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Power, Politics,
and Tradition *in the*
Mongol Empire and
the Īlkhānate of Iran



MICHAEL HOPE

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Conventions of Transliteration

Mongolian and Turkish names and terms have been transcribed from the glossary of Mongolian words provided in Igor de Rachewiltz's *The Secret History of the Mongols v 2*. Persian and Arabic characters have been transliterated according to the table given below, with the exception of some place names which have been presented in their current anglicized forms to avoid confusion (e.g. Persian Iraq, as opposed to 'Irāq-i 'Ājam; Mosul, rather than Mūṣul; Azerbaijan, rather than Adharbāyjān).

| | |
|---------|---------|
| ا (') | a, i, u |
| آ | Ā |
| ب | B |
| پ | P |
| ت | T |
| ث | Th |
| ج | J |
| چ | Ch |
| ح | h |
| خ | Kh |
| د | D |
| ذ | Dh |
| ر | R |
| ز | Z |
| ژ | Zh |
| س | S |
| ش | Sh |
| ص | ṣ |
| ض | ḍ |
| ط | ṭ |
| ظ | ẓ |
| ع | ‘ |
| غ | Gh |
| ف | F |
| ق | Q |
| ک | K |
| گ | G |
| ل | L |
| م | M |

ن

n

و

w for Arabic/v for Persian

ه / هـ

H

ي

y / ī

ذ

,

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Michael Hope, *Yonsei University*

1

Introduction

Political authority within the Mongol Empire can be traced back to its founder, Chinggis Khan, who by 1206 had united the previously warring peoples to the north of the Great Wall under his rule, thereby creating the *Yeke Mongyol Ulus* (the Great Mongol Realm).¹ From the year 1206 until his death in 1227 Chinggis Khan led the Mongols on a series of military campaigns from China to Iran which resulted in the creation of the largest contiguous land empire the world has ever seen. The great scope of Chinggis Khan's military, social, and political achievements gave him an unrivalled influence and authority over the Mongols. His rule came to represent the ideal Mongol polity, in which its people could attain the highest standard of satisfaction and well-being. All subsequent leaders of the Mongol Empire sought to legitimate their authority by appealing to the symbols and traditions of Chinggis Khan's charisma.

The present study will provide a new interpretation of how political authority was conceived and exercised in the early Mongol Empire (1227–59) and its successor state in Iran, the *Īlkhānate* (1258–1335). In what follows, it will be shown that two streams of political authority emerged after the death of Chinggis Khan: the *collegial* and the *patrimonialist*. Each of these streams represented the economic and political interests of different groups within the Mongol Empire, respectively, the propertied aristocracy—made up by commanders, queens, and junior princes—and the central government—consisting of the khan, his bureaucracy, and household staff. The supporters of both streams claimed to adhere to the ideal of Chinggisid rule, but their different statuses within the Mongol community led them to hold divergent views of what constituted legitimate political authority. This book will detail the origin of, and the differences between, these two streams; analyse the role that these streams played in the political development of the early Mongol Empire; and assess the role that ideological tension between the two streams played in the events leading up to the division of the empire.

This study has used Max Weber's discussion of 'the routinization of charisma' to interpret the evolution of political authority in the early Mongol Empire and the *Īlkhānate*. Weber used the term 'routinization' to describe the process of transition from a temporary political association built around the charismatic leadership of an individual (e.g. Chinggis Khan) to a permanent government supported by laws

¹ For an explanation of the term, see Igor de Rachewiltz, 'Qan, Qa'an and the Seal of Güyüg', *Documenta Barbarorum: Festschrift für Walther Heissig zum 70 Geburtstag*, ed. Klaus Sagaster and Michael Weiers, Veröffentlichungen der Societas Uralo-Altaica, Band 18.37, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983, p. 274.

and traditions.² Weber argued that this transition was a necessary measure to sustain a charismatic community beyond the death of its leader, who acts as the source of all political authority and unity. The death of the charismatic leader deprives the community of political cohesion and threatens to cause its collapse. Routinization was the means through which this shortfall was addressed, that is by 'institutionalizing' charismatic authority in the form of permanent offices, laws, and traditions. The community attains stability and security by shifting loyalty away from an individual to an institution.

Weber argued that the routinization process is both driven and defined by the material interests of the 'charismatic disciples' whose titles, incomes, and powers are all dependent upon their proximity and service to the leader. The death of the leader compromises the livelihood of these charismatic disciples, who have a vested interest in preserving the existing social order. Routinized authority is, therefore, derived from the ability of a 'chief' (ruler, government) to protect the material welfare of their subjects. This principle implies a balance in a routinized polity between the material demands of the disciples and the power of the chief that protects them. Weber argues that solidarity of interest between the chief and the disciples is at its height when the economic needs and social status of the disciples depend upon the chief remaining in power. The chief's authority is undermined if the needs of the disciples are not met. The routinized social order is then dissolved.

This study has also been strongly influenced by Hamid Dabashi's use of Weberian social theory to explain the evolution of political authority within the early Islamic Empire.³ Dabashi's study discusses the emergence of the Sunni and Shī'ite *madhāhib* (religious creeds) in terms of two streams of 'routinized' authority derived from the Prophet Muḥammad's charisma: one advocating that the supreme leadership of the Islamic community should be chosen through council elections, the other arguing for the incumbent's designation of an heir from amongst the Prophet's family (*ahl al-bayt*).⁴ In accordance with Weber's theory, Dabashi highlighted the economic and social differences between adherents of the two factions as the reason behind their ideological divergence. The present study has sought to follow Dabashi's lead by using the theory of routinization to interpret the evolution of political authority within the Īlkhānate. There is, however, an important distinction that insofar as Dabashi was using Weber's theory to explain a historically recognized schism, the present study will identify an ideological divergence within the Īlkhānate which has yet to be recognized or understood.

This study will argue that two streams of routinized authority emerged to serve the interests of the two leading social groups within the Īlkhānate. The patrimonialists and collegialists both claimed to be the political successors of Chinggis Khan based upon a routinized form of his original charismatic authority. Yet the two

² See Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, New York: Bedminster Press, 1968, pp. 246–54.

³ Hamid Dabashi, *Authority in Islam: From the Rise of Muhammad to the Establishment of the Umayyads*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1989.

⁴ Hamid Dabashi, *Authority in Islam*, pp. 3–7.

streams developed completely different interpretations of the Chinggisid tradition based upon their unique position within the Mongol community. This difference led to their forming divergent opinions on questions such as what constituted the Mongol community, what purpose the Mongol Empire served, and how it was to be administered.

The patrimonial faction viewed authority over the *Īlkhānate* as a hereditary right which belonged to the descendants of Chinggis Khan (the *altan uruq*, golden kin), specifically the descendants of his fourth son Tolui. They conceived of Chinggis Khan's charisma passing through his bloodline/bone⁵ to his children and their offspring. According to this view, only the family of Chinggis Khan could legitimately claim to rule his empire. Land, resources, cities, people, and animals were all thought of in terms of property that had been captured by Chinggis Khan and would pass to his children on a hereditary basis. This concept of patrimonial kingship was later combined with ideas of absolute monarchy which were introduced to the Mongols by scholar-bureaucrats who were recruited to serve the Empire in Iran. These bureaucrats identified their interests with the creation of a strong centralized state under the rule of an autocratic king. They hoped that the centralization of authority in the hands of the khan would be accompanied by the growth of the imperial administration, thereby providing them with increased influence over the running of the Empire.⁶

The 'collegial' faction, on the other hand, qualified imperial authority in terms of custom and precedent. In the mind of the collegialists, Chinggis Khan had not only conquered an empire, he had also instituted a programme of social reform in which a new series of laws and policies had been introduced to regulate political behaviours and relationships. The most prominent members of the collegial faction were drawn from Chinggis Khan's senior commanders (the *noyat*; singular *noyan*),⁷ who had been appointed from amongst his most trusted companions (the *nökör*; singular *nökör*). The collegialists believed that their expertise in these laws (*jasag*) and principles/customs (*yosun*), combined with their former proximity and service to Chinggis Khan, qualified them to have a share in the wealth and government of the Empire. They sought to use the *quriltai* (council of notables), amongst other institutions, to protect their economic and political status within the *Īlkhānate*.

Membership of the collegial or patrimonial faction was by no means static. Political affiliation within the *Īlkhānate* was determined by a variety of contingencies and relationships that were in a constant state of flux. Senior figures within the *Īlkhānate* were not obliged to adhere dogmatically to the principles of one stream of Chinggisid authority. Rather, their views would change to accommodate shifts in the balance of power at the centre of the realm. Loyal household retainers of a

⁵ The Mongols of the thirteenth century spoke of the 'bone' (Mong. *yasun*) rather than blood as the chief symbol of heredity.

⁶ Dorothea Krawulsky, *The Mongol Īlkhāns and their Vizier Rashīd al-Dīn*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011, p. 50.

⁷ For the term 'noyan', see Nicholas Poppe, 'On Some Proper Names in the Secret History', *Ural-Altaische Jahrbuecher*, Vol. 47, 1975, p. 161.

patrimonialist monarch were consequently often obliged to adopt a more collegial interpretation of authority when their master died and a new ruler threatened their position. Similarly, Persian bureaucrats in the service of the *Īlkhān* would almost inevitably work for the concentration of power in the household of the ruler, whereas those in the service of senior commanders often strove to erode central control and protect the interests of their lord. The advocacy of certain groups and individuals for either patrimonial or collegial models of rulership was, therefore, contingent upon a variety of circumstances in addition to social status.

Social differentiation was, nevertheless, a central component in the emergence of rival political traditions within the *Īlkhānate*. Whether one was born a Chinggisid or not was one of the most important factors in determining individual rights and entitlements within this system. We can, for example, state with some certainty that a member of the non-Chinggisid military aristocracy would never have been able to claim supreme power over the *Īlkhānate* on the basis of hereditary authority. The *Īlkhān* throne was reserved for members of the dynasty and was off-limits to the non-Chinggisid aristocracy. Yet there was nothing preventing the military aristocracy from using the laws and customs of Chinggis Khan to impose their will upon the *Īlkhān*. The demarcation of social roles did not, therefore, preclude the non-Chinggisid elites from participating in government, but it did mean that they had a different relationship to the state than the Chinggisids. Contrasting attitudes towards power, authority, and rights within *Īlkhān* society were informed by these differences.

It should also be stressed that, whilst the collegialists and patrimonialists held very different views about the way that the *Īlkhān* polity should be constituted and governed, they did derive their arguments from the same source, namely Chinggisid political tradition. For example, both sides made reference to the *jasaq* and *yosun* (laws and customs) of Chinggis Khan to support their claims to authority; and both sides derived their property and status from their association with Chinggis Khan. Conflict between the groups was, therefore, occasioned by their divergent interpretation of the same Chinggisid symbolism. For instance, despite the fact that both the collegialists and patrimonialists used the laws and customs of Chinggis Khan to support their positions, they strongly differed on what these laws included. As we shall see, the collegialists believed that the *jasaq* (laws) empowered them to depose a khan when the latter transgressed the rights of the community. The patrimonialists, on the other hand, claimed that the *jasaq* forbade the non-Chinggisid soldiery from harming any of his descendants. Of course, these two interpretations were bound to clash if the military aristocracy sought to depose an *Īlkhān* for perceived violations of their rights.

The primary focus of this study is the *Īlkhānate* (1258–1335), the successor to the Mongol Empire's territories in the Middle East. Spanning from the Oxus River in the east, to the Euphrates River in the west, the *Īlkhāns* ruled an area roughly coterminous with some of the earliest Iranian empires, such as the Parthian and Sasanian. This territory was gradually brought under Mongol control as a result of three campaigns launched in 1220, 1236, and 1256. The great qa'ans were forced to cede control of this region to Hūlegü (d. 1265), a grandson of Chinggis Khan,

during a civil war that engulfed the Empire between 1259 and 1264. Hülegü was the first of the Īlkhāns and all subsequent Mongol rulers of Iran were descended from him.

The unique composition of the Īlkhān court makes it an ideal candidate for a case study into different interpretations of Mongol political tradition. The Īlkhān court was characterized by the existence of a very strong non-Chinggisid military aristocracy. Their prominence can largely be explained by the great distance separating the Īlkhānate from the political centre of the Mongol Empire. The relative remoteness of the Īlkhānate in relation to the *ordu* (court/capital) of the Great Qa'an in Mongolia meant that there were far fewer Chinggisid princes willing to undertake the arduous journey west in search of wealth and office. Rather, the Chinggisids were quite happy to work through agents, drawn from amongst the non-Chinggisid elites and their own household servants, to ensure their control of revenues and people. The hostility of the Īlkhāns' neighbours in the Pontic steppe, Syria, and Central Asia further reduced the number of Chinggisid princes, as the Īlkhāns either expelled or exterminated rival family members. With fewer royal princes in Iran, the Īlkhāns relied heavily upon the non-Chinggisid aristocracy, the *noyat*, to administer their territories and command their armies. The consequent importance of the *noyat* within the Īlkhānate, as opposed to some of the other Chinggisid successor states, placed them in a more favourable position to impose their will upon the Hülegüid rulers. The historical tension between the interests of the Hülegüid dynasty and their senior commanders provides the perfect environment to explore the social and political tensions that gave rise to rival interpretations of Chinggisid authority and tradition.

Other successor states to the Mongol Empire will only be mentioned in this study insofar as they are relevant to the history of the Īlkhānate. This parameter was determined partly by the paucity of information contained in the sources concerning other parts of the Mongol Empire, and partly by the author's linguistic limitations. The Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and Russian sources that discuss the history of the Golden Horde and the Chaghadaï Ulus provide little insight into the internal dynamics of their courts. Later chronicles and biographies written in the Temürid and Ottoman empires contain much more information on the political history of these regions in the fifteenth century, but these lie outside the periodization of this study, which looks at the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. By contrast, the Mongol Yuan dynasty, which ruled almost all of East Asia between 1264 and 1368 produced voluminous records of its political structure and the role that individual officials and leaders played within this system. Even a cursory look at the history of the Yuan Empire suggests that the *noyat* played an important role in the administration of China. For instance, the well-documented arrogation of power by several senior *noyat* around the middle of the fourteenth century suggests that the non-Chinggisid aristocracy played a much more important part in the history of the dynasty than they are typically given credit for. Unfortunately, a detailed study into the relationship between the Yuan and their *noyat* will have to wait for a historian with a greater mastery of Chinese than this author can muster.

It should also be acknowledged that the four main khanates to emerge from the Mongol Empire ruled territories that were ethnically, culturally, geographically, and socially very different, so there is no reason to assume that their histories converged either before or after the dissolution of the Mongol Empire in 1259–64. We should, therefore, avoid the temptation to assume that the relationship which existed between the *Īlkhāns* and their *noyat* was mirrored in other parts of the Mongol Empire. It is, nevertheless, hoped that the work done to elucidate the role of the *noyat* in this volume will contribute to further studies into their influence throughout the Empire.

Indeed, one of the motivations behind this study is to provide a new perspective on the role of the *noyat* in the *Īlkhānate*. Until recently, the influence of the *noyat* on the political history of the *Īlkhānate* has been largely neglected. Historians of the *Īlkhānate* have traditionally focused on the relationship between the Chinggisids, the *Īlkhān* bureaucracy (*dīvān*), and their Persian subjects (*ra'īyyat*). The *noyat*, on the other hand, are usually only mentioned insofar as they help or hinder the cause of the khans. They appear most widely in discussions of military histories which document the campaigns of the Mongols. Such analysis is of limited utility since it focuses on the role of the *noyat* outside the *Īlkhānate* under exceptional circumstances (i.e. war), as opposed to their normal role within the state. The *noyat* were a distinct social group within the Mongol Empire, a fact which meant that their aspirations and interests did not always coincide with those of their Chinggisid rulers. Their social and political autonomy within the Empire demands that more research be devoted to understanding their position in relation to other groups in the Mongol polity.

Previous research into the nature of Mongol rule has traditionally emphasized the extent to which the Golden Kin (Chinggisids) determined the administrative and political direction of the Mongol Empire. This emphasis has led to the belief that the people, animals, cities, goods, and land incorporated within the Mongol Empire were the property of its founder, Chinggis Khan, who subsequently distributed them amongst his children as hereditary patrimonies.⁸ This view is not entirely inaccurate, yet it minimizes the role of the *noyat* in the Mongol polity after Chinggis Khan's death. The patrimonialist notion that the Golden Kin were the source of all authority and power was an ideal through which Persian and Chinese bureaucrats interpreted life in the Mongol Empire. But the degree to which this ideal corresponded with historical reality depended heavily on the turbulent fortunes of its adherents. The present study will differentiate between the various streams of political tradition that existed in the *Īlkhānate* to provide a more complete account of how the Mongol polity operated.

⁸ See Peter Jackson, 'From *Ulus* to Khanate: The Making of the Mongol States c. 1220–c. 1290', *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan, Leiden: Brill, 1999, p. 12; Isenbike Togan, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations: The Kerait Khanate and Chinggis Khan*, Leiden: Brill, 1998, p. 148; Thomas Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', *The Cambridge History of China v. 6, Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368*, ed. Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 382; Denise Aigle, *Le Fârs sous la domination mongole (XIII–XIVe s): Politique et fiscalité*, Studia Iranica, Cahier 31, Paris: Association pour l'Avancement des Études Iraniennes, 2005, p. 47.

This book will also provide a new analysis of the language and symbolism employed by Persian sources documenting the Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate. The first two decades of the fourteenth century saw a dramatic rise in the number of histories devoted to the Chinggisid dynasties. Such is the importance of the histories written during this period that it would not be an exaggeration to say that they have defined the way that contemporary historians understand Īlkhān history. They were, however, predominantly published by bureaucrats in the service of the Īlkhāns, Ghazan (r. 1295–1304) and Öljeitü (r. 1304–16). Thus, the authors of these works manipulated their historical narratives to accommodate social attitudes and messages which supported the policies of their patrons. This is particularly true of histories documenting Ghazan's conversion to Islam. It will be demonstrated that the discourse and symbolism employed by the historians of the later Īlkhān court was primarily directed towards promulgating the patrimonialist conception of Chinggisid authority. An understanding of the political environment in which these histories were written is, therefore, essential if their significance is to be fully appreciated.

This study has ancillary significance for historians seeking to understand the political development of Iran in the centuries following the collapse of Īlkhān rule. Historians have long argued for the deep social, political, and economic impact of Mongol rule in the Islamic world.⁹ This book will contribute to the existing body of work on this topic by briefly outlining the way that principles associated with the two streams of Chinggisid authority influenced the dynasties that succeeded the Mongols in Iran and Central Asia. It will be shown that the dissolution of the Īlkhānate after the death of its last effective ruler, Abū Sa'īd Bā'tur Khan, in 1335 was a product of the collegial faction achieving a permanent ascendancy over the state. During this time several *noyat* established autonomous rule over various parts of the former Īlkhānate, installing puppet-khans to demonstrate their continued adherence to the *jasaq* and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan. In this context, during the 1360s and 1370s, the amīr Temūr (Tamerlane) began a campaign to achieve control of Transoxiana and Iran. Despite Temūr himself being a charismatic leader, he was initially forced to operate within the boundaries of Chinggisid authority. His court histories, and those of his son Shāh Rūkh, portray Temūr as a revivalist seeking to reconstitute the laws, customs, and empire of Chinggis Khan. Temūr believed that the Mongol Empire and its successor states had fallen because the *jasaq* and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan had been allowed to lapse. As a hereditary member of the *noyat*, Temūr claimed an intimate knowledge of the *jasaq* and *yosun* and promised to revive the Mongol Empire in accordance with their mandates. Adherence to traditions and symbols of Chinggisid authority also continued well into the modern era in Iran. The Šafavid dynasty (1501–1724) showed a particular fondness for the patrimonialist conception of political and

⁹ R. D. McChesney, *Central Asia: Foundations of Change*, Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1996, p. 124; Bert G. Fragner, 'Ilkhanid Rule and its Contributions to Iranian Political Culture', *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. Linda Komaroff, Leiden: Brill, 2012, pp. 68–80; Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2007, pp. 126–31; Beatrice Forbes Manz, 'Multi-ethnic Empires and the Formulation of Identity', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Jan. 2003, pp. 70–101.

spiritual authority. The Šafavids, like the Īlkhāns before them, struggled with their military aristocracy (the *qizlbāsh*) for political ascendancy.¹⁰ It is, therefore, not surprising to find a large number of sixteenth-century historians linking the Šafavid founder, Shaykh Šafi al-Dīn, with the Īlkhān court.¹¹ Still more significant is the existence of semi-fictional accounts documenting the conversion of the Īlkhāns to Islam which were composed during the first century of Šafavid rule (1501–1601).¹² These conversion narratives seek to re-emphasize patrimonialist notions of hereditary rule and divine mandate, first advocated at the start of the fourteenth century by the Īlkhāns, Ghazan and Öljeitü. Īlkhān ideas of political authority continued to hold currency into the nineteenth century, when the scholar-bureaucrat, Ḥasan Fasa'ī, began his history of the Qājār dynasty (1794–1925) by pointing out that the Qājār were Mongols whose ancestor, Qājār Noyan b. Sartaq Noyan, had served as the *atabeg* (steward, guardian) of the Īlkhān Arghun.¹³ Fasa'ī's history contains a jubilant account of the supposed discovery of Arghun's tomb and the treasure contained within it in an attempt to provide the Qājār with the relics of Īlkhān authority.¹⁴ It is evident from this brief summary that Mongol ideas of political authority retained their popularity in Iran until the eve of the twentieth century. A thorough understanding of how the Mongols saw their own political environment is therefore essential to understanding the issue of political authority in Iranian history more generally.

THE SOURCES

The *Jām'ī al-Tavārikh* (the Collection of Histories) of Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Ṭabīb is easily the most valuable primary source employed in this study. After initially

¹⁰ See Maria Szuppe, 'Kinship Ties Between the Safavids and the Qizilbash Amirs in Late Sixteenth Century Iran: A Case Study of the Political Career of Members of the Sharaf al-Din Oghli Tekelu Family', *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, ed. Charles Melville, London: I. B. Tauris in association with the Centre of Middle Eastern Studies of the University of Cambridge, 1996, pp. 79–104.

¹¹ Ibn Bazzāz Ardabīlī, *Šafwat al-Šafā*, trans. Ghulām-Riḍā Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Tehran: Intishārāt Zaryāb, 1376/1996–7, pp. 207–11; Roger Savory, *Iran Under the Safavids*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980, pp. 9–11; H. R. Roemer, 'The Safavid Period', *Cambridge History of Iran*, v. 6, *The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, ed. Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 192.

¹² For example, the *Risālah Fawā'id-i Ūljāytū* (see Yūsif Raḥīmīlū's recension in *Faḡhnāmāya Dānīshgāh Adabāyāt va 'Ulūm Insānī Tabriz*, No. 106, Summer 1352/1974, pp. 135–56) and the *Jabān-nāma* of Hajji-Khalifa composed in the year 1600 (see Sheila S. Blair's comments in Sheila S. Blair, 'The Epigraphic Program of the Tomb of Uljaytu at Sultaniyya: Meaning in Mongol Architecture', *Islamic Art*, Vol. 2, 1987, p. 70).

¹³ For the Qājārs, see Ḥasan Fasa'ī. *Fārsnāma-yi Nāširī: The History of Persia Under Qajar Rule*, trans. H. Busse, New York: Columbia University Press, 1972, p. 1; For the Afshārs, see Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order, and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran From the Beginning to 1890*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984, p. 221; Bert G. Fragner, 'Iran Under Ilkhanid Rule in a World History Perspective', *L'Iran face à la domination mongole*, ed. Denise Aigle, Bibliothèque Iranienne 45, Tehran: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1997, p. 129.

¹⁴ Fasa'ī, p. 141.

serving as the royal physician of the Īlkhān Geikhatu (r. 1291–5), Rashīd al-Dīn subsequently joined the court of the latter's nephew, Ghazan Khan (r. 1295–1304), who appointed him as his chief minister (vizier).¹⁵ Rashīd continued in this position during the rule of Ghazan's brother, Öljeitü (r. 1304–17), but was executed by Abū Sa'īd Ba'atur Khan in 1318.¹⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn was one of the most powerful figures in the Īlkhānate during the time that he was in office. He amassed a great personal fortune which permitted him to construct entire neighbourhoods in the cities of Tabriz and Sultaniyya.¹⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn's contemporaries believed that he had a great influence over the Īlkhāns, and he was undoubtedly at the heart of legislation introduced to regulate coinage, property ownership, trade, the taxation system, and government salaries during the reign of Ghazan.¹⁸ He also seems to have had a very personal relationship with the Īlkhāns he served. It was said that Ghazan refused to speak Persian with anyone except Rashīd al-Dīn and several sources mention Rashīd providing Öljeitü with spiritual advice.¹⁹

Ghazan commissioned Rashīd al-Dīn to write a history of the Mongols at the end of the thirteenth century. For this task he relied heavily upon the *Altan Debter* (Golden Records), a now lost history of the Mongols and their rulers written in the Uighur-Mongol script. According to Rashīd, the *Altan Debter* was kept in the royal treasury and only members of the *altan uruq* were permitted to read it.²⁰ It is for this reason that J. A. Boyle concluded that Rashīd al-Dīn probably never read the *Altan Debter* himself and that he was much more likely to have learned its contents by speaking with Mongols at the Īlkhān court.²¹ Rashīd does indeed state that he relied heavily upon the expertise of the *noyan* named Bolad-Chingsang (Pulad in the Persian sources).²² Bolad had a unique knowledge of Mongol history and his title, 'chingsang' (*ch'eng-hsiang*), was reserved for senior ministers and governors during the Mongol Yuan dynasty.²³ Bolad arrived in the Īlkhānate in 1267 to act as the official representative of the Great Khan Qubilai of China to the Īlkhān

¹⁵ Charles Ambrose Storey, *Persian Literature: A Bio-Bibliographical Survey*, London: Luzac, 2002, p. 71.

¹⁶ Storey, *Persian Literature*, p. 71.

¹⁷ Edward Granville Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, v. 3, *The Tatar Dominion (1265–1502)*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964, p. 70.

¹⁸ David Morgan, 'Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb', *Encyclopaedia of Islam 2nd Edition (EI2)*, Vol. III, Leiden: Brill, 1954–2005, p. 443.

¹⁹ Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad Qāshānī, *Tārikh-i Pādshāh Sa'īd Ghiyāth al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn Uljāytū Sultan Muḥammad Tayyib Allāh Marqada*, ed. Mahin Hambli, Tehran: Shirkat-i Intishārāt-i 'Ilmī va Farhangī, 1384/2005–6, p. 96; Muḥammad b. 'Alī Shabānkārā'i, *Majma' al-Anṣāb*, ed. Mir Hāshim Muhadith, Tehran: Mu'asissih Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1363/1984–5, p. 272; also see Birgitt Hoffmann, 'Speaking About Oneself: Autobiographical Statements in the Works of Rashīd al-Dīn', *Rashīd al-Dīn: Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchanges in Ilkhanid Iran*, ed. Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett, and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, London: The Warburg Institute, 2013, p. 11.

²⁰ A. Z. V. Togan, 'The Composition of the History of the Mongols by Rashīd al-Dīn', *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 2 (1962), p. 66; Karl Jahn, 'Rashīd al-Dīn as World Historian', *Yādnāme-ye Jan Rypka: Collected Articles on Persian and Tajik Literature*, Prague: Academia, 1967, p. 82.

²¹ J. A. Boyle, 'Juvayni and Rashīd al-Dīn as Sources on the History of the Mongols', *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. B. Lewis and P. M. Holt, London: Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 134.

²² Togan, 'The Composition of the History of the Mongols by Rashīd al-Dīn', p. 60.

²³ Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985, No. 483, p. 127.

Abaqa, a job which would have required both eloquence and intelligence.²⁴ Rashīd may have also balanced Bolad's account of the early Mongols with that of Ghazan himself, since the Ilkhān took a keen interest in his family's history and traditions.²⁵ These various sources combined with Rashīd al-Dīn's own experience of events in the Ilkhānate produced a history of such detail that David Morgan has dubbed it the 'most important single historical source for the Mongol Empire'.²⁶

Rashīd al-Dīn's history was expanded during the reign of Öljeitü, who asked him to continue his work to include an account of all the people with whom the Mongols had come into contact. These separate volumes were combined to create what became known as the *Jām'i al-Tavārikh*, 'the Collection of Histories'.²⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn's history of the Mongols is easily the most detailed and expansive of its time, and includes an account of the emergence of the first Mongol polity; the ancestors of Chinggis Khan; the rise and conquests of Chinggis Khan; the rule of his immediate successors; the division of the Empire; and the reign of the Ilkhāns from the time of their founder, Hülegü (r. 1258–65), to the reign of Ghazan. As Beatrice Manz has pointed out, the *Jām'i al-Tavārikh* was written for the Ilkhān court as much as it was for Ghazan personally.²⁸ It therefore contains a detailed account of the lineages and histories of the leading Ilkhān *noyats*. The *noyats*' genealogies are traced back to the time of Chinggis Khan and provide much information about the traditions which connected them to the founder of the Mongol nation. But Rashīd al-Dīn did not record all traditions indiscriminately. As the Ilkhān's vizier, Rashīd al-Dīn identified his interests with the creation of a strong monarchy supported by a large bureaucracy. Indeed, Ghazan's reign saw the revival of the patrimonialist social order, in which Rashīd al-Dīn played an influential role. His history of Ghazan's rule in particular is therefore underscored by his strong advocacy for patrimonial kingship.²⁹ The third volume of his history, the *Tārīkh-i Ghāzānī*, which covers the life of Ghazan, served as a model of patrimonialist history upon which later court historians based their works.³⁰ It portrayed the Ilkhān as a superhuman hero, whose success had been ordained by God and under whom the Empire would achieve full prosperity. Rashīd al-Dīn's work has been utilized throughout the present study for its extensive subject-matter, although other sources have been used to balance his accounts.

²⁴ Bertold Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran: Politik, Verwaltung und Kultur der Ilchanzeit 1220–1350* trans. Maḥmūd Mir-Āftāb, Tehran: Shirkat-i Intishārāt-i 'Ilmī va Farhangī, 1386/2007–8, p. 269.

²⁵ Paul Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy*, trans. Thomas Nivison Haining, Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, p. xv; Judith Pfeiffer, 'The Canonization of Cultural Memory: Ghāzān Khan, Rashīd al-Dīn, and the Construction of the Mongol Past', *Rashīd al-Dīn: Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchanges in Ilkhanid Iran*, p. 64; Christopher P. Atwood, 'Mongols, Arabs, Kurds and Franks: Rashīd al-Dīn's Comparative Ethnography of Tribal Society', *Rashīd al-Dīn: Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchanges in Ilkhanid Iran*, p. 236.

²⁶ Morgan, 'Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭābil', *EI2*, p. 443.

²⁷ Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. 3, pp. 68–72.

²⁸ Beatrice Forbes Manz, 'Mongol History Rewritten and Relived', *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, Nos 89–90, Juillet 2000, p. 131; Pfeiffer, 'The Canonization of Cultural Memory', p. 68.

²⁹ I. P. Petrushevsky, 'Rashīd al-Dīn's Conception of the State', *Central Asiatic Journal*, No. 14, 1970, p. 153.

³⁰ See discussion of Banākātī, Qāshānī, Shabānkārā'i, and Ḥafīz Abrū further on in this section.

The *Tāziyyat al-Amṣār wa-Tāziyyat al-Aṣār* also known as the *Tāriḫ-i Vaṣṣāf* (History of Vaṣṣāf) provides an alternative source of information on the Īlkhānate to that of the *Jām'i al-Tavāriḫ*. The history was composed by the scholar-bureaucrat Abd Allāh ibn Faḍl Allāh al-Shīrāzī, also known as Vaṣṣāf-i Ḥaḍrat; a resident of Fārs and a contemporary of Rashīd al-Dīn. Vaṣṣāf sought to write his account to complement the earlier work of 'Alā al-Dīn 'Aṭā' Malik Juvaynī, the *Tāriḫ-i Jahāngushāy* (History of the World Conqueror), which documents the history of the Mongol Empire from the time of Chinggis Khan to the creation of the Īlkhānate (1206–58). Vaṣṣāf's history focusses on the period between 1252 and 1335 and therefore encompasses the entire lifespan of the Īlkhānate. The preface to the *Tāriḫ-i Vaṣṣāf* is dated April–May 1300 (Sha'abān 699 AH) and a rough copy was presented, along with the author, to the Īlkhān Ghazan in 1303 and the latter provided Vaṣṣāf with a pension to help him continue his work.³¹ Four volumes were completed by 1312 when he submitted them for the approval of Öljeitü and a fifth volume was completed during the reign of Abū Sa'īd at an unknown date.³² The fact that his history was written contemporaneously with that of Rashīd al-Dīn leaves his work independent of the other's influence—a rarity amongst Īlkhān histories, which generally copied heavily from both Rashīd al-Dīn and Juvaynī. Indeed, Vaṣṣāf's history often demonstrates a remarkable disassociation from the views of the Īlkhān court. When discussing the numerous wars between the Īlkhāns and the Mamluks, Vaṣṣāf seems to have a sympathetic view of the Egyptians. He refers to them as the 'Army of Islam' and even goes so far as to publish the *fathnāma* (declaration of victory) of Sultan Qalāwūn after his triumph over the Īlkhānid prince, Möngke-Temür, in 1281.³³ The *fathnāma*, a document of Mamluk propaganda, had no place in other Īlkhān histories of the time which denigrated the Egyptian rulers as unruly slaves, in line with official Īlkhān policy.³⁴ Vaṣṣāf's seeming detachment from the Īlkhān court also renders him ambivalent towards the ideological struggle between the patrimonialists and collegialists. This ambivalence is reflected in his account of Ghazan's conversion to Islam. Whereas Rashīd al-Dīn attributes the conversion to divine inspiration (*ilhām*) and the superior intellect of the Īlkhān, Vaṣṣāf attributes his conversion entirely to the influence of a *noyan*, Nawrūz, who later became a dangerous enemy of Ghazan.³⁵ Whereas Rashīd al-Dīn seeks to attack the reputation of Nawrūz, Vaṣṣāf praised him for his piety and heroism.³⁶ This objectivity was no doubt a product of Vaṣṣāf's distance from the Īlkhān court in Azerbaijan. Vaṣṣāf remained in Fārs throughout his career and described himself as a client of the native Salghūrid dynasty, which ruled that province. His history also includes detailed information about the administration of Fārs and of the trade network between southern Iran and India, which serve to

³¹ Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. 3, pp. 67–9.

³² Peter Jackson, 'Waṣṣāf al-Ḥaḍrat', *EI2*, Vol. XI, p. 173.

³³ 'Abd Allāh b. Faḍl Allāh Vaṣṣāf-i Ḥaḍrat, *Tahrir-i Tāriḫ-i Vaṣṣāf*, ed. 'Abd al-Muḥammad Ayyatī, Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Iran, 1346/1967–8, p. 55; al-Nuwayrī, p. 269.

³⁴ See Chapter 2.

³⁵ Charles Melville, 'Pādshāh-i Islām: The Conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān', *Pembroke Papers* 1, 1990, p. 170.

³⁶ Vaṣṣāf, pp. 192, 193.

demonstrate his strong association with the region, as opposed to the north where Mongol influence was far more prominent.³⁷ The independence and detail of Vaṣṣāf's account make him a valuable source for the history of the Īlkhānate.

The *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushāy* of 'Alā al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvaynī, upon which the history of Vaṣṣāf was based, is concerned with the first five decades of the Mongol Empire from 1206 to 1254. Juvaynī was descended from a line of bureaucrats who claimed Faḍl b. Rabī, the vizier of Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, as their ancestor.³⁸ Both Juvaynī's grandfather and his father were employed in the court of the Khwārazmshāh dynasty which ruled Transoxiana and Iran.³⁹ When the Mongols conquered Iran the Juvaynīs remained in their native Khurāsān in the east of the country until they were betrayed to a Mongol governor, Chin-Temūr, in 1232–3. Chin-Temūr offered 'Alā al-Dīn's father, Bahā al-Dīn, the post of *sahīb divān* (chief minister); a position which he held for two decades before he died.⁴⁰ Bahā al-Dīn's eldest son, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, inherited his father's title, whilst his younger son 'Alā al-Dīn was appointed to govern the provinces of Arab Iraq and Khūzistān during the reign of the first Īlkhān, Hülegü (d. 1264). Juvaynī's history is divided into three volumes which deal primarily with the conquests of Chinggis Khan and the reign of his first three successors; the history of the Khwārazmshāh dynasty; and the history of the Nizamī-Shī'ite sect known as the Ismā'īlīs and their defeat at the hands of Hülegü. Juvaynī does not describe the creation of the Mongol state or the rise of Chinggis Khan in great detail, but rather focuses on the latter's conquest of Iran, which had far more significance for his own career. The section concerning the creation of the Īlkhānate is also teasingly short and does not mention the conquest of Baghdad or the Mongol invasion of al-Shām (the Levant). This study has made most use of Juvaynī's account of the years between Chinggis Khan's death and the rise of the Īlkhānate (1227–54). It is fortunate that Juvaynī provides much detail on the situation of the Empire under Chinggis Khan's successors. His history is the most important source of information regarding the method of political succession, the division of the empire, the growth of the imperial bureaucracy, and the conflict which defined the nature of patrimonial authority. A good knowledge of Juvaynī's history is therefore essential to understanding both the transmission and transformation of Chinggisid authority.

If Juvaynī is the chief source of information concerning the transmission of Chinggisid authority, then the *Secret History of the Mongols* (*Yuan chao bi shi*) is the most important source of information on the origin of this authority. The book is a biography of Chinggis Khan's life and career, written in twelve chapters (*chuan*), of which the last two provide a concise account of his son Ögödei's reign (1229–41). The colophon of the *Secret History* records that it was completed 'in the year of the Rat', a date which might correspond to the years 1228, 1240,

³⁷ Jackson, 'Waṣṣāf al-Hadrat', p. 173.

³⁸ George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance*, London: Routledge, 2003, p. 3.

³⁹ Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. 3, p. 20.

⁴⁰ J. A. Boyle and V. V. Barthold, 'Djuwaynī, 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā-Malik b. Muḥammad', *EI2*, Vol. II, p. 606.

1252, or 1264.⁴¹ The author of the *Secret History* is also unknown. The three leading candidates have been named as Shighi-Qutuqu, Chinggis's adopted brother who had learned to write the Uighur script and had a keen knowledge of both Chinggis's life and his reforms; Chinqai Noyan, one of Chinggis's *nököt* and the chamberlain of his successors, Ögödei and Güyük; and Tata-Tunga, a Uighur seal-bearer who had entered Chinggis's service after 1204.⁴² Yet Igor de Rachewiltz has made the point that the search for an individual author may be pointless since the *Secret History* could just as easily have been written by a team of researchers or a narrator who told his story to a secretary.⁴³ The subject matter of the *Secret History* has led some historians to describe the author as a revivalist, who uses the Chinggis Khan epic to encourage his contemporaries to restore old traditions.⁴⁴ Indeed, the ideas expressed in the *Secret History* fall under the umbrella of collegialism as interpreted in the present volume. Despite accepting Chinggis Khan's divine mandate and good fortune, the history also has a very collegialist interpretation of monarchy in the Mongol Empire. The *Secret History* accepts Chinggis Khan's supremacy, but also reports his weaknesses in some detail. It records how he was 'frightened' of dogs and also by his one-time friend, Jamuqa;⁴⁵ it recalls that Chinggis had murdered his younger brother Bekter and that he was subsequently scolded by his mother, Ho'elün.⁴⁶ More significantly, Paul Ratchnevsky has noted that the *Secret History* shows a strong tendency to aggrandize the deeds of Chinggis Khan's army and his *nököt*.⁴⁷ Their valour and devotion to Chinggis Khan are recorded at length in passages describing battles which act as proof of their loyalty and commitment to the state. On the other hand the *Secret History* portrays the *altan uruq* as troublesome misfits. It tells of how Chinggis squabbled with all three of his brothers, Joči-Qasar, Temüge Otčigin, and Belgütei (a half-brother by a different mother).⁴⁸ Similarly, Chinggis's sons are chastised as a group on two occasions for fighting amongst each other and for violating Chinggis's *jasaq*.⁴⁹ Perhaps these two stories were designed to condemn similar behaviour by the *altan uruq* during the time of the *Secret History*'s composition, which might favour

⁴¹ For a summary of the theories supporting these dates, see Igor de Rachewiltz, 'Some Remarks on the Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols*', *Monumenta Serica*, No. 24, 1965, pp. 185–206; Christopher P. Atwood, 'The Date of the "Secret History of the Mongols" Reconsidered', *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies*, No. 37, 2007, pp. 1–48; Christopher Atwood, 'Informants and Sources for the *Secret History of the Mongols*', *Mongolian Studies*, Vol. 29, 2007, pp. 27–39; Igor de Rachewiltz, 'The Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols* – A Re-Interpretation', *Ural-Altische Jahrbuecher*, No. 22, 2008, pp. 150–84.

⁴² See Igor de Rachewiltz, Introduction to *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, Leiden: Brill, 2006, Vol. 1, p. xxxvii.

⁴³ De Rachewiltz, 'Some Remarks on the Dating of the Secret History of the Mongols', p. 205; Arthur Waley, 'Notes on the "Yüan-ch'ao pi-shih"', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 1960, p. 530.

⁴⁴ Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, p. xiv.

⁴⁵ *Secret History of the Mongols (SHM)*, ed. Igor de Rachewiltz, pp. 16 and 132, §§ 66 and 201.

⁴⁶ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 21, § 78.

⁴⁷ Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, p. xiv.

⁴⁸ Chinggis's uneasy relationship with his family, particularly his brothers, is discussed by Thomas Barfield in *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China*, Cambridge: Blackwell, 1989, pp. 191–5.

⁴⁹ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 183 and 192, §§ 254 and 260.

the later dates of 1252 and 1264 for its completion.⁵⁰ Of course it is not possible to confirm positively that the *Secret History* was written by a proponent of either collegialism or patrimonialism, since the identity of its author remains a mystery. It is, however, important to stress the apparent sympathies of the source before it is applied to the present work. With this in mind, the *Secret History* remains the most important source of information for the career of Chinggis Khan. No other source provides the same level of detail on his social reforms, his conflict with the aristocratic houses of Inner Asia, or the names and positions of his supporters. The climax of Chinggis Khan's story is the creation of the Mongol Nation, with the policies Chinggis Khan introduced to organize his state and the rewards given to those who helped achieve it taking up easily the largest portion of the book. Much attention is also given to explaining the success of Chinggis Khan's movement, which is attributed to his divine mandate. The *Secret History* is, therefore, the most important source available for analysing the nature of Chinggis Khan's 'charismatic authority' and the creation of his state.

Abū'l Qāsim Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad Qāshānī, one of Rashīd al-Dīn's deputies, recorded the situation in the Ilkhānate at the start of the fourteenth century in great detail in his *Tārīkh-i Pādshāh Sa'īd Ghiyāth al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn Ūljāytū Sultan Muḥammad Ṭayyib Allāh Marqada* (History of Ūljāytū). Qāshānī wrote his history as the continuation of the *Jām'i al-Tavārikh*, which Qāshānī himself claims to have helped write.⁵¹ Thus, the *Tārīkh-i Ūljāytū* continues to develop the patrimonialist concept of authority presented in Rashīd al-Dīn's history. Qāshānī portrays the Ilkhān Ūljeitū as a superhuman source of spiritual power, which he attributes directly to a divine mandate.⁵² Indeed, Qāshānī's preoccupation with Ūljeitū's spiritual authority dominates his work to an extent which is not evident in other accounts. This emphasis was, no doubt, a result of the increasing number of Muslims at the Ilkhān court after the conversion of Ūljeitū's predecessor, Ghazan, to Islam in 1295.⁵³ Islam, therefore, had to be married to the patrimonialist conception of Chinggisid authority to avoid alienating the new Muslim elite. The *Tārīkh-i Ūljāytū* represents one of the first significant attempts to reconcile the twin principles of Chinggisid and Islamic patrimonialism in order to legitimate the rule of an Ilkhān. Qāshānī's political-spiritual symbolism mirrors that employed in several building projects carried out during Ūljeitū's reign. He therefore plays an important role in defining the nature of patrimonial authority during the reign of Ūljeitū.

The *Rawḍat Ūlī al-Albab fī Tavārikh al-Akābir wa al-Ansāb* (the Garden of the Intelligent, on the Histories of the Great, and on Genealogies) of Fakhr ad-Dīn Abū Sulaymān Dāvūd Banākātī provides further examples of patrimonialist thought in the later Ilkhānate. Banakati claims to have been an official panegyrist at the

⁵⁰ William Hung, 'The Transmission of the Book Known as the *Secret History of the Mongols*', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 14, Nos 3/4, Dec. 1951, p. 492.

⁵¹ In fact, Qāshānī accuses Rashīd al-Dīn of academic theft. He claims that it was he who wrote the *Jām'i al-Tavārikh* and that Rashīd al-Dīn plagiarized his work.

⁵² More is said on this matter under the section 'The Charismatic Authority of Chinggis Khan' below.

⁵³ On the role of Islam in Ūljeitū's court, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, 'Sufis and Shamans: Some Remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhānate', *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 42, No. 1, 1999, pp. 35 and 36.

court of Ghazan, who gave him the title *malik al-shu'arā* (king of poets).⁵⁴ Indeed, Banākātī's poetry is what makes his work significant for the present study. His history, known more widely as the *Tārikh-i Banākātī*, was composed at the court of Ghazan's nephew, Abū Sa'īd Bā'tur Khan, in 1317–18.⁵⁵ The text itself is essentially an abbreviated transcription of the *Jām'ī al-Tavārikh*, which suggests the enduring influence which Rashīd al-Dīn's work held in the later Ilkhān court.⁵⁶ It may also betray a great deal about Banākātī's own political beliefs and sympathies since he was a contemporary of Rashīd al-Dīn at Ghazan's court. The wholesale copying of entire sections of the *Jām'ī al-Tavārikh* does, however, reduce the utility of his account. Fortunately, Banākātī has interjected his own account of events in which he was present, or for which he had reliable information which differs from that provided by Rashīd al-Dīn. This independence is most evident in Banākātī's account of Ghazan's reign, during which he provides a unique, though somewhat short, account of a ceremonial banquet which he attended.⁵⁷ Banākātī was not a historian of any great talent, but he has provided several examples of his poetry which he claims to have read in honour of the Ilkhān. Such readings were carried out at official ceremonies, during which the leaders of the Ilkhān army, bureaucracy and royal family were present. Banākātī's poems represent a form of political pageantry which the Ilkhāns employed to convey their interpretation of political authority.

Numerous regional histories have survived from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries which document events in cities and provinces on the periphery of the Ilkhānate. The *Tārikh-i Sīstān* (History of Sīstān), *Tārikhnāmāye Harāt* (Chronicle of Herat), *Tārikh-i Shāh-i Qarakhatāyan* (History of the Qarakhatāyan Kings), the *Georgian Chronicle*, and the *Musāmarat al-Akhhār va Musāyarat al-Akhyār* (Night-time Narratives and Keeping up with the Good) are amongst this group. Because the regional histories often focus upon characters and territories which were not constantly in contact with the Ilkhānate they often mention their Mongol rulers sparingly. Yet they remain a good source of information on the impact of Mongol rule in their respective territories. Indeed, the parochial interest of some of the regional histories means that they actually contain more detail on certain events which occurred within their territory. The *Tārikhnāmāye Harāt* and the *Tārikh-i Sīstān*, for example, document the events of Eastern Iran between 1286 and 1295 when Ghazan governed the region. This means that they provide particularly interesting information on his struggle with the *noyan* Nawrūz in Khurāsān and Sīstān during the 1280s and 1290s. In the case of the *Tārikhnāmāye Harāt*, there is also a revealing insight into the character of Öljeitü who devoted much time to fighting with the Kart dynasty of Herat in Central Khurāsān.

History writing in Iran suffered a lean period in the decades immediately after the disintegration of the Ilkhānate in 1335. The paucity of sources composed during this period is particularly stark when compared with the start of the fourteenth

⁵⁴ Storey, *Persian Literature*, p. 79.

⁵⁵ Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. 3, p. 100.

⁵⁶ Storey, *Persian Literature*, p. 79.

⁵⁷ Dāvūd b. Muḥammad Banākātī, *Tārikh-i Banākātī: Rawdat Ūlī al-Albāb fī Tavārikh al-Akābir wa al-Ansāb*, ed. Ja'far Sho'ār, Tehran: Anjoman-i Ashār va Mufākhir-i Farhangī, 1378/1999–2000, p. 466.

century, which was one of the most prolific and brilliant periods in Iranian literary history. The division of the Īlkhānate amongst a handful of unstable dynasties and the repeated assault of both disease and warfare meant that there was limited patronage for the type of literary projects carried out at the former Īlkhān court. Indeed, the majority of sources completed between 1335 and 1404 were begun during the reign of the last Īlkhān, Abū Saʿīd (r. 1318–35).

The Persian financial administrator, Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī, was the most prolific author at the time of the Īlkhānate's disintegration. He was appointed as the financial director of his home town of Qazvīn by Rashīd al-Dīn in 1311, and the latter served as an inspiration for his later writing.⁵⁸ In approximately 1320, Ḥamd Allāh began work on his *Ẓafarnāma* (Book of Victory), a history of Iran from the Arab conquest until the reign of Abū Saʿīd. The *Ẓafarnāma* is a continuation of Firduwsī's poetic history of pre-Islamic Iran, the *Shāhnāma* (Book of Kings), which became particularly popular in the later Īlkhān court.⁵⁹ The *Ẓafarnāma* was created as an exposition of the Persian language and so its importance lies in its representation of political attitudes at the end of the Īlkhānate, rather than in its historical accuracy.⁶⁰ Qazvīnī is also noted for publishing two other works during the last decade of the Abū Saʿīd's rule. The first is the *Tārikh-i Guzīdeh* (Select History), which provides a concise history of Iran from the rise of Islam to the reign of Abū Saʿīd. The *Tārikh-i Guzīdeh* was completed in 1330 and relies upon previously mentioned sources for its information, which somewhat diminishes its utility.⁶¹ Qazvīnī's most valuable work is, however, the geographical treatise which he completed in 740 AH/1339–40 CE, known as the *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* (Journey of the Hearts).⁶² The *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* is a survey of the population centres in the former Īlkhānate and includes valuable information about population density, economic activity, and administrative divisions in the first half of the fourteenth century. The *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* also provides profiles for several cities which are relevant for the present study.

The *Majmaʿ al-Anṣāb* (Collection of Genealogies) of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Shabānkāraʾī is another example of a history begun during the reign of Abū Saʿīd and finished after his death. A poet of Kurdish origin, Shabānkāraʾī dedicated the original copy of his history to Abū Saʿīd's vizier, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh in 733 AH/1332–3 CE. This work was, however, destroyed when the vizier's home was ransacked during the troubles following the death of Abū Saʿīd. Shabānkāraʾī completed a second version in 1337, from which two recensions were derived. The *Majmaʿ al-Anṣāb* is of particular value for its account of the reign of Öljaitü and Abū Saʿīd, for which he is an independent source and a contemporary of the events he describes. The *Majmaʿ al-Anṣāb* also provides the

⁵⁸ Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. 3, p. 87.

⁵⁹ J. Rypka, 'Poets and Prose Writers of the Late Saljuq and Mongol Periods', *Cambridge History of Iran*, v. 5, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*, ed. J. A. Boyle, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1968, p. 625.

⁶⁰ Bertold Spuler, 'Ḥamd Allāh b. Abī Bakr b. Aḥmād b. Naṣr al-Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī', *EI2*, Vol. III, p. 122.

⁶¹ Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. 3, p. 94.

⁶² Storey, *Persian Literature*, p. 81.

only account of events within the author's homeland of Shabānkāra, which fell under Mongol domination in 1259.⁶³ The *Majma' al-Anṣāb* is, however, an unreliable source of information regarding Mongolian political tradition. Shabankara'ī borrowed from a range of histories written during the later Īlkhānate and after its fall, which has resulted in the indiscriminate transmission of both patrimonialist and collegialist accounts.

The *Tārīkh-i Shaykh Uways* (History of Shaykh Uways) which was completed around 1360 stands out as an example of a history written well after the division of the Īlkhānate. Little is known about its author, Abū Bakr al-Quṭbī al-Ahrī. His *nisba* (title of origin) suggests that he was from the town of Ahar in Azerbaijan (also Adharbāijān) where he must have spent much of his life, but no biographical information has been found in any of the contemporary literature.⁶⁴ Al-Ahrī dedicated his history to the Jalayirid Sultan, Shaykh Uways b. Shaykh Ḥasan-i Buzurg (r. 1356–74) in an attempt to link the latter's dynasty to that of the Īlkhāns. Thus, al-Ahrī devoted a chapter of his history to each of the Īlkhāns up until the fall of the dynasty. Most of his information on the period between 1258 and 1304 is derived directly from Rashīd al-Dīn, and he also borrows heavily from the *Tārīkh-i Ḫẓaitū* for the period up to 1317. Al-Ahrī does, however, provide an independent source of information for the reign of Abū Sa'īd and his account of the fall of the Īlkhānate is of critical importance as it documents the continuation of the collegial stream of Chinggisid authority well into the middle of the fourteenth century.

Several histories written during the first half of the fifteenth century in Temürid-dominated Khurāsān and Transoxiana have been used in this study as a supplementary source of information for the later Īlkhānate. Most of the histories composed during the early fourteenth century exaggerated the significance of Ghazan's reign at the expense of his successors, for whom much less information was provided. To some extent, both Ḫẓaitū and Abū Sa'īd encouraged this trend in an attempt to perpetuate the patrimonialist model of kingship which Ghazan embodied. Their focus on Ghazan is in itself important for understanding the nature of political authority after his death, but it has also resulted in a significantly smaller pool of information regarding the reign of the last two Īlkhāns. This shortage is compounded by the above mentioned decline in history writing during the second half of the fourteenth century. Fortunately, the Temürids eagerly compiled and recorded information pertaining to the later Īlkhānate in order to portray themselves as the continuators of the Mongol political tradition. Shāh Rūkh b. Temür (r. 1405–46) was the member of his family most determined to link the Temürid dynasty to that of the Īlkhānids. The histories he commissioned provide valuable information regarding the last three decades of Īlkhān rule and go a long way towards compensating for the shortfall in primary source material covering this period.

Ḥāfiẓ Abrū was the most distinguished Temürid historian to document the later Īlkhānate. Abrū was initially included in Temür's suite because of his talent for

⁶³ Storey, *Persian Literature*, p. 85; Peter Jackson and C. E. Bosworth, 'Shabānkāra'ī', *EI2*, Vol. IX, p. 158; Jean Aubin, 'Un chroniqueur méconnu: Šabankara'ī', *Studia Iranica*, Vol. 10, 1981, pp. 213–24.

⁶⁴ Ī. Aka, 'Aharī', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater, Vol. 1, London: Routledge, 1983, p. 634.

chess before joining the court of the latter's son, Shāh Rūkh, and his grandson, Baysunqur.⁶⁵ His first historical work was the *Zayl-i Jām'i al-Tavārikh* (Tail of the Collection of Histories), which was intended as a continuation of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Collected Histories* of the Mongol Empire. Abrū picks up Rashīd's narrative from the death of Ghazan and provides a full account of the reign of Öljeitü and Abū Sa'īd before documenting the division of the Īlkhānate and the fate of Iran before the first invasion of Temür in 1380. Abrū subsequently authored the *Zubda al-Tavārikh*, the 'Cream of Histories', which documents the career of Temür and the early years of his patron, Shāh Rūkh, before terminating in the year 1426–7; the year in which the history was completed.⁶⁶ The *Zubda al-Tavārikh* is the continuation of the biography of Temür known as the *Zafarnāma*, composed by the courtier Nizām al-Dīn Shāmī, and was designed to link the Temürid dynasty into the political tradition of their Chinggisid predecessors, the Īlkhāns. Abrū's account served as the primary source for the first chapter of Kamāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī's later work, *Maṭla'-i Sa'dayn va Majma'-i Baḥrayn* (Dawn of the Two Auspicious Planets and the Junction of the two Seats), which commemorates the rule of Abū Sa'īd Ba'atur Khan and documents the rise of Temür in Transoxiana.⁶⁷ The *Zubda al-Tavārikh* has been employed more sparingly in this study, and only in relation to the rise of collegialism in Iran and Transoxiana. Abrū is a strong and independent source of information on the early Temürids whom he served and, in many instances, witnessed the events he describes, such as Temür's invasion of al-Shām in 1401.⁶⁸ His expertise on the Temürid state and the extent of their empire is demonstrated by a geographical survey which he began in 1414–15.⁶⁹ The geography contains information which Abrū utilized in his subsequent two works, but also provides a much more detailed history of each of the regions and cities which had been absorbed into the Temürid Empire. Since Abrū's geography has minimal relevance to the present study, however, a broader enumeration of its contents and history will not be provided here.

Other sources written during the fifteenth century will be utilized to chart the triumph of the collegial stream of authority in the Ulus Chaghadaī. One of the most informative sources for this transition is the *Muntakhab al-Tawārikh-i Mu'inī* (Choice History of Mu'inī) of Mu'in al-Dīn Naṭanzī. Naṭanzī wrote his history in Fārs during the reign of Mirza Iskandar Sultan (812–17 AH/1410–15 CE), who along with several other Temürid governors of Fārs had spent time serving in Andijan, in the far east of the Empire.⁷⁰ It was there, in Andijan, Beatrice Manz suggests, that Iskandar Sultan was introduced to a distinctly Temürid historical tradition which was separate from that of the Persians, who largely ignored

⁶⁵ Storey, *Persian Literature*, p. 86; John E. Woods, 'The Rise of Timurid Historiography', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 46, 1987, pp. 96–9.

⁶⁶ F. Tauer, 'Ḥafiz Abrū', *EL2*, Vol. III, p. 57; Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. 3, p. 424.

⁶⁷ Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. 3, p. 430.

⁶⁸ Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, Vol. 3, p. 425.

⁶⁹ Storey, *Persian Literature*, p. 87.

⁷⁰ 'Alā al-Dawlah Bakhtishāh al-Samarqandī Dawlatshāh, *Tadhkirat al-Shu'arā'-yi Dawlatshāh Samarqandī*, ed. Edward Brown, Tehran: Asāṭir, 1382/2003–4, p. 371.

Transoxiana.⁷¹ Naṭanzī draws on this independent source to provide the most detailed history of the period between 1334 and 1346, during which time the collegialists achieved complete ascendancy over the Ulus Chaghadaī. The centrality of these Chaghadaid sources in Naṭanzī's account caused him to write a distinctly collegialist version of events, which often jeopardizes the veracity of his account. It does, however, provide a unique insight into the collegialist conception of Chaghadaī history and society in the middle of the fourteenth century.

Reference has also been made to Arabic histories written predominantly in al-Shām (the Levant) and Egypt. In many cases these Arabic sources provide detailed information on events in the Mongol Empire which is independent of the accounts provided by Īlkhān court histories. The growing popularity of biographical encyclopaedias in the Mamluk Empire during the thirteenth century was one factor which caused Arabic authors to record important facts about their eastern neighbours.⁷² Writers such as Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī (d. 749 AH/1349 CE) and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852 AH/1449 CE) sought to include information on the most important figures of their time in their biographical dictionaries and encyclopaedias and were therefore compelled to devote some space, however short, to the Īlkhān rulers. The constant state of conflict between the Mamluks and the Īlkhānate also forced Arabic chroniclers to make reference to the battles and negotiations carried out between the two sides. Mamluk chroniclers such as Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir and Baybars al-Manṣūrī document several confrontations between their sovereign, Baybars, and the Īlkhān army. Both authors also provide valuable information about the court of the Golden Horde, the Mongol khanate on the northern border of the Īlkhānate, which was transmitted to them by Mamluk diplomats who frequented the northern Mongol court.⁷³ The Ayyubid prince, 'Imād al-Dīn Abū al-Fidā', ruled over the town of Ḥamāh which lay on the road going south from Aleppo to Ḥimṣ and was, therefore, in the line of assault for Mongol armies invading al-Shām.⁷⁴ His chronicle provides a beautifully detailed account of relations between the Mamluks and the later Īlkhāns (i.e. 1295–1335), which he gleaned from his many trips to the Mamluk court at Cairo. Abū al-Fidā' also gives accurate reports of events within the Īlkhānate itself, such as the coup which brought Ghazan to power in 1295.⁷⁵ Moreover, the war between the Īlkhāns and the Mamluks forced the latter to confront and, where possible undermine, concepts of Chinggisid authority. With this in mind, Mamluk propaganda such as the *fatwa* (religious ruling) of Ibn Taymīyah⁷⁶ and the generally dismissive reaction

⁷¹ Forbes Manz, 'Mongol History Rewritten and Relived', p. 6. Also see Woods, 'The Rise of Timurid Historiography', p. 93.

⁷² Donald P. Little, 'Historiography of the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Epochs', *Cambridge History of Egypt*, Vol. 1, ed. Carl F. Petry, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 413.

⁷³ Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Baybars I of Egypt: Rawḍ al-Zāhir fī Sirat al-Malik al-Zāhir*, trans. Fatima Sadeque, New York: Ams Press, 1980, pp. 231–3.

⁷⁴ H. A. R. Gibb, 'Abū'l Fidā, Ismā'il b. al-Afḍal b. al-Manṣūr b. Taḳī al-Dīn', *EI2*, Vol. I, p. 118.

⁷⁵ 'Abū'l Fidā', *The Memoirs of a Syrian Prince*, trans. P. M. Holt, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1983, p. 24.

⁷⁶ See Denise Aigle, 'The Mongol Invasions of Bilād al-Shām by Ghāzān and Ibn Taymīyah's Three "Anti-Mongol" Fatwas', *Mamlūk Studies Review*, Vol. II, No. 2, July 2007, pp. 89–120.

afforded to the conversion of Ghazan and Öljeitü to Islam in the histories of Ibn Kathīr and al-ʿAynī⁷⁷ provide an interesting insight into the way that Mongol ideology was interpreted by outside powers.

This study has made use of the observations of European travellers and non-Persian peoples subject to the Īlkhānate when discussing the early institutionalization of Chinggisid authority in the Mongol Empire. Mongol armies pushing west through the Kipchaq Steppe in 1236 annihilated the Rurikid principalities of Rus' and began a short yet devastating campaign into Eastern Europe in 1241. The threat of more Mongol invasions prompted Pope Innocent IV to dispatch three diplomatic missions to the East, ostensibly on fact-finding missions.⁷⁸ The most famous of these three missions was led by the Franciscan friar, John of Plano Carpini (Giovanni del Pian di Carpini), who arrived at the Qa'an's *ordu* (camp/court) in 1246.⁷⁹ Carpini's impressions of the Mongol *ordu*, its newly crowned ruler Güyük Khan, the Dowager Empress Töregene Khatun, the Mongol army and the Mongol way of life were provided to Innocent IV on his return and have survived as one of the most important sources of information on the early Mongol Empire. Carpini was fortunate to have arrived at the Mongol *ordu* during the coronation of Güyük, and he therefore provides some brief observations on the *quriltai* that elected him. This information renders his account a valuable source of information on the institutionalization of Chinggisid authority. Another Franciscan, William of Rubruck, visited the Mongol *ordu* in December 1253 as an unofficial representative of King Louis IX of France.⁸⁰ Rubruck spent a little over six months at the *ordu* and met with its ruler Möngke Qa'an on several occasions before returning to Europe. His account is generally far more detailed than that of Carpini regarding the arrangement of the Qa'an's suite and the etiquette required in his presence. Möngke's rule marked a new phase in the transmission of Chinggisid authority and tradition, which renders Rubruck's account even more valuable for this study.

The imperial bureaucracy of the Mongols was staffed mostly by members of ethnic and religious minorities to prevent larger population groups attaining any significant power. This policy prompted the Īlkhāns to maintain a strong relationship with the Armenian, Nestorian, and Jacobite/Syrian Christian communities in Iran and Mesopotamia, who in turn provided several accounts of their interactions with the Mongols. These sources generally (although not universally) provide a far more positive account of the Īlkhān government. One such account is that of the Nestorian patriarch Mar Yahballaha III, translated from Persian to Syrian by an unknown author at the beginning of the fourteenth century.⁸¹ Yahballaha's grasp of

⁷⁷ Judith Pfeiffer, 'Conversion Versions: Sultan Öljeitü's Conversion to Shi'ism (709/1309) in Muslim Narrative Sources', *Mongolian Studies*, No. 22, 1999, p. 43.

⁷⁸ For background information on these missions, see Igor de Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans*, London: Faber & Faber, 1971, pp. 84–8.

⁷⁹ De Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans*, p. 99.

⁸⁰ William of Rubruck, *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253–1255*, trans. Peter Jackson, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009, p. 44.

⁸¹ *The Monks of Khubilai Khan, Emperor of China*, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge, London: Religious Tract Society, 1928, p. 6.

the Mongol and Persian languages meant that he was regularly employed as a bridgehead between the Īlkhāns and their Christian neighbours and subjects.⁸² Yahballaha's close proximity to the Īlkhān *ordu* provided him with an insight into the relationship between religion and authority in the Mongol Empire which he reports with a great deal of candour.

The information recorded by Mar Yahballaha III is confirmed by the Jacobite (Syrian) Catholicos, Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), in his *Mukhtaṣar al-Tārikh-i al-Dāwal* (Abridgement of the History of Dynasties). The history of Bar Hebraeus covers the rule of the ten great dynasties from the time of Adam and the Kings of Israel up to the Mongols. His account terminates in 1284, but an anonymous continuator has carried the story up until the early years of Ghazan's reign (1295–1304). Despite much of his history being borrowed from the *Tārikh-i Jahāngushāy* of Juvaynī, Bar Hebraeus also provides independent information derived from his own experience of Mongol rule as well as reports he garnered from Christians at the Īlkhān court. Bar Hebraeus' discussion of the coups and rebellions against Īlkhān rule carried out by various leading *noyat* and royal princes is particularly informative.

The thirteenth century is also notable for the large number of Armenian sources which document Īlkhān rule. The Hetoumid rulers of Cilicia were counted amongst the Īlkhāns' most powerful vassals and several accounts of their relationship emerged during this period. The Armenian constable, Smbat, himself a member of the Armenian royal family, is thought to be responsible for a chronicle documenting the submission of King Hetoum I to Möngke Qa'an in 1253 and of the subsequent history of the Īlkhānate until 1267.⁸³ Smbat's nephew, Hetoum, also penned a history of the Īlkhānate and the Armenians of Cilicia in 1307. Hetoum wrote an account of Mongol rule from the time of Chinggis Khan until the reign of Öljeitü (r. 1304–17) during a supposedly self-imposed exile from his homeland.⁸⁴ In addition to these sources the *History of the Nation of Archers*, written by the monk known as Grigor of Akanc, documents the initial invasion of Iran by Chinggis Khan and the military administration which ruled Azerbaijan up until the year 1274. Akanc's history is most valuable for his observations on the creation of the Īlkhānate and his impression of Mongol administration in the provinces. The Catholicos of Greater Armenia, Stéphanos Orbélian (1250–1304), has also provided an account of his church's fortunes, and those of his family, under Mongol rule. His history, whilst lacking the detail of Hetoum and Akanc, still reveals much about the nature of Īlkhān rule, as Orbélian was personally acquainted with no less than three of the Īlkhān rulers.⁸⁵ But perhaps the most useful Armenian source for the present study has been *The History of the Armenians*, penned by the monk Kirakos Gandzakets'i (1201–72). His history provides a detailed account of early Mongol rule in Iran, which he obtained through his experiences, first as a captive and then as a scribe in the Mongol garrison

⁸² De Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans*, p. 158.

⁸³ Smbat, *La Chronique attribuée au connétable Smbat*, trans. Gérard Dédéyan, Paris: P. Geuthner, 1980; Hetoum, *A Lytell Cronycle*, ed. Glenn Burger, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988, p. x.

⁸⁴ Hetoum, *A Lytell Cronycle*, p. xx.

⁸⁵ Stéphanos Orbélian, *Histoire de la Siounie*, trans. Marie F. Brosset, St Petersburg: l'Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1864.

army deployed to Azerbaijan in 1229.⁸⁶ Kirakos relied upon senior commanders in this army for his information on the Mongol Empire and, as a direct result, his history includes a list of Mongolian terms which J. A. Boyle described as 'one of the earliest monuments of the Mongol language' in existence.⁸⁷

THE CHARISMATIC AUTHORITY OF CHINGGIS KHAN

To understand the nature of the ideological conflict which existed in the Īlkhānate between the collegialists and the patrimonialists it is first necessary to trace the genealogy of authority within the Mongol Empire. The Mongol Empire itself was born of a social revolution which swept away the oligarchy of aristocratic houses that dominated the Inner Asian steppe and replaced them with a centralized imperial state ruled by Chinggis Khan. The most dramatic change brought by this revolution concerned the source of legitimate authority within the new community. The Mongols of the twelfth century were a hierarchical society in which a number of property-owning aristocracies ruled over a population of nomadic serfs, who were bound by hereditary obligations of service to their lords. Chinggis Khan overturned the power of these lords by claiming a higher authority, which he attributed to divine will. He used this ideology to create a new society in which devotion to him became the primary source of social and political status.

Temüjin (the future Chinggis Khan) was born into one of the senior aristocratic lines of the ruling Mongol Qiyat dynasty in the second half of the twelfth century. The precise date of Temüjin's birth is not known, since it was said to have corresponded to the 'year of the Pig' in the Mongol astrological table; a year which could equate to either 1155 or 1167.⁸⁸ The *Secret History of the Mongols* informs us that Temüjin's father, Yisügei, was the nephew of the Mongol khan Qutula, for whom he commanded a body of soldiers.⁸⁹ Qutula was the fifth son of Qabul, the first khan of the Mongols, who were one of several powers to emerge from the Khitan-Liao Empire, which controlled northern China and eastern Inner Asia until it fell to the Jurchen-Jin dynasty in 1125. At that time the Mongols occupied the territory between the Onon and Kerulen rivers, to the east of the Khentei mountains, from where Qabul pursued a rigorous policy of resisting Jin interference and challenging the latter's allies, the Tatars, for control of the steppe (Figure 1).⁹⁰

⁸⁶ J. A. Boyle, 'Kirakos of Ganjak on the Mongols', *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 8, 1963, p. 199.

⁸⁷ Boyle, 'Kirakos of Ganjak on the Mongols', p. 200.

⁸⁸ The date of 1167 proposed by Pelliot remains the most credible based upon his analysis of the ages and birthdates of his siblings and other relatives. See Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo: Ouvrage Posthume*, Vol. 3, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1973, pp. 285–8; Paul Pelliot and Louis Hambis, *Histoire des Campagnes de Gengis Khan: Cheng-wou ts'in-tcheng loy*, Leiden: Brill, 1951, p. 126; *The History and Life of Chinggis Khan: The Secret History of the Mongols*, trans. Urgunge Onon, Leiden: Brill, 1990, p. 14; Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, p. 18.

⁸⁹ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 10, § 50.

⁹⁰ Peter B. Golden, 'Inner Asia c. 1200', *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia*, v. 2, *The Chinggisid Age*, ed. Nicola Di Cosmo, Allen J. Frank, and Peter B. Golden, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 21; Ruth Dunnell, *Chinggis Khan: World Conqueror*, Boston: Longman, 2010, p. 17.



Figure 1. Horses on the Steppe in Mongolia. Author's photo

The Mongol polity of the twelfth century has traditionally been described as a 'tribal confederacy', whose political and social organizations were defined by kinship relations. The most basic unit of social organization in this kinship system was believed to have been the extended family, which would form tribes on a seasonal basis, seeking common winter pastures before dispersing in the spring when animals had fattened and the threat of starvation had dissipated.⁹¹ Several tribes would in turn form temporary confederacies to achieve a shared aim, such as military defence or trade alliances, but these associations were thought to have been highly unstable and prone to disintegration when the initial goal of the union had been achieved.⁹² Indeed, all forms of political association between pastoral nomads were believed to have been ephemeral since their seasonal migrations were thought to prevent the imposition of stable government. More recently, however, David Sneath and

⁹¹ Anatoly M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, trans. Julia Crookenden, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 134.

⁹² Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, p. 134; Joseph Fletcher, 'The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 1, June 1986, p. 14; Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier*, p. 7; Anatoly M. Khazanov, 'Characteristic Features of Nomadic Communities in the Eurasian Steppes', *The Nomadic Alternative: Modes and Models of Interaction in the African-Asian Deserts and Steppes*, ed. Wolfgang Weissleder, The Hague: Mouton, 1978, p. 124; Bat-Ochir Bold, *Mongolian Nomadic Society: A Reconstruction of the Medieval History of Mongolia*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001, p. 83; Peter Jackson, 'The Mongol Age in Eastern Inner Asia', *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia*, v. 2, *The Chinggisid Age*, p. 28.

Christopher Atwood have challenged the idea that the political associations of nomadic societies were defined by kinship relations. They have demonstrated that only the elite of the Inner Asian steppe maintained detailed genealogies to sustain their hereditary claims to property, power, and status, and that the concept of a political association based upon kinship was unknown to them. Sneath and Atwood have also shown that the same communities possessed rich traditions of statehood, which contradicts the assertion that Inner Asia lacked permanent, stable government.⁹³ These revelations force us to take a fresh perspective on the political history of Inner Asia.

The Mongols of the twelfth century lived within a hierarchical society, dominated by a khan and a number of aristocratic households, who held power on a hereditary basis. The first Mongol khan, Qabul, was a member of the Qiyat-Borjigin dynasty, which traced its ancestry from a matriarch, Alan Qoa, who was said to have given birth to three sons after being impregnated by a heavenly beam of light. The *Secret History of the Mongols* claims that this noble parentage distinguished Alan Qoa's three sons and their descendants from other 'black-headed men' (commoners), and augured their eventual domination of the world.⁹⁴ The various Qiyat bloodlines sat at the head of a propertied aristocracy which constituted the ruling class of Mongol society. This quasi-feudal aristocracy owed its power to the control of pastures, herds, and people, who fell under their control through conquest and voluntary submission. The *Secret History* provides the example of how Temüjin's forebear, Dobun Mergen, acquired a young boy from a man who came to him in 'desperate straits' and asked for some meat in return for his son. Dobun cut off the thigh of a deer, which he gave to the man, 'and took the child to be a servant in his house'.⁹⁵ These captured peoples became the *ötögus bo'ol* (hereditary serfs/servants) of the ruling elite, who employed them as shepherds, soldiers, and household staff.⁹⁶ In other instances there is evidence that aristocratic households emerged as the result of state policy. Temüjin's father, Yisügei, owed his control over the people of his household to his descent from Qabul Khan, as did his cousin Qutuqtu Yurki, whose father had been granted the hereditary command of a number of military households.⁹⁷ In neither instance do the sources mention bonds of kinship between the lords and their hereditary vassals.

⁹³ David Sneath, *The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, and the Misrepresentation of Nomadic Inner Asia*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007; David Sneath, 'The Headless State in Inner Asia: Reconsidering Kinship Society and the Discourse of Tribalism', *Representing Power in Ancient Inner Asia: Legitimacy, Transmission and the Sacred*, ed. Isabelle Charleux, Grégory Delaplace, Roberte Hamayon, and Scott Pearce, Bellingham: Western Washington University, 2010, pp. 365–415; David Sneath, 'Imperial Statecraft: Arts of Power on the Steppe', *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth–Twentieth Centuries*, ed. David Sneath, Bellingham, WA: Western Washington University, 2006, pp. 1–22; Christopher Atwood, 'Titles, Appanages, Marriages and Officials: A Comparison of Political Forms in the Zünghar and Thirteenth-Century Mongol Empires', *Imperial Statecraft*, pp. 207–42; Christopher Atwood, 'How the Mongols Got a Word for Tribe—and What it Means', *Studia Historica Mongolica* (Höhhöt), No. 10, 2008, pp. 63–89.

⁹⁴ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 4, §§ 18–20.

⁹⁵ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 3, §§ 14–16.

⁹⁶ B. Y. Vladimirtsov, *Le Régime Social des Mongols: Le Féodalisme Nomade*, Paris: A. Maisonneuve, 1948, p. 155.

⁹⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 61, § 139; Sneath, *The Headless State*, p. 109.

The Mongol polity fluctuated between periods of greater and lesser centralization. Each aristocratic household fulfilled the role of the state within its area of influence, collecting taxes, assigning pastures, and regulating the seasonal migration of its subjects.⁹⁸ The revenues generated by the nomadic serfs would remain with the lords of these aristocratic households, who were often under no financial obligation to the khan. Nevertheless, the various households retained a degree of political cohesion through communal activities such as trade and war, which required the pooling of resources.⁹⁹ Connections between the aristocratic households were also strengthened through marriage exchanges, and sometimes marriage partnerships, in which successive generations would engage in an exchange marriage to reaffirm their ties.¹⁰⁰ These economic, social, and military associations bred a sense of political community amongst the otherwise autonomous households.

The khan's influence over the aristocratic households had been strong during the reign of Qabul, whose government filled a power vacuum left by the fall of the Khitan-Liao. Qabul had successfully established his Qiyat-Borjigin household as the pre-eminent power amongst the Mongols and, perhaps, the whole of eastern Inner Asia. Yet rivalry among his descendants soon destabilized his khanate. Despite having seven sons of his own, Qabul Khan nominated his cousin, Ambaqai, to succeed him (Table 1).¹⁰¹ Drawing his information from the earlier Mongol chronicle known as the *Altan Debter*, the Persian scholar-bureaucrat Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh explains that Ambaqai's descendants, the Tayiçi'ut, had become far more numerous and powerful than the sons of Qabul by the time of Temüjin's birth.¹⁰² Qabul's decision to designate Ambaqai as his heir may therefore have been a necessary step to placate the powerful Tayiçi'ut. Nevertheless, the houses of Qabul (the Qiyat) and Ambaqai (the Tayiçi'ut) seem to have become two distinct entities at the time of the latter's death. The only surviving Mongolian source on the rise of Chinggis Khan, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, states that Ambaqai 'nominated both Qada'an [his son] and Qutula [the son of Qabul Khan]' to succeed him.¹⁰³ The *Secret History* goes on to claim that a *quriltai* (council of notables) subsequently resolved the question of succession in favour of Qutula, but this accord is not reflected in the account of Rashīd al-Dīn, who gives the impression that the question of the succession remained unresolved: 'in this council no ruler was appointed from amongst them and, after that, it is not known precisely who

⁹⁸ Sneath, *The Headless State*, p. 5.

⁹⁹ Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier*, p. 8; Bold, *Mongolian Nomadic Society*, p. 83.

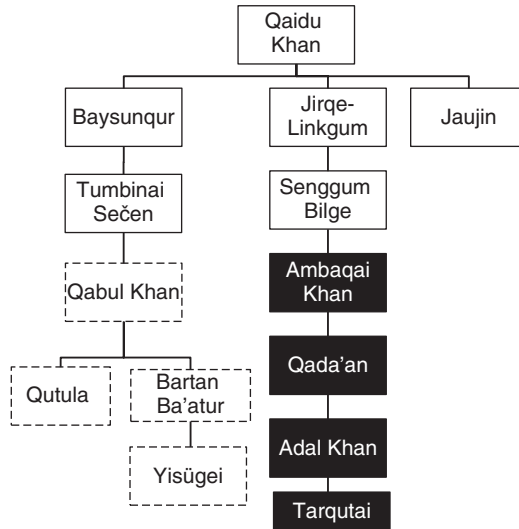
¹⁰⁰ Nobuhiro Uno, 'Exchange-Marriage in the Royal Families of Nomadic States', *The Early Mongols: Language, Culture, and History, Studies in Honor of Igor de Rachewiltz on the Occasion of his 80th Birthday*, ed. Volker Rybatzki, Alessandra Pozzi, Peter W. Geier, and John R. Kruger, Indiana University, The Denise Sinor Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 2009, p. 177; Jennifer Holmgren, 'Observations on Marriage and Inheritance Practices in Early Mongol and Yüan Society, with Particular Reference to the Levirate', *Journal of Asian History*, No. 20, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1986, p. 136.

