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Mongol loyalty networks: cultural transmission and Chinggisid innovation

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1. Introduction

The Mongol Empire which ruled over much of Eurasia for most of the 13th century and its successor states of the later 13th and 14th centuries have long captured the imagination of travellers, historians, linguists, and anthropologists, to name but a few.[1] Many scholarly works and products of popular culture have been fascinated with how this nomadic people on horseback conquered such a vast swathe of land. Over time, those researching the Mongols have come to appreciate the impressive political acumen which those who ruled this empire possessed. Gone are the days where the Mongols are portrayed simply as savage barbarians, to be replaced by an impressive volume of literature on a diverse range of aspects of Mongol rule. As we have come to understand this period better, the Mongols' political and administrative system of the imperial era has been explored by many different scholars, while works on various successor states (often called khanates) have further developed our knowledge of Mongol adaptations to rule in regions across Eurasia.[2] These works and many others have shown how the Mongols structured their empire, what methods they used for ruling over subject populations, and how they dealt with the idea of the lands they conquered as a shared patrimony of not just the great Chinggis Khan, but of his family as well. We are now in a better place than ever to navigate what can be a minefield of names, sources, and power shifts.

Standing on the shoulders of such giants, this work seeks to focus on a topic that is often mentioned, but rarely considered in any great detail, namely that of loyalty. Loyalty in the Mongol Empire is regularly discussed primarily focusing on incidents of disloyalty, or in examples of extreme loyalty. Take the work of Morris Rossabi, who discusses the case of the Southern Sòng dynasty (1127-1279 CE) artists who refused to join Qubilai Qa'an's (r. 1260-1294) Yuán court: 'the painters, for the

[1] This research was funded by the NWO (Dutch Research Council) VICI grant for the project 'Turks, texts and territory: Imperial ideology and cultural production in Central Eurasia', Project Number 277-69-001, at Leiden University.

[2] For works on the united Mongol Empire, standout contributions are T.T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and P. Jackson, *The Mongols and the Islamic World: From Conquest to Conversion*, (Cumberland: Yale University Press, 2017). For the Yuán Dynasty in China, M. Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). For the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid realms, M. Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia*, (Richmond: Curzon, 1997). For the Ilkhanate (and the earlier united empire), M. Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate of Iran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). For the Jochid *ulus* (Golden Horde), M. Favereau, *The Horde: How the Mongols Changed the World*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021).

understandable and praiseworthy notion of loyalty to a native dynasty, declined Khubilai's offers.'[3] Here we are given a clear dichotomy, between loyalty to one's nation or going over to a foreign invader. Take also the statement by George Lane regarding the choice of steppe leaders to follow Chinggis Khan: 'independent-minded tribal chiefs remained with him not out of fear but out of choice'.[4] However, there are countless instances where loyalty decisions were not so cut and dried, even if we accept that the above examples count as such. The goal of this dissertation is to get to grips with loyalty in the Mongol world, in an attempt to understand some of the nuances in loyalty decisions and competing forces at work for political actors who had loyalty choices. What will be shown is that such choices were not always easy, and posterity often judged and judges these decisions without full comprehension of what such decisions entailed.

While loyalty is of great social importance in every society, a specific focus on Mongol political loyalty reveals a great deal about other aspects of Mongol cultural and societal norms. Despite the fact that the lenses through which we view the Mongol world are regularly not Mongols themselves, through comparison and the use of our 'Mongol' source covering the rise of the empire, the *Secret History of the Mongols*, we can find some fascinating trends.[5] In our study of loyalty, we also come to understand much about the Mongol approach to family, law, religion and obligations to one's ancestors. Again, these are concepts that have been dealt with before, but I believe that this look at loyalty fills out this picture provided by many excellent scholars. It is of critical importance to understand how political actors in the 12th-14th centuries made loyalty decisions, as it gives us a better understanding of Mongol culture and how it affected and was affected by the societies that it came into contact with. In looking at this, we see not only the reasons that our sources give us, but also the other potential influences that pushed or pulled people one way or another. In looking at these cases, we can see the fabric that made the Mongol Empire what it was, and how this fabric eventually tore under the stresses of these loyalty decisions. This breakdown of the loyalty network of the greater Mongol Empire in the 1260s forced a readjustment of how political loyalty was seen by actors in the various khanates which emerged out of this system. Of course, the Mongol Empire was not made up of only Mongols, and thus we must also consider how those who came under Mongol rule adapted to the cultural norms of loyalty which the Mongols brought with them.

Understanding Mongol loyalty networks is not only applicable for this period either. Long after any true 'Mongol' power had disappeared, the ideas that they brought with them permeated many other societies. Dynasties such as the Timurids (1370-1506) in Central Asia and the Mughals

[3] Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan*, p. 166.
[4] G. Lane, *Daily Life in the Mongol Empire*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006), p. 21.
[5] For information on this text, see the Primary Sources section.

(1526-1857) in India were the inheritors of Chinggisid concepts of governance, and the loyalty networks that the Mongols had brought with them were transferred into new societies and situations.[6] These dynasties willingly embraced many of the ideas that Chinggis and his family propagated, and many of the same issues surrounding loyalty cropped up again among later states.[7] Even regions further afield that had a much more negative memory of the Mongols, such as in Muscovy or in Míng China, adopted many of the institutions and ideas which had bolstered the Mongol state apparatus.[8] Only by truly understanding Mongol ideals and cultural norms can we figure out why their legacy was so powerful, even in sedentary states whose primary view of the Mongols was as barbarian destroyers. Thus, while it is outside the scope of this thesis, a consideration of Mongol loyalty networks and the bonds that held them in place gets us closer to understanding this legacy among later societies.

1.1 The Concept of Loyalty

Before addressing the framework of this study, perhaps it is important to address what exactly we mean by 'loyalty'. Loyalty is a term which has many different meanings which people ascribe to it, based on the context in which we use it. Most loyalties are informal, such as to one's friends or to one's football team, while others are contractual, sealed by an oath, vow, or pledge. Marriages often, but not always, include an exchange of vows pledging loyalty to the other person. Politically, in western Europe we tend not to officially vow loyalty to the nation or to a party, but in my childhood in the United States, every school morning began with the class chanting together with hand on heart, 'I pledge allegiance to the flag, and to the republic for which it stands…'. Considering what people choose to be loyal to indicates what political, cultural, societal and religious values they care to be seen upholding.

What sort of attributes make up loyalty then? Again, this seems to depend on context. For example, working at a company for many years is considered loyalty, though perhaps that employee

[6] For Mongol influence on the Timurids, see M.E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007). For an understanding of the Mughal relationship to the Mongol legacy, see J. Gommans and S.R. Huseini, 'Neoplatonism and the Pax Mongolica in the making of ṣulḥ-i kull. A view from Akbar's millennial history', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 56, No. 3, (2022), pp. 870-901.

[7] See for example pp. 10-18 of this thesis.

[8] Considering Mongol influence on Muscovite political institutions, see C.J. Halperin, 'Muscovite Political Institutions in the 14th Century', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History,* Vol. 1, No. 2, (2000), pp. 237-257. For Mongol influences on the Míng, see D.M. Robinson, 'The Ming Court and the Legacy of the Yuan Mongols', in (ed.) D.M. Robinson, *Culture, Courtiers, and Competition: The Ming Court (1368-1644),* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008), pp. 365-421.

was happy with his/her pay and never was offered anything better by another company. If the company suddenly reduced salaries and extended hours, most people would not begrudge the employee changing positions. In friendships usually no contract is signed or oath made, and we do not expect monetary benefit, yet we expect loyalty in the sense of something far less concrete, perhaps a feeling of support which we derive from that person.

Loyalty is a two-way street of course, and the two parties often feel quite differently about what is expected of the other. A politician for example, may feel loyalty towards his/her party, but if the party makes a stand on an issue that disagrees with that politician's conscience, he/she may vote the other way. The party leadership may see this as disloyalty, while the politician would rather see it as loyalty to his/her own beliefs. This example also raises the issue of multiple loyalties. Perhaps this politician was elected by his/her constituents on an anti-war platform, and his/her party votes to go to war. Is this politician being disloyal to constituents if he/she votes with the party, or disloyal to the party by opposing the war? In this case and in many others, loyalty is not a black and white issue.

Loyalty in a political sense nowadays seems to have quite a different meaning than in a mediaeval context. We tend no longer to describe loyalty as personal loyalty to the ruler and his dynasty, but rather to a more abstract concept of a nation. One can betray a leader or a party without being seen as a traitor to the country, while in a mediaeval context personal ties were often the only measurement of loyalty, as the abstract idea of a nation often is hard to find if it existed at all, though, as we will see, there was some notion of loyalty to the realm which transcended personal ties. Likewise, nowadays we have a much more specific notion of what constitutes a lack of loyalty. A criminal who consistently flouts a law against breaking and entering may be considered many negative things, but we are unlikely to dub that criminal a traitor to his/her country.[9]

However, in a mediaeval context where the ruler was seen as divinely ordained and was also the lawgiver, one who broke any of his laws having given oaths of loyalty to the ruler was frequently described as disloyal, an oath-breaker, or as betraying his rightful lord. The extent of the disloyalty was considered of course, bringing us to another point. Thomas Welsford (whose 2012 book on loyalty in a Central Asian context will be discussed shortly) relates the story of a ruler of Bukhara and Samarqand, Pīr Muḥammad, and his amir (commander) Bāqī Muḥammad's extremely different notions as to what loyalty entailed in the 16th and 17th century.[10] The amir takes a very formal view, saying that he has remained loyal in that he has not pronounced himself the new ruler, issued coinage in his own name, or had the Friday prayers read out in his name. This interpretation permits

[9] M. Grodzins, *The Loyal and the Disloyal*: *Social Boundaries of Patriotism and Treason*, (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Company, 1956), pp. 31-3.
[10] Foreign terms and titles can be found in the Glossary, along with the languages in which they appear.

greater leeway in action for the amir, while the ruler labels certain actions that we would not necessarily deem disloyal as sedition, bringing in a wider conception of loyalty which justifies strong action against the amir.[11]

What amount of loyalty was expected by the ruler, and to what extent was conformity to these expectations possible or desirable on behalf of the ruled? Clearly this also depended on power. The landless peasant working a farm presumably had to contribute his time and produce to his landlord and not become a brigand or flee his land to meet his loyalty quota, while a powerful amir would have significantly more demands from the ruler in order to show his loyalty, though one should not forget that the amir served his ruler with the expectation of benefit. Suffice it to say that loyalty today is seen in quite different ways than a thousand years ago, and that different conditions affected both the perception and the practice of loyalty. Historians are sometimes tempted in a mediaeval context to see those who facilitated conquests of invaders and later served them as 'betraying' their country or homeland. These judgments are inherently linked to nationalism and the nation-state's conceptions of loyalty. For countries such as China, Iran and Russia, the Mongols have often been portrayed as foreign destroyers with no appreciation of local culture who represented an existential threat to the nascent nations. Those who worked for them on the ground are thus judged as collaborators. Perhaps some contemporaries would have seen it this way, but I believe we need to look closely into the specifics of loyalty in the Mongol Empire and one of its offshoots, the Ilkhanate (c. 1265-1335), before casting judgement on those actors who sought to bridge the gap between the conquerors and those they ruled.

