CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

THE MONGOLS IN THE EYES OF THE IRANIANS

Michael Hope

Though situated at the western extremity of the Mongol Empire, the Islamic core territo-
tories produced some of the most detailed information on their nomadic conquerors. A rich historiographical tradition, combined with extensive trade networks across Eurasia, both of which predated the Mongol Empire, meant that the largely Persian-speaking Muslim population of Iran and Central Asia was in a better position than most to document not only their own experiences of Mongol rule but those of the people around them. The fact that Persian (Farsi) served as one of the chief literary and administrative languages of the Mongol Empire, as well as commerce, further ensured that Iranian writers were well-informed regarding the inner workings of the Chinggisid khanates. Contrary to what might be expected, Mongol rule coincided with a period of immense literary productivity across Iran. The reports, anecdotes, and opinions of the Mongols contained in these sources are equally diverse and were naturally shaped by the genre and the personal experiences of the authors. Nevertheless, we can say that Islam was the most important lens through which the Iranian sources viewed Mongol rule. God was ultimately believed to be responsible for determining the fate of both the Iranians and the Mongols based upon their adherence to Islamic laws, traditions, and expectations. No one seems to have been more aware of this fact than Ghazan Khan and his vizier, Rashid al-Din Fadlallah Hamadani. Together they sought to combine Mongol, Persian, and Islamic political traditions to situate the Ilkhans as millennial rulers and renewers of Islam.

Rashid al-Din’s history was built upon close collaboration with the Mongol rulers, which reveals how important relationships of power and patronage were in shaping opinions of the Mongols. This collaboration did not occur exclusively at the Ilkhan ordu (camp/court). Indeed, ties between the Mongols and the native population were often more profound in the provincial capitals of Kirman, Khurasan, Anatolia, Iraq, and Mazandaran, among others. Like many earlier conquest dynasties, the Mongols drew upon the expertise, manpower, and resources of their subjects to facilitate their rule, and this in turn produced meaningful partnerships between Mongol governors, commanders, and queens and the largely urban Iranian
powerbrokers, such as magistrates, scribes, spiritual leaders, and merchants. These connections blossomed into marriage alliances, joint commercial endeavours, and religious conversion, all of which caused the Iranian writers to identify more closely with the Mongol Ilkhan dynasty and their appointees. These ties never resulted in a universal acceptance of the Mongols among the Iranian writers, who were not a monolithic group, but there was a general acceptance that, for better or worse, the Mongols were a part of the political and cultural heritage of Iran.

EARLY PERSPECTIVES

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Persianate world had little knowledge of the Mongols, let alone their homeland in Eastern Inner Asia. The geographies of Ibn Hawqal, Istakhri, and the anonymous *Hudud al-‘Alam* only cover as far as the lands of the Ghuzziyya and Kharlukiyya, which lay to the north and east of Mawarannahr, whilst the later works of Yaqut and Marvazi conceived of East Asia being dominated by China (al-Sin), though the latter author did also reference the Yugur (Uyghur) as one of its component parts.1 Writing on the Turk in the twelfth century, Marvrudi listed a group named the Tatar alongside the Khitan and Tibetans as some of the most important Turkic peoples of his time. This discovery, most likely facilitated by the expansion of the Qara Khitai Empire in the twelfth century, shows an improved knowledge of the peoples of eastern Inner Asia, if not the geography of the region. The term “Tatar” was later adopted by Islamic writers as a synonym to refer to the Mongols, most likely based upon Marvrudi’s earlier work.2 This may go some way to explaining the earliest account of the Mongol invaders provided by ‘Izz al-Din ‘Ali Ibn al-Athir (d. 1233), who describes the Mongols as coming from Tamghaj (i.e. Northern China). In the accounts of Shihab al-Din Muhammad Nasawi (1241) and Minhaj al-Din Juzjani (1260), both of whom drew upon Ibn al-Athir, China was ruled by six amirs, one of whom was Chinggis Khan. Chinggis then joined with Güchülüg, another of the six amirs, to overthrow Altan Khan, the ruler of China.3 These rather sketchy accounts were ultimately replaced by the far more detailed and precise rendering of ‘Ala al-Din Juwayni (1258–1283?) and Rashid al-Din (1316), who drew upon information provided by the Mongols themselves. Those who lived through the conquest, however, would have had scant notion of who the Mongols were or where they had come from.

