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IL-KHANIDS I. DYNASTIC HISTORY

i. DYNASTIC HISTORY

The first part of this entry will be a short survey of the reigns of the various Il-khans; treatment that is more detailed will be found in the individual entries for each ruler. The second part will review some of the salient characteristics and institutions of the state they ruled, as well as certain significant developments in it.

Dynastic history. The Mongols had been present in the Islamic world since the invasion of Čengiz Khan in 1219. Even after he withdrew to the steppe in 1223, a relatively small Mongol force remained in Transoxiana and Khorasan. This garrison, reinforced over the years by additional Mongol forces, gradually expanded Mongol control over all of Persia and beyond, even bringing the Saljuq kingdom of Rum under their rule after the victory of Köse Dagh in 1243. The Jazira and Iraq remained beyond the reach of the Mongols at this time, although their forces occasionally raided these countries as well as north Syria in the 1240s. Mongol control over this vast territory was far from complete, and the Nezāri Esmāʿilis (the so-called Assassins) maintained their independence in a series of castles in the mountains south of the Caspian Sea and in Kuhestān in eastern Iran. A rudimentary bureaucracy was also established, staffed by Central Asian Muslims, members of select Central Asian sedentary peoples with administrative traditions (most prominently Uighurs

and Khitans), and some Persian bureaucratic families who had decided that it was in their interest, and perhaps the interest of the Muslims at large, to join the Mongol administration. The dismay of the Persians at the influx of the parvenus and their important role in the new administration is seen in the words of ʿAlāʾ-al-Din al-Jovayni (q.v.; see Jovayni, ed. Qazvini, I, pp. 4-5; tr. Boyle, I, pp. 7-8), scion of a well-established family of bureaucrats, whose father Bahāʾ-al-Din had begun serving the Mongols. His brother Šams-al-Din eventually became Hülegü's chief minister (*ṣāḥeb divān*), a post which seems to have merged with the position of vizier at this time. ʿAlāʾ-al-Din was to become the governor of Baghdad and one of the most important historians of Mongol Iran.

This period of relatively loose control and somewhat small Mongol presence, albeit over a large area, ended with the arrival of Hülegü in Transoxiana in 1255. This prince had been dispatched by his brother Möngke in 1251, soon after the latter's accession to the position of Great Khan or Qa'an (< *qaghan*), who also sent another brother, Qubilai, to China. Hülegü took with him an enormous army, supposedly two out of every ten Mongol soldiers, who were accompanied by families and herds. This, then, was not just a military campaign but also the mass migration of a large portion of the Mongol nation to Persia and the surrounding countries. According to Rašid- al-Din (q.v.), Hülegü was first to eliminate the Ismāʿilis and to subjugate the rebellious Lurs and Kurds. Subsequently he brought about the submission of the caliph and, finally, enacted the laws of Čengiz Khan in the territory from the Oxus river to the borders of Egypt. This is clear enough, but the author adds that the Qa'an publicly ordered his brother to return to Mongolia upon completing this mission, but secretly told him that he and his descendents were to remain in the country. Rašid-al-Din does not explicitly deal with the question of establishing a dynasty, but perhaps even this fuzzy information should be suspect, as this author was a clear apologist for the dynasty. This, and somewhat contradictory information in other sources such as the Mamluk author Ebn Fażl-Allāh al-ʿOmari (ed. Lech, pp. 2, 17), have led to suggestions that Hülegü may have been exceeding his orders by establishing a full-blown, practically independent dynasty (see Jackson, 1980, pp. 220-22, and the entry on Hülegü Khan for a fuller discussion) in the confusion and civil war that followed Möngke's death in August 1259. Certainly, as ʿOmari states (ed. Lech, p. 2), the Il-khanid state, as we can now conveniently call it, suffered from a problem of legitimacy vis-à-vis the neighboring Mongol states of the Chaghatayids in Transoxiana and the Jochid Golden Horde to the north, and

thus stressed its family connection with the Great Khan.

By 1256, Hülegü had all but eliminated the Ismāʿilis as an independent force in Persia (although individual forts remained independent for some time, even years), and had moved with the bulk of his army to Azarbaijan, which was to become the center of the Il-khanid state. After some desultory negotiations, Hülegü marched his army to Baghdad in early 1258, which surrendered after some spirited fighting by its army and populace. The caliph al-Mostaʿṣem was executed, and the Abbasid caliphate was virtually extinguished. Nevertheless, a scion of the dynasty eventually made his way to Syria, where the Mamluk sultan had him crowned as caliph (1261), thereby inaugurating a puppet caliphate that gave the sultanate a certain legitimacy, at least in its war against the Mongols. At the beginning of 1260, the Il-khans began a campaign into north Syria. Aleppo and its environs were quickly taken, and the general Kitbuqa was dispatched to the south with a division to occupy Damascus and reconnoiter in Palestine and trans-Jordan. In late winter, Hülegü withdrew from Syria to Azarbaijan, perhaps due to a lack of pastureland for the many horses of his large army, or in order to be prepared in case of a Jochid attack via the Caucasus, now that his patron, Möngke, had died. Taking advantage of the presence of only a relatively small Mongol force in Syria, the Mamluk Sultan Qoṭoz moved into the country from Egypt, defeating Kitbuqa on 3 September 1260 at ʿAyn Jālut in northern Palestine, thereby ending the short period of Mongol rule west of the Euphrates. Without a doubt, Hülegü, as well as his successors, desired to avenge this embarrassing and unexpected defeat, but other, more pressing matters usually prevented them from devoting their full attention to it. Hülegü, in any event, had to satisfy himself with raids along and across the frontier. From the Mamluk point of view the war took on clear religious overtones: they were the defenders of Islam against the infidel Mongols. The latter's religious status did not prevent many Muslim Persian bureaucrats from serving them to the best of their abilities.

