 1987–2009, deals with the years 648–712/1250–1312.

108 Little 1968, 80–81; Little 1998, 437–38. 109 Ibn Taghrī Birdī 1930–1972.

110 Ibn Taghrī Birdī 2008–2011 (e.g., the biography of Tegüder Aḡmad at 2: 254–56, or the long entry on Toqtamish, khan of the Golden Horde, at 4: 75–80); a useful summary translation of this work was published by Wiet (Ibn Taghrī Birdī 1932). For the author: Little 1998, 438–40.

111 Ibn al-Ṣuqā'ī 1974, including Arabic text and French translation. See Ibn Khallikān 1977.

112 Ibn Ḥajar 1929–1932; Ibn Ḥajar 1966. Ibn Ḥajar was a prolific and important scholar: Little 1998, 442; Rosenthal 1971c.

al-Sakhāwī (d. 1497) in his *al-Daw' al-lāmi' li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi'* (The Brilliant Light on the People of the Ninth [hijrī] Century), who has material on scholars in the Golden Horde and the Chaghadaid realm.¹¹³ We should also note the *ṭabaqāt* (“generations,” in the sense of one generation after another) literature of the Mamluk Sultanate, which unlike the “regular” Mamluk biographies mentioned above were devoted to scholars of one particular legal school. These are of great value for biographies of scholars in the Ilkhanate, and even in the Chaghadaid Khanate and the Golden Horde.¹¹⁴ Of special interest is the work by Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 1368), *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'iyya* (The Shāfi'ī Generations). While stretching back centuries, it has also detailed, though highly constructed, descriptions of Chinggis Khan's invasion and the fall of Baghdad.¹¹⁵ *Ta'rikh 'ulamā' baghdād* (History of the Baghdadi Scholars) by Ibn Rāfi' al-Sullāmī (d. 1372), known also as *Muntakhab al-mukhtār* (The Selected Choices), includes plenty of information on scholars who were active in Ilkhanid Iran.¹¹⁶

External Arabic Sources from outside the Mamluk Sultanate

A special place among Arabic sources is reserved for the travelogue of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 1368–1369 or 1377), “the Marco Polo of the Muslim world.” In 1324, he left his hometown, Tangier, to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca. This turned out to be the beginning of some thirty years of travel, leading him around most of the then-known world, including, so he claims, the entire Middle East, the Qipchaq steppe, Afghanistan, Central Asia, India, China, Southeast Asia, Africa, and Southern Europe, a greater distance than any other medieval traveler had covered. After returning to Morocco, he recorded his travels for the local sultan, aided by a commissioned secretary – and storyteller – named Ibn Juzayy. The resulting travelogue, known as *Rihlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭa* (The Journey of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa), written in a vivid personal style, acquired immediate popularity. It includes accounts of the places Ibn Baṭṭūṭa had visited and his adventures there, supplemented by notes that reflect his major fields of interest: saintly men and their tombs, rulers, women, and food. While the credibility of various parts of his work has been questioned, and he could cite previous writers without acknowledging them,¹¹⁷ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa is the only source that offers personal impressions of

113 al-Sakhāwī 1934–1936; for his many works on various subjects: Petry 1995.

114 Ibn Rajab 1997; al-Qurashī 1993; Biran 2016a.

115 Al-Subkī 1964, 1: 329–45, 8: 261–77; for al-Subkī's work: Schacht and Bosworth 1997.

116 Ibn Rāfi' 1938, which is a better edition than Ibn Rāfi' 2000.

117 The best example is Elad 1987. On Ibn Battuta: Dunn 2008; Harvey 2007; Waines 2010; for Ibn Battuta and the Mongols: Morgan 2001.

the four Mongol khanates towards the mid-fourteenth century, a time in which good internal sources are less available. Of special importance are his descriptions of meeting the Chaghadaid khan Tarmashirin (r. 1331–1334); information on Chaghadaid administration and on the religious, economic, and political situation in this poorly documented polity; his record of the capital, court, and harem of Özbek Khan of the Golden Horde (r. 1313–1341); and his account of the seasonal migration of Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd's camp from Baghdad to Tabriz. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's description of Yuan China is more problematic – he relates a funeral of a Great Khan that did not take place at the time when he allegedly visited the land (1346–1347). Yet while his record of north China is questionable, the account of the Muslim life in the coastal cities of south China is invaluable.

Unlike Marco Polo or other Western travelers, who described the Mongol lands as a new and unfamiliar world, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa traveled mostly in *Dār al-Islām*, finding a living as a Muslim judge whenever the need arose. His book, therefore, provides important evidence for the huge expansion of Islam during the Mongol era, and the daily lives of Muslims in Mongol Eurasia. This is by far one of the most accessible, entertaining, and important Arabic sources on the Mongols.¹¹⁸

Significant for understanding the Mongol part in the Indian Ocean trade and its cultural ramifications are the sources originating in Rasūlid Yemen (626–858/1229–1454). The Turkish Rasūlid dynasty, serving first the ʿAbbasids and then the Ayyūbids before emerging as an independent power, was famous for the robust international commerce centered at Aden and its intellectual splendor. Of special importance for Mongol history is the *Daftar al-Muẓaffariya* (also known as the *Nūr al-maʿārif fī nuẓūm wa-qawānīn wa-aʿrāf yaman* ('The Light of Information on Yemeni Rules and Costumes')), dedicated to the Rasūlid sultan al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Yūsuf (r. 1249–1295). This bulky collection of archival documents – including detailed lists of merchandise, prices, and measures, as well as gifts brought to the sultans – is a mine of information for the Indian ocean trade at the end of the thirteenth century, attesting, for example, to the selling of Arabian horses for Chinese goods, via India.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ The standard scholarly edition is still *Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1874–1879*, which includes a French translation; this served as the basis for the excellent full English translation by Gibb and Beckingham (Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb). The journey to Central Asia was also translated separately (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, 1999). Numerous editions of the Arabic have appeared. For Chinese translation: *Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1985*; Persian, Turkish and German translations are also available.

¹¹⁹ *Nūr al-maʿārif 2003–2005*; *Vallet 2010*, 70–72 and there 49–112 for Rasūlid historiography; *Yokkaichi 2008*; *Yokkaichi 2019*.

The most significant work of Rasūlid Yemen, now available in a masterful English translation, is the so-called *King's Dictionary* or *Rasūlid Hexaglot*, a six-language vocabulary that includes word lists in Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Mongol, Greek, and Armenian, the major political and cultural tongues of West Asia and the eastern Mediterranean. Composed in the 1360s by the learned Rasūlid sultan al-Malik al-Afḍal al-‘Abbās (r. 1363–1377), the vocabulary, which begins with the name of God (Allāh, translated as *Tengri* in Mongolian and Turkic), is arranged according to various fields (Heaven and Earth, the human body, kinship terms, time and seasons, geography, textiles, plants, food and drink, animals, colors, weapons, numbers, and so on). It is a dramatic expression of the linguistic cosmopolitanism of the era, following the Chinggisids' encouragement of multilingual knowledge, attesting also to the broadening of the horizons of contemporary Arabic-speakers. The first Arabic reference to chopsticks is a good example.¹²⁰

Internal Sources

While less ample than the external sources, the Arabic sources written inside the Mongol Empire are also highly valuable and far from fully utilized. Most of them originated in the Ilkhanate, while others were compiled in the Chaghadaid realm, and inscriptions exist even in Yuan China. They are reviewed below regionally.

The Ilkhanate

The most important internal Arabic sources derive from the Ilkhanate, and more specifically Iraq, where Arabic remained the first language. Most of the surviving relevant literary works were composed in Baghdad, the former ‘Abbasid capital, which, contrary to the previous accepted scholarly view, retained a considerable cultural vitality under Mongol rule, not least since nearby was one of the Ilkhanids' winter pastures.¹²¹

Among the literary works produced in Baghdad, the biographical dictionary of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī (d. 1323) is by far the most illuminating. Born in Baghdad, he was captured by the Mongols in 1258 and sent to Azerbaijan. In 1261–1262 Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, the famous polymath and Hülegü's adviser, released this young scholar, appointing him the librarian of the Maragha Observatory. After nearly twenty years in this office, in 1279–1280 Ibn al-Fuwaṭī returned to

¹²⁰ Golden 2000, chopsticks at 112; also: the introductory essays of Golden and Allsen, this volume; Varisco and Smith 1998.

¹²¹ Biran 2016b; Biran 2019a.

his hometown at the request of ‘Aṭā Malik Juwaynī, the renowned historian and Mongol governor in Baghdad. He was employed in Baghdad’s leading library, that of the Mustanṣiriyya College, for some twenty-five years, at least until 704/1304, when he began his travels between Azerbaijan and Baghdad, spending time in Rashīd al-Dīn’s quarter at Tabriz. After the latter’s execution (1318), Ibn al-Fuwaṭī returned to Baghdad, remaining there until his death in 1323.¹²² Famed as a polymath, well versed in sciences and religion, Ibn al-Fuwaṭī was especially known for his calligraphy and historical expertise. His only surviving work, the biographical dictionary *Talkhīṣ majma‘ al-ādāb fī mu‘jam al-alqāb* (Abridgement of the Collected Literatures in regard to the Dictionary of Nicknames), is indeed arranged by nicknames or honorific titles (*laqabs*, mainly in the form of Kamāl al-Dīn, ‘Izz al-Dīn, and so on). The book includes quite a few non-Muslims – including rulers, officials, and scholars with Turco-Mongolian names, as well as Jews and Christians – while situating the Mongols and others within an Arabic-Islamic classification system. Even though the work survived only in an abbreviated and fragmentary form,¹²³ it is of tremendous historical value. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī had access to the best libraries of his time and personally knew many of the people – jurists, officials, Sufis, astronomers, painters, merchants, and others – included in his dictionary. The book is a treasure mine for the Ilkhanate’s social, cultural, and intellectual history, documenting the Ilkhanate’s cosmopolitan atmosphere and various cultural encounters between Mongols and Muslims. It also contains important information on other Mongol states, especially the Chaghadaid Khanate, as well as entries on Chinggis Khan and some of his ministers.¹²⁴

Another major Iraqi work, previously ascribed to Ibn al-Fuwaṭī but now considered anonymous, is *al-Ḥawāḍith al-jāmi‘a wa’l-tajārūb al-nāfi‘a al-wāqi‘a fī al-mī‘a al-sābi‘a* (The Collected Events and Useful Experiences That Occurred in the Seventh [hijrī] Century) or *Kitāb al-Ḥawāḍith* (The Book of Events).¹²⁵ This is a local chronicle of Iraq; its surviving portion covering the years AH 626–700 (1228–1301). The book includes a detailed account of the

122 On Ibn al-Fuwaṭī: Rosenthal 1971b; Melville 1997; Shabībī 1950; Marūf 1965, 2: 109 ff.; DeWeese 2006.

123 The surviving part includes only the letters ‘ayn through mīm. It is available in a six-volume edition, including index (Tehran, 1995); an earlier edition (Damascus 1962–1965) includes only the part of ‘ayn through qāf.

124 DeWeese 2006 for various impressive examples.

125 A work with this title is ascribed to Ibn al-Fuwaṭī by several Mamluk authors (e.g., Ibn Rajab 1997, 4: 447–53). Iraqi scholars who in the early twentieth century found the manuscript of the Baghdadi chronicle, the first pages of which were missing, decided that it was Ibn al-Fuwaṭī’s work, partly due to its very detailed description of

Mongol conquest of Baghdad, now available also in English translation,¹²⁶ as well as unique information on Iraq's administration under Ilkhanid rule, its notables, and Mongol–Mamluk relations.

Also originating in Iraq is *Kitāb al-fakhrī*, a highly readable mirror for princes compiled by Ibn Ṭabāṭabā, known as Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā (“the rapid speaker”) for Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Isā ibn Ibrāhīm, the governor of Mosul, in whose realm the author was detained by snow in 1302 on his way from Baghdad to Tabriz. Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā was a Shī‘ī, head of the ‘Alīds in Iraq, who traveled often between Iraq and Azerbaijan. His book deals with statecraft and government in general, bringing examples and anecdotes from various Islamic dynasties up to the late ‘Abbasids. It contains the legal opinion (*fatwā*) that Hülegü received in Baghdad from the Shī‘ī Ibn Tāwūs, according to which a just but infidel ruler is better than an unjust Muslim, as well as intriguing anecdotes on the last ‘Abbasid caliph and Ghazan’s visit in the Mustanşiriyya College.¹²⁷ The book was translated (rather freely) into Persian around 1324, and there are modern translations and several editions.¹²⁸

Another genre of the “Baghdadi school” was general histories devoted to the caliphate, beginning either with the Creation of the world or with the rise of Islam, but focusing on the ‘Abbasids. Most of these are relevant mainly for the conquest of Baghdad,¹²⁹ but *Mukhtaṣar akhbār al-khulafā’* (Abridgement of the History of Caliphs), ascribed to Ibn al-Sā‘ī (d. 1276), is worth mentioning. Ibn Sā‘ī, a prolific Baghdadi historian and librarian, active under both the ‘Abbasids and the Ilkhanids, was famous mostly for his works on the ‘Abbasid caliphs.¹³⁰ Already Rosenthal had doubted the authority of *Mukhtaṣar akhbār al-khulafā’*.¹³¹ While the book’s last page gives the year 666/1267–1268 as the date of its completion, the immediately preceding part refers to the post-Ilkhanid Chobanids (1335–1357) and Sarbadarids (1337–1381), who rose to power long after Ibn al-Sā‘ī’s demise. Apart from an especially gory description of

al-Mustanşiriyya library. The manuscript’s various editors have doubted or refuted this authorship without, however, suggesting an alternative.

126 Gilli-Elewy 2011.

127 Rosenthal 1971e; Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā 1895, 21, 43–44, 65; Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā 1947, 1977, 1990, 14–15, 29–30, 43.

128 The Persian translation of Hindūshāh ibn Sanjar (fl. 1324) is known as *Tajārūb al-salaf* (The Experiences of Ancient Generations); Hindūshāh 1978; Bosworth 2003. For English translation: Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā 1947, 1977, 1990; for French: Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā 1910; for a modern Persian translation of the Arabic work: Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā 1989. The standard Arabic edition is Paris 1895 (with good index), but there are various recent Middle Eastern editions.

129 E.g. al-Kāzarūnī 1970.

130 Rosenthal 1971d and see there for his extant works; Ma‘rūf 1965, 2: 74–78.

131 Rosenthal, 1971d.

the fall of Baghdad, the book also includes a unique record of Hülegü's alleged conversion, which is illuminating for understanding the Mongols' place in the post-Ilkhanid collective memory.¹³²

Many of the other literary works produced in Mongol-ruled Iraq – dealing with theology, hagiography, geography, or music, to name just a few subjects – include various details relevant for Ilkhanid history, be it intellectual, cultural, or even political history.¹³³

Among later Iraqi chronicles, *al-Ta'riḫ al-ghiyāthī* (The Ghiyāthī History) deserves mention. Compiled by 'Abdallāh ibn Faṭḥallāh al-Baghdādī, known as Ghiyāth al-Dīn, who lived in Iraq at the end of the fifteenth century (he was alive in 1489), the book is of greater importance for the post-Ilkhanid period. While the author claims that his telling of what happened “from the time of Adam to that of [the last Ilkhan] Abū Sa'īd” is taken from (the Persian) *Nizām al-tawāriḫ* of Bayḍāwī (d. 1287), his rather laconic description of the late Ilkhanate is of value and includes quite a few local Iraqi details.¹³⁴

Another important Ilkhanid work is *Ta'riḫ mukhtaṣar al-duwal* (The Abridged History of Dynasties), an Arabic rendering of the universal Syriac history *The Chronography* by Gregory Bar Hebraeus (1226–1286), known in Arabic as Ibn al-'Ibrī, a Jacobite prelate and polymath. From 1264, Bar Hebraeus served as Catholicos of the Jacobite Church. Based in Mosul but spending much of his time in Tabriz and Maragha, he enjoyed great prestige among local Muslim scholars.¹³⁵ The Arabic version of his history, which he prepared allegedly due to the request of his Muslim readers, is shorter than the original Syriac work, and omits most of the information about Christians (and Jews) included in the original. Yet it contains details unavailable in the Syrian version, notably Mamluk–Ilkhanid diplomatic correspondence. These letters were probably copied by Bar Hebraeus from the Maragha library, which he mentioned as his main source of information, and are the earliest versions of these letters in any available source.¹³⁶

Rashīd al-Dīn (1247–1318), the famous historian and chief minister of Ilkhanid Iran, took special care that all his Persian works would be translated into Arabic and disseminated among the Ilkhanate's Arabic-speaking cities. Indeed, several Arabic copies of parts of his magnum opus *Jāmi' al-Tawāriḫ* (The Collection of Histories) survived,¹³⁷ and some of his theological works

132 Ibn al-Sā'ī (pseud.), 1891–1892, 136–42; Biran 2016a.

133 E.g. Ibn Tāwūs 1996; al-Wāsitī 1887; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥaqq 1954–1955.

134 Al-'Azzawī 1935, 2: 10–12; Ghiyāth al-Dīn 1975.

135 Bar Hebraeus 1932; Ibn al-'Ibrī 1992. 136 Aigle 2014a, 66–88.

137 The Khalili illustrated manuscript is reproduced in Blair 1995.

currently exist only in Arabic version.¹³⁸ In the multilingual Ilkhanid environment, many other polymaths dealing with science and religion wrote in both Arabic and Persian, and translations between these two languages were common.¹³⁹

An additional kind of Arabic source is endowment (*waqf*) documents. These *waqfs*, respected by the Mongols, funded many of the religious institutions such as colleges and Sufi lodges and served as a popular form of tax exemption in Mongol Eurasia (and elsewhere). While part of Ilkhanid *waqfs* were written in Persian – the notable example is Rashīd al-Dīn's *waqf* of his Tabrizi quarter – prominent Arabic documents include the Anatolian *waqf* of Nūr al-Dīn ibn Jājā (fl. 1274), a wealthy Seljuq governor and military commander of Kirshehir (today Kırşehir, Turkey). The *waqf* survived as a group of two (possibly three) originals and one partial copy. Two of the manuscripts include also a shorter part in Mongolian, written in Uighur script, and serving mainly as an oath to secure the *waqf*'s fulfilment. One manuscript includes a list of more than 100 witnesses, most of them Mongols, a record that enables the reconstruction of Mongol commanders in Anatolia. The detailed description of the places and institutions that enjoyed the fruits of the endowment or provided revenues for its support include important insights into Anatolia's economy and education under the Rūm Seljuqs and the Ilkhans.¹⁴⁰

Finally, we should note the existence of some Arabic inscriptions from the Ilkhanate, dating mostly from its Muslim period (after 1295). Many of these can be easily accessed from Volumes 13–15 of the *Répertoire chronologique de l'épigraphie arabe*.¹⁴¹ These inscriptions contain titles employed by the Ilkhans and some of their vassal rulers, thereby showing how they represented themselves to their subjects.

Mongol Central Asia

Arabic sources produced inside and outside the Chaghadaid Khanate are of crucial importance for this poorly documented polity. First among them is Jamāl Qarshī's work, *al-Mulḥaqāt bi l-ṣurāḥ* (Supplement to the *Ṣurāḥ* [Commentary]),

138 Rashīd al-Dīn, MS Paris (and other MSS; see [Van Ess 1981](#); [Krawulsky 2011](#), 77–86). Judith Pfeiffer recently edited a facsimile edition of a 711/1311 manuscript of *Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq* (Elucidation of the Truth), a work dealing with various topics that were often discussed in the court debates, from the position of the sultan to smallpox ([Rashīd al-Dīn 2016](#)).

139 Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī are prominent examples of scholars writing in both languages.

140 [Temir 1959](#), who edited all the existing manuscripts and added an extensive commentary in Turkish; [Pfeiffer 2013](#).

141 Combe, Sauvaget, and Wiet, 1931–1991, vols. 13–15.

written in Kashgar in the first years of the fourteenth century independently of the Mongol court. Jamāl Qarshī, a courtier serving the vassal Muslim dynasty of Almaliq who traveled widely in Eastern Turkestan, wrote the work as an appendix to his Persian commentary (*surāḥ*) to the popular lexicon of al-Jawharī (d. c. 1006–1010),¹⁴² which Qarshī had translated from Arabic into Persian. The *Supplement* contains historical information on Islamic and Central Asian dynasties, including the Chaghadaid and Ögödeid Mongols, together with biographical references to prominent Central Asian shaykhs and scholars, and descriptions of various cities in Eastern Turkestan. As the only surviving quasi-historical work compiled in Mongol Central Asia, the book is of special importance for the history of Qaidu (r. 1270–1303) and for the Chaghadaid Khanate, both usually portrayed only through the hostile Toluid lens. The recently published full edition of Qarshī's work is also valuable for the intellectual and social history of Mongol Central Asia, stressing, for example, the role of Greek knowledge and the high position of women in this realm.¹⁴³

Two Bukharan *waqf* documents from 1299 and 1326 provide important details on the city's economic life under Chaghadaid rule. The 1299 deed documents a local commander's purchase of a village in the Bukharan suburbs, providing data on the commander's wealth and its uses.¹⁴⁴ The 1326 endowment belongs to the mausoleum complex of Sayf al-Dīn Bākhārzi (d. 1261), the Sufi shaykh who converted Berke Khan to Islam. It demonstrates the wealth of Bukhara's Kubrawiyya order, *pace* the various references to the city's ruins, and the buying and manumission (and conversion) of Mongolian, Chinese, and Indian slaves by the local shaykhs.¹⁴⁵ The few Samarqandi inscriptions of the period also add to our understanding of the lesser-known polity.¹⁴⁶ The various works – mainly in manuscript – of religious and scientific literature of the period still await systematic study.

The last kind of internal source is the Muslim, mostly Arabic, inscriptions of Quanzhou, Yuan China's busy port and its gate for the Indian Ocean trade.

142 *Tāj al-luḡha wa-ṣiḥāḥ al-ʿarabiyya* (The Crown of the Language and the Authentic Arabic).

143 Jackson 1981; Barthold 1977, 51–52. Until recently, this work was only available as excerpts in the source volume of Barthold's *Turkestan* (Qarshī 1900, 128–152). The recent full edition (Qarshī 2005), including printed text, facsimile, and Russian translation, is by far the best; Qarshī 2006 contains the (challenging) facsimile and a partial Russian translation; for a reliable Chinese translation of Barthold's excerpts: Qarshī 1986–1987.

144 Chekhovich 1965, including Russian translation and commentary; Biran 1997, 81–82.

145 Chekhovich 1965, esp. 109, 40, 41, 42, 94, including Russian translation and commentary.

146 Dodkhudoeva 1992.

Collected by Chen Dasheng, and translated to English, these nearly 100 inscriptions are mostly epitaphs, attesting to the origin and professions of the local Muslim migrants, their contacts with their Chinese environment, and their role in the cosmopolitan city.¹⁴⁷

We trust that this survey, which by nature could not include all relevant works or detailed discussions, will be of interest to all scholars of the Mongol Empire, even those who do not know Arabic. This is not only because some of these works are available in translation, but also since the scope and depth of Arabic writing on the Mongols is another indication of the great impact of their empire on the peoples of Eurasia and beyond.

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Rus'ian-Language Sources

DONALD OSTROWSKI

Introduction

Those Rus'ian-language sources that have testimony regarding the part of the Mongol Empire known to them can be divided into three broad genre categories:¹ chronicles, tales and saints' lives, and documents.² These sources provide evidence regarding the Jochid Ulus, which is the subject of this essay, and its successor khanates – the Crimean khanate, the khanate of Kazan, the khanate of Astrakhan', and the khanate of Sibir' – which will not be discussed here. In using these sources for evidence about the Mongol Empire, the researcher needs to be aware of the characteristics of these sources and the attitudes of their writers toward the Mongols, whom they usually call "Tatars." Rashīd al-Dīn tells us that prior to the rise of the Mongols, as a result "of the glory, might, and respect they [the Tatars] commanded, other types of Turks, in all their variety and names, made themselves known by their name, and all were called Tatar." Furthermore, "they considered it an honor to call themselves Tatar." He goes on to say that "all Turkic peoples are still called 'Tatar' in the realms of Cathay, Hindustan, Chin and Machin, the lands of the Qirqiz, Kilar-Bashghurd, the Qipchaq Steppe, the territories of the north, the Arab peoples of Syria, Egypt, and North Africa."³ If they did

1 The languages of these sources are Church Slavonic and simple Rus'ian (*prosta mova*), depending on the source. At times, pockets of Church Slavonic text appear in a matrix of Rus'ian, like raisins in a bun, in a single source, such as the Rus' chronicles. These occurrences can represent either borrowing from a text written in Church Slavonic or from a translation of a Bible text, such as the Psalter. Technically, the *prosta mova* is neither Russian, Ukrainian, nor Belarussian, but an antecedent language that bears similarities to these later modern languages, but for most modern readers will require translation.

2 A fourth type of written primary source, inscriptions, I do not discuss here because I do not know of any inscriptions in Rus'ian about the Mongol Empire.

3 *JT/Thackston*, 1: 44. The similarity between the name of the prominent Tatar tribe and the Greek *Tartarus*, hell, might have contributed to the popularity of this name in Europe.

call themselves “Tatar,” then it would solve what Istvan Vásáry called a “historical puzzle” of why the Rus’ came to call the peoples of the western steppe “Tatars.”⁴

In any case, it may not be entirely accurate to call them “Mongols” either because, it has been argued, again on the basis of Rashīd al-Dīn, that at most only about 4,000 ethnic Mongols were assigned by Chinggis Khan to Jochi for the expedition.⁵ That number has recently been challenged by R. P. Khrapachevskii, who claims that 60,000 to 70,000 Mongols became part of the Jochid Ulus.⁶ We do not know what the number was, but apparently it was not too large for them to be completely assimilated ethnically and linguistically with the general indigenous population within two to three generations. The bulk of the Ulus of Jochi was made up of Qipchaqs (Cumans, Polovtsy), but there were also Alans, Qangli, Circassians, and other peoples among them. I follow Vásáry’s practice of using “the label *Tatar* . . . as a political term, without any [intended] ethnic connotation.”⁷ For this chapter, I use the term “Mongols” for the army led by Sübedei and Jebe into the western steppe in 1223 and the army led by Batu and Sübedei that conquered Rus’ from 1237 to 1240. I use the term “Mongol–Tatars” for the armies of the Ulus of Jochi of the later thirteenth century to indicate the time during which the Mongol elite was being ethnically assimilated into the indigenous Qipchaq population. I use the term “Tatars” for those in the Ulus of Jochi after c. 1300.

The Rus’ian sources provide testimony with regard to the *orda* (horde), not the Mongol Empire as a whole. For them, the *orda* was the Ulus of Jochi, to which the descriptive term “Qipchaq khanate” has been used by later historians. No source contemporary to its existence refers to the Ulus of Jochi as “Golden Horde,” which in that context is a meaningless term.⁸

Rus’ sources from the first encounter of the Rus’ with the Mongols in 1223, through to the seventeenth century and relations with the Ulus of Jochi and its successor khanates, can be divided into three chronological phases: 1223–1252, 1252–1448, and post-1448. Those written during the first phase, 1223–1252, initially express bewilderment concerning who the Mongols were and simply explained their presence as God’s punishment for the sins of the Rus’. When

4 For a discussion of this “historical puzzle”: Vásáry 2005, 9–12; cf. Halperin 2014, 144, where he argues that calling the Mongols Tatars “was an echo of the Rus’ ambivalence about admitting that the Mongols had conquered Rus’.” Presumably, in Halperin’s view, it was acceptable for the Rus’ that the Tatars had done so.

5 *JT*/Thackston, 2: 279. 6 Khrapachevskii 2008, 84–88. 7 Vásáry 2005, 10.

8 Ostrowski 2004, 571–72; Halperin 2011, 58–59.

the Mongols returned, though, Rus' writers began to disparage the Mongols and their Tatar subjects. In contrast, in sources that were written between 1252 and 1448, the Tatars are presented in neutral (non-disparaging) terms. This change in attitude most likely represents the compliance of the Rus' church prelates with Byzantine diplomatic rapprochement with the Mongols of the Ulus of Jochi in 1252.⁹ The 1448 date is significant because it represents the year the Moscow grand prince, without seeking the approval of the Patriarch in Constantinople, as all Rus' rulers had done until then, appointed a metropolitan for the Rus' Church nominated by the Rus' bishops. From then on, all Rus' metropolitans were appointed by the Muscovite ruler without seeking approval from Constantinople. Within five years, Constantinople had fallen to the Ottoman Turks, but for a number of years before that, communication between Moscow and Constantinople was effectively cut off. The revival in the sources of the pre-1252 disparagement of the Tatars most likely resulted from the newly established autocephalic status of the Rus' Church.

Chronicles

The usual English translation for the genre called in Russian *letopisi* and in Ukrainian *litopysi* (lit. "yearly writings") is *chronicles*, but annals can also be used.¹⁰ These chronicles were written mostly by monks in monasteries.

Alan Timberlake discussed four levels of work in the creation of a chronicle.¹¹ At the most basic level a *scribe* enters information, usually adding to an existing chronicle. At the second level, a *copyist* copies over the original chronicle, which may have entries added by different scribes. At this stage in the development of a chronicle, one can liken the yearly entries to beads on a string. At the next level, a *compiler* may combine different annal entries and/or different works – such as documents, saints' lives, tales, eyewitness accounts, and so forth – with the chronicle to create a compilation (*svod*). To continue the metaphor the beads on a string have been put on another string and/or combined with larger beads in the form of other works. At the final level, a *redactor* not only edits but also reworks a chronicle or compilation. To rise to the level of a *redaction*, that reworking should represent a significant change in outlook and/or presentation. The work of the

⁹ Ostrowski 1998, 145–46.

¹⁰ For the distinction between *letopisi* as chronicles and as annals: Guimon 2021, 30–33.

¹¹ Timberlake 2001, 196–97. I have somewhat modified Timberlake's formulation to accord more with my understanding of the process.

redactor can then become part of a new compilation. The scribe and the copyist operate at the levels of writing down a text. The compiler and the redactor operate at the levels of editing and shaping yearly entries into a narrative. One person can fulfill more than one role in this process.

Thus different chronicles were combined and recombined into compilations. They present a complex web of textual borrowings, relationships, and revisions that challenge the reader to try to determine which chronicles borrowed from which other chronicles and which parts of their texts are the earliest versions and which parts are interpolations. The names given to them by scholars since the eighteenth century are arbitrary and based on various considerations. No convention has ever existed for naming the chronicles or their manuscript copies. A chronicle could be named for the library or repository in which the main copy was found (Rogozhskii, Academy, Synodal), the monastery in which it was copied (Laurentian, Hypatian, Trinity), a person who owned it (Radziwiłł, Nikon, Simeonov, Karamzin, Obolenskii), the city that the monastery was in or near (Novgorod, Moscow, Tver'), and so forth.

The Novgorod Chronicles, of which there are five types, are not city chronicles; they have in common only having been compiled and copied in monasteries in or near Novgorod. The Synodal copy of the Novgorod First Chronicle was found in the Moscow Synodal Library. Pskov Chronicles were compiled in monasteries in or near Pskov. Likewise, the Moscow Chronicles were compiled in monasteries in or near Moscow. The Trinity Chronicle was found by the Russian historian Nikolai M. Karamzin (1766–1826) in the Trinity St. Sergius Lavra some seventy kilometers northeast of Moscow.

The dating system of years within the chronicles was the same as the Rus' dating system, which in turn was based on the Byzantine dating system. It counted from the beginning of creation, 5509 BCE, instead of from the birth of Christ. The year does not begin on January 1 but on September 1. So, for four months of the year, September through December, one needs to subtract 5509 from the year date in the chronicle. From January through August, one subtracts 5508. Thus a date of August 31, 6758, would mean that the event occurred in 1250 in the Julian calendar, but a date of September 1, 6758, would mean that the event occurred in 1249 in the Julian calendar. Some chronicles, however, adopted a date of March 1 for the beginning of the new year, in which case for those chronicles both August 31 and September 1 of 6758 would occur in 1250. One more wrinkle is that a few chronicles used an "ultra-March" system (i.e., the March of a year earlier), in which case one subtracts 5509 for the months of January and February and 5508 for the months of

March through December. Thus January 1 of 6758 would occur in 1249.¹² When no month is indicated in the source, then the equivalent year in the Anno Domini system is indicated with a slash: 1249/50.

Most, but not all, Rus' chronicles have been published in the series *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* (Complete Collection of Rus' Chronicles) (hereafter PSRL), which began publication in 1841 with Volume 3, the Novgorod Chronicles. It included poorly edited versions of the Novgorod First, Second, and Third chronicles, as well as additional fragments associated with the Novgorod Second and Third chronicles. In the year 2000, the publishing house Iazyki Russkoi kul'tury (Languages of Russian Culture), as part of an attempt to update, improve, and complete the PSRL series, issued as Volume 3 a reprint of the Soviet historian Arsenii N. Nasonov's *Novgorodskaia Pervaiia letopis' starshego i mladshego izvodov* (Novgorod First Chronicle of the Older and Younger Recensions), which had been published outside the PSRL series in 1950. It included the Older Recension and Younger Recension of the Novgorod First Chronicle.¹³ The Older Recension consists of the Synodal copy, which is missing a substantial part of its opening folios. It covers from the end of the entry for 1016 to an entry for 1352. The Younger Recension is presented with the Commission copy as the copy text and the Academy and Tolstoi copies as control texts. After a brief introduction about the beginning of the Rus' land, its entries begin with 854 and continue through to 1446.

In order to use PSRL, one should be at least somewhat familiar with the publication history of the chronicles one is using. The principles of the texts' publication changed over the years. Hence, and due to the fact that a number of the first editions of each chronicle had numerous errors and typos, as well as intentional exclusions, second (and sometimes third) editions appeared. In some cases, however, when a volume has two publication dates (an earlier and a later one), the later publication is merely a reprint of the earlier one. The publication of PSRL continued in 1843 with the second volume, the Hypatian Chronicle, and included with it a truncated version of the Hustyn (Gustin) Chronicle.¹⁴ The Hypatian Chronicle, the earliest copy of which

¹² On the March, Ultra-March, and September chronologies: Berezkhov 1963. For "A Note on the Reckoning of Time in Early Rus": Guimon 2021, 399–404.

¹³ *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei* 1843–2007 (hereafter PSRL), 3: 15–100 (Older Recension), 103–427 (Younger Recension). For an English translation of the Novgorod First Chronicle: Michell and Forbes 1914. From the middle of the entry for 1016 to the middle of the entry for 1333, the translation is based on the Older Recension. From then (1333) through 1446, it is based on the Younger Recension.

¹⁴ PSRL, 2: 1–227 (Hypatian), 233–373 (Hustyn (truncated)). The complete Hustyn Chronicle has recently been published in a new edition outside the PSRL series: Tolochko 2013.

dates to around 1425, begins with the *Tale of Bygone Years* (*Povest' vremennykh let*, hereafter *PVL*), which is the foundation chronicle for Rus' history from the biblical Flood to *sub anno* (hereafter s.a.) 1117.¹⁵ The Hypatian Chronicle then continues coverage to the year 1292, with the part from 1118 through 1200 called the Kievan Chronicle and the part from 1201 through 1292 called the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle (GVC).¹⁶ The Hustyn Chronicle, in contrast, was compiled in the early seventeenth century and covers Rus' history from the Flood to 1596. The 1843 publication of Volume 2 of *PSRL* was superseded by a second edition in 1908 edited by the noted Russian philologist A. A. Shakhmatov (1864–1920).¹⁷ That second edition excluded the truncated Hustyn Chronicle. In 1923, a third edition of part 1 of Volume 2 appeared. Nonetheless, a reprint of the second edition of 1908 came out in 1962. Thus the 1908 and 1962 editions of Volume 2 of *PSRL* can be cited reliably, as can the 1923 edition of part 1 of Volume 2, but not the 1843 edition.

Volume 1 of *PSRL* appeared in 1846 with the publication of the Laurentian Chronicle and the conclusion (from s.a. 1206 to s.a. 1415) of the “Trinity Chronicle.” This “Trinity Chronicle” is not the Trinity Chronicle that was lost in the Moscow fire of 1812. Instead, it is the Moscow Academy copy of the Suzdal' Chronicle, as is clear not only from the coincidence of the wording between the manuscript copy and the published text but also from the number – 5/182 – that the manuscript was given while in the repository of the Moscow Spiritual Academy (*Moskovskaia Dukhovnaia akademiia*), which also appears in the published version. The Moscow Academy copy of the Suzdal' Chronicle has three parts: (1) from the beginning to s.a. 1206, it coincides closely with the Radziwiłł Chronicle; (2) from s.a. 1206 to s.a. 1237, it coincides closely with the Sofia First Chronicle; and (3) from s.a. 1237 to s.a. 1415, it represents the Rostov Compilation of Archbishop Efreim (1427–1454). That section of the first part that provides testimony of the *PVL* was first published in the interlinear collation of 2003.¹⁸

In 1950, the Soviet historian Mikhail D. Priselkov (1881–1941) completed a remarkable reconstruction of the Trinity Chronicle that was burned in the 1812 fire.¹⁹ Using the typeset plates from 1812 when the Trinity Chronicle was slated to be published, Priselkov was able to publish the text up to s.a. 906.

¹⁵ Ostrowski 2003.

¹⁶ A translation of the Kievan Chronicle into English appears in Heinrich 1977, 2–496. A translation of the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle into English appears in Perfecky 1973, 17–117.

¹⁷ *PSRL*, 2: cols. 1–938. ¹⁸ Ostrowski 2003. ¹⁹ Priselkov 1950.

For the rest, he used the extensive quotations in Karamzin's twelve-volume *Istoriia Rossiiskogo gosudarstva* (History of the Russian State) along with a comparison with the Simeonov Chronicle as matrix within which to place the reconstructed parts of the Trinity Chronicle to 1408. He presented the text of the Simeonov Chronicle in normal font size, and interspersed the reconstruction of the Trinity Chronicle in larger font size. Priselkov's reconstruction was published outside the PSRL series.

A second edition of part 1 (*Povest' vremennykh let po Lavrent'evskomu spisky* (Tale of Bygone Years according to the Laurentian Copy)) of Volume 1 came out in 1926. A second edition of part 2 (*Suzdal'skaia letopis' po Lavrent'evskomu spisku* (Suzdal' Chronicle according to the Laurentian Copy)) came out in 1927, and of part 3 (*Prodolzhenie Suzdal'skoi letopisi po Akademicheskomu spisku* (Continuation of the Suzdal' Chronicle according to the Academy Copy)) in 1928. All three parts were reprinted in one volume by Iazyki Russkoi kul'tury in 1997.

In 1848 appeared the fourth volume of PSRL, titled *Novgorodskie i Pskovskie Letopisi* (Novgorod and Pskov Chronicles). It included the Novgorod Fourth Chronicle and Pskov First Chronicle.²⁰ But the editions of both chronicles were faulty. In 1915 appeared a second edition of part 1 of the Novgorod Fourth Chronicle. In 1925 appeared a second edition of part 2, and in 1929 a second edition of part 3.²¹ In 2000, Iazyki Russkoi kul'tury reprinted all three parts in a single volume as Volume 4, part 1. To date there has been no part 2 of Volume 4.²²

The Pskov First Chronicle had been published along with the Novgorod Fourth Chronicle in Volume 4 in 1848. The Pskov Second Chronicle was published with the Sofia First Chronicle in Volume 5 of PSRL in 1851. The editors were not consistent in choosing the copy text (moving somewhat arbitrarily between manuscript copies) and in representing the variant readings (mentioning only those they thought were the most significant regarding meaning). To correct that faulty text editing, a second edition of the first part of Volume 5 was issued in 1925. The second part of Volume 5 was not published at that time. Then, in 2000, Iazyki Russkoi kul'tury issued as part 2 of Volume 5 a reprint of the second volume of Nasonov's *Pskovskie letopisi* (Pskov Chronicles), which had been published outside the PSRL series in 1955, and which included the Pskov Second Chronicle, Pskov Third Chronicle, and

²⁰ PSRL, 4: 1–165 (Novgorod Fourth), 173–345 (Pskov First). ²¹ PSRL, 4: parts 1, 2, 3.

²² PSRL, 4: part 1, 1–320 (reprints part 1), 321–536 (reprints part 2), and 537–687 (reprints part 3).

fragments of related copies.²³ This volume substituted for the second part of the Sofia Chronicle that was supposed to have been published in 1925 but was not. The two volumes of Nasonov's *Pskovskie letopisi* were published fourteen years apart, in 1941 and 1955 respectively,²⁴ and were widely acknowledged to be a model of text editing. In 2003, the same company reprinted the first volume of Nasonov's *Pskovskie letopisi*, the Pskov First Chronicle, as part 1 of Volume 5, substituting it for part 1 of Volume 5 of the Sofia Chronicle published in 1925.²⁵ In 2000, the same publishing house also published a second edition of part 1 of the Sofia First Chronicle as Volume 6, part 1, of PSRL, naming it "Sofia First Chronicle: Older Recension" (*izvod*).²⁶

Volumes 7 through 14 and 16 through 43 have only one edition, although some have later reprints in the PSRL series.²⁷ The first edition of Volume 15, the Tver' Chronicle, was published in 1863. In 1922, a second edition of Volume 15 was published in two parts. Part 1 was the previously unpublished Rogozhskii Chronicle. Part 2 was a reprint of the 1863 edition of the Tver' Chronicle.

We can now make a few broad generalizations about the kinds of evidence and its approach to the Mongol-Tatars. The contents of the chronicles are heterogeneous and are included on the basis of what is important to the monk/scribes. The worldview of the monks who wrote down, copied, and redacted the chronicles was a standard medieval Christian religious one, in which contemporary events are seen as a recapitulation of archetypal events in the Bible. Events contemporary to the chronicler were viewed as either a fulfillment of God's plan for the Rus' people or a punishment for the sins they have committed.

The types of events described in the chronicles that involve the Mongol-Tatars are mainly military events, such as the first appearance of the Mongols in the western steppe in 1223, the conquest of northern Rus' towns in 1237 and 1238, their taking of Kiev in 1240, the campaigns of 1252 against Andrei Iaroslavich of Pereiaslavl'-Zaleskii and Daniil Romanovich of Galicia, military expeditions sent by the khan into Rus' territory to collect taxes and quell

23 PSRL, 5: part 2, 9–69 (Pskov Second), 70–77 (beginning of Archive 11 copy of Pskov Third), 78–250 (Stroev copy of Pskov Third), 251–90 (conclusion of the Archive 11 copy), 291–99 (a fragment of the Copenhagen Miscellany), 302–3 (written note on the last folio of the Pskov Illustrated Paleia of the fifteenth century. A *paleia* is a genre of Christian religious literature dedicated to explicating the Old Testament).

24 Nasonov 1941, 1955. 25 PSRL, 5: part 1 26 PSRL, 6: part 1, cols. 1–542.

27 Most of vols. 9–12 and the first thirty-six pages (through s.a. 1520) of PSRL 13 were translated into English in The Nikonian Chronicle 1984–1989. Zenkovsky, the translator, excluded some parts that he decided were not relevant for "Russian history." For a discussion of this practice: Ostrowski 1991, 445.

revolts, the trips of the Rus' princes to and from Sarai to pay the tribute, the battle of 1380 at Kulikovo Field between the army of Amīr Mamai and the army of Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich (Donskoi), the attack of Khan Toqtamish on Moscow in 1382, Temūr's attack on Rus' towns in 1385, and the Stand on the Ugra river in 1480 between the armies of Grand Prince Ivan III Vasil'evich (r. 1462–1505) and Khan Ahmet.²⁸

The Rus' chronicles provide little information about military confrontations among the Mongol–Tatars themselves. Nor do they provide any cultural, social, intellectual, or political information about them. There is little attempt to explain the relation of the Rus' princes to the khan. Some chronicles do report Rus' as the *ulus* of the Tatar khan. In the entry for 1348, Grand Prince Semen Ivanovich (r. 1340–1353) asks Khan Janibek for protection from Lithuania on the basis that the Rus' principalities are part of Janibek's *ulus*: "Olgerd has devastated all your *ulus* and has taken everyone with him into captivity. Now he wants to take all of us into captivity, and so your *ulus* will be devastated to the end."²⁹ The Nikon Chronicle under the entry for 1384 (6892) has Khan Toqtamish saying,

I know my *ulus* and each Rus' prince is in one of my *ulus*, which is his patrimony, and he lives as of old, and he serves me justly and I grant him accordingly. Concerning the malfeasance of my *ulusnik*, Prince Dmitrii of Moscow, I frightened him. Now he serves me justly, and I grant him in his patrimony as of old . . .³⁰

Other types of information provided include personal and geographic names. Excluded or neglected are matters of trade and institutional borrowing. The Rus' chroniclers seem uninterested in the Mongol–Tatars outside the Jochid Ulus.

In the entries from 1223, the Rus' chroniclers treated the Mongols as an unknown people who were sent to punish the Rus' for their sins. The first mention of the Mongols appears in the Laurentian, Suzdal', and Novgorod First chronicles under the year 1223. The Mongols are described as defeating the Rus' princes at the Kalka river "because of our sins."³¹ When the Mongols turned back eastward beyond the Volga river, the chroniclers reported, "we do not know from where they came and to where they went again only God

28 Lur'e 1994, 174–89. 29 PSRL, 7: 215, 10: 219, 20: part 1, 185, 23: 109, 25: 177, 28: 72, 233.

30 PSRL, 11: 84. Regarding the chroniclers' claim that Rus' was an *ulus* of the Tatar khan, Halperin argues that "all Russian declamations of fealty to the *ulus* to which they belonged, the *tsarev ulus*, must be invented fantasies, exercises in bending the truth to suit tendentious political purpose" . . . "the sources, to be blunt, lie." Halperin 1982, 261.

31 PSRL, 1: cols. 445–46, 503.

knows [Novgorod First adds: "whence he fetched them against us for our sins]." ³² These expressions indicate a genuine bafflement on the chroniclers' part concerning who the Mongols were because they did not fit into the existing Rus' worldview. The claim that the Mongols were sent to punish the Rus' for their sins is a *topos* that served to place the Mongols' existence within the context of a Christian universe. When the Mongols returned to the western steppe in 1237, the chroniclers used pejorative language about the Mongols couched in biblical terms. In descriptions of the conquests of 1237–1240, the Mongols are described as "godless," "lawless," and "accursed," but phrases like "there was no opposing the wrath of God" continue to appear. ³³

A common problem with the Rus' chronicles is that the names of Mongols and Tatars tend to be garbled. The result can be misidentification or non-identification of names given. An example is the name "Gemiabëg," which appears in the Novgorod First Chronicle with regard to the battle on the Kalka river in 1223:

And then Mstislav having forded the Dniepr went across with 1,000 men against the Tatar outposts and defeated them, and the remainder of them fled with the commander [*voevoda*] Gemiabëg to the Polovtsian burial mound [*kurgan*] and there they could not hold out, and they buried their commander [*voevoda*] Gemiabëg alive in the earth, wishing to preserve his life; and there the Polovtsian men, having begged permission of Mstislav, found him, and killed him. ³⁴

Until recently the name "Gemiabëg" has escaped identification. The historian Stephen Pow, through an examination of the sources for the Mongol general Jebe Noyan and a linguistic analysis, concluded that "Gemiabëg" should be understood to be Jebe Noyan, with "Gemia" being a linguistic corruption of "Jebe" and "bëg" being the Turkic equivalent of the Mongol title *noyan*. ³⁵

Another common problem with deriving information from the Rus' chronicles is that different chronicles provide different dates for the same event. An example of this feature is the sack of Kiev in 1240. ³⁶ Basically, the chronicles either provide no date for the sack or give two different dates (November 19 and December 6) in three forms (ecclesiastical, month–day, and both ecclesiastical and month–day). The Laurentian Chronicle, for example, provides the ecclesiastical date: *na Nikolin den'* (St. Nicholas's Day). ³⁷ The Vladimir Chronicle provides only the month–day form: *mesiatsa*

³² PSRL, 3: 61–62. ³³ PSRL, 3: 76. ³⁴ PSRL, 3: 62–63; Michell and Forbes 1914, 65.

³⁵ Pow 2016. ³⁶ For details: Maiorov 2016a, 51–59; cf. Maiorov 2016b, 481–84.

³⁷ PSRL, 1: col. 470.

dekabria v 6 den' (the month of December on the 6th day).³⁸ The Moscow Academy copy of the Suzdal' Chronicle provides both the ecclesiastical and month-day date: *dekabria 6 na pamiat' sviatogo ottsa Nikoly* (December 6 on the memorial [day] of Holy Father Nicholas).³⁹ In contrast, the chronicles associated with the Pskov Compilation of the 1460s–1470s not only have a different date, November 19, but also describe a siege of some two and a half months preceding the sack. According to Maiorov, the passage “in the most correct form is read in the Chronicle of Avraamka and the Pskov Third Chronicle”: “the Tatars came to Kiev on September 5, and stood 10 weeks and 4 days, and they took it on November 19 on a Monday” (*priidosha Tatarove k Kievu, sentiabria 5, i stoiasha 10 nedel' i 4 dni, i edva vziasha ego noiabria 19, v ponedel'nik*).⁴⁰ Despite the acceptance by a number of scholars of the November 19 date, Maiorov concluded that the December 6 date after a nine-day siege (if one accepts Rashīd al-Dīn's date for the beginning of the siege) is the more likely one on the basis of the respective descriptions in *Chronica majora* of Matthew Paris and in the letter of a Hungarian bishop to an unnamed bishop in Paris, both of which state that the Mongols waited until the Dniepr river froze so they could cross.⁴¹

A third common problem is that various chronicles provide different information for the same event. One of the more cryptic episodes described in Rus' chronicles is the Mongol–Tatar campaign to the Suzdal' land against Alexander Nevskii's brother Andrei in 1252.⁴² The problem is compounded by contradictory reporting in the sources. The chronicles and the *Life of Alexander Nevskii* treat the Tatar campaign in a variety of ways but are chary with regard to supplying crucial details. The Novgorod First Chronicle (Older Redaction) does not mention this episode at all.⁴³ The Suzdal' Chronicle (titled *Continuation of the Suzdal' Chronicle according to the Academy Copy* in PSRL) states that (the unidentified) Nevriui went against Andrei Iaroslavich and chased him beyond the sea.⁴⁴ The Laurentian Chronicle (titled *Suzdal' Chronicle according to the Laurentian Copy* in PSRL) states that Andrei “with his boyars thought to run rather than serve the khan and he fled to an unknown land with his princess and boyars.”⁴⁵ Without mentioning the name of Nevriui, the chronicle continues that the Tatars

38 PSRL, 30: 90. 39 PSRL, 1: col. 523. 40 PSRL, 16: col. 51, 5: part 2, 81.

41 Maiorov 2016a, 59; cf. Maiorov 2016b, 483–84.

42 For a detailed discussion: Ostrowski 2009, 46–64. 43 PSRL, 3: 80.

44 PSRL, 1: col. 524. The *Patriarch of Constantinople Nikifor's Short Chronicle* has the same information but uses the spelling “Nevron.” Tikhomirov 1962, 239 (fol. 575).

45 PSRL, 1: col. 473; cf. PSRL, 18: 70.

chased Andrei, went to Pereiaslavl', and fought a battle. Then "the Tatars scattered throughout the land," perhaps in search of Andrei. They killed the commander (*voevoda*), Zhidoslav, and "the princess" and took the children into captivity. They also "took numerous people as well as horses and cattle and caused much misery when they left."⁴⁶ Later (post-1448, pre-Nikon Chronicle) chronicles state that Nevriui went "against the Suzdal' land" as well.⁴⁷ To this story, the sixteenth-century Nikon Chronicle introduces, besides other anti-Tatar elements, an anti-Tatar speech that it puts in the mouth of Andrei Iaroslavich: "O Lord, why do we quarrel among ourselves and lead the Tatars against one another! It would be better for me to flee to a foreign land than to be friends with, and serve, the Tatars."⁴⁸ This speech does represent the further development of an idea that was expressed in the fourteenth-century Laurentian Chronicle and the fifteenth-century Simeonov Chronicle, s.a. 1252: "Prince Andrei Iaroslavich thought with his boyars that it was better to flee than to serve the khan."⁴⁹ The Nikon Chronicle changes the focus from a specific political decision not to serve Batu to a general religious decision not to serve the Tatars. Although Batu was not a Muslim, the Rus' Church, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, was promoting the idea that a "Russian" was someone who accepted Christianity under the aegis of the head of the Rus' Church, and by that time being "Tatar" was equated with being Muslim.

Batu then sent his general Nevriui to oust Andrei from the throne of Vladimir. The First Redaction of the *Life of Alexander Nevskii* (from the fifteenth century), found in the Younger Redaction of the Novgorod First Chronicle, implies that Alexander went to see Batu in 1249 and an unnamed khan in 1262/1263 just before his death, but does not mention Alexander's trip of 1252. The Nikon Chronicle interprets it in a different way by explaining that Alexander left Andrei in charge of Vladimir and the Suzdal' land while he was gone, since he (Alexander) had been grand prince of Vladimir and all Rus', in the view of the chronicler, all along. In neither instance do the authors of these texts stipulate any connection between Alexander's trip and the khan's move against Andrei. None of the extant chronicles has Alexander complain to the khan about Andrei. It seems that Andrei thought better of his decision not to "serve the Tatars" or to recognize the legitimacy of the Jochid khan to review the *yarligh* to the grand prince of Vladimir, for, despite the report in a number of chronicles of Andrei's demise in exile,⁵⁰ by 1256 he was back in

⁴⁶ PSRL, 1: col. 473.

⁴⁷ PSRL, 3: 304, 6: part 1, col. 327, 7: 159, 15: 396, 24: 98, 26: 86, 28: 57, 216, 42: 118.

⁴⁸ PSRL, 10: 138. ⁴⁹ PSRL, 1: col. 473.

⁵⁰ PSRL, 6: part 1, col. 327, 15: part 1, col. 31; PSRL, 15: 396–97, 26: 86, 27: 47, 33: 71.

Rus' as the prince of Suzdal'. In short, the Rus' chroniclers differ over who led the Mongol–Tatar armed force and who was with him, who was the khan who ordered the campaign, who or what they went against, what happened to Andrei Iaroslavich, and what the Mongol–Tatars did on the campaign.

Another case highlights a fourth common problem that one encounters in dealing with chronicle information about the Mongol–Tatars. The Galician–Volhynian Chronicle characterizes Noghai, who ruled the western part of the Jochid Ulus under the ostensible overlordship of the khan from the 1260s until 1299, as “lawless,” “damned,” and “accursed.” Yet those epithets do not seem justified within the context of the chronicler’s description of what Noghai was supposed to have done. Under the entry for 1277 (6785), the chronicle characterizes Noghai as “accursed and lawless,” but the accompanying text describes Noghai responding to complaints by the Rus’ princes Lev Danilovich, Mstislav Danilovich, and Volodimir Vasil’kovich about the Lithuanians. Noghai sends his envoys with documents. He instructs those Rus’ princes to accompany the army he is sending led by the commander (*voevoda*) Mamshei against the Lithuanians.⁵¹ Under the entry for 1280 (6788), Prince Lev Danilovich is described as going to the “accursed damned Noghai” for help in going against the Poles. In response, Noghai sent the “accursed Konchak, Kozei, and Kubatan to help him.”⁵² Under the entry for 1282 (6790) (= 1285), the chronicler again characterizes Noghai as “accursed and lawless,” but describes him as going with Khan Telebuga against the Hungarians and as ordering four Rus’ princes to accompany them against their common enemy.⁵³ How any of these actions make Noghai lawless, damned, or accursed is not made clear in the text. He appears to be just the opposite, for the chronicler describes Noghai as sending armies to help Rus’ princes combat their enemies at their request and in including Rus’ princes along with his army against a common enemy – the Hungarians.

In addition, the chronicler specifically indicates under the entry for 1283 (6791) (= 1287) that on the way back from another campaign against the Poles, Telebuga and his army ravaged the land of Prince Lev, but that the “accursed Noghai” did not take part in this devastation of a Rus’ prince’s land because he went a different route.⁵⁴ Telebuga is also characterized by the chronicler as

⁵¹ PSRL, 2: col. 876. ⁵² PSRL, 2: col. 881.

⁵³ PSRL, 2: col. 888. Some of the *sub anno* dates in the GVC are out of synch with other contemporary sources. The Ukrainian historian Mykhailo Hrushevs’kyj attempted to find the corresponding dates in those other sources. Hrushevs’kyj 1901, 1–72. The year in brackets represents Hrushevs’kyj’s correction.

⁵⁴ PSRL, 2: col. 894.

“accursed and lawless,” although fewer times than Noghai is. The chronicler denigrates Noghai but provides no reason for doing so. One possibility is that Noghai was supposed to have converted to Islam, but the chronicler never mentions that occurrence. The Galician–Volhynian chronicler was not constrained by the diplomatic reasons that prevented church writers under the authority of the metropolitan of Rus' from denigrating the Mongol–Tatars because they were not under that authority. The rulers of Galicia–Volhynia received authorization from the patriarch in Constantinople to establish their own separate autocephalic church.⁵⁵ On the other side, it allowed the author of the Volhynian part of the GVC to state that “at the time the *kniazi* of Rus' were Tatar subjects,” an outright admission that northeastern Rus' chroniclers seemed reluctant to make. The GVC chronicler used the phrase “for at that time the Rus' princes were under Tatar rule” (*v voli tatar'skoi*) to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Jochid khan. Later in the same chronicle but still under 1287, the chronicler declares, “God sent His sword against us, which serves His wrath for the proliferation of our sins,” and explains that “at the time the princes of Rus' were subject to [*v voli*, literally, “in the power of”] the Tatars having been conquered by God's wrath.”⁵⁶ These instances are among the few times that Rus' being ruled by the Mongol–Tatars is explicitly acknowledged in the Rus' sources.

In yearly entries and compilations that were made between 1252 and 1448, Rus' ecclesiastical writers and chroniclers describe Mongol–Tatar raids as motivated by God, with the Mongol–Tatars acting as divine agents. The phrase “favored by God and the tsar” (i.e., the Tatar khan) appears frequently.⁵⁷ Any disparaging verbiage directed at the Tatars found in a northern Rus' chronicle entry between 1252 and 1448 can be easily traced to a later interpolation at the compilation or redaction stage after 1448.

In their depiction of the Tatars, the chronicles proceed after 1448 along an increasingly radical rhetorical trajectory. Whereas the Nikon Chronicle represents a culmination of textual modifications and interpolations in the chronicles' representations of the Mongols, of Batu, and of Alexander Nevskii, the *Great Menology* (*Velikie Minei Cheti*) and the *Book of Degrees* (*Stepennaia kniga*) do not draw on the Nikon Chronicle accounts about 1252 in particular or the mid-thirteenth century in general.⁵⁸ Instead they draw on

55 Pelenski 1992, 8–15.

56 PSRL, 2: cols. 888 (s.a. 1282), 897 (s.a. 1287). PSRL, 2: cols. 888, 892, 897.

57 E.g., PSRL, 13: part 1, 92 (s.a. 1339), 15: part 1, col. 56 (s.a. 1344), and 18: part 92 (s.a. 1344).

58 A menology (*menalogion*; *menalogium*) is a collection of readings for church services usually arranged according to month and day. Under the appropriate day for the commemoration

earlier accounts. The *Great Menology* and the *Book of Degrees* do, however, represent a further conceptual development of the “cruel Mongols” that is depicted in the Nikon Chronicle.

After 1448, the chronicles under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of All Rus’ Iona revert to the pre-1252 pejorative terminology about the Tatars. Nonetheless, some information about those khanates can be extracted. The compilation of the Nikon Chronicle represents an important stage in the revision of the Muscovite virtual past.⁵⁹ It contains information not found in earlier chronicle accounts. A typical argument that has been advanced to justify our accepting this information as reliable is that the sixteenth-century editors had access to earlier sources that are no longer extant. Yet, unless the chronicler identifies his source of this additional information (which is not infrequently done), we should probably consider such testimony to be fictional.

We can see three types of interpolation by the editor of the Nikon Chronicle of earlier chronicle entries.⁶⁰ The first type is the simple revision, which modifies an earlier entry that is neutral toward the Tatars in order to put an anti-Tatar spin on it. The second type is the double-layered revision, where a post-1448 but pre-Nikon Chronicle revision puts an anti-Tatar spin on an earlier entry, which is then further revised and enhanced in the Nikon Chronicle. The third type of interpolation is inclusion of anti-Tatar material where no previous entry exists in the earlier chronicles. Although after 1448 the chroniclers openly deplore alliances between Rus’ princes and Tatars, they were aware that earlier Rus’ princes had allied with the Tatars, because such information is in the exemplars they are copying.

Tales and Saints’ Lives

Both tales (*povesti*) and saints’ lives (*zhitiia*) are narratives written by ecclesiastical writers, usually monks. Tales could be about secular personages, such as the “Tale about Tsarevich Peter” (“Povest’ o Petre, Tsareviche Ordynskom”)

of a particular saint or saints, all the relevant liturgical material is provided, including saint’s life, the relevant canons sung at matins and lauds, description of the transfer of the relics of the saint, and so forth. The *Great Menology* was compiled by Metropolitan Makarii (r. 1542–1563) in twelve volumes. The *Book of Degrees* is a recasting of chronicle accounts into seventeen generational “steps” or “degrees” to demonstrate that the actions of the rulers of Rus’ were in accord with the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church. It sought to describe ecclesiastical, and thereby divine, support for the monarchy. It is believed to have been initiated by Metropolitan Makarii and finished by the confessor of Ivan IV, Andrei, the later Metropolitan Afanasii (1564–1566).

59 On the concept of “virtual past”: Ostrowski 1989, 201–20.

60 For this section, I draw on Ostrowski 1998, 149–55.

or events such as the "Occurrence beyond the Don" ("Zadonshchina") or the "Tale about the Battle with Mamai" ("Povest' o Mamaevom poboishche"). But a tale could also be written about a prelate or monk whom the author wanted to be considered for sainthood. If the subject of the tale was declared a saint by the Rus' Church, then the tale (*povest'*) became a *vita* (*zhitie*). Tales and saints' lives could be incorporated into a chronicle or be copied as stand-alone works. Rus' saints' lives are an offshoot of Byzantine saints' lives. The cultural historian and philologist Ihor Ševčenko (1922–2009) tells us that "a typical *Life* of a saint has its rules and commonplaces and follows a rigid plan." Yet, "In spite of these commonplaces, and in addition to offerings of genuine spiritual wisdom, a good deal of space is left for adventures, anecdotes, and amusing motifs."⁶¹ Whereas scholars have used Byzantine saints' lives as sources of historical evidence, they have found Rus' saints' lives to be more problematic in that regard. The nineteenth-century Russian historian Vasili O. Kliuchevskii (1841–1911), in his study of Rus' saints' lives as a historical source, concluded that the rules and commonplaces were followed so rigidly that Rus' saints' lives could provide little of value for the scholarly investigator. He did allow, however, that the miracle stories attached subsequently to the end of a saint's life might provide some evidence concerning the time when they were attached.⁶² Bearing Kliuchevskii's seminal warning in mind, scholars of Russian and Ukrainian history have tended to be cautious about using saints' lives as sources of historical evidence.

Tales and saints' lives present, with some exceptions, highly stylized testimony with regard to the Tatars. Those works that were written between 1252 and 1448 in northeastern Rus' exhibit the neutral attitude that the chronicles do (provided they were not interpolated later). An example is the "Tale about Tsarevich Peter," the composition of which can be dated to the mid-fourteenth century, which describes in a neutrally worded way the adjudication of a land dispute in Rostov by the Jochid khan.⁶³

Other tales and saints' lives that were written before 1448 but interpolated after that year often display contradictions in their narratives. A typical kind of contradiction that one encounters in the tales and saints' lives is the name of the khan whom Alexander Nevskii went to see and who sent the Tatar expeditions against Rus' in 1252; that is, whether it was Batu or Sartaq. The account under 1247/1248 of the killing of Batu, "the impure khan," by King Vladislav of Hungary helps to explain this contradiction.⁶⁴ This story, the

⁶¹ Ševčenko 1985, 16. ⁶² Kliuchevskii, 1871.

⁶³ *Russkie povesti* 1958, 98–105; Halperin 1975, 324–25. ⁶⁴ *PSRL*, 10: 135–36.

"Tale about the Death of Batu" ("O ubienii Batieve"), is a fabrication that first appears in chronicles of the second half of the fifteenth century.⁶⁵ One also finds a version of it in the sixteenth-century Vasilii-Varlaam Redaction of the *Life of Alexander Nevskii*] and in the sixteenth-century Iona Dumin version of the *Book of Degrees* (*Stepennaia kniga*).⁶⁶ An allusion to it appears in the seventeenth-century *Story about the Kazan Khanate* (*Istoriia o Kazanskom tsarstve*).⁶⁷ Halperin referred to it as part of the "fictionalizing" about Batu and the Tatars going on in Muscovite church writing of the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries.⁶⁸ He pointed out that, in contrast, "Thirteenth-century sources created an image of Batu which accurately reflected his power and influence over Russian affairs, and which resonated with the reality of Mongol superiority over Russia at the time."⁶⁹ One of the texts from this later period engaged in fictionalizing the account of Batu is the "Tale about Merkurii of Smolensk" ("Povest' o Merkurii Smolenskom"), in which Batu is prevented from taking Smolensk in great part due to the intervention of Merkurii, a Moravian Slav in the service of the king of Smolensk in 1239. According to the tale, Merkurii led "a Godly life, labored in fasting and charity." He entered the Tatar camp at night and killed many of the enemy. He was killed in the ensuing battle and had his head cut off. At that point the Tatars "dropped their weapons, and driven by some unknown force, fled from the city."⁷⁰ In the "Tale about the Death of Batu," not only is Batu defeated in battle when he invades Hungary, but he is killed as well. We have no evidence other than the "Tale about Merkurii" that Batu was defeated in Rus' at any time, nor any evidence other than the "Tale about the Death of Batu" that he was killed when he led his army into Hungary. As Halperin characterizes them, both the "Tale about Merkurii" and the "Tale about the Death of Batu" are texts that "would nowadays be labelled a work of historical fiction."⁷¹

Halperin, furthermore, pointed out that since Batu died in 1255, many years after his invasion of Hungary, the chroniclers had a problem of where to insert the tale in their chronicles. A period of fourteen years separates Batu's invasion of Hungary from the year of his death. It would have been bad form to describe his death one year, then in subsequent years describe him as still alive. So, instead of inserting "The Tale about the Death of Batu" under 1241

65 PSRL, 7: part 1, 157–59, 5: cols. 394–95, 18: 69, 20: 161, 21: part 1, 288, 22: part 1, 400–1, 23: 82–83, 24: 96–98, 25: 139–41, 28: 56–57, 33: 71.

66 Mansikka 1913, 45, 89–90 (2nd pagination).

67 PSRL 19: col. 10; *Kazanskaia istoriia* 1954, 46. 68 Halperin 1983, 50, 60.

69 Halperin 1983, 51. 70 Cf. Budovnits 1958, 171–75. 71 Halperin 1983, 62.

when Batu was in Hungary, the chroniclers placed it under 1247/1248 because they might have had no entry (or few entries) specifically naming him between then and the succession to the throne by his son Sartaq in 1255.⁷² If they did come across a specific reference to Batu for an entry between 1247 and 1255, all they had to do was substitute Sartaq's name for Batu's; otherwise, as in the case of the Nikon Chronicle's account of the uprising of 1262, the formula "after the killing of Batu, so did his son Sartaq" was used.

The chronicles that incorporate the "Tale about the Death of Batu" then add Sartaq's name to any reference to "khan" after 1247/1248. Thus they assert that the khan who sent Nevriui against Andrei was Sartaq, Batu's son, although Batu was still khan in 1252. Both the First Redaction and the Vladimir Redaction of the *Life of Alexander Nevskii*, in contrast, state that Batu became angry with Andrei.⁷³ Neither the First Redaction nor the Vladimir Redaction of the *Life* incorporates "The Tale about the Death of Batu," and both of them continue to name Batu as the khan who sent Nevriui.⁷⁴ Some historians have made an attempt to reconcile the contradiction by explaining that Batu and Sartaq were co-khans.⁷⁵ While examples of corulers appeared in Byzantium, we have no evidence of such a phenomenon in the Jochid Ulus.

The Redaction of Vasilii-Varlaam of the *Life of Alexander Nevskii* for Makarii's *Great Menology*, the Chudov version of the *Book of Degrees*, and the Iona Dumin Redaction of the *Book of Degrees* (all compiled in the sixteenth century) incorporate the story of Batu's being killed by Vladislav.⁷⁶ In each of these texts, the khan who sends Nevriui against Andrei and the Suzdal' land is Sartaq rather than Batu. For the compilers of chronicles and the *Book of Degrees*, the fictional story of Batu's killing in Hungary in 1247/1248 by Vladislav had become an established historical fact. But the redactors of the *Life of Alexander Nevskii* continued to consider Batu as khan in 1252. The Iona Dumin Redaction of the *Life*, however, adapted the testimony of the Chudov version of the *Book of Degrees* that Sartaq was khan at the time.

The version of the "Tale about the Death of Batu" that was added to the Iona Dumin Redaction in the *Life of Alexander Nevskii* is characterized not so much by an increase in the number of formulaic slurs but by their intensity. In the title, instead of "About the Death of Batu Khan" or "The Death of the

72 Halperin 1983, 63. 73 Begunov 1965, 174–75, 192.

74 Mansikka 1913, 24 (2nd pagination).

75 E.g., Vernadsky 1953, 148; Zenkovsky in The Nikonian Chronicle 1984–1989, 3: 27 n. 42.

76 Mansikka 1913, 45, 89–90 (2nd pagination). Pokrovskii and Lenhoff 2007, 1: 526–27. The Vasilii-Varlaam Redaction changes the name of the land where Batu meets his demise at the hands of Vladislav from Hungary to Bulgaria. Mansikka 1913, 45 (2nd pagination). This redaction also appears in the Uvarov no. 1787 (517) (378) copy of VMCh.

Evil-Doing Batu in Hungary,” as in the chronicles,⁷⁷ we find “About the Death of the God-Reviled Dog, Batu Khan.” The phrases “accursed Batu” and “Godless Batu” appear frequently (e.g., “the accursed Batu went to western Hungary”).⁷⁸ In the first redaction of the *Life of Alexander Nevskii*, in contrast, we find no demeaning epithets attached to Batu, who is reported as saying, “Alexander, do you know that God has submitted many nations to me.”⁷⁹

The Tales of the Kulikovo Cycle were written after 1448 and provide fictionalized accounts of the supposed battle of 1380 on the upper reaches of the Don river between forces led by Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich (Donskoi) and the troops led by the Amīr Mamai. The Kulikovo tales ostensibly derive from chronicle accounts, but those accounts provide minimal testimony about the battle, only indicating that Dmitrii’s forces won.⁸⁰ Among the tales are (1) “Narration concerning Mamai’s Defeat” (“Skazanie o Mamaevom poboishche”) in four redactions,⁸¹ (2) “Event beyond the Don” (“Zadonshchina”) in two redactions,⁸² and (3) “Oration Concerning the Life and Passing Away of Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich” (“Slovo o zhitii i prestavlenii velikogo kniazia Dmitriia Ivanovicha”).⁸³ Significant issues of dating the various accounts and narratives, and of their relation to each other, abound. Scholars have tried to use the accounts in this cycle of tales to reconstruct the battle, but the results are questionable at best.⁸⁴ The paucity of archaeological evidence from the supposed battle site compounds the problem.

Documents

Documents tend to be the most reliable sources of information about the Mongol–Tatar khanates. The wills and treaties of the grand princes provide information about the relationship of the Rus’ grand princes with the Jochid Ulus (referred to as the *orda*).⁸⁵ For example, an agreement (which can be

⁷⁷ PSRL, 24: 96, 25: 139; Rozanov 1916, 110. ⁷⁸ Mansikka 1913, 89–90 (2nd pagination).

⁷⁹ Begunov 1965, 174.

⁸⁰ The chronicle accounts are the Suzdal’ Chronicle (PSRL, 1: col. 536); the Novgorod First Chronicle (PSRL, 3: 376–77); the *Short Chronicle Tale* (*Kratkaia letopisnaia povest’*) as maintained in the Rogozhskii and Simeonov Chronicles (PSRL, 15: part 1, cols. 139–41, 18: 129–31); *Skazaniia i povesti* 1982, 14–15, with variants at 374; and the *Expanded Chronicle Tale* (*Prostrannaia letopisnaia povest’*), as maintained in the Novgorod Fourth and Sofiiskii First Chronicles (PSRL, 4: part 1, 90–91, 95; PSRL 1915, 4: part 1, issue 1, 311–20; PSRL 1925, 4: part 1, issue 2, 321–25, 8: 34–39; *Skazaniia i povesti* 1982, 16–24, with variants at 374–75).

⁸¹ *Skazaniia i povesti* 1982, 25–127, with variants at 375–78.

⁸² *Skazaniia i povesti* 1982, 7–13, with variants at 369–74; *Sofonija’s Tale* 1963.

⁸³ PSRL 2000, 6.1: col. 491–507; Salmina 1981, 208–29.

⁸⁴ E.g., Nabiev 2010; Halperin 2016, 1–33. ⁸⁵ *Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty* 1950.

dated to June 28, 1404) between the Grand Prince Vasilii I Dmitrievich (r. 1389–1425) and the Metropolitan Kiprian (1376–1406) indicates the fiscal responsibilities of the metropolitan, which include having to pay tribute to the Tatars.⁸⁶

The Rus' metropolitan archive preserved six *yarlighs* (constituting the so-called Short Collection) considered to be translations into Russian of authentic *yarlighs* issued from the Jochid Ulus: (1) from Khan Tiuliak (Tulunbek, Toqtaqiya) of Mamai's horde to Metropolitan Mikhail (Mitia) (1379); (2) from Khatun Taidula to Metropolitan Ioann (Feognost'?) (1347); (3) from Khan Möngke-Temür to the Rus' clergy and monasteries (1267); (4) from Khatun Taidula to Metropolitan Feognost' (1343, 1351); (5) from Khan Berdibek to Metropolitan Aleksei (1357); (6) from Khatun Taidula to Metropolitan Aleksei (1354).⁸⁷ A seventh *yarligh*, which purports to be from Khan Özbek to Metropolitan Peter (found in the so-called Full Collection) has been determined to be a sixteenth-century forgery.⁸⁸

In 1969, Edward L. Keenan (1935–2015) questioned the authenticity of a *yarligh* that is not part of the Short Collection – the *Yarligh of Ahmed-Khan to Ivan III*. He concluded, after a cross-language (Turkic–Russian) comparison, that “it is not a contemporary Old Russian translation of a diplomatic document from the chancellery of the Great Horde.”⁸⁹ Instead, he called it “a historical ballad, in epistolary form,”⁹⁰ and, as with the *Story about the Kazan Khanate*, saw it originating in the circles of the Ambassadorial Chancellery (Posol'skij prikaz) of the early seventeenth century.⁹¹ Since the *Yarligh of Ahmed-Khan* follows neither the formulae of official translation nor the formulae of diplomatic structure for its genre, Keenan argued that it cannot be considered a genuine *yarligh*. The genuine *yarlighs* to the metropolitans, in contrast, affirm the immunity of the church from taxes and tributes and declare that the church's property should be protected from expropriation or damage as long as Rus' churchmen pray for the well-being of the khan and his family.

The wills of the grand princes are another documentary source that provides evidence concerning the tribute (*dan'*) to the Tatar khan. They contain evidence from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries that the grand princes were looking forward to a time when the Tatar khan was no longer their suzerain. In particular, they stipulate that the tribute is still to

86 Shchapov 1976, 176–79.

87 The *yarlighs* are listed here in the order in which they are found in the Short Collection.

88 It can be read, however, in English translation in Kaiser and Marker 1994, 101–2.

89 Keenan 1969, 47. 90 Keenan 1969, 44. 91 Keenan 1969, 47.

be collected by family members and kept for themselves. Grand Prince Dmitrii Ivanovich (Donskoi) wrote in his second will (1389) about the possibility of no longer having to pay tribute to the khan: "And should God change the Orda [so that] my children do not have to pay the distribution [*vykhod*] to the Orda, then the tribute [*dan'*] that each of my sons collects in his own appanage [*udel*] will be his."⁹² By the time of the first will (1406/1407) of Grand Prince Vasilii I Dmitrievich, that formulation became: "And if God brings about a change concerning the Tatars, then my princess will take the tribute [*dan'*] for herself from these districts and villages, and my son, Prince Ivan, will also not interfere in this tribute."⁹³ The second will (probably 1417) and third will (probably 1423) of Vasilii I have a similar formulation: "And if God brings about a change concerning the Orda, then my princess will take this tribute for herself, and my son, Prince Vasilii, will not interfere."⁹⁴ The will (1461/1462) of his son Vasilii II Vasil'evich (r. 1425–1462) makes the same stipulation: "And if God should bring about a change concerning the Orda, then my princes and my children will take tribute [*dan'*] for themselves from their patrimonial principalities, and my son Ivan will not interfere in this."⁹⁵

Another document, however, indicates that a change had already occurred. In 1449, in a treaty with the Suzdal' prince, Vasilii declares,

You are not to have dealings with the Orda [*A tobe Ordy ne znati*]. You, Prince Ivan, are to hand over to me and my sons, without any trickery [*bez' khitrostno*], any old *yarlighs* you might have for Suzdal', Nizhnii Novgorod, or Gorodets, or for the [Nizhnii] Novgorodian principality as a whole. You are not to accept any new *yarlighs*. And any *yarlighs* for [Nizhnii] Novgorod or Suzdal' that any khan might give you or send to you. You are to surrender them to me, the grand prince, and my sons according to our pact. You are not to keep them.⁹⁶

Previously, all princes who ruled a town received their *yarligh* directly from the Tatar khan. By requiring the Suzdal' prince to have no dealings with the *orda* and through demanding that he turn over any *yarlighs* from the khan, Vasilii established himself as the authority over Suzdal', replacing the khan in Sarai. At the same time, Vasilii declared his son Ivan coruler without

92 *Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty* 1950, 36, no. 12. Translation based on Howes 1967, 215–16.

93 *Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty* 1950, 56, no. 20. Translation based on Howes 1967, 221.

94 *Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty* 1950, 59, no. 21, 61, no. 22. Translation based on Howes 1967, 231, 239.

95 *Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty* 1950, 197, no. 61. Translation based on Howes 1967, 259.

96 *Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty* 1950, 156, no. 52.

bothering to obtain approval from the khan, the first ruler in Rus' not to get approval from the khan since 1240. Vasilii was the last grand prince to be authorized to rule by a *yarligh* from the Tatar khan in Sarai. Although Vasilii's son, Ivan III, continued to pay tribute to the *orda* until 1503, he ruled completely independently.

Conclusion

Although the information about the Mongol Empire and its successor khanates in the Rus'ian sources – chronicles, tales and saints' lives – is selective and much of it stylized, these sources should not be ignored. Valuable testimony can be extracted, but they do need to be carefully and critically assessed. In order to do so, the researcher should become familiar with the idiosyncrasies of each type of source. In particular, not being aware of the publishing history of the chronicles, both in the *PSRL* series and outside it, can trip one up. In that regard, the present chapter can provide a rough guide and brief introduction to the researcher who would like to use Rus' chronicles.

It is also incumbent on the researcher to be aware of the three chronological phases that the writing of Rus' sources on the Tatar–Mongols went through: from 1227 to 1252: bafflement concerning who the Mongols were but trying to explain them as God's punishment for Rus' sins; from 1252 to 1448: neutral reporting of events involving the Mongol–Tatars; and after 1448: slurs and diatribes against the Tatars with anti-Tatar interpolations entered into earlier sources.

Finally, the researcher who does not know East Slavic languages or Church Slavonic and is thereby dependent on translations should be aware that such translations are often faulty, sometimes being based on inaccurate editions that omit material from the source and mislead the reader regarding alternative readings. Fortunately, more recent translations (both published and in process) serve to help correct the insufficiencies of those earlier translations.

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Western European Sources

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Latin or Catholic Europe, the territory subject to the Pope and the Roman Church, was spared Mongol conquest and occupation, apart from the major assault by Batu's forces in 1241–1242, spasmodic attacks on Poland and Hungary thereafter, and in 1260 the subjection of Antioch and Tripoli and the sack of Sidon in Crusader Palestine. For the West – in contrast with China and the eastern Islamic world, for instance – the Mongols remained, for the most part, a distant if nevertheless menacing power. As a result, a great many Western sources make at least some reference to them but tell us rather less than do those produced within the Mongol world. Paradoxically, however, a few Western Europeans who were among the first to travel through the empire furnish descriptions of the Mongols that, in terms of breadth of coverage and accurate observation, are unmatched in the writings of the conquered peoples and indeed those of their western successors.

Genre, Transmission, and Reception

The bulk of this material is in Latin, the language naturally preferred by western churchmen (although vernaculars were also coming into use for historical writing from the thirteenth century onwards), and it takes many different forms. At one extreme, a large proportion of the annals maintained in churches and monasteries mention the Mongols, however briefly, at some point or other, most often in reporting Batu's invasion in 1241–1242 and the growing threat to the Latin settlements in Syria and Palestine in the years 1257–1260; on occasions we also encounter references to the arrival of embassies from the Mongols at the Papal Curia or the courts of western monarchs. Among such chronicles, particular mention should be made of the *Chronica majora* of Matthew Paris (d. c. 1259), the historian of the English Benedictine

monastery at St. Albans, who – to judge from the attention he gives to Mongol affairs – had a strong interest in them. At the other extreme, we have longer reports and treatises specifically devoted to the newcomers and in one case – the *Ystoria Mongalorum* (1247) of the papal envoy John of Plano Carpini – what might be called a pioneering essay in ethnography. In between lie a host of writings, ranging from letters written by or to royal or aristocratic figures in Europe, or by Catholic missionaries domiciled in the Mongol world, to works more generally concerned with the possibility of converting the heathen, the Mongols included, or with launching a crusade against the Mamluk Sultanate, an enterprise in which the Mongols are sometimes viewed as potential allies.

Some of our Western sources are based on the experience of eyewitnesses. The majority were the work of authors who never directly encountered the Mongols, but many of them nevertheless had access to firsthand information, including letters. Among these was Matthew Paris, who evidently benefited from the location of his abbey on a major thoroughfare north of London. Only occasionally does he reveal his informants, as when in 1252 he tells us that a party of Armenians visited St. Albans and brought news of the internecine struggle within the Mongols' ranks (presumably centering on the election of Möngke as qa'an).¹

Similarly, these sources were transmitted in diverse ways. Many letters have survived only because they were copied into the annals of a particular monastery or cathedral church. The variety is especially marked in relation to the accounts of western visitors to the Mongol territories, which constitute our most important principal sources. The report of Simon of Saint-Quentin (1248) has come down to us through lengthy extracts included in the great encyclopedia of Vincent of Beauvais; the account of the first mission undertaken by Andrew of Longjumeau (1245–1247) has survived only in summary form in the chronicle of Matthew Paris, and the second is abstracted in Joinville's "Life of Saint Louis." Sometimes it is a case of joint authorship, as when the original traveler supplied oral information to the person who committed the work to writing. The best-known example is the book of the Venetian traveler Marco Polo, of which the earliest version was composed by the Pisan romance writer Rustichello in 1298, when the two men shared confinement in Genoa. The pattern was repeated when the Franciscan missionary Odoric of Pordenone, during his final illness in 1330–1331, "dictated" his account to William of Solagna. There were authors who revised

1 Matthew Paris 1872–1883, 5: 340. Generally: Saunders 1969.

their written accounts, as did Plano Carpini in 1247–1248, with the result that two main versions have come down to us (excluding others which will be mentioned below). And Roger Bacon was able to meet his fellow Franciscan, the missionary William of Rubruck, and to incorporate his oral testimony alongside details taken from Rubruck's written report.

The authors' aims varied considerably. In the case of Plano Carpini, it was overwhelmingly pragmatic – the provision of military intelligence. But the works of subsequent travelers were designed more to provide edification and entertainment. The earliest known text of Marco Polo's book evidently aimed to introduce readers (and perhaps auditors) to the diversity of the world's regions and its many wondrous characteristics. So too did the various versions of Odoric's book, which placed, if anything, an even greater emphasis on "marvels." The underlying purpose may also have changed from one recension to another. One group of Polo manuscripts, in Northern French, claims that Polo himself had presented a copy to a French royal envoy visiting Venice in 1307,² so that we possibly have here a second redaction of the book, in the genesis of which Rustichello had no part. It has been suggested that on this occasion Marco was angling to secure employment and patronage from the French court.³ Alternatively, a work might undergo revision at the hands of others whose preoccupations were very different. Thus the Dominican Friar Francesco Pipino produced, probably between 1315 and 1320, a recrafted version (in Latin) of Polo's book which was designed to serve as a handbook for missionaries and hence adopts a noticeably loftier moral stance. The fact that Henry of Glatz produced two successive versions of Odoric's book within a decade of that composed by William of Solagna may well reflect a widespread (but ultimately fruitless) effort to secure Odoric's canonization. Even discounting such revisions, but given the vagaries of medieval copyists and a sometimes highly complex manuscript tradition, we cannot always be certain whose voice we hear or whether a particular detail formed part of the original account.

The conditions in which a text was produced had implications for its readership and reception. The extant versions of Plano Carpini's *Ystoria* are all addressed to the inhabitants of Christendom in general (the copy submitted to the Pope has not survived); following his return to Europe, he had the opportunity to expound his experiences while traveling within France and acquired a certain celebrity. Both circumstances doubtless helped to ensure that his report circulated. This is still more true of Marco Polo's book, of

2 Lerner 1999, 55. 3 Critchley 1992, 38–39.

which some versions open with an address to “Emperors and kings, dukes and marquises, counts, knights and burgesses.” By contrast, the *Itinerarium* (1255) of William of Rubruck, which took the form of a lengthy personal letter to King Louis IX of France, is represented by fewer manuscripts and seems to have remained virtually unknown until the sixteenth century. Destined for still greater obscurity was the account of the papal envoy John of Marignolli, who traveled in the Mongol Empire during the period from 1339 to 1353. Commissioned by the Emperor Charles IV, after his return from the east, to write a history of Bohemia, and finding little relish for the task, he relieved his boredom by inserting recollections of his journey in the history, where they would remain submerged for the next 400 years.

The Earliest Reports (1221–1245): Fact and Fantasy

Much of the information that reached Western Europeans about the Mongol advance in the years from 1221 to 1245 was distorted, amounting to no more than legend or myth. In this category belongs the very earliest report, the *Relatio de Davide rege* (Account of King David), which described the victorious progress of a supposedly Christian monarch against the Muslims of Central Asia and which circulated among the leadership of the Fifth Crusade at Damietta in the Nile delta in 1221.⁴ Since David was said to be moving to the aid of his coreligionists, the account created a sensation; copies were sent to the Pope and circulated among other leading ecclesiastics in the west. The Mongols are not named in the *Relatio*, but it clearly echoes Chinggis Khan’s attack on the Khwārazm-Shāh’s empire; the names of a great many cities sacked by the invaders appear in more or less recognizable form.⁵ Identifying their leader as the grandson of Prester John or (in one variant) as Prester John himself, the *Relatio* taps into a vein of legend that had first surfaced in Western Europe almost eighty years previously, in 1146, just after the failure of the Second Crusade in Syria, when the German chronicler Otto of Freising had been informed of the advance of a Christian priest-cum-king named John from his territory “beyond Persia and Armenia” to aid his coreligionists against the Muslims. That earlier rumor was in all likelihood prompted by the recent conquest of Muslim Central Asia by the Qara Khitan, refugees from northern China who had inflicted a signal defeat on the Seljūks in the

4 The text is incorporated in a letter of the Bishop of Acre: Jacques de Vitry 1960, 141–48; Brewer 2015, 126–34.

5 Richard 1996; Göckenjan 1988. The documents are edited and translated in Brewer 2015, 101–25.

Qatwān steppe in Transoxania (1141) and whose rulers were almost certainly Buddhists.⁶

It has been plausibly suggested that the identification of King David with Prester John in 1221 represents an attempt to boost the morale of the crusading army by one of its leaders, Jacques de Vitry, Bishop of Acre, whose letters also played a major role in disseminating the good news in Western Europe.⁷ In the cases of both the tale of King John and the account of King David, however, the original inspiration was very probably Nestorian Christian rejoicing at the afflictions that had befallen Muslim powers; significantly, the *Relatio* mentions an alleged attempt by the 'Abbasid Caliph to employ the Nestorian Catholicus ("Iafelech") as a mediator with King David. Some of the details about this Christian monarch, moreover, refer not to Chinggis Khan but to the activities of his rival, the Naiman prince Güchülüg, who had recently usurped the Qara Khitan throne and himself belonged to a Nestorian dynasty.⁸

Apocryphal documents that undoubtedly originated in the Latin world itself (as had the celebrated "Letter of Prester John" in the 1160s) continued to circulate even after the assault by Batu's armies in 1241–1242.⁹ Within the west, the conflict that was raging between the papacy and the Emperor Frederick II generated a letter that claimed to come from a certain "Messias," and another, *Epistola prudenti viro*, which survives in a number of manuscripts and purports to be addressed by the (ninth-century) Arabic philosopher al-Kindī to Theodore, Frederick's court astrologer: both letters made use of the Mongol menace. Similarly a jumble of fact and fiction is a report from the Patriarch of Jerusalem to the Pope, possibly from 1244, since the texts found in two of the manuscripts are bound together with a document of that date;¹⁰ it is quite likely that it was sent west in the summer, at the time of the Mongol incursion into northern Syria, and conveyed to the Curia by the Patriarch Albert of Antioch, who appears there early in 1245.¹¹ Describing the irruption of barbarian peoples who dress in the skins of wild beasts and are slaughtering clergy, the patriarch's letter can only allude to the Mongols (though it does not name them). But it also says that they claimed to transport Jesus Christ in one of their wagons and that this figure carried a *Liber executionis Novi Testamenti* (Book of the

6 Nowell 1953; Biran 2005, 45, 176. 7 Gosman 1989. 8 Jackson 1997, 428–31.

9 Hamilton 1985.

10 Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, MS 162/83, fol. 106b; Royal Library, Copenhagen, MS Acc. 2011/5, fol. 316b.

11 Huillard-Bréholles 1852–1861, 6: part 1, 263, 265–67.

Fulfilment of the New Testament), copies of which were given to foreign envoys.¹² Doubtless the confusion here arose because the Mongols carried with them a felt image of Chinggis Khan, to which envoys were required to perform obeisance, and because their ultimatums began with an invocation of Heaven (Tengri).

Distortions of this nature can be attributed only in part to a widespread sense that the Mongols were indeed the instruments of divine vengeance on a sinful Christendom (or, of course, that section of it which the author saw as especially sinful). To an extent, the more sanguine rumors that circulated about the Mongols were additionally fueled by the invaders' own propaganda; they were adept at spreading disinformation in order to lull the suspicions of their enemies. A letter reproduced by Matthew Paris tells of a western spy in the invaders' service, who was taken prisoner in Austria during the campaign. He told his captors that the Mongols employed various ruses, claiming at one point to be intending to make the pilgrimage to Santiago and, at another, to have come in quest of the relics of the Three Kings of the Nativity, preserved at Cologne.¹³ There are echoes of this latter connection as late as 1285, during the second great Mongol attack on Hungary, when another apocryphal letter circulated: copied into the chronicle of the Italian Franciscan Salimbene of Adam, it purported to come from King David – here described as a descendant of the Three Kings – and asserted that he was on his way to retrieve their earthly remains.¹⁴

One last vein of speculation must be mentioned: that the Mongols were the harbingers of the Last Things. According to the Croatian historian Thomas of Spalato, at the time of the Mongol invasion of 1241–1242 a good many learned men in the west began to believe that the invaders were those foretold in the prophetic book known as the *Sermo* or *Revelationes* of Methodius.¹⁵ This work, widely read in medieval Europe and traditionally attributed to the fourth-century writer Methodius of Patara, predicted that prior to the Last Things the world would be overrun by barbarian peoples, among them the “Ishmaelites,” who would be halted and destroyed only by the Romans. Ishmael, son of the biblical patriarch Abraham by the concubine

12 The longer version published by Davidsohn 1927, 383–84, had been incorporated in a letter from the papal legate Hugo of Santa Sabina to the Bishop of Constance, which must date from no earlier than c. 1250, when Hugo obtained legatine status. A shorter version has been edited twice: Richard 1961; Claverie 1999, 612–13.

13 Matthew Paris 1872–1883, 4: 276; Richard 1973, 219, 221–22.

14 Richard 1955–1957, 235–36. The letter is in Salimbene of Adam 1998–1999, 871–72 (tr. Baird 1986, 586).

15 Thomas of Spalato 2006, Latin text, 286 (tr. 287).

Hagar, was commonly seen as the forebear of nomadic peoples, and Genesis spoke of him as one whose hand would be against every man. The *Revelationes* were in reality the work of a seventh-century author, for whom the conquering barbarians in question were the Arab Muslims of his own day, but the fact that the prophecy had already been fulfilled at the time of writing was not yet recognized in the thirteenth century.

There is evidence to support Thomas's assertion about the newfound resonance of Methodian prophecy. One contemporary known to have had recourse to the *Revelationes* is the papal legate in Germany, Albrecht von Behaim. At some point in the 1240s, he copied it into his book of *memorabilia*, together with the apocryphal *Epistola prudenti viro*.¹⁶ The *Epistola prudenti viro* identifies the Mongols both with the Ishmaelites and with the nations Gog and Magog whom Alexander the Great was believed to have enclosed behind impenetrable barriers and who would break out towards the end of time.¹⁷ The Mongols are called Ishmaelites in the Scheftlarn annals.¹⁸ It is because of this close association with "Pseudo-Methodius" that authors contemporary with the Mongol invasion often include details which echo his prophecies about the barbarian invaders: the Mongols' alleged cannibalism, for instance,¹⁹ their intention of advancing on Rome, or the duration of their empire.²⁰

It is true that even prior to the devastation of Eastern Europe by Batu's armies in 1241–1242 we encounter the occasional realistic comment by a western author. Some were clearly aware that the newcomers were not necessarily Christian or even well disposed towards Christians. The Italian chronicler Richard of San Germano, describing King David's operations against the Muslims, mentions that he had also attacked the Polovtsy (Qipchaq/Cumans) and the Christian Rus'.²¹ This information is echoed by the French Cistercian chronicler Aubry de Trois-Fontaines, writing in c. 1240, who adds that some claimed they were neither Christians nor pagans (i.e. Muslims) – a sort of "third force," in fact.²² They were known, too, to have ravaged the Christian kingdom of Georgia. Such details required a certain mental adjustment: Jacques de Vitry felt obliged to circumvent this inconvenient fact by suggesting that the Georgians were being punished for an earlier compact they had made with their Muslim neighbors.²³

16 Frenz and Herde 2000, 134–78 (no. 43).

17 Burnett 1984: 163–66 for the text, also printed in Frenz and Herde 2000, 350–56 (no. 82). Further: Burnett and Dalché 1991.

18 Jaffé 1861a, 341. 19 Guzman 1991. 20 Jackson 2001, 356; Jackson 2018, 146–47.

21 Richard of San Germano 1938, 110–11. 22 Scheffer-Boichorst 1874, 911.

23 Jacques de Vitry 1960, 147.

The Accounts of the Mongol Invasions of 1241–1260

The visitation by Batu's forces brought home the danger confronting Catholic Christendom, prompting the Niederaltaich annalist to record that the Hungarian kingdom, which had existed for 350 years, had been destroyed.²⁴ The invasion also engendered a flurry of appeals for help from the devastated territories, which provide graphic testimony to the panic the Mongols inspired.²⁵ Some are to be found in archival collections, as are two letters written, during Béla IV's enforced absence in Croatia, by prominent ecclesiastics in Hungary to the Papal Curia (unaware that Pope Gregory IX had died and that the Holy See was vacant).²⁶ Others have come down to us through being preserved within annalistic sources. Matthew Paris incorporated several letters from 1241–1242 in the body of his *Chronica majora* (Greater Chronicle) and in a supplement (*additamenta*) appended to it after 1245 exclusively comprising documents.²⁷ Particularly informative are a Hungarian bishop's description of his interrogation of two Mongol prisoners (in which their responses read almost as if they were taken directly from Pseudo-Methodius), and a letter from the Landgrave Henry of Thuringia to Duke Henry II of Brabant.²⁸ An encyclical letter of the Emperor Frederick II, which Matthew also inserted in his chronicle,²⁹ contains some snippets of information about the Mongols' methods of waging war, though Frederick's source is unknown. What also emerges is the emperor's determination to profit from the Mongol threat, by offering himself as leader of Catholic Europe in the conflict with the invaders, and thereby put pressure on the Pope to withdraw his excommunication and welcome him back into the fold.³⁰

Of a different order are two detailed narratives of the events of 1241–1242 composed within the Hungarian kingdom. One is the *Carmen miserabile* (Woeful Dirge) of Roger of Torre Maggiore, canon of Várad (Grosswardein, Nagyvárad, now Oradea in Rumania), written in 1243–1244. The other is embedded in the history of the archbishops of Spalato (now Split) by Thomas, archdeacon of Spalato, begun in the late 1240s (though not finished

24 Jaffé 1861b, 394.

25 Generally: Schmieder 1991. Also Boehmer 1839; these letters are taken from Innsbruck Universitätsbibliothek MS 187, which also contains Julian's *Epistula* (below).

26 Magyar Országos Levéltár (Hungarian National Archives), MSS DF 290697, DF 290698 (letters of Uros, abbot of St. Martin in Pannonia [Pannonhalma], 1241). Schneider 1915 (letter of the leading ecclesiastics, 1242).

27 For the composition of Matthew's *Chronica majora*: Vaughan 1958.

28 For these and other letters: Matthew Paris 1872–1883, 6: 75–84; on the interrogation of the two Mongol prisoners: Klopprogge 1993, 162–68; Jackson 2001, 355–56.

29 Matthew Paris 1872–1883, 4: 112–19. 30 Jackson 1991, 12–14.

until 1266).³¹ Roger was an eyewitness of much of what he describes, having himself been taken prisoner by the invaders in 1241 but escaped during their withdrawal east.³² Thomas clearly based his account in part on the accounts of eyewitnesses. He affords especially valuable insight into the condition of Hungary on the eve of the Mongol attack, claiming that when in 1239/1240 news reached them of the Mongols' arrival in neighboring Rus', many Hungarians treated the news as a joke, and also suggesting that the nobility and knighthood had been enervated by a long period of peace.³³ It should be noted, however, that his language is very colorful, betraying a heavy debt to biblical imagery, and his description of the invaders is at least partly freighted with stock perceptions of the "Other."

Both authors provide relatively detailed accounts of the engagement at Mohi (April 11, 1241). Thomas ascribes the defeat of King Béla IV in part to the arrangement of their encampment, where men and horses were too closely packed and the tent ropes proved a major hazard once the Mongol attack was underway.³⁴ The accounts of the aftermath given by Roger and Thomas complement each other admirably. Roger alone speaks of the treachery of Frederick II, Duke of Austria, in taking advantage of Béla's plight to extort territory from him, but says little of the king's activity thereafter. Thomas naturally furnishes a detailed account of Béla's flight southwards towards the Adriatic and the Mongol pursuit under Qadan, and includes the important detail that when Qadan appeared before Spalato in March 1242 he had been obliged to leave behind the majority of his army owing to the dearth of fodder for the horses.³⁵ Thanks to these two sources, we are far better informed about events in Hungary in 1241–1242 than about the briefer Mongol campaign in Poland, which is noted in a number of local annals.³⁶

The Mongol threat to the Latin east is also documented both in letters and in annalistic sources. Matthew Paris, again, provides the most detailed western account of the Mongol raid of 1244 into northern Syria, when Prince Bohemond V of Antioch rejected an ultimatum demanding that he dismantle his fortresses and (allegedly) hand over all his gold and silver

31 Thomas of Spalato 2006, Latin text, 252–304 (tr. 253–305). For a summary of this work: Sweeney 1982.

32 Roger of Várád 2010, text and tr., 210–11, 220–21. On Roger: editors' introduction to Roger of Várád 2010, xli–lii; Babinger 1955.

33 Thomas of Spalato 2006, Latin text, 230, 254 (tr. 231, 255).

34 Thomas of Spalato 2006, Latin text, 260–8 (tr. 261–69). Roger of Várád 2010, text and tr., 180–91; for the Austrian duke: text and tr., 192–97.

35 Thomas of Spalato 2006, Latin text, 288–90, 294–302 (tr. 289–91, 295–303); for the fodder problem: 298 (tr. 299).

36 Becker 1932; Irgang 1991; Szcześniak 1958.

together with 3,000 young maidens.³⁷ The mounting rumors of Hülegü's advance through Iran during the late 1250s, and his destruction of the Baghdad caliphate, are reflected in various letters, notably that of the Templar Gui de Basainville (1257).³⁸ The fall of Aleppo to Hülegü's great army in January 1260, the submission of Bohemond VI of Antioch–Tripoli under the influence of his father-in-law, the Armenian king Het'um I, and the arrival at Acre of an ultimatum from Kitbuqa prompted various appeals for aid to Western Europe. Three are especially informative: from the papal legate Thomas Agni di Lentino to Christendom at large (March 1, 1260),³⁹ from the Templar Master, Thomas Bérard, to the Templar Preceptor in England (March 4, 1260);⁴⁰ and from Thomas Agni and the nobles and clergy of the Kingdom of Jerusalem to Charles of Anjou (April 22, 1260), which reveals that Hülegü had insisted on the reinstatement at Antioch of the Greek Orthodox patriarch.⁴¹ Like the letters of 1241–1242, this correspondence vividly conveys the sense of panic among the Palestinian Frankish establishment. But it is noteworthy that the letter to Charles of Anjou additionally portrays the situation as one of opportunity – namely that in view of the unexpectedly rapid collapse of the Ayyūbids a timely crusade from the west would both intimidate the Mongols into withdrawal and greatly extend Frankish territory.

A narrative of events from the arrival of Hülegü's forces in Syria down to Kitbuqa's sack of Sidon and his defeat by the Egyptian Mamluks at 'Ayn Jālūt in September 1260 is found in the final section of the late thirteenth-century work known as the *Gestes des Chiprois*.⁴² There is an earlier account, dating from soon after 1261, in the so-called "Rothelin" continuation of William of Tyre's twelfth-century history. It focuses more closely on the dilemma confronting the Franks of Acre when they received the invitation of the Mamluk sultan Qutuz to join forces against the Mongols, and includes the advice offered during the ensuing council of war by the Master of the Teutonic Knights, who urged remaining aloof from the conflict.⁴³ This view is in some measure reflected in Western European chronicle writing, where the reaction to the news of the Mamluk victory at 'Ayn Jālūt, closely

37 Matthew Paris 1872–1883, 4: 389–90. 38 For these letters: Jackson 1980, 489.

39 In Weiland 1874, 547–49; tr. in Barber and Bate 2010, 153–56.

40 In Luard 1864–1869, 1: 491–95; a better text is copied into a letter from Gui de Basainville to the Templar preceptor in Aquitaine: *Monumenta Boica*, 29, part 2 (Munich, 1831), 197–202.

41 Ed. Delaborde 1894, 212–15; Langlois 1917, 487–90.

42 Minervini 2000, 80, 82, 86, 88 (tr. Crawford 2003, 34–35, 37–38).

43 "Rothelin" 1859, 637 (tr. in Shirley 1999, 117–19).

following upon the Mongol attack on Sidon, betrays a sense that the sultan had brought deliverance for the whole region – and at no cost to the Franks.⁴⁴ The Heiligenkreuz annals, omitting any mention of the sultan, report the battle almost as if it were a Christian victory.⁴⁵

Documentation Available to the Papal Curia by 1245

During the first two decades or so, between the Mongols' initial appearance and their invasion of Hungary and Poland, no one from Catholic Europe had ventured into their territories. But in 1237 a Hungarian Dominican named Julian had penetrated to the very fringes of the Mongol world. He was one of a number of Dominican friars engaged in seeking to make contact with the people of "Greater Hungary" (possibly the Bashkirs), who were believed to be related to the European Hungarians. Arriving at the borders of Greater Hungary, he heard how it had recently been subjugated by the Mongols, and he returned to Hungary by way of Suzdal'. Around the close of 1237 Julian transmitted his report, *Epistula de vita et moribus Tartarorum* (Letter Concerning the Life and Practices of the Tartars), to the papal legate in Hungary; in the text he inserted the translation of an ultimatum (in the qa'an's name) to King Béla IV from Batu, whose envoys had been intercepted by the prince of Suzdal' – the earliest Mongol ultimatum to come down to us in any form.⁴⁶

Much of Julian's *Epistula* comprises fabulous elements, notably the account of the Mongols' origins, for which he was indebted to an unnamed Rus' cleric. Here, as in Rus' sources that describe the earlier conflicts with the Polovtsy and that report the first appearance of the Mongols in the Pontic steppe in 1222–1223,⁴⁷ the nomads are identified with the barbarian peoples whose irruption had been prophesied by Pseudo-Methodius. The reason given for their expansion is also apocryphal, since Julian alleges that they had left their homeland to avenge the rape and murder of their ruler's sister. Nevertheless, this document is the earliest to contain accurate data – most importantly, the remark that the Mongols' ambition was to conquer the

44 Weiland 1874, 549: "Soldanus Babilonie . . . eos vicit viriliter et potenter." Jaffé 1866, 191: "eos viriliter superavit."

45 Wattenbach 1851b, 644: "commisum est prelium."

46 The text was first published by Hormayr in 1842 from an unspecified manuscript and reprinted in Dörrie 1956, 165–82; for the ultimatum see Dörrie 1956, 179. Sinor 2002 demonstrated that the manuscript was Innsbruck Universitätsbibliothek 187.

47 Cross 1929; Chekin 1992.

entire world,⁴⁸ a fact reinforced by the uncompromising tones of the ultimatum.

Then, in 1244–1245, on the eve of the Council of Lyon which Pope Innocent IV had summoned to discuss, among other things, the problem of future Mongol attacks, a refugee cleric from Rus' named Peter arrived in Italy. Although described as an archbishop in the various sources that have come down to us, he may have been the suffragan bishop of Belgorod, twenty miles or so from Kiev.⁴⁹ Interrogated by the Pope and cardinals, Peter provided the Curia with fresh information about the new masters of most of Asia. His answers, entitled in the surviving manuscripts *Tractatus de ortu Tartarorum* (Treatise on the Rise of the Tartars), were also incorporated in the Burton annals and (in a version to which Matthew Paris made additions of his own) in the *Chronica majora*.⁵⁰ His account of the Mongols' origins fits squarely in a Methodian framework and hence strongly resembles the version supplied by Julian (though it would place too heavy a burden on the evidence were we to identify him with Julian's anonymous clerical informant). The other details he gave, however, and which he claimed to have obtained from an exiled Mongol commander (allegedly a son-in-law of Chinggis Khan himself), were of two sorts. The first was material calculated to leave the Curia in no doubt as to the Mongols' aims and strength: their aim was world conquest; their forces were operating on three fronts, against the Egyptians, against the Turks (of Anatolia?), and against the Hungarians and Poles, and they were due to rendezvous in Syria (an impressive, if far from accurate, summary); they had been joined by people of all nations and of every religion; they were formidable archers, wore virtually impenetrable leather armor, and deployed highly accurate siege weaponry; they were preparing to launch ships (this last detail surely untrue, given that the Mongols had as yet to subdue any state that possessed a fleet); and they did not spare those who waited to be attacked. The second kind of information, on the other hand, was likely to reassure Peter's interlocutors regarding the character of the Mongols: they claimed that St. John the Baptist was their leader; they had heard that the Pope was the supreme leader on Earth and were eager to visit him (this in only one manuscript);⁵¹ and they received envoys favorably, dealing with them expeditiously before sending them back.

48 Dörrie 1956, 172. 49 Ruotsala 2001, 154.

50 Luard 1864–1869, I: 271–75; Matthew Paris 1872–1883, 4: 386–89. Both texts are printed in Dörrie 1956, 187–94, who inadvertently omits a few lines from the Burton annals version (at 189, from *domini cujusdam* down to *interfecto Salbatin*; cf. Luard 1864–1869, I: 272).

51 Österreichische Landesbibliothek, Linz, MS 446, fol. 267b; Ruotsala 2001, 154.

What Peter did not reveal was that the Mongols regarded the dispatch of an embassy to them as the first step in the process of submission; and here we need to consider the precise purpose of his arrival in Lyon. After his appearance at Lyon, he vanishes from sight. Whoever he was, we cannot discount the possibility that the *Tractatus* is not the straightforward dossier that it seems and that Peter was no genuine refugee but was in the Mongols' service (rather like the anonymous spy mentioned, as we saw above, in Matthew Paris's *Chronica maiora*) – in which case his errand was doubtless to induce the papacy to enter into diplomatic relations with the Mongol imperial government.⁵²

Julian's *Epistula* and Peter's responses to the questions put to him at Lyon stand out sharply from previous accounts produced within the west. Even though the *Epistula* incorporates material on the Mongols that smacks of fable, and even though Peter's aims may have imparted a particular slant to his statements, these two men furnished the Curia with the earliest reliable information since the Mongols had first appeared on the horizons of Catholic Christendom. Peter's testimony, in particular, regarding the newcomers' treatment of envoys was instrumental in persuading Innocent IV to dispatch the first western embassies to the Mongols, a full four years after their attack on Latin Christian territory.

The Accounts of the First Western Missions to the Mongol World (1245–1260)

In March 1245, even before the council had assembled, Pope Innocent dispatched three embassies to the Mongol world, influenced, no doubt, by Peter's statement regarding the operations of three distinct Mongol armies.⁵³ A party of Franciscan friars, headed by Giovanni del Pian di Carpine (commonly known as John of Plano Carpini), former provincial minister in Saxony, took the northerly route through Bohemia and Poland into the Pontic steppes. Arriving at Batu's encampment, they were required to go on to Mongolia, where they were present at the enthronement of Güyük Qa'an. Carpini's mission therefore caused the greatest stir, not merely because it was the first to return but because it had traveled much further, across most of the breadth of Asia. He himself completed his *Ystoria Mongalorum quos nos Tartaros appellamus* (History of the Mongols, Whom We Call the Tartars) at Lyon in October 1247. This is a highly systematic

52. Jackson 2016. 53. Jackson 2012, 225.

work, divided into chapters that deal with the Mongols' clothing and diet, their cultic practices and other customs, the history of their rise to power and the character of their rule, their weaponry and military tactics, and even the best means of resisting them. It is available in two recensions, of which the earlier, comprising the thematic Chapters 1–8, is represented by several manuscripts; the later recension, which includes an additional Chapter 9, narrating the history of the mission, has survived in only three. This second version exhibits also numerous additions and emendations, of varying importance. It has been proposed that Carpini was the author only of the first eight chapters, on the ground that certain of these alterations are at variance with the earlier text in style, tone, or content. In particular, the cool detachment characteristic of the earlier redaction is, on occasions, jettisoned in the second, which clearly exhibits the aim of downplaying the Mongols' strength and of fortifying western resistance to them.⁵⁴ These arguments are not necessarily conclusive: following his return to Lyon, Carpini may have been under pressure from the Papal Curia to make such changes himself (see also below).

One of Carpini's colleagues, the Polish Franciscan Benedict, who had been taken on at Cracow, was responsible for a briefer report, dictated to a cleric at Cologne and incorporating the odd detail not found in the *Ystoria*.⁵⁵ There are also secondhand accounts, since Carpini tells us that as the party returned through Poland, Bohemia, Germany, and France they were frequently questioned regarding their mission and that incomplete versions were being written down.⁵⁶ At least two of these abridgments have survived, from one of which we learn that Carpini's return route took him by way of the Hungarian royal court.⁵⁷ According to the chronicler Salimbene of Adam, who met Carpini at a Franciscan convent just prior to his arrival at Lyon and again in 1248 when Carpini was returning to Lyon after carrying a papal message to the French court, he had his book read out to the friars there, explaining whatever was unclear and amplifying the details by word of mouth.⁵⁸

The work known as the *Tartar Relation*, composed by a Franciscan who calls himself "C. de Bridia" and dedicated in July 1247 to Bogusław, the provincial minister of Poland, might appear to be just another secondhand abridgment of Carpini's *Ystoria*, but is in fact a distinct account in its own right. It emphasizes the need to strengthen western armies with

54 Ostrowski 1990, 530–50. Cf. Guéret-Laferté 1994, 25. 55 Cardauns 1872, 542.

56 John of Plano Carpini 1989, 332–33 (tr. in Dawson 1955, 71–72).

57 Sinor 1957; Schmitt 1972.

58 Salimbene of Adam 1998–1999, 312–13, 321 (tr. Baird 1986, 196–98, 202–3).

crossbowmen (*balistarii*), and includes a few details, for instance, about the Mongol victory over Duke Henry of Silesia near Liegnitz (Legnica) in 1241.⁵⁹ The author, who tells us that he obtained information from Benedict, appears to have been one of the unnamed friars whom Carpini's party left at Batu's headquarters when they proceeded to Güyük's court and whom they found at the encampment of the Mongol commander Mochi on their return. This would explain how de Bridia was also able to glean information that is independent of either Carpini or Benedict and can only have come from his Mongol hosts.⁶⁰ For some years the sole known text of the *Tartar Relation*, which was discovered bound together with the "Vinland Map" (a palpable forgery), was widely regarded with suspicion, but Gregory Guzman's discovery of a second manuscript, dating from 1339 and uncontaminated by association with the map, has removed any doubts regarding the work's authenticity.⁶¹

The other two missions dispatched by Innocent IV, comprising Dominican friars, traveled to the Near East. One, headed by Andrew of Longjumeau, went via Egypt and Syria to Azerbaijan, where it made contact with the Nestorian "Visitor in the East," Simeon Rabban-ata. Andrew brought back letters from Simeon to the Pope, to Louis IX of France and to the Emperor Frederick,⁶² but of his own report we have only the brief abstract incorporated in the *Chronica maiora* of Matthew Paris. The second embassy, led by the Lombard Ascelin, which spent some weeks in the summer of 1247 at the encampment of the Mongol general Baiju in Greater Armenia, had gone by way of the Seljuk Sultanate of Anatolia (Rûm), to judge by the quantity of material on that region included in the report of the mission by one of its members, Simon of Saint-Quentin. Simon's *Historia Tartarorum*, which has likewise not survived in its original form, was preserved in the *Speculum historiale*, the historical section of the voluminous encyclopedia of his fellow Dominican, Vincent of Beauvais.⁶³ Vincent also included incomplete extracts from the second recension of Carpini's *Ystoria*, but we have no way of knowing whether he reproduced the whole of Simon's report or only a fraction of it, and whether he added comments of his own.⁶⁴

59 On Legnica: De Bridia 1967, 20. For the crossbow: De Bridia 1967, 36–37; Plezia 1971.

60 Plezia 1970, 20–21. For the friars left behind: John of Plano Carpini 1989, 312, 329 (tr. in Dawson 1955, 57, 69).

61 Guzman 2003; 2006. 62 Claverie 2000.

63 Guzman 1972. In Simon of Saint-Quentin 1965, Richard has excerpted from Vincent's work all the identifiable sections of Simon's report.

64 Guzman 1974. For Vincent's possible interpolation: Simon of Saint-Quentin 1965, 97–98.

In December 1248 Louis IX, then in Cyprus preparing for his crusade against Egypt, received an embassy from the general Eljigidei, whom Güyük Qa'an had recently appointed to command the Mongol forces in southwestern Asia. An account of the king's interview with the two envoys, both eastern Christians, and a Latin rendering of Eljigidei's letter, are preserved in a report to Pope Innocent from the papal legate, Odo (Eudes) of Châteauroux, Cardinal Bishop of Tusculum, dated March 31, 1249, which in turn found its way into Vincent's *Speculum historiale*. Eudes also included a letter from the Armenian Constable, Smbat (Sempad), then on a diplomatic mission to the Mongols from his brother King Het'um, which drew a highly favorable picture of the status of Christianity within the empire; had it not been for Smbat's letter, says Vincent, Louis would not have attached such credence to the statements of the two envoys.⁶⁵ They assured him that both their master and Güyük (who had in fact died in April 1248) were Christians and that Eljigidei planned to attack Baghdad in the coming year in order to avenge the sack of Jerusalem by the Khwārazmians in 1244. Louis was encouraged to respond in January 1249 with his own embassy to the Mongols, headed by Andrew of Longjumeau, whom we have already encountered.⁶⁶ The report by this mission has not survived. We know of its return only from a brief passage in Joinville's biography of Louis, which tells us that Andrew rejoined the king in Palestine in 1251, following the failure of his Egyptian campaign. He brought what appears to have been an ultimatum from the regent, Güyük's widow Oghul Qaimish, who thanked Louis for his gifts and required him to send similar "tribute" in future years, an outcome at which, Joinville tells us, the French king was bitterly disappointed.⁶⁷ It was apparently for this reason that shortly afterwards, when one of the Franciscans accompanying the crusade, the Flemish friar William of Rubruck, told him of his desire to travel to the Mongol world and requested a letter of introduction, Louis insisted that he should not allow the Mongols to believe he was an official envoy.⁶⁸

Virtually nothing is known of Rubruck outside the parameters of his mission (1253–1255) – and still less of his companion, Friar Bartholomew of Cremona. But since one of the very few authors who mentions his mission refers to Rubruck as *lector flandricus*, it has been plausibly suggested that he

65 Vincent of Beauvais 1477, Book 32, Chapter 91.

66 For Smbat's letter: Richard 1986. The letter of the legate Odo, and those of Smbat and Eljigidei reproduced within it, are translated in Jackson 2007, 74–83.

67 Joinville 1995, 242 (tr. in Smith 2008, 267); Wu 2011.

68 William of Rubruck 2011, 48 (tr. in Jackson and Morgan 1990, 97).

was lector in the Franciscan convent at Nicosia in Cyprus.⁶⁹ His primary purpose, as he himself informs us, was to bring spiritual comfort to a group of German miners who had been enslaved and carried off from Transylvania during the invasion of 1241–1242 and of whose plight Andrew had spoken. He wished, in addition, to follow up reports that Batu's son, the Mongol prince Sartaq, was a Christian, and it is clear that he would also have valued opportunities to preach the Christian Gospel to the Mongols. On the first count, his mission was a failure: he was unable to ascertain the whereabouts of the Germans, who had been moved to another location, until it was too late.⁷⁰ He had very little chance to preach. And he even concluded that rumors of Sartaq's Christian faith, as indeed that of Güyük and Möngke, sprang from gross exaggeration by the Nestorians.⁷¹

Underlying Rubruck's frustrations were two circumstances. The first was the Mongols' own attitude towards the religions of their subjects. Even those Mongols who had accepted something of the faith were unwilling to be called Christians,⁷² and the qa'an himself patronized holy men from many different confessions, who were thereby all misled into believing that they enjoyed his particular favor.⁷³ The second stumbling block was Mongol diplomatic protocol. Rubruck's hosts misunderstood the purpose of his journey and took him to be an envoy of King Louis. For this he was himself partly responsible. Informed by traders at Soldaia (Sūdāq), in the Crimea, almost at the outset of his mission, that he would be denied permission to continue if he did not allow the Mongols to think he was an envoy, he chose to remain silent. The fact that he carried a letter from Louis, asking for him to be given safe conduct, also served to reinforce the impression that his errand was an official one. Although it is no longer extant, we know from the details which Rubruck cites at intervals that Louis not only felicitated Sartaq on his conversion but urged him to be a friend to all Christians and an enemy to the enemies of the Cross.⁷⁴ The Mongols readily took this as an appeal for military assistance, and Sartaq regarded the matter as sufficiently important to forward the friars to Batu, who in turn sent them on to Möngke's court. Interrogated here yet again regarding the purpose of his mission, Rubruck was told that Batu's letter had been lost. It was only from this juncture that he

69 Pelliot 1973, 233. For the phrase *lector flandricus*: Jackson and Morgan 1990, 282.

70 William of Rubruck 2011, 110, 112, 238 (tr. Jackson and Morgan 1990, 144–46, 226).

71 William of Rubruck 2011, 82 (tr. Jackson and Morgan 1990, 122).

72 William of Rubruck 2011, 80, 86 (tr. Jackson and Morgan 1990, 120, 126).

73 William of Rubruck 2011, 170, 172 (tr. Jackson and Morgan 1990, 187); Jackson 2005.

74 On the contents of Louis's letter: Richard 1977.

was able to disown any diplomatic errand, though the qa'an employed him as his own ambassador when sending him back to King Louis. His diplomatic status meant that he was unable to preach. He had hoped to submit his findings in person to the French monarch, but when he reached Cyprus in 1255, he found that Louis and the Crusaders had returned to France the previous year, and the Franciscan provincial insisted that he send a written report to Paris instead.

Rubruck's *Itinerarium* is markedly more diffuse than Carpini's report, since he seems to have interpreted broadly Louis's instruction to set down everything he saw and heard among the "Tartars" and not to be inhibited about writing at length.⁷⁵ he thus incorporates brief notices even on Asian fauna like the yak and the *Ovis poli*. The *Itinerarium* is also structured less methodically than the *Ystoria*. It nevertheless contains thematic sections. Chapters 2–8 are devoted specifically to topics such as the Mongols' diet, hunting practices, and marriage and burial customs; Chapter 25 supplies the earliest western account of Buddhism, and Chapter 35 comprises a detailed account of shamanistic practices – the only account, in fact, that we possess from the period before those practices were subsumed by Buddhism in the sixteenth century. The remaining chapters are narrative in character, recounting the course of the mission from Rubruck's departure from Constantinople in May 1253 to his arrival back in Cyprus in the summer of 1255. Although the *Itinerarium* further lacks the cool detachment of Carpini's *Ystoria*, it is more lively and colorful, beginning with Rubruck's vivid sense, as he entered the steppe, that he was encountering "another world."⁷⁶ He is the only western author to relate interviews with Mongol rulers. Unlike Carpini, he spent time in Qaraqorum, of which he furnishes the only contemporary description we possess. It is admittedly a somewhat disparaging description, since he tells us that it was tiny compared with Paris and that the qa'an's palace there was smaller than the abbey of Saint-Denis;⁷⁷ yet it has proved of great value to successive archaeological expeditions. Rubruck was an assiduous and penetrating observer, noticing details on which previous visitors to the Mongols are silent: the consistent layout of Mongol encampments, for instance, and the respective places occupied within a princely tent by the men and the women.⁷⁸ He was the first Western European, moreover, to supply details of the Chinese ("Cathayans"), whom Carpini had mentioned only in passing,

75 William of Rubruck 2011, 6 (tr. Jackson and Morgan 1990, 59).

76 William of Rubruck 2011, 18, 48 (tr. Jackson and Morgan 1990, 71, 97).

77 William of Rubruck 2011, 231 (tr. Jackson and Morgan 1990), 221.

78 Fernández-Armesto 1982, 278–79.

and recognized in them the people known to the ancient Romans as the silk-producing “Seres.”⁷⁹

The importance of Rubruck’s *Itinerarium* lies in its content and quality rather than in any impact it had on contemporaries. It seems barely to have circulated. Only five medieval manuscripts are extant; and since four of those are of English provenance, it may be that their survival is due in part to the English Franciscan Roger Bacon, who was greatly indebted to Rubruck for the geographical sections of his *Opus maius* (Greater Work) (1266–1267) and who tells us that he was able to collate his own copy of the *Itinerarium* with the author when they met (at an uncertain date, but possibly in the late 1250s in Paris). This suggests that Rubruck’s report reached King Louis, but there is no direct evidence that it did so. Indeed, apart from Bacon, we have no evidence whatsoever that anybody read the work. Some of Bacon’s information is absent from any of the manuscripts of the *Itinerarium*, and must accordingly be based on Rubruck’s oral testimony: the statement, for instance, that the Mongols would have paid him more heed had he known something of the stars.⁸⁰ Whether Bacon’s copy was the book “on the lifestyle and customs of the Tartars, approximately the length of a psalter,” which two late thirteenth-century English chroniclers tell us was presented to Simon de Montfort in 1257, we cannot tell.⁸¹

We should also note at this juncture two slightly later reports that are no longer extant. One relates to the Ilkhanid Mongols. Early in 1260, the Frankish government at Acre sent the Dominican David of Ashby to make contact with Hülegü, whose army was then besieging Aleppo. David was obliged, it seems, to accompany Hülegü back to Iran, returning to the west just prior to the Second Council of Lyon (1274); he attended the council, apparently having escorted a diplomatic mission from Hülegü’s successor Abaqa.⁸² The sole known manuscript of *Les fais des Tartares* (The Doings of the Tartars), which he probably composed for that occasion, was regrettably destroyed in a fire in Turin in 1904, though we should note that one chapter had been transcribed and published in the previous century.⁸³ The anonymous *Descripciones terrarum*, which has been dated to 1256 and whose author was engaged in spreading the Gospel in Prussia, covers northern and

79 William of Rubruck 2011, 130, 132 (tr. Jackson and Morgan 1990, 161–62).

80 Charpentier 1935. On Bacon’s testimony: Abate 2013; Ruotsala 2013.

81 Liebermann 1888, 510–11; Ellis 1859, 217 (*ad annum* 1258). Both sources refer to the *Liber additamentorum* at St. Albans, which Bigalli 1971, 25, wrongly identifies with the documents gathered by Matthew Paris.

82 Roberg 1973, 289–95; and see the report of Abaqa’s envoys at 300.

83 Brunel 1958. Published extracts in Scheler 1867, 26–28.

Northeastern Europe. It has been attributed to the Dominican Jacek Odrowąż (St. Hyacinth, d. 1257), whom certain Polish writers from the sixteenth century onwards would closely link with apocryphal attempts to evangelize the Mongols.⁸⁴ Although they are barely mentioned in this piece, the *incipit* and the final sentence together make it clear that an account of the Mongols – their origin, advent, and customs – was to follow; possibly it was never written.⁸⁵

As a whole, the surviving reports of mid-thirteenth-century Latin visitors do more to illuminate the lifestyle of the nomadic Mongols and the conventions of imperial diplomacy than do sources from any other culture. The friars – men trained in the best intellectual traditions of the medieval Latin west – were especially well equipped to observe keenly and to describe their experiences clearly. Despite these undeniable advantages, however, it is vital to note two pronounced characteristics that they share. First, although on occasions they express a healthy skepticism, they also tend to accept legend or myth. Carpini incorporates, for instance, an alleged victory by Prester John over the Mongols.⁸⁶ Rubruck, by contrast, is extremely dismissive of Prester John, whose former territory he believed he had passed through and whose might, he concludes, had been greatly inflated by the Nestorians.⁸⁷ Yet he still transmits fabulous details that he has picked up in Central Asia regarding more distant peoples like the Tibetans, with whom he had no direct contact.⁸⁸

The second characteristic relates to the way in which they projected the Mongols. Carpini was greatly indebted to Rus' whom he met in Mongolia – whether low-status slaves, clerics, or those in the suites of princes; Rubruck, too, drew much of his information from expatriate Europeans who had been enslaved by the Mongols during the invasion of Hungary and Poland.⁸⁹ *Déracinés* of this kind, particularly slaves longing for deliverance, had every interest in exaggerating the vulnerability of their captors in the event of a western attack. Thus Carpini, Simon, and Rubruck all place a marked emphasis on the Mongols' weaknesses. For Carpini, the conquerors were physically weaker and fewer in number than the Europeans, and the enslaved

84 Tryjarski 1996.

85 Freibergs 1999. For the text (from Trinity College, Dublin, MS 347): Colker 1979, 720–26: “Ad sciendum ortum progressum consuetudines gentis que Tartari nuncupantur notandum est,” concluding with “Ceterum iam Tartari et qualiter exorti fuerunt breviter declarabo.”

86 John of Plano Carpini 1989, 258–59 (tr. Dawson 1955, 22–23).

87 William of Rubruck 2011, 82 (tr. Jackson and Morgan 1990, 122).

88 Jackson 2001, 368–69. 89 Guzman 2010.

peoples were merely waiting for a chance to mutiny.⁹⁰ Both he and Rubruck appear eager to stress that various peoples were still holding out against the Mongols.⁹¹ Simon cites the assurance of Georgians and Armenians that the conquerors feared the Franks more than any other nation in the world.⁹² Rubruck compares Mongol strength unfavorably with that of the fifth-century Huns, who had penetrated more deeply into Europe⁹³ – but by dint of ignoring, of course, the fact that the center of gravity of Attila's empire had lain much further west. Yet the reason for such over-sanguine assessments was quite simply that the friars saw it as their task to stiffen western resolve in advance of the next Mongol attack and thus ensure that the invaders encountered more formidable resistance than in 1241.

Western Geography and the Taste for Marvels

No subsequent accounts by Western European visitors to the Mongol Empire measure up to the standards of Carpini and Rubruck, even though some penetrated further, as far as China ("Cathay"). The original text of the book associated with Marco Polo is no longer extant, but there exist more than 120 pre-print manuscripts, including translations. It is widely agreed that the MS fr. 1116, to be found in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, and written in a French heavily influenced by Italian, is the earliest surviving version and probably, therefore, the closest to Rustichello's original text. Of the other manuscript traditions, particular mention should be made of a French version that Polo himself allegedly presented to the ambassador of the French king Philip IV in Venice in 1307; of a number of fifteenth-century Venetian manuscripts; and of the so-called "Z text," a Latin version, also dating from the fifteenth century. This last offers important information that is not found in MS fr. 1116 and that in some cases harmonizes with the now unidentifiable manuscript used by Gian Battista Ramusio for his printed edition of 1557.

Two points should be made at the outset. The first is that MS fr. 1116 represents in large measure the interests and preoccupations of Rustichello, as the book's coauthor, rather than simply those of a member of the Venetian mercantile class. The second point is that this is emphatically not a traveler's

90 John of Plano Carpini 1989, 295, 301 (tr. Dawson 1955, 44, 49).

91 John of Plano Carpini 1989, 258–59, 260, 290–91, 300 (tr. Dawson 1955, 22–23, 41–42, 48–49). William of Rubruck 2011, 10, 70, 130, 294, 296 (tr. Jackson and Morgan 1990, 65, 112, 161, 259).

