

Chapter 2

The Mongols in Iran

Someone had fled Bukhārā after the event and came to Khurāsān. They asked him of the circumstances of Bukhārā. He said: “They came, they gouged, they burnt, they slew, they pillaged, and they left.” The savvy crowd who heard this account agreed that greater concision could not be achieved in the Persian language.¹

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Chormaqaṇ-qorchi subdued the Baqtat people. Knowing that the land was said to be good and its possessions fine, Ögödei-qahan issued the following decree: “Chormaqaṇ-qorchi shall remain there as garrison commander. Each year he shall make [the people] send [me] yellow gold, [gold brocade], . . . and damasks, small pearls, large pearls, sleek Arab horses....”²

* * *

And those who remained in the towns had for the most part blocked their doors with masonry, or partially barricaded themselves and entered and exited through the roofs, fleeing the tax-collectors. And when the tax-collectors would go to the neighborhoods they would reveal a miscreant low-life who had knowledge of the houses, and by whose guidance they could drag the people out of the nooks, cellars, orchards, and ruins.... As an example, the situation in Yazd was such that if one wandered its villages one could not see anyone at all to speak to or one from whom to ask directions. And the very few who had stayed behind had a designated lookout, who would signal as soon as he saw anyone at a distance, so that all could hide underground in the qanāts [i.e., aqueducts].³

¹‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik Juwaynī, *Jahāngushā-yi Juvaynī: Changīz, Tārābī, Khvārazmshāh, Ḥasan Ṣabbāh, bā ma’nī-i vāzhah’hā*, 1st ed. (Tehrān: Intishārāt-i Mahtāb, 1371), 40; ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 107.

²Urgunge Onon, *The Secret History of the Mongols: The Life and Times of Chinggis Khan* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001), 267; Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 107.

³Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, 1028.

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to look at Mongol presence in Persia during the thirteenth century in order to better define the historical backdrop of Shīrāzī's life and career. While Shīrāzī was not yet born at the time of the initial conflict in the second and third decades of the century, the initial Mongol invasions were in many ways the defining events for the subsequent century and the trauma and disruption that they caused would likely have been felt not only by the immediate survivors but by subsequent generations, both in the affected areas and in neighboring regions. With the benefit of hindsight, historians often interpret the Mongol invasions and their aftermath as an attestation of the resilience of the subjugated cultures that were on the receiving end of the military campaigns of the Mongols. For the purpose of our study it is perhaps even more important to recognize that in this period the lives of those living in the eastern lands of the *abode of Islam*, whether cosmopolitan elites or illiterate peasants, abounded with various contingencies and uncertainties (as well, at times, as opportunities) that stemmed from their existence as imperial subjects of the vast Mongol empire. As a well-known scientist and scholar Shīrāzī spent much of his life close to the centers of political power and thus would have been particularly exposed to both the risks and rewards of the Mongol court.

Viewing the era through his lens of a world-historian living in the twentieth century, Marshal Hodgson terms the campaigns of Chingiz Khan and his successors the "Mongol Catastrophe." Yet, he concludes his discussion of the Mongol period on a positive note by emphasizing that, as traumatic as the Mongol invasions had been, their final result was the assimilation of the war-like nomads by the very cultures they had set out to conquer.⁴ Other historians have noted as well the productive nature of the encounter between the Mongols and their Persian-speaking subjects, specifically with regard to the promotion of a pan-Asian trade network, the demand for luxury goods and the practice of relocating war prisoners (and the ensuing cultural cross-fertilization).

It is important, however, to not lose sight of what appears to have been the singularly violent nature of the initial conquests and the onerous political and economic conditions in the subsequent decades. The hindsight of our modern day observations with respect to the indefatigability of the beleaguered cultures of the eastern lands of Islam – their ability to grow, and to permeate neighboring regions, their success in attracting new religious adherents – should not cloud our perceptions, in other words, with respect to the cataclysmic nature of the period in question as they were perceived by those experiencing the Mongol campaigns and their aftermath.⁵ Even though these campaigns created unprecedented opportunities

⁴Marshall G. S Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), vol. 2, 292.

⁵To gain some perspective on the situation in western Asia it should be noted that the campaigns of the Mongol armies in the first quarter of the thirteenth century appears to have resulted in the extermination of entire cultures, including that of the Tangut and Xi in Central Asia and China.

for the diffusion of goods and of ideas across Eurasia (considerable portions of which were to be ruled by a coalition of Mongol-ruled polities in the subsequent decades) and even though the rapid diffusion and close proximity of previously isolated cultures would no doubt have created a remarkable setting for cultural, religious and intellectual ferment, one of their most singular features remains their ferocity and violence, and – as far as Persia was concerned – the degree to which region was subjected (at least until the rule of Ghāzān, 1295–1304 C.E.) to a ruinous economic policy and exploitation.

Rather than do justice to the history of the Mongols in western Asia with its multiplicity of facets and profusion of detail (for which the reader is referred to the studies that appear in the bibliography) this chapter has the considerably more modest aim of presenting the major historical developments so as to provide a backdrop for our discussion of Shīrāzī's life. The primary goal remains, of course, to highlight especially those historical developments that would have been relevant to the life of Shīrāzī. Using the chronological scheme used by Boyle, we divide the period of interest into three phases: first, the period of the initial campaigns (1219–1226 C.E.); second, the period following the withdrawal of the main Mongol army with the installation of viceroys ruling in the name of the Great Khan in distant Mongolia (1226–1256 C.E., Boyle refers to this period as the period of the viceroys)⁶; third, the period of Ilkhanid rule in Persia (1256–1335 C.E.).⁷ Though born during the period of the viceroys, Shīrāzī lived for essentially all of his adult life under Ilkhanid rule. Indeed, as we will see in Chap. 3 his association with Ṭūsī and Hülegü appears to have been shortly after the arrival of Hülegü in Persia, i.e., at the commencement of the third phase, as defined above. Yet, insofar as the claims to legitimacy by Hülegü and his successors were in many ways rooted in the conquests of Chingiz Khan, and the sociopolitical conditions of Persia had evolved out of those earlier episodes it is necessary to begin our discussion with the appearance of the Mongols in western Asia in 1219 C.E.

2.2 The Mongols in Iran: Global and Local Perspectives

Referring to the period from 945 to c. 1250 C.E. as the “Early Middle Era of Islamate History,” Hodgson characterizes it as one of prosperity and vigor.⁸ He notes that many of the practices and institutions that are today associated with Islam were devised or, in having originated in the preceding period of the Abbasid “High Caliphate,” came into their maturity during this period. As examples of such practices and institutions Hodgson lists the establishment of the ‘*ulamā*’ as a social class, the spread of the Sufi orders, and the development of the *iqṭā*’ system of land

⁶Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 106–109.

⁷Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 106–109.

⁸Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, 4.

grants and of religious endowments or *awqāf*.⁹ Having spent the previous period in a process of transformation, says Hodgson, the practices and institutions of the “Perso-Islamic” world coalesced into a normative form that was capable of being exported from its heartland, i.e., the land “between the Nile and the Oxus,” to neighboring regions, e.g., Anatolia, North Africa, and across northern India, thus making this era one of expansion as well.¹⁰

Not surprisingly, if we were to examine the chronicles of a more local nature written by those who were living during Hodgson’s Early Middle period, we would encounter periods that were less characterized by growth and prosperity than by reversal and discord. Indeed, in the strife-ridden accounts of the *fitna* (i.e., riots/discord) which led to the establishment of Seljuk power in Persia (c. 1040 C.E.) and the predations of the Turkish Ghuzz tribes in eastern Persia (c. 1150) one comes upon the record of appalling atrocities that resulted in widespread destruction.¹¹ The Ghuzz raiding campaigns in eastern Persia in 1179–1180 C.E., for example, are recorded in one of the local histories of Kirmān as follows:

And when the Ghuzz succeeded in their designs, they surged out of Bāghayn and descended in the vicinity of the stream of Māhān, and when they had straitened the situation of Bardsīr [to its limit] they turned to Garmsīr and – Woe to the poor citizens of Jīruft, oblivious and unknowing! – for they swiftly descended upon them and annihilated one hundred thousand souls with a diversity of torments, trials, and tortures. Then, turning their attention to the countryside, wherever there was a prosperous region or an inhabited territory, they transformed it into denuded and abandoned rubble.¹²

Clearly, then, the difference in the two pictures, one depicting advance and the other recession is one of perspective: the first global and epochal, while the other local – both in the temporal and spatial senses.

That taken as a whole Hodgson’s Early Middle period could be considered as a period of growth is especially remarkable, however, for the fact that this period was one in which the lands of Islam experienced a calamity that was of a bona fide global nature. This calamity, which was precipitated by the campaigns of the Mongol armies under their leader Chingiz Khan against their sedentary neighbors, started

⁹For a discussion of the ‘*ulamā*’ as a social class, see Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, 153; for the spread of sufi orders, see Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, 201; see also Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, 50–51.

¹⁰Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, 255–292.

¹¹Omid Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 34; Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, 256; Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography*, 202; ‘Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh* (Bāyruṭ: Dar Ṣāder, 1385), XI, 176; Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, 285; Afḍal al-Dīn Kermanī, *Badāyi’ al-zamān fī waqāyi’ Kirmān*, Bayani, M., Ed. (Tehran: Intisharat-i daneshgah-e Tehran, 1326), 88–89; Fakhr al-Dīn Gurgānī, *Masnavi-i Vis va Ramin* (Calcutta: College Press, 1865), 8–9.

¹²Kermanī, *Badāyi’ al-zamān fī waqāyi’ Kirmān*, 89.

with attacks against the Chin dynasty, in northern China in 1213 C.E.¹³ In western Asia the campaigns were slightly later with the attacks on the cities of Transoxiana commencing in 1219 C.E.¹⁴ Though the parallels to the events surrounding the ascent of the Seljuks and the incursions of the Ghuzz tribes are readily apparent, the Mongol invasions (as recounted by the chroniclers of medieval Persia) dwarfed the scale of the earlier episodes in terms of severity as well as the geographical extent of the conflicts.¹⁵ Indeed, even from a global perspective, these military campaigns appear to have been epoch-making, detrimentally affecting the prosperity of the subsequent two centuries – i.e., Hodgson’s “Later Middle” period, 1250 to c. 1600 C.E.) across the entirety of the Eurasian continent.¹⁶

That the historical chronicles of the period are replete with accounts of extensive devastation or total destruction is an indication of the traumatic nature of these encounters in the shared experience of the chroniclers. What is particularly noteworthy in regard to the Persian historiography of the Mongols, however, is that in addition to references to “uncountable slayings”¹⁷ and “the destruction of regions and the annihilation of the faithful”¹⁸ one also encounters statements depicting devastation of such magnitude as to represent a woeful rupture with an irrecoverable past. Less than a century after the termination of Hodgson’s Early Middle period, Mustaufī Qazwīnī writes: “There is no doubt that the destruction which happened on the emergence of the Mongol state and the general massacre that occurred at that time

¹³H. Desmond Martin, *The Rise of Chingis Khan and His Conquest of North China* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1950), 158. See Hugh Kennedy, *Mongols, Huns and Vikings: Nomads at War* (London: Cassell, 2002), 11, for a timetable of the Mongol conquests in China and Western Asia.

¹⁴Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 307.

¹⁵*Encyclopaedic Ethnography of Middle-East and Central Asia*, 1st ed. (New Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House, 2005), 1; I. Petrushevsky, “The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran Under the Il-Khans,” in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5, J. A. Boyle, Ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 484; Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, 373.

¹⁶Noting a dearth of modern historical studies on the region, Hodgson is reluctant to blame the period of economic reversal in his “Later Middle period,” i.e., subsequent to the Mongol campaigns, on a single cause. The discussion that appears under the rubric “the world-wide crisis” is suggestive but not conclusive: “For almost two centuries, there was something like a world depression reflected in the degree of urbanization, in the volume of trade, in the social resources available, even in sheer numbers of population. This may have been due partly to the after-effects of the Mongol devastations. These after-effects were both direct, in the lands that had themselves been devastated, and indirect, affecting the sources of world trade.” Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 2, 373. Hodgson adds: “The economy of the age of Mongol rule was not expansive but, at least in some areas, contracting – though (to what degree is not clear) on an Oikoumenic scale the Mongols themselves may have been partly responsible for this.” Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, 386. The economy of the areas in Persia that were affected directly appeared to have suffered considerably, however. See I. P. Petrushevsky, “The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran Under the Il-Khans,” in *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5.

¹⁷Hāfiz Abrū, *Jughrāfiyā-yi Hāfiz Abrū: Qismat-i rub‘-i Khurāsān, Harāt, Māyil Haravī*, R., Ed. (Tehrān: Bunyād-i Farhang-i Irān, 1349), 33.

¹⁸Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Nasawī, *Sirat Jalal al-Dīn Minkubirni/Minuvi*, Muḥtabá, Ed. (Tihiran: Shirkat-i Intisharat-i ‘Ilmi va Farhangī, 1986), 79.

will not be repaired in a 1,000 years, even if no other calamity occurs; and the world will not return to the condition in which it was before that event.”¹⁹

The most notable Persian work that chronicles this unprecedented set of encounters between the Mongols and the Persianate cultures of western Asia is the *History of the World-Conquerer* by ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik Juwaynī (1226–1283 C.E./623–681 A.H.).²⁰ Juwaynī commenced on writing this work c. 1252 C.E. and completed it c. 1260 C.E.²¹ The book treats the history of the Mongols from shortly before Chingiz Khan’s rise to power to the conquest of the Ismailis in Persia by Chingiz’s grandson Hülegü. Juwaynī has been accused of servility to his Mongol patrons as well as of exaggerating the scale of the events he depicts. Though the accusations do not do justice to this remarkable historian and administrator,²² there is no reason to doubt that Juwaynī would have had to accommodate both his urge to report the sensational and violent campaigns as well as his desire to please his patrons and to protect his own personal well-being, while cognizant at all times of his position as a high-ranking bureaucrat in the Mongol government. These facts may help explain why, for example, he is meticulous in recording the cities that were spared

¹⁹Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, *The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat-al-qulub Composed by Ḥamd-Allāh Mustawfī of Qazwīn in 740 (1340)* (Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1915), 2, 34. The original Persian can be seen in the first volume of the same work: Qazwīnī, *The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat-al-qulub*, vol 1, 27.

²⁰For Juwaynī’s life see Barthold, W. “DJuwaynī, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā-Malik b. Muḥammad.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Edited by: P. Bearman; (Brill Online, 2011) <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam.SIM-2131>. Bar Hebraeus says of Juwaynī: “He had an adequate knowledge of the poetic art. And he composed a marvelous work in Persian on the chronology of the kingdoms of the Saljuks, and Khawarazmians, and Ishmaelites, and Mongols; what we have introduced into our work on these matters we have derived from his book.” Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography*, 473.

