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IRAN UNDER MONGOL DOMINATION

The effectiveness and failings of a dual administrative system

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At the beginning of the thirteenth century, Mongolia's unstable nomadic clans were brought together by an energetic leader, the future Genghis Khan[1]. He practiced a policy of intimidation towards the peoples that he wished to subject to his rule. Those who submitted were allowed to live. Resistance was considered an offence and punished by a general massacre[2]. In less than twenty years, all the peoples of Central Asia had, willingly or by force, become part of the "Great Mongol State" (*yeke monggol ulus*) created by Genghis Khan in 1206. This new order contrasted greatly with the previous situation. Political equilibrium on the steppe had been unstable of its nature, as the various tribal chiefs vied for leadership in the region[3]. Genghis Khan's successors extended the boundaries of the Mongol empire still further: at its height, it stretched from the Pacific to the plains of Hungary. The Mongols thus established an enormous "state" which, although governed in their traditional manner, rapidly acquired the administrative and judicial structures required to control the conquered territories effectively. The formation of the Mongol empire marked a break in the

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1. The Mongolian and Turkish names of persons and fonctions are without accents according to the phonological system of the Mongolian and Turkish languages.

2. On the imperial Mongol ideology, see Igor de Rachewiltz, "Some Remarks on the Ideological Foundation of Chinggis khan's empire", *Paper on Far Eastern History* 7 (1973): 21-36; Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "Mongol Imperial Ideology and the Ilkhanid War against the Mamluks", in *The Mongol Empire & its Legacy*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Press & David Morgan (Leiden: Brill, 1999): 57-72.

3. See Thomas J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier. Nomadic Empires and China, 221 BC to ad 1757* (Cambridge Mass. & Oxford UK: Blackwell, 1989); Thomas T. Allsen, "The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China", in *The Cambridge History of China, vol. 6, Alien regimes and border states, 907-1368*, ed. Herbert Franke & Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 321-413; Isenbike Togan, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations: the Kerait Khanat and Chinggis Khan* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

history of Eurasia, as countries with a long sedentary tradition, such as China and Iran, were made subject to a single people of the steppes for over a century.[4]

THE CONQUEST OF THE IRANIAN LANDS

Iran had suffered other major invasions in the course of the preceding centuries. In the seventh century, the Arab conquest had brought with it Islam, a religion based on social practices which differed from those prevailing in Sassanid Iran. In the eleventh century, the arrival of the Saljuqs Turks greatly increased the number of tribal elements in the country, but without effecting any fundamental transformation of its social and political structures. The Saljuqs, who were Muslims, quickly adapted to Persian culture and political traditions. The settling in Islamic Iran of the Mongol tribes, by contrast, was an unprecedented phase in the country's historical development, bringing it under the control of a non-Muslim power for several decades.

The Mongol domination of Iran began with a particularly traumatic invasion which was the direct result of the disastrous policy followed by the Khwarazmshah, 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad who at that time dominated the greater part of the Iranian east. In 1215, after the fall of Beijing, Genghis Khan sought to an agreement with the Iranian monarch. The aim of this agreement was to allow the great merchants and their goods to circulate freely in the territories of the two rulers. But in 1218, the Khwarazmshah's governor had a caravan of merchants sent by the Great Khan massacred at Uṭrār. Genghis Khan considered this an affront to Eternal Heaven (*möngke tenggeri*) of which he was the defender on earth. Such an affront called for vengeance. According to the Persian historian 'Aṭā' Malik al-Juvaynī, Genghis Khan went up alone to the summit of a hill, and for three days and nights offered up prayer, saying: "I was not the author of this trouble; grant me strengh to exact vengeance."[5] These events led to the invasion of eastern Iran, which was marked by the general massacre (*qatl-i 'āmm*) of the residents of the great cities of Transoxania and Khurasan. These regions then came under the Great Khan's direct authority.[6]

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4. On the Mongol studies, see David Morgan, "The Mongol Empire: A Review Article", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 14 (1981): 121-125; *idem The Mongols* (Oxford: Blackwall, 1986): 5-31 and Peter Jackson, "The Mongol Empire, 1986-1999", *Journal of Medieval History* 26/2 (2002): 189-210.

5. 'Aṭā' Malik al-Juvaynī, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī (Leiden-Londres, 2 vol., 1912), 1: 62; English translation John Andrew Boyle, *The History of the World Conqueror* (Manchester, 2 vol., 1958): 1: 80-81.

6. On these events, see Paul Buell, "Early Mongol expansion in Western Siberia and Turkestan (1207-1219)", *Central Asiatic Journal* 36 (1992): 1-32.

