

Mongol Women's Encounters with Eurasian Religions

Although there is an extensive secondary bibliography dealing with different aspects of religion in the Mongol Empire,¹ it is relevant to highlight the fact that the Mongols had their own native set of beliefs and practices generally referred to as shamanism that were shared by the majority of the nomadic societies of North Asia. As the empire grew, the Mongols' own religious milieu came into direct contact with those of the conquered populations. This encounter highlighted not only the similarities and differences between them but played a role in shaping the religious landscape of the Mongol Empire. In this context, the present chapter looks at the interaction between women and religion in different areas of the empire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

This encounter between the Mongols' understanding of religion and the faiths of the conquered populations triggered changes in the beliefs of both the Mongol rulers and the subject populations, and the resulting interaction between these two parties has been interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, some scholars have seen the Mongols as exploiters of religion for political purposes.² The attitude of the conquerors is seen as being governed by *realpolitik*, with a religion being favoured or persecuted simply in order to control the subject population.³ On the other hand, some studies have suggested that the pre-imperial Mongol worldview might have played a role in guiding their preferences towards a particular religion, or at least towards a particular sect or school within a given creed. As is generally the case with historical writing, both arguments seem to have solid foundations depending on where and when the historians have looked for evidence.

Ever since the confrontation between Chinggis Khan and the shaman Teb-Tengri in the early stage in the formation of the empire, the Mongols recognised the political threat powerful religious leaders could present to the political supremacy of Mongol khans.⁴ When Chinggis Khan arrived in Bukhara during the first Mongol invasion, he expelled the religious leaders from the Friday mosque, expelled the religious leaders from the city, and

claimed from the pulpit that he was there because he was 'the punishment of God'.⁵ We will never know for certain whether Chinggis Khan actually made this speech, but the removal of the religious officials from the scene and the situating of the Khan in the pulpit is a powerful image used by the Persian historian Juvayni and which illustrates the impact that the Mongol conquest had on Eurasian religions.⁶

Despite this example, the Mongols are generally considered to have been tolerant of religions, allowing freedom to cults and favouring religions as far as its followers did not challenge Mongol political supremacy.⁷ However, its selective use of religious favouritism as a way to control conquered populations has also been documented throughout the empire.⁸ This strategy was applied, for example, in Iran, where Christians and even Jews acquired important positions in government, at least until Ghazan Khan's conversion in 1295.⁹ But, religion in the Mongol Empire was also characterised by the rulers' rejection of it in any institutionalised form. Arguably, the reason for this may have been the Mongol strategy of preventing religious leaders from developing any political structures that might grow to rival the emperor's power. Perhaps there was also an internal Mongol component in this attitude, one rooted in the native shamanism-Tenggerism of Siberia and Mongolia.¹⁰ By 'shamanism' we are not here referring to the *perennialist* concept advanced by Mircea Eliade in his famous work.¹¹ On the contrary, the term shamanism here concerns the group of practices that were customary among the Mongols in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹² The role of the shaman (*böö* or *böge*) or shamaness (*idugan* or *iduyan*) was not clearly defined at the time of Chinggis Khan, or it could simply be that the information we have is scant and confusing. There is agreement among scholars that shamanism did not have an organised church in pre-imperial Mongolia and that the shamans were closely related to Christian priests, Buddhist monks and, later, Muslim shaykhs in the Mongol *ordos*.¹³

The rejection of institutionalised religion can be also observed in the adoption of Christianity by some Mongol groups, narrated by the Nestorian monk Bar Hebraeus as being an act lacking any submission to an ecclesiastical authority.¹⁴ Similarly, with regard to the adoption of 'Chinese religions' such as Taoism and Buddhism, the Mongols avoided subordinating themselves to institutionalised religion. This might explain their early favouring of the Quanzhen sect of Taoism, an incipient branch of this school of thought that did not require the khan to subordinate himself in any way to the master of the order.¹⁵ A reflection of the clear subordination of religion to the Khan can be observed in the travels of the Taoist monk Changchun from Northern China to Central Asia to

meet with Chinggis Khan. In the document that survived to our day, it is clearly mentioned that the old monk was not simply invited but ordered to travel to meet the Great Khan. It is recorded in the *Hsi Yu Chi* that for the master to refuse was 'out of the question'.¹⁶ Thus, the power relationship between religious leader and khan was clear from the very beginning, with the Mongol conqueror commanding the deeds of the respected Taoist master.¹⁷