²¹George Lane, “JOVAYNI, ‘ALĀ’-AL-DĪN,” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2009, <http://www.iranica.com/articles/jovayni-ala-al-Dn>.

²²See D. O. Morgan, “Persian Historians and the Mongols,” in *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds*, D. O. Morgan, ed., (SOAS, London, 1982), 113–118. For the life of Juwaynī’s first patron Möngke see Morgan, D.O. “Möngke.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition., Edited by: P. Bearman, (Brill Online, 2010) <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam.SIM-5260>. In reading Juwaynī’s history one can’t help wondering if there aren’t instances in which he may have reduced the level of mayhem and carnage a bit. The account of the wretched woman from Tirmidh, who, in an effort to buy time, admits to having swallowed some of her pearls, thus meeting an immediate and gruesome end, is one such example. The same account appears in Waṣṣāf’s account. While it is true that Waṣṣāf’s version is gorier and even more violent than Juwaynī, it is also more consistent with the level of mayhem in the rest of the account, and – given the tenor of the account – rings truer than Juwaynī’s. It should also be noted that some of Juwaynī’s astronomical figures may not have been too far off the mark. Jackson is one of the authors who disputes Juwaynī’s figures for the number of descendants of Chingiz Khan, in his article “From Ulus to Khanate: The Making of the Mongol States c. 1220 – c. 1290,” *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, Amitei-Preiss, R. and D. Morgan (Brill, Leiden, 1999), 12. Though Juwaynī’s figures are implausibly high, modern genetic studies have in fact suggested a gargantuan number of offspring for the ruler (see Travis, J., “Genghis Khan’s Legacy?,” *Science News* 163, no. 6 (February 8, 2003): 91).

ruination.²³ That Juwaynī was interested, generally speaking, in the veracity of what he was relating can also be seen in the fact that occasionally – as in the episode of Khwārazm, he, too, encounters an unacceptably high figure for the dead and refuses to include it in his book.²⁴ So, while the purported scale of the destruction often seems implausible – at Marw (Merv) Juwaynī records 1,300,000 dead²⁵ – there is little reason to suspect Juwaynī of willfully inflating his figures. At any rate, to fully appreciate these figures it is important to recognize the true significance of the reports, i.e., that to witness as well as chronicler, the events precipitated by the Mongol invasions were of a singular and unprecedented scale, and the implausible figures that were reported by witnesses or chroniclers were meant to convey the unimaginable scale of the destruction.²⁶

Juwaynī's loyalty to his employers as well as the recognition of his own place as a successful bureaucrat in the administration of the vast Mongol empire can perhaps best be discerned by the emphasis that he places on the efforts at rehabilitation since the original cataclysms (that had occurred roughly three decades before the time he was writing). This can be seen, for example, in his account of the sack of Bukhārā (1220 C.E.). Here Juwaynī provides a detailed account of the conquest of this important Central Asian city by describing the surrender of the townspeople, the resistance of the garrison stationed at the citadel, the use of the Bukhārāns as human shields in the siege of the citadel, the filling of the moat (for the citadel) with the “animate and inanimate” bodies of the levied Bukhārāns used as fodder, and the burning down of the entire town so that it came to resemble a “level plain.”²⁷ Yet, he also concludes the same section of his work with a rather sanguine report of the subsequent revival of Bukhārā at the time of the penning of his book.²⁸

There may be an additional significance to Juwaynī's buoyant tone in regard to the revival of Bukhārā, however, and this becomes apparent by reviewing his preliminary comments on the Mongol conquest of Transoxiana (in which both Bukhārā and Samarqand are located) as a whole:

Chingiz Khan came to these countries in person. The tide of calamity was surging up from the Tartar army, but he had not yet soothed his breast with vengeance nor caused a river of blood to flow [as was pre-ordained by Fate]. When, therefore, he took Bukhārā and Samarqand, he contented himself with slaughtering and looting once only, and did not go to the extreme of a general massacre; and of those regions that were the dependencies and subsidiaries [i.e., of Bukhārā and Samarqand], since the majority of these offered their allegiance, [the Mongols] defiled these regions even less, and subsequently they

²³ Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, 89; Juwaynī, *The Ta'rikh-i Jahān-Gushā*, 69.

²⁴ Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, 128; Juwaynī, *Jahāngushā-yi Juwaynī*; Juwaynī, *The Ta'rikh-i Jahān-Gushā*, 101.

²⁵ Ibn al-Athīr's figure is 700,000, *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, 12, 393.

²⁶ D. Morgan, *Medieval Persia, 1040–1797* (London: Longman, 1988), 80.

²⁷ Juwaynī, *The Ta'rikh-i Jahān-Gushā*, 75–83.

²⁸ Juwaynī, *The Ta'rikh-i Jahān-Gushā*, 84–85.

mollified what remained and were inclined to repair [these remains] so that presently [i.e., c. 1259/1260 C.E.] the prosperity and well-being of some of those domains equal what they were before, and for others they are approaching [their original condition].²⁹

In a rather grim foreshadowing, however, Juwaynī continues:

It is otherwise with Khurāsān and Iraq, which countries are afflicted with a hectic fever and a chronic ague: every town and every village has been several times subjected to pillage and massacre and has suffered this confusion for years, so that even though there be generation and increase until the Resurrection the population will not attain to a tenth part of what it was before. The history thereof may be ascertained from the records of ruins and midden-heaps declaring how Fate has painted her deeds upon palace walls.³⁰

Here we see repeated (at a considerably smaller divide from the events themselves) a sense of the unspeakable horrors suffered by Khurāsān and Irāq (meaning here *‘Irāq-i ‘ajam*, or Persian “Iraq”),³¹ and the enormous losses, economic as well as cultural, incurred by the lands that were on the Mongol war-path, as expressed by Qazwīnī.

It is reasonable to assume, then, that part of Juwaynī’s project (his role as prominent bureaucrat notwithstanding) is to capture, within the general ghastliness of the war campaigns, a hierarchy of destruction and violence. Since by all accounts Khurāsān – the initial conquest of which Chingiz entrusted to his son, Tolui – appears to have borne the brunt of many of the exceptionally violent events during the conquest, Juwaynī may have been taking pains to make sure that the violence this region suffered was emphasized against the texture of the general mayhem.³² In a short chapter entitled “A brief account of Toli’s [i.e., Tolui’s] Conquest of Khurāsān,” Juwaynī writes:

With one stroke a world which billowed with fertility was laid desolate, and the regions thereof became a desert and the greater part of the living dead, and their skin and bones crumbling dust; and the mighty were humbled and immersed in the calamities of perdition. And though there were a man free from preoccupations, who could devote his whole life to study and research and his whole attention to the recording of events, yet he could not in a long period of time acquit himself of the account of one single district nor commit the same to writing. How much more is this beyond the powers of the present writer who, despite his inclinations thereto, has not a single moment for study, save when in the course of distant journeyings, he snatches an hour or so when the caravan halts and writes down these histories!³³

²⁹Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, 97 (slightly modified translation); Juwaynī, *The Ta’rikh-i Jahān-Gushā*, 75. Prof. Boyle’s translation, with minor modifications.

³⁰Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, 96; Juwaynī, *The Ta’rikh-i Jahān-Gushā*, 75. Prof. Boyle’s translation.

³¹For a definition of *Irāq-i ‘ajam*, see L. Lockhart, “DJībāl,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman. (Brill Online, 2010), <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam.SIM-2068>.

³²Juwaynī, *The Ta’rikh-i Jahān-Gushā*, 144; al-Harawī Sayf ibn Muḥammad ibn Ya’qūb, *The Ta’rikh Nāma-I-Harat (The History of Harāt) of Sayf Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ya’qūb Al-Harawī* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1944).

³³Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 734. Prof. Boyle’s translation.

In contrast to Juwaynī's comments on the optimistic outcome at Bukhārā, this passage highlights the level of damage incurred by Khurāsān, while echoing as well Qazwīnī's sense of wonder and dismay at the magnitude of the destruction.

Chingiz Khan's final battle in western Asia, as it appears in Juwaynī's work, was against Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn, the last of the Khwārazmshāh dynasty – a Turkish dynasty ruling Persia – on the banks of the Indus (this is dated to between the 21st of August and the 19th of September, 1221 C.E.). This encounter was one from which Jalāl al-Dīn famously escaped with his life (eliciting, in so doing, the admiration and wonder of the Mongol ruler).³⁴ Until his death in August 1231 C.E., Jalāl al-Dīn represented the only tangible resistance to the Mongols, but this resistance – though perhaps significant to the immediate survivors of the Mongol campaigns – appears to have had little influence on the subsequent history of Persia.³⁵

Shortly after his encounter with Jalāl al-Dīn, Chingiz turned his views homeward to distant Mongolia.³⁶ According to the *Secret History of the Mongols*, Chingiz “left governors at the cities he had conquered” before returning home.³⁷ Other historical sources state that in addition to the local governors (*basqāq* in Mongolian, *shahna/shihna* in Persian/Arabic) various Mongol generals acted as viceroys administering and conducting military operations within Persian lands in the period subsequent to Chingiz's return to Mongolia.³⁸ However, Judith Kolbas – whose research is focused on the numismatic evidence of the Mongol era – comments, on the absence of any evidence indicating a permanent Mongol presence south of the Oxus river, subsequent to the initial campaigns (i.e., Prof. Boyle's first phase). She suggests that the Mongol withdrawal, which may have in part been triggered by the Tangut uprising, changed at this point from a policy of “occupation” to “devastation.” Returning to their Mongol homeland that had been made suddenly vulnerable by challenges and uprisings, Kolbas argues, the Mongol armies were left with no choice but to finish off any of the surviving populations that could provide resistance in the future.³⁹ If Kolbas is correct in her interpretation, then it is likely this scorched-earth policy with regard to the regions south of the Oxus river that is likely part of what survives in the chronicles as to the utter ruination of Khurāsān and ‘Irāq-i ‘ajam.

Needless to say, the lack of a permanent Mongol presence in these regions would also help explain the accounts of the subsequent revival of Transoxiana, which as a permanent holding of the Mongols would likely have been subject to an official policy of repair and restoration. In this account, large portions of Persia to the south

³⁴ Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 320.

³⁵ Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 335.

³⁶ Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 321.

³⁷ Onon, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 254. See also the quote from *The Secret History* at the beginning of the current chapter.

³⁸ Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 336–340.

³⁹ Judith G Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran: Chingiz Khan to Uljaytu, 1220–1309* (London: Routledge, 2006), 60.

of the Oxus River – having been destroyed and heavily depopulated – may well have served primarily as a site for periodic looting raids or as grazing grounds for the large flocks of the pastoral Mongols. It is perhaps significant that in Rashīd al-Dīn's account, one of the only vassals listed as paying obeisance to Hülegü on the eve of his campaign in Persia were the Salghūrid ruler of Fārs, i.e., the region in which Shīrāzī was born and spent his youth and which appears to have been spared from destruction.

That during the era of the viceroys portions of Persia were left in a state of desolation with the absence of any semblance of a central authority can also be seen in local histories such as that of Ṣāḥīb al-Dīn Mar'ashī who writes of the northern region of Māzandarān: "And since the affairs of Māzandarān had remained in a state of lawlessness and chaos, Malik Ḥusām al-Dawla . . . conquered this region in the year 635 A.H. (1237–1238 C.E.), but since the [region] was, due to the decimation of the Mongols, empty of notables he was unable to provide order, and merely attempted to repair the cities and to provide law and order to the best of his ability. And he struck an agreement with the Rustamdār rulers to move to Amul, since the passage of the Mongol army was in Sārī."⁴⁰ Mar'ashī adds that the ruin heaps in Sārī and Amul were still visible when he was writing in 1470 C.E.⁴¹

It is also possible to discern from Mar'ashī's words that, despite their vast scale, the Mongol campaigns in this period (i.e., during our first and second phases) were, characterized by some degree of unevenness with respect the degree of control exerted by the Mongols subsequent to their initial campaigns. As we noted earlier, Fārs which was Quṭb al-Dīn's birthplace, appears to have largely escaped destruction. Indeed, the Salghūrid rulers of Fārs appear to have been successful in negotiating a working relationship as vassals to the Mongols until the third quarter of the thirteenth century C.E.⁴²

It is not clear to what extent the survivors of the Chingiz Khan's military campaigns (all of whom were now theoretically the subjects of the great Khan in distant Karakorum) could draw comfort from the fact that ruination had not visited all of the commercial and cultural centers of Persia to the same extent, and that the Ruler of the Faithful still ruled from Baghdād. At any rate, the political situation of the region was to change again with accession of Chingiz's grandson Möngke to the position of great Khan in 1251 C.E.⁴³ Seeking to consolidate the Mongol holdings in western Asia, he dispatched his brother Hülegü to the conquered lands in the west. Hülegü's campaign commenced in 1256 C.E. By 1258 the Ismaili polity in eastern and north-central Persia had been destroyed, Baghdād had been conquered and viciously sacked, the last caliph of the Abbasid line, executed. In addition all

⁴⁰Ṣāḥīb al-Dīn Mar'ashī, *Geschichte von Tabaristan, Rujan und Masanderan* (St. Petersburg: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1850), 264.

⁴¹Ṣāḥīb al-Dīn Mar'ashī, *Geschichte von Tabaristan, Rujan und Masanderan*, 264.

⁴²C. Bosworth, "Salghurids," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman. (Brill Online, 2010), http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-6531.

⁴³Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns," 340.

of modern-day Iran and much of present-day Iraq was incorporated into a newly formed Ilkhanid realm headed by Hülegü himself.⁴⁴ It is not apparent if the founding of the Ilkhanid polity was part of the original understanding with Möngke, but when this was accomplished it does not appear to have caused an issue with Karakorum.⁴⁵ Hülegü's descendants ruled Persia until their power disintegrated in the first half of the following century, nominally due to dynastic and succession issues, but no doubt, also due to practices and policies that ultimately proved unsustainable.

In the remainder of this chapter I will present a dynastic chronology of the Ilkhans, the dynasty under which – with the exception of the years of his youth – Shīrāzī was to spend all of his life and conclude with a review of the historical evidence of the observatory of Marāgha to discuss the role of the Ilkhans as patrons of the sciences and of astronomy in particular.

2.3 A Chronology of the Ilkhans

2.3.1 *The Founding of a Dynasty: Hülegü (1256–1265 C.E.)*

A grandson of Chingiz by Tolui, Hülegü⁴⁶ left Mongolia in 1253 at the behest of his brother the great Khan Möngke, with a mission to subjugate the Nizārī Ismailī's of Persia as well as subjugating the Abbasid caliph in the event that he refused to offer his allegiance.⁴⁷ Hülegü arrived at Samarqand in 1255 C.E., and received the homage of the minor rulers, amirs, and viceroys of Persia upon crossing the Oxus a short while later.⁴⁸ Among the rulers that paid homage were “the heir and successor of the Atabeg Muẓaffar al-Dīn of Fārs [i.e., the Salghūrid ruler], and the rival Seljuk sultans from Rūm, ‘Izz al-Dīn and Rukn al-Dīn.”⁴⁹ Hülegü's address to the assembly of amirs and atabegs appears in Rashīd al-Dīn's history:

We have come to destroy the forts of the unbelievers by the Qā'ān's orders. If you have come of your will, with men and materiel, your land and home will remain yours, and your efforts will be appreciated. If not, then by God's will, when we are through with them we will march against you, heedless of excuses, and to your land and your home the same will be done as will have been done to theirs.⁵⁰

⁴⁴Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 340–355.

