Mediating Sacred Kingship: 
Conversion and Sovereignty in Mongol Iran

by

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

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

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

This study focuses on two arenas of engagement and exchange: dynastic succession struggles, and the interreligious, cosmopolitan, and competitive Mongol court environment. Religious interlocutors - mainly Buddhists, Muslims, and Jews - competed over influence and access to the Mongol rulers by demonstrating their skills in explaining and reinforcing the claims of their patrons to their inheritance of Chinggisid authority. Cultural brokers at the Mongol court in Iran ingeniously drew on a rich corpus of Perso-Islamic political and Islamic theological writings, to recast their Mongol patrons as law-maker monarchs, mahdī-reformer rulers, and sacred Muḥammad-like kings.
Recent scholarship assigns the emergence of a new type of sacred and messianic Muslim emperor from the fifteenth century onwards to the resurgence of Shīʿī and millenarian movements and the proliferation of Sufi and occult discourses following the vacuum in authority created by the fall of the caliphate to the Mongols in 1258. This study, however, argues that it was the Muslim engagement with the Chinggisid claim to exclusive unmediated divine authority that gave rise to a new understanding of the place of kingship in the Islamic salvation narrative. This study is the first, therefore, to uncover the contributions of Mongol political concepts and cultural brokers in late medieval Iran to the sacralization of Muslim sovereignty.
**Introduction:**

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

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

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

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

2 The Ilkhanids were the Mongol dynasty that ruled present-day Iran, northern Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, and the southern Caucasus, including Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, from about the year 1260 to the dynasty’s
One of Ibn Taymiya’s intriguing encounters took place on 25 Jumādā I 699/February 18 1300, with the great Mongol commander Qutlughshah (d. 707/1307). According to the Mamluk historian al-Yūnīnī (d. 726/1326), Ibn Taymiya reported that Qutlughshah was “from the descendants of Chinggis Khan.” He stated that the Mongol was in his fifties, had a “yellowish complexion” (ašfar al-wajh), and not a single hair on his face. Ibn Taymiya, furthermore, said that Qutlughshah claimed that, “God had sealed prophecy [/the line of prophets, khatama al-risāla] with Muḥammad” and that, “Chinggis Khan was the king of the earth (malik al-basīta), and whoever turned his back on his command and the command of his descendants is a dissident (khārīji)” Qutlughshah’s statement is also echoed in the second of Ibn Taymiya’s three “anti-Mongol” fatwas, where the Syrian scholar states that one of the Mongol commanders who...
invaded Syria tried to prove the Mongols’ sincere adherence to Islam by claiming that Muḥammad and Chinggis Khan were both “great signs [āya] coming from God”.

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

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

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9 Ibn Taymīya, Majmūʿfatāwā, vol. 28, 521-22. For Chinggis Khan as prophet and his yasa, see also chapter two.
(“Sky God,” môngke tenggeri) blessing to Chinggis Khan, which conferred on the world conqueror a special good fortune or charisma (qut or su), and the mandate to rule over the entire earth.\footnote{On the Chinggisid inheritance and revival of the Turkic “concept of universal nomadic rule sanctioned by Heaven” and their broadening of this ideological platform to encompass both nomadic and sedentary domains, Michal Biran, “The Mongol transformation: from the steppe to Eurasian Empire,” *Medieval Encounters* 10/1-3 (2004): 347; and Peter B. Golden, “Imperial ideology and the sources of political unity amongst the pre-Chinggisid nomads of Western Eurasia,” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 2 (1982): 37-77.} Chinggis is described in these letters as the sole lord on earth (*super terram Cingischam solus dominus*), and polities and rulers are divided into willful submitters (*il/el*, peace, harmony, or submission) and those in a “state of rebellion” (*bulgha/bulaq*) against Heaven’s will. This later group awaits a brutal fate at the hands of the Mongol forces.\footnote{Peter Jackson, “World conquest and local accommodation: threat and blandishment in Mongol diplomacy,” in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods*, eds., J. Pfeiffer and S. A. Quinn (Wiesbaden, 2006), 3-22. Ibn Taymiya’s claim that the Mongol commander’s statement expresses the Mongol converts’ belief that Chinggis Khan was the son of God, too, echoes statements made in the Mongol threatening letters to European rulers. For example, the letter from Qa’an Giyiyik delivered to the Pope Innocent IV in 1247 contains the following formula: “By the command of the Living God, Chinggis Khan, the dear and revered son of God, says that God, the Highest over all things, is God immortal, and Chinggis Khan is the sole ruler on earth.” Jackson, “World conquest,” 7 (see also the letter from Môngke, ibid., 9). It is worth noting the dual structure of this statement (God and Chinggis Khan). De Rachewiltz argues that the idea that Chinggis Khan was the “son of Heaven” and the notion of Heaven’s mandate were informed by Chinese imperial traditions, whereas Sanping Chen suggests that the notion of the “son of God” was rooted in a cross-cultural Sinitic, Iranic and Altaic conflation and symbiosis. Sanping Chen, “Son of Heaven and son of God: interactions among ancient Asiatic cultures regarding sacral kingship and theophoric names,” *JRAS* 12/3 (2002): 289-325; Igor de Rachewiltz, “Some remarks on the ideological foundation of Chinggis Khan’s empire,” *Paper on Far Eastern History* 7 (1973): 21-36. For the dating of the Mongol imperial ideology (that is, during Chinggis Khan’s lifetime or only after his death, under his son Ögedei Qa’an/Qaghan [r. 1229-41]), see Reuven Amitai’s discussion in Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement: studies in the relations between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Mongol Ilkhanate* (1260-1335) (Turnhout, 2013), 43-45. For Mongol titular and ideological formulas, also Thomas Allsen, “Changing forms of legitimation in Mongol Iran,” in *Rulers from the Steppe: state formation on the Eurasian periphery*, eds. Garry Seaman and Daniel Marks (Los Angeles, 1991). 223-41.}

Qutlughshah’s statement might be read, therefore, as a reiteration of the traditional Mongol demand for unwavering submission to Heaven’s will and Chinggisid rule, expressed now in Islamic terminology.\footnote{Thus, the Mongol commander refers to the deniers of the Chinggisid right to world domination with the term *khārijūn*, deviators from God’s path, a term that alludes to the historical Kharijite rebellion against the fourth caliph ‘Ali. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 75-76. As Denis Aigle aptly points out in her discussion of Ibn Taymiya’s *fatwas*, Ibn Taymiya uses the same term *khārijūn* to identify the Mongol converts as “deviating from the laws of Islam,” and thus, was “addressing the same reproaches to the Ilkhans that Ghazan Khān levelled against the Mamluks.” Aigle, “The Mongol invasions,” 113.} In a similar vein, Qutlughshah’s words can also be viewed as a further indication of the “Mongol deviousness.” The Mongols were renowned for their “habit of
exploiting” in their military campaigns “the religious susceptibilities of independent powers for diplomatic and strategic purposes”.\(^{13}\)

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

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

\(^{13}\) Jackson, “World conquest,” 252, 277.

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

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

15 I borrow this term from Johan Elverskog. He argues that the early modern Mongols adhered to a “bifurcated religiopolitical framework” of Buddhism and the cult of Chinggis Khan. Johan Elverskog, Our Great Qing (Honolulu, 2006), 40-62, and see discussion below. An identical message of dual Chinggisid-Muslim legitimation is found in the Ilkhanid edicts (farāmīn) and letters that, as Ibn Taymīya observes, read: “By the might of God and the auspiciousness of the Muḥammadan community (bi-quwwa Allāh taʿāla wa-mayāmin al-milla al-muḥammadīyya).” Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1400; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 689. This dual legitimation is also reflected in Ghazan’s coin reform. In their new-old design, the coins had the shahādah and Muḥammad on the obverse, and on the reverse, they read “The coinage of Ghazan Maḥmūd by the power of Heaven.” Judith Kolbas, The Mongols in Iran: Chingiz Khan to Uļjaytu 1220-1309 (London, 2006), 323-26.
16 See chapter three of the dissertation.
Though a seemingly “radical” departure, Mongol conversion is conceived as an expression of continuity with earlier practices and models of Chinggisid charisma. Ghazan’s reign is envisioned as a continuation of both Muhammad’s and Chinggis Khan’s missions. My reading of Qutlughshah’s statement does not view it as an expression of the “superficial” or “external” adoption of Islam by the Mongols, but rather as an example of genuine commitment of the Mongol converts. Qutlughshah’s speech is no less than a Mongol shahādah (the Muslim profession of faith). The Mongol commander’s words are a testimony to a processes of mutual refashioning, whereby Islam and its notions of authority and legitimation were appropriated in support of Mongol concepts of Chinggisid authority, and the Mongols were incorporated into an Islamic salvific narrative, as agents of religious revival and restoration.

Mediating Sacred Kingship at the Ilkhanid Court

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

17 DeWeese demonstrates that the Mongols’ claim to exclusive authority was based on the identification of “the person or family of the ruler, as the embodiment of the community.” He explains that “ritual expressions of communal sanctity bound up with sacral dynastic ancestry” and “the ancestral rites of the dynasty itself – takes on enormous importance for the state, and thus, for example, the tombs of the imperial dynasty, as well as the ancestral offerings to royal forebears acquire a double religious significance – participating both in the domestic-style sanctity of any ancestral rite, and in the universal-style sanctity reserved for rites evoking larger communal groupings.” Devin DeWeese, Islamization and Native Religion: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition (University Park, PA, 1994), 524. See also his discussion of ancestral veneration and rituals of libation, from 210ff, where he notes: “the khan and his deceased ancestors’ spirits, whether addressed at the royal burial ground or in some other sanctified reserve, come to represent the whole people, thereby further underscoring the vital communal and political imperatives requiring the veneration of imperial ancestors.” Ibid., 220. See also
Chinggis Khan and God’s blessing was sustained and cultivated through their privileged descent, their adherence to Chinggis Khan’s (real or fictive) policies and assertions as expressed in his *yasa*, the Mongol code of law attributed to Chinggis Khan, and through their replication of the dynastic founder’s exclusive Heaven-derived gift. This gift endowed Chinggis Khan and his offspring with the prerogative of intuitive, divine knowledge, attained through an unmediated communion with God, and designated the Chinggisid ruler as the ultimate source of law.

Furthermore, continuation of God’s blessing required also the Ilkhanid observance of Chinggis Khan’s Heaven-decreed mission of world conquest. In this dissertation, I examine how Muslim (Sunnī and Shi‘ī) and Jewish intermediaries at the Ilkhanid court mediated between their patrons’ distinct “political theology of divine right” and the Islamic and Perso-Islamic religiopolitical discourses of legitimate authority.

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

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18 For knowledge of Chinggis Khan’s edicts as criterion for electing the khan, see George Lane, “Intellectual jousting and the Chinggisid wisdom bazaars,” *JRAI* 26/1-2 (2016), 246.

19 No less significant was the ritual aspect, the cult of Chinggis Khan, for which, see my discussion of Johan Elverskog’s important contribution below.
during these intercultural exchanges the efficacy of their own traditions in expressing and reinforcing their Mongol patrons’ ideas of sacral authority and, in particular, the royal family’s relationship with their ancestor Chinggis Khan. 

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

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

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20 George lane has too recently described the court debates and intellectual tournaments at the Mongol courts as a “cultural window shopping” and “testing-drives” for local doctrines. He argues that in addition to its role in providing amusement and enabling the acquisition of knowledge and the gathering of intelligence, “the debates could serve as an ideological showcase and present the court as theatre providing potential ideologies that might then be officially adopted.” I characterize the court debate as a forum through which other “potential ideologies” were competitively presented and explained as “parallel” the Mongol political theology, and contributing to the image of the ruler as an “intuitive genius.” Lane, “Intellectual jousting,” 235-47.
In addition to the execution of their more senior Hülegüid cousins, the Abaqaids, who ruled the Ilkhanate from 1284 onwards, also sought alternative avenues to strengthen their claim to rightful Chinggisid succession and sanctified dynastic authority. In an empire inflicted by intense internal competition and rivalry, both among the Mongol successor states and within the ruling families, the Abaqaids branched and expanded the search for new ways to “routinize,” and claim their exclusive inheritance of Chinggis Khan’s charisma. I argue that the Abaqaids’ patronage of Buddhism enabled them to claim continuity with the Ilkhans, and to overcome their problematic succession to the throne. Furthermore, the Buddhists used the dogma of reincarnation and the Buddhist model of universal sacred kingship (the cakravartin) to sanctify and reinforce the royal Mongol family’s relationship with the empire’s founder. Ilkhanid cultural brokers also experimented with Islamic political structures to support their patrons’ claims to dynastic legitimacy, and thus, compete with the Buddhists’ influence with the Ilkhans.

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

**Methods and Literature**

**Ilkhanid Studies and Mongol Islamization**

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

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

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

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21 Amitai, Holy War, 63.
22 Ibid., 64ff.
model of cultural and material patronage. They made use of pre-Islamic Iranian concepts of ideal kingship to furnish legitimacy to Mongol rule, on the one hand, and on the other hand, to guide their Mongol patrons towards the adoption of the same Perso-Islamic norms of government and statecraft. Melville has suggested that Iranian concepts of sovereignty played the role of mediators between the two competing, Mongol and Islamic ideologies, and were therefore, instrumental in the acculturation of the Mongols.\textsuperscript{24} In a similar vein, Stefan T. Kamola has recently shed further light on the efforts of the renowned Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn (below) to transform, through his historiographical work, the Mongol rulers into legitimate Perso-Islamic monarchs.\textsuperscript{25}

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

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

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

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28 The Mongols “were culturally conservative at home but open and flexible in conquest, skilfully picking and choosing institutions and technologies from subject peoples that facilitated further military expansion and successful exploitation of their new economic base.” Allsen, Culture and Conquest, 197.
30 Peter Jackson, “the Mongols and the faith of the conquered,” in Mongols, Turks and Others, eds. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (Leiden, 2005), 277-78. Jackson, furthermore, observes that while the Mongols “did not persecute
Judith Pfeiffer has used Allsen’s critical reassessment of the Mongols’ role as selective appropriators of sedentary cultures to offer a new approach to the Ilkhanid conversion to Islam.\(^{31}\) She argues that the Mongols approached spiritual resources in the same way they approached material, intellectual, and human resources. Conversion to Islam among the Mongols was a process of “selective appropriation of elements that were felt to be enriching with the possible exclusion of others (such as, potentially, the performing of ablutions under running water) that were not approved of from a Mongol point of view or sanctioned by Mongol customs”.\(^{32}\)

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

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33 DeWeese urges us to study the “social, familial and institutional” aspects of the process of conversion to Islam, which Islamic tradition regards as religiously meaningful. DeWeese, “Islamization in the Mongol Empire,” 121.
way for Muslim counterparts, while Muslim religious figures make way for infidel habits”. He argues for “the unmistakable process whereby Islam was able to ‘fit into’ and reinforce (rather than oppose) the basic inner Asian religious values.” For example, the Mongols’ new Islamic “status” was “imagined in ways rooted in traditional concepts of communal origin and identity”.

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

**Mongol Political Theology**

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

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35 Ibid., 13, 530.
36 Johan Elverskog, *Our Great Qing* (Honolulu, 2006), 50-52. In other words, Chinggis Khan became “from founder of the empire to the sanctified holder of the right to rule.”
After the dissolution of the Mongol Empire and the fall of the Yuan dynasty, the Mongols continued to adhere to the belief in Heaven’s blessing, “conferred and confirmed” through the maintenance of a ritualized relationship with Chinggis Khan, as a source of communal authority and a means of maintaining power. However, as Elverskog further shows, from the fifteenth century onwards, the Mongols also based their legitimacy on Buddhist models of ideal rule. Through their adherence to Buddhist ritual and percepts, the Mongols fashioned themselves as ideal Buddhist monarchs and Buddhist universal emperors, cakravartin kings. This “bifurcated religiopolitical framework” of the Mongol “political theology of divine right” on the one hand, and the Dharma on the other, can be observed in the representation of Chinggis Khan, who continued to confer Heaven’s blessing on his offspring, but also assumed the role of the (original Mongol) Buddhist cakravartin. 37

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

37 Ibid., 40-62.
38 Christopher P. Atwood, “Validation by Holiness or Sovereignty: religious toleration as political theology in the Mongol world empire of the thirteenth century,” The International History Review 26/2 (2004), 238. Atwood further notes that “religions that contradicted it were ignored, if beyond reach, or ruthlessly suppressed, if within.”
initially “a series of ad hoc judgments, wise maxims, and stories with explicit morals,” became the precedent that governed how the law was applied throughout the Mongol empire.39

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

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

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

41 Ibid., 248. The Mongols rejected the notion that God’s blessing had any binding, exclusive address and thus could both argue against religious claims of exclusivity to divine communication (for example, claims made by the Pope or the caliph), and harness the claims of these “local” brokers of Heaven’s blessing. Ibid., 253.
In another, forthcoming piece, Atwood further expands this thesis, exploring how the Chinggisids conceived their own sanctified authority in relation to this distinct political theology. He argues that the Chinggisid khan was perceived as an individual possessing his own independent channel of communication with Heaven, a relationship that required no clerical or scriptural mediation. Furthermore, this communion with Heaven did not “need to be justified in terms of congruence with existing scriptural traditions” since “such congruence was assumed as a matter of definition.” A “direct font of law and wisdom, derived from Heaven itself,” Chinggis Khan and his successors were perceived as untutored geniuses, who with no previous learning or training in the great religious traditions could intuitively replicate and moreover, intervene and correct these traditions in accordance with their own superior understanding. This is expressed in the Mongols’ own statements, for example, in the bilingual Sino-Mongolian inscription from 1338, which states that “even if the present-day Mongol people have not studied letters, every time they say but a word and every time they do a deed, it agrees with the deeds of the ancient sages and wise men [i.e. the writers of the Confucian classics and their commentaries]. If you ask what is the reason, surely it is that they were born by the destiny of Heaven”. Thus, as Atwood shows, Mongol political theology offered a “model of imperial authority independent of any scriptural tradition.”

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

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

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

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

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

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44 “The emperor’s’ communion with Heaven was subject to no clerical control or mediation, nor did it need to be justified in terms of congruence with existing scriptural traditions – such congruence was assumed as a matter of definition.” Religious clergy were still important for the Mongols as they were seen as “possessing the ability to pray effectively but also possessed moral and clerical skills that made them appropriate tutors, informants, and even administrators.” Atwood, “The Mongol Empire and early modernity.”
great conjunction of 991/1583, which marked the end of a 960 year-long cycle. What these studies and subsequent research has pointed out is the remarkably prolific exchange and interconnectedness of personnel, texts, and “powerful myths and ideological constructs” that were circulated and employed as part of empire-building strategies across early modern Eurasian courts and societies.

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

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

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46 Subrahmanyam, “Connected histories,” 739. For one example, see Tijana Krstić, Contested Conversions to Islam: narratives of religious change in the early modern Ottoman Empire (Stanford, 2011) (especially chapter three).
47 Shahzad Bashir, Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: the Nurbakhsiyya between medieval and modern Islam (Columbia, South Carolina, 2003), 29-75; Kathryn Babayan, Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran (Cambridge, 2002).
48 For the struggles between saint and sultan, see for example also Nile Green, “Stories of saints and sultans: remembering history at the Sufi shrines of Aurangabad,” Modern Asian Studies 38/2 (2004), 419-46.
shrines as sites of kingly ritual. Moin also examines how the title of Lord of Auspicious Conjunction, the Ṣāḥib-Qirān, took on its millenarian connotations through its association with the process of institutionalization of the social memory of the dynastic founder Timur. The Ṣāḥib-Qirān became the “brand name” of a Timurid model of sacral kingship, which the Mughal emperors in particular sought to lay claim to.

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

50 On this process see also Derek Mancini-Lander, Memory on the boundaries of empire: narrating place in the early modern local historiography of Yazd (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2012); and Lisa Balabanlilar, Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire: memory and dynastic politics in early modern South and Central Asia (London, 2012).
development of these new sacral political models, or “constitutional programs,” in the Timurid and early modern eras, was the succession struggles ensued from Timur’s death in 1405.\(^\text{52}\)

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

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


\(^{53}\) Stephan Kamola’s dissertation is a welcomed exception in this regard. Kamola, Rashīd al-Dīn, 171-221.

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

**Brokering Difference: Three Ilkhanid Intermediaries**

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

While Allsen has brought attention to the role of intermediaries as “conduits” of intercultural exchange, recent research on “brokerage” has emphasized the way cultural intermediaries work to fix “the boundaries of the objects they were purported to mediate”.\(^{57}\) As Helmut Reimitz notes:

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

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

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\(^{56}\) Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*.


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

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

59 The latest and most up-to-date appraisal of the vizier’s biography is Stephan T. Kamola Rashīd al-Dīn and the Making of History in Mongol Iran (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2013), 102-27.
60 For his identification with the Hebrew name Eli instead of ʿĀlī, ibid., 104.
and his children joined Hülegü’s court. He entered court service in a young age, probably already during the Ilkhan Abaqa’s reign, and by 1295 was appointed as governor of Yazd.

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

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

63 On the division of labor between the two viziers, ibid., 121-23.

64 Krawulsky, 123, for his childhood conversion narrative (one might note that it is slightly reminiscent of the Ilkhan Ghazan’s conversion). Amitai explores indications that he converted after the execution of Geikhatu in 1295, near the age of fifty. See Reuven Amitai-Preiss, “New material from the Mamluk sources for the biography of Rashīd al-Dīn,” in The Court of the Ilkhans, 1290-1340, eds. Teresa Fitzherbert and Julian Raby (Oxford, 1997), 26. Kamola, on the other hand, suggests that it more likely that the vizier converted during the later part of Abaqa’s reign or during the reign of his successor. Kamola, 117-18. Rashīd al-Dīn is silent about his Jewish past, but there was clearly familiar with Hebrew. Birgitt Hoffmann notes, “although there is no straightforward evidence that he embraced Islam only in his maturity – some scholars think that it was already his father who converted, and Rashīd al-Dīn was raised as Muslim – there can be no doubt that his ancestors were of Jewish origin.” Birgitt Hoffmann, “Speaking about oneself: autobiographical statements in the works of Rashīd al-Dīn,” in Rashīd al-Dīn: Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchange in Ilkhanid Iran, eds. Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim
A talented statesman and astute political player, Rashīd al-Dīn is primarily famed for his authorship of the world history, the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh, signaled out as “the most important single historical source for the Mongol Empire”. In his recent dissertation on Rashīd al-Dīn, Stefan Kamola examined the vizier’s historiographical project against the backdrop of the Ilkhanid confrontation with the Mamluks and the Golden Horde. Kamola showed how the vizier deployed Mongol and Perso-Islamic notions of genealogy and geography to support the Ilkhanid regional claim to Iranian sovereignty. In chapter one, I offer a different reading of the vizier’s historiographical project with a focus on Rashīd al-Dīn’s efforts to support the Abaqaid claim to rightful succession within the Hülegüid family.

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

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65 Morgan, “Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb.”


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

Chapter two examines the cultural brokerage of the Jewish vizier Saʿd al-Dawla at the court of the Ilkhan Arghūn. Saʿd al-Dawla masʿūd, son of Hibat Allāh Abharī, was a Jewish physician (ḥākim) and local official in Baghdad, whose family probably originated from Abhar in the province of Jibāl. In 683/1284-85, Saʿd al-Dawla was appointed as deputy to the Mongol commander Tonska, whom the Ilkhan Arghūn assigned as Baghdad’s shīḥna, military governor. His quick mastery of Baghdad’s fiscal and financial affairs appears to have threatened the authority of Baghdad’s Ṣāḥib-dīvān al-Malik Nāṣir al-Dīn Qutlughshah, who deliberately advertised Saʿd al-Dawla’s credentials as a physician at the court bringing to Saʿd al-Dawla’s assignment to

68 Kamola, Rashīd al-Dīn, 171-221.
69 We do not have a full biographical notice of Saʿd al-Dawla in the remaining volumes of the Maragha librarian Ibn al-Fuwaṭī’s biographical dictionary, but Ibn al-Fuwaṭī does refer to him in a different biographical entrance as Saʿd al-Dawla masʿūd ibn Hibat Allāh al-Abharī. That Saʿd al-Dawla’s personal name was masʿūd has yet to be noted by modern scholarship. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, Majmaʿ al-ādāb, vol. 4, 100. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī also provides a full biographical notice of Saʿd al-Dawla’s brother Fakhr al-Dawla, whom the Jewish minister sent to govern Baghdad on his behalf. We learn there that Fakhr al-Dawla Ilya was son of Ṣaḥīf at-Dīn Hibat Allāh son of (Muḥadhdhib al-Dawla) Mūsa al-Isrāʾīlī. Ibid., vol. 2, 572. Bar Hebraeus writes that Saʿd al-Dawla was the “father-in-law of the governor of Baghdad,” who had recently died (presumably referring to the Juwaynis?). Bar Hebraeus, The Chronography of Gregory Abū’l Faraj... Bar Hebraeus, trans. Ernest A. Wallis Budge (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 478. This detail is not corroborated by other accounts. For other conflicting testimonies on the earliest stages of Saʿd al-Dawla’s career, see Walster J. Fischel, Jews in the Economic and Political Life of Medieval Islam (New York, 1969), 96-97.
70 For the development of the office of shīḥna/shahna and its relationship to basqaq (a provincial revenue officer), see Michal Biran, The Empire of the Qara Khitai in Eurasian History: between China and the Islamic world (Cambridge, 2005), 121-22.
Arghun’s service. Saʿd al-Dawla appears to have impressed the Ilkhan with his proficiency in Mongolian and Turkish, as well as his exceptional acquaintance with Baghdad’s financial situation. With the promise that he could raise more funds from Baghdad, Saʿd al-Dawla was sent twice to check on the city’s finances and collect Baghdad’s overdue taxes. Pleased with Saʿd al-Dawla’s performance, Arghun assigned Saʿd al-Dawla in Jumāda II 688/June 1289 to the office of chief minister of the entire realm, a position that Saʿd al-Dawla held until his execution in 1291.

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

The third cultural broker I investigate is the Shiʿī court historian Abū al-Qāsim Ṭāhir Allāh al-Qāshānī. Chapter three focuses on Qāshānī’s conversion narrative of the Ilkhan Ghazan. We know little about Qāshānī’s background and career. He was a member of the Abū Ṭāhir family, a leading family of potters from Qāshān/Kāshān, who are known for their works decorating Shiʿī shrines and mosques in Qom, Mashhad, Najaf and Qāshān. Qāshānī, however,
seems to have worked at the Mongol administration, unlike his potter brother Yusuf. At least in one instance, Qāshānī refers to himself as al-mua ‘rrikh al-ḥāsib, the historian and accountant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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73 Rothman, 4.
from the Muslim accounts. In chapters two and four, I discuss the Buddhists’ role as cultural mediators, especially through their attendance at the Ilkhanid court debate. While the presence of the Buddhists as historical actors at the Ilkhanid court is largely dependent on the outlook of the Arabic and Persian Muslim accounts for the period, the fate of the Buddhists was, nevertheless, more favorable than another important religious group, the shamans. The presence at the court of the latter, referred to with the Turkish qāms/qāmān, is rarely noted in the Ilkhanid sources, and always as a non-descript group. Unlike the Buddhists (and other religious experts), not a single shaman in mentioned by name in Ilkhanid histories from the period. I focus on the Buddhists to highlight their prominent role as cultural brokers, their importance for the Abaqaid dynastic project, and their imminent presence at the court debates. As we shall see, a number of Ilkhanid court agents (both Muslim and Jewish) identified their main opponents at court to be their Buddhist peers.

The Dissertation: An Overview

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

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

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

76 For the Buddhists’ dominant role at court debates in the Mongol Empire, for example, Lane, “Intellectual jousting.”
century, and finish with the revolt of the Mongol governor of Anatolia in the early 1320s. The first four chapters also each focuses on one of the three above discussed intermediaries.

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

Chapter two focuses on two episodes related to another key figure, the Jewish vizier Sa’d al-Dawla, in the contemporaneous history of the Ilkhanid author Vaṣṣāf, the Tajziyat al-amsār va tazjiyat al-aʿṣār (“The apportioning of lands and the passing of time”). In the first, Sa’d al-Dawla claims that the Ilkhan Arghun had inherited the prophethood of Chinggis Khan, and in the
second, the Jewish minister attempts to collect signatures to issue a document referred to as Sa‘d al-Dawla’s mahḍar/manifesto. I argue that Sa‘d al-Dawla presented the Ilkhan Arghun’s succession as his inheritance of Chinggisid propehthood in order to gain purchase with the Ilkhan, outmaneuver the ruler’s close Buddhist advisors, and redirect the Ilkhan’s policies. Furthermore, I examine how Sa‘d al-Dawla appropriated and experimented in his mahḍar with the akhlāq-ethical model of kingship of the Shī‘ī polymath Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, to argue for the Ilkhan Arghun’s role as a divinely designated world-regulator and law-maker king. Through Ṭūsī’s political model, Sa‘d al-Dawla sought to mediate his Abaqaid patron’s claim to an inheritance of Chinggis Khan’s unique Heaven-derived gift, which assigned to the Chinggisid rulers unparalleled wisdom and the right to freely legislate in any given tradition.77

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

77 My suggestion is that court debates were important forums for presenting and reaffirming the ruler’s “inheritance” and adherence to Chinggis Khan’s “gift.”
78 I probe the question of Qāshānī’s authorship of this narrative in Appendix II.
79 I borrow this term from Aziz al-Azmeh, Muslim Kingship: power and the sacred in Muslim, Christian, and Pagan polities (London, 2001), 41.
the Mamluks in Syria and Egypt. As a cultural broker, Qāshānī tapped into the rich Persian and Islamic symbolic and textual resources available to him to express and redefine the Mongol political theology of divine right within a new, Perso-Islamic political idiom.

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

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

Furthermore, I examine Rashīd al-Dīn’s explanation of the Dharma and his three refutations of reincarnation, and draw attention to his response to the growing presence of Shiʿī clergy at the court of Öljeitū, following the Ilkhan’s conversion to Shiʿīsm in 1309. I argue that Rashīd al-Dīn utilizes al-Rāzī’s hierarchy of sacred souls to advocate for an alternative, Islamic
and Sunnī theological model that could compete with the way that Buddhism and/or Shiʿīsm were able to negotiate and confirm Mongol conceptions of dynastic Chinggisid sacral kingship.

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

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

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

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

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

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

82 Ibid., 76. See also Hayrettin Yücesoy, *Messianic Beliefs and Imperial Politics in Medieval Islam* (Columbia, South Carolina: 2009).
mediators, cultural brokers in Ilkhanid Iran also worked to separate and distance the Chinggisid from their exclusive source of divine authority. My conclusion is that the mediation of sacral kingship, and moreover, the sacralization of the institution of Islamic kingship in Mongol Iran, inevitably also involved the demotion, and to a certain degree, even desanctification of the Chinggisid’s sacral authority. In the Islamic world, the Chinggisid ruler’s unmediated channel to the divine could only be second to the Prophet Muḥammad’s mediated revelation and connection to God. We might, indeed, suggest that while the early modern Islamicate world saw the rise of a new royal claim to unmediated, absolutist, and universal imperial authority, it also witnessed the re-emergence of a new class of talented, influential, and self-assured intermediaries and experts who claimed their authority and prestige through their ability to mediate and facilitate, but also delimit and constrain these new imperial universalist and cosmic claims.

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83 One might suggest that this process of mediation is also comparable to the Weberian concept of the “routinization” (of Chinggisid charisma in this case). See further discussion of “routinization” and Ilkhanid succession in chapter one.
84 As we will see in chapter two and four, the question of the relationship between Islamic prophethood and Chinggisid kingship became the center stage for the process of situating and defining a place for Chinggisid sacral authority in the Islamicate world.
85 In other words, whereas Azfar Moin considers early modern millenarian and sacral kingship as arising from the tension between “popular religion” and scriptural Islam, I suggest that the rise of this new type of early modern sacral sovereignty was interlinked with the “traditional” symbiotic relationship and competition over claims to authority between rulers and the class of intermediaries (such as the ʿulamāʾ or other scriptural and cultural experts).
Chapter I: The Politics of Descent and the Writing of History: Rashīd al-Dīn and the Making of an Abaqaid Dispensation

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

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

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86 He was Geikhatu’s son from his second wife, the Jalayirid Dondi Khāṭūn (daughter of the Jalayirid Aq Buqa). After Geikhatu’s execution, Ghazan married Ala Fireng’s mother. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1122-23; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 580.
This chapter offers a revisionist account of Ilkhanid succession history. Although historians have acknowledged the centrality of dynastic struggles in the Ilkhanid political history, they have focused on Ilkhanid lineal (Abaqaid) successors to throne, largely due to the nature and bias of our sources and the lack of (non-Abaqaid) independent historiography for this period. The impression one receives when reading Ilkhanid political histories is that the course of Ilkhanid dynastic history was rather linear, aside of three short intervals of lateral successions with the reigns of Aḥmad Tegüder (r. 1282-84), Geikhatu (r. 1291-95) and Baidu (e. 1295), who are all represented in negative light in Ilkhanid accounts. Thus, after the death of his father and the dynastic founder Hülegü (d. 1265), Hülegü’s son the Ilkhan Abaqa reigned for a long, stable period (r. 1265-82). His reign was followed by two short turbulent years of his brother Tegüder’s rule, which ended abruptly with the latter’s execution and the succession of Abaqa’s son Arghun (r. 1284-91). The latter’s period of rule is depicted as less chaotic and more stable. Arghun was succeeded by his brother Geikhatu, who ruled for a short interlude of four years and whose reign also ended with his execution. Geikhatu’s death was followed by several months of intense dynastic struggles that ended with the ascendancy and conversion to Islam of Arghun’s son Ghazan (r. 1295-1304). His reign is envisioned as one marked by reform and the renewal of political and economic stability and order in the Ilkhanate. It was followed by the smooth and undisputed succession of his brother Öljeitü (r. 1304-16). Öljeitü’s enthronement ended the Ilkhanid succession struggles, until the death of his heirless son the Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd (r. 1317-35), which was followed by the dissolution of the Ilkhanate. Modern historiography of the Ilkhanate tends, therefore, to identify the reigns of the lineal-Abaqaid (the descendants of the second

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89 For example, J.A. Boyle, “Dynastic and political history of the Il-Khans,” in The Cambridge History of Iran (Cambridge, 1968), 303-421.
Ilkhan Abaq) successors as more stable and prosperous, and moreover, to follow the pro-
Abaqaid sources in envisioning the succession of Abaq’s offspring as rightful and legitimate.90

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

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

90 See, for example, Allsen’s comment on Ghazan’s succession. Allsen, Culture and Conquest, 31.
91 Jackson further notes that while “claims of seniority were undermined more swiftly in those Mongol states which
arose in areas of traditionally sedentary culture, China and Iran, where a different practice obtained,” the principle of
seniority was not without its adherents, even in the Ilkhanate: thus, Rashid al-Din’s “silence on the brief reign of
Baidu in 1295 strongly suggests that as a grandson of Hulegu his claim was superior to that of Ghazan, a great
This chapter shows, however, that, contrary to the impression that Rashīd al-Dīn’s history gives, the principle of seniority continued to exert its influence well into Ghazan’s (d. 1304) reign, and possibly even after his death. A view of the order by which the Hülegüid (non-Abaqaid) princes revolted and died, beginning with Arghun’s execution of his most senior cousins (Jumghur’s two sons, and Hülegū s. Hülegūid, below) suggests that Hülegüid princes perished in the Ilkhanate by the order of their seniority.92 I argue that it is Rashīd al-Dīn himself who does the historiographical “sweeping.” As I demonstrate in this chapter, Rashīd al-Dīn conceals the significant lack of dynastic seniority of the Abaqids and diminishes the extent to which the Abaqaid usurpation of the Ilkhanate was contested by the collateral Hülegūid branches, starting with Arghun’s seizure of the throne in 1284 and ending with his son Öljeitū’s enronemnt two decades later. To resolve their dynastic insecurities, the Abaqids launched, beginning with the later part of Arghun’s reign, a series of purges of their rival cousins and their supporters, who are depicted in the pro-Abaqaid histories as unlawful rebels against the rightful Abaqaid heirs.

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

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

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

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

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⁹³ Aubin, *Émirs Mongols*. 42
al-Ṣafadī to bring attention to the role of the Sufi *samā’* in the cultivation of relationships between Sufi shaykhs and Mongol princes. Like the Abaqaq branch, other princely contenders too sought ideological support, external to the Mongol political system, for their dynastic aspirations. Sufis and Sufi ritual were particularly attractive for Chinggisid princes, as they added an additional sacred dimension to their political claim and offered an alternative avenue to claiming access to Heaven’s blessing.

**Hūlegū’s Wives and the Principle of Seniority in Rashīd al-Dīn’s Narrative**

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

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

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

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

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

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97 Dorothea Krawulsky argues that the law of succession in the steppe determined the priority of the ruler’s eldest son, eldest brother, or even his uncles creating “permanent struggles between the clan of the eldest son of the ruler, and that of the eldest brother.” She does not pay attention to the role of the status of the mothers. Krawulsky, *Mongol Ilkhāns*, 20-21.
98 Shir shows that Dokuz Khātūn does not confirm to either of the two principles of assigning the position of chief wife: the chronological principle (the first wife the khan had married prior to becoming khan), and the mother of male heirs. Shir, “Chief Wife,” 54-63.
internal hierarchy of Hülegü’s wives (and their children), especially since she did not bear any children to Hülegü. Second, his marriage to his father’s (chaste) widow had also a legitimizing role since it enabled Hülegü to claim his independent standing, as well as his inheritance of the territories conquered by his father Tolui. Rashīd al-Dīn uses Hülegü’s marriage to Dokuz to resolve some of the historiographical problems arising from Hülegü’s establishment of the independent khanate. As Jackson shows, Hülegü’s initial mission to the eastern Islamic world on the order of his brother Möngke probably did not include the establishment of an independent ulus in Iran.

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

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

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

101 The Armenian author Vardan Areveltsʿi (d. 1271) interestingly reports that Hülegü’s Christian wife Dokuz wrote him asking whether is was proper to enthrone Abaqa in Hülegü’s place in accordance with Hülegü’s will. His answer was that “it is according to scripture to appoint the senior son and that the will was in fact binding.” He does not mention why Dokuz should raise such a question, but this reference might suggest that Dokuz sought Christian advice to “circumscribe” the Mongol principles of succession. Vardan Areveltsʿi, Universal History, trans. Robert Bedrosian. http://www.attalus.org/armenian/vaint.htm.
of Hülegü’s (three) formal chief wives, confirms this thesis (figure 1). If we were to remove Dokuz from Rashid al-Din’s list, we find that Hülegü’s chief wife was Güyük Khâtûn, the daughter of the Oirat commander Törelchi Güregen (son-in-law of Chinggis Khan) from one of Chinggis Khan’s daughters, Chechiyegen. Hülegü had married her in Mongolia, where she also died prior to his campaign. Her son Jumghur, who was left with Möngke Qa’an in Mongolia and was put in charge of his father Hülegü’s camp (and wives), died en-route to join his father in Iran. Jumghur’s chief wife was his Oirat mother’s niece, Tolun Khâtûn. Jumghur had two sons, Jüskeb and Kingshû, who were both executed for rebelling during the reign of Arghun (below).

Hülegü’s second wife Qutui Khâtûn was the daughter of Chinggis Khan’s daughter Tümelün, probably from one of the sons of the Qunqirat (/Onggirad) Derge/i Güregen. Rashid

102 See Rashid al-Din/Rawshan, 2: 962-72; Rashid al-Din/Thackston, vol. 3, 471-77. One wonders whether Rashid al-Din’s presentation of Hülegü’s sons by their alleged order of birth, rather than by their seniority, is also meant to divert the readers’ attention from the Abaqaïd dynastic situation, just as he does by introducing Dokuz at the top of the list of Hülegü’s wives.
103 Confirmed by Juwaynî, who writes that “Jumghar Oghul, who because of his mother, who was senior to the other wives, [was of superior rank,] he appointed him deputy [qā’im maqām] and placed over the ordū and army [in Mongolia!]. And of his elder sons he chose Abaqa and Yoshmut to accompany him.” Juwaynî, Ta’riḵ-i jahān gushā, vol. 3, 96-97; Juwaynî, Genghis Khan, vol. 2, 611-12. Anne Broadbridge has recently reached a similar conclusion as to Güyük’s status as chief wife, but does not explain how this information might change our understanding of Ilkhanid succession politics. Ann F. Broadbridge, “Marriage, family and politics: the Ilkhanid-Oirat connection,” JRAS 26/1-2 (2016), 124.
104 After Jumghur had sided with Arigh Böke. Jackson, “The dissolution,” 234. Jumghur’s support of Arigh Böke merits further attention as Rashid al-Din might be omitting or obscuring some of the details here to further depict Jumghur in negative light. Rashid al-Din, too, identifies Jumghur as Hülegü’s eldest (buzurgtar) in his section on the Oirats. Rashid al-Din/Rawshan, 102 (Oirats: 101-3); Rashid al-Din/Thackston, vol. 3, 57. Rashid al-Din’s claim in his section on Hülegü’s descendants that Jumghur was Hülegü’s second son, born only a month after Abaqa, seems to be another historiographical strategy of the vizier.
105 This marriage pattern has also been recently noted by Anne Broadbridge, who points out that in the Mongol system such marriages were not considered consanguineous since consanguinity was determined by the male line alone. Thus, such marriages of sons into their mother’s families were still considered exogamous marriages. Broadbridge suggests that by wedding her son Jumghur to her niece, Güyük created a “senior line of Oirat in-laws in the Ilkhanate, composed of descendants born from marriages between her own royal offspring (or, later, her half-sister) and those of their brother.” However, we might wonder about Güyük’s role in establishing these marriage alliances with the Ilkhanate house as this pattern of intermarriage was shared by the three chief wives of Hülegü suggesting a common principle. Broadbridge, “Marriage,” 121-35.
106 Rashid al-Din’s account about this Qunqirat line is suspiciously confusing. It seems that Derge/i Güregen was the first to marry Tümelün. He had two children (or more) from her: Mûsâ Güregen (originally named Taghai Temür), who married Hülegü’s daughter Taraqi Khâtûn, and Martai/Mirtai Khâtûn, Aqa’s Qunqirat wife. Rashid al-Din
al-Dīn states that Hülegü married her after Güyük’s death in Mongolia and that he gave Qutui the deceased Güyük’s ordu. She had two sons, Tekshin, whom Rashīd al-Dīn describes as sickly, and therefore, unsuitable for the throne, and Aḥmad Tegüder, who arrived in the Ilkhanate with his mother Qutui in 666/1268, and succeeded Abaqa in 1282. Like his cousin Jumghur, Tegüder, too, married his mother’s niece of the Qunqirat tribe.107 Hülegü’s third wife was Öljei Khātūn, another daughter of the Oirat Töreelch Gürege. She accompanied Hülegü on his campaign. Her son Möngke Temür (d. 681/1282) was, too, married to his mother’s niece.108

Hülegü’s formal three senior wives represent, therefore, two chief tribes that had established “two-way” marriage relationships with the Chinggisid house: the Oirats and the Qunqirats.109

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

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

109 On the “one way” and “two ways” marriage relationships between the imperial family and a number of tribes in the Mongol Empire, Zhao, 24-25. The Qunqirat/Onggirat’s “two ways” marriage relationship with Chinggis Khan’s
The eldest sons of Hülegü’s three chief wives (Güyük, Qutui and Öljei) observe the same marriage pattern. They all married back into their mother’s families. Rashīd al-Dīn lists Abaqa’s mother, the Suldus Yesünjin Khātūn as Hülegü’s fifth wife. However, Abaqa’s marriages do not follow the same pattern exhibited by his more senior half-brothers, suggesting that his mother was not one of Hülegü’s formal chief wives.

Jumghur, and not Abaqa, therefore, was Hülegü’s senior son, an often-overlooked detail that is moreover plainly stated by the historian Juwaynī. Güyük Khātūn’s senior status was probably determined by her seniority in the order of marriages (being the first wife Hülegü married), but also independently, through her own matrilineal decent from Chinggis Khan. Her son Jumghur, thus, could make the claim to trace his ancestry to Chinggis Khan through both his (Kiyan) tribe appears to have extended earlier than Chinggis Khan. In Yuan China, thirteen principal empresses were Qunqirat. Ibid., 93-118. The Oirat tribe’s marriage relationship with the Chinggisids was established by Chinggis Khan after the Oirat commander’s surrender and support, and was maintained by Chinggis Khan’s successors. Ibid., 127-48 (135-36, for the marriages of Hülegü’s daughters with the Oirat commanders). In case of the Ilkhanate, we might wish to consider these marriage alliances as brokered not with tribes, but with aristocratic families: the Törelchi Gūregen (or his son Buqa Temūr, who took part in Hülegü’s campaign) family and the Mūsā Gūregen family. As Christopher Atwood aptly observes, while Rashīd al-Dīn’s history “is advertised as a ‘tribal’ account,” it is “more like apeerage of the great families of Ghazan Khan’s time with their pedigrees duly established. As result of this arrangement, lineages with no prominent members are given little attention in Rashīd al-Dīn.” Atwood, furthermore, argues that the vizier’s “tribal-style biographical dictionary” follows East Asian models of organizing historiography by ethno-legal status and lineage, promoting the “meritorious servants, the office holders whose ancestors assisted in the great founding of the empire” under Chinggis Khan. Christopher P. Atwood, “Mongols, Arabs, Kurds, and Franks: Rashīd al-Dīn’s comparative ethnography of tribal society,” in Rashīd al-Dīn, 223-250.

110 She too remained with the other wives in Mongolia during Hülegü’s campaign.

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

112 See footnote above. Rashīd al-Dīn’s “unfaltering” portrayal of Jumghur as not only fighting alongside the Ögedeiid “rebels” Arigh Bōke against his Toluid uncle Qubilai, but also excusing himself from Arigh Bōke’s service on the pretext of being ill after he learns that his father Hülegü is displeased with his “rebelliousness” against Qubilai, is another indication of Rashīd al-Dīn’s bias against the house of Jumghur. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 965-66; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 473.
parents. This seems to have made Junghur’s female offspring particularly attractive for royal marriages. Thus, the Ilkhan Tegüder appears to have married Junghur’s daughter Toghachaq, and the candidate to the throne Möngke Temür (and after him, his son Anbarji) was married to Junghur’s granddaughter Iniitai. These consanguineous intermarriages among the houses of the three sons (Junghur, Tegüder, and Möngke Temür) confirm their status as Hülegü’s senior sons.

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

113 Ahmad Tegüder could make a similar claim since his mother Qutui was the daughter of Tümêlíin daughter of Chinggis Khan. Möngke Temür, on the other hand, could not make a similar claim as his mother was not a Chinggisid offspring like her half-sister the mother of Junghur.
114 In addition, after Junghur’s death, another senior prince, his cousin Tekshin, the son of Qutui Khâtûn, married his Oirat wife Tolun. Rashid al-Dîn/Rawshan, 1: 102; 2: 965-66; Rashid al-Dîn/Thackston, vol. 1, 57; vol. 3, 473-74.
115 That two senior princes, Junghur and Möngke Temür were intermarried with the Törelchi Güregen family might explain why the Törelchi Güregen family makes nearly no appearances in the vizier’s history after the death in 1260 of Törelchi Güregen’s son, the amir Buqa Temür (who campaigned with Hülegü and took part in the attack on Baghdad). Rashid al-Dîn might have downplayed the family’s role in Ilkhanid history due to their support of the senior Hülegüid households. In a forthcoming article, Ishayah Landa suggests, on the other hand, that it might have been the Törelchi Güregen family’s matrimonial connections to the Jochis and their close cooperation with the Jochi contingents in Hülegü’s campaign in 1256 that explains the family’s subsequent decline in importance. Ishayah Landa, “Oyirads in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries: two cases of assimilation into the Musim environment,” forthcoming.
116 It is difficult to assess questions of succession on the basis of Abaqa’s case since as Jackson shows, at the time of Hülegü’s death, the status of the Ilkhanate as an independent ulas, was still undetermined; in addition, when Hülegü died, most of his sons and wives were still in Mongolia, making their succession to the throne, if we can even call it such, impossible. We might consider viewing Abaqa, like Dokuz, as functioning as a “temporary representative” of the family until their arrival from Mongolia. He continued, nevertheless, to hold on to the position of Ilkhan, until his death, at which point the leadership passed on to the real senior family member. It is worth bearing in mind the case of Abaqa’s brother Yoshmut, who too accompanied Hülegü in his campaign in Iran. Rashid al-Dîn’s account suggests that upon Hülegü’s death, Yoshmut considered himself a viable candidate to the throne as well. Furthermore, according to Rashid al-Dîn, Hülegü had divided the conquered lands between Yoshmut and Abaqa. Abaqa (“his eldest and best son”) was to govern Iraq, Khurasan, and Mazanderan as far as the Oxus, and Yoshmut was handed over, Arran and Azerbaijan. Yoshmut was Hülegü’s son from a concubine from Qutui’s camp. Yoshmut died in 1271, prior to Abaqa’s death. Rashid al-Dîn/Rawshan, 2: 1049; Rashid al-Dîn/Thackston, vol. 3, 513, 517, 535.
wife the Oirat Öljei Khâtûn, seems to have been mostly confined to commanders linked to the personal retinues of the princes’ parents.\(^\text{117}\)

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

Rashîd al-Dîn’s description of the council that was held when Tegüder’s reign was coming to an end provides the most explicit account of the different succession principles – generational seniority and seniority by the mother’s status - that were at play in the political struggles over the Ilkhanid throne.\(^\text{118}\) According to Rashîd al-Dîn, the three main candidates that were discussed as potential successors at the meeting were Hülegû s. Hülegû, Jûshkeb s. Jumghur (who was Hülegû’s senior son), and Abaqa’s son Arghûn. Rashîd al-Dîn writes that those supporting the investiture of Hülegû s. Hülegû claimed that “so long as a son [of Hülegû] is around the rule cannot go to grandsons”.\(^\text{119}\) The Jalayirid amir Aruq and other amirs, on the other hand, were in support of Jûshkeb s. Jumghur, who commands “the great yurt,” since he was senior in age (\(ā bi-sâl aqâ-st\)).\(^\text{120}\) Thus, in the case of the candidacy of Hülegû junior and Jûshkeb, we find both principles of seniority at play, that is, by “degrees of descent” and in accordance with the mother’s status.

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\(^\text{117}\) Tegüder’s succession was supported by his brothers Hülegû and Qonqurtai, his nephews - the sons of Jumghur, and a number of the senior amirs. According to Rashîd al-Dîn, Möngke Temûr’s support came from commanders who were with his mother Öljei Khâtûn, and Arghûn’s main supporters came from the ranks of the Jalayirid commanders such as Buqa and his brother Aruq, who were both attendants of Abaqa (in addition to others of Abaqa’s intimates and members of his keshig). See Pfeiffer, *Conversion to Islam*, 186-195.

\(^\text{118}\) On the circumstances leading to his fall and execution, ibid., 301ff.

\(^\text{119}\) Rashîd al-Dîn notes that Hülegû’s mother was a Qunqirat concubine from Dokuz’s ordû and that “at the end, a bogtaq was placed on her head,” which usually indicates a woman’s “promotion” to the status of a wife. Rashîd al-Dîn/Rawshan, 2: 975; Rashîd al-Dîn/Thackston, vol. 3, 475.

\(^\text{120}\) Aruq, who would become governor of Iraq under Arghûn, supported Arghûn. While this passage is useful as a clear presentation of the principles of succession at work, we should be cautious about attributing the specific suggestions to the individuals that Rashîd al-Dîn ascribes them to.
The strongest argument, however, is made in support of Arghun Khan. The speech delivered by the Jalayirid amir Buqa, member of Abaqa’s personal guard, his keshig, encapsulates the way Rashīd al-Dīn wishes his readers to conceive of the Ilkhanid succession history, from the “legitimate” establishment of the Ilkhanate as an independent dispensation under Hülegü to the rise of the Abaqaid dynastic line. Buqa states that the Qa’an (Möngke), “who is the king of the inhabited world,” had awarded, in full agreement with the heads of the descendants of Chinggis Khan (ūrūgh), the rule over the lands of Iran (mamālik-i īrān-zamīn) to the “eldest son” (buzurgtar) Abaqa, after his father (and Möngke’s brother) Hülegü’s death;121 “after him, it should go as inheritance (az rāh-i irth) to his true son Arghun, and if busybodies had not meddled in the affair, and he [Abaqa] would have left the crown and throne to his offspring, all of this strife (fitna) would not have occurred”.122

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

121 On Abaqa’s alleged primogeniture, see discussion above. Rashīd al-Dīn elsewhere states that Jumghur was Hülegü’s eldest.
123 Martin B. Dickson, “Uzbek dynastic theory in the sixteenth century,” in Trudy XXV-ogo Mezhdunarnogo Kongressa Vosto-kovedov (Moscow, 1963), vol. 3: 208-17; Jackson, “Dissolution,” 191; Allsen, “Sharing out the empire,” 172-90. Pfeiffer discusses the coexistence of two principles of succession in this system, in which the locus of power was not an individual but the entire ruling house: primogeniture based (lateral) and patrilineal succession. She, furthermore, argues that “in the appanage system as it played out in the Ilkhanate, lineal succession helped and supported the centralization of power, which is exerted vertically and hierarchically, whereas lateral succession supported a ‘horizontalization’ and thus spread and decentralization of power, ultimately empowering the amirs and resulting in a geographical split-up of the empire.” Pfeiffer, Conversion to Islam, 171-83. Jospeh Fletcher discusses an additional principle of succession in steppe politics, tanistry, according to which the successor is the most qualified member of the clan. Jospeh F. Fletcher, “The Mongols: ecological and social perspectives,” HJAS 46 (1986): 11-50 (especially 16-19).
Mongol corporate sovereignty with internal strife and civil war, and linear (Islamic) succession with the centralization of authority, stability and order.

In Rashīd al-Dīn’s account, the Oirat senior commander and Arghun’s father-in-law Tengiz Güregen, also supports Arghun’s candidacy at the council.  He claims that he witnessed Abaqa’s last will (waṣṣiya) and that the latter stated that he should be succeeded by Möngke Temür, and after him, by his son Arghun. Conveniently for Rashīd al-Dīn, Möngke Temür had died (quite suddenly) earlier, during the discussions leading to Aḥmad Tegüder’s enthronement in 1282. Through the speeches of Tengiz Güregen and Buqa, Rashīd al-Dīn provides his readers with an “alternative” succession history presenting Tegüder as the “usurper” of his brother Möngke Temür’s right to rule, and claiming that in accordance with Abaqa’s will, as well as for the sake of the realm’s stability and prosperity, the throne of the Ilkhanate should be assigned to Abaqa’s son Arghun. In this narrative, Arghun, too, becomes a “victim” of Tegüder’s “usurpation” of the Ilkhanate, and Tegüder’s execution is justified retribution.

Rashīd al-Dīn anchors Arghun’s claim to the throne in Islamic principles of filial succession replacing the Mongol system of corporate sovereignty and the Mongol principle of seniority. He notes that Abaqa was Hülegü’s heir-apparent (walī al-ʿahd), and Arghun was Abaqa’s heir-

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

125 On Möngke Temür’s death, see Pfeiffer, Conversion to Islam, 191 (footnotes).

126 Rashīd al-Dīn writes that prince Baidu first told Ghazan that the amirs were in agreement on enthroning Ghazan since the government belonged to him by “inheritance and merit” (irtih va-iktisāb). Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 613. Several decades later, the Mamluk geographer Shihāb al-Dīn al-ʿUmarī writes that when envoys from the Golden Horde came to Ghazan asking to reinstate their claim to Tabriz and Maragha. They told Ghazan that they were entitled Tabriz and Maragha through inheritance (irtih). Ghazan answered that he had become king through conquest and not through inheritance (mirath), and such was his claim to Tabriz and Maragha. This claim repeats itself elsewhere in al-ʿUmarī regarding Ghazan’s treatment of the Qa’an’s representative in the Ilkhanate and his claim to independent rule. Ghazan in al-ʿUmarī’s account is claiming the Ilkhanate as his personal property through conquest, not inheritance, which “contradicts” Rashīd al-Dīn’s promotion of the notion of an Abaqaid inheritance of Ilkhanid government. Al-ʿUmarī, 19-20 (for the Arabic text).
apparent.\textsuperscript{127} Abaqa’s will and his designation of Arghun as his heir are supported in Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative by the precedent of Chinggis Khan’s designation of his third son Ögedei as his heir-apparent (\textit{wali al-‘ahd}). However, as several scholars have shown, the claim that Chinggis Khan had designated Ögedei as his heir during his lifetime was a later interpolation.\textsuperscript{128} Rashīd al-Dīn uses in both cases the Perso-Islamic terminology of linear-filial succession (\textit{waṣṣiya}, \textit{wali al-‘ahd}, \textit{bay’a}) to support an Abaqaid version of rightful dynastic succession and mask the complexities of the Mongol corporate system of sovereignty. He harnesses for the Abaqaid cause, “the hegemonic Persian historiographical tradition” and its capacity to “obliterate variant social and cultural realities through the power of its language, idiom and genre”\textsuperscript{129}

Rashīd al-Dīn, however, appears also to be painfully aware of the limited authority that such a claim had in the Mongol political system. His choice to introduce Möngke Temūr into his “alternative” succession theory works like a decoy diverting the readers’ attention from the inherent weakness of Arghun’s claim to the right to rule on the basis of his designation as the heir-apparent of his father. In fact, in this account, as elsewhere in his history, Rashīd al-Dīn reveals his familiarity with the Mongol political culture by supporting the claim to rightful Abaqaid succession with the “principle of collegiality.”

\textsuperscript{127} Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1058; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 517.
\textsuperscript{129} Maria Subtelny observes, for example, how later Persian historians “tended to translate Mongolian and Turkic terms into Persian, and in doing so they often obscured the continued existence in post-Mongol Iran of Chinggisid institutions such as the \textit{keshig} or imperial guard corps, and the \textit{yarghu}, or court investigation.” Rashīd al-Dīn might be an exception in that his “obscur[ing]” of Chinggisid institutions is intentional, whereas in other cases, “the fault lies not with the individual historians themselves but with the hegemonic Persian historiographical tradition” which “tended to obliterate variant social and cultural realities through the power of its language, idiom and genre.” Maria E. Subtelny, “The binding pledge (\textit{möchâlgâ}): a Chinggisid practice and its survival in Safavid Iran,” in Colin Mitchell, ed. \textit{New Perspectives on Safavid Iran: Empire and Society} (New York, 2011), 9.
As Florence Hodous has recently argued, collegiality or the Steppe “consultative tradition” was the underlying principle of Mongol legal and political institutions such as the quriltai, the large gathering of members of the Chinggisid clan, their son-in-laws, and commanders to decide pressing military or government matters such as succession. A “ritualized consultation,” the quriltai was defined by “discussion and persuasion” aimed at achieving consensus rather than the employment of coercive power.\(^{130}\)

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


\(^{131}\) The depiction of Tegüder as a “usurper” is further established in Tegüder’s subsequent trial where he is asked why he attacked Arghun while the latter gave up his rightful inheritance of the throne for Tegüder's sake. Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative also implies, however, that princes Hūlegū s. Hūlegū and Jūshkeb s. Jumghur were both not part of the council where Arghun’s succession was decided “in consensus” and that they were contemplating contesting Arghun’s enthronement with their military forces (sar-i khilāf). Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1147-48.; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, .559.
Innocent Princes, Conspiring Amirs, and Conflicting Narratives of Abaqaid Usurpation

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

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

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

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132 For which, see Dickson, 209-10.
133 On Buqa’s fall from power after his alienation of the other amirs and Arghun, Jean Aubin, Émirs Mongols et vizirs Persians dans les remous de l’acculturation (Paris, 1995), 38-41.
to the vizier, Jūshkeb immediately remarked that Buqa was out of his mind to think of enthroning someone instead of Arghun and that Buqa might even covet the throne for himself. Demonstrating his loyalty to Abaqaïd rule, Jūshkeb, furthermore, wonders out loud how Buqa could have thought that Jūshkeb would be “duped” to usurp the throne. He further notes that “this is the same charm he worked on Aḥmad” Tegüder, convincing the latter to assume the throne on expense of the rightful Abaqaïd heir Arghun. In the vizier’s narrative, Jūshkeb does not covet the throne for himself, but instead tricks Buqa into providing him with a binding pledge (mŏchălgă), a document with the signatures of all the amirs involved in the conspiracy, which he then uses as proof of the plot when he reports it to Arghun. According to the narrative, Jūshkeb himself decapitates Buqa reasserting over Buqa’s beheaded corpse the Hülegüid “consensus” over Arghun’s right to rule.

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

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


137 On Nawrūz’s revolt, Michael Hope, “The ‘Nawrūz King’: the rebellion of Amīr Nawrūz in Khurāsān (688-694/1289-1294) and its implications for the Ilkhān polity at the end of the thirteenth century,” *BSOAS*, 78/3 (2015),
Nawrūz’s father-in-law, reluctantly took part in Nawrūz’s revolt. In addition, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, two other senior Hūlegūid contenders, Hūlegū s. Hūlegū and Qara Noqai s. Yoshmut s. Hūlegū, also took part in Nawrūz’s revolt. The two were arrested in May 30 (8, Jumādā I 688), and were executed a few months later, on the 20th of Ramadan (October 7, 1289). As noted earlier, both Hūlegū s. Hūlegū and Jūshkeb s. Jumghur (Hūlegū’s senior son), were potential candidates to succeed Tegüder. The beheading of the all-too-powerful amir Buqa did not only set Arghun free of the latter’s control, but seems to have also given the Ilkhan an excuse to embark on a series of executions amongst his most senior cousins.

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

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

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

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


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

142 In addition to Hūlegū junior and Qara Noqai, Vaṣṣāf lists Taghay Temür (Hūlegū’s youngest son), and Anbarji s. Môngke Temür. Vaṣṣāf, 232; Abd al-Muḥammad Ayatī, Tahrīr-i ta ’rikh-i vaṣṣāf (Tehran, 1346/1967), 140.

143 According to Vaṣṣāf’s account, the executions of the three princes were made public only several months later, after Arghun became severely ill: when regular remedies failed, an investigation was launched into the state of the princely prisoners (ahl-i hábs), probably in the hope that showing clemency to the prisoned princes would cure the Ilkhan. The investigation revealed that the three princes were killed together with 13 of the descendants (avlād-i
appointment of his Jewish physician Saʿd al-Dawla as vizier (Jumāda II 688/June 1289) and it is possible that the latter played a role in Arghun’s new policy towards his Hülegüid opposition.

While Vaṣṣāf’s account suggests a widespread opposition amongst the Hülegüid princes to Arghun’s succession, Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative breaks down this anti-Abaqaid front into smaller, detached rebellions, and moreover, depicts the amirs Buqa and Nawrūz as the main guilty parties in leading the princes astray.

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

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144 He was the brother of Taiju, and grandson of Hülegü from his third senior wife Öljei Khātūn.
145 Vaṣṣāf, 241-42; Ayatī, 158-59.
agreement on elevating Anbarji to the throne. Rashīd al-Dīn reports that the “innocent” prince became suspicious of the two schemers, revealing their plot to overthrow Geikhatu. Anbarji, in other words, maintains in Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative the fiction of the solidarity of the Hülegüid family and the agreement over the legitimate succession of the Abaqaid branch.

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

146 Taghachar and Şadr al-Dīn were arrested until Geikhatu returned from Anatolia in the spring (1292). Anbarji and another brother both died before the end of Geikhatu’s reign (1294). Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1193-94; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 581-82.
147 According to the vizier’s narrative, prince Taiju s. Mōngke Temür secretly revealed to the amir Nawruz, who raised Ghazan to the throne, the plot of princes Söge s. Yoshmut s. Hülegü, Esen Temür s. Qonqurtai s. Hülegü, and Arslan Ke’in (a descendant of Chinggis Khan’s brother Jochi Qasar), and several amirs to kill Nawruz in Khurasan and overthrow Ghazan, installing prince Söge in his place. Informed of their plans, Nawruz was able to repel their attacks capturing and executing the “rebels” one by one. Rashīd al-Dīn implies that Söge, who is earlier noted as a supporter of Ghazan against Baidu, was contemplating rebelling even before he headed for Khurasan. Summoned to court, Söge refused to make appearance. When one of Ghazan’s trustworthy amirs was sent to fetch the reluctant prince, the drunken Söge spoke seditiously against Ghazan. Rashīd al-Dīn notes that Ghazan ignored his intoxicated words and when the prince finally made appearance at court, treated him fairly. Yet, Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative also suggests that Söge and Barula might have been afraid that they were being sent to Khurasan in order “to split our children and wives and give them to the army of Khurasan.” Was Söge so reluctant to go to Khurasan that he devised such an elaborate scheme to overthrow Ghazan? Or was he afraid that Ghazan had something else in mind when he was sent away from the ordū to Ghazan’s “home turf” under the supervision of amir Nawruz, who, by then, was probably notorious for tricking Baidu in favor of Ghazan? Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1263-65; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 631-32. See also Aubin, 63.
148 Vaṣṣāf, 327; Ayatī, 200. In addition to this large scale purge, a large group of Oirat tribesmen, the offspring of Buqa Temür s. Törelchi Güregen (lead by Tūraqai Güregen s. Buqa Temür) and the men they commanded, migrated to the Mamluk Sultanate in 1296, possibly in the fear of Ghazan. On this group referred to as the wafidiyya (refugees) in the Mamluk accounts and their fate in the Sultanate, see David Ayalon, David Ayalon, “The Wafidiyya in the Mamluk kingdom,” Islamic Culture, vol. 25/1 (1951): 89-104; Reuven Amitai-Preiss, “Northern Syria between the Mongols and Mamluks: political boundary, military frontier, and ethnic affinities,” in D. Power and N. Standen, (eds.) Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700-1700 (London, 1999), 144-145.
149 While the so-called ‘rebellion/fīna’ was centered in the eastern part of the Ilkhanate, its ripples reached as far as its western frontier, Anatolia. The amir Taghachar, who was notorious for switching sides and whose fickleness was one of the decisive factors leading to Ghazan’s victory over Baidu, was first appointed governor of Anatolia, but in
fealty to Ghazan, was accused later, in Ghazan’s reign, of conspiring to overthrow the Ilkhan with a diviner shaykh and was subsequently executed (below).

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

Ala Fireng’s Heresy Trail: Sufi Deviance and Seditious Spirits

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

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

In addition to Pīr Yʿaqūb, the colluders included Nāṣir al-Dīn emissary (īlchī) of the Qaʾan, Shaykh Ḥabīb, the spiritual representative (khalifā) of Rashīd Bulghārī, and Sayyid  

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

152 Rashīd Bulghārī is possibly the Sufi shaykh Šalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥasan al-Bulghārī (603-698/1206/7-1299), who was famous for receiving his khirqa from Shams al-Dīn al-Tabrīzī. Bulghārī appears to have had close contacts with the
Kamāl al-Dīn Tamāmat (or Namāmat). Rashīd al-Dīn points out that two of these individuals, Shaykh Rashīd and Sayyid Kamāl al-Dīn were directly linked to the executed vizier Ṣadr al-Dīn Zanjānī (d. Rajab 697/May 1298). Noticing this, Ghazan remarked that even from his grave, Ṣadr al-Dīn continued to stir up sedition and strife (fitna). An investigation and trial commenced and at its conclusion, it was decided that Pīr Yaʿqūb and his colleagues held heretic beliefs based on the creed of Mazdak. During a verbal exchange between the Ilkhan and Pīr Yaʿqūb, the latter said: “our lords (pīrān) protect us.” And Ghazan, as the defender of Muslim orthodoxy, replied that his lords are Allāh, Muḥammad and ʿAlī. The Shaykh was thrown off the mountain and the rest of the plotters were executed.

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


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

154 Ṣadr al-Dīn, in fact, is suggested on several occasions to have conspired with Shaykhs to raise certain princes to the throne: thus, during the intrigues that brought about Baidu’s downfall and Ghazan’s rise to the throne, Zanjānī had attached himself to a Shaykh by the name of Mahmūd Dinawarī, a former confident of Arghun Khan and a protégé of Bulughān Khātūn. Ṣadr al-Dīn had used him to send messages to Ghazan from within Baidu’s camp. Before he became Geikhatu’s vizier, Ṣadr al-Dīn was also involved together with Taghachar in an attempt to enthrone prince Anbarji s. Möngke Temür in spring 1292. Rashīd al-Dīn claims that the two sent prince Anbarji a secret message through one of the shaykhs (Jamāl Shīrāzī) of his entourage (mulāzim) that Geikhatu was killed in battle with the Karamanids in Rūm and that the amirs were in agreement on enthroning Anbarji. Anbarji, according
corruption in Rajab 697/May 1298 following the executions of the powerful amirs Taghachar (d. 1296) and Nawrūz (d. 1297) suggests Ghazan’s wish to rid himself of the main parties that assisted him in his victory over his cousin Baidu. Ghazan was possibly motivated by the fear that the same individuals would try to enthrone another in his place, or support one of the other candidates.155

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

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

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155 Furthermore, Rashīd al-Dīn’s account suggests that in addition to the accusations of embezzlement, Ṣadr al-Dīn’s fall from grace was also hastened by a personal rivalry with Rashīd al-Dīn and Ṣadr al-Dīn’s unsuccessful attempt to level unspecified accusations against Rashīd al-Dīn at a court audience. Rashīd al-Dīn claims that the two had an amicable relationship until a group from the Divan attempted to create a rift between the two by propagating rumors on the two. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, vol. 2, 1283-84; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 641-42. Taiju had earlier reported another conspiracy against Ghazan (above). Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, vol. 2, 1283-84; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 641. The timing of the death of Pulad s. Taiju is uncertain. In his section on Hūlegū’s offspring, Rashīd al-Dīn simply notes that Pulad was executed for rebelling/being disloyal during Ghazan’s reign, but as far as I can tell, this information is not repeated again in Rashīd al-Dīn’s history or elsewhere. Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 475.
any Sufi austerities, and used omens and divination (tašayyur, fāl) to fool the prince into believing his hallucinations (khiyāl, mālīkhūlya). Allured by the shaykh’s promise, the prince secretly came to terms with his intimates (ināqiyyān, nöker) to overthrow Ghazan. Learning of the conspiracy, the latter issued a decree to seize and execute Taiju, the shaykh and their culprits.\textsuperscript{157}

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

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

\textsuperscript{157} Vaṣṣāf, 345; Ayatī, *Tahrīr*, 209.
\textsuperscript{158} Pfeiffer, *Conversion to Islam*, 95.
son Abaqa and Abaqa’s son Arghun, whereas as Jackson notes, Rashīd al-Dīn plays down the validity of the conversion to Islam of the lateral successor, the third Ilkhan Aḥmad Tegūder. Rashīd al-Dīn creates, in other words, a “monotheist” dynasty to match a linear, filial succession pattern extending from Chinggis Khan to Ghazan. As we shall see in chapter three, in his conversion narrative of Ghazan, Rashīd al-Dīn constructs Ghazan’s image as an Abraham-like monotheistic king. The vizier presents the conversion of Ghazan, who is driven by his internal rational inclination towards monotheism and Islam in spite of his avid practice and support of Buddhism, as one of reversion, that is, return to an alleged ancestral Mongol belief in monotheism.

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

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 251.
\textsuperscript{163} Maria E. Subtelny, \textit{Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian politics and acculturation in medieval Iran} (Leiden, 2007), 15, 40.
cultures of the societies they conquered, but active and selective appropriators of the sedentary
cultures and their wares, whether material or spiritual. Jackson demonstrates that it was the
perceived efficacy of religious specialists, for example, in prayer, divination, and healing that
defined the Mongols’ attitudes towards the religions of the societies they conquered. In an
dynastic intrigues, rivalries and wars, methods for anchoring one’s claim to a
relationship with the dynastic founder’s personal charisma would have had a special appeal. “The
problem of succession,” as Weber notes, “is crucial because through it occurs the routinization of the
charismatic focus of the structure. In it the character of the leader himself and of his claim to legitimacy
is altered”.

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

Furthermore, Rashid al-Dīn’s identification of the Abaqaid line with Islamic monotheism
seems to draw on the earlier Abaqaid adoption of Buddhism. The extensive support of Buddhism
by the Abaqaid Ilkhans had also a significant dynastic dimension to it. Rashīd al-Dīn reports that Abaq also assigned the Buddhist monks who were to educate and train Ghazan. Rashīd al-Dīn, thus, implies that Abaq’s special attention to his grandson’s (Buddhist) education was part of his designation of Ghazan as a rightful heir to the throne. The vizier also notes that the portraits of Ghazan’s father Arghun hung on the walls of Buddhist shrines in the Ilkhanate. Furthermore, his brother and successor Geikhatu, the father of the conspiring prince Ala Fireng, followed the advice of the Buddhists at court and used in his edicts and coins his Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist name Iringin Dorji, the “Jewel Diamond”.

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

168 Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1357; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 676. For the worship of ancestral portraits and statues of the Chinggisid family as “inhabited portraits” and a religiopolitical symbol connecting the present ruler to past rulers, in particular, Chinggis Khan, Charleux, “From Ongon to icon,” 215-19.
169 The Jewel Diamond is a symbol of Tantric sacred knowledge and power. Samuel Grupper’s reading of Geikhatu’s investiture as a Buddhist coronation and his claim that the Ilkhan was identifying himself as a Buddhist sovereign is unfounded. It seems to be based on a misreading of Vaṣṣāf. The latter does not state that the Buddhist name Iringin Dorji was conferred on Geikhatu as part of his investiture, only that after his enthronement, “the Chinese (khatā iyān) said that for the sake of the longevity of the Ilkhan’s reign, the of the Ilkhan must be written Iringin Dorji on the decrees and letters and minted on the coins.” Vaṣṣāf, 260. Samuel M. Grupper, “The Buddhist sanctuary-Vihara of Labnasagut and the Il-Qan Hülegü: an overview of Il-Qanid Buddhism and related matters,” Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi 13 (2004), 50-62.
170 See chapter two.
The Sufi Samā‘ as Investiture

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

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

172 On Simnānī and his relationship with the Ilkhanid court, see chapter two.
increasingly strong ties between Sufi shaykhs, powerful families of administrative officials, and the Mongol and local ruling elites.\(^{173}\)

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

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


\(^{174}\) *Al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt*, vol. 25, 234; also in *Aʾyān al-Asr*, vol. 5, 412-13.

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

\(^{176}\) There are a number of possibilities to consider here. Maḥmūd Dīwānā and Pīr Ya’qūb might have been the same individual, or Pīr Ya’qūb could have been the latter’s disciple/son and possibly inheriting his master’s shrine in Tabriz, which caused some confusion. On the other hand, al-Ṣafadī might have been mistaken regarding the name of the shaykh, although as we will see, a shaykh by the name of Maḥmūd Dīwānā does appear to have been in Tabriz at the time or shortly before.
Sufi cap (ṭāqiya) on the prince’s head, at which point, he cried out: “I have given you sovereignty (al-suṭṭana).” The two, the prince and the shaykh ecstatically danced together. Word about his cousin’s secret “coronation” reached Ilkhan Ghazan. According to al-Šafadī’s version, Ghazan first had his cousin Ala Fireng executed, and then, ordered the Shaykh to be brought before him. Welcoming Mahmūd Dīwānā as the “Shaykh who enthrones kings with his cap,” the furious Ilkhan had the wretched dervish cut into two equal halves.

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

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

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

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

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179 Ibid., 132-36. As Jürgen Paul shows, similar “enthronement” narratives are also found in later, Timurid court
histories, in which the exchange of a saint’s baraka for the patronage of a “ruler-to-be” is made concrete through the
exchange of physical objects: Sayyid Baraka, for example, is reported to have handed Timur a drum and a standard

180 The Ilkhan Ghazan, for one, would have had an impressive “wardrobe” of sacred attire. From his convertor Ṣadr
al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Ḥammūya/Hamuwayi, he received a robe and a talisman with the words and proverbs of Ṣadr al-
Dīn’s famous Sufi father (Charles Melville, “Paḍshāḥ-i Islām: the conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghazan Khān,”
Pembroke Papers 1 (1990), 163): Shaykh Zāhid handed him the shirt off his back to fulfill Ghazan’s wish, a shirt
that Ibn Bazzāz claims Ghazan wore when he was dead and was buried in (Ibn Bazzāz, Ṣafwat al-ṣafā, ed. Ghulām Riqāq
Tabātaba Ṯā Majd (Aradabī, 1994)), 208-9; and according to the Mawlāwī hagiographer Aflākī, Ghazan had a mantle
with Rūmī’s verses stitched in gold that he wore whenever he sat on the throne. Shams al-Dīn Ḵᵛājā Ṯā Ṭabātaba, The Feats

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

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The samā’ appears frequently in the hagiographic genre as a setting for establishing such relationships between Sufis and the Ilkhanid and/or local elites.\(^{182}\) As a hagiographic motif, the samā’ as Sufi initiation and the samā’ as an investiture ceremony are easily reconciled.\(^{183}\)

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

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

\(^{183}\) As Shahzad Bashir points out, “as Sufi ideas rose to social prominence in the Mongol and Timurid periods, the Sufi master-disciple relationship acquired new, grander dimensions in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and became one of the primary mechanisms for channeling [spiritual and political] power in Persianate societies of Central Asia and Iran.” Shahzad Bashir, Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam (New York, 2011), 13.

\(^{184}\) For Sufi narratives justifying the ties between Sufi communities and the Mongol elite, Devin DeWeese, “‘Stuck in the throat of Chingiz Khan’: envisioning the Mongol conquests in some Sufi accounts from the 14th to 17th centuries,” in History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods, eds. Judith Pfeiffer and Sholeh A. Quinn (Wiesbaden, 2006), 23–60. The proliferation of such narratives suggests that some Sufi circles felt the need to defend their close ties with the Ilkhanid elite against public criticism.
conspiracy and trail, al-Şafadi’s account might have been intended, therefore, to delegitimize Ala Fireng’s challenge to the throne. 185

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

185 Al-Şafadi’s identification of the shaykh with the name Maḥmūd Dīwānā, instead of Pîr Ya’qûb, however, also raises another option for contextualizing this story. Shaykh Maḥmūd Dīwānā and/or his disciples possibly took part in the succession struggles over the famous Shaykh Ibrâhîm Zâhîd Gîlânî’s (d. 705/1305) community and wealth. A Tabrizi Sufi by the name of Maḥmūd Dīwānā resurfaces in the later, sixteenth-century hagiographic compendium of Ibn Karbalâ’î, the Rawzat al-jînân, which is devoted to the saints buried in Tabriz. Writing about the domed mausoleum (mazâr or marqu‘) of one Bâbâ Maḥmûd at the top of the hill of Vîlyânkûy, today’s Bilankuh, where one finds several Sufi shrines, Ibn Karbalâ’î relates an anecdote from Nâjm al-Dîn Zarûb al-Tabrîzî (d. 712/1313), which identifies the Sufi buried in the site as Maḥmûd Dīwānā. While it seems likely that al-Şafadi’s “Maḥmûd Dīwânâ” is identical with Ibn Karbalâ’î’s “Maḥmûd Dîwânā” (=Bâbâ Maḥmûd), one should note that Ibn Karbalâ’î states that the shaykh had died in 691/1291, already in Arghun’s reign, and more than a decade before his “meeting” with prince Ala Fireng. Nevertheless, it might be worthwhile entertaining the idea that both Ibn Karbalâ’î’s and al-Şafadi’s Maḥmûd Dîwânâ are one and the same Sufi saint. Ibn Karbalâ’î adds another important detail on the shaykh. He reports on Maḥmûd Dîwânâ’s master-disciple relationship with Şâfî al-Dîn Işâq Arḍabîlî (d. 735/1334), the eponym and founder of the Sâfavid order-dynasty, and the successor of his Sufi master Shaykh Ibrâhîm Zâhîd Gîlânî (d. 705/1305). According to Ibn Karbalâ’î, Şâfî al-Dîn would accompany (ṣuhbat dâsht) Bâbâ Maḥmûd at the beginning of his Sufi career and would try to gain the latter’s attention (dâyîzâh-yi khâfîr). Another account that appears in Ibn Bazzâz’s hagiography of the family of Şâfî al-Dîn, the Şafwat al-ṣafâ (completed 759/1358), reports on the competition over Shaykh Zâhîd’s approval between Shaykh Şâfî al-Dîn and another Sufi by the name of Maḥmûd Baba (b-b-h), who was also a disciple of Shaykh Zâhîd. The story ends with the humiliation of the malicious Maḥmûd Baba and with an indication of Shaykh Şâfî al-Dîn’s undisputed superior position as Zâhîd’s chosen disciple and successor. Şâfî al-Dîn’s succession to the leadership of Zâhîd’s community and its abundant financial resources indeed appears to have been contested, particularly by Zâhîd’s children. The hagiographic anecdote about the rivalry between the two disciples, Şâfî al-Dîn and Maḥmûd Baba, might have been intended to undermine any claim Maḥmûd Baba, his disciples or those related to him might have made to succession to Zâhîd’s spiritual authority. Read along Ibn Karbalâ’î’s note about Şâfî al-Dîn’s Sufi training as a disciple of Bâbâ Maḥmûd (providing that the latter is the same Maḥmûd Baba), the passage in Şafwat al-ṣafâ might point towards a rivalry between Şâfî al-Dîn and his descendants, and the Tabrizi Bâbâ Maḥmûd and his followers. If indeed, Maḥmûd Baba (Şafwat al-ṣafâ), Bâbâ Maḥmûd and Maḥmûd Dîwânâ (al-Şafadi and Ibn Karbalâ’î) are all one and the same, we have here an example of the way Sufi involvement in Ilkhanid court politics could lead to the alignment of both Ilkhanid and Sufi succession struggles. The succession struggles following Zâhîd’s death drew the ordu’s attention: a Mongol decree from 1320 attests to sultan Abû Sa’id’s involvement in the hereditary disputes among Shaykh Gîlânî’s descendants. It is possible (though greatly speculative) that the driving force behind the Ala Fireng affair was not only the meddling of Tabrizi Sufis in Ilkhanid succession politics, but also the personal struggles within these Sufi communities, in particular, rivalries related to the spiritual and material succession to Shaykh Zâhîd, whose death in 1301 preceded by only two years the trial and execution of Ala Fireng’s co-conspirators. Ḫusayn Ibn Karbalâ’î, Rawzat al-jînân va-jannân al-janân, ed. Ja’far Sulṭân al-Qârî (Tehran, 1965), 499-500; Şafwat al-ṣafâ, 166-68. Nâjm al-Dîn Zarûb is primarily known for his Futuwvat nâmâ, Lloyd Ridgeon, Jawanmardî: a Sufi code of honour (Edinburgh, 2011), 10. On the Ilkhanid attachment to Shaykh Zâhîd and his disciples and the succession struggles after Zâhîd’s death: V. Minorsky, “A Mongol decrees of 720/1320 to the family of Shaykh Zâhîd,” Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, 16/3 (1954): 515-27; Amitai-Preiss, “Sufis and Shamans,” 36; M. Gronke, “La religion populaire en Iran mongol,” in Denise Aigle, ed. L’Iran face a la domination mongole (1997), 128-40
Menglī,\textsuperscript{186} and another shaykh by the name of Kamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. Rashīd al-Dīn writes that Tegüder paid little attention to managing the state and was instead preoccupied in samā’ sessions with the two shaykhs. Rashīd al-Dīn claims that at these gatherings, Tegüder would address Menglī as his brother (qarīndash), and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān as his father (bābā).