¹⁰¹ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 10, § 52.

¹⁰² Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Hamadānī, *Jamī'u't-Tawārikh: Compendium of Chronicles*, trans. W. M. Thackston, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 159; Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Hamadānī, *Jamī'i al-Tawārikh*, ed. Bahman Karīmī, Tehran: Iqbāl, 1374/1995–6, p. 241.

¹⁰³ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 12, § 57.

Table 1. The Qiyat-Borjigin



was chosen'.¹⁰⁴ In any case, the two households seem to have preserved their alliance in order to resist the Tatar.¹⁰⁵ But the split between the Tayiçi'ut line of Ambaqai and the Qiyat line of Qabul deepened after the death of Qutula, whose nephew, Yisügei, assumed a leading role in the Qiyat faction, whilst Ambaqai's grandson, Tarqutai Quriltuq, held influence over the Tayiçi'ut. By this point Mongol government had devolved into what Sneath has termed a 'headless state', in which the throne of Qabul remained empty and leadership of the Mongol polity was shared between several leading aristocratic households.¹⁰⁶ The growing political independence of these households weakened the cohesion of the Mongols and increased the possibility of civil war.

The Tayiçi'ut gained a temporary advantage over the Qiyat after Yisügei's unexpected death at the hands of the Tatar. Yisügei had previously been a prominent leader in several campaigns against the Tatars who now sought to capitalize on the divisions within the Mongol polity to take their revenge. Their moment came shortly after the betrothal of Yisügei's oldest son Temüjin. He was nine years old at the time and very little is mentioned of his life prior to this point in any of the sources.¹⁰⁷ Yisügei may have been trying to bolster his claim to rule the Mongols by giving Temüjin in marriage to Börte, the daughter of Dei-Sečen, a lord of the Onggirat people, with whom he had a warm rapport. Dei-Sečen seems to have been aware of Yisügei's political ambitions and reassured him that 'for those of you who have become qa'an we have our daughters with beautiful

¹⁰⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 131; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 197.

¹⁰⁵ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 13, § 58.

¹⁰⁶ Sneath, *The Headless State*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 13, § 61.

cheeks ride on a large cart to which we harness a black male camel. We trot them off to the qa'an, and seat them by him on the *khatun's* [queen's] seat.'¹⁰⁸ Yisügei confirmed the marriage arrangement and Temüjin was deposited with his future wife's family, presumably to work off a bridal debt.¹⁰⁹ On his return journey the unsuspecting Yisügei fell in with a band of Tatar from whom he accepted an offer of hospitality. The Tatar leapt upon the opportunity to poison Yisügei, their old enemy. After leaving the Tatar camp Yisügei suffered heavy stomach cramps and sent his servant on ahead to inform his family of what had happened; he died shortly afterwards.¹¹⁰

Yisügei's death left his wife, Hö'elün, as the head of his household. It was customary for a widow to receive a portion of her husband's wealth, but the fact that Hö'elün's eldest son, Temüjin, was still only thirteen at the time meant that she now assumed the management of his entire estate.¹¹¹ With Yisügei gone, Hö'elün and her young family faced increasing ostracism from the Tayiçi'ut, who viewed her and her sons as political rivals. She was excluded from a sacrificial ceremony in honour of the Qiyat ancestors by the Tayiçi'ut matriarchs and this insult was followed by an even more egregious violation of protocol as the Tayiçi'ut leaders struck camp, deserting Hö'elün and her children. The Tayiçi'ut's departure was probably intended to entice Yisügei's former vassals away from Hö'elün and the *Secret History* makes it clear that many did in fact join her rivals. One of Yisügei's old servants tried to stop them but was speared by a Tayiçi'ut rider. Hö'elün heard her people moving and tried to rally them to return by desperately waving Yisügei's old banner. The ploy seems to have worked since Rashīd al-Dīn mentions most of her people returning to her. But a sizeable number remained with the Tayiçi'ut and their betrayal formed the basis of a bloody feud between Temüjin and Tarqutai.¹¹² Serfs were considered both a legitimate and profitable form of property amongst the Mongols. They provided the aristocracy with tax revenues, corvée labour, and military service, as well as prestige.¹¹³ From the Qiyat perspective, the shift of Hö'elün's people to the Tayiçi'ut was nothing but petty theft.

What remained of Temüjin's youth is not discussed in any detail by either of the main sources. The *Secret History*, perhaps seeking to exaggerate the betrayal of the Tayiçi'ut, claimed that Hö'elün and her family were reduced to utter poverty. It states that Hö'elün was forced to forage for edible berries, roots, and weeds whilst her sons hunted. The *Secret History* has Hö'elün sum up their desperate situation in eloquent fashion, saying that 'we have no friend but our shadow, we have no whip but our horse's tail'.¹¹⁴ Yet this account is contradicted by Rashīd al-Dīn, who reported that a portion of Yisügei's former followers remained loyal to

¹⁰⁸ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 14, § 64.

¹⁰⁹ Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, p. 21.

¹¹⁰ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 16, § 68.

¹¹¹ Holmgren, 'Observations on Marriage and Inheritance Practices', p. 131; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 144; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 219.

¹¹² *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 17 and 18, §§ 68–73; Pelliot and Hambis, *Histoire des Campagnes de Gengis Khan*, pp. 17–18.

¹¹³ Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, p. 40; Sneath, *The Headless State*, p. 18.

¹¹⁴ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 20, § 76.

Hö'elün.¹¹⁵ Indeed, less than a decade later Temüjin can be found leading 10,000 soldiers, whose provenance would be hard to explain had they not belonged to Yisügei.¹¹⁶ Evidence that Temüjin and his family remained influential figures in the Mongol polity after Yisügei's death is provided by the sustained interest of the Tayiçi'ut in their affairs. Temüjin was captured by Tarqutai on at least one occasion and it seems that he remained a rival source of authority to the Tayiçi'ut leader.¹¹⁷ Prior to apprehending Temüjin, Tarqutai was said to have remarked with concern that 'the little rascals [i.e. Yisügei's sons] have shed their down, the snotty ones have grown up!'¹¹⁸ The *Secret History* again exaggerates the fact that Temüjin was mistreated by the Tayiçi'ut during his captivity, stating that he was placed in a cangue (a wooden collar used to restrain criminals) and passed around the various households of the Tayiçi'ut, who took turns guarding him.¹¹⁹ Yet the same source later has Tarqutai explain that:

I went there to get him [Temüjin] and brought him back home with me: Saying that if I taught him, he would be likely to learn, I kept teaching and instructing him just as if he were a two or three year-old new colt I had been training. Had I wanted to make him die, would I not have been able to kill him?¹²⁰

This later evidence suggests that Tarqutai treated Temüjin with the respect due to the son of a prominent aristocrat to entice him to become an ally of the Tayiçi'ut. Temüjin's successful escape put an end to this hope.

Temüjin was unwilling to share power with the Tayiçi'ut and it was not long after his escape from Tarqutai that he began to seek allies against them. He abandoned his homeland and moved to join To'oril Khan of the Kereit, who ruled the politically symbolic territory of the Orkhon River valley to the west of the Mongol homeland. The Orkhon Valley had served as the capital of both the Great Türk and the Uighur empires and was a source of great prestige to its rulers. More important for Temüjin, To'oril had been Yisügei's *anda* (sworn friend) ever since the latter had saved him from a coup orchestrated by his uncle.¹²¹ Temüjin wanted to make his own alliance with To'oril, and presented the Kereit ruler with a sable coat given to him by his wife Börte as a dowry, saying, 'Since in earlier days you and my father declared yourselves sworn friends you are, indeed, like a father to me.'¹²² To'oril accepted Temüjin's gesture and promised that 'In return for the black sable coat, I shall bring together for you your divided people; in return for the sable coat, I shall unite for you your scattered people', presumably eluding to the people whom the Tayiçi'ut had robbed from Hö'elün.¹²³ For his part, To'oril would renew an alliance with the household of his former *anda*, thereby boosting his authority amongst the Kereit. Temüjin also used his time with To'oril to renew a pledge of *anda* with the powerful commander, Jamuqa, who ruled over a *tümen* (a number of households

¹¹⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 144; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 219.

¹¹⁶ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 38, § 106.

¹¹⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 19–25, §§ 74–86. Chinggis may have been captured by the Tayiçi'ut on more than one occasion: see Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, p. 24.

¹¹⁸ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 22, § 79.

¹¹⁹ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 23, § 81.

¹²⁰ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 71, § 149.

¹²¹ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 98, § 105.

¹²² *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 30, § 96.

¹²³ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 30, § 96.

theoretically capable of providing 10,000 soldiers). Jamuqa and Temüjin were old friends and had become *anda* whilst they were still boys. Jamuqa had not forgotten this pledge and he was happy to join Temüjin in the hope of increasing his own power through joint campaigns and plundering expeditions.¹²⁴

The coalition of To'oril Khan, Jamuqa, and Temüjin temporarily formed the strongest military force in the eastern Inner Asian steppe until mutual suspicion drove them apart. Their first target was the Merkit people, who had ambushed Temüjin some time after his meeting with To'oril and had kidnapped his wife, Börte. Their joint attack smashed the Merkit and reunited Temüjin with Börte. For a year and a half after this campaign, Temüjin and Jamuqa formed one camp for the purposes of migration and pasture.¹²⁵ But Temüjin's following grew immensely on the back of his victory over the Merkit and Jamuqa began to imagine him as a threat. Temüjin parted from Jamuqa shortly afterwards on the advice of Börte, who perceived the growing tension between the two men.¹²⁶

Temüjin's appeal was not confined to members of the Qiyat aristocracy. He was also joined by commanders from the Mangqut and Uru'ut peoples who had no obvious ties to Temüjin. Even members of Jamuqa's own household deserted him and joined Temüjin. These were people who described themselves as being 'from the one womb water as Jamuqa'.¹²⁷ The *Secret History*, written decades after the event, simply attributes this shift in support to Temüjin's good fortune. But there is also strong evidence that Temüjin had shown himself to be a more competent leader than Jamuqa. Part of Temüjin's appeal seems to have been his personal charm, which encouraged devotion, even from complete strangers. The *Secret History* recalled how on one occasion, when Temüjin had been in pursuit of some horse-thieves, he came across a boy named Bo'orču, milking his father's mares. When Temüjin explained his situation to Bo'orču the latter instantly mounted a horse and, without telling his father where he was going, followed Temüjin in pursuit of the bandits. Bo'orču would remain a devoted servant of Temüjin until his death.¹²⁸ Temüjin also showed a profound understanding of his subjects' needs, which he used to build his supporter base. Rashīd al-Dīn describes how Temüjin joined in a hunt with 200 riders, who were subject to the Tayi'ci'ut. When night fell they decided to camp together. Temüjin ensured that the riders received a fair portion of the captured game and provided them with tents, kettles, and other equipment for their comfort. Such hospitality prompted the riders to say 'the Tayi'ci'ut left us and dispersed, paying no attention to us. Chinggis Khan [Temüjin], without prior cause, showed us favour and goodness. He is a ruler that takes care of his subjects and knows how to command.'¹²⁹ Indeed, Temüjin treated all manner of people, both lords and serfs, with the utmost respect and kindness; a fact which often undermined the authority of other leaders. Jamuqa

¹²⁴ Togan, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations*, p. 75.

¹²⁵ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 38–45, §§ 106–17.

¹²⁶ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 46, § 119.

¹²⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 47, § 121.

¹²⁸ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 28, §§ 91–3.

¹²⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 162; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 245; Pelliot and Hambis, *Histoire des Campagnes de Gengis Khan*, p. 141.

was most likely pushed away from Temüjin by the latter's tendency to undermine the authority of his neighbours and allies.

It was only a matter of time before Jamuqa and Temüjin were forced into a showdown. The pretext for conflict came when one of Jamuqa's kinsmen was killed for stealing horses from Temüjin's vassals. Jamuqa marched against Temüjin to avenge his dead relative, but Temüjin received word of his approach from a servant in Jamuqa's army and moved to confront him on the marshland known as Dalan Baljut in 1183–4.¹³⁰ It is unclear who won the battle since the *Secret History* and Rashīd al-Dīn provide contradictory accounts of the result. But both sources agree that Temüjin's army continued to grow as a result of defections from both Jamuqa's contingent and that of the Tayiçi'ut in the weeks after the battle.¹³¹ There is, however, very little information on Temüjin's movements after Dalan Baljut since both of the main sources for the history of his early life remain almost completely silent on his activities between 1184 and 1197. In 1221 a Chinese diplomat from the Southern Song claimed that he had seen Temüjin living in exile at the Jin court during this period, and that he remained there for ten years.¹³² If Temüjin was indeed forced to flee to the Jin after the battle of Dalan Baljut it could only have been a temporary setback because he is mentioned successfully coordinating a campaign against the Tatar with the help of both To'oril and the Jin during the same timeframe.¹³³ He also had the strength to put down a revolt by his relatives, the Jurkin, and to fend off a challenge to To'oril's authority by members of his own household.¹³⁴ Indeed, Temüjin appears to have substantially increased his power by 1197, when our sources rejoin his narrative.

Both Rashīd al-Dīn and the *Secret History* fill this lacuna in the history of Temüjin's early career with a discussion of the internal politics of the Kereit. Sometime in the 1190s To'oril faced two challenges from his brothers, Jaqa Gambu and Erke Qara, who successfully sought the support of the Naiman people from the territory around the Altai mountains to depose him.¹³⁵ It was during this period that To'oril was forced into a prolonged exile, first at the court of the Qara-Khitay in East Turkestan and then amongst the Uighur and Tangut rulers of the Tarim Basin. Forced out of both territories, To'oril finally returned to his former ally, Temüjin, around 1197. Temüjin took pity on the Kereit ruler and levied a tax on his own people to restore To'oril to power.¹³⁶ Despite this vital assistance to his former ally, it has to be asked why To'oril did not seek Temüjin's help earlier. The *Secret History* states that Jaqa Gambu had become one of Temüjin's companions

¹³⁰ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 53–4, §§ 128–9; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 160; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 242–5; Pelliot and Hambis, *Histoire des Campagnes de Gengis Khan*, pp. 24 and 35.

¹³¹ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 54, § 130; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 162; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 245–6.

¹³² Dunnell, *Chinggis Khan*, p. 34.

¹³³ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 57, § 134.

¹³⁴ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 58–9, § 136; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 164–5; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 248–51.

¹³⁵ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 73–4, § 151; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 175; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 266.

¹³⁶ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 74, § 151; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 176; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 267; Pelliot and Hambis, *Histoire des Campagnes de Gengis Khan*, p. 231.

(*nökör*) prior to his rebellion against To'oril and Rashīd al-Dīn describes them as *anda*.¹³⁷ Temüjin's connections in the Kereit court may, therefore, have discouraged To'oril from seeking the help of his former ally. Indeed, several of the Kereit's veteran commanders abandoned To'oril only a year after his return to power because he was deemed not to have shown sufficient respect to Temüjin.¹³⁸ Temüjin had, once again, undermined the authority of one of his allies and would soon be drawn into a fight for supremacy with his adopted father, To'oril.

The pair were temporarily forced to put their differences aside to face a renewed challenge from Jamuqa. In 1201 a coalition of forces, united by their fear of Temüjin, met to appoint Jamuqa as their ruler. They awarded him the title of *gurkhan* (universal ruler) in recognition of his position at the head of several aristocratic households.¹³⁹ The alliance included a number of leaders who had been threatened or defeated by Temüjin, the most prominent among them being the Tatars and the Tayiçi'ut. Temüjin had previously fought with small contingents of the Tayiçi'ut, but this time the Tayiçi'ut leadership put their full force in the field. The *Secret History* states that Temüjin, assisted by To'oril, won a crushing victory over Jamuqa's diverse army, which seems to have been incapable of coordinating its efforts. Jamuqa's unruly force fled before battle could be joined and Temüjin took full advantage of the situation to pursue his frightened enemy and destroy them.¹⁴⁰

Temüjin was not left to savour his victory over the Tayiçi'ut for long. To'oril had been obliged to remain loyal to Temüjin since he was in need of allies to fight off the claims of his brothers to the Kereit throne.¹⁴¹ But the balance of power between the two had begun to shift. Temüjin, once a suppliant of To'oril, had now become his chief political support.¹⁴² There were also signs that Temüjin's influence had become overbearing and To'oril began to conspire against him. The Kereit ruler decided to set a trap to destroy Temüjin, who got news of his intentions ahead of time and fled.¹⁴³ Stung by this temporary reverse, Temüjin soon returned with a new army and inflicted a decisive defeat on To'oril. The Kereit ruler was forced to flee into the wasteland of the western Gobi where he was murdered by a band of Naiman who did not recognize him, such was his impoverished state.¹⁴⁴ This victory permanently established Temüjin as the dominant ruler in the eastern steppe.

After absorbing the bulk of To'oril's soldiers into his army Temüjin was powerful enough to challenge the Naiman, who had provided refuge to his erstwhile ally, Jamuqa. The Naiman ruler, Tayang Khan, had become apprehensive of Temüjin's

¹³⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 73, § 150; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 175; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 266.

¹³⁸ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 74, §152.

¹³⁹ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 63, § 141; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 182; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 277.

¹⁴⁰ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 70, § 148.

¹⁴¹ For information on the Kereit dynastic struggle, see Togan, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations*, pp. 82–8.

¹⁴² Togan, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations*, p. 93.

¹⁴³ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 89, § 170.

¹⁴⁴ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 109, § 188.

swift rise and was gathering a coalition of neighbouring rulers with the intention of crushing him. Yet news of his preparations was soon conveyed to Temüjin, who determined to strike the Naiman before they could attack him. He set out with his army on the 17 May 1204, ordering each of his soldiers to light multiple fires in their camps to convey the impression that his forces were larger than they truly were. His subterfuge succeeded in unsettling Tayang Khan, who had not anticipated such a daring assault on his position. Unprepared and unnerved, the Naiman ruler withdrew his forces to the mountainous region known as the 'Naqu Cliff', where they were cornered by Temüjin's army and butchered.¹⁴⁵ This victory over the Naiman removed the last serious obstacle to Temüjin's complete domination of eastern Inner Asia. Tayang Khan died during the fighting on the Naqu Cliff, whilst Jamuqa, who had deserted the Naiman army prior to the battle, was soon apprehended and executed by his former ally.¹⁴⁶ Now no one remained to challenge Temüjin's authority.

The removal of his immediate rivals in Inner Asia allowed Temüjin to consolidate his power over his new political union. He began by summoning an assembly of his followers, in which he had himself declared supreme ruler of the Mongol Nation. The *Secret History* states that 'when the people of the felt-walled tents had been brought to allegiance, in the year of the Tiger (1206) they all gathered at the source of the Onon River. They hoisted the white standard with nine tails and there they gave Činggis Qa'an [i.e. Temüjin] the title of khan.'¹⁴⁷ The *Jām'ī al-Tavārikh* confirms the gathering of Temüjin's followers and his formal investiture at the head of the new state. Yet Rashīd al-Dīn records Temüjin receiving the title of 'Changīz' (i.e. Chinggis) in addition to that of 'Khan'. According to his account, Temüjin was proclaimed 'Ruler of the World' by a powerful shaman named Kōkōcū, who claimed that God (i.e. Eternal Heaven) had 'given him [Temüjin] the title of Changīz Khān' and that 'by the will of God you should have this name'. Rashīd al-Dīn translated the new title as 'strong ruler', deriving from the Mongol word 'čing', which he explained to mean 'strong', and this remains the most widely accepted reading of the term.¹⁴⁸ The fact that the newly dubbed Chinggis Khan, as he will be referred to from now on, received both his title and his authority from a heavenly mandate was a sign that he intended to hold a much more autocratic hold on power than his predecessors.

The concept of divinely mandated rule had always been an important force for centralizing authority in previous Inner Asian empires. In his study on the origins of the term 'Tenggeri' (Tängri), Jean-Paul Roux has demonstrated that it evokes themes of 'vastness' and 'eternity'.¹⁴⁹ Rulers therefore naturally sought to draw

¹⁴⁵ For Chinggis's war with the Naiman, see *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 109–22, §§ 188–96.

¹⁴⁶ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 128–32, §§ 200–1.

¹⁴⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 133, § 202.

¹⁴⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 90; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 127. Also see Igor de Rachewiltz, 'The Title Činggis Qan/Qayan Re-examined', *Gedanke und Wirkung: Festschrift zum 90. Geburtstag von Nikolaus Poppe*, ed. Walther Heissig and Klaus Sagaster, Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1989, pp. 281–98.

¹⁴⁹ Jean-Paul Roux, 'Tängri. Essai sur le ciel-dieu des peuples altaïques', *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, Vol. 149, No. 1, 1956, p. 65.

links between their own authority and the unlimited and eternal power of the deity, Tenggeri. The Xiongnu employed the title of 'shan-yü' for their rulers; a term which Chinese historians believed referred to the 'vastness' of their authority.¹⁵⁰ Similarly the Uighur kaghans employed 'tängri' in their titulature to draw comparisons between the extent of their authority and the power of Tenggeri, whilst also demonstrating the divine origin of their rule (e.g. *tängritäg tängriidä bolmış türk bilgä qağan*—heaven-like, heaven-created, wise Türk Qağan).¹⁵¹ Chinggis asserted the unlimited and eternal nature of his own authority by drawing on this same ideology.

Chinggis's claim to rule by the will of Möngke-Tenggeri (Eternal Heaven) situated his authority within popularly held Inner Asian ideas of cosmology and history. Despite not being analogous to a monotheistic or Abrahamic concept of 'God', Tenggeri was, nevertheless, thought to have been the supreme creative force in the world. He occupied the highest level of Heaven from where he established order in the earthly realm of humans, animals, and spirits.¹⁵² Most importantly, Tenggeri was responsible for determining the destiny of all human beings. This was particularly true for the political world, in which the Chinggisids believed Tenggeri would appoint a ruler through whom the will of Heaven would be implemented. This belief is most vividly demonstrated in the letter of Chinggis's grandson, Güyük Khan, to Pope Innocent IV in which Güyük reproved Innocent for claiming to know the will of God/Heaven.¹⁵³ Eternal Heaven had appointed the Mongols to rule the world by granting them universal military success, ignorance of which seemed to Güyük to be unreasonable: 'How dost thou know that such words as thou speakest are with God's sanction? From the rising of the sun to its setting, all the lands have been made subject to me. Who could do this contrary to the command of God?'¹⁵⁴ Chinggisid rule had been imposed by Tenggeri and was therefore irresistible. Chinggis secured his absolute control over the Mongol Nation by linking his rule to Inner Asian concepts of destiny and heavenly mandate.

The belief that Eternal Heaven (Möngke-Tenggeri) had appointed Chinggis to rule alone served to legitimate the centralization of power in his hands. It also concealed his assault upon the old aristocratic elite. The appeal to heavenly support was consistently employed by Chinggis whenever he sought to overstep the boundaries

¹⁵⁰ Roux, 'Tängri. Essai sur le ciel-dieu des peuples altaïques', p. 70.

¹⁵¹ 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, p. 45.

¹⁵² B. A. Litvinsky, 'Religion and Religious Movements II', *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, Vol. III, ed. A. H. Dani and V. M. Masson, Paris: UNESCO, 1992, p. 430; René Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*, trans. N. Walford, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970, p. 86.

¹⁵³ Igor de Rachewiltz, 'Heaven, Earth and the Mongols in the Time of Chinggis Khan and His Immediate Successors (ca. 1160–1260) – A Preliminary Investigation', *Lewen Chinese Studies*, Vol. XVII, 2007, p. 119; Peter Jackson, 'World Conquest and Local Accommodation: Threat and Blandishment in Mongol Diplomacy', *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honour of John E. Woods*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer and Sholeh A. Quinn, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz-Verlag, 2006, pp. 3–22.

¹⁵⁴ 'Güyük's Letter to Pope Innocent IV', *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, ed. Christopher Dawson, London: Sheed & Ward, 1955, p. 86.

of traditional authority. The *Secret History* claimed that during his aforementioned conflict with Jamuqa, Chinggis was justified in recruiting his *anda*'s vassals on the grounds that they had received a divine revelation encouraging them to join him: 'We would not have parted with him [Jamuqa], but a heavenly sign appeared before my very eyes, revealing the future to me [...]. "Together Heaven and Earth have agreed: Temüjin [Chinggis] shall be lord of the people!"'¹⁵⁵ In this instance, the otherwise condemnable behaviour of Jamuqa's servants in abandoning their master is rendered virtuous by an appeal to a heavenly mandate, which prioritized loyalty to Chinggis over the hereditary obligation owed to an aristocratic household. Such justification was necessary for Chinggis's subjects if they were to abandon their old masters in favour of his new state.

The new ideology of divine mandate was even used to justify the killing of Kōkōcū, Chinggis Khan's chief shaman, when the latter threatened to act as a rival source of authority. Kōkōcū was Chinggis's stepbrother and had been an active supporter of his push to promulgate the ideology of heavenly mandate amongst the Mongols. Kōkōcū had announced that it was the will of the supreme deity, Möngke-Tenggeri, that Chinggis should rule, during the latter's coronation in 1206.¹⁵⁶ But the shaman subsequently overestimated the power that his status as a spiritual leader afforded him amongst the Mongols and had contested with Chinggis's brothers for control of their armies. Chinggis explained Kōkōcū's murder in terms of the new political ideology: 'because Teb-Tenggeri [i.e. Kōkōcū] laid hands on my younger brothers and spread baseless slanders among them in order to sow discord, he was no longer loved by Heaven, and his life, together with his body, has been taken away'.¹⁵⁷ Kōkōcū had many allies amongst the Mongols but Chinggis no longer relied upon the consent of his supporters to legitimate his policies. He spoke on behalf of Eternal Heaven, which he claimed, gave him the sole authority to rule his people.

In addition to outlining the divine origins of his authority, Chinggis Khan used the occasion of his investiture in 1206 to impose a new hierarchy upon his political union. According to the *Secret History*, Chinggis Khan announced his intention of organizing his followers into an imperial army divided into decimal units: 'having formed units of a thousand, I shall appoint them commanders of a thousand'.¹⁵⁸ The decimal system was not an innovation introduced by Chinggis Khan. Both the Liao and the Jin had used a similar system to organize their administrative and military units.¹⁵⁹ There were even examples of the decimal system being employed by Chinggis Khan's allies and enemies on the Inner Asian steppe. The Kereit had long divided their army into units of 1,000 soldiers and the *Secret History* has To'oril

¹⁵⁵ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 48, § 121.

¹⁵⁶ Vaṣṣāf, p. 309; Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj*, ed. E. A. Wallis Budge, Vol. 1, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2003, p. 353; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 90; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 127.

¹⁵⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 170 and 173, §§ 245 and 246.

¹⁵⁸ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 133, § 202.

¹⁵⁹ Sneath, *The Headless State*, p. 114; Michal Biran, *The Empire of the Qara Khitai in Eurasian History: Between China and the Islamic World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 148.

number his army in *tümens* (units of 10,000) prior to Chinggis's first attack on the Merkit in 1182.¹⁶⁰ The Naiman also organized their army according to the decimal system and Chinggis himself is mentioned forming his army into units of 1,000 (a *mingqan*) prior to his attack on the Naiman in 1204: 'he counted his troops and on the spot formed units of a thousand *men*, appointing the commanders of a thousand, the commanders of a hundred and the commanders of ten'.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, Chinggis Khan's decision to reconstitute the decimal units of his army in 1206 caused a further decline in the importance of the aristocratic households. Old household units were dissolved and reconstituted into troops of *mingqan* (1,000 soldiers), over whom Chinggis appointed *noyat* (commanders) drawn from amongst his *nököt* (companions). The composition of these *mingqan* rarely accorded with the household units which they had replaced. They were made up of an agglomeration of defeated enemies who had surrendered to Chinggis, allied troops, and soldiers who had voluntarily joined his forces.¹⁶² Old obligations to aristocratic households counted for little within these new composite units, which owed their loyalty exclusively to the khan.

Chinggis made it clear that status within his new army depended solely upon loyalty to him and not aristocratic pedigree. The commanders Chinggis Khan appointed to lead the *mingqan* units came from a variety of different backgrounds, but they all shared a strong record of service to him. Indeed, command of a *mingqan* was, to some extent, a reward for past services. Before naming his commanders, Chinggis Khan declared, 'to those who sided with me when I was establishing our nation, I shall express my appreciation and, having formed units of a thousand, I shall appoint them commanders of a thousand'.¹⁶³ The list of commanders (*noyat*) included men who had previously been the slaves and servants of aristocratic houses, but who found themselves among the leading strata of the new Mongol state as a result of their former services to the khan.

The appointment of otherwise lowly people to positions of great authority based upon their loyalty and service was something that characterized Chinggis Khan's leadership well before his enthronement in 1206. In 1202, when To'oril Khan was plotting to betray Chinggis, his plans were overheard by a humble horse-herder, Badai, who was bringing mare's milk to his master's house. He immediately told a companion, Kišiliq, and the pair fled to inform Chinggis of the Kereit ruler's deception. After To'oril's defeat Chinggis awarded these humble herders To'oril's ceremonial gold tent, his silver vessels and bowls, and a contingent of Kereit servants to guard them. They were named freemen and were permitted to carry quivers and drink the ceremonial wine in addition to receiving a portion of the war booty and the game hunted by Chinggis's army.¹⁶⁴ They were, in short, elevated to the status of propertied nobility for their service and both were named among the commanders of *mingqan* in 1206.

¹⁶⁰ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 35, § 104.

¹⁶¹ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 113, § 191.

¹⁶² Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, p. 41.

¹⁶³ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 133, § 202.

¹⁶⁴ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 108, § 187.

Yet perhaps the most prominent member of the *ötögus bo'ol* (servants/serfs) to be ennobled by Chinggis Khan was the Jalayir slave, Muqali. The Jalayir had been the hereditary servants of the Qiyat-Borjigin ever since their subjugation at the hands of Qaidu, the grandfather of Qabul Khan.¹⁶⁵ Muqali's family were counted amongst the slaves of the Jurkin house and were transferred to Chinggis Khan's control after he defeated their masters sometime in the 1180s or 1190s. Muqali's father, Gü'ün U'a, took his sons and 'came to pay homage to Činggis Qa'an and said, "Let these sons of mine be the slaves of your threshold; if they stray from your threshold, cut off their heel tendons! Let them be the personal slaves of your door; if they abandon your door, cut out their livers and cast them away!"'¹⁶⁶ The seemingly menial task of serving at the future khan's door, presumably holding the tent-flap, was in fact a golden opportunity for Muqali to advance his career in the Mongol army. Service in Chinggis's personal quarters afforded Muqali intimate contact with his new master, with whom he spent every day and it is reasonable to assume that they became quite close. Indeed, several of Chinggis Khan's household servants were appointed to positions of great responsibility in his army. Jelme, the son of a blacksmith, was promised as a slave to Chinggis Khan shortly after his birth and was also entrusted with holding the tent-flap of Chinggis's tabernacle. He became the commander of a *mingqan* and was later granted the supreme command over all Chinggis Khan's officers (*noyat*).¹⁶⁷ In Muqali's case, the intimacy of his relationship with the future khan led him to become one of Chinggis's closest advisors. During the coronation ceremony in 1206 Chinggis recalled that 'you [Muqali] urged me to carry out what was right, you persuaded me not to do what was wrong, and in this way made me gain the throne'.¹⁶⁸ Muqali may also have played an active role in promoting the concept of Chinggis Khan's divine mandate, since he was said to have received a 'heavenly sign', which served as a 'clear portent' that Chinggis would attain political superiority over the steppe.¹⁶⁹ In 1206 he was rewarded with command over the left wing of the Mongol army and 10,000 soldiers. He played an important role in the subsequent campaign against the Jin and was left as Chinggis Khan's viceroy over North China with the title of *gui ong* (fortunate prince), a rank not granted to any other member of Chinggis's army.¹⁷⁰

Muqali, Badai, and Kišiliq were all considered members of Chinggis Khan's *nököt* (also spelt *nököd*, singular *nökör*; meaning companion). Both the *Secret History* and the *Jām'i al-Tavārikh* spend much time telling the stories of these *nököt* and their prominence in both sources suggests their importance in Chinggis Khan's early movement as well as their pre-eminence in his later empire. The *nököt* were members of a khan's retinue, tied to their lord by individual covenants and

¹⁶⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 37; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 48.

¹⁶⁶ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 59–60, § 137.

¹⁶⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 133 and 52, §§ 202 and 125.

¹⁶⁸ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 138, § 205.

¹⁶⁹ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 138, §§ 205–6.

¹⁷⁰ Igor de Rachewiltz, 'Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 9, Nos 1–2, Nov. 1966, p. 118.

friendships, rather than bonds of hereditary obligation. Their relationship to the ruler was highly personal and did not necessarily extend to the latter's household or his heirs.¹⁷¹ Chinggis Khan's *nököt* constituted his oldest and most devoted companions. Included in their number were men such as Bo'orču, who had helped Chinggis retrieve stolen horses during his youth. Chinggis later recalled Bo'orču's selflessness in following him: 'What did you know about me when you became my companion? You became my companion because of your brave heart.'¹⁷² Chinggis prized such loyalty highly and he summoned Bo'orču to join him after he had formed an alliance with To'oril.

The relationship between a khan and his *nököt* was one of mutual dependence in which the wealth and status of the *nököt* rested entirely upon the strength of the khan. The khan was obliged to financially support his *nököt* in return for their services, a fact reflected in the *nökör* Qorči's approach to Chinggis Khan after the latter departed from Jamuqa:

What kind of happiness is it for me, the man who foretold so many great affairs, merely to become the leader of ten thousand [soldiers]? Make me a leader of ten thousand, but in addition allow me to take freely beautiful and fine girls from among the people, and let me have thirty as wives.¹⁷³

Both the financial and political dependence of the *nököt* on the khan rendered them the most reliable group in his entourage. The *nököt* showed complete devotion to Chinggis and in return they were given offices and wealth, which they would enjoy for as long as their master retained power.

The decimal system was implemented in conjunction with the creation of a bodyguard (*kešik*) corps, which served to reinforce Chinggis Khan's control of his new regime. The bodyguard corps was initially formed for the protection of the khan and the administration of his household. However, in the context of the imperial administration the bodyguard played a vital role in maintaining the khan's control over the state apparatus. Members of the bodyguard were often raised in the household of the khan and usually developed an intimate relationship with the ruler.¹⁷⁴ The trust between a khan and his guard made them natural candidates for the highest offices in the army and the bureaucracy. The bodyguard were characterized by their often fanatical loyalty to the khan and were employed by several other Inner Asian rulers, the most notable amongst them being To'oril Khan of the Kereit. To'oril's guard was composed of *nököt*, men with whom he shared a personal friendship or bond and whom he knew he could trust. Such was To'oril's reliance on this unit that he would station them on the wings of his army to prevent the less

¹⁷¹ Lawrence Krader, 'Feudalism and the Tatar Polity of the Middle Ages', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Oct. 1958, p. 84.

¹⁷² *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 137, § 205.

¹⁷³ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 48, § 121.

¹⁷⁴ V. V. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, trans. H. R. Gibb, second edn, London: Luzac, 1958, p. 385; Thomas Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of Grand Qan Möngke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251–1259*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, p. 113; Charles Melville, 'The Keshig in Iran: The Survival of the Royal Mongol Household', *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, pp. 142–3.

reliable units of his force in the centre from fleeing.¹⁷⁵ Chinggis Khan attributed similar importance to his own guard, of whom he said:

My elder nightguards who, in the cloudy night,
Lying down around my vented tent
Ensured that I slept in quiet and peace
You have made me gain this throne.¹⁷⁶

The bodyguard unit became a vital tool for Chinggis to impose his authority over his new political union.

Not all units in Chinggis Khan's army were newly formed associations commanded by his *nököt*. Several of the new *mingqan* were commanded by Chinggis's relatives and many aristocratic households which had voluntarily submitted to him were permitted to keep their forces intact. Yet both Chinggis Khan's family and his allies were constantly reminded that their prestige rested solely upon their continued devotion and service to him, not their aristocratic descent.

Chinggis Khan's family seem to have found it particularly difficult to accept his newfound authority and he regularly suspected them of undermining his position. The awards made to his siblings during his coronation in 1206 were not particularly prestigious and his mother, Hö'elün, was reported to have been 'dissatisfied' with the number of people awarded to her and her sons 'thinking them too few'.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, Chinggis's eldest brother, Joči Qasar was only awarded 4,000 people, whilst his half-brother, Belgutei, was awarded a paltry 1,000 people. Chinggis had long considered his brothers to be more of a hindrance than a support. Joči Qasar is known to have abandoned Chinggis sometime before 1204, from which time Rashīd al-Dīn quoted an anonymous source as stating that he was one of Chinggis's most serious rivals.¹⁷⁸ He was even said to have attacked and scattered a troop of Onggirat, which had set out to submit to Chinggis.¹⁷⁹ Shortly after his coronation in 1206, Chinggis began to hear rumours that Joči Qasar was again threatening his position. The *Secret History* states that Chinggis Khan responded by kidnapping his brother and taking him out onto the steppe for violent interrogation. Hö'elün was informed of the danger and followed their tracks. When she finally caught up with her sons she found Joči Qasar, bound and deprived of his hat and belt, at the mercy of Chinggis Khan. She scolded Chinggis for his conduct, condemning him for suspecting his brother. The khan showed signs of contrition before his mother, whom he had always respected, but he had never let her stand in the way of his ambitions. He returned to court and secretly deprived Joči Qasar of all but 1,400 of his people, a betrayal that supposedly sent his mother to an early grave.¹⁸⁰

Chinggis showed little more consideration to his other relatives when they stood in his way. His youngest full brother, Temüge Otčigin, appears as a somewhat

¹⁷⁵ Togan, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations*, pp. 111–12.

¹⁷⁶ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 159, § 230.

¹⁷⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 166, § 242.

¹⁷⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 181; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 276.

¹⁷⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 181; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 276.

¹⁸⁰ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 170, § 244.

pathetic figure in the *Secret History*, which describes him as ‘Otčigin, the Easy-Going. He is an early sleeper and a late riser.’¹⁸¹ Shortly after Chinggis’s coronation Temüğe found himself the victim of the powerful shaman, Kōkōčū, who deprived him of his people and forced him to kneel at his feet. Temüğe sped to Chinggis to inform him of this outrage. He appeared before his brother’s bed in the early morning, weeping at his desperate situation. Temüğe’s plight caused Chinggis to be scolded again, this time by his wife, Börte, who angrily asked him ‘now that you have let them ill-treat your younger brothers in such a way, how do you view all this?’ Chinggis allowed his brother to retake his people and murder Kōkōčū, but the *Secret History* makes it clear that the khan was more concerned that the shaman might threaten his sons than for the welfare of his brother.¹⁸² Yet even Chinggis Khan’s sons could not be trusted completely. They failed to forward the spoils of a siege to Chinggis during his campaign against Transoxiana and Iran in 1220, for which he publicly rebuked them ‘to the point where they almost sank in the place where they stood, to the point where they could not wipe off the sweat of their brow’ and only the intercession of his senior commanders prevented him going further.¹⁸³ Yet Chinggis Khan’s most serious attack on a family member came during his coronation in 1206, when he confronted his paternal uncle, Dāritai Otčigin, for having joined the Kereit in their struggle against him in 1204. Turning to Dāritai, Chinggis Khan bellowed that ‘Daritai joined the Kereyit. I shall wipe him from my sight.’ Again, it was only the intercession of Chinggis Khan’s senior commanders, who pleaded for leniency in the name of Chinggis’s father, that convinced him to let his uncle live: ‘He snuffed, as if he had smoke in his nose. “Right!” he said, and thinking of his good father he calmed down.’¹⁸⁴ All power and prestige within Chinggis Khan’s political union rested upon loyalty and service to him, and this principle applied to his relatives as much as it did to his subjects.

Chinggis Khan applied the same standards of loyalty and service to his allies. Those who remained faithful to him were permitted to retain their own appanages, whilst those who crossed him had their family fortunes obliterated. One of the more notable examples of Chinggis Khan’s willingness to preserve aristocratic households was the incorporation of the Oirat into his army in 1207. The Oirat were a ‘Forest People’, who inhabited the heavily wooded territory to the north-west of Chinggis Khan’s new realm. Their leader, Qutuqa Beki, had joined with Jamuqa in an attempt to resist Chinggis Khan’s rise in 1201, but Chinggis’s appointment as supreme ruler in 1206 forced Qutuqa to reconsider his position.¹⁸⁵ Qutuqa subsequently welcomed a Mongol army sent to subdue the Forest Peoples under the command of Chinggis’s eldest son Joči in 1207. Indeed, Qutuqa helped Joči subdue the Forest Peoples and returned with him to the Mongol court, where the Oirat ruler submitted to Chinggis Khan personally.¹⁸⁶ Qutuqa Beki’s family

¹⁸¹ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 121, § 195.

¹⁸² *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 171–2, § 245.

¹⁸³ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 193, § 260.

¹⁸⁴ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 167, § 242.

¹⁸⁵ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 63, § 141; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 183; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 278.

¹⁸⁶ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 164, § 239.

were permitted to retain the rule of the Oirat and his son, Inalči, was given in marriage to Chinggis's daughter, Čečeyigen.¹⁸⁷ This union represented the start of a marriage partnership between Chinggis Khan's descendants and the Oirat ruling family, which formed a semi-independent principality within the Mongol Empire and an important source of military and political support.

The ruling family of the Onggut were also permitted to maintain their independence after they chose to side with Chinggis Khan against the Naiman in 1204. The Onggut occupied a strategic position between the steppe and China, which rendered them important allies in Chinggis Khan's later campaigns against the Jin.¹⁸⁸ It was, perhaps, with an eye to future conquest in China that Chinggis granted his daughter, Alaqa Beki, to the son of the Onggut ruler, Alaquš Quri Tegin, in 1207. The prestige that a Chinggisid princess afforded the Onggut was evidenced by the determination with which they sought to retain Alaqa Beki within Alaquš's household. She was subsequently married to Alaquš's nephew, and then another of his sons, after the death of her first husband.¹⁸⁹ Marriage into the Chinggisid royal line won these princes the title of *küregen* (imperial son-in-law), a position which saw them included as cadet members, or clients, of the extended royal family.¹⁹⁰ Of course, the status of the *küregen* should not be over-stated. Their marriages connected them to the Chinggisid line, but the offspring of such unions were never considered for political leadership, nor were they treated with the respect of full Chinggisid princes. Amīr Chupan, who married no fewer than two of the Īlkhān Abū Sa'īd's sisters, for instance, was still referred to as 'Chupan *Qaraju*' or 'Chupan the commoner' by Uzbek Khan in 1319.¹⁹¹ Moreover, the *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah*, a dynastic table tracing the lineage of the Chinggisids, fails to record the children of any such union between a Chinggisid princess and a non-Chinggisid client, suggesting that they were never considered to be full family members.¹⁹² Marriage to a Chinggisid princess was a reward to promote loyalty, but it did not cloud the distinction between the ruling dynasty and their subordinates.

On the other hand, rebellion against Chinggis Khan usually resulted in the annihilation of a ruling family and the division of their people among more loyal commanders. Shortly after forming an alliance with To'oril Khan, Chinggis cultivated relations with the Jurkin, who were ruled by descendants of Chinggis's distant relative Örqin Barqaq. Rashīd al-Dīn mentions the Jurkin forming an independent camp (*gura'an*) within Chinggis's army during the battle of Dalan

¹⁸⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 164, § 239; Uno, 'Exchange-Marriages in the Royal Families of Nomadic States', p. 180.

¹⁸⁸ Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 349; Dunnell, *Chinggis Khan*, p. 63.

¹⁸⁹ Holmgren, 'Observations on Marriage and Inheritance Practices', p. 164.

¹⁹⁰ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 163–4, § 239; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 55; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 78.

¹⁹¹ Vaṣṣāf, p. 365.

¹⁹² For examples, see Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Hamadānī, *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah*, MS., Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Ahmet III, Catalogue No. 2937, ff. 128 and 130. See also George Qingzhi Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression: Mongolian Royal Marriages from World Empire to Yuan Dynasty*, New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008, p. 13.

Baljur and their support must have afforded Chinggis some prestige in these early days.¹⁹³ Yet the Jurkin nobility were notorious for their sense of pride and when Chinggis sought to cement his relationship with the Jurkin leadership by holding a banquet for their ruling house, the Jurkin queens insulted and beat one of Chinggis's stewards for failing to observe the appropriate etiquette. This insult, combined with other indiscretions, developed into a brawl between the two sides that eventually caused a permanent split between them.¹⁹⁴ When Chinggis successfully subdued the Jurkin, he obliterated their line. The *Secret History* recorded with some satisfaction that 'Činggis Qa'an subjugated such a proud people and destroyed all those who were of the Jurkin clan [i.e. their ruling family]. He made the tribe and its people his personal subjects.'¹⁹⁵ Prestige and power within Chinggis Khan's political union were derived from service and loyalty to the khan, according to which principle slaves were elevated to the status of commanders and the most ancient and noble households were annihilated.

The concentration of political and military power over the steppe in the hands of Chinggis Khan gave him the strength to expand his authority outside Inner Asia. Armed with the belief that he possessed the special protection of Heaven, Chinggis Khan set about imposing his authority over the rulers and peoples of Eurasia. Beginning in 1209 with the invasion of the Tangut (Xixia) and Jin realms of north and north-west China, Chinggis Khan subjugated or cowed the major powers from Zhongdu (modern Beijing) to the Caucasus (Map 1).¹⁹⁶ In 1225 he returned to Mongolia, where he remained for one year, before leading a punitive expedition against the Tangut capital of Xingqing, during which he died in 1227.¹⁹⁷

The society which Chinggis Khan bequeathed to his fellow nomads was a vastly different one from that which had existed in the mid-twelfth century. He had imposed a centralized authoritarian government upon the steppe by defeating or subjugating the old aristocratic households and undermining the bonds of hereditary obligation upon which they rested. In their place, he introduced the doctrine of heavenly mandate, which he employed to legitimate his social revolution. The Mongols were registered into a new army which was to be commanded by the most devoted companions (*nököt*) of Chinggis Khan.

Chinggis Khan's state remained stable under his charismatic guidance, but his death forced his successors to reinterpret the source of legitimate political authority within the fledgling Mongol Empire. The three decades after Chinggis's death was a time of transition, during which the Mongols sought to compensate for his loss and institutionalize his government in the form of laws, offices, and official histories.

¹⁹³ Rashid al-Din, ed. Thackston, p. 160; Rashid al-Din, ed. Karimi, p. 244.

¹⁹⁴ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 55–6, §§ 130–2; Pelliot and Hambis, *Histoire des Campagnes de Gengis Khan*, p. 214.

¹⁹⁵ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 61, § 139.

¹⁹⁶ Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', pp. 351–2; Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, p. 229; Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, p. 107.

¹⁹⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 198, § 208; David Morgan, *The Mongols*, Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1986, p. 62.



Map 1. Eurasia at the Start of the Thirteenth Century. ©The Australian National University, CAP CartoGIS

During this period two traditions of political authority emerged, both of which claimed to have acquired their power on the basis of their former proximity to the khan. The first of these traditions was represented by the companions of Chinggis Khan, who claimed shared authority on the basis of their intimacy with him. They were, however, opposed by the descendants of Chinggis Khan's fourth son, Tolui, who claimed that supreme power belonged to their line on a hereditary basis. These traditions will be examined and defined in more detail in the following chapters.

2

The Problem of Succession (1227–59)

Chinggis Khan's armies dispersed to their pastures shortly after his death in 1227. A council (*quriltai*) of the leading commanders, princes, and queens was summoned for the following year to discuss the succession, but there must have been a general feeling of uncertainty regarding the stability of their union. Chinggis Khan had designated his third son, Ögödei, as his heir, yet it was unclear whether his will would be respected.¹ Chinggis's sons had previously squabbled over the succession and there was potential for a rival candidate to challenge Ögödei's position.² The status of Chinggis Khan's *nököt* was also uncertain. Their loyalty to Chinggis Khan had been built upon a series of individual covenants and friendships which no potential successor could hope to re-establish. The *nököt*'s relationship with the new imperial government would have to be redefined if they were to be successfully integrated into the future Mongol Empire. Mongol control of the territories conquered in Central Asia and China was also under threat as the death of Chinggis Khan emboldened his enemies to resist demands for submission and tribute. Decisive action was required to prevent the Chinggisid revolution from collapsing.

The nomination of Chinggis Khan's successor was, therefore, only one of several issues to be addressed by the *quriltai* of 1229. It was equally important to establish both the constitution of the new imperial polity and the extent of authority it wished to afford any potential Chinggisid successor. The *quriltai* of 1229 was anything but a simple ratification of Chinggis Khan's wishes, as has been suggested by some.³ Rather, it was a forum through which Ögödei and his supporters were expected to spell out the precise character of their authority. Throughout the *quriltai* Ögödei emphasized the themes of consultative rule and the protection of precedent to win the support of his father's former companions. These two principles formed the basis of collegial claims to authority, and were confirmed by Ögödei's son and heir, Güyük, during his own *quriltai* in 1246. In what follows, the nomination and rule of both Ögödei and Güyük will be analysed to plot the transmission of authority during the first two decades after Chinggis Khan's death.

¹ Chinggis Khan's designation of Ögödei is recorded in the *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 187, § 255; 'Alā al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvaynī, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*, ed. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Qazvīnī, Vol. 1, Leiden: Brill, 1912–37, pp. 143–4; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 262; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, 385.

² *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 183, § 254.

³ J. J. Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests*, London: Routledge, 1971, p. 75; Morgan, *The Mongols*, p. 112.

The precise composition and procedures of the *quriltai* have been a source of some uncertainty amongst contemporary commentators. The *quriltai* meetings were shrouded in secrecy and virtually no eye-witness accounts of the ceremony exist.⁴ Foreigners were initially prohibited from participating in the *quriltai* and Chinggis Khan forbade those who did attend from disclosing sensitive information discussed during the meetings.⁵ The lack of detailed information regarding the *quriltai* has led to confusion surrounding the questions of who attended a *quriltai* and how they chose a new ruler. Some scholars have adopted a strict interpretation of the *quriltai*s held after the death of Chinggis Khan, claiming that only members of the *altan uruq* (Chinggis's blood-relatives) were permitted to participate.⁶ Others have taken a more flexible approach and regard the *quriltai* as having been open to all the leading members of the Mongol aristocracy; i.e. the *altan uruq*, khatuns (queens), *küregen* (royal sons-in-law), and the *noyat*.⁷ The question of which procedures were used to nominate a new khan has also been left relatively untouched, with previous discussions focusing more on the coronation of the successful candidate than upon the selection process itself. The centrality of the *quriltai* to collegial notions of authority means that it is important to address these problems before the matter of Ögödei's nomination is discussed in more detail.⁸

The *quriltai* was a form of council in which senior political and military leaders would gather to discuss the election of rulers, the formation of policy, the division of loot and pastures, and the resolution of disputes.⁹ The *quriltai* was employed widely by the polities of Inner Asia prior to the thirteenth century to facilitate cooperation between the various aristocratic households. The *quriltai* retained its importance during the reign of Chinggis Khan, who used the council to assert control over his subjects and to announce his most important policy decisions. After Chinggis Khan's death there were two types of *quriltai*: those summoned to appoint a new ruler, and those called to discuss military and administrative

⁴ Herbert Franke, *From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor and God: The Legitimation of the Yüan Dynasty*, Munich: Verlag der Baerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1978, p. 20; Elizabeth Endicott-West, 'Imperial Governance in Yüan Times', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 2, Dec. 1986, p. 531.

⁵ Endicott-West, 'Imperial Governance in Yüan Times', p. 531; also see *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 77, § 154.

⁶ Vladimirtsov, *Le Régime Social des Mongols*, p. 100; Hsiao Ch'i-Ch'ing, 'Mid-Yüan Politics', *The Cambridge History of China*, v. 6, *Alien Regimes and Border States*, 907–1368, p. 494; Michal Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997, p. 7.

⁷ Endicott-West, 'Imperial Governance in Yüan Times', p. 526; Bold, *Mongolian Nomadic Society*, p. 84.

⁸ The following discussion is based upon an earlier paper, Michael Hope, 'The Transmission of Charismatic Authority through the Quriltai of the Early Mongol Empire and the Ilkhanate of Iran (1227–1335)', *Mongolian Studies*, Vol. 34, 2012, pp. 87–116. Also see Florence Hodous, 'The Quriltai as a Legal Institution in the Mognol Empire', *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 56, 2012/2013, pp. 87–102; Mansura Haider, 'The Kuriltai in the Medieval Central Asian Sources', *The Journal of Central Asian Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1995, pp. 220–34; Endicott-West, 'Imperial Governance in Yüan Times', pp. 526–40.

⁹ Bold, *Mongolian Nomadic Society*, p. 83; Vladimirtsov, *Le Régime Social des Mongols*, p. 100.

policy.¹⁰ Ancillary activities such as the division of loot and the celebration of festivals most often occurred in conjunction with one of these two *quriltai*s.

The most common description of the *quriltai* ceremonies provided by 'Alā al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvaynī and his continuators is of a meeting between the *aqā* (elder brother) and *ini* (younger brother) to discuss important matters relating to the Empire.¹¹ The examples provided by both Juvaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn make it clear that these meetings involved the junior (*ini*) members of the khanate seeking the advice of their elders (*aqā*, pl. *aqā-nar*) as to the most appropriate course of action. Rashīd noted that after the death of Ambaqai Khan the Tayīci'ut formed a *quriltai* in which they asked the opinion of the 'heads' (*muqadamman*) and 'greats' (*buzurgan*) of that nation regarding the succession.¹² Similarly, during the *quriltai* which followed the death of Güyük in 1247, the council sought the opinion of Joči's second son Batu, saying: 'Batu is the *aqā* to all the princes. Whatever he commands, his word is law.'¹³ During the *quriltai* of 1229, however, the *aqā-nar* are referred to as the senior aristocracy, rather than as individuals. Juvaynī states that the question of the succession to Chinggis was discussed by the leading 'princes, noyans and emirs'.¹⁴ On the other hand, the *Secret History* highlights the importance of the leading *altan uruq*, saying that the *quriltai* consisted of, 'the princes of the right hand headed by Ča'adai [Chaghadaï] and Batu; the princes of the left hand headed by Otčigin Noyan, Yegü and Yisüngge; the princes of the centre headed by Tolui; the princesses, the imperial sons-in-law, the commanders of ten thousand and those of a thousand'.¹⁵ These somewhat vague descriptions of the *aqā-nar* require further clarification to establish their role in both the *quriltai* of 1229 and in the Mongol polity more generally.

The *aqā-nar* have only been analysed sparingly, despite the fact that they occupied an important place within the structure of the *quriltai*. The term *aqā* is most commonly found in the secondary literature in reference to family hierarchy. For example, Ögödei was the *aqā* (elder brother) of Tolui; Temüge was the *aqā* (elder, uncle) of Chaghadaï; Batu was the *aqā* (eldest, senior) of the entire *altan uruq* through his descent from Joči, Chinggis Khan's eldest son.¹⁶ Yet F. W. Cleaves has demonstrated that the term was employed more broadly as a mark of respect denoting general seniority.¹⁷ By analysing its use in the *Secret History*, Cleaves concludes that the word *aqā*, in its narrowest sense, referred to an 'elder brother'. But the term evolved over time and was subsequently used to designate all senior male relatives and also to show deference to important figures outside the kinship

¹⁰ Endicott-West, 'Imperial Governance in Yüan Times', p. 526.

¹¹ 'Alā al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvaynī, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J. A. Boyle, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997, pp. 220, 557, 561, 586; also see Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 34.

¹² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 131; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 197.

¹³ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 557.

¹⁴ 'Alā al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvaynī, *The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J. A. Boyle, Vol. 1, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958, p. 185.

¹⁵ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 200, § 269.

¹⁶ F. W. Cleaves, 'Aqa Minu', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 24, 1962–3, pp. 66 and 70.

¹⁷ Cleaves, 'Aqa Minu', p. 69.

group. Indeed, the term appears most widely as a title for senior members of the *nökör*, and on at least one occasion for a Chinggisid princess.¹⁸ Cleaves's conclusions demand a far more flexible understanding of the term *aqa-nar* in the context of the *quriltai*.

An *aqa-nar*'s high status initially rested upon their advanced age. Respect for elders and ancestors was a legacy of the aristocratic households, in which authority was theoretically defined by the order of succession from a dynastic founder.¹⁹ The patriarchal stratification of aristocratic society encouraged a link between age and seniority which was then applied to associations in which no discernible tie of kinship existed. The *Secret History* provides the example of the Merkit, who referred to their senior commanders as the '*aqa-nar*' (elder brothers), whilst their subordinates were dubbed '*ini-nar*' (younger brothers).²⁰ However, the destruction of the aristocratic households and the creation of the Mongol Empire overturned prior notions of authority by concentrating absolute power in the hands of Chinggis Khan. The association between age and power endured in the political terminology of the new society, yet it was the knowledge and experience of Chinggis Khan's rule and laws that became the primary source of the *aqa-nar*'s authority.

Knowledge of traditions relating to Chinggis Khan furnished the *aqa-nar* with significant influence in the court of Ögödei. The Chronicle of Herat (*Tārikhnāma Harāt*) records the reception of an elderly (*pīr*)²¹ companion of Chinggis Khan in the *ordu* of Ögödei by saying that: 'Okotāy bestowed the utmost affection upon him and sat him at the right-hand of the princes and said "O, monument to our great father, what has forced your laborious march [to this place]?"' The elder replied that he had brought a '*yarliq* [order] decreed by the conquering emperor Changiz Khān', at which point Ögödei came down from the throne and told the elder to 'convey the will and the order of the *yarliq* from the throne', which he subsequently ascended.²² As the successors to Chinggis Khan derived their power from an institutionalized form of Chinggisid authority, they were obliged to show the utmost deference to anyone purporting to have knowledge of political traditions attributed to him. Rashīd al-Dīn confirms the power which knowledge of

¹⁸ e.g. Arghūn Aqa (head of the regional secretariat in Iran and then governor of Khurāsān until his death in 1275), Sūnjāq Aqa (a senior commander in Hülegü's army and later governor of Arab Iraq and Fars), Kalmish Aqa (Tolui's granddaughter), Bulghay Aqa (head of the Central Secretariat during the reign of Möngke, 1253–9), Bolad Aqa (also known as Bolad Chingsang, served as Qubilai's ambassador to the Ilkhānate in 1283, where he remained a leading courtier until his death in 1313), Māzūq Aqa (a senior commander in the army of Abaqa Khan), Husayn Aqa (*noyan* and father-in-law of Ahmad Tegüder Khan).

¹⁹ Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, p. 142; Rudi Lindner, 'What Was a Nomadic Tribe?', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1982, p. 696.

²⁰ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 32, § 101.

²¹ The Persian word '*pīr*' literally means 'old person' or 'elder'. According to Islamic law, the term is used to refer to people in their forties or fifties. It can either be used as a title (e.g. *Pīr-i Sarandīb* = Adam) or as a compound to express age and seniority. The term is also used to refer to religious leaders, such as Sūfī *murshids*, in recognition of their spiritual advancement (see C. E. Bosworth, '*Pīr*', *EI2*, Vol. VIII, pp. 306–7).

²² Sayf al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb Harāvī, *Tārikhnāma Harāt*, ed. Ghulām Riḍā Ṭabāṭabā'i Majd, Tehran: Asāṭir, 1383/2004–5, pp. 134–5.

Chinggisid traditions afforded the *aqa-nar* in an enumeration of Chaghadai's chief ministers. Rashīd states that one of Chaghadai's senior commanders was an elder (*pīr*) named Qūshūn Noyan, whom he described as 'knowledgeable of the previous state' (i.e. under Chinggis Khan) and of being a '*sāhib-i tajarub*' (master/possessor of experience).²³ Qūshūn Noyan was in turn responsible for promoting the career of a Khitan slave, known simply by his title 'Vizier', who had recorded the history and sayings (*bilig*) of Chinggis Khan in minute detail. Chaghadai ultimately appointed the Khitan to the head of his chancellery and awarded him the title of 'vizier' (minister).²⁴ Knowledge of Chinggis Khan's traditions provided officials with a means to swift advancement in Ögödei's regime. Knowledge of these traditions, which the elders (i.e. *aqa-nar/pīr*) derived from their service to Chinggis Khan, gave them the authority to counsel the khan on imperial policy and entitled them to high office.

Experience was also an important source of power for an *aqa*. The *Georgian Chronicle* reported that soldiers who had distinguished themselves in the service of Chinggis Khan's grandson, Berke, were awarded the title of '*aghna-ghom*' (i.e. *aqa-nar-i qum*: superiors or elders of the nation).²⁵ In some instances this experience translated into practical expertise in administration or warfare which could be drawn upon by the khan. Chinggis Khan used the expertise of his *nököt* by appointing them as atabegs (lord protector; Pers. *atābak*)²⁶ for his children. Realizing that Chaghadai was both 'headstrong' and 'punctilious', Chinggis Khan appointed the *noyan* Köke Čos to 'stay at his side evening and morning, and [...] tell him what he thinks'.²⁷ Atabegs were also appointed to Chinggis Khan's three other sons to command their armies and to act as advisors on policy. But the experience of the *aqa* could also take the form of services which they had rendered to the khan, for which they expected some form of remuneration. The *Secret History* sums up the exchange of service and rewards between the khan and his subjects in a dialogue between the Ba'arin *nökör*, Qorči, and Chinggis Khan in which the former asked his new sovereign: 'Temüjin, if you become lord of the people, how will you please me?'²⁸ Yet the past services of an *aqa* also gave him the right to influence the policy of his khan. The Jočid prince, Noqay, who is described as both a 'pīr' and an 'aqā' by several sources, summoned a *quriltai* of his own at which he demanded the attendance of the leading candidates for the throne on the basis of past service: 'O children [i.e. the descendants of Chinggis Khan], I served your fathers with ancient and noteworthy merit, and upon this [basis] you should hear my un-biased

²³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 379; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 549.

²⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 379; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 549.

²⁵ *Histoire de la Géorgie: Depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'au XIXe siècle*, trans. Marie F. Brosset, St Petersburg: l'Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1849, p. 571.

²⁶ The office of *atabeg* (*ata* = father/*beg* = lord) was common in Eurasian empires and was particularly prevalent amongst the Saljūq (Seljuk) dynasty of Iran (1056–1194). The atabeg acted as a protector for young princes and trained them in the traditional steppe customs of archery, hunting, swordsmanship, and horse-riding. Atabegs assumed great power and influence over their wards and were typically required to fulfil the latter's administrative and military responsibilities until they reached their majority.

²⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 167, § 243.

²⁸ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 48, § 48.

words.²⁹ Noqay would later reiterate his record of loyal service when seeking clemency from his sovereign, Tüqtā: ‘the land and the army are the *ilkhān*’s [i.e. Tüqtā’s], and your slave [Noqay] is an old and weak man, who has spent his whole life in the service of your forefathers’.³⁰ In at least one instance the experience gained in the service of Chinggis Khan afforded its participants an official title. Those who remained loyal to Chinggis when he was at his weakest were given the title of ‘Baljuntu’, in reference to Lake Baljuna, where the future khan was said to have promised to reward their devotion.³¹ This title remained a source of authority and pride for the Baljuntu who emerged as the leading figures of Ögödei’s new order.

The *aqa-nar* was, therefore, a diverse group, which included the former khan’s commanders (*noyat*), queens (*khatuns*), blood-relatives (*altan uruq*), sons-in-law (*kiüregen*) and servants. Membership of the *aqa-nar* was not based upon membership of an exclusive class or bloodline, but rather one’s proximity and service to the deceased khan. The authority which the *aqa-nar* derived from their wisdom and past services to Chinggis Khan afforded them a leading position in the Mongol Empire after his death. They were a focus of residual authority, a position they harnessed through the institution of the *quriltai*, in which the polity would seek their expertise to appoint a new khan.

The *quriltai* of 1229 established the principle of consultative-collegial rule as an essential part of Ögödei’s government. The most important role within this *quriltai* was played by the *aqa-nar* who positioned themselves as the guardians of Chinggis Khan’s will. Their support was an essential source of legitimacy for Ögödei, who received their nomination. The expertise of the *aqa-nar* on traditions relating to Chinggis Khan not only gave them the right to appoint his successor but also entitled them to a say in the formation of the new state. The power of the *aqa-nar* was confirmed by a decree made by Ögödei which protected the laws (*jasag*) and offices that had existed at the time of the *quriltai*. The *quriltai* of 1229 legitimated Ögödei’s rule whilst also recognizing the importance of the *aqa-nar* in his new government.

The *Tārikh-i Jahāngushā* of ‘Alā al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik Juvaynī is the most authoritative source on the *quriltais* of Ögödei and Güyük. Juvaynī’s history of the years after Chinggis Khan’s death served as a template which was reproduced by virtually all later Persian sources and provides an essential historical link between the *Secret History* and the *Jām’i al-Tavārikh*, written at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Juvaynī was not present at the *quriltais* of Ögödei and Güyük himself, but he derived his account from eye-witnesses, such as his patron and friend Arghun Aqa, who was closely affiliated with the Ögödeid house and attended the *quriltai* of 1246 personally.³² Moreover, Juvaynī attended at least one *quriltai* in 1282, and

²⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 363; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 528; Judith Pfeiffer, ‘Aḥmad Tegüder’s Second Letter to Qalā’ūn (682/1283)’, *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer and Sholeh A. Quinn, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006, p. 189.

³⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 365; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 531.

³¹ See F. W. Cleaves, ‘The Historicity of the Baljuna Covenant’, *Harvard Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3/4, Dec. 1955, p. 376.

³² See the Translator’s Notes to Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. xviii.

was therefore familiar with the procedures of the meeting.³³ Juvaynī's account is a rich source of information on the rituals and ceremonies used to nominate both Ögödei and Güyük, and is easily the most credible and detailed account for the *quriltai*s of 1229 and 1246.

After a protracted feast, the *quriltai* began when the *aqā-nar* 'spoke of the affairs of the realm and the testament of Changīz Khān'.³⁴ The potential existence of a will attributed to Chinggis Khan which named Ögödei as his heir has led several historians to conclude that the *quriltai* of 1229 was a simple acclamation of Ögödei's candidacy.³⁵ Yet such a view fails to appreciate the symbolic importance of the *quriltai* to those who attended. In 1229 and again in later *quriltai*s the reading of the will served to establish the *aqā-nar* as the 'executors'³⁶ of the deceased khan's estate and as experts on Chinggisid tradition.³⁷ Moreover, although both the *Secret History* and Juvaynī conceived of Ögödei's appointment in terms of a public decree or written contract, in most instances the will of the previous ruler was far less tangible.³⁸ Rather, the *aqā-nar* were expected to use their familiarity with the past ruler to determine whom he favoured most amongst his living relatives. These deliberations often involved the discussion of multiple candidacies before the *aqā-nar* could agree upon 'the will' of the khan. Indeed, the *Yuanshi* reported that there was a strong faction in favour of nominating Tolui, Ögödei's younger brother, during the *quriltai* of 1229.³⁹ In this instance, however, the *aqā-nar* 'adopted the counsel' (i.e. the will) in favour of Ögödei's candidacy, announcing that: 'in accordance with the command of Chingiz-Khan it behoves thee with divine assistance to set thy foot upon the hand of kingship'.⁴⁰ Subsequent councils would demonstrate that references to the will of previous rulers and Chinggisid tradition thinly disguised the political interests of the *aqā-nar* in the *quriltai*.

When Ögödei was informed of his candidacy, of which he must have already been largely aware, he declined the throne in a ritual demonstration of humility before his *aqā-nar*. Declining the throne became an essential part of the nomination process and forced those present to affirm their choice publicly. It also served to confirm the authority of the *aqā-nar* who had nominated him. Indeed, Ögödei ceremoniously refused the throne in favour of his *aqā-nar*; 'although Changīz Khān's command was to this effect, yet there are my elder brothers and uncles, who are more worthy than I to accomplish this task'. Ögödei also offered the throne to his younger brother, Tolui, although in this instance Tolui's claim to the throne was based upon his status as the *otčigin*; i.e. 'the youngest son of the eldest house'.

³³ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. xxiv.

³⁴ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 1, p. 146.

³⁵ Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests*, p. 75; Morgan, *The Mongols*, p. 112.

³⁶ 'wāsi' in the Persian sources.

³⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 517; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 742; Shabānkārā'i, p. 293.

³⁸ Krawulsky, *The Mongol Ilkhāns and their Vizier Rashīd al-Dīn*, p. 29; Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 182; *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 187, § 255.

³⁹ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 18; Igor de Rachewiltz, 'Yelü Ch'u-ts'ai (1189–1243): Buddhist Idealist and Confucian Statesman', *Confucian Personalities*, ed. A. F. Wright and D. Twitchett, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962, p. 199.

⁴⁰ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 185.

As the head of one of the four senior lines of Chinggisid princes, Tolui was still considered to be a member of the *aqa-nar* and Ögödei was obliged to defer to him.⁴¹

The *aqa-nar* responded to these protestations by reaffirming their commitment to Ögödei's rule. The confirmation of the *aqa-nar*'s nominee also became an essential part of the *quriltai* ritual and served to bolster the position of both the *aqa-nar*, and their nominee. Those present at the *quriltai* of Ögödei told him that 'this task Chingiz-Khan has confined to thee of all his sons and brethren and has entrusted to thy counsel the binding and loosing, the tying and untying thereof. How then may we suffer any change or alteration of his words or allow any transformation or violation thereof?'⁴² Reference to the will of the previous ruler demonstrated that the nominee was the 'correct' and only possible choice of successor. It also confirmed the expertise of the *aqa-nar* who would 'remind' their nominee of the wishes of previous rulers. In later times the affirmation ceremony included those present providing an oral or written oath (*möchälgä*) of loyalty to the *aqa-nar*'s candidate.⁴³ Opposing the decision of the *aqa-nar* under these circumstances constituted a violation of both tradition and one's oath.

A decision having been reached, the astrologers were consulted as to the most auspicious time to hold the coronation ceremony. Ögödei was then seated upon the throne by the leading members of the four senior Chinggisid lines, who acted on behalf of the *aqa-nar*. Juvaynī noted that he was crowned 'by the resolution of aged counsel and the support of youthful fortune'. The reference to 'aged counsel' no doubt alludes to the decision of the *aqa-nar* in the *quriltai*, whilst 'youthful fortune' (*javān-bakht*) was conveyed upon him through the coronation ceremony itself and represented the shared hope of his subjects that his rule would bring them fortune: 'May the kingdom prosper by his being Khān.' Thereafter, Ögödei was given the title of *qa'an* (*khaghan*; khan of khans) to distinguish him from his brothers, whose control of *ulus* (people/realm) afforded them each the title of khan.⁴⁴ Those assembled at the *quriltai* then proffered their formal submission to the new *qa'an* by slinging their belts over their shoulders, doffing their caps and bowing to the throne.⁴⁵

The *quriltai* did not terminate with the enthronement of the new ruler; this was merely the first item of business to be addressed by the assembly. With the coronation over, the *qa'an* was expected to outline the direction of his new government. His most pressing concern was to reward his supporters. Juvaynī noted that after Ögödei's coronation he 'opened the deposits of the treasuries' and

⁴¹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 186.

⁴² Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 187.

⁴³ Maria E. Subtelny, 'The Binding Pledge (*möchälgä*): A Chinggisid Practice and its Survival in Safavid Iran', *New Perspectives on Safavid Iran, Empire and Society*, ed. Colin P. Mitchell, London: Routledge, 2011, pp. 9–29.

⁴⁴ De Rachewiltz, 'Qan, Qa'an and the Seal of Güyüg', p. 273; Thomas Allsen, 'Changing Forms of Legitimation in Mongol Iran', *Rulers From the Steppe: State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery*, ed. Gary Seaman and Daniel Marks, Los Angeles: Ethnographics Press, University of Southern California, 1991, p. 224.

⁴⁵ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, pp. 187–8; For the inauguration ceremony, see Ron Sela, *Ritual and Authority in Central Asia: The Khan's Inauguration Ceremony*, Bloomington: Indiana University Research Institute for Asian Studies, 2003, pp. 26–32.

'allotted his portion to each of his relatives and soldiers, his troops and kinsfolk, noble and base, lord and liege, master and slave, to each in accordance with his pretensions'.⁴⁶ This was not an indiscriminate show of beneficence, but rather recognition of the collegial nature of Ögödei's rule. The language of Juvaynī's description confirms that these were not simple gifts, but rather the 'portion' and 'share' of the collective wealth due to Chinggis's family and followers, which they had accumulated through service to the Empire.⁴⁷ Chinggis Khan had rewarded both the *altan uruq* and the *nököt* with *qubi* (lit. 'share'), which entitled them to a percentage of the revenues paid by the sedentary communities they had helped to conquer.⁴⁸ The *noyat* were also entitled to a state salary to support the armies under their control. In Iran this salary consisted of one *dīnār* for each soldier (i.e. 10,000 *dīnārs* for the commander of a *tümen*).⁴⁹ These salaries were tested against statistics held in the 'Blue Book' composed by Chinggis Khan's adopted son, Shighi Qutuqu, which contained the names of commanders and the number of their soldiers.⁵⁰ Ögödei acted as the custodian of these revenues which were regarded as the shared inheritance of Chinggis Khan's senior family and companions. That he may have been too generous in paying off this trust is suggested by Juvaynī's remark that he was forced to 'close the mouths of the censorious with rejection of their advice' as he distributed the treasury.⁵¹ Yet placating the *aqā-nar* was a necessary measure for Ögödei to retain their support, which meant that such overindulgence became a theme of his reign.

The new qā'an was also expected to use the *quriltai* to address what the Persian sources describe as the '*dabt wa tartīb-i muhimāt-i mamālik*' (recording and arranging the ordinances of the realm). Proclamations on the *muhimāt* were used to announce a new qā'an's policies to the *quriltai*. These proclamations provided an indication of the new ruler's aims and intentions and could be used to build support for his reign. The proclamations of Ögödei were designed specifically to reassure the *aqā-nar* and reconcile them to his rule. This aim was initially achieved by providing an amnesty for crimes committed during the interregnum. Succession to the Mongol throne was often bitterly contested with rival factions employing murder, bribery, embezzlement, torture, and treason to achieve their political aims. When allegations were made against the *noyat* and governors during the *quriltai* of 1229, Ögödei responded by announcing that 'every hasty speech which until the day of our accession hath issued from the mouth of any man, we shall pardon and cancel it'.⁵² Ögödei wanted to avoid prosecuting the crimes perpetrated during the interregnum prior to his *quriltai*, many of which may have been committed by

⁴⁶ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 1, p. 149.

⁴⁷ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 1, pp. 149, 160, Vol. 3, pp. 80, 86, 96.

⁴⁸ For *qubi*, see Thomas Allsen, 'Sharing Out the Empire: Apportioned Land Under the Mongols', *Nomads in the Sedentary World*, ed. Anatoly M. Khazanov and André Wink, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2001, pp. 174–6 and de Rachewiltz, 'Personnel and Personalities in North China', p. 130.

⁴⁹ Aḥmad ibn Yaḥ ibn Faḍl Allāh al-'Umārī, *Das Mongolische Weltreich: Al-'Umārī's Darstellung der Mongolischen Reiche in seinem Werk Masālik al-Absār fi Mamālik al-Amṣār*, ed. Klaus Leich, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1968, p. 154.

⁵⁰ For the Blue Book, see *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 135, § 203.

⁵¹ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 1, p. 149.

⁵² Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 190.

allies of his brothers and uncles who had played leading roles in his nomination. A general amnesty was adopted to reconcile these potential enemies to Ögödei's fledgling rule.

Proclamations concerning the *muhimāt* were also used to announce the allocation of offices and armies. A newly crowned qa'an would seek to have his allies posted to senior positions within his army, personal guard, and household suite. The number of changes made to existing office holders depended upon the nature of the transition. If there had been a smooth transition of power from the last khan to his successor then there would be no need to purge the old regime and the *muhimāt* proclamations simply confirmed the incumbent office holders. If, however, the new ruler had won power through a coup or a contested election, it should be expected that the number of new appointees would be high. Neither Juvaynī nor the *Secret History* provides information on the offices granted during Ögödei's *quriltai* beyond confirming that armies were sent to the Empire's frontiers in China, Iran, and Russia under the command of Sübodei, Chormaghun, and Koketei, all veteran members of his father's *nököt*.⁵³ The *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah* lists at least sixteen of Chinggis Khan's former *noyat* among Ögödei's leading commanders, albeit there is little or no information on the origins of the other officials mentioned.⁵⁴ Juvaynī's account of the *muhimāt* proclamations does, however, record the beginning of a new ritual in which Ögödei confirmed the *jasaq* (laws) of his father, saying, 'he made a *yasa* that such ordinances and commands as had previously been issued by Chingiz Khan should be maintained, and secured, and protected against the evils of change, and alteration, and confusion'.⁵⁵ This ritual was continued by Ögödei's heir, Güyük, during his own *quriltai* in 1246:

He [Güyük] made a *yasa* that just as Qa'an [Ögödei], at the time of his accession, had upheld the *yasas* of his father and had not admitted any change or alteration of his statutes, so too the *yasas* and statutes of his own father should be immune from the contingencies of redundancy and deficiency and secure from the corruption of change.⁵⁶

The fact that the confirmation of the *jasaq* played such an important role in the 1229 *quriltai* and again in 1246 demands further analysis to determine how this ritual fitted into the *muhimāt* proclamations and how it could have brought legitimacy to Ögödei's rule.

The *jasaq* was initially believed to have been a legal code attributed to Chinggis Khan during his creation of a new society.⁵⁷ This legal code covered a wide variety of subjects ranging from prescribed punishments for criminal offences (e.g. adultery, murder, theft, and perjury), regulations concerning the composition and organization of the army, details of Chinggisid political doctrine, religious taboos, and the

⁵³ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 190.

⁵⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah*, f. 132.

⁵⁵ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 189.

⁵⁶ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 256.

⁵⁷ George Vernadsky, 'The Scope and Contents of Chingis Khan's *Yasa*', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 3, Nos 3–4, Dec. 1938, p. 337; Denise Aigle, 'Loi mongole vs loi islamique: Entre mythe et réalité', *Annales Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 59e Année, Nos 5/6, Asie centrale, Sept.–Dec. 2004, pp. 972–6.

appropriate etiquette for dealing with foreign envoys.⁵⁸ However, none of the available sources provide a precise date for the composition of the *jasaq*, which has led several scholars to the conclusion that it consisted of a collection of orders and decrees made by Chinggis Khan during his lifetime. Relying upon the evidence of the *Yuanshi*, Igor de Rachewiltz and Paul Ratchnevsky have concluded that these decrees were recorded by court secretaries (*bitikchis*) throughout Chinggis Khan's reign and were subsequently collected into a 'final form' during the *quriltai* of 1229. They argue that it was this 'Great *Jasaq*' which Ögödei publicly endorsed after his nomination to the throne.⁵⁹ Yet David Morgan has suggested that the *jasaq* represented a far less homogeneous entity, which consisted of 'no more than the recollection of Chinghiz Khan's utterances, or alleged utterances, that were more or less legislative in character'. Evidence for Morgan's argument is provided by the fact that different factions within the Mongol Empire believed that it contained contradictory information. For example, Ögödei's grandson, Qaidu, claimed that the *jasaq* restricted the throne to members of the Ögödeid line, but the descendants of Chinggis Khan's fourth son, Tolui, who supplanted Ögödei's sons on the Mongol throne, claimed that it could pass to any one of the other three Chinggisid lineages. This disparity, combined with the fact that Chinggis Khan's successors implemented their own *jasaq* in addition to his, would suggest that the *jasaq* never was compiled into a definitive book of laws. Rather, as Morgan believes, it remained an ideal through which the orthodoxy of a certain policy or action could be legitimated.⁶⁰ This disagreement as to the substance of the *jasaq* necessitates a further discussion of its subject matter to establish why Ögödei felt the need to confirm it.