⁴⁵Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 340.

⁴⁶Hülegü is generally referred to as Hulākū or Hulāgū in the Persian sources, and as Hulāghū in Arabic sources.

⁴⁷Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 688; R. Amitai, “HULĀGU KHAN,” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2004, <http://www.iranica.com/articles/hulagu-khan>.

⁴⁸Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 688.

⁴⁹Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 341; Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 688.

⁵⁰Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 688.

The conquest of the Ismaili forts in Quhistān and Daylam, in eastern and north-central of Iran, proceeded swiftly and the Ismaili polity was effectively brought to an end with the surrender of the Ismaili ruler, Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh (r. 1255–1257 C.E.), at the fort of Maymūndiz on Sunday 29 Shawwāl 654 A.H./19 November 1256 C.E.⁵¹ ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Juwaynī was present and, acting as Hülegü’s secretary, penned the *yarligh* granting safe conduct to Rukn al-Dīn.⁵² Upon the surrender of the fort of Alamūt some days later, Juwaynī was able to visit the famed library and to preserve some of the books and some of the astronomical instruments from destruction (while, at the same time, zealously consigning the Ismaili tracts that he found to the flames).⁵³ It was Juwaynī, also, who penned the terms of the surrender for the Ismailis.⁵⁴

Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī was among the notables that surrendered at Maymūndiz.⁵⁵ The fame of this scientist, then in his fifties, had reached Karakorum, and Hülegü had been entrusted by the Great Khan with sending him to the Mongolian capital. Instead, Hülegü retained Ṭūsī as a member of his own retinue, where he became a trusted adviser and the administrator of the religious endowments (*awqāf*) in the Ilkhanid realms. Ṭūsī served as well as the first director of the Marāgha observatory; the construction of which was funded, at least according to some historians, by the very *awqāf* revenues for which Ṭūsī had been appointed as administrator.⁵⁶ In his *Zīj-i Ilkhānī*, written during his tenure at Marāgha, Ṭūsī claims that he had been held by the Ismailis (whom he terms heretics) against his will, but this claim contradicts some of the other historical information from his life, including his own writings.⁵⁷

Upon the extermination of the Ismailis Ṭūsī’s new master, Hülegü, was able to focus on his second task: the extermination of the Abbasid caliphate. On the ninth of Rabī‘ al-ākhir 655 A.H. (April 25 1257 C.E.) he arrived at Dīnāwar and shortly thereafter at Hamadān where he sent a letter to the caliph “on the tenth of Ramaḍan, with warnings and promises (*bi tahdīd wa wa‘īd*),” stating:

At the time of the capturing of the forts of the infidels we asked for reinforcements from you; in response you claimed to be an ally, but did not send men.... Surely the word of men, common as well as exalted, has reached your ear as to what has befallen the world and its inhabitants at the hand of the Mongol armies from the time of Chingiz to the present time,

⁵¹Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, 690; Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, 634; See also Daftary, *The Ismā‘īlīs*, 426, and Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran*, 155.

⁵²Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 344.

⁵³Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, 719.

⁵⁴Barthold, “DJuwaynī, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Aṭā-Malik b. Muḥammad”; Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, 697; Shafique N. Virani, “The Eagle Returns: Evidence of Continued Isma‘ili Activity at Alamut and in the South Caspian Region Following the Mongol Conquests,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 123, no. 2 (June 2003): 351–370.

⁵⁵Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, 695; Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, 635.

⁵⁶Muḥammad ibn Shākir Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafāyāt wa al-dhayl ‘alayhā* (Beirut: Dar al-Thaqafah, 1973), 3, 250; Sayılı, *The Observatory in Islam and Its Place in the General History of the Observatory*, 207–211.

⁵⁷Ṭūsī, *Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī’s Memoir*, vol. 1, 10.

and what humiliations were made to visit upon the Khwārazmshāhs, and Seljuks and the kings of Daylam and the Atabegs and others who were possessed of glory and might, at the hand of the eternal and ancient God. The gates of Baghdād were not secure against any of these factions, [so that] they held court there. Thus, given our might and power, how can they be secure against us?⁵⁸

Given the fact that Rashīd al-Dīn lists concerns about both the (Ismaili) “unbelievers” as well as the “Caliph in Baghdād” as the reason for Hülegü’s campaign, it is not clear if al-Musta‘ṣam’s cooperation would have changed the course of events.⁵⁹ At any rate, Baghdād fell to the Mongol army on the 4th of Ṣafar, 656 A.H. (February 10th, 1258 C.E.), signaling the end of the storied Abbasid dynasty that had served as the political and religious leadership of the Islamic *umma* for more than five centuries.⁶⁰

Many secondary sources report that Hülegü chose Marāgha as his capital shortly after the fall of Baghdād.⁶¹ The situation with primary sources is not as clear. Rashīd al-Dīn, the main authority on Hülegü’s reign, mentions that Hülegü received the obeisance of vassals at Marāgha after the fall of Baghdād. However, neither Rashīd al-Dīn nor Waṣṣāf (another major source on Hülegü’s reign) mention Marāgha as a

⁵⁸Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, 699.

⁵⁹Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, 684.

⁶⁰Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, 714. In regard to the extermination of the Abbasid line Rashīd al-Dīn states: “At the end of Wednesday on the fourteenth of Ṣafar of 656 they concluded the business of the caliph and his eldest son and five attendants who were with him, [at the village of *w-q-f*] and the following day, those of the others who had descended with him from the Kalwādhī gate, they martyred, and whomever of the Abassids they found, they did not leave alive, all except for the few whom they considered of no account. And Mubarakshāh the youngest son of the caliph they gave to Oljai Khatun, and Oljai Khatun sent him to Marāgha, to Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn, and they gave him a Mongol wife and he had two sons with her, and on Friday the sixth of Ṣafar they made the middle son of the caliph join his father and brother and the rule of the Abbasid caliphs who had come to power after the Umayyads was thus extinguished, and the period of their caliphate was five hundred and twenty five years.” The caliph’s death appears to have been in accordance with a Mongol practice that forbade the spilling of royal blood. This may be the source of the legend that the caliph died from hunger when he was imprisoned in a storeroom containing his treasure but no food. This account appears, for instance, in Waṣṣāf: ‘Abd Allāh ibn Faḥr Allāh Waṣṣāf-i Ḥazrat, *Geschichte Wassaf’s* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010). A quote by the ruler of Miṣr al-Fāraqayn alludes to this, and also to what must have been a perception that al-Musta‘ṣam, had not allocated the proper funds for the defense of his domains: “Thanks be to God that I am not a dinar and dirham-worshipper like Musta‘ṣam who lost his life and the kingdom of Baghdād due to his parsimony and miserliness.” Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, 725.

⁶¹C. Bosworth, “Ordu,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman. (Brill Online, 2010), <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam.COM-0879>; V. Minorsky, “Marāgha,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman. (Brill Online, 2011), <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam.COM-0676>; Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, 714. Minorsky, V. “Marāgha.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Edited by: P. Bearman., (Brill Online, 2010) <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam.COM-0676>.

capital city.⁶² Indeed, Rashīd al-Dīn's chronicle suggests that Marāgha's privileged position may have been due in part to its selection by Ṭūsī as site of the observatory, the building of which commenced the same year as the fall of Baghdād:

And in the aforementioned date, it was decreed, that the great Maulānā . . . the sultan of the learned, Khwājah Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī (May the Lord conceal his faults through His mercy), in a location that he [saw] fit, set up a building for the observation of the stars. He chose a location in Marāgha.⁶³

Certainly, little mention of this city is made in Rashīd al-Dīn's history in the subsequent accounts of Hülegü's life (which are primarily devoted to his various campaigns). These accounts describe Hülegü's attack on Syria,⁶⁴ his campaign against the Mamluks,⁶⁵ the campaigns of the Mongols in eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus,⁶⁶ the treachery of the son of Badr al-Dīn Lau' Lau' (the amir of Mosul) who allies himself with the Mamluks (and suffers a particularly gruesome death),⁶⁷ the outbreak of internecine warfare between Hülegü and Berke the Khan of the Golden Horde.⁶⁸ It is certain that for the majority of these episodes Hülegü would have been residing in his great mobile tent compound, or *ordū*.⁶⁹ Indeed, when Marāgha is mentioned again in the final chapter of Hülegü's life, it is in connection with the observatory (again suggesting that the observatory was what lent Marāgha its unique importance):

Hulāgū loved buildings exceedingly, and of those that he has decreed many have survived. He built a palace in Alātāgh and built pagodas in Khoi and spent that year in the establishment of buildings and in the provident consideration of the welfare of the kingdom the army, and the populace. When fall arrived, desiring to establish his winter encampment at the Zarrīneh-rūd, [the river] which is called Jaghātū by the Mongols, he went to Marāgha and exerted his full efforts in the completion of the [observatory].⁷⁰

⁶²Rashīd al-Dīn's first mention of Marāgha, after the fall of Baghdād and the transfer of the loot from Baghdād, "and the forts of the unbelievers, and Rūm (Anatolia), and Georgia, and Armenia and the Lurs, and Kurds, likewise" to Azarbāijān, merely states that Hülegü received the obeisance of local rulers including Badr al-Dīn Lau' Lau' [the amir of Mosul] in the "vicinity of Marāgha." Rashīd al-Dīn continues "and sent him off on the sixth of Sha'bān of that year, and on the seventh . . . the Atabeg Sa'ad the son of Abu Bakr the Atabeg of Fārs, offered his obeisance and felicitations on the conquest of Baghdād." See Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 717. However the two Seljukid amirs Izz al-Dīn and Rukn al-Dīn (who arrived subsequently) were received in a different locality (i.e., Mausaq, near Tabrīz). Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 717.

Tabrīz appears to have become the official capital of the Ilkhanid dynasty under Hülegü's successor, Abaqa, shortly after his accession on June 19, 1265/third of Ramadan 663. *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 742–743.

⁶³Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 718.

⁶⁴Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 719–725.

⁶⁵Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 721–725.

⁶⁶Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 725–729.

⁶⁷Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 729–731.

⁶⁸Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 731–734.

⁶⁹Linda Komaroff, ed., *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 5.

⁷⁰Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 734.

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, of the amirs that Hülegü received in Marāgha after the fall of Baghdād were the governors of Shīrāzī's home province of Fārs (the Atabeg Sa'ad) as well as the brothers Rukn al-Dīn and 'Izz al-Dīn, who were rival Sultans in Rūm (Anatolia) having been installed in 1246 C.E.⁷¹

Subsequent to the sack of Aleppo and Damascus by the Mongols in 1259, news of the death of Möngke caused Hülegü to withdraw a portion of his forces to the east. Subsequently his general Kitbughā was defeated by the Mamluks of Egypt at 'Ayn Jalūt (i.e., "the spring of Goliath").⁷² This was a significant reversal of Ilkhanid fortune, for it halted the westward advance of the Mongol military machine, and established the Euphrates as the boundary between the two polities. It confirmed as well, the Mamluks as the primary rival for Mongol hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean – a rivalry that was to last for the remainder of the Ilkhanid era.⁷³

The Mamluk Turks – themselves of a Central Asian and nomadic background – had begun to consolidate their power upon the appointment of one of their members, Qutuz, to the regency of Egypt in the aftermath of the defeat of the French monarch Louis IX and his fellow crusaders.⁷⁴ Mamluk-Mongol relations were to greatly preoccupy the subsequent Ilkhan rulers; at least until Öljeitü's last campaign against them in 1313 C.E.⁷⁵ These relations were bitterly antagonistic, and were the cause of repeated attempts by the Mongols and European armies, both within the crusader states in Syria and in Europe proper, to form alliances with each other, against the Mamluks.⁷⁶ The Mongol defeat at 'Ayn Jalūt, which had followed a less crushing defeat of a smaller Mongol force in Gaza (where the Mamluks had again been led by Qutuz), was followed by yet another defeat on the 10th of December 1260 C.E., at Hims. Baybars, who had led the Mamluk army to victory at Hims, and who had been instrumental in the victory at 'Ayn Jalūt had by then become the new Mamluk ruler; having assassinated Qutuz in the short interval between 'Ayn Jalūt and Hims.⁷⁷ He was to be an indefatigable opponent of the Mongols until his death in 1277 C.E.⁷⁸

⁷¹Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, 271–273. These figures are the very same who greeted Hülegü on his arrival (see note 48), suggesting a possible duplicate rendition of the same event.

⁷²Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns," 352.

⁷³Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns," 352.

⁷⁴Syedah Fatima Sadeque, *Baybars I of Egypt*, (Dacca, Oxford University Press, 1956), 36.

⁷⁵Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns," 403.

⁷⁶Constantinople was reclaimed by the Byzantines from the Latins in 1261, leaving the crusader cities of the Levant as the only crusader presence in the eastern Mediterranean. See R.L. Wolff, "The Latin Empire of Constantinople, 1204–1261," in *The History of the Crusades*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1962), 231–233.

⁷⁷Sadeque, *Baybars I of Egypt*, 39–42. For the origin of the term *al-Bunduqdāri* or *Bunduqdār*, the title by which Baybars was known (and by which Rashīd al-Dīn refers to this energetic and successful ruler) see Sadeque, *Baybars I of Egypt*, 30. Homs is one of two English spellings for this important Syrian city, which is also commonly referred to as Hims.

⁷⁸Sadeque, *Baybars I of Egypt*, 46–54, 64–69.