However, the 'accommodation' of the Mongols towards Chinese religion, or rather the Mongol search for a religion for 'Mongol China', was not a straightforward process. One of the ways in which the new rulers tried to choose a religion and simultaneously shape it was by organising religious debates between Taoist and Buddhist scholars.¹⁸ It seems that Lamaist Buddhism offered the best means of accommodating the new conquerors in the religious milieu of conquered China. Though they had favoured Lamaism since the appointment of Phags-Pa Lama as state preceptor in 1268, the Mongols did not neglect the other Chinese traditions.¹⁹ The debates and the changing preferences for different religions among successive Mongol leaders seem to have been contributory factors in preventing the emergence of a religious tradition with enough power to rival the ruler's authority.²⁰ Whether this process was conscious or unconscious is difficult to assess, but it served the Mongols, helping them to keep religion under its 'secular' power, beginning with Chinggis Khan and Teb-Tengri and continuing into the Yuan dynasty.

When it came to dealing with Islam, the narratives concerning Chinggis Khan's conquest of Central Asia underline a dual strategy of disregard for the *'ulamā'* and the favouring of particular Muslim scholars.²¹ During the first invasion, the Mongols engaged in contact with the Ismailis of Alamut, a branch of Islam that had both an institutionalised organisation and political control over territories in Iran.²² The relationship between the conquerors and the Ismailis seems to have been, at first, one of military collaboration in the face of a common enemy: the Khwarazmshah Sultan Jalal al-Din (r. 1220–31).²³ But this political understanding came to an end when the Mongols decided to advance into the Middle East and secure control over regions under Ismaili influence. Under the reign of Möngke Khan (r. 1251–9), Hülegü carried out a military expedition to Iran, progressively enlisting the support of regional dynasties such as the Karts of Herat and the Qutlughkhanids of Kerman. In the course of this advance, even the Ismailis sent emissaries to Hülegü to offer their submission.²⁴ Persian sources mention that the decision to destroy the castle of Alamut was based on Möngke Khan's realisation that 'assassins' in the service of Alamut had infiltrated the Mongols.²⁵ Nonetheless, if it had been Hülegü's

plan to stay in the Middle East, then the destruction of the Ismailis would have had a dual purpose. First, it would have removed their political opposition and, second, it would have accorded the Mongols the support of other local dynasties in Iran, thereby granting legitimacy to their rule.²⁶

The removal from the political scene of any powerful religious authorities opened up the Middle East to the spread of other religions such as Nestorian Christianity and Buddhism.²⁷ But, the removal of institutionalised religion from the region also created the opportunity for other interpretations of Islam to flourish. It is hardly a coincidence that Sufism started to spread across the Middle East and Central Asia from the eleventh century onwards. The arrival of the Saljuq dynasty (c. eleventh to thirteenth centuries) in the region, an Islamised semi-nomadic branch of the Turkic people, saw the slow but steady development of this mystical aspect of Islam. The Mongols accelerated the process.²⁸ Sufism seems to have undergone a progressive process of institutionalisation, in which followers of a particular religious leader became the founders of Sufi orders (*ṭarīqa*, plural *ṭuruq*), but did not become fully structured until the fourteenth century.²⁹ Since the time of Tegüder Ahmad's reign, and especially after Ghazan Khan's conversion to Islam, members of the Mongol royal family were in close contact with Sufi masters.³⁰

