

# Authorial Voice in Ilkhanid Persian Historiography: Contradiction and Intent in the *Tārīkh-e Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni*

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The Mongol Empire established by Chinggis Khan (d. 1227) was a single polity that spanned from China to the shores of the Caspian Sea. While Mongol expansion across the Eurasian ecumene into China and Eastern Europe continued under Chinggis Khan's successor, Ögedei Khan (r. 1229–1241), the appanage system of Mongol inheritance encouraged the autonomy of the various domains governed by Chinggis Khan's other sons.<sup>1</sup> The Ilkhanate (1255–1335),<sup>2</sup> ruled by the descendants

of Chinggis Khan's grandson Hülegü (Ilkhan, r. 1255–1265), was one of the four autonomous Mongol appanage polities. The Ilkhanate was formed as a result of the expansionist policies of Möngke Khan (r. 1251–1259), the grandson and third successor of Chinggis Khan, who sought to reinforce the Mongol grip on Southwest Asia. In 1255, he enjoined his brother Hülegü to conquer the as yet unsubdued lands located southwest of the Aral Sea.<sup>3</sup> Hülegü's army was virtually undefeated for five years until the Battle of 'Ayn Jālūt (1260), when the triumphant forces of the Mamlūk sultan Baybars delimited the western border of the Ilkhanate at Syria.<sup>4</sup> Whether Möngke Khan intended Hülegü's creation of an independent but nominally subordinate appanage is unclear. What the historical documents and chronicles of the time do attest, however, are the ways by which the Ilkhanate shaped the human landscapes of the Iranian Plateau in the century following Hülegü's conquest.

The Persian chronicles of the Mongol Empire are invaluable sources for understanding not only the meteoric rise of the Mongol Empire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but also the character of the Iranian elite that served the Ilkhans. The most prominent modern scholarly attention on Persian historiography during the Ilkhanid period has been cast on *Jāme' al-Tavārikh*, a world history composed in the early fourteenth century by Rashid al-Din (1247–1318), the vizier to the Mongol Ilkhans Ghāzān (r. 1295–1304) and Öljeitü (r. 1304–1316), both of whom converted to Islam. Because mass conversions of the animist Ilkhanid Mongols to Islam occurred during Ghāzān's reign, Rashid al-Din was able to view Mongol rule in a fashion similar to that of chroniclers of previous waves of foreign rulers in Persia, like the Seljuq Turks in the eleventh century, who had also adopted Islam. The Mongol conquest of Persia was for Rashid al-Din a *fait accompli* that called for neither justification nor defense, and his *Jāme' al-Tavārikh* was probably written as an *aide-mémoire* for his Muslim Mongol patrons.<sup>5</sup>

'Alā'-al-Din 'Atā-Malek Jovayni (1226–1283), the chronicler

the year that the Ilkhan Hülegü conquered the Iranian Plateau (Hodgson, *Venture*, vol II, 411.). The end of the Ilkhanate was taken by David Morgan to be 1335, the year of the death of the Ilkhan Abu Sa'id, the last ruler of the Ilkhanate with any semblance of autonomous authority (David Morgan, *The Mongols* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 148–150.).

1 Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilisation*, 3 vols, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), vol. II, 288–292.

2 The periodization of the Ilkhanate, taken for the purposes of this essay to be 1255–1335, is highly contested. Marshall G. S. Hodgson marked the establishment of the Ilkhanate as 1255,

3 Hodgson, *Venture*, vol. II, 291.

4 *Ibid.*, 392.

5 Morgan, *The Mongols*, 17–18.

on whom this paper is focused, was, like Rashid al-Din, a vizier to the Ilkhans. From the years 1252 to 1260, he composed the *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni*, a three-volume chronicle that commenced with Chinggis Khan's career and ended with Hülegü's conquest of the Ismā'īlī Shī'ī fortress at Alamūt. Jovayni found favor with the Mongol governor of Iran at the time, Argūn Āqā, and traveled thrice to Mongolia.<sup>6</sup> In 1257, he marched on Baghdad with Hülegü, who later appointed him governor of the captured city.<sup>7</sup> These experiences gave Jovayni unprecedented access to the Mongol ruling elite, and it is with this unique position in mind that the first volume of the *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni* will be discussed, a volume that focuses on the early Mongol conquests of Chinggis Khan and his immediate successors.