From about this time we can talk about an independent Il-khanid state, within the context of the breakup of the united Mongol empire. One symbol of this discord was the civil war in Mongolia and northern China between Hülegü's two brothers, Qubilai and Ariq Böke. The former achieved victory and the title of Qa'an in 1264 and recognized the de facto independence of Hülegü in the west. The dissolution of the united empire is also symbolized by the outbreak of war between the two cousins, Hülegü and the Jochid Khan Berke, in the winter of 1261-62, although sustained fighting only began in the summer of

1262. Initially, the forces of the Golden Horde penetrated into Il-khanid territory, but these were beaten back; and Hülegü's army, under the command of Abaqa (q.v., the future Il-khan), advanced across the Caucasus into the land of the enemy. Eventually the Il-khanid forces were routed, and an uneasy frontier was established along the Kur river. War between the two Mongol neighbors erupted upon Hülegü's death in 1265 and continued in a desultory fashion along the river until Berke's death in 1267. In general, intermittent war with the Golden Horde, or the threat of it, plagued the Il-khanids and was an important factor contributing to their inability to pursue the war against the Mamluk sultans, allies of the khans of the Golden Horde.

Abaqa's reign (1265-82) was one of consolidation; there were no more conquests, but the state was more institutionalized and enjoyed relative internal stability. The continuing role of Šams-al-Din al-Jovayni as chief minister (*ṣāḥeb-divān* and vizier) should be mentioned. In the realm of foreign relations, perhaps the most important development was the war with the Chaghatayid Khan Baraq. This saw the latter's invasion deep into Il-khanid territory in 1270, but ended in his defeat by the Il-khans at the battle of Herat in July of that year. After this, the Il-khanid-Chaghatayid front remained quiet along the Oxus, but this did not prevent Abaqa's troops from raiding Bukhara in 1272-73. The front with the Golden Horde was also generally quiet, which may have led in the end to the revival of war with the Mamluks. There were at least half a dozen major raids into Mamluk territory during Abaqa's reign, culminating in the large-scale invasion of Syria in 1281 led by the Il-khan's brother Möngke Temür. This force was defeated by the Sultan Qalāwun (r. 1279-90) after a difficult battle, and half a generation passed before the Mongols again attempted a major offensive into Syria. The Mamluks themselves waged an active campaign of raiding across the frontier as well as against the Il-khanid ally of Lesser Armenia, reaching a peak with Baybars' massive incursion in 1277, which included the defeat of the local Mongol force at Albustayn (Elbistān) in April of that year. In order to deal better with the Mamluks, Abaqa dispatched four embassies to the West calling for a joint campaign against the common enemy. Here he continued and strengthened a policy already adopted by Hülegü, but in the long run nothing came of these maneuvers. There had been, however, an attempt to coordinate strategies with Prince Edward of England, who arrived in Acre in 1271, resulting in a fairly large Mongol raid to the north of Syria. This raid, as well as Edward's activities, led to no changes in the military or political situation in the country.

Abaqa was succeeded by his brother Tegüder, who had converted to Islam as a youth, taking the name Aḥmad. His short reign (1282-84) included a campaign to reinstate Islam as the official religion, negotiations with the Mamluks, and strife with Arḡun, son of Abaqa, which eventually led to Tegüder's demise. The research of Adel Allouche has shown that the Il-khan's diplomatic attempts vis-à-vis the Mamluks were still veiled calls for full submission to Mongol rule. While public expressions of Tegüder's faith were made, and in principle, the laws regarding the *d¨emmi*s were to be carried out, there is evidence for the continued maintenance of traditional Mongol religious tolerance. There is, indeed, little doubt regarding the Il-khan's general incompetence, especially in his dealing with the challenge represented by Arḡun, but the matter of his religion should not be discounted as a factor that encouraged opposition among the Mongol princes and grandees. If nothing else, his abandonment of traditional Mongol religion may well have served as a rallying cry for political and other opposition. It appears that the Mongol ruling class in Persia was not yet ready to accept wholesale conversion to Islam, either among themselves or among the masses of Mongol troops.