The final conquest of Iran took place under the reign of Möngke (r. 1251-1259), Genghis Khan's third successor to the throne of the empire. He decided that the Iranian lands, while remaining under his authority, would be established as an *ulus*[7] for the benefit of his brother Hülegü. The latter was charged with putting the country's wealth under Mongol control and "applying the customs (*rusūm va yusūm*) and rules (*yāsā*) of Genghis Khan in the territories situated from the Oxus to Egypt"[8]. Hülegü left Mongolia in 1253. In 1256 he reduced the Ismaili fortresses in Iran, then besieged Baghdad, massacred its population and had the Abassid caliph executed in 1258. When the conquest had been brought to a close, Hülegü withdrew to Azarbaijan, where pastureland was available for the Mongol troops to feed their herds and horses.

The success of the Mongols in creating the largest empire in human history was due to their ability to harness as required the human and material resources of the territories they controlled. Every subject of the empire, whether nomadic or settled, townsman, craftsman or farmer, had to support their imperial ambitions. The siege of Baghdad was not simply a confrontation between the troops of the Abassid Caliph and those of Hülegü: it was a confrontation between the human, financial, material and technological resources of north China, central Asia, Russia, the Caucasus and Iran on the one hand, and those of the caliphate on the other. It cannot be said that the Mongols, who at the beginning of the twelfth century lived in clans under hereditary leadership, were prepared for controlling the enormous territory that they had conquered[9]. The Mongols nevertheless succeeded in creating a novel administrative system. They maintained some of the practices of the peoples of the steppes, such as the sharing out of the subject peoples among the members of the imperial family, while adding elements of Chinese and Persian administrative practice. They also used the

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7. The primary signification of the term *ulus* is people; *ulus* is employed in different contexts for population, state, and generally for the subjects of a khan.

8. Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, ed. A.A. Alizade (Baku, vol. III, 1957): 23. On the *yasa*, see David Ayalon, "The Great *Yāsā* of Chingiz Khan, A Re-examination. Preface", *Studia Islamica* 33 (1971): 97-140 (part A, The Basic Data in the Islamic Sources on the *Yāsā* and on its Contents). [Reprint in *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam: Mamluks, Mongols and Eunuchs* (Londres: Variorum Reprints, 1988)]; David Morgan, "The 'Great *Yāsā* of Chingiz Khan' and Mongol Law in the Ilkhanate", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 49/1 (1986): 163-176; Denise Aigle, "Le 'grand *yasa*' de Gengis-khan, l'empire, la culture mongole et la *sharī'a*", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 47/1 (2004): 31-79; *idem*, "Loi mongole *vs* loi islamique. Entre mythe et réalité", *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 5/6 (2005): 971-996.

9. On Mongol society, see Boris Vladimirtsov, *Le régime social des Mongols. Le féodalisme nomade* (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1948); David Morgan, *The Mongols*: 32-54; Joseph F. Fletcher, "The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46/1 (1986): 1-35.

experience of the Turco-Mongols who had been integrated into the empire, such as the Uighurs who had ruled Mongolia, and the Kitan who had governed north China [10]. Already during Genghis Khan's first campaigns in China (1211-1227), many Chinese officials had been recruited to his service, bringing with them their expertise in that domain. This composite administrative system was the essential factor in their success.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MONGOL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM UNDER THE GREAT KHANS (1220-1258)

The historian of the Mongol period is confronted with a problem of methodology: almost all the available sources are from outside the Mongol culture, as we have very few texts drawn up by the Mongols themselves. Our informations come from conquered peoples or from the Mongols' enemies, such as the Mamluks. Furthermore, much of the historiography is made up of the writings of men like 'Aṭā' Malik al-Juvaynī or Rashīd al-Dīn, who held high political office under the Persian Ilkhanate and were, therefore, closely linked to the Mongol power.

There is, nevertheless, a historiographic tradition in Mongolian, but few texts have reached us in their original form. The *Secret History of the Mongols*, written shortly after the death of Genghis Khan is an important work in this regard, constituting as it does the foundation of Mongol identity [11]. It describes the gathering of all the Mongol chiefs (*quriltai*) that took place in 1206, when Genghis Khan was elected Great Khan. One might say that at the moment the empire was founded, he put a "proto-administration" in place which would later serve as a model for his successors. Genghis Khan named his adoptive brother, Sigi-Quduqu,[12] supreme judge (*yeke yarghuchi*)[13] of all the empire. He put him in charge of judicial matters, the

10. On the Kitan, see Herbert Franke, "The forest peoples of Manchuria: Kitans and Jurchens", in *The Cambridge History of the Early Inner Asia,* ed. Denis Sinor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 400-423; on the Uighurs, see Colin Mackerras, "The Uighurs", in ibidem: 317-342.