Whether as a legal code or as a series of traditions, the *jasaq* was used to stratify the Mongol polity and regulate its internal relationships in accordance with the perceived will of Chinggis Khan. David Ayalon has highlighted the fact that Juvayni's chapter on the *jasaq* of Chinggis Khan contains a long discussion of the decimal system which Chinggis had introduced to order his army in 1206.⁶¹ Ayalon argued that this description, situated in a chapter purporting to discuss the *jasaq*, demonstrated Juvayni's lack of first-hand knowledge of Chinggis Khan's laws.⁶² Yet de Rachewiltz has confirmed that both the stratification and administrative structure of the realm would have been key components of the Great *Jasaq*.⁶³ Rashīd al-Dīn also links the *jasaq* to Chinggis Khan's creation of a social hierarchy by saying that, 'when the fortune of Changiz Khān emerged, they

⁵⁸ Vernadsky, 'The Scope and Contents of Chingis Khan's *Yasa*', p. 342; Aigle, 'Loi mongole vs loi islamique', p. 982.

⁵⁹ Igor de Rachewiltz, 'Some Reflections on Činggis Qan's Jasar', *East Asian History*, Vol. 6, Dec. 1993, p. 99; Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, p. 188.

⁶⁰ David Morgan, 'The "Great *Yāsā* of Chinghiz Khan" and Mongol Law in the Ilkhānate', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. 49, No. 1, in Honour of A. K. S. Lambton, 1986, p. 172.

⁶¹ David Ayalon, 'The Great *Yāsā* of Chingiz Khān: A Reexamination (Part A)', *Studia Islamica*, No. 33, 1971, p. 135; Morgan, 'The "Great *Yāsā* of Chinghiz Khan"', p. 167.

⁶² Ayalon, 'The Great *Yāsā* of Chingiz Khān (Part A)', pp. 135 and 139.

⁶³ De Rachewiltz, 'Some Reflections on Činggis Qan's Jasar', p. 99.

[the Mongols] came under his command [*farmān*] and he organized [*yāsāmīshī*] them through his firm *yāsāq*. Those who were wise and brave he made commanders [i.e. *noyat*] and to those who were agile and nimble he gave wealth, and to the unknowing he rendered little and sent [them] to be shepherds.’⁶⁴ The *jasaq* was regarded as the embodiment of Chinggis Khan’s social revolution and therefore a prescription for the ideal society.

The *jasaq* also contained edicts relating to property and privileges which were attributed to Chinggis Khan. The *jasaq* was often quoted to justify benefices and privileges held by Chinggis Khan’s close companions. Perhaps the most famous of these was the *jasaq* granting the household of the father to his youngest son, which was used to justify the claim of the descendants of Chinggis Khan’s youngest son, Tolui, to the ownership of his father’s former household, camps, and the bulk of his army.⁶⁵ The *jasaq* also made provision for tax exemptions and obligations.⁶⁶ Religious leaders were amongst the main beneficiaries of such exemptions, which they used to increase their land-holdings and revenue bases. Yet the *jasaq* also contained safeguards for the property of the Mongols. It was forbidden to appropriate the property of the dead, which was regarded as the lawful inheritance of the deceased’s widow and children.⁶⁷ The Ghūrid historian, Minhāj al-Dīn Jūzjānī, also remarked that the *jasaq* prohibiting theft had rendered the Mongols fearful of even picking up a lost whip.⁶⁸ Not only did the *jasaq* make provision for those who had received land, titles, and wealth, but it also protected the hereditary transmission of these advantages within the same family.

In the context of the *quriltai* of 1229, the *jasaq* represented an institutionalized form of Chinggisid authority, which both Ögödei and his *aqā-nar* used to legitimate their positions within the Mongol Empire. As we have seen, the *jasaq* supported both the social hierarchy and benefices obtained by Chinggis Khan’s followers. Ögödei’s confirmation of the *jasaq* was therefore a guarantee to the *aqā-nar*, and the propertied elite more generally, that he would not seek to change the society which had empowered them, or deprive them of the offices which they held through the *jasaq*. Evidence for this assertion is provided by the role of the *jasaq* in future *quriltais*. Juvaynī’s account of the *muhimāt* proclamations of Ögödei’s successor Güyük state that he simultaneously confirmed the *jasaq* of both his father and grandfather along with their *yarliqs* (decrees).⁶⁹ These decrees, attributed to Ögödei and Chinggis, were the written enumeration of the propertied aristocracy’s titles and powers. The fact that they were confirmed in conjunction with the *jasaq* elucidates the underlying purpose of Ögödei’s original decree. Another account of

⁶⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 293; Rashīd al-Dīn, eds. Karīmī, p. 435.

⁶⁵ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 549. For the *otchigin*, see Vladimirtsov, *Le Régime Social des Mongols*, p. 60.

⁶⁶ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 539.

⁶⁷ Vernadsky, ‘The Scope and Contents of Chingis Khan’s *Yasa*’, p. 358.

⁶⁸ Minhāj al-Dīn Jūzjānī, *Tabakāt-i Nāsiri: A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia Including Hindustan; from A.H. 194 (810 A.D.) to A.H. 658 (1260 A.D.)*, ed. Henry George Raverty, New Delhi, Oriental Books Reprint, 1970, p. 1079.

⁶⁹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 256.

the confirmation ritual is provided by Abū al-Qāsim Qāshānī, who documented the *quriltai* of Öljeitü Khan in 1304:

after performing the customary celebrations and extending the wares of triumph, [he] rose to oversee the promulgation of the decrees of the *yisun* [*yosun*] and *yasa* of his goodly brother Ghazan Khān and from excessive kindness and true [and] genuine fondness and [in] observance of the duties of brotherhood, he fixed and affirmed upon each one of his [Ghazan's] various commanders and pillars of government their previous positions and past fashions and earlier jobs [and] ancient tasks.⁷⁰

In both these examples, the transition of power from the deceased ruler to his successor was a smooth one, rendering it unnecessary to make dramatic changes to the office holders of the previous regime. Both Güyük and Öljeitü were, therefore, eager to confirm the *jasag* of their predecessors in a bid to win the support of the propertied aristocracy. However, Güyük's successor, Möngke, refused to confirm the *jasag* of either Ögödei or Güyük during his *quriltai* in 1251, which followed upon a military coup. Indeed, Möngke massacred Güyük's officials in a bloody purge of the Ögödeid regime which made confirming their *jasag* impossible. Nor would Ghazan Khan (r. 1295–1304) confirm the *jasag* of his predecessors, with whom he had quarrelled and fought for control of the realm. The ceremonial confirmation of a predecessor's *jasag* constituted a positive endorsement of the status quo which was only ever employed in the context of a smooth transition of power. In practical terms, the confirmation of the *jasag* implied the recognition of the offices and benefices held during the previous reign. Ögödei's confirmation of his father's *jasag* in 1229 was, therefore, designed to reconcile the propertied aristocracy to his rule by guaranteeing them their old positions in his new regime.

The *quriltai* of 1229 was the first step in the institutionalization of Chinggisid authority. With the throne empty the khan's former companions and relatives assumed the role of the *aqā* (senior) on the basis of their past intimacy with Chinggis Khan. The *aqā-nar* harnessed this authority through the institution of the *quriltai*, which they used to nominate their own candidate, Ögödei, to the throne. In return, Ögödei was expected to protect the powers and incomes which the *aqā-nar* had won in the service of Chinggis Khan by publicly endorsing their role in his new regime. These two principles of consultative rule and the protection of precedent became the basis of future claims to collegial rule which identified strongly with the symbolism of the *quriltai* and the *jasag*.

His coronation complete, Ögödei now turned to the business of government. The wealth and power generated by Chinggis Khan's conquests were regarded as the shared property of his former companions and family. Ensuring the equitable division of the Empire's resources was, therefore, an important component of Ögödei's rule. He was expected to protect and advance the economic and political interests of Chinggis Khan's former companions and family by allocating them shares of pasture land and state revenue. Moreover, he was expected to actively engage the *aqā-nar* in the business of government, to which end he consulted with

⁷⁰ Qāshānī, p. 29.

the senior princes and *nököt* during the formulation of policy. His reign serves as an excellent example of the relationship between the khan and his leading subjects within the collegial polity.

Ögödei's first act in government was to achieve the final subjugation of the Jin dynasty in northern China. The conquest of the Jin had been agreed upon during the *quriltai* of 1229 and was now one of Ögödei's most pressing objectives.⁷¹ The Mongol army began its invasion in 1231, dividing into three units which opened separate fronts in a push against the Jin capital of Kāifēng. Ögödei took command of the centre of the army whilst his brother, Tolui, took control of the right wing and the more experienced *nökör*, Sübodei Ba'atur, held control of the left wing as well as overall command of the invasion itself. After defeating the main body of the Jin army and subjugating much of Hénán Province, the Mongol army began to assault Kāifēng. The city was finally taken after it had been abandoned by the Jin emperor, Aizong in 1233. A temporary Jin court was then established at Caizhou (Tai-zhou) before a combined Mongol–Song army captured the city in 1234. The Jin emperor committed suicide as the city fell and the campaign was brought to a successful conclusion.⁷²

The fall of the Jin called for a new *quriltai* to 'confirm the old and new *yasas*', distribute the wealth which had been attained from northern China and to plot a new course of policy in consultation with the *aqa-nar*.⁷³ The *quriltai* met in the spring of 1234 at Talan Daba and resolved to reallocate the resources and soldiers which had been released by the victory over the Jin. It was decided that a large part of this army should be sent to help with the ongoing war against the Kipchaq and Eastern Europe which had been undertaken simultaneously with the invasion of northern China in 1231.⁷⁴ Ögödei was again willing to assume command of the centre of the army, as he had done in the Jin campaign, but his nephew Möngke interjected:

All of us brothers and sons stand ready to obey thy ever-fulfilled command and have set our eyes and ears to the execution of affairs and the removal of difficulties, in order that we may attend to whatever may be commanded, while the Qa'an busies himself with spectacles, and amusements, and the enjoyment of every wish and pleasure, and rests himself from the toil of travels and the endurance of dangers. Otherwise of what use are so many kinsmen and such countless armies?⁷⁵

For his part, Ögödei was more than willing to delegate the command of the western campaign to his *aqa-nar*. The princes and *nököt*, who stood to gain the most out of imperial expansion, were capable of leading the expedition on their own.

⁷¹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 190.

⁷² Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, p. 258; Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 372; Peter Brent, *The Mongol Empire: Genghis Khan: His Triumph and His Legacy*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1976, p. 148.

⁷³ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 196; Endicott-West, 'Imperial Governance in Yüan Times', p. 538.

⁷⁴ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 190; Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', 368.

⁷⁵ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, pp. 198–9.

The *nökör* Sübodei Ba'atur was placed in overall command of the army which began operations against the Kipchaq in 1236, but the collegial nature of the command structure led to conflict. The *Secret History* records that during a banquet to mark the successful conquest of Kiev the princes turned on each other over the question of who should have the honour of drinking the first cup—a right reserved for the senior leader. Joči's son, Batu, drank first, thereby offending the representatives of the other Chinggisid lines and at least one of the *nököt* who believed that their status was equal to that of Batu. The success of the campaign was then jeopardized as the dissenting commanders deserted the imperial army and returned to their appanages.⁷⁶ Demarcation disputes and political rivalries were an inevitable corollary of the collegial polity which was characterized by weak central leadership.

Back in Mongolia, Ögödei continued to engage the *aqa-nar* in the administration of the Empire. His older brother, Chaghadaï, was consulted on all important decisions.⁷⁷ Indeed, Chaghadaï's opinion was credited as the decisive factor in the appointment of both commanders and soldiers to carry out the war against the Kipchaq in 1236, for which he had devised a system of enlisting one son from every military household to increase the size of the army sent on campaign.⁷⁸ Chaghadaï was also heavily involved in the implementation of a postal system throughout the Empire towards the end of Ögödei's reign.⁷⁹ Ögödei also encouraged his sister-in-law, Sorqaqtani Beki, the wife of Tolui, to take part in the imperial administration. As the mother of Tolui's eldest living sons, Sorqaqtani replaced her husband as the senior member of his house after his death. During his lifetime Tolui had been entrusted with the command of an army as well as extensive pastures in his father's former homeland of Mongolia. Upon his death, Ögödei confirmed these titles as the hereditary right of the Toluids and placed them under Sorqaqtani's management.⁸⁰ Sorqaqtani also inherited a share in devising the policy of the Empire which rivalled that of Chaghadaï. Rashid al-Din claimed that Ögödei would 'consult with her [Sorqaqtani] regarding the entire order and management of the empire and did not turn from her foresight and would not permit change or alteration to her word'.⁸¹ Ögödei fulfilled the promise of his *quriltai* to establish consultation with the *aqa-nar* as an essential feature of government by giving Chaghadaï and Sorqaqtani important roles in the administration of the Empire.

Ögödei's attitude towards the allocation of imperial revenues also served to emphasize the collegial nature of his rule. Since the death of Chinggis Khan there had been no official procedure for collecting tax revenue.⁸² All exactions from the conquered populations of the Mongol Empire had been levied by the Mongol

⁷⁶ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 207, § 275.

⁷⁷ Rashid al-Din, ed. Thackston, p. 375; Rashid al-Din, ed. Karimī, p. 544.

⁷⁸ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 202, § 270. ⁷⁹ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 215, § 280.

⁸⁰ Rashid al-Din, ed. Thackston, p. 401; Rashid al-Din, ed. Karimī, p. 580; Bruno De Nicola, 'Women's Role and Participation in Warfare in the Mongol Empire', *Soldatinnen. Gewalt und Geschlecht im Krieg vom Mittelalter bis Heute*, ed. K. Klaus Latzel, S. Satjukow, and F. Maubach, Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2011, p. 106.

⁸¹ Rashid al-Din, ed. Thackston, p. 401; Rashid al-Din, ed. Karimī, p. 580.

⁸² Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 363.

armies which took food, manpower, and other materiel as the need arose. This practice had led to gross abuses on the part of the soldiery, who looted the territories under their control at will.⁸³ This problem was compounded by the practice of awarding the revenue of villages to the *noyat* and *altan uruq* as *qubi* (share).⁸⁴ The rights of a *qubi* holder were later circumscribed, but during the first two years of Ögödei's reign they were afforded unchecked power over these households. Chinese officials blamed the abuses associated with the land distribution for heavy depopulation in northern China as local farmers migrated away from their homes in the hope of escaping the exactions of the *qubi* holders.⁸⁵

It was only in 1230 when the Khitan secretary and astrologer, Yëlü Chǔcái, advocated a rationalization of the tax system that a modicum of central control was imposed over revenue collection. Yëlü argued that if the income of the Empire was derived through a fixed annual tax levied upon households, rather than arbitrary raids, then the sum collected would rise in tandem with the productivity of the sedentary population.⁸⁶ Ögödei's plan to finish the conquest of northern China in 1231 made him thirsty for revenues and he duly accepted Yëlü's proposal.⁸⁷ The success of the project resulted in Yëlü's appointment as Chief of the Secretariat, under the supervision of the imperial chancellor, Chinqai Noyan.⁸⁸ It was also decreed that the right to collect all taxes would be restricted to the representatives of the regional branch secretariats which Yëlü established in eastern Iran (Khurāsān), Central Asia and China to manage the new state tax system. The imposition of secretarial control over revenues deprived the princes and *nököt* of the right to collect revenue from their own *qubi* lands and, in many cases, even obviated the need for them to reside in the lands they controlled. From 1231 onwards the officials of the regional secretariats would collect the revenue of all appanages and send them to the central treasury before they could be divided amongst the *qubi* holders.⁸⁹ This system was improved after the fall of the Jin in 1234, whose demise provided Yëlü with the means to conduct a census of all northern China with the aim of redistributing the tax burden on a more equitable basis. The completion of the first census in 1236 marked the apogee of secretarial power during the reign of Ögödei.⁹⁰

Theoretically, the growth of the Central Secretariat increased the strength of the qa'an in relation to the princes and *nököt*. It gave Ögödei control over their salaries and increased the income of the central treasury. But Ögödei's legitimacy rested upon sharing the benefits of empire with his father's former companions and family, so he manipulated the system Yëlü had put in place to increase their power.

⁸³ Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 363.

⁸⁴ Allsen, 'Sharing out the Empire: Apportioned Lands Under the Mongols', pp. 174–6 and de Rachewiltz, 'Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period', p. 130.

⁸⁵ Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 363.

⁸⁶ Thomas Allsen, 'Mongol Census Taking in Rus' 1245–1275', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1981, p. 35.

⁸⁷ Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 376.

⁸⁸ De Rachewiltz, 'Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai (1189–1243)', p. 203.

⁸⁹ De Rachewiltz, 'Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai (1189–1243)', p. 201.

⁹⁰ Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 378.

In the same year that the census was completed Ögödei approved a rise in the number of households held as *qubi* by 'imperial relatives and meritorious Mongol officials'.⁹¹ Ögödei's brother Chaghadai was said to have received the revenues of an additional 47,330 households, whilst the descendants of Joči were granted 41,302 further households.⁹² Indeed, the census of 1235–6 recorded that of the 1,730,000 households of North China, 900,000 were granted as *qubi* to the leading princes and *nököt*.⁹³ Nor did the Mongol aristocracy respect the restrictions placed on tax collection. Rather, they continued to withdraw their own levies on the populations under their control in addition to the annual tax.⁹⁴

The administrative machinery introduced by Yëlü to reduce the burden imperial government imposed on its sedentary subjects became a tool for Mongol landlords to exploit those subjects more heavily. In 1238 appanage holders and Central Asian merchants convinced Ögödei to farm out the taxes of each district to the highest bidder.⁹⁵ The results were so gratifying to Ögödei and his court that he placed a Muslim merchant, 'Abd al-Rahmān, in charge of the entire Central Secretariat after the latter promised to double the revenues achieved by Yëlü.⁹⁶ The practice of tax-farming proved popular amongst the appanage holders who increased their income substantially in partnership with the corrupt tax officials, but the policy was ruinous for the sedentary population. The system created by Yëlü did provide the rudiments of what would later become an extensive state bureaucracy, but during the reign of Ögödei it had become a tool for the *aqa-nar* to increase their wealth.

Nor did the revenues sent to the central treasury remain in the possession of the Qa'an. Rather, they were distributed amongst attendees and petitioners at the royal *ordu*. Juvaynī's extensive account of Ögödei's generosity fed the Qa'an's reputation for beneficence which was transmitted to all subsequent writers documenting his reign. Juvaynī construed Ögödei's open-handedness as a sign of his just rule, yet it accorded with the function of the qa'an in a collegial society to share the wealth of the Empire amongst his partners.⁹⁷ 'The treasury doors were flung open' was a description used repeatedly by Juvaynī to characterize Ögödei's generosity.⁹⁸ His rather dramatic statement may have disguised the simplicity of the early Mongol treasury, since even after the construction of the imperial capital at Karakorum there seems to be little evidence pointing to the existence of a formal treasury house. The royal *ordu* continued to migrate between seasonal pastures and hunting grounds until the fall of the Mongol Empire. The majority of the treasury, including

⁹¹ Hsiao Ch'i-Ch'ing, 'Yen Shih (1182–1240)', *Papers on Far Eastern History*, No. 33 (1986), p. 122.

⁹² Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 379.

⁹³ Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier*, p. 204.

⁹⁴ De Rachewiltz, 'Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period', p. 138.

⁹⁵ De Rachewiltz, 'Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai (1189–1243)', p. 207.

⁹⁶ Morris Rossabi, 'The Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty', *China Under Mongol Rule*, ed. John D. Langlois, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 265; Ma Juan, 'The Conflicts Between Islam and Confucianism and their Influence in the Yuan Dynasty', *Eurasian Influences on Yuan China*, ed. Morris Rossabi, Singapore: ISEAS, 2013, p. 61.

⁹⁷ Allsen, 'Sharing Out the Empire', p. 183.

⁹⁸ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, pp. 198 and 254.

its officials, migrated with the qa'an to facilitate the business of government, thereby making it difficult to protect. This statement is confirmed by Ögödei, who was said to have partially justified his open-handedness by pointing out the difficulty in trying to guard and maintain such a treasury.⁹⁹ In one instance he was said to have simply allowed those present at the *ordu* to take whatever they could carry from the treasury.¹⁰⁰ On this basis it is easy to see why the officials of the secretariat were often said to have been appalled by the profligacy of their master.¹⁰¹ Yet such generosity was entirely consistent with the belief that the wealth and power of the Mongol Empire was the shared property of Chinggis Khan's family and companions.

Ögödei's death in 1241 was a cause for sorrow amongst the Mongol elites who, in the coming decades, would view his rule as the epitome of collegial principles. Ögödei's reign was the first and most enduring attempt to institutionalize the authority of Chinggis Khan by appealing to the principles of consultative government and the protection of precedent. These same principles supported the authority of the princes and commanders, who used Ögödei's rule to preserve the wealth and offices they had achieved during the reign of Chinggis Khan. His rule would become a model for all future claims to collegial authority.

Ögödei's immediate successor was his chief-wife,¹⁰² Töregene Khatun, who assumed the regency until a *quriltai* could be formed to elect a new qa'an. Töregene held the throne for an extended period of five years, during which time she demonstrated how the Central Secretariat created by Yelü Chūcái could be used to undermine the power of the *quriltai* and introduce a more centralized form of government. Throughout her regency, Töregene sought to achieve control of the Empire's revenue streams by appointing members of her own household to key positions within the Secretariat. She used her control over the Empire's salaries and benefactions to influence the *quriltai* in favour of her own candidate, through whom she hoped to maintain her authority. Despite succeeding in having her eldest son, Güyük, nominated as Ögödei's successor, Töregene was unable to maintain her control of the state. Güyük had grown jealous of the power wielded by his mother and was determined to win the support of his father's former backers to wrest control of the Empire from her grasp. The *quriltai* of 1246 was an important component of Güyük's resurgence as he employed the symbolism of collegial authority to signal a return to the policies of his father. Güyük used the support he had achieved during the *quriltai* to undermine the power of his mother and restore the *aqa-nar* to their former position. His short reign represented a revival of collegialist power.

⁹⁹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 212. The sentiment was reiterated by Ögödei's heir, Güyük: see Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 260.

¹⁰⁰ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 212.

¹⁰¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 334; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 486.

¹⁰² Töregene had initially been Ögödei's second wife behind Boraqchin Qatun, yet the latter's death sometime before 1240 resulted in Töregene's advancement prior to Ögödei's own death in 1241. See Igor de Rachewiltz, 'Was Töregene Qatun Ögödei's "Sixth Empress?"', *East Asian History*, Nos 17–18 (Jun.–Dec. 1999), pp. 71–6.

Superficially, Töregene's interregnum seemed to continue the legacy of collegial rule begun by her husband Ögödei. Töregene granted the Mongol aristocracy free rein over their appanages in a bid to win their support for the impending *quriltai*. Juvaynī lamented that her regency was a period of chaos, during which any hint of centralized control was abandoned. He claimed that the *noyat* and Chinggisids had come to imagine themselves as independent sovereigns and began to issue decrees (*yarliqs*) and drafts (*barāt*) upon the territories they ruled.¹⁰³ Jūzjānī also condemned Töregene for permitting the appanage holders' excesses and argued that such mismanagement was the corollary of a woman being entrusted with a position of leadership.¹⁰⁴ Yet even if she had disapproved of the excesses committed by some of the Mongol elites, she would have been undermining her own position if she had tried to restrain them. Töregene realized that she would need their support if her candidate was to succeed in the *quriltai*. It is furthermore highly unlikely that she had the ability to effectively curtail these abuses. Töregene had no control over the imperial army, most of which remained the hereditary trust of the *noyat* and Chinggisid princes.

Töregene also appealed to the principles of collegial authority by imitating her husband's generosity. Juvaynī noted how she 'obtained control of all affairs of state and won over the hearts of her relatives by all kinds of favours and kindnesses and by the sending of gifts and presents'.¹⁰⁵ However, Rashīd al-Dīn was indignant at the fact that Töregene had squandered the treasury upon gifts made to leading members of the aristocracy. He argued that these gifts had won the support of the appanage princes for the candidacy of her son, Güyük, and allowed Töregene to rule 'without the counsel of the *aqā* and *ini* of the realm'.¹⁰⁶ That this was the case is beyond doubt. Yet Rashīd's hypocrisy becomes evident when it is noted that Sorqaqtani Beki, the matriarch of the Toluid house, used precisely the same policy of strategic gift giving to win the support of the army for her son, Möngke, a decade later and earned no similar disapproval from the Persian historian.¹⁰⁷ But by that time it had become unwise to show any sympathy for the Ögödeid faction and Töregene's strategy was violently condemned.

Töregene's policy of using targeted beneficence to win the support of the *aqā-nar* rendered her thirsty for revenue and this need for funds forced her to depart from the collegial model of kingship. Evidence for this shift is found in her attitude towards the Central Secretariat. Chaghadaī, the last of Chinggis Khan's sons still alive at the time of Ögödei's death, supported Töregene's regency but also stipulated that 'the old ministers should remain in the service of the Court, so that the old and new *yāsas* might not be changed from what was the law'.¹⁰⁸ By stressing the need to retain state officials in their current positions Chaghadaī was reiterating the prevailing collegialist belief that the titles and benefices held at the time of Chinggis Khan's death should be immune from change. But Chaghadaī died within months of his brother Ögödei, leaving Töregene with increased control over

¹⁰³ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 243.

¹⁰⁴ Jūzjānī, p. 1144.

¹⁰⁵ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 1, p. 196.

¹⁰⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed., Thackston, p. 390; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 564.

¹⁰⁷ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 3, p. 8.

¹⁰⁸ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 240.

the state apparatus.¹⁰⁹ Her pressing need for funds led her to covet the revenues which had been generated by Yēlū Chǔcái's Central Secretariat, but she first had to establish her own control over its offices.

In the months after Chaghadaï's death Töregene began to remove the heads of each of the regional secretariats. Her first target was her husband's old chancellor, Chincai, who held absolute control over the Central Secretariat and was a formidable obstacle to the implementation of Töregene's policies. Indeed, Thomas Allsen has suggested that Chincai openly supported the candidacy of Ögödei's grandson, Shiremün, in defiance of Töregene's will.¹¹⁰ He was, therefore, unlikely to consent to the use of the Secretariat's funds to back his rival's candidate. Töregene sent messengers to summon Chincai to her *ordu* with the intention of imprisoning him, but the chancellor realized the danger and fled before he could be apprehended.¹¹¹ Töregene's next move was against the heads of the regional secretariats in northern China and Turkestan, Maḥmūd Yalavāch and the latter's son Mas'ūd Beg. Maḥmūd managed to narrowly escape from Töregene's soldiers, after which Mas'ūd Beg fled to the court of Batu on the Kipchaq Steppe.¹¹² The head of the Persian secretariat, Körgüz, was not so fortunate. He had been a close ally of Chincai and was executed by Töregene's allies in the former appanage of Chaghadaï shortly after being apprehended.¹¹³

Töregene then sought to obtain personal control over the Central Secretariat by appointing members of her own household to its highest offices. A Persian slave named Fāṭimah assumed the responsibilities of Chincai, the former chancellor. Fāṭimah had been a member of a notable family in Khurāsān when Chinggis Khan invaded the province in 1220–1. She, along with many of her relatives, had been captured and taken back to Mongolia where she entered the service of Töregene as a house-slave. Töregene developed a liking for the intelligent and cultured Fāṭimah, who became one of her closest friends and most trusted advisors. Juvaynī reported that 'her [Fāṭimah's] influence became paramount, so that she became the sharer of intimate confidences and the depository of hidden secrets, and the ministers were debarred from executing business, and she was free to issue commands and prohibitions, and from every side the grandees sought her protection'.¹¹⁴ Fāṭimah was a Muslim and had established links with her co-religionists in the royal *ordu*, whom she now appointed to key positions within the central secretariat. Through Fāṭimah's influence 'Abd al-Raḥmān, the former head of the regional secretariat of China, was restored to his old position.¹¹⁵ His appointment signalled Töregene's intent to return to the extortionate tax rates levied in the final years of Ögödei's reign in an attempt to win the support of the aristocracy.¹¹⁶ Töregene also appointed

¹⁰⁹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 272; Rashīd al-Dīn claimed that Chaghadaï died several months prior to Ögödei (Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 376; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 544).

¹¹⁰ Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongol Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 384.

¹¹¹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 241.

¹¹² Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 243; de Rachewiltz, 'Yeh-lü Ch'u-t'ai (1189–1243)', p. 208.

¹¹³ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, pp. 498 and 504.

¹¹⁴ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, pp. 244–5.

¹¹⁵ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 243.

¹¹⁶ Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 383; Rossabi, 'The Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty', p. 268.

a member of her close circle of allies to the secretariat of Khurāsān. In this instance, Töregene replaced the Uighur Körgüz with an Oirat Mongol named Arghun Aqa. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Arghun Aqa's father, Taiju, had been reduced to severe poverty at the time of Chinggis Khan's rise. His situation had become so dire that he was forced to give his son as a slave to Ilügä Noyan, the protector (atabeg) of Ögödei. In Ilügä's household Arghun Aqa was trained to read and write in the Uighur script and was employed in minor secretarial posts until the regency of Töregene.¹¹⁷ As the protégé of her late husband's atabeg, Arghun Aqa could be trusted to serve the interests of the central government, whereas Körgüz, his predecessor, had been drawn from the suite of the Jočid prince, Batu, and had reportedly become haughty in his dealings with the Central Secretariat.¹¹⁸

Töregene was at the height of her power, having achieved complete control over the Central Secretariat and its regional offices, and so she decided to summon a *quriltai* in 1246 to acclaim her son Güyük as Ögödei's successor. New coinage was introduced to facilitate the transfer of tax revenues to the political centre in anticipation of the council.¹¹⁹ Töregene intended to buy the support of the *quriltai*, not to destroy it. She was not a reformer. Rather, Töregene was confident that the gifts and benefices which she had provided to the aristocracy would win her their support. Güyük's *quriltai*, therefore, followed the same procedures and symbolism adopted in 1229 by his father, Ögödei.

As was the case in 1229, the most essential component of the *quriltai* ritual consisted of consulting with the *aqa-nar* as to the appropriate choice of successor. The *aqa-nar* began by considering the will of the deceased qa'an and, in accordance with his wishes, they 'agreed as to committing the affairs of the Khanate and entrusting the keys of the Empire to one of the sons of Qa'an [i.e. Ögödei]' (Table 2). The *aqa-nar* next made a list of possible candidates, from amongst whom the new ruler would be chosen. The candidacy of Ögödei's grandson, Shiremün, was put forward, since it was widely believed that Shiremün had been Ögödei's preferred heir.¹²⁰ The *aqa-nar* also considered the will of Chinggis Khan in relation to the accession of Güyük's brother, Köten, since the charismatic leader 'had once made a reference to him'. In the face of these strong claims, the *aqa-nar* chose to nominate Ögödei's eldest son, Güyük, whom they argued would be more effective in managing the Empire since he 'had most practice in the handling of difficult matters and most experience of weal and woe'. Their decision was announced to Güyük, who proffered the obligatory, though only ceremonial, refusal. The *aqa-nar* then confirmed their choice and seated him on the throne. The favours Töregene had paid to the aristocracy had worked.¹²¹

Güyük even seems to have outdone his father in the extent to which he emphasized the consultative principle. This was by no means surprising given the amount of energy Töregene expended in buying the support of leading commanders and

¹¹⁷ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 506.

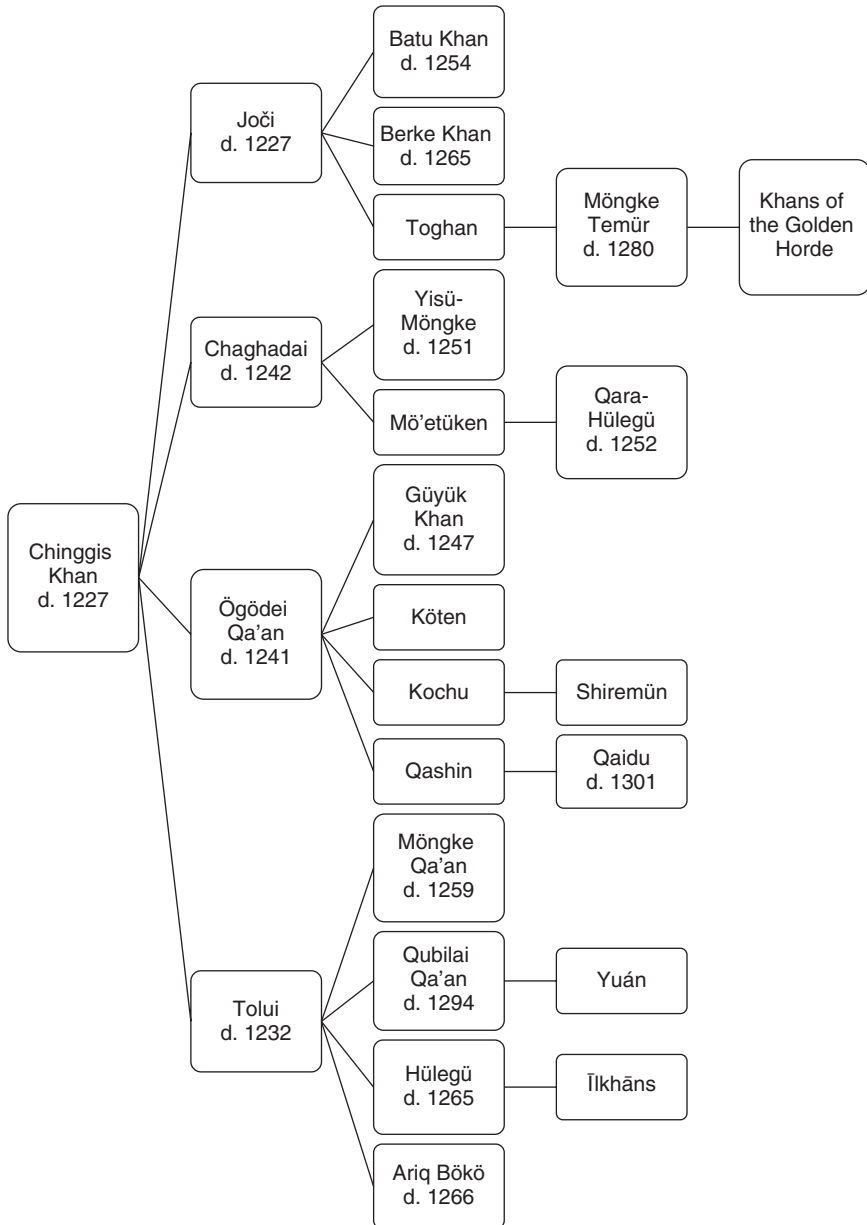
¹¹⁸ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 491.

¹¹⁹ Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongol Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 383.

¹²⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 361; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 524; Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongol Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 384.

¹²¹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 251.

Table 2. The Chinggisid Dynasty



princes, yet the extent of her success is demonstrated by the list of notables who attended.¹²² The fact that this list is so complete would suggest that it was widely distributed in order to give Güyük's government an aura of legitimacy. The leading members of each of Chinggis Khan's four bloodlines were prominent in acclaiming her son ruler. The Toluids, led by Sorqaqtani Beki and her sons, were said to have been amongst Güyük's leading supporters. The senior sons and grandsons of Chaghadaï were also represented, including his heir Qara-Hülegü. Moreover, although the leading Jočid prince, Batu, declined to attend Güyük's *quriltai* on the grounds that he was ill, virtually all of his living relatives were in attendance, including his elder brother Orda. Indeed, Orda, along with Yisü-Möngke, the oldest Chaghadaïd, was accorded the honour of seating Güyük upon the throne. His prominence more than compensated for the absence of Batu. The *quriltai* was also attended by the 'distinguished noyans and leading amīrs [commanders]' who, with the backing of their armies, acted as a vocal support for Güyük's candidacy. Both Juvaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn emphasize that the support of the senior *noyat* was an important part of Güyük's success: 'Türākinah Khātūn [i.e. Töregene] favoured his side and most of the commanders were allied with her'.¹²³ The support Güyük enjoyed amongst the *aqa-nar* provided a strong endorsement for his rule and the influence of Töregene over the *quriltai* process.

But not everything went in Töregene's favour. Members of Ögödei's former regime, ostracized from her court, had identified the *quriltai* as a platform from which to challenge her authority and attended in strong numbers. Köten, Töregene's stepson, had already proposed that the *quriltai* be used to establish an inquiry into the deposition of Ögödei's old ministers. This challenge troubled Töregene to the point that she pressured the governor of Khoten to make false accusations against the disgraced ministers.¹²⁴ The list of attendees also included Mas'ūd Beg, the former head of the Central Asian secretariat and a target of Töregene's purges.¹²⁵ His presence must have been sanctioned by a faction within the *quriltai* which protected him against the wiles of the regent.

The faction opposing Töregene had the power to undermine her aims during the *quriltai*, but they were reconciled to the nomination of Güyük after he publicly disowned his mother's support. Güyük had come to resent the influence that Töregene exercised over the government. The Franciscan missionary John of Plano Carpini claimed that upon his arrival at the *quriltai* he was forbidden to see Güyük and was instead ushered to the tent of his mother Töregene who continued to govern on behalf of her son.¹²⁶ Her continued interference may have been excusable on the grounds that Güyük had as yet not been nominated, but Töregene showed no sign of surrendering the power which she had worked so hard to build. She may have even had her own ambitions to rule through her son, a suggestion

¹²² See Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, pp. 249–50.

¹²³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 393; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 568; for Sorqaqtani's support, see Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 251.

¹²⁴ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 242.

¹²⁵ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 249.

¹²⁶ *The Mongol Mission*, ed. Dawson, p. 61.

alluded to by Timothy May.¹²⁷ Even after Güyük's coronation, Juvaynī noted that 'Töregene Khatun still executed the decrees of the Empire although the Khanate was settled upon her son.'¹²⁸ Güyük realized that if he wanted to rule in his own right he would have to establish a power base with which to resist his mother.

Güyük used the symbolism of collegial authority during his coronation ceremony to win the support of his father's ministers against Töregene. After being seated upon the throne Güyük carried out the ritual of confirming the *jasaq* of his predecessor. The information available on Güyük's proclamation, cited earlier, is far more detailed than that of his father. It shows not only that Güyük confirmed Ögödei's *jasaq*, stating that his decrees should remain unaltered, but also that 'every *yarliq* that had been adorned with the royal *al-tamgha* [seal] should be signed again without reference to the *Pādshāh* [emperor, i.e. Güyük]'. This point was particularly important for office holders, whose appointments and powers rested upon the *yarliqs* and *paizas* (diplomas) granted by the previous regimes. Equally significant was the fact that Güyük announced the recall of all *yarliqs* and *paizas* issued during the regency of his mother, Töregene. This proclamation not only appealed to the principles of collegial rule, which sought to protect the titles and offices of Chinggis Khan's former servants, but it also constituted the deposition of Töregene's ministers and the restoration of those whom she had removed. Güyük's confirmation of Ögödei's *jasaq* was a declaration of his intention to uproot his mother's regime and bring back the old order.¹²⁹

The subsequent struggle for the throne between mother and son focused on control of the Central Secretariat. If Güyük were to become the true ruler of the Mongol Empire he had to control the revenues which Töregene had used to buy her support. Fāṭimah, Töregene's chancellor, was caught at the centre of this struggle. Güyük demanded her deposition on several occasions but his mother refused to surrender her.¹³⁰ Juvaynī observed that Töregene's support for Fāṭimah contributed to the deterioration of the situation: 'as a result, his [Güyük's] relations with his mother became very bad'.¹³¹ Güyük's cause was championed by Ögödei's former supporters. Köten, who had previously been a source of opposition to Töregene, had fallen critically ill at the time of the *quriltai*. Güyük ingratiated himself with Köten's faction by blaming his illness upon the witchcraft of Fāṭimah.¹³² Köten's death shortly after the *quriltai* only added weight to this argument, which was supported by Ögödei's ex-chancellor, Chinqai. On the strength of this allegation, Güyük sent soldiers to his mother's *ordu* to arrest Fāṭimah but a confrontation was averted by the sudden death of Töregene.¹³³ It is unlikely that Güyük himself was responsible for her death, the cause of which

¹²⁷ Timothy May, *The Mongol Art of War: Chinggis Khan and the Mongol Military System*, Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2007, p. 20.

¹²⁸ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 244.

¹²⁹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, pp. 255–6.

¹³⁰ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 245.

¹³¹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 245.

¹³² Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 245. Carpini's account differs from that of Juvaynī by suggesting that Fāṭimah was accused of having murdered Ögödei himself (Carpini, ed. Dawson, p. 65). Yet Juvaynī's work within the imperial administration and his father's connections to the court of Ögödei render him the more credible source on this occasion.

¹³³ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 245.

remains a mystery, but Töregene's removal only three months after his coronation gave him a free hand to deal with her ministers. Fāṭimah was summoned to a *yarghu* (trial) in which the charge of witchcraft was laid against her. She was found guilty after a confession was obtained through torture and she was subsequently drowned.¹³⁴ Güyük took advantage of this victory to execute Fāṭimah's kinsmen and companions whom she had appointed to high office. Included amongst the casualties of this early purge was Töregene's head of the regional secretariat in China, 'Abd al-Raḥmān.¹³⁵ The only member of Töregene's bureaucracy to survive the purge was Arghun Aqa, whose patron Ilügä Noyan had prudently joined the list of Güyük's supporters along with Ögödei's other ministers. Indeed, Ilügä's brother Ilchīdāi would become one of Güyük's most devoted supporters and a senior *noyan* in his camp.¹³⁶

Rather than replacing his mother's officials with members of his own household, Güyük adhered to the *jasag* of his father and reappointed the men who had held these positions during Ögödei's reign. Chinqai was restored to his position as chancellor, with full control over the Central Secretariat, and Maḥmūd Yalavāch was returned as the head of the regional secretariat of China. The latter's son, Ma'sūd Beg also returned to his post in Central Asia where he assumed control of the cities of Transoxiana.¹³⁷ Command of the army seems to have also been maintained in the hands of his father's former officials. The qa'an's personal *minggan* (1,000 soldiers) was led by Chaghan Noyan, who had held the post under Ögödei.¹³⁸ Sübodei Ba'atur was also recalled to take the supreme command of the imperial army in a brief attack on the Song dynasty of Southern China.¹³⁹ The most significant innovation made by Güyük to his father's old administration was the elevation of his atabeg Qadaq Noyan, himself an appointee of Ögödei, to what Carpini describes as the office of imperial 'procurator'.¹⁴⁰ Generally speaking, however, Güyük's rule saw a restoration of Ögödei's officials to the positions they had held at the time of his death.

Güyük's short reign represented a revival of his father's collegialist policies. This was particularly evidenced by his support for the rights of appanage holders to a share in the wealth of the Empire. During his *quriltai*, Güyük announced his intention to exceed his father's generosity towards his subjects.¹⁴¹ He placed Sorqaqtani Beki in charge of the distribution of gifts which were then provided to the princes and the commanders of *tümen* (10,000) and *minggan* (1,000)

¹³⁴ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 246.

¹³⁵ Rossabi, 'The Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty', p. 268.

¹³⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 39; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 50.

¹³⁷ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 257.

¹³⁸ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 256. Rashīd al-Dīn (ed. Thackston, p. 272; ed. Karīmī, p. 399) states that Chaghan Noyan was an ethnic Tangut, who had been adopted by Chinggis Khan after his invasion of that country in 1207. He had been raised by Ho'elün and was appointed to command Chinggis's personal *minggan* (1,000 soldiers). The *Secret History* reports that Ögödei confirmed him in this position and made him second in command of the imperial army which invaded China in 1231.

¹³⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 394; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 570.

¹⁴⁰ Carpini, ed. Dawson, p. 66.

¹⁴¹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 259; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 394; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 571.

‘in accordance with the census’.¹⁴² Güyük understood that his senior notables held claims to the revenue derived from sedentary populations within the Empire and he sought to immediately pay them their dues. Similarly in China, although there is sparse information regarding the administration of Güyük, the *Yuanshi* reports that he permitted appanage holders to personally investigate allegations of corruption made against them: a sure sign that Güyük did not want to interfere in the business of his appanage holders.¹⁴³ Güyük also subsidized investment in trading companies (*ortaq*) made by the *altan uruq* and *noyat* by purchasing their goods at exorbitantly high prices using funds from the royal treasury.¹⁴⁴ Güyük recognized the hereditary right of his aristocracy to claim a portion of the imperial revenues in recognition of their families’ services to the Empire.

Güyük’s rule came to a sudden end when he died on a march to extend the Empire’s frontiers in the Middle East in 1247. Both Thomas Allsen and Hodong Kim agree that Güyük’s true intention was probably to lead his army against the Jočid prince, Batu, under the guise of a military campaign in Iran.¹⁴⁵ This position is supported by Rashid al-Dīn, who alleges that Sorqaqtani Beki dispatched envoys to Batu to warn him of Güyük’s arrival.¹⁴⁶ Whilst it is true that Güyük and Batu fell out during the campaign against the Kipchaq in 1236, it is unlikely that the new qa’an intended to begin a civil war to avenge the perceived insult.¹⁴⁷ In fact Rashid al-Dīn’s testimony seems rather incredible in this instance. That Sorqaqtani Beki, a leading supporter of Güyük’s candidacy, would turn against the qa’an whom she had only just elected is somewhat far-fetched. Güyük had approved of Sorqaqtani’s personal claim to a share in the imperial administration, which she had held during Ögödei’s reign.¹⁴⁸ She would be unlikely to trade in such a favourable position for an uncertain future with the Jočid, Batu. Sorqaqtani’s eldest son, Möngke, had accompanied Güyük on the campaign against Eastern Europe in 1236 and had returned with him to Mongolia after his falling out with Batu.¹⁴⁹ Güyük had subsequently appointed him as a senior *yarghuchi* (judge) after his accession.¹⁵⁰ Even Allsen is forced to admit that the Toluids showed superficial support for the Ögödeids which they emphasized

¹⁴² Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 254. The word ‘census’ here refers to the Blue Book in which Shighi-Qutuqu recorded the composition of each *tümen*. Al-‘Umarī claims that the number of soldiers in each *tümen* determined the salary paid to its commander: one dinār being paid for every soldier (10,000 dinārs for one *tümen*). Umarī notes that the *noyan* would appropriate these salaries and force the soldiers under their command to loot and scavenge their daily bread from the villages under their control. See al-‘Umarī, p. 154.

¹⁴³ Allsen, ‘The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China’, p. 387.

¹⁴⁴ Thomas Allsen, ‘Mongolian Princes and Their Merchant Partners, 1200–1260’, *Asia Major*, 3rd Series 2:2, 1989, p. 104.

¹⁴⁵ Allsen, ‘The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China’, p. 388; Hodong Kim, ‘A Reappraisal of Güyük Khan’, *Mongols, Turks and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran, Leiden: Brill, 2005, p. 331.

¹⁴⁶ Rashid al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 360; Rashid al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 524.

¹⁴⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 206, § 275; Rubruck suggests that Batu may have poisoned Güyük (Jackson, p. 167).

¹⁴⁸ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 254.

¹⁴⁹ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 29; *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 207, § 275.

¹⁵⁰ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 255.

strongly after Güyük's death.¹⁵¹ If the Toluids were uneasy about any of Güyük's policies they only showed it after his death, by which point they had entered into a rivalry with his sons for the throne.

Hodong Kim has suggested that Güyük's march west was part of a broader campaign to attain absolute control over the appanages of the Chaghadaid and Jočid princes. Kim supports his argument by pointing out that Güyük had already replaced the head of the Chaghadaid house, Qara-Hülegü, with his own candidate, Yisü-Möngke, in a bid to strengthen central control over the appanages.¹⁵² Yisü-Möngke certainly was a close friend of Güyük, who had spent much of his youth in the household of his uncle, Chaghadai.¹⁵³ But Güyük's drive to change the leadership of the Chaghadaids depended more on his desire to remove his mother Töregene's supporters than to expand his own power. Qara-Hülegü and Chaghadai's widow, Yisülün Khatun, had assumed control of the Chaghadaid Ulus during the regency of Töregene and both had actively sought to ingratiate themselves with her regime. During Töregene's purge of the Central Secretariat the Chaghadaids had obligingly helped to remove the head of the regional secretariat of Khurāsān, which had been well beyond Töregene's immediate reach. Juvaynī reports that during the purge, 'Qara Oghul [Qara-Hülegü] and the wives of Chaghadai sent Qurbagha Elchi together with the Emir Arghun [Arghun Aqa] to seize Körgüz.'¹⁵⁴ After Töregene confirmed the order to execute Körgüz, 'Qara Oghul ordered his men to fill his mouth with stones and so put him to death.'¹⁵⁵ It is, therefore, not surprising that Qara-Hülegü was deposed shortly after the *quriltai* of Güyük along with Faṭimah and 'Abd al-Raḥmān.

The idea that Güyük was on the verge of war with Batu is also doubtful. If this had been the case, Batu would have been unlikely to carry out the order of Güyük for a census only months earlier. Yet Allsen admits that Batu did 'grudgingly' comply with this edict.¹⁵⁶ Batu's brother Orda had been appointed as a senior *yarghuchi* (judge) after Güyük's *quriltai*, during which Batu's other brothers were also in attendance.¹⁵⁷ It is, therefore, unlikely that the Jočids would have supported their brother in a pointless feud with the head of the Empire. In any case, Güyük showed little interest in fighting Batu since he had already dispatched Eljigidei Noyan with the vanguard of the army consisting of 'two from every ten soldiers' to begin operations against the Shī'ite sect known as the Ismā'īlīs in Iran. Güyük planned to lead the main army to link up with Eljigidei after suitable provisions and pastures had been prepared for their arrival.¹⁵⁸ This strategy was later adopted by Güyük's successor, Möngke, in 1252. Güyük's ambition to expand the western frontier of his Empire would have severely limited his capacity to engage Batu in the Kipchaq Steppe and rendered the prospect of war between the two highly unlikely.

¹⁵¹ Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 391.

¹⁵² Kim, 'A Reappraisal of Güyük Khan', p. 327.

¹⁵³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 375; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 543.

¹⁵⁴ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 243. ¹⁵⁵ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 505.

¹⁵⁶ Allsen, 'Mongol Census Taking in Rus' 1245–1275', p. 38.

¹⁵⁷ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 255. ¹⁵⁸ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 256.

Güyük never held plans to unite the Mongol Empire under a centralized patrimonial state. Rather, his short time in power was spent protecting the legacy of his father and continuing the institutionalization of collegial Chinggisid authority. To this end, Güyük reiterated the principles of consultative rule and the protection of precedent during his coronation. He sought to restore the hereditary officials who had been deposed by his mother, Töregene, and to reverse some of the centralizing reforms which she had introduced. In spite of the fact that he strongly disliked Batu, he respected the rights of appanage holders to land and revenues on a hereditary basis, as was demonstrated by the powers he afforded to Sorqaqtani Beki. The Toluids did not reciprocate this respect. They trampled the Ögödeid traditions in an attempt to support their own claims to supreme imperial authority after his death.

THE TOLUID COUP AND THE PATRIMONIAL STATE

The death of Güyük signalled a shift of power away from the house of Ögödei to that of his younger brother, Tolui. This shift was brought about in large part by the inability of Güyük's former supporters to agree on his successor. The resulting division amongst the Ögödeids and their allies was exploited by the Toluids, who used the opportunity to seat their own candidate, Möngke, on the throne. But the Ögödeid aristocracy refused to support Möngke's candidacy. They regarded his nomination as the intrusion of an outsider which threatened the positions they had achieved after the death of Chinggis Khan. When it became obvious to Möngke that he would not be able to achieve the support of the leading Ögödeids he sought to impose his authority upon the Empire through a violent purge of the old regime. The hostile environment in which Möngke seized the throne pushed him to abandon Ögödeid notions of consultative-collegial government in favour of an individualistic-autocratic style of rule. Möngke's attempt to legitimate both the change of dynasty and the new supremacy of the central government led to the creation of a new stream of Chinggisid political tradition.

The task of documenting Möngke's rise and rule is made easier by the earlier research of Thomas Allsen. Allsen's extensive work documenting the key features and institutions of Möngke's regime makes him the leading authority on the subjects of the Toluid coup and Möngke's political reforms.¹⁵⁹ The following discussion will include extensive use of Allsen's findings, in particular those concerning the increasing power of Möngke's household and the growth of the imperial bureaucracy. Allsen has also worked to document the means through which the Toluids sought to legitimate their rule, which he argues was based upon four key pillars: the support of the *quriltai*; Toluid adherence to the *jasag* and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan; a heavenly mandate in favour of his rule; and the contention

¹⁵⁹ See Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*; Thomas Allsen, 'Guard and Government in the Reign of the Grand Qan Möngke, 1251–59', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 2, Dec. 1986, pp. 495–521; Allsen, 'Mongol Census Taking in Rus' 1245–1275'.

that the throne was not the sole preserve of the Ögödeids.¹⁶⁰ Allsen's findings on the sources of Toluid political legitimacy lead him to the conclusion that Möngke was a political conservative, who sought to preserve the Ögödeid ideal of Chinggisid authority.¹⁶¹ His analysis on the source of Toluid political authority provides an excellent starting-point for further discussion of Möngke's rule, but his conclusion concerning the new qa'an's attitude towards the Ögödeid method of government cannot be sustained. In what follows, it will be argued that Möngke's reign represented a significant departure from Ögödeid ideas of authority. The violent nature of the Toluid coup removed any chance of Möngke continuing the consultative-collegial style of government practised by his predecessors. Möngke worked to replace this system with a patrimonial monarchy, in which the qa'an was the centre of all political authority.

The unexpected death of Güyük plunged the Empire into a state of uncertainty as the question of the succession divided his former supporters. Leading members of the Mongol aristocracy, who had previously united behind Güyük's candidacy, split into factions advocating the accession of rival princes. Güyük's senior wife, Oghul Qaimish, was installed as the regent until a *quriltai* could be summoned to nominate a successor.¹⁶² Her appointment, like that of Töregene before her, was based upon her status as the mother of Güyük's senior sons, Naqu and Khoja, who held the strongest claims to the throne. Yet neither of Güyük's children appear in the sources prior to their father's death and in all likelihood they were still quite young.¹⁶³ Güyük's early death robbed them of the chance to take on leadership positions either in military campaigns or in the administration of *ulus* (realm/people), thereby depriving them of a natural base of support. Doubts regarding the capability of Naqu and Khoja to succeed their father were compounded by the incapacity of Oghul Qaimish, who failed to demonstrate the leadership which had characterized Töregene's regency. Juvaynī criticized her heavily for ignoring the business of government and secluding herself with shamans (*qamān*, sing. *qam*) who devoted themselves to what he regarded as superstitious rituals.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, Oghul Qaimish refused to provide positive support for the candidacy of either of her sons, thereby allowing divisions to emerge in the Ögödeid position. Naqu and Khoja established separate courts to rally their factions, which at times showed signs that they would fight each other, or even their mother.¹⁶⁵ Disillusioned by the bickering around their candidacies, many of the leading figures in the Ögödeid regime reverted to their former advocacy of Shiremün, a grandson of Ögödei. Yet Shiremün's young age and inability to win a clear majority in support of his accession emboldened other factions to contend for the throne.

With the Ögödeids divided, Tolui's widow, Sorqaqtani Beki, took advantage of her role in the imperial government to put forward the candidacy of her eldest son,

¹⁶⁰ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, pp. 43–4.

¹⁶¹ Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongol Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 398; Allsen, 'Guard and Government in the Reign of the Grand Qan Mongke', p. 521.

¹⁶² Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 263.

¹⁶³ In Juvaynī's account, Batu refers to them as 'mere children'. See Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 563.

¹⁶⁴ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 265.

¹⁶⁵ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 265.

Möngke. She had been provided with extensive control of the state treasury during the reign of Güyük, a privilege which she now used to buy the support of the leading Chinggisids and *nököt*. Her part in placing Möngke on the throne bears strong similarity to that of Töregene in the elevation of Güyük. Juvaynī candidly states that Sorqaqtani had

won favour on all sides by the bestowing of gifts and presents upon her family and kindred and dispensing largesse to troops and strangers and so rendered all subject to her will and planting love and affection in everyone's heart and soul, so that when the death of Güyük Khan occurred most men were agreed and of one mind as to the entrusting of the keys of the khanate to her son Mengü Qa'an.¹⁶⁶

Whereas in the time of Güyük similar behaviour by Töregene had earned accusations of corruption, Sorqaqtani is praised for having won the support of 'kinsmen and relations with all means of courtesy and diplomacy'.¹⁶⁷

Sorqaqtani Beki could also claim the support of Batu and the leading Jočids. Sorqaqtani's sister, Begtütmiş, was Joči's senior wife and the two maintained contact during the reign of Ögödei and Güyük.¹⁶⁸ Now that the succession was in doubt, Sorqaqtani dispatched Möngke to Batu, encouraging him to show appropriate deference to his cousin, who had now become the senior (*aqa*) member of the *altan uruq*.¹⁶⁹ Möngke's courtesy was greatly valued by Batu since he had been largely ignored by the Ögödeids, who had only dispatched lieutenants and messengers to the Jočid prince.¹⁷⁰ Seeing that his own interests were tied to those of the Toluids, Batu sought to ensure that Möngke would be crowned.

Batu summoned a *quriltai* inside his own patrimony in the region of Alā Qamāq, near Qayaliq (in modern-day Kazakhstan), in 1250 with the intention of formally nominating Möngke to the throne.¹⁷¹ The Ögödeids and Chaghadaids, however, refused to present themselves, claiming that the *quriltai* had always been summoned in the Kherlen River region of Mongolia.¹⁷² Batu ignored their protestations, insisting that he was too ill to travel to Mongolia, and that the *quriltai* would have to be held in his patrimony.¹⁷³ Juvaynī states that the senior Ögödeids, led by Naqu and Khoja, briefly presented themselves at the *quriltai* of Alā Qamāq before leaving after a couple of days to return to their own *ordu*.¹⁷⁴ The atmosphere of Batu's camp seems to have been decidedly hostile towards Güyük's former supporters. Güyük's atabeg and senior minister, Qadaq Noyan, refused repeated summons from Batu to attend the *quriltai* on the basis that he had a long-standing enmity with the Jočid prince which rendered his attendance dangerous.¹⁷⁵ Both

¹⁶⁶ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 552.

¹⁶⁷ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 562.

¹⁶⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 348; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 505.

¹⁶⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 361; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 524.

¹⁷⁰ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 557; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 401; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, 582.

¹⁷¹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 557; Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 22.

¹⁷² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 401; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 581; Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 23.

¹⁷³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 401; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 581.

¹⁷⁴ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 558. ¹⁷⁵ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 266.

the *Yuanshi* and Juvaynī admit that the *quriltai* of 1250 was conducted without the attendance of the majority of Ögödeids and Chaghadaids, although they insist that representatives of the absentee princes were present to give their assent by proxy.¹⁷⁶ Yet it seems highly unlikely that either Naqu or Khoja would have entrusted such an important matter to mere representatives and the absence of other leading Ögödeid officials and princes suggests that they did not recognize the validity of Batu's *quriltai* at all. The absence of the princes allowed the *quriltai* to proceed unhindered and Möngke was duly nominated with the support of the Jočid and Toluid houses.

In the wake of the Alā Qamāq *quriltai* Batu declared his intention to hold Möngke's coronation in the Kherlen River region of Mongolia. This move was dictated by the need to control Chinggis Khan's former camp as well as the desire to impose Möngke's candidacy upon the partisans of Ögödeid rule. Batu himself remained in his own appanage, but he dispatched a Jočid army of three *tümens* (approximately 30,000 soldiers) under the command of his son, Sartaq, and his brother, Berke, to ensure that their nominee was successful. Once again, they were helped by the disagreement which prevailed amongst the Ögödeids, who proved incapable of uniting behind a single candidate. The only point that the Ögödeids could agree upon was that the qa'anate should remain with their family, something which they expressed to Sorqaqtani Beki after she had sent messengers inviting them to join the *quriltai*.¹⁷⁷ Their division permitted Möngke to enter Mongolia unopposed and make a second summons to the Ögödeids to attend his coronation. The Ögödeids were hampered by indecision, neither preventing Möngke's coronation nor providing a suitable alternative. After several summons had been issued to no avail, Möngke duly had himself crowned by his own partisans in 1251.

The Ögödeid response to Möngke's coronation was typically disunited and ineffectual. In a misguided attempt to prevent the throne from slipping out of their grasp the factions supporting the candidacies of Shiremün and Naqu decided to attack the coronation party. Having hidden weapons inside wine-barrels, Shiremün and Naqu moved with their army against the rump-*quriltai* in Mongolia under the pretext of celebrating Möngke's nomination. The conspirators were without the support of Naqu's brother, Khoja, or his mother, Oghul Qaimish, and the clumsy execution of their plot meant that word of their intentions soon reached the new qa'an. Möngke sent a force to apprehend the Ögödeids, who were arrested and transferred to the *ordu*. Möngke's chamberlain, Menggeser Noyan, had the leading Ögödeids tortured until they confessed the plot to ambush the gathering.

The conspirators' confessions of guilt provided Möngke with the pretext he needed to launch a purge of his political rivals. With the conclusion of the first round of trials, Möngke dispatched two large armies to enter the appanages of the

¹⁷⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 403; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 584.

¹⁷⁷ For the events of Möngke's *quriltai* at the Kherlen-Onon confluence in 1251 and the purges carried out against the Ögödeid faction, see Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, pp. 18–34; Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, pp. 479–81; Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, pp. 274–5; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 402–10; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 583–94; Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, pp. 563–88.

Ögödeids and Chaghadaids in Mongolia and Central Asia to capture or kill any princes, commanders, or officials suspected of complicity in the conspiracy to unseat Möngke. A separate detachment was dispatched to China to uproot former Ögödeid agents and office holders in that region whilst envoys were also sent to Iran to apprehend and execute Eljigidei Noyan, whom Güyük had appointed to expand the Mongol Empire in the Middle East. Senior members of the Ögödeid regime, including Oghul Qaimish, were summoned before Möngke's courts and executed. The purge was also used as an opportunity to settle old grudges. Möngke had the Chaghadaid prince Buri captured and sent to Batu, who had him executed to avenge an old feud between the two.¹⁷⁸ Former allies of Töregene also sought to take their revenge against members of Güyük's old regime as those responsible for Fāṭima's demise were quickly put to death.¹⁷⁹ Möngke's brutal purge of the Ögödeid aristocracy removed the possibility of him ever continuing the consultative style of government practised by his predecessors and pushed him further in the direction of autocratic rule.

The senior *noyat* were targeted especially heavily by Möngke's purge of the conspirators. Their influence had been a decisive factor in the nomination of both Ögödei and Güyük and the control they exercised over the throne posed a danger to the fledgling Toluid government. Chinggis' former *nököt*, in particular, had ingratiated themselves with the Ögödeid order which had furnished them with the command of armies, *qubi* revenues, and offices in the qa'an's household. Their interest in the perpetuation of the Ögödeid regime rendered the Toluid coup an unwelcome intrusion and they consequently supported the plot of Shiremün and Naqu in large numbers. Möngke's purge of the Ögödeid conspirators was therefore also intended to curb the power which Chinggis Khan's former companions exercised over the Empire.

The Toluids singled out the *noyat* for special censure for their role in the Ögödeid conspiracy. Their lead in the attempted ambush was held as proof of the corrupting influence which their participation in government had brought. The *yarghu* convened to question the leaders of the Ögödeid plot began by questioning Shiremün's atabeg, Bābā Kārdidī, who confessed that the young princes had been oblivious to the conspiracy and that it had been the *'umarā* (commanders) who had sought to depose Möngke.¹⁸⁰ It is almost impossible that the princes had no knowledge of the plot, but the atabeg's account found in Rashīd al-Dīn's *Collected Histories*, which attributes a leading role to the senior *noyat*, is supported by other evidence. Juvaynī noted the prominence of Qadaq Noyan, Güyük's former atabeg and royal 'procurator',¹⁸¹ in the Ögödeid conspiracy, saying: 'to him was due the origin of this estrangement, that from him had arisen the source of this alienation, that it was he who had stirred up the dust of this disaffection and cast the fire of turmoil

¹⁷⁸ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 588; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 369; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 536; Rubruck, ed. Jackson, p. 145.

¹⁷⁹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, pp. 246–7.

¹⁸⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 406; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 589.

¹⁸¹ Carpini, ed. Dawson, p. 66.

into the world'.¹⁸² Batu was also said to have been enraged by the interference of the *noyat*, whom he blamed for preventing the leading Chaghadaids and Ögödeids from attending Möngke's *quriltai*.¹⁸³ The pernicious role of the *noyat* in the Ögödeid conspiracy was remembered over a decade later, during a *yarghu* held by Möngke's brother, Qubilai, who recalled that 'during the reign of Munkā Qā'an the *'umarā* of the time brought a conspiracy against him'.¹⁸⁴ The leading *noyat* had sought to overthrow Möngke's regime and the new qa'an immediately sought to limit their influence over the government of the Empire.

The *yarghu* held shortly after Möngke's coronation in 1251 rained a heavy penalty down upon the princes and *noyat*. The Franciscan missionary, William of Rubruck, reported that the Toluid purge of Ögödeid sympathizers claimed 300 victims from amongst the 'Mongol nobles' whilst Rashīd al-Dīn provides the lower, though still significant, figure of seventy-seven *'umarā* who were reportedly killed by Möngke's supporters.¹⁸⁵ The more notable victims of the purge included Ilchīdai Noyan, a leading member of both Ögödei and Güyük's household. His father, Qadan, had been named the commander of a *mingqan* (1,000) by Chinggis Khan and he had subsequently been appointed as the head of Ögödei's night-guard.¹⁸⁶ Ilchīdai's brother, Ilügä, had also been granted the command of a *mingqan* by Chinggis Khan and had served as Ögödei's atabeg, whilst Ilchīdai himself had been a leading figure in Güyük's court.¹⁸⁷ Eljigidei Noyan, the most senior commander in the Ögödeid regime, was another victim of the purge. Eljigidei had served as the head of Ögödei's day-guard and had subsequently been appointed to command the Mongol army based in Iran by Güyük.¹⁸⁸ His son, Harqasun, was one of several senior commanders named to lead the invasion of the Kipchaq in 1236 and was also claimed by the purge.¹⁸⁹ Yet perhaps the most prestigious member of the old regime to be killed by the Toluids was the Ögödeid chancellor, Chinqai Noyan. Chinqai was one of the most prominent members of the 'Baljuntu', Chinggis Khan's inner circle, whose literacy and familiarity with Chinese and Central Asian cultures saw his promotion to the head of the Mongol chancellery.¹⁹⁰ Neither Juvaynī nor the *Yuanshi* mention Chinqai playing an active role in the Ögödeid conspiracy, but it is likely that he was involved at some level in the machinations of his former candidate, Shiremün.¹⁹¹ The execution of such a high-profile member of Chinggis Khan's *nököt* demonstrated Möngke's disregard for their role in the

¹⁸² Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 583.

¹⁸³ Shabānkārā'i, p. 258.

¹⁸⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 433; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 629.

¹⁸⁵ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 33.

¹⁸⁶ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 133 and 210, §§ 202 and 278.

¹⁸⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 133, § 202; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 39; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 50.

¹⁸⁸ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 212, § 278; Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 256.

¹⁸⁹ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 206, § 275.

¹⁹⁰ See P. D. Buell, 'Chinqai', *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol Yüan Period (1200–1300)*, ed. Igor de Rachewiltz, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993, pp. 95–111; Li Chih-Ch'ang, *The Travels of an Alchemist: The Journey of the Taoist Ch'ang-Ch'un from China to the Hindukush at the Summons of Chingiz Khan*, ed. Arthur Waley, London: Routledge, 1931, pp. 33–8; Cleaves, 'The Historicity of the Baljuna Covenant', pp. 370–416.

¹⁹¹ Buell, 'Chinqai', p. 109.

imperial polity. The purge carried out against the Mongol aristocracy reduced the autonomy of the army and prevented its senior leadership from exerting further influence on the government process during the reign of Möngke.

The purge also had an enduring impact on the strength of the *altan uruq*, particularly those descended from Ögödei and Chaghadaï. Despite a short revival under the renegade prince, Qaidu, the house of Ögödei never again aspired to political leadership within the Mongol Empire. Its former appanages were first absorbed by the Central Secretariat and later by the house of Chaghadaï.¹⁹² Those Ögödeids who survived Möngke's wrath were given new appanages close to the qa'an's *ordu* in order that they might be constantly monitored.¹⁹³ A similar fate initially befell the Chaghadaïds. Yisü-Möngke was captured and executed for his support of the Ögödeids.¹⁹⁴ His throne eventually fell to Orghana Khatun, the wife of Yisü's former rival Qara-Hülegü, who served as a close ally to the Toluid regime in Central Asia.¹⁹⁵ Many other Chaghadaïd princes who escaped execution on the basis of their young age were taken to the *ordu* and raised at the court of the qa'an. These princes were used as puppets through whom the Toluids imposed their control over the Chaghadaï Ulus.¹⁹⁶ The purge of the Ögödeid aristocracy not only broke the power of Möngke's rivals but also reduced the power of the appanage holders and *altan uruq* in relation to that of the qa'an.

Möngke's purge of Ögödeid sympathizers was accompanied by the concentration of power in the hands of the qa'an and his household. The growth of the Central Secretariat was an essential part of this reform as Möngke began his reign by reintroducing laws to strengthen the power of his bureaucratic officials. Möngke reiterated the policy initiated by Yëlü Chūcái stipulating that only the appointees of the regional secretariats had the right to collect the revenues of the Empire, which would be forwarded to the central treasury. In this instance Möngke emphasized that appanage holders were not to interfere in the business of tax collection, nor were they permitted to make extraordinary exactions from the population under their control. Such exactions, which undermined the productivity of conquered towns, were prohibited under the new regime. Unlike his uncle Ögödei, Möngke handed out heavy punishments to those who violated these orders. Officials belonging to Möngke's son, Asutai, were flogged for interfering in the villages under his control.¹⁹⁷ Möngke was even capable of sending representatives of the Secretariat to investigate allegations of corruption against his own brother, Qubilai, who was forced to present himself before the Qa'an and beg his forgiveness in 1258.¹⁹⁸ In 1256 the *Yuanshi* also reports that Möngke held an investigation

¹⁹² Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia*, p. 108; Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, p. 480.

¹⁹³ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 31.

¹⁹⁴ Juvayni, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 588; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 409; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 594.

¹⁹⁵ Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, p. 481; Grousset, *Empires of the Steppe*, p. 329.

¹⁹⁶ Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, p. 483.

¹⁹⁷ Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 399.

¹⁹⁸ Morris Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987, p. 34.

into a *noyan* who was said to have appropriated sheep, hogs, and even people from a local community under his control.¹⁹⁹ These accounts provide strong evidence that Möngke not only legislated against the power of the appanage holders but also took great pains to enforce the new laws. During Möngke's rule provincial government was confined to the regional secretariats. Appanage holders derived their salaries as stipulated by the qa'an but lost the right to interfere in the management of their lands.

Möngke also sought to expand central control over the resources of his empire. This control was achieved primarily through the institution of the census which was used to determine the capacity of each province to pay sums to the regional secretariat. Möngke's reign saw the most detailed and extensive use of the census yet to be undertaken in the Mongol Empire. He conducted the first in China during 1252 and then again in 1255, 1257, and 1258. A census was also taken in Iran in 1254 and then again in 1258 to include the recently conquered cities of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate. The taking of a census in Russia was delayed until 1257 because of the death of Batu and his heir, Sartaq, in close succession. But by the end of his reign, Möngke had obtained detailed statistics as to the resources and population of the entire Mongol Empire.²⁰⁰

Möngke used the demographic information provided by the census to impose a stringent new tax system upon both his sedentary and nomadic subjects. The central feature of Möngke's new system was the poll tax (*qubchir*) which was levied on every mature male within the Empire.²⁰¹ The rate of the *qubchir* depended upon the wealth of the payer, with the poor being expected to pay one dīnār and the wealthy ten.²⁰² This tax was joined to the *qalan*, which consisted of a 10 per cent levy on all produce.²⁰³ Möngke ensured that these revenues reached his treasury by establishing a new coinage, through which the tax would be paid.²⁰⁴ Both the census and the monetization of the tax system allowed the central treasury to estimate accurately the expected revenues and keep precise accounts. The new tax system proved to be far more reliable than the one which had existed under the Ögödeids, who had previously collected most of their taxes in goods, thereby limiting the amount of revenue which could be transported to the royal treasury. Animals and produce could not be easily transferred from their source without perishing, so naturally they remained in the appanages which collected them.²⁰⁵ Coins were not perishable and could easily be transmitted to the Central Secretariat in Mongolia where Möngke used them to fund his reforms.

¹⁹⁹ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 88.

²⁰⁰ Allsen, 'Mongol Census Taking in Rus' 1245–1275', pp. 39–42.

²⁰¹ See John Masson Smith Jr, 'Mongol and Nomadic Taxation', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 30, 1970, pp. 46–85; H. F. Schurmann, 'Mongolian Tributary Practices of the Thirteenth Century', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 19, Nos 3–4, Dec. 1956, pp. 304–89; Morgan, *The Mongols*, pp. 100–1; Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 148.

²⁰² Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 164.

²⁰³ See Masson Smith Jr, 'Mongol and Nomadic Taxation'; Schurmann, 'Mongolian Tributary Practices of the Thirteenth Century'; Morgan, *The Mongols*, pp. 100–1; Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 148.

²⁰⁴ Judith Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran: Chingiz Khan to Uljaytu 1220–1309*, first edn, New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 141.

²⁰⁵ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 172.

The Mongol aristocracy detested the census and the new tax system, which caused them to lose both power and wealth. *Noyat* who had previously ruled their appanages independently found themselves barred from even entering the towns under their control. The booty which they had gathered in military service to the Empire was now subject to the *qubchir* and *qalan*, which imperial tax agents claimed by storming the homes of reluctant soldiers.²⁰⁶ The Mongol army occupying Azerbaijan found the new regime particularly abhorrent since the lands which they had previously ruled were incorporated under the control of the regional secretariat of Iran, headed by the zealous Arghun Aqa.²⁰⁷ Those soldiers who refused to participate in his census or pay the tax were flogged.²⁰⁸ Many of the leading *noyat* tried to undermine Arghun Aqa's work by encouraging members of the native Georgian aristocracy to resist him and turn away his agents.²⁰⁹ Others sent messengers to the new qa'an to complain against Arghun Aqa's overbearing conduct and to make false allegations of corruption against him.²¹⁰ Some of these allegations seem to have been taken seriously by Möngke, yet he ultimately confirmed Arghun Aqa in control of Iran. The *noyat* of Azerbaijan were to be brought to heel by the Central Secretariat, as were their compatriots throughout the Empire.

Möngke ensured the implementation of these policies by appointing members of his own household to the senior offices of the Empire. At the outset of his reign Möngke broke with the custom of the Ögödeids by refusing to ratify the *jasaq* of his predecessors. Rather, he announced a general recall of all *yarliqs* and *paizas* which had been issued from the time of Chinggis Khan until the death of Güyük.²¹¹ This proclamation was a deliberate move on Möngke's part to depose hereditary office holders and Ögöeid sympathizers and replace them with his own appointees. The most senior offices in both the army and the Central Secretariat were now occupied by members of Möngke's *kešik*²¹² (bodyguard) to the extent that Allsen has suggested that there was very little distinction made between the 'imperial household and the imperial government' during his rule. Möngke's *kešik* were made up of men who had a track record of service to the house of Tolui and could therefore be trusted with the implementation of Möngke's policies. In most instances the *kešik* were appointed to a variety of positions at any given time based upon the level of trust which Möngke placed in them. Menggeser Noyan was Möngke's most senior official at the time of his coronation in 1251. Menggeser was the chief of Möngke's personal guard and was appointed as the head of the Central

²⁰⁶ Kirakos Ganjakets'i, *Kirakos Ganjakets'i's History of the Armenians*, trans. Robert Bedrosian, New York: Sources of the Armenian Tradition, 1986, p. 260. This tax was also claimed from Mongol soldiers in Ghazna in 1221. See Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran*, p. 49.

²⁰⁷ J. A. Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns', *Cambridge History of Iran*, v. 5, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*, p. 338; Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 507.

²⁰⁸ Grigor of Akanc, 'History of the Nation of Archers', ed. and trans. Robert P. Blake and Richard N. Frye, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 12, 1949, p. 325.

²⁰⁹ Kirakos, p. 260.

²¹⁰ Kirakos, p. 296.

²¹¹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 598; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 411; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 596.

²¹² For the *kešik*, see Chapter 1: 'The Charismatic Authority of Chinggis Khan'.

Secretariat and as chief judge. Bulghai, a secretary in Tolui's night-guard, became Möngke's chamberlain and also managed the *semu* secretariat, which was in charge of the contingent of foreign administrators in Mongol service. Meanwhile, supreme command of the Mongol army in China was granted to Uriyangqadai, a member of Möngke's guard and a vocal supporter of his candidacy for the throne in both 1250 and 1251.²¹³ Möngke also appointed his father's former atabeg, Bala Noyan, to the command of an army. Bala's support was critical during the first two years of Möngke's reign when he commanded his troops to take the lead in uprooting former members of the Ögödeid aristocracy in Central Asia.²¹⁴ Members of Möngke's guard were also appointed as *darughachi* (governors),²¹⁵ whose task it was to oversee the activities of the regional secretariats and the native governors to ensure that they remained obedient to Möngke's order.²¹⁶ The Empire had become an extension of the Toluid household.

Möngke's most ambitious attempt to establish patrimonial control over the revenues and peoples of his Empire was, however, his plan to establish his younger brothers in control over the sedentary populations of China and Iran. Töregene's brief regency had demonstrated that control of the revenues generated by the cities of Khurāsān and northern China was the true source of power in the Mongol Empire. With the purges of the old Ögödeid regime completed by 1253, Möngke sought to place these cities under the rule of his brothers, Qubilai and Hülegü, whom he dispatched with large conscript armies.²¹⁷ Their mandate was twofold insofar as they were expected to expand the boundaries of the Empire to the west and south-east respectively, whilst also overseeing the orderly acquisition of census statistics and the collection of revenue for the central treasury.²¹⁸ The imposition of Toluid states over both China and Iran was considered particularly odious by the Jočid and Chaghadaid princes who complained that it infringed upon territories

²¹³ For these appointments, see Allsen, 'Guard and Government in the Reign of the Grand Qan Mongke', pp. 503, 510, 518; Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, pp. 93 and 95.

²¹⁴ Rashid al-Din, ed. Thackston, p. 409; Rashid al-Din, ed. Karimī, p. 594.

²¹⁵ *Darughachi* was a kind of 'civil governor', though the distinction between the civil and military spheres was considerably blurred within the administrative structure of the Mongol Empire. The wide application of the term by both Chinese and Persian sources has led to much ambiguity regarding the precise nature of this office. In this instance I have seen fit to make use of Thomas Allsen's interpretation that Möngke sought to establish a regional secretariat over the Jočid Ulus under the supervision of a *darughachi* (financial secretary). For further information regarding the office of *darughachi*, see Elizabeth Endicott-West, *Mongolian Rule in China: Local Administration in the Yuan Dynasty*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard-Yenching Institute, Harvard University Press, 1989, especially p. 27; Donald Ostrowski, 'The Tamma and the Dual-Administrative Structure of the Mongol Empire', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 1998, pp. 262–77; Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*, pp. 138–9 and 176; Dashdondog Bayarsaikhan, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220–1335)*, Leiden: Brill, 2011, pp. 105–6; Denise Aigle, 'Iran Under Mongol Domination: The Effectiveness and Failing of a Dual Administrative System', *Bulletin d'Études Orientales*, Vol. 57, 2006–7, pp. 65–78.