Easily the most profound impression left by the Mongol invaders on the Iranians was their brutality and destructiveness, which invited eschatological explanations. Ibn al-Athir famously declared his reluctance to discuss the Mongol invasion, noting that “it horrified me and I was unwilling to recount it.”4 But recount it he did, and his narrative is replete with gory details of the atrocities committed by the incoming Mongol soldiers, including the murder of millions of Muslims and the destruction of some of their most important cities. A similar catalogue of death and ruin is provided by Juzjani, who, like Ibn al-Athir, remarked on the Mongol invasion as an unprecedented catastrophe. For the earlier author, the Mongol invasion was likely to be the most destructive event until the coming of the people of Gog and Magog at the end of time, though he also noted that even the Antichrist would not cause as much damage as they had done. Juzjani went even further and identified traditions attributed to the Prophet which foretold the coming of the Turk as the first sign

815
of the impending Judgement Day. This apocalyptic view of the Mongol invasion probably did not stretch the imagination of those who witnessed it. The Mongols’ willingness to destroy the cities and people they were conquering defied explanation, unless they had been sent by a higher power to bring about a final reckoning before the end of time, as suggested by the words attributed to Chinggis Khan by ‘Ala al-Din ‘Ata Malik Juvayni: “If you had not committed great sins, God would not have sent a punishment like me upon you.”

The fact that the Mongols had been sent by God did not make them any more popular or their rule any less oppressive. Following the defeat of the Khwarazmshah, Chinggis Khan withdrew east to Mongolia, leaving behind a daruqachi ( overseer) in Khwarazm. The mandate of this daruqachi expanded to include the taxation of Khurasan during the rule of Ögödei (1229–1241) and then Azerbaijan and Persian Iraq during the reign of Möngke (1251–1259). Juvayni notes that these daruqachis spent much of their time at odds with their secretaries and deputies, who were constantly seeking to denigrate them before the khan in the hopes of taking their job. A daruqachi’s status rested upon their ability to maintain order while also providing the maximum amount of revenue. Taxes were, therefore, normally quite a heavy burden on the Iranian population and pushed a secondary migration of people west and south to escape the rapacious Mongol officials. It was only during the rule of Möngke that some semblance of balance was imposed on this system, with upper limits placed upon the amount of revenue that could be taken from the largely agrarian population, though how strictly these limits were followed is unclear.

Those living on the frontier of the empire had to contend with the Mongol tamma armies, who were charged with aggressively extending the borders of the khan’s dominion and causing havoc in the lands of their recalcitrant neighbours. Two such tamma armies had been dispatched to the Near East during the rule of Ögödei; the first, under the command of Chormaqan, was posted to Azerbaijan, while the second, under the command of Dayir Noyan, was sent to Afghanistan. Like the earlier Mongol forays into Iran, these armies proved intimidating and destructive. The tamma of Chormaqan made violent raids into Anatolia, the Caucasus, and Iraq, where they were described as an elusive, mercurial, and, above all, intimidating force. The tamma made almost annual raids into Iraq until Chormaqan’s death in 1241, which caused the population to move to the larger, better defended centres like Baghdad and Mosul. When the caliph’s armies were finally able to take to the battlefield, they often found it hard to come to terms with the raiders, who would vanish back to Iran. The inability of local armies to defend themselves led to a general sense of insecurity, with the late ‘Abbasid historian Ibn al-Sa’i noting that the hajj pilgrimage was postponed indefinitely, while anxiety manifested in persecutions against Baghdad’s Christian, Jewish, and foreign neighbourhoods who may have been suspected of working with the Mongols.