11. Igor de Rachewiltz, "Some Remarks on the Dating of *The Secret History of the Mongols*", *Monumenta Serica* XXIV (1965): 185-205; William Hung, "The Transmission of the Book Known as *The Secret History of the Mongols*", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 14 (1951): 433-492.

12. Sigi-Quduqu was an abandoned Tatar child, he was adopted as a brother of Genghis Khan. On his role in the Mongol empire, see Paul Ratchnevsky, "Sigi-Qutuqu, ein mongolische Gefolgsmann im 12.-13. Jahrhundert", *Central Asiatic Journal* X/2 (1965): 87-120.

13. On the Mongol terms '*yeke yarghuchi*' (Persian, *yarghuchī-yi buzurg*; Chinese, *ta-tuan-shih-kuan*), see *The Secret History of the Mongols. A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, translated with a Historical and Philological Commentary by Igor de Rachewiltz, 2 vol. (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2004), 1: xxxvii; 2: 767, 771

sharing out of the subject peoples between the members of the imperial family, and the grant to the latter of appanage (*qubi*) over them[14] . He ordered him to record everything in a "Blue Book" (*kökö debter*) for the use of the future administration: "Write in a Blue Book register all decisions about the distribution and about the judicial matters of the entire population, make it into a book. Until the offspring of my offspring, let no one alter any of the blue writing that Sigi-Quduqu after decising in accordance with me, shall make into a book with white paper. Anyone who alters it shall be guilty and liable to punishment."[15]. As is shown by other passages of the *Secret History*, the Mongols were capable of putting effort into administration.

The census of population is an important means of social control and mobilisation of resources. In the Mongol empire, it became one of the principal instruments for extracting profit from the potential resources represented by the empire's subjects. Ögëdei followed Genghis Khan's path in this matter, but it was under Möngke that the population, both nomadic and settled, was subjected to true systematic census-taking.[16] Möngke established centralising administrative structures in order to best turn to use the subjects, while taking care not to exhaust the empire's resources. He drew his inspiration in this from the advice of the Mongol amir Arghun Aqa. This latter had, thanks to his knowledge of the Uighur script, been employed as one of the secretaries (*bitikchi*)[17] at Ögëdei's court. He was later sent as *basqaq*[18] to Khurasan, before being appointed in 1243 as governor of the western territories, from the Oxus to Anatolia. He was granted the title "governor of the Empire of the great Mongols" (*ulugh manqul ulus*

(cited below HS/Rachewiltz); on the Mongol term '*yarghu(chi)*' (Persian, *yarghuchi*), see Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente in Neupersischen*, 4 vol. (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1963-1975), 4 (n° 1785): 64-66.

14. On *qubi*, see Thomas T. Allsen, "Sharing out the Empire: Apportioned Lands under the Mongols", in *Nomads in the Sedentary World*, ed. Anatoly M. Kazanov & André Wink (Curzon: Curzon-IIAS Asian Studies Series, 2001): 172-190.

15. *HS*/Rachewiltz, par. 203, 1: 135-136.

16. The census of empire's populations had the aim to fix the taxes and to levy troops, but also to identify the persons who were experts in scientific and technical knowledges, see Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: the Policies of the Grand Qan Möngke in China, Russia and the Islamics Lands* (Berkley: University of California, 1987): 116-143.

17. This term of Turkish origin means secretary. It refers to officials of chancelleries, Turko-Mongols or Persians, but also to lettered amirs. On this term, see Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente,* 2 (n° 718): 264-267.

18. On Turkish origin, *basqaq* is often employed for the Mongol term *darughachi*, see note 27, *infra.*

bek).[19] Thus, when after 1252 Möngke called on him, he already had some ten years of administrative experience.

Möngke created a "Central Secretariat" in Mongolia. A Mongol, Menggeser,[20] was its chief official. Like Sigi-Quduqu, he was appointed supreme judge (*yeke yarghuchi*), chief administrator of the State responsible for the Great Khan's security, and "great chancellor" (Mongolian, *chingsang*; Chinese *ch'eng-hsiang*) [21] . Under Menggeser was another official, Bulghai, a Nestorian Kerait. He, too, had begun his career as a *bitikchi*. Bulghai was in charge of the secretaries and chamberlains, and also headed the office that supervised the foreigners working for the Mongols.[22]

Under the Central Secretariat were regional secretariats. Their task was to govern the empire's settled populations. Such secretariats existed in northern China, Turkistan and Iran. In the Chinese sources, these regional secretariats are referred to as "mobile secretariats" (*hsing-sheng*) modeled on the Central Secretariat.[23] Their staff worked with the imperial agents of the Great Khan. The interests of the imperial clan were thus represented in these regional administrations as were those of the tributary princely families and local elites.