Judith Pfeiffer has suggested that in his samā’ sessions, Tegüder was attempting to “create an additional space of authority outside of the Mongol customs, established human relationships, and inherited hierarchies.” Linking Tegüder’s disadvantage as a lateral successor with his regular engagements in samā’ with his new “Sufi kin,” she explains that “like Chinggis Khan before him, and so many (from the Chinggisid perspective even more ‘lateral’) rulers after him, Tegüder cultivated relationships with individuals who were able or claimed to be able to establish a connection to the other world, attaching a sacredness to his rule that could counterweigh such ‘this-worldly’ issues as lateral succession, marriage politics, and amīrs’ needs for appreciation and reward”.\textsuperscript{187}

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


\textsuperscript{187} Pfeiffer, “Reflections on a ‘double rapprochement,” 388-89.

\textsuperscript{188} Tegüder and Ala Fireng both appear to share the same “worldly-concern” and dynastic predicament: Ala Fireng’s father, the Ilkhan Geikhatu (brother of Arghun) was a lateral successor to the Ilkhanid throne as well.
dynastically contested. All three Chinggisids sought to harness the religious charisma of the Sufi “holy men” to support their dynastic claims, which explains Ghazan’s harsh reaction to the threat posed by Taiju and Ala Fireng, and their Sufi supporters. Moreover, the three Chinggisids share a similar fate: all three were accused of maintaining a close relationship with deviant, heretical figures in order to secure the Ilkhanid throne. In the Ilkhanate, dynastic divides did not only define the lines separating orthodoxy from heresy, but also the lines separating orthodox, institutional Sufis from antinomian, extremist dervishes, legitimate rituals from illicit samā’ ceremonies, and normative prognostications from fraudulent magic.

Conclusion: Öljeytu at “Ghādir Khumm”

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

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189 Thus, Ibn Bazzāz describes Menglī as a vile individual and blames for the Ilkhan Tegüder’s addiction to drugs and indulgence in immoralities. Ibn Bazzāz further claims that Hasan Menglī had a particular aversion to Shaykh Zāhīd. Envious of Zāhīd’s fame, he tried on a number of occasions to poison Tegüder’s mind against the “Zāhidīyān.” Šafwat al-ṣafā, 217-19.

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

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

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

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192 The ambitions of the descendants of Geikhatu did not end with Ala Fireng’s execution: Ala Fireng’s son, Jahān Timūr, “ruled” briefly in the later 1340s (1339-1340). He was enthroned by Ḥasan Buzurg as a puppet Ilkhan in the succession struggles that ensued after the death of Abū Saʿīd. Charles Melville, “Jahān Timūr,” Elr, vol. XIV, 385-386.
193 Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 5-6; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 5.
The Ilkhanid court historian Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd Allah al-Qāshānī, author of *Taʿrīkh-i ūljāytū*, too emphasizes the smooth and undisputed transition of the Ilkhanid government from Ghazan to Öljeitū. According to Qāshānī, in 703/1304 when the Ilkhan Ghazan felt that his moment of death was nearing, he set out in person to Khurasan to reunite for the final time with his brother Öljaitū. Qāshānī describes Ghazan arriving at his brother’s camp between Ray and Qazvin ordering on deathbed that his previous will (*waṣṣiya*) and designation (*naṣṣ*) of Öljaitū as his heir-apparent (*walī al-ʿahd, qāʾim maqām*) be publically read before a great crowd of Khātūns, amirs and state dignitaries. Qāshānī explicitly states that, Ghazan had his will “designating (*taʿyīn*) his brother Sultan Muḥammad as his heir” written several years earlier, when he was in good health.\(^\text{194}\) Qāshānī’s depiction of Öljaitū’s succession agrees with Rashīd al-Dīn’s establishment of the Abaqaid dynastic line in accordance with the principles of “inheritance and merit.”

Some of the terminology that Qāshānī applies, however, also implies that the author models Öljaitū’s succession on Shīʿī notions of succession. In particular, the court historian Qāshānī’s assignment of the terms *naṣṣ* and *taʿyīn* to Ghazan’s designation of Öljaitū as his successor could reference Muḥammad’s designation of ʿAlī, as his sole legitimate successor in Ghādīr Khumm (10/632) according to Shīʿī traditions.\(^\text{195}\) That Qāshānī refers here to Öljaitū as Sultan Muḥammad might further support this association between Ghazan’s speech and appointment of his kin as his successor and the event at Ghādīr Khumm. As Pfeiffer shows, Shīʿī notions of religiopolitical authority, in particular, those pertaining to descent-based claims of authority had a special appeal for Ghazan and Öljaitū. In one example, Öljaitū uses the Shīʿī


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

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

196 Pfeiffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 129-163.
197 Hülegü’s second senior wife (and later, after the death of Güyük Khātūn, his first wife), the Qunqirat Qutui Khātūn, mother of Tegüder, is interestingly not represented in the list of Öljeitū’s wives. She might not have had daughters or this might suggest the “disappearance” or omission of a “Tegüder-Qunqirat faction.”
198 Öljeitū’s chief wife, Gunjishkab Khātūn, was the granddaughter (through her mother Orghutaq) of Hülegü’s chief son Jumghur s. Güyük Khātūn (Hülegü’s chief wife, above) and Tolun Khātūn; Öljeitū’s second wife, Bujughan (?) Khātūn, was the granddaughter (through her mother Papa/Baba Khātūn, sister of the Ilkhanid candidate Möngke Temür) of Hülegü’s third chief wife, the Oirat Öljei Khātūn. Qāshānī notes that Gunjishkab was childless, which indicates that she gained her status as Öljeitū’s senior wife by being the first woman he married. That Gunjishkab retained her status as chief wife in spite of being barren could indicate the ongoing importance of the Jumghur senior line from Hülegü and Güyük in the Ilkhanate, even after Arghun had executed Jumghur’s sons, Jüshkeb and Kingshū, in 1289 (for Sterility as a reason for replacing the chief wife, Shir, “Chief Wife,” 62-84). Qāshānī, 7; Rashīd al-Dīn, Shu’ab-i Panjgānah (MS Topkapi Sarayi Ahmet 3, No. 2937).
administration of the Ilkhanate prior to the consolidation of the Abarqaid line under Arghun and Ghazan.\footnote{The father of Öljjeitii’s chief wife Gunjishkab was Shadi Guregen, the son of the influential Mongol (Suldus) commander and governor of Baghdad (and later Shiraz) Su’unchaq Aqa; and the father of Bujughan (?) Khâtûn was Lazgi Guregen, the son of another powerful commander and talented administrator, the governor of Khurasan Arghun Aqa (and brother of Nawrûz). Whereas Arghun Aqa was governor of Khurasan already in 1242, when he was appointed by the regent Töregene Khâtûn, and retained his office under Hülegü, Su’unchaq Aqa had arrived only with Hülegü’s campaign. Nevertheless, the careers of both amirs exhibit similar trajectories. The two are listed as participating in Hülegü’s conquest of Baghdad. A look at Rashîd al-Dîn’s genealogical charts of the Ilkhanid dynasty in the Shu’ab-i Panjgânah, reveals that under Abarqâ, Arghun Aqa and Su’unchaq Aqa both rose to prominence and functioned as the Ilkhan’s chief commanders. After Arghun Aqa’s death in 1275 and Tegüder’s enthronement, Su’unchaq Aqa continued to hold a key position in the administration of the realm appearing as the second amir in Tegüder’s list of amirs in the Shu’ab-i Panjgânah. On Su’unchaq Aqa, see George Lane, Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth Century Iran (London, 2003), 135-41; Aubin, 33-41; Pfeiffer, Conversion to Islam, 277-78. Su’unchaq Aqa’s advancement is marked by the marriage of his son to the daughter of Hülegü’s chief son Jumghur. With Arghun’s enthronement, we hear nothing of Su’unchaq Aqa and his son in Rashîd al-Dîn’s account until the two die in Maragha in Jumada I 689/May 1290. Rashîd al-Dîn/Thackston, vol. 3, 573. Rashîd al-Dîn’s laconic notice on their death appears suspicious considering Su’unchaq Aqa’s earlier support of Tegüder’s enthronement and Arghun’s execution of Buqa and his family just a year earlier (above). On Su’unchaq Aqa’s support of Tegüder, Pfeiffer, Conversion to Islam, 278. Arghun Aqa’s sons Nawrûz and Lazgi, who both married into the Hülegüid house, appear as amirs under Arghun’s section in the Shu’ab-i Panjgânah. However, in Jumada II 696/April 1297, Ghazan executes Nawrûz and his entire family including Lazgi for the fictitious accusation of conspiring with the Mamluks. Thus, these two powerful aristocratic families, Su’unchaq Aqa and Arghun Aqa and their offspring, with their marriage ties to the Hülegüid house, seem to have been completely erased by the reshuffling of political relations in the Ilkhanate, which began with the fall of amir Buqa in the later part of Arghun’s reign and ended with the execution of prince Ta’iu in 697/1298. Shu’ab-i Panjgânah; Rashîd al-Dîn/Thackston, vol. 3, 636-37. Nawrûz was married to Abarqâ’s daughter.\footnote{Rashîd al-Dîn/Thackston, vol. 3, 580. Rashîd al-Dîn states that Ghazan gave her to Öljjeitii and praises her wisdom and qualities. Rashîd al-Dîn, Kitâb al-salûtânîyya in Rashîd al-Dîn, Mukhtasar-i tavârîkh-i Rashîdiyya. Istanbul Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi Ms. 3415, f. 126r. Ełtûzmîsh Khâtûn d. Qultugh Temür, the patrilineal granddaughter of the Qunqirat amir Abatai (/Ubetay) Noyan. The latter was sent by hülegü in 662/1263-64 to summon and lead his son Jumghur and hülegü’s wives to Iran and was subsequently punished by hülegü for his responsibility in Jumghur’s death while en-route to Iran. Rashîd al-Dîn/Thackston, vol. 3, 519. Aside of this suspicious episode that ultimately facilitated the Abarqâid rise, and Abatai’s role in Abarqâ’s campaigns, the amir is primarily known for his female offspring’s marriage ties with Abarqâids. Ełtûzmîsh’s sister Karâmû Khâtûn was married to Ghazan, and inherited Dokuuz’s ordu. Rashîd al-Dîn/Thackston, vol. 3, 644: they married on Shawwal 698/July 1299 in an impressive ceremony. Her cousin Bûlûghân Khâtûn (d. Otman) was first the wife of Arghun and next, Geikhatu, and finally, Ghazan as well. Melville, “Boloğan Kâtûn,” Elr, vol. IV (1989), 338-339. Bûlûghân Khâtûn facilitated Ghazan’s victory over Baidu.} While Öljjeitii’s first two wives reflect the earlier Hülegüid project, which joined together the Hülegüid house with the main Ilkhanid power holders from the military ranks, Öljjeitii’s next two wives in Qâshânî’s list can be seen as reflecting the Abarqâid dynastic project. Öljjeitii’s third wife, Ełtûzmîsh Khâtûn, was the widow of Öljjeitii’s grandfather Abarqâ, and then, the wife of his uncle, the Ilkhan Geikhatu.\footnote{Öljjeitii’s fourth and sixth wives, Hâjî Khâtûn and her sister...}
Öljetei, were the daughters of Hülegü’s daughter, Tödögech (from a concubine) and the son of the Oirat commander Tengiz Güregen. Tengiz Güregen played an instrumental role in Rashîd al-Dîn’s narrative in raising Arghun to the throne following Tegüder’s downfall.201 Viewed together, Qâshânî’s list of Öljeytû’s wives maps the political transformation of the Ilkhanate from a Hülegüid “cousin-clan appanage-state” to an Abaqaid dynastic dispensation, a process that comes full circle with Öljeytû’s succession and his swift execution of Ala Fireng, the last of the princely contender—“rebels”.202

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201 In addition to his Hülegüid wife, Tengiz Güregen’s daughter Qutlugh Khâtûn was married to Arghun and when she died, Arghun married her niece Öljetei, whom Öljeitû later married. Rashîd al-Dîn/Thackston, vol. 3, 561.

202 The repercussions of the Abaqaid purge of princes were felt well after the dissolution of the Ilkhanate. Writing in the 1340s, the Mamluk encyclopedist Shihâb al-Dîn al-‘Umarî connects the state of the Ilkhanate with the earlier executions of princely contenders: “I asked Ibn al-Ḥâkim and al-sharîf Muhammad b. Haydara al-Shîrûzî about who they know has remained from Hülegû’s descendants and they both said: no offspring with a certain ancestry (mihaqqaq al-nasab) has remained alive except for what they say about Muhammad, who is related to Anbarji [s. Môngke Temûr s. Hülegû], in spite of the great disagreement about him. I [al-‘Umarî] said: then, news about the death of this Muhammad had arrived and was proven true. Nîzâm al-Dîn ibn al-Ḥâkim said to me: the people of this house [the Hülegûïds] were annihilated by each other because of the fear of the ruler and his execution of Ala Fireng, the last of the princely contender—“rebels”.

Melville, The Fall Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate: a decade of discord in Mongol Iran (Bloomington, 1999), 46. According to al-Ṣafadî, he was raised and was taught the trade by a Christian in Daquqa. A yân, vol. 5, 483-4. Muhammad died in the battle between Shaykh Ḥasan and the Chupanid party shortly thereafter, in 738/1338. According to al-‘Umarî, Muhammad was a son of Tash Temûr s. Esen Temûr s. Anbarji (page 93). The Mamluk biographer al-Ṣafadî, on the other hand, writes that after Abu Sa‘îd killed Anbarji, a concubine claimed she was pregnant from the prince and gave birth to Muhammad. He was in his twenties when he was enthroned. Anbarji, however, died in 1294, which makes al-‘Umarî’s version more likely. Melville, The Fall, 51; al-Ṣafadî, A yân al-asr, vol. 5, 40-41.
Chapter II: Between Prophet and Law-Maker King: Buddhists, Shīʿīs, and a Jewish Vizier at the Court of Arghun

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

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203 Millāt-yi mutajaddid wa-dawlat-yi mutahaddid dar rūzgār pāydār gudhār. Vaṣṣāf, 241. Vaṣṣāf seems to play here on the parallel and contradictory meanings of the roots j-d-d and h-d-d in Arabic. While majdūd, for example, means “possessed of good fortune” or “fortunate,” maḥdūd can designate the opposite meaning of “unfortunate” or “withheld from good luck or prosperity,” but also carry a similar meaning to that of majdūd: “being guarded from evil.” Edward Willliam Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863), 385, 526. This translation tallies with the use of the term dawlat in Persian writings under the Mongols, not just to designate dynasty (derived from its earlier
This chapter focuses on two episodes related to Sa’d al-Dawla in Vaşşāf’s history, the *Tajziyat al-amšār va tazjiyat al-ašār* (The apportioning of lands and the passing of time). The first episode includes Sa’d al-Dawla’s claim that Arghun inherited the prophethood of Chinggis Khan, and the second episode is the Jewish minister’s attempt to collect signatures to issue a document referred to as Sa’d al-Dawla’s *mahḍar* /the manifesto. I argue that these two episodes open a window onto the ideological atmosphere at the court of the Ilkhan Arghun. They show how religious interlocutors and cultural brokers at the Ilkhanid court competed over influence and access by demonstrating their ability to mediate Mongol religiopolitical conceptualizations of sacral authority. They sought to demonstrate to the Mongol rulers, for example, how the adoption of Buddhist notions of universal kingship, or Islamic political models, in Sa’d al-Dawla’s case, the *akhlāq-ethical* paradigm of the law-maker king in Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s work, could rearticulate and reinforce Ilkhanid claims to continuity with Chinggis Khan and with his example “as an intuitive font of wisdom and law”.

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

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

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

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

**Sa’d al-Dawla and His Career in Ilkhanid Historiography**

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

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206 A full discussion of the representations of Sa’d al-Dawla in Ilkhanid historiography is beyond the scope of this chapter, and merits a separate study, which I plan to carry out in the near future.  
207 We do not have a full biographical notice of Sa’d al-Dawla in the remaining volumes of the Maragha librarian Ibn al-Fuwaṭī’s biographical dictionary, but Ibn al-Fuwaṭī does refer to him in a different biographical entrance as Sa’d al-Dawla mas ‘ūd Ibn Hibat Allāh al-Abhārī. That Sa’d al-Dawla’s personal name was mas ‘ūd has yet to be noted by modern scholarship. Majmaʿ al-ʿādāb, vol. 4, 100. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī also provides a full biographical notice of Sa’d al-Dawla’s brother Fakhr al-Dawla, whom the Jewish minister sent to govern Baghdad on his behalf. We learn there that Fakhr al-Dawla ʿĪyya was son of Šaḥī al-Dīn Hibat Allāh son of (Muhadhdhib al-Dawla) Mūsā al-Īṣāʾī. Ibid., vol. 2, 572. Bar Hebraeus writes that Sa’d al-Dawla was the “father-in-law of the governor of Baghdad,” who had recently died (presumably referring to the Juwayniš?). Bar Hebraeus, The Chronography of Gregory Abū’l Faraj... Bar Hebraeus, trans. Ernest A. Wallis Budge (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 478. This detail is not corroborated by other accounts. For other conflicting testimonies on the earliest stages of Sa’d al-Dawla’s career, see Fischel, Jews, 96-97.  
209 For the development of the office of shihḥa/shāḥna and its relationship to basqaq (a provincial revenue officer), see Michal Biran, Empire of the Qara Khitai, 121-22.  
210 Malik Nāṣir al-Dīn Qutlughshah was the supervisor of Iraq’s finances (mushrif) from 685/1286 and Baghdad’s Șāhib-dīvān from 686/1287. Malik Nāṣir al-Dīn Qutlughshah was killed in Tabriz in 688/1289 after Sa’d al-Dawla was appointed vizier. He was buried in the ribāṭ he built in the mashḥad of the Salmān al-Īrānī. Al-Ḥawādīth, 454, 484,
Sa’d al-Dawla an immediate threat to his position in the city, the Șāhib-dīvān Qutlughshah devised a plan to remove Sa’d al-Dawla from the city. In one of his visits to the Ilkhanid court, Qutlughshah praised Sa’d al-Dawla’s qualities as a one of a kind physician claiming that it would be a shame to keep the Jewish doctor from royal service.\footnote{Vaṣṣāf has Sa’d al-Dawla’s fellow physicians in the ordu praising Sa’d al-Dawla’s qualities as a physician. See also al-Hawādīth, 487.}

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

Contemporaneous historians share little sympathy with the figure of the Jewish minister.\footnote{In the words of later Ilkhanid author Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, whose uncle (Fakhr al-Dīn) Sa’d al-Dawla had executed, the Jewish minister had “the appearance of prudence but was in reality treacherous and malignant.” Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī, Zafarnāma von Hamdallah Mustaufi und Sāhnāma von Abu l-Qāsim Firdausī (from the Facsimile of the British Library Or. 2833; Teheran/Vienna: Iran University Press and Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1377/1999), 2, 1320; L. J. Ward, The Zafar-namah of Hamdullah Mustaufi and the} Although they acknowledge his contribution to stabilizing the kingdom, his

\footnote{487, 496. Aruq was the brother of amir Buqa, the mastermind behind Arghun’s seizure of the Ilkhanid throne and was subsequently the main power-holder in the Ilkhanate until his execution in 1289.}
correction of injustices and abuses, and his patronage of literary production in Baghdad (as well as his sponsoring of the Baghdadi *hajj* caravans), Ilkhanid authors generally depict the period of Sa’d al-Dawla’s tenure as vizier as one marked by administrative efficiency achieved through coercive and forceful measures, a high level of mortality among Ilkhanid governmental ranks, and a rise in tensions between religious communities, particularly among the resident populations of Baghdad. In his capacity as vizier, Sa’d al-Dawla removed his rivals and filled key posts with his loyalists, mostly his relatives and Jewish administrators. The primary image of Sa’d al-Dawla as retained in Ilkhanid accounts is that of a savvy politician who gained considerable influence over the Ilkhan and had his enemies removed through trickery and deceit. Anecdotes about the Jewish minister assign his downfall to his arrogant conduct at court and the animosity his efficiency in raising revenue and measures of administrative centralization fostered, especially amongst the Ilkhani military elite.

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Il-Khan Dynasty of Iran (PhD dissertation, University of Manchester, 1983), 2, 331. Bar Hebraeus is perhaps the most sympathetic to Sa’d al-Dawla’s tenure viewing the whole affair as an indication that “Islam hath been brought low!” Bar Hebraeus, 479. Vassaf, 238.

Among the many casualties of Sa’d al-Dawla’s “cleaning of the stables” were Malik Nāṣir al-Dīn Qutlugshah, who was the previous governor of Baghdad appointed by Aruq and Sa’d al-Dawla’s adversary in Baghdad, the reminder of the Juwaynī family, and members of the Simnānī family. Aubin, Émirs Mongols, 42-3.


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

In one account in Vaṣṣāf’s history, for example, Sa’d al-Dawla and the Ilkhan were playing chess. Sa’d al-Dawla stretched his legs in front of the Ilkhan in an audacious manner and was reprimanded by amir Toghan, who entered the tent that very moment. Sa’d al-Dawla explained that he had joint pain and was forgiven by the Ilkhan. According to Vaṣṣāf, Toghan developed a particular animosity towards Sa’d al-Dawla since this incident. Vaṣṣāf, 238-9.
Most of the research on Sa’d al-Dawla repeats this account on Sa’d al-Dawla’s short-lived career as vizier focusing on Sa’d al-Dawla’s Jewish identity and positioning him in Ilkhanid politics. Aubin, for example, assigns Sa’d al-Dawla’s appointment to the vizierate after the removal of the all-too-powerful amir Buqa, to the Ilkhan’s wish to create the ultimate vizier: a highly qualified and talented administrator who had no compromising ties to the local Muslim administration or issues with the Mongol tradition (as the Juwaynīs did) on the one hand, and on the other hand, was not a Mongol amir who might overstep his boundaries and accumulate political power on expense of the Ilkhan’s sovereignty as amir Buqa had done. Historians, furthermore, dismiss the possibility that Sa’d al-Dawla’s tenure as minister had a “cultural impact”. I suggest, however, that the two episodes in Vaṣṣāf’s history discussed in this chapter reveal otherwise.

A Jewish Vizier and His “Fables”

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

218 Aubin, Émirs mongols, 42-44.
“fables” to the knowledge of Persian epic or “the stories of the Persian kings and the stories of Rustum and Isfandiyār.” Vaṣṣāf might be using here the label “fables of the ancestors” to ridicule Sa’d al-Dawla and his speech to the Ilkhan as “diverting tales” (lahw al-ḥadīth) to imply that Sa’d al-Dawla was a “reincarnated al-Naḍr,” an adversary of the Muslim community. However, as I discuss below, the Ilkhanid historian might also be suggesting that the Jewish minister was using stories of the Iranian past such as the accounts on pre-Islamic Iranian monarchs that feature in the genre of advice literature in order to convince the Ilkhan to pursue certain policies.

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

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

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

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

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

However, the later Ilkhanid author Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, who possibly drew on Vaṣṣāf’s work, contradicts Ayatī’s impression of this affair. He writes that the goal of Sa’d al-Dawla’s unexecuted military campaign against the Ka’ba and ‘Ali’s shrine was to impose Buddhism on the Muslims (and not a new religion).225 Qazwīnī’s “reading” of this episode seems more correct as some authors, indeed, associated pre-Islamic Arabian idolatry with Buddhism. In his Life and Teachings of the Buddha, for example, the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn writes that “before the acceptance of Islam, the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina along with some of the Arabs and Persians were Buddhists (ʿalā dīn Shākamūnī) and that in the Ka’ba they had worshipped idols resembling the Buddha, which Muḥammad had then ordered to be destroyed.”226 Vaṣṣāf’s account might reflect, therefore, resentment over Sa’d al-Dawla’s appointment to the Dawla Abhārī in Shiraz to be executed as well. Was the Jewish minister attempting to uproot the intellectual opposition to his appointment? On Sa’d al-Dawla’s appointment of his relatives and other Jews to key positions, see Fischel, Jews, 7-8.

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


vizierate that embroiled the Jewish vizier’s growing influence at the court with Arghun’s Buddhist inclinations in a Jewish-Buddhist-Mongol conspiracy threatening Muslim sacred sites.  

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

The “Bloody Prophet”: Debating Buddhism and Islam at Arghun’s Court

Vaṣṣāf is unclear about when the exchange between the vizier and the Ilkhan took place, but due to its location in his narrative, Aubin assumed that Sa’d al-Dawla approached the Ilkhan with his proposal during the last few months of Arghun’s life and Sa’d al-Dawla’s career. However, clues in the episode as narrated by Vaṣṣāf, especially Sa’d al-Dawla’s suggestion that the Ilkhan appoint him as his “debt collector” (mutaqāzī-yi himmat-i ʿālī), suggest that the

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

228 Aubin, Émirs Mongols, 42-4.
reported incident probably should be placed earlier, at some point before Saʿd al-Dawla was appointed by the Ilkhan as the supervisor of finances of Baghdad in Jumādā I 687/June 1288, and certainly before Arghun made him vizier in Jumādā II 688/June 1289.\footnote{Vaṣṣāf has Jumādā II 687/July 1288 as the date for Saʿd al-Dawla’s appointment as chief minister (hākim-i māl va-mulk) after Ordu Qaya praises the physician’s tax collection skills before the Ilkhan. Vaṣṣāf also identifies this date as the date for Saʿd al-Dawla’s second return from his treasury inspection trip to Baghdad. Rashīd al-Dīn, however, has a year later, Jumādā II 688/June 1289, as the month of Saʿd al-Dawla’s appointment to the vizierate. The contemporaneous history of Baghdad, al-Ḥawādith al-jāmiʿa, confirms Rashīd al-Dīn’s “timeline” with Saʿd al-Dawla’s first trip to Baghdad on 686, his second inspection of the city’s finances in Muḥarram 687/February 1288 (which included also the removal from office of the city’s governor Qutlugshah), Saʿd al-Dawla’s appointment as supervisor (mushrif) upon his return from his second trip to Baghdad (probably in Jumādā I 687/June 1288) and finally, his appointment as sāhib-i dīvān in 688 (Jumādā II 688/June 1289 according to Rashīd al-Dīn). Rashīd al-Dīn, Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh/Rawshan, 1164ff; Vaṣṣāf, 236-237; anonymous, al-Ḥawādith al-jāmiʿa, 450-57.}

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Saʿd al-Dawla was at court as Arghun’s physician during the autumn of 686/1287, but towards the end of 686/winter of 1287-1288, after convincing the Mongol amir Ordu Qaya and the Ilkhan that, he could raise more revenue from Baghdad, he left the court for the city. He returned to the Ilkhan’s summer camp in Qonqur Ölāng with a treasure of retrieved taxes in Jumādā I 687/June 1288, at which point Arghun appointed Ordu Qaya as the amir (imārat) of Baghdad and Saʿd al-Dawla as the city’s supervisor of finances (mushrif).\footnote{The mushrif seems to have been an independent financial supervising agent. Al-Jamil, 103.} It seems, therefore, more plausible to date Saʿd al-Dawla’s exchange with Arghun either to the period when he served as the ruler’s physician in 1287, or a year later, in June 1288, when he returned from Baghdad for the first time. This later date, Jumādā I 687/June 1288, is significant since it means that the Jewish physician crossed paths at the Ilkhan’s summer camp at Qonqur Ölāng with another influential figure in Arghun’s court, the renowned Sufi ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 736/1336).

A member of a politically influential family of court officials from Simnān, ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Simnānī was in Arghun’s service from the age of 15. In 683/1284, as Simnānī set out to join Arghun’s forces on the battlefield against Arghun’s uncle, Aḥmad Tegüder, Simnānī
experienced a spiritual vision that left him bewildered and paralyzed. Simnānī subsequently lost all interest in serving the Ilkhan. He began pursuing the life of a Sufi ascetic, fasting and repenting. After spending time away from the ordu at his hometown of Simnān, he decided to abandon royal service and head to Baghdad to study with the famous Sufi master Isfarāyinī. He subsequently set out in Rabī’ II 687/May 1288, but was detained by the order of the Ilkhan in Hamadān and taken to the Ilkhan’s summer camp. At Qonqur Öläng, he was made, according to his own account, to partake in debates with Buddhist priests. According to Simnānī, the Buddhist clergy, whom he refers to as “the lords of the idol worshippers,” had arrived from India, Tibet, Kashmir and the Uyghur territory in order debate him. Qunqr Öläng, near where Sultāniyya (originally founded by Arghun) would later be built, was a significantly active Buddhist site where the Ilkhans partook in Buddhist rituals with the bakhshīs, Buddhist monks. Simnānī’s detention at the Ilkhan’s camp ended in Sha’bān 687/September 1288 when he left the court without Arghun’s permission.

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

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232 On Simnānī’s cultural interactions at the Ilkhanid court, life and career, see DeWeese, “ʿĀlāʾ al-Dawla Simnānī,” 35-76 (48 and 55 for the dates of his detention); Elias, Throne Carrier, 15-31.
monk as a fraud, Simnānī was made to accompany Arghun to a private garden where the ruler took his hand and had him sit on the ground beside him.

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

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

234 For the competition at the Mongol courts between different religious specialists and knowledge purveyors and the lack of a differentiation between “wise men” and “holy men,” and the theme of deriving advice from these figures as
Furthermore, Simnānī’s autobiographical accounts demonstrate first the Mongol ruler’s personal engagement in comparing the dogmas’ of the Buddha and the Prophet Muḥammad, and second that, his view of Islam was mediated through the Buddhist priests he held dear. The Prophet Muḥammad’s law (yasāq) and supposed promotion of war and violence was probably one argument raised, as an opposition to the religion of Islam, by the Buddhists at court disputation and other interactions with the Ilkhan. Simnānī’s answer to the Mongol ruler, who was posing as a promoter of non-violence and peace in the face of a blood thirsty Prophet, is also fascinating in this regard. Simnānī does not only use metaphors from his immediate environment, but also frames his response in terms compatible to the Mongols’ division of the world into obedient subjects and illegitimate rebels, implying that the infidels were both enemies of Allāh and the Mongol Ilkhan. In fact, we will see that Saʿd al-Dawla’s mahḍar used similar terms in reference to Arghun’s role as a world regulator king.235

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

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237 Phags-pa Lama (1235-1280), member of the ‘Khon family rulers of the Sa-skya monastery, who enjoyed a close relationship with Qubilai and the Yuan imperial family and was appointed in 1277 by Qubilai as viceroy over Tibet, too advised Qubilai to govern according to Buddhism’s moral principles and avoid violence since peace will be obtained by peace alone and “fire must be put out by water, not by fire itself.” Sh. Bira, “Qubilai Qa’an and ‘Phags-pa Bla-ma,” in The Mongol Empire and its Legacy, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (Leiden, 1999), 246.
Ilkhan “adhered to the religion of the bakhšhīs [Buddhism, dīn al-bakhshiyya], and they are the group [tāʾifā] famed for idol worshiping and sorcery [al-sihr] and he attached great importance to their path [tariqa], particularly to the group [tāʾifā] related to the Brahmans of India [barahmat al-hind]; he would spend forty days each year in seclusion [khalwa] in devotion [yatahanathā] and would avoid eating meat”.

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

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

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

240 Vaṣṣāf, 242-3.
Vaṣṣāf’s account and Simnānī’s recollections of his conversations with Arghun indicate that in the summer of 1288, when both Simnānī and Sa’d al-Dawla were present at the Ilkhan’s summer camp, the Ilkhan was preoccupied with questions about royal violence and, in particular, what was viewed as Muslim sanctioned violence against non-Muslims. Sa’d al-Dawla’s argument that the Ilkhan should follow the example of Muḥammad’s harsh treatment of his enemies can be read as a response to a similar charge made by the Ilkhan, or one of his Buddhist debaters in the context of Arghun’s court disputations (where religious founders and dogmas were compared), or during Sa’d al-Dawla’s less public audiences with the ruler. In Vaṣṣāf’s account, Sa’d al-Dawla proves himself to be a shrewd politician linking his own aspirations to advance in the ladder of the administrative service of the realm with the ruler’s concerns over the nature of government and dislike of violence colored by his engagement with a trans-regional and eclectic Buddhism. Sa’d al-Dawla uses the example of Muḥammad, of whose conduct Arghun seems to have particularly disapproved, to explain to the Ilkhan the pragmatism of state sanctioned violence: the prosperity of his (religious) community (milla) and dynasty/government (dawlat) depends on fervently protecting the realm from the Ilkhan’s own enemies. But who were these enemies that Sa’d al-Dawla was preaching the Ilkhan in their regard?

In chapter one, I discussed the change in Arghun’s policy towards his contending Hülegüid cousins, following Buqa’s fall from power in 1289. During the summer and fall of 688/1289, Arghun embarked on a series of executions of his most senior cousins including the prime Ilkhanid candidates for the throne, Jūshkeb s. Jumghur, Hülegü s. Hülegü, and Qara Noqai s. Yoshmut s. Hülegü along with their descendants. According to Vaṣṣāf’s account, there was widespread Hülegüid opposition to Arghun’s occupation of the Ilkhanid throne. Sa’d al-Dawla played a role in amir Buqa’s fall from grace revealing to the Ilkhan the misgivings of Buqa’s
brother Aruq in Baghdad. It was Buqa’s execution that paved the path for Sa`d al-Dawla’s advancement to the vizierate. Arghun’s dynastic situation was on the Ilkhan’s mind in Qonqur Öläng, during the summer of 687/1288, when the exchange between Sa`d al-Dawla and the Ilkhan appears to have taken place.

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

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

²⁴¹ Elverskog, Buddhism and Islam, 162-74.
Cakravartin or Prophet: The Reversion of Chinggis Khan

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

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

242 Ibid., 154-6.
243 Az nubuvvat bā bahra būdah ast. A few lines later, praising Mongol rule, Shabānkāraʾī adds that “one might say that government and kingship [sāliṭan wa-mamlakat] culminated in/were sealed with [khatm] them just as prophethood was sealed with Muḥammad.” Muḥammad Shabānkāraʾī, Majmaʿ al-ansāb (Tehran, 1363/1984), 223-4; Judith Pfeiffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 157.
Ilkhanid authors to retrospectively “monotheisize” Chinggis Khan’s biography.²⁴⁴ An account about Chinggis Khan’s early career found in the encyclopedia of the Mamluk official al-Nuwayrī (d. 733/1333) remarkably combines the depiction of Chinggis Khan as a ḥanīf, that is, an original monotheist or proto-monotheist, his semi-prophetic status, and the role of a Jew as a harbinger of his future success. According to al-Nuwayrī, before his rise to power, Chinggis Khan became an ascetic (tazahadda) in the mountains after asking a Jew: “what gave Mūsā, ‘Isā and Muḥammad this exalted position [al-manzala al-ʿazīma] and spread their fame?” and how he, too, could attain their rank. The Jew advised Chinggis Khan to devote himself to God adding that “in our books [it is written] that you will have a dynasty which will triumph [dawla satuẓhar].” Chinggis Khan follows the Jew’s advice and becomes an ascetic eating only permissible food and receiving pilgrims (ziyāra). Al-Nuwayrī further stresses Chinggis Khan’s “Hanifism” by concluding with the statement that even though Chinggis Khan did not belong to any religious community (milla), he, nevertheless, had a love for God. The role of the Jew as a harbinger of Chinggis Khan’s triumph is reminiscent of the role of the Jews and the Jewish scriptures as heralds of Muḥammad’s prophethood in the Muslim tradition. Amitai suggests that the story reported by al-Nuwayrī might have originated in the way some Mongols in the Ilkhanate explained their own conversion to Islam.²⁴⁵

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

²⁴⁴ For example, writing about Chinggis Khan’s war with Ong Khan, Shabānkāraʾī claims that Chinggis Khan had an intimate relationship with God, even though he was not a Muslim, and elsewhere, has Chinggis Khan directly address God. Shabānkāraʾī, 227. The Ilkhanid historian ḤamdAllāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī too compared the escape of the Mongols’ mythical ancestors to the valley of Ergene Qum to Muḥammad’s hijra. See discussion and further examples in Michal Biran, Chinggis Khan (Oxford, 2007), 114-21.
²⁴⁵ Al-Nuwayrī, Nihāyat al-arab, vol. 27, 207-8; Amitai, “Did Chinggis Khan have a Jewish Teacher?”, 119-120. Other Mamluk authors, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) for example, used the claim that the Mongols equated Chinggis Khan with Muḥammad even after their conversion to Islam, to accuse the Mongols of blasphemy. Amitai, “Did Chinggis Khan have a Jewish Teacher?”, 698-99; Pfieffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 158-9.
Mongols” under Qubilai Khan based their patronage of Confucianism on the definition of their turn to Confucianism not as “conversion to foreign, Chinese Confucianism, but ‘reversion’ to the basic traditions of the [Mongol] empire’s founder, recast, of course, as congruent with Confucian political and ritual principles.” Chinggis Khan was “reborn” as a proto-Confucian.246 By casting Chinggis Khan as a Confucian, conversion to Confucianism and adherence to Confucian precepts becomes a channel for claiming continuity with the empire’s founder’s legacy.247

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

246 Atwood, “Explaining rituals,” 95-100.
247 Reversion of the ancestors was also based on the notion of the Mongol ruler as an untutored genius who enjoys an innate knowledge of great agrarian religious traditions with no previous training. The Mongol ruler was understood as “an independent and intuitive font of law and wisdom, superior to, but not inconsistent [my emphasis] with, the best teachings of the religions.” The superiority of his personal wisdom thus confirmed with the religious written traditions of the conquered. Ibid., “The Mongol Empire and early modernity,” forthcoming. I am grateful to Christopher Atwood for sharing with me a draft of this paper.
king, the (iron) wheel turning king, a Buddhist universal emperor. His lineage continues with his son Ögödei Qa’an and Ögödei’s son Gıyûk. Tolui, who “obtained the rank of Khan and ruled supreme,” is mentioned next although he had never held the office of Qa’an. Tolui is followed by his sons Môngke and Qubilai, who “ruled over far more dominions than his predecessors” and “after entering the Door of Precious Teaching, has protected his realm according to the Dharma.” This history ends with Qubilai’s designated heir and second son prince Jîn-gim, “who is endowed with all the glory of Heaven,” and with a brief note on prince Jîn-gim’s siblings.

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

Qubilai, who was twice initiated by ‘Phags-pa into the Sakya cult, becomes in ‘Phags-pa’s political theology the “representation or substitute of the original cakravartin, Chinggis Khan”. The depiction of the imperial founder as a wheel-turning king or Buddhist world emperor was not unique to the

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249 Sh. Bira, 244-45; Herbert Franke, From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor and God: the legitimation of the Yuan dynasty (Munich, 1978), 54-59.
250 Ibid., 61; Sh. Bira, 244. In the short treatises dedicated to Qubilai and his family members, ‘Phags-pa advises Qubilai about matters of government preaching, for example, against royal violence, and argues that Qubilai rules in accordance with the Dharma. Sh. Bira, 246; ‘Phags-pa, Prince Jîn-Gim’s textbook of Tibetan Buddhism, 43. Furthermore, ‘Phags-pa’s works espouse a political theology, which similar to the Persianate “two powers,” envisioned a dual system of authority invested in the “two orders” or “principles” of religion and state, nom-un yosun and törö-yin yosun. ‘Phags-pa’s division of authority into religious affairs and state affairs corresponded to the twin Buddha/Lama and cakravartin/Buddhist king, which were personified by ‘Phags-pa Lama himself and Chinggis Khan/Qubilai, as it came to be articulated later, from the sixteenth-century onwards, in the theories of the ideal Mongol-Tibetan state. Franke and Bira both attribute the theory to ‘Phags-pa himself. Sh. Bira, 246ff; and Franke, 61. Dunnell, who is less convinced, suggests that “certainly the relationship between ‘Phags-pa and Qubilai […] set important precedents that Mongolian and Tibetan writers of the late-sixteenth century and early-seventeenth centuries systematically propagated.” Ruth Dunnel, “The Hsia origins of the Yuan Institution of Imperial Preceptor,” Asia Minor 51 (1992), 108. For the later, sixteenth century bifurcated nature of Mongol authority – when “Mongol political authority came to be ritualized through parallel systems of legitimacy: God’s blessing and the Dharma,” see Johan Elverskog, Our Great Qing (Honolulu, 2006), 42-62. Interestingly, Sa’d al-Dawla promised Arghunun Vassāf’s account a rejuvenated or fortunate community (milla) and a fortunate dynasty/empire/state (davlāt) (above), which might correspond to such a division into nom and törö or Dharma and state, another indication that Sa’d al-Dawla’s exchange with the Ilkhan was related to debates between Muslims and Buddhists at the Ilkhan’s camp.
Mongols. Buddhism provided a plethora of semiotic resources to couch an emperor’s life in Buddhist idioms. The *cakravartin* was seen as the flip side of the coin of the Buddha: the same amount of merit accumulated in pervious lives awarded one with the choice between the two parallel career paths.\(^{251}\)

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

In his study of the cult of Chinggis Khan, Elverskog has observed the that “the holding of the state was a sacred enterprise of the Mongols, and the privilege to rule was conferred only through the right worship and reverence of Chinggis Khan […]”.\(^{252}\) Furthermore, he suggested that Chinggis Khan’s “successors understood their rule only within a relationship between themselves and Chinggis Khan, who had the initial right to rule bestowed upon him by God” and

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\(^{252}\) Elverskog, *Our Great Qing*, 53-54.
that, Chinggis Khan, therefore, became “from founder of the empire to the sanctified holder of the right to rule”.  

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

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

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253 Ibid., 50, 52.
254 Elverskog furthermore demonstrates how the early modern Mongols held a dual system of legitimacy to sanctify and confirm Mongol political authority – one through maintain the ritualistic cult of Chinggis Khan, which mediated divine sanctification/God’s blessing, and another, through the model of ideal Buddhist rule (cakravartin). Ibid., 54-58. See also introduction here.
255 Elverskog, Buddhism and Islam, 149; Prazniak, “Ilkhanid Buddhism,” 655. For the dominance of Kashmiri Buddhism at the Ilkhanid court from Arghun onwards, ibid., 662-3.
256 Franke, 58.
257 Yoeli-Tlalim has, however, singled out some possible indications for the significance of Tibetan input, or more likely, “an Ilkhanid variation of Tibetan Buddhism” for Rashid al-Dîn’s Life of the Buddha. For one, Rashîd al-Dîn speaks of the Tibetans and Tanguts as having “a pure religion.” See Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, “Rashîd al-Dîn’s Life of the Buddha. Some Tibetan perspectives,” in Rashîd al-Dîn, 197-211.
The first embassy that took only seventeen months to arrive included Bolad noyan, a praised confident of Qubilai and senior official at the Yuan court, who had earned the prestigious title of ch’enggg-hsiang (“chancellor”). The second embassy, which arrived in January 1286 bearing Arghun’s patent of investiture from the Qa’an Qubilai (and the amir Buqa’s title of ch’eng-hsiang), was headed by Ordu Qaya (Urdāqiyā). Arghun had sent him earlier to China to gain the Qa’an’s support, before overtaking the throne from his uncle. While Bolad’s interactions with Rashīd al-Dīn have been determined as “the major conduit of cultural exchange between Iran and China,” it is also plausible that other individuals such as Ordu Qaya conveyed certain ideas from Qubilai’s environment.

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

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

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258 Allsen, Culture and Conquest, 27-8.
259 According to the Shu’ab-i panjgāna, Ordu Qaya was a Uyghur commander (and therefore, likely Buddhist as well) and a sūkūrci (parasol bearer). Shu’ab-i panjgāna (Arghun’s commanders).
261 In Vaṣṣāf’s account, Sa’d al-Dawla is sent on official duty to Baghdad after taking advantage of his private engagements with the Ilkhan while preforming Arghun’s medical procedures to raise before the latter the issue of Baghdad’s finances and the misgivings of amir Aruq, who was according to the Jewish doctor, keeping the city’s revenue in his own treasury. On the other hand, Vaṣṣāf writes that Ordu Qaya spoke favorably about Sa’d al-Dawla to the Ilkhan when the Jewish doctor and the amir returned from Baghdad after their second trip and that since the Ilkhan considered Ordu Qaya a trustworthy advisor, Arghun promoted Sa’d al-Dawla to chief minister of the realm (hākim-i māl va-mulk). According to Vaṣṣāf, from that moment on, Sa’d al-Dawla did as he wished in running the state and appointing trusted governors. Vaṣṣāf, 236-7. Ordu Qaya might have, therefore, served as a channel between Sa’d al-Dawla and the ideological atmosphere at Qubilai’s court.
Ilkhanate was never without political connotations.\(^{262}\) The extensive financial and material support for the construction and maintaining of Buddhist complexes in Ilkhanid territories indicates that the patronage of Buddhist communities was also “an essential part of early Ilkhanid political vision”.\(^{263}\) Furthermore, as discussed in chapter one, the support of Tibetan Buddhism appears to have had a significant dynastic-Abaqaid dimension in Ilkhanid Iran.\(^{264}\) Buddhist patronage provided the Abaqids with a means of claiming continuity with Hülegü, and overcoming their problematic succession to the throne. Furthermore, I suggested that Rashīd al-Dīn’s identification in his history of the Abaqaids-Hülegüid-Toluid-Chinggisid line with monotheism drew on the earlier Abaqaid appropriation of Buddhism, as part of its dynastic project.\(^{265}\)

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

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

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

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

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

266 It should not surprise us, therefore, that according to Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative, Sa’d al-Dawla’s fall from power begins with a Buddhist monk (bakhashi). The latter serves Arghun, who had just recovered from near fatal illness, several goblets of wine causing the ruler’s relapse. With Arghun on death-bed, Sa’d al-Dawla loses his protection at
notion of prophethood to reinforce Arghun’s claim to rightful inheritance of the Ilkhanid throne and to place Arghun’s claim to a sacred link with the empire’s founder above the claims of other contending senior Hülegüid princes. Vaşşaf’s account suggests, indeed, that Sa’d al-Dawla was successful in manipulating the Ilkhan and ascribes to the Jewish vizier Arghun’s transition from his earlier Buddhist-inspired pacifist policy to his later blood-thirsty attitude. Sa’d al-Dawla’s experimentation with the model of Chinggisid prophethood, nevertheless, appears to have been short-lived, as the Jewish vizier in Vaşşaf’s account subsequently sets out to ground the Ilkhan’s sovereignty in a different and more elaborate political model, one that he appropriates from Tūsī’s Akhlāq-i nāṣirī.

Sa’d al-Dawla’s Tūsīan Maḥḍar and the Akhlāq-Ethical Model of Kingship

The Jewish vizier’s advice to the Ilkhan is followed in Tajziyat al-amšār by a different account about Sa’d al-Dawla’s attempt to issue a document, referred to as Sa’d al-Dawla’s maḥḍar, the manifesto. Vaşşaf starts this report with the statement that out of his hatred of the Muslims and desire for fortune, the Ilkhan Arghun issued an edict (yarlıgh) prohibiting all Muslims from working in the dīvān and from entering the ʿordu, the Ilkhanid court. Subsequently, we are provided with a first-hand testimony from Vaşşaf’s patron Şadr al-Dīn al-Khālidī al-

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

This is also confirmed by Bar Hebraeus, who writes that when Arghun recognized that the “deceit” of the Arab scribes, he appointed Sa’d al-Dawla, who was at the time Baghdad’s governor as “chief of the scribes […] in all the dominion of his kingdom,” and ordered that “governors should never, never appoint the Arab [Muslim] to be a scribe, but only the Christian and the Jew.” Bar Hebraeus blames this policy for the growth of anti-Christian resentment among the Muslim population. Bar Hebraeus, 484-5.
Zanjānī (d. Rajab 697/May 1298), who would later replace Saʿd al-Dawla as vizier and take part in the Ilkhanid succession struggles.268 According to Zanjānī’s testimony, during this period of tribulations, when the Muslims were prohibited from entering the dīvān, Zanjānī had a chance meeting with Saʿd al-Dawla. Privately conferring with Zanjānī, Saʿd al-Dawla presented before him the maḥḍar.

The maḥḍar consists of a public manifesto confirmed and signed by a number of eminent scholars, copied and circulated or read out loud in public. The thirteenth-century historian Juwaynī reproduces one such maḥḍar, the manifesto that was issued in Baghdad in 402/1011, and targeted the Fatimid dynasty’s sayyid ancestry claiming it a forgery. The document was co-signed by Baghdad’s principal “sayyids, qāḍīs and ‘ulamāʾ,” who bore witness to its content.269

The best-known example of a maḥḍar, however, is the Mughal emperor Akbar’s 987/1579 Infallibility Decree. Signed by the leading ‘ulamāʾ at Akbar’s court, it announced Akbar’s supreme authority to resolve disagreements between legal interpreters (mujtahidīn).270 Intriguingly, Saʿd al-Dawla’s document promoted a similar statement of Ilkhanid sovereignty to Akbar’s Infallibility Decree.

Zanjānī related to Vaṣṣāf that at the end of Saʿd al-Dawla’s “forced manifesto” (maḥḍar-i zūr) as he refers to it, several prominent figures (aʿimma-yi islām wa-aʿyān-i davlat) signed their names as a confirmation of its content.271 However, their statements, as Zanjānī noticed,
alluded to a different conviction. One of the ‘ulamā’, for example, added in writing the Arabic proverb “people have the religion of their kings” implying a measure of implicit coercion in confirming the edict. To Zanjānī’s dismay, Sa’d al-Dawla asked him to add his signature to the document. Pleading with Sa’d al-Dawla in the name of their long-standing friendship and with the promise of future favors, Zanjānī was able to convince Sa’d al-Dawla to exclude him from his list without seemingly upsetting Sa’d al-Dawla. According to Vaṣṣāf, the core of Sa’d al-Dawla’s mahdar, which included lengthy prefaces and conclusions, announced that:

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

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


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

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

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

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

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

276 “On the reason for man’s need for civilized life (tamaddūn) and an exposition of the nature and virtue of this branch of science”.

277 Madelung, “Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī,” 86.

278 The absolutist imperative of medieval Islamic political thought was, thus, rooted in a “pessimistic anthropology” of the human nature as al-Azmeh explains. al-Azmeh, Muslim Kingship, 115 ff.; Subtelny, “Kashifī’s Akhlāq-i Muḥsinī,” 604-8.

279 Ṭūsī, Akhlāq-i nāṣirī, 238-50; The Nasirean Ethics, 187-95.

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

281 If such management encourages the social ranks towards cooperation it is called government (siyāsāt) and if such tadbīr also leads towards “the perfection (kināfī) which is in potency is species (naw) and individuals, it is called Divine Government (siyāsāt-i ilahī).” Indeed, in Sa’ d al-Dawla’s decree, it is stated that prophets are the recipients of Divine Government (siyāsāt-i rabbānī) (above).
alike since they both cannot be achieved without positive laws (awdā’) and/or rational commandments (ahkām-i ‘aqli). An individual “distinguished from others by divine inspiration (ilhām-i ilahī)” is needed in order to determine the positive laws. This individual is the lawgiver (ṣāḥib-i nāmūs) of the ancients (the Greek philosophers), whose laws are called the Divine Law/nomos (nāmūs-i ilahī), and the prophet (shārī) of the moderns (Muslim philosophers/political theorists), whose positive laws are called the sharī’a. At the other end of this equation is “an individual distinguished from others by divine support (taʾyīd-yi ilahī),” who is required “in order to determine rational commandments (taqdir-i ahkām).” 283 He is equated with the absolute king (malik ʿalā al-iṭlāq) of the Greek philosophers, the Imām of the moderns, Plato’s Regulator of the World (mudabbir-i ʿālam), and Aristotle’s civic man.284

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

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

283 The duty of this individual is to safeguard the hierarchical structuring of society, that is, that each class remains in its proper place according to Divine Wisdom (ḥikmat-i ilahī). Al-Azmeh, 118: “moral differentiation is the precondition of sound morality.”
284 Ibid., 190-192.
285 See also Shahab Ahmed, What is Islam? The importance of being Muslim (Princeton, 2016), 462-67.
species (nayv) in the most perfect manner (bar vajh-i akmal-i šūra) cannot be realized. The Regulator undertakes to preserve the Law (ḥifz-i nāmūs) and obliges men to uphold its prescriptions […]

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

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

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

288 Arjomand identifies a gradual transition starting in the twelfth-century onwards, from the “two powers theory” to “Islamic royalism.” In this later autocratic conception of authority, the ruler-sultan is envisioned as the “king of Islam,” who maintains both orders. Thus, as will be discussed further in the next chapter, in his section on advice for kings in his Sufi manual Mirṣād al-ʿIbād (the path of God’s bondsmen), the thirteenth-century Sufi Najm al-Dīn
Yet, Ṭūsī’s akhlāq-ethical model of kings and prophets might have had additional roots as well. In his third discourse of the *Nasirean Ethics*, Ṭūsī makes an additional important distinction noting that “in the terminology of some [qavm], the first of these persons is called the Speaker (nāṭiq), and the second the Foundation (asās)”.

As Madelung observes, this terminology is distinctly Ismāʿīlī: the Speaker is the prophet who initiates a new cycle of law, and the Foundation is his successor, the founder of the community. The latter knows the inner meanings of the religious law.

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

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


For Ṭūsī, Divine Law (nāmās-i ilahī) is changeable. It changes in accordance with the age and circumstances since like the “agreed opinion of the community,” the divine law is rooted in “position” (vaḍ) – only that its cause is “the exigency of the opinion of a great man, fortified by Divine assistance, such as a prophet or an imām.” Madelung, “Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī,” 90-7. See also Christian Jambet, “Idéal du politique idéale selon Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī,” in *Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī: philosophe et savant du XIIIe siècle*, ed. N. Pourjavady et al. (Tehran, 2000), 31-57. For nāṭiq and asās, see H. Halm, “Asās,” *Elr*. Accessed March 2, 2016. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/asas-pl.
course [inqiyād-i va-mutāb`at-i īshān]”. Madelung suggests that Ṭūsī refers here to the bifurcation of authority over the interpretation of the law between the prophets and their heirs, the Imāms (rather than the ʿulamā). Further support for this thesis is found in Ṭūsī’s statement in the third discourse that in referring to a “king” (malik) he is not speaking of one who possess “a cavalcade, a retinue or a realm,” but the one “truly deserving of kingship” (mustāhqīq-i mulk), even if no one pays attention to him. Furthermore, in what seems to be a reference to the Imām’s role in implementing justice, Ṭūsī continues that “if someone other than he was to manage [the realm], tyranny and disorder become widespread.” As Madelung argues, therefore, one might suggest that for Ṭūsī, the regulator kings, the “custodians of the body-social,” are the Ismāʿīlī or Shiʿī Imāms, who interpret and enforce the law, and must be rewarded with complete obedience.

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

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291 Ṭūsī, Akhlāq-i nāṣīrī, 125; Nasirean Ethics, 103.
292 Ṭūsī frequently also oscillates between different traditions making it difficult to unequivocally assign him commitment to one specific framework. This comparative (and cross-sectarian) synthesis explains, in turn, the great popularity of Ṭūsī’s work, but also challenges Madelung’s reading of Ṭūsī.
293 The notion of nizām-i ʿālam receives additional significance for the authors of Ottoman nasihatname, where it underlines Ottoman theoretical concepts and discourses of legitimate authority. In these works, the notion of nizām-i ʿālam is “construed as a divine remedy for a problem caused by weakness intrinsic to human nature,” that is, man’s tendency towards enmity and conflict. It is a “divinely ordained order as a primary condition, which is then disrupted because of human greed and weakness.” Gottfried Hagen, “Legitimacy and world order,” in Legitimizing the Order: the Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power (2005), 61-62.
Ṭūsī’s political model was, indeed, also read as a statement of Imāmī authority, might have Saʿd al-Dawla’s maḥḍar also meant to carry a similar message? Indeed, one historical account implies that the circumstances leading to Saʿd al-Dawla’s decision to issue the maḥḍar were linked to the sectarian scene in Baghdad.

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

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

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

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294 Al-Ḥawādith, 499; Fischel, Jews, 110-117.
Kammūna’s compilation of the *Examination of the Three Faiths* spread throughout the city (1284). In Ṣafar 687/March 1288, about a year before the Baghdadi *mahḍar*, riots broke out when a group (*jamāʿa*) of Tbilisi Jews relocated to the city to manage the inheritance (*tarikāt*) of the Muslims. The dissatisfaction that amassed during Saʿd al-Dawla’s tenure erupted again, shortly after the vizier’s death in 690/1291. Saʿd al-Dawla’s brother Fakhr al-Dawla was imprisoned and masses looted his home and the houses of the Jews of Baghdad. Another Jew and Saʿd al-Dawla’s appointee, Muhadhdhib al-Dawla Naṣr al-Māshaʿīrī, was caught, dismembered limb by limb and paraded through the streets. The anti-Jewish rioting continued for three straight days spreading to the rest of Iraq, even after the newly appointed governor was able to restore order in Baghdad.

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

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

296 According to *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmiʿa*, the Tbilisīs decreed that relatives of the maternal-side do not inherit. When the riots erupted, they fled the city fearing their lives. *Al-Ḥawādith*, 492.


298 *Al-Ḥawādith*, 501-3.
tidings, he paid the Shīʿīs (ʿalawīyyīn) in Mashḥad-i Mūsa and the shrine’s caretakers a sum of a hundred dinars. Subsequently, he arrived at the court where he was, indeed, made vizier.\(^{299}\)

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

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

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\(^{299}\) Ibid., 494.

\(^{300}\) Ibid., 441.

\(^{301}\) Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī was allegedly buried in a lavish empty grave prepared for the Caliph al-Nāṣir. Ibid., 416, 362.

\(^{302}\) Upon inspection of the city’s revenues, great discrepancies were found, and since those liable were unable to pay the amounts, the people of Baghdad had to come to their rescue and a sum of ten thousand dinars was delivered to Arghun for their lives. *Al-Ḥawādith al-jāmiʿa* further reports that whoever hid from Arghun’s men was caught and his
took over the throne, he appointed Fakhr al-Dīn as supervisor (mutawallī) of the awqāf of the entire kingdom restoring to the Tūsī family control over the awqāf of the Ilkhanate. The Tūsīs lost their hold over this important post earlier, when the Muslim convert Aḥmad Tegüder succeeded to the throne and implemented reforms that restored the waqf properties and rights in Baghdad. Tegüder’s reforms curtailed the Tūsīs’ ability to redirect revenue from the kingdom’s endowments towards the payment of salaries of the astronomers at the Maragha observatory, as Tūsī had done under the previous Ilkhans. Upon his reassignment as mutawallī of the awqāf, Tūsī’s son Fakhr al-Dīn appears to have implemented new measures in the management of the endowments of Baghdad that allowed for greater liberty in dispensing their profits.

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

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

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

304 Ann K. Lambton, Continuity and Change in medieval Persia: aspects of administrative, economic, and social history, 11th-14th century (Albany, 1988), 151-2. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī states that when Fakhr al-Dīn came to Baghdad in 683 with amir Aruq and found that city’s inhabitants were suffering from a major famine while the Imams where enjoying the benefits of their endowments, he ordered that the fruits of the endowments be circulated more widely. On the other hand, according to al-Ḥawādith al-jāmī’a, when appointed to the position, he reduced the dīwānī taxes/shares in the endowments so that more profit remained for those managing the endowments (arbāb). He died in Sivas in the year 700 and buried in Maragha. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, Majma’ al-ādāb, vol. 2, 553; al-Ḥawādith, 478. Aḥmad Tegüder seems to have been on bad terms with the family. Rashid al-Dīn writes that Tūsī’s two sons, Ṣadr al-Dīn ’Aḥī and Aṣīl al-Dīn Ḥasan, advised Tegüder against setting out on a military campaign against Arghunon the basis of heavenly portents. Tegüder scolded the two and had them punished. Rashid al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 555. For Tūsī’s misappropriation of waqf property to finance his observatory, see Pfeiffer, Conversion to Islam, 260-63.
As Saʿd al-Dawla was likely aware, the Ṭūsīs would have made a strong ally at Arghun’s court, and their control over the endowments of Baghdad would have been instrumental in raising further revenue from the city. The story about Saʿd al-Dawla’s visit to the shrine and the Qurʾanic “prophecy” might have been based on a rumor that expressed popular resentment over the Jewish doctor’s appointment to the vizierate. Yet, it also connects Saʿd al-Dawla to the Shiʿī communities of Baghdad, and was perhaps even rooted in an actual visit of Saʿd al-Dawla to Mashhad-i Mūsa. Saʿd al-Dawla was perhaps looking to gain favor with the city’s resenting populace, by presenting himself as a supporter of the Muslim shrine (as he did with his support of the hajj caravans). On the other hand, the vizier might have been signaling with this gesture to potential allies within the Shiʿī community.

The Mongol period was marked by a significant improvement in the status of Shiʿī communities in Iraq, and Baghdad was not alone in seeing the flourishing of Shiʿī intellectual life.305 In addition to the Ṭūsī family’s close ties with the Ilkhanid regime, a number of Shiʿī communities sought, early on, to benefit from cooperation with the Mongols. During the Mongol siege of Baghdad, the Twelver Shiʿī community of al-Ḥilla sent to the Ilkhan Hülegū a delegation of prominent Shiʿī clergy and scholars (ʿalawiyīn in al-Ḥawādith al-jāmiʿa), including the scholar Majd al-Dīn b. Ṭāʾūs/Ṭawūs,306 and the father of ʿAllāma al-Ḥilli, Sadīd al-Dīn Ibn al-Muṭahhar. According to Vaṣṣāf’s account, the delegation delivered to Hülegū a letter stating that ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib had predicted the Mongol sack of Baghdad, the fall of the corrupt ʿAbbasid Caliph, and the restoration of justice by Mongol rule. The prophecy was realized when Hülegū’s forces took hold of the city. Delighted with this message, Hülegū in response promised to spare the

306 On Majd al-Dīn b. Ṭāʾūs/Ṭawūs, his welcoming of the Mongols, and the family’s prominent position under early Mongol rule, see Etan Kohlberg, A Medieval Muslim Scholar at Work: Ibn Ṭawūs and his Library (Leiden, 1992); Lane, Early Mongol Rule, 32-33; al-Jamil, 65ff.
lives and fortunes of the Shīʿī residents of al-Ḥilla. That the fates of the denizens of al-Ḥilla and Kūfa were spared from the Mongol onslaught thanks to this delegation is also confirmed by other accounts.307 Al-Ḥilla flourished under Mongol rule.308

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

The question of Shīʿī-Jewish contacts under the Ilkhans aside, Saʿd al-Dawla was probably following the example of Ṭātā-malik Juwaynī, the previous governor of Baghdad. As

307 Al-Ḥawādith, 139-142; Judith Pfeiffer, “Faces like shields covered with leather: Keturah’s sons in the post-Mongol Islamicate eschatological traditions,” in Horizons of the World: Festschrift for Isenbike Togan, ed. Ilker Evrim Bingaš and Nurten Kılıç-Schubel, 557-594. That the lives of the residents of al-Ḥilla and Kūfa were spared is also confirmed by al-Ḥawādith, 360. Al-Jamil, 33.
309 Al-Ḥawādith al-jāmiʿa, 476-77. Sabine Schmidtke, “Ibn Kammūna,” 505. ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī, the son of Sadīd al-Dīn Ibn al-Muṭahhar, who was of the Ḥilla delegation, spent time in Baghdad studying after he left Ṭūsī’s observatory in Maragha. Schmidtke, “Ḥelli.”
310 Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, Majmaʿ al-ādāb, vol. 4, 100.
Hadi Jorati shows, ’Aṭā-malik Juwaynī developed a strategic alliance with the Twelver Shī’īs of al-Ḥilla and maintained close ties with Ṭūsī and his family. Sa’d al-Dawla’s visit to Mashhad-i Mūsa and his gift to its caretakers and resident Sayyids also echoes Juwaynī’s project of expanding the shrine of ‘Alī in Najaf. Like the former governor of Baghdad, Sa’d al-Dawla might have identified the Shī’īs of Iraq and the Ṭūsī family as potential allies and was attempting to cultivate an alliances with them.\footnote{Hadi Jorati, \textit{Science and Society in Medieval Islam: Nasir al-Din Tusi and the politics of patronage} (PhD diss. Yale, 2014), 146-155. The Shī’īs’ ties with the Mongols might have also been informed by the affinities between Shī’ī notions of religiopolitical authority and Mongol ideals of sacral kingship. Pfeiffer argues that in contrast to the common view of the Ilkhanid period as one marked by confessional ambiguity, at the height of Ilkhanid rule, the tendencies toward confessional polarization and the demarcation of sectarian boundaries within Muslim communities were further strengthened. Certain Shī’ī notions of religiopolitical authority, in particular, those related to descent-based claims of authority (such as support of \textit{ahl-i bayt}, the Prophet’s descendants) seem to have appealed to the Chinggisids, who considered genealogy a principle of sacral authority. These ideological affinities allowed Shī’ī agents to gain considerable influence at the Ilkhanid court and the upper hand over their Sunnī rivals. Shī’ism offered the Ilkhans a way of translating their Mongol religiopolitical authority into Islamic idioms of power by parallelism, for example, Shī’ism/\textit{sayyidism} with Chinggisidness and Sunnīsm with the claims of non-Chinggisid Mongol commanders. It appears that even before Öljeitü’s conversion to Shī’ism and propagation of Shī’ī tenets in the Ilkhanate, the compatibility of certain Shī’ī religiopolitical principles with the Mongols’ conceptualizations of authority and their “genealogical consciousness” was noticed by those wishing to gain purchase with the Ilkhanid court or to appeal to certain communities and individuals with strong ties to the Mongol ruling elite. Pfeiffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 129-163.}

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

Sa’d al-Dawla’s choice of Ṭūsī’s \textit{akhlāq-ethical} model for the \textit{mahdār}, however, was related not only to his precarious position in Baghdad and lack of allies at the court. Rather, Sa’d
al-Dawla’s *mahdar* indicates that the vizier continued to refine and experiment with political theories that could articulate Mongol notions of sacral kingship, and reinforce the Ilkhan’s claim to continuity with Chinggis Khan. Sa’d al-Dawla’s *mahdar* and its repurposing of Ṭūsī’s work should be read in light of the Mongols’ conceptualizations of religiopolitical authority more broadly, and specifically, in the context of the Ilkhan’s interest in articulating his relationship and reinforcing his relationship to Chinggis Khan.

**The *Mahdar* as a Statement of Mongol Political Theology**

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

The appropriation of the title of Ṣāḥib-Qirān for Ṭūsī’s periodic world regulator is befitting as since the title denominates a similar understanding of time as recurring, revolving around, and ordered by the rise and demise of kings, dynasties and empires. The potent royal title of Ṣāḥib-Qirān designated a ruler whose rise in fortune was signaled by the celestial conjunction (*qirān*) of Saturn and Jupiter. Timurid and post-Timurid authors linked the title of Ṣāḥib-Qirān to the specific patrimonies of Alexander and Tīmūr (*Iskandar-i thānī*), who were both celebrated as divinely ordained world conquerors. The great conjunction of 991/1583, which marked the end
of a 960 year-long cycle that started in 571 C.E., around the time of the Prophet Muḥammad’s birth and coincided with another event of immense cosmic import, the turn of the Hijrī millennium, further invested the title of Şāḥib-Qirān with particular messianic and millenarian significances for early modern Eurasian audiences.312 In the thirteenth and fourteenth-centuries, the usage of Şāḥib-Qirān was less restricted, both in the range of individuals to whom it was attributed, and the spectrum of meanings that were assigned to the title.313 Nevertheless, for Ilkhanid authors such as Rashīd al-Dīn, Şāḥib-Qirān was never quite a static or “generic” title, even if it did not “index a vigorous or singular millenarian claim associated with a specific set of cosmic events” or conjured a definitive ideology of religiopolitical authority.314 As we will see in chapter four, Rashīd al-Dīn uses the title of Şāḥib-Qirān in his theological compendia to designate a rank of exceptional kingship in his formulation of Ŭljeitū’s sacral persona.

Furthermore, while in Rashīd al-Dīn’s works (nor as far as I can tell, in any other Ilkhanid work), the Şāḥib-Qirān does not seem to designate a specific astrological event as it did in the post-Iلكhanid era, Rashīd al-Dīn does link in Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya the title of Şāḥib-Qirān to pre-Islamic Iranian cosmocrator-rulers. He designates Jamshīd, Afrīdūn, Anūshirvān and Alexander/Iskandar as divinely aided (muʿayyad min ‘ind Allāh) just Şāḥib-Qirān kings (below).

312 The association of the title with the mythic Iskandar often went hand in hand with claims of being Şāḥib-Qirān. For Timurid/Mughal usage of the title, Moin, The Millenial Sovereign; S. Chann, “Lord of Auspicious Conjunction: origins of the Şāḥib-Qirān,” Iran and the Caucasus 13 (2009): 1-39. For the Safavids, Kathryn Babayan, Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs, 295-308 (Shah Ismā‘īl as Şāḥib-Qirān); Mancini-Lander, Memory on the boundaries of empire, 244-67. In the case of the Ottomans, Muṣṭafā Ālī differentiations between muʿayyad min ‘ind Allāh, a sovereign who has never been defeated in battle (due to divine favor) - a term he awards Selim I and Sūleyman, and Şāḥib-Qirān, a world conqueror, a term awarded to only three – Iskandar, Chinggis Khan and Timur. There appears to have been some controversy whether or not Selim I deserved the title of Şāḥib-Qirān. Cornell H. Fleischer, Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire (Princeton, 1986), 279-81 (especially note 16). See also Kaya Şahin, Empire and Power in the Reign of Suleyman (Cambridge, 2013), 61-2. See also Sanjay Subrahmanyan, “Connected histories,” 756-58.
314 Mancini-Lander, 249. One Ottoman secretary and author (Jalālādād Muṣṭafā) depicted the yearning for the title of Şāḥib-Qirān as a competition on a global-scale, encompassing not just the Ottoman and the Safavid courts, but also Hungary (Archduke Ferdinand) and Spain (Charles V). Şahin, 188-190.
Rashīd al-Dīn, moreover, locates Chinggis Khan and his Mongol patron Öljeitū in this list of Iranian Ṣāḥīb-Qirāns, transforming his Mongol patrons from foreign Stranger-Kings to indigenous Iranian cosmocrats who lay claim to the glorious Iranian royal past and universalist claims.315

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

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

315 On Stranger-Kingship and Rashīd al-Dīn, see chapter three.
316 Mancini-Lander, 258; E.S. Kennedy, “The world-year concept on Islamoc astrology,” in Studies in the Islamic Exact Sciences, ed. Kennedy ([Beirut]: 1983), 29, 34. Furthermore, Juwaynī in his Ta’rīkh-i jahāngushā (History of the World Conqueror) designates the Great Khan Ḫāqān (r. 1229-41) as ‘Lord of Auspicious Conjunction’ explaining that in every age appears a Ṣāḥīb-Qirān just as in earlier times there were Ḩātim al-Ṭā’ī (the famous pre-Islamic Arab poet and warrior) and the king Anūshirvān, thus connecting Ḫāqān to two pre-Islamic figures known for their just rule. Juwaynī, vol. 3, 190; Juwaynī/Boyle, 234. As will be discussed in chapter five, in his account on the revolt of the Mongol governor of Anatolia Timurtash, the hagiographer Aflākī writes that “I am Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction [my emphasis, man sāḥīb-i qirānam balki mahdi-yi zamānam]. Why indeed, I am the Mahdi of Time!” Moreover, in giving away wealth he had no equal and in dispensing justice he was a second Anūshirvān.” Aflākī, Manāqīb al-ʿarifīn, vol. 2, 977; trans. O’kane, The Feats, 684.
317 “During the winter [of 1284] the seven wandering stars (i.e. planets) were gathered together in the Zodiacal Sign of Capricorn, in the anabībazon (i.e. the upper part of the Zodiac), and behold, the whole world trembled and quacked at this event, for it was the year of the conjunction of the two supreme [stars] Kronos [Saturn] and Zeus [Jupiter] in the Zodiacal Sign of Aquarius, for they make their conjunction in the summer.” Bar Hebraeus, 473. On Ghiyāth al-Dīn’s death and its Anatolian context, Charles Melville, “Anatolia under the Mongols,” in ed., Kate Fleet, The Cambridge History of Turkey, vol. 1: Byzantine to Turkey, 1071-1453 (New York, 2008), 73-74.
reliance on Persianate works of ethics and statecraft, which often evoked accounts on paradigmatic pre-Islamic Iranian kings. Ilkhanid rulers were portrayed as heirs to Iranian kingship and its epic history. The title of Şāhīb-Qirān in the mahdar incorporates the Ilkhan Arghun in an Iranian genealogy of moral cosmocracy, just as ‘Phags-pa Lama’s Shes bya rab gsal integrates Qubilai and his son into a line of Buddhist sacred cosmocrats (above).

As discussed earlier, Sa’d al-Dawla’s mahdar espouses a similar absolutist imperative to Tūsī’s akhlāq-ethical model. Tūsī’s work promotes a vision of the world regulator as the supreme enforcer of law, one who has the jurisdiction to interpret what is defined as the Divine Law, the nāmūs-i ilahī and, thus, transgress into the “exclusive” domains of the ‘ulamā’ (“his is the authority of jurisdiction over the particularities of the Law”). As Shahab Ahmed explains, Tūsī claims the ruler’s discretionary authority “in regard to the laid-down Divine Law.” The ruler has “the dispensation to specify and particularize that law ‘according to what is needed for welfare [maslahat] in each time and circumstance’. In other matters, the ruler has absolute authority to make original law with a view to general welfare”.

Muzaffar Alam notes that the ideal just ruler in Tūsī’s theory and in the works of later authors who appropriated and repurposed the Akhlāq-i nāsirī, is independent from the sharī’a and any other scriptural source of law. In akhlāq texts, justice, understood as “social harmony, and the coordination and balance of conflicting claims of diverse interest groups that may comprise people of various religions,” existed outside of the sharī’a, surely in its narrow legalistic sense, and so was the king, the “all powerful center of societal organization.” The ruler’s pursuit of justice was judged by human reason, and not a

318 See for example, Melville, “The royal image in Mongol Iran,” in Every Inch a King: comparative studies on kings and kingship in the ancient and medieval worlds, eds. Lynette Mitchell and Charles Melville (Leiden, 2013), 343-71.
religious legal code. In the later, post-Mongol akhlāq formulations of Ṭūsī’s Akhlāq-i nāširī, the “law-making function of the Sultan,” which was based on the ruler’s human reason, was made to conform to “universal principles of the sharī‘a,” that is, to work towards the welfare of society. They conceived of a ruler’s siyāsa as an integral expression of the sharī‘a.

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

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


322 See introecution

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

324 Allsen, Culture and Conquest, 200. See also chapter four.
with the ruler’s supreme understanding and its applicability for confirming the Khan’s absolute prerogative.

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

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

\textsuperscript{325} Atwood, “Explaining rituals,” 101. See for example, the bilingual Sino-Mongolian inscription from 1338 translated by Cleaves quoted in the introduction. Cleaves, “Sino-Mongolian inscription,” 30, 69.
\textsuperscript{326} Elverskog, Our Great Qing, 48ff.
Sa’d al-Dawla might have deliberately retained here the ambiguity in Ṭūsī’s model to address multiple audiences with his manifesto: his enemies at home, the Ţūsīs and the Shi‘ī communities of Baghdad, and the Ilkhanid elite including the Buddhist Ilkhan himself. Sa’d al-Dawla left the prophet in his mahdar unidentified, but by declaring the regulator king to be the Ilkhan Arghun, he was plainly indicating that the law-giver in his document is non-other than the “yasa-maker” Chinggis Khan. Zanjānī, who was unwilling to sign his name on the document, surely disapproved this message.

Conclusion: Ṭūsī’s Law-Maker and Chinggis Khan

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

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

328 Ahmed, 462.
Nasirean Ethics […] proved to be an important support to facilitate stable and enduring Mughal rule in the complex religiopolitical conditions of India”.  

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

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


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

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

332 For the post-Mongol Ottoman ruler’s lineage-based legal authority, see Burak, “note on the Ottoman’s dynastic law,” 18.
later, in 987/1579, the Mughal emperor Akbar’s *maḥdar*, the *Infallibility Decree*, signed by the leading ‘*ulamā’* at Akbar’s court, announced the emperor’s supreme authority to resolve disagreements between legal interpreters (*mujtahidīn*). The next chapter examines another Ilkhanid experiment with a new legitimizing paradigm, the reformer-king model. As we shall see, unlike Sa’d al-Dawla’s *maḥdar* and its Ṭūsīan model, which promoted a type of kingship that was autonomous from the *sharī‘a*, the reviver king model associated Mongol rule, after Arghun’s son the Ilkhan Ghazan’s conversion to Islam, with the restoration and revival of *sharī‘ī* order, by casting Chinggis Khan’s mission of world domination as succeeding the Prophet Muḥammad’s prophetic mission.
Chapter III: The King Who Would Revive Islam: Qāshānī’s Perso-Islamic conversion of Ghazan Khan

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

In the above passage, the later Ilkhanid historian Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī writes of Ghazan’s noble attempts to perpetuate his regal legacy, first, by commissionning a history of the Mongols, and second, by initiating the Khānī calendar in the year 701/1302.335 According to Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī, Ghazan’s motivation in the new calendar was his desire to standardize and centralize a divided and poorly managed realm. Ghazan’s Khānī era marked the re-founding and regeneration of a unified land of Iran, īrān zamīn, under a single autocratic ruler: one land,


335 The (solar) Khānī calendar began on 13 Rajab 701 Hijrī and was intended as a replacement for the various calendars used in the Ilkhanid domains, in particular the jalālī calendar which was used for financial matters and taxation. There were only minor differences between the Khānī and jalālī calendars. Numismatic and textual evidence suggest that the Khānī count continued to be used into the reign of the Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd (d. 1335). For the Khānī calendar, see Osman G. Özgüdenli, Gāzân Han ve Reformları (1295-1304) (İstanbul, 2009), 344-47.
one calendar, one king.\footnote{Acts of foundation or of innovation or vitalization were regarded as acts of re-foundation and of restoration, usually related to a particular genealogy through which typology operates, a genealogy which was sometimes – but with monotheistic religions, at a certain stage in their evolution, invariably – marked by the beginning of a calendar. Persian kings were [...] also the initiators of new epochs, which signaled the regeneration of their countries.” Al-Azmeh, \textit{Muslim Kingship}, 42.} In this account, the meaning of Ghazan’s reign, and by extension, of the Mongol conquests and rule in the eastern Islamic world, is interpreted by modes of temporality and administrative machinations that organize and signify the flow of time. Time is revealed here to be a contingent ideological and cultural product.\footnote{Shahzad Bashir. “On Islamic time: Rethinking chronology in the historiography of Muslim societies,” \textit{History and Theory} 53 (2014), 521.} By imagining Ghazan’s initiation of the Khānī calendar as a moment of political, geographical, and temporal unification of īrān zamīn, Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī integrates the Mongol ruler into an Iranian kingly genealogy, picturing his reign as the beginning of a new cycle of Iranian monarchy.