In the last chapter on Hülegü's life Rashīd al-Dīn describes the manner in which he delegated the rule of his vast conquests, consigning Iraq, Khurāsān, and Māzandarān to the shores of the Oxus to his "oldest and best son," Abaqa, and "Arrān and Azarbāijān . . . to Prince Yashmūt, and Diyārbakir and the Rabī'a region up to the Euphrates to the Amir Tudān, and Rūm to Mu'īn al-Dīn Suleimān Parvāneh."⁷⁹ As we will see, Mu'īn al-Dīn was to become one of Shīrāzī's patrons. In Chap. 3 we use the date of Mu'īn al-Dīn's execution (in 1277 C.E., by the order of Hülegü's son, Abaqa) to help pin some of the dates in Shīrāzī's life. Rashīd al-Dīn states that Hülegü assigned Shīrāzī's home region of Fārs – ruled as we saw by the Salghūrid dynasty who were vassals to the Mongols – to the Amir Iknānū, presumably as an overseer of Mongol interests in that vassal state.⁸⁰ Hülegü selected Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Juwaynī, Ata' Malik Juwaynī's brother (and subsequently a patron of Shīrāzī), as the vizier of his domains, "granting him full and absolute power in the [administration of the] kingdom."⁸¹ The author of the *History of the World Conquerer* himself was granted the important governorship of Baghdād.⁸²

Hülegü's death occurred in the year 663 A.H. (1265 C.E.):

As the year of the Bull arrived in the Rabī' al-Awwal of the year 663 (Dec. 1264/Jan. 1265) he was busy with hunting and festivities (*tūy*). Suddenly after the bath an illness returned to his body, through which he felt heavy and became bedridden. And on Tuesday the seventh of Rabī' al-ākhir he took from the hand of the Chinese doctors a laxative, which resulted in unconsciousness and led to a stroke. And no matter how diligently the capable doctors did attempt the purge they were unable to deflect the malady since the levels of vitality had reached the point of morbidity, and no fateful arrangement could be found that was fruitful, nor could a providential drug be found that was beneficial. And at that time a comet came into view, shaped as a conical rod, appearing every night, and as it disappeared on Sunday night of the nineteenth of Rabī' al-ākhir of the year 663 [A.H.] the great event took place. His age was 48 full solar years and on the banks of the Jaghātū he left the roadhouse of annihilation for the eternal abode.⁸³

Hülegü's funeral appears to have been the last Mongol burial in Persia involving human sacrifice. Rashīd al-Dīn discretely omits any mention of this, simply stating: "They built his tomb in the Shāhī mountain that faces Dehkhārghān and in his camp they held mourning ceremonies, and buried his coffin in the tomb."⁸⁴ The reference

⁷⁹Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 734.

⁸⁰Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 734; Thackston's rendition of this name is Vangianu. See Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-Tawarikh*, 2, 513.

⁸¹This he does after executing Amir Sayf al-Dīn Batikhī, the previous holder of the post. See Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, *ibid*. We can only speculate on how the administrative duties of Shams al-Dīn may have affected Ṭūsī's role as chief administrator of the religious endowments. Certainly that Shams al-Dīn's brother does not mention Ṭūsī in his accounts of the fall of the Ismailis is one of the striking omissions in the *World Conqueror*.

⁸²Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 734.

⁸³Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 736.

⁸⁴Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 736.

appears rather in Waṣṣāf: “And in the manner of the Mongols they built a crypt, and poured great quantities of jewels and gold in it, and several ravishing beauties were made to accompany him in his eternal sleep, so that he would be immune to the fear of oblivion.”⁸⁵

2.3.2 *The Mamluk Challenge: Abaqa (1265–1282 C.E.)*

The day for Abaqa’s accession ceremony was determined by Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn to be the third of Ramadan, 663 A.H. (June 19th, 1265 C.E.) with Virgo ascendant (*bi ṭali’-i sunbula*).⁸⁶ Despite the purported auspiciousness of this day, Abaqa was soon faced with threats from the neighboring Mongol factions of the Golden Horde, and the Chaghatai Khanate of Central Asia.⁸⁷ The conflict with the Golden Horde was resolved in 1266 C.E. with the death of Berke, Abaqa’s uncle and the Khan of the Golden Horde.⁸⁸ The Chaghatai armies were dealt a bloody defeat at Harāt on the first of Dhū al-Ḥijja 668/22 July 1270; though raiding parties from Central Asia continued to menace the eastern regions of the Ilkhanate periodically.⁸⁹

Abaqa appears to have taken over the rulership of the Ilkhans with the unanimous support of the Ilkhanid nobles, yet had to wait for confirmation by the great Khan, Qubilai who had succeeded his brother Möngke and had consolidated his rule against the majority of his rivals by 1264 C.E.⁹⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn states that “despite being the protector (*walī*) [i.e., the rightful owner] of the crown and the throne – until the arrival of the messengers from his highness Qubilai Khan and their bringing the *yarligh* in his name – he conducted his affairs seated on a chair.” The *yarligh* with Qubilai’s endorsement did not arrive until 1270.⁹¹ This may explain why, upon his (first, unofficial) accession, Abaqa was munificent to the extreme. According to Rashīd al-Dīn “he gave an untold amount of money and jewelry and fine clothing to the courtiers (*khawāṭīn*), the princes and the amirs, so much so that [even] most of the soldiery was able to benefit.”⁹² In addition, “he made nearly one

⁸⁵‘Abd Allāh ibn Faḍl Allāh Waṣṣāf al-Ḥazrat, *Geschichte Wassaf’s* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), 101.

⁸⁶Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, 742; Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafāyāt wa al-dhayl ‘alayhā*, 3, 249.

⁸⁷P. Jackson, “ABAQA,” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, 1982, <http://www.iranica.com/articles/abaqa>.

⁸⁸Peter Jackson, “ABAQA.”

⁸⁹Peter Jackson, “ABAQA.”

⁹⁰Barthold, W. “Qubilai.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Edited by: P. Bearman, (Brill Online, 2010) <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam.SIM-4469>.

⁹¹Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, 765. Also see Peter Jackson, “ABAQA,” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

⁹²Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, 743.

hundred well-known scientists who were the students of the teacher of mankind, Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, May the Lord have mercy upon him, the beneficiaries of an all-embracing boon.”⁹³

Despite threats by his kinsmen in the Caucasus and Central Asia, the adversaries that were to demand the most attention during Abaqa's rule were the Mamluks. The intense rivalry of these two polities played itself out repeatedly in Syria and in Anatolia throughout Abaqa's reign. The first twelve years of Abaqa's reign coincided with the reign of Baybars. By 1261 C.E. Baybars had re-established Mamluk control over Damascus and Aleppo, and had had a new caliph installed in Cairo to help legitimize his rule.⁹⁴ He had also formed an alliance with Berke, the Khan of the Golden Horde, in 1264 C.E. In 1267 C.E. a skirmish with the Mongols under their new ruler Abaqa ended in a retreat of the Mongol forces.⁹⁵ In the face of such an energetic adversary, Abaqa in turn sought an alliance with Prince Edward of England (later King Edward I) who was leading the crusaders against the Mamluk armies. This alliance was not particularly fruitful, however, since the size of the Mongol forces that were dispatched was apparently too small.⁹⁶ In 1277 Baybars invaded Rūm, roundly defeating the Mongol army at Abulustān.⁹⁷ In retaliation for the tepid support of his Seljuk vassals Abaqa ordered the destruction of the area between Qaisariya and Erzurum, in the same year; calling off the slaughter and the mayhem only after the *Ṣaḥīb Dīwān* Shams al-Dīn's intervention.⁹⁸ Mu'īn al-Dīn Suleimān (also known as the keeper of the seals or “the Parvāneh”), whom as we saw had been confirmed in his role the Mongol-appointed administrator of Rūm by Hülegü, was accused of supporting the Mamluk attack, and paid with his life for this alleged intrigue with Baybars.⁹⁹

Rashīd al-Dīn states that in addition to leaving Shams al-Dīn in power as the chief administrator of the Mongol realms at the beginning of his reign, Abaqa appointed his son, Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad as the governor of 'Iraq-i 'ajam.¹⁰⁰ Bahā' al-Dīn continued his service under Abaqa, until his death in the year 678 A.H. (1279/1280 C.E.).¹⁰¹ In his introduction to the *Durra Mishkat* identifies Bahā' al-Dīn as the dedicatee of Shīrāzī's *Nihāya*.¹⁰² This identification creates an immediate chronological problem and (if the date of Baha' al-Dīn's death is accepted as valid)

⁹³Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 744.

⁹⁴Sadeque, *Baybars I of Egypt*, 43–46.

⁹⁵Sadeque, *Baybars I of Egypt*, 57.

⁹⁶Jackson, “ABAQA”; Michael Prestwich, *Edward I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 78.

⁹⁷Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 361.

⁹⁸Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 361.

⁹⁹Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns,” 361.

¹⁰⁰Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 744.

¹⁰¹Juwaynī, *The Ta'rikh-i Jahān-Gushā*; 'Abd Allāh ibn Faḡl Allāh Waṣṣāf al-Ḥaḡrat, *Taḡhīr-i tārikh-i Waṣṣāf* (Tehran: Bunyād-i Farhang-i Īrān, 1967), 34–37.

¹⁰²Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *Durrat al-tāj li-ghurrat al-dabāj*, page n.

cannot be correct.¹⁰³ (We will revisit the problem of identifying the dedicatee of the *Nihāya* in Chap. 3.) Shams al-Dīn and his brother had to contend with forceful attempts by fellow courtiers to dislodge them from their positions of prominence. In addition to being charged with embezzlement, the brothers were charged with the perhaps even more serious crime of harboring pro-Mamluk sympathies. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn was punished by being humiliatingly paraded in Baghdād, and was subsequently imprisoned in Hamadan.¹⁰⁴ Indeed Abaqa’s death in Hamadān on the twentieth of Dhū al-ḥijja 680/April 1st 1282 C.E., after an evening of excessive drinking, would no doubt have come as a welcome reprieve for both Juwaynī brothers.¹⁰⁵

2.3.3 *An Adoption of Popular Customs: Tegüder Aḥmad (1282–1284 C.E.)*

A notable feature of the reign of Tegüder Aḥmad (or Takūdār, in the Persian sources) is his conversion to Islam (whence the Arabic name Aḥmad), is reported rather tepidly in the account by the Syrian historian Abū al-Fidā’. “And when Abaqa died, his brother Aḥmad the son of Hülegü became king and the name of this aforementioned Aḥmad was Biker [sic], and since when he assumed power he professed Islam he was called Aḥmad Sultan.”¹⁰⁶ As a Mamluk official the lukewarm tone in Abū al-Fidā’'s report is perhaps understandable. Rashīd al-Dīn appears to be as unimpressed as Abū al-Fidā’, however: “They sat him on the throne, and celebrated in the manner to which the Mongols are accustomed, and since he professed Islam they called him Sultan Aḥmad.”¹⁰⁷ This presentation is in stark contrast with that of Rashīd al-Dīn’s employer Sultan Ghāzān, whose conversion to Islam is praised by Rashīd al-Dīn with a lofty and ornate language. One of the possible reasons for the ambivalence regarding Aḥmad’s profession of Islam is the questionable reputation of the man said to be responsible for his conversion: Tegüder Aḥmad’s “adviser,” Sheikh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān of Mosul, was considered by

¹⁰³As we will see the *Nihāya* was completed in November of 1281 C.E. and so postdates Bahā’ al-Dīn’s death by approximately a year.

¹⁰⁴Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, 774.

¹⁰⁵Biran, “JOVAYNI, ŠĀḤEB DIVĀN,” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2009, <http://www.iranica.com/articles/jovayni-saheb-divan>; Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, 779; Jackson, “AḤMAD TAKŪDĀR,” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Encyclopaedia Iranica Online., 1984, <http://www.iranica.com/articles/ahmad-takudar-third-il-khan-of-iran-r>.

¹⁰⁶Ismā’īl ibn ‘Alī Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-bashar*, pt. 4, 63 (See Chap. 1, note 72).

¹⁰⁷Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, 785. It is understandable that Rashīd al-Dīn saves his most fulsome accolades for the conversion of his own employer, Sultan Ghāzān. In addition the copier of the manuscript available for the Karimi edition appears to have had a personal experience with Sultan Aḥmad; a petition of his for which he nearly pays with his life, and includes an account of this encounter as a reprobation of Aḥmad. See Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, 801.

many to be a charlatan.¹⁰⁸ In Rashīd al-Dīn's description, the Sheikh is depicted as something of a distraction to Aḥmad's official duties.

[Aḥmad] had a great intimacy with 'Abd al-Raḥmān, so much so that he called him bābā [i.e., father], and he called Ishan Manklī who was a follower of Bābī Ya'qūb, who had a station in Arrān, qarandash, and would go to their house at all times (Ishan Manklī's house was in the back of the [Royal encampment]) and participate in the *simā'*. And he was less likely to attend to the organization and arrangement of governmental issues, and his mother Qūṭī Khātūn who was wise and capable to the extreme, ensured the interests of the various realms were met.¹⁰⁹

The Sheikh is important for our study, since Rashīd al-Dīn states that "it was at the suggestion of the Sheikh 'Abd al-Raḥmān and Shams al-Dīn (i.e., Juwaynī) the *Ṣāhib Dīwān*, that [Sultan Tegüder Aḥmad] sent Maulānā Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī who was a learned man as a messenger to Egypt on the nineteenth of Jumāda I, 681 (Aug. 25, 1282 A.H.)."¹¹⁰ This embassy, which undoubtedly signifies the prestige of Shīrāzī as a scholar in the court of Tegüder, was the first of two sent by Tegüder Aḥmad. The embassy conveyed a written message which appears in full in Shāfi's account (and is described by him as clattering "with the clatter of the '*ajam*'").¹¹¹ It opens with thanks to the Lord for guiding the ruler to Islam, and describes Tegüder's desire for peace – despite a Mongol assembly (Kuriltai) in which the notables had voiced their desire for a continuation of Abaqa's antagonism with the Mamluks. It lists, as well, Tegüder's reforms which had allowed for improvements in providing for the welfare of his subjects.¹¹² Modern historians have generally viewed the

¹⁰⁸R. Amitai, "Sufis and Shamans: Some Remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42, no. 1 (1999): 27–46; Shāfi' ibn 'Alī Ibn 'Asākir, *Ṣāfi' Ibn 'Alī's Biography of the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn*, 308.

¹⁰⁹Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 788. Sheikh 'Abd al-Raḥmān is also described as a person with supernatural powers. In an episode depicting the intrigue of the courtier Majd al-Mulk against his patrons the Juwaynī brothers we read: "A decree was passed stipulating the return [to their owner] of the possessions and articles of Khwājah 'Ala' al-Dīn Ata' Malik [Juwaynī] that had been . . . confiscated 'Ala' al-Dīn prepared them and presented them [stating]: "What we brothers have accomplished has been through the all-encompassing blessing of the Ilkhāns. In this quriltai [i.e., assembly] your servant [willingly disburses these items back to the treasury]".... And it was decreed that Majd al-Mulk [stand trial instead] . . . [During the trial] in the midst of his trappings they found a fragment of a lion's skin, upon which something had been written in yellow and red with an illegible hand, and since the Mongols detest sorcery to the extreme, they were terrified of the script . . . The . . . sorcerers said that the protective charm should be doused with water, and that [Majd al-Mulk] be forced to drink the extract so that the magical evil would be neutralized. And they prompted Majd al-Mulk to carry this out, but he refused, since the protective charm was one that Sheikh Abd al-Raḥman had devised, and [one he] had planted in his trappings and he was sure that it could not be devoid of [evil powers]." Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 787. See also Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography*, 474; and Amitai, "Sufis and Shamans."

¹¹⁰Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 787.

¹¹¹Shāfi' ibn 'Alī Ibn 'Asākir, *Ṣāfi' ibn 'Alī's Biography of the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn*, 309. This letter was likely written by Shīrāzī himself as we will see in Chap. 3, Sect. 3.5.

