

A Dialogue between Friends and Foes: Transcultural Interactions in Ilkhanid Capital Cities
(1256-1335 AD)

by

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M.A., University of Victoria, 2014

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in the Department of Art History and Visual Studies

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University of Victoria

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

The period following the Mongol conquest of vast areas of Eurasia in the thirteenth century, the so-called *Pax Mongolica*, witnessed the emergence of a new visual language in Persian art and architecture. Various Islamic and non-Islamic visual traditions that permeated the whole body of the arts of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Iran played a pivotal role in the formation of the hybrid style characterizing the art and architecture of the Ilkhanid period (1256-1335 AD). Along with the reconstruction of the cities that had been extensively destroyed during the Mongol attack on Iran, the Ilkhans (Mongol rulers) founded a number of new settlements. Both literary and archaeological evidence testifies that the foundation and development of urban centers was one of the primary objectives of the Ilkhans throughout their rule over Iran. Putting emphasis on Ilkhanid urban architecture, this project focuses on two major cities in the northwest of Iran (Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya) in order to show how the architectural and urban features of the cities were determined through the complex interaction of local and global forces. Challenging the stereotypes that looked at the steppe people as destroyers of civilizations in earlier scholarship, this study argues that the Ilkhanid city as a physical entity manifests the dialogue between Perso-Islamic sedentary concepts and Mongolian nomadic traditions.

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Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Marcus Milwright for the continuous support of my PhD study and related research, for his patience, motivation, and immense knowledge. I am grateful to him for the generosity of his time and advice.

Besides my supervisor, I would like to thank my supervisory committee: Dr. Evanthia Baboula, Dr. Tsung-Cheng Lin, and Dr. Brendan Burke, for their insightful comments and encouragement. I also owe thanks to the faculty members and the staff members of the Department of Art History and Visual Studies for their support.

The writing of this dissertation was made possible through doctoral fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and travel grants from the Barakat Trust, the Graduate Student Society and the Department of Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Victoria.

Throughout my fieldwork in Iran I received a great deal of support and assistance. I would like to thank my friends at the World Heritage Site of Sultaniyya, Muhammad Muradi Shurcheh, Parvaneh Oliyaei, and Sajjad Ja'fari. I am grateful to Dr. Abulfazl 'Ali, the research director of Zanjan Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization. I also owe special thanks to Dr. Abbas Ghadimi Gheidari and Mehran Besharat Ghazani, who helped me to carry out my fieldwork in Ghazaniyya.

I thank Ying Liu at McPherson Library, University of Victoria, Qichen Zhong, Yuxuan Jennifer Cai, and Geng Wang, students at the Department of Pacific & Asian Studies, University of Victoria, who helped me with the translation of Chinese and Japanese sources.

I express my sincere thanks to my parents, Zohreh and Davood, for their long-term support. Special thanks are also due to my husband, Hamed, who is behind the completion of this project. This dissertation would not have been written without his love, continued patience, endless encouragement, and brilliant comments on the work.

To My Homeland:

IRAN

Notes on Transliteration and Dating

Technical vocabulary in Persian and Arabic are transliterated according to the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, but I have imposed some standardization. When the Persian silent (◌) is final, it is given as (ih). Thus *khānih* is preferred to *khānah* or *khāna*; *tappih* is preferred to *tappah*. However, some Persian words are spelled as they commonly appear in published books. For instance, *Shāhnāma* is preferred to *Shāhnāmih*. The silent final (◌) in the words built according to Arabic grammar is given as (a). Thus, *Sultaniyya* is preferred to *Sultaniyyih* and *Ghazaniyya* is preferred to *Ghazaniyyih*. In the words widely used in Persian, regardless of their origin, the short (◌) is given as (v). Thus, *īvān* is preferred to *īwān*. However, in the words which are common to both Persian and Arabic, regardless of their origin, the short (◌) is given as (w). Thus, *zāwīya* is preferred to *zāvīya*.

The plural forms of Persian and Arabic terms are indicated by addition of an unitalicized s.

Chinese terms are transliterated according to the “pinyin” 拼音 system but without tone symbols.

For the standard names of dynasties and rulers, I have mainly followed Bosworth’s *The New Islamic Dynasties* (1996), particularly for Mongolian names. Place names are not transliterated. The year and centuries mentioned in the dissertation are given according to the *Anno Domini* system unless otherwise noted.

Translation of Persian primary sources and inscriptions are by the author unless otherwise noted.

The dissertation follows the notes and bibliography system in *The Chicago Manual of Style Online* (2017).

Notes on Key Terms

Persia is an old title of the territory that roughly constitutes present-day Iran. For the sake of convenience, ‘Persia’ and ‘Iran’ are used interchangeably in this dissertation. The Persianate world refers to Persian speaking domain, which was much broader than modern Iran’s boundaries. In addition to language, ‘Persian’ is often associated with other cultural aspects of the Persianate world (such as art and architecture). Since Iran (as a geographical and cultural entity) was incorporated into the Persianate world during the Ilkhanid period, for the sake of convenience, ‘Persian’ and ‘Iranian’ are used interchangeably in this dissertation. In the same way, the ‘Iranians’ referring to the people who lived within the boundaries of Iran under the Mongols and the ‘Persians’ are interchangeable.

Introduction

The period following the Mongol conquest of vast areas of Eurasia in the thirteenth century, the so-called *Pax Mongolica*,¹ witnessed the emergence of a new visual language in Persian art and architecture. Various Islamic and non-Islamic visual traditions that permeated the whole body of the arts of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Iran² played a pivotal role in the formation of the hybrid³ style characterizing the art and architecture of the Ilkhanid period (1256-1335).

Operating as an interconnected network of people, buildings, and institutions, the Ilkhanid city perfectly represents different aspects of cross-cultural encounters in medieval Iran. Along with the reconstruction of the cities that had been extensively destroyed during the Mongol attack on Iran, the Ilkhans (Mongol rulers) founded a number of new settlements. Both literary and archaeological evidence testifies that the foundation and development of urban centers was one of the primary objectives of the Ilkhans throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

In a simple, but rather comprehensive, definition of the “Iranian city” prior to the drastic transformations that started in 1920/30s, Gaube differentiates the city from the hinterland on the basis of the predominant type of activities happening in each domain: that is crafts, industry, and administrative service in the former and agriculture in the latter. He regards the city as the seat of government and the center of religious, intellectual, and economic activities.⁴ In view of the

¹ *Pax Mongolica* refers to a period of time (c. 1280-1360), following the conquests of the Mongol Empire, during which Mongol domination stabilized the social and cultural life in most part of Eurasia and guaranteed security on the Eurasian commercial routes (Di Cosmo, “Black Sea Emporia,” 83).

² The Ilkhanids governed present-day Iran, Azerbaijan, Eastern Anatolia (De Nicola and Melville, eds., *The Mongols’ Middle East*, 1), and parts of Iraq. The major architectural and urban undertakings of the Ilkhans as well as their political activities, as will be discussed in the following chapters, were concentrated in the northwest of present-day Iran. Therefore, for the sake of convenience, in this dissertation Iran and Ilkhanid state (Ilkhanid land or territory) in western Asia are used simultaneously.

³ The terminology of intercultural contacts will be discussed in chapter 6.

⁴ Gaube, *Iranian Cities*, 8-11. Also see Gaube, “Iranian Cities,” 159-163.

Mongols' attachment to their nomadic lifestyle, even during the time they had established themselves as the rulers of the ancient civilizations of Iran and China,⁵ the cities founded following the conquest may need to be considered according to a different set of standards. Although these cities were the residence of different ethnic groups, they were aimed to fulfill primarily the needs of their Mongol patrons. Thus, it would be problematic to assess the urban qualities of these cities on the basis of such essentializing definitions of the Iranian city as Gaube's. While acknowledging the validity of Gaube's definition, in general terms the present research examines the Ilkhanid cities with regard to the seasonal migrations of the Ilkhans and the fluidity of their political and administrative centers. The examples that will be discussed in the following chapters reveal how the political and administrative centrality could be transferred from one city to another during the year when the *urdū* (encampment) of the Ilkhans moved between different seasonal camps/cities.

The Ilkhanid city was founded in the Islamic context of medieval Iran. However, the archaeological findings, surviving buildings, and textual records reveal how a complicated system of local and global forces interacted with each other in order to form the distinct architectural and urban identity of the city. The multi-dimensional character of the Ilkhanid city is the outcome of the communication between pre-existing traditions and received concepts. This dialogue, nonetheless, did not incorporate simply the conquered (the Iranians) and the conqueror (the Mongols),⁶ but included other cultural traditions that originated in the Eastern Islamic world

⁵ The Mongols adapted to the traditional structure of power in Iran and China. This adaptation partly reflected in the newly chosen titles of Mongol rulers, such as sultan, *pādshāh*, and emperor, will be discussed later in this dissertation.

⁶ The Ilkhanids were descendants of Chinggis Khan who was the son of Yesügei, the head of the ruling Mongol clan. Therefore, the steppe people of Central Asia who ruled Iran in the thirteenth and fourteenth century are generally called the Mongols, despite the presence of nomadic Turks and Uyghurs among the Mongols. In other words, in the context of Ilkhanid Iran the word "Mongol" no longer serves as the name of a particular clan. On nomadic Turks and Uyghurs, see Skaff and Honeychurch, "Empire Building," 85-89.

and the Far East, most significantly in the sedentary civilization of China. The synthetic identity of the Ilkhanid city is poorly understood for two reasons. First, compared with relatively well-researched Ilkhanid art and architecture of Iran, the urban complexes or urban settlements of the Ilkhans still remain to be fully explored. Our understanding of the Ilkhanid city, for the most part, is confined to the studies concerning surviving individual buildings rather than the city in its entirety. Second, the Ilkhanid city, as I will argue in this dissertation, was hybridized in body and spirit. Not only various tangible formal and stylistic grounds encountered one another in these cities, but also several intangible forces shaping the identity of these urban centers, such as the motivations behind their foundation, were hybrid by nature.

The hybrid character of Ilkhanid art and architecture is often examined in relation to the artistic traditions of settled societies while the cultural conventions of the steppe people are given less credit. Even today, speaking of the Mongol invasions of Iran can arouse national sentiment. In public opinion, the Mongols are still regarded as barbarians whose widespread bloodshed in the thirteenth century destroyed a significant phase of the civilization of Iran. Suffering the consequences of the conquest for centuries, the Iranians have barely recognized the nomadic steppe customs and beliefs of the Mongol invaders as an established form of culture. Whether this view is grounded in the historical reality or is shaped by the myths that grew up around the Mongols' violence, a rather similar mindset has been transmitted from the non-scholarly part of society to academia. For example, in a recent history of Iran, Katouzian writes that:

It is difficult to credit the Mongol regime in Persia with much positive achievement . . . A few notable constructions such as Soltaniyeh and Holagu's [sic] observatory in Maragheh are hardly compensation for the losses they inflicted on the country. Hundreds of thousands (perhaps millions) were killed;

towns were devastated; sedentary agriculture suffered tremendously from pillage, plunder and heavy taxes.⁷

While scholars from an Iranian background have put more effort into disentangling the hard fact from myth, under the influence of their nationalistic viewpoint or Islamic beliefs, they have still tended to emphasize the superiority of the sedentary culture of Islamic Iran over the steppe culture of Mongol nomads. They highlight the Mongols' mass-conversion to Islam or their dependency on their resourceful Persian viziers.⁸ On the one hand, the scholars acknowledge the emergence of new artistic and architectural styles and techniques in the post-conquest period, while on the other hand they attribute the achievements of Ilkhanid art, architecture, and urbanism to the Iranian-Islamic culture of the settled society of Iran. They value this culture as the remarkable source of inspiration for artists and artisans and undermine the nomadic traditions of the Ilkhans themselves. Consequently the Ilkhanid city is described as an arena in which the struggle between nomadic and urban tendencies eventually resulted in the supremacy of the latter.⁹

⁷ Katouzian, *The Persians*, 106 cited in Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, 3-4. This viewpoint is not, however, confined to Iranian scholars. As Allsen puts it "... the long-held stereotypes in the sedentary world ... viewed ... the steppe peoples as barbarians, destroyers of civilizations, or at best children of nature and noble savages" (Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, 105-106). For more studies on this stereotype, see *ibid.*, 106, n. 31. Biran also writes that "representatives of the sedentary civilizations ... often portrayed them [pastoral nomads] either as a violent force that left no mark of their culture or as source of negative influence that was responsible for 'all that went wrong' with their civilizations (Amitai-Preiss and Biran, eds., *Nomads as Agents*, 1). For more studies on this stereotype, see the notes of chapter one of the book). For more discussion on Chinggis Khan in the western popular imagination, see Marsh and Saruul-Erdene, "I Conquer like a Barbarian!," 278.

⁸ There is no doubt that the Mongols' conversion drastically changed the social and political conditions of the Ilkhanid state. However, the exaggerated interpretation of this historical event offered in some secondary sources sometimes contradicts the accounts of eye-witness historians. For instance, in a section of her book dealing with Ghazan Khan's conversion, Bayani writes that the Ilkhan converted to Islam in order to win the war against Baydu and ascend the throne. While she confirms that this conversion was not entirely sincere, she adds that following the conversion the sovereignty of Chinggisid *Yasa* came to an end forever in Iran and Islam became prevalent again (Bayani, *Religion and the Government*, vol. 2, 441). However, as it will be discussed in chapter 2, we know that Ghazan remained committed to the *Yasa* until his death (Amitai-Preiss, "Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition.").

⁹ Razavi, "Structure of Urban Life," 9; Bayani, *Religion and the Government*, vol. 2, 465-466.

Challenging the stereotypes that have developed in earlier scholarship up to the present time, I will argue that the arts of the Ilkhanids need to be addressed as the product of the interactions between a number of cultural realms without attributing a privileged position to the well-established culture of Iran. There is no doubt that Ilkhanid art and architecture was built on pre-Mongol artistic styles and practices such as the arts of the Seljuq period. The stylistic and technical achievements of the Iranians in different areas of art and architecture prior to the Mongol invasions formed a certain foundation for the new aesthetic idiom that came into being under the Ilkhans. Furthermore, Iran as a result of its geopolitical situation in the medieval world, facilitated the transmission and exchange of cultural, political, and economic traditions between Eastern Asia and the Eastern Islamic world during the *Pax Mongolica*. However, I suggest that Ilkhanid Iran should be given credit for acting as a “contact zone” providing proper context for the encounter between different cultures rather than a prevailing culture that deeply impressed the Ilkhans and manipulated their aesthetic taste.

While admitting the emergence of various non-Islamic/non-Iranian forms and notions in Ilkhanid art and architecture, I specifically focus on the dialogue between the Mongols and the Iranians at the core of the present research, and look for the imported signs and meanings brought in by the Mongol conquerors and injected into the principles of Iranian urban architecture. I concentrate on two major sites in the northwest of Iran, Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya, in order to show how the architectural and urban features of the cities were determined through the complex interaction of various forces.¹⁰ Reassessing the development of these urban sites, I uncover the imported visual, conceptual, and theoretical traditions that

¹⁰ The fieldwork for this project was carried out in 2017 in Ghazaniyya and in 2015, 2017, and 2018 in Sultaniyya.

permeated the whole structure of the cities and examine the mechanisms through which the foreign trends were adapted to suit local values and established traditions of Iranian culture.

This project promotes understanding of Ilkhanid urbanism through reconstructing of the cities that have been partially or completely vanished. The reconstruction is intended to illuminate two aspects of the cities: first, general layout including key architectural elements and their spatial arrangement, and second, major historical figures who contributed to the formation of the cities in the role of founders and patrons. The identification of the Ilkhanid cities is important because they are the least-known aspect of the undertakings of the Ilkhans in Iran. Moreover, the study of intercultural contacts between Mongol rulers and their subjects needs to be grounded in a body of material evidence, otherwise it will be pure speculation about a situation in the past and not necessarily in accordance with the historical reality. Shaping a vivid picture of the Ilkhanid city will significantly develop this solid foundation.

Sources

- *Secondary sources*

The large number of works written on the history of the Mongol Empire have laid the foundations for more detailed studies of art and architecture that flourished in different khanates during the *Pax Mongolica*.¹¹ Part of these studies examines the Mongols of Central Asia in connection with the sedentary civilizations bordering the steppe.¹² Contrary to traditional views

¹¹ For a historiographical study of recent scholarship on the Mongols, see Morgan, *The Mongols* (2nd edition). See also Morgan, *The Mongols*, 27-31.

¹² Two recent publications on the Mongols in western Asia are of great importance: De Nicola and Melville, eds., *The Mongols' Middle East* and Jackson, *The Mongols and the Islamic World*. On the interactions between the Mongols and their northern and eastern neighbors, see Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*; Seaman and Marks, eds., *Rulers from the Steppe*.

representing the nomads as violent barbarians,¹³ more recent studies, exemplified by the innovative books of Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire* and *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia*, draw attention to the influence of the steppe people on their neighbors and highlight their dominant role as active agents in the transcultural exchange of goods and ideas across Eurasia.¹⁴ This unconventional opinion on the Mongols forms the basis for the main argument of this dissertation aiming to uncover the nomadic traditions and concepts brought in by the Mongols to the urban architecture of the Ilkhanid land. This project borrows substantially from the solid scholarship on the history of the Mongol Empire, but intentionally avoids digging deeply into the sociopolitical and religious conditions in different sectors of the empire except for the Ilkhanate.

This dissertation benefits from the great body of literature on Ilkhanid art and architecture. Different forms of decorative arts including textile, ceramic, metalwork, jewelry, and manuscript illustration have been extensively examined.¹⁵ Although delving into the arts of this period is not within the scope of the present research, it is noteworthy that part of the studies done on Ilkhanid decorative arts have raised the issue of continuous artistic communication between East and West Asia, and, thus, the occurrence of Far Eastern motifs and themes in Iranian art under the Mongols. They provide a methodological model, which is also applicable to architectural and urban studies in this project. *Islamic Chinoiserie*¹⁶ and *Khitā'ī: Cultural*

¹³ For the literature on these stereotypes, see footnote 7.

¹⁴ Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*; Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*; Amitai-Preiss and Biran, eds., *Nomads as Agents*. For more examples of studies with a critical approach to cross-cultural interaction, see Canepa, "Theorizing Cross-Cultural Interaction," 21, n. 3.

¹⁵ For example, see Grube *Persian Painting*; Raby and Fitzherbert, eds., *Court of the Il-khans*; Komaroff and Carboni, eds., *Legacy of Genghis Khan*; Komaroff, ed., *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*.

¹⁶ Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie*.

*Memory and the Creation of a Mongol Visual Idiom*¹⁷ are two significant works in this regard (see chapter 6).

Along with the portable arts, a large number of extant architectural remains throughout the territory of the Ilkhanids have been surveyed, analyzed, and published over the last few decades.¹⁸ Wilber's book, *The Architecture of Islamic Iran: The Il Khānid Period*, is still considered the most comprehensive catalogue of the Ilkhanid surviving monuments.¹⁹ In addition to general surveys, in a number of more recent works, such as *The Ilkhanid Shrine Complex at Natanz*,²⁰ architecture has been examined in greater detail in the sociopolitical context of Iran under the Mongols. Despite these efforts, in comparison with pictorial and decorative arts held in many museums around the world, Ilkhanid buildings have been given lesser attention in western scholarship mainly due to the smaller number of expeditions of European scholars to Iran following the 1979 Iranian revolution. Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization (ICHTO), however, has been considerably concerned with the identification and preservation of historic buildings and archaeological sites for the last forty years. In cooperation with ICHTO, extensive research and excavations have been conducted by architectural historians as well as archaeologists in numerous buildings and many historic sites, including the ones founded during the Ilkhanid period.²¹ As a result, a large number of scholarly works published in Persian forms a relatively rich body of literature on Ilkhanid architecture.

¹⁷ Akbarnia, "Khitā'ī: Cultural Memory."

¹⁸ For more examples of the works looking at Ilkhanid architecture, see Golombek, "Cult of Saints"; Blair, "Ilkhanid Architecture and Society"; Blair, "Mongol Capital of Sulṭāniyya"; Blair, Bloom, and Ettinghausen, *Art and Architecture of Islam*; Hoffmann, "Gates of Piety"; Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture*; Blair, "Monumentality under the Mongols."

¹⁹ Wilber, *Architecture of Islamic Iran*.

²⁰ Blair, *Ilkhanid Shrine Complex*.

²¹ For archaeological studies of Ilkhanid historic sites, for instance, see Ganjavi, "Excavation of Tappih-nur"; Asgarian, Muhammadi, and Qasemi, *Report of the Trial Trenching*; 'Ali, *Report of the Second Season*; Muhajerinejad, *First Season of Archaeological Excavation*; Muhajerinejad, *Report of the Trial Trenching*; Velayati,

Despite an awareness of the formal and functional features of Ilkhanid architecture, few attempts have been made, both in western and Iranian scholarship, to contextualize the monuments. The research conducted in this area mainly deals with monuments with the purpose of examining their aesthetic and architectural qualities as individual buildings rather than considering them within the wider context of urban space. This approach results in the compilation of valuable catalogues, monographs, and surveys of the buildings founded by the Ilkhanids, but it does not contribute to the creation of a clear picture of the Ilkhanid city as a whole. Although cities have been given the least attention in the existing scholarship on the architectural undertakings of the Ilkhans, there are still few research works that specifically deal with Ilkhanid urbanism. Two remarkable articles by Isfahanian and Khaza'ili, *The Ilkhanid New Cities and Urban Development in Iran during the Time of the Mongols*,²² and Masuya's publication on the Ilkhanid capital of Takht-i Sulayman²³ are some notable examples in this respect.

Contrary to scant concentration on urbanism under the Mongols in Iran, there is a significant literature on the contemporary cities of the Ilkhanids that developed beyond their territory, in Central Asia and the Far East. The examination of the projects patronized by the Mongols in China and Mongolia throws light on the origin of the models employed by the Ilkhans in the construction of their urban centers in Western Asia. Moreover, making a comparison between Ilkhanid cities and the Mongol-sponsored urban settlements in Eastern Asia

Report of the First Season. For architectural studies of Ilkhanid historic buildings, for instance, see Mirfattah, "Ilkhanid Capital Cities"; Shikari-Niri, "Examination of the Architectural Remains"; Mahdizadih and Nasiri, "Endowed Buildings of Maragha"; Rezvan and Karimian, *Sultaniyya*; Muradi, Musavi-Haji, and 'Umrani, "Re-identification of the Tomb of Ghazan." See the bibliography for further publications.

²² Isfahanian and Khaza'ili, "Ilkhanid New Cities"; Isfahanian and Khaza'ili, "Urban Development in Iran." Both articles are written in Persian.

²³ Masuya, "Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān." See also Masuya, "Ilkhanid Courtly Life."

can be enlightening about how the Mongol conquerors reacted to the long-established architectural conventions of their sedentary hosts (Iran and China). In this regard Steinhardt's extensive research on the cities founded by the Mongol rulers of the Yuan dynasty in China²⁴ and Masuya's studies of the settlements of the Mongols in Central Asia²⁵ are noteworthy examples.

- ***Primary sources***

In view of the relative paucity of the secondary literature on Ilkhanid urbanism, primary historical texts will be regarded as important sources of information on the urban undertakings patronized by the Ilkhans. Written sources regarding the Mongol invasion and their control over Western Asia are rich and can be found in different languages including Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Armenian and some eastern languages such as Chinese and Mongolian.²⁶ The textual evidence includes a wide range of sources from chronicles written by the members of the royal court and the ruling elite to local histories, travel accounts, and religious texts such as endowment deeds (*waqf-nāmihs*). Written records connect the scattered archaeological and architectural remains found at the urban sites together, providing the missing link and, thus, contributing to the formation of an integrated picture of the city. The research, therefore, is based largely on the works of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century authors writing in Persian, specifically three historians: Rashid al-Din (d. 1318), Abu al-Qasim Kashani (d. 1337), and Vassaf al-Hazra (d. 1329). The importance of these books in the study of the Ilkhanid period is that they can be classified as primary sources, according to Morgan's definition. He argues that a text written a

²⁴ Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture." See also Steinhardt, "Plan of Khubilai Khan's Imperial City"; Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture along the Mongolian Road"; Steinhardt, "Toward the Definition of a Yuan Dynasty Hall."

²⁵ Masuya, "Seasonal Capitals with Permanent Buildings."

²⁶ Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, 2.

long time ago is not necessarily a primary source unless it is among the first sources that survive on a particular issue.²⁷ In addition, the three above-mentioned sources are the contemporary accounts of the reigns of Ghazan Khan (r. 1295-1304) and Öljeytü (r. 1304-1316) embracing the first-hand information on the main case studies of this project (Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya). In view of this criterion, several other significant works, such as the invaluable book of ‘Ata Malik Juvayni (d. 1283), *Tārīkh-i Jahān-gushā*, are not included among the selected sources of this study, although it also has been consulted throughout the work, particularly in the sections concerning the history of the Mongol Empire prior to the reign of Arghun Khan (r. 1284-1291).²⁸

Rashid al-Din, Kashani, and Vassaf al-Hazra not only were witness to the events of the time of Ghazan Khan, Öljeytü, and Abu Sa‘id (r. 1316-1335), but also held positions in the administrative system of the Ilkhanid court. They were in regular contact with the Ilkhans themselves, and in this way, their accounts usually reflect their conceptions of their masters. It is necessary at this stage to give a brief outline of the works of the three historians. Shedding some light on these historical characters, this piece of information will enable us to adopt more realistic approach to their works to which we will refer repeatedly in the following chapters. Therefore, they are reviewed in the introduction.²⁹

In 1303, Ghazan Khan, the seventh Ilkhan, commissioned his vizier, Rashid al-Din, who was an influential statesman, to compile a comprehensive account of the history and genealogy of the Mongols. Following the death of Ghazan in 1304, the project of the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh* continued under the auspices of his brother and successor Öljeytü, but substantially expanded in

²⁷ Morgan, “Rašīd al-dīn and Ġazan Khan,” 181-182.

²⁸ In this regard, the significant works of Hamdallah Mustawfi (d. 1349), *Tārīkh-i Guzīdih*, which is a general history of the world, and *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* are also worth mentioning.

²⁹ For further discussion on the importance of Rashid al-Din as a historian as well as a statesman in the Mongol regime in Persia, see Morgan, *The Mongols*, 18-22.

order to cover the whole history of the known world.³⁰ Taking into account Morgan's idea, only those parts of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* concerning the events recorded by Rashid al-Din either as a witness or a participant are deemed as being truly primary source material; for example, his account of Ghazan Khan's reign and his reforms are written from first-hand knowledge. Nonetheless, some sections of the book on the early Mongolian history, which are based on a now lost Mongolian chronicle, the *Altan Deftar*, are still considered primary.³¹ These segments of the book are presumably the oldest surviving materials on this phase of the history of the Mongols.

Kashani's history, the *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, is a substantial book on the Ilkhanid period. While the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* concluded with the account of Ghazan Khan's death, the *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü* covers the next important phase of the history of the Ilkhans, the reign of Öljeytü. Kashani was possibly one of the scribes of the Ilkhanid court who participated in the grand project of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* under the supervision of Rashid al-Din.³² In his chronicle, however, Kashani claims that he compiled the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* and Rashid al-Din took all the credit for it. He was obviously annoyed with the vizier and expresses his displeasure via unpleasant mentions of Rashid al-Din throughout the book; for instance, Kashani calls him Rashid al-Dawla which was the title (*laqab*) of the vizier before converting from Judaism to Islam.³³ Although Kashani's book is the most important source for the period after Ghazan, it needs to be utilized cautiously, particularly regarding his references to Rashid al-Din's words and acts. Being affected by its author's personal struggles, the *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü* is a good

³⁰ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, (Preface) 50-51.

³¹ For more information on the *Altan Deftar*, see chapter 4.

³² Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, (Introduction) 16.

³³ *Ibid.*, 76 & 240-241; Bayani, *Religion and the Government*, vol. 2, 490.

In the Mamluk sources also Rashid al-Din is usually called Rashid al-Dawla. In the Ilkhanid state, the title ending in al-dawla was generally applied to non-Muslims (Amitai-Preiss, "New Material," 26).

example confirming that a primary source cannot be fully relied on merely because it is contemporary with the events of a historical phase; rather such a work must be contextualized more meticulously before we can understand the actual thoughts and ideas it was intended to convey.

Vassaf al-Hazra, the author of the *Tajziyat al-amṣār va tazjiyat al-a‘ṣār* (known as *Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*) worked in the court of Ghazan Khan and Öljeitü assisting Rashid al-Din and his joint vizier Sa‘d al-Din Muhammad Savaji (d. 1311) in court affairs.³⁴ As Vassaf states, his history is in fact the continuation of the work of ‘Ata Malik Juvayni, *Tārīkh-i Jahān-gushā*, for whom Vassaf had the greatest admiration and respect. The *Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf* covers the time period between 1258, the siege of Baghdad, and 1328 the middle of the reign of Abu Sa‘id. The work has been regarded, for the most part, as an eye-witness account of the Ilkhanids.³⁵ In addition to the description of historical events, Vassaf included short poems in his book. The most important piece is a relatively long ode dedicated to Öljeitü in 1312 in which he describes Sultaniyya with a richly poetic language.³⁶

My linguistic capacity does not extend to the sources in Mongolian and Chinese in which I depend on translations and secondary literature. Since the non-Persian sources are barely informative about the camps and cities built by the Ilkhans in Iran, the language restrictions have not been a big obstacle in most of the research. Nevertheless, in the absence of English translation of some invaluable Chinese historical texts, such as the *Yuan Shi*,³⁷ the lack of language proficiency has posed some problems in the study of the urban settlements of the

³⁴ Vassaf presented his book in two parts to Ghazan and Öljeitü respectively in 1303 and 1312.

³⁵ Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, (Introduction) 1-6.

³⁶ Ayati, “Ode of Vassaf al-Hazra,” 25-30.

³⁷ The *Yuan Shi* is the official history of the Yuan dynasty. Despite the historical importance of the source, there are no sections on the other Mongol khanates (including the Ilkhanate) in it (Morgan, *The Mongols*, 15).

Mongols in Mongolia and China (chapter 5). In these cases, I consulted exclusively the secondary sources and relied on the interpretations of the original texts. In addition, the sections of the dissertation dealing with non-Persian historical characters, such as Bolad Aqa (chapter 4), are also largely based on secondary sources, and unfortunately, have not benefitted from the Chinese and Mongolian primary sources, which must have been more enlightening about these figures.

European travelers' accounts of their journey in Mongol territory in the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Far East provide insights into different aspects of the Mongol Empire and also Mongol-European relations. Among the travelers, the written descriptions of two observers, William of Rubruck (d. 1293) and Marco Polo (d. 1324), are of great importance for the purpose of this study since they provide relatively accurate reports of the Mongols' settlements in China and Central Asia as well as their customs and religions. Rubruck was a missionary sent by Louis IX of France (r. 1226-1270). He was given the opportunity of meeting Möngke Khan (r. 1251-1259) in his palace at Karakorum.³⁸ Venetian merchant, Marco Polo, also recorded a great amount of interesting information about the Mongol Empire in his book, particularly on the events of the court of Qubilay Khan (r. 1260-94).³⁹ In addition, some of European travelers heading east stopped in the domain of the Ilkhanate. They have left detailed reports of the cities which they visited en route to Central Asia and China. The account of Ruy González de Clavijo (d. 1412), the ambassador of Henry III of Castile to the court of Timur (r. 1370- 1405), is a notable example in this regard. His description of the Ilkhanid city of Sultaniyya sheds much

³⁸ For the biography and mission of William of Rubruck, see Ruysbroeck, *Mission of Friar William Rubruck*; Morgan, *The Mongols*, 25-26.

³⁹ For the biography and travels of Marco Polo, see Moule and Pelliot, *Marco Polo*; Marco Polo, *Book of Ser Marco Polo*.

light on the physical structure of the city a few decades after the disintegration of the Ilkhanids.⁴⁰ In the Safavid (1501–1736) and Qajar periods (1789–1925) many Iranian cities were visited by European ambassadors, merchants, and travelers whose reports sometimes contain valuable remarks on the Ilkhanid architectural remains.⁴¹

Methods and theories

In comparison with historical texts, archaeological excavations usually produce more factual body of information on the structural features of pre-modern cities. Generating archaeological evidence, however, is associated with some challenges, for instance, the limited coverage of excavations and surveys and the unsatisfactory amount and quality of published data.⁴² In the case of Ilkhanid cities, regrettably, the excavations have been confined to few famous sites (notably Sultaniyya, Ujan, and Takht-i Sulayman) and several other settlements, such as Ghazaniyya, despite their vital role in the political history of the Ilkhanids, have been overlooked. Moreover, even in some of the well-excavated sites, excavations have been limited mostly to archaeological dig, and documenting the unearthed layers has not been a priority. This is particularly the case for Sultaniyya where the whole Ilkhanid citadel was unearthed during sixteen years of excavation. In the absence of sufficient published reports, nonetheless, it is still confusing to differentiate between different phases of construction or understand the spatial arrangement of architectural elements of the citadel.⁴³

⁴⁰ González de Clavijo and Le Strange 1928. For further discussion on the visitors to Sultaniyya, see chapter 3 and also Blair, “Mongol Capital of Sultāniyya,” 140-141.

⁴¹ For more discussion on European travelers to Iran in the Safavid period, see Matthee, “Safavids under Western Eyes.”

⁴² Milwright, “Imported Pottery,” 122.

⁴³ For further information on archaeological studies in Sultaniyya, see chapter 3.

Despite the limitations, excavated findings form a significant body of information for the present research. Archaeologically derived information, combined with the textual accounts of the cities, removes many ambiguities concerning their spatial structure. The combination of excavated materials and written evidence is the base of historical archaeology,⁴⁴ which is broadly conceived as the study of societies that produced textual records.⁴⁵ Historical archaeology can also be defined as the study of the “modern world” or the world that have shaped since about 1500 AD.⁴⁶ While the archaeologists of history merge textual and material evidence, the independence between the two sources of evidence is equally significant. As Kosso argues texts and archaeology can be used “as independent sources of information to function in the accountability of the other as evidence.”⁴⁷

Having examined the Ilkhanid cities being excavated through the perspective of historical archaeology, we can overlay the historical descriptions with the archaeological findings in order to reconstruct parts of the cities that developed under the Ilkhans. The integration of textual evidence and archaeological data, nevertheless, is not always fruitful due to the disparities between the two categories of evidence. Textual sources are sometimes criticized for not being entirely unbiased. The events and figures seen and recorded from the perspective of a Christian missionary, for instance, might have been affected by some degrees of religious or political bias. This issue is particularly the case for the accounts written by court historians, which are the primary historical documents used in this dissertation. Their hyperbolic language for describing the architectural undertakings of their patrons could mislead architectural historians about what

⁴⁴ Orser discusses “historical archaeology” as “the combination of excavated and textual information” in connection with “global historical archaeology” and “modern-world archaeology” (Orser, “Historical Archaeology,” 182).

⁴⁵ Funari, Hall, and Jones, eds., *Historical Archaeology*, 1-3.

⁴⁶ Orser, *Encyclopedia of Historical Archaeology*, (Introduction) xiii-xv; Orser, *Historical Archaeology*, 3-11.

⁴⁷ Kosso, “Epistemic Independence,” 182. For further discussion on this topic, see Kosso’s more recent work: *Knowing the Past: Philosophical Issues of History and Archaeology* (2001).

is uncovered during the excavations since the physical findings sometimes do not match up with what has been exaggeratedly described in the text. Furthermore, their architectural descriptions might refer to the structures that were replaced with later constructions. In this case, court historians' account of a particular site may not correspond to the results of the excavation of the same place. For example, in Kashani's report of the citadel of Sultaniyya one can find some information about the buildings built during the reign of Öljeytü. It is probable that some of them were replaced with Abu Sa'id's buildings. Although archaeologists are able to date roughly the uncovered structures on the basis of their stylistic and technical features, the style and technique usually change slightly over a short period of time, which means that it is almost impossible to determine with certainty whether the unearthed remains belong to the time of Öljeytü or of his successor Abu Sa'id.

Most of the Ilkhanid archaeological sites are urban or rural settlements with several overlaid later layers of habitation. Some of them are still active towns and cities going through constant development projects. Archaeologists are not always given the opportunity to survey sites or conduct rescue excavation in advance of construction.⁴⁸ Private ownership of the properties in the middle of the archaeological sites has caused some valuable physical evidence to distort before being documented and studied (some are not even seen by archaeologists). For instance, in some projects, the sudden removal of earth using machines has changed the order of archaeological layers or has caused some layers to be destroyed.⁴⁹ Regardless of the scale of the construction projects, as large as recently developed streets and neighborhoods or as small as

⁴⁸ For a general discussion on rescue archaeology, see Demoule, "Rescue Archaeology." For various examples of rescue archaeology in different geographical regions, see Baugher, Appler, and Mosseds, eds., *Urban Archaeology*. For the most recent news and examples of rescue archaeology, see RESCUE—the British Archaeological Trust available at <http://rescue-archaeology.org.uk/>.

⁴⁹ For comparison, see *Archaeological Reports*. The journal published by the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies and the British School at Athens, documents many examples of such occurrences.

individual residential units, they could seriously damage the archaeological and architectural integrity of the historical sites. As a result, although a substantial amount of archaeological finds have been unearthed during the last couple of decades in a number of Ilkhanid sites, these sites are still far from being fully understood in their entirety.

In the absence of sufficient physical evidence, aerial archaeology, or the study of archaeological remains by examining them from altitude, is the method that could improve our understanding of the urban fabric of certain cities in the past.⁵⁰ The aerial photographs and satellite images can show the general configuration of now-vanished urban sites.⁵¹ Older photographs are even more useful than more recent ones, since the original layout of the site may be better preserved at an earlier date, and more recognizable in such images. For instance, in the case of Ghazaniyya, the outline of the pre-modern city covered by modern constructions can be generated on the basis of the 1960s aerial image. However, it must be noted that the sketch maps drawn from aerial photographs are less accurate than what can be measured on the ground, and what is measured on the ground is less accurate than what is excavated.⁵² In addition to aerial photographs and satellite images, low-level oblique shots are also significant material providing large-area view of historical landscapes with greater clarity. The tendency to apply these images

⁵⁰ Hanson and Oltean, *Archaeology from Historical Aerial and Satellite Archives*. For more examples of the archaeological use of aerial photos, see Kennedy and Bewley, "Aerial Archaeology in Jordan"; Kennedy, Bewley, and Radcliffe, "Aerial Archaeology in the Middle East."

⁵¹ For more examples of the archaeological use of Google Earth satellite images, see Kennedy and Bishop, "Google Earth and the Archaeology."

⁵² Being located in a different geographical region though, Samarra presents a good example of the city plans generated by photogrammetric techniques from air photography. See Northedge, *Historical Topography of Samarra*, 27-28.

is increasing among archaeologists and architectural historians particularly because of the wider availability of UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle)⁵³ over the last few years.⁵⁴

Visual analysis of medieval miniatures as well as early modern drawings is an effective method enabling us to visualize the general landscape of the Ilkhanid camps and cities of which almost nothing remain today. The paintings are highly informative. They often represent more details than textual accounts, but they need to be consulted cautiously. Images are not unbiased in communicating content. Furthermore, the interpretation of images is qualified by the questions of style and function. In other words, the stylistic and visual features of these manuscripts should be considered alongside the purpose they served and the motivations of their patrons. These visual materials were often produced in the court scriptorium following the styles and pictorial conventions of their own time. Contextualizing these works with their contemporary paintings can reveal the general drawing rules followed by their painters, hence facilitates the analysis and interpretation of their content.

The extent of similarities between the views depicted in these images and the surviving historical landscapes suggests that they must have been painted on the basis of realistic sketches made on site, either by the painter himself or his assistants. However, it is plausible that the painters, to some degree, incorporated their imaginations in the final works. This issue is more noticeable in urban plans and city views. For instance, as we will discuss in the case of Matrakçı Nasuh (d. 1564)'s⁵⁵ topographical paintings of Ujan and Sultaniyya in chapters 1 and 3, in these images the topographic relations of the sites are somewhat inaccurate despite the accuracy of the

⁵³ UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) or drone as more widely used by the public.

⁵⁴ On the application of UAVs in archaeological research, see the special issue of *Drones*: “(Re)Defining the Archaeological Use of UAVs.” For example, see Cowley *et al.*, “UAVs in Context.”

⁵⁵ Matrakçı Nasuh was a historian, geographer, and cartographer in the Ottoman Empire. He accompanied the Ottoman sultan Sulayman (r. 1520-1566) in his campaign to Persia.

appearance of individual buildings. Taking into account that in Ottoman miniature painting the illustrations were created collaboratively by a team of artists with various specialties each of whom executed a particular component of the work, one can explain the low correspondence between the composition of the buildings in the maps and their original setting in reality.⁵⁶ The topographic inaccuracy of the paintings can also be attributed to the fact that the rules of perspective were not followed in Ottoman architectural drawings.⁵⁷ While the painters attempted to depict the buildings or natural elements on a two-dimensional surface, they often failed to give a right impression of their width, height, depth, and position in relation to each other.

As we discussed earlier, the rapid expansion of communication between East and West during the *Pax Mongolica* gave rise to the significant development of transcultural interactions. Among various terms and theories analyzing the complex process of intercultural contacts, this research benefits mostly from the theory of translation, which discusses the concept of translation, beyond the domain of languages, in relation to the transmission of forms and ideas between different cultures. The notion of translation has been discussed by Homi Bhabha in his ground-breaking work *The Location of Culture*.⁵⁸ This book alongside his earlier publication, *The Third Space*,⁵⁹ form the basis for the main discussion of this dissertation in chapter 6. The discussion also benefits largely from the relatively recent publications of Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation*, and Esra Akcan, *Channels and Items of Translation*,⁶⁰ both of which apply the concept of translation in an art/architectural history context. According to this conceptual framework, the hybrid quality of the Ilkhanid cities is scrutinized in order to determine how the

⁵⁶ Ebel, "Representations of the Frontier," 3-5.

⁵⁷ Necipoğlu, "Plans and Models," 236.

⁵⁸ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*.

⁵⁹ Bhabha, "The Third Space."

⁶⁰ Flood, *Objects of Translation*; Akcan, "Channels and Items."

imported notions, themes, and motifs obtained new identity under the influence of the cultural environment of Ilkhanid Iran.

Allsen argues that in the process of cultural exchange, the receiving culture inspects and changes the introduced elements on the basis of its own local assets as well as established traditions. In other words, the new (introduced) items are gradually modified to suit the taste and sensibilities of the culture of adoption. The final product is a new “synthesis”; an innovative combination of the possessions of the receiving culture and what it has received. In the process called “re-identification,” alien elements can be seen by the receiving cultures as either a threat to or an enrichment of their cultural identity. The receiving cultures will be receptive to the new items if they are culturally pre-adapted, which means they can identify the new things with something in their own culture that they have been already familiar with from previous experience. Otherwise, they reject the new items.⁶¹ Allsen’s analysis suggests that in the identification of a hybrid phenomenon, such as the Ilkhanid city, it can be challenging to locate the origin of all the components with certainty as these components might have experienced varying degrees of adaptation. Theory of translation and its suitability for the study of the cultural exchange in the Mongol Empire will be examined in great detail in chapter 6.

Chapter outline

The chapters that follow explore the process during which the Mongols accustomed themselves to the practices of the sedentary world. They examine how the nomad conquerors dismounted from their horses and ascended the throne, how their settled mentality strengthened against their

⁶¹ Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, 98-102.

nomadic background. On the other hand, the following discussion looks into the extent to which the Mongols were inclined to retain their steppe conventions. Focusing on the architectural and urban projects conducted under the patronage of the Ilkhans, the emphasis is on the encounter between these two apparently opposite forces and reflection of this encounter on the urban foundations of the Ilkhanids.

In chapter 1, as a prelude to the study of the Ilkhanid urban foundations, the concept of Ilkhanid urbanism is examined in the broader setting of medieval Islamic world first, and next in connection with major construction activities in pre-Mongol Iran. The first section is a brief overview of the comprehensive transformation that impacted the socio-religious structure as well as the architectural and urban features of the city in the Islamic world during the medieval period. The second section focuses on major urban projects under the Seljuqs (1040-1194) and the Khwarazm Shahs (1077-1231) who ruled Iran prior to the Mongol invasion in the first decades of the thirteenth century, and aims to shed some light on the context in which the Ilkhanid cities were founded. The third section examines different types of the construction projects conducted under the patronage of the Ilkhans in general, and focuses more specifically on the larger settlements designated as their political and administrative centers, such as Maragha, Takht-i Sulayman, and Ujan.

Chapters 2 and 3 deal with the two case studies of this research; Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya. In addition to the topographical reconstruction of the two sites, the foundation of the cities is discussed in connection with the thesis statement of the dissertation, suggesting that the urban architecture of the Ilkhanids reflects the synthesis of Perso-Islamic concepts and Mongolian nomadic ideas. In view of the available research material (both physical and textual evidence), different approaches have been adopted to each case. Dealing with the westward

transmission of cultural traditions as well as the items and mechanisms of transportation, chapter 4 is concerned with the political agents of cultural transmission, more specifically three figures: Rashid al-Din, a Persian vizier, Bolad Aqa (d. 1313), a Mongol tribesman, and Liu Ping-chung (d. 1274), Qubilay Khan's (r. 1260-1294) Chinese chief counselor.

Making a comparison between Ilkhanid urban centers and their contemporary cities in Central Asia and the Far East could be enlightening about the mechanisms through which the interaction between native traditions of the Mongols and long-established architectural conventions of their newly conquered territories (Iran and China) happened. Therefore, chapter 5 focuses on the urban centers built or expanded under the patronage of the emperors (khaqans) of the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), the most powerful khanate after the division of the Mongol Empire, in Mongolia and China.

While the final chapter (6) deals with a variety of terms and notions (such as syncretism, bricolage, creolization, hybridity, acculturation, and postcolonialism) describing different aspects of cultural interactions, it places greater emphasis on the notion of transportation and translation of culture. Being built on the discussions of the previous chapters, chapter 6 theorizes the intercultural contacts between the Mongols and the Iranians on the basis of the theory of translation. The chapter uncovers the interactions that underlie the syncretic nature of Ilkhanid urban architecture and articulates them in three areas as: a dialogue between khans and sultans/*pādshāhs*, a dialogue between tents and buildings, and a dialogue between camps and cities.

To conclude this introductory chapter, it should be emphasized that the sack of Baghdad by the Mongols and the fall of the 'Abbasid Caliphate in 1258 terminated the long dominance of the Arab world and stabilized the political state of Iran. After the establishment of the Ilkhanids

in Iran, as one of the many consequences of the Mongol conquest, Iran became less connected with the Arab lands of the Fertile Crescent –despite their close association since the rise of Islam in the seventh century– and was reoriented towards Central Asia.⁶² Artistically, Iran flourished as a center of art and culture after the Mongol conquest and played the role of a creative mediator between East Asia and the Muslim world. Iran was the entering gate of Chinese motifs and themes into the Islamic world.⁶³ Nevertheless, it must be noted that the so-called legacy of Chinggis Khan pointing to the achievements of Iranian art and architecture following the Mongol conquest, was founded on the ruins of the cities that enjoyed their highest levels of prosperity a few years prior to the Mongol invasion. Although the Mongols –unintentionally– provided a context in which the extensive intercultural contacts changed the face of art and architecture in Iran, they terminated the century-long evolving process that had reached its climax in Seljuq art. This fact is usually ignored by the scholars who regard the Mongol invasions as a turning point in the history of art and architecture of Iran.⁶⁴ On the two-sided outcome of the Mongol conquest, Allsen writes that “when the nomads are brought into the picture, their influence on the course of events is usually addressed under the twin rubrics of ‘communication’ and ‘destruction’.”⁶⁵

⁶² Melville, “The Mongols in Iran,” 37. Over this period, a pre-Islamic concept known as *Iranzamān* (the Land of Iran) or *Iranshahr* (the City of Iran) was revived. Under the Mongols, within the conceptual framework of *Iranzamān*, the connections between Iran and the Central Asian world strengthened and the idea of the political and cultural autonomy of Iran was encouraged by the Mongols and their Persian administrators (*ibid.*, 43).

⁶³ Komaroff and Carboni, eds., *Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 6-7.

⁶⁴ *The legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly art and culture in Western Asia, 1256-1353* was the exhibition organized by Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni. The exhibition was held at The Metropolitan Museum of Art from November 2002 to February 2003 and at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from April to July 2003. A publication with the same title accompanies the exhibition. In the introduction of the book Komaroff and Carboni write that “culturally, the Mongol invasions and the so-called *Pax Mongolica* had the effect of energizing Iranian art and infusing it with novel forms, meanings, and motifs that were further disseminated throughout the Islamic world. In uniting eastern and western Asia for over a century, the Mongols created a unique opportunity for an unrestricted cultural exchange that forever altered the face of art in Iran and made it a focal point of innovation and synthesis for the next three hundred years. This, too, was Genghis Khan’s legacy.”

⁶⁵ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 4.

Chapter One: The Foundation of Urban Centers under the Ilkhanids

Let our capital be our saddle.

—Shaybani Khan, Uzbek ruler (c. 1451-1510)¹

The Arab conquests of the seventh and early eighth centuries brought changes to the spatial and temporal structure of the cities in the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa, although the gradual process of change did not cause a sudden discontinuity with Late Antiquity during the early period.² From the ninth century,³ nonetheless, the material and visual cultures of the Islamic world moved away more noticeably from Late Antique patterns and practices. A number of newly founded cities in this period denote this distance in their built environment.⁴ The architectural and archaeological evidence shows that the urban and rural environments of the Islamic world broke even more significantly with Late Antique roots during the tenth and eleventh centuries. Over the medieval period (roughly the twelfth to sixteenth century), many cities throughout Muslim lands experienced a comprehensive transformation. While the changes to early Islamic preexisting cities were mostly confined to their physical fabrics, medieval cities underwent a metamorphosis in different socio-religious, economic, and political arenas, besides their architectural structure.

¹ Gronke, "Persian Court," 20.

² In modern scholarship, late antiquity is defined as the period between the third/forth and the seventh century during which profound transformation can be witnessed in the physical layout of the cities of the Middle East. For further discussion, see Milwright, *Introduction to Islamic Archaeology*, 29-34.

³ Although the cities in the Islamic world, in a general sense, experienced a process of transformation from the classical city to the Islamic city between the sixth and eleventh centuries, the urban change, in Avni's words "was more complex and involved a wide regional variability of intensification and abatement of settlements." See Avni, "'From Polis to Madina' Revisited," 328.

⁴ Milwright, "Early Islamic Urbanism"; Samarra founded in the ninth century is a good example in this regard. For further discussion on Samarra, see Northedge, *Historical Topography of Samarra*; Leisten, *Excavation of Samarra*.

The medieval period witnessed the formation of cities that gained a certain uniformity both in institutions and architecture. Many Islamic institutions, such as mosques, madrasas, mausoleums, and *khānqāhs*, which were identified with distinctive forms and functions, fundamentally changed the physical and mental character of Islamic cities.⁵ These cities developed in response to the new needs of dynasties, which had passed the period of military expansion and were starting to show signs of stabilization. The building of new urban centers seems to have been part of the development of the concept of Islamic kingship in which the grandeur of the constructions expressed the power and glory of their founders.⁶ Contrary to early Islamic urbanism marked by the transition from preexisting urban settlements to Islamic “medina” (Arabic *madīna*), the medieval period should be perceived as the establishment phase of the so-called “Islamic city.”

The “Islamic city” is a term with “colonialist overtones”⁷ that does not literally exist, but has developed a life of its own in scholarship. At the beginning of the twentieth century the study of the “Islamic city” was based on two approaches. The first approach coming from English and German Orientalist studies, attributed the structure of Islamic cities to social and religious factors.⁸ The second approach coming from French Orientalist studies, addressed the physical features of urban environments of the Islamic world.⁹ Both approaches attempted to establish how the structure of the “Islamic city” is different from that of the “western city.”¹⁰ This body of

⁵ Wolper, “Islamic Architecture and Institutions.” According to Wolper, these institutions could be found in most cities across the Islamic world during the medieval period. Each of the institutions was associated with a certain architectural building.

⁶ Rogers, “Samarra,” 120.

⁷ Wolper, “Islamic Architecture and Institutions,” 920.

⁸ Neglia, “Some Historiographical Notes,” 3.

⁹ Milwright, *Introduction to Islamic Archaeology*, 75.

¹⁰ For more discussion on the early-twentieth-century studies of the “Islamic city,” see Haneda, “Interpretation of the Concept”; Bonine, *Middle Eastern City*.

studies, however, has been heavily critiqued.¹¹ One of the methodological problems of these studies was that they explained the physical features of the “Islamic city” on the basis of few cases in a specific region (mostly North Africa),¹² and then applied the same urban model to many cities in different regions of the Islamic world. Furthermore, many of these studies focused on one particular historical phase in different cities and forgot that Islamic cities have evolved over time. In the 1950s, this Orientalist model of approaching Islamic cities was refined by some scholars.¹³ In later decades more flexible models were suggested, which were applied to study a wide range of cities across the Islamic world in different historical periods.¹⁴ A new phase of scholarship was begun in the 1980s proposing that every city has its own unique identity and should be analyzed in its own distinct historical and geographical conditions.¹⁵ This long process of the evolution of scholarship on the “Islamic city” resulted in the formation of a regional approach to the study of cities in the twenty-first century.¹⁶

A rather vivid image of the built environment of the medieval city as well as the socio-political and economic interactions between the city dwellers has formed on the basis of this substantial body of literature on the evolving concept of the “Islamic city.” Despite the formation of the notion of medieval “Islamic city” as a well-defined phenomenon, urban structure did not take exactly the same form in different regions throughout Muslim lands. Being affected by various political and socio-religious conditions in each region, medieval cities also acquired regionally diverse characters.¹⁷ Adopting regional approaches to these cities helps to understand

¹¹ Hourani and Stern, eds., *Islamic City*; Abu-Lughod, “Islamic City.”

¹² For instance, see Marçais, “L’Urbanisme Musulman.”

¹³ Such as Edmond Pauty; see Pauty, “Villes Spontanées.”

¹⁴ For instance, see Lapidus, *Muslim Cities*.

¹⁵ For instance, see Abu-Lughod, “Islamic City”; Abu-Lughod, “What is Islamic.”

¹⁶ For more studies dealing with this approach, see Neglia, “Some Historiographical Notes,” 18-46.

¹⁷ For a brief bibliography on the regional approach, see Neglia, “Some Historiographical Notes,” 18-25. Also see Wheatley, *Places Where Men Pray*, Part II.

different geographical and cultural forces, along with Islamic juridical and legal parameters¹⁸ that shaped the identity of numerous urban sites spreading all over the Islamic world.

The complex and multi-layered nature of the medieval city defines distinct areas of research for different cities. In addition to the study of the urban fabric in individual cases, the socio-religious and architectural transformation of the medieval Islamic city as a whole needs to be addressed. As it will be discussed in the following pages, the analysis of different processes of change will help to uncover the tangible and intangible forces shaping the distinctive nature of the medieval city. This analysis sheds light on the structural components of the cities as well as different social classes and urban institutions that contributed to the transition from early Islamic urban centers to medieval cities.¹⁹

Ilkhanid cities did not form in isolation. The large number of cities built by the Ilkhans during the post-conquest era developed in accordance with the architectural traditions that had been already established by their predecessors in Iran as well as the patterns that were being practiced by their contemporaries beyond the borders of Ilkhanid state in western Asia. While the main focus of the present research is Ilkhanid cities, the concept of Ilkhanid urbanism will be studied not only in the historical context of medieval Iran,²⁰ but also in the broader setting of medieval Islamic world. Looking at the well-studied cases in the Islamic world as models in this

¹⁸ For example, Abu Lughod discusses three “Islamic” forces that played an important role in the creation of the traditional Islamic city: the juridical distinction between the *Umma* population and the outsiders, gender segregation, and the legal system of property laws; see Abu Lughod, “Islamic City,” 162-163.

¹⁹ Different aspects of this transformation have been tackled in different studies. For instance, in the *Cities and Saints*, Wolper looks at the transformation of urban space in medieval Anatolia in connection with a series of newly built dervish lodges (Wolper, *Cities and Saints*). Addressing the concept of religious transformation in the medieval Islamic society, Mulder also mentions the emergence of “religious effervescence” and the foundation of hundreds of new religious buildings in this era (Mulder, *Shrines of the ‘Alids*). Focusing on Aleppo, Tabbaa examines the transformation of the urban structure of the city in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in the larger context of the urban and architectural transformations that characterized Islamic cities of the medieval period (Tabbaa, “Circles of Power”; Tabbaa, *Constructions of Power*).

²⁰ On the simultaneous usage of Ilkhanid state (Ilkhanid land or territory) in western Asia and Iran in this dissertation, see the introduction.

research, in general terms, could underline certain areas that need to be addressed in the examination of the cities that flourished under the patronage of the Ilkhans. What will be discussed in the following pages is a brief overview of the most remarkable changes affecting the cities that developed between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries across a geographic area known as the central Islamic lands, including Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Turkey.²¹ It must be noted that although the comprehensive transformation impacting the western neighbors of Ilkhanid land might have affected the evolution of the Mongol-sponsored cities, a comparative study of different aspects of the city (whether its materiality or spirituality) in Ilkhanid state and the central Islamic lands may not be always fruitful due to their dissimilar social, political, and religious conditions.

The socio-religious transformation of the medieval Islamic city

The disintegration of the 'Abbasid Empire in 1258, followed by the decline of the caliphate and the rise of local princes, commenced a new era in Islamic history that is characterized by important changes in the social structure of the city. This period sees the emergence of new social players in the medieval society, such as military aristocracy, patrician families, *'ulamā* (orthodox scholars) or religious elite, and sufis. These players maintained the balance of power, although they were constantly threatened by one another and sometimes lost their authority over civil bureaucracy for a while. The social transformation of the medieval Middle East is also marked by “the transition from central control of resources to increasing private control.”²²

²¹ Wolper calls this area “the central Islamic land” because we are witnessing the emergence of some of the most recognizable components of the medieval city (such as mosques, madrasas, *khānqāhs* (and other buildings associated with Sufism), and mausoleums) in this region for the first time; see Wolper, “Islamic Architecture and Institutions,” 912.

²² Gascoigne, “Water Supply of Tinnis,” 173.

Hence, besides the above-mentioned social groups, the role of individuals, such as merchants, became more significant and their political and economic power increased. Powerful individuals attracted the support of commoners through the foundation of charitable institutions. The *waqf*, or charitable endowment, functioned as a mechanism that converted wealth and possessions into social prestige in the medieval Islamic world.²³ This function was not the claimed reason for the existence of the pious endowments, however.²⁴

The religious transformation of medieval society is characterized to a large degree by “a popular atmosphere of religious excitement”:²⁵ the restoration of Sunnism or the Sunni revival²⁶ on the one hand and the rise of Sufism and the expansion of popular religion on the other hand. Between the two, we should highlight the central position of Sufism. The dissemination of mysticism and Sufism alongside the rise of the *khānqāh* significantly changed the medieval society. Foreign military elites regarded Sufi saints as sources of legitimation and sought to gain the blessing and spiritual protection associated with these figures through supporting alive saints or being buried within the shrine complexes around the graves of dead saints.²⁷ Sufis stepped out of their traditional mystical world and established their position in the congregational life of the commoners. Sermons and various religious celebrations were the occasions through which Sufi shaykhs strengthened their links with the common people. Mediating between the military regimes and their subjects, Sufi institutions together with *‘ulamā*, played a central role in the improvement of the internal balance in these societies. Distinguishing between “high culture”

²³ Tabbāa, *Constructions of Power*, 32.

²⁴ It is noteworthy that during the medieval period, Muslim rulers altered the legal parameters of *waqf* on some occasions in order to achieve their own political or financial goals. In this regard, Tabbāa discusses the concept of “state *waqf*,” which was possibly introduced by Nur al-Din Zangi (r. 1146-1174). He diverted monies from the treasury (*bayt al-māl*) into *awqāf* in a way that served his purposes; see Tabbāa, *Constructions of Power*, 33.

²⁵ Mulder, *Shrines of the ‘Alids*, 3.

²⁶ For more discussion on the movement of the Sunni revival, see Tabbāa, *Transformation of Islamic Art*, 11-23.

²⁷ Wolper, “Islamic Architecture and Institutions,” 916.

(the culture of ruling elite, bureaucrats, scholars, and wealthy merchants) and “low culture” (the culture of ordinary people or popular culture) in medieval Cairo,²⁸ Shoshan draws our attention to a third subculture, which is the cult of Sufi saints and claims that, despite the existence of a dichotomy between high and low in the medieval Cairene society, as in many other places, these two cultures shared some common qualities and created a shared cultural domain. The cult of Sufi saints largely contributed to the formation of this common cultural area.²⁹

The architectural and urban transformation of the medieval Islamic city

The medieval Islamic cities are characterized by urban and architectural transformations.³⁰ In addition to the institutional changes discussed earlier that affected the appearance of the medieval city, the drastic changes of structural elements, particularly citadels and pious institutions, also resulted in the physical transformation of the Islamic urban sites. Regardless of the socio-political outcome, the fall of the ‘Abbasid caliphate, as the central pillar of power, and the rise of the Turkish military states significantly transformed the architectural character of the city. The process of political decentralization that pervaded gradually the medieval Islamic world increased the importance of military architecture in the cities. As a result, citadels were constructed in a number of major cities, such as Damascus, Aleppo, and Mosul. The citadels were the new centers of power and government of the military elite that consisted of royal mosques, palaces, and places for ruling family and the military.³¹ In other words, the earlier

²⁸ Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 67.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 21 & 78.

³⁰ Tabbaa, *Constructions of Power*, 1.

³¹ Wolper, “Islamic Architecture and Institutions,” 918. For more discussion on the transformation of citadels in the medieval Islamic world, see Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*; Rabbat, “Militarization of Taste.”

form of Islamic citadel as a military outpost was replaced by a new institution that functioned as the center of the court and the administration in the medieval city.³²

In the late eleventh century, the emergence of court-citadel, as the seat of government and the ruler, and the locus of his military-political power, contributed to a large degree to the architectural transformation of the medieval city. Court complexes formerly situated away from the urban centers were attached to the cities. The location of the citadel usually on an elevated position allowed the court to separate itself physically from the city dwellers, but consolidated the visual interaction between the ruling class and the subjects. The position of the citadel highlights its symbolic role as a dominating element, not merely a defensive unit within the city.³³ The court was linked to the city in two ways: first, through the roads that led the dwellers of the citadel from the citadel gates to the congregational mosque of the city and the major markets; second, through religious institutions such as madrasas and shrines located in the citadel. Although Talmon-Heller describes the citadel as a place of interaction between rulers and their subjects, such communication was limited to particular classes of society such as *'ulamā* and sufis, and the merchants and artisans who were allowed to enter the citadel.³⁴

The other urban element that underwent major changes was the madrasa. In addition to the rise in the number of madrasas, there were changes in the transmission of religious knowledge in these institutions.³⁵ Following the foundation of the great Nizamiyya madrasa in Baghdad by Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092) – the Persian vizier of the Turkish Seljuq sultans, Alp Arslan (r. 1063-1072) and Malik Shah (1072-1092) – and in different parts of the Seljuq Empire

³² Tabbaa, *Constructions of Power*, 56.

³³ Pentz, *Medieval Citadel*, 30.

³⁴ Talmon-Heller, *Islamic Piety*, 10.

³⁵ Although early medieval madrasas were built as individual buildings, by the end of the medieval period, they were joined to mosques, tombs and other structures and formed monumental complexes.

thereafter, the independent religious character of madrasas was diminished. Considering the various financial sources that funded the vast network of Nizamiyya madrasas (including Nizam al-Mulk, sultans, and high officials), Tabbaa interprets madrasas as “institutions for the state.” This role of madrasas seems to have continued into the post-Seljuq era (the twelfth and thirteenth centuries) so that the madrasas founded by Sunni dynasties were understood by modern scholars as a counterweight to Shi‘ism. The architectural form of madrasa revealing its new character as a state institution also consisted of both palatial and religious qualities.³⁶

The emergence of a large number of small mosques, chapels, mausoleums (in the form of free standing buildings or as part of charitable complexes), shrines, *ribāṭs*,³⁷ and monasteries commenced another remarkable string of changes in the urban landscape of the Middle East in the twelfth century. These architectural constructions, in Mulder’s words, gave Islam “an institutional importance and urban visibility” and paved the way for the urban settlements to become genuine Islamic cities.³⁸ Grabar suggests that such varying architectural structures were built in response to different forms of Muslim piety that started to exist as well as the need of smaller social units (family, quarter, and profession).³⁹ Other socio-religious factors, such as the society’s further religiosity and the growth of opposing religious trends (such as partisans of Sunni four schools of law or diverse Shi‘a sects), were also crucial to the formation of numerous new pious institutions. Talmon-Heller claims that the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Muslim community was split into diverse sects and schools seeking their independent identity. This fact

³⁶ Tabbaa, *Constructions of Power*, 125-129.

³⁷ *Ribāṭ* was a term originally used for small fortifications. It was later used for a place where travelers could stay and also a center for sufis and their gatherings.

³⁸ Mulder, *Shrines of the ‘Alids*, 251.

³⁹ According to Grabar, archaeological findings suggest that the alliance of the individual Muslim was parochial in the twelfth century, although no evidence of a parish-like organization in Islam has been found. He questions “whether the parochialism was related to quarters, or whether certain city-wide organizations took precedence over topographical proximity;” see Talmon-Heller, *Islamic Piety*, 23. For the original discussion, see Grabar, “Architecture of the Middle Eastern City,” 38-39.

motivated different congregations to found various houses of worship in order to pray separately. However, given the available historical sources, as Talmon-Heller acknowledges, this hypothesis cannot be ascertained.⁴⁰

As an example of the pious architecture changing the landscape of the Islamic city, one should emphasize the morphological impact of Sufism and its associated architecture in the medieval Islamic world. Focusing on Central Anatolia, Wolper argues that the growth of Sufism and the formation of dervish lodges were influential in the massive physical changes of Anatolian cities during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. For instance, the location and orientation of dervish lodges altered the configuration of space within the city.⁴¹ Following the political decentralization spreading across the medieval Islamic world, the breakdown of the centralized rule was transmitted from socio-political aspects of the society to the physical character of the city and resulted in the development of the cities with a different hierarchy of space. In the new configuration, the city with the pattern of the former Seljuq city embracing a citadel and market area was transformed into an urban area consisting of several separate centers.⁴²

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, under Zangid (r. 1127–1251) and Ayyubid (r. 1169–1260) dynasties, the urban life in Syria and the northern section of Mesopotamia remarkably thrived. Aleppo, Damascus, and some other Syrian cities were transformed into “cosmopolitan Muslim intellectual centers” due to the sudden growth of construction, and the availability of hundreds of jobs, attracting a large group of teachers and students to these cities. In addition to these two groups, one should highlight the role of other classes of immigrants

⁴⁰ Talmon-Heller, *Islamic Piety*, 44.

⁴¹ Wolper, *Cities and Saints*, 7.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 58-59.

including amirs (commanders), *'ulamā*, and bureaucrats, as a “central catalyst” in the prosperity and architectural development of the Ayyubid cities.⁴³

Under the Mamluks (r. 1250-1517) a thoroughly different pattern of architectural patronage can be seen. The Mamluk patrons focused less on the large-scale urban projects, the royal palaces, and the congregational mosques that had been in the center of attention of earlier Islamic dynasties.⁴⁴ Instead, the institutions dealing with mysticism, law, and theology – the ones, which were accommodated in the buildings with more moderate proportions – benefitted from the patronage of the Mamluks. Uncovering the reasons for their patronage policy, Rabbat suggests that the Mamluks who were ethnically and linguistically different from their subjects sought their acceptance. Therefore, they supported the religious class and endowed pious structures to prove their religiosity.⁴⁵ Furthermore, due to the change in the system of patronage, the immense congregational mosques were no longer regarded “as the expression of the identity between state and community and of the role of the state as the political embodiment of Islam.” In the new system people considered different relationship between the state and Islam as a religion. The unity of the Islamic community was not expressed through the state and the state was no longer the single institution that acted for the community, but state and community started to act more independently.⁴⁶

Hamza proposes that the most notable achievement of the Mamluks in the area of urban foundations was the refurbishment of existing towns and providing them with the necessary

⁴³ Talmon-Heller, *Islamic Piety*, 44-45.

⁴⁴ There are some exceptions to this pattern, however. The Mamluk sultan al-Zahir Baybars is a good example in this regard. The large number of buildings he founded (including monumental mosques and shrines) is recognized as the means utilized by the sultan to legitimize his rule in the eyes of his Muslim subjects. For further discussion on Baybars, see Frenkel, “Baybars.”

⁴⁵ Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 284.

⁴⁶ Humphreys, “Expressive Intent,” 83-88 & 92.

institutions of urban life rather than the development of new urban settlements.⁴⁷ The Mamluks established their position as defenders of Islam and Sunni orthodoxy. Under the Mamluks the Sufi movement evolved into institutional communities. In order to legitimize their role as upholders of the faith, the Mamluks shifted to new institutions fulfilling their needs.⁴⁸ Consequently, the central position of the traditional congregational mosques was overshadowed by the emergence of other building forms such as *khānqāh*, *madrasa*, and *zāwīya* that better suited their demands and purposes.⁴⁹

The Mamluks were the heirs of the Ayyubid ideology and like their predecessors pursued the purpose of serving Sunni institutions. The architectural and urban foundations of the Mamluks manifested the grandeur and greatness of Sunni Islam, the Islam that developed with the protection and support of Mamluk amirs. The major monuments of the Mamluk period represent remarkable elements of “palatial symbolism,” in Humphreys’ words.⁵⁰ The Mamluks were not creative patrons in the sense that they did not add any new monumental types or building methods to what they had inherited from Zangid and Ayyubid architecture. However,

⁴⁷ The reign of the Mamluk Sultan, al-Nasir Muhammad (r. 1293-1294, 1299-1309, 1310-1341) marks a golden age in Cairo’s history. In spite of the general characteristics of Mamluk architecture and urban planning, the reign of al-Nasir associated with his ambitious building programs for expanding the urban area which caused the growth in the number of congregational mosques in the fourteenth century. Following his large-scale architectural undertakings, Sultan al-Nasir Hasan (r. 1347–1351, 1355–1361) also combined the madrasa and the congregational mosque and founded a multifunctional complex in Cairo. The number of congregational mosques and multifunctional complexes increased enormously in the fifteenth century; see Behrens-Abouseif, “The Mamluk City”; Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*, 181-282.

⁴⁸ Hamza, *Northern Cemetery of Cairo*, 40 & 55. The changes in Mamluk society and the development of the Mamluk state in Egypt are perfectly reflected in the history of the northern cemetery of Cairo, the *sahara*, since the site was Mamluk from its foundation to its fall. The *sahara* is considered a Mamluk urban settlement, for the dead though.

⁴⁹ The construction of religious and funerary monuments served two different purposes for the Mamluks. In addition to pious motivations, they sought material benefits that could be achieved through the *waqf* system (Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 12). Taking into account the problems of inheriting wealth in the Mamluk system, the *waqf* functioned as a means for Mamluk amirs to pass on some wealth to their families while expressing conspicuous piety (derived from Dr. Milwright’s comments on the first draft of the dissertation).

⁵⁰ Humphreys, “Expressive Intent,” 80.

they constructed lavishly decorated buildings with astonishing speed that immortalized their powerful founders.⁵¹

The transformation of patterns of patronage in the medieval Islamic city

The concept of patronage should be considered in relation to all social, religious, and architectural transformations of the medieval city. On the one hand the socio-religious changes established new patterns of patronage in the medieval society, on the other hand the appearance of new groups of patrons and patronage procedures influenced the quantity and quality of the architectural undertakings. Therefore, one could suggest that the architectural and urban transformation of the medieval Islamic cities was largely dependent upon the changes happened in the patterns of patronage.

A process seems to have begun in the second half of the eleventh century during which the social base of architectural patronage widened and, thus, the nature of the monuments being commissioned became more varied. Before this period the state was identified as the most notable patron who commissioned mainly palaces and congregational mosques.⁵² In the case of Ayyubid Syria the contribution of sultans, state officials, patrician families, and women of the court, as patrons, to the urban development projects increased the diversity of architectural patronage.⁵³ The projects sponsored by different social groups varied in type and scale. For instance, most urban and rural mosques were patronized only by rulers and other members of the

⁵¹ Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*, 45.

⁵² Humphreys, "Expressive Intent," 91.

⁵³ Tabbaa, *Constructions of Power*, 34.

urban and military elite, whereas the construction and renovation of *mashhads*⁵⁴ and *maqāms*⁵⁵ were funded by both the ruling class and commoners.⁵⁶

The changes in the mechanism of *waqf* in the twelfth century, described as “state *waqf*” had an impact on architectural patronage. Furthermore, the codification of new laws of *iqṭāʿ*⁵⁷ encouraged different social classes to involve in architectural patronage because the new system ensured their immediate benefits. The stability of the cities under the Ayyubids also attracted sufis and scholars from Iran and Central Asia and persuaded them to devote part of their properties as *waqf* for the construction of shrines and *zāwīyas* (as they often did in their former home). Tabbaa proposes that “the mania for building” was largely related to both financial and charitable outcome of the *iqṭāʿ* and *waqf* systems.⁵⁸

In common with the Ayyubids, the involvement of different social groups in the construction projects can be seen under the Mamluks. For instance, in Cairo the Mamluk amirs, the *ʿulamā*, and the rich merchants contributed actively to architectural patronage.⁵⁹ The Mamluks patronized religious monuments as an influential means of integration with their Muslim subjects. Moreover, as we discussed earlier, they gained more social significance and acceptance among the indigenous Muslim society through representing Islamic values in their

⁵⁴ A *mashhad* is a shrine built on the site believed to be the place of martyrdom of a religious figure.

⁵⁵ A *maqām* is usually a small shrine built on the tomb of a Muslim saint or on a site commonly believed to be connected with a religious figure.

⁵⁶ Talmon-Heller, *Islamic Piety*, 190.

⁵⁷ *Iqṭāʿ* is a term used for the lands granted to army officials for a limited length of time instead of their regular wage when the state was unable to pay army salaries (Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Iqṭāʿ”). *Iqṭāʿ* underwent basic transformations in the twelfth century (Tabbaa, *Constructions of Power*, 32; for more discussion on the *Iqṭāʿ* in Ayyubid Syria, see Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols*, 371-375). Under the Mamluks, in addition to the wage, Mamluk officers were given an *Iqṭāʿ* grant for the maintenance of additional soldiers under their command (Hamblin, “Egypt: Mamluk Dynasty,” 445).

⁵⁸ Tabbaa, *Constructions of Power*, 33 & 49.

⁵⁹ Considering the complex social structure of Cairo, medieval historians suggest various categorizations. For instance, Ibn Khaldun divided the society into two major groups: the rulers and the common citizens. However, Maqrizi describes a more complex social structure with seven classes. For further discussion, see Hamza, *Northern Cemetery of Cairo*, 35.

large and ornate religious buildings.⁶⁰ Patronage reflected the social structure of the city, different social classes involving in building projects, and the worldview of their wealthy patrons. It is noteworthy that a considerable number of Mamluk constructions, regardless of their function (mosques, madrasas or *khānqāhs*) were converted into *waqf* endowments. In addition to pious purposes, the institution of *waqf* protected one's wealth against confiscation under the guise of the Islamic legal system or *shari'a*.⁶¹

Motivated by their political and religious beliefs, Muslim rulers adopted different approaches to architectural patronage. Making a comparison between the patronage of pious institutions as well as religious scholars by the Zangids and Ayyubids and the Mamluks, Talmon-Heller discusses that the acts of the former were deeply affected by their personal preferences regarding schools of law or their opinions on the study of philosophy and the ancient sciences, while the latter sought to achieve more peace and stability through the treatment of all four schools of law equally.⁶²

Alongside the state as a central system organizing architectural commissions, the name of some individual patrons shines out in the history of medieval Islamic architecture.⁶³ Tankiz al-Nasiri (d. 1340), the governor of the Syrian province during the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad, is a great example in this regard. The study of Tankiz's patronage sheds some light on the internal mechanism of Mamluk architectural patronage and building activity particularly because of the position of Tankiz not only as an architectural patron but also an urban planner.⁶⁴ Taking into account the fact that Tankiz was a contemporary of the famous Persian vizier of the Ilkhans,

⁶⁰ Humphreys, "Expressive Intent," 119.

⁶¹ Hamza, *Northern Cemetery of Cairo*, 35-36.

⁶² Talmon-Heller, *Islamic Piety*, 9.

⁶³ Alongside individuals, there are rare examples of institutions that functioned as patrons, for instance, the *khānqāh* of Sa'īd al-Su'ada patronized the *Turbat al-sufiyya* in Cairo; see Hamza, *Northern Cemetery of Cairo*, 35.

⁶⁴ Kenney, *Power and Patronage*, 79.

Rashid al-Din, and despite the rather hostile encounters between the two states over several decades, one could raise the possibility of a mutual influence between the two patrons through examining their architectural undertakings in their territories. Nevertheless, it must be noted that, in view of the available texts and architectural evidence, it is difficult to substantiate this comparison, but it is worth addressing in our future studies of Mamluks-Mongols encounters.

Major construction activities in pre-Mongol Iran

Mongol campaigns in Iran caused extensive destruction in different aspects of the Iranians' social life and built environment. It took them several decades to get over the shock of the widespread devastation. Focusing on the architecture and urbanism that began to revive under Hülegü, one may discern in them the traces of the monuments and urban complexes of eleventh- and twelfth-century Iran. After the conquest, when the dust settled, large groups of master builders came back to their homeland. These architects and craftsmen who had inherited the skills and abilities of the previous generation contributed to the transfer of motifs, styles, and techniques of the earlier centuries to the architectural undertakings of the post-conquest period and bridged the gap caused by several years of bloodshed. Looking into the major achievements of Iranian architecture and urbanism under the Seljuqs and the Khwarazm Shahs who ruled Iran prior to the Mongol invasion, can shed some light on the context in which the Ilkhanid cities were born. The urban patterns generated in the pre-Mongol period affected the course of subsequent development.

The Seljuq Empire was a Turko-Persian Sunni Muslim empire that ruled vast areas of Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and most of Iran during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Under the Seljuqs, Anatolia and Iran gradually overshadowed the political centrality of the Arab

territories. Islamic power was shared among the traditional centers in Damascus and Baghdad and Seljuq capitals in the Iranian world, Marv, Nishapur, Rayy, and Isfahan.⁶⁵ Following the Seljuqs, the Khwarazmian dynasty, which was a Persianate Sunni Muslim dynasty, controlled large parts of Central Asia and Iran during the twelfth century and the early years of the thirteenth century. The importance of Iran as a center of artistic production increased with these political changes.

The concept of Seljuq art and architecture⁶⁶ in Iran is usually discussed in relation to the artistic production between the middle of the eleventh century, when the Turkish dynasties established themselves in Eastern Persia, and the beginning of the Mongol invasion. Persian art and architecture of the Seljuq period flourished in a multi-centered landscape in which not only the major urban centers of the Persian plateau but also smaller towns and cities attracted the attention of patrons, artists, and craftsmen. The Seljuq period is often regarded as one of the most important phases of Persian art due to the development of techniques (of design, construction, and decoration) and the establishment of formal solutions after the long process of trial and error taken in the first centuries after Islam.⁶⁷ Comparable to the Ilkhans, the Turkish Seljuqs, who had slight artistic and literary heritage of their own, were deeply influenced by the cultural environment of Iran. Nonetheless, the occasional appearance of Central Asian-Turkic motifs and elements affirms that the Seljuqs, despite patronizing various forms of Persian art and literature, retained some aspects of their ethnic identity and tribal culture.

⁶⁵ Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture*, 89-90.

⁶⁶ As Akimushkin and Ivanov discuss, the classification of art by dynasties is too artificial. This approach should serve merely as chronological guide; see Akimushkin and Ivanov, "Art of Illumination," 35. However, despite the rejection of dynastic names, the use of rulers' names is sometimes justified since the rulers played a central role – as patrons – in the formation of the arts, such as Timurid art; see Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, xviii.

⁶⁷ Korn, "Saljuqs: Art and Architecture."

Among numerous figures sponsoring construction projects, some names shine out in particular. One of them is the Persian vizier Nizam al-Mulk, who was given full authority over the empire's organization. Remarkable architectural undertakings were conducted under the supervision of Nizam al-Mulk, such as the network of Nizamiyya madrasas discussed earlier in this chapter, and the expansion of the congregational mosque of Isfahan.⁶⁸ In spite of the large number of individual religious and secular monuments that have remained of the cities, the extent of the destruction caused by natural and human factors particularly during the Mongol period makes it difficult to represent a vivid image of the Seljuq city as an integrated whole. To obtain a general idea of the layout of the Seljuq cities, the Seljuq phase of development in the life of the two well-studied cities of Isfahan and Nishapur will be discussed in the following section. The main aim is to understand the spatial structure of the cities between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries through finding the location of the key structural elements and reconstructing their arrangement in the urban landscape of the cities.