Judith Pfeiffer observes how contemporaneous Muslim Ilkhanid authors viewed Ghazan’s conversion and reign as a watershed moment that marked the “resumption and continuity” of Islamic and Persian historical time. This vision is best illustrated in the way Ghazan’s conversion brought about an abrupt end to the historiographical silence that ensued after the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258. Ghazan’s conversion released “an unprecedented amount of historiography,” which paved the path for the integration of the Mongols into Islamic history.\footnote{Pfeiffer, “The canonization of cultural memory,” 59, 68.} In this chapter, I examine the two earliest Ilkhanid conversion narratives of Ghazan that appear in two different recensions of the \textit{Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazānī}, the first volume of the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn’s famous historical compendium, the \textit{Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh}.

I argue that the earlier recension of Ghazan’s chapter in the \textit{Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazānī} was either authored by, or based on another work that was authored by the Ilkhanid court historian Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd Allāh al-Qāshānī. Qāshānī’s narrative of the Ilkhan appears to have
been first incorporated, with little change, into Rashîd al-Dîn’s *Târîkh-i mubârak-i Ghazanî*, but at a later stage, significantly revised and altered by the vizier to match his larger agenda in his *Jâmi‘ al-tawârîkh*. While the two conversion versions are intertextually linked, each narrative uses a different temporal perspective on Ghazan’s conversion to Islam, one Perso-Islamic and cyclical, and the other linear and Abrahamic, to integrate and translate Ilkhanid *difference*.\(^{339}\)

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

\(^{339}\) On these “two temporal modes” and “imaginations of the cosmos” (monotheistic and dualist, Abrahamic and Persianate), see Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs*, Preface (especially, xxix-xxxvi) and chapter 2 (9-45).
While Rashīd al-Dīn relied on Qāshānī’s earlier account, Rashīd al-Dīn’s later conversion narrative is anchored in his broader project of modeling Ghazan into a Mongol monotheistic king. I situate Rashīd al-Dīn’s conversion narrative to Islam within the larger theme of Mongol ancestral monotheism in his Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh. I argue that the portrayal of Ghazan’s conversion as deriving from the Ilkhan’s innate monotheistic proclivities arises from one of the strategies, namely, ancestral reversion, employed by the pro-Muslim faction in the Mongol elite. Rashīd al-Dīn appropriated this approach with the aim of further solidifying his patrons’ conversion to Islam. I argue that the vizier’s account represents the Mongol conversion to Islam as a process that reinforces the Ilkhan’s connection with their Mongol past, and moreover, with the empire’s founder Chinggis Khan. His targeted audience appears to be the Mongol elite and foremost, Ghazan’s brother and successor, the Ilkhan Öljeitü. Furthermore, I suggest that the salvific linearity and genealogical perspective that infuse Abrahamic constructions of time, within which Rashīd al-Dīn locates Ghazan’s conversion, offer a medium for further consolidating and grounding his brother Öljeitü’s dynastic claims.

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

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

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

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

Kamola, for example, identifies the interpolations of a scribe (nāsukh), who identified himself as Rashîd Khwâfī (or Muḥammad b. Ḥamza), in the copies he made of the Tāpublic.bārak-i Ghazanī. Khwâfī’s interpolations in the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī include, for example, a chronogram of the death of Shams al-Dīn Kurt of Ghur, additional information about an earthquake in Nishapur during the reign of Abaqa, and an account of the scribe Khwâfī’s own ill-fated attempt to receive justice from the Ilkhan Aḥmad Tegüder for an incident that took place earlier, when Khwâfī served the Juwaynī family, and in which, a Mongol officer stole from him a slave he owned. Khwâfī also tampered with the division of the two first volumes of the work, “reediting” the first volume, the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī by including at the end of Ghazan’s reign a brief account of the Ilkhan Öljeitū’s reign. In a note at end of Ghazan’s section, Khwâfī delineates the three-volume plan of the Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh: the first volume being the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī, a history of the Mongols in the name of the deceased Ghazan, the second volume, a world history (Tārīkh-i ‘alam) in the name of Öljeitū Sultan, which was also to include Öljeitū’s reign from Öljeitū’s birth to his death (in future tense), and a third, geographical volume. Khwâfī writes that whereas Öljeitū’s reign is found in the second volume of the Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh, the world history, he decided to include Öljeitū’s reign as a dhayl in the first volume, the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī. Khwâfī explains that his intent is that whoever copies the first volume from Khwâfī’s copies and is unable, due to the sheer size of the entire Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh, to copy the second volume, but wishes to end the first volume with Öljeitū’s reign, would be able to do so by following Khwâfī. Khwâfī subsequently includes a brief account of Ghazan’s public appointment of his brother Öljeitū as heir apparent (valī al-‘ahd) and Öljeitū’s assumption of the throne in Tabriz. Khwâfī’s tampering with the format of the text and with the chronological choices of its author reveals the Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh to be in its early textual phases an evolving work, one that invited interventions, either in the form of filling in gaps in the text or factual additions, or a more substantial reordering of its sections. For example, by filling the third empty section of Aḥmad Tegüder’s reign. Kamola, 231-36; London, British Library ms. Add. 16688, folios 291r-293r (for the Khwâfī manuscript’s explanation of his “reordering” of the volume and the section on Öljeitū’s reign). Intriguingly, in the illustrated Timurid manuscript (Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī, Bibliothèque Nationale, Supplément persan, 1113), this empty third section is filled instead with a depiction of Aḥmad Tegüder sitting with a shaykh, possibly shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Rahman (202r). Khwâfī’s interventions in the text are one example of the Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh’s complicated history of compilation, editing and copying.
in China and Iran, was commissioned by the Ilkhan Ghazan, but completed only after his death.
The second volume, a world history (Tārīkh-i ālam) consists of a history of the pre-Islamic rulers, a history of the Muslims from the Prophet to the last ‘Abbāsid caliph followed by the independent dynasties in the eastern Islamic world, and a history of the rest of the people of the world (Oghuz Turks, Chinese, Jews, Franks and Indians). This volume was also supposed to include a history of Öljeytū’s reign. However, this section is missing from all extant volumes. Rashīd al-Dīn notes that Ghazan’s brother and successor, Öljeytū Sultan, ordered this volume to be added as a second volume to the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī, in addition to a third volume on geography that remains missing.342

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

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344 The current consensus is that the Paris manuscript of the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī (Bibliothèque Nationale, Supplément persan, 1113) was copied (by two hands) in the early Timurid period. Shiraiwa revised his earlier dating of the manuscript, from 1308-1314 to 1416-1417, and suggested that its illustrations were completed by 1425. Kazuhiko Shiraiwa, “Sur la date du manuscrit parisien du Gāmīʿ al-Tavārīkh de Rašīd al-Dīn,” Orient: Report of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan 32 (1997), 37-49. For dating the illustrations, see also Francis Richard, “Un des peintres du manuscrit Supplément persan 1113 de l’histoire des mongols de Rašīd al-Dīn identifié,” in Denise Aigle (ed.), L’Iran face à la domination mongole (1997), 307-320; Kamola, 89-93.
345 Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, and Karīmī’s edition: Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh, ed. Bahman Karīmī (Tehran, 1338/1959-60). Thackston’s translation, on the other hand, makes use of both iterations following Jahn’s edition, but confuses the two in a number of instances and in some places, chooses to translate one account over the other. Rashīd al-Dīn, Rashīd uddin Fazlullah's Jami' u't-Tawarikh, trans. W.M. Thackston.
The main differences between the two “P” and “S” iterations of the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī appear in the first half of the dastān of Ghazan, which details the events leading up to Ghazan’s victory and enthronement.346 While the “S” recension has often been addressed as the “main” version of the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī of Rashīd al-Dīn, the “P” recension, and in particular, the first half of the chapter (dastān) on Ghazan, appears to represent another, earlier work authored by the Ilkhanid court historian Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd Allāh al-Qāshānī. The majority of the section detailing Ghazan’s conversion, however, is missing from the fragmentary Paris manuscript that Jahn used for his edition (BnF 1113). Kamola has recently noted the existence of this “alternative” conversion account in a St. Petersburg manuscript (dated to Rajab 4 984/September 27 1576, and marked with the letter “B”). This text was edited and published as an appendix to ʿAlī Zādah’s Soviet edition from 1957.347 Kamola has concluded that while the manuscripts of the “P” recension postdate that of the “S” recension, they reflect, nevertheless, “an early iteration of the text, one that was redacted out of the version found in most manuscripts” of the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh.348 I discuss in appendix II, the evidence in support of the argument that Qāshānī was the author of the section on Ghazan in the “P” recension.

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

346 Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 1-96.
347 Faḍl Allāh Rashīd al-Dīn, Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh, ed. by ʿAbd al-KarīmʾAlī Oghlu ʿAlī Zādah (Baku, 1957), vol. 3, 579-619 (appendix 5). The editor notes that the manuscript, preserved at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts at the Russian Academy of Sciences, is dated Rajab 4 984/September 27 1576. Ibid., 13.
348 Kamola, 89-93.
his once rebellious opponent and now powerful ally amir Nawrūz, suggests to Ghazan to convert to Islam. Rashīd al-Dīn is at pains to stress that Ghazan followed the amir’s advice, not for political external pressures or his precarious situation during his dynastic struggles with his contender cousin, but for his internal convictions regarding the veracity of the Muslim belief. He converts under the close guidance of Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya. In contrast to his own account reported in the contemporaneous Mamluk histories, Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya is described by Rashīd al-Dīn as a regular member of Ghazan’s entourage.

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

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

350 Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 619-622; Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1253-56. As Melville notes, however, the independent eyewitness account of shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya does not support this. The shaykh speaks to the presence of a significant party (jamāʿa) of Muslim converts among Ghazan’s forces and the officer ranks. Melville concludes that Ghazan, who was in the midst of a struggle over the Ilkhanid throne with his cousin Baīdū, did not initiate a Mongol mass conversion as the Ilkhanid accounts propose, but rather, was securing the support of the Mongols who had already embraced Islam, most significantly amir Nawrūz himself. By the time of his final advance against Baīdū, Ghazan’s army seems to have been fully identified with the Islamic faction. Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām,” 171-172. Pfeiffer’s study of onomastic changes in Rashīd al-Dīn’s genealogical work, the Shuʾ ab-i panjgāna, indicates a rise in the number of Perso-Muslim names in the group of chief Ilkhanid commanders for the reign of Ghazan’s predecessor, the Ilkhan Geikhatu (r. 1291-1294), which possibly confirms Ṣadr al-Dīn’s observation that the Islamization of the Ilkhanid elite was already on its way when Ghazan had converted. Pfeiffer, “Reflections on a double rapprochement,” 374.
the “ruby episode” and the conversion episode - which both center on the relationship between the future Ilkhan and his convertor ally. This two-stage process is also confirmed by the Sufi shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya’s independent eyewitness report in the Mamluk sources. Ṣadr al-Dīn reported that when Nawrūz first addressed him on the issue of Ghazan’s conversion, the amir stated that he had previously already spoken with Ghazan about the matter. He was uncertain whether the prince would follow through on his promise and convert.

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

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351 See Appendix II.
352 Rashīd al-Dīn’s report (“S” recension) of these developments is far less detailed than the “P” recension version. See appendix II.
353 Ghazan consults with his commanders at this juncture. Nawrūz carries out a prolong speech before the prince, in which he promises to raise Ghazan to the throne and speaks of Baidu’s weak and malleable character and the great influence of the amirs on him. Qāshānī’s account devotes a long section to the correspondence between Ghazan and Baidu. Baidu refuses Ghazan’s demand that the amirs who conspired against his uncle be sent to Ghazan for trail, and explains that while initially he had no intentions on taking on the throne for himself, he was persuaded to do so by the amirs. Intimidated by Baidu’s clear numerical advantage, Ghazan, subsequently, contemplates returning to Khurasan. Nawrūz, however, entices Ghazan and the men to bravely meet Baidu on the battlefield.
between the two contenders. It is at this point in Qāshānī’s narrative, when an agreement between Baidu and Ghazan is nearly achieved, that the first part of Ghazan’s two-stage conversion narrative takes place.

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

The two armies meet for battle near Qurbān Shīra on Rajab 5 694/May 21 1295. After the initial clash, where Nawrūz is able to secure the higher ground and Ghazan’s forces seem to have the advantage, Baidu decides at the advice of his commanders to invite Ghazan for truce talks as a ruse for gaining further time to gather his forces. Baidu’s envoy to Ghazan appeals to the rival princes’ shared ancestry and offers Ghazan the throne “for it is better for a son to take the place of his father.” Baidu offers Ghazan in exchange for a truce control over Iraq, Kirman and Fars in addition to Khurasan and Mazandaran, and the ordus of Ghazan’s father, his uncle Geikhatu and their wives. Ghazan agrees to his terms and the two sides meet to conclude a peace treaty. Both parties swear an oath not to attack each other, though Nawrūz’s unwillingness to swear over a golden goblet with wine in accordance with the Mongol tradition (rasm-i mughūl) becomes a cause of concern for Baidu. The discussion over Ghazan’s enthronement is postponed, however, until the feast on the next day. In spite of these measures, tensions remain high between the two factions until the parties meet the next day at the tent of Today Khātūn and the negotiations resume. During the day a number of Baidu’s forces switch sides giving Ghazan a slight numerical advantage. However, this changes during the nighttime as Baidu’s reinforcements arrive from Baghdad and Mughan. When Baidu realizes that Ghazan is thinking of heading back to consolidate his own forces, he sends his son Qipchāq with a number of amirs to stall the prince. They pledge their allegiance to Ghazan and present him with gifts (tagishmishī), and suggest that Ghazan and Baidu celebrate their agreement with a feast before Ghazan leaves in order to refute any suspicions as to the endurance of the enmity between the two parties. Qipchāq, however, is sent back to Baidu on the pretext that this would be an inauspicious (maqrūn) day for feasting.
Nawrūz’s ruby returns in the second part of Ghazan’s conversion narrative in Qāshānī’s account, when the ruby that was earlier entrusted for safe-keep, is returned to Nawrūz and possibly gifted to Ghazan just prior to his conversion. The function of the ruby at this point of the narrative is not entirely clear. Qāshānī appears to suggest that the precious gem was used as assurance that Ghazan fulfills his promise to convert and was, therefore, entrusted with one of the men until Ghazan’s actual conversion. The promise of the rare gem appears to cement the exchange that was at the center of the relationship between the commander and the prince, the throne for Ghazan’s conversion.

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

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355 In Islamic narratives, the fate of exquisite rare gemstones is often discussed in the context of dynastic and political transitions as the famous precious stones also passed along with other treasures to the possession of the new imperial powers. One such example is the enormous celebrated pearl al-yatīma (the Orphan or one of its kind), which was transferred from the Umayyad dynasty to ʿAbbāsid hands, and came to be “the Abbasid royal insignia.” In ancient and medieval times, precious stones were understood to be able to shine like lamps. One ninth-century author claimed that a red ruby was placed at the top of the Dome of the Rock to shine on its environs. Thus, the idea that the ruby had “guided” the Mongol believers or “Nawrūzian” faction might have been linked to the ideal of the radiant gem. Avinoam Shalem, “Jewels and journeys: the case of the medieval gemstone called al-Yatima,” Muqarnas 12 (1995), 45-46, 49. One might suggest that the ruby in Ghazan’s conversion narrative functions as a royal artifact heralding Ghazan’s reign (dawlat). This idea finds affirmation in another exquisite gem, an inscribed royal red spinel weighing 361 carats (about 72 grams) that was given by the Safavid Shāh ʿAbbās (d. 1629) to the Mughal emperor Jahāngīr (d. 1627). The gem bears the names of Shāh ʿAbbās and Jahāngīr, but also that of the Timurid prince Ulugh Beg and the later Mughal emperor Alāmghīr (Aurangzeb) and Ahmad Shāh Durrani suggesting that the precious stone had a particular appeal to monarchs who claimed to be heirs to Timur’s sovereignty. The gem is currently part of the collection in Dār al-Athār al-Islāmiyyah, Kuwait City. “Inscribed royal spinel” in Explore Islamic Art Collections. Place: Museum With No Frontiers, 2015. http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object:EPM;kw;Mus21;27;en

356 Kamola notes that this episode, Nawrūz’s initial presentation of the ruby to Ghazan, was omitted from the “main redaction” of Rashīd al-Dīn’s work (the “S” recension), which was also translated by Thackston. Kamola, 182; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 620. However, this episode, or the first part of the two-stage of Ghazan’s conversion, is not entirely missing from the “main” iteration. Rashīd al-Dīn combines the two sections into one episode and omits some of the details (for example, noting that “the Muslims swore on the Qur’ān and the Mongols swore on the gold” and omitting the names of the amirs Nūrīn and Qutlughshāh who swore on the golden goblet and Nawrūz, Būrālaghī and Mūlāy, who swore on the Qur’ān). This divergence agrees with the Rashīd al-Dīn’s general effort to make Qāshānī’s narrative more concise and clearer (see Appendix II).
captive, Baidu’s attempt to win over Nawrūz, and Nawrūz’s final deception of Baidu.\(^{357}\) Baidu’s attempt to gain Nawrūz’s support through the mediation of Nawrūz’s brother (and Baidu’s supporter) backfires. Nawrūz does not only outright refuse to break his oath to Ghazan, but also secretly succeeds to forge an alliance with Baidu’s main supporter and key co-conspirator, the amir Taghachar. Nawrūz tricks Baidu to believe that he turned sides and swears to bring back with him Ghazan’s head. Set free, Nawrūz is reunited with Ghazan, and it is at this point that the scene of Ghazan’s conversion takes place.

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

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

\(^{357}\) This section, which includes a number of lengthy quotes by Nawrūz and other protagonists, appears only in a brief outline in the later “S” redaction.

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

\(^{359}\) The author refers to the gift of the ruby here, probably as an allusion to Islam.

\(^{360}\) Kamola has translated the conversion narrative in an appendix to his dissertation. My translation differs from Kamola’s on several points. See Kamola, appendix B.

\(^{361}\) This statement is echoed in Rashīd al-Dīn’s Miftāḥ al-taḥfūsīr, where the vizier mentions that a king who would be fortunate enough to rule, “the marks of kingship would shine/be evident (lā iḥ) from his forehead.” Miftāḥ al-taḥfūsīr, ed. Hāshim Rajabzāda (Tehran, 1391 [/2013]), 246. The vizier makes a similar statement in a story about a prediction of Chinggis Khan’s rise in the so-called tribal section of the Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh. He writes that Chinggis Khan’s kingship is predetermined since “Heavenly assistance and regal splendor (farr-i shāhī) shine (lā iḥ) patently on his forehead (jabīn).” Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 1: 181; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 1, 97.
prince were to convert to Islam and adhere to the tenets and tracts of the faith, he would certainly be the one in authority of the age [ūlī al-amr-i ḍhad, ruler of the age, my emphasis] and he would enable the Muslims, who are enslaved in the lowest baseness and the lowest of places, to safely rise and fittingly thrive so that aiding the māvālī in victory and subduing the enemies by the spreading of religion and the provisioning of justice, and full (az bun dandān), unsolicited obedience [to the prince] would become an individual duty for all Muslims (fard 'ayn), moreover, it will be the fountainhead of duty (ʻayn-i fard). All the Muslims would seek you and love you and on account of the sincerity of [their] endeavors and heartfelt inclinations, God Glorious and Exalted will make you victorious. The religion of Islam, which has been weakened [“worn out”] by its subjugation to the infidel (kuffār) Tatars and the domination of the tyrants and offenders (zālimān va fāsiqān), will be revived through the prince’s support.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

362 This is the end of a poem in praise of Sultan Malikshāh (?) by the Saljuqid laureate Mu’izzī (d. ca. 542/1148). See Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām,” 173; Mu’izzī, Dīvān, ed. ’Abbās Iqābāl (Tehran, 1318/1938), 315-16.
Ghazan’s Conversion and Persianate Cyclical Time: Qāshānī and Niẓām al-Mulk

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

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

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

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

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

365 Julie Scott Meisami, Persian Historiography to the End of the Twelth Century (Edinburgh, 1999), 10-11. See also al-Azmeh, Muslim Kingship, 41.
God’s salvific plan for his weakened community, and with the other, the conversion is predetermined by the recurring cycles of political-social-religious decline and renewal that are caused and predicted by celestial movements. Qāshānī’s conversion narrative utilizes these historical imaginations to offer a providential explanation of Ghazan’s conversion and of the Mongol invasions, and the destruction and havoc they inflicted. Ghazan’s conversion amends the crisis that ensued from the Mongol conquests. Qāshānī employs these Perso-Islamic imaginations of history and divine agency to normalize the watershed moment of the Mongol invasions and rule, by envisioning Ghazan’s conversion as “restarting” Islamic time and “revitalizing” Iranian history.

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

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

367 Pfeiffer, “The canonization of cultural memory,” 59, 68.
princes of Najm al-Dīn Rāzī Dāya (d. 1256), the Mirṣād al-‘Ībād (the path of God’s bondsmen).

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

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

368 It is suggested that Nizām al-Mulk added chapter forty along with ten more chapters a year after completing the work in 484/1091 (which originally included thirty-nine chapters), and shortly before he was dismissed by Malikshāh and assassinated. According to the librarian’s note for the revision of Siyār al-mulūk, Nizām al-Mulk had added another eleven chapters “because of the constant anxiety that was in his mind on account of the enemies of this dynasty.” Meisami, Persian Historiography, 145-162. The authorship of Siyar al-mulūk by Nizām al-Mulk has been recently questioned by Alexey Khismatulin, who presented compelling evidence to suggest that the Saljuq court poet Mu‘izz Nishābūrī (d. ca. 542/1148) had fabricated the work on the basis of the contract of employment of the Saljuq vizier, attributing the text’s authorship to the latter. For the meantime, until this question is fully resolved, I maintain here the traditional attribution of the authorship to Nizām al-Mulk. Alexey Khismatulin, “Two mirrors for princes fabricated at the Seljuq court: Nizām al-Mulk’s Siyar al-mulūk and al-Ghazālī’s Nasīhat al-mulūk,” in Edmund Herzig and Saraf Stewart, eds. The Age of the Seljuqs: the idea of the Iran (London, 2015), 94-130.
read books and learn the enactments of former rulers; he will reinstate the proper social
hierarchies, ascertaining that, all are appointed to suitable positions and maintain justice; he will
be the friend of religion and enemy of heresy. According to Niżām al-Mulk, predictable
planetary movements determine the rhythms of cycles of moral degeneration and political
corruption followed by the revival of order and justice heralded by the appearance of a “savior
king.”

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

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

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370 In chapter one of the Siyār al-mulūk, Niżām al-Mulk explains that after a period of corruption, bloodshed and discord, “by divine decree (tavfīq-i ḥadīf) one human being acquires some prosperity and power (sīdaṭī wa-dawlatī) and according to his deserts the truth bestows good fortune (iqbālī) upon him […] he may employ his subordinates every one according to his merits and confer upon each a dignity and a station proportionate to his power”. Book of Government, 9-10.
371 This recurrent cycle of “revival-corruption-revival” is derived from God’s need to punish and chasten his subjects for “any disobedience or disregard of the divine laws (sharīʿa).” God’s punishment is the removal of good kingship, which is followed by anarchy, strife and bloodshed, until the sinners and the innocent alike are destroyed. The period of the “absence of kingship” is followed by a chosen “savior king,” who through the good fortune (iqbāl) bestowed on him by God, is able to quell rebellions and guarantee political stability and justice. This theme appears also in chapter forty, where in addition to restoring order, this king will also be “the friend of religion and the enemy of oppression, he will assist the faith and remove vanity and heresy (havā va-biʿat)”.
372 As Simidchieva furthermore observes, in Niżām al-Mulk’s “reviver king” model, “a ruler – any ruler – is an instrument of God’s will […] a king represents God’s blessing upon His righteous and obedient servants. A rogue ruler is a conduit of God’s wrath against a sinful and rebellious lot, an unwitting agent of divine purpose […] and] digression from the religious norms is very closely aligned with political transgression.” Marta Simidchieva, “Kingship and legitimacy in Niżām al-Mulk’s Siyāsatnāma, fifth/eleventh century,” B. Gruendler and L. Marlow, eds. Writers and Ruelrs: persepctives on their relationship from Abbasid to Safavid times (Wiesbaden, 2014), 101-2.
Malikshāh fills in the shoes of the latter), in chapter forty, Niżām al-Mulk transforms his earlier praise of his Saljūq patrons into reprimand intertwined with a latent warning as to the dynasty’s future decline. Celestial movements function here both as the causation of and the ominous signs heralding the moral corruption and the subsequent fall and decay of dynasties and regimes. Thus, we find in the Siyāsatnāma both agents, God and celestial movements, ordering together cycles of political and moreover, religious degeneration, punishment, and rejuvenation within a “rhythm of salvation history,” in which “righteous kingship” constitutes “an agency of restoration”. Nevertheless, the Siyāsatnāma’s vision of kingship is one that derives its authority from farr and reason.

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

373 As Simidchieva notes, this warning is made explicit in the next chapter (41) on “not giving two appointments to one man...” where Niżām al-Mulk states: “the dynasty has reached its perfection; your humble servant is afraid of the evil eye and knows not where this state of affairs will lead.” Book of Government, 164; Simidchieva, 106. 374 It is significant that these recurring cycles were not envisioned as eternal. As al-Azmeh further states, “monotheistic religions, under the decisive influence of Zoroastrianism and the no less decisive but still poorly appreciated influence of Manicheanism, recast this in a manner that enclosed time by postulating an end to it. In this model, the alternance of righteousness and wickedness, the succession of virtuous and evil kings and times, will end and yield to the undisturbed and perpetual reign of order as decreed by divinity.” Al-Azmeh, Muslim Kingship, 41. While the two agencies at play might represent two different “temporal modes”, one Abrahamic and the other Persianate, as Babayan notes, they nevertheless “converge at moments of grand transformation [...] for they share the paradigm of an imminent messiah.” Babayan, XXXV (introduction) and 34.
states before his court that “I shall protect the ewes and lambs from the wolves […] I shall remove evil-doers from the face of the earth and fill the world with justice and equity”.

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

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

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

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375 Nizām al-Mulk, Siyāsatnāma, 40; Nizām al-Mulk, Book of Government, 41.
376 Amitai, “Whither the Ilkhanid army?” 221-64. The Ilkhanid forces went on to occupy the city of Damascus for five weeks. Ghazan appointed as the city’s governors two Mamluk renegades (Qipchaq and Baktimur), who had earlier sought refuge at the Ilkhanid court, and heavily taxed the Damascene population. The Mongol forces looted and destroyed (allegedly without Ghazan’s authorization) Damascus’ outskirts and are reported to have raided as far as Hebron and Jerusalem. The Ilkhanid occupation of Damascus, however, came to an abrupt, eventless end by the middle of Jumādā II 699/early February 1300, shortly after Ghazan headed back and left in charge the new governors and his Mongol officers. When the Mongol commanders and the two Mongol armies abandoned Syria as well heading back east after Ghazan’s departure, the two Mamluk rebel-governors were quick to switch sides once again, transferring their allegiance back to the Mamluk sultan and putting an end to the Ilkhanid conquest of Syria. Ibid., 73. For a discussion of conflicting loyalties in the Mongol short-lived occupation of Damascus, see Reuven Amitai, “The Mongol occupation of Damascus in 1300: a study of Mamluk loyalties,” in The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society, ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden, 2004), 21-41.
During Ghazan’s first Syrian campaign, the Ilkhanid chancellery issued several ideologically charged documents that were preserved in the Mamluk chronicles (in Arabic). As discussed by Anne Broadbridge, the documents depict Ghazan as the guardian of Islam and accuse the Mamluks of being unfit to rule and devoid of divine support.\footnote{For a detailed discussion of the five texts related to Ghazan’s occupation of the city (the guarantee of peace/amān to the Damascene population, Ghazan’s letter to the Syrian population and military commanders, the two decrees/firmāns appointing the city’s governors, and finally his “state of the Khanate address”), see Broadbridge, 73-80. Broadbridge argues that the documents “all promulgated the Ilkhan’s new Muslim identity as Guardian of Islam, but simultaneously echoed with a Mongol imperial ideology reminiscent of earlier Ilkhanid letters” (74). As we shall see in this chapter, the documents reveal the synthesis of ideals of Perso-Islamic kingship with Mongol “political theology of divine right.” Broadbridge also makes the unlikely argument that the documents were probably issued in Mongolian but recorded in Arabic. I believe that the documents were originally written in Persian.} Ghazan’s second undated text, addressed at the Mamluk commanders and the people of Syria. It stands out in comparison to the rest of the documents. The ideas presented in the letter show substantive links to Qāshānī’s conversion narrative. Both texts draw on the same work, Najm al-Dīn Rāzī Dāya’s (d. 1256) Mišād al-Ībād (below). One possible explanation for these intertextual ties between the letter and the conversion narrative is that Qāshānī had access to the letter and used it for constructing his conversion account. The letter, in any case, allows us to explain and historically situate several of the ideas that appear in Qāshānī’s conversion narrative.

The letter starts by offering its readers a succinct Islamic salvation history. The letter positions Ghazan and the Ilkhanid campaign in Syria in relation to a history of the successive missions assigned by God to the Abrahamic prophets and their culmination in Muḥammad’s prophethood.\footnote{On the question of the finality of prophethood with Muḥammad, see the excellent discussion by Yohanan Friedmann, Prophecy Continuous: aspects of Ahmadi religious thought and its medieval background (Berkley, 1989), 49-82.}

In every age (zmān), the turn of time (al-dawr) requires that God, may He be exalted, send a prophet to guide the world and direct man towards the right path and staying in lines in the communities of the religion (hīfż al-asāṭīr fī milal al-dīn). [However,] prophecy ended with the seal of the prophets Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā, whom He sent with guidance and the true religion to proclaim it over all religions, even if the polytheists detest it [al-Tawba, 33],
and sent him to all the beings to guide all of mankind from the darkness of infidelity to the light of Islam, lead them from their corporal bonds to the spiritual corners (min ʿalā iq al-juthmāniyyāt ilā zawāyyā al-rūḥāniyyāt), and adorn them with the perfection of religion and the refinement of character […] It is incumbent for all to follow this prophet and comply with his law (sharīʿatihi). Whoever disobeys him, will find his abode in hell and suffer from a wretched fate. From the start of his mission and the beginning of his message until this time whenever degeneration (khalal) appeared in the matters of religion and weakness (wahn) spread in [the community’s adherence to] the Muslim law (sharīʿat al-muslimīn) and man approached disobedience and was persistent in oppression, God brought forth an individual from amongst those in authority (ūlī al-amr) who would strengthen the religious matters and reproach all of the beings, forbid them from wrong (yadhāhum ʿan al-umūr al-mustankara), and send them back to the straight, agreeable paths. Before our time, the infidels, the idol-worshippers, and the group [the Mamluks] who were reprehensible (?) for being from the Muslims who say amen with their mouths, but do not believe in their hearts – appeared, and they tyrannized and acted unjustly […] and God ordained as a Prophetic Muḥammadan miracle (min al-muʿjaz al-nabawī al-muṣṭafawī al-muḥammadī) that we, of the descendants of Chinggis Khan the great who ruled the majority of the great climates, should enter this true religion and the straight path without coercion (bi-ghayr taklīf); nay, the light of the guidance of God and the religion of the Prophet al-Muṣṭafā shined in our hearts, God honored us with Islam, and distinguished us for justice and good deeds. He ingrained in our hearts the love of the true religion, and made us successful in our endeavor (jihād) to kill the polytheists, the idol-worshippers, and the transgressors [the Mamluks], destroy the idol houses, repel the evilness of the oppressors, and command right and forbid wrong […]379

The Mongol invasions of the Islamic world gave rise to a variety of responses and religious explanations. Penitential responses that viewed the Mongol conquests as a divine punishment for the Muslims’ wrongdoings, and providential explanations that interpreted the Mongol conquests and rule as a necessary step before the exceptional expansion and proliferation of Islam, were a few of the more enduring and widespread explanations of the Mongol success. Exploring a particular strain within the group of penitential explanations - the assertion that a certain saintly personage was responsible for summoning the Mongols in order to punish the straying community - DeWeese argues that such explanations were responses of some communities, in this case, specific Sufi circles, to concerns and anxieties over their relationship

with the Mongols. As discursive strategies, such accounts advanced the possibility of reconciliation with the Mongol overlords and allowed Sufi communities to sanction accommodation and cooperation with the conquerors.\textsuperscript{380}

The letter’s conversion narrative clearly falls within this group of providential explanations. As a providential explanation, however, Ghazan’s letter also stands out. First, it skips over the stage of destruction and havoc inflicted by the Mongol invasions in the eastern Islamic world and leads straightforward to a divinely orchestrated Mongol conversion to Islam. Second, the letter explicitly situates the Mongols’ conversion in relation to the notion of the “corruption of religion” and moreover, designates Ghazan (without mention of the caliphate!) as a direct substitute for the prophets - a chastising or reformer king, while simultaneity asserting the sincerity of the Mongols’ conversion and its miraculous nature.

Friedmann analyzes the Islamic dogma of the finality of prophethood with Muḥammad (\textit{khatm al-nubuwwa}) and the challenges it posed for the Muslim tradition. In Muslim thought, successive missions of prophets were indispensable for continually communicating God’s wishes to the community and enabling mankind to work towards his salvation. Once the dogma of the finality of prophethood took its place as one of the chief articles of the Sunnī creed, the continuous link between the Muslim community and the source of divine inspiration was threatened. The issue of the cessation of prophethood with Muḥammad became an even greater challenge as the notion of the deterioration of the Muslim community after the golden age of the first generation of Islam gained growing popularity. After Muḥammad’s age, “each successive generation was inferior to that which preceded it” and thus, “a process of almost irreversible decline set in”.\textsuperscript{381} While some Muslim thinkers, most

\textsuperscript{380} Devin DeWeese “Stuck in the throat of Chingiz Khān,” 23-60.
\textsuperscript{381} As Friedmann demonstrates, “the idea that with the passage of time things deteriorate rather than improve is frequently encountered in Muslim thought and literature.” Friedmann, 77.
significantly, Ibn al-ʿArabī questioned (to some extent) the validity of this dogma, more generally, the Muslim tradition found substitutes or “alternative channels through which divine guidance could reach the Muslim community after Muḥammad’s death”. Friedmann situates within this context the mujaddid tradition, according to which the Prophet reported that “God will send to this community at the turn/on the eve of every century a person who will renew its religion” (inna allāh yabʿathu li-hadhihi al-umma ʿalā raʾs kull miʿa sana man yuṣaddid laḥā amr dīnīhā).

According to Friedmann, this process of deterioration that set in immediately after Muḥammad’s death was accompanied by an eschatological layer: the gradual process of decay and decline “will persist until the Day of Judgment, when it will reach its nadir, the world will become full of wicked infidels and will abruptly come to an end”.

By revitalizing the religion of Islam each century, the cyclical mujaddid (the centennial renewer/reformer) could arrest and indefinitely postpone the final religious decay, the catalyst leading to the Day of Judgment.

In her inspection of Ghazan’s letter, Broadbridge raised the possibility that the sequence of arguments presented by the letter implied that Ghazan was the mujaddid, though she acknowledged that that the term itself is not explicitly noted in the letter or in any other Ilkhanid reference. That Ghazan’s Syrian campaign took place at the turn of the eighth Hijri century might, indeed, support such a suggestion. However, as Ella Landau-Tasseron convincingly shows, the mujaddid tradition was never a central idea in Muslim medieval thought. There were no formal criterions for appointing or identifying such centennial restorers. Painstakingly tracing the early transmission history of the mujaddid and related traditions, Landau-Tasseron concluded

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382 Ibn al-ʿArabī argued that only legislative prophecy ended with Muḥammad, and that God continued to appoint non-legislative prophecy from among the Muslim community. Ibid., 72-4.
383 Ibid., 92.
384 Ibid., 95.
385 Ibid., 97.
386 Broadbridge, 77.
that the *mujaddid* primarily functioned as an honorific title, (unsystematically) bestowed on a number of religious scholars. She suggested that it originated within specific Shāfīʾi circles as an attempt to legitimize al-Shāfīʾi’s teachings. Landau-Tasseron further showed the eschatological classification of the *tajdīd* tradition to be a later, fourteenth-fifteenth-centuries innovation found in the writing of religious scholars, in particular, the work of the famous Egyptian scholar al-Suyūṭi. These authors attempted to furnish an explanation for the *mujaddid* tradition, if not also to lay their own claim to the title. Furthermore, only few scholars (the fourteenth-century al-Ṭaybī for one) seem to have linked the continuation of revelation after the cessation of prophethood to the *mujaddid* tradition.  

The question of the origins of the *mujaddid* tradition aside, the Ilkhanid sources do not appear to support Broadbridge’s suggestion that the letter alluded to Ghazan’s role as a *mujaddid* king. It appears that in the Ilkhanid period, the term was still limited to scholarly ranks. Vaṣṣāf, for example, lists the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn as the *mujaddid* of the eighth Hijri century. Furthermore, when the idea of the reform or “rejuvenation of the religion” is applied to the Mongols, Ilkhanid authors appear to tend to use the term *ihyāʾ al-dīn* rather than *tajdīd* or *mujaddid*. For example, Vaṣṣāf extols the amir Nawrūz as *muḥyī i dīn*. Finally, the fact that the title *mujaddid* does not explicitly appear in the letter is significant as well. After the dissolution of the Ilkhanate, when rulers do make a claim to the title, the title always explicitly appears, usually accompanied by the quoted tradition, in part or in full.

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387 Ella Landau-Tasseron, “The “Cyclical Reform”: a study of the mujaddid tradition,” *Studia Islamica* 70 (1989), 79-117. Friedmann, too, noted that in spite of the strong likelihood that the tradition originated in connection to eschatological expectations, “its eschatological content was not very prominent throughout the centuries.” Friedmann, 97.

388 Vaṣṣāf, 539.

389 Qāshānī, too, refers to Ghazan stating that he had “revived Islam” (*ihyāʾ i mavāt i islām*). Qāshānī, *Taʾrīkh-i ṣīyāsāt,* 13.
The Syrian letter, therefore, does not depict Ghazan as the *mujaddid*, the Islamic centennial renewer. It does, however, situate the new convert within a successive line of rulers (*ūlī al-amr*) who are sent periodically and continuously in order to lead back the community from its stray path and undue its corrupt ways, as the prophets did beforehand. The letter casts Ghazan’s conversion as a transformation into a “reviver king,” a successor to the Prophet. This depiction of Ghazan as a periodically designated reformer ruler also resonates with the Mongol “political theology of divine right.” In the introduction, I have examined the Mongol commander Qutlughshah’s statement, made before Ibn Taymīya outside the city walls of Damascus. I suggested that Qutlughshah’s statement championed a dual discourse of sacral kingship: through their link to Chinggis Khan, “the king of the earth,” the Ilkhans inherit and re-create Heaven’s blessing, and through their link to Muḥammad, “the Seal of the Prophets,” they inherit the prophetic mission of protecting the Islamic faith.\(^{390}\)

Like Qutlughshah’s statement, the letter equates Muḥammad’s mission with Chinggis Khan’s charge of world domination legitimized through Heaven’s selection and blessing, and carried out by his offspring. It integrates Chinggisid exceptionality into Muslim history, and moreover, situates Ilkhanid kingship at the center stage of the Islamic salvation schema. The letter’s conversion narrative of Ghazan, furthermore, speaks to Ghazan’s continuation, both in terms of his Chinggisid heritage of a divine mission by Heaven’s design, and in reference to the Prophet Muḥammad’s mission to the believers. In other words, Ghazan (and by extension also Chinggis Khan) is introduced into the Islamic salvation history, and the Prophet Muḥammad is recruited in support of the Ilkhanid claim to exceptional kingship. As agents of God, the Chinggisids are now in charge of upholding the Islamic faith. They are integrated “to a successive chain of a hereditary divine legacy”\(^{390}\)

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\(^{390}\) As discussed in the introduction, Qutlughshah claimed that God had sealed prophecy [/the line of prophets, *khatama al-risāla*] with Muḥammad,” and that “Chinggis Khan was the king of the earth (*malik al-basīṭa*), and whoever turned his back on his command and the command of his descendants is a dissident (*khārijī*).”
that goes back to the Prophet Muḥammad, and through him, also connects the Chinggisids to “the universal chain of the prophets, the bearers of the authority.” 391

This dual system of legitimation is expressed not only the presentation of the Chinggisid mission of world domination as a continuation of the Prophetic missions, but also in the letter’s insistence on full Mamluk submission on the basis of Ghazan’s sacred Chinggisid bloodline. The Mongol demand for submission finds concrete expression when it is explicitly linked to the “authority verse.” The letter reproaches the Mamluks stating that once they had realized that “we are the descendants of the sultans of [the habitable] quarter of the Earth’s climates and that we

391 The letter’s narrative bears resemblance to famous letter of the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd II (r. 743-44). In God’s Caliph, Crone and Hinds examined the letter arguing that it situated the Umayyad caliphate within a history of salvation that started with God’s prophetic missions, continued with Muḥammad as the Seal of the Prophets, and ended with the era of the caliphate, after the death of Muhammad. They suggested that the letter argues that “God raised up deputies to administer the legacy of His prophets,” and implement and observe God’s sunna. As with Ghazan’s second Syrian letter, most of al-Walīd II’s letter is devoted to arguing for the importance of full obedience to God’s caliphs. Severe punishment awaits the disobedient. Crone and Hinds further argued that in the letter, “caliphs are in no way subordinated to prophets (let alone the Prophet). Prophets and caliphs alike are seen as God’s agents, and both dutifully carry out the tasks assigned to them, the former by delivering messages and the latter by putting them into effect […] Their [the caliphs’] authority comes directly from God. In other words, formerly God used prophets, now He uses caliphs.” They further suggest that the letter espoused a conception of the relationship between caliphs and God, in which “there is no sense here […] that the caliphate is a mere Ersatzinstitution, a second-rate surrogate for the direct guidance which they enjoyed in the days of Muhammad […] Messengers belonged to the past: the present had been made over to caliphs.” Crone and Hinds, God’s Caliph, 27-8, 116-26. Uri Rubin, however, has recently challenged Crone’s and Hinds’ reading of the letter. He argued that the letter espoused “the idea of successive history.” The letter both stresses the idea that “the prophets have belonged to a successive chain of hereditary divine legacy, which in the letter is identified as the Islamic faith,” and that the caliphs “have inherited the universal legacy of the prophets […] put in charge of God’s religion after Muḥammad’s death, and their duty is to protect it from distortion and pass it on to the coming generations through their own chosen pedigree.” Rubin suggests that this is the context within which the Umayyads received the title of God’s deputies. While Rubin’s reading of the letter as stressing continuity between the “universal and supra-national” stage and Islam, and between Muhammad and the caliphs, is strikingly different from the understanding of Crone and Hinds, they, nevertheless, all seem to agree that the letter’s authors saw in the caliphs agents appointed directly by God. It is this understanding, I suggest, that Ghazan’s Syrian letter similarly espoused (albeit with the Mongol kings, and the caliphs) and that enabled the integration of the notion of the Chinggisid mission by Heaven’s decree into the Islamic salvific schema, and furthermore, as part of “a successive chain beginning with Muhammad.” Uri Rubin, “Prophets and Caliphs: the biblical foundations of the Umayyad authority,” in Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins, edited by Herbert Berg (Leiden, 2003), 87-99. The choice of ʿālī al-amr is too significant in this regard. Rubin notes the use of the term amr in al-Walīd II’s letter: the term denotes “government” or “authority,” but also suggests that the caliphs (or in our case, the Mongol rulers) were put in charge of divine legacy/God’s government. Ibid., 90-91.

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are [now] Muslims and aiders of the religion of Islam,” it was incumbent upon them to obey the Mongols in accordance with God’s command in the “authority verse”.  

A similar idea, that after Ghazan’s conversion all Muslims would be required to submit to the Ilkhanid ruler, is also made in Qāshānī’s conversion narrative as stated above. Such a view corresponded with the traditional Mongol understanding of the world order, reiterated repeatedly in the Mongol correspondence with European forces and in the Ilkhanid diplomatic exchange with their Mamluk neighbors and rivals: Heaven’s blessing invested the Chinggisids with a special good fortune (qut or su) and domination over the entire world. On the basis of this universal mandate, Mongol imperial ideology classified other polities and rulers into willful submitters (il, peace, harmony or submission) and those in a “state of rebellion” (bulgha) against the imperial house and divine will.

Furthermore, in the letter, the (Qur’anic) demand for obedience explicitly draws on Ghazan’s sanctified bloodline. The importance of the Chinggisid royal lineage to the Ilkhanid claim to authority is evident in both the Ilkhanid issued documents and Ilkhanid accounts about the campaign. Ghazan’s royal lineage was contrasted with the Mamluk Sultan’s low ethnic origin. Thus, the final surviving document from Ghazan’s first Syrian campaign begins with a declaration of the Chinggisids’ divinely supported bloodline:

Our grandfather Chinggis Khan was a king and the son of a king to seven degrees in the Mongol lands. When God, may He be exalted, supported him, he took over the inhabited quarter of the world with his sword. Nowhere in the histories since the time of Adam to today, has it come to us that anyone ruled the territory that Chinggis Khan ruled, or was...

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394 According to Rashīd al-Dīn, on the 9th of Rabī’ II / January 3, all of the people of Damascus set out to greet the Ilkhan. The Ilkhan asked the populace: “who am I?” and they answered in one voice that he is Shah Ghazan and detailed his lineage leading back to Chinggis Khan. Ghazan, then, asked the Syrians about the lineage of the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Muhammad b. Qalāwūn (r. 1293-4, 1299-1309 and 1310-1340). The crowd fell silent once they realized that the Mamluk sultan had no royal noble lineage after his father Sultan Qalāwūn and that “these people’s sultanate was gained by accident (ittifāq), not by merit (istiḥqāq) and they [the Qalāwūnids or the Damascene inhabitants] were all slaves of the renowned urugh of the king of Islam’s forefather [Chinggis Khan].” Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1393-4; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 646.
supported with such divine support (taʾyūd). We [Ghazan] are the sixth king [descending from] his loins.\textsuperscript{395}

In the previous chapter, I noted the compatibility of Shīʿism with its promotion of hereditary-based claims to religio-political authority, to the Chinggisid descent-based ideology. Under the Shīʿī convert Ilkhan Öljeytü, these ideological affinities offered a way of converting the Chinggisid claim to a lineage-driven legitimacy into “local currency” by comparing it to the precedence of ahl al-bayt.\textsuperscript{396} The notion of legitimacy by pedigree is also paramount to the Persian tradition of kingship, where “divine grace [farr] follows channels of hereditary entitlement”.\textsuperscript{397} Adding to this vision of Chinggisid hereditary kingship, the idea of their divine support (taʾyūd), the letters draws on the Persian akhlāq-ethical vision of what constitutes legitimate, worthy, and ideal kingship.

The author/s of the letters and Qāshānī use Perso-Islamic conceptions of ideal ethical kingship, drawn from Persianate political advice, to articulate and renegotiate Mongol conceptualizations of the sacrality and divine right of Chinggis Khan’s bloodline. In his discussion of changes in political authority in Ilkhanid Iran, Melville suggests that “it is possible to see Iranian concepts of sovereignty mediating between these competing ideologies,” namely, Muslim and Chinggisid. By Ghazan’s reign, the “reactivation” of Iranian conceptions of kingship

\textsuperscript{395} Baybars al-Manṣūrī, 337-8; Broadbridge, 79.
\textsuperscript{396} See Pfeiffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 129-163. Michael Hope, too, noted the ideological similarities between the Chinggisids’ hereditary-based authority and the Shīʿī “advocacy of the hereditary nature of political/spiritual authority in opposition to elective councilor systems.” Hope also notes in this regard Ghazan’s generous support of pro-ʿAlid shrines and his designation as the “friend of the ahl al-bayt”. Michael Hope, Sultanate or Amīrate? The transmission of Chinggisid authority in the early Mongol empire and the Ilkhanate of Iran (PhD diss., Australian National University, 2013), 521-24.
\textsuperscript{397} Simidchieva, 128. Simidchieva investigates the change in approach towards noble pedigree in Nizām al-Mulk’s Siyāsatnāma: whereas in chapter one, we find the (Persian) notion of pedigree de-emphasized for the sake of a “classical Islamic concept of God-given just rulership,” in the opening to the second, later section of the Siyāsatnāma, we see Nizām al-Mulk reasserting the centrality of pedigree for royal legitimacy and the demand to guard the rights and privileges of old nobility. Nizām al-Mulk’s savior king must be of “royal/princely stock (abnā- yī mulāk)” and one of the principles by which he abides is the protection of “ancient families” and the honoring of “the sons of kings.” Several didactic historical accounts in the Siyāsatnāma stress hereditary succession as a prerequisite for rightful and just government. Ibid., 108, 112.
went hand in hand with the “restoration of Muslim rule”\(^{398}\). Perso-Islamic concepts might, furthermore, be seen as bridging two types of explanations of Mongol invasions and rule, from the penitential to the salvific-providential. Both Ghazan’s Syrian letter and Nizām al-Mulk’s Siyāsatnāma attribute to kingship the ability to reinstitute and restart a previous order (social, political, religious). An examination of a third text used by Qāshānī, Najm al-Dīn Rāzī’s Sufi guide-mirror for princes, will allow us to further contextualize the vision of the Ilkhan as a reformer king in the transition from the penitential explanation of the Mongol invasions to the providential.

From Wolves to Shepherds: a Sufi Mirror for Princes and Qāshānī’s Transition From the Apocalyptic to the Providential Explanation

Ghazan’s second Syrian letter and Qāshānī’s conversion narrative both draw on the lexicon of Persianate genre of advice literature. Therefore, they refer to Ghazan in similar terms. In the letter, Ghazan is the one from the ʿūlī al-amr designated by God for the mission of eradicating the Mamluks’ corruption and oppression. In the conversion narrative, Ghazan is referred to as the one in authority of this age (ʿūlī al-amr-i ʿahd). The title of ʿūlī al-amr derives from the Qur’anic “authority verse” (4:59): “O those who believe, obey God and the Messenger and those in authority among you (ya ayyuḥā alladhīna amanū, aḥī ʿAllāh wa-aḥī ʿal-rasūl wa-ʿūlī al-amr minkum).

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\(^{398}\) Charles Melville, “The Mongol and Timurid periods,” in A History of Persian Literature, vol. X: Persian Historgioryah, ed. Melville (London, 2012), 187, 191-2. There is no doubt that Iranian conceptions of kingship were more readily available for legitimizing and assimilating the foreign conquerors, certainly prior to their conversion to Islam, and that the cultural milieu of the Ilkhanate found them useful in these endeavors. However, the Mongol invasions and Ilkhanid rule also provided a significant impetus for articulating with better clarity, if not more audacity, ideas about Islamic kingship that were already developing from the eleventh century in the eastern Islamic world. As noted in the previous chapter, Arjomand refers to the specific theoretical-practical constellation, the type of autocratic regime, in which the king was envisioned as maintaining both spheres of politics and religion, as “Islamic royalism.” Arjomand, “Legitimacy and political organization,” 245-250. Arjomand furthermore notes that Ghazan adopted Islamic royalism and that thereafter, this type of “post-caliphal sultanic” regime prevailed in the eastern Islamic world (657/1258 to 906/1500).
In the first two centuries of Islam, the Qur’anic phrase ālī al-amr was interpreted as referring to religious scholars (“people of knowledge and discernment”) and to military commanders who were appointed by the Prophet himself. From the ninth century onwards, the term was expanded to incorporate also political leaders. Authors such the famous eleventh-century jurist al-Māwardī understood the verse to mean the requirement for unconditional obedience on part of the Muslim community to their appointed leaders. Ghazan’s conversion narrative, indeed, ends with the statement that in accordance with the “authority verse,” all the Muslim kings and sultans were obliged to show their obedience to Ghazan. According to the narrative, Nawrūz claimed that if Ghazan were to convert, and become the ālī al-amr-i ʿahd, “full (az bun dandān), unsolicited obedience [to the prince] would become an individual duty for all Muslims (farḍ ʿayn).” The Syrian letter, which references the “authority verse” no less than three times, links the verse, too, to the Ilkhanid demand for full Mamluk submission, and moreover, accuses the Mamluks of transgressing God’s command by repeatedly disobeying and killing “those in authority” from amongst them. Furthermore, the letter seems to draw a link between the obligation to follow the Prophet and the necessity to obey the ruler, in this case, Ghazan.

Authors of Persian advice literature considered the “authority verse” to be particular significant, not just for the authority it conferred upon the community’s political leaders, but also as evidence for the proximity of the rank of kingship to the rank of prophethood. In the thirteenth century influential mirror for princes, the Laṭāʾif al-ḥikma of Sirāj al-Dīn Urmawī (d. 1283), the verse is interpreted to mean that kings are the associates (qarīn) of the prophets. Since the verb ʿaffū separates in the verse Allāh from the prophets, but not the prophets from “those in

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authority,” the author concludes that except for the prophets having precedent over kings (taqđīm), there is no difference between the authority (amr) of the prophet and the king.⁴⁰¹

Marlow identifies two major trends in medieval advice literature. The first includes attempts to claim similarity between prophets and kings, and the second entails the ranking of kings and prophets in a cosmic hierarchy. From the standpoint of the first approach, which prevailed in Persanate advice literature, prophets and kings were regarded “as equally important players in the divinely ordained cosmos”.⁴⁰² A similar interpretation to that of Urmawī is also found in the early thirteenth-century celebrated Sufi manual of Najm al-Dīn Rāzī Dāya (d. 654/1256), the Mirṣād al-ʾIbād. Najm al-Dīn Rāzī states that “ kingship over others is the deputyship and vicegerency (niyābat va-khilāfat) of God and is second (tilw) only to prophethood […] God Almighty has threaded obedience to a just king together on a single string with obedience to Himself and obedience to His messenger”.⁴⁰³ Najm al-Dīn subsequently quotes the “authority verse” as proof for his assertion.

As mentioned earlier, Najm al-Dīn Rāzī’s work had a strong influence over Qāshānī’s conversion narrative of Ghazan. A disciple of Majd al-Dīn al-Baghḍādī, who was one of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā’s (d. 618/1221) senior disciples, Najm al-Dīn Rāzī had originally composed the Mirṣād al-ʾIbād as a gift for the Saljūq ‘Alāʾ al-Dīn Qayqūbad in 620/1223. According to his own account, Najm al-Dīn followed the recommendation of Shihāb al-Dīn ‘Umar al-Suhrawadī (d. 632/1234), whom he encountered by chance in Malatya when he fled the Mongol onslaught in the east. Najm al-Dīn wrote the work with the aim of gaining the patronage of Alāʾ al-Dīn

⁴⁰² Ibid., 106-7.
Qayqūbad and finding asylum at his court. Other accounts (Ibn Bībī), however, suggest that
Najm al-Dīn completed the work and dedicated it to the sultan prior to his arrival at Malatya and
alleged meeting with al-Suhrawadī. 404

The work includes chapters on the order of creation, prophethood, Sufi ritual, training
and practices, as well as on dreams and visions. The fifth and final part of the work also offers a
long exposition on “the wayfaring of kings and the lords of command” (as well as advice as to
the conduct of ministers, merchants, tradesmen and other professions), which combines Perso-
Islamic political theory with Najm al-Dīn’s Sufi orientation. Thus, kingship is described as the
best means of attaining proximity to God. 405 Lambton draws attention to Mirṣād al-ʿībād for its
Sufi interpretation of the philosopher king. For Najm al-Dīn, ideal kingship is achieved when the
“kingship of the faith and the kingship of the world were united in one person,” a rank achieved
according to Mirṣād al-ʿībād by King David. 406

Kamola has drawn attention to the possible relationship between the Mirṣād al-ʿībād and
the chapter on Ghazan in the Jāmiʿ al-tawārikh, pointing out that “Najm al-Dīn Rāzī’s
prescription for an ideal ruler fits neatly with the reform program that Rashīd al-Dīn attributes to

404 Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, however, did not seem to have fared well at the Saljūq court and he “retracted” his praise of
ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Qayqūbad in a work he composed shortly after in Erzincan. Nevertheless, his masterpiece, the Mirṣād
al-ʿībād, gained after its author’s death in 654/1256 considerable popularity and fame for its eloquent presentation
and comprehensive treatment of Sufism and Sufi training. The work reached India with Chishtī Sufis already in the
fourteenth century and spread as far as China, where it was one of the most popular works among Muslim Chinese.
In the seventeenth century, Mirṣād al-ʿībād was translated into Chinese. Algar, “Dāya Rāzī.”
al-ʿībād, 246; God’s bondsmen, 412. Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, however, argues that the king should not pursue Sufi ascetic
practices or busy himself with constant devotion: “it is not the proper mode of devotion for a king that he should
busy himself with supererogatory worship, such as prayer, fasting […] and spend most of his time in solitude and
seclusion, thus neglecting the interests of the people […] and abandoning his subjects to the control of oppressors
[…] the proper mode of devotion for a king is rather this, that after fulfilling all obligatory duties of worship […] he
should attend to the affairs of his kingdom […]” Just kingship, in other words, becomes a means of attaining
proximity to God. Rāzī, God’s bondsmen, 420. For kingship as a means of cultivating praiseworthy qualities, ibid.,
402-3.
Ghazan Khan”.\footnote{Kamola, 183.} Qāshānī’s conversion narrative indeed draws directly from \textit{Mirṣād al-ībād}. Moreover, I argue that Qāshānī’s account is in dialogue with Rāzī’s understanding of the political situation of his time.

Writing of the king’s conduct towards his subjects, Rāzī refers to the well-known comparison of the king to the shepherd (\textit{shabān}) who protects his flock of sheep (\textit{rama}), his subjects, from the evil wolves (\textit{gurg}), found in prophetic traditions. The wolves, explains Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, are the accursed polytheists (\textit{kuffār-i malā īn}), “who have become predominant/powerful (\textit{mustavli}) in these hard times (‘ahd-\textit{i sukht}),” and whose evil the king and the amirs must eradicate. Furthermore, “even if the unbelievers cause no trouble it is incumbent on the king to go forth in war (\textit{ghazā}) to conquer the lands of unbelief and make Islam prevail”\footnote{Rāzī, \textit{Mirṣād al-ībād}, 248-49; \textit{God’s bondsmen}, 415-16.}. However, in addition to the infidel wolves, within the shepherd’s flock, there are also horned rams (\textit{qūch šāhib-i qarn}), tyrants (\textit{ẓālimān}) – ranging from commanders and troops to officials, tax collectors and Qadis - who wish to oppress the king’s subjects. The king must be on constant alert for their recurring corruptions (\textit{fisād}) and look into cases of oppression for the sake of his subjects.

An identical division of evildoers from whom the king must safeguard his subjects is apparent in the conversion narrative. Qāshānī states that “the religion of Islam, which has been weakened [“worn out”] by its subjugation (\textit{istilā}) to the infidel Tatars (\textit{kuffār-i tatār}) and the domination of the tyrants and offenders (\textit{ẓālimān va fāsiqān}), will be revived through the prince’s support.” By following Rāzī’s division of enemies from whom the king must beware, Qāshānī’s conversion narrative also addresses Rāzī’s apocalyptic interpretation of the events that took place in the eastern Islamic world in the first half of the thirteenth century. Qāshānī’s
narrative offers an “alternative ending” to Rāzī’s dark doomsday vision of the state of the Islamic world in the aftermath of the Mongol invasions. Addressing his reasons for composing the Mirṣād al-ʿĪbād in the prelude to the work, Najm al-Dīn wrote about the Mongol (kuffār-i tatār and kuffār-i malāʾīn) attacks in 617/1220, their subjection (istīlā) of the eastern Islamic world, and the unprecedented chaos and ruin they inflicted.

Viewing the Mongol destruction as a penitential response for the “ingratitude for the blessing of Islam,” Rāzī claimed that their destruction and massacres “resemble only the catastrophes that shall ensue at the End of Time (fitnah-yi ākhīr al-zamān) foretold by the Prophet.” Najm al-Dīn, then, quotes the following tradition: “the hour of resurrection shall not come until you fight the Turks (al-turk) and they are people with small eyes, red faces and flat noses. Their faces like shields covered with leather (wujūhuhum al-mījān ak-muṭraqa).”

While such facial features and traditions are usually associated with the Turks, Najm al-Dīn identifies the apocalyptic villains with the Mongols (kuffār-i malāʾīn) arguing that “in truth, this event is none other than that which the Messenger of God, upon whom be peace, foresaw with the light of prophethood.”

As proof, Rāzī mentions the fate of his hometown Rayy and the extensive destruction the Mongols inflicted there. Rāzī urges the political leaders of his age (mulāk va-salāṭīn) to join in union and protect the Muslims from the undergoing fitna, warning that if they disregard their

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409 This tradition appears in al-Bukhārī and these facial features are usually identified with the Turks. Pfeiffer discusses another apocalyptic tradition that appeared in the letter of submission from the Shi‘īs of al-Ḥilla during the conquest of Baghdad in 1258. As reported by Vaṣṣāf, the letter stated that according to a tradition from ʿAlī, a group of horsemen would lay ruin to Baghdad (“mother of tyrants and abode of oppressors”). These will be the Banū Qanṭūra, who “have faces like shields covered with leather and trunks like the trunks of elephants and there is no country they reach which they will not conquer.” The Shi‘ī delegation claimed that this meant that Hülegū will be victorious and would rule these lands. A similar tradition is found in the Shi‘ī collection of traditions, the Nahj al-Balāgha. Pfeiffer studies the application of the Banū Qanṭūra tradition to the Mongols as an example of genealogical engineering and as a “step in the integration of the Mongols into Muslim eschatological tradition and cosmology,” as well as into the fold of the “known” Abrahamic world. Pfeiffer, “Faces like shields,” 557-594 (page 579 for al-Bukhārī’s tradition).
fundamental obligation as Muslim kings and as the shepherds (!) of their communities, “Islam will be completely eradicated” and even in the few lands where it still remains, it would give way to infidelity.\footnote{Rāzī, Mīrṣād al-ʿibād, 8-9; God’s bondsmen, 39-41. These apocalyptic overtones are further established in Najm al-Dīn’s Marmūzāt-i Asadī dar Mazmūrāt-i Dāʾūd, which he dedicated to the Mengüček ruler of Erzincan, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Dāʾūd (r. 622-5/1225-8). The Marmūzāt-i Asadī (“Subtle indications provided by al-Asadī [Dāya Rāzī] concerning the Psalms of David”) is largely based on Mīrṣād al-ʿibād with its Sufi portion of the work significantly reduced and the sections on advice for kings further expanded. The final chapter of the Marmūzāt-i Asadī deals with traditions on the Signs of the Hour, which Najm al-Dīn invokes as proof for his interpretation of current events as the heralding the last days. Among the traditions that Najm al-Dīn interprets we also find the tradition about Banū Ḍandūr, whom he identifies as Mongols (Tatars). See Marmūzāt-i Asadī dar Mazmūrāt-i Dāʾūd, ed. Muḥammad Shafīʿī Kadkanī (Tehran, 1381), 143-159 (for the Mongols as Banū Ḍanṭūrā, 151).}

Rāzī’s lamentation, implicit condemnation, and plea to the leaders of his age convey a sense of immediacy and urgency at the face of what he viewed as a near certain annihilation and looming apocalypse. When Rāzī compares later on in Mīrṣād al-ʿibād, the king to the shepherd (ṣhabān) who protects his flock, and presents the wolves as the accursed polytheists (kuffār-i malāʾīn), “who have become predominant/powerful (mustawlī) in these hard times (ʿahd-i sukht),” he is clearly referring to the Mongol invasions. When Qāshānī, therefore, refers to the weakening of Islam due to its subjection to the infidel Tatārs (kuffār-i tatār), he builds on Rāzī’s apocalyptic interpretation of the Mongol conquests half a century earlier, but offers a different explanation in its place.

Ghazan’s conversion becomes the key for unlocking, and moreover, reversing the decline of the Muslim world. Rāzī envisioned his introductory words as an invitation (if not an explicit demand) for the Muslim rulers of his age to take action in the face of the Mongol menace and imminent apocalypse. Through Qāshānī’s conversion narrative, Ghazan responds to Rāzī’s desperate call for a savior. Qāshānī replaces the penitential, apocalyptic interpretation of the Mongol conquest with a providential, salvific one. Instead of Rāzī’s apocalyptic prophecy delivered from the Prophet predicting Mongol destruction, Qāshānī provides the readers with a
prognostication foretelling the revival of Islam and its community. Ghazan’s conversion, in other words, answers earlier apocalyptic expectations arising from the Mongol invasions; it reverses the process of decline and destruction that began with Ghazan’s forefathers’ invasions.411

In addition to the kuffār-i tatār, Qāshānī also mentions “the tyrants and offenders” (zālimān va fāsiqān) as those responsible for the decline of Islam in Miršād al-ʿĪbād. The latter group is identified with the tyrants (zālimān) or the horned rams (qūch ṣāhib-ī qarn), which threaten the king’s subjects from within his flock in Miršād al-ʿĪbād. In the letter as well as in Qāshānī’s narrative, the Mamluks follow the scripted role of the “tyrant rams.” For example, the letter condemns the Mamluks not only on religious grounds, but also for their oppression of their subjects and unjust usurpation of their property. Ghazan, on the other hand, takes on the role of Miršād al-ʿĪbād’s ideal philosopher king.

The letter recognizes Ghazan’s role as the shepherd whose duty is to provide security to his subjects and protect them and their property from the unjust Mamluks. It explicitly references in this regard the prophetic hadith “each one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock” (kullukum rāʾ in va-kullu rāʾ in masʿāl ʿan raʾiyyathih).412 The letter specifies the Mongols’ effort to establish just law (qawāʾid al-ʿadl) and abolish (the Mamluks’) evil/forceful customs (qawānīn al-zūr). Rāzī makes a similar statement. The letter subsequently quotes the Qur’anic verse: “O David, we have made you vicegerent/caliph upon earth [so rule among men with justice]” (38:26) as a justification for the Ilkhanid encroachment into Syria. Najm al-Dīn Rāzī devotes an extensive discussion at the start of his chapter on kingship to this verse for its equation of salṭāna with khilāfā, and its emphasis on the centrality of justice for kingship.

411 Judith Pfeiffer has recently suggested that conversion narratives were used “as a discursive strategy in countering unfulfilled apocalyptic expectations widespread among Muslims vis-à-vis the Mongol conquerors.” Pfeiffer, “The canonization of cultural memory,” 61.
412 Rāzī, Miršād al-ʿībād, 249; God’s bondsmen, 414-15.
Furthermore, as noted earlier, Rāzī argues for the duty of the king to set on *ghazā* and spread the religion of Islam. Similarly, the letter claims that Ghazan’s conversion and reign was preordained by divine will, since his name is derived from the root of the word *ghazw*. Ghazan, indeed, had pledged to fight (*al-ghazw wa’l-jihād*) the polytheists, the dissidents (*al-khawārij*), and the oppressors.\(^{413}\) Other examples suggest that *Mīrṣād al-`ībād*’s influence also extended to the rest of the documents issued by the Ilkhanid chancellery during the occupation of Damascus.\(^{414}\)

One of the chief Ilkhanid arguments against the Mamluks in the letters is the Mamluks’ unfitness to rule due to their low, slave origins, their ignorance in the matters of kingly behavior (*adab al-mulūk, ‘awā’ id al-mulūk*), and their disregard for proper, diplomatic protocol.\(^{415}\) This focus on the Mamluks’ kingly conduct and courtly etiquette might have had also to do with the letter’s reliance on works of Persianate political ethics and their views on proper royal conduct.\(^{416}\)

\(^{413}\) It is also worth noting the importance with which Rāzī views the requirement to enjoin the good and forbid the wrong, which is repeated several times in the letter as one of the chief tasks of the convert Ghazan as the chosen āli *al-amr* of the age. Rāzī writes that if the king acts wrongfully towards his subjects, “the people of corruption will be fortified and the task of enjoining good and forbidding wrong will suffer, for none will be able to enjoin the good.” Rāzī, *God’s bondsmen*, 416. On enjoining the good and forbidding the wrong and its political implications, see also chapter 5.

\(^{414}\) For example, in the first text issued in the campaign, the guarantee of peace (*amān*) from Ghazan to the people of Damascus (for which, see Broadbridge, 75-77), it is stated that Ghazan pledged to eradicate the Mamluk injustice and abide by God’s order (*al-amr al-ilāhī*) to do justice (*‘adl*), do good deeds (*al-ihṣān*) and be generous to one’s kinsfolk (*tāʿ i dhī al-qurbā*). These are the same first three rules for the relationship between kings and their subjects in Najm al-Dīn’s *Mīrṣād al-`ibād* (Rāzī, *Mīrṣād al-`ibād*, 249-50; *God’s bondsmen*, 413-14). Najm al-Dīn, in particular, explains that generosity to one’s kinsfolk (*tāʿ i dhī al-qurbā*) consists of “respecting the rights of all subjects, for subjects stand in relation of kinship to the king.” The document subsequently states that God forbids “abomination, evil and wrongdoing” (*al-faḥshā* wa’l-*munkār wa’l-‘baghā*). Najm al-Dīn uses the exact same terms for warning from the bad conduct of kings (Rāzī, *Mīrṣād al-`ibād*, 254; *God’s bondsmen*, 416, 420). For the letter, Zetterstén, *Beiträge*, 62-4.

\(^{415}\) Broadbridge, 74, 80; see for example, the last document issued in the campaign, what Broadbridge refers to as Ghazan’s “state of the Khanate address,” where the Mamluks’ unstable succession system is criticized and their lack of kingly conduct (*huqūq al-`adab*) is condemned. For example, Ghazan complains that the Mamluks have yet to send their congratulations and gifts for the Mongols’ conversion to Islam a few years earlier. Baybars al-Manṣūrī, 338.

\(^{416}\) The relationship between the documents issued by Ghazan’s chancery during his Syrian campaign and Persian-Islamic political ideals has also been briefly noted by Denis Aigle, who in her study of Ibn Taymiya’s “anti-
The author(s) of the Syrian documents, therefore, appears to have used Rāzī’s advice for
the kings in his Sufi manual, the *Mirṣād al-‘Ībād*, as a prescriptive model. It functioned as a
script he deployed to cast Ghazan’s Syrian campaign as the fulfillment of the Ilkhan’s duties as a
Muslim king and, moreover, as the predestined ʿūlī al-amr of the age. The Mamluks, on the other
hand, were cast as the corrupt oppressive rulers that the king must bring under control. Through
this discursive strategy, Ghazan’s domains as the ideal Perso-Islamic monarch are extended
beyond the Ilkhanate into Mamluk Syria, presenting the Mamluks merely as oppressive and
insubordinate local rulers under the just king’s rule.

**The Mahdī Khan and the Poet of Banākat**

The transition from a penitential to providential explanation of the Mongol invasions and
rule, evident in Qāshānī’s “response” to the apocalyptic in *Mirṣād al-‘Ībād*, is further apparent in
the work of another Ilkhanid historian active at Ghazan’s court at the time. The court poet Abū
Sulaymān Dāʾud b. Abī al-‘Āḍal Muḥammad al-Banākatī (d. 730/1329-30) was a native of the
village of Banākat in Transoxania. According to Banākatī’s own testimony, he inherited his
position as court poet from his brother Sayyid Nizām al-Dīn ʿAlī, who passed away on the eve of
Ghazan’s first Syrian campaign in Rajab 699. Rightfully considered an abridgment of Rashīd
al-Dīn’s world history, to which the author Banākatī wholeheartedly admits at the introduction to
his history, the *Rawdat ūlī al-albāb fī maʿrifat al-tawārīkh waʾl-ansāb* (completed Shawwāl

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*Mongol*” fatwas suggests that the first document issued by the Ilkhanid chancellery, “the text of the amān presents
Ghazan Khan as a sovereign boasting all the qualities of the ideal prince portrayed in the Islamic ‘mirrors for
princes’ genre.” Aigle, however, did not attempt to link this portrayal of Ghazan to specific advice literature works.

462-3.
418 Ibid., 1-2.
717/1317) has drawn only minor scholarly consideration. Banākāṭī does, however, make his own contribution to what is predominantly the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh’s narrative by including samples of his and his brother’s poetry.

Describing Ghazan’s extravagant celebration in Üjān, Azerbaijan, at the end of Dhū al-Qaʿida 701 (June-July, 1302), Banākāṭī mostly follows the account in the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh. Banākāṭī adds, however, that he too was among the Ilkhan’s invitees. Furthermore, he claims that the Ilkhan awarded him the title of “king of poets” (malik al-shuʿarāʾ) for a poem (qaṣīda) he read in praise of the sultān-i islām. In the poem, Banākāṭī extols Ghazan’s justice and beneficence:

The world has become so joyous from the justice of the Pādshāh
The Khusrav, the Khusrav like king, the sultan of the world, Khān Ghazan
The Ilkhān, the greatest Khāqān, the brave world conqueror
The Pādshāh of the inhabited world, the Khusrav, the Ṣāḥīb-Qirān
His generosity during the feast put to shame
The mine and overcame the sea and the mine

Banākāṭī harnesses the imagery of the Khan’s magnificent gold covered tent in Üjān as a canvass for his praise of Ghazan. The poet compares the ruler’s temporary court in Üjān to paradise. His dome is likened to a staircase leading to heaven functioning as a sort of axis mundi, connecting the court and the Ilkhan to divine realms. In addition to his play on different celestial

420 According to the latter, an enormous tent of golden brocade and a gold-made throne, on which craftsmen were laboring for three years, were delivered from the workshops in Tabriz to the camp in Üjān and constructed in the middle of a green meadow. The tent was installed at the Ilkhan’s orders at the center of a square shaped garden divided into equal portions, and was filled with pools, ponds, and all sorts of wildlife. A complex with towers and a bathhouse rose above these beautiful settings. Trees were planted alongside the plot to demarcate paths for the guests. Before Ghazan’s reception started, sayyids, imams, Qādīs and shaykhs were admitted to his presence. Next came Ghazan’s speech of gratitude to his Maker before entering his golden shelter followed by the lavish feast and the ruler’s dispersal of wealth to his many guests in the form of gold and textiles. For three days and nights, the Qur’an was recited out loud and each religious group worshiped according to its own rites. As described by Rashīd al-Dīn, on the day of the banquet, the Ilkhan was seated on his golden throne, clad in his gold brocade garments, and crowned with his precious jeweled crown, surrounded by the princes, ladies (khavāṭīn), amirs and his courtiers. Once the festivities came to an end, Ghazan proceeded to discuss state affairs with his commanders and intimates. Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 651-652; Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1303-6.
imaginary, Banākafī also locates the ruler’s court in Ūjān at the center of the Ilkhanid kingdom (“The city of Islam Ūjān became the heart of the kingdom and the ordu of the soul of the world is at the eye of the Khān’s Ūjān”) and compares it to the flourishing Ilkhanid center of Tabriz.421 The tent in Ūjān is, hence, also situated in the specific Iranian-Ilkhanid synthesis of royal geography, in īrān zamīn. The common praise for the ruler’s virtues, justice, benevolence, and military might is interwoven into his description of the Ūjān celebration. Not unlike other panegyrists, Banākafī resorts to both Iranian and Central Asian sovereignly concepts and titular. The Mongol ruler is, on the one hand, the Pādshāh, the Khusrav, and the Ṣāḥib-Qirān, and on the other, the Khaqan (Qa’an) and Khan of Khans. To these two eminent expressions of imperial power, Banākafī adds, towards the end of his poem, an additional locus of Ilkhanid sovereignty.

He defines Ghazan’s imperial stature in Islamic idioms as well:

Oh Heaven, fortune of the path of kingship, it has been determined
By the words of the Prophet that you are the Khusrav, the master of the age (Ṣāḥib-zamān)
You are the mahdī of the End of Time as is evident, oh king, by the palm of your hand
For you have endless fortune from ʿAlī, lion of God422

Ghazan is the master of the age (Ṣāḥib-zamān) as anticipated by the Prophet Muḥammad the mahdī of the End of Time since he shares ʿAlī’s precious good fortune (naṣīb). Ghazan’s Muslim kingship in the poem is indebted to a dual ancestry, a realization of both Muhammad’s prophecy and ʿAlī’s qualities. That Banākafī sees the marks of Ghazan’s mahdīhood in the palm

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421 For the centrality of Tabriz in the Ilkhanate, see the volume edited by Judith Pfeiffer: Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th to 15th century Tabriz (2014).
422 You have cultivated the world with your justice and generosity and the justice
Of a hundred like Kīrasā serving at your court
You are the Khān of Khāns of the world and delivered to you is
The fortune of this world and the next (davlat-i dunya va-dīn), with them you are a fortunate king
Since I, the pride of Banākāt, is the least of the Shah’s eulogists
Praise day and night, from the depth of soul and heart, according to law and reason
All have become rich from the generosity of the Shah of the world
How would it ever be possible for me to be deprived from being among them […]
Banākafī, 465-66.
of his hand is also significant. As I note in appendix II, Banākatī summarizes Qāshānī’s conversion narrative, where the amir Nawrūz argues that the signs on Ghazan’s forehead indicate that Ghazan is the predicted savior-reviver king. Ghazan’s scripted roles as the anticipated “reviver king” in the conversion narrative and in the Syrian letters tally well with traditions which attribute certain tasks to the eschatological redeemer. For example, Qāshānī’s description of the anticipated reviver king’s absolute justice is common to Islamic eschatological traditions. They depict the mahdī as an extraordinarily just ruler, who is constantly on the watch to make sure that no exploitation or corruption are carried out in his name. According to one early hadith collection, al-Muśannaf of the eighth century scholar al-Ṣanʿānī, under the just rule of the mahdī, “the lamb would live happily with the lion” – a theme we find in Qāshānī’s account a well (“the sheep will be protected from the harm of the wolf”).

In addition to his distribution of utopian justice, in many ʿAbbāsid-era prophecies, the mahdī’s rule signifies the universal spread of the authority (and mission) of Islam, either through military feats, or according to variant traditions, through voluntary submission to his rule. Other traditions locate the figure of the mahdī at the turn of a three stage cycle, from prophetic missions to the dominium of tyrannical kings, and finally with the arrival of the redeemer/reformer mahdī - in other words, from revelation to corruption of that revelation and religious deterioration, and to purification and restoration. The mahdī is envisioned as a militant religious reformer, a puritan who will restore Islam to its original, pristine purity. The


424 Ibid., 45-7.

425 David Cook, “Moral apocalyptic in Islam,” Studia Islamica 86 (1997), 53-54. In one eschatological tradition, for example, it is reported that the Prophet predicted such cycles of tyranny and reform/revival: “Woe to this community from tyrannical kings (jabābira) – how they kill and hollow the people out […] when God will desire to return Islam to glory, he will break every stubborn tyrant and he is able to do as he pleases – to set the community aright after its corruption.” Ibid., 45; Abū al- Ḥasan ʿAlī b. ʿIsā al-Irbīlī, Kashf al-ghumma fī maʿrifat al-aʾimmah (Beirut, 1981), vol. 3, 272.
mahdī was understood not only as the eschatological redeemer, whose appearance marks the End of Time, but the title also signified the penultimate reformer king.\textsuperscript{426}

It is, furthermore, interesting to see how the poet interlinks Ghazan’s sacral Chinggisid pedigree with his embodiment of this reformer-mahdī. Banākatī reports to have recited another poem in a celebration in Tabriz on Muḥarram 703/August 1303, where Ghazan’s daughter was given in marriage to her cousin (Ghazan’s nephew), Bisṭām. After thanking God for delivering such a mighty, world conquering monarch and a fortunate Ṣāḥib-Qirān, Banākatī sets out to chart Ghazan’s medley of kingly pedigrees:

Shāh Ghāzān son of Arghun son of Abāqā son of
Shāh Hūlāgū Khān son of Tolui Khān son of Chinggis Khān
The just Khusrav, Sulaymān of the time, Jamshīd of the age
A second Kisrā, Ghāzān Mahmūd, the sultan of the world
The master of the king of the kings of the seven climes
The subduer of the enemies of religion and the mahdī of the End of Time

This line of kingly titular signifies several distinct and competing lineages of universal kingship, from Ghazan’s Chinggisid ancestry, to the Mongol ruler’s personification of mythic Iranian monarchs (Jamshīd, Kisrā) and monotheist prophet-kings (Sulaymān), and finally to his expression of universal aspirations and (penultimate) Islamic religiopolitical claim of authority. The mahdī, in other words, is the culmination of Ghazan’s sovereignly identities.