92 Simon of Saint-Quentin 1965, 98.

93 William of Rubruck 2011, 104 (tr. Jackson and Morgan 1990, 138–39).

memoir (as is Rubruck's *Itinerarium*, for instance). Although the prologue does supply a brief and skeletal survey of the first eastward journey, in the 1260s, by Marco's father and uncle, Niccolò and Maffeo Polo, the main part of the book is only loosely structured around their second journey in c. 1272–1274, when Marco accompanied them, or around his own travels in the qa'an's service until the departure of all three men for the Ilkhanate via the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean in 1290. The book is, rather, a description of the known world, in all its diversity: in some manuscripts, the title is given as *Le divisament du monde* (The Divers Parts of the World). The vantage point is sometimes expressed through the first person or through the third (occasionally with Marco's name attached), but more often the style is quite impersonal; and the work includes regions, such as East Africa and Japan ("Cipangu"), that the Polos certainly never visited.⁹⁴ Although Marco came of merchant stock, moreover, the book is concerned only to a limited degree with the commerce and products of Asiatic regions. He may have engaged in trade while he was in the qa'an's service, but we should bear in mind that – at least if his book is to be believed – Qubilai expected him, on his return from his various missions, to bring back entertaining and exotic information.⁹⁵ The tone of the *Divisament* may have been determined not merely by Rustichello's literary interests and experience, but also by the manner in which this "male Sheherezade" had spent much of his time in the east.⁹⁶

It is therefore futile to seek to establish the routes taken by Marco Polo, though the section of the book dealing with the Yuan dominions includes what look like genuine itineraries, some of which he may have followed. With respect to Iran, we cannot always be sure whether he visited a particular town (if at all) on the way out to China or during his return. Strong doubts have been expressed whether he ever reached China, and it has been suggested that he went no further than Qubilai's encampments in Mongolia and even that he never passed beyond the Black Sea region.⁹⁷ True, no reference to the Polos has been found in any Chinese source. Undeniably, the book inflates the importance of Marco, who is described as governor of the major city of Yangzhou, and indeed the importance of all three Polos, who are credited with the construction of a machine that assisted Qubilai's troops to capture Xiangyangfu (1273), two years before they even reached the Far East.⁹⁸ The *Divisament* further fails to mention such

94 Guéret-Laferté 1994, 81–87. 95 Marco Polo 2001–2009, 1: 130 (tr. Ricci 1931, 13).

96 "Male Sheherezade" is the apt phrase of Fernández-Armesto 1982, 276.

97 Haeger 1978; Wood 1995. 98 Pelliot 1959–1973, 4–5; cf. Haw 2006, 116.

conspicuous features of Chinese life as tea drinking or the practice of binding the feet of Chinese women (although its silence regarding the Great Wall is explicable on the ground that this construction, in its present form, dates only from the sixteenth century).⁹⁹ Presumably we can explain such omissions on the ground that as clients and agents of the occupying power the Polos stood aloof from the subject Chinese population; they would have formed part of the class known in Chinese as *semuren*.

Yet formidable arguments have been advanced in favor of the authenticity of his travels, not least in relation to the quality of his information on the Yuan empire.¹⁰⁰ It is significant that, for all their formulaic quality, the chapters concerning China are more detailed than any of those relating to the Near East or Iran and can hardly be based upon secondhand experience of the country. We might not choose to rely exclusively on the *Divisament* for that information, but it receives strikingly frequent corroboration from the Chinese material. The Polos may therefore retain the distinction of being the first Western Europeans known to have reached China.

Even if it was by far the best-known Western geographical survey produced in the Mongol period, Polo's *Divisament* was not the only one. Although the Franciscan Odoric of Pordenone assures us at the outset that he set out in order to win a "harvest of souls," his *Relatio* is in fact silent regarding any efforts to spread the Gospel. The book betrays a greater interest in commercial goods and prices and more especially in curiosities and marvels. Odoric, who traveled through Iran to Hormuz and thence by sea to Malabar and to southern China ("Manzi"), describes several Chinese cities and claims to have spent three years in Khanbaliq (the qa'an's residence, near Beijing). But apart from an account of the qa'an's court, his hunting expeditions, the annual festivals and the *jam* network, he has nothing to say specifically about the Mongols or their government. Much as Marco Polo's book had done, he provides cursory descriptions of lands, including Tibet and parts of Indochina, that almost certainly did not lie on his itinerary.

The hallmark of this travel literature is the accent on the marvelous. This does not necessarily involve stories of monstrous races or fabulous beasts, as would have been the case in the pre-Mongol era. Rather, marvels for Polo and Odoric, at least, tend to involve superlatives: "the greatest city," "the most plentiful (or varied) merchandise," "the largest geese," and so on.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Waldron 1990.

¹⁰⁰ Notably by de Rachewiltz 1997; Voiret 1997. On the Chinese material: especially Haw 2006; Vogel 2013.

¹⁰¹ Guéret-Laferté 1994, 245–46.

The Evidence of Commercial Documents

Not long after the Polos took their final leave of Qubilai, the Franciscan Giovanni di Montecorvino made the journey by sea in the opposite direction, from Ilkhanid Iran to Yuan China, arriving in 1294, when Qubilai had just been succeeded as qa'an by his grandson Temür (d. 1307). Montecorvino expresses his indebtedness to the Venetian merchant Pietro da Lucalongo, who had shared his outward journey. Here, as on other occasions, merchant and missionary had afforded each other mutual support. We know that a western merchant shared the fate of a group of Franciscans who were massacred at Almaliq, in the Chaghadaid dominions, in c. 1339.

But for the most part our evidence for Western European traders in the Mongol territories comes not from literary accounts, but from documentation preserved in the archives of the Italian mercantile cities, particularly Genoa and Venice. This includes notarial instruments drawn up in connection with commercial contracts (called *commenda* by the Genoese and *colleganza* by the Venetians) between the person(s) who made the journey and a passive partner who provided the bulk of the finances. Examples are the *acta* of the Genoese notaries Lamberto di Sambuceto, from Kaffa in the Crimea, and Antonio di Podenzolo, from Kilia in the Danube estuary, covering respectively the years 1281–1290 and 1360–1361. The drawbacks inherent in this type of material are twofold: first, that it tends to be remarkably unspecific, partly, perhaps, from a desire to keep the active partner's precise activities and destination secret from commercial competitors and partly from his need for maximum freedom of maneuver; and second, that we cannot be sure whether the merchant(s) in question ever set out. We are fortunate to have access also to documents pertaining to legal disputes in which traders became embroiled and on which the mother city was required to reach a verdict. Because the voyage was already completed, or was at least underway, these are, on balance, more forthcoming, like that describing the fortunes of a group of traders who in 1339 had traveled from Urgench to Ghazna on their way to Delhi.¹⁰²

We are fortunate to possess two fourteenth-century handbooks for merchants, which supply valuable information on trade routes and journey times within Asia and on the products of various emporia within the Mongol dominions. The earlier of these works is anonymous, and dates from between 1315 and 1320.¹⁰³ A slightly later work, the *Pratica della mercatura* of

102 Lopez 1943, 174–80. Lopez 1975. 103 Printed in Bautier 1970, 311–20.

Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, who was employed by the Bardi banking house in Florence and wrote around 1330, is far more detailed. What all this material tells us, of course, has far more to do with the character of trade and with the commodities traded, in the lands under the Mongol hegemony. It yields little or no information about the Mongols themselves, although we know from non-European sources that Mongol khans and other members of the Chinggisid dynasty formed *ortoq* partnerships with certain merchants, entrusting them with capital to trade on their behalf (as Berke evidently did with the elder Polos).¹⁰⁴ Pegolotti famously assured his readers that the more northerly route to Yuan China, from Tana by way of the steppes, was safe by day and by night.¹⁰⁵ Whether we can trust this statement is debatable. But in general the material relating to Western European commercial activity in the Mongol world supports the notion that the benign conditions expressed in the phrase “Pax Mongolica” were not totally eclipsed by the numerous wars between, and within, the early fourteenth-century Mongol khanates.

Western–Mongol Diplomacy and the Work of Christian Mission

From the 1260s letters to Mongol rulers figure regularly in papal correspondence,¹⁰⁶ and – less frequently – in that of western monarchs. The series begins with a letter from Urban IV, probably dating from the second half of 1262, which reveals that Hülegü had written a few months previously to Rome, doubtless at the same time as dispatching an embassy to Louis IX of France to propose simultaneous action against the Mamluks.¹⁰⁷ But it is during the pontificate of Clement IV (1265–1268) that we first find a pope envisaging military collaboration with the Ilkhan.¹⁰⁸ The question grew more urgent in the wake of the final loss of Acre and other Palestinian strongholds to the Mamluks in 1291. Diplomatic contacts aimed at the recovery of the Holy Land persisted even beyond the conversion of the Ilkhanid Mongols to Islam; it seems unlikely that the Pope and western monarchs ever learned that Ghazan and Öljeitü were Muslim rulers. That these intermittent negotiations ultimately came to nothing was due in part

104 Allsen 1989; Endicott-West 1989. 105 Pegolotti 1936, 22 (tr. in Yule 1913–1916, 3: 152).

106 For the majority of known letters exchanged down to 1300: Lupprian 1981; Tanase 2013b.

107 Lupprian 1981, 216–19. For the message to Louis: Meyvaert 1980, tr. in Barber and Bate 2010, 156–59.

108 Jackson 2018, 204–5.

(but only in part) to the widely differing perspectives of western and Mongol potentates. When Nicholas IV voiced his concern that the Ilkhan should be baptized as a precondition for joint action, Arghun expressly dismissed this step as superfluous.¹⁰⁹

Nicholas's stance reminds us that the line between papal diplomat and evangelist could be a thin one. Papal ambassadors, generally chosen, as they had been in 1245, from the ranks of the mendicant orders, were frequently also commissioned to preach the Gospel. We do not even know the primary purpose of Pope John XXI in dispatching a party of Franciscans to Abaqa in 1277.¹¹⁰ Montecorvino, who left for the east in 1290 as the official envoy of Pope Nicholas IV, spent the rest of his life proselytizing in the Yuan dominions, and the papal ambassador John of Marignolli – as far as we can tell from the exiguous details in his report – paused to preach in Almalik in c. 1341 en route for China. The overlap between crusade and mission is encapsulated in the fact that Abaqa's envoys at Lyon in 1274 voluntarily underwent baptism (doubtless in order to smooth the course of the negotiations).¹¹¹ The 1290s witnessed various rumors in the west about the Ilkhan's baptism, culminating in the excitement of 1300, when the jubilee year coincided with the news of Ghazan's temporary occupation of Syria and Palestine.¹¹²

In 1307 Pope Clement V responded to news of the success of Montecorvino's solitary endeavors in the Yuan empire by appointing him the first archbishop of Khanbaliq and dispatching a number of Franciscans to serve as his suffragans. The majority died en route in India, but two, Peregrinus of Castello and Andrew of Perugia, reached the Far East, where they acted successively as bishops of Zaytūn (Quanzhou). Initially the new see was designed to cover the whole of Asia, but in 1318 Pope John XXII created another metropolitan see, centered on the newly founded Ilkhanid residence of Sulṭāniyya and staffed by the Dominicans, to serve Southwest Asia and India, so that the jurisdiction of Khanbaliq was confined to China, Mongolia, and the territories of the Golden Horde.

Two of Montecorvino's letters to his *confrères* in Europe have come down to us;¹¹³ a slightly earlier letter (in an Italian dialect), transmitted by the Dominican Menentillus of Spoleto may have derived ultimately from Montecorvino during his stay in India en route, though Menentillus does

109 Lupprian 1981, 254, 266 (nos. 53, 57); Mostaert and Cleaves, 1952, 451–52.

110 Mentioned only in Salimbene of Adam 1998–1999, 317 (tr. Baird 1986, 200).

111 Roberg 1973, 294. 112 Schein 1979; Jackson 2018, 210–11.

113 Van den Wyngaert 1929, 345–55 (tr. in Dawson 1955, 224–31).

not name him and doubts have been expressed.¹¹⁴ We also have two letters from Peregrinus and Andrew, dated 1318 and 1326 respectively, in which they recount the progress of the work of conversion.¹¹⁵ The treatise *De statu, conditione ac regimine magni canis* (Book of the Estate of the Great Khan), which for long was extant only in a late fourteenth-century French translation, was attributed to John of Cori, Archbishop of Sulṭāniyya, but since the recent discovery of the Latin original it has been recognized as the work of an Italian Franciscan writing c. 1330.¹¹⁶ It provides a fairly general description of the Yuan empire, based probably on letters from other Franciscans in China.

Even prior to the creation of the archiepiscopal see of Sulṭāniyya, the Dominican missionary Riccoldo of Montecroce (d. 1320) was active in the east from 1288/1289 to 1300/1301, spending ten of these years in Ilkhanid Baghdad. He was the author of five letters, *Epistolae ad ecclesiam triumphantem* (Letters to the Church Victorious), written in the aftermath of the loss of Acre to the Mamluks (1291); of *Libellus ad nationes orientales* (Pamphlet to the Nations of the East), which despite its title is a survey of the different religious communities under Mongol rule, numbering among them the “Tartars” themselves (c. 1300); and of *Liber peregrinationis* (The Book of Pilgrimage), an account of his experiences combined with a description of the Near East and its peoples. All these works contain valuable observations on the Mongols and their religious attitudes.¹¹⁷

Three informative letters have come down to us from Franciscans operating in the Pontic–Caspian steppe, the dominions of the Golden Horde. One, from a Hungarian named “Johanca” and written in 1320 from a Mongol encampment in the vicinity of Bashkiria (“Bascardia”), contains the first mention of militant armed Sufis (*falsarii*, for *falcharii* < *faqīrs*) active in the Jochid lands.¹¹⁸ The other two, from the Franciscan community at Kaffa and dated May 1323, include material about the transition (1312–1313) between the reigns of Toqto’a and Özbek. Interestingly, the friars reveal that at this stage the new khan (a convert to Islam) still readily permitted them to preach the Gospel and to ring their church bells (forbidden under Islamic law); on good terms with him, they even harbored hopes of his conversion. They mention that the Mongols believed in holding to the faith last observed by their

114 Van den Wyngaert 1929, 340–45; for doubts concerning Menentillus: Phillips 2014, 39.

115 Van den Wyngaert 1929, 359–77 (tr. in Dawson 1955, 232–37).

116 Gadrat 2007; for the French version: Jacquet 1830.

117 For *Ad nationes orientales*: Dondaine 1967, 162–70; for *Epistolae ad ecclesiam triumphantem*: Röhrich 1884; for *Liber peregrinationis*: Riccoldo of Montecroce 1997; the latter two works are translated in George-Tvrtković 2012, 137–73, 175–227.

118 Bihl and Moule 1924, 66.

parents and regarded abandoning it as a mark of inconstancy.¹¹⁹ This is difficult to reconcile with the friars' reports of numerous baptisms, but it might cast an interesting light on attitudes within the Turco-Mongol world.

We have rather less material on the course of evangelism in the Chaghadaid territories: only a letter of Paschal of Vittoria, written from Almaliq in 1338 and describing both the success of his mission and his tribulations at the hands of the local Muslims,¹²⁰ and the observations of Marignolli, who passed through the town en route for China two years later. In the interval, and during the brief reign of the Muslim khan 'Alī Sulṭān, there had occurred the martyrdom of a group of Franciscan friars, Paschal included, for having publicly insulted the Prophet (1339); though it appears that the political situation had since been transformed once more, as Marignolli's party were able to preach the Gospel openly without any hindrance.¹²¹ Slightly fuller versions of the martyrdom, which mention the khan's name, are found in later fourteenth-century Franciscan sources.¹²²

The reports of Latin missionaries display certain common characteristics. In the first place, they have a marked tendency to blame setbacks on the obstructionist tactics of the local Nestorians, who, we might presume, were jealously alert to any threat to their own standing and privileges. It is a moot question, however, whether such opposition was in part provoked by the friars' own intransigent insistence on submission to Rome – and their evident disdain for a church that lacked the extensive landed endowments of the Roman Church and that had not, as that church had done, passed through the crucible of eleventh-century Gregorian reform. Second, the missionary accounts reflect a preoccupation with martyrdom, giving rise to the suspicion that this may on occasions have been an end in itself rather than the by-product of opposition and failure. Third, they frequently exaggerate the success that has attended their evangelistic efforts, and the prospects of further triumphs. This was only partly in order to elicit reinforcements from the west. A more potent impulse was the idea of "apocalyptic conversion," which was so much in vogue in the late thirteenth century.¹²³ Thus the friars readily announce the baptism of this or that prince, or large numbers of

119 Bihl and Moule 1923, 111–12 (tr. in Moule 1921, 365–66). On these letters: Hautala 2014.

120 Van den Wyngaert 1929, 501–6 (tr. in Yule 1913–1916, 3: 81–88).

121 Van den Wyngaert 1929, 527–28 (tr. in Yule 1913–1916, 3: 212).

122 E.g. *Chronica* xxiv Generalium Ordinis Minorum 1897, 531: "quidam religiosus saracenus, Alisoldani nomine"; Bartholomew of Pisa 1906, 335: "quidam pessimus falcherius saracenus . . . nomine Alisolda" (tr. in Yule 1913–1916, 3: 32, rendering *falcherius* incorrectly as "falconer").

123 For this concept: Daniel 1969.

common folk, while seemingly unaware of the pluralism of Mongol khans and oblivious of the fact that baptism may have held a rather different significance for the Mongol neophyte. Rubruck stands virtually alone in his shrewd recognition of the over-sanguine perspective of the Nestorian clergy and of Möngke's lack of commitment to any particular faith.

Riccoldo, writing in Iraq, perhaps in the aftermath of the Ilkhan Ghazan's public acceptance of Islam, expresses a somewhat different perspective, if an undeniably cynical one. He observes that the Mongols have in their entirety gone over to the rival faith, in part because the "Saracens" offered them material inducements; he had allegedly been told that they would have embraced Christianity, but that Christians would not make them adequate gifts.¹²⁴ It is noteworthy that he, at least, was prey to no illusions about the moral standing of his hosts or their usefulness as allies for the crusade. He describes the Ilkhan Arghun as "the worst of men, given to every kind of villainy, though a friend to the Christians."¹²⁵ He also emphasizes that the Mongols, believing still that the whole world had been created for their benefit and conferred upon them as a possession, took for granted any obedience and deference that was shown them.¹²⁶

Crusade Theorists and the Mongols

This brings us to a group of late thirteenth-/early fourteenth-century writers concerned with the crusade against the Mamluk empire and the recovery of the Holy Land.¹²⁷ The Dominican William Adam, who in 1322 would be created Archbishop of Sulṭāniyya by Pope John XXII, produced his *Tractatus quomodo Sarraceni sunt expugnandi* (Treatise on How to Vanquish the Saracens) in c. 1318. It is of interest, inter alia, for the information it supplies regarding Arghun's recruitment of Genoese mariners and their construction of ships on the river Tigris in 1290 with a view to entering the Red Sea and attacking the Mamluks from the rear – an abortive project that would later be taken up, with some success, by the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century.¹²⁸ William was one of the few Western observers to notice the frequent and amicable diplomatic contacts between the Mamluk regime and the "Northern Tartars," namely the Mongols of the Golden Horde, about

124 Riccoldo of Montecroce 1997, 112 (tr. in George-Tvrtković 2012, 197).

125 Riccoldo of Montecroce 1997, 114 (cf. tr. in George-Tvrtković 2012, 198).

126 Riccoldo of Montecroce 1997, 78, 80 (tr. in George-Tvrtković 2012, 188).

127 For a survey of such treatises written between 1290 and 1336: Leopold 2000, 8–51.

128 William Adam 2012, 104; Richard 1968.

which he was evidently better informed than either Marco Polo or Hayton.¹²⁹ He was optimistic about the prospects of collaboration with the Ilkhan, on the ground that the Mongols had offered aid to Louis IX's crusade in 1248 – at a time, that is, when their attitude towards independent powers had been markedly more uncompromising (this was both to misunderstand the purpose of Eljigidei's embassy and to be unaware that the Mongols of his own day had by no means relinquished their program of world conquest).¹³⁰

Fidenzio of Padua, writing in 1290–1291, similarly believed that the Ilkhan would send assistance to a crusade once it landed in Syria. He saw clearly that the Mongols were actuated by a desire to avenge the defeats they had suffered at the Mamluks' hands in 1260 and 1281.¹³¹ Reservations concerning possible joint action were widespread. The anonymous author of a *Memoria*, written between 1289 and 1308, echoes Riccoldo with his comment that the Mongols were an arrogant people who regarded the whole world as theirs by right and despised all other nations.¹³² It was doubtless for this same reason that a slightly earlier work, *Via ad Terram Sanctam* (The Route to the Holy Land), dating from around the loss of Latin Syria, had recommended that a crusading force should keep its distance from a Mongol army.¹³³ In his own memoir (1306), Fulk of Villaret, the Master of the Hospitallers, merely envisaged a simultaneous Mongol attack on Syria which would distract the Mamluks while a crusade landed in Egypt. King Henry II of Cyprus, writing in 1311, argued in favor of Egypt rather than Syria as the target of a crusade: the sultan's officers in Syria would not then dare to move to his aid from fear of a Mongol attack to their rear, whereas a landing in Syria would permit him to concentrate his forces in that region.¹³⁴ In other words, the majority of these treatises either make no mention of the Mongols or allocate them merely a subsidiary, almost incidental, role in the recovery of the Holy Land.

Very different in tone is *La flor des estoires de la terre d'Orient* (The Flower of the Histories of the East) (1307), by the Armenian prince Hayton (Het'um) of Korikos (Gorighos), included here for two reasons: that the original was written in Old French (followed within a few months by Nicolas Faucon's Latin translation), and that it was commissioned by Pope Clement v. Hayton, who had abandoned political life to become a Premonstratensian canon and was in Europe as part of an embassy to the Pope from the regent of Armenia, was asked to produce a treatise on the conduct of a future crusade, and in so doing he incorporated a section on the history of the Mongols. At first sight,

129 William Adam 2012, 46. 130 William Adam 2012, 58, 60.

131 Fidenzio of Padua 2008, 161–62. 132 Paviot 2008, 258–59. 133 Paviot 2008, 178.

134 Paviot 2008, 232, 290.

his credentials appear unimpeachable. He claims that he had witnessed many of the events narrated and that for everything prior to his own day he was indebted to his uncle, King Het'um I (d. 1270),¹³⁵ who had himself visited Möngke Qa'an's court in 1254. At one point, he mentions having accompanied Ghazan on his invasion of Syria in 1303.¹³⁶

Hayton's work is highly tendentious, however, and must be used with great caution. His list of the privileges that Möngke conferred on his uncle outstrips those specified by any previous Armenian source, and is evidently overblown; he even claims that Möngke acceded to the Armenian king's request that he be baptized.¹³⁷ His account of the Ilkhans is misleading – and in all probability disingenuous. Thus the Muslim convert Tegüder Ahmad (1282–1284) is depicted as a fanatic who had aimed to exterminate his Christian subjects. Hayton draws a contrast with Ghazan, who at his accession, under the influence of certain of his *amīrs*, had been pro-Muslim, but had since developed an antipathy towards Islam, allegedly, and had grown favorable towards the Christians.¹³⁸ Moreover, Hayton places the blame for the clash in 1260 between Kitbuqa's forces and the Franks of Sidon – and, by implication, a breakdown of trust between the Mongols and the Franks – squarely on the latter.¹³⁹ His purpose was clearly to engineer an alliance between the crusading powers and the Ilkhans that in his view represented the only hope of saving the beleaguered Armenian kingdom from the Mamluks. He therefore needed to assuage precisely those western reservations concerning the Mongols that we have noticed.¹⁴⁰ Yet even Hayton, significantly, felt compelled to admit that Ghazan would not prove receptive to western advice, and recommended that the crusading and Mongol armies follow separate routes, on the ground that the Latins would find Mongol bluster and arrogance intolerable.¹⁴¹

The Venetian Marino Sanudo Torsello began his *Liber secretorum fidelium crucis* (Book of the Secrets of the Faithful of the Cross) in 1306 and completed it in 1321. It incorporates an account of the “Tartars,” which is largely secondhand, being derived from Hayton; the brief survey of the Mongols' customs and characteristics with which it concludes is taken from Carpini, probably through the intermediary of Vincent of Beauvais.¹⁴² The work is noteworthy for its attention to economic warfare against the Mamluks. To that end Sanudo advocates that traders bypass the sultan's dominions by traveling to Ilkhanid territories, where they will additionally obtain better

135 Hayton of Korikos 1906, 213. 136 Hayton of Korikos 1906, 203.

137 Hayton of Korikos 1906, 164–66. 138 Hayton of Korikos 1906, 185, 191.

139 Hayton of Korikos 1906, 174. 140 Bundy 1986–1987; Sinor 1994.

141 Hayton of Korikos 1906, 251. 142 Marino Sanudo Torsello 2011, 372–85.

merchandise than in Alexandria.¹⁴³ He recommends friendly relations with the Ilkhan, however, purely in the interests of the conflict with the Mamluks; he views the Mongols too as a potential threat, particularly since the majority had converted to Islam.¹⁴⁴ He is aware, in any case, that the Mongols were at a disadvantage when operating in the summer heats of Palestine and that they could not help the crusade without great effort and expense.¹⁴⁵

Generally speaking, then, western sources are valuable primarily for the Mongol campaigns in Eastern Europe (on which sources from the Mongol Empire say remarkably little) and for diplomatic contacts, whether amicable or hostile, with Mongol rulers (about which sources composed within the Mongol world are totally silent). Otherwise, with a few important exceptions, they supply relatively little information concerning the Mongols and their empire that is unavailable elsewhere, and afford far greater insight into western attitudes and preconceptions than into events or conditions within the empire itself. But Western Europeans who visited Mongol Asia in the mid-thirteenth century, notably Carpini and Rubruck, are prominent among the exceptions. Their highly detailed reports provide a considerable quantity of valuable material on the character of nomadic life, the structure of Mongol society, and the nomads' cultic practices and beliefs. This material constitutes essentially the backcloth for the narrative history that can be compiled from literary sources produced within other, non-European societies.

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143 Marino Sanudo Torsello 2011, 49–51.

144 Marino Sanudo Torsello 2011, 71, 150, 154.

145 Marino Sanudo Torsello 2011, 73, 153.

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Armenian Sources

BAYARSAIKHAN DASHDONDOG

Armenian historiography dates back to the first centuries CE and continues more or less systematically until the Soviet era, also providing valuable historical sources for the Mongol period.

Édouard Dulaurier (1807–1881) was the first western scholar to translate Armenian texts relating to the Mongols in the *Journal asiatique* of 1858–1860. He published a partial translation of the *History of the Armenians* by Kirakos Ganjaketsi and extracts from the Armenian text of the *Historical Compilation* (*The Universal History*) by Vardan with its translation under the title “Les Mongols d’après les historiens arméniens: Fragments traduits sur les textes originaux.”¹

In 1869, Dulaurier edited and published the first volume of his fundamental work *Recueil des historiens des croisades: Documents arméniens*. This was a French translation of extracts from several Armenian sources for the Mongol period, namely Kirakos Ganjaketsi, Smbat Sparapet, Vardan Areweltsi, Samuel of Ani, Nersēs Palianents, and Vahram Rabun. The *Recueil* largely deals with the Crusades, and therefore does not address the Mongols’ initial incursions into the Caucasus and Cilician Armenia, or the actions of the Mongol *noyans* on the ground.²

Russian orientalists also investigated Armenian sources for the Mongols. Kerope Patkanov (Patkanean, 1833–1889) produced a Russian translation of some major Armenian sources, namely *The History of the Nation of Archers* of Grigor Aknertsi (1871), some extracts from Vardan, Step’annos Orbelian, and Smbat Sparapet’s sources in the first volume of *Istoria Mongolov po Armianskim Istochnikam* (A History of the Mongols in Armenian Sources) (1873), and extracts from Kirakos Ganjaketsi’s history in the second volume (1874). Patkanov’s work was pioneering among Russian academics, despite his

1 Dulaurier 1858, 1860. 2 RHC1.

misattribution of the history written by Grigor Aknerts'i to a monk called Maghak'ia.³

Many of the minor chronicles or annals were also given critical editions, especially by the Armenian historian V. A. Hakobyan during the Soviet era. He published Armenian chronicles written between the thirteenth and the eighteenth centuries, which contain abundant material dealing with the Mongol period.⁴

In 1962, A. Galstyan published a collection of Armenian sources for the Mongols, which for the first time also included colophons.⁵ In 1969, A. K. Sanjian issued an English translation of selected Armenian colophons relating to the period from 1301 to 1480. These included details of colophon scribes, geographical locations, and personal names of lords, *noyans*, and tax collectors, an invaluable aid for historians.⁶

The most recent Armenian historiography of the Mongols focuses on English translations. Robert Bedrosian has issued a large online collection of sources translated into English, which also includes his own studies on the Mongol period.⁷ Although his site does not deal solely with the Mongols, one can find the translation of the relevant pieces of Armenian historiography of that period, such as the histories of Kirakos Ganjaketsi and Vardan Areweltsi', as well as Smbat Sparapet's *Chronicle*, the *Chronicle Attributed to King Het'um II*, Grigor Aknerts'i's *History of the Nation of Archers*, Het'um the Historian's *History of the Tartars*, and T'ovma Mecopetsi's *History of Tamerlane and His Successors*. Although he has skipped some pages of the sources and some translations might benefit from a deeper perspective, they are still essential works.

The ERC project ArMen led by Zara Poggosian (University of Florence) aims to study Armenian sources of the ninth to fourteenth centuries in their full Eurasian context, and is therefore highly relevant for the Mongol period.⁸

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are rich in material for Armenian historiography, and the Mongols feature strongly within it. Overall, Armenian sources for that period can be classified as general historical compilations, chronicles, hagiographic sources, colophons, epigraphic sources or inscriptions, and poetry.⁹

3 Patkanov 1871; Patkanov 1873; Patkanov 1874. 4 Hakobyan 1951; Hakobyan 1956.

5 Galstyan 1962. 6 Sanjian Avedis 1969.

7 See www.attalus.org/armenian (last accessed March 20, 2021). The site contains English translations of Armenian historical sources (fifth–fifteenth centuries); also Bedrosian 1979; Bedrosian 1997.

8 See www.armen.unifi.it.

9 For bibliography of Armenian sources: Thomson 1995; Thomson 2007; For sources on the Mongols: Bias 2010; Dashdondog 2011, 2–30.

General Historical Compilations

Education and culture in Armenia were under church control, and history teaching and writing were managed by church leaders or monks, who left a great number of solid firsthand accounts of the Mongols.

Kirakos Ganjaketsi (Gandzakets'i, 1200–1271)

The fundamental Armenian source for the Mongols is the *Patmut'iwn Hayoc'* (A History of Armenia) of Kirakos Ganjaketsi. It contains sixty-five chapters that review the political history of Armenia from its Christianization until 1266/1267. It has several thematic sections, such as political history and biographical accounts of clerics in Greater and Lesser (Cilician) Armenia, as well as in Caucasian Albania. Much of this work is devoted to the events of the historian's own day, namely the Mongol invasion and domination.

From Chapter 11 onwards, Kirakos Ganjaketsi gives an extensive, in-depth account of the Mongols, starting from their emergence in the lands of Greater Armenia, Georgia, and then Cilician Armenia. Kirakos was captured along with his teacher, Vanakan Vardapet, by the Mongol *noyan* Molar.¹⁰ On Molar's orders, Kirakos was taken to serve the Mongols' secretarial needs, writing and reading letters during the summer of 1236.¹¹ He was in captivity for about a year. This gave him a certain understanding of the history and religion of the Mongols as well as some knowledge of Mongolian, which he elaborates in Chapter 32 along with a Mongol vocabulary of about seventy words and their meanings.¹² This Mongolian vocabulary ranks among the earliest Mongolian glossaries in non-Mongol sources.

The source relies on oral reports from informants and firsthand witnesses that the historian met and interviewed. It ends by describing the battle between the Ilkhan Abaqa and Berke Khan of the Golden Horde in 1266/1267.

Among the critical editions of *Patmut'iwn Hayoc'*, that of K. A. Melik'-Öhanjanyan of 1961, which combined the three earlier editions of Moscow (1858), Venice (1865), and Tiflis (1909), is still pre-eminent.¹³

10 The scholar Vanakan Vardapet or Yovhannēs Tavushetsi (1180– after 1251) was the teacher of Kirakos Ganjaketsi, Vardan Areweltsi, and Grigor Aknerts, and the author of the now lost *History of the Tatars' Invasion*; Galst'yan 1962, 118 n. 127.

11 Kirakos Ganjaketsi 1961, 243–52. 12 Kirakos Ganjaketsi 1961, 271–75; Ligeti 1965.

13 Kirakos Ganjaketsi 1961; Ganjaketsi 1858; translations: English: Bedrosian 1986, extracts in *HAL2*; Russian: Ter-Grigorian 1946, Khanlarian 1976; French: Brosset 1870, 1–194, extracts in Dulaurier 1858, 192–255, 426–73, 481–508; *RHC1*, 413–30; Modern Armenian: Arak'elyan 1982. Studies: Boyle 1963–1964; Arake'lyan 1969; Arake'lyan 1972; Arzoumanian 1984; Conrad 1995; Dashdondog 2011, 11–17.

Vardan Areveltsi (c. 1200–1271)

Vardan's *Hawak'umn Patmut'ean* (A Historical Compilation, sometimes titled A Universal History) covers the period from Creation to 1267. Its title suggests that it is a universal history, but in style it belongs to the category of chronicles.¹⁴ The tradition of combining different sources from different periods and thus elaborating new versions of specific events is maintained in Vardan's work.¹⁵

Since Kirakos and Vardan were both students of Vanakan Vardapet, and wrote their histories more or less at the same time, the sources tend to complement each other.

Vardan introduces the Mongols only at the end of the *Historical Compilation*, from Chapter 84 onwards, and, alone among his peers, addresses the subject of Armenian clerical attitudes to the Mongol invasion of Greater Armenia. His insights are further found in the narration of his visit to Hülegü in Tabriz in 1264. He depicts the Ilkhan as having a very positive attitude towards the Christians, and is significantly impressed by Hülegü's Nestorian wife Doquz Khatun. He also details Ilkhan Abaqa's marriage to Maria Despina, the Byzantine emperor's daughter. Around 1265, for unknown reasons, the original text of the *Historical Compilation* was lost, to be found again eighteen months later in the bazaar of Tiflis by a relative of Vardan. However, Vardan added only a few more pages and ended his work in 1267. There is as yet no appropriate critical edition of Vardan's *Historical Compilation*; nonetheless, two editions, by Emin and Alishan, are based on the earliest manuscripts.¹⁶

Grigor Aknerts'i or Akanets'i (1250–1335)

The authorship of the *History of the Nation of the Archers* was associated with three different names: Vardan Patmich', Maghak'ia Abegha, and Grigor Aknerts'i. H. Zhamkochyan and N. Akinean, in their articles of 1946 and

¹⁴ Besides the *Historical Compilation*, Vardan composed a *Commentary on Grammar* and a *Miscellany on Passages of Scripture*. He also participated in the translation of the Syriac *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian into Armenian (Thomson 1989, 126). Vardan's *Historical Compilation* used materials from the history of Matt'ēos Ufhayetsi (eleventh–twelfth centuries); Mxit'ar Anetsi (twelfth–thirteenth centuries); Kirakos Ganjaketsi and Vanakan Vardapet (thirteenth century) as well as Michael the Syrian (twelfth century).

¹⁵ Thomson in Vardan 1991, 13.

¹⁶ Emin 1861 (text and Russian translation); Alishan in Vardan 1991. Translations: English: Bedrosian 2007, extracts in *HAL2*, 486–92; French extracts: Dulaurier 1860; *RHC1*, 43–431; Muyltermans 1927; modern Armenian: T'osunyan 2001. Studies: Ant'abyan 1987–1989; Brosset 1862; Canard 1968; Oskean 1921; Thomson 1987; Thomson 1989; Poggosian 2014.

1948 respectively, contested the authorship of Vardan and Maghakia; finally N. Pogharean, in his introduction to the critical edition of 1974, proved the monk Grigor Aknertsı to be the author.¹⁷ There are several extant manuscripts of this work: the oldest one, dating from 1271, is from Jerusalem (in the Patriarchal Library of St. James, MS 32). Two editions issued in Jerusalem in the nineteenth century, and in St. Petersburg in 1870, are based on this oldest manuscript. Another manuscript is from Venice and is dated to the seventeenth century (Mekhitarist Library, MS 781). This text was published and translated into English by Robert Blake and Richard Frye in 1949. N. Pogharean issued a new edition of Jerusalem MS 32 in 1974.¹⁸ The old Jerusalem texts are more comprehensible than that of Venice.

Grigor Aknertsı describes Armenian events from the reign of Chinggis Khan up to 1271/1273. The work was written in 1273 in the Hermitage of Akan in Cilicia, and is far from being a universal history. It mainly concerns the history of thirteenth-century Cilicia and Greater Armenia. Despite some anachronisms in dating events prior to 1250 – such as stating that the first appearance of the Mongols in Armenia occurred in 1214 instead of 1220, that the defeat of the sultan of Rūm was in 1239 instead of 1243, and that the Mongol census in Armenia happened in 1252 instead of 1254 – Grigor accurately provides some details of the Mongols, Mamluks, and Armenians, as well as of events in Cilician Armenia. Thus he details the reception of the Cilician Armenian king by the Mongol Khan and the Mongol–Armenian treaty established by Smbat Sparapet and the Mongol commander Baiju, who replaced Chormaghan in 1242.¹⁹ Aknertsı also contributes to Mongolian studies by mentioning many names of Mongol chieftains who governed in Greater Armenia, along with some military terms.²⁰

Step'annos Orbelian (1250/1260–1304)

Step'annos Orbelian was from the Orbelian lords who ruled the Siwnik' lands in the eastern Armenian kingdom from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. In 1286, Step'annos was ordained as the metropolitan bishop of Siwnik' province. His *Patmut'iwn Nahangin Sisakan* (History of Siwnik' Province) has seventy-three chapters, covering events from the Creation of the world until

17 Zhamkochyan 1946; Akinean 1948; Grigor Aknertsı 1974.

18 Editions: Grigor Aknertsı 1870; Blake and Frye 1949 (with English translation); Grigor Aknertsı 1974. Translations: English: Bedrosian 2003; French: Brosset 1851, 439–67; Russian: Patkanov 1871; Mongolian: Dashdondog 2010 (inc. text). Studies: Cleaves 1949; Cowe 1987.

19 Grigor Aknertsı 1974, 31, 37–38. 20 Grigor Aknertsı 1974, 26.

1299, when the *History* was completed. The main focus of the work is the Orbelian House and its secular and ecclesiastical life, which are highly praised.

Information about the Mongols is found from Chapter 66 onwards. Since Step'annos Orbelian personally interacted with the Mongols, his history contains his opinions of the Ilkhans. These are in line with the aims of the Orbelian House to achieve power over other Armenian families through the Mongols. Yet for the early part of his work, Step'annos Orbelian probably used the sources of his predecessors, namely Kirakos Ganjaketsi and Vardan Areweltsi.

The *History of Siwnik' Province* was printed in 1859 in Paris by K. Shahnazareants, based on a single manuscript, and was reprinted in 1910 in Tiflis. In 1861, a Moscow edition was published by M. Emin.²¹

Chronicles/Annals

Step'annos Episkopos

This *Chronicle* was for a long period attributed to Step'annos Orbelian for two reasons: first, because of confusion between two bishops with the same name Step'annos; second, due to an overlapping narrative in both sources.²²

Step'annos Episkopos was a chronicler of the thirteenth century whose work is considered to be a continuation of the *Chronicle* of Samuēl Anetsi, the Armenian historian and priest of the twelfth century, which ends in 1180–1190. Step'annos Episkopos continued it up to 1290, until the time of Ilkhan Arghun (r. 1284–1291).

The *Chronicle* has some colorful depictions of the Mongol conquest of the city of Karin and of the author's surprise at how quickly and suddenly the country was overrun by the "Tatars," and how they took manuscripts and church plate as booty. These details are important for understanding Armenian reactions to the Mongol invasion. Part of the text was published in 1913, but the whole *Chronicle* was not edited until 1951, by V. A. Hakobyan, and was only partially translated into Russian by A. Galstyan.²³

21 Step'annos Orbelian 1859; Step'annos Orbelian 1861. Translations: French: Brosset 1866, extracts: Saint-Martin 1819, 2: 15–300; English extracts (Chapter 71): HAL2, 534–58; Russian extracts: Patkanov 1873, 29–65; Modern Armenian: Abrahamyan 1986; Old Georgian: Tsagareishvili 1978. Studies: Hakobyan and Melik'-Baxshyan 1960; Abrahamyan 1985.

22 This work was published in 1942 by Abrahamyan under the name of Step'annos Orbelian, a confusion that was clarified in Hakobyan and Xaçikyan 1949.

23 Step'annos Episkopos, 1942; 1951; Galstyan 1962, 33–43.

Smbat Sparapet (1208–1275/1276)

The *Chronicle* of Smbat Sparapet (1208–1276) is one of the major works on the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia and a valuable source for the Crusades and Mongol–Armenian contacts, as well as Armenian–Byzantine, Armenian–Persian, and Armenian–Mamluk relations.²⁴ Smbat, the son of Constantine of Baberon, was the older brother of the Cilician King Het’um I (r. 1226–1269, d. 1270), and of Oshin, the Lord of Kořikos. He held the title of *sparapet*, or commander-in-chief of the Armenian army, from 1226 until his death, when he was hurled against a tree by his horse after a successful battle against the Mamluks.²⁵

Smbat was a diplomat and was sent to Qaraqorum in 1246/1247 to negotiate an agreement with the Mongols. His journey lasted two years and is mentioned in several sources.²⁶ Its first part is reported by Smbat himself in a letter of 1247 to King Henry I of Cyprus, his brother-in-law. Being written in Old French, this document is not considered an Armenian source.²⁷ Despite this, Smbat offers his own interpretations of the many historical events to which he was an eyewitness. Thus he attributes the failure of the Mongols in Syria in 1260 to an illness among Mongol troops and horses, because of the hot climate.²⁸ Presumably, Smbat also had access to archival documents of the civil and ecclesiastical institutions in Cilicia. Smbat’s *Annals* give important information about the region’s political and military affairs that took place among the Cilician Armenians, the Seljuq sultans, and the Mongols.

There are two texts of the *Annals*: a short version in the Matenadaran, a repository of ancient manuscripts in Erevan, and a longer one, MS 875 (old 1308) in the Library of San Lazzaro in Venice, which was discovered in the late 1870s. The Venetian manuscript has several lacunae; the folios corresponding to the years 1023–1029, 1063–1064, 1070, and 1230–1251 are missing. This means that the account of Smbat’s mission to Qaraqorum has not survived in the Venetian manuscript, nor is it related in the shorter version. There are several editions of the text: the Moscow (1856) and Paris (1959) editions are based on the shorter text; the Venice edition (1956) is based on the longer version.²⁹

24 Galstyan 1962, 47–64. 25 *RHC*1, 607–8.

26 Galstyan 1976, 33–34. Original Armenian version in *PBH* 1964.1, 91–106.

27 For the letter: Yule 1915, 1: 262–63; Bouquet et al. 1840, 361–63.

28 Der Nersessian 1973, 370.

29 Smbat Sparapet 1856; Smbat Sparapet 1859; Smbat Sparapet 1956. Translations: English: Der Nersessian 1959; Bedrosian 2005b; and www.attalus.org/armenian/cssi.htm, extracts in *HAL*2, 504–15; Russian: Galstyan 1976, extracts in Galstyan 1962, 47–64; French: Dédéyan 1980, extracts in *RHC*1, 605–80. Studies: Bayaban 1976; Dédéyan 1989; Der Nersessian 1959; Safaryan 1989; Suk’iasyan 1974.

*Anonymous Continuator of Samuēl Anetsi (fl. Thirteenth–
Fourteenth Centuries)*

Samuēl Anetsi lived between c. 1100 and c. 1190. His *Chronicle* arranges historical events according to a complex calendar, which includes the years associated with the Olympic games, the Christian and Armenian eras, and the reigns of the Armenian kings and the Catholicos, the head of the Armenian Church. There is no agreement about the end date of his original work, either 1179/1180 or 1193. Anonymous writers continued the work: according to Bedrosian, the history covers the periods from 1179/1180 to 1304/1305 and from 1257 to 1424/1425, but Thomson states that the later writers continued the *Chronicle* up to 1665.³⁰ In the introduction to his French translation of the *Chronicle*, Dulaurier writes that the text he translated came from an unpublished manuscript and runs to the year 1339/1340 (789 of the Armenian era).³¹

The subjects of Samuēl's anonymous continuators are Mongol rule in the Middle East, and the Caucasian opposition to the Mongol invasion.

A semi-critical edition of this text was published in 1893 by Tēr-Mik'aēlean.³²

Mxit'ar Ayrivanetsi (fl. Thirteenth Century)

Mxit'ar Ayrivanetsi wrote a *Chronicle* that was intended to be a universal history, and provides details of the Armenian political and military situation up to 1289. Not much is known about the author except that he lived in the monastery of Ayrivank' (Geghard, Armenia). At the end of the *Chronicle* he considers the Mongols from Jebe's and Sübe'etei's first raids into the Caucasus in 1221 up to Arghun's accession to the Ilkhanate's throne in 1284. Mxit'ar provides some unique historical details, such as the Chinggisid internal strife between the Hülegüids and Chaghadaids, and the flight of Tegüder to Swanetia to escape execution during his fight against Abaqa, before the death of the Georgian king David in 1279.³³

The Old Armenian text of this *Chronicle* has two nineteenth-century editions, one by N. Emin (1860), based on a single manuscript, and the other, based on a better manuscript and acknowledging Emin's edition, by Patkanean (1867). We also have several translations.³⁴

³⁰ Bedrosian 1979, Chapter 1; Thomson 1995, 191. ³¹ RHCt, 445–68.

³² Tēr-Mik'aēlean, ed. 1893. Translations: French: Brosset 1876, 340–483, extracts in Brosset 1873, 402–42; extracts in Russian translation: Galstyan 1962, 78–89. Studies: Abgaryan 1964; Mat'evosyan 1992.

³³ Dashdondog 2011, 24–25.

³⁴ Mxit'ar Ayrivanetsi 1860; Mxit'ar Ayrivanetsi 1867. Translation: French: Brosset 1869; Russian: Patkanov 1867, extracts in Galstyan 1962, 89–91; Georgian: Davlianije-Tatishvili 1990. Studies: Brosset 1865; Harut'yunyan 1979; 1985.

Het'um of Kořikos (c. 1240–c. 1310)

Het'um of Kořikos, called Patmich (the Historian) was the author of the *Liber Historiarum Partium Orientis*, originally written in French and known as *La flor des estoires de la terre d'Orient*, which was translated into Armenian in the nineteenth century as *Patmut'iwn T'at'arats* (A History of the Tatars) and edited by M. Awgorean in Venice in 1842.³⁵

Het'um of Kořikos was a nephew of King Het'um I and became the Lord of Kořikos (or Corycos, in Cilicia, modern Kızkalesi in south Turkey) in around 1280. His work reflects his own life. If we believe him, he attended the enthronement ceremony of the Mongol Ilkhans twice.³⁶ Another Armenian source says that he conspired against the Armenian king in 1293, and was forced to flee the country with his brother Öshin.³⁷ He joined the order of the Premonstratensians in Cyprus, where he seems to have supported the attempt of Almaric of Tyre to usurp the Cypriot throne in 1306. Het'um visited the Papal Curia in France, probably on an ultimately unsuccessful diplomatic mission on behalf of the usurper, and wrote his major work *La flor* during this time. After the assassination of King Lewon III and Het'um II in 1307, Het'um of Kořikos returned to Cilicia, became constable of the kingdom, and died probably shortly after 1310.

Apart from *La flor*, Het'um of Kořikos wrote a *Chronicle*, which survives in a unique copy (MS 1898, Matenadaran, Erevan, ff. 123a–167b). It covers events from the birth of Christ up to 1294. According to the title, the work is based on Frankish sources, mainly Martin of Opava (Martin of Poland), but much information bearing on Armenian history has been added to it.

Hakobyan produced a critical edition of the *Chronicle* in 1956. He published also a series of small genealogical texts – the histories of the Rupenid princes, the kings of Jerusalem, the kings of Cyprus, and the princes of Antioch, which in the manuscript follow the *Chronicle*, and can probably be attributed to the same author.³⁸

King Het'um II (1266–1307)

Het'um II was crowned king of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia in 1289, and despite a number of abdications, he was still able to campaign successfully with the Mongols against the Mamluks for control of Syria in 1299. He was

35 Dashdondog 2011, 21–24, for the text's various versions.

36 RHC2, 149 (Latin), 285 (French); on Het'um's life: Mutafian 1996.

37 The *Chronicle* is sometimes attributed to his cousin/uncle King Het'um II / 1.

38 Hakobian 1956, 33–113. Studies: Bundy 1986–1987; Sinor 1996; see also Jackson's chapter in this volume.

heavily defeated in the Battle of Marj al-Suffar (near Damascus) in 1303. In 1307, the Mongol general Bilarghu assassinated Het'um together with his son Lewon III.

The *Chronicle* of King Het'um II was written in 1296 in Cilicia and covers the period from the tenth century until Het'um's day. It was continued by different scribes to 1351. The *Chronicle* relates Mongol events from 1246, up to the reign of Ghazan Khan in 1296. In 1842, M. Awgerean published the Old Armenian text of this *Chronicle* as an appendix to his Armenian translation of the Latin version of *La flor des estoires de la terre d'Orient*, mistakenly attributing both works to Het'um Kořikos, the Historian.³⁹ Awgerean's edition was based on two manuscripts in the Mekhitarist Library of San Lazzaro (Venice), which give a less complete version of the text. Dulaurier translated this edition into French in 1869,⁴⁰ attributing it to Het'um the Historian.

There are about ten manuscripts of this text. The critical edition published by Hakobyan in 1951 is based on the expanded version.⁴¹ Following Patkanov's hypothesis, Hakobyan claims that some genealogical details found in the text could only have been written by King Het'um II.⁴² Bedrosian admits that King Het'um II possibly wrote the *Chronicle*; however, the work has suffered in later copyists' hands.⁴³ Mutafian suggests that the manuscript in the British Library which refers to a certain "John servant of God" as its author was possibly written by King Het'um during one of his abdications, when he became a Franciscan monk by the name of John.⁴⁴

Ananun Sebastatsi (Anonymous from Sebastia)

The *Chronicle* succinctly relates events from the 1st century CE until 1309, with some lacunae during the 1221–1253 period. If the earliest period is sketched from other sources, then treatment of the Mongol period from 1220, and from 1254 to 1297, adds to the information provided by other Armenian historians. For instance, the *Chronicle* states that the size of the Mongol army was 20,000 men and that it came to Armenia in 1220 from Gugark under the commander Sübe'etei.⁴⁵ This anonymous *Chronicle* composed in Sebastia (contemporary Sivas, Turkey) is preserved in three manuscripts housed in the Matenadaran in Erevan, the first of which (MS 2174) was published by G. Manvelian and G. Abramian in 1940, while in 1956 Hakobyan republished the same text

39 Awgerean 1951, 81–90. 40 RHCi, 469–90. 41 Hakobyan 1951, 65–101.

42 Hakobyan 1951, 65–73.

43 Bedrosian 2005a, which also provides an English translation. Russian extracts in Galst'yan 1962, 71–78.

44 Mutafian 1996, 163. 45 Ananun Sebastatsi 1940; Hakobyan 1956, 115–75.

together with that of the third manuscript (MS 6617). Both Hakobyan and Galstyan think that the manuscripts cover the years up to 1220, but a continuator carried the account to 1309.⁴⁶

Nersēs Palianents (Balients, d. c. 1367)

The short chronicle of Nersēs, an Armenian monk from Cilicia, is important for two reasons. First, it provides information about the Mongols and the tense relations between Armenians and Muslims during the decline of Mongol rule in Asia Minor, and about Mongol–Armenian campaigns against the Mamluks.⁴⁷ Second, it can be seen as a propaganda source as it provides details of King Het’um II’s visit to Jerusalem. This was especially important for Nersēs Palianents, who was a member of the order of *Fratres Unitores* founded by the Dominican Bartholomew of Bologna, whose goal was to unite the Armenian Church with Rome.⁴⁸

Hagiography

The Armenian *Synaxarium* or *Yaysmawurk’*, literally “On This Day” (roughly corresponding to the martyrology of the Roman Church), found in some liturgical books, contains the lives or accounts of saints, which were to be read in church on the days of their commemoration and were arranged according to the Armenian year.⁴⁹ There are four enlarged editions or redactions of the *Synaxary*: Ter Israyel’s *Synaxary* of c. 1240, Kirakos Ganjaketsi’s *Synaxary* with a first edition in 1252 and a second in 1269, Grigor Anawarzetsi’s *Synaxary* of the early fourteenth century, and Grigor Xlat’etsi’s early fifteenth-century *Synaxary*.⁵⁰

Armenian historians detail some hagiographic episodes relating to the Mongols, such as the martyrdom of old Father Step’annos, head of the

46 Hakobyan 1956, 137. The only existing translation of this work is Galstyan’s Russian extracts, covering the period from 1220 until the end of the thirteenth century. Galstyan translated the text of MS 2174, but expanded it with material drawn from MS 6617. Galstyan 1962, 23–33.

47 Galstyan 1962, 92–102, 131 n. 237; text in Hakobyan 1956, 173–94; text, French translation, and introduction in *RHC1*, 608–80.

48 Bias 2010, 393–94.

49 The Armenian Church did not have a formal ritual for granting sainthood. The last saint accepted into the Armenian *Synaxary* during the period under discussion was the scholar and philosopher Grigor Tet’evatsi (1346–1409), whose feast day falls on the Saturday before the fourth Sunday in Lent. Bias 2010, 458–61.

50 Texts: Acarean and Manandean 1903; Bayan 1909–1930; Ter-Davtian 1973. Translation: Russian: Ter-Davtian 1994, 1996, 1998; on the *Synaxarion*: e.g., Renoux 1980–1981; general survey: Ter-Davtian 1980.

cloister called Geret'i in Zak'arid Armenia, who was accused of poisoning a Mongol chieftain and was roasted to death in 1251 (1257 according to Bedrosian), as related by Grigor Aknerts'i.⁵¹

The other case is the martyrdom of the pious Prince Jalal, who was imprisoned in 1261 (710) and handed over to the Mongol governor Arghun Aqa, because he was unable to pay his taxes.⁵² Jalal's daughter Rhuzuk'an, wife of Bora Noyan, son of the Mongol military leader Chormaghun, interceded for him with Hülegü's wife Doquz Khatun, but Arghun still had him killed.⁵³

Gēorg Skewrātsi, an influential commentator, copyist, and poet of the later thirteenth century, and a student of the conservative scholars Mxit'ar Skewrātsi and Vardan Areweltsi, is the subject of two highly contrasting rhetorical lives produced by his disciples. The first is by Movsēs Erznkatsi, and marks the beginning of an extended tradition of laments over the death of Vanakan Vardapet in various media.

The year 1290 saw the composition of *Grigor Baluetsi's Martyrdom* by David Baluetsi, a nephew and disciple of Grigor; the latter was tortured and stoned to death by the Muslim mob during the Ilkhan Arghun's reign (1284–1291).⁵⁴

Generally, Armenian hagiographies of the Mongols present a fascinating picture of the ethno-religious complexity of different regions in Cilicia, Armenia, Georgia, and Anatolia.⁵⁵

Colophons

Armenian colophons are based on the manuscripts housed in Jerusalem, Venice, and Vienna, the complete catalogues of which are available.⁵⁶ The Matenadaran collections in Erevan are still waiting to be catalogued.

Overall, the colophons refer to the dates of Mongol attacks or census taking, to the Ilkhans, and to the political and economic conditions under which the manuscripts were copied, as well as to the circumstances of a particular event that characterized a certain village, town, or monastery.

Some colophons contain extended narratives, which provide not only local and routine information, but also valuable data on social and economic

51 Blake and Frye 1949, 326, 328 (Armenian), 327, 329 (English); Ter-Davtian 1998, 46–47.

52 Kirakos Ganjaketsi 1961, 390–92; Ter-Davtian 1998, 48.

53 Kirakos Ganjaketsi 1961, 390–92.

54 Ter-Davitan 1973; Ter-Davitan 1994; Ter-Davitan 1996; Ter-Davitan 1998.

55 Dashdondog 2020.

56 Pogharean 1966–1990; Sargisean et al., 1914–1998; Tasean (Dashean) et al. 1895–1953.

issues, major political events, and natural calamities, such as earthquakes, epidemics, famines, and so on. Moreover, they were often written close in time and sometimes in place to the events they described, and thus are chronologically more accurate and reliable than later sources.

The colophons were used as sources for Armenian history by the thirteenth-century Armenian historian Step'annos Orbelian, by the seventeenth-century historian Afak'el Davrizhetsi, and by scholars of the Mekhitarist monastic tradition, such as Mik'ayel C'amc'ean, Ghewond Alishan, and Garegin Zarbhanalean, between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During the Soviet era, Sanjian, Hovsep'ean and Mat'evosyan continued collecting colophons that provided data on warfare, census taking, and tax collecting, along with historical material relating to the Mongol conquest of the region in subsequent decades, the capture of Baghdad in 1258 and the establishment of the Ilkhanate, the engagements with the Mamluks, and the conversion of Ghazan to Islam.

Avedis Sanjian's collection of colophons, first published in English in 1969, covers the period from 1301 to 1480, and concerns, for instance, the Seljuqs and Chūbānids in Asia Minor, the Mamluks in Syria and Egypt, the Golden and the White Hordes, the Tatar kingdoms in the Crimea and Kazan, the Chaghadaids in Central Asia, and the Ilkhans and their successor dynasties after Abū Sa'īd. The colophons deal with the Turcoman dynasties of the Marash-Malatia region, along with Tamerlane's conquest. Access to the manuscripts of Venice and Jerusalem greatly enriched Sanjian's material.⁵⁷

Inscriptions

The thirteenth century is notable for extensive building activities throughout Armenia. Patrons of these buildings customarily left an inscription, sometimes lengthy, on the walls of religious and secular buildings, and on the typical Armenian stone memorials called *xac' kar* ("stone cross"), supplying the historical context; the names of the local bishop, Catholicos, and secular lords, including the Ilkhans; and the economic situation and features of taxation.

The epigraphic material found at Ani and many of the inscriptions from the territory of the Republic of Armenia have been published in the eight volumes of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Armeniacarum*.⁵⁸

57 Sanjian Avedis 1969; for the Armenian texts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: Xachikyan 1950; Mat'evosyan 1984.

58 Afakēlyan, Barxudaryan, and Lafadaryan 1960–1999; also Kalantar 1999.

Epigraphy is important for the study of Armenian economic life under Mongol domination. For instance, the inscription of the city of Ani, dated 1270, and the edict of the Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd (r. 1316–1335) in Ani prove that the former capital of the Bagratid kingdom became an Ilkhanid estate. Inscriptions provide useful data for elucidating taxes, such as the *kalan* (vassalage tax), the *nemeri* (additional tax), and the *tarh* (provisions tax).⁵⁹

The large collection of Armenian inscriptions explores the deeds of particular people inhabiting a particular area and gives local insights into Mongol rule.

Poetry

Some remarkable poems from the Armenian poetical tradition help to reveal both the factual reality of Mongol rule and the way the Armenians perceived the Mongols.

Among them is *The Versified Poem of the Pious King of Armenia Hetum II*, composed by King Hetʿum II. It consists of 226 lines and relates to the history of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, the attacks of the Mamluks, and their invasion of Armenia. The Mongols are mentioned here as allies of the Armenians whose actions delayed the capture of Acre.⁶⁰

Another poem alluding to the Mongols is the work of Vahram Rabun, a native of Edessa, a scholar, and a historian, who served as chancellor for King Lewon III (1269–1289). At the request of his lord, he composed a *Versified History of the Rupenids* or *Versified Historical Tale*, a monorhyme poem in verses of eight syllables. This relates King Hetʿum I's travel to the land of the Mongols to negotiate an alliance, and the Mamluk attack on Antioch and Cilicia, where Toros, Hetʿum's younger son, was killed in battle, while his elder son Lewon was captured. Hetʿum returned from the Mongol court and paid a large ransom to release Lewon. The last part of Vahram's work deals with the Mamluk attacks on Cilicia during the reign of Lewon II and his relations with the Ilkhan Abaqa (r. 1265–1282).⁶¹

Frik (d. c. 1330) was a poet who traveled to find his son, who had been captured by the Mongols. His poems, written in colloquial Middle Armenian, deal with secular and religious themes, and in some of them

⁵⁹ On taxes: Dashdondog 2011, 111–20.

⁶⁰ *RCH*1, 541–55 (text and French translation by Dulaurier).

⁶¹ Vahram Rabun 1810; 1832; Schahnazarian 1859, 5: 185–242; *RCH*1, 491–535 (text and French translation by Dulaurier); partial French translation: Newmann 2012.

he considers the dreadful situation of Armenia, invaded and dominated by nomadic tribes. His 1289 poem *On Arghun Khan and Bugha* contains a generic protest against foreign conquest: “the Tatar became King, seized everything, honoured the thieves,” reducing the “people to live in misery and slavery,” but also refers to specific historical events. It records the plot of Bugha (Boqa), the Mongol vizier and tax collector, against Arghun Khan. The poem can be viewed as a verse chronicle with its passionate laments over the political and social conditions of the Armenians. In Frik’s view, the sufferings of his fellow countrymen were the result of sin, and eventually God’s punishment.⁶²

Another verse chronicle of great historical interest is the poem written by the martyr Grigor Xlat’etsi (1345–1423). It deals mainly with the Timurid invasion of Armenia, covering the post-1386 decades, when the army of Tokhtamish Khan (r. c. 1378–1406) of the White Horde was sent to invade Iran and Armenia.⁶³

Conclusion

Armenian sources can build a distinctive picture of the political and cultural relationship between the Mongols and the Armenians in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Armenian sources of the thirteenth century tend to describe the Mongol invasion as a human disaster, whereas Armenian manuscripts of the early fourteenth century interpret the Mongols as God’s chastisement for human sins.

The sources can be valued in terms of the historiography of the Western Crusades, the Armenian Christians, and papal diplomacy. But they appeal also to the Muslims and Mongols, presenting a remarkable account of the history, culture, ethnology, and geography of the peoples who inhabited the Middle East and Central Asia during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Armenian sources add another dimension to understanding the relationships established between conquerors and subject peoples within the Mongol Empire.

62 Frik 1952; Frik 1982; Basmajean 1923 (Arghun and Bugha); Gugerotti 1982 (Italian translation of “Arghun and Bugha”); extracts in translation: *HAL2*, 524–33 (English); Tchobanian 1906, 121–33; Tchobanian 1923, 73–98; Tchobanian 1929, 3–10 (French). Studies: Ghanalanyan 1944; Hovhannisyan 1955; Stone and Bourjekian 2001.

63 Mat’evosyan and Marabyan 2000.

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Abbreviations

- HAL2 = Hacikyan, A. J., ed. 2002. *The Heritage of Armenian Literature*, vol. 2, *From the Sixth to the Eighteenth Century*. Detroit.
- Lraber = *Lraber hasarakakan gitut'yunneri* (*Vestnik obshchestvennykh nauk*) (earlier *Teghekgagir*)
- PBH = *Patma-banasirakan Handes*
- REA = *Revue des études arméniennes*
- RHC1 = Dulaurier, Edouard, ed. 1869. *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Documents arméniens I*. Paris.
- RHC2 = Dulaurier, Edouard, ed. 1906. *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Documents arméniens 2*. Paris.
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Georgian Sources

ROIN METREVELI

Georgian narrative and documentary material (historical chronicles, some legal and economic documents) constitutes a significant primary source to be taken into account when researching Mongol–Georgian relations, as well as the history of the Mongols themselves. These sources deal with various questions of the Mongols and the history of the peoples conquered by them.

Primary mention should be made of the extensive work of a Georgian anonymous author of the fourteenth century, called Zhamtaaghmcereli (“chronicler of the times”). It is known as *The Chronicle of One Hundred Years*, or occasionally *The Chronicle of the Time of the Mongols* or *The Georgian Chronicle*. Along with other primary historical sources, it forms part of the corpus of Georgian history called *Kartlis Tskhovreba* (The latest edition of the corpus came out in Georgian and Russian in 2008, and in English in 2014).¹ The different redactions of these sources were published by Marie Felicité Brosset, Zakaria Chichinadze, Ekvtime Takaishvili, Ivane Javakhishvili, and Simon Qaukhchishvili. The first version of the *Kartlis Tskhovreba* was presumably compiled at the instigation of King David IV the Builder (1089–1125) in the first quarter of the twelfth century. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and particularly in the eighteenth century, *Kartlis Tskhovreba* was complemented by diverse new chronicles. The old version of the collection was translated into Armenian in the twelfth century.

The Chronicle of One Hundred Years is an important source not only for the history of Georgia and the Mongols, but also for the history of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Iran, Central Asia, and Asia Minor. Separate aspects of the

¹ *Astslovani Matiane* 2008; *Astslovani Matiane* 1987; *Astslovani Matiane* 1959; *Kartlis Tskhovreba* 2014.

chronicler's work have come under the scrutiny of quite a few historians.² The eminent Georgian historian Ivane Javakhishvili noted that the chronicler's work not only deals with political developments, but also contains much evidence on governance, taxes and dues, the people's morality, census data, and church affairs.³

The Chronicle of One Hundred Years has preserved some evidence not to be found elsewhere, which enhances the significance of the work. It conveys the developments from the 1220s to the 1340s. The author uses both Georgian and foreign material, relying on both written sources and oral reports; he is familiar with Greek writers, often mentioning "old" books as a source when narrating this or that story. He has access to Persian sources,⁴ among which he specifically mentions the famous Persian historian 'Atā' Malik Juwaynī. Assumedly he also knew *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* of Rashīd al-Dīn,⁵ from which he derives an extensive description of the Mongols' origin, language, tribal organization, way of life, and religion; the rise of the Mongol state; the wars of conquest waged by Chinggis Khan and the Mongol *noyans*; Mongol taxes; and so on, although presumably he made use of Mongol writings as well. The Georgian author appears to have availed himself of state registers and books of dues (e.g., he mentions charters which were signed together by David VI Narin and David VII Ulu. These two kings governed the kingdom together from 1247 to 1259. The Mongols crowned David Narin as some kind of chief-king and subordinated to him his cousin David Ulu). The Mongol-Turkish terms found in the work are based on unknown sources, while their meanings are explained by the author himself.

The material presented in the *Chronicle of One Hundred Years* is a reliable source for the study of the socioeconomic and political history of Mongol domination in the Near and Middle East. It is of special significance for the relations between Georgia and the Mongols. The Georgian historian has conveyed and assessed all the significant economic and social developments of Mongol rule (e.g., the tax abatements that the Mongols gave to the representatives of different religious denominations).⁶ He discusses the conflict between the Georgian secular and clerical powers on some estates,⁷ and reports on the general census of 1258 and 1273. He comprehends well that the Mongols strove for adjustment of the tax system.⁸

2 Vladimirtsov 1917, 1487–1501; Spuler 1955, 14–15; Iakubovskii 1953, 31; Tvaradze 2007, 87–123; Tvaradze 2012, 251–307.

3 Javakhishvili 1977, 246–62. 4 Kiknadze 1962, 127–55.

5 Javakhishvili 1977, 259–60; Vladimirtsov 1917, 1495–96. 6 Gabashvili 1968, 61.

7 Gabashvili 1968, 61–62. 8 Gabashvili 1968, 54–55, 62.

In the 1220s – the heyday of Georgia – Mongol detachments appeared in the country. Their advent certainly altered the political and economic situation of the Georgian state. The chronicler writes, “a people from an amazing place called Karakorum. They are strange by face and in their mores and appearance. You cannot find stories about them in any of the ancient books, for they are alien in language, habit and in their way of life.”⁹

In 1220 a 20,000-strong army of the Mongols, led by Jebe and Sübe’etei, appears to have crossed the Georgian border. State officials Varam Gageli and Ivane Atabag reported to the king on the arrival of foreign people.¹⁰ The king summoned his troops from the country’s eastern and western regions.¹¹ The Georgian king Lasha-Giorgi (1213–1222) was by then making preparations to take part in the Fifth Crusade (1217–1221) in the Holy Land, as attested by the letters sent to the Pope by the Georgian Queen Rusudan (1223–1245) and the high state official Atabag Ivane Mkhargrdzeli.¹²

In the words of the chronicler, the Georgians attempted to offer resistance to the invading Mongols, mustering 10,000 troops, but were defeated.¹³ The Georgian royal court, convinced of the strength of the enemy, deemed it necessary to form a coalition. Negotiations were held with Uzbek, the Ildegizid ruler of Azerbaijan, and Malik Ashraf, the ruler of Akhlat. An agreement was reached but the Mongols anticipated it, attacking Georgia in 1221, whereas the coalition campaign failed. The Mongols reached Georgia’s capital, Tbilisi. In August 1221 the Mongols took the south Caucasian cities: Nakhichevan, Ardabīl, Bailaqan, and Gandza. From here Jebe and Sübe’etei again set off for Georgia.

According to *The Chronicle of One Hundred Years*, Lasha-Giorgi mustered a 90,000-strong army.¹⁴ The number cited may be exaggerated but the Georgians certainly offered resistance to the enemy. The battle took place on the Berduji river, now called the Sagim.¹⁵ The opposing sides attacked each other without reconnoitering:¹⁶ after the first engagement Sübe’etei and his troops withdrew. The Georgians fell for the Mongols’ bait and pursued the enemy. The Mongols lured the Georgians to a place where Jebe’s men lay in ambush. The Georgians were defeated. In the chronicler’s words, the Georgians took to flight, their soldiers and King Lasha as well. Many

9 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 527; *Kartlis Ckhovreba* 2014, 318.

10 Atabag is the Georgian version of the Turkic title *atabeg*.

11 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 532–33. 12 *Tamarashvili* 1902, 7–9; *Metreveli* 2012, 44.

13 *Lasha Giorgis droindeli memaṭiane* 2008, 356. 14 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 533.

15 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 533. 16 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 533.

Christian souls perished. The Mongols went by the road of Derbend; neither the Shirvānshāh nor the Derbendians could resist them.¹⁷

In the 1230s a new stage began in the Mongol conquest of Georgia. The chronicler reports that they came up to Shamkor,¹⁸ which was ruled by the Georgian noble Varam Gageli. Despite the request of Shamkor's residents, Varam Gageli did not come to their aid; shunning battle, he crossed into western Georgia and found refuge in Kutaisi.¹⁹

The queen, too, left the capital, Tbilisi, "ordering the commandant of the fortress, the son of Mukha, to burn the city if the Tatars appeared, excluding the royal palace and a city quarter called Isani."²⁰ The latter carried out the queen's order, burning down the city – including the palace and Isani. The Mongols conquered the provinces: Kartli, Trialeti, Somkhiti (south Georgia), Javakheti, Samtskhe, Shavsheti, Klarjeti, Tao, Kola, Artaani, and Anisi, invading the whole country like "locusts." Georgian nobles launched a guerrilla war.

Queen Rusudan tried to negotiate with the Mongols, reaching a definite agreement. At the suggestion of the Lord Quarqvar she sent Atabag Ivane to the Mongols.²¹ He was welcomed with respect by "Chaghata Noin." The queen established direct contact with Batu Khan.²² The Mongols set guards on Ivane's domain.

The queen recognized the supreme rights of the Mongols in Georgia. The harsh period of Mongol rule commenced. Georgia became a "*vilayat* of Gurjistan," a military-administrative unit in the Mongol Empire.

The chronicler gives valuable information on the Mongol administrative system in Georgia. From approximately 1245 the country was divided into eight *dumans* ("regions" – Georgian *duman* derives from the Mongolian *tümen* and means "ten thousand"). The first *duman* comprised eastern Georgia (Hereti, Kakheti, Kambechani; the region was headed by a noble, Egarslan Bakurtsikheli); the second, Kvemo (Lower) Kartli and its eastern communes, was subject to Varam Gageli; the third, the Armenian provinces within Georgia, were led by the *mandaturtukhutsesi* Shanshe Mkhargrdzeli;²³ the fourth, Shida (Inner) Kartli, was ruled by the *eristavteristavi* Grigol Surameli;²⁴ the fifth, Javakheti (Southern Georgia), was led by the noble

17 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 533.

18 "Shamkor" is present-day Shamkir in northwestern Azerbaijan.

19 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 548.

20 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 547. "Isani" was a historical quarter in eastern Tbilisi, first mentioned in the eleventh century.

21 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 556. 22 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 554.

23 The term *mandaturtukhutsesi* refers to the minister of the interior in medieval Georgia.

24 The term *eristavteristavis* refers to great territorial princes.

Gamrekel-Toreli; the sixth, Meskheta up to Karnukalaki (Erzurum), was headed by Quarqvare Tsikhisjvareli-Jaqeli; and the seventh and eighth *dumans*, comprising western Georgia, were headed by Tsothe Dadiani and the Eristavi of Racha. Each *duman* was supervised by a Mongol *noyan*.²⁵

The source gives a very detailed description of the Georgians' plot at Kokhtastavi, southern Georgia, around 1245, including the betrayal of the plot and the subsequent actions by the Mongols.²⁶

The chronicle states that following the demise of Queen Rusudan (1245), the qa'an raised two kings to the throne; David (Ulu), son of Lasha, and David (Narin), son of Rusudan. The interregnum lasted for two years.

The Georgian source stresses that from the 1250s the Mongols began to introduce order into the taxation system. They attempted to determine the scale of income the subordinated countries could give and the number of troops they could supply. To this end the Mongols conducted a census in their dominions (evidence on this is also found in the Armenian historians Kirakos Ganjaketsi, Grigor Aknerts, and Vardan Areweltsi). The census was conducted in 1254, under Möngke Qa'an (r. 1251–1259), and directed by his governor Argun Aqa: "the whole population of David's kingdom was in great distress. And lists of everything were made, starting with people and ending with beasts, from fields to vineyards, and from orchards to vegetable gardens. And from every nine well-off peasants they took one for military service."²⁷ By this rule, the Gurjistan Vilayet had to supply 90,000 warriors. The Mongol terms, cited in the chronicler's work, are important for the study of the social-economic history. These terms were mainly introduced in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, entering the Georgian vocabulary too (*tamgha*, *yarligh*, *beglarbeg* (*beglerbeg*), *bokauli* (*böke'ül*), *iasauli* (*yasa'ul*), *qarauli* (*qara'ul*), and so on). Notably enough, the chronicler tries to explain the meanings of some terms as well, e.g., *erismtavari* – *noin* (*noyan*); defender of the country – *shana* (*shahna*), chief of ten thousand – *dumani* (*tümen*); khan's guard – *qarauli*; commander-in-chief – *beglar-beg*.²⁸

The chronicler presents the taxation system of the Mongols. They introduced fourteen forms of duty and tax. These dues were generally called *satastro* ("tax for the Tatars") by the Georgians. The size of the tribute was assigned in the following way: for the commander of 1,000 horsemen it was one lamb and one *drahkan* (gold coin), for the commander of a *bevri* (10,000 in Old Georgian) one sheep and two *drahkans*, and the fee for a horse was three

25 Astslovani Matiane 2008, 561; Melikishvili 1980, 184; Javakhishvili 1977, 36.

26 Astslovani Matiane 2008, 566. 27 Astslovani Matiane 2008, 580.

28 Astslovani Matiane 2008, 545, 635.

tetri (*tetri* is a Georgian monetary unit) daily. This tax was called *ulupa* (maybe from Arabic *‘ulūfa*, “fodder”).²⁹ The chronicler names the following taxes: *tamgha* (tax on trade, per 100 *tetri* of purchase), *qalani* (*qalan*, war duty), *mali* (*māl*, tax on farming), *ulupa* (tax for a military campaign).

Significantly enough, the Georgian historian was aware of the Mongol calendar. He seeks to explain the “curious counting of the years they have”:

They also have twelve years, in the manner of the *Kronikon* (cycle) with the names of animals at the head of each year. This is like in ancient times, when the Hellenes created twelve zodiacs, which are stars and constellations of the Sun and the Moon, and for each of these constellations they set aside thirty days of the sun and not animals but signs (of the zodiac). The Uighurs also placed one animal at the head of each year and upon expiry of twelve years, they started the cycle anew. Reaching the twelfth year, they again counted the years which they called *Kulkunjil*, *Ukurjil*, *Parsinjil*, *Tavlinjil*, *Luinjil*, *Moginjil*, *Morinjil*, *Kokinjil*, *Mechinjil*, *Taganjil*, *Nokhinjil*, *Kakinjil*.³⁰ Such were the names of the twelve animals, each of which was privileged to head a year. The first of them was called *Kolguna*, that is the Mouse, then came the Cow, the Leopard, the Rabbit, the Dragon, the Snake, the Horse, the Sheep, the Monkey, the Hen, the Dog, and the Pig. This they had for their enumeration of the years, like we, the Georgians, who have *Koronikon*.³¹

The merit of the chronicler lies in his impartiality in describing the then enemies of the Georgians – the Mongols; far from concealing their positive sides, he mentions them with respect: “and they were in full possession of reason and self-control. There was no place for lies among them, they were servile in the face of no man, neither great, nor small, or before a council; they submitted to the good order created by Genghis Khan.”³²

The historian’s impartiality comes from his belief that the cause for the country’s fall lay not only in the external enemies; he was aware of the many shortcomings of Georgia’s internal politics and did not shut his eyes to them. In contrast to the majority of the medieval Georgian chronicles, the chronicler speaks often directly about the errors and failings of some Georgian kings and nobles (e.g., about Giorgi-Lasha, Queen Rusudan, David VII Ulu,

²⁹ *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 580; *Kartlis Ckhovreba* 2014, 318

³⁰ These are Georgian transliterations of the Mongolian terms for the various animal years (“year of the rat” etc.)

³¹ *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 529. Each *Koronikon* cycle contains 532 years. *Koronikon* was first introduced in Georgia at the end of the eighth century.

³² *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 528.

Demetre II, Egarstan Bakurtsikheli). He also characterizes as positive some Mongol sovereigns (e.g. the Ilkhans Hülegü and Abaqa).³³

The chronicler bases his narration of important events on documentary evidence. Thus, in recording the joint enthronement of David the son of Lasha (Ulu) and David the son of Rusudan (Narin), he states that he has seen numerous documents proving this: “Many charters are to be found, and I have myself seen the title of a charter saying: ‘the Bagrationi kings’, ‘By God’s will David and David’, and the signatures of both are affixed.”³⁴ Thus the author ascertains historical facts through documentary evidence, giving us a clue to determining the method used by the fourteenth-century historian. In describing the reign of David Ulu and David Narin he appears to have had at hand another (unknown) source.³⁵

Ivane Javakhishvili noted that the author of the chronicle viewed with distrust the information of the “Uighur house.”³⁶ The chronicler shuns conveying fabulous exaggerated stories. At that time the *amīr* (commander) of the Uighurs was someone named Sarchuk, whose deeds sound like amazing fairy tales, some of them rather filthy.³⁷ He might have been identical with the Uighur ruler Barchuq who submitted to Chinggis Khan, mentioned by the Persian historian ‘Atā’ Malīk Juwaynī.³⁸

Notwithstanding the impact of Mongol rule (referred to as *uluses* or *ulusoba* by the chronicler),³⁹ Georgia preserved its social structure, agrarian relations, and administrative organization. Furthermore, the country retained its territory within its old political borders. Royal authority, defined as vassalage, was preserved under the Mongols. The local socioeconomic terminology survived unaltered. That is why the chronicler often explains Mongol terms, by which particular Mongol taxes were denominated. In Georgia, Mongol rule touched the country’s social system superficially, feudal relations remaining unchanged.⁴⁰

The chronicler gives a fairly good account of the causes of the deterioration of Georgia’s economic situation (practical destruction of agriculture, the exile of the population, desertion of villages). He gives an overview of the political, social, and economic changes not only in Georgia but in the entire Mongol Empire as well. The *Chronicle of One Hundred Years*, which was

33 *Kartlis Ckhovreba* 2014, 344–45, 360. 34 *Kartlis Ckhovreba* 2014, 346.

35 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 574; *Kiknadze* 1962, 154–55. The joint reign of two kings in Georgia is confirmed also by an inscription on the church in v. Abelia (Kvemo Kartli).

36 *Javakhishvili* 1977, 260. 37 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 530–31. 38 *HWC*, 44, 222 n. 14.

39 The chronicler uses the term *ulus* for both particular Mongol states and Mongol rule.

40 *Gabashvili* 1968, 33.

supposedly written in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, provides materials for Mongol history over approximately 100 years: the campaign of Jebe and Sübe’etei in 1220–1223, the beginning of Mongol expansion in the 1220s–1230s, and then primarily the history of the Ilkhanate (1260–1335). Yet the chronicler also offers some information about the Golden Horde and the Chaghadaid Khanate.

Apparently, the chronicler’s worldview follows the principles of the Gospels,⁴¹ according to which there exists in reality not only the principle of good but of evil as well. Hence it is not ruled out for people to deviate from the right path, to commit a sin, and take the evil road. In such a case, God punishes the sinners. Thus, for example, the Georgian king Lasha Giorgi (George IV Lasha), in the words of the chronicler, “showed an inclination for evil things, falling under the influence of immoral people, as has been written of Solomon, who was perverted by his wives.”⁴² The king was followed by his subjects. The same thing happened to the Georgian people, for satiating themselves they indulged in pleasure: reckless people who did not deserve to stay at the king’s court.⁴³

Lasha Giorgi broke the royal tradition by marrying a woman from Velistsikhe, a local feudal lord’s wife. As the chronicler contends, Lasha Giorgi’s conduct became the cause of Georgia’s disaster – this was the first advent of the Mongols (1220) and their devastation of the country.⁴⁴ Following Lasha Giorgi’s death, his sister Rusudan, too, along with good deeds, took the evil path. In her reign “people began to display insatiability and idleness, and everything turned to evil, for queen Rusudan adopted her brother’s habits and indulged herself in idleness and amusement from which originated great evils.”⁴⁵

The chronicler names lack of faith as the cause of God’s wrath (less liturgical service, breakdown of churches, neglect of the principle of monogamy – Demetre II married three wives and was imitated by some princes). In particular, the chronicler notes, “They deviated from God’s path and began to go astray. For the king married three wives. Sadun [an official] did the same. And the *mtavaris* [princes] began to lay their hands on churches and monasteries and to appropriate villages and fields.”⁴⁶ The chronicler comes to a hard conclusion: “for they were evil in everything.”⁴⁷ And “it was then that we were visited by just punishment for our sins.”⁴⁸

41 Grigolia 1968, 81–82. 42 Astslovani Maṭiane 2008, 525.

43 Astslovani Maṭiane 2008, 527. 44 Astslovani Maṭiane 2008, 528–31.

45 Astslovani Maṭiane 2008, 535. 46 Astslovani Maṭiane 2008, 615.

47 Astslovani Maṭiane 2008, 615. 48 Astslovani Maṭiane 2008, 615.

By the chronicler's conception, the people's sin against God causes various wraths. God's wrath against Georgia is seen in the devastation of the country and the extermination of the population. Following the defeat of the Georgians on the Berduji river, the chronicler writes, "Then we were visited by the wrath of the Almighty for our sins, and the Georgian troops fled, and King Lasha himself and countless Christian souls died."⁴⁹ Nor was there peace in the later period; thus the chronicler is troubled: "The Lord's fury, whom we angered, was not calmed."⁵⁰

The chronicler believes the Virgin Mary to be the deliverer of the Georgians from the Mongols, coming to the rescue of the Georgians in dire need. He recounts how the Mother of God saved the Georgians who had fought together with the Mongols at the castle of Alamūt in 1256. A peril was caused by the Assassins' murder of "Chaghata the Noin," an important Mongol commander, in which the Georgians were implicated. The Virgin appeared to the killer and made him accept responsibility for the murder:

And as they performed a thanksgiving prayer and gave glory to the Holy Mother, the barbarians approached them with the intention of killing all the Georgians. A man came out of the reeds with a drawn sword in his hand smeared with blood. He raised his sword in the air and cried loudly: "Man kusitem Chaghata," which in the Persian language means: "I killed Chaghata."⁵¹

Conveying the burden of Mongol dominance, the chronicler also reports the rise of the Georgians against them. The rising began in summer 1259 under the leadership of David VI Narin (mass actions against the Mongols occurred in Azerbaijan and other *vilayats* as well).⁵² The rising caused the concern of Hülegü, who sent troops under the command of Arghun Aqa in September 1259. After a bitter clash the Georgians repulsed Arghun Aqa's troops. The Mongols retreated to Tabriz and returned with a larger army. King David Narin considered it inadvisable to continue the resistance and crossed into western Georgia. Here he was recognized as king of Georgia (Abkhazia), where he started the Imeretian royal branch of the Bagrationis. Before long King David Ulu also rose.⁵³

Arghun Aqa was joined by princes who betrayed the king. The Mongols took Tbilisi. They failed to seize the rebel king, and Arghun Aqa returned home. David joined his brother in western Georgia.⁵⁴

49 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 533.

50 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 534.

51 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 563.

52 *Alizade* 2012, 119.

53 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 585; *Kiknadze* 1974, 51.

54 *Astslovani Maṭiane* 2008, 583.

The Mongols failed to extend their sway over western Georgia. No *kharāj* (land tax) was collected there. The Mongol army dared not cross Likhi mountain to campaign in Western Georgia. Thus the royal court led by David Narin turned into a refuge for fighters opposing the Mongols, including Mongol rebels: the chronicler describes in detail the rebellion of the Chaghadaid prince Tegüder who escaped from Abaqa's court to Georgia, where he was granted refuge by David Narin.⁵⁵

The Golden Horde's threat eventually forced the Ilkhans to come to terms with Georgia and its King David Ulu. In 1262, when Hülegü and Berke (Jochid khan, r. 1257–1267) fought on the “field of Shaburani,” Georgians participated in the Ilkhanid army. Hülegü was defeated, but Berke's army turned back without entering Georgia. During the struggle between the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate, a new military duty was imposed on the Georgians: taking up a position and defending the *siba* (probably from the Mongol word *sübe*, meaning originally “needle point,” but also “strategic point on the frontier,” “border”).⁵⁶

Mongol rule weakened the centralization of the Georgian kingdom. Recognition of the political rights of state officials by the Mongols took place without consulting the king. The Mongols often declared a certain land *khass-inju*, a Persian–Mongol combination, meaning private land usually of the Mongol ruler, but here meaning that a feudal lord became absolutely independent of the king and was subject directly to the Ilkhans.

The merit of the *Chronicle of One Hundred Years* lies in its thorough description of the creation of the Mongol Empire, the rise of Chinggis Khan, the anthropology of the Mongols, the conquest of the country of the Alans and the Georgians, the characterization of individual *noyans*, the submission of the Georgian and Armenian princes to the Mongols and the tributaries' terms, the Mongol campaign against the Sultanate of Rüm, the Georgian conspiracy against the Mongols, the census carried out by the Mongols, the Mongol seizure of Baghdad, the Mongol campaign against Syria, the rebellion of Tegüder, and so on. In the last part of the chronicle, it gives an account of the deeds of Ilkhan Öljeitü (r. 1305–1316) and the beginning of the reign of the Georgian king George V the Brilliant (r. 1314–1346).

The Georgian chronicler did not overlook the fact that from the end of the thirteenth century the Ilkhanate suffered a crisis.⁵⁷ The last part of the chronicle gives a real picture of the Georgian state gaining strength and the

55 *Astslovani Matiane* 2008, 604, 599; the chronicle describes Tegüder as Baraq's brother.

56 *Astslovani Matiane* 2008, 597. 57 *Petrushevskii* 1960, 52–62.

decline of the Mongols.⁵⁸ In the reign of George V the Brilliant Georgia became free from Mongol domination. The country – both west and east – united under a single monarchy, throwing off the 100 years of the Mongol yoke. The chronicler noted pathetically, “Luminaries began to shine and my speaking power fails me in my task to recount these wonderful and terrible things.”⁵⁹

Thus *The Chronicle of One Hundred Years* is a highly important, reliable source. It should be taken into account not only for the study of Mongol–Georgian relations, and Mongol history proper, but also in researching the political and socioeconomic history of the Caucasus and other Near Eastern countries.

Among the other works of the *Kartlis Tskhovreba* the Mongol invasions are dealt with by a historian of the 1220s, who is considered to be a chronicler of the period of Lasha Giorgi.⁶⁰ The work gives a brief description of the Georgian Kings Demetre I (1125–1155), George III (1156–1184), Queen Tamar (1184–1213), and Lasha-Giorgi (1213–1222). The material dealing with the Mongols is included in the last part, as it was in the reign of Lasha-Giorgi that the Mongols first appeared in Georgia. The chronicler gives a high appraisal of Lasha-Giorgi: “a many-colored flower, strong as a lion pure in his thoughts, a lover of mankind . . . calm and not prone to anger, the king of seven kingdoms, never raising the whip against his servants, a brilliant archer, a valiant and brave rider.”⁶¹

The chronicler of Lasha-Giorgi narrates the campaign of the Georgian king and his successes: “The king took Oroti and all the regions and strongholds subject to it up to Nakhichevan and the Gate of Gandza. He took Shamkor too.”⁶² Here the chronicler halts to inform the reader about “foreign troops coming to Somkhiti and Hereti.”⁶³ These were the Mongols, who did some damage and left the place. Lasha-Giorgi attacked them on the Balistsqali river,⁶⁴ where he received his first wound. After that, with God’s help, the army fled, and those who tried to escape were exterminated.⁶⁵ Next year they came again and pitched their tents at Bardavi. The king mustered his troops

58 Astslovani Maṭiane 2008, 651–53. 59 Astslovani Maṭiane 2008, 653.

60 Lasha Giorgis droindeli memaṭiane 2008, 351–57.

61 Lasha Giorgis droindeli memaṭiane 2008, 356.

62 Lasha Giorgis droindeli memaṭiane 2008, 356.

63 Lasha Giorgis droindeli memaṭiane 2008, 356.

64 The battle on the Balistsqali river is conveyed in *The Chronicle of One Hundred Years* as well.

65 Lasha Giorgis droindeli memaṭiane 2008, 356

and encamped between Lomta Gora and Agara. But the army fled before they were attacked.⁶⁶

In general, the work is very brief and fragmentary, giving only scanty information about our subject. Yet the chronicler's evidence is confirmed by other (especially Armenian and Persian) sources as well.⁶⁷ Therefore the chronicler of the time of Lasha-Giorgi should be considered a useful historical source.

There are no other chronicled materials on the Mongols from that period. But a few legal and economic documents manifest the relations between the Georgians and the Mongols. One is a "Deed of Grant of Arsen Chkondideli-Mtsignobartukhutsesi to Mgela Abulakhtrisdze."⁶⁸ The document states that the "first amongst the viziers, 'Mtsignobartukhutsesi Arsen grants the village of Ghuerki with its seat and land, mountain, plain, wood, field, water, mill and with all its proper vineyards" to Mgela Abulakhtrisdze and his children."⁶⁹ Queen Rusudan sent Arsen Chkondideli-Mtsignobartukhutsesi to "serve" with Batu. He was accompanied by Mgela Abulakhtrisdze. The mission of the man appears to have been hard, as stated directly by the grantor: "At the time when God and my upbringing Queen of Queens Rusudan sent me to Batu to serve him, you then accompanied me and suffered great hardship."⁷⁰ The "Deed" attests that in 1249 Queen Rusudan sent Arsen on a special (diplomatic) mission to Batu on "business," a fact unknown from other sources.

The document is confirmed by the signatures of Queen Rusudan, her son David, and the Catholicos of Kartli Arsen. The "Deed" is confirmed by witnesses: Basili Chkondideli-Mtsignobartukhutsesi and *protoipertimos* Avag Atabag, and Shanshe the Mandatartukhutsesi. The document must have been issued in 1241 or 1242.⁷¹ It confirms the relationship of the Georgian Queen Rusudan and Batu, namely the fact that the first vizier of the state went to the Horde on the queen's order on a business mission.

Among the documents of Gelati Monastery we find the so-called *Davtarisabanelisi* (Register [*defter*] from Sabanela"),⁷² in which reference is made to the Mongol tax ("tax for Tatars"). The *defter* states that the king of Georgia, David (Narin), son of Rusudan, bought the village of Sabanela in western Georgia. David notes that he trusts the "Virgin of Khakhuli." This

66 *Lasha Giorgis droindeli memaiane* 2008, 356. 67 *Javakhishvili* 1977, 245.

68 *Kartuli samartlis dzeglebi* 1970, 159–60. 69 *Kartuli samartlis dzeglebi* 1970, 158.

70 *Kartuli samartlis dzeglebi* 1970, 158.

71 *Kartuli samartlis dzeglebi* 1970, 158; the dating is based on historical facts and persons mentioned in the document.

72 *Kronikebi da skhva masala sakartvelos istoriisa da mtserlobisa* 1897, 159–60.

induced him to buy the village: “This small place for their service of praying and resource of our soul for eternity, to manage our kingship and for the longevity of our sons.”⁷³ Part of the obligation of the purchased village was donation of fifty *litras* of wax so that “every day and night of the year fifteen candles will be lit inextinguishably and without fail for eternity.”⁷⁴ Notably, the village was exempt from the “Tatar’s” tax, a general name for Mongol taxes: “From that time on ‘Tatar’s’ tax shall not be levied.” The document also reveals that David could manage taxation in a village purchased by his own means – in this case to exempt the village from the Mongol taxes.⁷⁵

Thus Georgian primary sources about the Mongols, their conquests, and the socioeconomic situation under their rule in general are not so abundant. Yet what is available is significant and should be taken into account. The Georgian sources, particularly *The Chronicle of One Hundred Years*, contain important materials about the united Mongol Empire and especially about the Ilkhanate.

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73 *Kronikebi da skhva masala sakartvelos istoriisa da mtserlobisa* 1897, 159.

74 *Kronikebi da skhva masala sakartvelos istoriisa da mtserlobisa* 1897, 159.

75 *Kronikebi da skhva masala sakartvelos istoriisa da mtserlobisa* 1897, 160.

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Turkic and Chaghatay Sources

DEVIN DEWEESE

The Turkic literary material produced in the western portions of the Mongol Empire – those that underwent the gradual process of Islamization during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries – does not include any overtly historical works. It does offer insights into the patronage activities of various figures, however, within the structures of the Chaghadaid and Jochid *uluses*, and more broadly reflects the patterns of acculturation underway in the two *uluses*, as religious and literary works of the Muslim world were used as models (or direct sources) for the rendering of Muslim civilization in Turkic language. As such, the Turkic works from this era are important historical records in their own right, despite the difficulties in properly contextualizing many of them.¹

It should be kept in mind that the linguistic affinities of the Mongol elite and the bulk of the nomadic military forces upon which the power of the elite rested undoubtedly shaped the cultural products that both reflected and furthered their acculturation to Muslim patterns, and that the process of Islamization, broadly understood, ensured that literary reflections of Muslim culture would be adapted and recast in Turkic; it is less likely that such products were rendered into Turkic prior to the existence of a Muslim, or Muslim-inclined, “audience” for them, as a means of inducing conversion and acculturation. In other words, it makes sense to assume that literary efforts *followed* religious and cultural orientation, not the other way around; the frequent tendency to assume that Turkic-language works were written in a Muslim cultural and religious framework as part of conscious “missionary”

1 Still the most extensive bibliographical resource for “eastern” Turkic literature, though considerably flawed and dated, is Hofman 1969, which covers post-Mongol Central Asian Turkic authors (anonymous works are thus not discussed). See also Togan 1963; Eckmann 1965; Bombaci 1968.

efforts reflects modern, Protestant-style notions of religion and proselytization rather than thirteenth- and fourteenth-century realities.

Muslim Turkic Literature and the Mongol Era

In the now commonly accepted historical classification of Turkic languages, the Mongol conquests mark the beginning of the Middle Turkic period, characterized by the introduction of a substantial Mongolian administrative and military vocabulary (including the Mongolian versions of terms borrowed from Turkic) into the languages of the Turkic peoples conquered, reorganized, and ruled by Chinggis Khan and his heirs. The thirteenth century also coincides, however, with the beginning of a substantial expansion of Turkic literary production, in an Islamic cultural framework and in political and patronage contexts shaped by the impact of the Mongol conquests, beyond the meager offerings of earlier centuries. It is this material, from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, that is surveyed below; the substantial growth of Chaghatay literary production in Timurid Central Asia, and the emergence of distinct historiographical traditions, in Chaghatay, celebrating the heritage of the Muslim Chinggisid dynasties of Central Asia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, are important components of the Mongol legacy in the region, but cannot be explored here.

To begin with, two works typically regarded as major monuments of Turkic language and literature from pre-Mongol times may be thought of as sources, of a kind, for the Mongol era as well, attesting as they do to important features of literary patronage, manuscript production, linguistic proficiency, and cultural and intellectual interests under Mongol rule, or at least in a political and cultural space shaped heavily by the Mongol presence. The lone surviving manuscript of the dictionary of Turkic languages compiled in the late eleventh century by Maḥmūd Kāshgharī, the *Dīwān lughāt al-turk*, was copied in 664/1266, most likely in Damascus,² just a few years after the brief occupation of the city by the Mongols, who remained a nearby threat for the next forty years. The three surviving manuscripts of the *Qutadghu Bilig*, written for a Qarakhanid ruler in the late eleventh century by Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib of Balāsāghūn, likewise remind us of the importance of the Mongol era in Turkic literary production: aside from the Uighur-script copy completed in 843/1439, in Timurid Herat, the two Arabic-script copies

2 al-Kāshgharī 1982, I: 1, 10.

undoubtedly date from the Mongol period, with one, found in the Ferghana valley, dated to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century and likely copied in the Chaghadaid (or possibly Jochid) Ulus, and the other, preserved in Cairo, ascribed to the first half of the fourteenth century, reflecting Mamluk, Ilkhanid, or Jochid patronage.³

The Mongol era was also especially productive in terms of translations and explanations of the Qur'an in Turkic; some of the five surviving examples of such works may have been composed in earlier times, but all of the extant manuscripts appear to date from the Mongol era.⁴ Likewise among the "artifacts" of Turkic literature, or at least language, produced in the Mongol-ruled world are manuscripts of the famous guide to Arabic literacy, the *Muqaddimat al-adab* of the noted Mu'tazilī theologian of Khwārazm, Jārullāh Maḥmūd b. 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144). Numerous copies dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries provide equivalents for the Arabic terminology of the work in the languages of Mongol-ruled Khwārazm (sometimes alone, sometimes in different combinations), including Persian, Mongolian, the old Iranian Khwārazmian language (still in use in the fourteenth century), and Turkic. Copies with Turkic "translations" are dated as early as 655/1257, and though for most of them – nearly twenty have been identified – it is not known where they were produced, all but two of those for which the place of copying is indicated were completed in Khwārazm or Sarai.⁵ These manuscripts are chiefly of interest as repositories of early Middle Turkic terminology; nevertheless, they, like the Turkic renderings of the Qur'an, are "frontline" examples of the encounter of languages and peoples in the Mongol era, and specifically of the acculturative vectors connecting the Turks of the Mongol-ruled world with Islamic civilization.

Sources from the Jochid Ulus

The earliest original Turkic work assumed to have been produced in the Jochid realm is the *Mu'in al-murīd*, a Sufi didactic treatise written in verse, evidently in Khwārazm. The single surviving copy, preserved in Bursa, affirms that the work was completed in Ramaḍān (*oruch āyī*) 713/December 1313–January 1314 – barely a year into the reign of Özbek Khan.⁶

3 Arat 1947, xxxiii–xxxix.

4 On these translations: Eckmann 1971; Eckmann 1976, 13–19; on individual manuscripts: Eckmann 1959; Eckmann 1976; Ata 2004; Saḡol 1993–1999; Barthold 1925; Borovkov 1958; Borovkov 1963; Menges 1965.

5 Yüce 1993, 9.

6 See Toparlı 1988 for a transcription, vocabulary, grammatical analysis, and facsimile; the manuscript (which includes other works as well) is evidently undated, but the facsimiles

The work is divided into thirteen chapters (*bāb*), with some of these further subdivided into sections (*fasl*), explaining the essentials of Muslim doctrine regarding God and the Prophet, the inner spiritual virtues, and the basic ritual obligations, before turning to specifically Sufi issues (*irādat*; the *adab* of *shaykh* and *murīd*; fellowship (*ṣuḥbat*); the threefold division of *sharīʿat*, *ṭarīqat*, and *ḥaqīqat*; and the struggle against the carnal soul (*nafs*)); it closes with reference to the author, the title, and the date, affirming that the poet's name was simply "Islām," and referring to his father, the source of his teaching and practice, as "Bābā Islām" (also referred to by the honorifics *Qutb al-ʿālam* and *Ḥujjatullāh*). The problem of the work's authorship is complicated, however, both by the vague and unusual nature of these "names," and by inconclusive external evidence;⁷ thus we are left with no solid basis for identifying him, or even for situating him in terms of locality or Sufi affiliation.

The likelihood that the work was written in Khwārazm is perhaps strengthened by the figures mentioned in a brief prose account added in the margin of the manuscript. The passage, added near a section on prayer (*namāz*), tells of a query regarding this subject posed by "Qūtlūgh Timūr Bek" to "Shaykh Yaḥyā-yi Kashshāfi" when the former was building his *madrasa*; this clearly refers to Özbek Khan's governor in Khwārazm, the Amīr Qutlugh Temūr.⁸ The scholar he consulted is undoubtedly Mawlānā Raḍī al-Dīn Yaḥyā, who is mentioned among the notable scholars of Khwārazm met there in 1333 by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa.⁹ The death of this Shaykh Raḍī al-Dīn Yaḥyā, in Sarai in 740/1339, is noted in the mid-fifteenth century *Mujmal-i Faṣīḥī*,¹⁰ which further identifies him as the son of Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn al-Qaṣṣārī al-Bārjinliqī (a Sufi disciple of Kamāl al-Dīn Sighnāqī, also known as "Bābā Kamāl Jandī," who was in turn a direct disciple of the famous Khwārazmian Sufi, Najm al-Dīn Kubrā).¹¹ The unusual *nisba* assigned to this Shaykh Yaḥyā in the marginal note from the *Muʿīn al-murīd* probably reflects his association with the legacy of the Khwārazmian scholar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), author of the *Muqaddimat al-adab*, noted earlier, who also produced a much-esteemed Qurʾan commentary, *al-Kashshāf*. After his death in Sarai, Shaykh

suggest that it belongs to the fifteenth or sixteenth century. On the Turkic verse passages added in the margin of the manuscript: Toparlı's introduction, and Bodrogligeti 1972; of particular interest is one in which the author suggests that a Sufi disciple (*murīd*) might be "Chinese or Indian or Mongol or As or Russian or Cherkes" (*khiṭāy hind mughāl as ūrūs jarkas*).

7 On the problems surrounding the work's authorship: Toparlı 1988; Togan 1928, 315–30; Hofman 1969, 3: 323–33; Köprülü 1926, 340–43; Bodrogligeti 1976; DeWeese 2012.

8 Toparlı 1988, ix, facsimile, f. 10b; cf. Togan 1928, 330.

9 Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1969, 3: 7–8; Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 3: 543. 10 Khwāfi 2007, 2: 323.

11 On these figures: DeWeese 1994, 81, 89–90.

Yahyā's body was taken to Khwārazm for burial near al-Zamakhsharī's grave, and his father produced a commentary on another of al-Zamakhsharī's works, suggesting some close familial or intellectual connection (the latter is perhaps favored by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's insistence that Shaykh Raḏī al-Dīn Yahyā, like the other scholars of Khwārazm he names in his company, was a Mu'tazilī, and concealed this from Özbek Khan and Qutluḡ Temür). Thus, although these links and identifications are not affirmed in the text of the *Mu'in al-murīd* itself, they may suggest some particulars about the Jochid environment in which the work circulated.

From the middle of the fourteenth century, two additional Turkic verse works explicitly dedicated to the Jochid elite have survived. One is a rendering in Turkic verse of the story of Khusraw and Shīrīn, based on Niẓāmī's Persian version, by a poet who calls himself simply "Quṭb."¹² He dedicated his work to the Jochid ruler he calls "prince [*shahzāda*] Tīnī-bek Khan," and "our *khan* [*khānimiz*] Tīnī Bek," referring to the son of Özbek Khan who briefly succeeded his father but was soon killed on his brother Jānī-bek's order in 743/1342. The poet also praises Tīnī-bek's wife, "the late queen," Khan Malik, who is characterized as "the beauty of the throne" in "the state [*davlat*] of the Aq Ordu."¹³ This work survives in a unique manuscript, preserved in Paris, that was copied in the Mamluk realm in 785/1383; the copyist identifies himself in the colophon as Berke b. Berāgiz (*b.rāk.z*) b. Qāndūd b. Ädgü, "of Qipchaq stock" (*al-jins al-qibjāqī*), and in an "autobiographical" poem he added to the manuscript, refers to himself as "Berke Faqīh," "of Qipchaq origin" (*aşlīm qībjaq*).¹⁴

Less substantial, but more "original" – and considerably more complicated in terms of its provenance – is a short Turkic work, framed as eleven "letters" from a lover to his beloved (all in verse, eight in Turkic and three – the fourth, eighth, and eleventh – in Persian), known as the *Maḥabbat-nāma*, composed by a poet who calls himself simply "Khwārazmī." Nothing more is known of this poet, who nevertheless gained considerable renown, and both the identity of the work's dedicatee and the particulars of where and when it was composed are uncertain, owing in part to differences in the surviving copies of the work.¹⁵ The earliest manuscript so far utilized in studying the work was copied in Yazd in 835/1431, in Uighur script. It lacks the poet's

12. On this poet's link with Sarai: DeWeese 2005, 130–31.

13. Zajączkowski 1958–1961; cf. Hacıeminoğlu 1968. On Quṭb: Hofman 1969, 5: 78–83; DeWeese 2005, 130–31.

14. On the copyist and his patron: Hofman 1969, 2: 236–40; on another work he copied: Toparlı 1992.

15. The Uighur-script copy was the basis for two published editions: Gandjei 1954–1957; Khwārazmī 1959, 111–70. The Arabic-script copy was the basis for another edition,

affirmation, found in the old Arabic-script copy, completed in Herat in 914/1508–1509, that he finished the work in 754/1353, having written “all of it on the banks of the Syr” (*qamughīn sīr yaqasīnda bitidim*), i.e., the Syr Darya, thus leaving open the possibility of an earlier date of composition in the fourteenth century. As for the patron, both copies refer to him as Muḥammad Khwāja Bek, and link him with Janibek Khan; but they differ regarding the former’s origin (where the Uighur-script copy identifies this figure as of Chinggisid descent, *khān urughī*, the Arabic-script copy says that he was of Qonggirat tribal origin, *qūngrāt urughī*), and the nature of his connection with Janibek is similarly unclear. These questions may not be resolvable, but scholarship on the *Maḥabbat-nāma* has mostly ignored a fragmentary copy of the work preserved in Paris – perhaps copied as early as 730/1330, thus complicating the question of the work’s date – that further identifies Khwārazmī’s patron as “Muḥammad Khwāja b. Yāylāgh Qutlūgh.”¹⁶ This figure might have been none other than the Qonggirat *amīr* better known as Nanghidāy, who was met, in the service of Özbek Khan, by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, and whose sons were established in Khwārazm as the so-called Qongrat Šūfī dynasty during the 1360s and 1370s.¹⁷ These identities and connections cannot be conclusively demonstrated, but the Paris manuscript may signal yet another *amīrid* patron for Turkic Islamic literature in the Mongol era.

Of far greater substance is a final Turkic work from the fourteenth-century Jochid Ulus, the remarkable *Nahj al-farādīs*, or *ūchtmākh-lar-nīng achuq yoli*, i.e., *The Open Path to the Paradises*. Study of this work has mostly been based, rightly, on the beautifully written, and fully voweled, manuscript copied in 761/1360, which was discovered by Togan in Istanbul in 1928.¹⁸ Other extant manuscripts are fragmentary and/or much later (from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries),¹⁹ but unfortunately two evidently old and important

Khwārazmī 1961. On the differences between the versions: Clauson 1962; Clauson 1928, 114–15.

16 Khwārazmī, *Maḥabbat-nāma*, MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Suppl. Pers. 869 (described in Blochet 1928, 138–39, no. 1400), f. 56b; on the manuscript’s provenance: DeWeese et al. 2013, 336–37 n. 114. Two other Arabic-script copies, discovered in Istanbul, do indicate the year and the place of the work’s composition, but do not clarify the patron’s identity: Sertkaya 1972; Nadzhip 1973; Eckmann 1987.

17 Hofman 1969, 3: 255–66. On Nanghidāy and the Qongrat (Qonggirat) Sufis: DeWeese 2016, 70–73.

18 Published in facsimile in Maḥmūd b. ‘Alī 1956; a transcribed text was published in Maḥmūd b. ‘Alī 1988, followed by a word-index, Maḥmūd b. ‘Alī 1998; the transcribed text and facsimile were reissued, together, as Maḥmūd b. ‘Alī 2004.

19 Eckmann 1964; Nadzhip 1971 (cf. Nadzhip 1979, 51–67); Nurieva 1999, 24–28; cf. Hofman 1969, 4: 104–9.

copies have been lost. One was the manuscript owned by the Tatar scholar Shihāb al-Dīn Marjānī (d. 1889), who gave brief excerpts from it, including the information on the author and the date and place of the work's completion;²⁰ another, evidently copied in 792/1390, was preserved for a time in a local museum in Yalta, in Crimea, and was discussed in a study published in 1930.²¹

The old Istanbul manuscript unfortunately lacks all of the information about the author and where he worked found in Marjānī's excerpts, and reflected also, though in slightly different ways, in some of the later copies. What seems to be clear, based on those other copies, is that the work was completed in Sarai, the "capital" of the Jochid Ulus, in 759/1358 (though later copies also give a date according to the twelve-year animal cycle calendar that does not correspond to this *hijrī* year); this was during the short reign of Berdibek, the son and successor of Janibek, near the beginning of a twenty-year period of profound political disorder in the Golden Horde. The author identifies himself as Maḥmūd b. 'Alī, and adds three *nisbas* after his name: he was, he writes, a Bulghārī by birth (*muwalladan*) – of interest in terms of the ongoing currency of that *nisba* after the Mongol destruction of the Bulghār state in 1236 – a Sarāyī by upbringing (*mansha'an*), and also a Kardarī, thus linking himself also to a prominent town of Khwārazm, a region traditionally tied to the Jochid Ulus. In one of the later surviving copies (though evidently not in the lost Marjānī manuscript), the *nisba* "al-Kardarī" is followed by the word '*aqdan*, i.e., "by attachment" or perhaps even "by affiliation." This opaque term may allude to a period of training or religious activity in that Khwārazmian town, marital ties with a family native to it, or simply a period of residence there. In any case, the *Nahj al-farādīs* should be understood as a work reflecting the language and, more significantly, the religious, cultural, and social concerns of the substantial Muslim and Islamizing population of the Jochid Ulus in the middle of the fourteenth century, on the assumption that the work's production reflects the existence, already, of a constituency for it, rather than the "missionary" aims sometimes imputed to such works.

As with most Turkic works of this era, the *Nahj al-farādīs* has mostly been discussed for its linguistic data, without attention to the religious or social environment it reflects. It consists of four chapters (*bāb*), each divided into ten sections (*fāṣl*). The first deals with the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, including an account of his *mi'rāj*. The second chapter recounts the lives of the first four Caliphs, with sections on Fāṭima, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn following the account of 'Alī, and then discusses each of the "four *imāms*," i.e., the

20 Marjānī 1897, I: 14. 21 Kemal' 1930.

namesakes of the four *madhhabs* (in order: Abū Ḥanīfa, Shāfiʿī, Mālik, and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal). The third is focused on virtuous deeds, beginning with basic religious knowledge and the major ritual obligations, covering “service to parents,” lawful food, the duty to “command the right and forbid the wrong,” “extra” acts of worship, and the virtues of patience and contentment. The final chapter outlines the bad deeds that distance a person from God, beginning with illicit bloodletting, fornication, and drinking, and including also pride, lying, “loving the world,” jealousy, and so on. The key to the work’s richness is the extensive anecdotal material that illustrates all these sections. Unfortunately this narrative content is so far the least extensively studied aspect of the book. There is also as yet no serious study even of the many references to the sources drawn upon by the author, as an indication of the wide range of works of *ḥadīth*, *sīra*, *fiqh*, and Sufism with which he was familiar, and which he drew upon in conveying religious guidance and illustration in fourteenth-century Turkic.

The Turkic documentary legacy from the Golden Horde’s successor states is quite extensive,²² but the earliest surviving documents date only from the 1390s, and have been the focus of study from the middle of the nineteenth century.²³ Chancery production is likewise an important aspect of the use of Turkic in the Jochid Ulus, but cannot be reviewed here.

Sources from the Chaghadaid Ulus

As for the Chaghadaid Ulus, which territorially encompassed most of the presumed centers of Turkic literary production in pre-Mongol times, the Turkic-language legacy is much smaller than that of the Jochid realm, at least until the Timurid era. A substantial documentary legacy, in the Uighur script, survives from the *ulus*’s eastern part, but reflects the continuation of the local Buddhist civilization into the Mongol era. No Islamic documents in Turkic from the Chaghadaid realm have been identified (until the seventeenth century),²⁴ and even the Timurid period left a relatively sparse documentary record in Turkic (in Uighur script). Turkic literary production is likewise limited in scope, but the surviving works are of considerable importance.

The earliest-known example of Turkic literature from the Chaghadaid Ulus is the *Qışaṣ al-anbiyā*, a major collection of stories about the prophets begun in 709/1309–1310 and completed the following year by Nāṣir al-Dīn

22. On this material: Usmanov 1979; Kurat 1940; Özyetgin 1996.

23. Berezin 1850–1851, 1857; Radlov 1888; Samoilovich 1918.

24. On these: Kim 2010. On the absence of earlier material: Biran 2008.

b. Burhān al-Dīn Rabghūzī; his *nisba* is assumed to be a contraction of the place name “Ribāt-i Oghūz,” but the unusual form is difficult to explain, and in any case helps little in terms of situating the author in a particular context. Rabghūzī’s work, like those mentioned above more clearly produced within the Jochid Ulus, has typically been classified as representing Khwārazmian Turkic; whatever this may mean linguistically (some have gone further and insisted that the work was produced *in* Khwārazm), the likely identity of Rabghūzī’s patron places the work’s production clearly in the context of the gradual Islamization of the Chaghadaid Ulus.

Rabghūzī dedicates his work to, and praises, a certain “Nāṣir al-Dīn Tūq-būghā,” who is explicitly and repeatedly identified as a *bek* (*begimiz*, *beklār urughī*, *toq-bughā bek*), of Mongol origin (*moghul soyligh*, *aşlı moghul*), a Muslim (*musulmān dīnligh*, *mu’minlār kūvānchi*, etc.), and young (*yashī kichik*).²⁵ This figure is undoubtedly to be identified with the “*amīr* Toq-bughā” whom Ibn Baṭṭūṭa met in Nakhshab/Qarshī, in 733/1332–1333, nearly a quarter-century after the dedication of Rabghūzī’s work; by then he was, as Ibn Baṭṭūṭa refers to him, the deputy (*nā’ib*) of the Chaghadaid khan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Tarmashirin (r. 731/1331–734/1334).²⁶ This identification was suggested already in 1888.²⁷ In both editions of the English publication of Rabghūzī’s work, however, the editors make no mention of this quite likely identification, and instead seek to make the dedicatee a Chinggisid, suggesting that “the Mongol prince Toqbuqa” was a grandson of the Chaghadaid khan Du’a, making him a nephew to Tarmashirin.²⁸ Such an identification is plainly precluded by Rabghūzī’s affirmation that his patron was a *bek* – the equivalent of *amīr*, the title assigned to Toq-bughā by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa – and thus implicitly not a Chinggisid. Though nothing more is known of this *amīr*, to find him linked both with the composition of a substantial work presenting the lore of Islam through stories of the prophets, in Turkic, and with Tarmashirin, the khan known as a convert to and promoter of Islam in the Chaghadaid Ulus,²⁹ suggests that he may have been of considerable importance as a proponent of Islamization in the early fourteenth century. This in turn reminds us of the importance of patronage by the *amīrid* class, who often preceded the Chinggisids in adopting Islam, and in some cases clearly urged them in that direction.

The early date and patronage context for Rabghūzī’s work, as well as its rich linguistic, narrative, and folkloric material, naturally lend appeal to its

25 Rabghūzī 2015, 1: 5–6, 2: 6–8 (tr.). 26 Ibn Baṭṭūṭa 1969, 3: 29; Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb 3: 555.

27 Rieu 1888, 269–73; cf. Togan 1963, 232; Rabghūzī 1997, 1: xiii–xiv.

28 Rabghūzī 1995, 1: xviii; Rabghūzī 2015, 1: xvii. 29 Biran 2002.

study, but despite the publication of the facsimile of the old London manuscript, datable to the fifteenth century,³⁰ and of three text editions based on it (two with English translations),³¹ considerable work remains to be done in assessing this substantial text and its relationship with the process of Islamization; once again, it should no doubt be approached, as with the later *Nahj al-farādīs*, on the assumption that its composition reflected the presence of an audience for it rather than the impulse to create one (the recent claim that the paucity of early manuscripts is to be explained by the work's "propaganda value" – i.e., copies were purposefully targeted for destruction by zealous opponents of Islam – is strained and overly simplistic³²). Yet even study of the work's complex textual history and of its linguistic contextualization remains poorly developed, as some old and important manuscripts have been ignored until recently,³³ and others still remain essentially unstudied,³⁴ neither the language nor the contents of Rabghūzī's work can be regarded as properly assessable until these other old copies have been explored more fully.

At the same time, part of the ongoing importance of Rabghūzī's work lies not simply in its archaic lexical stock, or its reflection of an early stage of the rendering of Muslim hagiographical lore about the prophets of Islam into Turkic, but in its updating and adaptation in the process of transmitting the work over the course of six centuries; the relatively few manuscripts surviving from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries bring us closer to the "original" work, but the numerous later copies, updated linguistically, from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries remind us of the continuing appeal, and meaning, of a work inspired by the cultural and religious encounter of the Mongol era.

30 Rabghūzī 1948. 31 Rabghūzī 1995; Rabghūzī 1997; Rabghūzī 2015.

32 Rabghūzī 2015, xiii, xvi–xvii.

33 Rabghūzī 1995 and Rabghūzī 1997 were based chiefly on the old London manuscript, with no mention of an important old copy preserved in Tehran, which had been described already in Dānish-pazhūh 1961, 774–75 (giving excerpts clearly revealing this copy's inclusion of archaic orthographic, phonological, and lexical features), and noted in Hofman 1969, 5: 86–92. In Rabghūzī 2015, the editors incorporated material from the Tehran manuscript (crediting Cin 2010 with first bringing the copy's importance to light), but retained the London copy as the basis.

34 Some old and potentially important manuscripts preserved in Tashkent, described in Urunbaev and Epifanova 1964, 332–36, continue to be ignored; the oldest is ascribed to the late fourteenth century, and two others to the fifteenth century. None were mentioned in Hofman 1969 or Rabghūzī 1997. In Rabghūzī 1995, the editors downplayed the importance of the oldest Tashkent manuscript, which they could not consult (I: xxii–xxiii n. 11); Rabghūzī 2015 includes a somewhat longer discussion of this copy, but continues to dismiss its potential importance.

From the middle of the fourteenth century dates another, much less well-known, Turkic literary product of the Chaghadaid era, and territory, namely a Sufi work written by a son, named Ishāq Khwāja, of a saint, linked with the Yasavī Sufi tradition, known as Ismāʿīl Ata, whose Sufi community was based in the locality of Qazghirt, roughly midway between Isfijāb/Sayrām and Tashkent. This work survives in two redactions: one bears no special title, and the other is entitled *Ḥadīqat al-ʿārifīn*. Most known copies were produced in the nineteenth century, but one manuscript of the untitled version was produced in the late seventeenth century, and a copy of the titled redaction appears to date from the early sixteenth (and was probably transcribed from a fourteenth-century original). The work is a typical Sufi handbook, divided into fifteen chapters, but includes valuable hagiographical information about Ismāʿīl Ata, and more broadly bears witness to an early stage in the development of local Sufi communities that played an important role in the religious and social acculturation of the Turkic nomads brought into Central Asia in the course of Mongol rule. One remarkable feature of this still largely unknown work is its inclusion of a narrative of Islamization, involving conquest and martyrdom, that recounts the spread of Islam into the Ferghana valley, eastern Turkistan, the Ili and Chu valleys, and the Syr Darya basin, by three warrior saints said to descend from ʿAlī's son, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiya; though set in the second century of the Hijra, it may be read as evoking the religious, political, and social concerns of Muslim communities in Central Asia facing the impact of the Mongol conquest and the imposition of non-Muslim rule.³⁵

Aside from the works of Rabghūzī and Ishāq Khwāja, it is not so easy to properly contextualize other extant Turkic works that might have some connection to Mongol-era Central Asia. Isolated works or fragments are sometimes published and declared to be “old” without serious efforts to date or contextualize them,³⁶ and assumptions about other supposedly “early” examples of Turkic literature are commonly voiced but left unsubstantiated (e.g., claims about the poetry of Aḥmad Yasavī, or about the provenance of the Turkic *Qisṣa-yi Yūsuf*, ascribed to a certain ʿAlī).³⁷ It is more likely, by contrast, that a Turkic verse work often dated to the twelfth or thirteenth century was produced in the Chaghadaid Ulus, perhaps in the second half of the fourteenth century. This is the *ʿAtabat al-ḥaqāʾiq*, written by “Adīb Aḥmad” (ascribed, by the early fifteenth century, the *nisba* “Yūknākī”) and dedicated to Muḥammad-dād Ispahsalār Bék, an otherwise

35 On this work: DeWeese et al. 2013.

36 Fazylov 1970; Fazylov 1972; Fazylov 1989; Shcherbak 1974.

37 On Yasavī: DeWeese 2011; on *Qisṣa-yi Yūsuf*: Almaz 1963; Nadzhip 1976; West 1983.

unknown “great *amīr*.”³⁸ Even less clear, in terms of provenance, is the Uighur-script fragment of the legend of Oghuz Khan,³⁹ though often assumed to reflect a version of that tale untouched by the process of Islamization, it seems equally plausible that it should be recognized as a consciously contrived alternative to the heavy infusion of Islam, and Islamization, into the story, as evident already in the Persian rendering by Rashīd al-Dīn.⁴⁰ Whether understood as an un-Islamized, or de-Islamized, version of the story, this short text has so far defied efforts to explain satisfactorily who its Turkic-speaking audience was, or when and where it was either clinging to an un-Islamized legend of origin, or creating one shorn of meaning in a Muslim context.

A final Turkic work of possible relevance to the Mongol era may be noted here, though it is not known to survive. The author of a Chaghatay Turkic historical work completed in Tashkent around 1530, the *Zubdat al-āthār*, mentions, among the sources he utilized in producing the section of his work dealing with Temūr and his successors, a work he calls the *Tārīkh-i khānī*, “which the Uighur *bakhshīs* wrote using the Uighur script (*khatt*) and dialect (*talaffūz*).”⁴¹ It is generally assumed, with good reason, that this work should be understood in connection with the affirmation of Temūr’s fifteenth-century historian, Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī, that “Uighur *bakhshīs*” were in Temūr’s service (along with Persian secretaries), to record his exploits, and produced a work in Turkic verse.⁴² The “title” mentioned in the sixteenth-century *Zubdat al-āthār*, however, might be taken as suggesting a Chinggisid focus or Chinggisid patronage. In any case, there can be little doubt that this early work – as well as a Turkic history of Temūr mentioned by the historian Khwāndamīr and ascribed to a certain Mawlānā Ṣafī al-Dīn Khuttalānī, among the learned men of Mawarannahr⁴³ – would have offered invaluable information on the history of the western portion of the Chaghadaid Ulus during the second half of the fourteenth century.

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38 Yükleki 1951, 5–39 (with praise of the patron at 44–46); Soper 2002.

39 Pelliot 1930; Bang and Rachmati 1932; Shcherbak 1959, 1–110; Danko 2019.

40 Rashīd al-Dīn 1969. 41 Bartol’d 1973, 131 n. 25; on *Zubdat al-āthār*: DeWeese 1992.

42 Yazdī 2008, 1: 246; cf. Woods 1987, 82–83.

43 Khwāndamīr 1954, 3: 549; Khwāndamīr 1994, 1: 304.

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Tibetan Sources

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Introduction

A great variety of Tibetan sources deal with various aspects of the Mongol Empire. Among the most important are a number of contemporary official documents, issued by Mongolian khans, imperial widows, princes, and so on, down to imperial preceptors and governors of myriarchies. These documents, as well as the letters of high Tibetan religious dignitaries, provide important information about the working of the imperial administration, including details like corvée duties, rights to pasturelands, or the constant issue of abuse of power by local authorities. Furthermore, Tibetan literati have been preoccupied with history and history writing since the period of the Tibetan Empire.¹ They have developed their own taxonomy of historiographic genres, among them the most important are *lo rgyus* ("tale of years"), *rgyal rabs* ("account of kings"), *gdungs rabs* ("account of the lineage"), and *chos 'byung* ("origin of Buddhism"). One should not, however, take these genres in too strict a manner, as the lines between them are often blurred with regard to content and form. They often have in common a narrative style in which events are presented chronologically, combining both historical and ahistorical, mythological elements in the narrative. Whereas *lo rgyus*, *rgyal rabs*, and *gdungs rabs* primarily aim at the presentation of either a general history of Tibet or the genealogy and history of a certain ruling family, kingdom or fiefdom, the *chos 'byung* have a different aim. They outline the history of specific religious traditions and, especially if they are biographies and autobiographies, focus on the spiritual development of their protagonists. As they tend to mention historical events only in passing, their historical value is

1 For a general evaluation of Tibetan history writing: Vostrikov 1962, 48–51; Van der Kuijp 1996.

sometimes underestimated. However, they do contain important historical material, to the point of including official documents that have not been preserved elsewhere. Much valuable information is also hidden in regional histories, as recent research into the history of the petty kingdoms of Mang yul gung thang and Gu ge pu hrang has shown.² Due to limitations of space, this short survey cannot give a comprehensive overview of all available Tibetan sources that contain information about the Mongol Empire. As verbatim copying is a legitimate device in Tibetan historiography to add authority and legitimation to one's own writing, later general histories that often do not have any independent value are not included in this overview. I will restrict myself to a bibliographical review of the most important sources, highlighting their specific contributions to the study of the Mongol Empire.

Official Documents

In Tibet under Mongol overlordship, official documents included imperial decrees to different Tibetan religious and political dignitaries. They were either written originally in Tibetan or, in the case of the Great Khans and their widows, translated from Middle Mongolian. The official documents can be classified into the following sections: (1) imperial decrees (Tib. *'ja' sa*, Mo. *jarligh*, Ch. *shengzhi*),³ (2) decrees of imperial widows (Tib. *e ji*, Mo. *iji*, Ch. *yizhi*), (3) decrees of imperial preceptors (Tib. *ti shri*, Ch. *dishi*), (4) decrees of national preceptors (Tib. *go shri*, Ch. *fazhi*), (5) decrees of Mongolian princes (Tib. *ling rtsi*, Mo. *lingji*, Ch. *lingzhi*), (6) decrees of the heads of the Xuanweisi (Tib. *svon vi si*), (7) decrees from chancelleries of Sa skya, (8) decrees from chancelleries of the governors of the Tibetan myriarchies, (9) decrees from non-specified chancelleries of the middle and upper level of the imperial administration, (10) official seals (Tib. *gser yig*, Mo. *gerege*, Ch. *paizi*).⁴ As we do not possess a similar wealth of official documents for any other cultural region of the Mongol Empire, these sources are of primary importance for understanding the working of the imperial administration.

Of the sixty official documents addressing Tibetan destinaries known so far, forty-nine are rendered in the Tibetan language, either translated from Middle Mongolian or originally composed in Tibetan.⁵ They include eleven

2 Everding 2000; Everding 2005; Vitali 1996.

3 For the correspondence of Tib. *'ja' sa* with Mo. *Jarligh*: Schuh 1977, 159–60.

4 This classification follows Everding 2006a, 4, with a minor adjustment.

5 Everding 2006a, 5.

decrees of the Great Khans, two decrees of imperial widows, seventeen decrees issued by imperial preceptors and five by national preceptors, two decrees of imperial princes, two decrees issued by the heads of the Xuanweisi, six decrees from diverse *Sa skya* chancelleries, three decrees from Tibetan governors of myriarchies, and one document from an as yet unidentified chancellery. All these documents either have been preserved separately in Tibetan archives or are included in historical works like the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs*, the *Hu lan deb ther*, or the *gNyags ston pa'i gdung rabs*, among others. The separately preserved documents have been published in facsimile together with a Chinese and English translation.⁶

The first scholar to examine a Tibetan official document from the Yuan era was Édouard Chavannes, who, based on its Chinese translation, translated a decree issued by the *Go shri dKon mchog rgyal mtshan*, a state preceptor, in 1341.⁷ Eleven documents, issued by the imperial preceptors in favor of the *Zva lu* myriarchs, have been edited in facsimile and translated by Giuseppe Tucci.⁸ Of the eleven decrees issued by the Great Khans, the most prominent are the '*Ja' sa bod yig ma* of 1254 and the '*Ja' sa mu tig ma*, the "Pearl Decree," of 1264, both issued by Qubilai Qa'an. Preserved in the Tibetan chronicle *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs*, they have been reproduced in facsimile, text-critically analyzed, and translated by Dieter Schuh.⁹ The imperial decree issued by Temür Öljeitü Qa'an in 1297 has been preserved in the chronicle *Hu lan deb ther*.¹⁰ Shōju Inaba and Hisashī Satō have translated this document,¹¹ as did Dieter Schuh, who also provided a text-critical analysis.¹² In recent years, Karl-Heinz Everding has started the admirable task of bringing together all known official documents written in Tibetan and Middle Mongolian and publishing them anew within a multivolume series.¹³

Among the official documents mention should also be made of the letter of summons issued by Köten (Tib. *Go dan*) to the *Sa skya paṇḍita*. This letter, which is preserved in a couple of Tibetan historical accounts, foremost in the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs*, is corruptly transmitted, or even, on formal grounds, a forgery, as Dieter Schuh was able to show. Schuh provides a facsimile reproduction of the text and a translation, accompanied by a comparison of the extant versions in different Tibetan histories.¹⁴

6 Sgrolkar, Xiao Huaiyuan, and Vodzer 1995.

7 Chavannes 1904; Chavannes 1908. Wang Yao 1981 reconstructed the Tibetan text of the document. For *dKon mchog rgyal tshan*: Van der Kuijp 2004a, 51.