In Iran, the regional secretariat was in Khurasan. It was headed by Arghun Aqa, who, as we have seen, had governed the province since 1243. He was aided by representatives of the Great Khan Möngke as well as those of the princely families descended from Genghis Khan.[24] As regional governor, Arghun Aqa was responsible for setting and collecting the taxes in the territories under his control. Each governor had at his disposal a considerable number of staff, recruited from among the local population. In Iran, political positions

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19. From a silver coin striked toward 1244-1245, see George Lane, "Arghun Aqa: Mongol Bureaucrat", *Iranian Studies* 32/4 (1999): 461. The title *ulugh manqul ulus bek* is Turkish equivalent for Mongol title: *yeke monggol ulus noyan*. On Arghun Aqa, see also Peter Jackson, "Argun Aqa", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2: 401-402.

20. On Menggeser's career see Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism:* 93-94.

21. This fonction goes back to Han and Chin. The term *chingsang* is employed in paragraph 132 of the *Secret History of the Mongols*; see *HS*/Rachewiltz, 1: 486-487; 2: 896. On this term see also Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente*, 1 (n° 184): 310-312. In China under the Yuan, *ch'en-hsiang* points out the "great chancellor" (from the Central Secretariat); see David M. Farquhar, *The Government of China under Mongolian Rule* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1990): 170 [b]: 368 [81]. On the Chinese titles in Mongol Iran see Thomas T. Allsen, "Notes on Chinese Titles in Mongol Iran", *Mongolian Studies* XIV (1991): 27-39.

22. Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism:* 93-96.

23. Paul Buell, "Sino-Khitan Administration in Mongol Bukhara", *Journal of Asian History* 13/2 (1979): 147; Thomas T. Allsen, "Guard and Government in the Reign of The Grand Qan Möngke", *Harvard Journal of Asian Studies* 46/2 (1986): 502; David Faquhar, *The Government of China under Mongolian Rule*: 367.

24. Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*: 502; George Lane, "Arghun Aqa: Mongol Bureaucrat": 465-466.

traditionally went to the "people of the pen", in other words the "divaniens (divanists)"[25] who were acquainted with administrative procedures. Great lettered families held, on a hereditary basis, the administrative offices in the chancelleries of the different powers who successively ruled Iran. Even before Hülegü's arrival, these great divanist families had supplied officials to the Mongol administration. In order to guarantee for themselves a place in the state apparatus when the time came, these great families built up contacts with the Great Khan Ögëdei and travelled to Mongolia.[26] 'Aṭā' Malik al-Juvaynī, scion of a family of divanists who had held high office under the Saljuqs and the Khwarazmshahs, stayed in Mongolia for two periods. It was therefore quite natural that Arghun Aqa, on being appointed governor of Khurasan, should take as fellow workers 'Aṭā' Malik al-Juvaynī and his brother, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, the future minister (*ṣāḥib-divān*) of the Ilkhans. Arghun Aqa also selected as chief secretary (*ulugh bitikchi*) a Khwarazmian, a certain Fakhr al-Dīn.[27]

In the tributary states, the Mongols exercised administrative control through the *darughachi* (Chinese, *ta-lu-hua ch'ih)* who were posted there,[28] acting as representatives of the Great Khan. All were Mongols, or Asian Turks, and they had troops at their command to reinforce their authority. They had various functions: the collection of taxes and tributes, supervision of the postal service, the *yam*,[29] the census of populations, and keeping the peace.

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25. The term "divaniens " points out the members and the families from the chancelleries. It is borrowed from Jean Aubin, *Émirs mongols et vizirs persans dans les remous de l'acculturation* (Paris: *Studia Iranica*, Cahier 15, 1995): 8; here translated in English by "divanists".

26. On the contacts taken by the divanists with the Mongols during the reigns of Ögëdei and Möngke, see Jean Aubin, *Émirs mongols et vizirs persans*: 19-20, 25-26.