Banākatī’s mahdī encapsulates a historical vision, according to which, a certain process of decline and revival culminates in the figure of the Ilkhan. It identifies Ghazan’s reign as an exceptional moment in time, an initiation of a new era, but also, much like the term ūlī al-amr-i ʿahd, places Ghazan (and the Mongols) within (intelligible) historical time, as part of recurring

\textsuperscript{426} Yücesoy, 47-9. See also chapter five.
cycles of divine punishment and salvation. According to Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, such a ruler, of both the temporal and the spiritual, epitomized the best happiness and greatest fortune (davlat).\footnote{Rāzī, Mirṣād al-ʿibād, 234.}

Read alongside the Syrian letters and Banākatī’s poetry, Qāshānī’s conversion narrative offers an Islamic version of the Iranian “savior king,” a prophesized periodic reviver or reformer monarch. Ghazan’s conversion is, thus, situated at the convergence of several “rhythms of salvation”:\footnote{Al-Azmeḥ, Muslim Kingship, 41.} Iranian cycles of dynastic and moral decay and revitalization, Islamic visions of recurrent degeneration and reform, and Muslim “eschatological” traditions of periodic cycles of corruption and restoration. He functions as both the restorer of the religion of Islam (and justice), and the reviver of Iranian kingship. Ghazan, after all, has been also identified as the first ruler to take on the title of the Pādshāh-i Islām, a fitting Perso-Islamic synthesis. Each of these “strands” is further developed in the later legendary refashioning of Ghazan – on the one hand, as the re-initiator of Iranian history, and on the other, as a reformer-\textit{mujaddid} king.\footnote{For the \textit{Mujaddid} kingship, see chapter 5. For Ghazan as the initiator of a new era of Iranian history, see for example, Melville’s “History and myth: the Persianisation of Ghazan Khan,” where he discusses the legendary refashioning and the “Persianisation” of Ghazan’s figure in the later, Jalayird Ghazan-nāma (composed between 758/1357-763/1362). “History and myth: the Persianisation of Ghazan Khan,” in \textit{Irano-Turkic Cultural Contacts in the 11th-17th Centuries}, ed. Eva M. Jeremias (Piliscsaba, 2003), 133-60.}

\section*{Contextualizing Qāshānī as Author: Perso-Islamic Synthesis and Ilkhanid Cultural Production}

I have suggested that it is likely that Qāshānī had access to and made use of Ghazan’s Syrian letters for his conversion narrative. Qāshānī’s narrative reflects, therefore, Ghazan’s expansionist ideology within the context of the Mamluk Ilkhanid rivalry. It appears that it was in this context, of an ideologically charged war, that the need to explain Ghazan’s conversion to Islam as part of a providential plan had arisen. The arguments in the second Syrian letter offer a
compelling providential explanation for Ghazan’s conversion (and the preceding Mongol invasions), which might have been initially designed to gain the support of the Syrian populace. One of the main points stressed in both the narrative and the letters, is the need for complete compliance with Ghazan’s rule.

While drawing on the letter, however, the conversion narrative does not appear to be targeting critics of the Ilkhanid regime from outside the Ilkhanate, but rather to address the uncertainties of the Ilkhanid administrative and literary elite in Mongol service. Through its application of the “savior king” model, the narrative seeks to explain and justify their support and loyalty to the Mongol rulers, and thus alleviate some of the concerns about their close relationship with the Mongols.

Qāshānī’s narrative should be considered within its specific Persian literary and cultural milieu. In the Ilkhanate, viziers often served as literary and artistic patrons. There are indications that Qāshānī had attempted to, and seems to have been, at least for a while, successful in gaining the patronage of the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn. Qāshānī dedicated his treatise on gems and minerals, the ‘Arāʾis al-jawāhīr va-nafāʾis al-ṣaḥāʾib, which he originally composed in 700/1300-01, to the vizier (whom he highly praises in the preface to the work). Qāshānī, however, later rededicated the work to Rashīd al-Dīn’s rival, Tāj al-Dīn ʿAlīshāh, probably after the latter’s appointment as vizier in 711/1312.\(^{430}\) The rededication was probably linked to the Qāshānī’s tense relationship with Rashīd al-Dīn. Qāshānī claims that he was the real author of the Jāmiʿ ʿal-tawārīkh, which the vizier presented to Öljeitū on the fifth of Shawwāl 706 (/April 9 1307). Rashīd al-Dīn was generously rewarded for this work by the sultan and although he promised to appropriately

compensate Qāshānī for his labor (according to the latter at least), Qāshānī claims that he never saw a dime from this treasure.\footnote{\textit{Ta’rīkh-i ʿalāyatū}, 54-55; 240-41. In the second instance, Qāshānī refers to the work he authored as the \textit{dhayl-i Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh} (possibly the history of Ghazan or \textit{Zubdat al-tawārīkh}? Or perhaps to his \textit{Ta’rīkh-i ʿalāyatū} though there is no indication, as far as I know, that the vizier has access to this work). See Apendix I for further discussion of Qāshānī’s claim to have authored the \textit{Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh}.}

Situating Qāshānī as an author within the context of negotiations of patronage relationships at the Ilkhanid court sheds a different light on Qāshānī’s writing. Qāshānī’s conversion account of Ghazan, communicated via a didactic historical narrative heavily influenced by the literary genre of advice literature, and imbued with Sufi motifs, is compatible with the literary and intellectual tastes, sensibilities, and values of the cultural milieu of the Ilkhanid administrative and (civilian) governing ranks. Similar combinations to that of Qāshānī’s narrative are found in the works of other authors, equally or less skillful than Qāshānī, who sought to use these literary strategies and devices to secure patronage and positions, gain remuneration for their work, or advertise their credentials and skills, and more broadly, their cultural-literary “fluency”. Marlow argues that the fluidity of the genre of advice literature (within some literary constraints) allowed authors to tailor their work to certain ends, and negotiate relationships with current or potential patrons.\footnote{One Ilkhanid example for advice literature combined with Sufi tendencies is \textit{Minhāj al-wuzarāʾ wa-sirāj al-umārāʾ} (\textit{The Way of Viziers and the Lamp of Commanders}) of Ahmad al-Isfahbadhī. The \textit{Minhāj al-wuzarāʾ} was dedicated to the son of Rashīd al-Dīn, the Ilkhanid vizier Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad (d. 736/1336), who was an avid supporter of literary and artistic production and was also known for his strong interest in Sufism. One Ilkhanid author, indeed, addressed Ghiyāth al-Dīn as “the Sufi vizier.” Marlow suggests that \textit{Minhāj al-wuzarāʾ} belongs to a “derivative genre” of political advice literature, which was more-or-less comprised of compilations of carefully selected texts and was directed less by didactic impulses, and more by the authors’ intentions on securing employment. Louise Marlow, “The Way of the Viziers and the Lamp of Commanders (\textit{Minhāj al-wuzarāʾ wa-sirāj al-umārāʾ}) of Ahmad al-Isfahbadhī and the literary and political culture of early fourteenth-century Iran,” in \textit{Writers and Rulers: Perspectives on their Relationship from Abbasid to Safavid Times}, eds. B. Gruendler and L. Marlow (2004), 169-192; Marlow, “Teaching wisdom: a Persian work of advice for Atabeg Ahmad of Luristan,” in \textit{Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and the Theory of Statecraft}, ed., M. Boroujerdi (2013), 141.}

Didactic historical narratives appear to have had a special appeal or “market value” in thirteenth- and fourteenth-centuries Ilkhanid Iran where “the preservation and transmission of historical
knowledge and an appreciation of the instructiveness of the past flourished”. Marlow finds that “categories of historical narrative and moral counsel constitute less distinct genres than variants of a single literary continuum that served to define, consolidate, and perpetuate a distinct cultural-political elite”. Qāshānī’s conversion narrative of Ghazan and moreover, his explanation of the Mongol invasions and rule, on the basis of the advice literature model of the periodic savior king should be viewed as part of the broader trend of the cultural modes of production of the time that promoted a particular strand of cultural-ethical ideals and was primarily addressed at the intellectual and bureaucratic civilian Ilkhanid elite.

It is through this elite, rather than the Mongol governing elite, that Qāshānī sought to gain entry into the court milieu and enjoy its material advantages. Qāshānī’s conversion narrative with its convergence of different “salvific rhythms” and providential explanation of the Mongols’ invasions represents, thus, a specific-Ilkhanid cultural conceptualization of time, an understanding that is in-itself also historically contingent. One might, furthermore, suggest that through this specific temporal regime, Ghazan was also understood to be the “reviver” or “initiator” of a particular Perso-Islamic culture.

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433 Ibid., 134.
434 Ibid., 156. Melville further observes that whereas “in earlier times, works of ethical and practical advice, or ‘mirrors for princes,’ were mostly a separate branch of writing […] in the Mongol period the historians absorbed almost completely this overtly didactic role and presented, however implicitly and often seemingly with heavy irony a vision of ideal kingship”.
435 See for example, Marlow: “Artistic prose was appreciated as a kind of literary display that engaged its audience through its opposite citations, allusions, tropes, and metaphors and evoked pleasure by means of particular literary effects. In social and cultural terms, the production and appreciation of artistic prose was closely linked to the affirmation of a set of cultural ethical ideals and constituted a mark of belonging to the courtly elite”. Ibid., 136.
436 Marlow points out in particular to the combination of “moral instruction through historical narrative” and “the chancery style or artistic prose.” Ibid., 142.
437 See Bashir’s advocacy for “a “time-sensitive” rethinking” of historians’ approaches to Islamicate temporalities and historical narratives. “On Islamic time,” 519-544.
438 Consider, for example, Melville’s “History and myth: The Persianisation of Ghazan Khan.”
Monotheistic Kingship and Mongol Ancestral Belief: Rashīd al-Dīn’s Version

Unlike Qāshānī’s chancery prose style in Ghazan’s dastān (the “P” recension), which conforms to the artistic literary canons of the time, the later version of the chapter on Ghazan by Rashīd al-Dīn (“S” recension) offers the readers a more direct and less ornate presentation, though not entirely devoid of literary embellishments. One significant difference we find between the two versions is that Rashīd al-Dīn’s version uses far less Arabic. Furthermore, Rashīd al-Dīn’s version offers a narrative that is easier to follow, especially at points where Qāshānī’s account appears overburdened by excessive detail. One notes this in two important places in the conversion account: first, the rendition of Qāshānī’s two-stage conversion narrative into a one-stage process, and second, in the diminished role of the amir Nawrūz in the later conversion narrative, and the generally hostile attitude towards the amir.

In addition, while Rashīd al-Dīn’s version is more overall concise than the earlier recension, we find Rashīd al-Dīn adding details, in particular additional genealogical clarifications and amendments. One striking difference relates to the position of Ghazan’s wife Bulughān Khātūn, who was his father Arghun’s widow, in the list of the Ilkhan’s wives. We find the later iteration “correcting” Bulughān Khātūn’s position, “demoting” her from the Ilkhan’s chief wife to the position of wife number five. This change corresponds to the list of Ghazan’s wives in the Shuʿab-i Panjgānah, which seems to have been a later addition to the historical compendium of the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh. Bulughan Khātūn retained considerable power into the reign of Ghazan’s brother Öljeitū. She died in the month of Shaʿbān 709/January 1310, the same year for which we have the first mention of the Shuʿab-i Panjgānah as part of the Jāmiʿ al-

438 On the stylistic differences and other divergences between the two versions, see Appendix I. The Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh’s (“S” recension’s) “simpler” style might also account for the relative lack of interest in the work by later generations in comparison to other Ilkhanid histories such as Vaṣṣāf’s work. See Pfeiffer, “Canonization,” 69; Ron Sela, “Rashīd al-Dīn’s historiographical legacy in the Muslim world,” 213-222.

439 See Appendix II.
tawārīkh. Her changing status between the two recensions, therefore, might reflect the influential Khātūn’s demise.

I suggest in appendix II that these and other observations indicate that the “S” recension was not only a later version, but also that it reflects changes made after the work was presented at Öljeytū’s court, at which point corrections were offered. At this point, efforts were also made to make the work more accessible to the Mongol elite. Ghazan’s conversion narrative in the later version of Ghazan’s dastān agree with the broader aim of Rashīd al-Dīn’s oeuvre. As Pfeiffer notes, Rashīd al-Dīn’s historiographical, genealogical, philosophical and even medical writings exhibit a shared vision which promotes “cohabitation, integration, and indeed respect for the culture of his patrons”. 440

I argue that the reorientation of Ghazan’s conversion narrative in the later iteration indicates that the aim of the editor/author was not to impress his literary peers and potential patrons from amongst the administrative-intellectual ranks (which, as I suggested, Qāshānī’s narrative aims to do). Rather, it communicates a message to the Mongol elite of the Ilkhanate. The genealogical clarifications and amendments in this recension reflect a “Mongol audience.” Atwood urges us to “read Rashīd al-Dīn’s genealogical material as primarily a by-product of the need of the Mongol peerage to document their status” as “meritorious servants.” The meticulous observance of genealogical details in Rashīd al-Dīn’s writing reflects the social efforts of members of the non-Chinggisid Mongol elite to secure and legitimate their positions in the service of the Ilkhanid dynasty by tracing their lineage back to an ancestor who gained his status during the foundational moment of the empire. 441

440 Pfeiffer, “Canonization,” 63.
441 Atwood, “Mongols, Arabs, Kurds, and Franks,” 243-250. Atwood’s conclusion appears to align with one Shiraiwa’s suggestions, namely that one can discern in the later, “revised” iterations of the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī a number of passages “as oral traditions added to the main [presentation] text” and that these traditions
Although Rashīd al-Dīn’s conversion narrative references similar ideas about the cycles of decline and revival to that of Qāshānī’s account, the focus of the later conversion narrative is on the depiction of Ghazan’s inclination towards Islam and monotheism prior to his conversion.\textsuperscript{442} The presentation of Ghazan as an Abrahamic-monotheistic king in his conversion narrative is echoed throughout the \textit{Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh}. It is, moreover, aligned with the vizier’s broader project of presenting the Mongols as monotheists (\textit{muvahhidān}) prior to their conversion, and thus, their conversion to Islam as a natural progression.

I suggest that this notion of the Mongols ancestral monotheism was rooted in how the pro-Islamic party within the Ilkhanid ranks was “marketing” conversion to Islam among the Mongols as a form of reversion, return (rather than a radical departure from) to the belief of the “ancestors”.\textsuperscript{443} Atwood has shown that the Confucian party at the Yuan court employed a similar strategy. Considered along these lines, Ghazan’s conversion narrative should be viewed as a narrative designed to promote and encourage Mongol Islamization.

Pfeiffer observes the central role conversion narratives play in the structural aspects of the \textit{Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh}. Two conversion narratives frame his universal history: the conversion narrative of Oghuz Khan at the beginning and Ghazan’s towards its end.\textsuperscript{444} Several parallels are drawn between the two conversions in the \textit{Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh}. Both conversions of Oghuz and Ghazan initiate a top-down “mass conversion.” Furthermore, according to the conversion narrative of Oghuz in the \textit{Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh}, the Mongols are descendants of “some of the uncles touch on people other than Chinggis Khan and his direct ancestors” – implying a broadening of the genealogical framework of the work for the sake of other, not necessarily Chinggisid actors. Kazuhiko Shiraiwa, “Rashīd al-Dīn’s primary sources in compiling the \textit{Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh}: a tentative survey,” 49-51.

\textsuperscript{442} See also chapter one.


\textsuperscript{444} Pfeiffer, “Canonization,” 61-2.
and nephews” who opposed Oghuz and migrated east after Oghuz’s successful overthrow of his father and two uncles. These Mongol ancestors were infidels at first, but overtime became monotheists (muhahhid) together with their families (urğh). These kinship ties aside, Oghuz and Ghazan also share the notion of an innate monotheist conviction, which makes their conversion a “formal” affirmation of their natural, preordained disposition (a “non-conversion,” in other words).

In the Oghuz narrative in the Jami’ al-tawârikh, the newborn Oghuz refuses to consume his infidel mother’s breast milk. Only after she agrees in a dream to her son’s plea to secretly worship and love the one God, does Oghuz agree to feed once again. The Jami’ al-tawârikh’s choice of words gives the impression that the infant Oghuz was preaching a vague crypto monotheism, rather than a specific denominational and dogmatic identity. Ghazan’s conversion narrative starts with a description of the conversion as a preordained design. Ghazan is destined by God to realize the true reality of things through his divinely granted means of discrimination and faculties of contemplation. The narrative situates Ghazan’s conversion within a two-stage divine plan to eradicate the corruption and decay that took hold in the lands of Islam:

“Since divine favor and will necessitated that the lassitude and the weakness, which had invaded the borders of the Islamic nation through the vicissitudes of months and years and the succession of days and nights, should be rectified by one of his particular servants, who would take over the rule of towns and cities, and should be followed by an individual of kingly attributions, He made Ghazan Khan the happy recipient of the lights of guidance and divine inspiration (anvâr-i hidayat va-ilhâm-i rabbâni).”

This two-stage schema, according to which, corruption and weakness in the Muslim world are eradicated by a world conqueror followed by a Muslim convert king, also echoes an earlier

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446 Titled: “The expansion of the blessed breast of the Pâdshâh of Islam Ghazan Khân by the light of faith and the profession of faith by him and the amirs in the presence of the Shaykh Šadr al-Dîn Ḥâmmûya Juwaynî.” Rashâd al-Dîn/Rawshan, 1253-56; Rashâd al-Dîn/Thackston, 619-622.
passage in the opening paragraph to the section of Chinggis Khan’s biography in the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ:

[...] Since with the passage of eons all things must fall into lassitude and with the turning of days and nights nations and realms must fall into ruin, in every epoch (garni) a great and mighty (azīm shavkat) lord of auspicious conjunction (ṣāhib qirānī) is singled out by heavenly assistance (makhṣūs bi-ta’yīd-i asmānī) and garbed in a raiment of power in order to do away with that lassitude (khalal) and degeneration and [...] to lay anew the foundation and base, to cleanse the field of realms [...] of the defilement of all types and sorts of evil and self-serving men, and to cause the dust of sedition (fitna) and corruption to settle.\(^{448}\)

Since “the bonds of the orderly rule (jihāndārī) had been damaged by strife and discord (takhāluf),” Rashīd al-Dīn continues, eternal wisdom necessitated the world domination of the mighty warrior Chinggis Khan. By superior force, remarkable near-supernatural feats, and extensive bloodshed, he subjects all. Chinggis, then, takes on the role of the lawgiver and establishes, arranges and codifies a new foundation of law, the imperial yāsāq (law) and yūsūn

\(^{447}\) For Chinggis Khan as a world-conqueror Şahīb-Qirān, see for example, Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, vol. 1, 222; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 1, 116. I discuss at the length the Ilkhanid use of the title of Şahīb-Qirān in chapters two and four.

\(^{448}\) Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, vol. 1, 287-90; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 1, 141-2. It is significant that Rashīd al-Dīn speaks of Chinggis Khan’s military might in terms of shavkat, raw power. The eleventh-century al-Ghazālī uses the notion of the Central Asian Turks’ shavkat/shawka, unparalleled brute and raw force, to explain the need for the Saljūqs’ protection of the Caliphate and ultimately to legitimize Saljūq dominance. Sāfī, Politics of Knowledge, 112, 121; Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, Ḩudūd il-bāṭīniyya, edited by Ḥabīb al-Rāḥmān Badawī (Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmiyya, 1383/1964), 182-4. Rashīd al-Dīn is, thus, situating the Chinggisids within a historical pattern of Turkish-Central Asian dynasties ruling the heartland of the eastern Islamic world. Interestingly, depicting in his geographical section on Europe (mamālik ‘ubād al-salīb) in his encyclopedic Masālik al-ḥabsī ʿīf mamālik al-amsār (Routes toward insight into the capital empires) the German emperor, the Mamlik secretary and author Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī (d. 749/1349) notes that the German emperor is the most powerful among the European kings in terms of military force/value on the battle field (shawka) but also assigned to him the idea of the “circle of justice”: “In spite of his great oppression and his perpetuation to such a degree that it is as if he will never die, he surrounds his subjects with justice and charitable/good actions and stops any person tyrannizing them, even if they are his deputies and his armies [kunūdīhi wa-ʿasākirīhi] and soldiers and all groups of people; and none of them is able to oppress one of his subjects [...] and they [the subjects] are with him in the convenience of protection and justice [...] and with this, their property became numerous and their possessions became abundant and their riches became plenty and their lands were built and their enemies were conquered and their lives became good [...]”. Thus, as with Chinggis Khan, the German emperor combines raw (magical and evincible) force and (raw) just rule suggesting that the two might have been intrinsically linked in the minds of some Muslim authors. Curiously, al-ʿUmarī also describes the Germans as “the Tatars of the Franks for their large numbers and their great courage and their preference to hard conditions and their endurance.” Published as a separate section with translation to Italian by M. Amari (ed. and trans.), “Condizioni degli Stati cristiani dell’Occidente secondo una relazione di Domenichino Doria da Genova,” Atti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Ser. 3, vol. 11 (Rome, 1883), 67-103. This section is also found in a facsimile of the Süleymaniye (İstanbul) manuscript: Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad, Masālik al-ḥabsī ʿīf mamālik al-amsār, ed. Fuad Sezgin (Frankfurt, 1988), vol. 2, 112-23.
(custom), and promotes the practice of justice towards the subjects and the reinforcement of social order so that “the gates of beneficence and reward be opened to all classes of people.” Chinggis Khan is conceived here as “Stranger-King,” who by brutal force and semi-magical power trumps the claims of autochthonous rulers (the caliphate), but after his conquest, redirects this power towards revitalizing the society and restoring justice and order.

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, God’s salvific plan does not end with the strange conqueror, but continues with the conversion to Islam of his descendant Ghazan, whom the vizier describes as the Pādshāh-i islām (king of Islam) and Shahanshāh-i anām (emperor of mankind), the shadow of God. A Muslim convert, Ghazan is presented as the cosmocrator ruler, the cultivated Perso-Islamic civilizer, who converts and eliminates the polytheists and all forms of tyranny and injustice. Rashīd al-Dīn offers a concise salvation narrative modeled on a Stranger-King structure in which the yasa is construed as an intermediary stage in a divine plan towards the re-implementation of the sharī‘a. Rashīd al-Dīn’s introduction to the life of Chinggis Khan presents the Ilkhans as exceptional insider-outsider rulers. Furthermore, this narrative is compatible with

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449 Marshal Sahlins has identified as the “universal cultural blueprint” of the Stranger-Kingship to express both the Ilkhans’ autochthonous claims to Irano-Islamic authority and their commitment to Chinggisid legitimation. Sahlins identified a recurring cultural pattern in a remarkable number of societies, in which a barbaric outsider overtakes the kingdom with brutal force, violence and magic, and is subsequently domesticized, socialized and transformed from the terrible to the benefactor. From dominating the local, the Stranger-King’s foreign force turns outwards, towards the protection and expansion of the kingdom; his brutality is deployed towards order, prosperity and justice; and his sacredness and out-worldliness recharge and revitalize the kingdom. A “synthesis between the complementary opposites,” Stranger-King politics offer “a total structure of reproduction” in which the “acquisition of alterity is the condition of both fertility and identity.” Marshall Sahlins, “The Stranger-King or, elementary forms of the politics of life,” Indonesia and the Malay World 36/105 (2009): 178. Ian Caldwell and David Henley, “Introduction: the stranger who would be king: magic, logic, polemic,” Indonesia and the Malay World 36/105 (2009): 165. Alexander/Iskandar is the stranger-king, the insider-outsider par excellence. Mancini-Lander, 239-241.

450 Sahlins envisions the culmination of Stranger-Kingship in cosmocrator rulers, who “synthesize the ontological and theological dualisms that mark stranger-king polities to produce a distinctive system of totalized and centralized rule.” Sahlins, 185. Discussing kingship narratives in the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms of Southwest China, Yongjia argues for a structural distinction between Sahlins’ extra-social stranger-king and the supra-social cosmocrator: “Contrary to the kin-killing incestuous stranger-king, these enfeoffing kings or Cakravartin Kings [the cosmocrators] were presented as morally superior and universal. These kings also represented a form of cosmological centring of power instead of the power derived from an outsider from another territory.” Yongjia, “Stranger-kingship and cosmocracy,” 236-54.
the Mongols’ own political theology of Chinggis Khan’s divine right. This penitential-providential explanation is imbued with a cyclical understanding of time as composed of recurring cycles of decay and rejuvenation, similar to that explored earlier for Qāshānī’s narrative.

Returning to Ghazan’s conversion narrative, Rashīd al-Dīn, next, transitions into what becomes the main focus of the conversion account, that is, Ghazan’s Abrahamic mission. The author begins with a description of Ghazan’s childhood, when his grandfather Abaqa entrusted Ghazan’s education to several great Buddhist monks (bakhshī-yi buzurg). Within a short time, Ghazan masters their teachings to perfection. Ghazan, however, “gazed into the secrets of idolatry and contemplated the truth of various religions and communities (adyān va-milal)” and through “the rays of the lights of the Muḥammadan religion,” was inclined toward the nation of God/truth (millat-i ḥaqq). Nevertheless, Ghazan fervently continues on the Buddhist path (ṭarīqa) and builds lofty idol-temples in Khurasan.\footnote{That Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative gives such prominence to the Ilkhan’s Buddhist training and patronage of Buddhism is another indication of the important Aqaqaid-dynastic dimension of the support of Buddhism.} The narrative, then, proceeds to Ghazan’s struggle with Baidu, Nawrūz’s proposal to Ghazan to convert, and Ghazan’s positive response, which is followed by Nawrūz’s presentation of the ruby.

Rashīd al-Dīn’s version presents a more hostile attitude toward the amir Nawrūz.\footnote{Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative “skips” over the lengthy, lauding, and nearly heroic depiction of Nawrūz as he is faced at Baidu’s camp with dangers and overcomes with insightful deceit his ill-wishers (and thus, redeems himself from his earlier “crimes” of disloyalty towards his benefactor Ghazan), which we find in the earlier recension/Qāshānī’s account. Instead, he briefly summarizes it and depicts this episode in negative light, as Nawrūz’s failure to fulfill his promise to Ghazan to hand him Baidu’s head. Furthermore, it notes that Ghazan was about to rebuke the amir for his return without results, just as Nawrūz decided to raise before the prince the issue of his conversion. See also Appendix I.} He limits the amir Nawrūz’s role in the conversion shifting the “spotlight” to Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the shaykh was not only present at that moment in Ghazan’s camp, which according to Ḥammūya’s own account, was due to the efforts of Nawrūz,
but was, in fact, usually in the attendance on the prince Ghazan, who would inquire with him about the religion of Islam. Shaykh Šadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya, thus, is positioned in the later narrative as the main agent in Ghazan’s conversion (apart from the Ilkhan himself).

Closely following Qāshānī’s conversion narrative, Ghazan, who is guided by the light of the faith, carries out a speech in which he criticizes adultery and idol-worship for their foolishness, inefficiency, and lack of reason (“for a rational person to place his head down before an inanimate object is utter ignorance and stupidity”), and praises Islam as “very strong and obvious (matīn va-mubīn).” Announcing his commitment to reject polytheism, Ghazan pronounces together with all the amirs the profession of faith (kalimah-yi tavhīd) at the presence of the shaykh. Subsequently, he celebrates his conversion with a banquet, devotional acts, granting gifts to the sayyids and shaykhs, building mosques, and fasting in Ramadan. Unlike Qāshānī’s account which ends with a declaration of the requirement to comply with Ghazan’s authority as the ūlī al-amr-i ‘ahd, Rashīd al-Dīn ends his conversion narrative with a reaffirmation of the sincerity (ikhlāṣ) of Ghazan’s conversion claiming that “with all his greatness and might (shavkat), compulsion (ijbār) in his conversion cannot be conceived.”

The departures from Qāshānī’s earlier narrative suggest how Rashīd al-Dīn re-crafted Ghazan’s conversion narrative to meet his agenda. First, the vizier lifts the “ruby episode” (Nawrūz’s first suggestion to the Ilkhan) and relocates it to the (later) conversion narrative, creating a more effective one-stage conversion narrative.453 Nawrūz’s role in the conversion is, thus, significantly curtailed. Rashīd al-Dīn, furthermore, expands and elaborates a brief paragraph in Qāshānī’s account concerning Ghazan’s early Buddhist training, repositioning it as the crux of the conversion account. It, thus, throws into greater relief the polemical function of

453 This, however, also leaves in the text visible fault lines of the “copy-and-paste” process.
Ghazan’s conversion narrative as it situates Buddhism (and polytheism more generally) as the main obstacle for the conversion of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate. Another significant departure from Qāshānī’s narrative is the elaboration on Ghazan’s pre-conversion inquiry into the various religions and his internalized, unaided (at least not by human agency) arrival at the truth of the Muslim belief.

This depiction of Ghazan the monotheist is, furthermore, interlinked to his presentation as a “Mongol Abraham” in the introduction to the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī. Ghazan, who “like Abraham, God’s friend, sought to be free from the infidels, with his own hand he smashed the idols and he completely blocked the way to infidelity and polytheism […] therefore, they broke [by his order] the idols and tore down the idol-temples, building mosques and houses of worship in their places”.454 The comparison of Ghazan to the idol-smashing monotheist (muvahhid) Abraham is, moreover, situated within a broader historical narrative that aligns Ghazan with Abraham and Muḥammad. This section starts with a discussion of Abraham, who “alone among all his polytheistic and idolatrous kith and kin became a monotheist worshipper of God.” Abraham becomes the father of nations and according to the narrative, charges his children with the task of keeping a record of their genealogical tree (shajarah-yi nasal-i avlād) generation after generation and forbids them from intermarrying with other nations.455 Since they maintained this custom, the narrative argues, it is clear that since “the time Abraham’s sons began to beget and multiply […] all the prophets, kings, and elite of religions and nations have been – and will be until the Day of Resurrection – of his progeny.” Alluding, hence, to the

454 Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 29; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 16.
455 Compare with Rashīd al-Dīn’s claim that “it is a Mongolian custom to preserve one’s relationship to one’s father and forefathers, and every child born is taught and inculcated with his genealogy [nasab] like all others in that nation […] peoples [aqwām] other than the Mongols do not have such a custom – except for the Arabs, who also keep their genealogy.” Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 1, 113; Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, vol. 1, 215. See discussion of this passage in Atwood, “Rashīd al-Dīn’s comparative ethnography,” 231ff.
argument that the Chinggisids/Mongols, too, were members of the Abrahamic clan, the narrative continues with the noblest of Abraham’s descendants, Muḥammad, whom God sent with the promise that all “would follow his religion.” Moreover, in Rashīd al-Dīn’s account, the three “avatars,” Abraham, Muḥammad and Ghazan, are all rallied against the same familiar enemy, which the vizier identifies as Buddhism.\(^{456}\)

The narrative, then, echoes the providential narrative found at the start of the Syrian letter discussed at length earlier in the chapter. In every age, when controversy befalls the people of Islam and the Muslim go astray from the right path, it is divine will that they be chastised and punished (\(ta’dīb\)) and that, “the foundation of the work of the Muslims be renewed.” Thus, the Mongols enter into this salvific plan. It was preordained that “the chastisement (\(ta’dīb\)) of the Islamic peoples would be at the hand of a nation (\(ṭā’ifa\)) that would be monotheistic (\(muvahhīd\)) and God-fearing, not polytheistic or the enemies of the religion.” Furthermore, divine will’s intention was that “through the might (\(shavkat\)) of these terrifying peoples,” the community of Islam would be strengthened, and that “through the blessing of an innate disposition to monotheism (\(tavhīd-i jibillī\)),” they would convert and make all comply with God’s commandments. At this point, Islam would spread and be firmly rooted. The author considers as proof the rise of Chinggis Khan’s descendants and their joint world dominium. The cycle of decay, chastisement, and restoration is completed by the Ilkhan Ghazan, who after his conversion “caused all his soldiers, some of whom were Mongol monotheists and others of whom were idolatrous […] to convert to Islam.” We witness in this narrative not only the expansion of

\(^{456}\) Thus, it is not only Ghazan who set out to demolish their statues of the Buddha, but the Prophet Muḥammad as well. See chapter two: in his *Life and Teachings of the Buddha*, Rashīd al-Dīn writes that “before the acceptance of Islam, the inhabitants of Mecca and Medina along with some of the Arabs and Persians were Buddhists (\(^{\prime}alā dīn Shākamīnī\)) and that in the Ka’ba they had worshipped idols resembling the Buddha, which Muḥammad had then ordered to be destroyed.” Quoted by Akasoy, “The Buddha,” 187
Abrahamic genealogy to include the Mongols, but also the aligning of Ghazan with other monotheist founders such as Oghuz Khan.

Peter Jackson has compared Rashīd al-Dīn’s approach to the Mongols’ traditional beliefs to the approach of the earlier historian ʿAṭā-malik Juwaynī. Unlike Rashīd al-Dīn, he refrains from describing Chinggis Khan or the Mongols as worshipers of the one God revered in Islam, though he does depict the Mongols as the instrument of divine fury and agents of God’s scourge. While the Mongols believed in eternal tenggeri (heaven, sky), they also revered a host of supernatural beings in an elaborate system of domestic rites. Jackson suggests that Rashīd al-Dīn’s unfounded distinction between the “monotheistic” Mongols and other idol worshiping nations such as the Uighurs reflects “the means whereby the newly-converted Mongols sought to reconcile Islam with the cultic beliefs of their forebears […] a continuation of the old syncretistic and pluralistic attitudes”. I argue that Rashīd al-Dīn’s depiction of a Mongol “ancestral monotheism” and his explanation of Ghazan’s conversion as deriving from innate monotheistic proclivities reflect the strategy employed by the “pro-Muslim party” within the Mongol elite of the Ilkhanate in order to propagate conversion to Islam and explain their own conversion in favorable terms.

Another case of monotheistic reversion is found in Rashīd al-Dīn’s account of Qubilai’s grandson, the Muslim convert and ruler of the province of Anxi, prince Ananda (d. 1307). In

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457 For the expansion of the Islamic cosmos through genealogy in Rashīd al-Dīn’s works and the integration of the Mongols into the Abrahamic family tree (and the Muslim eschatological tradition) by linking them to Abraham’s wife/concubine Keturah, Pfeiffer, “Faces like shields,” 557-594.  
458 Jackson, “Mongol Ilkhans and religious allegiance,” 111-114.  
459 Ibid., 118.  
460 As discussed in chapter two, reversion was one of the means by which the “Confucian party” in Yuan China explained their conversion to and patronage of Confucianism, which were viewed not in terms of “conversion to foreign, Chinese Confucianism, but ‘reversion’ to the basic traditions of the [Mongol] empire’s founder, recast, of course, as congruent with Confucian political and ritual principles.” Atwood, “Explaining rituals,” 95-100.  
the *Jāmi` al-tawārīkh*, Ananda was given in childhood to a Muslim man from Turkistan for his education. The man’s Muslim wife, Zulaykha, was also Ananda’s wet-nurse, and “therefore, Islam took firm root in his heart” (echoing Oghuz’s refusal to suckle on his mother’s breast until she “converts”). Ananda is portrayed as a devout Muslim, who converts to Islam a hundred and fifty thousand Mongol soldiers. However, Sartaq, one of his commanders and an opponent (*munkir*) of the Muslims, complains to the Qa’an Temür Öljéitü that Ananda spends his time worshiping and studying in the mosque and has circumcised the Mongol children and converted his men. Temür Öljéitü forbids Ananda from worshiping and urges him to bow down to the idols. Ananda declines, giving a speech, not too different from that Ghazan carries out in his conversion narrative, as to the senselessness of idol veneration and polytheism. He is, subsequently, imprisoned at the Qa’an’s orders.

In spite of these afflictions, Ananda remains steadfast in his convictions insisting that: “our fathers (*pidarān-i mā*) were all monotheists; they considered God to be one and worshiped him. It was due to that right belief/good doctrine/orthodoxy (*barakat-i ān nīkū'i tiqād*) that the Ancient God (*khudā-yi qadīm*) rewarded them with the entire face of the earth and made them kings and leaders of the human beings […] they never bowed before an idol.” Summoned before Temür Öljéitü, Ananda refuses to acknowledge that he was guided to Islam by a demon and refers to the Ilkhan Ghazan’s conversion as proof of God’s agency in Ananda’s own conversion. In consideration of Ananda’s great support among the ranks of the Muslims of the Tangut region, Temür Öljéitü releases the prince and awards him the land of Tangut. Ananda follows the example of Ghazan in going to great lengths to propagate Islam and the commander Sartaq, who once opposed the Muslim belief, converts as well.\(^\text{462}\) Ananda’s figure functions in the *Jāmi` al-

tawārīkh’s narrative as an avatar of Ghazan. He reaffirms the sincerity of Ghazan’s conversion, as well as the seniority of the convert Ilkhan in Islam. Ghazan’s fame is depicted as instrumental in Ananda’s consolidation of Islam in the Tangut region.

Faced by the Qa’an’s opposition to his adoption and propagation of Islam, Ananda chooses to argue that it is he, and not the Qa’an, who remained loyal to Mongol “ancestral beliefs”: the Mongol ancestors were always monotheists (muvahhid); moreover, they received the right to rule the earth on account of their correct, monotheist convictions. Rashīd al-Dīn makes Heaven’s blessing to Chinggis Khan and his offspring contingent on Mongol monotheism equating Eternal Heaven and Allāh. Ananda is employing in this account similar measures to that employed by the “Confucian party” at Qubilai’s court. Reversion is employed as a meaningful way of claiming authority in conversion. Ananda’s speech, furthermore, conflates the Chinggisids’ monotheistic ancestral belief with the notion of nīkū iʾtiqād (good-doctrine, right faith, orthodoxy), and the baraka granted to Chinggis Khan and his descendants. Omid Safi discusses how historians of the Saljūq dynasty depicted the Saljūqs as possessing “orthodoxy” in “a dual process of legitimizing irresistible power by empowering orthodox knowledge”.463

Lurking behind such claims of “right faith” in the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh is Rashīd al-Dīn’s Abaqaid dynastic project. In chapter one, I have shown how Rashīd al-Dīn attempted to create a “monotheist” dynasty to match a lineal succession pattern extending from Chinggis Khan to Ghazan. Monotheism and nīkū iʾtiqād function as strategic discourses in charting a clear dynastic line of succession. Rashīd al-Dīn, furthermore, equates orthodoxy with the legitimate sovereignty of Ghazan, and heresy with illegitimate, Hülegüid dynastic usurpation.464

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464 See chapter one.
Conclusion: The Abrahamic Khan

The re-aligning of Ghazan’s conversion narrative with its “new” focus on Ghazan’s innate predisposition towards monotheism does not only reduce the agency of others (aside from God) in Ghazan’s conversion, but also situates Ghazan at the juncture of two overlapping genealogical chains: on the one hand, a Chinggisid-Toluid-Abaqaid linear dynastic succession line, and on the other, a monotheistic chain binding together Abraham, Muḥammad and Ghazan (and Oghuz). Ghazan’s place in this successive monotheistic line is furthermore established via his “consanguineal” relationship with Abraham. Rashīd al-Dīn states that “all the prophets, kings, and elite of religions and nations have been – and will be until the Day of Resurrection – of his [Abraham’s] progeny.” Monotheistic-Abrahamic time, with its salvific linearity, genealogical perspective, and centralizing vision (one god = one king), is utilized by Rashīd al-Dīn in an attempt to resolve some of Ghazan’s dynastic challenges and reinforce his (and his brother’s) claim to descent-based legitimation. However, the main protagonist against whom Ghazan is positioned is neither his dynastic opposition (Baidu) nor the Muslim heretics. Rather, it is Buddhism and the Buddhist monks who are envisioned as the main hindrance to Ghazan’s true conversion, and against whom Ghazan unleashes his monotheistic zeal. In the next chapter, I examine Rashīd al-Dīn’s theological writings and anti-Buddhist polemics to show how the vizier competes with the Buddhist cultural brokers by grounding his patron Öljaitū’s Chinggisid sovereignty in a kalām-theological foundation.

I started this chapter with Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī’s paragraph on Ghazan’s initiation of the Khānī calendar in 701/1302. For Qazwīnī, Ghazan’s Khānī era and rule marked a

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465 It is worth entertaining here al-Azmeh’s observation as to the polemical context of “polytheism” and idol-worshiping: “the notion of polytheism itself appears as a polemical notion arising from monotheistic self-definition, and is of doubtful systematic and analytical value.” Aziz al-Azmeh, “Monotheistic monarchy,” in The Times of History: Universal Topics in Islamic Historiography (Budapest, 2007), 271.
temporal-geographical unification of a mythic īrān zamīn under a single autocratic ruler. Rashīd al-Dīn’s message of Mongol monotheistic kingship too lends itself to a similar autocratic universalism. Aziz Al-Azmeh argues that late antique monotheistic kingship, within which he also includes Muslim kingship and the caliphate, granted the ruler “a charter for imperial autocracy” on the basis that “the existence of one Caesar on earth corresponded to the dominion in heaven of only one Lord”. One might suggest that Rashīd al-Dīn’s presentation of Ghazan as a monotheistic king also offered a venue for dynastic centralization, and the consolidation of Ilkhanid authority at the hands of Ghazan.

466 Aziz al-Azmeh argues that “sacral kingship, in its variety of forms and representations one of which is monotheistic kingship, might in anthropological terms be regarded an Elementary Form of socio-political life […] in which sovereign and deity are related by manners and degrees of identification and mimesis”. Ibid., 281; Muslim Kingship, 31. Monotheistic kingship is furthermore a “form of artificial sociality” where the caliph-king imposes culture and order and maintains this order by force. According to this view, “kingship and prophecy – are the corrective” of man’s insubordinate and evil qualities and the caliph-Muslim king, “the demiurge of sociality,” is the civilizer who stands above and beyond his civilized subjects: he is “the untamable tamer and the savage domesticator, continuously exercising the corrective primal violence”. Al-Azmeh, “Monotheistic monarchy,” 283. The monotheistic king’s relationship with the society that he rules, is one of an insider-outsider, a stranger-king, or rather his more domesticated version, the cosmocrator ruler, which Sahlin discusses.
Chapter IV: The Words of the Kings are the Kings of Words: Rashīd al-Dīn’s Muḥammad-Centered Kingship and His Refutation of Reincarnation

The sign of this prince [the Ṣāḥib-Qirān prince] is that the acts that appear from him [during childhood] are in the level of the signs that some of the prophets exhibited during their childhood, until revelation gradually (bi-tadrīj) reached them and they became [adult] prophets. For example, Ibrāhīm, peace be upon him, who also perceived during his childhood the falseness of the belief of his father and his people […] and Yūsuf, peace be upon him, who at the beginning when he was still a child had a dream, and he told it to his father, and his father interpreted it and said: do not tell your brothers […] and the states (ahvāl) of the Seal of the Prophets [Muḥammad], prayers be upon him, from whom they witnessed miraculous things at the beginning [of his path] and during his childhood […]

At the time of his [Öljeitū’s] blessed birth, this weak slave [Rashīd al-Dīn, the author] was in attendance of state (davlat) dignitaries. Since his blessed birth took place in the desert between Marv and Sarakhs, there was no water at all nearby, and two months of spring had passed by with no rain. There was a long drought, and people gave up hope from the lack of rain. At the moment of his birth at that desert […] a great cloud suddenly appeared and it rained so hard that the entire desert filled with water and canals of water appeared. So much water came down on the ordu and tents that the carpet spreaders [farrāshān] collected all the woolen carpets (zīlūhā) and piled them up and spread their possessions on them. Until _____ [incomplete, Öljeitū] came to the world in a blessing and fortunate horoscope, they sat on them and took a firm hold while the water gathered beneath them. Since it is the custom [to wait] until everything calms down, they camped there […] an endless amount of fodder appeared there, and since everyone witnessed the wonder, the blessing, and the joy in the blessed arrival of _____ [Öljeitū], they all together praised and extolled him […] wherever his blessed feet reached, there appeared an ample of fodder, greens and sweet basil, and in truth, they said that his auspicious name should be blessed feet and for that reason, he was named _____ [Öljeitū].

467 From Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya in Rashīd al-Dīn, Mukhaṣar-i tavārīkh-i Rashīdiyya, Istanbul Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi Ms. 3415, ff. 119v-122r. The scribe seems to have left room in the manuscript for Öljeitū’s name to be filled in later, probably in gold, which was not carried on. We are, thus, left with blank spaces whenever Öljeitū’s name is mentioned. In Mongolian, Öljeitū means auspicious/blessed (the possessor of good fortune/blessing, Öljei). Gerhard Doerfer, Türkisch und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen, 1 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1963), 174. A very similar account is found in Qashqānī’s Ta rīkh-i Úljāytū, 16. In fact, it is clear that Qashqānī had access to Rashīd al-Dīn’s Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya and used its preface for his history. For example, Qashqānī’s description of Öljeitū’s feats (manāqib) follow closely, though with stylistic differences, Rashīd al-Dīn’s parallel accounts in Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya. Ta rīkh-i Üljāytū, 227ff.
In the above quoted passage from Rashīd al-Dīn’s introduction (fātiḥa) to his Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya (The Book of the Sultan, penned in 706/March 141307), the Ilkhanid vizier sets the Ilkhan Öljeitū’s miraculous birth story alongside the childhood miracles of the prophets, reading it as a sign of his future position as a member of an exceptional rank of absolute kings (muṭlaq pādishâhân), and Şâhib-Qirâns, Lords of Auspicious Conjunction. In this chapter, I examine Rashīd al-Dīn’s formulation of Öljeitū’s sacred persona in his theological compendia. I argue that the vizier experiments with Islamic paradigms to express and redefine his patron’s Chinggisid sacral kingship, in particular, the notion of the Mongol ruler as heir to Chinggis Khan’s gift of intuited knowledge and direct link to Heaven/God.

I explored how Saʿd al-Dawla, the Jewish vizier of the Ilkhan Arghun, used in his māḥdar (manifesto) the distinction between the two ranks of lawgivers and world regulator-absolute kings in Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s (d. 1274) Akhlāq-i nāṣirī (The Nasirean Ethics) as a political model that would be compatible with the Mongol understanding of the ruler “as an intuitive font of wisdom and law,” who can independently legislate and interpret any scriptural tradition.468 Similar to Saʿd al-Dawla’s establishment of Arghun’s sovereignty on the basis of Ṭūsī’s akhlāq-ethical paradigm, Rashīd al-Dīn provides Öljeitū’s Chinggisid authority with a kalām-theological foundation. I examine how Rashīd al-Dīn introduced a new rank of exceptional kingship into the twelfth century influential Ashʿarite theologian, exegetist and philosopher Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s (d. 606/1210) hierarchy of human perfection. I show how the vizier ingeniously positioned the souls of his Chinggisid patrons alongside the sacred perfect souls of the ranks of the saints and the prophets using al-Rāzī’s theoretical scheme.

468 See chapter two.
Rashīd al-Dīn presents the Ilkhan Öljeitū as a perfect king and a luminous soul, through whom divine wisdom reaches his subjects. Öljeitū has likewise the ability to perfect the souls of others, a particular attribute of the prophets in al-Rāzī’s thought. Rashīd al-Dīn, furthermore, constructs Öljeitū’s exceptional kingship as a reflection of Muḥammad’s exceptional prophethood. He establishes Öljeitū’s supreme position within a hierarchical system of kingship that parallels the Prophet’s position as the Seal of Prophethood in a hierarchy of human intellectual and moral perfection. I argue that Rashīd al-Dīn appropriates al-Rāzī’s theory of human perfection, which “reconciled ancient and Islamic philosophical ideas about the soul’s perfection with Sunni ideas about prophetic guidance”. 469 He experiments with a novel political model, a Muḥammad-centered kingship, 470 through which the vizier mediates between Islamic revelation and sources of authority, and the Mongols’ understanding of the Chinggisids’ exceptionality as untutored prodigies, in possession of a direct channel to the Heavens. By expanding al-Rāzī’s theological model to entertain a rank of absolute kingship that mirrors al-Rāzī’s rank of absolute perfect prophethood, and assigning this new rank of Muḥammadan kingship to the Ilkhan Öljeitū, Rashīd al-Dīn both “theologizes” kingship in Islam, and reconstructs Öljeitū’s Chinggisid sovereignty as distinctively Muslim.

In his theological writing, Rashīd al-Dīn uses al-Rāzī’s theory of the perfect soul of the Prophet Muḥammad as a design for a new type of sacralized intellectual kingship. Rashīd al-Dīn appropriates key concepts from al-Rāzī’s thought to present Öljeitū as a radiant soul, a recipient

470 While drawing such a comparison is not without its challenges, there is something to be said about parallels between the vizier’s theological-grounded Muḥammad-centered model of kingship and the early Christian model of monarchy as “Christ-centered kingship.” Ernst Kantorowicz identified in the late medieval period a transition from a “more christocrati-liturgical concept of kingship” to “a more theocratic-juristical idea of government” (93). It seems to me that this later idea already existed in the Islamicate world in the Persian akhlāq-ethical paradigm of government and that, in contrast to the “evolutionary change” Kantorowicz identifies here, Rashīd al-Dīn’s innovation lies in the creation of a theological foundation for kingship, and thus, a novel Islamic political theology. Ernst H. Kantorowicz, The King’s Two Bodies: a study in mediaeval political theology (New Jersey, 1957), 42-93.
of divine inspiration, an individual in possession of a superior intellect, that enables the Ilkhan, without the need for previous learning or even literacy, to gain intuitive knowledge/revelation that is unattainable to others, but nevertheless, adheres and espouses the essential truths of Islamic theological convictions. This vision of Öljeytü directly corresponds with the understanding of the Chinggisid ruler as gifted by Heaven’s blessing with a form of intuitive knowledge and reason. In Rashīd al-Dīn’s works, both Islamic theological concepts and Chinggisid conceptualizations undergo a process of cultural translation and mutual refashioning.

Thus, while the vizier endeavors to elaborate a theological foundation for a new category of Islamic sacral kingship for his Mongol patrons, he also strives to restrict the scope of his patron’s claim to sanctified authority by delineating, through his discussion of Muḥammad’s prophethood, the boundaries of this new category of kingship. In spite of Rashīd al-Dīn’s extravagant presentation of this novel rank, Öljeytü’s new role as a Chinggisid-Muslim sacred king can only be seen as a demotion from the earlier Chinggisid model of unmediated authority. It sets with Muḥammad’s prophethood a clear limit to the Ilkhan’s authority and power. In Rashīd al-Dīn’s “prophetology,” Öljeytü’s unmediated channel to the divine can only be second to Muḥammad’s mediated revelation and link with God. Rashīd al-Dīn’s work as a cultural broker is also about demarcating and establishment of clear boundaries, as much as it is about transgressing earlier theological and political borders. His mediation of Chinggisid kingship must also be understood as part of the vizier’s larger project of converting the Mongols through reversion.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁷¹ See chapter three.
Rashīd al-Dīn fuses together the Chinggisid claim to a superior intellect and an “intuited wisdom”, with the efforts of al-Rāzī and his predecessors from the tradition of the Ash’ārite mutakallimūn to demonstrate the congruency of scripture and transmitted knowledge (naqîl) with reason (ʻaql). In Rashīd al-Dīn’s theological writings, Ŭljeitū is presented as the chief advocate for reason (ʻaql) and rationally-based knowledge, and by extension, for kalām as well, and

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472 Atwood, forthcoming.

473 For example, Rashīd al-Dīn, Bayān al-baqāʾ Ĩq, ed. Ḥāshim Ṣayyibī (Tehran, 1386/[2008]), 87.

474 I follow here Sabra’s definition of 14th-century, post-Rāzī kalām as “an argumentative approach to religion which sought, through discussion and discursive thought, to interpret and transform the content of the Islamic revelation into a rationally-based doctrine” (11). Kalām developed in the context of intense intra- and inter-religious controversies; yet, Sabra demonstrates that kalām was more than a mere “intellectual pursuit,” but that it conceived itself as “a genuine knowledge”: “All Kalām, whether that of the Muʿtazila or the later, ‘orthodox,’ Ash’ārites, declares itself against the passive by the name of taqlīd (the imitation or unquestioning following of authority), and which it seeks, expressly and as a matter of principle, to replace by a state of knowledge (ilm) rooted in reason (ʿaql).” The most important problem faced by the mutakallimūn is how to reconcile “its claim to be a rational inquiry with its ultimate concern with revealed truth.” According to Sabra, by the 14th century, the mutakallimūn conceived themselves as victors in their arguments with the philosophers and they sought to incorporate falsafa and the sciences (e.g., astronomy). Sabra references in this regard the work of the Ash’ārite mutakallim ʿAṭūd al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 1355) as the fullest expression of kalām’s ontological self-appreciation. In his influential work on kalām, the Kitāb al-Mawāqif fī ʿilm al-kalām (composed 1330), al-Ījī states: “the questions of kalām comprise every theoretical judgment concerning an object of knowledge which is either one of the religious beliefs depends. (Kalām) is the highest science, and, as such, it contains no principles which are proved in another science; rather its principles are either self-evident or they are proved in it and thus belong to it as questions.” Sabra also points out that al-Ījī’s al-Mawāqif evinced the influence of philosophy on kalām (according to Ibn Khaldūn (s.1382), by the fourteenth century, kalām and falsafa were, in fact, indistinguishable): both for its role as an organizing tool in al-Ījī’s work and in the appropriation of falsafa terminology and methodology throughout his text. A. I. Sabra, “Science and philosophy in medieval Islamic theology: the evidence of the fourteenth century,” Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften, 9 (1994): 1-42 (11 for al-Ījī’s quote). On al-Ījī, see Sabra, 13 (footnote). For al-Ījī’s skeptical approach to the reliability of astronomical observations, Robert Morrison, “What was the purpose of astronomy in İji’s Kitâb al-Mawāqif fī ʿilm al-kalâm?” in Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge, 201-229. Morrison notes that for al-Ījī, “kalām seems to have demanded a level of demonstrative certainty often unattainable by astronomy” (206), but that al-Ījī’s stand “represents a point in a debate,” rather than the (final) position of kalām on science. That al-Ījī and his family had connections with Rashīd al-Dīn is well known. Ibn al-Fuwaṣī notes that al-Ījī came to the court in Sulṭaniyya in 706 and caught the attention of the vizier, subsequently entering into his service. Ibn al-Fuwaṣī writes that al-Ījī followed Rashīd al-Dīn’s cues and manners, until he became addicted to the consumption of wine. He would “yatafaṣafu” (as Ibn al-Fuwaṣī has it) and stopped following Muḥammad’s shariʿa. Rashīd al-Dīn was blamed for the corruption of al-Ījī’s morality. Majmaʿ al-ādāb, vol. 1, 411-12. This story might be a fabrication as Rashīd al-Dīn’s son Ghiyāth al-Dīn was likely involved in al-Ījī’s appointment as chief Ilkhānid Qâḍī under Aḥū Saʿīd. J. van Ess, “al-Ījī,” EI². Brill Online, 2016. Accessed February 1, 2016. http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-idji-SIM_3486. Al-Ījī also enthusiastically “endorsed” Rashīd al-Dīn’s Qurʾān commentary in Kitāb al-tawdīḥāt. See Dorothea Krawulsky, Mongol Ilkhāns, 90. Morrison notes that in her 2009 Habilitationsschrift (The Post-Avicennian Philosophical Tradition and Islamic Orthodoxy), Heidrun Eichner shows how late Ilkhānid period works of kalām were influenced by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s al-Mulakḥkhas fī al-hikma, (205). Sabra noted a relationship between the organization of al-Mawāqif and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimūn wa l-mutaʻakkhaṭṭir (15-17). Ayman Shihadeh in his study of al-Rāzī, too, briefly notes that al-Ījī heavily relied on the latter’s works. Ayman Shihadeh, “From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī: 6th/12th century developments in Muslim philosophical
the proclamation of the belief in the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*) is rationally explained through the Mongol demand for the absolute obedience to Chinggisid rule. Rashīd al-Dīn repeatedly invokes in his theological writings the proverb *kalām al-mulūk mulūk al-kalām* (“The words of kings are the kings of words”) in order to depict Öljeitū’s insight as divinely originated and argue for his *kalām*-infused rule.476

This chapter focuses on Rashīd al-Dīn’s largely neglected textual legacy, his *kalām*-oriented compendia of miscellaneous treaties. Rashīd al-Dīn identifies his miscellanea as belonging to the fields of “theological, metaphysical and scientific” (*šarʿiyāt, hikmīyyāt, ʿilmīyyāt*) writing.478 Birgitt Hoffmann suggests that one reason why these treatises have remained little studied is that “in contrast to his well-conceived and structured *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*, the theological, philosophical and medical writings are less coherent”.479 However, a closer look

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475 For example, *Bayān al-haqq ʿiq*, 127. In other words, Chinggisidness becomes an expression of Islamic monotheism. This relationship between Mongol demand for absolute obedience and monotheism is also found in the letters of the Mongol khans to European rulers. In the letter from Mōngke to Louis IX it is stated that: “in Heaven there is only one eternal God; on earth there is only one lord, Chinggis Khan.” See Amitai, *Holy War*, 45.

476 “Since the wise/rational-one (āqīl) never forgets that ‘the words of the kings are the kings of the words,’ which originates from the source [the hadīth] ‘The hearts of the kings are the treasuries of God’.” Rashīd al-Dīn, *Asʿīla va ajviba-yi rashīdī*, edited by R. Shaʿbānī (Islamabad, 1993), 416. See also Pfeiffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 96 (footnote 95). It is, furthermore, possible to see in Rashīd al-Dīn’s *kalām*-infused presentation of Öljeitū’s kingship an additional step in the Islamization of the Persian-Islamic tradition of statecraft offering further Islamic grounding for a growing claim to a close affinity between prophethood and kingship (see chapter two).

477 The works in questions are part of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *magnum opus*, the *Jāmiʿ al-taṣānīf al-Rashīdī* including the four works that comprise his *al-Majmūʿa al-Rashīdīyya*: *Kitāb al-tawādīḥāt* (1304-6), *Miftāḥ al-taṣāfīr* (1304-6), *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya* (1307-8), and *Lahāf al-haqaʾi ṣiq* (1307-8); and his *Bayān al-haqaʾi ṣiq* (1309-10). An additional work is the *Kitāb al-asʿīla waʿl-ajwība*, which is not part of the *Jāmiʿ al-taṣānīf*. For the dating of the works, see Kamola, 205ff., 285-7. For description of these works, see also Josef Van Ess, *Der Wesir und seine Gelehrten* (Wiesbaden, 1981), 12-21; and Krawulsky, 77-86.


479 Hoffmann argues that “they are in fact anthologies of independent treatises with a high proportion of recurrent topics and redundant argumentation.” Hoffmann, “Speaking about oneself,” 8. In addition, a number of the vizier’s
at the vizier’s Qur’ānic exegesis and theological treatises reveals that Rashīd al-Dīn identified with the aims of the Ash’arite mutakallimūn in promoting the interpretation of “the content of the Islamic revelation” as a “rationally-based doctrine”.  

The vizier situates himself in his theological writing alongside, if not “on a par with” the great Ash’arite theologians and mujaddids (centennial renewers) al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī. Rashīd al-Dīn particularly draws on al-Rāzī’s influential synthesis of kalām and falsafa (below).  

Rashīd al-Dīn’s (post-Rāzī) kalām-informed approach is discernable in the statements he makes theological works have only recently been edited and published. One exception to the general disregard of these works is Krawulsky’s discussion of the vizier’s approach to Jihād and abrogation in his Qur’ānic interpretation in Kitāb al-tawdīḥāt. Krawulsky, 87-99.  

Sabra, 11. See, for example, Rashīd al-Dīn’s treatise on Sharḥ-i ‘ulūm-i ma‘aqūl va-manqūl in Bayān al-haqā‘īq, where he argues for the conformity of the transmitted knowledge (the scriptural canon), that is, the Qur’ān, the words of the Prophet, and the followers, with the rational (“furthermore, the transmitted knowledge is the manifestation and the purest of the rationalistic sciences”). In this treatise, he presents his anti-taqlīd stance. Bayān al-haqā‘īq, 401-402. Elsewhere, Rashīd al-Dīn claims that “the best Jihad” and the greatest support for Islam is removing the misled and corrupted beliefs of different groups (for example, in matter of the afterlife and resurrection) through rational and scriptural/transmitted proofs. As ‘ila va ajvība-yi rashīdī, 5. On Rashīd al-Dīn’s reliance on al-Rāzī’s methods of rational exegesis, see Krawulsky’s note. Krawulsky, 91. On al-Rāzī’s reconciliation of reason and the content of scripture, see Jaffer, Rāzī, 84ff. Mamluk authors accused the vizier of distorting the meaning of the Qur’ān by basing his Qur’ān commentary on philosophy. As we shall, this accusation is not far from the truth as the vizier followed closely al-Rāzī. Chipman, 121.  


Shihadeh observes a gradual development in al-Rāzī’s works, from a primarily kalām outlook and critical stance on philosophy, towards a rich synthesis of arguments and views from both kalām and falsafa, and finally, away from an apologetic kalām perspective to a falsafī-inspired adoption of a theory of human perfection, on which, I argue, Rashīd al-Dīn draws for his philosophical-theological explanation of sacred kingship. Shihadeh, “From al-Ghazzālī to al-Rāzī,” 70-77. Tariq Jaffer, on the other hand, argues that al-Rāzī adopted the Mu’tazilite conception of “human reasoning as an autonomous source of religious knowledge” and their practices of figurative and allegorical interpretation of the Qur’ān (ta ‘wil) and prophetic traditions (“upgraded […] by grounding it in Avicennian philosophical resources”) with the aim of transferring “philosophical concepts and methods across disciplinary boundaries.” Jaffer finds that al-Rāzī used kalām as an intermediary in his project of “importing philosophical concepts and methods into Qur’ānic exegesis” and thus, raising Ash’arism “to higher philosophical standards.” Jaffer, 54-83. In spite of his incorporation of Mu’tazilite (as well as Sufi) conceptions and methods and his oscillation between kalām and falsafa (or merging of the two), it seems that later authors continued to identity al-Rāzī’s contribution within the domains of kalām (al-Īf, for example, whom Shihadeh notes to have synthesized al-Rāzī’s philosophical and kalām oriented works). For our own purposes here, it might be significant that Rashīd al-Dīn appears to have identified al-Rāzī as one of the later mutakallimūn, whom the Ilkhanid vizier highly regarded. See Rashīd al-Dīn’s treatise on Tabqīq-i mas ‘ala-yi jabr va-qadr in Miftāḥ al-tajżīsr, ed. Hāshim Rajabzāda (Terhan, 1391 [2013]), 200.
throughout his writings, in the content he addresses in his theological treatises and his argumentative style. This later aspect is also related to the fact that his discussions are depicted as the vizier’s responses to questions that were presented to him by religious scholars and members of the educated elite (including, on a number of occasions, Buddhists and Christians) or

483 Rashīd al-Dīn argues, for example, for the superior rank of the mutakallimūn “who are the ḥukamā-yi Islām and argue that the rational (m aqūl) matches which is transmitted (manqūl), since it [reason/kalām] does not uncover defect in the transmitted knowledge (naqūl), but to the contrary, it strengthens it.” Below them is the rank of those who follow the philosophers and learn their books, and follow their rules, some of which are contrary to the sharīʿa. Further beneath these two groups (of the ḥukamā) are the ʿulamā and fuḥḥā (the traditionalists), who do not study the rationalistic texts (m aqūlāt, philosophy or theology), and follow the texts (muṣūs), and finally, the commoners who blindly follow (taqīlūd) the principles of religion. Bayān al-ḥaṣaṣ i̇g, 353-54. In this taxonomy of the Muslim learnt elite, the vizier clearly self-identifies with the first group of the mutakallimūn, and shows his hostility towards taqīlūd, a theme repeated throughout his works (the priority of reason and knowledge rooted in reason). A different example is found in his praises of Ghazan in the Jāmīʿ al-tawārīkh, where he states that the Ilkhan Ghazan, in spite of his accomplishments and perfection in “every imaginable science,” did not “fall prey to pride” and repeatedly said that “the essence/purest (khuālaṣa) of the sciences is theology/science of divinity (ilāhiyyāt); the object in learning other sciences and crafts is to pronounce the name of perfection (kamāliyyat) over it [theology, that is, “to top it off”]. Not knowing is imperfection. Therefore, one must know something about everything in order not to be imperfect […] He [the Ilkhan] is even now engaged in teaching and learning.” Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1340-41; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 668-69. Rashīd al-Dīn appears to be placing in the Ilkhan’s mouth a statement that reflects al-Rāzī: Shihadeh notes that al-Rāzī considered in his philosophical-theological works that “the route to human perfection […] involve[s] only those questions related to God’s existence, His attributes and acts, including creation, prophecy, and the afterlife, constituting what al-Rāzī terms the ‘science of divinity-proper’ (al-ilāhiyyāt al-mahdā). The great overlap between these topics and those of kalām seems to have determined the nature of al-Rāzī’s synthesis […]” Shihadeh, “From al-Ghazāli to al-Rāzī,” 177. Rashīd al-Dīn’s opposition to the falsafa can be gleaned from the endowment deed for his Rubʿ-ī Rashīdī, where he barred the teaching of philosophy and those interested in engaging with it from the madrasas he endowed in the Rubʿ. Rashīd al-Dīn was also “unsympathetic” towards astronomy. Morrison, Islam and Science, 39-40.

484 Rashīd al-Dīn’s Kitāb al-suhānīyya, for example, covers much of the same topics covered by the sixth part of the ʿAḍud al-Dīn al-ʿIjī’s (d. 1355) al-Mawāqif, which is considered the fullest example of the fourteenth century expression of kalām (above): “matters of tradition (samʿ iyyāt): prophecy, prophetic miracles, angels, holy men, resurrection, divine punishment and reward, repentance, intercession and forgiveness, the meaning of faith and the nature of unbelief.” In al-ʿIjī’s work, an additional sub-section is devoted to the leadership of the community. Sabra, 16-17. Klein-Franke had also observed that the questions Rashīd al-Dīn was made to answer in Asʿ ilā va ajwiba “can be classified into two classes: questions which concern philosophical and scientific problems and questions which point to apparent inconsistencies that appear in the holy scriptures, i.e. contradictions within and one the same Koranic verse (a), between two Koranic verses (b), between Koranic verse and a dictum of the Prophet Muhammad (c), and in a Prophetic tradition itself (d).” Felix Klein-Franke, “The relation between knowledge and belief in Islam. Annotations to Rashīd al-Dīn’s ‘Book of questions and answers’,” Le Muséon 113/1-2 (2000): 205-19. Furthermore, the goals of Rashīd al-Dīn’s theological treatises often appear to be the rational explication of the principles of the faith and the refutation of deviant convictions and doctrines. A more thorough study of the vizier’s theological writing and treatises on tafsīr, which is beyond the scope of this study, would give us a better understanding of the extent to which Rashīd al-Dīn was influenced by al-Rāzī and furthermore, the former’s place in the debates over kalām in the fourteenth century, especially in light of the role of Shiʿī scholars at the court. Morrison, for example, has noted that the vizier’s Epistle of Astronomy in al-Asʿ ilā waʿl-ajwiba draws on al-Rāzī’s tafsīr. Morrison, Islam and Science, 40, 207 (footnote 33).
by the Ilkhan Öljeitü himself during court audiences and debates. Rashīd al-Dīn’s choice of a kalām approach matches the competitive court environment in which the vizier sought to advance himself and subsequently retain his position. Through their polemical engagement and dialectical argumentative tone, Rashīd al-Dīn’s works are thus closer to the “original” meaning of kalām as a means of elucidating and defending the tenets of the faith against the deniers and unbelievers.

Rashīd al-Dīn’s theological compendium gives visibility to the court debate as central institution where religious interlocutors, mainly Buddhists, Jews and Sunnī and Shīʿī Muslims rivaled for access and influence. I argue that they did so by demonstrating the congruency of Buddhist, Muslim or other religio-political models, with the notion of the Chinggisid ruler’s intellect as a source of law and divine wisdom, and with the ideal of the sacrality of the Chinggisid bloodline and state project. Court disputations were an ongoing and well-established tradition both in the Muslim world and at Eurasian courts, where it was considered essential for the display of kingship. At the court of Öljeitü and more generally at the Mongol courts, however, the institution of the court debate was more than “a channel and stage for royal patronage” or a setting for acquiring knowledge and providing entertainment and amusement to the ruler and his court. Court disputations at Öljeitū’s court were sites of interpretive contests.

485 See his introduction to Laṭāʾif al-ḥaqāʾiq, where he discusses the nature and manner of debates, the characters of those who question him, and his own civility (and gratitude) when answering his contenders. This treatise carries a highly apologetic tone. Laṭāʾif al-ḥaqāʾiq, ed. Ghulām Rūdā Tāhir (Tehran, 2535 [1976-77]), 1-25.
488 See chapter two.
between religious interlocutors and cultural brokers and spaces of cross-cultural negotiation and contestation.

Reading Rashīd al-Dīn’s theological writing through the contextual lens of the Ilkhanid court debate invites us also to pay closer attention to how this corpus of theological writings was interlinked with the vizier’s improvisations, experimentations and strategic claims as a cultural mediator and an astute political player. I argue that Rashīd al-Dīn’s theological outlook was informed by the court disputations and interpretive contests that took place at the courts of Arghun and his son Öljaitū. I explore Rashīd al-Dīn’s works on the Dharma and his refutations of the Buddhist belief in reincarnation, and draw attention to his responses to the growing presence of Shīʿī clergy at the court of Öljaitū, following the Ilkhan’s conversion to Shīʿism in 1309. In both instances, Rashīd al-Dīn utilizes al-Rāzī’s hierarchy of sacred souls to advocate for an alternative (Islamic and Sunnī) theological model that could compete with the way that Buddhism and/or Shīʿism were able to negotiate and reaffirm Mongol conceptions of Chinggisid sacral kingship and continuity. It would be a mistake, however, to define this interpretive contests solely as inter-ecumenical (Islam versus Buddhism) or inter-confessional (Shīʿism versus Sunnism), and ignore their deeply personal dimensions. Rashīd al-Dīn strategically uses his theological conceptualization of Chinggisid authority to claim to himself the exclusive position of Öljaitū’s chief intermediary in an environment dominated by inter-religious, inter-sectarian and inter-personal power struggles.

Rashīd al-Dīn presents Öljaitū at these court debates and audiences not as a passive observant or silent arbiter but as an active disputer claiming his own superior authority in
resolving theological disputes, in accordance with his divinely inspired reason.\textsuperscript{489} Rashīd al-Dīn repeatedly claims that the Ilkhan’s brilliant questions and insightful theological speculations guided himself and other scholars to new and better revelations and truths. Rashīd al-Dīn’s “Öljeitū” conceives of his own superior “intuited wisdom” as worth recording and explaining. According to the vizier, he was repeatedly ordered to record his patron’s observations and use them as a basis for developing new theological arguments.

Rashīd al-Dīn’s experimentations with the political languages of Islam was not the product of his own fascination, but rather part of a historical context of the Ilkhanid court and court disputations, where religious interlocutors and members of the Mongol elite investigated, negotiated, contested and redefined the relationship between Mongol notions of sacral kingship and Islamic doctrinal and cosmological convictions.

\textbf{The signs of the Şāḥib-Qirān King: Nascent Formulations of Öljeytū’s Sacral Kingship in \textit{Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya}}

The introduction (\textit{jātiha}) to Rashīd al-Dīn’s \textit{Kitāb (Risālat) al-sulṭāniyya fī marātib al-nabawiyya}\textsuperscript{490} contains one of the earliest, and possibly most extensive attempts of the vizier to conceptualize and articulate Öljeytū’s unique kingly rank, one that also precedes his later arguments on the topic. Furthermore, it demonstrates how Rashīd al-Dīn worked towards interpreting and mediating the Ilkhanid understanding of the ruler’s sacred persona and his exceptional status. It is, therefore, worthwhile providing an outline of the vizier’s chief arguments in the introduction to \textit{Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya} as a basis for our subsequent discussion of the main strands of Rashīd al-Dīn’s construction of Öljeytū’s sacred persona.

\textsuperscript{489} In the case of the Mughal court, Corinne Lefèvre also points out that: “in the hand of the emperor, dialogue was a powerful didactic tool that aimed to convince his interlocutors of his superiority, both temporal and spiritual.” Lefèvre, 262.

\textsuperscript{490} For the full title of the work, see \textit{Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya}, ff. 117v-118r.
The work, also known as *Fawā’id al-sulṭāniyya* and *Mabāḥith al-sulṭāniyya*,\(^{491}\) is primarily devoted to a discussion of prophetic miracles and revelation in the Muslim tradition, for example, the distinction between *waḥy* (revelation) and *ilhām* (inspiration), and the differences between the ranks and types of prophets (*nabī*, prophet, *ūlū al-ʿazm*, prophets who establish a law (*sharīʿa*), and *rasūl*, messenger), saints, and the perfect individuals (*arbāb-i kamālāt*).\(^{492}\) The treatise concludes with a discussion of reward and punishment and the fate of the individual’s soul in heaven or hell, as well as a limited discussion of the issue of the gathering of the bodies on the Day of Judgment, a topic that the vizier addresses more extensively elsewhere.\(^{493}\)

The core treatise (*aṣl*) on prophethood and revelation is followed by two additional segments (*dhayl-i Kitāb-i sulṭāniyya*). The first is Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Risālat Nafāʾ is al-afkār* (The Precious Thoughts, see below), in which the vizier answers questions on the issues of the afterlife and resurrection.\(^{494}\) The *Nafāʾ is al-afkār* is presented as a sequel to an earlier treatise Rashīd al-Dīn composed on “The debates that Muslims and the other of People of the Book [Jews?] have with the people of transmigration (*ahl-i tanāsukh*) and some of the people who deny the gathering of the bodies (*hashr-i ajsād*) [on the day of resurrection]” found in his *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr* (below). The second text is a detailed list of the prophets and their descendants, categorized according to their rank, followed by the Prophet Muḥammad, the first four caliphs, a list of the Prophet’s companions (similarly categorized according to rank), the remaining caliphs (including the Fāṭimid caliphs), and famous religious scholars (*ulamāʾ va-mashāyikh*). This

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\(^{491}\) For a short description of the work and its manuscripts in Persian and Arabic (translation), see Van Ess, *Der Wesir*, 17-19. I have used the Persian manuscript, Istanbul Nurusmaniye Küütphanesi Ms. 3415. To date, I was unable to access the Paris manuscript of the work.

\(^{492}\) *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, ff. 147v-290r.

\(^{493}\) Ibid., ff. 290v-320r.

\(^{494}\) The order of these two segments depend on the manuscripts. See Van Ess, *Der Wesir*, 18-19.
information is, subsequently, also provided in the format of a genealogical tree (mushajjar), which Evrim Binbaş has recently discussed.\footnote{Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya, ff. 370r-444v. On the genealogical tree see discussion by Binbaş who refers to it as the shu`ab-i anbiyā’, Ilker Evrim Binbaş, “Structure and function of the genealogical tree in Islamic historiography (1200-1500),” in Horizons of the World, 494-99.}

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya originated in a wager (girav) that the Ilkhan Öljeitū made with a number of unidentified religious scholars. Rashīd al-Dīn reports that on Wednesday the ninth of Ramaḍān 706 (/March 14 1307), a number of scholars gathered at Gāvbārī, near Mūghān, for an audience with Öljeitū,\footnote{Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya, ff. 147v- 150r. Rashīd al-Dīn states that the group came together for the tāgishmishi (an interview) with the Ilkhan.} and were questioned by the Ilkhan. Concerned, at first, with the relationship between new, contemporaneous interpretations of the Qur’an (tafsīr and ta’wil) and earlier interpretations, Öljeitū’s interrogation soon turned to the subject of prophethood in the Islamic tradition. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the Ilkhan, who was interested in learning the most correct doctrine (i’tiqād), asked about the number and identity of the messenger prophets, about the differences between messengers and non-messenger prophets, and about the mechanisms of revelation, mission and prophethood. Finally, Öljeitū also inquired why the Prophet Muḥammad was considered the most perfect from amongst the prophets.

The vizier writes that one of the scholars responded with an explanation that the difference between prophets and messengers is that prophets receive revelation without the mediation (bī-vāsiṭah) of angels, whereas messengers receive revelation through angels (like the Prophet Muḥammad). Öljeitū responded by asking what made mediation or the lack of mediation better. According to Rashīd al-Dīn’s account, Öljeitū’s question caught the scholars off guard and they requested time to further consider the matter. Öljeitū, subsequently, issued an edict stipulating the scholars to write an answer to this question together with the vizier Sa`d al-Dīn Sāvajī, and asserting that he himself will also consider this question and write an answer together.
with the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn. According to the terms of wager, if the scholars’ answer would be found to be superior to answer by Öljeitū and Rashīd al-Dīn, the Ilkhan would hand them an honorary robe (jāma); yet, the scholars would be obliged to give the Ilkhan a robe instead if they lose. After the conditions of the wager were set, Rashīd al-Dīn explains that he sat down to write an answer to the Ilkhan’s questions noting that while he himself (Rashīd al-Dīn) lacked official training in theology and philosophy, and could not compete with the superior knowledge of the scholars, he wrote down that which God had brought to his mind. Rashīd al-Dīn, thus, positions the Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya in the historical context of courtly competitions and royal interrogations, in which the Mongol ruler is presented as seeking to take an active role.

Rashīd al-Dīn prefaced this discussion of prophethood and revelation in Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya with an extensive fātiha, in which he elaborated the main proofs (barāhīn) of Öljeitū’s unique status of exceptional kingship, with a focus on his childhood and early years of rule. The first sign the vizier lists as proof of the praiseworthy qualities (akhlāq-i ḥamīda va-ṣifāt-i pasandīda) of the Ilkhan, “whose outside and insides are lit by the divine lights (anvār-i ilahī),” is the prophetic tradition, according to which “God will send to this community at the turn/on the eve of every century a person who will strengthen its religion” (inna allāh yabʿ ath li-hadīhi al-ummah ʿalā raʿ s kull miʿ a sana man yuqawwī lahā amr dīnīhā).

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the tradition confirms Öljeitū’s perfect rank (martaba-yi kamāl) “since it is clear that prior to him, for a period of a hundred years, there was no one who strengthened the religion of Islam (muqavvī az an dīn-i Islām), but a group of unbelievers from the idol worshipers and the people of other faiths (adyān va-milal), whose religion was abrogated, began making a useless effort (ḥarakat al-madhībūh) [literally: the movement of the slaughtered], and they rebuilt their places of worship, which had been destroyed, and during this
hundred years, day after day, they were strengthened” until “all the traces of these unbelievers were effaced with the ray of light of the sun-faced” Öljeitū. Rashīd al-Dīn explains that Öljeitū’s enthronement was marked by a remarkable increase in the numbers of Mongol converts to Islam, and gives the example of the great Qa’an’s idol-worshipping emissaries residing in Ilkhanid Iran, who chose to convert to Islam knowing that they would be reproached and punished for this when they return to the Qa’an’s court in Yuan China.

The prophetic tradition Rashīd al-Dīn refers to is the mujaddid (the centennial renewer) tradition, according to which he Prophet said “God will send to this community at the turn/on the eve of every century a person who will renew its religion.” Rashīd al-Dīn, however, replaces the verb yujaddid (renew) with yuqawwī (strengthen), a choice that echoes the Ilkhanid court historian Qāshānī’s earlier salvific conversion narrative of Öljeitū’s brother and precursor, the Ilkhan Ghazan, which appears in one of the iterations of the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī. As discussed in the previous chapter, Qāshānī uses Ghazan’s conversion narrative to depict the Ilkhan as a cyclical reformer-savior king. He writes that the amir Nawrūz told Ghazan that “it is reported from the religious scholars, the astrologers and the composers of almanacs that a great king was to appear around the year 690 (/1291) and this king was to strengthen the religion of Islam, and the Muslims, who have been weakened were to be revived and renewed through his guidance […] Time and again it has come to the mind of this slave that he [this king] is Ghazan Khan.”

Both Qāshānī and Rashīd al-Dīn use the same term (muqavvī-yi dīn-i Islām) to identify this prophesied king. As we saw in chapter three, Qāshānī’s conversion narrative combines several “salvific rhythms” (Iranian cycles of dynastic and moral decay and revitalization, Islamic visions of recurrent degeneration and reform, and Muslim “eschatological” traditions of periodic
cycles of corruption and restoration), but does not appear to indicate that Qāshānī had conceived of Ghazan in terms of a mujaddid king, a title we find appropriated by rulers, mainly from the Timurid era (fifteenth century) onwards.\(^{497}\) Our investigation determined that in the Ilkhanid period, the term mujaddid was still exclusively used for the scholarly ranks. Rashīd al-Dīn used the earlier account by Qāshānī to outline a new conversion account for Ghazan, one focused on the Ilkhan’s pre-conversion inclinations towards Islam and monotheism. This account was aligned with the vizier’s broader project of reversion of the Mongols in the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī: the presentation of monotheism as an ancestral belief of the “monotheist” Mongols (muvaḥhidān). Qāshānī’s salvific account of Nawrūz’s “prediction” of the Ilkhan’s conversion and restoration of the Muslim community was redacted in Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative, perhaps also due to this later version’s critical stance towards the amir Nawrūz.