Arḡun's reign (1284-91), began with the final deposition and execution of Šams-al-Din Jovayni and his replacement by a Mongol officer, Buqa, who in turn served three years before his elimination. Eventually (1289), the office of vizier was given to Saʿd-al-Dowla, whose efficiency in collecting money, and his religion (Jewish), gained him many enemies. He was removed from office and killed during his patron's fatal illness. Twice, in 1288 and 1290, Arḡun took to the field to meet invasions (or perhaps large-scale raids) from the Golden Horde into the Caucasus; in both cases the invaders were repulsed. On the Central Asian front there were also problems; in early 1288 there had been an attack from Qaidu and his Chaghatayid supporters. Toward the end of Arḡun's reign, this front erupted again: Nowruz (q.v.), the son of the earlier Mongol viceroy in the area, Arḡun Āqā (q.v.), had long been in rebellion against the Il-khan. He had earlier fled to Central Asia, and now returned with the support of Qaidu. At the time of Arḡun's death, his son Ḡāzān (q.v.), the governor of Khurasan, was retreating, although eventually he was to be reconciled with Nowruz. Arḡun launched no major campaigns against the Mamluks; perhaps he was preoccupied with other problems, or was hoping for cooperation from the West. The Mamluks, however, were not idle and sent raiders across the frontier in 1285, 1286, and 1289. Arḡun's lack of military initiatives against the Mamluks belies his diplomatic activities to garner support from the Franks in Europe for a common campaign against this enemy. Arḡun sent four

delegations to the West, the most famous being that of the Nestorian prelate Rabbān Ṣauma in 1287, who visited, inter alia, the papal court. (An interesting Syriac account of this mission has come down to us: see Budge, *The Monks of Kûblâi Khân* in the Bibliography.) The story is recounted by Bar Hebraeus (tr. Budge, p. 486), that 900 Franks came to Iraq in order to build a fleet to harass Muslim shipping, apparently in the Indian Ocean. Nothing came of this project, if indeed it ever existed. Arḡun continued the religious policy of his forefathers—a basic belief in shamanism, combined with an interest in Buddhism, and discernable sympathy for the eastern Christians in his kingdom. He showed perhaps less tolerance for Islam than did other pagan Il-khans.

The years after Arḡun's death were characterized by political and economic confusion. Gayḵatu, a brother of Arḡun, beat out Ḡāzān, who was preoccupied with Nowruz's rebellion, to the throne. Ḡāzān had no choice but to acquiesce in this fait accompli. The new Il-khan (r. 1291-95) was known among Mongols and the wider population for his moral turpitude and extravagance. The Mamluks, now under the rule of al-Ašraf Ḵalil (r. 1290-93), attacked and took Qalʿat al-Rum in southeastern Anatolia. This was followed by an exchange of truculent letters between the two rulers, but the Mamluk sultan did not live long enough to attempt to carry out his threat to reconquer Baghdad. The Il-khan, in any event, did not initiate any major offensives into Syria. Likewise, the Central Asian and Caucasian fronts were also relatively quiet. Perhaps the most notable, or rather infamous, development of this reign was the introduction of paper money (*chʿao*) in the markets of Tabriz in 1294 by the vizier Ṣadr-al-Din Zanjāni. This was a complete failure and contributed to the economic crisis fueled by the large-scale death of livestock (the so-called *jut*), mismanagement, and unbridled spending by the court. Gayḵatu's unhappy reign was brought to an end by Baidu, a nephew of Abaqa, who took the throne in the early spring of 1295. Baidu's regime lasted only a few months; the historian Rašid-al-Din, a noted partisan of Baidu's nemesis Ḡāzān, does not even bother to mention him as a ruler. Baidu certainly did not have time to make his mark; some six months after seizing power, he was removed and executed by officers of Ḡāzān.

With the accession of Ḡāzān (r. 1295-1304), the Il-khanate enters a new and dynamic era. A harbinger of these changes was Ḡāzān's conversion to Islam even before he gained the throne. Nowruz, with whom he had been reconciled, was instrumental in bringing about this conversion, as well as the

successful struggle with Baidu. With the defeat of the latter and the beginning of Ḡā-zān's rule, we can now talk of the Islamization of the Mongols in Persia and the surrounding countries, although not all aspects of traditional Mongol belief disappeared immediately. In spite of the patronage of Muslim building and institutions, and the increasing employment of Islamic titles and other forms of legitimization, there is a continued use of Mongol forms of rule and ideology, as well as ongoing connections, perhaps more attenuated than previously, with the Great Khan in the East. We cannot, therefore, speak of a break from Mongol tradition, but a transition to other, more Islamic and perhaps Iranian, forms of government and symbolism.

Ḡāzān's regime commenced with the removal of several princes who were perceived as undermining his rule. He and his successors continued purging real and imagined royal conspirators, thereby dangerously reducing the pool of potential dynasts in the long run. In 1297, Ḡāzān also executed Nowruz, the strongman of the regime, who was suspected of secret contacts with the Mamluk enemies. In spite of the religious change, there was a remarkable continuity of foreign policy. The conversion of the ruler brought no relaxation of relations with the Mamluks—quite the opposite. Ḡāzān pursued his war with the rulers of Egypt and Syria with vigor, now adding Muslim justification to traditional Mongol ones. An invasion of Syria at the end of 1299 led to the Mongol victory at the Wādi al-Ḵaznadār near Homs; this is the one significant Il-khanid success in a field battle against their Mamluk enemies in the sixty-odd years of the war between the two regional powers. The victory led to a 100-day Mongol occupation of Damascus, but the Mongols withdrew of their own accord, perhaps due to troubles on other frontiers and possibly due to the projected logistical difficulties of maintaining a cavalry army and its numerous mounts in Syria over the summer. A year later, Ḡāzān tried again, demonstrating his determination to gain control over the country and to defeat the Mamluks decisively. This campaign was curtailed while still in north Syria, when unusually wet and cold weather was encountered. Two years later, the Il-khan again sent a large army over the Euphrates under the command of Qutlu-šāh. This force was defeated in April 1303 south of Damascus at Marj al-Ṣoffar. This was the last of the great Mongol invasions across the Euphrates, although warfare along the frontier was to continue for more than a decade. These campaigns had been interspersed with an exchange of missives with the Mamluk sultan, al-Nāṣer Moḥammad. The truculent nature of these letters from both sides, laced with Islamic motifs and each disparaging the religiousness of the other, shows that the possibility of

Mamluk-Il-khanid peace was still far in the future.