8 Tucci 1949, 670–73. 9 Schuh 1977, 103–24. 10 Bira 1964. 11 *Huran deputura* 1964.

12 Schuh 1977, 126–28. 13 Everding 2006a, b. 14 Schuh 1977, 10–41.

Historical Works

Only a few contemporary historical works have come down to us. Probably the earliest historiography providing detailed information about the Mongol Empire is the *Tshal pa kun dga' rdo rjes mdzad pa'i hu lan deb ther* (Red Book, Composed by 'Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje), also called *Hu lan deb ther* or *Deb ther dmar po* (Red Book, Red Annals), that was composed in the years 1346–1363 by 'Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje (1309–1364).¹⁵ Its short title *Hu lan deb ther* hints at the historical context to which it owes its compilation: *hu lan* corresponds to Mongolian *ulaghan*, “red,” and *deb ther*, “book,” derives from Mongolian *debter*. Three editions of the *Hu lan deb ther* are known to me.¹⁶ The edition of 2004 contains numerous notes by Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las. This chronicle is one of the most influential works for later Tibetan historians, who used it as a source for their descriptions of the Mongol Empire. The work contains detailed genealogical accounts of the Mongolian imperial family as well as information about Tibetan–Mongolian relations, including details about the relations of the Phag mo gru pa with Hülegü. As noted above, Temür Öljeitü Qa'an's decree of protection and tax release for Buddhist monasteries from the year 1297 is included in the work. The style of the *Hu lan deb ther* is very dry and matter-of-fact, as can be seen from the short biography of Phyag na rdo rje, 'Phags-pa's nephew:

The younger brother, the lord Phyag na rdo rde, was born in the female pig year [1239]. In his fifth year he followed as attendant of his uncle. Prince Go dan [= Köten] let him wear Mongolian clothes and gave him the lady Me 'ga' lung [as wife]. Se chen [= Qubilai] appointed him over the whole of Tibet. He passed away in his twenty-ninth year, in the female fire hare year [1267], at Sa skya.¹⁷

For the compilation of his work, 'Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje used Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, and Mongolian sources. Not all of them can be identified without doubt.¹⁸ The *Hu lan deb ther* has been translated into Japanese and Chinese.¹⁹ Recently, the chapter on the Mongolian royal genealogy has been translated into English.²⁰

¹⁵ Franke 1990; Van der Kuijp 1996, 44–45; Martin 1997, 52–53. Sørensen 1994, 500, deals with the book's sources.

¹⁶ *Tshal pa kun dga' rdo rje* 1961; *Tshal pa kun dga' rdo rje* 1981; *Tshal pa kun dga' rdo rje* 2004.

¹⁷ *Tshal pa kun dga' rdo rje* 1961, fols. 22r6–7.

¹⁸ *Tshal pa kun dga' rdo rje* 1961, fol. 14v3; Van der Kuijp 1996, 45.

¹⁹ *Huran deputura* 1964; *Hongshi* 1988. ²⁰ Schaeffer, Kapstein, and Tuttle 2013, 339–42.

The perhaps most important historical work on the Yuan era was written more than sixty years after the end of Mongol rule in Tibet. In 1434 gYas ru tshang pa Śrībhūtibhadra (dPal 'byor bzang po) composed the *rGya bod kyi yig tshang mkhas pa dga' byed chen mo 'dzam gling gsal ba'i me long* (short title *rGya bod yig tshang* (Annals of China and Tibet)). The work, which has been studied by Ariane Macdonald,²¹ contains a wealth of information about Mongolian rule in Tibet, including detailed descriptions about the myriarchies, census, social conditions, and military campaigns of the Mongols to curb local Tibetan resistance. A special value lies in the fact that the author makes use of Chinese works of the Yuan era which are nowadays lost. Gene Smith translated and annotated the section on the 'Khon lineage up to the birth of Kun dga' snying po.²² Luciano Petech deals with the data given in the *rGya bod yig tshang* about the Mongol census of 1268.²³ The work has been published in two editions.²⁴ Although scholars made extensive use of it,²⁵ still a full translation of this important historical account into a European language does not exist.

One of the most influential works of Tibetan historiography is the *Deb ther sngon po* written, according to tradition,²⁶ by 'Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal (1392–1481) in 1476–1478.²⁷ The work is a general history of Buddhism in Tibet. Literally “The Blue Book,” the use of a color for the book title shows the cultural influence of the Mongols long after their actual rule in Tibet. The *Deb sngon*, as it is abbreviated in Tibetan, provides detailed information about the different Buddhist schools in Tibet and in this context deals with the Mongolian invasion of Tibet, the ensuing Mongolian rule, and the relations that Tibetan Buddhist dignitaries developed with Mongolian emperors and princes. The *Deb sngon* stands out as one of the early text-critical works in Tibetan historiography, as the author critically evaluates the often conflicting information provided by his various sources. A complete English translation with indices was prepared by George N. Roerich,²⁸ to which Turrell V. Wylie added an index of place names.²⁹ In 1985 Guo Heqing published a Chinese translation.³⁰ The work has been edited in India and China.³¹

In 1538, Paṇ chen bSod nams grags pa (1478–1554) composed a “new” *Hu lan deb ther*, the *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma*, with the full title *rGyal rabs 'phrul gyi lde*

21 Macdonald 1963; outline of contents: Kolmaš 1973. 22 Smith 2001b, 102–9.

23 Petech 1980. 24 dPal 'byor bzang po 1979; dPal 'byor bzang po 1985.

25 Wylie 1977; Van der Kuijp 1993; Everding 2007.

26 Van der Kuijp 2006, 16, argues for a “corporate authorship.” 27 Van der Kuijp 2006.

28 Roerich 1979 (1949). 29 Wylie 1957. 30 Guo Heqing 1985.

31 'Gos lo tsā ba 1976; 'Gos lo tsā ba 1984.

mig gam deb ther dmar po'i deb sar ma (The Magical Key to the Accounts of Kings, or the New Red Book). The author's aim was indeed to supplement the *Deb ther dmar po* of 'Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje. His work focuses on the history of Tibet, but also contains chapters about the history of India, the mythical country Shambhala, China, and the Mongol Empire. Several editions of the work exist.³² Giuseppe Tucci reproduced the Tibetan text with text-critical annotations and prepared a translation of the introduction and the sections that deal with Tibet, including the parts focusing on China and the Mongol Empire.³³

It took the Tibetan scholar dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1566) nearly twenty years, from 1545 to 1564, to write the *Dam pa'i chos kyi 'khor lo bsgyur ba mams kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa'i dga' ston* (short title *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (Joyous Feast of the Learned)), a history of Buddhism in India and Tibet, dealing with all schools, but putting a special emphasis on his own school, the Karma bKa' brgyud pa. This work, also known as *Lho brag chos 'byung* (Religious History of the Lho brag Province), contains detailed information about the religious and political relations of the Karma pa hierarchs with the Mongolian rulers, as well as a short account of the history of the Mongols, thus providing a necessary balance to the Sa skya pa accounts which in Tibetan studies for long decades have been the primary sources for the history of Tibetan–Mongolian relations.³⁴ The *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* has been published in India and China.³⁵ The Chinese edition contains a chapter on the author's life and some information about the sources of the work, written by Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las. The chapter on the Mongols has been translated into Japanese.³⁶

The *Chos 'byung bstan pa'i padma rgyas pa'i nyin byed*, with its short title *'Brug pa'i chos 'byung* (Religious History of the 'Brug pa), was written in 1575 and revised in 1580 by the fourth 'Brug chen Padma dkar po (1527–1592). This history of Buddhism in Tibet has a special focus on the bKa' brgyud pa in general and the 'Brug pa bka' brgyud school in particular. The particular focus from which the author unfolds the narrative of Tibetan–Mongolian relations during the Mongol Empire makes the work valuable. Contrary to other authors, Padma dkar po does not arrange his material into sections, but creates a continuous narrative. As Helmut Eimer has shown, he possesses considerable literary qualities as a writer, and historical accuracy may suffer

32 Paṇ chen bsod nams grags pa 1968 (two folios of the manuscript are missing); Paṇ chen bsod nams grags pa 1971; Paṇ chen bsod nams grags pa 1989.

33 Paṇ chen bsod nams grags pa 1971. 34 Schuh 1976.

35 dPa' bo gtsug lag 1959–1965; Gnäs nang Dpa' bo 1980; dPa' bo gtsug lag 1986.

36 Chibetto–Mongoru Nendaiki kenkyūkai 1990.

in favor of the plot's dramatic development.³⁷ The *'Brug pa'i chos 'byung* is available in three different editions.³⁸ Gene Smith provides information about the author and an outline of the contents.³⁹

In 1609 the sTag lung Zhabs drung Ngag dbang nram rgyal (1571–1626) composed a history of Buddhism in Tibet with a special emphasis on the sTag lung bKa' brgyud pa, the *Chos 'byung ngo mtshar rgya mtsho* (Ocean of Wonderful Religious Histories). As in the aforementioned work, the value of this *chos 'byung* for the history of the Mongol Empire lies in the detailed biographical information it provides about the Stag lung masters that sheds light on the Bri khung–Mongol (sTod hor) relations. This work has been used, among others, by Petech and Van der Kuijp,⁴⁰ but no extensive study exists. So far, it has been edited twice.⁴¹

A collection of biographies of the abbots of Sa skya monastery, *'Dzam gling byang phyogs kyi thub pa'i rgyal tshab chen po dpal ldan sa skya pa'i gdung rabs rin po che ji ltar byon pa'i tshul gyi nram par thar pa ngo mtshar rin po che'i bang mdzod dgos 'dod kun byung* (short title *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* (Genealogical Account of the Sa skya pa)) was composed in 1629 by the 'Jam mgon A myes zhabs Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams (1576–1662).⁴² The work is of great importance for the relations of the Sa skya pa with the Mongolian rulers. As already noted, the author included in his account the famous letter of Köten to the Sa skya paṇḍita and two decrees of Qubilai Qa'an. Due to the – incorrect – translation of the imperial decree of 1254 in the popular history of Tibet written by Tsepon Shakabpa, a former member of the Tibetan government before 1950,⁴³ the *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs* has for a long time shaped our understanding of the political and religious role of the Sa skya school during the century of Mongol rule in Tibet. Dieter Schuh gives a German translation of the colophon and the sections relevant to the relations of the Sa skya pa with the Mongolian emperors, discusses the date of its compilation, and provides a text-critical assessment of its contents.⁴⁴ Two editions of the work exist;⁴⁵ Schuh, however, used a copy of a manuscript in the possession of the Sa skya khri 'dzin at his exile seat in Mussoorie in northern India.⁴⁶ No full translation into a European language is available.

One of the towering texts of Tibetan historiography is the chronicle of Tibet, *Gangs can yul gyi sa la spyod pa'i mtho ris kyi rgyal blon gtso bor brjod pa'i*

37 Eimer 1976. 38 Padma dkar po 1968; Padma dkar po 1973–1976; Padma dkar po 1992.

39 Smith 2001c. 40 Petech 1990a.

41 Ngag dbang nram rgyal 1972; Ngag dbang nram rgyal 1992.

42 Tucci 1949, 154; Schuh 1977, 12–15. 43 Shakabpa 1967, 65–66. 44 Schuh 1977, 12–19.

45 'Jam mgon a myes zhabs 1975; 'Jam mgon a myes zhabs 1986. 46 Schuh 1977, 185.

deb ther rdzogs ldan gzhon nu'i dga' ston dpyid keyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs, the “Song of the Queen of Spring, Joyous Feast of the Incomparable Youth, Book That Chiefly Describes the Kings and Ministers of Heaven That Act on the Earth of the Snow-Covered Country,” written in 1643 by the fifth Dalai Lama, Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1607–1682), at the request of the new ruler of Tibet, the Qoshot Gushri Khan. It deals extensively with the political history of Tibet in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries under Mongolian rule, touching issues like the internal struggles between the Tibetan noble houses of Sa skya, 'Bri gung, Tshal pa, and others; their relations to the Mongolian khans; and the territorial divisions into different myriarchies, to mention but a few of the topics this chronicle covers. The author based his work on a variety of sources, among them the autobiography of Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan (see below). Accompanied sometimes by harsh comments in verse form, the political issues are addressed in a beautiful, ornamental literary style, as the following passage shows:

But the dPon Kun dga' rdo rje, together with the dPon chen of Sa skya, rGyal ba bzang po, dBang brtson and the g'Ya' bzang pa, brought about many bad intrigues against the sDe srid Phag mo gru pa.

Therefore, as an ordinary bird hastening after an eagle only tires itself out, he lost most of the subjects who had been granted by an imperial decree during the time of the dPon dGa' bde and the Drung chen sMon lam pa.⁴⁷

The chronicle was partially translated by Giuseppe Tucci in 1949.⁴⁸ Kristina Lange translated the section on the Tshal pa.⁴⁹ In the meantime a complete English translation was published.⁵⁰ Numerous editions of the work exist.⁵¹

The Mongolian scholar Sum pa mkhan po ye shes dpal 'byor (1704–1788) finished his history of Buddhism in India, China, Tibet, and Mongolia, entitled *rGya gar 'phags-pa'i yul rgya nag chen po gangs can bod yul sog yul nmams su dam chos rin chen byung tshul dpag bsam ljon bzang* (short title *dPag bsam ljon bzang* (The Noble Wish-Fulfilling Tree)), in 1748. Although his work has no independent value with regard to our knowledge of the Mongol Empire, the accompanying chronological tables (*re'u mig*) are important for a comparison of dates. The work and its author are well researched.⁵²

47 Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1985, 133. 48 Tucci 1949, 625–51.

49 Lange 1975; also Lange 1987. 50 Ahmad 1995.

51 For example, Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1967; Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1985; Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho 1988.

52 De Jong 1967; Hambis 1971; Erdenibayar 2007.

A couple of editions exist,⁵³ as well as one partial and one full translation into the Russian language.⁵⁴

The still little-known *dPal ldan gle lung chos sde chen po'i gnyags ston pa'i gdung rabs gdan rabs dang bcas pa'i rnam thar skal bzang mdzes pa'i rgyan phreng* (short title *Nyags ston pa'i gdung rabs* (Genealogical account of the Nyags ston pa)), written in 1775 by Chos nyid ye shes, is an important genealogical chronicle that focuses on the noble house of gNyags ston and its principal monastery, Gle lung chos sde. It contains fourteen decrees for the myriarchy of Mus in northwest central Tibet issued by Mongol rulers, an imperial widow, and high officials in the local administration, considerably contributing to our knowledge of local rule in the greater context of the Mongol Empire. Karl-Heinz Everding provided a detailed outline of contents together with a full translation and analysis of the fourteen decrees.⁵⁵ The work is available in one print edition.⁵⁶

The most detailed chronicle about the noble house of Tshal pa and the Tshal pa bKa' brgyud pa that is known today is the *Gung thang dkar chag*. It was written in 1782 by the dGe lugs pa monk 'Jog ri Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin 'phrin las (1748–after 1804). Although the work does not bring much new material, but rather summarizes older accounts, it still allows us to study the historical significance and the territorial dimensions of the Tshal pa myriarchy much better than other sources. Again, Everding has produced a thorough study, including the diplomatic edition of the rare xylograph and an annotated translation into German.⁵⁷ He also provides a detailed outline of contents.⁵⁸ For his account of the noble house of Tshal pa the author apparently used the *rGyal rabs sogs bod kyi yig tshang gsal ba'i me long*,⁵⁹ an anonymous chronicle probably dating to the thirteenth century,⁶⁰ or a source close to it. Unfortunately, at the time of writing this chapter, I have not seen this work, which deals with the history of the Tshal pa noble house and their relations with the Mongolian rulers. However, it should at least be mentioned in this short overview.

Autobiographical and Biographical Works

Tibetan literature abounds in biographical writings, be it single biographies (*rnam thar*), collections of biographies (*bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar*), or autobiographies (*rang nam*). Much of this material has not been studied by

53 To mention but three: Sumpa mkhan po 1908; Sumpa mkhan po 1959; Sumpa mkhan po 1992.

54 Pubaev 1981; Pubaev 1991. 55 Everding 2006b, 8–59. 56 Chos nyid ye shes 1997.

57 Everding 2005. 58 Everding 2005, xv–xxiii. 59 Everding 2005, xxiv.

60 Anonymous 1985; Martin 1997, 228.

scholars, so that in future new material which may broaden our knowledge of the Mongol Empire might still be discovered. Also, due to limitations of space, the following overview is far from complete.

Perhaps the most important of the period's biographical writings is the autobiography of the Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan (1302–1364) of the noble house of Phag mo gru, the de facto ruler of dBus and gTsang from 1354 onwards, completed in 1361. This work, entitled *bKa' chems mthong ba don ldan*, but usually quoted as *bKa' chems deb ther* (Testamental Book), and generally known as *Si tu bKa' chems* (Testament of Si tu), deals not only with the last years of Sa skya rule in Tibet, but also with earlier times, providing us, among other things, with important information about the relations of the Tibetan Buddhist school of the Phag mo gru pa with Hülegü. Rolf A. Stein and Leonard van der Kuijp studied this work.⁶¹ Elliot Sperling translated a passage concerning the internal organization of the alignments between the different bKa' brgyud pa branches and Mongolian rulers.⁶² An outline of contents is given by Zuiho Yamaguchi.⁶³ Three different manuscripts of the work have been published so far;⁶⁴ according to Van der Kuijp, who made a penetrating analysis of them, all three of them should be used together.⁶⁵

One of the earlier biographies of the Sa skya paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan dates from the early fifteenth century and was, perhaps,⁶⁶ written by Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1450). The work with the title *Chos rje sa skya paṇḍi ta chen po'i nam thar gsung sgros ma* (Report on the Biography of the Lord of the Dharma, the Great Sa skya Paṇḍita) informs us about the beginnings of Tibetan–Mongolian relations, providing details about the summons of Köten Khan, the journey of the Sa skya paṇḍita to Liangzhou, and his audience with the khan. Schuh gives a translation of some relevant passages of this work,⁶⁷ which is preserved in the collected works of the Sa skya pa.⁶⁸

A counterpart to the better-known Sa skya point of view of Tibetan–Mongolian relations provides the collection of biographies of the bKa' brgyud pa masters entitled *bKa' brgyud bla ma rnams kyi nam thar rin chen gser phreng* (Golden Garland of Jewels, the Biographies of the bKa' brgyud Lamas) written by the 'Bri gung chos rje Kun dga' rin chen (1475–1527) in 1508. The work, which has been published in an Indian edition,⁶⁹ informs us about the

61 Stein 1962; Van der Kuijp 1991. 62 Sperling 1990, 148–49. 63 Yamaguchi 1970.

64 Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan 1974; Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan 1986; Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan 1989.

65 Van der Kuijp 1991, 279 n. 2. 66 See Van der Kuijp 1993, 531 n. 13.

67 Schuh 1977, 53–56. 68 Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po n.d.

69 'Bri gung chos rje Kun dga' rin chen 1972.

relations of the 'Bri gung pa and the Mongols in the thirteenth century. Elliot Sperling has made use of it in his study on the relations between Hülügü and Tibet.⁷⁰

The collection of biographies of the masters of the Karma kam tshang branch of the bKa' brgyud pa, the *sGrub rgyud karma kam tshang brgyud pa rin po che'i mam par thar pa rab 'byams nor bu zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba* (Crystal Garland of Profound Moonwater Jewels, the Biographies of the Precious Tradition of the Karma kam tshang, the Lineage of the Accomplished Ones), was begun by the Si tu Paṇ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1699–1774) and finished by his disciple 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab nges don bstan 'phel a year after Si tu Paṇ chen's death.⁷¹ The value of this work lies in the inclusion of official documents that other historical accounts of the Karma bKa' brgyud pa, notably the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, do not contain. These documents include the imperial letter of summons addressed to the third Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339) by Togh Temür Qa'an (1331), a decree of the Bureau of Buddhist Affairs, the imperial order for the Karma pa after his arrival in China (1332), the letter of summons of the imperial widow Budashiri to the third Karmapa (1336), the imperial letter of summons (1356), and part of an imperial order to continue his journey, the last two issued by Toghon Temür Qa'an and addressed to the fourth Karma pa Rol pa'i rdo rje (1340–1383). All of these documents have been text-critically analyzed and translated by Schuh.⁷² The work is available in a reprint of the dPal spungs edition.⁷³

Letters

Among the historical material Tibetan literati have left us, letters occupy an important position. They are a valuable source for our knowledge of political, religious, and administrative matters in the Tibetan areas of the Mongol Empire, and sometimes they even provide glimpses into the cultural life of Mongolian-ruled Tibet. When, for example, the Sa skya paṇḍita advises his Tibetan countrymen that vermilion and madder are a tribute welcome to the Mongols,⁷⁴ we come to learn about the trade articles and items valued by the Mongols.

Best known in Tibetan studies is perhaps the letter the Sa skya paṇḍita wrote to his countrymen after he had arrived at the *ordo* of Köten in 1247 and was interviewed by the khan. The letter, entitled *Bu slob rnams la spring ba* (Message to Disciples),⁷⁵ presents, if authentic, one of our earliest sources on

70 Sperling 1990.

71 Schuh 1977, 128; Sperling 1987, 40. For the life of the Si tu Paṇ chen: Smith 2001a, 91–93.

72 Schuh 1977, 128–47. 73 Situ and Belo 1972. 74 Sa skya paṇḍita 1992–1993, 433, 1.

75 Sa skya paṇḍita 1992–1993, also included in 'Jam mgon a myes zhabs 1975, 156–62.

Tibetan–Mongolian relations in the thirteenth century. A full translation has been provided by Giuseppe Tucci.⁷⁶ David Jackson has convincingly argued that this letter is a later, early sixteenth-century, addition to the *oeuvre* of the Sa skya paṇḍita.⁷⁷ Its colloquial tone differs markedly from the elegant style of the author’s other writings. Despite the doubts concerning its authenticity, the letter continues to exert a strong influence on scholarly evaluation of Tibetan–Mongolian relations in the thirteenth century.

The collected works (*gSung ’bum*) of ’Phags-pa bla ma Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280) contain the letters he wrote to secular and religious leaders of his time. Some of them add to our knowledge of the Mongol Empire.⁷⁸ The letter entitled *Chos rje pa bde bar gshegs dus dbus gtsang gi dge ba’i bshes gnyen mams la spring ba* (Message to the Kalyānamitras of dBus and gTsang),⁷⁹ which he wrote in 1252 from Liangzhou, contains an imperial decree of Möngke Qa’an. The decree has been translated by the Hungarian scholar Janos Szerb.⁸⁰ A second letter refers to the same edict.⁸¹ In his “Letter to the Bodhisattva Prince,” ’Phags-pa addresses a Mongolian ruler, probably Qubilai, commenting on, among other things, the delicate issue of authority between the secular and the religious powers.⁸² Furthermore, in the letters of ’Phags-pa bla ma we find information about the Mongol census in Tibet as well as the tribute and tax system the Tibetans were subjected to. Janos Szerb dealt with ’Phags-pa’s letters to Qubilai,⁸³ and Luciano Petech also made use of them.⁸⁴

In the letter the famous scholar Bu ston rin chen grub (1290–1364) wrote to the Ta’i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan, probably around 1330, defending the *sKu zhang* Kun dga’ don grub against charges of conspiracy, he comments on, among other issues, the official recognition of the *Zhva lu* ruler by the Mongolian emperor Öljeitü Qa’an some decades earlier. The letter is included in the collected works of Bu ston and has been translated by Giuseppe Tucci.⁸⁵

Conclusion

This short overview has amply proved the importance of Tibetan sources for the study of the Mongol Empire. Indeed, of all the regions under Mongol rule, Tibet has preserved the greatest number of official documents. Apart from these important sources for the study of imperial diplomacy and

76 Tucci 1949, 10–12. 77 Jackson 1986. 78 Chos rgyal ’phags pa 1993a.

79 Chos rgyal ’phags pa 1993b. 80 Szerb 1980a, 291–92, 298 n. 54.

81 Chos rgyal ’phags pa 1993d. But compare Schuh 1977, 101–2.

82 Chos rgyal ’phags pa 1993c. 83 Szerb 1985. 84 Petech 1990a.

85 Bu ston 1971, vol. *la*, fols. 9817–10013; Tucci 1949, 673–74.

political relations of the period, Tibetan literature, be it historiographical or (auto)biographical, is a veritable treasure mine for our understanding of the entangled web of social, cultural, and political relations that made up the fabric of the Mongol Empire. Still, among the vast body of Tibetan literature not yet studied, there may well be unknown treasures to discover in the future.

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Korean Sources

KANG-HAHN LEE

From the latter half of the Koryŏ dynasty (918–1392) onward, the Korean people produced a considerable body of sources, written in classical Chinese, that discuss the Mongols, and notably their relations with Koryŏ, from the invasions and diplomacy of the thirteenth century to the coexistence of the fourteenth century. Such sources range from official records to private ones, and include administrative, literary, and geographic material as well as personal notes. They can certainly contribute to the study of Mongol history in general, notably that of the Yuan dynasty.¹

Official Sources

The Official Histories of the Koryŏ Dynasty: The Koryŏsa and the Koryŏsa-jŏlyo

The most prominent source on the Koryŏ dynasty is the *Koryŏsa*.² This official history of the Koryŏ dynasty was published in the early days of the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1897). The number of references to the Mongols and their history in it is staggering.

The compilation of the *Koryŏsa* began in 1449 (the thirty-first year of the Chosŏn king Sejong's reign), and it was completed and published in 1451. Comprising a total of seventy-five volumes containing 139 chapters, the structure of the *Koryŏsa* is similar to that of a Chinese official history: it features a chronological documentation (annals) of the thirty-four Korean

1 For studies of the Koryŏ-Yuan relationship: Lee Ik-ju 1996; Kim Ho-dong 2007; Robinson 2009; Lee Kang-hahn 2010; Lee Kae-sŏk 2013; Morihira 2013; Lee Myŏng-mi 2016; Chŏng Tong-hun 2016.

2 *Koryŏsa* 1972; *Kugyŏk Koryŏsa* 2008; for the *Koryŏsa*'s various editions: Kim Kwang-ch'ŏl 2014.

kings, biographical records of the dynasty's renowned figures (queens, officials, noteworthy persons, rebels, and so on), and a categorical description of key government institutions (treatises).³ Records portraying the last two centuries of the dynasty (the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) are particularly detailed, and include invaluable information concerning the Mongol Yuan empire and Koryŏ's exchanges with it.

Almost simultaneously with the *Koryŏsa* another important chronological record of Koryŏ was produced by some of the same team of historians who had worked on the *Koryŏsa*, such as Kim Chong-sŏ and Chŏng In-ji. This was the *Koryŏsa-jŏllyo* (or *chŏryŏ*) that was presented to King Munjong (r. 1450–1452) in 1452, only a few months after the *Koryŏsa*. Literally, *Koryŏsa-jŏllyo* means “Abbreviated History of Koryŏ,” but this name is misleading, as this compilation also contains a considerable amount of information not found in the *Koryŏsa*. A more prudent translation would thus be “Essentials of Koryŏ History.” The *Koryŏsa-jŏllyo* is arranged in an “annalistic style” in thirty-five chapters, consisting only of annals without biographies or treatises. It was the result of a dynastic project that had started earlier than the *Koryŏsa* but was discarded for a while in favor of the new historical project which eventually culminated in the *Koryŏsa*.⁴

Both texts have their own merits and should be read together. While the *Koryŏsa-jŏllyo* is more condensed, its chronological rearrangement allows a whole new kind of historical flow, highlighting events that sometimes are not captured effectively in the *Koryŏsa*. Yet biographies and institutions are obviously better documented in the *Koryŏsa*.⁵

Both histories are valuable for historians of the Mongols, since the Koryŏ–Yuan relationship takes a prominent role in both. Thus, for example, the *Koryŏsa* and the *Koryŏsa-jŏllyo* meticulously portray how and why the Yuan established in Koryŏ the Chŏngdong Haengsŏng (Branch Secretariat for the Conquest of the East), a sort of provincial government,⁶ as well as the functions it served, their modifications over time, and how the Koryŏ kings adapted to their new position as “governor” of this provincial administration from the 1280s. Additionally, both histories contain materials such as orders

3 E.g. the government officials; the army, the penal system and legal orders, economic policy and institutions, geographic description of the country, official appointees selected by the annual dynastic examinations, relief efforts.

4 *Koryŏsa-jŏllyo* 1973; *Kugyŏk Koryŏsa-jŏllyo* 1976; Roh Myŏng-ho 2016; for a partial English translation: Shultz and Kang 2014; Vermeersch 2021.

5 For the relationship between the two Koryŏ histories and their historical significance: Roh Myŏng-ho 2019; for a brief English introduction to the two histories: Breuker, Koh, and Lewis 2012.

6 Chang Tong-ik 1994.

or instructions from the Yuan government and the replies of the Koryŏ court, which reveal the agendas that politicians on both sides were pursuing. Both histories review the development of Koryŏ–Yuan relations – political, economic, and cultural, as they continued to evolve over time. They document both Yuan provocations, such as the change of the Koryŏ governmental structure in 1275 at the urging of the Yuan government, and the 1290s legal conflicts over determining the social class of an individual born from a cross-class marriage, when several Yuan figures tried to “revise” Koryŏ legal practices. Yet they also demonstrate how Koryŏ managed to turn the tables, restoring the original features of its own governmental structure in the late thirteenth century, and having the Yuan emissary responsible for the aforementioned legal conflicts recalled to China in 1300. Such trends took momentum in the early fourteenth century, and in the 1320s–1330s Koryŏ officials were able to neutralize certain Koryŏ and Yuan factions that had tried to replace the Koryŏ king and government with more Yuan-friendly entities (another royal candidate and a new branch secretariat). In the 1340s Koryŏ officials even used the Yuan court’s orders as an excuse to launch domestic reforms targeting pro-Yuan factions in Koryŏ⁷

This interesting mix of seemingly contradictory aspects of the Koryŏ–Yuan relationship is reflected in the economic field as well. At first, during the 1260s–1280s, Koryŏ suffered all kinds of economic extraction from the Yuan. Yuan levies for funding its Japanese campaigns seriously depleted Koryŏ’s silver and grain reserves, and their demands for ships and manpower for the same campaigns also harmed the country as it was still recuperating from its long war against the Mongols. However, after the Yuan took over the Song in 1276–1279, its extraction of Koryŏ resources slowed, and exchange became the new norm. Commerce – private and governmental – thrived from the 1290s and throughout the first half of the fourteenth century. The kings especially took advantage of this new situation, dispatching commercial ships to Chinese shores from the 1290s, establishing workshops for the production of commodities such as high-quality textiles, and recruiting Chinese and Islamic merchants to serve as representatives of the Koryŏ court. As a result, foreigners such as Indians and Iranians began to visit the Korean peninsula.⁸

The introduction of the Yuan paper currency did not have a negative impact on Koryŏ, due to its limited circulation; rather, Koryŏ merchants

7 Kim Hye-wŏn 1994; Kim Hye-wŏn 1999; Min Hyŏn-gu 1980.

8 Lee Kang-hahn 2013; Lee Kang-hahn 2016a.

took advantage of it when they launched commercial activities in the Yuan realm.⁹

Amidst all this, cultural and institutional exchanges also continued, and are well documented in the official histories. Noteworthy are the reform efforts of King Ch'ungsŏn-wang (1275–1325, r. 1298 and 1308–1313), who was the offspring of the first royal Koryŏ–Yuan marriage. Inspired by the regional system in Jiangnan, in the late 1300s and early 1310s he reformed the local governing network of Koryŏ, to ensure long-range communication and efficient management of wider regions.¹⁰ He also adopted a modified version of the Yuan system of “military slaves” (*junqu*) whose households were mobilized for military service, merging the Koryŏ and Yuan institutions to restore the Koryŏ military system after the damage inflicted on it during the Mongol invasions.¹¹

The *Koryŏsa* and *Koryŏsa-jŏlyo* also manifest how Neo-Confucianism was newly introduced to the Koryŏ people, and how new trends of Buddhism were disseminated among the Koryŏ Buddhist community. The mix of indigenous traditions with newly imported elements led to the redesigning of Koryŏ's dynastic shrine, reflecting both its past styles and new Chinese inspiration, and the relaunch of a dynastic memorial service for one of the country's most honorable sages, Gija.¹² The interactions also transformed the self-identity of Koryŏ officials, who received titles and ranks from the imperial government in China.¹³

*Geographical Encyclopedia and Compilation of Classical
Writings: The Sinjŭng Tongguk Yŏji Sŭngnam
and the Tongmunsŏn*

Geographical information regarding Koryŏ's various regions reveals the living conditions of the Koryŏ people, what kind of obstacles they had to endure, and what kind of lifestyle they formed while trying to overcome such circumstances. Simultaneously, the literary writings of Koryŏ authors bring to life their perspectives, worldview, mentality, and priorities. Luckily, the

9 Wi Ŭn-suk 1997. 10 Park Chong-gi 1994.

11 For King Ch'ungsŏn-wang other Yuan-inspired measures: Park Chong-jin 1983; Lee Kang-hahn 2008; Lee Kang-hahn 2016c.

12 Gija (Ch. Jizi) was one of the last royal members of the Chinese Shang dynasty (c. 1766 to 1122 BCE) who was known to have fled and founded a dynasty in Korea, the so-called “Gija Chosŏn” (1120–194 BCE).

13 Yuan sources also contain plenty of information on the Koryŏ–Yuan relationship. For a comprehensive compilation of Koryŏ references in Yuan Chinese sources: Chang Tong-ik 1997; also Lee Chin-han et al. 2008; Kwŏn Yong-chŏl 2019.

people of Chosŏn decided to compile grand collections in both areas, in the form of a geographical encyclopedia named *Sinjŭng Tongguk Yŏji Sŭngnam* (New and Enlarged Geographical Treatise on Korea),¹⁴ and a collection of classical writings named *Tongmunsŏn* (Selections of Refined Literature of Korea).¹⁵ Both texts were compiled and printed during the early half of the Chosŏn dynasty, and document how the lives of the Koryŏ people were affected by the Mongols.

The *Sinjŭng Tongguk Yŏji Sŭngnam* was compiled and published in 1530, as an enhanced version of the original *Tongguk Yŏji Sŭngnam* (Geographical Treatise on Korea) (1481). It is an extensive collection of geographical information on the Korean peninsula's individual regions, and their respective histories from Korea's antiquity. Comprising twenty-five volumes that contain fifty-five chapters, the encyclopedia assigns separate sections to individual provinces: the capital cities of Koryŏ (Kaegyŏng) and Chosŏn (Hanyang), and the provinces of Kyŏng'gi, Ch'ungchŏng, Kyŏngsang, Chŏlla, Kang'wŏn, Hwang'hae, P'yŏng'an, and Ham'gil (Ham'gyŏng).¹⁶ Under provincial entries, it brings information on their various subunits, covering the most crucial details that constitute the region's self-identity, being a treasure mine of local information.

The *Sinjŭng Tongguk Yŏji Sŭngnam* shares much information with a very similar, yet different, source of geographical information, the "Treatise on the Geography," inserted in the *Annals of King Sejong* – which is also a part of the *Annals of the Chosŏn Dynasty*. Originally published in 1432 as *Sinchan P'aldo Chiriji* (Newly Compiled Geographical Treatise of the Eight Provinces), it was included in the *Annals of King Sejong* with additional data and published in 1454. The text contains a vast amount of mainly practical social and economic information on individual regions, even more than the *Sinjŭng Tongguk Yŏji Sŭngnam*, and reflects a time and situations closer to the Koryŏ years.¹⁷ In contrast, the *Sinjŭng Tongguk Yŏji Sŭngnam* contains more cultural information. Thus while both compilations feature basic information, including local perimeters, the number of households and the size of the population,

14 *Sinjŭng Tongguk Yŏji Sŭngnam* 1958; *Kugyŏk Sinjŭng Tongguk Yŏji Sŭngnam* 1971.

15 *Tongmunsŏn* 1975; *Kugyŏk Tongmunsŏn* 1975; for an introduction to this work, followed by an English translation of Chapters 96–99: Wei and Lewis 2019, 3–58.

16 Kyŏnggi, Chungchŏng, and Hwang'hae were in the middle part of the Korean peninsula, while Kyŏngsang and Chŏlla respectively occupied the right and left parts of the south. Kang'wŏn stretched from north to south on the east side of the peninsula, while P'yŏng'an and Hamgyŏng (then called Hamgil) were in the north part of the peninsula.

17 Contents in Chinese and Korean are available at http://sillok.history.go.kr/id/kda_400.

regional climate and temperature, the size of land adequate for cultivation, local products, and basic geographic traits, the latter also records issues such as local heritage, renowned historical individuals, religious facilities, and praise of the local landscape. Both texts also detail the Koryŏ people's experience with the Mongols, describing areas which were completely destroyed due to the Mongol invasion and later rebuilt, focal points of traffic which fell into Mongol hands, strategic crossroads where the Koryŏ people defeated the Mongols, and the activities of Koryŏ's envoys to the Yuan (recorded under their hometowns), and the heroic efforts of the Koryŏ civilians and soldiers who bravely fended off Mongol troops.¹⁸

Meanwhile, the other work mentioned above, the *Tongmunŏn*, was a completely different kind of source. It was a compilation of compositions and articles, carefully selected from a vast array of masterpieces, authored by people of the Shilla (or Silla, 57 BCE–935 CE), Koryŏ, and early Chosŏn periods. This collection of literary materials was completed in 1478, with forty-five volumes containing 133 chapters. The total of 4,302 items by more than 500 authors include not only poems but also lengthy documents: royal orders and instructions authored by officials, appeals and reports submitted to the kings, and diplomatic communiqués sent to foreign countries. Also included here are celebratory remarks for special occasions, eulogies for funerals, and even letters exchanged between private individuals. Notably, the data we find in this book are primary sources, right from the mouths and voices of the contemporaneous Koryŏ people, unmodified by a committee assigned to compile an official history for the past dynasty such as the *Koryŏsa* and *Koryŏsa-jŏllo*, and not rearranged by local authorities as official reports for the central government as in the *Sinjŭng Tongguk Yŏji Sŭngnam*.

This is also true for literary works from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, written by those who had firsthand experience of the Mongols' presence. In particular, items written by Koryŏ's diplomats contain invaluable information, revealing negotiation details, as well as how the two countries' relationship and their mutual perceptions evolved over time. Among the documented issues are Koryŏ's arguments against the Yuan's Japanese campaign, to which Koryŏ was forced to make a considerable contribution. Thus a dialogue in the *Tongmunŏn* described Japan as a country that would be best untouched, for ensuring that the empire be

18 Yun Yong-hyŏk 1991.

spared from all kinds of disobedience and local retaliation.¹⁹ Other documents in the *Tongmunson* were written as pleas and pledges, such as the appeal requesting to salvage King Ch'ungsŏn from his exile. After maintaining a long, favorable relationship with the Yuan government, and enjoying a strong and successful political status for more than a decade, the king was framed, accused, and sent into exile. Many people in the Koryŏ government invested efforts in retrieving him, and he was finally released, only to die a few months later.²⁰ Other pledges were of a more personal nature, filed by individuals wishing to establish direct contacts with the Yuan authorities. For example, a Koryŏ Buddhist priest praised the Yuan emperor for restoring the past glory of the priest's monastery, promising that he and his colleagues would pray for the emperor's health.

Individual Sources

Personal Anthologies: Ikjejib (*Ikje* [Yi Che-hyŏn]'s *Anthology*), *Cholgo Ch'ŏnbek* (*Hundreds and Thousands of Useless Words from Ch'oi Hae*), *Kajŏngjib* (*Kajŏng* [Yi Kok]'s *Anthology*) and Others

Another important genre is the personal anthologies of Koryŏ individuals.²¹ These literary collections contain a variety of writings (e.g., forewords, epilogues, scholarly articles, private letters, commemorating notes, discussions with colleagues, essays, novels, and biographies). Currently all extant anthologies from the late Shilla through Koryŏ and up to the late Chosŏn period are collected in the *Han'guk Munjib Ch'onggan* (Complete Collection of Korean Literary Writings) series, established by the Han'guk Kojŏn Pŏnyŏkwŏn (Institute for Translation of Korean Classics), formerly the Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhwe (Board for the Promotion of National Culture). There are literally thousands of them, yet most are from the Chosŏn period, and only around fifty of them were authored by people who were born before Koryŏ's fall. Yet most of the Koryŏ anthologies are from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and therefore manifest what the Mongol Empire meant for the Koryŏ people.

¹⁹ *Tongmunson* 1975, Chapter 62: "A Letter Sent to Mongol Envoy Heidi."

²⁰ *Tongmunson* 1975, Chapter 62: "A Petition Submitted to Minister Baiju."

²¹ *Ikjejib* 1996; *Cholgo Ch'ŏnbek* 1972; *Kajŏngjib* 1973. All these anthologies have online editions that include both the original Chinese and an annotated Korean translation. *Kugyŏk Ikjejib* 1982; *Kugyŏk Cholgo Chhŏnbek* 2006; *Kugyŏk Kajŏngjib* 1982.

Several anthologies reveal the Koryŏ people's initial impression of the Mongols. Notable among them are the *Tongguk Yi-sangguk-jib* (1241) by the poet and scholar Yi Kyu-bo (1168–1241) and the *Tong'an Kŏsajib* compiled by the envoy Yi Sŭng-hyu (1224–1300), which manifest the challenges the Koryŏ people faced due to the Mongol invasions.²² For instance, Yi Kyu-bo's work includes both letters he drafted to the Mongols and others sent to the Jin dynasty (1115–1234) or the short-lived Eastern Zhen dynasty (1215–1233). But while in the letters to the Mongols Yi Kyu-bo's tone is humble and respectful, in the latter cases Yi describes the Mongols as "jealous, cruel, and generally untrustworthy beings," and even refers to the Mongols' assault on the Jurchens as a "crazed attack, launched by a violently savage race."²³ His anthology well conveys the palpable tension between the Mongol and the Koryŏ peoples.

Yi Sŭng-hyu's anthology includes, among other things, a travelogue poem named *Pinwang-rok* (Travelogue as a Royal Emissary), which depicts in great detail his journey to the Yuan court in 1273 as a congratulatory envoy for the empress's designation ceremony, and his feelings about his task. His other writing, notably the *Chewang Wun'gi* (Ode to the Kings), a historic epic praising both the Koryŏ and Chinese histories but stressing Koryŏ's own ancient legacy, reflects some of his ambivalence towards Mongol–Yuan rule.²⁴

Later Koryŏ anthologies reveal the changes in Koryŏ's perceptions of the Mongols over the years. Prime examples from the fourteenth century include the writings of Yi Che-hyŏn (1287–1367), Ch'oi Hae (1287–1340), and Yi Kok (1298–1351). They were all prominent figures in Koryŏ politics and literature, who played a significant role in the evolution of the Koryŏ–Yuan relationship, and were also responsible for contemporaneous reforms.

Yi Kok was the Korean who rose to the highest position inside the Yuan government, faithfully serving both the Koryŏ and Yuan governments throughout his entire career. He was able to demand reforms of his Koryŏ colleagues, while protecting the interest of the Koryŏ dynasty from the Yuan.²⁵ Meanwhile, Yi Che-hyŏn traveled far and wide, more than any other contemporary Koryŏ individual, and also had significant access to the most renowned Yuan Confucian scholars, with whom he cultivated a close

22 *Yi-sangguk-jib/Tong'an Kŏsajib* 1973; *Kugyŏk Tongguk Yi-sangguk-jib* 1982; Kim Kyongsu 1995; Lee Wu-sŏng 1995.

23 *Kugyŏk Tongguk Yi-sangguk-jib* 1982, vol. 28.

24 Kim Kyŏng-su and Chin Sŏng-kyu 1995; Chin Sŏng-kyu 2009.

25 *Kajŏngjib*, vol. 8: "Wu Pon'guk Chaesang-sŏ" (A Respectful Letter to the Fellow Ministers of Koryŏ).

relationship.²⁶ As for Ch'oi Hae, he returned to Koryŏ after serving a brief term in Yuan local government, praising the Mongols as “enlightened” rulers, while taking pride in Koryŏ’s literary accomplishments, which he thought could rival the finest Yuan writings. Considering the complex and unique nature of all these people’s lives, their accounts can certainly inform us about what the Yuan empire meant on the fourteenth-century Korean peninsula.

The *Ikjejib*, Yi Che-hyŏn’s literary collection, comprises ten chapters of *Ikje Nan’go* (Ikje’s Miscellaneous Writings) and four chapters of *Yŏg’ong P’esŏl* (An Old Man’s Unimportant Utterances). It was first published during the Koryŏ period, and reprinted several times, beginning in 1432. It contains Yi’s views on almost every important issue of the late thirteenth and mid-fourteenth centuries, highlighting his suggested reform measures and detailing the Koryŏ–Yuan controversy over the Chŏngdong Branch Secretariat and its proposed substitutes.²⁷ The book also contains many poems (collected in the first four chapters), which Yi composed while traveling through China. All the excitement, concerns, and pride associated with the awe and wonder he experienced during his journey, and the relationships he developed with his Yuan counterparts, are captured in these poems.

The *Cholgo Ch’ŏnbek*, the anthology of Ch’oi Hae’s works, was first published in 1354. It comprises two volumes containing a total of forty-three articles. Ch’oi Hae applied for the Yuan imperial examination in 1320, and got a post in the Yuan provincial government, but chose to return to Koryŏ in 1321. He was a close friend of Yi Che-hyŏn, and a strong-minded man who became one of Koryŏ’s most renowned literary figures. His anthology highlights the exchanges between the Koryŏ intellectual community and foreign experts – in fields ranging from Confucianism to Buddhism and from linguistics to science – who frequented the peninsula during Yuan rule.²⁸

The *Kajŏngjib*, an anthology of Yi Kok’s works, comprises four volumes containing twenty chapters, and was compiled by his son Yi Saek (1328–1396).²⁹ It was published first in 1364, and again in 1422. In 1332, Yi Kok passed

26 In 1314, he was given the opportunity to stay at the Man’gwŏn-dang (Hall of Ten Thousand Volumes), an institution established by King Ch’ungsŏn for discussing Confucian teachings with Chinese and Mongol literati, where he associated with many renowned Yuan literary figures. He also traveled across China in the 1310s and 1320s, and accompanied King Ch’ungsŏn to the Yuan court and later to his exile in Tibet.

27 *Ikjejib*, vol. 5.

28 *Cholgo Ch’ŏnbek*, vol. 2, Tong’in-jimun-sŏ (Preface to *Tong’in-jimun*); vol. 1, Song Roh-kyosu Sŏkwi Sŏ (Farewell to Professor Roh returning to the West).

29 For Yi Saek, a famous Koryŏ official: *Mogŭnjib* 1975; *Kugyŏk Mogŭnjib*; for an extensive analysis of Yi Saek’s works: Lee Ik-ju 2013.

the Yuan imperial examination, and began serving as a Yuan official. Like Yi Che-hyŏn, he was also an accomplished scholar, and while he was the prime example of a Korean who succeeded in reaching one of the most honorable positions in the Yuan government, he retained his Koryŏ identity. This book highlights his relationship with Yuan officials, Yuan internal affairs, and the condition of the Koryŏ people living in Dadu.³⁰ His collection also reports the unfolding of several political controversies between the Yuan government and Koryŏ, such as the Yuan periodic bans on Koryŏ people's ownership of weaponry and horses,³¹ or the Yuan requests for tributary females, which caused all kinds of anger and frustration throughout Koryŏ society. Yi Kok filed an official appeal to the Yuan court to have such practices publicly discouraged, if not totally discontinued.³² On a lighter note, he also depicted the admiration of high-ranking Mongol officials of the scenery at the Korean Kŭmgang-san mountain, who even became sponsors of the renovation of the mountain's famous temples.³³ Much information is hidden in these gems, and awaits systematic study and translation.

Grave Epitaphs

Grave epitaphs, written to commemorate the lifetime accomplishments of an individual and then buried inside that person's tomb, are important primary sources reflecting the terminology and vocabulary which were actually in use at the time, and depicting individual life in much greater detail. Although they were created to honor the dead, and usually do not contain any negative information that would harm the buried person's reputation, they still provide us with invaluable firsthand information from people who personally knew the deceased without the filters and censorship typical of the official histories' biographies.³⁴

Currently there are more than 300 epitaphs from the Koryŏ period, and they are still being discovered.³⁵ Kim Yong-sŏn put out a first collection of

30 *Kajŏngjib*, vol. 2, Records: "Kyŏngsa Poŭn Kwanggyosa Ki" (Record of the Poŭn Kwanggyo-sa Temple at the Imperial Capital).

31 *Kajŏngjib*, vol. 10, Appeals: "Sa Pok-Kungbyŏng Mapil Pyo" (Expressing Gratitude for Again Allowing Koryŏ to Use Weaponry, Horses, and Troops).

32 *Kajŏngjib*, vol. 8, Letters: "Tae-ŏn'gwan, Ch'ŏng P'achwi Tongnyŏ Sŏ" (Request for the Abolition of Young Female Drafts, on Behalf of the Official in Charge).

33 *Kajŏngjib*, vol. 2, Records: "Kŭmgang-san Pohyŏnam Pŏbhwegi" (Record of the Buddhist Gathering Held at Mt. Kŭmgang's Pohyŏnam Sanctuary).

34 Inscriptions from pagodas or tombstones of the Koryŏ period are another invaluable source of information: Kim Yong-sŏn 2004.

35 Kim Yong-sŏn 2021. Online service can be found at www.krpia.co.kr/viewer?plctId=PLCT00004735&tabNodeId=NODE04250618.

epitaphs in 1993, and has been collecting and translating them for nearly three decades. About two-thirds of them date from the late twelfth through the late fourteenth centuries, and many reflect the connections of the deceased with the Mongol Yuan empire or their adapting to the Mongol presence.

For example, authors of epitaphs were particularly meticulous in documenting all the titles (both practical and meritorious) conferred upon an individual during his or her lifetime. Among those titles, there are also foreign titles bestowed by the Yuan emperor on Koryŏ officials serving the Koryŏ government, which are identical to titles the Yuan conferred upon its Mongol and Chinese officials. Such Koryŏ officials were considered by the Yuan government as part of the Yuan system even when they remained in the confines of Koryŏ, and they gradually came to terms with their own sort of “dual identities” under Yuan hegemony. Epitaphs also closely follow the Koryŏ individuals’ encounters with Yuan personnel, while issues that rocked Koryŏ society are depicted through the lives of individuals who were personally involved in those situations. Here, too, the painful task of preparing ships, soldiers, and food supplies for the Yuan campaigns in the 1270s, 1280s, and 1290s is described in detail, while epitaphs of emissaries reveal matters of all kinds that were discussed between the two governments. Political machinations to remove the Koryŏ king and replace him with another member of the Koryŏ royal family with stronger ties to Yuan political society are illustrated in epitaphs dedicated to people who were able to subdue or at least tried to crush such conspiracies, or to people who initiated them in the first place.³⁶

Finally, Koryŏ sources also include publicly and privately generated documentary materials. Roh Myŏng-ho and others have collected various types of document, ranging from official ones issued by the king or government (to designate meritorious vassals or appoint officials to governmental posts), to diplomatic documents (including official communiqués), and even private civilian documents related to property inheritance, household registration, and religious activities. Some of these documents were issued after the Mongols had dominated the Korean peninsula in the mid-thirteenth century, so they are relevant to Mongol studies as well.³⁷

Apart from the literary sources briefly described above, material evidence provides another kind of record. Notably porcelain, sculptures, painting, and

36 E.g., the epitaphs of Kim Pang-kyŏng (1212–1300), Cho In-kyu (1237–1308), O Cham (1259–1336).

37 Roh Myŏng-ho et al. 2000.

textiles from both Koryŏ and the Yuan attest to a thriving trade and artistic exchange, with various mutual influences among the two polities.³⁸

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38 For porcelain: Chang Nam-wŏn 2007; Kim Yun-jŏng 2006; Lee Chong-min 2012; Lee Kang-hahn 2016b. For textiles: Wi Ūn-suk 1993; Lee Kang-hahn 2018a; Lee Kang-hahn 2018b.

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Syriac Sources

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Syriac sources about the Mongols, datable from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and are quite numerous: Syriac authors speak about the Mongols in their chronicles and exegetical works, as do Syriac poets in their poems; copyists refer to the Mongols in colophons or marginal notes on manuscripts. Inscriptions in monasteries celebrate, or complain about, individual events related to the relationship between the Syriac churches and Mongol rulers. Besides, we must not forget relevant information from the same Syriac Christian milieu, albeit written in Arabic. From a geographical point of view, the above-mentioned evidence derives from southeastern Anatolia, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Iran, the territories of the Ilkhans, where both the Syriac Orthodox Church (or West Syriac Church) and the Church of the East (East Syriac Church) developed and lived.¹

The First Encounters: The Mongol Invasion

The earliest mentions of the Mongols in a Syriac document are found in the anonymous West Syriac chronicle known as *Chronicon ad 1234*. They are related to the incursions of the Mongols in north Mesopotamia, in the pursuit

1 These churches are also called respectively “Jacobite” and “Nestorian” – both “lamentable misnomers” (Brock 1996) that recent scholarship prefers to avoid, as we will do here. They developed in the Near East after the Christological debates that resulted in schisms after the council of Chalcedon (451). Chalcedonian Christology was not accepted by these two Syriac-speaking churches, but from different perspectives. The West Syriac Church, as the Coptic one, followed the theological approach of Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria (c. 376–444), while the Church of the East was inclined towards an Antiochene Christology, to which also Nestorius, former Patriarch of Constantinople (c. 386–450), adhered. This explains why the misleading name “Nestorian” was attributed to the Church of the East. This church, based in Sassanian Persia, had its patriarchal see in Seleucia-Ctesiphon. To regard Nestorius as its “founder” is obviously a mistake. The West Syriac Church, whose official patriarchal see was in Antioch, Syria, was labeled “Jacobite” after Jacob Baradaeus, Bishop of Edessa (d. 578), because of his instrumental efforts in reorganizing and revitalizing his church. Syriac was for both churches the liturgical and literary language; some dialectal peculiarities distinguish West Syriac language from the East Syriac one, and the scripts employed differ.

of Jalāl al-Dīn Khwārazm-Shāh. The first is a marginal note, related to the chapter devoted to AG 1530 (= 1218/1219 CE):²

In the same year, 1530, the people of the Huns, that nowadays are called Tatar, went out and passed to the sword all the territory of the Persians. They destroyed flourishing cities and districts of Persia. The great sultan Jalāl al-Dīn fled and took refuge in one of his fortresses near to the region of the Georgians and to Kalat.³

A few pages later, a chapter is devoted to the deeds of the “Huns” in AG 1542 (= 1230/1231 CE); its title says, “The invasion of the pagan Turks from the north, and the complete and violent defeat of Jalāl al-Dīn, the great king of the Persians, by those Turks who are called ‘Tatar’ in Turkic and ‘Huns’ in Syriac.”⁴ From these quotations it appears that the Syriac people had no previous knowledge about the invaders from the east, and were puzzled by the name, the origin, and the religion of the newcomers. Apparently unaware of the name “Mongol,” the chronicler calls them “Huns” and “Tatars.”⁵ In the course of time, an answer was found in the biblical story of “Gog and Magog,”⁶ which resulted in Christian societies, both western and eastern, in a suitable theological/historical frame, to interpret the arrival of the eastern invaders. However, the anonymous Syriac author of the *Chronicon ad 1234* does not yet refer to it, expressing only terror and astonishment caused by the raiding armies of “those Tatars, pagan and spreaders of blood”.⁷

At the sight of so wonderful a happening, all peoples from sea to sea were dismayed, and fear spread on every king. Nobody was able to oppose them, although they had no army with them surpassing [those] of the sovereigns of the regions they invaded.⁸

Similar feelings appear in a different literary genre, liturgical poetry, in a touching lamentation about robberies and killings committed by “Tatar” raiders in the village of Karmlish (Iraq, north of Irbil) in 1235. The poem is

2 The “era of the Greeks” (*Anno Graecorum*, AG), or “of Alexander,” a heritage of Hellenism in the Near East, was until recently adopted by the Syriac people, as by other peoples of the region. Also called “Seleucid era”, it begins on October 1 of the year 311 BC.

3 *Chronicon ad 1234*/Chabot, 227; *Chronicon ad 1234*/Abuna, 170.

4 *Chronicon ad 1234*/Chabot, 233; *Chronicon ad 1234*/Abuna, 175.

5 In the Chronicle (both the text and the marginal note) the name is consistently in the singular. The text says that they are called “in Turkic ‘Tatar’, and in Syriac ‘Huns’ [here the Syriac work is marked as plural]”. The previously unknown name is quoted by the chronicler as an exotic (Turkic) word, which does not follow the rules of his language.

6 Ezekiel 38: 1–15. 7 *Chronicon ad 1234*/Chabot, 236; *Chronicon ad 1234*/Abuna, 177.

8 *Chronicon ad 1234*/Chabot, 237; *Chronicon ad 1234*/Abuna, 178.

attributed to a certain Giwargis d-Wardā (“George of the rose” – an East Syriac author).⁹ The author offers a theological reason for the sad events he commemorates: they are a punishment for the sins of the inhabitants of Karmlish. This answer fits well with the interpretation of the first Mongol raids given by the anonymous author of the *Chronicon ad 1234*: the reason of their success, although their military strength is no greater than that of local rulers, is to be found in God, who gave them victory because of the sins of the people.¹⁰ Warda’s poem became famous in the East Syriac Church, as it was sung in the liturgy on St. Stephen’s commemoration. A “remake” of it, in the Neo-Aramaic language, was written in 1930 by a priest from Karmlish.¹¹ Albeit a minor episode, this raid aroused the interest of Bar Hebraeus (Barhebraeus, 1225/1226–1286), the West Syriac polymath, who mentions it both in his Syriac *Chronography* and in his *Arabic Chronicle*.¹²

According to the anonymous *Chronicon ad 1234* the reason for the enmity between the “Huns/Tatars” and the Khwārazm-Shāh, which caused their spread westwards, was “a blood feud between each other,” found in a remote incident: “the king of the Persians killed the father of the king of the Turks, and the king of the Turks [in his turn] killed the brother of the Persians’ king.”¹³ Apparently the author refers to the Iran–Turan contention, known to him probably from Firdawsi’s *Shāhnāmāh*.

Under Mongol Rule: After Hülegü’s Conquest

An enhanced knowledge about the history of the Hun/Tatar invaders, and a more articulate expression of it in narrative form, appears in Syriac sources during the Ilkhanid era. They are now called “Mongols” (*muglāyē*, *mgulāyē*). Several chapters of Bar Hebraeus’s *Chronography* are devoted to their history, from the rise of Chinggis Khan to Ghazan’s time and over.¹⁴ Bar Hebraeus explicitly says that his source is the Persian *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā* by Juwaynī, which he had the opportunity to consult in Maragha. Indeed, as the head of the Syriac Orthodox Church in the East (*maḡryono*), Bar Hebraeus visited Maragha on many occasions and was involved as a scholar in the activities of

⁹ Deutsch 1895; Hilgenfeld 1904; Borbone 2010; Butros 2010.

¹⁰ *Chronicon ad 1234*/Chabot, 233–37; *Chronicon ad 1234*/Abuna, 175–78.

¹¹ Braida 2011, 99–119 (text), 109–31 (translation).

¹² Bar Hebraeus/Bedjan, 469; Bar Hebraeus/Pococke, 476.

¹³ *Chronicon ad 1234*/Chabot, 235; *Chronicon ad 1234*/Abuna, 176.

¹⁴ Bar Hebraeus passed away in 1286; the chapters subsequent to that year in the Syriac *Chronography* are due to continuators. In some manuscripts the continuations reach Tamerlane’s time and beyond. The *Arabic Chronicle* had no continuators.

the local observatory founded by Hülegü.¹⁵ Hence Syriac literates had the possibility to read Mongol history in the very concise but generally faithful abridgment of Juwaynī's work via Bar Hebraeus's *Chronography*.¹⁶ The *Arabic Chronicle* of Bar Hebraeus draws its narrative on the early Mongol history from the same source, but curiously enough it contains some typically Christian additions, absent not only in Juwaynī's narrative, but also in the Syriac *Chronography*. For instance, in the account of the three days Chinggis Khan spent fasting and mourning after the massacre of the merchants in Otrar, we read that a "monk in black clothes" holding a staff appeared to him, urging him not to be afraid and to enact his decision, whatever it was, and giving him guarantee of success. When back in the camp, Chinggis Khan related the apparition to his wife, "a daughter of the Wang Khan"; she recognized in the man in black a bishop, who used to visit her father; some "Christian Uighurs" in Chinggis's retinue substantiated the identification, and Chinggis Khan had a bishop who was found at the camp, a certain "Mar Denha," summoned to him.¹⁷ The story looks like Christian support for Chinggis Khan's war against Khwārazm; finding it only in the *Arabic Chronicle*, apparently addressed to a readership not exclusively Christian, is surprising.

However, usually the Syriac and Arabic chronicles by Bar Hebraeus do not offer information which is not already known from their main source – that is, Juwaynī's work – at least until the conquest of Baghdad. From this date on, Bar Hebraeus's chronicles become more relevant as a source for Mongol history.

This is especially true for the *Ecclesiastical Chronicle*, another most important work by Bar Hebraeus.¹⁸ Here the author, due to his high office in the West Syriac Church, figures not only as a writer but also as an actor, at times protagonist, in the events. Already before Hülegü's conquest of Baghdad, the Mongol camp/court (*ordo*)¹⁹ had become the indispensable reference for patriarchs, bishops, and abbots. Often prelates had recourse to the Mongol authority to settle their quarrels, or to obtain a Mongol officer (at times a Christian one) to be posted with them to enforce ecclesiastical decrees. For instance, Bar Hebraeus tells us that, in a moment when the *ordo* was off limits for Christian

¹⁵ Borbone 2017. ¹⁶ Aigle 2008, 25–61; Borbone 2016.

¹⁷ Bar Hebraeus/Pococke, 285–86 (translation), 435–36 (text); Bar Hebraeus/Sāliḥānī, 230.

¹⁸ Bar Hebraeus's *Ecclesiastical Chronicle* is usually read in an old edition with Latin translation (Bar Hebraeus/Abbeloos-Lamy). Here we have made use of the Syriac original (MSS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 166; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hunt. 1; Jerusalem, St. Mark Monastery, 211).

¹⁹ The Turkic word is written in Syriac as it is in Persian: 'rdw.

prelates because an Armenian monk had committed a crime in it, he was nevertheless able to reach it to contact the “king of kings,” because as a physician to Hülegü he had the privilege of the use of the *jam* for the fast transport of drugs.²⁰ The issue of a favorable “decree” (*yarligh*, a Mongol borrowing into Syriac) is sought by the prelates, at times for their individual aims, in other instances for the well-being of the whole church. Such diplomatic ecclesiastical activity at the *ordo*, with the “amirs” and the “king of kings,” often involves gifts to the Mongol authorities. The *Ecclesiastical Chronicle* is an excellent source for reconstructing the policy of the early Mongol and Ilkhanid rule towards the Christians, from the point of view of the Syriac Orthodox Church. It offers a lively description of the strategies, tricks, and devices adopted by the church to get support from Mongol authority.

Another important source dating back to the first decade of the fourteenth century is the anonymous East Syriac chronicle known as the *History of Mar Yahballaha and Rabban Sauma*, available also in English translation.²¹ Centered on the biography of two monks who came from north China to Mesopotamia, the narrative expands itself in a history of the Church of the East from 1281 to about 1314. The protagonists are two Turkic Christians, most probably Önggüd, a Turkic-speaking people converted, at least in part, to Syriac Christianity. The elder, Sauma, was born in Khanbaliq (Beijing); the other, Marqos, in “Koshang.”²² Both living as hermits near Khanbaliq, they decided to abandon their country to reach Jerusalem as pilgrims. The troubled political situation compelled them to interrupt their travel in Mesopotamia, where the younger, Marqos, in 1281 was elected patriarch of the Church of the East with the name of Yahballaha. According to the anonymous author, the very reason for Marqos’s election was his being of the same race and language as the rulers of the time, the Mongols. His election was sanctioned by Ilkhan Abaqa and for thirty-seven years Yahballaha reigned over the Church of the East, leading a semi-nomadic life, due to the need to follow the movements of the *ordo*: close contact with the *amīrs* and the Ilkhan was necessary to run the church. Yahballaha’s reign as patriarch corresponds to the rule of the Ilkhans from Abaqa to Abū Sa’īd, which means almost all of the dynasty. For this reason, the *History of Mar Yahballaha and Rabban Sauma* is an important source for Mongol history. Better known are the chapters devoted to the embassy sent by Arghun to Europe (1287–1288), because Rabban Sauma was one of the

20 Bar Hebraeus/Abbeloos-Lamy, 2: 753–54. 21 Borbone 2021.

22 The city, located in Önggüd territory, modern Inner Mongolia, has been tentatively identified with at least three sites: Olon Süme-in Tor, Fenzhou (a site about twenty kilometers east of Hohhot), and Dongsheng (modern Toghto). Paolillo 2006.

envoys.²³ Other important chapters give an account of Ghazan's accession, and the revolt of the Amīr Nawrūz. About one-third of the narrative is devoted to the revolt of Irbil's Christian garrison, the troops called in Syriac *qayaḡiyē* (*qayāḡiyan* in Persian), literally "rock climbers." They were Merkit mountaineers who served in Hülegü's army in his march westwards. The episode ended with the massacre of the city's Christian population. No mention of Irbil's siege is found in Rashīd al-Dīn, but Qāshānī devotes to it some interesting pages.²⁴ The two accounts, Syriac and Persian, allow reconstructing the events in the frame of the policies of the newly Muslim Mongol elite. Most instructing for the attitude of the Syriac ecclesiastic elite towards the rulers is Yahballaha's remark when, near the end of his life, he decides to remain in the monastery of Maragha: "I am tired of serving the Mongols."²⁵ For him, apparently, rule of the church, whose endangered existence he had to defend, resulted in "service to the Mongols." Indeed, from the point of view of the rulers he was a state functionary, endowed with *paiza* and *yarligh*, besides the big seal that Möngke had granted to the patriarch of the Church of the East. Information from the *History of Mar Yahballaha* is indeed invaluable also with respect to Mongol so-called "tolerance." The narrative points out that often hostile *amīrs* or bureaucrats hindered the enforcement of royal decrees favorable to the church, and that the state was often ineffective in protecting its Christian subjects from riots and robberies. As an example, some Kurds dared to shoot arrows at the patriarch while he was traveling with Ghazan; when he heard, the khan, "cursing in his own language, said: 'I will take vengeance of those Kurds!'"²⁶

A continuator of Bar Hebraeus expresses similar feelings:

With the Mongols there is neither slave nor free man, neither believer nor pagan, neither Christian nor Jew, but they regard all men as belonging to one and the same stock. Everyone who approaches them and offers to them any of the riches of the world, they accept it from him, and they entrust to him whatsoever office he seeks, whether it be great or whether it be little, whether

23 Rossabi 1992. Scholars tend to overestimate Rabban Sauma's role because his travel report has been preserved. Being indeed a good diplomat and observer, he understood that the European sovereigns he met (the Pope and the kings of France and England) were not in a condition to join Arghun in an alliance aiming at the conquest of Jerusalem. He expressed his feelings in a talk with a Catholic prelate in Genoa, before returning to Arghun's court: "What shall I relate, what shall I tell the Mongols? Their heart is harder than rock, yet they are hoping to conquer the holy city, while those whose duty it would be do not even consider doing it or think of such an undertaking. What we might relate, we really do not know!" Borbone 2009b, 35; Borbone 2021, 120–21. A close reading of Sauma's argument shows that the Mongol's "hardness of heart" is still a topical opinion in the Syriac Christian milieu, even under a sovereign that was well disposed towards the Christians.

24 Qāshānī 1969, 113–15. 25 Borbone 2021, 228–29. 26 Borbone 2021, 170–71.

he knows how to administer it, or whether he does not. All they demand is strenuous service and submission which is beyond [human] power.²⁷

In conclusion, Syriac historiographical sources, if read in parallel with chronicles in other languages, mainly help reconstructing the history of the Mongol incursions in the Near East and the Ilkhanate, giving invaluable information about policy towards the churches. As for the events and the society of the empire's eastern regions, apart a few paragraphs in the *History of Mar Yahballaha* regarding China and Inner Mongolia, and some chapters in Bar Hebraeus's *Chronography* and *Arabic Chronicle*, they are almost silent. However, Bar Hebraeus's chronicles provide some interesting details, for instance in the description of Güyük's goodwill towards Christians, which ended up with metropolitans, bishops, and monks filling his *ordo*, so that "the empire became Christian," and "the Mongols and other peoples related to them used to greet each other with the Syriac expression 'barrek mor!' – 'bless, o Lord'."²⁸ The reader might be inclined not to give much credit to this anecdote, but *barrek mor* is indeed the greeting formula in Hülegü's Latin letter to King Louis of France, dated 1262.²⁹

On the other hand, Syriac chronicles express the feelings of the Syriac Christians towards the rulers and their culture. Such feelings are a mixture of fear and appreciation, especially in the early Ilkhanate, when the sovereigns and the people showed some liking towards Christianity. However, the situation soon changed, as an anonymous interpolator of Bar Hebraeus's *Chronography* testifies:

And having seen very much modesty, and other habits of this kind among the Christian people, the Mongols loved them more [than the other peoples]. *However, this was at the beginning of their kingdom, and for a short time. Then their love turned to such intense hatred that they could not even look them in their eyes, because they have all alike become Muslims, myriads of people and peoples.*³⁰

Without any doubt, after the Mongol conquest the Syriac Christian subjects in the Near East seized an unexpected opportunity for religious freedom and

²⁷ Bar Hebraeus/Budge, 490, adapted according to the Syriac original.

²⁸ The information is given only in the *Arabic Chronicle*: Bar Hebraeus/Pococke, 321, 491; Bar Hebraeus/Sālḥānī, 257.

²⁹ Borbone 2015b.

³⁰ Bar Hebraeus/Budge, 354, modified according to the Syriac text (Budge's translation at times significantly deviates from the original). We put in italics the words that are due to the initiative of the anonymous interpolator. Bar Hebraeus could not have written them, as he passed away before the Mongols' conversion to Islam. These words do not appear in the oldest manuscript of the *Chronography* (MS Vat. Syr. 166, written before 1356/1357; here f. 189r).

cultural revival, to the point where Bar Hebraeus compared Hülegü as a restorer of Christianity to Constantine, the first Christian emperor, and his wife Doquz Khatun to Constantine's mother, Helen. Nevertheless, as the *History of Mar Yahballaha* and the interpolator of Bar Hebraeus's *Chronography* testify, one should not overemphasize the effects of the official "religious freedom" in the Syriac Christians' everyday life.

The ambivalence of feelings and the emergence of hopes among Syriac Christians, grounded on the policy of the Mongol rulers, come out from other sources, such as the annotations on manuscripts.

A list of Mongol rulers, from Chinggis Khan to Abū Sa'īd's successors, is written on MS Birmingham, Mingana Syr. 561 (Theodore of Mopsuestia's *Catechetical Homilies*; f. 43r, margin); significantly, Arghun is labeled "a Christian."³¹

The long colophon of MS Jerusalem, St. Mark Monastery, 109, dated 1300 (*Book of the Cheirotanies*), refers to the religious persecution instigated by the decrees promulgated at Ghazan's enthronement:

This wonderful book . . . was finished on Saturday 19 *Adar* of the year of the Greeks 1611 [1300 CE] . . . in the year 1607 [1296 CE] there was a persecution against the Christians, and the churches were destroyed in Tabriz, Irbil, and Baghdad . . .

After mentioning the hostile attitude to Christianity at the beginning of Ghazan's rule, the scribe further on celebrates him as the deliverer of the Christians from the Muslim yoke:

In the same year of the completion of this book [1300 CE] . . . the Lord had pity on his people and saved him from the hands of the Pharaohs, who kidnapped and ravaged our lands for a period of forty years, who were oppressing us . . . The Lord moved the heart of the victorious king of the Huns, Ghazan, who gathered endless armies: Tatars, Persians, Armenians and Georgians . . . and went to Syria . . . The Lord gave him complete victory, and he took over and conquered all the territories of Syria.³²

We know that Ghazan's campaign of 1300 was celebrated in similar words by western chroniclers.³³

A note on MS Mardin, Chaldean Bishopric, n° 8,³⁴ commemorates the execution of the archenemy of the Christians, Amīr Nawrūz, with a learned

³¹ Brock 2007, 327–37. ³² My translation; the colophon in Dolabani 1994, 237–39.

³³ Schein 1979.

³⁴ Liturgical MS (Lectionary of the Gospels), finished in AD 1218. The note was written after August 13, 1297, the day of Nawrūz's execution. Scher 1908.

parallel with the Roman emperor Julian the Apostate, who after turning away from Christianity was killed while waging war against the Persians (363):

In the year 1607 [1296 CE] . . . Nawrūz the Persian, instigated by the Devil . . . ordered all the monasteries and churches be destroyed and persecuted for six months the Christians. Then God answered the prayer [of the patriarch], and the arrow that killed Julian killed also the impious Nawrūz.

Among the epigraphic evidence relating to the Mongols, an inscription in the church of Mar Behnam monastery (some thirty-five kilometers southeast of Mosul) commemorates the merciful intervention of Baidu Khan, who at the request of a monk returned to the monastery the rich booty made by his troops ravaging the region in 1295. In addition, Baidu “gave to the Saint a gift from his own wealth.”³⁵ In the same monastery, an inscription in Uighur script and Turkic language on the saint’s tomb says, “May the blessing of Khidr-Ilias dwell upon the Ilkhan, his retinue and his wives.”³⁶ The Arabic “Khidr-Ilias (Ilyās)” corresponds to St. George, who in turn shares some features with the martyr Mar Behnam. The use of Turkic in Uighur script appears as a flattering device, in order to gain the respect of the Mongol rulers.

Curiosity towards Mongol customs is also present in Syriac sources. Bar Hebraeus, in his exegetical commentary on the Bible called the *Storehouse of Mysteries*, shows what may be considered an ethnological interest when he refers to Mongol customs to explain some biblical verses.³⁷ Some examples follow (the biblical verses are quoted in italics).

Genesis 50:4:

“And Joseph spoke unto those of the house of Pharaoh: If I have found favour in your eyes, say before Pharaoh: My father [by now dead] made me swear.” That is, he needed others to speak his word to Pharaoh because for a certain time he could not enter unto Pharaoh, according to the custom which we, indeed, see among the Mongols, that a person who has a deceased not only do not enter before the king, but even is kept outside the camp.

Joshua 6:5:

“Let all the people utter a great shout and the wall shall fall,” i.e., as the Mongols do nowadays when they conquer cities.

³⁵ Harrak 2010, 322–24. ³⁶ Halévy 1892, 291–92; Harrak and Niu Ruji 2004, 66–72.

³⁷ Borbone 2007, 191–202; Borbone 2009b, 102–12.

1 Samuel 5:5:

“Wherefore the idol-priests of Dagon, and all who enter, do not tread upon the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.” That is, they enter only overstepping [the threshold], as the Mongols do today.

2 Kings 21:6:

“And he let his son to pass through the fire”: as the Mongols do nowadays when they make fire in two places and between these places they pass their children, their clothes and every present they received, as if they were dismissing the demons from them.

Bar Hebraeus mentions the Mongol calendrical cycle of the twelve animals in his cosmological and astronomical work entitled *Ascension of the Mind*.³⁸ A single East Syriac manuscript (Vat. Syr. 148) is dated according to three reckonings: the “Greek” era (1578), the *hijrī* one (665), and the twelve-animal cycle. It was finished “in the year of the Hare of the Mongols [Tatars], in the month called *itinch ai* [“the seventh month”].” The dates correspond to 1267, under Abaqa’s rule. A second hand inserted the two Turkic words in Syriac script in a space purposely left blank by the copyist.³⁹

Several words borrowed from the language(s) of the Mongol administration feature in Syriac texts. A comparison between Bar Hebraeus’s chapters derived from Juwaynī shows that the former prefers to avoid quotation of foreign words found in his Persian source, using instead a Syriac equivalent. In contrast, a prominent feature of the *History of Mar Yahballaha* is the interest in exotic words, such as *ṣandali*, “chair” (Persian); *chatr* (Persian) and *siḳiūr* (Mongol), both meaning “parasol” (the paraphernalia of Mongol officials); *yarligh*, “decree” (Turkic); *yaghi*, “enemy” (Turkic); *paiza*, “tablet of authority” (Chinese/Mongol); a *paiza* called *sungqur*, “hawk” (Mongol); *tamgha*, “seal” (Turkic). Each foreign term is explained in Syriac.

Evidence of Syriac Christianity in Central Asia and China under Mongol rule

The evidence we have cited so far is the expression of an educated priestly elite, of both the Syriac Orthodox Church and the Church of the East, in their broadly speaking “Mesopotamian” motherland. As missionaries already in

38 Bar Hebraeus/Nau, 194. 39 Borbone 2003, 74.

the seventh century successfully brought Syriac Christianity to China, the Church of the East especially expanded its presence in Central Asia and China.

Syriac Christianity in China, after an eclipse that followed the end of the Tang dynasty (618–907), saw an important revival under Mongol rule.⁴⁰ As evidence of such a revival, we may mention Christian manuscripts and epigraphic documents found in Central Asia and China; several of them are written in Syriac language and script, others in Syriac script but in Turkic languages. In almost all cases, the evidence points to Turkic or Mongol – that is, local – Christians, not to ethnically Syriac immigrants.⁴¹ The use of Syriac (the language and/or the script) explains itself, as it was the Church’s liturgical language. It will be interesting to exploit this evidence to acquire information not from a Syriac perspective, but from a local one, somewhat influenced by the Syriac culture.

More than 600 gravestones, for the most part from cemeteries located in Semirechye (the valley of the river Chu, in Kirgizstan, and part of southern Kazakhstan), and some from Almaliq (modern Kulja/Yining, Xinjiang), are written in Syriac script, and sometimes also in Syriac language – the rest being in Turkic. They bear a cross in the center and are the expression of the local Christian population.⁴² Archaeological evidence of a Syriac Christian presence in the region was found in Ak-Beshim,⁴³ where a church was discovered, dated by archaeologists to the eighth century. However, the numerous inscriptions date back from AG 1512 (1200/1201 CE) to AG 1683 (1371/1372 CE). The date is given in the Seleucid reckoning – the Syriac ecclesiastic calendar, often converted to the twelve-animal cycle – the civil calendar.⁴⁴ As an example, we may quote a gravestone dated to AG 1650 (1339 CE): “It was in the year 1650, the year of the Hare, in Turkic *tavishqan* – this is the tomb of the student [*eskolāyā*] Sargis.” This inscription represents quite well the structure

⁴⁰ Moule 1930; Gillman and Klimkeit 1999.

⁴¹ That ethnically “Syriac” priest or monks reached Central Asia and China from Mesopotamia is sure, because bishops for the “external” ecclesiastical provinces were chosen among the monastic clergy from the church’s motherland (Dauvillier 1948). However, in the Mongol era these cases could not have been numerous, and we lack direct evidence of the migrants’ feelings. Moreover, these bishops elected in Mesopotamia by the catholics might have never reached their Central Asian or Chinese see, as we have at least three examples of such cases: the Metropolitan of China elected by Mār Denhā, Bar Khalig; Mār Yahballaha himself, who before becoming catholicos was elected by the same Mār Denhā for the same see but never reached it; and the Bishop of Tangut, who was in Baghdad in 1281. Borbone 2021, 84–85.

⁴² Chwolson 1890; Chwolson 1897, where the Russian scholar published most of the evidence. Recently Chetin Dzhumagulov (2010) collected the evidence from previous publications in a useful book. For Christianity in Semirechye: Klein 2000.

⁴³ Kyzlazov 1959; Klein 2004. ⁴⁴ Bazin 1991, 416–29.

of the gravestones' texts; with rare exceptions, they are short, and the formulaic and simple Syriac text features some recurrent syntactic oddities, which the classical Syriac language could not bear. When the text is in Turkic, it may be longer and more detailed about the deceased. This points to Turkic-speaking communities among whom Syriac was known only as a liturgical language. Evidence from Kāshgharī and William of Rubruck could support the hypothesis of Turkicized Sogdians at the origin of Semirechye's Christian communities.⁴⁵ Words of Sogdian origin are indeed present in the inscriptions. The onomastics are predominantly Turkic. School and teaching seem to have enjoyed high consideration, if we look at how many instructors (*khwastanch*, a Sogdian word, approximately twelve times, mostly for females), teachers (*malpānē*, approximately ten), exegetes (*mpashshqānē*, approximately 8), and students (*eskolāyē*, approximately forty-two) are among the deceased. Ecclesiastical offices are mentioned too: among them priests (*qashshē*, *qashshishē*, approximately 110) and visitors (*sa'orē*, approximately twenty).

A remarkable concentration of dated gravestones in the years AG 1647–1653 (1335/1336–1341/1342 CE), 213 in total (156 of them in AG 1649–1650) raises the question of the reason for such high mortality. The answer comes from some inscriptions which specify the cause of the death as the *mawtānā*, “plague, pestilence.” These gravestones are probably evidence of the outbreak of the Black Death in Central Asia – which was one of the reasons for the disappearance of the Christian Turkic communities of Syriac tradition from Semirechye.⁴⁶

These Turkic Christians were under Qara Khitai rule, then Chaghadaid Mongol rule. Despite the presence among them of teachers and students, we know nothing of cultural production in the region. The gravestone texts do not mention historical events, except in a single case: the epitaph of “Alma Khatun,” dated 1335, mentions the ascent to the throne of the Chaghadaid Khan Changshi (r. 1335–1337) in the same year.

Numerous Syriac manuscripts were found in Turfan,⁴⁷ and some fragments in Dunhuang and Qara-Qoto;⁴⁸ possibly several date back to the Mongol epoch. Mostly they are liturgical texts in Syriac (psalters, Bible lectionaries, breviaries). Christian literature produced in Central Asia is generally written in Turkic, but often in Syriac script. From a codicological

45 KJashtornyj 1964, 130–31; Borbone 2015b, 135–36. 46 Biraben 1975, 48–51; Slavin 2019.

47 For a catalogue of Berlin's Turfanforschung collection: Hunter and Dickens, 2014; also Hunter 2012a; Hunter 2012b.

48 Duan Qing 2000; Duan Qing 2001. Pigoulewsky 1935–1936; Pigoulewsky 1940; Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008.

point of view, the Syriac manuscripts from Central Asia and China retain in general the basic features (size, layout, rubrics, and decoration) of the western Syriac codices.

Eastwards the knowledge of Syriac among converts to Christianity in the Church of the East fades away almost completely: all the “Syriac” or “Syro-Turkic” inscriptions found in China – in the north (Inner Mongolia: Olon Süme-in Tor, Bailingmiao, Chifeng) and in the south (Yangzhou, Quanzhou) are in Turkic language written in Syriac script. The use of Syriac liturgical formulae such as “In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost” does not allow us to consider these texts “bilingual.”⁴⁹

All the above-mentioned epigraphic material is restricted to funerary inscriptions; that is, it does not give any information apart from some details about the deceased – at times very scant: only a name, and perhaps the office. Only one curious exception exists: the inscriptions in the “White Pagoda” near Hohhot (Inner Mongolia). The pagoda dates back to the Liao dynasty; then the territory and the city were occupied by the Önggüd. The inscriptions, all in Turkic language and Syriac script, were recently published.⁵⁰ Four of them are poems, unfortunately almost illegible because heavily damaged. The other inscriptions are a simple anonymous prayer (“May God make happiness! Amen!”), and signatures with *nishan/tamgha* by a Christian visitor, the “priest Sargis.”

In short, evidence shows scribal activity which follows the models of the motherland among the Turkic Christians of Syriac tradition under Mongol rule (but we should also consider the possibility that the manuscripts were at least in part imported from Mesopotamia); the local literary production is in the local language, in some cases written in Syriac script. A standard orthography in writing the Turkic languages in Syriac script is recognizable, from Semirechye to Inner Mongolia and south China. The “Syriac” script employed for writing Turkic texts corresponds to that used in Sogdian Christian texts, as it features a specific sign added by the Sogdian scribes to the Syriac alphabet.

Two very interesting Syriac inscriptions located in Mongolia have recently been published.⁵¹ They consist of quotations from the book of Psalms, written

49 Such a definition is misleading, because the main message of the text is expressed in one single language, Turkic. About Syriac among the Önggüd: Borbone 2008. For Quanzhou: Eccles and Lieu 2012; for Yangzhou: Geng Shimin, Klimkeit and Laut, 1996; for a comprehensive edition: Niu Ruji 2008; Niu Ruji 2010.

50 Borbone 2013.

51 Osawa and Takahashi 2015; also Bajar 1990 (without identifying the inscriptions as Syriac).

on rocks in the Altai mountains. The site, known as Ulaantolgoi of Doloon Nuur (the “red peak” of the seven lakes”), is located in the district of Mönkhkhayrkhan, Khovd province, namely in the region inhabited by the Naiman – a tribe among whom Christianity had spread. One inscription (a short quotation from Psalm 68:5) is dated to AG 1609 (1297/1298 CE). A Chinese inscription on the same rock bears the date of July 27, 1298, and refers to the Önggüd prince George as the commander of an army that performed a circumambulation ritual on that mountain. The other Syriac inscription, undated, is found on an isolated rock nearby. It consists of a quotation from Psalm 125:2. This second inscription looks older; the rock on which it is engraved was possibly at the center of the circumambulation ritual. Perhaps the Christian Prince George on campaign against the Chaghadaid khan Du’a (r. 1282–1307) ordered his army to perform a ritual around a pre-existing Christian inscription which marked a sacred site for the Naiman Christians, and commemorative Chinese and Syriac inscriptions were engraved nearby on that occasion. That the event is described only in the Chinese inscription, while the Syriac one simply quotes a short Psalm verse, most probably means that nobody in George’s entourage was proficient enough in Syriac to write even a short narrative. However, the study and recitation of the book of Psalms in Syriac being a common practice of earlier Syriac Christians, it is not surprising that there were people able to write such short quotations.⁵²

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52 Some lines of Psalm 1:1–3 and 2:1–6 written on an ostrakon found in Panjakent, Tajikistan, are indeed considered a school exercise: [Paykova 1979](#).

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Uighur Sources

DAI MATSUI

Introduction

In this chapter, “Uighur sources” are defined as Old Turkic text materials mainly written in the so-called Uighur script. They were composed generally by the Turkic-speaking Uighurs, who migrated from Mongolia to establish a new kingdom in the east Tianshan region (eastern Xinjiang) in the late ninth century and submitted to the Mongols at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

The historical significance of the Uighurs for the Mongol Empire lies in their contribution of literacy to the Mongols. After Chinggis Khan adopted the Uighur script to transcribe the Mongolian language, Mongolian (and Turkic) literacy in the Uighur script became an essential skill for bureaucrats and administrators. Even after Qubilai established the 'Phags-pa script as the official script in 1269, the Uighur script continued to be in common use among the Mongols. The Uighurs not only were appointed to administrative positions but also were assigned as teachers (Uig. *baxshī* > Mo. *baghsi* ~ Pers. *bakhshī*) and secretaries (Uig. *bitkächi* ~ Mo. *bichigechi*) in the Mongol courts. As a result, the Uighurs became indispensable collaborators for the Mongol rulers. Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they enjoyed prosperity as constituents of the ruling stratum and broadened their sphere of activities along with the Mongol expansion.

However, the vast majority of extant Uighur sources were produced in their homeland, i.e., the oases of the Turfan Basin in the northeastern corner of East Turkestan, and farther east in their colonies in Dunhuang and the Gansu corridor. They consist mostly of Buddhist, Christian, and Manichaean religious canons along with a comparatively smaller number (although still more than a thousand) of various secular documents. They were first

excavated by European and Japanese academic expeditions at the turn of the twentieth century and brought to each country's holding institutions. Chinese institutions later played a major role in recovering these materials.¹

As is well known, information on the Uighurs of East Turkestan is rather scarce in Chinese and Islamic narrative sources. The Uighur sources, produced between the ninth and fourteenth centuries, but mostly in the thirteenth and fourteenth, are therefore of great significance as contemporary accounts of Mongol rule. Even though the Uighurs rarely produced "historical narrative sources,"² a comprehensive analysis of the Uighur sources manifests various aspects of Mongol rule in East Turkestan and beyond.³

Classifications of the Secular Documents

Among the various Uighur sources, secular documents in particular have attracted the attention of historians, because of their abundant information on Uighurs' political, economic, and social lives.

For the classification of the secular documents, the system proposed by N. Yamada is generally accepted. He divided the secular texts into official and personal documents, and established the following subdivisions for each of the two categories:⁴

1 Official Documents

- 1.1 Decrees, administrative/military orders (including letters of appointment)
- 1.2 Diplomatic letters
- 1.3 Certificates and licenses
- 1.4 Receipts
- 1.5 Petitions
- 1.6 Reports (including testimonies)
- 1.7 Registers and lists
- 1.8 Prayers (including colophons)
- 1.9 Miscellaneous

2 Personal documents

1 Matsui 2009a, for general information on the collections, catalogues and online resources of the Uighur texts.

2 Cf. Moriyasu 2002b; Zieme 2009; Zhang and Zieme 2011 for examples of narrative sources.

3 E.g., von Gabain 1973.

4 Yamada 1993, 2: ix–xi, xiii–xiv; Raschmann 2007, 15–16; Raschmann 2009a; Moriyasu 2011, 34–35.

- 2.1 Contracts (including wills)
- 2.2 Receipts
- 2.3 Letters and invoices
- 2.4 Registers and lists
- 2.5 Prayers (including colophons)
- 2.6 Miscellaneous.

As early as 1928, W. W. Radloff edited and published a considerable number of Uighur secular documents, 104 in total.⁵ His edition has been highly significant for the study of Uighur and Central Asian history. However, it is extremely difficult to definitely decipher the secular texts, most of which were written in the perplexing rapid cursive script. Thus, while Radloff's edition should be respected, it is not necessarily reliable; we have to treat with caution the historical studies of scholars who cannot themselves read the Uighur texts and rely solely on Radloff's work.⁶

Contracts and Related Studies

The study of Uighur documents had its first and most important success in the comparative analysis of Uighur contracts and Chinese contracts of preceding centuries discovered at Turfan and Dunhuang. This comparative analysis was first taken up by a Mongolist, F. W. Cleaves,⁷ and then definitively established as the principal approach to Uighur documents by M. Mori, who proved that the formats of the Mongol period's Uighur contracts were based on the preceding Chinese contracts.⁸

N. Yamada inherited this method of integrating philological decipherment and insight into historical background, and devoted himself to producing a comprehensive edition of Uighur contracts from various collections. The fruits of his work were published posthumously by his colleagues as *Sammlung uigurischer Kontrakte*, which became the new standard edition of Uighur contract documents.⁹

During the preparation for his edition, Yamada and his colleagues published individual analyses of some contracts. Among these, H. Umemura's notable description of Turfan Uighur society in the thirteenth century

5 Radloff 1928.

6 E.g., Clark 1975a, 76–78, for a critical review of Tikhonov 1966, who magnified Radloff's misreading. Saguchi 1943; Schurmann 1956; and Allsen 1983 occasionally repeat Radloff's mistakes.

7 Cleaves 1955; cf. Matsui 2016c; Matsui 2016a. 8 Mori 1961; Cf. Moriyasu and Zieme 1999.

9 Yamada 1993; Supplements and corrections in Moriyasu 1998; Sertkaya 2002; Matsui 2005b.

suggests that by submitting to the Mongols, the Uighur king, the *ïduq-qut* (*idiqu*), actually lost his authority over the residents of Turfan, and, by the latter half of the century, the Mongol emperor and the imperial family had completely replaced him as the supreme authority.¹⁰ Another prominent contribution was the criteria for dating Uighur documents established by T. Moriyasu, who improved upon L. V. Clark's earlier attempts.¹¹ Among these criteria, we find the so-called "Mongol markers," i.e., loanwords from Mongolian and historical terms specifically related to Mongol rule, including *chao* "paper currency" (< Ch. *chao*); *qupchir* "poll tax" (< Mo. *qubchiri*, originally the livestock tax); *qalan*, "labor service"; and *darugha*, "governor general." Taken together, these too suggest the penetration of Mongol rule into Uighur society.

Administrative Orders

In contrast to the success of these analyses of Uighur contracts, studies of the official and administrative documents have long lagged behind, partly due to a lack of directly comparable Chinese documents. This has recently been remedied by this author's series of investigations into Uighur administrative orders for compulsory requisition.¹²

These administrative orders, defined incorrectly by previous scholars,¹³ were actually issued for the requisition of materials or services from local inhabitants. Such requisitions were a kind of extraordinary tax or labor obligation, which frequently offset part of the regular tax quotas.¹⁴

The orders are generally stamped with one or more official seals, whose designs and stamping methods can be used for chronological classification into several groups, i.e., pre-Mongol, early Mongol (before 1260), Yuan (c. 1260–early 1320s), and Chaghadaid periods.¹⁵ Such dating could shed light on changes in the Uighurs' political situation. Oppressed by the anti-Yuan alliance of the Ögödeids and Chaghadaids in Central Asia, by the mid-1280s the local court of the *ïduq-qut* had left East Turkestan and migrated eastward to Yongchang. Subsequent events in the Turfan region up to the early 1330s had been difficult to trace, because of a scarcity of information from Chinese and Islamic narrative sources.¹⁶ However, the seals on the administrative

10 Umemura 1977a; Umemura 1977b.

11 Moriyasu 1994, 63–83; Moriyasu 2004, 7–9; Cf. Clark 1975a, 97–196.

12 Matsui, forthcoming, for the comprehensive edition.

13 E.g., Arat 1964, 33–37; Clark 1975a, 389–90. 14 Matsui 1998a; Matsui 2008c.

15 Matsui 2014a; Matsui, forthcoming. 16 E.g., Allsen 1983, 253–61; cf. Biran 2009.

orders indicate that the issuers, i.e., Uighur officials in the Turfan region, acknowledged the supremacy of the Yuan emperor up until the early 1320s,¹⁷ so their domination by the Chaghadaid Ulus was not complete until the early 1330s.¹⁸

The chronological difference is found also in the taxes and labor services mentioned in the administrative orders. In the earlier period, the compulsory requisitions were frequently counted as part of the *qupchir* tax (the poll tax that the Mongols implemented extensively across Eurasia), but disappeared from the orders of later periods.¹⁹ Notably, a decrease in the attestations of *qupchir* (> Pers. *qūpchūr*) has been also confirmed in the Persian sources.²⁰ This may suggest that the brand-new Mongol taxes imposed across Eurasia were simultaneously absorbed into each of the regional traditions.

Even so, we may note that the administrative systems installed in the Turfan region during the Tang domination (in the seventh and eighth centuries) were still alive as *calques* of Chinese terms; these included Uighur *kāzig* “turn or shift of labor service; labor levied in rotation” (< Ch. *fan*); *ulugh berim*, “great tax” (< *dashui*); *uzun ulagh*, “long-distance postal horse” (< *changxingma*); and *qisgha ulagh*, “short-range postal horse” (< *duanxingma*). As with contracts, this also indicates the effectiveness of a comparative analysis of Chinese and Uighur official documents.²¹

Collective Analysis of Documents

Besides contracts or administrative orders, other groups of Uighur secular documents have not been sufficiently investigated from the viewpoint of Mongol history. Recently, T. Moriyasu traced the formulae of Uighur letter correspondences and their historical development, which had an influence on Mongol literacy.²² His comprehensive edition of the letters is expected to provide important historical data on Eurasian-wide remote communications under Mongol rule.²³ Recently M. Vér meticulously studied the documents concerning the postal system in East Turkestan.²⁴

Apart from the functional classification mentioned earlier, scholars have attempted to group a series of secular documents from the Mongol period, in which certain persons and figures in common appear. For example, the

17 Matsui 2003; Matsui 2009a.

18 Matsui 1998b, 7–11; Matsui 2014a, 621; Matsui 2015b, 72–75; cf. Matsui 2007, 63–65.

19 Matsui 2014a, 623–25. 20 Honda 1961, 109; Watabe 2011, 26–27.

21 Matsui 1998a; Matsui 2008c. 22 Moriyasu 2011; Moriyasu 2012; cf. Matsui 2018.

23 Moriyasu 2019. 24 Esp. Vér 2019.

Qayimtu texts, concerning a rich Buddhist landowner, Qayimtu, and his poorer neighbors who become his tenant farmers;²⁵ the Inächi (or İnanchi) texts, concerning the Inächi family over at least two decades;²⁶ the Turī texts, which were exchanged between a monk, Turī, and the litigants about his vineyard;²⁷ the Ikichi texts, relating to a peasant community in the village of Chiqtim, who came into serious conflict with a Buddhist monastery;²⁸ the Pintung texts, concerning a slave, Pintung, who was liberated in 1280 but later sued his former master for illegal treatment;²⁹ and the Sivshidu-Yaqshidu texts, composed around 1240 CE by a group of Buddhists at the Toyoq Caves.³⁰ Each of the text groups came from an individual community during a single period, and their analysis reveals glimpses into local society. Also noteworthy is the contribution of L. V. Clark, who proved a connection between several Uighur and Mongolian documents under Chaghadaid domination of the mid-fourteenth century.³¹

As the institutions holding the Uighur texts now provide their collections online or publish facsimile volumes, the total volume of Uighur documents available to scholars is much greater.³² Consequently, it has become possible to comprehensively assemble philological attestations of legal and socioeconomic terms. S.-Chr. Raschmann contributed an analysis of the terminology of the cotton cloth (*bōz*) used as currency among the Uighurs.³³ T. Moriyasu, assembling and dating texts with attestations of uncoined silver, proved that silver was not circulated as currency among the Uighurs until the thirteenth century, when the Mongols promoted the use of silver in commercial transactions across Eurasia.³⁴

Multilingual Comparative Analysis in the Eurasian Context

In the context of Eurasian–global history in the Mongol period, the Uighur documents should also be compared with multilingual sources from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Already in 1944, N. Maeda proved the unification of denomination (i.e., weights of silver ingot) throughout Mongol Eurasia, comparing the Uighur documents with Chinese, Mongolian, and

25 Yamada 1965, 102–3; Clark 1975a, 176–78; Yamada 1978.

26 Clark 1975a, 174–76; Umemura 1977a; Umemura 1987a; Umemura 1987b; cf. Moriyasu 2002a, 157.

27 Oda 1990; Oda 1991. 28 Moriyasu 2002a; cf. Matsui 2004a.

29 Yamada 1968; Clark 1975a, 185; Yamada 1981; Oda 1992. 30 Matsui 2010.

31 Clark 1975a, 186; Clark 1975b. 32 Matsui 2009b, 38–43. 33 Raschmann 1995.

34 Moriyasu 2004; cf. Kuroda 2009.

Persian sources.³⁵ Similarly, the terms for measurement of weight, grain, and liquid as seen in the Uighur documents were unified into a single system together with those in Mongolian, Persian, and Chinese.³⁶

Taxation terms in Uighur documents have been analyzed from the viewpoints of both Turkic philology³⁷ and the comparative history of Mongol Eurasia.³⁸ Based on a functional approach to Uighur and Mongol documents, this author has integrated these viewpoints, offering a framework of terminology for ordinary taxation systems, which consisted mainly of three categories: (1) normal taxes, consisting of the land tax (Mo.–Uig. *tsang* ~ *sang* = Pers. *kharāj*) and the commercial tax (Mo.–Uig. *tamgha* > Pers. *tamghā*); (2) labor services (Mo. *alban* = Uig. *qalan* ~ Pers. *qālān*); (3) additional taxes chiefly represented by the *qupchir* tax, mentioned earlier. This kind of tripartite system basically aligns with that used in Iran.³⁹ Moreover, the Mongols' consistent policy over East Turkestan and China is reflected in the principle that ecclesiastics could not escape normal taxes but were exempted from labor services (*qalan*).⁴⁰ As in other regions under Mongol rule, the Uighur inhabitants were administratively organized into a decimal system, where a decury (*onluq* ~ *onī*) became the minimum unit to respond to tax and labor obligations.⁴¹

Diachronic multilingual comparison was also successful in topography, proving that the names of oases and cities in the Uighur and Mongol documents were derived from Chinese and then became the direct origin of modern Uighur toponyms.⁴²

Buddhist Scriptures and Colophons

The enormous number of Uighur Buddhist scriptures from East Turkestan and the Gansu corridor display a diversity of Buddhist cults, sects, and orders.⁴³ In most cases, they were translated from a version of a foreign language, including Indic or Sanskrit, Tocharian, Chinese, Tibetan, and Xi Xia (Tangut).⁴⁴ Further research is still needed to determine whether these canonic texts comprise chronological features or changes particularly related to Mongol rule.

35 Maeda 1973. 36 Matsui 2004b. 37 E.g., Caferoğlu 1934; Özyetgin 2004.

38 E.g., Schurmann 1956; Smith 1970. 39 Matsui 2005a, 72–78; cf. Matsui 2007, 62.

40 Matsui 2004a, 15–24; Matsui 2005a, 72–74.

41 Matsui 2002; Matsui 2014b; Matsui 2015a, 90–91, 94–95. 42 Matsui 2013b; Matsui 2015c.

43 Zieme 1992; Elverskog 1997.

44 Matsui 2012, for a scribble translation of the Xi Xia original.

The Uighur Buddhist texts related to Tibetan Tantric Buddhism were produced only after Qubilai's reign. He began to appoint the highest priest of the Sa skya sect as "Imperial Teacher" (Ch. *dishi*) and conferred upon him authority over all Buddhists under Yuan dominion. The prosperity of Tibetan Buddhism under Mongol patronage led the Uighur Buddhists to adopt the Tibetan Buddhist canons.⁴⁵

On the other hand, the Uighur Buddhists themselves continued to be "teachers" of Mongol Buddhism, as proven by the borrowing into Mongolian of many Uighur Buddhist terms with roots (via Tocharian) in Sanskrit, some of which still remain today.⁴⁶ Moreover, Uighur Buddhist priests played an intermediary role between Tibetan Buddhism and the Mongols: the narrative sources recorded them translating the Tibetan canons for the Mongol rulers, possibly first via the Uighur language and later directly into Mongolian.⁴⁷

Several printed Buddhist works were published by the technologically advanced printing offices in north and south China, as revealed by the colophons attached to them. Together with fragments of printed calendars,⁴⁸ these suggest that the mobility of Uighur Buddhists under the Mongols extended over all of eastern Eurasia.⁴⁹

Besides the locations of production, colophons provide considerable information on the historical process of publishing: the title of the work, language of the original text, author or translator, scribe, sponsor and his/her motive, date of accomplishment, and transfer of Buddhist merit (Uig. *buyan* < Skt. *punya*). Notably, when offering Buddhist merit, some sponsors refer to the Yuan emperor and the imperial family as their supreme ruler but not the *ïduq-qut*. This tallies with the diminished authority of the *ïduq-qut* as indicated by Umemura. Meanwhile, the *ïduq-qut*, his relatives and high-ranking Uighur officials at the Yuan court themselves piously sponsored such Buddhist printings.⁵⁰

Chronologically, also significant are the Uighur Buddhist texts brought from Dunhuang, located at the western edge of the Gansu corridor and surrounded by nearly 800 Buddhist cave temples. Except for those from the notorious "Library Cave" (Mogao 17), which was sealed in the early eleventh century,⁵¹ most of the Dunhuang Uighur texts date to the Mongol period.⁵² So does one

45 Oda 1974, 96–99; Zieme 1992, 40–43. 46 Shogaito 1978, esp. 106–8; Shogaito 1990.

47 Franke 1994; Franke 1996, 69–124. 48 Eberhard 1936, 95; Bazin 1991, 313.

49 Zieme 1981; Oda 1984; Zieme and Kudara 1985, 43–48; cf. Moriyasu 1988.

50 Zieme 1985; Zieme 1992, 46 ff.; Kasai 2008, 19–22.

51 Hamilton 1971; Hamilton 1986; Hamilton 1996; Moriyasu 1985, 15–36.

52 Moriyasu 1982; Moriyasu 1985; Moriyasu 1988.

of the largest Uighur Buddhist texts, the translation of *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya-ṭīkā Tattvārthā*.⁵³ Moreover, the colophon of the Uighur version of the *Book of Dead* states that it was first translated from the Tibetan original by a Uighur master from Hami (Qomul), and copied in 1351 by another Uighur monk from Lükchün.⁵⁴ This indicates the existence of Uighur Buddhist networks and exchanges between East Turkestan and the Gansu region.⁵⁵

Memorial Inscriptions

The significance of stele inscriptions as a source for understanding Mongol Yuan history has been well acknowledged, as they provide information from a perspective different to that of the Chinese dynastic narrative sources. This is true for the Uighur stele inscriptions (found not in East Turkestan but in the Gansu corridor and eastward) that have thus far been published.

The first is the monument to the reconstruction of a Buddhist temple in Suzhou by a Chaghadaid prince, Nomdash, a grandson of Chübei who migrated from Central Asia.⁵⁶ It attests to the political significance of the “eastern Chaghadaids” of Gansu during the fourteenth century, only vaguely suggested by Chinese and Persian sources.⁵⁷ Nearby is the second source, a recollection of the genealogy of a Tangut family, whose members were appointed the governors (*darughachi*) of the Suzhou district for successive generations.⁵⁸ The third concerns the genealogical history of the *idug-quts* until the mid-fourteenth century.⁵⁹ All three are bilingual, in combination with Chinese, from which the Uighur versions are translated. We may add the hexalingual inscription of Juyongguan near Beijing, comprising the Uighur version.⁶⁰

In another category, we may note the wall inscriptions written by Uighur pilgrims inside the cave temples in the Turfan and Dunhuang regions or other Buddhist sites. The Mogao and Yulin caves of Dunhuang in particular hold hundreds of these inscriptions. Offering such information as dates, pilgrims’ names, and birthplaces, they provide insights into the pilgrimage range of Uighur Buddhists and aspects of their Buddhist faith and practice.⁶¹

53 Shogaito 2008.

54 Shogaito 1974, 44–45; Zieme and Kara 1978, 162–63; Kasai 2008, 213–15.

55 Moriyasu 1985, 76–89; Matsui 2008a, 169–71. Cf. also Abdurishid 2011.

56 Geng and Zhang 1986. 57 Sugiyama 1982; Sugiyama 1983.

58 Geng 1986; Franke 2003.

59 Geng and Hamilton 1981; Kahar and Liu 1984. Both editions should be modified in many parts.

60 Murata 1957, 161–69, 270–78.

61 Hamilton and Niu 1998; Matsui 2008b; Matsui 2013a; Matsui 2014c; Matsui 2017; Porció 2014; Bai and Matsui 2016.

Christian Texts

As reported by such contemporary observers as John of Plano Carpini, William of Rubruck and Marco Polo, some Uighurs in eastern Eurasia were Christians of the Church of the East. In the Turfan region, Christian texts written in the Uighur and Syriac scripts have primarily been recovered from two Christian church sites, Bulayïq and Qurutqa. Turkic Christian monuments are also scattered on the northern slope of the Tianshan and eastward in Gansu, Inner Mongolia, and China proper.⁶²

Since these will be introduced in Borbone's chapter in this volume, here I merely draw attention to two Turkic epitaphs found in Quanzhou, a port city in Fujian province that prospered from maritime trade during Mongol rule. One of the Syro-Turkic epitaphs was composed in 1301 to mourn a Christian "from the city of Qocho," or Gaochang, the core city in the Turfan basin. In another Uighur Turkic epitaph of 1331, the subject's husband was also "from Qocho." We can thus observe that Christian Uighurs, alongside the Buddhists, extended their activities up to China's southeastern coast.⁶³

Western Regions

In contrast to their abundance in the eastern half of the Mongol dominion, the number of Uighur Turkic text materials of the Mongol period from the western half or Islamic Asia is smaller.⁶⁴

Of the so-called Ardabîl documents, from the archive of Shaykh Şafî al-Dîn's shrine, at least three Uighur Turkic countersigns or summaries attached to the Persian documents have been published.⁶⁵ In 726/1326, Aḥmad b. Chaqırcha, the Ilkhanid *amîr* of Sivas, Anatolia, inserted an Uighur Turkic confirmation testimony to the Arabic deed in his *waqf* endowment.⁶⁶ Moreover, the Ḥaram al-Sharîf collection in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem contains several unpublished Arabic documents with Uighur Turkic (and Uighur Mongolian) notes attached.⁶⁷ The historical significance of these additional notes should be reconsidered alongside principal Arabo-Persian texts.

62 Zieme 1974; Zieme 2015; Raschmann 2009b; Sertkaya 2013; Bai and Matsui 2016, texts C and Q.

63 Matsui 2016b, 288–89; Bai and Matsui 2016, 52. 64 Sertkaya 1977.

65 Doerfer 1975, 221–24; Herrmann 2004, 84–89; Matsui and Watabe 2015.

66 Temir 1960; Temir 1964, 146; Matsui et al. 2015, 58–59. 67 Little 1984, 5–6.

Among the published Turkic decrees and mandates issued by the Turkicized rulers of the Jochids and Timurids, seven were written in the Uighur script.⁶⁸ Influenced by the Uighur literacy of the Jochid chancellery, even Muscovy used the Uighur script for additional notes on their diplomas: some of the notes are in Turkic and one is clearly deciphered in Russian.⁶⁹ In the Timurid court, “Uighur masters” (*uyghur bakhshī* > *bakhshiyān-i ūyghūr*) played a significant role.⁷⁰ The Timurid Persian sources on Mongol genealogy often attach the Uighur transcription to each personal name.⁷¹ Together with Chaghatay Turkic literatures in the Uighur script,⁷² they may merit comparative investigation with the legacies of the Uighurs of the Mongol period.

Concluding Remarks

In the early sixteenth century, the Uighurs’ descendants were forced by waves of Islamization to migrate from East Turkestan to the Gansu corridor.⁷³ Afterwards, having been completely occupied by Muslim Turks, literacy in Uighur script almost vanished from East Turkestan. The emigrants in Gansu preserved the script until the beginning of the eighteenth century, to which the latest Old Uighur material is dated.⁷⁴

Thereafter, the Uighur script continued to be in use for Mongolian before being reformed as the Manchu script, while most of the Old Uighur sources fell into oblivion for centuries.

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68 Melioranskiĭ 1905; Kurat 1940, 120–34; Deny 1957; Özyetgin 1996, 17–18, 105–7; Ono 2002; Ono 2006; Ono 2014; Matsui, Watabe, and Ono 2015.

69 Morozov 2006; Morozov 2016. 70 Kubo 2012; Matsui 2018.

71 E.g., Roxburgh 2005, 216–17, 417–18. 72 Sertkaya 1977; Sugahara 2007–2008; Kaya 2008.

73 Hamada 1998, 98–103. 74 Israpil and Zhang 2012.

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Greek Sources

ISTVÁN VÁSÁRY

Byzantine historiography has been one of the most refined, prolific, and reliable historiographies in human history, encompassing a time of more than a millennium spanning from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries. In addition to the history of Byzantium it yields ample material on the history of the Balkan lands and Eastern Europe in general. Its contribution to the understanding of the history of the Eurasian nomadic peoples, which more often than not lacked any sort of literacy, is immeasurable. Beginning with the Huns and ending with the Ottoman Turks, Byzantine Greek historiography is an indispensable reservoir of written sources for Eurasian history. Consequently, historians of the Mongol Empire cannot pass by the evidence offered by Byzantine sources, although they are often biased against the nomadic foes, and reflect only certain aspects of nomadic life. Mongol history as reflected in the Greek sources of the time (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries) is written mainly through the prism of the “civilized” enemy, but through a critical reading of the sources we can attempt to find an equilibrium between their bias and the historical reality reflected by them. Most pieces of information culled from the Byzantine sources have two limitations. First, they refer primarily to the western lands of the Mongol Empire, the Golden Horde (Jochid Ulus) and Ilkhanid Iran (Hülegü Ulus).¹ Second, their advices are mainly of a political character, so they contribute first and foremost to the political history of these western appanages of the Mongol Empire.

Byzantine historiography was an organic part the culture of Byzantium. It grew out of the ancient culture and historiography of Greek and Hellenic civilization of antiquity. Although, undoubtedly, the most important link connecting Byzantine literacy to the ancient Hellenic world was language, literary styles and genres were also greatly influenced by archaic models. Certain periods and authors of Byzantine historiography were particularly

1 For the Ilkhanids: Korobeinikov 2020.

characterized by the revival of classical traditions. But in contrast with the antique “pagan” literary traditions, Byzantine literacy was permeated by the spirit of Christianity. For more than 1,100 years, Byzantium was a Christian empire with the emperor at its head as God’s earthly representative. Last but not least, Byzantium was the continuator and heir to the Roman Empire, and after the fall of the western Roman Empire in 467, the sole survivor of the empire. All these aspects of Byzantine civilization (Greek antiquity, Christianity, and Roman imperial tradition) must be borne in mind when analyzing Byzantine historiography.²

Before proceeding to the written sources, one must review the character of the ethnonyms used in Byzantine sources. For denoting a “people,” Christian or pagan alike, Greek authors generally use the terms *ethnos*, *ethne*, “people(s),” and *genos*, “race.” Here again we must reckon with the immeasurable influence of classical Greek traditions. Herodotus (c. 484–425 BCE), first called “the Father of History” by Cicero, was the first historian to create a continuous historical narrative describing the surrounding world of the Greeks and the adjacent territories. We owe the first description of the Black Sea region and its inhabitants, the nomadic Scythians, to his pen. His impact was immense, in every respect. In the subsequent centuries all nomadic steppe peoples arriving from the east and emerging in Eastern Europe were designated Scythians and regarded as late descendants of Herodotus’ Scythians. This tendency to use archaic ethnonyms for foreign peoples, among others the newcomers of the steppe region, was one of the most characteristic features of Byzantine historiography. Thus one must be very cautious and circumspect in evaluating Byzantine ethnonyms. One and the same ethnonym, e.g., that of the Scythians (*Skythai*) could designate dozens of peoples that have lived hundreds of years, even more than a thousand years, later: Huns (fourth to sixth centuries); Onogurs, Kutrigurs, and Utigurs (sixth century); Turks (sixth to seventh centuries); Avars (seventh to tenth centuries); Khazars (ninth to tenth centuries); Bulgars (eighth to fourteenth centuries); Hungarians/Magyars (tenth to eleventh centuries); Pechenegs (tenth to twelfth centuries); Uzs (eleventh to twelfth centuries); Cumans (eleventh to fourteenth centuries); Seljuqs (eleventh century); Ottomans (fourteenth to sixteenth centuries); Tatars/Mongols (thirteenth to sixteenth centuries).³ Our only pivot in defining the exact contents of these archaic ethnonyms can be the age when the historical work was compiled and

2 There is an enormous and valuable bibliography on Byzantine historiography; for a general view: Kazhdan 1991, vol. 1; Karayannopoulos and Weiss 1982; *Byz.turc.* 1: esp. 165–200.

3 For all occurrences of *Skythai*: *Byz.turc.* 2: 279–83.

a knowledge of the ethnography of the period in question. Thus in Byzantine usage “Scythian” in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries generally relates to the Tatars or Mongols, but sometimes it is difficult to determine how precise a historian was in employing the term. On the other hand, one and the same ethnic group could be designated by different names, sometimes even within the same historical work. For example, the commonest terms used for the Tatars or Mongols were Scythians (*Skythai*) and Tatars (*Tataroi* and *Tocharoi*),⁴ but to a lesser extent names like Mongols (*Mougoulioi*, *Magoulioi*, *Mougoulés*), Persians (*Persai*), Hagarenes (*Hagarenoi*), Cimmerians (*Kimmerioi*), and Massagetes (*Massagetai*) also occur.⁵

The main literary genre of the Byzantine Greek historical sources relating to the Mongol period was the *history*, a contemporary, narrative source that recounts the events of approximately two generations (fifty to sixty years). In most cases the authors were contemporary to the events presented in their works and drew upon firsthand and reliable sources.

There are four excellent Byzantine contemporary histories of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries that can be used for the history of the Golden Horde and Mongol Iran.⁶

Georgios Akropolites (1217–1282) was born in Constantinople, and in 1233 was sent to Nikaia, center of the new Nikaian Empire.⁷ There he became tutor of the would-be emperor Theodoros Laskaris II (r. 1254–1258), who, after his enthronement, entrusted Akropolites with important tasks. In 1261 he returned to the reconquered capital, Constantinople, with Emperor Michael Palaiologos VIII (r. 1259–1282). His works include poems, rhetorical and theological treatises, and one historical work entitled *Chronike Syngraphe* (Written Chronicle), which is a continuation of the *History* of Niketas Choniates (1155–1217). It is an objective and reliable source that follows events from 1203 to 1261.⁸ Akropolites often mentions the Tatars as *Tocharoi*, *Tacharioi*.⁹

4 For *Tataroi*, *Tataros*, *Tataris*: *Byz.turc.* 2: 282, 301; for *Tocharoi*, *Tocharioi*: *Byz.turc.* 2: 329.

5 *Byz.turc.* 2: 193, 254, 55, 160, 183. 6 For a general survey: Korobeinikov 2014.

7 Named also the Nicene Empire (1204–1261), it was one of the three Byzantine statelets founded after the Crusaders' capture of Byzantium in 1204. In 1261 the unity of the empire was restored in Constantinople.

8 Akropolites 1903; Akropolites 1836; Akropolites 2007 (English tr.); Akropolites 1989 (German tr.); Akropolites 2005 (Russian tr.); Zachariadou 1978; Petrides 2009; Karayannopoulos and Weiss 1982 2: 461–62; *Byz.turc.* 1: 137–39.

9 Akropolites 2007: §40 (216), §41 (220–21), §42 (223), §59 (292), §61 (301), §65 (315–16), §69 (326), §76 (343).

Georgios Pachymeres (1242–c. 1310) was born in Nikaia, and after the recapture of Constantinople in 1261, returned and filled high ecclesiastical and state offices. His works contain rhetorical and philosophical treatises, poems, letters, and one historical work entitled *Syngraphikai Historiai* (Historical Narration). It treats the events between 1261 and 1308, and consists of fifteen books (six books for Michael VIII's reign, seven books for Andronikos II's reign) referred to under the name of the ruling emperor. As an introduction, the period between 1255 and 1261 is also treated in two books. It is a direct continuation of Georgios Akropolites's *Chronicle*. Pachymeres was a great polymath of his age, with a very solid knowledge of classical antiquity and a strong tendency toward archaization. For the second half of the thirteenth century he is the primary Byzantine source, and the most reliable one for the Mongols and Tatars.¹⁰

Nikephoros Gregoras (c. 1295–1359) was the greatest polymath of the fourteenth century. He was an active opponent of the prominent theologian Gregorios Palamas (1296–1357 or 1359), and therefore Emperor Ioannes Kantakouzenos banished him to the Chora monastery in Constantinople for a certain time. His works are rhetorical, grammatical, and philosophical treatises, poems, speeches, and letters, and one historical work entitled *Historia Romaike* (History of Rome). It treats events between 1204 and 1359, so it partly complements and partly continues Pachymeres's *History*. It consists of thirty-seven books, the sources of the first seven books being Akropolites's *History*, Pachymeres's *History*, and other unknown sources. For the first half of the fourteenth century he is the primary authority. The Mongols and Tatars are designated, for the most part, by the term *Skythai*. A strong tendency towards archaization, in both ethnonyms and ethnographical descriptions, is apparent.¹¹

Ioannes Kantakouzenos (1292–1383) was the offspring of a distinguished family. During Andronikos II's reign (1282–1328, d. 1332) he held high offices. After Andronikos II's death in 1341 he had himself crowned, but only in 1347 did he succeed in getting to the capital, where he reigned as emperor John VI until 1354. He was an excellent soldier and commander, and in 1353 he called in the Ottomans, who set foot in Europe for the first time at Gallipoli in 1354. In the same year Ioannes V Palaiologos (r. 1341–1391) coerced him to abdicate, and in 1355 he became a monk in Mount Athos under the name Ioasaph. He wrote several philosophical and theological treatises and one historical work entitled *Historia*. It consists of four books, and treats the events between 1320 and 1356, but there

10 Pachymeres 1984 (crit. ed. and French tr.); Pachymeres 1835 (Latin tr.); Cassidy 2004 (English tr.); Karayannopoulos and Weiss 1982 2: 492–93; *Byz.turc.* 1: 280–82.

11 Gregoras 1829–1830. (Greek and Latin tr.); Gregoras 1973–1988 (German tr.); Karayannopoulos and Weiss 1982 2: 493–94; *Byz.turc.* 1: 50–53.

are hints to later events up to 1362. Generally it is a reliable source, also on the Mongols and Tatars, sometimes well complementing Nikephoros Gregoras's *History*.¹²

In the following I present a few representatives of various genres of Byzantine literacy that may have relevance to Tatar/Mongol history. Obviously enough, aiming at completeness would be a futile attempt considering the size restrictions of this volume.

Another genre of historical writing was the world chronicle, which treats the history of mankind from earlier periods (often from biblical beginnings) to the age of the writer. These chronicles deal with events in chronological order, and as a rule draw heavily on former works for the periods preceding the author's own age. World chronicles, though less fastidious and ambitious than the histories, and often inferior in their elaborateness and literary style, can equally be important for contemporaneous history.

Theodoros Skoutariotes lived in the second half of the thirteenth century, and belonged to the circle of Emperor Theodoros II Laskaris and Patriarch Arsenios. He became the Metropolitan of Kyzikos in Mysia (now Balıkesir province in Turkey), and was sent to Rome for talks concerning the church's union. After Emperor Andronikos II's enthronement, he was deposed from his church position because of his adherence to the ecclesiastical union of Byzantium and Rome. The bulky historical compilation *Synopsis chronike* (Survey of History), written sometime after 1282, was attributed to Skoutariotes by Heisenberg, editor of and expert in Akropolites's *History*.¹³ It is a world history that treats events until 1261, mainly utilizing earlier authors. For the period from 1204 to 1261 he primarily draws on Akropolites's *History*, but supplements it with important and trustworthy details from other sources,¹⁴ which makes it a valuable source.¹⁵

Laonikos Chalkokondyles (c. 1423–1490) is perhaps the most important source for the final period of Byzantine history (1298–1463). His historical work, the *Apodeikseis Historion* (Demonstrations of Histories), written in ten books after the fall of Constantinople, comprises the best description of the Byzantine Empire's collapse and the rise of the Ottomans. His work contains

12 Kantakouzenos 1987 (crit. ed.); Kantakouzenos 1828–1832 (Greek and Latin tr.); Kantakouzenos 1982–1986 (German tr.); Karayannopoulos and Weiss 1982 2: 494–95; *Byz. turc.* 1: 321–23.

13 Tocci 2005; Zafeiris 2011.

14 For references to the *Ataroi* "Tatars": Skoutariotes 1903, 284₁₂, 292₁₉; also Skoutariotes 1894; *Byz. turc.* 1: 526–28.

15 Ostrogorsky 1957, 371.

trustworthy reports also on the Tatars, as well as on Temür's (r. 1370–1405) realm.¹⁶

Doukas was one of the most important historians of the disintegrating Byzantium in the fifteenth century (c. 1400–after 1462). Little is known of his life, but for a long period he was in the service of the Genoan Gataluzzi family in Lesbos. His work contains trustworthy reports and accounts for the late fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth century, on, among others, Temür's and the Timurid realms.¹⁷

Georgios Phrantzes (also written as Sphrantzes) (1401–1478) was a native of Corfu (Kerkyra), who first served in Mystras, in the court of the would-be emperor Konstantinos Palaiologos (r. 1449–1453), then Despot of the Peloponnese. In 1453 during the siege of Constantinople he fell into Ottoman captivity, then fled to the Peloponnese. After the Ottoman conquest of the Peloponnese he drew back to a monastery in Corfu, where he died. The *Chronikon*, compiled in Corfu in 1478, treats events from 1258 to 1477 in four books. In writing Book I, which deals with the period from 1258 to 1425, he drew mainly on the works of Niketas Choniates, Georgios Akropolites, and Niketas Gregoras. Books II to IV, based on his personal experience, contain valuable and reliable pieces of information concerning the events of five decades (1425–1477). Under the name *Skythai* he reports on the Turks and Mongols of Temür's period.¹⁸

Michael Panaretos (c. 1320–c. 1390) was a historian of the Empire of Trebizond whose short chronicle, entitled “On the Great Komnenoi, Emperors of Trapezunt,” comprises the period from 1204 to 1426. The years from 1395 to 1426 were written by a continuator. The sources of the work are unknown, but for his own period the author drew on pieces of trustworthy, firsthand information. It contains reliable data for the history of the eastern Turks, the Ottomans, and the Ilkhanate.¹⁹

The *Ekthesis chronike* (Chronological Consideration) is a popular chronicle of an anonymous author, beginning with the year 1391 and ending in the sixteenth century. Although for the earlier period it is heavily dependent on

16 Chalkokondyles 1922–1927 (crit. ed.), esp. I: 52, 78 (Temür); II8–22, 126–28, 139, 144, 146–47, 152 (Mongols and Turks in Temür's realm); Chalkokondyles 1843 (Greek and Latin tr.); Chalkokondyles 1958 (Romanian tr.); Chalkokondyles 1972, 42–55 (English tr.; Book 8); Chalkokondyles 1996 (English tr.; Books 1–3); *Byz.turc.* I: 391–98.

17 Doukas 1834 (Greek and Latin tr.), 57–83, 88, 91, 107, 122, 339–42 (on Temür); Doukas 1958 (crit. ed. and Romanian tr.); Magoulas 1975 (partial English tr.); *Byz.turc.* I: 247–51.

18 Phrantzes 1838 (ed. and Latin tr.): II6, 12, 64, 18, 67, 8, 13, 68, 72, 9, 15, 83–84, 85, 10, 89, 6, 449–50; Phrantzes 1935; Phrantzes 1966 (Romanian tr.); Philippides 1980 (English tr.); *Byz.turc.* I: 282–88.

19 Khakhanov 1905; Lambros 1907; Kiknadze 2013; Kennedy 2018; *Byz.turc.* I: 436–37.

Doukas and Phrantzes, it is a reliable source with some independent chronological and factual data. Under the name *Skythai* the Crimean Tatars are referred to several times during the reigns of Sultan Selim I (1512–1520) and Shah Ismail (1502–1524).²⁰

Hierax is the author of a versed metrical chronicle entitled *Chronikon perites ton Tourkon basileias* (Chronicle of the Empire of the Turks), which treats Ottoman history from the 1300s to 1461. It is a rather late work since we know that Hierax held some church offices in Constantinople in the 1590s. He mainly drew on earlier works, such as those of Dorotheos and Manuel Malaxos, so the value of the work is rather limited.²¹

An anonymous poem entitled *Poulologos* (Bird Book) dating from the late fourteenth century represents a special literary genre. Written in popular Greek, it refers to some peoples living in the vicinity of Byzantium, including the Tatars.²²

Thousands of letters preserved in various manuscript collections testify to the Byzantines' predilection to writing epistles, at least in higher circles. Suffice it to mention two authors who excelled in letter writing.

Isidoros was an outstanding Greek theologian from the Peloponnese (c. 1385–1464), who in 1437–1442 became Metropolitan of Kiev and played an eminent role in the negotiations between Byzantium and Rome. As a fervent adherent of church union he participated in the Councils of Ferrara–Florence (1438–1445). During the Ottoman siege of Constantinople, he was captured, but later released, and he fled to Rome. There he was appointed cardinal, and died in 1464. In 1415 he addressed a letter to Photios, the Metropolitan of Kiev (1410–1431) and a fellow Greek, whom he must have known earlier. In this letter he praises Photios, who interceded and saved Russia from the Tatars of the Golden Horde (referred to as Scythians).²³

Manuel II Palaiologos, emperor of Byzantium (r. 1391–1425), was a highly cultured man of letters. In his youth he stayed at the court of Sultan Bayezid (r. 1389–1402) as a state hostage. Later, as an emperor, he made a long trip to Italy, France, and England (1399–1402). His works, among others his epistles

20 Lambros 1902, 50¹³, 62¹⁹; *Byz.turc.* 1: 251–52.

21 In addition to the Ottomans and Hungarians, the Tatars occur as Scythians (Sathas 1872, 251⁸⁹, 253⁴⁵); *Byz.turc.* 1: 293–94.

22 *Tataroi*: Wagner 1874, 197⁶¹⁶, 198⁶²¹; *Tartariki*: Wagner 1874, 197⁰⁸; *Tartarokope*: Wagner 1874, 197⁶⁰⁷; *Tartaria*: Wagner 1874, 197⁶¹⁰; *Byz.turc.* 1: 502.