To summarise, the Mongol native religion before the rise of Chinggis Khan has generally been described as a 'polytheism, the belief in a supreme deity, an armed equestrian deity, veneration of Heaven, Earth, Water and Fire, the worship of ancestors, meditation in the form of shamanistic practices, both human and domestic animal sacrifice, etc'.³¹ But, as important as these practices was the lack of the sort of organised church and priesthood structure that was present among the sedentary societies that they conquered. Perhaps because of this native conception of religion and the avoidance of a religious opposition to their political supremacy, the Mongols favoured the rise of a new sect of Taoism (the Quanzhen sect), reinforced Nestorianism (a less hierarchical form of Christianity than its Catholic counterpart), developed Tibetan Buddhism and supported the presence of mystical interpretations of Islam (Sufism) in the Middle East and Central Asia. This triggered a new religious situation, especially in the Middle East, where minority forms of religion such as Christianity or Buddhism could, at least initially, gain adepts and privileges. It also generated the establishment of popular forms of religion within Islam that rapidly engaged with the new ruling elite. It was this political use of religion together with the flowering of non-institutionalised forms of religion that formed the religious environment where Mongol women lived.

Personal Involvement of Women in Religion: Religiosity and Interaction with Religious Leaders from Shamanism to Islam

Women were a presence in the religious milieu of the Mongols before the rise of Chinggis Khan in the form of goddesses and in the worship of female ancestors. With regard to goddesses, Allsen has noted that, particularly among the Mongols of the White and Golden Hordes of the Russian Steppe, the religious system was based on a duality of gods represented by Köke Möngke Tengri (Eternal Blue Heaven) and Nachighai/Etügen, who ruled over the ‘seventy-seven earthly gods’.³² The interesting part of this heaven–earth representation is that the second god was ‘always personified as female and bears the epithet *eke*, or “mother”’.³³ Concerning ancestor worship, there is an interesting account of Chinggis Khan performing rituals in honour of his female ancestor Alan Qo’a that signifies the relevance of women in the Mongol religious milieu.³⁴ These rituals were performed through shamans who acted as intermediaries between these deities and the people. Shamans were generally held in high regard because they could deliver prophecies, divinations and omens, and make sacrifices to the ancestors.³⁵ These rituals included bone-burning, veneration of heaven, water, earth and fire, and dancing and chanting, among other things, all activities similar to those performed by other pastoral groups in ancient and medieval times.³⁶

Shamanesses and women actively participating in the religious rituals have been recorded since the earliest known history of the Mongol people.³⁷ The best-documented example of this concerns the dispute between Hö’elün and the wives of Ambaqai after the death of Temüjin’s father, which was mentioned in Chapter 1. As we saw, the anecdote concerning the displacement of Temüjin’s mother from the ritual has a political interpretation, but over and above this it indicates the role that noble women might have had in performing religious rituals among the Mongols in pre-imperial times.³⁸ Yet, in this early period, there is no clear definition of the role of shamans, making it difficult to assess the degree of women’s involvement in shamanic practices beyond the example of Hö’elün.³⁹

If evidence for the presence of women shamans in the early empire is scarce, episodes of female religious involvement are more frequently documented.⁴⁰ One example appears in *The Secret History of the Mongols*, which mentions how the Naiman lady Gürbäsü she asked for the head of the Kerait Ong Khan to be brought to her so that she could perform a sacrifice in his honour.⁴¹ Other episodes of divination and shamanism during the period of Mongol expansion can be found in the sources, in which women’s involvement usually acquires a negative connotation.⁴² Women