Ḡāzān also continued his predecessor's attempts to forge an alliance with the rulers of Europe against the Mamluks. In April 1302, he wrote to Pope Boniface VIII; it appears that an earlier order (*yarlīg*) had been issued, which might well have been a detailed plan for a joint Mongol-Frankish campaign (A. Mostaert and F. W. Cleaves, "Trois documents mongoles des Archives secretes vaticanes," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 15, 1952, p. 469). As in earlier cases, nothing came of these missions, although the Mongol victory of 1299 and the subsequent occupation of Syria had awakened hopes in the West for a return of Jerusalem to the Christians. Again, little of substance occurred except for some raiding along the Syrian coast (see S. Schein, "*Gesta Dei per Mongolos 1300*: The Genesis of a Non-Event," *English Historical Review* 94, 1979, pp. 805-15). Around the beginning of 1300, Ḡāzān received a letter from the Khan of the Golden Horde, Toqta, in which the old Jochid demands for Azarbaijan were rehashed. This claim was dismissed out of hand, but there is no record of actual hostilities breaking out on this front during this reign. On the other hand, there are reports of problems on the Chaghatayid front (Hetʿum, p. 196). These incursions may have been at least part of the reason for Ḡāzān's withdrawal from Syria in 1300.

A notable event in Ḡāzān's reign was the elevation of Rašid-al-Din Hamadāni (q.v) as co-vizier (with Saʿd-al-Din Sāvaji) around 1298. Rašid-al-Din first has importance as an administrator, lasting in this job until 1318. No less important, he was entrusted by Ḡāzān with writing the history of the Mongols and their steppe predecessors. This was the *Tāriḵ-e ḡāzāni-e mobārak*, which was expanded during the reign of Öljeytü (1304-16) into a history of humanity as then understood, with the title *Jāmeʿ al-tawāriḵ*. Besides being a monument to the wide intellectual horizons occasioned by the period of Mongol rule, it is also a major (and according to many scholars the most important) source for the history of the Mongols in general and the Il-khanids in particular. It is not without its biases, particularly towards the house of Toluy (q.v.), i.e., Hülegü's father, and therefore the ancestor of his own patron. Among the significant information transmitted by Rašid al-Din is extensive evidence, including the original texts of orders from the Il-khans, regarding the widespread economic and administrative reforms that Ḡāzān saw fit to enact towards the end of his reign. The reports on the poor state of the economy that Ḡāzān met upon his rise to power, and the extent of these reforms (and their execution), should be taken with some reservations, since Rašid al-Din is virtually our only source

for these matters and he himself was heavily involved in their implementation. This subject will be discussed in more detail below.

Ḡāzān died in 1304 at the age of 33. Possessing wide intellectual horizons, he was in many respects the greatest of the Il-khans. He was succeeded by his brother Öljeytü, whose early reign was marked by an attempt at unity and an end to conflict among the various Mongols rulers. This *rapprochement* was highlighted in the Il-khan's letter to Phillip the Fair of France in 1305. Even though there was a call for concerted action against the Mamluks, there is also perhaps a veiled threat towards the Franks if they did not join the campaign (D. Sinor, "The Mysterious 'Talu Sea' in Öljeitü's letter to Philip the Fair of France," in D. Sinor, *Inner Asia and its Contacts with Medieval Europe*, London, 1977, article no. XIV). At the same time, Öljeytü also instigated an exchange of embassies with the Mamluks, calling for peace, although it would appear that this was either a subtle demand for surrender or an attempt to bide time until a major campaign could be launched. After several years of waiting for a Frankish response to his call for joint action, Öljeytü decided to launch the offensive with only his own forces. He was probably encouraged by Mamluk deserters who arrived in the summer of 1312 under Qarasunqur, former governor of Aleppo. This campaign, in spite of the large Mongol forces that set out, was a fiasco. The Mongols, led by the Il-khan himself, wasted their strength against the Mamluk border fortress of al-Raḥba along the Euphrates. After a siege lasting several weeks, during which the Mongols suffered from disease and other problems, the Mongols withdrew at the end of January 1313. Although there would be further fighting along the border in the following years, this was the final attempt of the Il-khans to invade Syria in force.

Öljeytü also had little success in 1307 in bringing the troublesome Gilān region under firmer control. The Mongol campaign, led by the Il-khan himself, met with stiff resistance; the senior general Qutlu-šāh was killed, and the Mongols suffered an embarrassing withdrawal. More success was achieved in the East, when in 1314 interference from both the Chaghatayids in Transoxiana and the Negüderis (Qauranas) in Afghanistan was brought to an end.