1.2 Categories of Loyalty

To analyse the concept of loyalty in the Mongol Empire, the framework has been set by three important works focusing specifically on loyalty and dealing with geographical regions quite distant from each other and temporal settings across several centuries, but all with some relevance to or effect on the Turco-Mongol world of the 13th and 14th centuries. Roy Mottahedeh's seminal work *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (1980) established the framework for the discussion of loyalty, in the context of the weakening of ʿAbbasid caliphal rule (750 -1258) and the

[11] T. Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty in Early Modern Central Asia: The Tūqāy-Timurid Takeover of Greater Mā Warā al-Nahr, 1598-1605*, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 94-6.

coming to the fore of the Buyids (934-1062) and eventually the Seljuqs (1037-1194).[12] A more recent work by Thomas Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty in Early Modern Central Asia: The Tūqāy-Tīmurid Takeover of Greater Mā Warā al-Nahr* (2012) addresses the changeover in loyalty from one branch of the Chinggisid house to another in Central Asia in the 17th century. The last text considered here is that of Naomi Standen, titled *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossing in Liáo China* (2007).[13] This work focuses on the rivalries between dynasties in the north of modern-day China during the 10th and 11th centuries. While this is at quite a far remove from the region of Mottahedeh's focus especially, it is extremely useful conceptually, as it analyses the way in which authors of later Chinese dynasties, like the Southern Sòng, calcified what loyalty meant in an earlier period, though this was not the view of those on the ground in the 10th century, whose loyalties changed quite regularly. As this same process happened in the course of the breakup of the Mongol Empire, Standen's book can provide us with a comparative framework to address these changes. These three works will be considered in turn.

Roy Mottahedeh considers loyalty from the point of view of individual actors in the ʿAbbasid and Buyid realms in the areas of modern day Iraq and Iran. With the weakening of the Abbasid Caliphate as a political force with the ability to coerce, several dynasties emerged in the Middle East. These dynasties were not able to maintain the religio-political legitimacy of the ʿAbbasid caliph, who could claim to represent and rule all of the Islamic world. As political fragmentation occurred, the dynasties which emerged could not command people's loyalties in the same way. The presence of several different dynasties competing for power also meant that individual actors had greater agency and ability to choose their loyalties. The point of view of the individual therefore has pride of place in Mottahedeh's work. Even in the discussion of kingship, he emphasises that despite the lack of a strong central power in Baghdad, it was individual people who 'yearned to be ruled' that saw to it that the non-Islamic institution of kingship emerged and was maintained.[14] There are certainly issues with this individualistic analysis of loyalty, but the author's arguments need discussing, and his different categories of individual loyalty are certainly relevant both for the society he studies and the same area three centuries later under Mongol rule.

Mottahedeh divides loyalties into two types; acquired loyalties and loyalties of category. Thomas Welsford simplifies these categories neatly: they are 'described in terms of what one does

[12] R. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980).
[13] N. Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossing in Liáo China*, (Honolulu, HA: University of Hawaii Press, 2007).
[14] Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, p. 176.

[…] and who one is.'[15] Mottahedeh's framework then can be utilised for loyalties in general rather than simply for the Buyid realm. He then dives into describing acquired loyalties, that is, what a man decides to commit himself to.[16] According to the author, these loyalties were 'positive' and 'predictable'; positive in the sense that people cooperated even when not threatened, and predictable in that people knew what the implications were due to the formal nature of these loyalties.[17] Mottahedeh elaborates on some of the more formal expressions of loyalty, such as the *bayʿa*, the original oath of allegiance to the prophet Muḥammad, then given to the caliphs, which subsequently came to be used for amirs, sultans and others. He argues at some length that while oaths, both to the caliphs and to other rulers, as well as more generally, were not always totally effective in ensuring someone's loyalty, they were seen to be important, as shown by their repeated usage both in the ʿAbbasid and Buyid worlds and beyond. He gives the example of the general Tuzun who in 944 made repeated oaths of good conduct to the caliph al-Muttaqi (r. 940-944) and made obeisance to the caliph, before arresting him and blinding him. Mottahedeh emphasises that contemporary accounts of Islamic historians express great shock and horror at this wilful perjury and disloyalty and claim that Tuzun regretted this until his death, caused by God in revenge for Tuzun's betrayal.[18] Oaths were made between people at many levels, tying society together. It is this web of acquired loyalties which Mottahedeh claims held much of Islamic society in the post-caliphate world together.

While in regards to acquired loyalties, people were, in a sense, choosing their loyalties, with Mottahedeh's loyalties of category, one's lineage, association and participation in a particular group were the determining factors of one's loyalty. In the mediaeval Islamic world, just as in Europe and elsewhere, one's lineage (*nasab*) largely determined how others saw you and how you saw yourself. This and your actions (*ḥasab*) showed your worth. Therefore it was assumed that, for example, a man from a family of administrators would naturally have abilities that made him a good administrator, though his actions might prove otherwise. Therefore, Mottahedeh notes, certain roles and professional classes tended to become the preserve of certain families.[19] In this sense, actors often saw their loyalties as to the group to which they belonged, though these would not be 'classes' in the way we see would understand the word nowadays. Sometimes it was one's occupation, one's ethnicity, one's religious school or one's neighbourhood which received loyalty, though the positive

[15] Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty,* p. 20.
[16] Women's loyalties are rarely if at all considered in these works, and are often hard to determine. A significant amount of work has been done with regards to women's loyalties in the Mongol world by Anne Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
[17] Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, p. 40.
[18] Idem, pp. 46-8.
[19] Idem, pp. 98-101.

nature of these loyalties is not often apparent. Rather members of one category often looked out for each other in times of stress. Mottahedeh provides examples of when the professional class (*ṣinf*) of the clerks was threatened they intervened on each other's behalf, or when Turkish slave-soldiers (*ghulām*) of different armies refused to carry out their rulers' orders against their compatriots to protect members of their own *ṣinf*.[20] He goes on to argue that the different loyalties which acted against each other could negatively affect society if one became too prominent. In his words, 'if loyalty to one category overwhelmed other feelings of obligation, then the interest which created that loyalty would feed itself at the expense of the rest of society, which would be oppressed.'[21] It is for this very reason that local amirs and kings (*malik*, pl. *mulūk*) were necessary as arbiters of these different loyalties in his view, not allowing any to gain too firm a foothold.

While Mottahedeh's categories and framework of loyalty has a broad acceptability for many societies, there are some issues with the conclusions he draws from his arguments. Certainly he gives a great amount of agency to those he discusses while barely mentioning the large amount of the population who would have had little in the way of decision-making ability with regards to their loyalties. While it was undoubtedly applicable to certain groups of people and classes, the landless peasants and others are not incorporated into his network of loyalties, or at least he fails to explain how they were. Society is greater than those who are able to make political decisions about their own lives, and while not much is written about these people, failing to discuss them in any way significantly weakens any broad analysis of 'society' in any context.

Mottahedeh is also overly focused on towns and cities. His urban standpoint neglects people of the country, bar large landowners, to the detriment of his argumentation. Unfortunately the author only really mentions those classes that can represent themselves throughout his work, leading to a lopsided view of society. Take for example his analysis of why kingship was necessary. He quotes the historian Ibn al-Āthīr (d. 1233), using the example of Damascus, which had driven out its Fatimid governor.[22] The *aḥdāth* (landless young men) had taken over the city, and could not be controlled by the *ashrāf* (nobles) or *aʿyān* (city leaders). The disenfranchised parties turn to the Turkish commander of the Buyids, Alftakin (Alp Tegin), asking him to come rule the city. Ibn al-Āthīr

[20] Idem, pp. 110, 112. This is echoed in an episode recounted by Rashīd al-Dīn, whereby Shams al-Dīn Juvainī, the vizier of the previous Ilkhanid ruler Aḥmad Tegüder (r. 1282-1284), begs Buqa, the vizier of the current Ilkhan Arghun (r. 1284-1291), not to teach Arghun to kill viziers, or he may find himself next, which naturally ended up happening. If this episode did occur, it is interesting to note that Juvainī, a Tajik, appeals to Buqa, a Mongol, on the basis of their *sinf*. It may also have been Rashīd al-Dīn's attempt to forestall any such actions being taken against him, the vizier, by his Ilkhanid employers, see Rashiduddin Fazlullah, *Jamiʿu't-Tawarikh, Compendium of Chronicles: A History of the Mongols,* (trans.) W.M. Thackston (Cambridge, MA: The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1999), Vol. III, p. 564.

[21] Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, p. 175.

[22] For more on Ibn al-Āthīr, see p. 15 of this thesis.

states that Alp Tegin drove out 'the destructive elements', and that 'all the people were in awe of his authority […] and gladly obeyed him'.[23] Mottahedeh believes that society in general could not function without this ruling figurehead, but surely this is too blithely accepting the voice of his source. All the people clearly did not gladly obey Alp Tegin, as he was forced to drive out those who were perfectly happy controlling the city. It seems to me rather that the *aḥdāth* had upset the apple cart by taking control away from those that normally held it. While this was shocking to those disenfranchised groups and Ibn al-Āthīr, the *aḥdāth* were part of society, and clearly wanted to exert their own position. We do not know what the causes of their discontent were, but to say as Mottahedeh does that this was a society which could not function without some ruler to quell this rabble and restore the order of things ignores the desires and needs of a significant part of the population. The ruling classes were of course delighted that Alp Tegin came in and restored their positions.

Beyond difficulties with Mottahedeh's conclusions, there are issues with his conception of loyalty as well. He relies a great deal on the formal oath, the *bayʿa*, as an expression of loyalty to the ruler. When these existed of course, they showed a formal commitment. However, even his own examples seem to fail the test of how powerful oaths were. The episode previously mentioned of Tuzun giving oaths to the caliph al-Muttaqī was one of his examples of how infuriated historians were by oath-breakers. It may be true that oath-breakers were castigated, but even in this instance, al-Muttaqī has Tuzun give him repeated oaths of assurance. There are instances of this in Mongol history as well.[24] The unsure ruler or commander tries to bind his followers to him, but the fact that they have these oaths performed repeatedly shows that it was more in hope than in confidence that these men would not prove to be unscrupulous and go against their written or sworn oath. However, history is full of unscrupulous people, and as was the case for Tuzun, continued to be the case for many of those who made oaths in the Mongol world. The shock of the historian is perhaps the shock of a religious man seeing someone break a covenant sworn to God and leader.