23 Regel 1891, 70⁴, 9, 11, 19; 69–71, XLIX–L (V. Epistolae Isidori hieromonachi); *Byz.turc.* 1: 349–50.

and letters, display his prolificacy in literary activity. Among his numerous epistles addressed to different persons, the Tatars (named the Scythians) are mentioned a few times. For example, in Letter 14 addressed to the theologian and statesman Kydones (1324–1398) he claims, “I have marched with the Romans from our own land to wage war with the Scythians in the land of the Scythians and to command troops for our enemies.”²⁴ Or, in Letter 16, addressed also to Kydones, he described Sultan Bayezid’s Anatolian campaign against the Qadi Burhān al-Dīn in 1391, in which he personally participated as the Sultan’s aide. Burhān al-Dīn was supported by Mongol warriors (*Skythai*) in the siege of Sivas.²⁵ In his funeral oration over his brother Theodoros, Despot of the Peloponnese (d. 1407), he also mentioned the Mongols (Scythians).²⁶

A very peculiar group of sources owes its existence to the deep impression exerted on the Byzantine mind by Sultan Bayezid’s defeat at Ankara in 1402 at the hands of Emir Temür.

The *Demegoria Tamerlanis* (“Demegoria tou Person basileos Temyre,” “The Speech of Temür, Emperor of the Persians”) is an anonymous work from the fifteenth century, the sole copy of which is preserved in the Ambrosiana Library in Milan. It contains a fictive speech of Emir Temür addressed to his army before the campaign against Toqтамish, khan of the Golden Horde, in 1391. The oral source of the author was a certain Theodoros, son of Demetrios Athenaios, who, in his turn, acquired his information from the circle of Amīr Edigü (1352–1419), Toqтамish’s rival. Since the two informants referred to were historical persons, the speech as a whole may have some historical value, although its literary form was shaped according to Byzantine patterns.²⁷

The *Threnus de Tamerlane* (“Threnos peri Tamyrlangou,” “Lament over Temürleng”), is an anonymous work written in c. 1402, a “political” verse in which Sultan Bayezid’s siege of Constantinople, the defeat of the Ottoman army at Ankara in 1402, and the devastating campaign of Emir Temür are narrated. The poem, written in vulgar Greek, contains some unique and interesting details on the Ottomans and their “Tatar” adversaries in Temür’s camp.²⁸

24 In Manuel’s time *Scythian* may have referred to both the Tatars of the Golden Horde and a successor statelet of the Ilkhans in eastern Anatolia, like the Eretnid emirate (*beylik*). Cf. Dennis 1977, 38, 39; Legrand 1893; *Byz.turc* 1: 414–16.

25 Dennis 1977, 46–47, 49 n. 10. 26 Lambros 1926, 11–119; Chrysostomides 1985.

27 Treu 1910; Kurtz 1921; *Byz.turc*. 1: 246.

28 E.g. Papadimitriou 1894, 173–77; Wagner 1870, 105–9; Wagner 1874, 28–31; *Byz.turc*. 1: 415.

Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos (r. 1391–1425), whose epistles were treated above, wrote also a short *ethopoia* (discourse, rhetorical speech) entitled “What Could Temür Have Said to the Defeated Turkish Sovereign [Bayezid]?” The Scythians (Tatars and Turks in Emir Temür’s military) are mentioned in it a few times.²⁹

Geographical works can also contain references to various peoples and countries. Georgios Chrysokokkes (fl. 1335–1350) was a famous physician, physicist, and astronomer of the fourteenth century who mainly pursued his activity in Trebizond. His work, entitled *Introduction to the Syntaxis of the Persians*, written in 1347, is an exposition of Persian astronomical knowledge, which also contains some geographical references. The Tatars are referred to several times.³⁰

In some Byzantine manuscripts, often referred to as *Notitia de populis* (Notice on Peoples), various notices of foreign peoples can be found, e.g., a Vatican manuscript (Vatic. 329, f. 160r) from 1360 contains some data on the Tatars.³¹

There are sparse references and data concerning the Golden Horde and the Tatars in the rich Byzantine documentary material that comprise imperial charters, ecclesiastical documents and private acts as well. Their evidence can also be utilized in writing the history of the Golden Horde.³²

Several documents were issued in Greek, a lingua franca of the age, also in Muslim chancelleries of the Seljuq, Ottoman, and Mamluk courts. An important piece of such documents was a letter of Malik Nāṣir Ḥasan, sultan of Egypt (r. 1347–1351), addressed to the Byzantine emperor Andronikos III in 1349, which referred to the Tatars of the Golden Horde.³³

A special genre of Byzantine literature was the encomium (*enkomion*) written in praise of an illustrious person. Sometimes these works contain references to different peoples: there are three encomiums in which the Tatars or Mongols are mentioned.

- 1 Theodoros II Laskaris, emperor of Nicaea (1254–1258), author of several works on theology and rhetoric, also wrote an encomium to his father, Emperor Iohannes Dukas Batatzes (1222–1254).³⁴

29 Legrand 1893, 103–4; *Byz.turc.* 1: 249. 30 Bullialdus 1712, 1–6; Lampides 1938, 321–22.

31 Mercati and Franchi de’ Cavalieri 1923, 492.

32 For a rich depository of Byzantine ecclesiastical and imperial diplomas: Miklosich and Müller 1860–1862; Dölger 1924–1965.

33 Regel 1891, 57₁₂, 58, XXXVIII–XLI (IV: *Fragmentum epistolae Nassir sultani Aegypti ad Andronicum III imperatorem constantinopolitanum*); Canard 1937; *Byz.turc.* 1: 255–56.

34 Andreeva 1938, 137–38, 141; *Byz.turc.* 1: 521–22.

- 2 Gregorios Kyprios, Patriarch of Constantinople (1283–1289), also wrote a few encomiums in honor of the co-emperors Michaelés (r. 1294–1320) and Andronikos Palaiologos (1282–1328).³⁵
- 3 Finally, there is an *Encomium Anonymum* of the fifteenth century, written in honor of emperors Manuel II (1391–1425) and John VIII (1425–1448).³⁶

Oracles and forecasts take a special place among the Byzantine literary genres. The *Horoscopium Trapezuntiacum* is an anonymous horoscope from 1336 Trebizond which contains a few pieces of information on the Crimea, the Turks, and the Tatars.³⁷

Under the name of Emperor Leo VI (886–912), several collections of oracles were compiled (*Oracula Leonis*). In a redaction of the thirteenth or fourteenth century, several contemporary ethnonyms occur, among others the Tatars.³⁸

Among the numerous ecclesiastical writings special significance can be attributed to the *Notitiae Sugdaeae* (Notices on Sugdea) or the *Synaxarion of Sudaq* (Biographical Collection of Sudaq), which also contains various notes on and references to historical and family events from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. These data are especially instrumental in proving the survival of the (Turkic) Cuman–Qipchaq ethnic element in the Crimea in the Mongol period. The Tatars are mentioned often.³⁹

Theodoros de Alania, a bishop of the Caucasian Alans in the thirteenth century, in a speech addressed to the synod in c. 1240 made mention of the Tatars.⁴⁰

Although the four major Byzantine histories of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries (Akropolites, Pachymeres, Gregoras, and Kantakouzenos) have been extensively used for the history of the Tatars, the Golden Horde, and Ilkhanid Iran, historians often ignore the other minor sources, part of which have been sketched out above (versed chronicles, poems, epistles, geographical works, state and ecclesiastical documents, encomiums, and oracles). This is because most historians of the Mongol Empire and the post-Mongol states are not familiar with Byzantine Greek texts, while for historians of Byzantium, references to the Mongols and Tatars are only of peripheral interest.

35 Migne 1857–1866, 345–417, esp. 365; *Byz.turc.* I: 292.

36 Lambros 1926, 215, 200–21; *Byz.turc.* I: 252. 37 Lambros 1916, 42₁, 2; *Byz.turc.* I: 299–300.

38 Gidel and Legrand 1874; Legrand 1875, 34₇₂; *Tartaroi*; 42₂₈₁; *Tartaron*; *Byz.turc.* I: 470.

39 Antonin 1863, 596, 597₁₀, 601₃₃, 606₆₈, 608₈₂, 600₃₀ (as *Hagarenés*), 610, 611₁₀₄, 613₁₂₀, 614₁₂₆, 615, 621; Nystazopoulos 1965; Vásáry 1988; *Byz.turc.* I: 468.

40 Migne 1857–1866, 388–413, esp. 393, 396–97; Kulakovskii 1898; *Byz.turc.* I: 519.

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Tangut Sources

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Introduction

For the purposes of this discussion, Tangut sources refer to texts written in the Tangut script, primarily. Because the Xia state (Xia or Xi Xia, conventionally dated 982 or 1038 to 1227) also widely employed Chinese, and to a lesser extent Uighur and Tibetan, sources using one or all of these languages as well as Tangut originating or found in the former territories of the Xia state are of potential interest to historians of early Mongol Yuan history. Unfortunately few items relevant to the history of Tangut relations with the northern steppe survived the destruction of the Mongol campaigns. Tangut sources produced in the post-1227 era (after the Mongol conquest of Xia) are overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, Buddhist in content, and are thus indispensable to the study of the Chinese Buddhist canon, book printing (especially using moveable type), Buddhism under the Mongols, and Yuan religious institutions and policy. This chapter provides a brief description of the main collections of these sources, and their origin, status, dating, and accessibility. The chapter then summarizes the state of research on the secular and Buddhist material.

The largest and most significant collections of Tangut materials originated from Edzina (Qara-Qoto (Khara Khoto) or Heishuicheng, Inner Mongolia), Lingwu (near Yinchuan, Ningxia), Dunhuang, and other sites in Gansu and Ningxia. They are housed in the St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (IOM, before 2007 the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies) of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and in various institutions across China. The materials in these collections have been more or less completely

published and made available to scholars.¹ Guides to the use of these materials include E. I. Kychanov's 1999 catalogue of Qara-Qoto Buddhist texts in St. Petersburg, and the indispensable 2012 volume compiled under Du Jianlu of studies and indices to the published Chinese collections.

The 2005 publication of materials from known Chinese collections embraces all sources produced in Tangut territory from the ninth and tenth centuries to the post-Xia era, by ancestors, subjects, and descendants of Xia subjects up through the Ming period, in all scripts and forms, archaeological and textual. Although this collection is smaller than the Kozlov archive, it contains most of the Tangut sources datable to the Yuan period.

The third-largest holding of Tangut materials, housed in the British Library, numbers about "6,000 Tangut fragments on paper" from Sir Aurel Stein's second and third expeditions to Dunhuang (1907, 1914–1915) and Qara-Qoto (1914). In this latter site he found roughly 3,000 Tangut items after Peter Kozlov hauled his treasure off to St. Petersburg (1909).² Their fragmentary nature has impeded cataloguing and research. Eric Grinstead was the first to publish studies based on a preliminary examination of the British collection. These materials are scheduled to be digitized and put online through the British Library International Dunhuang Project (IDP), which maintains websites in English, Chinese, Russian, French, German, Japanese, and Korean that provide detailed descriptions of the various national collections. Currently almost 8,000 Tangut items, mainly the bulk of the British collection, are digitalized on the IDP website, and the restoration of other fragments is ongoing.³ The London material was also published in 2005 by the Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House.⁴ Recent study by Chinese scholars shows that it includes many fragments of early thirteenth-century Xia military registers, among other civil documents, and thus provides new material for Inner Asian military history.⁵

A small but significant Japanese collection housed in seven institutions in four Japanese cities has recently been published in Beijing.⁶ Smaller holdings of Tangut fragments, mainly from Dunhuang and Qara-Qoto, exist in the

1 Institut vostokovedeniia et al. 1996–2013; Ningxia daxue Xi Xia yanjiu zhongxin et al. 2005. See the excellent IOM website at www.orientalstudies.ru/eng.

2 Wang and Perkins 2008, 3; Grinstead 1972, 23.

3 Grinstead 1961, 1972; <http://idp.bl.uk/idp.a4d>. The Tangut material is catalogued in the Or.12381 sequence.

4 Xibei di er minzu xueyuan, Shanghai guji chubanshe, British Library, 4 vols., 2005.

5 Shi 2002; Shi 2013; also Shi 2020.

6 Wu and Arakawa, 2011, reproduce all the Japanese documents.

National Museum of India in Delhi, the Etnografiska Museet in Stockholm, Princeton University's Gest East Asian Library, and the Bibliothèque nationale de France and Musée Guimet in Paris (the latter described on the IDP website under French Collections).⁷ Most of the 203 Tangut fragments retrieved from Dunhuang by Paul Pelliot in 1908 are from Buddhist texts presumably printed under the Yuan.⁸ The Princeton and Japanese holdings represent acquisitions made in China (Beijing, principally) before 1945, including volumes of the *Avatamsaka sūtra* (*Huayan jing*) (Garland Sūtra), evidently from a Yuan printing of the Hexizang or Tangut tripitaka.⁹ Two Tangut Buddhist fragments, one manuscript and one block print, of uncertain date, from the Sven Hedin expedition of 1929–1935 are listed in the digital catalogue of the Etnografiska Museet in Stockholm.¹⁰ A Yuan-period fragment of a Tangut printed Buddhist text found at Turfan is part of the Berlin Turfan collection.¹¹ That some Yuan-era Tangut texts have turned up in Turfan indicates the extent of Buddhist activity during the Mongol Empire, particularly in relation to the history of the spread of Islam throughout the Mongol Empire.

The first decade and a half of the twenty-first century has witnessed steady growth in the Chinese study of these materials; translations, not surprisingly, remain largely in Chinese, Japanese, or Russian. Two Chinese journals dedicated to research on Tangut history, culture, and sources began publishing in the first decade of the present century: *Xi Xia xue* (Xi Xia Studies) and *Xi Xia yanjiu* (Xi Xia Research), the name Xi Xia referring to any period or topic deemed of relevant interest.

Following the eminent Russian Tangutologist E. I. Kychanov, scholars have for decades maintained that the Qara-Qoto collection unearthed by Peter Kozlov and housed in St. Petersburg contains only Xia-era materials.¹² Kira Samosiuk, the curator of Central Asian art at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, however, identified a dated northern Yuan piece among the Buddhist art recovered from Qara-Qoto at the same time and housed in the

7 Nishida 1966, 1975–1977; Arakawa 2011; Arakawa 2012; Heijdra and Cao 1992; Grinstead 1972, 20–22, for the Stockholm and Delhi holdings, about which very little has been published.

8 Pelliot Xixia 2012 (Bibliothèque nationale website description) follows Berthier 2000, 108–10.

9 Nishida 1966, 589–90, for a detailed description of the Tenri Library texts.

10 Etnografiska Museet Carlotta database items 1935.50.5717 and 1935.50.5717.A.

11 Berlin Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities 2007; the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Turfanforschung website labels the Tangut document Mainz 197, TII D. 68. See also Kychanov 2004.

12 For example, Kychanov 2008, 138.

Hermitage Museum.¹³ Chinese researcher Shu Xihong supports a wider dating of the Kozlov collection based on his analysis of the record of archaeological exploration of the region.¹⁴ New work by Sun Bojun on Tangut Buddhist texts, as described below, has definitively broadened the temporal boundaries of the Kozlov collection and other Tangut texts in China hitherto assumed to pre-date 1227, with clear implications for their relevance to Yuan history.¹⁵

Secular Sources

The relatively recent publication of many new Tangut sources suggests that knowledge of Tangut Xia relations with the Mongols, and their Inner Asian neighbors, will develop significantly over the coming years. Work on all Tangut sources is still in its infancy, but expanding rapidly in China. Published studies of one Kozlov document relevant to Tangut relations with the Mongols indicate the scope for scholarly re-examination.

The text in question is dated to March 1225, and consists of a complete official letter from the Xia commander at Suzhou to the authorities at Edzina, notifying them of his arrival there en route to an unspecified northern destination.¹⁶ It is highly probable that the Tangut envoy was traveling to the camp of Chinggis Khan, on the eve of the Mongols' final campaign against the Tangut state. So far only a Russian translation of this document exists.

An alternative interpretation of the above letter and a Tangut court ode (from material dated to the years 1185–1221) has been proposed by the late Russian linguist Ksenia Kepping (1937–2003), asserting that the Tangut emperor did send a hostage son to Chinggis Khan, that the boy was killed, and that these events are alluded to in coded language in a ritual song of the Yuan period.¹⁷ The author's methodology and use of sources make this reading difficult to accept, and it contradicts Kepping's own earlier claims.¹⁸ One version of her theory appears in a newsletter on the IDP website.¹⁹

13 Samosiuk 2006, 15,19, *passim*; Piotrovskii 1993. Samosiuk's Russian text is far more accurate, more thorough, and better edited than the 1993 English-language exhibition catalogue.

14 Shu 2009. 15 Sun 2011a; Sun 2011b. 16 Kychanov 1977.

17 Kepping 2003; Kepping 1999.

18 Elsewhere Kepping says (2003, 25) that the five odes "belong to pre-Buddhist times" and mention only the Tibetans and Chinese, also problematic. A useful description of the fragments containing the "court odes" is Nie Hongyin 2000.

19 Kepping 2001.

Chinese scholars have drawn upon the twelfth-century Tangut Tiansheng legal code along with the court odes in an attempt to reconstruct Xia relations with the Kereit and other tribes on the Mongolian plateau.²⁰ Liang Songtao and Yang Fuxue argue that the Kereit prince Jaqa-gambu is referred to in one ode, and that he entered into a marriage relationship with the Xia throne between 1207 and 1221. Though the chronology they suggest does not square with other research on Kereit tribal relations, their work demonstrates the ways in which historians are attempting to use Tangut sources to shed light on the last years of the Weiming (Tangut royal clan) dynasty in the context of the emerging Mongol power.

So far the only known non-Buddhist use of the Tangut script during the Yuan dynasty (or the period of the Mongol Empire) is a stone tomb stele heading to an inscription in Chinese, discovered in Daming county, Henan province, in 2013.²¹ The ten Tangut graphs on one side of the stone yield the name and title of the deceased *semu* ancestor, Xili Gambu, honored by his descendant in the inscription on the other side. Xili Gambu is well documented in Yuan Chinese sources. Farther west in Gansu, a descendant of his nephew, Asha Gambu of Suzhou, sponsored a stele inscription in Chinese and Uighur dated to 1361–1362, on a pillar inside the east gate of Jiuquan (present-day Suzhou, Gansu).²² During the Yuan era, the use of Uighur and Chinese expanded in this region at the expense of Tangut in all but Buddhist works.

Buddhist Sources

Research on Tangut Buddhist sources focuses on identification and reconstruction of texts and their antecedents, the history of Tangut Buddhism, the history of the publication of Tangut Buddhist texts and the Hexi canon under the Yuan dynasty, and the Tangut contribution to moveable-type printing. The engraved illustrations accompanying Buddhist and Daoist texts, and the *thangkas* recovered from Qara-Qoto or found at caves throughout Gansu, have also attracted the attention of art historians.²³ The study of the voluminous Tangut visual record, though, has barely begun.

Scholars have addressed several problems: when and from which existing editions were translations made into Tangut? When and how were these

20 Meng 1998; Liang and Yang 2008 (reprinted in Yang and Cheng 2011).

21 *Handan ribao*, October 11, 2013 (with thanks to Nie Hongyin for supplying the newspaper notice); Zhu and Liu 2012.

22 Bai Bin and Shi Jinbo 1979 transcribe both Uighur and Chinese texts.

23 Xiong 2003; Xie 2001; Huang 2014.

texts printed? Given historical notices in Buddhist texts to a Hexi (Tangut-script) canon printed under the Yuan, when and where were these Hexi texts printed, and who was involved? What was their relationship to other Buddhist printing projects of the Yuan era? Though many extant Tangut printed sutras are believed to be a Yuan product, especially the volumes of the *Avatamsaka sūtra* found scattered in various collections, dating these and other Buddhist works is tricky, in part because of the continuity of Tangut Buddhist productions from the late Xia into the early Ming period. Xie Jisheng's analysis of a Tibetan-style *thangka* found recently at Wuwei (Liangzhou), which became an important early base for Mongol operations in north China, illustrates the complexity of dating works that span the late Xia and early Yuan periods.²⁴

The earliest datable Tangut source of the Mongol period is a 1247 printing of a new Tangut edition of the *Suvarṇaprabhāśottamarā* (*Jin guang ming zui sheng wang jing*) (Golden Light Sūtra), by a Tangut Buddhist community residing at the court of the great Mongol dynasty (*dachaoguo jingshi*), presumably either Qaraqorum or, if more local to Hexi, perhaps Liangzhou, Köten's base of operations in the 1240s.²⁵ Tangut cleric Yixing Huijue, who achieved prominence in the early Yuan, wrote a preface to this edition.²⁶ The vow specifies that work on carving the blocks began in the *yisi* year and concluded in the *dingwei* year, 1245 and 1247 respectively, and from the context the dates are unlikely to be 1305 and 1307. This and subsequent publications of Tangut Buddhist texts apparently occurred in close conjunction with political support at the highest levels.

Few Yuan-era Tangut Buddhist texts survive in their entirety, but they were published on more than one occasion. The hitherto mysterious figure Guanzhuba, associated with the Yuan printing and distribution of the Hexi canon, was only one of many people sponsoring the production of Tangut texts. The scholarship on these questions has been summarized by Duan Yuquan and Sun Bojun.²⁷ Sun Bojun in particular has revised the identification of several Tangut Buddhist works in the Kozlov collection and linked them and their translators directly to the Baiyun sect, an offshoot of Huayan Buddhism that arose in the Song, flourished in the Yuan, and sponsored the publication of the Puning and Hexi Buddhist canons.²⁸ The discovery of Baiyun sect compilations in the Kozlov collection has led Sun to argue that these texts were translated into Tangut during the Yuan, by former Xia

24 Xie 2006, esp. 456–58. 25 Shi 1981; Shi 1988, 276–85; Dunnell 1992, 105 n. 35.

26 On Yixing Huijue: Bai 2006; Li and Hou 2010.

27 Li and He 2003; Duan 2009; Du 2012; Sun 2011a; Sun 2011b. 28 Sun 2011a; Sun 2011b.

monks and their descendants who immigrated to Jiangnan and joined up with Baiyun sect members in the project to publish the Puning and Hexi canons, and to reprint the Qisha canon, all with the support of Hexi Buddhist officials like Guanzhuba and Yang Lianzhenjia (and his son Yang Anpu). Moreover, she proposes that Guanzhuba can be identified as Baiyun sect leader Shen Mingren.²⁹ Thus datable printings of Tangut Buddhist texts occurred during the reigns of Chengzong (Temür, r. 1294–1307), Wuzong (Qaishan, r. 1307–1311), and Renzong (Ayurbarwada, r. 1311–1320), with imperial support, at a time when Tangut *semu* (the political class just below Mongols) became increasingly involved with the tumultuous politics of the Yuan court.³⁰

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29 Sun 2011a, 63. 30 For example, Tang 1987.

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Hebrew Sources

NA'AMA O'HANNA-AROM

Hebrew, or 'Ivrit, is a Semitic language used by the Jewish people. It ceased to be a vernacular some centuries before the Christian era but continued as a written language; alongside it, new languages appeared – such as Judeo-Arabic, Arabic written in the Hebrew alphabet.¹ In the late Middle Ages, Jewish communities throughout the Mediterranean, Europe, North Africa, and Asia used Hebrew script and language. The status of a holy language caused, in several cases, the preservation of every document written in Hebrew letters – as in the Cairo Genizah.² The Hebrew texts referring to the Mongol advance will be traced here according to genre – letters, poems, tomb inscriptions, eschatology and Kabbalah, exegesis and sermon.³

Letters

*Catania; 28th of Tishrei, presumably October 2, 1244 – writer
unknown*

This damaged Genizah document survived in two folios; it was published by Mann, with an abridged English version, discussed by Epstein, Ashtor, Menache, and Yuval, and was re-edited by Zeldes. It has neither beginning

¹ Weingreen 2007, 554; Birnbaum and Aslanov 2007, 302. ² Reif 2000, 10.

³ The poem written by the Baghdadi poet El'azar ben Ya'aqov haBavli, and dedicated to Mordekhai ben al-Harbiyya (El'azar/Bradi 1935, 123–34), was connected by Graetz and Adler to Sa'd al-Dawla (d. 1291) – the Jewish vizier of Ilkhan Arghūn (Graetz 1873, 7: 425 (missing in his English version, Graetz 1956, 3: 638); Adler 1899, 686). Yet later research placed this poet earlier in time, c. 1195–1250 (Fischel 1937, 235–36; Yahalom 2001, 20). Therefore it will not be discussed here.

nor end; the writer's name and the year of writing are missing.⁴ Yet between the gaps, the writer describes the miracles he witnessed in Catania, Sicily.

A foreigner arrived at Catania, he reported, with word for its Jewish community – mysterious emissaries were sent to the European kings, bearing Hebrew-written letters from “your Hidden King.” The kings were ordered to assist the emissaries “to reach all the communities of Israel, so that they all gather to go to Jerusalem.” The emissaries, 200 riders, set the kings to fright, from Hungary to Spain.⁵ The messianic excitement attested in this letter clouds the image of the Mongols – not mentioned by name, but identified by content. The rumor of messengers carrying letters in foreign script echoes clearer reports, as that of Julian the Hungarian in 1237; the panic of the European kings reflects the time of the Mongol invasion headed by Batu and Sübe’etei, and the fear that followed their sudden retreat.⁶ The Catanian letter wove these events into the Jewish messianic atmosphere of the time,⁷ transforming the Mongol Khan into the Hidden King of the Jews. This notion is similar to early Christian reactions to the Mongol advance, identifying the Mongols as a Christian force led by the legendary Prester John.⁸

Jerusalem, 1267 or 1268 – Rabbi Moshe ben Naḥman
(*Nahmanides*, 1194–c. 1270)

One of the most distinguished Jewish leaders of his time, Nahmanides's religious and social activity crossed the boundaries of his native city, Girona. Following a religious debate in Barcelona, 1263, Nahmanides left Spain eastward,⁹ reaching Jerusalem on September 1, 1267. There he wrote this letter to his son Naḥman. The letter – not to be confused with another, didactic letter which is widely distributed as a blessing – was printed in Lisbon in 1489, and published by Kedar.¹⁰

Describing Jerusalem, Nahmanides mentions the Mongol attack as part of the city's numerous woes – “There are nearly 2,000 [people] living in [Jerusalem] . . . and the [people of] Israel are not among them, because since the Mongols [*tatarim*] came they fled from there, and some were killed

4 MS Cambridge, Taylor-Schechter, Misc. 35, 16; Zeldes 1993, 361–63; Mann 1972, 1: 41–42; Epstein 1940, 219; Ashtor 1944, 1: 54; Menache 1996, 334 n. 75; Yuval 1998, 118–19. For its dating: Arnon 2010, 154–55.

5 TS Misc. 135, 16, fol. 2, a–b; Zeldes 1993, 361–63; Mann 1972, 1: 35, 41–42; Arnon 2010, 154.

6 Jackson 2005b, 60–72. 7 Yuval 1998, 105–6, 109–10; Arnon 2010, 154.

8 Jackson 2005a, 249. 9 Nahmanides 1971, 1: 5.

10 MSS Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Heb. 357, fols. 52b–53a; Cod. Heb. 56, fol. 405a; Kedar 1979, 134. Kedar 1979, 127, dates the letter to 1267; Prawer 2000, 245 n. 1, to 1268.

by their sword.”¹¹ This dry description of the Mongols, using the Hebrew version of their name – similar to the Arabic *al-tatar*, or *al-tatār* – hints at Mongol activity in the area in 1260.

Apparently Mosul, between 1237 and 1252 – writer unknown

This Genizah document describes the writer’s close encounter with a Mongol raiding force near al-‘Imrāniyya, east of Mosul. Written in Judeo-Arabic, it was published and translated by Goitein twice, with minor changes, and re-edited by Gil.¹² The first part of the letter, describing the Mongol incident, can be dated according to the title of the addressee – Shlomo ben Yishai, “shīrif al-milla al-Yahūdiyya” – *nagid* of the Jewish religion.¹³ “Nagid” was the Hebrew title of the Jewish community’s leader in Islamic lands;¹⁴ Shlomo, a known leader of Fustāt’s community, could be titled *nagid* only between December 1237 and 1252.¹⁵ I shall therefore consider the first part of the document as an independent letter, written soon after the incident, between 1237 and 1252.¹⁶

At that time small Mongol forces operated in northern Iraq.¹⁷ Since coming to this land, complained the writer, he has endured Mongol raids three times; the last occurred at al-‘Imrāniyya. One morning, while he and several others were praying in the synagogue, apparently outside the village, a Mongol force appeared:

As they came between us and the mountain, we turned back to get to the village, but saw on our way fifty riders; and when we tried another route, we saw on it about a hundred . . . God put it into my heart to cross over to a thick hedge of blackberries, and I took cover under it, me and the boy. And the Mongols [*alṭaṭar*] went by that hedge, twenty-five riders; had one of them stretched forth his whip, it would have reached us . . .¹⁸

This vivid description tells of the mechanics of a small-scale raid, prior to Hülegü’s vast campaign – a force of about 100 riders, spreading terror and death outside the village;¹⁹ yet sparing the synagogue itself.

¹¹ Nahmanides 1979, 135; Amitai-Preiss 1987, 238.

¹² MS Oxford, Bodleian, Heb. a3, fol. 24; Goitein 1956, 407–8; Goitein 1988, 5: 66; facsimile copy in Goitein, 1970; Gil 1997, 2: 246–51.

¹³ Gil 1997, 2: 247. ¹⁴ Bashan and Bareket 2007, 730. ¹⁵ Goitein 1965, 236–40.

¹⁶ Goitein set the writing place as Mosul (Goitein 1956, 399), then as Damascus (Goitein 1988, 5: 66). I prefer Mosul, which is closer to al-‘Imrāniyya.

¹⁷ Boyle 1968, 334–36, 338. ¹⁸ Goitein 1988, 5: 66. ¹⁹ Goitein 1988, 5: 66.

Poems

*“About the Rumor of Our Hidden Brothers,” Rabbi Meshulam
ben Shlomo de Piera, Girona, summer of 1260*

Rabbi Meshulam – a scholar and poet, and for a while the head of Girona’s community – wrote this long poem. Its last part, dedicated to the resurrection of his people, was published twice by Shirman, then studied and partly translated by Idel.²⁰

It begins with a vision of redemption – the return of the Kingdom of the House of David, and the rebuilding of the Temple. All these will happen soon, as attested by contemporary events – caused by God-sent tribes that once had been exiled:

How fell Bavel and Ḥalab [Baghdad and Aleppo]
and Damascus, all laid to waste!
And so my Saviour broke through the Border Mountains
and the Boulder River [Sambtion] came to rest . . .²¹

As in the Catanian letter, the Mongols are not mentioned by name, and appear as redeemers; here they are described as those exiled across the Sambation river – the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.²² Meshulam continues,

They came to the Land of Ya‘azer, and Nimra
and some of them in Dibon and ‘Aṭarot . . .
and at the edge of Ashkenaz [Germany], cities in fright
and some assemble to [take] sword.²³

These biblical city names, originally from Numbers 34:34–36, have been located in Transjordan – Ya‘azer and Nimra near al-Ṣalt, Dibon and ‘Aṭarot north of the Mawjib (Arnon) river.²⁴ In these areas raided the forces of Ḥusām al-Din Kushlūkhān, sent by Kitbuqa Noyan in early 1260.²⁵ This poem implies that even small-scale raids resounded in rumors far to the west. The unmentioned battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt (September 3, 1260) hints that the poem was written earlier, in summer 1260.

20 MS Jerusalem, Schocken, 37; Meshulam ben Shlomo 1972, 1: 317–18; Aescoly 1987, 214–15; Idel 2014, 148–49.

21 Meshulam ben Shlomo 1972, 1: 317; Idel 2014, 149.

22 Meshulam ben Shlomo 1972, 1: 317 n. 14; Epstein 1940, 218; Idel 2014, 149.

23 Meshulam ben Shlomo 1972, 1: 318.

24 Ya‘azer: Lionstam 1958, 710–11; Nimra: Avi-Yona 1954, 91–92; Dibon: Mazar 1954, 650–651; ‘Aṭarot: David-Amir 1971, 166.

25 Amitai-Preiss 1987, 237 and n. 12.

*Apparently Valencia, between 1261 and 1263 – Ya‘aqov ben
Rabbi Eliyahu*

A large-scale conquest is described this time – that of Baghdad. This poem survives in several manuscripts, and was published by Kobak.²⁶ Ya‘aqov, a Provençal scholar in exile – apparently in Valencia, Spain²⁷ – addresses this polemic poem to the Dominican friar Paulus Christiani.²⁸ Demanding that he cease his actions against Judaism, Ya‘aqov cites several incidents in which offenders of the Jewish communities suffered a sad fate. The mention of the fall of the Nicaean King Johannes IV Lascaris, in 1261 – and the absence of reference to the Barcelona disputation in 1263, in which Paulus faced Nahmanides – set the possible date of writing.²⁹

Ya‘aqov’s tale of the conquest of Baghdad begins with the declining rule of the caliph, and his reluctance to fund Baghdad’s defense. He then gathers an army at the expense of the Jewish community, to the chagrin of the Baghdadi Jews: “then came the great heroic Mongols [*tatarim*], joyful and singing, with trumpets blowing, crimson-[wearing] men of valor, and waged war against the King of Bavel [the caliph].” The city was conquered, and the caliph imprisoned; he was later summoned by “the King of the Tatars,” witnessed the execution of his sons, and was then killed and cast into the river. The leader of Baghdad’s Jewish community, “our lord, Rosh haGola [the Exilarch], our Rabbi Shmu‘el,” was elevated to a high position at court.³⁰

Apart from attesting to the continuation of the post of the Babylonian exilarch, this poem adds another version of the caliph’s end – simpler and closer to earlier versions.³¹

Tombstones

Archaeological excavations in Armenia have revealed another type of Hebrew source. Forty tombstones were unearthed in the remains of a Jewish cemetery in Eghegis, southeast of Erevan. In the second half of

26 Ya‘aqov ben Eliyahu 1868, 1–31, based on MS Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 210, and the privately held Halberstamm MS. Other MSS, listed by Chazan: MS Oxford, Bodleian Opp. Add. 111; MS Oxford, Bodleian, Opp. Add. 182; MS Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, 2233; and a manuscript in the private Ghironi collection. Chazan 1992, 60–61.

27 Mann 1926, 363–64; Stow 1987, 223–24, for the option of Venice; cf. Chazan 1992, 55–56.

28 Ya‘aqov ben Eliyahu 1868, 21; Chazan 1992, 58.

29 Lascaris: Ya‘aqov ben Eliyahu 1868, 26; Ben-Shalom 2006, 39; latest date set by Chazan 1992, 58.

30 Ya‘aqov ben Eliyahu 1868, 26–29; Munich MS, ff. 206b–207a. 31 Boyle 1961, 145–50.

the thirteenth century, Eghegis was the capital of the flourishing Armenian kingdom Siwnik', whose ruler, Prince Elikum of Vayots-Dzor submitted to the Mongols in 1236.³²

The stones bear twenty inscriptions – two Aramaic and the rest Hebrew. The dates, between 1266 and 1336/1337, correspond with the era of Ilkhanid rule. The inscription dedicated to the “modest youth, Mar Khwājā Sharaf al-Dīn, son of the elder Khwājā Zakī,” which indicates a Persian origin, hints too at contacts with Iran.³³ With the dissolution of the Hülegü Ulus, the authority of the Armenian rulers diminished; Eghegis became a village again, and the Jewish cemetery was abandoned.³⁴

Eschatology and Kabbalah

Kabbalah, a trend in Jewish mysticism directed at the internal study of the Divine, spread during the thirteenth century from Provence to Spain, followed by Central Europe.³⁵

Sefer ha'Ot (“*The Book of the Sign*”), Apparently Italy,
1288 – Avraham ben Shmuel Abul'afia (Abraham ben Samuel
Abulafia, 1240–c. 1291)

Avraham, a wander Kabbalist, was born in Zaragoza.³⁶ Apparently motivated by the above-mentioned rumors, he set out eastward in 1260, looking for the Sambation, reaching Acre in 1260 or 1261.³⁷ Unable to continue further, he returned west to Greece, Italy, and Spain.³⁸

Avraham's apocalypse, *Sefer ha'Ot* – published by Jellinek and later by Gross³⁹ – contains a vision of a war between three kings. Qedari'el, the southern king, kills the northern king Magdi'el; these names commonly represent Islam and Christianity – defining here the Mamluks defeating the Crusaders. Then an Eastern king, Alfi'el – a name unknown in earlier texts – strikes Qedari'el down.⁴⁰ “And I went to the striker . . . and said, the Lord is with thee, mighty man of valour (Judges 6:12) . . . And he is not of our people;

32 Amit and Stone 2002, 66–71. 33 Amit and Stone 2006, 108–9.

34 Amit and Stone 2002, 68 n. 7, 70, 88; Amit and Stone 2006, 108–9. 35 Idel 1990, 4.

36 Sholem 1946, 127; birth and death dates according to Idel 2014, 153–56.

37 Idel 2014, 153, for 1260; Kedar 1971, 92, for 1261. 38 Sholem 1946, 127.

39 Avraham ben Shmuel Abul'afia 1887, 1; Avraham ben Shmuel Abul'afia 2001. Date and place of writing Italy 1288, according to Sholem 1946, 128.

40 Idel 2014, 154–55; Avraham ben Shmuel Abul'afia 1887, 18–19; Aescoly 1987, 228–29. A messy version in Avraham ben Shmuel Abul'afia 2001, 35–36.

God has sent him to fight on our side.”⁴¹ Idel assumed that Alfi’el represents the Mongols, the name possibly connected with the Hebrew first letter, aleph.⁴²

*Sefer haZohar (“The Book of Splendor”), Castilla, early
1280s – writer unknown*

A similar apocalyptic war between three powers is found in *Sefer haZohar*, the most important corpus of Kabbalistic texts.⁴³ The unnamed third force – which appears as a gentile nation, yet plays a positive role in the Jewish redemption – was identified by Idel as the Mongols.⁴⁴

(God) has given to the Ishma’elites an inheritance in the Land of Israel . . . and the Edomites⁴⁵ will gather to wage war against them . . . At that time, one nation from the end of the world will awake . . . and it (the Land) will fall into their hands . . . and then (God) shall arise on it . . .⁴⁶

The same idea would appear, in a more practical sense, in the following exegesis.

Exegesis and Sermon

*Ma’ase Nissim (“Miracle Deed”), Rabbi Nissim ben Rabbi
Moshe of Marseilles, Marseilles, Early Fourteenth Century*

R. Nissim is known only from his essay – an exegesis of the Torah, with a philosophic introduction, written shortly after 1315.⁴⁷ It is found in several manuscripts, and was edited by Kreisel.⁴⁸ In his exegesis, Nissim explains miracles as natural phenomena or historical events, propelled by divine will. He thus interprets the verse in Leviticus 26:32, describing the predicted desolation of the Land of Israel. This verse – “and I will bring the land into desolation, and your enemies that shall dwell therein shall be desolate in it”⁴⁹ – has been fulfilled, writes Nissim. Explaining the Land’s desolation by the many conquests it endured,⁵⁰ he then describes

41 Avraham ben Shmuel Abul’afia 1887, 19; Aescoly 1987, 228. Messy in Avraham ben Shmuel Abul’afia 2001, 36–37.

42 Idel 2014, 155–56. 43 Place and date of writing according to Idel 2014, 160.

44 Idel 2014, 165. 45 Ishma’el and Edom represent Islam and Christianity. Idel 2014, 161.

46 Tr. Idel 2014, 160, based on MS *Zohar* 11, fol. 32a. 47 Sirat 1990, 57–58.

48 Based on MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, 720; Nissim ben Moshe 2000, 49–50.

49 In many translations, the second verb is rendered as “astonished” instead of “desolate”, yet Nissim, like other medieval and modern commentators, took the “desolation” meaning. See also Nahmanides’s exegesis: Nahmanides 1971, 3: 473.

50 Nissim ben Moshe 2000, 396–97.

the Mongol invasions.⁵¹ Referring the Mongols as “other nations,” Nissim distinguishes them from the Christian and Muslim enemy forces:

And once every fifty years, at least, the King of the Tatar ventures with many people and a great host to hold Jerusalem. And then all the inhabitants of the Land of Israel run to the very sound of them . . . until the passing of this great host . . . For they cannot remain, for the water of the rivers and springs are not enough for them, with their horses, and their camels . . .⁵²

Here Nissim takes the logistical element as the cause for the failure of the Mongols to establish themselves in this area – all as the result of God’s will.

*Tam haKessef (“Silver’s End”), Rabbi Yossef ibn Kaspi,
between Valencia and Fez, First Half of the Fourteenth
Century*

This collection of eight sermons is found in a single manuscript in the Adler’s collection, and was published by Last. Yossef ibn Kaspi, a restless philosopher born in 1279/1280 in Argentièrre, Provence, who wandered across Provence and Spain, visiting Egypt in 1315.⁵³ This is believed to be his last essay,⁵⁴ written between Valencia – where he stayed in 1332 – and Fez, to where he was planning to continue.⁵⁵ The eighth sermon deals with the national resurrection of the Jewish people, and their return to the Land of Israel. The probability of this happening in his time is high, claims Yossef, because of the contemporary political situation:

And why won’t it be easier – as we said – for God to bring forth a man who would do as Moses did, and go to the King of Egypt, and to the King of the Tatar, and they will deliver him the Jews and the Land of Israel? Or a king would rise to conquer the entire Land of Israel from the King of Egypt, who is nowadays called “al-Sultan”; and a voice would pass throughout his kingdom, calling us to return to our Land? And maybe it would be the King of the Tatar, who is nowadays the King of Bavel [Baghdad], or maybe it would be the King of France, [or] the Emperor who too comes from the North – or maybe without them all . . .⁵⁶

The messianic excitement seen in the mid-thirteenth-century sources appears now as a realistic, political hope.

51 While Nissim ben Moshe 2000, 397 n. 258 identified the “Tatar” as Khwārazmians, they were recognized as Mongols by Ḥazani 1982, 345; Amitai-Preiss 1987, 245; and Prawer 2000, 172.

52 Nissim ben Moshe 2000, 397. 53 Kasher 1996, 11; Herring 1982, 8–11.

54 Pines 1997, 277 n. 1. 55 Kasher 1996, 13.

56 Yossef ibn Kaspi 1970, 44–45; Arnon 2010, 155–56.

Conclusion

The contribution of the Hebrew sources to the study of the Mongol Empire is unique, despite their scant number. Having neither state nor army, the Jews were not considered a target or a threat; their descriptions of the Mongols are therefore not a consequence of direct disinformation, nor were they written under Mongol rule. As a people, they had nothing to lose. This might explain the absence of panicked descriptions of the Mongol advance, even by writers who stood, literally, in the riders' way. These sources provide a neutral, and often positive, description of the Mongols – as a raiding force, a conquering army, and a state. The archaeological excavations, along with non-Hebrew literary sources, hint that this positive view of the Mongols might have been based on fact.

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VOLUME II

PART 2

★

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
AND VISUAL SOURCES

Archaeological Sources

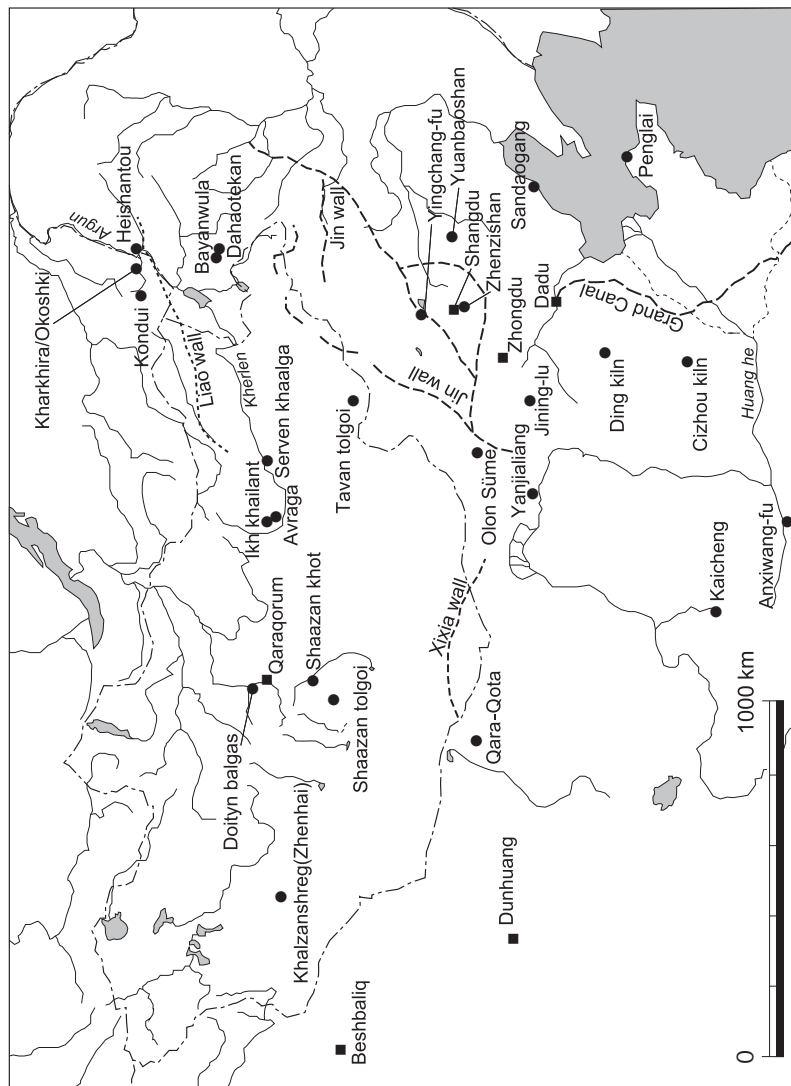
Mongolia and the Yuan

NORIYUKI SHIRAISHI

Archaeological research targeting the Mongol Empire has not been especially active in the past. With the exception of the ruins of large cities such as Dadu (currently Beijing) and Shangdu, as well as artistic handicrafts such as pottery, researchers have not held particular interest in the matter. However, numerous discoveries have accumulated around the past twenty years, making it possible to record a historical overview of the Mongol Empire from purely archaeological data. This has resulted from archaeological investigations that have been actively conducted on the Mongolian plateau, leading to the discovery of a great number of ruins and relics. Since Mongolia's democratization in 1990, countries such as Japan and Germany have held joint excavations with Mongolia, increasingly clarifying, from an archaeological perspective, the nature of strongholds from the early days of the Mongol Empire, such as the ruins of Avraga and Qaraqorum. In addition, as many tombs have been surveyed in investigations accompanying mine development in recent years, a great number of relics, along with anthropological data, have also been accumulated. In this essay, recent archaeological accomplishments in areas in the eastern half of the Mongol Empire's territory (the Mongolian plateau, east Siberia, China, Korea, and Japan) will be introduced (for the sites see Map 17.1).

Climate Change

The archaeological targets include not only man-made remains such as relics and the remnants of structures, but also natural remains such as carbonized vegetation and animal bones. Natural remains are related to the production activities of the time, such as agriculture and farming, but in the background



Map 17.1 Map of the main archaeological sites in Mongolia and north China

of all of that exists the natural environment. Changes in the natural environment influence production activities and also greatly affect human actions. Consequently, archaeological research necessitates an accurate, detailed grasp of the natural environment. Accordingly, this chapter will take a general view of the natural environment during the time of the Mongol Empire, particularly during the sudden rise to power of Chinggis Khan.

Aspects of the natural environment such as climate have been connected to the rise and fall of dynasties for quite some time. The climate at the beginning of the thirteenth century probably played a significant role in the Mongols' sudden rise to power. A prominent hypothesis until recently was that Chinggis Khan unified the Mongolian people, amassed power, and set out for world conquest during a period of cooling after the peak of the Medieval Warm Epoch (eighth to tenth centuries), in which there was a global warming.¹ However, recent paleoenvironmental research has indicated that the climate during Chinggis Khan's sudden rise to power was not necessarily cold.

According to reconstructions of the climate of northern China based on historical documents, after the temperature hit its warming peak around the eighth to tenth centuries, it did experience a downward trend; however, around the end of the twelfth century, it once again shifted toward high temperatures.² In addition, a paleoclimatic reconstruction using annual tree rings pointed out that while the Mongolian plateau was somewhat cold at the end of the twelfth century, it had a warming trend at the beginning of the thirteenth century.³

Moreover, the same research based on annual tree rings has indicated that the Mongolian plateau during Chinggis Khan's accession largely changed from dry to wet. At the end of the twelfth century the Mongolian plateau experienced cold and, moreover, severely dry climate. Such an intense environment accelerated the conflict and integration of tribes. However, as the thirteenth century began, the climate rapidly became warm and wet.⁴ Thus behind the strength of the cavalry that Chinggis Khan led were abundant pastures arising from the humid conditions, as well as superior horsepower reared on these pastures.⁵

Moreover, while the Mongolian plateau tended toward humidity, the surrounding areas were, in contrast, dry, as attested in the *Jin shi* accounts, recording that northern China was hot and dry. Comparing the forty years

1 Jenkins 1974, 223. 2 Zhu 1972, 22–26, 37. 3 Jacoby 2009, 53–55; Pederson et al. 2014.
4 Pederson et al. 2014. 5 Hvistendahl 2012; Pederson et al. 2014.

when Chinggis Khan flourished (1191–1230) to the prior forty years (1150–1190), while accounts of “heavy rain” were seen with roughly the same incidence for both periods, accounts of “droughts” and “intense heat” were over five times more frequent in north China from 1191 to 1230.⁶ In addition, reconstructing the climate of Central Asia west of the Altai mountains using multi-proxy analysis shows that the beginning of the thirteenth century had a strong tendency toward hot, dry weather. The glaciers on high mountains shrank, leading to reduced river flow and considerably decreased water levels in lakes.⁷ This kind of drying must have exerted a negative influence on production activities such as agriculture and farming.

The reason for the Mongol Empire’s expansion may be hidden in the Mongolian plateau’s successful animal husbandry due to its tendency toward warming and humidity, simultaneously with the surrounding areas’ decline in agriculture due to their dry climate. I hope that in the future the accumulation of multi-proxy analyses of paleoenvironments will shed more light on this matter.

Advance toward the Mongolian Plateau

According to the *Jiu Tang shu*, the Mongols – the nucleus of the Mongol Empire – occupied the area from the western foot of the Great Hinggan (Great Khingan; *Da xing an ling*) mountains to the Argun (Ergüne) river area around the eighth century.⁸ According to *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, they became independent and grew there, then rallied the tribes while moving west and migrated to the Mongolian plateau.⁹

From the sixth to the ninth centuries, the Mongolian plateau was controlled by the Turks and Uighurs, peoples of Turkish descent. The burial system stands out as characteristic of that period. Its characteristics include many cases of cremation; in burials, the heads of the corpses faced east; and for leaders a stone monument modeled after the departed (*balbal*) was erected on the grave. These characteristics remained on the Mongolian plateau even after the expansion of the Khitan Liao (907–1125) in the tenth century.

However, from the western foot of the Great Hinggan mountains to the Argun river area, around the sixth to ninth centuries, a burial system differing from that seen in the Mongolian plateau existed. It consists of simple burial pits, in which the corpses were positioned lying straight with their heads

6 Tuotuo 1975, 19–403. 7 Narama 2012, 280–90. 8 Liu 1975, 5358.

9 Rashīd al-Dīn 1952a, 153.

facing north; there were no burial stones or markings of any kind created on the ground surface. If the accounts in the *Jiu Tang shu* are correct, the creation of these graves might have involved the ancestors of the Mongols.

During the same period, a bit further west in the Transbaikal region (the Onon river area), a burial system differing from that in the Argun river area is also attested. A grave was styled as a simple hole, with the corpse lying straight or with the arms, legs, and back bent in a curled position, with the head mainly facing east. On the ground surface, boulders of about twenty to fifty centimeters in size were arranged in a circle. The diameter of this pebble arrangement was about two to three meters across. The fact that the heads face east was likely an influence of the Turkish culture from the Mongolian plateau.¹⁰

In the tenth and eleventh centuries, the burial system in the Transbaikal region retained the boulder arrangement on the ground surface, but the positioning of the corpses shifted to a style in which they were lying straight, with their heads facing north. The transformation of the Transbaikal culture was probably due to the influence of the Argun river area's culture. As burial system characteristics of this culture include daggers, scissors, and horse-riding gear – elements common among the burial accessories of the later Mongols – this is referred to as the early Mongol culture.¹¹

From the twelfth century, the burial system of early Mongol culture can also be seen around the Kherlen and the Tuur rivers, the eastern portion of the Mongolian plateau. In this period, burial systems influenced by Turkish culture began to vanish from the Mongolian plateau. Further, entering the thirteenth century, the distribution of the early Mongol grave system spread across the whole Mongolian plateau. This was the fundamental grave structure for the time of the Mongol Empire.

Taking a broad look at history and ethnic groups from around the world, grave forms and burial methods had regulations consistent with the traditions of such groups as tribes and clans. A change in the regulations of graves likely symbolizes a shift in the social environment in which that group was positioned, due to migration or subjugation by another group. Thus the burial style of the Argun river area spread to the Transbaikal region in the west, fusing with the culture in that area and creating a new burial system, which then expanded to the entirety of the Mongolian plateau. This movement matches extremely well the Mongols' process of moving west, as related in *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*.¹² Based on this description, some historians

¹⁰ Aseev, Kirillov, and Kovychev 1984. ¹¹ Kirillov 1983, 136–37.

¹² Rashīd al-Dīn 1952a, 153.

have envisioned a movement in which the Mongols formed in the Argun valley gradually moved south to the eastern part of the Mongolian plateau,¹³ but in recent years archaeologists have explained that this temporal and spatial shift of burial systems traces the path of the Mongols' migration.¹⁴

It is assumed that through a process of migration, the Mongols absorbed surrounding tribes, growing into a new and more powerful group. It seems that this process was not a peaceful one, and that the Mongols incited wars with tribes residing in the Transbaikal region. This can be understood from the shift in weaponry in the Transbaikal region. Looking at arrowheads as an example, from the sixth to the tenth centuries there were 1.2 times more arrowheads made from iron than from bone; in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, this increased to 3.7 times. The size of these arrowheads also increased, becoming 1.5 times longer and 1.4 times wider.¹⁵ These findings indicate an improvement in the performance of the arrowheads, which suggests that their purpose was not hunting, but battle.

Why, then, did the Mongols move west? The first reason is the narrowness of the land. For nomads, who need vast pastures, it is difficult to cultivate extensive livestock and a large population in the narrow land within the Great Hinggan mountains. The next reason is the harsh winter and the extensive snowfall. The Argun river area has the lowest average temperature in the Mongolian plateau, along with the most snowfall. During the cooling from the eleventh century, after the peak of the Medieval Warm Epoch, life must have become difficult. Moreover, in the early twelfth century the strength of the Khitans (Liao) weakened, creating a political vacuum in the Mongolian highlands and leading to an era of rivalry between local warlords. This incited the Mongols' advance.¹⁶

Conflicts with Surrounding Countries

The growth of the groups in the Transbaikal region from the tenth to twelfth centuries is attested by archaeological and historical artifacts: Chinese copper coins and copper mirrors have been excavated from graves of this period in the Onon and Shilka river areas.¹⁷ These are probably the results of exchange with the Liao dynasty, which had advanced to the Amur river area and the Mongolian plateau. This manifests that powerful groups from the

13 Tamura 1973. 14 Shiraishi 2002, 36–38; Lin 2007, 258–66. 15 Shiraishi 2002, 46–49.

16 Shiraishi 2002, 49–51. 17 Shiraishi 2002, 29–36.

Transbaikal region became independent, making an active effort to procure items from advanced civilizations.

While the groups of the Transbaikal region held peaceful commerce with the Khitans, their relations also involved invasion and plunder. The Khitans constructed an earthen wall to avoid this invasion. The western end of this wall was in Norovlin in Mongolia's Khentii province, and the eastern end was in Hulunbuir in China, forming a total length of 737 kilometers. The current earthen wall is two meters high and ten meters wide, with a moat five meters wide and one meter deep at the northern side. On the southern side are castles, either rectangular with sides of forty to sixty meters, or circular with a diameter of 150 meters, arranged approximately ten to forty kilometers apart.¹⁸ The wall is attributed to the Liao due to the finding of Liao-style ceramics,¹⁹ and I suggest that it was constructed in the second quarter of the eleventh century, in which the proposal to build an earthen wall for defense against the increasingly aggressive invasions of the tribes to the north is recorded in the *Liao shi*.²⁰

In this context, the Mongols grew decisively; according to the *Liao shi*, by 1084 they had gained so much power that they brought tribute to the Khitans.²¹

In the first half of the twelfth century, when Khitan power withdrew from the Mongolian plateau, groups from the Transbaikal region, centered on the Mongols, became active in advancing toward the plateau. Military conflict was frequent with the Jurchens (Nuzhen/Jin dynasty, 1115–1234), who eliminated the Liao and were planning to replace them also in Mongolia. The Jurchens built a line of defense consisting of earthen walls in the east of Inner Mongolia that were doubled and redoubled. According to the *Jin shi* records, these earthen walls were built from the fourth quarter of the twelfth century to the beginning of the thirteenth century.²² Their cumulative length extends to approximately 3,200 kilometers. The current earthen walls are approximately two to three meters high and about thirty meters wide. On the northern side is a moat approximately twenty meters wide and one meter deep. On the southern side are rectangular forts, approximately 100 meters on each side, built at intervals of twenty to thirty kilometers, in addition to

18 Mi and Feng 1990; Shiraishi 2002, 40–43; Lun'kov et al. 2009, 143–54; Lun'kov et al. 2011, 110. Cf. Shelach-Lavi et al. 2020, who suggested that this wall was built not for defense purposes, but for controlling the movement of nomads.

19 Kiselev 1958, 108–9; Jing 1982, 199; Lun'kov et al. 2009, 143–54; Lun'kov et al. 2011, 115–17.

20 Tuotuo 1974, 1446–49; Jing 1982, 199; Shiraishi 2002, 43. 21 Tuotuo 1974, 289.

22 Tuotuo 1975, 563–64.

the distinguishing feature of barbicans built into the earthen wall itself spaced approximately 300 meters apart.

The Jurchen emperor dispatched a large army to subjugate the rebellious tribes in the Mongolian plateau. The army dispatched in 1196 and led by Wanyan Xiang destroyed the Tatar tribe in the Ulz (Ulja) river valley in the northeast portion of the Mongolian plateau. Sources such as the *Secret History of the Mongols* and *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*²³ record that the young Chinggis Khan (Temüjin) also participated in the battle as a commanding officer on the Jurchen side. A monument commemorating the victory in this battle remains on Serven Khaalga Mountain, located in Bayankhudag in Mongolia's Khentii province. There are actually two monuments – one in Jurchen script and one in Chinese characters – and while the Jurchen monument has long been known, the monument with Chinese characters was discovered by a Japanese–Mongolian joint team in the 1990s (Figure 17.1).²⁴ The Jurchen inscription has 143 characters, and the Chinese one has ninety characters. While a portion is indecipherable, the result of the deciphering reveals that both inscriptions were etched in 1196, and their content is nearly identical. The route advanced by Wanyan Xiang is recorded in detail, so this material will be extremely useful not only for studying the Jurchen script, but also for research on the contemporaneous historical geography.²⁵

Entering the thirteenth century, the Mongols also began their invasion of the Tangut (Xi Xia) people to the south. In response, the Tanguts built an earthen wall totaling approximately 700 kilometers in length at the northern foot of the Yinshan mountains, following the southern end of the Gobi Desert. For a portion of this wall, they repaired and improved the earthen wall previously built in the Han dynasty.²⁶ The current wall is two meters high and six meters wide, and there is a moat three meters wide and 1.5 meters deep at the northern side. No barbicans can be seen. Built on the southern side of the wall, separated somewhat from the wall itself, are rectangular forts between ninety and 140 meters on each side, spaced approximately twenty to thirty kilometers apart. Based on radiocarbon dating, the period of construction is thought to have been the first quarter of the thirteenth century.²⁷ This places it exactly at the period in which Chinggis Khan rose to power.

23 *SH*, 1: 56–58; Rashīd al-Dīn 1952b, 92–93. 24 Kato 1992, 132–37.

25 Shiraishi 2009, 132–33; Shiraishi 2016, 40.

26 Kovalev and Erdenebaatar 2008, 104–7; Wei 2010, 116–33; Sohma and Shiraishi 2015, 295–96.

27 Sohma and Shiraishi 2015, 302.

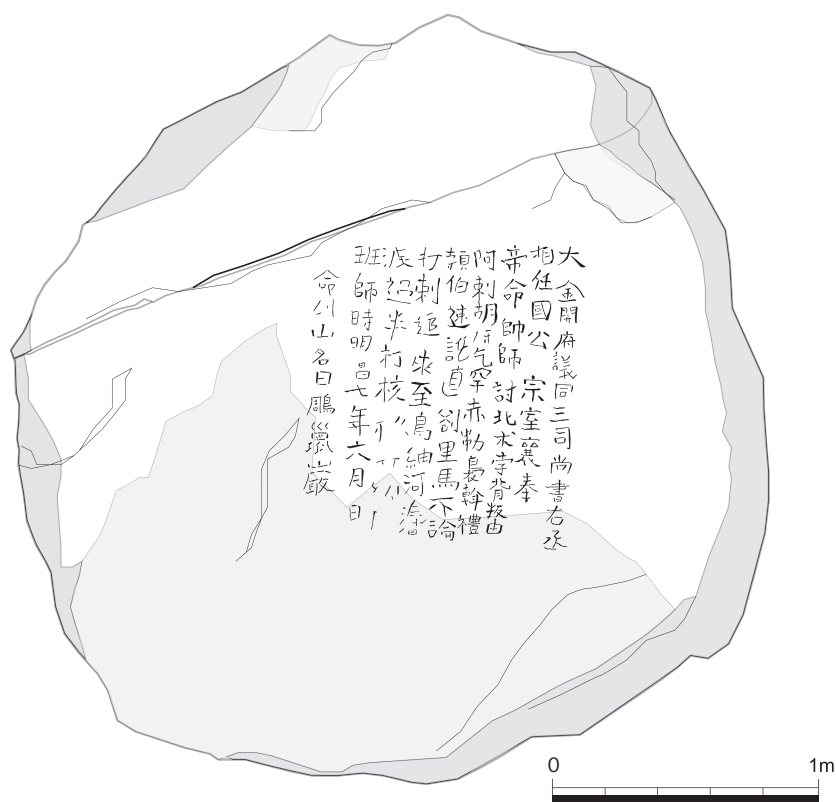


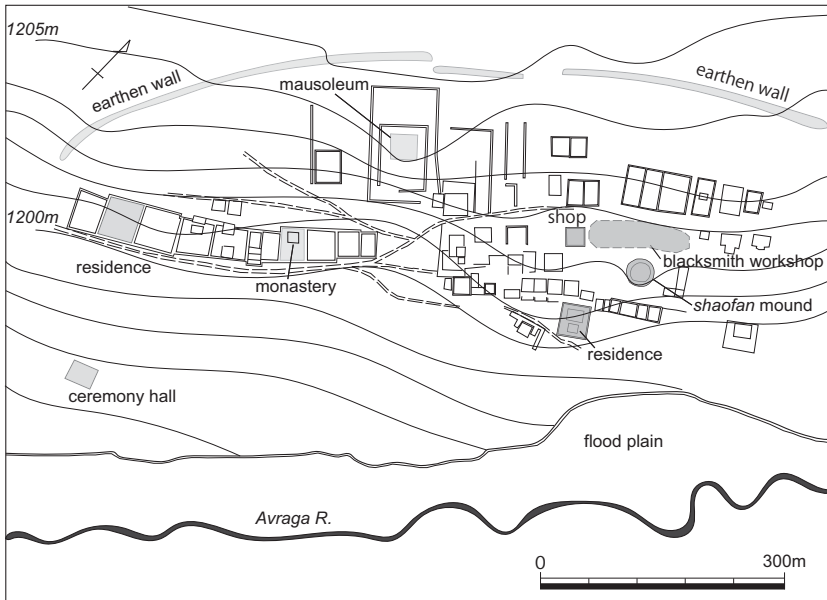
Figure 17.1 The Serven Khaalga inscription (Chinese characters)

The First Capital Cities

Chinggis Khan, who became the leader of the Mongols, suppressed the neighboring tribes and countries, and in 1206 established the Mongol Empire. There have been archaeological discoveries that uncover the context behind that powerful military strength (Map 17.2).

An iron workshop was discovered in the Avraga ruins in Delgerkhaan, in Mongolia's Khentii province. Weapons such as arrowheads, as well as daily necessities such as nails, were made here. Charcoal made from thin conifer branches was used as fuel. Stick-shaped cast-iron ingots (around five centimeters long, with a square cross-section about one centimeter in length per side) were used as material for the ironworks.²⁸ Since there

²⁸ Sasada and Ishtseren 2012, 268–69; Shiraishi 2017.



Map 17.2 Map of the Avruga ruins

were no centers producing high-quality iron ore around the Avruga ruins, the raw material was imported as ingots. Based on elementary analysis, the possibility that some was brought on the long journey from Shandong, China, has been pointed out.²⁹ There might have been an established distribution network in place. A large amount of slag produced during blacksmithing has been excavated from the Avruga ruins. The smiths' hearths that have been found are small in scale, but apparently numerous smiths' hearths operated at the same time. Radiocarbon dating attests that these hearths operated from the final quarter of the twelfth century to the first quarter of the thirteenth century.³⁰

As described below, following the death of Chinggis Khan the Avruga ruins were a center in which his spirit was worshipped; therefore it is reasonable to suppose that while he was alive it was one of the centers of his day-to-day life. Therefore the weapons produced at these iron workshops probably supported Chinggis Khan's troops. Incidentally, the place name "Avruga" is a corruption of *a'uruq*, which had the meaning of "base for nomadic

29 Osawa 2004, 54–55. 30 Murakami and Sasada 2009, 11–12.

group” or “logistical support base” in middle Mongolian.³¹ This word also appears in the *Secret History of the Mongols* with the meaning of “main base camp.”³²

A building cluster which was used around the same time as the smiths’ hearths has also been found in the Avruga ruins. These were not the tent-style houses characteristic of nomadic communities, but buildings featuring wooden architecture and roofing tiles – Chinese-style construction. The scale used for construction, calculated using the distance between pillars, was the same scale as that used in the fortified cities of the Liao – one *chi* was 29.6 centimeters. It is also clear that this scale was used according to the bone rulers that have been excavated from the Avruga ruins. Marked influence from the Khitans, who had ruled the Mongolian plateau up to the early twelfth century, remained in the culture of the early Mongol Empire.³³

Within the building cluster was an exceptionally large, prominent structure. There were two buildings, one measuring eight meters by seven and the other twelve meters by seven, and they were built joined at the south and north. The circumference was encompassed by earthen walls and the structure was separated from other buildings. Plaster was spread on the inside walls, and pictures were painted over that with pigments in such colors as black and red. The building arrangement of the structure, connected at the south and north, resembles that of the palace construction used in the Jin and Yuan dynasties. In addition, murals were objects only seen in special facilities such as temples. All this suggests that this structure was used as a political or religious ceremonial hall.³⁴

The group of iron workshops and wooden houses in the Avruga ruins were on the southern slope of a hill, stretching across approximately 1,200 meters from east to west and approximately 500 meters from north to south.³⁵ There were no walls encompassing the entire settlement. Based on the appearance of its building clusters, arranged in an orderly fashion along roads, it is possible to consider the area a town. In effect, it can be said that the Avruga ruins, Chinggis’s base, marked the first capital of the Mongol Empire.

An example of a similar community is the Kharkhira (Khirkhira) ruins in the Transbaikal region in Russia, considered to be the base of Jochi Qasar, Chinggis Khan’s younger brother.³⁶ This area, with Chinese-style architecture and iron workshops, spans 1,600 meters from east to west and 400 meters from north to south. There are no walls here either. Here, too, there are

31 Maidar and Maidar 1972, 151. 32 *SH*, 1: 161, 83. 33 Shiraishi 2009, 135.

34 Shiraishi et al. 2012, 262. 35 Shiraishi 2006, 87; Shiraishi and Tsogtbaatar 2009, 551–52.

36 Kiselev et al. 1965, 23–58; Artemiev 2004, 88–92.

large-scale buildings of wooden construction that use roof tiles, and the surroundings are encompassed by earthen walls. These were also likely buildings that functioned as ceremonial halls. Apparently, the ruling class in the early Mongol Empire, while practicing a nomadic migrant lifestyle, also had ceremonial halls and production bases for military affairs in their territory. These extremely simple settlements with no walls were possessed as bases. They are the original form of urbanization of the Mongol Empire, which would continue to Qaraqorum, Shangdu, and Dadu.

City Construction

Several studies have already reviewed the urbanization of the Mongol Empire.³⁷ Based on them I will describe this issue while emphasizing archaeological results.

Throughout Chinggis Khan's wars outside Mongolia, and especially his victories against the Jin dynasty, many artisans and slaves were brought to the Mongolian plateau. Thus the need arose for a place where they could reside and engage in production activities. According to the *Yuan shi*, in 1220 Chinggis Khan decided to locate his capital in Qaraqorum, near the banks of the Orkhon river.³⁸ The area had been used as a dynastic center since the Turk and Uighur khanates; it was a strategic point for transportation; had superior water and grass suited for nomadic grazing; and had plentiful sources of lumber, stone, and ore in the surrounding areas. The location was a perfect base for a variety of production activities.

Construction of a city at Qaraqorum is thought to have begun around 1220; however, archaeological evidence of such is scant. It was not until 1235, when Ögödei Qa'an moved the empire's political base from the Kherlen river basin (Avraga and the surrounding areas) and constructed a palace and city walls at Qaraqorum that it became the Mongol Empire's capital both in name and in fact.

Qaraqorum differed from Chinese walled cities, whose layouts were square or rectangular. The city was instead completely encompassed by a wall that resembled the shape of an irregular hexagon. This was likely due to the construction of the wall around a pre-existing settlement. The span between the walls is thought to have been 1,138 meters from east to west at its greatest point. As the southern walls no longer exist, the exact distance from north to south is unknown, but is estimated at about 1,300 meters. The

37 Steinhardt 1988; Li 1988; Masuya 2013. 38 *YS*, 58.1382.

central axis of the city points 20 degrees east of due north. Thus the city of Qaraqorum, while at first glance seemingly built on a disordered plan, was apparently constructed with Jin measures and city plans as a guide. For example, the east–west length of the city is equivalent to two *li*, a Chinese (Jin) measurement from that time. Among Jin cities with walls measuring two *li* in length is Huanzhou city (Inner Mongolia), which was invaded and destroyed by Chinggis Khan. It was around this time that the Khitan measurements used in Avraga were replaced by those of Jin China (one *chi* = 31.6 centimeters, one *li* = 569 meters).³⁹

Within Qaraqorum's walls are two main streets with perpendicular intersections at the city's center. Along these streets were clusters of buildings. Building clusters can be seen outside the walls as well. There are many building ruins especially along the main road connecting Qaraqorum and China, on the eastern side of the city. I estimate that combining those residents within the city walls and in the surrounding areas outside it, the populace numbered more than 10,000.⁴⁰ Also, an area northwest of the city spanning 800 meters by 300 meters is dotted with graves of varying sizes. These were likely the graves of the city's inhabitants.

In the southwest corner of Qaraqorum there is a large, square foundational platform (approximately forty meters per side). It is the largest of the building remains in the city. This building was once thought to be the Wan'an gong, the palace constructed by Ögödei in 1235;⁴¹ however, through recent archaeological investigations it is now known to be the remains of a stupa called the Xingyuan gu.⁴² So what of the palace's whereabouts? To the south of the remains of Qaraqorum is the Erdene Zuu Monastery, constructed at the end of the sixteenth century. Remnants of a large-scale walled structure (410 meters by 480 meters) built in the first half of the thirteenth century were found directly underneath the monastery, and researchers believe that these remains are those of the palace.⁴³

William of Rubruck, who visited Qaraqorum in 1254, reported that within the city was a quarter for Chinese artisans and a quarter for Muslims engaged in trade.⁴⁴ The specific locations of said districts remain unclear. However, in the center of the city and around the eastern gate, remains of buildings related to blacksmithing and ceramics have been discovered.⁴⁵ These areas appear to be districts for those engaged in handicrafts. Also, a dome-shaped kiln for baking bricks for temple use was excavated along the walls in the

39 Shiraishi 2002, 154–56. 40 Shiraishi, 2002, 384–85. 41 Kiselev et al. 1965, 138–66.

42 Hüttel 2005, 146; Shiraishi and Tseveendorj 2007, 8. 43 Hüttel 2009, 546–48.

44 William of Rubruck 1990, 221. 45 Kiselev et al. 1965, 173–82; Pohl 2010, 87–88.

city's southwestern corner.⁴⁶ Its form closely resembles porcelain kilns of northern China and thus attests to the existence of ceramic craftsmen who had come to the city from China.

Signs of Islamic residents or people with connections to Western or Central Asia have also been found. Silver coins were found with Arabic and Persian inscriptions denoting that they were minted from 1237 to 1238 in Qaraqorum. Also, a communal grave containing thirty-seven bodies was excavated from the northwestern burial ground outside the city walls. Human bones with physical-anthropological features common to peoples of Central Asia were exhumed there.⁴⁷ Further, a Persian inscription attests to the establishment of a *khānqāh* (Sufi lodge) in the city in 1342, while an endowment for the sake of a mosque is mentioned in another Persian inscription from 1332.⁴⁸

In recent years, the German–Mongolian research teams have found production sites such as bronze and iron workshops, brick kilns, and a quarry around the city.⁴⁹ Many of their findings from the middle part of Qaraqorum are documented and analyzed in Susanne Reichert's recent two volumes, dealing with stratigraphy and periodization of the city center (1235–early fifteenth century) and craft production in Qaraqorum. Reichert notes the development of Qaraqorum's workshops, from blacksmiths and copper workshops in the city's first years to a variety of workshops for elite consumption, dealing with precious metals, gems, and glass. This was apparent by Möngke's reign (1251–1259), if not earlier, and continued throughout the Yuan period. She also suggests that the deported artisans were working in an attached context, probably regulated by the Mongol government, namely as dependents of either the government or the elite.⁵⁰ Another recent study by Bemann and Reichert stresses that the built environment of Qaraqorum combines architectural elements of different cultural traditions, often elevated to a far greater size than equivalent structures elsewhere, and attests to huge investment in large ritual and political buildings, including a multitude of inscribed stone steles, mainly from the first half of the fourteenth century. This suggests the continuous importance of the city throughout the Yuan period and highlights its political character: Qaraqorum was closely connected to the rise and fall of the Mongol Yuan empire. The Mongols were willing to invest in a city that obviously lived beyond its means, but when this

46 Franken 2005, 147–49. 47 Bayar and Voitov 2010, 303–4.

48 Uno, Muraoka, and Matsuda 1999, 34–35; Bemann and Reichert 2021, 134.

49 Pohl et al. 2012; Bemann et al. 2015. 50 Reichert 2019; Reichert 2020.

governmental support ended with the Yuan's collapse, the city's decline was abrupt.⁵¹ This huge site still awaits further research.

The Emperors' Seasonal Movements

The cosmopolitan city of Qaraqorum was an economic center, a center for handicrafts and trade, with a considerable sedentary population, mostly of migrants who either were brought as prisoners of war or came voluntarily. In contrast, the ruling class of Mongols – particularly the qa'ans (Ögödei, Güyük, Möngke) – continued their traditional nomadic lifestyle. They owned separate seasonal palaces and moved between them and Qaraqorum.

The qa'ans' seasonal movements, reconstructed from historical sources, are summarized as follows.⁵² In spring they would depart from Qaraqorum, heading north to arrive at a place called Gegen Chaghan (Karchagan/Qarshī-Sūrī). It was a marshland, where the emperors enjoyed hunting waterfowl. In summer they would head south through Qaraqorum to a mountainous region. They spent the summer avoiding the heat at the highland region called Örmegetü, a place with plentiful water. There they built Sīra-Ordu, a large golden pavilion. In fall they would stay near a lake known as Köke Na'ur. In winter they would head further south to spend the season in the vicinity of the Ongi river (Ong-khin). It was close to the Gobi and had plentiful wildlife, which the emperors would hunt throughout the winter. In spring they would move northward to return to Qaraqorum once again.

The Doityn Balgas ruins located about forty kilometers northwest of Qaraqorum's ruins have already been identified as the spring palace of Karchagan.⁵³ Building remains in an area spanning 250 by 150 meters can be found on a small hill with a relative elevation of forty meters surrounded by a lake. Its arrangement of a large building surrounded by smaller ones closely resembles the *kūriy-e* (lit. "enclosure"), the form of traditional nomadic temporary settlement. No surrounding walls are seen at the site. The large, central building has a square plan measuring about forty meters per side. Instead of Chinese roof tiles, one can see the use of blue-glazed tiles similar to those in Islamic architecture. This matches Juwaynī's account, according to which the palace called Qarshī-Suri was constructed by Islamic artisans.⁵⁴

Örmegetü and Köke Na'ur are both thought to be in a mountainous region south of Qaraqorum, but their specific whereabouts are unclear. This area is

51 Bemann and Reichert 2021. 52 Boyle 1974, 145–50; Atwood 2015, 305–21.

53 Shiraishi 2004, 110–11. 54 HWC, 237.

well suited to spending the summer season; at over 2,000 meters above sea level, it is cool and has many cold-water springs, as well as abundant grass. The area contains a large number of Mongol Empire-era ruins, some of which probably belonged to Örmegetü and Köke Na'ur.

The Shaazan Khot remains on the west bank of the Ongi river are those of the winter palace.⁵⁵ They are located roughly 170 kilometers southeast of Qaraqorum. The surrounding area is an arid region of gravelly sand called Gobi. Building remains are observed in an area spanning 600 meters from north to south and 350 meters from east to west. There are no walls surrounding the site. The remains of a large-scale building utilizing Chinese architecture and roof tiles are found in the northernmost part. The foundational platform is on a square plan, twenty-five meters per side and 1.2 meters tall; an earthen wall is built around it. This building is known to be one of importance, likely a palace. The area to the south of the palace is dotted with groups of small buildings, from which large amounts of Chinese porcelain, Song dynasty copper coins, and iron slag have been unearthed. It was probably a site for trade and handicrafts such as blacksmithing. It is identified as the place where William of Rubruck met with Möngke in 1253.⁵⁶

Thus, over the span of a year, the emperors traveled back and forth from the Doityn Balgas ruins site to the Shaazan Khot ruins site, a distance of over 400 kilometers. There were more than just seasonal palaces along the path of their travels: archaeological investigation has revealed the existence of bases for handicraft production such as blacksmithing and ceramics. This area, with the city of Qaraqorum at its core and an arrangement of seasonal palaces and production bases, may be called “the Qaraqorum peri-urban area” and defined as the direct power base of the Mongol emperor.⁵⁷

Dietary Habits

What were the lives of citizens in places like Avruga and Qaraqorum like? The remains of food enable us to study their dietary habits. In Avruga, the Japanese–Mongolian joint team analyzed a large quantity of animal remains excavated from strata from the last quarter of the twelfth century to the first quarter of the thirteenth century. From dwellings that are thought to have been occupied by common people, livestock bones have been excavated with a proportion of 51 percent sheep and goats, 45 percent cattle, and 4 percent

55 Shiraishi 2004, 112–14.

56 William of Rubruck 1990, 177–78; Shiraishi 2002, 265.

57 Shiraishi 2004, 114–16.

horses. According to an analysis of their teeth, the sheep were young – two years old and younger. In addition, fish bones (Cyprinidae) were found. Meanwhile, in large dwellings thought to have been occupied by elites, the proportion of the excavated livestock bones was 68 percent sheep and goats, 20 percent cattle, and 11 percent horses. In addition, small numbers of dogs and rodents were excavated. Furthermore, from areas in which *shaofan* (a ritual in which food was roasted and offered to spirits in Heaven) was practiced, livestock bones show a proportion of 79 percent sheep and goats, 12 percent cattle, and 9 percent horses; dogs, marmots, shellfish (Cyrenidae), and fish (Cyprinidae) were also excavated.⁵⁸

A large amount of charred and uncharred plant remains have been excavated as well. These were seeds of grains such as six-rowed barley, wheat, and millet. The millet was excavated together with stems and roots and the wheat was excavated with the seeds of weeds characteristic of wheat fields, which suggests that these plant remains were cultivated near the ruins.⁵⁹

Twenty-five kilometers northwest of the Avraga ruins are the Ikh Khairant and Tavan Khailaast ruins, thought to be burial sites for Avraga's citizens. Using carbon and nitrogen stable-isotope analysis of more than ten human bones found there from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to examine the food these people ate during their lifetimes, it was found that they had a high dependence on terrestrial animals, and simultaneously were also making use of freshwater fish to some extent.⁶⁰

The isotope data from Tavan Tolgoi, a ruling-elite cemetery in southeast Mongolia, differed from those of common people in the Mongolian homeland. Possibly, the dietary habits differed according to status, although the researchers suggest that the difference may be due to varying environmental conditions rather than dietary differences.⁶¹

In Qaraqorum, artifacts from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries have been examined.⁶² Excavated animal bones were essentially the same as in Avraga, with the number of sheep and goat excavations being the largest, followed by cattle and horses. Horses comprised approximately 1 to 2 percent of the findings in urban areas, but 9 to 12 percent at temple ruins, a difference of great interest. In addition, animals such as camels, pigs, and donkeys, which were not found in Avraga, were also attested. Of course, it is likely that the camels and donkeys were used for transportation rather than food in most cases. As for plant materials, in addition to grain seeds, which were also

58 Shiraishi 2015, 190–94. 59 Shiraishi and Tsogtbaatar 2009, 559–61; Obata 2015, 196–99.

60 Shiraishi and Tsogtbaatar 2013, 51–52, 58–59.

61 Fenner, Tumen, and Khatanbaatar 2014, 238–43.

62 Driesch, Peters, and Delgermaa 2010, 253–55.

excavated in Avraga, grains of rice, vegetable seeds, and fruit seeds were also found. Millet, barley, and wheat were cultivated in the region, while rice, grapes, Chinese desert thorns, figs, and jujubes were imported goods.⁶³ The diverse imported articles demonstrate that Qaraqorum was a cosmopolitan city where a wide variety of people lived.

The Construction of Dual Capitals

Qubilai moved his base south of the Gobi Desert and put effort into the conquest of China. In addition, he proactively incorporated elements such as Chinese-style political and economic structures and culture. The construction of the capital city is another example of this phenomenon.

In 1256, Qubilai built a capital called Kaiping fu in Doloon Nuur to the east of Huanzhou, a strategic position of the Jin dynasty. This capital was later called Shangdu ("upper capital"). The entirety of Shangdu was surrounded by earthen walls of three to six meters in height. The plan was square, each side being approximately 2,200 meters. This is called the "outer city." In the southeast corner of the outer city, there is a portion surrounded by solid walls six to seven meters in height. The eastern and southern walls utilize the outer city's wall. The length of each side is approximately 1,400 meters. This is known as the "inner city." Further, near the center of the inner city is a portion 600 meters from north to south and 540 meters from east to west which is surrounded by walls made of bricks. The height of the walls is five meters. This is called the "palace city." The eastern and western walls of these three cities are built in line with the meridian. In addition, from the length of the sides of each wall, it is clear that the scale of measure used in the Song and Jin dynasties (1 *chi* = 31.6 centimeters) was being used.⁶⁴ Unlike the building arrangement in capitals such as Avraga and Qaraqorum from the early days of the Mongol Empire, which were close to disorder, clearly Shangdu was built according to a prearranged plan.

The interior of the outer city is divided into two zones, north and south, with a low earthen wall. The southern zone has building clusters and is a normal town area, but no building remains can be seen in the northern zone, which might have been similar to a garden. The inner city contains the remains of many large buildings, which were probably temples and various kinds of government offices. In the center of the palace city, a main palace, called Da'an gu, was built. The plan of the building's basic foundation was

63 Rösch et al. 2010, 224–26. 64 Shiraishi 2002, 157–59.

a square thirty-six meters on each side.⁶⁵ According to historical records, it was a magnificent building with a height of nearly seventy meters.

In Shangdu, building remains exist even outside the portion encompassed by walls. There were barracks, granaries, shops, and other buildings in the surroundings of the outer city in blocks called Dongguan (“east suburb”), Xiguan (“west suburb”), and Nanguan (“south suburb”).⁶⁶

Dadu (“great capital”) is the city that became the foundation for modern Beijing. Building commenced in 1267, and was nearly completed in 1283. The city was surrounded by earthen walls, and in terms of scale it was 6,600 meters from east to west and 7,600 meters from north to south. It was planned in line with the meridian, just like Shangdu. There was a total of eleven gates arranged – two for the northern wall and three each for the western, eastern, and southern walls – which led outside the city. In addition, an artificial lake called Jishuitan (currently Xihai) was built in the city’s center and connected by canals to, for example, the ocean and the grain-producing regions of central China. A marketplace was formed around the lake.

The palace city was 2,450 meters from east to west and 2,200 meters from north to south, and was positioned slightly south of the town area. This was based on a traditional ideology regarding cities from the Chinese classic *Zhou li* (Rites of Zhou) in which the following is written: “To the south is the palace and government offices, and to the north is the marketplace.”⁶⁷ Aside from villas and gardens, the palace city contained governmental offices. The main palace was near the center of the palace city. The plan for the foundation of the palace building was not square, as in Shangdu; it is reconstructed as having been in the shape of the character 工 (*gong*), consisting of two buildings – south and north – and a thin hallway connecting them.⁶⁸ This type of palace plan was inherited from the Northern Song and Jin dynasties. It was also adopted in the Zhongdu (“central capital”) palace, whose construction commenced in 1307 under the Yuan emperor Qaishan (r. 1307–1311),⁶⁹ as well as in the Anxiwang fu (“Prince Anxi’s palace”), which belonged to Manggala (d. 1278), Qubilai’s third son.⁷⁰ The unit of measurement used for Dadu’s city plan and main palace construction was one *chi* = 31.5 centimeters.⁷¹

The emperors of the Yuan dynasty from Qubilai onwards spent their summers in Shangdu, which was cool due to the plateau, and their winters

65 Wei 2008, 320–26. 66 Wei 2008, 193–264. 67 Komai 1977, 139. 68 Fu 1998, 355.
69 Zhang 2012, 524–26. 70 Yu 2009, 287–88. 71 Fu 2001, 10.

in Dadu. While they had built Chinese-style cities, they continued a lifestyle of seasonal migrations, in line with the nomadic tradition.

Grave Burials

On the Mongolian plateau at the time, the representative form of grave was a simple structure in which a pit was dug into the ground and the corpse was positioned at the bottom of the hole. The sizes of the pits varied to some extent with the size of the coffin or the corpse to be interred, but were two by 1.5 meters in diameter and one to three meters in depth. The corpse was placed at the bottom of the hole. With the head pointed north, the face angled upward, and the body in a stretched position, the corpse was either laid in a wooden coffin or wrapped in cloth. As for burial accessories, items such as decorations and accessories from one's daily life were placed inside the coffin, but other items were located on top or to the side of the coffin. Burial accessories included items indispensable to the Mongol equestrian tribe, such as horse-riding gear, as well as bows, arrows, and quivers. In addition, tools, clothing, decorations, and personal effects used in one's lifetime were buried with the deceased. For offerings, food including grains (such as millet) and mutton were put inside. In elite graves, the deceased was sometimes buried alongside a horse with a set of riding gear, including a bit, stirrup, and saddle. Three suits of Mongol clothing (*deel*) made of silk embroidered with gold thread, golden earrings, and gold-plated bronze belt decorations have been excavated from a grave in Bukhiin khoshuu in Khentii, Mongolia. The entombed must have belonged to the political elite.⁷²

In the southeast area of the Mongolian plateau, there are graves topped with stone statues of people considered to have been the entombed. About seventy of these stone statues have been identified within Mongolia,⁷³ and a large number have also been observed in Inner Mongolia. The stone statues use white stone such as marble, and are made in the shape of people sitting in chairs. The height from the ground to the head is around 1.5 meters. In many cases, the body is clothed in an extravagant *deel* with embroidered flower patterns, tied at the lower back with a thick decorated belt. On the belt there is a pouch carved in relief. The custom of building statues of this kind for high-ranking individuals was presumably brought by the Qipchaq (Polovtsy) people, who had come to this area as mercenaries of Möngke and Qubilai.⁷⁴ In grave no. 5 in Tavan Tolgoi in Sukhbaatar province, there was a circular

72 Bayarsaikhan 2009, 484–85. 73 Bayar 2002, 37. 74 Hayashi 2005, 201–6.

arrangement of stones 6.5 centimeters in diameter on the ground, with a grave pit below three meters in length, two meters in width, and 3.2 meters in depth. The corpse was placed in a wooden coffin. The entombed was a female in her twenties or thirties. She was accompanied by a great variety of burial accessories, such as golden decorations, copper tableware, Buddhist altar equipment, an ivory sculpture, a bronze mirror inscribed with a Sanskrit character, and millet in a silver bowl. In addition, a complete skeleton of a horse equipped with a set of riding gear has been excavated.⁷⁵ Radiocarbon dating determined that this grave was from the fourteenth century.⁷⁶

In the Yinshan mountains in the southern portion of the Mongolian plateau, there are tombs in which stone grave markers are placed on the ground. These grave markers are thought to be modeled on Noah's Ark, and a distinct cross and ancient Syriac characters are carved into them. These are taken to be burial sites of the Önggüt people, who were Nestorian (Assyrian) Christians.⁷⁷

Graves with burial mounds were extremely rare on the Mongolian plateau, but a few such cases exist in graves of either nobility or migrants. A burial site in Okoshki in Transbaikalia,⁷⁸ Siberia, is the burial site for the family of Jochi Qasar, Chinggis Khan's younger brother. Grave no. 1 has a burial mound twenty-seven meters from north to south, sixteen meters from east to west, and 1.5 meters in height, with three graves dug out on top. It has already been subject to illegal digging, but extravagant burial accessories, including a lacquered bow and arrow, fragments of silk goods and fine clothes, and an ivory sculpture of a dragon's head have been unearthed.⁷⁹ As has already been stated, the graves of Qaraqorum's Muslim residents also include burial mounds.⁸⁰

From the southern portion of the Mongolian plateau to China, stone-chambered tombs (in which an underground tomb chamber is built with hewn stone) and brick-chambered tombs (in which a tomb chamber is made with bricks) are common. Brick-chambered tombs are a burial system that originated in China. The ceiling of the tomb chamber is domed, with plaster coating the walls and sometimes pictures drawn over that. From above ground, there is a stairway-shaped path leading in and out of the tomb chamber. Like the Zhenzishan burial site on the outskirts of Shangdu, there are many examples of Chinese individuals entombed in such graves,⁸¹ but

75 Erdenebat and Törbat 2011, 17–38, 46–52. 76 Navaan and Mönkhdelger 2006, 14–17.

77 Gai 1992, 270–302. 78 Kharinskii et al. 2012, 158–59.

79 Bayar 2000, 10–22; Kharinskii et al. 2014. 80 Bayar and Voitov 2010, 303–5.

81 Wei 2008, 328–585.

there are also instances of Mongolian nobility who had adopted Chinese customs, as in the Yuanbaoshan grave.⁸²

Religion and Rituals

As the Mongol Empire was relatively tolerant of religions, its subjects included Buddhists, Confucianists, Daoists, Muslims, Nestorian Christians, and others. Traces of Buddhism can be seen universally throughout the eastern portion of the Mongol Empire. Of course there was Buddhism in the Chinese regions, but on the Mongolian plateau as well; there was already a temple constructed in Qaraqorum in 1256.⁸³ In the center of the temple was a tower called the Xiangyuan gu that was approximately ninety meters in height. In terms of the tower's structure, in contrast with the brick towers with octagonal plans common in the Yuan dynasty and Tibetan-style pagodas, it was of wooden construction and square in plan.⁸⁴ The only similar tower is the one at Hwangryong-sa temple in Gyeongju, Korea, which was burned down by the Mongol army in 1238. In addition, Buddhism's penetration into people's lives is attested, for example, by the Sanskrit characters carved into the silver bowl in grave no. 4 at Okoshki,⁸⁵ and the bronze mirror in grave no. 5 at Tavan Tolgoi.⁸⁶ For Confucianism and Daoism, the ruins of relevant temples (*miao*) remain in several places. In Qaraqorum too, has been found a stone monument on which contents relating to Confucianism or Chinese folk religion are recorded.⁸⁷ As for Islam, there is a famous burial site in Quanzhou, in south China, but on the Mongolian plateau as well, at a grave in Serten, 150 kilometers east of Qaraqorum, there was found a tombstone dated to the Islamic calendrical year AH 748 (1347–1348 CE).⁸⁸ As for Christianity, at the Önggüt burial site in the Yinshan mountains, traces of Nestorians have been seen in items such as grave markers and excavated relics.⁸⁹

Furthermore, there was also a traditional religion of the Mongols, and rituals relating to it were performed during important national ceremonies. The *Yuan shi* records rituals that were carried out by Mongol shamans, among which *shaofan* was particularly important.⁹⁰ *Shaofan* is a ritual in

82 Xiang 1983, 46. 83 Hüttel 2005, 146; Shiraishi and Tseveendorj 2007, 8.

84 For this temple: Franken 2015, and the reconstruction at www.artefacts-berlin.de/portfolio-item/karakorum-the-reconstruction-of-the-great-hall.

85 Bayar 2000, 17. 86 Navaan and Mönkhdelger 2006, 28.

87 Radloff 1892–1899, Plate 42, Figures 1–3. 88 Yajima 2008. 89 Gai 1992, 276–81.

90 YS, 77.1924.

which food such as meat or grain is roasted while being sprinkled with alcohol, and then the smoke is offered to the heavenly spirits. This was practiced from around the Liao period among hunting and nomadic peoples in northeast China.⁹¹ In the Mongol Empire, this ritual was practiced frequently for the nobility, including the emperor. Even inside Dadu there was a dedicated ritual site known as *shaofan yuan* on the eastern side of the palace area.⁹²

Examples of *shaofan* were ambiguous until recently, but remains relating to it have been excavated in Avraga. Earthen walls surrounded a rectangular plot of land twenty-five meters from east to west and fifteen meters from north to south where *shaofan* was carried out. Practicing *shaofan* once produced a volume of approximately half a cubic meter, but as a result of its having been practiced several hundred times in the same place, a mound approximately eighty centimeters in height formed within the earthen walls. Similar mounds exist in several places within the Avraga ruins. Normally sheep were used in *shaofan*, but in Avraga there were many instances of horses, and the parts used often comprised the head, *dörben öndür* (the four large ribs), and *aman küjügiün* (the first cervical vertebrae). Even now, in Ejen Qoriya in the Ordos region of Inner Mongolia, where Chinggis's rituals are conducted, the same parts are offered to the spirit of Chinggis Khan.⁹³ In addition, the *Yuan shi* and the *Cao mu zi* also state that horses were used in the rituals of the nobility such as the emperor.⁹⁴ Thus the *shaofan* in Avraga clearly differed from the convention. Perhaps it was an area in which the spirits of successive Mongol emperors, including Chinggis Khan, were deified.⁹⁵

The Development of Industry

Various industries thrived during the era of the Mongol Empire. First we must refer to agriculture. During the Yuan dynasty, the *ou-tian* system, which used smaller plots of cultivated land and applied water and fertilizer intensively, was promoted as a famine relief measure that would be resistant to droughts and unaffected by terrain. Traces of this can be seen in the Heihu (Ejina) river valley in northwest China. According to the *Yuan shi*, *tuntian* (agricultural-military colonies) were established in this region in 1286.⁹⁶ While a plot of cultivated land was around 800 square meters in the Xi Xia dynasty, during the Yuan dynasty it had undergone a drastic decrease to

91 Chen 1980, 131–37. 92 Xiong 1983, 115. 93 Mostaert 1956, 280–81.

94 YS, 77.1924; Ye 1959, 63. 95 Shiraishi 2005, 857. 96 YS, 60.1451.

about ten square meters.⁹⁷ Small plots are easier to irrigate, so this farming method was appropriate for arid regions such as the Heihu river valley.

During the Yuan dynasty, even on the Mongolian plateau, on which agriculture had not been practiced to a great extent, agriculture came to be actively carried out due to factors such as an influx of inhabitants of Chinese ethnicity. Irrigation farming was carried out, with water from the Orkhon river used in the Qaraqorum region, and spring water used in the Shaazan Tolgoi ruins 250 kilometers south of that. Shaazan Tolgoi might have been the remains of the Konggulie cang granary, which appears in the *Yuan shi*.⁹⁸ In addition, in the area of the Avraga ruins, traces of rain-fed farming have been observed.⁹⁹

Next we look at the ceramic industry. This industry also developed in the Yuan dynasty. The technology of the ceramic industry underwent a great change from the second half of the Song dynasty to the Jin dynasty. The form of fuel changed from charcoal to coal, allowing the generation of higher temperatures, and *mantou*-style kilns, which featured bricks stacked in a dome shape and had highly efficient combustion, were adopted, improving the productivity of pottery. In terms of representative pottery-producing areas, Hubei had the Ding kiln site and Cizhou kiln site, and Hunan had the Jun kiln site, to name some examples. These kiln sites, which produced high-class items during the Song dynasty, were destroyed when groups such as the Jurchen and Mongols invaded.¹⁰⁰

However, once the economy was revived due to political stability, production once again became prosperous. Of course products were transported to Chinese regions such as Dadu and other large cities, but they were also transported to the Mongolian plateau. In particular, porcelain with blue glaze from the Jun kiln site has been excavated in large amounts from areas such as Avraga and Qaraqorum,¹⁰¹ perhaps because it suited the taste of the Mongols. In addition, in the area south of the Yangtze river, the production of the Longquan and Jingdezhen kilns increased, and their products were even exported abroad to places such as Japan through maritime trade.

At the Jingdezhen kiln site, designs were drawn on a white surface with blue pigment, and the product was then fired at the high temperature of 1,200 °C to create Qinghua (blue and white) porcelain. It was a new type of porcelain which combined Chinese porcelain technology with cobalt pigment introduced from the Islamic regions. Many points in the origin of this porcelain

97 Shiraishi 2007, 143.

98 YS, 82.2044; Shiraishi et al. 2009, 634.

99 Sohma 2010, 189–91.

100 Qin 1997, 480–502. 101 Kamei 2007, 58; Kamei 2009, 100–1.

are unclear, but it seems that production started around 1330 at the latest.¹⁰² Qinghua porcelain was also supplied to large cities within the country such as Dadu, but large dishes and jars were produced for export to the Muslim world.¹⁰³

Next is a look at iron manufacture. During this period in China, the fuel changed from charcoal to coal and it became possible to produce iron in large amounts at high temperatures, but it had been thought that charcoal remained the main source of fuel on the Mongolian plateau. However, analyzing iron materials from Qaraqorum has revealed the use of fossil fuel there.¹⁰⁴ Various technical improvements to the production of ironware were apparent across all regions. In terms of casting, high-quality pearlite cast iron similar to that used in modern times was employed for items that required durability, such as linchpins for wheels.¹⁰⁵ Simultaneously, the technology for creating solid, sturdy forgings improved, raising the performance of tools and weapons. Stick-shaped ingots were used as the raw material for forging. These ingots were produced in large numbers near the location where the iron ore originated, and then exported to blacksmithing workshops in distant lands, where they were turned into products such as weapons and daily necessities, including arrowheads and nails. Thus an efficient ironware production network was established.¹⁰⁶

Additionally, it is also possible to take note of glass production. The glass that has been excavated from ruins includes not only containers, but also board-shaped products. Such glass products were probably used as construction material for items such as windows. Particle-induced X-ray emission analysis of the elemental components of the glass excavated from Avraga revealed that it was soda-lime glass with a pale blue color, and had been colored with iron.¹⁰⁷ Chinese-made glass contains a large amount of lead across all periods, but this material did not contain lead. Yet soda-lime glass from Boshan in Shandong, China, from the fourteenth century did not contain lead either.¹⁰⁸ Soda-lime glass is attested in western Asia from ancient times, and the technology might have been introduced to East Asia through the stimulation of east–west exchange by the Mongol Empire.

102 Yuba 2008, 55. 103 Yuba 2007, 164. 104 Park and Reichert 2015, 59–60.

105 Osawa 2013, 171. 106 Osawa 2004, 54–55. 107 Koizumi and Hara 2003, 65–66.

108 Yi and Xu 1986, 142.

Local Regions and Transportation

In the Mongol Empire, royalty and nobility held their own territory in various areas as appanage holders. Especially powerful royalty imitated systems such as the Qaraqorum peri-urban area and Qubilai's dual capital; that is, they built multiple palaces within their territory, and seasonally migrated between them. For example, the Manggala family possessed Anxiwang fu (603 meters by 542 meters) and Kaicheng (475 meters by 341 meters);¹⁰⁹ the Jochi Qasar family possessed Khirkhira, Kondui,¹¹⁰ and Heishantou (589 meters by 527 meters);¹¹¹ and the family of Temüge Otchigin, Chinggis's youngest brother, possessed Bayanwula (440 meters by 410 meters) and Dahaotekan (Xiguitu, 360 meters by 360 meters).¹¹² In addition, there were some instances in which powerful nobility arranged buildings such as government offices, temples, schools, and commercial facilities around their own dwellings, and then surrounded that area with walls. For example, the Önggüt royal family built a fortified city called Olon Süme (970 meters by 578 meters),¹¹³ and the Onggirat royal family built one called Yingchang fu (817 meters by 660 meters).¹¹⁴ Palaces and fortified cities such as these were at the center of the local administration and economy.

The Mongol Empire created a transportation system which could spread information and goods to the corners of its extensive dominion. This was called the postal system (Mo. *jam*; Tu. *yam*; Ch. *zhanchi*). Postal stations were arranged, with Qaraqorum as the starting point for Ögödei and Dadu as the starting point for Qubilai. The route that connected eastern and western Eurasia was a particularly important artery. In addition to the Silk Road, which had been active since much earlier times (along various routes), the so-called "Steppe Road," which passes through grassy areas, was also important. The stations were positioned every twenty-five to fifty kilometers along the postal roads.

A city located 300 kilometers west of Dadu called Jining lu was a rectangular city surrounded by a wall, stretching 940 meters from north to south and 640 meters from east to west. While it was an administrative center for the region, it was also a major station on a main road heading west. It was also a commercial city, positioned at a point of contact between an agricultural area and a nomadic zone. Besides copper coins and gold and silver articles, its

109 Yu 2009, 278–80. 110 Kiselev et al. 1965, 325–69. 111 Guojia wenwu ju 2003, 2: 476.

112 Guojia wenwu ju 2003, 2: 468–69. 113 Egami and Miyake 1981, 16.

114 Liu 1984, 113.

excavation has unearthed as many as 7,000 pieces of pottery accumulated from kiln sites from various regions around China.¹¹⁵

Qara-Qoto (Ejina lu) is 1,500 kilometers west of Jining lu. It is the ruins of a city surrounded by a square wall (374 meters by 421 meters), built in an oasis in the Badanjilin Desert, Inner Mongolia.¹¹⁶ It was located halfway between the Steppe Road and the Silk Road, and goods from both roads were gathered here. Owing to its arid climate, as many as 3,000 paper documents have been found there. In a sense, these are both archaeological and historical resources. They are written in varied languages and scripts – Chinese, Tangut, Mongolian, Uighur, Arabic, Tibetan, and others. The majority were official documents detailing the political and economic situations of this remote region.¹¹⁷

Further, Almaliq is located in the middle basin of the Ili river, 1,600 kilometers west of Qara-Qoto. At present, new cultivation has resulted in the destruction of the ruins and the remains of buildings and walls cannot be observed, but there are relics scattered on the ground of a large region roughly two kilometers from north to south and one kilometer from east to west. This was an important city in the Chaghadaid Khanate, and a contact point between China and Central Asia. Thus a variety of goods were gathered there. There is a mix of relics from east and west, including celadon and Qinghua porcelain from the Longquan and Jingdezhen kilns, together with Central Asian copperware and ceramics.¹¹⁸

In addition to large-scale stations like the above, small-scale stations that are unknown in historical records have also been found. Yanjialiang in Baotou in Inner Mongolia is the remains of a post station that was built at the river crossing on the Yellow River. From the buildings along the main street that cuts through the town area, items such as a hearth with high heating power and a *kang* underfloor heating system have been found, and pottery with words that mean “hotel” and “cafeteria” written in Chinese characters have been excavated.¹¹⁹

Progression onto Water

During the Yuan dynasty, in addition to land transportation, transportation by inland water also saw remarkable development. In particular, the Grand Canal, which crossed the Yellow River from Dadu and reached the Yangtze

115 Chen 2004, 9–26. 116 Neimenggu wenwu kaogusuo 1987, 3.

117 Yoshida and Chimeddorji 2008. 118 Yuba 2008, 221–22.

119 Zhang and Zhang 2010, 641–56.

river, was a major route for north–south distribution. In Cixian, in western Shandong, at the remains of an old river which flowed to Hebei, a sunken ship from the end of the Yuan dynasty has been found. It was a wooden ship, a portion of which was corroded, but the remaining part was ten meters in length and three meters in width, and the interior was separated into six cabins. Fine pottery such as large Qinghua porcelain jars from the Jingdezhen kiln, lacquerware, and decorations were loaded inside.¹²⁰ This sunken ship is a good indication of the Yuan Grand Canal's trade.

In addition, another distinctive feature of the Yuan dynasty was an advance to the ocean. Zhigu (Tianjin), Qingyuan (Ningbo), Quanzhou, and other areas were equipped with harbors. The harbor at Zhigu was directly connected to Dadu by canal, and accumulated a large variety of trade items. Sunken ships can shed light on the Yuan maritime trade. One such ship, built at the end of the Yuan dynasty, was found inside the harbor of Penglai, on the Shandong peninsula. It was a wooden ship with a total length of 17.1 meters and a width of 6.2 meters, divided into eight cabins.¹²¹ A similar ship was also found in Sandaogang, Liaoning.¹²² The cargo of both of these ships seems to have been pottery. As they were relatively small ships, they were probably commercial vessels operating in coastal waters.

As for oceangoing ships, a sunken ship was discovered off the coast of Sinan in the southwestern part of the Korean peninsula. It was a trading vessel that departed from Qingyuan in China in 1323, heading for Hakata in Japan. It is a junk ship with a total length of thirty-four meters, a width of eleven meters, and the capacity to hold a crew of around sixty men. Its cargo included, in addition to a large amount of pottery and rosewood, twenty-eight tons of bronze coins. While the coins were a commercial item, it seems that they simultaneously acted as ballast to stabilize the ship.¹²³

The Yuan dynasty was also active in advancing to the open sea for military purposes. Qubilai dispatched naval fleets to Japan, Vietnam, and Java. On the expedition to Japan in 1281, 4,400 warships sank in heavy winds off the northwest coast of Kyushu island. A portion of the wreckage has been located on the ocean floor along the coast of Takashima island. A large number of artifacts have been found in the surroundings of the sunken ships. There were arms such as helmets, swords, arrows, small armor plates, and the earthen shelled bombs (*tetsuhau*, fourteen centimeters in diameter and four kilograms in weight), as well as other objects like pottery, porcelain, lacquer bowls,

120 Cixian wenhuaguan 1978, 388–92. 121 Tong, Wang, and Teng 2006, 4–5.

122 Zhang 2010, 136–38.

123 Hangug munhwajae gwalligug 1983.

combs, bronze pots, bronze spoons, and bronze coins, probably used for the soldiers' daily lives.¹²⁴ Historical records indicate that the naval fleet was made up of a combination of large mother ships, along with smaller ships for landing.¹²⁵ This point is also supported by the ship wreckage that has been recovered from the ocean floor. In terms of the materials for the ships, durable camphor wood was used extensively. In addition, a large anchor with an estimated length of seven meters and an estimated weight of a ton, made up of a combination of oak and stone, was used.¹²⁶ Such construction made long-distance voyages on the open sea possible.

Archaeological materials are extremely important in deepening the understanding of the history of the Mongol Empire. In particular, these types of resource provide valuable information on the situation surrounding the Mongolian plateau – the spot where the empire originated – from which few written historical records have remained. In recent years, along with scientific investigations and public works that have also increased with economic development, important materials are being newly discovered one after another. Hence archaeology is a field that should be watched closely while investigating the history of the Mongol Empire.

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¹²⁴ Takano 2013, 34–36. Matsuo 2011. ¹²⁵ YS, 208.4628.

¹²⁶ Yanagida 2001, 6–7; also Nakata and Ikeda 2021.

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The Ilkhanate

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Under the Ilkhanate (1260–1335), the Mongol state in West Asia established by Hülegü (r. 1260–1265), a number of cities and buildings were newly constructed. While some Islamic religious buildings, such as mosques, *imāmzādas* (tombs of descendants of Shi'ite imāms), and other tombs of religious figures, have survived as functioning buildings or as ruins above ground,¹ the capital cities and secular buildings established by the Ilkhans have been almost entirely lost in spite of much contemporaneous information on them. Nevertheless, the remarkable progress in archaeological research since the twentieth century has unearthed several of them. A great majority of them are located in the western part of the Islamic Republic of Iran, where the political centers of the Ilkhanate were situated (see Map 18.1).²

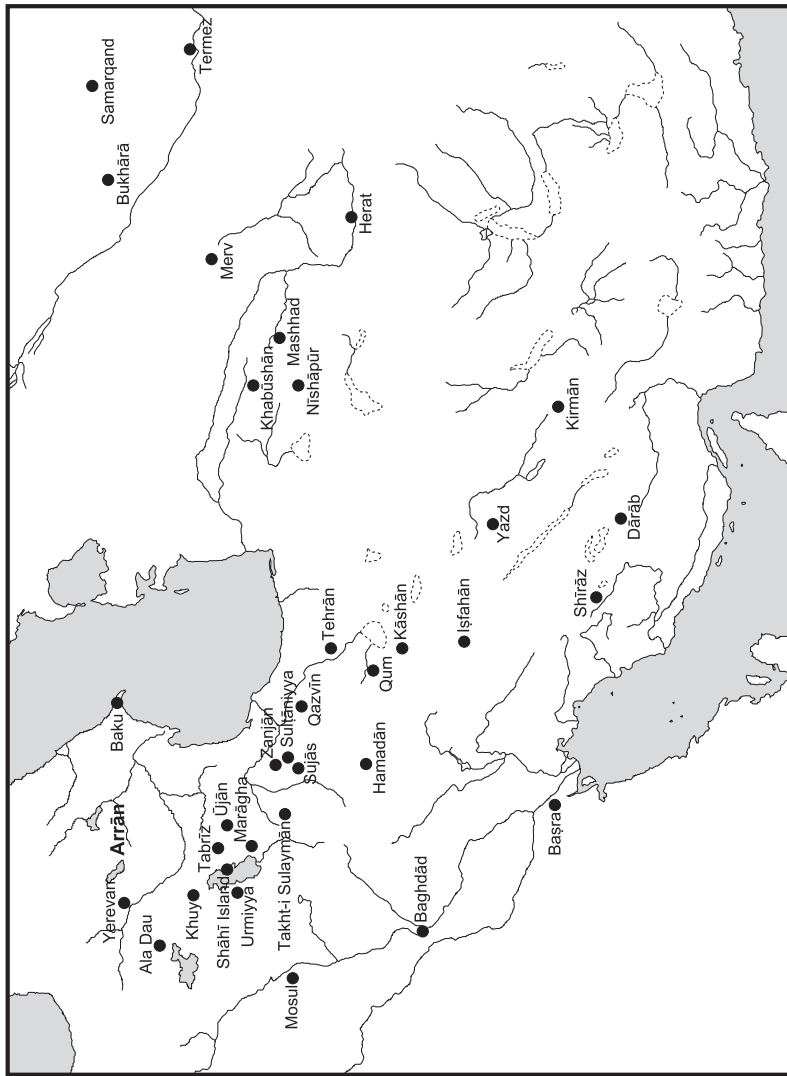
According to Rashīd al-Dīn (1247–1318), Hülegü ordered his scientist-statesman Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (1201–1274) to found an observatory, and this order was carried out in Maragha, the city chosen by Ṭūsī.³ The observatory is located on a hill in the western part of Maragha in West Azerbaijan province. The excavations led by Parviz Vardjavand (Warjāwand) in the 1970s exposed a scientific complex consisting of the central observatory; five smaller circular structures; other buildings which might have served as a school, a library, or an atelier to construct astrological instruments; and a few other structures inside the walled precinct. The buildings are constructed with stone, sundried brick, and baked brick. Fragments of tiles of different shapes and techniques were found; among them were molded frieze tiles with luster-painted inscriptions.⁴ Recently the main observatory was covered with a structure for preservation purposes.

1 Blair 2002; Blair and Bloom 1994, 5–19; Wilber 1955.

2 Blair 1993 for a general discussion of Ilkhanid palaces.

3 JT/Thackston, 2: 501–2.

4 Vardjavand 1975b; Vardjavand 1979; Vardjavand 1987.



Map 18.1 Map of Ilkhanid archaeological sites

Hülegü is said to have built idol temples in Khuy (West Azerbaijan province) and the seventh Ilkhan Ghazan (r. 1295–1304) another in Khabūshān (North Khurasan province) before his conversion to Islam.⁵ Three rock-cut structures – the Raṣadkhāna caves in Maragha, the Mihrī Temple or Imāmzāda Ma‘šūm in Warjuwī near Maragha, and Dāsh Kasan in Wiyār near Sulṭāniyya – have often been suggested to be Buddhist temples from the Ilkhanid period, although none of them is associated with the Ilkhans. Among these, Dāsh Kasan has drawn special attention because of its rock-cut reliefs of dragons and a niche with a vase of flowers that reflect Chinese design. The first survey of Dāsh Kasan was conducted by a research team from the University of Venice in 1973; also during the 1970s, Warwick Ball published articles to support the identification of the two caves in the Maragha area as Buddhist temples.⁶ A recent paper by Arezou Azad is a comprehensive study of the three sites yet is inconclusive, stating that while the sites do exhibit traces of Ilkhanid construction or addition, they lack evidence of use as Buddhist temples.⁷

Rashīd al-Dīn attests that Hülegü constructed a lofty building on Shāhū Mountain or Shāhū Tala on the shore of Lake Urmiyya between the cities of Urmiyya and Salmās (both in West Azerbaijan province) and made it his treasury. Later it became Hülegü’s *qoruq* (forbidden area), where he and his son Abaqa (the second Ilkhan, r. 1265–1282) were buried.⁸ It was identified by Donald N. Wilber as the rock-cut ruins at Sarāy Rock on Shāhī Island, or present-day Islāmī Island on the eastern shore of Lake Urmiyya.⁹ Yet comprehensive studies spanning all types of rock-cut structure from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are greatly desired.¹⁰

Takht-i Sulaymān, located in the mountain area of West Azerbaijan province, is clearly the best-excavated Ilkhanid site. It has been identified with one of the Ilkhanid summer quarters in a town called Satūrīq or Sughurluq (“place where marmots abound” in Turkic), where, according to Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī (active in the first half of the fourteenth century), Abaqa restored a palace founded by Kay Khusraw, the legendary Kayānian king.¹¹ In fact, the Ilkhanid

5 JT/Thackston, 2: 513; 3: 664.

6 For Dāsh Kasan: Curatola 1982; Kleiss 1997; Scarcia 1975. For the caves in the Maragha area: Ball 1976; Ball 1979; Vardjavand 1975a.

7 Azad 2011. 8 JT/Thackston, 2: 501, 514; 3: 545, 672; Honda 1991a, 374–77.

9 Wilber 1955: 108–9, no. 10, Plates 3–4, Figure 7.

10 Masjid-i Sang (“rock mosque” in Persian) in Dārāb, in Fārs province, a rock-cut mosque with a *mihrāb* with the date 652/1254, and another rock-cut mosque in Shahr-i Īj, located northwest of Dārāb, with a *mihrāb* with the date 633/1236, are assigned to the Ilkhanid period by Lionel Bier in spite of their dates (Bier 1986). These Islamic monuments would provide valuable comparisons for the other Ilkhanid caves.

11 Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī 1919, 69.

palaces at Takht-i Sulaymān are on the ruins of the Sassanian fire temple of Ādurgushnasp, with Sassanian walls forming the large oval area that comprises the palace grounds. Takht-i Sulaymān was first surveyed by the American Institute for Iranian Art and Archaeology in 1937.¹² Then it was excavated by the German Archaeological Institute from 1959 until 1978, under the direction first of Rudolf Naumann and later of Dietrich Huff (Figure 18.1).¹³

The German excavations yielded the Ilkhanid palace buildings encircling the central lake, where Ilkhanid builders reused the Sassanian foundations for their structures. The northern *īwān* (vaulted hall with one of four sides open) seems to have been an audience hall; the western *īwān* leads to two octagonal structures, which are unusual in shape for secular buildings in Iran, where octagonal buildings served as mausolea. A pottery workshop and kilns were important finds testifying that a certain portion of tiles used for architectural decoration were manufactured on site. Thousands of fragments of tiles of



Figure 18.1 Takht-i Sulaymān, general view. Photograph: Yousef Moradi

¹² Pope et al. 1937.

¹³ Huff 1977; Huff 1978; Huff 1989; Huff 2006; *Elr*; Naumann 1963; Naumann 1971; Naumann 1977; Naumann and Huff 1972; Naumann and Naumann 1969; Naumann and Naumann 1976; von der Osten and Naumann 1961.

a variety of shapes and techniques were excavated mainly in the northern area.¹⁴ A few tiles are inscribed with dates in the 1270s, which accord with Abaqa's reign. Some tiles bear images of Chinese dragons and phoenixes, and others, images of Iranian kings and inscriptions taken from the Iranian epic *Shāhnāma* (Book of Kings) by Firdawsī (934–1025). The pottery techniques applied to the tiles include luster painting, *lājwardīna* (enameling and gilding over an opaque glaze), partial glazing, and monochrome glazing. The plaster plate found at Takht-i Sulaymān incised with the design for a *muqarnas* (three-dimensional architectural decoration to adorn a vault) is a valuable clue to clarify how medieval architects designed and constructed *muqarnas* vaults.¹⁵

In 1993 the site was selected as one of the ten great cultural heritage projects of Iran, prompting archaeological and geomorphological research projects at the site. It was inscribed in the World Heritage List of UNESCO in 2003, and since then conservation and restoration efforts have been enhanced.¹⁶ The major results of these recent efforts by Yousef Moradi are the excavations of the late Ilkhanid settlements, including a mosque, pottery kilns, smith shops, and public bath houses.¹⁷

Volume 56 (2012) of the Iranian periodical *Athar* is a commemorative volume dedicated to Takht-i Sulaymān providing information of recent finds from the site.¹⁸ Ḥamīd Amān al-Lahī's article gives an overview of the site and the history of archaeological research therein, including a useful bibliography of recent Iranian works.¹⁹

The seventh Ilkhan, Ghazan, had his building projects at Ujān, which was located eight *farsangs* (leagues) from Tabriz, according to Mustawfī.²⁰ Ghazan ordered the construction of buildings there in 1299 and renamed it Shahr-i Islām ("city of Islam" in Persian).²¹ The location of Ujān has recently been identified with the town of Bustān Ābād, forty-five kilometers southeast of Tabriz, and detailed excavation reports from the sites are expected.²²

Sulṭāniyya in Zanjān province was the capital of the eighth Ilkhan, Öljeitü (r. 1304–1316). His father, the fourth Ilkhan, Arghun (r. 1284–1291), originally

14 For the tiles: Ahmadi 2012; Ghouchani 1992; Masuya 1997.

15 For this plate: Dold-Samplonius and Harmsen 2005; Harb 1978; Yaghan 2000.

16 Malīklū 2004 deals with the restoration of the western *īwān*, which has suffered much deterioration over the years.

17 Moradi 2006; Moradi 2012. The attached bibliography lists only items dealing with the Ilkhanid phase of Takht-i Sulaymān. For a bibliography on the site's various phases: Huff 2016.

18 Ḥaydarī 2012 summarizes the organizational work on the site. Among the articles in that volume, Ahmadi 2012 deals with the Ilkhanid phase.

19 Amān al-Lahī 2015. 20 Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī 1919, 83. 21 Waṣṣāf 1967, 231.

22 Velayati et al. 2018. I thank Dr. Yousef Moradi for this valuable information.

founded a city in a place known as Sharūyāz in Persian and as Qonqur Öläng (“brown meadow”) in Turkic, which was not completed during his reign;²³ Öljeitü enlarged it and named it Sulṭāniyya (“the sultan’s (city)” in Arabic).²⁴ Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī and Ḥāfiz-i Abrū (?–1430) report that Öljeitü’s mausoleum was in the center of this city, along with many other religious, charitable, and secular buildings inside the city walls. Among these numerous buildings constructed in the city, Öljeitü’s lofty mausoleum, with a gigantic double-shell dome and eight minarets, is the only one that survives today above ground. This famous monument has been studied extensively for its historical, architectural, and epigraphical aspects.²⁵ Sulṭāniyya was listed as a World Heritage Site of UNESCO in 2005.

Archaeological excavations have been carried out around the mausoleum and in other parts of the city area. They were first conducted under the direction of Saeed Gandjavi (Ganjawī).²⁶ Muḥammad Mihryār and his colleagues published an excavation report of the Ilkhanid city walls and bastions of Sulṭāniyya with several examples of tile fragments.²⁷ In 1991, ‘Alī Aṣghar Mīrfattāḥ wrote an overview of the city of Sulṭāniyya, including the information gathered by recent excavations.²⁸ The full excavation reports are awaited for a more concrete idea of this Ilkhanid city.

Tappa Nūr, an Ilkhanid monument 1.5 kilometers southeast of Sulṭāniyya, was first excavated also by Saeed Gandjavi.²⁹ It is a twelve-sided building nineteen meters in external diameter. While Gandjavi suggests that it was Arghun’s tomb, Marco Giovanni Brambilla has recently suggested a more likely identification that it was the mausoleum of Abū Sa‘īd, the last significant Ilkhanid ruler (r. 1316–1335), pointing out that Arghun was buried in the mountain of Sujās, about twenty-five kilometers southwest of Sulṭāniyya, and that Abū Sa‘īd was buried in a mausoleum which he had built during his lifetime in a suburb of Sulṭāniyya called Sharūyāz.³⁰

Rashīd al-Dīn, who was Ghazan’s and Öljeitü’s vizier, built a charitable foundation called Rab‘-i Rashīdī in the eastern suburb of Tabriz with a number of religious and charitable buildings.³¹ It was surveyed by Donald N. Wilber and Modjtaba Minovi in the 1930s, and they published

23 JT/Thackston, 3: 574, 577.

24 Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī 1919, 61–62; Ḥāfiz-i Abrū 1971, 68–69. Also Blair 1986; Honda 1991b.

25 For example: Blair 1987; Sims 1988; *Sulṭāniyya III* 1982. 26 Gandjavi 1979.

27 Mihryār et al. 1986. 28 Mīrfattāḥ 1991. 29 Gandjavi 1976.

30 Brambilla 2014. For Arghun’s burial: Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī 1919, 69; for Abū Sa‘īd’s: Ḥāfiz-i Abrū 1971, 190–91, where Sharūyāz is spelled “Sharūbāz.”

31 Blair 2016; Hoffmann 2014.

a topographical map of it.³² Based on this map and the endowment deed of the Rab‘-i Rashīdī, Sheila S. Blair reconstructed the city planning and structures of some of the buildings.³³ In 2006 excavations at this site were finally started by Lāla Rūḥangīz. Architectural fragments of brick, tile, and stucco have been unearthed.³⁴ It is hoped that further excavations will shed light on various unknown aspects of this important city.

Furthermore, an Ilkhanid building was excavated at Bīsutūn in Kirmānshāh province by the German Archaeological Institute in 1963–1967. It is located about one kilometer southeast of the famous Bīsutūn inscription and was built against a Sassanian wall. Fragments of bricks decorated with reliefs; glazed tiles, including luster-painted and underglaze-painted; and pottery sherds unearthed there indicate its early fourteenth-century date but its function is not clear.³⁵

Excavations or detailed surveys of other Ilkhanid cities and palaces mentioned in the historical sources are yet to be done. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Arghun constructed a capital city called Arghūniyya on the western side of Tabriz named Shamb or Shamm, which contained palaces and canals.³⁶ Arghun’s son Ghazan developed Shamm into a charitable foundation called both Abwāb al-birr (“gates of piety” in Arabic) and Ghāzāniyya, adding a lofty dome in 1297; he was buried in this domed building.³⁷ Moreover, Rashīd al-Dīn attests that the Ilkhanid rulers down to Geikhatu (r. 1291–1295) built palaces in Ala Tagh (Tu: “spotted mountain”; identified with Ala Dau located in the upper Euphrates, northeast of Lake Van, present-day Turkey), Urmiyya, Sujās, Khūjān/Khūchān (unidentified), Zanjān (capital of Zanjān province), and Sarāy-yi Manṣūriyya of Arrān (a region of eastern Transcaucasia, in the present-day Republic of Azerbaijan).³⁸ However, none of these have been located.

The excavations of Ilkhanid cities and monuments in Iran will supplement the descriptions available in historical sources and help fill in any blanks. After the surveys during the 1930s and archaeological excavations of the 1970s, there have been new active waves of excavation of Ilkhanid sites since the 2000s. The preservation of these sites is an urgent matter, and appropriate restoration is required to extend their life. It is hoped that excavated materials will soon be classified typologically and analyzed chemically to furnish a clearer picture of Ilkhanid cities and monuments.

32 Wilber and Minovi 1938. 33 Blair 1984; Blair 2016. 34 Rūḥangīz 2011; Rūḥangīz 2015.

35 Kleiss and Calmeyer 1996, 183–241. 36 *JT*/Thackston, 3: 574, 577.

37 *JT*/Thackston, 3: 640–41, 662, 668, 684–88.

38 *JT*/Thackston, 2: 513; 3: 756; Honda 1991a for other palaces and cities built by the Ilkhans.

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The Golden Horde

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The descendants of Chinggis Khan's oldest son Jochi (d. 1227), known as the Golden Horde, established their rule over western Siberia, Dasht-i Qipchaq, and the Crimea. Their highly heterogeneous realm was part and parcel of a Chinggisid civilization that stretched across Eurasia, and resulted, among other things, in new cities arising in the European steppe, monetarization of the economy, and a revival of the trade along the Silk Roads.

The Golden Horde was the first, the largest, and the most ethnically diverse of the Mongol successor states. It originated in the land of the "forest people" of southern and eastern Siberia, when, in 1207, Chinggis Khan, himself busy fighting the Tanguts, ordered his son Jochi to conquer it.¹ Later on, Jochi took control of these territories, and it is generally believed that the *ulus* known as the Golden Horde (a Russian politonym of the sixteenth century) was formed after Jochi returned from Khwārazm in the second half of 1221.² The administrative and political division of the state was based on an army model with two flanks, i.e. two *uluses*: Kök Orda ("the Blue Horde") and Ak Orda ("the White Horde").³ According to Ötemish Hājjī (sixteenth century), Chinggis Khan "handed the right flank with *vilāyats* [territories] along the Itil [Volga] river to Sain Khan [Batu, Jochi's second son and heir] and the left flank with *vilayats* along the Syr river to Iyan [Orda, Jochi's first son]."⁴ Before the Mongol invasion of Europe, Batu's *ulus* was apparently located in the northern Aral region, in the steppe land of Turgai, reaching as far west as the Ural river. After the western Dasht-i Qipchaq was conquered (1237–1241), Batu's domain moved to the Volga region. Since then, the border between the Kök Orda (Batu's lands) and the

1 For Jochi: Uskenbai 2013, 61–68.

2 Uskenbai 2013, 61.

3 Fedorov-Davydov 1968, 224–30.

4 Utemish-khadzhi 1992, 93; Allsen 1985–1987, 5–40.

Ak Orda (Orda's lands) was settled along the Yaik (Ural) river.⁵ According to Allsen, whose conclusion is based on studies by Kazakh archaeologists, the Ak Orda culture was not purely nomadic.⁶

The Imperial Horseman Culture: Belts, Saddles, Bowls

We begin our survey of the material culture of the western Mongols by describing the new "horseman" culture which emerged in the east soon after the *quriltai* on the Onon river in 1206. The equestrian culture was most prominently reflected in the symbols of power that became a marker of identity for the civil and military elites within the Chinggisid empire, including those of non-Mongolian origin. This phenomenon was characteristic of all the united Mongol Empire's successor states, as long as the Chinggisid identity lasted, namely throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and even up to the late fifteenth century. The imperial pattern allowed the non-Mongol elite in the Mongols' service to be equal to the Mongols in their right to wear "national" costumes and enjoy a number of privileges reflected in special regalia. The collective consciousness tended to associate the "imperial style" first of all with precious metalwork, such as horse harness decorations, warrior or "officer's" belts, private belt bowls, and feast vessels made of gold or silver.⁷ According to the *Altan tobchi* (Golden Summary) of the seventeenth century, the tradition of the warrior chief's belt dated back to the pre-imperial period. Thus, during the third rite of brotherhood between Temüjin and Jamuqa, each already possessed the captured golden belt of a Merkit tribal chief. *Anda* Temüjin had the belt of Toqto'a of the Merkits, while *anda* Jamuqa kept the belt of Dayir-Usun of the U'as-Merkits.⁸ Warrior belts, horse harness decorations, and portable cups, which were of serial production, not only demonstrate the shape and ornaments chosen for each particular category of object, but also give an idea of the early Mongolian equestrian culture as a whole. Particularly important are the gold and silver findings from Central Asia and northern China, as well as from the Altai-Sayan mountains (including Tuva, the Altai

5 For more details about the Jochi *ulus*'s flanks: Kliashtorny and Sultanov 1992, 185–89; Uskenbai 2013, 83–111. For the Golden Horde's administration: Egorov 1972, 32–42; origin of the principal political institutions: Sabitov 2012, 269–75; see Favereau and Pochekaev's chapter in Volume 1.

6 Allsen 1985–1987, 27–28. 7 Kramarovskii 2001, 73–79.

8 Luban Danzan 1973, 95–96; for *Altan Tobchi*: Bira 1978, 232–34.

mountains and the Khakas-Minusinsk valley), dating back to the first generations of the Mongols. No less noteworthy are the findings from the steppe zone beyond the Ural mountains.

