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Edited by Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart

Excerpt

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CHAPTER I

THE JALAYIRIDS, MUZAFFARIDS AND
SARBADĀRS

THE LAST CHINGIZIDS

The end of the Il-Khanid empire resulted in Persia, if not in the creation of a vacuum, at any rate in a dilution of power, which worked in favour of various forces contending for authority in the state. The rivals involved in the struggles which now began fall into three categories. The most obvious of these were princes from several lines of the dynasty of Chingiz Khān, who looked to a restoration of centralised Mongol rule. They set about their task partly on their own initiative and partly as mere figureheads put up by legitimist groupings in the background. A second group was the representatives of local dynasties or highly placed families, who had served the Il-Khāns as generals or senior servants of the state, and also the leaders of powerful tribal associations. And there were, finally, other groups for whom what mattered was not dynastic or aristocratic considerations but religious adherence to Shī'ī or extremist movements.

The power struggles that went on within or between these groups lasted for half a century. Though one or other of the rivals might for a time contrive to establish a certain measure of political and economic stability in his area of effective control, none had any lasting success, and there was no question of their unifying the country alone and unaided. Whatever the hardships Persia suffered as a result of divisions and chaotic conditions, even greater sacrifices were demanded of the people when, at the beginning of the eighties of the 8th/14th century, reunification was finally achieved: imposed, in fact, from outside by the conqueror Tīmūr. Pressing forward from Central Asia, he soon swept aside the contending parties or merely allowed them to fade into insignificance.

It is typical of Persia that in spite of the troubles of the decades between the end of the Il-Khanid empire and the appearance on the scene of Tīmūr, Persian culture was not submerged, as one might have expected, but achieved, in its intellectual life, for example in the sphere of poetry, a distinction hardly equalled in any other period. The flowering of poetry which reached its highest point in the unique figure of

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Ḥāfiẓ of Shīrāz is a striking phenomenon in the cultural history of 8th/14th century Persia. In marked contrast, public life and political affairs were throughout most of this period in a sorry state. Political confusion, the tyranny of petty princes, bloody conflicts between local powers, and devastating invasions were a constant menace, not only to the general well-being but to people's very existence, even when they managed to save their skins in the apocalyptic horrors which now descended on their homeland, depopulating many towns and laying waste entire areas. The collapse of the Mongol empire of Iran, struggles for the Mongol inheritance and the horrors of another conquest and occupation of the country at the hands of Tīmūr made up the fate of the luckless inhabitants of Iran in this century; a fate which was all the more keenly felt as the memory of the halcyon days under the last of the Il-Khāns was no doubt still widely treasured.

Strangely enough, the very time at which – with the death of the Il-Khān Abū Sa'īd and the passing of Hülegü's dynasty – the end of their empire became imminent, was the year in which Tīmūr was born, the man who a few decades later incorporated Persia into an empire destined eventually to extend from the Jaxartes to Asia Minor. Though he himself was actually of Turkish origin, throughout his life, and even when he had become the most powerful man on earth, he set the greatest store by his Mongol family connections – a plain indication of the high regard in which Chingiz Khān and his descendants were held even long after the fall of the Il-Khanid empire.

Of course, the extinction of the line of Hülegü need not necessarily have implied the end of the Persian Mongol empire, and there is no doubt that many people in Persia at this time were convinced that Mongol rule would survive, for there was plainly no lack of influential Mongol leaders and politicians, nor of princes belonging to the most diverse lines of descent from Chingiz Khān who could theoretically have provided for the continuation of the empire. Abū Sa'īd's successor Arpa Ke'ün, for instance, belonged to the family of Tolui. He was a competent prince, who might have been able to secure Mongol control of Persia had he not met his end a few months after his accession as a result of a conflict with a general who was seeking to put another Chingizid in power. But he was the last of the princes who emerged, or were thrust forward in these struggles for power, to show any competence, at least in terms of their success in re-establishing a united Iranian empire. Not one of them was able to assert control, nor could

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any of their military or nomadic backers. The disappearance of centralised authority not only opened the way for Mongol princes and influential military leaders or tribal chieftains to engage in political adventures; it was also the signal to local rulers who had hitherto been submissive to Mongol power to make a bid for independence.

