Published: October 29, 2015
Last Updated: June 14, 2018

AḴBĀR-E MOḠOLĀN

***AḴBĀR-E MOḠOLĀN*,** an original and independent source prepared by Qoṭb-al-Din Širāzi (1236-1311) on the reign of the Il-Khan Hulāgu Khan and his immediate successors, Abaqa and Aḥmad Tegüdār. The *Aḵbār-e Moḡolān,* penned, though not necessarily authored or endorsed, by Širāzi, recounts the rule of Hulāgu Khan and his son Abaqa and the travails and ultimate demise and death of Abaqa's brother and would-be successor, Aḥmad Tegüdār.

The work is an original and independent source that throws new light on these anecdotes and makes some startling and controversial claims concerning other matters that are only lightly touched upon elsewhere. Širāzi (pp. 37-38) includes an intriguing anecdote not recorded elsewhere concerning an attempt by the Franks of Syria (see CRUSADES) to infiltrate the Mamluk army's ranks. He claims that 700 Franks approached the Muslim forces with the intention of deceiving the true believers in order to gain their trust before attacking them with concealed weapons. However, Bondoqdār Baybars saw through the subterfuge and invited the Christians to participate in the celebrations for *ʿeid al-ẓḥā* though without first explaining that they would be taking on the role of the sacrificial animals. The Mamluk Sultan then ordered "that they be cast in the manner of the animal, and they cut their necks with a knife" (p. 38). Following this anecdote, Širāzi continues with a significant observation as regards those nobles and commanders who had joined Hulāgu's forces from the Golden Horde in the north. After hostilities had broken out between Hulāgu and the House of Jochi under the new khan,

Berka, Širāzi claims that that there had been considerable jealousy emerging among many of Hulāgu's loyalists against Berka's Jochid governors and *šeḥna*s (military administrators) in Iran who "held the choicest and best territories in Khorasan, ʿErāq, Azarbaijan, Arrān, and Georgia" (p. 40).

The manuscript came to light in recent years as part of the "Širāzi Codex," an eclectic collection of treaties on theology and philosophy, quatrains of Persian and Arabic verse, including work by ʿOmar Khayyam, quotations from pre-Islamic Persian and Greek thinkers with extracts from the thoughts of Plato, and complete texts of such contemporary figures as the Jewish thinker, Ebn Kammuna, and Samāwʾal al-Maḡribi. This diverse collection, all in the hand of Qoṭb-al-Din Širāzi, is indicative of the wide interests of this medieval scientist and thinker, who had the ears of Hulāgu and the early Il-Khanids. After many years of dispersal, the collected, collated, and rebound codex is currently in the Ayatollah Marʿaši Public Library in Qom with call number 12868, where it remains accessible for researchers.

The *Aḵbār-e Moḡolān* is a fragmentary collection of notes, jottings, and records which, after an initial general introduction to the Chinggisids, dwells solely on events connected with the early Il-Khanate, closing circa 1284 with the execution of Aḥmad Tegüdār and the elevation of Arḡun Khan to the throne. Though a basic chronology is followed throughout the text, the detail given to individual events is random and unpredictable, and many major incidents and major figures are omitted, probably due to the loss or destruction of folios. The late Iraj Afšār, the editor of the published edition, has arranged the folios into a more coherent order, since the gaps in events, years, and pages made the 'original' pagination, as it appeared in the codex, very unsatisfactory. Afšār explains his revised pagination and also supplies the original order of the folios in his very welcome introduction, which furnishes the reader with an array of other useful background data.

The manuscript, composed between 1280 and 1284, eventually turned up in the scriptorium (Rabeʿ-e rašidi) of Rašid-al-Din, whose stamp *waqf-e Ketābḵāna-ye Rašidi* ("endowed to Rašid-al-Din's library") is clearly identifiable on some of the folios, and it is clear that Rašid-al-Din and his researchers made selective use of this unusual text in the epic *Jāmeʿ al-tawāriḵ*. For the most part, the text uses plain and unembellished language, which possibly indicates regard for a non-Persian audience—a view re-enforced by the opening line of the text, which provides the date in the "reckoning" of the Muslims, the Anatolians, the Zoroastrians, the Uyghurs, and the Chinese. The opening page

also makes plain the positive light in which the author held the imperial Chinggisid rulers. The one anecdote concerning Čengiz Khan portrays the Great Khan in an almost biblical light, magically distributing the meager rations between his beleaguered faithful in the valley of Baljuna, dividing the meat of one desert sparrow among seventy and "from that sharing and righteousness the people became devotees and followers, and towards him they surrendered their souls" (p. 19). The chronicle summarizes the Chinggisid conquests and the individual rulers before observing that now with the ascension of Möngke Qa'an "there was equity and justice … the wolf and the sheep drank water together [in peace]" (p. 20).

