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Mongol loyalty networks: cultural transmission and Chinggisid innovation

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4. Loyalty in Ilkhanid Iran

4.1 Introduction

We now turn our attention to loyalty in Ilkhanid Iran. While there were multiple *uluses* and khanates which survived the breakdown of the united Mongol Empire in 1259, the Ilkhanate is one of the most well-documented of these successor states. It also provides a fascinating case study in how loyalty decisions changed with the more regional focus of these new realms. We also get from our Ilkhanid sources a picture of loyalty issues in other regions, particularly the Jochid *ulus* and the Chaghadaid *ulus*, which provide a somewhat negative reflection on how these sources view loyalty obligations. In looking at Ilkhanid Iran, we also get a glimpse of how the Persian-speaking elites interacted with Mongol loyalty networks to create a new synthesis of these ideas.

The concept of loyalty in Ilkhanid Iran is a tricky one due to the murky circumstances in which the realm was established as a political entity ruled by Hülegü and his successors, but by its very nature, gives us particular insight into loyalty decisions. The predominance of Toluid-leaning sources for the Mongols not only explains Hülegü's rule in Iran as entirely valid, but also reinforces Möngke's own legitimacy, which was questioned by many who believed that the khanship should have remained in the house of Ögödei. Möngke's ruthless dealings with those who challenged his right to rule have been addressed, but it should be mentioned that this had a knock-on effect for the Ilkhanate, as Ilkhanid history writers had to explain both events in such a way that showed both Möngke's rightful accession and Hülegü's correct actions in following the commands of his brother and khan. This situation has been discussed at length by many scholars, and while this study will not cover these analyses in their entirety, a look at the primary source material on Hülegü's formation of a new state is imperative if we are to understand the concept of loyalty with regard to the Ilkhanate. Many of the issues addressed in this chapter relate to succession in the Ilkhanate, as this is where loyalty choices are most obvious. It will also be shown that it was through the successions of Aḥmad and Arghun in particular, that loyalties to the house of Hülegü were damaged, leading to the assertion of non-Chinggisid power against the ruling house, providing alternative nodes of

leadership. These non-Chinggisids seem to have largely been able to subjugate Chinggisid princes in practice, if not in name.

This chapter will also address the recent trend in Mongol scholarship where Rashīd al-Dīn is seen as the creator of legitimacy for Hülegü's son, Abaqa, and his linear successors (Figure 8). This narrative has become quite prevalent, and thus many loyalty decisions which are relayed by Rashīd al-Dīn are thus put down to his bias towards Abaqa and his line. I believe however, that in consultation with other sources, it is possible to examine these loyalty decisions using the categories we have already established to understand the multiple possible reasons that actors made their choices. Thus, it is essential to understand this debate in order to come to grips with how loyalty is framed in both the contemporary sources and in modern works, and how we can move beyond somewhat simplistic accusations of bias on behalf of Rashīd al-Dīn's employers.

4.2 The Founding of the Ilkhanate and Loyalty Developments across the Mongol World

If we consider our major sources for the founding of the Ilkhanate, we must first begin with Juvainī, one of the earliest Ilkhanid histories. Juvainī's account does not cover the founding of the state, though it does address Möngke's original mission for Hülegü in the west. Juvainī simply states that Möngke 'appointed him (Hülegü) to capture the western regions' (واو را بضبط جانب غربی نامزد فرمود) *va ū rā bi-ḡabṭ-i jānib-i gharbī nāmzad farmūd*.¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, who largely followed Juvainī's narrative until 1256, has to go a bit further. As a servitor of the Hülegüid dynasty, it was necessary for him to justify Hülegü's establishment of the Ilkhanate as fully sanctioned by Möngke. Peter Jackson notes that the Ilkhanid historian explains the status quo by stating that Möngke sent Hülegü on a temporary mission to Iran, but that later he secretly indicated to Hülegü that he and his successors should rule over Persia.² Indeed, one of the more 'independent' sources we have for the period, the Syriac historian Gregory Bar Hebraeus, seems to indicate that there was some confusion in the Mongol leadership as to possession and control of pasture lands in the wild west of the Mongol world. He says that Hülegü was coming 'to the western countries [...] in the territory of Eljigidei, who Güyüg Khan sent.'³ He later implies that Hülegü drove Baiju Noyan (the replacement for Eljigidei,

¹ Juvainī/Qazvini, Vol. III, p. 90.

² P. Jackson, 'From *Ulus* to Khanate: The Making of the Mongol States c. 1220-c.1290', in (eds.) R. Amitai-Preiss and D. Morgan, *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 29; RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 283, Vol. II, p. 479.

³ BH/Budge, p. 419. Bar Hebraeus did base much of his work on the early Mongols on Juvainī's account.

who had been killed in the purges of Möngke in the early 1250s) out of the territories of Iran, though this general would serve Hülegü ably in later campaigns, before his eventual execution.⁴

Juvainī confirms that previous commanders in the west had largely had independent power, and that Möngke had tried to curb this. Speaking of Möngke's administrator *extraordinaire* Arghun Aqa, he states, 'He restored to order the affairs of that region which had been disturbed by the proximity of the great emirs such as Chormaghun, Baiju and others who regarded that territory as their own property.'⁵ It seems that Hülegü was sent to take overall leadership of western campaigning, suborning the previous general Baiju and only later did he claim rulership.⁶ According to Krawulsky, this did not take place until 1264, after his investiture by the recently victorious Qubilai, when Hülegü began minting coins with the title Ilkhan.⁷ Judith Kolbas has shown however, that local rulers in Mardin and Baghdad were minting coins in Hülegü's name, with the title khan, by 657 AH (1258-9), though it was not until 1264 that the 'ilkhan' title was included.⁸ The fact that the Jochids in the Qipchaq Khanate and the Ögödeids and Chaghadaids in Central Asia did not recognise either Qubilai's supremacy or Hülegü's right to rule in Iran, as confirmed by Qubilai, changed the dynamic of loyalty in the Mongol world. Descent from Chinggis alone was not sufficient for rulership in the different khanates. One also had to be the right type of Chinggisid.

The long-running debate in modern scholarship as to the will of Chinggis Khan illustrates that this problem may have reared its head earlier than we have previously considered. According to the translator of the *SHM*, Igor de Rachewiltz, the *SHM*'s claim that Chinggis decided upon Ögödei as his successor was in fact a later Toluid amendment to the text in order to justify the Toluid takeover.⁹ Certainly there were attempts by the Ögödeids in the mid-13th century to guarantee that succession remained in their line, though the princes themselves were not in agreement as to which Ögödeid was the most suitable.¹⁰ For Möngke and his brothers Qubilai and Hülegü, it was imperative that they

⁴ Idem, p. 424.

⁵ Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 507.

⁶ This caused problems with the Jochids, as Baiju had been Batu's representative in Iran, see Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, p. 62.

⁷ Krawulsky, *Mongol Ilkhans*, p. 56. Hülegü's official reign then only lasted for about a year before his death in 1265.

⁸ Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran*, pp. 157, 161, 173.

⁹ SHM/de Rachewiltz, 'Philological Commentary', Vol. II, p. 923. The key to this argument is §255, where both Ögödei and Chinggis speak poetically of the potential that Ögödei's descendants may be unfit rulers, leading Chinggis to say 'is it possible that among my descendants not even a single one will be born who is good?'. This then foreshadows Möngke's takeover.

¹⁰ See above p. 101. It was apparently not outside of the realm of possibility that someone other than a son of Chinggis Khan could take over. Jackson has pointed out how greatly Temüge, Chinggis' younger brother, was favoured in Chinggis' allotment of troops, and his attempt to take the throne during the reign of Töregene Khatun; Jackson, 'From *Ulus* to Khanate', p. 33

both legitimise their own rule through calling into question the necessity of Ögödeid succession while also supporting their brothers' various claims to authority to ensure Toluid power in the Mongol world. Therefore Qubilai's ritual crowning of the Ilkhanid rulers, despite their *de facto* independence, and various Ilkhanid successors' desire for the Qa'an's blessing and approval of their rule were ways of bolstering each other's authority and legitimacy, under threat from the other powers in the Mongol world. While the narrowing of acceptable dynastic lines is common practice in attempting to limit the competitors for power, this tension in the Ilkhanate was not fully resolved. Bruno de Nicola argues that descendants of Abaqa, Hülegü's successor, such as Arghun, Ghazan and Öljeitü, as well as their supporters, sought to firmly establish Ilkhanid rule in the Abaqaid line, though Aḥmad Tegüder and Baidu's reigns indicate that this effort was not entirely successful.¹¹ Indeed, after the death of Abū Sa'īd in 1335 and the lack of an appropriate successor, at least one non-Abaqaid, and even a non-Hülegüid, Arpa Ke'ün, a descendant of Hülegü's younger brother Ariq Böke, sought to succeed as Ilkhan, though authority was largely held by powerful amirs or *noyans* by this stage.¹²

These developments affected not only loyalty within the Chinggisid house, but also those not lucky enough to have been born of the great conqueror. Michael Hope argues that both the tighter criteria for those able to hold power and the relative paucity of Chinggisid princes in Ilkhanid Iran contributed to the greater power of the non-Chinggisid Mongol elite, such as the *noyans* and the *inaqs* (personal advisors).¹³ It was these men who profited from the loss of the joint aspect of rulership within the larger Chinggisid house, filling many of the command positions previously occupied by Chinggisid princes. Whereas previously members of princely houses, agents of khatuns and others had all partaken in campaigns, interlineal rivalries now mostly prevented this. For example, the Jochid princes who had been sent with Hülegü in his campaign against the Ismā'īlīs and the Caliphate were put to death while those who had served them fled, many of them to the Mamluk state in Egypt.¹⁴ This action by Hülegü was tantamount to a declaration of war. Both Berke and Hülegü had each other's merchant representatives slaughtered upon the outbreak of this war.¹⁵ The

¹¹ De Nicola, *Women in Mongol Iran*, p. 108.

¹² Melville, *Fall of Amir Chupan*, p. 44.

¹³ Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, p. 5.

¹⁴ RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 367, 513-14; Grigor of Akanc', p. 341; Gulev, 'Intra-Mongol Diplomacy', p. 354, note 85 states that various Mamluk authors claimed that Berke ordered his troops with Hülegü to flee to the Mamluks if they could. Several groups of them reached the Mamluk sultanate in 1262 and 1263, where they were welcomed by the sultan Baybars, becoming the first of the so-called *wāfidiyya*, groups of Mongol refugees who defected to the Mamluks and were incorporated into their army, but at a lower level than the Mamluks themselves. The Mamluk sultans did however marry into the families of these Mongol refugees, Van den Bent, 'Mongols in Mamluk Eyes', pp. 214-19.

¹⁵ Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, p. 142.

message was clear therefore. The Ilkhanate would now be exclusively ruled by Hülegü's house, and Jochid and Ilkhanid loyalties were drawn in the sand.

These changes were mirrored by those in the Chaghadaid *ulus*, where Alghu, the ruler appointed by Ariq Böke, not only cast off his allegiance to Ariq Böke but actively fought him. Alghu also sought to stamp Chaghadaid control onto his *ulus*, putting to death some 5,000 families of craftsmen in Bukhara who apparently belonged to Berke.¹⁶ We can go too far with this sort of statement of course. It was only a few years later at the Talas *quriltai* of 1269 that Jochid, Ögödeid and Chaghadaid princes agreed on a division of the Chaghadaid *ulus* and matters related to the administration of cities in Central Asia.¹⁷ This unity did not last, but there were instances of princes continuing to receive incomes from lands held by enemies, such as Qaidu's lands in China as well as the Mamluk historian al-'Umarī's claim that Jochid revenues from Tabriz were being withheld by the Ilkhans.¹⁸ Both instances however are used as a *casus belli*, indicating that perhaps practically these incomes would be forfeited in times of conflict. As Hodong Kim has pointed out on the other hand, conflict did not necessarily mean that exchanges and contacts across the khanates did not occur, especially when it came to those less directly associated with politics, such as religious men and merchants.¹⁹

More specifically for the Ilkhanate, a troublesome situation developed from their treatment of the Jochids and Chaghadaids in their lands. One of the Jochid representatives in Hülegü's army was Negüder, who according to Rashīd al-Dīn, had been a commander under the Jochid princes Quli and Tutar. When Hülegü killed these princes, Negüder fled with a large part of their army to the borders of India, in modern day Afghanistan.²⁰ This Negüder, due perhaps to a scribal error and/or the likeness of the ت and ن letters in Arabic script in the manuscripts, has been often conflated with the Chaghadaid prince Tegüder, also in Ilkhanid lands, who rebelled under encouragement from the Chaghadaid ruler Baraq, in the area of Georgia during Abaqa's reign and was defeated.²¹ The Jochid Negüder gave his name to the group of Mongol warriors active in the late 13th and early 14th centuries, the Negüderis. In the regions of Ghaznin and Ghor, they were joined by another group of Mongol soldiers operating largely outside the classical 'four khanates' picture, the Qara'unas. The Qara'unas were garrison troops, called *tammachis*, who had been based in Afghanistan since

¹⁶ Idem, p. 149.

¹⁷ Biran, *Qaidu*, p. 26.

¹⁸ Jackson, 'From *Ulus* to Khanate', p. 31, note 87.

¹⁹ H. Kim, 'The Unity of the Mongol Empire and Continental Exchanges over Eurasia', *Journal of Central Eurasian Studies*, Vol. 1, (2009), pp. 15-42.

²⁰ RAD/Thackson, Vol. II, p. 362.

²¹ Jackson, 'The Mongols of Central Asia', p. 93, note 18; Jones, 'The Objects of Loyalty', pp. 20-1.

Möngke had sent them there under the command of one Sali Noyan. Command of the garrison was apparently hereditary, as first Sali's son Oldu succeeded him, then Oldu's son Begtüt.²² According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Sali was subordinate to Hülegü and sent him slaves from campaigns in India, but over time, the loyalty to the Ilkhanid khan weakened, and perhaps encouraged by the Negüderis, groups of Qara'unas became quite independent, raiding into Khurasan as well as into the Chaghadaid *ulus*. However, Qāshānī lists one 'Bīkūt' son of Alādū son of Sātī Noyan of the Tatar people as one of the key amirs under Öljeitü stationed near the Amu Darya.²³ This seems to be referring to the same Begtüt, so clearly there continued to be Qara'unas support for the Ilkhans in the early 14th century.

It is a little misleading to think of the Negüderis and Qara'unas as distinct groups that acted as specific entities. Our source material indicates that groups of these two 'quasi-tribes', to use Jackson's expression, pursued their own goals, at times joining together with their colleagues for greater reward, but often turning against the commanders who led them and conducting small-scale pillaging.²⁴ Groups of Qara'unas served the Ilkhans, while others served the Chaghadaids, with some fighting on behalf of regional lords such as Nawrūz in Khurasan. By the 14th century however, many of the Qara'unas largely were brought under the Chaghadaid aegis, and became extremely influential in the *ulus* and under Temür and his successors as well.²⁵ Clearly, loyalties became more fractured in the Ilkhanate, especially in these border areas where there were ready backers and troops for princes or amirs who acted against the Ilkhan.

If we add this information to what we know about the situation in other khanates, we develop a slightly different picture of loyalties in the post-imperial world than perhaps our sources would have us believe. The presence within the greater Jochid *ulus* of the *ulus* of Orda (later known as the Blue Horde), the elder brother of Batu who was passed over for succession to the khanate, would in the course of the late 13th and early 14th centuries render the 'Golden Horde' as a cohesive entity a political misconception, though the two *uluses* did act in concert at times. Even in the 1250s, Orda's *ulus* had a great degree of independence from Batu's, and according to Rashīd al-Dīn, Orda was mentioned first in Möngke's *jarlighs*.²⁶ Thomas Allsen has shown that by the 1280s and 1290s, the *ulus* of Orda was in fact allying with the Toluid powers in China and Iran while their western

²² RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 49; T. May, 'The Ilkhanate and Afghanistan', in (eds.) T. May, D. Bayarsaikhan and C.P. Atwood, *New Approaches to Ilkhanid History*, (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 282-5.

²³ Qāshānī/Hambali, p. 9 پانزدهم بیکوت پسر الادو بن ساتی نویان از قوم تاتار حامی کنار امویه *pānzdahum bīkūt pīsar-i alādū bin sātī nūyān az qawm-i tātār ḥāmī-yi kinār-i amūya*. Elsewhere, Qāshānī calls him بیکوت پسر الادو نویان, Qāshānī/Hambali, p. 22.

²⁴ Jackson, 'The Mongols of Central Asia', p. 99.

²⁵ See Bernardini, 'The Mongol puppet lords', *passim*.

²⁶ RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 348.

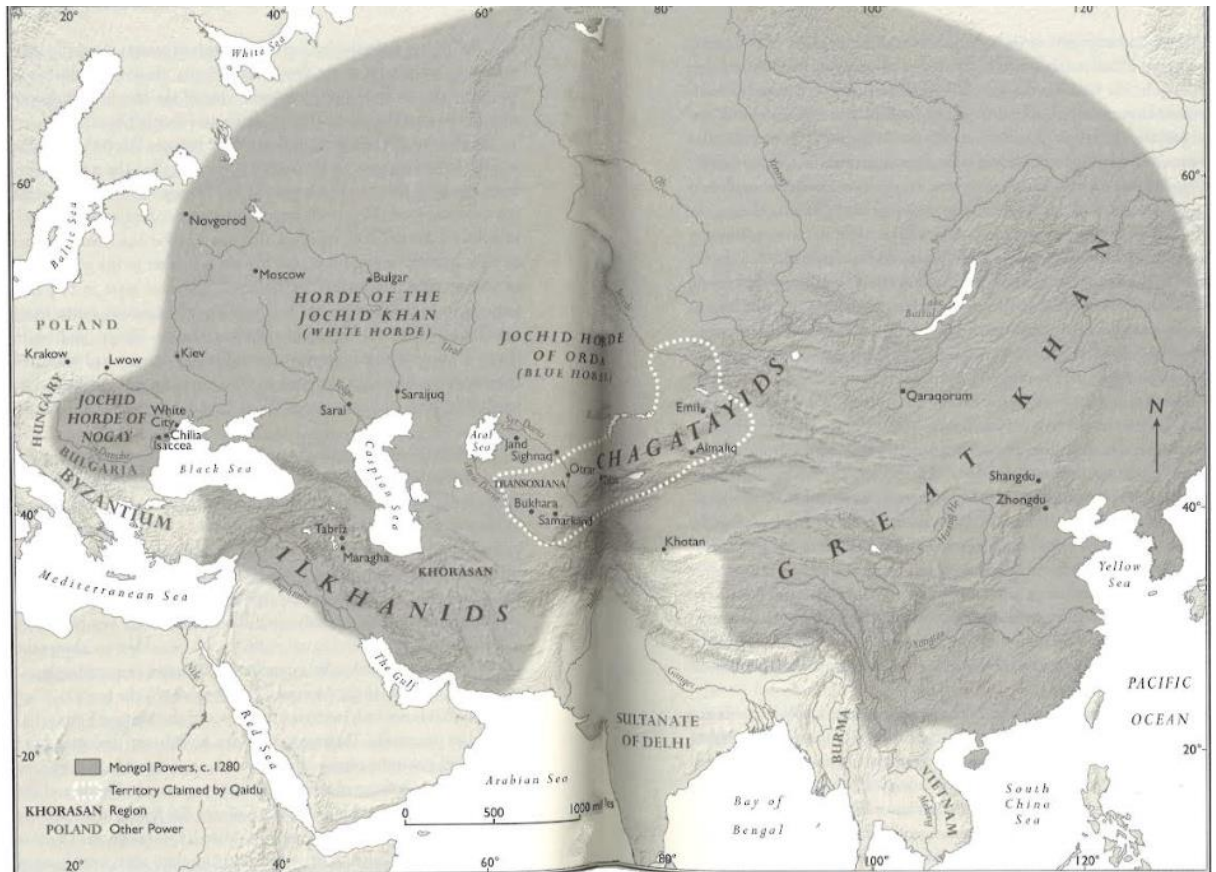
cousins were in conflict with the Ilkhanate.²⁷ In the Chaghadaid *ulus*, not only were there the Qara'unas and Negüderis, whose loyalties at the best of times were questionable, but also the state created within the *ulus* by Qaidu, grandson of Ögödei. Qaidu's influence with, and often power over, Chaghadaid khans again should make us question whether the Chaghadaid Khanate at different periods in the 13th century was a stable political 'state'.