²¹⁶ Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 398.

²¹⁷ For the campaign of Hülegü in Iran, see Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran*; Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns'; Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*. For the campaigns of Qubilai in China, see Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times*; John Dardess, 'From Mongol Empire to Yuan Dynasty: Changing Forms of Imperial Rule in Mongolia and Central Asia', *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. 30, 1972–3, pp. 117–65; Morris Rossabi, 'The Reign of Khubilai Khan', *The Cambridge History of China*, v. 6, *Alien Regimes and Border States*, 907–1368, pp. 414–89.

²¹⁸ Details pertaining to the campaign of Hülegü will be provided in the Chapter 3.

which had previously been granted to them by Chinggis Khan.²¹⁹ This was, no doubt, part of Möngke's initial reason for establishing his brothers in these territories. With the appointment of two Toluid viceroys in Iran and China, the former appanages of the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid houses would be surrounded by armies loyal to the qa'an.²²⁰ Möngke never lived to see his plan realized, but the appointment of his brothers to govern the largest population centres of the Empire would have been a significant step towards consolidating his complete dominance of the government.

The Toluid coup and the reforms that followed it forced Möngke to reinterpret the nature of Chinggisid authority. Unlike his predecessors, Möngke could not claim the support of a genuine *quriltai* for his accession. Furthermore, the purges which he had carried out against the Ögödeid aristocracy removed the possibility of Möngke continuing the consultative-collegial style of government practised by his predecessors. Möngke had taken power through a military coup and his regime remained the most domineering of any Mongol qa'an to date. He therefore sought to legitimate his rule by appealing to a different kind of political symbolism from that of the Ögödeids. His authority was derived from a claim to possess unique virtues which elevated him above his rivals. These virtues, the Toluids argued, would enable Möngke to restore the Mongol Empire to its former state of greatness which had existed at the time of Chinggis Khan. Möngke's claim to unique virtues underscored the Toluid policy of creating an autocratic monarchy whilst downplaying the role of the aristocracy in the government of the Empire.

Thomas Allsen's discussion of Möngke's reign in his book, *Mongol Imperialism*, is the most comprehensive study on the subject of Toluid political philosophy prior to the Empire's fracture.²²¹ Allsen characterizes Möngke as an intelligent and industrious ruler who held a conservative attitude towards government; he was a traditionalist who sought to work within the framework of the customs and laws established by his predecessors to achieve his aims. In Allsen's mind, Möngke was not an innovator.²²² It has already been noted that Allsen described Möngke's political authority as resting upon four key pillars: the support of the *quriltai*; Toluid adherence to the *jasaq* and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan; a heavenly mandate in favour of his rule; and the argument that the throne was not the sole preserve of the Ögödeids.²²³ Broadly speaking Allsen's findings are undoubtedly correct, but some of his conclusions require further discussion. Allsen's characterization of Möngke as a political conservative is misleading. Rather, his reign represented a significant departure from the model established by the Ögödeids, which forced him to support his authority on a different set of principles. By expanding upon

²¹⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 521; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 751; Vaṣṣāf, p. 28; al-'Umārī, p. 100; also see Jackson, 'From *Ulus* to Khanate', p. 28.

²²⁰ Jackson, 'From *Ulus* to Khanate', p. 26; Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 48.

²²¹ See Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*. Also see Allsen, 'Guard and Government in the Reign of the Grand Qan Möngke'; Allsen, 'Mongol Census Taking in Rus' 1245–1275'.

²²² Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 29; Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongol Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 398; Allsen, 'Guard and Government in the Reign of the Grand Qan Möngke', p. 521.

²²³ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, pp. 43–4.

Allsen's discussion of the four pillars of Toluid authority, we can see that Möngke sought to undermine the power of the *quriltai* and replace it with a far more autocratic idea of kingship in keeping with his domineering style of government.

The most serious challenge to Möngke's legitimacy immediately after his coup in 1250 was posed by his failure to achieve the support of the *aqa-nar* through a credible *quriltai*. The leading members of the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid houses, as well as their senior commanders, had shunned both Möngke's *quriltai* in Alā Qamāq and his subsequent coronation in 1251, thereby robbing him of the leading elders' support. This problem weighed heavily on the mind of Möngke, who used a variety of methods to legitimate his accession retrospectively. Allsen has rightly noted that the Toluids initially strove to prove the credibility of their first *quriltai* in Alā Qamāq in the face of heavy criticism from their Ögödeid opponents.²²⁴ Juvaynī laboured particularly hard to prove the legitimacy of the Alā Qamāq *quriltai* in his *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*. Juvaynī had served in the regional secretariat of Iran during the reign of Möngke and had received his diploma of appointment (*paiza*) from the new qa'an personally.²²⁵ Juvaynī spent a year at Möngke's court between 1252 and 1253, in which he states that he was strongly encouraged to write his history, the purpose of which, he explained, was 'to perpetuate the select deeds and radiant glory of the *pādshāh* of the time [i.e. Möngke]'.²²⁶ Juvaynī addressed the problem of the Alā Qamāq *quriltai* by providing a list detailing the names of the princes and *noyat* who attended the *quriltai* in the hope of proving that the *aqa-nar* were indeed present to confirm Möngke's nomination.²²⁷ Juvaynī's list demonstrates that Güyük's short reign had seen the alienation of Töregene's former supporters from the Ögödeid cause. These royal outcasts quickly made their way into the Toluid camp in the hopes of improving their positions. The most notable amongst the outcasts on Juvaynī's list was the former head of the Chaghadaid house, Qara-Hülegü, who attended with his wife, Orghana Khatun.²²⁸ Qara-Hülegü had been deposed from his position at the head of the Chaghadaids by Güyük as a result of his support for Töregene's regime. He had subsequently spent the rest of the Ögödeid period in seclusion, and by the time of the *quriltai* in 1250 there were signs that he had fallen seriously ill. He died shortly before returning from Möngke's coronation in 1251.²²⁹ Also present in 1251 was Güyük's brother, Qadan (also Qadaqan), whose absence from the sources documenting the reign of both his father and sibling was continued for the rest of Möngke's rule.²³⁰ Once he had served his purpose Qadan was no longer required by the Toluids. The attendance of Qara-Hülegü and Qadan gave Möngke the right to claim that he had received the backing of representatives from each of the four Chinggisid households. Yet it would have been difficult to argue that these marginalized

²²⁴ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, pp. 34–5.

²²⁵ See translator's introduction in Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, pp. xix–xx.

²²⁶ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 5.

²²⁷ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 558.

²²⁸ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 558.

²²⁹ Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, p. 480; Grousset, *Empire of the Steppe*, p. 329; Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 3, p. 70.

²³⁰ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 558.

princes represented the *aqa-nar* of their respective branches. Möngke would have to find another source of authority with which to legitimate his seizure of power.

Initially the Toluids appropriated the authority of the *aqa-nar* to appoint new rulers for themselves. The Toluids sought to demonstrate that they, not the *aqa-nar*, were the true guardians of Chinggisid tradition, thereby rendering them the most worthy candidates to continue his rule. Allsen has correctly argued that the Toluids underscored their intimate knowledge of Chinggis Khan's traditions by exaggerating the status of their patriarch, Tolui.²³¹ They pointed out that Tolui had been Chinggis's youngest son, the *otčigin*, who according to Mongol custom inherited the property of his father. Juvaynī also argued that Tolui was the favourite of Chinggis Khan's four sons. He made note of the fact that Tolui 'was ever in attendance on Changiz Khān, day and night, morning and evening, and has seen, and heard, and learnt all his *yasa* and *yūsūn*'.²³² Rashīd al-Dīn seeks to expand on Juvaynī's point by making Tolui his father's most trusted counsellor: 'Tülüy Khān spent most of the time attending his father and, in the gathering of grandees, Changiz Khān would consult with him [*mushāvarat*] concerning the great and minute ordinances and policies.'²³³ This special connection between Chinggis and Tolui was even said to have been evident during the latter's infancy, when Tolui predicted the precise time that his father would escape from Tayiči'ut captivity and rejoin his family, a feat which left his mother and siblings flabbergasted.²³⁴ By demonstrating Tolui's special relationship with his father, Möngke's supporters sought to undermine the collegialist belief that Chinggis's companions and extended family were the most authoritative source of information on his rule. This privilege, so they argued, belonged to the Toluids who therefore possessed the strongest claim to decide the fate of the Empire.

The Toluids also sought to establish Möngke's superior record of service to the Empire in order to undermine the authority of his much older relatives and *noyat*. The claim to Toluid experience and service in the armies of both Chinggis Khan and Ögödei had proven an effective tool through which to prise power from the Ögödeids. On one occasion, when Ögödei refused to grant Sorqaqtani the ownership of an *ortaq*,²³⁵ the latter burst into tears and reminded the qa'an that her husband, Tolui, had died whilst serving in his campaign against the Jin in 1234.²³⁶ Both the *Secret History* and Rashīd al-Dīn go so far as to suggest that Tolui sacrificed his life to save Ögödei during the war.²³⁷ On this basis Ögödei

²³¹ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 37. ²³² Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 186.

²³³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 384; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 555.

²³⁴ Banākatī, p. 363.

²³⁵ Trading companies made up predominantly by Muslim merchants from Central Asia operating with the funding of Mongolian princes, commanders, and queens. The *ortaq* used this investment to purchase goods for trade across Eurasia or to provide loans at high rates of interest. The *ortaq* was a vital source of income for Mongol aristocrats who used the interest from their investment to supplement their *qubi* revenues. For the *ortaq*, see P. D. Buell, *Historical Dictionary of the Mongol World Empire*, Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003, p. 208; Rossabi, 'The Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty', pp. 259–93; Allsen, 'Mongolian Princes and their Merchant Partners', pp. 96–123.

²³⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 386; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 561.

²³⁷ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 203, § 272; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 386; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 559.

was forced to withdraw his earlier objection and grant Sorqaqtani her request. The *Secret History*, Juvaynī, and the *Yuanshi* also provide extensive detail on Möngke's career prior to assuming the throne. Juvaynī in particular emphasized Möngke's heroism during the campaign against the Kipchaqs in 1236 and, whilst by no means confirming his support for Güyük's rule, pointed out that he was appointed as one of two supreme *yarghuchis* (judges) during the latter's reign.²³⁸ Möngke's record of service led Juvaynī to contend that he deserved the throne on the basis that he had 'in person supervised important affairs and been in charge of weighty matters, and in the overcoming of difficulties and the crushing of rebels has provided unanswerable proofs'.²³⁹ Both the *Yuanshi* and Juvaynī also sought to establish strong ties between Ögödei and the Toluid house. Juvaynī argued that this relationship was strongest between Ögödei and Tolui, but the *Yuanshi* suggested that it was actually Möngke for whom his uncle had special affection. The Chinese chronicle noted how Ögödei's second wife, Ang Hui, was said to have paid special attention to Möngke's upbringing and how Ögödei himself was responsible for selecting Möngke's chief wife.²⁴⁰ The Toluids used this 'experience of the *yasa* of Changīz Khān and the customs of Qā'ān [Ögödei]'²⁴¹ not only to support the accession of Möngke, but also to undermine the position of the *aqa-nar* in nominating a new ruler.

Yet sustained criticism of both the *quriltai* at Alā Qamāq and the violent imposition of Möngke's rule which followed it forced the Toluids to explain their departure from previous political convention. In response, the Toluids made reference to what they perceived to be a state of emergency, which justified their seizure of power. They argued that lawlessness had engulfed the Empire since the death of Ögödei, after which there had been no central control. Juvaynī stated that, 'after the death of Qā'ān [Ögödei] the affairs of the world had been diverted from the path of rectitude and the reins of commerce and fair dealing turned aside from the highway of righteousness'.²⁴² Güyük was accused of doing nothing to impose the *jasaq* or to bring the appanage holders under control. During and after his reign junior commanders and office holders ruled the territories entrusted to their care as if they were 'their own property'.²⁴³ Corrupt appanage holders oppressed the populations under their control through heavy exactions and requisitions which led to the depopulation of towns throughout the Empire.²⁴⁴ In the absence of a strong central government the empire of Chinggis Khan was beginning to crumble: 'with each year that passed the affairs of the world became more desperate, and with every month the garment of the people's livelihood more ragged'.²⁴⁵ In the eyes of the Toluids the divisions which had spread through the Empire were embodied by the leading Ögödeids, Oghul Qaimish and her two sons, who had divided the court and paralysed the business of government. The Toluids argued

²³⁸ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 255.

²³⁹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 560.

²⁴⁰ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, pp. 27–8.

²⁴¹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 559.

²⁴² Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 556.

²⁴³ Grigor of Akanc, p. 303; Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 507.

²⁴⁴ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 598.

²⁴⁵ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 563.

that these divisions were dangerous because they threatened the security of the Empire and also rendered it an appealing target for enemies.

The Toluids contended that the crisis gripping the Mongol Empire after the death of Ögödei constituted a state of emergency, which needed a speedy remedy. In this state of emergency a properly constituted *quriltai* would, according to the Toluids and their allies, be impossible to organize. Strong leadership, not consultation, was required to restore health to the body politic. Juvaynī recorded that when the Ögödeids reproved Batu for appointing Möngke to the throne without a meeting of the *aqā* and *ini*, Batu responded by saying that 'if this was not carried out, and someone other than Mungkā Qā'ān had been appointed, it would have invited the destruction of the Empire'.²⁴⁶ Indeed, the Toluids argued that the appointment of Möngke restored order to the Mongol Nation: 'If you have a mind to concord and unity you should present yourselves as soon as possible at the *quriltai* [of Möngke] in order that the affairs of the realm may be dealt with in unanimity and the foul veil of estrangement and duplicity removed from the countenance of harmony'.²⁴⁷ Möngke would later boast of the unity which had accompanied his accession to William of Rubruck, when he spoke of his friendship with Batu: 'there are two eyes in one head, and yet in spite of being two they have only one sight'.²⁴⁸ The Toluid coup was portrayed as the reunification of the Empire behind the leadership of a strong qa'an.

The Toluids also sought to undermine the importance of the *quriltai* in determining the succession by claiming that both Chinggis Khan and Ögödei had left written wills, designating their successors. The concept of the qa'an's will had been quite fluid during the *quriltais* of Ögödei and Güyük, but the Toluids argued that it represented a legally binding document which forced the council to carry out its dictates. Indeed, Juvaynī argued that the 'will' of Chinggis Khan had been transcribed onto paper for the various members of the *altan uruq* and *nököt* to sign in token of their obedience.²⁴⁹ The idea that the will of the qa'an existed as a formal mandate dramatically reduced the influence of the Mongol aristocracy in the nomination of a ruler. There could be no scope for the *aqā-nar* to 'interpret' or discuss the will of the qa'an when it had been transcribed on paper for all to read, nor was there room for the nomination of rival candidates, only the acclamation of the chosen one.

The principle of designation also served to justify the deposition of the Ögödeids and the elevation of the Toluids. The Toluids themselves had not been directly nominated by any of the previous three rulers, but they pointed to the failure of the Ögödeids to adhere to the will of Ögödei which named his grandson Shiremün as his successor. It has already been stated above that the question of the existence

²⁴⁶ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvinī, Vol. 3, p. 22; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 403; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 583.

²⁴⁷ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvinī, Vol. 3, p. 37; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 403; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 584.

²⁴⁸ Rubruck, ed. Jackson, p. 238.

²⁴⁹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 182; the *Secret History* simply refers to an agreement reached between Chinggis Khan and his sons. See *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 182–8, §§ 254–5.

of such a will is highly contentious. Rashīd al-Dīn is the first source to make explicit reference to a will in favour of Shiremūn over half a century after Ögödei's death, whilst Juvaynī, a contemporary of the events he describes, states that Ögödei in fact summoned his eldest son, Güyük, to return to take the throne.²⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the Toluids contended that the Ögödeids and Chaghadaids had transgressed Ögödei's will by nominating Güyük. The *Jām'i al-Tavārikh* emphasized the Ögödeids' infidelity to Shiremūn on two occasions, first during the *quriltai* of 1250 and then again during the purges of 1251–3. When Batu was first asked for his opinion regarding the succession he initially stated that 'the children of Ukutāy Qā'ān have violated their father's words [and] not installed Shīrāmūn' whereby 'the qā'ānī (khanate) will not pass to them'.²⁵¹ In the second instance, the Toluids were confronted by one of Güyük's former supporters, Ilchīdāi Noyan, during the show trials that followed Möngke's coronation. Ilchīdāi responded to the Toluids' taunts by chastising them for having betrayed Ögödei's sons and placing Möngke on the throne. But Möngke's brother Qubilai retorted that the Ögödeids had been the first to violate the will of the qā'an since 'Ukutāy Qā'ān said that Shīrāmūn should be *pādshāh* (emperor). [How then did] you give the *pādshāhī* to Kuyūk Khān of your own accord?'²⁵² In the eyes of Möngke's supporters, the Ögödeids' transgression against the will of the qā'an disqualified them from taking the throne, thereby opening the succession to other candidates.

The principle of designation was also used to support the nomination of Möngke during the *quriltai* of 1250, albeit that in this instance it was the designation of Batu, not the previous qā'an, which was held up as the source of Toluid legitimacy. Batu's sudden rise to prominence was premised upon the argument that he was the *aqa* of the *altan uruq*. On this basis, Juvaynī claims that every member of the *altan uruq* provided written oaths to accept whomever Batu nominated to the throne.²⁵³ Rashīd al-Dīn suggests that the Ögödeids and Chaghadaids were willing to grant Batu such wide-ranging authority on the arrogant assumption that he would inevitably nominate one of them to take the throne.²⁵⁴ That these statements were spurious is almost certain. The long-standing hostility between members of Güyük's old administration, various Chaghadaid princes, and Batu had precluded them from attending the meeting. They were therefore unlikely to abdicate their right to participate in the *quriltai* in favour of their arch-enemy. Yet in the minds of the Toluids, Batu's elevation was an essential substitute for a royal designation. The initial violation of Ögödei's will had broken the chain of designated rulers who were supposed to have followed Chinggis Khan. There was, therefore, no one with the authority to designate a successor to the throne. The Toluids tried to solve this problem by situating Batu as a kind of regent who temporarily embodied the

²⁵⁰ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 248; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 39; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 51.

²⁵¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 361; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 524.

²⁵² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 39; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 51.

²⁵³ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 559; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 402; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 581.

²⁵⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 403; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 583; also see Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 558.

powers of the qa'an. Batu would then use his largely honorary position to formally bestow power upon Möngke through royal designation, thereby bypassing the *quriltai*. For this reason many of the sources claim that the *quriltai* of 1250 initially elected Batu as qa'an and that he in turn designated Möngke.²⁵⁵ This royal designation robbed the aristocracy of its right to participate in the nomination process and undermined the importance of the *quriltai*.

Allsen also stressed that Möngke claimed legitimacy on the basis of a heavenly mandate.²⁵⁶ He shows that the Toluids attributed good fortune (*qut*) to Möngke as a sign that he had been chosen to rule by the Mongols' supreme creative deity. The belief that good fortune distinguished a ruler from amongst his potential rivals had been employed by previous Eurasian dynasties such as the Great Türk Empire and the Uighurs, who regarded power as a divine blessing.²⁵⁷ Heaven would mark out its chosen ruler by affording him the protection of fortune (*qut*) which in turn empowered the prospective ruler to seize the throne.²⁵⁸ The appointment of a fortunate ruler was also a blessing for his subjects, who expected to share in his success. Indeed, the fortunate ruler was required to provide constant proof that he continued to possess the favour of Heaven in the form of military victories, royal benefices, and general prosperity.²⁵⁹ The concept of *qut* had also been prominent in the rise of Chinggis Khan and, to a lesser extent, his first two successors, Ögödei and Güyük. The degree to which the Mongols continued to adhere to concepts of divine mandate and good fortune after the death of Chinggis Khan is demonstrated by the orders of submission which the Mongols sent to foreign powers. Both the orders themselves, and the seal of Güyük which adorns them, contain the recurring formula 'by the power of eternal heaven, and through the protection of great fortune, the qa'an', thereby establishing that the Mongols continued to regard their ruler as possessing the blessing of Eternal Heaven.²⁶⁰

Yet Allsen neglects to mention that Möngke's claim to possess a divine mandate to rule differed significantly from those made by his predecessors. Whereas Ögödei and Güyük were thought to embody the collective good fortune of the entire Mongol Nation, Möngke used his claim to divine mandate to elevate himself above his rivals and to accentuate the distinction between the qa'an and his subjects. Neither Ögödei nor Güyük's *qut* was thought to have significantly marked them

²⁵⁵ Juvayni, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 559; Jüzjāni, p. 1177; Kirakos, p. 293.

²⁵⁶ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 42.

²⁵⁷ See Golden, 'Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity Amongst the Pre-Činggisid Nomads of Western Eurasia', pp. 37–76; Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 42.

²⁵⁸ See Thomas Allsen, 'A Note on Mongol Imperial Ideology', *The Early Mongol Language, Culture and History: Studies in Honour of Igor de Rachewiltz on the Occasion of his 80th Birthday*, ed. Volker Rybatzki, Alessandra Pozzi, Peter W. Geier, and John R. Krueger, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009, pp. 1–7; Igor de Rachewiltz, 'Some Remarks on the Ideological Foundations of Chinggis Khan's Empire', *Papers on Far Eastern History*, Vol. 7, March 1973, pp. 24–34; Golden, 'Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity Amongst the Pre-Činggisid Nomads of Western Eurasia', pp. 37–76; Togan, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations*, p. 5.

²⁵⁹ Golden, 'Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity Amongst the Pre-Činggisid Nomads of Western Eurasia', p. 60.

²⁶⁰ Eric Voegelin, 'The Mongol Orders of Submission to European Powers, 1245–1255', *Byzantion*, Vol. 15, 1940–1, p. 396; Jackson, 'World Conquest and Local Accommodation', p. 4.

apart from other members of the *altan uruq*. Indeed, the *qut* of Chinggis Khan was believed to have passed to his sons and followers as a common legacy. According to Juvaynī, Chinggis Khan held that each of his sons possessed kingly virtues which qualified them to rule in equal measure. Chinggis awarded them responsibilities which corresponded with their talents in the hope that they would share the rule of the Empire between them.²⁶¹ Nor was there any sign that either Ögödei or Güyük had claimed a special position in relation to Eternal Heaven, which would have elevated them above their kin. Batu, not Ögödei, is recorded ascending a hill to seek the intercession of Eternal Heaven during his war with the Kipchaqs in 1236.²⁶² Moreover, Tolui was thought to have interceded with the local gods of China to restore Ögödei to health after they had afflicted him with illness whilst on campaign.²⁶³ Finally, the Ögödeids' claim to divine mandate was not accompanied by parallel claims to special virtues or powers which may have distinguished them from their rivals. Güyük's character is condemned widely by the *Secret History*, Juvaynī and the *Yuanshi*, who described him as greedy, arrogant, and immoderate.²⁶⁴ Juvaynī in particular draws attention to the fact that Güyük was 'of a languid nature' and that his ill-health prevented him from ruling effectively.²⁶⁵ Juvaynī's views may have been influenced by his Toluid masters, but it is significant that Ögödei received similar criticism from the *Secret History*, the *Jām'i al-Tavārikh*, and the Chinese *Yuanwenlei*, which draw attention to his alcoholism despite the fact that the Toluids held a great deal of respect for him.²⁶⁶ The fact that the Ögödeids never sought to aggrandize their position in relation to their family is not surprising since such a move would have been anathema to the collegial style of government established by the Ögödeids, which held that Chinggisid charisma and authority had passed to the community as a whole.

Shortly after the accession of Möngke there were strong signs that the Toluids wanted to elevate the new qa'an above his rivals. This move was motivated primarily by the Toluids' failure to achieve the support of the aristocracy in either the *quriltai* at Alā Qamāq or at the subsequent coronation. In the absence of popular support, the Toluids were eager to demonstrate that Möngke possessed a divine mandate which rendered his accession both righteous and inevitable. This argument was initially supported by references to the qa'an's good fortune. In some instances, Möngke's claim to *qut* does not appear out of line with those of his predecessors. The more mundane examples of his good fortune include favourable weather during his coronation ceremony in 1251 and the uncovering of the Ögödeid plot (despite the fact that such a plot was probably widely anticipated at

²⁶¹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 40; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 303–4; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 443.

²⁶² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 325; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 475.

²⁶³ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 203, § 272.

²⁶⁴ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 206–7, §§ 275–6; Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 259; Kim, 'A Reappraisal of Güyük Khan', p. 310.

²⁶⁵ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, Vol. 1, 1958, p. 259.

²⁶⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 40; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 380; *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, p. 217, § 281; Ma Juan, 'The Conflicts Between Islam and Confucianism', p. 62.

the time).²⁶⁷ Yet these anecdotes are contrasted sharply with a more extreme example of Möngke's *qut* provided during the campaign against the Kipchaq in 1236.²⁶⁸ Juvaynī recorded that Möngke was in pursuit of a Kipchaq bandit named Bachman when the latter fled to an island in the middle of the Itil River. The current made crossing the water difficult and the Mongols had no boats, yet when Möngke arrived with his army 'suddenly a wind sprang up and blew away the water from the approach to the island so that the bottom appeared. Mungkā Qā'ān ordered the troops to ride in without delay' and after the bandit chief was captured 'the water began to move and when the troops had crossed it was back again without one soldier's having suffered harm'. Juvaynī believed that these miracles 'provide a reason for the transfer of power and the key of empire to the World *Pādshāh* Mungkā Qā'ān, such as requires no demonstration'.²⁶⁹ The history of the Ögödeids provided by the *Secret History* and Juvaynī possesses nothing similar to the story describing Möngke's parting of the waters, which has far more in common with accounts of later patrimonialists.

The Toluids also sought to demonstrate that Heaven had distinguished Möngke from his rivals by blessing him with superior virtues. Such concepts were in keeping with the Toluid idea of autocratic kingship, which was heavily influenced by Chinese and Persian bureaucrats recruited to serve in Möngke's expanded Secretariat. Juvaynī's account of Möngke's coronation provides an insight into the Toluid ideal of patrimonial kingship:

in the first place, the nature of *He created souls before bodies*, adorns that man's being with the embroidery of bliss and illumines his soul with the lights of sound judgement, and then, when he comes from the highest world to the lowest halting place, God rears his nature in the cradle of wisdom and sagacity, and puts the breast of the nurse that is all gentleness and gravity to the mouth of his inner knowledge, and inspires him to righteous deeds and actions and straightforward speech, and curbs him in his comings and goings with the bridle of understanding, so that gradually, day by day, he ascends the steps of greatness and, hour by hour, receives instruction from Fortune and Prosperity.²⁷⁰

In the mind of Juvaynī, God endowed kings with virtues and abilities which made them suitable for the task of governance and distinguished them from lesser men, who were excluded from the throne. His description of Möngke's designation by Batu is pregnant with similar ideas regarding the necessary qualifications for kingship:

Now of the lineage of Changīz Khān is Mungkā Qā'ān, who is famous for his shrewdness and bravery and celebrated for his sagacity and valour. The affairs of the khanate should be ordered and regulated by the excellence of his world adorning counsel and the welfare of land and people assured by the good fortune of his knot-loosening resolution and forethought. In this world there always appears the affair for every man and the man for every affair. *There are men for every action and everything is possible to such as are created for it.*²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 43; Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, pp. 567 and 574.

²⁶⁸ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 554.

²⁶⁹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 554.

²⁷⁰ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 555.

²⁷¹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 560.

Juvaynī claimed that God had distinguished Möngke from amongst his peers by blessing him with kingly virtues which marked him as a ruler.

Juvaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn used Möngke's claim to unique genius to undermine the influence of the *quriltai*. In Rashīd's version, as in Juvaynī's, Möngke's virtues remove the possibility of further discussion or debate on the question of the succession. In his own record of Batu's speech, Rashīd points out that Möngke is the only one worthy of taking the throne; 'and from amongst Changīz Khān's family which other son is there who can order the realm and army with enlightened and righteous deliberation?'²⁷² Similarly, when Juvaynī sought to address the question of the succession to Güyük he noted that only Möngke Qa'an and his family demonstrated the moral rectitude to rule the Empire; they remained without fault and in a state of flawless purity.²⁷³ Such virtues rendered Möngke the rightful heir to the throne.

The Toluid coup of 1251 not only brought a different Chinggisid line to the Mongol throne, but also changed the previous conception of political authority as held by the Ögödeids. Möngke's reign represented a departure from the collegial form of government practised by his predecessors and began the shift towards a more autocratic style of kingship. This shift was necessitated by the failure of the Toluids to obtain the support of the *aqa-nar* in the *quriltai* of Alā Qamāq, thereby forcing them to reinterpret the source of Chinggisid authority. The shift was achieved after the Toluids appropriated the authority of the *aqa-nar* by establishing their own expertise on Chinggisid traditions, which they claimed to have derived from their patriarch. This claim, combined with the Toluids' record of service to the Empire, robbed the *aqa-nar* of their authority within the *quriltai* and empowered the Toluids to place their own candidate on the throne. Their choice of Möngke was justified by claiming that he possessed exceptional virtues which not only gave him the ability to restore the fortunes of the Empire, but also established his right to appropriate the power of the princes and *noyat* which had been heavily depleted by the purges following his coronation. This Toluid interpretation of Chinggisid authority would become a model for future claims to patrimonialist authority in both China and Iran.

²⁷² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, 402; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 582.

²⁷³ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 36; Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, pp. 255 and 552.

3

Hülegü and the Īlkhānate

Möngke Qa'an's reign (1251–9) saw the rapid expansion of the Mongol Empire in both East Asia and the Middle East. This expansion was motivated primarily by Möngke's desire to increase his control over the sedentary populations of China and Iran whilst also fulfilling the ideological aspiration of the Mongols to achieve complete world domination.¹ The conquered territories were initially envisioned as falling under the control of enlarged regional secretariats, which would in turn be answerable to the Qa'an and his Central Secretariat in Mongolia. Yet Möngke's unexpected death in 1259 undermined these plans and the Empire, which he had worked so hard to unite under his leadership, was divided once again by a succession dispute. The throne was contested by Möngke's eldest remaining brother, Qubilai, whom he had entrusted with the administration of Mongol territory in north China, and his youngest brother, Ariq Bökö, whom he had left as his regent in Mongolia. This contest greatly weakened the political centre of the Mongol Empire, which remained without a leader for five years until Qubilai triumphed in 1264.

Regional governors and Chinggisid princes were encouraged by the lack of central direction following Möngke's death to seize independent control of the provinces under their care. Perhaps the most notable power to assert its autonomy against the centre of the Empire during this period was the Īlkhānate of Iran, which was founded by Möngke's second brother Hülegü. In 1252 he had been appointed as the '*il-khān*' (Mongol. *il-qan*, viceroy; deputy to the qa'an)² of the imperial army in Iran and was entrusted with extending Mongol power into Arab Iraq and the Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm (Anatolia), whilst also establishing a base for further operations to the west.³ He had barely achieved these goals when news of Möngke's death reached him in 1260. Hülegü took advantage of the subsequent confusion to carve out an independent dominion for himself in the lands he had conquered.

Hülegü's decision to assume the autonomous rule of Mongol-held territories in the Middle East forced him to abandon the politics of patrimonial rule practised

¹ Reuven Amitai-Preiss, 'Mongol Imperial Ideology and the Ilkhanid War Against the Mamluks', *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, p. 72; de Rachewiltz, 'Some Remarks on the Ideological Foundations of Chinghis Khan's Empire', p. 24; de Rachewiltz, 'Heaven, Earth and the Mongols in the Time of Činggis Khan and his Immediate Successors', p. 119; Morgan, *The Mongols*, p. 14; J. J. Saunders, *Muslims and Mongols: Essays on Medieval Asia*, Christchurch: Whitcoulls for the University of Canterbury, 1977, p. 41; Brent, *The Mongol Empire*, p. 131.

² The title of *ilkhān* is discussed further on in this chapter.

³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 479; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 686.

by his brother Möngke. Hülegü was in no position to claim such authority since he had previously only been appointed as the qa'an's deputy (*il-khān*) in the west. Even after Möngke's death, Hülegü and his successors acknowledged their formal subordination to the qa'an and continued to seek his sanction to rule in Iran until 1295.⁴ Furthermore, Hülegü's army incorporated units and commanders of varied political backgrounds, many of whom held high office under the previous Ögödeid regime and were unlikely to favour a strong centralized government in Iran. Hülegü was forced to rely heavily upon the support of these commanders in his attempt to maintain control of Iran, and they subsequently exerted a strong influence in shaping the nature of Īlkhān authority. The important position of the aristocracy in the early Īlkhān state prompted a revival of collegial notions of Chinggisid authority in the years after Hülegü's death.

Hülegü's control over Iran was built upon the support of his army, yet his relationship with its commanders was often strained. The most salient characteristic of his force was the diversity of its membership, which was recruited from a variety of different regions in the Mongol Empire. It included commanders drawn from the former Ögödeid aristocracy, Jočid and Chaghadaid royal princes, garrison forces previously stationed in Iran and Kashmir, and native Iranian allies, as well as members of the Toluids' private army. Thus, the majority of the Īlkhān army was drawn from outside the Toluid household and had very little sympathy for the patrimonialist style of kingship practised by Möngke. The restrictions which these commanders placed on Hülegü's authority as well as their dominant role in the creation of the Īlkhānate mean that understanding the composition of Hülegü's army is important to fully comprehend the nature of political authority in the regime he built in Iran.

Previous discussions of the Īlkhān army have focused mainly on its size and religious-ethnic affiliations.⁵ Attention has also been given to the contingents commanded by Jočid and Chaghadaid princes due to their central role in the conflict which emerged between Hülegü and the Jočid Ulus and then later between the Īlkhānate and the Chaghadaids.⁶ However, virtually no attention has been given to the other contingents entrusted to Hülegü, which Thomas Allsen briefly describes as being commanded by Toluid loyalists, hand-picked by Möngke from amongst his personal guard.⁷ In fact, the following discussion will demonstrate

⁴ Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 268; Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, p. 296; Allsen, 'Changing Forms of Legitimation in Mongol Iran', p. 227.

⁵ 'Abbās Iqbāl Āshīyānī, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl*, Tehran: Mu'asisih-i Intishārāt-i Nigāh, 1389/2010–11, p. 187; Shīrīn Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmat-i Īlkhānī dar Irān*, Tehran: Sāzmān-i Muṭāl'ah-i va Tadvīn-i Kutub-i 'Ulūm Insānī Dānīshgāhha, 1385/2006–7, p. 98; Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Īlkhānī War, 1260–1281*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 15; John Masson Smith Jr, 'Mongol Manpower and Persian Population', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 18, No. 3, Oct. 1975, pp. 274–8; John Masson Smith Jr, 'Mongol Nomadism and Middle Eastern Geography: Qishlaqs and Tümens', *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, p. 40; Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, pp. 203–7; Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 188; David Morgan, 'The Mongol Armies in Persia', *Der Islam*, Vol. 56, 1979, pp. 81–9.

⁶ Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns', p. 340; Peter Jackson, 'The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 22, 1978, p. 192; Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, p. 489.

⁷ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 49.

that the Toluid contingent formed less than half of the army granted to Hülegü, which included several members of the Ögödeid aristocracy. Their presence suggests that the Īlkhān army was most likely hostile to the kind of patrimonial rule imposed by Möngke.

Möngke had appointed Hülegü to serve as a senior commander, not as an independent ruler. Hülegü's description of his own role within the Mongol army is provided by a letter which he wrote to King Louis IX of France in 1261. A translation of this letter into Latin survives in the Vatican archives and has been published by Paul Meyvaert. In this letter, Hülegü simply describes himself as the *dux milicie Mungalorum* (commander of the Mongol army).⁸ This characterization was supported by the constable of Armenia, Prince Smbat, who described Hülegü as the 'chef supreme, le khan Hulagu'.⁹ The use of these titles denotes not only Hülegü's subordinate status in relation to Möngke, but also his relative parity with the other Chinggisid princes who accompanied his mission.

The Armenian monk Grigor of Akanc counted six Chinggisid princes in Hülegü's army (Qul, Balaxe, Tutar, Tataqan, Tegüder, and Bawraqan), each of whom brought their own contingents to assist in the expansion of the Empire.¹⁰ These armies remained under the control of their respective princes, who considered the Īlkhān to be a mere first amongst equals whose commands were open to contention.¹¹ Indeed, the short history attributed to Quṭb al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shīrāzī claims that whenever Hülegü asked the princes to perform a task they would complain, and say that Hülegü had no right to ask anything of them.¹² As was the case with previous Mongolian campaigns, Hülegü had to discuss all strategy with a council of the leading princes and *noyat* of his army.¹³ However, Grigor of Akanc pointed out that this approach often led to open bickering amongst the princes: 'they were in disagreement among themselves but were very fearless and eaters of men'.¹⁴ Conflict between the princes was exacerbated by the fact that they did not recognize Hülegü's authority over the army. A similar situation unfolded during the campaign against Europe in 1236, when Güyük refused to concede precedence to Batu, whom he regarded as his equal.¹⁵ In this instance, the Jočid princes in particular saw Hülegü as the mere lapdog of Möngke. Al-'Umarī recorded that up until the fall of the Īlkhānate in 1335, the descendants of Hülegü were chided by the other Chinggisid princes for being the qa'an's underlings.¹⁶ Their assertions may not have been far from the truth since the title of *il-khān*, which was assumed by Hülegü sometime after his arrival in Iran, is a compound of the Mongolian

⁸ Paul Meyvaert, 'An Unknown Letter of Hulagu, Il-Khan of Persia, to King Louis IX of France', *Viator*, No. 11, 1980, p. 253.

⁹ Smbat, *La Chronique Attribuée au Connétable Smbat*, p. 101; Smbat, 'The Armenian Chronicles of Constable Smpad or The Royal Historian', trans. Sirarpie der Nersessian, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 13, 1959, p. 159.

¹⁰ Grigor of Akanc, p. 327.

¹¹ Grigor of Akanc, p. 337; Kirakos, p. 330.

¹² Quṭb al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Mas'ūd Shīrāzī, *Akhhār-i Mughūlān dar Anbāna'i Quṭb*, ed. Īraj Afshār, Qūm: Kitābkhāna-yi Buzurg Ḥaḍrat Ayat Allāh al-'Azīmī Mar'ashī Najafī, 1389/2010, p. 40.

¹³ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 3, p. 113; Vaṣṣāf, p. 123.

¹⁴ Grigor of Akanc, p. 327.

¹⁵ See Chapter 2.

¹⁶ Al-'Umarī, p. 91; Abū Bakr b. 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-Durar wa Jāmi' al-Ghurar*, ed. Ulrich Harman, Cairo: Franz Steiner-Verlag, 1402/1982, Vol. 9, p. 43.

terms for submission/peace (*il*) and ruler (*khan*).¹⁷ Reuven Amitai-Preiss has pointed out that the Syrian writer 'Izz al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Shaddād al-Ḥalabī heard members of Hülegü's army using the title in reference to Hülegü's second son, Yoshmut, during his father's lifetime, which suggests both the common nature of the title and the subordinate status it conveys.¹⁸ Similarly, Bayarsaikhan has pointed out that the Armenian historian Kirakos qualified Hülegü's power as being 'khan-like', implying that he lacked the full authority of a khan.¹⁹ The restricted nature of Hülegü's mandate invited the interference of the Jočids in both the command of his army and his administration of Iran.

The view that Hülegü held a limited authority over his army is confirmed by the fact that he was only entrusted with temporary command over Iran. Even the most fervent supporter of İlkhān power, Rashīd al-Dīn, admitted that Möngke publicly ordered Hülegü to return to Mongolia after he had achieved his mission in the west.²⁰ The Jočids, who had already established a strong presence throughout Iran, therefore justifiably believed that they would benefit most from any westward expansion of the Mongol Empire. Hülegü had entered their sphere of influence and was bound to show a degree of deference in recognition of his transitory position. Any attempt to take unilateral command of their armies would have met with failure on Hülegü's part. Rather, a return to the consultative style of collegial leadership was forced upon Hülegü before he even set out for Iran.

Hülegü also faced resistance from the Mongol army in Azerbaijan. This army was a *tamma*, a mixed force comprising soldiers of the Chinggisid princes and the *noyat*.²¹ *Tamma* armies were regularly employed to act as garrison troops to defend the distant territories conquered by the Mongols and to enforce the rule of the qa'an over these lands.²² During the reign of Chinggis Khan the *tamma* system had been employed to minimize the soldiers' loyalty to their old aristocratic households, thereby accelerating their assimilation into the new Mongol Nation, but in the years after Chinggis Khan's death, these units came to assume a separate identity of their own.²³ This seems to have been the case with the *tamma* of Azerbaijan, which had initially been dispatched to Iran by Ögödei in 1229 under the leadership of

¹⁷ For the title of *il-khān*, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, 'An Exchange of Letters in Arabic Between Abaqa İlkhān and Sultan Baybars (A.H. 667/A. D. 1268–9)', *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 38, Weisbaden, 1994, pp. 24–6; Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung älterer neupersischer Geschichtsquellen, vor allem der Mongolen und Timuridenzeit*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1963, pp. 207–9; Reuven Amitai-Preiss, 'Evidence for the Early Use of the Title *ilkhān* among the Mongols', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd Series, No. 1, 1991, pp. 353–61; Xénia Celnarová, 'The Religious Ideas of the Early Turks From Point of View of Ziya Gökalp', *Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1997, p. 105.

¹⁸ Amitai-Preiss, 'Evidence for the Early Use of the Title *ilkhān* among the Mongols', p. 359.

¹⁹ Bayarsaikhan, *The Mongols and the Armenians*, p. 13.

²⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 479; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 687.

²¹ For the *tamma*, see P. D. Buell, 'The Kalmyk Tanggaci People: Thoughts on the Mechanics and Impact of Mongol Expansion', *Mongolian Studies*, Vol. 6, 1980, pp. 41–59; Hsiao Ch'i-ch'ing, *The Military Establishment of the Yuan Dynasty*, Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1978, p. 137; Ostrowski, 'The *Tamma* and the Dual-Administrative System of the Mongol Empire', p. 277; May, *The Mongol Art of War*, p. 38.

²² Buell, 'The Kalmyk Tanggaci', p. 45.

²³ Jean Aubin, 'L'ethnogenèse des Qaraunas', *Turcica*, Vol. 1, 1969, pp. 69 and 75.

Chormaghun Noyan, one of Chinggis Khan's quiver-bearers.²⁴ Chinggis Khan had initially charged Chormaghun with mopping up the remnants of the Khwārazmshāh dynasty and its army, which had been heavily defeated by Chinggis Khan during a campaign in 1220–4. But Chinggis Khan died before Chormaghun's mission commenced and it was postponed until the reign of Ögödei.²⁵ Chormaghun successfully defeated the resurgent Khwārazmian leader, Jalāl al-Dīn Minkubirnī, at Amid (the capital of Diyārбакr) in 1234 and forced him to flee west into northern Syria where he disappeared from history.²⁶ This victory gave Chormaghun control of the pastures of Azerbaijan and afforded him a base from which to impose Mongol rule over Greater Armenia and the kingdom of Georgia. Chormaghun rewarded his leading *noyat* for their success by partitioning the north-west of Iran into thirteen districts which were to be governed by them as autonomous fiefs.²⁷ But by the time of Möngke's accession their independence seems to have reached an unacceptable level and Juvaynī complained that they 'regarded that territory as their own property'.²⁸ The truth of this statement is demonstrated by the fact that Töregene, Güyük, and then Möngke all successively sought to include Azerbaijan and the southern Caucasus within an expanded regional secretariat of Iran.²⁹ They hoped that the growth of the secretariat would curtail the abuses of the military governors and bring the region's tribute under imperial control, but the reign of Güyük saw the decline of the regional secretariat's power in Iran, and the military governors strongly resisted any attack on their privileges until the reign of Möngke.³⁰

By the time of Hülegü's arrival in 1256 the *tamma* of north-western Iran was held by Baiju Noyan, who ruled in partnership with Chormaghun's widow, Elt'ina.³¹ Baiju was a typical member of the Ögödeid aristocracy. He held a distinguished lineage within the Chinggisid state as his father had been appointed to command a *mingqan* by Chinggis Khan himself. Baiju was also a close relative of Jebe Noyan, another of Chinggis's most renowned generals.³² Baiju held his father's *mingqan* on a hereditary basis and joined Chormaghun's army as one of the thirteen commanders who received fiefs in Azerbaijan upon the defeat of Jalāl al-Dīn.³³ Ögödei dispatched a *yarliq* confirming Baiju as Chormaghun's successor over

²⁴ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 1, pp. 149–50; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 41; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 54. The *Secret History* mistakenly claims that it was Chinggis Khan himself who sent Chormaghun to Iran with orders to attack the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate sometime after 1222.

²⁵ May, *The Mongol Art of War*, p. 97; Bayarsaikhan, *The Mongols and the Armenians*, p. 52.

²⁶ Ibn al-Athīr, 'Izz al-Dīn. *Kāmil fi'l-Tārīkh: The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the Crusading Period from al-Kāmil fi'l-Tārīkh*, trans. D. S. Richards, Vol. 3, Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 305.

²⁷ Grigor of Akanc, p. 303; Bayarsaikhan, *The Mongols and the Armenians*, pp. 55–8; also see *Histoire de la Géorgie*, p. 511.

²⁸ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 507.

²⁹ Töregene dispatched Arghun Aqa to assume control of Azerbaijan and the southern Caucasus, Güyük sent Eljigidei Noyan to replace Baiju as the commander of the *tamma*, and Möngke finally sent Hülegü with an army to enforce his rule over Azerbaijan.

³⁰ Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran*, p. 135; Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', p. 387.

³¹ Grigor of Akanc, p. 317; Kirakos, p. 252.

³² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 42; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 54.

³³ Grigor of Akanc, p. 303.

Azerbaijan prior to his death in 1241 and Baiju continued where his predecessor left off, defending the claim of his army to rule what they had conquered.³⁴ During the regency of Töregene, when the imperial throne was left vacant for five years, imperial coins were minted in Iran in the name of the 'beg [lord] of the Empire'.³⁵ The precise identity of this 'beg' is not known, but Baiju seems to be the most likely candidate since Stéphanos Orbélian also described him as a 'sorte de monarque universellement reconnu'.³⁶ Qazvīnī also records Persian petitioners begging Möngke Qa'an to expand his rule into Azerbaijan, where Baiju ruled independently of the Mongol court and tyrannized his subjects.³⁷

It is, therefore, not surprising that Baiju and his military governors initially resented the arrival of Hülegü, whom they feared would attempt to curtail their power. They were soon proved right when Hülegü's weary Jočid troops appropriated their pastures in Azerbaijan and forced them to relocate to Rūm (Anatolia); something which Kirakos claimed led to much anger amongst their leaders.³⁸ Baiju also showed a distinct lack of respect towards Hülegü personally, who accused him of being proud and boastful: a fault which contributed to his execution some time after 1260.³⁹ The last straw came after the sack of Baghdad (1258), when Hülegü learned that Baiju had initially ignored orders to bring his *tamma* army to help in the attack on Iraq. By that time rumours had begun to circulate that Baiju was conspiring to seize independent control of Anatolia for himself, and so the wily Hülegü was said to have discreetly poisoned him to avoid creating further conflict with his *tamma*.⁴⁰ Peter Jackson and George Lane have argued that Baiju's poor relationship with Hülegü can be attributed to his sympathy for Batu, of whom they claim he was a representative.⁴¹ Yet this seems unlikely given that Baiju resented the influence of the Jočids even more than that of the Toluids. Kirakos, who passed several years as a scribe in the *tamma* army, describes Baiju and Batu ferociously competing for ascendancy over the Caucasus. When Queen Ruzudan of Georgia sent her son, David, to the court of Batu to offer tribute, Baiju was angered to the point of placing her nephew and rival, David Lasha, on the throne. In his subsequent dispute with Batu, Baiju sought the support of Güyük, who ruled that Georgia was within the *tamma*'s sphere of influence.⁴² This was not the only occasion that the Jočids interfered in the affairs of the *tamma*. The Rūmī

³⁴ Jackson, 'The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', p. 217.

³⁵ Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 177; Allsen, 'Changing Forms of Legitimation in Mongol Iran', p. 224.

³⁶ Orbélian, p. 229. Also see Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 177; Allsen, 'Changing Forms of Legitimation in Mongol Iran', p. 224.

³⁷ Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran*, p. 16; George Lane, 'Whose Secret Intent?', *Eurasian Influences on Yuan China*, p. 1.

³⁸ Kirakos, p. 311; Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 3, pp. 91–2.

³⁹ Rashid al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 111; Rashid al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 159.

⁴⁰ Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-ārāb fī funūn al-ādab*, ed. Najīb Muṣṭafī Fawāz and Hikmat Kushlī Fawāz, Vol. 27, Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Ilmiyya, 1424/2004, p. 259; Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Manṣūrī, *Zubda al-Fikra fī Tārīkh al-Hijra*, ed. D. S. Richards, Beirut: al-Shirkat al-Muttaḥidat-i l'il-Tawzī, 1998/1419, p. 41.

⁴¹ Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran*, p. 40; Jackson, 'Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', p. 218.

⁴² Kirakos, p. 263.

secretary, Karīm al-Dīn Maḥmūd Aqṣarāyī, recorded that the Saljūq prince, ‘Alā al-Dīn Kaī Qūbād journeyed to the court of Batu to seek his help against Baiju, who had been raiding as far as Erzerum.⁴³ This evidence suggests that Baiju’s antagonistic relationship with Hülegü was derived from his desire to preserve the autonomy of his *tamma* rather than any possible connections he had to the Jočids. The *tamma* of Azerbaijan had developed a distinct identity by the time of Hülegü’s arrival in Iran and their long-standing independence prompted them to view him with suspicion. But the *tamma* leaders would eventually come to seek the protection of the İlkhān for their position in the southern Caucasus in the face of Jočid expansionism.

A second *tamma* force based in Kashmir was far more amenable to Hülegü’s command. Once again, however, the İlkhān’s authority was not universally recognized. The *tamma* of Kashmir had initially been dispatched by Ögödei in 1229 to stabilize Mongol control over the province of Sind with a view to applying pressure to the Sultanate of Delhi.⁴⁴ Little is known of this force, although Jean Aubin’s study of the Mongol armies based in Afghanistan has contributed greatly to our understanding of its history and composition.⁴⁵ Aubin points out that the *tamma* was initially commanded by four *noyat*, each of whom represented the interests of a separate line of Chinggisids. The Toluid *tamma*, which came to be commanded by Sali Noyan, took control of the Chaghadaid and Ögödeid units during the purges which followed the Toluid coup. Möngke then commanded Sali Noyan to use this combined army to assist Hülegü during his push to the west and, as a close ally of the Toluid house, Sali willingly complied.⁴⁶ The loyalty of the Chaghadaid *tamma*, however, remained with their former masters and they rejoined them in 1265 when Alghu Khan of the Chaghadaid Ulus defeated Sali Noyan in Khurāsān. Yet the Toluid contingent of this Kashmiri *tamma* remained obedient to the Hülegüids and acted as a strong support to the İlkhānate.

Much of Hülegü’s army was made up of soldiers drawn from within Mongolia. These soldiers also came from a diverse political background, a fact which cannot be reconciled with Allsen’s statement that they were predominantly led by members of Möngke’s household guard. Rather, many of them were drawn from leading members of the Ögödeid aristocracy and held collegialist views on the authority of a khan. This group managed to preserve their status under the new Toluid regime through timely submission and the intercession of allies amongst the Toluid ranks. John Masson Smith Jr has recently shown that Hülegü’s march to Iran took him through the territory of Zaysan, in the former *ulus* (realm) of the Ögödeids, where he encountered the latter’s soldiers and families in their winter quarters. This Ögödeid force was absorbed into Hülegü’s army, with Masson Smith estimating that anywhere up to 60,000 Ögödeid troops accompanied him to Iran. Such was the drain on the region’s population that when the Ögödeid prince, Qaidu, sought

⁴³ Karīm al-Dīn Maḥmūd Aqṣarāyī, *Musāmarat al-Akbbār*, ed. Osman Turan, second edn, Tehran: Asāṭir, 1362/1984, p. 38.

⁴⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 49; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 66.

⁴⁵ Aubin, ‘L’ethnogenèse de Qaraunas’, pp. 65–94.

⁴⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 478; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 685.

to revive his family's power he was scarcely able to muster 2,000 or 3,000 men from Zaysan.⁴⁷ Ögödeids were also included amongst the senior leadership of Hülegü's force. Arghun Aqa was, perhaps, the most powerful member of this Ögödeid elite. As we have already seen, Arghun Aqa was raised in the house of Ögödei's protector, Ilügä Noyan, before being promoted to the head of the regional secretariat in Khurāsān during the regency of Töregene Khatun (1241–6). Arghun Aqa subsequently demonstrated a political suppleness that guaranteed his survival and secured his place in both the incoming governments of Güyük and Möngke. George Lane has argued that Arghun Aqa's integrity and honesty endeared him to the new Toluid regime, yet Arghun Aqa also presided over the increase of the tax rate in Iran to 70 dinārs for every ten people; a sum which greatly exceeded the total demanded by Möngke. This revenue provided Arghun Aqa with the necessary patronage to secure his survival.⁴⁸ He received Hülegü in Khurāsān with an ostentatious display of loyalty, housing him in an enormous tabernacle decorated 'with delicate embroideries, with gold and silver plate'.⁴⁹ Arghun Aqa successfully preserved his power after Hülegü's arrival in Iran, but he did not abandon his collegialist view of Mongol kingship and the fact that he held his army on a hereditary basis meant that his support had to be courted by the Ilkhān.

Yet even Arghun Aqa's pre-eminence seems to have been eclipsed to some degree by the leaders of the Oirat and Onggirat (also Qongqirat). The rulers of both groups had managed to maintain a high degree of political autonomy during the reign of Chinggis Khan as a result of their timely acceptance of Mongol rule. It will be recalled that Quduqa Beki of the Oirat had allied himself with Chinggis's armies in their mission to subdue the Forest People in 1207 and had subsequently entered a marriage alliance with the Chinggisids.⁵⁰ The Oirat ruling family preserved their ties with the *altan uruq* in the years after Chinggis's death. One of Quduqa's descendants, Tangīz Küregen, was married to the daughter of Güyük and was arrested during the purge of the Ögödeids. Fortunately for Tangīz, Möngke had also married one of his daughters and so he escaped after only receiving mild punishment.⁵¹ Tangīz's Oirats remained one of the most powerful military contingents within the Toluid state and his help was instrumental in the later victory of Qubilai during the civil war which followed Möngke's death.⁵² Möngke naturally sought to draw on this strength when building Hülegü's army. Tangīz's cousin, Buqa Temür, was charged with leading the Oirat contingent and the latter's prominence in Hülegü's army is demonstrated by the fact that he is numbered as one of the

⁴⁷ John Masson Smith Jr, 'Hülegü Moves West: High Living and Heartbreak on the Road to Baghdad', *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, p. 133.

⁴⁸ George Lane, 'Arghun Aqa: Mongol Bureaucrat in Iran', *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4, Fall 1999, pp. 464–6; Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 519.

⁴⁹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 614.

⁵⁰ *SHM*, ed. de Rachewiltz, pp. 163–4, § 239; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 56; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 78.

⁵¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 56; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 78.

⁵² Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Zubda al-Tawārikh*, ed. Sayyid Kamāl Ḥājj Sayyid Javādī, Tehran: Sāzmān-i Chāp va Intishārāt-i Vazārat-i Farhang va Arshād Islāmī, 1380/2001–2, p. 52.

'royal princes' by Juvaynī.⁵³ He also shared command of the right wing of the Ilkhān army, which he used to achieve the conquest of southern Arab Iraq and Khūzistān.⁵⁴

The Onggirat also held a well-established series of marriage alliances with the leaders of the Qiyat–Borjigin dynasty which they used to preserve their independence in the new Mongol Nation.⁵⁵ The most celebrated of these unions was that between Börte and Temüjin, after which the Onggirats became the primary source of royal consorts in the Mongol Empire, with thirteen Onggirat princesses marrying eleven different Chinggisid rulers.⁵⁶ Their favourable position within the imperial court was translated into military and political power and their soldiers constituted a large portion of Hülegü's initial force under the command of Abatay Noyan. The latter was entrusted with the important task of escorting Hülegü's family to Iran after the successful establishment of the Ilkhān state.⁵⁷ These commanders of Oirat and Onggirat contingents were descended from the royal lines of both their nations and supplemented this pedigree with marriage into the Chinggisid royal line. This lineage, combined with the independence of their respective households, rendered them suspicious of the central government and resistant to trends towards patrimonial kingship. Neither the Oirat nor Onggirat could be counted amongst the Toluids' household servants noted by Allsen. Their roots were firmly planted in the old collegial Ögödeid regime under which their political views had been shaped and advanced.

Hülegü also held personal command of a private army which he had inherited from his father, Tolui. This force had been under the control of his mother, Sorqaqtani Beki, until Möngke took the throne in 1251.⁵⁸ According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Tolui's original army consisted of 101,000 men from which Möngke granted Hülegü two from every ten as his portion (i.e. 20,200 soldiers).⁵⁹ It has been suggested that this number was inflated by Toluid historians, who included imperial soldiers in their calculations.⁶⁰ Yet by 1252 Möngke Qa'an held control of both groups, from which it may be assumed he drew the soldiers given to Hülegü. This army's commanders were drawn from amongst Tolui's former guard and included figures such as Kitbuqa Noyan, a *ba'urči* (cook, steward) in Tolui's household, who was entrusted with the command of Hülegü's vanguard.⁶¹ Other notable members of this Toluid force included the descendants of Sorqan Šira, one of Chinggis

⁵³ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 3, p. 92.

⁵⁴ Našīr al-Dīn Tūsī, 'The Death of the Last 'Abbasid Caliph. A Contemporary Muslim Account', trans. by J. A. Boyle, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. 6, Manchester, 1961, p. 161; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 500; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 715.

⁵⁵ The best analysis of the Onggirat's use of marriage to advance their position within the Mongol Empire is Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression*, pp. 93–119.

⁵⁶ Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression*, p. 107.

⁵⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 519; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 745.

⁵⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 386; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 560.

⁵⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 272 and 283; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 399 and 415.

⁶⁰ Jackson, 'From *Ulus* to Khanate', p. 37; Hodong Kim, 'A Re-examination of the Register of Thousands (*hazāra*) in the *Jāmi' al-Tawārikh*', *Rashīd al-Dīn: Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchanges in Ilkhanid Iran*, pp. 104–6.

⁶¹ Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, p. 596.

Khan's oldest and most respected companions. Sorqan Šira's grandson, Sodun Noyan, had been named the commander of the right wing of Tolui's army during Chinggis's lifetime; a position which he retained under Sorqaqtani Beki.⁶² Sodun dispatched no fewer than five of his children to accompany Hülegü's army, the most senior of whom, Suqunjaq Noyan, commanded the right wing of Hülegü's forces.⁶³ Yet perhaps the most powerful member of the Toluid contingent was the Jalayirid commander, Elgäi Noyan. As the *amir-i ordu* (commander of the camp/court, which al-'Umarī translates into the Kipchaq-Turkish *beklari-bek*—supreme commander) Elgäi held the most senior position in Hülegü's retinue.⁶⁴ His importance within the Ilkhān court was demonstrated in 1269 when the Chaghadaid vizier, Maṣ'ūd Beg, visited the court of Hülegü's son, Abaqa, and was seated above every Ilkhān commander with the exception of Elgäi.⁶⁵ The Toluid army commanded by Elgäi and his companions was regarded as the *injū* (hereditary property) of the Hülegüids, yet after Hülegü's death its membership progressively exercised greater independence from the ruling Ilkhān.

Hülegü's army also made use of soldiers belonging to native Iranian, Georgian, Armenian, and Turkish rulers. These forces played a secondary role in the early Ilkhān court, but because they constituted an important part of the Mongol army and the Ilkhān realm itself, it would be beneficial to provide a brief account of these forces before proceeding any further. The native rulers who lent their support to Hülegü's campaign mostly came to power during the 'warring states period' after the collapse of the Great Saljūq Empire, which followed the death of Sultan Malikshāh in 1092. Local dynasties, such as the Salghūrids of Fārs, the Zangīds of Mosul, and the atabegs of Yazd and Luristan, seized control of cities and territories which they had administered on behalf of the Saljūqs.⁶⁶ Others, such as the Quṭluḡshāhid rulers of Kirmān, the *maliks* of Sistān, and the Kartid rulers of Herat came to power in the chaos following the demise of the Khwārazmshāh realm (1220–34). These regional warlords and former governors saw the arrival of Hülegü as an opportunity to consolidate their power under Mongol sanction.⁶⁷ The Christian dynasties of the Near East such as the Armenian rulers of Cilicia and the Georgian Bagratid dynasty saw the arrival of the Mongols as a welcome reinforcement in their war against their Muslim neighbours. Indeed, the eastern Christians hoped that their assistance to Hülegü would be rewarded by the recapture of Jerusalem.⁶⁸ Yet neither the native Christian forces nor their Muslim counterparts held much power within the Ilkhān army. Their military service was considered an obligatory tribute to the Ilkhāns who placed their soldiers under the command of Mongol *noyat*, rather than their own native

⁶² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 95; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 135.

⁶³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 95; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 136.

⁶⁴ al-'Umarī, p. 153. The *Georgian Chronicle* also refers to Elgäi by the title of 'beglerbeg' (i.e. *beklari-bek*), *Histoire de la Géorgie*, p. 539.

⁶⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 519; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 745.

⁶⁶ Claude Cahen, 'Atābak', *EL2*, Vol. I, pp. 731–2.

⁶⁷ On the Quṭluḡshāhids, Salghurids, and Kartids, see Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran*, pp. 96–176.

⁶⁸ Hetoum, p. 42; Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 211.

commanders.⁶⁹ The subordinate position of non-Mongol soldiers within the Īlkhān army is demonstrated clearly in the text of Hülegü's first summons to the local dynasties of Iran to submit:

If you personally come and lend assistance with armies, provisions and weapons (*ālat*) your lands and armies and homes will remain with you and your efforts will be accepted. But if you treat the contents of this decree cheaply and delay, through the power of Almighty God, when we are finished with them [the Ismā'īlīs], not hearing [your] apologies, we shall come against you and do with your lands and homes what we have done with theirs.⁷⁰

Nor could these local rulers hope to influence the direction of Mongol policy. The Īlkhāns, like their predecessors in Mongolia, regarded their native population as either slaves or rebels in the new Chinggisid regime.⁷¹ In short, the native princelings held a secondary role in Hülegü's camp and had a limited input on the early composition of the Īlkhān state.

An early deduction which can be drawn from this survey of the forces under Hülegü's control is that far from being led by loyalist members of the Toluid household, the commanders of the Īlkhān army were drawn from a variety of sources in the tradition of the *tamma* units. Only a minority of the army granted to Hülegü consisted of forces belonging to the Toluids and commanded by their retainers. The rest of this impressive force included several members of the former Ögödeid aristocracy (some of whom had only recently submitted to Möngke's rule), and Jočid and Chaghadaid contingents, as well as the old *tamma* forces from Azerbaijan and Kashmir. These diverse contingents retained a high degree of autonomy over their armies which detracted from the Īlkhān's authority and forced him to adopt a more consultative-collegial approach to his command.

Möngke ordered Hülegü to use his newly constituted army to bring the territory between the Oxus River and Egypt into submission (Mong. *il*) to the Mongol Empire. The qa'an's initial *yarliq*, announced in 1252 and summarized by Rashīd al-Dīn, set three clear objectives for Hülegü: the destruction of the Shī'ite sect known as the Ismā'īlīs, pacification of the Kurds and Lurs inhabiting the Zagros Mountains, and the subjugation of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate in Baghdad.⁷² Hülegü achieved these targets with stunning speed and efficiency, achieving the submission of the Ismā'īlīs late in 1256, before sacking Baghdad and exterminating the 'Abbāsīd dynasty in 1258 (Map 2).⁷³ Hülegü then reported his success to Möngke, who expanded his mission to include the conquest of al-Shām (Syria) and Egypt.

⁶⁹ May, *The Mongol Art of War*, p. 27; W. E. D. Allen, *A History of the Georgian People: From the Beginning Down to the Russian Conquest in the Nineteenth Century*, London: Kegan Paul, French, Trubner, 1932, p. 116.

⁷⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 480; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 688.

⁷¹ Voegelin, 'The Mongol Orders of Submission', p. 404.

⁷² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 479; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 686.

⁷³ For the conquest of the Ismā'īlīs, see Bernard Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967, pp. 92–5; Marshall G. Hodgson, *The Order of Assassins: The Struggle of the Early Nizari Ismā'īlīs Against the Islamic World*, Gravenhage: Mouton, 1955, pp. 266–8; Marshall G. Hodgson, 'The Ismā'īlī State', *The Cambridge History of Iran*, v. 5, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*, p. 482; Juvaynī, ed. Boyle, 1997, pp. 620–2. For the fall of Baghdad, see Vaṣṣāf, p. 21; Rashīd



Map 2. The Ilkhānate. ©The Australian National University, CAP CartoGIS

By 1260 Hülegü's armies had occupied Damsacus, but news of Möngke's death prevented him from marching on Cairo. Instead, he withdrew the main body of his army from al-Shām and returning to his camp in Azerbaijan. A small detachment of 12,000 soldiers was left in Damascus under the charge of Kitbuqa Noyan to protect the gains which had been made to that date, but operations against the new Mamluk rulers of Egypt had effectively been suspended indefinitely.⁷⁴ Any hopes that Hülegü may have held of continuing his campaign west were then dashed when the Mamluks took advantage of his absence to annihilate Kitbuqa's force in the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt in 1260.⁷⁵ News of the defeat came as a heavy blow

al-Dīn, ed. Thackson, p. 499; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 714–16; Jūzjānī, pp. 1252–7; Bar Hebraeus, p. 431; Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 56; Tūsi, p. 155.

⁷⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackson, p. 503; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 720; Vaṣṣāf claims that Hülegü left three *tūmens* with Kitbuqa (p. 26), although Amitai-Preiss has estimated the numbers to be somewhere between 10,000 and 12,000 soldiers (see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, 'Ayn Jālūt Revisited', *The Mongols in the Islamic Lands: Studies in the History of the Ilkhanate*, ed. Reuven Amitai, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007, p. 124). Al-Nuwayrī reports the size of the garrison army as 12,000 men (al-Nuwayrī, p. 263); Baybars al-Manṣūrī, p. 49.

⁷⁵ For the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt, see Bernard Lewis, 'Ayn Djalūt', *EI2*, Vol. I, pp. 786–7; John Masson Smith Jr, 'Ayn Jālūt: Mamluk Success or Mongol Failure?', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2, Dec. 1984, pp. 307–45; P. Thorau, 'The Battle of 'Ayn Jālūt: A Re-Examination', *Crusade and Settlement: Papers Read at the First Conference of the Society for the Study of Crusades and the Latin East*

to Hülegü, who had been forced to give his complete attention to the conflict over the succession, thereby preventing him from avenging this affront immediately.

By the time Hülegü arrived back in Azerbaijan the dispute between his brothers over the succession to Möngke was well under way. His youngest brother, Ariq Bökö had been appointed as regent of Mongolia during Möngke's absence in southern China.⁷⁶ He controlled not only the political centre of the realm, but also a large army which had been left to guard the royal court. His older brother, Qubilai, had been entrusted with the administration of North China and had accompanied the invading army sent against the Song. News of Möngke's death reached him as he was about to commence the siege of the Song fortress of Ezhou (O-chou), which he was either unwilling or unable to abandon.⁷⁷ The siege proved unexpectedly difficult and Qubilai was detained in China for a further two months. This delay afforded Ariq Bökö the upper hand and he convened a *quriltai* in April 1260 on the Onon River where he was nominated as Möngke's successor by his own partisans.⁷⁸ News of this result reached Qubilai in Kāipíng, much to his disgust. In response, he held a show-*quriltai* of his own in which he was proclaimed qa'an by the Mongol commanders who had remained behind in China.⁷⁹ The Empire was subsequently plunged into a four-year civil war, with neither brother willing to recognize the precedence of the other.

Möngke's death changed the nature of Hülegü's relationship with both the imperial centre and his own army. Until that time he had held temporary command of Mongol forces in Iran on the basis of the qa'an's edict. He had little independent authority of his own and was required to defer to his brother on all matters of policy and strategy. But the death of Möngke gave Hülegü the chance to rise above his previous position and assume equality with his remaining brothers, Qubilai and Ariq Bökö, who each coveted his support for their nomination. Hethum, the former constable of Cilicia, even suggested that Hülegü might have been a popular choice for the throne himself: 'the barownes sought for to haue made hym emperour'.⁸⁰ This seems improbable given the vast distance between Hülegü and Mongolia. Moreover, his prolonged absence from the imperial centre would have meant that Hülegü was unlikely to receive much support in Mongolia, and the Syrian historian al-Nuwayrī says that he quickly abandoned any hope of the throne.⁸¹ Yet Hethum's comment does hint at the change in Hülegü's status after Möngke's death. He was now, in theory, on an equal footing with the other leading princes and he hoped to use the turmoil surrounding the succession to prove it.

The succession struggle presented ambitious Chinggisid princes and *noyat* with an opportunity to advance their own political interests by playing one side off against the other. The Chaghadaid prince, Alghu, initially swore to provide Ariq

and Presented to R. C. Smail, ed. Peter W. Edbury, Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1985, pp. 236–41; Amitai-Preiss, 'Ayn Jālūt Revisited'.

⁷⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 414; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 600.

⁷⁷ Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times*, p. 50.

⁷⁸ Vaṣṣāf, p. 1.

⁷⁹ Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times*, p. 51.

⁸⁰ Hetoum, p. 42; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, p. 56.

⁸¹ al-Nuwayrī, p. 241.

Bökö with soldiers and provisions from Central Asia if the latter would agree to install him over his family's former patrimony.⁸² Ariq Bökö acceded to Alghu's request, but the Chaghadaid refused to fulfil his part of the bargain and quickly defected to Qubilai to avoid the heavy military and financial burden of supporting Ariq Bökö's army.⁸³ An Ögödeid prince named Qaidu also saw the dispute between Ariq Bökö and Qubilai as an opportunity to revive the fortunes of his family. He was initially apprehensive about the prospect of Ariq Bökö taking the throne because the latter's one-time client, Alghu, had encroached upon Ögödeid appanages during his push into Central Asia. But when Alghu joined with Qubilai, Qaidu saw that his interests lay firmly with Ariq Bökö and he quickly sought to ingratiate himself with the regent in the hope of receiving Alghu's former position.⁸⁴ Alghu and Qaidu's exploitation of the succession dispute resulted in Central Asia permanently breaking away from the Qa'an's control after 1265.

Much like his Chaghadaid and Ögödeid cousins in Central Asia, Hülegü sought to advance his own interests by exploiting the succession struggle in Mongolia. The two most informative sources for the period between 1259 and 1264, Rashīd al-Dīn and Vaṣṣāf, are vague on the precise nature of Hülegü's involvement in the conflict. Both Ariq Bökö and Qubilai courted his support and, although not stated explicitly by Rashīd al-Dīn, Hülegü appears to have initially favoured the claim of his younger brother, Ariq Bökö. The silence of the Persian sources on this subject probably reflects a change in Hülegü's policy midway through the civil war. Yet Rashīd al-Dīn clearly states that Hülegü's second son, Jumughur, who had remained in Mongolia to represent his father's interests at court, sided with Ariq Bökö and actively campaigned with the latter's army both in Mongolia and in Central Asia.⁸⁵ By 1262, however, Hülegü had ordered Jumughur to cease attacking Qubilai and to join him in Iran.⁸⁶ Peter Jackson has attributed this sudden change in Hülegü's policy to a *yarliq* proclaimed by Qubilai, and reported by Rashīd al-Dīn, which granted Hülegü the autonomous rule of Iran.⁸⁷ This *yarliq* appears to have been part of a broader strategy to cut Ariq Bökö's support from the west since it also made provision for Alghu assuming autonomous control of the Chaghadaid lands in Central Asia.⁸⁸ In this *yarliq* Qubilai assumed the position of qa'an and informed Hülegü that 'the provinces have fallen into turmoil, Hülegü should protect and administer [*bidānī*] from the banks of the Jihūn [Oxus River] to the Sea of Egypt, [including] the Tāzik (Muslim) provinces and the Mongol army which our goodly ancestors stationed there [*tamāchāmīshī kardānd*]'.⁸⁹ Further evidence for the existence of such a *yarliq* is provided by al-Nuwayrī, who claimed that Qubilai

⁸² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 428; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 622; Vaṣṣāf, p. 2.

⁸³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 428–9; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 625; Vaṣṣāf, p. 3.

⁸⁴ Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia*, p. 21.

⁸⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 473; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 680.

⁸⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 473; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 680.

⁸⁷ Jackson, 'The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', p. 234; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 429; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 623.

⁸⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 429; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 623; Jackson, 'From *Ulus* to Khanate', p. 30.

⁸⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 429; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 623.

granted Hülegü the independent rule of Iran and Iraq shortly after Möngke's death.⁹⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn goes on to state that in 1264 Qubilai sent a second message to Hülegü, in which he invited the *İlkhān* to return to Mongolia for a *quriltai* to decide the fate of Ariq Bökö.⁹¹ Hülegü proffered excuses as to why he could not attend, but it is significant that this second message recognized Hülegü's equal status with Berke and Alghu, the Jočid and Chaghadaid patriarchs who held autonomous control of the Pontic Steppe and Central Asia respectively.⁹² These two *yarliqs* suggest that Qubilai recognized Hülegü's authority over Iran and perhaps even encouraged it in an attempt to win his support against Ariq Bökö.

The idea that Qubilai granted Hülegü the rule of Iran is supported by the testimony of Grigor of Akanc, who also makes reference to the *İlkhān* receiving an imperial *yarliq* to that effect.⁹³ According to this version, after Hülegü had defeated the *Ismā'īlis* and conquered Baghdad he sent an envoy to Möngke to inform him that rivalries amongst the Chinggisid princes threatened to undermine the gains they had made. In response, Möngke named Hülegü the supreme ruler of Iran and ordered that all those who refused to accept his command should be executed. Hülegü realized that his claim would not go uncontested amongst the Jočid princes, Balaghai, Tutar, and Quli, but he hoped to offset their opposition by achieving the complete support of the *noyat* and their armies. With this aim in mind, Hülegü convened a secret *quriltai* in which only the 'amīrs' (*noyat*) were present, to inform them of the qa'an's ruling. No further detail of the meeting is provided by Akanc, but he reported that the *noyat* unanimously proffered their submission to Hülegü and swore to back his takeover. Having confirmed the *noyat*'s support, Hülegü called a second *quriltai*, to which the Chinggisid princes were summoned, and repeated the *yarliq* of Möngke for all to hear. The Chaghadaid prince Tegüdar and the *küregen* Bawraqan⁹⁴ accepted Möngke's decision, but the Jočids voiced their hostility to Hülegü's rule. Faced with their resistance, Hülegü ordered the *noyat* to apprehend the Jočids before having them strangled with bow-strings. Despite the fact that Akanc's version mistakenly names Möngke as the qa'an of the day instead of Qubilai, his account affirms Rashīd al-Dīn's evidence that Hülegü was granted the rule of Iran through a royal *yarliq*.

The significance of Akanc's account lies with the distinction he makes between the position of the *noyat* and that of the Jočids. The emphasis which he places on these two groups is striking given that the other Persian and Armenian accounts concern themselves exclusively with the personal split between Hülegü and Berke, the new head of the Jočid Ulus, when discussing the deaths of the princes in the

⁹⁰ al-Nuwayrī, p. 241.

⁹¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 435; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 631.

⁹² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 435; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 631.

⁹³ Jackson, 'The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', p. 234; Grigor of Akanc, p. 339.

⁹⁴ Bawraqan is not mentioned in any of the other sources and Akanc gives no hint as to which of the four Chinggisid lines he may have been descended from. It does, however, seem likely that Akanc may have been referring to Buqa Guregen (i.e. Buqa Temür), the Oirat, since Juvaynī also includes him in his list of Chinggisid princes under Hülegü's command. Buqa Temür was the son of Chinggis Khan's daughter Čečeyigen, and was therefore named as the member of a *küregen* (royal son-in-law) line.

İlkhān army.⁹⁵ They do, nevertheless, confirm Akanc's claim that the *noyat* and Jočids were divided on the question of Hülegü's sovereignty by naming the *noyat* who supported Hülegü during his subsequent war against the Jočids.⁹⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn also observed that the *noyat* were active in the expulsion of Jočid agents from the *divān* (chancellery) of Azerbaijan and the southern Caucasus, which had been established as an extension of the regional secretariat shortly after Hülegü's arrival in Iran. He mentions that the *inaqs* (confidants/intimates), the most trusted members of Hülegü's court, 'targeted' Hülegü's astrologer, Husam al-Dīn, as well as his personal advisor (*vizier-i khāṣṣ*), Sayf al-Dīn Bitikchi, both of whom were executed on suspicion of holding Jočid sympathies.⁹⁷ Heavy support for Hülegü's position may have been expected from amongst the İlkhān's private army commanded by Suqunjaq Noyan, yet it is interesting to note that the leaders of the *tamma* and the Ögödeid contingents were equally enthusiastic to champion his cause.

The *noyat*'s strong support for Hülegü and the equally strong opposition of the Jočids were born from a conflict of interest relating to the territory they had conquered in Iran and Arab Iraq. The Jočids believed that Iran fell within their sphere of influence and hoped to expand their control of the region after Hülegü had completed his assignment and returned to Mongolia. The Jočids held control of both the Pontic Steppe and Khwārazm, which afforded them easy access to Iran through the Caucasus and the Oxus River respectively. Kipchaq merchants financed by Jočid princes had a heavy presence in the markets of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Shīrvān at the time of Hülegü's arrival in Iran⁹⁸ and the Jočids' prevalence in the region was recorded by Minhāj al-Dīn Jūzjānī, who claimed that they had installed an agent in every Iranian province and town.⁹⁹ The Jočids had a particularly strong claim to the regions of Mūghān, Ārrān, and Azerbaijan in north-western Iran, where they had previously contended the control of Baiju Noyan. These territories, so they argued, were included as part of the original Jočid appanage granted to them by Chinggis Khan.¹⁰⁰ Hülegü's occupation of Azerbaijan and his claim to rule the southern Caucasus as part of a greater Iranian İlkhānate constituted a serious betrayal of this right in the minds of the Jočids. They had joined Hülegü's campaign in the hope of expanding their holdings, not to suffer their reduction.

The Jočid belief that they were the true lords of Iran had led to tension with Hülegü well before Möngke's death. Indeed, their rivalry emerged almost immediately after Hülegü reached Khurāsān in 1256. The *Tārīkh-nāma Harāt* reported that at the time of Hülegü's arrival the Jočid princes Tutar and Balaghāi were seeking to

⁹⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 511; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 711; al-'Umārī, p. 102; Kirakos, p. 330; Vaṣṣāf, p. 28; Jūzjānī, p. 1257.

⁹⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 512; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 732; Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfi Qazvinī, *Zafarnāma*, ed. Manṣūrah Sharifzādah, Vol. 7, Tehran: Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, 1387/2009, p. 2.

⁹⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 511; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 732; also see Jean Aubin's discussion of this purge in *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans dans les remous de l'acculturation*, Studia Iranica, Cahier 15, Paris: L'Association pour l'Avancement des Études Iraniques, 1995, p. 21.

⁹⁸ Vaṣṣāf, p. 28.

⁹⁹ Jūzjānī, p. 1172.