Early in his reign, Öljeytü dedicated the city of Solṭāniya in Azarbaijan, a project that had been initiated by Arḡun. Öljeytü built his mausoleum there, one of the pinnacles of Il-khanid architecture in Persia. In the winter of 1307-08 he declared his allegiance to the Shiʿites, and during the following years he made efforts to enforce this belief among the Muslims of his kingdom. This "conversion" certainly fueled the enmity of the Mamluks, and perhaps

Öljeytü's adoption of this faith was indirectly influenced by this ongoing conflict. Some Mamluk sources report that Öljeytü renounced his Shiʿite faith towards his death, but this is probably no more than wishful thinking on their (and their patrons') part.

The last of the Il-khans was Abu Saʿid, the son of Öljeytü, who was twelve years old at the time of his accession to the throne. Real power was clearly in the hands of Čobān (q.v.), the leading Mongol grandee. Early in his reign, the venerable vizier and historian Rašid-al-Din was tried and executed, leaving his enemy ʿAli Šāh as the sole vizier. The latter maintained this position until his *natural* death in 1324, a unique occurrence in the annals of the Il-khanate. The early years of Abu Saʿid's reign were punctuated by invasions and disorder. In 1319, Yasaδur, a Chaghatayid prince based in what is today Afghanistan, who earlier had submitted to the Il-khans, now rose in revolt. This was soon put down, but at the same time there had been an invasion via the Caucasus by Özbek, khan of the Golden Horde. This was repulsed by Čobān, although the young Il-khan's personal bravery can be noted. The forces of the Golden Horde attacked a second time in 1325, and again Čobān repulsed them, even penetrating enemy territory in the aftermath of his success. Perhaps more significant was a revolt of Mongol notables led by Irenjin. It appears that Abu Saʿid himself may have initially encouraged these officers against his guardian. Subsequently, however, the Il-khan changed sides and together with Čobān defeated the rebels. Due to his own courage, Abu Saʿid received the epithet Bahādor "brave" (< Mongol *baghatur* "brave"), which henceforth remained attached to his name.

An important development in the realm of foreign relations was the end of hostilities with the Mamluks. This began with feelers put out, evidently first by the Mongols, through the good offices of the international slave trader, Majd-al-Sallāmi, around 1320. This led to negotiations that in turn resulted in the signing of a peace treaty in 1223. Thus ended the sixty-odd year war with the chief enemy, certainly the main non-Mongol one, of the Il-khans. In 1327 began the crisis that led to Čobān's downfall and death. Henceforth Abu Saʾid ruled fully in fact and not just in name. The following years were relatively tranquil. A contemporary observer would probably not have discerned that the Il-khanate was nearing its end, but the rebellion of Irenjin and other tensions hint that the ties between the Hülegüid dynasty and the Mongol ruling class were weakening. With the unexpected death in 1335 of Abu Saʿid, who had set out to meet the reported advances of an invasion from the Golden

Horde, the ruling house basically came to an end. The purges and rebellion of the previous generation or so had left their mark; there were virtually no Hülegüid scions to serve as ruler (Abu Saʿid had no sons), and in any event the senior Mongol grandees fell out among themselves, each supporting different pretenders. This led to the disintegration of the kingdom, the story of which is beyond the scope of this article (see ČOBĀN, CHOBANIDS)

Institutional, social, and cultural aspects of Il-khanid rule. The most important institution in all the Mongol states, including the Il-khanate, was the army, the basis of conquest and power. All Mongol grandees and princes were senior officers, and the Il-khan, even at the end of the dynasty, would often go out at the head of his troops on campaign. The original Mongol army that Hülegü brought with him (supplemented by the Mongol garrisons already in the Middle East) was composed overwhelmingly of light cavalry: Mongol troops riding steppe ponies and armed with bows and hand weapons. Troops went on campaign with a string of ponies that they would ride in turn, both on long marches and during battle. The principal tactics were the massed cavalry charge, accompanied by a barrage of arrows, and attempts to encircle the enemy. If the enemy were broken, then the Mongols would close in; if it maintained its position, then the Mongols would launch successive attacks until their objective was achieved. From the beginning, the Mongols were aware of the importance of siege warfare. Hülegü brought with him several hundred households (or perhaps squads) of siege engineers, who were probably both sappers and artillery experts (cf. Allsen, 1987, p. 202). The question whether the Mongols employed gunpowder-based explosives (or even artillery) in sieges in the Islamic world remains open, at least to this author's mind. In any event, there is no evidence of them in the war against the Mamluks. Early on, the Mongols employed auxiliary troops from local rulers, be they Muslims (Saljuqs from Rum, Mosul, etc.) or Christians (Greater and Lesser Armenia, and Georgia). In the former case, many of these soldiers were probably mamluk-type troops, i.e., slave soldiers, of local rulers; the Georgian and Armenian contingents probably included some infantry. In any event, the evidence points to the continuation into the fourteenth century of traditional Mongol tactics, using massed light cavalry. There may have been some heavier-armed cavalry units, perhaps the guard division of the ruler himself (the *bahādoriya* "braves"). There is clear evidence that the Il-khanid army was organized into divisions, each called *tümen*. These were, in theory, composed of 10,000 men, although in reality they probably were undermanned.