Despite the clear information we have about the existence of these 'sub-khanates', they are almost never included in maps of the post-imperial Mongol world and rarely discussed. It is perhaps more accurate to talk about six main Chinggisid-ruled *uluses*, with several important regional players operating on the fringes of these domains, see Map 4. Indeed, as Kim has shown, Chinggis' brothers, nephews and daughters controlled much land as *emchü* (private land) throughout the empire, and while they were largely submissive to their Chinggisid rulers, they still held some degree of power and influence which allowed them to 'rebel' at times.²⁸ We have already seen how Chinggis' younger brother Temüge Otchigin tried to seize power after Ögödei's death. His appanage was not removed from his descendants however, and one of these, Nayan, rebelled against Qubilai's rule in the 1280s. Even so, descendants of Temüge continued to hold land in the Yuán Empire until the Míng took power.²⁹ What we must be aware of are our sources' biases towards a more centralised view of rule, especially Rashīd al-Dīn, who was intimately involved in Ghazan's centralising reforms. It is largely his narrative which frames the discussion of loyalty in the Ilkhanate, though of course we do have competing voices which change the picture somewhat. Again, it may help us understand Ilkhanid history and the way it is portrayed by Rashīd al-Dīn if we think about the categories of loyalty which seek to explain *why* someone did something or acted in a certain way.

²⁷ Allsen, 'Princes of the Left', pp. 21-3.

²⁸ H. Kim, 'Formation and Changes of *Uluses*', pp. 269-317.

²⁹ Idem, p. 311.



Map 4: The major Chinggisid *ulus* in the late 13th century. This map is found in *The Horde: How the Mongols Changed the World* (2021), reproduced here with the kind permission of its author Marie Favereau.

4.3 The Abaqa Succession

One of the key issues in recent scholarship which surrounds loyalty choices in the Ilkhanate is the establishment of Abaqa and his descendants as rulers of the Ilkhanate. As we have seen, succession was something that often troubled the Mongols, and the Ilkhans were no different. Three of the Mongol Ilkhans, Aḥmad Tegüder (r. 1282-1284), Gaykhatu (r. 1291-1295), and Baidu (r. 1295), were put to death after rebellions against their rule, and there was some suspicion that Arghun may have been poisoned as well. If we add to this the many princes who were put to death by incoming Ilkhans seeking to solidify their rule, we can see that the question of loyalty was often a fatal one in Ilkhanid Persia. According to our sources, Abaqa succeeded his father in 1266 in what appears to be one of the more straightforward transfers of power in the Mongol world. Of the following seven Ilkhans, five of them were descendants of Abaqa, so his legacy is firmly stamped on the history of the

Ilkhanate. Here we analyse how and why this took place by looking at our loyalty categories, by which we seek to address some of the recently raised problems around this succession.

Firstly, let us summarise these issues. The main hypothesis put forward primarily by Jonathan Brack, and followed by Broadbridge and to a lesser extent de Nicola, is that one of the key aims of Rashīd al-Dīn's history is a legitimisation of the Abaqaid line, and that in this light, he frames succession disputes as a competition between the legitimate successor and the challenger who rebels against his rightful khan.³⁰ Brack argues that Rashīd al-Dīn is following a fundamentally Perso-Islamic view of succession, whereby the son succeeds the father; a view perhaps held by the historian, but not one held by all Mongols.³¹ Indeed, as we have seen, Mongol successors were often brothers, cousins and nephews. However, it is questionable what is meant by 'Perso-Islamic succession', as this does not seem to be an easily defined or limited concept. It is neither Qur'anic, nor was filial succession the case among the Rashidun (Rightly-Guided) Caliphs. Admittedly among the 'Abbasids this became the norm, but Turkic modes of succession had been influential in preceding dynasties in Iran such as the Seljuqs and the Khwarazmshāhs, where filial succession occurred but was not regular. It does not seem immediately apparent why Rashīd al-Dīn should plump for 'Abbasid caliphal succession over others.

It was rather the possession of divine fortune, *farrah-i īzādī*, which qualified one for rule, and this was only apparent after successfully winning the throne. As Sara Mirahmadi has shown, this concept was present in Sasanian times, and developed heavily in Firdawsī's *Shāhnāma*, before being incorporated into the poetic usages of Firdawsī by both Juvainī and Rashīd al-Dīn, as well as other Ilkhanid scholars.³² That Rashīd al-Dīn co-opted Firdawsī to legitimise his patrons is in no doubt, but the prevalence of this idea in Persian historiography and thought before the coming of the Mongols, in conjunction with Turco-Mongolic ideas of divine favour in the form of *qut/suu*, means that there does not seem to be such a wide gap between the imposing culture and the receiving culture with regards to succession traditions. Rashīd al-Dīn then, is not going back and presenting a clean image of the past, but rather he is trying to show how certain rulers came to be in possession of divine favour, even when they were unfancied or had relatively little support.

³⁰ J. Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship: Conversion and Sovereignty in Mongol Iran', PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2016, p. 41; Broadbridge, *Women*, p. 264; De Nicola follows the line of reasoning that the Abaqaid were trying to establish themselves as the only legitimate rulers of the Ilkhanate, but he does not attribute this to Rashīd al-Dīn's work as such, de Nicola, *Women in Mongol Iran*, pp. 99, 108.

³¹ Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship', p. 52.

³² S. Mirahmadi, 'Legitimising the Khan: Rashid al-Din's Ideological Project from a Literary Aspect', *Iran*, (2021), DOI: 10.1080/05786967.2021.1889929, pp. 1-14.

Perhaps rather we should consider previous Mongol succession precedents to understand Ilkhanid succession. The decisions made by Chinggis and his descendants would have a powerful influence on the later khanates, where loyalty decisions were regularly justified based on these precedents. While before Chinggis it seems that filial succession was not at all common, Chinggis himself clearly sought to change this, indicating to his brothers and nephews that succession would belong to his sons.³³ Chinggis himself, as well as his successor Ögödei, were keen on their sons to succeed them as *qa'an*, while Jochi, Chaghadaï and Tolui all sought to pass their *uluses* on to their sons (or grandsons).³⁴ The regular occurrence of this trend should make us doubt whether this was a retrojection of 'Perso-Islamic ideals'. This is not to say that the principle of seniority disappeared however, as is made clear in the succession of Qubilai, where competition to succeed Möngke was between Qubilai and Ariq Böke, Möngke's brothers, not with any of Möngke's sons.³⁵ While two of the most influential of these, Asutai and Shiragi, were born of concubines, perhaps limiting their chances of succession, one of his sons, Ürüngtash, was born of Qutuqtai Khatun of the Ikires, who Rashīd al-Dīn says was Möngke's chief wife (Figure 7).³⁶ Interestingly however, Ürüngtash seems to have been a willing supporter of Ariq Böke at first, and did not assert his own potential claim to the throne before the *quriltai* which elected Ariq Böke.³⁷ We have no information about Möngke's desired successor, and even the Toluid propagandists do not claim this for Qubilai.³⁸ We are unaware of Ürüngtash's age on Möngke's death, consequently, we cannot be sure if he was simply too young to gain support. What we do know is that Möngke left Ariq Böke in control of the *ordus* and soldiers in Mongolia when Möngke departed on the campaign against the Sòng on which he died, and that Ürüngtash was left with Ariq Böke.³⁹ Ürüngtash likely had no choice but to go along with his powerful

³³ SHM/de Rachewiltz, §255, p. 188.

³⁴ Güyük also may have appointed his son Naqu as his successor, see above p. 104, note 153.

³⁵ Qubilai began to follow Chinese practice by issuing an edict in 1276 naming his heir and empress, H. Franke, 'From tribal chieftain to universal emperor and god: The legitimation of the Yuan Dynasty', in *Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 2, Munich, 1978*, reproduced in H. Franke, *China under Mongol Rule*, (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), Number IV, p. 25.

³⁶ RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 399. Qutuqtai had an elder son, Baltu, but he must have died at a young age as he is not mentioned elsewhere. Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia*, p. 364 hypothesises that perhaps the civil war took place because Möngke was not survived by any of his chief wives who could have served as regents and perhaps even secured the succession of one of their sons.

³⁷ Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, p. 73 states that as the youngest son of the chief wife and *otchigin*, Ürüngtash could have been a regent like Tolui.

³⁸ Neither Chinese nor Persian advocates of 'filial succession' question why Ürüngtash was not chosen. Indeed, the *YS* states that Qubilai was the proper successor because of capability and seniority, '*Yuanshi Annals* (benji 本紀) for Shizu 世祖 (Qubilai Qa'an) Part Two (1260)', (trans.) G. Humble, Unpublished, p. 2. Bar Hebraeus heard that Ariq Böke claimed that Möngke had given the kingdom over to him when he went on campaign to China, BH/Budge, p. 439. This again presents a challenge to the classical dichotomy of Ariq Böke representing the conservative Mongol element and Qubilai representing the Sinified 'new wave'. If this was the case, we should expect the *YS* to claim Qubilai's right based on Möngke's will, which would fit Chinese succession practices, rather than to focus on seniority, a much more common determinant of succession on the steppe.

³⁹ RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 414.

uncle. However, we are given a fascinating titbit of information by Rashīd al-Dīn, that Ürüngtash in 1264, perhaps sensing the change in the wind, demanded Möngke's great jade seal from Ariq Böke, and upon receiving it, went over to Qubilai.⁴⁰

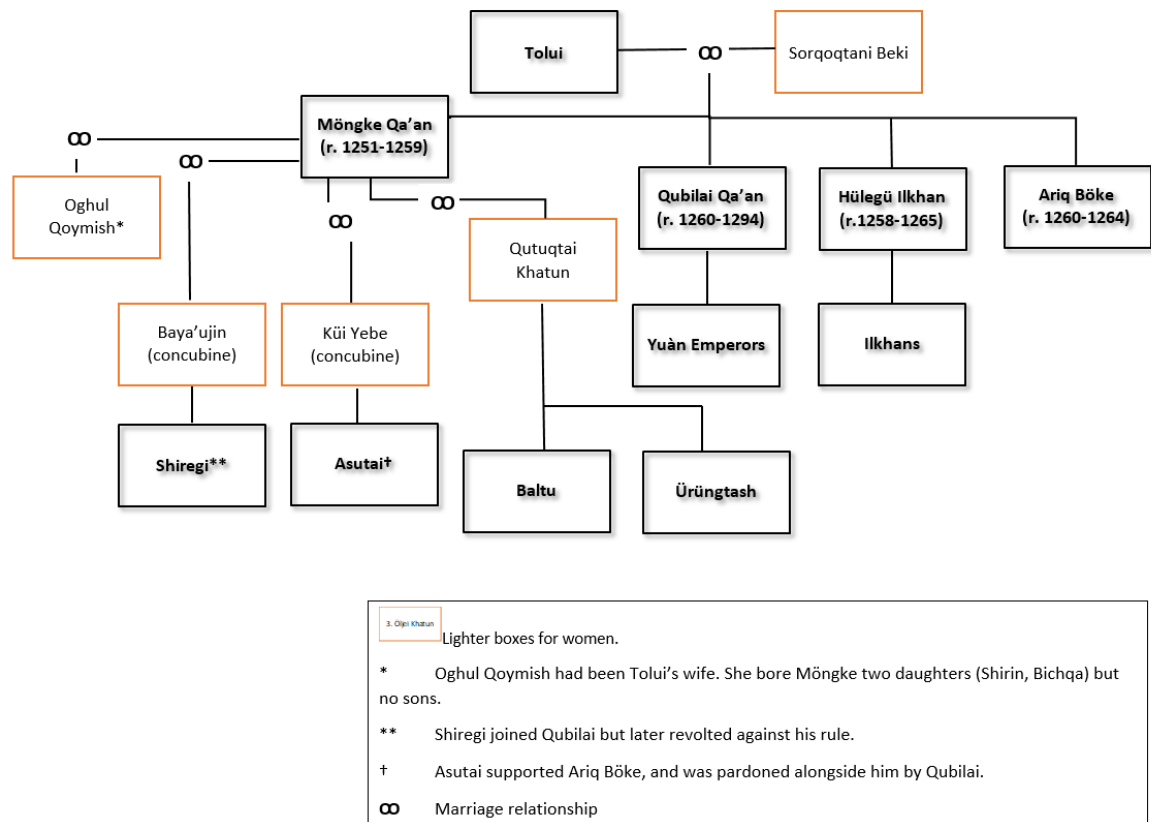


Figure 7: The Toluids, Möngke's Family © Tobias Jones

In the Jochid *ulus* also, seniority came to the fore after a period of filial succession. Batu hand-picked his successor, his son, Sartaq, whose death shortly after his father in 1256 led to Möngke installing Sartaq's young son (or brother) Ulaghchi as ruler of the Jochid *ulus*, with Batu's wife Boraqchin Khatun serving as regent until Ulaghchi's majority (Figure 6).⁴¹ After Ulaghchi's death that same year, Berke assumed control of the *ulus*.⁴² According to Peter Jackson, there was a similar

⁴⁰ Idem, p. 432. However, Ürüngtash does not seek independence. It is interesting that Ürüngtash requests Möngke's jade seal. Famously, the royal seal, *al tamgha*, was red. Perhaps this jade seal represents Möngke's personal authority? Qubilai did give a jade seal to the Tibetan monk Phagpa as part of his role as leader of Buddhists in Yuán China, 'Yuanshi Annals for Shizu, Part Two', p. 8. Clearly the jade seal represents something less than imperial authority.

⁴¹ Juvaini/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 268.

⁴² Some scholars have questioned Berke's accession, either arguing that it was a usurpation, Broadbridge, *Women*, p. 231, or that Möngke was not keen on it given his involvement in the successions of both Sartaq and Ulaghchi, Kamola, 'The making of history', p. 52; Lane, *Early Mongol Empire*, p. 69. There were certainly rumours about Berke's involvement in the death of Sartaq at least. Kirakos claims that the Muslim Jochids, Berke and Berkechay (Berkecher) poisoned the Christian Sartaq after Möngke appointed him ruler, Kirakos,

struggle in the *ulus* of Orda in the late 13th century, whereby more senior princes vied for power with those of the khan's direct descendants.⁴³ In the Chaghadaid *ulus* also, we have shown in the previous chapter that Chaghadaï's designated successor Yesü Möngke originally succeeded him even though there were Chaghadaid princes who were more senior, before Yesü Möngke was replaced by Güyük with Qara Hülegü, arguing seniority. In the Qaidu's reinstated Ögödeid *ulus*, Qaidu, regularly seen as the bastion of Mongol tradition and conservatism, attempted to hand-pick his own successor, Orus, his third son, born of his chief wife Dörbejin. However, the Chaghadaid ruler Du'a, previously Qaidu's greatest ally, preferred Qaidu's eldest son Chapar, son of Kukui Khatun, to succeed him and had Chapar enthroned instead of Orus.⁴⁴

History of the Armenians, p. 310; Vardan, *Compilation of History*, p. 90. Jūzjānī also mentions a religious conflict, saying that Sartaq refused to visit Berke on his return journey due to Berke's religious beliefs and delivered him a personal insult, and that Berke had prayed for Sartaq's death. Interestingly however, Jūzjānī quotes a rumour that Sartaq's death was down to Möngke's belief that Sartaq had rebelled against him, Jūzjānī/Raverty, pp. 1291-2. Both Kirakos and Jūzjānī seem to play up the religious conflict, as Rashīd al-Dīn does not mention anything in this regard, despite his patrons' animosity towards Berke and the Jochids, though Rashīd al-Dīn acknowledged Berke's status as *aqā*, see p. 114 and he may have been unwilling to criticise a Muslim for killing a Christian. He does state that Möngke and Berke had a close working relationship, RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 511, and 'there was unanimity and friendship between Tolui Khan's and Batu's progeny' through most of Berke's reign, Vol. III, p. 361. Lane and others rely heavily on Jūzjānī's narrative, however Jūzjānī does not seem the best-placed to know the workings of Mongol government, and his story is highly coloured by his approval of Berke's faith. Favereau, *The Horde*, p. 102 states that Berke 'would have to fight harder than his brothers for a place on the Jochid throne, owing to his mother's lower rank', accepting that Berke's mother was the daughter of the Khwarazmshāh Sultan Muḥammad, Sultan Khatun. However, Berke's mother's identity has never been solidly confirmed, Broadbridge, *Women*, p. 231. Vaṣṣāf regularly calls Berke 'Berke Oghul', and Ilkhanid historians seem to have often used this appellation to refer to Chinggisid princes born of concubines, or descending from those born of concubines: Baidu Oghul, Tübshin Oghul, Qada'an Oghul to name a few. Qiu Yihao questions Rashīd al-Dīn's narrative of good relations between Möngke and Berke however, highlighting that Mamluk sources like Baybars al-Manṣūrī claimed that Möngke backed Boraqchin Khatun's regency on behalf of Batu's grandson Töde Möngke. This led to Berke's supporters executing Boraqchin, and Möngke giving Jochid appanages in China, Yihao, 'Independent Ruler, Indefinable Role', pp. 29-31. Istvan Vasary questions this narrative, given the many different sources which provide conflicting information, regarding it as mostly legendary, I. Vasary, 'History and Legend in Berke Khan's Conversion to Islam', in (ed.) D. Sinor, *Aspects of Altaic Civilization III, Proceedings of the Thirtieth Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, June 19-25, 1987*, (Bloomington, IN: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1990), pp. 242-6. Returning to our Toluid sources, Juvainī, writing in the 1260s, when his ruler was involved in a war against Berke, is either neutral about Berke, or positive. He notes Berke's name first in the list of princes that enthroned Möngke, and that at the celebration of Möngke's enthronement, all animals were slaughtered in the halal fashion because of Berke's religion, while Möngke gave him great gifts and favours on his departure, Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, pp. 568, 573, 594. Neither is Rashīd al-Dīn, who usually has Toluid propaganda more fully developed than Juvainī, particularly negative about Berke beyond his description of Berke's 'overbearing' nature and 'nastiness' (even here, this is due to his close relationship with Möngke), RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 511. He still calls Berke the *aqā*, attributes the original estrangement to the poisoning of Berke's relatives in Hülegü's camp, and spells out Berke's own issues with Hülegü, Vol. II, pp. 362, 511. Perhaps neither Juvainī nor Rashīd al-Dīn could afford to be overly critical of a man who was both considered highly-ranked in Mongol hierarchy and one of the first Chinggisid princes to convert to Islam.

⁴³ Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, p. 190.

⁴⁴ RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 307-310; Qāshānī/Hambali, pp. 32-3, p. 41 (son of Kukui کوکوی); M. Biran, 'The Mongols in Central Asia from Chinggis Khan's Invasion to the rise of Temür: the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid

Thus, we can see that many of the previous Mongol rulers across the empire and its successor khanates had *wished* to be succeeded by their sons, though the principle of collective sovereignty still did intervene in cases such as those of Güyük and Möngke, where seniority could not be discounted.⁴⁵ Surprisingly then, it seems more a trend of Mongol rulers to try and push filial succession on their recalcitrant family members and subjects, rather than later historiographical editing based on their own preferences. The precedent of Chinggis' own choice to make his son succeed was likely a very influential factor amongst his descendants. That Rashīd al-Dīn should echo the wishes of the khans themselves is hardly surprising given his role, and we can decide not to suspect the historian of some grand plot here. It seems as if he was seeking to explain what occurred in Ilkhanid history and the wishes of the Mongol rulers. That this slanted his history in an Abaqaid direction thus makes complete sense, as it was indeed the Abaqaid line that was largely successful in establishing itself in Ilkhanid Iran and quashing those who they saw as representing a threat to their own control. If we look at Rashīd al-Dīn's history through this light, we can better understand how loyalty to the Chinggisid house in the Ilkhanate was expressed.

If we look at the case of Abaqa's succession, we can see its effects on the Ilkhanid vision of Chinggisid power in the khanate. Both Broadbridge and Brack have shown that Abaqa's position amongst Hülegü's sons was not necessarily the strongest. His mother, Yesünjin Khatun, seems to have been relatively unknown and is mentioned only briefly by Rashīd al-Dīn. Abaqa had a brother, Jumghur, who is mentioned by both Rashīd al-Dīn and Juvainī. He is twice mentioned by Rashīd al-Dīn as older than Abaqa, but elsewhere said to be younger by both Rashīd al-Dīn and Juvainī (Figure 8).⁴⁶ As Broadbridge points out, Jumghur's mother Güyük Khatun had been Hülegü's senior wife before her early death, and thus, in her view, whatever the question of who was older between Abaqa and

realms', in (eds.) N. Di Cosmo, A.J. Frank and P.B. Golden, *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 54.

⁴⁵ That Mongol *quriltais* often selected rulers not chosen by their predecessors indicates the strength of the 'collegialist' notion in the Mongol world as put forward by Michael Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, pp. 1-4. Interestingly, the anonymous *Akhbār-i Mughulān* (compiled however by the scholar Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, a protégé of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and envoy of the Ilkhans) states that 'there is no clear ruling on imperial bequests' in the *yasa*, *The Mongols in Iran: Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī's Akhbār-i Mughulān* (trans.) G. Lane, (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 75, Persian text, p. 65. The term here translated by Lane as 'imperial bequest', *vaṣiyyat*, is more specifically a will. For more on this work, see G. Lane, 'Mongol News: The Akhbār-i Mughulān dar Anbāneh Qutb by Quṭb al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Mas'ūd Shīrāzī', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 22, Nos. 3-4 (2012), pp. 541-559.