¹⁰⁰ al-'Umārī, p. 100.

apprehend the *malik* of Herat, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Kart, for attacking several of their allies in Sistān. Yet Shams al-Dīn was a Toluid appointee and claimed that he had received sanction for his operation from Möngke Qa'an himself. He managed to evade the Jočid agents before fleeing to Hülegü in the hope of achieving his support. The Īlkhān was eager to obtain Kartid support for his impending attack on the Ismā'īlī fortresses in Qūhistān and ruled in favour of Malik Shams al-Dīn before having his pursuers severely lashed, much to the disgust of the Jočids.¹⁰¹ Relations between the Jočids and Hülegü further deteriorated after the death of Batu during the same year. The Mamluk sources inform us that Hülegü sought to strengthen his position by having his own candidate appointed to the throne of the Golden Horde and perhaps even seizing the throne for himself. His hopes came to nought as Batu was eventually succeeded by Joči's fourth son, Berke Khan, who viewed Hülegü's interference as unwelcome.¹⁰² Tension between the two rulers was stoked as Berke presumed to inherit the role of the *aqa*, which had been ceremonially bestowed upon Batu during the *quriltai* of Alā Qamāq in 1250.¹⁰³ Berke had a poor opinion of Hülegü, whom he regarded as a mere servant of Möngke and, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, never missed an opportunity to remind Hülegü of his inferior status.¹⁰⁴ He sent a constant stream of belittling orders to the Īlkhān to stress his seniority both in Iran and the Mongol Empire. Hülegü was angered by Berke's presumption, but he was obliged to maintain good relations with his cousin, whose soldiers continued to assist him in his campaigns against Baghdad and al-Shām. Yet the rivalry between Hülegü and the Jočids for control of Iran came to a head when Hülegü showed his ambition to rule the region as a semi-independent khanate. Neither Berke, nor his soldiers in the Īlkhān army, were willing to accept this affront.

The *noyat* held a very different view of Hülegü and his new state. They welcomed the news of his elevation to the throne of Iran in the belief that his government would protect their recently acquired assets and offices in Iran and Arab Iraq. This was particularly true of the Oirat and Onggirat who were tied by marriage to Hülegü's household. The strong position of the Onggirats within Hülegü's court is evidenced by Abatay Noyan's elevation to the command of the central army (*qol*) shortly after Hülegü's appointment, a position he held until his death in 1280.¹⁰⁵ Sometime after 1262 Abatay was also sent to Transoxiana to escort Hülegü's Onggirat queen, Qutui Khatun, to Arab Iraq where the Īlkhān had awarded her and her family territories and revenues in the Jazīra.¹⁰⁶ Abatay spent most of his time at the royal *ordu* in Azerbaijan, but the extent of his influence over northern Iraq was hinted at by Bar Hebraeus, who mentions him campaigning in al-Bīra in

¹⁰¹ Harāvī, p. 262.

¹⁰² Al-Nuwayrī, p. 244; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, pp. 16–17.

¹⁰³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 511; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 731; Jackson, 'The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', p. 229.

¹⁰⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 511; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 731; Ghiyāth al-Dīn b. Hamām al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī Kwāndāmīr, *Ḥabīb al-Sīr*, ed. Muḥammad Dabīr Sayāqī, Vol. 3, Tehran: Intishārāt-i Khayyām, 1380/2001, p. 101.

¹⁰⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 568; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 814.

¹⁰⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 519; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 745.

north-eastern Syria in 1275 and refers to him as 'Abatai Nâwîn the Great'.¹⁰⁷ The Oirats also received territory in Arab Iraq when Hülegü granted them the territories they had conquered in southern Iraq, consisting of Hilla, Wāsiṭ, Baṣra, and Khūzistān, as their pastures.¹⁰⁸ Southern Iraq remained an Oirat fief until well after the death of the last Ilkhān, Abū Sa'īd, in 1335 and provided a strong incentive for them to support Hülegü's takeover.

Members of the Toluid and Ögödeid aristocracy, such as Elgäi Noyan and Arghun Aqa, were also unwilling to trade their prominent positions within the Ilkhān army for uncertain futures under the Jočids. Elgäi was confirmed as Hülegü's chamberlain (*amīr-i ordu*) shortly after 1262 and one of his sons was subsequently appointed to the rich pastureland of Abulustān in southern Anatolia, where his family began to build a power base. The former head of the regional secretariat, Arghun Aqa, was also won over to Hülegü's side after he was named chief-commander of Khurāsān in eastern Iran. In addition, he was given the title of *muqāt-i mamālik* (Secretary of the State), a position which gave him a strong influence over the currency and spending of the Ilkhān *ordu*. Jočid rule threatened these *noyat*'s offices, which would no doubt fall to members of Berke's suite in Sarai in the event that Hülegü returned to Mongolia. The *yarliq* confirming Hülegü's authority over Iran provided the *noyat* with an avenue to protect and expand the gains which they had made during the previous two years campaigning.¹⁰⁹

Many of the *noyat* bore little love for the Jočids, whom they regarded as a threat to their newfound wealth in Iran. The Oirat commander, Buqa Temür, had a particularly strong reason for joining Hülegü against the Jočids since his cousin, Tangīz Küregen, was a leading figure in Qubilai's army and was personally responsible for apprehending Ariq Bökö in 1264, an act which earned the Oirat the undying hatred of Ariq Bökö's descendants.¹¹⁰ With Berke supporting the candidacy of Ariq Bökö it is almost certain that Buqa Temür received orders from Tangīz to support Hülegü's power grab. Yet Hülegü was also adept at exploiting the tension between the *noyat* and the Jočids for his own aims. Shortly after the massacre of the Jočid princes in his army, Hülegü granted the *tamma* of Baiju its former territories in the southern Caucasus, which they had been forced to vacate after the arrival of the Jočid contingent.¹¹¹ Control of the southern Caucasus had been a pillar of Jočid policy in Iran and afforded them a monopoly over the trade route stretching from Tabriz to Sarai on the Pontic Steppe.¹¹² The Jočids were unwilling to concede this territory and their previous rivalry with Baiju rendered them hostile to the *tamma*. Hülegü utilized this rivalry by appointing the new *tamma* commander, Shiremün the son of Chormaghun, to defend the frontier stretching from Georgia

¹⁰⁷ Bar Hebraeus, p. 454.

¹⁰⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 57; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 79.

¹⁰⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 563; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 743; Lane, 'Arghun Aqa', p. 477.

¹¹⁰ Hāfiz Abrū, *Zubda al-Tavārikh*, p. 52.

¹¹¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 513 and 518; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 734 and 743.

¹¹² Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmat-i Ilkhānī dar Irān*, p. 165.

to Shīrvān. The appointment was an inspired move by Hülegü, who knew that the *tamma* would act as the first line of defence against the Jočids to protect their own patrimonies.

Akanc's claim that the Jočids were seized by Hülegü after refuting Qubilai's *yarliq* is also the most credible account for the outbreak of hostilities between the Jočid and Īlkhān armies in 1262. His position is supported by Kirakos who recorded that the Jočid princes were executed by Hülegü after they had 'meddled in the authority with one another'.¹¹³ The Mamluk sources contain variations on the same theme. The Syrian writer al-Yūnīnī, for example, quoted from a Mamluk prisoner at the Īlkhān *ordu*, who claimed that after Batu's death Hülegü had ceased to grant the Jočids their share of the revenue from the conquered territories. Berke responded by sending envoys to the Īlkhān court with the secret mission of undermining Hülegü's position. When the Īlkhān learned of their plans he had the envoys and the Jočid princes executed.¹¹⁴ The Persian sources are far more ambiguous in their assessment of Hülegü's behaviour, to avoid harming the Īlkhān's reputation. Rashīd al-Dīn provides the most detailed account of the princes' fate, saying simply that Balaghāi [also Bulughai] and Quli died in mysterious circumstances, whilst Tutar was executed by Hülegü for holding treacherous designs against the Īlkhān. Rashīd does not elaborate any further, except to say that Berke accused Hülegü of poisoning Balaghāi and Quli.¹¹⁵ Other sources accuse either Quli or Tutar of practising witchcraft:¹¹⁶ a popular pretence for removing political rivals during times of unrest in the Mongol Empire.¹¹⁷ In any case, the murder of the Jočid commanders spread fear amongst their soldiers, who immediately fled the Īlkhān *ordu*. Some found their way to al-Shām, where they were received by the recently installed Mamluk sultan, Baybars, whilst others fled north over the Caucasus to join Berke's *ordu*. A smaller contingent also made their way east to Afghanistan, where a Jočid commander named Negüdar had been charged with operations against Toluid agents.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Kirakos, p. 330.

¹¹⁴ Quṭb al-Dīn Abū al-Faṭḥ Mūsā b. Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī, *Dhayl Mar'āt al-Zamān*, Vol. 1, Hyderabad: Dairatu'l-Ma'arif-il-Osmania, 1374/1954, p. 498; Ibn al-Dawādārī, p. 92.

¹¹⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 506; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 725.

¹¹⁶ Banākatī and the Temürīd historian Mīrkhwānd copied their account directly from Rashīd al-Dīn, whilst neither Qazvīnī nor Vaṣṣāf make any mention of the execution of the Jočids. Mu'in al-Dīn Natanzī states that Quli and Tutar died of unknown causes and that Berke believed that they had been poisoned by Hülegü (Mu'in al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Hindūshāh Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab al-Tawārikh-i Mu'ini*, ed. Jean Aubin, Tehran: Kitāb-Furūshī-yi Khayyām, 1336/1957–8, p. 73). The *Georgian Chronicle*, however, states that Hülegü only executed the princes after hostilities had begun with Berke (*Histoire de la Géorgie*, p. 569). Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī also mentions the charge of witchcraft on p. 41.

¹¹⁷ Törege'n's favourite, Fāṭimah, was executed by Güyük on the basis that she was a witch. In 1282 Majd al-Mulk, the royal preceptor, was also executed on the charge of witchcraft after it was discovered that he had been corresponding with Arghun Oghul; a leading candidate for the Īlkhān throne. Then in 1290 one of Arghun's widows was accused of witchcraft after the Īlkhān fell critically ill: al-Yūnīnī, Vol. 1, p. 498.

¹¹⁸ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, pp. 154–5; Grigor of Akanc, p. 341; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 362; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 526.

Berke was deeply affronted by the murder of three Jočid princes and could not let it go unpunished. He assembled an army under the command of Noqay Noyan, a relative of Tutar, to attack Hülegü's camp in Ārrān and avenge his kinsmen. In 1262 Noqay marched to the Tarak River and then into Shīrvān (now part of the Republic of Azerbaijan) where he was met by the *tamma* force commanded by Shiremün Noyan. The ensuing battle was notable for the heavy casualties on both sides, yet Hülegü arrived late in the day with fresh reinforcements to turn the battle in his favour. The defeated Noqay was forced to fall back to the frontier before returning to the Jočid Ulus. Hülegü then sought to follow up his victory with an assault on Berke's *ordu*. Once again, his policy was heavily supported by the *noyat* who played a prominent role in the invasion of the Jočid Ulus. Shiremün Noyan and his *tamma* troops were accompanied by Abatay Noyan of the Onggirat in leading the first wave of the invasion. A second troop of reinforcements arrived shortly afterwards and included Elgäi Noyan, at the head of his own army, as well as Tudan Ba'atur, Suqunjaq Noyan's brother, in command of the Toluid contingent. These two armies linked up to the north of the Caucasus and fell upon the Jočid baggage, which had been abandoned by the fleeing army. The *noyat* ravaged and plundered the Jočid lands, their flocks, their people and their belongings until Berke arrived with a fresh army and scattered the Īlkhān troops, who were forced to recross the Caucasus with heavy casualties.¹¹⁹

This initial phase of the conflict terminated in an indecisive deadlock, but the result favoured Hülegü. He had managed to retain control of Iran, Arab Iraq, and Rūm in the face of heavy opposition from the Jočid princes, who were unable to restore their control over the southern Caucasus until well after the death of the last Īlkhān in 1335. Hülegü's gains were made possible by the prominent support of the *noyat*, first during the announcement of Qubilai's *yarliq* and then in the war against Berke. Their pivotal role in the creation of the Īlkhānate won them an equally central role in both the administration and the government of the new realm under Hülegü's descendants. Their prominence in the Īlkhān polity was unparalleled in any of the other three Chinggisid successor states, where the *noyat* served as only one of several powerful groups exercising influence over the state. Hülegü's *noyat* did not have to wait long for an opportunity to show the extent of their influence. Hülegü died less than two years after the expulsion of Berke's armies from Iran. He had contracted an illness after taking a bath, for which his physicians prescribed purgative drugs. Yet these medicines took a heavy toll on his health and he expired three days later.¹²⁰ His death prompted the senior *noyat* to assume an even greater role in the fledgling Īlkhān state, over which they sought to impose their collegial authority.

¹¹⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 512; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 731–3; Vaṣṣāf, p. 28; Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Navā'ī, Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1362/1983, p. 590; al-Yūnīnī, Vol. 1, p. 535.

¹²⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 435; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 631; Khwāndāmīr, p. 102; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-islām wa-wafāyāt al-mashāhīr wa-l-'alām*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmūrī, Vol. 49, Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1419/1999, p. 184.

COLLEGIAL RULE IN THE EARLY
ĪLKHĀNATE (1265–84)

The power of the *noyat* grew rapidly in the two decades following Hülegü's death. The Īlkhān had relied heavily upon their support during his conflict with the Jočid princes and they had been rewarded with prominent positions in his new state. The main aim of the *noyat* after Hülegü's death was, therefore, to preserve the status which they had enjoyed under his rule. During the *quriltai* convened to nominate his successor, the *noyat* stressed the need to continue Hülegü's legacy by adhering to his *jasaq* and *yosun*. In doing so, they successfully confirmed the offices and salaries which they had received from the previous Īlkhān on a hereditary basis, and established the protection of Hülegü's laws and edicts as the primary source of legitimate authority within his realm. Over the next two decades, the *noyat* used their position as the defenders of these laws and traditions to expand their control of the Īlkhān government.

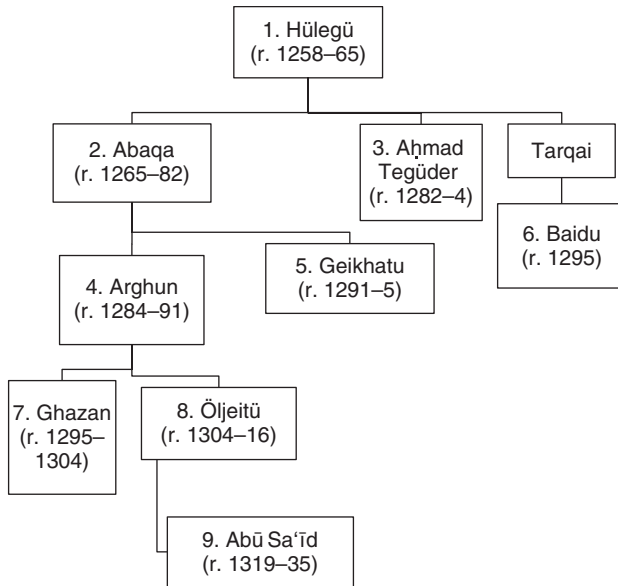
There was a dramatic shift in the balance of power away from the Īlkhāns to their *noyat* during the reign of Hülegü's first two successors. This shift began shortly after the coronation of Hülegü's first heir, Abaqa (r. 1265–82), when a series of foreign invasions and the weakness of the Hülegüid princes combined to increase the Īlkhān's dependence on the military aristocracy (Table 3). This dependence resulted in an expansion of the *noyat*'s power over the administration of the Īlkhānate, which was most evident in the steady subordination of the *divān* (civil administration) to military governors. During the reign of Abaqa's successor, Aḥmad Tēgüder (r. 1282–4), the *noyat* would also assert their primacy over the Īlkhān himself. Aḥmad was accused of violating the principles of Hülegüid tradition and law, as defined by the *noyat*, for which he was arrested and killed. Aḥmad's murder was the first regicide carried out by the *noyat* against a Chinggisid ruler and marked the extent to which the power of the *noyat* had increased in the two decades after Hülegü's death.

Fortunately, the *quriltai* of 1265 and those that followed it are reported in far more detail than those of the early Mongol Empire. The richness of the sources covering the early Īlkhān *ordu* is largely due to the fact that the Īlkhāns ruled a sedentary people with strong literary traditions. Moreover, the introduction of Persian as the official language of the Īlkhān bureaucracy shortly after the fall of Baghdad gave Iranian scholar-bureaucrats unprecedented access to information concerning their new overlords. Many of these Persian officials attended the *quriltai*s they described and, in several instances, were even said to have played a part in the proceedings.¹²¹ The presence of foreigners within the Mongol council should not come as a shock since many of these officials served within the household of the deceased rulers and were counted amongst their *inaqs* (intimates).¹²² Hülegü's most trusted minister, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, played a particularly active role in the

¹²¹ Shabānkārā'i, p. 264; Mīr Muḥammad b. Sayyid Burhān al-Dīn Khwāndshāh Mīrkhwānd, *Tārikh-i Rawḍat al-Safā'*, ed. Riḍā Qulī Khān, Vol. 6, Tehran: Markazī-yi Khayyam Pīrūz, 1338/1959–60, p. 274.

¹²² Vaṣṣāf, p. 16; Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran*, p. 224.

Table 3. The Īlkhān Dynasty



quriltai of 1265, adding his voice to those of the *noyat* and khatuns who agitated for the elevation of Abaqa, Hülegü's oldest son, before determining the most auspicious date for the latter's coronation.¹²³ The Persian scholar-bureaucrats and their supporters regularly exaggerated their own role within the *quriltais*, but their records of its rituals and debates in dynastic and regional histories shed new light on what had previously been an exclusive and mysterious ceremony.

Modern historians have paid relatively little attention to the *quriltais* of Hülegü's successors, despite this wealth of information. This deficiency can partly be explained by the lack of new surveys on the general history of the early Īlkhānate. As David Morgan observed recently, the works of Bertold Spuler (1939) and the *Cambridge History of Iran*, v. 5 (1968) remain the most authoritative general histories of the Īlkhānate. Of these, Spuler's *Die Mongolen in Iran* provides the most detailed account of the *quriltais* which nominated Abaqa and Tegüder Aḥmad to the Īlkhān throne.¹²⁴ Yet his analysis, which compares the *quriltais* of the early Mongol Empire with those of the Īlkhānate, neglects the significance of the *quriltai* ceremony for the early Īlkhān state and has long been in need of revision. More recent discussions of the *quriltais* held in Iran found in monographs on aspects of Īlkhān rule tend to focus more upon the outcomes of these grand assemblies, rather than the rituals they invoked. Such an approach

¹²³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 517; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 742; Mīrkhwānd, p. 274; Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 21; Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 260.

¹²⁴ Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, pp. 259–66.

fails to appreciate the purpose of the *quriltai*, which served not just to choose a new khan, but to define the limits of his authority. The political theatre of the *quriltai* reveals a lot about the nature of the İlkhān's relationship with his military aristocracy. The *quriltai*s held after the death of Hülegü marked a revival of collegial authority and are evidence of the growing strength of the *noyat* in the fledgling İlkhān realm.

Soon after Hülegü's death it became apparent that his *noyat* would revive the principles of collegial rule practised under the Ögödeids. The first to learn of Hülegü's death were those senior commanders, khatuns (*khawātīn*), and officials who had accompanied his *ordu* to Marāghah, in southern Azerbaijan. This group, which constituted the *aga-nar* of the early İlkhān realm, immediately sent out a summons to the leading figures in Hülegü's army to inform them of his death and call them to a *quriltai* to discuss the succession.¹²⁵ The very fact that a *quriltai* was summoned so soon after the death of Möngke Qa'an points to the *noyat*'s desire to revive the collegial government of the Ögödeids. By contrast, the concept of consultative rule seemed to be dead in Mongolia, where, as recently as 1264, Qubilai had seized the throne through the sheer force of his army.¹²⁶ A similar transition may have also been expected in Iran, where Hülegü had assumed power through the edict of first Möngke and then Qubilai. The re-emergence of the *quriltai*, however, demonstrates the dependence of the early İlkhāns upon their military aristocracy which had won them the throne of Iran.

The most detailed account of the 1265 *quriltai* is given by Rashīd al-Dīn, who probably relied upon the sons of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī for his information.¹²⁷ He makes it clear that the leading members of Hülegü's court agreed to nominate his eldest son, Abaqa, to the throne before the *quriltai* convened. Most of Hülegü's family had remained in Mongolia when he had set out for Iran in 1254.¹²⁸ This meant that only three of his children were present at the time of his death. Juvaynī mentions that Hülegü travelled to Iran in the company of his two eldest sons, Abaqa and Yoshmut, and, whilst not mentioned by Juvaynī or any of his continuators, it would appear that Hülegü was also joined by his sixth son Tübshin Oghul (also Tubsin), who was given the rule of Khurāsān shortly after the *quriltai* in 1265.¹²⁹ Abaqa was by far the most popular of these three candidates. His main rival, Yoshmut, was known for his hot temper and there is strong evidence that he was highly unpopular amongst the military aristocracy.¹³⁰ His reputation had been badly damaged during Hülegü's march into al-Shām, at which time he had been sent to subdue the fortresses of Miyāfarighīn and Mardīn in Diyārbakr. It took Yoshmut two years to obtain the submission of Miyāfarighīn, by which time many

¹²⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 516; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 742.

¹²⁶ Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times*, p. 51.

¹²⁷ Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran*, p. 215; Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmat-i İlkhānī*, p. 217.

¹²⁸ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 3, p. 96; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 473; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 679.

¹²⁹ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 3, p. 97; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 517; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 743; Vaṣṣāf, p. 43.

¹³⁰ Jūzjānī, p. 1272; Mīrkhwānd, p. 299.

of his soldiers had been killed.¹³¹ Both Rashīd al-Dīn and Jūzjānī claim that Hülegü scolded Yoshmut for his inability to take the city and he was subsequently excluded from the force that invaded the Jočid Ulus in 1262.¹³² Indeed, the Syrian chronicler, al-Dhahabī, claims that Yoshmut was recalled from Miyāfarighīn after ten months.¹³³ Yoshmut's reputation suffered even more damage after Abaqa's coronation. Whilst on a hunting trip, he was said to have misfired an arrow which struck the new Ilkhān in the neck. The penalty prescribed by the *jasaq* for such incompetence was death, but Abaqa showed pity to his clumsy younger brother and simply had him exiled to Māzandarān.¹³⁴ Yoshmut's public failures did not endear him to the *noyat*, who informed him that they would not support his candidacy when he arrived at the *ordu* in 1265.¹³⁵ Abaqa's only other rival to the throne was Yoshmut's much younger brother, Tübshin, whose age seems to have precluded him from assuming any meaningful role within the Ilkhānate prior to his father's death.¹³⁶ Tübshin's candidacy was also hampered by a lack of connections amongst Hülegü's former *noyat*. His mother had been a Khitan slave in Hülegü's *ordu*, a fact which almost certainly harmed his prestige in the eyes of the *aqā-nar*.¹³⁷ Indeed, the lack of interest in Tübshin's candidacy is reflected by the fact that none of the sources mention him until after the *quriltai*, when he was granted the governorship of Khurāsān. The shortcomings of both Tübshin and Yoshmut gave Abaqa a strong advantage in the race to succeed Hülegü, yet he still had to achieve the formal nomination of the *quriltai*.

Abaqa received the summons of the *aqā-nar* in Māzandarān where he had established his winter camp.¹³⁸ Hülegü had sent him to Khurāsān in 1263 to help pressure the Jočids' eastern border.¹³⁹ He was assisted ably in this capacity by the 'vizier of Khurāsān', Arghun Aqa, in whose company he had led an attack against Khwārazm. The pair now set out for Marāghah to join in the customary mourning rituals which were carried out prior to the nomination of a new ruler. Upon his arrival in the *ordu*, Abaqa was received by Elgāi Noyan, whose position as *amīr-i ordu* entitled him to welcome the prince on behalf of the court. He provided Abaqa with food and wine before relating the circumstances of his father's death to him. The period of official mourning then continued for five more days, during which time Abaqa, the *noyat*, and the khatuns publicly expressed their grief at the

¹³¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 507; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 725–9; Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Isma'īl al-Shāfi'ī Abū Shāma, *Kitāb al-Rawdatayn fī Akhbār al-Dawlatayn al-Nuriyya wa al-Salahiyya*, ed. Ibrāhīm Shams al-Dīn, Vol. 5, Beirut: Dār al-Katāb al-'Ilmiyya, 1322/2002, p. 308.

¹³² Jūzjānī, p. 1272; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 507; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 726.

¹³³ al-Dhahabī, Vol. 48, p. 367; Shīrāzī, p. 34.

¹³⁴ Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 54.

¹³⁵ Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 72.

¹³⁶ Tübshin is not mentioned prior to Hülegü's death and Arghun Aqa seems to have been appointed as his atabeg during his subsequent appointment as governor of Khurāsān. Tübshin's precise age at the time of Hülegü's invasion of Iran was not recorded, but as Hülegü's sixth son, it may be estimated that he was probably only slightly older than Ahmad Tegüder, Hülegü's seventh son, who was only six years old when his father left for Iran in 1254 (Reuven Amitai-Preiss, 'The Conversion of Tegüder Ilkhan to Islam', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, No. 25, Jerusalem, 2001, p. 18).

¹³⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 474; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 681.

¹³⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 517; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 742.

¹³⁹ Kirakos, p. 331.

death of the İlkhān. On the fifth day those assembled at the *ordu* turned their attention to the succession.¹⁴⁰

Rashīd al-Dīn's account of the 1265 *quriltai* highlights the dominant role of Hülegü's former *noyat* in Abaqā's nomination. Unlike Juvaynī, Rashīd al-Dīn does not provide a comprehensive list of all those who were present at Abaqā's *quriltai*. He does, however, mention the names of the *aqā-nar* who had the greatest influence over the proceedings.¹⁴¹ This group was composed almost exclusively of Hülegü's former *noyat*, the majority of whom would remain firm partisans of collegial rule in future years. Elgäi Noyan was the most prominent member of the *aqā-nar* during Abaqā's *quriltai*. Rashīd al-Dīn states that his precedence was based upon both his office as *amīr-i ordu*, and the fact that 'he had for some time supported and served Ījān¹⁴² [Mong. *Ejen*, 'Lord'—i.e. Hülegü]'.¹⁴³ Other leading members of the *aqā-nar* were drawn almost exclusively from amongst Hülegü's senior *noyat*, including Suqunjaq Aqa and Sumaghar Noyan¹⁴⁴ of the Toluid contingent, Suntay Noyan of the *tamma*, Arghun Aqa of the Ögödeids and Abatay Noyan of the Onggirat. Another leading figure amongst the *noyat* was Shiktur Aqa, a member of the Jalayir and a kinsman of Elgäi Noyan. Shiktur Aqa had not accompanied Hülegü's army on its conquest of Iran but he had been responsible for conveying the news of Möngke's death to Hülegü in 1260 and he had remained a leading member of the İlkhān court ever since.¹⁴⁵ This small group of *noyat* controlled the proceedings of the *quriltai* in 1265 and were singled out for special reward after Abaqā's nomination.

The influence of Hülegü's former *noyat* over the *quriltai* of 1265 was illustrated by the strong emphasis placed on continuity throughout the ceremony. The theme of continuity was intimately linked to the *noyat*'s power as they sought to maintain the positions they had held during Hülegü's reign. Shiktur Aqa was the first to speak of Hülegü's legacy on the basis that 'Ījān made his will to him [i.e. Shiktur] and [had] entrusted him with the *bilik* [*bilig*; sayings]'.¹⁴⁶ From this statement it

¹⁴⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 517; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 742; Lane, 'Arghun Aqa', p. 479.

¹⁴¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 517; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 742.

¹⁴² *Ejen* was the honorific title posthumously conferred upon Hülegü after he had died. It is common to find the Persian historians referring to Mongol khans/qa'ans by different names after their death and whilst the precise reason for this custom is not known, J. A. Boyle has suggested that the Mongols believed that it agitated the spirits of the dead to use their name after they had passed (see J. A. Boyle, 'On the Titles Given in Juvainī to Certain Mongol Princes', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 19, Nos 1–2, 1956, pp. 148–52 and J. A. Boyle, 'The Posthumous Title of Batu Khan', *Proceedings of the Ninth Meeting of the Permanent International Asiatic Conference*, Ravello, 26–30 September 1966, pp. 67–70). This theory has, however, recently been contested by Elizabeth Endicott-West, who states that Chinese bureaucrats regularly criticized the Yüan for not observing such taboos (see Elizabeth Endicott-West, 'Aspects of Khitan Liao and Mongolian Yüan Imperial Rule: A Comparative Perspective', *Rulers From the Steppe. State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery*, p. 203).

¹⁴³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 517; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 742.

¹⁴⁴ Sumaghar is described by Rashīd al-Dīn as a member of the Kūi'in Tatar, who had served as the vassals of the Kereit prior to the rise of Chinggis Khan. The Kūi'in Tatar were granted to Tolui, who incorporated their members into his private army. Sumaghar is mentioned as one of Hülegü's *aqtachī* (quiver bearers) during his march to Iran.

¹⁴⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 503 and 517; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 720 and 742.

¹⁴⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 517; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 742.

would appear that Shiktur carried out a role similar to that of Chinqai in the court of Ögödei. The fact that he was entrusted with the *bilig* implies that he was literate and may have performed the duties of a *bitikchi* (scribe), transcribing the orders and rulings of the khan. This assertion is confirmed by the fact that he held a similar role in 1291, when he was appointed as the *nā'ib* (deputy) of the Ilkhān in Azerbaijan. Whether Shiktur possessed a written will from Hülegü declaring Abaqa to be his heir, or whether he deduced this point by analysing the numerous sayings of the former Ilkhān, is somewhat more questionable. Hülegü had died from a protracted illness, which may have given him the opportunity to consider the succession on his deathbed. Yet the fact that Yoshmut believed that he had a strong enough case to assume the throne implies that this will was either not common knowledge, or that it was of limited importance in deciding the succession. In any case, the *aqā-nar* had already announced their decision to Yoshmut so Shiktur's speech seems to have been targeted more at stressing the *aqā-nar*'s expertise in the laws and traditions of Hülegü than at reciting an official will. In doing so, Shiktur sought to legitimate the nomination of Abaqa, a candidate who the *noyat* expected would continue in the footsteps of his father. Shiktur's testimony was also supported by Suqunjaq Aqa, the commander of Hülegü's Toluid contingent, who claimed that Hülegü had indeed 'willed' that Abaqa should assume the throne and provided unspecified evidence to this effect. The testimony of Hülegü's leading *noyat* was greeted with the unanimous approval of the *aqā-nar*, who confirmed their choice.¹⁴⁷

Abaqa responded to his nomination with the customary refusal to accept the throne, as was the case in previous *qurultais*. He began by suggesting that his brothers would make a more suitable choice, but this was rebuffed by the princes, who declared on bended knee that 'we are your servants and we know you as our father's heir'.¹⁴⁸ In doing so, Abaqa's brothers formally renounced their claims to the throne and affirmed the choice of the *aqā-nar*. Yet Abaqa also raised the question of whether the *aqā-nar* had the authority to appoint him as Hülegü's heir since the latter had received his appointment from Qubilai: 'Qubilai Qa'an is my *aqā* [senior], without his order how can I be enthroned [*nishast*]?' The *aqā-nar* responded by downplaying the influence of the qa'an and reiterating the importance of Hülegüid tradition: 'How can another be enthroned when you are the *aqā* [eldest] of all the sons [of Hülegü] and you well know the ancient customs and *yosun* and *yasa* and *hadith* [sayings] and İjān willed you as his heir [*wali 'abd*] during his lifetime.'¹⁴⁹ The Qa'an would indeed be asked to confirm Abaqa's appointment, yet his approval was never anything more than an affirmation of the *aqā-nar*'s decision.¹⁵⁰ Having accepted the nomination of the *qurultai*, the Chaghadaid prince Tegüder Oghul,

¹⁴⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 517; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 742; Vaṣṣāf, p. 158.

¹⁴⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 517; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 742.

¹⁴⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 517; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 742.

¹⁵⁰ Allsen, 'Changing Forms of Legitimation in Mongol Iran', p. 227; Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests*, p. 129.

who was the most senior member of the Chinggisid line present in the Īlkhānate, seated Abaqa upon the throne.¹⁵¹

His coronation complete, Abaqa turned to the ordinances of the kingdom (*muhimāt-i mamālik*). As had been the case under the Ögödeids, monetary reward was a large part of the *muhimāt* during Abaqa's *quriltai*: 'after his coronation on the throne of the khan Abaqa bestowed incalculable sums of coin, jewels and costly robes upon the khatuns, princes and amīrs'. Yet the most important function of the *muhimāt* was to assert the continuity of Abaqa's reign with that of his predecessor. Rashīd al-Dīn reported that Abaqa 'first ordered that the *yasaq* that Hulaku Khān had ordered and the decrees on all matters which had been promulgated should all stay in place and remain immune and protected from the evils of alteration and change'. This declaration reassured the military aristocracy that no change in their status would be permitted during Abaqa's reign. The continuity of office holders between the reign of Hülegü and that of Abaqa was confirmed by the announcement that Shiremün Noyan and his *tamma* would remain in Georgia to guard the Jočid border; Arghun Aqa retained the title of *muqat'-i mamālik* and 'remained in his position in Khurāsān' where he was joined by Abaqa's brother, Tübshin Oghul; Suqunjaq Aqa was appointed to the governance of Baghdad and Fārs where he was to be assisted by 'Alā al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvaynī in the role of *nā'ib* (assistant, deputy); Suqunjaq's brother, Tudan Ba'atur, and Elgāi Noyan's son, Tüqü Aqa, were also confirmed in their position at the head of the army guarding the Saljūq Sultanate of Rūm; and Elgāi Noyan retained his status as the *amīr-i ordu* until his death sometime after 1268. In affirming the *yasaq* of his father, Abaqa sought to reassure Hülegü's *noyat* that no change would be permitted to the Īlkhān state during his reign.¹⁵²

The *noyat's* dominant position within Abaqa's *quriltai* was maintained throughout his reign, during which time they succeeded in gradually increasing their influence over the government of the Īlkhānate. Their exalted position was reflected in a *yarliq* penned in 1295 and transcribed by Vaṣṣāf: 'the kingdom was divided into several portions and each one of the amīrs was sent to a portion and, in the fashion of the time of Abaqa Khān, they were independent in their lands in every regard'.¹⁵³ Abaqa was not a weak ruler, but he was forced to increase his dependency upon his father's leading commanders by a series of attacks against the Īlkhānate.

The *noyat's* influence over Abaqa was felt most strongly at the *ordu*, where access to the Īlkhān was carefully guarded by his leading officials and most intimate companions. Qazvīnī claims that Abaqa's *ordu* was dominated by two groups, who together formed the base of Abaqa's power: the 'pillars of state' (*arkān-i dawlat*) and his 'companions' (*inaqs*).¹⁵⁴ The pillars of state were constituted by Hülegü's most senior *noyat*: Arghun Aqa, Abatay Noyan, Suqunjaq Aqa, and Shiktur Aqa. These pillars were designated by the title of *amīr-i ulūs* in the Persian sources and

¹⁵¹ Vardan, 'The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelc'i', trans. Robert W. Thomson, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 43, 1989, p. 222.

¹⁵² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 517–18; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 743.

¹⁵³ Vaṣṣāf, p. 172; Mirkhwānd, p. 376.

¹⁵⁴ Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, pp. 77–8; Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 277.

acted as the *aqā-nar* of Abaqā's realm, whilst also serving as the senior representatives of the military aristocracy in Abaqā's court.¹⁵⁵ In fact, Rashīd al-Dīn goes so far as to say that Suqunjaq held the title of '*gui ong*' (fortunate prince: i.e. viceroy), a title previously applied to Muqali the Jalayir when he served as commander of the left wing and 'acting emperor' under Chinggis Khan.¹⁵⁶ Between them, the four pillars held power over the amirates of Khurāsān, Arab Iraq, Khūzistān, and Fārs in addition to the centre (*qol*) of the army and the Īlkhān *ordu* itself.¹⁵⁷ It is possible that the 'pillars of state' evolved into a semi-permanent administrative council within the Īlkhānate. In fact, Charles Melville has suggested that the pillars of state, or *ulus amīrs* as he refers to them, were probably the captains of the *kešik* (*ötögüs*).¹⁵⁸ He points out that offices within the *kešik* were transmitted on a hereditary basis within the Īlkhānate, which would account for the amīrs having not previously served in the bodyguard of Abaqā in Khurāsān. Certainly the idea that offices within the *kešik* were transmitted on a hereditary basis is supported by the family history of the Muẓaffarid rulers of Kirmān, who held the same offices in the royal *kešik* from the reign of Arghun Khan (r. 1284–91) until the time of the last Īlkhān, Abū Sa'īd (d. 1335).¹⁵⁹ These hereditary *kešik* would then presumably be distinguished from the household staff of the ruling Īlkhān. Schamiloglu and Atwood have even suggested that these four senior *noyat* at the apex of the various Mongol successor states may have been the precursor to the *qarachū begs* of the Crimean Khanate of the seventeenth century. The *qarachū begs* were the heads of the four leading families of the realm, whose signatures were required on all decrees issued by the ruler.¹⁶⁰ But the political hierarchy of the Īlkhān court was highly fluid and, although the descendants of Abaqā's four pillars remained influential throughout the period of Īlkhān rule, the number of senior *noyat* often fluctuated.

The influence which the four pillars enjoyed over Abaqā was shared with his eight *inaqs*, who were made up of his most trusted companions and friends. Abaqā's *inaqs* were mainly drawn from amongst his household service, which had accompanied him to his posting in Khurāsān shortly before Hülegü's death.¹⁶¹ They included members of his personal guard as well as his private servants, many of whom had been in his service since childhood. The most notable of these eight were Buqa Noyan and Taghachar Noyan. Both held high status within the Īlkhānate as the sons of *noyat* who had died fighting for Hülegü.¹⁶² The Īlkhān rewarded the

¹⁵⁵ Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 77.

¹⁵⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah*, f. 138; Matsuda Kōichi, 'On the Ho-nan Mongol Army', *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, No. 50, 1992, pp. 35–6.

¹⁵⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 517–18; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 743.

¹⁵⁸ Melville, 'The *Keshig* in Iran', pp. 135–64.

¹⁵⁹ Maḥmūd Kutubī, *Tārīkh-i Āl Muẓaffar*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Nawa'ī, Tehran: Mu'assisa-yi Intishārāt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1364/1985, pp. 31–4.

¹⁶⁰ Christopher P. Atwood, 'Ulus Emirs, *Keshig* Elders, Signatures, and Marriage Partners: The Evolution of a Classic Mongol Institution', *Imperial Statecraft*, pp. 155–7; Uli Schamiloglu, 'The *Qaraçi* Beys of the Later Golden Horde: Notes on the Organization of the Mongol World Empire', *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, No. 4, 1984, p. 288.

¹⁶¹ For Abaqā's *inaqs*, see Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 78.

¹⁶² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 518 and 541; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 744 and 773.

orphaned children for their parents' service by granting them offices within the household of his son, Abaqa, and their status was increased when the latter was crowned. Between them the pillars of state and *inaqs* exerted the greatest influence over Abaqa's government.

The extent to which Abaqa's pillars of state and *inaqs* controlled his government can be seen in the Īlkhān's attitude towards his *divān*, led by Shams al-Dīn Juvaynī. The *divān* was the predominantly Persian ministry responsible for the civil administration of the Īlkhānate.¹⁶³ Traditionally the size, complexity, and duties performed by the *divān* varied with each dynasty. The Sāmānīd dynasty (907–99) had a well-advanced *divān* consisting of nine ministries and twenty-six offices, whereas the Ghaznavīd (999–1187) *divān* initially comprised only three ministries dedicated solely to collecting revenue, foreign relations, and provisioning the army.¹⁶⁴ The Īlkhān *divān*, which had evolved from the regional secretariat of Khurāsān, had five main responsibilities: provisioning the army, foreign relations, the post system, the royal (*khāṣṣ*) and public (*dālāy*)¹⁶⁵ treasuries, and, most important, the collection of revenue.¹⁶⁶ The *ṣāhib divān* (prime minister, literally 'lord of the *divān*') was at the head of the civil administration and led a group of regional assistants (*nuvāb*, sing. *nā'ib*) who coordinated the duties of the *divān* in the various provincial centres. Both the *ṣāhib divān* and his *nā'ibs* (deputies) had a team of officials under their control, including secretaries (*bitikchis*), tax collectors (*ʿumāl*), and accountants (*mustawfi*) to carry out the work of government.

Denise Aigle has shown that during Hülegü's reign, the realm was governed in accordance with a 'dual administrative system', in which the regional *nā'ibs* of the *ṣāhib divān* were placed under the supervision of Mongol governors, who held supreme authority over the provinces entrusted to them.¹⁶⁷ The most notable example of this system was found in Arab Iraq, where 'Alā al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvaynī acted as the *nā'ib* to his brother, Shams al-Dīn, under the supervision of Suqunjaq Aqa, whom Abaqa had appointed as governor of Arab Iraq, Khūzistān, and Fārs.¹⁶⁸ The key feature of this dual administrative system was the subordination of the *divān* to the *noyat*, who acted as mediators between the Īlkhān and his civil administration.¹⁶⁹ Since the *noyat* dominated the royal *ordu*, the *divān*

¹⁶³ For the *divān* (Arabic, *Diwān*), see Reuben Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam: Being the 2nd Edition of the Sociology of Islam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957, pp. 325–9; A. S. Bazmee-Ansari, 'Diwān', *EI2*, Vol. II, pp. 323–37; Roy Mottahedeh, 'The 'Abbāsīd Caliphate in Iran', *The Cambridge History of Iran*, v. 4, *The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*, ed. Richard N. Frye, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 80; A. K. S. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia: Aspects of Administrative, Economic and Social History, 11th–14th Century*, London: Tauris, 1988, pp. 28–68.

¹⁶⁴ Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran, 994–1040*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963, pp. 27 and 41.

¹⁶⁵ For the term *dālāy*, see V. Minorsky, 'Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī on Finance', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1956, p. 76.

¹⁶⁶ For the Īlkhān *divān*, see Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, pp. 283–301.

¹⁶⁷ Aigle, 'Iran Under Mongol Domination: The Effectiveness of the Dual-Administrative System', p. 72.

¹⁶⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 518; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 743; Vaṣṣāf, p. 32.

¹⁶⁹ Aigle, 'Iran Under Mongol Domination: The Effectiveness of the Dual-Administrative System', p. 73; Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 82.

secretaries were only able to access the Īlkhān through the intercession of a sympathetic member of the military aristocracy. Thus, the size and strength of the *divān* largely depended upon the relative influence of the *noyat* within the *ordu*.

During the reign of Abaqa, the *divān* came under a notably heavy attack from the *noyat*, who were apprehensive of the growing political and fiscal power which the *divān* commanded. The *noyat* saw the *divān* as an impediment to their exploitation of the sedentary populations of the Īlkhānate. They regarded the people, animals, and pastures of the realm as their property, earned through service to Hülegü and his family, and they resented the level of control which the Persian bureaucracy exercised over their territories.¹⁷⁰ The *noyat*'s suspicion of the *divān* was heightened by the strong personality of Shams al-Dīn Juvaynī, who appointed his brother, 'Alā al-Dīn, as the *nā'ib* of Arab Iraq, his son Bahā' al-Dīn as *nā'ib* of Persian Iraq, and his son-in-law, Vajih al-Dīn Zangī Farūmadī, as *nā'ib* of Khurāsān.¹⁷¹ During Shams al-Dīn's time at the head of the *divān* his annual salary stood at 3.6 million dīnārs, a wage which rivalled the budget of the Īlkhān household.¹⁷² Much of this sum was used to patronize poets and writers who praised Juvaynī as an all-powerful sovereign: 'You are the lord, under the *yarghu* (trial) of whose orders are placed the Turks, the Persians, the Rūmis, and the Berbers. You are the Lord of the Time (*ṣāhib zamān*) and the world lies at your command, what need to speak of your being Lord of the *divān* (*ṣāhib divān*) and *daftār* (records).'¹⁷³ The majority of these eulogies vastly exaggerated the extent of Juvaynī's authority in gratitude for his various benefices, but there was still a genuine concern at the Īlkhān *ordu* that he had begun to exceed his authority. This feeling was hinted by Vaṣṣāf who described a wine party in which Shams al-Dīn's son, Khwājah Hārūn, justified referring to a *khwājah* (master scholar) by his familiar title, saying: 'I am the son of the *ṣāhib divān* and have also taken a member of the caliphal line as my wife. My name is Hārūn and my son is Ma'mūn and we rule in Baghdad, so if I say Ṣafī al-Dīn [the name of the *khwājah*] in the fashion of the caliphs it should come as no surprise.'¹⁷⁴ But the *noyat* had not deposed one caliph only to replace him with another, and they soon began to reassert their ascendancy over the *divān*.

The *noyat*'s dominance over Abaqa's court, and through it the *divān*, was increased greatly by the Īlkhān's heavy dependence on their armies. This dependence was the result of a series of attacks on the Īlkhānate's borders which permitted the *noyat* to make heavy exactions on both Abaqa and his *divān*. The first of these invasions came in 1265 when Berke Khan sought to capitalize on Hülegü's death to reclaim the Jočid territory in Ārrān and Azerbaijan.¹⁷⁵ The Jočid forces were

¹⁷⁰ I. P. Petrushevsky, 'The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran Under the Īl-Khāns', *The Cambridge History of Iran*, v. 5, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*, p. 492; Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmat-i Īlkhānān*, p. 184; Āshṭiyānī, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl*, p. 230.

¹⁷¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 518; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 743; Vaṣṣāf, p. 34.

¹⁷² Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 297.

¹⁷³ 'Pūr-i Bahā's Mongol Ode', trans. Vladimir Minorsky, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1956, p. 265.

¹⁷⁴ Vaṣṣāf, p. 36.

¹⁷⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 518; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 744; Vardan, p. 223; Qazvinī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 591.

repelled from the Kura River in modern-day Georgia, yet a second attack followed soon after on Abaqa's eastern border when Baraq Khan of the Chaghadaï Ulus sought to annex Khurāsān.¹⁷⁶ Baraq was defeated near the Herat River (also Hari Rud) in 1269 and two years later Abaqa dispatched a force to ruin Bukhārā in reprisal.¹⁷⁷ Yet it was the invasion of Abaqa's western border in 1276 by the Mamluk sultan, Baybars, which had the deepest implications for the Īlkhān polity.

Baybars launched his attack against the Sultanate of Rūm (Anatolia), where a rebellious amīr named Ibn Khaṭīr had invited him to aid his resistance against the Īlkhān-supported Saljūq government in Konya.¹⁷⁸ Abaqa ordered Tudan Ba'atur, the brother of Suqunjaq Aqa, Tüqü Aqa, the son of Elgāi Noyan, and the *Parvānah* (master of the seal), Mu'in al-Dīn Sulaymān, who served as the regent for the four year old child-sultan, Ghiyath al-Dīn Kaī Khusraw III, to suppress the rebellion.¹⁷⁹ Their arrival cowed the rebels, who evacuated their base at Nikidah (Nigda) and fled south. The *noyat* pursued them as far as Abulustān on the mountainous southern border of the Saljūq Sultanate, where they surrendered. Yet in the following year the armies of Baybars descended upon the Mongol camp from the south, taking Tudan and Tüqü by surprise. The Īlkhān army was defeated with heavy casualties and the two *noyat* were amongst those slain on the battlefield. Seeing that resistance was useless, Mu'in al-Dīn Parvānah fled north to Kayseri and then Tuqat (Tokat), where he sped word of the Mamluk invasion to the Īlkhān court. Meanwhile, Baybars occupied Kayseri, where he was seated on the Saljūq throne and began to issue summons to the Rūmī amīrs to join his resistance to the Mongols. Yet few native commanders joined the Mamluk invasion, and when news of Abaqa's impending arrival reached Kayseri, Baybars beat a hasty retreat back to Damascus.¹⁸⁰

Baybars's invasion of Rūm severely undermined the Īlkhān's confidence in his native officials. The defeat at Abulustān affected Abaqa deeply and he was reported to have wept after touring the battlefield and seeing the thousands of dead Mongols.¹⁸¹ Blame for the defeat initially fell upon the Rūmī amīrs, who were accused of abandoning the Mongols on the battlefield and conspiring with Baybars. Abaqa ordered his army to cull their numbers in an indiscriminate show of anger which saw 500,000 people either killed or captured between Kayseri and Erzerum.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ Harāvī, pp. 331–51; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 520–31; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 751–65; Vaṣṣāf, pp. 41–3; Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 591; Mirkhwānd, pp. 290–308.

¹⁷⁷ Vaṣṣāf, p. 45.

¹⁷⁸ Ibn Bibī, *Akbbār Salājuqī'ya Rūm*, ed. Muḥammad Javād Mashkūr, Tehran: Intishārāt-i Kitāb Furūshīyih, 1350/1961–2, p. 313; Aqsarāyī, p. 101; Bar Hebraeus, p. 457.

¹⁷⁹ Ibn Bibī, p. 315; Aqsarāyī, p. 110; Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-Khāns', p. 361; Tamara Talbot-Rice, *The Seljuks in Asia Minor*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1961, p. 79.

¹⁸⁰ 'Izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī Ibn Shaddad, *Tārīkh al-Malik al-Zābir*, ed. Aḥmad Haṭīf, Beirut: al-Nashirāt al-Islāmiyya, 1403/1983, p. 176; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 537; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 768; Ibn Bibī, pp. 317–18; Aqsarāyī, pp. 114–15; Hetoum, p. 45; al-Yūnīnī, Vol. 1, pp. 172–82; al-Nuwayrī, pp. 268–9; al-Dhahabī, Vol. 50, p. 25.

¹⁸¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 537; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 768; al-Yūnīnī, Vol. 1, p. 185.

¹⁸² Ibn Shaddad, p. 181; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 537; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 769; Ibn Bibī, p. 319; al-Yūnīnī, Vol. 1, p. 186; al-Nuwayrī, p. 268; al-Dhahabī, Vol. 50, p. 28.

The Īlkhān then set out on his return journey to Ārrān and demanded that Mu'in al-Dīn Parvānah accompany the *ordu*. The *noyat* of Rūm, in particular the families of Tudan and Tūqū, held the Parvānah to be directly responsible for the Mamluk invasion and accused him of cowardice and collusion with Baybars.¹⁸³ The Persian sources provide little conclusive evidence to support these allegations and it is only from the Mamluk sources that we hear the full extent of the Parvānah's treachery. They confirm that not only had the Parvānah invited Baybars to seize control of Anatolia, but that he had also sought to betray an earlier Īlkhān expedition against the Euphrates fort of al-Bīra in 1275. They claim that he was also responsible for inciting the uprising of Ibn al-Khaṭīr and for undermining the influence of earlier Mongol officials in Anatolia.¹⁸⁴ The Parvānah was quickly put to death for his crimes. But the damage caused by his conspiracy, and Abaqa's failure to detect it, completely undermined the Īlkhān's confidence in the *divān* and his native officials more generally.

The collaboration of the Rūmī *divān* in Baybars' invasion also cast a shadow over the Īlkhān *divān* and its branches in Arab Iraq and Khurāsān. Following the execution of Mu'in al-Dīn Parvānah, the former constable of Cilicia, Hetoum, remarked that Abaqa never fully trusted his Muslim officials ever again.¹⁸⁵ He was supported in this view by Lewon, the king of Cilicia, whose agents sent a constant stream of information to the *ordu*, warning the Īlkhān that his Muslim bureaucrats were conspiring with the Mamluks.¹⁸⁶ The *noyat* also slandered the Persian *divān* to Abaqa. They counted the Mamluk invasion as a golden opportunity to remove the Juvaynīs from power. Shortly after Baybars's death in 1277, the *noyat* accused 'Alā al-Dīn Juvaynī of encouraging the new Mamluk sultan, Qalāwūn, to invade Arab Iraq with the promise that he would surrender Baghdad upon the latter's arrival.¹⁸⁷ The Mamluks confirm that Juvaynī was in contact with dissident members of the Syrian army and that he facilitated their alliances with Abaqa.¹⁸⁸ But there is no evidence that he directly contacted Qalāwūn, an allegation which seems to have been dreamed up by the *noyat*. In any case, Abaqa was not yet ready to give credence to the accusations against Juvaynī, which he knew to be false, and the allegations against him were dismissed.¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, it was not long before Abaqa would give in to his *noyat*'s demands for a review of the *ṣāhib divān*'s position.

The *noyat*'s campaign against the civil administration was bolstered by Abaqa's desire to avenge Abulustān. In doing so, Abaqa hoped to incorporate both al-Shām

¹⁸³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 538; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 770; Bar Hebraeus, p. 457; Hetoum, p. 45. Also see Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-Khāns', p. 361; Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 78.

¹⁸⁴ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, p. 146; Ibn Shaddad, pp. 79 and 125–8; al-Yūnīnī, Vol. 1, pp. 115–17; al-Nuwayrī, p. 268; al-Dhahabī, Vol. 50, pp. 17–25; Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-Aynī, *ʿIqd al-Jumān fī Tāʾrīkh abl al-Zamān*, ed. Maḥmūd Razzaq Maḥmūd, Vol. 6, Cairo: Dār al-Katāb wa al-Wathāʾiq al-Qūmiyya, 1428/2007, pp. 159–67.

¹⁸⁵ Hetoum, p. 46.

¹⁸⁶ Grigor of Akanc, p. 367; Hetoum, p. 46.

¹⁸⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 542; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 774.

¹⁸⁸ Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 8, p. 237.

¹⁸⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 542; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 774.

and Egypt into an expanded Īlkhānate, as his father had initially envisioned.¹⁹⁰ Such an ambitious operation made the Īlkhān thirsty for revenues to provision and equip his army. In 1275 the centre of the Īlkhān army was sent against the fortress of al-Birā along the Euphrates River in what proved to be an unsuccessful attack.¹⁹¹ Then in 1280 Abaqa dispatched his youngest brother, Möngke-Temür, along with several leading *noyat* to conquer al-Shām. The mission ended in disaster when the Mongol force was defeated at Ḥamāh and the young prince only narrowly escaped with his life.¹⁹² A third expedition against al-Shām was being planned as early as 1281 before the Īlkhān's death put a stop to the invasion.¹⁹³ These three operations greatly increased the influence of the *noyat* at Abaqa's court, whilst also placing the *ṣāhib divān* under increasing pressure to meet the demands of the army.

Abaqa's pressing need for revenue and resources made him far more amenable to the *noyat*'s accusations against the Juvaynīs. Yisübuqa Küregen was the most persistent enemy of the *ṣāhib divān* at the Īlkhān *ordu*. His father had been one of Chinggis Khan's most trusted companions and he led a *mingqan* in Hülegü's army.¹⁹⁴ Yisübuqa had also married Hülegü's sixth daughter, Qutluqqan, an honour which earned him a place amongst the senior figures at Abaqa's court.¹⁹⁵ Yisübuqa was listed as one of the amīrs of Baghdad shortly after Abaqa's death and it appears that the meddling of 'Alā al-Dīn Juvaynī in his sphere of influence was the primary motivation behind his attacks on the *ṣāhib divān*.¹⁹⁶ He was joined in these attacks by one of Shams al-Dīn's former *nā'ibs*, Majd al-Mulk Yazdī, who had come to resent the Juvaynīs' dominance over the *divān*. Yisübuqa and Majd al-Mulk had been responsible for the accusations of treason levelled against 'Alā al-Dīn Juvaynī shortly after the defeat at Abulustān and, although Majd al-Mulk was punished for this slander, he remained at the *ordu* under the protection of Yisübuqa where he managed to further ingratiate himself with Abaqa's *inaqs*.¹⁹⁷

By 1277 Abaqa was committed to the conquest of al-Shām and his need for revenue made him susceptible to the *noyat*'s views. This time Yisübuqa was joined by one of Abaqa's *inaqs*, Abājī, who introduced Majd al-Mulk to Abaqa's eldest son, Arghun Oghul. Majd al-Mulk informed Arghun that Juvaynī had been embezzling millions of dinārs from the public treasury and that his brother had assumed almost complete power over Baghdad. Arghun conveyed these accusations to his father, who ordered an investigation of Shams al-Dīn's accounts. Once again, however,

¹⁹⁰ Amitai-Preiss, 'An Exchange of Letters in Arabic Between Abaqa Īlkhān and Sultan Baybars', p. 11; Amitai-Preiss, 'Mongol Imperial Ideology and the Ilkhanid War Against the Mamluks', p. 64.

¹⁹¹ Baybars al-Manṣūrī, p. 146; Bar Hebraeus, p. 454; Vaṣṣāf, p. 54.

¹⁹² Baybars al-Manṣūrī, pp. 198–213; Bar Hebraeus, p. 464; Vaṣṣāf, p. 55; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 544–5; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 778; al-Dhahabī, Vol. 50, p. 58; Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 80.

¹⁹³ Hetoum, p. 48; Aqṣarāyī, p. 134.

¹⁹⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 276; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 404.

¹⁹⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 476; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 683.

¹⁹⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 566; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 812; Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran*, p. 203.

¹⁹⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 542; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 775; Vaṣṣāf, p. 56; Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-Khāns', p. 362.

Shams al-Dīn Juvaynī managed to narrowly evade his enemies by appealing for help to Öljay Khatun, one of Hülegü's widows who had since married Abaqa. Öljay's intercession saved Juvaynī from an investigation of his accounts, but he was still obliged to pay 50,000 dīnārs; a sum that he violently extracted from the population of Baghdad.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, Majd al-Mulk had finally discovered the *ṣāhib divān*'s weakness: appealing to the Ilkhān's greed.¹⁹⁹

With the support of the *noyat*, Majd al-Mulk came to rival the power of the Juvaynīs over the *divān*. Abaqa appointed him to the office of *mushrif al-mamālik* (auditor general) under the supervision of the ambitious *inaq* Taghachar Noyan. His new position entitled Majd al-Mulk to act as Shams al-Dīn Juvaynī's partner in the *divān*. All orders and reports relating to matters of treasury and taxation had to first be co-signed by Majd al-Mulk before being enacted. Moreover, Majd al-Mulk was empowered to appoint his own *nā'ibs* to oversee the collection of revenue throughout the empire. His appointment to oversee the financial administration of the realm marked the decline of the *divān* and the corresponding rise to power of the *noyat* over the civil administration of the Ilkhānate.²⁰⁰

Shams al-Dīn Juvaynī's links to Abaqa's khatuns made him a difficult target for Majd al-Mulk and the *noyat*, who subsequently sought to attack his brother, 'Alā al-Dīn Juvaynī, instead. They began their campaign by accusing 'Alā al-Dīn of embezzling the sum of 1,000,000 dīnārs, on which basis he was summoned to the *ordu*. Shams al-Dīn advised his brother to pay the sum and thereby avoid the pressure of a full investigation, which 'Alā al-Dīn did. Yet the seeming effortlessness with which the Juvaynīs paid off the outstanding accounts only emboldened the *noyat* and Majd al-Mulk to make further accusations. The *noyat*'s hand was strengthened by the defeat of Abaqa's army at Ḥamāh in 1281, which made the Ilkhān desperate for revenue to write off the losses and build a new army for his next campaign. Abaqa received news of the defeat in the Jazīra, whence he moved to Baghdad to hear the charges against 'Alā al-Dīn in person. This time, Majd al-Mulk accused him of having embezzled 3,000,000 dīnārs, for which 'Alā al-Dīn was imprisoned and tortured until he surrendered all of his wealth. He even sold his children before being forced to sign a declaration stating that he possessed no other property. On the basis of this declaration Abaqa agreed to release 'Alā al-Dīn, but his commitment to launch another invasion of al-Shām soon prompted him to turn to Majd al-Mulk again. This time, Taghachar Noyan came in person against Baghdad with the demand that a further 3,000,000 dīnārs should be paid to the public treasury. When this sum proved impossible to obtain, 'Alā al-Dīn was arrested and Baghdad was given over to plunder by the *noyan* and his soldiers. The fact that Abaqa consented to his *noyat* looting the second city of the realm was

¹⁹⁸ Kamāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Razzāq b. Aḥmad Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *al-Hawādith al-Jāmi' wa al-Tajārūb al-Nāfi'ah fī al-Mā'ya al-Sāba'a*, trans. 'Abd al-Muḥammad Ayatī, Tehran: Anjuman Āthār wa Mafākhir-i Farhangī, 1381/2002, p. 238.

¹⁹⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 543; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 776; Vaṣṣāf, p. 56; Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran*, p. 203.

²⁰⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed., Thackston, p. 543; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 776; Vaṣṣāf, p. 56; Āshtiyānī, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl*, p. 232; Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 81. For the title of *mushrif al-mamālik*, see Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia*, pp. 36 and 52.

explained by Vaṣṣāf, who lamented that 'the absolute impetus and main motivation behind this action was the army's need for funds'. Abaqa's military ambitions had broken the power of the Juvaynīs.²⁰¹

Abaqa died at Hamadān in 1282, just as the attacks against the Juvaynīs were reaching their peak.²⁰² His reign was regarded as a model for collegial rule in which the khan governed on behalf of his military aristocracy. The ascendancy of the *noyat* was most evident in their treatment of the İlkhān *divān*, which they saw as a tool for their own enrichment. Shams al-Dīn Juvaynī tried to explain this situation to an incredulous Abaqa when the latter interrogated him over the extent of his wealth. Juvaynī responded by saying that in relation to the *divān* revenue, 'we spent some on the princes and khatuns and amīrs [i.e. *noyat*] and the rest on public works of charity and the people'.²⁰³ In other words, if the İlkhān truly wanted to know where his money was being spent, he should look to the *noyat*, not the *divān*. Yet Juvaynī's complaint seemed to have fallen on deaf ears as the *noyat* raided and burned the suburbs of Baghdad in search of specious back-taxes. For the moment the ascendancy of the military aristocracy over the İlkhānate would proceed unchecked.

Abaqa's death forced the *ordu* to return to Azerbaijan in preparation for a *quriltai*. The *divān* dispatched envoys with the news of the İlkhān's passing throughout the Empire and the royal coffin was conveyed to the region of Shāhān-Tula for burial.²⁰⁴ Envoys were also sped to the leading Hülegüid princes to convey the news of their patriarch's death and to summon them to a *quriltai*.²⁰⁵ The subsequent nomination of Abaqa's brother, Aḥmad Tegüder, to the İlkhān throne proved to be one of the most controversial decisions taken by a *quriltai* at any time in the history of the Mongol Empire. The enigmatic new İlkhān had been nominated by the *aqā-nar* in the hope that he would continue the *jasaq* and *yosun* of his predecessor and reward the leading *noyat* with a share of government. Yet Aḥmad betrayed the expectations of his *noyat* by ignoring their advice and granting increased power to his chief wives. Aḥmad's ill-judged affront against the most powerful faction in his realm caused the *noyat* to reconsider the nature of their relationship to the crown. In the rebellion which followed, the *noyat* firmly asserted their own primacy over the throne on the basis of their duty to defend the laws and traditions of Chinggis Khan and his descendants. Aḥmad Tegüder was deposed and executed in fulfilment of these duties in what became the first regicide committed by the *noyat* against a member of Chinggis Khan's Golden Kin. The *aqā-nar* demonstrated that they not only held the right to appoint the İlkhān, but that

²⁰¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 545; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 776–8; Vaṣṣāf, pp. 59–64; Shirāzī, p. 50; Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *al-Hawādiṭh al-Jāmi'*, p. 249; Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran*, p. 205; Āshtiyānī, *Tārikh-i Mughūl*, p. 232; Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the İl-Khāns', p. 362.

²⁰² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 545; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 779; Vaṣṣāf, p. 64; Bar Hebraeus, p. 466.

²⁰³ Vaṣṣāf, pp. 57 and 73.

²⁰⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 779; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 784.

²⁰⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 779; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 784.

they also had the right to depose him if he failed to adhere to the principles of collegial rule.

Prior to the *quriltai* of 1282, Aḥmad Tegüder had been a peripheral figure within the Īlkhānate. He had not accompanied Hülegü during his initial march into Iran. Rather, he was one of a handful of princes and wives left in Mongolia by the Īlkhān under the protection of Hülegü's second son, Jumughur.²⁰⁶ Nothing is known of Aḥmad Tegüder's childhood or early life until the death of his uncle, Möngke Qa'an, in 1259. During the ensuing civil war, Aḥmad Tegüder's family initially joined the campaign of Ariq Bökö. But when Qubilai's blockade of Mongolia forced Ariq Bökö to move his base west into Central Asia, Jumughur sought permission to leave his army before setting out for Iran. By 1264 Jumughur had led his family as far as Samarqand, where he fell ill and died, thereby stranding his small party. Hülegü ordered the Onggirat commander, Abatay Noyan, to travel to Transoxiana and retrieve his family, yet the latter was forced to return as a result of fighting between the Chaghadaids and Jočids which had made the expedition dangerous. It was, therefore, not until 1269 that Aḥmad Tegüder's party was finally able to enter Khurāsān, by which time his older brother, Abaqa, had assumed the throne.²⁰⁷

There was little room for Aḥmad Tegüder in the by then well-established Īlkhān polity. He had arrived more than a decade after his father first crossed the Oxus River and had therefore missed the division of offices and pastures which were assigned shortly after the expulsion of Jočid soldiers in 1262. His party was well received by Abaqa, but the Īlkhān's welcome may have masked a degree of suspicion. Abaqa's apprehension was demonstrated by the fact that he awarded the new arrivals only the revenues of Diyārbakr and Miyāfārighīn to support themselves. The combined income of these two regions totalled no more than 100,000 dīnār, a miserly sum at a time when Vaṣṣāf reported that Abaqa's *divān* spent a total of 8 million dīnār on the salaries and upkeep of the princes and *noyat*. Moreover, Abaqa did not grant these territories to the princes and khatuns as hereditary patrimonies (*injū*), but rather gave them salaries from the revenue of these provinces as a livelihood (*tūnlūq*). Control of the people, pastures, and administration of Diyārbakr and Miyāfārighīn remained with the *noyan*, Daritay, who had been appointed as governor of the territory during Abaqa's *quriltai* in 1265. Nor did the newly arrived princes and khatuns reside in Diyārbakr; rather they remained at the *ordu* under the watchful eye of Abaqa. It was not until 1279 that the Īlkhān finally relented and declared that Hülegü's descendants should receive a share of his property. Yet Abaqa still refused to grant a portion to his brothers and nephews, preferring instead to entrust their share to their mothers to administer on their behalf. This decision may have also been informed by the age of his siblings, since al-Dhahabī mentions that Aḥmad was still only in his twenties when he died in 1284.²⁰⁸ If this was true then Aḥmad may still have been an adolescent when he arrived in Iran.

²⁰⁶ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 3, p. 97.

²⁰⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 473 and 519; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 680 and 745.

²⁰⁸ al-Dhahabī, Vol. 51, p. 140.

In any case, Abaqā's policies ensured that Aḥmad Tegüder remained on the periphery of the İlkhān polity until the *quriltai* of 1282.²⁰⁹

Reconstructing Aḥmad Tegüder's *quriltai* is somewhat difficult since the majority of Persian sources which document the event were written during the reign of Ghazan, the son of his chief rival, Arghun, and seek to deny the meeting any legitimacy.²¹⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn's account, which was also adopted by Shabānkārā'i, states that the *quriltai* process began before the arrival of Arghun, Abaqā's eldest son, and concluded whilst the young prince was still mourning the death of his father.²¹¹ Qazvinī levels particularly harsh criticism at Aḥmad for the way the 1282 *quriltai* was carried out. He claimed that Arghun's exclusion was a deliberate and mischievous tactic used by Aḥmad Tegüder to deny the young prince his rightful place on Abaqā's throne. He also claims that Arghun was intimidated into accepting Aḥmad's rule before being forced to flee back to Khurāsān to escape from the newly crowned İlkhān's hostile supporters.²¹² The historians of Ghazan's reign used these arguments to accuse Aḥmad of stealing the throne from its rightful heir.

Yet Aḥmad Tegüder receives a far more sympathetic hearing from Vaṣṣāf, who held a high opinion of the first Muslim İlkhān. Vaṣṣāf states that Arghun had, in fact, been present at the *quriltai* of 1282 and that he had initially welcomed his uncle's nomination to the İlkhān throne. According to this account, it was well after Aḥmad's coronation that Arghun was persuaded to challenge the outcome of the *quriltai* at the prompting of the *'umarā* [commanders]. Indeed, both Vaṣṣāf and al-Nuwayrī state that Aḥmad Tegüder was unanimously supported by the *noyat* and princes in 1282. That Aḥmad managed to win the backing of the *aqā-nar* is also confirmed by Rashīd al-Dīn's account, which lists many of Abaqā's former *aqā-nar* and *inaqs* amongst Aḥmad's supporters. At the top of this list were Shiktur Aqa and Suqunjaq Aqa, two of Abaqā's pillars of state, who had been central figures in his own nomination in 1265. Another name to appear on the list is that of Arab Noyan, the son of Suntay Noyan, who had commanded a *tamma* in Erzerüm. Qarabuqa Noyan was additionally mentioned as a member of Aḥmad's faction. Qarabuqa was the son of Altaju Noyan, who had administered Abaqā's *injū* lands and briefly held the governorship of Fārs.²¹³ Yet Aḥmad's most important support remained the Onggirat. Aḥmad's two most senior wives, Toquz and Armani, were both drawn from the Onggirat ruling dynasty, as was his mother, Qutui Khatun. Despite the fact that Rashīd al-Dīn seeks to minimize Qutui's role in Aḥmad's nomination, saying that she sympathized with Arghun's candidacy, it would appear that she actively campaigned for her son. The most telling sign of her support is the fact that her *amīr-i ordu*, Asiq Noyan, is listed by Rashīd al-Dīn as

²⁰⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. pp. 517–18, 519–20, 541, 548; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 743, 746, 773, 785; Vaṣṣāf, p. 68; Shirāzi, p. 46.

²¹⁰ Peter Jackson, 'Mongol Khans and Religious Allegiance: The Problems Confronting a Minister-Historian in Ilkhanid Iran', *Iran*, Vol. 47, 2009, p. 117.

²¹¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 548; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 785; Shabānkārā'i, p. 264.

²¹² Qazvinī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 118; Qazvinī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 87.

²¹³ For Altaju's time in Fārs, see Vaṣṣāf, pp. 112.

supporting Aḥmad's nomination. She would later assume the dominant role in Aḥmad's *ordu* as the new Ilkhān withdrew from the business of state. Rashīd al-Dīn's list, combined with the testimony of Vaṣṣāf seems to suggest that Aḥmad was indeed the *aqā-nar*'s candidate in the *quriltai* of 1282.²¹⁴

What information is provided on Aḥmad's *quriltai* suggests that the theme of continuity was upheld as the central criterion of the *aqā-nar*'s nomination. Shabānkārā'i observed that the *aqā-nar* justified Aḥmad's nomination on the basis that he was Hülegü's eldest surviving son and, therefore, the ideal candidate to continue his policies. Shortly after his coronation, Aḥmad is said to have written a letter justifying his accession on the basis that he was the senior descendant of Hülegü and both Vaṣṣāf and the Mamluk historian, Ibn al-Dawādārī, claim that Aḥmad was simply referred to as 'Aḥmad Agha' in his correspondence with the provinces.²¹⁵ Vaṣṣāf also stated that much of the reason for Aḥmad's popularity amongst the *aqā-nar* was the fact that he would 'renew the *aḥkām va farmāns* (rulings and orders) and agree upon the administration of the *yasa*'.²¹⁶ In short, he was expected to preserve the Ilkhān state as it had existed under Hülegü and Abaqa. Aḥmad initially seemed to comply with this expectation as he affirmed the hereditary right of his *aqā-nar* to the offices they had held under Abaqa. He appointed Suqunjaq Aqa as his *amīr al-ūmarā* and granted him his old position as governor of Arab Iraq and Fārs; Aq-Buqa Noyan, Elgāi's son, was granted the command of the armies of Rūm and was married to one of Aḥmad's daughters in an attempt to strengthen the bonds of their alliance; Abukan Noyan, the son of Shiremūn, was also granted his father's title in command of the armies in the southern Caucasus; Shiktur Aqa remained at the *ordu* and effectively carried out the duties of his former kinsman, Elgāi Noyan, as the *amīr-i ordu*.²¹⁷ The strong emphasis on continuity during Aḥmad's *quriltai* seemed to suggest that the *aqā-nar* had found the ideal candidate to replace Abaqa.

Despite the optimism surrounding Aḥmad's appointment he quickly lost the support of the *noyat*. One explanation for the speedy decline in Aḥmad's popularity is that his conversion to Islam caused resentment amongst conservative elements within the *ordu*. This theory is supported particularly strongly by modern Iranian historians of the Ilkhānate, who view Aḥmad's deposition as part of an ongoing cultural battle between Persian-Islamic and Mongol-Buddhist factions at the Ilkhān *ordu*.²¹⁸ Evidence to support this theory is supplied by Vaṣṣāf and the Mamluk sources, who joyfully reported that Aḥmad ordered the destruction of all

²¹⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 548; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 783–5; Vaṣṣāf, pp. 66–71; al-Nuwayrī, p. 271.

²¹⁵ Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns', p. 364; Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 258; Vaṣṣāf, p. 123; Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 8, p. 248; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, p. 218.

²¹⁶ Vaṣṣāf, p. 66.

²¹⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 551; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 788; Vaṣṣāf, p. 67.

²¹⁸ Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmāt-i Ilkhānī*, p. 197; Farukh Sarāmad, *Ilkhānān Irān*, Tehran: Farukh Sarāmad, 1384/2005–6, p. 119; Āshtiyānī, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl*, p. 269; Ḥamid-Riḍā 'Alizādah Muqaddam, *Pujūhishī dar Sikkahaya Uljāytū: Hashamīn Ilkhān-i Mughūl*, Tehran: Pāzinah Press, 1388/2009–10, p. 23. Also Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 85; and Amitai-Preiss, 'The Conversion of Tegüder Ilkhān to Islam', p. 39.

churches, stupas, and synagogues and that he had begun to replace Mongol terms, such as *yarliq* and *elči* (envoy), with the Arabic terms *farmān* and *rasūl*.²¹⁹ Furthermore, both Marco Polo and Mar Yahballaha III allude to the fact that opponents of Aḥmad's rule used his conversion to Islam as a means to push for his deposition. They go on to say that the traditions and laws of Islam and the *jasaq* and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan are incompatible, thereby implying that a choice had to be made between the two beliefs.²²⁰ If such opinions were prevalent at the Mongol court during Aḥmad's reign then it is indeed conceivable that the Īlkhān's conversion to Islam would have destabilized his position. Yet the role Aḥmad's conversion played in his deposition has been downplayed and even attacked in recent times. David Morgan and J. A. Boyle highlight Aḥmad's political incompetence as the determining factor in his deposition, rather than his religious convictions.²²¹ Indeed, the evidence pointing to sectarian and cultural factionalism as the main reason for Aḥmad's deposition is mixed at best. Beyond the testimony of Vaṣṣāf, there is very little evidence that suggests Aḥmad tried to impose his religion upon his predominantly Christian supporters.²²² In fact, Aḥmad's reign seems to suggest a growing syncretism between Islamic and Mongolian concepts of authority at the Mongol court.²²³ More importantly, none of the Persian sources which document the rebellion against Aḥmad list his religious convictions as a reason for the Īlkhān's sudden decline in popularity. Aḥmad's faith may not have endeared him to the *noyat*, but it certainly did not prevent them from nominating him to the throne and it is unlikely that this sentiment changed shortly after his coronation in 1282.

The most common reason given by the Persian sources for the decline in Aḥmad's popularity was that he had betrayed the expectations of his *noyat*. Aḥmad had been a relatively peripheral figure within the Īlkhānate prior to his nomination to the throne. Unlike his brother Abaqa, he had not held the command of soldiers or the governorship of a great province. Rather, Aḥmad relied upon the support of senior *noyat* for his elevation to the throne and they assumed that their assistance entitled them to a strong hand in the governance of the realm. Yet once Aḥmad's coronation was completed the *noyat* found themselves increasingly marginalized from the seat of power. Rashīd al-Dīn stated that Shikṭur Aqa and Suqunjaq Aqa had been largely responsible for Aḥmad's nomination, yet the new Īlkhān had snubbed them, failing to reward them with the wealth and influence that their contribution deserved.²²⁴ Not only did Aḥmad ignore the counsel of his *aqā-nar*, but he also

²¹⁹ Vaṣṣāf, p. 67; al-Dhahabī, Vol. 51, p. 6; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, p. 221.

²²⁰ Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. Ronald Latham, London: Penguin, 1958, p. 322; *The Monks of Kublai Khan*, p. 160; Vaṣṣāf, p. 67.

²²¹ Morgan, *The Mongols*, p. 160; Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-Khāns', p. 368. Also see Adel Allouche, 'Tegüder's Ultimatum to Qalawun', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 4, Nov. 1990, p. 444.

²²² Amitai-Preiss, 'The Conversion of Tegüder Īlkhān to Islam', p. 28.

²²³ Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 32; Allsen, 'Changing Forms of Legitimation in Mongol Iran', p. 228; Amitai-Preiss, 'The Conversion of Tegüder Īlkhān to Islam', p. 32.

²²⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 551; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 788; *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah*, f. 140.

abandoned the policies of his predecessor. During the reign of Abaqa, the *noyat* had enthusiastically supported the Īlkhān's campaign against al-Shām and they advocated a continuation of this position immediately after Aḥmad's nomination.²²⁵ Yet the new Īlkhān had very little interest in beginning a long and costly war with the Mamluks and he rebuffed their request to begin a new campaign.²²⁶ Aḥmad's refusal to adhere to the policies of his predecessors must have caused many of them to question whether they had made a mistake in appointing him to the throne.

Aḥmad's failure to appease the *aqā-nar* was largely the result of his general lack of interest in government. His successful nomination in 1282 was achieved at the insistence of those around him, not by his own design. Prior to 1282 Aḥmad had lived a life of ease and pleasure, first during his stay in Mongolia and then after his arrival in Iran, where he had been pensioned off by his older brother. Ibn al-Dawādārī describes him as 'exceedingly ignorant' and a 'poor statesman'.²²⁷ In fact, Aḥmad spent very little time at court with his *noyat* after assuming the throne. He preferred the company of musicians and spiritualists.²²⁸ First in precedence amongst this group was the dubious Sufi named Shaykh Kamil al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Rifā'ī. Both Bar Hebraeus and Ibn al-Fuwaṭī describe 'Abd al-Raḥmān as a charlatan who came to prominence by amusing the *ordu* with cheap magic tricks.²²⁹ 'Abd al-Raḥmān's popularity as a spiritualist in Abaqa's court won him the support of Aḥmad's mother, Qutui Khatun, who introduced the shaykh to her son.²³⁰ Aḥmad subsequently described 'Abd al-Raḥmān as his 'chief spiritual advisor' in a letter to the Mamluk sultan, Qalāwūn, in 1282 and his influence over the new Īlkhān was rewarded with control of the *āwqāf* (benefices) and *quḍāt* (Islamic judges).²³¹ Another spiritualist, Īshān-Mengli, was also highly popular at Aḥmad's court. Little is known about him, although Ibn Bazzāz, writing during the 1350s, described him as a member of the Ya'qūbiyya Qalandariyya, known for their odd appearance and lax adherence to Islamic rules of devotion.²³² Both Rashīd al-Dīn and Qazvīnī claim that Aḥmad spent all of his time with these and other disreputable figures within the *ordu* and gave precious little attention to his *noyat* who quickly grew frustrated with the Īlkhān's aloofness.²³³

²²⁵ Vaṣṣāf, p. 70; Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 8, p. 250; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, p. 220.

²²⁶ Vaṣṣāf, p. 70; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 551; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 788; Bar Hebraeus, p. 467; Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 8, p. 250.

²²⁷ Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 8, p. 264.

²²⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 551; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 788; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 88.