Seljuq Isfahan

It should not be challenging to identify the individual monuments built during the Seljuq period in Isfahan thanks to the literary sources and the architectural/archaeological data. There is, however, a challenge in distinguishing between several earlier phases of construction intertwining to form the Seljuq and post-Seljuq layout of the city. Isfahan under the Seljuqs encompassed an existing urban fabric that communicated actively with the newly-founded monuments. Extensive archaeological excavation will be needed in the future to uncover the

⁶⁸ Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Seljuq, Turkish Dynasty."

Seljuq development of the city and the spatial organization of the urban elements during this period.

Tughril Beg (r. 1037-1063), the founder of the Seljuq Empire, conquered Isfahan in 1051 and transferred the seat of government from Rayy. Under the governorship of Abu al-Fath Nishapuri, appointed by Tughril, Isfahan began a period of rapid urban revival.⁶⁹ Nasir-i Khusraw's (d. 1088) description of the city in 1052 testifies to the prosperity of the city under the Seljuqs. He writes:

... The city has a high, strong wall with gates, embrasures, and battlements all around. Inside the city are courses for running water, fine tall buildings, and a beautiful and large Friday mosque ... everything inside [the city] is in a flourishing state, as I saw nothing in ruins. There were many bazaars; one I saw was only for money changers and contained two hundred stalls. Every bazaar has doors and gates, as do all quarters and lanes. The caravanserais are exceptionally clean, and in one lane ... there were fifty fine caravanserais, in each of which were retail merchants and shopkeepers ...⁷⁰

... Of all the Persian-speaking cities, I never saw a finer, more commodious, or more flourishing city than Isfahan ...⁷¹

The urban development of Isfahan continued during the reign of Tughril's successors, Alp Arslan and his son Malik Shah. The reign of Malik Shah is particularly remarkable for the number of architectural undertakings conducted inside and outside the city. The old fort was restored and a new fortress, named Dizhkuh or Shah-Dizh, which worked as the treasure house of the sultan, was built about 30 kilometers southeast of Isfahan.⁷² In the north shores of the Zayandih Rud, outside the walls, the Seljuqs founded numerous garden-palaces. In addition to the extramural gardens and pleasure palaces, there were several "green belts" within the walled

⁶⁹ Kamaly, "Isfahan: Medieval Period."

⁷⁰ Nasir-i Khusraw, *Book of Travels*, 98.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁷² Kamaly, "Isfahan: Medieval Period."

city, some of which became the ground of the later foundations; for instance, the Seljuq garden of Naqsh-i Jahan on which the Safavid palatial complex was built. Furthermore, at that time the congregational mosque was extensively renovated and expanded. The hypostyle mosque was transformed into a four-*ivān* structure, which became the typical style of the mosques built across Iran in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁷³ The most important Seljuq extensions to the mosque were two domed structures; the dome of Taj al-Mulk (or *gunbad-i Khāgī*) and the dome of Nizam al-Mulk which were built respectively in the north and south of the central courtyard. According to the foundation inscriptions running around the interior of the domes, the former was built by order of Taj al-Mulk in 1088-89 and the latter was constructed under the patronage of Nizam al-Mulk, possibly a year or two earlier.⁷⁴

Considering the general layout of the city, it seems certain that Seljuq Isfahan retained the Buyid configuration. Under the Buyids (934-1062), a defensive wall with twelve gates was built around part of the city and a citadel was placed in its southeast quadrant. The area of the walled city was divided into four quarters. In the Seljuq city, a public square known as the Old Maydan (*Maydān-i Kuhnih* or *Maydān-i Qadīm*) lay at the intersection of axial bazaars or roads that had split the walled city into four quarters, just south of the congregational mosque (the Masjid-i Jami'), which had been founded in the eighth century. The *maydān*, in the center of the city, had been possibly the focus of public life since Seljuq times, if not earlier. The monuments related to the royal families and the notables as well as major buildings such as madrasas and mosques were often constructed in the area surrounding the city center;⁷⁵ for example, the Malik

⁷³ Grabar, *Great Mosque of Isfahan*, 56. For more discussion on the meaning and origins of four-*ivān* mosques, see Keall, "Thoughts on the Early Eyvan."

⁷⁴ Blair, *Monumental Inscriptions*, 162.

⁷⁵ Golombek, "Urban Patterns in Pre-Safavid Isfahan" 28-32; Falahat and Shirazi, "New Urban Developments," 614-616.

Shahi madrasa was built by Malik Shah in the Karan quarter and the Nizamiyya madrasa was built by Nizam al-Mulk in the Dardasht quarter.⁷⁶ The *maydān* kept its importance until the Safavid period when Shah ‘Abbas built the Maydan-i Shah and made it a religious, administrative, and commercial focal point in the life of the city (Fig. 1-1).

In many Iranian cities, *maydāns* were located on the outskirts serving as horse racing courses and polo fields. Since horse races were not daily activities, the courses were sometimes converted into markets or commercial centers. In a similar way, the Old Maydan of Isfahan seemed to be located at the edge of the old city up to the eighth century, but it was gradually surrounded by later constructions, and was placed in the center of the Buyid city. Gaube suggests that the Old Maydan in Seljuq Isfahan became the religious and administrative center of the city while the *maydān* partially retained its original function as a sports and commercial site. The central bazaar of the city formed around the Old Maydan and the smaller ones gradually grew near the city gates. In addition, the linear bazaars developed along the intra-urban routes. The residential quarters, usually with high building density, filled the space around the *maydān* and between the communication axes.⁷⁷

Seljuq Nishapur

During the Mongol invasion of Nishapur in 1221, the city was devastated and many buildings were leveled with the ground. As Yaqut al-Hamawi (d. 1229) puts it “the Mongols left not one stone standing upon another.”⁷⁸ Nishapur, however, was recovered again and became a populous

⁷⁶ Kasayi, “Isfahan and the Nizamiyya,” 7.

⁷⁷ Gaube, *Iranian Cities*, 76-82.

⁷⁸ Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 385.

center in the fourteenth century. Hamdallah Mustawfi calls it *umm al-bilād* (the mother of cities) of Khurasan, which denotes the important position of the city even after the Mongol conquest.⁷⁹ Despite the late thirteenth-century revival, repeated earthquakes (in 1389, 1405, and 1673) afterwards severely affected the spatial structure of the city and forced the residents to rebuild the new city at another location.⁸⁰ Considering the multiple phases of construction and destruction of the city that happened through the medieval period, the reconstruction of the Seljuq city must remain highly speculative. Nevertheless, in view of the significance of Nishapur as the *dār al-mulk*⁸¹ of Khurasan under the Seljuqs, and the possible influence of the city over its contemporary urban centers throughout eastern Iran, it is crucial to dig deeply into the literary sources and physical remains of the city in order to uncover the pieces that shaped the outline of Seljuq Nishapur.

In the *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, Mustawfi writes that the *dār al-'imāra* (the seat of government) of Khurasan was in Marv and Balkh until the end of the Tahirid dynasty (r. 821–873) but during the Saffarid dynasty (r. 861–1002) Nishapur became the *dār al-mulk* of Khurasan.⁸² However, Mustawfi seems to be slightly inaccurate in dating the transfer of the capital to Nishapur since at the time of the earthquake of 856, the city had become capital of Khurasan and was governed by Tahir ibn 'Abdallah (r. 845–862).⁸³ The Seljuqs captured Nishapur twice, first in 1038 when Tughril was enthroned in Nishapur and chose the city as his capital, and second in 1040 when the Seljuqs defeated Sultan Mas'ud Ghaznavi (r. 1030–1040) who had reoccupied the city. The third Seljuq sultan, Alp Arslan resided in Nishapur for a period of time. Eventually Sultan Sanjar (r.

⁷⁹ Mustawfi, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 212.

⁸⁰ Melville, "Earthquakes," 117.

⁸¹ The term *dār al-mulk* used in historical texts refers to a city with political, economic, and administrative centrality. It is usually used as the equivalent of "capital."

⁸² Mustawfi, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 212.

⁸³ Melville, "Earthquakes," 104.

1097-1157) transferred his court from Nishapur to Marv due to some strategic considerations. Marv was considered a suitable place for the sultan's military purposes, such as the defense of the northeastern border of Iran and his campaigns against the Khwarazm Shahs and the Qara Khitay.⁸⁴

During the medieval period the city of Nishapur was formed from three parts: the citadel (*quhan-dizh*), the inner town (*ḥākim-nishīn*) and the outer town (*rabaẓ*).⁸⁵ The citadel and the inner town were fortified in pre-Islamic times but the walls were being destroyed in the early Islamic centuries and the main body of the city shifted to the outer town. From the late tenth century the citadel seemed to begin a period of abandonment and depression, while the outer town became the central part of the city, economically and politically, containing key urban elements such as the congregational mosque, most of the bazaar, the *dār al-'imāra* or government building, the houses of the notables, and the popular residential quarters. At the time of the Seljuq invasion of Nishapur, the outer town seemed not to be fortified, or even if the walls and gates existed they might have been superficial barrier aimed to impress the invaders rather than working as effective defensive structures.⁸⁶ Bulliet suggests that the reason that the outer town was not suburban but contained the functional core of the city could be that Nishapur became a major Muslim administrative center after the Arab conquest and developed significantly. The growth happened outside the inner town which was small and possibly remained the residence of the old population of the city.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Bosworth, "Nishapur."

⁸⁵ Ibn Hawqal, *Ṣūrat al-'Ard*, 167.

⁸⁶ Paul, "Seljuq Conquest(s)," 583-584; Rante, "Nishapur: Archeology."

⁸⁷ Bulliet, "Medieval Nishapur," 72-73.

Ibn Hawqal (d. 988) calls Nishapur, Abrshahr,⁸⁸ and mentions some of the structural components of the city. According to his account, the citadel, the inner town, and the outer town of Nishapur were flourishing in the tenth century. The citadel was situated outside the inner town, both of which were embraced by the outer town. The citadel and the inner town had two and four gates respectively. The outer town also had several gates that Ibn Hawqal names just four of them: Bab al-Qubab towards Iraq and Gurgan, the gate of Jik (it is also read as Jig or Jang) towards Balkh, Marv, and Transoxiana, the gate of Ahvasabad towards Fars and Quhistan, and the fourth gate towards Tus. The congregational mosque of the city, built by the successor of the famous Ya'qub Layth-i Saffari (r. 861-879), 'Amr-i Layth (r. 879-901), was located in the outer town at a place called al-Mu'askar (army camp). The *dār al-'imāra* also founded by 'Amr-i Layth opened on a square called the Maydan al-Husayniyn, and not far from this was the prison of the city. The bazaars were also located in the outer town. The most splendid bazaars were Murabba'at al-Kabira (*Chāhār-Sūq-i Buzurg* or the Large Crossroads Market) and Murabba'at al-Saghira (*Chāhār-Suq-i Kūchak* or the Small Crossroads Market) (Fig. 1-2).⁸⁹ There were numerous shops in the bazaars allocated to various types of crafts, and also a number of caravanserais where the merchants ran their business.⁹⁰ According to Hakim-i Nishapuri (d. 1014), Nishapur had forty-seven quarters,⁹¹ while Maqdisi (d. 991) reports forty-two quarters.⁹² Half of these quarters are now nothing but some names and there is no evidence to mark their

⁸⁸ Ibn Hawqal, *Ṣūrat al-'Ard*, 166.

There are different versions of this name in different historical texts such as Abrshahr (Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 383). Although the origin of the word is still unknown it is possibly derived from the name of the Sasanian province of Abharshahr or Abarshahr.

⁸⁹ The large cruciform mound identified by P. M. Sykes as "ruins of Bazaars" in 1911 was presumably the Large Crossroads Market; see Bulliet, "Medieval Nishapur," 74-75.

⁹⁰ Ibn Hawqal, *Ṣūrat al-'Ard*, 166-169; Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 383-385.

⁹¹ Hakim-i Nishapuri, *Tārīkh-i Nishābūr*, 200.

⁹² Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 384.

locations. On the basis of photographic and written sources, however, Bulliet speculates on the location of the remainder.⁹³

This section will be concluded with a brief overview of the quarter of Shadiyakh, which was a dominant element in the urban landscape of Nishapur through the medieval period. The quarter was originally a garden area outside the city. Hakim-i Nishapuri attributes the foundation of Shadiyakh to ‘Abdallah ibn Tahir al-Khurasani (r. 830-844), the Tahirid governor of Khurasan. This site was firstly used as a military structure, but it rapidly became an urban political center enclosed by a rampart.⁹⁴ The palaces which the Tahirids constructed there were destroyed by Ya‘qub-i Layth. Hakim writes that Ya‘qub built gardens there and Shadiyakh converted into a city [*shahr*]⁹⁵ during his time.⁹⁶ Under the Samanids (r. 819-999), Shadiyakh integrated into the urban area and was considered one of the quarters of the city.⁹⁷ During the later developments of Nishapur, Shadiyakh gradually became detached from the actual center of the city. Being covered mainly with gardens, Shadiyakh provided a proper site for palatial buildings. For example, Alp Arslan built a castle in the quarter of Shadiyakh and fortified it as his treasure house. In the mid-twelfth century, following the destruction of the city by the Ghuzz, the population of Nishapur moved to Shadiyakh and rebuilt the town there. In the next phase, Mu‘ayyid al-Din Ay Aba, one of Sultan Sanjar’s commanders, rebuilt the walls of the quarter and took the population with him to Shadiyakh.⁹⁸ In 1209 an earthquake destroyed the prosperous quarter, but Shadiyakh was rebuilt again by order of Muhammad Khwarazm Shah (r.

⁹³ Bulliet, “Medieval Nishapur,” 77-85.

Following the excavations made at a number of places in Nishapur, some of Bulliet’s speculations have been criticized; see Wilkinson, *Nishapur*; Rante and Collinet, *Nishapur Revisited*.

⁹⁴ Rante, “Nishapur: Archeology.”

⁹⁵ The word “city” applied by Hakim may solely refer to the flourishing state of Shadiyakh during the time of the Saffarids.

⁹⁶ Hakim-i Nishapuri, *Tārīkh-i Nishābūr*, 201.

⁹⁷ Melville, “Earthquakes,” 106.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 105.

1200-1220) quickly afterwards. Therefore, prior to the Mongol invasions, Shadiyakh was a prosperous city quarter and a center of the population.⁹⁹

Nasir-i Khusraw visited Nishapur in 1046. He referred to a madrasa that was being constructed by order of Tughril near the Saddlers' Bazaar.¹⁰⁰ Nizam al-Mulk also founded his Nizamiyya madrasa in Nishapur, which was his original home. On the basis of literary sources Bulliet lists thirty-eight madrasas, in addition to Nizamiyya, that operated in Nishapur between the tenth and twelfth centuries.¹⁰¹ This piece of historical information alongside part of the city unearthed during the excavations conducted by the Metropolitan Museum in the 1930s (more specifically in the mounds known as the Vineyard Tappih, Tappih Madrasa, Tappih Sabz Pushan, and the Qanat Tappih) attest to the importance of Nishapur as “a cosmopolitan, polyglot city, a famed center of learning” through the early Islamic and medieval period (Figs. 1-3, 1-4).¹⁰² The brickwork, wall painting, and carved stone and plaster decoration found across the excavated mounds show exquisite craftsmanship, which reveals that not only the rulers of Nishapur and their palatial complexes but also the commoners and their residential quarters benefited from a carefully executed architecture.

The study of pre-Mongol Isfahan and Nishapur showed that, despite the presence of some common urban elements such as mosque, madrasa, bazaar, and *maydān*, the two cities varied in layout. Taking into account the dissimilar sociopolitical and environmental conditions of Isfahan and Nishapur, they seemed to follow different processes of development through the medieval

⁹⁹ On the history of Nishapur, see also Wilkinson, *Nishapur*, 37-44.

¹⁰⁰ Nasir-i Khusraw, *Book of Travels*, 2.

¹⁰¹ Bulliet, *Patricians of Nishapur*, 249-255.

¹⁰² Wilkinson, *Nishapur*, 290.

period. The examination of the two cases suggests that we should expect the existence of several local/regional methods of urban planning under the Seljuqs rather than the emergence of one single style used in different parts of the country. In other words, unlike the individual buildings described with certain formal and technical features, Seljuq urbanism hardly fits into a well-defined frame. This issue is partly because of the ever-changing nature of the organic cities that prevents the formation of a constant arrangement. The examination of pre-Mongol cities improves our understanding of the temporal context in which the Ilkhanid cities were founded. However, these studies barely give a benchmark for comparison, primarily because the Ilkhans built their urban foundations in one stage on the basis of pre-designed plans, in contrast to the urban centers that developed over a long period of time and inherited, in each phase of development, certain structural components, such as major thoroughfares and public buildings that previously existed. Therefore, the organic layout of the Seljuq cities was affected by some limitations which were not applicable to the urban plans designed for the cities of the Ilkhans.

Ilkhanid urban foundations: A brief overview

The urban development in Iran during the Ilkhanid dynasty was largely influenced by fluctuations in the political, economic, and cultural environment of the country. After the conquest of Iran, the Mongol rulers and princes, who were designated as the representatives of the Great Khans, began the revitalization of the towns and cities that had been extensively destroyed in the course of the invasion in the 1250s. Although the Mongols mostly pursued their own interests, establishing security and stabilizing commerce across the country, their undertakings gradually resulted in the recovery of urban life. Many cities in Azerbaijan and Greater Khurasan, particularly Marv and Tus, significantly flourished during the first years of

Ilkhanid rule to the extent that the latter promoted to the capital or *dār al-mulk* of Khurasan.¹⁰³ In addition, within the cities, the emergence of new patrons breathed new life into art, architecture, and historiography.

The political stability after the arrival of Hülegü (r. 1256-1265) and the foundation of the Ilkhanid dynasty intensified the process of urban development. Under Hülegü the architectural and urban projects were mostly conducted in the western regions of the country, with some exceptions, for instance the city of Khabushan in Khurasan which was largely rebuilt by Hülegü and the notables of his court.¹⁰⁴ According to Juvayni the city and its infrastructure, such as the underground water system [*kārīz*], was restored by order of Hülegü. Juvayni emphasizes that the cost of the construction work was covered by the Ilkhan in order to comfort the people who had been severely hurt during the Mongol invasion.¹⁰⁵ In western Iran, Hülegü firstly focused his attention on the reconstruction of Baghdad, but following the designation of Azerbaijan as the headquarters of the Mongols, his urban development activities extended to this region. Maragha was chosen as the first capital of the Mongols and the most well-known architectural project of Hülegü, the observatory, was founded there with the effort of Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (d. 1274), the famous scientist and astronomer. In addition to cities, Hülegü erected several buildings in his seasonal camps where he resided for most of the year; for example, Rashid al-Din refers to a splendid house [*sarā*] in Alatagh and an idol-temple [*but-khānih*] in Khuy, both in Azerbaijan, that were built by the Ilkhan.¹⁰⁶ Rabban Sawma (d. 1294) also writes about a church in Alatagh

¹⁰³ Isfahanian and Khaza'ili, "Urban Development in Iran," 13.

¹⁰⁴ In addition to Hülegü, Ghazan Khan also erected magnificent buildings in Khabushan. According to Rashid al-Din, the great idol-temples founded by Ghazan Khan and the way he performed the Buddhist rituals surprised the Buddhist priests [*bakhshīyān*] who lived there; Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1254.

¹⁰⁵ Juvayni, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushāy*, vol. 1, (Introduction) 43.

¹⁰⁶ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1048.

which had been built by Doqуз Khatun (d. 1265), the Christian wife of Hülegü.¹⁰⁷ The other example is a fortified structure reported to be built by order of Hülegü to protect his mythical treasure gathered in Baghdad and other campaigns. Rashid al-Din states that Hülegü ordered Majd al-Din-i Tabriz to construct a strong building in a mountain called Tillah¹⁰⁸ on the shore of Lake Urmiya and Salmas,¹⁰⁹ while some scholars speculatively suggest that the building was located on the rocky island of Shahi in Lake Urmiya, although no archaeological work has ever undertaken to support this claim.¹¹⁰

The local powers in the south, particularly Fars, Kirman, and Yazd, retained their place through submitting themselves to Hülegü. They strengthened their connections with the Mongol court via marriage. The hot and dry climate of central and southern Iran did not attract Mongol pastoralists.¹¹¹ While there is no evidence of the physical presence of the Ilkhans in these regions, the historical accounts reveal that they controlled these areas through supporting certain groups of local princes. Interestingly, in place of princes who were often of young age, their powerful mothers acted as regents intervening in political and economic affairs. These women were often active patrons who financed extensive architectural projects. Qutluğ Tarkan Khatun in Kirman region is an outstanding example in this regard.¹¹² During her reign she initiated a vast architectural project, consisting of five major buildings, and ordered the construction of underground water channels. In addition, approximately sixteen charitable foundations bear

¹⁰⁷ Sawma, *Monks of Kublai Khan*, 75.

¹⁰⁸ Tillah possibly means hillside.

¹⁰⁹ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1022. According to Rashid al-Din, Abaqa Khan also was buried beside the Great Ilkhan [*Ilkhān-i buzurg*] in Shahu-tillah (ibid., 1118).

¹¹⁰ Wilber, *Architecture of Islamic Iran*, 9.

¹¹¹ The Mongols' long-lasting reliance on their herds of mares and horses, and the key role of the extended grasslands of Central Asia in their pastoral economy is well recognized (Morgan, *The Mongols*, 32). The loyalty of the Ilkhans to their nomadic customs persuaded them to found their settlements, whether seasonal quarters or permanent cities, in the natural landscapes that resembled the steppes of Central Asia and supported their nomadic economy. Therefore, they had a preference for regions with grasslands.

¹¹² Melville, "Mongols in Iran," 46.

witness to her philanthropy.¹¹³ Wealthy provincial families also extensively supported the religious classes, both the *'ulamā* and Sufi shaykhs, by conducting architectural programs and constructing religious buildings in the cities. These families contributed in strengthening the values of Islamic communal life that had been severely damaged during the Mongol invasions.¹¹⁴

Tabriz and Takht-i Sulayman developed during the reign of Hülegü's successor, Abaqa Khan (r. 1265-1282). In addition to the Mongols, Persian families also started to take part in urban and architectural projects. The most famous one is the Juvayni family, which was promoted to the higher political positions in the Ilkhanid court, particularly under Abaqa Khan. Several members of this family invested significant amounts of their wealth in the construction works and patronized several projects in Khurasan, Araq-i Arab, Araq-i 'Ajam or Persian Araq (particularly Isfahan), and Rum.¹¹⁵

Despite the cases mentioned earlier, it is noteworthy that the Mongols' policy of urban development, especially during the earlier Ilkhans, was confined to the cities designated as their major urban centers. Many smaller cities and towns continued to suffer from the consequences of the Mongol invasions into the first half of the thirteenth century. During the reign of Abaqa Khan's successors, Arghun Khan and Gaykhatu (r. 1291-1295), the Ilkhanids broadened their construction activities and founded several new cities rather than focusing on the renovation of the existing ones. The best-known case was the city of Arghuniyya in the vicinity of Tabriz. Nevertheless, nothing remains of most of these cities since they were mainly built near the location of their seasonal camps without consideration for the infrastructures essential to urban life.

¹¹³ Quade-Reutter, "Qotloğ Tarkān Kātun."

¹¹⁴ Melville, "Mongols in Iran," 61.

¹¹⁵ Isfahanian and Khaza'ili, "Urban Development in Iran," 16.

Under Ghazan Khan a comprehensive construction program was implemented that, despite the earlier schemes, took into consideration all the necessary components of a prosperous city and the welfare of its inhabitants. Rashid al-Din praises Ghazan Khan for this program and confirms that the system designed by the Ilkhan was better than anyone would think possible since all the technical and financial issues of the work were handed over to the most reliable experts.¹¹⁶ While the architectural undertakings led by Ghazan Khan culminated in the city of Ghazaniyya, the construction activities were not confined to the capital and were extended to almost all the regions of the country, beyond the areas where the Ilkhans resided. In addition to the undertakings initiated by Ghazan himself, he issued a decree (*yarlīgh*) that compelled the local rulers and governors to conduct architectural and urban projects in their domains.¹¹⁷

Blair raises an interesting point about the network through which “Ghazan’s reforms diffused vertically through the society and horizontally into the countryside.” Due to the financial reforms of Ghazan’s vizier, Rashid al-Din, especially regarding the system of taxing, the Iranian civil bureaucracy, whose fortune was mainly based on land tenure, became wealthier. As a result, along with the buildings patronized by the royals and the notables in the Ilkhanid capitals, the economic improvement enabled the local officials to finance many architectural projects in their hometowns.¹¹⁸ In addition to the considerable number of construction projects, the movement of craftsmen and materials among different urban centers is of great importance. Taking into account these varied sources of men and materials, Blair highlights three levels of

¹¹⁶ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1370.

¹¹⁷ Isfahanian and Khaza‘ili, “Urban Development in Iran,” 19-20.

¹¹⁸ In Sheila Blair’s words “the extensive reforms of ... Rashid al-Din ... produced an economic upswing ... and shifted the balance of power in favor of the Iranian civil bureaucracy at the expense of the nomadic Turko-Mongolian aristocracy;” a fact that deeply influenced the mechanism of patronage under the two Ilkhans, Ghazan Khan and Öljeitü, and expanded the construction projects all across the country; see Blair, *Ilkhanid Shrine Complex*, 52.

the organization of the state – imperial, provincial, and local – as the product of the administrative reform of the Ilkhans.¹¹⁹

The development plans of Ghazan Khan were pursued by his successor Öljeytü. The most ambitious urban project of the Ilkhanids, the city of Sultaniyya, was founded by order of Öljeytü. Although the city did not finish during his lifetime and his son Abu Sa' id did not complete the unfinished work of his father, the architectural remains of Sultaniyya attest to the stylistic and technical excellence of the city patronized by Öljeytü. After the death of the Ilkhan, during the reign of Abu Sa' id, the process of urban development significantly decelerated. By the time the Ilkhanids disintegrated in the mid-fourteenth century, the construction activities had almost been ceased.

The great interest of the Ilkhans in urban and architectural activities encouraged the Persian elites to become involved in the construction projects all over the country. While the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century had left urban life in ruins, the development programs pursued by the Mongols, particularly during the time of Ghazan Khan and Öljeytü, gave the Iranians the opportunity to reclaim their lost social position and economic success through the patronage of various construction projects. Among them, those notables who penetrated the Mongol court encouraged the Ilkhans to invest in the urban development even more, while they themselves became the most prolific patrons. Rashid al-Din and Taj al-Din 'Alishah (d. 1324) shine out as two important figures in this regard who financed several projects in different cities.¹²⁰ As a result, one can suggest that the flourishing urban development under the Ilkhans was the product of the environment in which not only the sultan but also a diverse group of

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 59.

¹²⁰ Isfahanian and Khaza'ili, "Urban Development in Iran," 30.

patrons including Persian viziers and nobles, Mongol princes and amirs, and local rulers and governors underwrote construction projects. Although the real motivation behind their actions is not still completely transparent, this enthusiastic patronage was successful in partly compensating for the extensive destruction caused by the Mongols.

Different types of the urban undertakings conducted by the Ilkhans

The Mongols, at least at the beginning of their rule of Iran, were not prepared to apply the traditional system that had been used by previous dynasties. Instead they returned to their own traditions, perfectly exemplified by the *Yasa* of Chinggis Khan. They founded their seasonal capitals and camps in Khurasan and Azerbaijan, although military, ecological, and economic factors persuaded them to concentrate in the northwest. As a pillar of the nomadic life of the Mongols, they kept on the move between their seasonal camps even after establishing themselves as the rulers of the sedentary world. Living on horseback and in tents, while migrating between summer and winter capitals, not only harked back to earlier times but was also essential to pastoral nomadism deemed a pivotal element in the Mongol economy.¹²¹ Despite the allegiance of the Ilkhans to the *Yasa* and their dependency on the portable settlements throughout the Ilkhanid period, they gradually realized that they would not be able to achieve political stability merely through following this traditional doctrine and lifestyle. Therefore, they started seeking other methods of governing the country. Melville characterizes the history of the Mongols in Iran

¹²¹ Melville, "Mongols in Iran," 45; Morgan, *The Mongols*, 32. On the general importance of pastures and horses in the economy of the steppe people of Central Asia, see Sinor, "Horse and Pasture."

by their oscillation between two poles: adjusting to Persian ways in some circumstances and retaining their own customs within the Persian context in others.¹²²

The textual and physical evidence testify that the foundation and development of urban centers was pursued by the Ilkhanid rulers as one of their prime ambitious objectives throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The flourishing urbanism under the Ilkhanids was the product of the relative stability that gradually developed in the mid-thirteenth century. Although the picture of the Ilkhanid urban centers is extremely blurred, taking into account the archaeological and architectural remains as well as the sporadic references to these centers found in written sources, one can suggest that the urban undertakings of the Ilkhans were conducted in three categories: foundation of seasonal camps, establishment of permanent capitals and development of small towns and villages.

- *Seasonal camps*

Ilkhanid courtly life, particularly during the reign of the early Ilkhans was deeply affected by Mongolian traditions. The Ilkhanid court retained the pivotal feature of the nomadic life of their ancestors and adhered to the foundation of seasonal camps and seasonal migration between summer camps (*yaylāqs*) and winter camps (*qishlāqs*) around which their first settlements formed. Seasonal camps were temporary residences of the Mongols and usually consisted of the royal tents erected in the center during the annual presence of *urdūs*¹²³ in the site and few permanent buildings constructed around the tents. Since the Ilkhans resided in these

¹²² Melville, "Mongols in Iran," 49-50.

¹²³ *Urdū* "can mean 'headquarters', 'encampment', 'imperial camp', or 'palace', as well as referring to a unit of horde under the management of a legitimate wife of a Mongol ruler" (Masuya, "Seasonal Capitals," 224).

encampments for certain months, most of the administrative sections of the capital were inevitably transferred there. In some cases, to supply the *urdū*, small groups of artisans and traders gradually formed their neighborhoods around the camps. However, the settlements were usually abandoned after the death of the ruler or the departure of his camp since the social and economic life of the city dwellers was mainly dependent upon the presence of the camp. Nothing remained of most of the royal camps but some names appearing in the historical texts of the fourteenth century such as Alatagh in Azerbaijan founded by Hülegü and Qutlugh-Baligh built by Gaykhatu in the region of Arran.¹²⁴

We should approach this group of Mongol residences cautiously since our modern perceptions of urban centers might affect the way that we evaluate these foundations. In the eyes of the thirteenth-century nomad Mongols, their seasonal camps possibly stood in the same, if not higher, position as their permanent capitals. While the Ilkhanids founded their permanent political capitals consisting of numerous magnificent buildings on the basis of the patterns and criteria of the sedentary world, they still valued their camps as the headquarters of their courts. The mentions of the grand assemblies of the Mongol princes (*qūriltāys*)¹²⁵ who gathered together in these encampments to make important administrative and military decisions support this claim. For instance, in the *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, Rashid al-Din refers to one of these

¹²⁴ For more information on the seasonal capitals of the Mongols, see Isfahanian and Khaza'ili, "Ilkhanid New Cities"; Masuya, "Seasonal Capitals."

The PhD dissertation of Alireza Khaza'ili on the Ilkhanid cities is a good source on this topic to which, unfortunately, I could not gain access during my fieldwork in Iran; see Alireza Khaza'ili, "The Rise and the Fall of the Iranian Cities during the Ilkhanid Period." PhD diss., University of Tabriz, 2003.

¹²⁵ *Qūriltāy* describes an assembly of Mongol princes and nobles at which important decisions, such as the election of new khans and Ilkhans, were made.

assemblies held in the yurt of Sayin (located between Sarav and Ardabil), which lasted two days.¹²⁶

- *Permanent capitals*

The idea of the establishment of governmental centers as the permanent capitals of the Ilkhans formed during the reign of the fourth Ilkhan, Arghun Khan in the palatial city of Arghuniyya (Arghun's city). However, his son Ghazan Khan was the first Ilkhan who founded a true capital and administrative center, the complex of Ghazaniyya (Ghazan's city) in Tabriz. This tradition was followed by his brother/successor, Öljeytü in Sultaniyya.¹²⁷ While these capital cities were established as permanent settlements, they were often the residence of the court only for a few months during the year. Since the Ilkhans continued the practice of seasonal migration, in fact, they supplanted their seasonal camps by cities consisting of monumental buildings around which they sometimes erected their royal tents.

The cities were built on the basis of predetermined plans while their location, layout, material, and required financial sources had been arranged in advance. The royal court was accommodated in the central core of the city or the citadel. The citadel, in most of the cases, consisted of a multi-functional complex known as *abwāb al-birr*.¹²⁸ The complex formed from individual buildings and charitable foundations enclosing the tomb of the Ilkhanid sultans, their viziers or Sufi shaykhs. The citadel was surrounded by the edifices, gardens, and various

¹²⁶ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 102. My understanding of the passage is that the meadow [*marghzār*] of Sayin and the yurt of Sayin both refer to the same place.

¹²⁷ The practice of founding of urban centers was transmitted from the Ilkhans to their viziers. The charitable foundation of Rab'-i Rashidi patronized by Ghazan's vizier, Rashid al-Din, outside Tabriz is a prominent example of these centers.

¹²⁸ These pious foundations are generally named *abwāb al-birr* which means "the gates of goodness" in Arabic.

governmental, public, and imperial buildings built by the viziers and the notables. The complex of buildings along with the houses of the city dwellers were encompassed by a fortified wall.

Isfahanian discusses the foundation of the administrative and political centers of the Ilkhans and suggests that while many public and private buildings patronized by Mongol princes or their viziers, in actual fact they were built by order of the Ilkhan. Wealthy officials were forced to contribute to the development of the cities that had been aimed to fulfill political aspirations of the Mongols. Much of the workforce in these architectural undertakings were artists, artisans, and workers who were also compelled to leave their homelands and take part in these large-scale urban projects. Although this compulsion increased the speed and volume of the construction work, it jeopardized the future of the cities. Many of the citizens who had been resettled in these newly-founded cities left them immediately after the death of the sultan/Ilkhan. Despite the centrality and prosperity of the cities in their heyday, they were mostly left as unfinished projects by the successors of the deceased Ilkhan, gradually declining after the fall of the Ilkhanid dynasty.¹²⁹

- *Small towns and villages*

The Ilkhans provided a proper context for the development of small villages and towns through the construction of public buildings and expanding infrastructure such as water system and roads. With the course of time, they attracted many immigrants and converted into larger cities. Since this type of settlements developed on the basis of the social, cultural, and economic needs of the residents of the region, they mostly continued their thriving life even after the disintegration of

¹²⁹ Isfahanian and Khaza'ili, "The Ilkhanid New Cities," 64-65.

the Ilkhanids, unlike the settlements of the first and second groups. Many of the urban undertakings in this category were conducted as part of Ghazan Khan's reforms. As an example, one can refer to the large group of villages founded along Ghazani River in Iraq. Ghazan Khan constructed a channel between Baghdad and Hillah and led a branch of Euphrates to it. Following the development of the region, Ghazan founded a city there and called it Ghazaniyya.¹³⁰ The city of Rayy that had been destroyed during the Mongol invasion was rebuilt by order of Ghazan Khan. A new wall and a moat were also constructed around Shiraz. A number of charitable complexes, *khānqāhs* and *dār al-sīyādas* (a residence for *sayyids* and *sādāts*, the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) were founded across the country due to the religious beliefs of the Ilkhan and his devotion for dervishes and the descendants of the prophet.¹³¹

While acknowledging the importance of the study of these three groups, the main focus of this project will be the second group: those urban foundations that were established by the Mongol rulers as their administrative and political capitals and flourished over the Ilkhanid dynasty throughout their greatest extent encompassing all of present-day Iran, Azerbaijan, parts of Iraq, and Eastern Anatolia.

Capitals and summer/winter camps

Leafing through the textual sources of the Ilkhanid period, one comes across several names referring to the camps, towns, and cities somehow associated with the Ilkhans. Some of them still

¹³⁰ Ibid., 68-69. The city of Ghazaniyya in Iraq should not be confused with the city of Ghazaniyya founded by Ghazan Khan in the vicinity of Tabriz.

¹³¹ Isfahanian and Khaza'ili, "Urban Development in Iran," 24.

exist but many of them are mere names, barely connected with an existent site. While the descriptions of the cases in the historical texts are mostly brief, they are still informative regarding the location and, in few cases, the general characteristics of each site. According to these scattered pieces of information, we can enumerate a number of the Ilkhanid foundations as follows (Fig. 1-5):¹³²

- Maragha
- Takht-i Sulayman (Suqurluq)¹³³ in Azerbaijan
- Tabriz, Arghuniyya, and Ghazaniyya: in addition to the urban complexes constructed in Ilkhanid Tabriz, two smaller settlements, Arghuniyya and Ghazaniyya, developed as the suburbs of Tabriz.
- Sultaniyya (called Qūnqūr öläng during the reign of Arghun)
- Sharuyaz was possibly the same area where the city of Sultaniyya was later built by Öljeytü. Rashid al-Din mentions the grand city of Sharuyaz initiated by Arghun but left as an incomplete project.¹³⁴
- Khabushan, in Khurasan, was rebuilt by Hülegü and was expanded by his grandson Arghun¹³⁵ and his great-grandson Ghazan.¹³⁶
- Alatagh, in Azerbaijan, was the summer camp of Hülegü where he built a grand building.¹³⁷
- *Qishlāq-i Zarrinih-rud* or the winter camp of Hülegü in Zarrinih-rud, in south of Lake Urmia in Azerbaijan, was called Chaghatu and Naqatu by the Mongols.¹³⁸
- Siyah Kuh, in Azerbaijan, along with Alatagh, was designated by Abaqa Khan as his summer camp.¹³⁹

¹³² The list of the Ilkhanid cities offered here is largely based on Isfahanian and Khaza'ili, "The Ilkhanid New Cities."

¹³³ For further discussion on the etymology of Suqurluq, see Masuya, "Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān," 77; Ja'fari, "Takht-i Sulayman," 34.

¹³⁴ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1179.

¹³⁵ Mustawfi, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 214.

¹³⁶ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1254.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1048.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1048.

¹³⁹ Qazi Ahmad Tatavi and Qazvini, *Tārīkh-i Alfī*, vol. 6, 4033.

- Sujas is a region located about five *farsangs* to the south of Sultaniyya. Arghun was secretly buried in the mountain of Sujas. However, his daughter Öljei Khatun revealed his grave, built a *khānqāh* there and resettled people in the site.¹⁴⁰ Bulughan Khatun the Elder was the wife of Abaqa Khan who married his son Arghun Khan after his death (according to a Mongolian tradition). She died beside the Kur River in 1286 and her coffin was taken to the mountain of Sujas.¹⁴¹
- Ujan or Shahr-i Islam (City of Islam) in southeast of Tabriz was founded by Ghazan Khan.¹⁴²
- Qutlugh-Baligh built by Gaykhatu in the region of Arran, at Qarachali, that was his old yurt,¹⁴³ beside the Kur River.¹⁴⁴
- Mahmudabad was founded by Ghazan Khan in the plain of Gavbari in the Mughan Plain that was one of his winter camps.¹⁴⁵ Öljeitü led a branch of Aras River to Gavbari and made it a cultivated field.¹⁴⁶
- Ghazaniyya of Iraq founded by Ghazan Khan.¹⁴⁷
- The yurt of Hulan Muran,¹⁴⁸ in Azerbaijan, which was called Buynuq by Öljeitü.¹⁴⁹
- Hasht-rud, in Azerbaijan, has been repeatedly mentioned in the historical texts as one of the stopping points of Ghazan Khan in the course of his seasonal migrations between the summer and winter camps.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁰ Mustawfi, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 98 & 106.

¹⁴¹ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1162.

¹⁴² Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 231. See also Amirahmadi, “Ujan 1”; Amirahmadi, “Ujan 2”; Velayati, *Report of the First Season*.

¹⁴³ Yurt refers to both one single portable, round tent and the place where a group of tents are put. In the case of Qarachali, Rashid al-Din possibly considers the latter and uses the word yurt as an equivalent for camp, encampment, or *urdū*.

¹⁴⁴ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1192.

¹⁴⁵ Mustawfi, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 139. The Mughan Plain is located in the northwest of Iran and the south of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

¹⁴⁶ Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeitü*, 238.

¹⁴⁷ Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 242.

¹⁴⁸ Referring to Mustawfi, Le Strange mentions that the Sifid Rud, or White River in Azerbaijan, was known to the Mongols as the Hulan Mulan (more exactly Ulān Mören), which in Mongolian means “Red River” (Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, 169).

¹⁴⁹ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 158.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

- Sultanabad-i Chimchal: in the *Tārīkh-i Öljejtü*, Kashani mentions that Öljejtü founded the city of Sultanabad in Sultan-Maydan around Chimchal and Mount Bisutun in Kermanshah in 1312.¹⁵¹
- Sultanabad or Öljejtüabad founded by Öljejtü in the Mughan plain.¹⁵²
- Arran was the winter camp of the Ilkhans. The lands between the Kur and Aras rivers is called *vilāyat-i Arran* by Mustawfī.¹⁵³ The palace of Mansuriyya was located in Arran.¹⁵⁴
- Baghdad was one of the winter camps of the Ilkhans where they conducted several construction projects.
- Aq Qal‘ih in Khurasan (the site has not been mentioned in any pre-Modern text).¹⁵⁵

In addition to the cases mentioned above, there are several more summer and winter quarters named in the itineraries of the Ilkhans, particularly Ghazan Khan and Öljejtü.¹⁵⁶ However, locating and examining all the sites that contributed to the generation of a new landscape of Mongol settlements in northwestern Iran is not only beyond the scope of the present study, but also practically unfeasible, mainly because of the extent of destruction in most of the cases and the scantiness of archaeological and architectural evidence. Therefore, I will be focusing on the larger settlements designated by the Ilkhans as their political and administrative centers. I analyze the urban foundations of four generations of the Ilkhans, Hülegü, Abaqa Khan, Arghun Khan, Ghazan Khan, and Öljejtü respectively in Maragha, Takht-i Sulayman, Arghuniyya,

¹⁵¹ Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljejtü*, 133. See also Mutarjim and Muhammadifar, “Speculations on the Location.”

¹⁵² Mustawfī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdih*, 607.

¹⁵³ Mustawfī, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 140.

¹⁵⁴ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 4, 2942.

¹⁵⁵ I exclude Rab‘-i Rashidi from this list since the urban complex was founded during the Ilkhanids, but it was built under the patronage of a Persian vizier, Rashid al-Din (see, for instance, Hoffmann, “In Pursuit of Memoria”). This issue can be discussed in connection with other towns, cities, and urban compounds that benefitted from the sponsorship of Persian patrons. Avih, located in Markazi province, is an important but lesser-known example in this regard. The recent excavation carried out in the site revealed that Avih was a prosperous city during the Ilkhanid period. The most significant aspect of the archaeological findings was the luster star-shaped tiles uncovered in the site. The considerable number of luster tiles as well as the traces of tile kilns found in the site raise the possibility that Avih worked as a center for the production of luster tiles under the Ilkhans; for more information on the site, see Lashkari, Khatib Shahidi, and Muhajer Vatan, “Preliminary Report of Excavations.”

¹⁵⁶ The *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī* and the *Tārīkh-i Öljejtü* are particularly enlightening in this regard.

Ghazaniyya, and Sultaniyya. The first two cases will be discussed briefly in this chapter, but I will expand on the last two sites as the main case studies of this dissertation in chapters 2 and 3. Arghuniyya also will be described in chapter 2 in association with Ghazaniyya.

- *Maragha*

In 1258 Ilkhanid forces led by Hülegü Khan besieged and captured Baghdad, the capital of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate. The disintegration of the Sunni caliphate that had lasted for more than five centuries placed most parts of the Islamic world in a state of political turmoil. Several claimants attempted to fill the power vacuum left by the execution of the last caliph, Al-Musta‘sim (r. 1242-1258) who was believed by Sunnis to be the true successor of the Prophet Muhammad. The struggle began between Buddhist/Christian-oriented Mongol Hülegü, who had conquered much of Western Asia and the Mamluk sultans, the successors of the Ayyubids who had defended the Islamic world against the Christian world and the Crusaders. Although this conflict continued through the Ilkhanid period, in comparison with other Ilkhans, Hülegü faced more challenges both inside and outside his domain. He had to establish his reign in a foreign land and ensure its durability for his successors.¹⁵⁷

When the Ilkhans stabilized themselves as the rulers of the southwestern sector of the Mongol Empire, they founded two headquarters, one in the northwest/west and the other in the northeast/east of present-day Iran. Throughout the Ilkhanid period, the western headquarters was the residence of the Ilkhan/sultan (*sulṭan-nishān*) and the eastern headquarters was the residence of the crown prince (*valī‘ahd-nishān*). Maragha, Tabriz, and Sultaniyya in Azerbaijan, and Marv

¹⁵⁷ For further discussion on this topic, see Bayani, *Religion and the Government*, vol. 1, 343.

and Tus in Khurasan were the headquarters or capitals of the Ilkhans, which are usually called *dār al-mulk* in their contemporary accounts. Many of the large-scale construction projects patronized by Mongol khans were concentrated in their capitals, among which Maragha, the capital of Hülegü, contains the smallest number of Ilkhanid surviving structures.¹⁵⁸

Maragha lies beside Sufi-Chay River which rises at Mount Sahand in northwest Iran. The fertile soil and fine pastures, mild weather, and strategic location of the city that was on the route connecting Araq-i 'Ajam to Azerbaijan, persuaded Hülegü to designate Maragha as the first capital of the Ilkhans and the *dār al-mulk* of Azerbaijan. Furthermore, Maragha was a significant center of Islamic education in Azerbaijan prior to the Mongol invasion of Iran. Historical texts confirm that at least seven important madrasas had been built in this city up to the thirteenth century.¹⁵⁹ Alongside the educational institutions, the extant architectural structures from the Seljuq period, such as Gunbad-i Surkh (1147), Gunbad-i Kabud (possibly 1197), and Burj-i Mudavvar (1167), attest to the prosperity of the city in earlier centuries.¹⁶⁰

The best-known component of the Ilkhanid city was an astronomical observatory, built in 1259 under the patronage of Hülegü and the directorship of Nasir al-Din al-Tusi. Prominent scientists from Damascus, Mosul, Tbilisi, and Qazvin were summoned to Maragha by Hülegü's decree. The observatory of Maragha is believed to be the first Islamic observatory that benefitted from extensive endowments, and in this regard it established a new tradition which was later imitated in the Ulugh Beg Observatory in Samarqand and the Observatory of Sultan Murad III in

¹⁵⁸ The smaller number of Ilkhanid surviving structures in Maragha, in comparison with newly-founded cities such as Ghazaniyya or Sultaniyya, is partly because the city already had monuments from the Seljuq period and therefore fewer architectural projects were conducted during the Ilkhanid dynasty.

¹⁵⁹ Shikari-Niri, "Examination of the Architectural Remains," 63.

¹⁶⁰ For more studies on Seljuq buildings in Maragha, see Shani, *Monumental Manifestation*; Bier, "Decagonal Tomb Tower"; Sharifian and Khudaparast, "Examination of Gunbad-i Kabud."

Istanbul.¹⁶¹ Vassaf writes that the observatory was located to the north of Maragha on the top of a hill. The structure had a dome and the rays of the sun entered it through a slit on its upper part.¹⁶² Along with the observatory, there was a library in the complex for manuscripts taken at Baghdad and elsewhere.

The excavations carried out in the site revealed interesting points regarding the outline of the observatory. The most important component of the complex was a circular tower whose internal space consisted of a long passage along the diameter of the circle with six rooms on either side. Alongside the remains of the tower which was about 23.6 meters in external diameter and 22 meters in internal diameter, the foundations of five other circular structures were found whose function is yet unclear. Some other parts of the complex uncovered by the archaeologists including the foundries, where the astronomical devices were produced, madrasa, library, and residential units.¹⁶³

To the west of the hill, there are a number of cells and tunnels that were carved out and locally called the temple of Rasad-daghi (Figs. 1-6, 1-7).¹⁶⁴ It is unlikely that these spaces were connected with the structures of the observatory; however they were possibly built during the same period as the main complex. Shikari-Niri speculatively associates the rooms with Chinese and Mongolian religious ceremonies. Considering the altar-like elements and the stone platforms in the rooms, he suggests that they were possibly part of a Buddhist temple.¹⁶⁵ A historical account given by Rashid al-Din supports this claim since it affirms the presence of the Buddhists in Maragha during the Ilkhanid period. The vizier writes that in 688/1289 Arghun arrived in

¹⁶¹ Shikari-Niri, "Examination of the Architectural Remains," 64.

¹⁶² Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 29; Wilber, *Architecture of Islamic Iran*, 10.

¹⁶³ Varjavand, *Excavation of Maragha Observatory*; Shikari-Niri, "Study of the Form and Function."

¹⁶⁴ Rasad-daghi means the mountain of observation in Turkish. The name describes the hill on top of which the remains of Maragha observatory are located.

¹⁶⁵ Shikari-Niri, "Examination of the Architectural Remains," 70.

Maragha and paid a visit to the observatory. He began to take the “black drug” [*dārūy-i sīyāh*] there. The drug was, in fact, an elixir promising eternal life. It was prescribed by a Buddhist priest [*bakhshī*] from India in whom Arghun had great faith. Rashid al-Din believed that taking that drug eventually resulted in the death of the Ilkhan.¹⁶⁶ A more recent report written by Arnold Wilson, who visited the site in the early-twentieth century, connects the rooms cut into the rock with a Nestorian monastery. Wilson was told by the locals of Maragha that Christian monks had lived in the cells of this monastery long time ago.¹⁶⁷

The observatory continued to exist until the reign of Abu Sa‘id, but during the Aq Qoyunlu and the Jalayirids invasions of Azerbaijan, the complex was massively destroyed and its grand library was plundered. Nevertheless, some individual elements of the building remained in the site, for instance, Ghiyath al-Din Jamshid Kashani (d. 1429), Persian astronomer and mathematician who was invited to Samarqand by Ulugh Beg to work at his observatory, mentions one of these elements. In a letter written by Ghiyath al-Din to his father, he writes about a “geometric circular pulpit” [*minbar-i mustadīr-i hindisī*] in the middle of Maragha observatory whose nature and function was not known to anybody.¹⁶⁸

Although Nasir al-Din’s fame to a large degree rests on his scientific activities, he was also an influential politician assisting Hülegü with his decision-making. The Ilkhan delegated complete authority over the endowments (*awqāf*) throughout the country to him. In order to control the large amount of the incomes earned from the donated properties, Nasir al-Din designated one deputy in each city. It is reported that one tenth of the revenues was allocated to

¹⁶⁶ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1176, 1179. For the whole passage, see the appendix.

¹⁶⁷ Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson (1884-1940) was a British soldier, explorer, author, and politician who served in Iran for a few years. I was not able to find the travel account in which his visit to Maragha has been described, but it has been mentioned by Shikari-Niri in Shikari-Niri, “Examination of the Architectural Remains,” 72.

¹⁶⁸ Baqiri, *From Samarqand to Kashan*, 65.

Maragha observatory to cover the expenses of the residents and the equipment.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, he was a leading supporter of Shi'a beliefs who provided a proper context for the political and social activities of the Shi'is.¹⁷⁰

Except for the observatory and a few individual structures, such as Gunbad-i Ghaffariyya, a square building built according to its inscription during the reign of Abu Sa'id, the main body of the city has been massively destroyed with the course of time. Given the scantiness of archaeological data on the urban fabric of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Maragha, occasional remarks of the historical texts on some of the Ilkhanid foundations can enhance our understanding of the spatial structure of the first capital of the Mongols. Hence, in the following section, a number of buildings that existed in the urban landscape of Ilkhanid Maragha have been extracted from primary sources.

Juvayni refers to an idol-temple [*but-khānih*] in Maragha.¹⁷¹ In the endowment deed of the Rab'-i Rashidi, Rashid al-Din writes about several plots of land in Maragha endowed by the vizier for a madrasa he built in the same city.¹⁷² Ibn al-Fuwati (d. 1323) refers to Majd al-Din Muhammad al-Sivasi al-Rumi who resided in Maragha around 1280 and had a madrasa next to the congregational mosque.¹⁷³ In another entry of his book, Ibn al-Fuwati mentions 'Izz al-Din Abu al-Fazl al-Maraghi who was a famous preacher in the congregational mosque of Maragha

¹⁶⁹ Mahdizadih and Nasiri, "Endowed Buildings of Maragha," 59. It is noteworthy that Nasir al-Din was later criticized for using the revenues of the endowments in his observatory project; see Saliba, "Horoscopes and Planetary Theory," 366.

¹⁷⁰ Bayani, *Religion and the Government*, vol. 1, 351.

¹⁷¹ Juvayni, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushāy*, vol. 1, 35.

¹⁷² Rashid al-Din, Minuvi, and Afshar, *Waqf Nāmih-yi Rab'-i Rashīdī*, 113.

¹⁷³ Mahdizadih and Nasiri, "Endowed Buildings of Maragha," 63; see the original passage in Ibn al-Fuwati, *Majma' al-Ādāb*, vol. 4, 512.

and Nasir al-Din had a great faith in him.¹⁷⁴ *Zāwīya* of al-Shaykh Suvab¹⁷⁵ and *sūq al-bazzāzīn*¹⁷⁶ (the bazaar of textile sellers) are two other buildings that existed, according to Ibn al-Fuwati, in Ilkhanid Maragha.

Rabban Sawma was a Turkic Chinese monk and later a Nestorian priest who was dispatched to Europe as Arghun's envoy in 1287. The purpose of the travel was seeking help in defeating the Mamluks.¹⁷⁷ In his long journey from China to West Asia, he was accompanied by his fellow cleric, Mar Yaballaha, who was later elected as Patriarch of the Nestorian Church in West Asia. They benefitted from the tolerant policies of Abaqa, Arghun, and Gaykhatu towards Nestorians. For example, Abaqa authorized the Patriarch to levy a tax for the upkeep of the churches and monasteries, or during the reign of Arghun the power of the Patriarch increased and several churches were built under his supervision.¹⁷⁸ What is important for our discussion is the construction of the churches and monasteries in Maragha associated with these two historical figures. The first case is the church of Mar Shalita in Maragha. During the reign of Arghun, Mar Yaballaha pulled down the old building and spent large sums of money to rebuild it. Sawma emphasizes that “instead of using [the old] beams [and making a single roof] he made [the new church] with two naves; and by the side of it he built a cell in which to live.”¹⁷⁹ Before the

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 512. Ibn al-Fuwati also refers to four other schools in Ilkhanid Maragha, madrasa of al-Ghazi Kamal al-Din, madrasa of al-Ghazi ('Izziyah), madrasa of al-Khalifa, and madrasa of al-Muhiyya, some of which had been built in earlier times.

¹⁷⁵ Ibn al-Fuwati, *Majma' al-Ādāb*, vol. 1, 506.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 386.

¹⁷⁷ Rossabi, *Voyager from Xanadu*, 99.

¹⁷⁸ Sawma, *Monks of Kublai Khan*, 72.

It is noteworthy that the above-mentioned source, *The Monks of Kublai Khan*, officially known as *The History of Yabballaha III*, is a translation of the Syriac History of the two Nestorian Chinese monks, Rabban Sawma and Mar Yaballaha. A Nestorian cleric translated the original Persian text (consisting of Rabban Sawma's accounts, memoirs, and diaries) into Syriac twenty years after Sawma's death. In addition to the translation of the documents, he added a report on the persecution of Nestorian Christians during the reign of Ghazan Khan as well as a survey of Mar Yaballaha's career. Besides translating, the cleric edited the account and added his own comments to the narrative; see Rossabi, *Voyager from Xanadu*, 171.

¹⁷⁹ Sawma, *Monks of Kublai Khan*, 165.

consolidation of power in the hands of Ghazan Khan, the enmities towards non-Muslims including Christians, encouraged by Amir Nawruz, resulted in the destruction of this church.

After accomplishing his mission and returning from Europe, Sawma won Arghun's favor and received great rewards from him. Remarkably, Arghun made a pledge to build him a church at the Gate of his Kingdom (i.e. the Ilkhanate palace). In 1288, by order of the Ilkhan and at Sawma's request, Mar Yaballaha came to the Camp, whose location is still unknown to us, to consecrate the church. Arghun erected a tent-like church which "was so close to the Door of the Throne that the ropes of the curtains of the church intermingled with those of his [Arghun's] house" and made a great feast. When the camp moved, Sawma, who was designated as the chief and director of the church, alongside the priests moved the church and all its belongings.¹⁸⁰ In 1289, as another sign of favor, Arghun went to the residence/cell of the Patriarch in Maragha and asked Mar Yaballaha to baptize his son Öljejtü.¹⁸¹

The next case is a permanent church built by Sawma in the names of Mar Mari and Mar George under the direct patronage of Gaykhatu in Maragha. Sawma who had become old and tired of the seasonal migrations of the Mongols completed the building and resided in the cell he had built by the side of the church until 1293 when he went to Baghdad in the service of Mar Yaballaha for the last year of his life. The church was located near the site of Mar Yaballaha's private residence/cell where Gaykhatu visited him twice and remained there as his guest for short periods. Furthermore, with the help Mar Yaballaha, Sawma founded a series of endowments in order to provide the church with an income covering the cost of keeping the building.¹⁸² The last case is the holy monastery of Mar John the Baptist built by Mar Yaballaha on the north side of

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 197-199.

¹⁸¹ Rossabi, *Voyager from Xanadu*, 173.

¹⁸² Ibid., 176; Sawma, *Monks of Kublai Khan*, 203-204.

the city of Maragha, at a distance of about two miles from the city in 1294. He started building the monastery with the money he had received from Gaykhatu. Sawma writes that “he built up the wall nearly to the top, and the nave up as far as the spring of the roof,” but we are not sure whether he succeeded in completing the building.¹⁸³

Maragha was a political and administrative center under Hülegü. After his death, the *dār al-mulk* was transferred to Tabriz. Hülegü died in Maragha but his coffin, according to Mongolian traditions, was carried to the Shahu Mountain in Dih-kharigan where his *quruq* (forbidden burial precinct) had been already built.¹⁸⁴

- *Takht-i Sulayman (Suqurluq)*

The dates found on the luster-painted tiles unearthed in the excavations of Takht-i Sulayman suggests that the construction of the Ilkhanid palatial complex goes back at least to the reign of Abaqa Khan.¹⁸⁵ Mustawfi’s report on the site also supports this claim.¹⁸⁶ However, neither Rashid al-Din nor Vassaf clearly write about the foundation of the town by the Ilkhan, although they mention other quarters where he spent his summers and winters.¹⁸⁷ It is also noteworthy that Rashid al-Din refers to Takht-i Sulayman as Suqurluq but does not specifically attribute the construction of its complex to Abaqa Khan. The name Takht-i Sulayman appeared only after the Timurid conquest of Persia.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸³ Sawma, *Monks of Kublai Khan*, 76 & 208.

¹⁸⁴ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1051.

¹⁸⁵ Masuya, “Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān,” 72.

¹⁸⁶ Mustawfi, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 106; Mustawfi calls the site Saqurluq (Saturiq) which is apparently a misreading of Suqurluq; see Ja‘fari, “Takht-i Sulayman,” 34.

¹⁸⁷ Masuya, “Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān,” 86.

¹⁸⁸ Huff, “Takht-e Solaymān.”

The site includes the remains of the sanctuary of Azar Gushnasp, literally means the “fire of the warriors and kings” (one of the three most revered fires of the Sasanian period, 224-651 AD) and the other related contemporary buildings. Archaeological excavations conducted at the site revealed the materials that date back to the Achaemenid period (550-330 BC). However, the monumental architecture on the site began later during the Sasanian dynasty. The arrangement of the extant buildings in relation to the open spaces suggests that the site was originally laid out on a master plan which determined all later building activities.¹⁸⁹ After the Mongol conquest, Abaqa Khan built his palace on the ruins of the ancient sanctuary and palatial complex. In addition to natural resources and the intact strong fortification available at the site of Takht-i Sulayman,¹⁹⁰ the reuse of a pre-Islamic site might be explained in regard to the Ilkhans’ intention to associate themselves with ancient history of Iran. This possibility is strengthened by the fact that the Ilkhanid palace was decorated with tiles depicting scenes and verses from the *Shāhnāma* (Book of Kings), the Persian national epic. The transformation of the Ilkhans into religious and national heroes intensified during the reign of later Ilkhans (see chapter 4) particularly Ghazan Khan, who was idealized, in Melville’s words, as a “second Alexander, a philosopher king, and a Persian emperor.”¹⁹¹

The Ilkhanid constructions in Takht-i Sulayman were mainly based on the original Sasanian layout. The palatial complex seems to function as a summer residence for the Ilkhans. It was smaller and possibly less important than their other quarters in Alatagh or Arran since no enthronement at the site has been reported in the textual records.¹⁹² It is recorded that Ghazan

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Huff, “Ilkhanid Palace at Takht-i Sulayman,” 96.

¹⁹¹ Melville, “Mongols in Iran,” 54.

¹⁹² Masuya, “Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān,” 96.

Khan was raised by Bulughan Khatun the Elder, Abaqa Khan's wife, in Suqurluq, and that the Ilkhan bequeathed his encampment (*urdū*) to Ghazan Khan.¹⁹³

The southern gate cut through the oval wall was the principal entrance to the complex during the Ilkhanid period and the main Sasanian gate to the north-northwest became a secondary entrance. The Sasanian secondary gate in the southeast was not reused by the Mongols. The most dominant component of the Ilkhanid constructions in the site is a palace courtyard with the lake in the center surrounded by arcades (Fig. 1-8). On the north side of the courtyard, the fire temple is located whose *īvān* was enlarged under the Ilkhans. Huff suggests that the upper floor of this building possibly worked as a "Chinese throne hall" during the Ilkhanid period. The lack of large quantities of debris on the floor of the Mongol hall supports the idea that this space has been a hypostyle hall with wooden columns. Huff attributes the construction of a Chinese hall in Takht-i Sulayman to the close relationships between the Ilkhans and the Great Khans, and, thus, the influence of Chinese courtly architecture of the khans on their subordinates in Iran (Fig. 1-9).¹⁹⁴

To the left of the temple (northwest corner of the courtyard), there was a Sasanian palace to which a central hall and two adjacent octagonal structures were added. The northern octagon may have been the Ilkhan's private living room for dining. Parallel to the western side of the arcade, there was a line of buildings in different shapes and types. Inside the oval wall, to the north of the central courtyard, there is an area that possibly functioned as the civilian settlement of Takht-i Sulayman. Also the remains of kilns uncovered there suggest that workshops must have been built in this part during the construction of the complex. Masuya suggests that the

¹⁹³ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 7.

¹⁹⁴ Huff, "Ilkhanid Palace at Takht-i Sulayman," 103.

general layout of the Ilkhanid phase of the palatial complex in Takht-i Sulayman partially resembles the traditional Iranian four-*īvān* plan. Despite the fact that the four-*īvān* plan was commonly used in Ilkhanid monuments, it is difficult to locate the sources of influence since there are no surviving secular or religious four-*īvān* buildings from the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.¹⁹⁵ However, it is possible that the Ilkhanid four-*īvān* monuments had their roots in earlier times (i.e. the Seljuq period when the four-*īvān* plan was widely used in Western and Central Iran for religious buildings and in Eastern Iran for secular buildings) (Fig. 1-10).

The Ilkhans not only retained their portable tents as pivotal elements of their seasonal quarters under the influence of their former nomadic lifestyle, but also took into account their Mongolian traditions while founding their permanent structures. Takht-i Sulayman, the only extant Ilkhanid palatial complex, reveals some specific Mongolian features incorporated into the architecture of its buildings. For instance, erecting the palace over the ruins of Sasanian structures was based on a practice which was common among the Mongols; as the city of Karakorum in Mongolia, the first capital of the Mongol Empire, built on the remains of a Uyghur fortress, or Daidu, the capital of the Yuan dynasty founded on the site of Zhongdu, one of the capitals of the Jin dynasty (1115-1234).¹⁹⁶ It is noteworthy that in the case of Takht-i Sulayman, the pre-existing Sasanian structures were reused as the main residence of the Ilkhan and his family, whereas in Yuan China, the pre-existing complexes and cities were usually reused by the Mongols as the capital cities of regional governments (see chapter 5). The Mongol emperors and their court resided in the new buildings, which had been designed and built from the outset as imperial constructions.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Masuya, "Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān," 150.

¹⁹⁶ Masuya, "Ilkhanid Courtly Life," 88.

¹⁹⁷ Masuya, "Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān," 209.

Furthermore, locating important buildings at the city center or the center of its northern area, facing south can be traced back to the Mongol custom in city planning.¹⁹⁸ The north-northwest to south-southeast orientation of the Ilkhanid palace was also one of the noticeable qualities of Mongol tents and that was based on the direction of sunlight. Moreover, the Mongol enthusiasm for polygonal or round buildings reflected in several polygonal structures in the site of Takht-i Sulayman was probably affected by the form of their traditional residential tents.¹⁹⁹

- *Ujan (Shahr-i Islam)*

Although Ujan was never officially designated as the capital of the Ilkhans, it frequently appears in their contemporary accounts and, thus, deserves to be studied in some depth. Mustawfī refers to Ujan as the *dār al-mulk* of Ghazan Khan,²⁰⁰ but Rashid al-Din calls it the honorable encampment [*urdūy-i mu‘azzam*]²⁰¹ and the golden encampment [*urdūy-i zarrīn*],²⁰² and uses *dār al-mulk* exclusively for Tabriz. Ujan was not comparable with major cities such as Tabriz and Sultaniyya, but still is an important camp for the Ilkhans in which the assembly of Mongol princes (*qūriltāys*) were occasionally held,²⁰³ and some significant decisions were made such as the enthronement of Öljeitü.²⁰⁴ In addition to the historical reports of the city, the fruitful archaeological excavations conducted in the site provide us with substantial amount of information on its spatial structure.

¹⁹⁸ Danti, *Ilkhanid Heartland*, 45.

¹⁹⁹ Masuya, “Ilkhanid Courtly Life,” 88-90.

²⁰⁰ Mustawfī, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 127.

²⁰¹ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 1, 4. Banakati also refers to Ujan as *urdūy-i mu‘azzam*, see Banakati, *Tārīkh-i Banākātī*, 474.

²⁰² Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1303.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1288 & 1296-1297.

²⁰⁴ Hafiz-i Abru, *Zayl-i Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 66.

The Ilkhanid city of Ujan was located in the middle of the meadow of Ujan [*marghẓār-i Ujān*] in the province of west Azerbaijan.²⁰⁵ The city was possibly founded by the Seljuqs.²⁰⁶ Ujan was rebuilt and expanded by Ghazan Khan in 1299 and was renamed Shahr-i Islam (City of Islam). Yaqut al-Hamawi's account of the site is one of the few reliable texts, if not the only one, that mentions the existence of the city before the Ilkhanids. Yaqut describes Ujan as a town [*shahrak*], located about ten *farsang* (almost equal to 60 kilometers) from Tabriz that still had a wall and a bazaar, but had been extensively destroyed.²⁰⁷

One of the main motivations for the foundation of an imperial city in Ujan was the strategic location of the site. Four important routes radiated from Ujan towards Rayy, Tabriz, Maragha, and Sarab.²⁰⁸ In addition, the geographical features of the region such as the fertility of the soil and the existence of lush green pasturelands made it an ideal place for a royal residence in the eyes of the Mongol rulers.

Among the contemporary sources, the accounts of Vassaf al-Hazra, Rashid al-Din, and Mustawfi throw more light on the urban foundation of the Ilkhanids in Ujan. Vassaf says that in the spring of 698/1299, Ghazan Khan ordered the foundation of the "City of Islam" in Ujan with several bazaars and public baths. The lands of the city were divided between the relatives of the Ilkhan and the notables of the court. They built their houses, gardens, and bazaars on these properties.²⁰⁹ According to Rashid al-Din, however, as Ghazan Khan had ordered, a group of skillful masters and engineers worked for three years to build a golden tent [*khargāh-i zarrīn*]

²⁰⁵ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 138.

²⁰⁶ Velayati, *Report of the First Season*, 3.

²⁰⁷ Yaqut al-Hamawi, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, vol. 1, 123.

²⁰⁸ In the eastern side of the pasture of Ujan, the remains of a building can be seen that is locally called *qarāvul-khānih* (the station of road guards). The existence of the building reveals the significance of the roads connecting Ujan to other cities; see Amirahmadi, "Ujan 2," 52.

²⁰⁹ Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 231.

and all the necessary equipment for the Ilkhan in Ujan. He adds that the city was founded in 701/1302. Rashid al-Din gives us more details regarding the general layout of the site. He says that a wall was built around the meadow [*marghzār*] of Ujan that formed a square-shaped enclosure. The square was divided into equal sections, and rows of willows and poplars were planted on the sides to define the borders of the city and to prevent people from passing through the area. Several pavilions, towers, public baths, and magnificent edifices were built and the golden tent was erected in the garden. It took the handymen [*farrāshān*] and engineers [*muhandissān*] one month to set up the grand tent and the jeweled throne. In the opening ceremony of the city, Ghazan Khan threw a public feast [*tuy-i 'ām*] and a great amount of gold and garments [*jāmiḥ*] were bestowed on the audience.²¹⁰ Mustawfi also clearly says that Ghazan Khan rebuilt Ujan and constructed a wall with a perimeter of 3,000 paces around the city [*bārūy-i Ghāzānī*]. He mentions that Ujan was a wealthy city and part of its income was endowed to the *abwāb al-birr* of Ghazan Khan [*abwāb al-birr-i Ghāzānī*].²¹¹ However, whether this reference relates to the *abwāb al-bir* of Ujan or the charitable complex of Ghazaniyya is not certain. In addition to the contemporary textual sources, the names of a few buildings in Ujan have been mentioned by later historians. For example, Khwandmir (d. 1534) refers to the pavilion of Ghazan Khan [*kūshk-i Ghāzānī*] in Ujan.²¹² Although the building has been entirely destroyed, the mere fact that it existed in the city during the Ilkhanids would aid us to decode the pictorial and textual evidence more logically.

The textual and visual descriptions of Ujan presented by two Ottoman historians who visited the site during the Safavid period shed some light on the spatial structure of the Ilkhanid

²¹⁰ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1303-1305. For the whole passage, see the appendix.

²¹¹ Mustawfi, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 127. For the whole passage, see the appendix.

²¹² Khwandmir, *Habīb al-Sīyar*, vol. 3, 501.

city. Evliya Çelebi (d. 1682), a celebrated Ottoman polymath, describes Ujan as a square-shaped castle²¹³ with a perimeter of 2,000 paces [*gām*] (1,220 m)²¹⁴ and a metal gate on its eastern side. Çelebi says that the castle consisted of 3,000 earthen houses, seven mosques, three public baths, seven guesthouses, and 600 shops.²¹⁵ The details of his account might not be necessarily accurate; however, it can convey how the general physical layout of the medieval city looked. The second document is a drawing made by Matrakçı Nasuh presenting a general view of the city (Fig. 1-11). While the picture seems too simplified to be considered a reliable illustration of the Ilkhanid city, it depicts two buildings that must have been the most significant architectural elements of Ujan. Some speculations about the identity of the structures will be suggested at the end of this section.

Three seasons of excavation have been conducted in Ujan in 2006, 2013, and 2017.²¹⁶ On the basis of the archaeological finding,²¹⁷ the archaeologists have speculated that the Ilkhanid city of Ujan was founded in the vicinity of the current city of Bustanabad. The main area of the city possibly consisted of three parts: the citadel (*arg*), the inner town (*shāristān*), and the outer town (*rabaž*). The remains of two historical cemeteries,²¹⁸ in the northwest and southwest of the inner city, were found during the field survey of the site. The remnants of the stone and brick walls on the ground suggest that the inner town had a non-rectangular wall. During the last season of excavation, a tower and part of the wall of a building which is temporarily called the castle of Ujan were uncovered inside the town. The surface debris found in the southeast of the

²¹³ In the Ottoman text, Çelebi uses the term *qal'ih* to refer to the castle.

²¹⁴ For the value of each pace (*qadam* or *gām*), see chapter 3, 134, n. 46.

²¹⁵ Velayati, Mahdizadih, and Khanali, "Locating the Ilkhanid City," 85.

²¹⁶ Evliya Çelebi, "Siyāhat-nāmih," 291-292.

²¹⁷ Among the potteries and metal objects found during the excavations, an Ilkhanid coin minted in Tabriz is considered an important proof that the site was a settlement under the Ilkhans.

²¹⁸ The historical graves scattered around the pasture of Ujan are locally called the "graves of strangers" (*gharīblar qabrī* in Turkish) possibly because the locals were not able to associate the graves to any of the surrounding villages or towns; see Amirahmadi, "Ujan 1," 52.

castle raises the possibility that the pavilion (palace) of Ghazan Khan might have been located around this area (Figs. 1-12, 1-13, 1-14).²¹⁹

Within the area of the inner town, there is a hill locally called Qizil-kushk (the red pavilion/palace in Turkish) around which a large amount of red pottery shards and bricks as well as glazed potteries and glasses have been found. The hill might have been formed from the debris of the building known as the pavilion of Ghazan Khan. In the south of Qizil-kushk, there is another hill called Tappih-‘imarat (the edifice hill) whose surface is covered with a mass of broken bricks and glazed-pottery shards. The hill marks the location of an edifice built by the order of the Qajar ruler, Fath ‘Ali Shah (r. 1797–1834). The stone foundation of the building is still visible on the ground. The Qajar building must have been built on the ruins of an earlier Ilkhanid building.²²⁰ The traces of a square-shaped pond (each side about 500 meters) were found in the pasture of Ujan that is locally called Ghazan-guli (Ghazan’s pool in Turkish).

Taking into account the field findings and the local appellations as well as the textual description of the city, one can speculate about the possible identity of the monuments depicted in Matrakçi’s illustration of Ujan. In the picture, three architectural elements are recognizable: a group of modest buildings in the bottom center, a castle (or castle-like building) in the center right, and a pavilion in the top left. The last item perhaps is the most interesting one. The building stands on a stepped platform. It has a Chinese-style roof covered with blue glazed tiles. The decorated façade of the building overlaid with a red plaster. The pavilion seems to have a small *ivān* in front. There are two windows, covered with metal grille work, on either side of the main portal. The physical characteristics of the building suggest that it could be the pavilion of

²¹⁹ Velayati, Rezvan, and Ibrahimi, “Ilkhanid Architecture,” 20.

²²⁰ Amirahmadi, “Ujan 2,” 53-54.

Ghazan Khan that had been located in the same spot called Qizil-kushk today. The castle-like structure, entitled “Khan ‘Abbas” on the illustration, could be the building unearthed during the excavation and called the castle of Ujan. The group of small building in the bottom, entitled “Turkman kandi”²²¹ might represent the civilian settlement of Ujan.

- *Aq Qal‘ih*

Aq Qal‘ih seems to be an awkward concluding case for this chapter since it is a lesser-known and isolated site located far from other cases that have been examined so far. At the same time, Aq Qal‘ih should not be overlooked in this study because it is one of the few (if not the only) surviving examples of the urbanism conducted during the Ilkhanid period that was remote from their major political and administrative centers in the northwest of Iran. The remains of the city of Aq Qal‘ih are located in the fertile plain of Juvayn, about 80 kilometers northwest of Sabzivar in Khurasan-i Razavi. The field survey of the site and the examination of the architectural components and archaeological fragments confirm that the city must have founded during the Ilkhanid period. Among the surviving physical material, the inscriptions of a mosque, locally known as Masjid-i Sifid (white mosque), situated within the walls of the city strengthened this hypothesis (Fig. 1-15). The mosque was not accessible during my visit to the site, but the inscription band was visible from the outside that began in the southwest corner and ran counterclockwise around the room (Fig. 1-16). The inscription contains the Qur’an 62, the Sura of al-Jumu‘a and the date 712/1313 for the construction of the building.²²² Unfortunately, some

²²¹ Since the meaning of the phrase is still vague, it can also be pronounced as “Turkman kindi” or “Turkman kundi.”

²²² The first section of the inscription reads as follows:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

parts of the band have been destroyed or poorly restored.²²³ The appellation of the mosque (white mosque) was possibly derived from the color of the painted plaster covering the internal walls of the building. Also, it could be related to the name of the city, Aq Qal'ih, which means “white castle,” although it is still unclear whether the city was originally named Aq Qal'ih or the locals lent the title to the enclave because of the presence of the grand white mosque in the site.

To the best of my knowledge, there is no reference to the city in the contemporary textual sources. However, the study of this Ilkhanid site is important for two reasons: firstly, the dated inscription of the mosque is contemporary with the reign of Öljeytü, and secondly, the general layout of the city resembles the form of his capital, the city of Sultaniyya. The plan is clearly visible in the aerial photos: a square-shaped citadel attached to a rectangular area surrounded by

يُسَبِّحُ اللَّهَ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ (1) هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ (2) وَأَخْرَجَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (3) ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ (4) مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ أَسْفَارًا بِئْسَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ (5) قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا إِنْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنْكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّهِ مِنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَتَّعُوا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (6) وَلَا يَتَمَتَّعُونَ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ (7) قُلْ إِنْ الْمَوْتَ الَّذِي تَفِرُّونَ مِنْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مُلَاقِيكُمْ ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (8) يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (9) فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَابْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (10) وَإِذَا رَأَوْا تِجَارَةً أَوْ لَهْوًا انفَضُّوا إِلَيْهَا وَتَرَكُوكَ قَائِمًا قُلْ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمِنْ التِّجَارَةِ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ (11)

The Qur'an, 62:1-6

Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is exalting Allah, the Sovereign, the Pure, the Exalted in Might, the Wise

(1) It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom - although they were before in clear error (2) And [to] others of them who have not yet joined them. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise (3) That is the bounty of Allah, which He gives to whom He wills, and Allah is the possessor of great bounty (4) The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take it on is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]. Wretched is the example of the people who deny the signs of Allah. And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people (5) Say, “O you who are Jews, if you claim that you are allies of Allah, excluding the [other] people, then wish for death, if you should be truthful” (6) But they will not wish for it, ever, because of what their hands have put forth. And Allah is Knowing of the wrongdoers (7) Say, “Indeed, the death from which you flee - indeed, it will meet you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you about what you used to do” (8) O you who have believed, when [the adhan] is called for the prayer on the day of Jumu'ah [Friday], then proceed to the remembrance of Allah and leave trade. That is better for you, if you only knew (9) And when the prayer has been concluded, disperse within the land and seek from the bounty of Allah, and remember Allah often that you may succeed (10) But when they saw a transaction or a diversion, [O Muhammad], they rushed to it and left you standing. Say, “What is with Allah is better than diversion and then a transaction, and Allah is the best of providers” (11)

English translation of the Sura: <http://quran.ksu.edu.sa>. Accessed on May 25, 2018.

The rest of the inscription is read as follows (read and translated by the author):

صدق الله العلي العظيم وصدق رسول الله النبي الكريم ونحن على ذلك من الشاهدين (الشاكرين والحمد لله رب العالمين) ... هذه عمارته ... في يوم ... شهر ربيع الثاني 712 ...

The section in parentheses has been destroyed and is illegible. The last few words of the sentence mention the date of the construction of the mosque which is Rabī' al-Thānī of 712/1312, but the day is illegible.

²²³ The plan of Aq Qal'ih is comparable with the plan of Khar Balgas (Ordubalik), an urban site in the Orkhon Valley, Mongolia. Khar Balgas was the capital of the 8th-9th century Uyghur Empire (Fig. 1-18).

fortified walls and moats (Fig. 1-17). The concentration of archaeological and architectural remains in the southern half of the site suggests that this part was more populated than the northern half during the Ilkhanid rule. The residents possibly abandoned the city by the end of the period. Larger groups of people, however, built their houses on the Ilkhanid ruins and resided in the city during the Safavid period. The complex was habitable until the middle of the Qajar era.²²⁴

The intention towards permanency and the establishment of capital cities came into being in the time of the first Ilkhan, Hülegü, and was followed by his son Abaqa Khan. Both Ilkhans chose pre-existing settlements, Maragha and Takht-i Sulayman, as their political and administrative base, but conducted their own extensive construction projects. The idea of foundation of an urban center from the outset as a royal residence formed during the reign of Arghun Khan and was pursued by his successors Ghazan Khan and Öljeitü respectively in Ghazaniyya, and Sultaniyya. The fact that the later Ilkhans had a preference for new towns while there were many major prosperous cities in their territory, raises some key questions about their political aspirations. In order to tackle these questions, the next two chapters will focus on Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya and will examine the physical and functional features of the cities in connection with sociopolitical and religious parameters that impacted their creation and development during the Ilkhanid period. The study of the two cities can provide insights into the main thesis of this dissertation, which argues that the Ilkhanid city as a physical entity represented the interaction between Perso-Islamic concepts and Mongolian native traditions.