⁴⁶ RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 57, Vol. II, p. 428 where Jumghur is older, Vol. II, pp. 472, 480, 513 say that Abaqa is the elder, while Juvainī says that Abaqa was older, Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 611; *Akhbār-i Mughulān*, p. 61, Persian text, p. 44, also mentions Abaqa as the oldest son (though certainly true by Hülegü's death). Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 31; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 52 has 12 sons of Hülegü, listed in almost completely different order to Rashīd al-Dīn (though Vaṣṣāf does not explicitly state age order). Abaqa is listed first, Möngke Temür, said by Rashīd al-Dīn to be the eleventh son, is listed fourth, and before Aḥmad Tegüder. Jumghur is in fact listed last, which would suggest he would fill the role of *otchigin*, staying in Mongolia to look after his father's camps. Vaṣṣāf also lists Jūshkeb as a son of Hülegü, rather than a son of Jumghur, according to Rashīd al-Dīn.

Jumghur, Jumghur was senior based on his mother's status.⁴⁷ The question of age was not necessarily a determinant for the ruler's choice of successor, as we have seen with Chinggis' choice of his third son Ögödei, Ögödei's choice of his second or third son Köchü (father of Shiremün), even when all the sons were of the same mother. Hülegü did summon Jumghur from Mongolia to join him in Iran, so it may have been that he was indeed planning to have Jumghur succeed him, though we cannot be sure. Rashīd al-Dīn's phrasing seems to indicate that Jumghur was being summoned to account for his actions in supporting Ariq Böke however.⁴⁸ Whatever the case may be, Jumghur died en route and Abaqa was made to succeed. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the reasons for his succession are thus: 'You are here, you are the eldest of all the sons, you know well the customs and ancient *yosun* and *yasa*, and Hülägü Khan made you the heir designate during his lifetime. How can anyone else accede to the throne?'⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Broadbridge, *Women*, p. 264; Juvainī/Qazvini, Vol. 3, pp. 96-7; Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 611; RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 57; Vol. II, p. 472. A closer look at Juvainī's Persian text reveals more questions than it does answers. و جومغار اغول را که از راه منصب سبب مادر که از خاتونان دیگر بزرگتر بود (رتبه تقدم داشت) قایم مقام خویش بر سر اردو و لشکر نصب فرمود. This all seems quite straightforward, but as the editor Qazvini notes, the phrase in brackets, *rutba-yi taqaddum dāsht*, meaning 'had the preceding/higher position', is not present in any of the manuscripts. The sentence would certainly seem to imply that Jumghur was the most senior, but we cannot be certain. Grigor of Akanc' claimed that Abaqa was in fact the senior son, Grigor Aknerts'i, *History of the Nation of Archers*, Chap. 14, pg. 16. Returning to Juvainī, we also have the problematic phrase, *mādar az khātūnān-i dīgar buzurgtar būd*, saying Jumghur's mother Güyük was the greatest of the *other* women. Does this mean apart from Doquz Khatun, who was childless? No other woman is mentioned here. The final question is what is meant by *qāyim maqām*. This could mean deputy or, less often, successor, but being put in charge of the *ordu* and army in Mongolia was regularly the preserve of the *otchigin*, or hearth-keeper, who was supposed to be the youngest son or brother. Considering that Juvainī famously misunderstood the difference between succession and inheritance for the Mongols, it is not impossible that Jumghur fulfilled the *otchigin* role. If however, *qāyim maqām* means successor in this case, it would indicate that Hülegü presumably had no plans to stay in Iran and was not in fact given it as his to rule, and brought his elder sons, of lower rank, on a dangerous assignment, while leaving his preferred successor in charge of the original *ulus*. The lack of clarity on this issue does not allow for any firm statements.

⁴⁸ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 519; RAD/Raushan, Vol. II, p. 941. به وقت بلغاق اریغ بوکا جومقور مصاحب او بود... چون خبر *bi-vaqt-i bulghāq-i arīgh būkā jūmqūr maṣāḥib-i ū būd... chun khabar bi hūlāgū khān rasīd...ibātāl nūyān rā bi ṭalab-i jūmqūr va aghrūq firistād*. Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship', p. 42, note 104 questions Rashīd al-Dīn's portrayal of Jumghur supporting Ariq Böke, saying it was an attempt to show Jumghur in a negative light. However, this type of Rashīd al-Dīn revisionism can go too far. Jumghur was in Mongolia, with Hülegü's *aghrūq*, which had been left in Möngke's care, and thus passed to Ariq Böke when Möngke died. Ariq Böke was elected *qa'an* by a significant portion of the Mongol elite, and it is unlikely that Jumghur had any choice in supporting Ariq Böke. That this would have caused Hülegü some problems given his support for Qubilai is undoubtable, and Hülegü likely had to show at least some outward disapproval of Jumghur's actions. Both Jumghur's coercion into supporting Ariq Böke and Hülegü's displeasure are explicitly stated by Rashīd al-Dīn, RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 473.

⁴⁹ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 517.

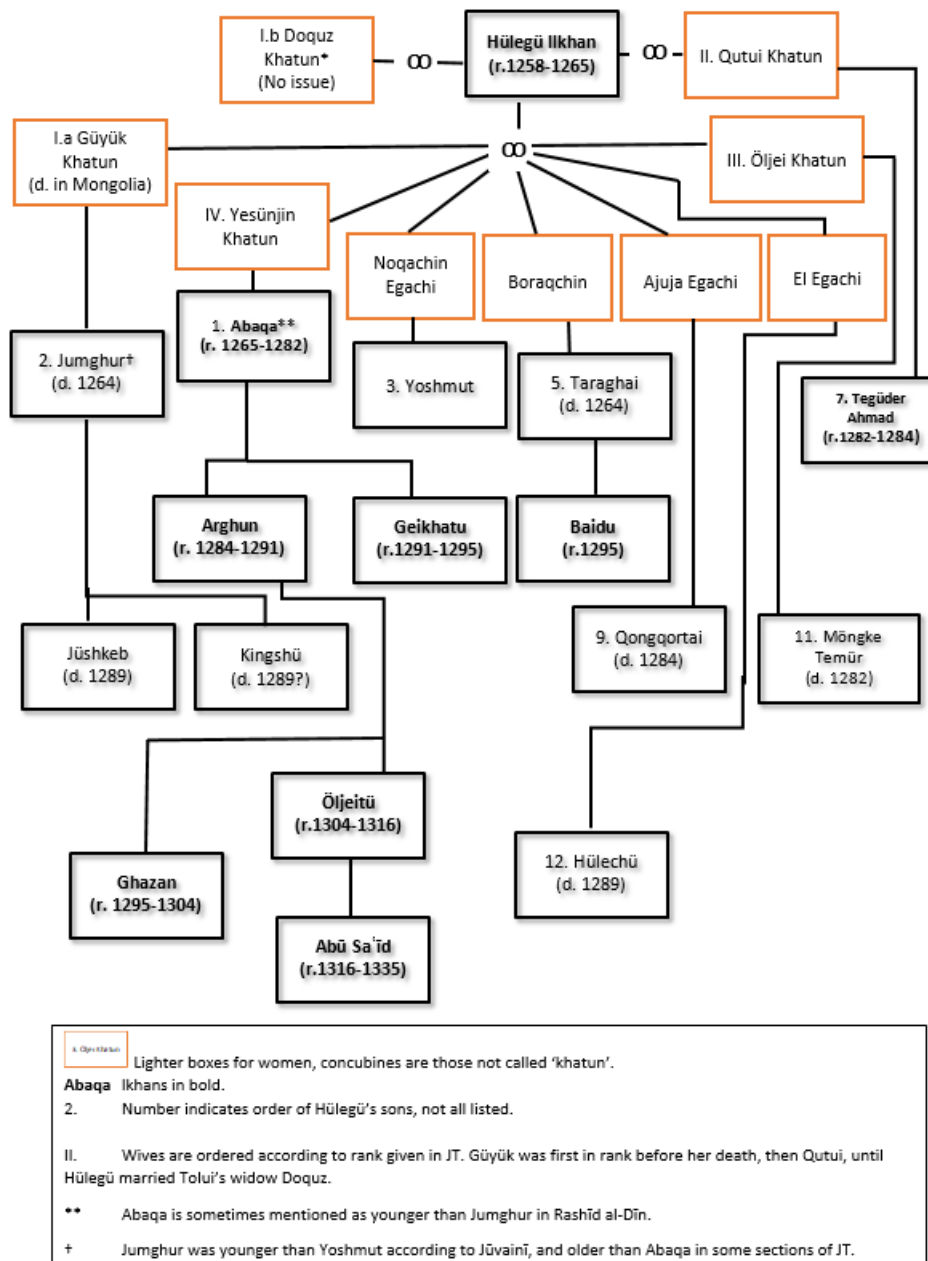


Figure 8: The Ilkhanid Line, Key Descendants and Mothers © Tobias Jones

Let us look now at our categories of loyalty to understand why this happened. The most obvious is the very practical statement made by Rashīd al-Dīn saying 'You are here'. Abaqa's presence nearby when his father died was key. His other brothers, Ahmad Tegüder and Möngke Temür, may have been born of mothers whose lineage was far more prestigious than Yesünjin Khatun, but these brothers were still in Mongolia. The Ilkhanid state was a fledgling one, whose legitimacy was highly questionable. For the amirs who had accompanied Hulegu and helped him win his state, from the perspective of both their inertial and clientelist loyalties, Abaqa was an easy choice. A speedy succession protected their gains and their support for Abaqa would have rendered

them rewards in the future. These amirs presumably knew Abaqa personally, and had fought alongside him during Hülegü's campaigns, while Abaqa also had the support of Hülegü's vizier, Arghun Aqa, who was in attendance on Abaqa when he received news of his father's death.⁵⁰ Waiting for the princes still in Mongolia would have been risky given the shaky foundations the state was based on, the nascent war with the Jochids and the lack of personal connections between these princes and the amirs. Abaqa also would have had plenty of time to establish loyalty networks among those he campaigned with, while his brothers in Mongolia were at a disadvantage in this regard.

From a charismatic loyalty point of view, Abaqa had already proven himself an able military commander and administrator of the province of Khurasan; a worthy successor to his father. Indeed, as we shall see, this province was repeatedly given by Ilkhans to their sons or brothers who eventually succeeded them. This looks to have been a ploy to boost their chances of succession, as Khurasan was a wealthy and powerful province (Map 4) and the heir's establishment of loyalty bonds in the region during their father or brother's rule seems to have stood them in good stead when they sought the khanate.⁵¹ The communal loyalty of this key province played a large part in the success of the Abaqaids.⁵² Finally, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, Abaqa also appealed to his supporters' ideal loyalty by his knowledge of and respect for Chinggisid *jasaq* and Mongol custom. We have no way of knowing whether this was the case, but Rashīd al-Dīn is ticking a box here for a suitable successor. The confirmation of Abaqa as fitting the bill from an ideal loyalty perspective was his official enthronement by Qubilai in 1270.⁵³ The rubber stamping of Abaqa's rule by Qubilai could only have elevated Abaqa's prestige among his subjects.

⁵⁰ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 517; Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, p. 114.

⁵¹ This situation in Khurasan has led to Timothy May stating that 'the prince stationed there became, in effect, the Prince of Wales', May, *The Mongol Empire*, p. 82.

⁵² Michael Hope has shown how Nawrūz was able to create communal loyalty networks in Khurasan and establish himself as a major regional player who challenged Ilkhanid authority, see Hope, 'The "Nawrūz King": the rebellion of Amir Nawrūz in Khurasan (688-694/1289-94) and its implications for the Ilkhan polity at the end of the thirteenth century', *Bulletin of School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 78, (2015), pp. 451-473.

⁵³ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 535.

4.4 Aḥmad's Rise and Fall

Although Abaqa's brother Yoshmut, born of a concubine, apparently tested the waters to see if his succession was possible, it was made clear to him by the amirs that his claim would not be supported, and thus Abaqa did not truly have a challenger for the throne.⁵⁴ We see quite a different situation with the succession of first Aḥmad Tegüder, and subsequently, Arghun. Aḥmad has not received particularly stellar reviews in the histories of the Ilkhanate, and his succession was not quite as clear cut as Abaqa's had been, at least according to Rashīd al-Dīn. Aḥmad's lineage was said to be key to his succeeding Abaqa. In Rashīd al-Dīn's account, Abaqa, unlike Hülegü, had not clearly indicated who his successor was to be, which caused some consternation among the amirs and princes.⁵⁵ However, the *quriltai* which decided upon Aḥmad as Abaqa's successor, despite weighing up the claims of Arghun, Abaqa's son by a concubine named Qaitmish Egechi, and Möngke Temür, Hülegü's son by another of his chief wives, Öljei Khatun, Aḥmad's greater age and the superior status of his mother, Güyük Khatun, saw him chosen as Ilkhan.⁵⁶ Möngke Temür's suspiciously timed death during the course of the *quriltai*, which Bar Hebraeus and Het'um the Historian put down to poison, seems to have been a significant filip to Aḥmad's party as well.⁵⁷ Vaṣṣāf, Bar Hebraeus and the *Akḥbār-i Mughulān* state that not only was Aḥmad's election unanimous, but that Arghun supported Aḥmad at the outset.⁵⁸

Arghun, at least according to Rashīd al-Dīn, after an initial play for the throne by seizing his father's treasury, accepted Aḥmad as ruler due to the greater support Aḥmad had in the *quriltai*. Arghun certainly seems to have been damaged in his play for the throne by several key factors. His status was lesser to Aḥmad's due to Aḥmad's mother's rank and Aḥmad's seniority by a generation, as well as the fact that Arghun was born of a concubine. Abaqa's failure to make his desired

⁵⁴ Idem, p. 517. Jūzjānī states that Yoshmut was not a successful general, saying that Hülegü insulted him for his inability to take Mayyafaraqin, and promising that he could take it in three days, Jūzjānī/Raverty, pp. 1270-3. This may have accounted for a lack of charismatic loyalty to Yoshmut among Hülegü's amirs. Yoshmut is portrayed as quite hapless, with Ḥamd-Allāh Mustawfī saying that he accidentally hit his brother Abaqa in the neck with an arrow, Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, p. 114.

⁵⁵ Idem, p. 558.

⁵⁶ RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 548; Āqṣarā'ī (ed. Turan, p. 136) and Shabānkārā'ī, *Majma' al-ansāb fī l-tawārīkh*, p. 294, as referenced in J. Pfeiffer, 'Conversion to Islam', p. 172; BH/Budge, p. 467.

⁵⁷ BH/Budge, p. 466, says Möngke Temür died some 25 days after Abaqa, though he does not attribute the poisoning to any of the claimants to the throne; Het'um the Historian, *Flower of Histories*, p. 59 states that a Muslim poisoned both Abaqa and Möngke Temür. However, Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 55; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 89 claims that Möngke Temür died on his campaign against the Mamluks in 1280/1281.

⁵⁸ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 66, 71; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 106, 118; BH/Budge, pp. 467, 470; *Akḥbār-i Mughulān*, p. 66, Persian text, p. 53. Qāzī Bayzāvī in his *Nizām al-tawārīkh* also claimed that Aḥmad's election was supported by most amirs and princes, see C. Melville, 'From Adam to Abaqa: Qādī Baidāwī's Rearrangement of History (Part II)', *Studia Iranica*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (2007), p. 60.

successor clear is apparent enough as even Rashīd al-Dīn does not claim this definitively. Rather, he writes of a council of amirs and princes meeting in 1284 where the matter was discussed. One of the key amirs, Buqa Jalayir, instead says that based on precedent, i.e. Hülegü's succession by Abaqa, the rule should pass to Arghun. Buqa argues that this had been Abaqa's plan but he had died before being able to do so. Given that Abaqa reigned for some 17 years, he certainly had plenty of time to indicate his preferred successor, though of course Arghun had been entrusted with the governorship of Khurasan. Several of the other amirs present claimed that they had heard Abaqa say that the original heir would be Möngke Temür, and after him Arghun, but other amirs present did not accept this as more than hearsay. Buqa saw that there was no agreement and delayed, saying that the counsel of the khatuns would help them decide as to who should be Ilkhan.⁵⁹

Rashīd al-Dīn's explanations of Arghun's position may be somewhat suspect, but as we can see he shows us that support was not overwhelming for Arghun even in 1284, shortly before he in fact became Ilkhan. The important questions to figure out are how did people's loyalty sway *away* from Aḥmad and then *towards* Arghun. As we have seen, Arghun himself originally supported Aḥmad, so perhaps we can analyse why our sources say he changed his tune. Rashīd al-Dīn, given his position in the court of Ghazan (the son of Arghun), could hardly afford to accuse Arghun of treachery, but rather positions the argument in such a way that although Arghun had a claim to the throne, it was not until Aḥmad sent one of his *noyans*, Alinaq, to attack Arghun that Arghun felt forced into rebelling.⁶⁰ Thus the aggression is all on Aḥmad's part, and Arghun is simply reactive, and even apologetic for taking up arms against his *aqa*.⁶¹ Vaṣṣāf, further away from the incidents temporally and geographically, states that Arghun, under the influence of a group of amirs, became desirous of the kingship.⁶² This situation occurred because of Aḥmad's actions regarding the Mamluks. Vaṣṣāf claims that a *quriltai* was held in which all of the Mongol princes and amirs present agreed to attack the Mamluks, but Aḥmad instead offered Sultan Qalāwūn peace, which angered and upset the Mongols.⁶³ For Bar Hebraeus, it was one specific action of Aḥmad's that turned Arghun

⁵⁹ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 558. According to the *Akḥbār-i Muḡhulān*, Buqa said Abaqa gave the throne to Arghun, confirmed by Dankiz (Tanggiz in Rashīd al-Dīn) Güregen, with Möngke Temür not mentioned, possibly because of Abaqa's extreme disappointment in his brother after his defeat at the hands of the Mamluks at Homs, *Akḥbār-i Muḡhulān*, pp. 64, 74-5 Persian text, pp. 49, 65.

⁶⁰ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 556.

⁶¹ This is echoed in Khwāndamīr/Thackston p. 81, where Ghazan is apologetic to Baidu for turning against his *aqa*, but felt forced due to Baidu's plot to kill him.

⁶² Vaṣṣāf was far more negative about Arghun than Rashīd al-Dīn could ever afford to be. He called Arghun 'the sworn enemy of Muslims', *dushman-i jān-i musalmānān*, and said that Arghun and his Jewish *ṣāhib-dīvān* Sa'd al-Dawla tried to force Muslim spiritual leaders to preach Arghun's prophethood. He even went so far as to say that Arghun plotted to turn the Ka'ba into a Buddhist site, Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 145; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 241-2; Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, p. 145.

⁶³ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 70-1; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 113, 118.

against him, and this was Aḥmad's execution of Qongqortai, one of Hülegü's sons by a concubine, Ajuja Egechi, who Aḥmad had appointed governor of Rum. Apparently he and Arghun had been firm friends and Aḥmad suspected them of plotting against him.⁶⁴

If we combine our information on Aḥmad's reign, it is perhaps not too hard to see from a loyalty perspective why his supporters turned against him. The killing of Qongqortai seems to have been a major gripe for the Chinggisid princes themselves. It is unsure exactly why this took place, as we have several possible reasons given in our sources. Both Rashīd al-Dīn and Bar Hebraeus claim that it was Qongqortai's support for, or perceived support for, Arghun that led to Aḥmad having him killed.⁶⁵ For Vaṣṣāf, Qongqortai himself had rebelled and sought to overthrow Aḥmad.⁶⁶ In a letter from the Mamluk Sultan Qalāwūn, Aḥmad is criticised for allowing Qongqortai to kill Muslims in Anatolia, and it was soon after this that Aḥmad had him killed, leading Judith Pfeiffer to hypothesise that this was a possible reason for his execution.⁶⁷ The *Akḥbār-i Mughulān* tells a similar story, saying that Qongqortai massacred people in Rum who were 'very *īl*', and that this, along with Qongqortai's plotting with Arghun, was why Aḥmad had him killed. It adds that gossipers told Aḥmad that Qongqortai had shared Aḥmad's women.⁶⁸

Whatever the case may have been, Aḥmad's execution of his brother negatively affected loyalty towards Aḥmad on several different levels. At the most basic, as mentioned in Chapter 2, this could be seen as breaking the contract between a lord and his subject, in this case compounded by the blood relationship between the two. Of course, if Qongqortai's actions did amount to rebellion, Aḥmad was presumably well within his rights to punish his subject, however, this had to be done in the correct way. For both the princes and the amirs, this may also have been a blow to their ideal loyalty towards the Ilkhan, with Aḥmad ignoring Mongol custom and Chinggisid *jasaq* by foregoing a trial for Qongqortai. Again, the *Akḥbār-i Mughulān* provides an interesting analysis of this moment. Here, Aḥmad is portrayed as following the *jasaq* by executing Qongqortai, 'in accordance with the precepts of Chinggis Khan, who had said that the back of whosoever plots against the kingdom should be broken', but also mentions that Aḥmad acted pre-emptively in executing his brother.⁶⁹ The

⁶⁴ BH/Budge, p. 470.