Further issues arise when we consider that many loyalties were not formally acknowledged. If an oath or contract exists, we can analyse what was expected of both parties, however, when we do not have a copy, or nothing was written, it is difficult to know what exactly was expected of the two parties. As Mottahedeh tends to view loyalty from the point of view of the one being loyal to something or someone, we also fail to have a clear picture of what rulers expected from their 'loyal' subjects. He mentions cases of clear treachery, for example a rebellious amir going over to another

[23] Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, p. 176. Translations by other scholars in this thesis are indicated by a reference to their work, as here, otherwise translations are my own.
[24] See p. 132 of this thesis.

dynasty, but often disloyalty was more nuanced. Inactivity as much as rebellious activity could be considered disloyalty. Therefore, while his study is of vital importance in setting the scene for a discussion of loyalty and its categories, a broader set of these categories and a greater understanding of the importance of the lineage of Chinggis Khan, crucial for the Mongol Empire, is necessary. We can then turn to our second author's work. It is Welsford's study which will form the basis of this dissertation, while Mottahedeh's categories will only be discussed in passing.

Thomas Welsford's book deals with a later time period and the Chinggisid rulers of Central Asia, the Uzbeks. The Uzbek royal family were descended from Chinggis' grandson Shiban, the son of Chinggis' firstborn son Jochi (d. 1227), while their subjects were largely Turkicised and Islamicised nomads, as well as the sedentary Turk and Tajik population. In the late 16th to early 17th century, power shifted from the descendants of Shiban, called the Shibanids or Shaybānids (r. 1505-1599) to the descendants of another son of Jochi, Toqa-Temür, called the Tūqāy-Tīmurīds (r. 1599-1711), (Figure 1).[25] While these events are several centuries after the 12th-14th centuries which I will focus on, Welsford's analysis of loyalty itself is extremely useful, and considers what loyalty meant in a Chinggisid context. Throughout much of Eurasia, the idea of Chinggisid legitimacy still held great power, and many Chinggisids still held control in different regions. Welsford also considers loyalty from the point of view of the ruled, or at least decision-makers in society who had the ability to make choices about who the khan should be. Our sources largely prevent us from knowing what the general population thought about their rulers, though there are instances which give us a glimpse into popular feelings on this matter. Welsford is largely concerned with the point of view of those who gave their support to one candidate for the throne or another, rather than the khan's own views on the matter.

[25] Regarding the spelling of these names, while the original Mongol names of Jochi's sons were Shiban and Toqa Temür, the historians of the Uzbek khanates changed Shiban to the Arabic *nisba* (a name based on where someone is from) Shaybān and the descendants of Toqa-Temür were given the more Persianised form Tūqāy-Tīmūr. See S. Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 149.

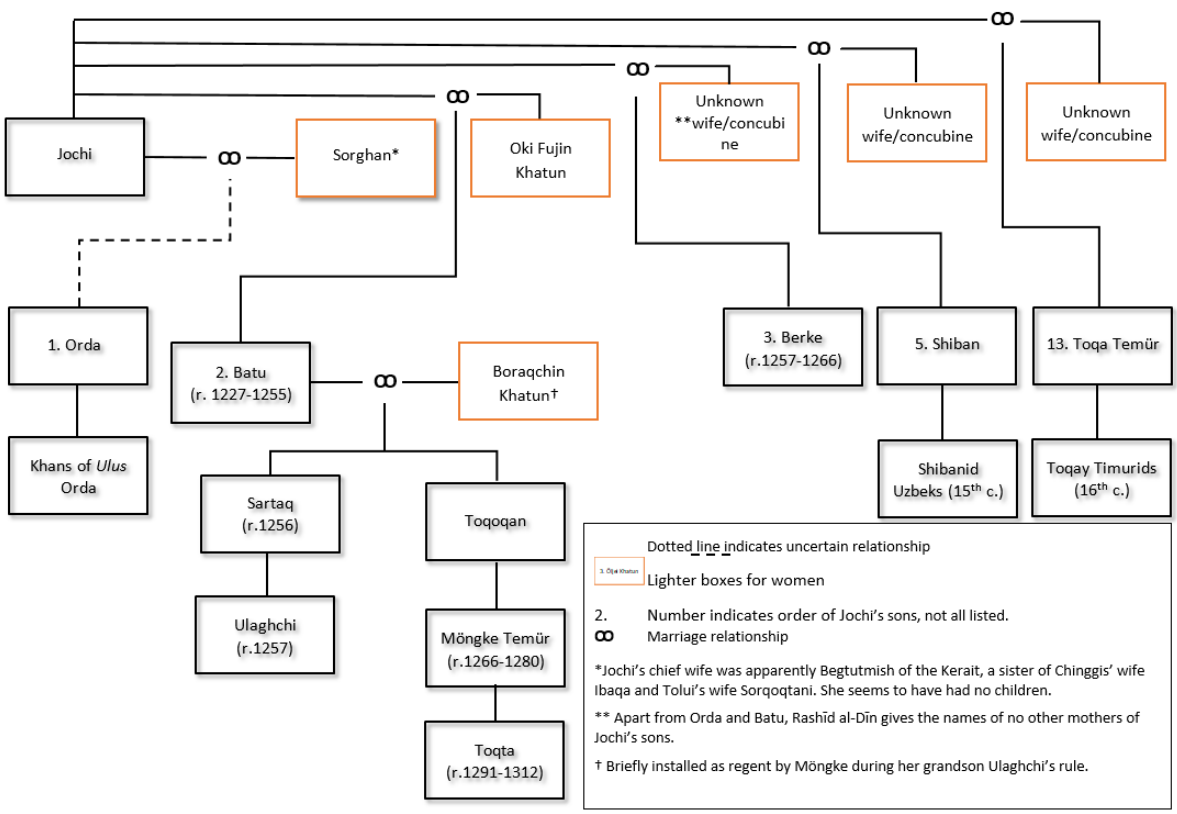

Figure 1: The Jochid House © Tobias Jones

Welsford's definition of loyalty is a simple one: '*an individual's self-subjugation to something which is not him, whether this be to an individual, a group or any other entity*.'[26] He then goes on to categorise loyalty into four types which can be independent of each other, but more often are competing or jostling factors in the decision-making process of his actors. Indeed it is Welsford's aim to understand a complex society, in which people had different reasons to support their rulers, as well as different feelings towards them, which cannot be expressed in simple terms like 'legitimacy'. For one person a dynasty may be entirely legitimate, while for another not so. While it is important to realise that agency is extremely limited in a pre-modern Central Asian context, in more chaotic times in history there was greater scope for individual choices when it comes to loyalty, as we shall see when we look at Standen's work as well. Welsford indeed argues that history is too often consigned to the actions of great men, and that agency is removed from the general populace. In discussing loyalty he seeks to address the chosen courses of action of people beyond the ruling house.[27] The four loyalties that he describes are charismatic, clientelist, inertial, and communal loyalty. Some of these types are more straightforward than others, but they adequately capture the

[26] Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty*, p. 17, original italics.
[27] Idem, pp. 12-13.

sort of push and pull factors that affect decision making in this period. Arguably, these four categories can be used not just for Chinggisid political entities, but for many states throughout history.

The first type of loyalty is that of charisma in the Weberian mould.[28] Welsford describes this as one motivated by principle, in which actors thought it right and necessary that they be ruled by the right type of rulers; in Welsford's chosen case, a dynasty with descent from Chinggis Khan, and more specifically, the Shibanids. This type of loyalty is one in which the actor recognises the worthiness of a ruler or dynasty to rule, based on factors sometimes alien to us in the present day. While we may acknowledge the suitability of a certain person to rulership, we tend to base this on the person's character and actions. These were naturally important to people in the 16th century as well, but in addition to, or perhaps because of, the ruler's divine glory and fortune.

This concept has a longstanding tradition in the Persian, Turkic and Mongol worlds. In Persia under the Sasanians (224-651) it was known in Middle Persian as *khvarrah* (New Persian: *khvarnah* or *farr*), made known by one's lineage and military successes.[29] The Kök Türk Qaghanate (552-603 and 682-744) developed many of the religio-political ideas (likely influenced by Chinese political thought) which later appeared in the Mongol Empire and its successors. The ruling clan possessed a heavenly mandate through the support of the sky god (Tengri) and the mother god (Umay). This heaven-provided support was known as *qut*, which also showed itself in a ruler's success. This resided in the blood of the royal clan alone.[30] A dynasty such as that of Chinggis Khan by the time of the Shibanids, was known to possess a great deal of *qut*, or *suu* in Mongolian, though individual rulers could possess more or less of it. If two Chinggisids were competing for the throne, their respective lineages were also taken into account as to which possessed the greater *qut*. However, as in the case of the

[28] Charisma in a Central Asian Timurid context has been extensively looked at in Maria Subtelny's work, *Timurids in Transition*; Najam Haider has shown how this charismatic loyalty could be converted into both a political and religious bond (*walāya*) for ʿAlī and his successors, N. Haider, *Shīʿī Islam, An Introduction*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 32-4. Indeed, the North African traveller of the 14th century, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, believed that this was why the Ilkhan Öljeitü converted to Shīʿīsm in the early 14th century. A Shīʿī theologian, Jamal al-Din al-Hasan, explained that in the Shīʿī system, descent from the charismatic household was key, which matched the Chinggisid ideas of fortune, *The Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, A.D. 1325-1354* (trans.) H.A.R. Gibb, Vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 302.

[29] A. Soudavar, *The Aura of Kings: Legitimacy and Divine Sanction in Iranian Kingship* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2003) p. 79; T.T. Allsen, 'A Note on Mongol Imperial Ideology', in (eds.) V. Rybatzki, A. Pozzi, P.W. Geier and J.R. Krueger, *The Early Mongols: Language, Culture and History, Studies in Honor of Igor de Rachewiltz*, (Bloomington, IN: Denis Sinor Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 2009) pp. 1-8. According to the Ilkhanid historian and geographer Ḥamdallāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī's *Ẓafarnāma*, *farr* could even be seen in one's countenance, Mustawfī, *Ẓafarnāmah*, f. 585A; tr. Ward, vol. II, p. 13, quoted in G. Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance*, (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 16.

[30] P.B. Golden, 'Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity amongst the Pre-Chinggisid Nomads of Western Eurasia', *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, Vol. 2, (1982), pp. 44-6. The sanctity of royal blood is here shown, something the Mongols were keenly aware of.