are not usually involved though, whilst any involvement they do have generally acquires a negative connotation. For instance, both the Muslim and Christian chroniclers accuse those Mongol women who engage directly in shamanic rituals of being sorcerers and witches, using these accusations to discredit their political capability. For example, in imperial times, Fatima Khatun, the counsellor of the empress Töregene Khatun, was accused of witchcraft. She was charged with causing the illness of Köten, the son of Ögetei, who openly opposed the policies of the two women. When Köten died, Güyük Khan, who was about to take control of the empire, was forced by his minister Chinqai to question Fatima about this accusation. She confessed under torture and was brutally executed.⁴³ Christian sources narrate the story, emphasising that the accusations of sorcery are false, thereby implying that Güyük's decision to execute his political rival caused strife between mother and son.⁴⁴ In the politically turbulent decade of the 1240s, the same accusations were brought against other female member of the royal family, such as the second empress of the Mongol Empire Oghul Qaimish (r. 1248–50). Rubruck mentions he had heard from Möngke Khan's 'own lips' that Oghul 'was the worst kind of witch and that by her sorcery she had destroyed her whole family'.⁴⁵ One cannot know if the account of the sorcery came directly from the Khan himself, but it seems clear that the perception in Möngke's court, especially among the Christian subjects that Friar William met there, was that there was a link between these powerful women and practices of sorcery and witchcraft.⁴⁶

Executions of women based on accusations of sorcery were not restricted to the 1240s. Charges of treason and sorcery were used by Hülegü in Iran to execute Balaqan, a male descendant of Jochi, just before the enmity between the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde broke out in the early 1260s.⁴⁷ Another example involves the death of the Ilkhan Arghun in 1291. One explanation of his rapid illness and death was the medicine provided by Buddhist monks. The close relationship that the ruler had with this religion led him to take some 'medicine' from an Indian monk famous for his longevity in the hope of prolonging his own life. Arghun took the elixir for nine months, but eventually developed a chronic illness that may have been responsible for his death.⁴⁸ The shamans of the court claimed that the Ilkhan's death was due to sorcery, highlighting some inter-religious tensions in the court of Arghun. On this occasion, a woman (Toghachaq Khatun) was found to be responsible and, after being tortured, 'she and a number of other women were cast into the river'.⁴⁹

The scant information we have on the relationship between women and shamanism points towards a twofold phenomenon. On the one hand,

it appears that some women were allowed to perform religious rituals as shamans and actively participated in the liturgy of this religion. On the other hand, this same involvement in religious rituals appears to have been used politically as the empire began to expand, with accusations of sorcery and witchcraft generally being used to justify political agenda as described in both the Christian and Muslim sources. We might only be scratching the surface of the relationship between women and ‘shamanism’ in this period, since the evidence in the written material available is scarce and difficult to interpret. However, as the empire grew and other regions were incorporated into the Mongol domains, the information becomes more varied and women’s presence in the religious milieu of the empire becomes more visible.

FIRST ENCOUNTERS: FEMALE RELIGIOSITY IN THE FACE OF EASTERN
CHRISTIANITY AND CHINESE ‘RELIGIOUS’ TRADITIONS

The quick expansion of the empire in the first half of the thirteenth century put women into contact with other Eurasian belief systems. Some of these religions such as Buddhism and Nestorian Christianity were known in the Steppe before Chinggis Khan’s expansion.⁵⁰ For this reason, it is not surprising that most early female religiosity was articulated around these two faiths. Yet the information regarding female interaction with ‘Chinese’ religions such as Taoism and Buddhism is rather limited. There is, however, the already mentioned meeting between Chinggis Khan and the Taoist master Changchun held in Afghanistan in 1221 after the Mongol Khan has temporarily abandoned his camp in Central Asia to pursue his military campaigns against the pockets of resistance of the Khwarazmshah empire. This direct contact and some of the early policies in the Mongol Empire towards this particular Taoist sect (referred to generally as the Quanzhen sect) suggest certain initial favouritism from the Mongols towards this religious branch. However, there are no references to a continuous interaction between this sect and any Mongol women.⁵¹ Only a passing reference is made in this account to presents sent by two princesses who were living in Chinggis Khan’s camp in Afghanistan to Changchun. Yet, neither of them were Mongols, since one was the daughter of the Tangut ruler and the other a princess of the former Jin dynasty of Northern China.⁵² It appears that at this stage Taoism remained a ‘foreign’ religion to the Mongols and that the *khātūns* did not pay much attention to this holy man.