David Morgan speculates that, given the shamanist religious proclivities of the Mongol conquerors, early Ilkhanid historiography documents the shock of the Iranian elite at suffering repeated military defeats at the hands of pagans from the Central Asian steppe.<sup>8</sup> This is where Jovayni's circumstances deviate from those of Rashid al-Din, for the former was writing in what Melville calls "the dark period before Ghāzān's conversion",<sup>9</sup> and did not have the benefit of knowing that the Mongols would later enter the fold of Islam. A critical reading of the *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni* as veiled polemic can further these views by highlighting the insecurities of a Muslim official navigating new political landscapes and occupying a tenuous position in a polity run by polytheist foreigners. The methodology of this paper is best expressed by Kappler, who writes that "Jovayni écrit une Histoire officielle où il n'est pas libre d'exprimer ses opinions et ses sentiments profonds: pour découvrir ceux-ci, il faut lire entre les lignes."<sup>10</sup> Although the *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni* is an imperially commissioned chronicle, Jovayni's authorial voice is detected under a veneer of historical description. The contradictions that pervade Jovayni's ornate yet measured prose reflect a view that is necessarily conflicted—Jovayni is indebted to the Mongol patrons of his historiographical undertaking, yet those very patrons had inflicted innumerable atrocities on his countrymen. By analyzing the disjuncture in intent between an officially commis-

sioned work and a personal expression of grief and loss in the first of the three volumes of *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni*, one can discern that under the surface of Jovayni's pre-Islamic imagery and his religious vision lies his keen criticism of his pagan Mongol patrons.

### Literary Patronage and Panegyric

In keeping with the literary traditions of courtly literature, panegyric on one's patron is an indispensable element of the *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni*.<sup>11</sup> Due to the nature of such stylistic conventions, differentiating between insincere panegyric and genuine praise is an essential step in uncovering Jovayni's authorial voice. Franklin Lewis, in arguing that the courtly poet used greater discretion in his panegyric than one would expect, has demonstrated the importance of such an exercise, as the adept poet was functionally in control of the literary exchange between patron and client.<sup>12</sup>

The customary opening doxology is followed immediately by the exaltation of Möngke, the ruling Khagan of the whole Mongol Empire, of whom Jovayni writes, "the tales of Nushirvān's justice were hidden thereby and the traditions of Faridun's wisdom seemed effaced."<sup>13</sup> Drawing on pre-Islamic personages is a common device for Persian panegyric, as is hyperbole. That Möngke's virtuousness exceeds that of the Sasanian paragon of justice and of the Indo-Iranian mythical personification of excellence demonstrates the extent of Jovayni's embellishment of his prose, and some of the constraints of writing at the behest of his literary patron. Jovayni emphasizes this feature of courtly prose by writing that the purpose of compiling his chronicle is "in order to perpetuate (*takhlid*) the excellent deeds and to immortalize (*ta'bid*) the glorious actions of the Lord of the Age (*pādshāh-e vaqt*), the youth of youthful fortune and aged resolve".<sup>14</sup> In outlining the goal of his ambitious historiographical endeavor, Jovayni employs imagery relating to time to underline the significance of Möngke's rule, thereby arguing that his temporal reign is worthy of transcending the limits of his worldly existence.

Despite the ingratiating language of his opening panegyric on his patron, however, there is little reason to completely dismiss Jovayni's text based on his adulation of the Mongols. It is true that the opening panegyric is highly sycophantic and flatters Möngke in every way possible, but this is a necessary

6 George Lane, "Jovayni, 'Alā'-al-Din," in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, XV/1, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Columbia University Center for Iranian Studies, 2009), 64.

7 Charles Melville, "Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni," in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, XIV/4, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Columbia University Center for Iranian Studies, 2008), 378.

8 Morgan, *The Mongols*, 15-17.

9 Charles Melville, "The Mongol and Timurid Periods, 1250-1500," in *A History of Persian Literature, Volume X: Persian Historiography*, ed. Charles Melville (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 188.

10 "Jovayni writes an official history in which he is not at liberty to express his true opinions and sentiments: to discover these, one must read between the lines." Claude-Claire Kappler, "Regards sur les Mongols au XIIIème siècle: Jovayni, Rubrouck," *Dabireh* 6 (1989): 193.

11 Ibid.

12 Franklin Lewis, "Sincerely Flattering Panegyrics: The Shrinking Ghaznavid Qasida," in *The Necklace of the Pleiades: 24 Essays on Persian Literature, Culture and Religion*, eds. Franklin Lewis and Sunil Sharma (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2010), 219-220.

13 'Alā'-al-Dīn 'Atā-Malek Jovayni, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J. A. Boyle (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 2. Translations of this primary text are taken from Boyle's edition, with slight modifications.