Shibanids, *qut* could be seen to have deserted a family line. A significant issue with analysing this concept is that often whether or not one possessed enough *qut* was only made clear by events, if they were not successful and ended up losing control, it was shown that they did not. Young Chinggisid princes were given opportunities by their fathers to show themselves as successful in warfare and administration, and it was success in these ventures that showed their adherents that they possessed this *qut*.

Welsford's example of a loss of *qut* is upon the death of the Shibanid Khan ʿAbdallāh in 1598. His son, ʿAbd al-Mūʾmin, seized the throne, but went on to alienate many of his constituents by his executions and mistreatment of many who had been loyal to ʿAbdallāh. After just a year in charge, he was ambushed and assassinated, in all likelihood by amirs angry about their treatment. Three other rulers were put forward, but variously their age, character and inability to rule proved that *qut* had largely abandoned the Shibanid line.[31] With the presence of another Chinggisid lineage, the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids, made up of men such as Dīn Muḥammad and his grandfather Yār Muḥammad, who had served ably as military leaders and governors under ʿAbdallāh and ʿAbd al-Mūʾmin, the Shibanids began to appear far less attractive from a charismatic point of view. While this factor was not the sole reason for the Shibanids' loss of 'khanal' authority, the weakening of people's charismatic loyalty to them certainly contributed to their replacement despite the existence of several dynastically suitable candidates. However, the fact that their takeover was hotly contested indicates that for many people, Shibanid candidates were still preferable, having ruled in Central Asia for over a hundred years.[32]

Types two and three, namely, clientelist and inertial loyalties, are described as loyalties motivated by self-interest. Clientelist loyalty entailed supporting whoever was most likely able to further one's own goals. This idea illustrates the agency of certain actors. An amir need not blindly follow a dynasty or pretender already established if they thought doing so would not positively affect his livelihood. To some extent this was built into the Mongol dynastic system, which contained an element of tanistry.[33] While succession often passed to the eldest son of the previous ruler, there was scope for consideration of another outstanding candidate, whether a younger son, a brother, or even a nephew or cousin. It is rare in a Turco-Mongol context to see a child ruler, as a child would

[31] Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty*, pp. 43-7.

[32] Idem, p. 64.

[33] This term relating to Celtic practises of election of the king and his successor is commonly applied to the Mongols, though it does not easily fit. The Celtic system involved the election of both king and successor at the same time and it was commonly held that the eldest of the same blood as the king would be the tanist (heir). Neither of these elements was common in Mongol succession practises. 'Tanistry', *Britannica Academic, Encyclopædia Britannica,* 8 Feb. 2019. academic-eb-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2443/levels/collegiate/article/tanistry/71183, Accessed 13th June 2019.

find it difficult to engage this clientelist loyalty. Of course, to the eventual victor in a succession struggle, this type of loyalty would not be considered, and supporting the wrong side often had fatal consequences. Welsford does indicate that in a risk/reward analysis, throwing support behind a pretender early was far riskier, but led to greater rewards; while waiting to see who was most likely to succeed was the safer option, but would probably not be met with great enthusiasm by the successful claimant. Beyond a certain point, a failure to throw one's support behind the claimant in a timely enough manner would be seen as disloyalty.[34]

Inertial loyalty is in some way the opposite force, based on an unwillingness to risk change that could potentially upset the system and threaten an actor's way of life.[35] Welsford argues that even should an actor find another potential ruler who was more likely to further his needs in the long term, in the short term sudden change had 'transaction costs' such as factional warfare, economic disruption, and depopulation. The prospect of these short term damages could prevent an actor from aligning himself with a potentially fruitful new ruler.[36] Again, we see that there was an important risk-benefit analysis which influential amirs and shaykhs had to consider before making a decision regarding who to support. If one's inertial loyalty was weak, perhaps due to a lack of favour shown to him by the khan, this would strengthen his clientelist loyalty towards another option who would be more willing to reward his supporters. On a more general level, for the great majority of the population it is likely that the risk of change far outweighed its benefits, except in extreme circumstances. Rural populations would be subjected to the passage of troops, possibly several armies supporting different claimants to power. Urban populations would likely be worried that their city be involved in a siege and all the attendant calamities that could befall them.

The final type is that of communal loyalty, a loyalty based on affection towards other individuals and groups, which could decide why a region or city would tend to support one group or pretender over another, perhaps comparable to group identity.[37] Welsford's examples show that Timurid pretenders in the region of Badakhshan continued to cause problems for the Tūqāy-Tīmūrids

[34] Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty*, pp. 94-7.

[35] The political scientist Morton Grodzins describes this as 'residual loyalty', saying 'These persons are loyal because they are not disloyal. And they are not disloyal because the entire weight of society repels them from open acts of national disloyalty', Grodzins, *The Loyal and the Disloyal*, p. 30.

[36] Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty*, p. 151.

[37] Idem, pp.22-23.It is perhaps possible to equate this idea with the great 14th century North African scholar Ibn Khaldūn's concept of *ʿaṣabiyya*, which Josephine van den Bent has described as 'group solidarity', and is at the heart of Ibn Khaldun's theory of the rise and fall of nomadic empires, J. van den Bent, '"None of the Kings on Earth is Their Equal in *ʿaṣabiyya":* The Mongols in Ibn Khaldūn's Works', *Al-Masāq*, *Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (2016), p. 176. Morton Grodzins describes communal loyalties in this way, 'One is loyal to the groups that provide gratifications because what serves the group serves the self; what threatens the group threatens the self', Grodzins, *The Loyal and the Disloyal*, p. 7.

in the 17th century, as the area had long-held affection and loyalty to Timurid rulers. It is somewhat a question of familiarity. A city like Bukhara or a region like Badakhshan were more likely to attach themselves to figures who were active in that area, or whose lineage held a particularly strong place in the imagination of those who made up the Bukharan or Badakhshani communities. Indeed, Welsford argues that it is clear in a Central Asian context, as well as in many other parts of the pre-modern world, urban and regional identities have greater longevity than the more abstract 'imperial' identity.[38] For example, the support of a locally respected *shaykh* for one ruler over another could also be decisive in that community's loyalty. If a ruler was successfully able to attract both the charismatic and clientelist loyalties of these local figures, their path to control in that city or region could be considerably smoothed.

Perhaps linked to communal loyalty is another loyalty which should be discussed, if not added to our list, is ethnic or cultural loyalty. While there are problems with both of these terms, it should be noted that at least one major source on the Mongol period regularly mentions the importance of this idea, that is the chronicle of Ibn al-Āthīr.[39] Ibn al-Āthīr, a scholar from modern Cizre in Turkey who spent much of his time in Mosul and Syria, wrote a universal history around 1231 and was regularly made use of by later chronicles in Persian and Arabic.[40] He was one of the most dramatic authors when discussing the calamitous Mongol invasions of the Islamic world in the early 13th century, but he regularly focused on shared cultural background as a reason for loyalty decisions. When the Mongols were besieging Samarqand in 1220 for example, Ibn al-Āthīr states that the Turkic soldiers of the Khwarazmshāhid dynasty (1077-1231) inside the city refused to fight the Mongols, saying 'We are of their race (*jins*). They will not kill us.' Thus they opened the gates and let the Mongols in, who killed them anyway.[41] This story is echoed in the history of the Mongol governor of Baghdad, 'Aṭā Malik Juvainī (d. 1283), who adds that the Turks and the Tajiks (Persian-speakers) were separated after the conquest of the citadel of Samarqand, and the Turks had their heads shaved in Mongol fashion to show them they would be a part of the Mongol army, yet they were still killed on the spot.[42] In another instance, Ibn al-Āthīr states that a *mamlūk* (military slave) from Tabriz, one Aqush, gathered Turcomans and Kurds and went over to the Mongols based on common

[38] Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty*, p. 210.
[39] Ibn al-Āthīr, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the Crusading Period from* al-Kāmil fi'l-ta'rīkh: *Part 3, The Years 589-629/1193-1231: The Ayyubids after Saladin and the Mongol Menace* (trans.) D.S. Richards, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).
[40] Idem, pp. 1-2.
[41] Idem, pp. 209-210.
[42] Juvainī, 'Ala-ad-Din 'Ata Malik, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, (trans.) J.A. Boyle, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), Vol. I, p. 121.

ethnicity to attack the Georgians.[43] In one of the most famous incidents, the chronicler reports that the Mongols encouraged the Turkic Qipchaqs to abandon the Iranic Alans, as the Mongols and Qipchaqs as 'Turks' had a shared ethnicity (*jins*). The Qipchaqs duly obliged, the Alans were destroyed, and the Mongols turned on the Qipchaqs immediately.[44]

What are we to make of Ibn al-Āthīr's assessment of so-called 'ethnic' loyalties? It is certainly the case that people in the Islamic world generally saw all residents of the northern climes of the world as of the same origin, and dubbed them all 'Turks'.[45] At least one Mamluk historian, Abū Shāma, related that when the Mongols lost the battle of ʿAyn Jalūt in 1260 to the Mamluks, largely Turkic-speaking military slaves from the Qipchaq steppes, that they were defeated by 'sons of their own ethnic group of the Turks' (*abnāʾ jinsihim min al-turk*).[46] Even those with direct access to Mongol records, such as the early 14th century Persian historian Rashīd al-Dīn (who will be discussed in the Sources section), claimed, 'Although all the tribes and branches of the Turks and Mongols resemble each other, and although they all originally had one name, the Mongols were one type of Turk, and there are great differences among them.' [47] This may indicate that the Mongols themselves believed that they were related to the Turks. With these widely-held notions, it is no surprise that Ibn al-Āthīr and the Mamluk historians following him saw ethnic and cultural similarities between the Mongols and Turkic groups in Eurasia. However, it is certainly questionable what affinity a Muslim Kurd who had long lived in Islamic lands, as mentioned by Ibn al-Āthīr in one of the examples above, would have shared with a non-Muslim Mongol, given centuries of living in very different parts of the world under quite different situations. Yehoshua Frankel shows that even after the Turks had long been

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[43] Ibn al-Āthīr, *Chronicle*, p. 214. Boris James has shown that in the dispute between the Ilkhanid Mongols and the Mamluks, the Kurds regularly switched sides, showing that this 'cultural affinity' was likely simply opportunism, B. James, 'Mamluk and Mongol Peripheral Politics: Asserting Sovereignty in the Middle East's 'Kurdish Zone' (1260–1330)' in (eds.) C. Melville and B. de Nicola, *The Mongols' Middle East: continuity and transformation in Ilkhanid Iran*, (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 277-305.

