



# JALĀL-AL-DIN ḲVĀRAZMŠĀH(I) MENGÜBIRNI

**JALĀL-AL-DIN ḲVĀRAZMŠĀH (I) MENGÜBIRNI**, the last Ḳvārazmšāh of the line of *Anuštigin Ġarča'i*, reigned in 1220-31 as the eldest son and successor of 'Alā'-al-Din Moḥammad. His Turkish personal name remains enigmatic, as no more satisfactory interpretation of the Arabic consonant *ductus* MNKBRNY has been seriously suggested than *mengü birti* ('the Heavens [i.e., God] gave'), propounded by d'Ohsson in the early 19th century (d'Ohsson, I, p. 195, n. 1; Boyle, 1965, p. 392). Recently, however, Peter Jackson has tentatively put forward as a possibility the reading of *Mingīrinī* ('having a thousand men'), which can be an equivalent to Persian *hazārmard* with the same meaning (Bosworth, p. 179).

Jalāl-al-Din was in fact never able to reign in his ancestral kingdom for more than a brief time. When his father died on an island off the Caspian coast in December 1220, Jalāl-al-Din and various members of his family made their way via the Mangyshlak peninsula on the eastern side of the Caspian to the Ḳvārazmian capital Gorgānj, just before it was invested by the Mongol commanders Čaġatay and Ögedey in 1221 and destroyed after a lengthy siege (Nasavi, pp. 120-22, 170-73; Ebn al-Aṭir, Beirut ed., XII, pp. 394-95; Jovayni, tr. Boyle, I, pp. 123-28; Barthold, *Turkestan*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 433-37; Kafesoġlu, pp. 274-75, 283-84). Suspecting treachery against himself in Gorgānj by discontented Turkish commanders, who were unable to accept 'Alā'-al-Din's last-minute change of the succession from the previously appointed heir Qoṭb-al-Din



Uzlağšāh to his elder brother Jalāl-al-Din, the latter left the capital and headed southwards. He eluded Mongol watchmen in northern Khorasan, defeated a force of Mongol cavalry near Nasā, and reached the appanage which his father had previously allotted to him, i.e., the lands conquered by ‘Alā’-al-Din from the [Ghurids](#), corresponding roughly to modern Afghanistan. At Ghazna (see [ĠAZNI](#)) he gathered together a large force of K̲vārazmians, Turks, and Ghurids, marched out to inflict a serious defeat on the pursuing Mongols of Chinghiz Khan (see [ĈENGIZ KHAN](#)) at Parvān, but was forced by Chinghiz Khan to retreat to northwestern India. A battle took place on the banks of the Indus, and Jalāl-al-Din escaped the Mongols only by riding his horse across the river either in August-September 1221 or two months later (Nasavi, pp. 126-34, 152-62; Jovayni, tr. Boyle, I, pp. 133-35; Juzjāni, *Ṭabaqāt*, tr. Raverty, II, pp. 1012-23; Barthold, *Turkestan*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 437-46; Spüler, *Mongolen*, pp. 31-32; Boyle, 1968, pp. 317-21). He was never to see Khwarazm again.

He managed to get some 4,000 of his troops safely across the Indus and spent the next three years in India, being involved in negotiations and warfare with local rulers including the ruler of Sind, Nāṣer-al-Din Qubača, but then he made his way to western Persia where his brother Ġiāt-al-Din Piršāh had established himself as a ruler. He passed through Kerman in 1224, confirming the position of the Qutluğ-khanid Barağ Ḥājeb (r. 1222-35) as his governor there; in Fārs he married a daughter of the Salghurid Atabeg Sa’d I b. Zangi (r. 1198-1226; see [ATĀBAKĀN-E FĀRS](#)). Jalāl-al-Din made Ġiāt-al-Din Piršāh his vassal and clashed with the army of the resurgent Abbasid caliph al-Nāṣer (r. 1180-1225). In Azarbaijan he expelled the Ildegizid Atabeg Uzbek b. Jahān-Pahlavān (r. 1210-25; see [ATĀBAKĀN-E ĀḌARBĀYJĀN](#)) from his capital Tabriz in 1225 before going on in 1226 to invade the Christian kingdom of Georgia, defeating its king, sacking the Georgian capital Tbilisi (Teflis), and massacring its inhabitants (Nasavi, pp. 163-69, 174-79, 192-200, 211-12; Jovayni-Boyle, II, pp. 411-35; Ebn al-Aṭir, Beirut ed., XII, pp. 425-28, 432-36, 450-52; Spüler, *Mongolen*, pp. 32-33; Boyle, 1968, pp. 322-28).

After a lightning march back to Kerman to subdue the rebellious Barağ Ḥājeb, Jalāl-al-Din turned to invade eastern Anatolia and unsuccessfully besieged the town of [Aqlāt](#) on lake Van, at that time under Ayyubid (see [AYYUBIDS](#)) control. In 1227 he reduced the Isma‘īlites of Alamut in northern Persia to tributary status (Nasavi, pp. 228-31, 246; Ebn al-Aṭir, Beirut ed., XII, p. 470; Daftary, pp. 414, 416-18). The Mongols re-appeared in central Persia in this same year, and Jalāl-al-Din engaged them in battle outside Isfahan. The result was technically



a Mongol victory, but their losses were so severe that they withdrew from Persia back to Transoxania (Nasavi, pp. 232-38; Ebn al-Aṭir, Beirut ed., XII, pp. 470, 476-77; Jovayni, tr. Boyle, II, pp. 436-38; Boyle, 1968, pp. 329-32). Jalāl-al-Din was forced to return to Aqlāt in the hope of carving out for himself a principality in Anatolia. He captured the town at last in 1230, but then he had to face the combined forces of the Ayyubid ruler of Diyarbakır al-Malek al-Ašraf I Musā (r. 1229-37) and the Saljuq sultan of Rum ‘Alā’-al-Din Kay-Qobād I b. Kay-Ḳosrow (r. 1220-37). He was defeated by them at Arzinjān in July-August 30. Peace was agreed in face of the common threat from the Mongols, and he withdrew to Azarbaijan. However, a new Mongol army under Čormağun appeared in northern Persia, and Jalāl-al-Din, pursued by the Mongols, had to flee westwards to Aqlāt, Āmid, and then Mayyāfāreḡin, but he was unable to recruit an army to face the Mongols and was mysteriously killed in a nearby Kurdish village in August 1231, perhaps for reasons of gain or for revenge (Nasavi, pp. 299-335, 374-83; Ebn al-Aṭir, Beirut ed., XII, pp. 454-55, 459-63, 481, 487-91, 495-504; Spüler, *Mongolen*, pp. 33-34; Boyle, 1968, pp. 328-35). His troops stayed in Anatolia and Syria, where for a considerable time they formed a distinct ethnic element. Jalāl-al-Din would have been the only ruler in the eastern Iranian world with the statesmanship and military expertise to possibly withstand the Mongols, if he had been able to assemble a coalition of the local rulers of Persia, Iraq, and Anatolia, but divisions and jealousies made such an aim impossible, and the line of Ḳvārazmšāhs ended with his death.

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