The Chingizids' control of Iran was at an end by half way through the 8th/14th century. This is true whether one chooses to take as critical the year 740/1340, in which Ḥasan-i Buzurg, the founder of the house of the Jalayirids, took power personally in Baghdad in place of his figurehead Jahān Temūr, a descendant of the Īl-Khān Gaikhatu (690–4/1291–5), or whether one prefers the year 754/1353, in which an equally insignificant Chobanid caused the last coins to be minted bearing the name of the puppet khan Anūshīrvān and, in addition, the last Chingizid, Togha Temūr, was murdered by a Sarbadār. From then on until Tīmūr's invasion of the country, Iran was under the rule of various rival petty princes of whom henceforth only the Jalayirids could claim Mongol, though not Chingizid, descent. They ruled from Baghdad and were later significantly involved in the history of the country with the conquest of Āzarbāijān. In the east, especially in the Khurasanian city of Sabzavār, the Sarbadārs increased in power, while in Fārs and Iṣfahān members of the house of Īnjū sought to assert themselves over the Muzaffarids. In the south-east, princes of the Kart (or Kurt) dynasty at Herat were active on the political scene, just as they had been under the Īl-Khāns. Later, Türkmen confederations appeared, thrusting forward from eastern Anatolia towards the Iranian highlands. These were the Qarā Quyūnlū and the Āq Quyūnlū, of whom the former were already beginning to influence the fortunes of Persia in the 8th/14th century.

It is necessary to discuss the political scene at this time, grim and unedifying though it is, because it forms the background to a significant epoch in Iranian intellectual life; and also because it shows up in clear colours the negative reasons for Tīmūr's successes on Iranian soil. Before tracing the main lines of this development, which extended over some fifty years, it will be as well to try to clarify the situation of the time by means of a table setting out the most important political forces which began to operate after the fall of the Īl-Khanid empire. Although the plan which follows is not exhaustive, it does demonstrate the fragmentation of the country. It is evident from the dates given, which in many cases can only be tentative, that various of these

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régimes survived the conquest by Tīmūr or in some cases even the entire Timurid era:

The Chobanids in ‘Irāq-i ‘Ajam, Āzarbāijān and Armenia, until 744/1343;

The Jalayirids in ‘Irāq-i ‘Arab and later also in the territory of the Chobanids, until 835/1432;

The Qarā Quyūnlū in Āzarbāijān, and later with further extensions of influence to Fārs and Khurāsān, till 873/1468–9;

The “‘Il-Khān” Togha Temūr in western Khurāsān and Gurgān, until 754/1353;

The Sarbadārs in western Khurāsān, until 783/1381;

The Sayyids of Māzandarān, until 794/1392, and Gīlān down to 1370;

The Kārkiyā in Lāhijān, until 1060/1650;

The Kartids (Kurtids) of Herat in eastern Khurāsān and Afghanistan, with influence extending into Sīstān and Kirmān, until 791/1389;

The Injuids in Fārs and Iṣfahān, until 758/1357;

The Muzaffarids in Kirmān and Yazd, and later also in the former territory of the Injuids, until 795/1393;

The *maliks* of Shabānkāra in the area lying between Fārs and Kirmān on the Persian Gulf, until 756/1355;

The governors (*bukkām*) of Lār, until 983/1575;

The maliks of Hurmuz, until 1031/1622;

The atabegs of Greater Luristān (Lur-i Buzurg), until 828/1425;

The atabegs of Lesser Luristān (Lur-i Kūchak), until 1006/1597.

A number of these princely houses and their representatives such as Togha Temūr, the Chobanids, and particularly the conflict of the “two Ḥasans”, i.e. the Chobanid Shaikh Ḥasan-i Kūchak and Shaikh Ḥasan-i Buzurg of the Jalāyir tribe, have been treated elsewhere,¹ and the Qarā Quyūnlū will be dealt with later; others are of such minor significance in the history of Iran, in this period at least, that no more than a brief reference can be made to them here. We shall therefore summarise the most important events in three brief sections on the Jalayirids, on the Injū family and the Muzaffarids, and on the Sarbadārs and their rivals.

¹ On the Chobanids, see Boyle, in *CHI* v, 373–416; for Togha Temūr, *ibid.*, 413–16, and Minorsky, “Tughā Tīmūr”, *EP*; for the racial affinities of the Jā’ūn-i Qurbān who supported him, Aubin, “L’ethnogénèse”, p. 67.