[44] Ibn al-Āthīr, *Chronicle*, p. 222. J. van den Bent, 'Mongols in Mamluk Eyes: Representing Ethnic Others in the Medieval Middle East', PhD Dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 2020, p. 20 shows that this story was repeated in the accounts of Mamluk historians such as al-Nuwayri, Ibn Wāṣil and Ibn al-Dawādārī, while it also appears in Rashīd al-Dīn's Persian chronicle on the Mongols.

[45] Y. Frankel, 'The Turks of the Eurasian Steppes in Medieval Arabic Writing', in (eds.) R. Amitai and M. Biran *Mongols, Turks and Others: Nomads and the Sedentary World*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 201-241; Van den Bent, 'Mongols in Mamluk Eyes', Chapter 1.

[46] Van den Bent, 'Mongols in Mamluk Eyes', p. 18. This dissertation deftly delves into the thorny issues of 'ethnicity' in the complex world of Mongol-Mamluk relations, where it shows that Ibn al-Āthīr was one of the main sources for Mamluk ideas about the Mongols, and thus that this point about *jinsiyya* (ethnic solidarity), was regularly mentioned by Mamluk historians. However, as she later goes on to show, Mamluk sultans regularly intermarried with the *wāfidiyya*, the refugees from Mongol lands, who entered Mamluk service, and that one of the greatest early Mamluk sultans, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, was thus half Mongol, and the sultan Kitbugha was a Mongol himself, 'Mongols in Mamluk Eyes', p. 211-2. Thus even while these historians emphasised ethnic issues, the distinction between 'Turk' and 'Mongol' was hardly so clear on the ground.

[47] Rashiduddin Fazlullah, *Jamiʿu't-Tawarikh, Compendium of Chronicles: A History of the Mongols,* (trans.) W.M. Thackston (Cambridge, MA: The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1999), Vol. I, p. 18.

Islamised and become part of the Middle Eastern world, stereotypes about their barbarity and violence remained amongst Muslim authors.[48]

Despite these differences, it may well have been the case that nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples may have fit the Mongol military system better, given their greater familiarity with Mongol fighting styles.[49] However, in the above examples, the Mongols regularly did not make use of these opportunities. Even if there may have existed some idea of cultural solidarity between nomadic peoples, or a vaguely held idea of a common ethnic background in the early stages of the Mongol conquests which made some decide to go over to the Mongols, their subsequent treatment surely did not make this a common trend. In most instances, nomadic and semi-nomadic Turkic groups such as the Qipchaqs, Volga Bulghars, and Bashghird refused to submit, and preferred to flee to the sedentary lands of the Rus' or Hungary to escape Mongol domination.[50] There does seem to have existed some cultural affinity between the Khitans who served the Jīn dynasty (1115-1234) and who spoke a Mongolic language, and the Mongols, as many of these Khitans went into Mongol service early. However, this may also have had to do with their dislike of the Jīn, who had destroyed the Khitan Liáo dynasty (916-1125) and attempted to force sedentarisation on the Khitans.[51] Therefore, it seems that we can perhaps consider cultural affiliation, or the unity of an ethnic group, part of the broader idea of communal loyalty, rather than as a separate category for loyalty decisions.[52]

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[48] Frankel, 'Turks in Medieval Arabic Writing', pp. 221, 230.

[49] J.M. Smith, Jr., 'Mongol Manpower and Persian Population', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Oct. 1975), pp. 284-6.

[50] Cultural affinity certainly did affect the way the Mongols viewed loyalty. They demanded the submission of all of 'the people of the felt-walled tents', thus, nomads of the Mongolian steppe, SHM/de Rachewiltz §202, p. 133 and 'Philological Commentary', p. 760. However, this did nothing to prevent the Mongols from destroying those people if they did not submit without a fight.

[51] P.D. Buell, 'Yeh-lü A-hai, Yeh-lü T'u-hua', 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. 112-114. Bettine Birge has also highlighted that much like the Mongols, many who were followers or subjects of the Khitans took on the name as well, which blurs the lines as to ethnicity and identity, B. Birge, *Marriage and the Law in the Age of Khubilai Khan*: *Cases from the* Yuan dianzhang, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), p. 18. This 'common kinship' can of course be overstated, as when Qubilai organised his four classes in Yuán society, the Khitans were neither part of the top class with the Mongols, nor even the second class of *sèmùrén*, but were included in the third class of northern Chinese (*hànrén*), just like their Jīn 'oppressors', C.P. Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire,* (New York: Facts on File, 2004), p. 319.

[52] Reuven Amitai provides a fascinating analysis of communal vs. 'ethnic' loyalties in his work R. Amitai, 'The Mongol Occupation of Damascus in 1300: A Study of Mamluk Loyalties', in (eds.) A Levanoni and M. Winter, *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 21-41. In it he shows how a Mamluk officer Sayf al-Dīn Qipchaq, who was ethnically Mongol, was captured by the Mamluks and given high position. However, after a dispute with the Mamluk Sultan al-Manṣūr Lāchīn (r. 1296-1299), Qipchaq was welcomed by the Ilkhan Ghazan (r. 1295-1304), given the region of Hamadan as his *ʿiqtā*, and Ghazan's sister-in-law in marriage. Not only this, but he found his father and brother still serving the Mongols. Eventually, Ghazan made him governor of Damascus once he retook it in 1300, but Qipchaq returned to the Mamluk fold, where he also had family, but also the idea of brotherhood (*khūshdāshiyya*) with the Mamluks he was raised

The four types established by Welsford allow us to understand that one's loyalty was not as fixed as rulers would perhaps desire. They also serve to show that competing motivations were at play; for example, someone might have self-interest at heart when deciding who to support, while another may do so for a more idealistic reason. Welsford has shown that this approach is suited to the complexities of Central Asian society in this period, but his categories also have a broader application that will help us to understand why certain characters in the Mongol imperial context acted in the way they did. The same push and pull factors can certainly be seen in the Chinggisid Mongol Empire of the 13th century as well as its successor khanates. One should not forget though, that from a ruler's point of view, these nuanced factors were unlikely to have held much importance. Welsford himself notes that there was an ideological gap between the ruler and his subjects. It is this gap that has been the focus of another work on loyalty, that of Naomi Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty: Frontier Crossing in Liao China.*

Standen's work, while less conceptual in nature, addresses an extremely important issue within this topic, namely that of shifting ideas as to what loyalty entailed. She deals with the somewhat chaotic period of the 10th century, focusing on the exchanges of officials that served the competing dynasties in what is now northern China. This book stands out not simply as an excellent historical account of a little-studied period, but also as an important contribution to the investigation of how national identities are formed.[53] She argues that within a nationalist framework, loyalty is inextricably linked to ethnicity, stating that 'the nationalist trope assumes and requires ethnic identity to be of determining importance in all historical periods.'[54] Thus, Han Chinese should have banded together against the foreign Khitan Liáo dynasty based on their shared ethnicity, showing their loyalty to 'China' rather than the barbarian outsiders.[55] However, this conception of loyalty in fact emerges from histories written in later periods, by dynasties with a more bipolar view of the

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with. These communal and ideal bonds outweighed any ethnic connection to the Mongols. See also, A. Mazor, 'Sayf al-Din Qipchaq al-Manṣūrī: Defection and Ethnicity between Mongols and Mamluks', in (eds.) M. Biran, J. Brack and F. Fiaschetti, *Along the Silk Roads in Mongol Eurasia: Generals, Merchants and Intellectuals*, (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2020), pp. 102-119.

[53] For further information on this in regards to China, Prasenjit Duara's book, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995) examines closely the interplay between history-making and the nation.

[54] Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*, p. 26.

[55] This is comparable to the situation in the Islamic world, where there was an assumption that 'Muslims' as an entity would present a unified front against the pagan Mongols. However, as Devin DeWeese has shown, narratives emerged among Sufi groups of the Mongols as liberators from the oppressive 'normative' Muslim hierarchy, even with legends emerging of the Mongols led by saints, D. DeWeese, ''Stuck in the Throat of Chingiz Khan:' Envisioning the Mongol Conquests in Some Sufi Accounts from the 14th to 17th Centuries', 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. 23-61. Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, p. 195 notes that the Alids of the city of Hilla saw the Mongols' coming as prophesied by ʿAlī himself to destroy the evil city of Baghdad.

world, namely the Chinese Sòng dynasty and its rival to the north, still the Khitan Liáo after the crystallisation of borders in the Chányuān Treaty of 1005 CE. The hardening of borders is shown in mapmaking of the Sòng period, where the Great Wall is shown to separate the nomads from 'China Proper', or rather what Sòng cartographers wanted China to be.[56] Nonetheless, Standen's research indicates that in previous periods, Han officials willingly left the service of Han dynasties in the south to the Liáo court, and many times returned and were once again taken into the service of the dynasty they had left. The frequency of transfers of allegiance and the apparent success these officials had on the whole indicates that views on what loyalty entailed are not uniform across historical periods. Later Sòng historians condemned these movements as disloyal and dishonourable, lacking in their idea of *zhōng*, 忠, a Confucian concept of undying loyalty to a single dynasty. Even this definition only developed over time, while it is important to note that many of the early Sòng officials themselves had switched dynasties, and it was only later in the Sòng period that more fervent condemnation of these 'traitors' emerged.[57]

Standen sees loyalty in Confucian thought in this period as two competing types, relational and idealistic. Relational loyalty was understood as an official's relationship to a ruler, while their idealistic loyalty was the official's obligations to higher considerations, such as moral imperatives and the *dào*, 道, the right order of things in Daoist and Confucian thought.[58] During the Warring States period (722-453 BCE) Confucius argued that ministers should stop serving their ruler if the *dào* was not being followed. This led to rulers not wanting to employ Confucian ministers, as they could not be guaranteed of these ministers' relational loyalty. In times of empire, where there was a lack of other rulers to turn to, relational loyalty became strengthened, as a minister's only option was to resign from office should he disagree with the ruler's actions. When there were multiple possible targets of loyalty, such as in the 10th century, the minister's hand was strengthened, in that he could give his allegiance to another ruler. This was a more significant threat to rulers, causing a shift in the balance of power towards the ministers. This give and take was affected by the work of Xúnzǐ (316-237 BCE) who in his *Chén dào,* 'On the Way of Ministers', argued that the interests of the state and those of the ruler were one and the same, and logically, that the ruler was the state. The development of this idea did not definitively sway the loyalty issue in the rulers' favour, but it could be used to highlight ministers' disloyalty in times of more central rule. [59]

[56] Idem, p. 22.
[57] Idem, pp. 18, 32-3, 58.
[58] Idem, p. 43.
[59] Idem, pp. 45-8.