²²⁴ Bakhtiyari-Shahri, *Ilkhanid City of Aq Qal'eh*.

Chapter Two: The Ilkhanid City of Ghazaniyya¹

The neighborhood of Ghazaniyya in modern-day Tabriz marks the site of the capital of Ghazan Khan, the seventh Ilkhanid ruler of Iran. Although only fragments of tile and brick have remained of the city's former glory, the study of Ghazaniyya is of great significance for two reasons. Firstly, Ghazaniyya is the first major urban center that was planned and constructed by an Ilkhan from the outset and, thus, denotes the political and religious doctrines of Ghazan Khan as the founder as well as the group of Persian viziers and Mongol elite who assisted the Ilkhan in the operation. Although a few buildings had already been constructed by his father Arghun Khan in the site, the main development phase of the city happened during the reign of Ghazan Khan. Secondly, the foundation of Ghazaniyya is considered a turning point in the history of the presence of the Mongols in Iran. The building of the city demonstrates the transformation of the Mongol elite from nomadic conquerors to administrators of an urban society. This undertaking shows how Mongol officials, in spite of their nomadic heritage, had come to appreciate the importance of establishing a political, administrative, and commercial urban center.

While the picture of the main body of Ghazaniyya derived from limited literary and physical evidence is quite blurry, we have a better idea of the charitable complex (*abwāb al-birr*) of Shanb-i Ghazan located at the heart of the city. Shanb² is a relatively well-known architectural ensemble thanks to the description of its buildings and their endowments given by Rashid al-Din,

¹ In this dissertation, “Shanb-i Ghazan” refers to the *abwāb al-birr* (charitable complex) built by Ghazan Khan and “Ghazaniyya” refers to the larger urban area that surrounded the complex. In some primary and secondary sources the two names are used interchangeably.

² The meaning of the word Shām or Shanb has not been understood yet. Roshan suggests that Shamb is the shortened version of the Mongolian word Shamb(h)ala, which means Paradise or Utopia (Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 3, 2258). Evliya Çelebi writes that Shām (Shanb)-i Ghazan was known by the appellation “Shām” since it resembled Shām (Damascus) because of its numerous gardens (Evliya Çelebi, “Sīyāhat-nāmih,” 289).

and the brief remarks made by other Persian historians and European travelers.³ Despite the inconsistencies in different historical accounts of Shanb, we have a comparatively clear understanding of the main components of the complex and their possible functions. The illustrations of it in manuscripts also shed some light on the arrangement of the buildings inside the compound and their spatial relation with the tomb of Ghazan. Furthermore, the textual records are informative about the systems of patronage and management of the *abwāb al-birr*.⁴ Considering the available research materials as well as the known aspects of Ghazaniyya up to the present time, the life of the city and in particular its pious complex, in their heyday, has been given more attention than the motivations behind the formation of these architectural and urban undertakings. Therefore, the first purpose of this chapter is to reconstruct, as far as possible, the spatial structure of Ghazaniyya during the Ilkhanid period. Secondly, the chapter addresses Ghazan Khan's intention of establishing an urban center (if not a city according to the generally accepted standards) in the vicinity of a prosperous city like Tabriz. In addition, I will examine how the *abwāb al-birr* of Shanb, patronized by Ghazan Khan, a newly converted Ilkhan, reflected the synthesis of Persian/Islamic and Mongol visual and spiritual traditions.

To meet the abovementioned targets, this chapter tackles Ghazaniyya in two ways: first, as a physical entity, and second, as a non-material concept in relation to the socio-religious, cultural, and political context in which the city was built. Great emphasis will be placed on the character of Ghazan Khan, as the founder, and his religious and political aspirations.

Understanding the nature of the desires and beliefs of the Ilkhan paves the way for the exploration of the genuine motivations leading Ghazan to build Ghazaniyya and its charitable

³ For example, see Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 204-214; Mustawfī, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 89-91; Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, 178; Amuli, *Nafāyis al-Funūn*, vol. 2, 256-257; Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 229-231. For European travelers, see Wilber, *Architecture of Islamic Iran*, 124-126.

⁴ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 212-216.

complex. This study will shed light on the assumption that the construction of Ghazaniyya was merely due to the religious orientation of Ghazan following his momentous conversion to Islam.

A general description of Ghazaniyya

While walking through the current urban fabric of Ghazaniyya (now one of the precincts of the city of Tabriz) barely hints at its glorious history, examining the spatial structure of the site from altitude is a more fruitful exercise. Going through the aerial photographs taken during the last couple of decades, one can comprehend the gradual process of alteration affecting the whole structure of Ghazaniyya. Despite the drastic changes, even the most recent satellite image of the area taken in 2018 still corresponds to the original layout of the Ilkhanid city (Fig. 2-1), as it is reflected in the textual and pictorial records of this period. The aerial photograph of 1968 gives a better view of the original layout of the site (Fig. 2-2).⁵ In the photograph Ghazaniyya is still apart from Tabriz. The most noticeable feature in this image is the concentric pattern of the area: two incomplete circles, distorted by modern urban constructions in this part of Tabriz, with a mosque (the grand mosque of al-Mahdiyya) located almost in the center (Fig. 2-3). The outer circle, working as the main street of the precinct today, encircles the residential units of Ghazaniyya. The two circles are divided into four quarters by two perpendicular streets although just two of the quarters have survived up to the present time.

Considering the extant visual and textual materials representing Ghazan's foundations in Ghazaniyya during the Ilkhanid period, as an initial hypothesis, one could interpret the current urban structure of the site visible in the 2018 satellite image as follows: the inner circle marks the

⁵ The aerial photo is provided by Iran National Cartography Center.

approximate area of the pious foundation of Shanb-i Ghazan with the tomb of the Ilkhan at its core, and the outer circle shows the edge of the main city of Ghazaniyya. The circles themselves indicated possibly the walls enclosing the charitable complex as well as the city. The two perpendicular streets were likely to be the roads connecting the suburbs to the main city and subsequently to the pious complex through the four gates in the outer wall.

Despite its modern appearance, the inscription on the portal of the mosque al-Mahdiyya states that the new structure was built on the ruins of an earlier mosque (Figs. 2-4, 2-5). The inscription is read as follows:

In the name of God, and Praise be to God, and *Ṣalawāt* be upon the prophet of God and his innocent descendants. Ghazan Shah founded this mosque in 700/1300. The building was destroyed by earthquake in 1133/1721. This humble servant, Abbas-Ali bin Haji Muhammad-Hassan, built a public bathhouse [*ḥammam*] in 1345/1926 with the aid of Mashhadi Hassan and the locals and endowed it (dedicated its revenue) to this mosque and the other mosques of the neighborhood, and this cupola [*tāq*] was built in 1351/1932...⁶

The dark stones used in the lower parts of the external walls of the mosque seem to belong to an earlier building. Some of the stones carry the marks which were possibly put by stone carvers in carving workshops (Figs. 2-6, 2-7). The content of the inscription as well as the location of the building speculatively suggest that the mosque must have been part of the central pious complex of Ghazaniyya.

⁶ There is one misspelling in the beginning of the inscription (الصلاة instead of الصلوة). The end of the inscription is quite illegible:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَالصَّلَاةُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى عِزَّتِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ
اِیْنِ مَسْجِدِ رَا دَر 700 هِجْرِي غَازَانِ شَاهِ بِنَا كَرْدِه بُوْد. دَر 1133 بَا زَلْزَلِه خَرَابِ
شُدِه. اِیْنِ اِحْقَرِ عَبَّاسْعَلِيْ بِنِ حَاجِي مُحَمَّدْحَسَنِ بِه مَسَاعِدَتِ اِهَالِي وَ مَشْنَهْدِي
حَسَنِ دَر 1345 حَمَامِي بِنَا كَرْدِه وَ مَنَفَعَتِ اَوْ رَا بِه اِیْنِ مَسْجِدِ
وَ سَايِرِ مَسَاجِدِ دِيْگَرِ مَحَلِه مَقْرَرِ كَرْدِيْمِ وَ اِیْنِ طَاقِ دَر 1351 سَاخْتِه كَشْتِ ...

Although the Ilkhanid city of Ghazaniyya was destroyed to the ground, architectural fragments and shards of potteries, bricks, and tiles are still unearthed accidentally in the process of construction projects (Figs. 2-8, 2-9, 2-10).⁷ An interesting example of these shards is a piece of brick on which the words “Ghazan Qa’an” is read (Fig. 2-11). The significance of this small piece is that in the contemporary literary sources of the reign of Ghazan, he has been entitled Ilkhan, *pādshāh*, and sultan, but qa’an (khaqan), which means the Great Khan, was commonly used as the title of the khans (Mongol emperors) of the Yuan dynasty.⁸ Whether this inscription denotes Ghazan’s ambition to reach the position of the Great Khan or it is simply a play on words requires further textual and physical evidence.

Nadir Mirza’s description of Shanb-i Ghazan

In the *Tārīkh va jughrāfi-yi dār al-salṭana-yi Tabrīz* (History and Geography of Tabriz, the Capital), Nadir Mirza (d. 1886) gives an account of his visit to the ruins of Shanb-i Ghazan in 1842.⁹ According to Nadir Mirza, the magnificent edifices of Shanb had been destroyed either by order of Safavid sultans or by natural disasters such as earthquakes. The ruins of a few walls and cells seem to be the only remnants of Shanb that existed in the site at the time of his visit. He approves of the quality of the bricks used in the buildings of Shanb and believes that the stone-

⁷ In the small cemetery of Ghazaniyya, I saw two plinths, which had been transferred there from somewhere else. I saw similar plinths in the Rab’-i Rashidi which had belonged to a historic public bath in Tabriz and had been transferred there after the destruction of the bath (Figs. 2-8, 2-9).

⁸ For further discussion on the origin and meaning of the words “khan,” “khaqan,” and “qa’an,” see Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi’ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 3, 2359.

⁹ Nadir Mirza was born in Istarabad (Gorgan) but lived in Tabriz for about forty years. Nadir Mirza worked as a bureaucrat in the office of Muzaffar al-Din Shah Qajar (r. 1896-1907) when he was the crown prince and the governor of Azerbaijan. During his residency in Tabriz, Nadir Mirza compiled the *Tārīkh va jughrāfi-yi dār al-salṭana-yi Tabrīz* on the basis of his own observation as well as the historical documents preserved in governmental archives or in the private collections of the notables of Tabriz. The book contains valuable information on the social and political conditions of Tabriz during the Qajar era. Nadir Mirza also includes detailed descriptions of some of the historic buildings of the city in the book.

like bricks [*bi sakhtī chun sang*] had been made of a kind of soil which was different from the soil of which the bricks in Tabriz were made in the nineteenth century. He writes that the high quality of the building materials in Shanb has made them a highly valued commodity for those who extracted bricks and stones from the buildings [*khārā kanān*], transported them to Tabriz and nearby towns on the back of their pack animals, and made a big profit from selling them.¹⁰ It indicates that there were still plentiful building materials to rob despite the extent of destruction.

This short passage on Shanb-i Ghazan, although is not architecturally informative, attests to its former glory. However, in the same book, Nadir Mirza gives a more detailed description of the ruins of Shanb on the basis of his second visit to the site almost four decades later in 1884.¹¹ Nadir Mirza's report is a combination of his own observation and the narratives related by medieval historians to whom he refers to in his text.¹² His accurate observation of pottery shards and tiles scattered over the site complements the historical narratives. Furthermore, it seems that the original distribution of the pottery shards and tile fragments had not been distorted specially at the time of his first visit. Therefore, the report is deemed a credible text in the study of the historical status of the buildings of Shanb. He says that Shanb-i Ghazan is the tomb of Ghazan Khan. The grave of the Ilkhan was situated in the center of the complex surrounded by brick-roofed [*ājur-pūsh*] and wood-roofed [*chūb-pūsh*]¹³ edifices. He gives some information on the

¹⁰ Nadir Mirza, *Tārīkh va Jughrāfiyā*, 90.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 100. Nadir Mirza writes the passage on Shanb-i Ghazan in 1884. He also refers to his first visit to the site in 1842 in the same book.

¹² Nadir Mirza writes that Shanb-i Ghazan has been recorded in detail in historical sources, for instance, he refers to the author of *Habīb al-Sīyar* (Khwandmir) and his description of the endowment of Shanb-i Ghazan (p. 100). He also mentions the *Jāmi'-i Rashīdī* and Rashid al-Din's account of the Ilkhanids' campaign in Sham (Bilad al-Sham). Apparently Ghazan's triumphant victory in this campaign was his primary motivation for constructing of a mosque, a madrasa, and a *khānqāh* in Shanb (p. 90).

¹³ By brick-roofed and wood-roofed edifices, Nadir Mirza probably describes domed buildings and buildings having a roof supported by rows of pillars respectively.

architectural decoration of the buildings on the basis of the tile fragments that were still visible in the debris of the ruined buildings. He writes:

The dome of the tomb was covered with faience mosaic tiles and the dome's adjoining buildings were covered with tiles from the plinth to the top ... those tiles found rarely in the middle of the complex [*ma 'mūra*], where was the tomb of Ghazan, are not related to the other tiles scattered around the complex.¹⁴

He attributes the high quality light blue tiles to the tomb with certainty and admires their color, technique, and design.

Despite the extensive destruction of the buildings of Shanb, Nadir Mirza's account reveals that the charitable foundation of Ghazan was acknowledged as an endowment by the locals even in the nineteenth century. According to his report, the people who lived in the surrounding area did not use the bricks scattered all over the site because the religious scholars called them "forbidden" [*ḥarām*], as they had been endowed in the past [*chun waqf ast ḥarām ast*]. Although the report does not confirm the locals' awareness of the history of the complex or its religious values, it is interesting that the spiritual aspect of the Ilkhan's foundation outlived its physical components. Nevertheless, that was not always the case. In his second visit to the site, Nadir Mirza observes that a very small number of sound bricks were left, because of a new *fatwā* given by some religious scholars who had built a couple of *qanāt* channels around the site. Since they intended to take advantage of the bricks and stones of the buildings of Shanb in the construction of their own *qanāts*, they announced that the building materials are "permissible" [*ḥalāl*] and, thus, trading them is allowed by the Islamic law.

¹⁴ Ibid., 101.

The extensive extraction of bricks and stones from the ruins of Shanb not only profoundly damaged the architectural remains in the site, but also distorted the archaeological material buried under the ground. For instance, Nadir Mirza says that the workers, who were digging the site, informed him about a bunch of rotten arrows and remnants of gunpowder that had been found in one of the trenches. The author himself observed two carved columns made of black stone in his earlier visit (fifteen years earlier) around the hollow supposed to be the tomb of Ghazan, while there was no trace of them in 1884.¹⁵ Although Nadir Mirza's account does not offer a vivid description of the charitable complex of Shanb in its entirety, it is still assessed as a valuable historical document because it describes the last phase of the complex before it is covered by the buildings of the modern neighborhood of Ghazaniyya.

The location of Ghazaniyya

In the *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, Rashid al-Din mentions that Ghazan Khan had an interest in construction and many people [*hizārān hizār*]¹⁶ were engaged in the work of building due to this interest [*imārat-dūstī*].¹⁷ Mentioning several building projects that were being conducted across the Ilkhanid territory, he gives a detailed description of Ghazan's architectural undertakings in Tabriz to which he refers to as *dār al-mulk* or *dār al-salṭana*.¹⁸ The city wall had been destroyed and many houses had been built far from the main body of the city. By order of the Ilkhan the

¹⁵ Ibid., 102. Apparently Nadir Mirza visited the site three times. He writes the description in 1884 while he refers to his first visit in 1842 and a third visit fifteen years earlier than 1884.

¹⁶ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 204.

¹⁷ Ibid., 201.

¹⁸ It is important to note that Rashid al-Din uses "*dār al-mulk*" exclusively for Tabriz not Ghazaniyya. His preference for this appellation was not possibly due to the fact that Tabriz was a more important city than Ghazaniyya. In my view, the "*dār al-mulk* of Tabriz" possibly extended beyond the boundaries of the city. Although Rashid al-Din clearly differentiates between city of Tabriz and Shanb, "*dār al-mulk*" might simply refer to Tabriz and its environs including Shanb and the Rab' -i Rashidi.

new wall was constructed enclosing old Tabriz and its surrounding buildings and gardens. Thus, the area of Tabriz expanded extensively under Ghazan. Moreover, another city, larger than old Tabriz, was founded in Shanb that surrounded the *abwāb al-birr* and its gardens, and was called Ghazaniyya. Regardless of the important information on Ilkhanid Tabriz given in this passage of the text, Rashid al-Din indirectly makes two interesting points about Ghazaniyya: firstly, Ghazan intended to build Ghazaniyya and its pious foundation beyond the walls of Tabriz, although in the newly expanded city there was enough space for more constructions. Secondly, a number of the trade caravans that arrived from Rum and Afranj¹⁹ in the region, unloaded their goods in Ghazaniyya, although they paid their tolls to the same toll-collectors [*tamghāchī*] who worked at the gates of Tabriz to prevent hostility [*tā munāzi ‘at nayuftad*].²⁰ According to these two points, one can suggest that from the outset Ghazan envisaged that Ghazaniyya, with a distinct identity, would live independently from Tabriz. Involving Ghazaniyya in the trade network of northwestern Iran and developing its commercial relations with other cities must have been part of Ghazan’s larger policy for establishing a new urban center in the immediate vicinity of a commercially thriving city like Tabriz.²¹

Mustawfi’s account in the *Nuzhat al-qulūb*, also suggests that Ghazaniyya was intended from the beginning as the more private section of Ghazan’s court whose political function was different from Tabriz. He writes that Ghazan founded a small city [*shahrchih*] in Shanb [*Shām*]²² outside the walls of Tabriz and built magnificent edifices there for his own chamber [*khābgāh*].²³

¹⁹ The mention of Rum and Afranj (Byzantine and Europe) in Rashid al-Din’s account shows the significance of Tabriz and Ghazaniyya in the commercial network of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. For further discussion, see Preiser-Kapeller, “Civitas Thauris”; Blair, “Tabriz: International Entrepôt.”

²⁰ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 204-206. For the whole passage, see the appendix.

²¹ For more discussion on the general question of trade under the Mongols, see, for instance, Petrushevsky, “The Socio-Economic Condition”; Allsen, “Mongolian Princes”; Amitai-Preiss, “Turko-Mongolian Nomads”; De Nicola, “Economic Role of Mongol Women.”

²² In some historical sources Shanb is spelled as Shām.

²³ Mustawfi, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 123. For the whole passage, see the appendix.

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the prosperity of the *dār al-mulk* of Tabriz was important to Ghazan. Therefore, despite the autonomy of Ghazaniyya, his architectural operation in Shanb might have happened in connection with the idea of creating a place of pilgrimage²⁴ in the vicinity of Tabriz that promoted the commercial and economic life of the city.²⁵ The tomb of Ghazan and its surrounding charitable buildings attracted a large number of people from both nomadic and urban social groups.

Although Rashid al-Din describes the urban development of Tabriz during the time of Ghazan Khan, such as the building of new walls and gates, bazaars, caravanserais, and public baths, the court-sponsored large-scale projects seem to have been conducted mostly in the district of Ghazaniyya, except for the ensemble of the Rab‘-i Rashidi located on the northeastern outskirts of Tabriz. However, a few smaller architectural complexes were patronized by the Ilkhanid elite inside Tabriz, albeit most of which was not built under Ghazan.²⁶ One of the most important projects was a grand garden and pavilion erected on the northern bank of Mehran Rud by Shams al-Din Muhammad Juvayni (d. 1285), the Persian statesman and vizier under the first four Ilkhans. The compound was later expanded by the Aq Qoyunlu (1378-1501) and was renowned as Sahibabad Garden (*Bāgh-i Şāhibābād*).²⁷ The other noteworthy project was a multi-functional complex financed by Taj al-Din ‘Ali Shah (d. 1324), Öljejtü’s vizier. The complex consisted of a mosque, a madrasa, and a hospice (*zāwīya*) of which only a single *īvān* of the mosque has remained today commonly known as Arg or citadel of ‘Ali Shah.²⁸ Although the role of Tabriz as the *dār al-mulk* of the Ilkhans has been emphasized in the literary sources, one can

²⁴ The idea of Ghazaniyya as a destination for pilgrims is discussed in the following pages and also in chapter 6.

²⁵ Aliasl and Yusefifard, “Ghazaniyya of Tabriz,” 76.

²⁶ For more information about these architectural complexes, see Karimian and Mehdizadih, *Iranian Cities*, 93-99.

²⁷ Bani-Mas‘ud, “Sahibabad Garden of Tabriz,” 5.

²⁸ Blair, “Tabriz: International Entrepôt,” 333-335.

suggest that the city itself was the locus of the life and commercial activities of the general populace while Ghazaniyya worked as the residence of the Mongol elite. This hypothesis will be discussed further in the following pages.

To address the question of the location of Ghazaniyya, it is helpful to understand the Mongols' perception of dynastic legitimacy. Allsen expresses the political notions of the nomads of Inner Asia throughout the pre-modern era by two precepts, as written in Persian on a dirham struck in Tbilisi during the reign of Möngke Khan: "By the Might of God/ By the Good Fortune of the Emperor." These precepts rooted in the folk cosmologies of the nomadic peoples had much in common with the political theories of nearby settled cultures. It is usually assumed, without any certainty, that they borrowed these doctrines from the sedentary societies of West and East Asia.²⁹ According to the ideology of the nomads, the good fortune existed permanently in some specific territories in eastern steppe and their khaqans (khans) obtained royal charisma (*suu* in Mongolian) and thus legitimacy through occupying these lands. Burqan Qaldun and Karakorum, two important ritual and political centers (especially during the formative years of the Mongol Empire, ca. 1220-60), were believed to carry such quality. The former borrowed its spiritual power from the unknown burial site of Chinggis Khan and his *urdūs* (encampments) in the region. Following the burial of all the major Toluid princes in the Great Forbidden Precinct, *quruq*, Burqan Qaldun was established as an ancestral shrine. The spiritual power of Karakorum was gained from its proper placement (which was close to an earlier Turk and Uighur imperial city), and the "primordial" charisma and good fortune that existed permanently in the whole region.³⁰

²⁹ Allsen, "Spiritual Geography," 116-117.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, esp. 128-129.

The idea of founding a new urban center in the vicinity of the *dār al-mulk* of Tabriz can be explained in connection with the above-mentioned Mongol ideology. Ghazan Khan constructed his charitable complex in Shanb that had already been claimed by his father Arghun Khan. In the historical accounts of the reign of Arghun, particularly those ones reporting the events of his early years, there is no indication of one certain political and administrative center. The accounts describe the movements of the Ilkhan among a number of seasonal camps including Tabriz, Baghdad, Maragha, and Arran.³¹ However, Rashid al-Din writes that in 1290 Arghun, who had a great interest in constructing buildings [*bi kār-i ‘imārat aẓīm māyil būd*], founded a grand city in the Shanb [*Shām*] of Tabriz and built splendid houses there and called it Arghuniyya.³² Although there is no description of the physical structure of Arghun’s city in the textual records, scattered remarks made by some historians have revealed the name of a few buildings of Arghuniyya, for instance ‘Adiliyya pavilion and garden [*kūshk va bāgh-i ‘Ādiliyya*].³³ Unlike his successors, the Ilkhan did not have a tomb complex. Mustawfi says that Arghun was buried in the mountains of Sujas,³⁴ his burial site was concealed as was the Mongol custom, and the mountain was made a *quruq*.³⁵ Devin DeWeese suggests that the term *quruq*³⁶ in

³¹ For instance, according to Vassaf, Arghun ascended the throne the first time in a summer camp called Qamisiyun (between Hasht al-rud and Qurban-shira) (Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 81). Banakati writes that Arghun ascended the throne the second time in Arran, when Bolad Aqa delivered his *yarlīgh* from Qubilay Khan. In the spring of the same year he went to Tabriz and then moved towards Surluq (Suqurluq or Takht-i Sulayman) (Banakati, *Tārīkh-i Banākātī*, 443).

³² Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1179.

³³ The pavilion and the garden were merely expanded by Ghazan. However the contemporary author, Vassaf al-Hazra, attributes the foundation of the two buildings (*bustān-sarāy va qaṣr-i ‘Ādiliyya*) to the Ilkhan; see Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 230.

³⁴ Before Arghun Khan, Bulughan Khatun the elder, the wife of Abaqa Khan, had been buried in the mountains of Sujas in 1286 (*va ṣandūq-i ū rā bi kūh-i Sujās burdand*); see Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1162.

³⁵ Mustawfi, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 106.

³⁶ *Quruq* is also spelled as *qurūq* and *qūrūq*.

quruq-i Arghun (the burial site of Arghun) probably has the same meaning implied by that term when attached to the burial site of Chinggis Khan or other khans.³⁷

According to Rashid al-Din, Ghazan Khan founded his sublime cupola [*qubba-yi 'ālī*] in the middle of 'Adiliyya garden in Shanb [*Shām*].³⁸ He also mentions that the Tazik and Mongol amirs and those who made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Ghazan went to the 'Adiliyya pavilion and ate votive pottage [*āsh-i nazrī*] there.³⁹ Kashani also asserts that the Arghun's pavilion was located next to the tomb of Ghazan [*dar janb-i gunbad-i sharīf-i Ghāzānī*].⁴⁰ Since Arghun's burial site was unknown (until his daughter, Öljei Khatun, made the grave public and found a *khānqāh* at the site), one can raise this hypothesis that, instead of his tomb, his pavilion and garden built in Shanb gave spiritual power (or "good fortune" according to the Mongols' political notion) to the site. Ghazan captured the power through establishing his *abwāb al-birr* and the city of Ghazaniyya in Shanb. This tradition was not unprecedented in the spiritual culture of the Mongols: following the death of Chinggis Khan, in the absence of the actual burial site of the khan, his encampments were honored as shrines by the Mongolian leaders. Textual records describe the visits of Chinggis Khan's successors to his *urdūs* in Burqan Qaldun in search of good fortune or royal charisma of the deceased khan, which explained in fact the reason for his surprising victories and ensured his followers' success in their future campaigns. These visits were usually accompanied by making sacrifices to the drum and the banner of Chinggis Khan, which represented the khan's good fortune.⁴¹

³⁷ DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, 191.

³⁸ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 117.

Vassaf al-Hazra calls the tomb "special cupola" [*gunbad-i khāṣ*]; see Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 270.

³⁹ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 212.

⁴⁰ Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeitü*, 179.

⁴¹ Allsen, "Spiritual Geography," 119.

Ghazan built his tomb and its surrounding charitable institutions close to the constructions of his father in search of royal charisma left by the deceased Ilkhan in the site. For Ghazan, as an outsider, founding his political center and imperial court in an area that had been already occupied by his father, rather than in the developed city of Tabriz, seemed a reasonable policy towards legitimation. Furthermore, the seasonal pilgrimages made by Öljeytü to Shanb, where he mourned and honored his father's pavilion as well as the tomb of his brother and gave alms to the poor, supports this claim that Ghazan must have thought of creating an ancestral shrine in Shanb, following the tradition of his ancestors in Inner Asia. Historical references to the burial of Ghazan's courtiers in his tomb support this idea. For instance, in the *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü* we read that Bulughan Khatun Mu'azzama, Ghazan's wife, died in the pavilion of Baghdad but her coffin was transferred to Tabriz in order to be buried in the tomb of Ghazan [*gunbad-i 'ālī-yi sharīf*] at the side of the Ilkhan.⁴²

It is noteworthy that Mongolian traditional idea of founding an ancestral shrine in Shanb, however, was expressed through a local religious vocabulary. After the disintegration of the Mongol Empire, the regional khanates increasingly borrowed the local concepts of legitimacy from the sedentary subjects of their domains, Muslim notions in the west and Chinese-Buddhist concepts in the east, and combined them with their own.⁴³ Ghazan was not an exception to this pattern. In his building projects in Shanb, Ghazan distanced himself from his ethnic traditions and approached the local Persian/Islamic architectural language. Therefore, the concept of Mongol ancestral shrine combined with the notion of Sufi and Shi'i charitable complexes that

⁴² Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, 89.

⁴³ Allsen, "Spiritual Geography," 128.

Ghazan had already visited in Khurasan.⁴⁴ In addition to the appearance of Ghazan's complex resembling Muslims sacred mausolea, the visible location of his grave also contradicted the renowned Mongolian custom of burying their dead secretly. This contradiction is usually justified by his controversial conversion to Islam. Masashi Haneda suggests that Ghazan Khan, as a Muslim, aimed for God's grace as well as the pilgrims' blessing through the construction of his charitable foundation in Shanb.⁴⁵

While I discussed the significance of the location of Shanb-i Ghazan and Ghazaniyya from a spiritual perspective, some scholars invoke more practical factors in the selection of a suitable site for the tomb of Ghazan and its related institutions. For instance, the geographical conditions of the region as well as the nomadic lifestyle of the Mongols leading them to erect their seasonal encampments in pastures, made the gardens on the outskirts of Tabriz a proper place for the foundations of Arghun and his successor Ghazan.⁴⁶

In addition to all above-mentioned factors, positioning Ghazaniyya apart from Tabriz could be discussed in connection with the notion of maintaining the racial purity which was of great significance to the Central Asian Mongols as a nation. This concept, in the form of blood purity, was also important to individual tribes. They tried not to distort their tribal integrity through intermarriage with neighboring tribes whose lineage was perceived as vague. In addition, they highlighted their tribal identity through the clarification of the borders of their territory so that the precinct covered by the tents of each tribe was a well-defined (and sometimes

⁴⁴ For instance, the mausoleum of Imam Riza and the tomb complexes of Sultan Bayazid, Abu al-Hassan Kharraqani, and Shaykh Abu Sa' id Abul Khayr (Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 208). For further discussion, see chapter 6.

⁴⁵ Haneda, "Pastoral City and the Mausoleum City," 147.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 151-152.

isolated) area of land which belonged to that particular tribe.⁴⁷ In the case of Ghazaniyya, as an independent city beside Tabriz, even if the new city founded by Ghazan did not remain a residence exclusively for the Mongols in practice, I suggest that its isolation symbolically represented the different ethnic identity of its founder. Moreover, Ghazan's motive for constructing a new architectural complex in Ghazaniyya, in the environs of Tabriz, a major city with a large number of splendid buildings, can also be explained in regard to a tradition which was common among the Mongols in eastern Asia. As we discussed in chapter 1, pre-existing buildings were barely reused as the residence of the Mongol emperors and the members of the Chinggisid royal family in Yuan China.

Furthermore, considering the cities founded by the Mongols earlier in Central Asia,⁴⁸ Ghazan was familiar with the model of the political centers consisting of a complex of encampments. Ghazaniyya and subsequently Rab'-i Rashidi, located around Tabriz, are also comparable with the satellite encampments (*urdūs*) that had been gradually laid out about Karakorum (Fig. 2-12).⁴⁹ A passage from the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* also supports the claim that Ghazaniyya resembled the earlier encampments of the Mongols in Central Asia. In a section of the book reporting the events of the time of Chinggis Khan, Rashid al-Din uses the word *kura'ān* in order to describe the circle of the tribes which gathered around the khan. Rashid al-Din says that *kura'ān* means "ring" (possibly of Mongolian origin). In the past, when a tribe arrived at a place to erect its encampment, the group of people formed a circle with their tents, and the tent of

⁴⁷ Vladimirov, *Social System of the Mongols*, 87; Muradi, Musavi-Haji, and 'Umrani, "Re-identification of the Tomb of Ghazan," 36.

⁴⁸ Mongol urban settlements in Central Asia are discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

⁴⁹ For instance, Sira Ordu (Sira urdū) in Örmögatū was a satellite camp founded by Ögödei about fifteen to twenty kilometers southeast of Karakorum, the imperial capital (Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, 13). For other satellite camps and seasonal residences around Karakorum, see Boyle, "Seasonal Residences"; Shiraishi, "Seasonal Migrations."

their master was located in the center. In the time of Chinggis, when the army of the enemy was close, the tribe shaped a *kura 'ān* to block the enemy.⁵⁰ Muradi –rightly in my opinion– compares Shanb-i Ghazan to a Mongolian *kura 'ān*. Shanb, consisting of permanent structures rather than tents and chariots, encircled the tomb of Ghazan Khan which was, in fact, the location of the master.⁵¹ The same interpretation can be proposed about Ghazaniyya which surrounds the complex of Shanb-i Ghazan.

The *abwāb al-birr* of Shanb-i Ghazan

The extent of the portable and non-portable properties endowed to the charitable institutions of Shanb-i Ghazan denotes the grandeur and complexity of the pious foundation, only a small portion of which is evident to us thanks to the accounts of Rashid al-Din and Vassaf al-Hazra.⁵² Ghazan appointed Rashid al-Din as the custodian (*mutivallī*) of the endowment and founded a particular office [*dīvan-i khāṣṣa*] conducted by two of his amirs, Gur Timur and Tarmtaz, to collect and manage the annual income earned from the lands endowed to the *abwāb al-birr*.⁵³ Vassaf reports that each year the income exceeded 100 *tumāns* (equivalent to a million dinars; literally “a thousand thousand dinars” [*hizār hizār dīnārs*]) gold. According to Rashid al-Din, by order of Ghazan, seven copies of the endowment deed of Shanb were written to be preserved in seven different locations, four of which are known to us: one with the custodian of the complex, one in the honorable Ka‘ba [*Ka‘ba-yi sharīf*] in Mecca, one in the courthouse [*dār al-qazā*] of

⁵⁰ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 1, 329.

⁵¹ Muradi, Musavi-Haji, and ‘Umrani, “Re-identification of the Tomb of Ghazan,” 36.

⁵² Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 209; Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 231.

⁵³ The endowments of the *abwāb al-birr* of Shanb-i Ghazan was called special endowments [*awqāf-i khāṣṣ*]; see Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1383.

the *dār al-mulk* of Tabriz, and one in the courthouse [*dār al-qazā*] of Baghdad, the city of peace [*madīnat al-salām-i Baghdād*]. However, all the copies have since been destroyed.⁵⁴ In the absence of the endowment deed of Shanb, we are aware of neither the whole financial resources endowed to the *abwāb al-birr* nor the exact physical and functional nature of the components founded around the tomb of the Ilkhan. However, Rashid al-Din records parts of the endowments made to the complex and Vassaf enumerates the twelve adjacent buildings including mosque, *khānqāh*, Shafi‘iyya and Hanafīyya (two residences and religious schools for the followers of the schools of Shafi‘i and Hanaf), *dār al-shafā*’ (hospital), *bayt al-mutivallī* (custodian’s house), *kitāb khānih* (library), *raṣad khānih* (observatory),⁵⁵ *ḥukmīyya* (a residence for philosophers [*ḥukamā*] and teaching philosophy [*ḥikmat*]),⁵⁶ *huḏ khānih* (reservoir), *bayt al-sīyāda* (a residence for *sayyids* and *sādāts*, the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad), and *garmābih-yi sabīl* (public bath).⁵⁷

Our understanding of the architectural features of the ensemble is rather fragmentary. The general names and functions of the buildings found in textual records along with few miniatures depicting some parts of the complex are the only evidence assisting us in the study of the spatial structure of the *abwāb al-birr*. The tomb is the only element of the foundation that has been described in great detail. On the basis of Vassaf’s report, it is possible to reconstruct the structural details and dimensions of the tomb, the types of material used in the building as well as

⁵⁴ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 215.

⁵⁵ According to Rashid al-Din, after visiting the observatory of Maragha, Ghazan Khan ordered to build an observatory next to the *gunbad-i ‘ālī* and the *abwāb al-birr* of Shanb; see Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1296.

⁵⁶ *Ḥukmīyya* is possibly the same place to which Rashid al-Din refers as *bayt al-qānūn* (the house of law); see Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 211.

⁵⁷ The public bath has been mentioned in the *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī* (Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 211) while in the copy of *Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf* edited by Ayati one finds a question mark instead of the twelfth component of the pious complex; see Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 230.

its decoration and inscriptions.⁵⁸ In addition, his account gives some approximate information about the number of workmen and artisans employed in the project and the rough cost of erecting the tomb.⁵⁹ Vassaf clearly describes that the twelve-sided tomb built of brick was erected on a circular cut-stone base. Despite his vivid description, there are some disagreements over the geometry of the tomb.⁶⁰ A surviving miniature painting from the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, probably produced a century later in Herat, depicts the pious foundation in Shanb (Fig. 2-13). The illustration, as one of the oldest extant visual evidence of the ensemble, intensifies the discrepancy since the appearance of the tomb in the work does not accord with Vassaf’s account. The round or possibly square tomb-tower portrayed in the miniature is located in a courtyard and enclosed by a row of buildings the façades of which are decorated by tile-works and inscriptions.⁶¹ The tomb, in Vassaf’s report, was surrounded by the twelve above-mentioned buildings, whereas the compound in the miniature does not look like a twelve-sided enclosure possibly because the painter failed to follow the rules of perspective.⁶² The enclosure is encircled by a wall fortified with towers. The possibility of the existence of a wall around the *abwāb al-birr* was discussed earlier in this chapter. Outside the complex, three architectural elements attract our attention: a minaret, a tall building, and a dome-like structure which could be either the cover of a building or a huge tent. In view of the pictorial inaccuracies of the painting, it is

⁵⁸ Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 229.

⁵⁹ Vassaf mentions that 14,400 workmen participated in the construction of whom 13,000 persons worked continuously and 1,400 persons were hired to help the first group; Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 230, n. 2.

⁶⁰ For instance, Evliya Çelebi compares the tomb of Ghazan to Galata Tower in Istanbul, which is a round tower (Evliya Çelebi, “Sīyāhat-nāmih,” 289). For further discussion on this issue, see Muradi, Musavi-Haji, and ‘Umrani, “Re-identification of the Tomb of Ghazan”; Wilber, *Architecture of Islamic Iran*, 124-126.

⁶¹ Despite what is depicted in the miniature, in the *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, Rashid al-Din refers to the twelve-sided tomb and writes that “...*gunbad-i ‘ālī* (Ghazan’s tomb) and the *abwāb al-birr* that is in its (tomb’s) twelve sides...” (Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 212).

⁶² The problem of understanding and interpreting historical paintings and maps is addressed in the introduction.

important to analyze it not as a visual reference per se, but as a historical document that can complement the eye-witness texts describing the site.

In addition to individual buildings of Shanb, there are some hypotheses explaining the layout of the *abwāb al-birr* as a whole. As we mentioned above, Muradi believes that the complex with the tomb of the Ilkhan in the center and the twelve pious buildings around it resembled the arrangement of Mongolian *urdūs* in Central Asia, with the yurt (portable round tent) of the khan in the center and the tents of the rest of the tribe about it (Figs. 2-14, 2-15, 2-16). He also attributes the number of the buildings surrounding the tomb to the Twelve Imams, and, thus, to the Shi‘i tendencies of Ghazan.⁶³ However, to the best of my knowledge, this interpretation is not found in any source from the period. Moreover, there is no reason to believe that among different sects and schools of Islam to which Ghazan showed interest after his conversion, Shi‘ism had a special place in the spiritual life of the Ilkhan.⁶⁴

The religious eclecticism of the Mongols

There are a lot of complexities surrounding the issue of religion, or on a broader scale the spiritual beliefs, of the Mongols. After achieving dominion over much of Eurasia, they were exposed to a wide range of religions practiced across their vast territories. Therefore, following the disintegration of the Mongol Empire in the mid-thirteenth century, in each of the autonomous khanates formed afterwards, the Mongols dealt with the religion of their subjects almost without hostility. In the same way, the Ilkhans encouraged religious diversity in Iran until the conversion of Ghazan Khan in 1295. With the accession of Ghazan at the end of the thirteenth century,

⁶³ Muradi, Musavi-Haji, and ‘Umrani, “Re-identification of the Tomb of Ghazan,” 36-37.

⁶⁴ On various religious tendencies of Ghazan Khan after his conversion to Islam, see Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām.”

Islam was known as the imperial religion in Western Asia. Ghazan's conversion was followed by the evolution of the state from a nomadic Central Asian regime into a sedentary Islamic polity.⁶⁵ As part of Ghazan's reforms (which will be discussed in great detail in chapter 4), he tried to end his ideological connections with the Great Khan in China in order to obtain the support of the Iranians. He officially called himself "sultan," a propagator and defender of the faith, instead of "Ilkhan," a subordinate to the Great Khan in China.⁶⁶ However, this ideological shift seems to be primarily for internal consumption and did not result in a political break between Ilkhanid Iran and Yuan China since the two courts kept their continuous military and diplomatic cooperation until the mid-fourteenth century.⁶⁷

Conversion to Islam among the Ilkhanid elite seems to be a gradual process, which extended over several generations.⁶⁸ The Mongol rulers obtained both legitimacy and authority through accepting the faith of their subjects and, thus, in most of the cases their conversion is understood not completely as a shift in piety or religious taste but as a way to "domesticate the bases of legitimacy."⁶⁹ Islamization can also be considered as one of the policies pursued by the

⁶⁵ On the Islamization of the Ilkhans, see Amitai-Preiss, "Sufis and Shamans"; Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, 352-380. On the conversion of Ghazan Khan, see Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition*, 159-181. On the nature of Ghazan Khan's Islamic belief from the perspective of Mamluk sources, see Amitai-Preiss, "Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition."

⁶⁶ The political self-perception of the Ilkhans after conversion was also reflected in the establishment of a new coinage system in which the traditional Islamic coin names *dinar* and *dirham* were used (Fragner, "Ilkhanid Rule," 76). More importantly, Ghazan Khan omitted the name of the *khaqan* from the coins and inscribed his own name alone. "Ruler of the World/Sultan, the Supreme/Ghazan Muhammad/May God Prolong his Reign" is one example of the inscriptions on the coins. For more examples, see Allsen, "Changing Forms of Legitimation," 230-231.

⁶⁷ Allsen, "Biography of a Cultural Broker," 11; Allsen, "Notes on Chinese Titles," 27-28.

⁶⁸ The coins minted by the first Ilkhan, Hülegü, exemplify this claim since they carried the Muslim *shahādā*. We know that Hülegü never converted to Islam but the coins' inscriptions show how he benefited from the existing Muslim discourse and combined it with his own political/religious doctrines; see Pfeiffer 2006, 370. For further discussion on the emergence of the Ilkhans' titles on the coinage of this period, see Allsen, "Changing Forms of Legitimation," 225-228.

⁶⁹ Allsen, "Biography of a Cultural Broker," 11. In other words, as Allsen discusses it in the case of Ahmad Tegüder, responding to the religious feelings of the majority of the subjects was considered an effort to "broaden or diversify the bases of his legitimation"; see Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 26.

Iranian elite in order to transform the Mongol rulers and fit them into their own ideal molds.⁷⁰ In the process of conversion to Islam the Mongols acted very selectively in the adoption of sedentary religion and culture. They chose those appropriate elements that ensured the improvement of the quality of their life and excluded others that were not approved of from a Mongol point of view.⁷¹

The religious eclecticism of the Mongols and their interest in various religions is usually interpreted as their religious flexibility or tolerance (or even indifference) by some scholars.⁷² Allsen, nevertheless, looks at the issue from a different perspective. He says that in the Mongols' new polity, articulated by the term "state culture," in addition to resources (such as men, money, and material), they tried to mobilize and control the spiritual forces of their domain including those found in the natural world, the powers possessed and controlled by their ancestors or former dynasties, and those owned by ritual specialists, artisans, and scholars. Focusing on the last group, Allsen suggests that the Mongols tried to control and exploit the spiritual power of the clergymen of different faiths for the benefit of the empire. While they did not adhere to a particular sect or school, they arranged theological debates in their courts and showed interest in various religious principles and practices. This enthusiasm often created a sense of sincerity for the supporters of different spiritual/religious groups so that they came to this opinion that the khan/Ilkhan is "one of them."⁷³ Perhaps due to this notion, there is no explicit statement regarding Ghazan's religious affiliation in his contemporary textual records. After his conversion to Islam he brought an end to the long years of religious tolerance and destroyed a large number

⁷⁰ Melville, "Mongols in Iran," 54-58.

⁷¹ Pfeiffer, "Reflections on a 'Double Rapprochement'," 371-72.

⁷² Blair, "Religious Arts of the Ilkhanids," 105. On the religious eclecticism of the Mongols in China, see, for instance, Chan and De Bary, *Yüan Thought*.

⁷³ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 200. See also Morgan, *The Mongols*, 44. In Morgan's words "the Mongols believed in taking out as much celestial insurance as possible."

of non-Islamic places of worship.⁷⁴ However, within the realm of his Islamic beliefs, he continued roaming around different branches and schools of Islam.

Ghazan Khan: A Mongol Ilkhan or a Muslim sultan?

Scrutinizing the ideological life of Ghazan Khan, and his conversion to Islam in particular, will pave the way for obtaining a relatively credible interpretation of the Ilkhan's architectural undertakings in Ghazaniyya. Ghazan's conversion is a turning point in the history of the Mongols in Iran that influenced not only the political atmosphere of the Ilkhanid court but also the social life of their Iranian subjects. There are some ambiguities in the story of Ghazan's conversion to Islam. It is hard to confirm the sincerity of the conversion despite several historical accounts attesting to his religious fidelity as a faithful Muslim. Furthermore, most of the contemporary accounts of the conversion of Ghazan Khan were written by court historians, and, thus, are usually subject to religious or political biases of their authors.⁷⁵ Regardless of the actual nature of his beliefs, there can be little doubt that his conversion was encouraged by both political and spiritual motives.⁷⁶ The conversion took place in 1295, presumably in Lar-i Damavand in the pavilion [*kūshk*] of Arghun Khan.⁷⁷ Although it seems that the place of the conversion had not been planned in advance, the fact that Ghazan converted to Islam in the residence [*takhtgāh*] of his father is of great importance. As Charles Melville discusses, not only

⁷⁴ Rossabi, "Mongols and their Legacy," 34. Despite the extensive destruction, the remains of a few Ilkhanid structures still exist, which are believed to be non-Islamic religious monuments, for instance, an unfinished rock-cut complex (possibly a Buddhist temple) near Sultaniyya (see chapter 3). For more examples of non-Islamic structures (whether Nestorian or Buddhist), see Ball, "Two Aspects of Iranian Buddhism"; Ball, "Some Rock-Cut Monuments."

⁷⁵ For further discussion on the problems of the interpretation of primary sources, see the introduction.

⁷⁶ "His motivation appears to have been an amalgam of conviction and political reasons." For further discussion, see Amitai-Preiss, "Sufis and Shamans," 33.

⁷⁷ Banakati, *Tārīkh-i Banākātī*, 454.

this act supported his claims to Arghun's inheritance, but also it can be considered as a gesture towards legitimation in the eyes of the Mongol elite,⁷⁸ possibly through gaining the good fortune and royal charisma of the deceased Ilkhan that had been left in the site.

In the words of Amitai-Preiss "Ghazan's Islam was a syncretist faith" consisting of a number of different and sometimes opposing principles and practices. Ghazan and the Mongol elite followed the pattern of "communal conversion" in which they adopted the new religion, but retained their own cultural identity and ethnic affiliation. Ghazan remained committed to the Chinggisid Yasa and loyal to the Great Khan in China.⁷⁹ He participated in Mongolian traditional ceremonies and consulted with his Mongolian advisors in his native language.⁸⁰ Although Ghazan had almost no adherence to the Mongol folk religion, shamanism, its rituals were maintained among the Ilkhanid Mongols even in the post-Ghazan period. In addition to the spiritual notions of the Mongols incorporated into Ghazan's new religion, his Islamic beliefs were also an inconsistent amalgamation of different branches of Islam. For instance, the influential role of Sufi Shaykh Sadr al-Din Ibrahim b. Sa'd al-Din Hammuya in Ghazan's conversion explains the Ilkhan's initial preference for Sufism.⁸¹ Even so, Ghazan's enthusiasm for Sufism should not be overstated since the Sufis were only a portion of the group of religious figures who surrounded the Ilkhan. On the other hand, Rashid al-Din says that, after his conversion, Ghazan chose the Hanafi School which is one of the four religious schools of Sunni Islam.⁸² However, according to Kashani, Ghazan, because of his devotion to 'Ali and the family of the Prophet Muhammad [*ahl al-bayt*], later decreed that the names of the *Rāshidūn* (the first

⁷⁸ Melville, "Pādshāh-i Islām," 167-168.

⁷⁹ Amitai-Preiss. "Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition."

⁸⁰ For further discussion, see Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 31-34.

⁸¹ For further discussion, see Amitai-Preiss, "Sufis and Shamans."

⁸² Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 76. Rashid al-Din does not expand on the motivations behind Ghazan Khan's preference for the Hanafi School.

three caliphs: Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthman) should be removed from the sermons [*khuṭba*]. He declared that the mention of their names in the sermons is an innovation [*bid‘a*] while mentioning the name of the *ahl al-bayt* and ‘Ali is a religious duty [*vājib*].⁸³ Although Rashid al-Din eventually dissuaded Ghazan from performing this order, the story denotes the Ilkhan’s deviation from Sunnism to Shi‘ism.⁸⁴ Besides all of these, the crucial role of Nawruz, Ghazan’s amir and closest advisor, should not be overlooked. He was a devoted Muslim, who persuaded Ghazan to accept the new religion. Vassaf describes Nawruz as “the warrior Mahdi, the reviver [*muḥay*] of the religion of the Arabs, the representative of the divinity, the second Abu Muslim, the promoter of the religion.”⁸⁵

Going back to the question of whether Ghazan was a Mongol Ilkhan or a Muslim sultan, we should deem him both, although it would be impossible to determine which of the two titles influenced the Ilkhan and his decisions more. Furthermore, the picture of his spiritual worldview, particularly after the conversion, has been often painted by his contemporary Persian historians,⁸⁶ whose accounts should be regarded with skepticism for two reasons. Firstly, the historians were usually part of the administrative body of the court. Even if they were not directly designated by the Ilkhan to write a particular history book, they were officially his employees and had no choice but to fulfill his employer. Secondly, in the case of the *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, as the most comprehensive source of information on the reign of Ghazan, we are facing a book theorizing about the principles of an Islamic state rather than a mere historical account.⁸⁷ Rashid

⁸³ “*zīkr-i khulafā-yi sih-gānih dar khuṭba bid‘a ast va az ān-i ahl al-bayt va Ali ki muqaddam-i īshān ast vājib.*” Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Ōljeytū*, 94.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁸⁵ “*Mahdī-yi ghāzī, muḥay-yi dīn-i tāzī, nimūdār-i yazdānī, Abu Muslim-i šānī-yi dīn-parvar.*” Bayani, *Religion and the Government*, vol. 2, 451, on the basis of Vassaf al-Hazra, *Tajzīyat al-Amṣār*, vol. 3, 313.

⁸⁶ A few Mamluk sources are also notable in this regard. For further discussion, see Amitai-Preiss, “Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition.”

⁸⁷ Petrushevsky, “Raṣhīd al-Dīn’s Conception”; Shabaneh, “Political and Social Desires.” On Mamluk sources’ perception of Rashid al-Din, see Amitai-Preiss, “New Material from the Mamluk Sources.”

al-Din frequently describes Ghazan not so much according to the character of the Ilkhan, but on the basis of the hypothetical image of the ideal Muslim sultan that the vizier has in mind. I will expand on this aspect of Rashid al-Din's account in chapter 4.

The encounter between Persian/Islamic and Mongol traditions in Shanb-i Ghazan

The fluidity of religious beliefs of Ghazan and his entourage or their “bewildering variety of attachment,”⁸⁸ as Peter Jackson puts it, often prevent us from being certain about his denominational (or even more generally religious) orientation during his reign. While the architectural projects patronized by Ghazan in Shanb are usually attributed to his spiritual beliefs after the conversion, the ambiguity over his religious orientation can produce some misinterpretation of the message supposed to be expressed by the language of architecture. In other words, given the ethnic background of the Ilkhan and his later spiritual shift, it would be challenging to determine the exact nature of the religious and cultural traditions that contributed to the formation of the *abwāb al-birr* of Shanb.

In the story of Ghazan's conversion to Islam, in addition to the Ilkhan himself, the mass conversion of his Mongol entourage is of great significance; either the Mongol amirs who adopted Islam on the same day that Ghazan did or that part of the army who had already converted.⁸⁹ Gaining support among the second group, in his struggle against Baydu (the sixth Ilkhan, r. 1295), is actually considered one important motive behind Ghazan's conversion to Islam.⁹⁰ The exact nature of the Mongols' Islam or all the motives behind their Islamization is

⁸⁸ Jackson, “Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered,” 273.

⁸⁹ In Persian sources different figures have been mentioned for the number of the Mongol amirs and the army who adopted Islam on the same day that Ghazan converted. For further discussion, see Melville, “Pādshāh-i Islām,” 171.

⁹⁰ Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition*, 160 according to Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 192-193. See also Bayani, *Religion and the Government*, vol. 2, 437-441.

not clear to us. Even so, according to the contemporary accounts of the reign of Ghazan, we can be quite certain of the “Islamic atmosphere”⁹¹ dominating the entourage of Ghazan. This atmosphere describes the situation in which the Ilkhanid court, in a general sense, practiced Islam. For instance, the Muslim *shahādā* appeared on the coins, Muslim Ilkhans patronized religious monuments (such as mosques and Sufi shrines) and supported theological discussions in their court.

Considering the conversion of a large group of the Mongols, it is probable that Ghazan had little difficulty justifying the religious architectural projects conducted during his reign. They were mainly those buildings whose concept and appearance were in accordance with Islamic principles such as the pious institutions founded in different cities of Iran under his patronage. Nevertheless, it must be noted that despite the communal conversion of the Mongols, Islam was not willingly adopted by all the Mongols and they largely retained their cultural identity, remaining committed to their Mongolian customs. In nomadic societies, as Allsen writes “power is derived from the acquisition and retention of followers not the acquisition of land.”⁹² Therefore, even if Ghazan sincerely practiced the new religion, he had no choice but to ensure the loyalty and support of his extended household as well as the Mongol army through respecting their nomadic traditions. On the other hand, the Ilkhan inevitably needed to be trusted by his Iranian (primarily) Muslim subjects and, thus, acknowledged their ideological values in his decrees and acts.

⁹¹ Here, the “Islamic atmosphere” refers to the situation in which the Ilkhanid court, in a general sense, practiced Islam. For instance, the Muslim *shahada* appeared on the coins, Muslim Ilkhans patronized religious monuments (such as mosques and Sufi shrines) and supported theological discussions in their court.

⁹² Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, 103.

Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that Ghazan had to face the issue of legitimization in relation to both the Mongols and the Persian population. He benefitted from his architectural undertakings to represent “images of authority and claims of legitimacy,” in the words of Allsen.⁹³ However, to enhance the effectiveness of this tool, the Ilkhan had to choose a visual language that was comprehensible to both groups. After his conversion, Ghazan needed to deal with his Mongol entourage with great caution. Dedicating himself too much to protecting the principles of the new faith could cause the Ilkhan to lose the support of at least the zealous members of his household or his army who had retained their native religion and culture. Although Ghazan conducted his architectural projects as the Muslim sultan of Iran, as a legitimate Ilkhan, he still had to impress his Mongol followers by his operations and convey a message of power and authority to them by means of architecture. Hence, there would be no point constructing magnificent structures if the visual vocabulary used in the buildings was not familiar to the Mongols. As a result, in the form and function of the Ilkhanid charitable foundations, particularly the major one in Shanb, one can suggest that the elements of the spiritual culture of the Mongols combined with the components of the religious/cultural traditions of the Iranians. However, it should be mentioned that the coexistence did not always happen with the presence of the obvious signs of each cultural sphere, but, as will be discussed shortly, could be confined to the themes that were subtle but effective and familiar to the both sides.

Sorting out different cultural and spiritual traditions that went into the construction of the pious ensemble of Shanb and identifying their origins is not at all easy. For modern scholars

⁹³ Allsen discusses the Mongols’ use of luxury goods (such as gold cloth) in their imperial ceremonies and their importance in the political system of the nomads. Although the content is different, I tried to apply his model in the study of the significance of architectural undertakings in the political system of Ghazan Khan. For further discussion, see Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, 103.

studying the Ilkhanid period, there have been always some ambiguities in the nomadic spiritual principles and practices of the Mongols either because of their complex nature or their distant place of origin from the capitals of the Ilkhans in Iran.⁹⁴ On the contrary, the belief system of the Iranians under the Ilkhans is rather well known. The majority of the population was Muslim and, as a consequence of the fall of the Sunni ‘Abbasid caliphate, Shi‘ism and Sufism were strengthening.⁹⁵ Furthermore, considering myriads of extant pre- and post-Mongol religious structures, there is an extensive knowledge of this type of architecture in the geographical region of Iran. As a result, scholars have a tendency to consider the Ilkhanid building projects exclusively in the familiar context of Persian/Islamic visual and spiritual customs, and, thus, attribute all their physical and conceptual characteristics to this set of traditions.⁹⁶

Even if we gain a clear picture of the pre-invasion spiritual doctrine of the Mongols (despite all their ambiguities), finding some traces of their nomadic trends and traditions in their later architectural undertakings in Iran would be often challenging for two reasons: firstly, despite our relatively deep knowledge of religious and cultural opinions of the Iranians during the Ilkhanids, it would be difficult to differentiate between the local traditions and what were

⁹⁴ For instance, in the introduction of Rubruck’s report, Jackson and Morgan write that “the religious beliefs and practices of the early Mongols belonged ... to those generally labelled as shamanistic. A major difficulty is that most of the evidence comes from a later date, after the importation of many elements from Lamaistic Buddhism of Tibet in the sixteenth century. We cannot be certain, therefore, what exactly constituted shamanism in the thirteenth” (Ruysbroeck, *Mission of Friar William*, 21). In addition, on the status of Buddhism in Ilkhanid Iran, Bayani attributes our limited knowledge to Muslims’ hatred of Buddhism, and, thus, the silence of literary sources on this religion. She also suggests that the conversion of the Ilkhans to Islam destroyed the last traces of Buddhism in Iran; see Bayani, *Religion and the Government*, vol. 2, 374.

⁹⁵ Bausani, “Religion under the Mongols,” 549.

⁹⁶ Part of this tendency has formed on the basis of the statements of medieval historians. For instance, in the case of the *abwāb al-birr* of Ghazaniyya, as discussed earlier, Rashid al-Din clearly mentions that Ghazan Khan built the complex under the influence of the shrines that he had visited in Khurasan. He also writes that Ghazan built his tomb in competition with the tomb of Sultan Sanjar in Marv (Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 208). Haneda, as an example, discusses the foundation of Ghazaniyya in connection with the mausoleums of Seljuq sultans (Haneda, “Gāzāniyya in Tabrīz,” 284). Blair also writes that “Ghazan’s tomb was ... the model for that of his brother and successor Uljaytu ... Uljaytu’s tomb ... is the culmination of a steady line of polygonal mausolea with dome chambers and side galleries erected in Iran for at least the preceding four centuries” (Blair, “Monumentality under the Mongols,” 136-137). For further discussion, see chapter 6.

brought in by the Mongols. Sometimes the introduced elements lost their original character. They were adapted to suit the taste and sensibilities of the receiving culture. The product of this process was an innovative combination of alien elements and what had already existed in the culture of adoption. I will expand on this idea in chapter 6. The second reason is related to the spiritual ideas that are common to the receiving culture (the Persians) and the guest culture (the Mongols). While some concepts fit perfectly into one specific belief system, there are other notions that can be explained in connection with both Persian and Mongol ideological perspectives. Between the two, the latter is usually given lesser attention and credit due to our fragmentary knowledge of the spiritual beliefs of the Mongols, as discussed above. Therefore, the visual and conceptual elements of the buildings that seem meaningful in the Persian/Islamic context at first glance can have different meanings when they are interpreted according to the Mongols' spiritual and aesthetic doctrines.

I would like to conclude this chapter by taking up the question of the synthesis of Persian/Islamic and Mongol ideas incorporated into the initial concept of Shanb-i Ghazan. Obviously the center of the discussion will be the pious foundation rather than the city of Ghazaniyya due to the better-known characteristics of the former. To address the question, I will focus on two major aspects of the ensemble: the tomb of Ghazan and the charitable donations.

Honoring ancestors or religious leaders

According to the preceding argument, in Shanb-i Ghazan, the Mongolian custom of founding an ancestral shrine coexisted with the Sufi/Shi'i tradition of honoring religious leader in a charitable complex. While the origin of the former was briefly discussed above, in the following section, I will tackle the historical context of the latter.

The Sufi shrine complexes, or as they are entitled “little cities of God” by Lisa Golombek, were mostly erected in Iran in the early fourteenth century, beginning with the reign of Öljeytü.⁹⁷ Most of the foundations, commemorating contemporary shaykhs, were built around their tombs by their devotees and disciples. However, a few Sufi ensembles, reviving an older cult, were founded on the pre-Mongol structures that still existed in the site. The phenomenon of the foundation, or merely restoration and redecoration, of the Sufi shrine complexes during the fourteenth century was due to a “climate” that encouraged the development of such compounds regardless of the power, influence, and spiritual importance of the saints and popularity of their cults. The availability of financial resources as well as the power and wealth of the Sufi community in the Mongol period are two crucial factors that contributed toward establishing this climate.⁹⁸ Not only did the Ilkhanid state encourage the foundation of charitable institutions in general, the Ilkhans also imitated the “little cities of God” consisting of a group of buildings with different religious, educational, and residential functions, as a model in the construction of their tomb complexes. In some cases, such as Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya, the tomb and its adjacent buildings gradually formed the central core of the city; the area that was later identified as their citadel. However, instead of the typical citadel of the Islamic cities, which were centers of power and government consisting of administrative, religious, and palatial buildings, within the citadel of the Ilkhanid cities, there emerged monumental complexes formed from charitable institutions enclosing the tomb of the Ilkhanid sultans and their household.

⁹⁷ Despite their prosperity and popularity during the reign of Öljeytü, these Sufi shrine complexes were also active before his time, although on a smaller scale; see Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 208.

⁹⁸ Golombek, “Cult of Saints.” On the power of the Sufi community in the Ilkhanid period, see also Blair, “Epigraphic Program of the Tomb,” 67. She argues that the use of mystical *ḥadīths* in the imperial monuments, such as the tomb of Öljeytü only indicates the level of acceptance of Sufi orders in Mongol Iran.

The notion of offering

Allsen mentions an important concept in Mongolian politics throughout the imperial era: a ruler can expect and demand unflinching service and complete loyalty from his retainers as long as he provides them with food and clothing. Mongolian khans spent substantial resources to acquire and sustain their companions. Garments and presents were usually bestowed upon nobles in great annual festivals. In these occasions, the ruler not only displayed his glory and majesty but also strengthened the connections of distant officials with the imperial household, those who had returned from all across the vast territory of the Mongols to the annual feasting and ceremonies. Beyond the extended court of Mongol khans, this “patrimonial principles,” as Allsen puts it, were also applicable to their subjects as a whole. In other words, the khans provided (part of) their people with food and clothes in order to ensure their support and obedience.⁹⁹

The idea of feeding and clothing people particularly those who found themselves in distressed conditions, as a pivotal feature of nomadic polities, can be discussed in relation to the concept of charity and alms based on which the pious institutions of Shanb were founded. In a section of *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī* on the properties of the tomb and its *abwāb al-birr*, Rashid al-Din describes the endowments made over to the complex. A detailed discussion of the items given to different components of the foundation goes beyond the confines of this part. I mention, however, a few points that are relevant to the idea of supplying the poor with life’s basic necessities. He writes that in the *khānqāh* foodstuffs were provided for making morning and evening meals and alms was available to cover the cost of clothes and footwear of the poor. In the *dār al-sīyāda* money was provided for the cost of living of the *sādāts* who resided there or those who stayed there temporarily. In the *dār al-shafā’* the patients were supplied with

⁹⁹ Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, 53-55.

medications and clothes. In ‘Adiliyya pavilion foodstuff was available for making votive pottage [*āsh-i nazrī*] for the pilgrims of the tomb of Ghazan. Foodstuff was also provided for making the grand pottage [*āsh-i buzurg*], which was offered every year on the memorial day of the endower (Ghazan). On this day the wealthy and the poor of Tabriz gathered there to recite the Qur’an and eat the pottage, and those who are moneyed, gave alms. Every year two thousand coats made from sheepskin were purchased and offered to the poor.¹⁰⁰

This type of information on the endowments of Shanb-i Ghazan (and equivalent sites) is crucial to understanding the cultural and social context in which the complex was founded. It is even more enlightening about the nature of customs and religious rituals in the reign of Ghazan Khan. Although Rashid al-Din’s description of the endowments barely contains architectural details of the pious foundation, it gives an idea of what institutions were located in the complex and who the personnel were. The mentions of the buildings and their associated ceremonies enable one to visualize Shanb-i Ghazan as an architectural complex being formed from a number of buildings of various charitable functions encircling the tomb of the patron; a picture similar to the painting depicting the twelve-sided complex of Shanb-i Ghazan discussed earlier.

Taking into account the scantiness of physical evidence on the spatial structure of Shanb-i Ghazan and Ghazaniyya, the examination of the encounter between the Persians’ perception of a capital city and the Mongols’ expectations of an imperial settlement would be confined to the more conceptual aspects of these urban projects. Scrutinizing the mentality of Ghazan Khan as the chief patron, this chapter sought to uncover the beliefs and thoughts based on which

¹⁰⁰ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 209-214.

Ghazaniyya was founded. This study, inevitably, deals with non-material remnants of Ghazaniyya in search of some indications of the nomadic concepts brought in by the Ilkhans. Hence, instead of hybrid signs, it looks for hybrid motivations behind the formation of these signs. While our understanding of the coexistence of the views and conventions of the two sides (Persians and Mongols) is partly speculative, it forms the basis for our future studies that presumably will benefit from further archaeological findings. This problem, as we shall see in the next chapter, would be less considerable in the case of Sultaniyya due to the higher availability of architectural material.

Chapter Three: The Grand Capital of the Ilkhans at Sultaniyya

بر اقالیم جهان یافت شرف فنقر الانگ
تا که شد تخت‌گه پادشه روی زمین
—Vassaf al-Hazra¹

The long-standing tomb of Öljeytü, in the midst of the pastures of Sultaniyya, represents the most visible vestige of the Ilkhanid city founded by Arghun Khan and expanded by his son Öljeytü. While the free-standing monument is the only extant building of the Mongol capital at Sultaniyya, a great amount of textual and physical evidence (including travel accounts, eyewitness chronicles, architectural and archaeological remains, and myriads of pottery shards found on every corner of the site) all attest to the existence of a vast urban site (approximately 350 hectares) with the mausoleum at its heart. The examination of Sultaniyya is of great importance. In common with Ghazaniyya, Sultaniyya was built from the outset under the patronage of the Ilkhanids and therefore one can suggest that among different urban centers developed by the Mongol rulers of Iran, the two sites best represent their perception of a city and of urban life. Following the pattern of Ghazan Khan's *abwāb al-birr* (pious foundation) in the suburb of Tabriz, Sultaniyya takes one step further towards the ideal model of an "Ilkhanid city." The city is not a mere royal camp despite most of the examples of the settlements founded and flourished under the previous Ilkhans. It possessed all the elements of a medieval Islamic city, although in its own particular way.

¹ Ayati, "The Ode of Vassaf al-Hazra," 28.

Part of the ode dedicated to Öljeytü by Vassaf al-Hazra in 1312. The verses can be loosely translated as: when Qūnqūr öläng (Sultaniyya) became the residence [*takhtgah*] of the king of the world (Öljeytü), it became the most honorable city of the world.

Written records on Sultaniyya are diverse in terms of time and place. In addition to Ilkhanid Persian chroniclers and their Timurid successors, the city has been mentioned in the accounts of dozens of Islamic and European travelers, ambassadors, and merchants who visited the site over the centuries. Their narratives provide important insights into the architectural identity of the capital. Most of the reports are first-hand descriptions of the city, some of which are supplemented with drawings, maps, and illustrations, and are, therefore, highly informative about the architecture, function, and location of the ruined buildings. Nevertheless, a few are merely restatements of their earlier texts mingled with imaginary accounts. As it will be discussed shortly, the credibility of some of these textual and visual records is questionable; however, they are still influential in the reconstruction of the past.² Along with the written material, several phases of archaeological excavation conducted at the site of Sultaniyya and its surrounding settlements have offered valuable insights into the spatial structure of the Mongol capital.

On the basis of textual, visual, and physical material, this chapter reconstructs the layout of the city that developed during the time of Öljeytü. The main focus is the citadel that not only embraced the most magnificent architectural undertakings of the city, but also has been uncovered almost in its entirety thanks to extensive excavations. The outer city that expanded beyond the walls of the citadel will also be studied in the hope of gaining a better understanding of the residential area of the commoners; the people who were not part of the ruling class. Although the commoners formed the majority of the population of Sultaniyya, they have been barely mentioned in historical accounts. Archaeological excavation, however, has revealed that

² Not all the available sources have been referred to in this chapter due to the high number of the chronicles and sometimes their repetitive accounts. For a list of all visitors to Sultaniyya, see Akhavan-Tavakoli, *Bibliography of Sultaniyya*, 178-179.

besides the impressive monuments patronized by the Ilkhans and the ruling elite, a large number of humble constructions had covered the area of the outer city, which is regarded as the residence of the commoners.

To paint a realistic picture of the fourteenth-century city, different sources of information have been overlaid, including the chronicles describing the city, the illustrations left by the visitors of the site, the aerial photos and satellite images of the area, the results of the site survey, and the remnants of the buildings. It must be noted that despite the speculative nature of this picture, the topographical reconstruction of the Ilkhanid city of Sultaniyya coming out of a solid examination of all the evidence, throws some light on the main thesis of this dissertation, which suggests that the encounter between the Ilkhans' nomadic notions and Perso-Islamic ideas was reflected in their urban architecture.

Sultaniyya, the imperial capital

The name Sultaniyya first appeared in the written sources that described the major events under Ilkhan Öljeytü. The texts covering Mongol history prior to the reign of Öljeytü used two toponyms, Qūnqūr öläng and Sharuyaz, to refer to the same geographical location that was later chosen as the site of the capital at Sultaniyya.³ For example, according to Hafīz-i Abru, Qūnqūr öläng was the fertile meadow chosen by Arghun as the site of his grand city (*[shāh-i bilād]*): the

³ Different meanings have been suggested for Qūnqūr öläng. The most credible one seems to be the meaning suggested by Roshan and Musavi in the annotation of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*. They explain that Qūnqūr means pit and öläng means soft grass in Mongolian, hence Qūnqūr öläng generally means lowland meadow (Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 3, 2256). However, it must be noted that in my recent trip to Ferdaws, a city in Khurasan, I heard that the locals use the word awlang (aw or āb means water and lang means lame and also to linger) for the lands in which water gathers for a while and thus are fertile. For a different interpretation of Qūnqūr öläng, see Sobuti, *Architecture of the Dome*, 43. To the best of my knowledge no meaning or interpretation has been suggested for Sharuyaz. Re the location of Sharuyaz, Scarcia discusses that Sultaniyya had taken the place of a former urban settlement named Sharuyaz; see Scarcia, "'Vihār' of Qonqor-olong," 102.

king of cities).⁴ The Ilkhanid chroniclers' repeated references to the events taking place in Qūnqūr öläng and Sharuyaz before the foundation of the capital by Öljeytü indicates that the areas had been active settlements (or encampments) of the Mongols under the previous Ilkhans.⁵ The two toponyms, Qūnqūr öläng and Sharuyaz, were still in use during Sultaniyya's heyday, but as names for two areas on the edge of the capital. In the contemporary texts of the reign of Öljeytü, Qūnqūr öläng possibly marks the district today known as *chaman-i Sulṭānīyya* (Sultaniyya pasture) located about three kilometers to the northwest of the city. Therefore, Sultaniyya, Qūnqūr öläng, and Sharuyaz seem to have described three distinct areas over the time of Öljeytü and Abu Sa'id. Unlike Qūnqūr öläng, Sharuyaz is still an unknown site. The written sources report that the coffin of Abu Sa'id was transported to a mausoleum near Sultaniyya called Sharuyaz, but they are silent about the exact location of the site.⁶

In the spring of 704/1305, Öljeytü completed the construction of a city that had been formerly founded by his father Arghun in Qūnqūr öläng, and named it Sultaniyya (the Imperial).⁷ It is interesting to note that, despite the significance of Sultaniyya as an imperial city, it is not necessarily always entitled "*dār al-mulk*" in the contemporary accounts of the reign of Öljeytü. For instance, although Mustawfi refers to the city as the *dār al-mulk* of Iran,⁸ Kashani frequently calls it the city [*shahr*] of Sultaniyya or the summer camp [*yaylāq*] of Sultaniyya.⁹ The authors'

⁴ Hafiz-i Abru, *Zayl-i Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 67.

⁵ For instance, in the story of Abaqā Khan in the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, Rashid al-Din mentions that the Ilkhan went to the public bath located in the *ribāṭ* of Muslim in Sharuyaz (Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1113). For more examples of references to Qūnqūr öläng in the historical accounts, see Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1146; Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 142; Banakati, *Tārīkh-i Banākātī*, 450.

⁶ According to Rashid al-Din, during the reign of Abaqā Khan, Sharuyaz and Qūnqūr öläng both referred to the same location (Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1078). For the description of the funeral of Abu Sa'id, see Hafiz-i Abru, *Zayl-i Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 190-191.

⁷ Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 277. For the whole passage, see the appendix.

⁸ Mustawfi, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, *passim*.

⁹ Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, *passim*.

preference for some particular appellations is an important issue that needs to be addressed in more detail in future studies.

The mild weather, lush pastures, and the proximity of the region to main trade routes were some of the practical reasons persuading the two Ilkhans to designate the area as their capital.¹⁰ According to Vassaf al-Hazra, Öljeitü's panegyrist and court poet/historian, a large group of skilled artists and artisans with their families migrated into Sultaniyya and contributed greatly to the construction of the magnificent city.¹¹ Öljeitü founded a splendid square citadel at the heart of the city in which he built an *abwāb al-birr* with different components including school, mosque, *khānqāh*, *dār al-shafā* (hospital), *dār al-dīyāfa* (guest house), *dār al-ḥuffāz*,¹² and *dār al-sīyāda* (house of *sayyids* and *sādāts*).¹³ He endowed extensive lands to provide an income for the complex and bestowed the custodianship [*tawlīyyat*] of the endowments upon Rashid al-Din.¹⁴

The most important element of the city was the sublime dome [*qubba* or *gunbad-i 'ālī*] that had been possibly built with the purpose of being used as a royal tomb chamber,¹⁵ as there are several references to the burial of Öljeitü himself as well as the members of his court in this particular building and adjacent rectangular hall, *turbat-khānih*.¹⁶ The tomb is a massive octagonal structure covered with a 50 m tall dome.¹⁷ In addition to the start date of the

¹⁰ For further discussion on the location of Sultaniyya, see Rezvan and Karimian, *Sultaniyya*, 85-87.

¹¹ Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayatī, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 277.

¹² *Dār al-ḥuffāz* was a place where the students memorized and recited the Quran.

¹³ Different historians have described the components of the complex in different ways; see Blair, "Mongol Capital of Sulṭāniyya," 144.

¹⁴ Amulī, *Nafāyis al-Funūn*, vol. 2, 257-258. For the whole passage, see the appendix.

¹⁵ For other possible functions of the sublime dome, see chapter 6, 251.

¹⁶ On the story of the construction of the mausoleum of Sultaniyya as a tomb for the bodies of Imam 'Ali and Imam Husayn, see Godard, "Mausoleum of Öljeitü," 1111-1113; Blair, "Monumentality under the Mongols," 126. Also see chapter 6, 259, n. 123.

¹⁷ For a detailed description of the architectural features of the tomb, see Blair, "Monumentality under the Mongols," 113-122.

construction campaign given in textual accounts, two other dates are read on the inscriptions of the building: 710/1310-11 and 713/1313-14, which possibly mark completion of the exterior decoration and completion of the first phase of interior decoration respectively.¹⁸ The examination of the building suggests that the rectangular hall and the crypt underneath it were added to the main domed room at some point between 1313-14 and Öljeytü's death in 1316. Perhaps during the same time period, the initial decoration of the mausoleum consisting of brick, terracotta, and tile was covered with a layer of tile and painted plaster.¹⁹ The date of 720/1320-21 written on the inscription of the southeast bay presumably shows the end of the second phase of decoration. The possible reasons for redecoration of the tomb will be touched on in chapter 6. Despite vivid description of the tomb and its furnishings given by historical texts, no reliable trace of the cenotaphs or the graves has been found.

In the literature on Sultaniyya, the general consensus is that the city was composed of two parts: the citadel located in the center and the urban context surrounding the citadel. However, there is a disagreement over the structures forming each section of the city. Textual records and pictorial material give some ideas of the construction projects conducted under the patronage of the Ilkhan and his notables in the citadel and beyond; nevertheless, they do not lead us toward a consistent description of the medieval city. Rather, making a comparison between these historical documents and the architectural and archaeological remains of the ruined city reveals the level of imagination involved in the creation of textual representations by the chroniclers or travelers who visited the Ilkhanid city. Furthermore, despite providing invaluable observations on events and people, the reliability of these historical accounts is sometimes undermined by the

¹⁸ Ibid., 117.

¹⁹ Ibid., 119.

misunderstandings or biases of their authors.²⁰ Comparatively, the archaeologists' finding on the physical and functional features of the Ilkhanid foundations seems to be more factual boosting our understanding of the spatial structure of the city, although methodological problems, such as difficulties in obtaining sufficient archaeological data as well as interpreting them, should not be overlooked.²¹ The methodological problems with the use of different types of evidence necessitate the cross-checking of information from a variety of visual, material and literary sources.

Textual sources on Sultaniyya were partly discussed in the introduction. In this section, I expand on the most productive phases of excavation of the Ilkhanid city and its surrounding settlements. The first phase of archaeological study of Sultaniyya was carried out by Sa'īd Ganjavi in the 1970s focusing mainly on the site of Tappih-nur.²² In the fall of 1987, ten trial trenches were dug by Hushang Sobuti inside and outside the tomb of Öljeytü in order to identify the main entrances of the building, which threw some light on how the tomb connected to the neighboring buildings.²³ The second phase of excavation that lasted for sixteen years (1988-2004) under the supervision of Aliasghar Mirfattah, was conducted in a number of locations including the citadel, the area known as Jum'ah-masjid,²⁴ Tappih-nur, the site of Dash Kassar (Viar), and a few historical spots spread across the region. According to the historical texts and the field survey done prior to the excavation, these places promised to be archaeologically productive. Although the sixteen seasons of excavation in actual fact were fruitful, in terms of

²⁰ Despite the above-mentioned problems, primary sources are utilized extensively in this dissertation. Methodological problems with the use of primary sources are discussed in the introduction.

²¹ The methodological problems of historical archaeology are discussed in the introduction.

²² Ganjavi, "Excavation of Tappih-nur."

²³ Sobuti, *Architecture of the Dome*, 32-36.

²⁴ This area is locally called Jum'ah-masjid which is the same as masjid-i Jum'ah or the congregational mosque. In the Turkish language spoken in the northwest of Iran, contrary to Persian, the adjective precedes the noun.

the extent of architectural structures and archaeological material uncovered in the citadel as well as the outer city, most of the results have not been well-documented and the reports have remained mainly unpublished.²⁵ The third phase of excavation conducted by Mehrdad Asgarian in 2005 was meant to determine the southern confines of the area of Jum‘ah-masjid.²⁶ The last phase was directed by Abd al-Reza Muhajerinejad in 2009 throughout the whole area of Jum‘ah-masjid (over 80 hectares) and the site of Tappih-nur (Fig. 3-1).²⁷ Building on the results of several seasons of excavation as well as the historical accounts of the Ilkhanid city, in the following sections I attempt to reconstruct the imperial city that represented the most significant achievements of the Ilkhanids in art and architecture in its heyday.

The citadel of Sultaniyya

The foundation of the citadel of Sultaniyya has been mentioned by several Ilkhanid and Timurid chroniclers.²⁸ One of the most detailed descriptions of the citadel is given by the contemporary historian of the reign of Öljeytü, Abu al-Qasim Kashani. He clearly refers to the citadel and the *abwāb al-birr* embracing nineteen edifices some of which were mentioned earlier.²⁹ The account of Hafiz-i Abru is also a comprehensive report revealing interesting points about the citadel and, more particularly, the tomb of the Ilkhan.³⁰ Vassaf’s brief mention of the construction of

²⁵ Only a very small part of the results of the excavations undertaken within the citadel has been published in Mirfatah “Sultaniyya.” For more discussion on the methodological problems, see the introduction.