This fragmentary history is important, not only for the new information it provides, but for the quotations and anecdotes it shares with later chronicles, suggesting either a common earlier source or that the *Aḵbār* is that primary source. Since it has no obvious textual links with other early regional chronicles, such as Jovayni's *History*, or Ṭusi's preface to his *Zij-e Il-Ḵāni* and description of the fall of Baghdad, it is likely that the scholars working for Rašid-al-Din at the Rabʿ-e rašidi in Tabriz had used this narrative as a primary source when preparing the *Jāmeʿ al-tawāriḵ*. The small, subtle differences in the accounts of events appearing in these two histories are often intriguing. A far more detailed description of the siege of Baghdad appears in the *Jāmeʿ al-tawāriḵ*, though it seems certain that Rašid-al-Din consulted this slim volume for some of his detail. However, absent from Rašid-al-Din was the significance that the *Aḵbār-e Moḡolān* placed on pestilence as a cause of the mounting death toll and the problem that the caliph and the citizens had in disposing of diseased cadavers (p. 32).

Both histories report the mobilization of troops and their march on Baghdad, but whereas Širāzi makes it plain that these troops came from Pārs, Kerman, Rum, ʿErāq, Šuštar, Khuzestan, and other regional strongholds, Rašid-al-Din disguises this fact by naming the advancing armies after their Mongol commanders. In an almost verbatim report of the treachery of the dashing Jamāl-al-Din, son of the Caliph's chancellor, Rašid-al-Din reports Hulāgu's fury and upset but omits the last sentences found in Širāzi's account describing Il-Khan's convulsions that the incident precipitated. Though both Rašid-al-Din and Širāzi devote great attention to the standoff between Arḡun and Aḥmad Tegüdār, they often chose the events of different days to record. The combined account of the final conflict between these two princes should prove particularly valuable for scholars of this period.

The *Aḵbār-e Moḡolān* is only now attracting serious attention, but, if one considers that it was likely written by a politically and culturally influential figure with access to the highest circles of power, it deserves far deeper scrutiny and analysis than it has hitherto entertained.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sources.

Rašid-al-Din Hamadāni, *Jāmeʿ al-tawāriḵ*, ed. M. Rawšan and M. Musavi, Tehran, 1994.

Idem, "Compendium of Chronicles: Jāmeʿ al-Tavārīkh," in W. M. Thackston, ed., *Classical Writings of the Medieval Islamic World*, London, 2012, III, p. 586.

ʿAṭā Malek Jovayni, *Tāriḵ-e jahāngošā*, ed. M. Qazvini, 3 vols., Leiden, 1937; tr. J. A. Boyle as *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, 2 vols., Manchester, 1997.

Qoṭb-al-Din Širāzi, *Aḵbār-e Moḡolān dar anbāna-ye Mollā Qoṭb*, ed. I. Afšār, Qum, 2009.

Saʿdi Širāzi, *The Gulistan of Saʿdi*, ed. and tr. W. M. Thackston, Bethesda, 2008.

Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi, "Kayfiyat-e Vāqeʿa-ye Baghdad," in ʿAṭā Malek Jovayni, *Tāriḵ-e jahāngošā*, ed. M. Qazvini, 3 vols., Leiden, 1937, III, pp. 280-92.

Idem, "Moqaddama-ye Zij-e Il-Ḵāni," in "The Longer Introduction to the Zij-i-Ilkhani of Nasir al-Din Tusi," ed. J. A. Boyle, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 8, 1963, pp. 244-54.

Studies and catalogues.

J. A. Boyle, "The Death of the Last Abbasid Caliph: A Contemporary Muslim Account," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 6, 1961, pp. 145-61.

G. Lane, "Mongol News: The Akhbar-i Moghulan dar Anbaneh Qutb by Qutb al-

Din Mahmud ibn Masʿud Shirazi," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 22, 2012, pp. 541-59.

M. Marʿaši, *Fehrest-e nosḵahā-ye ḵaṭṭi-e Ketābḵāna-ye ʿomumi-e ḥaẓrat-e Āyat-Allāh al-ʿoẓmā Najafi Marʿaši*, vol. 32, Qom, 2004.

R. Pourjavadi and S. Schmidtke, "The Quṭb al-Din Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311) Codex (Ms. Marʿashī 12868)," *Studia Iranica* 36, 2007, pp. 279-301.

S. Takagi, "Akhbar-i Mughūlān as a Source of Early Ilkhanid History," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 82, 2011, pp. 95-143 [in Japanese, available online at: http://repository.tufs.ac.jp/handle/10108/65520].