What we see through the illumination of Standen's work is not only how loyalty is viewed in retrospect, but also the dynamic of power shifting between a ruler and his ministers. This would certainly apply in how Confucian-trained officials saw their obligations to Mongol rulers as well. What may be trickier is that Standen clearly delineates ruler and minister here, so her assessment of loyalty is limited to a ruler/ruled division. She does not address how members of the ruling family acted in this period. In a Mongol context this becomes extremely important early on, as there are divisions in houses, with one holding power to the exclusion of the others. How can loyalty be seen when there are multiple possible rulers, all with their own lands, households and supporters? It becomes more complex than simply analysing the actions of one minister who decided to give his support to another dynasty. The idea of the sanctity of the *dào* and loyalty to it as a concept is one that echoes in the Mongol world as well. There are enough instances where the *jasaq* (Mongol law) is invoked to justify someone's actions that it appears there was some idea that the *jasaq* had a similarly pervasive role in Mongol society. This idea and its effects on relational loyalty as defined by Standen will be analysed in the following chapter.

1.3 Aims and Methods

Therefore, in combining Standen's analysis with that of Welsford, I believe that we have a suitable framework for categorising loyalty in the Mongol period, or at least the reasons that actors with a degree of agency had for giving their loyalty to a certain person, group of people, or role. If we consider the four types as given by Welsford, namely charismatic, clientelist, inertial, and communal, and add Standen's concept of idealistic loyalty which affects individuals' personal loyalty decisions, then we can better understand the motivations of these individuals overall. Thus, perhaps we can edit Welsford's definition of loyalty to suit this thesis: 'an individual's self-subjugation to something which is not him *or her*, whether this be to an individual, a group, *an institution or an ideal'*.[60] This idealistic loyalty is one that should not be downplayed. Standen uses the idea of *dào*, but for every society, there is one or indeed several ideal standards which some people choose to hold themselves to. In modern pluralistic societies these could be many, but in the Mongol world religious belief and adherence to Chinggisid *yasa* or Mongol customary law (*törü*) seem to have been the stand-out candidates for idealistic loyalty which affected one's choices as to who to follow and support.[61]

[60] Welsford, *Four Types of Loyalty*, p. 17, with my own additions in italics.
[61] L. Munkh-Erdene, 'The Rise of the Chinggisid Dynasty: Pre-Modern Eurasian Political Order and Culture at a Glance', *International Journal of Asian Studies*, Vo. 15, No. 1, (2018), p. 70 even indicates that in medieval

This idealistic loyalty interacts with the other types as well. Many may have supported a candidate for the khanate due to his charisma, a part of which many would have seen as his adherence to a certain code; in the Mongol case, knowledge of the *jasaq* was considered a key ingredient rendering someone a legitimate potential ruler. Idealistic loyalty could strongly contribute to inertial loyalty as well, as within many religions, such as Christianity and Islam, there are politically quietist trends. Take the Book of Romans: 'For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.'[62] Also the Qur'an: 'O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.'[63] Verses such as these led to significant theological and legal debates about the extent to which earthly authority should be supported, tolerated, or challenged.[64]

Idealistic loyalty may also act in complete opposition to the loyalties of self-interest, where people choose to stick to their principles even when their lives and livelihoods are threatened. We can see countless modern examples, so why should we not consider this type of loyalty in the Mongol period as well? We should not underestimate the power of idealistic loyalties. In every society there are those for whom these ideals significantly affect the way they make decisions. These are often indicated in the sources as the reasons for actions, though modern historians tend to want to explain away these idealistic reasons by analysing the more self-interested rationale behind one's actions. Both need to be considered in my view, and this idealistic loyalty and its effects on the way that actors in the Mongol world are justified will be analysed throughout this study. Of course, the opposite effect can take place as well. Ideal loyalties can be changed, through conversion for example, in order to gain access to greater economic, social, cultural and political advantages.[65] We shall see however, how multiple types of ideal loyalty were expressed by certain Mongol actors, sometimes quite paradoxically.

Mongol translations of Chinese texts, the *dào* was rendered in Mongolian as *törü*, indicating the quite encompassing nature of customary law in the minds of Mongols at the time.

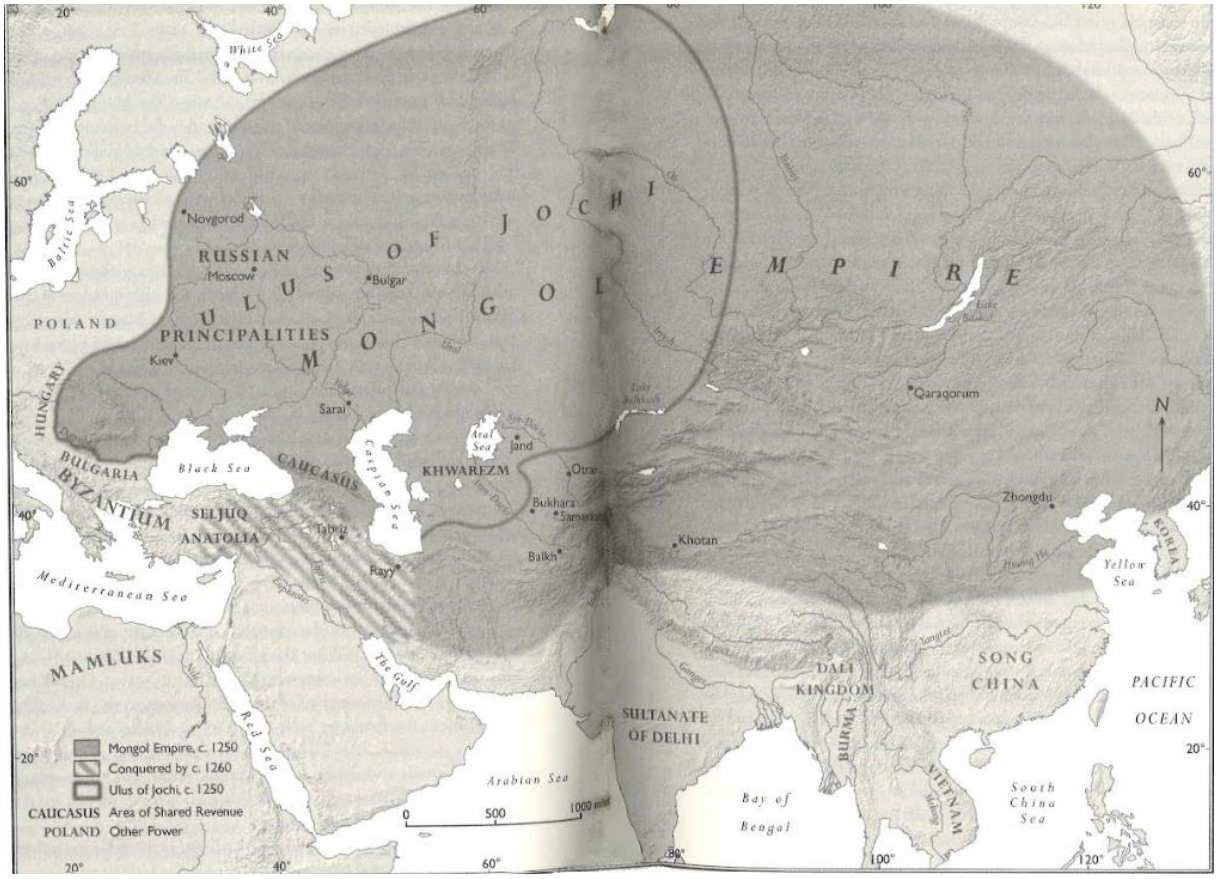
[62] Romans 13: 4, NIV, https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+13%3A2-7&version=NIV

[63] Surah An-Nisa, (4:59); These trends and their development have been more significantly considered by K. Abou El Fadl in his work, *Rebellion and Violence in Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[64] El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence*, p. 116 *et passim*; M. von Bruck, 'Political Authority: A Christian Perspective', *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Vol. 30, (2010), pp. 159-170.

[65] Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, p. 328; D. DeWeese, 'Islamization in the Mongol Empire', 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. 120.

This thesis will make use of textual analysis in order to come to grips with loyalty in the Mongol Empire. Primary source material in diverse language traditions such as Persian, Chinese, Mongolian and European will be considered to achieve this. Wherever possible, information from other disciplinary fields will be made use of as well to fill out this understanding: thus numismatic, linguistic, art historical, and anthropological studies also contribute to the findings in this dissertation. The work will cover a wide geographical area, incorporating information about the Mongol Empire across its breadth, but with a larger focus on the areas of the Mongolian steppe, Central Asia, and the Islamic world, (Map 1). The time period which I will deal with begins with the founding of the Mongol enterprise in the mid-12th century and continues until the dissolution of most of the successor khanates to the Mongol Empire in the mid-14th century.



Map 1: The united Mongol Empire at its zenith. 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.

In discussing the Mongol period in history, I subscribe to the thinking of David Sneath and Lhamsuren Munkh-Erdene regarding the usage of terms such as 'tribe' and 'clan'.[66] These terms, while well-established for Eurasian nomads, are singularly unhelpful in achieving a better understanding of the Mongol polity and its formation. Due to the influence of 19th and 20th century anthropological works however, these terms are quite pervasive in translations of Mongol-era texts of various languages.[67] The unnecessary connotations of these words can lead us to make assumptions about the type of society that we are dealing with, and create an 'Othering' of nomadic societies more generally. Therefore, in this text I prefer different terminology which could equally be used for a European society, thus 'house' for a ruling family which had many people under its control, or 'people/people group' for a named group of uncertain familial connections.[68]

It is also important to state, that while I have used the term 'Mongol' many times already, and will continue to do so, the Mongol Empire was as much a Turkic enterprise as it was a Mongol one. While the Chinggisids, the ruling house descended from Chinggis Khan, were Mongols, many of their early followers and a great deal of their military might was made up of Turkic peoples from across Eurasia. Turkic-speaking groups such as the Öng'üt and Kerait were rapidly absorbed into the Chinggisid aegis, and were key members of the ruling elite. As the Mongol conquests expanded westward, more and more Turkic speakers were drafted into the military, while Qipchaq Turkish eventually became the primary form of communication for many areas of the empire, particularly in the Jochid *ulus* on the Russian steppes. Therefore, while I will use the term 'Mongol Empire' due to the Chinggisid ruling dynasty being Mongols, it is perhaps equally accurate to call the Chinggisid

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[66] D. Sneath, *The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society and Misrepresentations of Nomadic Inner Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); L. Munkh-Erdene, 'Where Did the Mongol Empire Come From? Medieval Mongol Ideas of People, State and Empire', *Inner Asia*, Vol. 13, No. 2, (2011), pp. 211-237.