**GOD’S SECRET INTENT**

Islam was the primary filter used by the Persian sources to interpret the Mongol conquest. The Mongols were of course not Muslims, yet it was believed that they had been sent by God to test the faith of His subjects and to punish the wicked. Those who suffered defeat at the hands of the Mongols were, therefore, almost universally portrayed as poor rulers and deficient Muslims. Ibn al-Athir upbraided the
leaders of the Muslim world, stating that “each of them looks to his pleasures, his sport and the oppression of his subjects. For me this is more frightening than the enemy.” Juzjani likewise argued that the Mongol invasion of the Khwarazmshah Empire had been provoked by Sultan Muhammad’s decision to rob and slay the Muslim traders whom Chinggis had sent to his lands, saying, “God willed that this treachery would be the means for the ruin of the empire of Islam.” This model was then copied by historians documenting the defeat of the Seljuks at the Battle of Köse Dağ in 1243 and the capture of Baghdad in 1258. In the earlier case, the armies of Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Kaykhusraw were supposedly defeated after they had become so conceited that one of their commanders boasted that they would triumph over the Mongols even if God was with the Mongols, only to be forced to concede that God had indeed favoured the Mongols once they had been defeated. Likewise, the last caliph, al-Musta’sim (r. 1242–1258) was said to have presided over a series of natural disasters and sectarian riots, all the while spending his treasury on women and music instead of the defence of Islam. According to these sources, the Mongols behaved in the manner to be expected of all kafir – spreading destruction and death like a natural disaster. It was the rulers of the Muslim world who deserved rebuke for failing to protect the people trusted to their care.

The widely accepted view that the Mongols were tools to achieve God’s greater purpose did leave room for grudging admiration and eventually acceptance of Mongol rule. Although he believed Chinggis Khan was adept at magic and susceptible to the suggestion of demons, Juzjani also reported that the Mongol khan imposed justice upon his people so that they would not so much as pick up a fallen whip, while lying and deception were unknown among them. This view was mirrored by Juvayni, whose father had entered the service of the Mongols and who himself rose to high office under the Ilkhans of Iran. He observed that, although the Mongols had previously been a poor and unruly people, Chinggis Khan had “abolished reprehensible customs which had been practiced by those peoples and had enjoyed recognition amongst them; and established such usages as were praiseworthy from the point of view of reason. There are many of these ordinances that are in conformity with the Shari’at.” Indeed, Juvayni was the first of a new generation of Muslim scholar-officials for whom the Mongols did not represent the end of the Muslim world, but rather the beginning of its revitalization. His Tarikh-i Jahangusha draws upon both Quranic scripture and Persian and Arabic verse to argue that the Mongols were part of a divine plan that would advance the cause of Islam. He advised his readers to “look to the effects of God’s mercy, how he maketh the earth to live after its death,” of which there seemed to be no greater sign than Chinggis Khan’s heir, Ögödei (r. 1229–1241), whose generosity towards the Muslims was noted even by Juzjani. Both histories brim with examples of Ögödei’s generosity and favour towards Muslims, which in turn led Juvayni to conclude that

For this reason the banner of Islam is raised higher and the candle of the Faith lit brighter, and the sun of the creed of Mohammad casts its shadow over countries whose nostrils had not been perfumed by the scent of Islam.
It helped the Mongols’ Muslim subjects come to terms with the fact that God had seemingly given the pagans victory over them, whilst at the same time providing a useful tool for interpreting the subsequent political history of the Mongol Empire. Indeed, it is difficult to overstate the importance of Juvayni’s work for later Mongol historiography, as the next generation of historians, including Rashid al-Din, Vassaf-i Hazrat (d. 1329), and Muhammad Shabankara’i (d. 1358), based their work directly on his Tarikh-i Jahangusha (History of the World Conqueror).

How God’s will manifested itself after the fall of the ‘Abbasid caliphate in 1258 was open to interpretation, depending upon the political loyalties of each author. Juzjani, for example, saw hope in the conversion of Berke Khan (r. 1257–1266) of the Jochid Ulus to Islam, whereas Juvayni favoured the claim of his patrons, the Toluids, who had seized power when Möngke Qa’an was crowned in 1251. In his view, and indeed that of Juzjani, Möngke Qa’an had continued Ögödei’s benevolent policy towards the Muslims by having the azan (call to prayer) recited in his camp and by tasking his brother Hülegü with the eradication of the Nizari Isma’ilis in Iran. Combat with the Isma’ilis was a common source of prestige and legitimacy for Iranian rulers between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries, but Hülegü achieved the near complete eradication of the order, clearly marking him as God’s chosen ruler. The fact that neither man was a Muslim, though problematic, was overlooked in view of the old axiom that “a kingdom may last while there is irre-ligion but it will not endure when there is oppression.” This sentiment, which had already been used by Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092) to gloss the earlier Seljuk conquest of the Islamic core territories, was supposedly redeployed in a fatwa attributed to ‘Ali ibn Tawus and the senior doctors of the Mustansiriyya madrasa to validate the overthrow of the ‘Abbasids by Hülegü in 1258. Moreover, although they were not Muslims themselves, Möngke and Hülegü provided patronage for the construction of mosques, madrasas, and other institutions of learning which could be cited as evidence that they ruled in accordance with Islamic tradition and law. By contrast, their enemies, the Chaghadaid and Ögödeid princes of Central Asia, were characterised as enemies of Islam. Chaghadai in particular was described as an ardent opponent of Islam, who forbade his retinue from even mentioning the religion, whilst Güyük (r. 1246–1248), the last Ögödeid ruler of the empire, was portrayed as either a Christian or Buddhist fanatic, bent on the destruction of Islam. Indeed, a failed coup organised by the Ögödeids shortly after Möngke’s coronation was linked by Juvayni to a plot to exterminate the Muslim population of East Turkistan in a sign that the fortunes of the Islamic world were tied to the new Toluid dynasty.