After the initial period of conquest and consolidation, the army found employment against different types of enemies: (1) other Mongol states and forces (the Golden Horde, Chaghatayids and Qaraunas), (2) local rebels (Kurds, Lurs, local Muslim kings), (3) rebellions of Mongol princes and senior officers (who were supported by part of the army), and (4) the Mamluks. In general, the Mamluks had the upper hand in this sixty-year war along the frontier, in the use of espionage and in the major field battles. The one Mongol victory in the field in a major confrontation was at Wādā al-Ḵaznadār in central Syria in 1299. This led to a temporary Mongol occupation of Syria but to no lasting change of the status quo along the border. It has been suggested by J. M. Smith, Jr. and David O. Morgan that the logistical limitations of Syria prevented the Mongols from concentrating a large number of troops in Syria for any length of time; there simply was not enough pasturage in the country to support the many mounts that the army brought with it. Without anyone contesting the importance of this factor, others may have been just as significant. One was the inability of the Il-khans to absent themselves for any length of time from the center of their kingdom, and another was the dangers (perceived or real) from other Mongol states. In general, it appears that the Mamluk sultans attributed more importance to this war than did the Il-khanids. For the former, it was seen as a matter of life and death. The resources and attention that the Mamluks devoted to the war may be one of the main reasons for their continuing success. It was recognition of their inability to defeat the Mamluks that apparently impelled the Mongol ruling group in Iran to initiate the negotiations that led to the peace treaty of 1323.

The desire to defeat the Mamluks also led to ongoing negotiations with Western powers such as the pope and the kings of France, England, and Aragon. While the Il-khans had some contacts with the Franks in the Levant (particularly with the Prince of Antioch, who officially submitted to the Mongols even before the campaign in Syria in 1260), it became clear that these were of minor importance and that a deal would have to be struck with at least one of the Western potentates. Hülegü's initial maneuver, directed to Louis IX of France and apparently to the Pope as well, still bore traces of the traditional haughty Mongol attitude toward non-Mongol rulers, albeit more subtly expressed in this case. Later missives were more restrained, as the Mongol rulers saw the strategic importance of gaining allies against the Mamluks. It appears that the impression frequently conveyed by the Mongol envoys, who were often Eastern Christians, was that the Mongols either had converted to Christianity or were about to do so. This may have been due to a

deliberate Mongol ploy to encourage cooperation, an exaggeration on the part of the envoys, or simply a misreading of the religious tolerance of the Mongols, along with their sympathy for the Eastern Christians and the fact that some Mongol queens were Christians, mainly Nestorian. The last recorded Il-khanid embassy to the West was dispatched to Philip the Fair of France by Öljeytü in 1305.

Overall, in spite of some warm words and general expressions of good will and a desire to cooperate against the common enemy, little came of these exchanges of letters and oral messages. The closest that the Mongols came to actively cooperating with the Franks was during the crusade of Prince Edward of England, who arrived in Acre in 1271. After an exchange of letters, Abaqa sent a significant force into northern Syria. Edward, however, dissipated his strength on pointless raids in Palestine; and the Mongol force withdrew. So ended the one real attempt at Il-khanid-Frankish military cooperation. (See R. Amitai, "Edward of England and Abagha Il-khan: A Reexamination of a Failed Attempt at Mongol-Frankish Cooperation," in M. Gervers and J. M. Powell eds., *Tolerance and Intolerance*, Syracuse, N.Y., 2001, pp. 75-82.) At the same time, one might note the evidence cited above about the Frankish (probably Italian) sailors in Iraq at the end of the thirteenth century, who supposedly were planning attacks on Muslims (i.e., enjoying Mamluk patronage) in the Indian Ocean.

The overall failure of diplomacy to achieve a common military strategy with the Frankish rulers in Europe belies a well-developed trade with Europe, particularly via Italian merchants. Especially important were the Venetians, although their Genoese competitors also were active in the Il-khanate in spite of their close relations with the Golden Horde and the Mamluks. The Italians maintained colonies in Azarbaijan: not the least in Solṭāniya, where eventually a bishopric was established. Much of this trade was transient, i.e., Mongol Iran was a conduit for merchandise moving between the Mediterranean and points further east such as China and South Asia, and there are examples of Italian merchants (most famously the Polos) using Mongol Iran as a springboard for activities in other Mongol-controlled areas of Asia. The importance of these Italian merchants and the trust placed in them by the Mongol authorities is shown by their occasional use as envoys to the West by the Il-khans.

The checkered and often difficult relations between the Il-khans and their royal cousins to the north and northeast have already been mentioned. Relations with the Great Khan or Qa'an (Qāʾān in Persian and Arabic texts)

were much warmer, due both to the close familial ties (all were descendents of Toluy), as well as the fact that they were far away and therefore there was no opportunity for border disputes. The importance of these ties for the legitimacy of the Hülegüid house is noted by the Mamluk author ʿOmari (ed. Lech, p. 1). Hülegü's immediate successors enjoyed official investiture from the Great Khan Qubilai, although it came some time after their initial gaining of rule. Under Ḡāzān and his successors, some of these ties were loosened. The title Il-khan is used less often, and the official expression of subservience by Ḡāzān to the Great Khan on his coins all but disappears. On the other hand, there are several examples of delegations going back and forth between the two rulers, even more so than in the past; the largest number of missions was exchanged under Abu Saʿid. More importantly, the Great Khan had a high commissioner in the Il-khanid court, Bolad Ching-Sang (d. 1313), giving clear evidence of the official preeminence of the Great Khan. It is clear, then, that the Il-khans never gave up their de jure recognition of the Great Khan's preeminence.