27. When Fakhr al-Dīn died, his son succeeded him, see Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism:* 107.

28. On the Mongol term *darugha(chi)*, often on the form *darughachī* in Persian sources, see Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente*, 1 (n° 193): 319-323. On the fonctions of *darugha(chi)*, see Vladimir Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion* (4e ed., Londres, 1977): 401; David O. Morgan, *The Mongols*: 108-109, 114, 142; Francis W. Cleaves, "DaruΓa and Gerege", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 16/1-2 (1953): 237-255; David M. Farquhar, *The Government of China under Mongolian Rule*: 3, 7, 23 [X.1], 41: Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism:* 72-73; Elizabeth Endicott-West, *Mongolian Rule in China. Local Administration in the Yuan Dynasty* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989): 2-3, 8, 17-18. In the Islamic sources the term *basqaq* is employed as an equivalent of Mongol *darughachi*. The Arab term *shiḥna* is also an equivalent for *darughachi*, but not with regularity; it can also refer to the Mongol *yarghu(chi*), the judge. On the term *basqaq*, see Gerhard Doerfer, *ibid.*, 2 (n° 691): 241-243. It is difficult to state precisely the fonctions of these officials because the meaning of the terms had changed according to the periods and regions. See the discussion on the use of the terms *tamma*, *darugha(ci)* and *basqaq* by Donald Ostrowski, "The *tamma* and the dual-administrative structure of the Mongol empire", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 61/2 (1998): 262-277. He points out (*ibid.*: 270) the influence (in Mongol local administration) of the dual Chinese system: a governor for the civil affairs (*t'ai-shou*) and an another for the military affairs (*wei-t'ou*). According to Donald Ostrowski (*ibid.*: 272), the *basqaq* seems to be equivalent for the military governor and the *darugha(chi)* for the civil governor.

29. On the *yam*, see David Morgan, *The Mongols*: 103-107.

No document from the court of a vassal state was valid unless it had been authenticated with the seal (*gerege*) of the *darughachi.* The *darughachi* also supervised the activities of the administrative personnel serving the local dynasties, thus assuring the Great Khan, his Central Secretariat and his liaison officials permanent surveillance of the semi-autonomous states. Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad (r. 1252-1257), the ruling Qara-Khitai of Kirman, had selected his local staff from among the Muslim men of letters who had served before him, but the Mongols added five *darughachi.* They were charged with monitoring the intrigues of the local officials and reporting on them to the Great Khan. The Mongols thus, in order to better control the semi-autonomous states, established a dual administrative system made up of staff of local origin and staff of Mongol, or at least non-indigenous origin.

ILKHANID IRAN (1258-1336) - AN ADMINISTRATIVE BREAK

Mongol domination in Iran marks a break in the administrative functioning of the state: the Ilkhanid state was subjected to a dual administrative structure, one Mongol, the other Iranian, each with its own staff. This duality can be recognised as the same administrative practice adopted in the semi-autonomous tributary states, at the time when only eastern Iran was under the direct control of the Great Khans. The most important administrative discontinuity concerned the role of the vizier, who was no longer the prime minister responsible for supervising all the administration's business. In his work on the Mongols of Iran, Bertold Spuler gives a list of those occupying the function of "prime minister" between 1260 and 1340, with a variety of different titles: *vazīr, ṣāḥib-divān, nā'ib, khazindār, umūr-i divānī*, etc.[30] In this list we find, naturally, the names of Persians, but also of Mongols who were mainly military figures. The Persian vizier always worked in collaboration with a Mongol official. After having been the *nā'ib* of Sughunchaq Noyan, Hülegü's great Mongol amir (*noyan*; plural *noyad*), Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Juvaynī became *nā'ib* of the Mongol Buqa, who was head vizier and the pre-eminent personage of the Persian Ilkhanate .[31]

In the Ilkhanate period, it would appear that the vizier's competence was essentially confined to questions of state finances. The prime minister, however, was not always in charge of financial affairs, as was the case under the Saljuqs. At times the position of minister

30. Bertold Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran. Politik, Verwaltung und Kultur der Ilchanzeit* 1220-1350 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1955): 285-288.

31. In 1286, after the second Arghun's intronisation, Qubilai grants him the title of "Great Chancellor" (*ch'eng-hsiang*); see Jean Aubin, *Émirs mongols et vizirs persans:* 38.

for finance was separated from that of vizier and assigned to an assistant vizier. In 1279, for example, Majd al-Mulk al-Yazdī held the office of *mushrif al-mamālik* alongside Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Juvaynī was Hülegü's *ṣāḥib-divān*. Majd al-Mulk al-Yazdī signed documents on the left, and Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Juvaynī signed them on the right.[32] This diminution of the vizier's role was not permanent: at other times, his remit was extensive. In fact, all depended on the confidence the ruling Ilkhan had in his vizier, and on the latter's good relations with the Mongol official assigned to his office. Such good relations were often established on the basis of common interests.