THE JALAYIRIDS

THE JALAYIRIDS

The name Jalāyir is derived from that of a large and important Mongol tribe.¹ The dynasty of the same name, whose rule began in 740/1340 with Shaikh Ḥasan-i Buzurg's seizure of power in Baghdad and ended with the death of Ḥusain II at the siege of al-Ḥilla, is also quite often referred to as the Īlkā dynasty or the Ilkanids. The name originates with Shaikh Ḥasan's great-grandfather Ilge (<Īlkā) Noyan, who as one of Hülegü's generals took a significant part in the Mongol conquest of Central Asia and the Near East. His sons likewise attained to high rank in the military aristocracy of the Il-Khanid empire, and several of them were able to take princesses of the house of Hülegü in marriage. Thus Ilge's grandson Ḥusain (d.722/1322) married a daughter of the Il-Khān Arghūn named Öljetei, who became the mother of Shaikh Ḥasan, the founder of the dynasty.

Shaikh Ḥasan-i Buzurg, who under Abū Sa'īd and again under Arpa Ke'un had attained to the highest offices as *ulus beg* and deputy, proved to be the strongest personality in the massive struggles for power which took place at the end of Mongol rule in Iran, though he was frequently hard pressed in the conflicts with the Chobanids, and especially with Shaikh Ḥasan-i Kūchak and, after the latter's murder in 744/1343, with his brother Malik Ashraf. If we are to credit a recent interpretation, he was more interested in seeing restoration of the Il-Khanid empire than its overthrow, which of course he did in fact bring about.² He is said never to have assumed any title other than *ulus beg* ("amīr of the state", from Tu. *beg*, "amīr", and Mo. *ulus*, "state, people") and to have recognised the legitimate Chingizids – Togha Temūr (739/1338–9, 741–4/1340–4), Jahān Temūr (740/1339–40) and Sulaimān (747/1346) – and subsequently, in the period 747–57/1346–56, to have left the throne unoccupied. The remarkable thing is that this prince was able to maintain his position in these troubled times right up to his death in 757/1356. "No one in his position has lived to such an age nowadays", commented

¹ In "Īlār", *EP*, Professor Lambton discusses a manuscript said to be taken from the state papers of the Safavid Sulṭān Ḥusain, in which the distribution of tribes at the beginning of the 12th/18th century is surveyed and a distinction drawn between Persian and non-Persian tribes: here the Jalāyir in Khurāsān are listed in the former category.

² The view of Smith, "Djalāyir, Djalāyirids", *EP*. According to Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, p. 133, and Boyle, *CHI* v, 415, however, Shaikh Ḥasan began his autonomous rule in Baghdad with the deposition of Jahān Temūr. On this question Shaikh Ḥasan's coinage appears relevant: cf. Spuler, p. 303, n.7.

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in amazement Ibn Bazzāz; and he finds a supernatural explanation for the fact – namely the good relationship which (in contrast to the Chobanids) Ḥasan-i Buzurg had established with the saintly Shaikh Ṣafī al-Dīn of Ardabīl, who had died twenty-two years previously.¹

He was succeeded by Shaikh Uvais, a son of Ḥasan and the Chobanid princess Dil-Shād Khātūn. In the same year – as had happened once before, at the death of Abū Sa‘īd – an attack was launched by the Golden Horde against Persia, namely in Khurāsān and Āzarbāījān. However, the khan Jānī Beg (Jambek) Jalāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd, who had defeated and executed Malik Ashraf, the ruler in Āzarbāījān, was forced to withdraw as a result of developments in the northern part of his realm. When he died in the following year, his son Berdī Beg, whom he had left as governor in Persia, also returned to Sarāī. This amounted to the abandonment of the Persian conquests, even if we regard Akhīchūq, one of Ashraf’s amīrs, who placed himself at the disposal of the conquerors after the defeat, and following their withdrawal twice took possession of Tabrīz, as belonging to the Golden Horde; for he, too, was unable to maintain his position for any length of time. In 761/1360 Uvais, who had at first recognised the overlordship of the Golden Horde, conquered Āzarbāījān, which his father had lost to Shaikh Ḥasan-i Kūchak twenty years earlier. Thus another attempt to restore Mongol rule in Iran, this time from the direction of the Golden Horde, had also failed. Shaikh Uvais’ success had not been achieved at the first attempt, however. It was preceded by an abortive attack on his part and a campaign led by Mubārīz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Muzaffar of Yazd, which had thoroughly weakened Akhīchūq’s fighting power. In the years that followed, Shaikh Uvais intervened in the power struggles of the Muzaffarids. To Shāh Maḥmūd, who acknowledged his sovereignty and married one of his daughters, he handed over Iṣfahān and recognised his conquest of Shīrāz.