Taking into consideration the finds from Tavan Tolgoi (the first half of the thirteenth century, southeastern Mongolia) we can already talk of a series of “silver” and “golden” saddles of the same period, including the golden cover of a man’s saddle from the Khalili collection in London.⁹ The dragon motif on the Tavan Tolgoi’s saddle cover is typical of high ranking *noyans*’ (Mongol nobles’) regalia, including warrior belts and cups. Between 1204/1206 and 1217, images of dragons with four or three legs started to be used as symbols of the Great Khan and his army.¹⁰ Yet warrior belts with dragon images have until today been found only in the European steppe zone, where they were brought already by the first generation of Jochid horsemen in the 1220s–1240s. Such findings come from Dnieper Ukraine, the middle Don river region, the steppe region north of the Caucasus, and the middle Volga region.¹¹ One of the remarkable findings from the lower Volga region is a belt set from a destroyed burial in the site of Krasny Yar near Astrakhan. A fragment of the strap has survived (Figure 19.1).¹² A similar set of decorations has been found recently in the same burial. This group of warrior belts has much in common with “hunter’s” belt sets, such as the silver one from the Tash-Bashat burial (Kirgizstan), and the golden one from Gashun-Usta (the north Caucasus), or the group of three golden plates of the Khalili collection.¹³ Both groups of belts belonged to the older generation of Jochid commanding officers, who came to the European steppe zone around the mid-thirteenth century.¹⁴ The style and different types of these belts originated in Central Asia or northern China in pre-imperial times. They represent a part of the “Mongolian heritage” brought to Dasht-i Qipchaq – reaching the basins of the Sura, Volga, Kama, and Don – with the first generation of invaders, led by Batu. This group of objects, including the Jurchen belt set from barrow no. 7 of the “Olen-Kolodez” burial complex on the terrace above the mound on the left bank of the Don river,¹⁵ enables us to study artifacts dating back to the

9 Kramarovskii 2001, 21. 10 Kramarovskii 2001, 35–50.

11 Kramarovskii 2001, 35–45, Figure 14, 1–16, 17–19.

12 Kramarovskii 2001, 35–45, Figure 18; Gosudarstvennyi Ėrmitazh 2019, 162–63. The belt’s golden and silver decorations include a buckle, a ferrule, a sliding knife holder, two sabre holders with loops for scabbards, and twenty-five crescent-shaped plates. Kramarovskii 2002, 43–81; Kramarovskii 2000, 69.

13 Kramarovskii 2001, 45–49, Figures 20, 21. 14 Kramarovskii 2001, Figures 14–22.

15 The burial complex is located near the village of Olen-Kolodez, Kashirsky district, Voronezh region. Efimov 1999, 93–108.



Figure 19.1 Belt fittings from Krasny Yar (lower Volga region), the first half of the thirteenth century. © The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Photograph Leonard Kheifets

pre-1260s, which do not bear any signs of the *metropolia*.¹⁶ These prestigious golden and silver sets from the United Empire era were part of the common Chinggisid heritage, which represents the Mongols' early equestrian culture. It is this group of golden and silver objects that best reflects the warrior hierarchy of the Chinggisid period and the first generations of Chinggisids.

A notable example from this early period is the silver, embossed-gold saddle arch cover found in a woman's grave in the district of Melitopol, southern Ukraine. Its front side features grazing Mongol horses while its back side is illustrated with two hares, Asian symbols of fertility and long life, against a background of unblown lotuses (Figure 19.2). Expensive saddles and horse gear that were found in elite Mongol women's graves from north China to the Golden Horde attest to women's high status and equestrian skills.¹⁷

Expensive metal portable cups or bowls that can be attached to a belt have also been found in various Chinggisid contexts across Eurasia. A beautiful

¹⁶ The only two exceptions are "Jamuqa's belt" and a golden belt set from a private collection, which may date not to the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) but to the Yuan period (1272–1368); cf. Altangerel 2005, 170–71.

¹⁷ Kramarovskiy 2009a, 180–82; Gosudarstvennyi Ėrmitazh 2019, 71.



Figure 19.2 Saddle arch back with rabbits, from Melitopol district (southern Ukraine), the first half of the thirteenth century. © The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Photograph: Leonard Kheifets

example is a gold cup with a dragon head handle dated to the second half of the thirteenth century found in Gashun-Ust near Stavropol, in the Caucasus (Figure 19.3).¹⁸ Dragon-like elements symbolizing royal power continued to appear on later Golden Horde luxurious vessels (Figure 19.4).¹⁹

A Variety of Religious Objects

Indeed, drinking vessels from the west and the east of the Mongolian world, though typologically alike, still differ in shape, decorations, and some stylistic features. Some of them display Buddhist symbols, as there were many Buddhists among Qubilai's Mongols, as well as among the early Jochids, until the late thirteenth century. Quite often silver vessels with an *om* formula in Brahmi script can be found in the lands where Buddhism spread.²⁰ Such

¹⁸ Kramarovsky 2009a, 184–85; Gosudarstvennyi Ėrmitazh 2019, 82.

¹⁹ Gosudarstvennyi Ėrmitazh 2019, 79.

²⁰ Smirnov 1909, no. 217; Delacour 2005, 94–95, Figures 13 a–b, 15. The *om* symbol, originating in Brahmanism, was transferred to Buddhism, where it symbolizes the Buddha.



Figure 19.3 Portable cup with dragon head, Gashun-Ust, thirteenth century. ©The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Photograph: Leonard Kheifets



Figure 19.4 Gold vessel with handles in the form of water dragons, Gulistan-Sarai, late thirteenth to early fourteenth century. ©The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Photograph: Vladimir Terebenin

vessels were used by the followers of Tibetan Buddhism to perform rites. Craftsmen, who apparently did not understand the meaning of the *om* symbol, sometimes made mistakes (for example, on the melon-shaped golden bowls from the Guimet collection in Paris),²¹ which means that literate smiths were not numerous, or that the symbol lost its religious meaning.

While searching for evidence of Buddhism in the Golden Horde's culture, V. P. Kostyukov and P. V. Popov analyzed a series of burials with Buddhist features. Kostyukov detected the following distinguishing features of Buddhist burials: a southern orientation of the burials; coins or jewelry in the mouth or hands of the buried; one hand covering the mouth; wrapping or covering the body, especially the head, with cloth; and mummification of the dead.²² Simultaneously, he emphasized the heterogeneity of Buddhist burial rites due to the absence of strict requirements. Popov refers to the burial from the mausoleum no. 1 at Mokhshi-Narovchat (in Penza province, southwest Russia) as providing evidence for the preservation of Buddhist traditions amongst the Golden Horde aristocracy up to the fifteenth century.²³

Since the early Jochid aristocracy adhered to the Chinggisid *yasa*, their attitude towards world religions, such as Buddhism, Islam, or Christianity (especially its Nestorian branch), was traditionally tolerant. The tradition of religious tolerance was preserved by most Muslim khans as well.²⁴ According to an Armenian source,²⁵ Batu's son Sartaq, who was brought up by the Syrians, was a Nestorian, as were his companions. The presence of a Nestorian community can be traced in Solkhat, the center of the Crimean *ulus*, up to the last third of the fourteenth century. According to a colophon, in 1374 a Nestorian lectionary (evangelary) was created in Solkhat.²⁶ In 1261 an Orthodox eparchy was established in the capital city, Sarai, by Kirill III, Metropolitan of Kiev.²⁷

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there was a Jewish Karaite community in the above-mentioned Crimean *ulus*, one of the oldest communities on the Crimean peninsula.²⁸ A Torah scroll from a ruined synagogue which dates back to 1300 was found there.²⁹ Besides, in the mid-fourteenth century a rationalist exegete born in Solkhat, Abraham Qirimi ("Abraham of

21 Delacour 2005, 94. 22 Kostyukov 2009, 209. 23 Popov 2011, 119–32.

24 Fedorov-Davydov 1998, 28–39. 25 Galstian 1962, 110. 26 Kramarovskii 2015, 303.

27 Poluboiarinova 2009.

28 Kramarovskii 2009d, 395–432. On the Jews in the Golden Horde: Volkov and Kadyrbaev 2009, 387–89.

29 Kandel' 1990, 264.

the Crimea”) lived and worked there. In 1358 he wrote an extensive commentary on the Torah in Hebrew, called *Sfat Emet* (The Language of Truth), which is the oldest Jewish literary work of the “developed Middle Ages”.³⁰

Islamization and City Life

The Golden Horde’s Islamization, however superficial it might have been, started from the ruler’s residences: Berke Khan (r. 1257–1267) was the first to adopt Islam as a young man in Bukhara from the hands of the Kubrawī Shaykh Sayf al-Dīn Bākhārī (d. 1261), whose mausoleum still stands today.³¹ Yet Islamization reached its real power and depth only with the development of city life. Archaeologists list over 140 cities and towns of the Golden Horde,³² most of them belonging to the type of the so-called “steppe” towns. They, as well as the capital city, Sarai, lack an “underlayer,” namely there are no signs of life in these sites in the pre-Mongol period. Old Sarai was located on the high bank of the Akhtuba river. In the fourteenth century, areas of town buildings alternated there with agricultural sites and pasture. Like other Jochid young towns, Old Sarai had no walls. Defense ditches and walls started to be used only after the crisis of authority in the 1360s.³³ The mightiest defense structures were built by the *beglerbegi* Mamai (d. 1385) in Solkhat between 1375 and 1380.³⁴

Under Özbek Khan (r. 1313–1341) and his son and successor Janibek (r. 1342–1357) Muslim urban communities flourished. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa reports thirteen Friday mosques and numerous quarter mosques in Sarai. He mentions Friday mosques in Majar (north Caucasus), Solkhat, and Kaffa (the Crimea). Archaeologists have studied a number of mosques in different regions: in the lower and middle Volga region, the north Caucasus, the Crimea, Dnieper Ukraine, and Moldova. The oldest and the most famous one is the Friday mosque in Bulghar (in Tatarstan, Russia). Its construction started in the 1230s–1240s. The mosque has a trapezium shape with interior walls 32.4 meters long, a northern wall 28.2 meters wide and a southern wall 29.6 meters wide. The foundation and the plinth are made of lime-mortared lumps of shell rock and limestone, while the walls are built of mortared crude limestone. The interior of the mosque is divided by five rows of columns into four aisles. The history of the construction has at least three stages. In one of the last stages (in the 1330s), polyhedral chisel-shaped towers were erected on

30 Tsinberg 1924, 93–110; Akhiezer 2019. 31 On the Kubrawiyya: Trimmingham 1989, 55–57.

32 Egorov 1985; Nedashkovsky 2004, 2010.

33 For Old and New Sarai: Goncharov 2000; Rudakov 2000. 34 Kramarovskii 2011.

each of the four corners.³⁵ The mosque of Bulghar is similar to those found in the south Caucasus, Asia Minor, and the Crimea in its layout, technique, and architectural décor. Its corner towers are reminiscent of the *khānqāh* (Sufi lodge) on the Pirsagat river (Azerbaijan) and the Hizir Ilyas Kiosk near Kayseri (Turkey).³⁶ Another school of Islamic architecture is represented by the monuments in the Crimea, which follow the traditions of the Sultanate of Rūm. In 1332–1333 a college (*madrasa*) with four *iwāns* and a portal in the Asia Minor style was built by Indgibek-Khatun (Inchi Khatun) in Solkhat.³⁷ The plan of the *madrasa* is a slightly modified replica of the Burusiye madrasa in Sivas (1271, central Anatolia). The *madrasa* in Solkhat, together with the Çifte Minareli and Gök Madrasa in Anatolia, is one of the few *madrasas* whose portals follow the Seljuq style. Its three-dimensional decorations, including the two-level structure of the capitals, belong to the same tradition. The *madrasa* had fourteen classrooms and a few more rooms used for the instructors' accommodation, winter classes, common meetings, and some household needs. They are all located along the perimeter of a rectangular yard with a stone gallery and a reservoir for ablutions (a *shādurvān*) and a rainwater drain. Besides its didactic function, the *madrasa* also served as a *muwāqqit-khānah*, namely it was responsible for keeping prayer times.³⁸

Our survey of the Golden Horde's architecture would not be complete without mentioning the Khwārazmian masterpiece of Turabek Khanum's mausoleum in Kunya-Urgench (Figure 19.5). The mausoleum belongs to the portal-dome multichambered type.³⁹ The mausoleum's small domed ante-room is connected by passages with two chambers. The central hall has the shape of a regular hexahedron. It is covered with a dome erected on a hexagon. The suite of rooms in the first level leads to a domed chamber in the northern part of the building. The mausoleum is abundantly decorated with mosaics. It might be the *khānqāh* visited by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in 1333.⁴⁰ It is generally believed that it was built in honor (and, probably, with the funding) of Turabek Khanum, the wife of Qutluğ Temür, the Golden Horde's local governor (1321–1336).⁴¹

Baths (Arabic *ḥammāms*) were another characteristic feature of the towns' landscape. Over twenty public baths have been discovered in Golden Horde

35 Zilivinskaia 2011, 12–15. 36 Bretanitskii 1988, 74–78; Hillenbrand 1994, 515, 581.

37 Kramarovskii 2009c; Kramarovskii 2009b, 567–88; Kramarovskii 2012, 206–18.

38 Aslanapa 1979, 5–11.

39 For a recent summary: Armarchuk 2001, 188–210; for Khwārazm's material culture: Kdyrniiarov 1989; Kdyrniiarov and Kdyrniiarov 2013.

40 Iakubovskii 1930, 58. 41 Cf. Pugachenkova 1972, 16.



Figure 19.5 Turabek Khanum Mausoleum, at Konye-Urgench, Turkmenistan, view from the south. ©Tim Williams, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konye-Urgench#/media/File:Turabek_Khanum,_from_the_south.JPG

territory, mainly in major cities. A good example is the bath in Majar.⁴² The public bath in Sarai was opened in 1383–1384. Its southern side faced the city square, opposite the mosque. The total area of the nine-room bathhouse was 360 square meters. The central hall was cross-shaped and comprised four washing compartments. In the center of the hall (10 by 10 meters) there was a round fountain basin with a diameter of 1.65 meters. Two pipes laid under the floor supplied hot and cold water. All the main compartments, as well as the two narrow rooms located north of the entrance room (12.8 by 9.5 meters) had heated floors. The central hall, with its washing compartments, as well as the two heated rooms, must have been covered with a dome. Archaeologists found some fragments of an alabaster lattice window (*panjāra*) with pieces of colored glass in the entrance room. Colored stained glass, mosaic floors, and walls decorated with tiles, together with the fountain in the central hall, suggest that this was a bath for the city's elite. Its location in the aristocratic

42 Zilivinskaia and Alekseichuk 2003, 58–59.

area of the city confirms this assumption. Many glass and some cornelian beads were found in the drain gutter, which means that women visited the bath, too.

Town Building

Towns continued developing in the Golden Horde up to the 1360s,⁴³ when centrifugal forces became evident, and twenty-five candidates fought for the khan's position. The city life of the Golden Horde was ruined by the campaigns of Temür (Tamerlane, r. 1370–1405), especially that of 1395. Unlike other cities of the Volga region, the capital city, Sarai, was not completely destroyed. We do not know exactly when it fell to total desolation, but in the first half of the fifteenth century it was still an international trade center.⁴⁴ The craft potential accumulated by the Golden Horde by the end of the fourteenth century appeared to be so significant that after 1395 Temür moved craftsmen to Central Asia to build Samarqand.

Thus professional building crews worked in different parts of the country (the Crimean builders, no doubt, came from Anatolia), and as a result local architectural schools emerged. Their work was most evident in a number of regions, such as the Volga region, the territory of modern Moldova, the Crimea, north Caucasus, and Khwārazm. Town planning in the Central Asian tradition is evident on the Kazakh steppes. It is here that archaeologists lead the research into ancient Otrar (Utrār, eighth to fourteenth centuries) in southern Kazakhstan, and conduct excavations of medieval Saurana (tenth to sixteenth centuries) on the middle Jaxartes.⁴⁵

The history of town building in the Golden Horde's western areas can be divided into several stages. The old cities (restored since the 1240s) continued dominating throughout the second half of the thirteenth century, issuing abundant coins. In the first half of the 1250s, new steppe cities came to existence. In the 1250s–1270s they grew and developed, but their coinage remained quite scarce until the 1280s–1290s.⁴⁶ In the late thirteenth century, the coinage of the Bulghar cities and the Crimea replaced that of the restored Khwārazm. But if, in the thirteenth century, the steppe cities of the Volga region were less developed than the Bulghar, in the early fourteenth century, under the rule of Khan Toqto'a (r. 1290–1312), the centers of the lower Volga

43 Kramarovskiy 2009a, 181–90. 44 Zakhoder 1967, 166–67.

45 Baipakov and Lev Erzakovich, 1990; Baipakov and Khodzhaev 1999; Baipakov 2005; see Pachkalov's chapter in this volume.

46 Fedorov-Davydov 1994, 16.

region started growing dramatically. After 1310 the coinage of Sarai gradually forced the Bulghar coins out of the markets.⁴⁷ In the beginning of the fourteenth century, city life developed and flourished, together with the work of foreign and local building crews. It was during that period that most masterpieces of Islamic architecture of the Golden Horde were created. All that inevitably encouraged the process of sedentarization of the nomadic population and the development of an urban lifestyle. From 1360, the first signs of the upcoming political crisis became evident and coincided with the drought of the 1360s–1380s, resulting in an environmental crisis. Those two troubles together led to the political disaster of 1395, after which both the emerging cultural achievements and their users disappeared from the scene.⁴⁸ Plenty of work in recent years that cannot be summarized adequately in the scope of this article has dealt with Golden Horde cities, burials, and subsistence as reflected in these various sites.⁴⁹

Considering the scope and the speed of town building in the Golden Horde's steppe areas, including its western regions, as well as the availability of almost all categories of artifacts, it is hard to agree with those who argue that the Golden Horde did not have a "cultural code" of its own. In fact, this point of view is an armchair researcher's assumption, based on a simplified view of the Golden Horde's urban culture.⁵⁰

The Simferopol Treasure

The Golden Horde civilization can be best demonstrated by the Simferopol treasure. This is a conventional name for several groups of decorations, vessels, and coins which belonged to the treasury of an unknown Crimean *noyan*. Items of the treasure reached the State Historical Museum from the customs administration of Moscow in 1965.⁵¹ The treasure was allegedly hidden in a clay vessel which has not survived, in one of the mounds near Simferopol, and comprised five groups of artifacts.

The first and largest group is items produced in the Golden Horde (69 percent of the finds). They include a *paiza* (tablet of authority); a rifleman's full-dress belt set; jewelry, including a string of 250 pearls and

47 Fedorov-Davydov 1994, 16; Sitdikov 2015.

48 See Favereau and Pochekaev's chapter in Volume 1.

49 E.g. Fedorov-Davydov 1984; Fedorov-Davydov 1994; Fedorov-Davydov 2001; Tasmagambetov and Samashev 2001; Baipakov 2005; Nedashkovsky 2010; Sitdikov 2015; Ivanov 2015.

50 Kramarovskii 2012, 55–74. 51 Kramarovskii 2000, 288–89.

a necklace of forty-five cornelians, one emerald bead and one crystal bead; several plaques; ornaments for male and female headdresses; two *phylakteria* (phylacteries, reliquaries); decorated boxes; and a few utensils, notably spoons.⁵² Among the pieces of Golden Horde origin, a subgroup manufactured in east Crimea is the largest, comprising 45.5 percent of all the treasure items.⁵³ The beads and one phylactery were likely produced in the Bulghar manner (0.8 percent of the whole group).⁵⁴ With Byzantine ornamentation on its reverse side, the phylactery, which probably originated in eastern Crimea, can be placed, too, among the Greek subgroup (0.4 percent). Locating the origins of other pieces is difficult.

The second large group comprised items, coins, and coin amulets that arrived in the Golden Horde from the Near East: Iran, Asia Minor, and probably Yemen, as well as from the Delhi Sultanate. This group makes up 18.6 percent of the treasure finds. Mamluk imports from Egypt and Syria make 4.57 percent of all the finds. Thus 24.6 percent of the artifacts are Islamic imports, a fact obviously related to the leading position of the Crimea in the Golden Horde's connections with the Near East. This group of Islamic imports includes coins and coin amulets (6.4 percent – hereinafter of the whole treasure); decorations with Iranian, Asia Minor, and Syrian/Egyptian craft features (4.26 percent, 3.35 percent, and 4.57 percent respectively).

The third group, composed of items of Central Asian and Chinese (Yuan) origin, makes only 0.6 percent of the whole treasure, including a ladle and a globular vessel with a lid.⁵⁵

The fourth group is represented by pieces of Latin origin (12.5 percent of the treasure). The group consists of two belt sets—a Venetian one, created in Venice itself or one of its eastern Mediterranean colonies (preserved incomplete), and a Genoese one with Siena(?) enamel.⁵⁶ Decorations or their details, with attribution, though conjectural, form a separate group (1.5 percent).

For determining the date and owner of the Simferopol treasure, a *paiza* with the name of the Golden Horde khan Keldibek (d. 1361–1362) and a group of golden coins and coin pendants are crucial. There are ten coins, all minted by the sultans of Delhi. The earliest coin, a golden dinar of 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī

52 Kramarovskii 2001, 290 no. 306, 291–97 nos. 307–32, 297–304 nos. 333–56, 304–5 nos. 357–65, 306–8 nos. 371–94, 403–8; 314–15, nos. 479–81, 317, nos. 487, 488, 321, nos. 496, 497, 498–509; 321–22, nos. 510, 511, 512–16; 324–27, nos. 527–64; 329–30, nos. 596–99, 600, 601, 603, 331, no. 604, 332–33, nos. 608, 609–11, 310, nos. 458, 411–57.

53 Kramarovskii 2001, nos. 306, 307–22, 333–56, 488, 490, 512–16, 527–64, 610.

54 Kramarovskii 2001, 308, no. 89, 317, no. 487.

55 Kramarovskii 2001, 331, 332, nos. 605, 606. 56 Kramarovskii 2001, 327–29, nos. 565–95.

(r. 1296–1316), dates to 1298–1299, the latest one to 1352. In addition, there are eleven coin pendants, probably originating in Rasūlid Yemen (1229–1454). These golden coins were most likely used in the Golden Horde as a deposit, being excluded from currency circulation up to the 1380s. After the unifier Khan Toqtamish (r. c. 1378–1406; called Qa’an on his *paiza*) rose to power,⁵⁷ imitations of Indian dinars appeared in the Golden Horde – and even a stamp for fake production was found – thereby attesting to the use of gold as currency.

The treasure was therefore accumulated in a relatively short time by no less than two generations of owners.

The silver *paiza* is inscribed with the name of Khan Keldibeg (r. c. 1361–1362),⁵⁸ who in 1361 forced Mamai out of Sarai but was soon killed in a palace plot. The *paiza* therefore gives the treasure’s *terminus post quem* date. The dates and the *paiza*’s Crimean location suggest that it was held by the Golden Horde’s governor of the Crimea, Qutluğ Temür Bek (r. 1357–1364), son of Toghlugh-Temür, governor of Solkhat and the province of Crimea under Özbek Khan.⁵⁹ Keldibek Khan probably gave the *paiza* to the experienced *darugha* (governor) to secure his support. Qutluğ Temür’s successor and grandson Khwāja ‘Alībek probably inherited the *paiza*. In August 1365 Solkhat was taken by the *beglerbegi* Mamai, and Khwāja ‘Alībek had to escape the city. It was probably then that the treasure was deposited. The connection to Qutluğ Temür is further strengthened by the presence of a hat ornament fitting the position of a *darugha* among the treasure’s finds, as well as two Italian belts, from Venice and Genoa/Siena, probably gifts from the Venetian merchants whose presence in the Crimea Qutluğ Temür is known for encouraging.⁶⁰

The composition of the Simferopol treasure reflects the globalization of the Chinggisid culture as formed in the material culture of the Golden Horde after Özbek Khan’s Islamization. Thus, despite a certain heterogeneity of population, language, religion, and culture, the Golden Horde developed a uniform material culture based on the Chinggisid tradition and was part and parcel of the Eurasian globalization of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

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57 Reva and Belyayev 2017, 25–26. 58 Münküev 1977, 206.

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Archaeological Sources

The Chaghadaid Khanate

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The Chaghadaid Khanate extended from the Amu Darya south of the Aral Sea to the Altai mountains on the border of modern-day Mongolia and China and the Turfan oasis (Xinjiang, China), a realm that is divided today among China, Kirgizstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. This split is perhaps one of the reasons why the archaeology of the Chaghadaids is poorly studied. Hitherto, there has been no special monograph devoted to this topic, and just as the various regions of the *ulus* have not been evenly scrutinized, none of them has been fully covered. The study of Chaghadaid material culture began in the second half of the nineteenth century, after the annexation of Central Asia by the Russian Empire. It had intensified by the end of the nineteenth century, thanks to the activities of the Turkestani Circle of Archaeology Lovers, established in 1896.¹ Yet systematic archaeological research, on thirteenth- and fourteenth-century sites, was carried out only during the Soviet era. An important role in the study and understanding of Chaghadaid archaeology was played by M. E. Masson, Huang Wenbi, A. N. Bernshtam, A. Kh. Margulan, K. M. Baypakov, L. B. Erzakovich, K. A. Akishev, K. Sh. Tabaldiev, T. N. Senigova, E. Nekrasova, and A. A. Raimkulov. The study of Chaghadaid numismatics has been carried out mainly by M. E. Masson, E. A. Davidovich, B. V. Lunin, R. Z. Burnasheva, M. N. Fedorov, and notably P. N. Petrov, while the scrutiny of epigraphic materials of Chaghadaid monuments by V. V. Barthold, N. N. Pantusov, D. A. Chwolson, N. Y. Marr, M. E. Masson, C. D. Dzhumagulov, and W. Klein should be mentioned.

The Mongol conquests usually mark the beginning of the decline of Central Asia's urban culture, a phenomenon which is depicted by a decrease in the number of settlements. Partial restoration of urban life occurred in the second half of the thirteenth century, largely due to Mas'ūd

¹ Gorshenina 2012.

Beg's monetary reform in 670/1271–1272.² The number of cities decreased in the second half of the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth compared to the pre-Mongol period, and their size was frequently reduced as well. Simultaneously, however, particular cities such as Otrar (Utrār) and Sairam in the Jaxartes region flourished during the Chaghadaid period.³ The main archaeological sites on the territory of the Chaghadaid Ulus constituted settlements. Judging by the numismatic data, the largest cities of the *ulus* were Almaliq (China), Pulād (China), Samarqand (Uzbekistan), Bukhara (Uzbekistan), Otrar (Kazakhstan), Shāsh (Uzbekistan), Taraz (or Talas, Kazakhstan), Khujand (or Khojend, Tajikistan), Andijān (Uzbekistan), and Tirmidh (or Termez, Uzbekistan).⁴ The locations of some of the smaller Chaghadaid cities remain controversial. The Chaghadaid cities have not been properly studied archaeologically. Some of the cities (for example, Almaliq) have been almost destroyed by modern economic activity, while systematic scrutiny of other cities, such as Samarqand, Bukhara, or Taraz, is made difficult by modern urban development. In some cases, such as Khujand, Andijān, and Tirmidh, it is impossible to accurately determine the urban areas of the Chaghadaid period, because the cities' layers of that time are covered and overlapped by later stratifications.

In China, the largest archaeological site is the ancient settlement of the Chaghadaid capital, the city of Almaliq (Hocheng county in Ili-Kazakh prefecture, Yining suburbs, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region). The area of the ancient settlement is about twenty-five square kilometers. In the eastern part of Almaliq there is the mausoleum of Tughluq Temür khan (r. 1347–1363).⁵ A survey of Almaliq was performed by N. N. Pantusov at the beginning of the twentieth century,⁶ when Christian tombstones were found, indicating the presence of Christian residents in the city. In 1950, Almaliq was explored by the Chinese archaeologist Huang Wenbi and by the archaeological expedition of the Xinjiang Historical Museum. During the excavations, clay and porcelain dishes, gold and silver coins, and Nestorian tombstones were found. At present, Almaliq is almost a destroyed site in archaeological terms, because its territory has been ploughed up over several decades. Nevertheless, peculiar coins recently found on the site of medieval Almaliq are available for public viewing.⁷

In the territory of Xinjiang there is also a large ancient town (twenty-seven kilometers southeast of Bortala) which is identified with the city of

2 Davidovich 1972. 3 Waugh 2017; also Campbell 2020. 4 Davidovich 1972.

5 O'Kane 2004. 6 Pantusov 1902; Pantusov 1910. 7 Li Wenbo 2015.

Pulād, known as a coinage center in the Chaghadaid period. Its mention in several Chaghadaid documents of the fourteenth century attests to its importance.⁸

Another noteworthy monument in this region, but on the Kazakh side of the border, is the town of Usharal (eighteen kilometers west of Almalıq, near Zharkent, Kazakhstan), identified as medieval Ilibalıq. The site has been excavated by a Kazakh–Swiss team that surveyed the site, revealing a medieval city covering five square kilometers, its layout consisting of a fortified *shahristān* administrative area containing a monumental bath house surrounded by massive ramparts and a residential suburb with significant evidence of industrial activity. The excavations have unearthed a large cemetery of the Church of the East; eighty of its estimated 500 burials have already been excavated, as well as thirty-four gravestones. The excavation also uncovered a collection of numismatic material, its more recent coins issued in the 1340s, and several treasures. Most of the coins originated in the Almalıq mint, thereby attesting that the city was then under the influence of the Almalıq economic sphere.⁹

On the territory of Kirgizstan, the Chaghadaid period starts with the appearance of the Qara Jirach settlement, currently a village in the Alamudun district of Chui province, not far from Bishkek, where Christian tombstones have been excavated. Qara Jirach is identified with Tarsākand (literally “the Christians’ city,” Rashīd al-Dīn’s Tarsākīnt).¹⁰ Burana, the site of medieval Balāsāghūn, the Qara Khitai capital that continued to exist under the Chaghadaids, is also not far from Bishkek. Recently, another Chaghadaid settlement has been found in Kyzyl-Tuva Kirgizstan (most probably the city of Qaryalıq, mentioned by Rashīd al-Dīn).¹¹

Another Chaghadaid site is the mausoleum of Manas (Gumbez Manas) in northwestern Kirgizstan’s Talas province (twenty-two kilometers northeast of the city of Talas). It lies on the bank of the Kenkol river, near its meeting with the Talas river, and is not far from an ancient burial ground. In *The Epic of Manas*, the hero Manas originated in Talas, so it makes sense that he would be buried there, yet the inscription in the mausoleum describes its occupant thus: “This is the majestic mausoleum of the virtuous, chaste, modest, and most glorious of women, Kenizek Khatun, daughter of the amīr Abuka,” and it was built in 734/1334–1335. The mausoleum looks similar to other monuments from the fourteenth century, with Kufic script around the outside edge

8 Dang Baohai 2015. 9 Petrov et al. 2014, 61–76; Stewart 2020.

10 Klein 2000, 132–36; JT/Thackston, 2: 309.

11 Goriacheva and Peregodova 1995; JT/Thackston, 2: 309.

of the monument. Apart from the inscription dedicated to Kenizek Khatun, there are several religious declarations.¹²

In Uzbekistan, cities such as Tirmidh, Samarqand, and Bukhara have been studied and analyzed, including the archaeological city layers belonging to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.¹³ The Shāh-i-Zinda (“the living king”) ensemble in Samarqand is a necropolis built around the grave ascribed to Kuthām b. ‘Abbās, a cousin of the Prophet Muḥammad who allegedly died there in 677. Already in the eleventh century it included a mausoleum and a *madrasa*, but the majority of its mausoleums date to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. While most of them were erected during the Timurid period (1370–1501), certain renovation and building activity began in the third decade of the fourteenth century, and a few mausoleums belong to the Chaghadaid era, notably the mausoleum of Khwāja-Aḥmad (1340s) and an (anonymous) mausoleum of a lady, dated Safar 762/December 1360.¹⁴

The cities and the villages of the Chaghadaid period situated in the valley of the Kashkadarya river have been studied in more detail.¹⁵ The Chaghadaid khan Kebek (r. 1319–1327) built in the Kashkadarya valley a city fortress named Qarshī (Mo. “palace,” near medieval Nakhshab), which he turned into his capital, a status it continued to hold during the reign of Tarmashirin Khan (1331–1334).¹⁶ M. E. Masson excavated the city and its environment, including the medieval canals. The city was square-shaped, and in size it was 630 by 630 meters. Its total area was about forty hectares. A wall, 4.5 meters thick, surrounded the castle. Around the castle there was a defensive ditch, eight to ten meters wide and 3.5 to four meters deep. The fortress has four gates.¹⁷ At present the fortress is mostly destroyed.

West of Qarshī, also situated in the valley of the Kashkadarya river, is Zanjir Sarāy (Tu. “stone palace,” Persian “chain palace”), the residence and fortress of the Chaghadaid khan Qazan (r. c. 1343–1347), built in the 1330s. The monument represents a square with overall dimensions of 400 meters by 400 meters (the whole area totaling about sixteen hectares). In the central part of the monument was found an entire palace, surrounded by a massive defensive wall built with rough brick, about six meters wide. In addition, a canal was built from the Kashkadarya river to Zanjir Sarāy.¹⁸ The city plans of Qarshī and Zanjir Sarāy are basically the same. The plans, reflecting the city planning traditions of Mongolia and southern Siberia, are encountered in Central Asia only in the Kashkadarya oasis.

12 Masson et al. 1950 (citations 34–35). 13 Nekrasova 2001. 14 Nemtseva et al. 1977.

15 Masson 1973; Raimkulov and Sultonova 2005. 16 Raimkulov and Sultonova 2005.

17 Masson 1973. 18 Raimkulov and Sultonova 2005.

In Tajikistan, the layers of the Chaghadaid period have left only a faint impression. Yet the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are linked with the functioning and flourishing of the Pamir mine of Kukhila, the place from where Badakhshan rubies were extracted.¹⁹

The cities belonging to the Chaghadaid period have been studied in the most detailed way within the territory of Kazakhstan.²⁰ Among them the town of Otrar-tobe (medieval Utrār) has been most thoroughly studied, including data related to public facilities, craft workshops, and urban development under the Chaghadaids.²¹ The layout plan of the city in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, compared with previous city plans, changed completely. At the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth, a solid city wall was erected, apparently to defend the city against Jochid attacks. By that time the city extended and occupied the entire area within the boundaries of the pre-Mongolian *ribāṭ*. The city's contraction began in the second half of the fifteenth century. Excavations carried out in Otrar unearthed objects including bath houses belonging to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. On the basis of the ancient settlement a preservation museum was founded. The significant role of the city of Otrar in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is confirmed by written sources. According to Pegolotti's commercial guide of the 1340s, Otrar was a major station on the main route of the Silk Roads, leading from Khwārazm to Almaliq. Chaghadaid Otrar continued to be the center of a large urban district (the center of the oasis in the middle course of the Jaxartes river). Restored irrigation systems were adjacent to the city, suggesting that it was supported by an agricultural hinterland.²²

Lengthy and prolonged archaeological research has been carried out also in other towns in southern Kazakhstan, on the Sauram-Sairam (the outskirts of the city of Shymkent), which for some time was part of the Ulus Jochi.²³ In the Ili valley, the city of Almaty, known by its coins, thrived during the Chaghadaid period. In the area between the Talas and Chu rivers, various settlements such as Sharvashlyk, Ohkhum, Sadyr-Kurgan, Aktobe Talas, and others are known to have existed in the Chaghadaid period. A large center of the early Chaghadaid period was the settlement of Antonovka (or Koilik) in the Almaty region, probably medieval Qayaliq, which existed before the 1270s.²⁴ At the site of Qayaliq a mosque has been unearthed, while outside the city wall a Buddhist temple has been explored, which existed, like the city

19 Bubnova 1971. 20 Ageeva and Patsevich 1958. 21 Akishev et al. 1987.
22 Baypakov 1998. 23 Baypakov and Smagulov 2005. 24 Petrov et al. 2012.

itself, until the end of the thirteenth century.²⁵ Presumably, the construction in the western part of the settlement is a Manichaean temple, perhaps the one mentioned by William of Rubruck, who visited Qayaliq in the 1250s. The size of the city was 1290 by 840 meters. A castle wall 3.5 meters high surrounded it. Ruins of two mausoleums of the thirteenth century have also been found there.²⁶

Coin hoards are less common in the Chaghadaid realm than in the Jochid domains. A complete and accurate topography of discovered hoards with Chaghadaid coins has not yet been compiled. Only the findings from Kazakhstan have been studied systematically.²⁷ The large number of Chaghadaid coins found in Xinjiang attests to the region's commercial importance, as well as the presence of the khan's mobile court (*ordo*) there: in the thirteenth century, Xinjiang issued coins marked *al-ordo al-a'zam* ("the highest *ordo*").²⁸

In addition to the Chaghadaid coin hoards, jewelry hoards have also been unearthed. Among them, the most interesting are the noteworthy jewelry ornaments made of silver, jade, pearls, and marble, found in 2007 in the village of Ak-Beshim (Kirgizstan). The Ak-Beshim treasure is dated to the 1320s–1330s, according to the Chaghadaid coins found in it.²⁹ An additional distinguishable mixed hoard (consisting of silver ingots, jewelry, and coins) dating to the 1260s has been found in Otrar. One of the largest coin hoards, consisting of 3,800 copper and 1,860 silver coins, has been discovered in the village of Mamaevka (near Shymkent, Kazakhstan).³⁰ Chaghadaid coins have been discovered in the territory of the Ulus Jochi (up to the Volga region), and a limited amount of Jochid coins (mainly copper and silver coins of Khwārazm) have been found in the Chaghadaid realm. Other finds include rare coins from the Delhi Sultanate and the Ilkhanate, and coins issued in Qaraqorum.³¹

At present it is difficult to explain the reason for the scarcity of information about burials in the Chaghadaid territory. Archaeologists have studied a small number of nomadic burials belonging to the Chaghadaid period in Kazakhstan, mostly around Taraz. Burials of the Mongolian period in the Tian Shan were investigated by K. Sh. Tabaldiev.³² The funeral rites indicate the preservation of pagan traditions among the nomads, such as cremation, sepulchral mounds, the remains of funeral food, and horse gear. These nomadic monuments share a number of cultural elements, notably clothing

25 Baypakov 2000. 26 Baypakov and Ternovaya 2002. 27 Petrov et al. 2014.

28 Wang 2004. 29 Bashkova 2009. 30 Davidovich 1972. 31 Petrov et al. 2014.

32 Tabaldiev 1996.

inventory, with monuments of the Ulus Jochi found in the steppe. Among the burials it is necessary to single out the burial of the Chaghadaid period accidentally discovered in 1980 at the village of Shengeldy (Almaty region), where fragments of silk fabrics – the remains of three ceremonial and parade robes – have been found, together with gold belt ornaments and a fragment of a silver container with ornamentation.

As in the other Muslim khanates, the Islamization of the Chaghadaid Ulus was expressed in the erection of mausoleums. A mausoleum built in the vicinity of Taraz in the thirteenth century over the tomb of the Mongolian governor Dā'ūd Beg is mistakenly known among the locals as the mausoleum of Du'a b. Baraq khan (r. 1282–1307).

The mausoleums of the Bukharan shaykh Sayf al-Din al-Bākharzī (d. 1261), and the Chaghadaid khan Bayan Quli (r. 1348–1358), are both located in Faṭḥabād, an eastern suburb of medieval Bukhara. They were part of a vast religious complex, built around the grave of Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī, a renowned Kubrawī shaykh famous for converting the Jochid Khan Berke (r. 1257–1267) to Islam. Al-Bākharzī's followers built in the area a Sufi lodge (*khānqāh*) for dervishes, who lived there on donations, and the place became a center of Bukhara's Kubrawī order. The shaykh's mausoleum was completed by the early fourteenth century. Bayan Quli Khan had expressed a wish to be interred near al-Bākharzī, and indeed was buried there. An impressive domed mausoleum was erected on his grave after 1358, probably around 1363 when Bayan Quli's son was enthroned, and the imposing intake portal was built even later.³³

Among the Chaghadaid period's epigraphic monuments, Christian tombstones are the most apparent. A Christian cemetery with tombstones was opened in 1886 by N. N. Pantusov at the Qara-Djirach town near Bishkek.³⁴ N. N. Pantusov and A. M. Fetisov studied the site, collecting Christian tombstones with Syrian inscriptions and crosses (*kairaki*). They identified it with Tarsākand (the “city of Christians”) mentioned by Rashīd al-Dīn. Christian cemeteries of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were also found near the Tokmak (Burana) settlement, in Ilibaliq and near Almaliq.³⁵ Among the Christians, Nestorians predominated, but in the Bishkek area an Armenian tomb of 1332 was also found. The last tombstones date from the 1370s, and several commemorate deaths during a plague in 1338.³⁶

³³ Haase 1999; Babajanov 1999. ³⁴ Pantusov 1886.

³⁵ Klein 2000; Niu Ruji 2008; Stewart 2020. ³⁶ For the plague tombstones: Slavin 2019.

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Visual Sources^{*}

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The fine technical quality and ready visual appeal of the arts created during the period of Mongol sovereignty in Asia mean that these buildings and objects have long been admired and collected, although critical assessment of them is more recent. This chapter offers an overview of this copious material production and an interpretive analysis of the various ways to approach it and some of the problems therein. The chapter begins with a brief regional survey of the works produced under the United Mongol Empire and the four post-dissolution khanates before attending to discussion of the range and nature of sources, including the preservation of art and architecture, commodity and exchange, and the development of a new material world and visual language during this period. Co-authored, this chapter presents a fully integrated study of visual sources for the Mongol Empire, one spurred by the synchronic methodology of this volume, and an implicit challenge to the disparate state of research into the regions and disciplinary fields treated here.

Chronological and Geographical Parameters

The chronological and geographical span of this chapter is broad, and the bibliography about it correspondingly large and growing rapidly. This section of the chapter opens with a discussion of the period of the United Mongol Empire in the early thirteenth century, when Chinggis Khan and his immediate descendants controlled Mongolia and adjacent regions before the establishment of the Yuan dynasty in 1271 under Qubilai

* We have tried to cite here only the most recent or most accessible works, but the sheer number of notes demonstrates the size of the burgeoning scholarship on the visual culture of Mongol Eurasia. The authors are grateful to several colleagues who read through many drafts, including Jonathan Bloom, Nancy Steinhardt, and Christian Luczanits and Charlotte Horlyck for comments pertaining to Himalayan, Mongolian, and Korean sources. Any errors are ours alone.

(r. 1260–1294). In the more traditional dynastic view of history, this period is sometimes designated pre-Yuan or pre-dynastic, thereby emphasizing its regnal and Chinese aspects, a somewhat outdated view slowly being replaced by one that emphasizes maker and materials over ruler and patron, active agency over passive acceptance or the nefarious and vague concept of “influence.”¹

In terms of artistic production, this early period is marked by the forced transfer of artisans from one region to another, usually overland. The Mongols appreciated the value of craft, and following their campaigns of subjugation and conquest, they often spared artisans, especially weavers and metalworkers, who were sent back to the Mongol homeland. After the submission of Herat in 1221, for example, the head of the weavers’ guild and 1,000 weavers of gold brocade were transferred to Beshbaliq, the Uighur summer capital on the northern slopes of the Tian Shan northeast of Urumqi.² The artisans’ quarters in the Mongol capital at Qaraqorum contained metalsmiths, potters, weavers, and others drawn from diverse regions including Tibet, Khwārazm, and elsewhere in the west. Under Ögödei (r. 1229–1241), these craftsmen were then dispatched to regional centers under the direction of secretariats at such sites as Yanjing, the former Middle Capital of Jin (present-day Beijing), and the silkweavers from Herat were even sent back to their homeland.³ This movement of artisans therefore transformed the nature of production, introducing such skills as weaving cloth of gold.

This chapter also considers works fashioned after the dissolution of the empire following the death of Möngke (r. 1251–1259) under the Yuan and its neighboring regions in East Asia and under the three khanates in West Asia. The latter three formed a group from the standpoint of faith in that they all adopted Islam as the state religion: the Ilkhanate under Ghazan in 1295, the Golden Horde under Özbek (r. 1313–1341), and the Chaghadaids officially under Tarmashirin (r. 1331–1334) in Transoxania, and under Tughluq Temür (r. 1347–1363) in Moghulistan.⁴ In contrast, Tibetan Buddhism in particular flourished under the compendious patronage of the Yuan khans. Nevertheless, these four khanates still retained a collective Mongol identity

1 This newer approach that emphasizes agency has also been adopted for much historical analysis of the period, beginning with the work of Allsen 2001; also Biran 2004. On the damning of the word “influence”: Baxandall 1992, 58; for Chinese art history: Hay 1999; for the problems in applying it to the interchange between East and West Asian ceramics in the ninth century: Watson 2014, 124. For a synthetic study of Yuan art history and material culture informed by “art and agency”: McCausland 2022.

2 Allsen 1997b, 10. 3 Allsen 1997a; Allsen 1997b; Watt and Wardwell 1997; Watt 2002.

4 Melville 1990; Biran 2004, 353; Jackson 2005.

on the grounds not only of geography (all ranged along the Eurasian steppe) but also of lineage (all four were founded by descendants of Chinggis Khan). The Chaghadaids (1260–1678), descendants of Chinggis Khan's second son, Chaghadaï, controlled Central Asia, while the Golden Horde (1260–1502), descendants of Chinggis Khan's eldest son Jochi (who had predeceased his father), controlled the Qipchaq steppe in southern Russia. The Yuan and its Ilkhanate (sub-khanate) (1260–1335) were both governed by descendants of Chinggis's grandsons through his youngest son Tolui: Qubilai who ruled as qa'an from Yuan China and his older brother Hülegü who controlled Iraq and Iran.

Whereas, in the period of the United Empire, the movement of artisans had engendered shifts in production, in the later period, after 1260, artistic change arose from a variety of factors. One of these was certainly the exchange of goods, particularly following the development of extensive maritime trade from southern China to Japan and the Yuan's vassal state of Korea, as well as through Malaysia to India and the Gulf.⁵ Artisans and scribes were also quite often loaned, for instance from the Korean court to participate in court Buddhist sutra-writing projects in the Yuan capital. Tribute, goods, and chattels could also include artisans and women. Again, in the case of Korea, girls and young women were demanded by the Yuan for placement in the palace at Dadu.⁶ One of these rose from her position as a serving girl to become the late Yuan empress Qi (Korean Ki, 1315–1369), consort of the last Yuan qa'an Toghon Temür (r. 1333–1370). As yet there has been little recognition of how intermarriage either inside or outside the Yuan royal family may have prompted artistic change. Intermarriage in China and Korea would generally seem to refer to Mongol and *semu* men taking local wives. Archaeological discoveries, such as those of murals in provincial tombs across north China, including Shaanxi and Shanxi, can be expected to throw more light on this situation.⁷

Travelers such as Marco Polo and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa or advisers such as Bolad Aga certainly moved across the region,⁸ but during the later period there is

5 Allsen 1997b, 20; Kauz 2010a.

6 In addition to lists of tribute in the *Koryŏ-sa*, there is an epitaph dated 1335 in the National Museum of Korea of a Korean royal lady surnamed Kim (1281–1335) who gave up her daughter in tribute to the Yuan (in Chinese). McCausland 2015, 248.

7 A mural-painted Yuan tomb found in 2014 at Luogetai, Hengshan county in Shaanxi province, shows the deceased man, who could be a Mongol or Han Chinese but is dressed in Mongol attire, and his five wives in Chinese attire seated on a bench in front of a screen. Kaogu yu wenwu 2016.

8 Polo 1993; Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb; Allsen 2001. On European encounters: Arnold 1999; Purtle 2011.

little evidence for the direct transfer of workers at royal command, although some artisans may have migrated to supply new markets, as in the case of Persian potters who collaborated with Chinese locals at Jingdezhen during the mid- to late Yuan period to produce underglaze cobalt blue porcelains. Furthermore, the direction of most artistic exchange changed: whereas in the earlier period workers had been brought overland to the Mongol courts in the east, under the western khanates most luxury goods (but certainly not all ideas and products) seem to have moved from East Asia to the west, although this model is likely to come under continued scrutiny as more evidence of Yuan–Ilkhanid ties emerges.

The Nature of the Sources

Firsthand study of the material culture from this period, whether buildings or portable objects, is particularly important not only because these works are so fine and so plentiful but also because, outside the Yuan, written sources about them are relatively sparse. In contrast to the tradition of connoisseurship in China, we have few, if any, contemporary (or even later) artistic assessments of these objects like the titles, descriptive poems, colophons, and other inscriptions recorded in inventories and critical texts or added to handscrolls by such luminary Yuan painters as Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322), his contemporaries, and his followers, including Zhou Mi (1232–1298), Li Kan (1245–1320), and Tang Hou (1255/1262–before 1317).⁹ The “veritable records” of reigns in the *Yuan shi* contain rich seams of information about the tribute wares that envoys presented to the Yuan court; as such objects have never been part of the canon of Chinese scholar art, this evidence remains to be systematically mined. Occasionally court and canon have coincided. The court official Wang Yun’s *Shuhua mulu* (Catalogue of Calligraphy and Painting), compiled in 1276, lists the pick of the former Southern Song imperial collection at the moment it was transported from Hangzhou to Dadu as booty.¹⁰ By the mid-Yuan period, however, a wide range of “high” cultural and connoisseurship activities did take place at the Yuan court, such as sponsorship of printing projects, the 1323 “elegant gathering” of the Grand Elder Princess Sengge Lagyi (or Ragi, c. 1283–1331), sister of Ayurbarwada Qa’an (Renzong, r. 1311–1320), and also, under Wenzong (r. 1328, 1329–1332),

⁹ McCausland 2011; Hearn 2010. Some of the extended comments on these scrolls are almost like conversations between connoisseurs. For Zhou Mi: Weitz 2002; for Li Kan: Kao 1981; for Tang Hou: Chou 2005.

¹⁰ Wang 1993–1997.

academic meetings and viewings at the Kuizhangge (Pavilion of the Stars of Literature), which evaluated old masterworks of calligraphy and painting in imperial and elite collections. These not only defined the Yuan cultural agenda but also showed the imperium in a positive light, and also seem to have had a direct impact on visual motifs in wider circulation on ceramics and other media.¹¹

Still, these sources are uneven and, outside China, sometimes unique, such as the description of making lusterware in the treatise on gems and minerals by the historian Abū al-Qāsim Qāshānī, a member of the most famous family of luster potters in Iran, which is more of a technical how-to manual than any sort of aesthetic evaluation.¹² Judging the visual reception of these objects is all the more difficult since many have been removed from their original context, as with paintings from the western khanates that have been detached from manuscripts and mounted in albums or even framed by a museum to obscure the surrounding text.¹³ Hence most of our information must come from close scrutiny of the works of art themselves, supplemented by occasional references in annals, travelogues, and other contemporary written sources.

For China, one also has to reckon with the propensity of post-Yuan collector–connoisseurs toward the editing and reframing of artworks in the process of their transmission, for example by adding, removing, or adulterating titles, seal impressions, and inscriptions either on the artwork or in postscripts, and through remounting. Even beyond perennial issues of authenticity, scrolls of calligraphy and painting of Yuan origin pose particular problems in Chinese art history arising in part from the chauvinist backlash of the native Chinese Ming regime which followed the Yuan. Traces of non-Chinese interventions in art, such as seals in Mongol (ʿPhags-pa) script, have at best puzzled connoisseurs, while there is no knowing what proportion of the material record was destroyed in the aftermath of the Yuan. Japan remains an important repository of Yuan art, notably Buddhist art, as in the case of the Southern Song painter Liang Kai’s *Li Bai Chanting While Strolling*, which bears a large seal in Mongol script,¹⁴ and of some schools and practices largely choked off in China proper. A fine long handscroll entitled *Episodes*

¹¹ Chen 2016; McCausland 2014, Chapter 5.

¹² Qāshānī 1966–1967; partial English translation in Allan 1973.

¹³ Most of the albums are in the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul and the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin; see Gonnella, Weis, and Rauch 2017; for the history of the albums: Roxburgh 2005.

¹⁴ Tokyo National Museum. The seal is sometimes said to be that of Qubilai’s Nepalese art impresario Anige (1245–1306); on Anige: Jing 1994.

from the *Career of a Yuan Official* (see Figure 21.7), in the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, which has one scene that provides us with the rarest glimpse in painting of the Yuan palace city gate (Chongtianmen), has only recently been reinscribed by the architectural historian Fu Xinian to the late Yuan period, having been attributed by early Ming connoisseurs to the late Northern Song (early twelfth century), possibly to ensure its survival.¹⁵

New forms and types of visual source become important. One added to the repertory in the western khanates, notably in Iran, comprises illustrations in codices. Illustrated books had been produced earlier in the region, but in this period, particularly under the patronage of the Ilkhanid court and its successors, such as the Injuids in Fārs province in southwestern Iran (c. 1325–1353) and the Jalayirids in Iraq and Azerbaijan in the northwest (1340–1432), illustrated books emerged as a major medium of artistic production.¹⁶ To judge from the oblong shape of the paintings and abrupt truncation of the figures at the margins in them, Chinese handscrolls and prints may have provided a model for the format of these early illustrations such as those in the copy of the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* (Compendium of Chronicles) made in 714/1314–1315 under the auspices of the author, the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn.¹⁷

Woodblock printed books certainly were the source of text and illustrations for Rashīd al-Dīn's medical compendium, *Tansūqnāma*: in the preface, he praises the quality of the Chinese printed books he is translating.¹⁸ For the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*, he may also have had sight of Chinese popular illustrated woodblock-printed books of a type called *pinghua*, which featured illustrations in a rectangular frame in the top quarter of each page above the text. The impact of these early fourteenth-century illustrations in China is evinced by the appropriation of a scene depicting the story of “Guiguzi descending the mountain” from a 1321–1323 *pinghua* (“plain speech”) text, *New Woodblock Fully Illustrated Pinghua of Yue Yi Planning [the Conquest] of Qi*, for a well-known mid-fourteenth-century blue-and-white vase in a private collection (Figure 21.1).¹⁹ Further similar appropriations of print imagery by ceramic decorators are likely to be discovered.

In this period in West Asia, illustrations were still inserted into and subsidiary to the texts that they illustrated. The written text and the calligrapher were more important than the illustration and the painter, but this balance

15 McCausland 2014, 37, 50, 142, 205 ff., Figures 13, 134, based on Fu Xinian's research. The scroll is also illustrated in Watt 2010, Figures 51, 230.

16 Blair 1992; Hillenbrand 2002; Kadoi 2009, Chapters 4–6.

17 Rice 1976; Gray 1978; Blair 1995; Komaroff and Carboni 2002, nos. 6–7, Figures 130, 162, 172–75; Ben Azzouna 2014; Ben Azzouna and Roger-Puyo 2016; Kamola 2019.

18 Berlekamp 2010, 217. 19 Watt 2010, 24–25, Figures 37, 314.



Figure 21.1 Blue-and-white porcelain jar depicting the story of Guiguzi descending the mountain. Diameter 33 cm. Jingdezhen, Yuan dynasty, mid-fourteenth century. Private collection. Photograph © Christie's Images/Bridgeman Images

shifted over the course of the fourteenth century. Size shows that illustrations increased in importance over time. The individual painter also became more important, to judge from signatures and later histories of the subject such as Dust Muḥammad's account of past and present painters, composed in 951/1544 as the preface to an album of paintings, drawings, and calligraphic exercises: the first signed Persian painting to survive is that by Junayd in a codex of Khwājū Kirmānī's three poems dated 798/1396 (British Library, Add. 18113, fol. 45b); the Safavid chronicler Dust Muḥammad moved to a historical record of events beginning with the reign of the Ilkhanid ruler Abū Saʿīd (r. 1317–1335).²⁰

20 Blair 2014, Chapter 5; Blair 2018; Dust Muḥammad's preface is published and translated in Thackston 2001, 4–17.

These manuscript illustrations from the Ilkhanate thus differ from Chinese media in various ways. At least since the eleventh century, members of the educated elite in China had been inscribing and signing scrolls, either as authors or as connoisseurs, scrolls that could measure several or many meters in length and in which calligraphic inscriptions could be inserted on, around, or after the painting. The habit of appending critical colophons (on the mounting or in the backing paper) after the main work, be it of calligraphy or painting, became ingrained in the early Yuan period, as exemplified by the practice of Zhao Mengfu, whose colophons were privately solicited or royally commanded.²¹

Furthermore, in the Islamic lands two separate types of specialist usually compiled illustrated manuscripts – calligraphers who wrote with reed pens and painters who used brushes – in contrast to China, where the same person frequently did both using similar implements. The illustrations in these Ilkhanid manuscripts sometimes seem generic or emblematic rather than specific and personal, and attempts to ferret out hidden political or social commentaries implied by the painters, in the way that scholars have done so well for Yuan painting, are sometimes torturous and not always convincing. For the early Yuan period, for example, insect themes in paintings like *Eight Insect Themes* (Palace Museum, Beijing) and *Fascination of Nature* of 1321 (British Museum) have been seen to highlight how beauty in nature is a veneer, scarcely obscuring the violence of the food chain in the insect world and offering a point of departure for artistic and poetic reflections on the predatory character of social hierarchy.²²

The concept of the arts in China as an ancient tradition in transmission and the role of scrolls as potential bearers of seal impressions and inscriptions of collectors and connoisseurs turns up some illuminating anomalies at the intersection of the Mongol Empire with China's art history. Not only did some of the most famous old masterworks belong to non-Chinese collectors, like the *Admonitions of the Court Instructress* (*Nüshi zhen tu*) picture scroll (British Museum), which bears a seal of a certain Muslim official named 'Alī, but also inscriptions turn up unlikely connections between connoisseurs: the *semu* calligrapher Kangli Naonao (1295–1345), for instance, commented on a scroll painting by the southern Chinese scholar-official Ren Renfa (1254–1327) that the two men were related by marriage.²³ In addition, women like the princess

21 McCausland 2011 covers the life and works of Zhao Mengfu.

22 Wang 2009. For other interpretive studies: Hay 1989; Sturman 1999.

23 Zhang Guo's *Audience with Emperor Minghuang*, Palace Museum, Beijing; McCausland 2014, Figures 98, 99.

Sengge Lagyi were among the prominent collectors and patrons of Chinese calligraphy and painting. Of particular interest are the princess's interactions with Chinese-educated scholar-officials and her patronage of a trio of southern Chinese, the painter Wang Zhenpeng, and the calligrapher–connoisseurs Feng Zizhen and Zhao Yan.²⁴ A painting like Wang Zhenpeng's *Boya Playing the Zither* in the Palace Museum, Beijing, made for the princess, exemplifies this interstitial moment. Extraordinarily naturalistic and highly keyed to the senses, it is executed in consummate Chinese monochrome ink-outline technique (*baimiao*, literally “plain drawing”), with the subtlest of shading. It confronted head-on issues of who is qualified to appreciate Chinese culture and take responsibility for transmitting it.

The adoption of Islam by the three western khanates also opened up another source of information about the visual culture produced there: inscriptions in Arabic script on the works themselves. These texts often provide a key to dating or localization. A good example is the compound silk textile inscribed with the name and titles of the Ilkhanid sultan Abū Saʿīd (Figure 21.2).²⁵ The official *ṭirāz* inscription shows that it was woven in a state factory, mostly likely at the ruler's capital, Tabriz, after he had assumed the title of *bahādur* in 1319 but before his death in 1335. The inscription thus provides at least one fixed point for the localization of this type of lampas-weave with silk and gold produced in many areas of the region and known as *nasīj* in Persian, *nakh* in Arabic, *nashishi* in Chinese, and *panni tartarici* (“Tartar cloths”) in Italian sources.²⁶ The multiple terms used for this type of textile not only exemplify the polyglot nature of the period but also illustrate the contemporary development of lexicography, attested by multilingual dictionaries such as the *Rasūlid Hexaglot*.²⁷ This lexicographical advance is taken one step further in the unique copy of a dispersed manuscript entitled *Muʿnis al-aḥrār fī daqāʾiq al-ashʿār* (The Free Men's Companion to the Subtleties of Poems) completed at Isfahan in Ramaḍān 741/February–March 1341, which contains a rare and curious poetic device matching individual words with images that function like visual glosses.²⁸

In addition to providing fixed dates for individual works or style, dated Arabic inscriptions on works of art can also help us to go further in contextualizing the transfer of objects, styles, and motifs between the khanates. A good example here is a large flat dish with articulated rim dated

24 For the scroll: Watt 2010, Figure 28; McCausland 2014, Figure 4.

25 Ritter 2010; Folsach 2013, 233–34, Figure 225; Blair 2013, 215, Figure 6.

26 Wardwell 1989; Allsen 1997a; Watt and Wardwell 1997, Chapter 4; Ritter 2010, 2016.

27 Allsen 2000; Biran 2004, 352. 28 Światochowski and Carboni 1994.

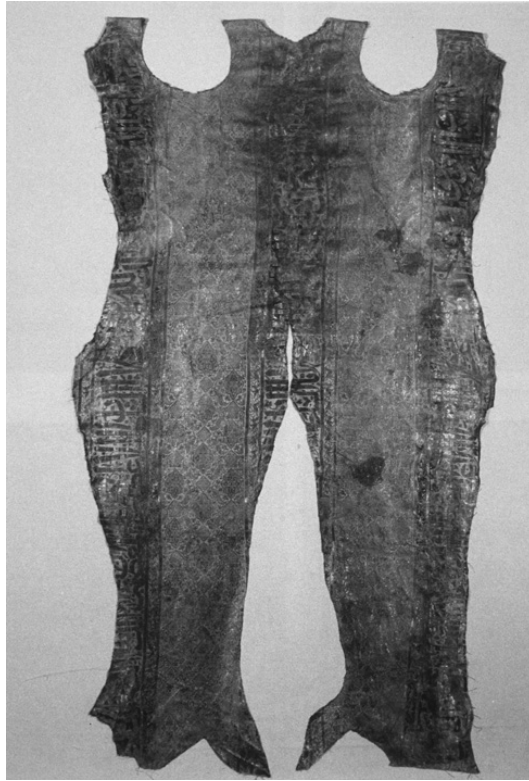


Figure 21.2 Tiraz fabric made for the Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd (1319–1335), probably at Tabriz, and transformed into the burial suit for Duke Rudolf IV (d. 1365). Silk with gold weft, 176 × 90 cm. Loaned by St. Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna. Photograph: Leni Deinhardstein, Lisa Rastl, Dom Museum Vienna

667/1268–1269 (Figure 21.3).²⁹ Made of fritware painted in luster over an opaque white glaze, it can be localized by its technique to the city of Kashan, the major site where lusterware was produced in Iran. The Persian potter working in central Iran used local materials but adopted the shape from Song (960–1279) Chinese celadons made at the Longquan kilns in Zhejiang and porcelains produced over the same period at Jingdezhen in Jiangxi. To decorate the dish, he laid out a geometric interlace of overlapping bands that is typical of works produced in the Islamic lands but inserted into it lotus flowers typical of Chinese wares, perhaps known through the

²⁹ Watson 1985, Figure 89a, b; Soucek 1999, Figure 4; Komaroff and Carboni 2002, no. 128, Figure 3.



Figure 21.3 Fritware dish painted in luster over an opaque white glaze. AH 667/1268–1269. Height 6.5 cm, diameter 29.5 cm. © Copenhagen, David Collection Isl. 95/Pernille Klemp

intermediary of textiles or other arts such as lacquer or even vernacular painting and printing. The buds on the luster dish seem to open as they progress from the center toward the rim, itself decorated with a floral scroll. This combination of motifs shows the intermixing typical of the period, and the date on the lusterware dish further helps us to see how early these East Asian motifs had been adopted in the western khanates, even before the incorporation of the Southern Song into the Yuan realm in 1276–1279.

Lusterware is one of the two most expensive techniques used to decorate ceramics in Iran (the second is the other overglaze technique of enameling or *minā'i*, also produced in Kashan). But ceramics are still a middle-class product,

for the elite ate off silver and gold.³⁰ What this luster dish dated 1268–1269 proves is that already by the third quarter of the thirteenth century not only were Chinese wares available to potters in Kashan but also the taste for their forms and designs had spread beyond the Mongol court to create significant local demand. This market was quite widespread, as shown by the large number of similar floral motifs used on contemporary luster tiles, such as the dado of star and cross tiles dated in the early 1260s that decorated the Imāmzāda Yahyā at Varamin.³¹ In other words, Chinese wares must have been widely available in Iran already in the early thirteenth century before the official founding of the Ilkhanate in 1256 and the production of this luster dish in 1268–1269. From the continental perspective of the Mongols, one overarching both Persian and Chinese cultures, the phenomenon of blue-and-white ceramics in the second quarter of the fourteenth century marks the culmination of this trend, even if that occurred at the twilight of the Yuan and Ilkhanate imperia.³²

Sufis, typically the institutional types but occasionally the more extreme antinomian mendicants, were often responsible for the spread of Islam in the western khanates, where Mongol rulers and their courtiers typically adopted Islam under the tutelage of learned shaykhs.³³ The Sufi approach to Islam fit with the syncretistic practices of the Mongols better than the more orthodox Islam of theologians, but the adoption of this approach to Islam in the western khanates in turn had a major impact on the architecture and art of the region. Rulers were often interred in tombs near their mentors, as with the Chaghadaid khan Bayan Quli (r. 1348–1359), who was buried next to the shaykh, poet, and theologian Sayf al-Dīn Bākhārī (d. 1261) in a shrine complex outside Bukhara.³⁴ The Ilkhanid sultan Öljeitü brought the body of the more popular and somewhat bizarrely dressed shaykh Baraq Baba, who had probably converted the ruler to Shi'ism, to his capital, Sulṭāniyya, where the shaykh's tomb tower and a later hospice for Sufis (*khānqāh*) are the only buildings that survive from the period other than the ruler's majestic tomb (Figure 21.4).³⁵ Öljeitü's son Muḥammad Ṭayfūr was buried at the shrine of the famous mystic Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī (d. c. 877) in northern Iran.³⁶

30 Watson 2006. 31 Watson 1985, Color Plate G.

32 On Yuan–Ilkhanid relations and ceramics: Soucek 1999. 33 Amitai-Preiss 1999.

34 Golombek and Wilber 1988, no. 2; Nemsteva 1989; Blair 2019b. Many of the tiles from Bayan Quli's tomb were purchased by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 1899 and 1900 and are now on display in the Jameel Gallery there: Crill and Stanley 2006, 64–65. Others are in the MK&G Museum in Hamburg and are available at www.mkg-hamburg.de/en/collection/permanent-collection/islamic-art/tiles-with-spiral-vines-from-the-mausoleum-of-bayan-quli-khan.html (last accessed February 17, 2021).

35 Blair 1986; Pfeiffer 1999. 36 Hillenbrand 1982; Blair 1982b.



Figure 21.4 Tomb of the Ilkhan Öljeitü at Sulṭāniyya in northwest Iran, 1305–1320.
Photograph: Sheila Blair

One result of such court patronage of Sufism was the growth of shrine complexes into “Little Cities of God,” such as the one at Ardabīl in north-western Iran around the grave of the Sufi shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn, eponymous founder of the Safavid dynasty (r. 1501–1722).³⁷ This development is so pronounced that shrines replace congregational mosques as the major type of new religious building in most of the western khanates, and the objects endowed upon them some of the most splendid. Yet the information offered by their buildings and the objects donated to them in documenting the history and development of Sufism in this region is often overlooked. The domed tomb also became the standard grave marker for important Muslims, not only in the western khanates, as in the one dated 771/1369–1370 for the Chaghadaid khan Tughluq Temür at Almaliq, but elsewhere in north China, as in two anonymous tombs at Guyuan in Hebei and outside the southwest wall of Qara-Qoto.³⁸

37 Golombek 1974 first drew attention to this phenomenon and sketched the history of five major complexes at Natanz, Ardabīl, Isfahan, Bastam, and Turbat-i Shaykh Jam. On Ardabīl: Morton 1974; Morton 1975; Rizvi 2011, Chapter 1.

38 Steinhart 2015, 92–108; Blair 2019b. On Almaliq: O’Kane 2004; on Qara-Qoto: Carswell 1999–2000, Plate 27.

Mongol patronage under the Yuan extended to temples and official buildings across China, Korea, and Tibet, while the influx of foreigners spurred a variety of religious buildings, from temples and mosques to grottos housing religious sculptures. The architectural fabric of Yuan Dadu was documented by the Chinese scholar Tao Zongyi in the late Yuan period and again by Xiao Xun in 1396 prior to the planned destruction of the palace complex in the early Ming period in preparation for the re-establishment of the capital at Beijing by the Yongle Emperor (r. 1403–1421), but those plans were carried out so effectively that only the grid layout of the city underpins modern Beijing.³⁹ A rare exception is the White Pagoda Temple (Baitasi) built late in the thirteenth century, to the west of the palace city.⁴⁰ Its massive white stupa (*ta*), still clearly visible on the Beijing skyline, is all that remains of dozens of imperially sponsored temples built and liberally furnished with bronze and wood statues, textiles, and lacquers by the Nepalese artist and architect Anige, doyen of the early Yuan imperial art world and head of Qubilai's supervisorate of all artisans. Much of this material could have been expected to throw light on the "Himalayan style" employed by the Yuan court to house relics and render figures of the Buddhist pantheon.

Visually, Yuan architecture must be reconstructed from disparate survivals such as the Cloud Terrace (Yuntai) of 1342–1345, originally a platform for three Tibetan-style stupas, at the strategic Juyongguan pass on the Great Wall just north of Beijing (Figure 21.5). It exemplifies the indebtedness to the "Himalayan style" in what could be called Yuan Buddhist public art, as well as being a rare surviving example of a sophisticated multilingual inscription practice. The official in charge of the monument, and the person who also performed the consecration ritual, was an Imperial Preceptor (Dishi) Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan (1310–1358), a member of the leading family of the Tibetan Sa-skyapa order.⁴¹

There are some other buildings in remoter spots: the Temple to the Northern Peak (Beiyuemiao) at Quyang in Hebei, which features a hipped roof construction fronted by a large ritual platform and suggests what Yuan palace buildings, on only a slightly larger scale, might have looked like; other Daoist temple complexes like the one at Yonglegong, which has large-scale murals and was probably imperially sponsored; and the celestial observatory (Guanxingtai) at Dengfeng in Henan, originally built by the Chinese court astronomer Guo Shoujing.⁴²

39 Tao 1959, *juan* 21; Xiao 1996. 40 Jing 1994, 49–52, Figures 3, 4. 41 Bentor 1995, 31.

42 On Dadu: Steinhardt 1983; Liu 1992; McCausland 2014, Chapter 1. On the Beiyuemiao: Steinhardt 1998. On the Yonglegong and related murals: Gesterkamp 2011; on the observatory at Gaocheng: Steinhardt 2015, 108–16.

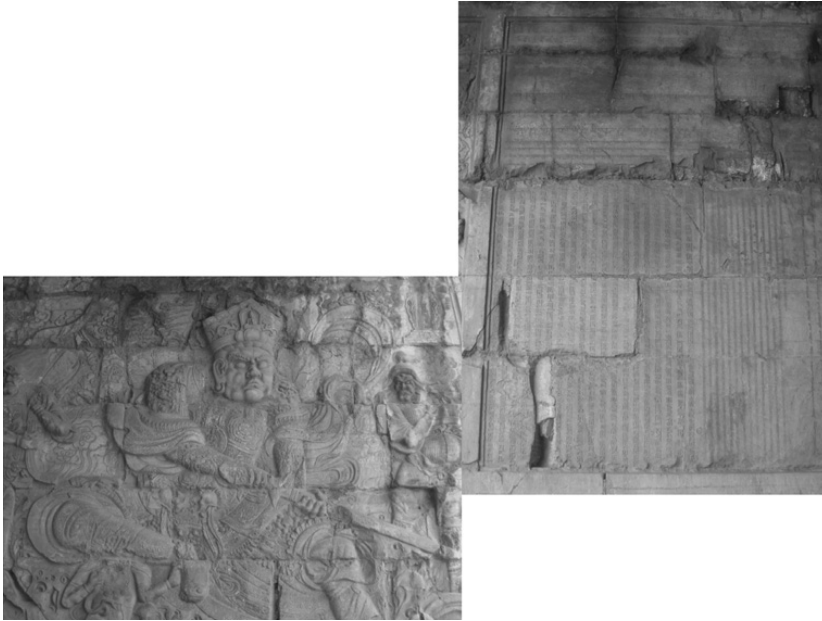


Figure 21.5 A guardian king and detail of the multilingual inscriptions inside the arch of the Cloud Terrace (Yuntai) of 1342–1345, at Juyongguan pass, Hebei province, on the Great Wall north of Beijing. Photographs: Shane McCausland

The Islamization of the western khanates also had implications for the preservation of art and architecture. Many of the buildings and objects blatantly associated with other religions were abandoned or even destroyed. There are therefore few buildings or other works that attest to the many other religions practiced in the western khanates,⁴³ and those that do survive are mainly the result of abandonment and obscurity, as with the incomplete rock-cut structure at Viar, some thirty kilometers south-southeast of Sulṭāniyya in Iran, which may have been a Buddhist monastery.⁴⁴

In theory (if not always in practice), the new converts to Islam adhered to traditional Muslim burial practices, especially to the regional tradition of domed tombs visible from afar. Unlike Chinese burials, these tombs are not hidden below ground, so few have been discovered recently, in contrast to the spate of archaeological finds in Mongolia and China. An example of the

43 See, for example, the many Buddhist buildings mentioned in the written sources of Ilkhanid Iran: [Prazniak 2014](#).

44 [Blair 2002](#), 110; [Blair 2014](#), 139–46.

latter is the unearthing in 2008 of a subterranean domed tomb dated to 1308 for a provincial official or gentry couple at Hongyucun in Xing County, Shanxi province.⁴⁵ Although the tomb had been looted of its contents (and there were surely many), the murals depicting a domestic setting were intact and included *trompe l'oeil* effects, both for architectural features like bracketing and cogging and for decorative furnishings like latticed doors and scrolls hanging on the walls, the whole laid out using geometric mirroring effects. Buddhist and Confucian values were on display in the depiction of a Buddhist monk and conventional scenes of Confucian filial piety, while status was projected via the images of spirited horses, peony-and-rock and lotus pond scenes, and balustraded and landscaped gardens peopled with servants preparing refreshments.⁴⁶

By contrast, Muslim tombs do not have murals with idealized depictions of their occupants surrounded by their accouterments. Nor are Muslims theoretically buried with grave goods, whether contemporary objects or precious heirlooms, although to judge from finds from the Qipchaq steppe and elsewhere, not all Muslims actually adhered to this practice.⁴⁷

Therefore many objects known from across the empire are fragmentary or chance finds. In addition, where these discoveries are hoards, like the mid- or late Yuan cache of ceramics found in 1980 at Gao'an in Jiangxi province, it is not always possible to reconstruct any social context. The construction boom in China since 1980 has led to many discoveries, but it has also meant that even where the contents remained *in situ*, any recovery has been in the form of salvage archaeology under time constraint. The ceramics that do survive from the period are often recomposed from shards of objects that had been broken and discarded.⁴⁸ Some important finds at Jingdezhen have been pieces from wasters found in rubbish pits, for example at the Red Guard Cinema kiln site.⁴⁹

Similarly, textiles were literally worn to death. Most of the best and largest examples were preserved elsewhere, whether in Christian burials or church treasuries in the west where they were used to wrap bodies or relics (as was the case of the Abū Sa'īd silk, see [Figure 21.2](#)) or in Buddhist monuments in the east

45 [Han and Huo 2011](#). New discoveries include the Yuan tomb at Luogetian, Hengshan county in Shaanxi province, noted above.

46 [McCausland 2014](#), 130 ff., Figures 79–83.

47 See, for example, the stunning caftans found around bodies buried in the Caucasus analyzed in [Dode 2005](#).

48 A point often made: [Blair 2014](#), 12. The best overview of ceramics from the western khanates is [Watson 2004](#); for Yuan ceramics: [Barnes 2010](#).

49 E.g., the fragmentary blue-and-white porcelain stemmed bowl (no. 1) with Persian inscription excavated from level 6 of the Red Guard Cinema kiln site: [Huang and Huang 2012](#), 82, Figure 5.

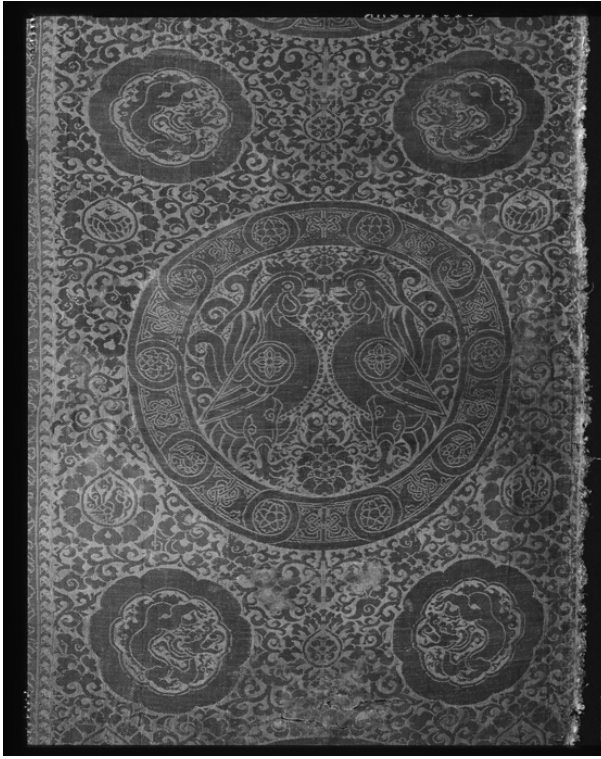


Figure 21.6 Left half of a lampas woven textile, silk, gilded paper, and gilded animal substrate. China or eastern Islamic lands. © David Collection, Copenhagen 40/1997 Pernille Klemp

(Figure 21.6). Following the dissolution of the monasteries in Tibet during the late twentieth century, many of these textiles and other objects, notably gilt bronze sculptures, have emerged on the art market, such as those from the Densatil Monastery.⁵⁰ A rare Buddhist *kesi* tapestry, *Mandala of Yamantaka-Vajrabhairava* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1992.54), datable to 1330–1332, is testament to the continued Yuan royal patronage of the arts in the Newari or Indo-Tibetan style into the mid-Yuan period and beyond (Figure 21.10 below). Along the lower edge of the mandala, their identities confirmed by Tibetan inscriptions (the Chinese inscriptions may have been removed), are donor portraits of two Yuan qa’ans, Togh Temür (Wenzong, r. 1328–1332) and his elder brother Qoshila (Mingzong; r. 1329) and their respective consorts,

⁵⁰ Folsach 2013; Franses 2013. On Densatil: Czaja and Proser 2014.

Budashri and Babusha, who both wear the tall hats known in Mongolian as *boghtaq* and in Chinese as *gugu guan* (Figure 21.9 below).⁵¹

From 1275, shortly after its founding, Dadu became one of the main centers for the production of textiles likely made on commission for the Mongol elite, including “cloth of gold,” after Uighur weavers had been moved there from Beshbaliq. Two other production sites nearby were populated with Muslim, local Chinese, and also Central Asian weavers, providing a rich environment for the exchange of ideas and practices, all close to the cultural heartland of Mongolia.⁵² Surviving mainly in fragments, textiles of the cloth-of-gold type are technically highly accomplished in that their designs and techniques combine features from east and west. Designs might feature motifs of Iranian origin (winged lions, griffins, falcons) set in ornamentation more typically seen in China (cloud patterns). Similarly, the technique might comprise single-warp silk threads, as seen in China, crossed with gold wefts in pairs, as found in eastern Iran.⁵³ Such luxury textiles had ready use in the ceremonial dress of members of the Mongol elite, if not also in the suits of silk clothing presented by that elite to officials and envoys for banquets and court appearances.

Despite sometimes lacking provenance, these textiles and other objects provide a welcome supplement to the corpus preserved in shrines, for many of these latter sites are difficult to access or have been stripped of their goods.⁵⁴ The shrine of Shaykh Ṣafī at Ardabil, for example, was the location of one of the world’s largest collections of blue-and-white porcelains, over 1,000 vessels, many now moved to the National Museum in Tehran, a building that was closed for a decade, in a country itself difficult to access.⁵⁵ Another large collection in the Topkapı Palace Museum in Istanbul is now a major tourist site, but one that does not always welcome foreign scholars and where access to storage has also been restricted for many years.⁵⁶ Early monographs on these two collections, which may have originally belonged to the same royal collection in Iran, are therefore all the more important, as are early photographs of temple and monastery collections in Tibet. The objects that do appear on the art market without attested provenance are in themselves problematic, for many national museums are financially unable to acquire, or legally prohibited from acquiring, such works of art, which often end up in the hands of private museums or wealthy

51 Watt and Wardwell 1997, cat. no. 25; Komaroff and Carboni 2002, no. 185, Figures 125–26.

52 Watt and Wardwell 1997, 14–15. 53 Watt and Wardwell 1997, 127 ff., nos. 35, 36.

54 Blair 2011; Blair 2014, Chapter 5. 55 Pope 1956; Medley 1986.

56 Krahll 1986. Such collections were notably absent from Shanghai bowuguan 2012.

collectors attracted by the very allure that made these objects so popular in their own time of manufacture.⁵⁷

Commodity and Exchange

The buildings and objects from the khanates illustrate the active process of commodity and exchange described by Thomas Allsen and attest to a shared material culture, one that is understood best by comparing and combining the various sources of information from the different regions.⁵⁸ All the khanates, for example, founded new capital cities that embodied the new regime.⁵⁹ Thus under Ögödei, the site of Qaraqorum was transformed from a military camp and commercial and handicraft center to a capital city with permanent halls. In 1256 Qubilai founded a city at Kaiping fu (now Shangdu in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region), and in 1267 Qubilai broke ground for another new capital at Dadu/Beijing, just to the north of the Jin capital, Yanjing (Zhongdu), where he held his first court gathering in the spring of 1274.

The construction of the new Yuan capital, Dadu, was the largest of these undertakings. The new city incorporated part of, and recycled building materials from, the former Jin capital, but to ensure adequate water supply the main city was sited to the north. This relocation called for extensive rezoning of land around the capital for pasture, agriculture, and hunting, and the Grand Canal was even extended right into the city. Symbolism mattered too. Between 1276 and 1279, Qubilai had the Song royal family brought to reside there, ostensibly for their own protection, lest they unwittingly or otherwise become figure-heads for dissent in the south. In the mid-1280s, the Song royal palace in Hangzhou and the royal tomb precinct to the south were scandalously targeted for appropriation by Buddhist officials, chief among them the notorious Yang Lianzhenjia, who was intent on driving through a triumphalist building program. Due to local outrage, further members of the Song royal family were brought north on that occasion for the same reason as after the fall of the Song. There clearly was a distinction between treasures obtained through wanton appropriation and as spoils of war. Exemplifying the latter, in 1276, as noted, Qubilai had allowed the pick of the Song imperial art collection to be

57 Major collections of Mongol textiles include the David Collection in Copenhagen (Folsach 2013), the Doha museum in Qatar (Gierlichs et al. 2010), and the Marjani Foundation in Moscow (Lasikova 2014).

58 The phrase is the apt title of Allsen's 1997 monograph (Allsen 1997a).

59 Steinhart 1990, 147–60; Fitzhugh, Rossabi, and Honeychurch 2009, 137–449; Biran 2004, 354–55 makes the point that many of these new capitals were to the northeast of the previous ones.

inventoried by the scholar-official Wang Yun in a *Catalogue of Calligraphy and Painting* (*Shuhua mulu*) when it was brought north.⁶⁰ These scrolls of old-master calligraphy and painting and those in the collections of state institutions like the Hanlin Academy could subsequently be viewed by officials and court artists and contributed thereby to the development of Dadu's cosmopolitan culture.

Some of the objects unearthed in modern times from Dadu are today housed in the Capital Museum, but remnants above ground are few: in addition to the White Pagoda Temple by Anige, they include the Rainbow Bridge close to the Wuyingdian paintings gallery hall in what is today the Palace Museum and a few short sections of the city wall that were not dismantled after the founding of the PRC in the mid-twentieth century.

Many of the western khanates in turn emulated the Yuan practice of new imperial cities on a smaller scale: the Ilkhanids established them at Takht-i Sulaymān (more of a seasonal hunting camp) and at Sulṭāniyya in northwest Iran (see [Figure 21.4](#)); the Golden Horde at two sites on the Volga called Sarai (one by Batu designated Old Sarai/Selitrennoe, the other by Berke designated New Sarai/Sarai Berke/Tsarev); and later the Timurids at Kish/Shahr-i Sabz and Samarqand in Central Asia.⁶¹ By combining physical and literary sources, one can paint a fuller picture of the urban development of the period, as Terry Allen did with Herat, a city in Khurasan province in eastern Iran that was substantially rebuilt by Temür's son Shāhrukh (r. 1409–1447).⁶²

To judge from the remains, these new cities shared certain physical features, some again adopted from prototypes in China, where the palace city was nested inside the imperial city inside the city itself, which was built on a grid system. In Dadu, the sovereign's gate was the middle one of five in a massive south-facing gated entrance (Chongtianmen), as depicted in a view, remarked upon above, looking north in a scene from the narrative painting *Episodes from the Career of a Yuan Official* (also called *Zhao Yu's Pacification of the Barbarians*) ([Figure 21.7](#)), and showing a sequence of palace roofs receding to the north over the top of the main gate. In the western khanates, the citadels were large walled squares with bastions and a major north–south axis leading from the main entrance on the south. This was the case not just for major Ilkhanid sites such as Takht-i Sulaymān and Sulṭāniyya, but also for minor settlements such as Hasanlu Tepe.⁶³ The internal layout and organization of

⁶⁰ Wang 2009.

⁶¹ On Takht-i Sulaymān: Masuya 2002; on Sulṭāniyya: Blair 1986; Blair 2014, Chapter 4, and 2019b; on the Golden Horde sites: Federov-Davydov 1991; Allsen 1997c; on the Timurid sites: Golombek and Wilber 1988, 18–43.

⁶² Allen 1981; Allen 1983. ⁶³ Danti 2004.

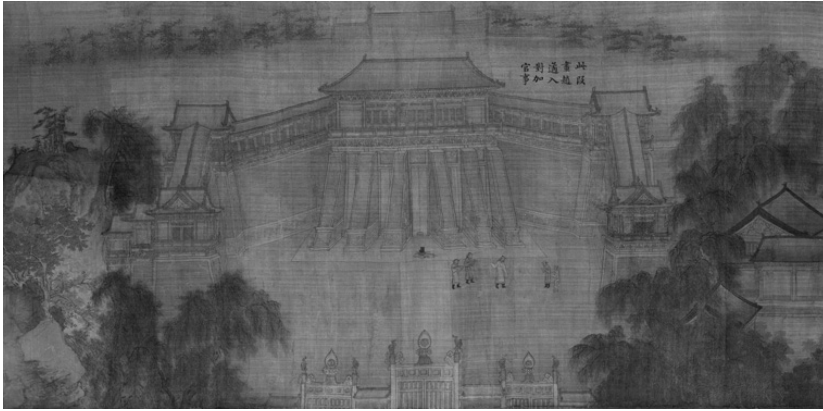


Figure 21.7 *Episodes from the Career of a Yuan Official* (also called *Zhao Yu's Pacification of the Barbarians*) (artist unknown) (detail), probably Chinese, late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). Handscroll, ink and color on silk, 15.5 × 156 inches (39.3 × 396.2 cm). The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 58–10. Photograph: Jamison Miller

the tents within the capital cities, the so-called Mongol *ordo* (encampment), may also have derived from a Liao model known from northern China.⁶⁴ At any rate, in Dadu, Qubilai commanded steppe grasses to be planted in these open spaces in the palace city to re-create the steppe landscape, an effect complemented by landscapes on the walls and green-painted floors within the palace buildings. Steppe landscape paintings mounted on screens are recursively included as “paintings within paintings” in scenes set in the Yuan palaces, as is seen in the illustrations to *Yinshan zhengyao* (*A Soup for the Qan*), a woodblock-printed dietary manual presented to the throne in 1330 by the *semu* court physician Husihui and his colleagues.⁶⁵

None of these cities survives intact, but combining the information from various sites in the western khanates allows us to sketch the range of standard building types in them, such as Öljeitü's tomb at Sulṭāniyya (1303–1320) and the Ilkhanid summer palace at Takht-i Sulaymān (1270s), along with Temür's palace Aq Sarāy at Kish/Shahr-i Sabz (1379–1396) and his congregational mosque, sometimes dubbed the Mosque of Bibi Khanum, at Samarqand (1398–1405).⁶⁶

To this standard repertory of structures, one should add more unusual types, such as observatories. Hülegü founded one on a hillside north of his

⁶⁴ Biran 2004, 344; De Nicola 2013, 126. ⁶⁵ Buell and Anderson 2010, 209.

⁶⁶ On Sulṭāniyya: Blair 2014, Chapter 4; Blair 2019b; on Takht-i Sulaymān: Masuya 2002; on Shahr-i Sabz and Samarqand: Golombek and Wilber 1988, nos. 39, 28 respectively. On Ilkhanid architecture in general: Blair 2019a.

first capital at Maragha in northwest Iran.⁶⁷ Its size (the large circular building for the meridian arc or sextant measures forty-five meters in diameter), multiple buildings (five smaller circular units, a foundry to fabricate astronomical instruments, and several other multiroom buildings identified tentatively as a *madrassa*, library, and so on), and fancy decoration (luster and glazed tiles) bespeak its significant funding. It was the prototype for the better-known one that the Timurid ruler Ulugh Beg founded at Samarqand in 1420, but it seems to have had no impact on the above-mentioned Yuan observatory begun in 1279 under Qubilai in Haocheng in Dengfeng county, Henan, at least to judge from the main building there, a brick observation tower for observing the stars (Guanxingtai) that housed the tall gnomon (*gaobiao*) used to regulate the calendar.⁶⁸ The extant observatory on the Dadu city wall in Beijing is an early modern reconstruction. Astronomers and their books and instruments may have moved between Iran and China, but construction techniques and forms did not.

One also gets a sense of the styles of court life and dress shared among the khanates by combining several sorts of evidence from different regions. The combination of Mongolian, Chinese, Persian, and other elements in Yuan court cuisine, as described in the *Yinshan zhengyao* (A Soup for the Qan), is an image of that plurality, while the extensive treatment in that manual of alcohol poisoning gives visual form to the effects of Mongol feasting culture.⁶⁹ The best visual depictions of Mongol feasting, encampments, and campaigns are the illustrations detached from early fourteenth-century copies of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Compendium of Chronicles*.⁷⁰ Some paintings (Figure 21.8) show khans enthroned with their consorts.⁷¹ In China, the Mongol rulers and consorts were the subjects of official portraits but they were no less significantly depicted out hunting, as in the impressive hanging scroll dated 1280 in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, attributed to Liu Guandao, *Qubilai Khan Hunting*, which shows him accompanied by his consort Chabi (Chabui).⁷²

67 Wilber 1955; Vardjvand 1979; Vardjvand 1987. For a celestial globe probably made there: Carey 2009.

68 For Samarqand: Golombek and Wilber 1988, no. 31; for Haocheng: Steinhart 2015, 108–16.

69 Buell and Anderson 2010; also McCausland 2015.

70 The pages are in albums divided between Berlin and Istanbul: Gonnella, Weis, and Rauch 2017. In addition to individual items in exhibition catalogues (e.g., Komaroff and Carboni 2002, nos. 18–19, Figures 222, 84; *Dschingis Khan und seine Erben* 2005, nos. 279–302), many of the illustrations from the Diez albums in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin are available on their website at <http://orient-digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de>. For the Istanbul pages: Karamağaralı 1968; better color reproductions in Çağman and Tanındı 1986, nos. 43–44.

71 Kadoi 2017; Blair 2019c. On the important role of women in Mongol Iran: De Nicola 2017.

72 Illustrated in Fong and Watt 1996, Plate 138; Watt 2010, Figures 108–10, 267; McCausland 2014, Figure 21.

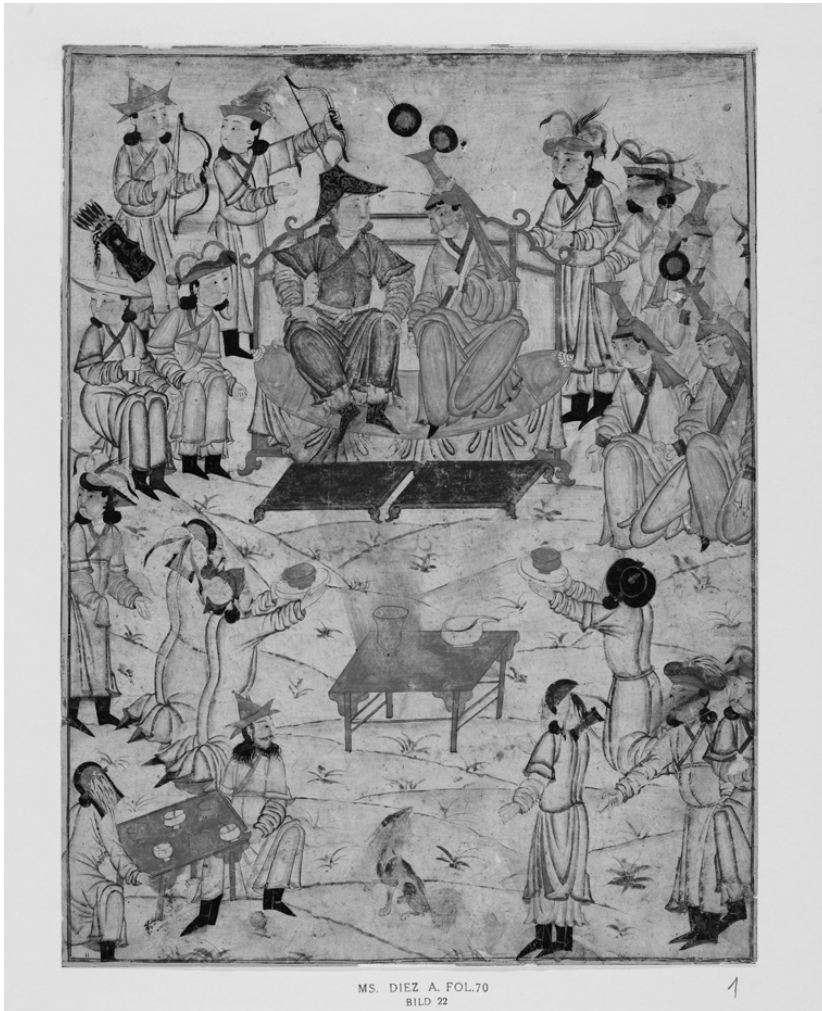


Figure 21.8 Mongol enthronement, probably detached from a copy of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Compendium of Chronicles*. Tabriz, first half of the fourteenth century. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Orientabteilung, Diez A, fol. 70 S. 22, #1

The accouterments illustrated in these paintings survive elsewhere. In women's fashion, for example, the tall hat known as a *boghtaq* has long been known from later Yuan portraits such as the silk one depicting Chabi, who herself is credited in her *Yuan shi* biography with having designed a peaked hat for her husband Qubilai after he was once dazzled by the sun while aiming to

shoot an arrow, a design that caught on at court.⁷³ Examples of the *boghtaq* found recently in the region (see [Figure 21.9](#)), and known from the portraits of the empresses in the *Mandala of Yamantaka-Vajrabhairava* mentioned above, bear out its physical reality (see [Figure 21.10](#)).⁷⁴ Measuring nearly ninety centimeters in height when intact, this headgear comprised a column-shaped bark cloth covered by a gold cloth cut in the shape of a hat with lappets reaching the



Figure 21.9 *Boghtaq* (Mongol women's headdress). Height 90 cm. CO_118_1
The Museum of Islamic Art, Doha co. 118-2000-1 Samar Kassab

⁷³ For a translation of her biography: [Cleaves 1979–1980](#); for her portrait: [Jing 1994](#).

⁷⁴ Like the scroll showing Qubilai hunting, the silk portrait of Chabi, also in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, is often reproduced: [Komaroff and Carboni 2002](#), Figure 27; [Watt 2010](#), Figure 7. Several *boghtaqs*, including this one (published in [Gierlichs et al. 2010](#), 64), have recently been acquired by the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha. Another spectacular intact example acquired by the Mardjani Foundation in Russia was exhibited in 2013 at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow: [Lasikova 2014](#), Figure 1.



Figure 21.10 *Mandala of Yamantaka-Vajrabhairava*. China, Yuan dynasty, c. 1330–1332. Silk tapestry (*kesi*), overall dimensions: 245.5 × 209 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 1992)

shoulders and padded with silk wadding. The hat was attached under the chin by a secondary hat with a hole in the middle through which the bark column projected.

These elaborate headdresses, particularly those for royal wives, were further adorned with metal spires and tail feathers and decorated with pearls

and gold jewelry.⁷⁵ These included spiral-filigree ornaments of a type known from the Song period in China (and possibly earlier) and spread under the Mongols to the western khanates.⁷⁶ The same path of transmission is true for the elaborate robes that typically crossed to the right and had a wide ribbed waistband.⁷⁷ Like the individual elements of dress, the royal couple's stemmed or handled cups, often melted down for their precious metals, are known from excavations at the Golden Horde capital Sarai Berke or from chance finds on the Mongolian or Qipchaq steppes.⁷⁸

The survival of these textiles and metalwares shown in pictures and paintings suggests further that other more perishable items which have not survived such as folding stools and dragon-headed thrones were similarly adopted in the western khanates as signs of Mongol sovereignty. So too the western khanates used rectangular seals inscribed in 'Phags-pa and stamped in red on documents and artworks.⁷⁹ These in turn provided formal models for variants issued by local authorities in Arabic script, such as the square bronze seal inscribed in a square Kufic with the name of the Injuid ruler Abū Ishāq (r. 1343–1353).⁸⁰ The use of seals in 'Phags-pa script, which have turned up all over Yuan territory, even among the wreckage of Qubilai's fleets in Takashima Bay in Japan, may also have prompted the use of Tibetan and other scripts, as well as ciphers and monograms in seals. 'Phags-pa seals are occasionally seen on artworks, like the one of a senior minister impressed on Liang Kai's (c. 1140–c. 1210) portrait of the Tang poet Li Bai (Tokyo National Museum, TA164), mentioned above. Presumably these seal impressions exemplified the wider visibility of many language scripts in urban and official life, as also seen in the multilingual inscriptions on the Cloud Terrace at Juyongguan.⁸¹

⁷⁵ On the importance of pearls: [Allsen 2019](#). ⁷⁶ [Kramarovskiy 2013](#).

⁷⁷ Spectacular examples of robes and other clothing are now being unearthed across the khanates: [Kessler 1994](#), nos. 106, 108; [Gierlich et al. 2010](#), 62–67; [Dode 2005](#); [Denney 2010](#); [Watt 2010](#), nos. 105, 261, 264; [Folsach 2013](#), Plates 228–30.

⁷⁸ [Simferopolskii klad 1986](#); [Kessler 1994](#), Figures 103, 107; [Treasures on Grassland 2000](#), 251–52; [Kramarovskii 2001](#); [Komaroff and Carboni 2002](#), nos. 139, 149, 155, Figures 11–13, 197; [Fitzhugh, Rossabi, and Honeychurch 2009](#), nos. 24.8, 25.4, 25.5, 27.8; [Watt 2010](#), Figures 3–5.

⁷⁹ A thirteenth-century seal impression in red ink is illustrated in [Kessler 1994](#), no. 99; a Yuan seal dated to the equivalent of 1379 is illustrated in [Treasures on Grassland 2000](#), 255. A comparable edict (*firmān*) issued in the name of the Ilkhan Geikhatu in 692/1293 is stamped twice with the seal of Qubilai ([Komaroff and Carboni 2002](#), no. 68, Figure 47).

⁸⁰ David Collection, Copenhagen, no. 7/1996, available at www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/dynasties/il-khanids/art/7-1996 (last accessed February 17, 2021); [Komaroff and Carboni 2002](#), no. 167, Figure 146. The ruler's name derives from that of the Sufi shaykh, but the seal should probably be attributed to the Injuid ruler, not the shaykh.

⁸¹ On the seal of a Muslim collector–connoisseur of Chinese calligraphy: Zhaona [Situ 1998](#).

One type of object depicted in other album paintings of Mongol campaigns or entourages (Diez A, fol. 71, S. 50 and 53) aptly illustrates how Mongol customs were adopted and adapted across Asia: the *paiza* or passport, a metal (or sometimes wood) plaque used to identify official couriers or envoys, themselves sometimes part of the postal network inherited from earlier systems in Liao China.⁸² These plaques do not appear to have been depicted in Chinese art, even where they might have been expected, for example in a tersely titled handscroll painting like *Man Riding* of 1296 by Zhao Mengfu, who had previously been a senior official in the Postal Service.⁸³ Possibly a self-portrait or a portrait of Zhao's younger brother, this dignified, red-robed equestrian is an official arriving in post, but he has no framing escort as one sees in Ilkhanid paintings of grandees traveling with *paiza*-bearing mounted retainers.

Examples of such plaques from Liao and Yuan China, the Golden Horde, and the Ilkhanate show how a common item could be transformed to meet local needs, whether in shape, language, or iconography.⁸⁴ Earlier ones seem to have been rectangular with a hole, whereas later ones had a rounded or scalloped body with a ring by which the envoy attached the metal plaque to his person. The languages and scripts inscribed on them ranged from Khitan and Chinese to 'Phags-pa, Uighur, and Arabic. And the iconography evolved as well. In addition to writing, later ones have figural imagery, including a stylized dragon face, found on both Yuan and Golden Horde examples, and the figure of a striding envoy, found on the Ilkhanid one. He carries a three-pronged javelin identified in the 1341 manuscript of the *Mu'nis al-aḥrār* as a spear (*nayza*) or dart (*khisht*).⁸⁵

Such combinations of languages and images compare with the design of another circulating form of representation, namely Yuan paper money notes (based on Jin designs), which bore texts in Chinese and 'Phags-pa as well as pictures of the value and of dragons and phoenixes. Another example is the architectural design of liminal points in the communications network, such as

82 Paintings shown in Komaroff and Carboni 2002, nos. 22–23, Figures 39, 68; *Dschingis Khan und seine Erben* 2005, nos. 297, 300; analysis in Blair 2005.

83 Palace Museum, Beijing; McCausland 2011, 135–37, Figures 2.11–2.12.

84 A Liao *paiza* is illustrated in Komaroff and Carboni 2002, Figure 70. Yuan examples inscribed in 'Phags-pa include *Treasures on Grassland* 2000, 249; Komaroff and Carboni 2002, no. 197, Figure 69. Fitzhugh, Rossabi, and Honeychurch 2009, no. 24.3, illustrates one issued in the name of the Golden Horde ruler Muḥammad Özbek (r. 1313–1341). Another from the National Museum of Mongolia (Fitzhugh, Rossabi, and Honeychurch 2009, no. 27.5) is inscribed in three languages.

85 Swietochowski and Carboni 1994, 3a, 4f. The manuscript also depicts many other types of clothing, weaponry, and implements with labels attached, such as a cuirass or corselet (*jawshan*), mace (*gurz*), and ax (*tabar*).

inside the relief-sculpted and inscribed arch of the Cloud Terrace (Yuntai) of 1342–1345, just north of Beijing where the Great Wall and Juyongguan pass intersect. The inscriptions, which are in Sanskrit, Tibetan, 'Phags-pa, Uighur, Tangut, and Chinese, are positioned between sculpted figures of the guardian kings of the four cardinal directions. Negotiating offerings of Tantric Buddhist protection may have gone hand in hand with border and customs formalities for travelers and traders at such a site.⁸⁶

By combining the information from illustrations, objects, and texts, we can both identify the subject matter of detached images and name the specific objects in them. This is the case, for example, with various types of Mongol weaponry, most of which have not survived.⁸⁷ Two well-known pages from an album in Berlin (Diez A, fol. 70, S. 4, right, and S. 7, left) have been identified as depicting the Mongol capture of Baghdad and prominently display the catapults, bows, quivers, and war drums used to terrify and subdue the enemy.⁸⁸ Another detached image (Diez A, fol. 70, S. 19, no. 2) shows horsemen leading away prisoners trapped in a two-pronged wooden shackle.⁸⁹ Chronicles such as Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* name this device under the Persian term *dushākha* ("two-branched").⁹⁰ These images, then, literally illustrate history.

There is little of this in China, by contrast, where the tenor of painting was more about building civic society or about individual exemplary conduct, as seen in the biographical scroll *Episodes from the Career of a Yuan Official*, which eulogizes the life of an Inner Asian military official whose Chinese name was Zhao Yu.⁹¹ The exception may be illustrations of Mongol archery techniques in the early fourteenth-century southern Chinese encyclopedia, *Shilin guangji* (Forest of Affairs). The depiction of the mounted archer illustrates the Parthian shot; the dropped sword lying on the ground and the grass tufts look distinctly un-Chinese but are not unfamiliar in cavalry engagements depicted in Persian painting.⁹²

The type of luxury product that best embodies the mutually fruitful artistic exchanges across Asia under the Mongols and the complications in discussing them is blue-and-white porcelain (see [Figure 21.1](#)), produced mainly, if not

86 Paper currency: Komaroff and Carboni 2002, no. 198 and Figure 16; McCausland 2014, 118, Figures 69, 70; Cloud Terrace: McCausland 2014, 29, 198, Figures 6, 23, 132.

87 May 2007.

88 Komaroff and Carboni 2002, nos. 24–25 and Figures 33, 35; *Dschingis Khan und seine Erben* 2005, no. 279.

89 Illustrated in *Dschingis Khan und seine Erben* 2005, no. 280; May 2007, Plate 5, bottom.

90 *JT*/Thackston, 93, 551. 91 Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City; note 16 above.

92 McCausland 2014.

exclusively, at the kilns of Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province in southeast China. Most scholars adhere to the traditional schema proposed for its florescence in the second quarter of the fourteenth century based on the stylistic chronology laid out by John Pope in his 1956 monograph on the many fine examples preserved at Ardabil.⁹³ The dating to the second quarter of the fourteenth century has been corroborated in part by negative evidence: the complete absence of blue-and-white from a large cargo of Chinese ceramics wrecked off the coast of Sinan in South Korea that is securely dated to 1323 and included some 5,000 pieces from Jingdezhen.⁹⁴ More positive evidence for the florescence of the blue-and-white production in the second quarter of the fourteenth century is offered by the date of 1351 on a well-known pair of large vases presented to a Daoist temple in Yushan district, 120 kilometers southeast of Jingdezhen.⁹⁵ In addition to these dated ritual vessels, archaeological evidence confirms that sizeable blue-and-white dishes were made for export by the mid-fourteenth century, as shown by a large group of shards found in the garden of the Kotla Fīrūzshāh, a palace built in Delhi by the Tughluqid ruler Fīrūz Shāh (r. 1354–1388).⁹⁶ The difference between the ritual vessels found within China and the platters found elsewhere might also point to a difference in taste, function, and market.⁹⁷ Furthermore, this neat chronology has been complicated by recent discoveries of tombs and hoards in China.⁹⁸ These discoveries in turn raise as many questions as they answer. Did, for example, experiments in underglazing and the use of cobalt blue happen earlier or elsewhere in China? Are some of the blue-and-white pieces believed to be Yuan actually earlier, as claimed in a revisionist theory that has not received widespread acceptance?⁹⁹

Explanations for the development of blue-and-white porcelain are likewise complicated, as credit for the innovation often depends on the interests of the person who is giving the explanation. Thus some scholars of Chinese art emphasize the “Chineseness” of the motifs, whereas scholars specializing in the arts of Persia and Islamic West Asia emphasize the imported elements, such as the cobalt and the technique of underglaze painting used to decorate

93 Pope 1956.

94 Carswell 2000, 17; Barnes 2010, 360–62. For the revised excavation report: Munhwa jaecheong Gungnip haeyang yumul jeonsigwan 2006; for an exhibition at the National Museum of Korea: Gungnip jungang bangmulgwan 1977; also Kim 1986; Lee 2011.

95 Percival David Collection at the British Museum; Carswell 2000, Figure 40; Barnes 2010, pl. 7.49a, b.

96 Smart 1975–1977. 97 On questions of taste, function, and market: Shih 2000; Shih 2003.

98 Many of these are mentioned in Barnes 2010, 351–62. 99 Kessler 1994; Kessler 2012.

it.¹⁰⁰ Finds now point to the collaborative nature of early Jingdezhen blue-and-white, facilitated by the Mongols, as seen in stemmed winecups, some with inverted rims (possibly to prevent spillage while mounted), bearing poetic inscriptions in Persian inscribed by Persian hands.¹⁰¹

The range of evidence is so broad that it is often difficult to control all the sources from the various regions. Thus a recent comprehensive survey of the subject by the leading expert in Yuan ceramics cited the letters of the Persian vizier Rashīd al-Dīn as evidence for the existence of blue-and-white porcelain in Ilkhanid Iran.¹⁰² Yet a decade earlier Alexander Morton had proved that these letters were a creation of the fifteenth century, and virtually all major historians of the Mongol period in West Asia have accepted Morton's conclusions as definitive.¹⁰³ David Morgan recently noted that one of the main difficulties confronted by historians of the Mongol Empire is the number of languages in which the sources were written.¹⁰⁴ The same could be said for the visual and material sources, and here, as in other fields, collaboration between scholars of various regions and media may offer a broader and more nuanced perspective, as wider visual literacy enables the determination of greater commensurability in comparisons.

Blue-and-white porcelain was but one aspect of the large-scale ceramic trade, which also included Longquan celadons, between China and the Islamic lands that goes back many centuries, at least to the so-called Samarra horizon of the early ninth century.¹⁰⁵ The Belitung shipwreck discovered in 1998, only one of many such cargoes, attests to some twenty-five tons of Chinese stonewares and porcelains destined for consumers in 'Abbasid Iraq.¹⁰⁶ But, as Oliver Watson pointed out recently, these imports were not simply a matter of Iraqi reaction to imported Chinese wares, but required the creation of a mass market to want them and a mercantile system to supply them.¹⁰⁷

As with the Samarra wares of the ninth century, the blue-and-white porcelains of the Mongol period offer evidence about how the foreign market, as catered to by the powerful Mongol–Muslim trade associations,

100 Cf., for example, Watt 2010, 280–86; with Carswell 2000.

101 Huang and Huang 2012; McCausland 2014, 218 ff., Figures 141, 142–43.

102 Barnes 2010, 347.

103 Morton 1998; Allsen 1999, 432; Di Cosmo 2000, 583; Golden 2000, 132; Streusand 2000, 100; Morgan 2004, 132; Morgan 2008, 143. Abolala Soudavar's 2003 rebuttal of Morton's arguments is not convincing and has even been criticized for its "markedly inappropriate language." Morgan 2004, 132 n. 6.

104 Morgan 2013, 120. 105 Northedge and Kennet 1994. 106 Krahel et al. 2010.

107 Watson 2014.

drove aspects of the design of wares made in China. Many of the large dishes with foliate rims are decorated with complex paneled and banded designs quite different from the single scenes preferred in the traditional Chinese repertory, seen, for instance, in northern Cizhou wares, and more like the compositions typical of Islamic wares and attested, for example, on the Kashan luster dish dated 1268–1269 (see [Figure 21.3](#)). Furthermore, the designs on these large blue-and-white dishes, like that on the luster dish dated 1268–1269, could be worked out in reserve by coloring the ground blue and leaving the design in white. The reserve technique requires far more cobalt than simply painting a blue design, an expensive development of decorative practices seen on popular Cizhou wares produced all over north China, on Jizhou wares in south China, and indeed in inlaid Korean wares.

Many of these dishes, like Cizhou pieces, are also very big: the largest-known charger from the Ardabīl collection measures 57.5 centimeters in diameter. It is inscribed on the back rim in Arabic with the word “Jingdezhen,” written under the glaze and added at the kiln presumably to ensure quality to the user, in the same way that modern ceramics have “Limoges” written under the foot.¹⁰⁸ The large dish would have been suitable for the communal serving typical of the meals prepared in the Islamic lands, and its design was deliberately adopted to fit the taste of its users, who were willing to pay high prices for a very large and very hard vessel. Blue-and-white’s southern rival, Longquan, also made pieces very large, apparently beginning in the 1320s, judging by a dated example of 1327 in the Percival David collection and similar examples commissioned by temples in Japan.¹⁰⁹

The Ardabīl dish was part of the royal collection of more than 1,000 ceramics that the Safavid Shāh ‘Abbās bestowed in 1611 upon the shrine that had developed since the Mongol period around the grave of his eponymous ancestor. The ceramic collection includes 400-odd other pieces of blue-and-white porcelain, a cross-section of the best-quality wares and many of the largest pieces known. We have no evidence when this particular blue-and-white dish came to Iran, but given its royal pedigree and the Arabic inscription on its reverse side, it must have been made for the export market. The most likely suggestion is that it came to a very wealthy Mongol patron in Iran soon after it was produced. Shipment of so many large and heavy dishes and vessels occurred with the development of the extensive mercantile network

108 [Pope 1956](#), Plate 6K. This Arabic inscription differs from the names that are incised or drilled into the glaze by the later owner who endowed the pieces to the shrine.

109 PDF 237 in the British Museum; Shōmyōji Temple in Kanezawa, illustrated in [McCausland 2014](#), Figure 136.

developed under the Mongols. From Jingdezhen, these wares were widely distributed, sometimes via land routes across the steppe from Dadu/Beijing to Qara-Qoto but more often via maritime routes from Ningbo and Quanzhou (Zaytūn) east to Korea and Japan and west through the Malacca Straits to India, the Maldives, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and East Africa. The Mongols, themselves originally nomadic and still transhumant into the fourteenth century, encouraged trade, which was often carried out by Muslims and other foreign merchants in *ortogh* (*ortaq*) partnerships with them.¹¹⁰

Under the Yuan, these activities were supervised under specialized government agencies such as the Maritime Trade Bureau and the Supervising Money Bureau,¹¹¹ but evidence for such state-controlled workshops in the western khanates is more limited. The formal nature of the inscription on the Abū Saʿīd silk (see Figure 21.2) shows that it was woven in a state factory, but it is the only Ilkhanid example known, and we have no evidence for the precise organization of the workshop where it was made. Occasional hints about such factories crop up in texts describing other political events in the Ilkhanate, as in Rashīd al-Dīn's account of the dispute between Hülegü's son Aḥmad Tegüder (r. 1282–1284) and his nephew Arghun. According to the chronicler, Aḥmad seized and plundered 300 households of artisans who belonged to Arghun; in return Arghun sent to the workshops (*karkhānahā*) at Nishapur, Tus, and Isfahān in eastern Iran for cloth or garments (*jāmaha*) to be brought. Within twenty days, quantities of gold, jewels, and textiles were delivered to the Adiliyya in Jurjan and distributed among the *amīrs* and soldiers.¹¹² A more rigorous search of more texts might yield more references to such workshops and help us understand how they functioned in the western khanates.

Foreign merchants from the west were also active traders in the western khanates. Using written sources, historians have traced the extensive trade between Italian merchants from Genoa and Venice and Tabriz and cities on the Black Sea.¹¹³ Objects like the silk made for Abū Saʿīd (see Figure 21.2) provide evidence of such traders as well. Its inscription offers blessings on a living person, but following the sultan's untimely death in 1335, the textile would have been useless at the Ilkhanid court. It must have been picked up there by a merchant who took it to north Italy, where it was made up into the burial suit of the Habsburg prince, Duke Rudolf IV, who had died unexpectedly in

¹¹⁰ Allsen 1997b. ¹¹¹ Endicott-West 1989; Endicott-West 1994, 597–600.

¹¹² JT/Karīmī, 2: 792; JT/Thackston, 3: 553. ¹¹³ Di Cosmo 2010.

Milan in 1365 and whose body was transported in this suit to his capital, Vienna, where he was buried in it in the ducal crypt in St. Stephen's Cathedral. It took only three decades to put the silk to use in Europe. Other similar silks were interred in the tomb of Cangrande della Scalla (d. 1329) in nearby Verona, and some were shipped across the Mediterranean as far as Burgos in the Iberian peninsula.¹¹⁴ Such objects thus complement the information contained in written sources, and mapping the diffusion of these silk textiles and other objects would aid in the establishment of overland trading networks in the same way that the presence of caravanserais at Marand and Sarcham documents the land route north from Tabriz to Julfa.¹¹⁵

Foreign populations also resided in Yuan and Korean cities – Yuan merchants in Korea and members of the Korean royal family in Dadu, for instance – although supporting visual sources are thin. A rare piece of evidence for cosmopolitan social intercourse in Dadu is preserved in Japan: a scroll of calligraphy by the southern Chinese court calligrapher Feng Zizhen, who served the Mongol princess Sengge Lagyi, presented to the Japanese Zen monk Muin Genkai (1283?–1358?), a pupil of the pre-eminent southern Chinese Chan master Zhongfeng Mingben (1263–1323).¹¹⁶ Material evidence is more helpful in documenting the influx of Persians and Central Asians to southern China. The Mongols built up their sea power in the 1260s and 1270s, partly to frustrate Song trade but also to secure Korea and invade Japan, and with the fall of the Southern Song in 1276–1279, the southern ports were opened up. Quanzhou became a clearinghouse for goods headed north.¹¹⁷ The former Song navy formed part of Qubilai's massive fleet for the second invasion of Japan, which departed from Ningbo at the mouth of the Qiantang river. A naval action is one of the scenes in the *Mongol Invasions of Japan* (*Mōkō shūrai ekotoba*) picture scrolls of 1293 commissioned by the samurai Takezaki Suenaga (1246–1314) after the catastrophic failure of the second invasion.¹¹⁸ Curiously, on the destruction of both invasion fleets by typhoons (*kamikaze*, “divine winds”), these scrolls are silent. The Persian population of Hangzhou rose significantly under Bayan Noyan, Mongol governor for

¹¹⁴ Wardwell 1989. ¹¹⁵ Wilber 1955, nos. 85, 90.

¹¹⁶ The handscroll *Poems Dedicated to Muin Genkai*, a National Treasure in Japan (Tokyo National Museum, TB-1176), is one of several pieces of calligraphy that Feng Zizhen wrote for Genkai; McCausland 2014.

¹¹⁷ Allsen 1997a, 18; Guy 2010.

¹¹⁸ The best-known version is in the Imperial Household Collection, Tokyo, illustrated in Conlan 2001.

Qubilai, as attested not only by references in chronicles but also by the numerous tombstones in the Phoenix Mosque there.¹¹⁹ Tombstones are particularly suitable as historical documents, because they are dated. Corresponding ports in southern Iran flourished at this time as well, as shown by the prosperity of the island of Kish.¹²⁰

The notorious Tangut lay monk encountered above, Yang Lianzhenjia, a deputy commissioner for religious affairs in Hangzhou and a protégé of the vizier, Sangha, was among the leading official and private patrons of Buddhist art and architecture in early Yuan Hangzhou, evinced by his personal commissioning of some of the dozens of Yuan figures carved in the grottos along the Feilaifeng cliff face opposite the famous Chan Buddhist temple, Lingyinsi, west of the city.¹²¹ The Buddhas and other Yuan figures attest to Indic, Tibetanized, and Chinese modes coexisting, sometimes within the same grotto. Such material evidence contrasts with the Chinese textual record wherein Yang is infamous for having facilitated, in the 1280s, the ransacking of the Song imperial tomb precinct south of the city, involving also the desecration of the corpses, by Tibetan and Central Asian monks to fund restoration and construction of Buddhist buildings. The skull of Qubilai's former adversary, Song emperor Lizong (r. 1224–1264), a trophy presented to Yang by those monks and made into a cup, made its way up the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy to court, where it was later spotted at a state banquet by the Hanlin academician and art connoisseur Wei Su, who successfully appealed to the qa'an to have it reburied.¹²²

Material evidence shows further that such transnational networks between the Chinese and south Persian littorals were not limited to merchants.¹²³ In the west, Sufi orders also engaged in such commerce. A good example is the Kāzarūniyya/Ishaqiyya, an order that prospered in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries around the tomb of the founder Abū Ishāq (d. 1003) at Kazarun in southwest Iran.¹²⁴ The order had extensive ties both west by land across Anatolia, with hospices at cities such as Erzerum, Amasya, Konya, and Bursa, and east by sea to the coasts of India and China. The Moroccan traveler Ibn Baṭṭūṭa stayed overnight in the home hospice (*khānqāh*) at

119 Lane 2018. 120 Kauz 2006; Kauz 2010b.

121 Gao 2002; Mezcua López 2017. New research by Bernadette Bröskamp awaits publication.

122 *Ming shi* 1999, 285.4888–89. On these events: McCausland 2014, Chapter 2.

123 There is no material counterpart to the *Yuan shi* records of a continuous stream of local products arriving at court as tribute from diplomatic/trade missions from the kingdoms of Korea, Indo-China, and insular Southeast Asia.

124 Lawrence 1983; Aigle 1997, 250–55.

Kazarun, as well as at others in Calicut and Quilon on the Malabar Coast and in Zaytūn/Quanzhou on the east coast of China, some of which were supervised by disciples from Fārs.¹²⁵ The order ran a sort of Sufi insurance agency, as the shaykh's blessing (*baraka*) was regarded as protection from danger. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa describes how fearful seafarers would pledge sums of money in hope of being safely delivered. When the ships docked, members of the order were waiting to redeem the pledges. Material evidence here again corroborates textual evidence, for the order issued its own coins.¹²⁶ Sufism here was no otherworldly asceticism but a practical moneymaking business condoned by the government.

The Kāzarūniyya are but one example of the prosperity of southwest Iran, particularly in the early fourteenth century, a florescence again well documented not only in written sources but also by material objects. Denise Aigle has charted the politics and fiscal administration of Fārs province under the Mongols, and John Limbert has profiled the poets and scholars who flourished in the main city of Shiraz.¹²⁷ One could well use visual sources for similar ends. Local production there included a rich range of inlaid metalwares and various types of manuscript, ranging from copies of the Qur'an to illustrated manuscripts of the *Shāhnāma*. Many of these objects are frequently discussed and reproduced, but a study of them as a whole has never been carried out and their usefulness as sources for provincial activity is underexploited.¹²⁸

Textiles show that such contacts between southern Iran and the Mongol regions in the east existed already in the thirteenth century. A stunning silk-and-gold textile in the David Collection (20/1994) names the Salghurid Abū Bakr ibn Sa'd (r. 1226–1260).¹²⁹ As ruler (*atabeg*) of Fārs, he acknowledged the suzerainty of Ögödei, who bestowed on him the title Qutlugh-Khan. Abū Bakr regularly sent tribute of pearls and other gifts to his Mongol overlord; perhaps this textile, surely woven in the Mongol domains to the east, was sent back as confirmation of Salghurid submission. It seems never to have reached Iran, for it, like many other textiles that have appeared on the market, is said to have been preserved in Tibet. Its publication in a catalogue of art from the Yuan period points to the recognition of the global nature of

125 Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 2: 309–II; [Kauz 2010b](#). 126 [Blair 1982a](#), esp. note 54; [Album 1984](#), 69.

127 [Aigle 2005](#); [Limbert 2004](#).

128 Many are illustrated and discussed in [Komaroff and Carboni 2002](#). For book production: [Wright 2013](#).

129 [Watt and Wardwell 1997](#), 135, Figure 63; [Folsach 2013](#), Figure 222c; on Abū Bakr: [Aigle 2005](#), 101–II.

art produced for the Mongols, and it, like other objects, can and should be exploited as a primary document.

A New Material World

One result of all this extensive network of commodity and exchange among the khanates was the development of a different material world. There was a shift in the balance of individual media. In the Ilkhanate, as in Korea, illustrated manuscripts became a major medium of production and covered new topics. China, with its traditions of calligraphy and painting, scrolls and printing for religious and civic functions may have provided the models not only for format but also for subject matter. David Morgan noted recently, for example, that the Chinese tradition of diary keeping and collective histories might have inspired local Persian historians such as Qāshānī and Rashīd al-Dīn.¹³⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn would likely have been aware that on the death of Qubilai in 1294 some of the most brilliant Yuan scholars, including Zhao Mengfu, were seconded into the National History Office of the Hanlin Academy in Dadu to compile and edit the veritable records of his reign (*shilu*), traditionally the source material for the history of the dynasty that was to be written by its successor, as duly occurred under the editorship of the Confucian scholar-official Song Lian (1310–1381), architect of the early Ming regime. Qubilai himself showed close interest in Song imperial history, exemplified for him in the person of Zhao Mengfu, a minor Song royal from Huzhou, just north of Hangzhou, who was commonly referred to as a “princeling” (*wangsun*) and whose recruitment to court in 1286 was a major achievement. The Tang court artist Yan Liben’s (c. 600–673) *Thirteen Emperors* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) was among the paintings that came into the qa’an’s possession in 1276 from the former Song imperial collection; the emperors of many of China’s dynasties were in turn depicted in Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*.¹³¹

There were other innovations to the material record in this period as well. The Qipchaq steppe under the Golden Horde became the site for the production of fine pottery, seemingly for the first time. Variants of the type of underglaze ceramics known as Sultanabad wares, after the site west of Kashan in central Iran where many were excavated clandestinely in the early twentieth century, were excavated at Sarai Berke. These wares may suggest

¹³⁰ Morgan 2013.

¹³¹ Gray 1978, Figures 4–18; Blair, 1995; Masuya 2018; McCausland 2014, 63–64, Figure 29.

that a contingent of potters brought their own methods and expertise, including the fritware body, vessel shape, and style, west to the lands of the Golden Horde.¹³² Rashīd al-Dīn's treatise *Āthār wa-aḥyā'* attests to the propagation, cultivation, and diffusion of a wide variety of plants and trees, some from China, India, and Southeast Asia, to the Ilkhanate.¹³³ The one new ceramic shape of the period in West Asia – a bowl with an articulated wall forming a broad in-sloping rim – might reflect a new type of cuisine that included the adoption of rice, which seems to have occurred at this time.¹³⁴

Textiles comprise one of the major commodities traded across Asia, or otherwise displaced, for instance in the possession of elite tribute women, and the gold-and-silver lampas weaves were not the only new type popular in this period. So was the knotted carpet. A few examples have been preserved in Anatolia, but other carpets with pseudo-Kufic borders enclosing a field with octagons incorporating stylized animals have recently come to light from Tibetan monasteries. To judge from their designs, some of which can also be documented precisely in Ilkhanid painting, these carpets attest to the flourishing of production in the western khanates, but attribution to Anatolia or Iran again often depends on the interests of the scholar involved or the subject of the collected volume in which the work is published.¹³⁵ A group of twenty-one carpets used to decorate a parade of floats in the Gion Festival in Kyoto, Japan, have similar pseudo-Kufic borders enclosing Chinese motifs such as a *Prunus* branch or octagons.¹³⁶ They not only demonstrate that some knotted carpets were produced for the East Asian market, but also show the value of looking at regional sources. Furthermore, the evidence from these carpets is becoming more valuable, as they are increasingly being dated more accurately with improved techniques of carbon-14 testing.¹³⁷

During this period, shapes and designs were often transferred between regions and/or media.¹³⁸ Metalware forms were often reproduced in ceramic. This is the case not only with the stemmed cups and large flat dishes used by the court, but also for other objects such as tripod incense burners.¹³⁹ The lobed roundels used for cloud collars could be adapted to fill the surfaces of

¹³² Watson 2006. ¹³³ Lambton 1998; Allsen 2001, Chapter 14.

¹³⁴ Allsen 2001, Chapter 15.

¹³⁵ Denny 2002; Denny 2010; Thompson 2010; Blair 2013; Franses 2013.

¹³⁶ Watt 2010, Figures 46–47; Franses 2013, Figures 248a, b.

¹³⁷ On the necessity of repeated testing: Franses 2013.

¹³⁸ On the introduction on Chinese motifs: Kadoi 2009.

¹³⁹ Several remarkable ones are in the Hohhot Museum, including one with a blue glaze and inscribed date equivalent to 1309 (Barnes 2010, Plate 7.11) and several with appliqué polychrome decoration (Carswell 1999–2000, Plate 9; McCausland 2014, Plate 22).

blue-and-white plates or the handles of metal cups or *paizas* or as gold filigree ornaments. The panel style was used in both Kashan and Jingdezhen. Scenes on Kashan ceramics that are cut off on the sides suggest that potters had some familiarity with scenes illustrated in manuscripts.¹⁴⁰ In Yuan China, at Longquan and Jingdezhen and possibly at the Cizhou kilns, potters took woodblock picture designs, often from dramas and *pinghua* texts as in the case of the Guiguzi story already noted, but also more “decorative” designs.

The visual evidence suggests a wide and easy currency of images of birds, flowers, and pond scenes across many points of consumption, for example in print from the court dietary manual *Yinshan zhengyao* of 1330 to the *Shilin guangji* of about the same date or a little before, and in painting from the scholar-cum-professional painting mode of Wang Yuan, to high-end artisanal paintings of the Piling school, to vernacular and funerary mural painting. The so-called Piling school of painting, located at Changzhou on Lake Tai in Jiangsu province, specialized in pond scenes featuring lotus and waterbirds of the kind seen in carved jade on official hat finials but also quickly adopted for surface decoration by producers of blue-and-white porcelain. The Piling school peaked during the Yuan, but examples of paintings survive mainly in Japan, likely enough because they were unsigned and sometimes made in decorative pairs, characteristics of little appeal to literati critics in China.¹⁴¹

Individual motifs were shared across media and regions as well. Dragons, phoenixes, peonies, and lotuses were applied to a variety of media across Asia, as were pseudo-Kufic borders on carpets, although it is doubtful that any of these motifs retained the significance they had carried in their original contexts. Most motifs moved from east to west and were then exported beyond the khanates to Syria and Egypt, but the pseudo-Kufic borders moved in the opposite direction, as did materials like cobalt along with the skills to use it. It was part of a favored palette that incorporated contrasts of gold with blue and other colors, whether in the new overglaze technique of *lājvardīna* developed for ceramics in Iran or in an unusual group of overglaze enameled wares found in Inner Mongolia.¹⁴² Again, we do not know whether the predominance of blue is related to the Mongol worship of Tengri as Sky

¹⁴⁰ [Watson 2004](#), no. Q.7; [Watson 2006](#), 335.