¹¹²Shāfi' ibn 'Alī Ibn 'Asākir, *Ṣāfi' ibn 'Alī's Biography of the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn*, 309–316.

embassy as a gesture of peace by the newly converted Mongol ruler.¹¹³ However, the presence of a fragment of verse 17:15 of the Qur'an, "And we do not mete out torment until after we have sent a messenger [to warn]" in the closing of the letter, as well as other features have led one modern historian to conclude that the letter is actually a sort of ultimatum by the Mongol khan to the Mamluk ruler.¹¹⁴ In any event, the mission was a failure, either as ultimatum or indeed as far as changing the status quo between the warring states.

The Mamluk historian 'Abd al-Zāhir writes of the embassy that it was a large one, consisting of "subjects, escorts, slave boys, slave soldiers and notables, all in great splendor."¹¹⁵ He adds: "When they had reached Bira [on the Euphrates, i.e., the frontier] the Sultan wrote to his deputies to guard against them and [to ensure] that none of the [muslims] should see them or associate with them, nor were they to speak with them even a word, and that they [i.e., the Mongol contingent] were not to travel except at night."¹¹⁶ Despite the heavy security, Shīrāzī tells us of his success, in Cairo, of locating several much needed books for his commentary on Avicenna's *Canon* (as we will see in Chap. 3). A loosening of security once the embassy was in Cairo seems highly unlikely, and it is therefore not clear exactly how Shīrāzī was able to obtain his beloved books.

Of the mission's return 'Abd al-Zāhir states that the embassy headed first to Aleppo, "reaching it on the sixth of Shawwāl 681 (Jan. 7th, 1283 C.E.), and from there, headed back to its own country."¹¹⁷ News of Tegüder Aḥmad's death (caused by dynastic struggles, on the 26th of Jumāda I, 683 A.H./Aug. 10th 1284)¹¹⁸ arrived at Cairo during a second Ilkhan embassy. That embassy did not include Shīrāzī, but it was headed by Sheikh 'Abd al-Raḥmān himself.¹¹⁹ (In addition the second embassy included four dervishes "for the sake of chanting," at which 'Abd al-Zāhir expresses his astonishment and wonder.)¹²⁰ According to 'Abd al-Zāhir it was the

¹¹³P.M. Holt, "The Ilkhān Aḥmad's Embassies to Qalāwūn: Two Contemporary Accounts," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 49, no. 1 (1986): 128–132.

¹¹⁴Adel Allouche, "Teguder's Ultimatum to Qalawun," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 22, no. 4 (November 1990): 437–446.

¹¹⁵Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrīf al-ayyām wa al-'uṣūr fī sīrat al-malik al-manṣūr*, 1st ed. (al-Qāhirah: Wizārat al-thaqāfah wa-al-irshād al-qawmī, al-idārah al-'āmmah lil-thaqāfah, 1961), pt. 2. 5.

¹¹⁶Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrīf al-ayyām wa al-'uṣūr fī sīrat al-malik al-manṣūr*, pt. 2. 5.

¹¹⁷Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrīf al-ayyām wa al-'uṣūr fī sīrat al-malik al-manṣūr*, pt. 2., 16.

¹¹⁸Jackson, "AḤMAD TAKŪDĀR," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, 1984, <http://www.iranica.com/articles/ahmad-takudar-third-il-khan-of-iran-r>.

¹¹⁹Ibn 'Asākir, *Šāfi' Ibn 'Alī's Biography of the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn*, 328.

¹²⁰Ibn 'Asākir, *Šāfi' Ibn 'Alī's Biography of the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn*, 329.

Mamluk sultan himself who conveyed news of Aḥmad's death to his sheikh, upon which the sheikh "fell into his arms, unconscious," dying shortly thereafter.¹²¹

In Rashīd al-Dīn's account of Aḥmad's rule, his rivalry with his nephew (and Abaqa's son), Arghūn, through which he ultimately lost his kingdom and his life, is an ever-present theme.¹²² In Bar Hebraeus's *Chronography* we see Arghūn providing the following justification for the elimination of his uncle:

Inasmuch as Aḥmad turned aside from the laws of our fathers, and trod the path of Islam, which our fathers did not know, all the princes agreed and they cast him forth from the kingdom, and sent him to the Khān, our great father, that he might judge him; and they seated me on the throne of the kingdom from the river Gihon to Frankistan.¹²³

Given the skepticism with which many considered Tegüder Aḥmad's conversion to Islam, there is a fair amount of irony in this rationalization for Aḥmad's death.

2.3.4 A Return to Mongol Traditions: Arghūn (1284–1291 C.E.)

Like Abaqa, Arghūn had to await an official endorsement from Karakorum at his assumption to power,¹²⁴ and like him he had to contend with both the Golden Horde and the Chaghatai Khanate, his rivals to the north, and the east.¹²⁵ Though the purported proclamation by Arghūn in which he condemns Aḥmad Tegüder's conversion to Islam does not appear in Rashīd al-Dīn's history, his rule may have been characterized by a certain anti-Islamic sentiment (though some of what is reflected in the Muslim chronicles may be due to the Mongol tolerance of the various religions of their subjects). Upon assuming the throne Arghūn opted for non-Muslim viziers, first appointing Buqa, a Mongol notable, and subsequently Sa'd al-Daula who was Jewish.¹²⁶ Arghūn also appears to have forbidden the employment of Muslim scribes in the court bureaucracy.¹²⁷

Arghūn's reign is also one in which Shams al-Dīn, the *Ṣaḥib Dīwān* under Hülegü, Abaqa, and Aḥmad, was put on trial and executed (Oct. 16th, 1284 C.E./Fourth of Sha'bān, 683 A.H.).¹²⁸ Already during the reign of Aḥmad, Arghūn had charged Shams al-Dīn and his brother with the poisoning of Abaqa. The

¹²¹Ibn 'Asākir, *Ṣāfi' Ibn 'Alī's Biography of the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn*, 332.

¹²²Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 784–788.

¹²³Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography*, 474. Gihon is the Oxus River, from the Persian Jaiḥūn.

¹²⁴Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 812.

¹²⁵Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 821–822.

¹²⁶Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 808.

¹²⁷Jackson, "ARGŪN KHAN," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 1986, <http://www.iranica.com/articles/argun-khan-fourth-il-khan-of-iran-r683-90-1284-91>.

¹²⁸Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 808–811; Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography*, 472–473.

charge for which the great statesman was finally executed, however, was financial misappropriation.¹²⁹ ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Juwaynī, Shams al-Dīn’s brother and author of the *History of the World Conqueror*, had already died in 1283 C.E., likely from a stroke induced by the charges brought against him as a party, allegedly, to Abaqa’s death.¹³⁰

Though a protege of Shams al-Dīn, Shīrāzī appears to have weathered the politics and intrigue of the court in this period and was even able to intercede for an acquaintance. We read about this in the first of two episodes recorded by Rashīd al-Dīn in which Shīrāzī appears in Arghūn’s presence. This episode belongs to sometime after the 13th of Jumāda al-ulā 689 A.H. (i.e., May 24, 1290):

And at a post on the road to Vān, as the Sultan was returning from Alātāgh, Shīrāzī was received [in humility], and he made a presentation on the western sea and its harbors and its shores, which include many western and northern regions, and the king found his company to be exceedingly pleasant, as while recounting the regions of Rūm (Anatolia) the king had noticed Ammorium, which is in Rūm, and had asked Shīrāzī to describe it. He [i.e., Shīrāzī] presented a report of utmost eloquence containing prayers and plaudits for the king, and a description of the subject, which greatly impressed Arghūn. And as he was leaving for the hunt, he said to the Maulānā [i.e., Shīrāzī]: “When I return, come so that we may speak some more, for you speak wonderfully well.” He then pointed to Sa’d al-Daula [the vizier] and indicated that they bring all three, meaning Amīrshāh, Fakhr al-Dīn Mustaufī, and the son of Hajjī Laylī, for they had taken all three from Rūm and had brought them. And Maulānā Shīrāzī reproached Sa’d al-Daula in regard to Amīrshāh, and hastened him after the King, thus winning [Amīrshāh’s] release.¹³¹

We will meet Amīrshāh again in Chap. 3. The administrator of the loan taken by the Seljuk rulers from the Mongol treasury, Amīrshāh was also the dedicatee of the *Tuhfa*, and thus a former patron of Shīrāzī. That Shīrāzī appears to have been able to chasten the vizier with respect to a prisoner and that he was even able to win the prisoner’s release indicates the extent of his authority during this period.

The second episode does not appear in the copy of the *Jāmi’ al-Tawārīkh* that was the main reference for this study.¹³² It is included by Thackston in his translation of the *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh* with a footnote stating that the text is absent from all manuscripts save a few.¹³³ The fragment which references Shīrāzī is quoted here from Thackston’s translation:

[In addition to building, Arghūn] was also enthralled by alchemy, and alchemists came to his court from far and wide to encourage him in this art. Untold amounts of money were spent on it, but he never chided them for it and even cheerfully authorized more expenditures. One day an extremely subtle point was discussed in the presence of Maulānā Qutbuddin

¹²⁹Biran, “JOVAYNI, ŠĀḤEB DIVĀN” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2009, <http://www.iranica.com/articles/jovayni-saheb-divan>.

¹³⁰Lane, “JOVAYNI, ‘ALĀ’-AL-DĪN.” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2009, <http://www.iranica.com/articles/jovayni-ala-al-Dn>.

¹³¹Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, 822–823. Shīrāzī would have been 55 years old.

¹³²Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, edited by Bahman Karīmī (Tehrān: Iqbāl, 1338)

¹³³Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah’s Jami’u’l-Tawarikh*, 577.

Shīrāzī. When the alchemists had left, Arghūn said to the Maulānā [i.e., Shīrāzī], “Since I am only a Turk and you are a wise man, do you think these people are taking me for a ride? I have often wanted to put them to death, but since it is certain that this science exists and there must be someone who knows about it, if I withdraw my patronage from these ignorant men and put them to the sword, that one learned person will not trust me.” In short, during Arghūn Khān’s reign the alchemists spent untold amounts on their various experiments, but after much experimentation and tests, the veil of doubt was lifted from everyone’s eyes, and nothing had been achieved other than financial loss and ruin.¹³⁴

This episode to which this fragment refers is undated, appearing instead under the title “Part Three, on [Arghūn’s] conduct and character; the pronouncements and orders he gave; incidents that occurred during his reign that were not included in the previous two sections but learned from various persons.” The “lifting of the veil of doubt” in regard to alchemy could not have referred to the ruler himself, however, for in Rashīd al-Dīn’s final chapter on Arghūn’s life we see him still consorting with his alchemists:

Arghūn Khān’s belief in holy men and their customs was extremely strong, and he always sponsored and promoted that group. From India there came a holy man and claimed [the knowledge to] a long life. They asked him through what means is the life of holy men prolonged there? He said through a special draught. Arghūn asked him whether the draught was found locally. He said it was. [Arghūn] obliged the fashioning of it. The holy man produced a brew which contained Sulphur and Mercury. And he [i.e., Arghūn] partook of it for eight months at the end of which he spent forty days in seclusion in the fort of Tabrīz, and at that time no mortal was with him, except Orduqaya and Qūcān, and Sa’d al-Daula, and the holy men who were constantly present and busy discussing their beliefs. When he left seclusion he decamped for Alātāgh and there an ailment appeared suddenly upon his humors, and Khwāja Amīn al-Daula, who was the physician at court, exerted himself, together with the other physicians, so that after a bit through their wise words some signs of health reappeared. [But] suddenly one day a holy man came and gave Arghūn three glasses of wine. Since he was still convalescing the illness returned and became terminal. And the doctors were unable to cure it and after two months of his sickness the generals started discussing and searching for the causes of his illness. Some said that the cause was the evil eye and that alms-giving was thus necessary, and some admitted that the shamans (who observed portents through the “art of the scapulae”) were saying that the cause for the illness was sorcery and they placed the accusation on Tughanjūq Khātūn and through the beatings and the tortures of her trial they interrogated her and finally they drowned her and some other women. And this occurred on the 16th of Muḥarram of the year 690 A.H. [i.e., Jan. 19th, 1291 C.E.], and the Lord knows the truth of things.¹³⁵

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Arghūn commenced on taking the draught c. Ramadan of 688 A.H. (September 1289 C.E.): “On the fourth of Ramadan of 688 Arghūn Khān arrived at Marāgha and toured the observatory – and he commenced on drinking the black drug that will be described henceforth at that location [i.e., at Marāgha]. He then left for the cold-weather camp at Arrān.”¹³⁶ It is difficult to know what to make of this tantalizing fragment, other than to emphasize the clear

¹³⁴Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah’s Jami’u’t-Tawarikh*, 577.

¹³⁵Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, 824.

¹³⁶Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, 821.

association of Marāgha with the alchemical draught. The passage quoted earlier with respect to Arghūn's patronage of the alchemists has an interesting parallel in the final chapter of Hülegü's life which raises, at least, the possibility that Hülegü may have dabbled with alchemically produced potions and their purportedly life-prolonging qualities, as well. Interestingly, Hülegü's account also includes as the setting of its preamble the observatory at Marāgha; a connection that was already noted by Sayılı:¹³⁷

When fall arrived, aiming for the warm-weather camp at Zarīneh-rūd, [the river] which the Mongols call Jaghātū, he [i.e., Hülegü] arrived at Marāgha and exerted himself in the completion of the observatory. And he loved knowledge exceedingly, and would encourage scientists in the pursuit of the ancient sciences (*awā'il*) and he had assigned salaries to all, and had embellished his court with the presence of the scientists and learned men, and he was interested in the science of alchemy, and [thus was] keenly interested in this group [i.e., the alchemists]. They lit many flames and burnt many drugs and blew through many useless bellows, large and small, and they had constructed pots from the "clay of wisdom," yet the concoctions only benefited them as far as their breakfast and evening victuals. They were ineffective as far as transmutation was concerned but in dishonesty and duplicity they had miraculous powers. They were unable to fuse a single dinar, nor were they able to mould a single dirham, yet they scattered the stores of the workshop of Divine Power to a place of oblivion and nonexistence. So much was spent on their provisions, desiderata, and stores that Qārūn himself ... had not been able to produce during his entire life [i.e., through the use of *his* elixir]¹³⁸

We will discuss the possibility of the presence of a Taoist tradition of alchemy at Marāgha in Chap. 6. Here we note that, if Hülegü's death, which as we saw involved the sudden return of symptoms such as weakness and an undefined ailment "upon his body" (a rash, perhaps?), was due to the ingestion of mercury or other toxic substance, then the irony of Rashīd al-Dīn's observations in regard to the wastefulness of alchemy is further amplified. As it is, Rashīd al-Dīn's account indicates that Arghūn almost certainly succumbed to voluntary poisoning, and that Hülegü may very well have done the same.