Bolad also played a certain role in the cultural exchanges between the two extremes of the Mongol world, Iran and China. As Thomas Allsen has recently shown, the movement of people, commodities, and ideas across Asia was mutually beneficial to these countries, contributing to influences in both directions. Areas of influence included cartography and astronomy, medicine, agriculture, textiles, food, and printing. For example, on one hand, various crops were introduced from the Islamic world into China, while on the other hand, culinary influences went both ways. The Mongols were not merely passive conveyors of cultural artifacts but actively shaped the nature of this exchange by their own tastes and preferences.

The administration of the Il-khanate was an interesting mixture of institutions from Muslim Iran and the Mongol empire (itself combining several traditions), along with some original features and ongoing stopgap measures. Large numbers of Muslim bureaucrats, mostly Persian-speaking, quickly made their peace with the new non-Muslim rulers and joined their service. Mention has already been made of the Jovayni family; but Jean Aubin has brought to our attention the existence of the so-called Qazvini group of officials, and there were surely others. This scholar has also made it clear that the distinction between Mongol officers and Persian-speaking officials was not as clear-cut as has been thought. Certain Mongols (or other Central Asians) functioned successfully as senior bureaucrats (e.g., Arḡun āqā, q.v., and Buqa), and many

of the Persians were well acquainted with Mongol ways and language. On occasion they would even command military campaigns, such as Šams-al-Din Jovayni's in Anatolia in 1277. There is evidence that the tax system was both more onerous and more capricious than before the Mongols, causing much difficulty for the agricultural sector and for economic life in general. This is related to the question of the economic decline of the Il-khanate. A recent study by G. Lane permits us to see the economy of Mongol Iran and the surrounding countries in a more nuanced way. In general, we should be wary of attributing the effects of the initial Mongol conquest (1219-23) in northeast Iran, and the subsequent three decades of minimal Mongol control, to the initial period of Il-khanid rule. It can be stated that Hülegü and Abaqa's reigns led to a certain stabilization and some attempt to rebuild the economy, at least in certain areas. At the same time, we should be aware that areas such as Iraq and the Jazira suffered from Hülegü's conquest, and the latter region, as a frontier area, subsequently declined economically and demographically (see the evidence in Rašid-al-Din, Baku, III, pp. 557-58). Other areas, particularly Azarbaijan, prospered, due, inter alia,to Mongol patronage. Southern Iran (Fārs and Kermān) also maintained a level of prosperity, due apparently to the indirect nature of Mongol rule. It appears that Khorasan never fully recovered from the effects of the original conquest, as well as the fighting with the Chaghatayids and internal disorders such as Nowruz's revolt. In any event, the misrule of Gayḵatu seems to have plunged the kingdom as a whole into an economic crisis, perhaps exacerbating previous problems of over-taxation and the abandonment of agricultural land in certain areas.

Our understanding of the problem is certainly colored by the account of Rašid-al-Din. As mentioned above, since he was in the service of Ḡāzān and was writing at his behest, these reports should be treated with some caution, not the least since Rašid-al-Din himself was co-vizier and therefore responsible for carrying out the Il-khan's efforts at reform meant to rectify this situation. These administrative and economic reforms were recorded in detail by Rašid-al-Din himself in his history, with the texts of many orders (*yarlīg*s) given verbatim. The only independent, and quite general, confirmation of these reforms is by the Mamluk author al-Ṣafadi (*al-Wāfi be'l-wafayāt*, MS. Topkapı Sarayı Ahmet III 2920/25, fol. 61a), but there is no denying that a great many reforms were conceived and at least partially executed. It is also clear that the economic situation that Ḡāzān inherited was not auspicious, and strong administrative measures were needed to stabilize and improve matters. It appears that these measures, enacted towards the end of Ḡāzān's reign, had

some effect. A certain increase in state revenues is reported, and the impression from the accounts of his successors' reigns is not that of endemic economic crisis.