¹⁴¹ A fine pair of Piling school paintings is in the Tokyo National Museum (TA-142) (illustrated in [McCausland 2014](#), Figure 85). On the motifs and links to blue-and-white porcelain: [Whitfield 1993](#).

¹⁴² For *lājvardīna*: [Watson 2006](#), 336; for the unusual Chinese wares found in Inner Mongolia and now in the Shanghai Museum: [Watt 2010](#), Figure 327.

God or whether it was simply a response to the availability of high-quality cobalt, or some other permutation of reasons.

The changes introduced in the arts of the Mongol period in the western khanates, especially the Ilkhanate, are so extensive that Linda Komaroff described production there as part of “a new visual language.”¹⁴³ This idea might also have some currency in discussing Yuan art. One feature there was a novel interest in perspective and the opening up of space, even in the antiquarian, scholar mode. Intensifying the virtual reality of the pictorial image, a depiction of a unified landscape that runs along a level ground plane rising from the bottom edge of the painting uninterrupted to the horizon above is evident in Yuan landscape paintings by Zhao Mengfu, including his *Autumn Colors on the Qiao and Hua Mountains*, dated 1296, and *Water Village* of 1302.¹⁴⁴ Persian painters, perhaps introduced to this concept through prints and possibly textiles, developed it over the course of the fourteenth century such that the unified plane with high horizon becomes standard in Persian manuscript illustrations from the 1370s. As far as the makeup of an official “visual language” in the Yuan is concerned, one might point to the appearance in architectural painting (*jiehua*) and interior scenes of a perspectival system that was either affine (parallel) or tending towards the inverse (i.e., converging towards the observer), as is seen in paintings done at the Yuan court by Wang Zhenpeng, like the scroll commonly, if erroneously, known as *Mahaprajapati Nursing the Infant Buddha* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 12.902).

Figural painting in Yuan China, likewise, could be intensely naturalistic. Some of the most successful paintings carried deep appeal to the senses even if they were rendered using schemas and idioms such as Chinese ink-outline technique (*baimiao*), as in the case of Wang Zhenpeng’s *Boya Playing the Qin* (Palace Museum, Beijing), painted for Princess Sengge Lagyi. The narrative realism and spatial complexity and depth seen in professional painting, as in Piling school scenes of lotus ponds, carried over into the carving of jade. This is not to suggest that all of Chinese painting embraced such novelties: provincial scholars in the late Yuan championed modes of expressionistic brushwork and humanistic content, thereby highlighting painting as a literary practice rather than a pictorial craft. Similarly, the art of women like Guan Daosheng (1262–1319), wife of Zhao Mengfu, though still not well

¹⁴³ Komaroff 2002.

¹⁴⁴ National Palace Museum, Taipei, and Palace Museum, Beijing: McCausland 2011, Figures 3.9, 3.21; Watt 2010, Figure 31.

understood, appears to have been rather conservative, not straying far from Southern Song modes.

A second feature of this new style, again found in the arts produced under both the western khanates and the Yuan, is a desire for monumental size. The arch in the congregational mosque that the vizier 'Alī Shāh ordered built at Tabriz in the 1310s stretches thirty meters across, was supported on side walls some ten meters thick, and rose to an assumed height of twenty-five meters.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Öljeitü's tomb at Sulṭāniyya (see [Figure 21.4](#)) dwarfs its predecessors; its twenty-five-meter dome approaches the limit of single-span construction in brick. Standing over fifty meters high, the stupa of Anige's White Pagoda Temple took almost a decade to build and was one of the largest structures, if not the largest structure, in Yuan Dadu.

The Mongols themselves were often depicted as men of large and powerful physiques in East Asian paintings and prints, something complemented by the heft and size of many ceramic vessels, particularly from the 1320s on, as noted. The thirty-volume Qur'an that the sultan bestowed upon the pious foundation around Öljeitü's tomb is transcribed on full *baghdadi*-size sheets of paper, with each bifolio measuring seventy-three by 110 centimeters.¹⁴⁶ A mold slightly over a meter in width approaches the limit of what a single papermaker can lift, and the sheets are thus the largest that can be produced using dipping molds. Many features of size known in the Ilkhanate, from the large *iwan* to the large-size sheets of paper, were in turn adopted by the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria.¹⁴⁷ Such size not only bespeaks generous funding but also evinces a taste for importance demonstrated through scale.

A third feature found in many of the arts produced for the Mongols, both in the western khanates and under the Yuan in China, is an interest in all-over surface patterning, often with raised, pierced, or multilevel carving. In the Ilkhanate, the medium that best exemplifies this feature is plaster, whether in designs that are cut down from the surface, as with the extraordinary *mihrab* added to the congregational mosque at Isfahan in 710/1310,¹⁴⁸ or in other designs that are raised from the surface, as in the molded and painted bosses added to the tomb at Sulṭāniyya.¹⁴⁹ Both techniques of plasterwork were again exported to Mamluk Cairo.¹⁵⁰ In China, such designs can be very well seen in lacquer and also in ceramics, as on the Longquan ware octagonal vase with biscuit panels showing the Eight Daoist Immortals or the porcelain jars with red and blue-and-white panels.¹⁵¹ Such designs, which may reproduce

145 Wilber 1955, no. 51; Blair 2008; Blair 2013, 131–35. 146 Blair forthcoming.

147 O'Kane 1996. 148 Wilber 1955, no. 48; Blair 2015. 149 Sims 1982. 150 Blair 2013.

151 Watt 2010 Figures 293, 324; Barnes 2010, Figures 7.6, 7.36.

the raised effect of compound lampas or tapestry weaving, were executed in other media as well, ranging from metalwares to lacquer and cloisonné enamel.¹⁵² The examples par excellence are the stone relief carvings of the four Guardian Kings at the Cloud Terrace at Juyongguan (see [Figure 21.5](#)). One reason for the spread of such surface patterning is the widespread adoption of paper for stencils and designs, a feature that allows transfer from one medium to another and from one scale to another.¹⁵³

Many of these artistic innovations were not necessarily produced by or even for the Mongols themselves. However, the framework of Mongol sovereignty in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries afforded a cultural climate accepting and even desirous of new and different artistic and aesthetic features from individual motifs to designs, modes, and elements of style. Visual sources, in the sense of buildings and objects, thus help us to map the mental space of the period, its “period eye” and the social agency of its artworks. These works are the result of increased commerce and the availability of models, facilitated by the empire, but they also embody a taste ready to accept the new and different, a taste established in the Mongol period.

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152 Many illustrated in [Watt 2010](#); for cloisonné: [Quette 2011](#).

153 [Bloom 2001](#); [Bloom 2006](#).

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Index

- Abaqa, Ilkhan, 195–96, 207, 236, 418, 552, 554, 562, 813
 arts in the summer palace of, 181n1
 Buddhism, 840
 campaigns against the Mamluks, 806, 807
 chosen as Hülegü's successor, 194
 communications with Baybars, 810, 814
 conflict with Baraq, 260, 330–31, 404
 continuity and change under, 196–202
 death and succession, 202, 722
 defeat of Teguider, 721
 deployment of Georgian troops at Herat, 469
 diplomatic relations with Christians, 787, 809–10
 foreign policy, 721
 invasion of Bukhara, 332–33
jam system, 436
ordos, 410
 requested to purchase medicines for Qubilai, 841
 seals, 431
 seasonal migration, 408
 seizure of Khurasan troops, 416
 'Abbasids, 20, 38, 74, 232, 246, 254, 257, 330–31, 552, 557, 872
 Hülegü's destruction of, 87–90, 182, 189, 862
 Shī'ī threat, 221
 Translation Movement, 555
 'Abd al-Mu'min al-Khuwayyi, 592
 'Abdallāh son of Böjei, Chaghadaid prince, 333, 341
 'Abdallāh son of Qazaqan, Qara'unas amir, 363
 Abish Khatun, Salghurid, 194, 218
 Abishqa (Ch. Abigu), Alghu's *yarghuchi*, 323
 Abishqa, Chaghadaid, 322, 663
 Abū al-Ghāzī Bahādūr Khān, historian, 291
 Abū 'Alī (aka Sayyid) from Ma'bar, 831
 Abū al-Khayr, 300–1, 303
 Abū Bakr, atābeg, 837
 Abū Sa'id, Ilkhan, 222–28, 234, 278, 280, 288, 447, 641, 724, 789, 815, 816–17, 832
 Abulistan, battle of, 722
 Academy of Medicine (*Taiyi yuan*), 554
 Acre, 201, 804, 810, 811
 Aden, 495–96, 864
 'Ādil Sultan, Chaghadaid puppet khan, 364
 administration
 in the Caucasus, 716–19
 Chaghadaid, 372–74
 experts of, 856
 Ilkhanid, 204–7, 640
 Ghazan's reforms, 213–17
 institutions, 420–28
 of Möngke, 82–84
 of Ögödei, 59–65, 95, 425–26
 Ögödeid, 372–74
 Yuan, 113–16, 118–23, 132–35
 Adriatic, Sea, 858
 al-Afḍal 'Abbās, Rasūlid ruler, 817
 Afghanistan, 44–45, 88, 194, 319, 322, 351, 353, 359, 360, 371, 468, 576, 827, 833, 842
 Africa, 558, 860, 862
 Age of Exploration, 387, 852, 872
 agricultural colonies (*tuntian*), 58, 108, 143, 170, 661, 664, 666, 689, 741
 cannibalism in, 163
 Aḥmad, khan of the Great Horde, 303–4
 Aḥmad Fanākātī, Yuan minister, 121–23, 132–34, 411
 Aḥmad Tegüder. *See* Tegüder, Aḥmad
 Ainos, city in Thrace, 256
 Ainu, 741
 Aizong, Jin emperor, 50, 57
 Ajiqi, Chinggisid prince, 94, 343

- Aju, 117
 Akbar the Great, 221
 al-Akhawī, Jalāl al-Dīn, 380
Akhbār al-Moghūl (Mongol News), 7
 Aknerts'i, Grigor. *See* Grigor of Akanc
 Al Altan (Altun Beki), 34, 57 n174, 73 n269, 636
al tamgha (vermilion seal), 429, 431
 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad Shāh Khaljī, Delhi
 Sultan, 829, 832
 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad, Khwārazm-Shāh.
 See Muḥammad Khwārazm-Shāh
 Ala Qamaq, 75, 76
 'Alamdār, 92, 109–10, 111
 Alamūt, 89, 552, 720
 Alan Gho'a, 628
 Alans, 47, 66, 249, 256, 263, 308, 413, 417, 472–73,
 476, 643, 710, 790
 Alaqa (Alahai Beki), 636, 646
 Alaqush Digit Quri, 27
 Alashan, 34
 Alatagh, 408
 Alborz Mountains, 61, 182, 187, 189
 Alchu, son of Ghazan, 210
 alcohol, 11, 64, 75, 147, 205, 667, 859
 Aleppo, 90, 190, 423, 708, 711, 799, 802, 806, 811
 Alexander Mikhailovich, prince of Tver', 283,
 758, 764
 Alexander Nevsky, 501, 758, 761
 Alexander romance, 381
 Alexander the Great, 385, 592
 Alexandretta, 708
 Alexeev, Valery, 24 n20
 Alghu, Chaghadaid khan, 81, 112, 322–24,
 327–29, 334–35, 369, 371, 372, 405, 663–64
 descendants, 332–34, 343, 346, 366, 405
 marriage to Orqina, 644
alginchi(n) (scouts), 415, 463, 465, 467
 'Alī Bahādur, 423
 'Alī Qushjī, 569
 'Alī Sulṭān, Ögödeid prince, Chaghadaid
 khan, 356, 365, 382
 Alinaq, son-in-law of Tegüder, 722
 'Allama al-Hillī, 221, 233
Allegory of Winter (painting), 596
 Allsen, Thomas T., 5, 11–12, 21, 34n66, 37n82,
 40n95, 59, 73n269, 73, 75, 83, 147, 248n9,
 251n23, 252n31, 270n89, 308, 437, 480,
 501, 551
Almagest, 552, 563
 Almalīq, 33, 38, 53, 88, 96, 129n66, 261, 321,
 322–23, 325, 327, 334, 335, 348–50, 354,
 356–57, 362, 372, 666, 870
 Italian merchants in, 377
 minting of coins, 373
 religion in, 381–82, 789
 role of Chaghadaid women in, 379
 trade routes, 376
 Alqui Temür, Ögödeid prince, 159, 172, 348n71
 Altai mountains, 23, 33, 41, 141–42, 143, 248, 344,
 412, 617, 658
 climate, 613–15
 Altaic peoples, 28
 Altai-Sayan region, 614, 736, 748
 Altan Khans, 736
altan uruq (golden lineage), 30–31, 53
 Altun Beki. *See* Al Altun
 Altuna Khatun, wife of Chormaqan, 713
amān (safe conduct document), 340
 Ambrogio Lorenzetti, 596, 793
 Āmid, 799, 802
amīr al-umārā'. *See* beglerbeg
amīr-i ordo, 342, 639
 Amitabha, 541
 Amu Darya (Oxus river), 43–44, 88, 114, 195,
 404, 416, 421, 480, 617–18, 665
 Amu Darya region, 426
 Amur region, 737, 745, 750
 Amur, river, 149n129, 734, 741, 743, 871
 Ananda, 147, 160, 408, 648
 Anatolia, 1, 71, 74, 182, 218, 219, 224, 249, 254,
 256, 258, 468, 799
 Mamluk invasion (1277), 201
 migrations to Syria and Egypt, 819
 slave trade routes, 280
 tamgha, 499
 tax and tribute, 192
 ancestor worship, 448, 452, 455, 577, 659
 ancestors' system, 158–59
anda (sworn brothers), 25, 682
 Andalò da Savignone (Andrew the Frank), 790
 Andijān, 375
 André de Longjumeau, 786
 Andrei Aleksandrovich, son of Alexander
 Nevsky, 265, 268, 274, 759
 Andrei Iaroslavich, prince of Vladimir, 758
 Andreolo Civran, 286–87
 Andronikos II, 265
 Andronikos III, 281
 Anhui, 58, 130, 580
 Anige, 589, 844–45
 animals. *See also* camels; horses; livestock;
 sheep
 in artwork, 577, 595
 effects of climate on, 657, 658, 661
 environmental carrying capacity and,
 605, 608

- exchange of among the Chinggisids, 245
 export of from Central Asia, 377
 mass hunting of, 462
 measurement of the Mongolian plateau
 in, 24
 provision of, 665
 religious views of, 539, 553
 taken as tithes, 761
 women's care of, 633
 Ankara, battle of, 365
 Annam, 124, 153, 830. *See also* Dai Viet
Annunciation (painting), 509, 793
 Antioch, 468, 806
 Antong, son of Muqali. *See* Hantum
 Anūshīrvān, Khusrāw I, Sasanid ruler, 450
 Apardi, tribe, 360
 appanage (*qubi*), 31, 54, 64, 81–82, 108, 400, 403,
 436, 863
 assigned by Möngke, 325
 granted to women, 633, 645
 Qaidu's involvement in affairs of, 325
 Yuan, 107, 503–4
aqā (elder brother), 857
 Aqsu, 362
aqtachi (grooms), 417
 Arabia, 510, 798, 815–18
 Arabic language, 235, 237, 817, 869
 Arabic script, 8, 71, 234, 237, 379, 428, 597, 659
 'Arabshāhids, 301
 Aradnadara, son of Tuq Temür, 152
 Aragibag, 150, 648
 Aral Sea, 44, 53, 248, 293, 298, 606, 613, 614,
 617–18, 742
 architecture, 581–83
 Arghin, tribe, 244
 Arghun Aqa, Oirat amīr, 71, 73–74, 82–83, 84,
 88, 208
 diplomatic relations with Ayyūbids, 799
 establishment of fiscal system in
 Caucasia, 713
 establishment of postal stations, 436
 reaction to Caucasian revolt, 716
 tasks assigned in Caucasasia, 717
 Arghun, Ilkhan, 181n1, 198, 201, 202–4, 220,
 224, 338–39, 418, 561, 811
 appointment of *shāhna*s, 423
 Armenian support for, 722–23
 conflict with the Jochids, 267
 death and succession, 205–7
 described in poetry, 728
 diplomacy, 787, 790, 809
 diplomatic exchanges with Yuan China, 831
 messages of friendship from Qonichi, 270
 ordos, 410
 patronage of Buddhism, 840
 rejection of baptism, 528
 revolt against Aḥmad Tegüder, 207
 seals, 431
 seasonal migration, 408
 Arigh Böke, 81, 82n314, 84, 113, 127, 128, 129,
 186, 261, 336, 413, 453, 475, 646
 control of Qaraqorum, 92, 94
 descendants, 665, 675
 Oirat support for, 747
 opposition from Orqina, 644
 war with Qubilai, 91, 94, 110–12, 190, 201,
 254, 258, 321–23, 327, 401, 406, 417, 660,
 662–64, 689, 744
 Ariq-Qaya, 117
 Arlat, tribe, 360, 372
 Armenia, 74, 680, 707–8, 779, 871
 first Mongol invasion, 708–10
 introduction of *jam* system, 436
 Mongol administration, 717
 Mongol legacy, 726–27
 Armenia, Greater, 254, 714, 717, 719, 721,
 724, 726
 Armenia, Lesser (Cilicia), 468, 680, 694, 708,
 709, 713, 714–15, 720, 722, 726, 805, 817.
 See also Het'um I
 Armenian language, 454, 817
 Armenian literature, 728–29
 Armenian texts, 449
 illustrated manuscripts, 580
 multilingual dictionaries, 860
 Armenians, 56, 258, 266, 288, 308, 331, 449, 803
 in Baiju's army, 416
 Christian, records of interactions with
 religious traditions, 532–33, 541
 contribution of tax and tribute
 requirements, 192
 enlisted to Hülegü's *kešig*, 418
 intermarriage with Mongols, 716
 merchants, 502, 509n110, 864
 military cooperation, 719–22
 military participation in Syria, 468, 806,
 808, 811
 rebellion against the Mongols, 715–16
 submission to Mongol rule and
 co-operation, 714–15
 support for Arghun, 722–23
 army, 118, 460. *See also* tactics and strategy
 Byzantine, 708
 Chaghadaid, 368–72, 470–71
 Ilkhanid, 467–70
 institutions and organization, 412–20

- army (cont.)
 Jochid, 471–74
 Mamluk, 185, 722, 804, 813, 815, 818
 mobilization, 605, 634, 741, 748, 855, 870
 Mongol, 460–67
 Ögödeid, 368–72
 Yuan, 474–77
 Arpa Ke'ün, 227
 Arrān, 182, 183, 195, 272, 408, 714, 724
 Arshad al-Dīn, 362
 Arslan Khan, 33
 artisans, 107, 596, 862
 conscripted to the Mongol army, 757, 761
 high status of in the Golden Horde, 244
 redemption and transportation of, 42, 43,
 46, 334, 378, 380, 575–76, 658, 856
 resettlement of in Qaraqorum, 60
 Samarqandi, 861
 support for, 500
 taxation of, 645, 718
 arts and artisanship, 575–78
 book painting, illustrated manuscripts,
 235–36, 591–94, 598
 calligraphy, 597–98
 ceramics, 580–81
 illustrations of the natural world, 595–97
 metalwork, 578–80
 portraiture, 588–91
 textiles, 584–88
 tilework, 199, 236
 Artsruni, Sadun, 721, 723
 Artsrunids, Armenian Dynasty, 721
 Aruq, Jalayir amīr, 204, 205, 208
 Ascelin, Friar, 784
 al-Ashraf Khalīl, Mamluk sultan, 811
 Asia Minor, 562, 708, 713
 Asoka (Ashoka), Mauryan monarch, 446, 450
 Assassins. *See* Ismā'īlis, Nizārī
 Astrakhan, 296, 298, 299, 766, 783
 Astrakhan, Khanate of, 300, 302, 306, 767
 astrology, 234, 525, 559, 562, 567, 568, 569
 Astronomical Bureau (of the Ming
 dynasty), 675
 Astronomical Bureau (of the Yuan dynasty),
 562, 564
 astronomy, 236, 306, 550, 839, 845
 Ptolemaic, 551
 Asud Guards, 130, 149, 169
 Asutai, son of Möngke, 93
 'Aṭā al-Samarqandī, 566
 Ataghai, 123
Āthār wa ahyā, 838
 Atlantic Ocean, 613, 864
 Atwood, Christopher, 75n288
 Aubin, Françoise, 36n77
a'uruq (base camp), 407
 Austria, 67, 783
 auxiliary troops, 36, 37, 331, 370
 Awag Zak'arian, Armenian prince, 714n41,
 715, 716n54, 721
 Awarga (Avraga), 52, 407
 Ayas, 280n134, 708, 723, 789
 Aykaku, 258
 'Ayn Jālūt, battle of, 91, 191, 257, 720, 787,
 810, 818
 Aytamish al-Muḥammadi, Mamluk officer
 and envoy, 819
 Ayurbarwada (Buyantu Qa'an, Emperor
 Renzong), 144–45, 151, 154–55, 157, 160,
 161–63, 648, 672, 697, 799
 Ayushiridara, Biligtü Qa'an, 172–74, 674
 Ayyūbid dynasty, 185, 190, 246, 252, 708,
 799, 802
 Mayyāfāriqīn, 182
 Syria, 804, 819
 Azaq, 279, 290
 Azerbaijan, 71, 416, 468, 708,
 710, 799, 870
 attacked by Jebe and Sübe'etei, 781
 Buddhist complex, 840
 Chobanid command of, 228
 Hülegü's withdrawal to, 803, 819
 Ilkhanid rule, 87, 182, 183–84, 195
 influence on Italian architecture, 236
 Jochid-Ilkhanid struggles over, 91, 192, 231,
 258, 272, 275, 278, 288–90, 292, 296, 473,
 482, 721
 Azov, Sea of, 47, 375, 517, 707, 727, 769, 788
 Ba'arin. *See* Barin
ba'atur (brave, pl. *ba'atud*), 75
ba'urchi (steward), 417, 419
 Baalbek, 802
 Bābā Kamāl Jandī, 384
 Baba Tükles, Sufi saint, 299
 Babai Xifu. *See* Lan Na
 Babusha, princess, 145n116, 151
 Bachman, 66
 bacteria, 866
 Badai, 108, 133
 Badain Jaran Desert, 611
 Badakhshān, 38, 84, 338, 352, 356–57, 359, 363,
 367, 416
 Badakhshān, Shāh(s) of, 270, 343, 353, 360, 370
 Bādghīs, 331, 361
 Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu', ruler of Mosul, 802

- Baghdad, 38, 87, 182, 183, 200, 212, 220, 272, 811, 870
 administration, 423
 anti-Jewish pogrom, 205
 author portraiture, 593
 conquest of, 254, 257, 552, 553, 787, 801–2, 853
 as a cultural and economic center, 233
 damage caused by the Mongols, 581, 854
 Genoese shipbuilding, 201
 Ilkhanid administration, 204–5
 Ilkhanid control of craftsmen, 576
 Jalayirid book making, 235
 Jalayirid court, 228
 killing of the last ‘Abbāsīd caliph, 232
 land taxes, 498
 Mongol governance, 868
 Mongol campaign (c. 1245), 799
 Mongol troops in, 414
 as a royal residence, 198, 222
 siege of, 89–90, 189, 416, 802
 slave trade, 378
 sparing of the Christian population, 641, 719–20
- Baghdad Khatun, 223, 225, 226, 641
- Baghlan, 360, 363, 416
- Bagratids, 708, 726
- Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband, 357
- Bahram Gur, Sasanian, 199
- Bai Baliq, 658
- Baidar, 67, 322
- Baidu, Ilkhan, 207–9, 211, 339, 723
- Baiju, noyan, 56, 71, 74, 90, 148, 258, 416, 468, 711–13, 715, 718, 784, 799
- Baikal, Lake, 21, 614
- Baikalia, 737
- Bairam Egechi, mother of Temür Qa’an, 409
- Bala, Uighur secretary, 76, 80, 429
- Balaghai, Jochid prince, 404
- Balard, Michel, 768
- Balāsāghūn, 33, 38, 358, 376, 870
- Baljuna, Baljuna Covenant, 26, 531
- Balkans, 269–70, 281
- Balkh, 45, 84, 338, 376, 379, 421
- Balkhash, lake, 38, 47, 75, 614, 615
- ballista, 465, 467, 480–81
- Baltic Sea, 508
- Bamiyan, 46
- Banākātī, Abū Sulaymān, 213
- Baniyās, 802
- baoyin* (requisition-oriented tax), 499–501, 504
- Bar Hebraeus, 206
- Baranī, Zīyā’ al-Dīn (Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn), 842–43
- Baraq, Chaghadaid Khan, 128–29, 201, 259–61, 327–31, 334, 344, 369, 374, 384, 404–5, 644, 665, 721
- barāt*, 216
- Barcelona, 810
- Bärchkand, 382
- Barchuq, 33, 636
- Barfield, Thomas, 21
- Barin region, 140, 338
- Barin, tribe, 244, 293
- Barlas, tribe, 360, 363, 372, 406
- barley, 374, 610
- Barqu Plain, 735, 738, 740, 748
- barschi* (inspector of those hunting with cheetahs), 327
- barter, 373, 865
- Bartold, W., 41102
- Barulas. *See* Barlas
- Basarab, 281
- Bashkirs (Bajigit), 247, 738, 740, 746, 748
- Bashqirds, 249
- Basileopator* (Father of the Basileus), 250
- basqaq*, 283, 286, 424–25, 717, 742, 763, 770
- Batu, son of Jochi, 47, 54, 59, 88, 245, 249–52, 254, 257, 740, 781
 awarded Shazhou, 51
 death, 91, 192, 251, 719
 designated as Jochi’s heir, 249
 destructiveness of his armies, 756, 759
 influence of Sorqaqtani, 637
 inheritance of western territories, 53
 insulted by Büri, 79
 invasion of Hungary, 783
 operations in Kievan Rus’, 66–68, 753
ordos, 410
 postal stations, 433
 relations with Chin Temür and Körgüz, 62
 seasonal migration, 408
 submission of David Narin to, 715
 succession matters, 68–69, 75–77
 support for Möngke, 403
 tensions with Güyük, 70, 72, 75, 83, 186–87, 250, 402
ulus, 472
 wife, 642
- Batuids, 249, 265, 270, 278, 284–92, 293, 295, 297, 302
- Baya’ud, tribe, 147
- Bayad territory, 140
- Bayalun, 276
- Bayan (Bayan Chingsang), Yuan general, 129, 138, 481, 647

- Bayan Quli, Chaghadaid puppet khan, 360, 362, 386
- Bayan Sulduz, 362–63, 371
- Bayan *taishi*, Yuan official, 114n21, 115, 117, 494, 693
- Bayan, son of Qonichi, khan of the Orda ulus, 270, 272, 343
- Bayazid, Ottoman Sultan, 365
- Baybars al-Bunduqdārī, Mamluk Sultan, 201, 256–57, 262, 264, 804, 810, 812–14, 816
- Bayit, Siberian people, 738
- Bedouins, 806, 814, 815–16
- beg*, 244, 292
- Beg Qadaq Binal, noyan, 257
- beglerbeg*, 244, 276, 292, 298–300
- Begtütmish, 68, 637
- Beian Wang, 666
- Beijing. *See* Dadu; Zhongdu
- Beijing opera, 860
- Bekrin, tribe, 324
- Béla IV, King of Hungary, 66, 782, 783
- belge* (certificate), 436
- Belgütei, 25, 30, 31, 55, 425
- Belting, Hans, 583
- Bembo, Leonardo, 287
- Benedict of Poland, 590, 784
- Benedict XI, Pope, 144, 277n19, 120, 428–32, 790
- Bengal, 495, 496–97, 834–35, 838, 842, 865
- Buddhism, 839
- benji*, Yuan imperial annal, 165
- Bergen, 263
- Berke, Jochid khan, 77, 91, 192, 202, 246, 250, 721, 787, 814
- coinage, 261
- first collective conversion to Islam and, 252–58
- monetary reform, 275
- reconciliation of Islamic and Chinggisid rules, 309
- succession, 259–60
- Berke Buqa, 697
- Berkecher, Jochid prince, 329
- Beshbaliq, 33, 46, 62n207, 80, 82, 325, 336, 357, 376, 380, 426, 504, 576, 581
- Beth Shean, 804
- Bezhtsk, 759
- Bianliang. *See* Kaifeng
- Bianliang, river, 170
- bichēchi*, *bichigechi* (scribe), 323, 417, 418, 419, 420, 426, 429
- Bilawhar wa Būdḥāṣaf*, 591
- bingjang* (Ch. *pingzhang*), 114
- al-Bīra, fortress, 802, 806
- Biran, Michal, 8n19, 24n23, 24, 33n65, 38n84, 40n96, 270n89, 320n1, 530n26, 598
- Birdibek, Jochid khan, 289–92, 294, 765
- Birge, Bettine, 7, 154n136
- al-Birūnī, 235
- bishop, bishopric, 225, 266, 382, 761, 789–91
- Black Death, 9, 159, 166, 232, 287, 290, 291, 356, 358, 359, 375, 551, 606n5, 726, 755, 764, 818, 866
- Black Sea, 226, 231, 244, 256, 270, 279, 286, 288, 290, 376, 707, 742
- competition between Genoese and Venetians, 263
- exports of horses from region of, 510
- Genoese trading posts, 281
- Ottoman control of, 305
- provision of staples from region of, 789
- slave markets, 378
- slave trade, 815
- trade, 727
- trade colonies, 788, 794, 864
- transmission of Christianity to China, 780
- Black Tatars, 23
- Blair, Sheila, 577
- Blanche of Burgundy, 593
- Bloom, Jonathan, 577
- Blue Book (Mo. *köke debter*), 30, 425
- Blue Horde, 53, 249, 270, 272, 277, 290, 295, 297, 300, 472
- Blue Waters, battle of, 294
- blue-and-white porcelain, 236, 495, 509, 580–81, 582, 661, 837–38, 865
- Bo'ol, son of Muqali, 48
- Bo'orchu, 25, 29, 131, 132
- Boccaccio, Giovanni, 232
- boghtaq* (headdress), 76
- Bohemond VI of Antioch, 803
- boiar* (Russian nobility), 761, 763, 770–71
- Böke Temür, 337, 348, 352
- Böl, son of Muqali, 47
- Bolad Chingsang, 206, 419, 437, 475
- Bolad Temür, 172–73, 698
- Bolaji, Dughlat commander, 366
- Bolghai, 83, 426, 429
- Boniface VIII, Pope, 211, 418, 431
- Book of Hours*, 593–94
- book painting, 235–36, 591–94, 598
- Boqa Temür, Chaghadaid khan, 332, 333
- Boraqchin, 252, 650
- Borjigin, 628
- Boroldai, Qara'unas amir, 361
- Boroldiyya, 361

- Boroqul, 29
- Börte, 25, 31, 52, 53, 409, 629, 632, 635–37
 descendants, 640, 642, 643, 646
 tribe of, 649
- Bosphorus, 256, 306, 815
- Bosten Lake, 616
- Boucher, Guillaume, 582
- Bozhou, 171, 325
- Bozhulu Chong, 155, 157
- Brack, Jonathan, 868
- Briansk, 759
- Broadbridge, Anne, 34n66, 57n174, 73n269
- Broadening Benevolence Office (*Guanghui* si), 554
- Brook, Timothy, 135, 163
- Bruges, 506, 508
- Bryansk, 265
- 'Bry-Gung, Tibetan Buddhist sect, 336
- bubonic plague. *See* Black Death
- Buda, 67
- Buda Kur, 257
- Budashiri, 151–52, 157, 648
- Buddha, 533, 538, 540–41, 839, 840–42
 narrative art, 591–92, 860–61
 statue, 511
- Buddhist priests, 445, 695
 dispensation of drugs, 555
- Buddhists, Buddhism, 23, 454, 529, 662, 700, 784. *See also* Tibetan Buddhism
 among the Chaghadaids, 354, 381
 famine assistance, 163
 freedom from war captivity, 109
 in the Ilkhanate, 194, 204, 209, 541–42, 592, 839–41
 influence on art and architecture, 577, 578–79, 582, 585, 589, 595–98
 in the Jochid Ulus, 276
 literature, 591
 Qara Khitai, 21
 in Qaraqorum, 60, 659
 Qubilai's engagement with, 108, 841–42, 844
 recognition of their specialist knowledge, 527
 religious exchange, 84, 93, 526, 531–33, 538–42
 sacralization of Chinggis Khan, 446
 segregation in the steppe, 455
 tax immunities, 64
 in the United Empire, 531
 vilification of Tibetan Buddhists, 534
 women and, 628, 646
 in Yuan China, 544, 841–42
- Buell, Paul, 7, 19n1, 28n37, 33, 59, 248n9, 739n12
- Bug, river, 269
- Bugha (Buqa), 728
- Bujir, 82
- Bukhara, 39, 53, 335, 374, 421
 Abaqa's invasion of, 201, 332–33
 Baraq's flight to, 260, 329, 331
 as a center of Sufism, 384
 Chaghadaid administration, 322–23
 Chinggis's conquest of, 42–43
*darugh*a institution, 422
 Maḥmūd Yalawāch's governance, 61, 62
 Mongol troops in, 369
 Qaidu's claim to, 259
 restoration, 96
 restoration of intellectual life, 564
 scholastic institutions, 382–83
 scholastic works, 380
 slave markets, 378
 trade routes through, 376
- al-Bukhārī, Saḍr al-Sharī'a al-Thānī, 563, 565
- al-Bukhārī, Shams al-Dīn Mīrak, 564, 565
- Bulghar, 472
 coinage, 261
 monetary reforms, 275
- Bulghars, 66, 249, 309, 402, 472, 736, 740, 748–49, 750, 754, 782
- Bulughan, 147, 642, 647–48
- Buqa Temür, 640
- Buqa, Jalayir amīr, 204–5, 208
- Bureau of Military Affairs (Ch. *Shumi yuan*). *See* Ōn
- Bureau of Tibetan and Buddhist Affairs (Ch. *Xuanzheng yuan*), 427
- bureaucracy, 21, 23, 132, 205, 474, 670, 671, 817
- Büri, Chaghadaid prince, 67, 79, 267n75, 402
- Buriat, 41
- Burkhan, Xia ruler, 34
- Burma (Myanmar), 116, 125, 126, 140, 142, 477, 495, 830, 838, 872
- Burqan (Burkhan) Qaldun, 21–23, 28, 40, 52, 93, 452, 748
- Buryiat, 738
- Buscarello de Ghisolfi, 787
- Buyantu Qa'an. *See* Ayurbarwada
- Buyid dynasty, 221, 233
- Buyirūq Khan, 33
- Buz Baki, 257
- Buzan (Buzun), Chaghadaid prince, 355, 357
- Byzantine army, 708
- Byzantines, 244, 262, 264, 266, 269, 281, 310
 Ilkhanid wives, 641, 643

- Byzantines (cont.)
 slaves, 815
- Byzantium, Byzantine Empire, 20, 256,
 264–65, 269, 281, 451, 707–8, 737,
 738, 788
 ceramics, 581
 coinage, 493, 496, 517
 metalwork, 580
- Caesarea, 713
- Caffa, 263, 269, 273–74, 279, 286–87, 358, 472–73,
 781, 788, 789, 864, 866
 coinage, 497, 517
 Franciscan settlement, 266
 slave trade, 768
- Cai Meibiao, 650n53
- Cairo, 804, 808
 Black Death, 291
 diplomatic missions to, 811
 Mamluk army in, 813
 puppet ‘Abbasid caliphate in, 814
 relations with Sarai, 91
 scholarly contact with, 818–19
 trade road from, 256
- Caizhou, 57
- Calicut, 833, 835
- camel(s), 305, 377, 483, 532, 633
- cannibalism, 163, 165–66, 170, 171
- “Cap of Monomakh”, 580
- Cappadocia, 708
- captives, 370, 862
 execution of royal, 189
 Kashmiri, 84, 353
 Koryō, release of, 689
 marriage with, 630
 massacred by Temür in Delhi, 829
 seized from Koryō, 688
 skilled, 378
 sold as slaves, 342, 378, 515
 taken from the Latin communities of
 Crimea, 269
 Tangut, 34
 Tatar women and children, 636
- Carmen Miserabile*, 783
- Carpini, John of Plano, 68n240, 69n245, 72,
 402, 553, 591, 755, 759, 784–85, 790
- Carrying the Cross* (painting), 596
- cartography, 236, 526, 557–58, 792–93, 860
- Casimir IV, 303
- Caspian Sea, 44, 53, 62, 219, 288, 297, 299, 613,
 707, 708, 742, 781
- Caspian steppes, 66, 67
- Cathay, 375, 378, 406, 408, 564, 789, 790
- Catholic Church, Catholics, 266, 380, 382, 725,
 782, 783, 784, 789–91, 839
- Caucasus, 10, 45, 47, 53, 66, 79, 182, 183, 194,
 252, 273, 473, 707–8, 753, 781, 783, 799,
 853, 871
 extension of the postal system to, 504
 final conquest, 710–16
 first invasion (1220), 708–10
 Hülegü’s withdrawal to, 190
 Jochid alliances, 244
 Jochid governance, 246, 250
 Mamai’s rule, 294
 military co-operation, 719–22
 Mongol administration, 716–19
 Mongol legacy, 726–29
 pasturelands, 192, 219
 relations in the later Ilkhanate, 722–26
 Toqtamish’s expeditions to, 296
- Censorate (Ch. *Yusitai*). *See* *Tai*
- census, 330, 501
 Caucasia, 713, 717–18
 central China, 666
 Chaghadaid, 323, 498
 Chinggis Khan’s supervision of,
 422
 Golden Horde, 251, 498
 Ilkhanate, 498
 Koryō, 685
 north China, 63, 64, 82, 503
 organization of, 498
 Russia, 424, 500–1, 757, 758–63, 764
 United Empire, 857
 used for military recruitment, 856
 Yuan, 121, 334, 413
- Central Asia, 2, 8, 246, 369. *See also* Chaghadaid
 Khanate, Chaghadaids; Ögödeids
 administration, 372–75
 agriculture, 374
 armies, 368–72
 climate, 603
 conquest of, 40–43
 economy, 373–75
 ethnic reconfiguration, 869–70
 merchant associations, 502
 Qaidu and the Middle Kingdom, 324–44
 rebels and subjects in, 32–34
 reigns of the Du’aids, 344–58
 trade, 375–78
 women’s participation in the campaigns
 in, 642
- Central Europe, 263, 269, 281
- ceramics, 514, 577–78, 580–81, 597, 661. *See also*
 porcelain; tilework

- inscriptions, 597, 659
 Iranian, 580
 Ch'oe, 85, 684, 693, 854–61
 Ch'unghye, king of Koryŏ, 693, 696
 Ch'unghyŏl, king of Koryŏ, 696
 Ch'ungsŏn, king of Koryŏ, 692, 694
 Chabui (Chabi), 94, 110, 589, 646, 845
 Chaghadaï, son of Chinggis Khan, 52, 54–55, 62–63, 369, 380, 635
 army, 470
 assignment of territories to, 782
 and the conquest of Central Asia, 41, 43–46, 248–49
 death, 68, 250
 grants of subject peoples, 31
 postal stations, 433
 seal, 431
 territories assigned to, 53–54, 184, 320, 365
 war in north China, 35
 wives, 643
 Chaghadaid Khanate, Chaghadaids, 4, 182, 245, 319–20, 404–5
 administration, 322–23, 372–75
 architecture, 583
 army, 368–72, 470–71
 tribal contingents, 372
 census, 323, 498
 ceramic art, 581
 chancellery, 431
 chiliarchy system, 414
 coinage, 501
 culture and religion, 378–87
 division, 292
 economy, 373–75
 emigration, 333, 340n51, 380, 381
 executions of Franciscans, 793
 gender relations, 643–44
 invasions of Iran, 340–41, 721
 Islamization, 381–82, 384–87, 862
 keshig, 368, 373, 419, 471
 lack of interest in arts and culture, 598
 Qaidu and, 327–44, 665–69
 reigns of the Du'aids, 344–58
 relations with Möngke, 321–22
 relations with the Delhi Sultanate, 341, 829, 843
 relations with the Ilkhanids, 184, 191, 212, 218–19, 329–33, 338–40, 351–53, 371
 relations with the Yuan, 127–29, 144–46, 333–34, 346–55, 369, 374, 598, 744
 rise and fall of Alghu's state, 320–24
 rule of the amīrs, 359–68
 scientific activity and exchange, 550, 551, 563–64, 565–66, 568
 taxation, 372–73
 Toluid purge of, 250
 trade, 375–78
 Chaghan Khan, White or Western Khan, appellation of Russia, 455
 Chaghān Temür, 169, 172
 Chaghan, Tangut commander, 50, 51, 108
 Chaghatay language, 319
 Chaghatu, 408
chaifa, 63
 Chakir, Chinggisid princess, 150
Chakravartin-rajā, "Wheel-turning Universal Emperor," 446
 Champa, 116, 124, 142, 478, 482, 830–31
 chancellery, 428–32
 Changbaishan mountains, 612
 Changchun (Qiu Chuji), 45, 46, 84, 429, 430, 432, 531, 553
 Changsha, 93
 Changshi, Chaghadaid khan, 356, 381–82
 Changzhou, massacre of, 118
chao. *See* paper money
 Chapar, son of Qaidu, 141–42, 143, 270–71, 344–51, 370, 372, 375, 405, 414, 668
 Chaqa, Chinggisid prince, 86
 Chaqa, Tangut princess, 34
 charisma, 451–53
 genealogical, 220
 Charles of Anjou, 200
 Chechegtü, Chinggisid prince, 157
 Checheyigen, 636, 640, 642, 643
 Cheke, 268, 270n88
 Chen Gaohua, 162n168
 Chen Rijiong (Tran Canh), 87
 Chengdu, 57, 93, 415
cherbi (steward, adjutant), 83
cherbin ökid (female attendants), 411
 Cherepnin, L.V., 66n227
cherig (auxiliary troops), 414
 Chernigov, 66n234, 754
chernyi liudi (free commoners), 761
 Chikü Güregen, 57
 chiliarch. *See* *mingghan*
 Chimgi-Tura (Tiumen), 296, 743
 Chin Temür, 61–62, 71
 Chinese painting, 598, 859
 Chinese script, 421, 597
 Chinese, ethnic. *See* Han
 Chinggim, son of Qubilai, 122, 130, 132, 133–34, 152, 194–95
 descendants, 145, 146, 148, 152

- Chinggis Khan (Temüjin), 1, 6, 19, 80, 181, 482,
528, 657, 673, 753, 845, 853
administration and institutional reforms,
28–30
allocation of troops to his sons, 470, 471
appointment of *darughas*, 420–22
appointment of *jarghuchi*, 425
birth and lineage, 24–25
and the Caucasus, 709
as *chakravartin*, 446, 841
chancellery practices, 428–29, 430
charisma and good fortune, 452, 454, 861
climate and the expansion of his troops, 9,
609–10
dispensation of territories, 184
effects of climate on his campaigns, 606
Mongolia, 609–10
North China and Manchuria, 610–12
encounters with South Asia, 827–28, 832
fall of Xia and death of, 50–52
family, 635–37
Golden Kin, 30–31
heavenly mandate, 449, 451
household staff, 411
intellectual curiosity, 531
Jin campaign, 35–37, 681
and Koryŏ, 683
last campaign, East Asia, 48–50
marriage, 629–30
military
 conscription, 413
 keshig, 416–17
 mingghan (chiliarchies), 412
 reforms, 460–62, 464, 481–82
northern conquests, 738–40
ordos, 409
Otrar and the conquest of Central Asia,
40–48
postal system, 433
preparations for the Jin campaign, 34–35
regard for the Uriyangqai, 748
relations with Jochi, 248–49
relations with Khwārazm and Sultan
 Muḥammad, 37–39, 229–30
religious toleration policy, 262
relocation of the Merkits, 746
response to rebels and subjects in Central
 Asia, 32–34
search for medical expertise, 553
seasonal migrations, 407
sons, 635
submission of the Oirats, 741
succession, 52–54, 186
tax policy, 499
tax privileges granted to Daoist and
 Buddhist monasteries, 64, 84
uluses, 400–1
uniting of the Mongol confederations,
25–27
worship of, 452, 591
yāsāq, 427, 428, 867
Chinggis Khan cults, 455, 749
Chinggisid exchange, 245
 cultural transformations, 854–61
 economic exchange, 863–66
 religious changes, 861–63
Chinggisid lore, 858
Chinggisid princesses, 642, 643, 644, 691
Chinggisid principle, 455, 867
Chinggisid unity, 4, 329, 345, 857
Chinggisids, 1, 4, 10, 70, 227, 250, 271, 360, 406,
451, 674–75
 affirmation by the clergy, 445
 affirmation of Möngke as new leader,
 77
 in Central Asia, 359–61, 364–65, 372
 goods transported to, 435
 ideology, 445–47, 449, 451–55
 invasions of Caucasia, 729
 Koryŏ and, 679–80, 699
 alliance and war, 683–84
 integration of royal families, 692–93
 marriage ties, 691–92
 redistribution of women, 697–98
 legacies, 455–56, 745–49
 marriage practices, 195, 631–32, 636
 political involvement of women, 634
 in Siberia, 743–45
 succession struggles, 91, 402, 671
chingsang (grand counselor), 114, 133
Chinqai, 46, 61, 62, 63, 64, 70–71, 73, 75–76, 79,
429, 658
Chinqai Balāsāghūn (City or Granary of
 Chinqai), 46, 658
Chinqai, city, region, 143, 172
Chioniates, Gregory, 550, 565, 566
Chittor, 342
Choban (Chupan), Ilkhanid amīr, 218, 222–25,
226–28, 288, 353, 724–25, 816
Chobanids, 223–28, 231, 288, 360, 641
Chông Mongju, 700
Chông Tojôn, 700
Chongqing, 87, 110, 117, 118, 125, 415
Chong'ur, 140, 143, 144, 145
Chormaqaq, general, 45, 56, 61, 71, 184, 416,
467, 481, 711–13, 714n41, 714, 717

- Chosgem, 173
 Chosŏn dynasty, 694, 700
 Christian priests, clergymen, 262, 445
 Christianity. *See also* Catholic Church,
 Catholics; Nestorianism, Nestorians;
 Orthodox Christianity, Orthodox
 Christians; Papacy
 Anglo-Saxon conversion to, 208
 in the Chaghadaid realm, 380
 among the Chaghadaids, 354, 356
 Eastern, 720
 failure of amongst the Chinggisids, 863
 in the Golden Horde, 266–67, 279
 Güyük and, 75
 in the Ilkhanate, 209, 592
 Mongols and, 527–29, 784
 religious exchange, 526, 531–34
 women and, 628
Chronica Majora, 779
 Chu, river, 376, 742
 Chübei, son of Alghu, 128, 343, 405
 Chubi, Möngke's third empress, 94n375
 Chungryöl, king of Koryŏ, 419
 churchmen (Christian), 445
 Cilicia. *See* Armenia, Lesser
 Circassians, 47, 66
 civil service examinations, 65, 556
 Cleaves, Francis W., 27n32, 33, 659n6, 716n55
 Clement IV, Pope, 200
 Clement V, Pope, 790
 client dynasties, 124, 126
 cobalt, 236, 505, 509–10, 581, 837
Codex Cumanicus, 279, 785
 coinage, 488–90
 of Almaliq, 357
 Byzantine, 496, 517
 Caffa, 517
 Central Asia, under Qaidu and Kebek,
 373–74
 Chaghadaid Khanate, 501
 copper, 120, 161, 373, 488–90, 491, 496, 501,
 510–15, 517–18
 Ghazan's reforms, 216
 gold, 488–89, 493, 506–7, 769
 Golden Horde, 501
 of Janibek, 290
 of Möngke Qa'an, 373
 of Möngke Temür, 261
 of Qutluğ Khwāja, 341
 in the reign of Abū Sa'īd, 225
 Rus', 766–69
 silver, 492–94, 497, 505, 506
 Toqto'a's reforms, 274–75
 of Vasilii I, 766
 of Vasilii II, 767
 Cologne, 263
 Columbus, 872
 commerce. *See* trade
 commodity tax (*kecheng*), 741
Compendium of Chronicles. *See* Jāmi' al-tawārikh
 composite bow, 460, 462, 482, 808
 Confucian schools, 670
 Confucianism, 122, 132, 158, 529, 543
 critique of Buddhism, 538
 connectivity, Eurasian, 793, 852,
 856, 858
 Conrad (German King), 783
 Constantinople, 256, 266, 306, 580, 641, 727,
 729, 767, 866
 cooking, 860
 Copernicus, 560, 569
 cosmopolitanism, 34, 96, 220, 231, 542, 658, 817,
 861, 862
 counterweight trebuchets, 481, 859
 Cowen, Jill Sanchia, 595
 cowries, 510, 518, 768, 834, 838, 865
 Cracow, 267
 craftsmen, 579, 596, 658, 660. *See also* artisans
 employed by Baraq to build weapons,
 260, 329
 enslaved from Nishapur, 46
 involvement in ceramics trade, 837
 Mesopotamian, 183
 migration, 861
 Muslim, 843
 Nepalese, 582, 589
 Qaraqorum, 661
 relocated from Samarqand to Beijing, 576
 slave, 761
 Crimea, 66, 243, 256, 753
 authority of Hajji Giray, 302
 base for Italian trade, 789
 cessation of silver minting, 290
 challenge from the Noghai Horde, 306
 Christian communities, 266–67, 279
 climatic conditions, 619
 destruction of the Great Horde, 767
 Edigü's authority in, 298
 establishment of Toqtamish in, 299
 Genoese threat in, 288
 Islamization, 247
 Italian trade base, 864
 Latin communities, 781
 Latin-Jochid trade, 263, 264, 279, 288,
 788
 Mamai's rule, 294

- Crimea (cont.)
 Mongol attacks on, 754
 Muslim constructions, 284
 Noghai's attack on, 268–69
 Ottoman threat to Jochid positions, 303
 slave market, 768
 Toqtamish's alliance with the Genoese, 295
 Ulugh Muḥammad's invasion of, 302
- Crimean Khanate, 302, 305n232, 307, 766
- cross-cultural exchange, cross-cultural
 contacts, 1, 368, 378, 384, 854–61
- Crusades, Crusaders, 191, 200–1, 231, 256, 580,
 708, 783, 786, 810
- cuisine, 236, 859
- cultural broker(s), 6, 437, 868
- cultural exchange, 4, 174, 220, 386, 595, 680,
 693, 794, 819, 833, 844, 845, 854. *See also*
 cross-cultural exchange
- cultural transmission, 236
- Cumans, 66, 245, 308, 710, 781, 782
- currency. *See* coinage; paper money; silk
 currency reform
 of Kebek, 374
 of Mas'ūd Beg, 373, 493
- Da Menggu guo* (*Da chao*, Great Court), 28
- Da Yuan da yitong zhi* (The Treatise on the
 Great Unified Realm of the Great
 Yuan), 558
- Da zongzheng fu* (High Court for
 Mongols), 426
- dada*[n], 23
- Dadu (Mo. Daidu, Tu. Khanbaliq), 4, 138, 174,
 183, 408, 410, 496, 660, 742, 854, 864. *See*
also Beijing
 ancestor worship, 452
 architecture, 582–83
 attack on the palace of, 122
 Buddhists, 381
 designated Yuan capital, 113, 115
keshigs, 417–18
 Latin communities, 781
 missionary presence in, 789–90
 observatory, 566
 Qubilai's temple, 74
 rule from Qaraqorum, 868
 slave markets, 515
 trade routes, 376, 743
- Daghui (Ch. Daji), Empress Dowager, 147–48,
 155, 648
- daha* (military unit of ten), 414
- Dai Viet, 87, 478, 482. *See also* Annam
- Daidu. *See* Dadu
- Dair Bahadur, 416
- Dalan Baljut, battle of, 416
- Dalan Dabas, 70
- Dali, 82, 84, 86–87, 109, 125, 477, 662
- Damascus, 90–91, 190, 211, 340, 799, 802–3,
 808–9, 812
 diplomatic activity, 801
 Het'um's entry, 720
 Muḥammad's footprint, 543
 non-military contact, 818
 Tamerlane's occupation, 818
- Damba, dynastic preceptor, 134
- dan'* (tribute), 251, 761, 762
- Danashiri, Empress, 648
- Daniil Aleksandrovich, prince of Moscow,
 757, 764
- Daniil Romanovich, prince of Volynia and
 Galicia, 758
- Dānishmand Ḥājib, 749
- Dānishmandche, Ögödeid puppet khan, 360
- Danube, river, 67, 257, 264, 265, 270, 281, 303,
 402, 783
- Daoism, Daoists, 45, 526, 527, 529, 662
 books banned, 534
 canon, 324
 medical care, 555
 Ögödei's patronage, 659
 priests, 109, 445
 Qashi's support for, 324
 religious exchange, 84, 93, 531, 542
 temples, 60, 64, 163, 325, 650, 845
- Daoyi zhiliue*, 834
- darachi* – (liquor managers, qarachi), 417
- Dardess, John, 138
- darkhan, 29. *See also* tarkan
- daru* (to press), 421
- darugha*, 420–25, 742
- darughachi* (governor), 37, 43, 51, 58, 61, 82, 86,
 154, 373, 420–25, 650, 687, 689, 717, 857.
See also *shahna*, *basqaq*
- darughala* (to take care of, to supervise),
 421
- Dasht-i Qipchaq (Qipchaq Steppe), 243
- Dastūr al-kātib*, 424, 427
- Datong, 135, 143, 161, 165, 166, 336
- Dā'ūd Khwāja, Chaghadaid prince, 350–51
- David IV, King, of Georgia, 726
- David V, King, of Georgia, 721
- David VI, King, of Georgia, 716
- David VIII, King, of Georgia, 723
- David Lasha, King, of Georgia, 720
- David Narin “The Younger,” King, of
 Georgia, 715, 721

- David Ulu "The Elder," King, of Georgia, 715, 720, 722
- Davis, Richard L., 57n179
- Dawlat Shāh, Yuan official, 148–50, 156
- Dayuan tongzhi* (Comprehensive Regulations of the Great Yuan), 155, 157
- de Rachewiltz, Igor, 6, 26, 55, 69n245, 779n1
- Dei Sechen, 25, 629
- Delhi Sultanate, 319, 333, 341, 348, 355, 361, 380, 383, 842, 872
- archaeological evidence of ceramics trade, 838
 - demand for slaves in, 856
 - diplomatic exchanges, 832–33, 843
 - military encounters, 828–29
 - military incursions, 846
 - trade, 376–77
 - trade roads, 838
- Demetre the Devoted, Georgian king, 722
- Den Terek, 743
- Department of State Affairs. *See* *Shangshu sheng*
- Derbend (Derbent), 66, 127, 267, 272, 296, 299, 331, 404, 414, 708
- Derbent Shirvan pass, 288
- dervish, *faqīr*, 356, 364, 540
- Deshou, 147
- desiatniki* (tens), 760
- devastation and destruction, Mongol-induced, 36, 581, 852–54
- DeWeese, Devin, 385
- Dhu'l-Qadirid Turcomans, 817
- Di Cosmo, Nicola, 9n27, 20, 24n21, 609n16
- Diaoyucheng (Hezhou), 93, 118
- dictionaries, multilingual, 234, 860
- dietary decadence, 553
- Dimashq Khwāja (Choban's son), 223–24
- Ding Chao, 162n168
- Dingzhou Island, battle of, 117
- diplomacy
- Ilkhanid, 91, 787, 790, 801
 - Ilkhanid–Mamluk, 809–12
 - Ilkhanid–Yuan, 829–33, 836
 - Jochid, 244, 309
 - Mamluk, 272
 - of Möngke-Temür, 259
 - Mongol-Ayyūbid, 799
 - with the papacy, 276, 292
 - papal, 787, 790
 - South Asia, 827–33, 844
 - of Toqta, 271
 - with Western Europe, 780, 786–87
 - Xia-Jin, 34
- diplomatic documents, 446
- Directorate of Muslim Astronomy, 531
- dirham, 374, 488, 493, 506, 507
- Almalīqī, 332n34
 - Jochid, 274
 - Khani Dirham, 489
- disiatok* (ten), 414
- Dmitri Aleksandrovich, son of Alexander Nevsky, 265, 268, 759
- Dmitrii Ivanovich Donskoi, prince of Moscow and grand prince of Vladimir, 294, 765–66, 769
- Dmitrii Mikhailovich, prince of Tver', 283, 758
- Dmitrov, 759
- Dnieper, river, 268, 270, 296, 298, 303, 402, 756
- Dniester, river, 257, 270, 281, 756
- documents
- Mongolian, 320, 354, 356, 362, 381
 - study of, 8
 - Uighur, 320, 369, 373, 381
- dogsled relays. *See also* *jam*
- Dominicans, 66, 784
- Don, river, 264, 268, 270, 279, 286
- donatives, 160, 161, 162
- Dongjing. *See* Liaoyang
- Dongzhen (Eastern Jurchens), 681–82, 684
- Doorda Darkhan (Tib. Dor-tog or Do-rta), 57
- Doquz (Dokuz) Khatun, wife of Hülegü, 194–96, 410n34, 631, 640–41, 644
- dörben yeke ordos* (Four Great Ordos), 409
- Döre Temür, Chaghadaid khan, 355
- dowry, 629, 635. *See also* *inje*
- drinking, 59, 67, 75, 202, 324, 553, 637
- drinking vessels, 453, 578–79, 863
- drought, 603, 605, 608, 657, 662, 673
- in the Chaghadaid realm, 356, 359
 - Lower Volga region, 304
 - north China, 36
 - Yuan Ulus, 156, 163, 165–66, 170
- Du Feng, 650
- Du'a, Chaghadaid khan, 333, 371, 405, 414
- army, 369–70
 - Buddhism, 381
 - interference in the politics of the Blue Horde, 270–71
 - invasion of South Asia, 341, 829
 - invasion of the Ilkhanate, 339–40
 - investment in the postal system, 369, 375
 - succession, 348
 - support for Kubalak, 343
- tamgha*, 339, 341, 379
- Yuan incursions, 140–41, 335–37, 344, 666–67
- Yuan peace proposal and war with the Ögödeids, 344–48, 666–68

- Du'aids, 344–58
 Duan Xingzhi, 86
 Dughlat, tribe, 358, 362, 367, 368, 372, 643
 Dunhuang, 334, 429. *See also* Shazhou
 Dunnell, Ruth, 24n23, 32n58, 53on26
 Durbay, 257
- e'üdenchi* (doorkeepers), 417
 early modern world, 1, 8, 387, 543, 852,
 867–69, 873
 East Asia, 550
 Chinggis Khan's campaign, 48–50
 Eastern Churches, 446
 Eastern Europe, 55, 66, 186, 200, 245, 266, 269,
 460, 472, 473, 499, 515, 779, 782–83
 climate, 620–21
 growing power of the Lithuanians, 294
 Islamization, 247
 women's participation in the campaigns
 in, 642
 Eastern Mongols, 675
 Ebinur, lake, 616
 Ebügen, descendant of Jochi Qasar, 339,
 356
 economic exchange, 863–66
 Edessa (Ruhā), 799, 802
 edict. *See* *yarligh*
 Edigü, 296–300, 302, 472
 descendants, 306
 Edward I, King of England, 200–1, 787,
 806, 810
 Edzina. *See* Qara-Qoto
egechi, 409, 411
 Egypt, 91, 190–91, 254, 288. *See also* Mamluk
 Sultanate
 arrival of the plague, 291
 as center of Arabic culture, 872
 migration to, 819
 multilingual dictionaries, 860
 Ottoman conquest of, 190
 porcelain imports, 495, 509
 silver usage, 493, 496, 497
 surge of refugees to, 817
 trade roads to, 376
 Egyptians, 308
 Ejil, 86
el (hereditary people), 295, 297
 El Qutlugh, 225
 El Tegüs, 152, 157
 El Temür, Yuan minister (*taishi*), 114n21, 145,
 150–52, 157, 354, 693
Elements, 563, 565
 elephants, 43, 482, 832
- Eljigidei, Chaghadaid khan, 74–75, 146, 151,
 354–55, 381–82, 786
 Emba, river, 297
emchü (*enchü* or *injü*, private property), 218,
 404, 406, 416, 714, 717
 emigration. *See* population movements
 Emil, city, 321, 345, 376
 Emil, river, 53, 75, 76, 325
 engineers, 465, 468, 470, 476, 480, 859
 England
 adoption of “Tatar dress”, 858
 diplomatic relations with the Mongols, 780,
 787, 809–10
 economy, 770
 knowledge of the Mongol conquest, 779
 market establishment, 514
 silver usage, 496, 865
 entertainment, 697, 856, 859
 epidemic disease, 110, 166, 287, 355, 358, 382,
 764. *See also* Black Death; plague
 Erlongwang Maar Lake, 611
 Erzurum, 71, 708, 711, 714, 724
 Esen Buqa, Chaghadaid khan, 144, 278, 346,
 348–53, 371, 374
 Esen Temür, 149
 ethnic categories, 738
 ethnic changes, 852, 870
 ethnicity, 21, 122, 125, 152, 448, 462, 465, 588, 857
 ethnogenesis, 19
 Etsin Gol region, 51
 Euclid, 563, 565
 eunuchs, 90, 695–97
 Korean, 172
 Euphrates river, 212, 802, 805, 809, 815, 817
 Euphrosyne, daughter of Andronikos 11, 265
 exogamy, 195, 629, 632
 experts, 378–79, 855–56, 862
 Ezhou, 93–94, 110, 111, 117
- Fa'alta fa-lā talum* (You Did It So Don't Blame
 [Me]), 562, 565
 factionalism, 122, 172, 204, 672
 Fakhr al-Dīn, Kish merchant, 143n107, 836
 Fakhr al-Dīn, Malik of Herat, 211
 falcon stations (*haiqing zhan*), 743
 falconers, 417, 645, 692
 falcons. *See* hunting birds
 famine
 Koryō, 85, 688
 Lower Volga region, 304
 north China, 36
 Russia, 619–20, 764, 769
 suffered by the troops of Arigh Böke, 664

- Yuan Ulus, 135, 159, 160–67, 170, 171, 671
 famine relief, 160–62, 164, 166
 Fan Wenhui, 118, 123
 Fancheng, 93, 117, 118
 Fang Guozhen, 169
 al-Fārisī, Kamāl al-Dīn, 563
 Fārs, 183, 192–94, 210, 218, 227, 228, 871
 Chaghadaid invasion, 340
 Mongol troops stationed in, 414
 Negüderian attack on, 333, 424
 Salghurid wives from, 641
 Faṭḥabād, 360
 Fāṭima, 73
 Fāṭimid dynasty, 221
 Favereau, Marie, 8
 Fedor Rostislavich of Iaroslav' and
 Smolensk, 757
 Fedor, son of Alexander of Tver', 758
 Fengxiang, 48, 415
 Fennell, John, 755
 Ferghana, 38, 121, 350, 358, 368, 373, 375, 382, 615
 Feridun, 199
 Fertile Crescent, 707, 799
 Fihrist, 551
 filigree work, 579–80
 Finno-Ugrian peoples, 736, 748
 Firdawsī, Abū'l-Qāsim, 199, 235
 Fīrūz Shāh, Delhi Sultan, 361
 Firūzkūh, 341
 Five Elements theory, 556
 Five Nations (*wuguo*), 745. *See also* Water
 Tatars
 Five Tribes, 406, 413, 415
 flame (Turkic *yalin* and Mongolian *jali*), 453
 Flanders, 493
 floods, 163, 165, 167
 prevention, 168
 Florence, 291, 793
 Cathedral, 236
 Florentines, 286
 footbinding, 652
 forest peoples, 23, 745–46, 750, 871
 in the armies of Qaidu, 744
 ethno-linguistic changes, 747–49
 integrated into the Golden Horde, 251
 interactions with steppe nomads, 734–37
 migration to the the steppe, 736
 military mobilization, 741, 748
 Mongol affinity with, 738–39
 pacification of, 31, 38, 41, 248, 738–40
 relationship with the Jochids, 742
 trans-ecological trade, 865
 forest zone, 59, 455, 734–37
 civil wars and rebellions, 743–45
 continuance of Mongol traditions, 749–50
 ethno-linguistic shifts, 747–49
 introduction of new religions, 749
 military engagements, 738–40
 population shifts, 745–47
 products from, 737–38
 remote control of, 741–43
 “Four Empires”, theory of the, 450
 “Four Hounds”, 29
 “Four Steeds”, 29
 fourteenth-century crisis, 9, 165–68, 358, 375
 Fra Mauro, 792
 fragmentation, of political authority, 19, 292,
 302, 430, 455, 662, 726
 France, 780, 786–87, 809
 Franciscans, 266–67, 276, 279, 308, 433, 587,
 784, 793
 Franke, Herbert, 49n134, 134n84, 366n122,
 534n52, 673n48
 Franks, 6, 219, 468, 564, 711, 786–87, 803, 804,
 820, 860
 Frederick II Hohenstaufen, Holy Roman
 Emperor, 565
 Frik, Armenian Poet, 728
 Fu Mengzhi, 561
 Fujian, 118, 125, 510
 funerals, of Mongol rulers, 52, 194, 409
 Fur Road(s), 263, 376, 865, 871
 furs, 274, 377, 737, 741, 742, 750, 759, 761,
 768, 838
 Fushang, 340
 Fuzhou, 118
 Galen, 234, 551
 Galicia, 281, 758
 Gamala, 130, 131, 137–38, 141, 145, 148, 337
gambu (Tangut title), 26
 Gandzakets'i, Kirakos. *See* Kirakos of Ganjak
 Gandzar Monastery, 728
 Ganja, 710, 711n29
 Gansu, 111, 153, 161, 173, 358, 366, 381, 611,
 663, 869
 Gansu corridor, 51, 336, 407, 666
 Ganzhou, 51, 376
 Gao, monk, 122
 Gao Xiang, 86
 Gaochang, 33, 351
 Gaocheng observatory, 566
 Gaoyou, siege of, 170
 garrisons
 of the Yuan in Central Asia, 336, 747
 Siberia, 741

- Gaza, 802, 804, 808
 Gediminas, Duke, 281–82
 Gegen Chaghan, lake, 407
 Geikhatu, Ilkhan, 201, 206–7, 723, 811
 gender relations, 628
 Chaghadaid, 643–44
 division of labor, 632–34
 Ilkhanid, 640–42
 Jochid, 642–43
 Genoa, 493, 516, 578, 585, 727, 788–89, 866
 Genoese, 244, 256, 263, 269, 273–74, 278–79, 286–87, 288, 473
 alliance with Toqtamish, 295
 Edigü's subjugation of, 298
 merchants, 264, 281, 377, 786, 788–89
 relations with the Jochids, 310
 shipbuilders, 201, 810
 slave trade, 815
 Toqtamish's agreement with, 297
 geography, 129n66, 236, 245n4, 557–58, 845
 and nomadism, 605
 geopolitical transformations, 852, 868–73
 George IV Lasha, 709–10, 715
 George V "The Brilliant", 723, 724–26
 George Terter I, king of Bulgharia, 265
 George Terter II, king of Bulgharia, 281
 George the Little, 724
 Georgia, Georgians, 10, 56, 74, 680, 707–8
 acceptance of the heavenly mandate, 449
 Berke's policy of religious tolerance, 258
 Christian communities, 266
 considered subjects of Batu, 251
 contribution of tax and tribute, 192
 final conquest of, 710–11
 first invasion (1220), 47, 708–10, 781
 harsh treatment of, 331, 779
 involvement in Mongol military
 operations, 331, 416, 418, 468–69, 719–22
 Mongol administration, 71, 717
 Mongol legacy, 726–28, 871
 relations with the Ilkhanate, 722–26
 relations with the Mongols, 694, 714–16
ger, 633
gerege (tablet of authority), 261, 307. *See also* *paiza*
ger-ün kö'üd (sons of the household), 411
 Gharchistan, 341
 al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥamid, 221
 Ghazan, Ilkhan, 196, 207–13, 226, 227, 339–40, 416, 723–24
 administrative reforms, 213–17, 275, 413, 423
 continuation of, 219
 agricultural reforms, 555
 contact with the Latin West, 201
 conversion to Islam, 202, 220, 232, 338, 447, 818, 844
 destruction of non-Islamic complexes, 840
 diplomatic missions, 831, 832, 836
 execution of Ṣadr al-Dīn Zanjānī, 207
 gifts to the Yuan, 504
 good fortune, 454
 governance in Khurasan
 and Māzandarān, 224
 interest in science, 562
 keshig, 418–19
 Kostandin's description of, 728
 legitimation, 202
 marriage, 642
 military reforms, 469
 ordos, 410
 portrayed by Rashīd al-Dīn, 230
 postal system, 437
 protection of pilgrimage caravan, 816
 relations with the Jochids, 270, 271, 272–73
 religious tolerance, 220
 seals, 418–19
 seasonal migration, 408
 Syrian campaigns, 807–12
 urban living, 196–98
 Ghazna, 44–45, 199, 331, 341, 346, 348, 353, 376, 383, 576
 Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balbān, Sultan of Delhi, 843
 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, Malik of Herat, 224
 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, son of Rashīd al-Dīn, Ilkhanid vizier, 225, 227
 Ghiyāth al-Dīn, Sultan of Rūm, 711
ghol-un ulus (Center Ulus), 405
 Ghūr, 341
 Ghūrīd dynasty, 218, 468
 Gibbon, Edward, 527
 gift exchange, 452
 Gīlān, 219, 221
 Gilyaks (Nivkh), 741
 Giray, 306
 Glajor, Armenian monastery, 724
 Gleb, Prince of Belozero, 643
 Gobi Desert, 606, 675
 Golan, 802
 gold, 206, 493, 838
 artifacts, 580, 661
 brocade, 46, 585–88, 792
 coinage, 62, 373, 488–89, 493, 506–7, 769
 circulation, 490
 as currency in Western Europe, 516
 exchange rate against silver, 494n24

- gifts to princes, 672
- importation of gold thread from Japan, 509, 513
- jewelry, 738
- seals, 430, 437
- taxes imposed in, 499
- Temür's gifts to princes, 160
- Gold Teeth. *See* Zardandan
- Golden Horde, Jochids, 4, 53, 183, 243–47, 666, 713
 - abandonment of ancestral lands in the lower Volga to the new Jochids, 305–7
 - advent of the Togha Timurids, 292–94
 - architectural projects, 583
 - assistance given to Qaidu, 329
 - Batu and the great western steppe, 249–52
 - Black Death, 166, 232, 356, 358, 866
 - Black Sea colonies, 788, 864
 - census, 498
 - coalitions with other polities, 371
 - coinage, 493, 501
 - commercial exchange with Rus', 767–68, 769
 - commodity exchange in the subarctic, 742
 - conveyance of sovereignty over Rus', 757–58
 - diplomatic activity, 787
 - disintegration, 766
 - economic exchange, 502, 516–17
 - Edigü and the rise of the Manghit, 296–300
 - emergence as a dominant polity, 401–3
 - evidence of artistic exchange, 578, 580
 - formation of the regional khanates, 301–3
 - fur trade, 508, 509
 - gender relations, 642–43
 - governance, 307–8
 - horse trade, 510
 - interference in Central Asia, 357
 - Islamization, 252–58, 862
 - Italians expelled from, 788
 - Jochi and conquest of the northwest, 247–49
 - left and right wings, 401–3
 - legacies, 307–10, 869–70
 - military, 471–74
 - Noghai and the Balkans, 264–70
 - peace with the Ilkhanate, 723
 - period of the Great Troubles, 765
 - reign of Özbek and the rise of Islam, 276–84
 - relations with Qaidu, 342
 - relations with the Caucasian aristocracy, 719
 - relations with the Ilkhanids, 184, 191–92, 196, 226
 - rule of Möngke Temür, 259–63
 - and the rule of Rus', 770–71
 - scientific activity and exchange, 550, 551–52, 568
 - Shibanids–Uzbeks, 300–1
 - silver transfer, 505
 - slave trade, 342, 515
 - stand on the Ugra river, 303–5
 - statues, 591
 - the last Batuids, 284–92
 - Toqtamish and the end of political instability, 294–97
 - Toqto'a and the Mongol "peace," 270–75
 - trade roads, 376
 - trade with Western Europe, 788–89
 - tribute payments, 506
 - war with the Ilkhanate, 719, 721–22, 724, 744
- Gontsa, Georgian Queen, 716
- good fortune, 444–48, 451–56, 863
- gosti-surozhane, 769
- Grabar, Oleg, 594
- grain trade, 866
- granaries and grain reserves, 60, 135, 163–64, 166
- Grand Agricultural Administration, 121
- Grand Canal, 132, 167–68, 170, 660, 694
- Great Horde, 302, 304–5
 - collapse, 306
 - stand on the Ugra river, 766–67
- Great Khan. *See* Qa'an
- Great Lakes Basin, 143
- Great Mongol *Shāhnāma* (Book of Kings), 199, 235–36, 591–92, 596
- Great Troubles, 765
- Great Wall of China, 734
- Greek language, 565, 593, 597, 817
- Greeks, 263, 266–67, 288
- Gregory IX, Pope, 783
- Gregory X, Pope, 201, 785, 787
- Grigor of Akanc (Akner), Armenian historian, 416, 418, 436, 709n15, 716
- grivna*, 506–8, 762
- Gu Kaizhi, 588, 595
- Guangdong, 117, 118, 510
- Guangxi, 151
- Guanwu liang shou jing*, 541
- Guanzhong, 81, 92
- Guazhou, 51
- Güchülük, 33–34, 37–38, 39
- gui-ong* (Ch. *guo wang*, prince of state), 37
- Gujarat, 341, 355n88, 828

- Gunadara, 152
 Gunashiri, Chaghadaid prince, 366
 gunpowder, 479–81, 791–92, 794, 845, 859
 Guo Shoujing, 567
güregen (son-in-law), 29, 360, 364, 371–72, 412, 631
 Gurjistan. *See* Georgia
gürkhan (universal khan), 21, 26, 33
 Güyük (Oirat), senior wife of Hüleü, 195–96, 410n34, 631n7, 640
 Güyük, qa'an, 59, 65, 67, 69, 82–83, 85, 95, 186, 250, 324, 402–3, 407, 429, 445, 448, 637, 657, 759
 accession and reign, 72–75
 attempts to revamp the fiscal system, 717
 campaign in northern India, 84
 candidacy for succession, 69–70
 Caucasia, 713, 715
 debts, 81
 expression of obedience from
 al-Musta'şim, 801
 homage paid at his enthronement, 784
 marriage proposals, 631
 Ögödei's proposal for his marriage to
 Sorqaqtani, 57
 relations with Köten, 72
 seal, 28n40
 sent to serve in Chaghadaid's guard, 63
 Guzang, battle of, 111
 gyrfalcons, 743

 Ḥabash 'Amīd, Chaghadaid's vizier, 323, 377
 Ḥāfīz al-Dīn al-Kabīr, 383, 384
 Hainan Island, 148, 149
hajj. *See* pilgrimage
 Ḥājji Barlas, 362, 363, 371
 Ḥājji Giray, 302, 766
 Ḥājji 'Umar, 286
 Hajji-Tarkhan. *See* Astrakhan
 Halbertsma, Tjalling, 23n16
 Halperin, Charles J., 283n143, 308n240, 309n243, 424, 502n75, 755, 770
 Hamadan, 89–90, 421, 722
 Hambis, Louis, 83n323, 86n334
 Hamburg, 263
 Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, 189, 217, 228, 229, 557, 725
 Hami. *See* Qamīl
 Hammer-Purgstall, Joseph, 182
 Han (ethnic Chinese), 107, 152, 412n44, 413, 454
 administration of crimes committed by, 426
 armies, 49, 58, 117, 131, 415–16, 417, 462, 464–65, 468, 476, 481
 conflict with Ahmad (Yuan minister), 122
 footbinding, 652
 generals, 474
 laws, 128, 174, 330
 levirate and pre-mortem partible inheritance imposed on, 115
 literati, 122, 158
 mocking of Islam, 534
 officials, 115, 133–34, 157, 422–23, 425
 Qaidu's connections with, 325
 response to rebellions, 169
 script used by, 428
 Han dynasty, 159, 451, 454, 491, 537
 Han, river, 93, 117
Han fa (Chinese law), 135
 Han Gan, 595
 Han Lin'er, 168, 171
 Han Rulin, 58n180
 Han Shantong, 168
 Ḥanafī, 383, 387
 Ḥanbalī, 233, 818
 Hangzhou (Lin'an), 117–18, 136, 169, 376, 381, 494, 870
Hanjūn (Han army), 49, 476
 Hanoi, 87
 Hanseatic League, 765
 Hantum (Antong), 115, 128–30, 132–33
 Hanzhong, 107, 116
 Hao Jing, 660
harban (tens), 412
 Harghasun, 132, 143, 147, 647
 Hārīm, 802
 Ḥarrān, 799, 802
 Ḥasan b. Choban, Ilkhanid amir, 353
ḥashar, 413, 464
 Hayton (Het'um of Kōfikos), 711, 790
hazāra (military unit of one thousand), 323, 329, 379, 414
hazāra-i qōl (the chiliarchy of the center), 418
hazarapet (commander of 1,000), 709
 heavenly mandate, 116, 448–51
 Hebei, 35, 36, 82, 128n63, 168, 170, 650, 662
 famine in, 135
 floods, 165n185
 Hebron, 802
 Heicheng. *See* Qara-Qoto
 Heishui. *See* Qara-Qoto
 Henan, 57–58, 92, 108, 153, 162, 171, 173, 325, 412
 natural disasters, 163, 165–66, 167, 170
 observatory, 566
 Red Turban rebellions, 168–69
 Henthorn, William E., 58n183, 59n187, 85n329, 681n8

- Herat, 224, 229, 338–40, 352, 353, 360–61, 421, 838. *See also* Kartids of Herat
 intellectuals, 568
 Mongol control of artisans and craftsmen, 576
 valuation of weavers from, 46
- Herat, battle of, 201, 260, 331, 469, 665
- Heretics. *See* Ismā'īlis, Nizārī
- Herman, John E., 86n335
- Hesimali (Ismā'īl), 425
- Her'um I (Hethum), King of Armenian Cilicia, 714–15, 719–22, 786, 803
- Her'um II (Hethum), King of Armenian Cilicia, 723
- Her'um of Kofikos. *See* Hayton
- Hexi, 51, 52, 72, 333–34, 343, 405, 408. *See also* Xi Xia
- Hexi corridor. *See* Gansu corridor
- Hezhou (Diaoyucheng), 93, 118
- al-Hidāya*, 382, 383
- Ḥijaz, 812, 815–16, 818
- Hillenbrand, Robert, 593
- Himalayas, 828, 832, 842
- Ḥims, battle of, 201, 722, 805
- Hindu Kush, 44, 45, 363, 429, 827
- Hindu, prince, 123
- Hindustan, 84, 322, 416. *See also* India
- historiography, 138, 236
 Islamic, 276
 Soviet, 246, 309n243
 Timurid, 290
 Toluid control of, 247
- Hö'elün, Chinggis Khan's mother, 24–25, 80, 631, 635
- Holy Land, 708, 720, 779, 781, 786, 787
- Holy Roman Empire, 779
- Homs. *See* Ḥims, battle of
- honey, 582, 737
- Hong Chagu, 123
- Hong Pokwŏn, 58–59, 85, 695
- Honil gangli yŏkdae gukdo jido*, Korean map of 1402, 558
- Honorius IV, Pope, 561
- Hope, Michael, 55, 339n47
- Hoqu, son of Güyük, 329, 334, 337
- Hormuz, 231, 340, 375, 837, 864
- Horqudaq, amīr, 210
- horse plague, 364, 370
- horse archers, 460, 462, 464, 467, 469, 471, 473, 474, 476, 481, 583
- horses, 192, 604
 Arabian, 231
 grazing of, 605
 in Hülügü's army, 88
 influence of climate on, 482, 605
 portraits of, 595
 postal, 435–37
 provisioning of for the military, 476–77
 trade in, 305, 377, 502, 505, 510, 833, 836–38
- Hovsgol, lake, 607
- Hsiao Ch'i-ch'ing, 271n95, 475
- Hu Sihui, 554
- Huai, river, 58, 94, 414, 416, 476
- Huang Jin, 158
- Hubei, 58, 110, 149
- Huguang, 140, 153, 162n169
- Huihui (Muslims), 156, 423
- Huihui *Yaofang* (Collection of Muslim Prescriptions), 7, 554
- Huihuili (Islamic Astronomical System), 562, 566, 568, 569
- Hülügü Ulus. *See* Ilkhanate
- Hülügü, Ilkhan, 80, 83, 84, 94, 192–96, 201, 229, 252, 278, 504, 644, 719–21, 805, 809, 810, 813, 827
 accompanied by the Oirat, 741
 appointed as viceroy in Iran, 108
 appointment of *darughā*, 423
 armies, 467–69, 483
 attack on the fortress of al-Bīra, 806
 Buddhism, 840
 conquest of Syria, 90–91, 190, 801–2
 construction of the Marāgha Observatory, 209, 550
 contact with al-Andalus, 565
 control of the Caucasus, 718
 death, 327
 dispatch of diplomatic envoys to the Delhi Sultanate, 829
 establishment of the Ilkhanate, 181–82
 interest in astronomy, 558
 introduction of physicians to East Asia, 554
 introduction of the postal system to Armenia, 436
 letter to Louis IX, 200, 786
 multi-religious support, 531
 ordos, 410
 patents of investiture, 446
 patronage of scientific activity, 552
 relations with Berke, 91, 254–58, 322
 seasonal migration, 408
 siege of Baghdad, 89–90, 189, 801
 support for Qubilai, 190
 use of gunpowder weaponry, 479–80
 westward march, 87–89, 187–89

- Hülegü, Ilkhan (cont.)
 withdrawal to the Caucasus, 803, 819
 wives, 631, 639–41
- Hülegüids, 404, 407, 853. *See also* Ilkhanate, Ilkhanids
- human trafficking, 855–56. *See also* captives; slaves; slave trade
- Ḥumayda b. Abī Numayy, Bedouin leader, 816
- Hunan, 117
- Hunan Circuit Pacification Commission, 167
- Hungarians, 67, 308, 310, 755
- Hungary, 1, 66–67, 265–66, 269, 281, 472, 482, 606–7, 620–21, 755, 779, 782–83
- Huns, 453
- Hunshandake Desert, 611
- hunting, 59, 60, 379, 634, 738
 adaptation of nomadic techniques, 95
 techniques used in the military, 462–63, 466, 744, 754–55
- hunting birds, 737, 741, 743
- hunting-gathering economy, 735–36
- huojian* (fire arrows), 480
- Huqutur, 416
- Ḥusām al-Dīn, 561
- Ḥusayn, Qara'unas amir, 363–65
- Iaroslav Iaroslavich, prince of Tver', 758, 762
- Iaroslav of Pronsk, 284
- Iaroslav Vsevolodovich, prince of Vladimir, 757
- Ibak, Shibanid khan, 304
- Ibaqa Beki, 411
- Iberians, 90, 722n82
- Ibir-Sibir region, 296, 300
- al-Ibn al-'Alqamī, vizier, 801
- Ibn al-Athīr, historian, 40n93, 229, 232, 798
- Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, 181, 818
- Ibn al-Nadīm, 551
- Ibn al-Shāṭir, 563
- Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, 162n167, 222, 226, 284, 354n86, 357, 374, 376–77, 419, 431, 551, 565, 828, 832–33, 835, 838, 842–43, 845, 860, 864
- Ibn Ḥammūya, Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm, 818
- Ibn Kammūna, Sa'd ibn Manṣūr, 534
- Ibn Khaldūn, 234
- Ibn Shākir, Mamluk historian, 358
- Ibn Sīnā, 234, 555, 563, 566
- Ibn Taymiyya, Taqī al-Dīn, 233, 542–43, 818
- Ibn Taymiyya, Zayn al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān (brother of above), 818
- Ibn Yūnus, Kamāl al-Dīn, 552
- ideology of silence, 5, 770
- ideology, Mongolian, 444–57
 heavenly mandate, 448–51
 charisma and good fortune, 451–55
 universal rule, 187
- idīqut* / *idūq-qut* (title of Uighur ruler), 33, 351, 636
- Idoqudai, 470
- Ikires, 107, 406, 413, 415, 476, 632, 636, 649
- il (obedient/submission), 446
- ilchi* (envoy), 215, 322, 436
- İlgā Noyan, Jalayirid amīr, 227
- Ilgei Noyan, Hülegü's general, 90
- Ili, river/valley, 33, 129n66, 325, 414, 614, 617
- ilkhān*, meaning of, 181–82
- Ilkhanate, Ilkhanids, 4, 403–4
 administration, 204–7, 640
 architecture, 583
 army, 467–70
 artistic influence, 793
 Baraq's failed invasion, 128, 331
 Buddhism, 209, 541–42, 592, 839–41
 Buddhist temple construction, 583
 and the Caucasus, 722–26
 census, 498
 chancellery practices, 429, 431
 concubines, 409
 continuity and change under Abaqa, 196–202
 creation of a dynastic state, 191–96
 decorative arts, 236, 581
 demographic and economic impact, 228–32
 diffusion of South Asian medical knowledge to, 845
 diplomatic exchanges with the Yuan, 829–33
 formation, 185–91
 fragmentation of in Azerbaijan and Iran, 292
 geographical extent, 182
 Ghazan and the High Ilkhanate, 207–13
 Ghazan's reforms, 213–17, 275, 555
 illustrated manuscripts, 235–36, 598
 importance of Baghdad, 183
 importation of gold thread, 585
 Islamization, 201, 862
keshig institution, 418
 khatuns, 410
 marriage politics, 640–42
 monetary system, 502, 504, 507
 organization of the army, 413–14
 portraiture, 591, 593
 postal system, 215–16, 436–37
 refugees from, 817

- regional occupation, 182–84
 reign of Abū Saʿīd, 222–28
 reign of Öljeitü, 217–22
 relations with the Chaghadaids, 184, 191,
 201, 212, 218–19, 329–33, 338–40,
 351–53, 371
 relations with the Golden Horde, 184,
 191–92, 196, 226, 245
 relations with the Mamluks, 185, 189–90,
 192, 199–201, 203–4, 211–12, 216, 223,
 225–26
 religion and culture, 232–37, 868
 scientific activity and exchange, 380, 550,
 552, 560–66, 568
 slave trade, 515
 spending on art and architecture, 577
 study and practice of medicine, 554–55
 support for the Christian clergy, 446
 tactics and battle strategies, 469
 taxation, 498–99
 trade with Western Europe, 789
 turbulent period 1282–1295, 202–7
 women's participation in religion, 641
yāghūchī, 427
 Ilkhanid–Mamluk peace, 223, 225–26, 280,
 727, 816
 Illuminationist theosophy, 233
 Ilqa Senggüm, 26, 32
 Iltutmish, Shams al-Dīn, Delhi Sultan,
 828, 842
 Ilyās Khwāja, Chaghadaid khan, 365–66
 Im Yōn, 690
 Imīl Khwāja, 362n111
 immigrants, 123, 133, 156, 169, 536–37, 817, 818,
 843–44. *See also semuren*
 imperial guard. *See keshig*
 imperial son-in-law. *See güregen*
 Inalchuq, governor of Otrar, 40, 42
 Inanch Khan, 26
inaq (favorites), 170–71, 173
 India, Indian subcontinent, 4, 227, 288, 450,
 827, 854. *See also* Delhi Sultanate;
 Mughal India, Mughals
 Chaghadaid expansion, 341–42, 345, 346, 353,
 355, 361
 Chinggis Khan's raids through, 45
 cultural influence of the Mongols, 858, 859
 drought, 166
 evidence of contact with the Golden
 Horde, 578
 export of horses to, 510
 Four Great Empires theory and, 450
 introduction of gunpowder, 479, 791
 Islam, 862
 Ögödei's campaign in, 84, 829
 slaves captured in, 378
 Sufism, 384
 trade, 376–77
 trade routes, 231, 375
 use of *cherig* armies, 483
 Indian Ocean, 231, 435, 810, 838, 842
 polities, 841
 routes, 864
 trade, 816–17, 833–35
 Indus, river, 45, 331, 596
 Mongol incursions in the regions of,
 827–29, 846
 ingots
 coins made from, 517
 gold, 865
 silver, 251n23, 373, 489, 491, 494–95, 503–4,
 505, 515–16, 761, 768
ini (younger brother), 857
inje, *injes* (Ch. *yingzhesi*, dowry), 411, 633,
 714n43
injü. *See emchü*
 Injuid dynasty, 218, 227, 228, 235
 in-law (*quda*), status, family relations, 631, 636,
 640–41, 643, 644, 649. *See also güregen*
 Inner Asia, 24, 454, 550, 741, 744
 disappearance of Europeans from caravan
 routes, 794
 ethnic reconfiguration, 869
 frontier, 19–20
 political hierarchy, 203
 practices, 198
 supply lines, 741–42
 tradition of religious debate, 527
 Inner Mongolia, 111, 113, 129, 131, 172, 173, 413,
 428, 646, 658, 675, 870
 agricultural colonies, 143
 climatic conditions, 611–12
 Daoist residence, 109
 division of, 107
 famine, 135
 military expenses, 161
 Innocent IV, Pope, 74, 200, 758, 780, 784
 Institute of Muslim Astronomy, 559, 568
 institutional transformation, 866–68
 intelligence, 32, 35, 40, 57, 88, 147, 340, 341, 371,
 557, 670, 691, 782, 814
 investiture, patents of, 446
 Iqbāl Shāh, Commander of Gurjistan, 725
iqṭāʿ, 216
 Iran, 2, 4, 8, 20, 45, 87, 96, 236, 258, 321, 329, 350,
 375, 737. *See also* Ilkhanate

- Iran (cont.)
 adoption of Tatar dress, 858
 art and literature, 579, 581
 attempts to introduce paper money to, 859
 Baraq in, 330
 Buddhism, 541–42, 840
 campaigns of Jebe and Sübe'etei, 44
 Chaghadaid invasions, 340–41
 concept of good fortune, 454
 cultural influence of the Mongols, 232
dīwān system, 420, 771
 evidence of contact with the Golden Horde, 578
 governance of Güyük Qa'an, 250
 Hüleǵü appointed as viceroy, 108
 Hüleǵü's campaign in, 90, 182, 254, 640, 644, 719
 impact of Mongol invasions, 230–32, 745, 770, 865, 868–69
 Jochid-Ilkhanid struggles over, 275, 292, 721
 marginalization of Chaghadaids in, 335
 multilingual dictionaries, 860
 Ögödei's campaign in, 56
 as one of the Four Great Empires, 450
 Özbek's claim to northern lands of, 226
 porcelain imports, 509
 Qubilai's diplomatic mission to, 831
 regional secretariat, 760
 religious resistance and animosity, 534
 sedentary population, 319, 386
 spread of rice to, 859
 Sufism, 203
 texts from, 383
 trade from, 865
 trade routes from, 376
 weaving techniques, 585
 Yasa'ur's aspirations for, 353
 Yuan appanages, 503
Īrān-zamin (the land of Iran), 869
 Iraq, 1, 4, 8, 43, 222, 798. *See also* Ilkhanate
 Abaqa as deputy, 195
 Genoese shipbuilding, 810
 Hüleǵü's campaign in, 84, 182, 188–89, 254, 719
 compared to American intervention in, 229
 migrations to Syria and Egypt, 819
 pilgrimage caravans, 816, 818
 Qal'at al-Rūm's threat to invade, 811
 replaced by Egypt as center of Arabic culture, 872
 Sultan Muḥammad's attack on, 39
 texts from, 383
 traders from, 377
 Yasa'ur's aspirations for, 353
 Irinchinbal, qa'an, 152, 170
 Īrtakīn (Ilizhen, Irinjin), son of Hoqu, Ögödeid prince, 337
 Irtysh region, 716, 734, 739, 742
 Irtysh, river, 41, 47, 338, 346, 348n71, 376, 716, 743, 745
 assigned to Beshbaliq, 325
 assigned to Malik, 749
 battle (1306), 142, 143
 burials of Ögödei and Güyük, 69
 Jochi granted the region of, 248
 'Īsā Kelemechi, Nestorian physician, 201, 554, 561
 al-Iṣfahānī, Shams al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, scholar and administrator, 818
 Ishim, river, 745
ishkhan, Zaka'arid prince, 708, 717
 Isker, 743
 Islam, 189, 301, 419, 529, 534–35, 583, 794, 814, 862. *See also* Shi'ism; Sufism
 Arghun and Ilkhanid *amīrs'* antipathy towards, 204
 conversion to
 Berke, 91, 192, 252–58
 Ghazan, 208–10, 212, 213, 232, 818, 844
 Nawrūz, 208
 Öljeitü, 220
 Özbek, 279, 284
 Tarmashirin, 382, 383, 843, 844
 Tegüder, 202–3, 208
 cultural influence of, 232–33
 disseminated by Tarmashirin, 355
 Edigü's adherence to, 299
 Ibn Taymiyya's interpretation of, 543
 Janibek's support for, 290
 language of, 237
 political, 222
 Seljuks and, 229
 South Asia, 839
 Sunnī Islam, 192, 220–21, 225, 232
 women and, 628
 Islamic Astronomical Bureau, 562, 564, 675
 Islamization, 247, 284, 749, 862
 of the Caucasus, 707, 729
 Central Asia, 319, 320, 362–63, 371, 378, 381–82, 384–87
 consequences of, 543
 in the Golden Horde, 252–58, 309, 771
 Özbek and, 276–84

- in the Ilkhanate, 201, 641, 723–24
 Ismā‘īl, mangonel technician, 117
 Ismā‘īlis, Nizārī, 74, 87–90, 182, 187, 188–89, 221, 233, 534, 719
 isotope analysis, 511, 619
 Issyk Kōl, 144, 352, 356, 358, 374, 376, 381
 Italy, 509. *See also* Genoa; Venice
 merchants from, 509
 silk trade, 793
 spread of Mongol cuisine to, 859
 textiles, 585
 trade, 727
 Iurii Daniilovich, prince of Moscow and
 grand prince of Vladimir, 274, 282–83, 757–58, 764, 767
 Iurii Vsevolodovich, prince of Vladimir–
 Suzdal’, 754
 īv oghlānān, *ev oghlanan* (household slaves), 411
 Ivan I of Moscow, 762–63, 764
 Ivan II Ivanovich, prince of Moscow and
 grand prince of Vladimir, 283, 284, 286, 765
 Ivan III Vasil’evich the Great, grand prince of
 Moscow and Vladimir, 303, 455, 767, 770
 Ivan IV of Moscow, 306, 750
 Ivan Korotopol of Riazan’, 284
 Ivane, *atabeg*, 709, 715
 ivory (walrus, narwhal, and fossil mammoth
 tusks), 737
 ‘Izz al-Dīn, Seljuk sultan, 256

ja’un (hundreds), 412
ja’ut quri, honorary title, 26
 Jackson, Peter, 8, 47n129, 75n288, 87n341,
 182n7, 199n33, 225n78, 251n23, 252n31,
 256n37, 341n53, 357n96, 359n103,
 370n137, 401, 779n1, 804n23, 813n48
 Jacoby, David, 578
 jade, 334, 377
 jade seal, 430, 674
 Ja‘far Khwāja, 37
 Jagchid, Sechin, 84n325
 al-Jaghminī, 551, 560, 563, 568
 Jahāngīr, Tamerlane’s son, 364
 Jailu‘nadasi (Karandas?), Uighur monk, 830
 Jajirats, 643
 Jalāl al-Dīn al-‘Ubaydī, 563
 Jalāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd. *See* Janibek
 Jalāl al-Dīn, Khwārazm-Shāh, 40n95, 44–46,
 56, 416, 421, 710–11, 799, 828
 Jalayir, tribe, 29, 132, 204, 226, 360, 372, 406, 413,
 415, 469, 476, 641, 643
 Jalayirid dynasty, 227, 228, 235, 289, 296, 360,
 599, 641
 Jalayirtai Qorchi, 85
jam. *See* postal system, postal relay system
 Jamāl al-Dīn al-Baghdādī, astronomer, 557–59,
 561–62, 567
 Jamāl Qarshī, 324, 332
 Jambul, 322
 James I, King of Aragon, 200
Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh (*Compendium of Chronicles*), 6,
 212–13, 218, 219, 230, 235, 564, 591–94,
 596, 839, 860
 Jamuqa, 25–27
 Jand, 248, 261
 Janibek, Jochid khan, 277, 284–90, 295
 Janibek, Kazakh sultan, 301, 303
 Janshunuk, 257
 Japan, 116, 120, 694, 830, 854, 872
 canceled invasion 1294, 126
 copper coins and the growth of markets in,
 511–14
 gold exports from, 508
 naval power used in invasions of, 477–78
 Qubilai’s invasions of, 123–24
 role of Koryō in abortive campaigns
 against, 692
 silver usage, 865
 use of gunpowder weapons in, 479
 Jaqa Gambu, 26, 27, 32, 54
jarghu, *yārghū* (court), 79, 427, 428
jarghuchi, *yārghūchī* (judge), 46, 61, 420,
 425–28, 857
jasaq (*yāsā*, regulation, institution, and rules,
 29, 30, 56, 63, 79, 80, 369, 428, 630, 801
 Java, 116, 125, 477–78, 514, 516, 667, 830–31, 872
 Jaxartes region, 350, 382, 384
 Jaxartes, river, 38, 329, 342, 376
 al-Jazīra, 798–99, 802, 806–8, 817, 819
 Jazīrat Ibn ‘Umar, 802
 Jebe, 29, 35–36, 38, 41, 43, 44–45, 47, 429, 621, 781
 Jeju (Cheju) Island, 690
 Jelme, 29
jerge. *See nerge*
 Jerusalem, 212, 798, 802, 808
 Jesus, 385, 540
 jewels, 377
 Jews, 6, 209, 263, 288, 380, 860
 Jezreel Valley, 804
 Jia Sidao, 117
 Jiading, 415
 Jialing, river, 86, 93
 Jiangbei, 153
 Jiangling, 149, 151

- Jiangnan region, 162, 167, 537, 694, 695
 floods, 163
 Jiangxi, 130, 153, 162, 169, 861
 Jiangzhe, 153, 162, 167
 Jiaoshan, battle of, 117
 Jiaozhi, 87
jihād, 233
 Jin dynasty, 20, 24, 32, 41, 48–50, 159, 420,
 679, 782
 calendar, 561
 campaign against, 35–37, 56–57, 63, 415, 610,
 612, 681, 739
 preparations for, 34–35
 envoys, 45
 law code, 115
 monetary system, 492
 peace with Xia state, 27
 requisition system, 500
 ties with Koryō, 683
 treaty relations with the Song, 27
 use of gunpowder weapons against, 479
Jinchi. *See* Zardandan
 Jingdezhen, 861
 blue-and-white porcelain, 509, 581, 837
 Jingshan, 93
Jingshi dadian, *Yuan Jingshi dadian* (Great
 Statutes for Governing the Age,
 The Encyclopedia of Yuan Dynasty
 Institutions), 156, 416, 557
 Jingzhao (Xian), 81, 92, 408
 Jingzhou, 48, 661, 664
jinhuayin (silver taxation), 496
 Jinzhou, 278, 505
jiu (*jūyin*, Jurchen tribal allies), 32
jizya (tax on non-Muslims), 209, 724
 Jochi Qasar, brother of Chinggis Khan, 31,
 228, 739
 descendants, 339, 356, 369
 sons of, 54
 Jochi, son of Chinggis Khan, 635
 alienation from family, 47
 battle with Khwārazm-Shāh, 38
 birth and lineage, 25, 247
 conquest of the northwest, 247–49
 grants of subject peoples, 31
 operations along the Syr Darya, 43
 operations in Central Asia
 1206–1209, 33
 1219–1224, 42–44, 248–49
 pacification of the forest peoples of Siberia,
 38, 41, 248, 739–40
 succession, 47
 territories assigned to, 53, 184, 243, 248, 782
 war in north China, 35
 yurt assigned to, 53
 Jochids, Jochid Ulus. *See* Golden Horde
 John of Florence, Bishop of Tiflis, 725
 John of Marignolli, 790
 John of Montecorvino, 790
 John of Thessaly, 265
 John the Hungarian, 200
 John XXII, Pope, 725
 John, Bishop of Sarai, 266, 285
 Judaism, 209
 Judicial Proceedings Office, 669
 Jumqur, son of Hūlegü, 195, 196
 Junghar Basin, 138, 376
 Jungharia, 321, 744, 746
junhu (military households), 413
 Jurchens, 20, 24, 28, 35, 36, 47, 48–49,
 412n44, 744
 Jurjān, 339
 Jurji, (Dorji), son of Qubilai, 836
 Juwaynī, ‘Ala’ al-Dīn ‘Atā’ Malīk, 38n84, 53,
 54n160, 60n194, 71, 73, 75, 76, 80, 189,
 196, 204, 213, 226, 251, 402, 414, 421, 429,
 433, 449, 539
 Juwaynī, Bahā’ al-Dīn, 62, 196, 230
 Juwayni, Shams al-Dīn, 196, 204, 721
 Juwaynī, Sharaf al-Dīn, 563
 Juyongguan, 35, 429
 al-Jūzjānī, Minhāj al-Dīn, 37, 842

 bKa’-gdams-pa, 58
 Kābul Shāh, Chaghadaid puppet khan, 364
 Kaegyōng (Songdo), 58, 682, 684, 685, 687,
 689–92, 695, 700
 Kaffa. *See* Caffa
 Kahezia, 725
 Kaicheng, 408
 Kaifeng (Bianliang), 36, 48, 56–57, 81, 171,
 325, 581
 Kaiping. *See* Shangdu
kalām (philosophical theology), 551, 552,
 566, 569
Kalīla wa-Dimna, 592, 595
 Kalka, river
 battle of, 47, 710, 753, 781
 Toqtamish’s victory over Mamai, 295
 Kama, river, 376, 743
 Kamakura Shogunate, 872
 Kamalaśrī, 839, 840, 841
kamikaze (storms), 123, 478
 al-Kāmil, Muḥammad, Ayyūbid ruler,
 799, 802
 Kanas lake, 614

- Kanghwa Island, 58, 687, 690
 Kara, György, 11, 12
 Karak, 799, 803
 Karakalpaks, 247
 Karandas, Uighur monk, 830, 841
Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra, 541
 Karbala, 222
 Karin. *See* Erzurum
kārkhānahs (workshops), 329
 Karma Bakshi, 531
 Kartids of Herat, 182, 319, 360, 566
 Kashghar, 38, 144, 322–23, 334, 358, 360, 372, 373, 376, 381, 581, 667
 Kashmir, 84, 353, 378, 384, 416, 564, 829, 838, 839–40
 Katakiyya, Sufi order, 362, 384
 Kay-Khusraw, Seljuk Sultan of Rūm, 715
 Kazakh khanate, 307
 Kazakh steppe, 613
 Kazakhs (Qazaqs), Kazakh hordes, 247, 301n219, 368, 742, 746, 749, 870
 Kazakhstan, 53, 184, 247, 320–21, 322, 325, 616, 853
 Kazan, 300, 302, 305–6, 750, 766, 767
 Kebek, Chaghadaid khan, 144, 348–54, 357, 359, 371–72, 374, 375, 378, 379
kebbe'ül (night guards), 409, 466
 Keder, Ögödeid commander, 341
 Kehti Noyan, 411
kelemechi (interpreter), 417
 Kelmish Agha, 634n17, 642
 Kem, river, 736
 Kerch, 727
 Kerderi, 618
 Kereyit, tribe, khanate, 23–27, 32, 401, 629, 637, 640, 643, 673, 784
 Kerulen, river, 21, 33, 35, 37, 48, 54, 72, 76
 Kerulen river basin, 608, 609
 Kesdim, Siberian people, 738
keshig (blessing or good fortune), 453, 863
keshig (royal guard), 49, 416–20, 463, 465–66, 467, 857
 Chaghadaid, 368, 373, 419, 471
 of Chinggis, 29, 409, 416–17
 Ilkhanid, 204, 418–19
 Jochid, 249, 251
 Koryö, 419–20
 Ögödeid, 60, 338
 of Qubilai, 417–18
 rejected by the Noghai Horde, 306
 Yeke Mongol Ulus, 483
 Yuan, 476, 695, 697
keshigten (members of the *keshig*), 115, 131, 133, 145, 150, 151, 453, 465–66
kesi (cut silk), 585, 589
 Kets, 748
 Keyimen, 34
 Khalīl, Chaghadaid khan, 357, 370
 Khanbaliq, 789–90. *See* Dadu
 Khangai mountains, 131, 143, 335, 337, 407, 609, 658
khānqāh (Sufi lodge), 659, 819
kharaḡ (land tax), 373
 Kharbanda. *See* Öljeitü
khatun, 409–11
 Khazaria, Khazar Empire, 451, 736
 Khazars, 20, 308
 Khentii mountains, 21, 609
 Khidr Khwāja, Eastern Chaghadaid khan, 291n176, 367
 Khitan(s), 20–21, 23, 27, 36–37, 49, 50, 107, 158, 184, 681–83, 687, 695, 870
 capital cities, 658
 in the Mongol armies, 462, 464, 476, 685
 ordos, 409
 Khitay. *See* Cathay
 Khmer empire, 872
 Khotan, 38, 129, 323, 329, 334, 336, 352, 376, 381, 666, 667
 Khudāyādā, Dughlat commander, 789–90
 Khujand, 329, 332, 373, 383
 Khunan plain, 709
 Khurasan, 43–46, 54, 61, 71, 88, 202, 229, 272, 319, 332, 363–64, 370, 371, 374, 383, 744, 853
 administration, 82, 195
 Baraq's demand for the return of, 404, 665
 Baraq's invasion, 260, 329–31
 captured by Muḥammad Shibānī Khan, 301
 Chaghadaid authority in, 352–53, 356, 358
 Choban's rebellion, 223–25
 death of Qashi, 324
 Du'a's incursion, 339–40
 end of the Ilkhanate, 228
 Esen Buqa's invasion, 144, 351
 Ghazan's governorship, 207
 as a host for Mongol forces, 182
 Kebek's invasion, 353, 359
 Mongol troops stationed in, 414, 416
 Nawrūz expelled to, 723
 Nawrūz's invasion, 338–39
 Qazaqan's rule, 360–61
 Sarban's invasion, 340
 Temür's invasion, 367
 trade routes through, 376
 Yasa'ur's authority in, 352, 447
 Khusraw Dihlawī, 844

- Khutallani amirs, 360
khvarənah (good fortune), 454
 Khwāja Oghul, 76, 79
 Khwārazm, 40–44, 53, 62, 91, 243, 245, 295–96, 297,
 309, 322, 373, 374, 402, 480, 551, 607, 618
 Chinggis Khan's campaign, 421, 461
 coinage, 261
 Edigü's rule, 298–99, 300
 entrusted to Jochi, 248
 monetary reform, 275
 rule of the Sufi-Qonggirats, 293
 Temür's invasion, 367
 trade relations, 39
 trade roads, 376
 Uzbek khanate, 300–1
 Khwārazm-Shāh dynasty, 20, 48, 185, 188, 196,
 230, 246, 248, 308. *See also*
 Muḥammad, Khwārazm-Shāh; Jalāl
 al-Dīn, Khwārazm-Shāh
 expansion, 27
 Ki, Empress, Koryō wife of Toghon Temür,
 693, 696, 699. *See also* Lady Qi
 Kiev, 66, 281, 294, 299, 621, 753, 755, 759, 764,
 782, 870
 Kievan Rus', 66–68, 506, 710, 753, 756, 760, 764,
 765, 869
 Kim Hodong, 6, 75, 680n4
 Kimek Confederation, 735, 742
 Kirakos of Ganjak, 250, 532, 708, 711, 718, 720
 Kiray, 301
 Kirgizstan, 320, 335, 866, 870
 Kirman, 80, 182, 192–94, 218, 331, 333,
 414, 641, 871
 Kish, 88, 363–64, 376, 510, 836
 Kishiliq, 108, 133
 Kitbuqa, 88, 90–91, 189, 190–91, 200, 423,
 802–4, 810
 Kiyat, 24, 30
 Kizil Kum desert, 42
 Ko Yongbo, eunuch, 696
 Köchü, Ögödei's third son, 57n178, 70,
 72, 107
 Köde'ü Aral, 54
köke (kökö) debter (Blue Book), 30, 425
 Köke Na'ur (Khentii aimag, Mongolia), 72
 Köke Temür (Wang Baobao), 172–74
 Kökechü, prince, 141
 Kökejin, wife of Chinggis, 142, 409, 647, 831
 Kokonor (Qinghai, PRC), 51, 57, 70, 81
 Kolbas, Judith, 71n257, 71
 Kölgen, 77n295
 Kollam, 830–31, 835, 838
 Kolonna, 66, 302, 754, 756, 759, 763, 764
 Konchaka, Chinggisid princess, 282, 643
 Könchek, Chaghadaid khan, 144, 348, 356
 Kongmin, king of Koryō, 693, 694
 Konya, 182, 708
 Kopal, 325
 Korea. *See* Koryō dynasty
 Körgis (Körgüz) Güregen, the Önggüt,
 son-in-law of Temür Qa'an, 140, 344
 Körgüz, Uighur official, 62, 71, 433, 436
 Korikos, port of Cilicia, 708
 Koryō dynasty, 50, 58–59, 679–80
 alliance with the Mongols, 683–84
 first contact with the Mongols, 681–83
 integration into the Mongol Empire, 689–93
 marriage alliances, 645, 646, 647, 649
 military and royal authority, 693–94
 Mongol campaigns against, 85, 685–88
 movement of people and their power in
 the Mongol Empire, 694–99
 prewar relations with the Mongols, 683–84
 relations with the Ming dynasty, 699
 Köse Dagħ, battle of, 71, 249, 416, 711, 799
 Kostandin, Armenian baron, poet, 713, 728–29
 Kostroma, 764
 Köten, Ögödei's son, 57, 70–72, 73, 75, 77n295,
 81–82, 84, 86, 107, 113
 Kotman, river, 709
 koumiss (*qumiz*), 632
 brewers, 129
 ritual use of, 453
 Kremenchuk, 298
 Kubalak, prince of the Orda ulus, 270, 272, 343
 Kubrāwī, Sufi order of Kubrāwiyya, 384
 Küchük Muḥammad, 302
 Kügenlik, river, 269
 Küilük. *See* Kubalak
 Kuizhangge ("Pavilion of the Star of
 Literature"), 156, 158
 Kukherd, Iranian district, 721
 Kül Tegin, 408
 Kulikovo, battle of, 294, 766
 Külüg Qa'an. *See* Qaishan
 Kunming. *See* Shanchan
 Kura, river, 724
 Kurds, 45
 Kursk, 759
 Kūshyār ibn Labbān, 568
 Kusū, 340
 Kutais, 711
 Kychanov, E. I., 251n23

La Pratica della Mercatura (Practice of
 Commerce), 785

- Ladoga, 619
 Lady Qi (Mo. Öljei Qutuq), Yuan empress
 from Koryŏ, 647. *See also* Ki, Empress
 Laiazzo. *See* Ayas
lajvardina (glazing technique), 236
 lamaism. *See* Tibetan Buddhism
 Lan Na, 142–43
 Land of Darkness, 736, 737, 742
 Lane, George, 7
 Lanzhou, 51
 Laodisha, 173
 Laos, 140
lashkar-i tamma (type of army), 415
 László IV, 265–66
 late antiquity, 450
 Latin Empire, 711
 Latins, 256, 263, 274, 286, 288, 308, 781. *See also*
 Genoese; Venetians
 in the Crimea, 269
 Lattimore, Owen, 21
 law codes, 115, 132, 155, 369, 867
 Lazs, 710
 Ledyard, Gary, 58n183
 Lee, Sherman, 598
 legitimization, legitimization concepts,
 legitimacy, 378, 456, 757
 ‘Abbasid, 38
 Buddhist, 455
 Chaghadaid, 319, 323
 Chinese, 158, 447
 Chinggisid, 227, 288, 339, 386, 455
 Delhi Sultanate, 872
 Ilkhanid, 183, 196, 207, 211, 235, 237, 404
 Jalayirid and Chobanid, 360
 Mamluk, 190, 872
 Mongol, 96, 203, 386, 444, 446, 447, 658, 866
 Muslim, 233, 293, 362, 386, 455
 Ottoman, 234
 Qaidu, 332, 338
 Qubilai, 337, 667
 Temür (Tamerlane), 365, 367
 Temür Qa’an, 345
 Toluid, 79–80
 Yuan, 140
 Lena basin, 736
 Leng Qian, 538
lesostep (forest–steppe), 735
lesotundra (forest–tundra frontier), 737
lestvitsa (succession principle), 274, 282
 levirate, 115, 150, 195, 410, 630–31, 635, 642,
 646, 652
 Lewon II, Cilician king, 722, 723
 Li Meng, 146n122, 148, 155
 Li Quan, 49
 Li Siqi, 169, 172
 Li Tan rebellion, 112–13, 116, 122, 422, 474–75
 Lian Xixian, 81, 108, 111, 113, 115
 Liang Songtao, 26n29
 Liangzhou (Xiliangfu, Wuwei), 51, 57, 72, 81
 Liao empire, dynasty, 20, 24, 158, 184, 658, 683.
 See also Khitan(s)
 Liao river valley, 36
 Liaodong, 58, 612, 695, 700
 Liaoyang (Dongjing), 36, 150, 153, 337, 674, 695
 Liegnitz, 67, 402, 755
 Ligdan Qa’an, 174
 Lin’an. *See* Hangzhou
Lingbei xing zhongshu sheng (Branch Central
 Secretariat for Lingbei), 669
 Lingbei, province (*shing*), 143, 153, 346, 670, 672
lingji (princely order), 144
 Lingzhou, 51
 Lintao, 86
 literati
 Chinese, 150, 538
 Confucian, 122, 158
 Muslim, 246, 252
 painting, 580, 588
 Lithuania, Lithuanians, 265, 269, 281–82, 283,
 286, 294, 296, 298, 302, 303–4, 305–7,
 473, 765, 787, 872
 Little Ice Age, 9, 603, 614
 Liu Bingzhong, 82, 85–86, 92, 108, 115, 412, 559,
 582, 660
 Liu Futong, 168, 171
 Liu Heima, 111
 Liu Shen, 142
 Liu Shizhong, 86
 Liu Taiping, 92
 Liu Yingsheng, 6, 140n93, 144n113
 Liu Zheng, 116
 Liupan mountains, 51, 111, 408, 412
 livestock, 34, 143, 377, 407, 483, 608–9, 629, 633,
 754, 855
 Lizhou, 86, 93, 504
 locusts, 165, 166, 169, 171
 logistics, 639, 742, 803, 837
 London
 economic growth, 770
 minted silver, 492, 496–97, 508
 Longgang, 92
 Longmen, Buddhist cave complex, 538
 Lop Nor, 367
 Louis IX, King of France, 90, 189–91, 200, 593,
 784, 786–87, 810
 lower Yangzi region, 494, 496, 504, 508, 511, 518

- Loyang, 415
lu (circuits), 63
 Lu Shiron, 133–34
 Lübeck, 263
 Luyi county, 325
 Lyon, Second Council of, 787, 809
- Ma'bar, 864
 Madrasat al-Khānī, 383
 al-Madrasa al-Mas'ūdiyya, 383
madrasas (colleges), 221, 383, 540, 568, 816
 Magas, fortress, 66
 al-Maghribī, Muḥyī al-Dīn, 561–62
 Maḥbūbī Ṣadrs, 382
 Maḥmūd Dīnāwarī, shaykh, 209
 Maḥmūd Kāshgharī, 409
 Maḥmūd of Ghazna, 199, 353, 576
 Maḥmūd Yalawāch (Maḥmūd Khwārazmī), 39, 61–63, 65, 70, 73, 80, 230
 Maḥmūd, son of Soyurghatmish, Ögödeid puppet khan, 365
Mai jue (Secrets of the Pulse), 555
 Maili Bog, 611
 Maitreya, 532–33, 541
 Majapahit, 125. *See also* Java
 al-Majd, al-Sallāmī, trader, 815
 Majma' al-murūj. *See* Wādī al-Khaznadār
 Makhika, Nestorian Patriarch, 720
 Malabar coast, 830, 833–34, 835, 836–37
Malāḥida. *See* Ismā'īlīs, Niẓārī
 Malik Ashraf, 288–89, 290
 Malik Shams al-Dīn Kart, 88
 Malik Temür, Arigh Böke's son, 131, 141–42, 147, 335, 343, 345, 346, 419, 667
 Malik, Ögödeid prince, 749
 Mamai, Jochid commander, 294–95, 472, 765–66
 Mamistra, port of Cilicia, 708
 Mamluk Sultanate, Mamluk Egypt and Syria, 189–91, 565, 872
 adoption of Tatar dress, 858
 diplomatic documents sent to, 446
 first encounters, 804–5
 hostilities with the Ilkhanate, 91, 126, 185, 199–201, 204, 211–12, 216, 233, 805–15
 military tactics, 468–70
 Hülegü's attempt to forge an alliance with France against, 786
 legacy of the Mongols, 819–20
 lifting of the Papal ban on trade, 505
 migration to, 333
 peace with the Ilkhanate, 223, 225–26, 280, 727, 816
 raids on Cilicia, 720, 722, 723
 relations with Qaidu, 342
 relations with Tarmashirin, 355, 375
 relations with the Chinggisids, 679
 relations with the Jochids, 192, 244, 256–58, 262, 264, 272–74, 279–81, 289, 296, 305, 309
 relations with the Middle Mongolian Ulus, 319
 scholarly community, 380, 383
 slave trade, 269, 342, 378, 815, 856
 Tegüder's attempts to negotiate peace, 203
 the post-Ilkhanate era, 816–18
mamluks (slave soldiers), 272, 515, 804, 856
mamluks of Mongol origin, 819
 Manchu, 652, 750. *See also* Qing dynasty
 Manchuria, 19, 20, 107, 110, 127, 131, 135, 171, 337, 407, 657, 746, 748, 750, 869
 climatic and environmental conditions, 610–12
 Ming takeover of, 174
 Mongol migration from, 21, 739
 Mongol operations in, 36, 50, 56
 Naghachu's occupation of, 674
 rebellion, 477, 667, 744
 Manfred, king of Sicily, 200
 Mangghala, Anxi wang, 147, 408
 Manghit, 244, 293, 296, 297–301
manglai (vanguard), 465
 Mangqut, 406, 413, 415, 476
 Mangystau, 297
 Manichaeism, 168n198, 454
manjāniq (mangonels), 481, 806
 Manqud, 461
 Manzikert, battle of, 708, 711
 Mao Gui, 171, 172
 maps, 557–58, 675, 792, 859, 860
 Mar Yabhallaha III, 787
 Marāgha, 183, 198, 720, 727, 840
 cave complex, 209
 Marāgha Observatory, 90, 192, 221, 550, 552, 559–64, 566–67, 568
 Mārdīn, 799
 al-Marghīnānī, 382, 383
 maritime trade, 4, 344, 375, 386, 508, 511, 789, 834–38, 853, 864, 873
 Marj al-Ṣuffar, 809, 811
 marketplaces, 490, 513–15
 marriage practices, 629–32
 Ilkhanid, 640–42
 Jochid, 642–43
 Yuan, 648–49, 652
 Martin, Janet, 768

- Martini, Simone, 509, 587, 596, 793
 massacre, 118, 189, 228, 466–67, 852
 Mas'ūd Beg, 83, 321, 323, 329, 330, 333, 372, 373, 377, 383, 493
 material culture, 244, 386, 575, 791–92, 859
 mathematics, 234, 380, 383
 textbooks, 563
 mausoleum, 385
 for Bayan Quli, 360, 386
 for Öljeitü, 222, 583, 859
 reconstruction under the rule of Timur, 583
 in Sulṭāniyya, 236
 for Tughluq Temür, 379, 386
 May, Timothy, 11, 854n5
 Maymün Diz, fortress, 480
 Mayyāfāriqīn, 720, 799, 802
al-mazālim, 369
 Māzandarān, 71, 195, 207, 339, 353
 measurement system, 488, 491n9, 499–500
 Mecca, 209, 225, 310, 593, 642, 815–16, 818
 medicinal herbs and plants, 377, 859
 medicine, 234, 380, 383, 552–56, 845
 Medieval Climate Anomaly (Medieval Warm Period), 603, 608, 610, 614, 615, 616–17, 619
 medieval world, 1
 Medina, 225, 815, 816
 Mediterranean Sea, 256, 864
 Mediterranean world, 244, 279, 288, 450
 eastern, 488, 495, 506
 textile production, 585
 trade and contact with Mongols, 788, 793
 trade system, 708
 Mehmed II, the Conqueror, 303, 569
 Mencius, 108, 536
 Meng Nan, 25n25, 26n29
 Menggeser, 77, 83, 426
Menggu jun (Mongol Army), 476
 Mengli Giray, 303, 304
 Mengü Temür, 807. *See also* Möngke Temür, son of Hüllegü
 Mengwu, 21
 merchants. *See* traders
 Merkidai, 73n274
 Merkits, 23, 33, 38, 56, 630, 632, 635, 739, 746
 Merv, 338, 360
 Mesopotamia, 183, 198, 212, 213, 219, 720, 798n3, 853
 metallurgy, 737
 metalwork, 576, 577, 737
 Miaoying Baita temple, 582
 Michael of Tver'. *See* Mikhail Iaroslavich
 Michael Palaiologos, Byzantine emperor, 256
 Middle East, 10, 184–87, 190
 Arabia, 815–18
 Black Death, 166, 356
 first encounters, 799–805
 impact of the Mongols, 228, 230, 232, 819–20
 non-military contact, 818–19
 ongoing war with the Mamluks, 805–15
 “Middle Mongolian Ulus” (*Dumadu Mongol Ulus*), 319–20, 345, 374, 386. *See also* Chaghadaids; Ögödeids
Miftāh al-‘ulūm (‘The Key of Sciences’), 380
 migrant diasporas, 859
 migration. *See* population movements
 Mikhail Aleksandrovich, grand prince of Tver', 765
 Mikhail Iaroslavich (prince of Tver' and grand prince of Vladimir), 274, 282, 758
 Mikhail Vsevolodovich (prince of Chernigov), 758
 military colonies (*tuntian*), 336, 661, 741
 military deployment, 609, 620, 855
 military labor, 694
 military technology, 856
 Miller, David, 757
Mind Landscape of Xie Youyu, painting, 595
 mines, mining, 633, 738
 copper, 491
 salt, 718
 silver, 491, 495, 767, 838
 techniques used in the military, 685
 Ming dynasty, 159, 173–74, 295, 366–67, 673–75, 867
 adoption of “Tatar dress”, 858
 adoption of Mongol institutions, 868
 astronomy, 568
 collection of forest products, 743
 compilation of the Yuan imperial annals, 165
 destruction of Qaraquorum, 661
 influence in the Amur region, 745
 introduction of silver taxation, 496, 519
 Koryō's relations with, 699–700
 painting styles, 599
 receipt of fur from the Oirat, 750
Ming shilu (Ming Veritable Records), 673n48
mingghan (chiliarchy), 29, 400, 412–15, 461, 465, 466, 480, 760
 Minglig Tong'a, 151
minqan. *See* *mingghan*
 Mirkhwānd, Persian historian, 272
Mirror of Painting, Ancient and Modern, painting, 595
mīrzās (local nomadic leaders), 302

- mobility, 1, 263, 384, 478, 621, 672, 852, 854–55
 of goods, 866
 religious exchange and, 532, 534
 mobilization of spiritual resources, 456, 862
 Mochi Yebe (Mauci), Chaghadaï's eldest son, 402
 Möge, prince, 76, 93
 Möge, wife of Ögödei, 69
 Moghulistan, 320, 359, 362–63, 364, 365–67, 384
 Moghuls (Eastern Chaghadaids), 359, 360, 363–68, 370, 376, 382, 386–87
 Moghuls (of India). *See* Mughal India, Mughals
 Mohe, 745. *See also* Water Tatars
 Mohi, battle of, 755
 Moksha, 743
 Moldavia, 269, 305, 493, 496
 monetary policy, 206, 274–75, 527, 868
 Mönggedü, prince (Köten's son), 71n255, 73n274, 77, 82, 84n326
 Mönggedü, general, 416
 Möngke Temür, Jochid khan, 259–63, 369, 405, 642–43, 768
 alliance with Qaidu, 128
 regularization of the tribute system, 762
 Möngke Temür, son of Hülegü, 194, 195, 196, 202, 329–30, 342, 640. *See also* Mengü Temür
 Möngke, qa'an, 5, 20, 56, 59, 88, 128, 181, 186, 189, 247, 320, 426, 657, 853
 allocation of territory to Malik, 749
 appointment of Qubilai and Hülegü as viceroys in North China and Iran, 108–9
 assignment of Hülegü with the Middle Eastern campaigns, 254, 403, 416
 attack on the Song, 116
 census, 760
 chancellery tradition, 429
 chiliarchy organization, 412
 conquest of Dali, 86–87
darugha institution, 422, 424
 death, 90, 481, 646, 803
 events leading up to, 91–94, 109–10
 succession war following, 94, 190, 191, 254, 406, 689, 719, 744
 decree introducing *qubchir* throughout the empire, 500
 decree on the extermination of the Isma'ilis, 534
 Eurasian land apportioned among nobles, 503
 expansion of empire, 84–85, 186–87
 expansion of the postal system, 433
 ideology, 445
 influence of Sorqaqtani, 637
 interest in Buddhism, 531, 659
 legitimacy of his succession, 69, 79–80
 on religion, 527
 order for the execution of Rukn al-Dīn and family, 89
ordos, 409
 path to power, 77
 preparations for assault on Kiev, 66
 purge following his accession, 79–80, 329, 369, 662, 665
 recentralization of imperial government, 81–84
 redistribution of Central Asian territories, 201
 relations with Qaidu, 325–27
 relations with the Arab Middle East, 799–801
 relations with the Chaghadaids, 321–22
 relations with the Jochids, 252, 403
 religious approval of, 446
 resumption of minting of coins in Almalig, 373
 rule in Caucasia, 713, 715, 717
 seasonal migration, 407
 Toluid raid on his *ordo*, 335
 tradition of court sponsored debate, 221
 troops assigned to Chaghadaï, 470
 troops given as *emchü* to Hülegü, 404
 visit from Het'um I, 786
 wife, 383
 withdrawal from Russia, 67
 Mönglik, Father, 31
 Mongol Commonwealth, 2, 320, 854, 855
 Mongol invasions, impact of, 757–58, 852–54
 Mongol moment, 2, 4, 9, 359, 374, 386, 854, 856, 866, 871
 Mongolia, 657
 climate, 607–10
 construction of the capital, 657–60
 disunity after the return to, 673–76
 effects of warfare and natural disasters, 660–62
 emergence of dissidence, 127–32
 pre-1206, 19–21
 Qaidu's campaign, 665–69
 Qubilai Qa'an and, 664–65
 struggles for power, 662–64
 twelfth-century, 21–27
 Yuan Court and its problems, 664–65
 Yuan governance, 669–71

- Mongolian language, 23, 379, 866
 Mongolian People's Republic, 669
 monopolies, 121, 133, 135, 506, 508, 865
 monsoon, East Asian, 611
 Mordvins, people, 741
 Morgan, David, 11–12, 437
morin (horse), type of *jam* route, 433
 Moscow, 66, 621, 868, 870
 Aḥmad and, 303–4
 Black Death, 291
 chiliarchy, 760
 economic recovery, 756, 769–70
 grand duchy of. *See* Muscovy
 house of, 246, 282–84
 Mongol attack on, 754, 759
 relations with the Golden Horde, 284–86, 757–58, 764–66
 relations with the Great Horde, 306, 766–67
 Toqtamish's sack of, 473
 tribute, 763
 mosques, 309, 386, 446, 844
 Balkh, 379
 Central Asia, 385
 ceramic art, 581
 décor and furnishings, 584
 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, 819
 Qaraqorum, 658
 Mosquito Lake, battle of, 111
 Mosul, 565, 798, 799, 802
 Mozhaish, 759, 764
 Mubārak Shāh, Chaghadaid Khan, 81, 321, 327–29, 332–33, 339, 341, 379, 384, 644
 Mubārīz al-Dīn Muḥammad, 289
 Mughal India, Mughals, 221, 319, 368, 598, 867–68
 art, 845
 Mūghān, region, 408, 468, 708, 714
 al-Mughīth, 'Umar, Ayyūbid ruler, 799
 Muḥammad Pulād (Polad), Chaghadaid khan, 356, 381
 Muḥammad Shāh b. Tughluq, sultan of Delhi, 223, 355, 361, 829, 832, 843
 Muḥammad Shibānī Khan, 301
 Muḥammad, Khwārazm-Shāh (Sultan Muḥammad), 32, 33, 37–39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 612, 657, 781, 799
 Muḥammad, son of Shāh Jahān, 367
 Muḥammad, the Prophet, 220, 302, 385, 447, 592–93, 859, 860
 Mu 'izz al-Dīn Ḥusayn, Kartid ruler, 360
Mujmal al-uṣul fī ahkām al-nujūm (Compendium of Principles in Astrology), 568
al-Mulakḥḥaṣ fī al-hay'a al-baṣīṭa (Epitome of Plain Astronomy), 551, 560, 563, 568
 Multān, 355
 multiculturalism, 379, 857
 multilingual dictionaries, 860
 Muqali, 29, 35–37, 41, 47–50, 107, 413, 415, 463, 476, 481, 612, 684
 Murom', 500, 754, 759, 760
 Muscovy, 307, 309, 455, 750, 763, 771, 867–69, 871
 Muslim Benevolence Pharmacies (*Huimin yaoju*), 555
 Muslim clerics, 445, 842
 Muslim Medical Office, 531
 Muslim Pharmaceutical Bureaus (*Huihui yaowu yuan*), 555
 Muslims, 6, 39, 187, 254, 266, 309, 531, 786, 811, 870, 871
 administrative roles, 63, 423
 artisans, 380
 contact with the Mongols, 385
 dealing of legal cases among, 427
 experts, 378
 influence on Yuan astronomy, 568
 interest in cartography and geography, 557–58
 merchants, 377, 838
 migrations, 842–44, 846
 in the Mongol armies, 385, 414, 465
 participation in the siege of Baghdad, 189
 presence in Qaraqorum, 659
 religious exchanges, 84, 533–40, 542–43, 862
 segregation in the steppe, 455
 use of Arabic script, 428
 al-Musta'ṣim, 'Abbāsīd caliph, 87, 90, 801
mustawfī (audit official), 217
 Muzaffarīd dynasty, 218, 228
 Myriarchy for Agricultural Colonies (*tuntian wanhuifu*), 670
myt (toll), 761
nabo (lodging), 408
 Naghachu, 174, 674
 Nagorno Karabakh, 728
 Naiman, tribe, 23, 26–27, 32, 56, 401, 429, 462, 636, 673, 739, 746, 784
 Naishi Khatun, wife of Yesü Möngke Khan, 379
 Najaf, 222
 Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī, 564
 Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, 384
 Nakhshab, 354