14 Ibid., 3.

feature of a work of courtly literature. Besides, other passages where Jovayni praises Mongol rulers are limited in scope and often refer to specific historical events or corroborate with what we know from other primary sources. For example, in describing the structure of Chinggis Khan's family, he writes that Chinggis Khan "was wont to urge the strengthening of the edifice of concord (*tashyid-e banā-ye movāfaqat*) and the consolidation of the foundations of affection (*tambid-e qavā'ed-e olfat*) between sons and brothers".<sup>15</sup> It may appear that in claiming the strength of Chinggisid family unity, Jovayni is being unduly sycophantic, as later in Jovayni's own text, there is evidence that the antagonistic relationships between the Chinggisids had already become entrenched with the partition of Chinggis Khan's Eurasian empire into four appanages.<sup>16</sup> There is evidence that Jovayni was merely reflecting what he knew from contemporary documents, however, as he supports his claim by retelling a parable purportedly told by Chinggis Khan: a single arrow is effortlessly broken in half, but a bundle of arrows, an allegorical reference to fraternal unity, cannot be broken with ease.<sup>17</sup> This parable is found in the *Secret History of the Mongols*,<sup>18</sup> the only extant Mongolian chronicle from the period. Even though Alan Qo'a, a mythical ancestor of the Chinggis Khan's Borjigin clan ten generations before Chinggis Khan himself, tells the parable, its similarities to Jovayni's narrative are striking. While it may have been difficult for Jovayni to gain access to a Mongolian-language text that was taboo for anyone outside the Mongol imperial family, his sustained interactions with the ruling elite possibly allowed him to hear about extracts from the *Secret History*, just as Rashid al-Din could have learnt about the contents of the *Altan Debter* through a Mongol.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, while it may seem sycophantic and perhaps even somewhat ironic to applaud familial unity among the Chinggisids, Jovayni's praise stems from information drawn from contemporary primary documents, and reflects the value of his practice of historiography.

Jovayni also writes about other merits of the Mongols that are historically defensible, such as their religious tolerance. In his view, Chinggis Khan "eschewed bigotry (*ta'assob*)", and "respected, honored and revered (*ekrām va e'zāz va tabjil mi-karde-ast*) the learned and pious of every sect, recognizing such conduct as the way to the Court of God."<sup>20</sup> While an element of hyperbole is undoubtedly involved in Chinggis Khan's purported humility toward the pious of all religions, other contemporary observers corroborate the policy of reli-

gious tolerance in the Mongol polity.<sup>21</sup> Jovayni also extends his praise beyond the court by applauding the military prowess of the Mongols through a rhetorical question: "What army in the whole world can equal the Mongol army?"<sup>22</sup> He describes the efficiency of the renowned Mongol military apparatus by comparing the army to "trained wild beasts out after game (*sebā'-e zāri andar shekār*)" during times of war, but "in the days of peace and security they are like sheep, yielding milk, and wool, and many other useful things (*gusfandān bā shir va pashm va manāfe'-e besyār*)."<sup>23</sup> The comparisons of Mongol soldiers to domesticated animals that would have been familiar to an audience with steppe pastoral origins may seem like an attempt to appeal specifically to the Mongols' sensibilities through imagery with which they would have been familiar. While it may seem offensive to compare the Mongols to animals, it is important to bear in mind that this simile is limited to the Mongol masses and does not include the literate class to whom the chronicle is addressed. Jovayni's awareness of his audience suggests his value as a chronicler, because he is attempting to view historical incident from the perspective of his patrons. It is for this reason that Kappler highlights the importance of Jovayni's *Tārikh*: "Il est difficile de reconnaître les mérites de l'Altérité quand celle-ci est venue par l'invasion, le bain de sang et la terre brûlée. Pourtant Joveyni eut ce talent."<sup>24</sup> Weighing the merits of the Mongol Other despite the horrors of their conquest demonstrates Jovayni's historiographical flair, and it is in military matters that Jovayni's apparent contradictions surface most prominently.

### Reading Jovayni as Polemic

Jovayni's praise of the Mongol military appears to be at odds with his descriptions of the destruction wrought upon myriad regions and cities across Eurasia. He is unequivocal in describing the extent of devastation in his native Khorasan and in Iraq, writing that

every town and every village has been several times subjected to massacre and pillage (*koshesh va ghārat kardand*) and has suffered this confusion (*tashvish*) for years, so that even though there be generation and increase until the Resurrection the population will not attain to a tenth part of what it was before.<sup>25</sup>

Jovayni's emphasis on the extent of the ruination of his country and the decimation of his countrymen may appear to be mere nonchalant description, but the bold, if improbable,

15 Ibid., 30.

16 David Ayalon, *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam: Mamluks, Mongols and Eunuchs* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1988), IVa, 133.

