

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF IRAN

IN EIGHT VOLUMES

*Volume 5*

THE CAMBRIDGE  
HISTORY OF  
IRAN

*Volume 5*  
THE SALJUQ  
AND MONGOL PERIODS

*edited by*

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CAMBRIDGE  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1968

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-06936-6 — The Cambridge History of Iran  
Edited by J. A. Boyle  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi - 110025, India  
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

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[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521069366](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521069366)

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First published 1968  
Seventh printing 2008

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 67-12845

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-0-521-06936-6 Hardback

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editors and publishers are grateful to those who have given permission to reproduce plates in this volume.

## PREFACE

It is remarkable how little attention has been given in the West to a period of great significance in the evolution of Persian, European and indeed world history. Of the Saljuq Turks the only up-to-date account is Claude Cahen's chapter in the Pennsylvania *History of the Crusades*. Of the Īl-Khānid dynasty there has been no detailed study in the English language since Part III of Howorth's *History of the Mongols (The Mongols of Persia)* published as long ago as 1888 and now completely antiquated. In the present volume an attempt is made to cover not only the political but the religious, cultural, administrative and socio-economic history of Saljuq and Mongol Iran. In choosing my collaborators in this task the principle I adopted was to approach scholars who might, I thought, be disposed to expand, abridge or revise what they had already written elsewhere on their specialized subject, sometimes in a language other than English. Few unpublished works have been more frequently consulted than Professor A. K. S. Lambton's dissertation *Contributions to the Study of Seljūq Institutions* (London, 1939). It is highly gratifying that she should have consented to expound her present-day views on this subject in chapter 2 ("Internal Structure of the Saljuq Empire"). As the author of *Persia religiosa* (Milan, 1959) Professor Alessandro Bausani was the obvious choice for chapters 3 ("Religion in the Saljuq Period") and 7 ("Religion under the Mongols"). To Professor M. G. S. Hodgson, who has written the standard work on the Persian Ismā'īlis, *The Order of Assassins* (The Hague, 1955), we are indebted for chapter 5 ("The Ismā'īli State"). Professor I. P. Petrushevsky's monumental *Zemledelie i agrarnie otnosheniya v Irane XIII–XIV vekov* ("Agriculture and Agrarian Conditions in 13th- and 14th-century Iran") (Moscow–Leningrad, 1960) is still not translated into English or indeed into any West European language; but we now have an English summary in chapter 6 ("The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran under the Mongols"). I was particularly fortunate in persuading Professor Jan Rypka, the doyen of European Iranists, to contribute chapter 8 ("Poets and Prose Writers of the Late Saljuq and Mongol Periods"). Professor Rypka's *magnum opus*, published first in Czech (Prague, 1956) and then in German (Berlin, 1959) is now available in an English translation under the title *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht, Holland, 1968). Chapter 9 ("The Visual Arts 1050–1350") is by a leading expert on



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Middle Eastern art, Professor Oleg Grabar of the University of Ann Arbor, and chapter 10 (“The Exact Sciences in Iran under the Saljuqs and Mongols”) by Professor E. S. Kennedy of the American University, Beirut, our greatest authority on Islamic science. The opening chapter on the political and dynastic history of the Saljuqs and their successors down to the Mongol invasion I entrusted to Dr (now Professor) C. E. Bosworth, whose doctoral thesis (afterwards expanded into *The Ghaznavids*) I had recently examined. Chapters 1 and 4 (“Political and Dynastic History of the Īl-Khāns”) provide the chronological setting for the remainder of the volume.

On chapter 4 it is necessary to add a few details. The sources, particularly for the period of the Mongol invasion, are extremely discordant: it is not unusual to find two or even three mutually contradictory descriptions of the same occurrence. Even for the later Īl-Khānid period, our two main authorities, Rashīd al-Dīn and Vaṣṣāf, though viewing events from the same coign of vantage, are by no means always in agreement. It has often been necessary to draw attention to such discrepancies and even occasionally to reproduce side by side the two or more conflicting versions of a campaign or battle. In quoting the sources I have, whenever practicable, referred the reader to European translations. The relevant parts of Rashīd al-Dīn’s encyclopaedic work have now been translated into Russian, a language no longer, as in Professor Browne’s day, even less read in Western Europe than Persian. For permission to reproduce passages from a paper entitled “The Mongol Invasion of Eastern Persia 1220–23” read at the Middle East Centre, Cambridge, in November 1962, and afterwards published in *History Today* for September 1963, I am indebted to the courtesy of Professor Arberry and the editors of the journal.

The system of transliteration requires a word or two of explanation. In the case of Persian and Arabic words it is, broadly speaking, that recommended by the Royal Asiatic Society, modified here and there to conform with the practice in vol. 1. Thus the Persian province of Azerbaijan appears as Āzarbāijān (and not Ādharbāijān or Āzarbāijān); *-iyya* alternates with *-iyeh* in name-endings; and place-names in the neighbouring Arab countries appear sometimes in their conventional English forms whilst in other cases they are rigorously transliterated like the Persian names. It is to be hoped that the specialist will make allowances for such inconsistencies, which will not disturb the general reader. In the case of Turkish and Mongol words it has been thought proper to

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reproduce the actual pronunciation of the more elaborate vowel system rather than simply to transliterate the Arabic script, e.g. Boz-Aba (Turkish “Grey Bear”) and not Būzāba, Öljeitü (Mongol “Blessed, Fortunate”) and not Ūljāitū. As a guide to the pronunciation for the general reader it is sufficient to say that *ch* is pronounced as the *ch* in *church*, *d* and *dh* (by the Persians) as *z*, *kh* as the *ch* in *loch*, *gh* as the French *r grasseyée*, *sh* as the *sh* in *ship*, *th* (by the Persians) as *s* and *zh* as the French *j* or the *s* in *leisure*; that no distinction is made by the Persians between the dotted and undotted forms of *b*, *s*, *t* and *z*; and that the vowels in Persian and Arabic words have their Italian values, while Turkish and Mongol *ö* and *ü* are pronounced as the corresponding German vowels (French *eu* and *u*) and *ī* as the Russian *и* (Polish *y*).

In conclusion I should like to record my thanks to my friends Charles F. Beckingham, Professor of Islamic Studies in the University of London, and Frank R. C. Bagley, Lecturer in Persian in the University of Durham, for reading the galley proofs of chapters 4 and 8 respectively and making a number of valuable suggestions.

J. A. B.

Manchester, February 1968