- Naliqo'a (Nāliqū), Chaghadaid khan, 218, 348–50
- Nambui, wife of Qubilai, 646–48
- Naming (modern Kaifeng), 171, 172, 422
- Nan jing* (Classic of Difficulty), 555
- naphtha throwers (*naft andāzān*), 480
- Naqshbandi Sufis, Naqshbandiyya, 368, 384, 386
- Naqu, 76–77, 79
- narin*, type of *jam* route, 433
- Nasen, Qarluq poet, 698
- nasij* (gold brocade), 585–88
- Nāṣir al-Dīn, son of Sayyid Ajjal, 477
- al-Nāṣir Faraj, Mamluk sultan, 818
- al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, Mamluk sultan, 272–74, 279–81, 808, 811, 813, 816, 817
- mosque, 819
- al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, Ayyūbid ruler, 799, 801
- Naṣr al-Dīn, Marshal, 125
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, 594
- natural disasters, 149, 355, 670, 671–72, 865–66.
See also drought; famine; floods; locusts
- navy, 117, 123, 477–78, 857
- Nawākit, 381
- Nawrūz, Oirat amīr, 207–9, 210–11, 224, 291n176, 338–41, 356, 416, 423, 723
- Nayan, Mongol prince, 127, 131, 337, 406, 413, 475, 744
- Ne'ūril (Niulin), 93
- Near East, 450, 661, 780, 786
- Negübei, Chaghadaid khan, 128, 322, 332, 334
- Negüder, commander, 258, 322, 468
- Negüderi (Negüderid), 184, 322, 332–33, 341, 423, 468, 813. See also Qara'unas
- nerge* (hunting technique), 462, 466, 744
- Nestorianism, Nestorians, 23, 75, 84, 201, 266, 380, 381–82, 428, 446, 454, 554, 555, 592, 659, 784, 786, 787
- New Sarai, 277, 292, 472, 551
- New World, 1, 872
- Nicaea, 711
- Nicholas III, Pope, 436
- Nicholas IV, Pope, 220, 528, 787, 790
- Nihāyat al-idrāk fi dirāyat al-aflāk* (The highest attainment in comprehending the orbs), 562
- Ninefold Pardon (*tarkhan*), 29–30
- Ningxia, 51, 111, 611
- al-Nisābūrī, Nizām al-Dīn, 564, 565, 566
- Nishapur, 46, 331, 338–39, 429, 581, 854
- Nizām al-Dīn Shāmī, Timurid historian, 365
- Nizām al-Mulk, 221
- Nizārī Ismā'īlis. See Ismā'īlis
- Nizhny Novgorod, 285–86
- Nogölda, 517–18
- Noghai, Jochid prince, 182, 256–57, 264–70, 271, 281, 342–43, 472, 481
- Noghais (Noghai Horde), 300–1, 304, 306–7, 310, 746, 749
- nökör* (companion), 25, 29, 132
- nomadic culture, 1, 378–80, 852, 854, 863, 866
features of. See mobility; redistribution
- nomadic migrations, 619, 855, 856
- nomadism. See also pastoral nomadism
- Ilkhanid, 198, 222
- reindeer, 735
- resilience of in Jochid territories, 310
- Nomuqan, son of Qubilai Qa'an, 128–30, 261, 264, 270, 330n31, 334–35, 342–43, 666
- Nonni, river, 739
- noodles, 859
- North Atlantic Oscillation, 613, 615
- North Sea, 263
- Northern Europe, 263, 865
- Northern Yuan dynasty, 674–76
- Nosal, 62
- Novgorod, 263, 285, 489, 498–99, 501, 506, 508, 509, 619, 754, 756, 757, 758, 760–62, 765, 767–70
- noyan* (commander, military elite), 29, 250
- Nu'mān al-Dīn al-Khwārazmī, 551
- Nūr, 42
- Nūr al-Dīn, 300
- Nurgal (Nuergan), 149, 741, 745
- Ob, region, 742
- Ob, river, 140, 734
- Ob-Ugrian, 735
- Öchicher (Aqsaqal Taishi), 132, 141–44
- Odorico da Pordenone, 790
- Office of Western Medicine (*Xiyu yiyao* or *Jingshi yiyao yuan*), 554
- Oghul Qaimish, 74, 75–77, 79–80, 250, 786
- Oghuz Khan, 234
- Oghuz Turks, 234, 470, 736
- Ögödei, qa'an, 28n37, 31, 41, 46, 47, 52, 107, 184, 186–87, 249, 332, 412, 422, 448, 534n52, 635, 657, 711, 759, 853
- administration, 59–65, 95, 425–26
- army, 405
- audience with Yang Miaozen, 651
- campaign against the Qipchaqs, 402
- chancellery practices, 429–31
- construction of Qaraqorum, 657–60
- death, 402, 755, 783

- diplomacy, 832
 emergence of empire under, 55–59
 enthronement, 54–55
 heir to Chinggis, 52–54
 ideology, 445
 illness, 553
 Indian campaign, 84, 829
 lands granted to Sorqaqtani Beki, 82
 measurement system, 500
ordos, 409
 Qashi as heir to, 324
 recognition of Qaidu as heir, 324
 religious toleration policy, 81, 262
 role in Chinggis Khan's conquest of Central Asia, 43–45
 seasonal migration, 407
 struggle for power, 662
 succession struggles following death of, 68–72
 Tammachi army, 415–16
 territories assigned to, 321, 662
 transformation of the postal system, 433
 war in China, 35, 413
 Western campaign, 65–68, 779, 781–82
 Ögödeids, 68, 75, 76–77, 80, 81, 127, 174, 182, 201, 271, 310, 319–20, 356, 369, 386, 744.
 See also Qaidu; Chapar
 administration, 372–74
 army, 368–72
 battle with Toghan Temür, 172
 campaigns in Hanzhong, Sichuan, and Henan-Jianbei, 107
 challenges to the rule of the Ilkhanids, 404
 chiliarchy system, 414
 dissolution of the *ulus*, 80, 320, 321
 marriages, 649
 pacification of, 140–43, 747
 political struggles surrounding Möngke's candidacy for the throne, 76–77
 as puppet khans, 358, 360, 365
 struggles for power, 662–63
 support for Qubilai, 110
 tamgha, 373
 Toluid purge of, 250
 ulus, 407
 usurpation, 355
 warfare between the Chaghadaids and, 345–50, 405
 Ögrünch, 80
 Oirat, tribe, 33, 41, 301, 321, 368, 469, 471, 632, 636, 640–41, 643, 649, 738, 739, 741, 746, 749
 Oka, river, 285, 302, 303, 767
 Ölberli Qipchaqs, 47n127, 66
 Old Sarai. *See* Sarai
 Old World, 1, 737, 852, 864
 Öljei Qutuq. *See* Lady Qi
 Öljei, Oirat, senior wife of Hilegü, 195, 410n34, 640
 Öljeitü, daughter of Kelmish Agha, 642
 Öljeitü, Ilkhan, 144, 203, 206, 210, 228, 340, 641
 attempt to influence matters in the Hijaz, 816
 campaigns against the Mamluks, 809, 811–12
 construction of Sulṭāniyya, 198
 dispatch of diplomatic missions, 809, 832
 history of, 213, 226
 khatuns, 410
 letter to the King of France, 141, 271n93, 345, 435
 mausoleum, 583, 859
 Özbek's letter to, 252n31
 patents of investiture, 446
 reign, 217–22, 724
 relations with the Jochids, 278
 religion, 232, 724, 840
 seals, 431
 seasonal migration, 408
 trade with Mamluks, 273
 Yasa'ur and, 352, 353
 Öljetei, princess, 641
 Olqunu'uts, 406
 Om, river, 743
 Ōn (Bureau of Military Affairs), 114–15, 153, 154, 420, 427, 474
 Onan, river, 28
 Ondor Zuun Nuruu, 607
 Ong Khan (To'oril), 25–27, 28, 461, 465, 629, 637
 Ongghuchatu. *See* Zhongdu
 Onggin, river, 407
 Onggirat. *See* Qonggirat
 Önggüts, tribe, 35, 109n8, 406, 413, 428, 636, 649
 oral tradition (in legitimation), 445
 Orbelian, Stephannos, 722
 Orda Ulus, 342–43, 403, 472, 742
 Orda, son of Jochi, 47, 53, 67, 68, 72–73, 249–50, 403, 642
 Ordaids, 249, 297, 744. *See also* White Horde, Orda Ulus
ordo (camp, mobile court), 42, 400, 407–11, 856, 857
 in the Chaghadaid realm, 368

- ordo* (camp, mobile court) (cont.)
 distribution of women as slaves in, 42
 granted by Chinggis, 31
 in the Ilkhanate, 410
 in the Jochid realm, 243, 410–11
 in Qaidu's realm, 333
 in the Yuan, 115, 410
 women's management of, 632–34
- ordo ger* (palatial tents), 409
- Ordos, 23, 174, 612
- Ordu Bazar, 374
- Ordubaliq, 60
- Orghina Khatun, Chaghadaid, 81, 83, 88,
 321–23, 327, 379
- Orheiul Vechi, 505, 515
- Orkhon valley, 452, 608, 609
- Örlüg Noyan. *See* Ös Temür
- Örmegetü, 407
- Orsini Polyptych, 596
- Orthodox Christianity, Orthodox Christians,
 262, 266–67, 285, 764, 767, 782–83, 790,
 854, 858
- ortoq* (Tu. *ortaq*), partners, merchants
 trading with the capital of a Mongol
 dignitary, 59, 115, 132, 156, 377, 634,
 864
- Orus, son of Qaidu, 344, 346, 350
- Ös Temür (Örlüg Noyan), 131, 132
- Ossetians. *See* Alans; Asud
- Ostrowski, Donald, 755, 770
- ötegü bo'ol* (hereditary slaves), 133
- Otrar (Uträr), 38, 40–43, 297, 323, 350, 356, 373,
 376, 853–54
- Ottomans, Ottoman dynasty, 174, 213, 234,
 295, 305–7, 310, 729, 867, 871
 conquest of Egypt, 190
 intellectual and scientific connections,
 565, 569
 Khan Ahmed's challenge against in the
 Crimea, 303
- Ouyang Xuan, 158
- Oxus, river. *See* Amu Darya
- Özbek, Jochid khan, 299, 351, 758, 768
 accession to the throne, 274
 claim to the Caucasus, 219
 claim to the lands of northern Iran, 226
 collaboration with Kebek, 353
 death, 284, 357
 Esen Buqa's attempted alliance, 371
 execution of Alexander Mikhailovich and his
 son, 764
 hostilities with the Ilkhanate, 724
 letter to Öljeitü, 252n31
- ordos*, 410
 reforms, 290
 rise of Islam and, 276–84, 771
yarligh to the Venetians, 286
- Pacific Ocean, 734, 740, 743, 858
- Pacification Commission and General
 Regional Command, 664, 669
- Pādshāh-i Islām* (Emperor of Islam), 807
- Pagan, 125, 482, 872. *See also* Burma
- paiza* (tablet of authority), 49, 73, 86, 432, 436,
 597, 717
- Pak Bulhua (Buqa, eunuch), 696
- Palestine, 190–91, 200, 211, 254, 787, 802,
 804, 810
- Pamir, 38, 604
- Pang Sin'u, eunuch, 696
- Panj, river, 338
- Panjab, 338, 341
- Papacy, 225, 266, 276, 292, 310, 319, 446, 724,
 779–80, 787
- paper money, 109, 219, 373, 490, 504–5, 507,
 510–11, 514, 515, 517–18, 768, 859, 865
- Ilkhanate, 206
- Jin dynasty, 492
- Ming dynasty, 675
- Song dynasty, 121
- Tang dynasty, 120
- western khanates, 502
- Yuan dynasty, 118–20, 133–35, 136, 160–65,
 168, 170, 494–96, 497, 498, 501–2, 508
- Zhongtong bills, 121, 154, 164, 498
- paper, transmission of, 550, 859
- Paris, 291, 431, 493
- Paris, Matthew, 779
- Parvān, 45
- pastoral nomadism, 19, 21, 183, 374, 462, 605,
 657, 672, 855
- pastoralism, 9, 198, 374, 735
- pasture, pasturelands, of Chaghadaids and
 Ögödeids, 329, 341, 351–52, 362, 368, 374
- patronage
 of the arts, 235, 588, 599
 Chaghadaid, women's place in, 379
 Ghazan's program of, 212
 Ilkhanid, 233
 Koryö, 696
 relations, use of textiles, 577, 584
 religious, 221, 225, 659, 697, 840
 of scientific activity, 233, 550, 552, 559,
 566
- Pax Mongolica, 1, 437–38, 531, 532, 755, 779, 781,
 794, 854–55

- peace
 between Ilkhans and Mamluks (1323), 223, 280, 727
 among the Mongols (1304), 270–75, 345
 between the Yuan and Chaghadaids (1323), 353
- Pechenegs, 245, 308, 753
- Pegolotti, Francesco Balducci, 231, 373, 375, 497, 502, 509n110, 785
- Pelliot, Paul, 83n323, 86n334, 127n61, 402, 779n1
- Peng Daya, 64n217, 429, 445
- Pereiaslav¹, 274, 754, 759, 761, 764
- Pereiaslav¹-Riazanskii, 757
- Persian Gulf, 231, 509–10, 558, 581, 789, 827, 832, 834, 836–37, 843, 853
- Persian language, 237, 869
- Pest, 67
- Petech, Luciano, 57n179, 58n180, 72n265, 337n44
- Petr, metropolitan, 764
- 'Phags-pa, lama, 72, 113, 116, 597, 646, 841, 862
- 'Phags-pa, script, 8, 116, 379, 422, 428, 597
- Philip the Fair, king of France, 219, 271n93, 345, 435, 787
- 'Phyag-na-rdo-rje, 72
- physicians, 378, 380, 553–54, 857
 higher status of, 556
 Muslim, 555, 843
- pilgrimage (*hajj*), 225, 299, 816, 818
 Jochid, 310
 Öljeitü and, 220
 women and, 642
- Pingyang, 278, 505, 650
- Pinks, Elizabeth, 64n217
- Pisans, 286
- plague, 9, 159, 166–67, 168, 764, 765. *See also*
 Black Death
 cattle, 206
 economic effects, 768–70
 horse, 364, 370
- Podolia, 294
- Polad, city, 323
- Poland, 67, 265, 267, 269, 281–82, 305, 472, 740, 755, 765, 779, 782, 853
- Poland–Lithuania, 304, 305, 307, 310
- Polish, 282, 303, 304, 755
- political culture, Mongol, 4, 20, 95, 319, 680, 682–83, 867
- Polo, Maffeo, 785
- Polo, Marco, 128, 131, 453, 456, 508, 794, 830, 833, 845, 864
 on the attack on the Dadu palace, 122
 on the conflict between Noghai and Toqta, 269
 on the diplomatic role of South Asia, 831
 evidence of a battle between Qaidu and Nomuqan, 334n40
 on the *jam* system, 215, 435
 on the maritime networks between South Asia and Yuan China, 835–36
 on the monetary system in China, 502
 on Mongol decadence, 553
 on Mongol wives and concubines, 648–49
 on Qubilai, 841
 on Qubilai's consideration of a South Asian invasion, 828
 on the role of the *Tai*, 115n22
 on the trade in horses, 837, 838
 on the wealth provided by South China, 135
 story of Buddha, 540
 travelogue, 785, 790, 860, 872
- Polo, Niccolò, 785
- Polotsk, 756
- polygamy, 195
- polygyny, 629
- Pontic steppes, 47, 66, 191, 402–3, 404, 424
- population movements, 9, 20, 855–56
 emigration from the Chaghadaid Khanate, 333, 340n51, 380, 381, 382
 emigration from Golden Horde territories, 306
 labor migration, 42, 43, 46, 334, 378, 380, 575–76, 658, 856, 861
 migration of forest people to the steppe, 736
 migration of Muslims to Delhi, 842–44, 846
 migrations to Syria and Egypt, 819
 Mongol migration from Manchuria, 21, 739
 nomadic migrations, 619, 856
 seasonal migrations, 407–9
- porcelain, 236, 495–96, 502, 503, 505, 509–11, 513, 580–81, 661
 archaeological evidence, 582, 661, 837
 commodity, 833, 836
 production, 865
 trade, 837–38
- Porto Pisano, 286
- Posada, battle of, 281
- postal system, postal relay system (*jam*, *yam*), 375, 432–38
 in the Chaghadaid realm, 334, 336, 338, 362, 369, 373
 in the Ilkhanate, 215–16, 436–37
 in the Jochid realm, 251

- postal system, postal relay system (cont.)
 system of measurement, 499–500
 in the United Empire, 60, 63, 81, 432–35
 potters, 861
 Prazniak, Roxann, 793
 Price Stabilization Office, 665
 princes of the left hand (Jochids), 53–54, 55,
 110–11, 129–31, 337
 princes of the right hand (Jochids), 54,
 107, 129
 printing, 161, 163, 165, 219, 236, 492,
 494, 859
 propaganda, 75, 79, 853, 860
 Prosh Khaghbakian, Armenian prince, 720
 proto-globalization, 865–66
 Provanto (Cita Nuova), 288
 Prussia, 282
 Pskov, 756, 760, 767
 psychological warfare, 805, 852, 853
 Ptolemy, 559–60, 563, 566
 Pu Shougeng, 511
 Pulad Kykajas, 257
puma zhazi. *See belge*
put' (primary circuit), 762, 763
 Putnam, Aaron, 615
 Puxian Wannu, 59
- Qa'an (Qaghan, Great Khan), 2, 28, 55,
 401, 451
 Qa'an Ulus, 2, 139, 140, 321, 401, 405–7, 408, 410,
 422, 431, 437. *See also* Yuan dynasty
 postal stations, 435
 Qa'aniyya, 332. *See also* Ögödeids
 Qabul Khan, Chinggis's ancestor, 365
 Qachi'un, 31, 54, 131
 Qachulai, Tamerlane's ancestor, 365
 Qadan (Qadakhān, Qada'an, Qadaqan),
 Ögödeid prince, 67, 77, 81, 94, 325, 327,
 339, 663
 Qadaq, 75, 79, 429
 Qadaqai, son of Chaghadaï, 218
qāḍī, 188, 216, 385, 427–28, 564
 Qāḍī Khān, 383
 Qādir-Birdī, 299
 Qāḍizādah Rūmī, 568
 Qaidam Basin, 617
 Qaidu, Ögödeid khan, 80, 137, 320, 324–44, 598,
 644, 747
 administration, 372, 373–74
 army, 369–70, 665
 birth and early life, 324–25
 conflict with Temür Qa'an, 140
 death, 141, 344, 668
 encouragement of religious co-existence,
 381
 Inner Asian state, 744
 investment in the postal system, 369, 375
 involvement in the affairs of his *ulus*, 325–27
 legacy, 344–51, 668–69
 marriage alliances, 372
 and the Middle Kingdom, 813
 occupation of Qaraqorum, 660
 relations with the Chaghadaids, 325–27, 665
 relations with the Golden Horde, 259–62,
 270–72
 relations with the Ilkhanids, 191, 201, 329–33,
 342, 668
 relations with the Qa'an Ulus, 141, 405
 South Asian invasions, 829
 war with Qubilai, 128–29, 131, 665–68, 790
 Qaishan (Külüg Qa'an, Wuzong), 141–45,
 147–48, 150, 154, 157, 159, 161–62, 344,
 346–48, 354, 668–69, 672
 succession, 352
 Qal'at al-Ja'bar, 817
 Qal'at al-Rūm, 811
qalan, tax, 373
 Qalāwūn, Mamluk sultan, 342, 807, 810
 Qalmaqs, 301
 Qalqa, Mongol confederation, 749
qam (diviners), 76
 Qamaq, 170–71
 Qamar al-Dīn, Dughlat commander, 359,
 366–67
 Qamil (Ch. Hami), 144, 146
 Qamqanas, 746
 Qandahar, 341
 Qangli, 42, 47, 56, 245, 248, 413, 417, 470, 697
Qānūn (Ottoman law codex), 867
 Qara Buqa, 90
 Qara Hülegü, Chaghadaid Khan, 71, 73, 76, 77,
 321, 379, 643
 Qara Khitai, 21, 23, 26, 27, 32, 33, 38–40, 48, 61,
 80, 192, 308, 420, 425, 616
qara tamgha (black seal), 431
 Qara Tun, 407
 Qara'unas, 184, 319, 322, 350–51, 353, 356, 357,
 358, 359, 370, 371–72, 386, 468. *See also*
 Negüderi
 and the Chaghadaids, 340–42
 Mubarak Shāh appointed head of, 332
 Nawrūz and, 338–39
 raids on the Ilkhanate, 201
 Qarabalghasun, 658
 Qarachar, Tamerlane's ancestor, 257, 365, 470
Qarachin guards, 143

- qarachu* (rank and file, hereditary military commanders), 366, 483
- Qaradai, 142
- Qaragha-Tagh, 141
- qaraghul/qara'ul* (military unit), 463, 465, 468
- Qarajang. *See* Yunnan
- Qarakhanids, 20, 38, 409, 420–21
- Qarāmānid dynasty, 218
- Qara-Qocho, 336, 343, 352, 376
- Qaraqorum, 67, 88, 143, 324, 357, 409, 422, 426, 674, 781
- administration of Möngke, 83–84
- administration of Ögödei, 59–65
- administration of the forest zone, 741
- administrative units, 669
- agriculture, 610
- architecture, 582
- Arigh Böke's control of, 92
- Armenian and Georgian relations, 714
- Batu's administration of, 250
- center for trade, 55
- construction of, 96, 657–60
- David Ulu sent to, 715
- death of Ögödei, 402
- decline of, 660–62
- defeated by the Ming, 366
- European smiths resettled in, 861
- Fur Road, 376
- Güyük's enthronement, 784
- Güyük's residence, 70
- increase in population, 670
- location, 452, 870
- Middle Eastern diplomatic missions to, 799
- postal stations connecting to, 433–35
- Qaidu's occupation of, 337–38, 665, 667
- Qubilai's attempts to stabilize and make self-sufficient, 664–65
- rule from, 868
- seasonal patterns of occupation, 407–8
- Shiregi's occupation, 666
- succession war, 254, 322, 406, 662–63
- trade route from Siberia, 743
- visits of Rus'ian princes, 758
- Qara-Qoto, 51, 664
- Qarasunqur, Mamluk officer, 809
- Qarluq, 33, 35, 38, 138, 142, 173, 470
- Qarshī (palace), 60
- Qarshī, city, 354, 357, 378
- Qasar. *See* Jochi Qasar
- Qasar Qaya, 831
- Qāshānī, 'Abdallāh, 140n93, 213, 217, 220–21, 271n95, 350n72
- History of Öljeitü*, 226
- on Qaidu's death, 324n20
- Qashi, Qaidu's father, 324
- Qasimov, Khanate of, 302, 306
- Qasur, 341
- Qatay, tribe, 244
- qatun. *See* *khatun*
- Qatwān plain, 329
- qāyāchī* (specialist military unit), 468
- Qayaliq, 41, 53, 76, 270, 325–27, 381, 382, 402
- Qazan, Chaghadaid khan, 357–58, 359–60, 364, 369, 378
- Qazaq. *See* Kazakhs
- Qazaqan, Qara'unas amir, 358–62, 365, 369, 370, 371–73
- Qazwīn, 188
- al-Qazwīnī, 'Abd al-Rahmān, 380
- al-Qazwīnī, Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī. *See* Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī
- Qilian mountains, 51, 611
- Qing China, 174, 867–68, 871
- Qing dynasty, 174, 475, 669
- Qingli treaty (1044), 492
- Qiniangu, 69n247
- Qipchaq khanate, 53, 83
- Qipchaq steppe, 53, 56, 59, 243, 244, 248, 249, 280, 296, 301, 402, 404, 472
- Qipchaq, Ögödeid prince, 329
- Qipchaqs, 42, 44, 47, 56, 244, 263, 707
- alliance with László, 265
- attack on Georgia, 710
- battle of 'Ayn Jālūt, 91
- campaigns against, 248, 249, 402, 472, 621, 726
- in the Chaghadaid army, 470
- dispersion of, 870
- exported as slaves, 815
- flight to the forest zone, 748
- flight westwards to Hungary, 66
- integrated into Mongol military units, 245
- pursued by Büri, 67
- in Qubilai's army, 129–31, 413, 417, 476
- support for the Togha Timurids, 293
- ties with the Russians, 308
- Qirghiz, 41, 368, 738–40, 741, 744, 746–47
- Tianshan, 747, 749
- Yenisei, 736, 739, 740, 747
- Qirq Yer, 266
- Qiu Chuji. *See* Changchun
- Qiyat, 244
- Qobaq, river, 53, 744
- Qobaq, region, 144, 321, 376
- Qojin, 636
- Qongghotans, 406

- Qonggirat (Onggirat), tribe, 24–25, 195, 244,
342, 406, 413, 415, 632, 635–36, 640–43,
646, 648
- Qonichi, khan of the Orda Ulus (White
Horde), 264, 270, 343, 350, 419
- qorchin* (quiver bearers), 466
- Qorghosun, 132–33
- Qori Tumat, 738, 740
- Qoridai (Helidai), 84
- Qoshila, Yuan emperor (Qutuqtu Qa'an,
Mingzong), 138, 145–46, 148–52, 162,
352, 354, 697
- Qrim, 261, 275. *See also* Solkhat
- Qu, river, 93
- Quan, Empress, 646
- quanfusi* (merchant associations), 503
- Quanzhen Daoism, 324, 325
- Quanzhou, 136, 170, 172, 698, 833, 835, 843
porcelain exports, 511
- qubchir* (*qubchur*), tax, 373, 499, 500–2, 716n55
- qubi*. *See* appanage
- Qubilai Qa'an, Sechen Qa'an, Yuan emperor,
28, 64, 79, 181, 186, 187, 198, 278,
386, 542
administration under Möngke, 81–83
administrative reforms in Shaanxi, 109
ailments, 553, 667
appointment of women to official
roles, 650
army, 406, 412–13, 474–76
attempts to stabilize Qaraqorum, 664–65
Buddhism, 840, 841–42
Buddhist construction projects, 845
building of a Great Temple in Dadu, 74
Burma campaigns, 125
capital moved to Dadu, 138
conflict with Qaidu, 665
Confucian advisers, 660
conquest of the Song, 116–18, 174
consideration of a South Asian invasion,
828, 830
Dali campaign, 84, 86
darughas, 422–23
development and support of astronomy,
559, 561, 567
development of Dadu as his capital, 582–83
development of a Mongolian script,
428, 597
diplomacy, 830–31
encouragement of religious exchange, 531
establishment of falcon stations, 743
eunuchs, 696
famine relief, 160
good fortune, 453
influence of his wives, 646–48
interest in cartography, 557
invasions of Vietnam, 124, 831
issuance of paper money, 501
Japanese campaigns, 123–24, 689, 691, 694
jarghuchi, 426–27
Java campaign, 125, 831
keshig, 417–18
legacy, 135–36, 152–58
legalization of the levirate, 652
marriage alliances, 648–49, 691
naval warfare, 478
Nayan's rebellion, 406, 744
ordos, 409
patronage of the arts, 588–89
population transfer, 746
provision of aid to Qaraqorum, 660
regifting of women, 698
relations with Hülegü, 190, 191, 254, 329
relations with the Jochids, 259, 270
relations with Koryō, 689–91
relations with Qaidu, 128–29, 131, 260–61,
327–29, 333–38, 660, 665–68, 790
religious persecution, 534
removed from all military authority, 109
responses to Mongol dissidence, 127–32
restrictions on silk motifs, 584
search for medical expertise, 553–54
seasonal migration, 408
Song campaign, 91–94, 110, 112–13
succession, 137–38
viceroyalty in North China, 107–9
war with Arigh Böke, 91, 94, 112–13, 201, 254,
258, 321–23, 401, 406, 417, 660,
662–64, 744
Yuan administration, 113–16, 118–23, 132–35
- Qubilai, one of Chinggis Khan's "Four
Steeds," 29
- quda* (in-law), 27, 631
- Qudaq, 257
- Qudu, 38
- Quhistān, 87, 88, 182
- Qulan, 409
- Quli, Jochid prince, 404
- Qulpa, 291–92
- Qum Sengir, 74
- Qumans, 753
- qumiz*. *See* koumiss
- Qundurcha, river, 296
- Qunduz, 360, 376, 416
- quriltai* / *qurilta* (assembly), 40, 95, 647
of 1206, 204

- of 1234, 59
attendance of women, 634, 640, 645
to broker truce between Baraq and Qaidu, 665
convened by Chormaqan, 711
convened by Hüsayn for his enthronement, 364
convened by Möngke, 92
convened by Noghai, 268
convoked by Chinggis on the Onan, 28
cost of to enthrone Ayurbarwada, 160
decision to invade the western territories, 753
for the enthronement of Janibek, 284
for the enthronement of Ögödei, 249
following Möngke's death, 321
following the death of Güyük, 76
following the death of Ögödei, 69, 70, 72, 186, 250, 783
organized by Qubilai for his enthronement, 110
rejected by the Noghai Horde, 306
to select Chinggis Khan's successor, 52–53, 54–55
to select Qubilai's successor, 137
Talas, 128, 261, 329–31, 369
used by Du'a to split the Ögödeids 1307, 348
wealth distributed at, 863
- Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī, 551
Qutlugh Buqa, 723
Qutlugh Khānid dynasty (Kirman), 182–83, 192
Qutlugh Khwāja, son of Du'a, 341–42, 346, 371
Qutlugh Shāh, Mongol general, 205, 211, 220, 723
Qutlugh Temür, son of Boroldai, 361
Qutlugh Terken, 641
Qutluq Temür, 257, 276, 284, 427
Qutui, Qonggirat, senior wife of Hüleü, 195, 196, 410n34, 639–41
Qutula, 24
Qutulun, Qaidu's daughter, 340, 346, 379
Quṭuz, Mamluk sultan, 91, 190, 804–5, 810, 813
- Rabban Sauma, Nestorian monk, 201, 204, 787, 809
Rabghūzī, Nāsir al-Dīn b. Burhān al-Dīn, 385
al-Raḥba, 806, 808–9, 812, 815
Ramaḍān, 352
Rashīd al-Dīn, Faḍlallāh Hamadānī, 6–7, 26, 53, 80, 140, 205–6, 231, 329, 343, 404, 411, 437, 469, 562, 569, 591, 663, 801, 845, 860
on Batu, 251n28
on the capture of Körgis Güregen, 141m94
on the chiliarchy system, 412, 413
on Chinggis' succession, 52
on the concubines in the court of Hüleü
Ulus, 409
contribution to scientific exchange, 566
cultural influence, 233–34
on the death of Abaqa, 202
on the death of Qaidu, 324n20
on the defection of Chūbei and Qaban, 128n65
depictions of Muḥammad, 592
diplomatic mission to the Delhi Sultanate, 832
evidence of book painting in his works, 235
execution of, 222
exploration of Buddhism, 540–42, 839–41
on the fall of Nawrūz, 211
on the gathering of intellectuals in Tabriz, 564
on the good fortune of Chinggis Khan, 451, 452, 455
on Güyük, 75
history of the Ilkhans, 188, 191, 196
interest in Chinese medicine, 554–55
iqṭā' plan, 475
on the Jochid succession struggle, 182
on Korea, 649
on the left and right wings of the Jochi
Ulus, 403
on the office of *darughachi*, 420
on Ögödei's establishment of *jam* routes, 433
on the *ordos* system of the western *uluses*, 410
political theology, 868
portrayal of Ghazan and his reign, 207–8, 211, 212–17, 230
on Qonichi, 419
on Qubilai's diplomatic missions, 830
on the seals of Ghazan, 430
on the trade of products with South Asia, 838
on Töregene's regency, 69
tenure during the reign of Öljeitü, 219–20
on weaponry, 480–81
- Rasūlid Hexaglot*, 421, 817
Rasūlids, 429, 495, 816
Raverty, H. G., 52n148
al-Rāzī, Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā', 551
Recorders' Office, 669
Red Coats, 49
Red River, 87

- Red Turban Rebellions, 168–71
redistribution, 1, 201, 852, 857, 863–66
refugees, 24, 862, 872
 from conflict, 466, 670, 674, 710, 855
 Cuman, 66
 from famine, 135, 163–64
 in Güchülük's army, 33
 Muslim, influx into Delhi, 842
 surge to Syria and Egypt, 817
Regiomontanus, 569
Regional Military Command for the
 Subjugation of the East (*Dongzheng
 yuanshuai fu*), 740
reindeer nomadism, 735
Relatio, 790
religion, Mongol view of, 527–30
religious exchange, 525–26, 531–43
religious persecution, 534
religious relativism, 528, 861, 873
religious tolerance, 220
religious transformations, 543–44, 861–63
Renzong, Emperor. *See* Ayurbarwada
repopulation, 855–56
retribalization, in the Chaghadaid Khanate,
 359, 372
Riazan', 66, 285, 754, 756, 759, 760, 763, 764,
 768, 782
Riccardo da Montecroce, 535
rice, 170, 489, 510, 512, 675, 682, 859
Rin Chen, prince, 336
al-Risāla al-Sharaḥiyya, 563
Risāla-i mu'iniyya, 565
Rogerius, 783
Rossabi, Morris, 668n37
Rostov, 66, 756, 761, 763
Roublev, Michel, 763
Rubruck, William of, 79, 83, 187, 251n28, 403,
 408, 410, 435, 448, 450, 535, 539, 582, 661,
 784, 790, 799
Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh, Ismai'īlī leader, 89
Rukn al-Dīn Sa'in, vizier, 223, 224
Rukn al-Dīn, Chinqai's protégé, 80
Rūm, 806. *See also* Anatolia; Seljuks
Rupenids, branch of the Bagratid House, 708
Rus', Rus' principalities, 10, 53, 281, 740
 Ahmad's operations in, 303–4
 Black Death, 755
 chiliarchy system, 414
 darugha institution, 424–25
 economic recovery and decline, 764–65
 impact of Mongol invasions, 245–47, 755–57,
 759, 868
 invasions, 66–67, 753–55, 758–59, 779, 781–83
 Mongol rule, 245, 249–50, 500–1, 740, 770–71
 Mongol tribute, 742, 760–63
 relations with the Golden Horde, 251, 262,
 265, 268, 274, 281–86, 294–95, 302, 306,
 308–9, 765–66
 tithes, 759
Russia
 climate, 618–21
 relations with the forest peoples and
 eastward expansion, 750, 871
Russian Federation, 247, 613
"Russian Land" (*Ruskaia zemlia*), 869
Russian Orthodox Church, 246, 258, 262, 266,
 285, 294, 764
Rusudan, Georgian queen, 710, 711, 715, 723
rusūm (customs), 801

Sa skya. *See* Sa-skya
Sa'ari Keher steppe, 407
Sabzavar, 227
sacred kingship, 868, 873
Sa'd al-Dawla, Ilkhanid vizier, 205–6
Sa'd al-Dīn Sāwajī, Ilkhanid vizier, 219, 566
šada (military unit of a hundred), 414
Sadabala, junior wife of Yisün Temür,
 145n116
Sādāi Ilchi, Chaghadaid general, 322
Sa'dī, 214
šadr (local notable), 372
Šadr al-Dīn Zanjānī, 206–7, 211
Šadr al-Sharī'a al-Thānī, 380, 565–66, 568
Sadula, 538, 539
Safavids, 210, 236, 867, 869
Šafi al-Dīn al-Urmawī, 563
Šafi al-Dīn Ardabilī, Shaykh, 210, 213, 233
Šafīna-yi Tabriz, 227, 234–35
al-Šahyūnī, 551
Sairam, Lake, 323, 376
Sakhalin, 737, 741, 743, 745
al-Sakkākī, 380, 383
Šalāh al-Dīn Yūsuf (Saladin), 190, 233
Salghurid dynasty, 182–83, 192–94, 218, 641
Sali Noyan, 84, 416
Sali Sarai, 360
al-Šālīh Ismā'īl, Ayyūbid ruler, 799
Šālīhiyya, suburb of Damascus, 808
Salindi, 80
Salji'udai Güregen, 268, 414
Saljut, 244
Samarqand, 248, 250, 296, 322–23, 329, 347–48,
 360, 374, 382, 854
 architecture, 581, 583
 Chinggis Khan's subjugation of, 421

- civilian resistance, 364
 coinage, 374, 489
 intellectual life, 564, 568
 Mongol tax policy, 499
 Nestorian communities, 381–82
 Qaidu's claim to, 259
 relocation of artisans and craftsmen from, 576, 658, 861
 restoration, 96, 583
 Shāh Jahān's planned invasion of, 367
 superseded by Almaliq, 870
 Tamerlane's grave, 859
 trade routes through, 376
 Tughluq Temür's return to, 363
 al-Samarqandi, Shams al-Dīn, 564
 Samoyed, 735, 748
 Sandomir, 267
 Sangga, 134–35, 148, 162
 Saqsin, 402
 Sarai, 67, 293, 294, 551, 619, 783, 870
 administration of Russia from, 424, 763
 architecture, 583
 Black Death, 291
 captured by Toqtamish, 295, 765
 coinage, 261
 commercial exchanges with Rus', 768
 Edigü's intermittent authority in, 298
 flow of silver, 502–3
 Franciscan settlement, 266
 measurement of commodities, 500
 monetary reforms, 275
 relations with Cairo, 91
 Russian Orthodoxy, 258, 266
 targeted by Temür, 296, 766
 trade routes, 838
 Ulugh Muḥammad's reign, 302
 Sarai al-Jadid. *See* New Sarai
 Sarai Mulk Khatun, Qazan's wife or daughter, 360
 Saraichuq, 284, 299
 Sarbadarids (Sarbadars), dynasty, 227, 228, 361
 Sarban, Qaidu's son, 129, 332, 338–40, 346, 371
Sarta'ul (Westerners, Tajiks), 109n8, 156
 Sartaq (Sarta Qorchi), general, 58n183
 Sartaq, Batu's son, 91, 252, 408, 719
 Sarykamysh delta, 618
 Sāsī Buqa, 272
 Sa-skya Pandita Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan, 58, 72, 82, 845
 Sa-skya sect, Tibetan Buddhism, 336
 Sassanian Empire, 869
 Sasun, 714
 Sati Beg, 641
 Satpara Valley, 618
 Savastopoli, 727
 Sayf al-Dīn Bākharzī, 257, 383
 Sayf al-Dīn Beg, son of Ḥabash 'Amīd, 323
 Sayf al-Dīn Salār, 273n101
sayyid (descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad), 220, 302
 Sayyid 'Aḍud al-Dīn, 832
 Sayyid Ahmad, 302
 Sayyid Ajjal, 425, 477
Schemata, 565
 Scythians, 448
 seals, 379. *See tamgha*
 Season Granting System (*shoushi li*), 567–68, 569
 sea-transport of grain, 132
 Sebchine, Qaidu's mother, 324
Secret History of the Mongols, 6, 21, 24, 204, 400, 465, 471, 553, 609, 734
 Secretariat (Ch. *sheng*). *See Shing*
 sedentarization, 738
 sedentary population, sedentaries, 445
 balance between nomads and, 871
 Central Asia, 321, 329, 374
 administration of, 372–73
 concept of heavenly manadate amongst, 448
 shared ideology, 447
 Segurano Salvaygo, 280
 Sejong, Korean king, 568
 Selenge, river, 608, 658
 Seljuks, Seljuks of Rum, 20, 56, 182, 221, 256, 309, 715, 871
 collapse 1307, 218
 considered subjects of Batu, 251
 considered subjects of Berke, 252–54
 defeat at Köse Dagħ, 71, 249, 416, 711–13, 799
 defeat of the Byzantines at Manzikert, 708
 dominion, 708
 Ilkhanid's acceptance of wives from, 641
 invasions of Armenia, 708
 invasions, difference to those of the Mongols, 229
 metalwork, 577
 origins of the *darugha* institution, 420
 troops in the Mongol army, 468, 806
 Semen Ivanovich, prince of Moscow and grand prince of Vladimir, 764
 Semirechye, 346, 374, 381, 382, 612, 853
semuren (sundry peoples), 109n8, 413. *See also* immigrants
 Senggüm, Jochid prince, 403

- Serpukhov, 764
- Shaanxi, 47, 56, 150, 153, 172
 famine, 163–64, 165–66
 growth of Qubilai's base in, 82
 mass uprisings, 169
 Möngke's administration, 109
 Qubilai's reforms, 109
- Shabānkāra, 192
- Shabankārā'ī, Muḥammad, 451
- Shāh Jahān, Kirmanid prince, 218
- Shāh, son of Qaidu, 343
- Shahanshah, Armenian prince, 716, 720
- shahna* (governor), 43, 322, 373, 421, 423–24
- Shāhnāma*. See Great Mongol *Shāhnāma*
- Shāhrukh, Tamerlane's son, 299, 301, 365
- al-Shām, 798. See also Syria
- Sham' Jahān, Eastern Chaghadaid khan, 367
- shamanism, 220, 247, 529, 577, 640, 659, 862
- shamans, 31, 57, 210, 527, 529, 553
- Shams al-A'imā al-Kardārī, 383
- Shanchan (Kunming, Yachi), 86
- Shandong, 36, 49, 112, 122, 171, 172
 agricultural colonies, 170
 floods, 165n185, 165, 167
 General Military Command, 415
 land allocated in, 475
 mass uprisings, 169
 Yang Miaozen's control of, 651
- Shangdu (Kaiping), 92
- Shangshu sheng* (Department of State Affairs), 121, 123n47, 154
- Shanxi, 35, 56, 161, 171, 172–73, 278
 drought, 165
 famine in, 135
 tributes from, 503
- Sharaf al-Dīn Mahmūd Shāh (Injuīd), 218
- shari'ah* (Muslim law), 427
- al-Sharīf al-Samarqandī, 377
- al-Shīrāzī, Quṭb al-Dīn, 7, 221, 233, 562–66, 818
- Shāsh (Tashkent), 348, 358, 379
- Shatuo ("White Tatars"), 23
- Shawkal, *basqaq*, 283
- Shaykh Aḥmad, 304–5, 306
- Shaykh Ḥasan Jalayir, 223–24, 641
- Shazhou, 51, 334. See also Dunhuang
- sheep, 192, 377, 608
- Shejie, female leader, 651
- shell money. See cowries
- Shenzong, Western Xia Emperor, 34
- sherbet (*sharbat*), 556, 859
- Shi Tianlin, Qubilai's envoy to Qaidu, 325, 425
- Shi Tianze, 36n76, 113, 115
- Shiban, Jochid prince, 300, 403
- Shibanids, 293, 295, 300–1, 742–43, 745, 749
ulus, 296
- Shidibala, (Gegēn Qa'an, Yingzong), Yuan emperor, 144–45, 148–49, 354, 648, 671, 696
- Shigi Qutuqu, 30, 36, 45, 46, 55, 57, 61, 72
 census of north China, 64
 duties as *jarghuchi*, 425
- Shigu, female leader, 650, 651
- shihna*. See *shahna*
- shihou* (feudal lords), 49, 422
- Shi'ism, 220–22, 225, 232, 233
- Shimu'ultu Na'ur. See Mosquito Lake, battle of
- Shing (Secretariat), 114, 120, 121, 153, 154, 427
- ship building, 864
- Shīrāz, 182
- Shiregi, 129–30, 131, 666
- Shiremün, Ögödeid prince, 70, 76–80, 257, 637, 721
- Shirin, 244, 293, 299
- Shirindari Khatun, 147
- shiwei qinjun* (imperial guard army), 417, 476
- Shouning, princess, 145n116
- Shu'ab-i panjgāna*, 418
- Shumi yuan* (Bureau of Military Affairs). See *Ön*
- Siba, fortress, 721
- siba'uchi* (falconers), 417
- Siberia, 1, 10, 38, 41, 734–50, 871
 apportioned to Jochi, 31
 Christian communities, 279
 climate, 603, 608, 614
 Edigü's campaign in, 299
 emigration from Golden Horde territories to, 306
 forest products, 737–38
 Islamization, 247, 862
 Jochi's campaign in, 248
 Mongol legacies, 745–49
 Mongol military campaigns in, 738–40
 pacification of, 140
 people and products of the northern frontier, 734–37
 remote governance, 740–43
 reopening of the frontier, 740–43
 return of pre-imperial patterns of political interaction, 749–50
- Siberian High, 615
- Siberian Turks, 746
- Sibir, 734
- Sibir Khanate, 302, 750
- Sichuan, 49, 110–12, 116, 125, 153, 842

- Köten and Chikü Güregen's campaign in 1235–36, 57
- Köten and Köchü's campaign in, 107
- mass uprisings, 169
- Möngke's campaign in, 85–86, 90, 92–93, 110, 412
- Möngke's death in, 409
- Sichuan Mongol Army, 415
- siege teams, siege weapon crews, 465
- siege warfare, 36, 527
- Chaghadaid, 370, 470–71
- Ilkhanid, 470
- Jochid, 473
- United Empire, 466–67
- Yuan, 476
- Siena, 793
- Sighnaq, 293, 295, 301, 350, 382
- silent trade, 737
- siliao* (requisition-oriented tax), 500
- silk, 496, 502, 503, 504, 505, 516
- craftsmanship, 584–88, 792
- demand for in Japan, 513
- monetary role of, 491–92, 501, 865
- portraiture on, 589
- trade, 509–10, 793
- used for making requisitions, 500
- Silk Roads, 183, 231, 336, 765, 854, 864–65
- silver, 206, 488–91, 865
- artifacts, 578–80
- circulation of, 792
- eastward flow of, 505
- emergence and collapse, 493–98
- ingot, 59, 251n23, 373, 489, 494–95, 503–4, 768
- grivna*, 506–8, 516
- somo*, 502, 505–6, 514, 515–17
- yuanbao*, 505, 506, 515–16
- measurement, 505, 506, 515–16, 517
- minting of, 290, 492–93, 504
- as a substitute for silk, 491–92
- taxation, 498–502, 504
- trade in, 833, 838
- as a unit of account, 488, 490, 492, 506, 516, 519
- usage, late 13th century, 493–94
- westward flow of, 502–3
- Simeon of Moscow, 284, 286, 291
- Simferopol, 578
- Simnānī, 'Ala' al-Dawla, 210, 225, 533–34
- Simon of Saint-Quentin, 784
- Sin'an wreck, 513
- Sind, 371
- Singhasari dynasty, 872
- Sinqor, Jochid prince, 403, 472
- Siri plain, 342
- Sīstān, 342, 353
- Sit' river, battle of the, 754
- Sivin, Nathan, 562n68, 564n82, 567
- Sixteen Books, 551
- Siyāhkūh, 408
- Skaff, Jonathan Karam, 19
- slave trade, 256, 272–74, 280–81, 342, 377–78, 515, 765, 768, 815, 833
- slavery, 143, 203, 269, 472, 685, 689, 770
- debt, 515
- slaves, 42, 107, 377, 411, 771, 862
- demand for, 856
- as gifts, 832
- military (*mamluks*), 272, 804, 856
- Slavs, 308
- Smbat Orbelian, Armenian prince, 716
- Smbat Sparapet, 715, 716n54
- Smith, John Masson, Jr., 29n42, 812
- Smolensk, 756
- Sodu, Mongol commander, 124
- Söge, son of Yoshmut, 210
- Sögetü, Mongol general, 478, 830
- Soghdiāns, 60
- sokha* (plow), 762
- Solangqa, 58
- Soldaia. *See* Sudak
- Solkhat, 266, 288
- Solongotyn Davaa ("Sol Dav"), 607
- somo* (silver ingots), 502
- Song Defan, Daoist patriarch, 324
- Song dynasty, 20–21, 35, 48, 57–58, 679, 835
- artistic influence, 578, 580, 588
- border conflicts, 113
- calendar, 561
- conquest of, 4, 116–18, 375
- envoys sent to Chinggis Khan, 45
- footbinding, 652
- histories, 157, 158
- integration into the Yuan, 118–19, 476
- military vocabulary, 415
- monetary system, 491–92, 494
- Möngke's attack on, 86, 92–94, 109, 110, 406, 412
- naval operations against, 477–78
- peace with the Jin, 50
- portrayal of elite women, 652
- Qubilai's armistice with, 111
- renewed declaration of war 1261, 112
- ties with Koryō, 683
- treaty relations with the Jin, 27
- Uriyangqadai's attack on, 87, 412
- use of gunpowder weapons against, 479

- Song dynasty (cont.)
 Zhao family, 134
 Songdo. *See* Kaegyöng
 Sorqaqtani Beki, 54, 57, 68, 70, 72–73, 75, 76,
 79–80, 82, 83, 631, 637
 Sosaq, 170
sotniki (hundreds), 760
 sources
 Chinese, 7–8, 319, 672, 831
 Mamluk, 8, 271, 320n1, 320, 350, 481
 Timurid, 357, 359, 360, 365, 366n122, 371
 South Asia, 830
 south China, 79, 92, 116, 124, 171, 174. *See also*
 Song dynasty
 currency, 168
 disappearance of currency, 164
 granaries, 164
 Muslims, 536
 trade from, 865
 wealth provided by, 129, 135, 503–4
 South China Sea, 478, 853
 south Siberian Turks, 748
 Southeast Asia, 86, 127, 166, 343, 460, 477, 479,
 482, 830, 854, 862, 872
 porcelain market, 581, 865
 products from, 838
 southern Iran, 218, 340, 853
 Soviet Union, 246–47
soyurghal (land grants), 297
 Soyurghatmish, Ögödeid puppet khan, 365
 Spufford, Peter, 768
 Square Script. *See* 'Phags-pa script
 Sri Lanka (Ceylon), 827, 834–35, 839, 841
 St. George, 385
 standard (*tugh*, *sülde*), as source of
 charisma, 452
 steppe
 changes in religion, 749
 Chinggisid principle, 455–56
 decline in the political power of, 138
 governance, 307
 inheritance system, 293
 institutional and social reforms, 28–30,
 95–96
 institutional traditions, 420
 Jochid control, 245, 249–52, 401–4
 marriage practices, 632
 metalwork, 737
 “*nökör*-ization” of the, 25
 political culture, 19–21, 447, 782
 steppe ecology, 607–10, 616, 619, 621,
 673, 855
 steppe nomads, 746, 857, 863, 871
 economic interaction with the
 northeastern Slavs, 308
 imperial ideology, 444–45, 452, 453
 interactions with the forest peoples, 734–37
 military skills, 460, 462, 464
 stories of the prophets (*qışaṣ al-anbiyā*),
 385
 strategy. *See* tactics and strategy
Su wen (Basic questions), 555
 Sübe'etei, 429, 481, 621, 781, 782
 subsistence crises, 135, 159, 163
 succession struggles, 68–72, 146–52, 270, 292,
 293, 298, 301, 340, 343, 355, 365, 368, 402,
 671, 783, 866. *See also* Toluid civil war;
 Toluid revolution
 Sudak (Soldaia), 263, 267, 286, 296, 788, 789
 Sufi lodges, 309, 385
 Sufi orders, 384. *See also* Katakıyya;
 Kubrāwıyya; Naqshbandiyya;
 Yasawıyya
 Sufis, Sufism, 210, 232, 247, 299, 309, 368, 383,
 384–85, 386, 543, 818, 862
 Suga Lake, 617
 sugar distilling, 859
 Sughunchaq, 89, 90
 Sughurluq, 199
 Sugiyama Masaaki, 6, 54
 Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl, Shihāb al-Dīn, 233
 Sui dynasty, 159
 Suldus, Sulduz, tribe, 195, 360, 372, 643
 Sultan Muḥammad. *See* Muḥammad,
 Khwārazm-Shāh
 Sulṭāniyya, 198, 199, 222, 225, 236, 382, 408
 Sungari, river, 739
sunggon (Ch. *zongguan*, route
 commander), 154
 Superintendency of the Confucian
 Schools, 670
 Surghudu, Chaghadaid prince, 360
süsi (food), 435
 Suzdal', 66, 265, 285, 500, 759, 760, 761
 Suzdal', battle of, 767
 Suzdal'-Nizhnii Novgorod, 285, 765
 Suzdalia, 754, 756, 758, 762, 764, 768–69
 Suzhou, 51
 Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, 715
 Syr Darya, river, 38, 40, 42, 259, 295
 Syr Darya, valley, 248
 Syria, 90–91, 182, 200, 203, 211–12, 254, 272–73,
 340, 719–20, 723. *See also* Shām,
 Mamluk Sultanate
 arrival of the plague, 291
 first encounters, 801–5

- Ghazan's administration, 423
 Ghazan's campaigns, 211–12
 Ilkhanid invasions, 190–91, 216, 219, 805–14
 impact of Mongol invasions, 819–20
 migration to, 819
 obstacles faced by Mongols in, 470, 482–83
 surge of refugees to, 817
 traders from, 377
 use of Armenian troops in, 468
- t'ma* (ten thousand), 414, 760. *See also* *tümen*
Ta'dil al-'ulüm (The adjustment of the sciences), 566
- Tabriz, 183, 213, 235, 272–73, 416, 581, 708, 727, 864, 870
 account of cultural life in, 234–35
 anti-Jewish pogrom, 205
 appointed as Abaqa's capital, 408
 conquered by Janibek, 290, 295
 construction of Öljeitü's capital, 222
 cultural exchange, 220
 establishment of Mongol administration, 423
 Ghazan's urban project, 198
 illustrative arts, 595
 intellectual activity, 562–63, 564–65, 819
 Italian merchant community, 789
 Latin communities, 781
 manufacture of silks, 584
 patronage, 566
 sack of 1357, 473
 scientific institution, 568
 seat of administration moved to, 198
 Toqtmash's attempts to take back, 296
 trade, 231, 516
 trade routes to, 226, 836, 838
 workshops for illustrated manuscripts, 591, 594
- tactics and strategy, 460
 adopted by the Ming, 675
 following dissolution of the Mongol Empire, 467
 Ilkhanid, 469
 influence of environmental conditions, 604–7
 north China and Manchuria, 612
 Russia and eastern Europe, 618–21
 Tarim Basin, 615–17
 Japanese, 481
 Jochid, 473
tsunami strategy, 482, 852
 in the united army, 464
- in the Yuan army, 474
 in Yuan naval warfare, 478
- Taghachar (Ta'achar), 85n329, 93n367, 93, 94, 109, 127, 412
- Tahai, 49
- Tai* (Censorate), 114–15, 122, 153, 154, 420, 430, 664
- Tai-Buqa, 171
- Taichu, son of Möngke Temür, 210–11
- Taiding Slough, 163, 166
- Taidula, 277, 285, 291–92
- taiga, 735–36, 743, 749–50
- Taiping temple, 325
- taitou* ("elevating the head," writing style), 432
- Tāj al-Dīn 'Alīshāh, 219, 222, 225
- Tāj Mahal, 859
- Tajik, 34, 43, 214, 361, 414, 419
- Tajikistan, 320, 329, 360
- al-Tajrīd fī 'ilm al-kalām*, 569
- Takht Eli*. *See* Great Horde
- Takht-i Sulaymān, 199, 236
- Talas, 260–61, 322, 327, 331, 333, 348, 352, 373, 376
- Talas agreement, 342
- Talas *quriltai*, 261, 329–31, 369
- Talas, river, 144
- Talkhīš al-miftāḥ* ("Resumé to the Key"), 380, 551
- Tamara, queen of Georgia, 726
- Tamerlane. *See* Temür
- tamgha* (seal or stamp), 261, 330, 336, 339, 341, 348, 357, 373, 379
- introduced by Ghazan, 430–31
- tamgha* (tax on trade), 373, 499, 501, 516, 518, 760, 761–63
- tamghachi* (general), 717
- tamma(chi)* (vanguard or garrison troops), 74, 107, 412, 414–16, 424, 463–64, 467, 476, 717
- Tammachi Army (*Tanmachi jun*), 476
- Tana, 286–87, 290, 296, 727, 768, 788–89, 864
 bishoprics, archbishoprics, 789
 commercial exchange, 517
 sack of 1343, 473
- Tang dynasty, 20, 152, 157, 159, 451
 dissolution, 23
 intermarriage, 537
 paper money, 120
 portraiture, 595
 portrayal of elite women, 651
 silver currency, 491
- Tang Hou, 595
- Tang Renzu, 425

- Tangier, 860
 Tangut Ba'atur, 59
 Tangut (Xia), 20, 23, 25–26, 32, 47–48, 107n1
 Tangut script, 429
 Tanguts, 20, 32, 34, 41, 50–51, 121, 420, 476, 870
 Semu guard units, 417
 Tanishbugha, 257
 Tankiz, Mamluk governor, 817
Tanksūq-nāma (The Treasure Book), 554–55, 569
Tanqīh al-abḥāṭ li-l-milal al-thalāth (Examination of the Inquiries into the Three Faiths), 534
 Tārābī revolt, 61, 62–63, 422
 Taraghai, Chaghadaid commander, 152, 342, 829
 Tarbaghatai Mountains, 374, 607
Ta'rikh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī (Blessed History of Ghazan), 212
 Tarim Basin, 27, 38, 128, 140, 329, 334, 336, 338, 362, 368, 376, 613, 615–17, 666–67
tarkhan, 29–30, 262, 297
 Tarmashirin, Chaghadaid Khan, 353, 355, 371, 374–75, 379, 381
 battle with Muḥammad Shāh
 b. Tughluq, 829
 conversion to Islam, 371, 382, 383, 384, 843, 844
 diplomatic relations with Delhi Sultanate, 832, 843
 failure to combine Islam with Mongol tradition, 386
 keshig, 368, 373, 419
 Tartar Cham (European appellation of the Mongol ruler), 456
 Tartarian clothes (*panni tartarici*), 792
tartarus (hell), 23
 Tash Ba'atur, 169, 171, 172
 Tatar dress, 858
 Tatar Tonga (Tatatonga), 30, 429, 430
 Tatar Yoke, 1, 246, 309, 437, 767, 869
 Tatars, 23–27, 247, 291, 300, 461, 643, 753, 766, 768, 770
 tax immunities, 445–46
 taxation, 82, 215, 372–73, 495, 498–502, 518–19, 718, 723–24. *See also* *jizya*; *kharāj*; *qalan*; *qubchur*; *tamgha*
 Eurasia, 489–91
 silver, 496
 Tayichi'ut, 24–27
 Taziku Asan, 134
 Tbilisi, 725. *See also* Tiflis
- Teb Tengri, 28, 31
 technology, 867
 exchange of among the Chinggisids, 245
 gunpowder, 479–81, 791, 845, 871
 military, 856, 859
 paper-making, 550
 seafaring, 126
 Tegshi, 145, 148–49, 155
 Tegüder Aḥmad, Ilkhan, son of Hülegü, 196, 202–4, 206, 207, 641, 722, 818
 attempts at peace with the Mamluks, 211
 conversion to Islam, 208
 diplomacy, 809–11
 expression of Islamic faith, 232
 ordos, 410
 Tegüder, Chaghadaid prince, 330–31, 721
 Tekelgü, battle of, 141
 Tekish, Khwārazm-Shāh, 40
 Tekshin, son of Hülegü, 195
 Telengüt, 738
teme'echi (camel-herders), 417
temniki (ten thousands), 760
 temples
 Buddhist, 386, 582, 658, 832, 840, 845
 Confucian, 556
 Daoist, 60, 325, 650, 845
 Temples of the Three Progenitors, 556
 Temüder, 148, 149, 155
 Temüge Otchigin, younger brother of Chinggis, 31, 54–55, 68, 70, 72–73, 74
 descendants, 77, 127n61, 127, 131, 406, 700
 Temüjin. *See* Chinggis Khan
 Temülün, 636
 Temür (Timur, Tamerlane), 228, 234, 359, 363–67, 368, 372, 382, 447, 644, 726, 745, 789, 817, 827
 architectural reconstruction, 583
 and Edigü, 298
 grave, 859
 invasion of Delhi, 828, 829
 use of siege weapons, 471
 war with Toqtamish, 295–97, 766
 Temür Khan, son of Temür Qutluq, 299, 837
 Temür Qa'an (Öljeitü Qa'an, Chengzong, Yuan emperor), 116, 126, 131, 146, 482, 504, 647, 660, 668
 affairs managed by his empress, 147, 647
 campaigns against Burma and Lan Na, 142
 chosen as Qubilai's successor, 136–38
 conflict in Central Asia, 140, 343–44
 economic problems, 159–60
 and the Mongol peace, 270–71, 345–46
 provision of military support for Du'a, 414

- Temür Qutluq, 159–60, 296, 302–3
 Temür Shāh, Chaghadaid puppet khan, 362
 Temür, son of Özbek, 277
 Temürtash, 270–71
 Tengri (Tenggeri), 95, 186, 276, 528–29, 530, 659, 861, 871
 translated as *Deus* and *Khudāi-i buzurg*, 449
 tents, 72, 88, 378, 400, 409
 complexes. *See ordo*
 furnishings, 858
 Terek, river, 254, 296
tergen (cart), type of *jam* route, 433
 Terken Khātūn, 40, 42, 44, 218
 Terunakan, fortress, 709
 Teutonic Knights, 67, 402, 758
 textiles, 8, 577–78, 584–88, 597, 792, 793, 833, 838, 863
 Thackston, Wheeler, 6, 92n367
 Thailand, 142
 Thanh Long (Hanoi), 87
 Theognostos, 285
 theology, 221, 233, 237, 380, 444, 552, 868. *See also kalām*
 Thrace, 256, 281
 Three Extraordinary Watches
 (*sambyōlch'o*), 690
 “Three-in-One” thought, 542, 544
 Tian Shan mountains, 376, 866
 climate, 604, 607, 613, 615–17
 Tibet, 72, 82, 113, 174, 336–37, 534, 611
 administrative and cultural influence of Mongols, 872
 as center of Buddhism, 840, 862
 overland trade roads, 833, 838
 trade in Musk, 838
 Yuan rule, 869
 Tibetan Buddhism, 160, 381, 531, 534, 544, 659, 861
 Ming dynasty, 675
 at the Mongol court in Iran, 541
 sects, 336
 spread into Transbaikalia, 749
 in Yuan China, 862
 Tibetan empire, 20
 Tibetan scripts, 379
 Tiflis, 710, 711, 720, 725
 Tigris, river, 90, 233, 810
 tilework, 199, 236
 Timur. *See* Temür
 Timurid dynasty, Timurids, 319, 365, 382–83, 387, 471, 867
 adoption of Tatar dress, 858
 architecture, 386
 culture, 367, 598
 historiography, 290
 incursions in Georgia and Greater Armenia, 726
 marriage alliances, 368
 patronage of the arts, 235
 scientific activity, 568
 succession struggles, 298
 Sufism, 384
 territories taken by the Shibanids, 301
 trade, 376
 Tini Khatun, wife of Tughluq Temür Khan, 379
 Tinibek, Jochid khan, 277, 284
 Tirmidh (Termez), 327, 355, 356–57, 359, 372, 374, 376, 382
 tithe, 754, 759, 760–61
 Tiumen. *See* Chinggi-Tura
 To'oril, Kereyit khan. *See* Ong Khan
 Tobol, river, 293, 745
 sTod Hor (Eastern Turkestan), 336
 Töde Möngke, Jochid khan, 259, 264–65, 343
 Togha Temür, 228, 293
 Togha Timurids, 292–94, 295, 297, 301–2
 Toghachar, 46
 Toghachi Chingsang (Toghachi Ba'atur), 144, 414
 Toghān, prince, 124
 Toghon Temür (Huizong, Shundi), Yuan emperor, 138, 146–47, 151–52, 157–59, 168, 172–73, 348n71, 673, 790, 833
 Buddhism, 842
 influence of Lady Qi, 646–47
 natural disasters during the reign of, 671
 Toghrlcha, 276
 Toghus Temür (Usqal Qa'an), Northern Yuan emperor, 174, 674
 Tökme, 142, 350
 Töle Buqa, 265, 267–68
 Tolui, son of Chinggis Khan, 26, 31, 42, 44n113, 45–46, 52–55, 56–57, 80, 93, 186, 635, 662
 army, 404
 assignment of territories to, 782
 influence on Ayurbarwada, 155
 wives, 631, 637
 Toluid civil war, 91, 94, 112–13, 201, 254, 258, 321–23, 406, 660, 662–64, 744
 Toluid revolution, 68–69, 76–80, 320, 321, 324, 662, 744
 Toluid ulus, 91
 Toluids, 72, 140, 174, 310, 429
 and the accession of Güyük, 72–73

- Toluids (cont.)
 in the Central Asian armies, 369, 402, 403, 404
 control of the historiography of the Mongol empire, 247–48
 marriages, 321, 643
 princes' revolt (1276), 335
 Qaidu's rivalry with, 128, 344
 relations with the Jochids, 75, 245, 250, 258, 260–61, 270, 272, 719
 trade with India, 231
- Tolun Cherbi, 52
- tongzhi*. *See tungji*
- Tongzhi tiaoge* (Statutes from the Comprehensive regulations), 7, 155
- Tontur, 743
- Toq Temür, Jochid prince, 77, 403
- Toqbuqa (Dorbuqa), 385
- Toqta (Toqto'a), Jochid khan, 182, 250n21, 267–75, 282, 343, 350, 642, 788
 death and succession, 360–65
 and the Mongol peace, 270–75
- Toqtamish, Jochid khan, 294–97, 300, 303, 366, 414, 473, 745, 765–66
- Toqto'a, Jochid khan. *See* Toqta
- Toqto'a, Merkit chief, 33, 409
- Toqto'a Taishi (Ch. Tuo Tuo), Yuan minister, 157–59, 167–71
- Toquchar, 461
- Toquz Oghul, 257
- Töregene, Ögödei's wife, 57, 64–65, 69–72, 73–74, 186, 250, 637, 650n53
- Torzhok, 756, 759
- touxia* (Chinese estates), 436, 503–6, 508, 510
- trade, 23, 231–32, 863–66
 in the Chaghadaid realm, 375–78
 in the Ilkhanate, 225, 789, 838
 Indian Ocean, 853
 in the Jochid realm, 244, 251, 256, 263, 278–79, 286–88, 290, 305–6, 788–89
 relations with Khwārazm, 37, 39
 silent, 737
 South Asian networks, 833–39
 transcontinental, 261, 500, 515
 with Western Europe, 788–89
 in the Yuan, 111, 833–38
- trade experts, 856
- traders, 55, 59, 788–89. *See also ortoq* merchants; Genoese merchants; Venetian merchants
 in the Chaghadaid realm, 377
 Chobanid hostility towards, 231
 South Asian networks, 833–39
- Tran Canh (Chen Rijiong), 87
- Tran dynasty, 87, 124
- Transbaikalia, 741, 749
- Transcaucasia, 47, 56, 61, 71, 91, 254–56, 267, 454, 707, 721, 744
 trade route, 278, 296
- Transjordan, 799, 802
- Translation Movement, 555
- Transoxania, 38, 45, 47, 53–54, 88, 229, 322–23, 355, 356, 370, 371, 405, 612, 644
 agriculture and pastoralism, 374
 army of, 338
 Baraq's retreat to, 665
 captured by Muḥammad Shibānī Khan, 301
- Chaghadaid and, 62
 coinage, 373–74, 493
 Islamization, 384–86
 Jochid control of, 321
 Kebek's administration, 350
 Kebek's residence in, 354
 migration from, 843
 Ögödeid–Chaghadaid struggles, 261, 329–30, 333, 340, 346, 348
 reapportioned by the Toluids, 260
 religious learning, 382, 383
 restoration, 96, 375
 rule of the amīrs, 358–65
 Shāh Jahān's invasion, 367
 Uzbek khanate, 301
 Yalawāch's command of, 61, 230
 Yasa'ur's attack on, 352
- travel literature, travelogues, 7, 204, 320, 357, 790–91, 792, 860, 872
- Travels of Marco Polo*, The (Il Milione, Book of Marvels), 785, 790
- Treaty of Nymphaeum, 788
- Trebizond, 565, 711, 727, 729, 789
- trebuchet, 465, 467, 481, 859
- tributary state, 682
- tribute, 510, 512–13, 865. *See also dan'* fur as, 742
 Georgian, 725
 Koryō, 681–83, 687
 restoration of system by Yuan, 482
 Rus', 760–63, 770–71
- tribute women, 698
- Tsongkhapa, 542, 543
- tsunami* strategy, 482, 852
- Tu Ji, 69n245, 71n255, 127n61, 145n115
- Tubas, 738
- Tübshin, son of Hülegü, 196

- Tughluq Temür, Chaghadaid Khan, 358–59,
362–63, 366
combination of Islamic and Chinggisid
legitimations, 386
conversion to Islam, 384
interest in Buddhism, 381
mausoleum, 379, 386
seal from the reign of, 379
- Tughluqids, 829
- al-Tuhfa al-shāhiyya* (The imperial gift),
562, 566
- Tükel Bakhshi, 423
- Tükel Buqa, 276
- Tulunbay Khatun, 643
- Tumbina Khan, ancestor of Chinggis
Khan, 365
- tümen* (or myriarchy, social or military unit of
ten thousand), 29, 245, 264, 331, 354,
371–72, 412–15, 433, 462, 694, 714, 717,
754, 760
- Tümen, Ögödeid prince, 143, 348n71
- Tümen, river, 744
- tundra, 735, 743
- Tüngge Stream, 609
- tungji, 154
- Tungus, 735, 745
- Tunis, 200, 493, 810
- Tünskā, shahna of Baghdad, 423
- tuntian*. See agricultural colonies
- tuq* (white standard), 28
- Tuq Temür, qa'an (Jaya'atu Qa'an,
Wenzong), 146, 148, 149–52, 156–57,
162, 163, 167, 354, 417, 648, 842
- Tuqas, Siberian people, 738
- tuqchi* (standard bearer), 419
- Tura, river, 743
- Turan, 449, 734
- Turco-Iranian influences, 21
- Turfan, 130, 140, 336, 366, 367–68, 386
Chaghadaid administration, 373
language used in, 379
preserved documents from, 354, 356, 362,
369, 381, 425
taxation, 502
wine from, 374
- Turfan depression, 351
- Türk Qaghanate, inscriptions, 444, 451, 453
- Turkestan, 38, 65, 71, 144, 151, 515
Alghu sent to guard against Qubilai's
troops, 322
Chaghadaid right to, 346
Chaghadaids and Ögödeids in, 127
coexistence of Buddhism and Islam, 386
documents from, 489, 494
emergence of dissidence, 127, 130
imperial administration, 61–63
introduction of Tibetan Buddhism, 381
Mas'ūd Beg's administration, 73, 82–83, 321
origin of the Plague, 358
regional secretariat, 760
restoration of cities in, 375
- Turkey, 174, 708, 806
- Turkic language, 23, 319, 367, 554
- Turkicization, 20
- Türkmen, 235, 247, 295, 309, 310, 468
- Turks, 6, 20, 43, 219, 230, 428, 464, 709n9, 872
- turqa'ut* (day guards), 466
- Tus, 62, 82, 88
- Tūshā Bāsqāq, governor, 421, 422
- Ṭūsī Couple, 560, 565
- Ṭūsī, Nāṣir al-Dīn, 89, 90, 181, 192, 204, 209,
221, 233, 380, 531, 552, 559–66, 569
- tuska* (type of tribute), 761
- Tustar, 340
- Tutar, Jochid prince, 404
- Tutqaq (Ch. Tutuha), Yuan commander,
129n66, 130–32, 140, 337, 747
- Tuva (Tuba), 748
- Tver', 66, 285–86, 294, 643, 756, 759, 760, 762,
763, 764–65
princes of, 274, 282–83, 758, 762
- Twitchett, Denis, 207
- tysiashchniki* (thousands), 760
- ʿUbaydallāh, Yisün Temür Qa'an's official,
156, 163
- Udur, Jochid prince, 403
- üge* (decrees), 432
- Ugra river, stand on the, 303–5, 309, 767
- Uighur Empire, 444, 452, 736
- Uighur script, 428–29, 869
- Uighuria, Uighuristan, 146, 320, 336, 338, 343,
348, 351, 354, 355, 362, 371, 372–73, 374,
380, 680, 744, 853
- Uighurs, 23, 33–34, 35, 109n8, 377, 380–81, 386,
425, 454, 561, 636, 643, 652, 679, 680, 870
in the Chaghadaid army, 470
establishment of a capital city, 658
in the Ilkhanate army, 468
marriage alliances, 649
- Uighurtai, commander, 339
- üjig* (counter signature), 431
- Ukek, 296
- Ukraine, 294n187, 294, 298
- ulaghchi* (horse driver), 435
- Ulaqchi, Batuid prince, 252

- Ulugh Muḥammad (Mahmuted), 302, 305, 766
ulus (people, state), 400–7
ulus beg, 244, 276, 289
 Ulus Buqa, 140, 504
 Ulus Chaghadaï. *See* Chaghadaïd Khanate
 Ulus Chaghataï, name of the western
 Chaghadaïd realm, 359, 362,
 363–65, 372
 Ulus Hülegü. *See* Ilkhanate
 Ulus Jochi. *See* Golden Horde
ülüs-i qa'ân (Qa'an Ulus), 405
 'Umar Khayyâm, 563
 al-'Umarî, Mamluk historian, 377
 United Empire, 2, 5, 6, 9, 21, 25, 95–96, 338, 368,
 855, 868
 army, 460–67
 dissolution, 94, 321, 386, 399
 institutions, 857
 marriage practices and marriage politics,
 629–32
 political influence of women, 637
 population movements, 378, 855–56
 postal system, 432–35
 siege warfare, 466–67
 the work of women, 632–34
 trade routes, 375
 universal rule, Mongol, 187, 203, 448, 450, 801
 Ural, mountains, 734, 737, 740, 742, 748, 750
 Ural, river, 297, 299, 472
 Uraqai (Wulhai/Wolohai), 32, 34, 51
 Urban IV, Pope, 200, 787
 'Urđi Lemma, 560
 al-'Urđi, Mu'ayyad al-Dīn, 559–60
 Urgench, 44, 47, 248, 293, 373, 376, 472, 502–3,
 606, 618, 854
 Uriyangqadai, 86–87, 93, 109, 110,
 124, 412
 Uriyangqai, tribe, 735, 741, 748
 Urmia (Urmiyya), lake, 192, 194
 Ursut, 738
 Urtu Saqal ("Long Beard"). *See* Yelü Chucai
 Uru'ut, 406, 413, 415, 461, 476
 Ürüq Temür, Ögödeïd prince, 339
 Urus, Golden Horde khan, 294, 295, 744
 Ushin, 643
 Ussuri, river, 744
 Uzbekistan, 184, 320, 613
 Uzbek-Qazaq, 301
 Uzbeks, 291, 300–1, 303, 307, 310, 368, 471, 746,
 749, 870
 Vajravarmi, prince, 172, 174
 Vakhtang II, Georgian king, 723
 Vardan Arewelts'i, 195, 533, 709
 Vásáry, István, 243n1, 252n31, 427n114
 Vasilii I Dmitri'evich, grand prince of Moscow
 and of Vladimir, 766
 Vasilii Iaroslavich, 759
 Vasilii II Vasil'evich, grand prince of Moscow
 and of Vladimir, 766–67, 769
 Vasilii III Ivanovich, grand prince of
 Moscow, 767
 Vaspurakan, 714, 721
 Venetian merchants, 264, 358, 377, 500, 505, 789
 Venetian-Genoese "War of the Straits," 290
 Venetians, 244, 263, 279, 286–88, 290–91, 295
 Venice, 310, 496, 505, 578, 727, 788–89, 792, 866
 alliance with Khan Aḥmad, 303
 relations with the Golden Horde, 287
 slaves sold in, 768
 trade treaty, 225
 Vernadsky, George, 768
 Verona, Pisanello da, 793
 Viar precinct, 199, 209
 Vicina, 266
 Vietnam, 1, 109, 110, 116, 124–26, 134,
 135, 543. *See also* Annam; Dai Viet;
 Champa
 violence, 24, 28, 232, 671, 759, 788, 846,
 852–53, 861
 Visby, 263
 Vitautas, 296
 vizier, 368, 771
 Vladimir, city, 66, 760–61, 766, 782
 de-urbanization, 756
 relocation of the metropolitan seat to, 764
 siege of, 754
 Vladimir, principality, 285, 757–59, 762, 770
 Vladimir-Suzdal'. *See* Suzdalia
 Volga-Kama basin, 734, 871
 Volga, river, 9, 67, 274n107, 296, 754, 765
 Volga-Ural region, 243, 247, 248, 251, 305, 621
 Volhynia, 281–82, 758
 Vologda, 759
 Vozha river, battle of, 294, 765
 vykhod (Mongol imposed exactions), 761
 al-Wābkanāwī, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad
 b. 'Alī, 562, 564, 565
 Wabkent, 374
 Wādī al-Khaznadār, battle of, 808, 812
 waiwang neidi ("posturing as emperors but
 externally acting like princes"), 431
 Wakhsh, river, 363
 Wan'an Gong ("Palace of Myriad
 Tranquilities"), 60

- Wang Baobao. *See* Köke Temür
- Wang Chǒn, Crown Prince of Koryŏ, 85, 113, 688–89. *See also* Wŏnjong
- Wang Dayuan, 834–35, 841
- Wang family, royal family of Koryŏ, 112, 683
- Wang Jian, 93
- Wang Li, 537
- Wang Tiange (Dechen), 86
- Wang Weizheng, Önggüt commander, 111
- Wang Wentong, 112
- Wang Zhu, 122
- waqf*, endowment, 383
- Waqqāṣ Bīy, 300–1
- Waṣṣāf, ‘Abdallāh, Ilkhanid historian, 210, 212, 217, 226, 324n20, 329, 832, 836, 837
- Water Tatars, 744, 745
- wax, 737
- Weatherford, Jack, 24n23
- Weishao wang, 35
- Wen Tianxiang, 118, 122
- Wenzhou, 415
- Westerlies, 611, 613
- Western Asia, 246. *See also* Middle East
- census, 759
 - merchant associations, 502
 - use of Arabic script, 428
- Western Europe, 204, 779–81
- currencies, 506–7, 516
 - diplomatic relations, 786–87
 - information gathering missions from, 783–85
 - Jochid influence, 267
 - material and cultural influence of the Mongols, 791–93
 - minting of coins, 488, 493
 - missionary presence in Mongol Asia, 789–91
 - Mongol influence, 872
 - Mongol invasion and early contact, 781–83
 - popularity of Yuan portraiture, 588
 - trade and traders in Mongol lands, 788–89
 - trade routes to, 727
- wheat, 373, 374, 610, 789
- wheelbarrow, 859
- White Horde, 295, 342, 343, 345, 350, 472. *See* Orda Ulus
- White Stupa, 845
- White Tatars, 23
- white, color of charisma, 453
- Wieck, Roger, 593
- William of Paris, 84
- William of Rubruck. *See* Rubruck, William of
- wine, 265n68, 373, 374, 377, 582
- Wolohai. *See* Uraqai
- women
- camp management, 632–34, 637–40
 - Chaghadaid, 643–44
 - official roles in the Yuan, 650–51
 - participation in religion, 640, 641
 - participation in the Central Asian campaigns, 642
 - political influence, 634–37, 640
 - roles of non-Mongol women in the Yuan, 651–52
- Wŏnjong, king of Koryŏ, 690–91
- Wugong fu* (Talismans of the Five Lords), 168
- Wuhan, 93, 110
- Wulahai. *See* Uraqai
- Wutai Shan, mountain, 160
- Wuwei. *See* Liangzhou
- wuwei* (military guards), 417
- Wuye’er (Üyer), general, 59
- Wuzong, Yuan emperor. *See* Qaishan
- Xia (Xi Xia), 27, 32, 34–35, 41, 48, 50, 492, 606, 610, 611, 616, 636, 782
- fall of, 50–52
- Xia Huanzong, 32
- Xia, Empress Dowager, 646
- Xian, city. *See* Jingzhao
- Xiangyang (Xiangyangfu), 58, 116–17, 169
- Xiangzong, Emperor of Western Xia, 32
- Xie Jisi, 158
- Xiliangfu. *See* Liangzhou
- xinfu jun* (newly attached army), 416, 475, 476
- xing shumiyuan* (Branch Bureau of Military Affairs), 49
- xingsheng* (regional or branch secretariat), 49, 426, 649
- Xingzhou (modern Xingtai), 108, 662
- Xiningzhou, 57
- Xinjiang, 19, 21, 320–21, 325, 358n100, 382, 476, 509, 614, 616, 663, 869, 870
- Xinmalin, 658
- Xinzhou, 504
- Xiongnu, 483, 736, 737
- Xu Guozhen, 554
- Xu Heng, 117, 123, 567
- Xu Shijing, 163
- Xu Ting, 64n217, 324
- Xu Youren, 158, 536
- xuanfu shi* (pacification commissioner), 86
- Xuanwenge (“Pavilion for the Diffusion of Culture”), 158

- Xuanzong, Jin emperor, 36
 Xuzhou, 169
- Yachi (Kunming, Shanchan), 86, 125
 Yaishan, battle of, 118, 478
 Yakuts, 736
 Yalawāch family, 372, 377. *See also* Maḥmūd
 Yalawāch; Maṣ'ūd Beg
 Yalu, river, 684, 695, 744
yam. *See* postal stations
 Yamantaka Mandala, 589
 Yan (area around modern Beijing), 663
 Yan'an, 415
 Yanai, Wataru, 36n76, 85n329
 Yang Fuxue, 26n29
 Yang Miaozhen, 651
 Yang Rin-chen-skyabs (Ch. Yang
 Lianzhenjia), Tibetan lama, 134n84
 Yang Tingbi, 830–31, 836, 843
 Yangi Talas, 360
 Yangichar, son of Qaidu, 343, 348, 350
 Yangzhou, 117–18
 Yangzi valley, 171, 173
 Yangzi, region. *See* lower Yangzi region
 Yangzi, river, 93, 110, 116, 117, 651
 Yao Shu, Qubilai's official and Confucian
 scholar, 81, 86, 92, 116
yārghū. *See* *jarghu*
yārghūchī. *See* *jarghuchi*
yārghū-nāma (court report), 427
 Yarkand, 334, 368
yarligh (patent or charter), 757–58, 761–62, 766,
 770, 799
yarlighchi (decree writers), 417
yasa. *See* *jasag*
 Yasa'ur, Chaghadaid prince, 144, 352–53,
 357, 447
 Yasa'ur Noyan, Chaghadaid commander,
 338–39
 Yasawiyya (Sufi order), 384
yastuq. *See* paper money
yasun (bone), 24
 Yazd, 194
yeke jarghuchi (grand judge), 30, 73, 83, 428
 Yeke Mongol Ulus, 28, 400–1, 462, 475, 481, 483
 Yekü, son of Qasar, 85
 Yellow Army, 169
 Yellow River (Huanghe), 32, 34, 47, 51, 147, 167,
 415, 611, 830
 climatic conditions in the regions of, 611–12
 flood, 165
 uprisings in the region of, 169
 valleys of, 475
- Yelü Ahai, 32, 45, 61, 421
 Yelü Chucai, 41, 45, 46, 51, 52, 55n161, 61, 63–65,
 412, 429, 432
 Yelü Dashi, 21
 Yelü Liuge, 36
 Yelü Miansige, 61, 63
 Yelü Tuhua, 32
 Yelü Zhilugu, 33
 Yemen, 8, 421, 495, 798, 816, 860
 Yenisei, river, 338
 Yerru river basin, 608
 Yesü Möngke, Chaghadaid Khan, 73, 77,
 321, 644
 Yesüdei, 674
 Yesülün, 643
 Yi Chehyōn, 698
 Yi Kok, 698
 Yi Sōnggye, 700
 Yighmish, 113
 Yiheimishi (Yighmish), Uighur, 841
 Yilinzhen (Irinchin), 69n247
 yin/yang, 556
 Yinchuan, 34. *See also* Zhongxing
 Yingchangfu, 129, 173
 Yingzong, Yuan emperor. *See* Shidibala
 Yining, 321
Yinshan zhengyao (Soup for the Qan), 554
 Yinzhou, 48–49
 Yisügei, 24–25, 631, 635
 Yisügen, 409, 636
 Yisüi, 41, 409, 636
 Yisün Temür, Taiding Emperor of Yuan, 145,
 148–50, 155–56, 157, 163, 354, 356, 381,
 648, 671, 842
 Yisün To'a, Chaghadaid prince, 327
 Yisünjin, Suldus, wife of Hülegü, 195, 410n34
 Yomuqur, son of Arigh Böke, 140, 335, 504, 667
Yongle dadian (Great Encyclopedia of the
 Yongle Period), 831
 Yongle Emperor, 672n48, 675
 Yongzhou, 278, 505
 Yoshmut, son of Hülegü, 195–96, 210, 802
yosun (rules), 220–21, 801
 Yu Ji, 156–57
Yuan dianzhang (Statutes and precedents of
 the Yuan), 7
 Yuan dynasty, 4
 administration in the early years, 113–16
 administration of Aḥmad, 118–23
 adoption of "Tatar dress", 858
 army, 474–77
 artistic influence on the Ilkhanids, 598
 astronomy, 559, 561, 566–68

- Buddhism, 381, 659, 839, 841–42, 862
 Central Asian peace settlements, 345, 354, 375
 ceramic art, 581, 582
 Chinese painting, 859
 chronic deficits and periodic sloughs, 159–65
 coalition with the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde, 371
 collection of forest products, 743
 collection of taxes in silver, 502
 connections with Delhi Sultanate, 843
 conquest of the Song dynasty, 116–18
 currency, 510–11, 518
 death of Möngke and the emergence of a new power center, 109–13
 effects of natural disasters, 165–68, 671
 establishment of economic colonies in Siberia, 743
 establishment of medical schools, 554
 establishment of Muslim Pharmaceutical Bureaus, 555
 export of cobalt, 865
 fall of, 159, 171–74, 292, 366, 765, 871
 female officials, 650–51
 funding of Qubilai's final decade, 132–38
 Gold Brocade Office, 576
 governance of Mongolia, 665, 669–71
 influence of Koryŏ subjects, 694–99
 integration of Koryŏ, 692–93
 introduction of Chinese style governance in Siberia, 741–42
 Japanese trade, 513
 legacies, 174
 maps, 557, 558
 monetary expansion, 118–21
 multireligious culture, 530, 531, 542
 navy, 477–78
 pacification of the Ögödeids, 140–43, 747
 paper money, 494–96, 497, 501–2, 508
 policies and constituencies, 152–59
 portraiture, 588–89, 595
 prehistory, 107–9
 proposed coalitions, 343
 Qaidu and, 335–38, 344, 665–69, 744
 Qubilai's expeditions, 123–27
 Red Turban rebellions, 168–71
 relations with Özbek, 278
 relations with Qonichi, 343
 relations with the Chaghadaids, 127–29, 144–46, 333–34, 346–55, 369, 374, 598, 744
 reliance on salt revenue, 498–99, 501
 response to natural disasters, 661
 responses to emerging dissidence, 127–32
 restoration of the tribute system, 482
 roles of non-Mongol women, 651–52
 scientific activity, 380
 silver policy, 494–95
 South Asian role in diplomatic exchanges with the Ilkhanate, 829–33
 South Asian trading networks, 833–38
 spending on art and architecture, 577
 status of physicians, 556
 succession after Qubilai, 138
 succession crises, 146–52, 671
 system of workshop production, 578
 tax and food relief in Qaraqorum, 660
 textiles, 584–85
 transmission of South Asian artistic traditions to, 844
 transmission of South Asian medical knowledge to, 845
 weapons, 479
 and the western movement of silver, 502–4
 women of the royal family, 644–49
 worship of mountains and ancestors, 448
 Yuan Intervention, age of (*Wŏn kansŏp*), 680
Yuan Jingshi dadian. *See* *Jingshi dadian*
Yuan shi, 7, 148n127, 153, 828
 Yuan Taizu. *See* Chinggis Khan
yuanfeng qian (Song coin), 511
 Yuanzhen Slough, 135n86, 159, 166
 Yunnan (Qarajang), 82, 86–87, 109, 124–25, 126, 140, 142, 149, 153, 172, 174, 412, 475, 477, 495, 662, 842, 869
 flows of trade, 838
 Shejie's rebellion, 651
 use of cowrie shells, 510, 518
 Yuri of Moscow. *See* Iurii Daniilovich
 Yürl Temür, 425
yurt (place of residence or main camp site), 53, 403, 581, 633. *See also* *ordo*
 Zagros mountains, 183
 Zak'are, Armenian prince, 716, 720
 Zak'are Zak'arian, Armenian, 709n9
 Zaleskii, 764
 Zanjān, 222
 Zanjir Sarai, 357, 378
 Zardandan (Gold Teeth, Ch. Jinchi, or Tai of Yunnan), 125, 142
 Zhang Rou, 49, 58, 93, 108
 Zhang Wenqian, 108, 115, 121
 Zhang Yi, 122

- Zhang Zhijing, Daoist patriarch, 325
 Zhao Mengfu, 588, 595
 Zhao Shiyao, 156
 Zhao, George, 147
 Zhending, 82
zhenshou jun (garrison army), 415
 Zhida currency, 154, 161
 Zhikong (Chanxian), 840
 Zhilugu (Gürkhan). *See* Yelü Zhilugu
 Zhiyuan ("Perfect Prime", reign title), 157
 Zhiyuan currency, 134–35, 154, 161, 163, 164, 168, 499n50
 Zhizheng Slough, 165
Zhizheng tiaoge (Statutes of the *zhizheng* period), 7
 Zhongdu (Beijing), 109, 110, 151, 420. *See also*
 Dadu, Beijing, Khanbaliq
 in the Jurchen Jin period, 35–37, 49
 in the Yuan period, 113, 114, 115
 Zhongmi, 542
zhongrui si (Empress's Seal Office), 646
zhongshu sheng (Central Secretariat), 64, 420
 Zhongtong currency (*zhongtong chao*), 121, 154, 161, 163, 164, 498, 501–2, 504, 517
 Zhongxing (Yinchuan), 32n58, 34, 41, 50–51
zhongyu fu (Empress's Palace Office), 645
zhongzheng yuan (Bureau for the Empress's Administration), 645
 Zhu Xi, 543
 Zhu Yuanzhang, Ming emperor, 166, 171, 366, 449, 673
al-Zij al-Muḥaqqaq al-Sultānī (The Correct *zij* for the Sultan), 563
al-Zij al-Sanjufīnī, 566
Zij-i Ilkhānī (The Ilkhanid Astronomical Handbook with Tables), 561, 565
zongguan. *See* *songgon*
 Zoroastrianism, 454, 529
zud, 662

Index

- Abaqa, Ilkhan, 886, 888, 889, 901, 911, 1088,
1095, 1121, 1141, 1144, 1204, 1209, 1314–16
description of battle with Berke, 1116
edicts, 988, 989
letter, 984
marriage, 1117
poems featuring, 1127
'Abbās, Safavid shāh, 1379
'Abbasid Caliphs, 1029, 1074
'Abbasids, 879, 891, 895, 903, 907, 1013, 1026,
1029, 1378
'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī, 1017
'Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, 911
Abhidharmakośabhāṣya-ṭīkā Tattvārthā, 1225
Abkhazia, 1143
Abraham, biblical patriarch, 1075
Abraham Qirimi (Abraham of the Crimea),
1330
Abramian, G., 1123
Abū al-Fidā', 1016
Abū Bakr ibn Sa'd, Salghurid ruler, 1383
Abū Ishāq, Injuid ruler, 900, 909, 1374
Abū Ishāq, founder of the Ishāqiyya, 1382
Abū Sa'īd, Ilkhan, 890, 891, 905, 907, 1126, 1204,
1355
edict in Ani, 1127
edict in Mongol and Persian (1325), 989
histories covering events following death
of, 907–9
histories of events during the reign of,
894–904
mausoleum of, 1317
seasonal migration, 1026
Abū Sa'īd's silk, 1357, 1358, 1364, 1380–81
Abū Shāma, 1011, 1012
Abuka, amir, 1342
Abul'afia, Avraham ben Shmuel (Abraham
ben Samuel Abulafia), 1266
Abulastayn, battle of, 1012
Academia Sinica, databases of, 922, 943
Acre, 1016, 1074, 1079, 1088, 1094, 1096, 1127,
1266
Adīb Aḥmad, 1159
administration
Chinese, 922, 937
Ilkhanid, 895, 899, 902, 907
administrative documents
Byzantine, 1244
Chinese, 937–40
Korean, 1195
Mongolian, from Qara-Qoto, 985–88, 990–92
Persian, 911
Russian, 1064–67
Tibetan, 1166–68
Uighur, 1220–21
Admonitions of the Court Instructress (Nüshi
zhen tu), picture scroll, 1356
Adriatic Sea, 1078
Ādurgushnasp, Sasanian fire temple of, 1315
al-Afdal al-'Abbās, Rasūlid Sultan, 1027
Afghanistan, 930, 932, 1025, 1340
Aflākī, Shams al-Dīn, 905–6
Africa, 934, 1025. *See also* East Africa, North
Africa
Aguua, Mongol prince, 983
Ahar (Aqar), 989
Aḥmad of Niğde, 903
Aḥmad Tegüder, Ilkhan, 886–87, 1014, 1100, 1380
Aḥmad, son of Chaqırcha, 1226
Aḥmad-i Tabrizī, 899, 909
Ahrī, Quṭb al-Dīn, 907, 908–9
Ahwāl mulūk al-tatār al-mughūl, 1013
Aigle, Denise, 1383
Airusheng, database(s), 922, 948, 954, 956
Aizong, Jin emperor, 934
Ak-Beshim, 1210, 1345.
Akhhār al-Mughūlān, 886–87
Akhtuba, river, 1330

- Akishev, K. A., 1340
 Akropolites, Georgios, 1238–39, 1240–41, 1245
 Aktope Talas, 1344
 ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī, Delhi Sultan, 1335
 ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad, Khwārazm Shāh, 1010
 Ala Tagh, mountain, 1318
 Alamūt, 884, 1010, 1143
 Alans, 1047, 1144, 1245
al-A lāq al-khaṭīra fī dhikr umarā’ al-shām wail-jazīra, 1015
alba ghubchir (taxes and levies), 981
alban (labor service), 986, 1223
 Albania, 1116
 Albert, Patriarch of Antioch, 1074
 Albrecht von Behaim, 1076
 Aleksei, Metropolitan of Rus’, 1065
 Aleppo, 1010, 1079, 1088, 1264
 Alexander Nevskii, prince, 1056–58, 1059, 1061–64
 Alexander the Great, 1076
 Alexandria, 1101
 Alghu, Chaghadaid khan, 893
 Alghui, messenger, 991
 ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, 1011
 ‘Alī Sulṭān, Ögödeid, Chaghadaid khan, 1097
 ‘Alī Yazdī, Sharaf al-Dīn, 909
 ‘Alishāh, Tāj al-Dīn, 893, 901
 Alishan, Ghewond, 1126
 Alivan, 985
 Allen, Terry, 1368
 Allsen, Thomas T., 1324, 1367
 Almaliq, 1032, 1093, 1095, 1097, 1210, 1301, 1342, 1344, 1346, 1361
 Almaric of Tyre, 1122
 Almaty, 1344, 1346
 Alqudai (guarantor), 987
al-Altāf al-khāfiyya, 1014, 1015
 Altai, mountains, 889, 1213, 1278, 1324, 1340
 Altan and Quchar, their oath, 979
Altan Debter (lost Mongol chronicle), 975, 979
Altan Tobchi (Lubsangdanjin’s *Golden Summary*), 977–78, 1324
altan, plur. *altad* “dīnar,” 989
 Amān al-Lahī, Ḥamīd, 1316
 Ambaqai, Mongol khan, 978
 Ambrosiana Library, Milan, 1243
 American Institute for Iranian Art and Archaeology, 1315
 Amīn al-Dīn Balyānī, 905
 Amu Darya, river. *See* Oxus, river
 Amur, river, 1280
 Ananda, *darughachi* in Basar, 986
 Anatolia, 885–86, 902–3, 907, 1012, 1014, 1015, 1031, 1081, 1084, 1125, 1200, 1226, 1333, 1371, 1382, 1385
 Anderson, Eugene, 928
 Andijān, 1341
 Andrei Iaroslavich, prince, 1053, 1056–58
 Andrew of Longjumeau, 1071, 1084–85
 Andrew of Perugia, Bishop of Zaytun, 1095
 Andronikos II, Emperor, 1239–40
 Andronikos III, Emperor, 1239, 1244
 Angkor civilization, 933
 Ani, 1126
 Anige, 1353n14, 1362, 1368, 1388
 animal bones, 1290–91
 annals, 892, 1353. *See also* chronicles
 Armenian, 1115
 Chinese, 925
Annals of King Sejong, 1189
Annals of the Chosŏn Dynasty, 1189
 anthologies, of Koryŏ individuals, 1191–94
 Antioch, 1070, 1079, 1122, 1127
 Antiochene Christology, 1200n1
 Antonovka (Koilik), 1344
Anwār al-tanzīl wa asrār al-ta’wīl, 886
 apocalypse, 1266
Apodeikseis Historion (Demonstrations of Histories), 1240
 Aq Ordu, 1153
 Aqsarā’ī, Karīm al-Dīn, 902
 Arabic language, 879, 882, 1007, 1261, 1301
 biographies, biographical dictionaries, 1008, 1014–15, 1017, 1021, 1024–25, 1027–28
 chronicles, 1008, 1009–13, 1014
 encyclopedias, 1018, 1020–22
 inscriptions, 1031–33, 1357–58, 1379–81
 sources from Mongol Central Asia, 1031–33
 sources from the Ilkhanate, 1027–31
 translation of works, 1007
 travelogues, 1025–26
 Arabic script, 1150
 Aradnashiri (prince), order (*lingji*), 993
 Arāk’el Davrizhetsi, 1126
 Arakawa, Shintarō, 1251n6, 1252n7
 Aral Sea, 1340
 Aramaic language, 1202, 1266
 Aras, 984
 Arbulag, in Khöwsgöl, 981
 Ardabil, 989, 1137
 ceramics, 1379
 documents, 990, 1226
 shrine complex, 1361, 1366, 1377
 Arghui, khatun, 987
 Arghun Aqa, Oirat official, 1125, 1143

- Arghun, Ilkhan, 886, 887, 889, 890, 894, 984,
 1095, 1119, 1121, 1125,
 1128, 1204, 1207
 burial place, 1317
 construction projects, 1316, 1318
 dispute with Ahmad Tegüder, 1380
 letter to Nicholas IV, 985
 recruitment of Genoese mariners, 1098
 letter to Phillip the Fair, 985
 Riccoldo's description of, 1098
 Arghūniyya, 1318
 Argun, river, 1278–80
 Armenia, 1135
 Hebrew tombstones, 1265–66
 Armenian Church, 1121, 1124
 Armenian historiography, 1114–15
 Armenian sources
 chronicles
 of Ananun Sebastatsi, 1123–24
 of Het'um II, 1122–23
 of Het'um of Kořikos (Hayton), 1122
 of Mxit'ar Ayrivanetsi, 1121
 of Nersēs Palianents, 1124
 of Samuēl Anetsi, 1121
 of Smbat Sparapet, 1120
 of Step'annos Episkopos, 1119–24
 colophons, 1125–26
 hagiographies, 1124–25
 historical compilations
 Hawak'umn Patmut'ean, 1117
 History of the Nation of the Archers, 1117–18
 Patmut'iwn Hayoc, 1116
 Patmut'iwn Nahangin Sisakan, 1118–19
 inscriptions, 1126–27
 poetry, 1127–28
 Armenians, 1071, 1090, 1118, 1207
 of Cilicia, 1120
 relations with Muslims, 1124
 relations with the Mamluks, 1120
 relationship with the Mongols, 1127–28
 Arqai, 988
 Arrān, 1318
 arrowheads, 1280, 1283, 1299
 Arsenios, Patriarch, 1240
 artisans, forced transfer of, 1350
 Arugh, Yunnan prince, 983
 Ascelin, Dominican, 1084
 Asha Gambu, 1254
 al-Ashraf Khalīl, Mamluk sultan, 1014
 Asia Minor, 1124, 1126, 1135, 1331, 1335
 Assassins, 1143
 Astrakhan, 998, 1325
 khanate of, 1046
 Astronomical Reform, of Qubilai, 927
 astronomy, 928, 1244
 Ataibuqa, 983
 Athenaios, Demetrios, 1243
 Athos, Mount, 1239
 Attila, 1090
 Atwood, Christopher P., 922, 926–27, 929, 930,
 933, 975
 Aubin, Françoise, 896, 923
 Aubin, Jean, 907
 Aubry de Trois-Fontaines, 1076
 Austria, 1075
Autumn Colors on the Qiao and Hua Mountains
 (painting), 1387
 Avars, 1237
Avatamsaka sūtra (*Huayan jing* or “Garland
 Sūtra”), 1252, 1255
 Avruga (Awarga), 1275, 1283–85, 1286, 1292
 dietary habits, 1290–92
 industry, 1298, 1299
 religion and rituals, 1297
al-Awāmīr al-alā'iyya, 885
 Awgerean, M., 1122, 1123
 Ayalon, David, 1008, 1023
 'Ayn Jālūt, battle of, 1010, 1012–13, 1079–80,
 1264
 al-'Aynī, 1023
 Ayurbarwada (Buyantu Qa'an, Renzong),
 Yuan emperor, 973, 1352
 Ayyūbids, 1011–13, 1015, 1016, 1019, 1023, 1024,
 1026, 1079
 Azad, Arezou, 1314
 Azerbaijan, 907, 1010, 1027, 1029, 1084, 1135,
 1137, 1143, 1314, 1318, 1331, 1354
 Azhdarī, Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad, 899

 Babusha, wife of Qoshila, 1366
 Bacon, Roger, 1072, 1088
 Opus maius, 1088
 Badakhshān, 1290
 Badakhshān rubies, 1344
 Badanjilin Desert, 1301
 badges, 993, 996–97, 998
 Baghdad, 1096
 literary works composed in, 1027–28
 Mongol conquest of, 883, 884, 1010, 1203
 Arabic accounts of, 1012, 1013, 1017, 1025,
 1028–30
 Armenian accounts of, 1126
 Chinese accounts of, 933
 Georgian accounts of, 1144
 Hebrew accounts of, 1265
 images of, 1376

- Baghdad (cont.)
 Persian accounts of, 887, 893–94, 897
 Sa'dī's ode on, 881
 Persian histories, 900–1
 seasonal occupation of, 1026
- Bagratid Kingdom, 1127
- Baidu, Ilkhan, 886, 889, 894, 1208
- Baiju, Mongol general, 1084, 1118
- Bailaqan, 1137
- Baiyun (White Clouds) sect, 1255
- Bākharzī, Sayf al-Dīn, 1032, 1330, 1346, 1360
- bakhshiyān-i ūyghūr*, Uighur masters, 1227
- Balāsāghūn, 1150, 1342
- Balkan lands, 1236
- Ball, Warwick, 1314
- Baluetsi, David, 1125
- Banākātī, Fakhr al-Dīn, 891
- bang bichig* (note of restriction), 996
- Bar Hebraeus, Gregory (Ibn al-'Ibrī), 1030, 1202–4, 1205–9
 Arabic Chronicle, 1030, 1202–3, 1206
- Baradaeus, Jacob, bishop of Edessa, 1200n1
- Barajirard, Fra Gerard, papal envoy, 984
- Baraq Baba, shaykh, 1360
- Baraq Hājib, Qutluğ sultan, 901
- Baraq, Chaghadaid khan, 901, 1144
- Barcelona disputation, 1262, 1265
- Barchuq Art Iduq-qut, Uighur ruler, 983, 1141
- Bars Köl, lake and settlement, 993
- Bars Töge, 981
- barsuchin* (falcons and tiger-tamers), 989
- Barthold, V. V., 881, 882, 1032n143, 1340
- Bartholomew of Bologna, Dominican, 1124
- Bartholomew of Cremona, Franciscan, 1085
- Barur balaghasun (city of Barūr), 989
- barvana* (forwarding notice, *parwāna*, “order”), 989, 990
- Basar, 986, 992
- Bashkiria, 1096
- Bashkirs, 1080
- bath(s), bath house (*ḥammām*), 994, 1316, 1331–33, 1342, 1344
- al-Baṭṭī, Ḥusayn b. Alī, 1013
- Batu, Jochid khan, 1047, 1057, 1059, 1082, 1084, 1262, 1325
 fictionalized tale of, 1061–64
 invasion of Europe, 1070, 1074, 1076
 lands, 1323
 letter to Changsu, 986
 letter to King Béla IV, 974, 1080, 1086
 relationship with Queen Rusudan, 1146
- Bavel (Babylon). *See* Baghdad
- Bayan, general, 974, 1381
- Bayan, scribe, 987
- Bayan Quli, Chaghadaid puppet khan, 1346, 1360
- Bayankhudag, 1282
- Bayanwula, 1300
- Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī, shrine of, 1360
- Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Dawādār, 1015–16, 1024
- Baybars, Mamluk Sultan, 1012–15, 1024
- Bayḍāwī, 'Abdallāh al-, 886–87, 891, 895, 1030
- Bayezid, Ottoman Sultan, 1242–44
- Bayhaqī, Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Zayd, 901
- Bayighu, Mongol prince, 983
- Baypakov, K. M., 1340
- 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab nges don bstan 'phel, 1175
- Bedrosian, Robert, 1115, 1121, 1123, 1125
- beglerbeg* (chief commander), 1139
- Beijing, 922, 930, 934, 1357
- Beijing tushuguan cang Zhongguo lidai shike taben huibian*, 949
- Beishi ji*, 931–32
- Beitie jinghua*, database, 950
- Beixun shiji*, 936
- Béla IV, King of Hungary, 974, 1077, 1078, 1080
- belge* (token, seal), 984, 990
- Belgorod, 1081
- Belitung shipwreck, 1378
- belt bowls. *See* cups, portable
- belts, belt ornamentation, 1294, 1324–27, 1334, 1335, 1336, 1346
- Bemmann, Jan, 1288
- Benedict, Polish Franciscan, 1083–84
- Bérard, Thomas, Templar master, 1079
- Berdibek, Jochid khan, 1065, 1155
- Berduji river, battle on the, 1137, 1143
- Berk Chimken, 991
- Berke Faqīh (lawyer), 1153
- Berke, Jochid khan, 884, 1010, 1032, 1094, 1116, 1144, 1368
 conversion to Islam, 1330, 1346
- Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, 1252
- Bernshtam, A. N., 1340
- Berthier, Anne, 1252n8
- Beshbaliq, 983, 992, 993, 1350, 1366
- bevri*, commander of 10,000 (in Georgian), 1139
- Bianliang. *See* Kaifeng
- Bible, 926, 1046n1, 1053, 1211
 exegesis, 1208
- Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1252
- bichigechi*, *bichēchi*, *bitkāchi* (secretary), 1217
- al-Bidāya wa l-nihāya*, 1017

- Bigemür, 991
biji, miscellaneous notes, 931, 945–47, 955
 Bilarghu, Mongol general, 1123
bilig (the ruler's wise saying), 974, 979
 biographical dictionaries, 1021, 1024, 1027–28
 biographies
 Arabic, 1008, 1012, 1014–15, 1017
 Chinese, 921, 923, 935, 944, 947, 948, 955, 974
 Korean, 1185–86, 1191, 1194
 Tibetan, 1173–75
 Birge, Bettine, 943
 al-Birzālī, 1017
 Bishkek, 1342, 1346
 Bisqarun, Buscarello. *See* Musqaril
 Bisutūn, 1318
 Black Death, 1211
 Black Sea region, 1091, 1237, 1380
 Blair, Sheila S., 1318
 Blake, Robert, 1118
 Blo-bzang bstan-'dzin (Lubsangdandzin),
 977, 978
 block prints, 942, 993, 1252, 1354
 Blue Horde (*Kök Orda*), 1323
 blue-and-white porcelain, 1354, 1360, 1364n49,
 1366, 1376–80, 1386
 Bo Yinhu, 936
 boats, 994
Bodhicaryāvatāra of Śāntideva, Mongol
 translation (*Bodistv-a charya avatar*)
 and commentary by Chos-kyi 'Od-
 zer, 973–74
 Boghorchu (Bo'orchu), 978, 988
 Bogusław, Franciscan minister in Poland, 1083
 Bohemia, 1073, 1082–83
 Bohemond v, prince of Antioch, 1078
 Bohemond vi, prince of Antioch, 1079
 Bolad (city), 991
 Bolad (signer of a forwarding notice), 989
 Bolad Aga, adviser, 1351
 Bolad Chingsang, 889
 Bolad Örö (place), 991
 Bolad Qaya, official, 991
 Bon priests (bonbus, Tib. bon-po), 995n118
 Boniface VIII, Pope, 985
Book of Dead (Uig.), 1225
Book of Degrees (*Stepennaia kniga*), 1059, 1062,
 1063
Book of Documents (*Shangshu Bichig*, Ch.
 Shujing), 973n3
Book of Filial Piety (*Taqimtaghu* [*Bichig*], Ch.
 Xiaojing), 973
Book of Odes (*Maushi Bichig*, Chin. *Shijing*), 973n3
Book of the Cheirotanies, 1207
 Boralki, 988
 his order, 987
 Boroqul (Boro'ul), 977
 Bortala, 1341
 Bosson, J. E., 972n2, 996n125
Boya Playing the Qin (painting), 1387
Boya Playing the Zither (painting), 1357
 Brahmanism, 1327n20
 Brahmi script, 1327
 Brambilla, Marco Giovanni, 1317
 Bretschneider, Emil, 930, 931, 932, 933
 'Bri gung, 1172
 'Bri gung chos rje Kun dga' rin chen', 1174
 'Bri gung pa, 1175
 Bri khung–Mongol (sTod hor) relations, 1171
 British Library, manuscripts, 897n82, 899n93,
 951, 1123, 1355
 International Dunhuang Project (IDP), 1251
 Brosset, Marie Felicité, 1135
 Browne, Edward, 880, 1007
 'Brug chen Padma dkar po, 1170
 'Brug pa bka' brgyud school, 1170
 'Brug pa'i chos 'byung. *See* Chos 'byung bstan
 pa'i padma rgyas pa'i nyin byed
Bu slob mams la spring ba ("Message to the
 Disciples"), 1175
 Bu ston rin chen grub, Bu-ston, scholar, 1176
 Budashiri, official, 983, 1175
 Budashri, wife of Togh Temür, 1366
 Buddhism, Buddhists, 1172. *See also* Huayuan
 Buddhism; Tibetan Buddhism
 burial accessories, 1295, 1296
 burial rites, 1296–97, 1329
 in the Golden Horde, 1327–29
 Korea, 1188, 1193
 Tangut, 1254–56
 Buddhist art, 1353, 1362, 1365, 1382
 Buddhist canons, 1217, 1254–56
 Buddhist priests, monks, 931, 995n118
 depictions of, 1364
 edicts of, 996, 1166
 edicts regulating, 981–82, 993, 994–95
 Uighur, 1224
 Buddhist scriptures, 1223–25
 Buddhist temple(s)
 cave, 1314
 Qayaliq, 1344
 Suzhou, 1225
 Buell, Paul, 928
 Bugha (Buqa), Jalayir amir, 981, 1128
 Bukhara, 885, 1330, 1341, 1343, 1360
 waqf documents, 1032
 Bukhiin khoshuu, 1294

- Bulayïq, 1226
 Bulgaria, 1063n76
 Bulghār, Bulgars, 1155, 1237, 1330–31, 1335
 Bulughan, khatun, provisions ordered for her, 987
 Buqa Sochighai, campsite, 980
 Burana, 1342, 1346. *See also* Balāsāghūn
 Bureau of Buddhist Affairs, 1175
 Bureau of Interpreters (Ming), 926, 976
 bureaucracy, 885, 935, 937, 938, 952, 1014
 Burhān al-Dīn, Qāḍī, 1243
 burial accessories, 1279, 1294–95, 1296, 1364
 burial mounds, 1055, 1295
 burial sites, 1288, 1291, 1295–96. *See also* cemeteries
 burials, burial systems, 1294–96. *See also* graves
 Buddhist, 1329
 Chaghadaid, 1345–46
 Mongolian Plateau, 1278–80
 use of textiles, 1364
 Burnasheva, R. Z., 1340
 Burton, annals of, 1081
 Burusiye madrasa (college), Sivas, 1331
 Busayid Baghatūr Qan. *See* Abū Saʿīd
 Buscarel de Gisolf. *See* Musqaril
 Busma, Chaghadaid prince, 983
 Bustān Ābād, 1316
 Buyanjin, wife of Prince Hindu, 983
 Buyids, 890, 900
 Byzantine historiography, 1236–38
 Byzantium, 1063, 1236–37, 1240–41, 1242

 C. de Bridia, Franciscan author, 1083
 Cʼamcʼean, Mikʼayel, 1126
 Cai Meibiao, 950
 Cairo, 1011, 1023, 1151, 1388
 diplomatic missions to, 887
 Caizhou, Cai Prefecture, 934
 calendar
 Byzantine, 1121
 Chinese, 927, 936, 1370
 hijrī, Muslim, 1007
 in Georgian chronicles, 1140
 Julian, 1049
 Mongol, 999
 Syriac, 1210
 twelve animals, 892, 1140, 1155, 1209, 1210
 Uighur, 986, 1224
 calligraphy, 948, 1028, 1352–53, 1354–57, 1368, 1381, 1384
Cambridge History of China, vol. 6., 955
 Caomuzi (Master of Grass and Woods), 946

 carpets, 1385, 1386
 Caspian provinces, 903
 Catania, 1261–62
 Catholicos of Kartli Arsen, 1146
 Caucasus, 881, 888, 1010, 1114, 1121, 1145, 1325, 1327, 1330–31, 1333
 Cecegdari, G., 980n23
 celadon, 1301, 1358, 1378
 cemeteries
 Chaghadaid, 1346
 Jewish, 1265
 Semirechye, 1210
 Tavan Tolgoi, 1291
 Usharal, 1342
 census
 of 1268, 1169
 Armenia, 1118, 1125–26
 Georgia, 1136, 1139, 1144
 Tibet, 1169, 1176
 Central Asia, 879, 881, 882, 894–95, 932, 1009, 1010, 1025, 1073, 1089, 1126, 1128, 1135, 1219, 1301, 1351, 1368
 Arabic sources, 1031–33
 climate, 1278
 conquest of by the Qara Khitai, 1073
 decline in urban culture, 1340
 evidence of equestrian culture, 1324
 evidence of Islamic residents, 1288
 evidence of Syriac Christianity, 1209–13
 literary production, 1150
 Turkic sources, 1159
 urban planning tradition, 1333, 1343
 ceramics, 1287, 1290, 1359–60, 1364, 1377. *See also* blue-and-white porcelain; lusterware
 allover surface patterning, 1388
 Central Asian, 1301
 Liao-style, 1281
 motifs, 1353
 overglaze, 1386
 underglaze, 1384
 Cerenodnom, D., 978
 Chʼen, Paul, 941
 Chʼoi Hae, 1192–93
 Chʼungchǒng, province, 1189
 Chʼungsǒn-wang, Koryŏ king, 1188, 1191, 1193n26
 Chabi (Chabui), consort of Qubilai, 494, 495, 496, 646
 Chaghadaid khanate, Chaghadaids, 907, 1126
 administrative orders, 1220
 Arabic accounts of, 1022, 1025, 1026
 Arabic sources, 1031–33
 archaeological research, 1340

- burials, 1345–46
- cities, 1340–45
- coin hoards, 1345
- evangelism, 1097
- Islamization, 1346, 1350
- jewelry, 1345
- mausoleums, 1342, 1343, 1346484
- palaces, 1343
- referred to in documents from Turfan, 990–92
- tombstones, 1346
- Turkic literature, 1156–60
- Chaghaday, son of Chinggis Khan, 1351
- Chaghan Balaqasun “White City” (Ch. Zhengdingfu), 982
- Chaghan Teüke* (White History), 980
- Chaghata Noin (Chaghadai Noyan), Mongol commander, 1138
- Chaghatay-Turkic, 1150, 1160, 1227
- Chalcedonian Christology, 1200n1
- Chalkokondyles, Laonikos, 1240
- Chan Aifeng, 1254n20
- Chan, Hok-lam, 935
- Chang De, 933
- Changchun, 930–31
- Changchun zhenren xiyouji*, 930
- Changgu Zhenyi, 947
- Changzhou, 1386
- CHANT (CHinese ANcient Texts), database, 956
- Charles IV (Holy Roman emperor), 1073
- Charles of Anjou, 1079
- chau* (paper money, Chin. *chao*), 988, 1220
- Chavannes, Edouard, 1167
- Chelebi Amir ‘Abid, 905
- Chen Dasheng, 1033
- Chen Dezhi, 933, 955
- Chen Gaohua, 943, 955
- Chen Yuan, 950
- Chen Yuanjing, 954
- Chen Zhichao, 950
- Cheng Jufu, 944
- Chengzong. *See* Temür Qa’an
- cherbi* (high official), 973
- chi* (unit of measurement), 1285
- Chibinligh, 991
- Chichinadze, Zakaria, 1135
- Chikusa Masaaki, 952
- Chilger, lament of, 979
- Chimeddorji, 985
- China
 - art, 1353–54
 - Buddhism in, 1172
 - evidence of Syriac Christianity, 1209–13
 - Mongol patronage, 1362
 - plants and trees from, 1385
 - square script tablet inscriptions, 996
 - Chinese (“Cathayans,” “Seres”), 1087
 - China Biographical Database, 135n1011
 - Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 943, 951
 - Chinese histories
 - court sponsored, 924–28
 - official histories of the Liao, Song and Jin dynasties, 924
 - official history of the Yuan dynasty, 920–23
 - rewrites, 923–24
 - unofficial, private historical writing from the Yuan dynasty, 934–37
 - Chinese History: A New Manual, 955
 - Chinggim, son of Qubilai, 974
 - Chinggis Khan (Temüjin), 879, 980, 983, 1010, 1047, 1136, 1140–41, 1150, 1207, 1282, 1349
 - adoption of Uighur script, 1217
 - Arabic accounts of, 1009, 1012, 1013, 1018–19, 1025, 1028
 - Armenian accounts of, 1118
 - attack on the Khwārazm Shāh, 1073
 - Bar Hebraeus’s account of, 1202–3
 - captured belts, 1324
 - Chinese accounts of, 925–27, 928, 930–32
 - deification of, 1297
 - destruction of Huanzhou, 1287
 - edicts, 981
 - effect of climate on his rise to power, 1277–78
 - evidence of his capital at Avraga, 1283–85
 - in the Georgian chronicles, 1144
 - keshig* system, 923
 - Mongolian accounts of, 974–79, 983, 988, 994
 - obedience to the image of, 1075
 - Persian accounts of, 884, 887, 889, 894, 896–97, 898, 903, 904, 910, 1023
 - and Qaraqorum, 1286
 - Tangut accounts of, 1253
- Chinggis’s Stone (Yisünger’s inscription), 980
- Chinggisid civilization, 1323
- Chinggisid identity, 1324
- Chinggisid tradition, 1326–27, 1336
- Chingiz-nāma* (*Shāh-nāma-yi Chingizī*), 898
- Chingtemür, Uighur ruler, 991
- Chiqtim, 1222
- Choban, amir, 890, 901
- Chobanids, 895, 898, 902, 908, 1029
- Choimaa, 978
- Cholgo Ch’önbek, 1193

- Chölla, province, 1189
 Chöngdong Haengsöng (Branch Secretariat for the Conquest of the East), 1186, 1193
 Chongyue, Ren, 936
 Choniates, Niketas, 1238, 1241
 chopsticks, 1027
 Chora monastery, 1239
 Chormaghan (Chormaqaṇ), Mongol general, 1118, 1125
 Chos 'byung bstan pa'i padma rgyas pa'i nyin byed, 1170
 Chos byung ngo mtshar rgya mtsho, 1171
 Chos nyid ye shes, 1173
 Chos rje pa bde bar gshegs dus dbus gtsang gi dge ba'i bshes gnyen nmams la spring ba, 1176
 Chos rje sa skya paṇḍi ta chen po'i nam thar gsung sgras ma, 1174
 Chos-kyi 'Od-zer, 973, 997
 Chosön, dynasty, period, 1185, 1188–90, 1191
 Christian canons, 1217
 Christian cemeteries and tombstones, 1346
 Christian texts, 1226
 Christianity, Christians, 891, 985, 1013, 1028, 1266
 archaeological evidence of, 1296
 Byzantium, 1237
 Ilkhanid policy, 1204
 Jochid attitudes to, 1329
 missions, missionaries, 1094–98
 Mongol attitudes to, 1085–86
 Mongol encounters with, 1073–76
 reactions to the Mongol advance, 1262
 Rus'ian, 1057
 Syriac, 1202–8, 1209–13
 Chronicle of Avraamka, 1056
 Chronicle of One Hundred Years (*Chronicle of the Time of the Mongols or The Georgian Chronicle*), 1135–38, 1141, 1144–45, 1147
 chronicles. *See also* verse chronicles
 Arabic, 1008, 1009–13, 1014, 1016, 1020, 1023–24, 1028, 1030
 Armenian, 1115, 1119–24
 Mongolian, 974–80
 Persian, 977
 Rus'ian (*letopisi*), 1048–60
 Western European, 1070–71, 1075, 1077, 1079
 Chronicon ad 1234, anonymous West Syriac chronicle, 1200–2
 Chronike Syngraphe (Written Chronicle), 1238
 Chronikon peri tes ton Tourkon basileias (Chronicle of the Empire of the Turks), 1242
 Chronography (Bar Hebraeus), 1030, 1202–3, 1206–7
 Chrysokokkes, Georgios, 1244
 Chu, river, 1210, 1344
 Chübei, Chaghadaid prince, 1225
 Chügoku sekkoku bunbutsu gödō kenkyūkai (Combined research group for Chinese inscriptions), Meiji University, Tokyo, 950
 Chuogenglu, 946
 Church of the East, 1200, 1204–6, 1209, 1212, 1226
 cemetery, 1342
 Church Slavonic, 1046n1, 1067
 Chwolson, D. A., 1340
 Cicero, 1237
 Çifte Minareli, Sivas, 1331
 Cimmerians (*Kimmerioi*), 1238
 Cipangu. *See* Japan
 Circassians, 1047
 cities, 1367–69
 capitals of Koryō, 1189
 Chaghadaid, 1340–45
 construction of dual capitals, 1292–94
 construction of Qaraqorum, 1286–89
 first Mongol capital cities, 1283–86
 Golden Horde, 1330–33
 Ilkhanid, 1312, 1316–18
 civil service examinations, 939, 940
 Cizhou kiln, 1298, 1386
 Cizhou wares, 1379
 Clark, L. V., 1222
 Cleaves, Francis Woodman, 926, 978, 986n60, 1219
 Clement IV, Pope, 1094
 Clement V, Pope, 1095, 1099
 climate change, 1275–78
 Cloud Terrace (Yuntai) at Juyongguan Pass, 1362, 1374, 1376, 1389
 cobalt, 1298, 1352, 1377, 1379, 1386
 Un code des Yüan, 942
 coin hoards, 1345
 coin inscriptions, 984
 Cologne, 1075, 1083
 colophon(s), 973, 975, 1153, 1171, 1352, 1356
 Armenian, 1115, 1125–26
 Uighur, 1224–25
 commercial contracts, 952, 985, 987, 1093
 Compendium of Chronicles. *See* Jāmi 'al-tawārīkh
 compilation (*svod*), 1048
 concubines, imperial, 923, 987, 996
 confessions, 978

- Confucian classics in Middle Mongol, 973
 Confucian householders, 939
 Confucian schools, 939
 Confucianism, 1193, 1296
 Confucius, 973n3
 Constantine, Emperor, 1207
 Constantinople, 1048, 1059, 1087, 1238–39, 1240–43
 contracts
 Chinese, 952, 953, 954
 Uighur, 985–87, 1219–20
 Western European, 1093
 conversion
 to Christianity, 1086, 1096, 1097
 to Islam, 884, 889, 1030, 1032, 1126, 1346.
 See also Islamization
 copper coins, 1280, 1290, 1300
 Corfu (Kerkyra), 1241
 cornelian beads, 1333
 cotton cloth (*bōz*), 1222
 Councils of Ferrara–Florence, 1242
 Cracow, 1083
 Crimea, 1086, 1093, 1126, 1155, 1245, 1333
 Cuman–Qipchaq in, 1245
 Islamic architecture, 1330–31
 Jochid rule, 1323
 religious communities, 1329–30
 Simferopol treasure, 1334–36
 square script tablet inscriptions, 996
 Crimean Khanate, 1046
 Croatia, 1077
 crusade treaties, 1098–101
 Crusaders, 1087, 1266
 Crusades
 Armenian sources, 1114, 1120, 1128
 Fifth Crusade, 1073, 1137
 Second Crusade, 1073
 Cumans, 1047, 1076, 1237, 1245
 cups
 portable, belt bowls, 1324–25, 1326
 stemmed or handled, 1374, 1378, 1385–86
 Curia, Papal, 1070, 1074, 1077, 1083
 documentation available to, 1080–82
 Cyprus, 1085–86, 1087, 1122
 Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria, 1200n1
- D'Ohsson, A. C. M., 1007
Da Yuan hunyi Fangyu shenglan, 947
Da Yuan tongzhi, 941
Da Yuan yitong zhi, 947
 Da'an gu Palace, 1292
dachaoguo jingshi, 1255
- Dadu, 1275, 1286, 1352, 1362, 1368–69, 1388. *See also* Beijing
 as center for textile production, 1366
 canal, 1293
 Chongtianmen (imperial gate), 1354, 1368
 construction of, 1293
 distribution of goods from, 1380
 edicts issued from, 974
 evidence of social intercourse from, 1381
 fall of, 936
 observatory, 1370
 palace, 1351
 postal stations, 1300
 seasonal occupation, 1294
 shaofan-yuan, ritual site, 1297
 transportation of products to, 1298
Daftar al-Muzaffariya, 1026
Daftar-i dilgushā, 899
 Dagi (Dagui, Ch. Daji), edict of 1320, issued for Grags-pa Rgyal-mtshan, 995
 Dahaotekan, palace, 1300
Dai Ōn kemekü Yeke Mongghol ulus, 982
Dam pa'i chos kyi 'khor lo bsgyur ba rnam's kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa mkhas pa'i dga' ston. *See* mKhas pa'i dga' ston
 Damascus, 985, 1017, 1264
 literary activity, 1016, 1150
 Mongol occupation of, 1012
 Damietta, 1073
 Daming County, 1254
Dang Baohai, 943
 Danxi dudi, 940
 Daoism, 1296
 Daoist canon (*Daozangjing*), 980
 Daoist monks, 931, 982, 994
Daojia jinshi lüe, 950
Daoyi zhilüe, 934
darugha, darughachi (governor), 973, 980–82, 986, 993, 1220, 1225, 1336
 Darwīsh Muḥammad, 973
 Dāsh Kāsan, 1314
Dastūr al-kātib, 911
 databases
 Arabic, 1007n1
 Chinese, 922, 924, 943, 944, 945, 948, 950, 953, 954, 956
 Dā'ūd Beg, 1346
 David IV, King of Georgia, 1121, 1135
 David of Ashby, Dominican, 1088
 David VI Narin, King of Georgia, 1136, 1139, 1141, 1143, 1146–47
 David VII Ulu, king of Georgia, 1136, 1139, 1140, 1143