17 Jovayni, *History*, 30.

18 *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Igor De Rachewiltz, 2 vols (Boston: Brill, 2004), 4.

19 Morgan, *The Mongols*, 11.

20 Jovayni, *History*, 18.

21 Morgan, *The Mongols*, 41.

22 Jovayni, *History*, 22.

23 Ibid.

24 "It is difficult to recognize the merits of the Other when they came invading, massacring, and scorching the earth. However, Jovayni had this talent." Kappler, "Regards sur les Mongols," 187.

25 Jovayni, *History*, 75.

statistical claims of “every town and every village” and “a tenth part” conceal his genuine sentiment against Mongol violence. His observation is devoid of hope while expressing nostalgia for bygone times, and there is no possibility of reviving the past vitality of Khorasan and Iraq. Jovayni mentions material evidence for these claims, as the “records of ruins and midden-heaps (*āthār-e atfāl va deman*) declare how Fate has painted her deeds upon palace walls.”<sup>26</sup> That his claims of violence are supported by incontrovertible evidence of the destruction of previous human inhabitation indicates Jovayni’s ability to manage multiple audiences: he may be making audacious claims accepted by his Persian peers, but even a partisan of the Mongol ruling elite could not deny historical fact. The abovementioned images that paint a vivid picture of the extent of devastation are also standard symbols of lament for lost lovers in Bedouin Arabic poetry, demonstrating one of the ways by which Jovayni speaks to the cultural sensibilities of the Persian literate class, who must have received a classical education. While it may seem inconsistent that he praises the Mongol military apparatus while bemoaning its pernicious effects, it is important to note that despite the change in literary patron from Persian to Mongol, the system of patronage did not change—the task of the historian remained recording, educating, even entertaining.<sup>27</sup> In these moderated statements we can read polemic directed against the Mongols intended for his Persian readership. His craft as a historian is elaborated by his praise for and critique of distinct aspects of Mongol rule, allowing him to separate emotions evoked by the violence of conquest from admiration for the efficacies of Mongol military policy.

Jovayni’s diatribe against the social mores of Ilkhanid Persia that immediately follows the initial panegyric on Möngke displays even more clearly Jovayni’s distaste for certain unsavory aspects of the Ilkhanid Perso-Mongol milieu. He argues that the people of his age “regard lying and deception as exhortation and admonishment (*kezāb va tazvīr rā va’z va tazkīr dānand*) and all profligacy and slander bravery and courage (*taharmoz va namīmat rā sarāmat va shahāmat nām konand*).”<sup>28</sup> The parallel structure of this observation, heightened by its rhyme scheme (see Section III), reflects a total inversion of virtue and vice, and the complete degeneration of a society that once upheld masculine and martial qualities (*sarāmat va shahāmat*) as benchmarks of integrity. Jovayni continues:

They consider the Uighur language and script to be the height of knowledge and learning. Every market loungee in the garb of iniquity has become an emir (*bar yek az abnā’ al-suq dar zayy-e ahl-e fosuq amiri gashte*); every hireling has become a minister (*bar mozduri dasturi*), every knave a vizier (*bar mozavveri vaziri*) and every unfortunate a secretary (*bar modabbari dabiri*).<sup>29</sup>

26 Ibid.

27 Melville, “The Mongol and Timurid Periods, 1250-1500,” in *Persian Historiography*, 187.

28 Jovayni, *History*, 4.

29 Ibid.

After Jovayni observes that a Turkic language of the steppe has been inserted into the cultural fabric of Iran, the list of inversions in social hierarchy continues at length. Wordplay abounds in this passage, such as the use of similar-sounding Arabic trilateral roots (*mozavveri* and *vaziri*), the juxtaposition of an Arabic word with a word of Persian etymology, both with the same consonants (*modabbari* and *dabiri*), and rhyme (*mozduri* and *dasturi*). These pairs of words are phonologically and morphologically similar yet semantically contrary, and underscore Jovayni’s view that the Mongols have reversed the natural order of human society.