⁶⁵ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 549; BH/Budge, p. 470.

⁶⁶ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 74; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 125.

⁶⁷ J. Pfeiffer, 'Aḥmad Tegüder's Second Letter to Qala'un (682/1283)' in (eds.) J. Pfeiffer, S.A. Quinn, E. Tucker, and J.E. Woods, *History and historiography of post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: studies in honor of John E. Woods*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), pp. 178-182.

⁶⁸ *Akḥbār-i Mughulān*, pp. 66-7, Persian text, p. 54. *īl*, as shown in Chapter Two, was submissive and obedient to Mongol rule.

⁶⁹ *Idem*, pp. 66-7, Persian text, pp. 54-5.

language here is noteworthy also, as Aḥmad's own execution would be a breaking of the back performed by Qongqortai's sons.⁷⁰

For the Chinggisid princes themselves, their clientelist and inertial loyalties would be weakened at seeing a son of Hūlegü executed without a trial in which they participated. If this could be done to Qongqortai what was to prevent it happening to them? Rashīd al-Dīn also states that after Qongqortai's execution, Aḥmad ordered the arrest of Prince Jūshkeb as well as several powerful amirs such as Taghachar (whose career will be discussed later in this chapter).⁷¹ Many may have feared a more widespread purge. Pivotaly, Vaṣṣāf states that Buqa and the other amirs sought to overthrow Aḥmad because he had brought the house of Chinggis into disrepute.⁷² Executing a Chinggisid prince at the behest of a Muslim slave ruler would certainly fall into such a category. This action signalled a weakening in charismatic loyalty, whereby the charisma of the house of Chinggis was being damaged by the actions of Aḥmad.

The other major incident which seems to have irrevocably damaged Aḥmad's loyalty ties to his family and amirs was his establishment of peace with the Mamluks. Interestingly this is not mentioned by Rashīd al-Dīn, though he does note that there were envoys exchanged.⁷³ Bar Hebraeus discusses the peace but does not attribute it as a cause of Aḥmad's overthrow.⁷⁴ It is Vaṣṣāf who explicitly states that it was Aḥmad's actions in this regard which saw many of his amirs turn against him. Vaṣṣāf claims that after his coronation, Aḥmad held a *quriltai* in which there was an agreement between the princes and amirs to attack Mamluk lands.⁷⁵ However, according to Vaṣṣāf and Bar Hebraeus, Aḥmad, in seeking to promote Islam, instead sought peace with Qalāwūn, looking to re-establish trade between the two realms. It is due to this peace that many of the amirs apparently deserted Aḥmad and began to encourage Arghun to take power.⁷⁶ Adel Allouche and Judith Pfeiffer have shown however that Aḥmad's original embassy to Qalāwūn in August 1282 was far more aggressive than once believed, requiring Qalāwūn's obedience (طاعت, *ṭā'at*), and his belligerent

⁷⁰ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 80; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 134. According to Vaṣṣāf, this was done according to *qiṣās*, the retaliatory punishment by a victim or victim's family member discussed in the Qur'an, and still practised in Iran's legal code today. However, this seems unlikely, as neither Qongqortai nor his sons were Muslims as far as we know, and the Mongols had their own system of retributive justice, which nonetheless matched this idea quite well. J. Schacht, 'Ḳiṣās', *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Online, http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4400, Accessed 25th February 2022.

⁷¹ RAD/Thackston Vol. III, p. 552.

⁷² Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 78; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 132.

⁷³ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 551.

⁷⁴ BH/Budge, p. 467.

⁷⁵ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 70; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 113.

⁷⁶ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 71; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 118; BH/Budge, p. 467.

wording was rebuked by Qalāwūn in his response. It was only in Aḥmad's second embassy, in June 1283 that he dropped this word and instead used the words peace (صلح, *ṣulḥ*) and harmony (اتفاق, *ittifāq*).⁷⁷ This letter was sent after the execution of Qongqortai and it may be that Aḥmad was thus seeking to placate the Mamluks while dealing with problems at home. Perhaps Vaṣṣāf is conflating the two missions, but Bar Hebraeus also notes the submissive element required of Qalāwūn in Aḥmad's initial letter, threatening the Mamluks should they continue in their state of rebellion.⁷⁸

Maybe then this motive is overplayed by Vaṣṣāf, but it is worth considering why such an action would have given rise to dissension among the Mongols. Firstly, if Aḥmad did not pursue war with the Mamluks with sufficient gusto, this would have been damaging to the amirs' self interest. The successful pursuit of war brought with it the chance for positions, wealth, and the opportunity for booty for a leader's restless soldiers. The expectation of military success and reward were a key part of the Mongol system. One should note that Aḥmad also attempted to organise a peace with the Jochids as well, and it may be that many amirs were frustrated by the lack of outward campaigns.⁷⁹ If Vaṣṣāf is correct in stating that the *quriltai* decided on war and Aḥmad did not pursue it successfully, again the theme of ideal loyalty is relevant. The *quriltai*'s decisions were meant to be binding, even on the khan, and if Aḥmad went against this decision, it was a betrayal of Mongol and Chinggisid custom.⁸⁰ The assertion of the Ilkhan's power vis-à-vis the princes and amirs could be an attempt at centralisation, recalling Michael Hope's analysis of the tug-of-war between the patrimonialist and collegialist tendencies, though if so this attempt backfired dramatically.⁸¹

We must consider other reasons for Aḥmad's overthrow if we are to complete our analysis of loyalty decisions made by key figures at this juncture. Rashīd al-Dīn sums up Aḥmad's failures as a leader by claiming that he was uninterested in financial affairs, leaving such up to his mother Qutui and the *noyan* Asiq, while he himself spent his time in the company of Sufi shaykhs. The historian also notes that Aḥmad did not properly appreciate two highly influential figures in the Ilkhanate, Shikṭur Noyan and Suqunchaq Aqa, whose support had been vital in his ascension.⁸² Suqunchaq Aqa was the son of Sodon Noyan, a commander under Chinggis, Ögödei and the Toluids, and the

⁷⁷ A. Allouche, 'Tegüder's Ultimatum to Qalawun', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 22, (1990), pp. 437-446; Pfeiffer, 'Second Letter', pp. 177-9.

⁷⁸ BH/Budge, p. 467.

⁷⁹ Pfeiffer, 'Second Letter', p. 189.

⁸⁰ See Chapter 3, p. 127.

⁸¹ Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, *passim*.

⁸² RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 551. Qāzī Bayḏāwī mentions the importance of Suqunchaq Aqa for the reign of Abaqa, saying he was the pivot of rule, Abaqa's vice-regent and governor, 'From Adam to Abaqa', p. 59. Khwāndamīr/Thackston, p. 70 claims that Shikṭur Noyan was present with Aḥmad upon his capture by the Qara'unas, and arrested his sovereign.

grandson of Chila'ūqan Bahadur, one of Chinggis' 'four steeds', his most loyal and effective soldiers. Chila'ūqan Bahadur himself was a son of Sorghan Shira of the Suldus, whose assistance in hiding and freeing the young Temüjin from the Tayichi'ut was later rewarded with *darqan* status.⁸³ This status was also hereditary, and thus Suqunchaq would have held it also.⁸⁴ Disrespecting such an influential amir, with highly symbolic status as a *darqan* and a descendant of some of Chinggis' most loyal *nökörs*, could easily have been seen as disloyalty to the legacy of Aḥmad Tegüder's illustrious ancestor. However, this statement by Rashīd al-Dīn is somewhat lessened by the fact that Aḥmad made Suqunchaq his *nāyib* (vice-regent) after his accession.⁸⁵ It is unclear when exactly the slight on Suqunchaq occurred.⁸⁶ If Aḥmad did do something to damage the relationship with Suqunchaq, we may see the practical implications of side-lining an extremely powerful figure who had his own charismatic pull.

On top of this, Rashīd al-Dīn emphasises Aḥmad's inability to win over Buqa Jalayir as the issue most directly linked to his overthrow. Buqa had been an *inaq* (personal advisor) of Abaqa and kept the royal seal, a position of great honour. Aḥmad tried to gain Buqa's support, but forced him to leave Arghun and threatened and mocked him, raising up others in his place.⁸⁷ In the *Akḥbār-i Mughulān*, Buqa expressed his fears to his brother Aruq that Aḥmad planned to kill them for being overly friendly with Arghun, and thus convinced Aruq to get Prince Jüshkeb onside, and telling the

⁸³ RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, pp. 94-5; SHM/de Rachewiltz, §84-85 and §219, pp. 27-8, 149. All of the four steeds may have been *darqans*, as Muqali and Bo'orchu also were given this status by Chinggis, I. de Rachewiltz, 'Muqali, Bōl, Tas, An-t'ung', in (eds.) I. de Rachewiltz, H. Chan, H. Ch'i-ch'ing and P.W. Geier, *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200-1300)*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993) pp. 3-4.

⁸⁴ His grandson Chupan was the extremely powerful amir of Öljeitü and Abū Sa'īd, whose descendants founded the Chupanid dynasty in Iran.

⁸⁵ Pfeiffer, 'Conversion to Islam', pp. 200-1.

⁸⁶ Idem, pp. 279, 306, Pfeiffer notes that in Rashīd al-Dīn's *Shu'ab-i Panjgāna*, Rashīd al-Dīn states that after Aḥmad's accession, he no longer listened to Suqunchaq, and that he gave the position of *inaq* to the Sufi shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān, which Suqunchaq had previously held under Abaqa. However, Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, pp. 140-1 suggests that already during Abaqa's reign, Suqunchaq experienced a loss in prestige after Abaqa appointed Taqajar Noyan to collect the taxes of Shiraz after Suqunchaq was accused of corruption and embezzlement.

⁸⁷ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 541, 555. Judith Pfeiffer references Henry Howorth's *History of the Mongols from the 9th to the 19th century*, 1888. Part III. p. 296, who used Vaṣṣāf, saying that Aḥmad married Qutui Khatun to Buqa, however I cannot find this information in Vaṣṣāf nor do other scholars who make use of Vaṣṣāf mention this, J. Pfeiffer, 'Conversion to Islam among the Ilkhans in Muslim Narrative Traditions: The Case of Aḥmad Tegüder', PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2003, p. 280. Rashīd al-Dīn says that Qutui honoured Buqa with a robe of Hülegü's, but mentions no marriage, RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 550.

amir Tagana that they would be willing to give the throne to his lord, Prince Hülechü.⁸⁸ Aḥmad also imprisoned Arghun after he rebelled, possibly planning to kill him.⁸⁹

From Rashīd al-Dīn's assessment at least, one can see the manner in which Aḥmad undermined the loyalty both of his relatives and his great amirs. The princes rose up, not originally on behalf of Arghun's desire for the throne, but seemingly from a sense of communal loyalty, where they perceived themselves as a group under threat, Qongqortai having been executed by Aḥmad and now possibly Arghun. The great amirs who had been in high position under Abaqa were clearly unhappy with their treatment by Aḥmad, who limited their opportunities and handed their positions to Sufi shaykhs. Aḥmad also ground down people's charismatic loyalty to him by taking a less than active role in government, allowing his mother Qutui and her *amir-i ordu* (camp manager) Asiq to run things.

If we consider the other sources for Aḥmad's reign, we get a very different picture of the reasons for his overthrow. Apparently even before the execution of Qongqortai, one Ilkhanid official seems to have questioned Aḥmad's right to rule. This was Tash Möngke who as governor of Shiraz on behalf of Aḥmad, in 1283 refused to use the title 'khan' for Aḥmad in his letters, preferring the term *aqā*.⁹⁰ It is unclear why Tash Möngke did not recognise his patron's status as khan, or if he received any sanction for this potentially treasonous action but such open dissension cannot have helped Aḥmad's cause. It is notable that in 1284 Tash Möngke headed back for court, while the Salghurid Abish Khatun was sent as governor of Shiraz in his stead.⁹¹ Presumably Aḥmad was calling his recalcitrant official to task, while replacing him with a client who had long lived in the Ilkhanid *ordu* having been married to Möngke Temür, while also appearing more acceptable to the people of Shiraz, who welcomed her with celebration and joy after the mismanagement of several Mongol officials.⁹²

⁸⁸ *Akḥbār-i Mughulān*, pp. 72-3, Persian text, p. 63.

⁸⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn states that it was Aḥmad's general and son-in-law Alinaq who wanted to kill Arghun, but Vaṣṣāf states that Aḥmad ordered Alinaq to do so. RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 556; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 78; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 131.

⁹⁰ See Chapter 2.

⁹¹ Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, pp. 143-4. Both Lane and Ann Lambton have identified, based on Vaṣṣāf, this Tash Möngke as Möngke Temür, the husband of Abish Khatun and son of Hülegü, see A.K.S. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia: Aspects of Administrative, Economic and Social History, 11th-14th Century*, (London: Tauris, 1988), pp. 272-3. However, I believe this to be a misidentification. All the other sources of this period say Möngke Temür died before Aḥmad's accession (see page 156). Not only this, but Vaṣṣāf himself regularly uses the name Möngke Temür, as well as saying that he died from an arrow wound during the battle against the Mamluks in 679 AH (1280/1281), Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 55; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 89. This would explain Lane's confusion as to Vaṣṣāf openly calling Tash Möngke stupid and prideful, something he was not likely to have done about a Chinggisid prince, as well as the strange actions of the 'husband' of Abish Khatun not greeting his wife on the border of the province of Fars.

⁹² Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 123-4; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 211.

Vaṣṣāf also mentions Aḥmad's appointment of corrupt officials who embezzled funds from the camps of princes and khatuns, but for him, Aḥmad's major conflicts as a ruler stemmed from his religious choices.⁹³ Aḥmad's active support for Islam and raising of Muslims to positions of power apparently caused fear and anger among the amirs and princes, which was compounded by his reaching out to the Mamluk sultan Qalāwūn.⁹⁴ Neither Rashīd al-Dīn nor Bar Hebraeus mention Aḥmad's Islamising policies whatsoever, nor do they credit his religion as an issue with the Mongols. In this sense Vaṣṣāf, though generally not particularly approving of Aḥmad's reign, sympathises with Aḥmad's situation. Thus, despite further critical accounts of Aḥmad by Ilkhanid historians such as Ḥamd-Allāh Mustawfī, Pfeiffer notes that by the Timurid period, Aḥmad was portrayed as a martyr for Islam in Timurid historiography.⁹⁵

Several Christian sources also emphasise religious issues, unsurprisingly. Marco Polo claims that Arghun used Aḥmad's Islam as a stick to beat him with during their conflict, and also that Aḥmad had seized the throne and not shared out Abaqa's wives.⁹⁶ Mar Yahbh Allaha, the Catholicus of the Syriac Church in Maragha, states that Aḥmad persecuted Christians and took away the *paiza* which had been given to him by Abaqa. He also writes that Aḥmad's vizier, Shams al-Dīn Juvainī, accused the Catholicus and Rabban Sawma of sending treasonous letters to Qubilai, though these charges were eventually dropped and his *paiza* was returned to him by Aḥmad. Mar Yahbh Allaha does not link Aḥmad's Islam to his overthrow, only saying that Arghun loved Christians and that a greater number of the soldiers supported him.⁹⁷ The other source who discusses Aḥmad's reign in this manner is Het'um the Historian, who likewise highlights Aḥmad's persecution of Christians. Interestingly, Het'um also speaks of an informal alliance between Arghun and a brother of Aḥmad to overthrow Aḥmad. Apparently they informed Qubilai of Aḥmad's forsaking of the ways of their forefathers, which saw Qubilai order Aḥmad to cease and desist his proselytising efforts. Aḥmad ignored this and instead had this unnamed brother executed (clearly Qongqortai) and attacked Arghun. He was only prevented from doing so by Buqa, whose love for Abaqa would not let him see Abaqa's son executed.⁹⁸

⁹³ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 68; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 110, dealing with Khvāja Fakhr al-Dīn Idachi.

⁹⁴ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 70, 74; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 113, 125. Mamluk sources such as al-Yūnīnī and al-Nuwayrī also emphasise Aḥmad's attempts to convert the Mongol elite as a reason for his downfall, Van den Bent, 'Mongols in Mamluk Eyes', p. 185.

⁹⁵ Pfeiffer, 'Conversion to Islam', pp. 333, 345.

⁹⁶ *The Travels of Marco Polo*, (trans.) L.F. Benedetto, (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), First Published 1931, pp. 320, 322.

⁹⁷ *The Monks of Kublai Khan*, pp. 158-162, 165.

⁹⁸ Het'um the Historian, *History of the Tartars*, pp. 60-1.

Undoubtedly, there were some Mongols and Ilkhanid subjects who were unhappy with Aḥmad's religious policies, however this seems somewhat overblown. The historian Khwāndamīr believed that the brothers Buqa and Aruq wanted to do away with Aḥmad because he promoted Muslims above others.⁹⁹ Bar Hebraeus does state that Arghun announced that Aḥmad had turned away from the laws of our fathers and trod the path of Islam, which may indeed have been Arghun's belief.¹⁰⁰ However, as a Christian cleric and one who would have suffered greatly at Aḥmad's hands if Aḥmad did indeed persecute non-Muslims, Bar Hebraeus surprisingly announces that Aḥmad looked kindly on Christians and gave them patents.¹⁰¹ Rashīd al-Dīn, who seems to have been slightly embarrassed by Aḥmad's conversion, coming as it did before his patron Ghazan's, only makes a small comment as an aside that one of Rashīd al-Dīn's slaves was taken from him by one of Aḥmad's amirs. Rashīd al-Dīn asked for restitution, but was ignored, which a just Muslim ruler would not have done.¹⁰² There may indeed have been those who complained to Qubilai that Aḥmad was not following tradition, but it is unlikely that his religion was the main problem. As Judith Pfeiffer has pointed out, princes and amirs were taking on Muslim names before Aḥmad's conversion, indicating that there was already a significant degree of Islamisation by Aḥmad's reign.¹⁰³ Indeed this is explicitly stated by the continuator of Bar Hebraeus, who says that a large number of the Mongols had converted in his day, echoed by Het'um, who believed that by Baidu's brief reign (1295) many Mongols had already converted.¹⁰⁴ Given that neither Arghun nor Gaykhatu were Muslims, there was no particular event which saw this change occur, but rather it seems that this situation developed over time. The continuator of Bar Hebraeus added that at this same time (mid-1290s), both the nobles and lesser folk of the Mongols had mostly converted.¹⁰⁵

In this case, we should perhaps think about what ideal loyalty meant in this case. As many of our sources claim, it was Aḥmad's Islam that led to his overthrow. But these same sources also believed that conversion was already quite widespread. We know from previous Mongol history that conversions to different religions had not been a problem for Chinggisid rulers. Ghazan himself of course would prove the point that one could be a Muslim and a successful Chinggisid ruler, though there were some who questioned the need to convert to Islam. The issue was perhaps how Aḥmad

⁹⁹ Khwāndamīr/Thackston, p. 69.

¹⁰⁰ BH/Budge, p. 474.

¹⁰¹ Idem, p. 467.

¹⁰² RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 560. Kamola, *Making Mongol History*, pp. 144-5 indicates that this in fact was likely Rashīd Khwāfi, a scribe who added some amendments to the TMG text, as well as to Juvainī's *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*.

¹⁰³ Pfeiffer, 'Conversion to Islam', pp. 121-5.

¹⁰⁴ BH/Budge, p. 486; Het'um the Historian, p. 62.

¹⁰⁵ BH/Budge, p. 505.

went about enacting his beliefs. His actions contrary to the *quriltai* regarding the Mamluks and his replacement of key Mongol *noyans* with Sufi shaykhs may have been more damaging expressions of his faith. The execution of Qongqortai, little to do with Aḥmad's faith, also was seen as a betrayal of Mongol custom. These policies certainly weakened the Mongols' ideal loyalty to Aḥmad, which when married to his failure to appeal to his key subjects' self-interest and his perceived lack of charisma, saw Aḥmad's reign end quickly with the rise of his nephew Arghun.