[67] Sneath, *The Headless State*, pp. 63, 106-7 shows how translators like Igor de Rachewiltz insert the term 'clan' when no Mongol word which could be translated as such (*obog/yasu*) appears in the text of the Secret History of the Mongols; Wheeler Thackston uses the word 'tribe' to translate Rashīd al-Dīn's word *qawm*, which is a generic term meaning a people group of any size; Christopher Dawson translates John of Plano Carpini's term *dux* as 'duke' for a European lord, but uses 'chief' when it is applied to a Mongol. Many of the issues of translation of terms in diverse sources were already noticed by the anthropologist Anatoly Khazanov, A.M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World* (trans.) J. Crookenden, 2nd Edition (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), p. 121.

[68] Munkh-Erdene shows that in the SHM for example, the terms that could possibly be translated as 'clan' and 'tribe', *oboq* and *ayimaq,* are used quite infrequently. The terms *ulus* and *irgen,* however, are very common, and can be tentatively labelled 'state' and 'people', while the *oboqtan* he prefers to translate as 'house, lineage, or surname', Munkh-Erdene, 'Medieval Mongol Ideas', pp. 212-221. This is part of a trend of greater deconstruction of Mongol-era terminology used in modern historiography, see further K. Shiraiwa, 'On the *Ötegü Bogol* in the *Jāmiʿ al-Tavārīkh* of Rashīd al-Dīn', *Acta Orientalia, Societas Orientales Danica, Fennica, Norvegica, Svecica*, Vol. 47 (1986), pp. 27-31; T. Skrynnikova, '*Boghol,* A Category of Submission at the Mongols', *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Vol. 58, No. 3, (2005), pp. 313-319; C. Atwood, 'Mongols, Arabs, Kurds and Franks: Rashīd al-Dīn's Comparative Ethnography of Tribal Society', in (eds.) A. Akasoy, C. Burnett and R. Yoeli-Tlalim, *Rashīd al-Dīn. Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchanges in Ilkhanid Iran*, (London: The Warburg Institute, 2013), pp. 223-250.

project ‘the Turco-Mongol Empire’. The multi-ethnic and multi-lingual nature of Chinggis’ earliest band of followers would continue throughout the dominance of Chinggis and his descendants, and thus should not be forgotten when we think about the culture of the empire and its sucessor states.

1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis therefore, will apply the framework of Welsford and Standen’s categories of loyalty to the Mongol period. In order to approach the topic of loyalty, it is first incumbent on us to consider the language that is used to describe loyalty. Chapter Two approaches the language of Persian source material and how historians of the period talk about topics such as submission, obedience, fealty, and rebellion. This chapter assesses not only Persian vocabulary that can be classed as discussing loyalty, but also the Turco-Mongol terms that were adopted into Persian to deal with the new concepts that were being introduced into Perso-Islamic society by their Mongol rulers. Three of these terms in particular, *soyurghamīshī, tikishmīshī*, and *uljamīshī* are considered in a quantitative analysis of Rashīd al-Dīn’s history of the Mongols, as they relate to the performance of and reward for loyalty. The different characters who perform these actions allow us a glimpse of the two sides of the coin, both the ruler and the ruled, and what they expected of each other.

Chapter Three moves to the heart of the topic itself. In this chapter, several people and institutions, which I have termed ‘objects of loyalty’, are considered for the Mongol imperial period.[69] These objects represent figures of political authority in the Mongol world, namely the khan, *qa’an*, regent, *aqa*, *quriltai*, and lord/*khatun* of the *ulus*. All of these figures are mentioned in the source material as someone or something that those under Mongol dominion *should* be loyal to, and had significant input into how loyalty was defined. The categories established above will be applied to these various objects, in order to comprehend what motivations people had when deciding where their loyalties lay. These multiple nodes of loyalty will also be set against each other, and the different pulls that they exerted on Mongol imperial subjects will be explored, showing how these loyalty decisions were not so black and white. This chapter also looks at the different societal and legal compunctions that were brought to bear in order to try and ensure loyalty to one or more of these authority figures.

[69] T. Jones, ‘The Objects of Loyalty in the Early Mongol Empire (Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries)’, *Iran*, (2021), DOI: 10.1080/05786967.2021.1915701, pp. 1-25.

In Chapter Four we move from the united Mongol Empire to a case study of loyalty in one of the successor khanates, the Ilkhanate. This chapter tries to illuminate the changing political atmosphere of the more limited realm based in the Persian-speaking world. It first addresses the issues which surround the founding of the Ilkhanate and the current scholarly debate about the succession of Hülegü's son Abaqa and his lineal descendants, as this is a key question in understanding political loyalties in the Ilkhanate. As a case study, it does not follow such a strict adherence to the categorical structure of Chapter Three, but rather seeks to follow the careers of certain amirs whose loyalty decisions shaped the development of the Ilkhanate. Two of these cases in particular, those of Taghachar and Nawrūz in the late 13th century, show us how the fracture of Mongol unity and the assertion of non-Chinggisid authority caused major issues for the Ilkhans, but also paved the way for later dynasties such as the Jalayirids (1335-1432) and Timurids to establish themselves without recourse to Chinggisid lineage.

In Chapter Five, I conclude by providing a summation of my findings throughout my research. In this chapter, I connect some of the important themes which I have highlighted in my work to a larger scope, showing how Mongol ideas about loyalty were passed on to or appropriated by later dynasties in order to bolster their own legitimacy, or simply as an expression of ideas which were now a part of the common culture of the post-Mongol world. Many of these dynasties had some connection to the Mongols, if not always genealogically, but in their ideas about rulership or their cultural background.

1.5 Primary Sources

While this study covers a wide range of geographical areas, from China to the Middle East and Russia, following the expansion of the Mongol Empire, I focus in two chapters on terminology in Persian and the Ilkhanate, and thus the main sources for this work are Persian histories of the 13th and 14th centuries. For much of the early Mongol period, two of the main sources are 'Aṭā Malik Juvainī's *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā* and Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmiʿ al-tavārīkh*, specifically his volume on Mongol history, known as the *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*.[70] These works contain a great deal of information

[70] ʿAṭā Malik Juvainī, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*, (ed.) Mohammad Qazvini, (Tehran: Dunya-yi Ketab, 2011), hereafter Juvainī/Qazvini; English translation, Juvainī, 'Ala-ad-Din 'Ata Malik, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, (trans.) J.A. Boyle, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), hereafter, Juvainī/Boyle; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmiʼ al-tavārīkh*, (*Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī)* (ed.) Mohammad Raushan and Mostafa Mousavi (Tehran: Mīrās̲-i Maktūb*,* 1395/2016), hereafter, RAD/Raushan; English translation, Rashiduddin Fazlullah, *Jamiʿu't-Tawarikh, Compendium of Chronicles: A History of the Mongols,* (trans.) W.M. Thackston (Cambridge, MA: The

about the Mongol world, from scholars who worked alongside the Mongol rulers and even had access to Mongol documents. Juvainī's work is the earlier, completed in the 1260s, focusing on the early Mongol conquest, the reigns of several Mongol *qa'an*s, and the administration of the province of Khurasan up to the coming of Hülegü to the western regions. Juvainī's position as governor of Baghdad under the early Ilkhans and his proximity to key Mongol officials such as Arghun Aqa, renders him a vital source for this period. His father Bahā' al-Dīn, who had previously served the Khwarazmshāh Sultan Muḥammad, was the *ṣāḥib-dīvān*, minister of finance, for Arghun Aqa, allowing his son to serve as Arghun's personal secretary.[71] In this capacity, Juvainī visited the Mongol capital Qara Qorum on several occasions in the 1240s and 1250s, while his brother Shams al-Dīn Juvainī then took the position of *ṣāḥib-dīvān* for the Ilkhans Hülegü (r. 1260-1265) and Abaqa (r. 1265-1282).[72] The Juvainī family became exceedingly wealthy through their official positions and their great influence in the Ilkhanate helped to solidify loyalty networks for their rulers.[73] Both brothers met ignominious ends however, with the Ilkhans Abaqa and Arghun torturing and imprisoning them on suspicion of embezzlement. Shams al-Dīn was executed by Arghun in 1284, while 'Aṭā Malik died shortly before after a long period of imprisonment.

Juvainī's work was used as a primary source by the later historian Rashīd al-Dīn. Rashīd al-Dīn served as a physician to several Ilkhans in the 13th century, before working for the Ilkhans Ghazan (r. 1295-1304) and Öljeitü (r. 1304-1316) as a vizier/advisor in the late 13th and early 14th centuries.[74] He was a convert to Islam from Judaism, and was regularly forced to defend his theological positions against Muslims who questioned his beliefs.[75] Rashīd al-Dīn, much like the Juvainīs, became fabulously wealthy during his career, and built a quarter of the Ilkhanid capital, Tabriz, called Rabʿi Rashīdī. In this area he set up religious endowments which would reproduce and illustrate his

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Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1999), hereafter RAD/Thackston. I have chosen the Qazvini edition of Juvainī and the Raushan edition of Rashīd al-Dīn primarily for logistical issues, as these were the editions available to me. However, the Qazvini edition is the main edition in use by scholars who do not have access to the manuscripts. The Raushan edition of Rashīd al-Dīn has its detractors, but again, is one of the most commonly used editions. For the issues with this edition, see C.P. Atwood, 'Rashīd al-Dīn's Ghazanid Chronicle and Its Mongolian Sources', in (eds.) T. May, D. Bayarsaikhan, C.P. Atwood, *New Approaches to Ilkhanid History*, (Leiden: Brill, 2021), p. 55.

[71] S. Kamola, *Making Mongol History: Rashid al-Din and the* Jamiʿ al-Tawarikh, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), pp. 14-16.

[72] G. Lane, 'Jovayni, 'Alā' al-Dīn', *Encyclopædia Iranica,* Online, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jovayni-ala-al-din, Accessed 19th January 2022. For more on the Juvainī family, see Lane, *Early Mongol Rule,* Chapter 6.

[73] E. Ravalde, 'Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī, Vizier and Patron: Mediation between Ruler and Ruled 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. 55-78.

[74] I have chosen the commonly accepted version of the name 'Ghazan'. In Persian sources it is rendered *ghāzān*. The original term was *kazan/kazğan*, meaning a cauldron or large kettle, G. Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 682.

[75] Kamola, *Making Mongol History*, p. 106.

writings annually, which contributed greatly to his later fame, though Rabʿi Rashīdī was largely destroyed after his death.[76] Rashīd al-Dīn, again like the Juvainīs, as well as a large number of other Ilkhanid officials, was executed by an Ilkhan. Rashīd al-Dīn's death was ordered by the Ilkhan ʿAbū Saʿīd in 1318, on suspicion of poisoning his former patron Öljeitü.