Humor is used to obscure subtext, as is evident when he writes that “they consider the breaking of wind and the boxing of ears (*zart va saf*) to proceed from the kindness of their nature (*lotf-e tab*)”.<sup>30</sup> The exclusive use of Arabic-derived vocabulary may seem appropriately grandiloquent for a piece of courtly literature, but under this veneer of orotund language lies the crude humor of Jovayni’s invective against the iniquitous state of Ilkhanid society. The references to bodily functions and movements denigrate the Mongols by highlighting their purported approval of unrefined physical activities. This harsh polemic is preceded by the doxology and the panegyric on Möngke, demonstrating Jovayni’s audacity at expressing his resentment at the effects of Mongol conquest and rule, albeit in an encoded form most accessible to his Persian peers.

The measured prose of *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni* reflects Jovayni’s awareness of and his need to accommodate two audiences: his Mongol patrons and his Persian peers. For this reason, the apparent incongruity of praise and polemic in the text is not an unresolvable one. It is hence surprising that, by disregarding the nuances of Jovayni’s authorial voice, modern commentators like David Ayalon are unsympathetic toward Jovayni, arguing that his view on Mongol religious tolerance is “nauseating in its servile flattery.”<sup>31</sup> This view neglects the fact that his position as a dynastic chronicler called for him to sift through and differentiate between the laudable aspects and the deplorable conditions of Mongol rule, all while conforming to a hallowed genre of imperially commissioned historiographical writing. It is on this note that we turn to the conventions of the genre and their implications.

### Stylistic Conventions of Courtly Prose

While specific examples of rhyme and parallel structure have been discussed in the previous section, it is expedient for the purposes of this critical reading to generalize these features of Jovayni’s writing as the genre of *saj’*, rhymed prose adapted from Arabic literary traditions. The *recherché* quality of such ornate prose is heightened by the lavish use of Arabic loanwords interspersed with lines of Arabic poetry and Quranic citations throughout the text. The popularization of these stylistic conventions in Persian courtly literature was realized

30 Ibid., 5.

31 Ayalon, *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam*, IVa, 133.

through the praxis of *enshā'*, a process of modeling one's prose style after collections of literature and correspondence regarded as the paragon of *belles-lettres*.<sup>32</sup> It is within the Persian cultural milieu from which these courtly scribal traditions sprang that Jovayni practised his craft.

What is significant about Jovayni's maintenance of the literary traditions of the Persian court is that it carries a subtext of cultural resistance against the Mongols. In this reproduction of stylistic conventions of pre-Mongol Iran, there is a didactic purpose of attempting to bring the Mongol rulers, pastoral nomads from the steppe lacking a strong written culture, into the fold of Persian high culture. A similar but more discernible example of the use of literature in acculturating foreign conquerors of Persia can be seen in Nizam al-Mulk's *Siyāsatnāme*.

No king or emperor can afford not to possess and know this book, especially in these days, for the more he reads it, the more he will be enlightened upon spiritual and temporal matters [...] and nothing in the whole realm whether great or small, far or near, will remain concealed (if Allah wills—be He exalted).<sup>33</sup>

Nizam al-Mulk, a renowned vizier of the Turkic Seljuq Empire, seems to focus solely on the importance of understanding the content of his political treatise. By writing in a somewhat adorned fashion from a Persian frame of reference and in the Persian language, however, there is an element of stubborn dogmatism for him, a servant of the Seljuq rulers, to dictate the principles behind governing Iran. While such didacticism is less prevalent in the *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni* since it is a piece of historiographical writing, the choice of writing in *saj'* and the extensive use of Arabic can be understood as an attempt to facilitate the process of Mongol cultural assimilation. Not only does the recherché language allow Jovayni to encode polemic, it also perpetuates Persian courtly practices despite the Mongol domination of Iranian politics, encouraging these non-Persian rulers to adopt Persian sociocultural approaches and frames of reference.

### Religious Visions of Mongol Rule

Morgan argues that the main reason for the dismay and consternation expressed by Persian writers in the wake of the Mongol conquests was that it inverted Muslim politico-religious theory: the *dār al-ḥarb*, or the abode of war, over which unbelievers ruled, was supposed to be eventually conquered by the *dār al-islām*, or the abode of Islam, through *jibād*. However, the Mongols, a shamanist steppe people, reversed the supposed natural order of the world: they conquered and pillaged Muslim Persia with ease, resulting in the rule of the *dār al-islām* by

the *dār al-ḥarb*.<sup>34</sup> Whether or not Muslim Persian writers had this notion in mind, this inversion of canonical Muslim political thought represents the triumph of the pagans, a historical event that undoubtedly informed attitudes of the Persians toward the Mongol ruling elite. For this reason, an analysis of religious metaphor and imagery is important for understanding the means through which Jovayni rationalized the violence of Mongol subjugation of Persia.