However, in his Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya, the vizier repurposes Qāshānī’s providential explanation of Ghazan’s conversion and attributes it to the latter’s brother and heir. Furthermore, Rashīd al-Dīn grounds the “prophecy” in a more formidable tradition, albeit with a significant change: the prophet announces not the renewal of the religion each century, but the strengthening of the religion. This subtle, yet significant change might have been determined by an additional consideration, as Rashīd al-Dīn himself was considered by a number of his contemporaries as the mujaddid of the eighth Hijri century.\(^{498}\) It is worth noting that this significant change notwithstanding, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first instance the mujaddid tradition is attributed to a ruler.

\(^{497}\) See our earlier discussion on the title of Mujaddid in chapter three, as well as chapter five.

\(^{498}\) For example, Vaṣṣāf, 539.
The second proof of Öljeitü’s “perfect rank” that Rashīd al-Dīn lists in the preface to Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya is the comparison of Öljeitü’schildbirth miracle account with the childhood miracles of the prophets. Rashīd al-Dīn explains:

There is no doubt that revelation (vahy) did not reach any of the messengers (anbiyāʾ rasūl), whose rank is the highest human rank, during their childhood, but [nevertheless] in most cases, extraordinary and rare things originated (ṣādir) from them [during childhood]. Although the rank of kings does not reach the rank of prophethood, nonetheless, in accordance with His order “Obey Allāh, and obey the Messenger, and those in authority from among you (ūlū al-amr minkum)” [4:59, “authority verse”], He gave the absolute kings (muṭlaq pādishāhān) a relation (nisbat) to the prophets and even to Himself [God]. Therefore, there is no doubt that [the kings’s] rank can be great, especially, a king who is just, perfect, and wise (az ūlū al-albāb).

Not every prince is worthy of being a king […] Most of them [the princes] perish and die. Since no one knows during the childhood of a prince if God almighty had chosen him for kingship in eternity, all princes appear equal […] but a prince who will be from amongst the kings in the level of the Şāḥib-Qirān [kings, Lords of Auspicious Conjunction], and that is – that aside of kingship, he will also have an intimate relationship (khushūsiyyat) and closeness to God, and He [God] created him [the Şāḥib-Qirān king] in eternity in accordance with what He wishes and what He wills so that he [the king] will become the means through which matters become great (vāsiṭah-yi umūr muʾazzam shavad), and therefore, the Prophet alluded to him [the Şāḥib-Qirān prince-king] in his saying “every hundred years [God will send to this community a person who will strengthen its religion]” – the sign of this prince is that the acts that appear from him [during childhood] are in the level of the signs that some of the prophets exhibited during their childhood, until revelation gradually (bi-tadrij) reached them and they became [adult] prophets.

Rashīd al-Dīn proceeds to Öljeitü’s miraculous birth story with which this chapter began, and establishes it as paralleling the childhood miracles of Muḥammad, Yūsuf, and Ibrāhīm. Just as

499 On similar interpretations of the authority verse by advice literature, see chapter two.

500 As it appears in the beginning of the introduction, “God will send to this community at the turn/on the eve of every century a person who will strengthen its religion” (innā allāh yab ʾāhu li-hadhīhī al-umma al-ʿālā raʾs kull miʾa sana man yuqawwādī dinahā). The tradition originally reads “God will send to this community at the turn/on the eve of every century a person who will renew its religion” (innā allāh yab ʾāhu li-hadhīhī al-umma al-ʿālā raʾs kull miʾa sana man yuqaddid laḥāʾ amr dīnīhā). Rashīd al-Dīn changes yuqaddid to yuqawwād. See my discussion of this below.

these early signs foresee their later careers as recipients of revelation, so does Öljeytū’s birth miracle anticipate the prince’s distinct rank as a Şāhib-Qirān.

Rashīd al-Dīn carries out this comparison between the Ilkhan and the prophets into the third indication of Öljeytū’s rank. Quoting the phrase “The titles descend from the heavens” (al-alqāb tanzilu min al-samāʾ), the vizier explains that God entrusts an individual, who is divinely aided (muʾayyad), from the moment of his birth with certain attributes, and when they manifest as rare and exceptional things, this individual also receives by divine command a new name (nāmī) that would match his new state. Rashīd al-Dīn gives the examples of Ibrāhīm, who was first named Abram and later Ibrāhīm (“father of the nations in Hebrew”), Yaʾqūb (Isrāʾīl), and other biblical prophets (and Muḥammad, “who had many titles and names”), but also states that some of the great Şāhib-Qirān kings who were divinely aided (muʾayyad min īnd Allāh) such as (the Sasanian) Jamshīd, Afrīdūn, Iskandar, Anūshirvān, and Chinggis Khan,502 who was first named Temūjin, had a new name descend from the sky to match their new state. The vizier points out that Öljeytū was also first named Öljey-Buqa, and later was called Temüder, Kharbanda, Khudābanda and finally, upon his enthronement, due to his blessed feet, Öljeytū Sultan.503

Rashīd al-Dīn concludes that Öljeytū is a divinely aided monarch, a Şāhib-Qirān ruler, and a miracle worker (şāhib-i karāmāt), and sets out to demonstrate this by listing the miracles manifested through Öljeytū.504 These include Öljeytū’s surprising defeat of the armies of the

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502 Rashīd al-Dīn explains that his first name was Temūjin, and later, the Khitani title j’ aut-quri, and then, the title of Chinggis Khan “that is, the great king of the kings since ching means one/singular (vāhid), and chinggīz, a body of water (jam -i āb).” Rashīd al-Dīn seems to support Pelliot’s argument that Chinggis Khan’s etymology is derived from Tenkiz (Turkic for Ocean) and hence in the meaning of Oceanic and universal. See Biran, Chinggis Khan, 39.
503 Kitāb al-sultāniyya, ff. 122r-123r. On Öljeytū’s conversions (his baptism as a Nestorian Christian at the age of 8, and subsequent conversion to Buddhism, followed by his conversion to Islam), Judith Pfeiffer, Twelver Shiʿīsim, 3-4. In Mongolian, Öljeytū means auspicious/blessed (the possessor of good fortune/blessing, Öljei). Gerhard Doerfer, Türkisch und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen, 1 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1963), 174.
504 Kitāb al-sultāniyya, f. 124r.
Chagatai Du’a and Qaidu (in 1302) in Khurasan through the prince’s “nūr-i ilhāmī” in spite of the Central Asian armies’ numerical advantage,\textsuperscript{505} and another instance where “by the means of his sacred soul (nafs-i qudṣī),” Öljeytü identified and pointed out to his entourage a thief dressed as a shaykh hiding inside a great crowd assembled at the fortress of Tabriz. Rashīd al-Dīn also attributes to Öljeytü’s kingly rank the great peace accord between the Mongol khanates and the end of the Mongo civil war (fitanhā) that extended throughout a period of fifty years, even though the Ilkhans had no part in brokering this agreement.\textsuperscript{506} Of more miraculous nature is Rashīd al-Dīn’s argument that it was due to Öljeytü’s sacred persona that the Ilkhanate did not suffer from a rise in food prices in spite of a continuous drought throughout the provinces (vilāyat). Furthermore, although Saturn was in the rise during Öljeytü’s reign, which according to the astronomers, indicates a rise in food prices, the force of the enlightened soul of Öljeytü blocked the inauspicious influence of Saturn, “which is one of the greatest celestial bodies”.\textsuperscript{507}

Rashīd al-Dīn summarizes this section by arguing that Öljeytü “showed such miracles and states that no Ṣāḥib-Qirān and saint (vāfī) had shown prior to him”.\textsuperscript{508} According to the vizier, just as prophets and saints only gradually reach their full potential and gain revelation, so does Öljeytü’s rank as a Ṣāḥib-Qirān king gradually increase towards perfection. Furthermore, he explains that “this perfection will appear at the age of forty, and after this, the understanding, the knowledge and the wisdom gained in one year [added] could be equal to ten or twenty or more years [of knowledge earned]”.\textsuperscript{509} Another indication of Öljeytü’s growing wisdom is his

\textsuperscript{505} The invasion was led by Qaidu’s son Sarban. Michal Biran, \textit{Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia} (Surrey, 1997), 60.
\textsuperscript{506} Following Qaidu’s claim to the title of Qa’an. \textit{Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya}, ff. 129r-130r. Öljey tü and the Ilkhans were not involved in peace negotiations, but were informed of the peace accord in 1304 by the Qa’an’s emissaries. Biran, \textit{Qaidu}, ibid.
\textsuperscript{507} \textit{Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya}, f. 130.
\textsuperscript{508} Ibid., f. 132v.
\textsuperscript{509} Öljeytü, born in 680 /1281-82, was in his twenties at the time of the vizier’s composition of \textit{Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya}.
exceptional questions (since “the good question is half the knowledge”), “questions and answers that no one before had considered and answered”. \(^{510}\)

Rashīd al-Dīn, furthermore, attributes to the Mongol ruler his own achievements in the field of theology. He claims that the “many perfections” he achieved, including his two works, the *Tawḍīḥāt* and the other is *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, came to him “through (*bi-vāsiṭa*) the ray of the light of his [the Ilkhan’s] life-giving breast and soul”. \(^{511}\)

The vizier further demonstrates the ability of the ruler Öljeytu to lead others towards perfection through his insightful questions, with the example of the Ilkhan’s question about the priority (*ashraf*) of knowledge or reason. Öljeytu’s question was so unprecedented that “the religious scholars and the wise (*)hukamā*) [including the vizier] in all the kingdoms were preoccupied with it,” and competed in writing treatises to resolve this question: “they achieved many benefits and subtleties from it, and the benefits of this remain for eternity”. \(^{512}\) Furthermore, comparing the ignorant to the dead and the knowledgeable to the living, Rashīd al-Dīn claims that, through his internal light and by inspiring knowledge, “the *masīḥ*-like Öljeytu has revived and will revive thousands and thousands of deceased and this is a great miracle (*karāmatī*), [though] one cannot call it prophetic miracles (*muʿjaz*).”

\(^{510}\) And therefore it has been said, “The words of the kings are the kings of the words” (*kalām al-mulūk mulūk al-kalām*).

\(^{511}\) “He [Öljeytu] is so perfect that many perfections are achieved by anyone who serves him, and a clear proof and example of this are the states of this slave [Rashīd al-Dīn], who had never before previously penned down any explanation of the truths of the meanings [theology], and through (*bi-vāsiṭa*) the ray of the light of his [the Ilkhan’s] life-giving breast and soul, which is not an exaggeration, since what life could be better than the life of knowledge and perfection […], the insides of this poor one were enlightened, and he [Rashīd al-Dīn] writes these words and meanings and in clarifying the truths, says a few words, and he [Rashīd al-Dīn] composed two books, one is the *Tawḍīḥāt* and the other is *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr* that have reached and continue to reach the consideration of the great [scholars].” Ibid., f. 132v.

\(^{512}\) Rashīd al-Dīn uses *hukamā* as a title that encompasses both the philosophers (“those who the books of the philosophers”) and the theologians/*mutakallimūn* as both groups employ discursive reasoning and reason. See Rashīd al-Dīn, *Asʿīla va-ajvība*, 3.

\(^{513}\) *Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya*, f. 135r.
Rashīd al-Dīn develops this depiction of Öljeitū as a unique genius whose miraculous, brilliant queries guide the Islamic scholarly community towards uncovering new truths in his next report of his intimate conversation he had with the Ilkhan. Discussing “the insight (firāsat) and inspiration (ilhām) that reach his [the Ilkhan’s] blessed mind,” the vizier argues that one should not speak of this with ignorant individuals (jāhil) since they will not be able to comprehend, but also that, one cannot conceal this from those capable (mustaʿidd) of receiving benefit from it. The vizier explains that on one occasion, Öljëitū had secretly (bi-ṭarīq-i sirr) confided with Rashīd al-Dīn and told him:

In the past, I would obtain everything by [applying] analogy (qiyaṣa) [or syllogism, below] and experience/empirical knowledge (tajriba), and now, there is no doubt that this empirical knowledge grows day after day; by these means, things that remain hidden to everyone else become known to me; but, I do not wish to display this, lest some people deny it, and even if people deny it, since I tell them states of each kind that were hidden from others and were recurrently (mutavātir) revealed [to me], there is no doubt that they would rely on it and their problems would be resolved.514

Öljëitū further relates to Rashīd al-Dīn that he is able to read the minds of his servants at the court “from their appearance (hayʾat), states, bearing (forehead, nāṣiyat), and their features (shamāʾil)” before they start speaking to him. The Ilkhan Öljëitū explains that each individual has fixed signs (nishān), which he follows to understand their intentions and their thoughts, and that if he were to repeat those, the wise would know that his understanding is correct.515 With the promise to reveal these signs to the vizier so that he too would be aware of these secrets, Öljëitū also calls to his presence the great amir Amīr ʿAlī, the commander of the falconers

514 Ibid.
515 Rashīd al-Dīn similarly ascribes to Ghazan the ability to predict the future (the external appearance of an envoy or prisoner, or that bad or good news were arriving) and links it to his status as a Şāḥib-Qirān king, who was granted fortune and happiness. The vizier also argues that the Ilkhan was educated in geomancy, horses’ collarbones and teeth reading, and “various fortune-telling (jāl) devices practiced by every nation and country.” Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1348-49; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 671-72.
He repeated his secret to Amīr `Alī as well and promised to the two, the Mongol commander and the vizier, that they are the only individuals who know his secret.517

Surprised by Öljeytü’s statement, Rashīd al-Dīn notes that while he had never beforehand heard of any individual with such abilities, since the Ilkhan entrusted him with his secret, he felt compelled to respond. Rashīd al-Dīn interprets Öljeytü’s words within an Islamic framework, arguing for the Ilkhan’s combination of saintly and kingly ranks:

None of the prophets, who were subject to revelation (ṣāhib-i wahy) and had reached the rank of prophethood, and the saints, who were subject to inspiration (ṣāhib-i ilhām) and had reached the rank of miracles (karāmāṭ), had full revelation and inspiration at first, but only gradually, and most of the prophets until they were forty, fifty, sixty and seventy years old did not receive revelation; at the beginning, each of them, either though dreams or in stories and matters that suddenly reached them, and things that they [suddenly] knew, and the capacity (isti’dād) that was in them was moving them. Now, ______ [Öljeytü], may God prolong his reign, in spite of his youth, had preoccupied himself with and devoted most of his time to knowledge and proficiencies (hunar), and there was no single moment without learning, and he is compassionate and just; and the king of Islam, praise be to God, is worthy, and a saint (vālī), and a miracle worker. The saints alone have the level of sainthood (vilāyat). This [his] rank [of sainthood] is, therefore, proven (?), and it is further proven that [he has] both the rank of sainthood and the rank of the rulers (ālū al-amrī); and in spite of his youth, I reached all these meanings that I have comprehended, from ______ [Öljeytü], may God prolong his reign.518

Rashīd al-Dīn concludes, therefore, that Öljeytü shares the rank of the saints, which is proven through his capacity to perform miracles, most significantly, his supramundane knowledge of hidden things, a power still in its infancy.

As will be discussed, Rashīd al-Dīn’s depiction of Öljeytü’s exceptional intellect and aptitude for miraculous feats in Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya integrates two contrasting epistemic schemes following Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. The first is a rationalistic explanation that relies on Avicennian philosophical concepts, and according to it, the Ilkhan possess a unique intellect that enables him

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516 He was in Öljeytü’s company since an early age and was regarded highly by the Ilkhan, and a commander of a thousand and son of the great amir Baibuqa qushechi (falconer).
517 Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya, f. 135v.
518 Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya. f. 136v.
to acquire, with no effort (but nevertheless through his own superior intellectual capacity),
intuitive and theoretical knowledge that is superior to the knowledge acquired through human
agents or books. The second is an inspirational model that al-Rāzī assumes through the Sufi-
oriented works of al-Ghazālī. According to this scheme, inspirational knowledge is bestowed
upon the Ilkhan’s soul in the form of light and divine inspiration (ilhām).\footnote{Jaffer, 160-68.}

The first of these two models, the philosophical-rationalistic proved particularly
significant to Rashīd al-Dīn’s conceptualization of Öljeitū’s sacral kingship. The Ilkhan is
presented not only as an ultimate philosopher-king, but is also integrated into al-Rāzī’s
Avicennian model of a hierarchy of human perfection. Rashīd al-Dīn expands al-Rāzī’s model to
include a new rank of perfect kings, whose souls are nestled alongside the perfect sacred souls of
the saints and the prophets. Drawing affinities between the Mongol ruler and the Prophet
Muḥammad, Rashīd al-Dīn coopts the Prophet himself to confirm Öljeitū’s unique rank. Rashīd
al-Dīn, however, ultimately relies on both models (the rational and the inspirational) to mediate
the Mongols’ own understanding of the Chinggisid ruler’s intellect as a source of divine wisdom
and law, and as possessing a direct link to God.

**Hierarchies of Perfect Souls and Öljeitū’s Luminous Intellect: Between Rational
Intuition and Divine Inspiration**

In the opening treatise to his later *Bayān al-ḥaqaʾiq* (1309-10), Rashīd al-Dīn notes that
since he occasionally would repeat before the great scholars and the wise some of the
observations he would hear from the Ilkhan Öljeitū, they would often respond in wonder. They
asked how it was possible that the Ilkhan, who had never studied any of the sciences or read any
of the books, had such a perceptive understanding of the different sciences. Rashīd al-Dīn’s
answer divides knowledge into two kinds, ‘ilm-i fiṭrī, natural knowledge, and ‘ilm-i muktasabī, learnt/acquired knowledge. Man cannot exist without the ‘ilm-i fiṭrī or acquire the ‘ilm-i muktasabī. There are many levels of ‘ilm-i fiṭrī and the more natural knowledge an individual has, the more learnt knowledge he is able to acquire. Rashīd al-Dīn argues for the superiority of ‘ilm-i fiṭrī over ‘ilm-i muktasabī: the teacher of the former is the perfect omnipotent God, while the teacher of the latter is the defective poor servant. Rashīd al-Dīn ridicules the scholars for wondering how knowledge that, is not learnt from books or from human teachers could be superior to acquired knowledge.

The main proof Rashīd al-Dīn presents in this treatise for the superiority of the ‘ilm-i fiṭrī, and therefore, of Öljëitü’s untutored wisdom, is the example of the illiterate (ummi) Prophet Muḥammad. His rank and perfection were so great that he had no need to learn from anyone (defective individuals, nāqīṣān), aside for God. The link between Muḥammad’s “gifted” illiteracy to Öljëitü’s superior ‘ilm-i fiṭrī is further established in another treatise in Rashīd al-Dīn’s Asʾila va ajvība (date Dhū al-Qaʿida 710/April 1311). The treatise is an account of Rashīd al-Dīn’s answers to a list of questions formulated by the Ilkhan during one Friday audience, when the vizier was absent due to medical reasons. According to the vizier, none of the scholars present at Öljëitü’s audience was able to answer the Ilkhan’s questions, and therefore, the Shīʿī scholar Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥillī (682-771/1283-1369), son of the Imāmi jurist and theologian

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520 The vizier links the existence of different levels of natural knowledge to the Peripatetic notion of human capability (mustaʿidd/istiʿdād) noting that “all the distinctions/gradation (tafāvut) in perfection in people, from the prophet to the common, are in this manner.”

521 “Who even if it can be imagined that he, too, has in him perfection, it is like a drop or less than a drop of water in an ocean.”

522 Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq, 83-5.

523 This particular treatise is not found in the published edition of the work (Asʾila va ajvība-yi rashīdī, edited by R. Shaʾbānī, Islamabad, 1993), but in an unpublished Ayasofya manuscript. Rashīd al-Dīn, Kitāb al-asʿila waʾl-ajwība al-rashīdiyya bʾil-fārisiyya (MS Ayasofya, No. 2180), fol. 33-34, 37-40.
ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (648/1250-726/1325), suggested they convey Öljeytū’s questions to the vizier. According to the vizier, Öljeytū’s first question was concerned with the prophetic hadīth “poverty is my pride” (al-faqr fakhrī). The Ilkhan commented that “there is no doubt that wealth is better than poverty, and yet, there is also no doubt that the Prophet’s words are true.” Rashīd al-Dīn starts his answer by explaining that due to the abbreviated nature of the Ilkhan’s comment and, moreover, that his comment was not formed as a question, no one aside for Rashīd al-Dīn was able to comprehend the true meaning of Öljeytū’s comment. Rashīd al-Dīn juxtaposes the Prophet’s poverty with ʿilm-i fiṭrī, and wealth with ʿilm-i muktasabī, knowledge that is physically gained through learning and hard work. Rashīd al-Dīn argues that what the Ilkhan Öljeytū had perceived through his “internal light” was that, the Prophet had prided himself as being set apart from the rest of mankind for his absolute human perfection (muṭlaqan kamāl-i insānī). He explains:

The greater natural knowledge one has, he has less of a need for exhorting himself with physical learning (bī-vāṣṭah-yi badan), which is the acquired knowledge (ʿilm-i muktasabī), and in accordance with his saying “over every possessor of knowledge, there is one who is more knowing” (wa-fawqa kull dhī ʿilm al-ʿālim, Surat Yūsuf, 76), they [people] have great many ranks [of knowledge], and there is no doubt that since their states in this world are finite (mutanāḥī), there is an end to human perfection; therefore, there is necessarily an individual in whom human natural knowledge (ʿilm-i fiṭrī-yi insānī) reaches its end [perfection]. The attribute of this individual is that he could have no need


525 The notion that the vizier alone was capable of answering Öljeytū’s questions, which eluded others at the court, is a common feature of the vizier’s writings. See Kamola, 216, and discussion below. Similarly, Rashīd al-Dīn states that Ghazan amazed the learnt and philosophers who gathered at court with his questions. He notes that “although he spoke in the idiom (iṣṭilāḥ) of the Mongols, and not everyone immediately understood, nonetheless when what he said was repeated and interpreted, some understood and many did not comprehend.” Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1337; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 667.
whatsoever for acquired knowledge, and since he is free from it, he is also free from
perfecting himself through his body.\(^{526}\) As this can be the attribute and rank of finality
\(\textit{martaba-yi khātimiyat}\) […] there is no doubt that absolute human perfection \(\textit{muṭlaqān kamāl-i insānī}\) was sealed with the Seal of the Prophets […]\(^{527}\)

These passages in Rashīd al-Dīn’s \textit{Asʾila va-ajviba} and \textit{Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq} betray the
vizier’s appropriation of key concepts from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210). As Tariq Jaffer
has recently demonstrated, al-Rāzī draws in his commentaries, most notably, his Qurʾān
exegesis, and works on \textit{kalām} (theology) and \textit{falsafa} (philosophy), on core ideas of Aristotelian-
Avicennian philosophy and Muʿtazilism, and naturalized them into Sunnī theology with the aim
of setting Sunnī exegesis on rational foundations.\(^{528}\) In his theorization of prophethood, Rashīd
al-Dīn draws on al-Rāzī’s construction of a “teleological model of prophecy that assumes key
Avicennian principles”.\(^{529}\)

In his argument for the necessity of prophethood, al-Rāzī too adopted the Avicennian
principle that if a human attribute is found in deprivation, by necessity it must also exist in
perfection. Thus, al-Rāzī foregrounds his argument for the existence of prophethood in a
“hierarchy of human perfection”. Al-Rāzī argues for the unequal distribution of the intellect’s
capacity to achieve theoretical knowledge.\(^{530}\) Ayman Shihadeh examines how al-Rāzī delineates
a “hierarchy of human souls according to their theoretical perfection,” in which the highest levels

\(^{526}\) Shihadeh, \textit{The Teleological Ethics of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī} (Leiden, 2006), 124: “in this, he follows Ibn Sina,
who maintains that the purpose of the soul’s attachment to matter, and of its having a practical intellect, is the
perfection of its theoretical aspect, which alone leads to happiness.”

\(^{527}\) Rashīd al-Dīn presents himself also, in parallel to the Ilkhan, as uneducated, “intuitive theologian.” See below.

\(^{528}\) Jaffer, 10-14.

\(^{529}\) Ibid., 203-4; Shihadeh, \textit{Teleological Ethics}, 135-140.

\(^{530}\) “We have shown that perfection and imperfection appear in various degrees and disparate levels among people.
Therefore, as we are able to see individuals, who have reached great proximity to cattle and beasts in imperfection,
stupidity and heedlessness, similarly, on the side of perfection, there will have to exist perfect and virtuous
individuals. Necessarily, there will exist among them an individual who is the most perfect and virtuous of them. He
will be the last stages of humanity and the first stages of angelhood.” Translated by Shihadeh, ibid., 138.
of happiness are occupied by souls that have reached demonstrative knowledge.⁵³¹ Al-Rāzī considers the main goal of theological speculation, through which one attains knowledge on the nature and existence of God and his relationship with the world, to gain happiness (saʿāda) and perfection (kamāl).⁵³² Al-Rāzī observes that “the soul is perfected by knowledge, and that it realizes, by this acquisition, a happiness that surpasses all sensory pleasure.” After death, the soul will experience “posthumous happiness or misery in accordance with its level of perfection or imperfection.” Al-Rāzī’s understanding of the afterlife is central to Rashīd al-Dīn’s refutation of the Buddhists’ belief in reincarnation as well.

Al-Rāzī’s equation of the attainment of perfection through theological reflection with “human good” comprises the basis of his understanding of the prophet as “a man who invites people to this perfection.” The goal of revelation is, thus, to perfect the imperfect souls.⁵³³ Al-Rāzī describes a higher level of “rare intellects that have a special ability to attain knowledge with little effort and discursive reflection.” This level includes the prophets and the saints, who “require neither learning nor the instrument of logic to attain theoretical perfection.” These individuals discover knowledge intuitively, without the need for a guiding teacher.⁵³⁴

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⁵³¹ Al-Rāzī explains that one can reach the demonstrative/discursive level through learning, assistance from others, or by reliance on logic and other “discursive procedures” – in other words, theological speculation. According to al-Rāzī, the rational soul uses the body solely as an instrument for achieving perfection. Ibid., 117.

⁵³² Al-Rāzī earlier held as other Ashʿarites mutakallīmūn that rational reflection on God is legally obligatory for those capable. In his later work, however, al-Rāzī moved away from his earlier kalām outlook and made the legal obligation a secondary purpose of rational reflection. Shihadeh, “From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī,” 173-74

⁵³³ “Theology is no longer viewed as being in the service of scriptural creed, by providing theoretical support. Instead, Revelation itself becomes primarily a means to the ultimate goal of intellectual perfection, rather than to communicating theological knowledge to men […]”. Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Shihadeh, Teleological Ethics, 125-6. According to Avicenna, the prophetic faculty has an exceptionally powerful aptitude for intuition (ḥads) which allows it to achieve theoretical knowledge. People differ in their capacity to attain knowledge. See Jaffer, 139. Al-Rāzī supports Avicenna’s epistemological theory of intuition: “since we notice that the degrees of this aptitude differ in power and weakness and smallness and greatness, then it not impossible that there exists a soul that extends to the furthest degree in power and quickness of aptitude for the apprehension of the true natures of things such that this person comprehends knowledge of things without searching or wanting […] that faculty is called the sacred [prophetic].” Translated by Jaffer, 140.
Due to their intellectual and moral perfection, the prophets are also endowed with the distinct aptitude to perfect the souls of the imperfect (takmīl al- nāğiṣīn). Thus, in al-Rāzī’s hierarchy of human souls, the lowest level is occupied by the majority of human beings, who are imperfect and defective (nāqiṣ), the second level by the rank of the saints, āvliyā’, who “have both theoretical and practical perfection, but are incapable of perfecting others”; and the final level by the prophets, who are also capable of perfecting the souls of the imperfect. Just as common human beings can vary in their imperfection, saints and prophets, too, vary in their degrees of perfection and in their capacity to perfect others. According to al-Rāzī, prophets are more perfect than saints, for the prophet is endowed with absolute perfection, kamāl muṭlaq.

Rashīd al-Dīn’s approach to the ilm-i fītrī is informed by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s (Avicennian) ideas about the differences (tafāvat) of the intellect’s capacity to attain perfection. In his Laṭā’if al-haqā’iq, for example, Rashīd al-Dīn defines natural knowledge, ‘ilm-i fītrī, as a primordial type of knowledge that God had taught human beings at the beginning (dar mabda’-i fiṭrat). Although all individuals are endowed with a share of God’s teaching, “divine emanation/effluence (fayḍ) is distributed to each individual in accordance with his state [and] in agreement with his capacity (isti’dād) and aptitude (qābiliyyat) […] and in this [in the levels of intellectual and moral capacity] there is the possibility of a great variety (tafāvat)”. Rashīd al-Dīn’s concept of natural, intuitive knowledge draws on al-Rāzī’s representation of hierarchical system of knowledge.

535 On the way al-Rāzī synthesizes Avicennian notions with Ghazālīan concepts to further explain the prophet’s moral perfection and ability to perfect others by curing their moral and intellectual depravity, see Jaffer, 205ff. In al-Rāzī’s thought, the proof of prophethood via necessity is superior to the proof from miracles. Shihadeh, Teleological Ethics, 135.
536 Ibid., 135.
537 Al-Rāzī, thus, “took to construct a conception of the prophet’s soul that reconciled ancient and Islamic philosophical ideas about the soul’s perfection with Sunni ideas about prophetic guidance.” Jaffer, 212.
538 Laṭā’if al-haqā’iq, 38-9. This variety must be finite,
In *Kitāb al-jabr*, al-Rāzī postulates that “all acquired (muktasab) knowledge will depend on self-evident /[a priori] (badīhī) knowledge that the mind knows immediately and spontaneously, not by choice.” Al-Rāzī argues that self-evident knowledge is not produced through human will or control, implying that its origins are divine.\(^{539}\) Muslim theologians define *ʿilm badīhī* (self-evident, *a priori* or direct knowledge) as one type of the two kinds of the *ʿilm darūrī*, necessary knowledge (primary/immediate knowledge). The latter is defined in contrast to acquired knowledge (muktasab) as knowledge “occurring without man’s having power to produce and prove it”.\(^{540}\) Rashīd al-Dīn’s notion of the priority of *ʿilm-i fiṯrī* is, indeed, in accordance with al-Rāzī’s view that, knowledge and certain theological convictions that are obtained through man’s “primordial nature/disposition” (*fitra*) are “preferable to knowledge obtained through speculative arguments”.\(^{541}\)

In the above noted treatise in the *Asʾila va-ajviba*, Öljaitū’s high level of *ʿilm-i fiṯrī*, knowledge that enables him to arrive at theological speculations with no previous training or study, is confirmed through the example of the Prophet Muḥammad himself. Rashīd al-Dīn interprets Öljaitū’s comment on the prophetic tradition to relate and confirm Muhammad’s perfect *ʿilm-i fiṯrī* and exceptional intellect by equating “poverty” with natural, intuitive knowledge. By presenting the Mongol ruler as preaching for the Prophet Muḥammad’s unique rank, Rashīd al-Dīn has Muḥammad Khudābanda (Öljaitū) reaffirm his own rank as one of the rare gifted intellects that can effortlessly and intuitively uncover hidden knowledge.\(^{542}\)

\(^{539}\) Shihadeh, *Teleological Ethics*, 31.

\(^{540}\) Abrahamov concludes that “necessary knowledge” has five features: “a. occurrence without one’s power; b. necessity; c. production by God; d. absence of doubts; e. absence of speculation.” A few theologians, however, regard necessary knowledge as the object of man’s will and power. Binyamin Abrahamov, “Necessary knowledge in Islamic theology,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 20: 1 (1993), 20-32 (21). Sabra defines necessary knowledge as “made up of self-evident truths and common, undetachable, experience.” Sabra, 21-22.

\(^{541}\) Ibid., 25-6.

\(^{542}\) We find similar statements made by Rashīd al-Dīn for the Ilkhan Ghazan, though not nearly as elaborate as is the case with his brother Öljaitū. Thus, the vizier describes Ghazan as possessing perfect knowledge and wisdom. He
The vizier uses the case of Muḥammad’s illiteracy (ummīyya) not just to prove Īljeitū’s intellectual excellence, but also Rashīd al-Dīn’s own position as an “autodidact,” an “intuitive theologian.” In a short treatise in Laṭāʾīf al-ḥaqāʾiq, Rashīd al-Dīn explicates how he first began to compose theological works and grounds his authority as an author in his visionary experiences. Similar to his presentation of Īljeitū and the Prophet as illiterate prodigies, who enjoy a higher level of natural knowledge, which they gain through communication with the divine, Rashīd al-Dīn presents himself in this treatise (and in others) as an uneducated individual. With no previous proper training in the sciences, Rashīd al-Dīn instinctively gains “philosophical-theological literacy”, and achieves a deeper understanding of theological matters. He narrates the gradual process by which he came to trust his own theological “voice,” and the external encouragement he received from scholars (Tāj al-Dīn Muʿminān), and furthermore, the confirmation he gained from the Prophet Muḥammad himself, and from ʿAlī, Hasan and Ḥusayn in a dream, which he dates to 26 of Ramaḍān, 705 (August 18, 1305). They motivated him to commit his ideas to paper, starting with his treatise on the true meanings of the Prophet Muḥammad’s illiteracy, which he alleges to have completed within a short span of half an

writes that the Ilkhan would spend his time engaging in discussion with the learnt, and the in-depth comprehension he would show in these discussions/debates (mabāḥith) went “far beyond the comprehension of any philosopher or wise man.” Rashīd al-Dīn enumerates Ghazan’s knowledge as encompassing the conditions of various religions, languages (Arabic, Persian, Hindi, Kashmiri, Tibetan, Chinese, “Frankish, and all other languages”), the manners of past kings, the history of the Mongols and their ancestral trees, battle strategies, crafts (goldsmithing, blacksmithing, painting and more), the art of alchemy, medicine, knowledge of minerals, spells, and astronomy. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1335-41; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 664-69. A similar statement as to the Ilkhan Ghazan’s intuitive (“natural disposition”, āʿīda) insight into the rational sciences with no previous learning made by Rashīd al-Dīn is also reported in Mamluk accounts. See Amitai-Preiss, “New material,” 25.

Laṭāʾīf al-ḥaqāʾiq, 35-51. Hoffmann comments that “these narratives function as a way of compensating or even over-compensating for a lack in conventional Islamic scholarship and his status as a convert to Islam.” “Speaking about oneself,” 10.

Which he refers to as renewed knowledge (dānishī mujaddad). Laṭāʾīf al-ḥaqāʾiq, 42.

As the vizier himself explains that “although the meaning of illiteracy is not knowing how to write or read, if an individual does not learn a science, he is illiterate in that science, and there are many sciences that this poor one [the vizier] has not learnt from teachers and has not read.” Ibid., 50.
hour. Rashīd al-Dīn, moreover, directly ascribes his intuitive knowledge to the Prophet claiming that Muḥammad had granted him a minute portion of his own “illiteracy.”

In addition to Öljeytü’s intuitive intellect, Rashīd al-Dīn also promotes the image of Öljeytü as the champion of reason, “the king of kalām.” Rashīd al-Dīn repeatedly states in his regard that kalām al-mulūk mulūk al-kalām (“The words of kings are the kings of words”). In his tafsīr, al-Rāzī reconciles two apparent oppositional and autonomous sources of knowledge, arguing for the compatibility of human reason (ʿaql) or knowledge, obtained through rational means or experience, with the transmitted knowledge (naql), which is contained in the Qurʾān and the prophetic traditions. Seeking to “close the conceptual gap” between the two through taʾwil, figurative and allegorical reading of the Qurʾān, al-Rāzī argues for the priority of reason over transmitted knowledge when the apparent sense of scripture contradicts conclusions reached through discursive reasoning. Rashīd al-Dīn follows al-Rāzī in arguing for the congruity of human reason and scripture. He accordingly conceives of Öljeytü’s intellect as a source of human reason, presenting the Ilkhan as campaigning for reason in his court audiences and debates, and forcing all the present to follow the ironclad fist of reason.

Öljeytü’s campaign for reason aside, Rashīd al-Dīn also employs more direct Avicennian terminology when narrating Öljeytü’s unique intellect. He attributes to the Ilkhan a strong “intuitive capacity,” which Ibn Sīnā considered as one of the three elements that constitute prophethood (together with strong imaginative revelation and powerful practical faculty). Ibn

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546 This treatise is found in the vizier’s Kitāb al-tawdīḥāt, to which, unfortunately, I have not yet gained access.
547 Lāṭāʾ if al-ḥaqāʾiq, 50.
548 Jaffer, 84-117.
549 The Sultan Öljeytü, he writes, “ordered that anyone who says something [at court audiences and debates], must say rational things that cannot be denied, or else, they [their words] will not be accepted. If you, or any other person from the astronomers, the philosophers and the wise speak, what you say must appear true to one’s mind, and explain it through [rational] proofs until it is clear; after that, it will be accepted.” Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq, 87. See also Rashīd al-Dīn’s treatise on Sharḥ-iʿulm-i maʿaqūl va-manqūl in Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq, where he argues for the conformity of the transmitted knowledge with human reason. Ibid., 401-402.
Sīnā explained “intellectual revelation,” hads (“quick wit,” “intuition”), as the capacity to gain, by hitting “on the middle term of a syllogism,” “instantaneous scientific knowledge without having to expend any effort in learning or formulating arguments”.

Ibn Sīnā found that “it is possible that there is a person amongst human beings whose soul has been rendered so powerful through extreme purity and intense contact with intellectual principles that he blazes with hads.” This individual possesses a “holy intellect.” In Rashīd al-Dīn’s account of the Ilkhan’s secret confession (above), Öljeitū employs Avicennian terminology to speak of his gradual progress, from applying his exceptional capacity to attain syllogisms (qiyās) and his experience (tajriba) in order to gain new insights, to the state in which the Ilkhan could effortlessly attain secrets that remain hidden from others through his “intuitive capacity.” Moreover, he can read the minds of his companions and servants in accordance with certain signs and appearances.

As discussed above, in al-Rāzī’s hierarchy of human souls, the perfect souls of the prophets are also capable of perfecting the souls of the imperfect (takmīl al-nāqišīn). Shihadeh observes that according to al-Rāzī, “the prophet’s ability to perfect others lies in the prophet’s soul itself.” In his Qur’anic commentary, al-Rāzī describes the perfect souls of the prophets “emanating their lights on the souls of the deficient,” and compares this to the sunlight emanating from “the substance (javhar) of the sun” on earthly bodies. Prophets are souls that have “reach[ed] perfection and illumination (ishrāq) to the point that it becomes perfecting of

550 “To find the link the combines two independent propositions into a compelling rational augment.”
552 Compare with Ibn Sīnā’s statement about the significance of direct experience in comparison to syllogism: “All sensible and intellectual matters have aspects that can be known through syllogism (bi’l-qiyās) and characteristic states that are known [only] by experience (bi’l-tajriba). Just as neither flavor nor the ultimate nature of sensory pleasure can be captured by syllogism – for at most, syllogism can apprehend the affirmation of their [existence] devoid of specific details […] as for their specific characteristic, however, it can only be known through direct appreciation (mubāshara), to which not everyone is guided.” Translated by Alexander Treiger, Inspired Knowledge in Islamic Thought: al-Ghazālī’s theory of mystical cognition and its Avicennian foundation (London, 2012), 60-61.
those who are deficient (mukammilat al-nāqiṣīn)

Al-Rāzī, furthermore, writes that the Prophet Muḥammad’s soul “was a powerful, luminous, pure and radiant soul. So if Muḥammad supplicates [God] on [people’s] behalf […] effects of his spiritual power will emanate upon their souls. Their souls will become illuminated by this, their spirits will become purified, and they will be transformed from darkness into light, and from corporality into spirituality”.

Al-Rāzī appropriates the Avicennan theory of intellectual development and explicates Ibn Sīnā’s interpretation of the Light Verse (ayat al-nūr) as a representation of the process through which the rational soul achieves theoretical knowledge and perfection (istikmāl). Yet, as Jaffer demonstrates, in addition to his adoption of a rationalistic and philosophical outlook, al-Rāzī also embraces and refines al-Ghazālī’s method of Qur’ānic exegesis, assuming basic Sufi principles that diverge from the Avicennian epistemic scheme. Thus, al-Rāzī also endorses the idea that “a person’s religious belief can be strengthened through divine inspiration and the notion that religious knowledge of the divine is bestowed upon an individual’s heart rather than achieved through the intellect’s self effort”.

Drawing on al-Ghazālī, al-Rāzī holds that knowledge can be bestowed on the believer’s soul through inspiration (ilhām), and that this divine/inspirational knowledge (maʿrifā) is represented by light: the more knowledge one attains, the more light one’s

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553 Al-Rāzī explains that the lights emanating from the sacred pure souls of the prophets do not reach the unbelievers since just like a body can only receive sunlight once it faces the sun, the soul of the deficient, too, must be directed towards the prophets. In addition, according to al-Rāzī, just as bodies receive sunlight in accordance with their distance from the sun at the end of which are those who remain in in full darkness, so there is an infinite “distribution of the levels of the souls for receiving these lights from the souls of the prophets.” Al-Rāzī, al-Tafsīr al-kabīr, 16 (Cairo, 1938), 116-117. For this passages in al-Rāzī’s discussion of the ranks of the soul, see Jaffer, 206ff.


555 Jaffer, 167.
heart gains. The lack of divine knowledge is likened to darkness, and the reception of knowledge is considered illumination.\(^{556}\)

Just as al-Rāzī uses light as a representation of belief (\textit{imān}) and knowledge, Rashīd al-Dīn configures Öljeitū as a radiant soul emanating light that eradicates disbelief and polytheism, and revives the ignorant-dead by imparting wisdom and knowledge. Furthermore, in the introduction to \textit{Kitāb al-sultāniyya}, Rashīd al-Dīn demonstrates Öljeitū’s capacity to perfect others through his intellectual and moral perfection. Rashīd al-Dīn, for examples, writes of his own “interior” being lit (\textit{nūrānī gasht}) by the light emanating from Öljeitū’s soul, and attributes his accomplishments as an author of philosophical and theological treatises to Öljeitū’s perfecting aptitude.\(^{557}\)

Rashīd al-Dīn also follows al-Rāzī by drawing on both the Avicennian rationalistic conceptualization of “intellectual revelation” as discussed and the Sufi (Ghazālīan) inspirational model, according to which knowledge is bestowed upon the individual’s soul through divine inspiration (\textit{ilhām}).\(^{558}\) As noted earlier, Rashīd al-Dīn establishes the figure of Öljeitū as drawing

\(^{556}\) Ibid., 160-1. Al-Rāzī, for example, explains that the reason for praising and thanking the prophets and angels before the students commences reading to his teacher his assignment is to “strengthen the attachment between his spirit and these sacred pure spirits so that through the strength of this attachment, something from the lights and remnants [of the prophets’ spirits] might appear in the spirit of the student, and something from the lights emanating from them will become firm in his intellect and his spirit will become strong with the aid of this emanation [and capable] to perceive the inspirational knowledge and sciences.” Al-Rāzī, \textit{al-Tafsīr al-kabīr}, 16 (Cairo, 1938), 183.

\(^{557}\) In his \textit{Dhayl-i risāla-yi ziyāarat in Bayān al-haqa \textquoteleft iq}, Rashīd al-Dīn discusses the lights he witnessed emerging from Öljeitū’s feet one evening in Shābān 710/December 1310, when he and the Ilkhan camped on their way to visit to the shrine of Salmān al-Fārisī in al-Madā’in. The purpose of their journey was to examine whether the popular tradition according to which, on the night of the fifteenth of Shābān (\textit{al-Layla al-Mubāraka}), light appears over the shrine, was true or not. The vizier is tasked with explaining the light they witnessed and he does so by using al-Ghazālī’s theory of lights (a luminous entity that can only be seen by the “inner eye”) and al-Rāzī’s reinforcement of the latter’s theory with philosophical principles. Thus, the vizier equates light with perfection, morality and good appearances, and explains that saints and prophets, in various degrees, may emit light that can only be seen by a select few in accordance with their capacities. Their souls continue to produce light after their death. Bayān al-haqa \textquoteleft iq, 331-40; Jaffer, 145-53. The witnessing of lights emerging from or descending on sacred tombs is common to both Jewish and Muslim accounts of shrine visitation. Josef W. Meri, \textit{The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in medieval Syria} (New York, 2002), 20ff.

\(^{558}\) Al-Ghazālī, too, conceives of two modes of cognition, one attained by learning and acquisition (\textit{iktisāb}) and another through divine inspiration (\textit{ilhām}) in the case of the saints, or revelation in the case of the prophets. In addition, his conception of \textit{ilhām} follows Ibn Sīnā’s \textit{hads}. Treiger, 64ff.
his authority from divine inspiration. He concludes that Öljeytū’s secret confession in Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya indicates that the Ilkhan is subject to ilhām, and that this, in addition to the rest of the miracles the Ilkhan has performed, evinces that Öljeytū occupies both the rank of the rulers and the rank of sainthood (wilāya).

However, in his later As ṵila va-ajhiba, Rashīd al-Dīn integrates ilhām into the Avicennian philosophical system and conceives of divine inspiration as a property of the rank of the absolute kings and sultans (muṣlaq mulūk va-salāṭīn). In the treatise dated to Dhū al-Qa‘da 710/April 1311, Rashīd al-Dīn answers Öljeytū’s question about the unique properties of the kings in comparison to the prophets. Öljeytū writes that “the rank (martaba) of a king who has perfect knowledge and reason (ʼilm va-ʼaql), and whose interior is lit by the light of sacred meanings (nūr-i māʾānī-yi qudsī) is extremely great, especially if he is Muslim.” The proof of this is found in a tradition of the Prophet Muḥammad, who expressed his pride in being born at the age of the just Sasanian king Anūshīrvān (531-579), in spite of the latter’s arrival “prior to Islam”. If, like

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559 This is Öljeytū’s fourth question in a line of questions about the differences between the properties of God and human beings, prophets and kings, and kings, prophets and ordinary subjects. The vizier keeps his answers terse with the exception of question four. The vizier starts with the division of prophets into the categories of nabī (prophet), rasūl (messenger), and ʿālū al-ʿazm (prophets endowed with constancy The Qur’anic ʿālū al-ʿazm were understood to be either prophets who establish a law (ṣhārīʿ) such as Noah, Abraham, Moses and Muḥammad or those who suffered the worst trials (adding Jacob, Joseph, Job and David to the list). For this term and a general discussion of the divisions of prophets, Uri Rubin, “Prophets and Prophethood,” in Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (general editor) (Brill Online, 2014), accessed 06 November 2014. http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-the-quran/prophets-and-prophethood-EQCOM_00160. Rashīd al-Dīn stresses that while all prophets are full prophets (ḥama dar muṣlaq-i nubuvvat), there exists a clear hierarchy between the nabī (prophet) and rasūl (messenger). In addition to nubuvvat, some have also the ranks of mursal, ʿālū al-ʿazm and kingship. Answering the previous question, Rashīd al-Dīn explained that revelation (wahy), prophethood (nubuvvat), and prophetic miracles (nūjīz) are particular to the prophets. As to the rank of kings, the vizier first explains that that royal customs (ʿadat va-rasm), thrones and crowns are all particular to kings

560 “I was born in the age of the just king, Anūshīrvān.” Anūshīrvān is listed among the four just Sasanian kings in the second part (“guide for princes”) of the Naṣīḥat al-mulūk, the political treatise of the great Slajūq-era scholar and intellectual Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). Al-Ghazālī (or rather, pseudo-Ghazālī) also discusses this ḥadīth noting that the Prophet was born during the age of Anūshīrvān, “who surpassed the kings who ruled before him in justice, equity and government” and “made the world prosperous.” According to the author, Anūshīrvān’s just rule was part of the Prophet’s blessings. Anūshīrvān lived two more years after the Muḥammad’s birth. Naṣīḥat al-mulūk, 83, 98-99. There is an ongoing debate about the authorship of this second part of Naṣīḥat al-mulūk. However, even if al-Ghazālī was not its author, the two sections, as Crone argues, were joined together already in the second half of
Anūshīrvān, “kings are also Lords of Auspicious Conjunction (Ṣāḥib-Qirān), their rank can be
great. Because of absolute kings and sultans (muṭlaq mulūk va-salāṭīn, my emphasis), the
Prophet would say: ‘the hearts of kings are the treasuries of God’ (qulūb al-mulūk khazāʾ 'in
Allāh) […] God adorned his [Ōljeitū’s] blessed interior with sacred lights and assorted wisdoms
so that such subtleties of truths and secrets of varied wisdoms (daqāʾ iq-ʿī ḥaqāʾ iq va-āsrār-i
ḥikmatā) reach the beings from his blessed soul”. Rashīd al-Dīn, furthermore, argues that
within this rank of absolute kings and sultans there is also a great variety of ranks, and that some
kings are held in such a high regard that they receive “different kinds of inspirations (ilḥām),”
each in accordance with his specific capacity and aptitude. The vizier, thus, positions ilḥām,
divine inspiration, as the final stage within a hierarchical system of sacral kingship that is based
on the Avicennian model of the unequal distribution of intellectual capacities.

Drawing on al-Rāżī’s appropriation of diverse interpretive schemes, Rashīd al-Dīn
conceptualizes Ōljeitū’s intellect within different, parallel frameworks – from the Ilkhan’s
natural knowledge (ʿilm fiṯrī) to his “intuitive capacity” and reception of divine inspiration.
Depicting Öljeitü’s illuminated intellect as drawing on these different autonomous sources of knowledge (philosophical, inspirational), Rashīd al-Dīn also positions the Mongol king in relation to the Prophet.

Muḥammad’s Splitting of the Moon and the Miraculous Feats of the Şāḥib-Qirān Chinggisids

Rashīd al-Dīn assumes al-Rāzī’s idea of a hierarchy of human perfection as the theoretical basis for elaborating on Öljeitü’s sovereignty in Kitāb al-sultāniyya and in his later works. Through al-Rāzī’s appropriation of Avicennian principles, the Ilkhanid vizier makes room for a new rank of sacral kingship amongst the ranks of the sacred souls of the prophets and saints.

Rashīd al-Dīn’s emphasis on the gradual progress of prophets and saints towards revelation/inspiration and the full adult station of prophethood/sainthood in the introduction to the Kitāb al-sultāniyya is the basis for the vizier’s claim of the gradual progress of Öljeitü towards his future achievement of his full potential in the rank of perfect kingship. Using the Avicennian argument for prophecy that if a human attribute is found in deprivation, it must also necessarily exist in perfection, he establishes a hierarchical system of kingly ranks that runs in parallel to that of the prophets and the saints. This system culminates in Öljeitü’s prestigious rank amongst the absolute kings (muṭlaq pādishāhān). The term muṭlaq pādishāh/malik is in

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563 Thus, in Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq, the vizier explains the existence of a near-endless hierarchy of ranks within of the category of absolute kingship: Although God endowed the absolute kings (muṭlaqan pādishāhān) with wisdom, perfection and honor that he did not give any other of their kind (aṣnāf), and their rank is so great that they were included in the class for whom it was commanded: “Obey Allāh, and obey the Messenger, and those in authority from among you” (ālit al-amr minkum) [4:59, “authority verse”] and [one wonders] how it could be possible to conceive of a position (mansab) greater than that of the people whose name and position is stated alongside God and the messenger prophets - nevertheless, this is a rank that all the kings share. But a king who is a perfect in intellect, knowledge, justice and good qualities, his rank could be the most perfect of the ranks of the kings. And although it is said: “The words of the kings are the kings of the words” (kalām al-mulūk mulūk al-kalām), which means that just like the kings are the kings of the people so are their words [the kings’ words] the kings of all other words; and this
itself an appropriation of al-Rāzī’s concept of the “absolute perfection” (kamāl muṭlaq) of the souls of the prophets. The foundation of this new rank of sacral kingship is the example of the Prophet Muḥammad’s exalted rank: if Muḥammad is the culmination of human perfection (kamāl-i insānī) and he occupies the best rank of prophethood, Öljeitū similarly occupies the most perfect rank of kingship. Rashīd al-Dīn, therefore, positions Öljeitū’s miraculous feats alongside prophetic miracles.

According to Ibn Sīnā, the souls of the prophets have the capacity to cause change in objects outside of their own bodies, from the ability to bring about storms and cause earthquakes to the capacity to split the moon.564 The vizier claims that by imparting wisdom and guiding individuals to new truths through his remarkable questions and astute observations, “the masīḥ-like Öljeitū has revived [from ignorance] and will revive thousands and thousands of deceased and this is a great miracle (karāmatī)” (above). While Rashīd al-Dīn is diligent in Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya in emphasizing the distinction between prophetic miracles (muʿjaz) and Öljeitū’s own saintly miracles (karāmat), he also positions Öljeitū’s supernatural feats, for example, his miraculous birth story in relation to the childhood feats of the prophets.

In another example in the vizier’s treatise on “the falsity of the transmigration of souls (buṭlān-i tanāsukh) and the validity of the gathering of the bodies on the Day of Judgment” in his As’ila va-ajviba,565 Rashīd al-Dīn depicts the differences between the Chinggisid “Ṣāḥib-Qirān Kings” and the Prophet Muḥammad as quantitative rather, than qualitative. The account starts with Rashīd al-Dīn’s report of a surprise visit of the Ilkhan Öljeitū (“like the sun that fills the world

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564 Griffel, 172-73.
565 As’ila va-ajviba, 1-37. The same treatise also appears in Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq, 351-92.
with light and the spirit that revives the body”) to his tent one evening on Rajab 711 (November-December, 1311), while Rashīd al-Dīn was working on his treatise on “the falsity of transmigration.” Rashīd al-Dīn was delighted by the Ilkhan’s wish to see his treatise and remarked to the Mongol ruler that “time and time again it has been proven that the King of Islam is a performer of miracles (ṣāḥib-i karāmāt)”. However, after a short while of reading out loud, Rashīd al-Dīn was interrupted by the Ilkhan’s question. Reaching the point in the treatise where he explains that one’s wrongdoings and sins might block the influence of auspicious and inauspicious stars over one’s fortune, Rashīd al-Dīn compares the stars to a sharp blade and the sins to the stone, and argues that “no matter how sharp a sword of steal is, it will not leave a big mark on things that are very strong.” Öljeitü, then, challenges the vizier with the question: “if there were something that was sharper than the blade, what could that be?” Rashīd al-Dīn, then, responds that the only thing sharper than a blade is:

The perfect sacred souls (nufūs kāmila muqaddasa), like the souls of the prophets, saints (avliyā) and Şāhib-Qirān Kings; and such kings are like your [Öljeitü’s] excellent ancestor Chinggis Khan and his descendants such as the King of Islam [Öljeitü] that the stars have no influence over their perfect souls […] and it is determined that some of the souls of the perfect are even more perfect and more noble (shariftar) than the heavenly bodies (aflāk); their honor with God is so great that the souls of some of the perfect ones can leave a mark (athar) on the heavenly bodies and the stars. An indication of this is that the most perfect man, the Seal of the Prophets, the best of prayers be upon him, split the moon (inshiqāq-i qamar). A property (khāsiyyat) of the souls of the Şāhib-Qirān Kings is that kingship is theirs for a long period (muddathā), and anything that takes place during their reign, happens favorably, in accordance with their wishes. There is no doubt that although this success is in accordance with the horoscope (tāli’), it was not possible that the stars of misfortune (naḥs) have their gaze (nazar) [on earth] alongside their [the kings’] horoscope

566 Rashīd al-Dīn explains that he was working on his interpretation of the Qur’anic verse: “Those who deny Our verses/signs and treat them with arrogance, the doors of heaven shall not be opened to them (lā tufattaḫu lahum abwab al-samāʾ) nor will they enter the garden” (Surat al-a’raf, 40), According to the vizier, since Öljeitü arrived like the shining sun at the vizier’s dwelling at the very moment that Rashīd al-Dīn was engaged in explaining how the gates of Heaven could be closed or opened, and how the stars of good fortune (kavākib-i saʿīd) might or might not influence the horoscope (tāli’i) of an arrogant person (muṭakabbir), it was a sign, first, that God has opened before the vizier the gates of Heaven (darhā-i āsmān); and second, that Rashīd al-Dīn was granted this great blessing for refuting the claims of ahl-i tanāsukh.
for a lengthy period of time, and moreover, even if this would occur, they [inauspicious heavenly bodies] could not have influenced their horoscopes.

The hierarchical system of miracles established by Rashīd al-Dīn in this passage positions the  ShoppingCart-Qirān kings on the same supernatural spectrum of the prophets, even if they are found at its opposing, extreme end. This passage also illustrates the extent to which Rashīd al-Dīn was preoccupied with elucidating the relationship between the Prophet Muḥammad and the house of Chinggis Khan, foremost the Ilkhan Öljeitū.

As discussed in chapter two, the Ilkhan Arghun’s vizier Sa’d al-Dawla attempted in his mahḍar to articulate Arghun’s image as a superior, absolute monarch. He did so through the “division of labor” between lawgiver prophets and absolute kings (malik ‘alā al-iṭlāq, or world regulators, mudabbir-i ʿālam) in Ṭūsī’s Akhlāq-i nāṣirī (The Nasirean Ethics). That Rashīd al-Dīn, too, was preoccupied two decades later with defining the place of Chinggisid kingship in relation to the rank of prophethood (and sainthood) is apparent not only from his positioning of the Chinggisid souls alongside the perfect souls of the prophets, or from his comparison between Öljeitū’s childhood miracles and the early premature signs of prophethood, but also from the overall layout of Kitāb al-sultāniyya. Whereas the work is largely devoted to the vizier’s discussion of the science of prophetology, that is, the different ranks of prophethood and proofs

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567 As ʾila va-ajviba, 23-5. This final element echoes the vizier’s earlier claim in his introduction to the Kitāb al-sultāniyya (above) where he argues that Öljeitū was able to protect the Ilkhanid realm from the destructive influence of Saturn that was to herald droughts and hunger. Shihadeh notes that al-Rāzī adopted the approach of the twelfth-century philosopher Abū al-Barakāt and “talisman specialists” and argues that the souls of the moving planets are the sources for human souls and that each planet soul is characterized by a specific essence that also determines the essence of the souls that it produces. Each planet soul or “archetype” is characterized by different qualities (ṣifā, khāṣṣa) in a perfect way, and these qualities appear imperfectly in the human souls that originate from it. Furthermore, the planet soul considers the human souls like a father thinks of his children and assists them. Shihadeh, Teleological Ethics, 118.
(barāhīn) of Muḥammad’s finality of prophethood, Rashīd al-Dīn devotes his extensive introduction in Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya to the proofs (barāhīn) of Öljeitū’s sacral kingship.568

Rashīd al-Dīn’s extensive engagement with the topic of prophetic ranks, Öljeitū’s “own” inquiries into the relationship between prophets and kings, in addition to Sa’d al-Dawla’s similar engagement with defining Chinggisid kingship in relation to prophethood, all indicate that the relationship between prophethood and Chinggisid authority was a concern at the Ilkhanid court. These discussions played an instrumental role in situating Chinggisid kingship within the Islamic salvation history. One of the main objectives of Rashīd al-Dīn’s “theological project” was the negotiation of Chinggisid notions of sanctified, Heavenly decreed authority into Islamic ideas about the sources of authority, but its final outcome was a novel way of “theologizing” kingship within Islam through prophethood, that is, as Muḥammadan kingship. Rashīd al-Dīn, in other words, creates a Muḥammad-centered political theology.

Rashīd al-Dīn’s appropriation of key concepts of al-Rāzī’s theological and philosophical writing to present Öljeitū as a radiant soul and recipient of divine inspiration, who can with no previous learning or literacy, gain intuitive knowledge/revelation that is unattainable to others, but nevertheless, adheres to the essential truths of Islamic theological convictions, corresponds with the Mongol distinct political theology. The conviction that the Chinggisid rulers were “untutored geniuses who without book learning replicated the great traditions of learning in their realm” was a central aspect of the Chinggisid charisma, as discussed in the introduction.569

This idea is also attested in the way members of the Chinggisid Yuan dynasty in China approached Confucianism asserting that their “early dynastic ancestors had instinctual inborn

568 That Rashīd al-Dīn employs the term barāhīn to discuss the proofs of Öljeitū’s exceptional kingship is telling as well since it reminds his readers of the philosophical and theological discussions over the proofs (barāhīn) of prophethood.

569 Atwood, forthcoming.
knowledge of the vital Neo-Confucian ideas of principle and ritual.” The adoption of Confucianism in the later Yuan dynasty was not understood in terms of conversion, but rather conceived as reversion to Mongol ancestral beliefs. Furthermore, the Mongols understood the Chinggisid ruler’s personal superiority to result from his “directly intuited wisdom,” which broadly conformed to the scriptural traditions of the people he ruled. His reception of divine guidance, a direct and unmediated channel to the Heavens, was free from the intervention of established clergy or ritual experts. Rashīd al-Dīn’s presentation of Öljeytū’s unmediated link to God closely follows this understanding of the Chinggisid ruler as an untutored prodigy. He makes use of al-Rāzī’s Aristotelian-Avicennian theory of human perfection to reconstruct the figure of the Chinggisid ruler in a manner that would agree with the Mongols’ own understanding of Chinggisid exceptionality, but also in a way that re-conceptualizes Chinggisidness within Islam.

I argue that Rashīd al-Dīn saw in this endeavor, this project of cultural translation and mediation, a necessity stemming from the highly competitive inter-religious and inter-confessional environment of the Ilkhanid court. His access to the Ilkhan hinged, among other things, on his claim to being the latter’s exclusive intermediary, the sole individual able to comprehend and articulate the sovereign’s words, and mediate between Öljейtū’s “own” perceptions of his authority (as Rashīd al-Dīn’s presents them) and Islamic notions of authority.

Similar to Sa’d al-Dawla, Rashīd al-Dīn identified the influence of Buddhists, and in particular their dogma of reincarnation, as one of his main competitors at court. Next in this chapter, I explore how the vizier uses al-Rāzī’s ideas about perfect souls and their afterlife to

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570 Ibid., 102.
571 Rashīd al-Dīn states, for example, that Ghazan had such great knowledge of the different religions and beliefs that during debates with religious experts, they could only respond to nine out of ten questions he asked, whereas he knew the answer to all. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1337; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 667.
refute the Buddhist belief in the transmigration of souls and to establish an alternative to their mediation of Chinggisid kingship. I identify three strategies Rashīd al-Dīn deploys to refute Buddhism by appropriating al-Rāzī’s theory of human perfection and applying it to the Chinggisid afterlife: (a) undermining the Buddhist dogma of reincarnation; (b) proposing an alternative to Buddhism’s mediation and support of Chinggisid kingship; and (c) explaining the Buddhist path with familiar terms, and in a way that would subject Buddhism to the superiority of the Prophet Muḥammad and his message. Rashīd al-Dīn brilliantly marries together the Chinggisid claim to absolute political authority with Islamic supersessionist claims. He makes the idea of deserting the Muslim belief and monotheism akin to discarding Chinggisidness.

**Rashīd al-Dīn and the Dharma Revisited**

Whereas Rashīd al-Dīn’s three treatises on the transmigration of the souls and the resurrection of the bodies have not been addressed in modern scholarship, the vizier’s engagement with Buddhism, namely his *Life and Teachings of the Buddha*, is well-known. The work is regarded as the best-informed account of Buddhism in the medieval Muslim world. Rashīd al-Dīn, however, viewed both his description of the Dharma and refutation of the Buddhist’s doctrine of reincarnation as inherently interlinked (below). It is, therefore, important that we briefly consider, before approaching his apologetic works, his presentation of the Buddha’s life and the Dharma.

As a number of scholars have remarked, what made Rashīd al-Dīn’s example of “inter-ecumenical writing”, 572 his exploration of the Dharma and the life of the Buddha in the second

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572 Atwood defines “inter-ecumenical writing” in the Mongol period as the outcome of the increasing interactions of people and ideas under Mongol rule. Atwood, *forthcoming.*
section of his account on India in the second volume of the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* so exceptional is that unlike his predecessors, for example, al-Bīrūnī (d. 1048) in his history of India, Rashīd al-Dīn had access to actual living Buddhists. Rashīd al-Dīn names one particular Buddhist informant for his account of the Dharma, a Kashmiri monk by the name of Kāmalashrī. Most scholars have studied Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Life and Teachings of the Buddha* to determine what kind of Buddhism was being practiced in Ilkhanid Iran and the Mongol Empire more broadly. There is strong evidence to indicate the influence of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism (Varjayāna) in Rashīd al-Dīn’s account, for example, his praise of Varjayāna Buddhism as a superior teaching. However, there are also compelling indications that the author relied also on Sanskrit Nikaya and Chinese Buddhist texts for their sources. As Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim has recently noted, we should, nevertheless, bear in mind that even when we can ascertain the identity of a specific text (the *Devatāsūtra* for example) that was incorporated into Rashīd al-Dīn’s presentation of Buddhism, we are unable at this stage to determine with certainty whether the text used by Rashīd al-Dīn and/or Kāmalashrī had originated with Tibetan, Sanskrit, Chinese or Uyghur sources, especially since these texts were transmitted between different languages, and at times, both textually and orally. These methodological concerns notwithstanding, Rashīd al-

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574 For some theories about the identity of Kāmalashrī, in particular, in light of the connections between Tibetan Buddhism and Kashmiri Buddhism, see Yoeli-Talalim, 202-204. One theory is that Kāmalashrī was a Kashmiri based in China. It has been suggested that we should view Rashīd al-Dīn’s presentation of Buddhism more as a collaborative work of cultural translation between the two than a single authored text. Akasoy, 189.

575 Thus, Jahn argues that: “In my opinion, it is scarcely open to doubt that the account given by Kāmalashrī of Buddha and his teaching convey a picture of the religious opinions and conceptions which were commonly held by the Mongols of Iran.” Jahn, “Kāmalashrī - Rashīd al-Dīn,” xxxiii.

576 Yoeli-Talalim, 207-208.
Dīn’s account indicates that Buddhism as practiced in the Ilkhanate was drawn from diverse Buddhist traditions from across Asia.\textsuperscript{577} Aside for several exceptions such as the account of the Buddha’s achievement of nirvana in a dome-shaped structure made of pure crystal (\textit{gunbadī az bullūr-i pāk}),\textsuperscript{578} the three main foci of Rashīd al-Dīn’s account - the Buddha’s biography, the Wheel of Life, and the worship of Maitreya - are rather faithful and straightforward accounts of the Buddha’s life and Buddhist doctrines. Johan Elverskog observes that Rashīd al-Dīn’s account pays extra attention to Buddhist ideas of reward and punishment, as well as to Buddhist notions of heaven and hell. He wonders whether this is on account of its correlation with Islamic tradition, or of Rashīd al-Dīn’s attempt “to make the Dharma comprehensible and possibly even palatable to a Muslim audience”.\textsuperscript{579} It is evident that Rashīd al-Dīn generously utilizes Muslim terms to explain Buddhist ideas, thus, fostering certain commonalities between Buddhism and Islam. For example, the Buddhist demon Mara is addressed as \textit{Iblīs}, and the Buddha’s spiritual advancement is cast in Sufi terminology.\textsuperscript{580}

\textsuperscript{577} As Elverskog notes, it is important to remember that “the Mongol empire brought together not only the Buddhist and Muslim worlds; it also brought together for the first time Buddhists of many different cultural backgrounds and religious affiliations […] and it is precisely this rich Buddhist diversity of Il-khanid Iran that the \textit{Compendium of Chronicles} captures […] and] that is too often obscured when modern scholars try to make distinctions based on narrow definitions of either doctrinal affiliation or modern ethnonational identifications.” Elverskog, \textit{Buddhism and Islam}, 162. Elverskog, however, also details a number of instances were there would appear to be stronger Central-Asian and Chinese influences in the text (Ibid., 157-160) whereas Yoeli-Tlalim seems to prefer the Tantric Tibetan perspective, perhaps even channeled through Uyghur Buddhism. Yoeli-Tlalim, 210-211.

\textsuperscript{578} Jahn, “Kāmalashrī - Rashīd al-Dīn,” xlviii. I used the reproductions of the facsimiles of the (soul) Arabic and Persian manuscripts included in Jahn’s \textit{Rashīd al-Dīn’s History of India}. For the death story of the Buddha and for the light in the shape of a pillar that rose out of the top of the dome see, Arabic: Royal Asiatic Society A 27 (dated 714/1314-15), 2077r; and Persian: MS Topkapi Sarayi, 940-Hazine 1654 dated (717/1317), 345r. For the use of crystal lamps in the Islamic world, Avinoam Shalem, “Fountains of light: the meaning of medieval Islamic rock crystal lamps,” \textit{Muqarnas} 11 (1994), 1-11. For illustrations of these edifice in the manuscripts, see Sheila R. Canby, “Depictions of Buddha Sakyamuni in the \textit{Jami’ al-Tavarikh} and the \textit{Majma’ al-Tavarikh},” \textit{Muqarnas} 10 (1993), 304-05.

\textsuperscript{579} Elverskog, \textit{Buddhism and Islam}, 152-54.

\textsuperscript{580} Akasoy, 173-190; Elverskog, \textit{Buddhism and Islam}, 154; Jahn, “Kāmalashrī - Rashīd al-Dīn,” xlv; for example, he uses such terms as \textit{mukāshafāt, ma riṣa, ‘ulām yaqīnīyya, khalva, and mujāhada}. See Royal Asiatic Society A 27 (Arabic), 2073v.
The most striking attempt, however, to establish parallels between Muslim and Buddhist doctrines is the presentation of the Buddha Shakyamuni as a prophet with a book, who just like Muḥammad and the Qur’an, arrives at the end of “the same evolutionary prophetic progression as in Islam”,\textsuperscript{581} Shakyamuni being the seventh and final prophet in this successive line. Rashīd al-Dīn, furthermore, notes that Kāmalashrī had told him that “according to Shākyamūnī, the meaning (ma’na) of all the prophets is one and the same. They come in every age and renew (yujaddidūn) their religion […] and the meaning of all of it is in the book Abhidharma”.\textsuperscript{582} It is further stated that the teachings of the previous prophets were all true, but that their corrupt followers misinterpreted them. As Elverskog observes, Rashīd al-Dīn creates a new historical framework for Buddhism, fitting it neatly into Muslim conceptions about prophetic missions and communication with the divine through revelation. The so-called Buddhist holy book, the Abhidharma, however, is not a collection of the words of the Buddha, but rather a compilation of exegesis on the Buddha’s teaching.\textsuperscript{583}

The idea of viewing together both bodies of writing, Rashīd al-Dīn’s Life and Teachings of the Buddha on the one hand, and his polemical anti-metempsychosis treatises on the other, are born from Rashīd al-Dīn’s own statements, which indicate that in his mind they were, indeed, inseparable. Thus, in spite of the ample attention that Rashīd al-Dīn’s account on Buddhism has received, it has been poorly noted that the vizier chose to end his account of the Dharma by adding a treatise on the topic of transmigration, copied from his earlier Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr (Key to the commentaries). Rashīd al-Dīn identifies this treatise as an examination of “the debates that Muslims and the other of People of the Book [Jews?] have with the people of transmigration

\textsuperscript{581} Elverskog, Buddhism and Islam, 155-56
\textsuperscript{582} This appears in the first chapter on Buddhism. For the Arabic text and English translation, Akasoy, 190-196.
\textsuperscript{583} Elverskog, Buddhism and Islam, 156. As Elverskog further notes, “the question of whether a religious group had a prophet and/or a holy book had always been a part of earlier Muslim taxonomies of Indian religions, and in this regard Buddhism had always come up lacking.”
(ahl-i tanāsukh) and some of the people who deny the gathering of the bodies (ḥashr-i ajsād) [on the day of resurrection] and the materialists/eternalists (dahrīyān)⁵⁸⁴ and the others.”

Explaining his reasoning for appending this earlier work as the final cord for his account on the Buddha, Rashīd al-Dīn writes that “since the history of Shākyamūnī and the state of his religion, which is the pure religion of transmigration [maḥd dīn al-tanāsukh], has come to an end, we wished to add at this point the treatise that was previously written by this poor one [Rashīd al-Dīn] regarding the refutation of the transmigration of the souls, and on the weakness of their [the people of transmigration] religion and creed.” He, furthermore, explains that he added this treatise, which disproves “their false claims,” at the end of the description of the Buddha’s life and his doctrine so that it would be “like medicine for the disease” for the readers, who have read his section on Buddhism, uncovering before the readers the depravity of their beliefs.⁵⁸⁵

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⁵⁸⁴ The dahrī (externalist) thinkers in the early Islamic period are described as believing in a cosmology with no God, but are often also remarked as holding a belief in some form of reincarnation as well. The dahrīs are often coupled in the sources with zindīgs. According to al-Jāḥiz, the “pure dahrī” did not believe in the creator, resurrection or any life after death. They likely owned their name to verse 45:24 in the Qur’an: “there is nothing apart from this life. We die and we live, and nothing but time [al-dahr] destroys us.” The dahrīs are accused of believing in the heavenly sphere divine, but not to have worshipped them. They are considered by the heresiographers as “rationalists of the reductionist type.” The sources note an affinity between “Dahrist” and pre- and early Islamic period Iranian beliefs such as Khurramdīnism, or Manichaeism. From the tenth century onwards, the main “debate” with the dahrīs was concerned with the existence of the afterlife. Patricia Crone, “Dahrīs,” El3. Brill, online. Accessed April 2, 2016. http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/dahrīs-COM_25780?ln=en &s.num=9&s.start=0; Crone, The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: rural revolt and local Zoroastrianism (Cambridge, 2012), 247-49.

⁵⁸⁵ Royal Asiatic Society A 27 (dated 714/1314-15), 207v; MS Topkapi Sarayi, 940-Hazine 1654 dated (717/1317), 345r-345v. Rashīd al-Dīn’s decision to repeat at the end of his Life of the Buddha his earlier treatise against transmigration from Miṭṭāḥ al-taṯāfāsīr seems a particularly fitting choice as one can make the case that the vizier’s Miṭṭāḥ al-taṯāfāsīr was linked to Ilkhanid court disputations between Buddhists and Muslims. As we noted, in his Life and Teachings of the Buddha Rashīd al-Dīn pays particular attention to Buddhist notions of karma and reincarnation (the Wheel of Life), reward and punishment, and the Buddhist perceptions of heaven and hell. Miṭṭāḥ al-taṯāfāsīr addresses the same set of topics, albeit from the Muslim perspective. Hence, the first epistle in the second section (qism) of Miṭṭāḥ al-taṯāfāsīr is titled “on good and evil,” and discusses questions such as why God created good and evil, do pure evil and pure good exist, and will evildoers and good doers be punished or rewarded in this world or the next, and in what manner. The second epistle focuses on “the rewards of good and bad actions.” The third epistle deals with “the hour of death and length of life, and on charity that could repel misfortune,” whereas the fourth examines “the question of predestination” (jabr va-qadr). This is followed by Rashīd al-Dīn’s first treatise against the transmigration of souls, which the vizier appended to the end of his Life and Teachings of the Buddha. The final
The treatise starts with an outline of the main points of disagreement between the two parties, the “people of transmigration” and the “People of the Book”:

The people of transmigration (tanāsukh) believe in the pre-existence (qidam) of the souls and that every soul that leaves the body, immediately joins (ta'lluq) another body in accordance with the actions of that person. They even say that every soul that reaches a lower level joins vile bodies to the extent that [they say that] it also joins the bodies of vile animals, until they reach the level of a mosquito. And every soul that reaches perfection [my emphasis] joins a body that is nobler (ashraf) than its earlier body, and also a few souls that reach perfection join nobler bodies until they reach the degree of kings and prophets [my emphasis]. And the school/dogma (madhhab) of the Muslims and the rest of the People of the Book is that the soul does not pre-exist, but is temporally created (muḥdath), and the resurrection of the bodies (ḥashr-i ajzād) will definitely take place, but in the same body that the soul left. The people who do good deeds, will go to heaven, and the people who do bad, will go to hell.\(^{586}\)

The main points of disagreement according to Rashīd al-Dīn are, therefore, the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul in contrast to the temporal origination of the soul;\(^{587}\) and the transmigration of the souls into new bodies after death, in accordance with the individual’s accumulation of karma and his/her station of perfection, in contrast to the fate of the souls in

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epistle is particularly intriguing as it mirrors the Buddhist discussion of karma and good fortune by exploring the subtle differences between “capacity/capability (isti’dād), happiness (ṣa’ādat), fortunate horoscope (tāli -i mas’ūd), good fortune (iqbāl), turn of fortune (davlat), and divine favor (tavfīq)”. Rashīd al-Dīn combines here a diverse body of dispersed and overlapping categories of good fortune (Neo-Platonic, Iranian, Islamic, and astronomical) and places them into a ranked order, from the most general (isti’dād) to the most distinct (tavfīq). Towards the end of his discussion, he illustrates this hierarchical setting through the example of the process of attaining kingship: from an individual who has the most basic capacity (isti’dād) for kingship, through the quality that he shares with the other commanders and chiefs of the state (happiness, sa’ādat), to the moment when he is able to successfully sit on the throne (fortunate horoscope, tāli -i nīk), and fully act as a king (turn of fortune, davlat), and finally, when he is able to keep the throne until his natural death in old age and bequeaths it to a son (divine favor, tavfīq) (246). Rashīd al-Dīn appears to construct here a model of a gradually increasing and ever-more exclusive stages of good fortune that could explain kingly success in a way that would both speak to and compete with a Buddhist explanation of kingship, as well as be compatible with the Mongol understanding of Chinggisid success based on the unique “good fortune” (qut/su) that Chinggis Khan and his offspring were granted. Miftāḥ al-taḥfāsīr, 127-24 (239-49 for his discussion on istī’dād), Alsen, “A note on Mongol imperial ideology,” 6-7. Thus, on the one hand, these treatises deal with what might constitute (“classical”) kalām topics, but on the other hand, this particular combination of topical treatises in Miftāḥ al-taḥfāsīr, which end with the treatise against metempsychosis, might suggest that the vizier had drawn from materials possibly collected earlier for the purpose of Muslim-Buddhist disputations. Naturally, both explanations complete, rather than contradict each other.

\(^{586}\) Miftāḥ al-taḥfāsīr, 211.  
\(^{587}\) For the ranging approaches of Muslim thinkers, specially Illuminationist thinkers from al-Suhrawardī onwards, to the question of metempsychosis and in particular, the temporal origin versus the pre-eternity existence of the soul, Sabine Schmidtke, “The doctrine of the transmigration of soul according to Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (killed 587/1191) and his followers,” Studia Iranica 28 (1999): 237-54.

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heaven or hell in accordance with an individual’s actions and the resurrection of one’s soul in the
same body on the Day of Judgment. Rashīd al-Dīn’s statement, however, also points towards one
of the main advantages of Buddhism at the Mongol courts, that is, the ability the Buddhist
doctrine of reincarnation (the Wheel of Life) to explain and confirm the exceptionality of the
Chinggisids, and guarantee their future rank.

That the Buddhist clergy argued at the Ilkhanid court that the Ilkhans gained kingship
through their souls’ accumulation of merit and their self-perfection in past lives is found in a
letter composed by the Buddhist monk Togdugpa (d. 1267) of the Tibetan Kaygü monastery of
Drigung, which the Ilkan Hūlegū had financially supported. In the letter addressed to the
“Bodhisattva prince Hülegū,” it is stated that:

In general, these days, being born into a lineage of princes, you are one of great merit,
but this is the result of having accumulated a great store of merit in past lives [my
emphasis]. Such roots of virtue have made you the lord of all the monks who are
following Sakyamuni, and more specifically by taking ownership of this precious
Kaygü school you have accumulated a great wave of accumulated merit […] Keeping
virtue in the beginning, middle and end, the ritual services for the bodily
health of the
princely father and sons will result in great merit, such that there will be a
transmission/rebirth of only wheel-turning kings (cakravartin kings) [my emphasis] and
it will serve as cause of one day becoming a completely awakened Buddha.588

The letter provides Hūlegū and his offspring with a moral, karma-based theory of
kingship. It promises Hūlegū’s and his descendants’ future reincarnation as Buddhist universal
emperors, Cakravartin kings, or even fully awaked Buddhas, in exchange for their patronage of
the Buddhist community and adherence to Buddhist percepts and ritual. Rashīd al-Dīn
appropriates al-Rāzī’s theory of ethical perfection in order to redefine Şāhib-Qirān-kingship as a
new category of sacred perfect souls positioned alongside the souls of the saints and the

588 Translation by Jampa Samten and Dan Martin, “Letters to the khans: six Tibetan epistles of Togdugpa addressed
to the Mongol rulers Huleu and Khubilai, as well as to the Tibetan Lama Pgap’a,” in Trails of the Tibetan Tradition,
Papers for Elliot Sperling, eds. Roberto Vitali (Dharamshala, 2014; republished in Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines 31
[2015]), 310.
prophets. Rashīd al-Dīn offers, therefore, an alternative ethical model to the Buddhist model of moral sacral and universal kingship. Yet, he also uses al-Rāzī’s model to undermine the very basis of the Buddhist explanation of Chinggisid kingship, namely that the accumulation of perfection requires corporal reincarnation.