Buddhism was more successful than its Taoist competitor, but it had to wait a few years until Qubilai Khan was named Great Khan and his

wife Chabui became empress of the Yuan dynasty of China to make a real impact in the decision-making of the empire.⁵³ Chabui was a 'fervent Buddhist and was, in particular, attracted by Tibetan Buddhism',⁵⁴ but despite having a short biography about her in the *Yuan Shih*, nothing about her personal religious life is mentioned.⁵⁵ That is, she actively promoted this branch of Buddhism to her husband, eventually tipping the balance in its favour over its rival Taoism,⁵⁶ but although her proximity to the Tibetan lamas is manifest, no references to her involvement in religious rituals or her beliefs have come to us.⁵⁷ Our access to Chinese sources in the production of this work was rather limited, which might explain the dearth of descriptions of Mongol women's religiosities in Yuan China, and perhaps other studies can complement this short reference here. Hence, our attention is focused on the westward expansion of the Mongols, for which we have access to more source material, in our search for a more personal involvement of women in religion.

When we turn to Christian sources, the information about women is more abundant. As early as the 1940s, scholars noted that Christian women had been present among the Mongols; Douglas M. Dunlop observed that they belonged mostly to the Kerait people.⁵⁸ Probably due to the high position that the Keraites held in the political balance of the steppes prior to the military expansion of the Mongols, many of these women were married to members of the royal family, with the Jochids and Toluids, respectively the lines of the eldest and youngest sons of Chinggis Khan, being those with more intermarriages with Kerait women.⁵⁹ For example, Sorghaghtani Beki, Doquz Khatun and Ibaqa Beki had left indication of their intervention in political affairs where religion was involved in the Mongol Empire.⁶⁰ However, the relationship between these women and Christianity was not limited to the political use of the religion, there was also a personal dimension.

There is a constant anxious need in the Christian sources to emphasise the commitment of the *khātūns* towards their Christian faith.⁶¹ Similarly, Muslim sources make references to female affiliation to Christianity but highlight, wherever possible, their support for Islam.⁶² The majority of sources refer to politically influential Christian women among the Mongols, but they also mention isolated cases of women directly interacting with Christian priests and engaging in rituals. For example, Marco Polo mentions that a divination ritual was carried out by a Nestorian priest in the tent of one of Chinggis Khan's wives that foretold the victory of the Mongol ruler over the Ong Khan of the Keraites. Clearly trying to convey an idea of favouritism towards Christianity by Chinggis Khan, the Venetian traveller mentions that since then Chinggis Khan 'found the Christians

to tell the truth, he always treated them with great respect, and held them for men of truth for ever after'.⁶³ The story might have been a fabrication made by Polo a posteriori, yet what is relevant to us is the fact that these priests seem to have been in the *ordos* of the Khan's wives, their services being requested when an omen was needed. In one of the stories attributed to Bar Hebraeus, it is mentioned that Chinggis Khan had a dream in which a religious man appeared to him offering him success in his conquering enterprises. Chinggis Khan went to one of his Christian wives, a daughter of the Ong Khan, who recognised from her husband's description of the 'bishop' the man who had attended her father.⁶⁴ This Nestorian priest is identified as 'Rabbanta' by Vincent of Beauvais, who adds that the priest was in attendance in the *ordo* of this lady.⁶⁵ The story cannot be found in other sources and, because Chinggis Khan was not married to a daughter of the Ong Khan, we have to question its veracity.⁶⁶ However, if the author of this source was trying to make a connection between Chinggis Khan and Christianity for propaganda purposes, he would have done so by creating a context which was more credible so that his narrative would be convincing. Consequently, even if they never occurred, the events of this story offer an example of the proximity between the wives of Mongol khans and religious leaders that is documented in a variety of Christian accounts.