2.3.5 *Culminating Crisis: Gaykhātū (1291–1295 C.E.) and Bāydū (1295 C.E.)*

Subsequent to Arghūn death, it was his brother Gaykhātū who succeeded him. As with his uncle, Tegüder Ahmad, the beginning of his reign triggered a crisis of succession. The rival claimant in this case was Bāydū, Gaykhātū's cousin; and

¹³⁷Sayılı, *The Observatory in Islam and Its Place in the General History of the Observatory*, 193.

¹³⁸Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 734. For Qārūn see MacDonald, D.B. "Qārūn." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Brill Online, 2013. http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/karun-SIM_3951.

Hülegü's grandson through his fifth son, Taraqai.¹³⁹ Gaykhātū, as he appears in Bar Hebraeus and other historians, was a dissipated monarch given to debauchery with minors, forcing many of the Mongol nobility to send their children away to outlying districts.¹⁴⁰ His short reign included a military campaign to Anatolia, but none against the Mamluks.¹⁴¹

Rashīd al-Dīn refers to Gaykhātū's introduction of paper money, at the instigation of his *Ṣaḥīb Dīwān* Ṣadr al-Dīn Zanjānī and other courtiers, as an "account of the inauspicious *chau*." Describing Gaykhātū's endorsement of this plan, Rashīd al-Dīn writes:

[Since] Gaykhātū was an extremely liberal (*sakhī'*) monarch and gave liberally [so that] the wealth of the entire world could not satisfy his generosity, he approved it. . . . And on the Monday of the nineteenth of Shawwāl of 693 A.H., they presented and set into circulation the *chau* in Tabriz, and it had been decreed that whoever would not accept it would be executed instantly. For a week they took it, fearful of the sword And most of the population of Tabriz had been forced to leave and goods and foodstuffs had been removed from the bazaar, so that nothing was left, and the people took refuge in the orchards, and a city of such dense population was utterly emptied of its people and the thugs and hooligans would strip of his belongings whomever they found in the streets.¹⁴²

Rashīd al-Dīn writes that angered people mobbed a Quṭb al-Dīn "on a Friday in the congregational mosque."¹⁴³ Though not identified further, this Quṭb al-Dīn figure is almost certainly not our Quṭb al-Dīn but is rather the brother of Ṣadr al-Dīn Zanjānī (i.e., the mastermind behind the fiasco), who is identified as a chief judge in his own right, in the preceding chapter of the chronicle.¹⁴⁴ The experiment with paper money was a miserable failure, and appears to have petered out on its own once officials determined that it was unworkable.¹⁴⁵ Gaykhātū's rule did not outlive this fiasco by

¹³⁹D. Morgan, *The Mongols*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 225; Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 681.

¹⁴⁰Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography*, 494; B. Spuler, "Gaykhātū," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman. (Brill Online, 2010), http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-2427. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Edited by: P. Bearman, (Brill Online, 2010) http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-2427.

¹⁴¹Spuler, "Gaykhātū," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Edited by: P. Bearman. Brill Online, 2010. http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-2427.

¹⁴²See Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 835; Also Bar Hebraeus for the "immeasurable liberality of hand" which appears to be connected to his dissipated lifestyle (i.e., a lack of moral discipline in conduction with a lack of fiscal discipline) "'Whosoever hath in his hand silver, and doth not carry it to the offices of the Government to be stamped therein with [the word] Shaw, and giveth it up and taketh [in exchange] Shaw shall die the death.' And thus men remained in a state of great tribulation and indescribable difficulty for a space of two months." Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography*, 496.

¹⁴³Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 836.

¹⁴⁴Ibid. 833; Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb; At least one modern translation identifies this Quṭb al-Dīn with our Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jāmi' u't-Tawarikh*, 808.

¹⁴⁵Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 836; Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography*, 496.

long. He was forced to deal with an insurrection by Bāydū that ultimately ended his rule. He was executed on Thursday, the Sixth of Jumāda al-ūlā of 694 A.H. (March 24th, 1295 C.E.).

The reign of Gaykhātū is not particularly relevant to our study of Shīrāzī. Indeed, as we will see in Chap. 3, the reign of Gaykhātū (together with the very brief reign of Gaykhātū's successor, Bāydū) is the only era during Shīrāzī's adult career in which there does not exist any evidence for the presence of Shīrāzī at the Ilkhan court.

Probably as a mark of loyalty to his employer, Rashīd al-Dīn includes the account of the short reign of Ghāzān's rival, Bāydū, in the chapter devoted to Ghāzān himself.¹⁴⁶ Since the account is of recent historical events the narrative achieves a level of detail that is lacking in earlier chapters. Rashīd al-Dīn's narrative of Bāydū culminates with his capture by the capable general Naurūz, roughly six months after taking the reigns of power. Upon hearing his request for a private audience, Ghāzān (Hülegü's grandson through Arghūn) requests instead that Bāydū be "finished off where he is,"¹⁴⁷ with the execution occurring in the "evening on Wednesday, the twenty third of Dhū al-Qa'da, 694 A.H. [Oct. 4, 1295 C.E.]."¹⁴⁸

2.3.6 Reformation and Recovery: Ghāzān (1295–1304 C.E.)

Ghāzān is generally recognized for reversing the ruinous policies of his predecessor Ilkhanid rulers. Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, which includes within it some of Ghāzān's reform-minded proclamations, is the authoritative historical source for his reign. Ghāzān's reforms included a restructuring of the taxation system, a repeal of the expectation that Ilkhanid subjects provide quarters for traveling military and official personnel, a limiting of the burden on the Ilkhanid subjects of providing carriage animals for the governmental business, as well as other measures.¹⁴⁹ Morgan and others have pointed out that Rashīd al-Dīn was not an impartial observer in regard to his employer,¹⁵⁰ and it is certainly not surprising that Rashīd al-Dīn would have exaggerated the beneficence of Ghāzān, as well, perhaps, as the abuses perpetrated by his forebears. However, the reforms by Ghāzān of the exploitative system of taxation (which – as the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh* fragment at the beginning of the

¹⁴⁶Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 883.

¹⁴⁷Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 915.

¹⁴⁸Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, ibid. See also, Barthold, W., "Baydu," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 1988, <http://www.iranica.com/articles/baydu-baidu-on-coins-badu-a-son-of-taragay-and-grandson-of-hleg-hulagu-reigned-as-il-khan-in-iran-from-joma>.

¹⁴⁹Petrushevsky, "The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran Under the Il-Khans," 495.

¹⁵⁰Morgan, D., "Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Edited by: P. Bearman, (Brill Online, 2010) http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-6237.

chapter indicates – had driven entire regions into ruin) were effective in salvaging the plight of the Ilkhanid subjects (and of the peasants, especially) – as can be seen in the appreciable rise of agricultural production during his reign.¹⁵¹

As we have noted Ghāzān's conversion to Islam is a topic to which Rashīd al-Dīn's devotes a considerable amount of space. An unfortunate side-effect with Ghāzān's conversion to Islam, however, appears to have been the reversal of the decades-long Ilkhanid policy of tolerance for the various religious practices of their subjects: "And on Wednesday the twenty-fourth of Dhū al-Qa'da, of the year 694 A.H. [Oct. 4, 1295 C.E.] it was proclaimed that in the capital Tabrīz, and in Baghdād and the other regions of Islam all of the temples of the shamans and the Buddhists and the churches and the synagogues be destroyed."¹⁵²

Ghāzān's accession was complicated by rebellions that, at their root, were due to the crisis of succession at the end of Gaykhātū's reign. The situation appears to have taken several years to sort out, and was only settled after the execution of a rather long list of claimants to the throne. Also significant were a series of rebellions in Rūm (Anatolia), several of these by the Mongol overseers themselves (who were aided by various local factions). These were dealt with by Ghāzān by 1299 C.E.¹⁵³ The Seljuks of Rūm, in whose polity Shīrāzī had lived for some years, disappeared from the historical record in the first years of the following century, outliving these final spasms of violence by a handful of years, at most. Cahen notes the curious nature of the disappearance of the once powerful Seljuks of Rūm by stating that the "Sultanate disappeared in a manner so obscure that contemporaries do not mention it and authors who tried to account for it in retrospect disagree in regard to both dates and facts."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹Petrushevsky, "The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran Under the Il-Khans", 495–496.

¹⁵²Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 908; Waṣṣāf al-Hazrat, *Taḥrīr-i tārikh-i Waṣṣāf*, 223. That traditional Mongol beliefs and practices outlasted this forceful top-down conversion effort can be seen, however, in an episode that appears in Kāshānī's history of Ghāzān's successor, Öljeitü. Of particular interest are several episodes in the year 709 A.H. (1309–1310 C.E.). A heated debate between the supporters of the Ḥanafī and Shāfi'ī schools in the court of Öljeitü appears to have been particularly vexing to the ruler. Öljeitü, who was born in 680/1282 and thus presumably followed Buddhism and the shamanism of his ancestors, not converting to Islam until the accession of his father, when he was 15 – appears to have cut short his audience by storming out. Subsequently, high-ranking officials had complained audibly for the good old peaceful days of the Mongol *yasa* system. 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Alī Kāshānī, *Tārikh-i Ūljāyatū*, *Tārikh-i pādishāh-i sa'īd Ghīyāth al-dunyā va al-Dīn Ūljāyitū Sulṭān Muḥammad* (Tehrān: Bungah-i Tarjumah va Nashr-i Kitāb, 1348), 96. Tarjumah va Nashr-i Kitāb, 1348), 96. In the same year a lightning strike killed several courtiers, in the presence of the frightened ruler, forcing him to reconsider his religious convictions. "The amirs conveyed [to the Ilkhan] that according to the old conventions and the *yasa* of Chingiz Khan [he should be cleansed by fire]. They assembled the shamans who were in charge of this and said: 'This frightful lightning and incendiary and ruinous bolt is due to the ill omen of Islam and muslims. Should the King abandon the daily prayers and the adhan recital . . . his passing through fire would be successful.'" Kāshānī, *Tārikh-i Ūljāyatū*, 98.

¹⁵³Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, 300–301.

¹⁵⁴Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, 301.

Ghāzān's war against the Mamluks includes the military campaign of 1299 C.E./699 A.H. in which the Mongols were victorious, and temporarily occupied Damascus.¹⁵⁵ A final campaign against the Mamluks, in 1303 C.E./702 A.H., however, resulted in a decisive defeat of the Mongols.¹⁵⁶

On the cultural front, it was Ghāzān who commissioned Rashīd al-Dīn to compose his history.¹⁵⁷ Waṣṣāf also mentions his construction of an observatory in Tabriz, as part of a large complex that was started in 697 A.H. (1297/1298 C.E.) and finished in 702 A.H. (1302/303 C.E.).¹⁵⁸

2.3.7 A Peaceful Interlude: Öljeitü (1304–1316 C.E.)

Though Rashīd al-Dīn was alive during the reign of Öljeitü and appears to have written a history of his reign, this history has not survived.¹⁵⁹ Our main sources for the reign of this ruler are instead Kāshānī's *Tārīkh-i Oljaitu*, Waṣṣāf's history, as well as histories by Qazwīnī, and Banākātī.¹⁶⁰ It is through Kāshānī's text that we learn of Öljeitü's siege of the fort of Rahba on the Western bank of the Euphrates, in April of 1313 C.E.¹⁶¹ This event, which was instigated by a group of renegade Syrian amirs, was to be the last Ilkhanid expedition against their arch-enemies, the Mamluks.¹⁶² Despite this military campaign, which appears to have been a short and inconclusive affair and a 1314 C.E. conflict with the Chaghatai army in the east, Öljeitü's reign was generally speaking a peaceful one.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁵It is not known with certainty why the Mongols subsequently abandoned Syria, only to make a second unsuccessful attempt to retake it in the winter of 1300 C.E./700 A.H.

¹⁵⁶R. Amitai, "GĀZĀN KHAN, MAHMŪD," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Iranica Online, 2000, <http://www.iranica.com/articles/gazan-khan-mahmud>.

¹⁵⁷D. Morgan, "Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman. (Brill Online, 2011), <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam.SIM-6237>.

¹⁵⁸Waṣṣāf al-Ḥazrat, *Tahrīr-i tārikh-i Waṣṣāf*, 229.

¹⁵⁹Morgan, "Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb."

¹⁶⁰Abd Allāh ibn 'Alī Kāshānī, *Tārīkh-i Ūljāyatū*; Waṣṣāf al-Ḥazrat, *Geschichte Wassaf's*; Waṣṣāf al-Ḥazrat, *Tahrīr-i tārikh-i Waṣṣāf*; Hamd Allāh Mustaufī Qazwīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*; Dāwūd ibn Muḥammad Banākātī, *Tārīkh-i Banākātī* = *Rawdat ulā al-albāb fī ma'rifat al-tawārīkh va al-ansāb* (Tehrān, 1348).

¹⁶¹Kāshānī, *Tārīkh-i Ūljāyatū*, 143.

¹⁶²Kāshānī, *Tārīkh-i Ūljāyatū*, 143; D. Morgan, "Öldjeitü," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman. (Brill Online, 2010), <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam.SIM-6018>. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Edited by: P. Bearman, (Brill Online, 2010) <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam.SIM-6018>.

¹⁶³Morgan, "Öldjeitü." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Brill Online, 2010. <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam.SIM-6018>.

Of particular relevance to our discussion is a fascinating episode in Öljeitü's career that involved a military campaign against the region of Gīlān.¹⁶⁴ This episode is remarkable due to the fact that Gīlān was located virtually at the heart of the Ilkhanid realms. That the region would require pacification a half-century after the arrival of Hülegü in Persia is, therefore, something of a paradox.¹⁶⁵ Though this episode appears in a number of Persian and Mamluk sources the details are not clear. It appears as though the campaign ended with a disastrous defeat of the Mongols, forcing the Persian sources (who were generally loyal to their Ilkhan overlords) to whitewash this uncomfortable fact.¹⁶⁶ The geography of the region – as characterized both by the rugged topography of the Alburz range, and by its heavy annual rainfall – was no doubt a factor in the defeat of the Mongols. This episode, dimly captured in the historic sources, is mentioned here because one of the local rulers of Gīlān, Amīra Dabāj, who appears briefly in these accounts, is the dedicatee of Shīrāzī's encyclopedic work the *Durra*. The significance of this fact for our study of Shīrāzī's life is discussed in Chap. 3.

It should also be noted here that Öljeitü was responsible for moving the capital city from Tabrīz, where it had been from the time of Abaqa, to the town of Sulṭānīya. Öljeitü's mausoleum, recognized as a supreme instance of Persian architecture, still stands in Sulṭānīya, where it was once part of a large religious complex.¹⁶⁷ It thus appears as though Shīrāzī was to live the last portion of his life a distance away from the politics and the hustle and bustle of the capital. If the accounts of Shīrāzī's sufism are to be believed, this likely would have been a welcome change for him.