From the beginning of their regime, the Mongols were patrons of high culture. Hülegü supported the Shiʿite savant Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi (q.v.), most famously in the construction of an astronomical observatory at Marāḡa. This ruler surrounded himself with scholars from different religions and cultures (Rašid-al-Din, *Jāmeʿ al-tawāriḵ*, Baku, III, 91). The massive palace complex at Taḵt-e Solaymān in Azarbaijan (near Marāḡa), built during the time of Abaqa, is another example of a relatively early Mongol construction; the luxurious adornment shows the Il-khans as patrons of fine arts at their best (see Tomoko Masuya, "Il-khanid Courtly Life," in Komaroff and Carboni, 2002, pp. 84-103). With the final conversion of the Mongols, represented by Ḡāzān's adoption of Islam, we can see a definite change: patronage is devoted primarily to projects of an Islamic nature. Some of these projects are on a grand scale, such as Öljeytü's mausoleum complex, or, in the realm of fine arts, the gigantic Qurʾān that he commissioned. Henceforth, in their search for legitimization, the Il-khanids combine Islamic and Mongol motifs on coins, inscriptions, building projects, letters, and orders. Upon their arrival in the Middle East, the Mongols disestablished Islam as the state religion, a matter of some concern for subject Muslims. This was, however, a great propaganda boon for the Mamluks, who constantly harped in public pronouncements on this insufferable situation, on the killing of the caliph, and on the fact that the Mongols were infidels and polytheists. There is no indication that this religiously inspired, anti-Mongol polemic particularly disturbed the Mongols, although it may have caused some unease among the Muslim bureaucrats who served them. Within the Mongol ruling class, particularly among the women, there were those who professed Nestorian Christianity. The Mongols saw no contradiction between this system and their traditional sha-manistic religion. Likewise, Buddhism, evidently of the Tibetan variety, flourished in Iran under their patronage. Hülegü himself was sympathetic to Buddhism as well as to Christianity, surely influenced by his wife, Dokuz Ḵātun, herself a Nestorian. Abaqa and Arḡun had even stronger affinities for this religion, although without disagreeing with traditional Mongol beliefs. Tegüder, Ḡāzān, and Öljeytü all went through Christian and Buddhist phases as children. This religious tolerance or, as some scholars would have it, indifference to religion created a propitious environment for non-Muslim communities, particularly the Christians in Iran, Iraq, and other countries. The early Il-khanid period was indeed the Indian

summer of Eastern Christianity in the Middle East; even after the Mongol conversion to Islam, the Christians in their realm enjoyed a greater degree of freedom than in the pre-Mongol period.

The matter of the conversion to Islam of the Mongol rulers, notables, and commoners is one of interest and importance. Some scholars have suggested that this was a search for legitimization among the sedentary, mostly Persian-speaking, subjects. There is, however, no actual proof for this assertion, and in fact the impression is that the Mongol ruling class was not overly concerned with their image in the eyes of their Muslim or non-Muslim subjects, as opposed to the great importance that they attributed to legitimization among the peoples of steppe origin. Only with their conversion to Islam, as noted above, did the Il-khans and their officials look for Islamic motifs to justify their rule, among the ruling class as well as the larger population. Mongol conversion seems to have been a double process: individuals among the elite, and a growing movement among the common tribesmen. The role of Sufis can be noted, although whether this was due to some affinity to shamans or shamanism, another old chestnut in the research literature, may be open to question. It may be due more to the charismatic nature of some Sufis, the perceived success of their miracles and other powers, and the appeal of their down-to-earth, but also spiritually rich, version of Islam. In any event, other forces for Islamization can be ascertained, such as the Muslim officials who surrounded them and the Turks and Mongols who had already converted. Finally, there was the whole matter of cultural diffusion between a strong majority culture and a minority culture which had no proselytizing aspirations but rather had always been open to religious influences and which had created a multi-cultural milieu.

Another perspective is offered by looking backwards from the eventual fate of many of the Mongols in Iran and the surrounding areas. They assimilated into the Turkish-speaking population, some of whom had long been in the region and had long been Muslims, while others had come with the Mongols or in their aftermath; many of this latter group were also Muslims. From this point of view, one can say that the Islamization of the Mongols was a step on their way to becoming Turks or else, perhaps, that their assimilation into the Turkish population was facilitated by their conversion to Islam.

There is no overwhelming indication that the masses of Mongols settled down and became sedentary during the Il-khanid period. Since there is clear evidence that the Il-khanid army of the early fourteenth century was similar

in tactics and character to that which came with Hülegü in the mid-thirteenth, we have an indication that the later tribesmen maintained the same pastoral nomadic lifestyle as their forefathers. The famous evidence given by Rašid-al-Din (*Jāmeʿ al-tawārik̲*, ed. Jahn, 1940, p. 302) notwithstanding, it appears that Ḡāzān's distribution of land allocations (*eqṭāʿāt*) was not executed to any real degree, and even if it was, this does not mean that the Mongols were settling down and beginning to practice agriculture themselves. Quite the contrary ʿOmari (ed. Lech, p. 95) clearly states: "Every tribe has land to reside in and the descendent inherits it from the forefathers since Hülegü conquered this country. Their abodes are in it. They have in it crops for their substance, but they do not live by tilling and sowing." Until late in the Il-khanate period there is evidence that the royal family and the court in general maintained a peripatetic lifestyle, moving between winter and summer camps (see C. Melville, "The Itineraries of Sultan Öljeitü," *Iran* 28, 1990, pp. 55-70).

To sum up: The Il-khanid period was a time of tremendous change in Iran; some areas were adversely affected economically, while others enjoyed prosperity. This was a time of cultural activity, partially inspired by the continentally wide perspectives of the rulers. Mongol rule had an effect on political institutions in the long run in Persia and contributed indirectly the reconstruction of a unified Persia. The borders of the state established by the Safavids are quite similar to those created by the Il-khanids (with the major exception of Anatolia), and under the Il-khans the term *Irān-zamin* enjoyed wide use. Perhaps most importantly, the demography of the country and the surrounding areas was forever changed. The Eurasian Steppe element, what we can today call Turkic, was greatly augmented under the Mongols, eventually giving us the belt of speakers of Turkic languages from southeastern Europe through much of northern Iran into Central Asia.

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