The rather flattering picture of the Mongols portrayed by Juvayni and his successors at the Ilkhan court was not always so clearly represented in the provincial centres of the Ilkhanate, many of which remained under the control of local dynasties. The chronicles produced at their courts tend to adopt a far more ambivalent attitude to the Chinggisids, who could either reinforce or destabilise the local Iranian princelings. The native rulers had to make regular visits to the Mongol ordu to maintain the Ilkhan’s trust, but garrison armies (tamma), overseers (darugachis), tax-farmers, and envoys were often far more visible to provincial chroniclers than the Ilkhans. Authors like Ibn al-Fuwati (d. 1328) and Karim al-Din Mahmud Aqsarayi (1332–1333), writing in Baghdad and Anatolia respectively, wrote pro-forma endorsements of each of the Ilkhans as spreaders of justice and security, but
they were far more keenly aware of the machinations and intrigues of the Mongol commanders and diwan officials who cooperated directly with local rulers to fight off rebellions and foreign enemies, administer the census, and collect tax.

Personal interactions between the Iranian princes and the Mongols produced a complicated picture of Ilkhan rule, which was neither entirely positive or negative. Mongols who were permanently based in a particular territory often had far more congenial relations with the locals than those who were passing through on temporary assignments. Both Ibn Bibi and the anonymous Tarikh-i Al-i Saljuq echo the later report of Rashid al-Din that Mongol envoys (elchis) would regularly extort money and provisions from the towns and villages they visited on their travels through Anatolia, often forcing the population to migrate west into the lands of the Turkmen beyliks. The temporary deployment of Chinggisid princes, like Ejai (1271) and Qonqurtai (1279), to repel Turkmen invasions likewise proved a source of trouble as they indiscriminately punished the entire population of Anatolia. Yet there are also accounts of cooperation and mutual dependence between Mongol garrisons and local powerbrokers, which suggest a blurring of the lines between the conquerors and the conquered. The waqfnama of Nur al-Din ibn Jaja, whose family served the Seljuk dynasty before the arrival of the Mongols, is one such example. His charitable endowment of land, which begins with praise of the defunct ‘Abbasid dynasty, was recorded in both Arabic and Mongolian, complete with a date according to the Mongol zoological horoscope. Most important, however, was the fact that the document contained the names of the local Mongol garrison commanders who endorsed the endowment. Not only the senior Mongol commanders but also their junior officers, signed off on the waqf, illustrating the need for cooperation between the Seljuk aristocracy and the new Mongol leadership.