4.5 Arghun's Succession

Now that we have answered the question 'why not Aḥmad?', we must therefore deal with the 'why Arghun?' question, by looking at the loyalty models that we have established. We would perhaps expect the great apologist of the Abaqaid line, Rashīd al-Dīn, to portray Arghun's succession as natural and inevitable.¹⁰⁶ However, Rashīd al-Dīn clearly shows us that while some key figures supported Arghun and believed him to be the rightful successor based on the precedent of Abaqā's succession to Hülegü as eldest son, there were equally many powerful amirs, princes and khatuns who held to different views. In the *quriltai* which elected Aḥmad, Rashīd al-Dīn lists Hülegü's sons, Qongqortai and Hülechü; Jumghur's sons, Jüshkeb and Kingshü; and the key amirs Shiktur Noyan and Suqunchaq Aqa as supporters of Aḥmad, and presumably Aḥmad's mother Qutui as well.¹⁰⁷ Möngke Temür also had supporters, notably his mother, the influential khatun Öljei.¹⁰⁸ Even Aq Buqa, one of Arghun's supporters at the 1282 *quriltai*, was decisively won over to Aḥmad during his short reign. Another of Arghun's *amirs*, Hindu Noyan, refused to support Arghun's claim for the throne, stating that Aḥmad was the *aqā* and that Arghun should be happy with Khurasan. Hindu Noyan did promise to fight for Arghun if Aḥmad attacked him and apparently followed up on this promise when Aḥmad advanced on Arghun in April 1284.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Brack, 'Mediating Kingship', p. 41 explicitly states 'Rashīd al-Dīn also strives to show that the Abaqaid (Arghun, Gaykhatu, Ghazan) succession to the throne was undisputed, and enjoyed consensus among the princes to the house of Hülegü'.

¹⁰⁷ Though Rashīd al-Dīn states that Qutui supported Arghun, he later shows that she strove on behalf of her son Aḥmad till the end, Vol. III, p. 559. According to the *Akḥbār-i Mughulān*, Qutui was unhappy with Abaqā's rulership, as he had given her incomes to his concubine, Arqan, while Qutui was not yet in Iran, *Akḥbār-i Mughulān*, p. 62, Persian text, p. 46. It seems highly unlikely then that she would support Abaqā's son Arghun over her own son Aḥmad.

¹⁰⁸ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 548.

¹⁰⁹ Idem, p. 552-3.

Clearly most of the key figures in the Ilkhanate did not support Arghun's candidacy in 1282. However, even after Rashīd al-Dīn delineates how Aḥmad lost many of these supporters over the next two years, he still stages a set-piece in 1284 where the princes and amirs gathered to discuss who should become the ruler. Again, despite Aḥmad not being considered and Arghun's uncles Möngke Temür and Qongqortai dead, support for Arghun was not particularly strong. Some were keen on Hülechü, saying that a son of Hülegü was alive, and thus power should not go to a grandson.¹¹⁰ Others supported Jüshkeb based on his greater age and control of the great *yurt*.¹¹¹ Rashīd al-Dīn states that Tanggiz Güregen claimed that he and Shikṭur Aqa had heard Abaqa say that he would be succeeded first by Möngke Temür, then by Arghun.¹¹² The *Akhbār-i Mughulān*, an anonymous source from the 1280s, says that Buqa claimed that Abaqa had named Arghun his successor, confirmed by Dankiz (Tanggiz) Küregen. However, the source also specifies that the legitimacy of the ruler's will was not clearly delineated in the Chinggisid *jasaq*.¹¹³ In this case, maternal lineage was not a factor as Arghun, Hülechü and Jüshkeb were all born of concubines.¹¹⁴ No

¹¹⁰ This echoes the successions of Güyük and Yesü Möngke.

¹¹¹ Idem, p. 558. Even if we were to base our entire view of this period on Rashīd al-Dīn, the supposed white washer of Abaqaid pretensions, these statements show beyond doubt that Rashīd al-Dīn does not cover up that Arghun was not well-supported. He in fact repeatedly shows this.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ See *Akhbār-i Mughulān*, p. 75, note 33, Persian text, p. 65. '*hīch beh jāi vasiyyat nīstand*'. The Armenian chronicler Vardan tells a different story, saying that he was consulted by Doqūz Khatun after Hülegü's death as to who should be raised in his place. Vardan responded that it was according to Scripture that the senior son should be appointed, and that the will was legally binding, thus Abaqa should be the ruler, Vardan Arewelts'i's *Compilation of History*, (trans.) R. Bedrosian, <http://www.attalus.org/armenian/vaint.htm>, Accessed March 30th 2020, p. 97. It seems highly unlikely that the Mongols cared for Vardan's opinion on the matter, or that they would be swayed by Christian scripture.

¹¹⁴ Broadbridge, *Women*, pp. 283-4 calls Ghazan 'anomalous' because he was born of a concubine, but Arghun and Ghazan were both born of concubines, while Baidu's father, Taraghai, was a son of Hülegü by a concubine also. Baidu's mother is called by Rashīd al-Dīn Qaraqchin, but he does not use the title Khatun, nor is she mentioned again, which seems to indicate she was a concubine as well, RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 474. Three out of nine Ilkhans then were descended from concubines, thus we cannot really call this an anomaly. The consideration for rule of Hülechü, Jüshkeb, and Kingshü (all born of concubines), and the willingness of amirs to support them for the throne should make us question whether the mother's status was as decisive as Broadbridge and others claim, at least in the Ilkhanate. There is good reason to make this claim based on Juvainī's description of Mongol seniority, Juvainī/Qazvini, Vol. I, p. 29, در رسم مغول اعتبار فرزندان یک پدری بنسبت آن فرزندان را مزیت و رجحان باشد مادران باشد هرکدام بزرگتر بنسبت *dar rasm-i mughul i'tibār-i farzandān-i yik pidarī bi-nisbat-i madārān bāshad, mādar-i har-kudām buzurgtar bi-nisbat ān farzand rā mazīyyat va rujhān bāshad*. 'According to the custom of the Mongols, the importance of the sons of one father is in relation to mothers, whichever mother is eldest, that son has superiority'. However, Juvainī seems to be describing an ideal scenario here, and indeed, this quote emerges from his description of Chinggis' four sons by Börte, the classical case. If we consider what we know of Ilkhanid history, this simplistic rule is rarely followed. After Abaqa's death, why was it Arghun (Abaqa's son of a concubine, Qaitmish Egechi) who challenged for the throne and not Gaykhatu (the son of Nuqdan Khatun, Abaqa's second wife)? And why did Ghazan (Arghun's son by a concubine, Qultaq Egechi) and not Öljeitü (Arghun's son by his third wife Örüq Khatun) challenge Baidu for the throne in 1295? The answer is that there were many contributing factors as to why one prince was chosen for the throne, with the status of the mother only one of these, and clearly rarely the most decisive, at least by this period in the Ilkhanate. The use of concubines as royal consorts became the norm in the Ottoman Empire, see L.P. Pierce,

agreement was reached, and Buqa tried to defer the issue until Öljei Khatun and the royal women could be consulted, perhaps hoping to win them to Arghun's side. Vaṣṣāf goes a step further, saying that the princes and amirs successfully chose a candidate, and that candidate was Hülechü, with even Buqa saying he had traded Aḥmad's *yasa* for Hülechü's.¹¹⁵

We are somewhat in the dark about how Arghun exactly managed to gain power, but it was clearly without the support of his rivals Jüshkeb and Hülechü. Both Vaṣṣāf and Rashīd al-Dīn confirm that Arghun had himself crowned without the support of any Chinggisid princes, but rather only certain amirs and khatuns.¹¹⁶ Vaṣṣāf states that Öljei Khatun, Buqa and Shiktur Noyan, three powerful Ilkhanid figures, confirmed Arghun's succession, but even Arghun's confirmation *quriltai* was not attended by the Chinggisid princes and there was still support for Hülechü at this assembly as well.¹¹⁷ Incredibly, Arghun apparently apologised profusely to Hülechü for seizing the throne, even sending him an umbrella (*chatr*), a symbol of royal authority across Asia from the Achaemenids in Persia to the Zhōu Dynasty in China.¹¹⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn says that the possible conflict with the forces of Hülechü and Jüshkeb contributed to Aḥmad's execution, Arghun needing to show strength and not mercy on this occasion.¹¹⁹ Indeed, though these princes did give *möchelges* after the *quriltai*, Hülechü and Jüshkeb were executed a few years later by Arghun for rebelling.¹²⁰ Arghun's execution of many Chinggisid princes indicates how insecure he felt about his rule.

The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 30-41.

¹¹⁵ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 78; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 132-3.

¹¹⁶ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 559; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 81; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 137.

¹¹⁷ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 81; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 137, 139.

¹¹⁸ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 81-2; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 139; E. Sims, 'Chatr', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. V, Fasc. 1, (Dec. 1990), pp. 77-9, <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/catr-parasol-or-umbrella-an-attribute-of-royalty-in-iran>, Accessed 9th February, 2022; C.E. Bosworth, P.M. Holt, P. Chalmers, P.A. Andrews, and J. Burton-Page, 'Miṣalla', in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Online Edition (2012), http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/2048/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0757, Accessed 11th February 2022; S. Gordon, 'In the Aura of the King: Trans-Asian, Trans-Regional, and Deccani Royal Symbolism', *South Asian Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1, (2016), pp. 45, 50. According to Abu'l Fazl, the vizier of the Mughal ruler, Akbar, in his *A'in-i Akbarī*, the *chatr* was one of the four royal symbols that should never be bestowed on anyone else. Eleanor Sims however, has shown that in the Timurid period, the umbrella was also permissible for princes of the blood, as shown in depictions of Shah Rukh and Baysunghur. The Mongols may not have been so picky however, as the Syriac Catholicus Mar Yahbh-Allaha apparently received a parasol, a golden *paiza* and a seal from Abaqa, *Monks of Kublai Khan*, p. 155, while the Mongol *noyan* Shiktur also was given one by Aḥmad Tegüder, Pfeiffer, 'Conversion to Islam', p. 278.

¹¹⁹ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 559.

¹²⁰ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 563, 571. Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship', pp. 41, 46 states that Kingshü also was executed, though Rashīd al-Dīn says he fled to Ghor, p. 598, and Brack later admits that we in fact have no evidence of his execution, merely that we no longer hear of him after Nawrūz's revolt, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship', p. 57, note 138; a Kingshü does appear in Vaṣṣāf, where he is one of the leaders of Ghazan's Syrian campaign of 1303, where he is captured in a confrontation with the Mamluks at Marj al-Suffar. Vaṣṣāf lists him after other notable amirs like Taitaq and Irinjin, and says that he was captured with 'other amirs', (*va chand amīr-i dīgar*), which may indicate he was merely an amir of the same name. Vaṣṣāf also mentions that it was

Buqa's support was key in Arghun gaining power. Pfeiffer states that Buqa's loyalty to Arghun was personal, as he had been in Arghun's service.¹²¹ However, this service cannot have been for very long, as Rashīd al-Dīn states that Buqa only entered Arghun's service after Abaqa's death in April 1282, and he had been Abaqa's *inaq*, while Arghun was based in Khurasan.¹²² Given that Buqa was called to serve Aḥmad only a month after Aḥmad's enthronement in July 1282, Arghun did not have a great deal of time to make this personal connection. Instead we must turn to our loyalty categories to analyse Buqa's actions. As an *inaq* to Abaqa, Buqa's ideal loyalty presumably would have seen him honour Abaqa's children, and he may have seen it as his duty to support his lord Arghun. However, if we consider Vaṣṣāf's version of events, Arghun was not considered for rule at Aḥmad's *quriltai*, and Buqa only actively intervened on Arghun's behalf when Aḥmad sought to execute him. This can be seen as residual loyalty to Abaqa, but as we can see, Buqa had no problem announcing that he was in service to Hülechü when killing Aḥmad's general Alinaq.¹²³ If we turn to Arghun's reign itself, it may become clear what Arghun offered Buqa to get him onside. Buqa was given the vizierate and apparently literally showered in gold.¹²⁴ His powers under Arghun were manifold, and it was only after some five years or so that Arghun reacted against Buqa's perceived *lèse-majesté* and eventually had him executed.¹²⁵

The other factor that we must consider when thinking why the princes and amirs would accept Arghun as Ilkhan is his military might. This stemmed from two sources. The first source was what he received from his father as *emchü* (Persianised form, *injū*), personal property. Crucially, this included a number of Qara'unas troops handed down from Abaqa. This seems to have been no small amount, as Rashīd al-Dīn lists among their leaders two Chinggisid princes, Gaykhatu and Baidu, and no less than seven amirs. He calls these *gäzigtän*, who made up the personal bodyguard, or *keshig*, of Abaqa which passed down to Arghun.¹²⁶ Elsewhere Rashīd al-Dīn states that during Abaqa's reign he provided a personal *keshig* for Arghun, having his amirs give their sons and brothers and liegemen as *emchü* for Arghun.¹²⁷ It is not clear how large this force was, but it seems only to have been provided

the Amir Qutlughshah who carried Ghazan's *tugh* (banner) into battle, which would indicate that a Chinggisid prince was not present, Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 246-7; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 410-13. RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 657 mentions this engagement, and the defeat of the Mongols which sparked a trial of the commanders responsible, but does not mention Kingshü or Irinjin, though he does state that Taitaq and another amir, Tarsa, disappeared.

¹²¹ Pfeiffer, 'Conversion to Islam', p. 280.

¹²² RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 548.

¹²³ See note 93.

¹²⁴ Idem, p. 563.

¹²⁵ Idem, pp. 568-570. BH/Budge, pp. 477-480.

¹²⁶ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 551.

¹²⁷ RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 283.

to Arghun. While the Qara'unas could be of doubtful loyalty, deserting Arghun before the conflict which saw him imprisoned by Aḥmad, they eventually were vital in securing Arghun the throne by capturing Aḥmad and the khatuns.¹²⁸ The *Akḥbār-i Muḡhulān* also mentions that the support of the Qara'unas was pivotal in ensuring Arghun was made Ilkhan.¹²⁹ While Arghun's forces were not comparable in size to those at Aḥmad's disposal, none of the other Chinggisids, such as Hülechü, had a personal bodyguard of such size with which they could contend for power.

The second source which provided the backing for Arghun's power play were the forces he could lead based as governor of Khurasan. As the largest and wealthiest of the provinces of the Ilkhanate, it seems no coincidence that the princes given this province were consistently successful in becoming Ilkhans.¹³⁰ As a frontier province, it was also threatened by both the Chaghadaids and Qara'unas/Negüderi groups to the east and its governor was given significant forces to combat this threat.¹³¹ Arghun was able to call on workshops at Nishapur, Tus, and Isfarayin, as well as his treasury at Garrakan (?) in order to provide gold, jewels and textiles to his amirs and soldiers, crucial in winning over loyalties of self-interest.¹³² If the Ilkhans did not want their eldest sons to succeed, they certainly seem to have made it more difficult for anyone else to do so by entrusting these sons with Khurasan.

This military superiority over the other princes and the decisive capture of Aḥmad and the royal *ordus* by the Qara'unas seems to have enabled Arghun to take swift advantage. Having himself chosen as khan by key figures such as Buqa, Shiktur Noyan and Öljei Khatun forced a decision by the other princes: to continue to resist against Arghun's superior forces or to accept Arghun as Ilkhan, at least temporarily. Het'um the Historian claims that many accepted Arghun out of fear.¹³³ Both Vaṣṣāf and Rashīd al-Dīn agree that when the princes arrived after Arghun had already been chosen, they accepted the status quo and confirmed Arghun as Ilkhan.¹³⁴ However, Rashīd al-Dīn believed that Kingshū and Jūshkeb were only waiting to rebel at a later date, while Vaṣṣāf says that Hülechü still had a good deal of support as well.¹³⁵ Arghun clearly tried to appease these princes. We have already seen how he sought to mollify Hülechü, and he doled out governorships to all the key Chinggisid princes. Jūshkeb and Baidu were assigned to Baghdad, Hülechü and Gaykhatu to Anatolia, and

¹²⁸ Idem, pp. 554, 559.

¹²⁹ *Akḥbār-i Muḡhulān*, p. 75, Persian text, p. 65.

¹³⁰ Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, p. 189.

¹³¹ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 517-8, where Abaqa gives his brother Tübshin a large army to control Khurasan and Mazanderan.

¹³² Idem, p. 553.

¹³³ Het'um the Historian, p. 61.

¹³⁴ Khwāndamīr/Thackston, p. 70 states 'other princes were brought, willingly or otherwise, into obedience'.

¹³⁵ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 563; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 81-2; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 139.

Khurasan and Mazandaran to Kingshü and Arghun's own son Ghazan.¹³⁶ This seems to have been a prudent move, placating the princes with lucrative positions, but also separating them, having the brothers Jüshkeb and Kingshü at different extremes of the realm. Notably, he also installed counterpart princes and amirs to attempt to ensure the others' loyalty. Thus Khurasan was ruled not just by Kingshü, but also Ghazan, and Nawrüz, until this point one of Arghun's firm supporters, while Aruq, the brother of Buqa, was installed in Baghdad alongside Jüshkeb.¹³⁷

4.6 Arghun's Tenuous Rule

This appeasement seems to have worked out for the next five years, but when the great amir Buqa balked at Arghun's attempts to limit his power, there were no shortage of Chinggisid princes to whom Buqa could turn to as alternatives to his previous protégé. Eventually, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, it was Jüshkeb that Buqa sought to supplant Arghun. After flattering him and apparently submitting *möchelges* to Jüshkeb alongside some other amirs who supported Buqa, Jüshkeb reported this to Arghun. Jüshkeb was so keen to prove his loyalty, he asked to be allowed to kill Buqa himself, which Arghun accepted and rewarded Jüshkeb. Despite this elaborate show, Arghun clearly did not believe Jüshkeb's innocence in all this, executing him a few months after Buqa's death.¹³⁸ This situation is portrayed in even more stark terms by Vaṣṣāf. In his account, Buqa's revolt is no less than a full-fledged princely uprising against Arghun. Vaṣṣāf lists some seven princes involved, including all of those who had been considered as possible replacements for Aḥmad previously. Both Hülechü and Jüshkeb partook, though Vaṣṣāf confirms that it was Jüshkeb who spilled the beans on the plot to Arghun.¹³⁹ If Hülechü had already been chosen once as Ilkhan, perhaps Jüshkeb feared the same result and instead sought to gain by tardily showing his loyalty to Arghun. Vaṣṣāf also mentions that

¹³⁶ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 563.

¹³⁷ This was common practice in the Mongol Empire, see M. Hope, 'The *Atābaks* in the Mongol Empire and the Ilkhanate of Iran (602–736/1206–1335)' in (eds.) T. May, D. Bayarsaikhan and C.P. Atwood, *New Approaches to Ilkhanid History*, (Leiden, Brill, 2021), pp. 321–345.

¹³⁸ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 569–571.

¹³⁹ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 140; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 232. Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship', pp. 55–60, shows how Rashīd al-Dīn portrays this rebellion, and several others by Chinggisid princes against the Abaqaid line as driven by ambitious amirs, and not the princes themselves, who are shown as pawns. This tropic narrative of Rashīd al-Dīn is not to be found in Vaṣṣāf, but we should remember that this has been a regular ploy of dissenters in many regimes across the world. It is safer to question influential advisers or pernicious women than to blame the rulers directly.

Jüshkeb took Buqa's life with his own hands, though he seems to indicate that Jüshkeb's own death did not take place until late 1290 once Arghun was already ill.¹⁴⁰

It seems that while through clever manipulation of the situation surrounding Aḥmad's fall, Arghun was able to capitalise and take control, he had to walk a fine line between various groups whose loyalty to him only extended as far as they were benefiting from his rule, and many of them only under threat. It is made clear by Rashīd al-Dīn, Bar Hebraeus and Vaṣṣāf that for most of Arghun's reign, Buqa and his brother Aruq controlled many of the offices of the Ilkhanate, handing them out to their supporters. Key amirs such as Nawrūz in Khurasan bolstered Buqa's support. As we have seen, it looks as if Arghun was forced to accept Buqa's extensive power in order to get his support to take the Ilkhanate. However, this situation clearly disadvantaged other notable figures in the Ilkhanate, such as Taghachar Noyan, Ordu Qaya, Qunchuqbal, and Toghan. These amirs directly benefited from Arghun's assertion of independence from Buqa.¹⁴¹ Taghachar was put in charge of all the *emchū* lands in the Ilkhanate, previously in Buqa's control, while Ordu Qaya was given the governance of Baghdad, removing Aruq from his position. Toghan, who had been beaten at Buqa's order for infringements of the *jasaq*, was particularly keen to encourage Arghun's actions against Buqa.¹⁴² However, Arghun's actions were to have severe repercussions which lasted until the end of his reign. The revolt of the princes and Buqa was fiercely put down, but according to Vaṣṣāf, this very ruthlessness saw Nawrūz revolt in Khurasan when he became aware of it.¹⁴³ Nawrūz's rebellion was declared in the name of Hülechü and Kingshü according to Rashīd al-Dīn, and while Ghazan was able to capture Hülechü and send him back to Arghun, Nawrūz's revolt was still underway when Arghun died in 1291.¹⁴⁴

The tenuous nature of Arghun's reign is indicated by his increasing brutality throughout. Buqa's rebellion was met with his execution as well as that of his brother Aruq, all of their sons, dependents, amirs and anyone who had any association with them that Arghun could get his hands on. The ignominy with which the bodies of Buqa and Aruq and their associates were treated is vividly portrayed in Vaṣṣāf. Aruq and his son's heads were displayed over the Chaghan Bridge in Tabriz, but Arghun 'ordered that the dead (Buqa and all his kith and kin) were left in the wilderness to be devoured by dogs, wolves and vultures' (فرمود تا کشتگان را در صحرا گذارند تا سگان و گرگان و لاشخوران گوشت آنها) را بخورند (*Arghun*) *farmūd tā kushtigān rā dar ṣaḥrā guzārānd tā sagān va gurgān va lāshkhūrān*

¹⁴⁰ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 140, 146; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 233, 244.