Jovayni places the Mongol invasion firmly within a religious conception of historical events, by writing that “for the admonishment and chastisement (*tanbih va ta'rik*) of every people a punishment (*ta'dib*) has been meted out fitting to their rebellion (*farākhur-e toghyān*) and in proportion to their infidelity (*nesbat-e kofrān*)”.<sup>35</sup> An attempt at rationalizing suffering under the hands of the Mongols is evident in this passage, for the horrors of war are perceived as appropriate recompense for sin. The use of Arabic vocabulary evokes strong religious undercurrents that immediately surface as Jovayni cites stories from the *Qisas al-Anbiyā'*, a collection of tales of the prophets, and culminates in the Prophet Muhammad's alleged view on the punishment of Muslims.

When the time came for the reign of the Seal of the Prophets, [...] he besought the Lord of Majesty and Glory to grant that all the different punishments and calamities (*sonuf-e 'azāb-hā va baliyyāt*) which He had sent to every nation on account of their disobedience might be remitted in the case of his own nation [...] but not as regards the punishment of the sword (*'azāb-e sayf*) concerning which his prayer attained not the manifestation of acceptance and hit not the target of admission.<sup>36</sup>

By following the well-worn tradition of ascribing religious significance to historical event, this passage strikes a balance between the munificence of God, demonstrated by His willingness to deliver Muslims from calamity (*baliyyāt*) that would annihilate their community, and the might of His vengeance, for He would not hesitate to put sinful Muslims to the sword. That even the Prophet Muhammad failed to exhort God through prayer to exempt the Muslim community from the punishment of the sword in the temporal world is a theologically expedient claim, since violence and war, pervasive features of interactions between human civilizations, can always be understood as recompense for impious behavior. Jovayni later cites a *ḥadīth* to legitimize this claim, which is a clear attempt at interpreting the violence of the Mongol conquest through religious terms, as a conquest of the *dār al-islām*, or abode of Islam. The use of religious metaphor to describe Mongol military action is rendered in a literal sense through Jovayni's description of the conquest of Bukhara. He writes that Chinggis Khan mounts the *minbar* of the city's main prayer hall, and declares, “I am the punishment of God (*man 'azāb-e khodā-am*). If you

32 Julie S. Meisami, “History as Literature,” in *Persian Historiography*, 8.

33 Nizam al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, trans. Hubert Darke (London: Routledge, 1978), 2.

34 Morgan, *The Mongols*, 15.

35 Jovayni, *History*, 12.

36 Ibid.

had not committed great sins (*gonāb-hā-ye bozorg*), God would not have sent a punishment like me upon you.<sup>37</sup> While the veracity of the speech cannot be confirmed due to the lack of Mongol documentation, the spirit behind Jovayni's inclusion of these unequivocal words is clear. The message of the *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni* that is intended for Persian readers is that the Mongols are the scourge of God sent to punish Muslims for their sins.

It is noteworthy, however, that there is no indication that Jovayni believes that God is sympathetic to the Mongol cause. Examples of Mongol irreverence toward Islam abound, and a striking instance of this can be found in the same passage on the conquest of Bukhara.

And they brought the cases in which the Qur'ans (*masāhef*) were kept out into the courtyard of the mosque, where they cast the Qur'ans right and left and turned the cases into mangers for their horses (*ākhur-e asbān*).<sup>38</sup>

The audacity of this act of desecrating the sacred Muslim text reads like indifferent observation, but would undoubtedly evoke an emotional response from a pious Muslim reader. The callousness with which the Mongol army defiles the Qur'ans on holy ground is heightened by the use of the Qur'an cases for ritually unclean purposes, underscoring the utter disregard of the Mongol army and its commanders for Muslim custom. That Jovayni made the authorial decision to include incidents that would inspire hatred among his Muslim peers for their Mongol rulers suggests that his view of the Mongols is not one of blind adulation; rather, he is setting in relief the impiety of the pagan Mongols. It may seem like a contradiction that the Mongol army is a punishment sent by God unto a sinful Muslim community while also being defilers of the Muslim faith, but these views work in concert to demonstrate the religious underpinnings of Jovayni's worldview, especially when considered alongside pre-Islamic symbolisms that are projected upon the Mongols and the peoples whom they defeated.