²⁶ Asgarian, Muhammadi, and Qasemi, *Report of the Trial Trenching*; published exclusively in Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) and kept at the local archive of ICHTO located at the World Heritage Site of Sultaniyya.

²⁷ Muhajerinejad, *First Season of Archaeological Excavation*; Muhajerinejad, *Report of the Trial Trenching*; published exclusively in ICHTO and kept at the local archive of ICHTO located at the World Heritage Site of Sultaniyya.

²⁸ Blair, “Mongol Capital of Sultāniyya,” 139-151.

²⁹ Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, 45-48.

³⁰ Hafiz-i Abru, *Zayl-i Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 67-69. For the whole passage, see the appendix.

Sultaniyya is of great importance since he emphasizes that Öljeytü completed the unfinished building that his father Arghun had founded.³¹

Both texts and physical evidence confirm that the approximately square area of the citadel (295 by 315 m) orientated cardinally was enclosed with the walls built of cut stone and fortified with sixteen towers (Fig. 3-2).³² A moat also ran around the citadel. Although historical accounts are silent about the origin of the ramparts, the examination of their construction techniques suggests that they were possibly built in two phases under Arghun and his son Öljeytü. The excavations conducted in the citadel in the 1990s revealed the remains of the northern and southern gates that had been built in alignment with each other. One can imagine the axis joining the two gates was part of a grid pattern on which the citadel was laid out. The northern gate seems to be the main entrance to the citadel while the southern gate provided a private access for the members of the court.³³ Hafiz-i Abru says that after rumors about the execution of Amir Chupan were spread, his son Damishq Khwaja fled the citadel through its smaller southern gate with his ten horsemen while sultan Abu Sa'id was watching the northern gate.³⁴

The excavations carried out between 2000 and 2002 uncovered a passageway measuring around 3 m in width in front of the northern gate. The passage with plinths on both sides led through the citadel. The plinths built of green tuffite stones were possibly joined together with arches (Fig. 3-3). The relationship between the passageway and other buildings located inside the citadel is still vague. The partial excavation shows that the passageway ends in a courtyard

³¹ Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 277.

³² Kashani writes that the walls of the citadel were built of blue stone [*sang-i mīnā rang*]; see Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, 46.

¹⁰ Mirfatah, "Sultaniyya," 16-22.

³⁴ Hafiz-i Abru, *Zayl-i Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 169.

defined by a stone wall (Fig. 3-4). The entrance of the courtyard, on the north side, is situated in a semi-circular stone structure, which could be either the lower part of a small tower or a platform (Figs. 3-5, 3-6). The floor of the entrance is paved with bricks. The remains of terracotta pipes used for transporting water from outside are visible in the middle of the court (Fig. 3-7).³⁵ Despite the extent of the remains uncovered so far, the original plan of the courtyard is still illegible. The analysis of the satellite image of the site raises the possibility that the courtyard has been connected with the first phase of the construction of the citadel that happened during the time of Arghun. Assuming this is the case, I suggest that the stone structures possibly mark the wall and the entrance of the earlier citadel upon which Öljeytü founded his buildings. Further excavation is needed to clarify the layout of the courtyard and its relation to other components of the site.

Archaeologists found some evidence of the structures attached to the ramparts of the citadel. They possibly connected the walls and towers to the buildings located inside the enclave. For instance, a row of cells built along the wall seems to be used as local industrial workshops based on the artifacts and small kilns found in the rooms (Fig. 3-8). Another example is the room built inside tower B with a cruciform layout, and the floor paved with bricks (Fig. 3-9). The arrangement of the structures adjacent to the walls and towers suggests that a passageway parallel to the ramparts rounded the citadel.³⁶ On the western side of the site, close to the southwest tower, the remnants of a flight of brick stairs presumably ascending to the top of the

³⁵ Mirfattah, "Fourteenth Season of Archaeological Excavation"; unpublished report available at the local archive of ICHTO located at the World Heritage Site of Sultaniyya.

³⁶ This interpretation was proposed by Mifattah in the unpublished report of the excavation undertaken in Sultaniyya in 2002. Further excavation is needed to verify this analysis.

tower have been discovered. The stairs have not been joined to the wall structurally and thus seem to be built later than the wall.

The remains of architectural decoration on the external walls of the tomb show that the northern and eastern façades of the tomb were coated respectively with stucco and tile (Figs. 3-10, 3-11). Given the fact that stucco was commonly used as a decorative coating for interior walls, the northern façade might have been, in fact, the interior wall of a now vanished building (possibly the mosque that will be discussed shortly). In addition, the surrounding spaces that are being gradually appeared during the excavation support the possibility that the currently isolated tomb of Öljejtü had been attached to other buildings of the *abwāb al-birr* from different sides. The excavations carried out at the back of the eastern side of the tomb shed some light on the surrounding spaces connected to the tomb. The elaborate eastern façade decorated with bricks and glazed tiles in an interlaced pattern persuaded the archaeologists to dig the area in front of the portal, which had been possibly the main entrance of the tomb, in the hope of finding those spaces that match up with this lavishly decorated façade (Fig. 3-12).³⁷ The excavations revealed traces of a court with four *īvāns* to the east of the tomb. Three ornamented arches were situated on either side of each *īvān*. The north and south *īvāns* were likely to be blind arcades composing of a series of arches and, thus, the only access to the court was through an opening in the east *īvān* (Fig. 3-13). The lower parts of the walls enclosing the court were built of green tuffite stones. In addition to the physical remains, Flandin and Coste's drawings of Öljejtü's tomb (made in 1851 and 1867) depict the ruins of a wall attached to the east side the tomb (Fig. 3-14).³⁸ Traces of a partially ruined building with collapsed arches are also visible in Dubeux's

³⁷ The date 710/1310-1311 can be read on an inscription situated over the east portal. The date possibly marks completion of the exterior decoration; see Blair, "Monumentality under the Mongols," 117.

³⁸ For original drawings, see Flandin and Coste, *Voyage en Perse*; Coste, *Monuments Modernes*.

view of the tomb (made in 1841). However, the drawing is not deemed entirely credible.

Dubeux, whose drawings were based on the drawings of the official draftsman Michel-François Préault, has been criticized for adding tones of exoticism to his works. Blair mentions that the French traveller Xavier Hommaire de Hell evaluated the drawings as “completely false” (Fig. 3-15).³⁹

The excavations conducted behind the southern side of the court uncovered evidence of a possibly two-story catacomb. Mirfattah suggests that since some of the buildings attached to Öljejtü’s tomb were founded on top of the underground rooms, the catacomb had possibly been built before the foundation of the tomb and adjacent structures (Figs. 3-16, 3-17). The burial cells might be a model for the catacombs built later beneath the tomb. Therefore, Mirfattah raises the possibility of the existence of a royal burial place in the southeast corner of the tomb prior to the construction of the pious complex under Öljejtü.⁴⁰ The presence of the older catacombs presumably justifies choosing the southwest corner of the citadel as the location of the Ilkhan’s tomb.

Connected to the north portal of the mausoleum is a Safavid mosque built upon the remains of an Ilkhanid building. The base of four pillars still exists outside the mosque. Being aligned with the columns of the Safavid building, the remains of the pillars must have been related to the earlier mosque. Taking into account the pillars as well as the bottom part of the walls uncovered in the excavation, one can imagine the possible dimensions of the earlier Ilkhanid mosque covering the whole northern façade of the tomb (Fig. 3-18).

³⁹ Blair, “Mongol Capital of Sulṭāniyya,” 141 & 144; Dubeux, *La Perse*; Hommaire de Hell, *Voyage en Turquie*.

⁴⁰ Mirfattah, “Sultaniyya,” 21.

Mirfattah proposes that the citadel consisted of four zones with different functions and considers the tomb of Öljeytü as the center of the religious part. Although further archaeological discoveries is essential to prove his hypothesis, the internal network of passages partly discovered in the excavations supports this claim. The other component of Öljeytü's pious complex uncovered in the recent excavations was a space in the northeast corner of the religious quarter where several pottery shards inscribed with the phrase of *waqf-i abwāb al-birr* (endowed to the *abwāb al-birr*) were found (Fig. 3-19). The space possibly worked as a storeroom for keeping endowed objects that belonged to the complex.⁴¹

In order to construct a balanced picture of the citadel, the archaeological findings and textual descriptions discussed above have to be supplemented by visual representations of the enclave. While the material of the former is considered tangible evidence and, thus, more credible, the information obtained from the latter, as discussed in the first chapter, needs to be tackled more cautiously.⁴² The historical illustrations of buildings usually represent the ruined components of the complex; hence, these are persuasive documents helping architectural historians in the study of the earlier phases of buildings. Nevertheless, the pictures should not be considered as visual references per se, but rather in their historical context and in relation to the conventions and limitations that the painters dealt with them. Matrakçi Nasuh's miniature of Sultaniyya, drawn in the sixteenth century, is an interesting example in this regard (Fig. 3-20). The well-illustrated picture of the city, as the earliest extant view of Sultaniyya, has been widely used by many scholars. While appreciating Matrakçi's miniature in reconstructing the medieval

⁴¹ Mirfattah, "Fourteenth Season of Archaeological Excavation"; unpublished report available at the local archive of ICHTO located at the World Heritage Site of Sultaniyya.

⁴² For more discussion on the methodological problems, see the introduction.

city, in the following section, I argue that some details of the picture are inconsistent with the architectural and archaeological remains of the Ilkhanid capital.⁴³

The image seems to depict the citadel of the city with its wall and towers, as the number of towers confirms what the archaeologists have found in the excavation (Fig. 3-20, a, b). The large monument at the right in the image certainly represents the tomb of Öljeytü (Fig. 3-20, c). At the left, the massive structure and the long, arcaded building are possibly the congregational mosque built by Öljeytü and the bazaar of the city respectively (Fig. 3-20, d, e). Blair refers to Kashani's description of the bazaar,⁴⁴ and suggests that the structure in the illustration is the same bazaar founded by Taj al-Din 'Ali Shah, the vizier of the Ilkhan Öljeytü, and was repaired by him after the fire of 1312.⁴⁵ Although the superficial features of the building supports this opinion, the idea of founding the main bazaar of the city within the citadel, close to the tomb of the sultan, sounds unlikely.⁴⁶ In the Iranian city during the medieval period, in general terms, the bazaar developed along the intra-urban main-axes, from the center of the outer city towards the city walls. Furthermore, the archaeological excavations in the area of Jum'ah-masjid, which will be discussed shortly, shed some light on the actual location of the bazaar in the outer city close to the congregational mosque. On the other hand, it is arguable that Matrakçi merely intended to depict the mosque and the bazaar, as two significant elements of the city, without trying to place them in their accurate location.

⁴³ The challenges faced by scholars in the interpretation of Matrakçi's paintings and related architectural images have been discussed in the introduction. For instance, see Ebel, "Representations of the Frontier"; Necipoğlu, "Plans and Models."

⁴⁴ Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, 122 & 136.

⁴⁵ Blair, "Mongol Capital of Sultāniyya," 146.

⁴⁶ Bazaar and *maydān* played an important role in the spatial organization of the Iranian city during the medieval period. The Great Mosque, administrative institutions, and madrasas concentrated around the *maydān*. For further discussion on the structure of the Iranian city, see Habibi, *Historical Analysis*, 46-47; Gaube, *Iranian Cities*, 19-21. Also see Rante's studies on the case of Rayy in Rante and Afround, *Rayy*, 135-136.

In another case, Blair identifies the large building with two minarets at the right in Matrakçi's miniature as Rashid al-Din's pious foundation, the complex founded by the vizier along with a large number of houses [*qarīb-i hizār khānih*] in a quarter. The formal features of the building match up with Hafiz-i Abru's description of the splendid edifice [*'imārat-i 'ālī*] patronized by the vizier.⁴⁷ However, considering the location of the tomb in connection with the wall, towers, and gates of the citadel, emerging gradually from the excavations, it seems implausible to place the whole quarter on the right side of the tomb, as Blair claims (Fig. 3-20, f). In other words, Rashid al-Din's quarter did not simply fit into the available space next to the tomb. Moreover, the polygonal structure with two minarets shown in Matrakçi's painting is comparable with the dodecagonal building unearthed in the site of Tappih-nur. The domed portal depicted to the north of the tomb is also confusing. Matrakçi must depict the enclave as seen from the north. If that is the case, the court and other structures to the east of the tomb have been overlooked in his map, which again confirms that the picture, which was generated a few centuries removed from the foundation of the site, does not entirely correspond to the historical reality.

Considering the fact that the outer wall of the city was not finished under Öljejtü as well as the mass of the ruins caused by Miran Shah, Timur's son in Sultaniyya in 1399, Matrakçi must have been unable to distinguish between the exact confines of the citadel and the outer city. He possibly has mixed up the palatial constructions within the citadel with the buildings distributed in the outer city. Matrakçi did not maintain the topographic relations between the elements. He seems to have been more accurate in depicting individual buildings rather than representing their actual relationships. Therefore, the map should be considered as a collage of

⁴⁷ Hafiz-i Abru, *Zayl-i Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 68.

buildings connected together on the basis of sketches he made on his way to Istanbul.⁴⁸ Although the illustration is not entirely imaginary and some of its features, as discussed earlier, corroborate other literary and material evidence, it is still far from a model that could be applied exactly in reconstructing the Mongol capital at Sultaniyya.

The outer city of Sultaniyya

According to Mustawfi, Arghun founded Sultaniyya and built a wall around the city measuring 12,000 paces [*gām*] (7,320 m) in circumference. Öljejtü decided to finish the architectural undertakings of his father and, thus, he expanded the city wall to 30,000 paces (18,300 m). The task remained incomplete due to the death of the sultan. At the heart of the city he founded a citadel with the perimeter of 2,000 paces (1,220 m).⁴⁹ The perimeter of the citadel mentioned in Mustawfi's account roughly matches up with the length of the walls found in the recent excavations. Therefore, we may hypothetically accept that he reports the almost actual dimensions of the walls constructed around the city. On the basis of the discovered citadel walls and Mustawfi's reported dimensions of the city walls, we can estimate the approximate area of Sultaniyya under each of the two Ilkhans, Arghun and Öljejtü. Considering the tomb of Öljejtü in the center of the capital, the hypothetical area of each phase of the city is indicated on the current map of Sultaniyya (Fig. 3-21). According to the map, the area embracing the most

⁴⁸ For city views in Ottoman manuscripts, see Ebel, "Representations of the Frontier."

⁴⁹ Mustawfi, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 97 (for the whole passage, see the appendix). Mustawfi uses *gām* (pace) as the unit of length for the perimeter of the citadel and the city. However, Hafiz-i Abru and the later Timurid historians (Mirkhwand and Khwandmir) use *gaz*. According to Blair (Blair, "Mongol Capital of Sultāniyya," 143), the *gaz* used by Hafiz-i Abru is equal to 42 cm. The citadel is measuring 295 by 315 m. If we consider the citadel as a square (as the contemporary texts describe it) the average length of each of the walls will be 305 m which yield a value of 61 cm for the *gām*. Since Hafiz-i Abru's *gaz* is different from Mustawfi's *gām*, one may suggest that Hafiz-i Abru simply copied the figures from Mustawfi but reported them in a different unit of length. Also see Wilber, *Architecture of Islamic Iran*, 44-45.

Ilkhanid archaeological finds and architectural remains is the same area that was initially established as the capital of Arghun. This fact suggests that urban development during Öljeytü's reign mainly happened within the boundaries of the older city. Although eye-witness chronicler Mustawfi reports that the Ilkhan intended to build a wall almost three times larger than the one his father had ordered to be built, Öljeytü presumably did not have a chance to fulfill his own aspirations.

Öljeytü definitely expanded the walls, however, the ratio reported by Mustawfi (30,000 paces) and repeated by Hafiz-i Abru may be slightly exaggerated for three reasons. Firstly, it is very unlikely that Sultaniyya pasture was enclosed by the new walls in order to be combined with the main structure of the city, since the texts repeatedly refer to the meadow of Qūnqūr öläng and Sultaniyya as the favorite place of Öljeytü for his summer camp.⁵⁰ Secondly, the extent of architectural and archaeological material found outside Arghun's wall is very small which means the main body of the city under Öljeytü had not reached beyond this point, and thirdly, the remains of the brick kilns found around the mausoleum of Mulla Hassan Kashi (fl. 14th century) suggest that this area must not have been included in the urban fabric of the city, but in the suburb. Nevertheless, the reports of the travelers attest to the existence of a wall built much further from the city than the one attributed to Arghun. For instance, Olearius (d. 1671) mentions the remnants of walls, gate and towers located half a league from the city on the way to Hamedan that were possibly parts of the city walls.⁵¹ These remains are situated somewhere between the two hypothetical walls. James Morier (d. 1849) also reports that outside the citadel there were the ruins of several mosques built of the same materials as the tomb.⁵² One of these

⁵⁰ Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, *passim*.

⁵¹ Olearius, *Voyages and Travells*, 186.

⁵² Morier, *Journey through Persia*, 257-259.

buildings is visible in the foreground of his drawing (Fig. 3-22). He took this general view of the whole city while he was sitting on a small mound in the south. The building must have been the tomb of Shaykh Buraq. The remains of a tall wall and buttresses that were possibly part of the ramparts of the city can be seen right behind the tomb. Consequently, even if we admit the dimensions of Öljeytü's wall (30,000 paces) as reported by the historical texts, all the facts lead us to suggest that further development of the city during his reign was probably aborted in its early stages because of the Ilkhan's death.

Although we are still uncertain about the area of Sultaniyya's outer city under Öljeytü and his father, textual records, particularly the contemporary accounts of the foundation of Sultaniyya inform us about a thriving city that extended beyond the citadel.⁵³ Historical chronicles and descriptive poetry describe the architectural sites and the events related to them in rich detail. They are also valuable sources of information shedding light on the possible location of public buildings within the urban context. However, the validity of the accounts should be measured by different criteria, for instance, the status of the author/chronicler and the way he defined himself in connection with the Ilkhan and the court. In the *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, when Kashani narrates the establishment of the capital, the method of description utilized by him clearly represents the amity between the author and the vizier Taj al-Din 'Ali Shah. Kashani not only describes the vizier's constructions in great detail, but also gives him all the credit for the foundation of Sultaniyya and its glorious buildings. He says "the architect [*mi 'mār*] of this prosperous city and its celebrated edifices is the honorable command of ... Khwaja Taj al-Dawla and al-Din 'Ali Shah-i Tabrizi."⁵⁴ On the other hand, the architectural undertakings of Rashid al-

⁵³ Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, 46; Mustawfī, *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 97; Hafiz-i Abru, *Zayl-i Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 67-68.

⁵⁴ Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, 47.

Din at Sultaniyya are barely mentioned by Kashani, while Hafiz-i Abru describes the entire quarter, with houses and pious foundations, built by Rashid al-Din in the vicinity of the citadel.⁵⁵ This negligence must be related to Kashani's great annoyance with the vizier discussed in the introduction of this dissertation.

Despite the biases, in his description of the city, Kashani is quite precise in distinguishing between the buildings founded in the citadel and the ones built in the outer city. The complexity of the text, however, sometimes prevents the reader from comprehending the historical information concealed beneath the artificially florid language. He tells us, in an exaggerated manner, that the city (he presumably meant the outer city) was prosperous and full of rivers and trees. There were a large number of shops [*afzūn az dah-hizār dukkān*] that presented their exquisite goods, and a large number of mosques and endless [*bī pāyān*] *zawāyā* (s. *zāwīya*)⁵⁶ and edifices were erected in the city. The noblemen built splendid palaces and gardens in the city by order of the sultan. Kashani specifically describes the edifice that the vizier 'Ali Shah had built in the immediate vicinity of the entrance [*pīshgāh*] of the citadel.⁵⁷ He also mentions one of the few buildings that have remained of the large number of Ilkhanid structures in the outer city, the octagonal tomb of Shaykh Buraq. The tomb patronized by Öljeytü around 1307 and the adjacent *khānqāh* built by Khwaja Shams al-Din Muhammad Qazvini in 1333 are located in the southwest of the city.⁵⁸ Although the tomb is attributed to Shaykh Buraq, Kashani tells us that after he was killed in Gilan in 1306 his disciples mistakenly carried the bones of another person to Sultaniyya

⁵⁵ Hafiz-i Abru, *Zayl-i Jāmi 'al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 68.

⁵⁶ *Zāwīya* is a small religious school or monastery where a Sufi shaykh dwelt with his students.

⁵⁷ Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, 46-47.

⁵⁸ Sobuti, *Shrines of Zanjan*, 54.

and buried him there.⁵⁹ The other construction attributed to ‘Ali Shah by Kashani is a factory called *kārkhānih-yi Firdaws* (Firdaws workshop), the location of which is still vague.⁶⁰

Along with the *Tārīkh-i Öljejtü*, there are other references to the buildings patronized by Öljejtü as well as his viziers and amirs at Sultaniyya in different chronicles. For instance, in the *Tārīkh-i Vaşşāf*, Vassaf al-Hazra tells us that Rashid al-Din presented Vassaf’s book to Öljejtü when the sultan visited the observatory of Sultaniyya, but he does not expand on the location or architecture of the building. Moreover, he mentions *madrasa-yi Sayyara* (the portable school) “invented” by the two viziers Rashid al-Din and Taj al-Din [*az mukhtari ‘āt-i du vazīr ast*]. He describes the school as an educational institution held in a sublime tent adjacent to the royal camp in which a group of scholars taught.⁶¹ Hafiz-i Abru also refers to an excellent school built by Öljejtü in Sultaniyya and compares it to the madrasa of Mustansiriya in Baghdad.⁶² This building must be the same school mentioned by Amuli, an instructor at Öljejtü’s pious complex in his capital.⁶³

All the scattered references to the architectural elements of Sultaniyya appearing in the historical texts contribute to the formation of a general picture of the Ilkhanid city. Consulting

⁵⁹ Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljejtü*, 70.

⁶⁰ In the annotations of the *Dhayl-i Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, Khanbaba Bayani refers to a manuscript of the *Tārīkh-i Öljejtü* in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in which Sultaniyya is mentioned as the location of Firdaws workshop. In this copy, Kashani writes that “Khwaja ‘Ali Shah organized a splendid feast for the sultan in the workshop of Sultaniyya which was known as *kārkhānih-yi Firdaws* (Firdaws workshop) ...” (Hafiz-i Abru, *Zayl-i Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 97, n. 1). However, in another manuscript of the *Tārīkh-i Öljejtü* in the library of Ayasofya in Istanbul, Kashani says that the vizier Sa‘d al-Din designated Khwaja ‘Ali Shah as the supervisor of *kārkhānih-yi Firdaws* in Baghdad in order to banish him from the royal camp (Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljejtü*, 121). Vassaf al-Hazra also tells us that *kārkhānih-yi Firdaws* was one of the constructions built by Taj al-Din ‘Ali Shah in Baghdad. He reports that the construction of the workshop in Baghdad finished in thirteen days and the decoration of the building took less than forty days to complete. At the opening ceremony of the workshop, ‘Ali Shah presented *kārkhānih-yi Firdaws*, Ghiyathiyya School, Shatiyya palaces, and Sayyara School, along with several precious gifts, to the sultan, his wives, and his commanders (Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaşşāf*, 304).

⁶¹ Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaşşāf*, 304.

⁶² Hafiz-i Abru, *Zayl-i Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 68.

⁶³ Amuli, *Nafāyis al-Funūn*, vol. 2, 258.

other sources of information can improve this picture by clarifying the spatial structure of the city. Hence, in the following section, along with the textual records, the architectural and archaeological studies conducted on the sites of Jum‘ah-masjid and Tappih-nur, which possibly shaped two substantial quarters of the outer city of Sultaniyya under Öljejtü, will be examined.

A description of the site of Jum‘ah-masjid in the outer city of Sultaniyya

The site of Jum‘ah-masjid is located northwest of the current city of Sultaniyya. The area is surrounded by the pasture of Sultaniyya in the north, the agricultural lands in the west and south, and the residential part in the southeast. In the archaeological studies conducted by Muhajerinejad at the site of Jum‘ah-masjid in 2009, forty one trial trenches were dug to estimate the archaeological potential of the site. The location of the suggested trenches was defined on the basis of the visible features in the aerial photos of the site taken between 1955 and 2002. The current satellite images of the site overlaid with older aerial photos enabled the archaeologists to choose the location of the trenches more effectively. As a result, almost all of the trenches revealed significant finds.⁶⁴

In his report of the archaeological excavations in the area of Jum‘ah-masjid, Muhajerinejad uses the data compiled from fieldwork, archival research, and artifacts analysis in order to speculate about the distribution of buildings across the site. He suggests that the administrative buildings were possibly located in the southeast, and the public spaces, the bazaar, and the cemetery were placed in the south and southwest part of the site.⁶⁵ The large amount of

⁶⁴ Muhajerinejad, *First Season of Archaeological Excavation*, 11-14

⁶⁵ Outside the public cemetery, on the surrounding mounds and hills, there are a few tombs with distinct appearance that must have been related to the high-ranking Mongols. The particular burial method applied in these graves suggests the association of the buried person with the Central Asian religions such as shamanism; see Muhajerinejad, *First Season of Archaeological Excavation*, 405.

tiles of different types scattered throughout the site of Jum‘ah-masjid, the good quality of the soil of the region, and the pieces of flint (*sang-i chakhmāq*) found on the ground,⁶⁶ support the hypothesis that the pottery workshops producing luster and *mīnāyī* tiles were distributed across the area of Jum‘ah-masjid and the Talibiyya lands. The main *qanāt* channels were built along the north-south axis of the site. The pottery and metalwork workshops must have been located along the path of *qanāt* channels or around their outlet. While the mounds distributed over the area represent the ruined constructions of the old city, the empty spaces between the hills and mounds were possibly the gardens and urban plazas arranged among the buildings.⁶⁷

According to the building components as well as the fragments of architectural decorations, such as glazed bricks and luster tiles, found in some of the trenches, Muhajerinejad raises the possibility that the congregational mosque (*masjid-i Jāmi‘*) of the city was built in the southeast corner of the site (Fig. 3-23, Building A). Aerial photographs and satellite images of the site of Jum‘ah-masjid can be used to verify his claim about the location of the mosque. In the aerial photograph taken in 1964 a feature on the ground is recognizable, which seems to be a row of rooms arranged around a large open courtyard. The traces of possibly a domed chamber projecting out of the southern wall of the building are also visible. When the 1964 photograph of the site was overlaid with the 2014 satellite image of the same area, the building with the courtyard matched up with “Building A,” the structure which is claimed to be the congregational mosque (Figs. 3-24, 3-25). Furthermore, both the 1964 photograph and the 2014 satellite image show that the building has a deviation from the north-south axis (about 20°) and almost matches

⁶⁶ Flint (*sang-i chakhmāq*) is a raw material for pottery production. It is one of the ingredients with which the coating (*la‘āb*) is made.

⁶⁷ Mirfattah, “Sultaniyya,” 23.

up with the direction of the *qibla*.⁶⁸ Hence, both the layout and orientation of “Building A” supports the claim that this building must have been the congregational mosque of the city.

To the southwest of “Building A,” the earlier excavations conducted by Mirfattah in the 1990s revealed the remains of an architectural structure, presumably associated with the bazaar of the city, for instance a caravanserai, a *khān* (an inner-town inn for merchants), or a *sarāy* (a warehouse). The spaces excavated behind the eastern side of this building were possibly residential units attached to the bazaar. They are small houses with either two interconnected rooms or a single room. In some of the units, clay cookers and fireplaces were found in the floor (Fig. 3-25, Building B).⁶⁹ Part of the excavated buildings in this phase were covered again at the end of the season and, thus, are not visible in the 2014 satellite image.

Written sources also shed some light on the possible location of the congregational mosque and the bazaar. In the *Nafā'is al-Funūn*, Amuli first names the components of the *abwāb al-birr* inside the citadel as well as the personnel and their salaries, and then he adds that Öljejtü founded an excellent congregational mosque and a school with attached hospital in Sultaniyya by which he possibly means the outer city.⁷⁰ This congregational mosque must have been the same splendid mosque [*masjid-i Jum‘ah*] built of marble and grand tiles that Hafiz-i Abru describes in his chronicle.⁷¹ His report of the siege of the citadel by Amir Sintay in 1385 also confirms the proximity of the congregational mosque to the bazaars of *qaşşābān* (butchers) and *na‘l-bandān* (farriers).⁷²

⁶⁸ In Sultaniyya the direction of the *qibla* has deviated 29° from the north-south axis, facing the southwest.

⁶⁹ Mirfattah, “Sultaniyya,” 24.

⁷⁰ Amuli, *Nafā'is al-Funūn*, vol. 2, 258.

⁷¹ Hafiz-i Abru, *Zayl-i Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 68.

⁷² *Ibid*, 282.

The characteristic elements of the physical structure of Sultaniyya mentioned by historical texts correspond not only to the archaeological remains unearthed during the excavation but also to the traditional definition of the Islamic

In a more recent account, Fedot Katof (fl. 17th century), a Russian merchant from Moscow who travelled to the Safavid court in Isfahan in 1623 and 1624, gives a view of the seventeenth-century city. He says that there was a large mosque in the citadel in which the *shah* with his son had been buried. Katof's account of the mosque implies that, in fact, he is describing the tomb of Öljeytü. He also mentions that a bazaar, a stone caravanserai, and a large mosque, which must have been the congregational mosque, with sixteen stone columns were located in the city. Katof concludes that this mosque, alongside several other mosques distributed throughout the city were definitely indicative of a great king who had ruled the region in the past.⁷³ The congregational mosque of Sultaniyya was of great importance throughout the Ilkhanid period since after the accession of each Ilkhan, the ruler's name was mentioned in a *khutba* (sermon) that occurred there.⁷⁴

The stratigraphy of the trial trenches revealed three different periods of occupation in the site of Jum'ah-masjid. The most significant one, of course, is related to the Ilkhanid period. The type of materials used in the structures, particularly the green tuffite stones, is very similar to the ones applied in the walls of the citadel as well as the buildings located inside. This similarity is also notable in different kinds of tiles (e.g. luster and *mīnāyī* tiles) spread across the area. The resemblance supports the claim that the outer city of Ilkhanid Sultaniyya (or at least part of it) had extended over the area today known as the site of Jum'ah-masjid. In other words, the area of Jum'ah-masjid presumably formed the urban context of the Ilkhanid city in which the daily life of the citizens happened.

city: "a city must have a congregational Friday mosque and it must have a market/chief bazaar nearby." Marçais, "L'Islamisme et la Vie Urbaine" cited in Abu-Lughod, "Islamic City," 156.

⁷³ Katof, *Travel Account*, 57-58.

⁷⁴ Mirfattah, "Sultaniyya," 22.

A description of the site of Tappih-nur

The area of Tappih-nur lies southeast of the city and consists of several mounds of different size. The trial trenches dug in the site have revealed a large number of artifacts, ranging from Prehistory to the Islamic era. However, the pottery pieces and architectural remains found in the central hill relate exclusively to the Ilkhanid period.⁷⁵ The most significant find is a dodecagonal building excavated from this mound with no evidence to suggest its function (Figs. 3-26, 3-27).⁷⁶ The plan and possible dimensions of the structure as well as the quality of the building material (for instance, the green tuffite stones installed in the platform or the glazed tiles scattered around the site) propose that the building has never been a mere isolated structure on the verge of the Mongol city, but part of a larger complex. However, there are still some ambiguities in the way that it interacted with the citadel or the royal camp. Among different theories speculating on the function of the monument, the one suggested by Brambilla seems more plausible. He proposes that Tappih-nur is the site originally known as Sharuyaz, and the building founded on top of the hill must have been built by Abu Sa'id, the son of Öljeitü, as his mausoleum. He raises the possibility that the mausoleum might have been located in the center of an enclosure while a group of structures within or outside the enclosure encompassed the mausoleum.⁷⁷ Clavijo's account of a large mosque and a palace of many apartments that stood some distance outside the city, supports Brambilla's claim. He reports that Miran Shah had demolished the whole of the edifice and had thrown out the body of the founder that had been buried there in a magnificent tomb.⁷⁸ Although Blair suggests that Clavijo must have described the funerary suburb of Abu

⁷⁵ Ganjavi, "Excavation of Tappih-nur," 163-196; Muhajerinejad, *Report of the Trial Trenching*.

⁷⁶ Brambilla, "Tepe Nur," 2.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷⁸ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, 162.

Sa' id at the site of Sultanabad,⁷⁹ it is more likely that he refers to the palace and tomb complex of Abu Sa' id at the site of Tappih-nur. The location and architectural remains of the building match up with Clavijo's account. Hafiz-i Abru also relates the funeral of Abu Sa' id and clearly mentions that the coffin of the Ilkhan was carried to the mausoleum [*marqad*] and the city that had been built around Sultaniyya during his lifetime, in a spot called Sharuyaz.⁸⁰

The excavation conducted in the north and northwest of the central mound uncovered evidence of architectural spaces in which the floors are coated with bricks and the walls are covered with a layer of red plaster, the same substance discovered in the trial trenches of the area of Jum' ah-masjid.⁸¹ In addition, several clay ovens, and the fragments of modest kitchenware found in some of the trenches, suggest that the site must have had some residential characteristics. Moving closer to the mound, the remains of a few graves show that an Islamic cemetery possibly lay to the north of the central hill.

The suburbs of Sultaniyya

The field surveys conducted by archaeologists across the regions of Abhar and Khurram-darrih have revealed significant points regarding the location of ancient settlements and the distribution of material culture around the Mongol capital of Sultaniyya.⁸² According to the field research, there are several mounds around Sultaniyya in which various layers of occupation are discernible. The examination of the Ilkhanid layers of these sites provides information regarding the relationship between the city of Sultaniyya and its surrounding settlements. While the spatial

⁷⁹ Blair, "Mongol Capital of Sultāniyya," 142.

⁸⁰ Hafiz-i Abru, *Zayl-i Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 190.

⁸¹ Muhajerejad, *Report of the Trial Trenching*, 138.

⁸² 'Ali, *Report of the Second Season*; published exclusively in Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) and kept at the library of the ICHTO of Zanjan.

structure of the Mongol city is barely visible today, the study of its environmental connections can shed some light on the urban elements that have been disappeared with the course of time. In addition to the examination of physical evidence, the field survey will be helpful in terms of exploring the oral history of the region. For example, the archaeologists are sometimes told the local name of some places during their fieldwork. Through applying onomastics they will be able to recognize the origin of place names and, thus, obtain some information about the past human activities in the region.

The detailed account of the field survey directed by Abulfazl 'Ali in 2006 is a good source of information uncovering the unknown features that are observable on the surface in the aerial photographs of the site. The following locations have been identified and named by 'Ali (Fig. 3-21): Carvan-gah (or Tappih-yi caravanserai) is possibly the location of the building depicted by Chardin (d. 1713) in his illustration of the town of Sultaniyya.⁸³ Tappih-qal'ih in the vicinity of the village of qal'ih marks the place of the summer camp of the Qajar ruler Fath 'Ali Shah known as Sultanabad. The ruins of Fath 'Ali Shah's palace are still visible on top of the mound. However, the presence of Seljuk and Ilkhanid pottery shards among the Qajar remains suggests that the palace was built on the ruins of an earlier building,⁸⁴ or alternatively, building materials for the Qajar settlement and the palace itself were brought from other Ilkhanid structures within the Mongol city. There is another Ilkhanid site located about 200 m. to the north of the mound known as Uch-tappih (three hills in Turkish) that consists of three small

⁸³ In the account of his journey to Sultaniyya, Chardin writes: "We alighted after a journey of five Leagues at a Caravanserai call'd Queurk-boulag, over against and within a good Canons shot of Sultanie" (Chardin, *Travels of Sir John Chardin*, 375). By Queurk-boulag he possibly meant Qarah-bulagh, a small town located close to Carvan-gah (or Tappih-yi caravanserai) today.

⁸⁴ Sheila Blair suggests that the ruins of Abu Sa'id's tomb may have served as the site for Fath 'Ali Shah's palace at Sultanabad; see Blair, "Mongol Capital of Sulṭāniyya," 142.

mounds. The physical evidence found on the surface of the mounds raises the possibility of the existence of a permanent settlement in the site.

The site of Finjanabad must have been part of the Ilkhanid city of Sultaniyya. The new stream of constructions happening fast within the city over the recent years has not reached this area yet, and, thus, it is still rich in the Ilkhanid artifacts including pottery, tile, brick, and glass.⁸⁵ Mustafa-Khan plain is a small area in the middle of Sultaniyya pasture. In the plain there is an artificial circular pond consisting of two concentric channels dug in the ground. In the center of the pond, the ruins of a structure are visible. The plain possibly functioned as a hunting ground or the royal stable. To the north of the pond, the traces of a rectangular structure are discernible on the surface of the ground.⁸⁶ The two structures must have worked together (Fig. 3-28).⁸⁷

In the south of the city, next to the mausoleum of Mulla Hassan Kashi, there are several mounds of different size. A large amount of brick pieces and a lesser amount of pottery shards have covered the upper layer of the mounds. The vast quantity of brick pieces and *jūsh-i kūrih* (a waste product made in the kilns during the process of brick making) as well as the surface features resembling brick kilns suggest that this area possibly worked as an industrial zone on the edge of the city. The area of Qush-khanih (the house of falcons) is also located in the middle of agricultural lands in south of the city.⁸⁸ The most important feature of the site is a small mound surrounded by a rectangular element, which seem to have been four walls enclosing a central building. Ilkhanid luster pottery shards are visible among the ceramics found on the top of the mound.

⁸⁵ 'Ali, *Report of the Second Season*, 113.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

⁸⁷ Rezvan suggests that Mustafa-Khan plain possibly marks the location of the observatory of Sultaniyya (Rezvan and Karimian, *Sultaniyya*, 274). More archaeological evidence is needed, however, to support this claim.

⁸⁸ 'Ali, *Report of the Second Season*, 106.

In the northwest and southwest of the shrine of Imam-zadih Abdullah two smaller mounds can be seen. The artifacts scattered over the surface are possibly related to the brick structures that had been built there. Qizlar qal'ih-si (the girls' castle in Turkish) is an Ilkhanid site situated in the west of Asadabad village. The site has been possibly the location of a small castle or watch-tower overlooking the plain and the city of Sultaniyya. Tappih-yi gunbad (the dome hill) lies about two kilometers to the east of the village of Kabud-gunbad (dark blue dome). A large number of dark and light blue tiles, ceramics, bricks, and coarse stones cover the surface of the mound. The extensive illegal excavations in the site have revealed a few green carved stones resembling the ones employed in the citadel of Sultaniyya. The names of the mound and the village are possibly derived from a ruined Ilkhanid domed building that formerly existed there.⁸⁹

The network of the qanāts of Sultaniyya

Although overlaying the written sources with the extant structures throws light on the architectural character of the city, the topographical reconstruction of the Mongol capital is still challenging and demands applying other sources of information. In this regard, toponymy could provide valuable insights into the historical geography of the region. It also aids in identifying the location of the vanished buildings and describing their functions. Some of the names still exist in the daily conversations of the locals (such as Jum'ah-masjid as discussed earlier in this chapter). However, there are lesser-known names that can be obtained through oral history. The titles of neighborhoods, suburbs, roads, rivers, and *qanāts* give some clues in the process of the

⁸⁹ Ibid., 114.

spatial examination of the Mongol capital. As an example, in Sultaniyya, although most of the *qanāts* have been destroyed over the recent decades, they still provide a useful source of information on the urban fabric of the city. The names of the *qanāts* are usually derived from their owners or the buildings, neighborhoods, and villages surrounding them. In addition to their names, the surface channels and lateral branches of the *qanāts* carrying water throughout the city, gardens, and fields as well as the streets running parallel to the channels give us an idea of the layout of the historic city.

It is estimated that thirty six *qanāts* were in use in Sultaniyya. Most of the *qanāts* started in the lands extending to the south of the city and transported water towards it. The lands are historically known as *arāzī-yi khālisih*. The term generally describes the lands owned or supervised directly by the ruler or the state. The revenues of the lands were deposited to the treasury of the court. The 1990 Zanzan and Gilan earthquake destroyed a number of these historic *qanāts*, which were used until that time.⁹⁰ The poor maintenance of the shafts and channels, digging deep wells throughout the region, and increasing urban constructions are some of the other destructive factors. Of these thirty six, twenty *qanāts* provided drinking water for the city dwellers and two of them, Jilaw-khanih (forecourt) and Dar al-shafa, carried water respectively into the western and eastern sides of the citadel and then to the pasture of Sultaniyya. The name of the *qanāt* of Dar al-shafa was possibly derived from the *dār al-shafā* building, one of the components of the *abwāb al-birr* inside the citadel. The river illustrated in Matrakçi's miniature was probably one of the surface channels of this *qanāt* (Fig. 3-20, g). The fact that the *qanāt* entered the citadel from the southeast corner suggests the approximate location of the *dār al-*

⁹⁰ Muhammadi, *Identification of the Qanāts*, 38; published exclusively in ICHTO and kept at the local archive of ICHTO located at the World Heritage Site of Sultaniyya.

shafā. The *qanāt* of Maydan started below the foothills of the southern mountains and emerged from the ground in the southwestern corner of the city. The name of the *qanāt* raises the possibility of the existence of a square-shaped open area around its outlet or somewhere along its surface channels. The *qanāt* of Darvazih (gate) ran parallel to the eastern wall of the citadel. The name of the *qanāt* might point to the fact that a gate was positioned to the south of Sultaniyya where the *qanāt* entered the city (Fig. 3-29).⁹¹

During the reign of Abu Sa' id, different sectors of the kingdom fragmented into independent units. In Fars and Kerman, local governors minted money bearing their own names and patronized several architectural undertakings. They gradually spread their authority over southern and western Iran. Abu Sa' id died in 1335 at Qarabagh.⁹² Following the death of the sultan and the disintegration of the Ilkhanids, in a power vacuum that lasted almost half a century, Sultaniyya became a battlefield for different political groups to assert their claim to reign. However, the city retained its economic centrality throughout this period. For instance, Clavijo's report of Sultaniyya, short after Miran Shah's rampage through Sultaniyya and Tabriz in 1399, proves the partial prosperity of the city even after the fall of the Ilkhanids. He says that although Sultaniyya was less populous than Tabriz, it was a more important center of exchange for merchants and their goods.⁹³ Many water channels, fine streets and squares, and several hostels accommodating merchants are the other urban elements caught Clavijo's attention.⁹⁴

Nevertheless, the dissolution of the Ilkhanids that had already diminished the political

⁹¹ The possible connection between the name of the *qanāts* and the now vanished buildings of the city is initially suggested by Muhammadi in his report on the *qanāts* of Sultaniyya (Muhammadi, *Identification of the Qanāts*, 56, 62, 71) but further expanded by the author.

⁹² Wilber, *Architecture of Islamic Iran*, 26-27.

⁹³ Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, 158.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 161.

significance of Sultaniyya, resulted in the gradual destruction of the city over the next centuries in such a way that in the beginning of the twentieth century nothing had remained of the former prosperous capital except for a few semi-ruined buildings.

Sultaniyya: A Persian/Islamic capital city or a Mongol camp?

In some aspects of the Ilkhans' social life, for instance, their insistence on seasonal migrations and erecting magnificent camps in the environs of their cities, the steppe conventions appeared on the surface. In Ilkhanid urban architecture, nevertheless, the interaction between the settled and nomadic cultures occurred in some depth resulting in the formation of forms and meanings that were syntheses of Mongolian and Perso-Islamic concepts. In this regard, and within the scope of the present research, Sultaniyya is an ideal case study representing the Ilkhans' struggles for establishing a capital in accordance with the rules of the sedentary world, which at the same time protected their nomadic roots. Although the architectural undertakings of Öljeytü at Sultaniyya, the pious ensemble in particular, are widely attributed to his conversion and sincere faith in Islam, there is some textual and physical evidence to suggest that the construction projects had part of their origins in the nomadic customs of the Mongols. This hypothesis will be discussed in great detail in chapter 6, however, in the following section, I argue that, this inclination for the conventions of their homeland somewhat determined the location of their newly-founded cities.

While Ghazan Khan established Tabriz as the *dār al-mulk* of the Ilkhanids, in its vicinity he founded the city of Ghazaniyya with the charitable complex of Shanb-i Ghazan at its heart. The motivations behind the construction of a new city next to the metropolis of Tabriz were discussed in chapter 2. From the perspective of the nomadic Mongols, the khans obtained royal

charisma and legitimacy through occupying certain lands whose spiritual power had been derived from different sources, for example, an ancestral shrine or an earlier imperial settlement. Like the case of Ghazaniyya, the foundation of Sultaniyya could be explained in connection with the traditional beliefs of the steppe nomads.

In Hafiz-i Abru's account of the building of Sultaniyya, Öljejtü states that he aimed to complete his father's unfinished project in order to keep his name alive. He says that "I do not build this city and the castle [*qal'ih*] to be my stronghold, God forbid, in the time of hardship or to bring me wealth, the main reason for the building is that King Arghun had founded it and intended to finish it but the life did not give him a chance." Although Öljejtü had a great desire for constructing edifices, he did not trust his power and capabilities. Nevertheless, he had a motive for this job because the *pādshāh* (Arghun) believed in it.⁹⁵ In addition to Öljejtü's indebtedness to his father, the fact that he not only completed Arghun's construction, but also established it as his main capital suggests that Sultaniyya might have had other significance in the Ilkhan's eyes. One could raise the possibility that Öljejtü aimed to inherit legitimacy and royal charisma from his father through taking the control of a site that had been already occupied by Arghun. In addition, the proximity of the *abwāb al-birr*, the pivotal element of the enclave embracing the tomb of Öljejtü, to the spot recognized as a royal burial place during the time of Arghun could be explained in relation to the Mongol idea that acknowledges ancestral shrines as a sources of spiritual power.⁹⁶ Likewise, the closeness of Öljejtü's capital to the mountains of

⁹⁵ Hafiz-i Abru, *Zayl-i Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 67-68. For the whole passage, see the appendix.

⁹⁶ In addition to the pieces of bone and metal objects recovered in the excavation of the "royal tombs" (Mirfatah, "Sultaniyya"), a fragment of a tile has been found showing the date of 684/1285. The tile supports the claim that the royal burial place was built earlier than the reign of Öljejtü. The tile is preserved at the archive of ICHTO in Zanjan. Unfortunately, I could not get permission to see it.

Sujas known as the burial site of Arghun (*quruq-i Arghūn*) should be regarded as an attempt to gain the power.⁹⁷

The other factor pointing towards the spiritual significance of the region is an unfinished rock-cut complex locally known as Dash Kassan (Fig. 3-30). The site is located near the village of Viar about 30 km south-southeast of Sultaniyya. The structural, stylistic, and iconographical features of the complex suggest that it was a Buddhist temple⁹⁸ possibly founded by Arghun who had Buddhist priests brought from India according to Rashid al-Din.⁹⁹ Inside the complex, there are two rock-cut panels with the design of Chinese-type dragons (Fig. 3-31). The rock resembles the green tuffite stones used for the walls of the citadel at Sultaniyya. In addition, several carved fragments scattered all over the complex seem to have been cut for the purpose of being transferred to other sites. Thus, the site might have changed to a carving workshop or even a stone mine after the building was left unfinished (Figs. 3-32, 3-33).

A passage from the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh* alongside a recently-found stone sculpture at the site of Dash Kassan support the claim that the complex was aimed for a Buddhist monastery. Rashid al-Din writes that Ghazan Khan destroyed all the idol temples and fire temples following his conversion and forcefully converted most of the Buddhist priests to Islam. When some of the converts resumed practicing Buddhism, the Ilkhan did not allow them to rebuild their temples and said “my father was idol worshipper [*but parast*]... I destroyed his temple, but if you go

⁹⁷ In the *Zubdat al-Tawārīkh*, Hafiz-i Abru uses the term “*quruq-i Sulṭaniyya*” (Hafiz-i Abru, *Zubdat al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 3, 41). However, to the best of my knowledge, none of the contemporary historians of the reign of Öljejtü refers to Sultaniyya as a “*quruq*.”

⁹⁸ Scarcia, “‘Vihār’ of Qonqor-olong,” 99.

⁹⁹ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1179. In addition, Blair raises the possibility that the name of the nearby village “Viar” could be associated with the word *vihara* which is a Sanskrit term for a Buddhist monastery; see Blair, “Monumentality under the Mongols,” 146.

there and reside, you will be given alms.” A number of Ghazan Khan’s amirs and khatuns advised him that

... your father had built a temple and carved (or painted) his face on the walls of the temple [*sūrat-i khud bar dīvār-hā-yi ān khānih kardih*], but now because [the building] has been destroyed, snow and rain fall on the faces of your father, and he was idol worshipper, if [the Buddhist priests] rebuild the temple, it will make your fathers’ soul calm and keep his name alive.¹⁰⁰

The text is not enlightening about the location of Arghun’s temple to which Ghazan refers. However, it is possible that the stone head uncovered in southwest corner of the main court of the complex is one of the faces attributed to Arghun in the above-mentioned account (Fig. 3-34). If that is the case, Dash Kassan must have been the site of one the temples built by Arghun.

I conclude this section by addressing the question of “Sultaniyya: a Persian/Islamic capital city or a Mongol camp?” and stating that Sultaniyya seems to have fulfilled simultaneously the criteria of both groups. Öljeytü founded his imperial capital in the same place that had been already claimed by his father and therefore achieved legitimacy and royal charisma according to Mongolian native beliefs. On the other hand, within the citadel of the city, he built a multi-functional charitable complex, many elements of which, such as mosque, *khānqāh*, and *dār al-huffāz* were devoted to Islamic practices. The outer city of Sultaniyya also embraced the familiar structural components which were observable in other Iranian cities during the medieval period, such as bazaar and congregational mosque. This theory will be developed further in chapter 6. The next chapter will examine the agents and mechanisms through which the dialogue between the Ilkhans and their Iranian subjects was constructed.

¹⁰⁰ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1356-1357.

Chapter Four: Political Agents and their Role in the Transcultural Interactions under the Ilkhanids

Even though an empire may be conquered on horse-back, it could not be administered on horse-back.
—Liu Ping-Chung, in his memorandum to Qubilay Khan¹

Chinggis Khan founded the Mongol Empire in 1206 and gradually conquered vast areas across Eurasia. During the period of peace and stability following the Mongol conquest of the early thirteenth century, the so-called *Pax Mongolica*, long-distance travel and commerce were facilitated and cultural communication flourished. Furthermore, the unification of most of Eurasia by the Mongols resulted in the economic integration under the *Pax Mongolica* which stimulated the cultural development and artistic innovation in many regions throughout Asia and Europe. Within the study area of this research, the Iranian world, the remarkable artistic achievements were gained mainly due to the emergence of new patrons and the formation of “a new freedom of self-expression,” which encouraged Persian cultural creativity.² The centuries-old political, cultural, and commercial contact between Iran and China precedes the foundation of the Mongol Empire. However, after the formation of the transcontinental empire of the Chinggisids, a new chapter opened in the history of this relationship.

The Mongol Empire did not last long. After the death of Möngke Khan (r. 1251-59), Chinggis’ grandson, in 1259 competitions between Mongol princes for the title of Great Khan intensified and thus the division of the empire began. As a result of the fragmentation of the empire four autonomous and functionally separate Khanates were formed including the Golden

¹ Chan, “Liu Ping-chung,” 118.

² Melville, “Mongols in Iran,” 61.

Horde, the Chaghatay Khanate, the Ilkhanate, and the Yuan dynasty defined respectively as the northwestern, central, southwestern, and eastern sector of the Mongol Empire. Hülegü Khan, the founder of the Ilkhanate of Iran and his brother Qubilay Khan, the Great Khan of the Yuan dynasty in China became allies against their rivals in other sectors of the Mongol Empire and, therefore, Iran and China became involved in a deeper and more intimate intercultural communication. In almost one century of the Ilkhanid domination of Iran (from the beginning of Hülegü's military campaign in 1255 to the death of the ninth Ilkhan, Abu Sa'id in 1335), communication between the Mongolian courts of China and Iran strengthened, leading to the broader exchange of the cultural resources of their newly conquered lands.

The technical and cultural contact between the Ilkhanids and the Yuan happened in a wide variety of areas including historiography, cartography, astronomy, printing, cuisine, languages and different kinds of art and crafts.³ The westward transition of artistic ideas and techniques, which resulted in the emergence of chinoiserie, was particularly significant under Mongol rule. The concept of chinoiserie, or the occurrence of Chinese elements in Iranian art, can be pursued in different areas including ceramics and tiles, metal-work, textiles, and manuscript painting.⁴

Although the lion's share of contacts under the Ilkhanids was formed in relation to East Asia and China, the interchange of ideas, themes, and motifs between Iran and the eastern Islamic world, particularly the Mamluks is also deserving of attention. Within the borders of Iran, the interaction did not simply happen between the cultural resources of the Mongol conquerors and their Iranian subjects, but it included a number of other cultural traditions being

³ Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, 9.

⁴ For further discussion, see Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie*.

transmitted to Iran from her eastern and western neighbors. For instance, Iranian artists and artisans under the Ilkhanids were affected by two pre-Mongol sources: Byzantine-influenced models in decorative arts and arts of the book which had developed in Baghdad, the capital of the 'Abbasid caliphate at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and Iranian-Turkic-influenced style in painting which had been previously created in the Seljuqs' territories. They gradually adopted both sources and combined them with what they had gained from their encounter with East and West Asian art (diagram 4-1).⁵

As it was discussed in the introduction, for decades in modern scholarship, medieval Mongols were identified as barbarian conquerors who destroyed the cultural achievements of sedentary societies. Contrary to this perception of the Mongols, more recent studies have revealed that the Mongols of Central Asian steppe origin played an influential role in the cultural contact between East and West. Mediating between China and Iran, in Crowe's words, they acted as "catalysts and enthusiastic patrons of the arts" in the Muslim world.⁶ Despite the sedentary world's stereotypes that looked at the steppe peoples as destroyers of civilizations, the nomads acted as the intermediaries who facilitated the long journey of commodities and ideas across Eurasia. Allsen suggests a new model of intercultural relations and attributes a different historical role to the Mongols. According to this model, the Mongols were not passive mediators of cultural exchange, but rather active agents intervening in the process of the diffusion of material culture through Eurasia. Their tastes, world views, and needs determined their criteria for borrowing selectively from the cultural elements of the sedentary world.⁷ I will take one step

⁵ Komaroff and Carboni, eds., *Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 6-7. For further discussion on the influence of Byzantine models and sources, see Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*; Nassar, "Saljuq or Byzantine"; Allen, "Byzantine Sources"; Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie*. For a general survey of Seljuq art and architecture, see Hillenbrand, *Art of the Saljūqs*; Ettinghausen and Grabar, *Art and Architecture of Islam*.

⁶ Crowe, "Some Timurid Designs," 178.

⁷ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 189-191; Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, 105-106.

further and suggest that, beyond contributing to the transportation of signs and meanings between the Far East and West Asia, the Mongol rulers who felt nostalgic about the customs of their ancestors and had tendency to revive the traditions of their homeland, brought part of their own nomadic system of values to their conquered lands including Iran and China. Although the Mongols showed inclinations to adopt Chinese or Iranian local political and administrative systems, they never broke their ties with Mongolian traditions. In the following chapter, I will focus more on the agents through which the dialogue between the Iranians and the Mongols was constituted. The discussion of the dialogue will be followed in chapter 6 where I will expand on the items of Mongolian culture injected into Ilkhanid urban architecture.

The flow of different areas of knowledge, technique, and culture was a two-way street during the *Pax Mongolica*. However, the focus of this chapter is mainly the westward transmission of cultural traditions. In relation to the network of ideas, themes, motifs, and techniques transmitted throughout the territory of the Mongols, we are faced with two major issues: the items that were transported between East and West, and the mechanisms through which they were introduced and merged with the local assets of the receiving (or conquered) culture. In Allsen's words, "culture can be transmitted by a number of mechanisms – commodities, ideologies, literary works– as well as people."⁸ During the *Pax Mongolica*, the fourth mechanism, different groups of people who moved across various cultural zones of Eurasia, regardless of the purpose of their journeys, played a substantial role in the transmission of cultural products and ideas. Different groups of nomadic and sedentary populations including artists, artisans, architects, scholars, travelers, merchants, and embassies, contributed to transcultural interactions particularly between Iran and China. Among them, the focus of this

⁸ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 59.

chapter will be on political agents of cultural transmission, more specifically on three figures: Rashid al-Din, a Persian vizier, Bolad Aqa (Pulad Chingsang in Persian sources) a Mongol tribesman, and Liu Ping-chung, Qubilay Khan's Chinese chief counselor. It must be noted that the discussion on Rashid al-Din will be expanded more than the other two since the examination of his activities as an agent, while he had a position of authority in the Ilkhanid court, can shed more light on the general social and political atmosphere of the state under the Ilkhans who are the main concern of the present research.

Rashid al-Din: A Persian patron⁹

Both in China and Iran, the Mongols needed loyal administrators to control their essentially hostile subjects. Outsiders and indigenous minority groups such as Jewish bureaucrats potentially had more sympathy for the regime because they were granted more immunity from some discriminatory religious and financial policies, particularly during the early years of Mongol rule in Iran.¹⁰ Rashid al-Din Fazl Allah al-Hamadani al-Tabib is a well-known example in this regard. He was born around 1250 in Hamadan into a Jewish family, and converted from Judaism to Islam at the age of thirty, however, he never succeeded –or was willing– fully to separate himself from his Jewish heritage. This fact caused his rivals to slander and make accusations against him, and these eventually contributed to his execution.

Rashid al-Din entered the service of the Mongol rulers during the reign of Abaqa Khan as a physician but gradually moved forward and achieved higher positions under Abaqa's

⁹ The details of the personal life of Rashid al-Din will not be discussed in this section as they have already been examined by a number of scholars; for further discussion on this historical figure, see Morgan, "Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb"; Blair, "Patterns of Patronage"; Amitai-Preiss, "New Material from the Mamluk Sources"; Rashid al-Din, Minuvi, and Afshar, *Waḡf Nāmih-yi Rab 'i Rashīdī*, (Introduction) 32-37.

¹⁰ Melville, "Mongols in Iran," 52-53.

successors. However, throughout his political life, he never gained absolute power, but in the role of the co-vizier of Ghazan Khan and Öljeitü, shared the office respectively with Sa‘d al-Din Savaji and Taj al-Din ‘Ali Shah. The long years of service in the Ilkhanid court brought Rashid al-Din vast wealth and enabled him to finance several architectural projects in different cities.¹¹ Among them, the Rab‘-i Rashidi perhaps is the most significant one. It was founded as a grand educational and cultural complex in the vicinity of Tabriz in which a large number of students studied in different branches of science. The foundation operated as an autonomous system supporting many scholars and historians to produce knowledge under the auspices of Rashid al-Din. The endowment of the Rab‘-i Rashidi was intended primarily to keep the income in Rashid al-Din’s family. He took care of the endowment himself and designated three of his sons as *mutivallī* (custodian), *mushrif* (controller), and *nāzīr* (overseer).¹² They gained an enormous wealth through obtaining part of the income of the Rab‘-i Rashidi endowment which had been reserved for the donor and his family, or the other portion of its income that was spent on the administration of the complex.¹³

The endowment deed of the Rab‘-i Rashidi has survived. In the introduction of the document (*dībāchih*), Rashid al-Din refers to a saying of the Prophet Muhammad and writes that three things can influence one’s status in the afterlife. The first is establishing perpetual charities [*ṣadaqat jāriyat*], which has been often interpreted as making endowments [*waqf*]; the second is the production and transmission of valuable knowledge which is beneficial to the public [*‘ilm yuntafi‘u bih*]; and the third is having righteous children praying for one’s soul [*valad-i ṣāliḥ*]

¹¹ Morgan, “Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb.” In the endowment deed of Rab‘-i Rashidi, he refers to other charitable complexes (*abwāb al-birrs*), which he had founded in Sultaniyya, Hamadan, Yazd, and Bastam; see Rashid al-Din, Minuvi, and Afshar, *Waqf Nāmih-yi Rab‘-i Rashīdī*, 241.

¹² Blair, “Ilkhanid Architecture and Society,” 79 & 81.

¹³ Hoffmann, “In Pursuit of Memoria,” 178.

yad'ū lahu].¹⁴ The examination of Rashid al-Din's undertakings during his lifetime shows to what extent he was committed to this *ḥadīth*.¹⁵ Rashid al-Din's endowment in Tabriz can be evaluated from different perspectives, the most significant of which, within the scope of this chapter, would be patronizing the production and dissemination of knowledge.

Taking into account the number of written works attributed to Rashid al-Din, he was the most prolific author in the Rab' -i Rashidi. Every year all the compilations of Rashid al-Din¹⁶ were reproduced in both Persian and Arabic languages there and were sent as a gift to one of the major cities of the Islamic world in order to be studied at their madrasas.¹⁷ In addition to his own works, Rashid al-Din underwrote the production of a large number of illustrated and non-illustrated books, particularly the manuscripts of the Qur'an, most of which were produced in the atelier or scriptorium of the Rab' -i Rashidi.¹⁸ The outstanding product of the workshop was the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* (A Compendium of Chronicles), a history of the world commissioned by Ghazan Khan and Öljeitü.

Besides the stylistic innovations and aesthetic values of the manuscripts and architectural undertakings commissioned by Rashid al-Din, the intellectual framework established in order to create such impressive works is of great significance. The scriptorium of Rashid al-Din where painters and calligraphers worked together to produce large manuscripts in multiple copies, represents some aspects of this system. Rashid al-Din was directly involved in the process of

¹⁴ Rashid al-Din, Minuvi, and Afshar, *Waqf Nāmih-yi Rab' -i Rashīdī*, 4; Hoffmann, "In Pursuit of Memoria," 177.

¹⁵ The *ḥadīth* has been mentioned in the *Rīyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn* (Book 13, Ḥadīth 8) collected by the Sunni scholar Abu Zakaria Yahya Ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi known as Imam Nawawi (1234–1277). The *ḥadīth* says "The Messenger of Allah said, 'when a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: *ṣadaqah jāriyah* (ceaseless charity); a knowledge which is beneficial, or a virtuous descendant who prays for him (for the deceased)'. Available online at <https://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen> (accessed on 1 March 2019).

¹⁶ The set of all books compiled by Rashid al-Din is called *Jāmi' al-taṣānīf-i Rashīdī* or *Majmū'at al-Rashīdīyya*.

¹⁷ Rashid al-Din, Minuvi, and Afshar, *Waqf Nāmih-yi Rab' -i Rashīdī*, (Introduction) 34 & 239.

¹⁸ For a description of the manuscripts produced in the workshop of the Rab' -i Rashidi, see Blair, "Patterns of Patronage," 48-54.

manuscript production through explaining the specifications for preparing illustrated texts to the artists. The specifications were included in the preface to Rashid al-Din's collected works, the *Majmū'at al-Rashīdiyya*, and also in the addendum to the endowment deed of Rab'-i Rashidi.¹⁹ This fact reveals to what extent the atelier was crucial to the transmission of Rashid al-Din's world views and tastes from Tabriz scriptorium to other parts of Iran and the Islamic world. In addition to the systematic production of numerous exquisite manuscripts, the importance of Rashid al-Din's atelier lies in the establishment of the so-called Rashidiyya style, which is distinguished by a number of stylistic and technical innovations.²⁰ Several copies of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* and a number of other manuscripts produced in Rashid al-Din's scriptorium associated with this style. This school of painting provided the prototype for Timurid painters in Herat.²¹ Furthermore, Rashid al-Din's scriptorium, particularly its importance in the dissemination of royal policy, possibly affected the development of Timurid arts of the book in the next century.²²

Rashid al-Din in the role of an active patron and author promulgated a particular system of beliefs and ideas not only in Iran but also all across the Islamic world. Along with many architectural projects and illustrated manuscripts produced under the patronage of Rashid al-Din, his extensive connections with other patrons made him a model of patronage to them. He inspired them and influenced their taste not only mentally, but also in practical and technical aspects of their operations, such as employing the same craftsmen or design patterns.²³ The notable families in other regions were interested to follow Rashid al-Din's architectural and institutional innovations. An interesting example is the family of the Nizami *sayyids* in Yazd.

¹⁹ Blair and Rashid al-Din, *Compendium of Chronicles*, 90.

²⁰ For further discussion on the Rashidiyya style, see Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie*, 162-192.

²¹ Blair and Rashid al-Din, *Compendium of Chronicles*, 101.

²² Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, 50.

²³ Blair, "Patterns of Patronage," 39.

Shams al-Din, Rashid al-Din's son-in-law and the grandson of Nizam al-Din (an important member of the Nizami family and a protégé of Rashid al-Din), endowed the Shamsiyya complex in Yazd where he was buried after his death. Historical texts mention that the plans for Shams al-Din's funerary complex, resembling the tomb complexes founded earlier by Ghazan and Rashid al-Din, were drawn up in Tabriz and sent to Yazd.²⁴ The model of patronage established by Rashid al-Din outlived the vizier. The charitable complex of Ikhlasīyya founded by 'Alishir Nava'i (d. 1501), the companion of Timurid Sultan Husayn Bayqara (1469–1506), in Herat is believed to be inspired by the Rab'ī Rashidi.²⁵

Rashid al-Din's conception of Ghazan Khan and the representation of the Ilkhan in the Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh

The large number of the texts written or compiled by Rashid al-Din, as a prolific author and active politician, are considered the most important sources of information on this interesting personality and his activities. Furthermore, the frequent references to the vizier in other Persian sources written in the Ilkhanate realm, and to a lesser degree in the Arabic texts composed in the Mamluk Sultanate, present us with considerable material on different aspects of the political life of Rashid al-Din. The latter are regarded as supplementary sources since they approach the character of the vizier from a different perspective and carry information which is usually neglected in the Persian sources. They are also informative about Rashid al-Din's relationship to Ghazan and his substantial roles in the court of the Ilkhan as his trustworthy companion.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid., 54.

²⁵ Allen, *Timurid Herat*, 50.

²⁶ Amitai-Preiss, "New Material from the Mamluk Sources"; *al-Wāfi bi'l-wafiyāt*, a biographical work written by the Mamluk writer Khalil ibn Aibak al-Safadi is a good example in this regard.

Although Rashid al-Din served as a prominent official in the Ilkhanid court for several years, he has been admired in later times much more for his works as a historian rather than a politician. The *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh* is often regarded as the most ambitious project conducted by the vizier. Ghazan Khan had commissioned Rashid al-Din to write the history of the Mongols. During Öljejtü’s reign, the work was expanded by the vizier into a historical encyclopedia on the peoples of the whole known world. When Rashid al-Din presented the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh* to Öljejtü, the sultan rewarded him with an unprecedented royal favor (*sīyūrghāmīshī*). The great amount of Rashid al-Din’s wealth and his enviable position of being the *mutivallī* of the royal endowments of the deceased Ilkhan (Ghazan Khan) and his successor provoked political intrigues against him. Dealing with the slanders and accusations that targeted mostly his fortune as well as his Jewish heritage, Rashid al-Din started to write theological and philosophical treatises. His works on Islamic theology are sometimes interpreted as the demonstration of his Islamic orthodoxy (his strict adherence to Islamic creeds) in self-defense against those who attacked his Jewish background. Moreover, these pieces of writing, along with the introduction of the endowment deed of the Rab‘-i Rashidi, are deemed as a device of justification and legitimation of Rashid al-Din’s enormous wealth.²⁷

It is generally believed that Ghazan Khan commissioned the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh* to preserve the Mongols’ identity and knowledge of their past. Morgan argues that Ghazan feared that “in the future even fewer of the now Islamised Mongols of Persia would remember who they were and where they had come from.”²⁸ Rashid al-Din fulfills the patron through compiling extensive material on the history and genealogy of the Mongols, most of which had been secret

²⁷ Hoffmann, “Gates of Piety and Charity,” 199-200.

²⁸ Morgan, ed., *Medieval Historical Writing*, 120.

until then. Furthermore, he took the opportunity to approach the Mongol conquerors in his accounts from his own perspective. This issue is evident particularly in the part of the book that deals with Ghazan Khan's history.²⁹

To obtain a true conception of Rashid al-Din's history, we should consider the fact that he wrote the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* fifty years after the foundation of the Ilkhanate and eighty years after Chinggis Khan's invasion of Persia. At the time, the Ilkhans had established themselves as rulers of Iran and the Iranians to some extent, had dealt with the painful experience of the Mongols' initial destruction and terror, although they still deemed them to be the outsiders. This historical setting influenced the way that the vizier viewed the Mongols. Morgan argues that despite his predecessors, Juzjani (d. after 1260) and Juvayni (d. 1283), the focus of Rashid al-Din in his history is not the world of Islam. He shapes a global framework and puts the Mongols, their background, and their achievements in this context. Why did they deserve to be treated as the focal point of this framework? In Rashid al-Din's view, the Mongols were the beginners of a government/dynasty who initiated a distinct era and, thus, he himself, as the official historian of the government, felt obliged to record this crucial phase of the history of not just the Mongols, but mankind.³⁰

The section of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* on the history of the Ilkhans is deemed by the historian to be a credible evidence of the reign of the Mongols in Iran, since the account has been narrated through the eyes of a contemporary witness who was in the center of affairs. Morgan, however, suggests that Rashid al-Din's history represents neither a complete real picture of the

²⁹ For a full discussion on the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, see Melville, "Jāme' al-tawārīkh."

A division of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* on the life and reign of Ghazan Khan was published by Karl Jahn in 1940 as an independent volume entitled *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*. The book consists of three main sections. The first part deals with Ghazan's royal lineage. The second part gives an account of his reign. The third part, which is the largest section of the book, addresses Ghazan's orders and operations and praises his moral features.

³⁰ Morgan, *Medieval Historical Writing*, 119-121.

historical Ghazan Khan nor the full reality of the nature of Mongol rule in Persia.³¹ It can be argued that although the historian/vizier enjoyed the privilege of experiencing events first-hand as a Persian bureaucrat, the authenticity of his reports sometimes is questioned since he looked at the Ilkhans and evaluated their decisions and operations while he had his own assumptions and biases.³² The portrait of Ghazan painted by Rashid al-Din in the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh* seems to be closer to the image of an ideal righteous sultan that the vizier had in his mind than the real character of Ghazan. Moreover, whether to satisfy his Mongol masters or to justify his own undertakings, Rashid al-Din seems to exaggerate the troubles of the pre-Ghazan era and the achievements of his reign in the book. In a section of the book addressing Ghazan’s orders and operations, Rashid al-Din illustrates his utopia and describes the qualities of his ideal ruler, but by means of referring to the character of the Ilkhan and his decisions and undertakings in connection with his subjects. Rashid al-Din’s portrait of Ghazan, as the embodiment of justice and fairness, is indeed an attempt to create a role model for other Ilkhans.³³ He is at pains to point out how much Ghazan is different from his brutal ancestors. Putting emphasis on the incorrect polities of the past Mongol rulers, the vizier intends to highlight the significance of what has been done during the reign of Ghazan. Nevertheless, it must be noted that Rashid al-Din’s detailed description of the ruler’s reforms, to some extent, derives from his belief in Ghazan’s ability and character, not merely from his own conception of the idealized vision of a ruler.³⁴ Despite what has been argued, the accounts of other historians compiled several decades later, sometimes reveal that Ghazan and Rashid al-Din’s policies were not necessarily a total success and, thus, his reports had been slightly affected by a certain partisanship. The *Dastūr al-*

³¹ Morgan, “Rašīd al-dīn,” 187.

³² Morgan, “Rashīd al-Dīn Ṭabīb.”

³³ Shabaneh, “Political and Social Desires,” 21.

³⁴ Melville, “Jāme‘ al-tawārīkh.”

Kātib fī ta'yīn al-Marātib is a good example in this regard.³⁵ Within the scope of the present discussion, the importance of this book is that it informs us of the fate of Ghazan's reforms toward the end of the period of Mongol rule in Iran.

The *Dastūr al-Kātib* was written by Muhammad Nakhjavani and was commissioned by Abu Sa'īd's vizier, Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad, the son of Rashid al-Din. However, it was completed in 1365, almost thirty years after the death of the Ilkhan. The book is considered an important document shedding light on the administrative system of the government under the late Ilkhans.³⁶ Considering the long interval between the reforms being launched and Nakhjavani mentioning them in his book, the *Dastūr al-Kātib* gives us objective criteria to evaluate the success of systematic changes theorized mainly by Rashid al-Din and run by the Ilkhan in the final years of the thirteenth century. The exact mechanism through which Ghazan's reforms were executed is still not fully understood. In this regard, making a comparison between Rashid al-Din's account of the comprehensive undertakings of the Ilkhan in the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* and Nakhjavani's references to the operations in his book is enlightening.³⁷ Nakhjavani possibly adopted more realistic approach to the reforms since the book was compiled a few years after the fall of the Ilkhanid dynasty when the author must have had lesser motivation to satisfy the Ilkhanid patron (Abu Sa'īd) with his sycophantic descriptions of the undertakings of the Ilkhan's ancestors.

One interesting example relevant to our discussion is Nakhjavani's brief remark about the implementation of the endowment deeds provided during the reign of the earlier Ilkhans including Ghazan Khan. He expresses his dissatisfaction with the state of endowments in

³⁵ Nakhjavani, *Dastūr al-Kātib*.

³⁶ Morgan, "Dastūr al-kāteb."

³⁷ Khusrawbeygi and Farrukhi, "Comparative Study."

different parts of the country in his time. According to Nakhjavani, in the mid-fourteenth century, a number of endowment deeds had been distorted or forgotten; thus, many officials captured illegitimately the portable and non-portable properties that had been already endowed to the charitable institutions. As a result, the poor had been become deprived of the alms offered in the pious foundations.³⁸ Later in this section of the book, he mentions Ghazan Khan and praised him for organizing an efficient system that supervised the endowments all over the country. Although controlling the operation of this system, as part of Ghazan's reforms, happened successfully during the time of the Ilkhan, apparently it did not outlive the Ilkhanid dynasty.

In the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, Rashid al-Din repeatedly refers to Ghazan Khan as *Pādshāh-i Islām* (the king of Islam). The term had already been used by 'Ata Malik Juvayni and Nasir al-Din al-Tusi for addressing the Mongol rulers of Iran.³⁹ Regardless of the flattering side of the title, it strongly conveys two vital principles for the ruler of Iran in Rashid al-Din's eyes: his nationality and his religion that should be the same as the nationality and religion of his subjects. Although the Arabic title of "sultan" is usually added to the name of Ghazan and his successors by their contemporary historians, Rashid al-Din's preference for the word *pādshāh*, a title of Persian origin, is of great significance. While in public's opinion Ghazan was a Mongol ruler who had newly converted to Islam, by applying the term widely, Rashid al-Din in fact tries to promote Ghazan's royal/religious charisma that was required in order to claim full sovereignty over Islamic Iran.⁴⁰ In addition to highlighting the Islamic belief system of Ghazan, Rashid al-

³⁸ Nakhjavani, *Dastūr al-Kātib*, 175-183.

³⁹ After the fall of the 'Abbasid caliphate in 1258, the Persian/Shi'i elite of Iran tried to theorize about the principles of an ideal political system. The creation of the term "*Pādshāh-i Islām*" by 'Ata Malik Juvayni and Nasir al-Din al-Tusi for addressing the Mongol rulers of Iran is considered the most important concept pursued (advertised) in the political thought of the Shi'i Iranians until the foundation of the Safavid dynasty in the sixteenth century. For further discussion, see Qanadi, "Principles of the Legitimacy," 115.

⁴⁰ Rashid al-Din's approach to the issue of the legitimization of Ghazan Khan in the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* can be discussed in the broader context of the books generally known as *sīyāsatnāmih* (Book of Government), the most well-known of which is the *Sīyāsatnāmih* (or *Sīyar al-Mulūk*) compiled by Nizam al-Mulk. The justification of

Din attributes receiving divine inspiration to the Ilkhan. For instance, when narrating the Mamluk-Ilkhanid war, the vizier refers to the Qur'anic story of Moses and mentions that *Pādshāh-i Islām* heard a voice from *vādī-yi ayman*⁴¹ that said “Fear not. You have escaped from the wrongdoing people.”⁴² The voice increased his courage and strengthened him to defeat the Egyptians eventually.⁴³

Despite Rashid al-Din's efforts, as Allsen puts it, Ghazan's adoption of Islam should be analyzed mainly as a means of domesticating the bases of legitimacy. Ghazan and his successors tried to retain the Mongolian element in their political doctrines. Despite their long years of domination over the Eastern Islamic world, they still claimed that the legitimacy of their predecessors and themselves had been derived from the khaqans in China and emphasized these claims in their words and acts. Alongside the Ilkhans, Rashid al-Din is also inclined to underline the legitimacy of the khans of the Yuan dynasty. His treatment of Qubilai's rise to power in the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* is an interesting example in this regard. Evidently if the legitimacy of the khanate in China was called into question, the legitimacy of their subordinate cousins in Iran, the Ilkhans, would be shaken. The importance of this claim led the vizier to change slightly his historical account of the event in Qubilai Khan's favor.⁴⁴ Rashid al-Din's deceptive report of Qubilai's enthronement can be discussed in relation to the idea that the vizier wrote some parts of his chronicles not completely according to historical reality, but on the basis of the social and

current political state on the one hand and providing ethical advice on government and administration on the other hand are two primary themes pursued in the *sīyāsatnāmīhs* (Ranjbar, “Tradition of Writing of *Sīyāsatnāmīh*,” 104-105). For further discussion on the *Sīyāsatnāmīh* of Nizam al-Mulk, see, for instance, Khal'atbari and Dalir, “Concept of Iranzamīn.”

⁴¹ According to the Quran, *vādī-yi ayman* is the holy land where God spoke to Moses. *Vādī-yi ayman* is a Persian term coming from the Quranic term *al-wād al-ayman* (الواد اليمين) which means the right side of the valley (The Quran, 28:30).

⁴² The Quran, 28:25.

English translation: <http://quran.ksu.edu.sa>. Accessed April 4, 2018.

⁴³ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 127.

⁴⁴ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 55.

political framework that was crucial, in his view, to the establishment of his own ideal and legitimate form of state.

In addition to Ghazan himself, Rashid al-Din tried to attribute a sense of nationalism to the Mongols in general. For instance, in his account of the confrontation between the Mongol amir Qutlugh Shah and the Mamluks, he repeatedly calls the Mongol amirs “our valiant men” [*bahādurān-i mā*] and the Mongol military forces “our army” [*lashgarhā-yi mā*].⁴⁵ After several decades of the Mongol domination of Iran, they were still deemed as outsiders by many Iranians. By pretending that the Mongols are “our” warriors, the vizier leads the Persian readers of the book to empathize with the Mongols. He advertised national unity by consolidating the connections between the Mongols and the Iranians. Beyond the emotional aspects of the unity, it can be considered as a device helping the vizier to realize his idea of a centralized feudal form of government.⁴⁶

On the basis of what was discussed above, one comes to the conclusion that while Rashid al-Din’s history is assessed as an example of an accurate medieval chronicle, it has been written from a bureaucrat’s perspective who seeks to use the narrative in order to achieve his political goals. As his primary goal, Rashid al-Din attempts to stabilize the position of the Mongol Ilkhan as the *pādshāh* of Iran and empower the central government in order to end the chaos caused by the plurality of political and religious groups after the Mongol invasion of Iran. He reduced the authority of local governors and made them accountable for their deeds and words. Shabaneh suggests that all the political and economic instructions of Rashid al-Din in the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh* pursued this purpose.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 148; Shabaneh, “Political and Social Desires,” 22.

⁴⁶ Petrushevsky, “Rashīd al-Dīn’s Conception.”

⁴⁷ Shabaneh, “Political and Social Desires,” 23.

I conclude this section with a brief remark on Rashid al-Din's master, Ghazan Khan, who is deemed to be a significant figure in the process of intercultural exchange, particularly between Iran and China. According to Rashid al-Din, Ghazan grew up in a multicultural environment. His wet nurse was a Chinese [*khitā'ī*] woman named Mughaljin, who had come to Iran accompanying Ghazan's mother, Qultaq Khatun.⁴⁸ By the time he became five, his grandfather, Abaqa Khan, designated a Chinese Buddhist priest [*bakhshī-yi khitā'ī*] as Ghazan's mentor to teach him Mongolian and Uighur scripts and traditions.⁴⁹ Rashid al-Din believes that Ghazan's childhood education led him toward idol worshipper Buddhist priests [*bakhshīyān-i but-parast*] in his adulthood. Under Abaqa and Arghun several idol temples [*but-khānih*] were built on every corner and different groups of pagan Buddhist priests were respectfully brought in from India, Kashmir, Khitay (China), and Uighur. During Ghazan's governance in Khurasan, he founded a number of temples in Khabushan⁵⁰ and spent most of his time with Buddhist priests at the temples.⁵¹ Rashid al-Din underlines Ghazan Khan's broad knowledge of the religions and customs of different nations as well as his relative mastery of various languages including Arabic, Persian, Hindu, Kashmiri, Tibetan, Chinese, and European [*farangī*]. He mentions that, except for Pulad Aqa (Bolad), nobody was more knowledgeable about the Mongol tribes than Ghazan Khan. The Ilkhan was substantially aware of the history and genealogy of the Mongols and, therefore, is acknowledged by Rashid al-Din as one of the main sources of information in the writing of his history book. In addition, the vizier admires Ghazan Khan for his remarkable skills in different crafts and sciences, for instance, his general knowledge of different styles of

⁴⁸ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1206-1207.