Perfect Souls, imperfect Bodies: Rashīd al-Dīn’s Refutation of the ahl-i tanāsukh

Judith Pfeiffer has noted that in his treatises against transmigration, “Rashīd al-Dīn discussed the Muslim perspective and past Muslim debates on the topic just as much as the perspective of his Mongol interlocutors”. Rashīd al-Dīn’s counter arguments in his three treatises against transmigration and on the issue of the resurrection of the bodies, indeed, appear at times to be directed at a varied and unspecified audience that includes not just Buddhist practitioners, but also, for example, those who deny the existence of the afterlife, heaven and hell, and resurrection altogether. The first treatise on “the debates that Muslims and the other of People of the Book have with the people of transmigration (ahl-i tanāsukh) and some of the people who deny the gathering of the bodies (hashr-i ajsād)” in Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr is structured as a hypothetical debate or conversation with an unidentified, probably imaginary contender (muʿārid).

It starts with a discussion of the question of the eternity of the soul. The vizier, next, approaches the question of corporal “indwelling” (hulūl) and links it to the question of bodily

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589 See also my discussion of the Buddhist cakravartin kingship and the Jewish vizier Sa’d al-Dawla’s utilization of the title of Śāhib-Qirān in his mahdar and akhlāq-ethical model of the Ilkhan Arghun’s kingship.
591 On the belief in reincarnation among Iranian communities in the early Islamic period, Crone, Nativist Prophets, 233-252. On the continued belief in tanāsukh amongst medieval and early modern Iranian ghulāt, Kathryn Babayan’s discussion of the Nuqtavis, Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs, 57-117 (for example, 107-8).
592 Which the vizier answers in summary since he notes to have addressed the topic of the temporal origination of the soul (muḥdath/muʿallaf) in his Kitāb-i tavādhīhāt-i rashīdī. Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr, 212.
resurrection. One of the main arguments the vizier introduces concerns the exclusive interrelationship between specific souls and specific bodies on the basis the Avicennian notion of the unequal distribution of intellectual capacity: no single soul has the same capacity and, therefore, there can only be one compatible body for each soul, and vice versa.\(^{593}\) Rashīd al-Dīn concludes from this that “on the day that the angel Isrāfīl blows his trumpet,” the souls must be reunited (ḥulūl) with and resurrected in the same bodies.\(^{594}\)

In response, the adversary raises the following hypothetical question, which appears to reflect the Buddhist doctrine of reincarnation:

You explained that at the beginning, the soul joins a body that matches this specific soul […] and the body must be specific and match this soul; and we accepted this meaning; but when the soul reaches perfection, the body that it had at first, does not match this perfection; so it has to join another body that matches this later perfection […]\(^{595}\)

The vizier’s answer is that since he showed earlier that “the resurrection of the bodies (ḥashr-i abdān) will happen in the last body that the soul had left, there is no doubt that at that moment [of resurrection], the body will match it [the soul’s level of perfection].” Rashīd al-Dīn uses here the notion of “that by which the solubles [that dissolve] in the body are substituted” (badala mā yataballalu),\(^{596}\) which he addressed earlier as a proof for how bodies can change over time, during an individual’s lifetime. He argues that God’s reasoning for this process is “that an

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\(^{593}\) Thus, he explains that “if one were to wonder how it is possible that the same body parts that were joined to the elements, would be gathered together once again [with the resurrection], I say that it is even more astounding that the same body parts would not be gathered together for the body of that [same] soul and instead of it, have other body parts rejoined [on the Day of Resurrection].” Since it is agreed that no two things are entirely identical, and “each soul and each body have a special capacity/aptitude (istiḏād-i khāṣṣ) that is different (dūn) from other aptitudes, and that the parts of the elements match each [specific] body, and the soul that matches this [body] attaches itself to it, each [body and soul] have a [specific, exclusive] aptitude/capacity for each other.”

\(^{594}\) Since the soul cannot change (mutabaddil) and the body must exactly match the soul, no single component of the body can change as well. Ibid., 217-19.

\(^{595}\) Ibid., 219-20.

\(^{596}\) Ibid., 216-17. This expression is also found in Ṭūsī. Joep Lameer, The Arabic Version of Ṭūsī’s Nasirean Ethics (Leiden, 2015), 275.
individual’s body would match the perfection and states of his soul; since existence without compatibility between the two is impossible.”

Rashīd al-Dīn, however, is challenged once again by his theoretical adversary, who asks: if bodies gradually change, just like when a person grows old and his body gradually disintegrates and weakens, but his morality becomes even stronger (*adabtar*), that is, his soul advances in perfection, but also the soul will inhabit a body that is the best fit for its state at the time of resurrection, how, then, could this perfected soul return on the Day of Judgment to the feeble body it had left earlier? Rashīd al-Dīn’s answer is that “the states of perfections of men, and their reward and punishment differ greatly during their lifetime.” On the Day of Resurrection, all of the individuals’ sins and good deeds will be weighed against each other and a balance (*mīzān*) will be received, and the body will be prepared and arranged (*murattab*) in accordance with the received balance. Thus, the vizier explains that when he speaks of the compatibility of the body to the soul, he refers to its compatibility to the soul in the original state (*aṣl*), to the compatibility of “every body part, each moment, to each action” of an individual, and finally, to the weighing of sins and good deeds in the Final Judgment.598

The vizier’s answers are informed by al-Rāzī’s thinking. Shihadeh notes that al-Rāzī also directed his theory of the intellectual-moral perfection of the soul through the acquisition of knowledge to the souls’ fate after death: “the soul also survives the death of the body, and experiences posthumous happiness or misery in accordance with its level of perfection or imperfection”599 Rashīd al-Dīn follows this equation by explaining that those who gradually

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597 This can be compared with one of the proofs al-Rāzī lists for the immateriality of the soul, that “intellectual power, if bodily, would get more and more weakened with old age. However, the opposite is in fact the case.” Jules Janssens, “Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī on the soul: a critical approach to Ibn Sīnā,” *The Muslim World* 102 (2012), 576.


599 “As knowledge becomes the constituent of the soul’s perfection, the pursuit of knowledge, i.e., rational reflection, becomes almost intrinsically good.” Shihadeh, “From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī,” 173.
reach perfection and knowledge in their lifetime, through the instrument of the body and by

gaining empirical knowledge/experience and learning, will enjoy, when they reach haven
(bihishtīyān), a perfect intellect and knowledge as well as a perfect body, due to their good

actions. The same, he argues, applies to those who go to hell (dūzakhīyān), whose entire body

parts will match their actions and “will be intermixed with punishment” when they are

resurrected. Rashīd al-Dīn seems to concur here with the Buddhist understanding that as the

soul attains a higher level of perfection, it is also in a need for a corresponding body. He, thus,

focuses on disputing the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth by arguing for the changeability of the

(same) body to match the soul, both during one’s lifetime, and at the moment of resurrection.

In his second treatise composed two or more years later, the Nafāʾ is al-āfkār (The

Precious Thoughts), Rashīd al-Dīn returns once more to the question of how the perfected soul
can return on the Day of Resurrection to its imperfect body. Here again al-Rāzī’s influence is
clearly discernible. In this second work, we see that Rashīd al-Dīn further ventures in the

particular details about the soul’s whereabouts and actions in the afterlife, and its relationship to
the body after its disembodiment.

Al-Rāzī believed that the soul retains its perfection when it departs from the body, and

moreover, that some souls that perfected themselves to a certain degree in this lifetime, will


600 Ibid., 222.

601 At the beginning of the treatise, the vizier presents the questions that the muʾārid, the contender had supposedly

asked him following the first treatise:

You showed that each human soul after it leaves the body must attach itself to a body and its attachment

will be to the same body, and you determined that this would take place on the Day of Resurrection. Then,

where does the soul reside until the Day of Resurrection, after it had disembodied, and what are its states?

Second: if in its first existence (nashʿat) [literally: growth], the soul cannot be without a body, how can we
conceive of it existing without a body from the moment of corporal death to the Day of Resurrection?

Third: can we conceive or not of the disembodied soul achieving a different perfection than that

which it achieved through a body in this world? And if so, at the time that the soul does not have a

body (tajrīd) can the soul enjoy in heaven or in hell perfection and advancement (taraqqī) or

experience reward and punishment?

Ibid., 254-55. Rashīd al-Dīn starts his answers by arguing that the soul does need a place after its departure (az jā
mustaghnā) since it is not material (jīm va-jīmānī).
continue to increase in perfection in the afterlife, even without a body. In *Nafāʿis al-afkār*, Rashīd al-Dīn explains once more that the purpose of the rational soul’s link to the human body is to use it as an instrument for acquiring knowledge, and attaining theoretical perfection and happiness. One’s actions, good or bad, and the perfections achieved through the body, are carried within the soul (*dar dhāt-i ār*) into the hereafter. On the basis of these perfections reached in the lifetime, the departed soul continues to achieve new kinds of eternal perfections in the afterlife.

Rashīd al-Dīn addresses once more the question how the soul (*nafs-i sharīf*) that had undergone further perfections, can return to the same base body (*badan-i khasī*) it had earlier discarded. The vizier’s answer is that if at first the soul needed the body to achieve perfection, in the second round (*nash'at-i thānī*), after the resurrection, the body is in need of the soul to gain its perfection. The vizier develops here the idea that the soul perfects (*takmīl*) the body in accordance with the rewards and punishments it gained during an individual’s lifetime. He, furthermore, links the soul’s role in watching over and perfecting (*takmīl/tarbiyat*) the body to the ability of certain souls to ascend to heaven with their bodies: when the soul is strong enough it can perfect the body to such a degree that the body ascends (*ʿurūj*) with the soul and the soul carries the body with it.

Rashīd al-Dīn’s reference to the body-soul ascension in *Nafāʿis al-afkār* relies on his earlier discussion of the exceptionality of the Prophet Muhammad’s ascension. In his epistle on

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603 *Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr*, 263.
604 See Rashīd al-Dīn’s discussion of the possibility of attaining new, eternal perfections without a prism of the body (yet on the basis of the knowledge and intellectual-theoretical perfections achieved with the body), which he refers to as *kamāl-i thānī*. Ibid., 264-5.
605 Ibid., 260.
606 The vizier explains that a strong perfect soul can perfect the body to the degree that it is with it like “the sugar that dissolves in water.” Ibid., 275.
Bayān al-miʿrāj (the explanation of the Prophet’s ascension) in Kitāb al-tawḍīḥāt, the vizier discusses the question of the prophet’s ascension with the soul or the body and argues that the Prophet’s ascension (miʿrāj) was superior to the ascensions (ʿurūj) of other prophets. In addition to his corporal ascension, which other prophets share with him, Muḥammad also “ascended (ʿaraja) through the ranks and perfections so that no level of human perfection remained for him to ascend […] and this is the reason for the superiority of his illiteracy (ummīyatiḥi) since he had no need to study the sciences and achieve perfection in this world through the body”.⁶⁰⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn follows al-Rāzī here in arguing that the Prophet’s miʿrāj was both corporal and spiritual.⁶⁰⁸ The superiority of the Prophet is gauged through his lack of a need for a body to attain perfection, a quality not shared by other prophets. The vizier, further, explains that:

Since he was a prophet prior to his attachment to the body, and prophethood is the final [stage of human] perfection, we learn that his perfection was not achieved through the body, as full perfection (muṭlaq al-kamāl) is conceived and proven to be without the body. As long as [his] perfection is attached to a body and he does not exceed the human rank [of perfection], he [the Prophet] needs the body, but when he ascends beyond the [point of] human perfection and exceeds it, God’s gifts (mawāhib) continuously flow to him without the [mediation of the] body.⁶⁰⁹

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⁶⁰⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn’s understanding is based on al-Rāzī, who divides the Prophet’s ascension to two stages from the visible, corporal world, to the invisible, spiritual world, and from the invisible to the more invisible world (ʿālam gḥayb al-gḥayb): “the world of the spirits is infinite, and that is since the final ranks of the spirits are the human spirits, then, you rise in the ascension of perfections (miʿrāj al-kamālāt) and the level of happiness until you reach the spirits that are linked to the sky of the world […] until you reach the spirits who dwell in the levels of the throne, and they too vary in their superiority.” Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Tafsīr al-kabīr, 1 (Cairo, 1938), 275-76.

⁶⁰⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn appropriates a number of al-Rāzī’s rationalistic proofs for the Prophet’s accession in both spirit and body, in contrast to Ibn Sinā’s allegorical understanding of the Prophet’s miʿrāj as only spiritual and not physical. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Tafsīr al-kabīr, 20, 145-52. On Ibn Sinā’s understanding of the miʿrāj, Peter Heath, Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna (Ibn Sinā): with a translation of the Book of the Prophet Muhammad’s Ascent to Heaven (Philadelphia, 1992). The question of the Prophet’s corporal ascension continued to be debated in the Ottoman period as well. The Ottoman author Veyşi, for example, also saw in the doubts cast on the Prophet’s ascension from the arena of physics a “very real, highly debated, and quite timely issue.” Hagen, “Skepticism and forgiveness: The Miʿrāc in Veyşi’s Dürüstü t-tâc,” in The Prophet’s Ascension: cross-cultural encounters with the Islamic miʿrāj tales, eds. Christiane Gruber and Frederick Colby (Bloomingston, 2010), 206-24.

⁶⁰⁹ Christiane J. Gruber, The Prophet Muhammad’s Ascension (miʿrāj) in Islamic Art and Literature, ca. 1300-1600 (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2005), Appendix 1: Rashīd al-Dīn, Majmūʿa, BnF Arabe 2324, folios 129r-129v.
The idea that perfection, and by extension, also prophethood and prophetic revelation, do not necessitate a physical or corporal body (badan-i jismānī) proves, therefore, central to Rashīd al-Dīn’s theory of the exceptionality of the Prophet Muḥammad, and by extension also that of his Ilkhanid patron.

Rashīd al-Dīn’s understanding of Muḥammad’s exceptional prophethood as incorporeal serves him also in his arguments against the “people of transmigration” and in his supersessionist presentation of Islam.610 This is made clear from another instance in Kitāb al-sultāniyya, where Rashīd al-Dīn discusses the meaning of one tradition in which the Prophet Muḥammad says: “I was a prophet as soon as Adam was between water and clay” (kuntu nabiyyan wa-ādam bayna al-mā’ wa’l-tīn).611 He, first, argues that the Prophet’s words, like the Qur’anic verse (18:110) “I am but a man like yourselves, [but] the inspiration has come to me (that your God is one God),” were meant to ascertain that “the people would not be mistaken and would say like the Christians (ʾĪsāsibīyyān), who had gone astray and said that ʿĪsā is God and the son of God, and that they be aware of his [the Prophet’s] distinct perfection, and that it is [manifests itself] in revelation, and revelation is the essence of prophethood (khulāṣa-yī nubuvvat). The source of this revelation and the rank of prophethood had existed in the knowledge of God and were predetermined (muqaddar).”

610 For non-Muslims and converts, the Prophet’s ascension narrative had both proselytizing-didactic and polemical functions. Christian Gruber suggests, for example, that an illustrated Ilkhanid Miʿrāj nama served as pro-Sunni prayer manual (“buttressed with large-scale ‘show-and-tell’ images”), “A pictorial system of faith” possibly for the use of elite Mongol converts. Gruber, “The Ilkhanid Miʿrāj nama as an illustrated Sunni prayer manual,” in The Prophet’s Ascension, 27-49. On a fifteenth-century Timurid miʿraj narrative as originating from a missionary narrative targeting Jews in the Persiante world, see Maria E. Subtelny, “The Jews at the edge of the world in Timurid-era Miʿrājnama: The Islamic ascension narrative as missionary text,” in ibid., 50-77.

611 In response to the question “when did you become a prophet?” In other traditions, “I was a prophet as soon as Adam was between spirit and body.” Uri Rubin examines this tradition as part of a broader corpus of traditions that stressed the superiority of Muḥammad’s primordial substance. Here the tradition points out to Muḥammad’s prophethood even while he was still a spermatic substance, “an integral prophetic entity before his birth.” Rubin, 67-70.
Rashīd al-Dīn notes that the people of transmigration (ahl-i tanāsukh) take the Prophet’s words to mean that “he had been in a body since eternity, and now he is in another body.” He argues that the Qur’anic verse (18:110) “I am but a man like yourselves” shows that “revelation and prophethood are not attached to a body since […] the body of those who have revelation and prophethood does not have any additional advantage over other bodies.” He explains that the Prophet’s intention was to state that his prophethood was predetermined and awaited him until the moment of his mission, when he was granted perfect knowledge and intellect. If Muḥammad’s exceptional prophethood is incorporeal so is Ōljeitū’s exceptional kingship in Rashīd al-Dīn’s thought. Ōljeitū’s kingship becomes in this way an argument against the Buddhist reincarnation.

Öljeitū’s Exceptional Life Cycle in Nafāʾis al-āfkār and Muḥammad-Centered Kingship

Rashīd al-Dīn argues against the soul’s need for a new body to retain its moral and intellectual perfection or in order for it to gain further perfections after death. He uses this to dispute the foundation of the Buddhist theory of Chinggisid kingship. Rashīd al-Dīn’s second approach aims to offer an alternative theory, one that could accommodate Chinggisid exceptionality both in this life and in the hereafter.

In Nafāʾis al-āfkār, we see the vizier establishing the exceptionality of Öljeitū’s soul through Rashīd al-Dīn’s discussion of the experiences of the soul in the afterlife. While the central themes in Nafāʾis al-āfkār largely correspond with his first treatise on the topic of transmigration and corporal resurrection, the work also differs with its greater emphasis on the stratification of human souls and bodies, both in this world and in the afterlife, and the pre-

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612 Ff. 216r–216v. In the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh, Rashīd al-Dīn reports Ghazan making a statement as the falseness of idol worship arguing that it is a mistake to worship the body of perfect men by making idols in their shape, since the soul is the essence, and once it leaves the body, the body disintegrates. Rather, instead of focusing on the body’s condition, one should focus on the afterlife, and the “states of the holy spirits;” through this, one can attain perfection. Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 2: 1334; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 3, 664-65.
determined exceptionality of some soul-bodies in the grave. For example, Rashīd al-Dīn employs al-Rāzī’s theory of human perfection to describe the journey of the soul after it disengages from the body. According to Muslim traditions, as the spirit leaves the body, it travels to behold the seven heavens and the seven hells, and journeys back to be reunited in the grave with the corpse.

With the soul dwelling in it or by it once again, the corpse returns to a semblance of life with consciousness in the grave, though not entirely alive. Next, the first judgment, the inquisition of the grave takes place, where two angels, Munkar and Nakīr, ask the dead about his/her religion and question him/her on points of dogma. Most theologians seem to believe that the soul remains in the grave with the body or by the body until the Day of Resurrection. In accordance with one’s sins and good deeds during his lifetime, the corpse and soul experience the torture of the grave (ʿadhāb al-qabr) cleansing the soul from its sins until the Day of Judgment. This stage is called the barzakh. In its life in the grave, the spirit experiences the torture of its personal hell or the bliss of its personal paradise. Its state in the grave reflects its actions in lifetime and the future that awaits it in the “real” heaven or hell after the Day of Judgment.

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613 Thus, he explains that “the souls of the prophets, the saints, the perfect kings (pādishāhān-i kāmil), the religious scholars and the elite (afādil) differ greatly from the souls of commoners in relations to their primal nature (dar asl-i filṭra)” and “their capacity/aptitude,” and although this difference is not observable during their childhood, when they grow up, they reach different levels of perfection through their body in accordance with their initial capacity. As for “the states of the body” in the afterlife and its relationship to the varied perfections of the souls, the vizier illustrates this with the example of a bridge set above a river (death) that all, from kings to beggars, need to pass, and therefore, everyone have equal rights and duties in regards to the bridge (ḥuqūq-i pul); but since the kings, the amirs and fortunate ones have with them greater treasures and possessions than others (perfections), they gain more by passing the bridge and have greater rights and duties with regards to the bridge (ḥuqūq-i pul bar ḥishān bīshhtar). Once they safely pass the bridge with their valuables, they show their gratitude by building new bridges from their private riches. Miftāḥ al-tafaṣīr, 260-61.

In *Nafāʾ is al-afkār*, Rashīd al-Dīn explains that all souls, be they perfect or deficient (*kāmil va-nāqīs*), first undergo the “hell” (*dūzakh*) of the grave, but that their experience of the torments of the grave widely differs. Thus, a highly selective group of souls are entirely exempt from the torments in the grave. For these souls, the stage of being questioned by Munkar and Nakīr, which all souls undergo, constitutes their personal hell. When these souls are released from the questioning and are purified, “they become perfect” in accordance with their rank, and the ranks of their perfection, too, vary greatly, each according to their previous lives. Some of these souls’ perfection is so great that they are immediately, entirely freed from experiencing a personal hell (*dūzakh-i khūd*), and they are sent directly to their personal heaven (*bihisht-i khūd*) in the grave; and for an individual whose perfection is of the greatest kind (i.e., the Prophet Muḥammad), the heaven of the grave constitutes the hell he will experience in the grave.\(^{615}\)

Rashīd al-Dīn strives to point out here that “the souls of the prophets, the saints, the perfect kings (*pādishāhān-i kāmil*), the religious scholars and the elite (*afādil*) differ greatly from the souls of commoners in relations to their primal nature (*dar ašl-i fitra*)” and “their capacity/aptitude” to achieve perfection, and that this has a major bearing on their experiences and fate after death.\(^{616}\) He, thus, implies that the favorable and moreover, exceptional fate of his Mongol patron Öljeitū, to whom he ascribes a perfect rank of kingship, is a matter of certainty.\(^{617}\)

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615 *Miftāḥ al-tafāsūr*, 262.
616 Ibid., 261.
617 Rashīd al-Dīn further develops this understanding of a hierarchical experience in the afterlife in his discussion of the system of rewards and punishments in heaven or hell, after the final judgment. In his third and final treatise on “the falsity of the transmigration of souls (*buqlān-i tanāsukh*) and the validity of the gathering of the bodies on the Day of Judgment” in the *As'ila wa-ajība*, he explains that on the Day of Judgment, individuals will be collected together into groups (*jāʿ ifā*) according to their bad and good actions, the type of sins they committed and their level (*martaba*). God will, then, pass a single verdict (*ḥukm*) for each group, if their fate is the bliss of paradise or the pits of hell. Thus, the two groups of the dwellers of hell and the dwellers of paradise are further differentiated into smaller subgroups: there are different degrees of bliss in paradise, divided between the top garden and the lower spheres, just as there are different levels of degradation in hell. According to the vizier, this stratified division of souls will also reflect their division into social classes in this world and especially the class of kings, “who are the shadows of God and God’s caliphs on earth, and whom God designated with qualities similar to his own: when they
These passages explain why Rashīd al-Dīn chose to end (dhayl) his discussion of prophethood in Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya with his treatise of Nafāʾ is al-afkār. As examined earlier, the vizier dedicates the introduction (fātiḥa) of Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya to a discussion of the miracles and proofs of his patron Öljeitū’s exceptional rank of perfect kingship, from the Mongol ruler’s miraculous birth story to his exceptional, divinely inspired intellect and wisdom, which has the capacity to perfect the intellects of others. With his refutation of metempsychosis in Nafāʾ is al-afkār, Rashīd al-Dīn brings into the afterlife his earlier discussion of the exceptionality of Öljeitū’s radiant soul on the basis of al-Rāzī’s theory of a hierarchy of human souls. As noted above, the core of Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya is devoted to an extended discussion of prophethood, from the differences between revelation and inspiration to the various ranks of the prophets. The main purpose of Rashīd al-Dīn’s extensive discussion of prophethood in Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya is the demonstration of the superior, perfect rank of the Prophet Muḥammad. Rashīd al-Dīn, thus, frames Muḥammad’s exceptional prophethood with the exceptional life cycle of his Mongol patron Öljeitū. The work that starts with the Ilkhan’s miraculous moment of birth, which foretells his future rank, ends with his promised bliss in the life in the grave awaiting the Final Judgment, and in paradise after the resurrection.

Rashīd al-Dīn constructs Öljeitū’s exceptional kingship as paralleling the finality of Muḥammad’s prophethood: a “Muḥammad-imitating king.” He does not only replace the Prophet show kindness and mercy and honor the slaves/subjects, and especially when they labor in the general managing of the kingdom.” And this is in accordance with verses 51:20-21: “On the earth are signs for those of assured Faith. As also in your own selves: Will you not then see?” Rashīd al-Dīn, thus, implies that the Ilkhan Öljeitū’s favorable fate in the paradise in the grave and in paradise after the resurrection is, guaranteed by his kingly rank. Asʾīla va-ajviba, 8ff. On the hierarchisations of hell and paradise, and the way they reflect the moral and social order of this world, Christian Lange, Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions (New York, 2016), 154-162.

618 See above, and also Miftah al-tafsīr, 254.
619 For example, Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya, 126, 129, 131.
through his leadership of the community, but also has an ontological semblance to the Prophet.\textsuperscript{620} both Muhammad and Öljjetü are positioned at the extreme ends of a hierarchy of human perfection; their illiteracy and lack of previous learning are part and parcel of their perfect intellect and intuitive knowledge; they communicate with the divine through revelation (Muhammad) or inspiration (Öljjetü); they perform miracles, from Muhammad’s splitting of the moon to Öljjetü’s protection of the realm from calamities; and they are each assigned the task perfecting the souls of others. Öljjetü’s “Muhammad-imitating” kingship, nevertheless, is a double-edged sword. It sets with Muhammad’s prophethood a clear limit to the Ilkhan’s authority and power. In Rashid al-Din’s “prophetology,” Öljjetü’s unmediated channel to the divine can only be second to Muhammad’s mediated revelation and link with God.\textsuperscript{621} In other words, Rashid al-Din “sacralizes” Öljjetü’s kingship in Islam, but he also “desacralizes” Öljjetü’s sacral Chinggisid status. Öljjetü’s new rank of sacral Muslim kingship is a demotion, not a promotion.

\textbf{Muhammad’s Abrogation of Buddhism and Rashid al-Din’s Reinterpretation of Mahāyāna Buddhism}

Describing his methods when engaging with the Buddhists at court, Rashid al-Din provides the following explanation in \textit{Nafā’is al-afkār (The precious thoughts)}:

\begin{quote}
If [there is] a group of idol worshipers [the Buddhists] or a different group that does not believe in prophets and sacred scriptures (\textit{kutub-i rabbānī}) and are deniers (\textit{munkīr}), it is necessary to rationally discuss (\textit{ma qūl baḥth}) with them and prove it [prophethood] to them with rational proofs (\textit{dalāʾ il va barāḥīn-i ʿaqīl}). And time and time again it happened to this poor one [the vizier] that he discussed with people who are renowned for wisdom and knowledge, and are the leaders of the idol worshipers, and learnt their method, secrets, truths and inner secrets, in which they believe. And since I was occupied with writing the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{620} Compare with the medieval Christian world, where according to Kantorowicz: “it was the language of christological exemplarism which was used throughout to proclaim the king as a \textit{typus Christi}. This typology actually covered two aspects of the royal office, one ontological and the other functional, and both were reflected in the honorary titles which so often exalted the mediaeval ruler: ‘image of Christ’ and ‘Vicar of Christ’.\textit{”} Kantorowicz, 88-89.

\textsuperscript{621} Thus, we might wish to consider in this light Rashid al-Din’s choice to start his discussion of prophetology in \textit{Kitāb al-sulāniyya} with the Ilkhan’s question on the superiority of mediated or unmediated revelation (above).
Compendium of Chronicles, I requested to learn their states [history], and by these means, also gain knowledge about their states, stories and the principles of their creed, and during this, I Intellectually discussed with them each matter. Since they have a wise and tender (latif) nature and they listen to reason and speak with reason, it became known from their words that their school/dogma (madhhab), too, does not say that the world is completely ancient and they, too, believe it is impossible that the world is completely eternal and uncreated; but they say that it will exist for a great, endless number of years, and although they do not believe in the deluge of Noah, they do agree with the general deluge (tīfān-i kullī) and the resurrection. 622

Reading this passage, one’s attention is immediately drawn to Rashīd al-Dīn’s claim to have employed rationalistic arguments (maʿqūl baḥth) and rational proofs (dalāʾil va barāhīn-i ʿaqīl) in his engagement with the Buddhist monks at the court. 623 What does the vizier mean by rational speech and rational proofs? Is he referring here to ʿilm al-kalām, theological reasoning, 624 to philosophical argumentation, or possibly to his assumption of the theories of one of the great mutakallimūn, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī?

It is interesting in this regard to consider the way Rashīd al-Dīn uses al-Rāzī’s hierarchy of souls not only, as discussed earlier, in his refutation of Buddhism, but also in his explanation of the Buddhist path. Indeed, Rashīd al-Dīn links in the passage above between his presentation of the Dharma in the Life and Teachings of the Buddha and his endeavor to convince the

622 Miftāḥ al-tajfsīr, 282-3.
623 Writing of his experiences at the multilateral court debate that took place in 1254 at the court of the great Qa’an Mönge, the Franciscan William of Rubruck reports that the disputation at the Mongol court was comprised of two stages: first, the different parties were required to submit written statements explaining their doctrines; second, an oral exchange between the various parties. We should consider, therefore, the possibility that Rashīd al-Dīn’s description of the Buddhist doctrine took its initial form as a translation of such a “written statement” made by the Buddhist monks at the court. Rashīd al-Dīn’s above-quoted statement implies that the identification of common grounds through doctrinal discussion with the Buddhists was one step in the process of demonstrating the veracity and superiority of the Muslim faith and refuting core tenets of Buddhism such as the transmigration of souls. Simnāni, for example, claims that his success in refuting the Buddhist dogma of reincarnation triggered his Buddhist discussants’ conversion to Islam. See ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Simnāni, ʿAlāʾ ʿUddawla Simnāni: Opera Minora, ed. W. M. Thackston (Cambridge, 1988), 37; Benjamin Z. Kedar, “The multilateral disputation at the court of the Grand Qan Mönge, 1254,” in Hava Lazarus-Yafeh et al. The Majlis: interreligious encounters in medieval Islam (Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), 169.
624 Kalām originated as a means of elucidating and defending the tenets of the faith against the deniers and unbelievers.
Buddhists of the veracity of prophethood and revelation and the falsity of their doctrine of reincarnation.

A little noted aspect of Rashīd al-Dīn’s presentation of the Buddha as a prophet (above) is the vizier’s “rationalistic” explanation of the classification of the Buddhist paths and the superiority of tantric Buddhism (the Varjayāna path). In the first chapter in his account on Buddhism, the vizier explains that “the followers (al-ṭābiʿīn) of Shākyamūṇī” include three groups. The first group, the šrāvaka/Shrāvaka (“auditors”), who “belong to a low class, imitate [blindly] (muqallidūn) and say: Shākyamūṇī guided us to a difficult path, and we reach [our aim] only through diligence and endeavor. So how can we guide the people to the right path, if we are working so hard to redeem ourselves?” The second, middle group is the ṭrtyekabuddha (“solitary awaked ones”): “They believe that they save mankind from misfortunes and that they help and support them.” The third group, the samyaksambuddha, claim that they “are on the highest level and [have reached] the most remote horizon (al-ufq al-aqsā); all of them guide (yurshidūn) men and perfect the defective souls (yukammilūn al-nufūs al-nāqiṣa) by leading them from the level of animals and devils (al-martaba al-haywānīyya waʾl-shayjānīyya) to the level of the angels and of holy intellects (al-ʿuqūl al-qudsiyya). This group dedicates itself to the secrets, signs, investigations, discoveries (al-mubāḥathāt waʾl-mukāshafāt) and the wisdom that Shākyamūnī acquired”. 625

Scholars have noted that Rashīd al-Dīn’s description of the three groups that follow the Buddha Shākyamūnī reflects a Mahāyāna, or rather Varjayāna (Tantric Buddhism) perspective. The two šrāvaka and prtyekabuddha paths are envisioned as inferior to the samyaksambuddha, the perfectly enlightened Buddha, the focus of the Mahāyāna. The final, superior group that

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625 Text and translation in Akasoy, 190-196.
dedicates itself to learning the “secrets” of the Buddha and aims to bring to the enlightenment of others, appears to be the sub-group of the Varjayāna, which the author identifies here as identical with the Mahāyānists in general.626

This Mahāyāna (or rather Varjayāna) informed division of the followers of the Buddha, however, also corresponds with Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s classification of souls in accordance with their level of perfection: commoners, saints and prophets. The first group (the śrāvaka/auditors), the blind imitators strive in the path of self-redemption, but cannot assist or guide others and are, therefore, the commoners; the second (pratyekabuddha/solitary awaked ones) are equivalent to the saints, who perform miracles and save individuals, but cannot perfect others. They are inferior, therefore, to the final group, the samyaksambuddha, the perfectly enlightened Buddhas, who are identical to al-Rāzī’s prophets: they work towards perfecting the defective and guide them towards the holy intellect.627 Rashīd al-Dīn appears, therefore, to identify core commonalities between the pedagogical goals of Varjayāna and al-Rāzī’s theory as to the position of the prophets in the hierarchy of human perfection.

I argue that Rashīd al-Dīn did not simply identify commonalities or used Islamic terminology to explain Buddhism in a “palatable” way to his Muslim readers. Rather, the vizier explained Buddhism in familiar terms in order to incorporate Buddhism into a supersessionist narrative of Muḥammad’s prophecy.628 Anna Akasoy has pointed out that Rashīd al-Dīn does not

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626 Yoeli-Tlalim, 205.
627 Rashīd al-Dīn also uses the term “the perfect man” (al-īnān al-kāmil) for the Buddha Shākyamūnī. See his chapter on the “distinguishing marks and characteristics of the perfect man according to the words of the Buddhist monks (bakhshīs)” where he enumerates 32 signs of the “perfect man” and prophet that we were all found in Shākyamūnī. Jahn, xli.
628 The idea of explaining the Buddhist doctrine in terms that would be compatible with Islam is also found in the autobiographical accounts of the Sufi Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī (d. 736/1336), which as discussed in chapter two, contain important details about the inter-ecumenical disputations at the court of the Ilkhan Arghun. In a number of these instances, we find Simnānī deploying a similar strategy in identifying common grounds with Buddhism, specifically by comparing the Buddhist path toward the attainment of self-perfection to the Sufi path. Simnānī, too, identifies a number of the same commonalities that Rashīd al-Dīn does. Simnānī notes, for example, that Buddhism shares the
only identify compatible elements in the two traditions, but also establishes “the limits of compatibility with Islamic beliefs and creates borders by explicitly rejecting certain doctrines”. Thus, Rashīd al-Dīn uses in his account of the Indian religions and Buddhism the term nabī, but not rasūl, messenger sent with a divine message: nabī implies someone who receives divine inspiration, but is not necessarily a rasūl. Presenting the Buddha Shakyamuni as a prophet with a book also brings Buddhism into the fold of the evolutionary prophetic scheme. Rashīd al-Dīn can, thus, situate the Buddha’s “mission” within an inferior hieratical position in relation to Muḥammad’s final revelation.

Muslim belief in heaven and hell, in the resurrection, and in the unity of God (yagānagī-yi haqq). However, unlike Rashīd al-Dīn’s depiction of Shākyamūnī as a prophet with a book, Simnānī notes as a point of disagreement that the Buddhists believe that any individual can attain the rank of the Buddha through ascetic practices and spiritual exercises, whereas the Muslim doctrine is that prophets are sent by God. On the question of their belief in transmigration, Simnānī develops an interesting argument in his al-Urwa li-ahl al-khalwa wa’t-jalwa (completed in 722/1322). He starts by noting that in his discussions over transmigration with “the wise men of India who traverse the path of al-Shakmānī and who believe in the path of transmigration and in attaining the unity (al-ittiḥād),” they told him that “the transmigration of souls ends in the attainment of the goal of the perfection in the unity, and that they refer to the person who attains this goal as burkhān (i.e., “Buddha”).” In addition, he reports that the Buddhists “claim that attaining the goal of perfection is not possible without shedding the base, bestial, animal, satanic and other qualities that man possess, and [that] it is impossible for man to shed and relinquish them without casting off his body and attaching himself to a new one.” Simnānī notes to have answered their claims by comparing the Buddhist transmigration to the Sufi path, where the disciple also sheds the vile and bestial qualities and attains the praiseworthy and angelic qualities, but without having to be reborn into a new body. He, furthermore, explains that the Sufis experience certain images during their spiritual advancement, for example, by visualizing their appetitive and irascible (al-shahwīyya wa’l-ghaddhiyya) animal faculties as frightening beasts that are weakened through the disciple’s hard work until they entirely perish. Simnānī argues that the Buddhists had misread books of images (kutūb suwar) as literal representations of actual experiences of the Buddha and were misled by their teachers to take these images at face value, instead of correctly viewing them as allegorical representations. Thus, he argues that the when the Buddha spoke of the different bodies that his soul inhabited, he did not refer to the actual “annihilation of the body of the bird and the attachment of his soul to the human body in this world,” but instead, was describing examples of the different visions (al-wāqī āt) he experienced in the path to enlightenment, similar to the visions the Sufi novices (arbāb al-sulāk) experience as they advance in the spiritual path. By casting the Buddhist dogma of reincarnation as a misinterpretation of the Buddha’s original intentions, Simnānī claims a better understanding of Buddhism than the Buddhists at the court, and moreover, implies that the Buddhist path was essentially identical to the Muslim path, were it not corrupted. Simnānī’s strategy of recognizing commonalities between the two religions, but at the same time, “ridding” Buddhism of certain misconceived tenets such as the belief in transmigration, which cannot be reconciled with the Muslim perspective, appears to have been shared by Rashīd al-Dīn as well. DeWeese, “‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī,” 68ff. Simnānī, Al-Urwa li-ahl al-khalwa wa’t-jalwa, ed. Najib Māyīl Haravī (Tehran, 1362/1983), 482-3 (Arabic text). Compare with the account in Simnānī, Al ā uddawla Simnānī: Opera Minora, 36-7.

629 Akasoy, 188.
630 Ibid., 181.
An example for this is found in Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya, where Rashīd al-Dīn assumes the supersessionist view of Muḥammad’s prophetic mission as abrogating (nāsikh) the laws (sharāʾī) of Christianity and Judaism. He argues that both the Jewish and Christian traditions acknowledge their own deficiency (nuqṣān) through their demand for constant reform (iṣlāḥ) and a perfecter/reformer (mukammil/mutammim) whereas Muḥammad’s perfection, and by natural extension, that of Islam, is attested by the finality of prophethood with Muḥammad. By extending a similar understanding to Buddhism, through his depiction of the Buddha Shakyamuni as a prophet with a book arriving at the end of a line of prophets that were sent on a mission to “renew/reform (yujaddidūn) their religion,” Rashīd al-Dīn subjects Buddhism to the same historical understanding of Muḥammad’s mission as abrogating previous religions. The underlying message is that conversion to Islam is identical with the moral and intellectual self-perfection of the soul. In this, too, Rashīd al-Dīn draws parallels between Muḥammad and Ölüeitü: Muḥammad becomes the abrogator of previous religious (Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism too!) perfecting them with his new, final message, whereas Ölüeitü is presented as putting an end to a century of Christian and Jewish revival (“those whose religion was abrogated”), and heralding a period marked by mass conversion to Islam of the Mongols, also from Buddhism (above).

The Question of Buddhism under Sultan Ölüeitü

Rashīd al-Dīn’s level of investment in inter-religious disputations at the Ilkhanid court can be assessed from his composition of three different treatises devoted to the refutation of metempsychosis. However, to the best of my knowledge, aside for his exposition of his “rationalistic” methodology when engaging with the Buddhists and other deniers, Rashīd al-Dīn rarely references specific interactions with Buddhist monks in his philosophical and theological

631 Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya, ff. 224v-227r.
treatises. Rashīd al-Dīn’s “silence,” thus, raises the question of the significance of the Buddhist presence at the post-conversion Ilkhanid court, especially at the court of Öljeitū, and Rashīd al-Dīn’s motivation in disputing the Buddhists’ doctrines.

There is no evidence that inter-religious court disputations with Buddhist parties continued during the reign of Öljeitū, a decade after his brother Ghazan’s “official” conversion of the Ilkhanate and the Ilkhanid elite to Islam. Nevertheless, nearly half a decade of Ilkhanid dynastic support for Buddhism and a strong presence of Buddhist experts left a tangible mark on the Ilkhanid court making the Mongols’ earlier predilection towards Buddhism, a dormant, but still viable threat in the mind of Rashīd al-Dīn. Öljeitū, as other Chinggisids, had converted to Islam from Buddhism. Rashīd al-Dīn realigned the Ilkhan Ghazan’s conversion narrative in the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī to focus on the Ilkhan’s alleged pre-inclination towards Islam and monotheism, even while he publically (and enthusiastically) supported Buddhism in the Ilkhanate and in spite of his childhood experience as a talented disciple of great Buddhist masters. I suggested that Rashīd al-Dīn’s reconstruction of the conversion account throws into sharp relief the role of Ghazan’s conversion narrative as a polemical device as it situates Buddhism (and polytheism more generally) as the main obstacle for the conversion of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate. Regardless of the true state of Buddhism at the Ilkhanid court in the

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632 As far as I can tell, the only instance where he refers to being questioned by a Buddhist monk (at the court of Arghun) is in Laṭāʾif al-haqq īq, where he reports that “one day, one of the monks (bakhshi) that were in the retinue of the great king, the deceased Qa’an, Arghun Khan, in order to test me at the presence of the king, asked me: is the bird from the egg or the egg from the bird? And he thought that I would not be able to answer this question.” Rashīd al-Dīn reports that he had never heard this question before, and was, indeed, perplexed for a short while, until God revealed to him the answer. Rashīd al-Dīn writes that “although the person [the monk] who asked this was incapable of perceiving this [his answer],” the vizier, nevertheless, had gained much from pondering on the question, on which he elaborates further on in the treatise through the analogy of the createdness of Adam. Rashīd al-Dīn belittles the monk who asked him the question, but nevertheless, appreciates the question itself for its ability to direct the vizier to new considerations and meanings. Laṭāʾif al-haqq īq, 36-7.

633 The vizier discusses the questions of a European physician (ḥakīm firānī) in Asʾila va ajviba. See Klein-Franke, “The relation between knowledge and belief,” 213.

634 See Pfeiffer, Twelver Shi’ism, 4.
beginning of the fourteenth century, Rashīd al-Dīn clearly saw in the Ilkhanid Buddhist legacy an obstacle for the continuous conversion and Muslim education of the Mongol elite.635

That Buddhism maintained a lingering “presence” amongst the Mongol elite is seen in the following account of a conversation between Öljeitū and the vizier that the latter relates in his second treatise against transmigration (Nafāʾīs al-afkār). Rashīd al-Dīn writes that Öljeitū told him one day:

In the past, I followed the example of my good father (pidar-i nikā) [Arghun] and lived for a while in accordance with the path of the idol worshipers, and learnt some of their states; and one of these was that when the people burn [the bodies of] the idol worshipers, they find in the ashes of each individual, who is famous among them for his good character and perfection, something in the size of a pea, and sometimes it is bigger and other times smaller, and the size and weight of this object depends on the level of the [dead] individual; and this thing is very hard, and they call it shārīn [Śarīra]; and it is very rare, and is very dear to them […] They believe that whomever has it in his possession, gains different benefits, and that individual [in whose relics, they find the Śarīra] must be pure and have attained this through great karma […] Our good father had a few of these. Although now we do not believe [in the Buddhist creed], I have seen it [with my own eyes] and I tested it, and no fire, metal or anything else leave a mark on it; and not even a diamond leaves a mark on it […] Now, I would like to know how it is possible that the people of Islam do not have such a thing.636

Öljeitū refers here to the Śarīra, jewel-like relics reportedly found after the cremation of the bodies of Buddhist sages and adepts.637 Rashīd al-Dīn’s answer to Öljeitū is divided into three parts. First, he argues that one cannot know that Muslim bodies do not have this quality since it is not their custom to cremate their bodies. If they were to do so, it is likely that they would find there something better and greater than in the ashes of the Buddhist monks. The vizier also argues that the Śarīra constitutes a warning from God to the infidels that “their bodies ought to be perpetual and eternal.”

635 Alternatively, we must also consider the possibility that Rashīd al-Dīn, a Jewish convert himself, used this anti-Buddhist polemical writings and Ghazan’s conversion to construct his own authority as a “newcomer” to Islam.
636 Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr, 272-4.
Rashīd al-Dīn also argues that while the Buddhists claim to find indestructible pea-sized objects in the ashes of their perfect dead, “the bodies of our perfect ones [the Muslims] arrived at such a level that nothing disturbs their bodies, not even a hair from their head or a hair from their body.” Rashīd al-Dīn gives the example of Ibrāhīm, who was not harmed by the fire into which Namrūd had thrown him, and argues likewise that there is a great number of Muslims shaykhs “who have walked in fire, and have eaten fire, and it did not harm them”.

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, this serves as proof that living Muslim bodies have supernatural qualities, superior to that of the Buddhists’ “special dead.” Rashīd al-Dīn declares “Islam” as victorious over “Buddhism” in a hypothetical “fire-ordeal,” a theme that as Devin DeWeese shows, strongly resonated with the Inner Asian societies, particularly the Mongols. His answers give the impression that for Rashīd al-Dīn, the Muslim competition with Buddhism was not entirely a matter of the past, and

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638 Like his predecessors, Öljaitū too developed an attachment to a number of charismatic, antinomian dervishes. See for example the case of the Anatolian dervish Barāq Bābā, Pfeiffer, Twelver Shi‘ism, 20-24. For a discussion of the role of antinomian mendicant Sufis in the Mongol’s conversion, see Amitai-Preiss (who argues for a more limited role in comparison to the more institutional, moderate-ilk shaykhs), “Sufis and Shamans,” 27-46.

639 Mistah al-tafṣīr, 274-5. Consuming or walking on fire is associated with the Rifā‘īyya Sufi order. According to one fourteenth-century pro-Rifā‘ī biographical dictionary, al-Wāsīṭī’s (d. 1343) Tīryāq al-muḥībbīn, Hūlegū and his entire army had converted to Islam at the hands of two Persian shaykhs (Muḥammad al-Darbandī and al-Khāja Ya‘qūb Makhdūm Jahāniyyān) allegedly associated with Sawayd Aḥmad al-Rīfī’ī, after they drunk together with their disciples before the ruler liquefied copper and walked in a great fire without harm. Taqī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Rāhman al-Wāsīṭī, Tīryāq al-muḥībbīn fī tabaqāt khīrag al-mashā‘iykh al-‘ārifīn (Cairo: Maṭba‘a al-Miṣr, 1305/1887), 18. On the motif of the fire test in Inner Asian and Islamic societies (the hagiographical motif and the Abrahamic paradigm) and its relationship with the Mongols’ rituals of purification (passing between two fires) as well as the appeal of this narrative for the Mongols, see DeWeese’s thorough discussion in his Islamization, 244-62. That the vizier mentions specifically that “not even a hair from their head or a hair from their body” get burnt in the fire is particularly interesting considering DeWeese’s analysis of the fire ordeal of the “hairy” saint Baba Tükles in the conversion narrative of Özbek Khan. The conversion account specifically states that not a hair of Baba Tükles’ hairy body was harmed by the fire-pit. Ibid., 543. The Purificatory fire ritual was still practiced in the Ilkhanate during the reign of Öljaitū. According to Qashānī’s conversion account of Öljaitū to Shi‘ism, after lightening strikes Öljaitū’s camp, the Mongol amirs appeal to the Ilkhan to pass between to fires in accordance with the “Mongol custom.” The bakhshīs (in this case, shamans) were summoned to conduct the ceremony. They blamed the ominous storm on the Ilkhan’s conversion to Islam and argued that he must abandon Islam, repent and pass between the two fires for this inauspiciousness to be lifted. Taʾrīkh-i Ŭljāyru, 98-99; DeWeese, Islamization, 260-61; Pfeiffer, Twelver Shi‘ism, 10.

An Ilkhanid era illustration of Ibrāhīm’s trail by fire possibly had particular appeal to the recently converted Mongol audience. Teresa Fitzherbert, “Religious diversity under Ilkhanid rule c. 1300 as reflected in the Freer Bal’ amī,” in Beyond the Legacy, 398-99.
that Öljeitü’s “memories” of his Buddhist past could easily trigger the vizier into arguing for the superiority of Islam.\textsuperscript{640}

Rashīd al-Dīn’s disputation with the Buddhists was, therefore, not just about who would lay claim to the fate of Chinggisid souls and bodies –reincarnated or resurrected. Rather, it was over access, power and influence with the ruling élite. The assumption of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Razī’s model of a hierarchy of human souls, and its expansion to include an additional rank of the Chinggisid “Ṣāḥib-Qīrān kings” enabled Rashīd al-Dīn to provide Öljeitü’s authority with an Islamic theological foundation. The cooption of al-Razī’s hierarchy of perfection and its adaptation into a mechanism for assimilating and legitimizing Chinggisid rule allows Rashīd al-Dīn to offer a compelling paradigm with which Rashīd al-Dīn could challenge the models offered by other contenders at the court, primarily the Buddhists, and position Rashīd al-Dīn as the exclusive intermediary of Ilkhanid kingship. In the final section of this chapter, I argue that Öljeitü’s conversion to Shī‘ism also saw a major change in the nature of the courtly competition over the mediation of Chinggisid kingship, namely the transition from inter-religious competition to inter-confessional rivalry.

**Inter-Confessional Disputations and the Cult of Chinggis Khan in Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq**

The Ilkhan Öljeitü’s conversion to Shī‘ism around the year 709/1309-10 marked a moment of political ascendency for Ilkhanid Shī‘ī communities, as well as a rise in confessional polarization in the Ilkhanate. Öljeitü viewed his new confessional affiliation as a “political statement,” propagating his Shī‘ī message by changing the kingdom’s coinage and by embarking

\textsuperscript{640} Rashīd al-Dīn also provides a scientific explanation to dismiss the Buddhist claims noting that “we see that from the putridity of the air and its friction from the force of the heat, something appears that has the same nature as the shārin and is very strong, and fire leaves no mark on it.” Miftāḥ al-tafāṣār, 272-5.
on elaborate building projects. As Stefan Kamola has noted, the vizier’s later collection of treatises, the Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq, which roughly corresponds to the year of the Ilkhan’s conversion, bears the marks of Ölüjetü’s assumption of his new confessional identity. The corresponding pro-Shīʿī changes of the human configuration of the Ilkhanid court are apparent in Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq. In this work, the vizier takes note of the presence of the prominent Iraqi Shīʿī theologian Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Muṭahhar, al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (648/1250-726/1325), and his son Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥillī (682-771/1283-1369), to whom a number of later accounts attribute Ölüjetü’s conversion.

Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq also attests to Ölüjetü’s court as a site of inter-sectarian competition and rivalry. In his treatise on the tradition of the Prophet, “I am the city of knowledge and ʿAlī its gate,” the vizier writes about a royal interrogation that was initiated by Ölüjetü in 710/1310 in Sulṭaniyya. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, during a preaching in the Friday mosque, some praises were said about ʿAlī, at which point an individual from Khurasan rose from the crowd and asked a question about this tradition: since ʿAlī, the commander of the faithful, is the gate to this city, who are its walls, floors and ceilings? Since Ölüjetü, “whose great soul is the site of the descent of lights and the home of divine secrets,” was unpleased by the preacher’s terse answer, he requested two scholars to answer the question. The first scholar to answer was Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥillī, for whose sake the question was translated into Arabic, and the second scholar to answer

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641 Pfeiffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 129-163; on the conversion, Judith Pfeiffer, Twelver Shiʿism.
642 Kamola draws particular attention to the vizier’s treatise on the Prophet’s mantle (khirqa) in the work as an expression of the Ilkhan’s new Shīʿī belief. Kamola, 216-220.
643 On al-Ḥillī’s stay at the court and engagement in theological discussions with various figures including the vizier, see Sabine Schmidtke, The Theology of al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) (Berlin, 1991), 23ff.
was the chief Qâdî of the Ilkhanid realm (Qâdî qudât al-mamâlik) Nizâm al-Dîn ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 716).  

Nizâm al-Dîn was an offspring of a distinguished family of Qazwinîs, who throughout the 13th century held the position of chief Qâdî of Maragha. The family’s ties to the Ilkhanid political-intellectual elite were also consolidated through Nizâm al-Dîn’s marriage to Ṭūsî’s granddaughter. According to Qâshânî, however, it was Nizâm al-Dîn’s relationship with the vizier Rashîd al-Dîn (and not with the Ṭūsî family) that paved the path for his appointment as chief Ilkhanid Qâdî (Qâdî qudât-i mamâlik-i irân). Nizâm al-Dîn’s undisputed supremacy at the debates at court won over the Ilkhan, who “converted” under his influence from the Ḥanafî school of law to the Shâfî madhab. Nizâm al-Dîn is best known, however, for his debate with the Ḥanafî scholars that supposedly led to Öljeitû’s doubts about the Muslim creed and his conversion to Shi’îsm. Still, Nizâm al-Dîn’s influence on Öljeitû was believed to be so great that Qâshânî claims that were it not for his absence from court for the business of the awqâf of Azerbaijan during the winter of 709/1309-1310, Öljeitû would never had finalized his conversion

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644 Nizâm al-Dîn ʿAbd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, Ibn al-Fuwaṭî, vol. 5, 80-81 (biographical notice: 4678). The case of this family, whose history can be traced through Ibn al-Fuwaṭî’s dictionary seven generations back from Nizâm al-Dîn, is a remarkable example of the continuity of life under Mongol rule and, furthermore, of the opportunities of social mobility that it offered. Their forefather Imâd al-Dîn ʿAbd al-Ḥamîd b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlî al-Qazwînî migrated with his wife/family, probably in the eleventh century, from Qazwîn to Tabriz, where the family became prominent Qâdîs. The family traced their lineage to the Daylamî Sâḥîb Fayrûz (Ibn al-Fuwaṭî, vol. 2, 90-91). Nizâm al-Dîn’s grandfather, Ǧub al-Dîn Aḥmad b. Ṭâj al-Dîn Faḍî Allâh (d. 683/1284), inherited the position of Qâdî of Maragha in 648/1250-1251, after the death of his cousin Imâd al-Dîn Masûd, who himself had inherited the position from his father, Kimâl al-Dîn Abî Muḥammad b. Imâd al-Dîn ʿAbd al-Ḥamîd al-Qazwînî. Ǧub al-Dîn seems to have had held this post until his death in 683/1284. Ibn al-Fuwaṭî, vol. 3, 360: notice 2758; for the cousin: vol. 2, 175: notice 1277.

645 Ibn al-Fuwaṭî notes that he saw Nizâm al-Dîn in the company of Naṣîr al-Dîn Ṭūsî (d. 1274). This was Ṭūsî’s granddaughter from his second son, Aṣîl al-Dîn Ḥasan. See Qâshânî, Taʾrîkh-i ʿUljâyî, 96. Aṣîl al-Dîn, too, held prominent positions at Ghazan’s and Öljeitû’s courts. According to the Mamluk biographers, Aṣîl al-Dîn came with Ghazan to Syria and was appointed over awqâf al-shâm during the short Mongol conquest (where he also met Ibn Taymiyya); he was then given niyâbat Baghâd but was later demoted for his transgressions while in office. See editor’s footnote 5 in Ibn al-Fuwaṭî, vol. 1, 228-9.

646 According to Ibn al-Fuwaṭî’s biographical dictionary, Nizâm al-Dîn’s brother, ʿAlî al-Dîn ʿAbd al-Ḥamîm, who was born in Maragha in 662/1263-64, served as Qâdî qudât al-ʿirâq (vol. 2, 308).

647 Judith Pfeiffer, Twelver Shi’ism as State Religion in Mongol Iran (Istanbul, 1999), 8-9; Qâshânî, Taʾrîkh-i ʿUljâyî, 96.
to Shi‘ism. 648 Nizām al-Dīn, in other words, was a direct opposition to the Shi‘ī presence, represented at court by al-Ḥillī. By having Nizām al-Dīn and al-Ḥillī each answer the question concerning “I am the city of knowledge and ‘Alī its gate,” Öljeitū positioned this disputation as an inter-confessional (Shi‘ī- Sunnī) competition. 649

According to Rashīd al-Dīn, who himself was absent from this ordeal, neither side prevailed in this debate. Unsatisfied by the (uncreative) answers of neither the Shi‘ī nor the Sunnī contender, Öljeitū himself commented on the functional nature of the gate (‘Alī), which sets it apart from other parts of the city noting that without the gate, no one can enter or leave the city, and no benefit can be attained from the city (knowledge, the Prophet). Öljeitū ordered Rashīd al-Dīn to write down his insights, and Rashīd al-Dīn, indeed, devoted the remainder of the short treatise to explaining Öljeitū’s terse commentary on the tradition. Rashīd al-Dīn, thus, positioned himself in this treatise above the inter-confessional competition at the court. As he repeatedly does in other treatises, Rashīd al-Dīn claims to himself unique access to the ruler and portrays himself as the sole individual at the court capable of interpreting and mediating Öljeitū’s extraordinary intellect and intuitive wisdom.

Pfeiffer has recently demonstrated how Shi‘ī claims for descent-based political-religious authority (such as support for ahl-i bayt and the right to rule of ‘Alī and the Prophet’s descendants) had a special appeal for Öljeitū, for whom, like other Chinggisids, the sacrality of the Chinggisid bloodline was a central tenet in their claim to legitimate rule and rightful succession. Thus, similar to the Shi‘ī imams, who were descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad and ‘Alī, Chinggis Khan’s “successors understood their rule only within a relationship between

648 Ibid., 96-100. Qashānī refers to him in this context as “the barrier of the Gog and Magog of this fitna.”
649 Bayān al-haqa‘iq, 393-399. Later Shi‘ī biographical accounts describe the superiority of al-Ḥillī in these inter-confessional debates, especially over Nizām al-Dīn. Schmidtke, Theology, 27-30. Both al-Ḥillī (and his son) and Nizām al-Dīn were appointed to Öljeitū’s mobile school (madrasa sayyāra). The school included only six distinguished teachers (including the above mentioned al-Ījī). Qashānī, Ta’rīkh-i Üljāytū, 106.
themselves and Chinggis Khan, who had the initial right to rule bestowed upon him by God”. 650

In one instance, for example, we see Öljeitü expressing his insecurities as a ruler by comparing the option that a non-Chinggisid amir would assume the Ilkhanid throne to Abū Bakr’s “illegitimate usurpation” of the caliphate after Muḥammad’s death. 651 Shīʿī agents appealed to the Chinggisid sensibilities by linking confessional identity to genealogy (thus, identifying Shīʿism with Muḥammadan descent, sayyidism) and by demonstrating to the Mongol rulers the compatibly of Shīʿī and Mongol views on descent-based authority. They translated “Shīʿī claims to political authority into Mongol political thought” leading Öljeitü to recognize the superiority of Shīʿī Islam. 652

Rashīd al-Dīn, too, draws affinities between the exceptional prophethood of Muḥammad and the exceptional rank of kingship of his patron-ruler Öljeitū, translating the Chinggisid status of sacral kingship into al-Rāzī’s hierarchy of perfect souls. Was the presence of the Ḥillīs (father and son) and other Shīʿī protagonists, who gained political ascendancy following the Ilkhan’s conversion, encroaching on Rashīd al-Dīn’s position as mediator of Ilkhanid political theology?

In Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq, we see indications that the vizier saw a threat in the ability of Shīʿī genealogical-oriented notions of authority to mediate the Chinggisid worldview, and that he sought to “reclaim” his position as Öljeitū’s exclusive intermediary by rearticulating the sacrality of the Chinggisid bloodline and Chinggisid ancestral veneration though al-Rāzī’s theory of perfect souls.

Thus, Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq’s ninth treatise is the vizier’s discussion of “The benefits of visiting the shrines and graves of the great ones” (ziyārat-i mashāhid va-turbathā-yi buzurgān).

650 Chinggis Khan “was transformed from founder of the empire to the sanctified holder of the right to rule”. Elverskog, Our Great Qing, 50-2.
651 Pfeiffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 159.
652 Ibid., 161.
The treatise follows the Ilkhan’s visit to the shrine of Salmān al-Fārisī in al-Madāʾin in 709/1310 in the company of Rashīd al-Dīn and al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī, whom the vizier praises as “the one of his kind and exemplar of Iran.” According to Rashīd al-Dīn, al-Ḥillī asked him the following question: “there is no doubt that we believe in visiting the graves of the great, but since the essence of man is the soul, which leaves the body and no trace of it remains in the body [after death], what is the point of visiting the grave?”

Rashīd al-Dīn’s answer employs al-Rāzī’s hierarchy of human souls and repeats much of the earlier discussion. Rashīd al-Dīn explains that the souls of the perfect are able, in accordance with the level of their perfection and their power, to aid individuals, who seek their intervention and help in removing obstacles in the way of attaining fortune and rank (amvāl va-aḥvāl). Although disembodied souls are free from place and time, they are able to influence this world. The vizier stresses the need for pure intentions when supplicating the “special dead” for aid, noting too that one does not have to be present at their grave to attain the wanted result. Rashīd al-Dīn, however, also explains that gravesites are more effective spaces for gaining the help of the perfect souls since the perfect soul pays special attention to its buried remains.653

Yet, in addition their buried remains, “the souls of the perfect dead” also maintain an attachment and pay attention to the souls of some of the living, and grant them greater assistance, especially if they supplicate the dead with a “pure heart.” Rashīd al-Dīn explains that a special attachment between the dead and the living might develop between kin-related souls: parents, offspring, siblings, and married couples, as well as those maintaining kin-like relationships such as shaykhs and their disciplines, and teachers and their students. The vizier stresses in this regard the relationship of departed fathers with their offspring, noting that this fact is well known and

653 First, since it had attained perfection through its body and “this body, like a mantle tinged with Musk, becomes enlightened from the perfection of that soul,” and second, since the soul will return to its body in the resurrection.
tested (*mujarrab*) among the people (*`umūm*) since at times of hardship, one sees his parents in a dream, which is an indication of their influence. Rashīd al-Dīn also mentions in this context the Prophet’s relationship to his offspring, and cites Qur’anic verses that indicate that prophets and saints pray for their offspring. He repeats that, if the offspring is righteous (*ṣāliḥ*), performs worthy services (*khidmā-i shāyista*), and pleads for aid with pure intention, the influence of the “prefect dead” in removing calamities, hardships and obstacles before their offspring would be the strongest, for “the intellects (*`uqalā*) watch over the children and offspring of the perfect and hold them dear.” Here, too, Rashīd al-Dīn argues for a hierarchical order, in which there is a great variance in the levels of aid exhorted by the dead in accordance with their own rank of perfection.

Rashīd al-Dīn’s treatise on the supplication of the dead offers, therefore, a more expansive view, referring to the descendants of prophets and saints as enjoying a privileged position, the support of their perfect dead ancestors, rather than solely, to Muḥammad’s descendants. In his explanation of the merits of shrine visitation, Rashīd al-Dīn’s deploys al-Rāzī’s categorization of the perfect souls of prophets and saints, referencing once again the idea that the soul maintains its perfection, even after it departs from the body. While the vizier does not mention his third category of sacred perfect souls, the Şāḥib-Qirān kings, which include the Chinggisid dynasty, his emphasis on the relationship between the souls of departed fathers and their living sons (regardless of their prophetic or saintly status) in the context of Öljeitū’s shrine visitation implies that Rashīd al-Dīn’s explanation would have applied to the Chinggisid fathers and sons as well.

As Johan Elverskog shows, the Mongols considered the veneration of Chinggis Khan and Eternal God/Heaven essential for conferring and maintaining legitimate rule: “the present ruler’s legitimacy and the Mongol state were re-created in a semantic chain purely though this sacred
lineage.” This link between the ritualized reverence for Chinggis Khan, who alone could transmit the initial blessing of God, and Mongol sanctified rule was maintained both by Chinggis Khan’s immediate successors and under the Yuan dynasty in China, as well as in the post-Yuan period. Qubilai, for example, established during the 1260s an ancestor-worship complex, where the remains of Chinggis Khan and his offspring were maintained and rituals were performed four times a year. Evidence for the continuance of the cult of Chinggis Khan under the Ilkhans in Iran is more difficult to come by; yet, this does not negate the possibility that imperial rites of Chinggisid ancestral veneration were also retained in Iran. Öljeytü’s itinerary includes repeated visits to his brother’s tomb and possibly other Chinggisid burial sites.

Rashīd al-Dīn’s emphasis on the supplication of sons to their fathers, and his reference to the “worthy services” (khiḍmāt shāyista) that should be carried out are possible indications that, Öljeytü too valued the veneration of his Chinggisid ancestors as his father Arghun did. Was the vizier, then, trying in his discussion of ziyārat to include the cult of Chinggis Khan within the fold of the veneration of the dead in the Islamic tradition? Since the reverence of Chinggis Khan and Chinggisid sanctified kingship were deeply intertwined, one might suggest that making room for Chinggisid notions of sanctified rule within al-Rāzī’s hierarchy of human perfection would also entail the inclusion (and by extension, Islamization) of the Chinggisid “special dead.”

Rashīd al-Dīn’s treatise on shrine visitation should also be read against the backdrop of the intensification of inter-confessional rivalries at the court that came to the fore in power struggles over the management of sacred spaces in the Ilkhanate. The changing confessional

654 Elverskog, Our Great Qing, 48ff.
655 As DeWeese notes, we do have evidence of the practice of establishing and maintaining tomb-qorugs, “off-limit” burial grounds for the khans (though the term has an additional meaning of a forbidden hunting or recreational preserve), in the Ilkhanate. Öljeytü’s itinerary includes visits to qorug sites. The burial site of Arghun was also designated qorug. His daughter established there a Sufi sanctuary, which DeWeese discusses as an “intrusion” of the Sufi community, and a sign of conversion of the sacred space. Qorug sites were also linked to enthronement sites. DeWeese, Islamization, 181-203.
power balance at the court is reflected too in Rashīd al-Dīn’s treatise on ziyārat. The vizier states that it was al-Ḥillī who asked him the question since “he thought highly” of the vizier. As elsewhere in Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq, Rashīd al-Dīn is suspiciously at pains here to show the lack of hostility and competition between the new member of the Ilkhan’s entourage, al-Ḥillī, and himself, as well as to indicate that the former highly regarded Rashīd al-Dīn. On the other hand, in his commentary on the tradition “I am the city of knowledge and ‘Alī its gate” (above), al-Ḥillī’s “disappointing” performance at the royal interrogation leads Öljeytū to ask Rashīd al-Dīn to write a treatise on the topic, thus, demonstrating the vizier’s superiority. One’s impression is that Rashīd al-Dīn was intimidated by al-Ḥillī’s “incursion” and that the vizier’s treatise should be viewed in the context of the inter-sectarian court disputations and interpretive contests.657

Rashīd al-Dīn’s treatise on shrine visitation foresees the confessional struggle over the management of the shrine of Dhū al-Kifl (Ezekiel) near al-Ḥilla, in which the vizier was embroiled two years later, in 711/1312. The struggle involved Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn Āvājī, chief of the Twelver Shīʿīs, who was employed by Rashīd al-Dīn’s rival, the vizier Sa’d al-Dīn Sāvājī, and is credited by Qāshānī with the conversion of Öljeytū to Shīʿism.658 After Tāj al-Dīn Āvājī was appointed as an overseer of the shrines of the Ilkhanate, the Shīʿī sayyid took hold of the

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656 One example for this is found in his treatise on explaining lights, Rashīd al-Dīn references the works on the topic of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Razī and al-Ghazālī. At the end of the treatise, he adds an additional treatise. He explains that Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-Mutahhar al-Ḥillī, “who was ordered from Hilla by a royal edict (yarīḡh) to the service of great lord,” was also writing a risāla on this topic (since all the scholars of the age were ordered to do so by a royal edict), and started conversing with the vizier on it. Al-Ḥillī listened to a couple of words by Rashīd al-Dīn and found them agreeable. Rashīd al-Dīn’s tone might suggest that he saw in al-Ḥillī a competition as the vizier claims that the latter begged (ilmās) him to add these thoughts to Rashīd al-Dīn’s treatise so all would benefit from them. Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq, 266.

657 One might also note that al-Ḥillī devoted a work to the vizier’s rival Sa’d al-Dīn Sāvājī (the Risāla al Sa’dīyya). That al-Ḥillī appears on the list of recipients of gifts from Rashīd al-Dīn (712/1312/13) and that he received a larger sum than others listed does not necessarily contradict my suggestion that the vizier saw in al-Ḥillī’s position at court an incursion, but rather speaks to the Mongol ruler’s high regard of the Shīʿī scholar. Schmidtke, Theology, 28-29.

658 Qashānī, Taʾrīkh-i Uļjāytū, 99.
mashhad of Dhū al-Kifl, a site that was venerated by both Jews and Muslims, and administered by the Jewish community, and constructed there a minbar, mihrab, and a minaret. Enraged by Tāj al-Dīn Āvajī’s seizure of the shrine, Rashīd al-Dīn plotted to have Āvajī and his sons executed by Öljehitū with the accusation that Āvajī’s sayyid genealogy (nasab nāma) was a forgery. According to Qāshānī, Rashīd al-Dīn outmaneuvered his adversary by asking Tāj al-Dīn about his sayyid credentials (ʿalavviyat) during a court disputation (munāẓara); when Tāj al-Dīn responded that his authority is attested in his genealogy (nasab nāma), the vizier asked to examine it; that night, Rashīd al-Dīn erased Tāj al-Dīn’s name from the text and then, rewrote it, presenting it to the Ilkhan the next morning as proof of Tāj al-Dīn’s fraudulent claim to sayyid descent.659

Conclusion

Rashīd al-Dīn’s Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq and the Dhū al-Kifl affair call attention to the politicized nature of the court debate under the Ilkhan Öljehitū. Theological disputations at Öljehitū’s court became the center stage where political intrigues, personal rivalries and ecumenical and confessional power struggles played out. We see this in Qāshānī’s narrative, where a heated court dispute between the Ḥanafī scholars and the chief Qāḍī Nizām al-Dīn, who represented the Shāfīʿī madhhab, over the legal permissibility of engaging in intercourse with a female relative (mother or sister), ultimately leads Öljehitū to inquire about the Shīʿī creed, and subsequently, convert to Shīʿism under the guidance of Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn Āvajī. The central place occupied by the institution of the theological debate at the court of Öljehitū is visible not only in Bayān al-ḥaqāʾiq, but also in the rest of Rashīd al-Dīn’s theological compilations.

659 Pfeiffer, “Confessional ambiguity,” 152-3,159-60,
This chapter demonstrates that, Rashīd al-Dīn understood these disputations as a setting where he could safeguard and consolidate his claim to the exclusive position as the Ilkhan’s chief intermediary and spokesperson, who explains and makes accessible and legible the divine truths transmitted by the Mongol king. By establishing Öljëitū’s unique authority, Rashīd al-Dīn also claims his own superior rank by his side. Thus, when he compares Öljëitū to the just Sasanian philosopher-king Anūshirvān and repeats the claim that he alone was able to understand the meaning behind the Ilkhan’s brilliant comments, the physician-vizier Rashīd al-Dīn also claims to himself the rank of the paradigmatic Sasanian minister-physician Buzurgmihr, who too was credited with being the sole individual able to answer Anūshirvān’s queries.\footnote{Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya, f. 15v; Rashīd al-Dīn, Kitāb al-as‘ila wa‘l-ajwiha al-rashīdiyya b‘il-fārisiyya (MS Ayasofya, No. 2180), ff. 33-44. For Rashīd al-Dīn as Buzurgmihr in Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī’s Zafrānāma, Kamola, 276-78.}

About a century after Rashīd al-Dīn outlined in his writings a theological model of absolute, unmediated kingship for the Ilkhan Öljëitū, the Timurid prince Mīrzā Iskandar attempted to cultivate his own sovereignty “along the lines of Ibn ‘Arabī’s theological absolutism,” and eschatological and ‘Alīd symbols. Examining Mīrzā Iskandar’s unique political theology, Evrim Binbaş has suggested that, “if the rise of absolutist politics is one of the benchmarks of early modernity […] Mīrzā Iskandar was the first early modern absolutist sovereign, albeit an unsuccessful one”.\footnote{Binbaş, “Timurid experimentation,” 277-303. There are a number of interesting parallels between Rashīd al-Dīn’s depiction of Öljëitū and Mīrzā Iskandar’s “self-portrait.” See, for example, Binbaş, 291. One might, furthermore, suggest that Mīrzā Iskandar’s theological questionnaire sent to two of the leading intellectuals of his time, the Sufi Shaykh Shāh Ni‘matullāh Valī and the theologian Sayyid Sharīf Jurjānī (philosophical theology versus mystical theology), was structured as a court disputation by correspondence. Matthew Melvin-Koushki has further argued that Mīrzā Iskandar’s claims to his own status of a “spiritually perfected philosopher-scientist” (in addition to his involvement in the intellectual debates of his time) alongside his cousin Ulugh Beg’s (r. at Samarkand, 1409-49) identification by one of his astronomers as the “philosopher-sultan” marked the genesis of a}
distinctive Timurid model of sacral kingship, centered on the ruler’s patronage of astrology, astronomy and the occult sciences. 662

Yet, it seems to me that it was Rashīd al-Dīn’s extensive experimentation with al-Razī’s prophetic absolutism as a basis for sacral Muslim kingship that ushered, perhaps even defined an era of joint Ilkhanid-Timurid experimentation with a new brand of the “philosopher-king.” Thus, whereas Rashīd al-Dīn’s model of Muḥammad-centered kingship might have “died out” with the Ilkhanid period, this mode of sacral authority that was defined by the ruler’s endowment with a unique, intuitive and even divine form of intellect that allowed him to gain access to all knowledges and sciences via direct intuition, a power expressed through the ruler’s patronage and involvement in intellectual debates, retained considerable power in the Timurid period. Timurid intellectuals and court clients might be seen, therefore, as “rebranding” this new style of intellectual kingship in a far more appealing and persuasive packaging, for example, through astrology and lettrism, than the Ilkhanid vizier’s kalām-based vision of the philosopher-king.

Chapter V: The Mongol Mahdī in Anatolia: Mahdīs, Mujaddids, and Militant Reformers in the Ilkhanid and Post-Mongol Period

This chapter continues where we left off in chapter three by tracing the course of development of the paradigm of the reviver king in the decades after the Ilkhan Ghazan’s conversion to Islam. In chapter three, I argued that the notion of the ruler as a periodically sent puritan reformer, a chastising substitute for the prophets, emerged in the context of the Ilkhan Ghazan’s expansionist policy in Syria. Translating the Chinggisid mission of world domination into the Islamic salvific scheme, Ghazan’s letters during the Syrian campaign depicted the Ilkhan as a new type of Muslim salvation king, a direct appointment of divine will. From the 1320s onwards, the revivalist paradigm was appropriated to challenge and oppose the dominance of the Chinggisid principle of descent.

During the later Ilkhanid and post-Mongol periods, ambitious princes, rebellious commanders, and the intellectual networks that supported their political claims, tapped into the revivalist discourse to contest the Chinggisid claim to descent based authority, and offer a religiopolitical platform from which to launch their own independent political bids. I focus in this chapter on the short-lived revolt of the Mongol governor of Rûm, Timurtash the son of amir Chupan, and his self-proclamation as mahdī in the early 1320s Anatolia, to examine the dissemination and transformation of the revivalist model. I use multiple points of view on the revolt to argue that the Mongol rebel sought to harness through his claim to mahdīhood the Ilkhanid political idiom of religious reform, and challenge Ilkhanid sovereignty in Anatolia.
Expressed through the titles of the *mujaddid*, the religious centennial renewer, and the *mahdī*, the militant redeemer-reformer, the reviver king model thrived in the post-Mongol ideological imperial scene. It was one of the dominant religiopolitical structures alongside emerging and overlapping paradigms of the Shīʿī-Sufi model of authority and shrine-centered kingship, which fill the void left behind by the disappearance of the “caliphal-sultanic-jurisprudential model” after the Mongol invasions during the mid-thirteenth century. Together, these political models laid the ideological foundation for the early modern era of eschatological absolutist claims, millenarian politics, and the inter-imperial occultist competitions.\(^663\)

**From Ghazan to Abū Saʿīd: a Brief History of Ilkhanid Reformer Kings**

In chapter three, I examined how the Ilkhanid court historian Qāshānī responded in his conversion account of Ghazan, to the Sufi Najm al-Dīn Rāzī’s (d. 654/1256) earlier apocalyptic interpretation of the Mongol campaigns and his explicit call to the rulers of his age to save Islam from the Mongol onslaught.\(^664\) Qāshānī replaced Rāzī’s penitential interpretation of the Mongol invasions in Rāzī’s *Mīrṣād al-ʿIbād* with a providential, salvific narrative that was anchored in Ghazan’s fulfillment of the prophecy about the appearance of a reviver king. In Qāshānī’s narrative, Ghazan “answers” Rāzī’s plea from half a century earlier, to restore the Muslim community and revive Islam (*tāzah va ṭarī shaved*). In the poetry of the Ilkhanid court poet and historian Banākafī, the attribution of the title of the *mahdī* to Ghazan encapsulated a similar historical vision, according to which, a certain process of decline and revival culminated in the figure of the Ilkhan, and his conversion and just rule. This revivalist framework situated Ghazan and the Mongols at the pinnacle of a cycle of salvation history.


\(^{664}\) See chapter three.
The identification of the Mongol royal convert as a reviver king was also appropriated by the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn. Rashīd al-Dīn argued that Ghazan’s successor Öljeitū’s superior rank is evident from the the prophetic tradition: “God will send to this community at the turn/on the eve of every century a person who will strengthen its religion” (inna allāh yāb’ath li-hadhihi al-ummah ‘alā ra’s kull mi’a sana man yuqawwī lahā amr dīniḥā). According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Öljeitū’s reign confirms to this tradition since it is preceded by a period of a hundred years of infidel revival, until “all the traces of these unbelievers were effaced with the ray of light of the sun-faced” Öljeitū. Rashīd al-Dīn draws inspiration from Qāshānī’s conversion narrative of the Ilkhan Ghazan in depicting Öljeitū in his place as the periodic muqavvī-yi dīn-i Islām. Rashīd al-Dīn significantly altered the mujaddid (the centennial renewer) tradition by replacing the verb yujaddid (renew) with yuqawwī (strengthen), possibly since Rashīd al-Dīn was himself envisioned as the centennial renewer of the eighth Hijri century.

Öljeitū was depicted as reenacting the reformer-king not only through the reshuffling of narrative tropes between the court historian Qāshānī and his patron the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn, but also in the repeating of some of the same regulatory measures that inaugurated his brother Ghazan’s reign. Behind these measures was Ghazan’s convertor and kingmaker, the amir Nawrūz (below). The measures were primarily directed towards the non-Muslim communities of the Ilkhanate and symbolically positioned the new Ilkhan as the restorer of shar’ī rule. They included the destruction and looting of churches, idol temples and synagogues throughout the Ilkhanate, and the issuing of decrees reinstating the jizya (poll-tax) and re-enforcing the distinguishing dress code (ghiyr) on the dhimmīs.

665 Discussed in chapter four.
The later Ilkhani historian Mustawfī Qazwīnī writes that Ghazan’s brother and heir Öljekū too reinstated at the beginning of his reign, the jizya on the Jews and the Christians (tarsā va-jahūd) and re-enforced the ghiyār. The Armenian colophons confirm the reports about Öljekū’s reinstatement of the anti-dhimmī policies. They accuse Öljekū of being a “servant of Satan” and the anti-Christ planning to “efface Christianity from Armenia and Georgia” by issuing orders “that levies should be collected from all Christians on account of their faith in Christ, and that a blue sign should be sewn on the shoulders of the believers.” According to the work of the Nestorian Rabban Sauma, it was only through the intervention of Öljekū’s uncle, the Kerayit amir Irenjin, that the Nestorian monasteries and churches in Tabriz were spared from becoming mosques and endowments by the order of the Ilkhan. Both the history of Rabban Sauma and the Armenian colophon, however, note that after sending high ranking clergymen to Öljekū, they were able to persuade the Ilkhan to reverse his decision on reinforcing the jizya, just as Ghazan had done earlier. Qāshānī claims that Öljekū reinstated similar policies at the court as well. He writes that the Ilkhan Öljekū, together with his commanders and his intimates, refrained from consuming alcoholic beverages like Kumis.