### Pre-Islamic Persian Symbolisms

Pre-Islamic imagery drawn from the *Shāhnāme*, particularly Ferdowsi's late tenth-century version, regained popularity in the Ilkhanid period due to a revival of interest in reading the *Shāhnāme* as a work of historiography.<sup>39</sup> It is for this reason that evoking pre-Islamic imagery, in which Ferdowsi's retelling is quoted to the effect of framing the historical narrative, is a literary technique that pervades Jovayni's writing. Jovayni describes the figure of Temür Malik, the commander of the citadel at Khojend, during the conquest of Khwārazm, a fertile region south of the Aral Sea ruled by the Khwārazm Shāhs. Temür escapes when Khojend falls, but returns years later only

to be captured by a son of Ögedei Khan, who interrogates him. A soldier whom Temür had struck years ago identifies him, and before his death the following verses from the *Shāhnāme* are quoted:

Sea and mountain have seen how I dealt with the illustrious heroes of the Turanian host. (*marā dide dar jang daryā va kuh / ke bā nāmdārān-e turān goruh*)

The stars bear witness thereto: by my valour is the whole world beneath my feet. (*che kardam, setāre govāy-e man ast / be mardi jahān zir-e pāy-e man ast*)<sup>40</sup>

The tension between the Khwārazm Shāhs, a Central Asian Muslim dynasty with Turkic origins, and the Mongols is elaborated by means of the Iran-Turan binary that drives the *Shāhnāme* narrative. The Turanians, the ultimate non-Iranian (*anirān*) Other, are given due respect in the first verse despite being the figure at which Iranian antipathy is directed, a fitting summary of Jovayni's attitudes toward the Mongols. This notion is reinforced by evoking geological landforms and celestial bodies that are immutable in human temporal scales as witnesses to the anti-Mongol military action taken by the Khwārazm Shāhs. The tacit approval of these grandiose natural bodies suggests that fighting against the Turanian-like Mongols is an admirable attempt at restoring the natural order of the cosmos, and gives the Iranian-like Khwārazm Shāhs spiritual and moral dominance over the universe despite their military defeat.

Another example of the use of *Shāhnāme* imagery to this end is the recurring use of the figure of Rostam, one of the greatest heroes of Iranian mythology. In the abovementioned passage, Jovayni writes of Temür Malik that "it might be said that had Rostam lived in his age he would have been fit only to be his groom (*ghāsheye-dari*)."<sup>41</sup> The hyperbolic image of the Iranian paragon of heroic machismo reduced to nothing but a servant underscores the extent of Temür Malik's gallantry in his anti-Mongol struggles. Another non-Persian figure, the last Khwārazm Shāh Jalāl al-Din, is compared to Rostam, again in a citation of verse from the *Shāhnāme*:

When Isfandiyar gazed behind him, he descried him on the dry land on the far side of the stream. (*chu esfandyār az pas-esh bengarid / bedān suy-e rudesh be khoshgi bedid*)

He said: 'Call not this being a man—he is a raging elephant endued with pomp and splendour.' (*hami-goft k'in rā nakhwānid mard / yeki zhende-pil ast bā shākh o bard*)

So he spoke and gazed thitherwards where Rostam went seeking his way. (*hami-goft va mi-kard az ān su negāh / ke rostam hami-raft juyān-e rāh*)<sup>42</sup>

These three verses are aptly quoted, as they follow Chinggis Khan witnessing Jalāl al-Din jumping into the Indus River, drowning himself after his military defeat. Even after suicide,

37 Ibid., 81.

38 Ibid., 80.

39 Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, "Le livre des rois, miroir du destin," *Studia Iranica* 17 (1988): 31-45.

40 Jovayni, *History*, 73.

41 Ibid., 71.

42 Ibid., 107.

often perceived as a display of cowardice, he is compared to a regal creature of grace and majesty, and is exalted beyond mere human terms of reference. In this case, Jalāl al-Din is praised as such through the words of Esfandiyār, Rostam's nemesis who eventually gets killed by Rostam himself. In this case, the symbolism is turned on its head, as it is Chinggis Khan, the triumphant of the two, who is compared to the defeated Esfandiyār. This contradiction can be read as an attempt by Jovayni to grant the spiritual and moral victory to Jalāl al-Din despite his physical defeat by Chinggis Khan, as he resisted the Mongol conquest of Transoxania till his last moments on Earth. This view is supported by other passages where Jovayni praises Jalāl al-Din. For instance, at the cusp of Jalāl al-Din's defeat at the hands of Jochi, Chinggis Khan's eldest son, Jalāl al-Din manages to reverse the outcome of the battle and to defeat Jochi's forces. In this section too Jovayni quotes the *Shāhnāme*:

What is finer than a furious male lion, his loins girded before his father? (*che nikutar az narre shir-e zheyān / be pish-e pedar bar kamar bar meyān*)<sup>43</sup>

The animal imagery that recurs in Jovayni's *Shāhnāme* citations to describe Jalāl al-Din employs the diction of savagery and wrath (in this case, *zhiyān*), in order to highlight his violent indignation at Mongol incursions into his territory. It is fitting that Jovayni chooses a quote that depicts a warrior more imposing than his father, as Jalāl al-Din's father, Muḥammad II, is known for his cowardice and ineffectual policies that led to the collapse of Khwarazmian Empire.<sup>44</sup> The consistent glorification of Jalāl al-Din throughout the *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni* through *Shāhnāme* imagery demonstrates Jovayni's understanding of Jalāl al-Din's undying courage as a spiritual and moral victory over the Mongols.

The purpose of imbuing distinctly Iranian symbolisms on non-Iranian figures like Temür Malik and Jalāl al-Din, however, is greater than a glorification of their struggle against the Mongols. Melville, for instance, reads this as a means of asserting Iranian cultural identity for the Mongol patrons of this work,<sup>45</sup> an aspect of Jovayni's discourse that was discussed in the third section of this paper. A more critical reading of the use of *Shāhnāme* imagery to depict figures of Turkic origin could take into consideration Jovayni's religious vision of the Mongols as elaborated in this paper's fourth section, which argues that the apparent contradiction between depicting the Mongol defilers of the Muslim faith as a punishment sent by God is a superficial one. This is a valid approach to the text because the primary similarity between the Khwārazm Shahs and the Persians is their religion. By viewing the Khwārazm Shāhs

as Iranian and the Mongols as Turanian, Jovayni does not perceive the tensions of the Mongol conquest and occupation as one of ethnicity: unlike in preceding Turkic Muslim dynasties, the binary is not centered on conflicts between foreign rulers and their Iranian subjects. Rather, this is fundamentally a conflict of religion, between Muslims and non-Muslims, between the *dār al-islām* and the *dār al-ḥarb*. By being compared to the Iranian mythical heroes in spite of their ethnicity, the Turkic Khwarazm Shahs are to Jovayni the quintessence of the Persian ideals of masculine excellence and the last vanguard of the Muslims. In a similar vein, Jovayni perceives the Mongols as a punishment from God for the sinfulness of the Muslim community precisely because of their paganism, because they are the Other embodied by Turan. The rich imagery of pre-Islamic Iran is employed in concert with Jovayni's religious vision to the effect of crafting a veiled polemic directed toward the Mongols for being the shamanist conquerors of the Muslim lands.

## Conclusion

Much modern criticism leveled at the *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni* tends to focus on Jovayni's seemingly sycophantic attitude toward his Mongol overlords. David Ayalon and Leonard Lewisohn, for instance, have expressed their suspicions about how amenable Jovayni was to Ilkhanid rule, in spite of the Mongol devastation of his homeland.<sup>46</sup> This view, however, does not take into consideration Jovayni's precarious position in high office and the system of courtly literary patronage that was sustained in the Ilkhanate. For this reason, the treatment of Jovayni's seminal work has to be reconsidered to the end of re-evaluating present understandings of the ways by which Ilkhanid rule shaped attitudes of the Iranian elite toward the new Mongol world order. This analysis of the first volume of the *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni* reveals the literary mastery of an author toeing the line between two audiences: his Mongol patrons who seek fawning adulation from their subject, and his Persian peers who harbor a deep-seated loathing of their conquerors. The apparent contradictions in Jovayni's writing can hence be understood as a device that obscures his bitter censure of his Mongol patrons, highlighting the tenuous position that the Persian bureaucrat occupied in the Ilkhanid court. It would be injudicious, then, to read Jovayni without considering his commitment to furtive cultural resistance against his pagan overlords, a resistance that wanes in several decades with Rashid al-Din's confidence at the dawn of the Muslim period of Ilkhanid rule.

43 Ibid., 51.

44 See p.127 of the second volume of *Tārikh-e Jahāngoshā-ye Jovayni*, in which Jalāl al-Din delivers a public speech condemning his father's cowardice and offering to lead the vanguard against the Mongols.

45 Melville, "The Mongol and Timurid Periods, 1250-1500," in *Persian Historiography*, 192-3.

46 Lane, "Jovayni," 63.