⁴⁹ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 8.

⁵⁰ Today the district of Khabushan is located in Khurasan-i Razavi and its location is different from the historical city of Khabushan.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 166.

medicine practiced by Arabs, Chinese, Mongols, Hindus, and Kashmiris.⁵² Whether or not Rashid al-Din exaggerates Ghazan's intellectual perfection, his account of the Ilkhan's knowledge of diverse religions and languages explains the coexistence of culturally and ethnically different groups in the Ilkhanid state under Ghazan as a result of his tolerance towards various cultural practices.

Bolad Aqa:⁵³ A Mongol intermediary⁵⁴

In comparison with the other two khanates, the Chaghatayids and the Golden Horde, the Mongol courts in Iran and China shared more common characteristics. They dealt with rather similar problems and challenges and, thus, adopted similar policies. As the most important challenge, the two regimes were threatened by their common enemies, Mongolian princes in Central Asia, who sought to defeat Qubilai Khan and terminate the Yuan dynasty. When the enmities intensified, the Ilkhans and their sovereigns in China strengthened their contacts through exchanging envoys.⁵⁵ In addition to forming an alliance against their common foe, the two courts became closer since the khanate founded by Hülegü in Iran was the only Mongolian domain beyond the territories of the Yuan dynasty that formally recognized the legitimacy of the khaqans in China.⁵⁶ The Mongol

⁵² Ibid., 171-172.

⁵³ Bolad or Bulad is the same *pūlād* or *fūlād* which means steel in Persian. Apparently the word is of Turkish origin that later passed into Mongolian language. The Mongols and Turks believed that if they call their children with the names of tough objects they will be strong; see Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 3, 2042.

⁵⁴ Bolad Aqa, as a historical personage has been studied in detail by Thomas Allsen in three publications: *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia*, "Biography of a Cultural Broker: Bolad Ch'eng-Hsiang in China and Iran," and "Two Cultural Brokers of Medieval Eurasia: Bolad Aqa and Marco Polo." Therefore, my discussion on Bolad in this chapter does not deal with the historical details of his political life in the Ilkhanid court, but, within the scope of this chapter, I will be focusing on how he acted as an intermediary between the Mongol courts in Iran and China during the post-conquest era.

⁵⁵ Allsen, "Biography of a Cultural Broker," 10; Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 194. For a list of the envoys exchanged between the courts of the Mongols in Iran and China, see Masuya, "Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān," 661-663.

⁵⁶ Allsen, "Two Cultural Brokers," 66.

rulers of Iran took the title of Ilkhan which means “subordinate khan” to show their subordination to the khaqans or Great Khans in Beijing. In the textual records of the period, there are several mentions of the Ilkhans whose selection or removal from their position of power happened under the supervision of the khaqans in China. Most of the Ilkhans accepted to ascend the throne only after the official envoys arrived in their courts and delivered the decrees (official permission: *farmān* or *yarlīgh*) from the khaqan. For instance, in the case of Abaqa Khan, Rashid al-Din says that he ascended the throne, to some extent provisionally, in 1265, and five years later, when the envoys of Qubilay Khan brought a decree, crown, and robe of honor, the Ilkhan was enthroned again. The delay of the khaqan’s representative was due to the great distance between the two courts and the communication problems.⁵⁷ It is noteworthy that the Ilkhans who were enthroned after the death of Qubilay in 1294 –Baydu (r. 1295), Ghazan, Öljeitü, and Abu Sa‘id– did not wait for the decree of investiture from the khans of Beijing. They ascended the throne immediately after the demise of their predecessor.⁵⁸

The Ilkhans minted their coins in the name of the khaqans and validated their diplomatic correspondence with their Chinese seals. They remained partly involved in the khaqans’ administration until the reign of the last ruler, Abu Sa‘id. The Ilkhans retained their ties with the Yuan dynasty and continued to have their properties and governmental bureaus assigned to them in China. Despite the long distance between Iran and China, the political and economic system of the domain of the Yuan, which was an amalgamation of Chinese and Mongol methods of

⁵⁷ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1059-1060; Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 25. According to Rashid al-Din, following the death of Hülegü, Mongol khatuns, princes, and amirs gathered and asked Abaqa Khan to ascend the throne. Abaqa Khan refused and said: “my master [*āqā*] is Qubilay Khan. How can I ascend the throne without his order [*farmān*]?”

⁵⁸ Encyclopædia of the World of Islam, “Bolod Cheng-Hsiang.”

government (although with an unequal ratio in favor of the former), was emulated by the Ilkhans.⁵⁹

In addition to dispatching decrees in the name of the Ilkhans as a sign of approval, Qubilay interfered directly in the internal affairs of the Ilkhanate through sending his embassies to Iran. The first ambassador, and the focal figure of our discussion in this section, was a senior court official, Bolad *Noyan*⁶⁰ (Pulad Aqa in Persian sources). He arrived in Iran in 1285 during the reign of Arghun, accompanied by a native Syrian interpreter named ‘Isa *kilimichī*. After the execution of Ahmad Tegüder (r. 1282-84), his rival, Arghun, rose to power. However, like his father Abaqa, he waited two years to receive Qubilay’s decree. This gesture expressed his appreciation of Qubilay’s support and encouragement during his power struggle with Ahmad. His envoy, Urduqiya, arrived from China and brought the khaqan’s *yarlīgh*. Following the arrival of Qubilay’s decree in early 1286 and Arghun’s second enthronement (as Rashid al-Din emphasizes),⁶¹ Bolad and ‘Isa ensured that Arghun was enthroned officially. Thus, they considered their mission in Iran accomplished and intended to return home, but on their return trip they encountered the rebellion of the Central Asian Mongols and became separated. While ‘Isa succeeded in reaching China after two years, Bolad was forced to return to Iran and stayed there for more than 28 years. He married a former concubine of the deceased Ilkhan Abaqa while, according to Rashid al-Din, he had sons in the service of Qubilay in China.⁶²

Bolad was a member of a Mongolian-speaking tribe called Dörben. His father, Yurki joined the imperial guard of Chinggis Khan and was gradually promoted to higher ranks in the

⁵⁹ According to Marco Polo even the selection of the Ilkhans’ wives happened under the supervision of the khaqans; see Masuya, “Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān,” 91. For further discussion on the relationship between the khaqans in China and the Ilkhans, see *ibid.*, 8-40.

⁶⁰ Noyan was a title used for Mongol amirs.

⁶¹ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1161.

⁶² Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 1, 197.

Mongolian army as well as the imperial household. Later he became the *bā'urchī* (cook) of Chinggis Khan. Following his father, Bolad, as a child, entered the guard of Qubilay Khan, but in a few years rose to the higher status in the imperial guard and became one of the most trusted confidants of Qubilay as well as his *bā'urchī*.⁶³ The other significant aspect of Bolad's character, more relevant to the purpose of this chapter, is his involvement in a wide variety of administrative matters of the court and the government. Going through the *Yuan Shi* reveals that Bolad, while taking a number of administrative and military responsibilities, actively participated in the establishment or organization of several imperial offices. All the different appointments assisted him to become accustomed to Chinese social and cultural conditions.⁶⁴ Bolad held the prestigious title of *ch'eng-hsiang* (*chingsang* in Persian sources) which meant chancellor,⁶⁵ and was usually bestowed upon the very highest-ranking officials in the Yuan government.⁶⁶ The fact that a key figure like Bolad with a long history of important court services in China was sent to Ilkhanid Iran as a representative, conveys to what extent controlling the Ilkhanid court was significant to Qubilay.⁶⁷

The working life of Bolad consists of two main phases: in the first stage, he was a high-ranking official in the government, the military, and the imperial household of the Yuan dynasty in China, and in the second phase, he worked as an ambassador (the representative of the Great Khan) and political adviser in the Ilkhanid court in Iran. According to al-'Umari (d. 1384), Bolad

⁶³ Ibid., 197.

⁶⁴ Allsen, "Biography of a Cultural Broker," 8.

⁶⁵ *Ch'eng-hsiang* was transmitted from Chinese to Mongolian and from Mongolian to Persian. It means chancellor or prime vizier in Chinese and vizier of state in Mongolian (Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 3, 2357).

⁶⁶ One of Ahmad Tegüder's chief officials, Buqa, also held the title of *ch'eng-hsiang*. It is noteworthy that he was granted the title by Qubilay Khan because of his support for Arghun against Ahmad. While this title was reserved for the highest-ranking officials in the Yuan government, its bestowal shows the extent to which Qubilay was satisfied with Arghun's victory and was supportive of his coup. For further discussion on the bestowal of Chinese titles on Ilkhan officials, see Allsen, "Notes on Chinese Titles."

⁶⁷ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 25-28.

was designated by Arghun as his chief advisor and played an active role in the governance of the realm. In the reign of his successor, Gaykhatu, he remained in the court giving the Ilkhan some advice particularly on financial issues.⁶⁸ His notable political status under the Ilkhans was highly dependent upon his deep knowledge of Chinese society and culture gained during the first phase of his career. In the historical accounts of the period, there are a number of occasions and events attesting to the active role of Bolad as consultant or intermediary in court politics. However, his position seems to be affected by Ghazan's enthronement as well as his conversion to Islam. Regardless of the real reasons for the reduction in Bolad's influence during this period (whether it was part of the larger plan for the Islamization of the court particularly to satisfy their Iranian/Muslim subjects or it was caused by the competition between Ghazan and Baydu for the throne), he kept his good relationship with Ghazan. Although he was no longer the chief minister of state, he retained his important position as a high-ranking official. This phase of Bolad's life is significant within the scope of this chapter, as he started his partnership with Rashid al-Din in documenting the history of the Mongols for the grand project of the vizier, the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*. Under Öljeytü, Bolad regained his active role in political affairs. When Kashani enumerates the senior officials of Öljeytü, he mentions the name of Pulad Chingsang (Bolad) in the third place after Qutlugh Shah and Chupan.⁶⁹ In the accounts of his reign, we can find Bolad's name in different occasions not only as a wise consultant also as an influential amir who still received military commands from the Ilkhan.

Bolad was an acknowledged expert on Mongolian tradition and thus he, as one of the primary informants of Rashid al-Din, provided much of the information on the cultural life of the

⁶⁸ Allsen, "Two Cultural Brokers," 67.

⁶⁹ The other interesting example of the esteem in which Bolad was held can be seen in Kashani's account of Öljeytü's marriage with Qutlugh Shah Khatun. In the ceremony Bolad was the representative/witness of the groom and Rashid al-Din was the representative of the bride; see Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, 42.

tribes. In addition, Rashid al-Din mentions that he benefited greatly from Pulad Aqa's knowledge in writing the history of the Mongols.⁷⁰ Bolad's collaboration is evident especially in the writing of the first three sections of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* dealing with the history of the Mongolian and Turkic peoples, the history of the Mongols before the rise of Chinggis Khan and during his lifetime, and the reigns of Chinggis' successors. While Bolad's knowledge of the history and genealogy of the Mongols enriched Rashid al-Din's book, the accuracy of the accounts should be regarded with caution due to his Mongolian perspective on events as well as his political and ideological bias.⁷¹

The Imperial Archive or the Imperial Library Directorate (*Mi-shu chien*) of China, controlling the production and preservation of government documents, was established by Bolad and Liu Ping-chung (who will be discussed later in this chapter) in 1273.⁷² Rashid al-Din mentions this depository by the name of *Dafātir-i Dīvān* or "Archives of Court." Bolad, as Rashid al-Din's source of information, had access to this archive and thus this is not surprising that the vizier's accounts, to a large degree, accorded with Chinese records. In addition, a new set of dynastic histories, and more particularly an official history of Qubilai's dynasty, were initiated in the mid-thirteenth century by his Chinese advisors. Bolad possibly knew some of the individuals selected for the collection of data in Chinese and Mongolian and was aware of these activities even if he did not directly participate in this project. Regardless of the final product of this project, Chinese scholars generated a diverse body of historical sources used later by Rashid al-Din in the creation of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*. He refers to it as the *Altan Debter* or *Altan Daftar* (the Golden Book).⁷³ Allsen suggests that Rashid al-Din benefited from this source through Bolad who was permitted, as a Mongol, to gain access to it, and translated the desired

⁷⁰ Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 171.

⁷¹ Allsen, "Two Cultural Brokers," 70.

⁷² Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 68.

⁷³ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 1, 186.

passages into Persian for the vizier.⁷⁴ Rashid al-Din's account of the reign of Qubilay, containing a detailed description of the governmental principles, terms, and positions in China, attests to the surprising degree of accuracy of the information received by the vizier.⁷⁵

Making a comparison between the historiographical projects patronized by the Mongols of the Yuan dynasty and the Ilkhanates indicates that they benefited from common sources already collected in China. In addition, their approach to the compilation of official history was deeply influenced by Chinese traditions. Bolad was not only familiar with Yuan historiographers and their traditions, but also connected with the Imperial Library Directorate of the Yuan for years.⁷⁶ He is, therefore, considered the central figure in the transmission of information from East to West.

Under Qubilay he was an active and influential member of the emperor's household establishment and therefore he was considered "a true insider" in the Yuan court. It is surprising that after finishing his mission in Iran and subsequently his unsuccessful return to China, Qubilay never ordered Bolad home, although there was a time lapse between his initial intention to leave Iran in 1286 and the death of Qubilay in 1294. His rich experience of working in different imperial offices and organizations in the Yuan domain is considered crucial to the success of his subsequent positions and activities, as a permanent official, in Iran. However, this level of knowledge of political and administrative systems of the Yuan court could turn him into a potential threat for the Mongols in China. On the other hand, Bolad seems to be exclusively the

⁷⁴ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 95-97; Allsen, "Two Cultural Brokers," 70.

It is still uncertain whether the *Altan Debter* was in the form of one singular compiled book or a collection of different historical sources. Morgan, for instance, introduces it as a Mongolian chronicle; Morgan, "Rašīd al-dīn," 181-182.

⁷⁵ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 906-911.

⁷⁶ For further information on the historical archive of the Imperial Library Directorate, see *Yuan Shi*, ch. 90, p. 2296, cited in Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 95.

ambassador of Qubilay Khan in Iran and, thus, he possibly saw no reason for himself to return to the Yuan court after the death of the Great Khan. He had established his position as a high-ranking official and a trustworthy advisor in the Ilkhanid court by the time of Qubilay's death. Despite his twenty-eight-year absence from the Yuan court, in the historical account of the dynasty, Bolad was still mentioned with honorific titles even after his death.⁷⁷

In addition to Chinese and Mongolian historiography, Bolad as a “cultural broker,” paved the way for the transportation of many items of Chinese culture, science, and technology to the Islamic world. For example, as a pillar of Ghazan Khans' reforms, Rashid al-Din sought to restore the economy to which the revitalization of agriculture was crucial. His extant treatise, the *Āṣār va Ahyā'* (the *Monuments and Animals*), clearly reveals that he substantially borrowed from East Asian agricultural knowledge. Taking into account the fact that the Bureau of Agriculture was established on Bolad's recommendation in China in the reign of Qubilay and he was the head of the organization for a while, one could suggest that Bolad must have had a pivotal role in the transmission of information on Chinese agriculture to Iran. The introduction of paper currency and possibly block-printing technology that will be discussed later in this chapter, is also another example of the items introduced by Bolad to Ilkhanid Iran.⁷⁸

Bolad's role as a cultural intermediary was not confined to the period that he was associated with the Ilkhanid court in Iran, but there is some evidence of his involvement in such activities, although to a lesser extent, during his tour of duty in China. For instance, he encouraged the Yuan court to hire West Asian scientists particularly Muslim astronomers and

⁷⁷ According to the *Yuan Shi*, in 1311, the emperor of China “enfeoffed the Military Affairs Official Bolad (Po-lo) as Duke who Benefits the State (tse-kuo kung).” Allsen, “Notes on Chinese Titles,” 31.

⁷⁸ Allsen, “Biography of a Cultural Broker,” 8 & 14-16.

even succeeded in obtaining financial support for a Persian astronomer in 1273.⁷⁹ This example points towards Bolad's inclination to expand actively the cooperation between East and West long before his arrival in Iran. He facilitated reforms in Iran and China through mediating between the nomadic Mongol conquerors and the native officials in the sedentary sections of the empire. However, he remained faithful to Mongolian traditions.⁸⁰ Bolad and his important position in the political and cultural life of medieval Eurasia is just one example of numerous nomads who actively participated in East-West exchange. They did not act merely as a conduit for ideas and commodities to flow throughout the continent, but they were active players whose cultural values and political interests determined the items that traveled between East and West.⁸¹ Bolad died in the meadow of Arran, in the northwest of Iran, in 1313 when he was at the winter camp of Öljejtü.⁸²

Liu Ping-chung: A Chinese counselor⁸³

Bolad was a close associate of Liu Ping-chung.⁸⁴ Liu, a Chinese Ch'an Buddhist,⁸⁵ was Qubilai's chief counselor. He is recognized as an outstanding figure in the history of the Mongol conquest of China for two main reasons. First, he rearranged the Mongol administrative system on the basis of the Chinese model and led the Mongols to accept "sinicization."⁸⁶ He also tried to involve higher number of the Chinese literati in the political system. Second, to facilitate

⁷⁹ Allsen, "Two Cultural Brokers," 69.

⁸⁰ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 79.

⁸¹ Allsen, "Two Cultural Brokers," 75.

⁸² Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljejtü*, 147.

⁸³ According to Chan, Liu Ping-chung has not been mentioned in any of the Persian or Mongolian sources of the twelfth or thirteenth centuries; Chan "Liu Ping-chung," 101, n. 3.

⁸⁴ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 96.

⁸⁵ Ch'an is a tradition of Mahayana Buddhism.

⁸⁶ Sinicization is a process in which people of various cultures come under the influence of Chinese culture.

Mongols-Chinese relations, he acted as a mediator between the Mongol ruling class and the Chinese elite.⁸⁷ Liu Ping-chung was born in a bureaucratic family in 1216. His father surrendered to the Mongols in 1220, and served in different administrative positions in their court through his lifetime. Liu was a Buddhist monk who later became Qubilai's confidant accompanying him during his military campaigns. After Qubilai's accession to the throne as the emperor of China in 1260, Liu was promoted to the position of imperial adviser and conducted comprehensive institutional reforms. In 1268 he retreated from the Yuan court, returned to seclusion and devoted himself to Taoist studies until his death in 1274.⁸⁸

Despite his adherence to the Buddhist and Taoist orders particularly in his private life, he showed a strong inclination to the Confucianism and the perpetuation of its tradition in his public career. He attempted to modify Mongol institutions according to the Confucian patterns. In 1249, eleven years before Qubilai's enthronement, during the reign of his elder brother Möngke, Liu submitted a memorandum to him on government policy and administration. In the document, he underlined the traditional Chinese model of government that gave priority to the civil administration over the military. In addition, he stressed the necessity of adopting Chinese institutions in the administration of Chinese territories in the Mongol empire. Liu desired to convert the Mongol rulers into legitimate successors in the traditional political system of China by means of fixing the Confucian ideas and values in their minds. His primary purpose in writing the memorandum was to restore the traditional Chinese bureaucracy. He believed that the chaos caused by Mongols' military campaigns and disorders would be ended through the restoration of civil authority. Liu's recommendations changed the administration of the Mongol empire

⁸⁷ Chan, "Liu Ping-chung," 100.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 113.

substantially because accepting these suggestions meant that Qubilay would replace the Mongol tribal system with Chinese institutions.⁸⁹

By order of Qubilay Khan, Liu prepared the blueprint for the construction of the city of K'ai-p'ing fu (Kaiping Fu), that later was called Shangdu, and was used as a summer residence for the Mongol emperors. Liu included Buddhist and Taoist monasteries in the vicinity of palaces and residential quarters. The city was founded in 1256 when Qubilay was not yet emperor of China but was a confidant to the Emperor Möngke. Qubilay chose a strategic location for the city, between the pastoral regions of Mongol tribes and the agrarian lands of China that best served as an ideal place for his future plans as the emperor of China. When Qubilay established his position as the sovereign of the Mongol empire, he ordered the construction of a new capital city at Daidu in 1267.⁹⁰ According to contemporary sources, Liu was connected with the choice of location as well as the design of the future capital city.⁹¹ Liu was possibly connected with two other important renovations: the issuance of a new paper money called *ssu-ch'ao* or *chiao-ch'ao* in 1260, and the revision of the calendar. The former could be examined in relation to the introduction of a paper money known as *chāv* or *ch'ao* by Bolad during the reign of Gaykhatu around 1294.⁹² Evidently, a decade earlier (in early 1281) Qubilay transferred ready cash, in the form of *ch'ao*, gold, and silver, to Bolad to give them to poor people.⁹³

After Qubilay's succession in 1260, Liu was one of the first to be asked for advice regarding the administrative problems of the empire. Using their opportunity to suggest a

⁸⁹ Ibid., 118-122.

⁹⁰ Daidu is also known as Yen-ching, Peking, Ta-tu, Dadu, Khan Baliq, and Chung-tu.

⁹¹ Interestingly the chief architect of the project was a Muslim named Yeh-wei-tieh-erh (possibly a Chinese pronunciation of his original Arabic name); see Chan, "Liu Ping-chung," 134.

⁹² Regarding the failed attempt to issue paper money in Iran during the reign of Gaykhatu, see chapter 5, 214.

⁹³ The recruitment of civil servants can be compared to the formation of guards unit consisting of unfortunates during the reign of Ghazan Khan; see Chan, "Liu Ping-chung," 144; *Yuan Shi*, ch. 11, p. 229 cited in Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 79.

solution, Liu Ping-chung and Hsu Heng (d. 1281), a Confucian scholar, submitted a proposal for the reorganization of the government on the basis of the Chinese model. Following receiving approval from Qubilay, the plan came into operation and within the next decade, a comprehensive reorganization and sinicization happened in different sections of the administrative and political system of the empire. Nevertheless, despite the extensive sinicization conducted during the reign of Qubilay as well as his adoption and appreciation of the Chinese institutions, he remained a universal emperor and a true successor of Chinggis Khan, not the Chinese virtuous ruler who is presented as the ideal sovereign in Confucian tradition.

Making a sense of kinship between the ruler and his ministers is a main theme in the Confucian political philosophy. While the ruler was dependent on his wise consultants for their advice, reciprocally his advisors deserved to serve a virtuous ruler since moral qualities as well as abilities in practical matters were considered vital to the success of administrative system of the state. Chan describes this relationship by the dual concept of “sage ruler” and “virtuous minister” and suggests that this conception of emperors and their advisors affected most of biographical studies in Chinese historiography. As Chan puts it, “written history in the Chinese eye, serves as a moral injunction for posterity, less as a recording of events.”⁹⁴ This approach to history often brings about two results. First, the historical figures are confined to the traditional Confucian framework, and second, they are dramatized and become less similar to their historical reality. They are idealized and transfigured into heroes. Liu Ping-chung seems to be described by Chinese historians from this perspective, the fact that must be born in mind when we analyze the acts and the words of this historical figure, as they have been described in Chinese literary sources.

⁹⁴ Chan, “Liu Ping-chung,” 103.

Concluding note: The facilitators of the dialogue

It must be noted that East-West exchange under the Mongols involved more than the two major civilizations –China and Iran– interacting with one another. The interchange incorporated a number of cultures that could act as a donor culture and a receptor culture simultaneously, although in different interactions. While a particular culture is borrowing ideas and concepts from an outside donor culture, the latter could also act as a receiver which has already borrowed other cultural traits from a third culture. The study of the intermediaries who worked as cultural, political or religious agents within or between different courts and nations can reduce the complexities surrounding the transcontinental exchanges that developed during the *Pax Mongolica*.

The examination of the three agents, Rashid al-Din, Bolad Aqa, and Liu Ping-chung, reveals a significant point regarding the notion of cultural-political agency across Eurasia during the Mongol period: contrary to the embassies, merchants, travelers, artists, artisans, and architects who practically transferred tributes, commodities and goods, motifs, designs, and techniques from one court to the other, from one territory to the other, from one workshop to the other, the three figures did not directly contribute to the transmission of ideas and concepts. Nevertheless, on a higher level, they did contribute to the formation of the atmosphere within which the circulation of cultural wares happened. Rashid al-Din, Bolad, and Liu, despite their different official positions as well as political missions in the Mongol courts, share one common feature: they attempted to bridge the gap between the Mongol rulers on the one hand and the Persian/Chinese elite as well as subjects on the other hand. They provided a proper context for the legitimate presence of the conquerors in the both states and, thus, developed a greater tolerance towards them. The example of the encounter of Persian craftsmen with external visual

trends under the Ilkhanids helps to understand further this situation.⁹⁵ Relying on the relative peace and stability established over vast Eurasian territory, communication and commerce flourished under the *Pax Mongolica*. Among different modes of exchange, a number of Chinese and Central Asian artistic traditions were introduced to Persian potters or textile makers through the objects transported across the continent to Persia.⁹⁶ In the process of cultural exchange they adopted alien motifs and adapted them gradually to fit into the context of Iranian art.⁹⁷ Following the spread of the potteries or textiles produced under the influence of foreign themes into the market, different groups of consumers, whether the court or the commoners, became accustomed to alien motifs in the course of time. It appears that neither sorting out the different elements that went into the making of the various types of potteries or textiles nor identifying their origin mattered to their audience. They might find the patterns slightly exotic at first but did not reject them just because they did not look familiar or local to them. One can suggest that this level of adoption and adaptation of foreign visual traditions brought in by the Mongols or disseminated due to their presence across Eurasia must have happened when there was no general reluctance in Iranian society to accept the existence of the non-Persian based government. How did this atmosphere form after the Mongol invasion in Iran?

The influential role played by Rashid al-Din and Liu as cultural-political agents can be examined in relation to this receptivity to outside influence. Highlighting the Islamic beliefs of

⁹⁵ The concept of the transfer of visual trends through portable objects has been widely discussed. For instance, on the case of textiles, see Wardwell, "Panni Tartarici"; Liu and Jackson, "Chinese-Iranian Relations"; Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*; Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road*; Thompson, *Silk: 13th to 18th Centuries*; Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie*; Mackie, *Symbols of Power*. On the case of ceramics, see Morgan, "New Thoughts on Old Hormuz"; Watson, "Chinese-Iranian Relations"; Morgan, "Some Far Eastern Elements"; Soucek, "Ceramic Production"; Fehérvári, *Ceramics of the Islamic world*; Bivar, *Excavation at Ghubayra*; Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie*.

⁹⁶ Regarding the eastward movement of motifs and techniques and the resettlement of Persian textile workers in sites in China, see chapter 6, 232.

⁹⁷ Bailey has discussed the issue of transformation of alien (Chinese) motifs in the context of Timurid ceramics. A similar process of adoption and adaptation seems to have happened during the Ilkhanid period. See, Golombek, Mason, and Bailey, *Tamerlane's Tableware*, 57-60.

Ghazan Khan as a faithful convert in the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, Rashid al-Din represents him as the ideal Muslim Sultan rather than a Mongol Ilkhan or an outsider. Whether Ghazan’s ethical features as a righteous ruler described by Rashid al-Din are based on reality or not, they seem to be the vizier’s recommendations for any future Mongol ruler who tries to govern the state. On the other hand, Liu tries to shape his desired political-administrative system on the basis of Chinese traditional model, but by means of deploying the Mongol rulers. His memorandum to Qubilay Khan was part of his policy on the reinforcement of the Chinese pattern of government against the system brought in by the Mongol conquerors. One can propose that Rashid al-Din and Liu’s reformative operations dealt with the justification of the presence of the Mongols as foreign rulers in their Persian and Chinese subjects’ eyes. In other words, the advisors intended to mold the Mongols into their idealized sultans or emperors in order to legitimize them as the official rulers of their newly conquered lands and, thus, reconciled them and their subjects in Iran and China. Evidently in a society in which there is neutral, if not positive, opinions about the outsiders, the acceptance of alien ideas, notions, and traditions –as a manifestation of their invasion and presence– happens on a larger scale in comparison with a society in which there is still public outrage over the foreign invaders.

On the basis of the evidence presented here, the two following conclusions seem probable on Rashid al-Din’s and Liu’s perspectives on the way of governing. First, the duality of “sage ruler” and “virtuous minister,” attributed to Liu and Qubilay Khan as a main concept in the Confucian political philosophy, is captured by Rashid al-Din in the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*. However, since the role of the sage minister played by the author himself, one can see more emphasis on the wisdom of the ruler (Ghazan Khan) in the accounts of the book in comparison with the virtue of the humble vizier (Rashid al-Din). Whether Rashid al-Din sincerely praised the Ilkhan or

merely followed the Confucian philosophy under the influence of his Mongol and Chinese informants is still open to question. Second, the items mentioned by Rashid al-Din in the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh* as Ghazan Khan’s reforms can be compared to a section of the memorandum written to Qubilay Khan in which Liu explains his reform scheme in great detail. According to these two points, there are some parallels between Liu’s and Rashid al-Din’s political points of view. Given that Liu died long before Rashid al-Din became the vizier of the Ilkhanid court, the connection between the two advisors could have been defined as Liu’s influence upon Rashid al-Din rather than a mutual relation (or influence). Although there is still no certain indication of a direct influence, the fact that Bolad was an active political figure in both courts for a while raises the possibility that he could have informed Rashid al-Din of Qubilay’s political structure whose principles had been designed mainly by his Chinese counselors particularly Liu. However, the claim still needs to be strengthened by further evidence (diagram 4-2).

In addition to high-ranking officials, whose names have been recorded in the historical accounts, there must have been numerous courtiers who were exchanged between the Ilkhans and the khaqans, and travelled between the two courts to participate in different palatial occasions, but they have been barely mentioned in the textual sources. Furthermore, besides official envoys who were the main focus of this chapter, there are numerous artists, artisans, and craftsmen travelling between the courts of the Mongols in Iran and China. As the agents of cultural exchange, they largely contributed to the transmission of motifs, techniques, and styles between East and West. Unfortunately, they are mostly anonymous people whose names have been rarely recorded in the historical accounts.⁹⁸ The other category of agents is merchants to

⁹⁸ For instance, Rashid al-Din says that when the Mongols conquered Khwarazm, they selected about one hundred thousand of artisans and craftsmen [*arbāb-i ṣanā‘at va ḥirfat*] and send them to the East [*bilād-i sharqī*]; see Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 1, 516. For European craftsmen among the Mongols, see Guzman, “European Captives and Craftsmen.”

whom the flourishing trade during the Mongol period gave an impetus to expand their commercial networks all over the continent. They facilitated the movement of commodities and subsequently the dissemination of ideas and concepts.⁹⁹

In this chapter I discussed the dominant position of intermediaries in the process of cultural transmission under the Mongols. In spite of several examples highlighting the active role of agents as moderators of cultural exchanges, I would like to conclude this discussion with a counter-example showing that the presence of these facilitators and the introduction of new concepts due to their activities did not always result in the full adoption and adaptation of alien elements by recipient cultures, or in the words of Berlekamp, “the fact of encounter is not the same as the fact of exchange.”¹⁰⁰

The *Tansūkhnāma-yi* (*Tansūqnāma-yi*) *Īlkhānī dar funūn va ‘ulūm-i khitā’ī* (Treasure Book of the Ilkhans on the Branches of the Chinese Sciences) is a Persian translation of the book of *Mūchū’ē* compiled by Wang Shuhu the famous Chinese physician.¹⁰¹ The book was produced by a small team of experts all of whom had been handpicked by Rashid al-Din. Hakim Safi al-Dawla va al-Din, a Persian scholar of medicine who had been sent to study Chinese, Siyu Sha a very knowledgeable Chinese doctor who had been found by Rashid al-Din, a scribe named Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Mahmud (according to the colophon of the book), and a good interpreter. The book is a compilation of various Chinese medical texts and contained cosmological and medical images. It begins with a preface by Rashid al-Din in which he noted that he intended to make Chinese knowledge available to Islamic scholars through translation into Persian. The *Tansūkhnāma* is a remarkable example of the works transferred from one

⁹⁹ Wing, “Rich in Goods,” 306-310; Allsen, “Mongolian Princes.”

¹⁰⁰ Berlekamp, “Limits of Artistic Exchange,” 230.

¹⁰¹ Aqili and Qurbani, “Examination of the Cultural relations,” 141.

cultural zone to the other under the Mongols. However, contrary to the objects perceived to be the vehicles of cultural exchange, it marks the limits of effective cultural exchange in the Mongol Empire. As Berlekamp discusses, the fact that Chinese medical illustrations were introduced into Iran in the early fourteenth-century through the *Tansūkhnāma*'s images does not necessarily mean that they were conceptually accessible to their new intended audience (medieval Islamic doctors and intellectuals) or replaced other styles of medical images there. She argues that the book does not question cultural boundaries, but rather clearly shows the extent to which those boundaries can be formidable. The authentic medical imagery of the book does not seem to be formed within the framework of a universal visual language and therefore the book failed to provide a bridge between Chinese and Islamic medicine.¹⁰² While in the scholarship on the post-Mongol intercultural exchanges, the idea of the synthesis of various concepts in any given cultural domain is held by many scholars, the *Tansūkhnāma* clearly shows that the encounter between different cultures does not automatically result in their signs and meanings being exchanged or synthesized. In other words, the lack of familiar alternatives in the culture of destination sometimes interrupts the process of translation of cultural elements. In this case, although the foreign items and elements enter a new cultural zone successfully, they are not fully understood by their new audience.

The policies of Rashid al-Din and Liu, as high-ranking statesmen in the courts of the Mongols in Iran and China, were crucial to the formation of a receptive mentality towards Mongol conquerors among their subjects. Whether the parallel between their political mindset was derived from Liu's influence upon Rashid al-Din is still open to question. However, it is certain

¹⁰² Berlekamp, "Limits of Artistic Exchange."

that Rashid al-Din's knowledge of specific issues of the Mongols in other khanates extended beyond political thoughts. For instance, within the scope of the present research, the vizier's awareness of the Mongols' architecture and urban planning in Mongolia and China is evident to us. Rashid al-Din's description of the city of Karakorum in the time of Ögedey¹⁰³ or his detailed account of the construction activities of Qubilay Khan in China¹⁰⁴ are notable examples in this regard.¹⁰⁵ The fact that the vizier was aware of the architectural and decorative characteristics of imperial buildings as well as the layout of urban settlements founded in the Far East¹⁰⁶ raises the possibility that the Ilkhanid court, in a general sense, was familiar with Mongolian and Chinese architectural styles. The familiarity of the court officials, many of whom were patrons of construction projects, can mean that some architectural elements of Chinese and Mongolian origin appeared in their urban architecture. This hypothesis forms the basis for our discussion in the next chapter.

Focusing on the Yuan dynasty, the urban projects conducted by the Mongols in Inner Asia and China will be examined in the following pages. Given that the Mongol rulers of China and the Ilkhans came from the same ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the study of Yuan urban foundations can be enlightening about the urban architecture that developed in the Ilkhanid state. Furthermore, the policies of Chinese ministers of the Yuan emperors on the promotion of Chinese architectural practices and the way that the Mongol rulers reacted to their strategy

¹⁰³ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 1, 670.

¹⁰⁴ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 900-904.

¹⁰⁵ Rashid al-Din's report of Karakorum was possibly based on the account of earlier historians such as Juvayni and also information from his non-Iranian informants rather than his own observation of the site, whereas Juvayni himself visited Mongolia (Jackson and Morgan in Ruysbroeck, *Mission of Friar William*, 54).

¹⁰⁶ In contrast to repeated references to the construction activities of the Mongols in eastern Asia in Persian literary sources, the names of the important Ilkhanid cities in the northwest of Iran, such as Tabriz, Ghzaniyya, Arghuniyya, Maragha, and Arran have never been mentioned in the *Yuan Shi* (Masuya, "Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān," 85).

provides a model of analysis, which is possibly applicable to their counterparts, Persian statesmen in connection with their Mongol masters, in Iran.

Chapter Five: Urban Foundations under Yuan Patronage

Historical sources confirm that the Yuan Dynasty was an ally of the Ilkhanids. This political alliance facilitated the interactions between the states in different fields providing an ideal context for cultural exchange and the transfer of ideas from East Asia to the West and vice versa. The material evidence that can be attributed to the presence of the Ilkhans in Iran attests to the emergence of non-Iranian elements in the material culture of this period.¹ While the traces of several western and eastern cultures can be uncovered in Ilkhanid art and architecture, the Ilkhans' cousins in China and Central Asia seem to be the most influential source of inspiration for their subordinates in Iran. Taking into account the fact that extant buildings and urban complexes are few in number in the territory of the Mongols in Western Asia, the examination of the projects patronized by their relatives in the East can lead us to the possible common roots from which some of the features of Ilkhanid architecture originated. Moreover, making a comparison between Ilkhanid urban centers and their contemporary cities that developed in Eastern Asia throws light on the mechanisms through which the interaction between native traditions of the Mongols and long-established architectural conventions of their sedentary hosts (Iran and China) may have occurred.

In addition to certain elements, such as dragons, phoenixes, lotuses, and clouds,² pointing towards the dominant existence of East Asian visual culture in Ilkhanid art, there are other

¹ The occurrence of the Chinese elements in the art of Mongol Iran has been discussed in great detail by Yuka Kadoi (Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie*). For further discussion on the cultural exchange between the Ilkhanids and the eastern Islamic world, see, for instance, Little, "Diplomatic Missions"; Hillenbrand, "Mamluk and Ilkhanid Bestiaries"; Hillenbrand, "The Art of the Books."

² These elements extensively occurred in the major decorative objects produced in Ilkhanid Iran; see Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie*, 237.

reasons leading us to give priority to Mongol artistic and architectural projects in Central and Eastern Asia over other concurrent movements happening in the western neighbors of Iran. For the purpose of this study, drawing a comparison between the Ilkhanid urban foundations and those of their Mongol counterparts, who had come from the same cultural background as the Mongol rulers of Iran, would be more promising than comparing the former with the cities built by the non-Mongols. Furthermore, in view of the fact that the Ilkhans, at least during the first decades of their presence in Iran, were subordinates to the khans of Yuan China, one can raise the possibility that they were obligated to follow some aspects of the Yuan dynasty's royal protocol, if there was any, such as the official system of rules overseeing their architectural activities. Thus, some similarities between the undertakings of the two khanates are expected.

Although the greatest part of political-cultural contacts under the Ilkhanids formed in relation to East Asia and the Yuan dynasty in particular, the interchange of ideas, themes, and motifs between Iran and the eastern Islamic world, the Mamluks in particular, is also deserving of attention. The extensive Mamluk-Ilkhanid political confrontation resulted in widespread cultural exchange between the two states and, thus, the growth of reciprocal influences between Egypt and Iran. This issue points to the value of expanding the comparison and including the projects being conducted in other contemporary states, for instance Mamluk urban development, in future studies.

On closer examination, in spite of numerous settlements founded by the Empire of the Great Khans and the other successor khanates (the Chaghatay Khanate and the Golden Horde) across Eurasia, the focus of this chapter will be those urban centers built under Yuan patronage, the most powerful khanate after the division of the Mongol Empire (Fig. 5-1). More specifically, I will narrow down the list of case studies from several cities built by the Yuan dynasty

throughout the eastern sectors of their vast territory to only three centers including Karakorum, Shangdu (Kaiping Fu), and Daidu (Dadu) (Fig. 5-2). The selection of the three case studies is based on two reasons. Firstly, the selected cities, for a period during their lifetime if not the whole of it, were designated as the capitals of the Yuan dynasty and, thus, they are believed to share considerable characteristics with the Ilkhanids' administrative and political capitals in Iran, as the main subject of this study. Secondly, all the above-mentioned cases were founded or simply expanded during almost the same time period that the major urban projects of the Ilkhans were conducted in the north-west of Iran.

The literature on Mongolian urbanism in Central Asia and China is rich and wide ranging. Literary sources in Chinese, Japanese, and to a lesser degree Persian and European languages, as well as archaeological reports give solid evidence on the general characteristics of Mongol towns and cities.³ However, within the scope of the present study, to obtain a general idea of the Yuan imperial cities in China, I look into secondary sources and the results of the research carried out by other scholars rather than scrutinizing primary sources and examining Yuan urban foundations in great detail. This chapter largely benefits from Steinhardt's studies of imperial architecture under Mongolian patronage in Central Asia and China.⁴ In addition to Steinhardt's findings on the Mongols' cities, the methodology of her research also provides a good model for the examination of the Ilkhans' urban constructions in Iran. Adopting a comparative approach to the imperial cities founded by the Mongols in China, she tries to determine if there was a "characteristic" city plan of Mongolian conquest. She compares Yuan

³ For an overview of relevant literary sources, see Masuya, "Seasonal Capitals," 225-248; Masuya, "Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān," 164-222. Archaeological reports on Mongol urban sites have been mentioned in the footnotes throughout the present chapter.

⁴ Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture under Mongolian Patronage"; Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture along the Mongolian Road"; Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning*.

cities firstly with other examples of imperial cities built in China prior to Mongol rule, and, secondly, with the imperial cities founded by earlier conquerors of China. In addition, she looks beyond China's border and includes the walled settlements built by Mongolian khans in East Asia and Mongolia during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in this comparison.

Being examined through Steinhardt's model, the Ilkhanid city is not regarded as an isolated phenomenon. The concept of Ilkhanid urbanism should be considered within the historical setting of medieval Iran as well as the wider context of medieval Islamic world. This concept could be studied in close connection with other contemporary urban centers that developed outside Iran in Mongol and non-Mongol states. As we discussed in chapter 1, comparing the Ilkhanid capitals with well-studied urban centers, such as Mamluk cities would partly compensate for the lack of information on the former.⁵ The existing scholarship on these sites assists in the examination of the Ilkhanid urban centers within the broader context of Medieval Islamic world. In addition to the contemporary sites, the comparative study could be extended to the cities that were already developed by pre-Mongol dynasties in Iran, for instance, Seljuk Nishapur and Isfahan which were analyzed earlier in this dissertation. Following the same method of research, in this section I will be focusing on the contemporary cities founded by Mongolian khans far from Iranian borders.

⁵ Cairo under the Mamluks is an important case in this respect. The monuments patronized by the Mamluks have been studied in their social and political context by several scholars, for instance, see Rabbat, *Citadel of Cairo*; Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*.

A brief overview of Mongolian urban settlements/cities

The history of medieval Mongolia is largely characterized by the emergence of a number of urban centers during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The sudden arrival of wealth and a sedentary population into the Mongolian steppe, as the result of imperial expansion of the Mongols, is usually considered the main reason for this urbanization.⁶ Earlier in the mid-twelfth century the residential architecture of the Mongols consisted mainly of tents. More permanent elements were gradually added to the structure of their tents; for instance, by the thirteenth century Mongolian tents had wooden doors. Archaeological findings and written sources reveal that, around this time, seasonal quarters of the Mongols consisted of both temporary and permanent structures. For instance, while Chinggis Khan continued his nomadic lifestyle, he moved between three fixed seasonal quarters, the most important of which was the “Great *Urdū*” or “Chinggis Khan’s Palace.”⁷ The Great *Urdū* was possibly located in a permanent place, the Avraga site in North Mongolia. The focal element of the site was a large platform on which Chinggis’ tent was probably pitched. Archaeological excavations uncovered two layers of construction on the platform suggesting two phases of development in the site: Chinggis Khan’s Great *Urdū* and a shrine built later in his memory in the exact location of his *urdū*. Historical texts report that many important *qūriltāys* as well as rituals to commemorate the imperial ancestors were held at the site.⁸

The Mongol conquest of China and Eastern Islamic lands in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries remarkably affected the residential architecture in the Central Asian steppes and changed the shape of the Mongols’ settlements. Following the conquest, the Mongols camped

⁶ Allsen, “Archaeology and Mid-Imperial History,” 89.

⁷ Shiraishi, “Avraga Site,” 85.

⁸ Masuya, “Seasonal Capitals,” 230-231.

outside the pre-existing cities in China because of the availability of water and space. These encampments evolved over the years into their new cities.⁹ Some of these newly-founded cities retained part of their qualities as seasonal camps and some of them amalgamated with the pre-existing cities and formed larger urban centers. In a general categorization, the cities founded by the Mongols in China and Central Asia after the mid-thirteenth-century conquests are divided into three groups according to their development: the new cities founded by the Mongols, the existing cities modified and reused by the Mongols, and the existing cities reused by the Mongols without any change.¹⁰ On another level, Masuya divides the Mongol cities into the following five groups according to their function:

- 1- Capitals of *uluses*:¹¹ They were the sites that functioned as residences as well as administrative centers of the rulers of the Great Mongol Empire. Karakorum, the capital of the Empire, founded by Chinggis Khan in 1220 (in Mongolia), Shangdu, the summer capital of the Yuan dynasty from 1263 to 1358, established by Qubilay Khan in 1256 (in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China), and Daidu, the capital of the Yuan dynasty from 1272 to 1363, founded by Qubilay Khan in 1267 (in Beijing, China) are three remarkable examples of the cities in this category.
- 2- Pleasure-palace complexes (*xinggong* in Chinese):¹² They were the sites of hunting and feasts for the Mongol emperors located in hunting grounds usually near a lake. Urban structures gradually formed around these complexes in order to accommodate the people

⁹ Masuya, "Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān," 206.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹¹ *Ulus* in Mongolian means a union of different tribes. *Ulus* was firstly used to refer to the Great Empire of Chinggis Khan, but then was used to refer to the sectors given to his four sons; see Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 3, 2296-2297.

¹² *Xinggong* (行宮) is composed of two parts: *xing* (moving) and *gong* (palace). *Xinggong* usually means an imperial palace used for short stays. The first part (*xing*) in fact emphasizes the temporary nature of residency in these pleasure-palace complexes.

who were engaged in maintaining the palaces. Chaghan Na'ur was one of these pleasure residences built by Qubilay Khan in 1280 (in Guyuan County, China). In the course of their seasonal migrations, the Yuan emperors divided their nomadic life between different pleasure palaces. Besides enjoyment, important political and administrative matters as well as different royal and religious ceremonies were organized in these centers.

- 3- "Aristocratic cities"¹³ or residences of Chinggisid family and high-ranking officials: They were private cities built by the members of the royal family or those notables who had important positions in the government. The land of the cities was usually bestowed on them by the Emperors.
- 4- Regional governmental centers: They were seats of the local administrative units. In the regional capitals, located at the sites of the capitals of the earlier dynasties, the Yuan government used the pre-existing buildings. The regional centers mostly consisted of governmental buildings but possibly lacked palaces.
- 5- Agricultural centers: They were small walled villages where farmers resided. Archaeological excavations have revealed no remain of large buildings in these humble settlements. Simple objects used in daily life and traces of streets on the grounds are the only evidence unearthed in these sites.¹⁴

We have a more clear idea of the plans of the Mongols' imperial cities than their individual structures due to the quality of the material uncovered during the excavations. The descriptions offered by contemporary observers as well as archaeological evidence suggest that Mongol cities were usually oriented cardinally. The main axis of the cities ran from north-

¹³ Thomas Allsen suggested the title of "aristocratic cities" for the settlements of this group; see Allsen, "Archaeology and Mid-Imperial History," 91.

¹⁴ Masuya, "Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān," 166-177.

northwest to south-southeast. Masuya offers that this orientation must have been related to the orientation of Mongol tents that was based on the direction of sunlight and its significance for the Mongols.¹⁵ In his report to King Louis (r. 1226-1270), William of Rubruck says that the Mongols pitched their dwellings with the doorway towards the south while they placed the master's couch at the northern end.¹⁶ The same arrangement is also observed by William in Möngke's palace at Karakorum. He says that the palace had three doors on the south side and the khan sat opposite the doors at the northern end.¹⁷ In the palatial enclosures of Mongolian cities, such as Karakorum and Daidu, the private residence of the khan was usually located behind this audience hall.

Inside their tents, they placed the women's position on the eastern side (left) of the master and the men's position on his western side (right). Similarly, within their encampments, the tents of the chief wife were pitched to the left and the residences of the eldest son were erected to the right of the khan's tent. This feature seems to appear later in the palatial enclosures of Mongolian cities. In Daidu the residence of the Crown Prince was built to the west (right) of the Emperor's residence. Contrary to Chinese tradition of placing the residence of the Crown Prince to the east of the imperial residence, this feature of Daidu must have been proposed by the Mongol patrons of the city.

In several palatial complexes, there were round or polygonal structures that worked as pleasure palaces. Their form may have been derived from the circular shape of their tents, and, thus, is deemed a sign of long-lasting loyalty of the Mongols to their nomadic conventions.¹⁸

¹⁵ In almost all the excavated Mongol cities built during the first half of the thirteenth century, the buildings have a north-northwest to south-southeast orientation; see Masuya, "Ilkhanid Courtly Life," 89-90.

¹⁶ Ruysbroeck, *Mission of Friar William Rubruck*, 74-75.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 210.

¹⁸ Masuya, "Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān," 219.

Temples and churches associated with various religions were the other elements of the cities. While the Mongols showed willingness to build Chinese-style halls and chambers, they still allocated restricted areas of imperial cities to their tents. Regardless of the scale of the urban site, as large as the outer city of Shangdu or as small as the enclosure at Daidu, the “tent dwelling section” was a standard feature of imperial Mongolian city planning (Fig. 5-3).¹⁹

In the formation of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century imperial Mongolian architecture, Steinhardt attributes a pivotal role to Chinese imperial urban planning whose fundamental principles such as “four-sided enclosure,²⁰ gates, corner towers, defensive projections, clearly articulated and directed space, axial orientation and alignment, wards of restricted population or function, accessibility by water, vast size, and huge population” are clearly observable in Mongolian imperial urbanism. This influence is also noticeable in architectural decoration such as glazed ceramic roof tiles, animal-faced stone sculpture,²¹ and turtle-based and entwined dragon-headed stele. Therefore, in addition to the nomadic culture partially retained by Mongol khans in their newly-founded cities in China, one can see the distinct presence of Chinese traditions brought by Chinese officers, architects, and urban planners who were designated by the Mongols to design and build their cities.

Major activities of the Mongols in urbanism

- *Karakorum*

¹⁹ Steinhardt, “Imperial Architecture along the Mongolian Road,” 68.

²⁰ Most of “Mongolian” architecture is quadrangular. However, there are some exceptions, such as the site excavated on the Kondui River in the 1950s that was cross-shaped; see Allsen, “Archaeology and Mid-Imperial History,” 91.

²¹ Animal-faced stone sculpture, as an architectural component, is one of the most prevalent remains of imperial Mongolian construction; see Steinhardt, “Imperial Architecture along the Mongolian Road,” 70.

Karakorum is the first known imperial walled town constructed by the Mongols. The city was located several kilometers east of the bank of the Orkhon River, north of Ulan Bator, the present capital of the Mongolian People's Republic. Karakorum was known as a city of tents throughout its history, but by the mid-1230s the tent city converted into a walled settlement by Ögedey (the third son of Chinggis Khan, r. 1229-1241). In the southwestern part of the site, there is a walled area oriented along a northeast-southwest axis, which was investigated by Russian archaeologist, Sergej Kiselev, in 1949 and was supposed to be Ögedey's "palace area" (Figs. 5-4, 5-5).

However, the German-Mongolian collaborative examination of Kiselev's so-called "palace area" in 2001 revealed that this sector of the site contains the remains of a Buddhist temple contemporary with the imperial city of Karakorum.²² Excavation continued in the walled Erdene Zuu monastery attached to Karakorum in order to locate the palace of the Great Khan. The walls unearthed below the monastery possibly belonged to the palace of Ögedey and Möngke.²³

Literary sources are rather illuminating regarding the general physical features of Karakorum. In his description of the city, Rashid al-Din briefly writes about some of the structures founded by Ögedey. He mentions that in the yurt [*urdū*] of Karakorum an exceedingly tall palace was built that embraced a tall pavilion in the middle. The edifice was lavishly decorated and was named *qarshī*.²⁴ Ögedey designated the complex as his auspicious residence [*takhtgāh-i mubāarak*] and ordered his brothers, sons, and other princes to erect their splendid buildings around it. All the foundations gradually formed the city of Karakorum.²⁵ Rubruck's description of Karakorum, as a contemporary observer, is also of great significance. He writes:

²² In much recent publications on Karakorum, Kiselev's so-called "palace area" is still known as an imperial palace rather than a temple. See, for instance, Shiraishi, "Seasonal Migrations," 106.

²³ Hüttel, "Search for Khara Khorum," 147-149.

²⁴ *Qarshī* is a generic name for these imperial buildings, which in Mongolian means palace and palace hall (Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 3, 2385).

²⁵ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 1, 670.

It [Karakorum] contains two quarters: one for the Saracens, where there are bazaars and where many traders gather due to the constant proximity of the camp and to the great number of envoys; the other is the quarter of the Cataians, who are all craftsmen. Set apart from these quarters lie large palaces belonging to the court secretaries. There are twelve idol temples belonging to different peoples, two mosques ... and one Christian church at the far end of the town. The town is enclosed by a mud wall and has four gates. At the east gate are sold millet and other kinds of grain ... at the western, sheep and goats are on sale; at the southern, cattle and wagons; and at the northern, horses.²⁶

William's description of Karakorum is the first that is currently available to us from a visitor to the place.²⁷ The report contains interesting, although brief, information on the general physical characteristics of the city. It is even more enlightening about the inside relations of the household of Möngke Khan and their customs.

The archaeological remains of Karakorum display the characteristics of the "International style" of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.²⁸ The combination of Chinese, West Asian, and native influences is recognizable in the fragments of frescoes and small finds, such as beads, uncovered in the site (Fig. 5-7).²⁹ The existence of several distinct artistic styles attests to the activities of artists and artisans from various parts of Asia who came to the capital of a cosmopolitan empire. Even some of the archaeological finds which follow a unified tradition, such as the ceramics and tiles showing Chinese influence, were made locally. This fact supports the claim that many non-Mongol craftsmen were resettled in Karakorum and were accommodated in certain quarters of the city. In addition, some evidence, such as numismatic

²⁶ Ruysbroeck, *Mission of Friar William Rubruck*, 221.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, (Introduction by Jackson and Morgan) 49-50.

²⁸ Hüttel, "Search for Khara Khorum," 148.

²⁹ In addition to Karakorum itself, literary and physical evidence attest to the existence of diverse foreign motifs and styles in the seasonal palaces built in the environs of Karakorum. For instance, Juvayni (who visited Mongolia not long after Rubruck) and Rashid al-Din mention that one of the palaces of Ögedey was built by Muslims. The blue-glazed square floor tiles unearthed in excavations also suggest that the palace was possibly in the architectural style of Muslims. The absence of roof tiles, which were common in the Chinese architectural style, supports this hypothesis (Masuya, "Seasonal Capitals," 233).

finds as well as weighing scales confirms the presence of the merchants in Karakorum as William mentions in his passage too.³⁰

Steinhardt discusses that ceramics, decorative arts, and architecture were produced for different purposes in Karakorum. Different crafts provided the artifacts that were previously absent in the nomadic lifestyle of the Mongols. Among them, Chinese ceramics were of great significance. They were produced to improve the Mongols' perception of themselves as Chinese-style rulers. The visual splendor of Chinese wares was foreign to Mongol patrons of the city, but the wares may have served to remind the Mongols about a Chinese standard model that they were supposed to fit as the non-Chinese ruling dynasty of China.³¹ Also in architecture, in order to express their imperial ambitions, the Mongols chose Chinese visual imperial symbols rather than international architectural vocabulary. For instance, dragon and phoenix designs, as the most popular mythical animals in Chinese culture, were extensively used in the decoration of Mongol-sponsored buildings.³² The use of Chinese motifs can be interpreted as the effort of Mongol rulers to adapt to their new role as the emperors of China.

Although the Mongols constructed new cities, they retained the nomadic tradition of seasonal migrations. Despite the significance of Karakorum as the political, cultural, and economic center of the Mongol Empire, it was not the permanent residence of the Great Khans. They lived in Karakorum for short lengths of time in early spring and early summer and spent

³⁰ Allsen, "Archaeology and Mid-Imperial History," 89. Also see the results of the excavation of Karakorum conducted by a team of Soviet and Mongolian archaeologists under the direction of Sergej Kiselev (Kiselev, *Drevnemongol'skie*). The chapters of *Drevnemongol'skie goroda* on the construction materials of Karakorum, the frescoes found in the court of Ögedey in Karakorum, and the ceramics, the beads, the coins, and the artifacts of various handicraft industries excavated in Karakorum are particularly worth studying. For more recent finding, see the results of the Mongolian-German expedition of Karakorum (Bemmann, Erdenebat, and Pohl, *Mongolian-German Karakorum*), and the reports of the field research of Noriyuki Shiraishi around Karakorum (Shiraishi, "Seasonal Migrations").

³¹ Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture along the Mongolian Road," 62.

³² Masuya, "Ilkhanid Courtly Life," 96.

the rest of the year at their seasonal palaces in the environs of the city.³³ These palaces together with pastoral lands, hunting grounds, agricultural lands, and craft workshops shaped “the peri-urban area of Karakorum” in Shiraishi’s words.³⁴

Alongside the emergence of new economic sources in Mongol cities, pastoral nomadism continued to develop successfully in the steppe throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The archaeological examination of the court of Karakorum confirms “the existence of a permanent grain market, local agriculture, and the virtual absence of wild animal bones in the thirteenth-century ruins of the city” all pointing towards the urbanized qualities of Mongol life at that time. The archaeological data led the Soviet scholars to suggest that the economy of the Mongols in early thirteenth century was a mixture of nomadic and settled elements.³⁵ The fact that the pre-conquest Mongols were not mere tent-dwelling nomads depending only on herd-based economy supports the claim that they were semi-urbanized people who had been familiar with the idea of founding permanent settlements even before their encounter with the sedentary civilizations of Iran and China.³⁶ The statistical analysis of the skeletal remains of the domesticated animals proves the flourishing state of the Mongolian herd during the imperial period. The percentage of herd animals (sheep, goats, cattle, and camels) in the fourteenth century Karakorum is very close to their percentage in the twentieth century.³⁷ Therefore,

³³ Interestingly, two Persian sources, the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh* and the *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushāy*, are particularly enlightening about these seasonal palaces. See Shiraishi, “Seasonal Migrations,” 107-108.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 117.

³⁵ The emphasis of the Soviet scholars on the early urban culture of the Mongols can be discussed in relation to their national sensitivities. For further discussion on this topic, see Endicott-West, “The Yuan,” 103.

³⁶ Archaeological studies suggest that the first truly urban settlements in Central Asia were built at the end of the 3rd millennium BC. For further discussion on early urbanism in Central Asia, see Zadneprovsky, “Early Developments”; Golden, “Early Developments.” Shiraishi’s studies of the Great *Urdū* of Chinggis Khan and the seasonal palaces of the Mongol emperors also shed light on the permanent structures built by the Mongols prior to the foundation of their major cities; see Shiraishi, “Seasonal Migrations”; Shiraishi, “Avraga Site.”

³⁷ On the basis of the studies of V. I. Tsalkin in Karakorum (Allsen, “Archaeology and Mid-Imperial History,” 90). For further discussion, see Tsalkin, “Fauna from the Excavations.”

parallel to urbanism in the city, the nomadism connected with this economic activity (herding) still existed.

- ***Shangdu (Kaiping Fu)***

Shangdu was situated five kilometers northwest of Dolon-nor in present-day Inner Mongolia. The city was built by order of Chinggis Khan's grandson Möngke Khan. His younger brother, Qubilay Khan, became khaqan in 1264 and elevated the status of the city to a walled capital and called it Shangdu, "the upper capital."³⁸ After the foundation of Daidu as the new capital of Qubilay, Shangdu converted into the summer residence of the khaqan and a private pleasure area. Rashid al-Din says that Qubilay erected his summer quarter [*yaylāq*] in the environs of the city of Shangdu [*Keymin Fu*] and built a palace [*qarshī*] called Lang-ten to the east of the city.³⁹ Shangdu and Daidu functioned as twin centers of government and power in Qubilay's new administration.⁴⁰

Shangdu, designed by Qubilay's Chinese advisor Liu Ping-chung, was intended to be a Chinese-style imperial city.⁴¹ Comparable to the typical mid-thirteenth-century Chinese imperial urban plans, the city was formed from three walled areas that were identified as Outer, Imperial, and Palace Cities (Fig. 5-8). Administrative offices and some monasteries were located within the Imperial City. The Palace City of Shangdu was enclosed by two layers of walls. The main palace building, Da'an Ge, was attached to the northern side of the innermost wall, facing south. Textual records state that Chinese craftsmen and painters supervised the construction of Da'an

³⁸ Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning*, 153.

³⁹ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 903.

⁴⁰ Chan, *Legends of the Building*, 37.

⁴¹ Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture under Mongolian Patronage," 163.

Ge. In addition to Da'an Ge, monasteries are the only building types whose remains have been found among the ruins of the city of Shangdu.⁴²

The activities related to the Great Khans' recreations happened within the Outer City. According to the excavation reports, two areas of the Outer City, the "Northern Garden" (*Beiyuan*) and the "Western Inner Space" (*Xinei*), were separated by a mud wall. The pleasure palaces mentioned in the written sources, the *Sira Urdū* and the *Bayi Urdū*, were possibly located in these two areas.⁴³ Marco polo describes the Outer City as a fortified castle in which were

fountains and rives of running water and very beautiful lawns and groves enough. And the great Kaan keeps all sorts of not fierce wild beasts which can be named there ... And the great Kaan often goes riding through this park which is surrounded with a wall ... And ... in the middle place of that park thus surrounded with a wall, where there is a most beautiful grove, the great Kaan has made for his dwelling a great palace or loggia which is all of canes, upon beautiful pillars gilded and varnished, and on the top of each pillar is a great dragon ... The roof of this palace is also all of canes gilded and varnished so well ... Moreover the great Kaan had made it so arranged that he might have it easily taken away and easily set up, put together and taken to pieces, without any harm whenever he wished, for when it is raised and put together more than two hundred very strong ropes of silk held it up in the manner of tents all round about ... the great Kaan stays there in that park three months of the year ... sometimes in the marble palace and sometimes in this one of cane.⁴⁴

Polo's description strengthens the possibility that the pleasure palaces located in the outer walled area of Shangdu were semi-permanent structures built on the model of the Mongols' tents. The juxtaposition of portable tents and permanent buildings in Shangdu denotes the adherence of the Yuan emperors to their former nomadic life. They continued to pitch their splendid tents on the grass lands which were surrounded by the walls of their Chinese-style city. The pattern used in Shangdu is observable in many Mongol cities, which are now fields of ruins covered with

⁴² Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning*, 151-153.

⁴³ Masuya, "Seasonal Capitals," 239-243.

⁴⁴ Moule and Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, vol. 1, 185-187.

mounds and depressions. The empty spaces uncovered among the remains of buildings often show the location of tents erected in the vicinity of permanent structures.⁴⁵

- ***Daidu (Dadu or Khan Baliq)***

In 1267 Qubilai Khan founded a greater capital city located about 315 kilometers southwest of Shangdu and called it Daidu or Dadu, “great walled capital.” Daidu functioned as the winter capital of the khaqan.⁴⁶ During Qubilai’s reign, people from many different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds resided in the city and brought in their native conventions from different lands of Mongolian conquest. Although Chinese officials played a substantial role in the foundation of Daidu, the city attracted a wide variety of cultural traditions from not only China and Mongolia, but also Central Asia and beyond.

Comparable with Shangdu, Daidu was composed of three walled areas in a concentric arrangement. The non-imperial Mongols and non-Mongol population lived and worked within the outer wall. Eleven gates built in this wall provided access to the city. Straight lines connected the gates of the eastern and western walls together and the gates of the northern and southern walls together, although they were interrupted by water channels or buildings. The main layout of the city was shaped largely on the basis of these strong north-south and east-west axes.

Several waterways moved into the city three of which supplied water for different palatial and administrative sections of the city and eventually flowed into a large pond (Fig. 5-9). The

imperial sector, enclosed by the second wall consisted of the Palace City, administrative

⁴⁵ Masuya, “Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān,” 209.

⁴⁶ According to Rashid al-Din, Qubilai Khan designated the city of Khan Baliq (which is called Jungdu in Chinese [*khitā`ī*]) as his winter camp [*qishlāq*]. Next to Khan Baliq, he founded another city called Dai-Du whose wall had seventeen towers. In the middle of the city he built his *urdū*, which was a grand building [*sarāy*] and called it *qarshī* (Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi` al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 901).

buildings, and two palaces for crown princes (Fig. 5-10).⁴⁷ Textual sources attest to the elegance of the internal decoration of the palaces located to the west of the pond within the Imperial City. For instance, the late fourteenth-century official Xiao Xun describes the halls of the palaces which were covered with white silk decorated with dragons and phoenixes.⁴⁸ The Palace City of Qubilay Khan, the most private zone of Daidu, was a walled city formed from those buildings that exclusively belonged to the khaqans, such as reception and audience halls, sleeping chambers, and private worship rooms. While Daming dian, the main building of the Palace City, was completely built in the Chinese style, the thrones of the Great Khan and the empress were arranged next to each other following Mongol convention.⁴⁹

Tradition says that Qubilay Khan brought grass from the Mongolian steppe to Daidu as a nostalgic symbol of their homeland, and planted it in the Imperial City.⁵⁰ Beside his magnificent buildings, the moveable dwellings were erected in these grasses. Not only the Chinese imperial halls bore signs of Mongolian native traditions (for instance, animal skins replaced silk wall paintings that decorated the palaces of former Chinese emperors), these tents built in the open spaces of the city also represented the Mongols' insistence on preserving their nomadic lifestyle. Nevertheless, while the juxtaposition of tents and palaces in the Imperial City reveal Mongolian native taste and sensibilities, there are some other features suggesting how the khans partially compromised their nomadic conventions for the sake of being accepted by their subjects. For instance, Xiong Mengxiang (1213-?) noticed that the principles of auspicious *feng shui* (Chinese

⁴⁷ Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning*, 154-158. For more information on the concentric triple-walled architectural model (or the classical Wangcheng model) and the astral-geographical precept of *fatian xiangdi* employed in the city building of Daidu, see Chan, *Legends of the Building*, 44-57.

⁴⁸ Xiao Xun, *Gugong Yilu (Record of the Remains of the Imperial Palace)*, Taipei: Shijie Press, 1963, cited in Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture under Mongolian Patronage," 31-32.

⁴⁹ Masuya, "Seasonal Capitals," 238.

⁵⁰ Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture under Mongolian Patronage," 46.

geomancy) might have been employed in the city planning and construction of Daidu particularly during the early Yuan.⁵¹ Some scholars also suggest that Daidu was planned according to the model of the ideal capital described in the classical text of the *Zhou Li*, the *Rituals of the Zhou dynasty*.⁵² In an illustrated version of the *Zhou Li*, the description of the city of state of the King of Zhou is accompanied by a drawing of the city depicting a square-shaped plan with the royal structures at the city center (Fig. 5-11). The construction of Buddhist temples and Confucian shrines in Yuan capitals, including Daidu, is another example of the Mongols' willingness to follow certain Chinese social and religious norms in order to be approved as the legitimate rulers of China by their Chinese subjects.⁵³

Textual references and archaeological findings support this claim that the city of Daidu, in terms of both plan and individual structures, was part of the mainstream of the Chinese imperial architecture and urban tradition. Despite the themes and concepts pointing towards the non-Chinese origins of the rulers of Daidu, the city is usually considered a Chinese-style Imperial City. Digging deeply into the Mongol rulers' motivations for the foundation of a Chinese-style city such as Daidu, one can come up with two possible answers. Firstly, for the non-Chinese rulers of China, following Chinese established standards in architecture and urbanism worked as a means of legitimization. Secondly, as Steinhardt highlights the pivotal role of Chinese ministers of Yuan khagans, they not only led the aesthetic taste of the Mongols to their favored direction, but also propagated Chinese methods and ideas through the conducting of

⁵¹ *Xijin zhi* (Compiled by Xiong Mengxiang), 33, cited in Chan, *Legends of the Building*, 57. For further discussion on the impact of the *Yijing* (Book of Changes) on city planning in the Mongol-Yuan era, particularly in the two capitals of the Mongols, Daidu and Shangdu, see Chan, *Legends of the Building*, 192.

⁵² Masuya, "Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān," 214; Steinhardt, "Plan of Khubilai Khan's," 152. The *Rituals of Zhou* (*Zhou Li*) was one of the nine Confucian Classics during the Tang dynasty (618-907) written in early classical Chinese. The *Rituals* is an idealized blueprint for government organization; see Elman and Kern, *Statecraft and Classical Learning*, 1-29.

⁵³ Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture under Mongolian Patronage," 60.

certain construction projects (see chapter 4 for further discussion on this issue).⁵⁴ These two factors can be discussed in relation to other divisions of the Mongol Empire, including Ilkhanid Iran. The above-mentioned factors could form the basis for our discussion on the subject of the encounter between the Iranian and Mongol traditions in the Ilkhanid imperial cities, although they should be reexamined in the sociopolitical and religious context of the Ilkhanid court.

- ***Khara Khoto***

Among several settlements constructed by Mongolian rule in Central Asia and China during the imperial period (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries), Karakorum, Shangdu, and Daidu are considered the most significant imperial urban foundations of the khans. In addition to the major urban centers, as we mentioned earlier, there were a large number of settlements of different size that served different purposes; for instance, the satellite villages constructed around Karakorum worked as rest stops for travelers to the Mongol capital.⁵⁵ Although the smaller residences are not the focus of this chapter, we should bear in mind that their examination still sheds some light on our main questions here: what is the possible tradition of planned cities patronized by imperial Mongolian rule and to what extent this tradition was influenced by native Mongolian taste or Chinese architectural forms and concepts? Khara Khoto is an interesting example of the lesser-known cities which contributed to the establishment of the Mongols in the post-conquest sedentary world. Khara Khoto in western Inner Mongolia was a major trade center throughout the mid-imperial period. Marco Polo refers to the site as the city of Etzina.⁵⁶ Russian explorers,

⁵⁴ Ibid., 141-142.

⁵⁵ Allsen, "Archaeology and Mid-Imperial History," 91.

⁵⁶ In the chapter 45 of the *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, translated by Colonel Henry Yule (Marco Polo, *Book of Ser Marco Polo*), there is a short description of the city of Etzina: "When you leave the city of Campichu you ride for twelve days, and then reach a city called Etzina, which is towards the north on the verge of the Sandy Desert; it

particularly P. K. Kozlov, uncovered hundreds of manuscripts written in Tangut, Chinese, and Mongolian, paintings on silk, coins, and artifacts at the site.⁵⁷ Later investigations on the site carried out by Lubo-Lesnichenko showed that, besides commercial activities, Khara Khoto functioned as an important crafts center, to the extent that the artisans of the city are considered key players in the development of the blue and white porcelain ware.⁵⁸ In addition to the rich collection of portable objects, architectural remains at the site are also worth attention. Outside the southwest corner of the wall of the city, Kozlov described a building with a small dome and a humble portal, possibly an Islamic mausoleum or a mosque, which follows the architectural style of similar buildings constructed in the Middle East in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Figs. 5-12, 5-13). The presence of the building might be explained in relation to Muslim merchants who controlled the trans-Eurasian trade during the Mongol era and played an important role in the economic life of the Mongol Empire.⁵⁹

Daidu: The pinnacle of Mongolian urbanism

Daidu was built from the outset as a center of power under the patronage of the Mongols in the non-Mongol civilization of China. In comparison with the two earlier capitals of the Mongols, Karakorum and Shangdu, Daidu is considered a more significant example of imperial architecture and urbanism for two reasons. Firstly, it was located inside China and, thus, must

belongs to the Province of Tangut.”Allsen suggests that in Marco Polo’s nomenclature, Khara Khoto has been referred to as Etzina; see Allsen, “Archaeology and Mid-Imperial History,” 91.

⁵⁷ The site of Khara Khoto was extensively investigated by P. K. Kozlov in 1908 and 1926. For a history of the archaeological research conducted in Khara Khoto, see E. I. Lubo-Lesnichenko, “Historical and Archaeological Investigation,” cited in Allsen, “Archaeology and Mid-Imperial History.”

⁵⁸ Lubo-Lesnichenko, “Porcelain Artifacts from Khara Khoto,” cited in Allsen, “Archaeology and Mid-Imperial History.”

⁵⁹ G. A. Pugachenkova, “A Monument of Islamic Architecture,” cited in Allsen, “Archaeology and Mid-Imperial History.”

have been deeply influenced by Chinese long-established architectural and urban traditions. Secondly, the more organized layout of the city consisted of a larger number of permanent residential, religious, and administrative buildings.⁶⁰

Daidu is also an important case in terms of practical issues. While the city was extensively destroyed by the Ming army and the surviving sections were buried under the Ming city of Beijing, archaeological excavations have revealed considerable parts of the Outer City. More remarkable than archaeological material are textual sources describing the imperial sectors of the city in great detail. Steinhardt refers to two fourteenth-century texts, both written in Chinese, as the most comprehensive architectural descriptions of Qubilay's city. The earlier text is a chapter of the *Zhougeng Lu* published by the Chinese official Tao Zongyi possibly on the basis of a first-hand account. The second text, *Gugong Yilu*, written by the official Xiao Xun, is the only surviving eye-witness account of the Imperial City.⁶¹

The Imperial City of Daidu was Chinese both in general plan and in style of individual structures. Liu Ping-chung, Qubilay's confidant, was given the task of founding the capital city of Daidu.⁶² Liu chose a suitable site and submitted a city plan to the khaqan. The suggested place was the seat of the imperial cities of the previous dynasties and thus several magnificent buildings were still present at the site. Furthermore, the location of the city was believed to be at the center of heaven and earth and its terrain and waterways were arranged according to auspicious geomancy.⁶³ However, eventually the Yuan capital was built as a new city in the

⁶⁰ Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture under Mongolian Patronage," 4.

⁶¹ For more information on different sorts of texts encompassing some details of Daidu as well as those publications dealing with the textual accounts of the city, see Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture under Mongolian Patronage," 5-8.

⁶² I expanded on this historical figure in chapter 4, but his contribution to the design and building of Daidu is mentioned here.

⁶³ Chan, *Legends of the Building*, 45.

vicinity of the existing Jin capital. As Chan puts it, this new capital legitimized the Mongol ruler as the Son of Heaven ruling from the center of the Universe.⁶⁴ The metropolis designed by Liu in Daidu was a traditional Chinese imperial capital although its architecture and decorations represented certain Mongolian tribal and pastoral features. In addition to Liu, several Chinese officials and engineers and fewer artisans of Central Asian origin are mentioned in the textual sources who conducted different sections of the grand project of Daidu, for example Zhao Bingwen (d. 1232) a knowledgeable official in city building⁶⁵ and Guo Shoujing (d. 1316) a famous astronomer and mathematician.⁶⁶

The Chinese architectural style of the city of Daidu is explained according to two factors: the idea of symbolism and the concept of adaptability. Historically, in East Asia, an Imperial City was one of the attributes of a world empire. Qubilay Khan who came from Central Asia and identified himself as a world emperor in China, as a foreign-born ruler, lacked such a native imperial symbolism. Thus, he adopted the elements of a Chinese Imperial City in his foundations at Daidu in order to legitimize his own rule as a non-Chinese emperor in China. The symbolism of the Imperial City of Daidu is that of Chinese architecture rather than that of Qubilay Khan and the Mongolian steppe.⁶⁷ In terms of adaptability, the Chinese architectural system enabled the former tent dwellers to erect their tents behind the walls of their palatial complexes and revive their native decorative system in Chinese post-and-lintel structures.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the imperial family could practice their nomadic rituals in the private sectors of their palaces while the Chinese-style

⁶⁴ Ibid., 48.

⁶⁵ Although Zhao Bingwen is mentioned as a person who accompanied Liu to inspect the site of Daidu and submitted a city plan to Qubilay Khan, his death date accords neither with Qubilay Khan's reign nor with the dates reported in other sources for the foundation of the city.

⁶⁶ See Zhao Bingwen's biography in the *Yuan Shi* 150:3555 cited in Chan, "Exorcising the Dragon," 6 and Guo Shoujing's biography in the *Yuan Shi* 164:2852 cited in Chan, "Exorcising the Dragon," 19.

⁶⁷ Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture under Mongolian Patronage," 199-205.

⁶⁸ Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning*, 158.

walls and roofs of the public sections presented a Chinese palatial complex to the outside world. The simplicity of Chinese architectural form⁶⁹ and the availability of builders and craftsmen easing the construction were the other factors encouraging the Mongols to choose this architectural system. Despite the Mongols' loyalty to some aspects of their nomadic lifestyle, Daidu played a significant role in the transformation of the Mongols from tent dwelling nomads to successful emperors of the sedentary civilization of China.

The examination of Daidu, a city built by the Mongols in the non-Mongol context of China, provided insights into a major question concerning the city's architectural and urban identity, the same question that is also applicable to the Ilkhanid capital cities of Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya, which were founded by the Mongol Ilkhans in the non-Mongol civilization of Iran. Considering the fact that Daidu was built by a Mongol patron in China, one may wonder to what extent the architecture and urban planning of the imperial city reflect native traditions of the Mongolian steppe on the one hand and long-established architectural conventions of China on the other hand. The answer to this question, in fact, throw some light on the Mongols' approach to the tradition and culture of their new conquered land, China.

Taking into account the distance between the capitals of the two khanates, the socially, culturally, religiously, and politically different environment of their capitals, and the power disparity between the dominant host cultures (China and Iran), the Mongols' strategy in relation to Chinese culture may barely extend to the western division of the Mongol Empire, the Ilkhanids. However, in view of the cultural and political agents who contributed to the transmission of ideas and concepts across Eurasia under Mongol rule (see chapter 4), it is likely

⁶⁹ The simplicity of Chinese architectural form is somehow connected with its adaptability. Chinese structures, for instance the Chinese hall as one of the simplest ones, can be erected quickly. They are adaptable to change, thereby are able to suit different conditions and tastes.

that the process and method through which the Yuan emperors adopted the values and customs of their host culture in China impacted their counterparts' attitude towards the native cultural elements of their hosts. This perhaps happened not only in Ilkhanid Iran but also in other sectors of the Mongol Empire. Understanding of the Mongols' strategy in China could be enlightening about how the Ilkhans, like or unlike the khaqans, mediated between what they had brought in from their homeland and what their Persian Muslim hosts offered them.

This comparison is, in fact, based on the assumption that people from the same ethnic and cultural background, although ended up in different geographical regions, are likely to show similar behavior in their encounter with the sedentary world. In addition, according to historical sources, Yuan China retained its control over Ilkhanid Iran, especially in the first decades following the division of the Mongol Empire, and, thus, affected the internal policies of the Ilkhanid court. Qubilay Khan claimed the title of Great Khan, supreme over the other successor khanates. His claim of supremacy was recognized particularly by the Mongol rulers of Iran who identified themselves Ilkhans or subordinates to the Great Khan.

Delving into the contemporary accounts of the Yuan dynasty, one can come up with a number of cultural wares, which were produced in Yuan China and were sent to other khanates perhaps in the hope of creating a unified political or economic system. One of the well-known examples was *chāv* or the paper currency issued in Iran during the reign of Gaykhatu. *Chāv* was based on the Chinese model of paper currency, but it did not last so long in Iran as it caused an economic disaster.⁷⁰ Despite this case, in the area of architectural and urban projects, to the best of my knowledge, there is no evidence to confirm that the models and plans were drawn up in

⁷⁰ Interestingly, the notes bore both a Chinese inscription and the *shahādā*; see Jackson, "Čāv." Regarding the issuance of a new paper money called *ssu-ch'ao* or *chiao-ch'ao* in Yuan China, see chapter 4, 181.

the khaqan-ruled division of the Mongol Empire in China and sent to other khanates. Although it is unlikely that the same urban plans and architectural styles established by the Yuan khaqans in the East would be copied exactly by the Ilkhans in the West, one may raise the possibility that a general framework of thoughts, which had its roots in the traditions of the Central Asian nomads, extended to all parts of the empire and affected different aspects of their new sedentary lifestyle, including architecture and urbanism.

If the examination of court-sponsored architectural projects in the capitals of the Yuan dynasty reveals that patron khaqans injected their Mongolian native ideology into the physical layout of their cities, it will be plausible that the same mechanism was repeated by other patron khans elsewhere in the empire, particularly by their cousins in Iran. However, this possibility denies neither the influential role of major civilizations such as Iran or China in the formation of Mongolian cities nor the fact that steppe traditions were largely adapted to Iranian and Chinese notions of city.