These close relationships played an important role in the gradual Islamization of the Mongols. As Judith Pfeiffer has noted, this process most likely began in the provinces before moving to the ordu and was influenced by an array of factors, including marriages, trade ties, and political alliances, which served to integrate the Mongol and native populations. The rate and scale of this conversion is hard to measure but most likely began even before the arrival of Hülegü to Iran in 1256. By the reign of Arghun (r. 1284–1291), however, the Tarikh-i Al-i Saljuq reports that the Mongol troops in Anatolia stood alongside the Muslims in celebrating the ‘ayd-i qurban (festival of the sacrifice). Such references are often short and without much detail, but they do confirm the spread of Islam among the Mongol armies. A similar case is presented in the Tarikh-i Qarakhitayan, which states that a Mongol commander who accompanied Terkan Khatun (r. 1257–1282) to her patrimony of Kirman in 1265 had also converted to Islam. By the end of the thirteenth century, however, the list of converts included senior officials, such as Amir Nawruz, the commander of Khurasan, and Amir Choban, who came to prominence for his bravery during the reign of Arghun Khan (r. 1284–1291). These Muslim converts were generally treated more favourably by the provincial chronicles, though this was not always the case. Choban was praised for his piety by Shaykh ‘Ala al-Dawla Simnani (d. 1336) and was described by Darvish ‘Ali Buzjani (1523) as enjoying cordial relations with Shaykh Shihab al-Din Isma’il of Jam, but the same sources claim that Nawruz was spurned by these Islamic mystics, despite his best efforts to mollify them with patronage and shows of deference. Apparently even the Sufi tariqas were involved...
in the factional struggles at the Ilkhan court, and their political preferences dictated how individual Mongol princes and commanders were represented in their texts.

The gradual Islamization of the Mongols in Iran culminated in the conversion of the Ilkhan Ghazan in 1295, at which point there was a more concerted effort towards shaping an Ilkhan historical narrative. The chief author of this new Ilkhanid tradition was Rashid al-Din Fazlallah Hamadani, a Persian physician of Jewish extraction who had converted to Islam and took up office in the household of Ghazan’s grandfather Abaqa before entering the service of Ghazan himself in Khurasan. His *Tarikh-i Mubarak-i Ghazani* (Blessed History of Ghazan) was simply one of a number of histories produced at the beginning of the fourteenth century, ostensibly celebrating the Ilkhan’s conversion to Islam as the beginning of a new age. Indeed, Jonathan Brack has recently suggested that the core of Rashid al-Din’s narrative was most likely lifted from another history commissioned by Ghazan and written by ‘Abd Allah Qashani, who also wrote a volume on the reign of Ghazan’s brother Öljeytü. Earlier histories included the *Nizam al-Tavarikh* (1275) of Qadi Nasir al-Din ‘Abd al-Baydawi, the anonymous *Akbar-i Mughbulan* (1282), and the *Tarikh* of Vassaf-i Hazrat (1302). Charles Melville has noted that Baydawi’s *Nizam al-Tavarikh* in particular situated the Mongol Ilkhans alongside earlier Iranian dynasties in a line stretching all the way back to Adam and the mythical kings of the *Shahnama*. Baydawi was one of a number of historians to identify the Ilkhanate with ‘Iran-zamin’ (Greater Iran), whilst also drawing parallels between Ghazan and the likes of Rustam, Hatim Ta’i, and Khusrwan, marking him out as an archetypal Iranian king. Yet he also sought to emphasise Ghazan’s patronage for religious and charitable endowments, which promoted the health of the Islamic umma and the spread of the faith, prompting “the people of Islam to love him.”

Rashid al-Din moved in a significantly different direction, presenting Ghazan and his brother Öljeytü as universal rulers, sent by God to revitalise Islam. Rashid al-Din was a student of Juvaynī’s earlier history, and he sought to portray the reign of Ghazan as the final stage in God’s plan. Drawing upon Qashani’s manuscript, the *Siyasatnama* of Nizam al-Mulk, and the *Mirsad al-‘Ibad* of Najm al-Din Razi, Rashid al-Din portrayed Ghazan as a divinely inspired lord of the auspicious conjunction (*sahib qiran*). In his rendering, Ghazan was an all-knowing adept; a master of many sciences, crafts, and languages; a natural ruler, who showed signs of kingship from the cradle; one whose every action was blessed with good fortune and success. As the khan who reconciled the Chinggisid and Muslim traditions, Rashid al-Din presented Ghazan as a new source of royal emulation and included an extensive catalogue of the wise advice and auspicious edicts enacted during Ghazan’s rule. These wise sayings, or *biligs*, many if not most of which were surely the creations of Rashid himself, not only served to glorify Ghazan but also provided a roadmap for his successors to follow. Indeed, the *Tarikh-i Mubarak-i Ghazani* was only completed during the reign of his brother Öljeytü (r. 1304–1316), who made sure to show due reverence to his legacy by making regular pilgrimages to the latter’s tomb.