The dual administrative system which prevailed during the first decades of the period is difficult to assess, as the Ilkhans, unlike the Great Khan Möngke, do not appear to have established precise administrative norms. This two-headed administration led to intrigue and jealousy between the two officials in charge, all the more blatantly when they were both Persians. The latent hostility between Majd al-Mulk al-Yazdī and Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Juvaynī resulted in the execution of the latter in 1284. Collaboration between a Persian divanist and a Mongol amir tended to work much better. A case in point is the perfect understanding between the same Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Juvaynī and the great amir Sughunchaq Noyan.

Under the Ilkhans, the Mongol administration, with its secretaries (*bitikchi*), tax-collectors (*darughachi*) and judges (*yarghuchi*), interfered at all levels of the Persian chancelleries. At the court, the viziers could gain access to the Ilkhan only if presented by a Mongol amir. In the semi-autonomous states, the situation varied according to the humour of the Ilkhanid court. In the provinces, missions of enquiry were led by Mongols assisted by Persian staff. At the local level, the Mongols left in place the local officials, generally referred to by the term *mulūk* (sing. *malik*). Behind this term lie a wide variety of social realities, from the *mulūk* who found a place in the Ilkhanid administration to relatively powerless minor village noblemen, and including princes who continued to enjoy relative autonomy in Fars, Shabankara, Kirman and the Caspian provinces. The Ilkhanid government entrusted local administration to these *mulūk*, hence the title *ḥākim* by which they are also known in the sources.

The word *ḥākim* (pl. *ḥukkām*) is generally translated as "governor". This is wrong in relation to this period, when the real governors were the Mongol amirs whose senior Persian

32. Ann K.S. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia* (Londres: Tauris, 1988): 55.

officials were only their deputies (*nuvvāb*). In Baghdad, 'Aṭā' Malik al-Juvaynī was the *nā'ib* of Sughunchaq Noyan, the titular governor. The word is also used in a collective sense. Thus, the term "the *ḥukkām* of Fars" refers to agents who were not "provincial governors" but rather "administrative officials in the province", where they exercised a shared authority which was often less than that of the real governor. These *ḥukkām* were mere fiscal agents. The divanists cited in the chronicles as "governor" of a province, without an exact date, were in fact only its administrators for a certain length of time. In addition, in the frontier provinces from Khurasan to Anatolia, the civil and fiscal administrative corps coexisted with a military government. Diyar Bakr, for example, had two Persian *ḥākim,* while a Tartar amir was military governor. Finally, at its apex, the entire state apparatus was headed by one or more "great amirs" (Persian, *amīr-i buzurg*; Mongolian, *yeke noyan*) who assisted the Ilkhan in managing the affairs of state. This system was relaxed at the end of the thirteenth century when the Ilkhans, having converted to Islam, redefined their legitimacy in Islamic terms.

THE ORDO AND ADMINISTRATIVE CAREERS

Throughout the period of the Persian Ilkhanate, policy was decided in the Ilkhan's tent. To write the history of Iranian societies under Mongol domination, we must understand what went on at the Ordo, the Ilkhan's court. It was there that the great amirs (the *noyad*) lived together, surrounded by their followers; there, too, lived great numbers of physicians and astrologers, both Jewish and Christian. The great *noyad* surrounded the sovereign, and from time to time the sovereign was indeed created by them. They dominated him at times, and at other times rose up against him; in any case, they intervened incessantly in the affairs of state. The upper classes of Iranian society occupied varying positions vis-à-vis the *noyad.* Some were in the upper echelons of the administration, and were clients of *noyad*; others were Sufi masters, and the *noyad* became clients of theirs.

This configuration of the Ilkhanid court had various implications for the recruitment of staff to serve the Ilkhan. Great administrative careers could normally only be made at the Ordo; only those who had influential supporters or well-placed relatives there could make them elsewhere. The court was where Persian notables came in search of the support of a Mongol *noyan* who could gain them access to the Ilkhan. To become a *noyan*'s *nā'ib* marked the beginning of a political career. The Ordo was also the place where the nobles of the semi-autonomous regions vied for influence in the hopes of obtaining lucrative administrative

positions. Numerous intrigues arose as the contending hopefuls sought to bring about the downfall of one rival or another. In brief, the Ordo was the place where administrative careers, and thereby fortunes, were made and lost.