These great successes were offset by many difficulties and setbacks with which Shaikh Uvais had to contend. Thus in the winter of 766/1364, during a campaign against the Shīrvān-Shāh Kai-Kā’us b. Kai-Qubād, news reached him of the revolt of his governor in Baghdad, Khwāja Mirjān, and he was obliged to return and restore order in his own capital city. Among his worst enemies were the Qarā Quyūnlū

¹ Cf. Glassen, *Die frühen Safawiden*, p. 43. Good relations with the Ardabīl order continued into later times, as may be seen from an edict of the Jalayirid Aḥmad of 1372: see Massé, “Ordonnance”.

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in Diyārbakr, the same Türkmen federation which later, at the beginning of the 9th/15th century, was to put an end to his dynasty. In the spring of 767/1366 he marched against them and defeated Bairām Khwāja, their leader, at the battle of Mūsh. Eventually he also brought to heel the Shīrvān-Shāh, who had twice exploited his absence from Āzarbāijān to launch attacks on Tabrīz. In Ray he defeated Amīr Valī, who ruled in Astarābād after the death of Togha Temūr, but was forced to break off the campaign when news was brought of the death of his brother Amīr Zāhid in Ūjān, which made necessary his return to Āzarbāijān. He placed the governorship of Ray in the hands of Qutluḡ Shāh, one of his amīrs, who was followed in the post two years later by ʿĀdil Āqā.

Although Shaikh Uvais retained Baghdad as his capital, his military enterprises and political considerations repeatedly took him to Persia, and he died finally in Tabrīz (776/1374). It is not only his military and political achievements that mark him out as unquestionably the most eminent prince of his line; it is particularly his human qualities and the impetus he gave to cultural life. The latter embraced both efforts to revive commercial enterprise in the devastated regions of Iran and his own personal contribution to civilised living, his patronage of and interest in art and literature – to which no doubt we are also indirectly indebted for many of the detailed facts concerning his life and activities found in a chronicle whose author was apparently his official court chronicler, the *Tārīkh-i Shaikh Uvais* of Abū Bakr al-Quṭbī al-Ahrī. But in addition he wrote verses himself and won renown as a calligrapher and painter.

Shaikh Uvais's efforts towards an extension of Jalayirid power to central and eastern Persia, which was clearly to have been initiated by the campaign against Ray, met with no success. Nor were the rulers who followed him any more successful in this direction. Indeed, the decline of Jalayirid power set in immediately and relentlessly after his death. His eldest son, Ḥasan, failed on account of his general unpopularity and was executed by the top-ranking amīrs. The succession passed to his brother Ḥusain (776–83/1374–82).¹ He experienced immediate difficulties with the Muzaffarids, first with his brother-in-law Shāh Maḥmūd, who marched from Iṣfahān to occupy Tabrīz, though he was obliged to

¹ According to Rabino, "Coins of the Jalā'ir", p. 106, Ḥusain's *laqab*, which is usually given as Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn, appears on his coins as Mughīṣ al-Dīn. Perhaps it should also be read thus in the document published by Herrmann, "Ein Erlass des Galāyeriden Solṭān Ḥoseyn".

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withdraw from the town as a result of illness and died shortly afterwards. His successor Shāh-i Shujā' also made all haste to occupy Tabrīz if he could, but again the attempt failed. Disturbances in the city, the inclemencies of a hard winter, and an uprising in Qazvīn forced him to return to Iṣfahān. Not until the summer of 778/1376 was Ḥusain again able to take up residence in Tabrīz, only to be compelled in the following spring to march again, against Bairām Khwāja and his Türkmens, who were thrusting eastwards once more, this time from the direction of Erzerum.

These operations were successful, but Ḥusain soon found himself caught up in problems of an internal nature, in which his brothers Shaikh 'Alī, Aḥmad and Bāyazīd were involved. The situation was further aggravated by his support of 'Ādil Āqā, whose exceptional rise to power provoked the hostility of other influential amīrs. Incessant troubles at home, uprisings by local potentates and battles with the Muzaffarids consumed Ḥusain's resources. To all this was added the breach with 'Ādil, who had meanwhile risen to a position of unchallengeable power. So he found himself by Ṣafar 784/the end of April 1382 defenceless against an attack by his brother Sulṭān Aḥmad when he advanced with an armed force from his territory around Ardabīl and occupied Tabrīz. Aḥmad, who took over the succession, had his brother executed.