While Öljekū’s son, the Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd’s reign falls largely beyond the scope of the major Ilkhanid histories, it appears that he followed the footsteps of his father and uncle fashioning himself

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667 Mustawfī Qazwīnī, Guzida, 606-7.
668 Avedis K. Sanjian, Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 1301-1480 (Cambridge, 1969), 52 (dated to 1307), and 60 (dated 1318, Monastery of Varag).
669 Aqsarāʾī describes Irenjin as a tyrant and a villain based on his time as governor of Anatolia. See below.
671 Sanjian, Colophons, 60-61. That these churches were exempted from paying the jizya after the “lobbying” efforts of high ranking clergy with the ruler suggests that the traditional Mongol understanding to the function of the religions was still determining the Mongols’ religious policies, even after their conversion to Islam in the Ilkhanate. Thus, as Atwood shows, religious clergy were exempt by royal decree only after their representative visited the court, bestowed his blessings on the khan and his family, and showed that they were praying for the khan’s success. Atwood, “Validation by Holiness,” 237-56.
672 Qāshānī, Taʾrīkh-i āljāyṭū, 25.
too as a reformer-king. Mamluk histories report that early on in Abū Saʿīd’s reign, a deadly hailstorm hit the city of Sulṭāniyya in Shaʾbān 720/September 1320. The Ilkhan was convinced by the fuqahā that this was a sign of divine rage and ordered the immediate closing of all brothels and taverns throughout the Ilkhanate. In Sulṭāniyya alone, more than ten thousand wine barrels were collected, emptied and burnt. According to a merchant who witnessed the events, this public display of repentance and piety was also carried out, although less fervently, in Tabriz and Mosul. Churches in the vicinity of Tabriz were destroyed, old mosques were repaired, and new ones constructed. These events repeated themselves in Baghdad the following year, in the month of Jumādā 2/July, as Syrian merchants astoundingly reported: the bazzar was ransacked; the prostitutes were forced to repent and marry; all wine was poured onto the earth; the guilty parties were publicly executed and their bodies desecrated; and each day a number of Jews and Christians publicly converted to Islam.673

Abū Saʿīd’s declaration of a war against illegal actions and moral vices was also part of a larger change taking place in the Ilkhanate during the first years of the young Ilkhan’s reign. Abū Saʿīd was possibly responding not just to one isolated freak hailstorm, but to a wider crisis that enveloped Ilkhanid society, and resulted from a series of environmental disasters, including a deadly two year long drought and extensive depopulation in Diyar Bakr, Iraq, Jazira, and a series of raids on Ilkhanid borders and rebellions, most notably, the revolt of the amirs in 1319.674 Abū Saʿīd’s declaration of war

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674 These “climatic events” resulted in a severe depopulation of an area that produced about a quarter of Ilkhanid revenue during the first years of Abū Saʿīd’s reign. According to al-Nuwayrī, who attained his account from Ḥālāl al-Dīn al-Birzālī, Diyar Bakr, Mosul, Mardin, Jazira and Mayyafarqin had it worse than Sanjar and Iraq. The drought was accompanied by a severe rise in food prices and food shortage, locust and freak hailstorms. The disasters seem to have also triggered raids by nomads from Syria and Kurdish tribes into the Ilkhanid territories, making matters even worse for the agricultural settlements. Al-Nuwayrī, vol. 32, 290-92; Sarah Kate Raphael, Climate and Political Climate: environmental disasters in the medieval Levant (Leiden, 2013), 16, 67-69. It might be worth noting that Timurtash’s revolt seems to have overlapped, or slightly preceded a major drought that extended from Damascus to Aleppo (tagged by Abū al-Fidāʾ as the “red year”). Raphael, 8-9. For the distribution of Ilkhanid revenues according to
against alcohol consumption and moral transgressions might have been an attempt to win over the public, who perhaps attributed these disasters to failures of public morality. The first decade of Abū Saʿīd’s reign also saw the peace negotiations between the Ilkhanids and the Mamluks alongside a growing interest amongst members of the Mongol elite in the *hajj* and in Islamic patronage and expressions of piety more generally. In fact, while a peace treaty was negotiated and finalized, the rivalry between the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk sultanate was carried over to the Ḩijāz, where the two empires fought over the supreme patronage of Islam.  

Charles Melville suggests that in his regulatory measures in Anatolia, the Mongol governor Timurtash followed orders issued at the court of Abū Saʿīd. I argue, however, that Timurtash’s puritan policies in Rūm were tied to his rebellion and self-proclamation as a *mahdī*-reformer shortly after. Timurtash sought to harness the political language that identified the Ilkhanid kings, through their claims to reform and puritan measures, as continuers of the prophetic missions,


675 The religious rivalry in the Hijāz has been thoroughly studied by Melville (“year of the Elephant”) and Broadbridge (chapter 4). Melville suggests that religious prestige was not the only reason for the renewal of Ilkhanid interest in the *hajj* but that “the revival of the Iraqi rakb [caravan], and the presence of Mongol notables as well as Persians [at the *hajj*], also indicates the extent to which Islam was taking hold in the newly converted Ilkhanate.” A number of Mongol officers were so anxious to perform the religious duty of the *hajj* that they were willing to risk their lives and undertake the *hajj* already in 1319-20, before the peace negotiations even began. The regulation of Ilkhanid participation in the annual *hajj* was one of the major issues negotiated in the early stages of the peace talks. Melville, “year of the elephant,” 203, 211. 

676 Melville, “Anatolia,” 91. It is also worthwhile noting the possible role Timurtash’s father, the amir Chupan, carried in Abū Saʿīd’s campaign of moral regulation. As Melville shows, Chupan was interested establishing his own position as a charitable Muslim patron. Early on in the 1320s, Chupan, who was independently corresponding with al-Nāṣir Muhammad, requested from the Mamluk sultan unused land in Egypt to establish a *waqf* for the Haram complex in Mecca. Chupan was also behind a number of ambitious architectural projects in the holy cities: in Medina, a public bath and a school next to the prophet’s mosque, which included also a tomb complex for himself; and in Mecca, the project for which he is best renowned and which caused great trouble with the jealous al-Nāṣir Muhammad, the remarkable restoration of a spring outside of Mecca (which was restored just on time as most of the wells in the city went dry). Chupan himself made the pilgrimage with the Iraqi caravan of 725/1325. Melville characterizes Chupan as a complicated individual: on the one hand, a “Mongol of the old school,” a competent military man, who is more comfortable at the battlefield than with the intrigues at court, susceptible to schemers and impulsive under pressure, while on the other, a firm believer, unusual among the Mongols for his commitment to Islam, concerned with the welfare of the Muslims and promoting justice and Islamic values. A devoted servant of the crown, he, nevertheless, often found himself torn between his commitment to his family and his sense of dynastic loyalty. Melville, “Wolf or Shepherd? Amir Chupan’s attitude to government,” in J. Raby and T. Fitzherbert (eds.), *The Court of the Il-Khans 1290-1340* (Oxford, 1996), 79-93; idem, “year of the elephant,” 206; Broadbridge, 114-17.
poles of Islamic salvation in their own right. This model of a salvation king offered Timurtash an alternative legitimizing paradigm to the Chinggisid descent based model, from which he could launch his own claim to independent rule.

The Mongol Mahdī Rebels

Timurtash had initially accompanied his father Chupan to Anatolia in 1315. The Ilkhan Öljeitū dispatched the latter to Anatolia, after news of the Karamanid Turkmen’s insubordination and their conquest of Konya had reached the ordū. The Karamanids retreated from Konya to Larende after his arrival. However, Chupan remained in Anatolia reinstating Ilkhanid rule in Konya. Learning about Öljeitū’s death in 1317, Chupan headed back east leaving his son Timurtash in charge in Kayseri. Timurtash was heading to Niğde to deal with another Karamanid insurrection, when he was warned by his vizier Jalāl al-Dīn (Rashīd al-Dīn’s son) about the uprising of the preceding governor of the Anatolia, the amir Irenjin (Öljeitū’s uncle), against his father Chupan and the recently enthroned Ilkhan Abū Sa‘īd. He fled to Danishmand lands until he learnt of his father’s victory. Once the revolt was resolved, Timurtash was reinstated in office. However, shortly after, in 722/1322-1323, he orchestrated his own rebellion.

According to the Ilkhanid historian Mustawfī Qazwīnī, in 722/1322-1323 reports reached the Ilkhanid court that the governor of Rūm Timurtash declared himself shāh-i islām, and had his name added to the khutba and minted on the coins. Mustawfī Qazwīnī further writes in his Žafarnāmah that he was recruiting an army to overthrow the reigning Ilkhan Abū Sa‘īd and was corresponding with the Mamluks to that end. Timurtash had also declared himself mahdī.

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678 Timurtash might have indeed harbored grander aspirations in his rebellion, as Mustawfī Qazwīnī implies. One contemporary Mamluk author, Mūsā b. Muḥammad al-Yūsufī, justified the Mamluk Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s
In his bid for independence, Timurtash joined earlier failed Ilkhanid rebels, who taking advantage of the distance from the ordou and their long standing connections to the region, used Anatolia as a base for claiming their own independent rule. Like the rebellions of his precursors, Timurtash’s revolt too was short lived. When his father amir Chupan, who was at that time the de facto ruler of the Ilkhanate, learnt of his son’s insubordination, he personally headed an army mid-winter to Rûm and dragged his defiant son back to the court, where the young Ilkhan Abû Sa’îd had little choice but to pardon the rebel. Shortly after, Timurtash was reinstated for a second time as governor of Rûm. According to the Zafarnâmah, two of Timurtash’s culprits were blamed for instigating the uprising: an unidentified amir by the name Hûkârjî (or Sûkârjî), and a Qâdî by the name of Najm al-Dîn Ţâshfî. Repeating much of Qazwînî’s account, the later Timurid historian
Hāfiz Abrū adds that Chupan had the amir and the Qāḍī executed together with several others for conspiring with his son.\footnote{Hāfiz Abrū, Dhayl-i Jāmi` al-Tavārīkh Rashīdī, ed. Khānbābā Bayānī (Tehran, 1350, second edition), 160. For Hāfiz Abrū’s use of the Zafarnāma for the period under discussion, Ch. Melville, “Hamd Allāh Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī’s Zafarnāma and the historiography of the late Ilkhanid period,” in ed., K. Estami, Iran and Iranian Studies (New Jersey, 1998), 1-12 (for Timurtash’s uprising, 5).}

Although Timurtash’s actions and policies in Rūm are noted in a variety of sources, from Ilkhanid and Mamluk histories to Armenian accounts, we lack a detailed historical account on the revolt itself and on the instigators’ convictions. Timurtash’s rebellion and self-proclamation as mahdī have, therefore, received little attention.\footnote{The reign of Ilkhan Abū Sa`īd (r. 1317-35) falls unfortunately beyond the scope of the comprehensive histories of Rashīd al-Dīn and Vāṣṣāf al-Ḥaṭrā and we must contend with later, less informed works. The Mamluk sources might offer detailed accounts about the events leading to the downfall of the Chubanids (1327-8) and Timurtash’s arrival at the court of the Mamluk Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad (and subsequent execution), as well as some useful insights onto the appearance of the Timurtashid imposter nine years later (1337-8) and the instrumental role the “fake Timurtash” played in the factional struggles that ensued after Abū Sa`īd’s death, but they appear to show very little interest in (or simply, to have been less informed about) Timurtash’s rebellion and only few mention his messianic self-proclamation. For example, the sultan’s warm reception of Timurtash and the events leading to and following his execution have been recently thoroughly studied by Broadbridge, 117-25. Finally, the main Anatolian historical account of this poorly documented period, Karim al-Dīn Aqsarā’ī’s Musāmarat al-akhbār wa musāyarat al-akhbār (“Night time narratives and keeping up with the good”), ends with Timurtash return to office after the revolt of the amirs in 1319 and although completed during the height of Timurtash’s prestige and messianic claim (1323/722), would seem at first glance to furnish little information about Timurtash’s revolt and messianic convictions.}

In his study of Anatolia under Mongol rule, Charles Melville argues that Timurtash’s messianic claim was “designed to win the support of the religious classes (if not also of the Turkmens and dervishes, who were more successfully cultivated by the Safavīd şeyhs Haidar, Junaid and Isma`īl at the end of the fifteenth century)”.\footnote{Linda T. Darling, “Persianate sources on Anatolia and the early history of the Ottomans,” Studies on Persianate Societies, vol. 2 (2004), 136. Anooshahr has also recently suggests ghaza/Jihad against the Mongols and Timur to be a central theme in Anatolia at the time. My reading of the historian Aqsarā’ī differs very much from that of Anooshahr (more bellow). Ali Anooshahr, The Ghazi Sultans and the Frontiers of Islam (London, 2009), especially chapter 6.}

Linda Darling, on the other hand, suggests that the revolt was an indication that “fighting against the Mongol regime had by that time taken on an apocalyptic significance that it did not seem to have had earlier”.\footnote{Melville, “Anatolia,” 91.}

Two new pieces of evidence, however, shed a different light on Timurtash’s uprising. The first is the identification of Qāḍī Najm al-Dīn Ṭashṭī, who was tried and executed for the
rebellion. I argue that Ṭashtī’s intellectual milieu and ties suggest that the targeted audience of Timurtash’s claim was not the antinomian, dervish communities of Anatolia, but the “mainstream” intellectual networks and urban public spheres in the Ilkhanate and in Ilkhanid, post-Saljūq Anatolia. The second is the Armenian Martyrdom of St. Grigoris Karninci, bishop of Theodosiopolis/Erzurum, which speaks to Timurtash’s persecution of Christian communities, Greek Orthodox and Armenians in Anatolia, just prior to his outright rebellion. Considered alongside additional sources, primarily the Anatolian historian Karīm al-Dīn Aqsarāʾī’s Musāmarat al-akhbār wa musāyarat al-akhyār (“Night time narratives and keeping up with the good”), Timurtash’s course just prior to his revolt shows that the Mongol officer was using the new political language that had its roots in the Ilkhanid experimentation with Islamic salvation history and the Mongol “political theology of divine right,” in order to support, as a non-Chinggisid, his bid for independent rule.

**A Tabrizi Qāḍī in Anatolia and His Intellectual Networks**

An additional account of Timurtash’s revolt that mentions the Qāḍī Ṭashtī is the Manāqib al-ʿārifīn by Shams al-Dīn Aflākī, a disciple of Amīr ʿĀrif, a great grandson of the thirteenth-century Persian mystical poet Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (1207-73). In Manāqib al-ʿārifīn, a hagiography of Rūmī and his offspring, Aflākī situates Timurtash’s self-proclamation as mahdī in the midst of the Mongol governor’s military campaign in 723/1323 in Konya. According to Aflākī, a disciple of

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685 Based on Aqsarāʾī’s account, Şevket Küçükhüseyin also argues that Timurtash was addressing his (pro-Islamic) message to the primarily Muslim administrative ranks of Anatolia against the background of the crisis it was experiencing for three decades since the collapse of Seljuk rule. Şevket Küçükhüseyin, Selbst- und Fremdwahrnehmung im Prozess kultureller Transformation (Wien, 2011), 233
688 Aflākī has 720 for the retaking of Konya; this, however, appears to be a mistake as Taʾrīkh-i al-i Saljūq (and other sources) notes the date as 723. Anon. (ca. 765/1363), Taʾrīkh-i al-i Saljūq dar anāfīlī (Tehran, 1999), 132. Ahrī too ties Timurtash’s attacks on the Karamanids to his insubordination. He writes that after conquering fortresses
Rūmī’s great grandson Amīr ‘Ārif, after retaking Konya, Timurtash proclaimed (da’wa kardī): “I am the Lord of Auspicious Conjunction; why indeed, I am the Mahdī of time!” (man šāhib-i qirānam balki mahdī-yī zamānān). In spite of Timurtash’s harsh treatment of Rūmī’s great grandson Chalabī ‘Ābid, Aflākī nevertheless describes Timurtash as “a young man firm in religion and chaste (javānī būd mutadayyin va-pāk dāman)”. One of the most intriguing details in Aflākī’s account is the widespread support the Mongol rebel received. Aflākī lists a group of prominent men (jamā‘ī az kubarāyi dahr), Qāḏīs, religious scholars and shaykhs “from every city” (Tūqāt, Qayṣarīyya, Niğde, etc.), including the Qāḏī lashkar and the khaṭīb of Kayseri, who according to him, out of greed, went to great lengths in praising the Mongol amir and ha urged others to pay obedience to him. The first name in Timurtash’s list of supporters is that of Mawlānā Najm al-Dīn Ṭashtī. His is also the only name that resurfaces in other accounts as well.

The Maragha librarian Ibn al-Fuwaṭī’s (642/1244-723/1323) remarkable biographical dictionary, the Majma‘ al-ādāb fī mu‘jam al-alqāb, refers to Najm al-Dīn Ṭashtī in several instances. In the first example, Ibn al-Fuwaṭī notes that during his stay in Baghdad in
711/1311, Mawlānā Najm al-Dīn al-Ṭashtī al-Tabrīzī had copied the poems of an early thirteenth century Baghdadi poet by the name of Taqī al-Dīn ‘Alī from a Mālikī faqīh at the Mustansiriyya madrasa, whom Ibn al-Fuwaṭī praises for his supreme handwriting. In the second and more interesting reference, under the biographical notice of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ḥusa al-Shīrwānī, a resident of Erzincan in Rūm, Ibn al-Fuwaṭī mentions that he met together with Muḥyī al-Dīn the “excellent” Qāḍī Mawlānā Najm al-Dīn Abī Bakr b. Muḥammad al-Ṭashtī, at the dwelling (dār) of the chief Qāḍī of the Ilkhanid realm (Qāḍī quḍāt al-mamālik) Nizām al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 716) in 716/1316.

Ṭashtī’s full biography is not found in what remains of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī’s extensive work, though the latter appears to have personally known the Qāḍī. Nevertheless, Najm al-Dīn Ṭashtī emerges as part of the lively scholarly scenes of Tabriz and Baghdad. Ṭashtī’s name appears on two documents from the period. The signature of an individual by the name of M. b. M. b. Abī Bakr al-Ṭashtī al-Ṭabrīzī is found on a copy of Rashīd al-Dīn’s Kitāb al-tawḍīhāt, the first book of his Majmūʿa, dated to Ramadan 714/1314. Rashīd al-Dīn stipulated that each copy made of the Majmūʿa had to be confirmed by a Tabrizi Qāḍī.

More significant, however, is an autograph ijāza, a teaching certificate, issued in 701/1302 by Ṭūṣī’s most famous student from Maragha, the physician, philosopher, astronomer and overall polymath, Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311). The ijāza was granted to Najm al-Milla wa’l-Dīn M. b. M. b. Abī Bakr al-Ṭabrīzī, whom Shīrāzī honors with the titles quḍwat al-aʿīma al-mujtahidīn (exemplar of the mujtahids) and maliʿ akābir al-muḥaqiqīn (refuge of the great inquirers). The ijāza lists the works Ṭashtī had studied with Shīrāzī giving us insight into Ṭashtī’s

694 Ibid., vol. 4, 498 (biographical notice: 4304). Muḥyī al-Dīn Ḥusa al-Shīrwānī was the son of Majd al-Dīn, resident of Tabriz and Qāḍī of Shirvan.
695 Ibid., vol. 5, 80-81 (biographical notice: 4678). On Nizām al-Dīn at the court of Öljeitū, see chapter four.
696 Krawulsky, 82; Van Ess, Der Wesir, 37.
religious and intellectual background. They include several well-known hadīth compilations and philosophical studies such as Shīrāzī’s own commentary on Suhrawardī’s philosophy of illumination, Ṭūsī’s commentary on Ibn Sīnā, and the first book of Ibn Sīnā’s al-Qānūn (Canon of Medicine). Shīrāzī explicitly states that he also grants his student permission to transmit all of his works.697

Additionally, there are a number of parallels between the careers of Shīrāzī and Ṭashtī. In the 1270s, after spending nearly a decade in the company of Ṭūsī (up until 1268), Shīrāzī was appointed chief Qāḍī of Malatya and Sivas, a position that he likely held into the reign of the Ilkhan Arghun.698 Yet, in spite of the distance, Shīrāzī maintained close ties with the court, and in 681/1282, he was sent by the Ilkhan Aḥmad Tegüder on a diplomatic mission to the Mamlik Sultan Qalāwūn.699

Qāshānī refers to Ṭashtī as chief Qāḍī of Rūm (Qāḍī al-quḍāt-i mamālik-i rūm).700 Like Shīrāzī, Ṭashtī was also sent by the Ilkhan on a diplomatic mission. In 716/1316, Öljjeitū chose him from amongst the men of Tabriz, as Qazwīnī writes, for a mission to the Chagatai rebel prince Yasawur, who had fled from Central Asia to Khurasan with the intention of submitting to the Ilkhan.701 Before delivering to the Chagatai prince the letter concluding the agreement between the Ilkhan and Yasawur (ʿahdnāmah), Ṭashtī stopped at Abū Saʿīd’s camp to report on his mission. Qāshānī has an interesting account of Ṭashtī’s mission in Taʾrīkh-i ʿUljaytū. At Yasaʿur’s camp, the Qāḍī was questioned by a group of eminent scholars from Bukhara and Samarqand on matters of legal theory and jurisprudence. They were impressed by his answers and reported back

699 Pfeiffer, “Reflections on a ‘double rapprochement’,” 386.
700 Considering Timurtash’s ties with Ṭashtī, one might speculate that amir Chupan appointed him during his campaign against the Turkmen in Rūm and his retaking of Konya from the Karaminds in the summer of 714/1314. See Melville, “Anatolia under the Mongols,” 89-90.
to Yasa’ur, who showed Ṭashtī great favor. Qāshānī implies that the mission’s success was on account of the impression Ṭashtī had left on the Mongol prince.  

In sum, a student of the famous polymath Shīrāzī, Najm al-Dīn Ṭashtī, whom Chupan had executed for instigating his son’s revolt, was a Tabrizi Qāḍī, who was appointed as chief Qāḍī of Rūm. He appears to have had close ties to the Ilkhan Öljeitū’s court and to the court of his heir, Sultan Abū Saʿīd. His signature on a copy of Rashīd al-Dīn’s Kitāb al-tawdīḥāt, Shīrāzī’s ijāza and Ibn al-Fuwatī’s note about Ṭashtī’s presence at the home of the chief Qāḍī of the Ilkhanid realm, all indicate that Ṭashtī was a member of the central intellectual circles of the Ilkhanid court. The question remains, however, what role the Qāḍī al-quḍāt-i mamālik-i rūm play in Timurtash’s rebellion and his self-proclamation. Was he simply the scapegoat for the Mongol commander’s insubordination?

In Aflākī’s list of Qādīs and ʿulamā headed by Ṭashtī, nearly all of individuals listed appear only once, in this instance, in Aflākī’s extensive hagiography of the Rūmīs. How did Aflākī, a Sufi disciple of the Rūmī family in Konya, come up with this detailed list of the names of supporters of Timurtash? One possibility, which seems to be supported by Aflākī’s account, is that their names were made public through the issuing of a decree or a statement in support of the Mongol governor on the eve of his campaign in Konya against the Karamanids. I have discussed Saʿd al-Dawla’s (d. 1291) attempt to collect signatures from eminent Muslim scholars and other Ilkhanid public figures (aʾimma-yi islām wa-aʿyān-i dawlat) to confirm the content of a document that Vaṣṣāf refers to as the maḥḍar, a manifesto. I suggested that Saʿd al-Dawla’s maḥḍar was linked to the circulation of another maḥḍar in Baghdad in 689/1290, which raised various allegations against Saʿd al-Dawla and quoted from the Qurʾan and ḥadīth against the Jews.

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702 Ṭashtī’s name is misread here as Najm al-Dīn Ṭayyībī. Taʾrīkh-i Ūljāyūtu, 218-19.
703 See chapter two.
The case of Sa’d al-Dawla’s mahḍar is an indication of the complex relationship between the Muslim public sphere, religious minorities and the Ilkhanid rulers: a means of voicing the public’s, or rather its religious elite’s dissatisfaction with the ruling strata, its representatives or policies, the mahḍar could also function as a source of political authority and legitimacy furnishing the regime with a potential tool for influencing public opinion “from within.” As such, the mahḍar or similar signed declarations might also offer ideological support for acts of political subversion and dissent. Did the Tabrizi Qāḍī with his intellectual and political ties orchestrate the issuing of such a “mahḍar-like” document designed to win Anatolian public support for the Mongol governor-rebel? While the existence of such a document is uncertain, Ṭashtī and other religious figures in Ilkhanid Anatolia would have easily stood behind Timurtash’s message of moral regulation, puritanism, and the restoration of a deteriorating social and religious order in Anatolia.

Timurtash and the Armenian Martyrdom of St. Grigoris Karninci

Another unstudied account on Timurtash’s actions in Rûm is the Armenian Martyrdom of St. Grigoris Karninci, bishop of Theodosiopolis/Erzurum. According to the text, in 1321, after raiding Armenian Cilicia, Timurtash pillaged and burnt down the Armenian church of Etchmiadzin.704 Thereafter, he proceeded to Kayseri, where he plundered and ruined churches

704 Timurtash’s invasion of Sis followed a Mamluk invasion in early April-May 1320 (which included the Aleppo forces and the prince of Hamah Abū al-Fidāʾ). Later that year, in November-December, Timurtash sent ambassadors to the Mamluk court and possibly also sent a message to the Mamluk governor of Aleppo requesting Mamluk military support for his campaign against the Armenians. Toward the end of 1321, Timurtash joined forces with the Karamanids (according to Abū al-Fidāʾ) and invaded Sis. His forces remained there for nearly a month ravaging and plundering before they returned to Anatolia. The Mamluks do not seem to have responded to Timurtash’s messages, but this did not prevent them from reaping the benefits from his attack. Although they collected a tribute from the Armenians (who were now seeking to replace their alliance with the Ilkhan, with Mamluk protection), they also launched later that year another campaign against the Armenians conquering a number of key fortresses that the latter repetitively refused to hand over to the Mamluks. 'Imād al-Dīn Ismāʿīl b. 'Ali Abū al-Fidāʾ, The Memoirs of a Syrian Prince: Abu ’l-Fidāʾ, Sultan of Hamāh (672-732/1273-1331), trans. P. M. Holt (Wiesbaden, 1983), 81-82; Abū al-FidāʾʿAbd Allāh Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya wa’l-nihāya (Beirut, 1988), vol. 14, 100, 102; Mufaḍḍal Ibn Abīl-Faḍāʾ il, Ägypten und Syrien zwischen 1317 und 1341.
and killed Greek Orthodox priests. The hagiographer then takes us to the city of Erzurum in eastern Anatolia, where a wicked Qāḍī obtains from the Mongol governor Timurtash a decree ordering the forced circumcision and conversion to Islam of one local Bishop named Grigoris and his uncle. We learn about the ordeals the poor Bishop bravely withstands at the hands of the cruel Qāḍī and his tyrant accomplice, the Mongol amir. The account ends with the Bishop’s martyrdom and subsequent Christ-like resurrection, which is dated in the text to 20 June 1321.\textsuperscript{705}

Timurtash is primarily known for his aggressive anti-Beylik policy that he perused while in office in Rûm.\textsuperscript{706} It seems that his retrieval of Konya from the Karamanids in 723/1323 indeed marked a strategical shift, the start of his extensive military campaigns against the Turkmen Beyliks,

\textit{in der Chronik des Mufaddal b. Abî l-Faḍā’îl,} ed. and trans. S. Kortantamer (Freiburg, 1973), 11 (Arabic text); Broadbridge, \textit{Kingship and Ideology,} 117-8.\textsuperscript{705} The text is not dated and only one manuscript of it has been preserved. It was copied after 1567. Hayoc’ nor vkanere [New Armenian Martyrs] (1155-1843), ed. Y. Manandeian and H. Ačarean (Ejmiacin, 1903), 121-8. I am grateful to Zara Pogossian and Ishayahu Landa for their help with reading this text. Korobeinikov links this persecution to the decline of the Orthodox church in Kayseri. Dimitri A. Korobeinikov, “Orthodox communities in Eastern Anatolia in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries. Part 2: the time of troubles,” \textit{al-Masāq,} 17:1 (March, 2005), 6. The fourteenth century saw a massive decline in the Christian communities and the presence of the Orthodox Church in Anatolia. Vryonis has emphasized the role of dervish communities, syncretism, and conversion in this religious transformation of Anatolia. Korobeinikov, however, suggests that the key to this steep decline in Christian presence was the “sedentarisation of the Turkish people en masse” and the political instability and military campaigns in the region, which brought to the decline of Greek-city-dwellers in Anatolia (in contrast to the survival of Greek population in rural areas). Ibid., 18; Speros Vryonis, \textit{The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century} (Berkley, 1971), 351-402 (in particular).\textsuperscript{706} Timurtash’s campaigns in Anatolia left their impression not only on the terrorized Beyliks. In al-ʿUmārī’s geographical section on Anatolia, Timurtash is noted to have dramatically changed the balance of power between the Turkmen Beyliks and the Ilkhanid government in Anatolia. Al-ʿUmārī lists the Beyliks he conquered and notes, for example, that the Beylik of Eshrefoglu did not recover Timurtash’s campaign in 1326 and the gruesome death of its ruler. He writes of Timurtash’s tyranny towards his neighbors and use of both military force and ruses in order to annex the Anatolian Beyliks. He gathered such great riches during his campaigns and as result of revenue from taxes of the conquered territories that it did not fall behind that of the Seljuk rulers of Anatolia. Declaring his independent rule, he had nine Tumans (military units) of Mongol and Turkmen at his service. Al-ʿUmārī reports this account from Balbān the Genoese, a freedman (āṭīq) of a Mamluk officer and a former member of a ruling family in Genoa (the Duryea [?]), who al-ʿUmārī was lucky enough to interview when fate brought the two together in a Cairean jail. According to al-ʿUmārī, Balbān had full knowledge of Anatolia. We can imagine that the latter worked as a Genoese merchant at Anatolia probably trading along its shores and harbor cities. That stories about Timurtash’s fame and terror traveled so far was in itself quite remarkable and reveals somewhat of the drama that his actions brought upon Anatolia. Al-ʿUmārī, 21,30-31, 36-39, 51. For Timurtash’s military advancements, Melville, “Anatolia,” 91-2; for the Beyliks, Rudi P. Lindner, “Anatolia, 1300-1451,” \textit{The Cambridge History of Turkey,} vol. 1, 107-117.
which continued throughout the 1320s. Timurtash’s career as governor, however, began differently, with the persecution of Christians in Rûm and his invasion into the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, possibly with Turkmen-Karamanid support. In fact, an Armenian colophon dated to 1314, around the time Timurtash and his father were dispatched to Rûm, describes similar events taking place in Erzurum: “[these are] grievous and bitter times, when our Armenian nation fell under the yoke of levies […] in this city [Theodosipolis = Erzurum] they demolished many churches; and some individuals, abandoning their faith in Christ, joined the wicked nation of the Ismaelites and others sold their children and fled to various places, but they found refuge nowhere […]”.  

The accusations leveled in the martyrdom against the Mongol Timurtash and the wicked Qâdî culprit might have also been rooted in the transformation of the urban environment and demography of the city of Erzurum under Ilkhanid rule. At the end of the thirteenth century and the first decades of the fourteenth century, Erzurum experienced a remarkable surge in religious building projects making it “the greatest concentration of madrasas recorded in Anatolia in this period, as well as the peak of this kind of activity under Ilkhanid rule, whether in Iran or Anatolia”. One of the most monumental buildings erected during the reign of Öljeytû, was the

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707 Karaman was one of the most powerful rising Turkmen Beyliks at the time in Anatolia and its leaders had an alliance with the Mamluk Sultans. Al-ʿUmarî, nevertheless, emphasizes that were it not for Chupan’s arrival a year later to deal with his rebellious son, divine protection and the Mamluk sultan’s auspicious patronage on the Karamanids, with all their mighty forces, the Karamanids would not have been able to survive Timurtash’s military might. Al-ʿUmarî, 29 (text); Abû al-Fidâʾ, 90.

708 Sanjian, Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 58. Was Timurtash simply following the measures his father had instituted earlier in Anatolia? Vryonis notes that between the years 1315 to 1318, eleven patriarchal acta documents of the Orthodox Church refer to times of “confusion, invasions, upheaval, turbulence […] captivity, destruction, and attacks by foreigners,” in Anatolia, with specific references to localities such as Amsaia and Melitene (Erzincan) in eastern Anatolia. Vryonis argues for a correlation between this “documentary testimony” and the emergence of the Beyliks and suggests that “this period of upheaval was in large measure responsible for the final destruction of the ecclesiastical structure in Anatolia.” Vryonis, 311. The years 1315-18 were also the years Chupan and Timurtash were in Anatolia. Was Ṭâşhtî’s appointment as chief Qâdî of Rûm also related to the worsening conditions of the Christian urban communities?

709 Patricia Blessing, Rebuilding Anatolia after the Mongol Conquest: Islamic architecture in the lands of Rûm, 1240-1330 (Burlington, 2014), 129-30. Did the rise in investments in public religious building in Erzurum express
Yakutiye Medrese, established in 710/1310 “from the benefits of the benefaction” of the Ilkhan Ghazan and his wife Bulughan Khātūn, by Jamāl al-Dīn Khawāja Yāqūt al-Ghāzānī.\(^\text{710}\) As Patricia Blessing observes, this peak in Islamic patronage in Erzurum indicates that the city, with its surrounding pastures and central location on the trade routes to Tabriz, gained considerable importance. It was, she argues, “the Ilkhanid gateway into Anatolia” connecting the Ilkhanate with the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.\(^\text{711}\)

The urban transformation of Erzurum into a center of Islamic learning might have not been directly related to an increase in interreligious tensions in the city and persecutions of local Christian and Armenians that is attested to in the *Martyrdom of St. Grigoris*. However, these changes in Erzurum are an indication of the increasing significance and visibility of the city and more broadly eastern Anatolia under later Ilkhanid rule. Whether or not Timurtash was indeed personally involved in the persecution of the Armenian Bishop of Erzurum as the *Martyrdom of St. Grigoris* claims, the hagiography suggests that the Armenian communities of eastern Anatolia experienced a change in Mongol attitude, which is also attested in other Armenian accounts as noted above.\(^\text{712}\) The growing presence of Erzurum in the Ilkhanate might suggest that this change earlier changes in the human configuration of the city, for example, the city’s growing Islamization and demographic and confessional changes, or, were these projects aimed at encouraging such a change by inviting migrant scholars and students to the city through the promise of lodge and patronage? The answer might be altogether different. This surge in building and endowing might have originated in the wish of individuals who had achieved considerable wealth and political power under the Ilkhans, to guarantee that their offspring would benefit from their property. The mechanism of the *waqf* was seen as promising continuity and stability at a time period in which central government in Anatolia was increasingly destabilized and weakened, as Saljūq rule under the Mongols was nearing its end (1307). See, for example, Pfeiffer, “Protecting private property,” 152.

\(^\text{710}\) Jamāl al-Dīn Khawāja Yāqūt al-Ghāzānī seems to have been the Ilkhanid governor of Erzurum and Bayburt Or an Ilkhanid merchant, perhaps a partner merchant of the Ilkhan Ghazan, and hence his title al-Ghāzānī.

\(^\text{711}\) Blessing, 123-63.

\(^\text{712}\) Similar events related to the Armenian community seem to have taken place in Erzincan in 1314 (the same date as the colophon from Eruzurm lamenting the state of the Armenians). Three Franciscan missionaries, who were preaching to Muslims in the city, approached the Qāḍī of the customs house (*dogana*) denigrating the Prophet Muhammad and the religion of Islam. The Qāḍī along with a group of religious men and “*faqīrs*” argued with them at length. Later that day, a trial was convened and the three missionaries were sentenced to death. Interestingly, the head of the Franciscans in nearby Trebizond reported that their burial was arranged by the Armenian community. The Armenian patriarch of Erzincan “canonized” the Fransican martyrs, and had his community fast to

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in Mongol attitude towards the Christian communities was also aimed at propagating a message
to Ilkhanid as well as Anatolian audiences. It presented the new governor Timurtash as the
enforcer of public morality, perhaps even, surpassing in his puritan measures and persecutions of
the Christians the measures enforced by the Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd.

Furthermore, Timurtash’s involvement in these persecutions speaks to a larger campaign
enforcing public morality that the Mongol governor had undertaken in Rūm just prior to, or in
the early stages of his rebellion. The Anatolian historian Karīm al-Dīn Aqsarāʾī (on whom,
below), who devoted his didactic history to Timurtash, but chose to end it just prior to the amir’s
revolt, explicitly links Timurtash’s restoration of order and justice in Anatolia and his
implementation of regulatory measures in Rūm, in particular, his prohibition on alcohol
consumption, with the signs of the manifestation of the mahdī. Aqsarāʾī writes in the conclusion
of his Musāmarat al-akhbār that “one of the signs of the manifestation of the mahdī is that he
[Timurtash] has obliterated like this the wine, which is the mother of all evil […] from the lands
and countries” (az amārāt-i ḍuḥūr-i mahdī yakā an ast ki shirāb ṭā az bilād va-diyyār chinān zāʾīl
gardānīda ast).713

713 This section in Aqsarāʾī’s history starts with Chupan’s arrival in Anatolia in 1314 in order to repress the Turkmen
(atrāk bī-pāk affāk sāfāk) uprisings. In contrast to Aqsarāʾī’s vilification of the former governor of Anatolia, the
amir Irenjin, Chupan is described as the embodiment of justice: with his arrival at Anatolia, “the shadow of grace
was cast over the vilāyat.” He was successful in securing the submission of most of the Turkmen except for the
Karamanids, whom he expelled from Konya. Returning to the ordū after learning of Öljeitū’s death, he appoints in
his place his “pure progeny”, khusruv-i pīrūz takht Timurtash. With the arrival of spring and the period of revival,
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Aqsarāʾī, furthermore, praises the Mongol governor for enforcing the ghiyār, the distinguishing dress code, on the Jews and Christians of Rūm, “who had become so alike the Muslims in their appearance that they could not be told apart.” The centrality of these measures for Aqsarāʾī, and moreover, for his historical vision, can be further gleaned from the way the author chose to end his history. Musāmarat al-akhbār ends with a long quote from Ibn al-ʿArabī’s (d. 1240) letter of counsel (naṣīḥa) to the Saljuq sultan ʿİzz al-Dīn Kaykāʾūς I (r. 1211-19), enumerating the various regulations of shurūṭ ʿumar (“the pact of ‘Umar”). Aqsarāʾī urges his pious patron Timurtash to enforce the “pact” in its entirety on the dhimmi communities of Anatolia. Aqsarāʾī’s mahdī is not the eschatological redeemer, but a synthesis of the ideal Perso-Islamic monarch (philosopher accordingly by the tyrant Irenjin, who is blind to the fate that awaits him. Warned by his vizier, Timurtash flees to Danishmand territory until his father defeats Irenjin through “divine support” (taʾyid ilâhī). Aqsarāʾī takes great pleasure in depicting the defeat of the “second Pharaoh” and “new Abrahah al-Ḥabab,” Irenjin. He uses this episode as a moral lesson about the fickleness of fate and against haughtiness. Timurtash then returns under “the shining light of divine providence” to purify the land from the dirt of corruption and administer justice: the wicked collaborators of Irenjin in Anatolia are rewarded with evil disappears while the khusrūv-i ʿādīl. He sets out to vanquish the repressors and sets the law (qāmīn-i dawlat-i ʿū) on the basis of justice. Peace descends on Anatolia as Timurtash is able for a while to pacify the Karamanids and all are safe in their lands (dar vatan-i khūd). Returning the following year (1320) from a visit to the ordu where he pledges his alliance to the Ilkhan, his oppression of repression and rebellion, good deeds, and strengthening of Islam are so great that the sign of the actions and states of the Mahdi become manifest through them (az athār-i khayr [...] amārat-i afʿāl va-ahvāl-i mahdī bi-zuhūr payvast). Aqsarāʾī, 310-27; Melville, “Anatolia,” 89-90. On Irenjin’s role as leading conspirator in the revolt that was possibly supported by the young Abū Saʿīd against the strongman Chupan, Melville, “Abū Saʿīd and the revolt,” 100ff.

14 Aqsarāʾī, 327-9. Ibn al-ʿArabī had an intimate relationship with ʿİzz al-Dīn Kaykāʾūς I serving as his spiritual guide and teacher. The letter of counsel (naṣīḥa) to Kaykāʾūς I is found in Ibn al-ʿArabī’s al-Futūḥāṭ al-makkiyya (The Meccan Revelations). Sara Nur Yıldız and Ḥaṣım Şahin point out that Ibn al-ʿArabī’s discussion in his letter to Kaykāʾūς I of the enforcement of shurūṭ ʿumar, which forbade Christains from building or repairing churches and monasteries, sell alcoholic beverages, carry arms, or to draw attention to their religious ceremonies, “seems to be directly related to the sultan’s struggle to quell the Christian rebellion in Antalya, breaking out in 1212, the year the letter was written.” Ibn al-ʿArabī’s council, they observe, expresses the sultan’s fear from Christian dominance that “should be understood in accordance with his self-proclaimed role of reviving Islam in face of Christian expansion into Muslim lands, during a time when Crusades in both Spain and the Levantine coastal region posed a real threat to Muslim sovereignty.” On Ibn al-ʿArabī’s time in Anatolia (a total of five-six years between 1205-1222) and relationship with Majd al-Dīn Iṣḥāq (d. 1220), his influence at the Saljuq court, and his letter of counsel (naṣīḥa) to Kaykāʾūς I, ] Sara Nur Yıldız and Ḥaṣım Şahin, “In the proximity of sultans: Majd al-Dīn Iṣḥāq, Ibn ʿArabī and the Seljuk court,” in A.C.S Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız. Eds. The Slejnums of Anatolia: court and society in the medieval Middle East (London, 2013), 173-205. An important recent study of the origins of the shurūṭ ʿumar and their enforcement is Milka Levy-Rubin, Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire: from surrender to coexistence (New York, 2011). The enduring influence of shurūṭ ʿumar in the later medieval period is attested in the manuals guiding the muḥtasibs, the inspectors of public spaces and the markets. The manuals referenced the shurūṭ ʿumar as the main source of authority for determining the dhimmi communities’ obligations. Kristen Stilt, Islamic Law in Action: authority, discretion, and everyday experiences in Mamluk Egypt (Oxford, 2011), 109-26.
king) and the ultimate moral regulator, the commander of right and forbider of wrong (al-amr b’il-ma’rūf).

Michael Cook defines commanding right and forbidding wrong (al-amr b’il-ma’rūf wa’l-nahy ‘an al-munkar) as “a duty of unusual character” since “it is an integral part of the mainstream scholastic tradition of Islamic societies; and yet it retains a marked potential for violence” and subversion. Based on the idea that “an executive power of the law of God is vested in each and every Muslim,” commanding right grants each believer the right and obligation to invert “the prevailing hierarchy of social and political power”.715 This was case for the founder of the Almohad movement Ibn Tūmart (d. 524/1130), whose reform movement was interlinked with his claim to mahdīhood. As Mercedes Garcia-Arenal observes, for Ibn Tūmart, “the practice of al-amr b’il-ma’rūf thus became an instrument of political opposition, used of this purpose by those who assumed the role of censor or reformer of customs, and immediately recognized as such by his audience and by the political authority of the day.” Garcia-Arenal further notes that “Ibn Tūmart’s behavior as a censor or reformer of customs prepares the ground for his proclamation as a Mahdī, the greatest possible reformer”.716

In Sunni Islam, the mahdī came to denominate an eschatological figure, an apocalyptic world-ruler. However, the mahdī also designates a cyclical reformer, or “a mujaddid-like mahdī,” who appears periodically to set the community aright after its corruption and restore morality and

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715 Michael Cook, Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought (Cambridge, 2001), 583. Cook argues that “what we see here is the presence, within the mainstream of Islamic thought, of a strikingly – not say inconveniently – radical value: the principle that an executive power of the law of God is vested in each and every Muslim. Under this conception the individual believer as such has not only the right, but also the duty, to issue orders pursuant to God’s law, and to do what he can to see that they are obeyed. What is more, he may be issuing these orders to people who conspicuously outrank him in the prevailing hierarchy of social and political power.” Ibid., 9-10.

This understanding of the mahdī is already found in the eighth century. As Hayrettin Yücesoy concludes in his study of ‘Abbāsid messianism, “the idea of tajdīd, religious renewal and restoration, emerged as one of the fundamental components of messianic discourse since the second Islamic century.” Claims of reform and the purification of the faith provided rulers and rebels alike an ideological basis for their political actions.

By “obliterating the wine,” enforcing the ghiyār, destroying churches, and generally speaking, forbidding wrong, Timurtash the governor-rebel stepped into the shoes of this Sunni cyclical militant reformer and periodic moral regulator, the mahdī. Furthermore, Aflākī’s claim that Timurtash proclaimed himself “Lord of Auspicious Conjunction,” a world conqueror, in addition to the title of the mahdī further supports the suggestion that the Mongol rebel was claiming the title in the sense of a militant reformer.

Aflākī’s list of Timurtash’s supporters from amongst the Qādis and leading religious figures suggests that his reformist message might have been propagated through the circulation in Rūm’s urban centers of a “mahdār-like” document that included the names of Qādi Ṭashtī and other individuals in support of Timurtash’s campaign. What better way to pronounce Timurtash’s independent government, moralistic and new aggressive anti-Beylik agenda, than declaring his campaign to rid Anatolia from its immoral Christians and impure Turkmen over the pulpits of Konya, set free once again from the Karamanid menace? Our reconstruction of the

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718 Hayrettin Yücesoy further observes that while social, political and intellectual developments in the ‘Abbāsid period charged the mahdī with the notion of militant reform and revival, “the chronological relation of the mahdī at the end of time and his sectarian and genealogical affiliation did certainly display flexibility, which encouraged a wide range of aspirants.” Yücesoy, Messianic Beliefs, 133, 139-40.
historical context of Timurtash’s revolt indicates, therefore, that his mahdí scheme entailed “a political ideology of militant piety”.

The Mahdi’s Historian: Aqsarāʾī and His Musāmarat al-akhbār

A close reading of the work of the Anatolian author Aqsarāʾī, who as we noted earlier associated Timurtash’s prohibition on alcohol and campaign of public morality with “the manifestation of the signs of the mahdí,” shows how members of the local Persianate elite in Anatolia reacted to Timurtash’s bid for independence seeking to harness Timurtash’s campaign for their own causes, in particular, the restoration of a Persianate order in Anatolia. A native of Aksaray and a munshī at the local bureaucracy, Karīm al-Dīn Aqsarāʾī provides in Musāmarat al-akhbār a local, Anatolian point of view of the events taking place in the Ilkhanate and Ilkhanid Anatolia. Caught up in a number of the turbulent incidents at the end of the thirteenth century, Aqsarāʾī emerges as a politically involved member of the administrative ranks, the local Persianate elite, after the collapse of Saljūq rule. Under the Ilkhan Gāzān, he was appointed to the position of administrator of the awqāf of Rūm, an office, which as Melville notes, probably brought him both influence and wealth and even a greater measure of trouble and financial duties. He was a commandant of Aksaray and had his own fort at Sālima.

Melville defines Musāmarat al-akhbār as a work that combines both an Anatolian local view and an emphasis on contemporary events, with a model of a “general” history. Aqsarāʾī writes that he intended the work as a gift for his patron Timurtash as it is the custom of the

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719 Ibid., xii. The notion of “purification” is central to Aqsarāʾī’s presentation of Timurtash’s missions in Anatolia: enforcing Islamic public morality, especially with regards to alcohol and the Christian communities, and removing the “filth” of the Turkmen, whom Aqsarāʾī often refers to as impure. In Qāḍī Burḥān al-Dīn- al-Anawī’s Anīs al-Qulīb (completed in 1211), a history of the prophets with an extensive section devoted to anti-Armenian polemics, the Armenians are described as “the filthiest, most unclean and ill-fated of all the Christians.” See Andrew Peacock’s excellent study of this unpublished work, A.C.S. Peacock, “An interfaith polemic of medieval Anatolia: Qāḍī Burḥān al-Dīn- al-Anawī on the Armenians and their heresies,” in Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia, edited by A.C.S. Peacock, Bruno de Nicola, Sara Nur Yıldız, (Burlington, 2015), 233-61 (240 for this verse).
educated to award their masters gifts, yet a poor and humble servant, he could not think of any other appropriate gift than this history. He expresses his hope that, readers at court would convey the contents of this majmūʿa to the blessed ears of Mongol commander: “for the value (fāʿida) of history is the pleasure it gives to kings and potentates, while weary or relaxing, to listen to stories of the past […] , what the various kings had and […] how each was rewarded for his good or evil deeds […]”. Intending to encourage his patron to incline towards to good and shun the evil, Aqsarāʾī finds that there is no better time to end his history than the present (1323) as there is no ruler finer than the present prince (shahriyar) Timurtash.720

The didactic message of his history tallies with other Ilkhanid historians who, too, sought to steer their Mongol patrons towards acculturation and embracing the practices and cultures of their Persianate subjects.721 Historians of Ilkhanid Anatolia, Ibn Bībī, Aqsarāʾī, and to some degree, also the anonymous author of Taʾrīkh-i āl-i saljuq, actively participated in this project encouraging the intended audience of their works, be they government officials or Ilkhanid governors and rulers, to promote justice and strengthen Islam, by reporting positive and negative examples of previous rulers and state servants.722 In his history, Aqsarāʾī appears particularly invested in this project emphasizing the just rule of the Ilkhans (both non-Muslims and Muslims). In Musāmarat al-akhbār, even Chinggis Khan is praised for his God-fearing nature in contrast to the arrogance of the Khwārazmshāh.723

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721 Melville, “From Adam to Abaqa,” 67-86.
723 Ibid., 155-56.
Aqsarāʾī’s didactic attitude in Musāmarat al-akhbār is further evident in his account of the final clash between the forces of Baidu and Ghazan. Aqsarāʾī takes Qāshānī’s conversion narrative of Ghazan into a salvific reviver king, a step further by depicting the military clash as a scene from the Hour of Calamity that precedes the Final Hour. In Aqsarāʾī’s account, Baidu’s emergence (khurūj) is a fitna, a distortion of time, nature and social relations. When Baidu becomes ruler, “shrines and convents that were places of gathering and sanctuaries for the shaykhs and the worshipers became the abode of the lewd group of Patriarchs and Buddhist priests (bakhshiyan);” madrasas lost their splendor from neglect while prayer niches were violated, transformed into brothels and idol-houses; seeking haven in caves and fortresses from the sedition and misfortune that take hold in the Ilkhanid lands, Muslim believers are trampled by monks and the Buddhist; and the Islamic market and trade are corrupted. Aqsarāʾī further writes that in accordance with “divine grace and celestial assistance,” Baidu’s tyrannical rule, which is “the darkness of the day of resurrection (qiyāma),” precedes the rise of “the morning star of safety,” the “greatest Khaqan Ghazan,” a Lord of Auspicious Conjunction (khusruvi šāhib qirān), the like of whom has never been seen before.

Baidu and Ghazan meet on the battlefield for an Armageddon battle: an army of angels aids Ghazan against Baidu’s dark forces. The drums of the battlefield are the blowing of the Trumpet (nafkh-i šūr) of angel Esrafeel on the day of resurrection. The clash between the two armies on the battlefield and the havoc it causes are likened to the resurrection of the dead (ḥashr). The depiction of this battle as an apocalyptic moment is evident not only from the images of (Qur’anic) cosmic cataclysms and catastrophes (the transfigurations of the earth and mountains, the blackening of the sky and Saturn), but also from Aqsarāʾī’s use of Qur’anic

724 Chapter three.
Baidu’s “Tatar army” is defeated and his sedition is put to rest. The seal of Sulaymān (khatīm-i sulaymānī) passes from Baidu to the auspicious Ghazan Khan. Emptied from the accursed idol worshipers, the Muslim “abodes or prayer” are returned to their previous glorious state.

The apocalyptic overtones of Aqsarāʾī’s narration of the dramatic clash between Baidu’s and Ghazan’s forces is further accentuated by Aqsarāʾī’s stark silence on the topic of the Ilkhan’s conversion. Whether Aqsarāʾī conceived of Ghazan’s victory as an event of eschatological import or was simply using the apocalyptic allusions as metaphors to further dramatize the clash, or to show his skills as an author, Aqsarāʾī’s account of Ghazan’s triumph cannot be separated from the author’s didactic goals directed towards his mahdī claimant patron, whose attention Aqsarāʾī wishes to draw by gifting his history. Aqsarāʾī offers Ghazan as a model of the militant reformer for Timurtash the rebel to emulate. For Aqsarāʾī, like other Ilkhanid historians, the figure of Ghazan as a “savior king” combines the ideal just Perso-Islamic ruler and the militant reformer. In Aqsarāʾī’s account, after overcoming his cousin in a doomsday battle, Ghazan sets on reinstating justice and building projects in the Ilkhanate. As elsewhere in his history, Aqsarāʾī equates justice with building (‘imārat, quoting for example ‘Abd al-Malik’s dicta: “fortify it with justice”) revealing the concerns of a Persianate urban elite in the aftermath of the collapse of Saljūq rule in Anatolia.

Aqsarāʾī uses Qur’anic images such as “the plucked tufts of wool” and “the scattered moths,” both of which are derived from Surat al-Qāri’a (“the clatterer/calamity,” Q. 101) that was identified by early commentators as another term for the Day of Resurrection. The short Sura thus reads: "The calamity; what is the calamity?; And what will explain to you what the calamity is?; It is the day on which men shall be as scattered moths; mountains like the plucked tufts of wool; then, as for him whose measure of good deeds is heavy; he shall live a pleasant life; as for him whose measure of good deeds is light; his abode shall be abyss; and what will make you know what it is?; a burning fire." These Qur’anic references continue with "the edict of fate was seized and the cycle of time wrote/inscribed the letters of ‘scattered floating dust’ [Q. 25:23] unto the sheet of his government". The latter refers to Surat al-Furqan ("the Criterion"), where relating to the final of judgment of man, it reads: "and we shall turn to whatever deeds they did [in this life], and we shall make such deeds as floating dust scattered about." For the signs of the Hour in the Qur’an. Arjomand, “Islamic Apocalypticism.”

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Ending abruptly, just prior to Timurtash’s revolt or possibly even at the very moment Timurtash openly proclaimed his political aspirations, Aqsarāʾī’s history finishes with an optimistic note, praising Timurtash’s good government in Anatolia. Aqsarāʾī’s praise of Timurtash plays a prescriptive role, in addition to its descriptive function, urging the Mongol governor to live up to his historian-client’s expectations. Aqsarāʾī’s comments express the main concerns of a Persianate urban elite in Anatolia in the aftermath of Saljūq collapse. Writing first of the rebellious Turkmen (jins-i ʿīfa-yi mutamrridān), Aqsarāʾī explains that the sultan, who is the shadow of God on earth (ḥāl Allāh) and the administrator of justice, strengthened by divine assistance (bi-ta ʿīd-i ilāhī), destroys the Turks and cleans the land from the filth and impurity of the Turks. He praises Timurtash for his diligence in this matter. Aqsarāʾī follows this with a homily on the importance of banning wine, which Aqsarāʾī views as a danger for good governance. He argues that it is essential that the sultan serve as an example in this matter. The rules of justice must apply to him too since “a just sultan is better than heavy rain.” Rain might not fall everywhere whereas the rays of the sun of justice include both the weak and the strong. Aqsarāʾī equates justice with building (ʿimārat) as it invigorates the world.

Finally, Aqsarāʾī also praises Timurtash for ordering the Jews and Christians to wear yellow turbans, hats and strips, stating that religion is strengthened through kingship and that the king with the strength of religion keeps his seat. As noted above, in the final passages of the text, the author quotes Ibn al-ʿArabī’s (d. 1240) letter of counsel (naṣīḥa) to the Saljūq sultan ʿĪzz al-Dīn Kaykāʾūs I (r. 1211-727)

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727 This title (khusruv-i ʿādil) also appears in Anatolian inscriptions dedicated to Timurtash: for example, on a fountain in Sivas completed in 723. On other hand, on a mosque built in Samsun (723), it is noted the mosque was built during the days of the great sultan Abū Saʿīd and the time of the “Noyan Timurtash may his victory be glorious,” probably referring to his conquest of Konya in 723. M. Zeki Oral, “Anadolu’da Ilhani devri vesikalari. Temurtash Noyin zamaninda yapilmish eserler ve kitabeleri,” in V. Türk Tarih Kongresi, ser. 9, no. 5 (Ankara, 1960), 208-15.
19), a homily on good practice that repeats the Pact of ʿUmar. Like Najm al-Dīn Rāzī’s personal plea to the rulers of his age to save Islam after the Mongol destruction of his hometown of Rayy, Aqsarāʾī’s history too enmeshes together the author’s plea for the implementation of just rule, the restoration of the urban centers of Rūm, and the implementation of moral regulation with his own, personal grievances and requests.

Reform and Authority from the Ilkhans to the Timurids

While Aqsarāʾī implies that Timurtash should follow the example of the ideal Perso-Islamic and reformer king Ghazan, Timurtash might have followed the footsteps of another, the Mongol commander, rebel and “reformer,” amir Nawrūz. The accounts found in the contemporary Christian sources, which unanimously blame Ghazan’s convertor, the amir Nawrūz, for the violent persecution of Christian communities early in Ghazan’s reign, are

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728 Aqsarāʾī, 325-29.
729 Aqsarāʾī’s grievances are linked to Timurtash’s predecessor, the amir Irenjin (uncle of Öljeitū). The latter was dispatched by Öljeitū with a powerful force to protect the Anatolian frontier in 1305. Aqsarāʾī, just recently appointed administrator of the waqfs of Rūm, complains excessively of the latter’s mismanagement and tyranny (mazālim, fitna va-qāshūb). He is largely concerned with Irenjin’s actions in Aksaray. The latter seems to have found an accomplice in a local (Turkish?) amir, Valad Shankit (?), with whom the author appears to have been on bad terms. The first account (qadiyya) of Irenjin and Shankit’s evil doings reveals how Aqsarāʾī establishes this conflict as a cultural one (“un-Islamic” Turks versus the Persianate Muslims). It appears to have evolved around the repairs of the Khan ‘Alāʾī, situated on the road between Aksaray and Konya. Captured by a Karamanid rebel, two of its towers were destroyed blocking the road: appointed administrator of the waqfs, Aqsarāʾī paid from his own pocket a sum of ten thousand to repair the building hoping that the money would be returned to him from waqf profits. Two years later, the repairs were finished and history repeated itself: a Turk amir rebelled against Irenjin capturing the newly repaired castle and entrenching himself in it. Irenjin spent two months besieging the fort at the company of twenty thousand men with little luck. Aqsarāʾī blames Shankit, who belongs, according to Aqsarāʾī, to those people (na-ahl, Turks?) whose existence requires destruction for urging Irenjin to hold the poor Aqsarāʾī (in zaʾīf) responsible for the entire affair claiming that were he not to repair the castle, the rebel would not have entrenched himself in it. Aqsarāʾī was charged for another sum of six thousand as blood money for the Mongols who lost their lives in the siege. Aqsarāʾī vehemently protests to his readers the reverse logic (maʿṣūr) of this event arguing that it is the role of the mutawallī and furthermore, an Islamic requirement (sharāʿ ʿīf-i ʾislām), to repair and build. He uses this example as a moral lesson lecturing on the obligations of the ruler. The other accounts of Irenjin’s tyranny follow the same line: Shankit abuses under Irenjin’s authority the public treasury of Aksaray; he heads violent clashes in the streets of the city; bodies pile up in Aksaray’s streets, and personal property of the author is plundered; the shameless unbeliever Shankit burns a mosque; and complaints of the dignitaries of the city to Irenjin have little effect. Aqsarāʾī’s narrative of these events evolves around personal and local injustices carried out by Irenjin and his agent. Aqsarāʾī clearly pleads here for justice both on the personal (monetary compensation for himself) and public levels. Aqsarāʾī, 304-9; Melville, “Anatolia,” 88.
remarkably reminiscent of the narrative of Timurtash’s persecution of the Christians in the *Martyrdom of St. Grigoris Karninci*. Furthermore, according to the Mamluk biographer Šalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybeg al-Šafādī, Nawrūz entertained messianic aspirations as well. Al-Šafādī states that the conflict between Nawrūz and Ghazan, which led to the former’s downfall, arose from the amir’s belief that the time of the rise (*khurūj*) of the *mahdī* has come and that Nawrūz will pave the path before him (*al-mumhīd lahu*).731

I have discussed how both the Ilkhanid authors Rashīd al-Dīn and Vaššāf made use of Qāshānī’s earlier history of Ghazan and his conversion narrative, in which he credits Nawrūz with the Ilkhan’s conversion. Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative and conversion account of Ghazan in the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* express a hostile attitude towards the amir Nawrūz presenting the latter in negative light by omitting and rewriting portions of Qāshānī’s narrative. The Ilkhanid historian Vaššāf, however, maintained in his *Tajziyat al-amšār* Qāshānī’s approach in his earlier narrative, extensively dwelling on Nawrūz’s pivotal role in the Ilkhan’s conversion and enthronement.732 While Vaššāf writes that it was the prince Ghazan’s order, immediately after

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730 Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām,” 170-71; Foltz, “Ecumenical mischief,” 62-5; Dashdondog, 197. For Nawrūz’s persecution of the Christians with a focus on Tabriz and Maragha, see for example, the reports in Rabban Sauma’s history, where he states that Nawrūz had issued an edict stating that “the churches shall be uprooted and the altars overturned, and the celebrations of the Eucharist shall cease, and the hymns of praise, and the sounds of calls to prayer shall be abolished; and the heads of the Christians, and the heads of the congregations of the Jews, and the great men among them shall be killed.” Budge, *Monks of Kûblâi Khân*, 210ff. According to Rabban Sauma, Nawrūz’s reinstatement of the poll-tax was overturned shortly later by the Ilkhan. Bar Hebraeus also blames Nawrūz for the violent measures, the persecution of Christians and desecration and looting of churches throughout the Ilkhanate. He states that the Christian communities and institutions in Tabriz and Baghdad were especially subject to anti-Christian violence, but notes that the Jews were also attacked and that “it was twice as fierce, many times over, on the priests who were worshippers of idols [the Buddhists]. And this after the honor to which they had been promoted by the Mongol kings, and which was so great that one-half of the money which was gathered together in the treasury of the kingdom had been given to them […].” He also notes that many of the “pagan priests,” the Buddhist clergy converted because of their harsh persecution. Bar Hebraeus also writes that edicts were sent from Ghazan “to every country and town to destroy the churches and to loot the monasteries.” Bar Hebraeus, 506-08. See also the Armenian Bishop Stepanos Orbelian’s history, which too “vindicates” Ghazan while maintaining Nawrūz’s guilt for the persecutions. See Stéphannos Orbélia, *Histoire de la Siounie*, trans. M. Brosset (Saint Petersburg, 1864), 261-62.


732 On the relationship between Vaššāf’s and Qāshānī’s conversion narratives, see Appendix II.
his victory over Baidu’s coalition, to plunder the churches, synagogues and Zoroastrian temples of Tabriz, it is the amir Nawrūz’s edict (yarlīgh) following Ghazan’s enthronement in Tajziyat al-amsār that proclaims and enforces the Mongol “official” conversion to Islam.733

According to Vaṣṣāf, Nawrūz’s edict ordered that “all the Mongol and Uyghurs, both young and old, who had [previously] considered themselves free from obeying the sharī‘a and permitted themselves the consumption of pork and other [unlawful] carcasses in opposition to the Qur’an,” will sincerely pronounce the shahāda. The Christians were to utter the verse “He begetteth not, nor is He begotten” (surat al-Iklhāṣ), the polytheists and Zoroastrians were to be killed for their idolatry, and the Jews were to be granted safe haven as long as they pay the jizya and wear the ghiyār. According to Nawrūz’s edict, their synagogues and churches were to be looted and made into mosques.734

In addition to his image as convertor and restorer of Islamic order, Nawrūz, who was the semi-independent governor of Khurasan, is also praised by Vaṣṣāf, as well as by other local Khurasani histories for his cultivation of agricultural production in Khurasan and his protection of the local sedentary population from the incursions of the Central Asian Chagataid forces and the exploitation of Ilkhanid commanders and military. As Michael Hope demonstrates, through his favorable treatment of the local population in Khurasan, Nawrūz was able to gain their instrumental support and resist the forces of Arghun and his son Ghazan.735 According to Vaṣṣāf, the amir’s enforcement of the sharī‘a on the Mongols and on the non-Muslim populations of the

733 In the Ilkhanate, yarlīghs, royal decrees, were only issued by the Chinggisid rulers. The edict of the amir was referred to as söz reflecting the hierarchy: the commander rules by authority of the Ilkhan. Elsewhere in his history, Vaṣṣāf is more diligent about maintaining this differentiation. Thus, he states that when Nawrūz joined forces for a short while with the Ögödeid Muslim prince Ürüng Timur after Nawrūz’s disagreement with Qaidu, and the two had taken over Herat, Nawrūz sent out decrees (yarlīghhā) in the name of Ürüng Timur and had his name added as the governing commander (Nawrūz sözündin). Vaṣṣāf, 315; Ayatī, 191-92. For the hierahical systems of Ilkhanid documents, Gottfried Herrmann, Persische Urkunden der Mongolenzeit: Text- und Bildteil (Wiesbaden, 2004), 10-13.

734 Vaṣṣāf, 322-25.

Ilkhanate and his friendly policies in Khurasan made Nawrūz worthy of titles such ghāzī, “reviver of religion” (muhyi-i dīn), “second Abū Muslim,” and mahdī, a reformer.\footnote{Vassāf, 313-14.}

Whether or not Nawrūz was using, as Hope argues, his precedence and seniority in conversion to Islam to assert his authority over the recent convert Ghazan and overcome the limitations imposed on his authority as a non-Chinggisid amir (noyan),\footnote{Hope, 14-23.} the association of Ilkhanid conversion with reform and the restoration of a sharīʿa order clearly struck a chord with Ilkhanid historians, beginning with Qāshānī’s providential conversion narrative of Ghazan into a Perso-Islamic reformer king. A former client of the Salghūrid dynasty of Fārs and an employee of the Ilkhanid financial administration, Vaṣṣāf might have also idealized the figure the Mongol commander and convert-convertor Nawrūz to provide a model that later Mongol rulers could emulate, similar to the way in which Aqsarāʾī depicted his patron Timurtash as the ideal Perso-Islamic and reformer king with specific aims in mind.\footnote{Peter Jackson, “Waṣṣāf,” EL². Brill Online, 2016. Accessed May 6, 2016. http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/wassaf-SIM_7890.}

Timurtash’s and Nawrūz’s anti-dhimmī measures and persecution of Christian communities, which are also evinced by independent Christian accounts, suggest, however, that the two commanders were invested in their role as puritan reformers. Timurtash’s uprising and self-proclamation indicate that, the discourse of revival and reform offered a message that would strongly resonate with the Persianate Muslim administrative elites of the post-conversion Ilkhanate and Anatolia (and hence its resurfacing in Ilkhanid histories and court poetry).

The incorporation of the Heaven-decreed Chinggisid mission into the Islamic salvation schema and the interpretation of Mongol rule as the continuation of the prophetic mission envisioned the Ilkhans as reformer and reviver kings. The Chinggisid kings were the new agents
of God’s salvific plan for mankind. The expansion of the foundation of the Chinggisid universalist claim into Islamic religiopolitical idioms, however, also had unexpected results. It opened new possibilities for challenging and destabilizing “from within” the claim of Chinggis Khan’s offspring to divinely-decreed exceptionality and exclusivity. Thus, while Ilkhanid authors such as Qāshānī and Rashīd al-Dīn used this discourse in support of Chinggisid rule casting Ghazan as an anticipated ʿulī al-amr-i ʿahd, or his brother Öljeiğī as a centennial muqavvī-yi dīn-i Islām, the universalist paradigm of the reformer ruler and that of al-amr bʿil-maʿrūf, with its strong egalitarian basis, also became the ideological platform from which Mongol rebels could challenge and counter the Chinggisids’ claims to descent based authority. In other words, in his claim to mahdīhood, the Mongol governor Timurtash appropriated the Ilkhanid experimentation with the Perso-Islamic grammar of kingship to portray himself as the new address of God’s blessing, in place of the reigning Chinggisid Ilkhan. The Mongol mahdī had no need for the cultivation of the cult of Chinggis Khan to access and sustain divine charisma. His policies and measures as God’s designated puritan reformer confirmed his leading role in salvaging the believers.

That, in the post-Mongol period, the paradigm of the reviver king became further oppositional, rather than complimentary to the Chinggisid principles is also demonstrated by Timur’s son, Shāhrūkh’s (811-50/1409-47) championship of the restoration of Sharʿī order and the abrogation of Chinggisid customs and law. Shāhrūkh’s claim to Sunni revival was further expressed by his espousal of the title of the mujaddid, the centennial reformer of the ninth Hijri century. The earliest text to attribute the title of the mujaddid to Shāhrūkh is the Naṣāyih-i shāhrūkhī (completed 813/1411-820/1417), a juristic oriented Persian mirror for princes. The work was written for Shāhrūkh by the distinguished Ḥanafī jurist, preacher and overall “Sunni
propagandist” Jalāl al-Dīn Qāyīnī (d. 838/1434-35). The latter had joined the scholarly circles of Herat in 813/1410-11, at the beginning of Shāhrukh’s reign. In 818/1415-16, Shāhrukh sent Qāyīnī to his native Quhistan to restore Sharī‘a order and expose heterodox elements and heretical believers in the region. After his return to Herat, Qāyīnī was appointed by Shāhrukh to the office of the muhtasib, the inspector of public spaces of Herat, a position his son would inherit. As Herat’s muhtasib, Qāyīnī enforced adherence to the Sharī‘a throughout the city.\(^{739}\)

In Naṣāyiḥ-i shāhrukhī, Qāyīnī declares Shāhrukh’s denunciation of Mongol court law (the yarghu) and Chinggisid customary laws (rusūm-i tōre) and his restoration of the Sharī‘a in 813/1411. Qāyīnī argues that Shāhrukh’s pouring out of the wine and destruction of the wine vessels are demonstrations of his mujaddid- hood. He quotes the mujaddid tradition arguing that Shāhrukh is the centennial renewer since his reign began in 811/1408-09, nine centuries after the Prophet’s hijra. Maria Subtelny notes that Qāyīnī’s Naṣāyiḥ-i shāhrukhī draws from both the Persianate genre of advice literature and from works of the religious sciences, in particular, Ḥanafī and Shafi‘ī jurisprudence and Qur’anic exegesis. Qāyīnī argues that he intended to assemble in his work “whatever pertained to rulers from the religious and rational sciences”.\(^{740}\) Qāyīnī’s counsel for Shāhrukh, which as Evrim Binbaṣ points out, “is arguably the first Timurid political treatise,” and his description of Shāhrukh as wine-pouring mujaddid constitutes a muhtasib’s formula for an ideal Perso-Islamic-Sunni reviver king. Shāhrukh’s (or the mastermind Qāyīnī’s) mujaddid- hood overlaps with the meanings and measures that were associated


\(^{740}\) Subtelny, “Sunni revival,” 19; İlker Evrim Binbaṣ, Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī: Prophecy, Politics, and Historiography in Late Medieval Islamic History (PhD diss. University of Chicago, 2009), 338-39. Qāyīnī’s work exists in one manuscript (the actual presentation copy) found in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, dated to 820/1417. I was unable to gain access to the manuscript at this stage.

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with Timurtash’s claim to mahdihood. It had little to do with the usage of the title of the mujaddid to designate a religious renewer from amongst the scholarly ranks. As noted above, the Anatolian historian-administrator Aqsarāʾī similarly argued that Timurtash’s obliteration of alcohol consumption and his broader campaign of promoting public morality in Anatolia were signs of the manifestation of the mahdī.\(^{741}\)

**Conclusion**

The Ilkhanid court historian Qāshānī’s conversion of the Ilkhan Ghazan into a Perso-Islamic reviver king came full circle a century later, with the Timurid jurist Qāyinī’s program of Sunni revival under Shāhrukh. Whereas Qāshānī’s account of a prophesized reformer king integrates the Mongol “political theology of divine right” into a Muslim providential schema of decline and renewal, the “Sunni propagandist” Qāyinī defined mujaddid kingship in oppositional terms to the mode of sovereignty that Chinggis Khan’s rule exemplified. Qāyinī enlists the mujaddid Shāhrukh to abrogate Mongol court law (the yarghu) and Chinggisid customary laws (rusūm-i töre), and to reinstitute the Muslim Sharīʿa as the absolute legal authority. Qāyinī’s Timurid mujaddid realizes the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn’s two-stage salvific scheme in the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh. Rashīd al-Dīn envisioned Chinggis Khan’s establishment of a yasa based order at the start of the thirteenth century as inevitability leading to the reintroduction of righteous and just sharʿī order through Chinggis Khan’s offspring Ghazan and his conversion to Islam at the end of the thirteenth century.\(^{742}\) For Qāyinī and Rashīd al-Dīn, in other words, the concept of reviver or mujaddid kingship also offered a vision of assimilation of the Turkic-

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\(^{741}\) Furthermore, we can speculate that the Qāḍī Ṭashtī, who was tried and executed for Timurtash’s short-lived insubordination, had a similar role to Qāyinī’s in orchestrating the reformist message of Timurtash’s political claims.

\(^{742}\) See chapter three.
Mongol Timurid conquerors into Muslim society, and their adoption of Turkic-Mongol modes of government.

The designation of Shāhrukh as mujaddid was also repeated by Timurid historians, for example, Ḥāfiz Abrū, Sharaf al-Dīn Yazdī, and ‘Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, heirs to a rich corpus of Ilkhanid historical writing and thus, to the Ilkhan paradigm of the periodic reformer king that Ilkhanid histories espoused.743 Indeed, one might note that a short distance separates Rashīd al-Dīn’s appropriation of the mujaddid tradition for Īljamī and his designation of the latter as the centennial individual who would “yugawwī laḥāʾ amr dīniḥā,” and Qāyīnī’s deployment of the the original mujaddid title and tradition for Shāhrukh, a century later.744 In fact, we might view the Ilkhanid and Timurid appropriations of the titles of mujaddid and māḥdī as one continuous experimentation in defining a new type of king, a fusion of Iranian cyclical

743 binbaš, sharaf al-dīn ʿāli yazdī, 313-14, 337-41. ʿabd al-razzāq samarqandī (d. 887/1482), for one, quotes in his entry for the year 844/1440-41 in matlaʾ-i saʾdayn va majmaʾ-i bahrayn the mujaddid tradition identifying Shāhrukh as the mujaddid since he was appointed as ruler (sultānat) of the kingdom of Khorasan in the year 800. Furthermore, he claims that Shāhrukh deserves the title since, from when he was a child until when “he sat on the throne of the world caliphate (kingship, khilīfat-i jahān),” who worked towards strengthening the religion and enforcing the sharīʿa. He followed the divine scripture by refraining from forbidden pleasures and avoiding together with his intimates the consumption of alcohol. Samarqandī claims that under his rule, all repented and refrained from drinking, and notes Shāhrukh’s appointment of Qāyīnī to muḥtasib. Furthermore, he states that Shāhrukh enforced in person his policy over the countless brothels of the Timurid princes Muḥammad Jākū (d. 848/1444-45) and Rūkn al-dīn ʿalāʾ al-dawlā (d. 865/1460). ʿabd al-razzāq samarqandī, matlaʾ-i saʾdayn va majmaʾ-i bahrayn (lahore, 1360-68/1941-9), 2/2: 739-41.

744 There a number of isolate instances where the mujaddid title was used for rulers prior to Shāhrukh. For example, the odd history of Qāḍī Ahmad of Niğde, al-Walad al-shaʿfiq, composed in Niğde (Anatolia) during the first half of the thirteenth century, lists the Saljuq Kılıç Arslan II among the mujaddids. A. C. S. Peacock, “Ahmad of Niğde’s “al-Walad al-shaʿfiq” and the Seljuk past,” Anatolian Studies 54 (2004): 102. The Qalāwūnid Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ (d. 1345) was also attached to the title mujaddid in a prose panegyric by a scribe named Ibrāhīm b. al-Qaysarānī (d. 1352). To resolve the fact that al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ’s reign was mid-century, the author created a centennial historical scheme where the “tajdid clock” starts with the last Ayyubid ruler of Egypt, a century before al-Ṣāliḥ’s reign. Jo van Steenbergen points out that “Ibrāhīm b. al-Qaysarānī did not just actively engage with the dominant discourse of Qalāwūnid legitimacy, willingly contributing to the innovative religious imagery of the mujaddid that was slowly establishing itself as a functional legitimating device.” Jo van Steenbergen, “Qalāwūnid discourse, elite communication, and the Mamluk cultural matrix: interpreting a 14th-century panegyric,” Journal of Arabic Literature 43 (2012): 1-28. Interestingly, the Ilkhan Ghazan is described in the Safavid hagiography Šafwat al-safā as the mujaddid min al-mulik (“a mujaddid king”) of the hijri seventh century alongside Šafī al-Dīn as the “Sufi mujaddid” of the seventh century. Ibn Bazzāz, Šafwat al-safā, 55-58.
models of kingship with the notion of Islamic puritan reformer. This new model of Muslim kingship filled the void left by the Mongols’ execution of the last caliph and the subsequent disappearance of the earlier “caliphal-sultanic-jurisprudential model.” It encapsulated a providential explanation for the infidel Mongol invasions that enabled Ilkhanid authors to “resume” the flow of Islamic time after the Chinggisid rupture. The Ilkhanid-Timurid mujaddid-mahdī constellation and the eschatological rhetoric employed by Ilkhanid and Timurid historians had more to do with the normalization of time following Chinggis Khan’s and Timur’s devastating campaigns, and the restoration of the Islamic history than with foreseeing its unequivocal and finite end. The puritan, militant, and universalist reviver paradigm, in other words, did not transcend or break away from previous historical models, but was imagined as their historical culmination. Kings were now the new poles (alongside the prophets) of Islamic salvation history.

Evrim Binbaş suggests that we situate Shāhrukh’s mujaddid kingship in the context of the Timurid dynastic struggles following Timur’s death. Moreover, he argues that the two competing political ideologies, Sunni tajdīd and Chinggisid ideals, were aligned with Timurid dynastic fault lines. In contrast to his brother and contender Mīranshāh, who was a strong supporter of the

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745 See chapter three. The relatedness of the concepts of the mujaddid and mahdī and their denotation of the idea of reform and puritanism is evident already in the case of the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (r. 99-101/717-20), who institutionalized the shurūṭ ʿumar at the beginning of the eighth century and was celebrated as a symbol of justice and righteousness. He was also considered by some of his contemporaries as the mahdī, while others reported that he was a mahdī (“rightly guided”) in his time (“kāna mahdiyyan wa-laysa bihi”). It is this later interpretation, “a mahdī,” the ultimate moral regulator as ʿUmar II is remembered, that I argue we should adopt for Timurtash and Nawrūz as well. W. Madelung, “al-Mahdī,” El. Brill Online, 2016. Accessed May 4, 2016. http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-mahdi-COM_0618. ʿUmar II is also considered the first mujaddid, the centennial renewer of religion, after the Prophet. Hayrettin Yücesoy also observes the connection between mujaddid and mahdī. Yücesoy, 133, 139-40. My suggestion, however, is that this is not a “revival” of the earlier ʿAbbāsid model, but rather that the Ilkhanid and post-Ilkhanid “reviver king” had its roots in the Islamization of the Iranian savior king, as discussed in chapter three, and in the specific historical context of the Mongol conquests. Hence, the notion of a reformer-reviver—salvific king “preceded” to some extent the Ilkhanid search after a term that would best encapsulate this idea. Thus, only in the post-Mongol period, could the titles mujaddid and mahdī easily channel the vision of the ruler as a reformer-king and dynastic founder.
Chinggisid principles, Shāhrukh seems to have assumed the title of the mujaddid as an ideological platform from which he would be well positioned to launch his own Shāhrukhid dispensation.746

The Mongol governor of Anatolia Timurtash’s revolt and his self-proclamation as mahdī in the early 1320s marked a moment of transition. The revivalist political discourse that emerged in an Ilkhanid courtly context was appropriated and rebranded during the fourteenth century as oppositional to the prevailing Chinggisid models, that it was originally envisioned to reiterate. Furthermore, the identification of the reformer ruler, who inaugurates a new cycle, with the foundation of a new dispensation or the establishment of a new dynasty applies to the revival of Timurtash’s religiopolitical claim almost a decade after his death. Timurtash was executed in 728/1327 at the court of the Mamluk Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad where he fled in search of a safe haven after Abū Saʿīd ordered the execution of his family in the Ilkhanate.747 In 738/1337-8, nine years after his death and shortly after the death of Abū Saʿīd, Timurtash’s son Ḥasan used the remarkable resemblance of one of Timurtash’s former slaves to his master to claim that Timurtash had in fact escaped his executers at the Mamluk court. The ruse appears to have worked: Ḥāfīẓ Abrū and Ahrī both note that the emergence of the doppelgänger caused great

746 Binbaş, “Timurid experimentation,” 278-79; idem, Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī, 341. For Shāhrukh’s contenodr Mīrzā Iskandar’s designation as mahdī in one of the recensios of Naṭanẓī, idem, “Timurid experimentation,” 298 (especially footnote 67). The Aqquyunlu Üzün Ḥasan’s “Sunni iṣlaḥī” appears to have been part of his claim to establishing of a new dispensation defining his reign as a reformer king as the reversal of the previous immorality and heresy of the Qaraquyunlu. Üzün Ḥasan was theorized as the mujaddid of the ninth/fifteenth century and reenacted puritan measures enforcing the Sunni sharī’a. He was presented as cracking down on vices such as fornication and gambling, suppressing extreme antinomianism, and extensively supporting the religious establishment. The Armenian colophons, indeed, complain of Üzün Ḥasan’s enforcement of the distinguishing dress code and the jīzya. Woods, The Aqquyunlu, 100-106, 140.