²²⁹ Bar Hebraeus, p. 474; Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *al-Hawādith al-Jāmi'*, p. 259. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī was also responsible for forming the views of the Mamluk historians regarding 'Abd al-Raḥmān's road to power. See al-Nuwayrī, p. 271; Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 8, pp. 262–3; al-Dhahabī, Vol. 51, pp. 148–9.

²³⁰ Amitai-Preiss, 'The Conversion of Teguider Īlkhān to Islam', p. 21.

²³¹ Vaṣṣāf, p. 68; al-Nuwayrī, p. 272; also see Pfeiffer, 'Aḥmad Teguider's Second Letter to Qalā'ūn (682/1283)', p. 190.

²³² Ibn Bazzāz, p. 217; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 96; Amitai-Preiss, 'Sufis and Shamans: Some Remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate', p. 31.

²³³ Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 88; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 551; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 788.

Aḥmad's lack of military ambition and his isolation from the court permitted the *divān* to reclaim much of its former power. During Aḥmad's absence, the business of government devolved upon his mother, Qutui Khatun, who ruled through the agency of her *amīr-i ordu*, Asiq Noyan, and the *ṣāhib divān*, Shams al-Dīn Juvaynī. Juvaynī's prominence in the new government was particularly difficult for the *noyat* to tolerate, after they had worked so hard at minimizing his role during Abaqā's rule. The *noyat* had naturally assumed that Aḥmad would support their prosecution of the *ṣāhib divān* in the same way as his predecessor; this hope was soon to be disappointed. Shortly after his *quriltai*, Yisübuqa Küregen joined with Majd al-Mulk and several other unnamed *noyat* to level further accusations of embezzlement against 'Alā al-Dīn Juvaynī. Yet Aḥmad's Onggirat wife, Armani Khatun, dismissed all the allegations against Juvaynī and ordered that he be appointed to his former position and that his property should be returned in full. A short time later, a *yarghu* was convened to try Majd al-Mulk on charges of witchcraft. Initially, the two *noyat* appointed to adjudicate the *yarghu*, Suqunjaq Aqa and Uruq Noyan, refused to convict Majd al-Mulk. But when Suqunjaq Aqa fell ill towards the end of the trial, Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman managed to force the verdict and the unfortunate Majd al-Mulk was subsequently disembowelled. Juvaynī then stoked the *noyat's* anger further by convincing Aḥmad to hold a review of the salaries granted to the princes and *noyat* of the *ordu*, which resulted in them being halved. This last gesture convinced the *noyat* that Aḥmad had betrayed the traditions of his predecessors and several factions began to emerge with the intention of ousting him.²³⁴

Less than a year after assuming the throne, Aḥmad Tegüder's authority began to wane as the *noyat* sought to transfer their support to another candidate. The first, and arguably the most prominent, challenge to his rule came from his brother, Qonqortai, whom he had appointed to lead the İlkhān army in Rūm. Vaṣṣāf reported that the 'majority [*barkhī*] of the amīrs' convinced Qonqortai that he should attempt to seize the throne for himself.²³⁵ The conspirators agreed that Qonqortai should set out for the *ordu* under the pretext of holding a *quriltai*, in which they would assassinate Aḥmad. News of this plot reached the İlkhān prior to Qonqortai's arrival at the *ordu* and he was executed along with his companions shortly after they reached Ārrān. Qonqortai's murder infuriated both the *noyat* and the Chinggisid princes, who viewed the incident as evidence of Aḥmad's despotic nature. Rumours of a conspiracy then emerged in the Jazira, where many of the princes who had accompanied Aḥmad to Iran were still residing. Aḥmad dispatched an army to Diyārbakr and arrested several *noyat*, whilst also forcing Abaqā's younger son, Geikhatu, and his cousin, Baidu, to flee to Khurāsān. Aḥmad's suppression of the conspiracies in Rūm and the Jazira preserved his position temporarily, but they also eroded his support amongst the *noyat*, who were growing more apprehensive about the brutality of the İlkhān's regime. Senior members of Abaqā's *ordu* had

²³⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 549–50; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 786–8; Vaṣṣāf, pp. 66–8.

²³⁵ Vaṣṣāf, p. 74.

been arrested by Aḥmad in the Jazira, such as Taghachar and Dolā dai Noyan, forcing others to question whether they would be next to suffer Aḥmad's wrath. These fears caused the previously uncoordinated conspirators to unite behind a faction of *noyat* based in Persian Iraq in the middle of 1284.²³⁶

The revolt which succeeded in deposing Aḥmad Tegüder occurred shortly after the capture of Arghun Oghul. The latter had sought to capitalize on the Ilkhān's unpopularity by making his own claim to the throne. In 1283 Arghun had led an army from Khurāsān to Persian Iraq, where he arrested Aḥmad's *nā'ib* and confirmed his vassal, Malik Fakhr al-Dīn Rayyī, as governor of Qazvīn. He then moved into Arab Iraq and plundered Baghdad for funds with which he planned to buy support for his rebellion. The stress caused by Arghun's incursion into Arab Iraq proved too much for 'Alā al-Dīn Juvaynī, who died in Mosul shortly after Arghun returned east to Khurāsān. There the young prince received the refugees who had escaped Aḥmad's purge of Qonqortai's *ordu* and the Jazira and began to build his support with the local *noyat*.²³⁷

Aḥmad could not let Arghun's attack on Arab Iraq go unpunished. He sent to his son-in-law, Alinaq Noyan, the commander of Georgia, to summon his soldiers and move against Arghun. Shams al-Dīn Juvaynī was eager to avenge the death of his brother and worked energetically to supply the Ilkhān army with weapons and provisions. He may have also been aware that Arghun had accused him of murdering Abaqa; a claim that was readily believed by most of the Mamluk sources.²³⁸ Juvaynī could, therefore, be sure that a victory for Arghun would surely result in his execution. Alinaq's army initially moved to Qazvīn, on the road from Tabrīz, where his advanced guard was met and defeated by Arghun, who fell back into Māzandarān before the arrival of the main army.²³⁹ Alinaq then moved to Varāmīn, immediately south of Rayy, where he was joined by the main body of Aḥmad's army. From there Alinaq marched on Damghān, which had been acting as Arghun's administrative capital, and ruined the city and its surrounding countryside. The loss of his treasury in Varāmīn and the speed of Alinaq's progress caught Arghun off-guard and he was unable to muster any meaningful response. The weakness of Arghun's position was badly exposed. His campaign only ever appealed to a small number of his household retainers and was too narrow to win the popular support of the *noyat*. Indeed, the most powerful commanders of Khurāsān, Hindu Noyan and Lakzi Küregen b. Arghun Aqa, the husband of Hūlegü's seventh daughter Baba, refused to join Arghun and set out to help Aḥmad's forces defend against the

²³⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 552; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 791; Vaṣṣāf, p. 74; Bar Hebraeus, p. 470; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 101; Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 34; Āshtiyānī, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl*, p. 241.

²³⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 551–2; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 789–90; Vaṣṣāf, p. 72; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, pp. 97 and 112; Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *al-Hawādith al-Jāmi'*, p. 254.

²³⁸ al-Nuwayrī, p. 270.

²³⁹ Āshtiyānī, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl*, p. 242; Amitai-Preiss, 'The Conversion of Tegüder Ilkhan to Islam', p. 16; Vaṣṣāf provides a contrary view, stating that Arghun was forced to flee back to Khurāsān after suffering an initial defeat against Alinaq (p. 76).

young prince. Heavily outnumbered, Arghun fled to the castle of Kalāt, before surrendering to Alinaq.²⁴⁰

Yet Aḥmad's rule only endured for a matter of days after the capture of Arghun. The catalyst for the successful coup against him was Aḥmad's decision to depose one of his *noyat*, Buqa, from the command of an army during the attack on Damghān. Buqa's father had died in the service of Hülegü, after which he and his brother, Uruq, were raised in Abaqa's household before being given offices within the royal treasury and army respectively. During this time Buqa developed a relationship with Prince Arghun, briefly serving in his *ordu* before supporting his candidacy for the throne in 1282. Buqa subsequently reconciled himself with Aḥmad's rule and obtained high office at his *ordu*, but during the attack on Damghān the İlkhān suspected him of holding residual sympathies for Arghun's cause and deposed him from his command. Buqa was infuriated by his demotion and began to rally the *noyat* of Iraq behind the idea of a regime change shortly after Arghun's capture. Speaking to the shared fears of both the Chinggisids and the *noyat*, Buqa claimed that Aḥmad had shown little respect for the *jasaq* and *yosun* of his predecessors and that he 'has left the dynasty of Changīz powerless and servile, and at the prompting of the *Şāhib Divān* he has given Muslims prominence and positions, and has entrusted the army of Georgia to Alinaq to break the Mongols!' He did not have a hard time convincing the *noyat*. Al-Nuwayrī states that Aḥmad had already imprisoned and humiliated twelve senior commanders, prompting the other leading *noyat* to panic.²⁴¹ Buqa's appeal to the *noyat* to support the collegial principles of Chinggisid authority successfully gained their backing and he immediately set about ousting the unpopular İlkhān.²⁴²

Buqa waited until Aḥmad had set out on his return journey to Azerbaijan before launching his coup. Aḥmad had abandoned his camp to join his favourite wife, Tuday Khatun, one of Abaqa's former concubines, shortly after Arghun's capture. With Aḥmad gone, Buqa gathered a small band of soldiers and entered Alinaq's camp. He murdered Alinaq during his sleep and released Arghun without alerting the guards to his presence. He then escaped to join the main insurgency in Iraq and publicly proclaimed his rebellion. Separated from his army, Aḥmad had no choice but to flee back to Azerbaijan in the hope of reaching his mother's *ordu*. Buqa sought to intercept him and dispatched a *tümen* to apprehend him, but Aḥmad managed to reach Qutui's *ordu* narrowly ahead of his pursuers from where he planned to flee to the Kipchaq. But even in his mother's *ordu* Aḥmad could find no sanctuary. News of the coup had reached the *ordu* prior to his arrival and both Shiktur Aqa and Qarabuqa decided to apprehend Aḥmad before surrendering him to the rebels. Qutui's *ordu* and Aḥmad's household were both plundered by Aḥmad's pursuers in a show of frustration against his rule. The İlkhān was then

²⁴⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 553–6; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 793–5; Vaṣṣāf, pp. 75–6; Bar Hebraeus, p. 470; Qazvinī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 112; Qazvinī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 594.

²⁴¹ Al-Nuwayrī, p. 272; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, p. 237; Shīrāzī, p. 62.

²⁴² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 541, 548, 556–7; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 773, 785, 795–6; Vaṣṣāf, p. 78; Āshṭiyānī, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl*, p. 243; Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 30.

transported to the rebel base, where he was handed over to the children of Qonqortai and his *noyat* in revenge for their murder.²⁴³

The significance of Aḥmad Tegüder's deposition is yet to be fully appreciated by historians of the Ilkhānate, who have predominantly attributed his demise to either sectarian conflicts within the *ordu* or dynastic struggles within the Hülegüid clan.²⁴⁴ Such an interpretation fails to appreciate the broader political significance of his deposition. Aḥmad's capture and eventual execution was the first example of the *noyat* deposing a Chinggisid ruler in defence of their hereditary wealth and authority. Thus, Buqa's coup represented a shift in the relationship between the khan and his *aqā-nar*. Previously, the *aqā-nar* had only claimed the right to appoint new rulers on the basis of their expertise in the *jasaq* and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan. The new idea espoused by Buqa and his supporters, that the *aqā-nar* could depose a ruler if he failed to adhere to these laws and traditions, shows the extent to which the *noyat* had increased their dominance over the Ilkhānate by the time of Aḥmad's death.

²⁴³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 556–7, 559; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 791 and 798–800; Vaṣṣāf, pp. 77–80; Bar Hebraeus, p. 472; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnama*, pp. 125, 135, 142, 147; Mīrkhwānd, p. 343.

²⁴⁴ Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 85; Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmat-i Ilkhānī dar Īrān*, p. 196; Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia*, p. 16; Allouche, 'Teguder's Ultimatum to Qalawun', p. 444; Amitai-Preiss, 'The Conversion of Tegüder Ilkhan to Islam', p. 43.

The Patrimonialist Revival and the Fight for Political Primacy (1284–1304)

Aḥmad Tegüder's death marked the start of a decade-long conflict between the Īlkhān crown and its military aristocracy. This conflict was fuelled by a disagreement as to the nature of Chinggisid authority which had its roots in the Toluid coup of 1251. In the weeks after Aḥmad's execution the coup leaders agreed to appoint the deposed Īlkhān's one-time rival, Arghun, as the nominal ruler of the Īlkhānate. Yet Arghun had little love for either the *noyat* or their restrictive view of royal authority. Rather, he envisioned the imposition of a patrimonialist state, modelled on that of his great-uncle, Möngke. In 1289 Arghun successfully manipulated rivalries amongst the *noyat* to depose Buqa and reclaim control of the Īlkhān state. Over the next two years Arghun sought to replace the oligarchy of the coup leaders with a highly centralized monarchical state. Arghun justified the expanded power which these reforms afforded him through reference to the principles of patrimonialist authority first established by Möngke Qa'an.

The *noyat* violently opposed Arghun's interpretation of Chinggisid authority, both during his lifetime and after his death in 1291. In the weeks following Arghun's death the *noyat* sought to purge the Īlkhānate of his former supporters and officials in a bloody reaction against his autocratic rule. The leaders of this collegialist reaction blamed the instability that followed Arghun's death upon the Īlkhān's transgression of the laws and customs of Chinggis Khan. They contrasted the reign of Arghun and his successor Geikhatu with those of Hülegü and Abaqa, during which they claimed that the Īlkhānate had prospered through the help of a strong military aristocracy. It was with the aim of restoring this idealized past that the *noyat* seized control of the state, which they ruled through the agency of Hülegüid puppets. Yet their attempts to reconstitute the former Īlkhān polity were thwarted by regional rivalries which drew the *noyat* into a series of internecine conflicts. In the four years that followed Arghun's death no fewer than three different rulers would be crowned, as provincial warlords sought to assert their control over the realm. This fight for ascendancy, which almost resulted in the early demise of the Īlkhānate, was only terminated when Arghun's oldest son and heir, Ghazan, arrived from Khurāsān to revive the power of the Hülegüid monarchy.

A *quriltai* assembled in Tabrīz shortly after Aḥmad Tegüder's execution to appoint Arghun Oghul as the next Īlkhān.¹ Days earlier he had faced almost certain

¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 562; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 807; Vaṣṣāf, p. 81; Bar Hebraeus, p. 471.

death at the hands of Aḥmad's soldiers, before being rescued by Buqa and his allies. His sudden change of fortune was expounded by the Temürid historian, Mirkhwānd, as a lesson on fate's fickle nature.² Yet it was soon apparent that Arghun's situation had changed very little. It was true that he had achieved his father's crown, but his appointment masked the fact that Buqa remained the true power behind the throne. Indeed, Arghun's coronation was less a celebration of his succession than the assertion of Buqa's primacy. The latter had been showered in gold 'until he was completely submerged' and was granted 'every title, except that of khān'.³ It was also during Arghun's coronation that Buqa was granted new powers over both 'the amirate and vizierate': the military and civil administrations.⁴ Command of these two branches of Ilkhān government had never been combined in one office before, having traditionally been assigned to the *amīr al-ūmarā* and *ṣāhib divān* separately. The unique nature of Buqa's position was recognized in a new title, *chingsang*, which had previously only been awarded to the most senior members of the qa'an's secretariat in China.⁵ Buqa's control over the two arms of the Ilkhān state meant that he relied very little upon Arghun's approval to rule and it was not long before provincial governors refused to adhere to the Ilkhān's *yarliqs* unless they had been co-signed by the Chingsang.⁶ Buqa had established a military dictatorship in which Arghun served as a mere figurehead.

The state headed by Buqa was divided into a series of semi-autonomous amirates over which Arghun had virtually no control. Buqa's allies had been willing to grant him authority over the Ilkhān *ordu* and Persian Iraq, but they were not about to submit themselves completely to his rule. Buqa's main rivals, his brother Uruq, and Tegine Yarghuchi, a senior figure in both Abaqa and Aḥmad's armies, assumed the independent government of Rūm and Arab Iraq under the aegis of their own Hūlegüid puppets.⁷ Khurāsān was also granted to a military governor, Nawrūz b. Arghun Aqa, who ruled in the name of Arghun's infant son, Ghazan.⁸ The creation of these regional powers severely reduced the control of the *ordu* over the outlying provinces and fed the growth of new regional rivalries which would blight the Ilkhān polity after Arghun's death. This trend was most obvious in Arab Iraq, where Buqa's brother, Uruq, governed through the guise of his Chinggisid puppet, Jushkab, and was accused of ruling in the 'fashion of a *pādshāh* [emperor], rather than an amīr'.⁹ Uruq assumed direct control over the revenues of Baghdad and its surrounding countryside, providing nothing to the central *divān*, which remained under the control of his brother, Buqa. He also ignored the envoys sent by Arghun to inquire about the state of his administration in a sign that the Ilkhān's authority

² Mirkhwānd, 345.

³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 563; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 808; Vaṣṣāf, p. 137.

⁴ Qazvinī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 595.

⁵ Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *al-Hawādith al-Jāmi'*, p. 261; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 566; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 812; Qazvinī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 597.

⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 569; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 815; Bar Hebraeus, p. 477.

⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 563; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 808.

⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 594; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 850.

⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 568; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 815.

did not reach as far as Arab Iraq.¹⁰ The extent of Uruq's power was further demonstrated at the Īlkhān *ordu* when three former secretaries, who had worked under Uruq's administration in Baghdad, accused him of embezzlement. Arghun ordered that the secretaries be protected until a trial could be convened, yet all three were murdered by Uruq's agents before being questioned. Arghun was enraged by Uruq's blatant show of defiance, but no punishment was meted out to the unruly *noyan*, who bribed the Īlkhān's courtiers to drop the issue.¹¹

Nor did Arghun hold any influence over the *ordu* in Azerbaijan where Buqa had usurped the Īlkhān's position at the heart of the royal court. Within the *ordu* there was little doubt that Buqa held real power over the state and that Arghun served as a mere figurehead. Stéphanos Orbélian dubbed Buqa the 'prince of princes and the lord of lords', whilst Bar Hebraeus observed that the *noyat*, princes, khatuns, and other courtiers would 'come and submit to him [Buqa], and stand at his gate and beg stipends from him'.¹² These same magnates would only pay court to Arghun if he were in the company of Buqa, as one of his *inaqs* observed: 'when he [Buqa] entered the [Arghun's] *ordu* it could be seen that riders mobbed [the camp], and with his departure they dispersed'.¹³ Arghun's aunt,¹⁴ Abish Khātūn, was confronted with the new order when Buqa summoned her to Tabrīz in 1285. Upon her arrival at the Īlkhān *ordu*, Buqa confined her attendants to the city square and denied her permission to see the Īlkhān. Abish was then brought before Buqa, who sarcastically chastised his chamberlain for having forced her, 'a khātūn of the khān', to be brought before him, a mere 'qaraju (also *qarachū*; common) amīr'. Buqa subsequently had Abish's attendants flogged and tortured until they confessed to murdering one of Buqa's agents in Shīrāz, for which they were ordered to pay reparations of 700,000 dīnārs; a sum which they were still unable to pay over a decade later.¹⁵ By contrast, Arghun's impotence at the Īlkhān *ordu* was revealed by the fact that the sources contain virtually no information on his activity during the period of Buqa's ascendancy, which lasted until 1289. If Arghun wished to wield true power over his father's kingdom he would first have to remove Buqa, his former saviour.

Arghun was enraged by his treatment at the hands of Buqa and the coup leaders. He had been forced to make an alliance of convenience with the rebellious *noyat* to free himself from Aḥmad's grasp, yet he did not agree either with the sentiment of their revolt, or with their objectives. An analysis of Arghun's earlier rebellion against Aḥmad in Khurāsān will demonstrate that he held little sympathy for the plight of the *noyat*, whom he regarded as lowly *qaraju* (commoners). Rather, Arghun believed that the Īlkhānate's revenues, pastures, and people were the hereditary property (*injū*) of the Hülegüid family, in particular the descendants of Abaqa. Arghun believed that he possessed a divine mandate which entitled him to the absolute rule of his ancestral kingdom to the exclusion of all others.

¹⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 568; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 815; Mirkhwānd, p. 357.

¹¹ Bar Hebraeus, p. 478.

¹² Orbélian, p. 240; Bar Hebraeus, p. 477.

¹³ Vaṣṣāf, p. 139.

¹⁴ Abish Khātūn was the Salghūrid atabeg of Fārs and had married Arghun's uncle, Möngke-Temür.

¹⁵ Vaṣṣāf, pp. 129–30.

The *noyat* had little room to exercise any kind of independent power in Arghun's patrimonialist interpretation of the Chinggisid tradition and he deeply resented the way that they had usurped control of his state.

As early as 1283, it was apparent that Arghun's interpretation of Chinggisid authority differed significantly from that of the *noyat* who were challenging Aḥmad Tegüder's rule in Azerbaijan. Arghun's rebellion against his uncle, centred in Khurāsān, also contrasted sharply with those of Qonqortai in Rūm, and the Iraqī *noyat* led by Buqa. These movements both drew upon the *noyat's* sense of betrayal in an attempt to topple Aḥmad's government.¹⁶ Their aims had been fundamentally collegialist in nature. They sought a return to the state which had existed during the reign of Hülegü and Abaqa and to protect the privileges and titles of the *noyat* and princes. By contrast, Arghun's uprising had been based upon a patrimonialist claim to absolute monarchy, which would obliterate the power of the *noyat* as it had existed in the early Īlkhānate.

At the heart of Arghun's claim to rule was the patrimonialist belief that Chinggis Khan's empire remained the hereditary property of his descendants. This argument was previously used by Möngke Qa'an, who claimed that Chinggis Khan's armies, wives, and pastures were the exclusive property of Tolui and his descendants in an attempt to offset the appeal of his Ögödeid rivals.¹⁷ Arghun made virtually identical claims to the ownership of Abaqa's property (*injü*) following his failure to secure the nomination of the *quriltai* in 1282. Shortly after he returned to Khurāsān, Arghun dispatched envoys to Aḥmad's court to inform the new Īlkhān that the throne was his hereditary birthright and that it had in fact been his acquiescence, not the nomination of the *quriltai*, which had secured Aḥmad the Hülegüid crown:

Now that Abaqa has left this world,
For that place of goodly happiness,
His throne went to his beautiful son,
That the world would rejoice through his fortune,
[But] since Arghun has given you [Aḥmad] the kingship,
The great cap [i.e. crown] and the moonlike state,
You should see that your crown and throne are from him,
Not from Ichān Shah [i.e. *Ejen*, Hülegü] the fortunate.¹⁸

This envoy also asserted that the Īlkhānate was Arghun's hereditary property and that, 'Arghun accepted your [Aḥmad's] kingship, [but] he did not leave the inheritance to you' and in return for 'this great favour', Aḥmad should transfer the property of Abaqa to Arghun in Khurāsān. Only when Arghun had received his rightful inheritance, the '*injü*' of Abaqa, would he accept Aḥmad as his khan. Arghun's distinction between the ephemeral title of Īlkhān and the true wealth and authority inherent in the 'property' of Abaqa constituted a declaration of Arghun's intent to challenge Aḥmad's rule.¹⁹

¹⁶ See Chapter 5. ¹⁷ Jackson, 'From *Ulus* to Khanate', p. 37.

¹⁸ Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 93.

¹⁹ Vaṣṣāf, p. 74; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 92; Mīrkhwānd, p. 335.

Arghun's demand for his father's property was nothing less than a masked bid for the throne. Aḥmad was aghast, stating that Arghun had sought 'the world itself' as his inheritance. This assessment, dramatized in Qazvīnī's poetic rendition, was in fact not very far from the truth. The items which Arghun had listed amongst Abaqā's hereditary property included the royal treasury, the land and wealth of the Juvaynīs, Abaqā's *ordu*, the provinces of Arab Iraq, Fārs, and Kirmān, the khatuns and *noyat* of the court, and his original patrimony of Khurāsān, Persian Iraq, and Māzandarān. Arghun did exercise some diplomacy by not including Rūm on his list because this last territory was governed by Qonqortai, whom Arghun still hoped would support his uprising. Yet it is difficult to see what would have been left to Aḥmad had he agreed to Arghun's demands.²⁰

Aḥmad's formal response to Arghun's message was designed to stress his own collegialist claims to authority in opposition to the patrimonialist assertions of Arghun. He rebuffed Arghun's demands in strong language, saying that all property, offices, and salaries were awarded by the *quriltai*, which had nominated him to the throne.²¹ This council had awarded Arghun the government of Khurāsān and Māzandarān alone, and if the young prince 'desired to add other territories to these, he should present himself in a meeting of the council [i.e. *quriltai*],²² and if [the council] accepted his [claims], he [Aḥmad] would not refuse them'.²³ Aḥmad's response not only asserted his own claims to legitimate sovereignty over the Īlkhānate on the basis of the *quriltai*, but it also refuted Arghun's claims to ownership of the realm. According to Aḥmad, the Īlkhānate was the shared possession of the *aqā-nar* and *ini-nar*, who had accompanied Hülegü to Iran, and only they had the right to bestow it upon those they deemed worthy. This initial correspondence between Aḥmad and Arghun gave their conflict an ideological flavour, which distinguished their dispute from the other challenges to Aḥmad's authority. Whereas Qonqortai and Buqa sought to simply replace the ruling Īlkhān, Arghun's claims implied the overthrow of not only Aḥmad, but also the collegialist elite which supported him. The Īlkhān realm was his private property, and he did not seek approval from the *noyat* to rule it.

Arghun's initial campaign for the throne was an utter failure. His appeal was limited to the hereditary soldiers of the Toluid line and his most loyal troops were supplied by the Qaraunas of Arab Iraq and Khurāsān. Command of these units had previously been held by Sali Noyan and, as Aubin and Hirotooshi have pointed out, the leadership of these units remained at the discretion of the descendants of Hülegü.²⁴ When Arghun pushed into Arab Iraq in early 1284 it was primarily to link up with this Qaraunas army, which he entrusted to Taghachar Noyan, his father's former *inaq* (companion). Arghun also obtained the support of a segment

²⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 552; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 790; Vaṣṣāf, p. 74; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, pp. 92 and 98; Mīrkhwānd, p. 335.

²¹ Vaṣṣāf, p. 74; Mīrkhwānd, p. 336.

²² I have quoted here from Vaṣṣāf, who employed the Persian *majlis-i shūr* (council meeting). However, Mīrkhwānd has used the Mongol term *quriltai* in his rendering.

²³ Vaṣṣāf, p. 74; Mīrkhwānd, p. 336.

²⁴ Shimo Hirotooshi, 'The Qaraunas in the Historical Materials of the Ilkhanate', *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, Vol. 35, 1977, p. 178; Aubin, 'L'ethnogenèse de Qaraunas', p. 87.

of the Khurāsānī Qaraunas, led by Nawrūz b. Arghun Aqa.²⁵ Outside of the Qaraunas, Arghun enjoyed the support of his own *inaqs*, who had assisted him in the administration of Khurāsān. This group was led by the charismatic *noyan*, Bolad Temūr, who was responsible for much of the strategy of Arghun's resistance.²⁶ The loyalist base of Arghun's army was supplemented by refugees and opportunists who saw his rebellion as a source of short-term enrichment.²⁷ Arghun's force played an important part in destabilizing Aḥmad's rule, but it was not a strong basis for launching a claim to the throne. Aḥmad quickly crushed the seed of rebellion in Rūm and Arab Iraq and by the spring of 1284 he was ready to move against Arghun with the full force of his army. Deserted by his supporters, Arghun fled to the fortress of Qilāt in Khurāsān, where he was abandoned to Aḥmad's army. With no soldiers to defend him, Arghun surrendered to his rival, who was on the verge of killing him before Buqa snatched him away to become the face of his new regime.²⁸

Initially, Arghun lacked the support to launch an effective challenge against Buqa's power. He quietly endured four years of humiliation whilst the *noyat* ruled the kingdom he had claimed as his hereditary property. This initial weakness drew the criticism of Qazvīnī, who described him as 'simple-minded' and 'easily dominated'; an opinion which seems unwarranted in light of his later success.²⁹ Indeed, Arghun used Buqa's time in power to build up a new base of support against his over-mighty *noyan*. Buqa's strong rule had alienated several leading *noyat* who resented his dominance over the *ordu*. Anger at Buqa's rule was felt most strongly in Rūm, where Buqa's former rival, Tegine, had established a base of opposition against him.³⁰ Another Rūmī *noyan*, Aq-Buqa the son of Elgāi, also shared a personal feud with Buqa, which seems to have stemmed from their contest for precedence over the Jalayir.³¹ Moreover, many senior *noyat* had come to fear that Buqa's dominance of the state threatened their own positions. Former members of Abaqā's court, such as Dolā dai, Taghachar, and Tughan Quhistānī, all slandered Buqa to the Īlkhān and pressed him to take action against the Chingsang.³² Arghun skilfully drew upon this diverse opposition to Buqa's government to make his bid for power.

Arghun's assault on Buqa's position was initially economic, rather than military, and strongly reflected his patrimonialist belief that the Īlkhānate was his hereditary property (*injū*). Vaṣṣāf observed that the catalyst for Buqa's downfall was a seemingly innocuous dispute between Arghun and the Chingsang over the revenue of

²⁵ Hirotoshi, 'The Qaraunas in the Historical Materials', pp. 137–9.

²⁶ Shīrāzī, p. 57; Qazvīnī, *Ẓafarnāma*, p. 93.

²⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 551–4; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 789–92; Vaṣṣāf, pp. 71 and 75.

²⁸ Vaṣṣāf, p. 78; Qazvīnī, *Tārikh-i Guzīdah*, p. 594; Bar Hebraeus, p. 470.

²⁹ Qazvīnī, *Ẓafarnāma*, p. 188.

³⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 558 and 563; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 799 and 808; Vaṣṣāf, p. 82.

³¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 558; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 798.

³² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 568; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 814; Vaṣṣāf, p. 139.

Fārs in 1287.³³ During Arghun's first uprising against Aḥmad he had maintained a strong correspondence with *divān* officials in Shīrāz, the former administrative capital of the Salghūrīd atabegs. Aḥmad's support for the ruling atabeg, Abish Khātūn, had alienated Abaqā's former administrators in the region who desperately sought to reclaim their power by supporting Arghun's resistance.³⁴ One such refugee was the *sayyid*, Fakhr al-Dīn ḥasan, who encouraged Arghun to move against Fārs on the basis that over one quarter of that province had been designated crown land during the reign of the Buwayhid dynasty [also Būyid], and had since been misappropriated by the Salghūrīds. As a member of this distinguished Persian dynasty, the *sayyid* promised to gift the land to Arghun as '*injū*' if he would only reclaim it from the Salghūrīd rulers.³⁵ Arghun did not have the opportunity to move against Fārs before he was imprisoned by Aḥmad, but in the years after Buqa assumed power, Arghun decided to restate his claim to the revenue of that province. Initially, Buqa resisted Arghun's claim, saying that the Īlkhān *divān* already collected the revenues of Fārs and that it, therefore, made little difference whether they were collected into the public (*dālāy*) or the royal (*khāṣṣ*) treasury. But Arghun knew that Buqa held absolute control of the public treasury which he had been using to fund his own control of the state. If the revenue of Fārs were to be channelled into a separate, 'private' (*injū*), treasury then Arghun would have an independent source of revenue through which to buy support for his resistance. He appointed Taghachar Noyan as the new head of the *injū* treasury, which was to be held separately from the *divān* of Buqa, and agents were sent to Fārs to collect not only the taxes for that year, but also the back-taxes for every financial year since the reign of Hülegü. Buqa's deputy in Fārs was then forced to pay no less than 1,500,000 *dīnārs* to Arghun's treasury.³⁶

Arghun's success in Fārs was duplicated in Arab Iraq, where Buqa's brother, Uruq, had established his own power base. Arghun had previously claimed the revenues of Arab Iraq as his *injū* during his uprising against Aḥmad on the basis that Hülegü had conquered this territory from the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate in 1258.³⁷ Thus, the province of Arab Iraq was separated from the rest of the Īlkhānate, which had been conquered prior to Hülegü's arrival, and remained under the purview of the *divān*. The unique status of Arab Iraq was demonstrated by the fact that, unlike Khurāsān and Rūm, Baghdad was never assigned to a Hülegüid governor; instead it remained the property of the ruling Īlkhān and his heirs, who treated it as their winter pasture (*qishlāq*).³⁸ When Buqa fell ill in 1287, Arghun seized the opportunity to dispatch his personal physician, Sa'd al-Dawlah, to 'investigate' the revenues of this royal fief under the protection of Orduqiya Noyan. Sa'd al-Dawlah was a native of Baghdad and was renowned for his expertise in matters concerning the administration and finances of the city. Moreover, as a member of Arghun's household suite,

³³ Vaṣṣāf, p. 137.

³⁴ Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran*, p. 142.

³⁵ Vaṣṣāf, p. 138.

³⁶ Vaṣṣāf, p. 138; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 568; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 815; Khwāndāmīr, p. 129.

³⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 551; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 789; Khwāndāmīr, p. 122.

³⁸ Charles Melville, 'The Itineraries of Sultan Öljeitü, 1304–16', *Iran*, Vol. 28, 1990, p. 57.

he could be trusted to carry out his mission with complete loyalty. When Sa'd's party returned after two months with the tax of Baghdad, Arghun was said to have been so impressed that he immediately awarded him the permanent administration of Arab Iraq's finances.³⁹ Buqa's grip on power was significantly loosened by the loss of two of the realm's largest provinces and their revenues. But it provided Arghun with the resources he needed to retake the realm.

When Buqa finally recovered from his illness he found that the *Īlkhān ordu* had been turned on its head. His most dangerous enemies had attained supremacy over the former coup leaders and many of them had assumed duties which Buqa considered as part of his own jurisdiction. When he appeared at the *ordu* Buqa's rivals were no longer afraid to resist him. His old enemy, Tegine Yarghuchi, publicly abused him in colourful language during a wine party attended by Arghun. Despite Buqa's obvious frustration the *Īlkhān* refused to punish Tegine for his behaviour in a sign that he had broken with Buqa's faction. The Chingsang's frosty reception at the *ordu* pushed him to launch a final bid to reclaim control of the realm. He contacted his brother's Hūlegüid puppet, Jushkab Oghul, and informed him that Arghun had betrayed his kindness and had surrendered the government to evil men. He promised Jushkab the throne if the latter would guarantee Buqa the '*nā'ibāt*'.⁴⁰ But in a sign of how low Buqa's fortunes had sunk, Jushkab betrayed the Chingsang and sent word of his treason to Arghun. The *Īlkhān* dispatched his newly appointed commander of the central army, Qonchaqbal, to arrest Buqa, who was publicly tried and condemned to death. His various extremities were severed and sent to the four corners of the *Īlkhānate* as a warning against any future transgression of Arghun's authority, and the subsequent purge of Buqa's followers was so extreme that in al-Shām it was thought that Arghun was mustering an army to attack the Mamluks.⁴¹ Vaṣṣāf remarked that 'anyone who had even the smallest affiliation with him [Buqa] was captured and punished'.⁴² The brutal nature of the suppression would come to be a feature of Arghun's short reign, in which neither the Hūlegüids nor the *noyat* were safe from his power.

If the *noyat* expected Arghun's reign to resemble that of his father, they were to be bitterly disappointed, as the new *Īlkhān's* government held a much closer resemblance to that of his great-uncle, Möngke. After Buqa's execution, Arghun showed a strong desire to centralize the administration of both his army and his bureaucracy. In doing so, he hoped to increase his own power at the expense of the volatile *noyat*. The most salient feature of the new *Īlkhān's* centralizing campaign was the almost monolithic power afforded to his *inaqs* over the government of the realm. The *inaqs* of Arghun differed markedly from those of his father, Abaqa, insofar as they were dominated, not by Mongol *noyat*, but by the new *ṣāhib dīvān*, Sa'd al-Dawlah.

³⁹ Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *al-Hawādith al-Jāmi'*, pp. 270–2; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 567; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 814; Vaṣṣāf, pp. 141–2; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 178.

⁴⁰ The title of '*niyābāt*', or more accurately the '*niyābāt-i kul*' refers to the representative of the king, who supervised the affairs of his government.

⁴¹ Bar Hebraeus, p. 482.

⁴² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 568–70; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 814–17; Vaṣṣāf, pp. 139–41; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 171.

By 1290 Sa'd had returned to the *ordu* with the second annual instalment of the Iraqī tax revenue and Arghun was so impressed by the size of the returns that he appointed Sa'd to the overall management of his *divān*. To ensure that the *noyat* did not interfere in the *ṣāhib divān*'s work, Arghun named three commanders to serve as his '*nököt*' (personal retainers). Not only were these *nököt* granted the command of their own *tümen*, but they were also appointed to govern the three most important provinces of the realm: Arab Iraq, Fārs, and Azerbaijan. Within these provinces they were expected to enforce the policy of Sa'd al-Dawlah and provide armed support for the *divān* officials. The unprecedented support that Arghun provided to Sa'd al-Dawlah ensured that the *divān* remained free from the influence of the *noyat* and firmly loyal to the Ilkhān.⁴³

Arghun even extended Sa'd al-Dawlah's mandate to include matters pertaining to the *noyat*'s armies. Arghun formalized the supremacy of the *divān* over the *noyat* by declaring that the latter were not to embark on any action 'without [seeking] the opinion and permission' of the *ṣāhib divān*, but that Sa'd al-Dawlah could 'do anything he wanted, any time that he wanted, without [seeking] the counsel of others'.⁴⁴ The subordination of the military to the civil administration seems to have been a deliberate ploy by Arghun who, according to Shabānkārā'i, 'never again trusted even one of the amīrs' after the revolt of Buqa.⁴⁵ The extent of Sa'd al-Dawlah's new-found power was demonstrated by the fact that Tughan Quhistānī, having successfully suppressed a rebellion in Khurāsān, was lashed by the *ṣāhib divān* upon his return to the *ordu* for having wasted too many horses.⁴⁶ Similarly, a Kurdish amīr of Arbil in the Jazira had fled to the mountains of Diyārbakr for fear that Sa'd al-Dawlah's officials intended to investigate his management of the province.⁴⁷ Bar Hebraeus goes on to say that the vizier 'paid no heed [to the *noyat*], and he reduced the taking and giving of their hands, and he treated with contempt the principal amīrs and the directors of general affairs'.⁴⁸ The influence which Sa'd al-Dawlah enjoyed over the military aristocracy of the Ilkhānate was unprecedented, even during the time of Shams al-Dīn Juvaynī. Arghun had reversed the hierarchy of Abaqā's *ordu* by giving the *divān* primacy over the *noyat*.

Arghun gave the *noyat* little opportunity to complain about the growing power of the *divān* because he had deliberately distanced himself from Abaqā's old military aristocracy. Arghun had imposed a strict hierarchy upon his subjects which isolated him from the *noyat*, leaving the *inaqs* as the only group with direct access to his person. At one point, Arghun secluded himself in the *ordu* for over a month, refusing to see anyone outside his leading *inaqs*: Sa'd al-Dawlah, Orduqiya, Qujan, and Joči.⁴⁹ Any business to be discussed with the Ilkhān had to first be submitted to these four *inaqs*, who would then determine whether it was worthy of Arghun's attention.⁵⁰ The influence which their intimate relationship with the Ilkhān

⁴³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 572; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 819–20; Vaṣṣāf, p. 142; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 181; Khwāndāmīr, p. 131.

⁴⁴ Vaṣṣāf, p. 142.

⁴⁵ Shabānkārā'i, p. 266.

⁴⁶ Vaṣṣāf, p. 144.

⁴⁷ Bar Hebraeus, p. 485.

⁴⁸ Bar Hebraeus, p. 490.

⁴⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 574; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 823.

⁵⁰ Vaṣṣāf, p. 142; Khwāndāmīr, p. 129.

afforded them meant that the *inaqs* were often held directly responsible for Arghun's actions. Vaṣṣāf lamented that when Arghun came to the throne he would often pity the animals slaughtered for food, yet under Sa'd al-Dawlah's influence, Arghun would not flinch from spilling the blood of countless rivals.⁵¹ Whether Sa'd can be blamed for Arghun's brutal suppression of Buqa's allies is questionable, given that the purge began prior to his appointment. Yet Vaṣṣāf's accusation does demonstrate the level of intimacy and influence that the *inaqs* enjoyed with the new Īlkhān at the expense of the *noyat*.

The Īlkhān's ascendancy over the *noyat* found expression through a new symbolism which he used to project his authority over his subjects. This symbolism was evident on the coinage that Arghun struck in 1289, shortly after Buqa's deposition. During Buqa's regency the Īlkhān currency had reflected the division of the realm into a series of amirates, each of which minted coins with different designs and weights.⁵² Arghun's new coinage, however, was intended to act as the single currency of the entire Īlkhānate, thereby integrating the regional economies into a single market. The coins were also designed to publicize his victory over the *noyat* by asserting the absolute nature of his power. The obverse of these coins depicted two easily recognizable symbols of patrimonialist authority, a falcon in front of a sun-disc. The falcon had long been regarded as a spiritual messenger of the Mongol folk religion, acting as a mediator between humanity and Eternal Heaven.⁵³ Its use on Arghun's coinage stressed the divine source of the Īlkhān's power, whilst the sun-disc acted as a symbol for the universal nature of Arghun's rule. Möngke had also used the sun as a symbol of his authority, telling the Franciscan missionary William of Rubruck that his power spread to every quarter 'just as the sun spreads its rays in all directions'.⁵⁴ Yet the sun also represented the singular nature of Arghun's authority; just as there was only one sun in the sky, there could only be one ruler on earth.⁵⁵ During Arghun's reign it became common, particularly in the Persian sources, to associate the power of the Īlkhān with the sun. Reflecting on the anarchy following Arghun's death, Qazvīnī remarked that the khan was like the sun and his amīrs were the stars: 'it is not right for the stars to outshine the sun!'⁵⁶ Arghun's new standard of currency brought a strong message that the Īlkhān ruled alone and tolerated no rivals.

Also like Möngke, Arghun, sought to infuse the role of the Īlkhān with new power through an appeal to spiritual authority. The precise nature of Arghun's claim is, however, somewhat ambiguous since both his supporters and detractors have sought to exaggerate specific aspects of his policy. The clearest expression of Arghun's claim to spiritual authority was provided by Vaṣṣāf, who stated that Sa'd

⁵¹ Vaṣṣāf, p. 146.

⁵² For more on Arghun's coinage, see Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran*, pp. 242, 249, 251, 263.

⁵³ Teresa Fitzherbert, 'Religious Diversity Under Ilkhanid Rule c. 1300 as Reflected in the Freer Bal'ami', *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, p. 393; Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran*, p. 263. A similar tradition is also reported in the pre-Islamic Zoroastrian sources: see Abolala Soudavar, *The Aura of Kings: Legitimacy and Divine Sanction in Iranian Kingship*, Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2003, p. 22.

⁵⁴ Rubruck, ed. Jackson, pp. 180 and 250.

⁵⁵ Juvaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, Vol. 3, p. 31.

⁵⁶ Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 197. On the use of sun-discs in Īlkhān iconography, see Soudavar, *The Aura of Kings*.

al-Dawlah had convinced Arghun that 'the prophethood [*nabawat*] had passed from Changiz Khān to him by [right of] inheritance and that if he revealed this message and punished those opposed to his prophethood in the fashion of the Prophet of Islam (who in one day ordered that several people should be beheaded in a ditch) and reward those who accept him, he would create an enduring religion'. Arghun was said to have quickly accepted Sa'd's advice and moved to spread the message of his new-found spiritual power. One of the most controversial aspects of Arghun's policy had been his attempt to force Muslim spiritualists to preach his prophethood to their congregations. Šadr al-Dīn Aḥmad Khālādī, the vizier of Arghun's successor, Geikhatu, claimed that he had been solicited by Sa'd al-Dawlah to provide a written declaration in support of Arghun's 'prophethood' and that a petition had been sent to the leading religious doctors of Khurāsān and Iraq, asking them to preach this doctrine to the communities under their control. Such claims prompted a hysterical reaction from Vaṣṣāf, who believed that Arghun desired nothing less than the complete eradication of Islam. To this end, Arghun had united with the Jewish community of the Hijāz in a conspiracy to conquer Mecca and convert the Ka'ba into an idol-temple, a claim which Boyle has rightly described as 'pure invention'.⁵⁷

Yet if the more fanciful reports regarding Arghun's religious policy are put aside, it can be seen that the new Īlkhān's claim to spiritual authority was an extension of existing practices and beliefs long held within the Mongol Empire. The belief that Chinggis Khan had been a spiritual leader, or prophet, sent to impose Heaven's will on earth, was not new. Grigor of Akanc claimed that Chinggis Khan had received his Great *Jasaq* from angels who had imparted both spiritual and temporal power to him.⁵⁸ Similarly, Kirakos stated that the Mongols believed that Chinggis was the 'Son of God', sent to impose government upon them.⁵⁹ These sources merely exaggerated the popular belief amongst the Mongols that Chinggis Khan's rise had been sanctioned and protected by 'the Power of Eternal Heaven'. This belief had, no doubt, been nurtured by Chinggis Khan himself as he sought to legitimate his rapidly growing power over Inner Asia. As his empire expanded to incorporate the sedentary societies of China and Central Asia the Mongol idea of heavenly mandate melded with the Chinese concept of an emperor being the 'Son of Heaven'.⁶⁰ Belief in the deterministic power of Eternal Heaven over the political sphere of the Mongol Empire was still current during Arghun's reign, and the Īlkhān continued to make reference to the concept in his letter to Philippe le Bel of France as early as 1284.⁶¹ The significance of Arghun's assertion, therefore, lies less in his claim to possess a divine mandate to rule than his assertion that this mandate was

⁵⁷ Vaṣṣāf, p. 145; Mīrkhwānd, p. 352; Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-Khāns', p. 370; Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, p. 373.

⁵⁸ Grigor of Akanc, p. 290. ⁵⁹ Kirakos, p. 235.

⁶⁰ De Rachewiltz, 'Some Remarks on the Ideological Foundations of Chinggis Khan's Empire', p. 29; Saunders, *Muslims and Mongols*, p. 42; Franke, 'From Tribal Chieftain to Universal Emperor and God', p. 18.

⁶¹ Arghun's letter begins: 'By the Power of Eternal Heaven, and through the Fortune of the Qa'an, the Word of Arghun...'; see Antoine Mostaert and F. W. Cleaves, *Les Lettres de 1289 et 1305 des ilkhan Arghun et Oljeitu a Philippe le Bel*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962, p. 18.

transmitted on a hereditary basis. By arguing that he had inherited divine power from his father, Arghun sought to distance himself from the consultative rule of his predecessor, Aḥmad, and assert his right to rule on the basis of the patrimonialist concept of spiritual authority. Heaven had chosen Abaqa's line to rule the Īlkhānate in perpetuity and any claim to the contrary risked the wrath of both the khan and Eternal Heaven.

The later years of Arghun's reign represent a patrimonialist reaction against the growing authority of the *noyat* embodied by Buqa's dominance. Under the influence of his great-uncle Möngke, Arghun had come to think of the Īlkhānate as his personal inheritance. Indeed, Arghun used his claim to the personal ownership of the land and revenues of Arab Iraq and Fārs to undermine the financial support of Buqa's power whilst simultaneously building a foundation for his own future ambitions. Arghun's subsequent reign was characterized by the marginalization of the *noyat*, who surrendered their primacy over the *ordu* to the Īlkhān *divān*. This shift of power towards the Persian bureaucracy permitted Arghun to expand his own influence through a tight fiscal administration in which the role of the military governors was abolished. Arghun justified his increased power on the basis of patrimonialist principles of authority which had first emerged during the reign of Möngke; namely, hereditary kingship, divine-right monarchy, and the ownership of the Mongol Empire by Chinggis Khan's descendants. Arghun's interpretation of these principles would heavily influence the way that his sons Ghazan and Öljeitü came to conceive their own authority.

Arghun's interpretation of Chinggisid authority was highly unpopular amongst the *noyat*, whose control over the revenues and armies of the Īlkhānate had been dramatically curtailed during his reign. Arghun's increasingly independent government of the state even led many of the *noyat* to resist his reforms violently. As early as 1289, the amīr of Khurāsān, Nawrūz b. Arghun Aqa, led a revolt against Arghun's rule, which plunged the eastern provinces of the Īlkhānate into a state of chaos.⁶² Tension between the Īlkhān and his *noyat* was also evident in the royal *ordu*, where the military aristocracy led a violent uprising against Arghun's officials during the final days of his life. In the years that followed Arghun's death, the senior commanders made a vain attempt to return the Īlkhān polity to the collegial state which had existed under Hülegü and Abaqa. Their attempts would, however, prove futile as the emergence of strong regional rivalries prevented them from achieving the political consensus required to sustain a stable government. In the four years following Arghun's death no fewer than three candidates occupied the Īlkhān throne as provincial warlords competed to achieve ascendancy over the *ordu*. This chaos, which might have brought an early end to Mongol rule in Iran, finally subsided when Arghun's son, Ghazan, seized his father's throne and imposed his authority upon the upstart *noyat*.

The collegialist reaction against Arghun's patrimonial style of rule began during the weeks before his death in 1291. For some time, Arghun had been taking potions prescribed by Indian yogis residing at his court in the hope that they would prolong

⁶² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 595; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 851; Vaṣṣāf, p. 141.

his life. But these potions, which contained high quantities of mercury, proved to have quite the opposite effect and the Īlkhān fell fatally ill in December of 1290.⁶³ Power within Arghun's state was of such a personal nature that his temporary incapacity left his supporters at the mercy of the hostile *noyat*. When news of Arghun's illness reached his leading commanders, they seized upon the opportunity to attack his government. Taghachar Noyan, Abaqa's former *inaq* and atabeg (guardian) to Arghun's son, Khitay,⁶⁴ used the celebration of the young prince's birthday to spring a trap on Arghun's chief supporters. He invited the Īlkhān's three senior *noyat*, Orduqiya, Joči, and Qujan, to a feast in Khitay's honour, where they were arrested and executed by Taghachar and his allies. Sa'd al-Dawlah was apprehended by the conspirators only hours later in the suburbs of Tabrīz before being dragged into Taghachar's home and slaughtered. A period of unchecked anarchy then engulfed not only Tabrīz but also the entire Īlkhānate in which *divān* officials, religious minorities, and supporters of Arghun's government were massacred. The hostility which the majority Muslim population of Iran felt towards Sa'd al-Dawlah and his predominantly Jewish staff (Sa'd was himself a Jew) meant that even the native Persian population joined the *noyat* in attacking *divān* workers. Vaṣṣāf describes how, as far afield as Shīrāz, signal fires were lit on the roofs of suburban houses to alert the populace to the uprising and encourage them to rebel against Arghun's agents. Arghun himself died only days after Sa'd al-Dawlah's murder and some sources claimed that the Īlkhān had been poisoned by one of his concubines at the behest of senior *noyat*, although few details are known about the accusation and whom it might have implicated.⁶⁵ The fact that Arghun's death coincided with the uprising of Taghachar and his allies would point to the latter as the most likely instigator of an assassination plot. But since none of the official histories composed during the reign of Arghun's sons explicitly states that he was murdered, we can only speculate as to Taghachar's involvement. Vague rumours that the Īlkhān had been murdered by his *noyat* may simply reflect the hostility of the military aristocracy towards Arghun and his reforms at the time of his death.

The destruction of Arghun's patrimonialist state exposed regional rivalries amongst the *noyat*, which precluded them from uniting behind a single Hūlegüid candidate. Previously, the death of an Īlkhān had been followed by a gathering of the leading *noyat* in the *ordu* of Marāghah to discuss the succession. But in the

⁶³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 574; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 823; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 188.

⁶⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn refers to Khitay as Arghun's fourth son (Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 562; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 824), but Bar Hebraeus describes him as 'Baidu's handsome son' and states that he was held as a hostage at Geikhatu's *ordu* (Bar Hebraeus, p. 495). Bar Hebraeus seems to have confused Baidu's eldest son, Qipchaq, who was a hostage at Geikhatu's court, with Taghachar's ward since both Rashīd al-Dīn and Qazvīnī state that Qipchaq, not Khitay, was jailed shortly before Geikhatu's deposition. Khitay is not mentioned after Ghazan took power in 1295 and it is likely that he was murdered shortly after Taghachar's execution in 1297.

⁶⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 575; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 824; Orbélian, p. 259; *Histoire de la Géorgie*, p. 608. An alternate reading is provided by the Mamluk sources, alleging that Arghun was murdered by his vizier, Sa'd al-Dawlah. This theory seems highly unlikely given Sa'd's complete dependence upon Arghun. For the murder of Arghun by Sa'd, see al-Nuwayrī, p. 274; Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 8, p. 322; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, p. 284; al-Aynī, Vol. 7, p. 105.

weeks after Arghun's death the *noyat* gathered in two separate camps on the basis of their affiliation to regional power blocks.⁶⁶ The first block was established at the *ordu* of Arghun's brother, Geikhatu, who had been appointed as the nominal viceroy of Rûm during the former Īlkhân's reign.⁶⁷ Geikhatu's faction was led by the *noyan* Aq-Buqa, the son of Elgâi, who had acted as the military governor of Rûm since the reign of Aḥmad Tegüder.⁶⁸ Geikhatu was also supported heavily by Arghun's widows, who are mentioned physically moving to the prince's court in Anatolia in order to show their support for his candidacy. Other members of Geikhatu's faction included Tegine Yarghuchi and Sumaghar Noyan, both of whom had been appointed to positions in Rûm.⁶⁹

Aq-Buqa's Rûmî faction was opposed by an equally powerful Iraqî faction, which advocated the appointment of Arghun's cousin, Baidu b. Taraqai. Baidu was a member of the party of princes and khatuns, which had arrived in Iran during the reign of Abaqa in 1269.⁷⁰ He had subsequently remained on the periphery of the Īlkhân polity and Rashîd al-Dîn stated that the rebels favoured his candidacy precisely because he had never commanded an army and could be easily dominated by the *noyat*. Baidu's support consisted primarily of those *noyat* who had been residing in Azerbaijan and Persian Iraq at the time of Arghun's death, such as Taghachar Noyan, Tughan Qūhistānî, Qonchaqbal son of Abatay Noyan, the commander of the central army, and Tūkel, the son of Yisūbuqa Küregen and commander of the southern Caucasus.⁷¹ These *noyat* had initially been sympathetic to the appointment of Geikhatu, but had retracted their support when Taghachar pointed out that if Geikhatu was successful he would almost certainly reward the Rûmî *noyat* with offices and stipends at the expense of the Iraqî leaders. Regretting their former choice, the Iraqî *noyat* simultaneously sped envoys to Geikhatu to discourage him from coming to Ārrân and to summon Baidu to the *ordu*. Their plan was, however, undone when Baidu, living up to his reputation for cowardice and indecision, refused to travel to the *ordu*. He had received word of Geikhatu's impending arrival and, fearing a confrontation, responded to the Iraqî *noyat's* summons by saying that Geikhatu was the more worthy candidate. His refusal convinced many undecided commanders to support Geikhatu's nomination and the Iraqî cause soon became hopeless. Those who had advocated Baidu's nomination dispersed: Tughan Qūhistānî moved towards Khurāsān via Rayy, Tūkel fled to his amirate in Georgia, and Qonchaqbal moved to Ārrân, where he hoped to throw himself on the mercy of the new Īlkhân. For a short time it seemed that the Rûmî faction had won complete control of Iran.⁷²

Yet Geikhatu failed to achieve effective control of the Īlkhānate, despite the early collapse of his opponent's campaign in Iraq. Immediately after assuming the throne,

⁶⁶ Rashîd al-Dîn, ed. Thackston, p. 576; Rashîd al-Dîn, ed. Karīmî, p. 825; Vaṣṣāf, p. 157; Orbélian, p. 259.

⁶⁷ Rashîd al-Dîn, ed. Thackston, p. 563; Rashîd al-Dîn, ed. Karīmî, p. 808; Aqsarāyî, p. 145.

⁶⁸ Rashîd al-Dîn, ed. Thackston, p. 550; Rashîd al-Dîn, ed. Karīmî, p. 788.

⁶⁹ Rashîd al-Dîn, ed. Thackston, p. 576; Rashîd al-Dîn, ed. Karīmî, p. 825.

⁷⁰ Rashîd al-Dîn, ed. Thackston, p. 519; Rashîd al-Dîn, ed. Karīmî, p. 745; also see Chapter 5.

⁷¹ Rashîd al-Dîn, *Shu'ab-i Panjgānah*, f. 144.

⁷² Rashîd al-Dîn, ed. Thackston, p. 580; Rashîd al-Dîn, ed. Karīmî, p. 830; Vaṣṣāf, p. 158.

Geikhatu had been forced to contend with the rebellion of two native princelings, Atabeg Yüsufshāh of Yazd and Atabeg Afrāsiyāb of Greater Luristan. The latter rebellion was by far the more serious, as Afrāsiyāb's armies had already succeeded in capturing the major city of Iṣfahān before they were defeated on the road to Azerbaijan. These two rebellions hint at the weakened state of Īlkhān power at the time of Geikhatu's accession. Indeed, Vaṣṣāf argued that Afrāsiyāb's uprising had been inspired by the belief that the age of Mongol rule was coming to an end and that a new Muslim king would rise to dominate Iran.⁷³ Geikhatu also had minimal influence over the eastern half of his realm, where the rebellion of Nawrūz had temporarily succeeded in pushing Arghun's armies out of Khurāsān.⁷⁴ Geikhatu's lack of appeal outside of Rūm meant that he ruled over a truncated realm at the behest of regional warlords. These political problems were compounded by the fact that Geikhatu assumed the throne at the peak of an economic crisis caused by a recession in trade with India, years of severe drought, and a horse plague which decimated the herds of the propertied nomadic elite.⁷⁵ These crises led to a serious decline in state revenue, which Geikhatu sought to overcome in 1294 by introducing a new paper currency, known as the *chau*. The currency seems to have only been minted in the administrative capital of Tabriz, where it was rejected by the local population as a medium of exchange.⁷⁶ Unlike the paper currency introduced by Qubilai in China, the *chau* was not backed by gold reserves and so Persian merchants simply did not trust its value enough to trade with it. Rather, they boarded up their shops and hoarded their goods, which were occasionally sold on the black market for the old metal currency.⁷⁷ The subsequent freeze in trade only exacerbated the financial crises, causing serious damage to the Īlkhān's reputation in the process. Geikhatu's lack of influence over the native princelings and the difficulties arising from the economic crisis contributed to his inability to appease the Iraqi *noyat* who had contested his appointment.

Geikhatu's failure to reconcile the regional rivalries amongst his *noyat* significantly weakened his authority. As early as 1291, Geikhatu suffered a challenge to his rule from senior commanders in Iraq. Shortly after his arrival in Ārrān, Geikhatu took the unexpected step of returning to Rūm since news had arrived that the Qaraman Turkmen had led a revolt against his governor in Cilicia.⁷⁸ It is unlikely that Geikhatu's presence was required to suppress the revolt and several sources argue that the new Īlkhān simply felt homesick for his former pastures and decided to elope with a group of his favourites.⁷⁹ It was not until 1292 that Geikhatu returned to resume the responsibilities of government, during which time Taghachar had already tried to replace him with a rival Hülegüid prince, Anbarji Oghul. Taghachar's plan

⁷³ Vaṣṣāf, pp. 150–1.

⁷⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 603; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 860.

⁷⁵ A. P. Martinez, 'Some notes on the Īl-Xānid army', *Archivum Eurasiae medii aevi*, No. 6, 1986–8, pp. 197 and 210; Aigle, *Le Fārs sous la domination mongole*, p. 145; Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 50.

⁷⁶ Henry H. Howorth, *History of the Mongols from the 9th to the 19th Century*, Vols 1 and 3, New York: B. Franklin, 1964, p. 370; Aigle, *Le Fārs sous la domination mongole*, p. 145.

⁷⁷ Vaṣṣāf, p. 166.

⁷⁸ Aqṣarāyī, p. 170; Vaṣṣāf, p. 158.

⁷⁹ Bar Hebraeus, p. 491; Aqṣarāyī, p. 170.

backfired, yet again, when the prince refused to acquiesce in his scheme and he was soon apprehended by Shiktur Aqa, who imprisoned him until Geikhatu's return.⁸⁰ Despite Taghachar's obvious guilt and the danger he posed to Geikhatu's regime, the Īlkhān refused to hand out any significant punishment to the unruly commander. Even though Vaṣṣāf states that he was temporarily deprived of the command of his armies, he is later mentioned as one of Geikhatu's senior commanders and it appears that the Īlkhān simply lacked the support to remove such a powerful member of the Iraqī faction.⁸¹

Regional tension remained high following Taghachar's unsuccessful uprising and ultimately led to Geikhatu's downfall. The centre of Iraqī opposition was situated in Baghdad, where Baidu Oghul had established himself as the leading rival to Geikhatu's throne. Soon after Geikhatu's return to Ārrān, Baidu had travelled to Tabrīz to join a celebratory feast in honour of the new Īlkhān. Geikhatu was well aware that Baidu had been his main rival to the throne and the Īlkhān may have sought to pursue their grudge during the celebration. As the party dragged on and those in attendance grew increasingly drunk, the pair began to abuse each other in vile language. When Baidu dared to curse the Īlkhān before the court, Geikhatu ordered his arrest and execution. Once again, however, the Īlkhān was unable to impose his will on the *noyat*, who refused to carry out Baidu's execution. Indeed, Geikhatu was later persuaded to release Baidu once he had recovered his sobriety. Baidu apologized to Geikhatu for his poor behaviour and left his son, Kipchaq, as a hostage at the *ordu* before returning to his patrimony in the Jazira. Yet Baidu feared further repercussions following his public dispute with the Īlkhān, and when Geikhatu chastised him for failing to apprehend Bedouin bandits in Anbar and for extorting money from the population of Iraq, he was easily convinced by the Iraqī *noyat* to join their opposition.⁸² The conspirators agreed to depose Geikhatu early in 1295 and they announced their rebellion by murdering the Īlkhān *basqaq* (military governor) of Baghdad.⁸³

The regional divisions within Geikhatu's *ordu* seem to have limited his response to Baidu's revolt. He had received news that several leading *noyat*, including Qonchaqbal and Dolādai, had made an alliance with Baidu and planned to betray him at the earliest opportunity. Geikhatu ordered their arrest but refused to have them executed or to pursue a more rigorous purge of Baidu's supporters because Taghachar Noyan had insisted on them being tried first. The Īlkhān had ordered Taghachar to take his forces to join the attack on Baidu's army in Hamadān and he was heavily reliant on the latter's Iraqī troops to resist the rebel force. Yet Taghachar had also made a secret pact with Baidu and he turned his forces against Aq-Buqa and the Rūmī loyalists when the main rebel army was sighted. Aq-Buqa and his army were forced to flee back to the *ordu*, where they informed Geikhatu of the hopelessness of their situation. Geikhatu knew that his hold on Persian Iraq was

⁸⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 581–2; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 832; Vaṣṣāf, p. 159.

⁸¹ Vaṣṣāf, pp. 158 and 159.

⁸² al-Dhahabī, Vol. 52, p. 225; Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *al-Hawāḍith al-Jāmi'*, p. 286.

⁸³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 585; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 836; Vaṣṣāf, p. 168; Bar Hebraeus, pp. 494 and 498; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 211.

untenable and he immediately set out for his former patrimony of Rūm in the hope that his partisans would rally to his banner and beat back the rebel onslaught. Yet he was intercepted in Pilsavār on the road between Ārrān and Erzerūm by Tükel Noyan's Iraqī contingent from Georgia. His captors executed Geikhātu before Baidu's arrival in Azerbaijan.⁸⁴

The Iraqī rebels were quick to justify their deposition of Geikhātu by referring to the collegialist themes of the *jasaq* and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan. Shortly after Geikhātu's execution, the rebel *noyat* seized Tabrīz and penned an edict announcing their action to the realm.⁸⁵ This edict, which reached Ghazan in Khurāsān, was widely reported and interpreted by the sources discussing Geikhātu's deposition. These sources differ slightly in their recounting of the *noyat's* edict, but they are unanimous in the essential message that the rebels wished to convey, namely, that Geikhātu had transgressed the *jasaq* and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan and had been removed by the *aqā-nar* in a legitimate expression of collegial authority. Vaṣṣāf reported that the edict to Ghazan justified the rebellion in these terms: 'because Gaykhatū Khān deviated from the manner of rule and changed the *yasa* of Chinggis Khan, we removed him with the help of the younger and older brothers and *khawātīn* and amīrs'.⁸⁶ Bar Hebraeus expanded upon Vaṣṣāf's claim by adding details of Geikhātu's misdeeds:

Kaijātū [Geikhātu] hath departed from the path of the Mongols, and hath despised our father Chingīz Khān. And by his reprehensible and riotous life and his unmeasured liberality he hath wasted the treasures of the kingdom. His care is only for the lustful amusements of the world, and not for the government of the kingdom in which we live. Therefore the nobles, and the sons, and the daughters, and the wives, and the brides [or daughters-in-law] have agreed together to cast him out of the way, for his species is useless to the kingdom!⁸⁷

Bar Hebraeus' rendering of the *noyat's* letter to Ghazan stresses the 'lustful' and 'liberal' behaviour of Geikhātu in an attempt to link his transgression of the *jasaq* to the Īlkhān's deeper moral corruption. This theme was repeated by several other authors, who went so far as to accuse Geikhātu of having inappropriate relations with the young boys of the *ordu*.⁸⁸ It is no coincidence that accusations of sexual perversion were also levelled at Aḥmad Tegüder, another Īlkhān to have been deposed because of his disregard for the *jasaq*.⁸⁹ The collegialists regarded this corruption as a terrible example of the excesses which could arise when the laws and traditions of Chinggis Khan were permitted to lapse.

⁸⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 586; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 837; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, pp. 219–23; Vaṣṣāf, pp. 168–9.

⁸⁵ Vaṣṣāf, p. 172; Bar Hebraeus, p. 498; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 614; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 886; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 227.

⁸⁶ Vaṣṣāf, p. 172.

⁸⁷ Bar Hebraeus, p. 498.

⁸⁸ Vaṣṣāf, p. 161; Abū'l Fidā, p. 24; also see Bar Hebraeus, p. 494; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 216; Orbélian, p. 260; Khwāndāmīr, p. 136; al-Nuwayrī, p. 274; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, p. 306.

⁸⁹ al-Nuwayrī, p. 272. These allegations were first identified in Reuven Amitai, 'al-Nuwayrī as a Historian of the Mongols', *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950–1800)*, ed. H. Kennedy, Leiden: Brill, 2001, p. 35.

The *noyat's* edict to Ghazan was also notable for the stress it placed upon the theme of consultative government. According to Rashīd al-Dīn's transcript of the edict, Baidu claimed that:

When these events overtook Gaykhātū Khān and the Fortunate Prince [Ghazan] was far from the throne of government and chaos and trouble had befallen the *ulus*, the *āqā* and *inī* and *khawātīn* and *'umarā* together raised me [Baidu] to the khanate.⁹⁰

The cooperative manner in which Baidu was appointed was reiterated to Ghazan's envoys in a far less cordial manner by Ildar Yarghuchi, one of the coup leaders, when they visited Marāghah to condemn the rebellion: 'we, the *āqā* and *inī* raised Bāydū up to the throne together, and if any are discontent it will lead to conflict'.⁹¹ The stress which the rebels placed upon the theme of collegial action invited comparisons to the *quriltai* process, through which the *āqa* and *inī* would meet to decide matters relating to the succession. In doing so, the Iraqī rebels sought to draw upon the themes of collegial authority to justify their action.

The passive role of the new Īlkhān during Geikhatu's deposition and his own appointment was confirmed by external observers, who claimed that the Iraqī *noyat* were the true power behind the throne. The amir of Khurāsān, Nawrūz b. Arghun Aqa, informed Ghazan that the *noyat* had appointed Baidu to rule because he 'is a prince of weak mind in whose character there is neither wisdom nor confidence [nor] is there greatness or majesty in his being. He will not transgress against the order of the *'umarā* or their interests [and] they have always sought his enthronement'.⁹² Mar Yahballaha III affirmed this statement, saying that 'this unhappy prince only accepted the kingdom through fear for his life' because the *noyat* 'did not cease from the quarrels which they had set afoot'.⁹³ Vaṣṣāf also claimed that Baidu lived in fear of his *noyat* and that it had been this fear, not the arrival of Geikhatu, which had prevented him from seizing the throne in 1291.⁹⁴ There was very little confusion amongst Baidu's enemies as to the *noyat* being the true rulers of Iran during his short reign.

Several sources written during the rule of Baidu's fierce rival, Ghazan, condemned the *noyat's* interference in the business of government, yet the rebel leaders themselves regarded Baidu's rule as the restoration of true Chinggisid government.⁹⁵ The rebels believed that a strong military aristocracy was an essential pillar of Mongol rule. This belief was reflected in the reappointment of military governors to rule the provinces of the Īlkhānate. Vaṣṣāf claims that the designation of military governors followed soon after Baidu's coronation, when 'in the fashion of Abāqā Khān' the kingdom was 'divided into several provinces and each one of the amirs was sent to one of these provinces [...] and they were independent in every

⁹⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 614; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 886.

⁹¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 614; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 886.

⁹² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 885; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, p. 59.

⁹³ *The Monks of Kublai Khan*, p. 208. ⁹⁴ Vaṣṣāf, p. 157.

⁹⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 614; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 885; Banākati, p. 451; Vaṣṣāf, p. 193; Mirkhwānd, p. 380.

respect'.⁹⁶ Taghachar Noyan was appointed the government of Rūm and Diyārbakr, Persian Iraq and Luristan were granted to Dolā dai Noyan, Qonchaqbal was given Shīrāz and Shabānkāra, whilst Tūkel was dispatched to his old patrimony of Georgia.⁹⁷ Mīrkhwānd provides slightly deeper analysis of these appointments, saying that:

The conflicting ideas and the changing of the nuyīns' [opinion] towards Gaykhātū was caused by the fact that they had been prevented from appropriating and inspecting the wealth and property [of the realm], and since during the time of Abāqā Khān each territory had been placed under the protection of one of his majesty's companions, revenue collection and the rule of the regions was ordered and was protected from the stuff of calamity and the armies were obedient and loyal, and reflecting on this [contrast] he [Baidu] granted Diyārbakr and Rūm and their territories and provinces to Taghāchār Nūyīn and the *tūmens*⁹⁸ of Persian Iraq to Tūladāy [i.e. Dolā dai] and he placed Qunchāqbāl as the governor of Shabānkāra.⁹⁹

Mīrkhwānd's account gives a far more lucid impression of the *noyat's* attitude towards Chinggisid authority and their own role within the Īlkhān polity. Geikhatu had curtailed their control of the revenues and offices of the Empire and had thereby provoked their rebellion. Yet during Abaqā's reign, which had been a time of stability and strength in the Īlkhānate, the *noyat* had been granted a free hand to rule the provinces. The *noyat's* message was clear: the health of the Īlkhān realm rested upon the relative strength of the military aristocracy. It is tempting to assume that the rebels' denunciation of Geikhatu may have been targeted in equal measure at Arghun's reign before Ghazan's historians edited the accounts.

Whilst the *noyat* of Rūm and Iraq attacked Arghun's legacy in the west of the Īlkhānate, a different kind of challenge was mounted against his authority in Khurāsān, where the military governor, Nawrūz Aqa, sought to seize independent control of the province. Nawrūz had been assigned to the court of Arghun's son, Ghazan, in 1284 after the latter was appointed viceroy of Khurāsān. Yet Ghazan was still only a boy of fourteen years and true power seems to have resided with Nawrūz, whose father, Arghun Aqa, had governed Khurāsān since the reign of Töregene Khatun (1241–6). Nawrūz was named Ghazan's atabeg and was charged with 'striving in matters of the army and the amirate' upon which basis he assumed undisputed control over Khurāsān until Buqa's execution in 1289.¹⁰⁰ In the months after Buqa's death Arghun sought to purge the realm of the Chingsang's former allies and to impose his control over the previously autonomous provinces of the Īlkhānate.¹⁰¹ These goals posed a direct threat to Nawrūz, who ruled Khurāsān as a semi-independent amirate and had been a close personal friend of Buqa Chingsang.¹⁰² Conflict between Arghun and Nawrūz was inevitable and when the Īlkhān dispatched an army eastward to restore central control over

⁹⁶ Vaṣṣāf, p. 172.

⁹⁷ Vaṣṣāf, p. 172.

⁹⁸ In this instance the term *tūmen* is used to designate administrative districts based upon census figures which divided the conquered population into blocks capable of sustaining a unit of soldiers.

⁹⁹ Mīrkhwānd, p. 376.

¹⁰⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 594; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 850; al-Nuwayrī, p. 273.

¹⁰¹ Vaṣṣāf, p. 141.

¹⁰² Vaṣṣāf, p. 190.

Khurāsān, Nawrūz led a surprise attack against both the Īlkhān army and his former ward, Ghazan.¹⁰³ The Īlkhān forces suffered a heavy defeat in which their senior commander, Tegine Yarghuchi, was captured and Ghazan was forced to flee to Māzandarān.¹⁰⁴ This initial confrontation was the beginning of a five year war for ascendancy over Khurāsān, during which time Nawrūz successfully resisted the attempts of the Īlkhān army to restore control over its eastern border and Ghazan was finally forced to make peace with Nawrūz in 1294.¹⁰⁵

Nawrūz's rebellion represented a new ideological assault against Arghun's brand of patrimonial authority because, unlike the Iraqī *noyat*, Nawrūz based his claim to power upon Islamic, and not Chinggisid, political traditions. As an early convert to the religion of his Persian subjects, Nawrūz announced himself to be the 'Defender of the Faith', protecting the Muslim community of Khurāsān against the heathen Mongols of the Īlkhān *ordu*. Despite the fact that Nawrūz continued to acknowledge the enduring importance of Mongol traditions of authority he refused to subordinate himself to a Chinggisid ruler. Nawrūz proclaimed his rebellion in the name of an Ögöeid prince, Ürüṅ Temür, to rally support from amongst the nomadic military elite. Yet his claims to rule the region were made on the basis of Islamic rather than simply Chinggisid principles. Nawrūz donned the mantle of a champion of the Faith, promising to both defend and 'spread Islam' in Khurāsān. In aid of this mission, he announced his intention to launch a holy war against the heathen armies of the Chaghadaids and the Īlkhānate, promising to expel them from the region.¹⁰⁶ Whatever power Ürüṅ Temür retained was subordinated to this broader religious mission and he was made to convert to Islam shortly after his marriage to one of Nawrūz's daughters.¹⁰⁷ Nawrūz staked his claim to authority upon a combined Islamic–Chinggisid symbolism to ensure that Ürüṅ Temür would hold a much smaller share in the rule of their state.

The extent to which Nawrūz came to dominate his Chinggisid ally was demonstrated by a *yarliq*, proclaimed in the name of Ürüṅ Temür, but containing the prefatory formula of 'Nawrūz, *sözinden*...' ('Nawrūz says that...').¹⁰⁸ The fact that the words of an amīr had come to replace those of a Chinggisid prince on a *yarliq* was a dramatic innovation. It reflected a new type of political relationship in which religion served as an alternative source of political legitimacy to simple Chinggisid descent. Indeed, the pervasive dominance of Nawrūz proved too much for Ürüṅ Temür to bear and he fled from his ally some time in 1294, claiming that he feared Nawrūz would soon kill him and seize absolute power for himself.¹⁰⁹ His desertion robbed Nawrūz of an important source of legitimacy amongst the Turko-Mongol

¹⁰³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 595; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 852; Vaṣṣāf, p. 190.

¹⁰⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 595; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 852.

¹⁰⁵ The following discussion of Nawrūz's rebellion is based upon an earlier paper, Michael Hope, 'The Nawrūz King: The Rebellion of Amir Nawrūz in Khurāsān (688–694/1289–1294) and its implications for the Ilkhān Polity at the end of the Thirteenth Century', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 78, No. 3, Oct. 2015, pp. 451–73.

¹⁰⁶ Vaṣṣāf, p. 192.

¹⁰⁷ Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of an Independent Mongol State*, p. 58; Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 56.

¹⁰⁸ Vaṣṣāf, p. 192.

¹⁰⁹ Vaṣṣāf, p. 192; Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 56.

military elite and forced him to search for a new ally amongst the *altan uruq*. He did not have to look far, since circumstances at the Īlkhān *ordu* would soon force Ghazan to accept a rapprochement with his former protector.

Ghazan's position had become untenable in the time since the outbreak of Nawrūz's rebellion in 1289. His failure to establish working alliances with the towns of Khurāsān and Māzandarān meant that he was unable to provision his armies. These soldiers led a steady stream of defections to join Nawrūz, severely undermining Ghazan's strength. Nawrūz commanded strong support amongst the Qaraunas of Khurāsān, the majority of whom abandoned Ghazan as early as 1290. Other senior Khurāsānī *noyat*, fearful that their pastures, families and animals had been left to the mercy of Nawrūz's army, began to desert Ghazan shortly afterwards.¹¹⁰ Included amongst this group were some of Ghazan's most senior commanders, such as Uladu, Ara-Temür, and Uighurtay-Ghazan. The significance of these losses began to show after 1291 when Arghun died, thereby removing the possibility of reinforcements being sent from Azerbaijan. The young prince was doubly unlucky insofar as the new Īlkhān, Geikhatu, nurtured a boyhood rivalry with Ghazan and refused to respond to his appeals for assistance until 1293, when an army was briefly sent to Māzandarān. These forces were used to launch a short foray into Khurāsān, but swiftly retired when Nawrūz emerged to confront them.¹¹¹ Ghazan remained pinned down in Jājarm, to the west of Khurāsān, with little hope of advancing his position.

It was at this point that Nawrūz spied an opportunity for rapprochement with Ghazan. In 1294 Nawrūz was hard pressed by his campaign against the Chaghadaids who had fought him to a standstill.¹¹² An alliance with Ghazan would not only augment the number of his soldiers but also provide some much needed legitimacy to his regime after Ürüng Temür's departure. For his part, Ghazan had very few alternatives. He could either remain in Māzandarān whilst his support atrophied, or accept an alliance with his former protector in the hope of regaining a modicum of control over his old patrimony. It was agreed that the two sides should meet in November 1294 on the meadows of Rādkān, north of modern-day Mashhad, where Nawrūz had established his winter camp. The two sides agreed to put the past behind them and continued to maintain amicable relations until news of Geikhatu's death reached Khurāsān in 1295.

Ghazan was slow to respond to the news of Geikhatu's death. Baidu had fed the young prince a stream of misinformation designed to delay his anticipated march on the *ordu* in Azerbaijan. Yet the mood at Ghazan's court changed markedly after he received news that Baidu had seized power in a coup, supported by the Iraqī *noyat*, and that they had no intention of surrendering the throne. The prince was outraged. He railed against Baidu in a message condemning the latter's treachery, but his indignation was simply shrugged off by the Iraqī *noyat*, who continued to

¹¹⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 598–9; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 854; p. 29; Aubin, 'L'ethnogenèse de Qaraunas', p. 88.

¹¹¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 603–4; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 859–66; Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 55.

¹¹² Vassāf, p. 192; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 607; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 878.

profess their right to both depose and nominate the Īlkhān ruler. With a mixture of shock and perplexity, Ghazan summoned a council of his leading commanders to discuss their next move.¹¹³ Under strong prompting from Nawrūz, Ghazan and his *nököt* decided to march on Azerbaijan in the hope that they would be able to overwhelm Baidu's fledgling government.¹¹⁴ It initially appeared that this strategy would bear fruit when Ghazan met the vanguard of Baidu's army, commanded by Ildar Oghul, outside the town of Qazvīn. The latter's army represented only a fraction of the Iraqī force and was easily defeated by Ghazan, who gained some much needed confidence from the victory. Yet Ildar was soon followed by the main body of Baidu's army and when it became apparent that neither side possessed a numerical supremacy, Ghazan decided to fall back on Khurāsān.