Concluding notes

The examination of the Chinese-style cities founded by the Mongols in China during the Yuan dynasty suggests two points: first, in addition to their nomadic traditions, the Mongols showed great enthusiasm to employ Chinese language in art and architecture; and second, Chinese elements in art and architecture were transferred from China to other khanates, including Iran by the Mongols while their authentic meaning in Chinese terms, in some cases, seemed to be perceived neither by the khans in China nor by their cousins in other sectors of the empire. In different khanates, more particularly in the territory of the Ilkhans in Iran, despite the presence of some components of the Chinese imperial system, the link between the Mongol conquerors and

the native traditions of their host is closer than their connection with Chinese traditions. Hence, the Chinese Imperial City as an integrated whole, was possibly never copied and built farther west than the domains of the Mongols in Central Asia and Mongolia.⁷¹

The emergence of Chinese elements in Ilkhanid art and architecture might have been considered partly in relation to their symbolic meaning rather than their aesthetic significance per se. In other words, those concepts and ideas that developed in China under the Yuan dynasty, whether they were of Chinese roots or elsewhere, were gradually incorporated into the royal aura of the khaqans and, thus, were perceived as symbols of their royal power by other Mongols throughout Eurasia. In the same way, Yuan architectural and urban undertakings in China, whether influenced by Chinese or Mongolian native traditions, were praised as the representation of Mongolian achievement in urbanism by Mongol rulers in different sectors of the empire. For instance, the fact that the early Ilkhans built their capitals/imperial cities shortly after their arrival in Iran, while they still adhered to their nomadic lifestyle, might be regarded as a way to show their praise and approval for the imperial cities that had been founded earlier by their brothers and cousins in China. Therefore, taking into account the remarkable position of the khaqans as the emperors of the Yuan dynasty in their subordinates' eyes in Ilkhanid Iran, the appearance of Chinese or native traditions of the Mongols in the architecture and city planning of the Ilkhanids in Western Asia might be explained in connection with their eagerness to imitate the khaqans' imperial cities not necessarily looking back on their nomadic traditions or Chinese classical styles. Two stone dragon reliefs – one excavated at remains of Daidu (Fig. 5-14) and the other uncovered at the rock-cut complex at Dash Kassan (Viār), in the vicinity of Sultaniyya, (Fig. 5-15) – are interesting examples of this faithful imitation. The similarity between the two slabs

⁷¹ Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture under Mongolian Patronage," 202.

points towards the common symbolic meaning possibly carried by both objects in two different cultural environments.

There are also some parallels between the elements of Ilkhanid cities and the Yuan-sponsored urban projects in Mongolia and China. For instance, the walled area of Imperial City or Imperial Palace (*huangcheng* in Chinese) included the Inner Palace and other palatial and administrative structures for imperial usage. *Huangcheng* is similar, at least on the surface, to the citadel in the Ilkhanid city. Furthermore, Ilkhanid summer and winter camps were comparable with pleasure palaces (*xinggong*) of the Yuan emperors. However, since the Ilkhans, particularly the ones preceding Ghazan Khan, did not build large capitals like Daidu or Shangdu, in addition to activities of pleasure, more diverse state affairs, such as *qūriltāys*, enthronements, trials, executions, appointments of officers, and receptions of envoys, were held at these seasonal camps. The imperial treasures of the Ilkhans were also kept at these quarters. The treasures of Hülegü, Abaqa, and Arghun were kept respectively at Shahu-tillah, Siyah Kuh, and Suqurluq.⁷² Although, in comparison with the Mongol emperors of the Yuan dynasty, the Ilkhans were more faithful to their nomadic life, one can suggest that the foundation of large-scale urban ensembles in Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya under the last three Ilkhans diminished to some degree the political and administrative importance of their seasonal camps.

Besides the fact that Chinese imperial cities were the proper choice for the Mongol khans fulfilling their needs for imperial symbolism and adaptability, as it was discussed earlier in the case of Daidu, the khans' desire to emulate imperial architecture of China can be discussed in relation to a general pattern of adoption of ideas, concepts, and traditions of the sedentary world by nomadic people in order to legitimize their conquest. For Qubilay and his successors,

⁷² Masuya, "Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān," 200-201.

Chinese-style architecture worked as a vehicle for the legitimation of rule. Architectural material and decorative objects attest to the presence of many craftsmen of different ethnicity in Mongolian imperial cities. However, Chinese imperial architectural tradition, as the single most influential visual language in Eastern and Central Asia, fascinated the Mongols, along with many other ethnic groups, to employ this language in building their cities.⁷³

The four-sided enclosures with corner towers and symmetrically arranged side gates are typical of the Chinese city plans, whether the simplest ones or their capital cities, from earliest times. The same pattern is visible in the Mongolian-sponsored walled settlements in Mongolia, North China, and the lands between them, before and after Mongolian rule. The fact that the Mongol conquerors implemented the Chinese model (four-sided town) in their imperial cities in China might be due to their earlier familiarity with this model as well as their tendency to adopt identifiable architectural elements of sedentary conquered people, as it can be seen in earlier Chinese dynasties.⁷⁴ Beyond the context of Chinese or Chinese-inspired city plans, the same behavior can be expected in the encounter of the Mongols with the other parts of the sedentary world, including Iran. Taking into account the above-mentioned tendency, one can explain part of the similarities between the Ilkhanid urban foundations in Iran and the cities of the Mongols in Central Asia. In the first place, the Ilkhans seemed to choose those elements of Iranian architecture that they had been already acquainted with their counterparts in their homeland. Therefore, they adopted familiar concepts first and then adapted to the foreign ideas offered by their subjects. This topic will be expanded in chapter 6.

⁷³ Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture along the Mongolian Road," 72.

⁷⁴ Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture under Mongolian Patronage," 171.

Chapter Six: Theorizing Intercultural Contact in Ilkhanid Architecture and Urban Planning

In earlier scholarship the Mongols were often introduced as barbarian hordes whose extensive campaigns across the continent caused nothing but bloodshed.¹ In the course of time, they were acknowledged as people who facilitated commerce and communication through the creation of a *pax* and stabilizing the social, cultural, and economic life throughout Eurasia. Uncovering the role of the nomads as cultural mediators, more recent studies published in the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century have explored “Mongol agency” in the circulation of artistic forms and styles. Focusing on chinoiserie in Iranian art in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, these studies highlight the active role of the Mongols in the adoption, adaptation, and/or rejection of Chinese elements in the visual context of Iran and Central Asia.² This dissertation, nonetheless, challenges the idea that the Mongols were “agents not donors”³ who merely facilitated the arrival of foreign forms and concepts in Ilkhanid Iran. Rather this project looks for the nomadic traditions and thoughts injected by the Mongols into Iranian urban architecture.⁴ Recognizing these imported traits might not be easy since, as will be discussed shortly, the merging of foreign and local modes usually happens in the realms where there is more resemblance or commonality. The receiving culture would be receptive to the new

¹ See the introduction for more traditional views on the Mongols.

² Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*; Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*; Akbarnia, “Khitā’ī: Cultural Memory,” 1-49; Amitai-Preiss and Biran, eds., *Nomads as Agents*. See the introduction for further discussion and bibliography on this issue.

³ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 191.

⁴ Looking for these forms and concepts would seem to conflict with Allsen’s statement about the Mongols, who “with some exceptions, were not primarily engaged in transmitting their own ethnic culture to their diverse sedentary subjects;” see Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 19.

items if it could identify them with something already familiar from previous experience.⁵

Therefore, the nomadic concepts could have been hidden in the guise of pre-existing similar Islamic/Iranian notions.

The goal of the present research is to uncover the material and conceptual elements of Ilkhanid architecture and urban planning which were borrowed from Mongolian culture. This goal was set because of a generally accepted thought (particularly by Iranian scholars) that acknowledges to a large degree (if not exclusively) the role of the society of the Muslim Iranians in the development of different aspects of art and culture under the Ilkhanate.⁶ These scholars, of course, admit the encounter of two great civilizations of Iran and China that resulted in Chinese elements extensively occurring in Iranian art. However, in the context of the Ilkhanid court, they believe that the Mongol rulers of Iran, particularly Muslim Ilkhans, were mesmerized by the splendor of Persian art and the richness of Islam. It is undeniable that the art and culture that flourished during the post-conquest period was largely dependent upon the Islamic teachings absorbed by newly converted Ilkhans on the one hand, and the stylistic and technical achievements of the Iranians in different areas of art and science on the other hand. Despite this fact, while confirming the importance of the culturally and artistically fertile environment of Iran in the formation of Ilkhanid art and architecture, the previous chapters of this dissertation looked for the non-Islamic/non-Iranian notions brought in by the Mongol conquerors, which are apart from the motifs and themes generally represented under the umbrella of “chinoiserie.”

⁵ Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, 101-102.

⁶ For instance, Bayani discusses the influential presence of Persian bureaucrats and religious scholars in the Ilkhanid court. She emphasizes that these two groups empowered the “Iranian element” in order to rebuild the administrative and cultural structure of the state (Bayani, *Religion and the Government*, vol. 2, 383-384). In another study, Bayani argues that Ghazan Khan commenced his comprehensive reforms on the basis of “Iranian traditions and Islamic teachings” (Bayani, *Mongols and the Ilkhanid Rule*, 218-219). Ghafrani also highlights the role of Rashid al-Din in the execution of the reforms of Ghazan Khan and suggests that the Ilkhan himself had not benefitted from sufficient education and training to accomplish this grand project (Ghafrani, “Rashid al-Din and the Concept,” 173).

Chinoiserie and its “translation” in Persianate visual culture, *khitā’ī*,⁷ deal with the occurrence of Chinese motifs and styles in an Iranian context, whereas this study intends to describe the circumstance that caused the emergence of Mongolian concepts (not merely their visual elements) in Ilkhanid urban architecture. It looks at the interaction between the nomadic identity of Mongol khans and the established sedentary identity of Muslim sultans or Iranian *pādshāhs*, the negotiation which has been often reflected in the projects patronized by the Ilkhans. Building on the discussions of the previous chapters, in this section I theorize these intercultural contacts.

Leaving to one side, for the present, the items transported to Ilkhanid Iran and the agents and mechanism through which they were introduced and merged with the local concepts of the conquered culture, I would like to start the discussion by addressing the question of the encounter between the Iranians and the Mongols within the wider context of the encounter between the settled culture and the steppe life. In this regard, I found Ibn Khaldun’s (d. 1406) passage on the transition of dynasties from desert life to sedentary culture very enlightening which deserves to be quoted at some length:

The sedentary stage of royal authority follows the stage of desert life ... In the sedentary stage and under (sedentary) conditions, the people of a given dynasty always follow the traditions of the preceding dynasty. They observe with their own eyes the circumstance (under which the preceding dynasty lived), and, as a rule, learn from them.⁸

Sedentary culture was always transferred from the preceding dynasty to the later one ... The larger a dynasty, the more important is its sedentary culture. For sedentary culture is the consequence of luxury; luxury is the consequence of wealth and prosperity; and wealth and prosperity are the consequences of royal authority and related to the extent of (territorial) possessions which the people of a particular dynasty have gained.⁹

⁷ Persian adjective for “Chinese” introduced by Ladan Akbarnia; see Akbarnia, “*Khitā’ī*: Cultural Memory.”

⁸ Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, vol. 1, 347. Clearer than the Ilkhanate, the dynasty founded by Kublai Khan in China exemplifies this rule. This issue was partly tackled in chapter 5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 351.

It is important to mention that Ibn Khaldun represents the process of “observing” and “learning” as a “rule,” which can be applied to any two (or more) cultures that interact with one another. Therefore, within the scope of our discussion, the adoption of Islamic/Iranian culture by the Mongol conquerors can be conceived in connection with the “rule” of “learning.” In the study of the Iranian-Mongol relations, if we accept that the Mongols naturally “observed” and “learned” what the sedentary world offered them, as Ibn Khaldun puts it, we will be able to distance ourselves from the assumption that the process of cultural adoption happened only because of the exceptional assets and attributes of the sedentary culture of Iran.

As a prelude to discussing the topic of intercultural contact, it must be noted that in the study of cultural exchange in Ilkhanid Iran we usually deal with only some certain groups of the society. The ruling classes who have a bold presence in the literary sources as well as the notables, as primary patrons of art and architecture, to whom most of the remaining material culture is associated, form our main, and sometimes the only, focus of attention. Although conducting archaeological excavations in the residential areas of the cities improves our understanding of the social life of non-elite groups, it is barely enlightening about the quality of their intercultural encounters with foreigners due to the scantiness of evidence. On the other hand, apart from the Ilkhans and the Mongol amirs (commanders), we lack a balanced account of the society of the Mongolian people and their traditional culture. Our data are largely confined to the general description of their rituals in their homeland mainly prior to their campaigns in the thirteenth century,¹⁰ whereas we are still quite uninformed about the nature of the religious and cultural practices among the lower classes of the Mongols in Iran. They were present in the

¹⁰ For instance, see Fitzhugh, Rossabi, and Honeychurch, *Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire*, 57-83; Wallace, *Buddhism in Mongolian History*.

conquered lands, including Iran, and lived beside the local population who had different religion, nationality, and ethnicity, but are narrowly mentioned in the historical texts. In view of the available extant artifacts representing the culture of ruling elite in Ilkhanid Iran, our rather one-dimensional comprehension of the Iranian-Mongol society hardly imposes a restriction on the art historical studies of the period. However, our limited knowledge of the culture of ordinary people can be problematic when the notion of Iranian-Mongol encounters is examined from an anthropological point of view.¹¹

Intercultural contact and the complexity of the terminology

The study of intercultural contact is a broad discipline that includes the analysis of a wide range of communication processes across different groups of people from disparate cultural backgrounds, both in modern and pre-modern societies. In the last century, a variety of terms were created in order to explain different aspects of these complex cultural phenomena. Various branches of this discipline (intercultural contact studies) address different forms of encounter that vary in process or outcome. These terms will be analyzed briefly in this section.

Syncretism deals with one type of intercultural contacts during which certain forms are transmitted from one culture to the other, while the other forms fall away. The factor of resemblance determines the cultural traits that are adopted in new cultural contexts and are retained there, although in a different form. *Syncretism* rejects the mere coexistence of different cultural forms as the only result of intercultural encounters, and suggests alternative concepts

¹¹ To the best of my knowledge the question of Iranian-Mongol encounters has not been addressed by anthropologists yet, perhaps because of the scantiness of archaeological data derived from the residential areas of few Ilkhanid cities that have been excavated so far.

such as adaptation and assimilation. *Bricolage* is another concept explaining many forms of cultural borrowings in which various traits are combined in novel, and sometimes arbitrary, ways so that the product would be a new whole. The element of “unmotivated combinations” in *bricolage* differentiates it from syncretism.¹² Cultural *creolization* describes the interaction between two or more cultures in which participants select particular elements, reject others, and create new possibilities that supersede parent/prior cultures.¹³ *Hybridity* predominated for a while in intercultural analyses, mostly because of the cross-disciplinary nature of this concept. In Bhabha’s view, *hybridity* is defined not as the mere combination of two original concepts from which the third emerges, but as the “third space,” which enables other positions to emerge. The product of the process of cultural *hybridity* would be something different, new, and unrecognizable to the participants.¹⁴

Acculturation is an important type of intercultural contact referring to changes that take place in individuals as a result of communication with culturally dissimilar people. What differentiates *acculturation* from similar processes is that it looks at the people that live in countries other than where they were born. In the *acculturation* process, we deal with two opposing concepts: retention of the heritage culture on the one hand and acquisition of the receiving culture on the other hand. The retention/discarding of the former and the adoption/rejection of the latter can happen to varying degrees and the outcome, of course, would be different in each case. Among various results, two concepts seem to be more relevant to our discussion; *assimilation* and *enculturation*. *Assimilation* describes a situation in which the practices and values of the receiving culture are adopted while those of the heritage culture are

¹² Kapchan and Turner Strong, “Theorizing the Hybrid,” 240-241.

¹³ Cohen, “Creolization and Cultural Globalization,” 381.

¹⁴ Bhabha, “The Third Space,” 211. Culture’s *hybridity* is different from “the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures.” For further discussion, see Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 38.

discarded. *Enculturation* refers to a process in which some elements of both heritage culture and receiving culture are retained or obtained selectively.¹⁵ *Acculturation* could happen in related but somewhat independent domains or dimensions of cultural practices, values, and identifications, and, therefore, it might not be a singular process that occurs at a single pace.¹⁶ To obtain a comprehensive perception of the process, the three constructs are often needed to be considered together.

In modern societies, immigrants and refugees are the main targets of *acculturation* research.¹⁷ Within the scope of the present study, in the medieval society of Ilkhanid Iran, the target group seemed to be slightly different. The Mongols who conquered Iran and gradually settled in their new territory are comparable to the modern immigrants who are settled in their new homeland. In the case of the Mongol conquerors of Iran, who imposed several decades of widespread bloodshed on the Iranians, another factor articulated as “unfavorable context of reception”¹⁸ affects the *acculturation* process. However, it is noteworthy that contexts of reception change over time. The reaction of the Iranians to the Mongol occupiers in the early Ilkhanid period, while they had still a vivid memory of their violence, must have been different from what they felt about the Mongols during the reign of the later Muslim Ilkhans.¹⁹

¹⁵ Schwartz *et al.*, “Rethinking the Concept,” 237-239.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 245.

¹⁷ For immigration-based acculturation, see Chen, Benet-Martinez, and Bond, “Bicultural Identity”; Gibson, “Immigrant Adaptation”; Schwartz, Montgomery, and Briones, “Role of Identity in Acculturation.”

¹⁸ Schwartz *et al.*, “Rethinking the Concept,” 247.

¹⁹ The reaction of the conquered (the Iranians) to the conqueror (the Mongols) during the *acculturation* process can be compared to other historical cases of forced colonization, for instance, Ottoman occupation of the Balkans and Greece. The Ottomans established their universal empire in the fifteenth century. In order to conduct their cosmopolitan regime, they not only had to impose controls on numerous provinces, but also had to leave their own stamp on the conquered lands through shaping a common culture connecting all the provinces together and representing them as the components of an integrated system. On the other hand, they were faced with the issue of the pre-existing structures in the conquered cities, which determined the Ottomans’ particular approach to each of their provinces. For further discussion, see Brouskare and Key Fowden, *Ottoman Architecture in Greece*; Lowry, *In the Footsteps of the Ottomans*; Kiel, *Studies on the Ottoman Architecture*. For further discussion on the forced presence of the Ottomans in the major cities of the Mamluk Sultanate, see Watenpaugh, *Image of an Ottoman City*;

Our understanding of *acculturation* processes is largely dependent on knowing the context in which the interactions occur. This context is formed from the characteristics of the newcomers as well as their hosts, and the religious, sociopolitical, and cultural status of their countries of origin as well as the circumstances of the country in which they settle. The previous chapters of this dissertation provided different segments of this context based on which the *acculturation* process itself will be analyzed here.²⁰ In other words, as Allsen has observed, in order to determine the character, pace, and extent of *acculturation*, different aspects of the societies involved should be scrutinized, both before and after contact. As a result, a cultural “baseline” would be established based on which the *assimilation* or *enculturation* process can be measured.²¹ I would like to add that, in the course of contact, there are also some other factors affecting the quality and the extent of *acculturation*. An important example of these factors is agents through which the circulation and transformation of cultural notions happened. The agents could intervene in these processes and, while having their own political, religious, or aesthetic motivations, determine which elements of the heritage culture have priority over others to enter the receiving culture.

All the above-mentioned forms of intercultural contact seem to share one common characteristic in their outcome, which is the concept of “newness.” This notion describes a product, which is not part of the sequence of past and present, but a new element renewing and refiguring the past.²² In view of this fact, in the process of translation and negotiation of cultural

Watenpugh, “An Uneasy Historiography”; Kafescioğlu, “In the Image of Rūm”; Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment to Ottoman Rule*.

²⁰ The peace and stability established under the Mongols during the *Pax Mongolica* increased the mass-movement of people and commodities across Eurasia. Taking into account this historical event in the pre-modern world, one can raise the possibility of the study of the intercultural contacts under the Ilkhans in connection with the modern concept of *globalization*, although addressing this notion would be beyond the scope of this chapter.

²¹ Allsen, “Archaeology and Mid-Imperial History,” 94.

²² Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 7.

identities, the new identity is constructed not on the basis of the continuities of the nationalist tradition, but on the national notions translated into foreign forms of culture.²³

Postcolonial theories

The study of theories of colonial discourses would pave the way for a better understanding of postcolonialism. Colonialism addresses the issue of the settlement of one group of people in a new location usually with the purpose of governing the indigenous inhabitants and exploiting or developing their resources.²⁴ Colonialism, however, does not concern itself exclusively the problem of possessing land, but involves the more serious issue of “colonizing mind and imagination,” which is primarily achieved by spreading out the dominant languages of power.²⁵ Postcolonialism, on the other hand, does not describe a new historical era following colonialism, which lacks every sign of the grievous colonial past. Rather, postcolonialism challenges colonial ways of knowing that are still circulating.²⁶ Postcolonial theories address the impact of the long periods of forced dependency and hegemony not only on the societies of the colonized but also on those of the colonizers, and examine the hybrid and novel forms of culture that develop during the process of colonialism. These theories go beyond the traditional binary opposition of colonizer versus colonized and define a third concept, hybridity, which is not confined to the simple combination of the two separate cultural forms.²⁷

²³ Ibid., 38.

²⁴ McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, 7-8.

²⁵ Ibid., 22.

²⁶ Ibid., 32-33.

²⁷ Liebmann, “The Intersections of Archaeology,” 2 & 5. For more discussion on postcolonial theorists of hybridity, see Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”; Fludernik, *Hybridity and Postcolonialism*; Balaram, “(Re)theorizing Hybridity”; Iyall Smith and Leavy, *Hybrid Identities*.

In order to apply Postcolonialism in our art/architectural history studies, we should be aware of its defects. This theoretical approach is often criticized because of its inclination, in Liebmann's words, to homogenize colonial encounters while different colonized societies around the world have experienced different forms of colonialism. Postcolonialism is accused by him of representing the perspectives of European colonizers while its concepts and theories are formed in American universities, rather than that of colonized peoples. Critics claim that postcolonialist scholars ignore the economic and social realities of the societies who are still dealing with the legacy of colonialism. Since the study of material culture shapes an important part of archaeology and architectural research, it can provide an historical and material basis for postcolonial analyses, and, thus, partly compensates postcolonialists' ignorance about the material aspects of colonialism.²⁸

The concept of intercultural contact could be discussed in relation to postcolonial theories, since the theories "sought to theorize the limits and nature of cultural translation" and develop a set of ideas about the emergence of new cultural forms and practices as the product of circulation, appropriation, and translation.²⁹ Postcolonial theorists who deal with contemporary issues of cross-cultural interaction, often focus on some specific areas of the problem (such as defending the rights of the colonized people who have been limited politically and culturally) which are not necessarily the concern of the scholarship of the pre-modern world. Although the literature on postcolonialism may not provide a methodology that is directly applicable to pre-modern cultures, it has produced a rich interpretive vocabulary, which can also be used to evaluate the cultural impact of dominant power in the ancient and medieval worlds.³⁰

²⁸ Liebmann, "The Intersections of Archaeology," 10-13.

²⁹ Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 8.

³⁰ Canepa, "Theorizing Cross-Cultural," 10.

While dealing with the interaction between imperial and indigenous cultures or the colonizer and the colonized, postcolonial theories could be one of the components of the conceptual framework of the present research aiming to analyze the formation of new hybrid identities as the result of the interface between the Mongols as the dominant military power, and the Iranians as the subordinate nation. Furthermore, a substantial part of the discourses upon postcolonialism explores the ways through which the colonial powers justified their domination and perpetuated their subjugation in the colonized lands. In this regard these theories would be applicable to our discussion on the nature of the presence of the Mongols in Iran, since, like many familiar cases of forced colonization, the Mongols were unwelcome newcomers who initially imposed their presence on the Iranians.³¹

Theory of translation

The concept of transportation and translation of culture forms the basis for this research because of the rich history of cultural interactions under the Ilkhanids. My approach is close in spirit to the theories that extend the notion of translation beyond language to visual and cultural fields. Bhabha considers translation as a way of imitating. In his view, in this process an original is imitated. However, without emphasizing the priority of the original, it can be simulated, copied, transferred, and transformed.³² Acknowledging the global circulation of culture at all times, Akcan defines translation as processes of transformation that happen during the act of movement of people, ideas, objects, technology, information, and images among different geographical

³¹ As it was discussed in the case of Ghazan Khan in chapter 2, the negative views on the unwelcome presence of the Mongols were relieved with the course of time, particularly with the efforts of the Persian elite who sought to legitimize the rule of the Mongols over Iran. Rashid al-Din and 'Ata Malik Juvayni are two influential figures in the legitimization of the Mongols.

³² Bhabha, "The Third Space," 210.

regions. Akcan's translation method consists of two pivotal elements: items of transportation including the "things" that circulate and channels of transportation including the agents and institutions through which circulation, transformation, and eventually translation take place.³³ Apart from the complexity of the act of transportation, the same, if not higher, extent of sophistication is expected in the process of translation in the destination or the "contact zone." In this regard, Akcan coins the terms "appropriating" translation and "foreignizing" translation, which are the two ends of a spectrum. The former describes the tendency to absorb foreign ideas and artifacts into the local norms, and the latter refers to the tendency to reveal the differences between domestic and foreign ideas.³⁴

Flood considers the notion of translation in relation to different fields of cultural production and defines it "as both an explanatory metaphor and a dynamic practice through which the circulation, mediation, reception, and transformation of distinct cultural forms and practices is effected."³⁵ In Flood's view, when different cultures seek to communicate, they need some facilitators helping them to bridge the gap. Appropriation, translation, and rehistoricization of cultural signs and their associated meanings are some of the modes of facilitating the communication.³⁶ When multiple cultures come together, they exchange various cultural elements. As a result of the exchange, the cultural items undergo varying degrees of modification in order to suit the taste and sensibilities of the culture of adoption. This process of encounter and transformation contributes to the emergence of new syntheses or new hybrid identities.

³³ Akcan, "Channels and Items of Translation," 145-146.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 152.

³⁵ Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

In the process of cultural translation, we are not always dealing with homogenous original forms and practices transferred from one zone to the other. For instance, during the *Pax Mongolica*, due to the multi-directional encounters between different nations and ethnic groups, hybrid motifs and ideas came into being from “parent” notions which themselves might have been the product of other cultural syntheses; hence those were heterogeneous in nature. Considering the complexity of the process and the multiplicity of the participants, it could be challenging to trace the sources of all the contributors. Locating these origins would be even more problematic in the areas known as “contact zones,” such as Ilkhanid Iran, that witnessed the most complicated forms of cultural exchanges. While transcultural communications affected different regions of the continent during the post-conquest era, some sectors seem to have experienced a higher density of interactions due to their geopolitical circumstances.³⁷ These regions best described as “contact zones” are articulated in Pratt’s words as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism and slavery.”³⁸

Part of the Chinese ideas, motifs, and designs in art and architecture that arrived in Ilkhanid Iran had already been filtered through the Mongols’ aesthetic taste and their perceptions of imperial art and architecture in Yuan China. This is particularly the case for those concepts that were associated with the khaqan himself and his sovereignty over the state; for instance, the visual elements that symbolized the royal power. In other words, the Mongols hand-picked their visual vocabulary on the basis of Chinese pre-established imperial language in art and architecture. This claim means that part of this vocabulary that reached Ilkhanid Iran was

³⁷ For instance, those regions located at the intersection of trade routes or the ports that worked as entrepôts between east and west possibly encountered a higher density of interactions.

³⁸ Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” 34.

adopted by the Ilkhans not specifically as Chinese visual material, but as a set of elements that had been already employed by their superiors in the Yuan dynasty in order to exhibit their royal identity as the emperors of China. Cloud patterns, for example, symbolize auspicious good fortune and immortality in Chinese conventions.³⁹ Kadoi, however, suggests that cloud patterns used in the tile work of Takht-i Sulayman did not possibly hold any particular symbolic meaning. She associates their usage with either imperial images of Yuan China or the personal taste of the Ilkhans. Sometimes, as in the case of cloud patterns, motifs, objects or architectural forms themselves do not change during transportation but their meanings can change in their new cultural context. This process is also defined by Akcan as translation.⁴⁰

To complicate the process even more, we should take into account the movement of armies, merchants, travelers, missionaries, and more importantly, craftsmen carrying goods and subsequently various cultural traditions across Eurasia in the first half of the thirteenth century. Large colonies of artisans and their families were captured by the Mongols in northern China and the eastern Iranian world and resettled in the cities of Mongolia and Central Asia.⁴¹ The objects, more particularly precious textiles, produced in the workshops of these cities denote the combination of a wide variety of designs, styles, and techniques brought in by the craftsmen from their homelands as well as the local themes. In the second half of the thirteenth century several groups of craftsmen from Central Asia and Mongolia were resettled again in northern China.⁴² As a result, luxury textiles woven in northern China in the Mongol period carried the visual vocabulary of Iran, Mongolia, Central Asia, and China. Textiles' imagery was gradually

³⁹ Kadoi, "Cloud Patterns," 29.

⁴⁰ Akcan, "Channels and Items of Translation," 149.

⁴¹ Watt and Wardwell, *When Silk was Gold*, 127.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 130.

spread to other mediums and therefore the same bewildering variety of motifs appeared in different forms of art objects and architectural decorations.

The lengthy and complex process of the circulation of artists and artisans across the vast territories of the Mongols raises the possibility that the eastern and western sectors of the Mongol empire could share some common visual traditions through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Therefore, what was perceived by the Yuan as Chinese imperial art, and appeared in the artistic and architectural projects patronized by the khaqans in China might include some patterns and designs that had been already injected into Chinese visual culture through communication with Western and Central Asian craftsmen in the earlier decades of the thirteenth century. Part of Yuan visual vocabulary was absorbed by their cousins in Iran as is perfectly exemplified by tile works of Takht-i Sulayman.⁴³ While these exotic motifs are usually deemed as Chinese-inspired elements,⁴⁴ I suggest that they might have derived from models that were current in the eastern Iranian world or Central Asia but were transferred to China by captured artisans, and were gradually attached to the main body of Chinese art. This issue, however, is sometimes overlooked by those scholars who attribute the appearance of non-Iranian elements in Ilkhanid art, more specifically dragons and phoenixes, only to the penetration of Chinese and Mongol visual culture into the artistic traditions of Iran and omit the previous phases of the long journey of the motifs.⁴⁵ These studies consider the tile works of Takht-i Sulayman as the first appearance of these imperial motifs in Iran, whereas the design could have its origins in similar

⁴³ For more discussion on the Ilkhanid phase of Takht-i Sulayman, see Masuya, "Ilkhanid Phase of Takht-i Sulaimān"; Carboni and Adamjee, "Takht-i Sulaiman and Tilework"; Huff, "The Ilkhanid Palace."

⁴⁴ For instance, Masuya describes the motifs depicted on the tiles in Takht-i Sulayman as "Chinese dragons and phoenixes." Masuya, "Ilkhanid Courtly Life," 96.

⁴⁵ For instance, giving lesser attention to the journey of the motifs, Canepa says that: "the first appearance of the dragon and the phoenix in Iran, as well as other images and ornament drawn from Mongol visual culture, occurs in tiles that decorated a ceremonial hall ... [in the] site of Takht-e Solaymān" (Canepa, "Theorizing Cross-Cultural," 18). See also Crowe, "Late Thirteenth-Century Persian Tilework," 157.

motifs that had already existed in Persian visual vocabulary but had been somehow transferred eastwards; for example, the phoenix resembles the *sīmurgh*, the mythical bird in Iranian mythology and literature. As in other examples, one can mention the fashion for dragon decoration in early thirteenth-century Islamic architecture and more particularly in the architectural decoration in the Jazira, or the dragon theme that developed in Anatolian Seljuq art, although neither of cases resembled the style or meaning of Chinese dragons.⁴⁶

A fragment of a *kesi* (silk tapestry), woven in Central Asia in the thirteenth century or earlier, is an interesting example supporting this point (Fig. 6-1). The tapestry is designed with dragons chasing flaming pearls among clouds. The design is different from the pattern of animals and birds that was common in the decorative art of eastern Central Asia before the Mongol conquest.⁴⁷ The design of dragons on the tapestry shows the influence of a new foreign tradition upon the Central Asian native style. The dense arrangement of the dragons reveals some similarities to another *kesi* which exhibits strong Persian elements (Fig. 6-2). The common features of the two cases are more noticeable than the similarities between the former and the tapestries attributed to the eastern Central Asian tradition.⁴⁸ This tapestry is a good example of the appearance of dragons in a non-Chinese context before the Mongol period, and suggests that the Mongols had possibly met these motifs long before conquering China and being influenced by Chinese visual language in the late thirteenth century.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Kadoi, "Cloud Patterns," 27. For further discussion on the provenance and symbolic meaning of the pattern of dragon in general, see Curatola, "The Viar Dragon," 75-81. For further discussion on the dragon motif in areas west of Iran, see Kuehn, *Dragon in Medieval East Christian*, esp. 21-34.

⁴⁷ Watt and Wardwell, *When Silk was Gold*, 77.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁴⁹ See Kuehn's discussion about the westward migration of the dragon iconography from the Western Central Asian regions into Western Asia during the Seljuq period; Kuehn, *Dragon in Medieval East Christian*, 35.

The process just mentioned is an example showing that intercultural contacts were not confined to linear interactions between nations. The circulation of material culture across the medieval world was not always as simple as movement of objects eastwards or westwards. Intercultural contacts could occur in several simultaneous interrelated processes between two or more cultures, and, thus, it would be challenging to uncover the provenance of the items of circulation or their transmission direction. In this regard, it is noteworthy that some scholars use the term *transculturation* which represents, according to Flood, a complex process of transformation that develops through extended contact between cultures. *Transculturation* emphasizes that cultural forms are already hybrid and in process, and also cultural exchange could happen in multiple directions. This fact means that “translation is a dynamic activity that takes place both between and within cultural codes, forms, and practices.”⁵⁰

Authorship of Mongol histories by Persian historians

Ilkhanid historians and their remarkable works were extensively studied in the introduction of this dissertation. The aim of this part is not to reexamine the chronicles, but it is necessary to tackle briefly two of the sources, the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh* and the Great Mongol *Shāhnāma*, from the perspective of the theory of translation. Fulfilling the aspirations of the Mongol rulers, the projects of book production were accomplished under the supervision of Persian notables through the multiethnic staff of the Ilkhanid ateliers. In this regard, each book represents several layers of translation of meanings and ideas.

⁵⁰ Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 9.

Applying Flood's discussion on the encounter between pre-modern Indic and Persianate elites in the present study,⁵¹ one can find one of the best representations of the intercultural dialogue between the Mongols and the Iranians in the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, the most comprehensive extant account of the establishment and development of the Mongol Empire written by a Persian, Rashid al-Din. The vizier consulted extensively translated Mongol texts and Mongol agents as his sources of information;⁵² this represents clear evidence that meaning and recognition were constructed beyond the boundaries of language, religion, and ethnicity.⁵³ Those sections of the book that deal with the history of the Mongols are particularly important examples of pre-modern textual translation because the linguistic exchange happened directly between the two cultures (Iran and Mongolia) and the process possibly involved only two agents, Rashid al-Din and Bolad Aqa, who were discussed in great detail in chapter 4.⁵⁴

The other side of the coin is that the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* was commissioned by Ghazan Khan as an effort to record the history of the Mongols and preserve their nomadic roots which were on the verge of oblivion as the result of their encounters with the sedentary world. Ghazan's effort reveals the extent to which the preservation of their nomadic heritage mattered to him even when he was playing his new role as the *pādshāh* of Iran. The fact that the Ilkhan chose a non-Mongol figure, Rashid al-Din, to conduct the project, despite the presence of several well-informed Mongol characters in the Ilkhanid court, raises questions about the text as well as the

⁵¹ Ibid., 6. Regarding Rashid al-Din's indebtedness to the *Kitāb fi Tahqīq mā lil-Hind* by al-Biruni and his utilization of the work in writing those sections of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* that deal with the history of all the peoples of Europe and Asia, see Boyle, "Bīrūnī and Rashīd al-Dīn."

⁵² According to Rashid al-Din, Ghazan Khan himself had an extensive knowledge of the history and genealogy of the Mongols from which Rashid al-Din greatly benefitted (Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1338).

⁵³ Flood suggests the same interpretation in the case of al-Biruni and his work on Indian culture and religion, the *Kitāb fi Tahqīq mā lil-Hind* (Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 6).

⁵⁴ Flood discusses that pre-modern textual translations were generally mediated by a third language and involved more than two agents; see Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 7.

author. One obvious reason that the work was delegated to a Persian vizier could be the absence of historiographical tradition among the Mongols, although they had orally transmitted history.⁵⁵ The other reason was possibly the position of Rashid al-Din as an “outsider.” In the post-conquest era, more than any political and religious propaganda, Rashid al-Din’s approving opinion about the Ilkhans, particularly Ghazan Khan himself, played a significant role in the legitimization of Mongol rule in Iran. However, designating Rashid al-Din to be in charge of the project, Ghazan Khan accepted the risk of misunderstanding of some of the notions transferred to Rashid al-Din through his mediators and translators. Consequently, in spite of the importance of the *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh* in the study of the history of the Mongols, it should be treated first as an account written from the point of view of an Iranian with all his biases and preferences and second as a source compiled of the information and observations transported across different languages and cultures.

The arts of the book and production of large-size manuscripts fostered in the Ilkhanid period due to various factors, but most significantly, the availability of paper as well as the active patronage of Mongol rulers. In the Ilkhans’ view, certain types of manuscript could be applied to justify the legitimacy of their sovereignty over Iran. For instance, the illustrated copies of the *Shāhnāma*, an epic poem representing the ethno-national identity of the Iranians was widely produced throughout the Mongol territory in Iran.⁵⁶ The Great Mongol *Shāhnāma* is one of the surviving copies commissioned arguably by the court in the late Ilkhanid period.⁵⁷ The relationship between the illustrations of the book and events of Mongol history has been

⁵⁵ Franke discusses this issue in the context of Yuan China in regard to the fact that the dynastic histories compiled under the patronage of the Mongols in China show few alien traits. The percentage of non-Chinese compilers was often lower than the ones who had a Chinese background (Franke, “Chinese Historiography,” 15-16).

⁵⁶ Kadoi, “Chinese and Turko-Mongol Elements,” 643.

⁵⁷ The Great Mongol *Shāhnāma* completed in about 1335-36, during the time of Abu Sa‘id; Sims, “Thoughts on a *Shāhnāma*.”

extensively examined.⁵⁸ It is generally believed that every painting of the book was intended to reflect a story of the *Shāhnāma* as well as an episode of Mongol history.⁵⁹ This interpretation raises two possibilities regarding the main purpose of the production of the manuscript, whether it was designed by Mongol rulers seeking to justify their power by means of the national epic or it was initiated by Iranian elite attempting to legitimize the alien rulers.⁶⁰ Soudavar suggests that this copy of the *Shāhnāma* focused on the legitimacy of the house of Öljeytü within the general context of Mongol legitimacy.⁶¹

Although Mongol rulers of Iran adopted a great part of Persian royal culture, the production of the Great Mongol *Shāhnāma* depicting distinct Mongol features (visible, for instance, in the dress and physiognomy of the figures in the paintings) in the late Ilkhanid period suggests that some parts of the Mongolian traditions survived the Islamization and Persianization imposed on (offered to) the Ilkhanid court. Taking into account different aspects of the cultural identity of the Mongols portrayed through the stories of the epic poem, I suggest that this manuscript represents a shrewd form of intercultural translation. Several Ilkhanid historical figures and events have been represented by their fictional counterparts in the illustrations of the *Shāhnāma*. In addition, the painters of the book seem to have been partly aware of the Mongolian customs, and have benefitted from them in order to embellish their scenes. A good example is the representation of the traditional funeral of the Mongols in the Great Mongol *Shāhnāma*, which will shortly be discussed. In other words, some of the traditional beliefs of the

⁵⁸ Grabar and Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History*; Soudavar, “The Saga of Abu-Sa‘id.”

⁵⁹ Soudavar, “The Saga of Abu-Sa‘id,” 95.

⁶⁰ Grabar and Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History*, 46. Drawing a parallel between the Ilkhans and the ancient Persian kings, these illustrated copies of the *Shāhnāma* rationalized the notion of imposed rule through the idea that the new ruler possessed the necessary *farr* (literally glory) in order to be the leader of the Iranians (derived from Dr. Milwright’s comments on the first draft of the dissertation).

⁶¹ Soudavar, “The Saga of Abu-Sa‘id,” 186.

Mongols transported from their homeland to Iran assimilated into the national culture of Iran through the *Shāhnāma*.⁶² The fact that the Mongol figures and their native notions merged with the heroes of the book and their acts possibly improved the Iranians' conceptions of the Ilkhans. In the course of time, the Ilkhans became increasingly similar to the national figures and, thus, gained more legitimacy and acceptability among their subjects.

The above-mentioned cases are two examples of the historical sources that contain invaluable information about the motivations behind their production beneath the surface of narrative reconstruction of the past or telling entertaining stories. Being interpreted differently, the two texts throw some light on the processes of transportation and subsequently transformation of cultural forms and meanings.

Active and passive agents of transportation

As we partly discussed it in chapter 4, travel, broadly defined, is one of the major channels of transportation. Regardless of the purpose of the trips, different groups of people who moved from one place to another, such as artists, artisans, scholars, merchants, and envoys contributed to varying degrees to the transmission of concepts and, thus, translation of their meanings. The extent to which they facilitated this process is somewhat dissimilar. In my view, one factor based on which the nature of their contribution can be evaluated is the level of their intervention in the process of circulation of cultural wares; either they actively observed and adopted the items or merely (passively) carried them. To realize the difference, one can think of a spectrum with

⁶² In addition to the Mongol figures and cultural elements, in some of the illustrations of the book Chinese motifs and designs are also visible. As Soudavar points out, the combination of culturally various pictorial components has sometimes caused odd iconographic features unrelated to the stories of the *Shāhnāma*, for instance Rustam painted in an imperial Chinese robe; see Soudavar, "The Saga of Abu-Sa'id," 97.

passiveness and activeness on its ends. On one end of the spectrum passive travelers are located who carried objects, patterns, and concepts in their unchanged entity across culturally different regions. On the opposite end active travelers are placed who not only handpicked objects, patterns, and concepts in their lands of origin, but also imposed high degrees of transformation on the items of transportation during their trip. To put it another way, while the transportation of objects and ideas took place through the movement of people anyway, the characteristics of the “carriers,” such as their aesthetic taste, political and ethnic biases, or religious tendency, work as filters through which only a certain part of concepts could pass while undergoing different levels of change.⁶³

Giving an example can shed some light on this point. Compared to the other agents, artists and artisans seem to be closer to the activeness end of this spectrum. Those craftsmen, who travelled between various workshops in different regions, encountered local styles and techniques. They absorbed them first, and injected their own native taste and knowledge into the visual and technical vocabulary of the regions next. The motifs and techniques transferred by these agents to their hometowns were not mere foreign forms and ideas, but the concepts that had been already appropriated by the aesthetic taste and preferences of the artisans and, therefore, had assimilated into the visual culture of destination. In addition to the craftsmen themselves, the albums of templates (pattern books) created by them and circulated among local workshops are also significant agents of dissemination of motifs and ideas, although in a more complex way. Persian potters’ exposure to Chinese patterns under the Timurids is an interesting example in this

⁶³ In this context, the role of the “carriers” is comparable with that of the language translators. In Rykwert’s words “the quality and value of a translation from one language to another depends much more on the translator’s mastery of the language into which he is translating, on his judgment and skill, and less on his knowledge of the language of the original text” (Rykwert, “Translation and/or Representation,” 25). Regardless of the characteristics of the items that were transported, the nature of the act of transportation was largely dependent upon the attributes of the “carriers.”

regard. It is plausible that some certain groups of Persian potters were given the opportunity of visiting the court collections of Chinese porcelain. Hence, they were able to duplicate Chinese models from different periods and collect their patterns in their albums. The odd side of this imitation was that sometimes a single Persian vessel or a group of contemporary vessels displayed various Chinese patterns and styles from different periods, which never have existed in the bazaar at one time.⁶⁴ In other words, although the individual motifs were imitated from Chinese models, their combination was a novel arrangement created by Persian ceramicists. Consequently, making use of the albums of patterns which were not dependent on the factor of time, while facilitated the transportation of motifs, it might add more complexity to the adoption and adaptation of foreign styles.

Encounter and exchange, however, did not always happen between two different cultures. During the Ilkhanid period, in addition to the intercultural transportation of motifs, the availability of paper facilitated the transmission of patterns and designs within Persian artistic vocabulary, but from one medium to another. Moreover, using paper allowed for a greater homogeneity in the arts since artisans make different works in different cities on the basis of the designs on the papers not their memories of works.⁶⁵ Drawing on paper also played an important role in the dissemination of designs from Ilkhanid capitals to peripheral regions and in the creation of “a unified imperial style” patronized by the court.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Golombek, Mason, and Bailey, *Tamerlane's Tableware*, 13.

⁶⁵ Bloom, “Paper: The Transformative Medium,” 298-302.

⁶⁶ Necipoğlu, “Geometric Design,” 48.

Dialogues

Tackling the formation of the Ilkhanate as a non-Iranian dynasty, we are faced with two levels of encounter that did not occur necessarily independent of one another. On the first level, the encounter happened between the Iranians' pre-established definitions of sovereignty and the Ilkhans' nomadic perceptions of rulership. On the second level, while the former remained unchanged, the latter was replaced with the Yuan political system consisting of both Mongol beliefs and Chinese values. The notion of kingship over this period was connected, although to varying degrees, with the definition of a Muslim sultan, a Persian *pādshāhs* a Mongol khan, and a Chinese emperor. In other words, when the Ilkhans ascended the throne, they fluctuated between four different realms of signs and meanings. In addition to politics, the visual language used by the Ilkhans in order to communicate with their subjects, as well as with the outside world, borrowed many elements from Iranian, Chinese, and Mongolian languages in art and architecture. Taking the cosmopolitanism fostered in Ilkhanid Iran into consideration, one would be able to uncover fusions of sedentary and nomadic elements spread across Ilkhanid art, architecture, and urban planning.

Ilkhanid art, particularly paintings and decorative arts, and to a lesser degree architecture, is usually represented as a synthesis of manifold eastern and western ideas and themes. Putting more emphasis on Ilkhanid urban architecture, the present study seeks to uncover the interactions that underlie this syncretic fusion rather than focusing merely on the juxtaposition of various cultural elements. These interactions seem to have occurred between people as well as their undertakings. Therefore, I articulate them in three areas as: a dialogue between khans and sultans/*pādshāhs*; a dialogue between tents and buildings; and a dialogue between camps and cities. The first level of communication, facilitated mostly by political agents, is extensively

covered in chapter 4. In the following section, the other two forms of communication are contextualized in order to reveal the mechanism through which the negotiation happened.

A Dialogue between Tents and Buildings

Ilkhanid architectural works consisted of numerous structures financed by royals and notables in their capitals and major urban centers as well as by local officials in the smaller cities and towns far from the center. Within the scope of the present research, the main focus is the constructions of the first group of which only a few have remained. Among these buildings, to the best of my knowledge, the mausoleum of Öljejtü is the sole foundation patronized by an Ilkhan himself that has survived in its entirety. In my opinion, the plausible function of the building as the eternal home of Öljejtü proposes that it would be a truthful representation of the worldview of the Ilkhan and his aesthetic taste while exhibiting the most remarkable stylistic and technical achievements of the time. As will be discussed at length in the following pages, the architectural design, ornaments, and fittings of the building can be considered an arena in which the highest level of negotiation occurred between the Ilkhan's conceptions of his temporal/celestial abode based on his nomadic memories and the sedentary world's expectations of a Muslim sultan/*pādshāh*'s mausoleum.

Despite the fact that buildings are static, architectural idioms could travel distances through the portability of artifacts, including drawings, and artisans/architects.⁶⁷ In the case of Ilkhanid architecture, the semi-nomad Ilkhans themselves, while in the saddle, worked as the agents of architectural transportation. They facilitated the transfer of concepts and ideas not only

⁶⁷ For more discussion on different methods of transmission of designs in early Islamic architecture, see Bloom, "On the Transmission of Designs."

between Central Asia and Iran, but also within Iran through their seasonal migrations. In the position of patrons and sometimes overseers,⁶⁸ the Ilkhans' memory of their hometowns enabled them to revitalize what they had left behind in the steppes of Mongolia in their new foundations in Iran. A great portion of their nostalgic feeling about their nomadic lifestyle was fulfilled through the erection of magnificent tents in their seasonal camps, as well as in the vicinity of their permanent capitals.⁶⁹ More interestingly, however, is the process through which the tents of the Ilkhans, representing their Mongolian heritage, negotiated with their monuments which symbolized their authority as the legitimate rulers of a sedentary civilization.⁷⁰

Part of the negotiation happened on the surface; for instance, while the tomb of Öljeitü in Sultaniyya is associated with the tradition of building royal mausolea in the eastern Islamic world, its external appearance is superficially compared to Turko-Mongol tents.⁷¹ Further, the north-northeast to south-southwest orientation of the octagonal tomb is likely to be in accordance with Mongol convention in which buildings faced the south,⁷² in spite of Muslim religious custom in which religious buildings face in a south-westerly direction, towards the *qibla*.⁷³ Some other points of comparison between Ilkhanid complexes and Mongol tents were discussed in

⁶⁸ This is particularly the case for Ghazan Khan, who is said to have designed the charitable complex of Shanb-i Ghazan himself [*khishtan tarh kishidih*] (Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 208). Rashid al-Din also reports that during the construction of Ghazan's tomb in Shanb-i Ghazan, the Ilkhan followed the process enthusiastically. He oversaw the workshop and sometimes was being addressed by the master builders about the structural details of the building (ibid., 117).

⁶⁹ Given the low number of military expeditions in Öljeitü's reign, O'Kane suggests that most of the seasonal movements of the Ilkhan were not dictated by necessity, but were due to nomadism; O'Kane, "From Tents to Pavilions," 249.

⁷⁰ The issue of the Mongols' tendency to adopt Chinese-style architecture as "a vehicle of legitimation of rule" has been well studied in the case of the Yuan dynasty (for instance, see Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture"; Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture along the Mongolian Road"; Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning*). Although the political and social context is rather different, the Ilkhans' approach to Iranian-style monuments is comparable with that of their cousins to Chinese-style architecture.

⁷¹ Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture*, 199. Hillenbrand also draws a comparison between Seljuq tomb towers and the yurt or tent of the Turkic nomads. He calls the tombs "tents for the afterlife." Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture*, 107.

⁷² On the orientation of the Mongols' dwellings (tents), see Ruysbroeck, *Mission of Friar William Rubruck*, 74-75.

⁷³ Blair, "Monumentality under the Mongols," 113; Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, 363.

chapter 1 in the case of the palatial complex at Takht-i Sulayman. However, tackling the meanings conveyed by architectural forms and ornaments, the greater part of the process of negotiation and translation occurred in some depth, which means, instead of the amalgamation of nomadic and sedentary cultures in Ilkhanid urban architecture, we are witnessing a dynamic process in which “signs and meanings were appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew.”⁷⁴

The ornament with a “bookish” or “painterly” quality, as Akbarnia describes it, inspired by manuscript decoration appeared on Ilkhanid architecture as well as other portable objects such as ceramics and metalwork. She suggests that the decorative program of all these architectural monuments and artifacts might have been inspired by a *khitā’ī* idiom created in a virtual *kitābkhāna*.⁷⁵ One of these motifs extensively used on the second phase of painted decoration in the mausoleum of Öljeitü is associated with a Far East motif called cloud collar (i.e. the four-lobed shoulder attachment).⁷⁶ The motif appeared in Iran in early fourteenth century and was gradually applied in different mediums, including architectural decoration. Neither the origin of cloud collars nor their symbolic meaning are certain, though it is plausible that the idea of cloud collars arrived in Iran and China in the course of the Mongol invasions. The Mongols who had possibly the custom of wearing cloud collars carried the motifs to Iran during the conquest of the country. In the mausoleum the motif was adapted to fit the architectural limitations of the building (Fig. 6-3).⁷⁷ Furthermore, this blue-painted decoration on a white ground resembles the patterns decorating the external surface of Mongol tents, based on the scenes depicted in some

⁷⁴ Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 262.

⁷⁵ This institution was not possibly a central royal library-atelier in which all the models were produced by the court and sent to different regions, but various workshops spread across the state; see Akbarnia, “Khitā’ī: Cultural Memory,” 196-197.

⁷⁶ For a general survey of the cloud collar motif, see Cammann, “Symbolism of the Cloud Collar Motif.”

⁷⁷ Kadoi, “Cloud Patterns,” 33-34.

historical miniatures, for instance, the Diez albums (Fig. 6-4).⁷⁸ Besides the visual evidence, the *Yuan Shi* also reports that for the construction of a new *zongmao dian* (palace of palm) at Shangdu in 1325, two gigantic carpets were woven of *qingbai yangmao* (blue and white wool).⁷⁹ This account suggests that the composition of blue and white was a familiar color arrangement in Mongolian visual culture. The transformation of Far Eastern motifs and designs (from textile to architectural decoration) in Ilkhanid Iran under the impact of the most traditional scheme for the decoration of Persian mausolea, blue-painted decoration on a white ground,⁸⁰ emphasizes that, as Flood suggests it regarding a different geographical and cultural region,⁸¹ localism and particularism are not in opposition to cosmopolitanism.

While one should avoid drawing definitive conclusions, the existence of the same color composition, although in a different context, leads us to speculate on the symbolic significance of the blue-painted motifs on the white walls of the tomb of Öljeytü. In *The Secret History of the Mongols*, in a dialogue between Chinggis Khan and his adopted brother, Shigi-qutuqu,⁸² the khan says:

Write down in a blue book a list of the shares into which [you] divide the nation and of the judgments [you] deliver. Unto the seed of [my] seed, let no one alter the blue writing of Shigi-qutuqu, ordained in consultation with me, [written] on

⁷⁸ The Diez albums in the Oriental Department of the Staatsbibliothek at Berlin contain more than 400 figurative paintings, drawings, fragments, and calligraphic works originating mostly from Ilkhanid, Jalayirid, and Timurid workshops. For more discussion on the Diez albums, see Gonnella, Weis, and Rauch, *The Diez Albums*.

⁷⁹ Masuya, "Seasonal Capitals," 241. It is likely that the carpets were woven not to cover the floor of the palace but for the construction of the tent-palace itself. Masuya refers to the term 青白羊毛 used in the *Yuan Shi* (literally means blue and white wool), but she does not mention the Chinese equivalent for "carpet." Therefore, it is vague whether the wool was used to make "carpet" or "felt," as it was widely used by the Mongols for the construction of their felt-walled tents.

⁸⁰ Sims, "The 'Iconography' of the Internal Decoration," 150.

⁸¹ Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 262.

⁸² Shigi-qutuqu was an abandoned baby found by the soldiers of Chinggis Khan. He gave the baby as prize of war to his mother, Mother Hö'elün. She named him Shigiken-quduqu [Shigi-qutuqu] and raised him (Onon, *Secret History of the Mongols*, 114).

white paper in a blue book and made into a register. Anyone who alters it shall be [found] guilty.⁸³

The above-mentioned interpretations of the blue-and-white composition in ornaments of the Ilkhan's tomb can be examined in relation to the place of white in Mongolian visual culture. In the Eurasian steppe, colors represented particular concepts and meanings. All the people of different tribes or ethnic groups who lived in a given historical period were able to understand them.⁸⁴ For example, white denotes good fortune in Mongolian culture. The banner of Chinggis Khan was a white standard with nine pennants.⁸⁵ During the reign of his successors, erecting a white banner indicated the presence of the royal household. *The Secret History of the Mongols* mentions that Chinggis Khan bestowed the rank of *beki* on Old Man Üsün and said that “he shall wear a white dress and ride a white gelding.” *Beki* possibly meant a high-ranking officer and white was the color of esteem.⁸⁶

The Mongols celebrated the New Year with the “White Festival,” which is still a national holiday in Mongolia. In the feast, as Marco Polo describes, “the great Kaan with all his subjects dress themselves all in white robes ... they do it because white dress seems to them lucky and good, and therefore they wear it at the beginning of their year so that they may take their good and have joy and comfort all the year.”⁸⁷ Rabban Sawma writes that in 1303, Mar Yaballaha visited Ghazan Khan in the city of Hillah on the day of the “White Festival.”⁸⁸ This report shows that this Mongolian ceremony was still appreciated during the time of Muslim Ilkhans.

⁸³ Onon, *Secret History of the Mongols*, 192-193.

⁸⁴ Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, 57.

⁸⁵ Onon, *Secret History of the Mongols*, 190.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁸⁷ Moule and Pelliot, *Marco Polo*, vol. 1, 222.

⁸⁸ Sawma, *Monks of Kublai Khan*, 250.

Another mention of the Mongols' symbolic use of white, although in a different sector of the empire, is given by Ibn Battuta (d. 1377). He visited the city of El Khansa in China; a large city consisted of six smaller cities. During his visit, he was informed of a battle between the Great Khan and some of his relations and nobles. Ibn Battuta recounts the funeral of the Khan and a hundred of his relatives who had been killed in that battle in great detail. He mentions that "all the people of the city, Chinese, Mohammedans, and others, were present on the occasion, and had on their mourning, which consists of a sort of white hood."⁸⁹ Interestingly enough, the picture illustrated by Ibn Battuta in China shares some common characteristics with another funeral depicted in a culturally different context: *The funeral of Isfandiyar* (Fig. 6-5), a folio from the Ilkhanid manuscript of the Great Mongol *Shāhnāma*. The painting depicts a group of mourners wailing and tearing their hair around Isfandiyar's bier. The Mongol costumes, accessories, and physiognomy of members of the procession are noticeable. Soudavar refers to Rashid al-Din's account of the funeral of Ghazan Khan and suggests that the scene illustrated in this manuscript could be the funeral procession of Öljeitü or Ghazan Khan.⁹⁰ Rashid al-Din writes that:

... his corpse was mounted on a special carriage accompanied by *khatuns* and amirs. The procession headed towards Tabriz. Along the way, bareheaded and barefooted men and women came out of cities and villages wearing tattered gowns and wailing in grief ... when the procession reached the suburb of the *dār al-mulk* of Tabriz, the city dwellers dressed in dark [*kabūd*]⁹¹ garments out of misery, and men and women, great and small came out and buried the corpse.⁹²

⁸⁹ Ibn Battuta, *Travels of Ibn Battuta*, 220.

⁹⁰ Soudavar, "The Saga of Abu-Sa'id," 130.

⁹¹ Greenish blue.

⁹² Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1325.

The general atmosphere of Ghazan Khan's funeral in Rashid al-Din's account corresponds to the painting except for Ghazan's dark-dressed mourners who are different from Isfandiyar's white funeral procession. Taking into account the importance of white in Mongolian ideology as well as Ibn Battuta's description of a Mongol funeral, one can suggest that the ceremony depicted in the manuscript highly resembles a traditional Mongol burial. Given that Mongol nomadic customs (including their funerals) had an impact on the ceremonial practices of the Ilkhanid court,⁹³ Soudavar's claim seems plausible. The minor discrepancy between Rashid al-Din's account and the painting can be explained in view of Ghazan's conversion and accepting the Muslim faith. In addition to the elements of Mongol native culture appearing in the painting, the Buddhist iconography of the work (for example, the clouds and the geese bearing the soul to heaven) is also notable.

Apart from the individual motifs transferred from other mediums to the architectural ornaments of the mausoleum of Öljeitü, the painted decoration of the building, in its entirety, seems to have recreated the colorful textiles hung on the walls of the Mongols' tents⁹⁴ or decorating their palaces as a nostalgic vestige of their nomadic past (Figs. 6-6, 6-7).⁹⁵ This resemblance suggests that in the absence of precious wall hangings inside the tomb, the architectural decoration was meant to evoke memories of their ancestral tents. Furthermore, the mere fact of using textile-like stuccos and mural paintings point towards the Ilkhans' tendency to reside in tent-like buildings. In addition to the extensive decoration of the tomb, some smaller fittings found in the environs of the building giving more evidence on the eclectic (if not exclusively nomadic) taste of Öljeitü in the architectural projects undertaken under his

⁹³ Kadoi, "Chinese and Turko-Mongol Elements," 637.

⁹⁴ For more discussion on the position of textile furnishings in both indoor and outdoor life of the Mongol princes, see Golombek, "Draped Universe of Islam," 30-31.

⁹⁵ Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie*, 31.

patronage. For example, European travelers to the site of Sultaniyya reported observing a lattice metal grille that separated the rectangular tomb room (*turbat-khānih*) from the main octagonal hall.⁹⁶ The grille was formed from bars connected by inlaid brass bosses. One of the bosses possibly used at the tomb complex of Sultaniyya is inlaid with silver and gold and engraved with the design of a Mongol-looking falconer in his traditional robe and hat (Fig. 6-8). However, it is rather curious that in the context of the decorative program of the mausoleum with all Qur'anic quotations and the large collection of *ḥadīths*, the metalwork represents a scene of royal entertainment.⁹⁷ The other example is a ball joint that, despite the inlaid boss, has inscriptions bearing the name of Öljeytü (Fig. 6-9).⁹⁸ The formal details of the two bosses, however, are different.

Along with the decoration program of the tomb, the penetration of nomadic beliefs into the layout of the building is also plausible. According to Rashid al-Din, Ghazan Khan was inspired by the tomb of Sultan Sanjar at Marv (built in 1157), one of the greatest edifices of the eastern Islamic world, and built his mausoleum that was much more majestic than Sanjar's tomb (Fig. 6-10).⁹⁹ In view of the fact that Ghazan's tomb was in turn a model for Öljeytü's mausoleum, one should expect that the architectural characteristics of the tomb at Marv reappeared in the mausoleum at Sultaniyya. While it is almost the case for the general form and layout of Öljeytü's tomb, two features differentiate it from its predecessors: the rectangular room (sanctuary) appended to the domed hall and the absence of the cenotaph which still exists in

⁹⁶ The Venetian traveler Barbaro, cited in Blair, "Mongol Capital of Sultāniyya," 143.

⁹⁷ Blair divides the epigraphic material of the tomb into four categories: pious phrases or sacred names, Qur'anic citations, *ḥadīths*, and historical references, including dates (Blair, "Epigraphic Program of the Tomb," 61). Regarding the internal decoration of the tomb, Sims refers to small-scale geometrical and floral ornament (Sims, "Iconography of the Internal Decoration," 143). In accordance with these observations about the decorative program of the tomb, during my fieldwork in Sultaniyya, I found no trace of the ornament resembling the motifs inscribed on the boss.

⁹⁸ Komaroff and Carboni, eds., *Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 280; Wiet, *L'Exposition Persane*, 45-46.

⁹⁹ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1376.

Sanjar's tomb (Fig. 6-11).¹⁰⁰ Although the mausoleum at Sultaniyya was in the tradition of polygonal mausolea with dome chambers and side galleries constructed in Iran for at least four centuries prior to Sultaniyya,¹⁰¹ the two above-mentioned points raise the possibility that the Mongol patron might have encompassed some other traits that had not been common in the preceding constructions.

The rectangular room which is believed to embrace the cenotaph of the Ilkhan was added to the building at the same stage that the domed hall was redecorated. Pietro Della Valle (d. 1652) reports that the cenotaph situated inside the grille in the center of the sanctuary was covered with precious silk-and-gold cloth.¹⁰² Soudavar also suggests that the *Bier of Alexander*, a folio from the Great Mongol *Shāhnāma* (Fig. 6-12), represents the inside of the mausoleum at Sultaniyya where the coffin of Öljeytü had been placed.¹⁰³ Despite the textual and visual evidence on the existence of the Ilkhan's cenotaph inside the tomb, no trace of his grave has been found neither in the sanctuary nor in the crypt located underneath the rectangular hall.

Vassaf writes that Öljeytü was buried in the dome [*qubbah*] of the *abwāb al-birr*.¹⁰⁴ Hafiz-i Abru expands on the funeral of the Ilkhan and says that while the nobles, khatuns and amirs were clad in dark [*kabūd*] as a sign of mourning for him, Öljeytü was buried in the crypt [*sardābih*] of the dome (domed chamber) that he had already built inside the citadel [*qal'ih*] of Sultaniyya. Alongside his corpse a large amount of gold, jewels, and precious belongings were buried as if his tomb was a treasure house [*ganj-khānih*].¹⁰⁵ Although the texts testify that the

¹⁰⁰ The cenotaph in Sanjar's tomb dates only from 1906 (Blair, "Monumentality under the Mongols," 168), however its mere presence supports the idea that the original cenotaph was possibly located in this exact spot marking the tomb of the sultan underneath the ground.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 136-137.

¹⁰² Blair, "Mongol Capital of Sultāniyya," 143.

¹⁰³ Soudavar, "The Saga of Abu-Sa'id," 143.

¹⁰⁴ Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 355.

¹⁰⁵ Hafiz-i Abru, *Zayl-i Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 119-120.

Ilkhan's grave was located in the crypt, excavations have not uncovered enough evidence that confirm the space was used as a burial place (Fig. 6-13).¹⁰⁶ Taking into account all the textual and archaeological evidence, one could speculate that in his tomb at Sultaniyya, Öljeytü combined the Iranian-Islamic practice of constructing monumental tombs with the Mongol custom of burying the dead in a secret location together with his/her valuable possessions.

The structural and decorative features of the mausoleum raise the possibility that the building was initially intended for a palace rather than a funerary monument, but its drastic redecoration was conducted with the purpose of making it appropriate for the tomb of the Sultan. Sims suggests that the architectural and decorative iconography of the building, in the first phase, was inappropriate for a mausoleum. The largely non-epigraphic decoration of the building, the low legibility of its highly stylized Qur'anic quotations, and the dissimilarity between the decoration of the tomb and other contemporary tomb-complexes, are some of the evidence supporting her claim.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, Blair proposes that the redecoration of the tomb can be seen as part of the development of the shrine complex and the transformation of Öljeytü's single-room tomb working as a family burial place into a multi-chambered place of pilgrimage accommodating larger groups of people.¹⁰⁸ According to this hypothesis as well as our earlier discussion of the internal decoration of the tomb borrowing some aspects of Mongolian tents, it is not implausible that Öljeytü's preference for a secret grave within a magnificent mausoleum according to the tradition of his ancestors was based on the idea of impressing the pilgrims not

¹⁰⁶ Mirfattah, "Sultaniyya," 21-22.

¹⁰⁷ The Qur'anic inscriptions of Phase 1 are mostly limited to short *sūrah*s and do not bear on the function of the building. However, parts of the Throne Verse of *Sūrah* 2, which is frequently seen in Muslim tombs can be found among the inscriptions; Sims, "Iconography of the Internal Decoration," 149-150.

¹⁰⁸ Blair, "Monumentality under the Mongols," 126-127. Blair also reexamines the inscriptions of the building with regard to contemporary political events of the reign of Öljeytü. She suggests that the inscriptions of the second phase reflect his attempt to capture the Holy Cities (*ibid.*, 125). In her view, the architectural features and the inscriptions both propose that the building, in fact, symbolized the Ilkhan's "desired dominance as God's caliph on earth, protector of the holy cities, and lord of the world." (Blair, "Epigraphic Program of the Tomb," 73).

only as a Muslim sultan but as a Mongol khan. All the above-mentioned examples point towards the fact that while the Mongols showed interest in the adoption of the urban concept of the court through the foundation of monumental buildings, they enjoyed showcasing their nomadic assets in the settled context of these structures. The tomb of Öljeytü highly exemplifies this eclecticism.

The epigraphic program of the tomb, discussed in chapter 3, reveals that the Ilkhans experienced an oscillation not only between settled and nomadic concepts, but among several religious and cultural doctrines presented by the sedentary world. For example, in the second phase of interior decoration of the tomb the names of the four orthodox caliphs emerge in conjunction with the names of two Shi'ite imams, Hassan and Husayn, reflecting the religious eclecticism of the Mongol period.¹⁰⁹ In fact, besides the negotiation between foreign and local ideas, one should seek another level of encounter between various indigenous motifs and themes in Ilkhanid art and architecture.

Another noteworthy example is a painting extracted possibly from one of the copies of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* and was assembled in the Diez albums (Fig. 6-14). The picture is a notable case vividly representing the interaction and intersection of local modes and foreign idioms. The manuscript depicts two figures dressed in Mongol robes and headgears, and seated inside a white tent with blue ornaments. Two men are reading the Qur'an placed on the Qur'an stand (*rahl*). The inscription above the entrance of the tent, read as *al-mulk lillāh* (all sovereignty belongs to God), as well as the two Allah-shaped elements on the top of the tent suggest that the tent must have worked as a portable mosque.¹¹⁰ While the figures in the painting are usually

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 60.

¹¹⁰ Komaroff and Carboni, eds., *Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 252. I have not found any reference to such portable mosques in literary sources, although there are some references to portable schools in historical texts, for instance, see Vassaf al-Hazra and Ayati, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 304.

described as converted Mongol princes in a prayer space, the curious gesture of the man on the left, demands further attention. He seems to be gazing in wonder at the Qur'an and revealing his surprise by raising his eyebrows and putting his index finger on the lips. In another manuscript of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh (Siege of Alamut)*, Hülegü Khan is depicted with a similar gesture. The painting is accompanied by a short description mentioning that Hülegü bit his finger out of astonishment (Fig. 6-15).¹¹¹ Nevertheless, whether the gesture of the figure was meant to show the unfamiliarity of a newly converted or a non-Muslim Mongol prince with the Qur'an or his admiration for the holy book is still vague to us.

This miniature clarifies that the Mongols adopted, whether sincerely or not, the religion of the sedentary world, but still practiced it in their familiar nomadic context. In dealing with the rules of the civilized world, the Mongols' preference for these mobile structures was not merely because of their higher compatibility with their semi-nomadic lifestyle that continued through the Ilkhanid period. The tents seem to have shaped a crucial aspect of the Mongols' nomadic identity. In *The Secret History of the Mongols* the creation of the Mongol Empire is marked by the unification of several tribes, which are called "the people of the felt-walled tents/yurts."¹¹² This phrase emphasizes that the Mongols did not consider their tents exclusively as a requirement for their seasonal migrations, but perceived them as a device that materialized part of their collective identity. Furthermore, the tents visually represented the affiliation of the

¹¹¹ *Siege of Alamut* held in The Bibliothèque nationale de France. The description says that "[Hülegü Khan] *angusht-i ta'ajjub dar dandān-i tahayyur girift*." For further studies of the gestures of human figures in medieval paintings, see Contadini, *A World of Beasts*.

¹¹² Onon, *Secret History of the Mongols*, 190. There are several references in the historical accounts confirming that the Mongols' tents were literally built of white felt. For instance, when Juvayni refers to Ögedey's tent, Sir Urdū, he describes it as a pavilion whose walls were made of lattice wood and they were covered with white felt (Juvayni, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushāy*, vol. 1, 296). William of Rubruck also describes the dwellings of the Tartars as a hoop of interlaced branches which was covered with white felt (Ruysbroeck, *Mission of Friar William Rubruck*, p. 72).

Mongols in different khanates with the Mongol Empire and its legendary founder, Chinggis Khan.

A Dialogue between Camps and Cities

Despite the reputation of the Mongols as barbarian hordes and destroyers of civilizations, they had a great influence over Eurasian urbanism.¹¹³ Prior to Chinggis Khan's military campaigns, there was a growing urbanization throughout Central Asia during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Several new towns rose on the trade routes or at the meeting points of agricultural and pastoral regions, although these towns are barely comparable to the capital cities founded later by the Mongols in China or Iran.¹¹⁴ Besides the towns with permanent buildings existing in Central Asia before the Mongol invasion, seasonal camps came into being at the beginning of the thirteenth century that contained noticeable permanent elements. For instance, Chinggis Khan's Great *Urdū* discussed in chapter 5, was possibly located in a permanent place consisting of both temporary and permanent structures. Despite his seasonal migrations between different camps, the fact that his Great *Urdū* was erected in a fixed location suggests that neither the Ilkhans nor their counterparts in Yuan China were unfamiliar with the concept of designating a specific place as their capital. This hypothesis is worth considering because the idea of constructing permanent

¹¹³ Sinor, for instance, mentions that in many Chinese historians' eyes the steppe people were Barbarians with no cities or fixed dwellings nor any kind of agriculture (Sinor, "Horse and Pasture," 172). For more discussion on these stereotypes, see the introduction.

¹¹⁴ Biran, "Rulers and City Life," 257-259.

Much earlier than the emergence of the Mongol Empire in the thirteenth century, during the period of Uyghur power in Mongolia starting in the mid-eighth century, several walled settlements were constructed. The Uyghur capital, Khar Balgas, located to the north of Karakorum, is one example of these settlements. Later, during the time of the Khitans in the eleventh century, significant settlements were built, for instance, Kharbukhyn (Kharukhain) Balgas was one of the three centers founded by the Khitans. For further discussion, see Waugh, "Nomads and Settlement."

capitals is usually assumed as a theme borrowed by the Mongols from the nearby sedentary civilizations.¹¹⁵

Apart from the emergence of the camps with increasingly permanent components, during the time of Chinggis Khan's successors, the tents imitating the magnificence of monuments arguably lost some of their qualities as portable structures. In written sources there are references to splendid tents pitched at a fixed place, and were never taken down. For example, Rashid al-Din mentions that at the summer camp of Ögödei (r. 1229–1241), Chinggis Khan's son, in Örmögatü, his people erected a grand tent [*khargāh-i buzurg*] accommodating 1,000 people, and they never removed it [*hargiz bar nimī-giriftand*].¹¹⁶

This piece of information regarding the existence of permanent towns as well as the seasonal camps with permanent structures proposes that the Ilkhans' conceptions of built environment and social life were not confined exclusively to their memories of "felt-walled tents" that traditionally were being erected across the steppes of Eurasia. In other words, the Ilkhans had a sort of settled mentality even before their extensive encounter with the sedentary world following the Mongol conquest of Western Asia. Hence, it would be erroneous to assume that they showed inclination to found urban centers merely under the influence of Persian elites in the sedentary context of Iran.

Focusing on Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya in this dissertation, the foundation of the cities that fulfilled the requirements of the Ilkhans as the rulers of a sedentary sovereignty was studied. It must be noted that these urban centers distanced themselves from the conventional model of

¹¹⁵ This hypothesis does not rule out the idea of borrowing from the sedentary civilizations, however, it would indicate that the borrowing took place much earlier than the period when the Ilkhans in the west and the Yuan in the east conducted their architectural and urban undertakings. For more discussion on Chinese influences in city construction in Mongolia prior to the conquest phase, see Waugh, "Nomads and Settlement."

¹¹⁶ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 1, 671.

Iranian/Islamic city discussed in chapter 1 in order to satisfy the needs of the Mongols who had retained their semi-nomadic lifestyle. The Ilkhanid cities should be conceived, in Haneda's words, as a "compromise" between the tribesmen's desire to erect their encampments outside the established cities and the Ilkhans' wish to build splendid monuments that impressed their subjects.¹¹⁷ The outcome of this agreement is the two cases of Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya that share some common characteristics: both cities were built in the midst of a lush pasture while had a pious ensemble at the core embracing the tomb of the Ilkhan. This arrangement seems to have constituted an unprecedented type of urban centers in the long tradition of city planning in Iran.

Charitable ensembles known as *abwāb al-birr* (the gates of goodness) are the most notable architectural projects undertaken during the Ilkhanid period. They consisted of individual buildings enclosing the tomb of the Ilkhanid sultans, their viziers or Sufi shaykhs. Several large-scale urban complexes were founded or expanded under the patronage of the Ilkhans and their notables and officials throughout their territory. In their capital in Sultaniyya the pious compound was the outstanding element around which the citadel and, beyond that, the outer city was shaped. A similar *abwāb al-birr* also formed at the core of the newly-founded city of Ghazaniyya. While the fabric of the main body of the cities has been largely overlooked in the contemporary textual and visual material, the repeated references to these ensembles in historical sources have built a proper context for studying their structural and functional features. It is important to note that despite the extensive destruction of the two cities and, thus, the scantiness of architectural and archaeological evidence, the spatial structure of the cities of Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya in their entirety (with both citadel and outer city included) was partially reconstructed

¹¹⁷ Haneda, "Gāzāniyya in Tabrīz," 293.

in chapters 2 and 3. Nevertheless, in order to scrutinize the negotiation that developed between the Mongols and the Iranians in the context of the built environment of their cities, these urban projects (the *abwāb al-birrs*) will be addressed in this section, rather than the whole city, because of their better-described attributes.

The motives behind the location of the *abwāb al-birrs* of Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya were examined in chapters 2 and 3. The construction of the former in an area that had already been claimed by Arghun, and the foundation of the latter over an earlier imperial city and close to the spot attributed to the burial place of Arghun seem to have been in accordance with the nomads' ideology in which the good fortune was believed to exist permanently in some specific places. The khans obtained royal charisma and, thus, legitimacy through occupying these lands. This way of conceptualizing the architectural undertakings of Ghazan Khan and Öljeitü substantiates the claim that the Mongol conventions partially survived the process of Islamization and Persianization of the court imposed (or offered) by their Iranian viziers.

It should be underlined that in Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya the mausolea were intended to be regarded as a place of pilgrimage following the death of the Ilkhan. The sporadic references to the pilgrimages made by the members of the court to the two mausolea in the textual sources¹¹⁸ show that this target was partly met.¹¹⁹ In this regard, Kashani's mention of Sultaniyya as the

¹¹⁸ In addition to literary sources, some of the inscriptions of the tomb of Öljeitü can also be interpreted in regard to the significance of the building as a center of pilgrimage and circumambulation (Blair, "Epigraphic Program of the Tomb," 67). In my view, the most relevant inscription is the one encircling the dome at the highest level. The inscription contains the Qur'an, 2:127: And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed You are the Hearing, the Knowing. English translation of the Sura: <http://quran.ksu.edu.sa>. Accessed on June 6, 2018.

¹¹⁹ Blair suggests that, comparable to the tomb of Ghazan in Tabriz, Öljeitü had always considered his tomb as a place of pilgrimage (Blair, "Monumentality under the Mongols," 126). She refers to Kashani's reference to the burial of Öljeitü's wife in his mausoleum in Sultaniyya (Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeitü*, 83). Although I agree with her on the significance of the mausoleum as a place of pilgrimage, in my view, this quality had been more noticeable in the case of Ghazan's tomb in Tabriz as there are more references to the pilgrimage rituals performed in Shanb-i Ghazan in primary sources, for instance, see Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 209-214.

destination for pilgrims of the world and the Ka‘ba of human beings [*maqṣad-i zuvvār-i ‘ālam va Ka‘ba-yi maqām-i banī ādam*] is of great importance.¹²⁰ To the best of my knowledge, this is the only occasion that Sultaniyya is entitled “Ka‘ba” by a medieval historian.¹²¹

The fact that the spiritual significance of the mausolea, as a “destination for pilgrims,” was defined in connection with the Ilkhans themselves is of great importance. This specific quality of the tombs was in contrast to the tradition of burying the notables in the vicinity of the graves of religious figures and Sufi saints in search of blessing that was common throughout the Islamic world.¹²² This gesture suggests that the Ilkhans deemed themselves as sources of spirituality and religious legitimacy.¹²³ This perception seems far from the beliefs of a faithful Muslim who seeks eternal bliss in their proximity to the religious leaders. I suggest that this symbolic act of the two Ilkhans had possibly its origin in the Mongolian tradition of founding an ancestral shrine. Although the Mongols had the custom of secret burials, in the absence of actual graves, the encampments of the deceased khans sometimes were honored as shrines. The coexistence of this nomadic tradition and the Sufi/Shi‘i convention of honoring religious leaders

¹²⁰ Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeitü*, 45.

¹²¹ In the ode dedicated to Öljeitü, Vassaf calls Sultaniyya “the fifth heaven of the world” [*panjumīn jannat-i dunyā*] (Ayati, “The Ode of Vassaf al-Hazra,” 27). In my opinion, although this phrase possibly pointed to the outstanding scenic beauty of Sultaniyya, it also indicated the spiritual importance of the city.

¹²² On the practice of visiting tombs during the medieval period, see Taylor, *Vicinity of the Righteous*.