Rashīd al-Dīn was commissioned by Ghazan to write a history of the Mongols. When Ghazan was succeeded by Öljeitü, Öljeitü requested that Rashīd al-Dīn expand his history to a world-history, including accounts of diverse regions and peoples such as China, India, Europe, and the Jews; thus the 'compendium' (*jāmiʿ*) aspect. The Mongol section retained in its title the dedication to Ghazan, being called the *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 'The Blessed History of Ghazan'. Rashīd al-Dīn used primary source material from many different regions to create his world history.[77] Christopher Atwood has shown that for his history of the Mongols, Rashīd al-Dīn had access to a plethora of Mongolian-language source material, not least of these being the *Altan Debter*, or Golden Book, a chronicle usually only accessible to Mongols.[78] Both of the works of Juvainī and Rashīd al-Dīn have their issues, one of the most significant of these being their propagandistic purposes promoting the line of Chinggis' youngest son Tolui (d. 1231), whose descendants came to rule the Ilkhanate, where both men served. Thus, we must analyse how the authors did this, and what we can learn from these attempts.

Completing the set of Persian historian-administrators serving the Ilkhans considered here is Rashīd al-Dīn's contemporary, Vaṣṣāf.[79] Vaṣṣāf's work, *Tajziyat al-amṣār wa-tazjiyat al-aʿṣār*, more commonly called *Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, is a continuation of Juvainī that covers the Ilkhanid period up until after the death of Öljeitü in 1316, terminating in c. 1323.[80] Vaṣṣāf was a protégé of Rashīd al-Dīn, and served as a tax administrator in the Ilkhanid administrative region of Fars. Rashīd al-Dīn presented four parts of Vaṣṣāf's work to Öljeitü in 1312, and earlier had introduced Vaṣṣāf to Ghazan,

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[76] Idem, p. 110.

[77] At least one of the major sources for Rashīd al-Dīn's work, ʿAbd Allāh Qāshānī, complained of Rashīd al-Dīn's appropriation of his own world history, and that the significant financial reward should have gone to Qāshānī instead, see Kamola, *Making Mongol History*, pp. 95-103. Kamola argues that Rashīd al-Dīn would have had little time to write this work in 1307-1310 as he was running the state and published three theological compendia. This and the similarities of the work with Qāshānī's own world history entail that it is likely that Rashīd al-Dīn simply copied Qāshānī without crediting him.

[78] Atwood, 'Ghazanid Chronicle', *passim*.

[79] Vaṣṣāf Shīrāzī, Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abd-Allāh, *Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, (ed.) Muhammad Iqbal, (Lahore: Karīmī Press, 1929), hereafter Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal; 'Abd Allāh b. Fażl Allāh Vaṣṣāf-i Hażrat, *Taḥrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, (ed.) Abd al-Muhammad Ayati (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Iran, 1346/1967-68), hereafter Vaṣṣāf/Ayati. In using the *Taḥrīr*, which is a simplification of Vaṣṣāf's work, we must acknowledge that this is not the exact text, however, a lack of good editions of Vaṣṣāf and his somewhat inaccessible writing style have rendered this a necessity.

[80] S.S.D. Bolhasani and J. Tajlil, 'A Brief Introduction to the Book of Tarikh-i Vassaf and Its Author', *Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research*, Vol. 3, Issue 4, (2013), pp. 963-967.

presenting him with a part of the work in an earlier form.[81] Vaṣṣāf's work naturally does not greatly contradict Rashīd al-Dīn's and indeed, praises his vizier and patron regularly, while Rashīd al-Dīn's own work seems to have been based in part on Vaṣṣāf's account.[82] Vaṣṣāf does however have focuses and opinions that differ from the Rashīd al-Dīn's work, providing us with a more nuanced view of the Ilkhanate.[83]

In addition to these three main Persian sources, there exist a large number of key texts in diverse languages that contribute to the work in this thesis. One of the most notable of these is the *Secret History of the Mongols* (referred to hereafter as *SHM*), the semi-legendary account of Chinggis' rise to power on the steppe, likely from the mid-13th century.[84] While there is ongoing debate as to the exact production date, authorship of the work and later editing, it is indubitably a Mongol text despite its transcription in Chinese characters. It was produced by an unknown member of the Mongol ruling elite, therefore its value is unique.[85] Its candid approach to issues that seem to have been ignored by the standard Persian and Chinese accounts provides us with another view of the early rise to power of Chinggis and his descendants.

This work also seeks to make use of Chinese texts whenever they can be found in translation.[86] The *Yuán Shǐ* (hereafter referred to as *YS*) was the official chronicle of the Mongol Yuán dynasty (1271-1368) compiled in the Míng dynasty period (1368-1644). The work is often based on similar source material as Rashīd al-Dīn's work and the *SHM*, with significant differences.[87] Many Mongolian writings were translated into Chinese during the Yuán period, though a large amount of these are no longer extant. The *YS* and other Chinese sources were affected by Qubilai's editing process, which framed Mongol history in a light that accentuated the lineage of Qubilai's father Tolui, Chinggis' youngest son. As such it can be seen as part of a project by historians in China and Iran,

[81] S.S. Blair, '"The Mongol Capital of Sulṭāniyya, 'the Imperial'"', *Iran*, Vol. 24, (1986), pp. 139-152; Bolhasani and Tajlil, 'A Brief Introduction', p. 964. Thus, while Rashīd al-Dīn's 'completed' work emerged earlier than Vaṣṣāf's, much of the latter's text was already known to Rashīd al-Dīn when he was writing his text.
[82] Kamola, *Making Mongol History*, p. 76.
[83] P. Jackson, 'Mongol Khans and Religious Allegiance: The Problems Confronting a Minister-Historian in Ilkhanid Iran', *Iran*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (2009), p. 117 notes that Vaṣṣāf treats the Ilkhan Aḥmad Tegüder much more generously than Rashīd al-Dīn for example.
[84] *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, (trans.) I. de Rachewiltz, (Leiden: Brill, 2004). Hereafter SHM/de Rachewiltz.
[85] C. Atwood, 'The Date of the 'Secret History of the Mongols' Reconsidered', *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies,* No. 37 (2007) pp. 1-48; I. de Rachewiltz 'The Dating of the *Secret History of the Mongols*- A Re-interpretation', *Ural-altaische Jahrbücher / Zeitschriftenband* (2008), pp. 150-184.
[86] For example, *The History of the Yuan, Chapter 1*, (ed. and trans.) C.P. Atwood, *Mongolian Studies,* Vol. 39, (2017/18) pp. 2-80. Hereafter YS/Atwood; or 'The Biography of Yelu Chucai, *Yuanshi*, 146.3455-65', (trans.) G. Humble, Unpublished, pp. 1-14.
[87] Atwood, 'Ghazanid Chronicle', pp. 62-5, 74.

whose rulers were also descended from Tolui, to properly show the legitimacy of Toluid rule in their respective regions and over the whole of the Mongol Empire.

Beyond the Persian, Mongol and Chinese texts, we have significant literature in other languages which contribute to our knowledge of the Mongol Empire and its later Ilkhanid incarnation. European traveller monks such as John of Plano Carpini in the 1240s and William of Rubruck in the 1250s wrote of their travels and their experiences in the Mongol world.[88] Despite the shock to their Christian sensibilities, these men captured what Mongol life on the steppe itself entailed, the 'pure' Mongol way of life as the monks saw it, rather than other sources' experience with the Mongols in settled areas. A great wealth of information on the Mongols, and particularly the Ilkhanate, comes from Armenian sources. Armenian historical writing thrived in this period and the Armenians, as first victims of the Mongol conquests, then as vassals and allies, have a unique perspective with which we can see the Mongol Persian world.[89]

The Syriac chronicler Gregory Bar Hebraeus composed his *Chronicon* in the 1280s before his death in 1286, but the work was continued by his brother and another anonymous continuator. This work is also extremely useful for the entry of the Mongols into the Persian world and Near East and the changes which took place.[90] A physician to the Mongols who composed works in Arabic as well as his native Syriac, he offers a fascinating glimpse into the Christian world under the early Ilkhans. Another extremely interesting and useful Christian source is the travelogue of the Turkic Christian monk Rabban Bar Sauma and his colleague Markos.[91] Travelling from China to the Ilkhanid realm on pilgrimage, they eventually settled and served the Mongols in different capacities, with Rabban Sauma being sent to Europe by the Ilkhan Arghun (r. 1284-1291) to try and gain allies in the Ilkhanid war with the Mamluks. Markos became Patriarch of the Church of the East as Mar Yahbh-Allaha in 1281 and sought to positively influence the Ilkhans with relation to Christians, though as they converted to Islam his role became much more difficult.[92]

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[88] *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (trans. and ed.) C. Dawson, (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955).

[89] Eg. *History of the Nation of the Archers by Grigor of Akanc' Hitherto Ascribed to Matak'ia the Monk* (trans. and ed. R.P. Blake and R.N. Frye) *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 12, Nos. 3 and 4, (Dec., 1949), pp. 269-399.

[90] *The Chronography of Gregory Abû'l Faraj, the Son of Aaron, The Hebrew Physician Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus, Being The First Part of His Political History of the World*, (trans.) E.A. Wallis Budge, Vol. I (London: Oxford University Press, 1932). Hereafter BH/Budge.

[91] *The Monks of Kublai Khan, Emperor of China: Medieval Travels from China through Central Asia to Persia and Beyond*, (trans.) Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, New Introduction by D. Morgan, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014).

[92] For more on these two monks and their voyages, see M. Rossabi, *Voyager from Xanadu: Rabban Sauma and the First Journey from China to the West*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010).

The scope of the Mongol Empire and the diverse historical traditions which produced significant scholarship about it entail that there are sources that cannot be addressed or are not given the space they deserve in any work which deals with the Mongol Empire on a broader scale. This thesis is no different in that regard. Language limitations as well as reasons of scope mean that important source material, such as the Mamluk histories or the Rus' chronicles, are thus given short shrift in this dissertation, though their narratives do often provide a significant counterweight to those listed above. Even with regard to the Persian texts, the focus here is on the most famous court histories, while many local chronicles may provide a different perspective. This view from the centre is thus incomplete, and it is therefore hoped that this thesis can contribute something to the greater topic of Mongol loyalty that can be built upon or challenged through an extensive analysis of other historical traditions and works from the periphery of the Persian world. Nonetheless, even through this centrist viewpoint, there are new perspectives which can be gleaned from these works which have regularly been made use of. Thus, it is to the Persian historians' framing of loyalty in the Mongol world that we now turn.