The Mongols of Iran brought with them new political practices, but they did not exert their domination in a uniform way across the entire country. They left the petty states of the Caspian rim, Mazandaran and Gilan in place. They maintained dynastic traditions in Herat with the Karts, a family of Afghan origin; in Kirman with the Qara-Khitai, recent converts to Islam; and in Fars, partitioned between two rival states, with the Salghurid Turkish atabegs of Shiraz and the long-standing local royal dynasty of Shabankara. These local dynasties kept their throne and their territory as subjects of the Great Khan.

Fars had suffered neither the direct trauma of conquest, nor the large-scale settlement of tribes, and the status of its land was quite different from the regions where the Mongol tribes had been distributed (Anatolia, Khurasan, and Azarbaijan, where 600 km^2 of land between Sultaniya to Mughan had been transformed into summer pasturage, *yailaq*, or winter pasturage, *qishlaq*).[33] The wealth of Fars aroused the covetousness of the Mongol political authorities, who sought to bring the taxes raised there into the state coffers. They would, however, face considerable difficulties in putting an effective fiscal policy into effect.

DIFFICULTIES IN EXERCISING FISCAL CONTROL OVER A PROVINCE: THE CASE OF FARS

Before Hülegü's creation of the Persian Ilkhanate, the Salghurid atabeg Abū Bakr had submitted to the Great Khan Ögëdei. In return, he had been confirmed in his territorial possessions and favoured with the title "Qutlugh Khan" (Fortunate Khan). He was required to send a tribute of a thousand gold dinars to Qaraqorum every year.[34] One of his nephews took part in the capture of Baghdad alongside Hülegü, an indication of the Salghurid ruling family's good relations with the Mongols. Thanks to a skilful policy of cooperation first with Ögëdei, then with Hülegü, Abū Bakr succeeded in sheltering his kingdom from the unwelcome interventions of Mongol officials. He died on the 18 May 1260, leaving a prosperous province to his successors. Unfortunately, the dynastic crisis which followed his death militated in

33. See John Masson Smith, "Mongol Nomadism and Middle Eastern Geography: Qishlaqs and Tümens", in *The Mongol Empire & its Legacy*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss & David Morgan (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 39-56. On the terms *yailaq* and *qishlaq* (*qishlagh*) in the Islamic sources, see Gerhard Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente*: 4 (n° 1941): 252-253; 3 (n° 1496): 479-481.

34. Vassaf, *Tajziyat al-amṣār wa tazjiyat al-a'ṣār*, ed. M.M. Iṣfahānī (Bombay, 1259/1852): 157.

favour of Mongol ascendancy in the region. From that time on, the administration, which was entrusted to various local notables, became ineffective. The Ordo sent fair and competent Turko-Mongol administrators to rectify the situation. These administrators were anxious to bring taxes into the state coffers, and knew that to be able to raise the required sums the productive apparatus had to be preserved. In other words, the population could not be bled dry. These Turko-Mongol officials, however, who are praised in the Persian sources, quickly fell victim to the intrigues of their Persian colleagues. Denunciations to the Ordo by local officials, who saw their ill-won gains under threat from a sounder management of fiscal matters, punctuate the administrative history of Fars.[35]

Administrative developments in Fars reflected the power struggles taking place in the court of the Ilkhan. The disgrace of a *noyan* inevitably led to his death. The Persian chronicler Shābankāra'ī described the amirs sent for judgement to the court of justice (*yarghu*)[36] with considerable accuracy as "the prey of the swords" (*shikār-i suyūf*).[37] A disgraced Mongol amir brought down with him his Persian associate, who would thus be deprived of the benefits he gained from the influence of his clients, both at court and in the provinces. Occasionally these Persian notables, having lost their supporter at court, succeeded in retaining their position by attaching themselves to the new strong man of the hour. They would buy a new clientele and return to the administrative affairs until the day when they in turn became "prey of the swords". It was in fact these invariably venal local notables, who remained at the court to protect their interests, who were to blame for the administrative disorder in Fars. The Persian officials were clearly able to manipulate the administrative system to their own ends. Why did they act in this way?

The Ilkhanid period was characterised by the harshness of social relations at all levels, from the high-ranking divanists to junior local officials. A patron, either Persian or Mongol, was a necessity, and everything was for sale - whether the acquisition of a lucrative position or the blind eye an underling might turn to a fraudulent activity. Money was therefore an absolute requirement in order to retain a position in the administration. This explains the

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35. On the Mongol domination on Fars, see Denise Aigle, *Le Fārs sous la domination mongole (XIIIe-XIVe s.). Politique et fiscalité* (Paris: *Studia Iranica*, Cahiers 31, 2005).