¹²³ The religious significance of the mausoleum of Öljeitü may be explained in connection with the story recounted about Öljeitü’s intention to transfer the bodies of Imam ‘Ali and Imam Husayn to his mausoleum. Sir Percy Sykes writes that “he [Öljeitü] entertained the project of transporting the bones of Ali and Husayn from Najaf and Kerbela respectively, and erected a superb building to receive the sacred remains. His plan was never realized and the building became his own mausoleum.” (Sykes, *A History of Persia*, vol. 2, 235) While Sykes suggests that Öljeitü built the mausoleum for the bodies of the two Imams, Andre Godard considers this idea against tradition. He also argues that such a huge building could not have been finished in four years (which is the time period between the conversion of the Ilkhan in 1309 and the dedication of the building in 1313). Godard suggests that the building was originally built as the Ilkhan’s tomb but it changed when Öljeitü converted to Shi‘ism and decided to bring the bodies to Sultaniyya (Godard, “Mausoleum of Öljeitü,” 1111-1113). Nevertheless, some recent studies (Sims, “Iconography of the Internal Decoration”; Blair, “Monumentality under the Mongols”) analyze the changes in the structure and internal decoration of the tomb in relation with the functional changes of the building as well as the contemporary events of the reign of Öljeitü (briefly discussed earlier in this chapter), without crediting this story. To the best of my knowledge, there is no reference to this legend in any source from the period.

in a charitable complex was examined in chapter 2. According to this study, the necessity of founding a charitable compound with a tomb at its core is justifiable from both Mongolian and Iranian/Islamic perspectives. The other shared practice is alms-giving, an Islamic religious obligation that formed one of the pillars of these complexes. In the following section, I will argue that this act possibly originated in part in Mongolian beliefs.

Ögödei built the Yingjia dian (“the Palace welcoming carriages”), a seasonal palace at Tusuhu cheng near Karakorum. This palace is possibly the same as the Tuzghu Baligh mentioned by the Iranian authors, Juvayni and Rashid al-Din. Juvayni relates that the Turghu Baliq (Tuzghu Baligh) was a pavilion [*kūshk*] where Ögödei stayed on his way to and from winter camps.¹²⁴ Rashid al-Din describes the palace as a sublime pavilion [*kūshkī ‘ālī*].¹²⁵ The significance of the building for the present discussion is that it is associated with the Mongol custom of *tuzghū*, i.e. the offering of food to passing travelers.¹²⁶ Juvayni also mentions that foods [*nuzl*] called *turghū* were brought from the city to the palace.¹²⁷

The Mongols had the custom of offering food, *kūmīss*,¹²⁸ and meat at the graves of their ancestors.¹²⁹ They also burnt clothes, food, and silk as an offering to their dead.¹³⁰ Beyond their cemeteries, the notion of offering was one of the principles of Mongol society. As partly

¹²⁴ Juvayni, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushāy*, vol. 1, 273.

¹²⁵ Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 1, 672.

¹²⁶ Masuya, “Seasonal Capitals,” 234.

Tuzghū in Turkish consists of two parts: *tuz* that means salt and *ghū* that means a food offered as a gift to a traveler. *Tuzghū* was later used to describe a food offered to a master or a khan; Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 3, 2338.

¹²⁷ Juvayni, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushāy*, vol. 1, 273.

In Persian *nuzl* has different meanings: beneficence, blessing, and a food offered to a guest; see Hassan ‘Amid, *Farhang-i Farsi-i ‘Amid (Persian-Persian ‘Amid Dictionary)*. Edited by ‘Aziz-Allah ‘Alizadih (Tehran: Rah-i Rushd, 2010), 1016.

¹²⁸ Fermented mare’s milk. The Mamluks also had the tradition of drinking of *kūmīss* or *qumiz* despite their conversion to Islam; see Amitai-Preiss, “Echoes of the Eurasian Steppe,” 265.

¹²⁹ Onon, *Secret History of the Mongols*, 64, n. 159.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 137, n. 356.

discussed in chapter 2, Mongol khans provided their people with food and clothes in order to ensure their support and obedience. The receivers of the khan's favor ranged from his immediate entourage, servants, guards, and officials to envoys, travelers, and all his soldiers and poor subjects. Kublai, for instance, established agencies in his capital of Daidu to supply clothing and food to the poor.¹³¹ Regardless of the specific purposes of distributing food and clothing - whether it was intended to display the majesty and power of the ruler or it simply represented an act of charity and generosity- the gesture itself seems to have been adopted and adapted in later times by Muslim Ilkhans in their urban foundations (charitable complexes) in Iran.

In the account of the construction of the charitable ensemble of Shanb-i Ghazan, Rashid al-Din writes that Ghazan Khan had visited the holy shrine of Imam Riza and the tomb complexes of Sultan Bayazid, Abu al-Hassan Kharraqani, and Shaykh Abu Sa'id Abul Khayr in Khurasan. After his conversion to Islam, he went on a pilgrimage to the mausoleum of 'Ali in Najaf and the tombs of other holy figures in Baghdad. This spiritual journey led the Ilkhan to follow the act of the religious leaders and build an *abwāb al-birr* that would accommodate him in the hereafter [*jāy-i ākhirat*].¹³² The account of Rashid al-Din although is arguably reliable, it should be considered in connection with the vizier's policy of legitimization of Ghazan Khan and his undertakings as a faithful Muslim sultan discussed in chapter 4. Therefore, it is plausible that, along with Ghazan Khan's strong attachment to Islamic piety, whether sincerely or not, there were some other motives behind the construction of the pious complex in his newly-founded city of Ghazaniyya.

¹³¹ Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange*, 56.

¹³² Rashid al-Din and Jahn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 208.

Referring back to the theory of translation, one can suggest that these charitable architectural projects had possibly part of their roots in the Mongolian tradition of offering discussed earlier. Nomadic beliefs could travel far away in distance and time so that the later Ilkhans seem to have had vivid memories of the cultural and religious practices of their ancestors as well as of the other khanates.¹³³ Being aware of the resemblance between the Muslim and the Mongol notion of offering prompts speculation that the complexes might not have been built entirely under the influence of Islamic charitable buildings. Despite Rashid al-Din's statement, it is possible that the Mongol patrons had a faint intention to revitalize part of their nomadic traditions even if these traditions had to be embodied in a typical Islamic/Iranian architectural structure. In this way, a Mongol practice that had a counterpart in the receiving culture was translated into a local and, thus, more understandable act.

To support this claim, it is important to note that in spite of the mass conversion of the Mongols during the Ilkhanid period, there are historical accounts confirming that some of the Muslim Ilkhans and their Mongol amirs had still ambivalent feelings and opinions towards Islam. In the *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, Kashani writes about an argument between Ḥanafīs and Shāfi'īs at Öljeytü's court. The dispute made the Ilkhan furious so that he left the room. Qutlugh-Shah Nuyan, one of the Mongol amirs addressed the other amirs and said: "what is this that we have done? We abandoned the *yāsāq* (or *yāsā*: code of laws) and *yūsūn* (customs) of Chinggis Khan and converted into the ancient religion of the Arabs, which is divided into seventy-odd parts."¹³⁴ In a similar anecdote, Kashani writes about a severe thunderbolt that struck Öljeytü's *urdū* and

¹³³ After the death of Arghun Khan, the Mongols accompanying Ghazan Khan in Semnan, removed the feathers of their helmets by order of the Ilkhan according to a Mongol tradition; see Rashid al-Din, Roshan, and Musavi, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1230. This is one of the many examples of the traditional Mongol way of doing things that was still common under the later Ilkhans.

¹³⁴ Morgan, "Great Yāsā of Chingiz Khān," 172; Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Öljeytü*, 98.

killed a couple of his guards. The Ilkhan got frightened and was told by his amirs that, according to the former rules and the *yāsāq* of Chinggis Khan, he needed to pass through the fire in order to overcome the disaster. They called for Buddhist priests to come and set up the grand fire. The priests told him that the lightning was caused by the infelicity of Islam and being a Muslim. They advised him to cease his daily prayers and repent of his wrongdoings. He took their advice for about three months. During this period, however, dealing with his uncertain Islamic beliefs, “the king [*pādshāh*] struggled between affirmation and denial, devotion and hatred, resolution and hesitation.”¹³⁵ Although this incident eventually resulted in the conversion of Öljeytü from Sunnism to Shi‘ism, the story suggests, despite the process of Islamization of the Ilkhanid court being conducted through the later Mongol period in Iran, how easy the foundations of their Islamic ideology could have been shaken. Given the oscillation of the Ilkhans between different religious opinions and practices, in the case of the Ilkhanid charitable complexes, it is not difficult to believe that Mongolian beliefs might have intertwined with Islamic/Iranian concept of feeding the poor in the hope of gaining blessing.

This chapter discussed the occasions in which Mongolian nomadic forms and practices were transferred to the Persian/Islamic context of Ilkhanid Iran and were translated into the domestic language of art and architecture. Referring back to Berlekamp’s statement that “the fact of encounter is not the same as the fact of exchange,”¹³⁶ despite the expansion of contact between the Mongols and the Iranians following the conquest, not all the instances of encounter were associated with active communication between the two groups. Thus, exploring hybrid signs and

¹³⁵ Ibid., 99.

¹³⁶ See chapter 4 and Berlekamp, “Limits of Artistic Exchange,” 230.

meanings representing the occurrence of exchange demands meticulous examination of material culture. This issue could be even more challenging in the case of urban architecture due to the limited number of extant buildings as well as the insufficiency of archaeological excavation. In addition, as we discussed earlier in this chapter, the complex nature of cultural syntheses makes it strenuous to recognize the fusion and to trace back all the contributors. However, in spite of all these constraints, in my view, the study of individual cases of artifacts, buildings, and urban complexes is a credible method of analyzing the encounter between the two cultural domains and the way they exchanged motifs, traditions, and thoughts. I would like to conclude this chapter by pointing out that looking for more examples of various categories of material culture could enrich the present research. Nevertheless, if we theorize the intercultural contacts between the Mongols and the Iranians merely on the basis of material evidence, without considering intangible matters, such as religious beliefs or native traditions, we will develop only a set of ideas about a cultural phenomenon which could be far from the historical reality.

Conclusion

Through the examination of the urban centers founded under the patronage of the Ilkhans, this study has illuminated the dialogue that was established between the Mongol conquerors and the Iranians following the conquest of Iran in the mid-thirteenth century. While acknowledging the presence of imported visual conventions, particularly Chinese decorative repertoire, in Ilkhanid art, the present research places greater emphasis on Mongolian nomadic traditions and concepts that penetrated into the court-sponsored architectural projects. On the other side, this study has looked at the influence of Iranian-Islamic culture of the settled society of Iran on the Ilkhans, which was influential in the transformation of Central Asian nomads into the rulers of the sedentary world.

The development of theories about the encounter between the Mongols and the Iranians should be grounded in a physical context, which, in this research, is the built environment of their cities. Since the Ilkhans themselves were actively involved in designing and constructing of the architectural complexes, particularly in major urban centers, such as Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya, these buildings were able to denote the political aspirations and religious mindset of their patrons more powerful than the artefacts and manuscripts crafted in the ateliers of the court by artists and scribes. The charitable foundations built under the patronage of Mongol rulers represented their perception of life and the afterlife. The palatial constructions were also a genuine reflection of how the Ilkhans wished to be deemed in their subjects' eyes. Palaces, which were the residence of the Ilkhanid sovereigns, symbolized the majesty of their imperial power.

Being built on the substantial body of literature on the “Islamic city,” chapter 1 clarified the socio-religious and political context in which the concept of medieval urbanism evolved. This survey paved the way for a comprehensive examination of the cities founded and designated as political and administrative centers following the advent of the Mongols in Iran. The relatively brief overview of a larger number of Ilkhanid urban foundations in this chapter has been followed by a detailed study of the most significant architectural projects conducted under Mongol rule in Ghazaniyya and Sultaniyya in chapters 2 and 3. This analysis not only served to describe the spatial structure of the two cases, but also shed much light on the question of the encounter between Perso-Islamic concepts and Mongolian nomadic conventions. The study of Sultaniyya particularly has been enriched by archaeologically derived information. The architectural evidence unearthed during the excavations has revealed substantial information regarding the original layout of the Ilkhanid city. Deficiencies in the published excavation reports, however, have posed some difficulties in the interpretation of the excavated sites. Therefore, some of the speculations, for example about the development process of the citadel of the city, will be tested by the results of the works by the archaeologists who are currently conducting the long-term excavations in Sultaniyya.

The chapter on political agents explored the mechanisms through which the transcultural interactions were facilitated during the *Pax Mongolica*. Adoption and adaptation of cultural forms and their associated meanings are not the spontaneous and inevitable outcome of the coexistence of Mongol conquerors and their Iranian subjects. This chapter cast some light on the agents who actively contributed to the establishment of the encounter and subsequently the exchange between the two groups. In the course of the widespread transmission of commodities and ideas, the agents acted not just as messengers, but rather as mediators who became involved

in the circulation of signs, concepts, and systems. Their views, taste, and priorities were influential in determining what was borrowed from a foreign culture or was exchanged between two cultural domains. This is particularly the case for those motifs and themes which were connected with the representation of the Ilkhans in their new territory.

Focusing on Yuan major urban foundations in the Far East, chapter 5 looked into the question of encounter between the conqueror and the conquered in a different geographical context. The examination of Yuan imperial complexes revealed how Mongol emperors took advantage of the local language of art and architecture in order to legitimize their rule, as a foreign military group, in China. Whether or not the results of this study are directly applicable to the presence of the Ilkhans in Iran in the post-conquest period, this chapter provides insights into the approach adopted by Mongol nomads in their interaction with sedentary cultures, including that of Iran. A comparative study seems to be most fruitful in the case of the Ilkhans and their cousins in Yuan China due to their common ethnic and cultural background as well as partially shared interests. However, the comparison can extend to the Ilkhanids' western neighbor, the Mamluk Sultanate, which represented another example of the encounter between native inhabitants and ethnically foreign-origin ruling elite in the medieval world.¹

Furthermore, making a comparison between Mamluk and Ilkhanid cities raises the question of whether the latter can essentially fit into the general framework of "Islamic urbanism." Ilkhanid cities, particularly the cases patronized by Muslim Ilkhans, were built in accordance with the general characteristics of many cities that developed across the Islamic

¹ The Mamluks' adherence to their Inner Asian legacy has been partly examined by Amitai-Preiss in the context of the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and Syria. See Amitai-Preiss, "Echoes of the Eurasian Steppe." For further discussion on the issue of Mamluk legitimization through the use of Islamic themes (the religion of their subjects) in relation to their external audience, see Broadbridge, "Mamluk Legitimacy." Also see the sources mentioned by Broadbridge on Mamluk legitimacy in relation to their internal audience (*ibid.*, 91).

world around the same time. The examination of Ilkhanid urban environments, however, reveals some qualities which are unique to these sites. For instance, in medieval Islamic urbanism, including Mamluk cities, a citadel consisting of royal mosques, palaces, and places for ruling family and the military was the center of power and government of the military elite. In the Ilkhanid city, by contrast, the *abwāb al-birr* being formed from a number of charitable buildings encircling the tomb of the Ilkhan and his household shaped the central core of the city; the area which was later identified as citadel (*arg*). This dissertation touched upon these distinguishing features of the Ilkhanid city, and to some extent the contributing forces, such as the popularity of Sufism and the influence of Sufi shrine complexes on the Ilkhans,² but further studies are needed, first to clarify the authentic religious, political, and administrative significance of these charitable complexes, and second, to explain the Ilkhans' preference for these compounds at the heart of their cities rather than in citadels, which were being constructed throughout the Islamic world by other contemporary Muslim dynasties.

Going through the terminology of intercultural contacts, chapter 6 theorized the interactions underlying the syncretic nature of Ilkhanid urban architecture. Benefiting from both literary and archaeological evidence, the final section argued that the Ilkhans not only facilitated the westward transportation of cultural wares, but also intervened actively in the process of adoption and transformation of forms, ideas, and traditions in the destination (Iran). Although the Ilkhans initially established their domination by power of the sword, they gradually redefined their political aspirations in accordance with the principles of the newly-conquered land of Iran. While they adhered to their nomadic conceptions of the world to some extent, they compromised

² See chapter 2, subsection *Honoring ancestors or religious leaders*. For further studies on Sufism in Ilkhanid Iran, see Amitai-Preiss, "Sufis and Shamans"; Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, 229-236, and on Sufi shrines, see Golombek, "Cult of Saints"; Blair, "Sufi Saints and Shrine Architecture."

part of their steppe customs for the sake of being accepted. This strategy of conciliation has been articulated and discussed in three areas as: a dialogue between khans and sultans/*pādshāhs*; a dialogue between tents and buildings; and a dialogue between camps and cities.

Although this dissertation primarily focused on the built environment of Ilkhanid cities and examined their syncretic quality, it also looked, to a lesser degree, into the social dynamics which stimulated the formation of these cities. While studying Mongol and Persian figures who contributed to the development of the urban centers, this survey was largely confined to the members of the royal court and the ruling elite. It can, however, extend to the broader social network, which actively participated in the construction of Ilkhanid cities. This network is formed from people who indicated a need for buildings, the individuals or groups who financed the construction of buildings, the overseers who supervised construction projects, and the architects, builders, artists, and artisans who designed and executed buildings. Nonetheless, it is challenging, for two reasons, to uncover the social structure of the Ilkhanid society outside the court and the urban areas associated with them. First, historical accounts written by court historians barely contain information on commoners. Second, excavations are often conducted in the urban spaces with higher concentration of archaeological remains, for instance, the core of the city embracing the key elements of congregational mosque, bazaar, and citadel. In view of the available textual and physical data, this project laid greater emphasis on court-sponsored architectural projects, and, thus, civilian settlement of Ilkhanid cities was given lesser attention. The latter is an area that deserves greater attention in future studies.

Considering the paucity of research on urbanism in medieval Iran, this project might be deemed a starting point for study in this area and can expand in future to cover other major medieval dynasties. In this respect, the examination of Ilkhanid cities can be seen as laying the

foundations for the study of the cities built by the Ilkhans' successors, the Timurids (1370–1507) who were also of Turco-Mongol origin. Like their predecessors, the rulers of the Timurid dynasty retained the tradition of erecting royal camps in the vicinity of their cities. Despite the foundation of prosperous cities, such as Samarqand, Timur (r. 1370-1405), the founder of the Timurid Empire and “a sovereign in transition between nomadic and sedentary living,”³ adhered to his camp outside the city walls where he conducted feasts and festivals, made political and military decisions and received foreign emissaries.⁴

Addressing the lesser-known issue of the encounter between Mongolian nomadic conventions and Persian/Islamic visual and conceptual traditions in the court-sponsored architectural projects, this study attempts to clarify the poorly-understood picture of the Ilkhanid city. Having used two sources of evidence, historical accounts and archaeological findings, this research removes some ambiguities concerning the tangible and intangible forces that formed the architectural identity of the Ilkhanid city. However, it must be admitted that we are still struggling with significant deficiencies in both categories of information. Although several important Mongol cities and towns have been subjected to archaeological research, much evidence has yet to be unearthed. In addition, a number of non-Persian literary sources, more particularly Mongolian and Chinese texts, have been overlooked in the present research due to language restrictions. Furthermore, even on some occasions when text and physical evidence both are satisfactorily available, given the possible disparities between the two sources, their integration does not improve our understanding of the Ilkhanid city, but rather increases the confusion (see the introduction).

³ Gronke, “The Persian Court,” 19.

⁴ Clavijo, the Spanish ambassador who visited Samarqand in 1404 described Timur’s royal camp in detail. See Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, 266-277.

Consequently, many questions regarding the spatial structure of the Ilkhanid city remain to be answered. In view of the ongoing excavations being conducted in a few urban sites in Iran, Mongolia, and China as well as the larger number of eastern Asian sources being translated into European languages, it is hoped that the broader availability of archaeological data and textual evidence will pave the way for a more detailed exploration of Ilkhanid cities. Taking into account all the findings in this research, the Ilkhanid city should now be characterized by a hybrid quality, which was injected not only into the physical structure of the city, but also into the world views, motivations, and tastes of its patrons.

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Appendix

This appendix presents some of the historical accounts which have been mentioned briefly in the dissertation. The aim is to give the reader a better understanding of the original accounts through providing the whole passages as they appear in the primary sources. In each section the account in Persian script is followed by the English translation.

Translation of all the passages are by the author.

1- Rashid al-Din's account of the presence of the Buddhists in Maragha: Chapter 1, p. 68 (*Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1176-1179)

(۱۱۷۶) ارغون خان چهارم رمضان سنه ثمان و ثمانین و ستمائه در مراغه نزول فرمود و به تفرج رصد رفت و داروی سیاه خوردن که ذکر آن خواهد آمد آنجا آغاز کرد.

(۱۱۷۹) ارغون خان به غایت معتقد بخشیان و طریقه ایشان بود و همواره آن طایفه را تربیت و تقویت می فرمود. از جانب هند بخشی ای بیامد و دعوی عمر درازی می کرد. از وی پرسید که به چه طریق عمر بخشیان آنجا دراز می گردد. گفت: به دارویی مخصوص. ارغون خان سؤال کرد که آن دارو اینجا یافت شود. گفت: شود. اشارت فرمود تا آن را ترتیب کند. بخشی معجوننی بساخت که در آن گوگرد و زینق بود و قرب هشت ماه آن را تناول می فرمود.

(1176) Arghun Khan arrived in Maragha on the 4th of Ramaḍān 688 and promenaded towards the observatory and began to eat the black drug [*dārūy-i sīyāh*], which will be mentioned later, there.

(1179) Arghun Khan had great faith in Buddhist priests [*bakhshīyān*] and their way, and always supported those people and encouraged them. A Buddhist priest came from India and claimed that he had lived a long life. [Arghun] asked him how the Buddhist priests had a long life there. He said: with a special drug. Arghun Khan asked him if the drug could be found here. [He] said: yes. [Arghun] ordered him to arrange that. The priest made an elixir [*ma'jūn*] in which there were sulfur [*gūgird*] and mercury [*sīmāb*], and [Arghun] ate that for about eight months.

2- Rashid al-Din's account of the foundation of Ujan: Chapter 1, p. 79 (*Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, vol. 2, 1303-1305)

(۱۳۰۳) طوی عام فرمودن پادشاه اسلام در آوردی زرین به موضع باغ اوجان و ختم کردن قرآن در آنجا و بذل عام فرمودن

پادشاه اسلام پیش از آن استادان فاخر و مهندسان ماهر را فرموده بود تا خرگاهی زرین و تختی زرین با آلات و ادوات مناسب سازند و مدت سه سال گروهی انبوه به ترتیب آن مشغول بودند و در این وقت که به دارالملک تبریز رسید تمام شده بود. در اواخر ذی القعدة سنه احدی و سبعمائه از تبریز به اوجان حرکت فرمود و در آنجا مرغزاری را به غایت نزه و خرم به جهت نزول مبارک

دیوار کشیده و در آنجا رودخانه‌ها و چشمه‌های آب روان است و حوض‌ها و آبگیرهای معظم ساخته‌اند و انواع طیور در آنجا مأوی گرفته و آن مربع متساوی‌الاضلاع را به اقسام متساویه بخش کرده و بر دو طرف مرزهای آن درخت بید و سپیدار نشاندند تا ممر خلق بر آن مرزها باشد و هیچ آفریده‌ای در میان مرغزار نگذرد و راه هر طایفه‌ای معین که از کجا درآیند و از کجا بیرون شوند و در آن (۱۳۰۴) میان کوشک‌ها و برج‌ها و حمام و عمارات عالییه ساخته فرمود تا آن خرگاه زرین را در میان آن باغ بزنند با بارگاه و سایه‌بان‌ها که بدان مخصوص است. تمامت فراش‌ها و مهندسان جمع شدند، در مدت یک ماه توانستند زد از غایت عظمت، و تخت مرصع به جواهر و یواقیت بنهادند.

(1303) *Pādshāh-i Islām* throwing a public feast [*tuy-i ‘ām*] in the golden encampment [*urdūy-i zarrīn*] at the garden of Ujan and completing the recitation of the Qur’an there, and ordering a public bestowal [*baḡl-i ‘ām*]

Pādshāh-i Islām had already ordered excellent masters [*ustādān*] and skillful engineers [*muhandissān*] to build a golden tent [*khargāh-i zarrīn*] and a firm throne [*takht-i razīn*] with all the necessary equipment, and a large group were busy organizing that for three years, and when [Ghazan] arrived in the *dār al-mulk* of Tabriz at this time, the construction had finished. In late Dhu’l Qa’da 701 [Ghazan] traveled from Tabriz to Ujan, and [they] had built a wall around an extremely pleasing meadow [*marghzār*] for his arrival, and rivers and springs are flowing there, and [they] have built grand pools, and different kinds of birds have nested there, and [they] have divided that square into equal sections and have planted willows and poplars on both sides of its borders to be the path for those who are going past the borders, and no creature [*āfarīdih*] passes through the meadow, and the path of each tribe (family) was clear, from where they can come in and from where they can go out, (1304) and [Ghazan] built pavilions, towers, public baths, and magnificent edifices there and ordered [them] to erect the golden tent and its special canopies in that garden. All the handymen [*farrāshān*] and engineers gathered, [they] could set up [the tent] after one month because of its grandness, and decorated the throne with jewels and rubies.

3- Mustawfi’s account of the foundation of Ujan: Chapter 1, p. 79
(*Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 127)

(۱۲۷) بیژن بن گیو بن گودرز ساخت، غازان خان تجدید عمارتش کرد و از سنگ و گچ بارو کشید و شهر اسلام خواند و دارالملک ساخت، دور باروی غازانی سه هزار گام بود ... غله نیکو حاصل دارد و با حاصل شهر به هم به وقف ابواب البر غازانی تعلق دارد.

(127) Bizhan bin Giv bin Gudarz built [Ujan], Ghazan Khan reconstructed it and erected a wall built of stone and plaster and called it Shahr-i Islam (City of Islam) and designated it as *dār al-mulk*, the perimeter of the wall of Ghazan Khan [*bārūy-i Ghāzānī*] was 3,000 paces [*gāms*] ...¹

¹ The *gām* used by Mustawfi is approximately equal to 61 cm.

[Ujan] produces high-grade grain which, together with the income of the city, belong to the endowment of the *abwāb al-birr* of Ghazan Khan [*abwāb al-birr-i Ghāzānī*].

4- Rashid al-Din's account of the foundation of Ghazaniyya: Chapter 2, pp. 92, 93
(*Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 201-208)

- (۲۰۱) حکایت دوازدهم در عمارت دوستی پادشاه اسلام خلد ملکه و تحریض فرمودن مردم را بر آن کار پیش ازین پادشاهان مغول و بعضی از آبا و اجداد پادشاه اسلام خلد سلطانه هوس عمارات داشته‌اند و در آن شروع کرده لیکن کمتر باتمام رسانیده چنانکه مشاهده رفته.
- (۲۰۴) شهر تبریز که این زمان دارالملک است بارویی مختصر داشت و آن نیز (۲۰۵) مندرس گشته و بیرون شهر خانه‌ها و عمارات بسیارست فرمود که چگونه شاید که شهری چندین هزار آدمی آنجا ساکن‌اند و دارالملک است آن را بارویی نسازند.
- (۲۰۶) ... فرمود تا بارو بیرون باغات بگردانیدند ... و شهری دیگر بزرگتر از محوطه تبریز قدیم در موضع شنب و شم نیز گویند که ابواب البر ساخته بنا فرموده چنانکه ابواب البر و اکثر باغات آن محیط است و آن را غازانیه نام نهاده و فرمود که تجار که از روم و افرنج رسند بار آنجا گشایند لیکن تمغاجی آنجا و از آن شهر تبریز یکی باشد تا منازعت نیفتد.
- (۲۰۸) ... چون در دارالملک تبریز بود آنجا اختیار فرمود و خارج شهر در جانب غربی در موضع شنب خویشتن طرح کشیده آن را بنیاد نهاد و این زمان چند سال است تا به عمارت آن مشغول‌اند و از گنبد سلطان سنجر سلجوقی به مرو که معظم‌ترین عمارات عالم است و دیده بود بسیار باعظمت‌تر بنیاد از آن نهاده.

(201) The twelfth anecdote which is about *Pādshāh-i Islām*'s –May his kingdom last forever– interest in construction [*imārat-dūstī*] and encouraging people in this work

Previously, Mongol kings and some of the ancestors of *Pādshāh-i Islām* –May his kingship last forever– had a desire for construction and started that, but, as it has been observed, [they] have finished less.

(204) The city of Tabriz, which is the *dār al-mulk* at this time, had an insignificant wall, and that also (205) had been damaged, and many houses and edifices are located outside the city, [Ghazan] said that how it is possible that a city in which thousand people reside and is the *dār al-mulk*, [they] do not build a wall for it.

(206) ...[Ghazan] ordered [them] to build the wall outside of the gardens ... and [he] has founded another city, which is larger than old Tabriz, in Shanb, which is also called Sham, where he had built the *abwāb al-birr* in such a way that [the city] surrounds the *abwāb al-birr* and most of the gardens, and [he] has called it Ghazaniyya, and [he] ordered the merchants, who arrive from Rum and Afranj, to unload there, but the toll-collector [*tamghāchī*] [of Ghazaniyya] and the one of Tabriz is the same [person] to prevent hostility [*tā munāzi 'at nayuftad*].

(208) ...Since [Ghazan] was in the *dār al-mulk* of Tabriz, he made a decision there and himself designed a building [*khīshtan tarḥ kishīdih*] and founded it outside the city [of Tabriz] to the west [of Tabriz] in Shanb, and at this time, it has been a few years that [they] have been busy

constructing it, and [he] has founded it much more majestic than the tomb of Sultan Sanjar at Marv, which is the grandest edifice of the world and [he] had seen it before.

5- Mustawfi's account of the foundation of Ghazaniyya: Chapter 2, p. 93
(*Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 123)

(۱۲۲) چون در عهد مغول آن شهر (تبریز) دارالملک گشت (۱۲۳) کثرت خلایق در آنجا جمع شدند و بر بیرون شهر عمارات کردند ... غازان خان آن را بارویی کشید چنانکه تمامت باغات و عمارات و دیه‌ها و ولیان کوه و سنجانان نیز داخل آن بارو بود، جهت وفات او تمام ناکرده بماند و دور باروی غازانی بیست و پنج هزار گام است و شش دروازه دارد ... در زیر شهر به موضعی که شام می‌خوانند خارج باروی غازانی، غازان خان شهرچهای برآورده است و جهت خوابگاه خود در آنجا عمارات عالیه کرده چنانکه مثل آن در تمامت ایران نیست.

(122) Since during the Mongol period that city (Tabriz) became the *dār al-mulk* (123) large population gathered there and built their buildings outside the city ... Ghazan Khan built a wall for it in a way that all the gardens, buildings, villages, Valiyan-kuh, and Sanjaran were located inside the wall, [the wall] was left unfinished because of his death, and the perimeter of the wall of Ghazan Khan [*bārūy-i Ghāzānī*] is 25,000 paces and [it] has 6 gates ... Ghazan Khan founded a small city [*shahrchih*] in the south of the city [of Tabriz] in a place called Sham outside the wall of Ghazan Khan and built magnificent edifices there for his own chamber [*khābgāh*] in such a way that it (the small city) has no equal in Iran.

6- Vassaf's account of the construction of Sultaniyya: Chapter 3, p. 122
(*Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 277)

(۲۷۷) در بهار سال ۷۰۴ عمارتی را که در مکانی به نام قنقور اولانگ پدر او بنیان نهاده و اکنون ناتمام بود تمام کرد و آن را سلطانیه نامید. مخارج ساختمان و اجناس و آلات آن را بر مالی که از ولایات می‌رسید حواله کرد و رسولان برای گردآوری مال به اطراف روان گشتند و بنایان و مهندسان به کار مشغول شدند و گروه کثیری از صنعتگران با زن و فرزند به آنجا کوچ کردند و به کار اتمام آن بنای عظیم مشغول شدند. مرا در وصف بنای سلطانیه قصیده‌ای است.

(277) In the spring of 704, Öljeitü completed the construction of a city that had been formerly founded by his father Arghun in Qūnqūr öläng and was unfinished at this time, and named it Sultaniyya. He assigned the money [*māl*], which came from the provinces, for the expenses of construction and [necessary] goods and tools and [his] messengers moved around to collect the money, and builders [*bannāyān*] and engineers [*muhandissān*] became busy working [there], and a large group of artisans [*ṣan'atgarān*] with their wives and children migrated there and became busy finishing that magnificent construction. I have an ode on the foundation of Sultaniyya.

7- Amuli's account of the foundation of Sultaniyya: Chapter 3, p. 123
(*Nafāyis al-Funūn*, vol. 2, 257-258)

(۲۵۷) ... و آثار او (اولجایتو) در جهان از شهرها و قلاع و ابواب خیر و مساجد و مدارس عالی بسیار است. از آن جمله شهر سلطانیه که در شهر سنه اربع و سبعمائۀ بنیاد نهاد و در مدت ده سال به مرتبه رسانید که از بلاد ربع مسکون معمورتر شد و در وسط سلطانیه قلعه بس عالی به مقدار شهری بنا فرمود، وجهه مرقد خود گنبدی بس عالی هشت منار (۲۵۸) بر سر آن ساخته و در حوالی آن ابواب خیر از جامع و خانقاه و مدارس و دارالسیاده که هرگز مثل آن در جهان کس ندیده و نشنیده بفرمود و بسیاری از املاک نفیسه بر آنجا وقف کرد چنانچه حاصل آن در عهد دولت او به صد تومان می‌رسید و چون این جمله به تعلیم و ارشاد وزیر عالم عادل ... خواجه رشیدالدین ... بود نیابت تولیت بدو داد.

(257) and his works (the works of Öljejtü) in the world is numerous including cities and castles and *abwāb-i khayrs* and mosques and excellent madrasas. One of those [is] the city of Sultaniyya that he founded [it] in the months of year 704 and during 10 years [the city] reached the point where it became more flourishing than other cities in the world, and in the center of Sultaniyya [he] founded a great castle, which was of a size of a city, on the side of his tomb [*marqad*] [he built] a sublime dome and 8 minarets (258) on its top, and around it [he] built the *abwāb-i khayr* consisting of *Jāmi* ' mosque and *khānqāh* and madrasas and *dār al-sīyāda* that no one has ever seen or heard like that in the world, and [he] endowed extensive valuable lands to it (the *abwāb-i khayr*) in such a way that its income reached 100 *tumāns* during his reign, and since all these happened because of the teachings and guidance of the learned and virtuous ... vizier Khwaja Rashid al-Din ..., [Öljejtü] bestowed the custodianship [*tawlīyyat*] [of the endowments] upon him.

8- Hafiz-i Abru's account of the foundation of Sultaniyya: Chapter 3, p. 126
(*Zayl-i Jāmi ' al-Tawārīkh-i Rashīdī*, 67-68)

(۶۷) [سلطان] فرمود که یک روز پیش پدر خود پادشاه ارغون ... حاضر بودم او را داعیه عمارت سلطانیه بر خاطر خطوط کرده بود فرمود همچنان که من پادشاه جهانم می‌خواهم شهری بنا کنم که آن شاه بلاد بود، جماعتی که حاضر بودند بسی مواضع نام بردند و هر یک از آنچه از عیب و هنر دانستند باز نمودند آخر الامر موضع قنقور اولانگ اختیار کردند که ییلاقی به غایت منتزه است ... فرمان فرمود تا طرح شهر برکشیدند و بنای قلعه آن از سنگ تراشیده اشارت فرمود. فاما چون بنیاد عمارت کرد زمانه فرصت نداد که به اتمام رسد اکنون می‌خواهم که آنچه پدر من بنیاد کرده بود اگر حق سبحانه توفیق بخشد به اتمام رسانم چه فرزند شایسته آن است که پیروی مادر و پدر کند و نام او را زنده دارد ... و این شهر و قلعه نه از برای آن می‌سازم که اگر نعوذ بالله سختی پیش آید این موضوع مرا مأمونی باشد یا از آن مرا مالی حاصل شود، باعث اصلی برین عمارت آن است که پادشاه ارغون بنیاد کرده بود و می‌خواست که تمام کند روزگار فرصت نداد ... (۶۸) در اندک زمانی شهری عالی معمور شد و قلعه آن را دیوار از سنگ تراشیده کرده‌اند ... و اصل قلعه مربع نهاده‌اند طول و عرض مساوی ... و یک دروازه و شانزده برج دارد ... و در اندرون قلعه هر کس از امرای موضعی عمارت کرده بود و سلطان اولجایتو از برای مدفن خود در اندرون قلعه عمارتی ساخته است و آن را ابواب البر نام نهاده و

گنبدی مئمن بزرگ عالی که قطر آن شصت گز است ... و ارتفاع آن صد و بیست گز ... و متصل آن گنبد، چند عمارت عالی ساخته است مسجدی به تکلف و دارالضیافه و دارالسیاده و موقوفات بسیار بر آن وقف کرده ... در شهر مساجد بسیار ساخته‌اند اما مسجد جمعه که سلطان ساخت .. و دارالشفائی دیگر ... و دگر مدرسه عالی بر نمونه مستنصر به بغداد در آن شهر بساخت ...

(67) [Sultan] said that: one day I was with my father, *Pādshāh* Arghun ..., and he had decided to found Sultaniyya, [Arghun] said that: I am the *pādshāh* of the world, [I] intend to found a city which will be the king of cities [*shāh-i bilād*], the people, who were present there, mentioned different locations and expressed their disadvantage and advantage, eventually [they] chose Qūnqūr ōlāng, which was an extremely pleasurable *yaylāq* (summer camp) ... [Arghun] ordered [them] to design the city and build its castle out of carved stone. But, when [he] founded the building, the universe did not give [him] a chance to finish the work, now I intend to complete, if God bless me, what my father had founded, because a righteous child is the one who follows his mother and father and keeps their names alive ... I do not build this city and the castle [*qal'ih*] to be my stronghold, God forbid, in the time of hardship or to bring me wealth, the main reason for the building is that *Pādshāh* Arghun had founded it and intended to finish it but the life did not give him a chance ... (68) within a short space of time [Sultaniyya] became an excellent thriving city, and [they] built the wall of the castle out of carved stone ... and [they] designed the castle as a square with four sides of equal length ... and [the castle] has a gate and 16 towers ... and inside the castle each of the amirs had founded a building, and Sultan Öljeytü has built an edifice inside the castle for his own tomb [*madfan*] and has named it *abwāb al-birr*, and [has built] a sublime large octagonal dome [*gunbad-i muthammin-i buzurg-i 'ālī*] which is 60 *gaz* in diameter ... and 120 *gaz* in height ...² and adjacent to that dome, [sultan] has built a few splendid buildings [such as a] magnificent mosque and *dār al-dīyāfa* and *dār al-sīyāda* and established substantial endowments for it ... [they] built many mosques in the city but the *Jāmi'* mosque was built by Sultan .. and another *dār al-shafā* ... and another grand mosque resembling the one that Mustansir built in Baghdad.

9- Mustawfi's account of the foundation of Sultaniyya: Chapter 3, p. 134
(*Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 97)

(۹۷) ارغون خان بن ابقای خان بن هولاکوخان مغول بنیاد فرمود. پسرش اولجایتو سلطان ... به اتمام رسانید و به نام خود منسوب کرد ... دور باروش که ارغون بنیاد کرده بود و از ده هزار گام. و آنکه اولجایتو سلطان می‌ساخت و به سبب وفات او تمام ناکرده ماند سی هزار گام. و درو قلعه‌ای است از سنگ تراشیده که خوابگاه اولجایتو سلطانست و دیگر عمارات در آنجاست و دور آن قلعه دو هزار گام بود.

² The *gaz* used by Hafiz-i Abru is equal to 42 cm (Blair, "Mongol Capital of Sulṭāniyya," 143).

(97) Arghun Khan bin Abqay Khan bin Hülegü Khan-i Mughul founded [Sultaniyya]. His son Öljejtü Sultan ... finished it and named it after himself ... the perimeter of the wall, which had been built by Arghun, was 10,000 paces, and the one that Öljejtü built and was left unfinished due to his death [was] 30,000 paces. And inside it, there is a castle [*qal'ih*] built of carved stone, which is the chamber [*khābgāh*] of Öljejtü Sultan, and there are other edifices there, and the perimeter of that castle was 2,000 paces.

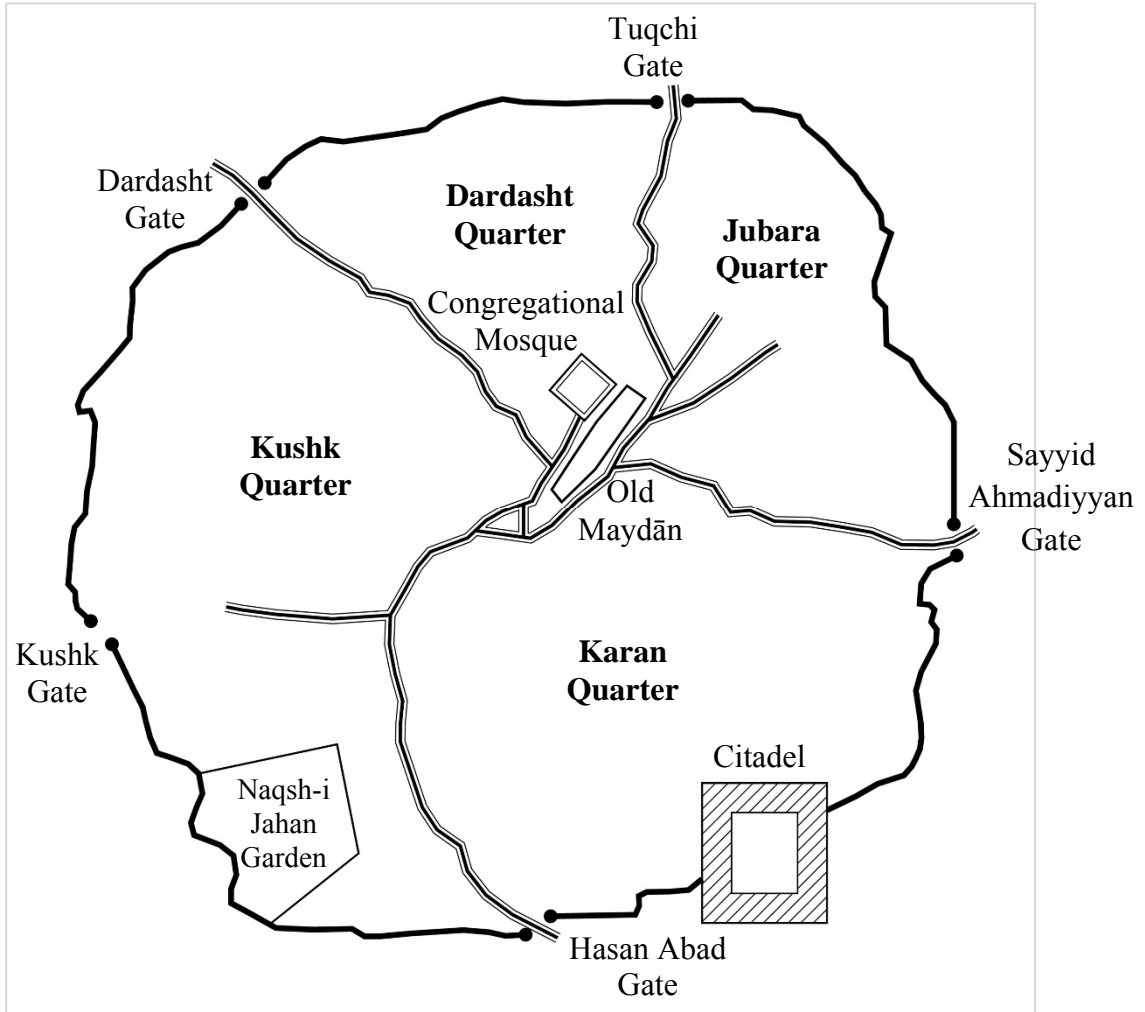


Figure 1-1: The structure of Seljuq Isfahan.

Photo credit: Regenerated after Falahat and Shirazi, "New Urban Developments," 615.

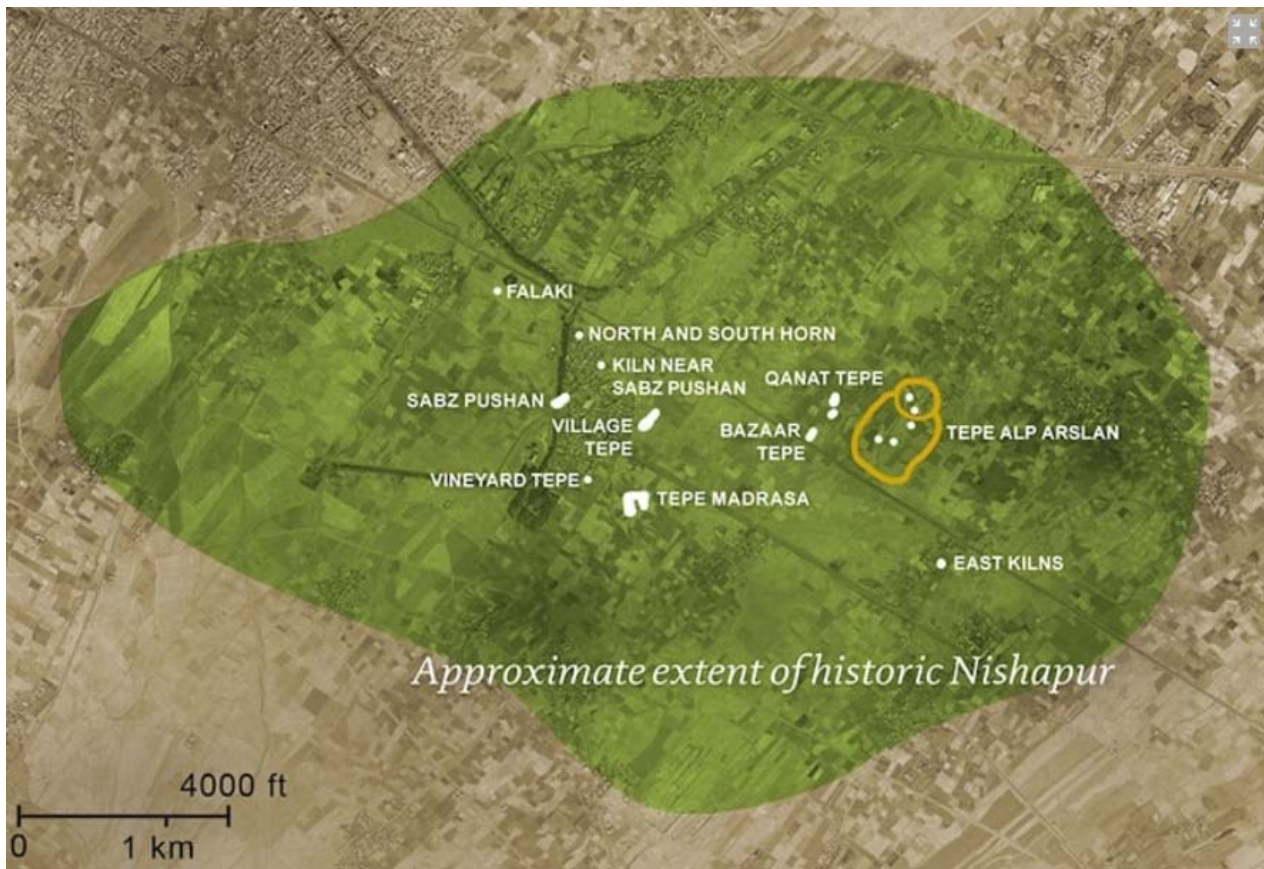
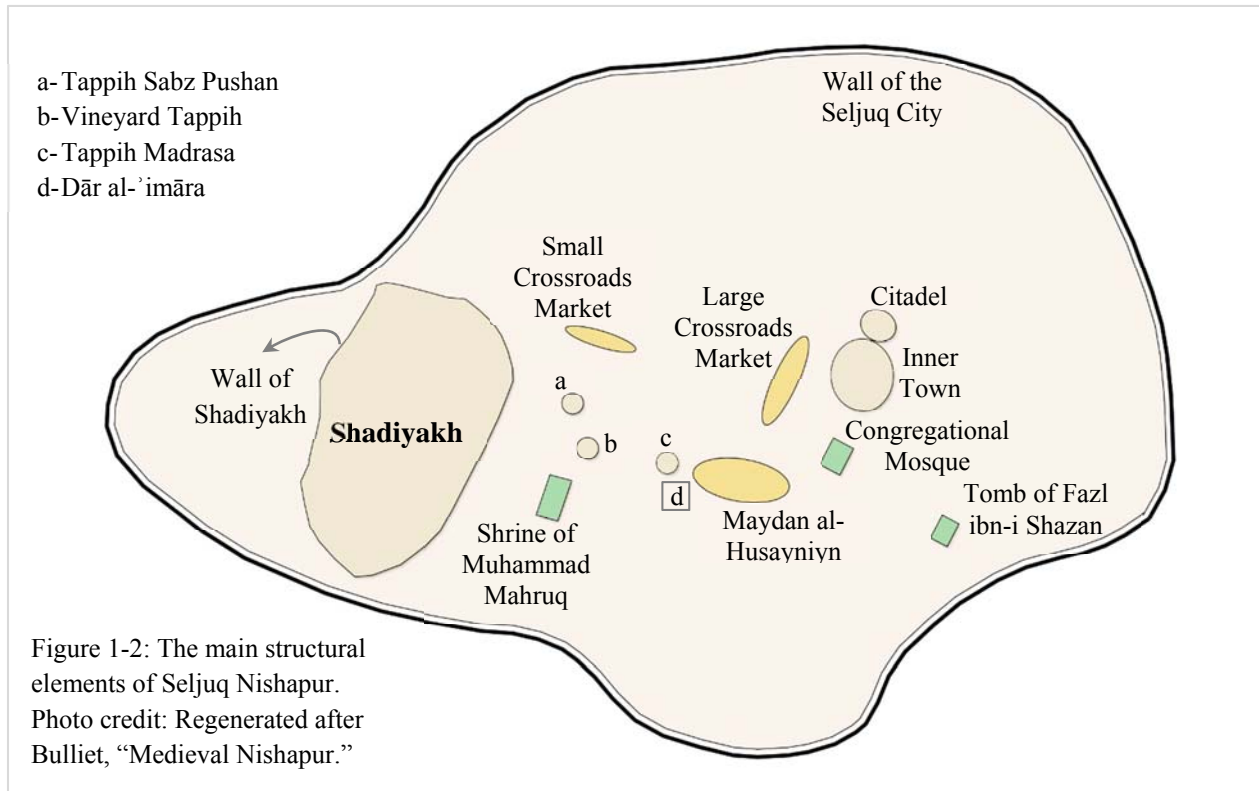


Figure 1-3: The approximate locations of the Metropolitan Museum excavations within the outline of medieval Nishapur.
 Photo credit: Sardar, "Nishapur vii." Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art.

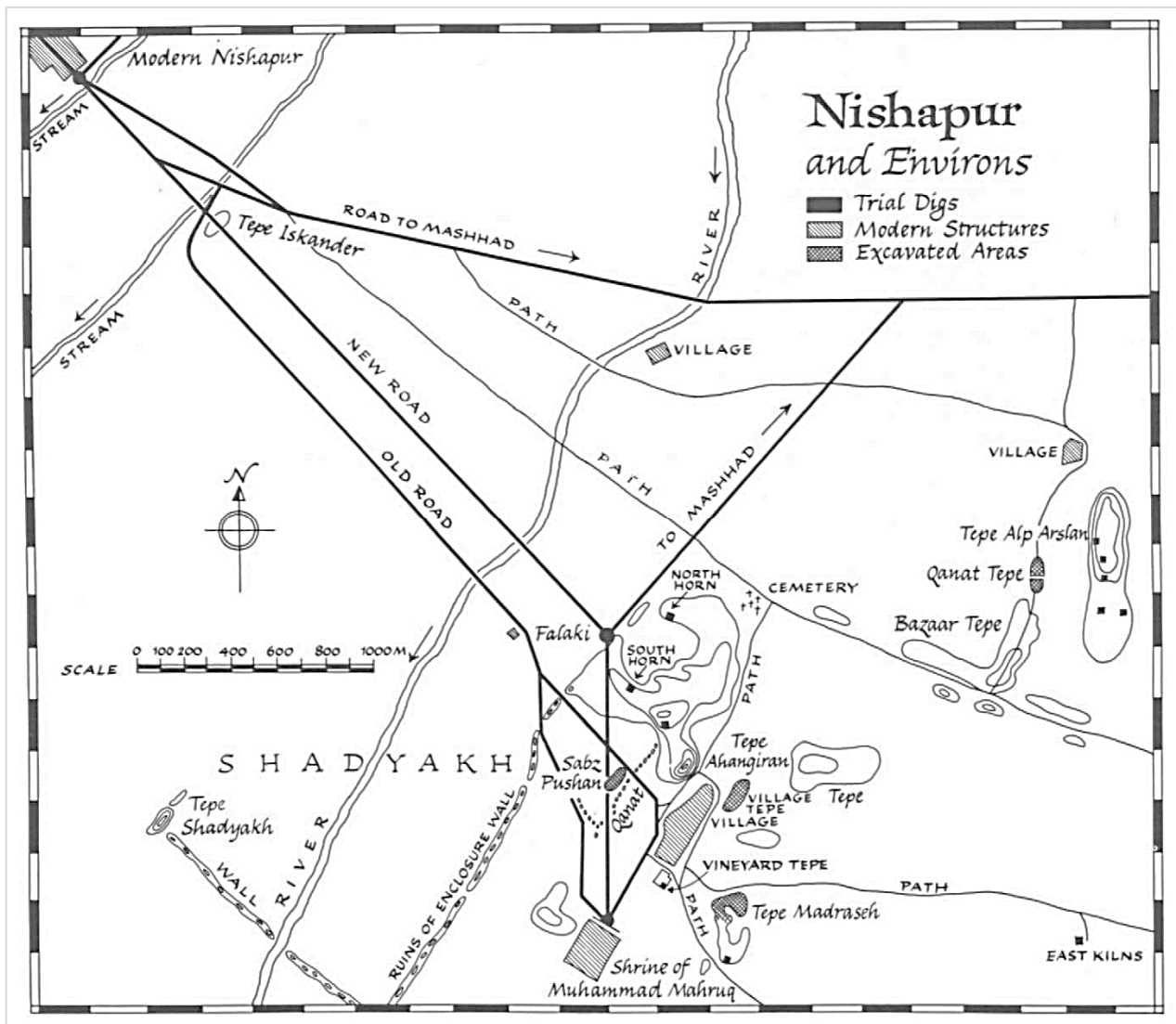




Figure 1-4: Nishapur and environs. The location of the excavated areas by the Metropolitan Museum is visible on the map.

Photo credit: Wilkinson, *Nishapur*, 36.



Figure 1-5: The location of the camps and cities of the Ilkhans
 Photo credit: Google Earth.

-  Safely identified locations
-  Possibly identified locations

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1- Qutlugh-Baligh | 9- Maragha |
| 2- Arran Region | 10- Chaghata and Naqatu |
| 3- Mahmudabad | 11- Takht-i Sulayman |
| 4- Alatagh | 12- Sultaniyya |
| 5- Tabriz | 13- Sujas |
| 6- Ghazaniyya | 14- Sultanabad-i Chimchal |
| 7- Ujan | 15- Aq Qal'ih |
| 8- Hasht-rud | 16- Khabushan |

The location of Siyah Kuh, Ghazaniyya of Iraq, the yurt of Hulan Muran, and Sultanabad (Öljeütüabad) is unknown.



Figure 1-6: The observatory of Maragha and the temple of Rasad-daghi.
Photo credit: A. Farabi.

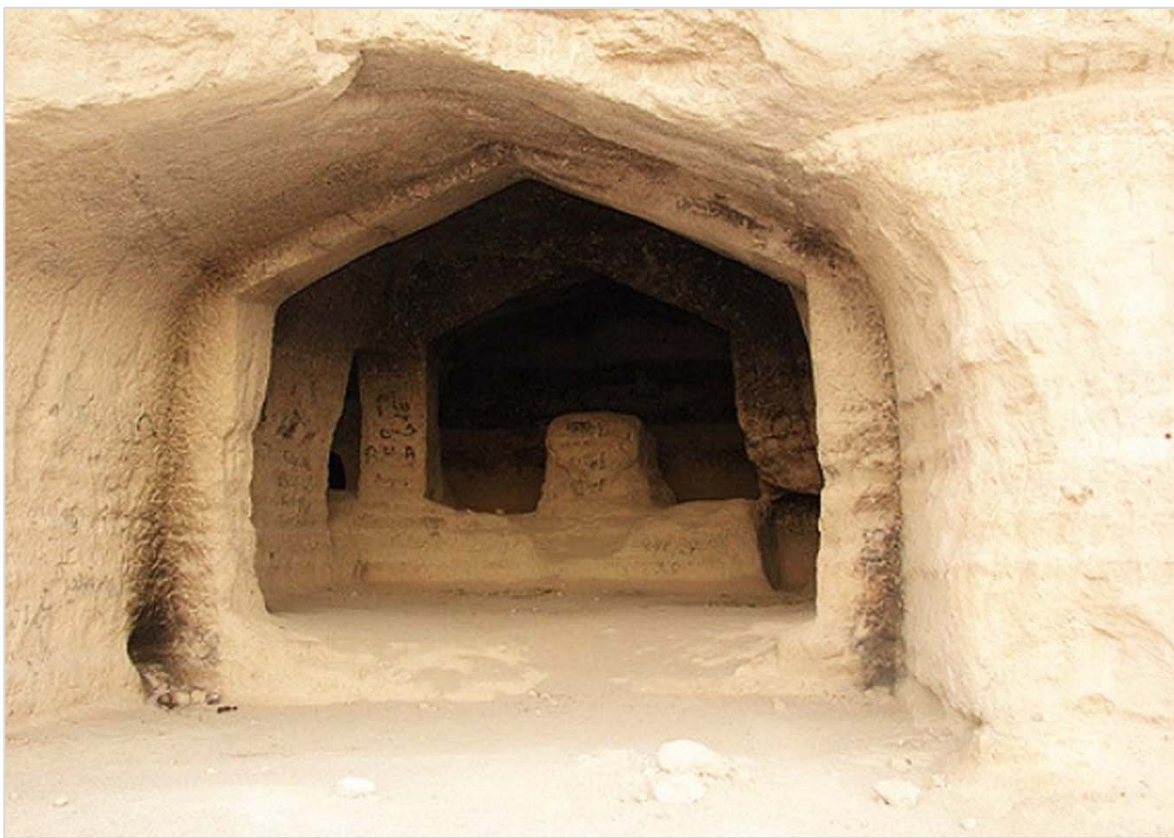


Figure 1-7: One of the cells of the temple of Rasad-daghi.
Photo credit: A. Vahedian
(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ali1364/2998534153/in/photostream/>).



Figure 1-8: The Ilkhanid palatial complex in Takht-i Sulayman.
 Photo credit: Google Earth. 2019 DigitalGlobe. Imagery date: 10/12/2010.



Figure 1-9: Takht-i Sulayman. The capital of a column with the motif of dragon.
 Photo credit: Kleiss, *Geschichte der Architektur Irans*, 269.



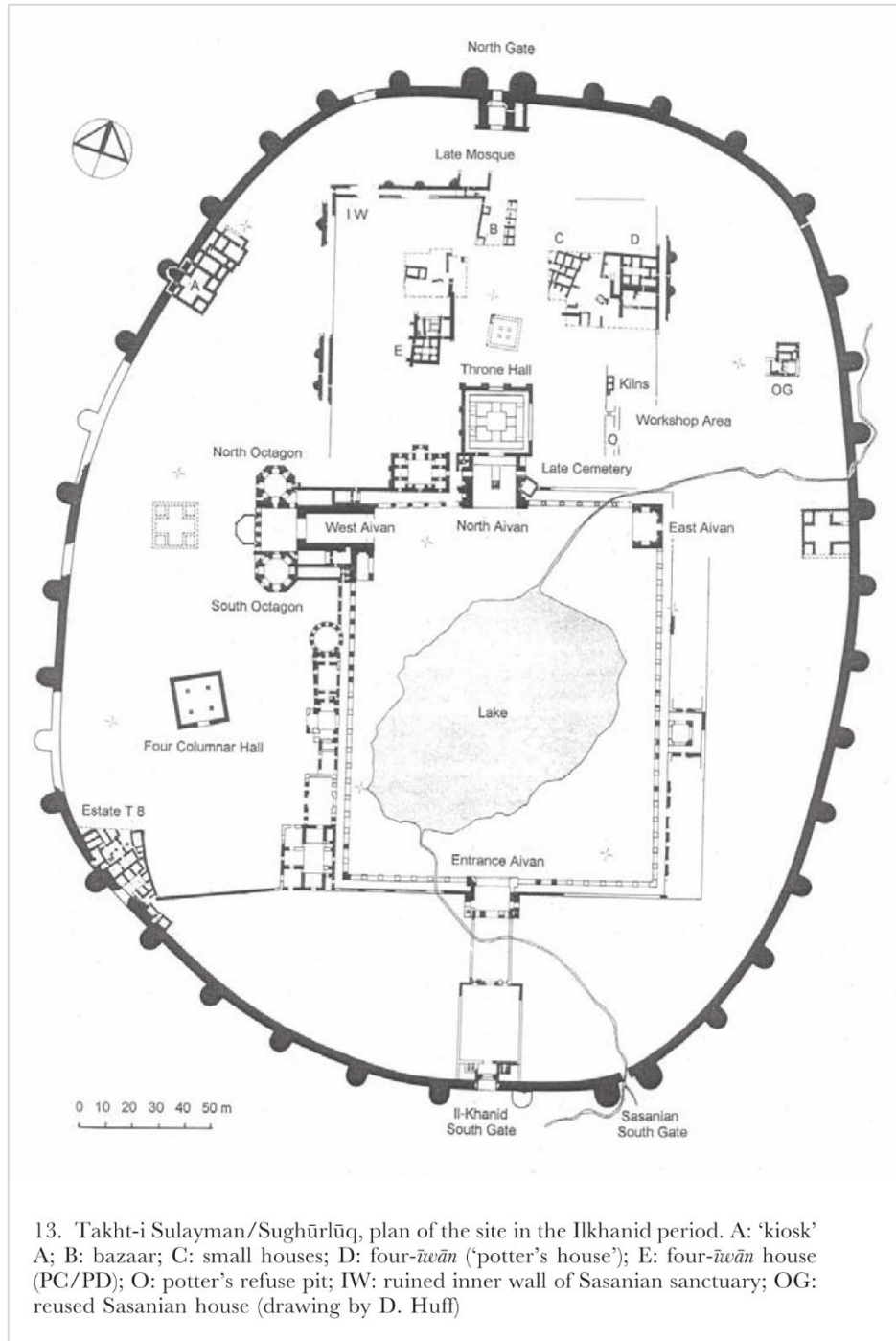


Figure 1-10: Plan of the Ilkhanid phase of Takht-i Sulayman.
 Photo credit: Huff, "Ilkhanid Palace at Takht-i Sulayman."

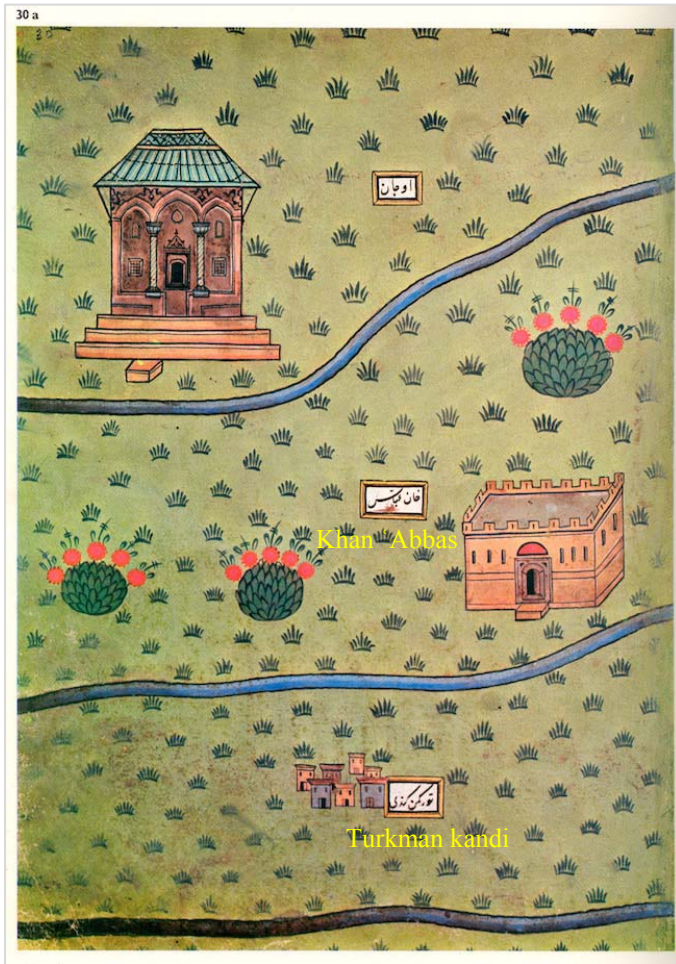


Figure 1-11: Matrakçı Nasuh's miniature of Ujan, 16th century.
 Photo credit: Courtesy of Istanbul University Library.



Figure 1-12: The archaeological site of Ujan.
 Photo credit: Google Earth. 2018 DigitalGlobe. Imagery date: 11/17/2017.



Figure 1-13: The Castle of Ujan.

The tower and part of the wall uncovered during the excavation are visible in the image.

Photo credit: Google Earth. 2019 DigitalGlobe. Imagery date: 3/20/2018.



Figure 1-14: The Castle of Ujan: The tower was unearthed during the excavation.

Photo credit: Velayati, *Report of the First Season*, 17.



Figure 1-15: The portal of Masjed-i Sifid (white mosque) of Aq Qalih.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 1-16: The interior of Masjed-i Sifid (white mosque) of Aq Qalih.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 1-17: The citadel and the fortified wall of the city of Aq Qalih.
Photo credit: Google Earth. 2019 CNES/Airbus. Imagery date: 11/3/2016.



Figure 1-18: Khar Balgas (Ordubalik), an urban site in the Orkhon Valley, Mongolia.
Photo credit: Fitzhugh, Rossabi, and Honeychurch, *Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire*, 147.



Figure 2-1: The 2018 satellite image of Ghazaniyya.
Photo credit: Google Earth. 2019 DigitalGlobe. Imagery date: 10/28/2018.



Figure 2-2: The 1968 aerial photo of Ghazaniyya.
Photo credit: Iran National Cartography Center.

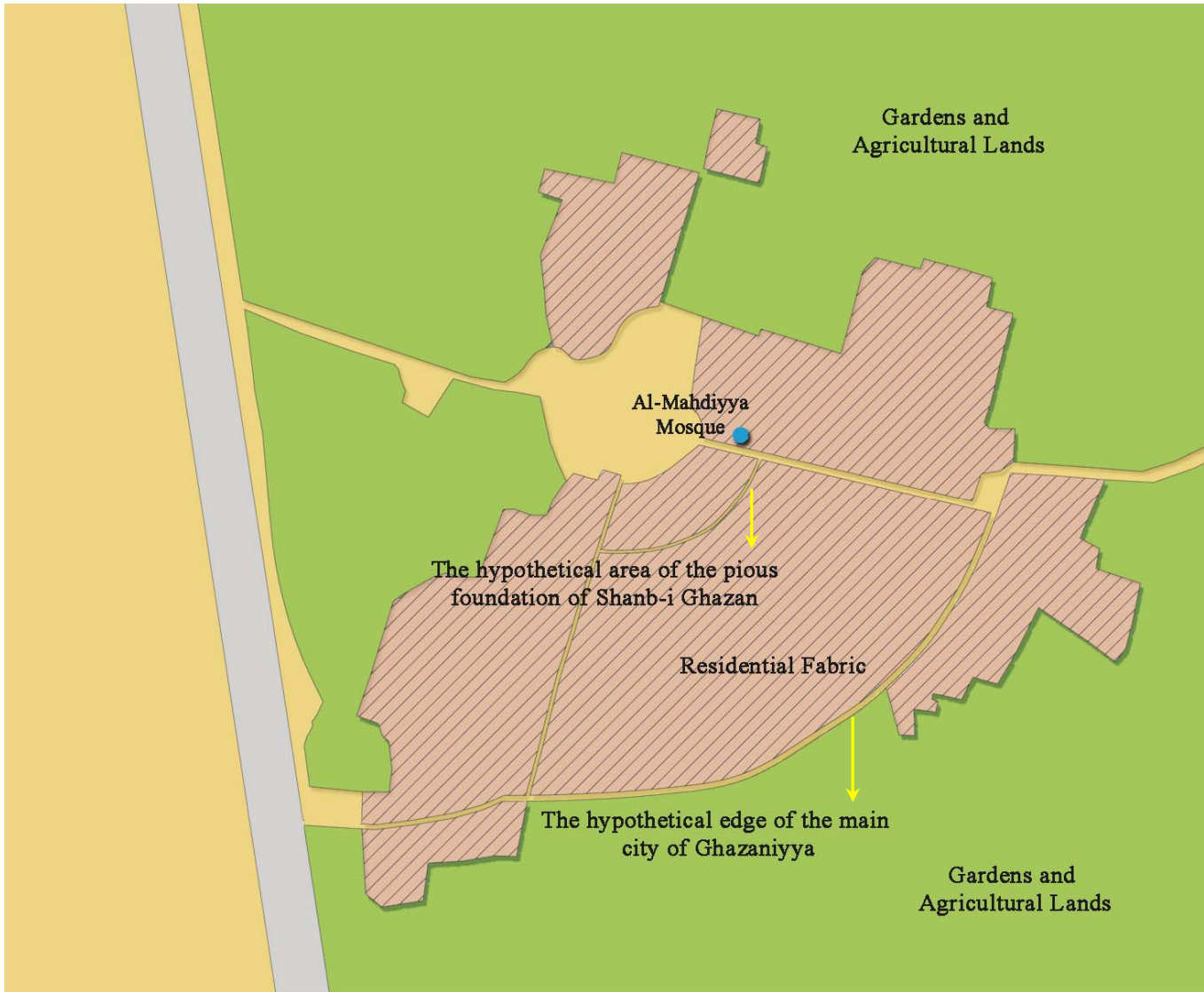


Figure 2-3: The outline of Ghazaniyya based on the 1968 aerial photo of the site.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 2-4: The grand mosque of al-Mahdiyya. According to the inscription the new mosque was built on the ruins of the Ilkhanid mosque.

Photo credit: Author.



Figure 2-5: The inscription of the grand mosque of al-Mahdiyya.

Photo credit: Author.



Figure 2-6: The grand mosque of al-Mahdiyya. The dark stones used in the lower parts of the walls seem to belong to an earlier building.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 2-7: The grand mosque of al-Mahdiyya. Two examples of the marks possibly put by stone carvers in the carving workshops.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 2-8: The plinth is currently kept in the cemetery of Ghazaniyya.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 2-9: The plinth is currently kept in the cemetery of Ghazaniyya.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 2-10: Shards of the potteries and tiles found in the modern neighborhood of Ghazaniyya.
Photo credit: Author (Courtesy of M. Besharat Ghazani).



Figure 2-11: A fragment of a brick found in the modern neighborhood of Ghazaniyya. The inscription of the brick is read "Ghazan Qa'an."
Photo credit: Author (Courtesy of M. Besharat Ghazani).

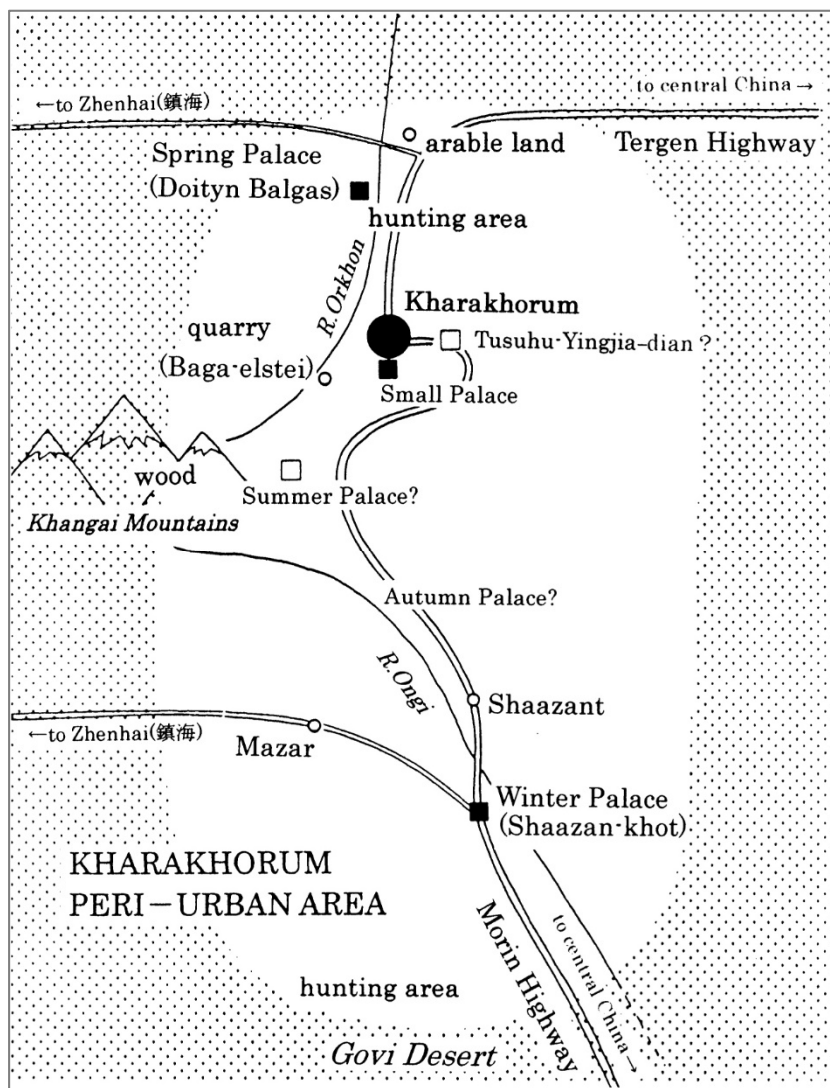


Figure 2-12: The Karakorum peri-urban area. The possible location of the seasonal palaces around Karakorum is marked on the map, however, Sira Ordu and Örmögatü have not been marked on the map. Photo credit: Shiraishi, "Seasonal Migrations," 115.

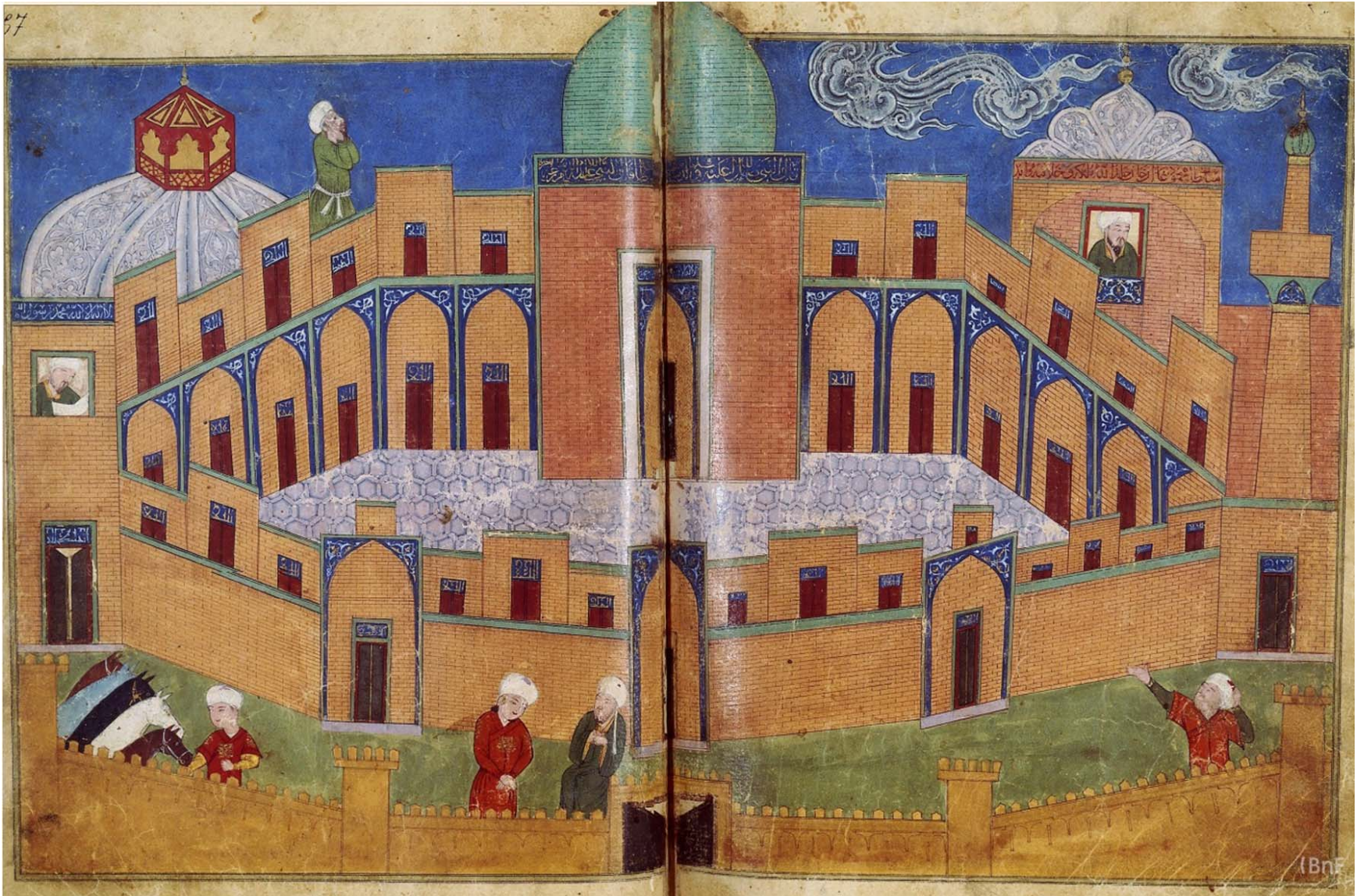


Figure 2-13: The pious foundation of Shanb-i Ghazan, from the *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, Herat, 1425.
Photo credit: Courtesy of Bibliothèque Nationale de France.



Figure 2-14: The satellite image of a tourist camp near Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia. The camp has been designed on the basis of traditional Mongolian camps; the main tent in the center surrounded by a group of smaller tents.
Photo credit: Google Earth. 2019 DigitalGlobe. Imagery date: 04/26/2018.



Figure 2-15: A tourist camp near Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia.
Photo credit: www.legendtour.mn



Figure 2-16: Chinggis Khan's camp. The tent of the khan surrounded by smaller tents.

Photo credit: Morgan, *The Mongols*, 36.

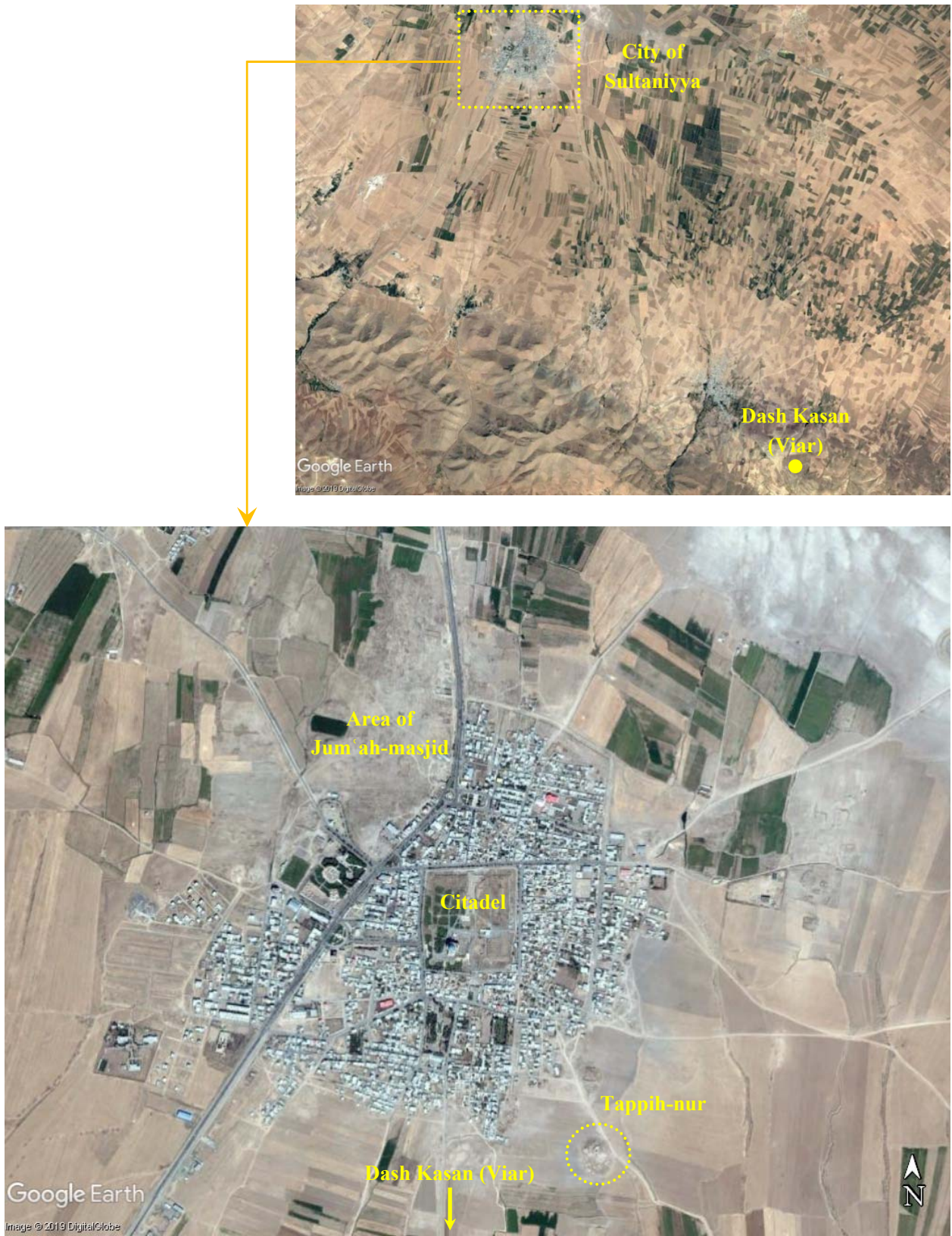


Figure 3-1: The location of the excavated sites are marked on the satellite image of Sultaniyya. Photo credit: Google Earth. 2019 DigitalGlobe. Imagery date: 9/19/2014.