Amīr 'Ādil countered by proclaiming Prince Bāyazīd, who had managed by the skin of his teeth to escape from Tabrīz, as sultan in Sulṭāniyya. Aḥmad, now subjected to attack from several directions, could find no other expedient in the circumstances than to seek help from the arch-enemies of his family, the Qarā Quyūnlū under Qarā Muḥammad. His brother, Shaikh 'Alī, who had advanced from Baghdad to attack Tabrīz, was killed in the fighting against them. A treaty providing for the cession of Āzarbāijān to Sulṭān Aḥmad, 'Irāq-i 'Ajam to his brother Bāyazīd, and 'Irāq-i 'Arab jointly to Aḥmad and 'Ādil, proved to be shortlived, so that it was in a state of utter disunity and discord that the Jalayirids were hurled into the great conflicts of Tīmūr, on the one hand with the Golden Horde under Tokhtamīsh and on the other with the Ottomans under Bāyezīd I Yıldırım. This will be dealt with in the next chapter.

The contributions to cultural life made by various princes of the Jalayirid dynasty provide a welcome contrast to the disastrous rôle played in Iranian politics by this princely house (especially its later

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THE JALAYIRIDS

members), with their endless disputes and feuds. Miniature painting is the most significant area. Their artistic activities were centred on Tabrīz and especially Baghdad, where impressive examples of their architecture have been preserved. In the period we are dealing with the Jalayirids were largely Turkicised, or at least Turkish-speaking; and they have been credited with establishing the Turkish element in Arabic Iraq on a firmer foundation so that Turkish became the language most commonly spoken after Arabic.¹ But this did not prevent them from acquiring a reputation as patrons of Persian poets: as a prime witness to this fact we may quote no less a name than Salmān Sāvajī.

In the religious sphere the Jalayirids display unmistakably Shī'ī features, as in their preference for such names as 'Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusain. A still clearer indication is to be seen in the dying wish of the founder of the dynasty, Shaikh Ḥasan-i Buzurg, to be buried in Najaf, where according to tradition 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib had found his last resting place. Nevertheless, as Mazzaoui points out,² the conversion of ruling princes to Shī'ism at this time did not necessarily assume a spectacular form or result in the conversion of their subjects. Whether this circumstance helps to explain the virtual absence of references to the Shī'a on Jalayirid coins must remain an open question. Rabino has found no evidence demonstrating even Shī'ī sympathies among the coins – over 150 of them – minted by the Jalayirids which he has examined. In a group of 35 other coins preserved in the Mūza-yi Āzarbāijān, Tabrīz, only one bears the names of the Twelve Imāms rather than those of the Orthodox caliphs, namely a coin of Ḥasan-i Buzurg minted at Āmul in 742/1341–2.³ A recent find at 'Aqarqūf, 20 km west of Baghdad, contained 227 Jalayirid silver coins, of which 50 belong to Shaikh Uvais and the remainder to Sulṭān Aḥmad. Shī'ī characteristics were totally lacking, and the coins of Uvais bore the names of the Orthodox caliphs.⁴

¹ Yınanç, "Celāyir", p. 65.

² *Origins of the Safawids*, p. 64.

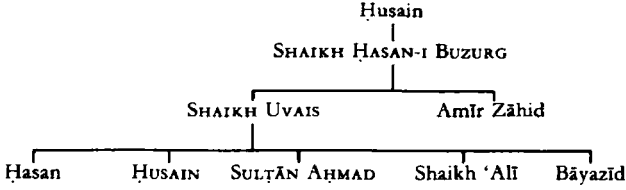
³ Sayyid Jamāl Turābī-Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *Sikkabā-yi shāhān-i islāmī-yi Irān* II (Tabrīz, 1350/1971), 110; cf. *idem*, *Rasm al-khaṭṭ-i uighurī va sā'irī dar sikkā-shināsi* (Tabrīz, 1351/1972), p. 58, for two other striking of Ḥasan-i Buzurg, in Baghdad 743/1344–5 and 744/1343–4, which both bear the names of the Orthodox caliphs.

⁴ Mahāb Darwīsh al-Bakrī, "Iktishāf nuqūd jalā'iriyya fī 'Aqarqūf", *al-Mashkūhāt* III (1972), 77–80 (reference kindly supplied by Dr Dorothea Duda): the details are unfortunately very scanty.

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JALAYIRIDS, MUZAFFARIDS AND SARBADĀRS

I. *The Jalayirids*



II. *The Muzaffarids*