36. In the Persian sources, *yarghu* means the court of investigations on the fallen ministers, the corrupt officials and anothers "ennemies of the state". See David Morgan, "The Great *Yāsā* of Chingiz Khan": 173-175; Ann K.S. Lambton, *Continuity and Change*: 95-96; 274-275.

37. Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Shābankāra'i, *Majma' al-ansāb*, ed. M. Hashim Muhaddith (Tehran, 1363sh/1984), 266.

many intrigues which were formed at the Ilkhan's court and which had a devastating effect on Fars throughout the period. The immense fortunes that officials gained all too quickly could be even more suddenly lost when a rival, desirous of laying his own hands on a position that promised great financial gain, denounced them for embezzlement. But despite the risks, the local notables at the Ordo would tear each other apart to gain responsibility for a mere fiscal district. Were administrative practices in Fars peculiar to the region, and a consequence of the situation the local notables had created? Did similar phenomena occur in neighbouring Kirman, a province whose history was in some degree linked to that of Fars by reason of their proximity?

In Kirman, the first rulers of the Qara-Khitai dynasty maintained excellent relations with the Mongol Ordo at Qaraqorum, and then with that at Tabriz.[38] The founder of the dynasty, Barāq-Ḥājib, had, like the Salghurid atabeg Abū Bakr, sent emissaries to the Great Khan to present his submission.[39] He, too, had received in return the title of "Qutlugh Khan" (Fortunate Khan) from Ögëdei. For this reason members of this dynasty are often referred to in the sources as the Qutlugh Khans. The queen Qutlugh Khātūn (r. 1257-1283), who succeeded her husband Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad, administered the province effectively, providing considerable political stability. Commerce, agriculture and the trades prospered. The resulting revenues enabled the sums sent as tax to the Ordo to be increased, thereby strengthening the relationship between the tributary court and the central government.[40] A strong dynastic government, such as that in Fars during the reign of the atabeg Abū Bakr or that in Kirman under Qutlugh Khātūn, allowed the Mongols to collect taxes without any major difficulties. In return, the rulers who were willing to cooperate with their new masters retained their political autonomy.

Internal power struggles among the members of ruling families, by contrast, led the Mongols to intervene in local affairs and exercise direct control over regions which had previously remained independent. Well before Hülegü's arrival in Iran, Anatolia had come under the direct control of the Great Khan. After the death of the Saljuq sultan Kaykhusraw II (r. 1237-1246), his three sons, all of whom were minors, came under the influence of different

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38. George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran. A Persian Renaissance* (Londres/New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003): 98-104.

39. Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī al-Qazvīnī, *Tārīkh-i guzīda*, ed. Ḥusayn Navā'ī (Tehran, 1362sh/1983), 529. On this dynasty, see 'Abbās Iqbāl, *Tārīkh-i Mughūl* (Tehran, 1345sh/1966-1967): 403-410.

40. George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*: 118.

factions. The three brothers' rivalry obliged the Mongols to intervene and officially divide the territory between them. The immediate consequence of this was direct Mongol control in the region, which became financially dependent.[41] Similar circumstances obtained at the end of Qutlugh Khātūn's long reign, when she was faced with the opposition of her grandson, Muẓaffar al-Dīn Ḥajjāj, then that of her son-in-law, Soyurghatmish, who attempted to remove her from power. These internal dynastic struggles were really a facet of the network of alliances between various protagonists at the Ordo. The rivals at the Ordo made use of the divisions within the Qara-Khitai family to serve their own interests. After Qutlugh-Khātūn's death, intrigues related to affairs at the Ordo multiplied, leading to great political instability in the province. The conditions had been formed for a direct Ilkhanid intervention in Kirman and the disappearance of the local dynasty.[42] In these two cases, the situation was analogous to that which obtained in Fars after the death of the Salghurid atabeg Abū Bakr.

No monographs have been written on the approach used by the Mongols to collect taxes in Anatolia and Kirman, but, on the basis of what little has been written about these provinces, it would appear that the Mongol authorities succeeded in putting a better system of fiscal control in place there. In any case, the dual administrative system instituted by Möngke before the establishment of the Persian Ilkhanate, which allowed a vast territory to be controlled without any major difficulties, functioned poorly in Iran due to the number of different local authorities and the conflicting interests of the Persian officials. Fars presents a flagrant case of this problem.

41. Carles Melville, "Anatolia under the Mongols", in *Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. 1, ed. Kate Fleet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in print).

42. George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*: 114-117.