Figure 3-2: The citadel of Sultaniyya. The walls, round towers, and Öljejtü's tomb are seen in the image. Photo credit: Google Earth. 2018 DigitalGlobe. Imagery date: 8/14/2013.



Figure 3-3: The passageway (north to south view). Photo credit: Author.



Figure 3-4: The northern gate, the passageway, and the inner courtyard.
Photo credit: Google Earth. 2019 DigitalGlobe. Imagery date: 9/19/2014.



Figure 3-5: The entrance of the inner courtyard situated in a semi-circular stone structure.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 3-6: The low-level oblique view of the northern gate, the passageway, and the inner courtyard.
Photo credit: Courtesy of the local archive of ICHTO located at the World Heritage Site of Sultaniyya.



Figure 3-7: The passageway and part of the inner courtyard uncovered during the excavation (south to north view).
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 3-8: The row of cells built along the wall and the room built inside tower B with a cruciform layout.
Photo credit: Google Earth. 2019 DigitalGlobe. Imagery date: 9/19/2014.



Figure 3-9: Tower B and the remains of the row of cells.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 3-10: The remnants of stucco decoration on the northern façade of the tomb.
Photo credit: Author.

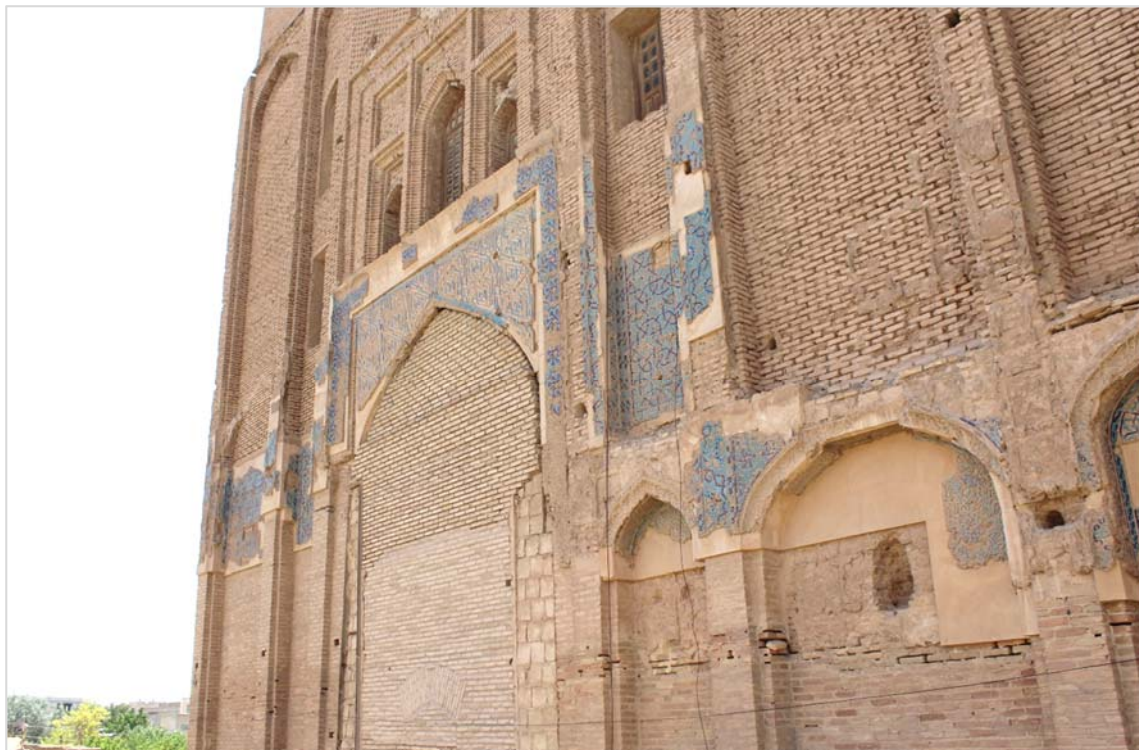


Figure 3-11: The remnants of tile-works on the eastern façade of the tomb.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 3-12: The eastern façade of Öljeytü’s tomb.
Photo credit: Author.

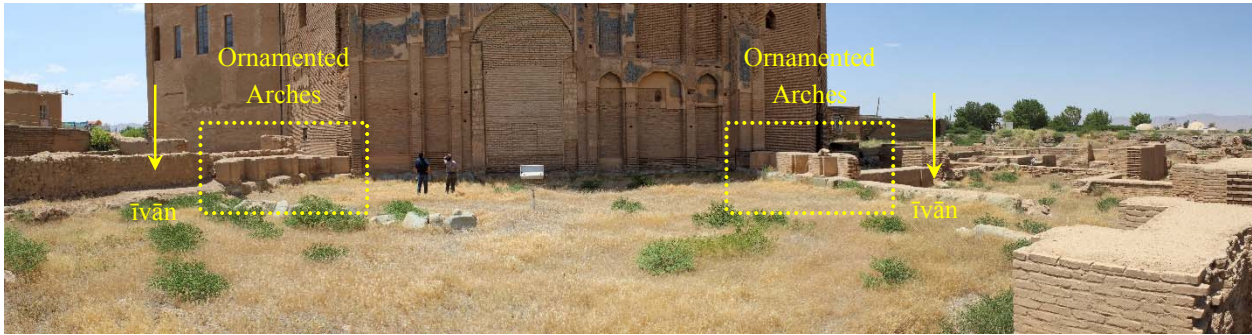


Figure 3-13: The courtyard in front of the eastern façade of the tomb.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 3-14: Flandin's drawing of Öljeytü's tomb, 1851. Turbat-khānih and the eastern façade are seen in the image. Photo credit: Flandin and Coste, *Voyage en Perse*.

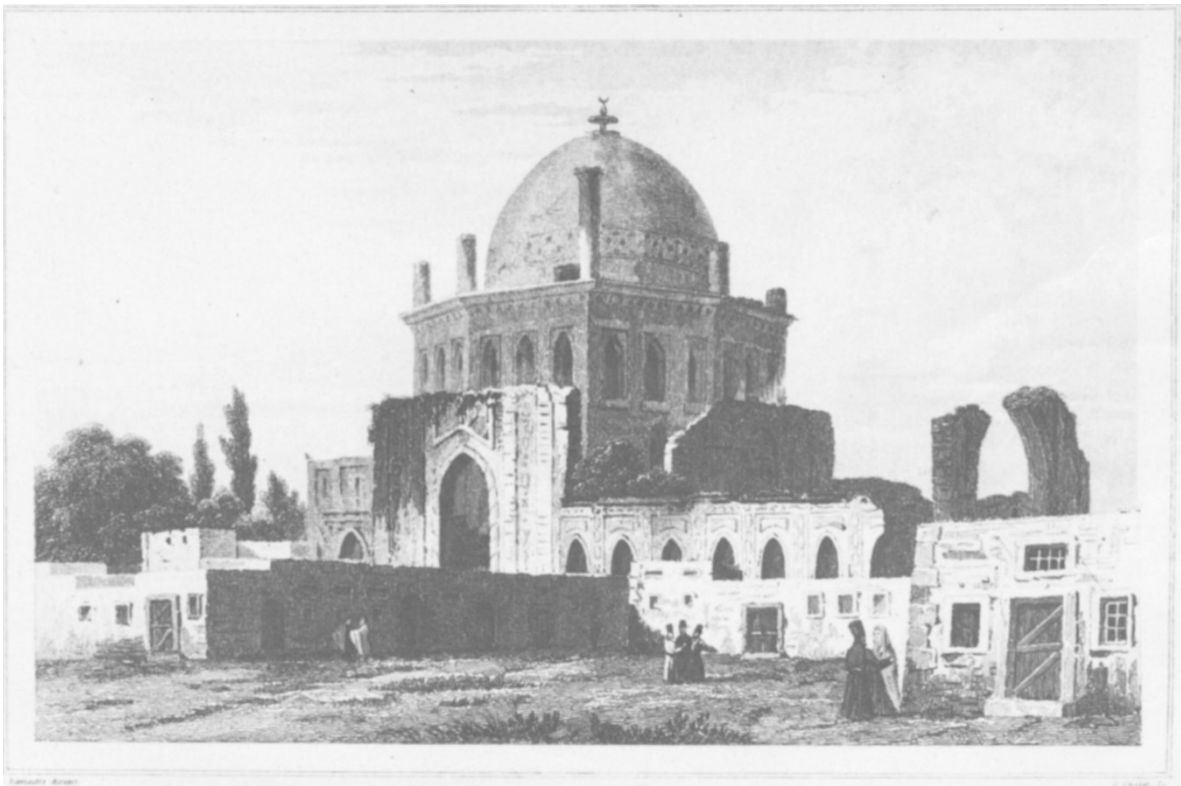


Figure 3-15: Dubeux's view of Öljeytü's tomb, 1841. Photo credit: Dubeux, *La Perse*.



Figure 3-16: The two-story catacomb (view from the second floor of Öljejtü's tomb).
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 3-17: The two-story catacomb.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 3-18: The Safavid mosque attached to the northern façade of the tomb.
Photo credit: Author.

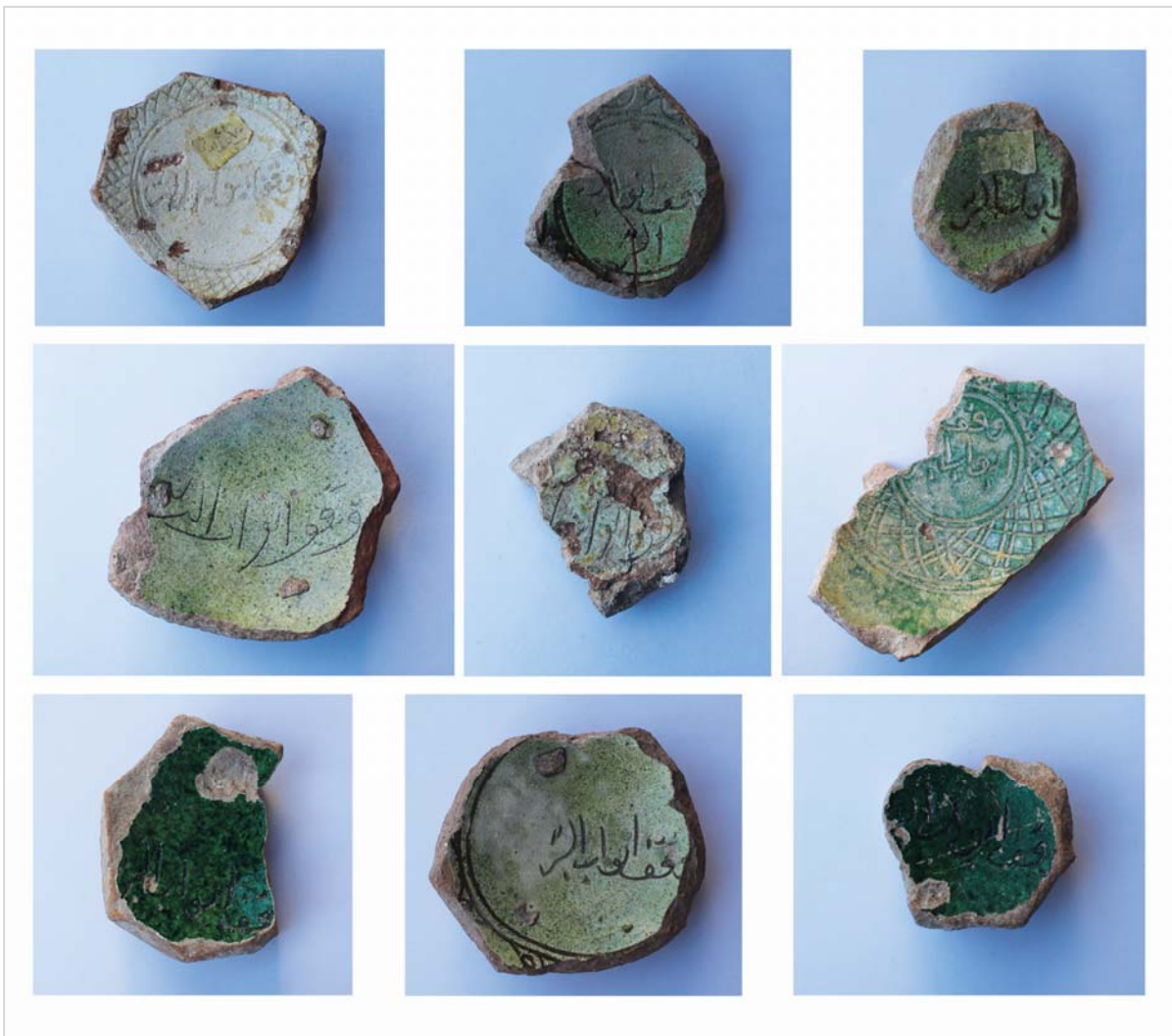


Figure 3-19: Some examples of the pottery shards inscribed with the phrase of *waqf-i abwāb al-birr* (endowed to the *abwāb al-birr*). The shards are preserved in the archaeological archive of ICHTO in Zanjan.
Photo credit: Author. Courtesy of the ICHTO of Zanjan.



Figure 3-20: Matrakçı Nasuh's miniature of Sultaniyya, 16th century. Yildiz T 5964. fols. 31b and 32a.

- a- The wall of the citadel
- b- Towers
- c- The tomb of Öljeitü
- d- The congregational mosque built by Öljeitü
- e- The bazaar of Sultaniyya
- f- Rashid al-Din's pious foundation (as suggested by Blair) or the dodecagonal building unearthed in the site of Tappih-nur
- g- The surface channel of the *qanāt* of Dar al-shafā.

Photo credit: Courtesy of Istanbul University Library.

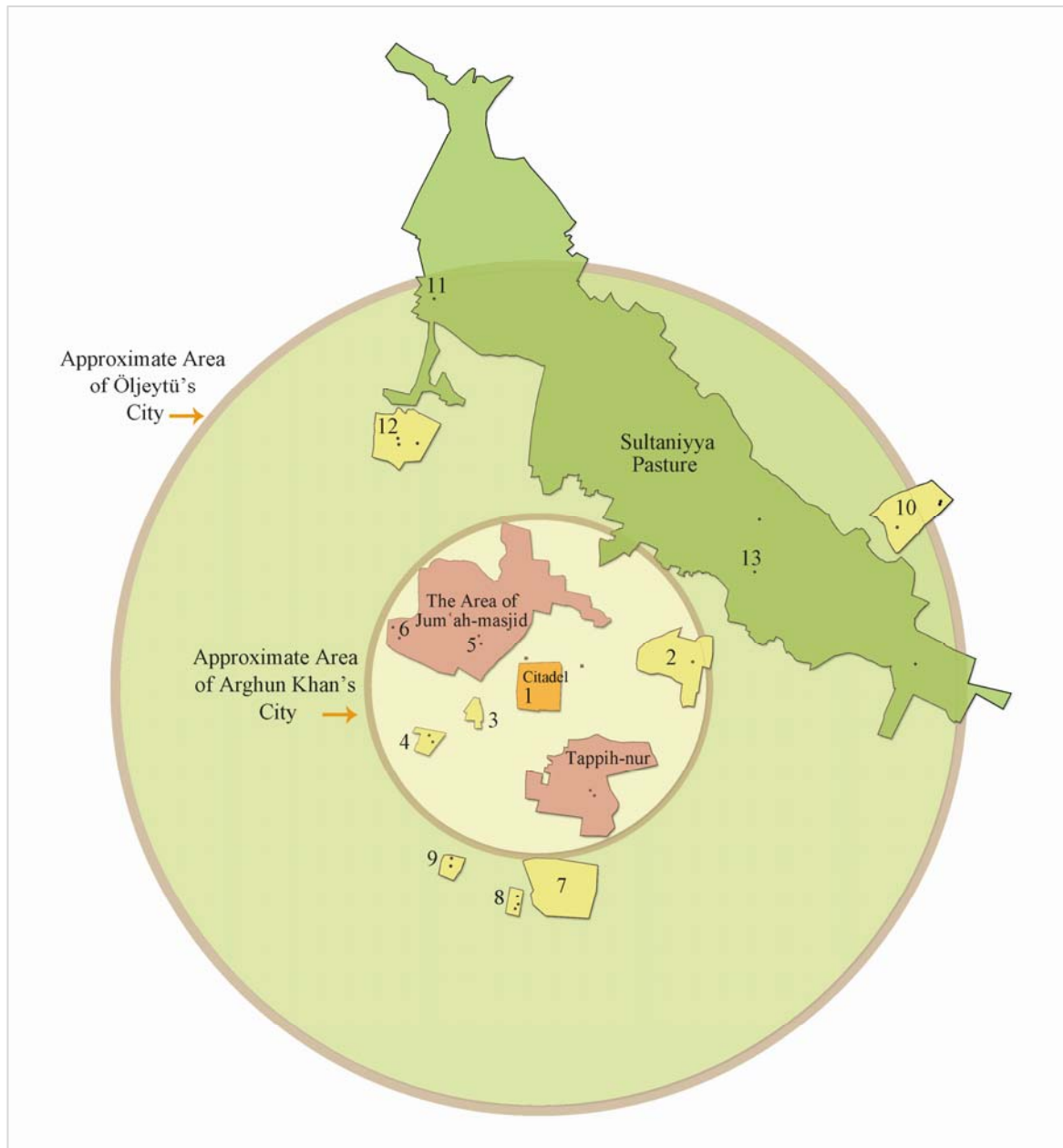


Figure 3-21: The hypothetical area of Sultaniyya under Arghun Khan and Öljeytü

- 1- Öljeytü's tomb
- 2- The site of Finjanabad
- 3- Maydan lands
- 4- Shaykh Buraq's tomb and khānqāh Cemetery
- 5- The shrine of Imam-zadih Abdullah
- 6- The Area of Jum'ah-masjid
- 7- The remains of the brick kilns
- 8- The mausoleum of Mulla Hassan Kashi
- 9- The area of Qush-khanih
- 10- Carvan-gah (or Tappih-yi caravanserai)
- 11- Uch-tappih
- 12- Tappih-qal'ih
- 13- Mustafa-Khan plain.

Photo credit: Author (Drawing based on the map of the city of Sultaniyya generated by B. Boroumandi, 2005. Courtesy of the local archive of ICHTO located at the World Heritage Site of Sultaniyya).

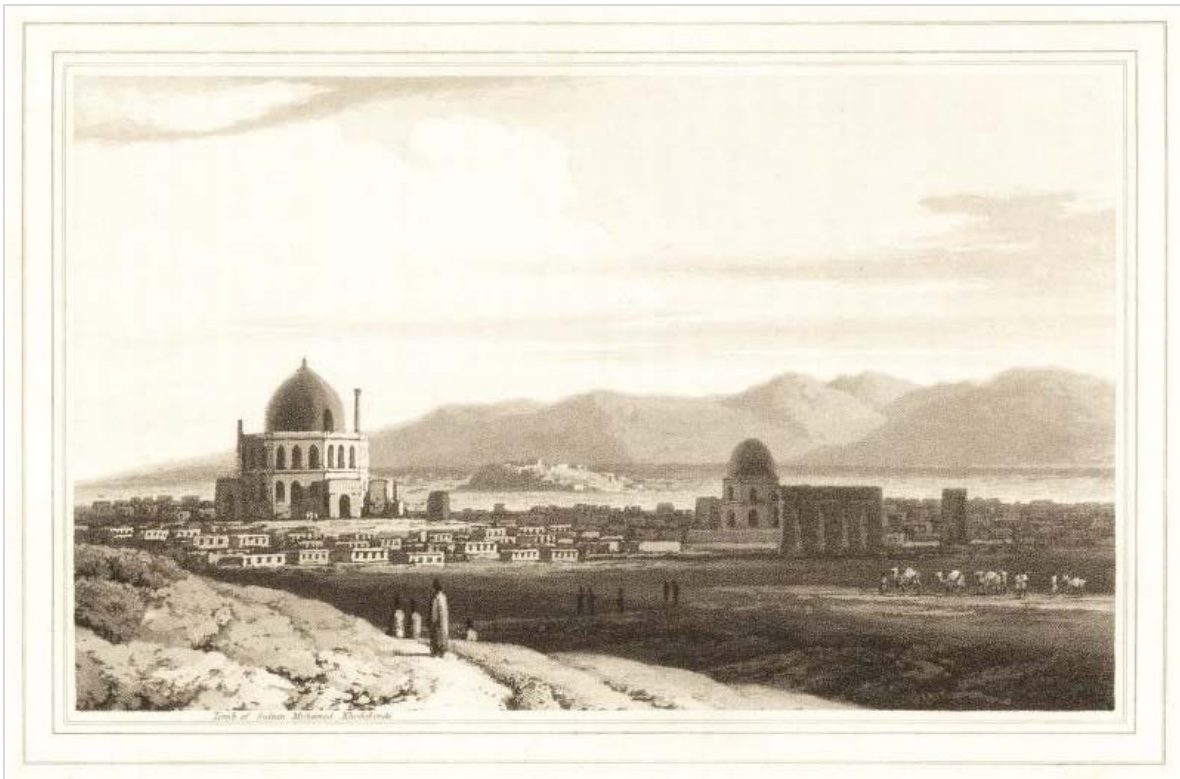


Figure 3-22: James Morier's view of the city of Sultaniyya.
Photo credit: Morier, *Journey through Persia*.

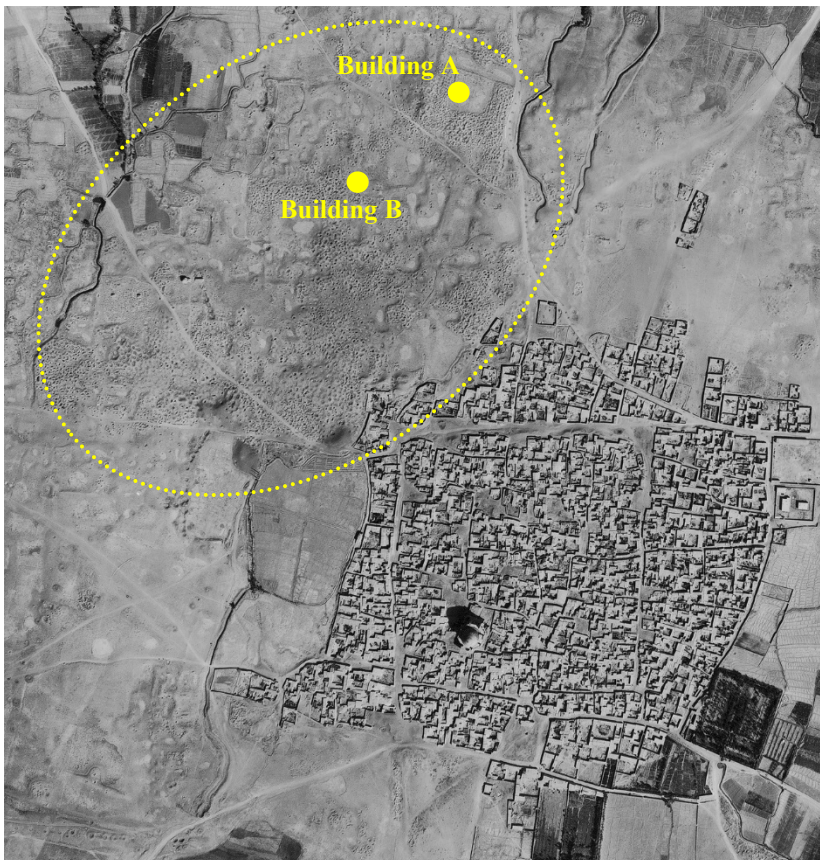


Figure 3-23: The aerial photo of Sultaniyya taken in 1964.
The site of Jum'ah-masjid is located northwest of Sultaniyya.
Photo credit: Iran National Cartography Center.

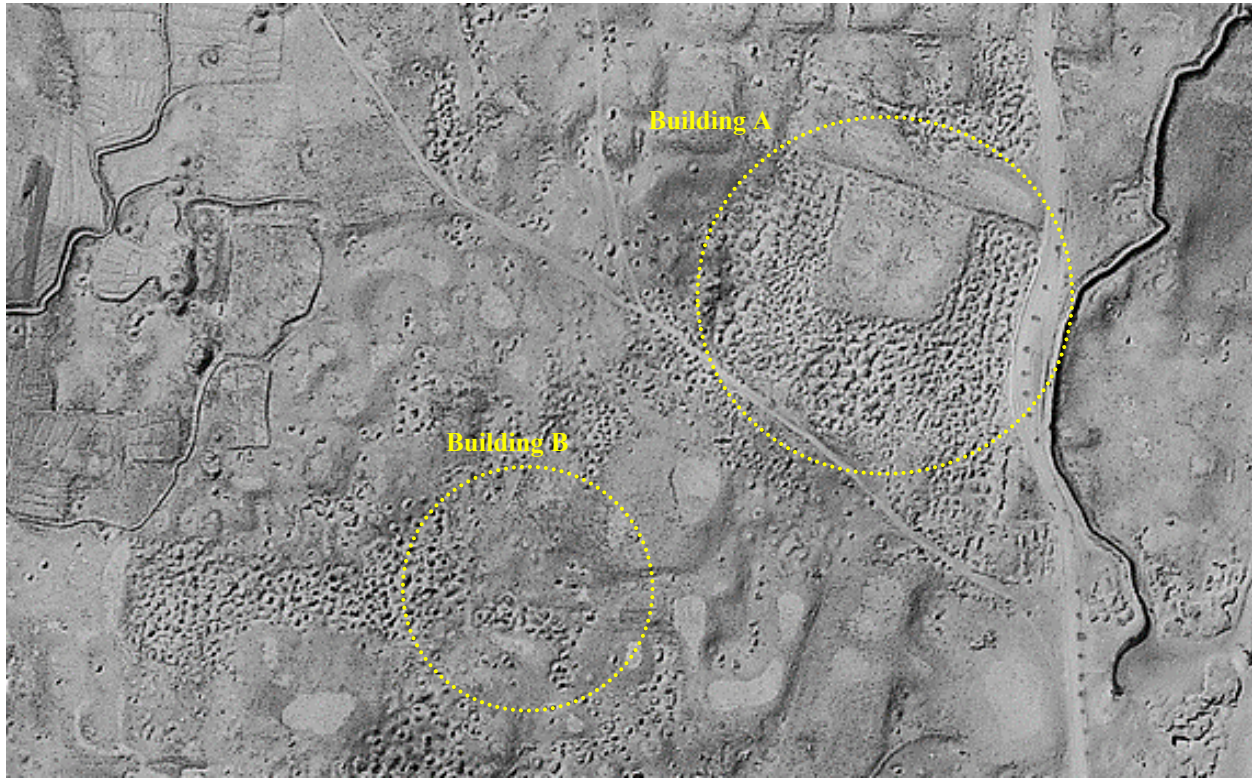


Figure 3-24: The location of Building A and Building B on the 1964 aerial photo of the site of Jum'ah-masjid. Photo credit: Iran National Cartography Center.



Figure 3-25: The location of Building A and Building B on the 2014 satellite image of the site of Jum'ah-masjid. Photo credit: Google Earth. 2019 DigitalGlobe. Imagery date: 9/19/2014.



Figure 3-26: The low-level oblique view of the site of Tappih-nur and the dodecagonal building on the top.
Photo credit: Courtesy of the local archive of ICHTO located at the World Heritage Site of Sultaniyya.



Figure 3-27: The dodecagonal building; Tappih-nur.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 3-28: Mustafa-Khan plain and the traces of two concentric channels dug in the ground.
Photo credit: Google Earth. 2019 DigitalGlobe. Imagery date: 9/19/2014.



Figure 3-29: The approximate path of the surface channels of the *qanāts*.
Regenerated after Muhammadi 2004.
Photo credit: Google Earth. 2019 DigitalGlobe. Imagery date: 9/19/2014.



Figure 3-30: The rock-cut complex known as Dash Kassan (Viar) temple.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 3-31: The rock-cut panel with the design of dragons; Dash Kassan (Viar).
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 3-32: An unfinished stone inscription; Dash Kassan (Viar).
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 3-33: The carved fragments scattered all over the complex; Dash Kassan (Viar).
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 3-34: The stone head uncovered in the main court of Dash Kassan (Viar).
Photo credit: Courtesy of the ICHTO of Zanjan.

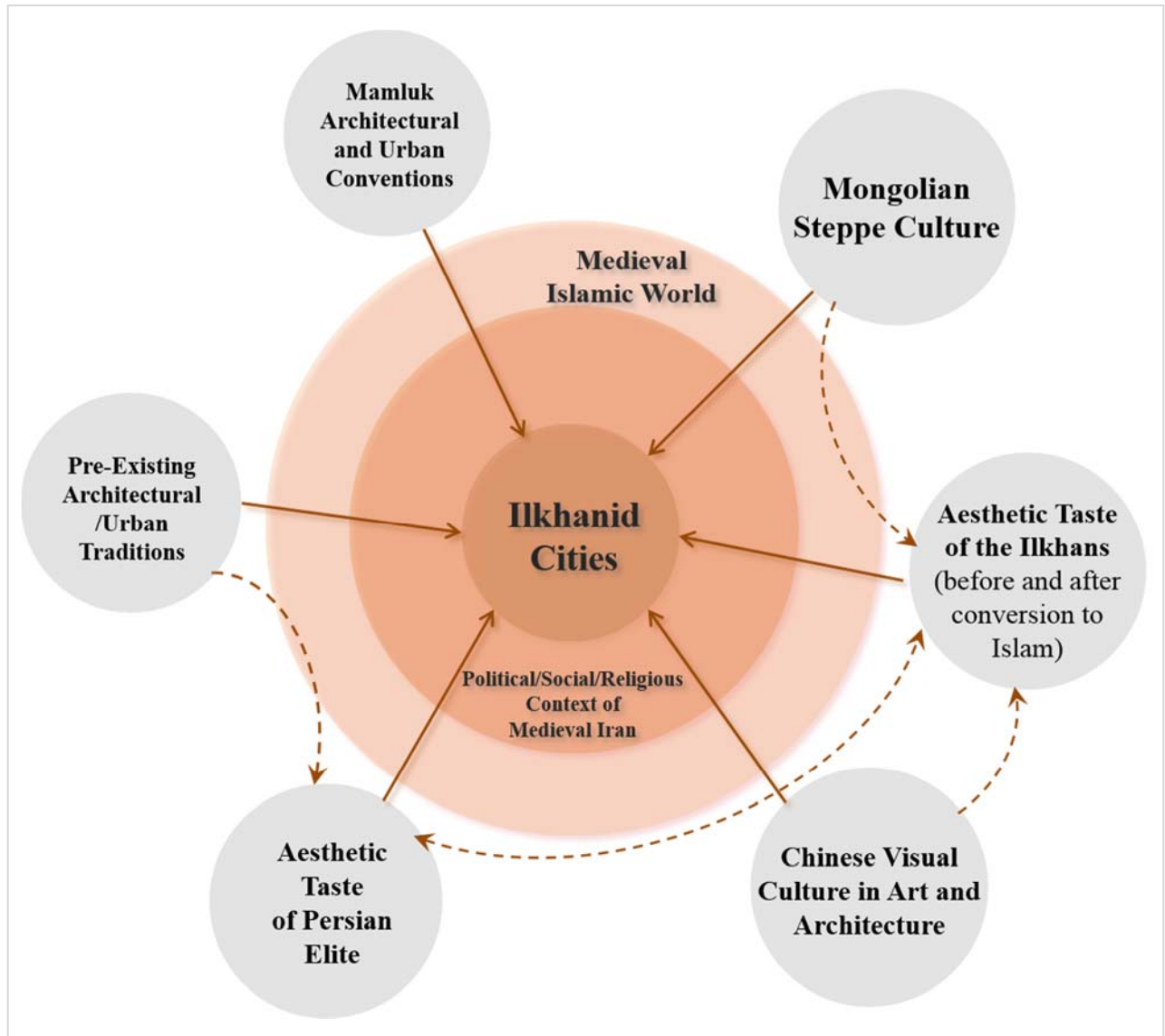


Diagram 4-1: The complex network of interactions between different local and global forces affecting the formation of the Ilkhanid cities.

Photo credit: Author.

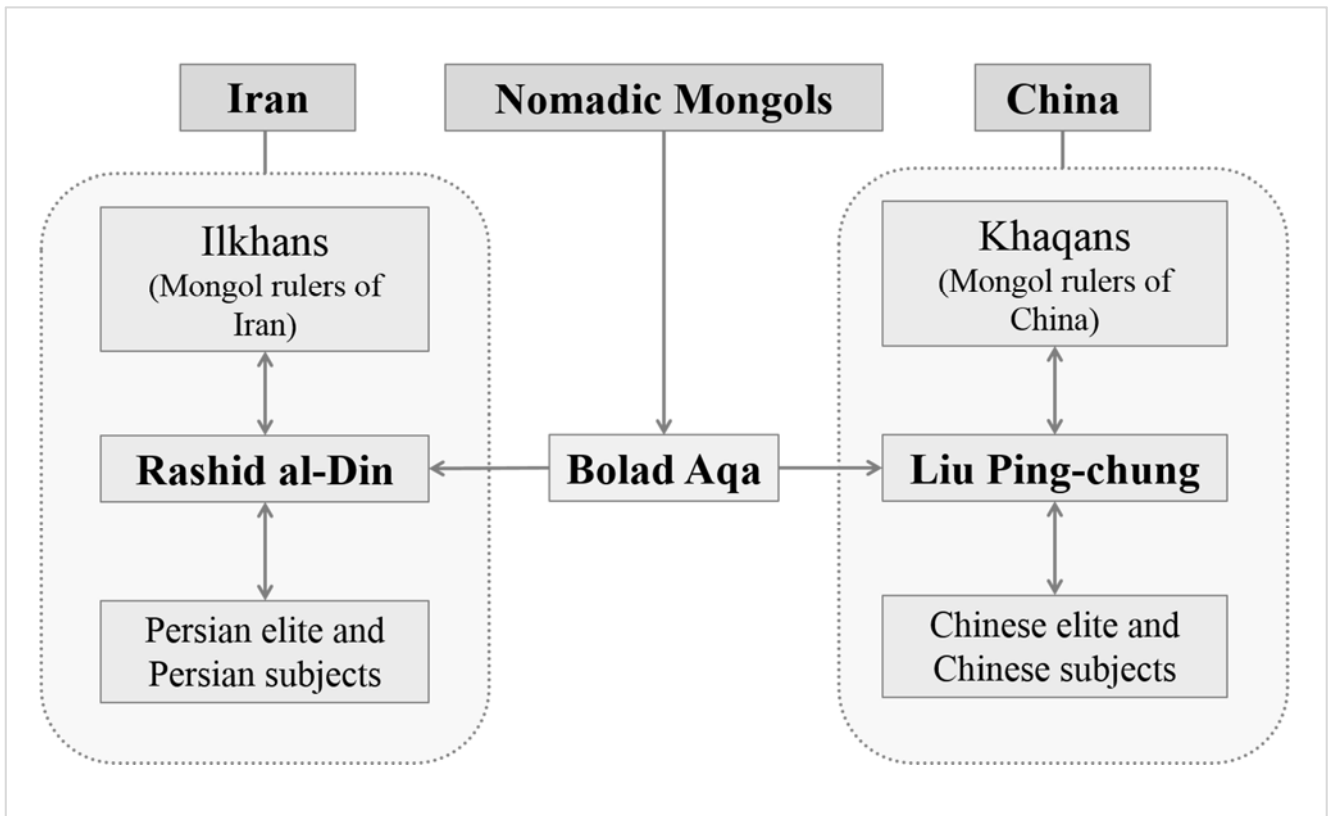


Diagram 4-2: The schema represents the possible connections between the three political agents Rashid al-Din, Bolad Aqa, and Liu Ping-chung.

Photo credit: Author.



Figure 5-1: The Mongol khanates and the Yuan dynasty, ca. 1276.
 Photo credit: Watt, *World of Khubilai Khan*.



Figure 5-2: The Yuan dynasty, ca. 1330.
 Photo credit: Watt, *World of Kubilai Khan*.

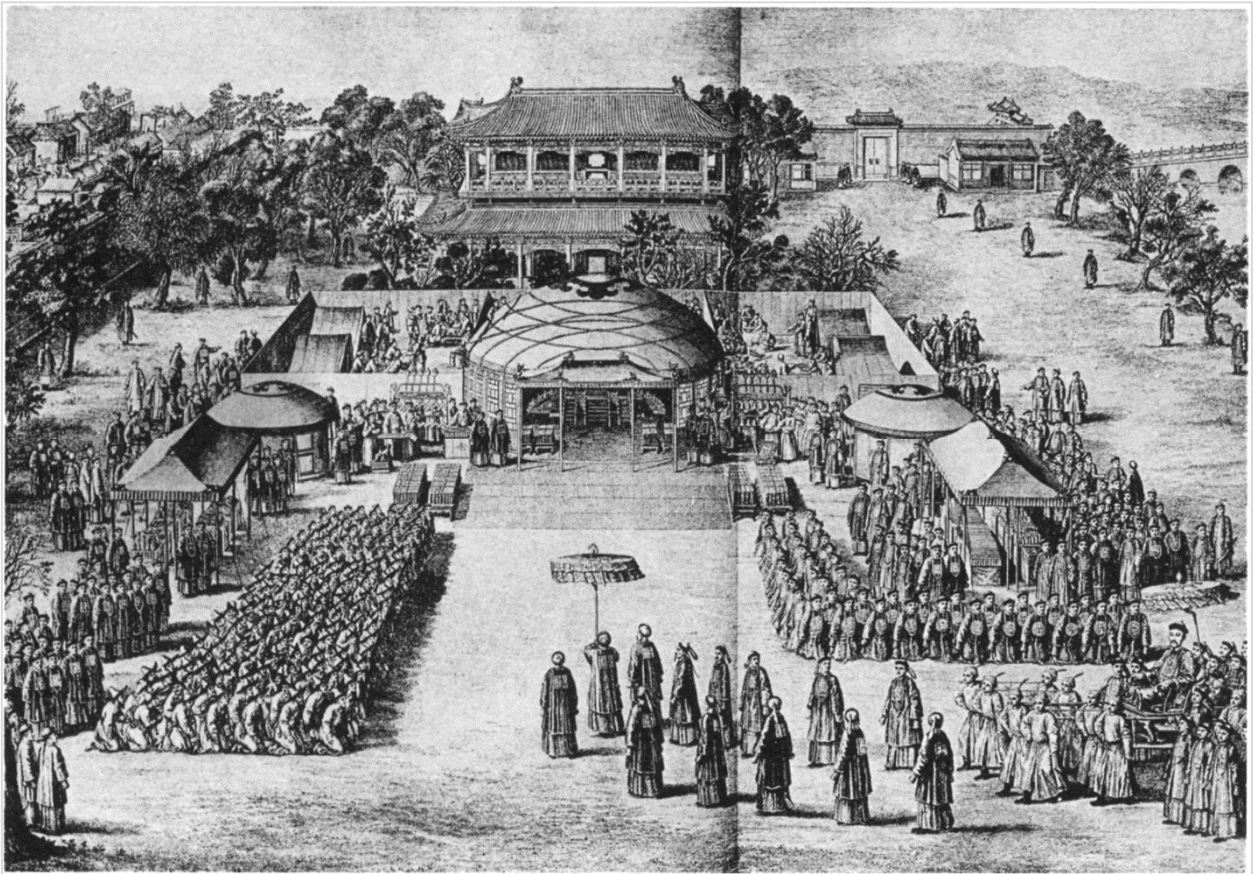


Figure 5-3: Ceremonial yurts of the Manchu Emperor of China in 1760. Although the engraving depicts an imperial scene much later than the Yuan dynasty, the juxtaposition of the tent (yurt) and the imperial hall in the background gives an idea of the “tent dwelling section” in the imperial cities of the Mongols.
Photo credit: Cammann, “Symbolism of the Cloud Collar.”

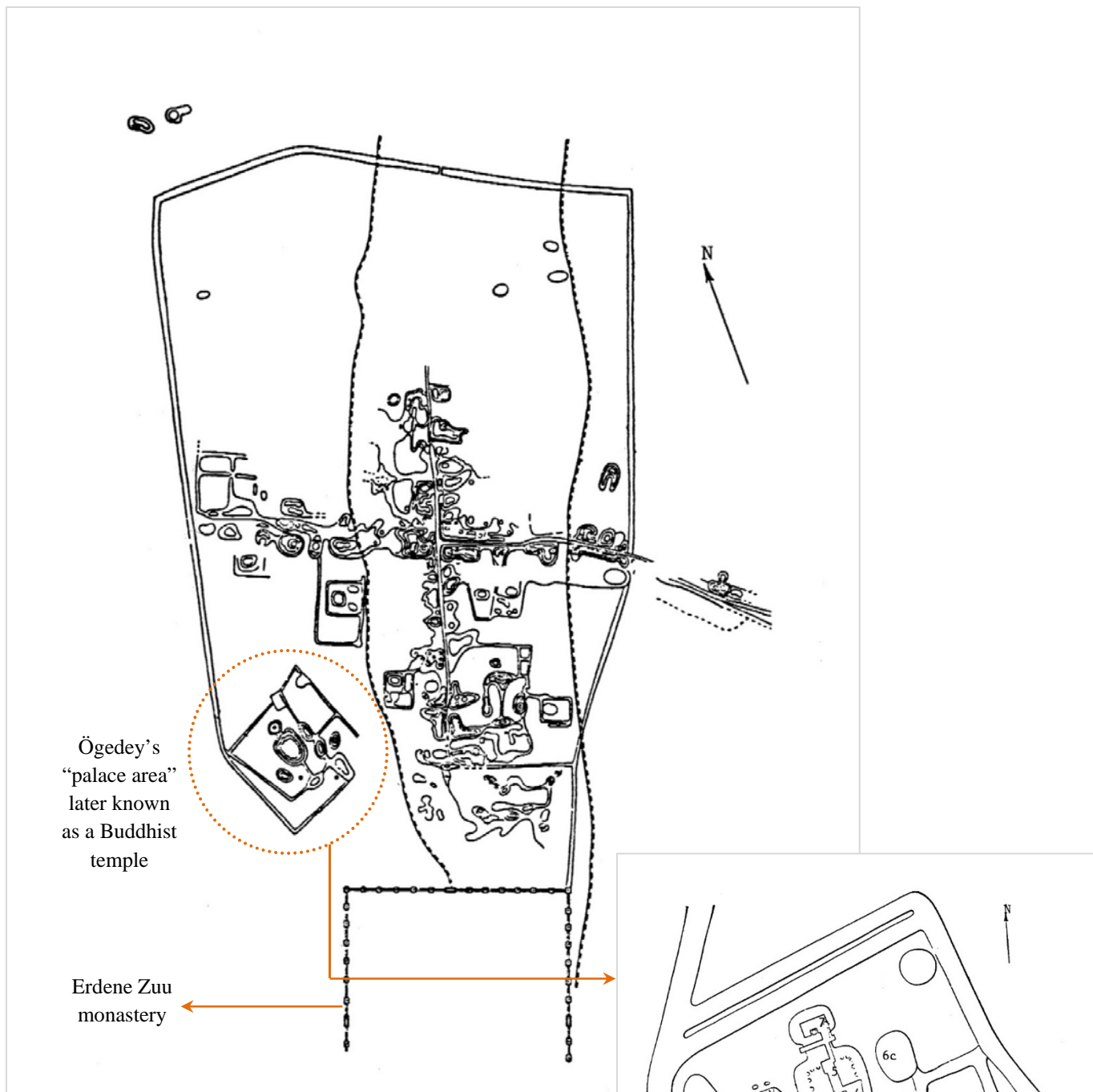


Figure 5-4: The plan of Karakorum at the time of Ögedey and Ögedey's so-called "palace area" or Buddhist temple:

- 1. Gate 2. Gate 3. Hall 4. Hall 5. Hall 6a-d. Mounds (for tents) 7. Mound for tents 8. Gate-Tower

Photo credit: Steinhardt, "Imperial Architecture along the Mongolian Road," 80.



Figure 5-5: The satellite image of Ögedey's "palace area." The halls have been unearthed. Photo credit: Google Earth. 2019. CNES/Airbus. Imagery date: 4/22/2018.



Figure 5-6: One of the stone turtles found in the site of Karakorum. Photo credit: Google Earth. John Stampfi.



Figure 5-7: Two fragments of a mural with figures recovered from the ruins of Karakorum. Photo credit: Watt, *World of Khubilai Khan*, 22.

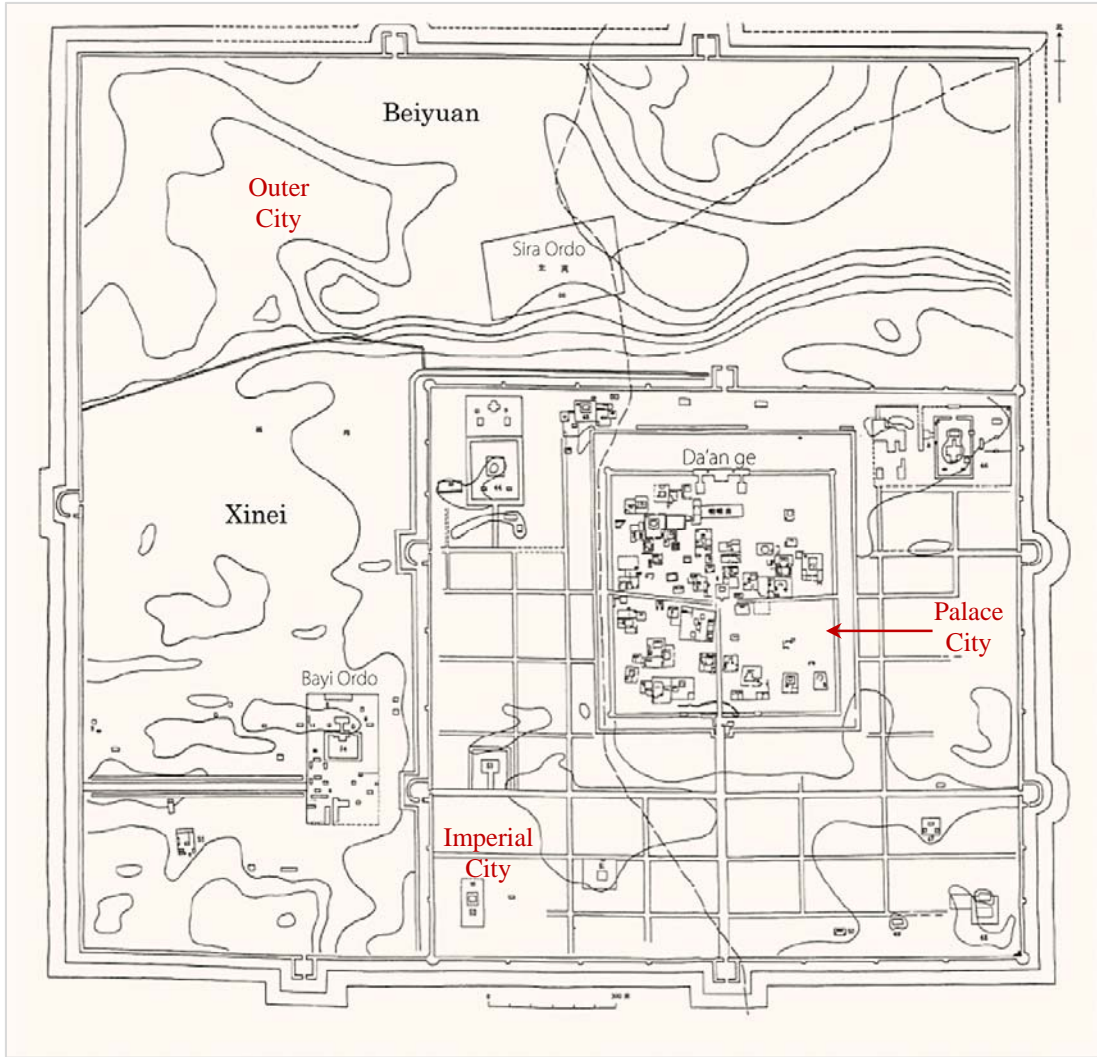


Figure 5-8: The Mongol city of Shangdu.
Photo credit: Masuya, "Seasonal Capitals," 240.

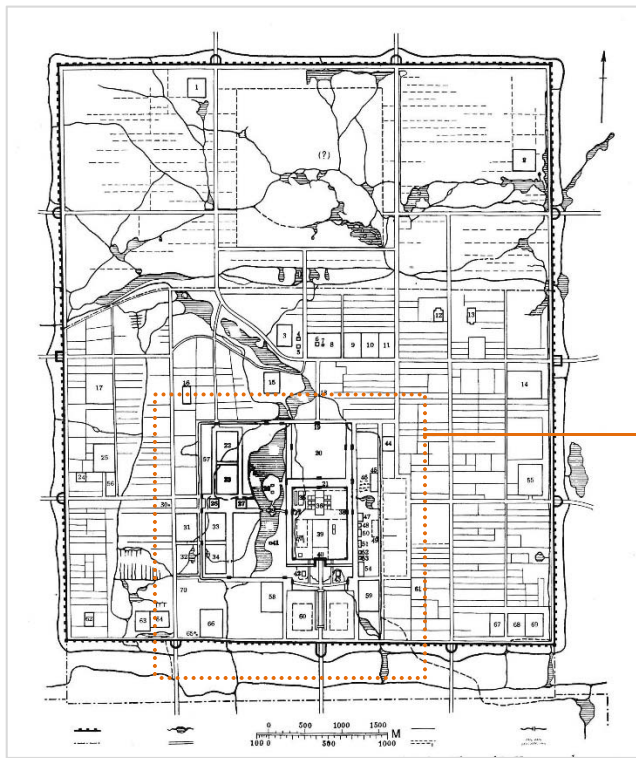


Figure 5-9: The Mongol city of Daidu.

Photo credit: Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning*, 157.

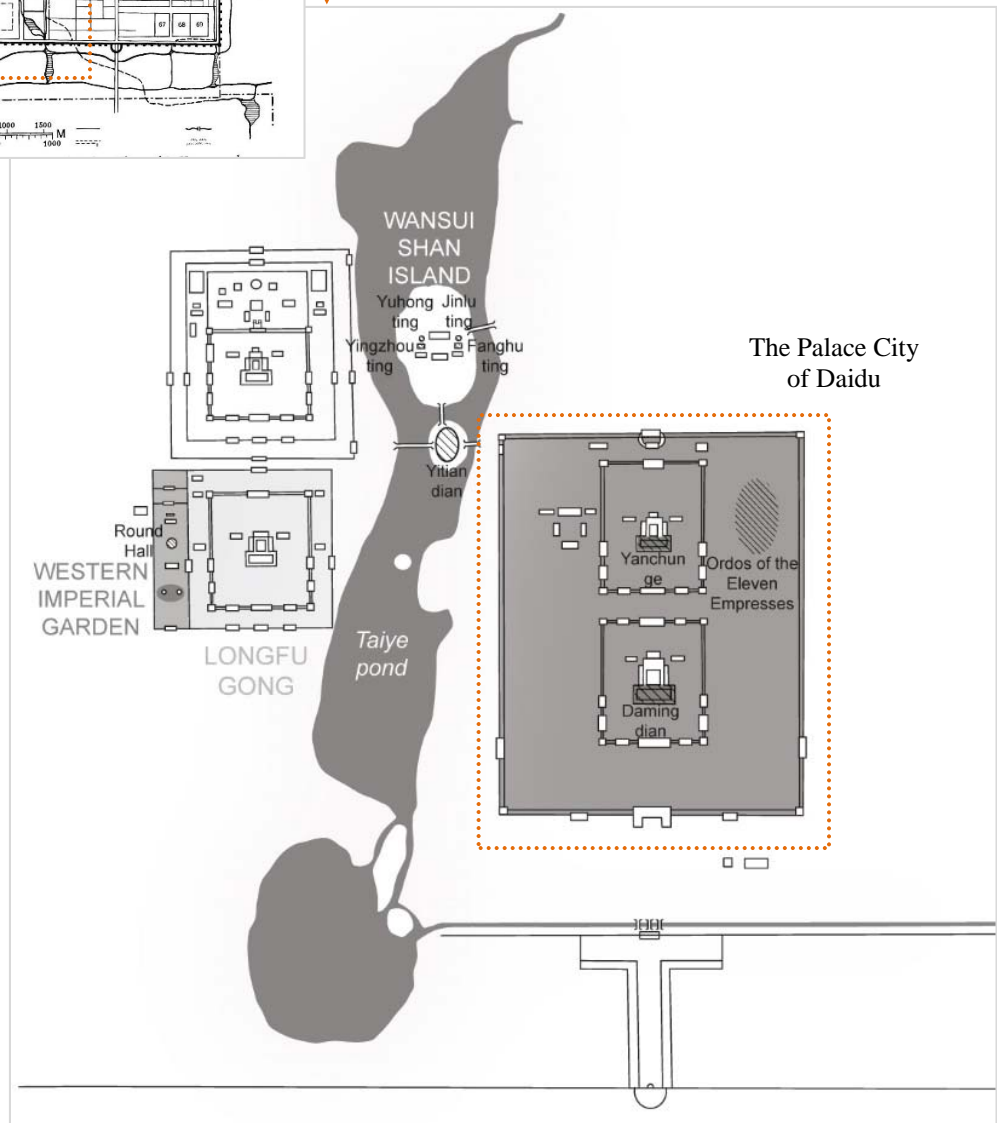


Figure 5-10: The imperial sector of Daidu.

Photo credit: Masuya, "Seasonal Capitals," 237.

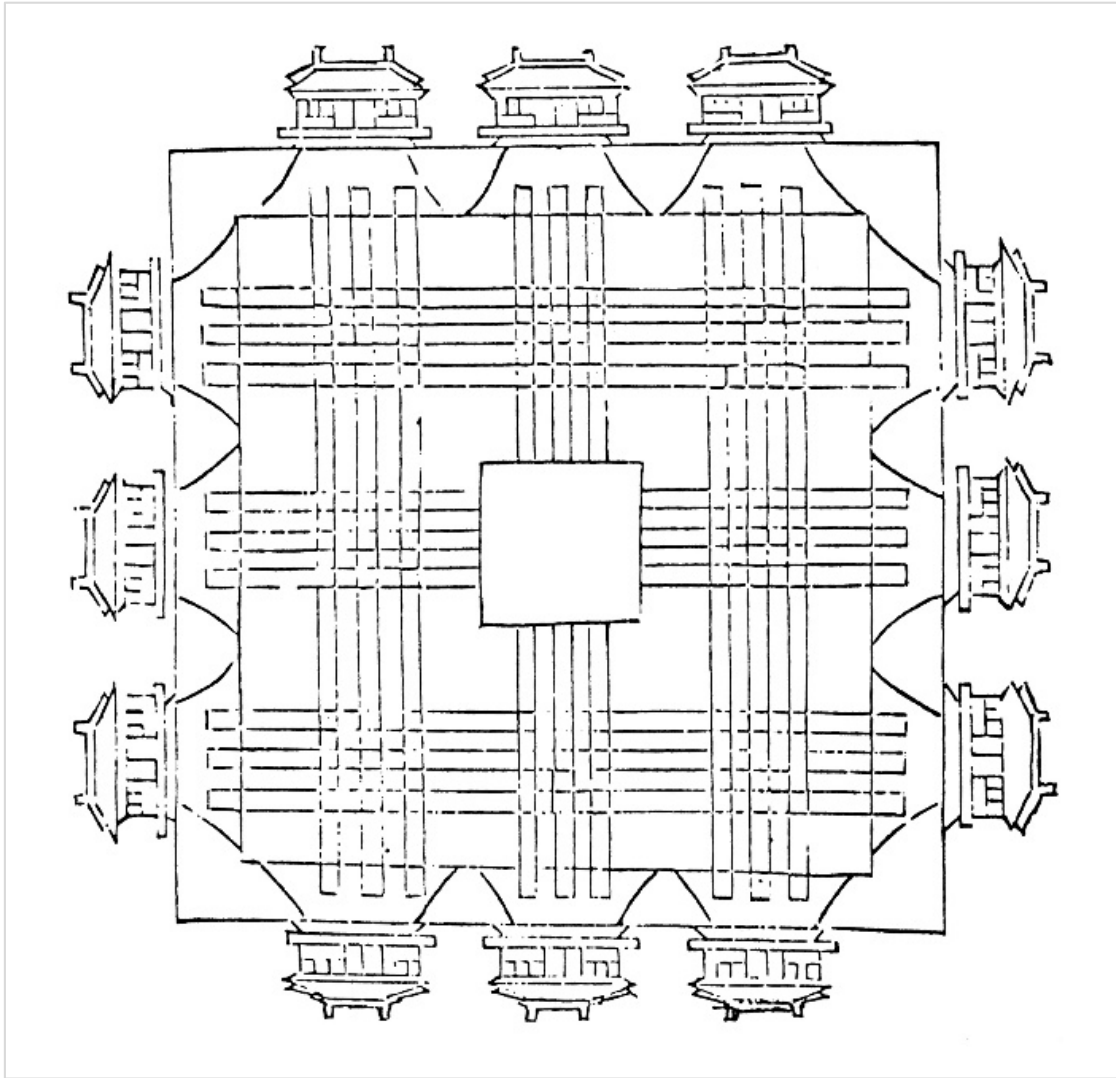


Figure 5-11: Plan of the city of state of the King of Zhou.
Photo credit: Steinhardt, "Plan of Khubilai Khan's
Imperial City," 146.

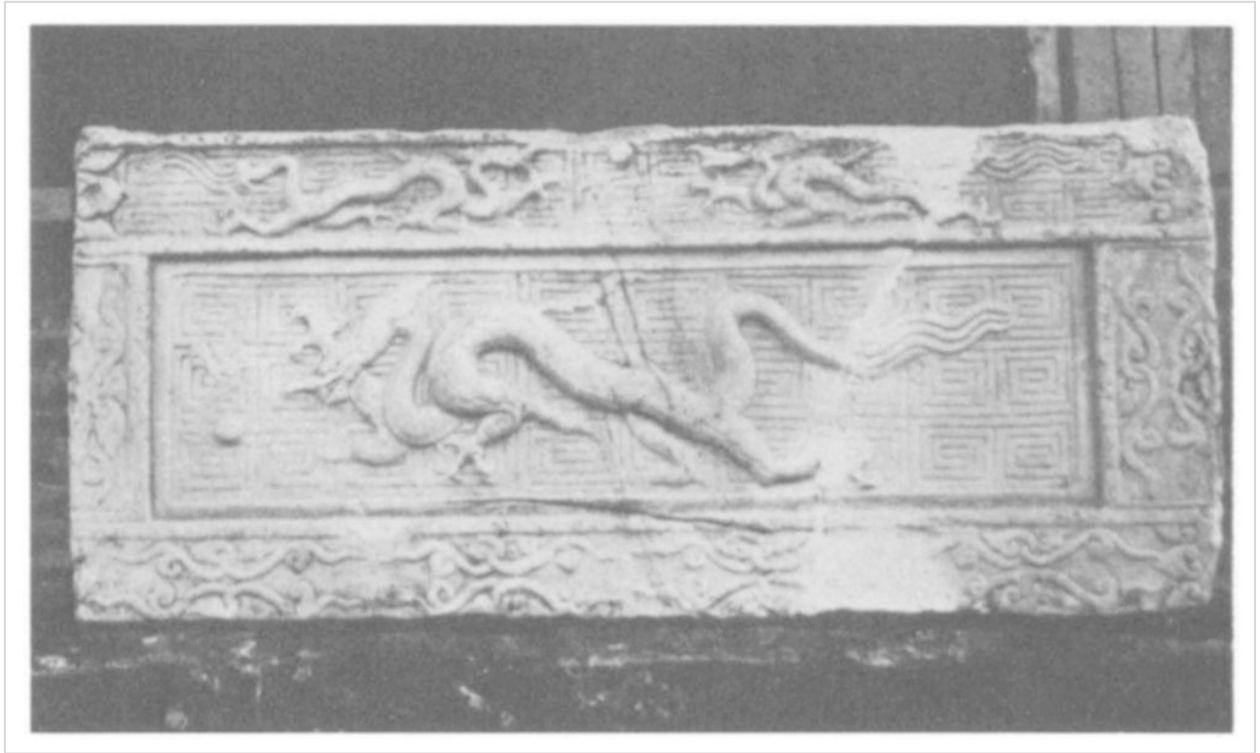


Figure 5-14: Dragon carved on marble slab from remains of Daidu.
Photo credit: Steinhardt, "Toward the Definition," 63.

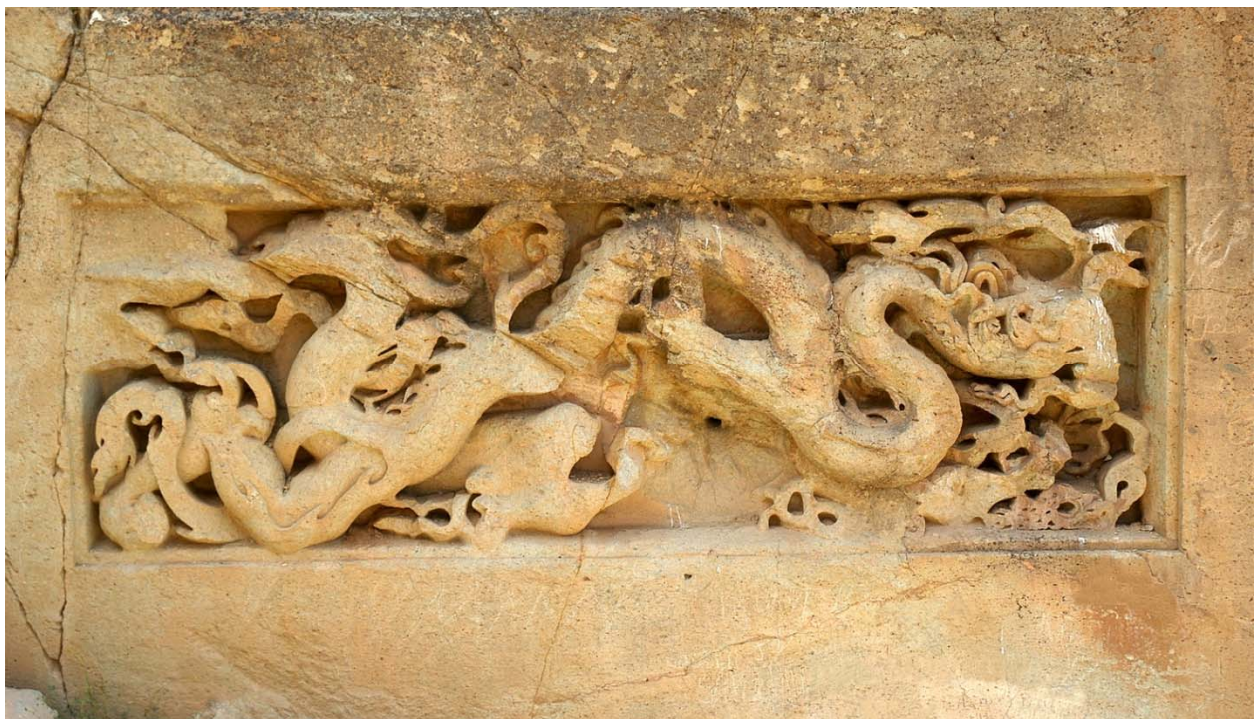


Figure 5-15: The rock-cut panel with the design of dragons, Dash Kassan (Viar) complex.
Photo credit: Courtesy of the local archive of ICHTO located at the World Heritage Site of Sultaniyya.



Figure 6-1: *Dragons chasing flaming pearls.*
Silk tapestry (kesi), Central Asia, 13th century or earlier.
Photo credit: Courtesy of The Cleveland Museum of Art.



Figure 6-2: *Lions with palmettes.*
Silk tapestry (kesi), Central Asia, Mongol period, 13th century or earlier
Photo credit: Courtesy of The Cleveland Museum of Art.



Figure 6-3: Interior decoration of Öljaitü's tomb.
Photo credit: Author.



Figure 6-4: *Preparations for a festival.*
An illustration of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, Diez A, fol. 70, 14th century.
Photo credit: Courtesy of Staatsbibliothek Berlin.

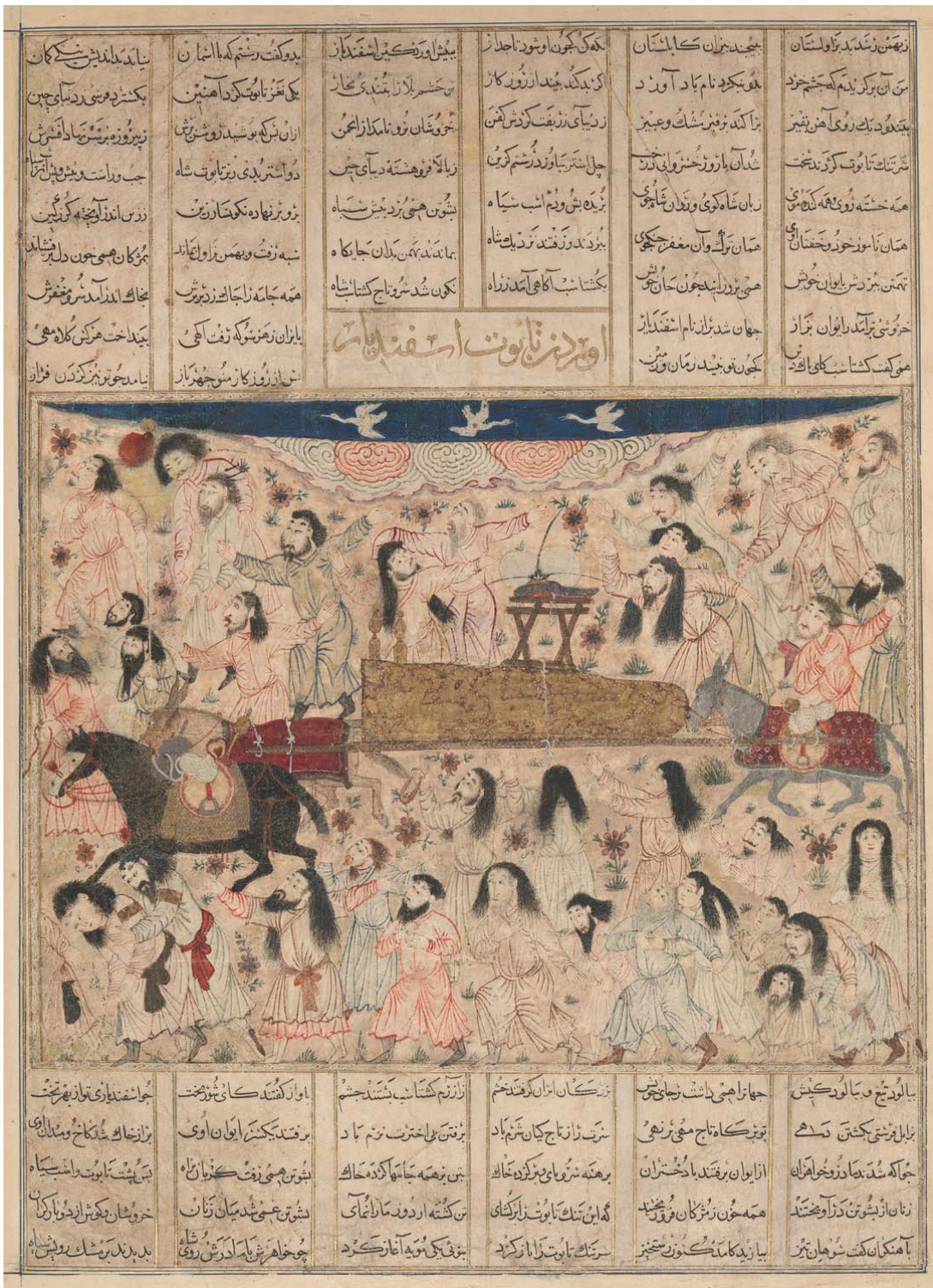


Figure 6-5: *The funeral of Isfandiyar*. Folio from a *Shahnama*, 14th century. Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, MS. 1933 (33-70).
Photo credit: Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

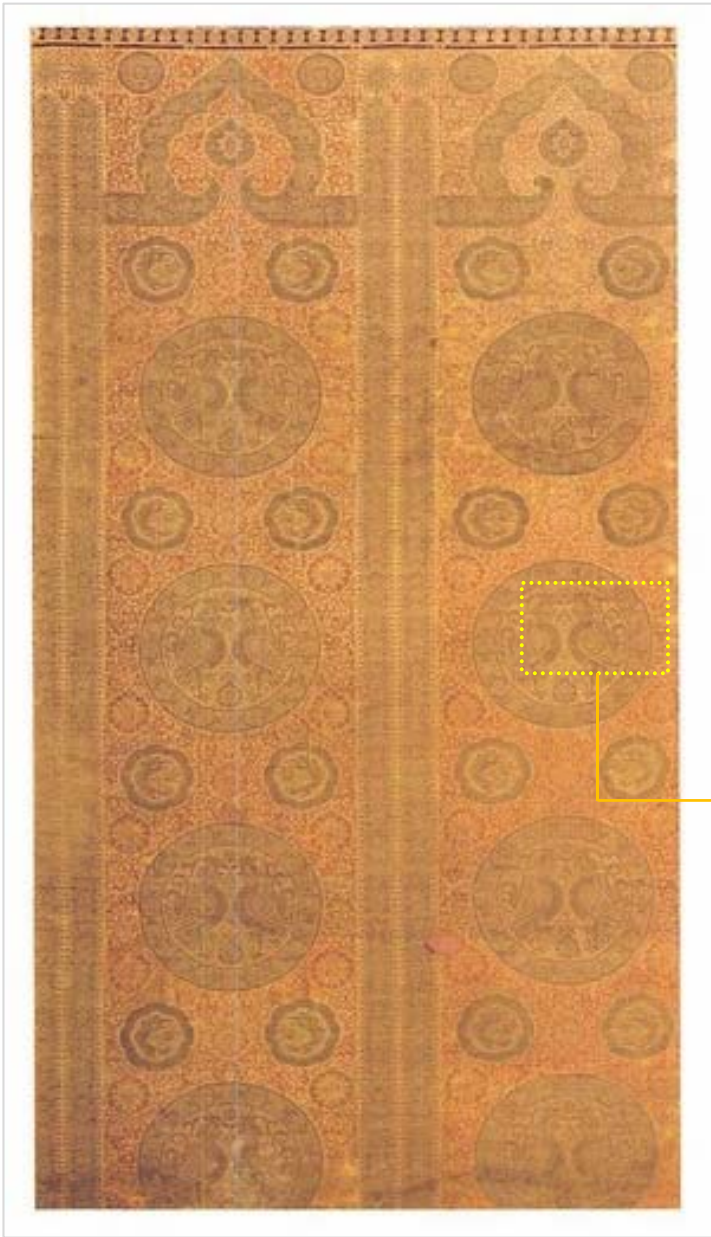


Figure 6-6: Tent hanging.
Silk lampas with gold thread, Eastern Iran or Central Asia, late 13th-early 14th century.
Photo credit: Courtesy of the Museum of Islamic Art, Qatar.



Figure 6-7: Tent hangings. Reconstruction of Figure 6-6 as it would have been used to cover the inner surface of a tent.
Photo credit: Courtesy of the Museum of Islamic Art, Qatar, Thompson, *Silk: 13th to 18th Centuries*, 13.

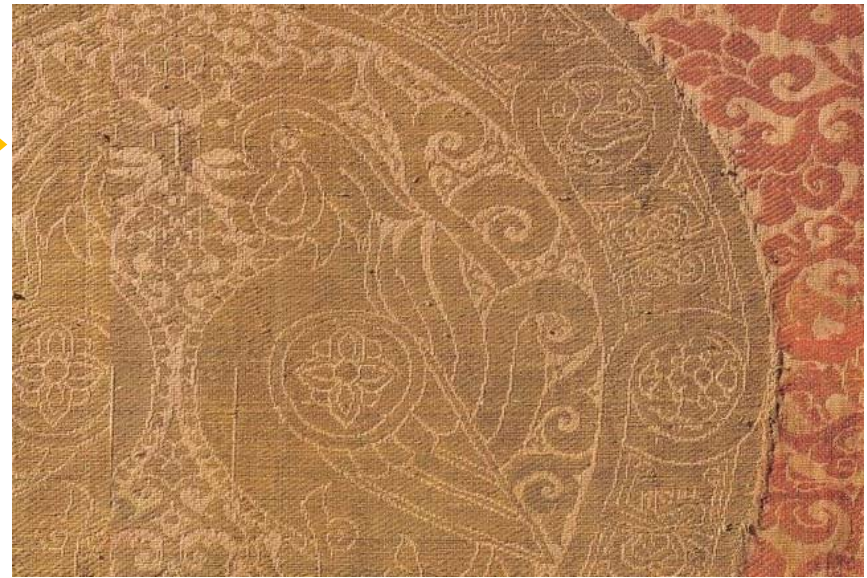




Figure 6-8: An inlaid brass boss. Western Iran, early 14th century.
Photo credit: Courtesy of Keir Collection, England.

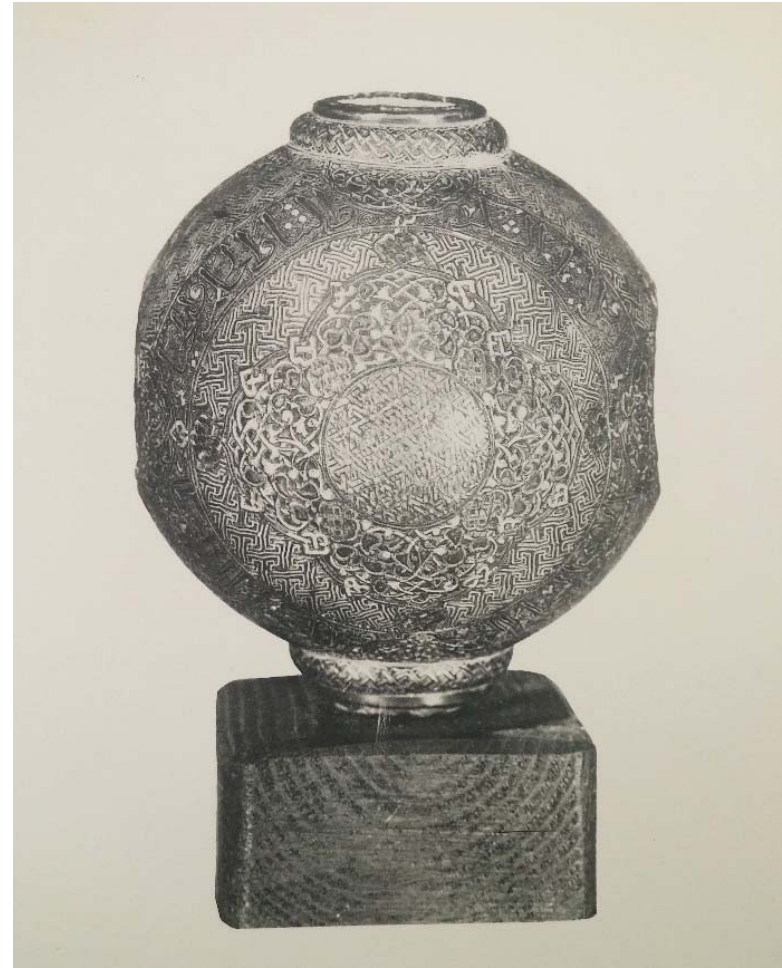


Figure 6-9: A ball joint with inscriptions.
Photo credit: Courtesy of the Islamic Art Museum in Cairo.



Figure 6-10: The tomb of Sultan Sanjar at Marv.

Photo credit: <https://www.advantour.com/fr/turkmenistan/merv/sultan-sandzhar.htm>.



Figure 6-11: The interior of the tomb of Sultan Sanjar at Marv.

Photo credit: <https://www.advantour.com/fr/turkmenistan/merv/sultan-sandzhar.htm>.



Figure 6-12: *The bier of Alexander*. Folio from the *Great Mongol Shahnama*, 14th century.

Page 57.6 × 39.7 cm; painting 25 × 29 cm.

Photo credit: Courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, MS.38.3.



Figure 6-13: The crypt of Öljaitü's tomb.
Photo credit: Photo ISNA, Pouria Pakizeh.

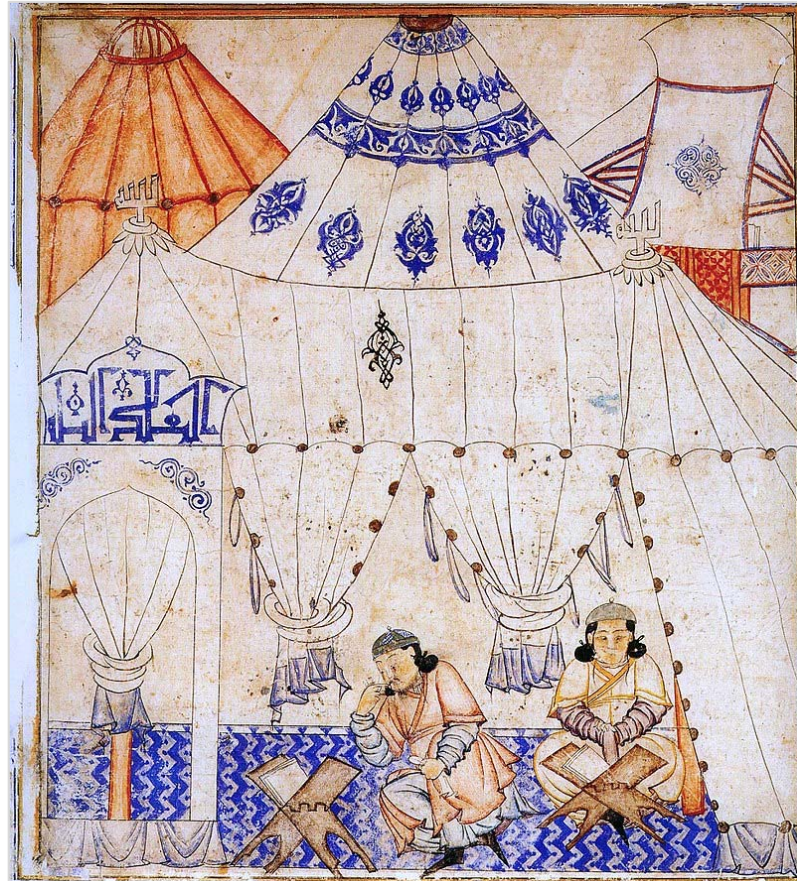


Figure 6-14: Tent mosque or Mongol
princes studying the Quran.
An illustration of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārikh*,
Diez A, fol. 70, 14th century.
Photo credit: Courtesy of
Staatsbibliothek Berlin.



Figure 6-15: *Siege of Alamut*. An illustration of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*.
 The description above the painting mentions that Hülegü bit his finger out of astonishment.
 Photo credit: Courtesy of Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Département des Manuscrits, Division Orientale.