**MONGOLS AS PERSIAN KINGS**

Rashid al-Din’s history, combined with the patronage of his family, had a profound influence on the writers who followed him, including Davud Banakati (1317),
Hamdallah Mustawfi (1335), and Ahmad Tabrizi (1337–1338). Without necessarily adopting the same messianic tone as Rashid al-Din, each of these writers incorporated the narrative of Rashid al-Din into their histories, which situated Ghazan as the catalyst for a new age of Islamic Persian kingship. Banakati, who served as the court panegyrist of Ghazan’s reign, provided an abbreviated account of Rashid al-Din’s Tarikh-i Mubarak, replete with poetry praising Ghazan as the “mahdi akhar-i zaman” (messiah of the end of times) and noting that “the faith and state will remain secure for as long as he is alive.” For their part, Ahmad Tabrizi and Hamdallah Mustawfi sought to bring the reign of Ghazan and his successors into line with popular Persian literary conventions. The Ilkhanid period coincided with the proliferation of Shahnama manuscripts, and both men adapted Rashid al-Din’s historical narrative to verse, imitating the style of Firdawusi and acting as his continuators. Stephen Kamola has noted that Hamdallah Mustawfi’s Zafarnama also incorporates aspects of the mirror for princes genre, in which he presents Ghazan meeting with his vizier, Rashid al-Din, and receiving regular lessons on good kingship, often explained in the form of anecdotes with reference to heroes from Iran’s past, such as Hatim Ta’i, Alexander, Mahmud of Ghazna, and Bahram Gur. These stories complemented an abbreviated list of the biligs of Ghazan, which continued the process begun by Rashid al-Din of situating Ghazan as a model for good Persian-Mongolian kingship.

Each of the aforementioned authors benefited from a close relationship with Ilkhanid patrons. Rashid al-Din was not only an intimate of Ghazan, but a long-serving member of his household with alliances among the senior Mongol amirs, not least Qutlughshah and Amir Choban, two of the leading figures in the final decades of Ilkhan rule. The same could be said for Hamdallah Mustawfi, who served the Ilkhan diwan in addition to enjoying the patronage of Rashid al-Din’s son and eventual successor, Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad. Others outside the Ilkhan’s immediate circle pursued the patronage of Mongol governors and commanders. Nasir al-Din Munshi Kirmani dedicated his Simt al-‘Ula’ (1320) on the history of Kirman to the commander Esen Qutlugh, whose family were of Uyghur extraction. Kirmani described him as the sahib qiran and Bahram of greatness. Yet he also claimed that Esen Qutlugh was descended from Altan Khan, giving him a pedigree second only to the Chinggisids. Kirmani praised Esen Qutlugh as a patron of both literature and ‘ilm (knowledge), in which capacity he was an example to all warriors. Karim al-Din Aqsarayi likewise dedicated his history of Anatolia to the Mongol commander Timurtash the son of Choban, whom he dubbed the mahdi al-zaman, comparing his government to the caliphate of ‘Umar and the reign of Fraydun. The conversion of the Mongols to Islam presented new possibilities for the Muslim scholars to win patronage by portraying the Mongols as protectors of the faith and paragons of good kingship.

This all meant that the Chinggisids were fully incorporated into the Iranian historical narrative. Even as early as 1302, Ibn al-Tiqtaqa’s mirror for princes, entitled Tarikh al-Fakhri, held up Juvayni’s accounts of Ögödei as a model of good charitable kingship. Although his work focuses primarily upon the earlier ‘Abbasids and Seljuks, Ibn al-Tiqtaqa claimed that “history does not record, nor biography contain mention of a dynasty enriched with as much military and civil obedience as the victorious Mongol dynasty.” In a similar vein, the manual of secretarial composition penned by Muhammad b. Hindushah Nakhjivani for the Jalayirid prince Shaykh Uways (1366) drew upon Rashid al-Din’s Tarikh-i Mubarak for stories of
Ghazan’s compassion towards the common people alongside similar stories about ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib and Alptegin, suggesting that the Ilkhan had truly become an exemplar of good kingship for later dynasties.46 Alongside these works, the Ghazan-nama of Nuri, which was also dedicated to Shaykh Uways in 1362, provided yet another verse rendering of Rashid al-Din’s Tarikh-i Mubarak, to which the author added new fanciful adventures. These episodes, which typically begin with Ghazan going hunting, see him enter a hidden cave to slay a dragon and retrieve the crown of Alexander, meet with wisemen whom he quizzes on kingship and faith, and of course engage in romantic trysts with his wives Bulughan Khatun and Kökechin, based upon comparisons with the story of Layla and Majnun.47 In short, Ghazan had become an epic hero, whose legacy survived the collapse of his dynasty.