¹⁴¹ Khwāndamīr/Thackston, p. 73.

¹⁴² RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 568-570; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 138-9; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 230-1. Rashīd al-Dīn highlights the personal animosity of Toghan, saying that he kicked Buqa in the chest before Jüshkeb killed him.

¹⁴³ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 141; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 235.

¹⁴⁴ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 596-602.

gūsh-t-i ānhā rā bikhurand').¹⁴⁵ By the end of his reign, Arghun was extremely ill and seemingly paranoid due to the repeated rebellions of his relatives, either in support of Buqa or Nawrūz. He decided to simply do away with any who were remotely troublesome. If we include Aḥmad himself, Arghun was responsible for the deaths of 17 Chinggisid princes. Even the infant sons of Hūlechū and Qara Noqai (a son of Yoshmut) were not spared, diverging from Mongol norms whereby the sons of defeated or executed rivals were reintegrated into the appanage system, though usually at a lower level.¹⁴⁶ Sultan Idachi, Arghun's tool for this gruesome task, was tried and executed by Taghachar Noyan and Qunchuqbal, apparently while Arghun was still alive.¹⁴⁷ Vaṣṣāf even states that Arghun disavowed any knowledge of Sultan Idachi's actions, though it is extremely difficult to believe that an amir would execute 16 Chinggisid princes of his own whim.¹⁴⁸

Loyalties at this moment seem to have been increasingly malleable and temporary, and Arghun's paranoia is perhaps understandable. However, Vaṣṣāf mentioned that according to 'Mongol holy men' (*rūḥānīyān*) the unjust murder of Chinggisid princes and infants was a cause of Arghun's illness.¹⁴⁹ Rashīd al-Dīn makes the scapegoat for this Sultan Idachi, but still saying that the amirs believed this action caused Arghun's illness.¹⁵⁰ If important Mongol amirs and religious figures believed that Arghun's actions were so damaging, indubitably this would have undermined

¹⁴⁵ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati pp. 140-1; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 233-4.

¹⁴⁶ See p. 124.

¹⁴⁷ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 575.

¹⁴⁸ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 146; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 244. Rashīd al-Dīn also is keen not to explicitly blame Arghun, saying that he had not been able to speak for some time, so there was no way he could have ordered the deaths of the young children, RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 575.

¹⁴⁹ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 146; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 246.

¹⁵⁰ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 575. This tale also reached the Florentine Dominican traveller Riccoldo da Montecroce, who was in the region of Baghdad in the early 1290s and later in Tabriz. Riccoldo reports that Arghun became gravely ill due to killing so many innocent women and children, and that an apparition came to him in a dream to hold him to account for his crimes. Arghun sought the advice of the *bakhshis* (Buddhist monks), who told him that only through alms could he save himself from death. Arghun freed captives and gave out great treasures and alms, but still died soon after, R. George-Tvrtkovic, *A Christian Pilgrim in Medieval Iraq: Riccoldo Da Montecroce's Encounter with Islam*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), p. 198. This was not the first time an Ilkhanid ruler was admonished by his Buddhist advisors for violence either. The abbot of Drigung Monastery, Togdugpa, wrote to Hülegü warning him of the King Ajatasatru, who had committed five inexpressible sins and became ill, but repented and became a Bodhisattva. Hülegü apparently followed Ajatasatru's example, J. Samten and D. Martin, 'Letters to the Khans: Six Tibetan Epistles of Togdugpa to the Mongol Rulers Hülegü and Khubilai, as well as to the Tibetan Lama Pagpa', in (ed.) R. Vitali, *Trails of the Tibetan Tradition: Papers for Elliot Sperling*, (Dharamsala: Amnye Machen Institute, 2015). Republished in *Revue d'Études Tibétaines*, Vol. 31, (2015), p. 311. Amnesties were seen to have positive effects in the natural world in both Buddhist and Confucian traditions, thus Ögödei was convinced by Ila Chucai to forgive offences after his accession in 1229 also, F. Hodous, 'Faith and the Law: Religious Beliefs and the Death Penalty in the Ilkhanate', in (eds.) C. Melville and B. de Nicola, *The Mongols' Middle East: continuity and transformation in Ilkhanid Iran*, (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 120-2. Qubilai repeatedly issued such amnesties, P. H. Ch'en, *Chinese Legal Tradition under the Mongols: The Code of 1291 as Reconstructed*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 46. Khwāndamīr/Thackston, p. 75 says that Arghun's officials tried to implement these tactics also, giving alms, releasing prisoners and sending out *al tamghas* to show justice to the people.

charismatic and ideal loyalty to him. Interestingly there is also some notion that Arghun was poisoned or subject to witchcraft. The main suspect in this action was one of his wives Toghachaq Khatun, who was drowned after an interrogation found her guilty alongside several other wives. Vaṣṣāf tantalises us by mentioning that Toghachaq was the niece of Jüshkeb, only a few lines after notifying us that Jüshkeb had been executed.¹⁵¹ We also find out from Rashīd al-Dīn that Toghachaq had in fact been married to Aḥmad before, so Arghun was therefore responsible for the deaths of her husband and uncle.¹⁵² It is perhaps too poetic to read into this a story of long-awaited revenge, given that we have seen that accusing women of witchcraft and poisoning their khan had already occurred in the Mongol world.¹⁵³ Clearly, however, Arghun had not done much to inspire loyalty in either princes, khatuns or amirs and perhaps only inertial loyalty and fear kept them somewhat under control until his illness.

4.7 Late 13th century developments: Taghachar and Nawrūz

This situation would deteriorate during the succession struggles of the 1290s and Arghun's son Ghazan's reign. The whittling down of the Chinggisid family in Arghun's reign seems to have allowed a great deal more freedom for the *amirs* of the Ilkhanate. The actions of two in particular perhaps highlight a lessening of ideal and charismatic loyalties to the house of Chinggis and Hūlegü, with clientelist loyalties, what we might term simply 'opportunism', coming to the fore. These two *amirs* were Taghachar Aqa and Nawrūz, whose actions largely decided succession issues in the Ilkhanate in the three changes of power between 1291 and 1295.¹⁵⁴ A casual glance at the sources would certainly suggest both acted for their own aggrandisement, but there is another strand of thought that can be pursued. Both Rashīd al-Dīn and Vaṣṣāf are quite critical of two Ilkhans in particular, Aḥmad Tegüder and Gaykhatu. Recent scholarship has labelled this as Abaqaid bias (though Gaykhatu was Abaqa's son), but one must also look at the commonalities in these criticisms. Both Ilkhans are primarily accused of two things: misgovernment and diminishing the legacy of Chinggisid rule, with the first causing the second. We must certainly not ignore the biases of our Persian administrators, who valued justice in their rulers to a great degree. However, the importance of the second criticism for the Chinggisids and their subjects cannot be underestimated. As Welsford

¹⁵¹ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 575; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 146; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 244.

¹⁵² RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 473.

¹⁵³ See p. 38.

¹⁵⁴ Taghachar is at times called Taghachar Noyan by Vaṣṣāf, but as this refers also to a descendant of Temüge Otchigin who served Qubilai, I have used Rashīd al-Dīn's label of Taghachar Aqa.

has shown, living up to Chinggisid charismatic standards continued to be important among dynasties of the 16th and 17th centuries.¹⁵⁵

Both Aḥmad and Gaykhatu were abandoned by the majority of their amirs. For Aḥmad, an assembly of amirs and princes apparently claimed that ‘Sultan Aḥmad despised the house of Chinggis Khan and held it worthless’ (سلطان احمد خاندان چنگیز را خوار و بی قدر ساخته), *sultān aḥmad khāndān-i chīngīz rā khuvār va bī-qadr sākhta*).¹⁵⁶ For Gaykhatu ‘all of the amirs, because of his attack on their honour and for the reason that their reputation was being tarnished, hated him’ (چون همهٔ امرا به علت تعرض کیخاتو خان به عرض و ناموس آنان و اینکه موجب بدنامی و ریختن آبرویشان شده بود از او متنفر بودند), *chun hama-yi umarā bi-illat-i ta’arruz-i kaykhātū khān bi ‘arz va nāmūs-i ānān va īnki mawjib badnāmī va rīkhtan-i ābrūyishān shuda būd az ū mutinaffir būdand*.)¹⁵⁷ Vaṣṣāf notes that Gaykhatu’s opponents criticised him for leaving for Anatolia soon after his enthronement, when the young ruler should be establishing his power at the heart of the realm.¹⁵⁸ These expressions of discontent with the debasing of Chinggisid charisma and the effects this had on the amirs themselves may have us rethink the amirs’ actions. Michael Hope has shown how there were actors who saw the Chinggisid state as more collegialist, but the actions of the amirs should not only be seen as that which increased their power.¹⁵⁹ It seems that they also demanded from their leaders a strong hand (though not tyrannical) in government and in warfare. Neither Aḥmad nor Gaykhatu had good records on either front, and it may be that the amirs acted out against this in order to preserve the legacy of the Chinggisid house. If certain amirs also could increase their own power and wealth along the way, there was ample opportunity to do so. As such, the amirs were not always demanding more freedom of action and

¹⁵⁵ See p. 12-3 of this thesis.

¹⁵⁶ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 78; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 132.

¹⁵⁷ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 168; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 276.

¹⁵⁸ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 159; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 261. Gaykhatu’s age is very difficult to figure out based on our sources. The manuscripts of Rashīd al-Dīn do not give easy answers, saying he was born in 64_ Hijri, or 638 of the Yazdgird era, RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 579. Karl Jahn, on the advice of J.A. Boyle, plumps for 1259 though it is not clear where this information comes from; perhaps it is simply the last possible year of the 640s, K. Jahn, ‘Paper Currency in Iran: A contribution to the cultural and economic history of Iran in the Mongol Period’, *Journal of Asian History*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1970), p. 105, note 14. However, Rashīd al-Dīn is clear that Arghun is older than Gaykhatu, and Arghun was apparently born in 1261. When exactly Gaykhatu was born is not clear, but it is possible he was born some years later given the fact that Vaṣṣāf calls him young on his accession and that he was not given a position in the Ilkhanate until Arghun’s reign, and that he was not considered for rulership in 1284. This last point would be particularly surprising if he was 25 (according to Jahn and Boyle) and of better birth than Arghun, his mother being Nuqdan Khatun of the Tatar while Arghun’s mother was a concubine. The issue of dating in Rashīd al-Dīn is extremely thorny in general of course, and specifically in Arghun’s case. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Ghazan was born in November 1271 (*Rabī’ al-’awwal* 670), (Vol. III, p. 589), which according to the above date for Arghun’s birth would have made him one of the youngest fathers in history at the age of 9/10. However, he also states that Arghun was 33 when he died in March 1291, (Vol. III, p. 561), giving us a date of 1258, rendering him 13 when Ghazan was born, a more probable age for fathering a child.

¹⁵⁹ Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, *passim*.

regional control, but in fact sought a strong ruler such as Abaqa had been to strengthen the state, and thereby their own prestige and charisma. Of course when rulers such as Arghun pushed their amirs too hard, it could cause rupture as well, as we will see with both of our amirs. Clearly, a balance had to be struck.

4.7.1 The Case of Taghachar

The first of our amir case studies is Taghachar Aqa. Taghachar Aqa's father, Qutu Buqa, had been a great commander under Abaqa and had fought and died in service against the Jochids.¹⁶⁰ Taghachar himself also served Abaqa, and was involved in the punishment of the Juvainī brothers, having 'Aṭā-Malik tortured on Abaqa's orders.¹⁶¹ As we have seen, Taghachar rose to greater prominence through his support of Arghun, with Vaṣṣāf claiming that he was one of the few present at Arghun's election.¹⁶² Taghachar seems to have been a firm supporter of Arghun and was relied on by Arghun as a buffer against Buqa and later took an active role in Buqa's deposition and execution. However, once Arghun became fatally ill, Taghachar began to act quite independently of the Ilkhans. Taghachar, along with other amirs such as Qunchuqbal and Toghan, quickly sought to eliminate Arghun's inner circle, his *inaqs* Joshi, Ordu Qaya and Quchan, as well as the extremely powerful vizier Sa'd al-Dawla and Arghun's executioner Sultan Idachi in show trials.¹⁶³ Hope holds that this retaliation was due to the resentment many amirs felt towards the limiting of their power through the actions of Sa'd al-Dawla and Arghun.¹⁶⁴ Dispensing with important rivals, given the death of Suqunchaq Aqa and the old age of Shiktur Noyan, also would have made Taghachar one of the most important amirs in the Ilkhanate.

In the aftermath of the death of Arghun and during the establishment of Gaykhatu as his successor, Taghachar was an active player. While Taghachar was not able to install his own desired candidate, Baidu, as Ilkhan due to the canny politics of Örüḡ Khatun, an influential widow of Arghun and mother of the later Ilkhan Öljeitü, he was able to act with relative impunity during the reign of Gaykhatu. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the Ilkhanate's amirs unanimously calumniated Taghachar to Gaykhatu for instigating the rebellion during Arghun's illness, including Shiktur Noyan, who had been involved in the plot but blamed his old age and lack of alternatives for going along with Taghachar

¹⁶⁰ RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 106; Vol. III, p. 518. He was of the Suqai'ut, a subdivision of the Ba'arin Mongols.

¹⁶¹ Idem, pp. 543, 545.

¹⁶² Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 81; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 137.

¹⁶³ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 575.

¹⁶⁴ Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, pp. 143, 147.

and his cronies Qunchuqbal and Toghan. Gaykhatu may or may not have ordered Toghan's execution, but Taghachar and Qunchuqbal were either absolved of their crimes (according to Rashīd al-Dīn) or summarily punished with three strokes of a wooden rod (according to Vaṣṣāf) after submitting to Gaykhatu, though they were demoted and their positions given to other amirs.¹⁶⁵ For those amirs who had reported Taghachar's actions, they must have been angered by Gaykhatu's failure to punish him. Vaṣṣāf states that Gaykhatu was so worried by the warning issued by Mongol holy men regarding Arghun's ruthlessness as the cause of his illness that he refused to have anyone executed during his reign.¹⁶⁶ In loyalty terms, inertial loyalties to the state would have weakened at its failure to keep Taghachar in line, while a Chinggisid kowtowing to an amir cannot have but damaged their view of his charisma.

Gaykhatu's inability to act against Taghachar and other powerful amirs was indicated by the fact that Taghachar seems to have supported another Chinggisid pretender, Anbarchi, the son of Möngke Temür, and falsely announced Gaykhatu's death fighting in Anatolia. This rebellion was soon dealt with by Shikṭur Noyan, who attacked and captured Taghachar, somewhat belying his previous claim of old age. Even this did not see Taghachar (or Anbarchi) punished, or even removed from military command.¹⁶⁷ Vaṣṣāf does at least credit Gaykhatu with attempts to limit Taghachar's power. In the incident where Taghachar was beaten for his actions during Arghun's illness, Gaykhatu also transferred 10 *hazāras* (thousands) from Taghachar and Qunchuqbal to other amirs.¹⁶⁸ After Taghachar's second rebellion, Gaykhatu put his chief amir (*amīr-i amīrān*) Aq Buqa in command of Taghachar.¹⁶⁹ These half-measures seem to only have encouraged Taghachar, who realised he could largely do as he wished, especially given that Gaykhatu was by and large not particularly interested in rulership according to both Vaṣṣāf and Bar Hebraeus.¹⁷⁰

Taghachar unsurprisingly saw no impediment to turning his cloak once again and backing Baidu's play for the throne in 1295, as Baidu was Taghachar's original choice for rule. We have another account of this incident in the chronicle *Tārīkh-i Shaykh Uways* of around 1360, written by the historian al-Ahrī on behalf of the Jalayirid dynasty (1335-1432 CE) which ruled over part of the

¹⁶⁵ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 581. In a sort of 'Who will rid me of this troublesome priest?' situation, Rashīd al-Dīn has Gaykhatu speaking out loud that Toghan deserves execution after encouragement from Örüḡ Khatun, and Aq Buqa taking it upon himself to act on these words; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p.158; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 260; Khwāndamīr/Thackston, p. 76 says that Taghachar's *tümen* was given to another amir, while Qunchuqbal's was given to Shikṭur Noyan.

¹⁶⁶ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 161; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 267, see p. 166 of this thesis.

¹⁶⁷ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 581-2, 586; Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, p. 150.

¹⁶⁸ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 159; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 260.

¹⁶⁹ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 160; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 265.

¹⁷⁰ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 161; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 268; BH/Budge, p. 492.

former Ilkhanid realm. In this account a personal confrontation emerged between Taghachar and Gaykhatu's Jalayirid *amīr-i amīrān*, Aq Buqa. Gaykhatu sent Taghachar to fight Baidu, but Taghachar wanted to go over to Baidu instead. Aq Buqa refused out of loyalty to Gaykhatu, and accused Taghachar of acting against the *jasaq* (خلاص, *khilāf-i yāsā*). Baidu then put Aq Buqa to death when he came into power.¹⁷¹ Some months later however, Taghachar subsequently abandoned Baidu for Ghazan on the eve of battle.¹⁷² Ghazan finally put an end to Taghachar's manoeuvring, despite acknowledging his key role in his own accession.¹⁷³ Gaykhatu's weakness in the face of Taghachar can only have encouraged other amirs to see that inertial loyalty to the state was at this point riskier than transferring their allegiance to another Chinggisid, as Aq Buqa's case proves. In fact, amirs such as Qunchuqbal and Tolodai were confident enough in their choice of loyalties to execute Gaykhatu of their own volition, without the consultation of the Chinggisid family.¹⁷⁴ This confidence was misguided, and Gaykhatu's nephew Ghazan would kill them for daring to lay hands on a Chinggisid prince. Betraying Gaykhatu was less of a problem than the infringement of Mongol ideals in killing a Chinggisid as a group of non-Chinggisids (*qarachu*).

It is perhaps worthwhile to quote Rashīd al-Dīn's account of Ghazan's justification of his execution of Taghachar in full:

و هرچند پادشاه اسلام را دلخواه نبود که او را هلاک گردانند لیکن مصلحت کار ملک را آن حکم فرمود، و در آن قضیه با مقربان خود گفت که، در قدیم الایام به ولایت ختای دو پادشاه با یکدیگر جنگ کردند یکی منهزم شد و لشکر او متفرق گشتند و لشکر منصور بر پی مقهور چند روزی می رفتند، امیری آن پادشاه را منهزم یافت، و چون بغایت عاجز و مضطر بود بر وی رحم آورد و خواست که او را خلاص دهد. در آن حدود به چاهی رسید، او را گفت در بن چاه رو تا لشکریان ما ترا نبینند. چون جماعت در رسیدند سبب آنکه ریگستان بود و بادآمده و پیها را ناپدید کرده راه نمی یافتند. آن امیر گفت راه پیدا نیست و معلوم نه که به کدام جانب بیرون رفته، و او به راهی رود و ما به صد راه چگونه او را توانیم یافت؟ اولی آنکه بازگردیم. باتفاق مراجعت نمودند و آن پادشاه از چاه بیرون آمد و با ملک رفت و بتدریج و تأنی لشکر جمع کرد و باز به جنگ آمد و آن پادشاه را که آن نوبت غالب آمده بود بشکست و بر ملک او مستولی شد، و آن امیر را که حق جانی بر وی ثابت داشت به انواع نوازش مخصوص فرمود و بغایت مقرب گشت و راه امارت بزرگ و نیابت مطلق به وی مفوض شد. روزی یکی از امرا با پادشاه گفت که این شخص حقوق پادشاه خود را نشناخت و با وی وفا نکرد و سبب هلاکی او و پادشاهی تو او بود، چگونه او را زنده توان گذاشت، چه عن قریب با تو همان غدر اندیشد. پادشاه بغایت زیرک بود، آن شخص مسموع داشت و به قتل او اشارت راند. آن امیر فریاد برآورد که بر تو حقوق جانی دارم. پادشاه بگریست و گفت: حق به جانب تست و من به قتل تو قطعاً رضا ندارم، لیکن رعایت مصلحت ملک و پادشاهی را چاره

¹⁷¹ *Ta'rikh-i Shaikh Uwais*, Text Summary, pp. 44, 48, Translation, pp. 142, 146; P. Wing, *The Jalayirids: Dynastic State Formation in the Mongol Middle East*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), p. 56.