- Davidovich, E. A., 1340
dawādār (lit. bearer of the inkstand, a leading official in the Caliphate and the Mamluk Sultanate), 1015
al-Daw' al-lāmi 'li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi', 1025
 Dayir-Usun, chief of the U'as-Merkits, 1324
De statu, conditione ac regimine magni canis, 1096
Deb ther dmar po. See *Hu lan deb ther*
Deb ther dmar po gsar ma. See *rGyal rabs 'phrul gyi lde mig gam deb ther dmar po'i deb sar ma*
Deb ther sngon po (Deb sngon), 1169
debter (book), 1168
 decrees. See *edicts*
decury, 1223
 Deed of grant of Arsen Chkondidel-Mtsignobartukhutsesi to Mgela Abulakhtrisdze, 1146
 Dei the Sage (Dei Sechen), 979
 Delhi, 1093, 1252, 1377
 Delhi Sultanate, 883, 893, 894, 1335, 1345
Demegoria Tamerlanis ("Demegoria tou Person basileos Temyre," "The Speech of Temür, Emperor of the Persians"), 1243
 Demetre I, king of Georgia, 1145
 Demetre II, king of Georgia, 1140, 1142
 Dengfeng, 1362, 1370
 denomination, 1222
 Derbend, 1138
 dervishes, 1346
Descripciones terrarum, 1088
 al-Dhahabī, 1017
dhayl (continuation), 894, 1017
Dhayl mir 'āt al-zamān fi ta'rikh al-a'yān, 1017
Dhayl-i Jāmi 'al-tawārikh, 897, 909
Dhayl-i Tārikh-i guzida, 908
Dhayl-i Zafar-nāma, 898
 dialogue, 979, 988
 dietary habits, 1290–92
 Ding family from Quanzhou, 953
 Ding kiln, 1298
 diplomacy, Western–Mongol, 1094–98
 diplomatic diaries, 928–29
 dishes, 1299, 1341, 1357–60, 1377, 1379–80, 1385
dishi. See *Imperial Teacher*
Divisament du monde, Le, 1091–92. See also *Polo*, Marco
Diwān lughāt al-turk, 1150
 Diwubala, Mongol prince, 982
 Dkon-mchog Bzang-po, Buddhist priest, 995
 Dmitrii Ivanovich (Donskoi), Grand Prince, 1054, 1064, 1066
 Dnieper Ukraine, 1325, 1330
 Dobu, 982n37
 documents
 Arabic, 1226
 of Ardabil, 906, 989
 Chinese
 excavated from Qara-Qoto and Huizhou, 950–52
 found on the backs of books, 952
 commercial, 1093–94
 Georgian, 1135, 1141, 1146–47
 Korean, 1195
 Mongolian
 from Dunhuang Mogaoku Northern Caves, 992–93
 from Qara-Qoto, 985–88
 from the Ilkhanate, 988–90
 from the Turfan area, 990–92
 square script, 993–98
 Persian, 885, 906, 990, 1226
 Rus'ian, 1064–67
 Tibetan, 1166–68
 Uighur, 1218–19
 Buddhist scriptures and colophons, 1223–25
 collective analysis of, 1221–22
 contracts, 1220
 multilingual comparative analysis in Eurasian context, 1222–23
 Doityn Balgas, 1289–90
 Doloon creek (Doloon Nuur), 1213
 Dominicans, 1072, 1080, 1084, 1088–89, 1095–96, 1098, 1124, 1265
 Don, river, 1064, 1325–26
 Doquz Khatun, 1117, 1125, 1207
 Dorotheos, 1242
 Doukas Batatzes, Iohannes, Emperor of Nicaea, 1244
 Doukas, historian, 1241
 dragon(s)
 cup handles, 1327
 motifs, 1316, 1325, 1375, 1386
 rock-cut reliefs of, 1314
 sculpture, 1295
 thrones, 1374
 drama, 945
 drinking vessels, 1327. See also *cups*
 drought, 1278, 1297, 1334
 Du Jianlu, 1251
 Du'a, Chaghadaid khan, 983, 1157, 1213
 mausoleum, 1346

- Duan Yuquan, 1255
 Dulaurier, Édouard, 1114, 1121, 1123
duman. See *tümen*
 Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, 1168, 1170
 Dunhuang, 1211, 1217, 1225. See also Mogao caves
 pilgrims' graffiti, 984
 Tangut materials, 1250–52
 Uighur contracts, 1219
 Uighur-Buddhist texts, 1224
 Dunnell, Ruth W., 931
Duoneng bishi, 954
al-Durar al-kāmina, 1024
Durrat al-akhbār, 901
Durrat al-aslāk fī dawlat al-atrāk, 1020
 Dust Muḥammad, 1355
 'Dzam gling byang. See *Sa skya pa'i gdung rabs*
 Dzhumagulov, C. D., 1340
- East Africa, 1091, 1380
 East Syriac Church, 1202
Ecang Dunhuang wenxian (Dunhuang
 documents held in Russia), 952
Ecang Heishuicheng wenxian (Qara-Qoto
 documents held in Russia), 951
Ecclesiastical Chronicle (Bar Hebraeus), 1203–4
 edict(s)
 of Bolad, 993
 of Buddhist priests (*faji*, Chin. *fazhi*), 1166
 of the Chaghadaiids, 991
 Chinese, 937, 940, 941–42, 980, 996
 of Chinggis Khan, 981
 for dealing with religious institutions, 974,
 994–95
 effected at Ghazan's enthronement, 1207
 of empresses ('*iji*, Chin. *yizhi*), 972, 980,
 995, 1166
 of Ilkhans (*üge*), 988–90
 of imperial preceptors (*dishi*), 1166
 of Kun-dga' Blo-gros Rgyal-mtshan Dpal-
 bzang-po, 996
 of Möngke, 981–82, 994, 1176
 of Mongol emperors (*yarligh*), 972, 973, 981,
 987, 991, 992, 993–95, 1166
 Mongolian, 972, 980–82, 993–97
 Persian, 906, 997
 of princes (*üge*, *bichig*, *lingji/linji*), 972, 982,
 987, 993, 1166
 of Qubilai Qa'an, 972, 996, 1171
 of Temür Öljeitü Qa'an, 991
 Tibetan, 1166–67
 of Toghon Temür, 994–95
 of Töregene, 980
 of Tughluq Temür, 991, 1168
- Turkic, 1227
 of Yisün Temür, 995
 Edigü, amir, 1243
 Edzina, 1250, 1253. See also Qara-Qoto
 Efrem, archbishop, 1051
 Egarslan Bakurtsikheli, 1138, 1141
 Eghegis, Armenia, 1265
 Egypt, 880, 895, 985, 1008, 1009, 1014, 1016,
 1020, 1022, 1024, 1046, 1084, 1085, 1099,
 1126, 1244, 1268, 1335, 1386, 1388. See also
 Mamluk Sultanate
Eight Insect Themes (painting), 1356
 Ejen Qoriya, 1297
Ekthesis chronike (Chronological
 Consideration), 1241
 electronic texts. See also databases
 of Arabic sources, 1007n1
 of Chinese sources, 922, 953
 of the Georgian Chronicle, 1135n1
 of Korean sources, 1185n2, 1186n4, 1189n14,
 1193n29
 Elege, his petition answered in Abaq's edict
 (1271), 988
 Elikum, prince of Vayots-Dzor, 1266
 Eljigidei, Mongol general, 1085, 1099
 Emin, N., 1121
encomium (enkomion), 1244–45
Encomium Anonymum, 1245
 encyclopedias
 Arabic, 1008, 1018, 1020–22
 Chinese, 937–39, 947–48, 953–54, 955, 977
 geographical, 1188–90
 Mongolian, 973
 environmental crisis, 1334
Epic of Manas, The, 1342
 epigraphy, 1009, 1127
Episodes from the Career of a Yuan Official
 (handscroll), 1354, 1368, 1376
Epistola prudenti viro, 1074, 1076
Epistula de vita et moribus Tartarorum, 1080–82
Epistulae ad ecclesiam triumphantem (Letters to
 the Church Victorious), 1096
 epitaphs, 982–83, 1194–96
 on graves, 1194–96
 Turkic, Uighur, 1226
 Erdene Zuu monastery, 1287
 Eristavi of Racha, 1139
 Erzakovich, L. B., 1340
 eschatology, 1261, 1266–67
 Esenbuqa, Mongol translator, 983
 ethnography, 1071, 1238
 ethnonyms, 1237–38, 1239, 1245
 ethnos, ethne, 1237

- ethopoia* (discourse, rhetorical speech), 1244
 Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm, 1252
 eulogies
 of Chinggis Khan, 979
 Koryō, 1190
 of the Onggirat people by Dei the Sage, 979
 Euphrates, river, 886, 1318
 Eurasian globalization, 1336
 Eurasian steppe, 1013, 1351
 Europe
 Batu's invasion of, 1070
 letters from, 1071
 Everding, Karl-Heinz, 1167, 1173
 Evidential Studies (*kaozheng*) movement, 923
 exegesis, 1208, 1261, 1267–68
 Exilarch (*Rosh haGola*), 1265

al-Faḍl al-ma'ṭhūr min sīrat al-sultān al-malik al-manṣūr, 1015
 Fakhr al-Dīn 'Isā ibn Ibrāhīm, 1029
 falcons, 985, 1366
 Fārs, 886, 894–95, 898, 899, 905, 909, 1354, 1383
Fascination of Nature (painting), 1356
 Faṭḥabād, 1346
fatwā, 1018, 1029
 Fedorov, M. N., 1340
 Feng Zizhen, 1357, 1381
 Feognost', Metropolitan of Rus', 1065
 Ferghana valley, 1159
 Fetisov, A. M., 1346
 Fez, 1268
 Fidenzio of Padua, 1099
 Firdawsī, 897, 898, 1316
 Firūz Shāh, Tughluqid ruler, 1377
 Florence, 1094, 1242
 food, 928, 929, 1290–92
 funeral, 1294, 1345
 rituals, 1297
 forecasts, 1245
Four Sources of Mongol History. See Menggu shiliao sizhong
 France, 1072, 1083, 1087, 1122, 1242
 Franciscans, 1071, 1082–84, 1085, 1093, 1095–96
 Franke, Herbert, 992
 Franks, 890–91, 985, 1079, 1090, 1100
 Frederick II, Duke of Austria, 1078
 Frederick II, Holy Roman emperor, 1074, 1077
 Friday Mosque, Bulghar, 1330–31
 Friedrich II, king of Sicily, 1012
 Frik, poet, 1127
 fritware, 1358, 1385
 Frye, Richard, 1118
 Fu Xinian, 1354

 Fulk of Villaret, master of the Hospitallers, 1099
 funerary inscriptions (*muzhiming*), 935, 944, 1212
 Fustāt, 1023, 1263

Galician–Volhynian Chronicle, 1051, 1058–59
 Gallipoli, 1239
 Galstyan, A., 1115, 1119, 1124
 Gamrekel-Toreli, Georgian noble, 1139
 Gandjavi, Saeed, 1317
 Gandza, 1137, 1145
Gangs can yul gyi sa la spyod pa'i mtho ris kyi rgyal blon gtso bor brjod pa'i deb ther rdzogs ldan gzhon nu'i dga' ston dpyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs, 1171
 Gansu corridor, 1217
 Buddhist scriptures and colophons, 1223–25
 memorial inscriptions, 1225, 1254
 Tangut materials, 1250, 1254
 Turkic Christian monuments, 1226
 Uighur migration to, 1227
 Gaoan, 1364
 Gaochang, 1226
 Gashun-Usta, 1325
 Gateluzzi, Genoan family, 1241
 gazetteers, 945, 947–48
 Gegen Chaghan (Karchagan, Qarshi Sūrī), 1289
 Geikhatu, Ilkhan, 889, 894, 1318, 1374n79
 Gelati monastery, Georgia, 1146
 Genealogical Society of Utah, 953
 genealogy, genealogies, 895
 Chinese (*jiazhuan*), 923, 935, 937, 952–53
 of the *iduq-quts*, 1225
 Mongolian, 975, 978, 1168
 Persian, 891, 910, 1227
 Tangut, 953, 1225
 Tibetan, 1171, 1173
 Genghis Khan. *See* Chinggis Khan
Gengshen waishi, 936
 Genizah, 1261–63
 Genoa, 1071, 1093, 1336, 1380
 Genoese belt, 1335
genos, 1237
 geographical works, 1244
 Arabic, 1008, 1015, 1030
 Chinese, 947–48
 Koryō, 1188–90
 Persian, 880
 George (Önggüd prince), 1213
 Georgia, Georgians, 1076, 1090, 1116, 1135–47, 1207

- Georgian Chronicle*. *See Chronicle of One Hundred Years*
- Georgian kings, 1137–38, 1139, 1140–47
- German Archaeological Institute, 1315, 1318
- Germans, enslaved by the Mongols, 1086
- Germany, 1076, 1083, 1264, 1275
- Gest East Asian Library (Princeton University), 1252
- Gestes des Chiprois*, 1079
- Gezidong cave, Longhua, Hebei, 952
- Ghamju Qaya, overseer, 981
- Ghazan, Ilkhan, 1123, 1350
- Arabic accounts of, 1019, 1029
- construction projects, 1314, 1316
- conversion to Islam, 1098, 1126
- Hayton's account of, 1100
- letter to Pope Boniface VIII, 985
- named on coins, 984
- occupation of Damascus, 1016
- Persian histories for the period of his reign, 888–903
- Persian histories up to the reign of, 886–87
- Syriac accounts of, 1205, 1207
- temporary occupation of Syria, 1095
- Ghāzāniyya, 1318
- Ghāzān-nāma*, 899
- Ghazna, 1093
- Ghaznavids, 890
- Ghiyāth al-Dīn 'Abdallāh ibn Faṭḥallāh al-Baghdādī, 1030
- Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad, son of Rashīd al-Dīn, 895, 896, 901, 911
- Ghiyāth al-Dīn, Kart Malik, 904
- Ghurids, Ghur, 883
- Gija, 1188
- Gil, Moshe, 1263
- Gīlān, 892, 904, 1024
- Giorgi III, king of Georgia, 1145
- Giorgi V the Brilliant, king of Georgia, 1144
- Girdkūh, 899
- Girona, Spain, 1262, 1264
- Giwargis d-Wardā ("George of the Rose," "East-Syrian author"), 1202
- glass, 1288, 1299
- beads, 1333
- colored, 1332
- Gle lung chos sde, monastery, 1173
- Go shri dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, state perceptor, 1167
- Gog and Magog, 1076, 1201
- Gök madrasa, Sivas, 1331
- gold, 1078, 1360, 1380, 1386
- artifacts, 996, 998, 1294, 1300, 1324, 1326–27, 1346, 1386
- currency, 1336, 1341
- headdresses, 1372–74
- textiles, 1294, 1350, 1357, 1366, 1383, 1385
- Golden Horde, 907, 973, 1323–24, 1374. *See also* Jochid Ulus
- adoption of Islam, 1350
- Arabic accounts of, 1016, 1025
- Byzantine histories, 1236, 1238, 1242–44, 1245
- coins, 984
- control of the Qipchaq steppe, 1351
- establishment of cities, 1368
- evidence of religious traditions, 1327–30
- horsemen culture, 1324–27
- Islamization and Islamic architecture, 1330–33
- material culture demonstrated in the Simferopol treasure, 1334–36
- Persian accounts of, 907, 908, 910, 911
- plaques, 1375
- pottery production, 1384–85
- Russian translations from Arabic works on, 1007
- town building, 1333–34
- ʿGos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal, historian, 1169
- Gospels, 1142
- graffiti, 984
- Grag-pa Rgyal-mtshan (beneficiary of Empress Dagī's edict of 1320), 995
- Grand Canal, 1301, 1367
- grave goods. *See* burial accessories
- graves
- coins excavated from, 1280
- epitaphs, 1194–96
- evidence of religion in, 1296
- forms, 1278–79, 1294–96
- Qaraqorum, 1287, 1288, 1295
- regulation of, 1279–80
- gravestones. *See* tombstones
- Great Khan. *See* Qa'an
- Great Khingan mountains, 1278, 1280
- Great Menology (Velikie Minei Cheti)*, 1059
- Great Wall of China, 973, 997, 1092, 1362, 1376
- Greater Hungary, 1080
- Greek knowledge, 1032
- Greek language, 1027, 1242, 1243, 1244
- Greek sources, 1236. *See also* Byzantine historiography
- Gregoras, Nikephoros, 1239–40, 1241, 1245
- Gregory IX, Pope, 1077
- Grigor Aknertsī, Grigor of Akner, 1114–15, 1117–18, 1125, 1139

- Grigor Baluetsi's Martyrdom, 1125
 Grigor Xlat'etsi, 1124, 1128
 Grinstead, Eric, 1251
sGrub rgyud karma kam tshang brgyud pa rin po che'i mam par thar pa rab 'byams nor bu zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba, 1175
 Gtsang, region in Tibet, 995
 Gu ge pu hrang, Tibetan kingdom, 1166
 Guan Daosheng, 1387
 Guanzhuba, 1255–56
 guarantor, 986–87
 Gugark, 1123
 Gui de Basainville, 1079
Guiqian zhi, 931–32, 934
 Gumbez Manas, mausoleum of, 1342
 Gumilëv, L., 978
Gung thang dkar chag, 1173
 Guo Heqing, 1169
Guochao mingchen shiliu, 935
Guochao wenlei, 939
Guochu qunxiong shiliu, 937
Guoxue baodian, database, 946, 956
 Gürkhan, 975
 Gүйүк, Qa'an, 884, 922, 977, 994, 1084–86, 1289
 description of his goodwill towards the Christians, 1206
 enthronement, 1082
 letter to Pope Innocent IV, 974, 981
 Guzman, Gregory, 1084
rGya bod kyi yig tshang mkhas pa dga' byed chen mo 'dzam gling gsal ba'i me long (short title: *rGya bod yig tshang*), 1169
rGya gar 'phags pa'i yul rgya nag chen po gangs can bod yul sog yul mams su dam chos rin chen byung tshul dpag bsam ljon bzang (short title: *dPag bsam ljon bzang*), 1172
rGyal rabs 'phrul gyi lde mig gam deb ther dmar po'i deb sar ma, 1170
rGyal rabs sogs bod kyi yig tshang gsal ba'i me long, 1173
 Gyeongju, 941, 1296
 Haarmann, Ulrich, 1008
 Ḥadiqat al-ʿarifin, 1159
 Haenisch, Erich, 929, 934, 936, 977
 Ḥāfiz-i ʾĀbrū, 890, 897–98, 899, 904, 906, 909, 911, 1317
 Hagar, 1076
 Hagarenes (*Hagarenoi*), 1238
 hagiographies
 Armenian, 1115, 1124–25
 Persian, 880, 905–6, 1030
 Russian, 1060–61
 Turkic, 1158–59
 Hakobyan, V. A., 1115, 1119, 1122, 1123
 Halperin, Charles J., 1047n4, 1054n30, 1062
 Ham'gil (Ham'gyöng), province, 1189
 Hambis, Louis, 923, 926
 Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, 896–900, 908–9, 1314, 1317
 Hami (Qomul), 1225
 Han Rulin, 936, 955
 Han Zhiyuan, 937
Han'guk Kojŏn Pŏnyŏkwŏn (Institute for Translation of Korean Classics), 1191
Han'guk Munjib Ch'onggan, 1191
 Hancheng, Shanxi, 994n113
 handscrolls, 1352, 1353–54, 1369, 1375, 1381n116
 Hangzhou, 946, 1352, 1367, 1381, 1384
Hanji dianzi wenxian ziliao (*Scripta Sinica*) database, 922, 924, 956
 Hanlin Academy, 1368, 1384
 Hao Jing, 944
 al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf collection, 1226
 Ḥarrān, 1018
 Harris, Peter, 934
 Hasanlu Tepe, 1368
 HathiTrust, database, 949, 956
al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi'a (*Kitāb al-Ḥawādith*), 1028
Hawādith al-zamān, 1017
Hayton (*Het'um of Koṛikos*), 1099–100, 1115, 1122
 He Rongzu, 941
 headgear, 988, 1335, 1366, 1372–74
 Hebrew, 1261, 1330
 eschatology and Kabbalah, 1266–67
 exegesis, 1267–68
 poems, 1264–65
 sermons, 1268
 tombstones, 1265–66
 Hedin, Sven, 951, 1252
Hei Da shiliu, 929
Heicheng chutu wenshu: Hanwen wenshujuan, 951
 Heiligenkreuz annals, 1080
 Heishantou, 1300
 Heishuicheng. *See* Qara-Qoto
 Henan, 933, 934, 950, 982, 1254, 1362, 1370
 Henry I, king of Cyprus, 1120
 Henry II, Duke of Brabant, 1077
 Henry II, Duke of Silesia, 1084
 Henry II, king of Cyprus, 1099
 Henry of Glatz, 1072
 Henry, Landgrave of Thuringia, 1077
 Herat, 883, 904, 909, 1150, 1154, 1350, 1368

- Hermitage Museum, 1252
 Herodotus, 1237
 Herrmann, G., 906n131
 Het'um I, King of Armenia, 1079, 1100, 1120, 1127
 Het'um II, King of Armenia, 1122–23, 1124, 1127
 Het'um of Kōfikos. *See* Hayton
 Hexi, 1255
Hexizang (Hexi or Tangut script canon), 1252, 1254–56
 Hierax, 1242
 Himalayan style, 1362
 Hindu, Mongol prince, epitaph, 982–83
Historia Romaike (History of Rome), 1239
Historia Tartarorum, 1084
 historical compilations
 Armenian, 1114, 1116–19
 Byzantine, 1240
 historiography
 Armenian, 1114–15
 Byzantine, 1236–38
 Mamluk, 1008, 1014–25
 Tibetan, 1165–66, 1168–73
History of Mar Yahballaha, 1204–7, 1209
History of Tamerlane and His Successors, 1115
History of the Armenians, 1114
History of the Nation of Archers, 1114, 1115
History of the Tartars, 1115
History of the World Conqueror, 884
 Hizir Ilyas Kiosk, 1331
 Hō'elün, Temüjin's mother, 979
 Hocheng county, 1341
 Hohhot, 926, 985, 1212
 Hohhot Museum, 1385n139
 Holt, Peter M., 1016
 Holy Land, 1094, 1098–99, 1137
 Homs, battle of, 1015
 Hong Jinfu (Hung Chin-fu), 938, 943
 Hormuz, 892, 894, 895, 907, 1092
Horoscopium Trapezuntiacum, 1245
 horse gear, 1294–95, 1326, 1345
 horse harness decorations, 1324
 horse(s), 991, 1057, 1078, 1139, 1194, 1290–91
 Arabian, 1026
 illness in, 1120
 images of, 1364
 postal, 1221
 used in rituals, 1297
 horsemen culture, 1324–27
 hostels, 994
 housing, 929
 Hovsep'ean, Janjian, 1126
 Hsiao, Ch'i-ch'ing (Xiao Qiqing), 923
Hu lan deb ther, 980, 1167–68
 supplement to, 1169
 Hu Sihui, 928
 Hu Zhiyu, 944
 Huai, river, 928
 Huang Jin, 944
 Huang Shijian, 941, 943
 Huang Wenbi, 1340, 1341
Huang Yuan dake sanchang wenxuan, 940
 Huanzhou, 1287, 1292
 Huayan Buddhism, 1255
Huayan jing ("Garland Sutra"), 1252, 1255
 Huff, Dietrich, 1315
 Hugo of Santa Sabina, 1075n12
 Huizhou district, Anhui province, 952, 953
hukamā' (Ar. philosophers, doctors), 1020
 Hülegü Ulus. *See* Ilkhanate
 Hülegü, Ilkhan, 879, 884, 886–87, 889, 894, 897, 903, 911, 933, 1011–12, 1203, 1205, 1263
 Arabic accounts of, 1011–12, 1013, 1020, 1024, 1030
 compared to Constantine, 1207
 construction projects, 1312–14
 edict, 988
 founding of the Maragha Observatory, 1203
 letter to Louis IX of France, 974, 1206
 relations with Tibet, 1168, 1174, 1175
 Hulunbuir, 1281
 Hung Chin-fu (Hong Jinfu), 938, 943
 Hung, William, 975, 978
 Hungarians, Magyars, 1058, 1078, 1080, 1081, 1237
 Hungary, 974, 975, 1062–64, 1070, 1077–78, 1080, 1089, 1262
 Huns, 1090, 1201–2, 1207, 1236, 1237
 Ḥusām al-Din Kushlūkhān, 1264
Ḥuṣn al-manāqib al-sirriyya al-muntaz'a min al-sīra al-zāhiriyya, 1015
 Hustyn Chronicle, 1050–51
 Hwang'hae, province, 1189
 Hwangryong-sa Temple, 1296
 Hypatian Chronicle, 1050

 Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, 1014–15
 Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il, 1020
 Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd al-Madā'inī, 1011
 Ibn al-'Amīd, 1013, 1020
 Ibn al-Athīr, 882, 1009–12, 1018
 Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, 1025–26, 1152, 1154, 1157, 1330, 1331, 1351, 1382
 Ibn Bazzāz, 906
 Ibn Bībī, 885, 902, 903, 908

- Ibn al-Dawādārī, 1019
 Ibn Duqmāq, 1020
 Ibn al-Furāt, 1022–23
 Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, 1027–29
 Ibn Ḥabīb, 1020
 Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, 1024
 Ibn al-ʿIbrī. *See* Bar Hebraeus
 Ibn Isfandiyār, 903
 Ibn al-Jawzī, 1011
 Ibn Juzayy, 1025
 Ibn Kathīr, 1017
 Ibn Khaldūn, 1022
 Ibn Khallikān, 1021, 1024
 Ibn Malka, Yehuda ben Nissim, 1267–68
 Ibn al-Mughayzil, 1012
 Ibn Rāfiʿ al-Sullāmī, 1025
 Ibn al-Sāʿī, 1029
 Ibn Shaddād al-Ḥalabī, 1015
 Ibn al-Ṣuqāʿī, 1024
 Ibn Taghri Birdī, 1024
 Ibn Taymiyya, 1012, 1018
 Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā (Ibn Ṭabāṭabā), 1029
 Ibn Wāṣil, 893–96
 Ibn Yamīn, 881
 Ibn Zarkūb, 900, 905
 Idel, Moshe, 1267
 idioms and metaphors, 979
idīqut (*īduq-qut*), Uighur ruler, 1220
 Ikh khairant ruins, 1291
 Ikichi texts, 1222
Ikje Nan'go, 1193
Ikjejib, 1193
 Ilaṣqoja. *See* Ilyās Khwāja
 Ili Valley, 1344
 Ilibaliq, 1342, 1346
 Ili-Kazakh, prefecture, 1341
 Ilkhanate, Ilkhanids, 881, 1088, 1126, 1236, 1241, 1245, 1351
 adoption of Islam, 1350
 Arabic accounts of, 1012, 1015–16, 1018, 1021
 Arabic sources, 1027–31
 archaeological sites and excavations, 1312–18
 biographical dictionaries, 1025
 Byzantine histories, 1238
 ceramics, 1360
 changes introduced in the arts, 1387
 diffusion of plants and trees to, 1385
 dissolution, 1266
 establishment of cities, 1368
 fall of, 882
 Hayton's account of, 1100–1
 illustrated manuscripts, 1356, 1384
 inscriptions, 1031
 painting, 1385
 paper sizes, 1388
 Persian histories (1294–1353), 888–906
 plaques, 1375
 plasterwork, 1388
 policy towards the Christians, 1204, 1207
 state supervision of workshops, 1380
 illustrations, 1354–56, 1369, 1370–71, 1376. *See also* manuscripts, illustrated
 Iluttmish, Delhi sultan, 883
 Ilyās Khwāja, Eastern Chaghadaid khan, 992
 Imāmzāda Ma'ṣūm, temple, 1314
imāmzādas (tombs of descendants of Shi'ite imāms), 1312
 Imperial Library Directorate, 938
 Imperial Teacher, Imperial Preceptor (Chin. *dishi*), 996, 1166, 1224, 1362
 ʿImrāniyya, 1263
In the Service of the Khan, 955
 Inaba, Shōju, 1167
 Ināchi texts, 1222
 Indgibek-Khatun (Inchi Khatun), 1331
 India, 883, 890, 894, 895, 1025, 1026, 1095, 1169, 1171, 1171, 1351, 1380, 1382
 Buddhism in, 1170, 1172
 histories, 1170
 plants and trees from, 1385
 Indian Ocean, 1026, 1032, 1091
 industry, development of, 1297–99
 Injūids, 898, 900, 905, 908, 909, 1354
 Inner Mongolia, 1206, 1297, 1301
 earthen defense walls, 1281
 enameled wares, 1386
 inscriptions, 996, 1212
 statue-topped graves, 1294
 Tangut sources, 1250
 Turkic Christian monuments, 1226
 Inner Mongolia Archeological Institute, 985
 Innocent IV, Pope, 981, 1081, 1082, 1084
 inscriptions
 Arabic, 1027, 1031–33, 1357–58, 1379, 1380–81
 Armenian, 1126–27
 Chinese stone inscriptions, 920, 948–50
 Chinggis's Stone, 980
 dedicated to Kenzek Khatun, 1342
 editing of, 1353
 Jurchen, 1282
 Korean, 1194n34
 luster-painted, 1312
 Mongolian, 983–84, 993, 996–97, 998
 Mongolian-Chinese, 980–83
 multilingual, 1362, 1374, 1376

- Persian, 1288, 1378
 on seals, 981, 1374
 on steles, 931n54, 950, 1225, 1254
 Syriac, 1210–13
 Tibetan, 1365
 on tombs and tombstones, 935, 950,
 1194n34, 1208, 1254, 1261, 1265–66, 1346
 on walls, 984, 1225
 Institutes of Astronomy, 939
 interpreters, 995
 Ioann, Metropolitan of Rus', 1065
 Ioannes v Palaiologos, emperor, 1239
 Ioasaph, 1239
ʾIqd al-jumān fi ta' rīkh ahl al-zamān, 1023
 Iran, 879–82, 911, 1010, 1135. *See also* Ilkhanate,
 Ilkhanids
 archaeological sites, 1312
 histories from later fourteenth century to c.
 1430, 906–10
 histories from the Mongol invasions to the
 reign of Ghazan Khan, 882–87
 illustrated books, 1354
 Polo's journey through, 1091
 post-Ilkhanate histories, 906–10
 rumors of Hülegü's advance through, 1079
 secular buildings, 1315
 textiles, 1366
Īrānshahr, 879
Īrān-zāmin, 879
 Iraq, 1008, 1098, 1354
 Arabic literary works, 1027–30
 import of stonewares and porcelains, 1378
 Mongol raids on, 1011, 1201, 1263
 Irbil, 892, 1201, 1205, 1207
 Irinchin, Mongol prince, 984
 Irinjindorji gabshi (Tib. Rin-chen Rdo-rje dge-
 bshes), Buddhist priest, 998
 Isen Qutluğ, Mongol amir, 901
 Isfijāb, 1159
 Isfizārī, Mu'īn al-Dīn, 904
 Ishāq Khwāja, 1159
 Ishmael, Ishmaelites, 1075–76
 Isidorus, 1242
 Iskandar Mīrzā, 907
 Islam, 879, 882, 887, 888–89, 902, 1149, 1160,
 1266, 1350, 1357
 Jochid attitudes to, 1329
 Islām, poet, 1152
 Islamization, 1149, 1157–60, 1227, 1336, 1346,
 1363
 and city life, 1330–33
 Ismā'īl Ata, 1159
 Ismā'īlis, 883, 887, 890, 894, 899, 1013, 1149
 Israel
 communities of, 1262–63
 land of, 1267–68
 Israel Museum, 1226
 Istanbul manuscript, 1154–55
 Istarābād, 1013
Istoria Mongolov po Armianskim Istochnikam,
 1114
Istoriia Rossiiskogo gosudarstva (History of the
 Russian State) a, 1052
 Itil, river. *See* Volga
 Ivan III Vasil'evich, Grand Prince of Rus',
 1054, 1067
 Ivane Atabag, 1137

 'Ja' sa bod yig ma, decree, 1167
 'Ja' sa mu tig ma ("pearl decree"), 1167
 Jacek Odrowąż, Dominican (St. Hyacinth),
 1089
 Jackson, David, 1176
 Jacobite Church, 1030, 1200n1
 jade, 1345, 1386, 1387
 Ja'far Khwāja, 1013
 Jalāl al-Dīn Mingbīrnī, Khwārazm-Shāh, 882,
 903, 905, 988n75, 1010–11, 1073, 1200–1
 Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Mawlānā, 905
 Jalal, prince, martyrdom of, 1125
 Jalayirids, 908, 1354
 'Jam mgon A myes zhabz Ngag dbang kun
 dga' bsod nams, Tibetan author, 1171
 Jamāl Qarshī, 1031
Jāmi' al-tawārīkh (*Compendium of Chronicles*),
 888, 890–93, 894, 897–99, 925, 974, 977,
 979, 990, 1007, 1136, 1278, 1279, 1282,
 1354, 1370, 1376, 1384
 Jamuqa, 975, 979, 1324
 Jandī, Bābā Kamāl, 1152
 Janibek, Jochid khan, 1054, 1153, 1154, 1155, 1330
 Japan, 925, 950, 1091, 1275, 1298, >1379, 1385
 second invasion of, 1381
 Yuan art, 1353, 1386
 Yuan campaigns in, 1187, 1190, 1320, 1374,
 1381
 Yuan trade with, 1351, 1380.
 Jaqa Gambu, 1254
jarghuchi (judge), 973
 Javakhishvili, Ivane, 1135–36, 1141
al-Jawhar al-thamin fi siyar al-khulafā' wa 'l-
 mulūk wa 'l-salātīn, 1020
 al-Jawharī, 1032
 al-Jazarī, 1017
 Jaxartes region, 1333, 1341
 Jaxartes, river, 1344. *See also* Syr Darya

- Jazīra, 1008, 1009, 1011, 1012, 1015, 1018
 Jebe Noyan, 1010, 1047, 1055, 1121
 Jerusalem, 1204, 1226, 1262–63, 1268
 colophons, 1125
 Het'um 11's visit to, 1124
 jewelry, 1294, 1329, 1334, 1345, 1374
 Jewish cemetery, 1265–66
 Jewish communities, 1261–63, 1265, 1329–30
 Jewish mysticism, 1266–67
 Jews, 890–91, 1020, 1028, 1030, 1262, 1265, 1268, 1269
 Jia Jingyan, 925, 932, 935
 Jiangnan, 927, 938, 1188, 1256
Jianyan yilai chaoye zaji, 927
 Jibik Temür, Ögödeid prince, 982
 Jie Xisi, 944
 Jigünte, epitaph of, 982
 Jin dynasty, 930, 932, 1286, 1292
 ceramic industry, 1298
 defense walls, 1281
 end of, 934
 letters sent to, 1192
 official history, 924, 1277, 1281
 palace construction, 1285
 travelogues, 933
 Jin family of Huizhou, 953
Jin shi, 1277, 1281
 Jingdezhen kiln, 1298, 1301, 1302, 1352, 1358, 1364, 1377–78, 1379–80, 1386
Jingshi dadian, 923, 937–38, 942
 Jingzhaofu, 994
 Jining-lu, 1300
al-jins al-qibjāqī (Qipchāq stock), 1153
 Jishuitan, Lake, 1293
Jiu Tang shu, 1278–79
 Jiuquan (Suzhou), 1254
 Jochi Qasar, younger brother of Chinggis Khan, 1285, 1295
 Jochid Ulus, 1046–48, 1058, 1063, 1064, 1065, 1149, 1157, 1236. See also Golden Horde.
 archaeological finds, 1344–46
 Turkic literature, 1151–56
 Jochi, son of Chinggis Khan, 1047, 1323, 1351
 'Jog ri Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin 'phrin las, Tibetan monk, 1173
 Johanca, Hungarian Franciscan, 1096
 Johannes IV Lascaris, Nicaean king, 1265
 John of Cori, Archbishop of Sulṭāniyya, 1096
 John of Plano Carpini. See Plano Carpini
 John VI, Byzantine emperor, 1239
 John VIII, Byzantine emperor, 1245
 John XXI, Pope, 1095
 John XXI, Pope, 1098
 Joinville, John of, 1071, 1085
 Judaism, 1265
 Judeo-Arabic, 1261, 1263
Jujia biyong shilei quanji, 954
 Julian calendar, 1049
 Julian the Apostate, Roman emperor, 1208
 Julian, Hungarian Dominican, 1077n25, 1080–82, 1262
 Jun kiln, 1298
 Jurchen script, 1282
 justice, 884, 885, 887, 897, 901
 Juwaynī, 'Ala' al-Dīn 'Atā' Malīk, 884–90, 893–94, 896, 897, 904, 911, 1023, 1028, 1136, 1141, 1202–3, 1209, 1289
 Juwaynī, Bahā' al-Dīn, 884
 Juwaynī, Shams al-Dīn, 885–86, 902
 Juyongguan, inscription, 993, 997, 1225, 1374, 1376
 Jūzjānī, Minhāj al-Dīn, al-, 882–85, 887, 888, 895, 907

bKa' brgyud bla ma nams kyi nam thar rin chen gser phreng, 1174
bKa' chems mthong ba don ldan (bKa' chems deb ther), 1174
 Kabbalah, 1261, 1266–67
 Kaegyöng, 1189
 Kaffa, 1093, 1096, 1330
 Kaifeng, 934
Kaiping jixing, 935
 Kaipingfu, 935, 1292, 1367. See also Shangdu
kairaki, Syrian crosses, 1346
Kajöngjib, 1193–94
 Kalka river, battle of, 1054–55
 Kama, river, 1325
 Kamalashri, Buddhist Lama, 890
al-Kāmil fī al-ta' rīkh, 1009
 Kanda Kiichirō, 930
 Kang'wōn, province, 1189
 Kangli Naonao, 1356
 Kantakouzenos, Ioannes, 1239–40
 Karak, 988
Kanz al-durar wa-jāmi' al-ghurar, 1019
 Karaites, Karaite Jews, 1329
 Karamzin, Nikolai M., 1049, 1052
 al-Kardārī, 1155
 Karin, 1119
 Karma bKa' brgyud pa, school, 1170, 1175
 Karmlish, 1201–2
al-Kashshāf, 1152
 Kart dynasty, 904

- Kartlis Tskhovreba*, 1135, 1145. *See also Chronicle of One Hundred Years*
- Kāshānī, Shams al-Dīn, 897, 898, 899
- Kashgar, 1032
- Kāshgharī, Maḥmūd, 1150, 1211
- Kashkadarya, river valley, 1343
- Kay Khusraw, the legendary Kayānian, 1314
- Kayseri, 1331
- Kayumars, Iranian king, 903
- Kazakh steppes, 1333
- Kazakhstan, 1333, 1340, 1341, 1342
cities, towns and artifacts from the
Chaghadaid period, 1344–46
- Kazan, khanate of, 1046, 1062, 1065, 1126
- Kāzarūniyya, Sufi order, 1344–46
- Ke Shaomin, 924
- Kebek, Chaghadaid khan, 1343
his order (*üge*) of 1326 to Kōk Buqa, 991
- Kedme Baghaturs, his order (*üge*), referring to
Ilyās Khwāja khan, 992
- Kedmen-baghaturs, his order (*üge*) for the
Buddhist priest Rdo-rje Bkra-shis
Dpal-bzang-po, 993
- Keenan, Edward L., 1065
- Keldibek, Jochid khan, 1335–36
- Kenizek, Khatun, 1342
- Kenkol, river, 1342
- Kepping, Ksenia, 1253
- Keral, the king (Hung. *király*) and Kingdom of
Hungary, 975
- Kereit, tribe, 1254
- Kerülen, river (modern Kherlen river), 975
keshig, 923
- al-Kindī, 1074
- Khabūshān, 1314
- Khakas-Minusinsk valley, 1325
- Khanbaliq, 1013, 1092, 1095, 1204. *See also*
Dadu, Beijing
- Khān-i Bilī (Qani Bili), 990
- khānqāh* (Sufi lodge), 1288, 1331, 1346, 1360, 1382
- Kharkhira (Khirkhira), 1285
- mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, 1170, 1175
- Khazars, 1237
- Khentii Province, 1281, 1282, 1283, 1294
- Kherlen, river, 975, 1279, 1286
- Khitans, 924, 930, 1278, 1280–81, 1285. *See also*
Liao dynasty; Qara Khitai; Yelü
Chuai
measurements, 1287
- Khmer Empire, 933
- Khrapachevskii, R. P., 1047
- Khüiten Gol, Mongol inscription at, 996n125
- Khujand, 1341
- Khurasan, 883, 901, 907, 909, 1010
- Khuttalānī, Ṣaḥī al-Dīn, 1160
- Khuyl, 1314
- Khwāja 'Alibek, Qutlugh-Temür bek's
grandson, 1336
- Khwāja-Aḥmad, mausoleum of, 1343
- Khwājū Kirmānī, poet, 1355
- Khwāndamīr, 1160
- Khwārazm, 1323, 1333, 1344
artisans from, 1350
copper and silver coins from, 1345
Turkic literary works, 1151–55, 1157
- Khwārazm Shāhs, 883, 884, 902, 1009–11. *See also* 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad; Jalāl al-Dīn Mingbūrnī
- Khwārazmī, poet, 1153–54
- Khwārazmian language, 1151
- Kiev, 975, 1055, 1056, 1081
- Kievan Chronicle, 1051
- Kilia, 1093
- "King David," 1073–74, 1075, 1076
- King's Dictionary (Rasūlid Hexaglot)*, 1027
- Kiprian, Metropolitan of Rus', 1065
- Kirakos Ganjaketsi, historian, 1114–16, 1119,
1124, 1139
- Kirgizstan, 1210, 1325, 1340, 1342, 1345
- Kirill III, Metropolitan of Kiev, 1329
- Kirman, 894, 895, 896, 901–2, 907, 909
- Kirmānshāh province, 1318
- Kirshehir (Kırşehir), 1031
- Kitāb al-Ḥawādith*, 1028. *See al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi'a*
- Kitāb al-majmū' al-mubārak*, 1013
- Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma'rīfat duwal al-mulūk*, 1023
- Kitbuqa, Mongol general, 1017, 1079, 1100,
1264
- Klein, W., 1340
- Kliuchevskii, Vasilii O., 1061
- Kōk Orda. *See* Blue Horde
- Kōke Aghula, "Green Hill" of Dadu, 982
- Kōke Na'ur (Khentii aimag, Mongolia),
1289–90
- Kōkedei, imperial son-in-law, 985
- Kokhtastavi, plot of, 1139
- Komaroff, Linda, 1387
- Kommenoi, Emperors of Trebizond, 1241
- Konchak, Tatar chieftain, 1058
- Kondui, 1300
- Kong Qi, 946
- Konggulie-cang granary, 1298
- Konstantinos Palaiologos, Byzantine
emperor, 1241
- Konya, 903, 906, 1382

- Korea, Koryŏ dynasty, 1185
 artistic change, 1351
 compilations of classical writings, 1190–91
 foreign populations, 1381
 geographical encyclopedias, 1188–90
 grave epitaphs, 1194–96
 illustrated manuscripts, 1384
 maritime routes to, 1380
 Mongol patronage, 1362
 official histories, 1185–88
 personal anthologies, 1191–94
 Korean wares, 1379
Koryŏsa, 1186–88, 1190
Koryŏsa-jŏlŏ, 1186–88, 1190
 Köse Dagħ, battle of, 903
 Kötēn, Ögödei's son, 1167, 1168, 1171, 1174, 1175, 1255
 Kotla Firūzshāh garden, 1377
 Kozēi, Tatar chieftain, 1058
 Kozin, S., 977
 Kozlov collection, 1252–53, 1255
 Kozlov, Peter, 951, 985, 1251, 1252–53
 Krasny Yar, 1325
 Kreisel, Howard, 1267
 Kubatan, Tatar chieftain, 1058
 Kubrawiyya, Sufi order, 1032
 Kudara, Kōgi, 982n37
kuffār (Ar. infidels), 1018
 Kuizhangge (Pavilion of the Stars of Literature), 1353
 Kulikovo, battle of, 1054
 Kun-dga' Blo-gros Ryal-mtshan Dpal-bzang-po, edict of, 996
 Kun-dga' Chos-skyong, Buddhist priest, 995
 Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan, imperial perceptor, 1362
 Kunya-Urgench, 1331
küriy-e (enclosure),
 Kutaisi, 1138
 Kuthām b. 'Abbās, 1343
 Kutrigurs, 1237
 Kutubī, Maḥmūd, 908, 909
 Kychanov, E. I., 1251, 1252
 Kydones, 1243
 Kyŏng'gi, province, 1189
 Kyŏngsang, province, 1189
 Kyprios, Gregorios, Patriarch of Constantinople, 1245
 Kyzikos, Mysia (now Balıkesir Province in Turkey), 1240
 Kyzyl-Tuva, 1342
La flor des estoires de la terre d'Orient, 1099, 1122–23
 labor services (Mong. *alban*, Uig. *qalan*, Pers. *qalān*), 1223
 lacquer, 1359, 1362, 1388
 lacquer ware, 1295, 1302
lājvardīna (enameling and gilding over an opaque glaze), 1316, 1386
 landed property, 987, 988, 991
 Lange, Kristina, 1172
 Lao, Yan-shuan, 935
 Lasha-Giorgi, Georgian king, 1137, 1142, 1145–46
 Latin, 1070
 Laurentian Chronicle, 1051, 1054, 1055–57
 Lech, Klaus, 1008, 1021
 legal code, 941–42
 legal writings, Chinese, 941–43
leishu (Chinese encyclopedic works), 953–54, 955
 Leo VI, emperor, 1245
Les fais des Tartares ('The Doings of the Tartars'), 1088
 Lesbos, 1241
 letter(s)
 Byzantine, 1239, 1242–43
 diplomatic, 1175–76
 Hebrew, 1261–63
 Koryŏ, 1190
 from Mongol rulers to foreigners, 984–85
 Mongolian, 986, 988, 989
 personal, 1073, 1153
 private, 972, 986
 safe conduct, 984, 1086
 of summons (issued by Kötēn to the Sa skya paṇḍit), 1167
 Tangut, 1253
 Tibetan, 1175–76
 Uighur, 1221
 from Western Europeans, 1071, 1074–75
 accounts of missions to the Mongol world, 1084–85
 documenting the Mongol threat, 1077, 1078–79
 Lev Danilovich, prince, 1058
 Lewon II, king, 1127
 Lewon III, king, 1122, 1123, 1127
 lexicography, 1357
 Lhasa, Central Archives, 995n114,
Lho brag chos 'byung. See *mKhas pa'i dga' ston li* (unit of measurement), 1287
Li Bai Chanting While Strolling (painting), 1353, 1374
 Li Kan, 1352
 Li Xinchuan, 927

- Li Yiyou, 951
 Li Zhichang, 931
 Liang Kai, 1353, 1374
 Liang Songtao, 1254
 Liangzhou (Wuwei), 1174, 1176, 1255
 Liao dynasty, 924, 930, 1212, 1278, 1280. *See also* Khitans
Liao Jin Yuan shike wenxian quanbian, 949
Liao shi, 1281
Libellus ad nationes orientales (Pamphlet to the Nations of the East), 1096
Liber executionis Novi Testamenti (Book of the Fulfilment of the New Testament), 1074
Liber Historiarum Partium Orientis (*La flor des estoires de la terre d'Orient*), 1122
Liber peregrinationis (The Book of Pilgrimage), 1096
Liber secretorum fidelium crucis (Book of the Secrets of the Faithful of the Cross), 1100
 Library Cave, Dunhuang, 1224
Lidai mingchen zouyi, 940
Lidai shikeshiliao huibian, 949
 Liegnitz (Legnica), battle of, 1084
 Life of Alexander Nevskii, 1056, 1057, 1062, 1063–64
 Ligeti, L., 975
 Limbert, John, 1383
Lingbei jixing. *See* *Saibei jixing*
 lingua franca, 1244
 Lingwu, 1250
 literary collections
 Chinese (*wenji*), 944–45
 Korean, 1188–94
 Lithuanians, 1058
 “Little Cities of God,” 1361
 Liu Guan, 944
 Liu Ji, 936
 Liu Minzhong, 927
 Liu Qi, 931–32, 934, 946
 Liu Xiao, 943, 955
 Liu Yingsheng, 922
 Liu Yu, 933
 Liu Zhen, 940
Liutiao zhenglei, 938
 livestock, 1220, 1280, 1290, 1291
Lixue zhinan, 939
 Lizong, Song emperor, 1382
 loan contracts (*bichig*), 972, 985–87
 local history, 895, 897, 900, 904
 longevity, 931
 Longquan kiln, 1298, 1301, 1358, 1379, 1386
 Longxi county, Gansu, 950
Longxi jinshilu, 950
 Louis IX, king of France, 974, 1073, 1084–85, 1094, 1099
 Lubsangbaldan, Q., 973n3
 Lubsangdandzin. *See* Blo-bzang bstan-'dzin
 Lucalongo, Pietro da, Venetian merchant, 1093
 Lükchün, 1225
 Lunin, B. V., 1340
 Luo Zhenyu, 936
 lusterware, 1312, 1316, 1318, 1353, 1358–60, 1370, 1379
 Lyons, 1082–83
 First Council of, 1081–82
 Second Council of, 1088, 1095
 Ma Xiaolin, 926
 Ma Zuchang, 944
Ma ase Nissim (“Miracle Deed”), 1267–68
 Macdonald, Ariane, 1169
madrasa (Ar. college), 1152, 1331, 1343, 1370
 Ma-gcig, Tantric goddess, 995
 Maghak'ia Abegha, 1115, 1117
Mahabbat-nāma, 1153–54
Mahaprajapati Nursing the Infant Buddha (painting), 1387
 Maḥmūd b. 'Alī (Bulghārī, Sarāyī, Kardarī), 1155
 Maḥmūd b. 'Uthmān, 905
 Maḥmūd-Shāh Injū, 898
 Maḥmūd Yalawāch, 901
 Maiorov, Aleksandr, 1056
 Majar, 1330, 1332
 Majd al-Mulk, 884, 887, 890
mal “tax” (Ar. *māl*), 989
 Malabar, 1092, 1383
 Malaxos, Manuel, 1242
 Malik, wife of Tinibeg, 1153
 Malik Ashraf, ruler of Akhlāt, 1137
 al-Malik al-Nāṣir Ḥasan, Sultan of Egypt, 1244
 Mamaevka, 1345
 Mamai, Jochid amir, 1054, 1064, 1065, 1330, 1336
 Mamalgh, Ilkhan Öljeitü's envoy, 985
 Mamluk historiography, 1008, 1014–25
 Mamluk Sultanate, Mamluks, 880, 1098–101, 1244, 1266
 artifacts, 1335
 arts, 1388
 crusades against, 1071, 1094
 diplomatic correspondence with the Ilkhanate, 1030
 diplomatic missions to, 887

- Mamluk Sultanate, Mamluks (cont.)
 Ghazan and, 894, 985
 Mongol–Armenian campaigns against, 1124
 relations with Armenia, 1118, 1120, 1122, 1126, 1127
 victory at 'Ayn Jalūt, 1010, 1079–80
 victory at Acre, 1096
 Mamshei, commander (*voevoda*), 1058
Man Riding, handscroll painting, 1375
Manāqib al-ārifin, 905
 Manas, 1342
 Manchu script, 1227
Mandala of Yamantaka-Vajrabhairava (tapestry), 1365
 Manfred, king of Sicily, 1012
 Mang yul gung thang, Tibetan kingdom, 1166
 Manggala, son of Qubilai, 994, 1293
 His family, 424
 al-Manhal al-ṣāfi wa'l-mustawfi ba'd al-wāfi, 1024
 Manichaeen religious canons, 1217
 Manichaeen temple, 1345
 Manuel II Palaiologos, emperor, 1242–43, 1244, 1245
 manuscripts
 Armenian, 1118, 1120–24, 1125, 1128
 illustrated, 1356, 1383, 1384, 1386, 1387
 Polo's travelogue, 1090–91
 from Qara-Qoto, 985–86
 of Rubruck's *Itinerarium*, 1088
 Syriac, 1210, 1211
 taken as booty, 1119
 Turkic language, 1150–51, 1153–55, 1157–59
 Uighur script, 976–77
 Manvelian, G., 1123
 Manzi (southern China), 1092
 al-Maqrizī, 1023
 Mar Behnam monastery, 1208
 Mar Behnam, martyr, 1208
 Mar Yahballaha III, 1204–7, 1210n41
 Maragha, 1030, 1202, 1205, 1370
 Observatory, 886, 1027, 1312–14
 Margulan, A. Kh., 1340
 Marignolli, John of, 1095, 1097
 Marino Sanudo Torsello, 1100
 Maritime Trade Bureau, 1380
 Marj al-Suffar, battle of, 1123
 Marjānī, Shihāb al-Dīn, 1155
 Marqos, Turkic Christian, 1204
 Marr, N. Y., 1340
 marriage arrangements, in Georgia following
 Mongol impact, 1142
 Marseilles, 1267
 Martin of Opava (Martin of Poland), 1122
 Marwanids, 907
Masālik al-absār fi mamālik al-amṣār, 1021, 1023
 Massagetes (*Massagetai*), 1238
 Masson, M. E., 1340, 1343
 Mas'ūd b. 'Izz al-Dīn, sultan, 885
 Mas'ūd Beg, 1341
 Mas'ūd-Shāh Injū, 899
 Mat'evosyan, Hrant, 1126
 Matenadaran manuscripts, 1120, 1122, 1123, 1125
 mausoleum(s)
 No. 1 at Mokhshi-Narovchat, 1329
 of Abū Sa'īd, 1317
 of Bayan Quli, 1346
 of Dā'ūd Beg, 1346
 of Manas Ordo, 1342–43
 of Öljeitü, 1316–17
 Qayaliq, 1345
 Samarqand, 1343
 of Sayf al-Dīn Bākhārzi, 1032, 1330, 1346
 of Tughluq Temür, 1341
 of Turabek-Khanum, 1331
Mawāhib-i ilāhi dar tārikh-i Āl-i Muẓaffār, 908
 al-Mawā'iz wa'l-i'tibār bi-dhikr al-khiṭa' wa'l-
 āthār fi miṣr wa'l-qāhira, 1023
 Mawarannahr (Mā warā' al-nahr), 1160. *See*
 also Transoxania
 Mawjib (Arnon) river, Jordan, 1264
 Mayyāfāriqin, 1010
 Mecca, 1025
 Mecopetsi, T'ovma, 1115
 Medieval Christian religious worldview, 1053
 Medieval Warm Epoch, 1277, 1280
Memoria, crusade treatise, 1099
 memorial inscriptions, 982–83, 1126, 1225
 memorials (to the throne, Chinese), 940, 944
 Mendicant Orders. *See* Dominicans,
 Franciscans
 Menentillus of Spoleto, 1095
Meng Da beilu, 928–29
Meng Yuan shi yanjiu daolun, 955
Menggu shiliao sizhong, 928, 929, 931
Menggu yiyu (*Zhiyuan yiyu*), the oldest known
 Sino-Mongol glossary, 954, 973
Mengwu'er shiji, 924
 merchant(s), 988, 1016, 1093–94, 1380–81
 Merkit(s), tribe, 978–79, 1205, 1324
 Merkurii of Smolensk, 1062
 Merv, 885
 Meshulam ben Shlomo de Piera, rabbi, 1264
 messianic expectations, 1262, 1268
 metalware, 1324, 1374, 1383, 1385, 1389
 Methodius. *See* Pseudo-Methodius

- Meyvaert, P., 974n5, 1094n107
Miaoxue dianli, 939
 Michael Palaiologos VIII, Emperor, 1238–39
 Middle East, 1007, 1008, 1011, 1025, 1121, 1128, 1136
 Middle Mongolian language, 973, 974, 1166, 1167, 1285
 Mihri Temple, 1314
 Mihryār, Muḥammad, 1317
 Mikhail (Mitia), Metropolitan of Rus', 1065
 Milan, 1243, 1381
 military registers, 1251
 military slaves (*junqu*), 1188
 Ming dynasty, 921, 923, 926, 937, 1353
 books printed on backs of official documents, 952
 encyclopedia, 937
Mingdai Menggu hanji shiliao huijian, 936
 Minglagh, place, 991
Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhwe (Board for the Promotion of National Culture), 1191
 Mīnuvī, Mujtabā, 1317
 miracles, 884, 1061, 1262, 1267
Mir āt al-zamān fi ta'rikh al-a'yān, 1011
 Mīrfattāh, 'Alī Aṣghar, 1317
 Mīrkhwānd, 911
 miscellaneous notes (*biji*, *suibi*), 931, 945–47, 955
Mishiqā-yin nom, the Messiah's teaching, 985
Mishu jianzhi, 938
 Mochi, Mongol commander, 1084
 mocking rhyme, 979
 Mogao caves, Dunhuang, 972
 documents from, 992–99
 inscriptions, 1225
 Library cave, 1224
 Mohi, battle of, 1078
 Mokhshi-Narovchat, 1329
 Molar, noyan, 1116
 Moldova, 1330, 1333
 money, 983, 1383
 paper, 988, 1187, 1220, 1375
 Möngke, qa'an, 896, 983, 1071, 1086, 1288, 1294, 1350
 census, 1139
 death, 893
 dispatch of information-gathering envoy, 933
 edicts, 981–82, 994
 enthronement, 975
 imperial decree of, 1176
 lack of commitment to any particular faith, 1098
 meeting with William of Rubruck, 1290
 nomadic lifestyle, 1289
 rumors of his Christian faith, 1086
 seal granted to the Church of the East, 1205
 visit of 'Aṭā-Malik Juwaynī, 884
 visit of Her'um I, 1100
 Möngke-Temür, Jochid khan, 1065
Mongol Invasions of Japan (picture scrolls), 1381
 Mongol invasions, Western European accounts of, 1077–80
 Mongol literacy, 1217, 1221
 Mongol world, accounts of the first Western missions, 1082–90
 Mongolia, 973
 climate changes, 1275–78
 dietary habits, 1291
 Mongolian language, 921, 974, 1151, 1217, 1223, 1301. *See also* Middle Mongolian language
 Mongolian Plateau, 1285, 1303
 agriculture, 1298
 archaeological investigations, 1275
 burial methods and grave forms, 1278–80
 conflicts with surrounding countries, 1280–82
 construction of cities, 1286
 evidence of industry, 1298–99
 grave forms and burial systems, 1294–96
 migration to, 1278, 1280
 religion and rituals, 1296–97
 Mongol–Tatars, 1047, 1053–54, 1056–59, 1067, 1201–2
Mongqolun niucha tobcha'an. *See Secret History of the Mongols*
 Montecorvino, Giovanni di, Franciscan, 1093, 1095–96
 Morgan, David, 890, 911, 1378, 1384
 Moriyasu, T., 1221
 Morocco, 1025
 Morton, Alexander, 1378
 mosaic floors, 1332
 Moscow, 1048, 1049, 1054, 1116, 1119, 1120, 1335.
 1812 fire, 1051
 communication with Constantinople, 1048
 Toqtamish's attack on, 1054
 Moscow Chronicles, 1049
 Moscow Spiritual Academy (*Moskovskaia Dukhovnaia akademiia*), 1051
 mosque(s), 1362
 of 'Alī Shāh, Tabriz, 1388
 Friday mosques, 1330–31
 Golden Horde, 1330
 Ilkhanid, 1312, 1314n10, 1316

- mosque(s) (cont.)
 at Isfahan, 1388
 Phoenix Mosque, 1382
 Qayaliq, 1344
 of Temür, Mosque of Bibi Khanum, 1369
 Mosul, 1009, 1024, 1030, 1263
 Mote, Frederic, 955
 Mother of God, Holy Mother, Virgin Mary, 1143
 moveable type, print, 1250, 1254
 Movsēs Erznkatsi, 1125
 Mstislav, 1055
 Mubārīz al-Dīn Shabānkāraʾī, 899, 909
 Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil.
 See Ibn Abī al-Faḍāʾil
Mufarrīj al-kurūb fī akhbār banī ayyūb, 1012
al-Mughul (as name for the Mongols), 1009
 Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīya, 1159
 Muḥammad Khwāja Beg, 1154
 Muḥammad Ṭayfūr, son of Ōljeitü, 1360
 Muḥammad, the Prophet (*Maghmad*/
 Muqamad baighambar), 990, 1019, 1097,
 1152, 1155, 1343
 Muḥammad-dād Ispahsalār Bék, 1159
 Mu ʾīn al-Dīn Parwāna, 905
 Mu ʾīn al-Dīn Yazdī, 908–9
Mu ʾīn al-murīd, 1151–53
Mu ʾizz al-ansāb, 891
muǰāhidūn, 1018
al-Mukhtaṣar fī taʾrīkh al-bashar, 1016
al-Mulḥaqāt bi l-ṣurāḥ, 1031
 multilingual dictionaries, 1357
Mu ʾnis al-aḥrār fī daqāʾiq al-ashʾar, 1357
 Munjong, Korean king, 1186
 Munkuev (Munkuyev), Nikolai Ts., 928
Muntakhab al-mukhtār. See *Taʾrīkh ʾulamāʾ*
 baghdād
Muntakhab al-tawārīkh, 907
Muqaddimat al-adab, 973, 1151, 1152
 Muqali, Chinggis Khan's general, 928
muqarnas, 1316
al-Muqtafā li-taʾrīkh al-shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Abī
 Shāma, 1017
Musāmarat al-akhbār, 902
 Muscovy, 1227
 Musée Guimet, 1252
 Muslim communities, 1330
 Muslim literature (Turkic language), 1149–51
 Muslims, 884, 1009, 1018, 1026, 1028, 1076, 1097,
 1296
 burial practices, 1361, 1364
 in Qaraqorum, 1287
 relations with Armenians, 1124
 trade, 1380
 Musqaril (Buscarel de Gisolf), envoy, 985
 Mustanşiriyya College, 1028, 1029
 al-Mustaʾşim, ʿAbbasid Caliph, 1265
 Mutaḥafian, C., 1123
mutasaribud (Ar. *mutaşarrif*), “tax
 inspectors,” 989
 Muʾtazilī, 1151, 1153
muwāqqit-khānah, 1331
 al-Muẓaffar Yūsuf, Ayyūbid, 1026
 Muẓaffarids, 908–9
muzhi. See tomb inscriptions
 Mxitʾar Ayriyanetsi, 1121
 myriarchy of Mus, 1173
 myths, 978, 1073
 of origin, Mongol and Turkish, 1019
 Nachin, noyan, 982
 Nādun visi (Chin. *feizi*, imperial
 concubine), 987
Nahj al-farādis, 1154–56, 1158
Al-Nahj al-saʿīd wa l-durr al-farīd fīmā ba ʾid
 taʾrīkh ibn al-ʾamīd, 1020
 Nahmanides (R. Moshe ben Naḥman), 1262,
 1265
nāʾib al-salṭana, 1016
 Naiman, tribe, 1074, 1213
 Naka, Michiyo, 977
 Nakhichevan, 1137, 1145
 Nakhjawānī, Muḥammad, 911
 Nakhshab, 1157, 1343
Nancun chuogeng lu. See *Chuogenglu*
 Nanghidāy, Qonggirat amir, 1154
 Nanhuasi (Buddhist monastery in
 Yunnan), 993
 Nantai beiyao, 938
 narratives, 972, 986, 988
 Nasawī, Shihāb al-Dīn, al-, 882, 1010–11, 1018
 Nāṣir al-Dīn Maḥmūd-Shāh, Delhi sultan, 883
 Nāṣir al-Dīn Munshī Kirmānī, 901
 Nāṣir al-Dīn Tūq-būghā, 1157
 Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī, 884, 911, 1027, 1312
 al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn, Mamluk
 sultan, 1019
 al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, Ayyūbid ruler, 1015
 Nasonov, Arsenii N., 1050, 1052
 Naʾanzī, Mu ʾīn al-Dīn, 906–7
 National Library of China, 927, 948, 949–50,
 951, 953
 National Museum of India, 1251
 National Museum, Tehran, 1366
 national preceptor, Buddhist, 993, 1166
 Naumann, Rudolf, 1315
 Nawrūz, amir, 1205, 1207

- Near East, 1084, 1092, 1096, 1145, 1200n1, 1201n2, 1206, 1335
- Nekrasova, E., 1340
- Neo-Confucianism, 1188
- Nerchinsk, region of, 980
- Nersēs Palianents, Armenian historian, 1114, 1124
- Nestorian Church. *See* Church of the East
- Nestorianism, Nestorians, 1074, 1084, 1086, 1089, 1097, 1296
- archaeological evidence of, 1296
- burial sites, 1295
- in the Golden Horde, 1329
- tombstones, 1341
- Nevriui, 1056–57, 1063
- Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, Dalai Lama v, 1172
- Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po, Tibetan author, 1174
- Nicene Empire, Nikaia, 1238
- Nicholas IV, Pope, 985, 1095
- Nicosia, 1086
- Niederaltaich, annals of, 1077
- Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab, 1018
- Niida Noboru, 954
- Nikon Chronicle*, 1054, 1057, 1059–60, 1063
- Nikrūz, Quṭb al-Dīn, 901
- Ningxia, 1250
- Nishapur, 885, 1380
- Nissim ben Rabbi Moshe of Marseilles, 1267
- Nizām al-tawārīkh*, 886, 1030
- Nizāmī, 1153
- Nizhnii Novgorod, 1066
- Noghai, Jochid prince, 1058–59
- nökör següder* (retainer, companion), 983
- Nomdash, Chaghadaid prince, 1225
- North Africa, 1008, 1009, 1046, 1261
- north China, 925, 931, 933, 934, 935, 1026, 1204, 1255, 1361
- Cizhou wares, 1379
- droughts, 1278
- grave goods, 1326
- tombs, 1351
- Northern Yuan, art, 1252
- Notitia de populis* (Notice on Peoples), 1244
- Notitiae Sugdaecae* (Notices on Sugdea), 1245
- Novgorod Chronicles, 1049–50, 1052, 1054–55, 1056–57, 1064n80
- al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk miṣr wa'l-qāhira, 1024
- Nūr al-Dīn (son of Chacha/Ibn Jājā, Qirshahir Saljuk amir), 989
- his endowment (*waqf*), 1031
- Nūr al-Dīn ibn Zengi, 1012
- al-Nuwaryī, 1018
- Nuzhat al-anām fī ta'rikh al-islām*, 1020
- Nuzhat al-qulūb*, 896, 899
- gNyags ston, house of, 1173
- Nyags ston pa'i gdung rabs*, 1167, 1173
- oath, vow, 979
- observatory, 1369–70
- Dengfeng, 1362, 1370
- Maragha, 886, 1027, 1203, 1312–14
- 'Od-zer Rgyal-mthsan, Tibetan supervisor of taxes and levies, 995
- ode(s), 881, 979
- Odo (Eudes) of Châteauroux, papal legate, 1085
- Odoric of Pordenone, 1071–72, 1092
- Oghul Qaimish, Mongol regent, 1085
- Oghuz Khan, 1160
- Ögödei, Qa'an, 922, 925, 975, 977–78, 1286–87, 1289, 1300, 1350, 1367, 1383
- Ögödeids, 1032, 1220
- Ohkhūm, 1344
- Okoshki, 1295, 1296
- Olbricht, Peter, 929, 934, 936
- Old Mandarin (*Zhongyuan*), 976–77, 981
- Olen-Kolodez burial complex, 1325
- Olgerd, 1054
- Öljei Temür, messenger, 987
- Öljeitü, Ilkhan, 888–89, 1024, 1094, 1144, 1360
- edict, 994, 997
- letter to Philip the Fair, 985
- mausoleum in Sultaniyya, 1316–17, 1369, 1388
- Persian accounts of, 890–94, 896, 897, 898, 904
- Olochi, imperial son-in-law (*güregen*), 982
- Olon Süme, 1204n22, 1212, 1300
- Om symbol, 1327
- On Arghun Khan and Bugha*, 1128
- Ong baghshi, 984
- Ong Khan (To'oril), 978
- Önggüd, tribe, 1204, 1212
- Ongi, river (Ong-khin), 1289
- Onogurs, 1237
- Onon, river, 889, 1279, 1280, 1324
- oracles, 1245
- Oracula Leonis, 1245
- oral sources, 889, 897, 904
- Orbelian House, 1119
- al-Ordu al-A'zam*, 1345
- Örmegetü, 1289–90
- ornaments, 1324, 1335, 1345–46, 1374, 1386

- Oron, Prince Hindu's son, 983
ortoq (*ortogh*, merchants trading with Mongol capital), 988, 1094, 1380
 Oshin, lord of Kofikos, 1120, 1122
 Ostrowski, D., 1053n27, 1056n42, 1060n59
 Ötemish Hājī, 1323
 Ötemish Sayf al-Dīn, vice-governor of Karak, 988
 Otrar, 1203, 1333, 1341, 1344, 1345
 Otto of Freising, 1073
 Ottoman Turks, 1048, 1236, 1241
 Ouyang Xuan, 944
 Oxus (Amu Darya), river, 886, 1340
 Ozawa Shigeo, 927
 Özbek, Jochid khan, 908, 998, 1026, 1065, 1096, 1151–53, 1154, 1330, 1336, 1375n84

 P'yōng'an, province, 1189
 dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba, Tibetan scholar, 1170
 Pachymeres, Georgios, 1239, 1245
 Padma dkar po, Tibetan scholar, 1170–71
 Pādshāh Khatun, 901
dPag bsam ljon bzang, 1172
 Pahlavi, 879
 painters, 1352
 painting(s), 1353–57, 1368–69, 1370–71, 1375, 1376, 1386–88
 Koryō, 1196
paiza (tablet of authority), 997, 1209, 1334, 1335–36, 1375, 1386
dPal ldan gle lung chos sde chen po'i gnyags ston pa'i gdung rabs gdan rabs dang bcas pa'i mam thar skal bzang mdzes pa'i rgyan phreng. See *Nyags ston pa'i gdung rabs*
 palace cities, 1292–93
 Palace Museum, Beijing, 1357
 palace(s), 000–1300
 Angkor, 933
 Chaghadaid, 1343
 Ilkhanid, 1314, 1318, 1369
 Kotla Firūzshāh, 1377
 Qaraqorum, 1087, 1286
 seasonal, 1289–90
 Song royal palace in Hangzhou, 1367
 Tbilisi, 1138
 of Temür (Tamerlane), 1369
 Palamas, Gregorios, 1239
 Palestine, 1070, 1085, 1095, 1101, 1268
 Palladius, 931
 Pamir mine, Kukhilal, 1344
 Pan chen bSod nams grags pa, Tibetan historian, 1169
 Panaretos, Michael, 1241–42
 Pankratov, B., 977
 Pantusov, N. N., 1340, 1341, 1346
 Paris, 898n91, 1056, 1087, 1119, 1120, 1329
 manuscripts, 1153, 1154, 1252
 Paris, Matthew, 1075, 1078, 1088n81
 Chronica maiora, 1056, 1070–71, 1077, 1081, 1084
 parwāna (barvana), 989, 990
 Paschal of Vittoria, Franciscan, 1097
 Patkanov, Kerope, 1114
Patmut'wn Hayoc', 1114
 patronage, 880, 885–86, 891, 901, 904, 906, 1149
 of the arts, 1354, 1357, 1365
 literary, 1150–51, 1157, 1160
 of religion, 1350, 1361–62
 Paulus Christiani, Dominican friar, 1265
 pawning (*tutughla*), 987
 pawning document (*tutugh bichig*), 987
 pawnshops, 994
 pearls, 1334, 1345, 1373, 1383
 Pechenegs, 1237
 Pegolotti, Francesco Balducci, 1093, 1344
 Peking Opera, 945
 Pelliott, Paul, 923, 926, 975, 1252
 Peloponnese, 1241, 1242
 Peng Daya, 929
 Penglai, port, 1302
 Peregrinus of Castello, Bishop of Zaitun, 1095
 Pereiaslav', 1057
 Perkins, John, 1251n2
 Persia, Persians, 1381
 Persian cultural tradition, 879
 Persian language, 1151, 1223
 word lists, 1027
 works translated to Arabic, 1030–31
 Persian language historiography, 880–82
 from Ghazan to the end of the Ilkhanate, 888–906
 from the Mongol invasions to the reign of Ghazan Khan, 882–87
 later fourteenth century to ca. 1430, 906–10
 Petech, Luciano, 1169, 1171, 1176
 Peter, Rus' ecclesiastic, 1081–82
 Petrov, P. N., 1340
 Phag mo gru pa, school, 1168, 1172, 1174
 'Phags pa bla ma Blo gros rgyal mtshan, 982, 1176
 'Phags-pa script, 972, 974, 1217, 1353, 1374–76.
 See also square script
 Philip the Fair (IV), King of France, 985, 1090
 Philippines, 934
 Phoenix Mosque, 1382

- Photios, Metropolitan of Kiev, 1242
 Phrantzes, Georgios, 1241
 Phyg na rdo rje, Phags pa's nephew, 1168
 pilgrims, pilgrimage, 1025, 1075, 1204
 inscriptions, 984, 1225
 Piling school, 1386, 1387
Ping Song lu, 927
pinghua ("plain speech"), 1354, 1386
 Pingyang, Daoist monastery in, 994
 Pinks, Elizabeth, 929
 pint, iron bound (*yabuqu temür-tü shim*),
 measure of grain, 986
 Pintung-texts, 1222
 Pipino, Francesco, Dominican friar, 1072
 Pirsagat, river (Azerbaijan), 1331
 Plano Carpini, John of (Giovanni del Pian di
 Carpine), 1071–72, 1082, 1089–90, 1100,
 1226
 Ystoria Mongalorum, 1071, 1082–83, 1084,
 1087–88
 plaster, plasterwork, 1285, 1295, 1316, 1388
 PLECO (smartphone application), 955
 Podenzolo, Antonio di, Genoese notary, 1093
 poetry, poems. *See also* verse chronicles
 Armenian, 1127–28
 Buddhist, 973
 Byzantine, 1238–39, 1242, 1243, 1245
 Chinese, 944, 945, 1352
 Hebrew, 1264–65
 Islamic, 1357
 Korean, 1190, 1192, 1193
 Persian, 880–81, 892, 897–99, 902, 905, 908,
 1355
 Syriac, 1200, 1201–2, 1212
 Turkic, 1153–54
 Poggosian, Zara, 1115
 Pogharean, N., 1118
 Poland, 1070, 1078, 1080, 1082–83, 1089
 Poles, 1058, 1081
Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei (Complete
 Collection of Rus' Chronicles, *PSRL*),
 1050–53, 1067
 Polo, Maffeo, 1091–92, 1094
 Polo, Marco, 951, 1026, 1099, 1226, 1351
 travelogue, 1071–73, 1090–92
 Polo, Niccolò, 1091–92, 1094
 Polovetsian burial mound, 1055
 Polovtsy, 1047, 1076, 1080, 1294. *See also*
 Cumans; Qipchaqs
 polyglot glossaries, 973
 porcelain, 1195, 1341, 1352, 1358. *See also* blue-
 and-white porcelain
 Portuguese, 1098
 postal service, postal system (*jam*), 991, 1221,
 1300–1, 1375
 potters, 1350, 1352, 1353, 1358–60, 1385, 1386
Poulologos (Bird Book), 1242
 Pow, Stephen, 1055
Povest' vremennykh let (Tale of Bygone Years,
 Rus' primary chronicle), 1050–52
 prayer, vow, 979
 Prester John, 1073–74, 1089, 1262
 "Letter" of, 1074
 printing, 937, 952, 1250, 1254–56, 1359, 1384
 printing offices, 1224
 Priselkov, Mikhail D., 1051
 prophecy, 979
 proverbs, 979
 province (*lu/chölge*), 987
 provincial administration (*songgon vuu*, Chin.
 zongguan fu), 987
 provisions (*künesün*), 992
 Prussia, 1088
 Pseudo-Methodius, 1077, 1080
 Revelationes of, 1075–76
 Pskov Chronicles, 1049, 1052–53, 1056
 Pulād, 1341, 1342
 Puning Canon, 1255
 Pür-i Bahā, 881
 Qa'an, 887, 896, 984, 1080, 1289
 dragon symbols of, 1325
 seal, 981
 Qabunki, lake, 987
 Qabuq Baliqchi, messenger, 991
 Qadan, Mongol prince, 1078
 Qaidu, 973, 1032
 Qaishan (Kültig Qa'an, Wuzong), Yuan
 emperor, 1293
qalan (labor service), 1220, 1223
 Qalāwūn, Mamluk Sultan, 1014–15, 1020
 Qalqanligh Qara Dodogh, 983
 al-Qalqashandī, 1021
 Qangli, 1047
 Qara Khitai, 901, 909, 1010, 1073–74, 1211, 1342
 Qara Tash, lake, 987
 Qara-Djirach, 1346
 Qara-Qocho. *See* Qocho
 Qaraqorum, 1013
 archaeological excavations, 1275
 building arrangement, 1292
 coins, 1345
 construction, 1289–90
 evidence of dietary habits in, 1291–92
 evidence of industrial development,
 1298–99

- Qaraqorum (cont.)
 inscription of the Buddhist monastery, 983
 irrigation farming, 1298
 Muslim graves, 1295
 Plano-Carpini's description of, 1087
 postal stations, 1300
 regulation of Buddhist monks' travel to, 981
 seasonal occupation of, 1289–90
 Smbat Sparapet's mission to, 1120
 temples and monuments, 1296
 Qara-Qoto, 941, 951–52, 973, 985–88, 996, 998, 1211, 1250–53, 1254, 1301
 tombs, 1361
 Qarāsunqur al-Manšūrī, 1019
 Qarshī, city, 1157, 1343
 Qāshānī, Abū al-Qāsim, 892–93, 898, 1205, 1353, 1384
 Qashin Burqan Qan, 978
 Qatwān steppe, battle of, 1073
 Qaukhchishvili, Simon, 1135
qayağiyē (Christian troops), 1205
 Qayaliq, 1344
 Qayimtu-texts, 1222
 Qazan, Chaghadaid khan, 1343
 Qazghirt, 1159
 Qazwīnī, Hamdallāh Mustawfī. *See* Hamdallāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī
 Qi (Kǐ), Yuan empress, 1351
 Qian Daxin, 931
 Qian Qianyi, 937
 Qiantang, river, 1381
 Qing dynasty, 923
 Qinghua porcelain, 1298, 1299, 1301, 1302
 Qingyun ti, 940
 Qiongzhusi (Kūngjūsi), Buddhist monastery near Kunming, 983
 Qipchaq steppe (Dasht-i Qipchaq), 1323, 1325, 1351, 1384
 Qipchaqs, 1047, 1076, 1245, 1294. *See also* Cumans, Polovtsy
 Qirṭāy (Qaraṭāy) al-Khaznadārī, 1019–20
Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ, 1156
 Qisha canon, 1256
Qīṣṣa-yi Yūsuf, of 'Alī, 1159
 Qiu Chuji. *See* Changchun
 Qiu Shusen, 955
 Qocho (Qara-Qocho), 991, 993, 1226
 Qomul. *See* Hami
 Qongghor Öleng, 989
 Qonggirat (Qongrat) Šūfī dynasty, 1154
 Qosh Qabuq, 985
 Qoshila (Mingzong, Yuan emperor), 1365
 Qoshot Gushri Khan, 1172
 Quan Heng, 936
Quan Yuanqu, 945
Quan Yuanwen, 944
 Quanzhen, Daoist sect, 930
 Quanzhou (Zaytūn), 953, 1095, 1383
 harbor, 1302
 inscriptions, 1032, 1212
 Islamic burial site, 1296
 trade through, 1380, 1381
 Turkic epitaphs, 1226
 Quarqvarē Tsikhisjvarel-Jaqeli, Georgian prince, 1139
 Quatremère, Étienne, 1007, 1023
 Qubilai Qa'an, 924, 925, 997, 1349, 1351, 1370, 1371
 artistic representation of, 1370
 astronomical reforms, 927
 Chinese accounts of, 922, 932, 935
 construction of cities, 1367
 construction of Kaipingfu, 1292
 decrees, 1167, 1171
 dispatch of naval fleets to Japan, 1302
 edicts, 972, 981, 993, 994, 996
 establishment of cities, 1367
 interest in Song imperial history, 1384
 introduction of a square script, 974
 legal writings, 941
 naval fleet, 1374, 1381
 order for the compilation of a gazetteer, 947
 Persian accounts of, 893, 896
 and the Polo family, 1091
 postal stations, 1300
 re-creation of steppe landscape in Dadu, 1369
 seal, 1374n79
 seasonal migration, 1293
qupchir, *qupchirīi* (poll tax), 1220, 1221, 1223
 Qur'an, 886, 1151, 1152, 1383, 1388
 quotation, 990
quriltai (assembly)
 of 1206, 1324
 great assembly (*yeke quriltai*), 975
 Qurutqa, 1226
Qutadghu Bilig, 1150
 Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, 886–87, 892n54, 1031n139
 Quṭb, poet, 1153
 Quṭluḡ Shāh, *amīr al-umarāʾ*, 997
 Quṭluḡ Temūr, Jochid governor in Khwārazm, 1152–53, 1331
 Quṭluḡ Temūr bek, son of Toghluc-Temūr, Jochid governor of the Crimea, 1336

- Quṭlū-shāh, general, 1024
 Qutughtai Sechen Qungtayiji of Ordos, 980
 Quṭuz, Mamlūk Sultan, 1020, 1079
 Quubitai, 987
 Quyildar Sechen, 988

 Rabban Sauma, 1204–5
 Rabghūzī, Nāṣir al-Dīn b. Burhān al-Dīn, 1156–58
Rab ‘i Rashīdī (Rashīdiyya), 887, 891, 895, 1317
 Rachewiltz, Igor de, 926, 930, 944, 955, 978, 1092n100
 Radloff, W. W., 1219
 Radziwiłł Chronicle, 1051
 Raḥba, 894
 Raimkulov, A. A., 1340
 Ramusio, Gian Battista, 1090
 Rang byung rdo rje, Karma pa III, 1175
 Raṣadkhāna caves, 1314
 Raschmann, Simone-Christiane, 1222
 Rashīd al-Dīn, 885, 887, 888–93, 894–99, 904, 909, 911, 977, 1046, 1136, 1346, 1384. *See also Jāmi ‘al-tawārīkh*
 account of the dispute between Aḥmad Tegüder and Arghun, 1380
 construction of *Rab ‘i Rashīdī*, 1317
 evidence in letters of blue-and white porcelain, 1378
 execution, 1028
 on Ilkhanid construction projects, 1312, 1314, 1318
 medical compendium, 1354
 on plants and trees, 1385
 on the siege of Kiev, 1056
 waqf of, 1030–31
Rashīdiyya. See Rab ‘i Rashīdī
 Rasūlid dynasty, 1009, 1026–27, 1336
Rasūlid Hexaglot, 1357
 Ratchnevsky, Paul, 922, 942, 978
al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī sirat al-malik al-zāhir, 1013
Rawḍat al-ṣafā, 912
Rawḍat ūlī’l-albāb, 891
al-Rawḍatayn, 1012
 Rażī al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn al-Qaṣṣārī al-Bārjinliqī, 1153
 Rdo-rje Bkra-shis Dpal-bzang-po, 993
Recueil des historiens des croisades: Documents arméniens, 1114
Red Annals. See Hu lan deb ther
 Red Guard Cinema kiln-site, 1364
 Red Sea, 1098, 1380
 regalia, 1324–25
 registers
 of chiliarchs, 979
 davtarisabanelisi (“Register [defter] from Sabanela”), 1146
 household (Huzhou Circuit), 952
 military (Xia), 1251
 state, 1136
 regulations, 937, 992
 of graves and burial methods, 1279
 relating to the issuance of edicts, 935
 Reichert, Susanne, 1288
Relatio de Davide rege, 1073–74
 religious artifacts, 1327–30
 religious ritual, 1296–97
 religious tolerance, 1329
 Ren Renfa, 1356
Répertoire chronologique de l’épigraphie arabe, 1031
Repertory of Proper Names in Yüan Literary Sources, 944
 reprimand, 979
 Rhuzuk’an, daughter of Jalal, 1125
 Riccoldo of Montecroce, Dominican, 1096, 1098, 1099
 Richard of San Germano, 1076
Rihlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, 1025
Risāla-yi falakiyya, 911
 robes, 988, 1346, 1374
 rock-cut structures, 1314, 1363
 Rockhill, William, 934
 Roerich, George N., 1169
 Roger of Torre Maggiore, *Carmen miserabile* (“Woeful Dirge”) of, 1077–78
 Rogozhskii Chronicle, 1053, 1064n80
 Rol pa’i rdo rje, Karma pa IV, 1175
 Roman Empire, 1237
 Rome, 1076, 1094, 1097, 1124, 1240, 1242
 Róna-Tas, A., 975n111
 Rosenthal, Franz, 1022n97, 1028n122, 1029
 Rostov, 1061
 Rostov Compilation, 1051
 Rubruck, William of, 1072, 1085–90, 1098, 1101, 1226, 1287, 1290, 1345
 Itinerarium, 1073, 1087–88, 1091
 Rudolf IV, duke, 1358, 1380
 Rūhangīz, Lāla, 1318
 Rūm. *See* Anatolia; Seljūks of Rūm
 Runan yishi, 934–35
 Rus’, Rus’ian, 1076, 1078, 1089
 chronicles, 1048–60
 documents, 1064–67
 saints’ lives, 1060–61
 tales, 1060–64

- Rus' Church, 1048, 1057, 1061
 Russia, 1135
 Russian Empire, 1340
 Russian Orthodox Church, 974, 1060n58
 Russian translations, from Arabic, 1007
 Rustichello of Pisa, 1071–72, 1090–91
 Rusudan, Queen of Georgia, 1137, 1138, 1140, 1142, 1146
 Rypka, Jan, 880

 Sa skya pa, 1171, 1174
 Sa skya pa'i *gdung rabs*, 1167, 1171
 Sa skya paṇḍita, Sa-skya Paṇḍita Kun-dga' rgyal-mtshan dpal bzang-po, 972, 1167, 1171, 1174, 1175–76
 Sa'd al-Dawla, Ilkhanid vizier, 894, 1261n3
 saddle(s), 1294, 1325, 1326
 Sa'dī, 881
 Šadr al-Dīn, 906
 Sadyr-Kurgan, 1344
 Šafā, Dhabīḥallāh, 880
 al-Šafādī, 1021, 1024
 Šafī al-Dīn Ardabīlī, 905
Safina-yi Tabriz, 880
Šafwat al-šafā, 906n130
 Sagim, river. *See* Berduji river, battle on the Šāhib, scribe, 899
Saibei jixing (Lingbei jixing), 932–33
 Sain Khan. *See* Batu
 St. Albans, 1071
 Saint-Denis, abbey, 1087
 St. George, 1208
 St. John the Baptist, 1081
 St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, 985, 1250
 saints' lives (*zhitiia*), 1046, 1048, 1060–61, 1067
 Sairam (Sayrām), 1159, 1341, 1344
 al-Sakhāwī, 1025
 Saladin (Šalāḥ al-Dīn), 1012
 Salghurids, 894, 896, 899, 900, 909, 1383
 Salimbene de Adam, Franciscan, 1075, 1083, 1095n110
 Samanids, 890
 Samarqand, 885, 1333, 1341, 1343, 1368, 1369
 observatory, 1370
 Sambation (legendary river), 1264, 1266
 Sambuceto, Lamberto di, 1093
Sammlung uigurischer Kontrakte, 1219
 Samosiuk, Kira, 1252
 Samu'el Anetsi, 1114, 1119, 1121
San jin shike daquan, 950
 Sandaogang, 1302
 Sanggashiri, Mongol prince, 987, 996

 Sanjian, Avedis K., 1115, 1126
 Sanskrit, 1223, 1295, 1296, 1376
 Santiago, 1075
 Śāntideva, Indian Buddhist poet, 973n4
 Sanudo, Marino, 1100–1
 Sarai, 1054, 1066, 1329, 1330, 1333, 1336, 1368, 1374, 1384
 coinage, 1334
 public bath, 1332
 Sarbadars, 904, 909, 1029
 Sarchuk, Uighur commander, 1141
 Sartaq, Jochid prince, 1061, 1063, 1086, 1329
 Sasanian Empire, 879, 897
satatro ("tax for the Tatars"), 1139
 Satō, Hisashi, 1167
 Saurana, 1333
 Sayan, mountains, 1324
 Sayfi Harawī, 904, 909
 Scalla, Cangrande della, 1381
 Schefflarn, annals of, 1076
 Schuh, Dieter, 1167, 1171, 1174, 1175
 Schulte-Uffelage, Helmut, 936
 Schurmann, Herbert Franz, 922
Scripta Sinica. *See* Hanji dianzi wenxian ziliaoku, database
 Scythians (Skythai), 1237–38
 seal inscriptions, 981, 1374
 seal(s), 982, 992, 997, 1166, 1209, 1374. *See also* belge
 Chaghadaid, 990
 in Mongol script, 1353
 on scrolls, 1356
 stone, 993
 on Uighur administrative orders, 1220–21
 Sebastatsi, 1123–24
Secret History of the Mongols (Mongqolun niucha tobcha'an, Chin. Yuanchao bishi), 879, 920, 925–27, 974–79, 1282, 1285
Sefer ha'Ot ("the Book of the Sign"), 1266
Sefer haZohar, 1267
 Selim I, Ottoman Sultan, 1242
 Seljuk style, 1331
 Seljuks of Rüm, Seljuk dynasty of Rüm, 885, 902–3, 905, 1031, 1120, 1126, 1237, 1244
 Semen Ivanovich, grand prince, 1054
 Semirechye, 1210–11, 1212
semu, semuren, 935, 1092, 1254, 1256, 1351, 1356, 1369
 Sengge Lagyi (Ragi), Mongol princess, 1352, 1357, 1381, 1387
 Senggüm, an official, 992
 Senigova, T. N., 1340
 Seres (China, Chinese), 1088

- sermons, 1261, 1267–68
 Serven Khaalga, mountain, 1282
 Ševčenko, Ihor, 1061
Sfat Emet (The Language of Truth), 1330
 Shaazan khot, 1290
 Shaazan tolgoi, 1298
 Shabānkāra, 899, 907
 Shabānkāra'ī, 895–96, 900, 906
 Shāfi' ibn 'Alī al-'Asqalānī, 1014
Shāhanshāh-nāma, 899
 Shāhī Island, 1314
 Shāh-i Shujā', Muzaffarid ruler, 908
 Shāh-i-Zinda, 1343
Shāhnāma, 897, 898, 1202, 1316, 1383
Shāhnāma-yi Chingīzī, 897
 Shahnazareants, K., 1119
 Shāhrukh, Timurid ruler, 907, 1368
 Shāhū Tala, Shāhū Mountains, 1314
 Shakabpa, Tsepon, 1171
 Shakhmatov, A. A., 1051
 shamanism, shamans, 1087, 1296
 Shamkor, 1138, 1145
 Shandong province, 930, 1284, 1299, 1302
 Shanguo, 974, 1275, 1286, 1292–94, 1295. *See also*
 Kaipingfu
Shanju xinyu, 946
 Shanxi province
 inscriptions of, 950
 tomb murals, 1351, 1364
shaofan, 1291, 1296–97
 Shaolin Buddhist monastery, 982
 Shaqiyar, city, 990
Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha, 1011
 Sharūyāz, 989, 1317
 Sharvashlyk, 1344
 Shaykh Hasan-i Kuchik, 898
 Shaykh Šafi al-Dīn, 906, 1226, 1361
 Shaykh Uways, Jalayirid sultan, 907, 989
 Shen Jiaben, 943
 Shen Mingren, 1256
 Shen Zhongwei, 943
 Sheng Ruzi, 930
Sheng Yuan mingxian bofang xuji, 939
 Shengeldy, 1346
Shengwu qinzheng lu, 925–26, 974, 977
Shengwu qinzhenglu jiaozhu, 925
Shes-bya rab-gsal (Skr. *Jñeyaparakāśa*, Mong.
 Medegdekün-i belgetey-e geyigülügči
 neretü šastir), 974
 Shi Jinbo, 1254n22
 Shigatse (Gzdis-ka-rtse), city, 995n115
 Shigi Qutuqu, 978
 Shigtür, emir, 989
 Shi'is, Shi'ism, 893, 1360
Shike shiliao xinbian, 948–49
Shilin guangji, 954, 973, 1376, 1386
 Shilla (Silla), 1190, 1191
 Shiraz, 898, 900, 905, 907–8, 1383
Shirāz-nāma, 900, 905
 Shirvānshāh, 1138
 Shlomo ben Yishai, 1263
Shoushi li, 927
 Shu Xihong, 1253
Shu 'ab-i panjgāna, 891
Shuhua mulu (Catalogue of Calligraphy and
 Painting), 1352, 1368
 Shumagha, Ataibuqa's wife, Hindu's
 mother, 983
Shuofu, 934, 946
 Shymkent, 1344, 1345
 Si tu bka' chems. *See* bKa' chems mthong ba
 don ldan, bKa' chems deb ther
 Si tu paṇ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, 1175
 Siberia, 996, 1275, 1295, 1323
 Sibir, khanate of, 1046
 Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, 1011, 1017
Sibu congkan, 939
 Sidon, 1070, 1079–80, 1100
 Siena, 1335, 1336
 Sighnāqī, Kamāl al-Dīn, 1152
Siku quanshu, 927, 935, 939, 954
 Silk Roads, 1344
 silver, 1078, 1360
 articles from Jinling-lu, 1300
 artifacts, 996, 998, 1324–26, 1327, 1336, 1345–46
 bowls, 1295
 currency, 1222, 1288, 1341
 ingot, 1222
 Simeon Rabban-ata, Nestorian, 1084
 Simeonov Chronicle, 1052, 1057, 1064n80
 Simferopol treasure, 1334–36
 Simferopol, Keldibeg's tablet from, 998
 Simon de Montfort, 1088
 Simon of Saint-Quentin, 1071, 1084
Simṭ al-'ulā, 901
 Sinan, 1302, 1377
Sinjūng Tongguk Yōji Sūngnam, 1188–90
 Sino-Mongol inscriptions, 980–83
Sīrat al-sultān jalāl al-dīn mingīmī, 1010
Sitanyin disanci Zhong Ya kaogu suohuo Hanwen
 wenshu, 951
 Sivas, 1123, 1226, 1243, 1331
 Sivin, Nathan, 927
 Sivshidu-Yaqshidu texts, 1222
 Siwnik', 1079–80, 1266
 Skewfatsi, Georg, 1125

- Skewrātsi, Mxit'ar, 1125
 Skoutariotes, Theodoros, 1240
 slaves (*boghal aran*, *bo'ol*), 983, 1032, 1089, 1286
 Smbat Sparapet (Sempad)
 chronicle of, 1114–15, 1120
 letter of, 1085
 Mongol–Armenian treaty, 1118
 Smith, Gene, 1169
 Smolensk, 1062
 Sofia First Chronicle, 1051, 1052–53
 Soldaia (Sūdāq), 1086
 Solkhat, 1329–31, 1336
 Song dynasty, 928–29, 947, 1187
 biji and fictional writing, 945
 books printed on backs of official documents, 952
 ceramic industry, 1298, 1358
 copper coins, 1290
 gazetteers, 947–48
 genealogies, 952
 interest of Qubilai in the history of, 1384
 law code, 943
 memorials, 940
 official history, 924
 travelogues, 933
 Song Lian, 921, 1384
 Song *Liao Jin Yuan fangzhi jiyi*, 948
 Song Shi, 924n21
 Song *Yuan fangzhi congan*, 947
 Song Zizhen, 930
 songs, 979
 Sonom Gara, Buddhist monk and Mongol translator, 972
 Sorqaqtani Beki (widow of Tolui), 980
 South China Sea, 1091
 Southeast Asia, 1385
 Southern Song, 927, 928, 954, 1381
 Southwest Asia, 1008, 1020
 Spalato, 1077
 speeches, 978, 1011, 1057, 1239, 1243
 Sperling, Elliot, 1174, 1175
 spirit-path inscriptions (*shendaobei*), 935
 Spuler, Bertold, 1007
 square script. *See also* 'Phags-pa script
 documents, 993–98
 introduction of, 974
 stained glass, 1332
 State Historical Museum, Moscow, 1334
 Stein, Rolf A., 1174
 Stein, Sir Aurel, 951–52, 1251
 stele inscriptions, 931n54, 950
 Tangut, 1254
 Uighur, 1225
 Step'annos Episkopos, 1119–24
 Step'annos Orbelian, 1114, 1118–19, 1126
 Step'annos, Father, 1124
 stone inscriptions, 920, 948–50
 Storehouse of Mysteries (Bar Hebraeus), 1208
 Su Jiqing, 934
 Su Tianjue, 935, 939, 944
 Su Zhen Shen, 938
 Sübe'etei (Sübedei), 974, 1010, 1047, 1121, 1123,
 1137, 1142, 1262
Subḥ al-a shā fī ṣinā'at al-inshā, 1021
Subhāṣitaratnaniidhi (Sa-skya Legs-bshad), 972n2
 al-Subkī, Tāj al-Dīn, 1025
 Sufi lodges, 1031, 1288, 1331, 1346. *See also*
 khānqāh
 Sufis, Sufism, 881, 905, 906, 1028, 1032, 1096,
 1151–52, 1156, 1159, 1360–61, 1382–83
 Sughunchaq noyan, 884, 886
 Sujās, 1317, 1318
 Sukhbaatar, 1294
 Sulaymān, khan, 910
 Sultanabad wares, 1384
 Sulṭāniyya, 989, 1314, 1316–17, 1360, 1363,
 1368–69, 1388
 archbishopric of, 1096
 Sultanshaa (Sulṭān Shāh), Prince of
 Xining, 992
 Sum pa mkhan po ye shes dpal 'byor,
 Mongolian scholar, 1172
 Sun Bojun, 1253, 1255
 Sun Jimin, 951
 Supervising Money Bureau, 1380
 Sura, river, 1325
 Surameli, Grigol, 1138
 sutra(s), 1255, 1351
 Suu Temür, 986
Suvarṇaprabhāṣottamarā (Jin guang ming zui
 sheng wang jing, “Golden Light
 Sūtra”), 1255
 Suzdal', 1054, 1056–58, 1063, 1066, 1080
 Suzdal' Chronicle, 1051–52, 1056
 Suzhou (Mon. Sügchü), modern Jiuquan, 984,
 1225, 1253, 1254
 synagogue, 1263, 1329
 Synaxarion of Sūdaq, 1245
 Synaxary, 1124
Syngraphikai Historiai (Historical Narration),
 1239
Synopsis chronike (Survey of History), 1240
 Syr Darya, river, 1154. *See also* Jaxartes
 Syria, 907, 1009, 1014, 1024, 1046, 1070, 1073,
 1084, 1099–100. *See also* Mamluk
 Sultanate

- events following the arrival of Hüleǵü, 1079
 Ghazan's temporary occupation of, 1095
 Mamluk reoccupation of, 1018
 Mongol failure in, 1120
 Mongol invasions, 1021, 1074, 1078, 1144, 1200–2
 Arabic accounts of, 1210
 Syriac language, 1200n1, 1210–11
 Syriac Orthodox Church, 1200, 1202, 1203–1204, 1209
 Syriac script(s), 1209, 1210, 1226
 Szerb, Janos, 1176
- Ta'i si tu Byang chub rgyal mtshan, 1172
 Tabaldiev, K. Sh., 1340, 1345
ṭabaqāt, 895, 900, 907, 1025
Ṭabaqāt al-shāfi'īyya, 1025
Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī, 883–84, 885, 907
 Tabriz, 880, 886, 891, 900, 1028, 1143, 1317–18, 1357, 1388
 seasonal occupation of, 1026
Tadhkirat al-nabih fi ayyām al-manṣūr wa-banihi, 1020
 sTag lung Zhabs drung Ngag-dbang-rnam-rgyal, Tibetan historian, 1171
 Taghai Qunchui (Princess), Ataibuqa's mother-in-law, 983
 Taidula Khatun, 1065
Taiping jinjingce, 940
Taipingce, 940
 Taizong, Song emperor, 947
 Tajikistan, 1340, 1341, 1344
Tajziyat al-amṣār wa tazjiyat al-a'ṣār, 893
 Takaishvili, Ekvtime, 1135
 Takashima Island, 1302
 Takezaki Suenaga, 1381
 Takht-i Sulaymān, 1314–16
 Talas (Taraz), city, 884, 1341, 1342, 1345
 Talas, river, 1342, 1344
 tales (*povesti*), 1046, 1048, 1060–64, 1067
 "Occurrence beyond the Don," 1061
 "Story about the Kazan Khanate," 1062
 "Tale about Merkurii of Smolensk," 1062
 "Tale about the Battle with Mamai," 1061
 "Tale about the Death of Batu," 1061–64
 "Tale about Tsarevich Peter," 1060, 1061
 "Tales of the Kulikovo Cycle," 1064
Tālī kitāb wafāyāt al-a'yān, 1024
Talkhīs majma' al-ādāb fi mu'jam al-alqāb, 1028
 tallies (*vuu*), 992
Tam haKessef ("Silver's End"), collection of sermons, 1268
- Tamar, queen of Georgia, 1145
tamgha, 984, 991, 995, 1139, 1140, 1209, 1212, 1223. *See also* seals, taxes
 Tana, 1094
 Tang dynasty, 924, 1210, 1221
 Tang Hou, 1352
 Tangier, 1025
 Tangut script, 1250, 1254, 1301, 1376
 Tangut tripitaka, 1252
 Tangut(s), 1323
 genealogies, 953, 1225
 inscriptions, 1376
 Mongol invasion of, 1282
 texts, 1250–53
 Buddhist, 1254–56
 secular, 1253–54
 Tangwu Chongxi (Yang Chongxi), 953
 Tantric Buddhism, 1224
 Tao Zongyi, 934, 946, 1362
 Tappa Nūr, 1317
Tarājim rijāl al-qarnayn al-sādis wa'l-sābi' al-ma'rif bi'l-dhayl 'alā al-rawḍatayn, 1012
 Taraz. *See* Talas
al-Ta'rif bi'l-muṣṭalah al-sharīf, 1021
Ta'rikh al-duwal wa'l-mulūk (*Ta'rikh ibn al-furāt*), 1022
Ta'rikh al-Islām wa-wafāyāt al-mashāhīr wa'l-a'lām, 1017
al-Ta'rikh al-Ghiyāthī, 1030
Ta'rikh al-malik al-zāhir, 1015
Ta'rikh majmū' al-nawādir mim mā jarā l'il-awā'il wa'l-awākhir, 1019
Ta'rikh mukhtaṣar al-duwal, 1030
Ta'rikh 'ulamā' baghdād (*Muntakhab al-mukhtār*), 1025
Tārikh-i Āl-i Saljūq dar Anāṭūli, 902
Tārikh-i guzīda, 896–97, 908
Tārikh-i Jahāngushā, 884, 885, 893, 1202. *See also* *History of the World Conqueror*
Tārikh-i khānī, 1160
Tārikh-i Rūyān, 904
Tārikh-i Shāhī, 901
Tārikh-i Ṭabaristān, 903
 Tarmashīrīn, Chaghadaid khan, 1026, 1157, 1343, 1350
 Tarsākand, 1342, 1346
 Tartar Relation, 1084
 Tash-Bashat burial, 1325
 Tashkent, 1158n34, 1159, 1160
Tashrif al-ayyām wa'l-ūṣūr fi sirāt al-malik al-manṣūr, 1014
 al-Tatar, Tatār, as a name for Mongols, 1009, 1263

- Tatars (*Tataroi*, *Tocharoi*), 1046–48, 1067, 1207
 Byzantine accounts of, 1237–45
 documentary information on, 1064–67
 in the Rus' chronicles, 1055–60
 in Rus' hagiographies and tales, 1061–62
- Tatarstan, 1330
- Tavan khailaast ruins, 1291
- Tavan Tolgoi, 1291, 1294, 1296, 1325
- Ta'rikh-i Shaykh Uways*, 908
- tax exemption, 982, 992, 993–94, 1031, 1147, 1168
- tax, taxes
 additional tax (*nemeri*), 1127
 commercial tax (*tamqa*, *tamgha*), 994, 1223
 dairy tax (*saghalgha*), 992
 in Georgia, 1136, 1139–40, 1144, 1146–47
 household tax (*unin* 'smoke'), 992
 land tax (Mon. *caᠰ*, Uig. *tsang/sang*, Ar-Pers. *kharāj*), 994, 1144, 1223
 poll tax (*qupchür*), 1220, 1221, 1223
 provisions tax (*tarh*), 1127
 vassalage tax (*kalan*), 1127
- Tbilisi, 1137, 1138, 1143
- tegin*, Turkic prince, 988
- Tegüder Aḥmad. *See* Aḥmad Tegüder
- Tegüder, Chaghadaid prince, 1121, 1144
- Tehran, Mongol documents kept in, 989n82, 990n87
- Telebuga, Jochid khan, 1058–59
- Temir, A., 1031n140
- Templars, Knights, 1079
- temple names of Mongol emperors, 995
- temple(s), 1296, 1300
 Buddhist, 1225
 Ilkhanid, 1314–15
 Manichaeon, Qayaliq, 1345
 murals, 1285
 remains of, 1292
 Yuan, 1362, 1382
- Temüge Otchigin, brother of Chinggis Khan, 978, 1300
- Temüjin. *See* Chinggis Khan
- Temür (Tamerlane), 1126, 1160
 attacks on Rus', 1054
 building of Samarqand, 1333
 Byzantine accounts of, 1243–44
 destructiveness of his campaigns, 1333
 mosque, 1369
 Persian accounts of, 907–10
- Temür Qa'an (Öljeitü, Chengzong), 889, 893, 1168, 1176, 1256
- Temür Satilmish, 991
- Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, 1264
- Tenggeri, Tengri ("Heaven"), 1027, 1075, 1386
- Terken Khatun, 901
- Tēr-Mik'āēlean, A., 1121
- Teutonic Knights, 1079
- textiles, 1359, 1362, 1387
 luxury, 1366
 showing contacts between southern Iran and the Mongol regions in the east, 1383–84
 silk, 1357, 1380–81
 trade in, 1385
 used in burials, 1364
- Theodore, astrologer, 1074
- Theodoros de Alania, bishop, 1245
- Theodoros II Laskaris, Emperor of Nicaea, 1238, 1240, 1244
- Theodoros, son of Demetrios Athenaios, 1243
- Thirteen Emperors, 1384
- Thomas Agni di Lentino, Papal Legate, 1079
- Thomas, archdeacon of Spalato, 1075, 1077–78
- Thomson, R. W., 1121
- Three Kings of the Nativity, 1075
- Threnus de Tamerlane* (*Threnos peri Tamyrlangou*, *Lament over Temürleng*), 1243
- Tianshan, mountains, 1217, 1226
- Tiansheng law code, 1254
- Tianxia tongwenji*, 939
- Tibet, Tibetans, 1165–66, 1362
 autobiographical and biographical works, 1173–75
 edicts issued for, 994–95
 historiographies, 1168–73
 letters, 1175–76
 official documents, 1166–68
 square script tablet inscriptions, 996
- Tibetan Buddhism, 1169–71, 1224, 1329, 1350
- Tibetan language, 1166, 1167, 1301
- Tibetan script, 1374, 1376
- Tibetan–Mongolian relations, 1168, 1170, 1174, 1176
- Tiesenhhausen (Tiezengausen), Vladimir, 1007, 1016n50
- Tiflis, 1119
- Tigin Savchi Üge (Turk. "Prince Messenger the Sage"), 992
- Tigris, river, 1098
- tile(s), 1317, 1318
 blue-glazed, 1289
 from the Ilkhanate, 1312, 1315, 1318
 luster, 1360
 roof, 1285, 1286, 1290
 from the tomb of Bayan Quli, 1360n34
 wall, 1332

- timber, 992
 Timberlake, Alan, 1048
 Timur. *See* Temür (Tamerlane)
 Timurid (empire, era, realm), 882, 891, 910, 1150, 1156, 1241, 1343
 Timurids, 906, 1128, 1227, 1368, 1370
 Tinibeg, Jochid Khan, 1153
 Tirmidh (Termez), 1341, 1343
 Tiuliak (Tulunbek, Toqtaqiya), Jochid khan, 1065
 To'oril. *See* Ong Khan
 Tocharian, 1223
 Togh Temür Qa'an (Jayaghatu, Wenzong), Yuan emperor, 1175, 1352, 1365
 Toghon Temür Qa'an (Huizong, Shundi), Yuan emperor, 936, 994–95, 998, 1175, 1351
 Tokmak, 1346
 Tolui, son of Chinggis Khan
 sons, 975, 978
 widow, 980
 Toluids, 1032
 Toman, Öljeitü's envoy, 985
 tomb inscriptions (Ch. *muzhi*), 935, 950, 1208, 1261
 Tangut script, 1254
 tombs
 Abū Ishāq, 1382
 of Cangrande della Scalla, 1381
 domed, 1361, 1363
 Ilkhanid, 1312, 1317
 murals in, 1351
 Muslim, 1364
 of Öljeitü, 1360, 1369, 1388
 stone and brick chambered, 1295
 with stone grave markers, 1295
 tombstones, 1382
 Christian, 1341–42, 1346
 Hebrew, 1265–66
 Quanzhou, 1296
 Syriac, 1210–11
 Tong'an Kōsajib, 1192
 Tongguk Yi-Ssangjuk-jib, 1192
 Tongguk Yōji Sūngnam, 1189
 Tongmunsōn, 1189, 1190–91
 Tongzhi tiaoge, 941–42
 Topkapi Palace Museum
 blue-and-white porcelain collection, 1366
 manuscripts, 989n80, 996, 1353n13
 Toq-bughā, amir, 1157
 Toqtamish, Jochid khan, 1024n110, 1054, 1128, 1243, 1336
 Toqto'a, Jochid khan, 1096, 1333
 Toqto'a, Yuan official, 924, 1324
 Torah, 1267, 1330
 Töregene, empress, 980
 Toros, son of Het'um II, 1127
 Toyoq Caves, 1222
Tractatus quomodo Sarraceni sunt expugnandi (Treatise on How to Vanquish the Saracens), 1098
 trade, 955, 1054, 1091, 1093, 1094, 1175, 1196, 1226, 1287, 1289, 1290, 1298, 1302, , 1323, 1333, 1351, 1378–1380–81, 1385
 Indian Ocean, 1026, 1032
 maritime trade, 1226, 1298, 1302, 1351, 1380
 traders, 1086, 1091, 1093, 1100, 1376, 1380
 Transbaikal
 archaeological evidence of population growth in, 1280–81
 burial system, 1279–80
 Kharkhira ruins, 1285
 Okoshki burial site, 1295
 translation
 from Arabic, 1007, 1011
 of Armenian sources to English, 1115
 Transoxania, 885, 888, 892, 904, 907, 911, 1010, 1074, 1350
 Transylvania, 1086
 travelogues, 1353
 Arabic, 1025–26
 Chinese, 920, 929–34
 European, 1071–73, 1090–92
 Korean, 1192
 Trebizond (Trapezunt), Empire of, 1241, 1244, 1245
 Trinity Chronicle, 1049, 1051–52
 Trinity St. Sergius Lavra, 1049
 Tripoli, 1070, 1079
 trumpets, 1265
 Tshal pa bKa' brgyud pa, 1173
Tshal pa kun dga' rdo rjes mdzad pa'i hu lan deb ther. *See* *Hu lan deb ther*
 Tshal pa, noble house of, 1172–73
 Tshal pa Kun dga' rdo rje, 980, 1168, 1170
 Tsotne Dadiani, Georgian noble, 1139
 Tu Ji, 924
 Tucci, Giuseppe, 1167, 1170, 1172, 1176
 Tughlugh (Tughluq), son of Prince Hindu, governor of Isina (Etsina), 983
 Tughluq Temür, Chaghadaid khan, 1350
 grave marker, 1361
 his edicts of 1352, 1353 and 1348 or 1360, 991
 mausoleum, 1341
al-Tuhfa al-mulūkiyya fī ta' rīkh al-dawla al-turkiyya, 1016

- Tükel, Mongol prince, 983
 order of 1317, 987
- Tulak, citadel, 883
- Tulisow, J., 983n42
- tümen* (ten thousand), 1138, 1139
- Tümen, envoy, 985
- Tumurtogoo (Tömörtogoo), 980n23, 984
- Tuna, A. O., 996n125
- Tuobochiyan* (*Tobchi'an*), Mongol chronicle mentioned in Chinese sources, 980
- Turabek-Khanum mausoleum, 1331
- Turco-Syriac epigraphy, 1210
- Turfan (city, site of medieval Qocho)
 administrative systems, 1220–21
 Buddhist texts, 1252
 calendars, 999
 fragments of *Subhāṣitaratnanidhi* (*Sa-skya Legs-bshad*), 972n2
 Mongolian documents, 973
 Syriac manuscripts, 1211
 Uighur Christian texts, 1226
 Uighur contracts, 1219–20
 Uighur documents, 990–92
 wall inscriptions, 1225
- Turfan Collection of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences, 1252
- Turfan oasis, 1217, 1340
- Turgai, steppe, 1323
- Türgen, place, 991
- Turi-texts, 1222
- Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, 881
- Turkestan, Eastern, 973, 986, 1032, 1217–18, 1220
 Buddhist scriptures and colophons, 1223–25
 Mongol policy, 1223
 postal system, 1221
 Uighur migration from, 1227
- Turkestan, Western, 978, 980
- Turkestan Circle of Archaeology Lovers, 1340
- Turkey, 989, 1008n9, 1031, 1122, 1123, 1240, 1318, 1331
- Turkic countersigns, 1226
- Turkic decrees, 1227
- Turkic epigraphic material, 1208, 1210–12
- Turkic epitaphs, 1226
- Turkic literature, 1149–50
 from the Chaghadaid realm, 1156–60
 from the Jochid *ulus*, 1151–56
 Muslim, in the Mongol era, 1150–51
- Turkish language, 906, 1024
- Turks, 1201–2, 1237, 1241, 1245
 control of the Mongolian Plateau, 1278
- Turughtai, 981
- Tus, 1380
- Tuur, river, 1279
- Tuva, 1324
- Tver', 1049
- Tver' Chronicle, 1053
- ʿUbayid-i Zākānī, 881
- Uch, 883
- Uematsu Tadashi, 941
- üge*, order, 982, 984, 987–88, 991–93
 of Ilkhans, 988–90
 of Temür Satilmish, 991
- Ugra river, stand on the, 1054
- Uighur script, 996, 1150, 1153, 1156, 1160, 1208, 1217, 1219, 1226, 1227, 1301
 badges, 998
 edicts and documents from the Ilkhanate, 988–90
 inscriptions, 980–84
 letters, 984–85
 manuscripts, 976–77
 official documents from Dunhuang Mogaoku Northern Caves, 992–93
 official documents from the Turfan area, 990–92
- Turkic documents, 986
- xylographs, 998–99
- Uighur(s), 1217–18
 administrative orders, 1220–21
 Buddhist scriptures and colophons, 1223–25
 calendar, 1140
 Christianity, Christian texts, 1226
 classification of secular documents, 1218–19
 collective analysis of documents, 1221–22
 contracts and related studies, 1219–20
 control of the Mongolian Plateau, 1278
 in the Georgian Chronicles, 1141
 memorial inscriptions, 1225
 multilingual comparative analysis of documents, 1222–23
 script, 972
 text materials from Islamic Asia, 1226–27
- Uighur masters, 1227
- Ūjān, 989, 1316
- ʿulamāʾ*, 1016
- Ulqun, place, 992
- Ulugh Beg, Timurid ruler, 1370
- ulugh berim*, “great tax,” 1221
- Ulugh tngrilig torma tib, Buddhist monastery, 992
- Ulz (Ulja), river, 1282
- al-ʿUmarī, Ibn Faḍlallāh, 1020–21, 1023
- Umayyads, 907

- Ümekei (Hümegei), Prince (*ching ong*), 981
 Umemura, Hiroshi, 1219, 1224
 United Empire, 931, 1147, 1349
 early Arabic writers, 1009–13
 equestrian culture, 1324
 Ural, mountains, 1325
 Ural, river, 1323
 Urban IV, Pope, 1094
 Ürgench, 1093
 Urmiyya (Urumi), 985, 1314, 1318
 Uros, Abbot of St. Martin (Pannonhalma),
 1077n26
 Usharal, 1342
 Uspensky, V., 974n7, 996n124
 Utigurs, 1237
 Uwais Baghatour Khan. *See* Shaykh Uwais
 Uygur(s). *See* Uighur(s)
 Uzbek, Ildegizid ruler of Azerbaijan, 1137
 Uzbekistan, 1340, 1341, 1343
 Uzs, 1237
uzun ulagh (long-distance postal horse), 1221

 Vahram Rabun, 1114, 1127
 Valencia, Spain, 1265, 1268
 van der Kuijp, Leonard, 1171, 1174
 Van, Lake, 1318
 Vanakan Vardapet, 1116, 1117, 1125
 Varam Gageli, 1137, 1138
 Vardan Areweltsi, 1114–15, 1117, 1119, 1125, 1139
 Varjāvand, Parvīz, 1312
 Vásáry, Istvan, 1047
 Vasilii Dmitrievich, grand prince of Rus',
 1065, 1066
 Vasilii II Vasil'evich, grand prince of Rus',
 1066–67
 Vaṣṣāf-i Ḥaẓrat. *See* Vaṣṣāf
 Vayots-Dzor, Armenia, 1266
 Venetian belts/belt sets, 1335, 1336
 Venetian manuscripts, 1090, 1118, 1120, 1126
 Venetian merchants, 1093, 1336, 1380
 Venice, 1072, 1090, 1093, 1125
 Library of San Lazzaro, 1120, 1123
 Venice, University of, 1314
 Vér, Marton, 1221
 Veritable Records (*shilu*), 925
 Verkhovskii, Yu., 977n15
 verse chronicles, 897–99, 904, 909, 1128,
 1153–54, 1245
Versified history of the Rupenids, 1127
Versified Poem of the Pious King of Armenia
 Hetum II, The, 1127
Via ad Terram Sanctam, crusade treatise, 1099
 Viar, 1363

vilāyats (territories), 1323
 Vincent of Beauvais, 1071, 1084, 1100
 Vinland Map, 1084
 Virgin of Khakhuli, 1146
 Vitry, Jacques de, Bishop of Acre, 1074,
 1076
 Vladimir (on the Kliazma), 1057
 Vladislav, King of Hungary, 1061, 1063
 Voegelin, E., 974n5
 Volga, region, 1323, 1325, 1330, 1333–34, 1345
 Volga, river, 1054, 1323, 1325, 1368
 Voronezh, 1325n15

 Wade, Geoff, 923
 Wādī al-Khaznadār, battle of, 1017
Al-Wāfi bi'l-wafāyāt, 1021
al-Walad al-shafīq, 903
 Waley, Arthur, 931
 wall inscriptions, 984
 Wan-an gong, palace, 1287
 Wang Dayuan, 934
 Wang E, 934–35
 Wang family of Gongchang, 950
 Wang Guowei, 925, 928–29, 931–32, 933
 Wang Xiong, 936
 Wang Yu, 943
 Wang Yuan, 1386
 Wang Yun, 932–33, 935, 938, 944, 1352, 1368
 Wang Zhenpeng, 1357, 1387
 Wang, May, 944
 Wanyan Xiang, 1282
waqf (Mo. *waqv*, *uqv*), endowment, “donation
 of an estate,” 989, 990, 1031, 1032, 1226
 warrior belts, 1324–25
 Waṣṣāf al-ḥadrat, Sharaf al-Dīn, 893–96, 900,
 910, 911
 water supply, 1367
Water Village (painting), 1387
 Watson, Oliver, 1378
 weaponry, 1194, 1280, 1283, 1299, 1376
 Wei Su (Ui Suu), Chinese writer of Hindu's
 epitaph, 983, 1382
 weight measurement, 1223
 Weiming (Tangut royal clan), 1254
wenji. *See* literary collections, Chinese
 Wenzong, Yuan emperor. *See* Togh Temür
 Qa'an
 West, Stephen H., 931
 Western Liao dynasty, 924. *See also* Qara
 Khitai
 White Horde (*Ak Orda*), 1126, 1128, 1323–24
 White Pagoda (Baita, Hohhot-Fengzhou),
 1212, 1362, 1368, 1388

- White Stupa of Dadu, Great Monastery of, 974n4
- Wilber, Donald N., 1314, 1317
- Wilkinson, Endymion, 922n7, 945n141, 953n189, 954n194, 955, 956
- Will, Pierre-Étienne, 64n981
- William Adam, Archbishop of Sułtāniyya, 1098–99
- William of Rubruck. *See* Rubruck, William of
- William of Solagna, 1071–72
- William of Tyre, “Rothelin” continuation of, 1079
- wills, 1064, 1065–66
- wine grower (*borchi*), 991
- wine, brandy (*bor araki*), 991
- witness (*gerechi*), 986–87
- women
- art of, 1387
 - as chattels, 1351
 - collection and patronage of Chinese arts, 1356
 - fashion, 1371
 - high status of in the Chaghadaid realm, 1032
 - positioning of in Mongol encampments, 1087
 - status of in the Golden Horde, 1326
 - tribute, 1385
- workshops, 1187, 1288, 1299, 1380
- iron, 1283–85
 - pottery, 1315
- world chronicles, 1240
- Wu Cheng, 944
- Wu Fu, 940
- Wu Yulin, 1251n6
- Wugusun zhongduan, 931
- Wulan, 926
- Wutai bibu, 938
- Wuwei. *See* Liangzhou
- Wuyuan lu, 943
- Wylie, Turrell V., 1169
- xac' kars* (stone crosses), 1126
- Xi Xia, 1223. *See also* Tangut
- Xi Xia xue* (Xi Xia Studies), 1252
- Xi Xia yanjiu* (Xi Xia Research), 1252
- Xia Nai, 934
- Xiang Da, 930
- Xiangyangfu, 1091
- Xiantai tongji* (Comprehensive records of the Censorate), 938
- Xiantai tongji xuji* (Supplement to the Comprehensive records of the Censorate), 938
- Xiao Xun, 1362
- Xie Jisheng, 1255
- Xili Gambu, 1254
- Xin Yuanshi*, 924
- Xinbian shiwen leiju hanmo quanshu*, 954
- Xinbian shiwenleiyao qizhaqingqian*, 954
- Xingtongfushu*, 943
- Xingyuan-gu*, stupa, 1287
- Xinjiang, 973, 991, 1210, 1217, 1340, 1341–42, 1345
- Xinjiang Historical Museum, 1341
- Xinjing, 992
- Xinkan leibian lieju sanchang wenxuan*, 940
- Xinzhongguo chutu muzhi*, 950
- Xiong Wenbin, 1254n23
- Xishi ji*, 933
- Xiyou lu*, 930
- Xu Bingchang, 951
- Xu Heng, 944
- Xu Quansheng, 929
- Xu Ting, 929
- Xu Youren*, 944
- xuanweisi, 1166
- xylographs, 974, 998–99, 1173
- Ya'aqov ben R. Eliyahu, 1265
- Yaik*, river. *See* Ural
- Yamada, N., 1218, 1219
- Yamaguchi, Zuiho, 1174
- Yan Liben, 1384
- Yang Anpu, 1256
- Yang Fuxue, 1254
- Yang Lianzhenjia, 1256, 1367, 1382
- Yang Ne, 940
- Yang Shuhong, 951
- Yang Xiaochun, 932, 933
- Yang Yu, 946
- Yang Shao-yun, 931
- Yangzhou, 1091, 1212
- Yanjialiang, 1301
- Yanjing (modern Beijing), 928, 935, 1013, 1350, 1367
- Yao Congwu, 929, 930
- Yao Sui, 944
- Yao Tongshou, 947
- yarligh. *See* edict
- Yarligh of Ahmed-Khan to Ivan III*, 1065
- gYas ru tshang pa Śrībhūtibhadra (dPal 'byor bzang po), 1169
- yasa*, 910, 1018, 1023, 1329
- Yassi Çıman, battle of, 903
- Yazdi, Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī, 909–10, 1160
- Ye Dehui, 926, 977
- Ye Ziqi, 946

- yeke dīwān* (the Great Council), 989
Yeke Mongghol ulus (*Yeke Mongol Ulus*, Great Mongol Empire), 981, 982
Yeke tobcha'an (Great Summary), 980
 Yelü Chucai, 930, 944
 Yemen, 1009, 1026, 1335, 1336
 Yi Che-hyŏn, 1192–94
 Yi Kok, 1192–94
 Yi Kyu-bo, 1192
 Yi Saek, 1193
 Yi Süng-hyu, 1192
 Yinchuan, 1250
Yingcang Heishuicheng wenxian, 951
Yingchang-fu, 1300
Yinshan zhengyao, 928, 1369, 1370, 1386
 Yinshan, mountains, 1282, 1295, 1296
 Yisüi qatun, 978
 Yisün Temür (Taiding), Qa'an, his edict (*jartigh*) of 1328 for 'Od-zer Rgyal-mthsan, 995
 Yisün Temür, Chaghadaid khan, his order (*üge*) about the Yogâcārya monastery's landed property, 991
 Yisütingge, son of Qasar, 980
 Yiu Shim, official, 983
 Yixing Huijue, 1255
 Yöğ'ong P'esöl, 1193
 Yogâcārya monastery, 991
 Yongchang, 1220
Yongle Dadian, Ming encyclopedia, 937–39, 947, 948, 977
 Yon-tan Rgyal-mtshan, appointed as *zhaotaoshi*, 995
 Yoshida, 985
 Yossef ibn Kaspi, rabbi, 1268
 Yu Ji, 944
Yuan dianzhang, 942–43
 Yuan dynasty, 882, 920, 1349, 1351–52
 administrative orders, 1220
 Arabic accounts of, 1026
 architecture, 1362
 blue-and-white porcelain, 1360, 1377
 books printed on backs of official documents, 952
 Buddhist art and architecture, 1382
 cuisine, 1370
 cultural and connoisseurship activities, 1352–54
 development of drama, 945
 development of industry, 1297–99
 encyclopedias, 953–54
 foreign populations, 1381
 gazetteers, 947–48
 illustrated manuscripts, 1356
 importance of Qaraqorum, 1288–89
 literary collections, 944–45
 maritime activity, 1301–3
 memorials, 940
 miscellaneous notes (*biji*), 945–47
 official history. *See* *Yuan shi*
 painting techniques, styles, 1386–88
 palace construction, 1285, 1293
 paper money, 1375
 patronage of the arts, 1365
 plaques, 1375
 plasterwork, 1388
 relations with Koryŏ, 1185–88, 1190–91, 1192–96
 religion and rituals, 1296–98
 seals, 1374
 seasonal migration, 1293
 state supervision of workshops, 1380
 temples, 1296
 Tibetan Buddhism, 1350
 travelogues, 933–34
 unofficial histories and private historical writing, 934–37
 Yuan empire, 1092, 1095, 1096, 1186, 1193, 1195, 1288
 Yuan Haowen, 944
Yuan hunli gongju kao, 939
 Yuan Jue, 944
Yuan Ming shiliao biji congkan, 932, 945
Yuan shi (Official History of the Yuan), 920–23, 925, 927, 933, 955, 974, 977
 accounts of agricultural practices, 1297–98
 biographies, 935, 1371
 information about tribute wares, 1352, 1382n123
 later rewrites, 923–24
 on the location of Qubilai's capital at Qaraqorum, 1286
 official administrative publications used as sources, 937–38, 942
 records of religious rituals, 1296–97
Yuan wenlei, 939
Yuan yitongzhi, 947
 Yuanbaoshan, 1296
Yuanchao bishi. *See* *Secret History of the Mongols*
Yuanchao mingchen shilüe, 936
Yuandai baihuabei jilu, 950
Yuandai falü ziliao jicun, 943
Yuandai zouyi jilu, 940
Yuanren wenji pianmu fenlei suoyin, 944
Yuanren zhuanji ziliao suoyin, 944
Yuanshi cidian, 955
Yuanshi erzhong, 924

- Yuanshi jiaozhu*, 922
Yuanshi yanjiu, 955
Yuantong yuanmian jinshi lu, 939
 Yüknākī, 1159
 Yulin caves, Dunhuang, 1225
 Yunchuang congke, 936
 al-Yūnīnī, 1011n21, 1017
 Yunli, Manchu prince, 974
 Yürinkan, Mongol documents, Kyoto, 992
 Yürük, place, 991
 Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib of Balāsāghūn, 1150
Yutang jiahua, 932, 933

Ẓafar-nāma ('Alī Yazdī), 909
Ẓafar-nāma (Mustawfī), 896–98, 908, 909
 Zak'arids, 1125
 al-Zamakhsharī, Jārullāh Maḥmūd b. 'Umar, 973, 1151, 1152
 Zanjān, 1316, 1318
 Zanjir Sarāy, 1343
 Zaragoza, 1266
 Zarbhanalean, Garegin, 1126
 Zayn al-Dīn Qazwīnī, 908–9
 Zaytūn. *See* Quanzhou
 Zenkovsky, A. A., 1053n27, 1063n75
 Zha-lu Buddhist monastery (Tibet), 995
 Zhamtaaghmcerei ("Chronicler of the Times"), 1135
 Zhang Chongyan, 951
 Zhang Dehui, 932
 Zhang Dexin, 937
 Zhang Fan, 943
 Zhang Yingrui, Chinese serviceman of Nachin and his son Olochin, his epitaph of 1335, 982
 Zhao Gong (Zhao Hong), 928–29
 Zhao Mengfu, 944, 1352, 1356, 1375, 1384, 1387–88
 Zhao Tianlin, 940
 Zhao Yan, 1357
 Zhao, George Qingzhi, 923
zhaotaoshi, pacification commissioner, 995
zhaotaosi, Office of Pacification (Mong. *Cheutausi, yamun*), 993
 Zharkent, 1342

 Zheng Jiefu, 940
 Zheng Yuanyou, 947
Zhenla fengtuji, 933–34
 Zhenzishan burial site, 1295
 Zhidoslav, commander (voevoda), 1057
Zhiyuan xinge, 941
Zhiyuan yiyu. *See* Menggu yiyu
Zhizheng tiaoge, 941–42
 Zhongdu, 1367
 Zhongdu palace, 1293
 Zhongfeng Mingben, 1381
Zhongguo cang Heishuicheng Hanwen wenxian (Documents in Chinese from Qara-Qoto held in China), 951
Zhongguo chuantong leishu ziliaoku (Database of traditional Chinese encyclopedias), 954
Zhongguo fangzhiku (Database of Chinese gazetteers), 948
Zhongguo jiben gujiku (Database of Chinese classic ancient books), 922, 956
Zhongguo shuzi fangzhiku (Digital database of Chinese gazetteers), 948
Zhonghua shuju (China Publishing House), 921–22, 924, 925, 930, 936, 937, 945
Zhongtang shiji, 935
Zhonguo leishuku (Database of Chinese Encyclopedias), 954
Zhongwen tapian ziyuanku (Database of Rubbings in Chinese), 950
 Zhou Daguan, 933
 Zhou Fu, 940
 Zhou Mi, 946, 1352
 Zhou Nanrui, 939
 Zhu Shijia, 948
 Zhu Yuanzhang, Ming emperor, 921
 Zieme, P., 982n37, 1218n2, 1219n8
 Zoroastrianism, 879
 Zou Shen zhi, 929
Zubdat al-āthār, 1160
Zubdat al-fikra fī tar'īkh ahl al-hijra, 1016
Zubdat al-tawārīkh, 893, 909
Zum Untergang zweier Reiche: Berichte von Augenzeugen aus den Jahren 1232–33 und 1368–70, 934