2.3.8 *The Waning Years: Abū Saʿīd (1316–1335 C.E.)*

Coming to power after the death of his father in 1316, Abū Saʿīd was the last of the Ilkhanid line to rule Persia. His death in November 30 1335 C.E., which may have been by poisoning,¹⁶⁸ precipitated a crisis of succession and a prolonged power struggle.¹⁶⁹ That his death marked the end of an era can be seen from the fact that the historical records suddenly fall silent about the details of these power struggles

¹⁶⁴Charles Melville, "The Īlkḥān Öljeitü's Conquest of Gīlān (1307): Rumour and Reality," in *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, Reuven Amitai-Preiss & David O. Morgan (eds.). (Leiden: Brill, n.d.), 73–125; Ḥamd Allāh Mustaufī Qazwīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, 607; Kāshānī, *Tārīkh-i Ūljāyatū*, 55–71.

¹⁶⁵Kāshānī mentions the ruler of Gīlān as having payed homage to Hülegü upon the Mongol rulers arrival in Persia. Kāshānī, *Tārīkh-i Ūljāyatū*, 57.

¹⁶⁶Melville, "The Īlkḥān Öljeitü's Conquest of Gīlān (1307): Rumour and Reality," 118.

¹⁶⁷Minorsky, "Sulṭānīya." *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Brill Online, 2010. <http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam-COM-1118>.

¹⁶⁸Abu Abdallah Ibn Battutah, *The Travels of Ibn Battutah* (London: Picador, 2002), 78.

¹⁶⁹Morgan, *Medieval Persia, 1040–1797*, 79.

in which the protagonists were soon, in Boyle's words, so insignificant "that we are not even informed as to the time and manner of their death."¹⁷⁰ Thus the rule of the Ilkhanid dynasty ended with a whimper that was a faint echo of the demise of their vassals, the Seljuks of Rūm three and a half decades earlier.

As we saw Quṭb al-Dīn died 5 years prior to the accession of Abū Sa'īd and so the history of the Abū Sa'īd's reign is not directly relevant to our discussion. It should also be noted here, however, that it was during the reign of Abū Sa'īd that the great statesman and extraordinary historian Rashīd al-Dīn, who, along with Juwaynī, has left us the most important and detailed chronicles of the period, finally succumbed to the intrigue of the Ilkhanid court and was executed. His charge was the poisoning of Öljeitü.¹⁷¹

2.4 The Mongols and the Patronage of the Sciences

Having briefly reviewed the dynastic history of the Ilkhans and of their Mongol forbears in Persia I will now provide a provisional interpretation of the historical record in regard to the patronage of the sciences and especially of astronomy in this period. While recognizing the violence of the original campaigns early in the 13th century (a cataclysm that led not only to the demise of entire cultures in Central Asia but is linked, as well, to the extinction of certain cultural traditions such as the production of textiles in eastern Persia and the complete disappearance of *mīnā'i* ceramics, for example)¹⁷² many modern studies on the Mongols point out the culturally productive conditions of the subsequent decades: the patronage of luxury goods, the facilitation of trade across the Asian landmass along with the concomitant diffusion of new ideas of governance and religion, as well as the diffusion of various technologies related to arts and crafts through the relocation of artisans. Though the situation with science and scholarship is not clear, these enterprises presumably would have experienced a fate similar to that of other cultural traditions of the afflicted regions. It shouldn't be surprising, in other words, if certain scholarly and scientific traditions of the eastern Islamic world did not survive the conflagration (that had had, as we saw, the wholesale destruction of a fair number of urban centers as one of its defining characteristics), while others managed to survive and perhaps even to thrive in the culturally conducive factors listed above.

It perhaps bears pointing out here that the region afflicted by the military campaigns of the Mongols was one with a distinguished cultural tradition. When

¹⁷⁰Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns," 416.

¹⁷¹Abbas Iqbal, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl: az ḥamlah-'i Changīz tā tashkīl-i dawlat-i Taymūrī*, 6th ed. (Tīhrān: Amīr Kabīr, 1365), 328.

¹⁷²Linda Komaroff, "Introduction: On the Eve of the Mongol Conquest," in *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), 4–5.

the last of the Chingiz's armies withdrew from Persia in 1226, the formerly bustling population centers that, according to the historical record, had been transformed to grizzly killing fields on an unimaginable scale (as we saw in the case of Balkh, Harāt, Marw, Nishāpūr, Tūs) were many of the same that in earlier centuries had nurtured some of the luminaries of Islamic culture. A discussion of the factors that had led to the amazing military success of the Mongol armies is not within the scope of this study.¹⁷³ It is, however, worth remembering that had the conditions that allowed for the blinding success of Chingiz Khan and his army coalesced two centuries earlier, the resulting disruptions would have been contemporaneous with the lives of such luminaries as Bīrūnī, Ghazālī (Algazel), Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), Rāzī (Rhazes), and Khayyām. While the centuries leading to the thirteenth century C.E. do not appear to have been particularly peaceful, one can wonder at the effect on the productive cultural milieu in which these well-known scholars were born and raised, had the Mongol war machine – with its habitual razing of urban centers – made an earlier appearance.¹⁷⁴

There are, needless to say, factors that complicate a study of the impact of the Mongol campaigns on the cultural and scientific production of the era; among them the compounding affect of earlier trends of warfare and strife (see the introductory section of this chapter) and the fact that the events themselves no doubt represent a partial obliteration of historical data that may be particularly difficult to reconstruct and interpret after a span of 800 years. In a study based on biographical dictionaries covering the eighth to the thirteenth century C.E. Bulliet observes a precipitous decline in the scholarly activities of Persian scholars in the early decades of the eleventh century. This decline is therefore considerably earlier than the thirteenth century, and has ultimately been linked by Bulliet to environmental factors that affected the lucrative cotton crop of Persia.¹⁷⁵

It is hoped that in due course enough studies are carried out on the surviving manuscripts themselves (both of the Mongol and preceding eras) to enable scholars to form a concrete picture of how various traditions of scholarship were transformed by the military campaigns of the Mongols under Chingiz Khan. In Chap. 5 the work of the great historian Ibn Khaldūn will be examined briefly, and his comments on

¹⁷³See, for example, Morris Rossabi, "The Mongols and Their Legacy," in *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), 15.

¹⁷⁴In what can only be seen as a testament to the quality of scientific production in Persian-speaking lands in both the era leading to the Mongol conquests as well as the subsequent period, Kennedy, dubs the scientists of the Seljuk and Mongol periods as the "best of their age." See E.S. Kennedy, "The Exact Sciences in Iran Under the Saljuqs and Mongols," in *Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 679. Sadly, the state of scholarship does not yet permit a conclusive determination of the impact of the Mongol invasions themselves.

¹⁷⁵Richard Bulliet, "Abu Muslim and Charlemagne," in *Community, State, History and Changes: Festschrift for Prof. Ridwan al-Sayyid* (Beirut: Arab Network for Research and Publishing, 2011), 25–26. See also, Richard Bulliet, *Cotton, Climate, and Camels in Early Islamic Iran* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 142.

Persian scientists will be used to suggest, at least, that the impact of the Mongol campaigns on the cultural production of the Persia was more apparent to medieval historians than they are to modern scholars.

A Mongol practice that has been cited as a factor for cultural productivity in periods subsequent to the original Mongol campaigns is that of the relocation of captives and slaves to faraway destinations. At several points in his narrative (written some 30 years after the original) Juwaynī describes the relocation of artisans (and occasionally of young women).¹⁷⁶ He states, as well, that some of the buildings at Karakorum were built with the assistance of “muslim” masons.¹⁷⁷ It is difficult, however – given the mayhem and chaos reflected in the historical narratives of the Mongol campaigns – to imagine a similarly perceived need to preserve the scholarly traditions of the conquered lands in western Asia. Some scholars would no doubt have been spared to act as interpreters and functionaries in the bureaucracy of the Mongol empire, especially in the Persian-speaking areas to the north and north-east of the Oxus river. Yet, it is safe to assume – given the historical data we have available to us – that these would have been the exceptions rather than the rule.

It is also not unreasonable to assume that during the era of the viceroys the scientists and scholars who survived the military campaigns of the Mongol armies, would have had greater concerns than the pursuit of their craft or the seeking of patronage for such pursuits. In Harawī’s account of the aftermath of the fall of Harāt we read that a small number of survivors (20–40 souls) lived initially on “the flesh of humans and of dogs” and that for the subsequent 4 years they were forced to prey on passing caravans for survival.¹⁷⁸ Harawī also relates that “from the year 619 A.H. to 634 A.H. (i.e., 1222/1223 to 1236/1237 C.E.) the city was a ruin; so that in these fifteen years no creature lived here, other than the occasional brigands [singular, *ayyār*] who were either in Harāt or in the nearby foothills.”¹⁷⁹ Under these conditions it is likely that the scientists who had survived the campaigns and who had the ability would have sought refuge and patronage in well-defended locations,

¹⁷⁶Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, 107; Sayf ibn Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb, *The Ta’rīkh Nāma-i-Harat (The History of Harāt) of Sayf Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ya‘qūb Al-Harawī*, 81.

¹⁷⁷Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, 237.

¹⁷⁸Sayf ibn Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb, *The Ta’rīkh Nāma-i Harat (The History of Harāt) of Sayf Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ya‘qūb Al-Harawī*, 81–90. Harawī describes the transformation of the once-bustling metropolis of a hundred-thousand souls to an eerie moonscape as follows: “And in these four years, the few places in the city that had remained undamaged collapsed by virtue of the falling of the rain and the density of the snow, and the city became a place of such [terror] it was as though at each rest a ghoul [was hiding] or at each step [one could hear] a keening wail.” In the same source we read that, as Chingiz Khan had followed a scorched earth policy, “from the environs of Balkh to Damghan people ate the flesh of humans, dogs and cats for one year.” This indicates that the campaigns managed to blight not merely the cities that had been targeted militarily but to destroy the entire countryside as well, as the agricultural systems of the whole region appear to have collapsed. Sayf ibn Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb, *The Ta’rīkh Nāma-i Harat*, 87.

¹⁷⁹Sayf ibn Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb, *The Ta’rīkh Nāma-i Harat*, 93.

as in the case of Tūsī who, in this period, found refuge with the Ismailis and their virtually impregnable forts.¹⁸⁰

To imagine the pace of the recovery during the reign of the viceroys (i.e., the three decades separating the withdrawal of Chingiz and the arrival of his grandson Hülegü) and of the Ilkhans, we need only note that by the time Qazwīnī was writing his *Nuzhat al-qulūb* during the reign of Ghāzān (i.e. a little under a century after the original conflagration), of those destroyed cities that had been reconstructed many were rebuilt in a reduced scale: large towns were transformed into smaller towns or villages (and small towns to villages, etc.). Among the towns that were rebuilt in such reduced circumstances Qazwīnī lists a considerable number; we note here Qum, Sirāf, Miāneh and Kermānshāh as examples.¹⁸¹ However, Qazwīnī is careful to point out as well that many of the towns (such as Khurrābād, Saimara, Arrajān, and Dārābjird) were still in ruins in his time, nearly a century after their destruction.¹⁸² Indeed, some of the major population centers of medieval Persia–Rayy,¹⁸³ Marw,¹⁸⁴ Balkh,¹⁸⁵ notable among them – were left as ruin-fields for many

¹⁸⁰Mudarris Razavi, *Aḥwāl wa Athār-i Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī*, 4. Several historical sources state that Tūsī was held by the Ismaili's against his will. Ibid. Certainly anti-Ismaili factionalism and the desire to rationalize Tūsī's long stay with the Ismailis should be accounted for when interpreting these accounts. In the conclusion to his commentary on Avicenna's *Kitāb al-ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* (or "Book of Directives and Remarks"), which was completed in the middle of Ṣafar, 644 A.H. (c. the beginning of July, 1247 C.E.) Tūsī speaks of "having written the majority of the book in such straitened circumstances, that it would be impossible to imagine worse." Razavi interprets this as indicating Tūsī's difficulties with the Ismailis. In my mind the reference could be to the desolation induced by the war, for he also writes: "And [as for] the continuance of my life – its [military] ruler are my sorrows, and its soldiery are my anxieties." Mudarris Razavi, *Aḥwāl wa Athār-i Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī*, 7.

¹⁸¹Petrushevsky, "The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran Under the Il-Khans," 497; Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī, *The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat-Al-Qulub Composed by Ḥamd-Allāh Mustawfī of Qazwīn in 740 (1340)*.

¹⁸²Petrushevsky, "The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran Under the Il-Khans," 497.

¹⁸³V. Minorsky, "al-Rayy," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman. (Brill Online, 2011), http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0916; Ruy González de Clavijo, *Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez De Clavijo to the Court of Timour at Samarcand, A.D. 1403–6: Translated for the First Time with Notes, a Preface, and an Introductory Life of Timour Beg* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2001), 99.

¹⁸⁴A. Yu. Yakubovskii, "Marwal- SHāhidjān," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman. (Brill Online, 2010), http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-4978; See also González de Clavijo, *Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez De Clavijo*, 117.

¹⁸⁵The Chinese Taoist monk Ch'ang-Ch'un was able to visit the ruins of Balkh in 1223, *ibid.* 487, as did Marco Polo (probably during the reign of Arghūn). See Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo: The Complete Yule-Cordier Edition: Including the Unabridged Third Edition (1903) of Henry Yule's Annotated Translation, as Revised by Henri Cordier, Together with Cordier's Later Volume of Notes and Addenda (1920)* (New York: Dover Publications, 1993), 151. Writing of his visit to Balkh in the fourteenth century, Ibn Battuta relates: "It is completely dilapidated and uninhabited, but anyone seeing it would think it to be inhabited because of the solidity of its construction (for it was a vast and important city), and its mosques and colleges preserve their outward appearance even now, with the inscriptions on their buildings incised with lapis-blue

centuries or abandoned permanently. Given the evidence of the historical record the impression can not be avoided that parts, at least, of the Persian-speaking world were transformed to virtual moonscapes or perhaps reconfigured into vast grazing fields for the herds of pastoralist conquerors. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that the decision to formally consolidate the Mongol holdings in Persia only happened in the sixth decade of the century. While internal factors involving politics of the Mongol rulers no doubt played a role, it was also perhaps the case that by this point enough of a recovery had taken place to make a full-scale occupation worthwhile in the first place.

As we have noted before, areas that were fortunate to not experience the Mongol armies directly would have felt the disruptions to a considerably lesser degree. Shīrāzī's home-province of Fārs was one such area. We will look at Shīrāzī's life in Chap. 3. Here we merely point out that as far as we can discern from the biographical material regarding Shīrāzī, his youth and his education do not appear to have been affected by the turmoil caused by the Mongols. Yet, as an intellectual and courtier Shīrāzī would have been frequently reminded of the political realities of his own era that had directly resulted from the trauma earlier in the century. There is little doubt that during his travels (particularly to Khurāsān) he would have witnessed first hand, the midden-heaps to which Juwaynī refers, and which would have been a constant reminder of the violent events that had so recently affected the region.