¹⁷² RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 617, 621, 625.

¹⁷³ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 632-3.

¹⁷⁴ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 170; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 279.

نیست، و لازم است که ترا بکشند؛ و او را بکشت و می گریست. حال ضبط امور پادشاهی بر این نمط است و هرچند بر¹⁷⁵ من عظیم دشوار است کسی را کشتن، اما محافظت قضایای کلی و جزوی را اگر سیاست نکنند پادشاهی نتوان کرد

Although the Padishah of Islam was loathe to have him killed, he issued the order in the best interests of the state. In this regard he said to his close associates, "In olden times there were two kings at war with each other in Cathay. One of them was beaten and his army was scattered. The victorious army went out in pursuit of the defeated for several days. An officer who discovered the defeated king had compassion on him and wanted to save him because he was so helpless and miserable. He came across a well in that region and said, "Get into this well so that our soldiers won't see you." When the troop arrived, because it was a sandy desert and the wind was blowing and effacing all tracks, they couldn't find their way. 'His tracks are gone,' the amir said, 'and there is no telling which way he has gone. No matter how hard we search, we won't be able to find him. It would be better for us to turn back.' When they had gone, the king came out of the well and went to his own land, where little by little he gathered an army and then came out again to fight. This time, he defeated and killed the king who had been victorious the time before and took over his kingdom. He covered the officer to whom he owed his life with special favors and took him into his closest confidence, assigning him to the highest office and making him his absolute deputy.

One day, one of the officers said to the king, 'This person did not recognize his obligations to his king. Not only was he unfaithful to him but he also caused his death and brought about your rule. How can he be left alive? It will not be long before he contemplates the same treachery with you.' The king, being extremely clever, listened to this person's words and motioned for the officer's execution. The officer cried out, 'You owe me your life!' The king wept and said, 'You are right, and I am in no way pleased to put you to death. However, in the best interests of the state and throne there is no alternative: it is imperative that you be killed.' The king did have him killed, but he wept.

"Such things are necessary for keeping regal affairs under control, and no matter how difficult it is for me to have someone killed, in the interests of maintaining affairs both great and small, if executions are not carried out it is impossible to rule."¹⁷⁶

There are many interesting facets of this text that could be brought out, but for the purposes of our argument, the loyalty aspects of this tale are telling. Here Rashīd al-Dīn puts into the mouth of his patron an anecdote that echoes Chinggis Khan's own words and actions when he confronted the liegemen of his enemies who went over to him. Consider the *SHM*'s account of the equerry of

¹⁷⁵ RAD/Raushan, Vol. II, pp. 1117-18.

¹⁷⁶ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 632-3, Thackston's translation.

Senggüm (a rival of Chinggis), Kököchü, who abandoned his lord to go over to Chinggis: ‘As for the equerry Kököchü himself, who comes here having in this manner abandoned his rightful lord, who would now trust such a man, and take him for a companion?’ He cut him down and cast away his body.¹⁷⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn also reports Chinggis’ response to a betrayal of loyalty of his former *anda* Jamuqa by his own men, saying that Jamuqa’s words upon his capture were reported to Chinggis, “‘If my own liege men, whose lord I was, took me captive and proved faithless, to whom will they be faithful?’” Genghis Khan ordered that group [...] who had taken him captive be separated and executed’.¹⁷⁸ This sort of story may be a trope of ideal loyalty, but it was one that held strong, and that Rashīd al-Dīn believed applied as much in China as in the Ilkhanate.¹⁷⁹ Thus his patron Ghazan is portrayed as continuing the Chinggisid beliefs as to the obligations of loyalty, like his illustrious forefather Chinggis, even when the betrayal would benefit him. Naturally of course, Ghazan accepted Taghachar’s help at the time he betrayed Baidu to support Ghazan, to ensure the ‘best interests of the state and throne’ no doubt.

This story is of course also a warning. Rashīd al-Dīn was seeking to restore the power of inertial loyalty in the Ilkhanate, which seems to have waned significantly in the 1290s. The message is clear, order had now been established, and Ghazan would do anything to ensure that it was preserved, even execute those to whom he owed his life and loved. Indeed, he apparently put to death five princes and 38 amirs in just one month.¹⁸⁰ Rashīd al-Dīn was not the only source who noted Ghazan’s emphasis on inertial loyalty. The scholar Ibn Bazzāz Ardabīlī claimed that in a meeting between Ghazan and Shaykh Zāhid Gīlānī, there were five unpardonable sins: 1) A subject rebelling against the king, 2) A *qāzī* misinterpreting the sharia, 3) counterfeiting coins, 4) a child disrespecting his parents, 5) and a slave rising against his master.¹⁸¹ The fact that three of these unpardonable sins deal with ‘natural’ loyalties to authority figures shows that Ghazan was particularly worried about

¹⁷⁷ SHM/de Rachewiltz, §188, p. 110.

¹⁷⁸ RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 108.

¹⁷⁹ Indeed, if Chinggis’ extreme position on loyalty was a trope, it certainly passed into several different historical traditions. Both the YS and Ila Chucai’s spirit-path stele tell the story of Chinggis summoning the descendants of the Liáo dynasty present in Jīn lands after he had conquered them, telling them that he had avenged their ancestors by destroying the Jīn. Chucai, whose father and grandfather had served the Jīn loyally, responded ‘As the son of a Jīn vassal, how could I dare repay him by harbouring divided loyalties and regard his ruler-father as my enemy?’ It was these words of loyalty that apparently caused Chinggis to trust Ila Chucai, Humble, ‘The Biography of Yelu Chucai, p. 1; Song Zizhen, ‘Spirit-Path Stele for his Honor Yelu, Director of the Secretariat’, in (ed. and trans.) C.P. Atwood, *The Rise of the Mongols: Five Chinese Sources*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 2021), p. 137.

¹⁸⁰ Brack, ‘Mediating Sacred Kingship’, p. 59.

¹⁸¹ Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, p. 162.

this.¹⁸² Brack has shown that this was not without good reason, as Ghazan faced a rebellion from Söge, the son of Yoshmut, and later that of Ala Fireng, a son of Gaykhatu.¹⁸³

If we compare the cases of Aq Buqa and Taghachar, we can see the predicament that the amirs were in. One could pick a hill to die on, as Aq Buqa did with his apparently unwavering support for Gaykhatu, or one could try to stay ahead by switching sides whenever it became apparent that a candidate had lost his edge, as Taghachar did. When Taghachar was questioned by Aq Buqa as to his refusal to accept Aq Buqa's precedence as chief amir and violation of the *jasaq*, Taghachar simply responded that Baidu had given that position to him now.¹⁸⁴ The fact that so many amirs were executed in this period may have swayed many to take a short-termist approach to their loyalties, and try to reap what reward they could and hope they were seen as too indispensable to do away with easily. Taghachar was only the most notable of these, and his interventions were both timely and regularly disastrous for the ruler he left.

4.7.2 The Case of Nawrūz

Nawrūz's situation, contemporaneous with Taghachar's movements, highlights the failures of several of the Chinggisid Ilkhans to encourage loyalty in their subjects. His long rebellion in Khurasan (1290-1295) has been comprehensively dealt with by Michael Hope and Michal Biran, giving us a clear insight into how loyalty functioned at a regional and state level.¹⁸⁵ Nawrūz was the son of the great statesman of the Mongol Empire and later the Ilkhanate, Arghun Aqa. Arghun Aqa's prestige was transferred to his son, who like him was made governor of Khurasan in 1284, alongside the young Ghazan by the Ilkhan Arghun.¹⁸⁶ Both Nawrūz and his father had been close with Buqa. It was this intimacy, along with the fear of punishment which Arghun wrought on anyone even remotely connected with his former vizier, which Vaṣṣāf states caused Nawrūz to rebel in Khurasan.¹⁸⁷ Arghun

¹⁸² Naturally, counterfeiting coins was also a form of lese-majeste.

¹⁸³ Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship', pp. 59-61.

¹⁸⁴ Khwāndamīr/Thackston, p. 78.

¹⁸⁵ M. Hope, 'The "Nawrūz King"', pp. 451-473; Biran, *Qaidu*, pp. 57-9.

¹⁸⁶ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 563; Hope, 'The "Nawrūz King"', p. 453. Regarding Arghun Aqa's own prestige, Stefan Kamola points out there was a significant difference as to his lineage according to Juvainī, where he is the son of a prominent Oirat commander, Taichu, while Rashīd al-Dīn says he was traded to a Jalayir commander for a leg of beef by his father. This divergence may have had to do with Nawrūz's disgrace not long before Rashīd al-Dīn's history was written. Kamola, 'The making of history', p. 160. However, as I have indicated in Chapter 2 of this thesis, the use of the term *soyurghamīshī* for Arghun Aqa by Rashīd al-Dīn, only otherwise used for divinities and Chinggisid rulers themselves, seems to show that great respect was still maintained for Nawrūz's father.

¹⁸⁷ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 141; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 233-5.

set his son Ghazan to deal with Nawrūz's rebellion. However, this proved too daunting a task for Ghazan, for a variety of factors. Nawrūz was well-connected locally given his father's long career in the area. He also was a Muslim, and had the support of local *qadis* against Ghazan, who at this point had not converted. He was supported and given refuge by the Chaghadaids and Qaidu to the east, who were always keen to destabilise the Ilkhanate. On top of this, after Arghun's death, Ghazan seemingly did not get adequate assistance from the new Ilkhan Gaykhatu, who refused to send money or troops to his nephew, perhaps due to his own struggles with rebellious amirs and princes.¹⁸⁸ In the end, an opportunity for both Ghazan and Nawrūz saw reconciliation occur. Gaykhatu and Baidu's inability to unite the realm meant that the khanate was attainable. Ghazan needed a backer, a Buqa who could make the difference in his claim for the throne, while Nawrūz saw the chance to be virtual ruler of the whole Ilkhanate.

Nawrūz may have been acting as an independent ruler, but his rebellion did not cleave away from the Chinggisid house. His family had been heavily involved in the Chinggisid venture up to this point, and Nawrūz sought allies from princes who had been maltreated by Arghun or the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid rulers to the east. His first foray was to support two princes who had been contenders for the Ilkhanate and been outmanoeuvred by Arghun's seizing of the throne without a *quriltai*: Hülechü and Kingshü. According to Khwāndamīr, Nawrūz was Kingshü's brother-in-law, and it seems that Nawrūz sought to establish kinship relations with Chinggisid princes to solidify his power, much as Temür would do in his own career.¹⁸⁹ Hülechü, as we have seen, looks to have been the originally chosen successor of Aḥmad, while there had been some support for Kingshü as well. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Nawrūz issued decrees in the name of both princes.¹⁹⁰ Ghazan was able to capture Hülechü in 1289 and send him to Arghun, who had him executed, while Kingshü was forced to flee to the frontiers and take refuge with the Qara'unas in the region of Ghor.¹⁹¹

Arghun's purge of Ilkhanid princes limited Nawrūz's options, and he turned in a different direction, issuing *farmāns* in the name of one Örüḡ/Ürüḡ Temür, an Ögödeid prince descended from Ögödei's sixth son Qada'an.¹⁹² It is difficult to exactly interpret this move. While it may seem that Nawrūz was simply casting around for a Chinggisid prince to give legitimacy to his actions, he also

¹⁸⁸ Hope, 'The "Nawrūz King"', pp. 453-463.

¹⁸⁹ Khwāndamīr/Thackston, p. 79.

¹⁹⁰ Given that Hülechü gives a *jarligh*, the province of Mongol rulers, and Kingshü follows this by giving a *buyruq*, or command, it looks as if Hülechü was the superior and Kingshü the subordinate. This tallies with Hülechü's direct descent from Hülegü, see RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 596.

¹⁹¹ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 596, 598.

¹⁹² Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 192; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 315. Vaṣṣāf calls him Ürüḡ Temür, while Rashīd al-Dīn uses Örüḡ Temür.

took a further step in marrying his daughter to Örüġ Temür.¹⁹³ Perhaps, given Nawrüz's previous associations with Qaidu, Nawrüz may have been looking to act more independently, though this seemingly backfired. According to Khwāndamīr, when Nawrüz and Örüġ Temür's joint invasion of Khurasan went wrong, Örüġ Temür had Nawrüz punished.¹⁹⁴ Eventually, when Örüġ Temür was accused of supporting Ghazan, it was his father-in-law Qaidu who had him executed.¹⁹⁵ It may also have been that Nawrüz was expressing explicit independence from the Ilkhanid house by turning to a non-Toluid. It is likely a combination of these factors that led to this somewhat strange situation, but it did not last long, as Örüġ Temür abandoned Nawrüz in fear for his life.¹⁹⁶

Nawrüz and Ghazan, so long rivals regionally, joined forces in order to supplant Baidu as Ilkhan. Predictably, Rashīd al-Dīn, Ghazan's vizier, shows this as on Ghazan's terms. Nawrüz is pardoned of his offences, and Ghazan converts to Islam at Nawrüz's suggestion but of his own free will.¹⁹⁷ Vaṣṣāf's account however, shows Nawrüz as clearly in the driving seat and Vaṣṣāf is far more positive about Nawrüz generally.¹⁹⁸ He mentions nothing of Nawrüz being pardoned, while Nawrüz states that he will serve Ghazan 'on the condition that Prince Ghazan accepts Islam' (به شرط آنکه) *bi-shart-i ānki shāhzāda ghāzān islām bī-āvard*).¹⁹⁹ Perhaps this is the greatest difference between Nawrüz and other amirs who had sought to maintain their independence vis-à-vis their Ilkhans. Nawrüz's loyalty would only come at a price, and that was a commitment to Islam. It is possible that his previous Chinggisid lord, Örüġ Temür, was also made to convert by Nawrüz.²⁰⁰ As both Christian and Mamluk sources confirm, it was Nawrüz who was the most vehement in pursuing Islamising policies.²⁰¹ However, this Islamising trend has been somewhat overplayed. Hope states,

¹⁹³ RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 310.

¹⁹⁴ Khwāndamīr/Thackston, p. 80.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. Interestingly, not for having supported Nawrüz, which he did, but for having supported Ghazan, which he did not.

¹⁹⁶ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 192; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 315. Khwāndamīr/Thackston, p. 80 suggests it was Nawrüz who broke off the alliance.

¹⁹⁷ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 608, 620.

¹⁹⁸ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 191; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 314. شجاعت و پردلی و صیت اسلام پروری او همه جا را بگرفت. برای تقویت اسلام رنج. *shujā'at va purdilī va šīt-i islām-parvarī-yi ū hama jā rā bigirift. Barāyi taqvīyat-i islām ranj-i farāvān kishīd.* 'Word of his courage, bravery and his promotion of Islam was spread everywhere. He suffered greatly to strengthen Islam.'

¹⁹⁹ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 192-3; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 316. See Hope, 'Nawrüz King', pp. 464-7.

²⁰⁰ Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, p. 154. As Michal Biran points out, Rashīd al-Dīn lists two of his sons as having Islamic names, Muḥammad and 'Alī, at a time that very few Öġödeids were identifiably Muslim, Biran, *Qaidu*, p. 93. The fact that Rashīd al-Dīn lists nine other sons with much more Mongol names (eg. Tuqluq Buqa, Chin Temür) and only the last two are given Islamic names suggests a late conversion, perhaps when he married Nawrüz's daughter, RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 310. As to the willingness of Örüġ Temür to convert, we can only speculate.

²⁰¹ *The Monks of Kublai Khan*, pp. 210, 216; BH/Budge, p. 507; R. Amitai, 'Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition: A View from the Mamluk Sultanate', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 59 (1996), pp. 1-10 shows how the Mamluk historian al-Ṣafadī portrayed Nawrüz's conversion of Ghazan.

based on Vaṣṣāf, that Nawrūz ‘announced his intention to launch a holy war against the heathen armies of Qaidu and the Ilkhanate, promising to expel them from the region.’²⁰² However, Vaṣṣāf in actual fact only claimed that Nawrūz made an agreement with Örüġ Temür to cleanse the area of Qaidu’s armies and to spread Islam. Vaṣṣāf goes on to describe this as a secret whose revelation broke down communication between the two allies.²⁰³ The fact that only a few lines later Vaṣṣāf describes an embassy from Nawrūz to Ghazan suggesting an alliance hardly suggests that such a strong claim was ever made by Nawrūz.

Whatever the case may be, it seems that Nawrūz was the senior partner in this marriage of convenience, and he asserted himself as such early in Ghazan’s reign. Vaṣṣāf states that Nawrūz was made Ghazan’s *nāyib* (vice-regent), and that through this position he appointed his own *nāyibs* for every district.²⁰⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn reports that Nawrūz was granted the emirate and vizierate, and requested that the *al tamgha* seals, used by the Mongols for decades as a sign of their authority, be changed to include Islamic elements, and be changed from the square shape to a circle.²⁰⁵ Mar Yahbh-Allaha confirms that Nawrūz was in fact in possession of the *al tamgha*.²⁰⁶ What we see here is a repeat of the situation with Buqa and Arghun. The princely pretender, dealing with his relative weakness vis-a-vis the centre, is forced into an alliance with a powerful amir, who is promised almost unassailable position and influence. Both Buqa and Nawrūz had also shown their willingness to switch to a different horse if their power was threatened. It may be for this reason that both Arghun and Nawrūz put so many of the Ilkhanid princes to death.²⁰⁷

Where the stories differ however, is the reason for these amirs’ downfall. While Buqa was accused of supporting another Chinggisid prince, Nawrūz was brought down due to perceived support for the Mamluks. Rashīd al-Dīn comes up with quite a twisted tale to explain Nawrūz’s rebellion, where both Nawrūz and Ghazan are absolved from serious blame. Nawrūz apparently sent an envoy, one ‘Alam al-Dīn Qayṣar, to the Mamluk Sultan Kitbugha during the reign of Baidu (1295),

²⁰² Hope, “Nawrūz King”, p. 461.

²⁰³ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 191-2; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 315, با اورنگتیمور که میانشان خویشاوندی بود هم پیمان شد که به مدد یکدیگر, *bā ḥawālī āb āmūyeh rā az laṣkar qaydū pāk gardānand va islām rā shāyī’ sāzand. Īn rāz fāsh shud va silsila-yi murāvīda miyān-i ānān bi-kullī bi-gusast. ūrungtimūr ki miyānishān khvīshāvandī būd ham paymān shud ki bi madad-i yikdīgar ḥavālī-yi āb āmūya rā az lashkar-i qaydū pāk gardānand va islām rā shāyī’ sāzand. Īn rāz fāsh shud va silsila-yi murāvīda miyān-i ānān bi-kullī bi-gusast.*

²⁰⁴ Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, pp. 198-9; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 325-7. The term can be written *nā’ib* or *nāyib*. As Vaṣṣāf uses the latter form here, I follow him.

²⁰⁵ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 629-630.

²⁰⁶ *Monks of Kublai Khan*, p. 216.

²⁰⁷ ‘Rebellions’ of Anbarji s. Gaykhatu, Söge s. Yoshmut, Ildar s. Ajai s. Hülegü, Ildar and Esen Temür s. of Qongqortai, and Taichu s. Möngke Temür were all met with executions by Ghazan, RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 474-5. These revolts and their implications have been extensively dealt with in Brack, ‘Mediating Sacred Kingship’, Chapter 1, particularly pp. 50-64.

asserting that both Nawrūz and Kitbugha were Muslims, and Baidu was not, and should therefore be overthrown.²⁰⁸ However, Qayşar returned only in 1297, well after Baidu had already been killed. Subsequently, the vizier Sadr al-Dīn Zanjānī, who had a personal animosity towards Nawrūz, planted letters on Qayşar and then had him investigated. These letters were purportedly sent to the amirs of Egypt and Syria (not to the newly installed Mamluk Sultan Lāchīn), complaining of Ghazan's amirs' attempts to block Islamisation. Nawrūz then offered to occupy Iran and turn it over to them. These letters were naturally discovered, and their existence was reported to Ghazan, who ordered the execution of Nawrūz's sons and followers. Nawrūz himself fled to Herat, where he was at first given shelter by the Kurtid *malik* of the city, Fakhr al-Dīn. Once Ghazan's amir Qutlughshāh arrived, however, Fakhr al-Dīn handed Nawrūz over, and Qutlughshāh executed him, sending his head to be hung at the city gates of Baghdad.²⁰⁹

This fanciful tale is a perplexing one. It allows Rashīd al-Dīn to put most of the blame on Sadr al-Dīn Zanjānī, who Rashīd al-Dīn had a personal falling-out with before Zanjānī's execution for embezzlement in 1298.²¹⁰ However, it seems quite unclear if Nawrūz had any actual contact with the Mamluks, or if this was simply a ploy by Ghazan and/or his officials to get rid of Nawrūz's overweening power.²¹¹ It certainly seems confusing why Nawrūz should wish to overthrow the Ilkhanid regime when he was such a major figure within it. Perhaps he believed that if he turned the province over to the Mamluk Sultan, he would be left in charge without any Chinggisid supervision. We can only speculate as to Nawrūz's motives, if this envoy was ever sent. The Mamluk historian Al-Şafadī claimed that Nawrūz believed that the time of the Mahdi had come, and that it was his role to pave the way for his arrival.²¹² What is interesting, is that whether Rashīd al-Dīn's tale is contrived or not, the story is that Nawrūz sought help *outside* the Chinggisid house for the first time, and was seemingly willing to overthrow the Hülegüids on behalf of the Mamluks. Ghazan's harsh reaction also may have been linked to the 1296 defection of the amir Turaghai to Sultan Kitbugha (r. 1294-1296)

²⁰⁸ There was some disagreement among our sources as to Baidu's religion. Het'um the Historian called him a Christian and a just man, Het'um the Historian, *Flower of Histories*, p. 62, while Bar Hebraeus states that he had been a Christian at some point but converted to Islam because most of the realm had also done so, BH/Budge, p. 505. He certainly contributed to the upkeep of the Iraqi Syriac monastery, Mār Behnam, where there was an Uighur script dedication to him, A. Harrak and N. Ruji, 'The Uighur Inscription at the Mausoleum of Mār Behnam, Iraq', *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2004), pp. 66-72. The monastery has since been destroyed by ISIS and subsequently restored.