Ghazan quickly realized that any attempt to win the throne from Baidu would hinge upon Nawrūz's support. In the event that Baidu's armies pursued him into Khurāsān, Ghazan would have to rely upon the latter's armies and supply networks to defend his position. Nawrūz was aware of his value to Ghazan and made it clear that his support came with conditions. Presenting himself to Ghazan in Māzandarān, Nawrūz told the prince that 'if the *Pādshāh* [Ghazan] becomes a Muslim, at once the Muslims will pray for and praise [his] fortune and count assistance and aid [to him] as incumbent [upon them]'.¹¹⁵ His appeal for Ghazan to adopt the Faith was much more than an innocent piece of advice. Nawrūz was giving Ghazan a clear choice between accepting a shared authority, under Nawrūz's spiritual primacy, or defeat. This ultimatum was presented in far more explicit language by Vaṣṣāf, who had Nawrūz promise that, 'if the Prince would accept Islam, I will remove Baidu and seat the Prince upon the imperial throne'.¹¹⁶ Fearing the collapse of his enterprise Ghazan accepted, although he pragmatically informed his upstart commander that he would only agree to convert to Islam if Nawrūz's god were to 'free him from this fearful peril', in other words, to defeat Baidu.¹¹⁷ Irrespective of Ghazan's later understanding of Islam, his initial conversion was a pragmatic response to his precarious political position.

His proselytizing work complete, Nawrūz sought to place his new disciple on the throne. He set out from Fīrūzkūh with a modest army of 4,000 soldiers in the direction of Azerbaijan. As he entered Qazvīn, Nawrūz spread the word that he was expecting 120,000 soldiers to reinforce him from Khurāsān. This boast seems to have been given credence by Baidu's loyal supporters, who remembered Nawrūz's former alliance with Ürüng Temür and scattered before his army's arrival at Tabrīz. The Īlkhān's position was further weakened by the prearranged defection of the commanders loyal to Taghachar, who believed that they would command even greater power under Ghazan's leadership. With his army evaporating before his

¹¹³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 613–14; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 884–7.

¹¹⁴ Bar Hebraeus, p. 501; Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 57; Āshtiyānī, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl*, p. 266.

¹¹⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 896; Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Hamadānī, *Geschichte Gāzān-Ḥān's aus dem Tārīḥ-i-Mubārak-i-Gāzānī*, ed. Karl Jahn, London: Luzac, 1940, p. 71; Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns', p. 378.

¹¹⁶ Vaṣṣāf, pp. 192 and 193.

¹¹⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 896; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, p. 72; Banākātī, p. 453.

eyes, Baidu had no other choice than to flee north in the hope of receiving sanctuary from Nawrūz's enemy, Tükel Noyan. In his absence Taghachar combined his forces with those of Nawrūz and the pair entered Tabrīz in triumph before speeding north to apprehend Baidu. The Īlkhān was betrayed to Nawrūz by members of his own household and was put to death shortly before Ghazan's coronation.¹¹⁸

Ghazan moved to the town of Tabrīz shortly after Baidu's flight from Azerbaijan and was given a warm reception by the townspeople.¹¹⁹ It was here on 22 October 1295 in the presence of the town's senior *quḍāt* and *ʿulamā* that Ghazan was crowned.¹²⁰ Yet it was immediately apparent that Ghazan had acceded to a shared authority. His coronation, much like that of his father, was dominated by his *noyat*. Shortly after taking the throne, Ghazan named Nawrūz as the 'representative' (*nāʾib*) of the Īlkhān, with supreme control over both the civil and military administration of the realm.¹²¹ Ghazan removed any doubt as to the extent of Nawrūz's power by confirmed that he had entrusted all the territory from the Oxus River to al-Shām to the latter's control.¹²²

To some extent, Nawrūz had succeeded to the office and powers previously held by his former allies, Buqa Chingsang and Taghachar Noyan, and much of his first two years in power was spent consolidating his hold over the *divān* and the Īlkhān *ordu*.¹²³ His first order was to install his own agents in every town and city throughout the realm to assert his control over the tax system.¹²⁴ He would not tolerate any rival to his position and when Ghazan's appointee to the *divān*, Ṣadr al-Dīn, sought to impose his own influence over the bureaucratic staff of the realm, Nawrūz overruled the Īlkhān and had him removed from office.¹²⁵ The ruler of Kirmān, Sultan Muẓaffar al-Dīn Muḥammadshāh, came to the *ordu* to complain of Nawrūz's unchecked power in his patrimony, saying that:

In all the lands of Fārs and 'Irāq and Kirmān it is declared and widely known that the key to office and status within the government lies with the favour and good-opinion of Nawrūz, and [that] the reins of all decrees and prohibitions are in his powerful hands, and he has sat his brothers, *dāmādān* (sons-in-law), agents and companions over the kingdom, and this has been the cause of all trouble in the business of the realm.¹²⁶

¹¹⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 907–14; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, pp. 82–93; Vaṣṣāf, p. 196; Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, pp. 268–73; Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns', p. 380; Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 61.

¹¹⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 627; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 916.

¹²⁰ Vaṣṣāf, p. 198; Rashīd al-Dīn places the *quriltai* at Qarābāgh, the traditional site of previous Īlkhān coronations (Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 626; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 916).

¹²¹ Vaṣṣāf, p. 198; Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 602.

¹²² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 629; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 918.

¹²³ Boyle 'Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns', p. 378; Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, 379; Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 61; Āshtiyānī, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl*, p. 224; Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran*, p. 295.

¹²⁴ Vaṣṣāf, p. 199.

¹²⁵ Vaṣṣāf, p. 199; Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 61; Āshtiyānī, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl*, p. 224; Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmat-i Īlkhānī dar Irān*, p. 216.

¹²⁶ Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Jughrāfiyā Ḥāfiẓ Abrū*, ed. Ṣādiq Sajjādī, Vol. 3, Tehran: Āyāniyī Mirāth, 1378/1999, p. 86.

Muḥammadshāh's complaint is supported by both Rashīd al-Dīn and Vaṣṣāf's description of Ghazan's *ordu*, which was dominated by Nawrūz's family. His younger brother, Hājī Narin was given the task of supervising the *divān* and provisioning the army, whilst another brother, Satalmish, was given the imperial seal used to validate official *yarliqs*.¹²⁷ Nawrūz also kept a third brother, Lakzi Küregen, at the *ordu* to keep a watchful eye on the young Īlkhān. When Ghazan, seeking to address Muḥammadshāh's concerns, ordered the eviction of the Nawrūzians (as Nawrūz's supporters were known) from Kirmān, Nawrūz violated the Īlkhān's orders and dispatched two of his agents to claim the tax of the province.¹²⁸ Nawrūz's authority covered every corner of the Īlkhān state, over which Ghazan held very little influence.

Whereas Buqa and Taghachar had expanded their power under the aegis of collegial concepts of Chinggisid rule, Nawrūz sought to replace the symbols of Chinggisid authority with a new concept of Islamic power, which expressed his spiritual primacy over Ghazan. This primacy was demonstrated when Nawrūz began to issue his own *yarliqs*, independent of Ghazan, shortly after Baidu's flight from Azerbaijan. These *yarliqs* announced Islam as the official faith of the Īlkhānate and proclaimed an end to the tolerance afforded to minority religions under previous rulers.¹²⁹ He ordered the destruction of all pagan buildings and the conversion or expulsion of all *kāfir* (non-Muslims) from the realm, which in turn resulted in a wave of persecutions against the religious minorities of the realm. René Grousset argued that these persecutory *yarliqs* were a sign that Ghazan remained 'a prisoner of his adherents' shortly after he assumed the throne.¹³⁰ Indeed, they were an assertion of Nawrūz's religious primacy over the political legacy of Ghazan's predecessors, chief amongst them being Arghun. Buddhist temples were targeted particularly heavily by Nawrūz's agents, who were under strict orders to either destroy all pagan temples or convert them into mosques.¹³¹ In doing so, the iconoclastic Nawrūzians tore down the buildings which housed painted effigies and statues of Abaqa and Arghun. The often intimate relationship between the Buddhist clergy and the Īlkhāns meant that Nawrūz's attack on the religious minorities of the *ordu* had serious implications for the Hūlegüid monarchy as well.

Nawrūz's Islamizing reforms also resulted in a change to the imperial seal of the Īlkhānate. Shortly after his appointment as the khan's *nā'ib*, Nawrūz informed Ghazan that, in light of his conversion to Islam, the *tamgha* (imperial seal) used for validating *yarliqs* and official correspondence should be replaced with a circular stamp bearing the Islamic profession of faith.¹³² The *tamgha* was one of the most salient symbols of royal Chinggisid authority and represented not only the sovereign's supreme control over the policy of his government but also the primacy of

¹²⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 630; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 919; Vaṣṣāf, p. 199.

¹²⁸ Hāfiz Abrū, *Jughnāfiyā Hāfiz Abrū*, vol. 3, p. 87; Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 65.

¹²⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 627; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 914; Banākātī, p. 455; Bar Hebraeus, p. 506; *The Monks of Kubilai Khan*, p. 210; Orbélian, p. 262.

¹³⁰ Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, p. 379. Also see Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-khāns', p. 380.

¹³¹ Bar Hebraeus, p. 506; Qazvinī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 602.

¹³² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 630; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 918.

Chinggisid–Toluid rulers. Until that time, the *tamgha* had acted as a symbol of investiture from the Qa'an, Qubilai, who dispatched the imperial seal to each successive Ilkhān after they had come to office.¹³³ The *tamgha* also bore the formula of Chinggisid authority through which the khan claimed to rule. For example, the inscription on the seal of Güyük read: 'We, by the power of eternal Tengri, universal Khan of the great Mongol Ulus—our command...' ¹³⁴ The fact that Nawrūz was now responsible for fashioning Ghazan's seal was a dramatic illustration of the former's primacy over the Ilkhān. Instead of the claim to universal Chinggisid sovereignty, the royal *tamgha* now bore the profession of Islamic faith, to which Nawrūz's *yarliq* ordered all Mongols to submit: 'it was decreed that all Mongols and Uighurs should favour Islam and pronounce the profession of faith (*shahādatayn*)'.¹³⁵ The Nawrūzian concept of spiritual primacy posed a direct challenge to the hereditary Chinggisid authority which Ghazan had only just claimed.

The alliance of Nawrūz and Ghazan and their triumph over Baidu in 1295 brought about the most significant change to the way that political authority was conceived in the Ilkhānate since the death of Möngke Qa'an in 1259. Their triumph resulted in the imposition of Islamic models of social, religious, and political identification upon the Hūlegüid realm. The introduction of these new ideas led to a new understanding of the *ordu*'s symbiotic relationship with their sedentary agrarian subjects, a mutual dependence which would find its fullest expression through Ghazan's land reforms of 1297–8. Moreover, the alliance of Ghazan and Nawrūz introduced the revolutionary concept of religious primacy to the Ilkhān realm. Nawrūz's successful manipulation of this new political formula won him a clear ascendancy over the Ilkhān government during the first two years of Ghazan's reign.

GHAZAN—THE MESSIAH KING

To some extent, the victory of Nawrūz and Ghazan over Baidu in 1295 represented a departure from the old standards of Chinggisid political authority to a new age of Islamic kingship. In light of the Nawrūzians' success in Khurāsān, Islam seemed to be a far more effective ideology for expanding Mongol sovereignty both inside and outside the Ilkhānate's borders. Rashīd al-Dīn could now inform Ghazan's Persian subjects that obedience to the Ilkhān was the duty of all Muslims on the basis of *Sūra* 4:59: 'O you who believe, obey God, and obey the Messenger, and those in charge among you.'¹³⁶ Ghazan also recognized the value of using Islamic, rather than exclusively Chinggisid, concepts of authority to project his power across the Islamic world, informing the Mamluk sultan, al-Malik al-Naṣīr, that there was no longer any religious impediment to prevent him from submitting

¹³³ Allsen, 'Changing forms of Legitimation in Mongol Iran', p. 227; Thomas Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 26.

¹³⁴ Carpini, ed. Dawson, p. 86.

¹³⁵ Vaṣṣāf, p. 199.

¹³⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 902; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, p. 78.

to the Mongols.¹³⁷ Ghazan's reign saw the increased use of Islamic symbolism to express the Mongols' political ambitions.¹³⁸

Ghazan's public identification with Islam won him enthusiastic praise from almost all of the Persian histories which documented his reign, yet it is uncertain what effect his conversion had on the Mongol *ordu*. Vaṣṣāf is one of several sources to claim that Ghazan's conversion gained him the support of many Muslims in his war against Baidu, although he does not explain whether these Muslims were Mongols or Persians.¹³⁹ The fact that Ghazan's triumph over Baidu came so quickly after his conversion to Islam has led several modern commentators to deduce that the loyalties of the Mongol military aristocracy were determined primarily by their religious affiliation. These studies argue that Ghazan's success was indicative of a broader division of the Ilkhān polity into Muslim and non-Muslim factions at the time of his coronation.¹⁴⁰ Ghazan's conversion to Islam was, therefore, presumably orchestrated to win over the larger Muslim faction (both Persians and Mongols) of the *ordu*.¹⁴¹

That Ghazan sought to capitalize on the spread of Islam amongst the senior *noyat* and harness the power of the Nawrūzian movement in Khurāsān is certainly correct. Yet the division of the Ilkhān polity into homogeneous religious factions is highly problematic. Both the early Mongol Empire and its various successor states were religiously diverse political unions defined by their shared devotion to traditions of Chinggisid charisma. The Ilkhāns had previously affiliated themselves with the religious sects of their sedentary neighbours, but this was often only a ploy to serve broader strategic ambitions, for example, when Abaqā's envoys accepted baptism at the Council of Lyon in 1274.¹⁴² Rather, Chinggisid notions of political authority continued to dominate the Mongol courts well into the fourteenth century. Indeed, Ghazan's zealous adherence to the principles of patrimonialist authority caused him to turn on his co-religionist allies, the Nawrūzians, shortly after his coronation. Such inconsistencies militate against the notion of a division of the Ilkhān polity into sectarian factions and call for a new interpretation of Ghazan's political philosophy.

The fact that Ghazan had learned to embrace the language of Islamic sovereignty did not result in his renunciation of older Chinggisid models of government.

¹³⁷ Vaṣṣāf, p. 222.

¹³⁸ Amitai-Preiss, 'Mongol Imperial Ideology', p. 66; Allsen, 'Changing Forms of Legitimation in Mongol Iran', p. 230; Marianna Shreve-Simpson, 'In the Beginning: Frontispieces and Front-Matter in Ilkhanid and Injuid Manuscripts', *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, pp. 213–47.

¹³⁹ Devin DeWeese, 'Islamization in the Mongol Empire', *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia*, v. 2, *The Chinggisid Age*, p. 128; Melville, 'Pādshāh-i Islām', p. 172; Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, p. 380; Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmāt-i Ilkhānī*, p. 208.

¹⁴⁰ DeWeese, 'Islamization in the Mongol Empire', p. 128; Melville, 'Pādshāh-i Islām', p. 172; Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, p. 380; Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmāt-i Ilkhānī*, p. 208. For the early conversion of Mongols to Islam, see Judith Pfeiffer, 'Reflections on a Double Rapprochement: Conversion to Islam Among the Mongol Elite During the Early Ilkhanate', *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, pp. 369–89.

¹⁴¹ Melville, 'Pādshāh-i Islām', p. 172; Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, p. 380; Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmāt-i Ilkhānī*, p. 208.

¹⁴² Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410*, Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005, p. 167.

Rather, Ghazan and his successors built their authority upon both Islamic and Chinggisid political traditions.¹⁴³ This dichotomy was expressed most clearly by Ghazan's *amīr al-ʿumārā*, Qutluḡshāh Noyan, who in 1299 informed the renowned Syrian scholar, Ibn Taymīyah, that 'God had sealed the line of prophets with Muḥammad and Chinghiz Khān, the king of the earth, and that anyone who did not obey him was considered a rebel'.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, Ghazan's court historians indicate that the latter's conception of Chinggisid authority directly informed his Islamic identity.¹⁴⁵ Ghazan, like his father Arghun, was a firm believer in the patrimonial nature of his authority. In his mind, the Īlkhān throne was a hereditary right, reserved for his bloodline, which had been chosen by Heaven/God to rule the world as a private patrimony. This fundamentally patrimonialist view of Mongol kingship permeates almost all discussions of Ghazan's religious beliefs found in his court histories. Ghazan's reign should, therefore, be interpreted as a continuation of the dialectic dispute between collegial and patrimonialist interpretations of Chinggisid authority, and not as a conflict between Muslim and non-Muslim factions within the Mongol *ordu*.

Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jām'i al-Tavārikh* is easily the most informative source on Ghazan's conception of political authority. The Īlkhān himself took a keen interest in the historical composition and contributed much information to Rashīd al-Dīn's account. Ghazan was said to have been a leading expert on the early history of the Mongols, yet his most valuable contribution to Rashīd's work must have been his own biography, the *Tārīkh-i Ghāzānī*, which documented his political career in addition to providing anecdotes regarding his personality and beliefs. The politically sensitive nature of this biography meant that the contents would have been closely scrutinized and edited by the Īlkhān and his agents.¹⁴⁶ As a member of Ghazan's *inaqs* (confidants, inner circle), Rashīd al-Dīn was the perfect candidate to recount his master's political achievements. It is almost certain that he helped to develop many of Ghazan's most important policies, evidence of which appears at the back of the biography, which contains several royal *yarliqs* that appear to have been written by Rashīd himself.¹⁴⁷ His highly detailed account of Ghazan's reign was part of a broader campaign to develop the spiritual basis of Ghazan's authority.

¹⁴³ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia*, p. 55; Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 65; Reuven Amitai-Preuss, 'Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition: A View from the Mamluk Sultanate', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (1996), pp. 1–10; Judith Pfeiffer, 'Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization: Politics and the Negotiation of Religious Boundaries in the Ilkhanate', *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th–15th Century Tabriz*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer, Leiden: Brill, 2004, pp. 142–7; Christopher Atwood, 'Explaining Rituals and Writing History: Tactics Against the Intermediate Class', *Representing Power in Ancient Inner Asia: Legitimacy, Transmission and the Sacred*, pp. 95–129.

¹⁴⁴ Aigle, 'The Mongol Invasion of Bilād al-Shām by Ghāzān Khān and Ibn Taymīyah's Three "Anti-Mongol" Fatwas', p. 114.

¹⁴⁵ e.g. Rashīd al-Dīn, Banākātī, Qāshānī, Naṭanzī, and Shabānkārā'i.

¹⁴⁶ Togan, 'The Composition of the History of the Mongols by Rashīd al-Dīn', p. 72.

¹⁴⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 690–7; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 1005–24; David Morgan, 'Rashīd al-Dīn and Gazan Khan', *L'Iran face à la domination mongole*, p. 185; Jackson, 'Mongol Khans and Religious Allegiance', p. 110.

Ghazan's conversion to Islam had done little to mask the deep ideological differences which had led him to fight a six-year war with Nawrūz. The pair had moved into Azerbaijan in two separate contingents, and only met briefly for Ghazan's coronation in October of 1295.¹⁴⁸ Shortly after assuming the throne, however, Ghazan gathered his supporters and moved his camp to Mughān, the traditional site of the Īlkhān *ordu*, whilst Nawrūz remained in Tabrīz to oversee the collection of tax.¹⁴⁹ There is no mention of open hostility between Ghazan and Nawrūz in any of the extant sources, but there would have been few members of the Īlkhān *ordu* who remained unaware of the tension which persisted between the two. Ghazan had been raised in the patrimonialist tradition of his father, Arghun, which had taught him to regard the throne as his indivisible and hereditary right.¹⁵⁰ He was, therefore, unlikely to have looked kindly on Nawrūz's continued meddling in the business of government, which the latter justified on the basis of his Islamic precedence. Indeed, Ghazan imagined himself to be leading a mission to restore the prestige and power of the Hülegüid dynasty in the face of an over-mighty *noyat*. His dogmatic adherence to the principles of patrimonialist authority rendered a conflict with both the *noyat* and his temporary ally, Nawrūz, inevitable.

Ghazan was preoccupied with the problem of disloyal commanders. This concern is evidenced in the accounts of his early encounters with the military aristocracy recorded in the *Jām'i al-Tavārikh*. His apprehension is understandable given that his time as viceroy of Khurāsān was almost completely overshadowed by his war with Nawrūz. The latter's treacherous and immoral nature had been revealed during his rebellion, when Rashīd al-Dīn claimed that he had surrendered to 'wicked temptations and carnal desires' which had caused him to 'rebel against his patron' and to 'spread evil and chaos' throughout Khurāsān.¹⁵¹ Indeed, Nawrūz's betrayal of his rightful sovereign was no less a crime than a sin in Ghazan's view, which was reflected in Rashīd's comment that Nawrūz 'feared the end' (*'āz 'āghibat mī-tarsam*'), in language suggesting that his actions would affect his position in the next life as much as this one.¹⁵² Similar sentiments are recorded by Ibn Bazzāz, who claimed that, in a meeting with Shaykh Zahīd Gīlānī, Ghazan spoke of five 'unpardonable sins': 1) a subject who rebels against their king; 2) a *qāḍī* who mistakenly interprets the *sharī'a*; 3) counterfeiting coins; 4) a child who disrespects his parents—'for this corrupts the rights of the *aqā* over the *ini*'; and 5) a slave who rises against his master.¹⁵³ The rebellion of Nawrūz against his rightful sovereign was, therefore, a perversion of the natural order. Yet Nawrūz had not acted alone. Throughout the course of his rebellion, he had successfully convinced several of the leading Khurāsānī *noyat* to desert and then oppose Ghazan in his attempt to regain control of his patrimony.¹⁵⁴ The experience was a sobering one for Ghazan,

¹⁴⁸ Vaṣṣāf, p. 198.

¹⁴⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 629; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 910.

¹⁵⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 591; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 847.

¹⁵¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 607; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 873.

¹⁵² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 875; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, p. 49.

¹⁵³ Ibn Bazzāz, p. 210.

¹⁵⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 595; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 859.

who, according to Mu'in al-Dīn Naṭanzī, lost all trust in the *noyat* as a result of the Nawrūzian rebellion.¹⁵⁵

But Nawrūz was only one, and not even the worst, example of the military aristocracy's perfidy. Ghazan retained a lifelong antipathy towards the Mamluk sultans of Egypt, whose origins as Ayyūbid slave-soldiers rendered them especially odious to the Īlkhān. The source of his animosity towards the Mamluks is again reflected in the *Collected Histories* of Rashīd al-Dīn, who inserted an apocryphal dialogue in his account of the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt in which the Mongol general Kitbuqa affirmed his loyalty to the Īlkhān and contrasted it with the intrinsic disloyalty of the Mamluk sultan, Quṭuz: 'in life, I was a servant of the *Pādshāh*, whereas you, through treachery and betrayal, severed the head of your own lord!'¹⁵⁶ Ghazan made a similar point himself during his first invasion of al-Shām in 1300. After taking the city of Damascus, the Īlkhān summoned the city's elders and told them to recite his lineage, which they traced back to the very first Mongol khans. He then asked the same elders to provide a similar genealogy for their ruler, al-Malik al-Naṣīr, whose ancestry they could not trace further than his father. This recitation led those present to deduce that Ghazan ruled by 'right', whereas al-Naṣīr was nothing more than a low-born slave who had assumed power by 'accident'.¹⁵⁷ Ghazan's contempt for the Mamluk slave-soldiers and their lack of royal pedigree no doubt helps to account for the unprecedented zeal with which he prosecuted the conflict against them.

Yet in Ghazan's mind the duplicity of the Iraqī *noyat* remained the most egregious violation of a commander's duty to his sovereign. Not only had they overthrown his father Arghun's government during his illness in 1291, but they had also murdered his uncle, Geikhatu, after nominating him to the throne. Ghazan had been deeply affected by the news of Geikhatu's death at the hands of the *noyat*. Such action was, in his view, an unforgivable violation of the sanctity of Chinggisid primacy. He chastised the Iraqī *noyat* in a message, which stated that 'it was never in the *yasa* of Changīz Khān that the *qaraju umārā* (common *noyat*) could harm his *uruq* (family). But now a group of *qaraju* have killed Geikhatu!'¹⁵⁸ Ghazan's derogatory use of the term '*qaraju*' (commoner) was an obvious attempt to assert the primacy of the Chinggisid line, which had been enshrined by the law (*qasaq*) of Chinggis Khan. Violation of this law represented a departure from the Chinggisid tradition, which Ghazan sought to restore through his bid for power. He demanded that the *noyat* responsible for Geikhatu's murder 'be sent [to us] to question them and treat them in accordance with the *yasa*'. Baidu's failure to meet this condition provided Ghazan with the justification he needed to march his armies out of Māzandarān on the campaign which resulted in Baidu's final deposition.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Mu'in al-Dīn Naṭanzī, *Tawārikh-i Mu'ini*, p. 153.

¹⁵⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 506; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 724.

¹⁵⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 646; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 941; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, p. 128; Banākātī, p. 461; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds*, p. 75.

¹⁵⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 885; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, p. 59. Ghazan's letter is also recorded in Banākātī, p. 451; Vaṣṣāf, p. 193.

¹⁵⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 885–7; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, pp. 59–61; Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 95.

Ghazan began his pursuit of the disloyal *noyat* shortly after his arrival in Tabriz in 1295. Having celebrated his triumph over Baidu, the new Ilkhān moved outside of the city to the region of Qarā-Tapih, where he received his loyal retainer, Qutlughshāh, and ordered him to convene a *yarghu* to investigate the crimes of the Iraqī *noyat*. The trial was summoned to hear a range of cases relating to the 'seditious' *'umarā* who had committed treason and misdeeds'. These 'misdeeds' related to two main transgressions: the murder of Geikhātu, and the uprising which had commenced during Arghun's illness. Ghazan imagined himself as his father's avenger, punishing the latter's treacherous *noyat* who had betrayed his vision of patrimonial monarchy. The most prominent victim of these early trials was Qonchaqbal, the son of Abatay Noyan, the commander of the central army (*qol*) and a driving force behind the purge of Arghun's officials in 1291. He, like the other victims of the trial, was subjected to the taunts of Arghun's former loyalists: 'Did you imagine that no one remained from the line of Arghūn Khān to defend against your evil and misdeeds?' Rashīd al-Dīn sought to stress Ghazan's mercy towards those convicted of such crimes, but there is strong evidence that the trials were ruthlessly efficient in asserting the new Ilkhān's sovereignty.¹⁶⁰ Fear of prosecution caused Taraqai Küregen, an Oirat commander based in Diyārbakr, to refuse a summons to appear at the trial to answer questions relating to Geikhātu's murder. Instead he fled with his troop of 10,000 Oirats to al-Shām.¹⁶¹ Other members of the Iraqī *noyat* were not so fortunate. Ildar Oghul, Baidu's son-in-law, had commanded the former Ilkhān's vanguard in an attack on Ghazan's army.¹⁶² Knowing that he was unlikely to receive merciful treatment at the hands of Ghazan's partisans, Ildar fled to Rūm, where he sustained a short resistance before being apprehended and executed by Ghazan's men in 1296.¹⁶³ The ferocity with which Ghazan pursued Baidu's leading supporters during the trial of 1295 was, however, only a small taste of what was to come.

Ghazan's initial purge of the disloyal *noyat* had claimed several prominent victims, yet the circumstances of his coup prevented him from carrying out a more decisive attack on their power. The new Ilkhān had relied on the support of some of the most dangerous *noyat*, such as Taghachar and Nawrūz, for his success against Baidu and he could not risk alienating their factions by implicating them in the trials. Moreover, in many instances marriage alliances between the Iraqī and Khurāsānī *noyat* forced Ghazan to show clemency to some of the very worst offenders. Petitioners had even sought out Ghazan's favourite wife, Bulughan Khatun, a relative of Qonchaqbal, to ask for her intercession on his behalf.¹⁶⁴ Ghazan did not possess the strength with which to

¹⁶⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 629; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 917; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, p. 95.

¹⁶¹ 'Imād al-Dīn Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'il b. 'Umar Ibn al-Kathīr, *'al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya fī al-Tā'rikh*, ed. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Mahsin al-Turkī, Vol. 17, Jiza: Markaz al-Bahūth wa al-Darāsāt al-'Arabiya wa al-Islāmiya, 1419/1998, p. 683; Abū'l Fidā, p. 26; al-Nuwayrī, p. 276; Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 8, p. 361; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, p. 309.

¹⁶² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 614; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 891; Banākātī, p. 452.

¹⁶³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 631; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 919; Banākātī, p. 456.

¹⁶⁴ Qazvīnī, *Zafarnāma*, p. 276.

launch an immediate assault on the leading members of his military aristocracy. Rather, he would be forced to achieve his aims through the more subtle process of administrative reform.

Ghazan sought to overcome the senior *noyat* by isolating them from their hereditary power bases. This aim was achieved in most instances through the seemingly collegialist ceremony of awarding benefices to the *aqā-nar* ('*ḡabt va tartīb-i muhimāt-i mamālik*').¹⁶⁵ Whereas previous rulers had merely confirmed the titles of their senior commanders after a *quriltai*, Ghazan granted his military aristocracy both new territories and new armies in an attempt to rob them of their support. The case of Ghazan's maternal uncle, Mulay Noyan, provides a good example of how this policy was carried out. As a devoted member of Ghazan's Khurāsānī suite, Mulay had served the new Īlkhān loyally during his wars against Nawrūz and Baidu and, no doubt, expected that his efforts would be rewarded. Ghazan graciously obliged by granting his uncle the amirate of Diyārbakr on the far western border of the Īlkhānate.¹⁶⁶ It would be hard to imagine a more distant posting from Mulay's fiefs, which lay in the Qūhistān region of Khurāsān, yet Ghazan compounded his isolation by appointing the new governor a conscript army, recruited from Georgia, with which to rule his new territory.¹⁶⁷ By appointing Mulay to command unfamiliar armies and territories, Ghazan blunted his capacity to influence his government. By 1303 Ghazan even felt confident enough to depose his uncle from his post after the latter was accused of incompetence during the defeat of the Īlkhān army by the Mamluks at the battle of Marj al-Ṣaffar.¹⁶⁸

The relocation of leading commanders to unfamiliar territories had a devastating effect on their power. Even the highly influential Taghachar Noyan found himself unable to adapt to his new posting as governor of Rūm.¹⁶⁹ The office itself was highly prestigious, befitting a commander of Taghachar's experience and power, but it put him in an awkward position. Taghachar had led the Iraqī *noyat* in direct opposition to their Rūmī counterparts during the reign of Geikhatu and his rebellion against the former Īlkhān was largely targeted at removing them from senior positions in Persian Iraq and Azerbaijan. Ghazan shrewdly realized that Taghachar would be unable to cause similar trouble again if he were surrounded by his former enemies. Indeed, the Rūmī bureaucrat, Aqsarāyī, who lived briefly under Taghachar's rule, noted that the leading Rūmī *noyat*, Arab the son of Sumughar, and Baltu Noyan both resented Taghachar's appointment and refused to cooperate with his government.¹⁷⁰ In 1296 when Taghachar inevitably sought to expand his control over the province at the expense of the Īlkhān *divān*, these

¹⁶⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 630; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 918; Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 603.

¹⁶⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 626–7; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 908–10.

¹⁶⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 652; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 949.

¹⁶⁸ Vaṣṣāf, p. 249.

¹⁶⁹ Aqsarāyī, pp. 191–6; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 630; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 918; Banākātī, p. 456; Vaṣṣāf, p. 199; Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 603.

¹⁷⁰ Aqsarāyī, p. 191.

local *noyat* quickly united to suppress and kill the unpopular governor.¹⁷¹ His death removed an important barrier to the rapid expansion of the Īlkhān's power.

Ghazan's tactic of relocating important leaders to unfamiliar surroundings proved equally useful in his attempt to assume control of the *divān*. Many members of the Persian bureaucracy were rotated to new postings by the Īlkhān as a means to curb their corruption. Once again it was Aqsarāyī who voiced his concern when Nizām al-Dīn Yahya Farūmadī, the son of the Khurāsānī vizier, Khwājah Vajih al-Dīn, was appointed as the *nā'ib* of Rūm. As an outsider, Farūmadī showed little sympathy for the native population under his control and rigorously pursued his revenue quotas from their territory. Yet Farūmadī in turn was constrained by his own secretarial staff who were also drawn from diverse geographical backgrounds, including Sāvah, Qūhistān, Azerbaijan, Khurāsān, Māzandarān, Kirmān, and Iṣfahān. Indeed, his officials seem to have been composed of men from everywhere except Rūm itself, a fact which angered the highly parochial Aqsarāyī, yet which, no doubt, contributed to the efficiency and loyalty of the *divān* staff appointed to the province by Ghazan.¹⁷² He ensured that there was no one to challenge his control by isolating the senior Mongol magnates from their power bases.

Ghazan's policy of relocating senior *noyat* to unfamiliar territories also brought about the downfall of his former ally, Nawrūz, in 1297. Ghazan had initially appointed the fiercely loyal Iraqī *noyan*, Nurin Aqa, as the new governor of Khurāsān shortly after his coronation in 1295, yet news soon arrived that Qaidu's Chaghadaid ally, Du'a Khan, had crossed the Oxus River and raided deep into Māzandarān. Faced with a potentially dangerous invasion, Ghazan permitted Nawrūz to return east to defend his former power base.¹⁷³ But instead of giving him the command of the feared Nawrūzian army, Ghazan placed him in charge of an Iraqī contingent, comprised of Baidu's former *noyat*.¹⁷⁴ The Īlkhān had been unable to execute many of these prestigious commanders after Baidu's death because of their connection to senior members of his own coalition, yet Du'a's attack provided Ghazan with the opportunity to rid himself of both the Iraqī *noyat* and Nawrūz in one decisive stroke.

Nawrūz's new army had not even reached Khurāsān before they began to argue amongst themselves. One of their number, Suka Oghul, the son of Prince Yoshmut, initially refused to accompany the army heading west and had to be forcibly conscripted by Nawrūz before their departure. During the march, Suka gave voice to his frustration at being uprooted from his hereditary fief, saying that 'they are sending us to Khurāsān so that they can divide our women and children amongst the soldiers of Khurāsān'.¹⁷⁵ He proposed a rebellion against the new regime and,

¹⁷¹ Aqsarāyī, p. 195; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 632; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 921; Qazvinī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 603.

¹⁷² Aqsarāyī, p. 259.

¹⁷³ Harāvī, p. 426; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 630; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 919; Banākātī, p. 456; Vaṣṣāf, p. 199.

¹⁷⁴ Vaṣṣāf, p. 198; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 629; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 917.

¹⁷⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 631; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 920; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, p. 98.

joined by senior commanders, he planned to ambush Nawrūz in his tent during the night. Nawrūz learned of their plot and sent word to Ghazan and his loyalist court, which led a counter-ambush against the Iraqī rebels who were captured and executed in the following days.¹⁷⁶ Ghazan's plan to isolate his enemies from their power bases had begun to bear fruit.

The conflict with Suka was merely one manifestation of the broader rivalry between Nawrūz and his Iraqī army. This tension cast him into direct conflict with Nurin Aqa, the Iraqī governor of Khurāsān. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, when Nawrūz dared to criticize Nurin for allowing Du'a to enter his jurisdiction, he immediately lost the support of the bulk of his army, who sympathized with their compatriot.¹⁷⁷ Realizing the gravity of his situation, Nawrūz excused himself from command of the Īlkhān army and returned west under the pretext that his wife, Tughan Khatun, was fatally ill. His desertion earned Nawrūz the wrath of the *ordu* and severely damaged his reputation amongst the leading *noyat*. Significantly, his departure led to severe upheaval within his army which, Rashīd al-Dīn claimed, abandoned their units to return to their hereditary patrimonies. In most instances these patrimonies lay in Persian Iraq and Azerbaijan, as was the case with Amīr Saman, the commander of a *mingqan* from Ārdabīl, who sped west in the absence of his senior commander.¹⁷⁸ Nawrūz's ignominious return from Khurāsān in 1296 demonstrates the extent to which Ghazan's policy of isolating the *noyat* had robbed him of his former powers.

Nawrūz's position did not improve after he left Khurāsān. Senior members of Ghazan's household, led by Qutlughshāh Noyan, insisted that Nawrūz had broken the *jasaq* of Chinggis Khan by deserting his army and demanded an immediate investigation into his activities. Rashīd al-Dīn claimed, with little credibility, that Ghazan held no malicious intent towards Nawrūz and refused to punish his former atabeg. Yet faced with the hostility of Ghazan's household, Nawrūz was forced to return east to resume his precarious command. Not long after his arrival he was physically attacked by one of his soldiers, Tūqtāy Yarghuchi, who claimed that Nawrūz had murdered his father.¹⁷⁹ He escaped unharmed, but the attack further demonstrates the decline of Nawrūz's status. His position in the west was similarly eroded as Ghazan deposed Jamāl al-Dīn Dastjurdānī, Nawrūz's choice for the office of *ṣāhib dīvān*, and replaced him with Ṣadr al-Dīn Khālādī.¹⁸⁰ This brief revival of Ṣadr al-Dīn's influence at Ghazan's court could only represent a diminution of Nawrūz's power since the pair remained intractable enemies. Ṣadr al-Dīn sought to solidify his position by permanently removing Nawrūz only a matter of weeks after his appointment to the head of the *dīvān*.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 631; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 920; Vaṣṣāf, p. 200; Qazvīnī, *Tārikh-i Guzīdah*, p. 603.

¹⁷⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 633; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 923.

¹⁷⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 633–4; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 923.

¹⁷⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 634; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 923–4; Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 65.

¹⁸⁰ Vaṣṣāf, p. 202; Qazvīnī, *Tārikh-i Guzīdah*, p. 603.

¹⁸¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 636; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 927.

Indeed, it is Ṣadr al-Dīn, and not Ghazan, who is most often credited with achieving Nawrūz's demise.¹⁸² This interpretation, recorded by Rashīd al-Dīn and his continuators, states that Ṣadr al-Dīn bore a grudge against Nawrūz after the latter deposed him from the *divān* and appointed his rival, Jamāl al-Dīn Dastjurdānī, in his place in 1296. In 1297 Ṣadr al-Dīn discovered a correspondence between Nawrūz and the Mamluk sultans of Egypt, in which the Amīr of Khurāsān had sought the aid of the Īlkhāns' old enemies to unseat Baidu in 1295. Despite two years having elapsed since the initial contact, Ṣadr al-Dīn forged a fresh letter from Nawrūz to the Sultan of Egypt, in which the Amīr called upon the Mamluks to drive Ghazan from power and seize Iran. Ṣadr al-Dīn then alerted the Īlkhān to the correspondence and when the false letter was found with Nawrūz's brother, the Īlkhān was forced to launch a purge of the Nawrūzians.¹⁸³ This explanation had the advantage of exonerating Ghazan of any complicity in Nawrūz's death, thereby mitigating any potential backlash from the latter's numerous supporters. It seemed as if mere gullibility had been Ghazan's only crime in his former ally's murder. Yet Jean Aubin has rightly voiced his scepticism at the idea that Ghazan was unaware of Ṣadr al-Dīn's subterfuge. The very public nature of the *ṣāhib divān*'s dispute with Nawrūz must surely have been known by the Īlkhān.¹⁸⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn's account is also contradicted by the fact that Nawrūz's demise came soon after Ghazan had deliberately sought to isolate him from his Khurāsānī army. Ṣadr al-Dīn may have found the pretext for Nawrūz's execution, but Ghazan had spent two years laying the ground for his fall.

When Ghazan heard the accusations against the Nawrūzians and saw the physical evidence of their treason, of which he must have been largely aware, he ordered a wave of purges across the entire length of the Īlkhānate. *Yarliqs* were dispatched ordering the summary execution of any person suspected of having been affiliated with the Nawrūzians. Nawrūz's brothers, Hājji Narin and Satalmish, and even his children were immediately murdered at the *ordu*, which had moved to Hamadān.¹⁸⁵ As the *yarliqs* reached Arab Iraq, another of Nawrūz's brothers, Lakzi Küregen, was also put to death.¹⁸⁶ All the *nā'ibs* and secretaries whom Nawrūz had sent to administer the taxes of the major provincial centres of the realm were apprehended and executed by the local Īlkhān commanders. Meanwhile, Ghazan fitted out an army to move against Nawrūz's position in Khurāsān, which he placed under the command of Qutluḡshāh Noyan.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸² Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Īl-Khāns', p. 383; Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 101; Ašhtiyānī, *Tārikh-i Mughūl*, p. 276; Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmāt-i Īlkhānī*, p. 216.

¹⁸³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 637; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 927; Banākātī, p. 457; Mīrkhwānd, p. 392; Qazvīnī, *Tārikh-i Guzīdah*, p. 604; Abū Bakr al-Qutbī al-Ahrī, *Tārikh-i Shaikh Uwais (A History of Shaikh Uwais): An Important Source for the History of Ādharbaijān in the Fourteenth Century*, trans. J. B. Van Loon, The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1954, p. 47; Vaṣṣāf, p. 206. The Mamluk sources confirm the correspondence between Nawrūz and the Sultan Laḡīn. See al-Nuwayrī, p. 276; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, p. 318.

¹⁸⁴ Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans*, p. 66.

¹⁸⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 637; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 928; Vaṣṣāf, p. 206; Banākātī, p. 457.

¹⁸⁶ Qazvīnī, *Tārikh-i Guzīdah*, p. 604.

¹⁸⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 638; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 929; Banākātī, p. 457; Vaṣṣāf, p. 206.

Nawrūz received news of the impending danger and the massacre of his family at his camp in Rādkān. Realizing that he could not count upon the support of his Iraqī army, he fell back on the town of Jām with a small troop of Nawrūzian partisans. It was here that he received the vanguard of Qutlughshāh's army in battle and was easily defeated. Forced to flee again, Nawrūz held counsel with his supporters on the best course of action. Those who had remained loyal to him advised Nawrūz to seek refuge in the Chaghadaī Ulus.¹⁸⁸ Yet in a sign of the importance that Nawrūz continued to place on his former networks with the urban elite of Khurāsān, he decided to flee to Herat, where he hoped that his ally, Malik Fakhr al-Dīn Kart, would once again support him in his war with the Īlkhān.¹⁸⁹ Yet in this instance Nawrūz severely misjudged the Lord of Herat's character. The *Tārīkh-nāma Harāt* claims that Fakhr al-Dīn left Herat shortly after Nawrūz's arrival on the pretext of rallying the latter's allies. The Malik was, however, captured by a branch of the Īlkhān army before escaping under mysterious circumstances, which led the Nawrūzians to suspect the sincerity of his support for Nawrūz's cause.¹⁹⁰ These suspicions were only heightened after Qutlughshāh Noyan established a cordon around the walls of Herat. Sayf al-Dīn Harāvī, perhaps looking to absolve his Kartid patrons of their betrayal, claimed that the Nawrūzians were found to have been plotting to seize the city from Fakhr al-Dīn. The Malik, fearing his own position, ordered the capture of both Nawrūz and his followers, whom he subsequently surrendered to Qutlughshāh.¹⁹¹ The latter immediately executed his prisoner and dispatched his head to Ghazan as proof of his success.¹⁹²

The death of Nawrūz in 1297 marked the end of a much wider purge of the Mongol military aristocracy, which had been carried to territories as far afield as Rūm, Arab Iraq, Azerbaijan, and Khurāsān. The murder of the leading Iraqī and Nawrūzian *noyat* was the final stage of a policy which had sought to alienate the Mongol commanders from their ancient power bases. By assigning the *noyat* to command foreign armies in unfamiliar provinces, Ghazan successfully undermined the independence of his army and ensured an unprecedented degree of centralized control over the administration of the Īlkhānate. Both the scope and the effectiveness of this purge were measured by Vaṣṣāf's comment that, during only one month of his assault against the *noyat*, no less than five Chinggisid princes and thirty-eight senior *noyat* were put to death by the Īlkhān.¹⁹³ This was a blow from which the *noyat* did not recover for another three decades.

Ghazan's attack on the power of the military aristocracy resulted in the creation of a new political order in which authority was confined to the Īlkhān's household. Ghazan was an autocrat who exercised supreme control over every facet of his government. He was an obsessive micromanager, who insisted upon being consulted

¹⁸⁸ Vaṣṣāf makes reference to Nawrūz initial plan to flee to the Chaghadaī Ulus, p. 206. Harāvī, p. 448.

¹⁸⁹ Harāvī, pp. 444–8; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 638; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 929; Vaṣṣāf, p. 206.

¹⁹⁰ Harāvī, p. 442. ¹⁹¹ Harāvī, p. 452.

¹⁹² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 640; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 932; Vaṣṣāf, p. 206; Mīrkhwānd, p. 393.

¹⁹³ Vaṣṣāf, p. 200; Banākātī, p. 457; Petrushevsky, 'The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran Under the Īlkhāns', p. 495; Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmāt-i Īlkhānī*, p. 217.

on every policy decision. Rashīd al-Dīn contrasted Ghazan's reign with those of his predecessors, stating that earlier rulers had delegated the administration of the realm to senior amīrs and bureaucrats, whereas Ghazan insisted upon exercising direct control over every facet of his government.¹⁹⁴ The seriousness with which Ghazan treated each petition that reached his throne was demonstrated by a *yarliq* in which he declared that no new business should be raised with him if he were drunk and that any orders that he may have ratified whilst inebriated should not be enforced. His attention to detail was further evidenced in a *yarliq* declaring that if he were not present to ratify *yarliqs*, both the *ṣāhib divān* and the five most senior amīrs of the *ordu* would have to stamp them before they were to become effectual.¹⁹⁵ The mutual suspicion and antipathy which existed between the Persian bureaucracy and the Mongol soldiery was, no doubt, intended to act as an impediment to effective government in the Ilkhān's absence. Ghazan's influence was felt in every aspect of Ilkhān government, a fact which led Rashīd al-Dīn to compare his power to the rays of the Sun, which illuminated every part of his realm.¹⁹⁶

Ghazan's unprecedented control over the administration of his empire was achieved through a series of reforms which were designed to give him control of the realm's finances. Ghazan, like his father Arghun, regarded the Ilkhānate as his private property (*injū*) and resented the interference of the military aristocracy in the taxation of his empire. During his rebellion against Baidu, Ghazan demanded the revenues of his father's *injū* lands in Fārs, Persian Iraq, and Kirmān as a condition for peace.¹⁹⁷ The seriousness with which Ghazan regarded these claims is demonstrated by Vaṣṣāf's report that an envoy arrived in Shīrāz to demand no less than one million dīnārs from the local *nā'ib* as a down-payment on Ghazan's dues from the province, which he held to have been in arrears for three years, dating from the death of Arghun Khan. The *nā'ib* of Shīrāz was unable to pay such an enormous sum and rejected Ghazan's demands immediately.¹⁹⁸ Ghazan also asserted his hereditary right to the revenues of other provinces during his brief interview with Baidu outside Rayy in 1295. The terms of their short-lived peace included Baidu's acknowledgement that Ghazan's *injū* included the provinces of Fārs, Kirmān, Persian Iraq, Māzandarān, and Khurāsān, in addition to the *ordu*, the royal treasury, and Arghun's widows. The terms of the truce might have been even more stringent had Baidu not pleaded for the ownership of Arab Iraq, implying that Ghazan had demanded it as well.¹⁹⁹ These claims leave little doubt that Ghazan considered the entire realm to be his hereditary property.

The issues of land ownership and revenue were the most important elements of Ghazan's social reform agenda. His *yarliqs* on the subject of the land tax and property deeds make constant reference to the relationship between the property

¹⁹⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 669; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 973.

¹⁹⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 725–6; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 1061.

¹⁹⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 712; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 1042.

¹⁹⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 615; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 895; Banākātī, p. 452; Vaṣṣāf, p. 194.

¹⁹⁸ Vaṣṣāf, pp. 193 and 243.

¹⁹⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 615; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 895; Vaṣṣāf, p. 195.

rights of common Muslims and the justice of his government.²⁰⁰ During his time in Khurāsān Ghazan had learned the importance of establishing firm relations with the sedentary *ra'yyat* (commoners), upon whose productivity his revenues depended. In an interview with his *noyat*, Ghazan was famously said to have stated that:

I do not take the side of the *tāzīk ra'yyat*, if it were prudent I would plunder them all, for there is no one more able than me to do so, we shall plunder them together. But if you later expect and beg me to [provide you] with a livelihood [*taghār*] and sustenance [*ūsh*], I shall refuse you. You should understand that if you [take] excessively from the *ra'yyāt* and eat their cows and seeds and crops, what can I then do?²⁰¹

In other words, Ghazan recognized that the revenues of the common people sustained his government. This realization prompted Ghazan to seek not only to improve the productivity of his sedentary population but also to assert his direct control over them. In a *yarliq* 'pertaining to the revenues of the provinces' Ghazan directly blamed the 'governors' and the 'commanders [*sarhangān*]' for the decline of government revenues and the misery of the common people (*ra'yyat*).²⁰² These military governors, Rashīd al-Dīn pointed out, had been issuing draft-bills (*barāt*) on the revenue of the provinces under their care which amounted to anywhere up to four times the prescribed tax set by the *divān*. These extra revenues were withheld from the *divān* and spent upon the personal retinues and pleasures of the military aristocracy. So widespread was this embezzlement that Rashīd estimated only one fifth of the prescribed sum of tax ever reached the Ilkhān's coffers. The power which these revenues afforded the military governors had contributed to the atrophy of the central governments' power and prevented it from blocking the *noyat*'s excesses. Officials sent from the *ordu* to monitor the governors' behaviour and even the Ilkhān's *inaqs* had entered the pay of the military aristocracy. Repairing such a system was, Ghazan claimed, both impossible and undesirable. In his view the only solution to the corruption of the military aristocracy was to deprive them of any influence over the financial management of his kingdom, responsibility for which would be transferred to the *divān*.²⁰³

Sometime after Nawrūz's death, Ghazan implemented a series of edicts which significantly curtailed the *noyat*'s control over the revenues of his realm. These reforms, in combination with the purge of the *noyat* described above, rendered the military aristocracy financially dependent upon the beneficence of the Ilkhān. Ghazan promulgated a *yarliq* which stated that neither the *noyat* nor the military governors had the right to issue draft-bills on the population under their control. Instead he appointed *bitikchis* (secretaries) from the *divān* to monitor the collection of revenue and prevent the military governors from seizing the taxes. *Noyat* who

²⁰⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 689–92, 694, 713; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 1005, 1007, 1008, 1011, 1014, 1035.

²⁰¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 714; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 1044.

²⁰² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 709; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 1037; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, p. 258.

²⁰³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 701–6; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 1025–31; Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia*, pp. 208–11.

continued to demand revenues from the sedentary population were hunted down by royal armies. Rashīd al-Dīn spoke of the governor of Hamadān, who in company with the local *basqaq*, continued to issue drafts on the city's revenue after the announcement of Ghazan's *yarliq*.²⁰⁴ Orders were dispatched calling for their arrest and execution. The governor fled Iran and was never heard from again, whilst the *basqaq* was pursued to Baghdad where he was arrested and, according to Rashīd, suffered a most painful death at the hands of the Īlkhān soldiers. From now on, commanders would resort to the *divān* for their allowances, which were allocated according to the number of soldiers under their control.²⁰⁵

The effectiveness with which Ghazan's financial reforms stripped the *noyat* of power is suggested by the fact that the *divān* official, Shabānkārā'i, remembered Ghazan's reign fondly as a time when the amīrs of the realm shook with fear of the Īlkhān.²⁰⁶ In this regard, Charles Melville's statement that the Mongols, and the *noyat* more specifically, might not have shared the Persian view that Ghazan's reign was a return to the 'good years' is probably correct.²⁰⁷ He had rendered the *noyat* a servile caste, completely subject to his will. Mīrkhwānd recorded the anger and humiliation of the *noyat* as Ghazan's vizier, Ṣadr al-Dīn Khālādī, began to reassign their lands to members of his bureaucratic staff in accordance with the Īlkhān's *yarliq*.²⁰⁸ Denied access to their former income, the *noyat* were in no position to resist further restrictions on their power. On the back of his *yarliq* 'pertaining to revenues' Ghazan announced that the *noyat* would be forbidden to either make use of the postal system (*jam*) or dispatch messengers (*elči*) within their domains.²⁰⁹ These were both privileges reserved for the Īlkhān alone. Moreover, in addition to relying on the *divān* for their provision and salaries, Ghazan instituted a *yarliq* prohibiting the *noyat* from sourcing their weaponry independently of the central government. The royal blacksmiths were, the Īlkhān asserted, his 'slaves' and would therefore surrender their wares to the *divān*, from where they would be distributed to the army on a seasonal basis.²¹⁰ Ghazan's reign saw the military aristocracy almost completely subordinated to the Īlkhān *divān*.

Ghazan was not, however, willing to trade the tyranny of a military oligarchy for that of a bureaucratic technocracy. The Īlkhānate was after all his personal property, and he would introduce a series of further measures to ensure his complete control over the *divān*. Perhaps the most important of these changes related to personnel. Not long after Ṣadr al-Dīn Khālādī had begun to implement Ghazan's reforms, he was accused of embezzlement by members of the Īlkhān's *inaqs* and put to death. In his place, Ghazan appointed Sa'd al-Dīn Sāvajī, a member of the Īlkhān's suite who had served his household faithfully during Nawrūz's uprising in Khurāsān. As a trusted companion, Sa'd al-Dīn was given the *tamgha* (seal) of the

²⁰⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 706–8; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 1031–6.

²⁰⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 746; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 1091.

²⁰⁶ Shabānkārā'i, p. 268.

²⁰⁷ Charles Melville, 'Abū Sa'īd and the Revolt of the Amīrs in 1319', *L'Iran face à la domination mongole*, p. 115.

²⁰⁸ Mīrkhwānd, p. 402.

²⁰⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 717; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 1049.

²¹⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 749; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 1095.

divān, with which he would ratify *yarliqs* and implement policy. In partnership with Sāvajī, Ghazan appointed none other than Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh, to act as the head of the various *divān* offices.²¹¹ Rashīd had served as both the royal physician and the head of the kitchen during the reigns of Arghun and Geikhatu and had presumably fled to Khurāsān as a part of Ṣadr al-Dīn Khālādī's suite during Ghazan's coup.²¹² His role as royal physician afforded Rashīd regular contact with the new Īlkhān, who quickly began to value his advice on matters of government and assigned him to assist Khālādī and then Sāvajī in the *divān*.²¹³ Rashīd seems to have retained his direct access to Ghazan since he was often mentioned discussing policy and court intrigues with the Īlkhān and it is not at all unlikely that this contact rendered him the more powerful of the two officials.²¹⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn and Sāvajī's appointments brought the *divān* under the direct control of Ghazan's household as both kept him constantly apprised of developments within the Empire. In his own characterization of the relationship between the throne and the *divān*, Rashīd al-Dīn claimed that the vizier served as the sultan's most trusted and talented official, and that there was no need for anyone outside their partnership to be involved in the business of government.²¹⁵ This assertion was soon put to the test as Arghun's former head of the Islamic judiciary, Mahmūd Dinawarī, joined with a group of disgruntled *divān* officials to slander the two viziers. When Ghazan learned of their sedition, he immediately ordered a purge of the disloyal *divān* staff and commuted Dinawarī's sentence into a lifelong exile.²¹⁶ Ghazan's bond with his two leading bureaucrats was an essential pillar of his centralizing reforms.

Rashīd al-Dīn also played an integral role in other reforms designed to ensure the *divān*'s effective operation. The majority of these changes were designed to increase the accountability of the bureaucracy to the Īlkhān. The most important aspect of this policy was to ensure an effective bookkeeping system in the *injū* (private) and *dālāy* (public) treasuries of the Īlkhān. Previously, Rashīd al-Dīn reported, revenues were simply gathered under a tent where no effort was made to record the income or expenditure of the court. This deficiency made it possible for both the *noyat* and the treasury workers themselves to embezzle large sums of revenue. During Ghazan's reign, however, account books were maintained to register all exchanges and a record office was established within the *ordu*.²¹⁷ This record office would serve as an important source of statistical information through which projections and quotas could be set in relation to the annual revenues. Yet the information provided by the records was not reserved solely for members of the Īlkhān *ordu*, but rather was shared with the *ra'īyyat* to help guard against the corruption of *divān* officials. Revenue quotas were chiselled into stone tablets and dispatched

²¹¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 610 and 641; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 870 and 934; Banākātī, pp. 459–63; Vaṣṣāf, pp. 209–10; Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 604.

²¹² Bar Hebraeus, p. 496; Boyle, 'Rashīd al-Dīn: The First World Historian', *The Mongol World Empire 1206–1370*, London: Variorum Reprints, 1977, p. 19; Āshīyānī, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl*, p. 261.

²¹³ Āshīyānī, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl*, p. 278.

²¹⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 641; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 934; Qāshānī, p. 95.

²¹⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 748; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 1094.

²¹⁶ Vaṣṣāf, p. 250; Banākātī, p. 464.

²¹⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 746–7; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 1091–2.

to the provinces to ensure that taxpayers knew precisely how much they should surrender every year and when. The tablets also informed the *ra'yyat* that extraordinary or unauthorized payments would be severely punished, thereby ensuring the honesty of the *divān* officials.²¹⁸ The *divān* would be held to the same standards of accountability as the *noyat* throughout Ghazan's reign.

A new political ideology, which married Islamic and Chinggisid notions of patrimonial authority, fed the growth of the Īlkhān's power in relation to both his military aristocracy and the *divān*. Ghazan sought to reinstate his father's vision of Toluid autocracy, in which the Īlkhān acted as the absolute spiritual and political power over his realm. He based this claim to authority upon the same ideological pillars used to justify both Möngke and Arghun's centralizing reforms, namely the principles of divine mandate, hereditary charisma, and royal genius. Yet unlike his predecessors, Ghazan's power was expressed through the language of Islamic spiritual authority, as befitted the new political environment created by the Nawrūzian rebellion. By drawing upon parallel symbols of patrimonial authority found in popular Shī'ite conceptions of imāmate (religious leadership), Ghazan successfully married Chinggisid political traditions with the new religion which had begun to spread amongst the Mongol ruling elite. In doing so, he undermined the ideological threat posed by the Nawrūzian movement.

The issue of spiritual primacy was at the heart of Ghazan's new political philosophy. His authority had been directly challenged by Nawrūz's supposedly superior expertise and experience in Islam. Ghazan's conversion at the hands of Nawrūz had ensured the latter's precedence in matters of the Faith and afforded him the right to directly interfere in the business of Ghazan's government to the point that he could issue his own orders independently from the Īlkhān. Yet more importantly, Nawrūz's interpretation of spiritual authority had much in common with collegial notions of Chinggisid authority by which the leading *noyat* assumed the right to appoint and depose rulers on the basis of their expertise and seniority in Chinggisid law and custom. Ghazan felt that it had been this egalitarian philosophy which had led to the betrayal of Geikhatu, and now threatened his own position.

Ghazan was disgusted by the idea that the *qaraju noyan* could achieve spiritual primacy over their sovereign or, worse still, that they were capable of appointing their own ruler. Such a suggestion was ridiculed by Rashīd al-Dīn, who highlighted the folly of those who believed 'the status of leadership and the position of kingship could be achieved through effort and struggle alone without worthiness, righteousness (*istihāqqāq*), guidance or seniority'.²¹⁹ These references to righteousness (*istihāqqāq*) and guidance (*hidāyat*) hinted at Rashīd al-Dīn's belief that divine mandate (*al-ḥaqq*), and not peer selection, was the true source of a ruler's power. Indeed, Rashīd al-Dīn used this argument in an indirect attack on Nawrūz's spiritual precedence, stating that although 'most people believed that his [i.e. Ghazan's] conversion to Islam was achieved through the persuasion of the amīrs

²¹⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 713; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 1042.

²¹⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 628; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 915. Also see Banākātī, p. 462.

and shaykhs, after investigating the matter it became apparent that this belief was incorrect'.²²⁰ Rather,

Whenever Almighty God has sought to bless one of his creations and distinguish him through various proofs, at the time of moulding his essence He places the ability [to find] salvation at the centre of his being and instinct [...]. And after that, by the guidance of divine blessing, he is raised in the cradle and gradually reaches the level of perfection and with the passing of [many] moons [i.e. years] he reaches seniority so that through reflection on what is written and debated he will discover the truth and falsehood of all things and by such policy and thought he will find salvation.²²¹

It was God, and not Nawrūz, that had inspired Ghazan to turn away from the error of infidelity and search for salvation in Islam.

The significance of Rashīd al-Dīn's account is quite obviously that it denies the possibility of Ghazan's subordination to a religious instructor. As Judith Pfeiffer has pointed out, Ghazan lay claim to a kind of divine knowledge, akin to that of the Prophet.²²² Ghazan's unmediated connection to God meant that, short of the Prophet himself, there would be no one who could claim spiritual seniority over the Īlkhān. This point was related most clearly in the account of a dream which was attributed to Ghazan at an unspecified date. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Ghazan had met with the Prophet in several dreams, during which 'they had conversations on many occasions'.²²³ In one such dream, Ghazan had met with the Prophet, the latter's cousin 'Alī b. Abū Ṭālib, and the Prophet's martyred grandchildren, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn.²²⁴ During the course of their interview, the Prophet informed him that he, Ghazan, was the brother of 'Alī, upon which they embraced and the Īlkhān swore to defend the *ahl al-bayt* (the Prophet's household). This vision served as much more than a simple anecdote in Rashīd al-Dīn's history. In the Medieval Islamic world dreams were regarded as revelations of the divine will and a source of spiritual inspiration.²²⁵ Ghazan's dreamt meeting with the Prophet and his family was a vision which had echoes in reality and was used to inform his subjects about the character of his authority. The seriousness with which Ghazan took his vision was demonstrated after the arrest of a controversial shaykh named Pīr Ya'qūb, who defiantly informed Ghazan that his '*pīrs*' (seniors, forebears) would protect him from harm. The Īlkhān retorted that his own *pīrs* were 'God, Muḥammad and Murtaḍā (i.e. 'Alī b. Abū Ṭālib)', and that they were far

²²⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 665; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 967.

²²¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 619; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 900–1; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, pp. 76–7.

²²² Pfeiffer, 'Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization', p. 162.

²²³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 676; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 984.

²²⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 676; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 984.

²²⁵ Linda G. Jones, 'Dreams and Visions: A Comparative Analysis of Spiritual Gifts in Medieval Christian and Muslim Conversion Narratives', *Medieval Cultures in Contact*, ed. Richard F. Gyug, New York: Fordham University Press, 2003, p. 122; G. E. von Grunebaum, 'The Cultural Fiction of the Dream as Illustrated by Classical Islam', *The Dream and Human Societies*, ed. G. E. von Grunebaum and Roger Caillois, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1966, p. 15; Toufy Fahd, 'The Dream in Medieval Islamic Society', *The Dream and Human Societies*, p. 352; Jean Lecercf, 'The Dream in Popular Culture: Arab and Islamic', *The Dream and Human Societies*, p. 375; Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 22.

more powerful than Pīr Ya'qūb's heretical predecessors.²²⁶ Through his intimate relationship with God, his Prophet and the *ahl al-bayt*, Ghazan had laid claim to an unmatched spiritual pedigree which would ensure his religious primacy over all his Muslim subjects.

Ghazan's sympathy for the *ahl al-bayt* was reported widely both during his lifetime and after his death. In several accounts it even appears that the Īlkhān was close to announcing his formal devotion to Twelver Shī'ism. Rashīd al-Dīn falsely claimed that he went so far as to mint coins in the names of the twelve *imāms* and Qāshānī insisted that Ghazan was on the verge of announcing Shī'ism as his state religion before his death.²²⁷ These undoubtedly apocryphal accounts may have overstated the sectarian nature of Ghazan's religious beliefs, since he was also said to have provided generous endowments to the tombs of non-Shī'ite patriarchs, such as Khālid b. al-Walīd and Shaykh Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī.²²⁸ Moreover, during his occupation of Syria in 1300, Ghazan also professed his support for the Rashīdun caliphs, and began his proclamations with prayers for the Companions of the Prophet.²²⁹ Even Ghazan's mausoleum complex, constructed during his own lifetime, included schools for students of Shāfi'ī and Hanafī jurisprudence.²³⁰ Such ambiguities have left modern commentators to deduce that Ghazan merely showed a strong sympathy for Shī'ism.²³¹ More recently, however, Anne Broadbridge has identified the latter Īlkhāns' use of popular Shī'ite symbolism to undermine the authority of the Mamluks in al-Shām. She demonstrates that Ghazan utilized the Syrians' widespread sympathy for the *ahl al-bayt* to weaken their loyalty to the 'Abbāsīd court of Cairo and its Mamluk protectors.²³² Yet her highly valuable insight into the religious influence which the Īlkhāns sought to impose over the territories of their Muslim neighbours is restrictive insofar as it neglects Ghazan's use of Shī'ite symbolism and dogma to project his authority upon his own subject population. Admittedly, such a discussion is not the main focus of Broadbridge's work, yet it will be demonstrated that the link between Chinggisid and Shī'ite ideas of patrimonial sovereignty was far stronger within the Īlkhānate than in its dealings with foreign powers. As Pfeiffer has argued, Ghazan's sympathy for the *ahl al-bayt* and popular Shī'ism more broadly, seems to have been born less from their spiritual appeal than from the ideological similarities which they shared with Īlkhān's notions of descent-based authority.²³³

²²⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 659; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 959.

²²⁷ Qāshānī, p. 95.

²²⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 688; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 1003; Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran*, p. 321; Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 195.

²²⁹ Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 9, p. 22; Baybars al-Manṣūrī, p. 337.

²³⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 686; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 998; Vaṣṣāf, p. 230.

²³¹ Jean Calmard, 'Le Chiisme Imamite Sous Les Ilkhans', *L'Iran face à la domination mongole*, p. 277; A. Bausani, 'Religion Under the Mongols', *The Cambridge History of Iran*, v. 5, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*, p. 543; Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmāt-i Īlkhānī*, p. 242.

²³² Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds*, p. 69. Also see Calmard, 'Le Chiisme Imamite Sous Les Ilkhans', p. 288; Pfeiffer, 'Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization', p. 151.

²³³ Pfeiffer, 'Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization', p. 148.

The Shī'ite concept of imāmate was a perfect antidote to the more egalitarian spiritual hierarchy endorsed by the Nawrūzians and shared many similarities with Toluid concepts of patrimonial authority. Both groups stressed the supremacy of the *imām*/khan over legal and customary sources of political authority, the role of the ruler as an intermediary between God/Heaven and the Muslim/Mongol community, and most important, thirteenth-century Shī'ite dogma advocated the hereditary nature of political/spiritual authority in opposition to elective councillor systems.²³⁴ The importance which these ideological similarities played in informing Ghazan's religious sympathies is illustrated by a story found in the *Tārikh-i Ūljāytū* of Qāshānī, which states that Ghazan quizzed the *'ulama* of Baghdad as to why the descendants of the Prophet did not have their own quarters within the city. An elderly scholar explained that after the Prophet's death his Companions (*ṣāhibah*) had robbed the succession (*khalifāt*) from 'Alī and awarded it to the *'amīrs*, who endeavoured to keep him and his descendants from their rightful throne. Having heard the old scholar's explanation, Ghazan beat his chest in agitation and bellowed: 'I am the one who will aid the *ahl al-bayt* and humble their enemies!'²³⁵ A variation of this story was recorded by Mu'in al-Dīn Naṭanzī, who claimed Ghazan had, in fact, inquired as to the principle beliefs of the four schools of Sunni Islam. Having heard their account, Ghazan stated that 'the *qaraju* have imposed this view to serve their own purposes. The true *madhhab* (religious creed) is the one belonging to the descendants of Muḥammad.'²³⁶ In both instances, the terms *'amīr* and *'qaraju* were used to highlight the Companions' lack of descent from the Prophet. In Ghazan's eyes, this deficiency excluded the Companions from assuming the leadership of the community. The use of the term *'qaraju* to denote the Companions of the Prophet also invites a comparison with the behaviour of the Ilkhān's over-mighty *noyat*. Indeed, this analogy was stated most plainly by Ghazan's *inaq*, Taramtaz, who would later inform Ūljeitū that 'a *Rāfiḍī* [i.e. Shī'ite] is one who, [in accordance with] the *yasa*, after Changīz Khān's [death], would raise his *uruq* [family] in his place, and the Sunni sect is that which would regard an *amīr* as deserving of his place'.²³⁷ Shī'ism presented Ghazan with a religious vindication of his hereditary right to rule the Ilkhānate in opposition to the more pluralistic concept of authority advocated by the Iraqi *noyat* and the Nawrūzians.

Ghazan identified his regime closely with Shī'ite symbols of spiritual authority based upon the similarities between 'Alawid (descendants of 'Alī) and Chinggisid claims to patrimonial authority. He declared himself to be the 'friend of the *ahl al-bayt*', to which end he showered the shrines and tombs of leading Shī'ite saints in gifts and stipends as well as funding pilgrimages to these sites.²³⁸

²³⁴ Dabashi, *Authority in Islam*, p. 109; Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 6; 'Allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Husayn Ṭabāṭaba'i, *Shī'ite Islām*, trans. Sayyid Hossein Nasr, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1975, p. 43.

²³⁵ Qāshānī, pp. 91–3; Pfeiffer, 'Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization', p. 145.

²³⁶ Naṭanzī, p. 150.

²³⁷ Qāshānī, p. 99.

²³⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 677; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 985.

His most notable achievement in this regard was the construction of the *Nahr-i Ghāzānī* (Canal of Ghazan), which drew water from the Euphrates River to irrigate the shrines of 'Alī at Najaf and the latter's son, al-Ḥusayn at Karbalā. These territories had, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, been severely depopulated by the creeping desertification of the land surrounding the tombs of the two most important Shī'ite leaders.²³⁹ Ghazan's Canal rendered the land so fertile that it led not only to increased pilgrimage but also permanent settlement around the sacred sites.²⁴⁰ Another significant endorsement came when Ghazan decided to build permanent stations for the *sādāt* (descendants of 'Alī) in every town of his empire.²⁴¹ These stations not only helped to facilitate the movement of the *sādāt* throughout the Ilkhānate, but also provided them a base with which to influence the religious hierarchy of the provinces. The biographical dictionary of the Ilkhān librarian Ibn al-Fuwaṭī is also replete with individual stories of *sayyids* who made the journey to Ghazan's court and were rewarded with lands, salaries, and offices.²⁴² The status of the 'Alawids improved significantly throughout Iran during Ghazan's reign.

Ghazan's veneration of the 'Alawids was not, however, an abdication of his own claim to spiritual authority. Rather, his assertion of spiritual primacy often appeared to have much in common with his father's reported claims to prophethood. Ghazan retained a firm belief in his own unqualified authority, a fact which spurred him to assume the leadership of the *ahl al-bayt*, rather than simple benign support. When members of his *ordu* questioned the reason for his support for the *sādāt*, Ghazan informed them sternly: 'I deny no one, I recognize the greatness of the Companions [of the Prophet], yet because I saw the Prophet, peace be upon him, in a dream and he instituted brotherhood and friendship between his children and myself, I shall always exercise great friendship with the *ahl al-bayt*.'²⁴³ In other words, although Ghazan respected the significance of the 'Alawids' lineage, he did not subordinate himself to them. Indeed, references to Ghazan as the 'brother' of 'Alī are significant insofar as they provided him with his own spiritual lineage from the *imām*; a fact which entitled him to claim the leadership of not only the *ahl al-bayt* but also the entire Islamic community ('*ummā*').

That Ghazan claimed a form of imāmate is suggested strongly by his official histories. Anne Broadbridge is one of several modern commentators to note that the sources documenting Ghazan's reign draw heavily upon the symbolism and

²³⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 683; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 994; Shabānkārā'i, p. 268.

²⁴⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 683; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 994; Dāvud Iṣfahānīyān, 'Shahrhāyi Tāzih Bunyād dar Dūrih Ilkhānī', *Faṣḥnāmāya Dānishgāh Adabiyāt va 'Ulūm Insānī Tabriz*, No. 6, Summer 1381/2002, p. 69.

²⁴¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 677; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 985; Qāshānī, p. 91; Pfeiffer, 'Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization', p. 148.

²⁴² Kamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl 'Abd al-Razzāq b. Aḥmad Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Majma' al-Adāb fī Ma'jam al-Alqāb*, ed. Muḥammad Kāzīm, Vol. 1, Tehran: Wazārat-i Farhang wa Arshād-i Islāmī, 1374/1995, pp. 186 and 411. For an insight into Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's place in the literary history of the Ilkhānate, see Devin DeWeese, 'Cultural Transmission and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: Notes from the Biographical Dictionary of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī', *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, pp. 11–29.

²⁴³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 677; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 985.

mythology associated with the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate.²⁴⁴ Yet as we shall see, Ghazan's claims to spiritual authority went far beyond superficial associations with the defunct court at Baghdad. Rashīd al-Dīn regularly described Ghazan as possessing superhuman characteristics denoting the possession of imāmate. He claimed that 'Almighty God has not withheld any perfection from him.' Like the *imāms*, Ghazan was said to have been a master of every craft known to man. He was an expert in subjects as diverse as carpentry, chemistry, astrology, architecture, and alchemy and would lecture professionals in their fields of work.²⁴⁵ Such talent would have been, Rashīd al-Dīn admitted, impossible except 'through the power of *far* (fortune) and all-knowing God'.²⁴⁶ Ghazan was also said to have been fluent in a range of languages, a quality which was considered to be a sign of imāmate.²⁴⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn claimed that Ghazan spoke Chinese, Latin (*farangī*), Hindi, Arabic, Persian, Tibetan, Kashmiri, and Turkish, amongst other languages.²⁴⁸ Many of these languages may have been used widely throughout the Mongol Empire, yet it is unlikely that Ghazan would have been able to master even half of them, let alone learn Latin, a language reserved primarily for diplomatic relations with Europe.²⁴⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn's claim that Ghazan spoke with great eloquence whilst still in the cradle should also be treated with scepticism.²⁵⁰ Such attributes were used to build the case for Ghazan's imāmate and had little relation with reality.

The new Ilkhān was also said to have possessed occult powers which distinguished him as God's chosen *imām*. Rashīd al-Dīn claimed that Ghazan possessed a unique insight which enabled him to predict the future and to see into men's hearts. He stated that whatever Ghazan said in joke or seriousness always came to pass. He was capable of predicting the arrival of foreign envoys, their number, clothing, and appearance, before anyone at his court received word of their coming.²⁵¹ Ghazan was also capable of using his powers of insight to circumvent danger to his power. The new Ilkhān warned his *noyat* that he had foreseen the rebellious intent of Nawrūz well in advance of his violent uprising and that he could read each of their minds to determine their future loyalty or treason.²⁵² Indeed, when a group of rebellious shaykhs were accused of inciting Ghazan's cousin, Prince Alafarang b. Geikhātu, to

²⁴⁴ Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds*, p. 65; Aigle, 'The Mongol Invasion of Shām by Ghazan Khān', p. 107; Calmard, 'Le Chiisme Imamite Sous Les Ilkhans', p. 281; Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmāt-i Ilkhānī*, p. 215.

²⁴⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 667–8; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, pp. 971–2.

²⁴⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 979; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 978.

²⁴⁷ Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam*, trans. David Streight, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994, p. 73; Asma Afsaruddin, *Excellence and Precedence: Medieval Islamic Discourse on Legitimate Leadership*, Leiden: Brill, 2002, p. 141; For examples, see Shaykh al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, trans. I. K. A. Howard, Horsham: Balagha, 1981, pp. 259 and 444; al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Hillī, ('Allāma Hillī), *al-Bab al-Hādī 'Ashar: A Treatise on the Principles of Shi'ite Theology by Hasan b. Yusuf b. 'Ali Ibnu'l-Mutahhar al-Hillī*, trans. W. M. Miller, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1958, p. 57.

²⁴⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 667; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 970.

²⁴⁹ On the presence of Latin scribes at the *ordu*, see Meyvaert, 'An Unknown Letter of Hulagu, Il-Khan of Persia', pp. 250–1.

²⁵⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 590; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 843.

²⁵¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 672; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 977.

²⁵² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 670–1; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 975.

rebel against him in 1303, Ghazan was able to identify them as the associates of his disgraced *ṣāhib dīvān*, Ṣadr al-Dīn Khālādī, before his *noyat* had been given the chance to question them. Ghazan's supernatural powers of perception were a clear proof to Rashīd al-Dīn that the Īlkhān was 'close (*walī*) and one of the friends (*āwaliyyā*) of God the eminent and magnificent'.²⁵³

Ghazan's claim to imāmate was much more than simple rhetoric. It was the doctrine through which he sought to impose his authority over the Īlkhānate. In the months after Nawrūz's death, Ghazan summoned the leading religious doctors of his realm to a mixed *quriltai* of Mongol *noyat* and Islamic clergy. The meeting was convened in a specially prepared palace, surrounded by an exotic garden, in which Ghazan intended to employ both Islamic and Chinggisid symbols to express his patrimonial authority over the realm. The *quriltai* commenced with three days of prayer in which the assembled guests were told to thank God for the Īlkhān's accession and recite verses from the *Qur'ān* in his honour.²⁵⁴ This communal thanksgiving was then followed by a coronation in which Ghazan crowned himself upon a carved ivory throne, dressing himself in the golden crown and belt of his ancestor, Abaqa. In doing so, Ghazan asserted the hereditary nature of his authority and his independence from the *aqā-nar*. Ghazan's court panegyrist, Banākātī, was present throughout the meeting in which he claimed that a series of notable poets praised the Īlkhān's justice and power. Banākātī himself presented at least two orations at the *quriltai*, which are preserved in his history and provide a taste of the mood that the Īlkhān wished to create for his audience. One of the more notable passages of Banākātī's ode stated that Ghazan was 'the one [whom] the Prophet foretold, the monarch [who is] Lord of the Age, the Messiah (Mahdī) of the End of Time, of whom the kings have said that "you are descended from 'Alī the Lion of God, you have rendered the masses of the world prosperous through fairness and generosity"'. Banākātī's poem announced Ghazan as the spiritual Saviour, through whose perfect rule the world would be transformed into a mirror of Paradise. The claim to messianic authority seems to have been a formula employed by Ghazan for several significant gatherings, since the wedding celebrations of the Īlkhān's daughter Öljeitay Khatun also saw Banākātī praise him as the 'Messiah of the End of Time'.²⁵⁵ Ghazan wanted to ensure that his *noyat* understood that he was the supreme spiritual and political authority of the world, to whom they were expected to show their unflinching allegiance.

At the time of his death in 1304 Ghazan had successfully smashed the power of the military aristocracy. By isolating senior commanders from their hereditary power bases, the new Īlkhān had robbed them of the capacity to influence his government. Having blunted their power, Ghazan purged the leadership of both the Iraqi *noyat* and the Nawrūzians. In doing so, he replaced the collegialist oligarchy which had dominated the reigns of his predecessors, Geikhatu and Baidu, with a new form of patrimonial monarchy in which the Īlkhān's household dominated

²⁵³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 958; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Jahn, p. 153.

²⁵⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, pp. 651–2; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 949.

²⁵⁵ Banākātī, pp. 465–8.

both the civil and military arms of government. Yet whereas his father had imposed similar reforms on the basis of Chinggisid principles of patrimonial sovereignty, Ghazan supported his rule through the language of his new religion. Ghazan used the symbolism of popular Shī'ite notions of imāmate to reconcile Mongol and Islamic concepts of patrimonial sovereignty to stress both the hereditary and personal nature of his authority.