Möngke Khān's request that Ṭūsī be sent to Karakorum is from the end of the era of the viceroys. And it may be one of the earliest records of an attempt to preserve scientists from the Islamic world for the benefit of the Mongol rulers. That this incident has been preserved speaks no doubt of the great fame of Ṭūsī, but perhaps was also a signal of a heightened awareness by the Mongol rulers of the dependence of urban civilization on scholars as a practical matter. That men of letters had been prized earlier as administrators is demonstrated by 'Alā' al-Dīn Juwaynī's career at the Mongol court, but the case with Ṭūsī suggests that perhaps the project to attract the best scholarly "talent" of the far-flung Mongol empire to its center was widened at some point during the reign of the viceroys to include scientists as well. On the Great Khan's recruitment effort Rashīd al-Dīn writes:

From among the kings of the Mongols, Möngke Qā'ān had been distinguished by great intelligence, perspicacity, and judgement, to the level that he had solved some of the problems of Euclid. His exalted will . . . had obliged the building of an observatory. He appointed Jamal al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad al-Zaydī Bukhārī to carry out the project, yet some of the operational details were unclear to him, while at the same time the reputation of the superior learning of Ṭūsī had been as globe-traversing as the wind. At the time of leave-taking Möngke had asked his brother, as soon as the forts of the unbelievers had been taken, to send Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn back to Karakorum. Yet at the time [of the fall of the Ismaili forts], since Möngke Qā'ān was preoccupied with the

paints. The accursed [Chengiz] devastated this city and pulled down about a third of its mosque because of a treasure which he was told lay under one of its columns. It is one of the finest and most spacious mosques in the world; the mosque of Ribat al-Fath in the Maghrib resembles it in the size of its columns, but the mosque of Balkh is more beautiful than it in all other respects." Ibn Battutah, *The Travels of Ibn Battutah* (London: Picador, 2002), 144.

conquest of the lands of the Manẓī [i.e., in China] and was thus away from his throne, Hulākū decreed that he would build the observatory [in Persia] for he had become aware of [Tūsī's excellent qualities].¹⁸⁶

Thus, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, the building of the Marāgha observatory appears to have been due to the Hülegü seizing an unexpected opportunity during his campaign of 1256 C.E.

Hülegü's campaign has been compared for its violence to the campaigns of Chingiz during 1216–1225 C.E.¹⁸⁷ This does not appear to be a fair comparison. While the historical record offers glimpses of the resistance against Hülegü's campaign (resistance that would no doubt have resulted in violent punitive measures), the intensity of the earlier campaigns and the wide geographical extent of the destruction are not reflected in the historical accounts.¹⁸⁸

On the other hand, it is unlikely that Hülegü was a particularly benevolent ruler (as has been recently suggested by some historians of the Mongol period).¹⁸⁹ Thanks to the work of Petrushevsky and others, who have examined the historical evidence of agricultural production and tax revenues for Persia under Mongol rule it is possible to trace the precipitous economic decline of Persia in the thirteenth century subsequent to the invasion of the Mongols.¹⁹⁰ The exploitation of peasant farmers through arbitrary and often draconian taxation, and the heavy environmental impact of the great numbers of newly-arrived nomad pastoralists were factors that contributed to the onerous economic conditions of Persia during this period.¹⁹¹ The declining trend of agricultural production continued through the Ilkhanid period and was only reversed at the end of the century during the reign of Ghāzān.

In discussing the social policy of the Ilkhans Petrushevsky identifies two competing processes within the Mongol aristocrats and the Persian elites allied to them: a process that aimed at “the creation of a strong central authority in the person of the Il-Khan and the adoption by the Mongol state of the old Iranian traditions of a centralized feudal form of government,” as well as a trend that was

¹⁸⁶Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, 718.

¹⁸⁷Komaroff, “Introduction: On the Eve of the Mongol Conquest,” 3. In contrast, the effort to portray Hülegü as an enlightened warrior/ruler is a trend that has gained in popularity recently. One of the most active proponents of this revisionist school is George Lane; see *Genghis Khan and Mongol Rule* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2004), 60–62.

¹⁸⁸See Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, 615.

¹⁸⁹One of the most active proponents of this revisionist school is George Lane; see *Genghis Khan and Mongol Rule* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2004), 60–62.

¹⁹⁰I. Petrushevsky, *Kishāvarzī va munāsabāt-i arzī dar Īran-i ahd-i Mughūl, Qarnhā-yi 13 va 14 milādī* (Tehran: Mu'assasah-'i Muṭāla'āt va Taḥqīqāt-i Ijtimā'ī, 1344); Ann K.S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia: A Study of Land Tenure and Land Revenue Administration* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991); Petrushevsky, “The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran Under the Il-Khans”; See also Ann K.S. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia: Aspects of Administrative, Economic, and Social History, 11th–14th Century* (Albany, N.Y.: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988).

¹⁹¹Petrushevsky, “The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran Under the Il-Khans,” 490.

“antagonistic to settled life, agriculture and to towns,” and supported “unlimited, rapacious exploitation of settled peasants and town-dwellers.”¹⁹² Writing of the second trend Petrushevsky states: “These representatives of the military feudal-tribal steppe aristocracy regarded themselves as a military encampment in enemy country, and made no great distinction between unsubjugated and subjugated settled peoples. The conquerors wished to plunder both . . . the former by seizure of the spoils of war, the latter by exacting burdensome taxes. The supporters of this policy did not care if they ended by ruining the peasantry and the townspeople; they were not interested in their preservation. The most self-seeking and avaricious members of the local Iranian bureaucracy supported the adherents of this . . . trend, as did the tax-farmers, who closely linked their interest to that of the conquerors and joined with them in the plunder of the settled population subjected to taxation – the *ra’yat*.”¹⁹³ It appears as though it was this second group that predominated during the rule of Hülegü and his successors up to and including the short-lived reign of Bāydu. The enfeeblement of the economy that resulted from many decades of “rapacious” rule was no doubt one of the factors that ultimately forced the economic reforms of Ghāzān. Petrushevsky chronicles the enervated state of an economy teetering on the edge of collapse due to decades of depredation and misrule, tracing as well the positive effects of the policy shift under Ghāzān, for which he credits Ghāzān’s chief administrator (and the eminent historian without whom the historical knowledge of the era would be greatly impoverished) Rashīd al-Dīn, himself.¹⁹⁴

Given the generally predatory qualities of the era of Ilkhan rule, it is therefore somewhat ironic that we are able to recognize Hülegü as the instigator of one of the most important acts of scientific patronage in the medieval Islamic era: the construction of the Marāgha observatory. Though observatories had not been unknown in Islamic world prior to Marāgha,¹⁹⁵ the observatory at Marāgha, the building of which commenced shortly after the fall of Baghdād, was notable for its physical scale, the scope of its program, and its longevity relative to those that had gone before it.¹⁹⁶ To obtain a better sense of how this act of scientific patronage came about, it is useful to examine the events leading to Hülegü’s involvement with this project.

As we saw in Rashīd al-Dīn’s comments on Möngke, prior to setting off for Persia Hülegü was aware of his brother’s plan for building an observatory in China. It is not clear, however, when he decided to build an observatory of his own, thus anticipating Möngke’s project. At the fall of Alamūt, Juwaynī tells us of his visit to the

¹⁹²Petrushevsky, “The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran Under the Il-Khans,” 491.

¹⁹³Petrushevsky, “The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran Under the Il-Khans,” 492.

¹⁹⁴Petrushevsky, “The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran Under the Il-Khans,” 494–500.

¹⁹⁵Samsó, J. “Maršad.” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Brill Online, 2010. http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-4972.

¹⁹⁶Sayılı, *The Observatory in Islam and Its Place in the General History of the Observatory*, 189–223.

library and observatory.¹⁹⁷ Hülegü is not mentioned in this account at all implying that, at this stage, the Mongol warlord was not yet preoccupied with the construction of an observatory. Yet, this situation appears to have changed on the way to Baghdād, suggesting that an adviser (perhaps Ṭūsī, himself) may have convinced Hülegü of the importance of the founding of an observatory in Persia, itself.¹⁹⁸ Indeed, the recruitment of al-‘Urḍī (who as the builder of the instruments would have been one of the earliest members of the Marāgha observatory team) suggests that by the time of his Syrian campaigns (less than a year after the fall of Baghdād) Hülegü was committed to acquiring the best talent for his observatory. Though the precise circumstance of al-‘Urḍī’s trip to Marāgha are not known, al-‘Urḍī himself writes that he was unhappy at Marāgha, for being away from his homeland and for being tasked with things that were not “within his main line of work.”¹⁹⁹ The tone of frustration suggests that al-‘Urḍī was taken to Marāgha against his will.

Indeed, the circumstances of al-‘Urḍī’s trip to Marāgha may have been similar to Muḥyi al-Dīn al-Maghribī’s, whose professional capacities as an astronomer ensured that his life alone, from among those of his companions at the court of Malik Nāṣir at Damascus, was spared. Al-Maghribī’s first-person account appears in Bar Hebraeus’s history and in it he describes how he saved himself in the nick of time by announcing his profession during the course of an ambush by Mongol soldiers.²⁰⁰ Al-Maghribī was subsequently sent to Marāgha, indicating again that Möngke’s project for building an observatory and for recruiting scientific talent had by this stage been fully adopted by Hülegü himself.

In Rashīd al-Dīn’s account of the founding of Marāgha, he credits Hülegü (albeit in vague terms) as the person responsible for the founding of the Marāgha observatory.²⁰¹ Yet, other accounts exist that explicitly credit Ṭūsī as the mastermind behind the Marāgha observatory. These accounts, though of a fabulous nature, are more consistent with the fact that at the outset the observatory project was not Hülegü, but Möngke’s. The following anecdote in which Ibn Shākir attributes the founding of Marāgha to Ṭūsī appears in *Fawāt al-wafāyāt*:

They say that when [Ṭūsī] desired to [build the observatory] Hulāgū saw what he was longing for, and so said to him: Of what use is this science that is related to the stars? Can what has been ordained be avoided? [Ṭūsī said:] I will show you an example: “[Order O Khān] someone to climb to that location and to throw from its top a large copper vessel without anyone knowing of it.” So he did so. And when this occurred a great noise was created so that all who were present were terrified, some to the point of passing out, but as for Ṭūsī and Hulāgū, not a thing happened to them by virtue of their knowledge of what had occurred. So he said to him: “The science of the stars has this benefit: he who is conversant

¹⁹⁷Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, 719.

¹⁹⁸George Saliba, “Horoscopes and Planetary Theory: Ilkhanid Patronage of Astronomers,” in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 357–368.

¹⁹⁹al-‘Urḍī, *Kitāb al-hay’a*, 29.

²⁰⁰Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography*, 438.

²⁰¹Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, 718.

in it is aware of what is happening, so the fear that is created for the oblivious and the unaware [does not affect] him.” So [Hülegü] said: “There is no harm in this,” and ordered him to commence [in the building of the observatory].”²⁰²

Though there is no way to ascertain Hülegü’s feelings on astrology we could perhaps speculate that his appreciation for this art was likely similar to the views of his grandson with respect to alchemy: a recognition of his own ignorance coupled with certainty as to the validity and the critical importance of the esoteric craft.²⁰³

It is certainly true that the belief about celestial bodies and how their influence suffused the sublunar realm was practically universal in the medieval world. It would thus be a mistake to dismiss the many references to fate and the workings of the celestial bodies in historical works of the period (such as Juwaynī’s, for example) merely as figures of speech. In the introduction of his history, Juwaynī follows a declaration of the importance of patronage to literature and to scholarship, with a lamentation on the capriciousness of Fate (one of many that appears in his work):

But because of the fickleness of Fate, and the influence of the reeling heavens, and the revolution of the vile wheel, and the variance of the chameleon world, colleges of study have been obliterated and seminaries of learning have vanished away; and the order of students has been trampled upon by events and crushed underfoot by treacherous Fate and deceitful Destiny.²⁰⁴

While using here some of the rhetorical flourishes that were common to an educated man of his cultural background, there is again little reason to doubt Juwaynī’s underlying belief that inexplicable terrestrial phenomena (no doubt such as the cataclysm of the Mongol invasions themselves) were caused by the “influence of the reeling heaves.”²⁰⁵ The strategic role of the stars and their influence on the events in the sublunar world are also glimpsed in Rashīd al-Dīn’s account of the accession of Abaqa, the date of which, as we saw was chosen by Ṭūsī. Elsewhere in Rashīd al-Dīn’s history we find Hülegü in consultation with his newly acquired adviser in regard to the providential risks associated with his siege of Baghdād. Though Ṭūsī’s astronomical knowledge is not explicitly part of the counter-argument he presents to those who opposed the campaign, it is not difficult to imagine how Ṭūsī’s knowledge of the stars would have been an important part of his authority. Indeed, earlier in the same episode Hülegü asks another of his courtiers by the name of Ḥusām al-Dīn-i Munajjim (i.e., Ḥusām al-Dīn, the astrologer/astronomer) “who had escorted him by order of the Qā’ān [i.e., Möngke] – so as to choose the moment of his mounting and dismounting from his horse – to tell, without embellishment all the portents of the stars.”²⁰⁶ It is reasonably clear, therefore, that Hülegü’s patronage

²⁰²Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafāyāt wa al-dhayl ‘alayhā*, 3, 247.

²⁰³See Saliba, “Horoscopes and Planetary Theory: Ilkhānīd Patronage of Astronomers” for a different interpretation of Hülegü’s views on Marāgha.

²⁰⁴Juwaynī, *Genghis Khan*, 5. The translation used here is that of Professor Morgan.

²⁰⁵Waṣṣāf, *Geschichte Wassaf’s*, 100.

²⁰⁶Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb, *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, 706.

of the Marāgha observatory was due to its importance in the security, prosperity, and success of the ruler and (by extension) of the Ilkhanid state.²⁰⁷ In examining the historical record one can not help wondering if the attention lavished upon the Marāgha observatory was not analogous to the care bestowed upon modern research centers that are engaged in the production and practice of cutting edge technology for the purpose of preserving the security and welfare of the state. If this view is accepted, then it is also reasonable to assume that a good fraction of the attention paid to astronomers and their research was due to the power of astronomy as a strategic tool for providing yearned-for and much needed knowledge regarding the impact of the reeling heavens on events and their circumstances on Earth.

²⁰⁷The situation is clearly similar with the patronage of the other scientific activity that garners multiple references in the historical sources: that of alchemy. This enterprise would have been viewed in connection to the granting of eternal life to the Ilkhān, as we saw in the episode of Abaqa's death, it would have been a particularly important recipient of royal patronage.

Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzī and the Configuration of the
Heavens

A Comparison of Texts and Models

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