²⁰⁹ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 636-640.

²¹⁰ Idem, pp. 641-2.

²¹¹ Vaṣṣāf makes no mention of faked letters, only that a spy (*jāsūsī*) from Nawrūz to Egypt was captured with a letter urging the Sultan, his amirs and his army to actively support the spread of Islam, Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 206; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 341.

²¹² J. Brack, 'A Mongol Mahdi in Medieval Anatolia: Rebellion, Reform, and Divine Right in the Post-Mongol Islamic World', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 139, No. 3, (2019), p. 619.

with some 10-18,000 Oirat households.²¹³ Ghazan could ill afford any further major defections of this kind.

4.8 Conclusion

The cases of Taghachar and Nawrūz suggest that there was a significant weakening of inertial loyalty to the Ilkhanid house among the great amirs. This eventually led to the emergence of dynasties led by these amirs, and not by Chinggisids. While it may be said that the Ilkhanid realm was significantly more stable in the later reign of Ghazan and the reigns of his successors Öljeitü and Abū Saʿīd after the chaos of the 1290s, a closer look shows that the balance of power between the amirs and rulers had been tipped in the favour of the amirs. Charles Melville has shown that the great amirs Chupan and the *atābeg* Sevinch, who controlled many of the affairs of the Ilkhanate, took six months to put the 11 year-old Abū Saʿīd on the throne after the death of Öljeitü.²¹⁴ Abū Saʿīd, unlike many of his Chinggisid ancestors, was not led to the throne by his high-ranking Chinggisid relatives, but by Sevinch and Chupan.²¹⁵ Christopher Atwood has also shown that in the early Ilkhanate, the ruler's affixed their seals on documents solely on their own authority, but that from the reign of Gaykhatu, these documents were countersigned by the four principal *keshig* amirs.²¹⁶ Perhaps the most telling indication of the amirs' greater self-confidence was that Abū Saʿīd faced three major revolts (Irinjin of the Kerait, Chupan of the Suldus and Temürtash s. Chupan) during his reign, none of which chose to use a Chinggisid as its figurehead.²¹⁷

All of this goes to show only what other scholars have pointed out already, that the amirs' power was greater than ever before in the Ilkhanate at the turn of the 13th century.²¹⁸ The death of Abū Saʿīd and the emergence of statelets such as the Jalayirids and Chupanids (1338-1357), who briefly made use of Chinggisid puppets, but soon dispensed with this formality, drives this point

²¹³ Van den Bent, 'Mongols in Mamluk Eyes', pp. 220-1.

²¹⁴ Melville, 'End of the Ilkhanate', pp. 310-11.

²¹⁵ Khwāndamīr/Thackston, p. 113; R. Sela, *Ritual and Authority in Central Asia: The Khan's Inauguration Ceremony, Papers on Inner Asia*, No. 37 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 2003), p. 31.

²¹⁶ Atwood, 'Ulus Emirs, Keshig Elders', p. 146.

²¹⁷ For Irinjin's rebellion, see C. Melville, 'Abū Saʿīd and the Revolt of the Amirs in 1319', in (ed.) D. Aigle, *L'Iran face à la domination mongole*, (Tehran: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1997), pp. 89-120. For Chupan's rebellion, see Melville, *Fall of Amir Chupan, passim* and 'Wolf or Shepherd?', *passim*. For the revolt of Temürtash, see Brack, 'Mongol Mahdi in Anatolia', *passim*.

²¹⁸ Melville, *Fall of Amir Chupan*, pp. 40. 42; Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, p. 190.

home yet further.²¹⁹ However, the descriptions of decline are usually reserved for the reigns of Abū Saʿīd, and to a lesser extent, Öljeitü.²²⁰ But it is perhaps worth returning to the reign of Ghazan and our loyalty categories to challenge this view. Both Arghun and Ghazan were particularly bloodthirsty, executing large numbers of Chinggisids and key amirs.²²¹ While this was perhaps a necessary measure in the short term, it seems to have caused their successors great difficulties.²²² Both rulers were desperately seeking to encourage inertial loyalty to the state, preemptively showing their subjects what could be expected at the least sign of rebellion. However, these actions damaged both the charismatic loyalty of the amirs to the Chinggisid house, and also the ideal loyalty towards the blood of the *altan urugh*, which Arghun and Ghazan freely spilled without recourse to consultation.²²³ Unlike previous punishments of the rebellious in the Mongol world, where their descendants were regularly excluded from execution and rehabilitated into the state, Arghun and Ghazan's reactions also often included the family and followers of rebellious princes and amirs. This seems to have both weakened the Ilkhanid state, and led to a more backs-to-the-wall reaction from the amirs when issues arose with their families.²²⁴

²¹⁹ For the Jalayirids, see Wing, *Jalayirids*; for the Chupanids, see M. Hope, 'The Political Configuration of Late Ilkhanid Iran: A Case Study of the Chubaniid Amirate (738–758/1337–1357)', Iran, (2021) DOI: 10.1080/05786967.2021.1889930, pp. 1-18.

²²⁰ Interestingly, the period of decline in the Ilkhanate seems to have been attended with the greatest florescence of cultural production, such as the illumination of *Shāhnāma* manuscripts. This curious paradox would also be apparent at the court of Sultan Husayn Bāyqarā, the last Timurid ruler of Herat.

²²¹ Even Öljeitü, Ghazan's successor, despite apparently being Ghazan's declared heir for three or four years on Ghazan's death, felt the need to execute the prince Ala Fireng, son of Gaykhatu, before his own accession, Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 270; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 457; Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship', pp. 76-80. The amir tied to Ala Fireng's rebellion, Horqudaq, was killed along with his brothers and sons, though his wife Shāh 'Alām and her young son Jahāngīr were spared by Öljeitü, Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 273; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, pp. 464-466. Thus, as Brack shows, despite Rashīd al-Dīn's emphasis on Öljeitü gaining the throne without spilling blood and ending the period of *fitna*, his reign in fact began with a bloody purge on a smaller scale than his brother's, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship', p. 77.

²²² Favereau, *The Horde*, p. 21 has shown that a similar situation emerged in the Jochid *ulus*, whereby rulers of the lineage of Batu, such as Özbek, purged Chinggisid lines which had opposed them, which solidified their own rule, but strengthened the hand of the *beglerbegs*, such as the late 14th century Mamai, who made use of puppet khans in his two-decade career. It also led to a changing of hands among Jochid lineages, whereby the descendants of Batu and Orda were marginalised, and the line of Toqa Temür (whose descendants would later rule the Uzbek khanate) came to the fore under the khan Toqtamish.

²²³ The damage to the Ilkhanid regime in the long-term and the charisma of the Abaqaid line is highlighted by the Mamluk scholar al-'Umārī, who states in the 1340s that no descendants of Hülegü could be found, and even those that did exist had belittled themselves to avoid executions, becoming tanners and sellers of barley, see Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship', p. 81, note 202.

²²⁴ See Melville, *Fall of Amir Chupan*, pp. 87-9. This should not be overplayed of course, Ishayahu Landa has shown that the family of Arghun Aqa, though descended not through Nawrūz, but another of his sons, Oyiratai, continued to hold power under Ghazan, and two of his female descendants, Bujughan and Bulughan Khatun married Öljeitü, I. Landa, 'New Light on Early Mongol Islamisation: The Case of Arghun Aqa's Family', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (2018), pp. 77-100.

These vindictive attacks on the families of rebels culminated in the young Abū Saʿīd's vicious response to the revolt of his amirs Irinjin, Toqmaq and Qurumshi in 1319.²²⁵ Before the final battle between the two sides, Abū Saʿīd had Irinjin's son Shaykh 'Alī decapitated and his head paraded on a spear. His other son Vafādār (ironically meaning 'loyal') was killed and his head thrown before his mother Könçek, who had taken part in the battle, before she herself was trampled by horses. Both Irinjin and Toqmaq were hung up on butcher's hooks, as well as Toqmaq's brother Orus and his two seven year-old sons.²²⁶ A similar fate befell the historian and vizier Rashīd al-Dīn also, whose son Khwaja Ibrahim was cut in two in front of him before his own execution.²²⁷ These extremely personal reactions may be put down to Abū Saʿīd's youth and his domination by Irinjin's rival Chupan and Rashīd al-Dīn's conflict with the vizier Tāj al-Dīn 'Alīshāh, but we should not forget that Ghazan's reign also began with a brutal spate of executions.²²⁸ These shows of strength in fact had the opposite effect longer term, damaging the credibility of the Ilkhanid state and the Chinggisid lineage. As noted by Jonathan Brack, this led to the Chupanid ruler Malik Ashraf being told that 'no charisma (Turkic *ughūr*) remains in the house of Chinggis Khan', according to the 15th century Timurid historian Muʿīn al-Dīn Naṭanzī.²²⁹

In this regard, it is perhaps interesting to reconsider Rashīd al-Dīn's account of Ghazan's reign. While Rashīd al-Dīn does not ignore Ghazan's executions of his kinsmen and *noyans*, he is at great pains to play up Ghazan's justice and Islamic kingship.²³⁰ As Devin DeWeese put it, Mongol khans often adopted their subjects' religious beliefs, 'in periods when the khans were politically weak and needed some other (i.e. non-Chinggisid) source of legitimacy.'²³¹ Thus, Rashīd al-Dīn takes a different angle, looking at Ghazan's treatment of the peasantry. He first shows how under previous Ilkhanid rule (though he does not specify which rule), 'because of such mismanagement and waste, most of the peasants in the provinces abandoned their homes and settled in foreign parts', for 'they

²²⁵ Perhaps he sought to emulate his predecessors Ghazan and Öljeitü, who had both begun their reigns in like manner. According to the *Tārīkh-i Shaykh Uways*, Irinjin and Qurumshi were foster brothers of Ghazan, so there is little about family loyalty here, *Ta'rikh-i Shaikh Uways*, p. 53, Persian text, p. 151.

²²⁶ Melville, 'Revolt of the Amirs', pp. 104-110.

²²⁷ Khwāndamīr/Thackston, p. 114.

²²⁸ 'Abū Saʿīd could be more forgiving as well. Stefan Kamola shows that while his uncle Ghazan's great statesman Rashīd al-Dīn and one of his sons were executed for the alleged poisoning of Öljeitü, another of his sons, Ghīyāṣ al-Dīn, was appointed as vizier in 1327, Kamola, *Making Mongol History*, p. 162.

²²⁹ Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh-i Muʿīnī* (ed.) J. Aubin, (Tehran: Kitābforūshī-i Khayyām, 1336 [1957]), p. 158, quoted in Brack, 'Mongol Mahdi in Anatolia', p. 625, note 73.

²³⁰ This has been well-studied in J. Brack, 'Theologies of Auspicious Kingship: The Islamization of Chinggisid Sacral Kingship in the Islamic World', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 60, No.4, (2018), pp. 1143-1171; C. Melville, 'Pādshāh-i Islām: The Conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān', *Pembroke Papers*, Vol. I, (1990), pp. 159-177; Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, Chapters 12 and 13 and Jackson, 'Mongol Khans and Religious Allegiance', *passim*.

²³¹ DeWeese, 'Islamization in the Mongol Empire', p. 121.

had developed an antipathy to that great realm'.²³² This was arguably the only way, apart from non-payment of taxes (though this was a natural by-product of departure), for the lowest echelons of society to show disloyalty. Therefore, Rashīd al-Dīn creates a scenario in which inertial loyalty among the general population was so weak towards the Ilkhanids that many of them preferred to depart the realm rather than deal with Ilkhanid exactions. Naturally then, after Ghazan punishes the voracious governors and tax collectors, and sets tax standards, these runaways return to their homelands, which begin to flourish once again.²³³

This narrative is one that has been regularly questioned, given Rashīd al-Dīn's own involvement in these reforms, and the fact that Ghazan was only alive for another year after he implemented them, giving them very little time to take effect. We also have local histories which put an element of doubt in the idea of the dire situation under Ghazan's predecessors. Charles Melville has shown that in Anatolia, there were several chronicles which highlighted the justice of various Ilkhanid governors and rulers. The Seljuq Anonymous Chronicle was in high praise of Gaykhatu as a just governor of Rum, though it is less complimentary about his time as Ilkhan.²³⁴ The historian Āqsarā'ī also described Hülegü, Abaqa and Arghun as just rulers who punished corruption and protected local traditions of law.²³⁵ The efforts of Rashīd al-Dīn to pillory previous Mongol rule and play up the common people's love of Ghazan look to be attempts to distract attention away from his sovereign's paranoid murders of anyone who had the potential to weaken his own power.²³⁶

One of the earlier Ilkhans who presumably was being anonymously criticised in Rashīd al-Dīn's account of the pillaging of Iran was Abaqa. However, Rashīd al-Dīn's own account of Abaqa's reign shows him as rarely troubled by internal uprisings and rebellions.²³⁷ The one major 'internal' revolt by the Chaghadaid prince Tegüder, which lasted from 1267-1270, was finally put down by Abaqa, who did not execute Tegüder, but merely kept him under guard until his patron, Baraq, was dead, then let him free.²³⁸ Abaqa put to death Tegüder's amirs, but he protected the Chinggisid

²³² RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 703.

²³³ Idem, p. 707.

²³⁴ C. Melville, 'The Early Persian Historiography of Anatolia', in (eds.) J. Pfeiffer, S.A. Quinn, E. Tucker, and J.E. Woods, *History and historiography of post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: studies in honor of John E. Woods*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), pp. 153-4.

²³⁵ Idem, pp. 156-8.

²³⁶ Favereau, *The Horde*, p. 250 reaches the same conclusion, that authoritarianism and centralisation developed in the Jochid *ulus* under the rulership of Toqto'a and Özbeg, and consensus and sharing of power disappeared. This is echoed in Hope's analysis of Ghazan's rule and the weakening of collegialist ideas of government, Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, p. 169. In both *uluses*, the amirs reacted against such changes and seized back control.

²³⁷ According to Qāshānī also, Abaqa's main attribute was justice, and he was associated with the promotion of agriculture and building works, Qāshānī/Hambali, p. 106, see Kamola, *Making Mongol History*, p. 169.

²³⁸ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 522-3.

bloodline, and merely divided up his soldiers amongst other units.²³⁹ He similarly merely exiled his brother Yoshmut after Yoshmut hit him in the neck with an arrow.²⁴⁰ The Juvainī brothers, accused of embezzlement, were tortured and threatened on Abaqa's orders. However, both were released from prison, and Shams al-Dīn was restored to favour, though 'Aṭā-Malik was beaten through the streets of Baghdad.²⁴¹ Abaqa could be brutal, as he showed in his treatment of Chaghadaid soldiers after the Battle of Herat in 1273, his sack of the city of Bukhara in the same year, and his execution of the Anatolian official Mu'īn al-Dīn Parvāna on suspicion of collaboration with the Mamluks.²⁴² However, none of these actions seem out of keeping with mediaeval rulership.

Peter Jackson has emphasised that Abaqa's smooth succession to Hülegü allowed him to keep continuity with his father's reign, maintaining many of the same people in their roles, while Ghazan, who came to power violently, was forced to begin his regime with a purge.²⁴³ Nonetheless, as we have seen with Arghun, the Mongols and their respected religious advisors genuinely believed that such bloodthirstiness towards one's own family had physical effects on the guilty party. The fact that Ghazan died of an illness at 33 may have caused similar feelings among the Turco-Mongol elite. While they had all supposedly converted to Islam, and Buddhist/shamanic influence had apparently been removed, this change was too fresh for such powerful cultural beliefs to have disappeared.²⁴⁴ The damage to Ghazan's charisma is certainly not shown in our Persian Muslim sources, who highlight his Islamic good works. These may have impressed the administrative and scholarly classes, but undoubtedly the ruling elites would have been worried about his paranoia and ruthlessness, much as had occurred with his father. This trend of signs of a weakening of charismatic loyalty to the dynasty continued under Öljeitü, when during his campaign in Gilan in 1307, several members of the royal household were struck by lightning, an indication in the Mongol world of divine displeasure, which the Mongol *bakhshis* apparently put down to the realm's conversion to Islam.²⁴⁵ Abū Sa'īd's

²³⁹ Biran, 'The Battle of Herat', p. 188; Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, p. 88.

²⁴⁰ Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, p. 116.

²⁴¹ RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 543-5.

²⁴² RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, pp. 536-8. Biran, 'Battle of Herat', pp. 198, 201. Het'um the Historian tells a fanciful tale that Abaqa ordered that the Parvāna be cut into pieces and divided up for he and his nobles to eat, Het'um the Historian, *Flower of Histories*, p. 56. Interestingly however, this story also reached Riccoldo da Montecroce, *A Christian Pilgrim*, p. 191.

²⁴³ Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, pp. 270-1. After Möngke's coup, there were also executions, but many of the Chinggisid princes were spared. In the Chaghadaid realm, where there were regular changes of power, officials like Mahmud Yalāvach and Mas'ud Beg were still kept on, while Chinggisids like Mubārakshāh, son of Orghina Khatun, were stripped of power, but kept alive.

²⁴⁴ In the Jochid *ulus*, also a Muslim polity at this point, the khan Birdibek in 1358 executed 12 brothers and his own son, leading to the ruling elites abandoning him, Favereau, *The Horde*, p. 262.

²⁴⁵ Qāshānī/Hambali, p. 89; Kamola, *Making Mongol History*, p. 105. Brack, 'Mediating Sacred Kingship', p. 60 shows that the line of Baidu (the Ilkhan who preceded Ghazan) was shown to be illegitimate in Rashīd al-Dīn's work by indicated that Baidu's father Taraghai was killed by a lightning strike. DeWeese, *Islamization and*

vindictive streak formed a part of this pattern which looks to have fatally damaged charismatic loyalty to the Hülegüid line.²⁴⁶

By looking at these categories of loyalty, we can better understand why the political credit of the Chinggisids had disappeared in the Ilkhanate. There were certainly issues with fertility in the later Ilkhanid period, but as observed by Charles Melville, the absence of direct heirs, as occurred after Abū Saʿīd's death in 1335, did not cause the other khanates to collapse.²⁴⁷ The Ilkhans' weeding out of their rivals did lead to a lack of great choices to succeed Abū Saʿīd. The actions of those Ilkhans also had a great effect on their own commanders, who saw that their livelihoods were under severe threat by greater centralising methods of those such as Ghazan. The factional rivalries between different commanders with no strong hand to guide them led to a pulling apart of the realm. Inertial loyalty to the state was at an all-time low, which caused many of these commanders to decide to strike out on their own, creating smaller versions of the Ilkhanid state in their own statelets.

Native Religion, p. 260, based on Qāshānī, claims that it was a specific *jasaq* of Chinggis that everyone nearby a lightning strike had to be purified by passing through two fires.

²⁴⁶ Favereau, *The Horde*, pp. 204-5 has shown that similar treatment of Chinggisids by Toqto'a in the early 14th century led to greater power in the hands of the *begs*, though Chinggisid lineage continued to be respected.

²⁴⁷ Broadbridge, *Women*, p. 274; Melville, 'End of the Ilkhanate', p. 313; Lane, *Daily Life*, p. 163 attributes the lessened fertility of the Ilkhanid rulers to genetic issues stemming from heavy alcohol consumption.