5

Amīrate or Sultanate? The Chinggisid Legacy

Supporters of Ghazan's messianic ideology viewed his reign as the beginning of a new age of patrimonial rule. This new age was quite literally forced upon the realm as Ghazan oversaw the implementation of a new solar calendar, known as the 'Ghāzānī' or 'Khānī,' which marked 701 AH/1301–2 CE, the middle of Ghazan's reign, as year zero.¹ This delineation was supported heavily by Ghazan's heirs, Öljeitü and Abū Sa'īd, who both sought to link their rule into his historical tradition. The success of Ghazan's political model also appealed to future dynasties. As Charles Melville has pointed out, Ghazan's reign saw the reconciliation of the divergent Islamic, Persian, and Turko-Mongol traditions of Iranian kingship, thereby providing a template for all future Iranian sovereigns to follow.²

Yet Ghazan's political philosophy failed to suppress the far more egalitarian collegial philosophy of the Turko-Mongolian military aristocracy. Ghazan's government model remained highly exclusive as it sought to concentrate both financial and political power in the hands of an absolute sovereign. Patrimonialism provided few advantages to the military aristocracy, who chafed under the restrictions it imposed upon their hereditary power. Several Mamluk sources even suggest that Ghazan was murdered after berating several senior generals for their poor performance on the last campaign against the Mamluks.³ The admittedly biased account of the Mamluk envoy Ḥusām al-Dīn al-Mujīrī, who had been imprisoned by Ghazan in 1303, states that his successor Öljeitü even went so far as to say: 'now do you see what Almighty God made of Ghazan the Accursed when he began to be despotic and overbearing'.⁴ Under these circumstances, collegial interpretations of Chinggisid authority retained their relevance as the ideology of ambitious commanders seeking to improve their share of the wealth and power afforded by the Mongol Empire.

The fragility of the patrimonial order became apparent soon after Ghazan's death in 1304. Ghazan's state was shaped by his mistrust of the military aristocracy, which

¹ Āshṭiyānī, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl*, p. 315; Aydin Sayili, *The Observatory in Islam and its Place in the General History of the Observatory*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988, p. 229.

² Charles Melville, 'From Adam to Abaqa: Qāḍī Baiḍāwī's Rearrangement of History (Part 2)', *Studia Iranica*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 2007, p. 18.

³ Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī Ibn Hījjar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-Kāmina fī A'yān al-Mā'ia al-Thāmina*, ed. Salim al-Almānī, Vol. 3, Beirut: Dār Aḥya' al-Tirāth al-'Arabī, 1343/1924–5, pp. 213–14; Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 9, p. 112; Ibn al-Kathīr, Vol. 18, p. 35.

⁴ Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 9, p. 129.

compelled him to confine power to his own household staff. His close family had been excluded from membership in this inner circle during his lifetime and lacked the political authority to impose their will over it after his death. In the absence of any real political influence, Ghazan's successors were therefore forced to rely upon his household staff to win the throne. In doing so, they transformed Ghazan's household staff into a new military aristocracy (the amīrs) whose power was held independently from the Īlkhān. During the reign of Ghazan's first heir, Öljeitü Sultan (r. 1304–16), the amīrs began to usurp control of the provinces. Then, under the rule of Öljeitü's son, Sultan Abū Sa'īd Ba'atur Khan (r. 1318–35), the military aristocracy assumed full control of the Īlkhān government, relegating the khan to the status of a mere figurehead. These amīrs would use the collegialist symbolism of the *jasaq* and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan to legitimate their independent rule over the former territories of the Īlkhānate in the years after Abū Sa'īd's death (1335).

At the time of Ghazan's death outside Qazvīn in 1304 the strongest candidates for his throne were residing in Khurāsān, on the far eastern border of the Īlkhānate. Whether Ghazan intended these distant postings to isolate or to promote his prospective heirs remains uncertain. Ghazan had previously fallen ill in 1303, prompting his most senior companions to consider the question of his succession. Two clear factions had emerged supporting Ghazan's brother, Öljeitü, and his cousin, Geikhatu's son, Alafarang. Rashīd al-Dīn, who later served as a vizier in Öljeitü's government, provided a scathing assessment of Alafarang's faction, which he claimed was supported by heretics and rebels.⁵ He went on to state that when this supposedly disreputable group plotted to impose Alafarang's candidacy upon the *ordu* through force of arms, Ghazan ordered a purge of their membership and dispatched the hapless prince to Khurāsān in shame.⁶ There he was joined by Öljeitü who had been sent east in 1298 to apprehend a band of errant Negüdarīans and had remained there to occupy Ghazan's former post as viceroy of Khurāsān.⁷ Öljeitü would later explain his new role as an endorsement of his candidacy, since many previous Īlkhāns from Abaqa to Arghun, and even Ghazan himself, had at one time served as governor of Khurāsān.⁸ Yet Öljeitü was unable to subjugate the Negüdarīan army and suffered an embarrassing defeat by the Kartid ruler of Herat, Malik Fakhr al-Dīn, shortly after his arrival in the east.⁹ This failure damaged Öljeitü's reputation severely, leading Ibn al-Dawādārī to surmise that the future Īlkhān 'was not a man of war, but rather a master of wine, pleasure and companionship'.¹⁰ Eventually, a series of complaints against his inept officials prompted Ghazan to transfer the financial management of the province to his uncle, Mulay Noyan, in 1303.¹¹ Thereafter, real power in Khurāsān was exercised by the amīrs and not the Īlkhān princes.

⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 659; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 958.

⁶ Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 605.

⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 635; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 926.

⁸ Ḥāfiz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh Rashīdī*, ed. Khānbābā Bayānī, Tehran: Intishārāt-i Anjuman Āthār 'Ilmī, 1350/1961–2, p. 111.

⁹ Harāvī, pp. 454–61.

¹⁰ Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 9, p. 254.

¹¹ al-Ahrī, p. 48.

When Ghazan's death finally came in 1304 the succession was decided through a contest of arms. Ghazan's Khurāsānī amīrs remained divided in their support for the two princes. Alafarang was favoured by Amīr Harqudaq, a former member of Arghun's household and an early supporter of Ghazan's coup. On the other hand, Öljeitü had successfully cultivated the support of Mulay Noyan, the amīr of central Khurāsān, in addition to Sevinj Aqa, the son of Ghazan's Khitan tutor, Shishi Bakhshi.¹² Upon the Īlkhān's death, Sevinj dispatched riders to Khurāsān to inform Öljeitü, who promptly ordered his allies to murder both Alafarang and Harqudaq before the news spread.¹³ Ḥāfiẓ Abrū recorded the killing of Alafarang with particular disgust, stating that he was lured into a trap by his assailants before being stabbed to death. Reassured as to the fate of his chief rival, Öljeitü marched west to assume the Īlkhān throne.¹⁴

Öljeitü's reign has traditionally been perceived as marking the beginning of the Īlkhānate's decline.¹⁵ Faced with the unenviable task of following Ghazan on the throne, Öljeitü never fully emerged from the shadow of his brother's achievements. The new Īlkhān sought to build his authority upon the platform of preserving and continuing his predecessor's reforms and modern historians have pounced upon this claim as a means to evaluate his reign.¹⁶ Yet judged on his ability to advance Ghazan's reforms, Öljeitü was always going to suffer unwarranted criticism. Ghazan's reform movement did not result in the institutionalization of centralized monarchical government. Rather, it led to the creation of a personal despotism. Such a system could not continue beyond Ghazan's death and any attempt by Öljeitü to create a similar government would have required a revolution, not a reform. Öljeitü's promise to preserve his brother's policies should, therefore, be understood as a guarantee to maintain the status quo which had existed under his predecessor's rule. Ironically, this promise to protect his brother's government and staff constituted the greatest departure from the latter's political philosophy. By affirming Ghazan's household staff in their former offices, Öljeitü effectively created a new military aristocracy whose authority rested upon bygone political traditions, rather than their loyalty to the Īlkhān. This acquiescence in the face of a collegialist revival represented the greatest failing of Öljeitü's reign.

Initially, it seemed that Öljeitü may have been able to emulate his brother's style of patrimonial rule. After his coronation Qāshānī stated that the amīrs granted him the reign name of 'Öljeitü Sultan' (Fortunate King), and the title held a special significance throughout his time in power. It appeared on all of his coinage and was

¹² Vaṣṣāf, p. 271; Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 606; Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, p. 65.

¹³ Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, p. 65.

¹⁴ Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, pp. 65–6; Qāshānī, p. 21; Vaṣṣāf, p. 273; Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 606.

¹⁵ This view is opposed by David Morgan, who has argued against the idea that the Īlkhānate ever went into decline before its fall in 1335. See David Morgan, 'The Decline and Fall of the Mongol Empire', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland*, Vol. 19, No. 4, Oct. 2009, pp. 427–37.

¹⁶ Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 408; Petrushevsky, 'The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran Under the Īl-Khāns', p. 483; David Morgan, 'Öldjeytü', *EI2*, Vol. VIII, p. 168.

used to publicize his authority through the construction of new towns named Sultaniyya, Sultanābad, and Öljeitü-Sultanābad.¹⁷ Indeed, the title of Sultan was used so often that Qazvinī erroneously claimed that Öljeitü had been the first Ilkhān to use it.¹⁸ Öljeitü's preference for 'sultan' over the more Mongolian 'khan' or '*il-khan*' was, however, a continuation of Ghazan's policy of using Islamic symbols of patrimonial authority to express his power.¹⁹ Also, like his brother, Öljeitü was eager to draw connections between the house of the Prophet and the Chinggisids. The *Fawā'id-i ʿUljāyṭū* recorded a conversation between Öljeitü and his attendants in which the latter professed that Abū Bakr (one of the Prophet's closest companions) had been the first successor (*khalāfa*) to the Prophet. Öljeitü retorted that 'in the time of my forefathers there were amīrs who were older than us [Öljeitü] and who were companions of my father and whom he had often praised, who perhaps should have taken the throne'. All present said that this would have been a terrible crime and it was agreed that 'Alī b. Abū Ṭālib (the Prophet's cousin) had been the Prophet's true heir and successor.²⁰ This story was used to endorse the transmission of authority through blood, and not through tradition or companionship as the amīrs claimed. Indeed, the new Ilkhān advanced beyond the simple favouritism which his predecessor had shown for the *ahl al-bayt* and publicly announced his adherence to Twelver Shī'ism in 1310.²¹ Some sources even suggest that he may have tried to force his new belief upon his sedentary subjects through force of arms.²² Qāshānī recorded him attacking the legacy of the first three caliphs, saying: 'how is it permissible that the amīrs move against the helpless ones of the dynasty [the 'Alawids] and there was not rebellion or insurrection [i.e. against the amīrs] and how were they not held to be guilty?'²³ Whatever his weaknesses, Öljeitü remained a fervent believer in Ghazan's brand of patrimonial monarchy (Figure 2).

Yet in several instances Öljeitü's claims to have been Ghazan's political and ideological successor were contradicted by his own behaviour. One such inconsistency

¹⁷ Qazvinī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 607.

¹⁸ Hamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazvinī, *The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat al-Qulūb Composed by Hamd-Allāh Mustawfī of Qazvin in 740 (1340)*, ed. G. Le Strange, Leiden: Brill, 1919, p. 61.

¹⁹ Allsen, 'Changing Forms of Legitimation in Mongol Iran', p. 230.

²⁰ Yūsif Raḥīmlū, 'Risālah Fawā'id-i ʿUljāyṭū', *Faṣḥnāmaya Dānishgāh Adabayāt va 'Ulūm Insānī Tabriz*, No. 106, Summer 1352/1974, p. 144; Pfeiffer, 'Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization', p. 159.

²¹ Melville, 'The Itineraries of Sultan Öljeitü', p. 57; Pfeiffer, 'Conversion Versions', pp. 35–67; Judith Pfeiffer, *Twelver Shī'ism in Mongol Iran*, Istanbul: Orient-Institut der DMG, 1999, p. 5; Javād 'Abbāsī, 'Barrāsī Sāl-i Shumār Rasmi Shudan Tashīy'i dar 'Asr Hukūmat-i Ilkhānān', *Pizhūbishnāmih 'Ulūm Insānī*, Nos 51–2, Autumn and Winter 1385/2006–7, p. 202; Rasūl Ja'fariyān, 'Sultan Muḥammad Khudābandih, 'Allama Ḥilli va Ravāj Tashīy'i dar Irān', *Majalīhnāma Mufid*, No. 7, Autumn 1375/1997, p. 169.

²² Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *The Travels of Ibn Battutah*, ed. Tim Mackintosh-Smith, London: Picador, 2003, p. 71; Ross E. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta: A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989, p. 86; Aḥmad b. Husayn Kātib, *Tārīkh-i Jadīd-i Yazd*, ed. Īraj Afshār, Tehran: Publications de Farhang-i Zamīn, 1345/1966, p. 78; al-Nuwayrī, p. 282; Ibn al-Kathīr, Vol. 18, p. 97.

²³ Qāshānī, p. 101.

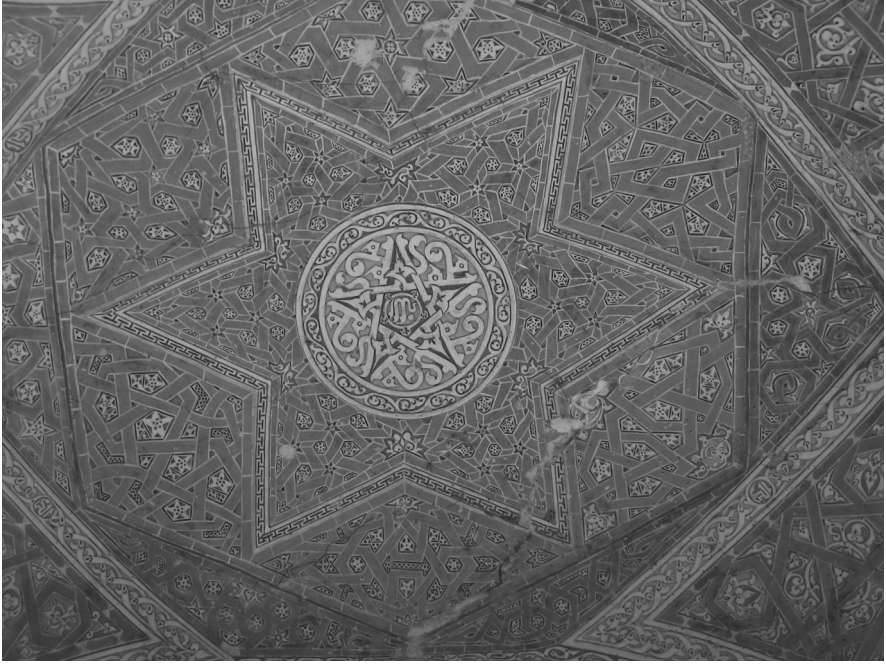


Figure 2. Panels from the Gunbad-i Öljeitü. Author's photo

relates to his claim that he had been designated as Ghazan's heir in 1301.²⁴ This assertion is difficult to either prove or deny since references to his designation only appear in histories written after his coronation. The earliest source to describe Öljeitü as Ghazan's designated heir was Rashīd al-Dīn, who only completed his history in 1307, three years after Öljeitü's accession.²⁵ The likely bias of such accounts has led Abolala Soudavar to question whether Öljeitü's designation was not simply fabricated by the Īlkhān's supporters in the years after his accession.²⁶ This possibility is difficult to ignore in light of the events surrounding his coronation. Öljeitü had initially sought to prevent the news of Ghazan's death spreading to Khurāsān: an odd move if he had already been named as the latter's rightful heir.²⁷ Moreover, the cold-blooded murder of his cousin, Alafarang, suggests that his candidacy was not universally recognized by Ghazan's former companions. In any case, the events of Öljeitü's coronation ceremony show that the new Īlkhān based his authority less upon a royal designation than upon an appeal to the old symbols of collegial authority.

²⁴ Qāshānī, p. 11; Vaṣṣāf, p. 270; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 662; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 962; Faṣīḥ al-Dīn Aḥmad Khwāfī, *Mujmal-i Faṣīḥī*, ed. Sayyid Muḥsin Nāji Naṣirābādī, Vol. 2, Tehran: Asāṭir, 1386/2008, p. 880; Banākātī, p. 470.

²⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Thackston, p. 662; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Karīmī, p. 962.

²⁶ Soudavar, *The Aura of Kings*, p. 10.

²⁷ Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, p. 65.

Öljeitü was welcomed by Ghazan's senior amīrs, who convened a *quriltai* for his coronation upon his arrival in Azerbaijan.²⁸ Little detailed information exists on the re-emergence of this collegialist institution. Ghazan's panegyrist, Banākātī, simply stated that Öljeitü was seated upon the throne after receiving the support of the amīrs, who 'performed all of the traditional rites and ceremonies in that regard'.²⁹ Ḥafiz Abrū certainly confirmed that the amīrs provided their unanimous endorsement of Öljeitü's candidacy prior to his enthronement.³⁰ Yet most accounts of Öljeitü's appointment contain virtually no information on the ceremonies and rites performed at his coronation.³¹ Nevertheless, there are still strong indications that Öljeitü's *quriltai* saw the reintroduction of important collegialist ceremonies. After being seated upon the throne, Öljeitü turned to the business of arranging the government and awarding benefices (*ḡabt va tartīb-i muhimāt-i mamālik*). He began by confirming the *jasaq* of his brother, Ghazan:

After performing the customary celebrations and extending the wares of triumph, [he] rose to oversee the promulgation of the decrees of the *yisun* [*yosun*] and *yasa* of his goodly brother Ghāzān Khān and from excessive kindness and true [and] genuine fondness and [in] observance of the duties of brotherhood, he fixed and affirmed upon each one of his [Ghazan's] various *umarā* and pillars of government their previous positions and past fashions and earlier jobs [and] ancient tasks.³²

This statement makes it clear that Öljeitü's claim to be the continuator of Ghazan's political tradition was in fact a device to assuage the concerns of his leading amīrs by confirming the offices and entitlements which they had held during his brother's reign. This move won the new İlkhān the unanimous support of his brother's military aristocracy, but it represented a significant departure from Ghazan's patrimonialist philosophy. Whereas Ghazan had made offices conditional upon personal loyalty, Öljeitü awarded titles on the basis of past services and traditions. It was a policy which would in time threaten the very existence of the Hülegüid dynasty.

Öljeitü's new state was dominated by a handful of Ghazan's most senior amīrs. During his *quriltai*, Öljeitü had confirmed Ghazan's former *amīr al-umarā*, Qutlughshāh Noyan, in his office, which, according to Qāshānī, afforded him control over both the 'Mongol army and the *ulus*'.³³ Vaṣṣāf stated that Qutlughshāh was entrusted with the running of the state and that his name began to appear on the letterheads of all official *yarliqs*.³⁴ It was even said that Qutlughshāh had his own *divān* and that Öljeitü was glad when he finally died, because 'he had achieved mastery over Khudābandah's [Öljeitü's] realm'.³⁵ Under him were four senior commanders, known as the '*ulus amīrs*', who monopolized control over the İlkhān army. Together this group dominated the government of the İlkhānate and, according to

²⁸ Banākātī, p. 474; Ḥafiz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, p. 66.

²⁹ Banākātī, p. 474. ³⁰ Ḥafiz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, p. 66.

³¹ Qazvīnī, *Tārikh-i Guzīdah*, p. 606; al-Ahrī, p. 49; Shabānkārā'i, p. 270; Vaṣṣāf, p. 275.

³² Qāshānī, p. 29. ³³ Qāshānī, p. 26. ³⁴ Vaṣṣāf, p. 276.

³⁵ Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Majma' al-Adāb fi Ma'jam al-Alqāb*, p. 392; Ibn Ḥijjar, Vol. 3, pp. 254–5; Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 9, p. 150; Ibn al-Kathīr, Vol. 18, p. 73.

al-‘Umarī, any order emanating from the *ordu* had to be ratified by them before taking effect.³⁶ The most prominent *ulus amīr* was Amīr Chupan whose loyalty and martial skill made him one of Ghazan’s most senior commanders. In fact, Chupan succeeded to Qutluḡshāh’s position at the head of the state after the latter’s death in 1311 and his power was so pervasive that Ibn al-Dawādārī claimed that he ‘ruled everything in his [Öljeitü’s] realm’.³⁷ Other prominent *ulus amīrs* included Bolad Chingsang, Arghun’s chief minister; Ḥusayn Küregen, the son of Geikhatu’s chief commander Aq Buqa and husband to Arghun’s eldest daughter Öljätäi; and Essen Qutluḡ, also a member of Ghazan’s court.³⁸ The families of these commanders would retain control of the realm long after the last effective Īlkhān had died in 1335.

Öljeitü’s claim to be Ghazan’s ideological successor disguised the limits of his control over the new military aristocracy. At least two of the *ulus amīrs*, Chupan and Essen Qutluḡ, openly refused to accept the Īlkhān’s new religion and the political ideology which accompanied it, favouring instead the rival Sunni sect.³⁹ Moreover, the *amīr al-‘umarā*, Qutluḡshāh Noyan, was said to have voiced his concern that the new religion should not dilute the influence of Chinggisid traditions at the Īlkhān *ordu*: ‘What is this that we have done that we have passed over the *yāsāq* and *yāsūn* of Changīz Khān and have come to the ancient faith of the Arabs which is [divided] into seventy parts and names [i.e. sects], we [should] revert to the *yāsāq* and *yāsūn* of Changīz Khān!’⁴⁰

Meanwhile, in the distant provinces of the realm, the power of the Īlkhān was slowly being forfeited to the military aristocracy. This shift was documented most widely in Khurāsān, where distance from the *ordu* afforded the local Mongol amīrs a free hand in managing the sedentary population of the province. The *Tārīkh-nāma Harāt* recorded that one of Ghazan’s former commanders, Dolā dai Noyan, would rotate military governors over the various districts of Herat in order that they might gorge themselves upon the revenues of the city. Two other commanders, Yasawul and Bujay, forced the townspeople under their control to construct sweatshops outside the walls of their city and to work in them to produce goods for sale in other parts of the province. When Yasawul’s daughter was to be wed to the Chaghadaid prince Yasawur, in 1319, he entered Herat and demanded 50,000 dīnārs from the local population to pay for the celebrations and bridal price. His soldiers arrested men in mosques and in the streets and tortured them until the sum was collected in the space of one day. The local townspeople remained helpless in the face of these exactions and on the odd occasion that they did seek redress from the local *basqaq* (military governor) after one of Bujay Noyan’s raids, they were told that ‘Bujay is the amīr of ten thousand men in this province and it would not do any harm if we were to [give him] something small during his comings and goings to appease him’. Öljeitü showed similar indifference to these complaints after the Khurāsānī

³⁶ al-‘Umarī, p. 153.

³⁷ Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 9, p. 270.

³⁸ Shabānkārā’ī, p. 270; Vaṣṣāf, p. 276.

³⁹ Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 9, p. 289; Ja’fariyān, ‘Sultan Muḥammad Khudābandih, ‘Allama Ḥillī va Ravā’j Tashīy’i dar Irān’, p. 174.

⁴⁰ Qāshānī, p. 98.

amīrs informed him that the reports had been concocted by rebellious elements. Whether he actually believed these explanations or was simply unable to bring his commanders to heel remains uncertain.⁴¹

The revitalization of the military aristocracy during Öljeitü's reign was not confined to Khurāsān. Amīr Irinjin, the father of Öljeitü's eighth wife, Qutlughshāh Khatun, had been appointed governor of Rūm, and exercised almost complete control over the provincial *divān*. The *nā'ib* of Rūm, Aḥmad Lakushi, soon learned that his position depended more upon the favour of Irinjin than that of the *ṣāhib divān*, Rashīd al-Dīn, and surrendered half of the total revenues of the province to the amīr in order to retain his office. The same lesson was not heeded by the head of the *injū* treasury in Rūm, who was soon intimidated into returning to the *ordu* at Sultaniyya. Yet Irinjin did not rely solely upon Aḥmad Lākūshī and the Rūmī *divān* for the collection of revenue. Aqsarāyī stated that he personally came to the town of Nikisar and claimed the revenue of the town upon an unnamed pretence. Irinjin retained absolute control over Rūm until Qutlughshāh's death in 1311, after which Amīr Chupan achieved ascendancy over the *ordu* and appointed his son, Temürtash, to replace Irinjin as governor of Rūm. Yet Temürtash continued to rule in the fashion of his predecessor and Aḥmad Lākūshī and his *divān* staff simply transferred their loyalty from one governor to another. The Ilkhān cannot have been ignorant of these excesses, but he lacked both the will and the authority to challenge Ghazan's former companions.⁴²

There were strong signs that the military aristocracy was beginning to assert its control over the realm at the time of Öljeitü's death in 1316. As early as his *quriltai* in 1304, collegialist ceremonies designed to express the seniority of the *noyat*/amīrs were reintroduced to the Ilkhān *ordu*. Öljeitü himself and his court panegyrists continued to stress the absolute spiritual and temporal authority of the Ilkhān, but such pageantry thinly masked the gradual transfer of power from the monarch to his military aristocracy. Over the course of his reign the distant provinces of the Empire fell under the control of regional strongmen who robbed the Persian bureaucracy of their political influence on their way to achieving autonomous government. This process of political fracturing was accelerated during the reign of Öljeitü's heir, Abū Sa'īd, under whose rule the Hülegüid monarchy lost all residual political authority.

Öljeitü died in 1316 after naming his only living son, Abū Sa'īd, as his heir.⁴³ The amīrs approved of Abū Sa'īd's candidacy with great enthusiasm, since he was only twelve years old at the time of his coronation.⁴⁴ For the military aristocracy, and particularly Amīr Chupan, the new ruler's minority represented a golden opportunity to transform the nature of Ilkhān government. From 1318 onward the amīrs assumed full control over both the civil and military administration of the Ilkhānate, whilst their Chinggisid puppets occupied themselves in leisure and

⁴¹ Harāvī, pp. 597, 602, and 654.

⁴² Aqsarāyī, pp. 303, 309, 312, and 318.

⁴³ Ḥafiz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jāmi' al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, p. 119; Qāshānī, p. 222.

⁴⁴ Mīrkhwānd, p. 480; Kamāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, *Maṭla'-i Sa'dayn wa Majma'-i Bahrayn*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Navā'i, Tehran: Mu'asisih Muṭāla'āt va Taḥqiqāt-i Farhangī Pizhūhishgāh, 1372/1991–2, p. 60.

frivolity. Abū Saʿīd's unusually long reign therefore marked the degeneration of the Īlkhāns' power and the final victory of the collegial faction.

Abū Saʿīd played a limited role during the first decade of his government. There were few who doubted that, as the *amīr al-ʿumarā*, Chupan was the true power behind the throne. Naṭanzī remarked that in the weeks after Abū Saʿīd's coronation 'nothing but the name of *pādshāh* remained with him'.⁴⁵ Similarly, Mīrkhwānd reported that 'the reins of government were placed in the capable and mighty hands of Amīr Chūpān since the *Pādshāh*'s raw age [rendered him] unable to rule the kingdom'.⁴⁶ The Chupanids even went so far as to claim that Öljeitü himself had entrusted the Amīr with the management of the kingdom until Abū Saʿīd reached his majority. Ḥafīz Abrū stated that 'complete control of the management and business of the kingdom was entrusted to Amīr Chupan in accordance with the will of Üljāytü Sultan who said, "You [Chupan] are the guardian of the world's army; you are the protector as well as the Shepherd [i.e. *chūpān*]."' ⁴⁷ Such traditions speak to the independence of Chupan's power during the early years of Abū Saʿīd's reign.

The Īlkhānate quickly assumed the semblance of a Chupanid patrimony. Unwilling to trust his fellow amīrs, Chupan appointed his children to the most senior offices of the kingdom. His second son, Temūrtash, was confirmed in his control of Rūm and was granted reinforcements to suppress local notables who had risen against his rule; his fourth son, Maḥmūd, was named the commander of the central army defending the Lower Caucasus; Chupan's first son, Ḥasan, was dispatched to act as the governor of Khurāsān; his grandson, Talash b. Ḥasan, was appointed as the governor of Kirmān; and finally, his third son, Dimashq Khwājah, was assigned the '*nāʾibat-i kul*', a position which afforded him control over both the court and the person of Abū Saʿīd.⁴⁸ Even the *divān* fell under the control of the Chupanids. With Chupan's assistance the vizier Tāj al-Dīn ʿAlīshāh successfully convicted Rashīd al-Dīn of murdering Öljeitü for which he was executed in 1319.⁴⁹ His removal left ʿAlīshāh in sole control of the bureaucracy until his death in 1323, at which point Chupan appointed a member of his own household, Sayin Qāḍī, as his replacement under the supervision of Dimashq Khwājah.⁵⁰ Chupan had become the absolute ruler of the Īlkhānate.

Chupan's ascendancy over the Īlkhānate was also recognized outside the borders of his realm. In 1326 envoys arrived from the Yuan court of Yesün Temür Qa'an and the Jočid court of Uzbek Khan. Yet it was Amīr Chupan, not Abū Saʿīd, who received their messages and entertained them at his camp in Arrān. These envoys observed that Chupan had assumed full responsibility for assigning pastures, a task traditionally reserved for the khan, and when this news was conveyed to Yesün

⁴⁵ Naṭanzī, p. 142. ⁴⁶ Mīrkhwānd, p. 380.

⁴⁷ Ḥafīz Abrū, *Dhayl Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, p. 123.

⁴⁸ Shabānkārā'i, p. 278; al-Ahrī, p. 54; Mīrkhwānd, pp. 523–6.

⁴⁹ Ḥafīz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, p. 128; Mīrkhwānd, p. 484; Ibn al-Kathīr, Vol. 18, p. 178.

⁵⁰ Qazvīnī, *Tārikh-i Guzīdah*, p. 616; Ḥafīz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, p. 162; Mīrkhwānd, p. 507; Samarqandī, p. 91.

Temür, al-Ahrī claimed that the qa'an granted him the title of 'amīr of the four *ulus*'.⁵¹ As Thomas Allsen has observed, the titles granted to Amīr Chupan by Yesūn Temür, as recorded in the *Yuanshi*, were in fact 'Commander unequalled in honour' and 'Duke who assists the state'.⁵² Significantly, Allsen points out that these titles were commonly used in China under the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) and were traditionally awarded to senior military commanders in times when the central government was in decline.⁵³ The Yuan, therefore, seem to have been under no illusions that it was Chupan, and not Abū Sa'id, who ruled the Īlkhān state.

Many of the leading Īlkhān commanders were infuriated by Chupan's grip upon the *ordu* and it was not long before they began to violently express their frustrations. Shortly after Abū Sa'id's enthronement Yasawur Oghul, a Chaghadaid prince who had been granted pastures in Khurāsān during the reign of Öljeitü, launched a rebellion under the pretence that 'Prince Abū Sa'id has not been crowned upon the auspicious throne and the amīrs are interfering in the rule [of the realm]'.⁵⁴ Yasawur summoned the Khurāsānī commanders to join him in a march against the *ordu* with the expressed aim of placing 'Abū Sa'id on the throne and stamping out all opposition and hostility to his rule'.⁵⁵ His rebellion never advanced beyond plundering the major towns of Khurāsān and Māzandarān and was quickly suppressed, yet Yasawur's rhetoric certainly suggests that the amīrs' opinion was beginning to turn against Chupan.

Chupan was forced to suppress an even more dangerous uprising in 1319 when a group of disgruntled amīrs sought to supplant him at the head of the government. Towards the end of 1318 Uzbek Khan of the Golden Horde ordered an invasion of the southern Caucasus, but when Chupan summoned the senior amīrs to defend the border a large number refused to present themselves. Chupan had the leading offenders lashed, one of whom, Qurumshi b. Alinaq, stated that Chupan 'wants to cower us through force and might. Our fathers never served under the banner of his father, indeed, they were one hundred times greater than him. Today we would choose death rather than endure his rule'.⁵⁶ After suffering the humiliation of Chupan's chastisement, these amīrs ambushed the *amīr al-ūmarā* whilst the latter was on tour in Georgia, forcing him to flee to the *ordu*. Their revolt spread quickly to Rūm and Azerbaijan before Abū Sa'id agreed to personally fight alongside Chupan's army in a decisive battle against the rebel amīrs outside Sultaniyya.⁵⁷ Chupan successfully defeated his rivals on this occasion, but popular discontent with his rule continued to undermine his authority.

The abuses of Chupan's family also lost him what little support he had once enjoyed from the Īlkhān. His second son, Temürtash, stopped sending the revenues

⁵¹ al-Ahrī, p. 55; Ḥafiz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, p. 167; Samarqandī, p. 96.

⁵² Thomas Allsen, 'Notes on Chinese Titles in Mongol Iran', *Mongolian Studies*, Vol. 14, 1991, p. 33.

⁵³ Allsen, 'Notes on Chinese Titles in Mongol Iran', p. 34.

⁵⁴ Harāvi, p. 683. ⁵⁵ Harāvi, p. 683.

⁵⁶ Ḥafiz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, p. 144; Samarqandī, pp. 71 and 72.

⁵⁷ For the revolt of the amīrs, see Vaṣṣāf, pp. 367–70; Ḥafiz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, pp. 144–51; Qazvinī, *Tārikh-i Guzīdah*, pp. 614 and 615; Shabānkārā'i, pp. 274–8; al-Ahrī, p. 52; Samarqandī, pp. 73–7. Also see Melville, 'Abū Sa'id and the Revolt of the Amīrs in 1319', pp. 89–116.

of Rūm to the *divān* treasury, using them instead to purchase a private army of mamluks (slave soldiers).⁵⁸ In 1324 he announced his independence from the central government by minting coins in his own name which proclaimed him to be the *mahdī al-zamān* (Messiah of the Age).⁵⁹ Aqsarāyī served in Temürtash's bureaucracy and dedicated his history to the upstart governor, whom he similarly declared to be the '*mahdī al-zamān*' and '*mahdī al-zuhūr*' (the Manifest Messiah).⁶⁰ His uprising was a serious embarrassment for Chupan who quickly marched to Rūm to arrest his wayward son.⁶¹ Despite his betrayal, Temürtash was subsequently pardoned and Chupan soon reappointed him to the amirate of Rūm, a fact which no doubt failed to reassure the *ordu*.⁶² Equally troubling was the behaviour of Chupan's third son, Dimashq Khwājah, who had begun to openly flaunt his superiority over the young Ilkhān. He was known to possess a larger treasury than Abū Sa'īd and he slandered his sovereign in the latter's absence.⁶³ Indeed, Dimashq Khwājah was said to have established a separate court from the Ilkhān and to have punished officials who refused to attend it.⁶⁴ Dimashq's excesses infuriated Abū Sa'īd who flew into a rage during a trip to Baghdad, demanding that Amīr Chupan replace Dimashq Khwājah, even if only with another one of his children.⁶⁵ Yet Chupan stubbornly refused and simply chided Dimashq for tarnishing his reputation in the eyes of the Ilkhān.

Abū Sa'īd showed himself to be both patient and tolerant of the excesses committed by the Chupanids. His marginalization may have meant that he had little capacity to resist, yet the young Ilkhān also showed scant interest in assuming direct control over his government. He was a man of considerable refinement who devoted much of his time to music and poetry.⁶⁶ Moreover, as Öljeitü's sole surviving heir, it is not unlikely that Abū Sa'īd received a pampered upbringing. Indeed, it was only when Chupan rebuffed the Ilkhān's advances towards his daughter, Baghdad Khatun, that Abū Sa'īd began to resent the authority of his over-mighty amīr. Chupan had wed Baghdad to Shaykh Ḥasan Buzurg b. Ḥusayn Küregen, the most prominent descendant of Hülegü's powerful Jalayirid *noyan*, Elgāi, in a notable piece of political diplomacy. He was not about to sacrifice his new alliance for the sake of the Ilkhān's childish infatuation and refused the latter's marriage proposal. Upon receiving Chupan's negative response, Abū Sa'īd fell into a deep melancholy. He withdrew from the *ordu* and was rarely seen by his own courtiers. Chupan tried to distract the Ilkhān by posting Ḥasan Buzurg and his wife to Ārrān whilst taking Abū Sa'īd on a hunting expedition to Arab Iraq. But despite his best efforts, Abū Sa'īd refused to give up the object of his affection and, at one stage, publicly scolded Chupan: 'I have put the reins of power over all the world into

⁵⁸ Shabānkārā'i, p. 285; Qazvinī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 616; Abū'l Fidā, p. 83.

⁵⁹ Ḥafīz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, p. 160; Mirkhwand, p. 504; Samarqandī, p. 87.

⁶⁰ Aqsarāyī, pp. 4 and 326.

⁶¹ Shabānkārā'i, p. 285; Qazvinī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 616; al-Ahrī, p. 53; Samarqandī, p. 88.

⁶² Qazvinī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 616; al-Ahrī, p. 54; Samarqandī, p. 88.

⁶³ Shabānkārā'i, p. 280; al-Ahrī, p. 54.

⁶⁴ Ḥafīz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, p. 168; Samarqandī, p. 97.

⁶⁵ Ḥafīz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, p. 165; Samarqandī, p. 94.

⁶⁶ Shabānkārā'i, p. 286; al-Ahrī, p. 57.

your hands and you refuse to grant me one moment of respite from this torment.⁶⁷ There would have been few at the Īlkhān court who remained unaware of the tension which had arisen between Abū Saʿīd and Chupan and the latter's enemies quickly sought to capitalize on his declining popularity.

At this point Chupan made the most costly blunder of his career. He had received news that the Chaghadaid khan, Tarmashirin, had amassed an army at Ghazna and was threatening the Īlkhānate's eastern border. In response to this threat, Chupan gathered an army and moved to Khurāsān with his son Ḥasan in 1327, leaving the volatile young prince alone to brood over this latest humiliation.⁶⁸ In his absence, Narin Toghay and Tash Temür, two amīrs who had been stripped of their offices by Chupanid sympathizers, won the Īlkhān's favour.⁶⁹ According to the Temürid sources, these courtiers brought word that Dimashq Khwājah had entered the royal *ḥarīm* to pursue a secret love affair with one of Öljeitü's former concubines.⁷⁰ Incensed, Abū Saʿīd empowered the amīrs to murder the young Chupanid.⁷¹ They moved against Dimashq Khwājah, who had secluded himself in a tower of the royal palace at Sultaniyya.⁷² Dimashq initially sought to pay off his assailants, yet when this failed he took advantage of a secret escape route and attempted to flee the capital. He was, however, pursued by the Īlkhān's palace guard, who returned him to the royal *ordu* where he was brutally executed. The Mamluk sources present a slightly different version of events, suggesting that Dimashq was actually the lover of Abū Saʿīd's mother, Hājji Khatun. They suggest that the pair's relationship had been going on for some time and that Dimashq's influence over the court was largely a product of Hājji's favour.⁷³ It is, of course, unlikely that Abū Saʿīd would have approved of a liaison with his mother any more than with his concubines, and so Dimashq's days were numbered.

Chupan was inconsolable upon hearing the news of his son's death. His oldest son, Ḥasan, suggested that they should remain in Khurāsān, where they might count upon the support of the Chaghadaids to resist any attack by the Īlkhān. Yet Chupan was not willing to let the matter rest. He assembled his amīrs and forced them to swear an oath of allegiance to him personally at the shrine of Shaykh Aḥmad of Jām before marching his army of 70,000 soldiers west to confront the Īlkhān.⁷⁴ But by the time Chupan's army had reached Simnān the Amīr showed signs that he regretted his decision to confront the Īlkhān. More specifically, he seemed to doubt the support of his amīrs. He assembled his leading commanders and again forced them to swear an oath of allegiance. His army included several

⁶⁷ Ḥafīz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, pp. 163–4; Mirkhwānd, pp. 507–9; Samarqandī, p. 92.

⁶⁸ Qazvinī, *Tārikh-i Guzidāh*, p. 617; Ḥafīz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, p. 168; Mirkhwānd, p. 509; Samarqandī, p. 96.

⁶⁹ Qazvinī, *Tārikh-i Guzidāh*, p. 618; Samarqandī, p. 118.

⁷⁰ Ḥafīz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, p. 169; Abū'l Fidā, p. 87; Samarqandī, p. 97.

⁷¹ Shabānkārā'i, p. 281; al-Ahrī, p. 55; Samarqandī, p. 97.

⁷² For Dimashq-Khwājah's capture and execution, see Qazvinī, *Tārikh-i Guzidāh*, p. 618; Ḥafīz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, p. 169; Samarqandī, pp. 97 and 98; Mirkhwānd, p. 513.

⁷³ Ibn al-Dawādārī, Vol. 9, p. 345.

⁷⁴ Qazvinī, *Tārikh-i Guzidāh*, pp. 618–19; Ḥafīz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, pp. 172–4; Mirkhwānd, pp. 516 and 517; Samarqandī, pp. 99, 102–3.

members of leading aristocratic families, such as Ugrunch, the brother of Sevinj Aqa, Nikrūz b. Nawrūz, and Maḥmūd b. Essen Qutluḡ. Chupan may have felt that the personal ambitions of these magnates would lead them to desert him on the battlefield.

Chupan's fears proved to be well-founded. He continued to hold a strong numerical advantage over the Īlkhān's army yet, as Samarqandī recalled, 'God placed the seeds of doubt in the minds of Chupan's senior amīrs' and they began to desert his force on the eve of battle.⁷⁵ In the morning it became apparent that at least three senior amīrs and 30,000 soldiers had left Chupan's force to join Abū Sa'īd. The advantage now lay heavily in favour of Chupan's opponents and, with little confidence left in his army, he fled the field before the battle had even commenced. Moving east, he passed through the Dasht-i Kavīr in the hope of hiding his retreat and entered Khurāsān with only a handful of supporters. At this point Shabānkārā'i claimed that Chupan considered fleeing to China in the hope of seeking the qa'an's support against his enemies.⁷⁶ This theory was nothing more than fantasy, since a strategist of Chupan's vast expertise would have surely understood that at that time the Yuan were incapable of pushing their claims to Kashgar and Khotan, let alone sending a force to reclaim Iran. Instead he decided to travel to Herat where he was murdered by the Kartid ruler, Ghiyāth al-Dīn, on the orders of the Īlkhān.⁷⁷

Chupan's death and the subsequent purge of his family and supporters brought about a small revival of the Īlkhān's powers. The amīrs who had remained loyal to Chupan were demoted from their offices, albeit temporarily, whilst those who had supported the Īlkhān were appointed to the command of provinces and armies. Narin Toghay was granted the amirate of Khurāsān and Abū Sa'īd's maternal uncle 'Alī Pādshāh was awarded the government of Baghdad.⁷⁸ More significantly, Abū Sa'īd appointed Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad, the son of Rashīd al-Dīn, as his new vizier.⁷⁹ Like his father, Ghiyāth became an intimate companion of the Īlkhān and he used this influence to impose his ascendancy over the *ordu*.⁸⁰ Ghiyāth al-Dīn was also praised widely for restoring a degree of stability to the *divān* and funding a revival of Persian literature.⁸¹

Nevertheless, the amīrs had grown too powerful to be replaced so quickly. Senior commanders were frustrated by the favour afforded to Ghiyāth al-Dīn, whom they

⁷⁵ For the account of Chupan's downfall, see Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 619; Shabānkārā'i, p. 283; al-Ahrī, p. 56; Ḥafīz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, pp. 175 and 176; Mīrkhwānd, pp. 519–23; Samarqandī, pp. 106–9.

⁷⁶ Shabānkārā'i, p. 283.

⁷⁷ Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 619; Shabānkārā'i, p. 283; al-Ahrī, p. 56; Ḥafīz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, pp. 175 and 176; Mīrkhwānd, pp. 519–23; Samarqandī, pp. 106–9.

⁷⁸ al-Ahrī, p. 56; Ḥafīz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, p. 185.

⁷⁹ Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 621; Mīrkhwānd, p. 515.

⁸⁰ Charles Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate, 1327–37: A Decade of Discord in Mongol Iran*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1999, p. 60.

⁸¹ Samarqandī, p. 101; Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, p. 623; Muḥammad b. Hindūshāh Nakhjivānī, *Dastūr al-Kātib fī Tā'yīn al-Marātib*, ed. 'Abd al-Karīm 'Alīūghlī 'Alizādah, Moscow: Institut Vostokovedeniia, 1964, p. 25.

believed to be working to curtail their influence.⁸² Moreover, when Abū Saʿīd did finally marry Baghdad Khatun, senior Chupanids returned to prominence at the Īlkhān *ordu* where they competed for status with their former enemies.⁸³ Feeling both betrayed and insulted, it was not long before the amīrs showed their anger at Abū Saʿīd's new favourites. In 1329 Narin Toghay left his post in Khurāsān without permission and entered the royal *ordu*. He marched to the home of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad with a troop of soldiers, intending to murder the vizier. The latter received word of Narin Toghay's intentions and fled to the Īlkhān who was subsequently able to mobilize his guard and force the disgruntled amīr to flee.⁸⁴ Yet Narin Toghay had not acted alone. Abū Saʿīd's maternal uncle, ʿAlī Pādshāh, had amassed an army in Iraq with the intention of supporting his assault. Even the supposedly loyalist Miṣr Khwājah, the killer of Dimashq Khwājah b. Chupan, was implicated in the brief uprising.⁸⁵ Unable to execute such prominent officials, Abū Saʿīd simply banished them from the *ordu* in disgrace.

An even more personal attack on the Īlkhān's authority came in 1334 when Abū Saʿīd announced the appointment of his close companion, Amīr Musāffar Īnāq as the governor of Shīrāz. Until that time Shīrāz had been held by Amīr Maḥmūdshāh Injū, who had assumed autonomous control over Fārs after Chupan's death in 1327. Maḥmūdshāh was enraged by the announcement and led a band of amīrs to hunt down the unfortunate Musāffar. Their prey fled into the Īlkhān's private tent in search of sanctuary, but the mob refused to relent and even fired several arrows into the royal residence, one of which narrowly missed Abū Saʿīd himself who had sought shelter under a table.⁸⁶ The amīrs surrounded the tent and demanded that the Īlkhān surrender his companion.⁸⁷ Fortunately for Abū Saʿīd, Amīr Sorqan b. Chupan arrived with a contingent of soldiers and successfully scattered the unruly amīrs. They were subsequently arrested by troops loyal to the Īlkhān who brought them before the *ordu*. But Abū Saʿīd refused to execute his assailants, preferring instead to imprison them in provincial fortresses.⁸⁸ Once again, his lenience seems to have been dictated by the widespread support shown for Maḥmūdshāh's uprising. Not only did his band include prominent amīrs, such as Maḥmūd b. Essen Qutlugh and Sultanshāh b. Nīkrūz b. Nawruz, but even a member of the Īlkhān's mother's retinue, Muḥammad Piltan.⁸⁹ The Dowager Empress, Hājji Khatun, seems to have been a central figure in both of the uprisings against her son. As a member of the powerful Oirat aristocracy, she would have been vexed by the restrictions imposed upon her family's power. Hājji Khatun also regarded Baghdad Khatun as a rival to her influence over Abū Saʿīd and encouraged any plot to

⁸² Melville, *The Fall of Amīr Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate*, p. 41.

⁸³ Ḥafiz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, p. 185; Mirkhwānd, p. 527; Samarqandī, p. 117.

⁸⁴ Qazvinī, *Tārikh-i Guzīdah*, p. 622; al-Ahrī, p. 57; Ḥafiz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, pp. 185–6; Samarqandī, p. 121.

⁸⁵ Ḥafiz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, pp. 185–6; Samarqandī, p. 123.

⁸⁶ Shabānkārā'i, p. 298; Ḥafiz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, p. 187; Samarqandī, p. 129.

⁸⁷ Shabānkārā'i, p. 298; Ḥafiz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashidi*, p. 187; Samarqandī, p. 129.

⁸⁸ Ḥafiz Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh*, p. 187; Samarqandī, p. 127.

⁸⁹ Melville, *The Fall of Amīr Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate*, p. 38.

undermine the Chupanids' power. She interceded with her son to ensure that the conspirators were not severely punished.⁹⁰

Abū Sa'īd did not live to suffer any further assault against his authority. He died in 1335, aged 29, whilst marching to confront the threat of a Jočid invasion in the Caucasus.⁹¹ After having the throne thrust upon him as a twelve-year-old boy, Abū Sa'īd had been powerless to resist the usurpation of his authority at the hands of his father's leading amīrs. During the first decade of his reign, Abū Sa'īd's protector, Amīr Chupan, assumed absolute control over the Īlkhānate and ruled almost independently of his sovereign. Nor was the prestige of the Īlkhān revived after Chupan's death. Rather, a series of commanders competed to replace the *amīr al-ūmarā* at the head of the government. Abū Sa'īd's own death in 1335 put an end to any chance of a patrimonialist revival as his senior amīrs sought to impose their will upon the beleaguered Hūlegüid throne.

Abū Sa'īd's death marked a political transition in which the authority and prestige of the Chinggisid dynasty in Iran receded behind that of their military aristocracy. The decline of the Chinggisids' fortunes during this period was evidenced most strongly by the instability that plagued the Īlkhān throne. Between 1335 and 1344 no fewer than eight Chinggisid princes/princesses were crowned in the various regional centres. These princes exercised negligible power over their estates and very little is recorded of them beyond their names and titles. Rather, true power fell to the senior amīrs who retained the services of the princes as figureheads for their own regional dictatorships. Such was the decline of Chinggisid prestige under these military governors that by 1343, al-Ahrī claimed that Malik Ashrāf, the amīr of Azerbaijan, kept his khan, Anūshīrvān, in a cage 'like a bird' for the duration of his reign.⁹² Indeed, by 1344 none of the regional amīrs felt the need to appoint Chinggisid figureheads, preferring instead to form their own hereditary dynasties over the territories of the former Īlkhānate. The simultaneous decline of Chinggisid prestige and the rise of the military aristocracy were a continuation of a collegialist revival which began shortly after Ghazan's death in 1304. Each of the regional amīrs who came to power during this period supported their claims to rule through reference to the two pillars of collegial authority, namely the *jasāq* of Chinggis Khan and the consultative process of the *quriltai*.

It was, however, the Chaghadaid amīr Temūr Gürkān (*küregen*), and not the Īlkhān amīrs, who would provide the most enduring tribute to the collegial stream of Chinggisid authority in Iran. Amīr Temūr was a member of the Barlas, which ruled over the territory of Kish (also Shahr-i Sabz), north of the Oxus River. In 1346 the Barlas joined with the lords of the Jalayir, Suldus, and Arlat to depose the Chaghadaid khan, Ghazan Sultan, and divide the former Ulus Chaghadaid between them. Temūr assumed the leadership of the Barlas in 1361 and, after a series of conflicts with their neighbours, successfully united Transoxiana under his

⁹⁰ Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate*, pp. 32–5.

⁹¹ al-Ahrī, p. 59; Ḥafīẓ Abrū, *Dhayl-i Jām'i al-Tawārikh Rashīdī*, p. 188; Mīrkhwānd, p. 534; Samarqandī, p. 131.

⁹² al-Ahrī, p. 71.

command in 1371.⁹³ In 1380 Temür launched the first of four campaigns (the others occurred in 1386–8, 1392–6, and 1399) to achieve the subjugation of the former Īlkhānate.⁹⁴ By 1384 his armies had penetrated as far as Sultaniyya, forcing the Jalayirid ruler, Sultan Aḥmad, to flee west to Tabriz and then Baghdad.⁹⁵ At the time of his death in 1405 the entire Īlkhānate had been brought under Temürid rule. Both Temür and his eventual successor, Shāh Rūkh (r. 1409–47), were keen students of history and provided considerable patronage to authors, such as Niẓām al-Dīn Shāmī, Ḥafīẓ Abrū, and Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī, to link their dynasty into the historical and political traditions of the Īlkhāns.⁹⁶ These Temürid court histories, like Rashīd al-Dīn’s before them, provide important insights into the ideology used to support early Temürid rule.

Beatrice Manz has already demonstrated that Shāh Rūkh’s court historians borrowed heavily from earlier Mongol and Īlkhān traditions of kingship. Shāh Rūkh’s capital, Herat, was an important administrative and economic centre of Īlkhān-ruled Khurāsān, so it was only natural that the Temürid prince adopted many of the former Īlkhānate’s political ideologies and strategies. The Temürids built their authority on the twin pillars of Islamic and Chinggisid kingship and Shāh Rūkh was keen to model his rule on that of Ghazan Khan, the ruler whom he believed best embodied the principles of good Mongol–Islamic rule. Manz shows that Shāh Rūkh not only adopted many of the titles and rituals attributed to Ghazan, but that he also had his historians model their work on the earlier court histories of the Īlkhānate, most notably the *Tārīkh-i Ghazani* of Rashīd al-Dīn.⁹⁷ Shāh Rūkh wanted to invest himself with the symbols and authority associated with the most celebrated Muslim Īlkhān.

Ghazan’s model of Islamic kingship may have been highly influential at the court of Shāh Rūkh, but his purge of the Īlkhān military aristocracy and his dogmatic belief in the hereditary transmission of Chinggisid authority were positively dangerous to the non-Chinggisid Temürids. Temür had married into the house of Chaghadaï, thereby achieving the title of *gūrkan* (royal son-in-law, Mong. *küregen*), but he was not a Chinggisid prince.⁹⁸ Indeed, Shāh Rūkh’s histories make only superficial attempts to link the Temürid bloodline to that of Chinggis Khan. Instead, they attributed Temür’s authority to the laws and customs instituted by Chinggis Khan. Their recourse to the principles of collegial authority was expressed in Ḥafīẓ Abrū’s account of Temür’s ancestor, Qarajar Noyan. According to Abrū, when Chinggis Khan appointed Chaghadaï to rule the realm between the Altai

⁹³ Beatrice Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp. 45–60.

⁹⁴ H. R. Roemer, ‘Timür in Iran’, *Cambridge History of Iran*, v. 6, *The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, p. 51.

⁹⁵ Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*, p. 70.

⁹⁶ McChesney, *Central Asia: Foundations of Change*, pp. 123–4; Woods, ‘The Rise of Timurid Historiography’, p. 83; Forbes Manz, ‘Mongol History Rewritten and Relived’, p. 11.

⁹⁷ Beatrice Forbes Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 28; Forbes Manz, ‘Mongol History Rewritten and Relived’, pp. 11–13.

⁹⁸ V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, trans. Vladimir Minorsky, Vol. 1, Leiden: Brill, 1956, p. 58.

and the Oxus River, he named Qarajar as the *amīr al-ūmarā* of his soldiers and entrusted him with the responsibility of 'managing the work of the realm and the *yāsāq* and *yūsūn* of the fortunate emperor, Chaghadaī Khān'.⁹⁹ Abrū's tradition makes it clear that whilst Chinggis Khan had appointed his son as 'khan', he had entrusted the command of the army and government of the *ulus* to his amīr, who would also protect his *jasaq* and *yosun*. A similar demarcation was reported by Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī, who in his history of the earliest Mongols reported that Tuminah Khan¹⁰⁰ informed the ancestors of Chinggis and Temūr that the 'throne' would fall to the line of Chinggis, but that Temūr's line would 'become the sword bearers and governors' of the Mongol Nation.¹⁰¹ Indeed, the Temūrids regarded their control of the Chaghadaid army as a hereditary trust. Both Abrū and Nizām al-Dīn Shāmī reported that Qarajar Noyan's family were confirmed over their ancestor's offices and fiefdoms by successive khans until the emergence of Amīr Temūr.¹⁰² Such traditions established the independence of the Temūrids from the Chinggisid dynasties they purported to serve. Their power had been assigned by Chinggis Khan and any attempt by the khans to appropriate this power would be construed as the violation of his *jasaq* and *yosun*.

The Temūrid account of the transition of supreme authority from the Chinggisids to their military aristocracy was also designed to undermine the political legacy of Ghazan and the patrimonialists. The Temūrid court historians claimed that the decline of the Chinggisids began during the reign of the last effective Chaghadaid ruler, the mysterious Ghazan Sultan b. Yasawur. In the years after his accession to the throne, Ghazan Sultan was said to have tyrannized his people by seeking to assume absolute control of the *ulus* and purging his senior *noyat*.¹⁰³ After enduring his excesses in silence for several years, the head of the Qaraunas army, Amīr Qazaghan, summoned a secret council of the pillars of state, in which he told them that 'if today we do not defend against him [Ghazan Sultan], he will uproot us one by one'. Those present then nominated a new khan in accordance with 'the word of Changīz Khān, which in regard to the rule and management of the kingdom and the state is, for the Mongol amīrs, a source of duty and a religious observance'. The rebel commanders then set out against Ghazan Sultan, who met them in battle. This first engagement was narrowly won by Ghazan after Qazaghan was wounded by an arrow in his eye. Yet support for the amīrs increased in proportion to Ghazan's tyranny and in a second and decisive battle fought in 1346, Ghazan Sultan was defeated and killed.¹⁰⁴ In his place, Qazaghan assumed nominal control over the semi-autonomous amīrates which

⁹⁹ Ḥafīz Abrū, *Zubda al-Tavārikh*, p. 36.

¹⁰⁰ Tumbinai Sečen in the *Secret History*.

¹⁰¹ Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī, *Zafarnāma*, ed. Sayyid Sa'id Mīr Muḥammad Sadiq and 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Nava'i, Tehran: Kitābkhānih-yi Muzih va Markaz-i Asnad-i Majlis-i Shurayih Islāmī, 1387/1968–9, p. 66; Mirkhwānd, p. 27.

¹⁰² Nizām al-Dīn Shāmī, *Zafarnāma*, ed. Felix Tauer, Prague: Oriental Institute, 1937, p. 14; Ḥafīz Abrū, *Zubda al-Tavārikh*, p. 37.

¹⁰³ Naṭanzī, p. 112; Ḥafīz Abrū, *Zubda al-Tavārikh*, p. 182.

¹⁰⁴ Ḥafīz Abrū, *Zubda al-Tavārikh*, pp. 183–7; Naṭanzī, p. 112; Yazdī, pp. 249–50; Samarqandī, pp. 241 and 242.

remained under the leadership of the military aristocracy.¹⁰⁵ In the words of Naṭanzī, 'the sultanate became an amirate'.¹⁰⁶

The Temürid account of the battle between Ghazan Sultan and Amīr Qazaghan must have held strong appeal to the collegialist amīrs of the former Īlkhānate. The narrative of a courageous *noyan* defending the Chinggisid state and its laws against the personal greed of a tyrannical monarch was, after all, also a part of their political tradition. The account of Ghazan Sultan's despotic rule in particular resonates strongly with the purge of the *noyat* conducted by Ghazan Maḥmūd Sultan, during the latter's attempt to impose his patrimonialist rule over the Īlkhānate. That the Temürids may have deliberately invented such a historical tradition to appeal to their new Persian commanders is supported by the fact that no evidence, independent of the Temürid histories, exists for the reign of Ghazan Sultan b. Yasawur. The numismatic evidence for the period suggests that Khalīl Sultan b. Yasawur ruled Transoxiana during the period ascribed to Ghazan by the Temürid historians and, according to hagiographical sources related by North African merchants, he was a reclusive *darvish*, not the tyrant described by Temürid historians.¹⁰⁷ Whether based on real events or invented as a political expediency, the story of Ghazan Sultan's battle with Amīr Qazaghan speaks to the enduring relevance of patrimonial and collegial interpretations of Chinggisid authority in the collective memory of the Turko-Mongolian military elite more than a century after Abū Sa'īd's death.

The central role played by Chinggisid political traditions in legitimating Temürid rule over Iran in the fifteenth century speaks to the profound influence that these ideas had, not simply upon the Turko-Mongolian political elite, but also upon their subjects in Iran and Transoxiana. The fact that Persian historians such as Ḥāfiẓ Abrū and Mu'in al-Dīn Naṭanzī sought to justify the deposition and murder of a reigning Muslim khan, Ghazan Sultan, by his military aristocracy in 1346 by appealing to the *jasaq* and *yosun* of Chinggis Khan should caution modern historians against viewing Islam and Islamic culture as the ideological pivot of the later Īlkhān court and its successor states. The idea that the Mongol *ordu* was simply submerged beneath the Persian-Islamic culture of its sedentary subjects during and after the reign of Ghazan Khan is highly misleading, and risks misrepresenting the views of the scholar bureaucrats who served under Ghazan and his successors, most notably Rashīd al-Dīn, who spoke of a growing syncretism between the Mongol and Islamic cultures in the later years of Īlkhān rule. Rashīd al-Dīn's account of Ghazan's reign suggests that it was in fact the continuing rivalry between competing traditions of Chinggisid ideology which dominated his time in government, not a battle between Muslims and non-Muslims for control of the Mongol court.

¹⁰⁵ See too V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, trans. Vladimir Minorsky, vol. 2, Leiden: Brill, 1962, pp. 10–14, and Beatrice Forbes Manz, 'The Ulus Chaghadaī Before and After Temūr's Rise to Power: The Transformation from Tribal Confederation to Army of Conquest', *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 27, Nos 1–2, 1983, p. 83.

¹⁰⁶ Naṭanzī, p. 113.

¹⁰⁷ Michal Biran, 'Central Asia from the Conquest of Chinggis Khan to the Rise of Tamerlane: The Ögöeid and Chaghadaīad Realms', *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia*, v. 2, *The Chinggisid Age*, p. 59.

Far from surrendering to the culture of their subjects, the later Īlkhāns based their authority upon the Chinggisid traditions of their forefathers. Ghazan Khan regarded himself as the restorer of Chinggis Khan's political legacy as well as those of his father, Arghun, and his great-uncle, Möngke. Where Islam did influence Ghazan's policies it was used to support, not replace, these theories of Mongol kingship. Chinggis Khan was elevated to the status of a prophet on an equal footing with the Prophet Muḥammad. His *jasaq* was interpreted as a new *shari'a* to be observed by his subjects, and his family were compared to the *ahl al-bayt*. Ghazan's conception of political authority was, therefore, heavily influenced by earlier notions of Mongol sovereignty which he fused with Islamic traditions of kingship. Yet the Īlkhāns were not the only actors in the Mongol polity of Iran to support their power through reference to traditions of Chinggisid authority. The *noyat*, whose claim to power rested upon their ancestors' companionship with and service to Chinggis Khan, opposed Ghazan's government not because of his religion, but on the grounds that he had violated the laws and customs (*jasaq* and *yosun*) of Chinggis Khan by usurping the military aristocracy's rightful share of the wealth and power generated by the Mongol Empire. Thus, the conflict between Ghazan and his military aristocracy was much more than a simple dispute between the forces of centralization and decentralization, or between Islam and heathenism. It was, rather, a battle between competing interpretations of the social and political legacy of Chinggis Khan.

6

Conclusion

The present study has traced the ideological dispute between Ghazan and his military aristocracy back to the three decades immediately after Chinggis Khan's death in 1227, when two traditions of political authority emerged to support the competing material and social interests of the Toluid dynasty and their aristocracy. The latter based their position within the Mongol polity upon what has been referred to as the 'collegial' stream of Chinggisid authority. The leading members of this collegial faction were drawn from Chinggis Khan's extended family (*altan uruq*) and most trusted companions (*nököt*), who had been rewarded with offices and wealth for their service to Chinggis Khan. The collegialists sought to protect their status within the Mongol Empire after Chinggis Khan's death by establishing his *jasaq* and *yosun* (laws and customs) as the primary source of political legitimacy. As Chinggis Khan's closest companions and servants, the *nököt* claimed the most detailed knowledge of his *jasaq* and *yosun*, which in turn afforded them the authority to dictate the policy of the Mongol Empire. The collegialists most commonly exercised their authority through the institution of the *quriltai* (consultative council), which empowered them to direct the khan towards ruling in accordance with their interpretation of Chinggis Khan's will.

The collegial faction assumed control of the Mongol Empire soon after Chinggis Khan's death when a *quriltai* was summoned to determine his successor in 1229. This council, which nominated Chinggis Khan's third son, Ögödei, as the new qa'an/khaghan also defined the nature of the new ruler's authority in relation to his aristocracy. The most senior members of Chinggis Khan's aristocracy, known as the *aqa-nar*, dominated the nomination process, in which the importance of preserving the Chinggisid social order was stressed. Ögödei's nomination assumed the character of a political covenant in which the *aqa-nar's* endorsement of the qa'an was reciprocated by the latter's confirmation of the offices, salaries, and titles held by the aristocracy. By affirming the sanctity of the *jasaq* and *yosun* of his father, Ögödei provided his guarantee that he would not seek to undermine the existing social order. This agreement was underscored by the belief that the Mongol Empire was the shared property of Chinggis Khan's family and companions, a sentiment which was manifested through the ceremonial division of Chinggis Khan's treasury amongst his disciples, each of whom claimed a portion as their traditional right.

The collegialists were opposed by Chinggis Khan's grandson, Möngke, who seized the throne in a military coup during 1251. Without the popular endorsement of the *aqa-nar*, Möngke was forced to pursue a policy of centralization which curtailed the power of the princes and *noyat* and confined power to his household

staff. He achieved this aim through a series of bloody purges carried out across the entire length of the Mongol Empire which terrorized his political rivals into submission. Möngke sought to justify his coup through reference to a different set of Chinggisid values, which contrasted sharply with those of his collegialist predecessors. The collection of principles upon which Möngke based his power, referred to here as 'patrimonialism', favoured an individualistic-autocratic style of monarchical government. He regarded Chinggis Khan's empire as the personal property of his family and resented the interference of the lowly born commanders. Under his rule both the financial and military governance of the Empire were managed by his household staff and a new central bureaucracy was established to supplant the military fiefdoms established during Ögödei's rule. The absolute nature of Möngke's power was also reflected in his claim to divine mandate, which mirrored that of his grandfather, Chinggis Khan. Not only was Möngke blessed with good fortune, but he was also thought to have possessed supernatural powers which distinguished him from his political rivals and legitimated his autocratic rule. Möngke's reign became a model for the patrimonial rulers of the Mongol successor states in Iran and China in the years after his death in 1259.

Both streams of Chinggisid authority were inherited by the İlkhanate, the independent khanate which emerged from the Mongol-held territories of the Middle East between 1259 and 1264. The first İlkhan, Möngke's brother Hülegü, assumed the autonomous rule of these territories shortly after Möngke's death, yet the circumstances of his appointment forced him to rule in accordance with the collegial principles of the Ögödeids, instead of the patrimonialism of his older brother. Many of Hülegü's senior commanders were drawn from the ranks of the Ögödeid court and resented the sudden decline of their political influence. Hülegü depended upon this Ögödeid aristocracy to both support and defend his new government in the face of sustained opposition from the rulers of the Golden Horde on his northern border. Moreover, Hülegü continued to recognize the supremacy of his older brother, Qubilai, as the heir to Möngke's throne and was therefore incapable of claiming a similar universal sovereignty. Rather, Hülegü was forced to conciliate both his military aristocracy and his external allies to assume the rule of the İlkhanate.

The leading commanders had been rewarded with prominent positions in Hülegü's new state in return for their service against the Golden Horde, and they soon expanded their influence after his death in 1265. They convened a *quriltai* to nominate his successor, Abaqa, who duly affirmed their authority by confirming the *jasag* and *yosun* of his predecessor. Abaqa's dependence upon the military aristocracy continued to grow throughout the course of his reign (1265–82) as a series of foreign incursions from the Chaghadaï Ulus to the east and the Mamluk sultanate to the west, coupled with the existing threat from the Golden Horde, increased the influence of senior commanders over his government. The *noyat*'s power grew to such an extent that in 1284 they successfully deposed Abaqa's heir, Aḥmad Tegüder, after he refused to heed their counsel. Aḥmad Tegüder's murder was the first regicide carried out by the *noyat* against a Chinggisid monarch anywhere in the Mongol Empire and demonstrated the growth of both the powers and

the ideology sustaining the military aristocracy. Protection of the rights and entitlements afforded to them by the *jasaq* and *yosun* was a duty imposed upon all collegialist khans. Failure to adhere to these principles was seen to justify the removal of the ruling monarch in accordance with the political contract established in the *quriltai*.

The balance of power shifted again in 1289 when Abaqa's son, Arghun Khan, took advantage of the mutual suspicions which existed between the senior commanders of his realm to impose his control over the Īlkhānate. Like Möngke before him, Arghun concentrated supreme power over both the civil and military administration of his realm in the hands of his most trusted and intimate companions, the *inaqs*, after launching a devastating purge of the military aristocracy. Arghun supported this shift through the patrimonialist claim that the Empire was his hereditary property (*injū*) and that he had been chosen by Heaven to rule as the supreme spiritual and temporal power of the realm. He regarded himself as a prophet-king whose authority was derived from his descent from Chinggis Khan.

Arghun died in 1291 before being able to complete his patrimonialist revival and his reforms proved unpalatable for the majority of his *noyat*, who led a violent reaction against his rule in the days before his death. Collegial rule was restored with great zeal by the military aristocracy of Rūm and Persian Iraq, who vied with each other for control of the imperial centre in Azerbaijan until Ghazan Khan emerged from Khurāsān and seized control of the *ordu*. Thereafter Ghazan sought to isolate his *noyat* from their hereditary pasturelands before launching a bloody purge of their ranks between 1295 and 1297. The former powers of the Rūmī and Iraqī *noyat* were then transferred to Ghazan's household staff, whose status depended upon their service and loyalty to him. The new Īlkhān would subsequently fuse Mongol and Islamic symbols of patrimonial kingship to create a new breed of patrimonialism. This new Ghazanī ideology employed the language of spiritual, and more specifically Shī'ite, authority to transform the khan into a messianic sovereign, whose rule represented the realization of both Islamic and Chinggisid prophecy.

The present study's investigation into the relationship between Islam and Chinggisid political traditions at the court of Ghazan and his heirs challenges many assumptions about the spread of Islam amongst the Mongols in Iran. Historians have often characterized Islam and the Chinggisid political ideology as irreconcilable creeds competing for ascendancy over the Īlkhān *ordu*. Many commentators have sought to add a cultural and social element to this conflict, describing it as a battle between the *divān* (ministry) and the *dargāh* (court), with the ostensibly Persian bureaucracy seeking to tame their Mongol overlords by converting them to Islam.¹ According to this view, Mongolian political traditions were replaced by those of their Persian subjects soon after Ghazan converted to Islam. The political influence which the Mongols exercised over Persian society continued

¹ Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 453; Saunders, *Muslims and Mongols*, p. 55; Grousset, *Empire of the Steppes*, p. 382; Alizādah Muqaddam, *Pujūhishī dar Sikkahaya Uljāytū*, p. 23; Shīrīn Bayānī, *Dīn va Dawlat dar Irān 'ahd-i Mughūl*, Vol. 1, Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i Dānishgāhī, 1389/2010, p. ii.

its decline until the fall of the dynasty, when it has been said that the Mongols were simply assimilated into the greater Persian (sometimes Turkish) population of Iran.² Yet this view rests upon an overly rigid understanding of the religious-political identities held by the Mongols and ignores the evidence presented by the sources.

This study has shown that the fusion of Mongol and Islamic traditions of political authority ensured that the Chinggisid legacy became an important standard of Iranian government. The continued significance of these traditions, particularly at the Temürid and Şafavid courts, undermines the claims of Khazanov and Saunders that Mongol ideology lacked either the sophistication or suppleness to be adopted outside the Chinggisid royal family.³ Yet it was the collegial stream of Chinggisid authority advocated by the *noyat*, and not the patrimonialism of Ghazan, that was adopted most readily after the collapse of the Īlkhānate. With its emphasis on collegial rather than autocratic government, collegialism endured as an ideology for the aspirational military elite of Iran and Central Asia long after the decline of the Īlkhānate in the first half of the fourteenth century. This new form of collegialism was first advocated by Ghazan's household staff, who formed a new military aristocracy, the 'amīrs', after his death and usurped control of the Īlkhānate from his successors, Öljeitü and Abū Sa'īd. In the three decades after Ghazan's death (in 1295) the amīrs gradually rolled back his patrimonial system, replacing it with a collegial government based upon the institutions of the *jasag* and the *quriltai*. This new collegialism achieved its fullest expression at the end of the fourteenth century when Amīr Temūr and his heir, Shāh Rūkh, announced the transformation of Ghazan's patrimonialist sultanate into an amirate ruled by the military aristocracy.

² Morgan, *The Mongols*, p. 170; Jack Weatherford, *The Secret History of the Mongol Queens: How the Daughters of Genghis Khan Ruled his Empire*, New York: Crown Publishers, 2010, p. 130; Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 453.

³ Khazanov, 'Muhammad and Jenghiz Khan Compared', pp. 461–79; Saunders, *Muslims and Mongols*, pp. 58 and 85.

Select Glossary of Foreign Terms and Expressions

Ahl al-bayt—Arabic. Members of the House. The family of the Prophet Muḥammad.

Altan Uruq—Mongolian. ‘Golden Family/Kin’. A term used to identify the descendants of Chinggis Khan.

Amīr/(pl.) *‘Umarā*—Arabic. Commander.

Amīr al-‘umarā—Arabic. Commander in Chief.

Amīr-i ordu—Arabic/Mongolian. Commander of the Camp/Court.

Amīr-i ulus—Arabic/Mongolian. Commander of the Nation/Supreme Commander.

Anda—Mongolian. Blood-brother/Sworn friend.

Aqal/(pl.) *Aqa-Nar*—Mongolian. Older Brother. The term was used to denote seniority of both age and social status within the Mongol Empire.

Arkān-i dawlat—Persian. Pillars of State. A title reserved for the most powerful bureaucrats and commanders of the Īlkhān court.

Atabeg—Persian/Turkish. Guardians appointed to tutor and protect young princes. The term is first encountered in Iran during the second half of the eleventh century, when it was most likely introduced by the Saljūqs.

Ba’atur—Mongolian. Brave/Valiant. A title conferred upon soldiers who demonstrated exceptional martial skill or courage in battle.

Barāt—Persian. Draft/Bill of Exchange.

Basqaq—Turkish. Military Governors appointed to supervise conquered territories.

Ba’urči—Mongolian. Cook/Steward.

Beklari-bek—Turkish. Supreme Commander.

Bilig—Mongolian. Sayings/Advice. Most notably those attributed to Chinggis Khan and his successors.

Bitikchi—Mongolian. Secretary.

Bo’ol—Mongolian. Slave.

Chingsang (ch’eng-hsiang)—Chinese. Minister. A title granted to the most senior members of the Yuan court.

Dā’ī—Arabic. Missionary. Derived from the word to ‘summon’ (*dā’wa*).

Dālāy—Mongolian. Ocean. The term was used to refer to state property in the Īlkhānate.

Darughachi—Mongolian. Governor/Overseer of conquered territories.

Divān—Arabic. Ministry. From the Arabic word *‘dawwana’* (to ‘register’/‘collect’).

Ejen—Mongolian. Lord/Owner/Host. Posthumous title granted to Hūlegü.

Elči—Mongolian. Messenger/envoy.

Emīr—Arabic. See *Amīr*.

Farmān—Persian. Command/Order.

Fatwa—Arabic. Ruling on a point of religious law handed down by a *faqih* (master of *shari‘a* law).

Ījān—Mongolian. See *Ejen*.

Il—Mongolian. Submission/Peace.

Imām—Arabic. Spiritual leader.

Inaq—Mongolian. Favourite/Confidant of the khan.

Inil(pl.) *Ini-Nar*—Mongolian. ‘Younger Brother(s)’. Denoted junior members of a family or political community.

Injü—Mongolian. Private property. *Injü* often took the form of pastures, revenue rights, animals, or even people.

Jasaq—Mongolian. The collection of laws and decrees made by Chinggis Khan and his heirs, primarily concerned with the administration of the Mongol Empire.

Kešik—Mongolian. Term for the Imperial Guard Corps.

Khalīfa—Arabic. Successor. Most commonly used in the term *khalīfat rasūl Allāh* (Successor to the Messenger of God i.e. Muḥammad).

Khan—Mongolian. Chief/Ruler.

Khān—Turkish. See *Khan*.

Khatun—Mongolian. Queen. A title given to the wives of khans and royal princes.

Khātūn(pl.) *khawātīn*—Turkish. See *Khatun*.

Küregen—Mongolian. Royal son-in-law. A title bestowed upon those who married Chinggisid princesses.

Madhbhab(pl.) *Madhāhib*—Arabic. Path/Way. Used to denote a religious creed or school of thought.

Mahdī—Arabic. Messiah.

Malik—Arabic. ‘King’—a secular ruler.

Mamluk(pl.) *Mulūk*—Arabic. Slave-soldier.

Mingqan—Mongolian. A unit of 1,000. The term was most often used to denote a military division.

Möngke Tenggeri—Mongolian. Eternal Heaven. The deity of the sky worshipped by the Mongols.

Muhimāt-i mamālik—Persian. The ordinances of the realm.

Nā‘ib(pl.) *Nuvāb*—Arabic. Deputy/Appointee.

Nökörl(pl.) *Nököt*—Mongolian. Personal retainer/companion.

Noyan(pl.) *Noyat*—Mongolian. Lord. The title was granted to senior commanders in the Mongol army.

Ordu—Mongolian. Camp. The term is also used to refer to the royal camp-court of the khans.

Ortaq—Turkish. A trading company financed by royal princes.

Otögin—Mongolian. ‘Lord of the Hearth’. The term used to denote the youngest son of a household.

Pādshāh—Persian. Emperor/Monarch.

Paiza—Mongolian. Diploma of investiture or entitlement.

Parvānah—Persian. Master of the Seal. Title granted to the assistant of the Saljūq Sultan of Rūm.

Pīr—Persian. Elder/Elderly.

Qa'an—Mongolian. Supreme khan. Derived from the Turkic '*khaghan*'. The term was used to distinguish the khan of the Empire from the holders of *ulus*.

Qādī/(pl.) *Qudāt*—Arabic. Islamic Judge.

Qalan—Mongolian. Tax. 10 per cent levy upon all produce.

Qaraju—Mongolian. Commoner.

Qol—Mongolian. Centre/Central Army. The Mongol army was traditionally divided into three divisions: the centre, the left, and the right.

Qubchir—Mongolian. Poll tax.

Qubi—Mongolian. Share/Portion. The term refers to grants of pasture and salaries from the khan to his family and most powerful subjects.

Quriltai—Mongolian. A council of notables, most commonly the Chinggisid princes, princesses (*altun uruq*), queens, and commanders (*noyat*), summoned to discuss all significant events affecting the Empire.

Qut—Turkish. Good fortune.

Ra'yyat—Persian. Literally translated as 'cattle'. The term was used to refer to the common, predominantly agrarian, population of Iran.

Ṣāhib Dīvān—Persian. Chief-Administrator/Minister. The *ṣāhib dīvān* was most commonly placed in charge of revenue collection, expenditure, and managing the treasury. But under Īlkhān rule it was often difficult distinguish between the duties of the *ṣāhib dīvān* and the vizier.

Sayyid/(pl.) *Sādāt*—Arabic. Chief. In Islamic times the title was used to distinguish the descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad.

Shāh—Persian. See *Pādshāh*.

Sultan—Arabic. Ruler/Monarch. Derived from the Arabic term for power (*salaṭa*).

Tamgha—Mongolian. Seal/Stamp. The term was also used in reference to tax on commerce.

Tamma—Mongolian. A military division of diverse origin appointed to garrison conquered territories within the Empire.

Tenggeri—Mongolian. See *Mōngke Tenggeri*.

Tümen—Mongolian. A unit of 10,000. The term was most often used to denote military divisions (myriarchies) and sums of money.

Ulamā—Arabic. Senior scholars of religious sciences.

Ulus—Mongolian. Realm/People/Nation.

Uruq—Mongolian. Family/Kin.

Vizier—Arabic/Persian. Chief Minister.

Yarghu—Mongolian. Trial/Interrogation.

Yarghuchi—Mongolian. Judge.

Yarliq—Mongolian. Imperial Decree/Edict.

Yosun—Mongolian. A loose collection of political traditions and customs attributed to Chinggis Khan and his heirs.

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