CONCLUSION

The Ilkhan historiography pushed by Rashid al-Din and his acolytes was never accepted entirely, especially among the provincial dynasties, which could not claim Chinggisid heritage. Many of the sources written after the decline of the Ilkhanate are ambivalent towards the Mongols, on the one hand lamenting the destruction caused by the initial invasion, whilst also recalling the stability and prosperity of Ghazan’s reign with clear fondness. This nostalgia for the late Ilkhanid period became especially acute after the death of the last effective Ilkhan, Abu Sa’id, in 1335 and the division of the Ilkhanate into a series of warring states. Forced to flee as a result of the conflict in his own home in 1349–1350, the historian Amuli mourned the passing of the Ilkhanate, especially the time of Abu Sa’id, stating, “in truth, there was never a padishah or a century in which there was such felicity and blessings.”48 His comments were echoed by his continuator Zahir al-Din Mar’ashi (d. 1489), who noted that for the eighty years of Ilkhan rule, “Iran was free from attack, especially in the time of the sultanate of Ghazan Khan, Öljeitü Khan Khudabanda and Abu Sa’id Bahadur Khan.”49 This prosperity may have only been the invention of Juvayni and Rashid al-Din, but their historical narrative proved highly resilient. As late as the sixteenth century, the Safavid cataloguer Qadi Ahmad included the biligs of Chinggis Khan and Ghazan alongside the stories of other exemplary Iranian rulers in his Tarikh-i Nigaristan (1569), a mirror for princes presented to the Safavid monarch Shah Tahmasp.50 The Mongols had been given their place among the Iranian dynasties of the past and their history would inform later traditions of Persian kingship.

NOTES

2 Marvrudi 1927, 47; Biran 2005, 98.
3 KFTR, 204; Nasawi 1965, 7–10; TNR, 936–937.
4 KFTR, 202.
5 KFTR, 202; TNR, 935 & 1259; May 2018, 42.
6 HWC, 105; May 2018, 32–57.
7 HWC, 497–508.
8 HWC, 519–521.
9 May 2020, 276–277; May 2017, 97.
12 KFTR, 304.
13 TNR, 967.
14 Ibn Bibi 1971, 238, 244.
15 TNR, 1077–1079.
16 HWC, 25.
17 HWC, 4; TNR, 1106.
18 HWC, 13.
19 Jackson 2009, 209. Also see Lane 2013, 2; Atwood 2010, 119.
20 TNR, 1283; HWC, 600.
21 HWC, 725.
22 Ibn al-Tiqtaqa 1947, 14; Tusi 2002, 12. Ibn al-Tiqtaqa states that Hülegü specifically sought a ruling “as to whether a just infidel emperor were better or a believing unjust emperor.”
23 Lane 2003, 19.
24 TNR, 1111, 1144; Shabankar’a 1984, 255; Haravi 2016, 200.
25 HWC, 48–53.
26 Jalali, ed. 1377/1957, 111; Ibn Bibi 1971, 283.
30 Jalali ed. 1377/1957, 120.
31 Bastani Parizi ed. 1976, 196.
32 Simnani 1988, 185 & 190; Buzjani 1966, 71, 103.
34 Brack 2016, 135–139; Kamola 2019, 33. Also see Pfeiffer 2013, 57–71. For an alternative view, see Morgan 1997, 179–188.
37 RDRM, II, 1210 & 1336–1339.
38 RDRM, II, 1326–1540.
39 Qashani 1969, 44, 74, 83.
40 Banakati 2000, 466, 468.
41 Tabrizi n. 2780; Ward 1983.
44 Aqsarayi 1984, 4, 6, 325.
46 Nakhiyani 1964, I, 73, 104, 181, 199.
48 Amuli 2014, 122.
49 Mar’ashi 1966, 40.
50 Kashani 1984, 457.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


RDRM, See List of Abbreviations.


TNR, See List of Abbreviations.