747 For the sultan’s warm reception of Timurtash and the events leading to and following his execution, Broadbridge, 117-25. The execution of Timurtash draw the attention of a number of Mamluk authors. Al-Yūsufi, for example, reports that he saw one of the astrological calculations that Saʿīd b. al-Baghdādhī (d. 737), whom he defines as a rare expert in a dying art, had composed for the Mamluk amir ‘Īz al-Dīn al-Khaḍīrī. He claims that Baghdādhī wrote in his entry for the month during which Timurtash came to Egypt that “a lord from the lords of the East would be expelled to Cairo and would die there, and so it happened.” Al-Yūsufi, 391-2. On the fall of the Chupanids, Melville, The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate, 1327-37 (Bloomington, 1999).
commotion and that the crowds and the riffraff (arād hil va-avbāsh) gathered around the latter and started a fitna.⁷⁴⁸

In the factional struggles that ensued after the dissolution of the Ilkhanate following the last Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd’s death, the Chupanid faction sought creative avenues for claiming political authority based on, and independent from Chinggisid principles.⁷⁴⁹ In spite of the short duration of Timurtash’s rebellion, the Mongol governor’s claim to reformer-mahdīhood was too harnessed to promote a Chupanid dynastic line. According to reports that arrived at the Mamluk court, the imposter was sighted with yellow banners (possibly in the Mamluk manner) reading: “there is no God but God alone, Muḥammad is the messenger of God, Timurtaš is the freedman of God (ʿaṭīq Allāh).” It was further reported that the “resurrected” Timurtash rode in a great procession hidden from all sides by his children, and that he had his face covered, supposedly in order to protect him from al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s assassins (fidāwīya).⁷⁵⁰ The veiling of the face, however, was also considered a sign of the awaited mahdī, who would conceal his true identity waiting for the right moment of unveiling.⁷⁵¹ Reviving Timurtash’s claim, the doppelgänger seems to have taken

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⁷⁴⁸ Hāfiz ʿAbru, 202; ʿAbru, 65 (translation), 165 (text).
⁷⁴⁹ Hasan’s brother and successor Malik Ashraf (r. 1343-57/744-58) established a Chinggisid puppet, a wardrobe keeper by the name of Anūshirvān, an alleged offspring of Chinggis Khan. Malik Ashraf ordered that a chain with bells be attached to the window of his chamber. The chain was named “justice” (ʿadl) and any person who had a complaint that was not addressed, could pull on the chain to inform Malik Ashraf of his grievance. A similar chain existed, we are told in this account, during the time of the celebrated sixth-century Sassanid king, the Just Anūshirvān. Broadbridge, 158-59.
⁷⁵¹ To be used later by the Shāh Ismāʾīl and Humāyūn. Moin, 125, 172, 212, 217. The success of the imposter is also an indication of Timurtash’s lasting charisma in Iran and Anatolia. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s impulsive reaction to the news of Timurtash’s “revival” is further indicative. The paranoid and weary sultan became extremely troubled believing that he was fooled by his intimates who were entrusted with the execution of his guest. After all the missions he sent to the Ilkhanate to investigate the matter measurably failed, the desperate Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ordered the exhumation of Timurtash. Ibn Taḡrī Birdī places the frantic sultan in front of his astrologers and diviners (al-munajjīmīn wa-ghayrīhim miman yādribu al-mandal) with Timurtash’s bones pleading before them: “is the owner of this corpse dead or alive?” In another version, the sultan wonders before his majlis how it is possible that Timurtash is still alive after he himself had just stamped on his corpse. Jamāl al-Dīn Abū l-Maḥāsīn Ibn Taḡrī Birdī, al-Manḥal al-sāfī wa-al-mustawfā baʿda al-wāfī, ed. Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo, 1984-2000); Ibn Abī l-Faḍāʾīl, 107-8. According to al-Shujāʾī, the doppelgänger was killed by Timurtash’s wife and offspring after four years of government, since he conspired to rid himself of them. Al-Shujāʾī, vol. 1, 122-3.
Timurtash’s messianic agenda a step further indicating that the latter’s short-lived fame as a mahdī-reformer was indeed seen as having the potential to offer an alternative source of political authority.
Coda
The Aftermath of the Ilkhanid Experimentation with Mongol-Muslim Sacral Kingship

In his Tawārīkh-i āl-i Ṭūhman, the sixteenth-century Ottoman historian and grand vizier Luṭfī Pasha (d. 1563) rearranges the history of the House of Osman in accordance with a Sunni mujaddid schema. The centennial renewers in Luṭfī Pasha’s history are all reviver kings, who arrive at the turn of each century to reform and renew Islam after its corruption by their malicious counterparts, the “anti-mujaddids”.752 Luṭfī Pasha’s sixth-century and seventh-century mujaddids overlap. They are the convert Ilkhan Ghazan and Osman Ghāzī (d. 1326). Both set out to correct and reverse the evils inflicted by the rise (zuhūr, khurūj) of Chinggis Khan, and the restoration and revival of Christianity and idol worshiping in the Islamic world in the century that followed the Mongol campaigns.

Osman Ghāzī is followed by his offspring. The eighth renewer Beyazid Yıldırım (d 1403) battles Timur and revives (tajdīd) Islam after it was weakened by Timur’s emergence (khurūj) and heresy. And the ninth mujaddid Selim I (d. 1520) restores the Sunna after the sedition, disorder, and religious degeneration that ensued from the emergence of Shāh Ismāʿīl in the

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752 In Luṭfī Pasha’s account, the second mujaddid (after the Prophet) is the righteous Umayyad Caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (r. 99-101/717-20), who restores (iṣlāḥ) Islamic belief the corruptions and innovations (biḍʿa) committed by his Umayyad kin. He is followed by the ʿ Abbāsid Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 218-27/833-42), who overturns the heresies (rafaʿ) of his two brothers Amīn and Maʿmūn. The fourth Sunni mujaddid, the ʿ Abbāsid Caliph al-Qādir (382-422/991-1031), banishes the heresy of the Fāṭimids in the Egypt and Syria, while the fifth reviver of religion, the Saljuq Sultan Muhammad s. Malik Shāh (r. 1105-18), battles the Ismāʿīlis (mulāhīda). Luṭfī Pasha, Tawārīkh-i āl-i ʿUthmān (İstanbul, 1341/1925), 6-12.
East. Lutfi Pasha re-contextualizes the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry depicting Selim I as a reformer ruler rescuing Islam from eastern heresy, just as his forefather Osman did in the century after Chinggis Khan’s campaigns. In Lutfi Pasha’s historical scheme of Ottoman mujaddid kingship, Timur and Shâh Ismā’îl are avatars of Chinggis Khan, whereas the Ottoman sultans are the Sunni savior rulers. In resemblance to the salvific narrative of Ghazan’s second Syrian letter, the successive line of mujaddid kings in Lutfi Pasha’s account receive their authority from their succession to the prophet Muḥammad’s mission to protect, guide, and salvage the believers. The Ottomans also lay claim to an imperial inheritance through their reform-kingship. As the new poles of salvation, the Ottomans inherit the tajdid legacies of the Umayyad, ‘Abbāsid, Saljūq, and Ilkhanid rulers.

The Ilkhanid experimentation with the Mongol political theology of divine right and the integration of the Chinggisid mission of world domination into the Islamic narrative of revelation and salvation gave rise to a new political paradigm in the post-Mongol Islamic world. Imperial ambitions were expressed in terms of promises to reform and revive a declining religious and socio-political order. In this schema, kings were not only tasked with the responsibility to sustain the conditions for the Muslim community to strive for salvation, but were assigned with the mission of actively guiding the ummah to redemption. Rulers were imagined as puritan reformers, mujaddids, mahdīs, caliphs, poles (qutb), and Šāhīb-Qirāns, “Starlords and Letterlords,” all arriving at a crucial moment in similar narratives of deterioration and restoration

753 Ibid. Lutfi Pasha also brings two poems which he claims to report from the ‘ulmā’ of Transoxiana. In these poems, Selim is accredited with being the mahdī of the End of Time (or ruler of the time) for his victory over the Safavids, his removal of Shâh Ismā’îl’s heresy, and his protection of the Muslim community and religion. Thus, Lutfi Pasha too seems to conflate the titles of mujaddid and mahdī as signifying the same type of kingship. Selim is the reviver-savior king. For a different view, see Cornell Fleischer’s discussion of the two poems in Lutfi Pasha as an “evocative form of testimony to Selim’s apocalyptic pretensions,”. Fleischer, “lawgiver,” 159-77.

754 See chapter three.
that increasingly received grander dimensions, from the moral decay of the human subjects to astrologically predictable millennial-cosmic cycles of degeneration. In the post-Mongol era, the reviver paradigm was repackaged and rebranded by progressively more complex, ostentatious, and persuasive iterations that drew on a rich pool of prophetic traditions, Perso-Islamic political theory, conjunction astrology, and occult sciences.\textsuperscript{755}

However, the appeal of this model of reform-kingship in the post-Mongol period was not merely due to the elaborate messianic predictions, astronomical calculations, or other cosmological machinations that, both couched and encouraged rulers’ imperial and universalist aspirations. It also derived from the ability of the reviverist paradigm to evoke a simple, recognizable, and equally powerful message, a narrative that strongly resonated with Muslim generations after the Mongol conquest of Baghdad and the fall of the caliphate, and that gained the attention of rulers and their courts. The reviverist claim became one of the main strategies for imperial legitimation, a political idiom in which claims to sacral sovereignty and dynastic authority simply had to be voiced in the post-Mongol era. This Sunnī reform-centered kingship further developed in the post-Mongol period alongside other, competing and corresponding political paradigms, for example, a new post-Mongol brand of intellectual kingship,\textsuperscript{756} the Shīʿī-Sufi political synthesis, and shrine-centered kingship, which constituted “a new style of Muslim sovereignty that was anchored in sainthood,” and assumed Sufi rhetoric, ritual, and Sufi modes of sanctity and authority.\textsuperscript{757} Ibn ‘Arabī’s unitive theosophy and his reintroduction of the concept

\textsuperscript{755} Thus, in the post-Mongol world, the Chinggisid model was seen as one “marker of religiopolitical prestige” alongside “Islamic, Solomonic or Imamic, Sunni, or Shi’i, Sufi or scholarly, occult or manifest, Arabic or Persian, Persian or Turkic” markers that early modern monarchs assembled in their courts in an unprecedented manner. Particularly noteworthy is the development of the “dual astrological-lettrist ideological platform” at early modern courts by occult philosophers. Matthew Melvin-Koushki, “Early Modern Islamicate Empire: new forms of religiopolitical legitimacy,” forthcoming.

\textsuperscript{756} See the conclusion in chapter four.

\textsuperscript{757} Azfar Moin, “Sovereign violence,” 467-96.
of the caliphate at the center of an Islamic cosmography were also borrowed and subsumed into the political lingua of a post-Mongol era.

The most radical departure in the Ilkhanid period, however, was not the reviver king paradigm, nor was it Rashīd al-Dīn’s kalām-based vision of the philosopher-king, which seems to have gained little traction.\(^{758}\) Rather, it was the notion of the ruler as an independent, rational law-maker. Tūsī’s vision of the ruler as a supreme interpreter of the law or the Sharī‘a in accordance with the community’s best interests,\(^{759}\) and the establishment of the independent institution of dynastic law drawing from the precedent of Chinggis Khan’s yasa,\(^{760}\) were both rooted in the Ilkhanid historical context and drew from the process of mediation of the notion of the Chinggisid ruler’s independent and superior legal authority due to Heaven’s exclusive gift. Ultimately, however, these two models of law-making kingship, which shaped the post-Mongol dynastic relationship with the sacred law, were also made to surrender to the Sharī‘a legalistic framework. Later authors who appropriated Tūsī’s political theory argued that the decisions of the Tūsīan law-maker world-regulator naturally conform with the general, universal principles of the Sharī‘a;\(^{761}\) and the jurists who worked on compiling and codifying the Ottoman dynastic law (qānūn) made the latter reconcile with the sacred law.\(^{762}\) This process might have also paved the path for a reconciliation of the paradigm of the reformer king as the supreme enforcer of the Sharī‘a, and the notion of the ruler as an independent law-maker, as was the case for the Ottoman Sultan Sulaymān.\(^{763}\) Rashīd al-Dīn’s “premonition,” in this sense, was not far off:

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\(^{758}\) However, as I note in chapter four, Rashīd al-Dīn’s extensive experimentation with al-Razī’s prophetic absolutism as a basis for sacral Muslim kingship can be seen as defining an era of joint Ilkhanid-Timurid experimentation with a new brand of intellectual kingship.

\(^{759}\) See chapter two.


\(^{761}\) Ahmed, 471.

\(^{762}\) Fleischer, “lawgiver.”

\(^{763}\) Ibid.
establishment of Chinggis Khan’s yasa indeed led to re-instituting the Sharīʿa as the foundation of a new mode of sacral kingship. 764

The role of the Mongol religiopolitical concepts in this process of minting new political terminologies and the re-appropriations of earlier terms should be understood as a “filtering mechanism,” to borrow from Thomas Allsen. They facilitated the promotion of particular concepts of sovereignty, just as other ideas that were considered less meaningful from the Mongolian point of view, were made to fade away. Mongol concepts of sacral authority and Ilkhanid cultural brokers, therefore, participated together in a process of experimentation and negotiation that gave rise to a new mode of Islamic sacred kingship that proliferated from the fifteenth century onwards.

The extensive mobilization and intermixing of symbols and idioms from multivalent repertoires to express the sacred personas and universal aspirations of Muslim rulers across Eurasian imperial courts, should not be considered as an indication of the weakness and shaky foundations of the post-Mongol institution of Islamic kingship. The experimentations in idioms of kingship in the post-Ilkhanid period should be attributed, less to the crisis that allegedly ensued from the fall of the caliphate in Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258, and more to a realization that the concept of Muslim kingship had yet to reach its full potential as a political, social, cosmic, and salvific foundation of Islamic society. I suggest that while the integration of Chinggisid kingship in the Islamic world inevitably led to the erosion and restriction of the Chinggisid claim to exclusive, unmediated divine authority, the institution of Islamic kingship emerged from its engagement with the Mongol political theology of divine right much better equipped and far more comfortable and self-assured in its Islamic foundations, certainly in

764 See chapter three.
comparison to its pre-Mongol predecessor. The post-Mongol kings were not defined by their relationship to caliphs or the other intermediaries and the “gatekeepers” of the divine, but rather as God’s agents and successors to the prophets in God’s salvific plan. The Ilkhanid era of political experimentation and innovation, therefore, laid the foundation for a new type of Islamic kingship.
Appendix I: Order of deaths/revolts of Hülegü’s offspring

Jūshkeb s. Jumghur (June 1289)*
Hülegü s. Hülegü, with his children (October 1289)**
Qara Noqai s. Yoshumut, with his children (October 1289)
Taghay Temür s. Hülegü (participated in Buqa’s conspiracy; died in 1289?)**
Kingshū s. Jumghur (rebels with amir Nawrūz, missing date of death, probably in 1289)*
Anbarji s. Möngke Temür (“rebels” in 1291-2, dies in 1294, unspecified cause of death)*
Gere s. Möngke Temür (dies shortly before his brother in 1294, unspecified cause of death)*
Baidu s. Taraghai (1294-1295)
Ildar s. Ajai (1296)
Söge s. Yoshmut (1296)
Esen Temür s. Qonqurtai (1296)
Ildai s. Qonqurtai (1296)
Taiju s. Möngke Temür (1298)*
Pulad s. Taiju (with his father, in 1298?)*

* Descendants of one of Hülegü Khan’s three chief wives
** First generation sons of Hülegü
Appendix II: ‘Abd Allāh Qāshānī’s Authorship of Ghazan’s Conversion Account in the P Recension of the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh

The two lives of the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh

In spite of recent efforts, the question of Rashīd al-Dīn’s authorship of the two volumes of the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh remains open. The main objection to the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn’s sole authorship of the work arises from Qāshānī “notorious claim”, which he repeats on several instances, that he was the true author of the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh.\(^{765}\) In his Introduction a l’histoire des mongols (1910), the French orientalist Blochet concluded in favor of Qāshānī’s claim after comparing parallel sections of the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh’s second volume (the world history envisioned by Öljeytü according to the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh’s preface), with an unpublished manuscript of Qāshānī’s Zubdat al-tawārīkh (on this work, see below). Blochet showed that Rashīd al-Dīn copied rather faithfully from the later work, omitting certain sections and changing in some instances the phrasing.\(^{766}\) Blochet argued for the superiority of Qāshānī’s Zubdat al-tawārīkh over Rashīd al-Dīn’s later, “redacted” version in the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh declaring that unlike Rashīd al-Dīn, Qāshānī “was a professional historian and not an amateur”.\(^{767}\)


\(^{766}\) Thus Blochet states: “Non seulement les divisions des deux ouvrages ont rigoureusement identiques, non seulement l’arrangement et la classification des faits sont completement les meme dans les deux histoires, mais il suffit de collationner leurs textes pour voir que Rashīd ed-Dīn a tout simplement fait recopier le livre d’Abd Allāh el-Kashani en se bornant a changer quelques rares expressions d’une façon assez maladroite et à supprimer, sans aucune raison plausible, des passages entiers qui ne manquaient cependant pas d’intérêt historique.” E. Blochet, Introduction a l’histoire des mongols de Fadl Allāh Rashīd ed-Dīn (London, 1910), 133-150 (quoted from page 145).

\(^{767}\) Ibid., 151.
Nevertheless, Qāshānī’s work as a historian and his central contribution to Ilkhanid historiography has received little attention to date, and there is still considerable confusion over the question of his authorship. This confusion has prevailed since Qāshānī’s works remain unpublished and are dispersed in a number of manuscript collections. Bartol’d dismissed Blochet’s theory on Qāshānī’s authorship arguing that the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh was written by an individual with direct experience of the events, and not by a trained historian like Qāshānī. For Bartol’d, Qāshānī’s contribution to the work was limited to a secondary role and it was Rashīd al-Dīn who was its main author.768 Since Bartol’d’s dismissal of Bolchet’s argument, Qāshānī’s claim has been addressed by several scholars. The prevailing consensus is that Rashīd al-Dīn had a group of research assistants, among them Qāshānī, who researched and compiled for him several sections of the compendium, which explains the stylistic unevenness of the work. According to this view, the work as a whole should, nevertheless, be attributed to Rashīd al-Dīn.769

It is worthwhile, however, revisiting some of Blochet’s early observations. One of the key components in Blochet’s argument was an untiiled manuscript authored by Qāshānī and held in Berlin.770 Blochet identified this work as Qāshānī’s unpublished Zubdat al-tawārīkh.771 In the

768 See Kamola, 246-7; Bartol’d, Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion (London, 1977), 47. Jahn, on the other hand, was not impressed by Qāshānī’s skill as a historian. See Jahn, “Study on supplementary Persian sources for the Mongol history of Iran,” 201.
769 For example, Morgan, “Rašīd al-Dīn,” 182-3. See also Pfeiffer, “Canonization,” 62 (lead editor-cum-contributor). Kamola has recently concluded that Qāshānī was likely the prime compiler of the second volume of the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh, the universal history. Kamola, 248.
770 Staatsbibliothek ms. Pertsch 368/Minutoli 23. A number of folios are missing at the end of the Berlin manuscript. On the other hand, another manuscript of the work found at the kitābkhānah-yi markazī-yi dānishgāh-i tahrān (ms. 5715) is missing a significant portion from the beginning of the manuscript. Muḥtafā Dīrāyatī, Fihristvārah-yi dastnivishthā-yi irān (Dīnā) (Tehran, 1389/2010), vol. 5, 1214-1215.
771 It is unclear if this is the title that Qāshānī gave the work (though Qāshānī does refer to it as the history of “the choicest (zubdat) of the seven climates (kishvar)”). Mustawfī Qazwīnī lists “Zubdat al-tawārīkh by Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Qāsim Kāshī” as one of the sources for his Taʾrīkh-i guzīda (completed circa 1330). Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, Taʾrīkh-i guzīda, ed. Navāʾī (Tehran, 1362/1983), 7. Kātib Chelebī might be referring to the same work when he mentions a Zubdat al-tawārīkh (in Persian) authored by Abū al-Qāsim Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAff al-
preface to this work, which Blochet quoted in full, after praising the auspicious reign of Öljeytü, Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlī b. Muhammad al-Qāshānī (as he identifies himself) states that since he (Qāshānī) had already finished compiling his history of the rest of the world (sāyir-i ālam) and the renowned nations of mankind (jamāhīr-i mashāhīr-i banī adam) of the seven climates, from east to west:

He [the author Qāshānī] wished (khvāst) [in accordance with royal decree and the vicissitudes of time] to compose, in abridgment and concision, the history of the fourth climate (iqlīm), which is the choicest (zubdat) of the seven climates (kishvar) […] encompassing the states of the kings (pādshāhān) and sultans of every age, the lords and rulers of this land of Iran (zamīn-i īrān) and the states of the kings (mulāk), the prophets and the caliphs of each era from Adam ʿṣafī, peace be upon him, to the end of the period (tā ghāyat-i vaqt), which is the lunar year 700, according to the Muslim count.\footnote{Blochet, 140-144; Staatsbibliothek ms. Pertsch 368/Minutoli 23, folios 1v-2r. My translation slightly differs from Kamola’s translation of this passage. See Kamola, 246.}

Qāshānī, furthermore, explains that this Perso-Muslim history (or, in other words, the zubdat-i haft kishvar) was to include a history of the pre-Islamic Iranian dynasties followed by the history of the Muslims, from the Prophet to the end of the ʿAbbasid Caliphate. It was gathered from a selection of famous histories such as the comprehensive chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233), al-Kāmil fi al-taʾrīkh. Qāshānī states that his aim was that this history would become “the completion and supplement of the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh (tamīma va-ḍamīma-yi Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh).”

As Blochet aptly notes, Qāshānī contrasts here a “new” Perso-Islamic history, which he dedicates to Öljeytü, with a work he had completed earlier. Qāshānī designates this new Perso-Islamic history, which appears to had been identified early on, with the title Zubdat al-tawārīkh, as a dhayl, a continuation of the universal history he had completed earlier. Qāshānī’s phrasing appears at first confusing as he addresses this universal history with the title Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh. This confusion is easily resolved, however, once we consider the possibility that Qāshānī named Qāshānī, who died in 836 (more than a century later than Qāshānī). Kātib Chelebi, Kitāb kashf al-zunūn ‘an asāmī al-kutub wa l-funūn ([Istanbul], 1892), 6. See also Blochet, 148-9.
this universal history, which he dedicated to Ghazan and completed before Ŭljeitū’s reign, the
Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh (that is, before Rashīd al-Dīn named his “own” compendium Jāmi’ al-
tawārīkh). Rashīd al-Dīn, in other words, did not only extensively “borrow” from Qāshānī’s
works, but also appropriated the title of this work.

Further support for this suggestion is found in the introduction to Qāshānī’s history of the
Ismāʿīlīs (Ta’rīkh-i ismaʿīliyya va-nizāriyya va-mulāhīda), an excerpt from Qāshānī’s universal
history that was edited and separately published in 1965. Qāshānī’s introduction to this section
reiterates the same ideas he expressed in the above-quoted passage from his Zubdat al-tawārīkh,
but also unequivocally refers to his earlier universal history as the Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh. Qāshānī
(identifying himself here as Abū al-Qāsim ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-mu’arīkh al-Qāshānī)
explains that after completing in accordance with the order of Ghazan Khan the Jāmi’ al-
tawārīkh-i sāyir-i umam-i ʿalam va-zumrah-yi banī adam, he decided to compose another
history, of the Ismāʿīlīs, so it may be “fastened as the saddle-straps (fitrāk) to the Jāmi’ al-
tawārīkh.” Qāshānī, furthermore, refers to the content of this Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh as encompassing
the history of the Turks and tāzīk, the Indians, the Jews, the lands of khitāy, khutan and manzī
(south China), and the Europeans (afrinja), the Christians, the Muslims and tarsa (Christians or
fire worshipers), the Arabs and Persian, and the east and the west. It is noteworthy that according
to Qāshānī, this Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh, commissioned by Ghazan, whom Qāshānī praises for

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773 According to Morton, this edition of Qāshānī’s history of the Ismāʿīlīs was published from the Tehran manuscript
of his general history. Zahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī, Salījūqnāmah, ed. A. H. Morton ([Warminster], 2004), 24
(introduction). The manuscript in question is the kitābknhānah-yi markaz-yi dānīshgāh-i takhrān ms. 9067. The
beginning of the manuscript is missing as well as a number of folios throughout the text. Copied in 989/1581, the
manuscript includes both a portion of the Zubdat al-tawārīkh and Qāshānī’s general/world history and therefore, was
labeled Zubdat al-tawārīkh. The editor of the 1977 edition of the section on the Ismāʿīlīs also gave the work the title
Zubdat al-tawārīkh; however, this section clearly belongs to Qāshānī’s general history (and thus, is missing from the
Berlin manuscript of the Zubdat al-tawārīkh). Abū al-Qāsim Kāshānī, Ta’rīkh-i isma ʿiliyya: bakhshī az zabdat al-
tawārīkh-i Abū al-Qāsim Kāshānī, ed. M. Taqī Dānishpīzhū (Tabriz, 1343/1965); Dirāyafī, Dinā, vol. 5, 1214-
1215.
elevating the banner of Islam and eradicating idol worshiping and polytheism, did not include a history of the Mongols.\textsuperscript{774}

In his introduction to the \textit{Jāmi’ ʿal-tawārīkh}, Rashīd al-Dīn writes that this title was given to the entire two volumes, which included a world history (the second volume) commissioned and authored in the name of Ōljeitū, and a Mongol-dynastic history, the \textit{Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī}, commissioned by and named after Ghazan. However, Qāshānī appears to have already authored a general history titled the \textit{Jāmi’ ʿal-tawārīkh} that predated Rashīd al-Dīn’s efforts in that regard.\textsuperscript{775} Even without having access to Qāshānī’s history of Ismā’īlī sects, Blochet was able to demonstrate that the two early works by Qāshānī, the Perso-Islamic history (\textit{Zubdat al-tawārīkh}), and the world history (the “original” \textit{Jāmi’ ʿal-tawārīkh}), directly corresponded to two sections (\textit{faṣl}) in the second volume (\textit{mujallad}), the so-called universal history of Rashīd al-Dīn’s \textit{Jāmi’ ʿal-tawārīkh}:\textsuperscript{776} a general summary of the history of all the prophets, caliphs, and kings (\textit{pādshāhān}), beginning with Adam and ending with the year 700, and a detailed history of every nation in the inhabited quarter.\textsuperscript{777} A thorough comparison between the \textit{Zubdat al-tawārīkh} and

\textsuperscript{774}Ta’rīkh-i isma ʿiliyya, 3-4.

\textsuperscript{775}Morton reached a similar conclusion on the basis of the preface to the \textit{Ta’rīkh-i isma ʿiliyya} though he does not appear to have noticed that Qāshānī also refers to this general history as the \textit{Jāmiʿ ʿal-tawārīkh} in the preface to the \textit{Zubdat al-tawārīkh}. Morton’s conclusion that “there was truth in Qāshānī’s accusations against Rashīd al-Dīn, and that the latter may have taken the title of his work as well as part of its contents from Qāshānī” has not received proper scholarly attention. Nishāpūrī, \textit{Suljūqnama}, 25.

\textsuperscript{776}The second volume is made of two chapters. The first chapter includes the history of Ōljeitū from his birth to the moment of binding of the \textit{Jāmiʿ ʿal-tawārīkh}. The second chapter (\textit{bāb}) includes two sections (\textit{qism}). The first section has also two sub-sections (\textit{faṣl}): a general summary of the history of the prophets, caliphs, and kings, from Adam to the year 700, and a detailed history of every nation in the inhabited quarter. This is followed by another \textit{qism} consisting of a \textit{dhayl} with the history of the reign of Ōljeitū from the time the book was bound until his death. This latter \textit{qism} is presumably Qāshānī’s history of Ōljeitū (below, and see Morgan, “Rasīd al-Dīn,” 183). Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, vol. 1, 8-9 (introduction); Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, 19-20.

\textsuperscript{777}Blochet’s thesis that Rashīd al-Dīn had copied (though with changes and omissions) these two histories composed by Qāshānī into the second volume of the \textit{Jāmiʿ ʿal-tawārīkh} is also supported, to some extent, by Morton’s comparative study of the sections on Saljūq history in Rashīd al-Dīn’s \textit{Jāmiʿ ʿal-tawārīkh} and Qāshānī’s unpublished general history. As Morton demonstrates, the section on the Saljūqs in Qāshānī’s world history was mistakenly identified by its editor (Ismā’īl Khān Afsāhr) as the original \textit{Suljūqnama of Zahir al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī} and published accordingly in 1332/1953. See Nīshāpūrī, \textit{Suljūqnama} (Morton), 23ff. Morton concluded that both sections were closely related, relying on the same pool of sources, foremost the \textit{Suljūqnama} of Zahir al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī. However, his impression is that although “a high proportion of the verbal alterations and factual additions
Qāshānī’s world history (“original” Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh), and the parallel sections in the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh might yield further insights.

**Did Qāshānī author a history of Ghazan?**

Rashīd al-Dīn’s incorporation of Qāshānī’s two histories into his second volume of the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh reveals an important pattern of relationship between Qāshānī’s “corpus” and Rashīd al-Dīn’s compendium, as well as between the two historical figures, the client historian Qāshānī and the Ilkhanid vizier and Qāshānī’s (actual or potential) patron Rashīd al-Dīn.

Qāshānī’s claim to have authored the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh is well known. In a number of instances in Taʿrīkh-i īljāyti, Qāshānī criticizes Rashīd al-Dīn, and even uses the latter’s Jewish heritage to damage the vizier’s reputation.\(^{778}\) Qāshānī’s critical stance towards his former patron was probably linked to his outrage at Rashīd al-Dīn’s appropriation of his work. According to Qāshānī, Rashīd al-Dīn presented the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh, “which was the composition of this poor one,” that is, Qāshānī, to ʻOljeitū on the fifth of Shawwāl 706 (April 9 1307), with the help of a number “repulsive Jews” (jahūdān-i mardūd). Rashīd al-Dīn was generously rewarded for this work by the sultan and although he promised to appropriately compensate Qāshānī for his

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\(^{778}\) Kamola, 252.
labor (according to the latter at least), Qāshānī claims that he never saw a dime from this treasure.\textsuperscript{779}

It is unclear, however, if Qāshānī refers here to his “original Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh,” his universal history, or to the two-volume Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh. In his preface to the Taʾrīkh-i īlāyṭū, Qāshānī writes of the completion of the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh and encourages his readers to view his history of “the blessed reign” of Öljeitū as the completion and supplement (tamīma va-damīma) of the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh. However, he describes the content of the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh in different terms than what he used in his earlier works. Qāshānī describes the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh not as a universal history (which did not include the Mongols!) as he did earlier, but as the history of Chinggis Khan and his descendants, in other words, as the Taʾrīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī, the first volume of Rashīd al-Dīn’s Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh.\textsuperscript{780} This statement probably reflects his changing perception of the work and its scope following Rashīd al-Dīn’s appropriation of his earlier histories, but also possibly, his direct involvement in the authorship of Rashīd al-Dīn’s first volume, the Taʾrīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī.

In addition to the two histories of Qāshānī, it has been also suggested that Rashīd al-Dīn might have made use in his al-Athār waʾl-ḥayāʾ of Qāshānī’s ‘Arāʾīs al-jawāhir wa-nafāʿīs al-ṭāḥ ʾib, a treatise on minerals, gems and perfumes (including information about their value and prices). Qāshānī composed ‘Arāʾīs al-jawāhir during Ghazan’s reign, in 700/1300-01 while in Tabriz. Qāshānī refers to himself in the preface to this work as al-muʿarrikh al-ḥāsib (the historian and accountant). Soucek notes that these epithets and his interest in the prices of gems suggest that Qāshānī had an administrative position at the time. Qāshānī belonged to the Abū

\textsuperscript{779} Taʾrīkh-i īlāyṭū, 54-55; 240-41. In the second instance, Qāshānī refers to the work he authored as the dhayl-i Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh (possibly the history of Ghazan or Zubdat al-tawārīkh? Or perhaps to his Taʾrīkh-i īlāyṭū though there is no indication, as far as I know, that the vizier has access to this work).

\textsuperscript{780} Ibid., 2-4.
Tāhir family, a leading family of potters from Qāshān/Kāshān, who are known to us primarily from their works decorating Shīʿī shrines and mosques in Qom, Mashhad, Najaf and Qāshān. While he was not a practicing potter like his brother Yūsuf (of whom we know from specimens of his work produced between the years 705 and 727), Qāshānī included in his ʿArāʾ is al-jawāḥir a detailed account about ceramics, glazes and decorative techniques used in pottery. Qāshānī’s attention to the prices of rare stones might explain the peculiar passage about the ruby the amir Nawrūz gave to Ghazan in Ghazan’s dastān in the “P” recension of the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī. As noted in chapter three, the author (Qāshānī) provides here the reader with the exact weight of the luxurious gem. In addition, the same expressions for describing rubies appear in both works. The ʿArāʾ is al-jawāḥir also provides additional evidence for Qāshānī’s strained patron-client relationship with the Ilkhanid vizier: Qāshānī had dedicated the work to the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn (whom he praises highly in his preface) in 700/1300-01. However, he rededicated the work to Rashīd al-Dīn’s rival, Tāj al-Dīn ʿAlīshāh, probably after the latter’s appointment as vizier in 711/1312. This rededication clearly reflects the changing relationship between Qāshānī and his patron Rashīd al-Dīn.

Rashīd al-Dīn appears, therefore, to have used three of the four known works of Qāshānī: ʿArāʾ is al-jawāḥir, Zubdat al-tawārīkh and Qāshānī’s world history (the “original” Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh). In addition, Qāshānī’s fourth work, the Taʾrīkh-i āljāytū, might have been intended to fulfill the role of the history Ōljeitū’s reign, which was supposed to be part of the second volume

782 Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 72-73, 78-79; Kāshānī, ʿArāʾ is al-jawāḥir, 61-3. In addition, the author of the “P” recension writes that Baidu’s supporters tried to gain the amir Nawrūz’s support because they knew that the stability of the realm depended on it since “without lead one cannot work with diamonds” (bar ilmās juz usrub kārgar nayāyad) (Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 617; Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 73). Qāshānī explains this expression in his ʿArāʾ is al-jawāḥir, where he states that the origins of this proverb are clear to diamond polishers who place lead, wax, or paper on the anvil so that when they hit the anvil (placed on the stone) with a hammer, the anvil would not break. ʿArāʾ is al-jawāḥir, 82-3.
783 Following the execution of (Rashīd al-Dīn’s rival) the vizier Saʾd al-Dīn Savajī. Soucek, “Abu’l-Qāsem ʿAbdallāh Kāšānī”; ʿArāʾ is al-jawāḥir, 359-371.
of the vizier’s Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh. The extent to which Rashīd al-Dīn relied on Qāshānī’s work raises the question whether Rashīd al-Dīn used in the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh additional, unknown works of Qāshānī.784

I suggest that Qāshānī had possibly authored a fifth work, a history of Ghazan’s reign that perhaps even bore the title Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī (the blessed history of Ghazan), just like Qāshānī’s world history was first named the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh. The existence of two different recensions for the chapter (dastān) on the Mongol ruler Ghazan (in Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh’s first volume), the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī, was already noted by the Czech orientalist Karl Jahn (d. 1985), who included both versions in his 1941 edition of the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī. Jahn assigned the letter “S” to one recension for its Istanbul manuscript (Revan Köşkü 1518),785 and marked the second recension with the letter “P” for its illustrated (Timurid era) Paris manuscript (BnF 1113).786 The “S” recension became the main iteration for a number of recent editions of the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī.787

784 Morgan has also raised this question: “could there have once been other Kāshānī works, relating to other sections of the Gāmiʿ al-tawārīḫ, which have not survived but which embodied most of the real work involved in the production of the great history?” Morgan, “Rashīd al-Dīn,” 182-3. Morgan, furthermore, asks whether Qāshānī’s history of Öljeytu is the missing end of Rashīd al-Dīn’s second volume and concludes that “this can hardly be true: as it stands, it simply would not fit, either stylistically or in terms of the way in which it is organized.” Morgan raised the possibility that Qāshānī’s history of Öljeytu should be viewed as “the research assistant’s draft, the collection of material on the basis of which the busy chief minister would have produced his own version, with his own perspective imposed and his own polish.” I do not see evidence for this thesis. In general, there is no support for the view of Qāshānī as an assistant, rather than an independent historian, whose work was commissioned by the vizier and incorporated into the latter’s work.


786 The current consensus is that the Paris manuscript of the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī (Bibliothèque Nationale, Supplément persan, 1113) was copied (by two hands) in the early Timurid period. Shiraiwa revised his earlier dating of the manuscript, from 1308-1314 to 1416-1417, and suggested that its illustrations were completed by 1425. Kazuhiko Shiraiwa, “Sur la date du manuscrit persan du Gāmiʿ al-Tavārīḵ de Rashīd al-Dīn,” Orient: Report of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan 32 (1997), 37-49. For dating the illustrations, see also Francis Richard, “Un des peintres du manuscrit Supplément persan 1113 de l’histoire des mongols de Rašīd al-Dīn identifié,” in Denise Aigle (ed.), L’Iran face à la domination mongole (1997), 307-320; Kamola, 89-93.

787 Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan, and Karimī’s edition: Jāmiʿ al-tawārīḵ, ed. Bahman Karimī (Tehran, 1338/1959-60). Thackston’s translation, on the other hand, makes use of both iterations following Jahn’s edition, but confuses the
The main differences between the two “P” and “S” iterations of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* appear in the first half of the *dastān* of Ghazan, which details the events leading to Ghazan’s victory and enthronement.\(^{788}\) While the “S” recension has often been addressed as the “main” version of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī* of Rashīd al-Dīn, the “P” recension, in particular, the first half of the chapter (*dastān*) on Ghazan, appears to represent an earlier version. My thesis is that the “P” recension represents an earlier history of Ghazan that was authored by the Ilkhanid court historian ʿAbd Allāh al-Qāshānī. Rashīd al-Dīn had initially incorporated this work with little change into his history of the Mongols (the “P” recension). However, he had it later substantially redacted and altered to meet the Rashīd al-Dīn’s own historical agenda and certain demands from the court (the “S” recension). As I discuss below, the first half of the chapter on Ghazan in the “P” recension stylistically and organizationally is more in-tune with Qāshānī’s *Taʾrīkh-i ʿuljāytū*, than with the rest of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. It is important to note that with one exception discussed earlier (in his later *Taʾrīkh-i ʿuljāytū*), Qāshānī indeed does not mention that he had composed a history of the Mongols (prior to Ghazan), nor does it seem likely that the court historian would have had the resources, contacts and knowledge required to compose the sections leading to Ghazan’s reign in the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. We might therefore stipulate that Rashīd al-Dīn should be credited with the authorship of the majority of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*.

One of the main indications of Qāshānī’s authorship of a history that was incorporated into the first half of the *dastān* of Ghazan (“P” recension) are the stylistic differences in this section between the two iterations of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. The “P” narrative generally features more ornate and artistic prose and exhibits a more extensive use of direct speech. It lacks the concise

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\(^{788}\) Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 1-96.

two in a number of instances and in some places, chooses to translate one account over the other. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Rashīd uddin Fazlullah's Jamiʿ uʿi-Tawarikh*, trans. W.M. Thackston.
style, which is the “hallmark” of the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī. A number of detailed passages in the “P” recension appear in the “S” recension in a summarized and redacted form, or are omitted altogether from the text allowing, at certain points, for a more straightforward and succinct account of the events, one less burdened by the “P” recension’s recurring attention to minute details.\textsuperscript{789} It is conceivable that, as Kamola suggests, the author of the “P” recension, with its detailed accounts of day-to-day activities, had access to Ilkhanid court journals for the reign of Ghazan.\textsuperscript{790} This, too, points towards Qāshānī’s authorship as we find that he employed a similar method in his Ta ’rīkh-i ūljāytū.\textsuperscript{791}

The “P” and “S” recensions also differ in their vocabulary preferences. A comparison of near identical paragraphs reveals the “P” author’s preference to Arabic loan words alongside a recurring use of rhyming prose (saj’), in distinction from the “S” author’s leaning towards a

\textsuperscript{789} A particular example for this is found in Ghazan’s conversion narrative. Kamola noted that Nawrūz’s initial presentation of the ruby to Ghazan in the “P” recension was omitted from the “main redaction” (“S”) of Rashīd al-Dīn’s work. Kamola, 182. However, this episode, or the first part of the two-stage conversion account of Ghazan, is not entirely missing from the “S” iteration. The author of this later recension (likely Rashīd al-Dīn) combined the two sections into one episode and omitted some of the details (for example, noting that “the Muslims swore on the Qur’an and the Mongols swore on the gold” and omitting the names of the amirs Nūrin and Qutlugshāh who swore on the golden goblet and Nawrūz, Būrālaghī and Mūlāy, who swore on the Qur’an in the “P” recension). Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 72-73, 78-79. Another example of such an omission in “S” is found in the details of Nawrūz’s first embassy to Ghazan: the wording is similar in both instances, but whereas “P” mentions the names of several individuals sent by Nawrūz in addition to Satlimish, the “S” recension mentions the latter as the sole envoy. Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 44, 49.

\textsuperscript{790} The recently published Akhbār-i mughulān is an important example of the Ilkhanid practice of court journals. Penned (but might not have been authored) by the famous Sufi polymath and physician Qūṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 1311), Akhbār-i mughulān is a collection of notes and observations pertaining to the political history of the early Ilkhanate ordered annually and ending with Ahmad Tegüder’s dispute with Arghun and Tegüder’s subsequent demise. The Shīrāzī codex was originally part of the library of Rashīd al-Dīn’s Rab’-i Rashādī in Tabriz and includes in addition to the anonymous chronicle Akhbār-i mughulān, poetry in Persian and Arabic, sayings by Plato, quotations from Persian and Greek thinkers and other miscellanea. The original chronicle was composed between 1281 and 1285 probably by one author. The question of Shīrāzī’s authorship of the text remains open. The work is incomplete with gaps of various lengths throughout the chronicle (for example, a seven-year gap between the years 667 and 675). Lane notes that the Akhbār-i mughulān’s language is “plain, direct and stripped of the usual Persian excesses and hyperbole so characteristic of the style of that time” (545). George Lane, “Mongol News: the Akhbār-i mughulān dar Anbānāh Qūṭb by Qūṭb al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Mas’ūd Shīrāzī,” JRAS, series 3, 22, 3-4 (2012): 541-559; Akhbār-i mughulān dar Anbānāh-yi mullā Qūṭb, ed. Iraj Afshar (Qom, 1431/2010); Kamola, 91.

\textsuperscript{791} For Ta ’rīkh-i ūljāytū’s detailed accounts of the Ilkhan’s day-to-day movements and court diary likeness, see Melville, “The itineraries of sultan Ōljeitū, 1304-1316,” Iran 28 (1990), 55-70.
This “simplification” of the narrative - from omission of certain passages in their entirety to the replacement of Qāshānī’s heavy use of saj’ with a more comprehensible and plain phrasing - appears to have characterized Rashīd al-Dīn’s editorial approach to the Qāshānī “corpus” as a whole. Thus, if we were to compare the preface of Qāshānī’s Zubdat al-tawārīkh with the introduction to the second volume of Rashīd al-Dīn’s Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh, we find that the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh’s preface was an abbreviated version of Qāshānī’s preface, “simplified of much of Qāshānī’s baroque saj’ rhetoric and scrubbed of any reference to Qāshānī himself”.793

A comparison of Qāshānī’s Taʾrīkh-i īlāyṭū and the “P” recension section on Ghazan reveals not only their similar stylistic preferences (heavy use of saj’ prose and Arabic loan words), but also common phrasing. A number of these examples are quite distinctive.794

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792 Consider, for example, the nearly identical paragraphs in the two recensions concerning the return of Ghazan’s emissary from Baidu and the information that the emissary Ura Temür Idāchī delivered to Ghazan. Note, in particular, how the “S” recension has Persian words in place of Arabic loan words in the “P” recension (tajavuz va-tajannub namūdah, for example, is replaced with bāz gardīdah) and lacks the excessive word repetitions of the “P” recension (for example, instead of ‘ard dāsht va-namūd, the “S” recension has just ‘ardah dāsht, or to keep with its concise style, instead of Baidu’s name has “ū”, him). Thus, the “S” recension reads: “Ura Temür Idāchī az pīsh-i Baidu bāz āmad va ‘ardah dāsht kab ā az sukhan-i khūd bāz gardīdah va-hūs-i pādshāhī dar dimaḡh-i ā bādid āmadah,” whereas the “P” recension reads: “Ura Temür Idāchī az pīsh-i Baidu *barasūd va-hāl-i hādītha-yi hīlākat-i Geikhatu* ’ard dāsht *va-namūd* kab Baidu az sukhan-i khūd *tajavuz va-tajannub namūdah* ast va-hūs-i pādshāhī *va-hāvīyī shaharīyīrī* dar dimaḡh-i ā *rasīkh va-mutamakkin gashtah*.” Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 57 (“S” on the left column and “P” on the right). (***) mark phrases that differ.

793 Kamola, 248. Found in the manuscript London British Library mss. IO Islamic 3524, fol. 1v. Furthermore, not only is any trace of Qāshānī’s authorship of the text erased from the preface, but also the title of his earlier world history (the “original” Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh) is conveniently altered in the “new” preface. Instead of referring to Qāshānī’s Zubdat al-tawārīkh as “the completion and supplement of the Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh (tamīma va-damīma-yi Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh),” the “new” preface mentions that this section will become “the completion and supplement of the books of history (tamīma va-damīma-yi kutub-i tavārīkh),” in other words, simply replacing the word Jāmiʿ with kutub.

794 Less significant instances include for example phrases such as: bi-bahādūrī va-dilāvarī ma rūf va-māvūf (Taʾrīkh-i īlāyṭū, 8; Rashīd al-Dīn/ Alīzādah, 584), ma hūd va-mu tād (Taʾrīkh-i īlāyṭū, 240; ‘Alīzāda, 619), fasīḥ mastīḥ (Taʾrīkh-i īlāyṭū, 50; Rashīd al-Dīn/ Alīzādah, 605; Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 4), tāza va-tārī shavad (Taʾrīkh-i īlāyṭū, 17; Rashīd al-Dīn/ Alīzādah, 604). In addition, a strikingly similar paragraph to the description of the anticipated reviver king in the conversion narrative (“From the inclusiveness of the justice of this king, the sheep will be protected from the harm of the wolf and the gazelle from to the oppression of the hound […]”) is found in Qāshānī’s description of Oljeitū’s justice in his Taʾrīkh-i īlāyṭū (page 232). To complicate the relationship between Qāshānī’s and Rashīd al-Dīn’s works even further, I found a number of indications that Qāshānī had access and used the vizier’s Kitāb al-sultāniyya (mainly the introduction). This possibility seems rather likely (and does not contradict my suggestion that Rashīd al-Dīn used Qāshānī’s work on Ghazan) considering the suggestion that
Significantly, in both works we find the author expressing his particular aversion to the Jews with the same, rare derogatory expression *jahūd juhūd* (hideous Jews), a term that perhaps unsurprisingly (considering Rashīd al-Dīn’s Jewish background) is missing from the corresponding paragraph in the “S” recension.\(^{795}\)

The chapter on Ghazan in the “P” recension of the *Tārikh-mubarak-i Ghazanī* also features more literary allusions referring, for example, to the fable of the rivalry between the owls and crows in *Kalīla va-Dimna* or to the *Shāh nāmah*.\(^{796}\) As discussed in chapter three, the Persianate genre of mirrors for princes appears to have been a central source of inspiration for Qāshānī. For example the tenuous relationship between the amir Nawrūz and the prince Ghazan is used by Qāshānī as a stage to set some of the main themes of the genre of advice literature.\(^{797}\)

The didactic and moralistic attitudes of Qāshānī’s work are compatible with a larger literary trend of the Ilkhanid period.\(^{798}\)

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\(^{795}\) In the “P” recension, in the context of Ghazan’s destruction of idol houses, churches and synagogues (*knīshit*) of the *jahūd juhūd*, Rashīd al-Dīn’s Alīzāda, 614. The author of “P” also uses the expression: *jahūd ḥanūd yahūd*. Ibid., 616. It also worth noting that in the parallel passage in the “S” recension, this derogatory term is omitted (though the “S” recension does retain the specific term *knīshit* for synagogue). Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 85. In *Ta rīkh-i āljāyūtā*, Qāshānī uses the phrase in the context of Rashīd al-Dīn’s stealing of his work (below), where he states that the latter had a number of Jews lie on his behalf to disprove Qāshānī’s authorship. *Ta rīkh-i āljāyūtā*, 240-41. A simple internet search shows that this term appears only once, in *Ta rīkh-i āljāyūtā* (!). Qāshānī also uses the expression *jahūdūkī* for the Jewish physician Najīb al-Dawla. Ibid., 131. He uses the more favorable designation, *banī ḫrārī il*, for example, when he refers to the conversion to Islam of a group of Jewish physicians headed by Najīb al-Dawla at the Ilkhanid court. *Ta rīkh-i āljāyūtā*, 49.

\(^{796}\) For example, Rashīd al-Dīn’s Alī Zādah, 602-3; Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 74-75; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 618-619.

\(^{797}\) One example that appears in the “P” recension alone is the moral counsel (*naṣāʿīh*) of Nawrūz’s wife, the Chinggisid princess Toghan. Ghazan’s aunt, to her husband urging him to submit to Ghazan and beg for mercy for his crimes against his benefactor (*valī-yi n’imat*). The notion of *valī-yi n’imat*, the purveyor of divine bounty, is a central precept in the cultivation of the ethos of the relationship of fidelity between the king and his subjects in Persianate literature, where ingratitude to the ruler (*kufrān-i n’imat*) is often equated with blasphemy (*kufr*) and considered the cause of injustice and disorder in the realm. In this lengthy passage, the princess Toghan advises her remorseful husband as to the merits of one’s perseverance when faced with the fickleness of fate and speaks in favor of submitting to the merciful and praiseworthy prince Ghazan. Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 44-48; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 607-8. For *kufrān-i n’imat*, see Hani Khafiāpour, *The Foundation of the Safavid State: fealty, patronage, and ideals of authority (1501-1576)* (Phd diss., University of Chicago, 2013), 20-62 (chapter 1).

\(^{798}\) See discussion in chapter three.
Qāshānī’s authorship of the “P” narrative is also supported by the existence of Sufi overtones in the “P” recension’s conversion narrative, in particular, the use of common light related Sufi terms such as nūr-i imān.799 One detail on Qāshānī that, to the best of my knowledge, has not been noted by modern day historians is that Qāshānī was probably the brother of the Sufi shaykh ‘Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭāhir al-Kāshī/Kāshānī al-Naṭanzī (d. 735). The latter is primarily known for authoring the Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah wa-miftāḥ al-kifāyah, a Persian adaptation of ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī’s Sufi guide the ‘Awārif al-ma‘ārif, and a number of other well-known Sufi works. ‘Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd was the disciple of several shaykhs associated with the Suhrawardī silsila.800 While there are no direct links between the “P” conversion account and the Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah, references to the nūr-i imān and to the symbolism of unveiling of the darkness of disbelief are also abundant in ‘Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd’s work.801 In any case, this familial connection between Shaykh ‘Izz al-Dīn and Qāshānī might suggest that the latter, too, had some Sufi training, or was exposed to Sufi works. This suspicion is confirmed by Qāshānī’s use of Najm al-Dīn Rāzī Dāya’s Sufi manual, the Miṣrād al-‘Ībād, in his conversion account of the Ilkhan.802

Some of the statements that Qāshānī makes in his Ta’rīkh-i īlājītū, in particular, one where he compares Mu‘āwiya and ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ to the devil, indicate that Qāshānī came from

799 Kamola suggests that this “reveals an additional layer of illuminationist rhetoric and symbolism.” Kamola, 180.
800 Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah wa-miftāḥ al-kifāyah, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Humā‘ī (Tehran, 1367 [1988]). For ‘Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd’s Sufi teachers, see introduction by Humā‘ī, 13-14, and for the work’s relationship with ‘Awārif al-ma‘ārif, see introduction, 19-40. ‘Izz al-Dīn Maḥmūd is not identified as a member of the Abī Ṭāhir family in Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah. However, he does appear under this name in Ibn al-Fuwaṭī’s biographical dictionary, the Majma‘ al-ādāb (vol. 1, 336), though the brief notice does not note his Sufi credentials or any other significant detail on him. For his identification as an Abī Ṭāhir, see also Ismā‘īl Bāshā al-Baghdādī al-Bābānī, Hadiyyat al-‘ārifīn (Baghdad, 1972?), vol. 2, 408.
801 For example, Miṣbāḥ al-hidāyah, 75-6.
802 See chapter three.
a Shīʿī background. As noted above, his family took a number of projects in veneration sites related to the ahl al-bayt. A possible indication of the “P” author’s Shīʿī inclinations is found in Ghazan’s conversion narrative when Nawrūz states that he saw the marks of the anticipated reviver king “manifest and shining from the shape of the state and the face of the impressions of the revealing (/clear/shining) forehead (jabīn-i mubīn) of the prince.” The term jabīn-i mubīn is familiar from a Shīʿī tradition about the resemblance of ʿHusayn ibn ʿAlī to his grandfather, the Prophet Muhammud. According to this tradition, during the dark nights, light would spread from the Prophet’s forehead, jabīn-i mubīn, and people would recognize him by his illuminated forehead.

The idea that Qāshānī had authored a separate history of Ghazan and that this work (whether completed or in draft) was available to Rashīd al-Dīn and possibly to others at the court finds further support in another Ilkhanid history, Vaṣṣāf’s Tajziyat al-amṣār. It is evident from Vaṣṣāf’s succinct conversion narrative of Ghazan that he had access to and made use of Qāshānī’s work. Vaṣṣāf, however, offers a different chronology for Ghazan’s conversion. He condenses Qāshānī’s lengthier narrative of the correspondence between Ghazan and Baidu and Ghazan’s several consultations with Nawrūz and the amirs into one short and concise paragraph that includes only one discussion and exchange between Ghazan and Nawrūz. Thus, in Vaṣṣāf’s account, Ghazan converts immediately after his first discussion with the commanders and Nawrūz.

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803 Taʾrīkh-i ʿiljāyṯū, 130-131. Further examples for his anti-Umayyad sentiment and pro-ʿAlīd convictions are found in his Taʾrīkh-i isma ʿilīya, for example, 8-12.
805 Melville, too, noted that in the case of Ghazan’s conversion narrative, “the language used by Vaṣṣāf is [overall] similar to Banākātī’s” and Banākātī’s version of Ghazan’s conversion is, in fact, based on the “P” recension conversion narrative (below), Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām,” 173 (footnote 4).
806 For the sake of illustrating the extent of Vaṣṣāf’s “editing,” one can note that in Jahn’s edition of the “P” recension, this first consultation is found on page 58, whereas Ghazan’s full conversion is only on page 67.
According to Vaşşaf, when learning that “Baidu Khan caused Geikhatu to taste the sherbet of annihilation and took over the throne,” Ghazan was unable to decide what to do and consulted with Nawrūz, who stated: “I, your slave, will raise the prince to the throne of the fortunate blessed state/dynasty.” This and the next line are nearly identical to Nawrūz’s words in Qāshānī’s narrative.\footnote{The “P” recension (Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 58) writes that Nawrūz ʾiltızām namūd kah bandah-yi kamīna shahzādah rā bar sarīr-i davlat-i kāmār va-kāmārnā binishānīd va-Baidu rā bā a vān va-ansār chūn hijāb-i kūfr az miyān bar dārad. Vaşşaf (Tajziyat al-āmsār, 316-317) writes: ʾiltızām namūd kah *man* bandah shahzādah rā bar sarīr-i davlat-i *rūz afżūn* kāmār *binishānām* va-Baidu rā bā *lashkar-i bisyār* va-a vān *kah chūn fīrāz jāmah bar siyārānd* chūn hijāb-i kūfr az miyān bar *dārām*. ** marks words added or changed by Vaşşaf (for example, changing the verbs’ subject from third person to first).} In Vaşşaf’s version, however, instead of Nawrūz’s lengthy diatribe against Baidu, Nawrūz makes Ghazan’s conversion a condition for his support of the prince,\footnote{Vaşşaf follows this with the famous saying (in Arabic here) of the founder the Sassanid Empire Ardashīr (d. 242) that “religion and monarchy are twins; religion sustains monarchy and monarchy protects religion.” As Hope notes, while the Ilkhanid narratives mostly (Vaşşaf and his pro-Nawrūz account being an exception in this regard) describe the rapprochement between the two as the unconditional submission of the amir to the prince, “Ghazan was in no position to demand the submission of Nawrūz, whose armies had repeatedly resisted his attempts to drive him out of Khurasan.” Hope views this as “a strategic alliance, not a political capitulation” and relies on Vaşşaf’s version to suggest that Nawrūz’s conditioned his service to the prince on the latter’s conversion, an offer which Ghazan initially declined, but later, during the prince’s conflict with Baidu, accepted. Indeed, as Hope further notes, Nawrūz had made a similar, yet unsuccessful bid earlier to enthrone the Ōgodeid prince and Muslim convert Ürűng Temür (who also married one of Nawrūz’s daughters). Hope further argues that Nawrūz was making an ultimatum to the prince and “was giving Ghazan a clear choice between accepting a shared authority, under Nawrūz’s spiritual primacy or defeat.” Hope, “Nawrūz King,” 14-15, 17-18. However, if Vaşşaf’s account is indeed, as I suggest here, not based on independent information, but on Qāshānī’s version, then we might wish to tread more carefully when making assertions about the relationship between the two on the basis of Vaşşaf’s version.} a statement that is not made in Qāshānī’s account. Ghazan, next, converts to Islam in Firuzkuh.\footnote{Vaşşaf’s phrasing here, too, clearly echoes the language of Qāshānī’s conversion narrative.} Vaşşaf’s phrasing here, too, clearly echoes the language of Qāshānī’s conversion narrative.\footnote{Thus, Vaşşaf writes: zabān-i shahzādah bar kilmayan-i ikhlāṣ kilmah-yi ṭayyibah-yi tāvīd sarāyīdan girift. The “P” recension has: shahzādah […] kilmah-yi ikhlāṣ sarāyīdan girift […] kilmah-yi tāvīd lafż-i takbīr īrād kard. The next line in Vaşşaf concerning the mass conversion of two hundred thousand (one hundred thousand in the “P” recension) Mongols after Ghazan’s conversion also draws from the distinctive language of the “P” recension, referring to the Mongol men as mushrik-i mutamrrid and stating that they all became muwahhid. Tajziyat al-āmsār, 317. Vaşşaf’s narrative continues with a second embassy, after Ghazan’s conversion, from Ghazan to Baidu, demanding that Baidu hand over the amirs who executed Ghazan’s uncle, the Ilkhan Geikhatu, so they go on trial according to the yusul for their transgressions against the Chinggisid household (urūgh/q). The wording of Ghazan’s message to Baidu here is identical to that of the message Ghazan sends Baidu in his first embassy after learning that Baidu took over the throne in Qāshānī’s narrative. Qāshānī’s version of this episode, however, is longer and includes details missing in Vaşşaf’s account, for example, the names of the two Mongol emissaries who delivered the message to Baidu. In the “P” recension, this episode follows Ghazan’s first consultation with Nawrūz, and not}
Vaşşaf, in other words, borrows whole sentences from Qāshānī, while also significantly altering his extensive narrative and chronological sequence, for example, by relocating Ghazan’s conversion to an earlier moment. Vaşşaf’s borrowing from Qāshānī should allow us to offer a *terminus ante quem* to Qāshānī’s narrative. The problem, however, is that Vaşşaf presented his work at the Ilkhanid court on two separate occasions. He first presented it to Ghazan in Rajab 702/3 March 1303 and nearly a decade later, in 712/1312, to Öljeitü in Sulṭāniyya. It is not clear at which point he presented each section of the work. It seems that Vaşşaf presented the first three volumes of his history, which included Ghazan’s reign up to the year 700, already in Rajab 702/3 March 1303. Vaşşaf appears to have had, therefore, access to Qāshānī’s narrative prior to 702/1303, but certainly no later than 712/1312.

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Ghazan’s conversion narrative, which appears much later in the “P” narrative, after an extensive back and forth between Baidu and Ghazan.

811 A more thorough comparison must be done before we can determine the extent to which Vaşşaf relied on Qāshānī. Kamola has noted certain “structural similarities” between the *Tajziyat al-sansur*’s third volume (especially the final account of the building projects of Ghazan) and the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*. Kamola concludes that Vaşşaf’s work “provides part of the immediate historiographical precedent for the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī*,” yet, it seems more likely that both relied on Qāshānī. Kamola, 144. For Rashīd al-Dīn’s and Vaşşaf’s patron-client relationship, ibid., 252-3.

812 In the fourth volume of *Tajziyat al-amsār*, Vaşşaf writes of his arrival on 13 Rajab 702/3 March 1303, shortly before Ghazan’s death, at the Ilkhan’s camp in Ḍūnā, which was located in a distance of two days from Rāshībat al-Shām on the frontier with Mamluk Syria. He presented his history to Ghazan at the presence of the two viziers, Rashīd al-Dīn and Sa’d al-Dīn Savājī, and received praises for the work from all those present and honors and gifts (including a brocade cloak and a golden *Tamgha*) from Ghazan. According to Vaşşaf, at this instance, an order was delivered to him from the Ilkhan to remain in Mawsal until the return of Ghazan from his third campaign against the Mamluks in Syria so he may complete during this interval another history with the beginning and end of the Mongols’ history (*afsānah-yi dīgar bar āghāz va-anjām-i mughūl*). Vaşşaf complained that he would be unable to complete such a work within such a limited time frame and received an extension and numerous resources to complete the new volume. The common view is that Vaşşaf presented in 702/1303 only the first *qism* of his history, which covered Ilkhanid history from Hūlegū to Ahmad Tegüder, and completed the three other volumes by 712/1312, when he presented the work to Öljeitū in Sulṭāniyya. Pfeiffer, “A turgid history,” 107-8; Vaşşaf, *Ta rikh-i vaşşaf al-hadrat: jalad chihārum*, ed. ‘Alīrīdā Ḥājjīyān Nazhād (Tehran, 1388/2009), 24 (introduction). However, as far as I can tell, Vaşşaf does not clarify which volume/s he presented before Ghazan in 702/1303. He refers to the work he presented simply as *ṯin kitāb, maktūb-i vaşşaf, ta rikh, or kitāb-i ta rikh*. Vaşşaf, *Ta rikh-i vaşşaf al-hadrat: jalad chihārum*, 25-29, 343. It seems to me more likely that Vaşşaf presented the first three volumes to Ghazan in 702/1303. According to his introduction to *Tajziyat al-amsār*, Vaşşaf intended his work to continue (*dhayl*) from where Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Alī-malik Juwainī’s *Ta rikh-i jahān gushā* ends, that is, with Hūlegū’s campaign against the Ismā‘īlīs, until the current date, that is, late Sh’ābān 699. Vaşşaf, *Tajziyat al-amsār*, 4-6. This time period is, indeed, covered in the first three volumes. The second work, commissioned by Ghazan in 702, appears to have become the *Tajziyat al-amsār*’s fourth volume, which includes the end of Ghazan’s reign (from the year 700, where the third *qism* ends), the reign of his successor Öljeitū, miscellaneous treatises by Vaşşaf, and a summary of the *Ta rikh-i
I have argued that Qāshānī had authored a history of Ghazan, parallel in scope, style, and goals to Qāshānī’s Taʾrīkh-i ūljāytū, and that Rashīd al-Dīn initially incorporated it with little change into the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī (“P” recension). The question remains, however, why the Ilkhanid vizier felt later the need to reedit and extensively redact it (leaving us with the “S” recension). Answering this question might also help us better understand Rashīd al-Dīn’s work process. Aside for the two distinct conversion narratives, one of the most significant differences between the two recensions of the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī is that a number of sections appear in the “P” iteration alone, particularly, episodes related to the role of the amir Nawrūz in raising Ghazan to the throne. As Kamola observed, the “P” recension appears to include more details about the events that took place in the eastern provinces, from the start of Nawrūz’s revolt in 1289 to Ghazan’s enthronement in 1295, and especially, regarding Nawrūz’s uprising, the subsequent rapprochement between him and Ghazan, and their joint struggle against Baidu. The “P” recension also includes details on a number of local rulers as well as on some early administrative measures of Ghazan, which are absent from the later recension.

The hostile attitude towards amir Nawrūz in the later recension of the Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazanī is attested not only in the omission of extensive paragraphs featuring the amir (in recension “P”), but also in Ghazan’s conversion narrative itself. Rashīd al-Dīn’s narrative “skips” over the lengthy, lauding, and nearly heroic depiction of Nawrūz as he is faced at Baidū’s camp with dangers and overcomes with insightful deceit his ill-wishers (and thus,

jahān gushā. In other words, it expands Vaṣṣāf’s history into the later and earlier periods of Mongol rule (or āghāz va-anjām-i mughāl) and accomplishes what Ghazan ordered. Thus, it seems more plausible that Vaṣṣāf presented Ghazan with the first three volumes of the work in 702/1303, and that he presented the four volumes together to Öljeytū in 712/1312.

813 For example, Nawrūz’s experiences at Qaidu’s camp; Nawrūz’s imprisonment by Baidu and his deceit of the latter; and amir Nawrūz mounts the vanguard. In the “S” recension, this last section is redacted and condensed together with the previous section on Shaykh Maḥmūd’s embassy from Baidu into one section in the “S” recension, which was titled: the imperial banners of Ghazan proceed towards Baidu for the second time. Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 24-26, 73-75, 90-96, 80-89.

814 Kamola, 89-92.
redeems himself from his earlier “crimes” of disloyalty towards his benefactor Ghazan), which we find in the earlier recension/Qāshānī’s account. Rashīd al-Dīn briefly summarizes it instead and depicts this episode in negative light, as Nawrūz’s failure to fulfill his promise to Ghazan to hand him Baidu’s head. Furthermore, it notes that Ghazan was about to rebuke the amir for his return without results, just as Nawrūz decided to raise before the prince the issue of his conversion. Rashīd al-Dīn’s attempt to reduce Nawrūz’s significance in the rise of Ghazan to the throne, if not also to “tarnish” his legacy, also leads the vizier to collapse the “two-stage” conversion narrative of Ghazan in Qāshānī’s account into a single episode (by relocating the ruby episode to the actual conversion moment): he reduces the extensive section detailing Nawrūz’s efforts to bring about Ghazan’s conversion and presents Nawrūz’s agency in the conversion as negligible.

We should also note that Qāshānī’s “two-stage” conversion account, which credits Nawrūz with the Ilkhan’s conversion, is confirmed by the independent eyewitness report of Ghazan’s convertor, Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. Sa’d al-Dīn al-Ḥammūya/Hamuwayi. Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Hamuwayi reported his involvement in the Ilkhan’s conversion to the

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815 Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 79; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 620.
816 Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm’s father, Sa’d al-Dīn (d. 650/1252?), was the celebrated disciple of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā. Ṣadr al-Dīn was well connected to the Ilkhanid civic elite: he married the daughter of Ṭūṣ and with the father of ʿAllāma al-Hilfī. Melville suggests that his “varied spiritual pedigree is an indication of the fluidity of sectarian categories in the early Mongol period.” Melville, “Paşshah-i İslām,” 165. Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm’s role in the conversion, however, seems to have been not for to his “special skill as an expounder of doctrine in a fashion suitable to Mongol tastes,” but rather, for “his social and familial prominence,” that is, as a marker of social prestige. DeWeese, “Islamization in the Mongol Empire,” 124. Elias too suggests that Ṣadr al-Dīn’s standing in Ilkhanid circles was primarily due to his father’s reputation as a Sufi and author. It should furthermore be noted that Ṣadr al-Dīn’s reputation was primarily as hadīth collector (especially pertaining to the Prophet’s family, and hence, the attribution of Shi’ite tendencies to his figure) and not a Sufi. Ṣadr al-Dīn had little contact with other members of the Kubrawi Sufī path aside his father and Simnānī. Ṣadr al-Dīn is not even listed as a main disciple of his father. Sa’d al-Dīn’s association with Kubrawi circles seems to have been tenuous and he seems to have been rejected by the latter due to his self-association with the Damascene circle of Ibn ʿArabī and the influence of Ibn ʿArabī on his thought. Jamal J. Elias, “The Sufi lords of Baharabad: Sa’d al-Dīn and Sadr al-Dīn Hamuwayi,” Iranian Studies, 27/1 (1994): 53-75. Considering the conclusions of Elias, we should beware from identifying Sufi Kubrawi tones in Ghazan’s conversion narratives as well as in his actual conversion. Kamola, 180ff.
Mamluk historian ʿAlam al-Dīn al-Birzālī (d. 739/1339) in 695/late 1295 when he arrived at Damascus after completing the hajj.\(^{817}\) Ṣadr al-Dīn notes the central role of amir Nawrūz in facilitating the Ilkhan’s conversion and in providing the Ilkhan with directions and explanations during the ceremony itself as well as instructing him on the tenets of Islam after the act. Ṣadr al-Dīn, furthermore, speaks to Nawrūz’s knowledge of Islamic traditions (zuḥdiyyāt, adhkār and ḥikāyāt). Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya also notes that Nawrūz’s Chinggisid wife, Toghan Khātūn, the daughter of Abaqa and Ghazan’s aunt, played a role in pursuing Ghazan’s conversion alongside her husband.

In addition to applying a critical stance towards amir Nawrūz, Rashīd al-Dīn also added new details.\(^{818}\) One example for this is found in the section on Ghazan’s birth and childhood, and the description of Ghazan’s wives. A segment with poetry describing the newborn Ghazan’s attributes is accounted for only in Qāshānī’s version,\(^{819}\) but Rashīd al-Dīn includes several additional details missing from the earlier versions, for example, an identification of one of the family members of Ghazan’s second nurse Ashtai,\(^{820}\) and the corresponding Mongol date for Ghazan’s birth.\(^{821}\)

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\(^{817}\) Melville translates the fullest version of the account given by the Syrian author al-Jazārī in Jawāhir al-sulāk (which is still in manuscript). A slightly shorter account is found in the anonymous chronicle (“Author Z”). Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām,” 159-177 (160-63 for the sources); Zetterstéen, Beiträge, 34-36. Earlier that year, Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥammūya joined Ghazan’s retinue from his native town of Bahรābād in order to secure safe passage to the hajj at which point amir Nawrūz approached Ṣadr al-Dīn about delaying his departure for the hajj. According to Ṣadr al-Dīn, Nawrūz hoped that the latter’s presence at the Ilkhanid camp would encourage Ghazan to follow through an earlier promise he had made Nawrūz to convert to Islam. Ṣadr al-Dīn reported to al-Birzālī that Ghazan pronounced the Shahādā dressed in the Shaykh’s robe (qamīṣ) and a woolen cloak on Friday 2 Sha’bān 694/17 June 1295 (or 4 Sha’ bān in Banākāfi’s history) at Arghun’s summer residence near Damavand. Ṣadr al-Dīn attests to the anticipation among Ghazan’s men and to the great joy that overtook the party once the ceremony was completed, and the impressive celebration that followed.

\(^{818}\) In addition, I identified at least two places, where the “S” recension breaks a long section with new section headings, which are missing from the “P” recension, a possible indication of the work of later editing. Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 31, 37.

\(^{819}\) Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 4-7; BnF 1113, fol. 211r.

\(^{820}\) Both recensions read: “he was given to the mother of Hasan, the amir of tughchis [standard bearers], of the Suldus tribe. The name of Hasan’s father was Ashtu (“P” has Ḥasan instead, possibly a mistake) and the name of his mother was Ashtai (“P” reads Isanbāy).” “S” adds here: “and the son of Ashtu is Tolai, who serves as idāchi and ba’urchi.” This suggests that the author/editor of “S” had a more up to date knowledge of position holders in the Ilkhanate.

\(^{821}\) In addition, the “P” recension has Ghazan’s birthdate as the 29th of Rabī’ I 670, whereas the “S” recension as the 29th of Rabī’ I 670 (November 4, 1271). This, however, might simply be a scribal mistake.
Striking differences are found in the section on Ghazan’s wives, where the order of the wives in the two recensions differs. Particularly significant is that Qāshānī places Bulughan Khātūn, who was Ghazan’s father Arghun’s (and uncle Geikhatu’s) widow, as Ghazan’s first-chief wife. He plainly states that before marrying Ghazan, she was “his father’s wife” (zan-i pidar-i ā). In the “S” recension, however, Bulughan Khātūn appears correctly as wife number five. It is not stated here that she was Arghun’s wife, although this detail and the controversy (and subsequent resolution) over Ghazan’s marriage to his father’s widow are addressed shortly after in this recension. There are additional genealogical details that appear only in the later iteration. Moreover, the order of the wives in the “S” recension corresponds to the order of Ghazan’s wives in the Shu’ab-i Panjgānah (Five Genealogies), the accompanying genealogical trees of the Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh. Furthermore, the author/copyist of “S” (Rashīd al-Dīn) was possibly

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822 In the “S” recension the order of the wives is as follows: Yedi Qurtqa, Bulughan Khātūn Khurāsānī, Eshil Khātūn, Kökāchi Khātūn, Bulughan Khātūn al-mu’azzama (widow of Arghun), Dondi Khātūn, and Kāramū Khātūn. In the “P” recension, the order of the wives is: Bulughan Khātūn al-mu’azzama, Bulughan Khātūn Khurāsānī, Yedi Qurtqa, Eshil Khātūn, Kökāchi, Kāramū Khātūn, Dondi.

823 In his study of the institution of the senior wife in the Mongol Empire, Shir demonstrates that according to Mongol custom, the chief wife was either the first woman married to the prince, or, the mother of sons (who alone had a right to claim the throne). Bulughan Khātūn, therefore, could not have been Ghazan’s senior wife. Shai Shir, “‘The Chief Wife’ at the Courts of the Mongol Khans during the Mongol World Empire (1206-1260)” (in Hebrew, M.A. thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2006), 54-62. On Bulughan Khātūn al-mu’azzama daughter of Otman, the second of the three Ilkhanid Bulughāns and the significance role she played in Ghazan’s rise to power, see Melville, “Boloğan Kätün,” Elr, Vol. IV, Fasc. 4, pp. 338-339.

824 For a discussion of the crisis over Ghazan’s decision to marry his father’s widow, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, “Ghazan, Islam and Mongol tradition,” 1-10. Amitai examines the details in Ghazan’s biographical notice in the Mamluk author Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khálib ibn Aybeg al-Ṣafādī’s (d. 764/1363) fourteenth century two biographical dictionaries. According to al-Ṣafādī’s account of the crisis that ensued from the convert Ghazan’s decision to marry his father’s widow, Bulughān Khātūn, in accordance with Mongol traditions, as reports by ʿIzz al-Dīn Ḥasan al-Irbīlī (d. 726/1326), Ghazan intended to abandon Islam were he not permitted to marry his father’s widow. The matter was resolved when one of the ʿulamāʾ offered a legal opinion that since the Ilkhan’s father Arghun was a pagan, the latter’s marriage to the lady was illegal and therefore, Ghazan may marry her in accordance with Muslim law. In addition, the “S” recension alone adds that the lady’s daughter (from Ghazan), Ōljāī Qutlugh, was betrothed to her cousin (Bistām, son of Ōljeitū). The two were betrothed on Safar 703 (September 1303). Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 658.

825 For example, “S” alone gives the full lineage of Yedi Qurtqa, Ghazan’s first and chief wife in “S,” leading back to one of Chagatai’s sons.

826 The Shu’ab-i Panjgānah remains in a single, sixteenth century manuscript, MS Topkapi Sarayi Ahmet 3, No. 2937. It encompasses the genealogies of the Mongols, Arabs, Jews, and European and Chinese emperors. For the Shu’ab-i Panjgānah as a summary of the first two volumes of the Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh, see Binbaș, “Structure and function of the genealogical tree in Islamic historiography (1200-1500),” 489-494. The Shu’ab-i Panjgānah appears to have been planned at a later stage than the rest of the Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh.
referring to the *Shuʿab-i Panjgānah* when he stated at the end of his list of Ghazan’s wives, that this list is confirmed by the *jadval-i shuʿab-yi farzandān-i āb*, the table of the branch of Ghazan’s descendants, which corresponds to the title of Ghazan’s section in the *Shuʿab-i Panjgānah*.\(^{827}\)

As a final point, it might be worth to briefly consider Rashīd al-Dīn’s work process. Based on the preface to the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* and to the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazānī*, Shiraiwa argues for a gradual process of compiling and editing. A draft of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazānī*, the first volume, which according to Rashīd al-Dīn’s preface, was ordered by Ghazan, appears to have existed as early as 702/1302. Already in 703/1303, copies of sections of the work were under preparation to present to Ghazan. However, it was only after Ghazan’s death, in 703/1304, that drafts of sections of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazānī* were finally presented at the *ordu*, to Ghazan’s successor, Öljeitū (704/1304-5). According to the preface, Öljeitū made major corrections and changes to the work. He also ordered that two more volumes, a universal history and a geographical volume in his name, would be added to the volume named after Ghazan.\(^{828}\)

Based on this description from the preface to the work, Shiraiwa urges us to consider Öljeitū’s role in this process as that of the “publisher or commissioning editor,” who oversaw and made editorial interventions in the production of the work.\(^{829}\)

While we might wish to refrain from assuming the Ilkhan Öljeitū’s direct involvement in the text, Shiraiwa’s chronology does correspond with the two-stage incorporation of Qāshānī’s

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\(^{827}\) Interestingly, in the corresponding section on Ghazan in the *Shuʿab-i Panjgānah*, Bulughān Khāṭūn’s earlier marriage to Geikhatu is noted, but not her marriage to Arghun (!). Since our earliest reference to the *Shuʿab-i Panjgānah* as part of the historical compendium of the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* is as late as 1310, this reference might also serve as a clue towards dating the later, “S” recension of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghazānī*. Kamola observed that the *Shuʿab-i Panjgānah* is not mentioned in the preface to the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*, but only in the description of Rashīd al-Dīn’s collected works in a manuscript completed in 1310 (Paris ms. arabe 2324). Kamola, 213-214, 286.

\(^{828}\) Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshān, 1-8; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, 1-6.

\(^{829}\) Kazuhiko Shiraiwa, “Rashīd al-Dīn’s primary sources in compiling the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*: a tentative survey,” 51-52.
history of Ghazan into the *Tārīkh-i mubārk-i Ghazanī*. The later version (“S”) includes several indications that the text was revised in accordance with the comments, corrections, and instructions made at the court, after its initial presentation there: its “less than enthusiastic” view of the amir Nawrūz (who was executed by Ghazan in 1297), and the omission of a number of key passages, significant for portraying the amir’s central role in raising Ghazan to the throne; its more concise and straightforward narrative and its inclination towards a more plain Persian, unburdened like Qāshānī’s writing, by a rich Arabic vocabulary. This rendered the work more accessible to an audience who might have been familiar with Persian, but probably uneducated in Arabic, for example, members of the Mongol elite; and finally, the additional genealogical details in the later version.\(^{830}\) Rashīd al-Dīn’s later version and especially its conversion narrative also appear to complement other sections of the *Tārīkh-i mubārk-i Ghazanī*, especially Rashīd al-Dīn’s promotion of the notion of Mongol ancestral monotheism in his introduction to the *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*.\(^{831}\)

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\(^{830}\) In addition, I identified at least two places, where the “S” recension breaks a long section with new section headings, which are missing from the “P” recension, indicating again the work of a later editing. Rashīd al-Dīn/Jahn, 31, 37.

\(^{831}\) There is further evidence that the process of editing the *Tārīkh-i mubārk-i Ghazanī* was a gradual one. The Ilkhanid court poet Abū Sulaymān Dā’ud b. Abī al-Faḍl Muḥammad al-Banākātī’s (d. 730/1329-30) Rawdat ʿulī al-albāb fī maʿrifat al-tawārīkh waʿl-ansāb (completed Shawwāl 717/1317) is mostly an abridgment of the *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, to which Banākātī wholeheartedly admits at the introduction to his history. Yet, a comparison of Ghazan’s section in Banākātī’s work and the two recensions shows that Banākātī used Qāshānī’s version from the start of his chapter on Ghazan until his conversion narrative. with one exception, the section on Ghazan’s birth and wives, where Banākātī faithfully follows the later, “S” recension. Unless Banākātī gained access to both recensions, it seems that Banākātī made use of an intermediary version of the *dastān* of Ghazan, which included the “correct” order of Ghazan’s wives, but still maintained much of Qāshānī’s history of the Ilkhan. Banākātī, Rawdat, 451-54. Melville observed that the Rawdat ʿulī al-albāb’s conversion narrative significantly differs from the *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh* (the “S” recension) and contains “useful independent details” and “more circumstantial description of the occasion,” and is the closest in detail to Sadr al-Dīn Hammūya’s independent report in the Mamluk sources. Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām,” 159-161.
Figure 1: Hülegü’s Three Chief Wives and their Offspring
Figure 2: Öljeitü’s wives
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