The reign of Möngke Khan (r. 1251–9) was also an interesting period in the religious history of the Mongols in terms of Christianity. Apart from the debates between Buddhists and Taoists and the expeditions against the Ismailis and the caliph in Baghdad, Christianity had gained a presence in his court. Only one source suggests that Möngke Khan converted to Christianity and the veracity of this claim has been disproved by modern historians.⁶⁷ However, if it did not convince the Khan himself, Christianity seems to have been widespread among some of his wives. One of them was Oghul Qaimish, the daughter of the leader of the Oyrat people at the time of Chinggis Khan, who was first married to Tolui and then passed to Möngke after the death of his father.⁶⁸ Although Oghul Qaimish was dead when Friar William of Rubruck was going to the Great Khan Möngke in 1254, the priest was nevertheless taken to her dwelling because it 'had belonged to one of his wives [Oghul Qaimish], a Christian, whom he had loved deeply'.⁶⁹ It is interesting to observe the diplomacy exercised here by the Mongols. It seems an appropriate protocol (if there was one) to receive the Christian priest in the tent of a Christian wife even if she was already dead.

The daughter of Oghul Qaimish, Shirin Khatun (Cirina Qaten in the extract below), is mentioned as having been in charge of her mother's *ordo*. In the company of other religious men, Rubruck was invited to

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go to the apartment of the young mistress Cirina, which was behind the large dwelling which had belonged to her mother. When the cross entered she prostrated herself on the ground and adored it with great devotion for she had been well instructed in this respect, and she placed it in a prominent position on a silken cloth.⁷⁰

This is plainly a reference to the performance of religious rituals among Mongol women requiring not only the instruction in religious values, but also direct interaction with religious leaders who performed these ceremonies for women. In fact, there are examples in Rubruck's accounts of him visiting some of the Khan's wives together with other religious leaders to offer not just spiritual comfort but, more importantly, to perform rituals with the aim of healing and combatting magical enchantments.⁷¹

It is impossible to generalise, but in this story one might be able to discern something of the female attitude towards religion in this central period of the empire. Qutay Khatun, wife of Möngke, is described as a 'pagan', which most probably means that she had not been baptised and was, in the eyes of the Christian priest, a 'shamanist'. He is, however, summoned to her *ordo* in the company of a Christian monk because the lady is sick and cannot leave her bed. The monk

made her get up from her couch and adore the cross, kneeling down three times and placing her forehead on the ground, and he stood with the cross on the west side of the dwelling and she on the east. This done they changed places and the monk went with the cross to the east side, she to the west; then, although she was so weak she could hardly stand on her feet, he insolently ordered her to prostrate again and adore the cross three times towards the east according to the Christian custom, and she did so. He also taught her to make the sign of the cross on herself.⁷²

After this visit, the lady deteriorated towards death and the shamans did not provide any solution. At this moment, Möngke sent for the monk who accompanied Rubruck and asked him to do something or he would have to respond with his life. In despair, the monk asked Rubruck and his companions to pray for the lady and prepared a potion made of a certain root mixed with holy water prepared by William himself. Afterwards, the monk, William and two Nestorian priests went to visit the woman and performed a similar ritual to that done with Shirin involving the cross and the Gospel being read over her. They made her drink the holy water and root mixture and 'at last feeling better she cheered up and ordered four *iascots* of silver to be brought' and distributed among the religious men.⁷³ Möngke was impressed, he took the cross in his hand and granted permission to 'carry the cross on high on a lance'.⁷⁴ It is remarkable, though, that

despite her participation in these rituals and the periodic visits by Christian priests and monks, there is no indication of this woman having converted to Christianity. Rubruck blames the Nestorian priests for not baptising her, but it seems that hers was a more syncretic understanding of religious practice, with pagan elements being mixed with those Nestorian rituals that had proved 'effective'. Rubruck also blamed the Nestorian priests for not condemning 'any form of sorcery'; it is not surprising that he particularly disliked all this syncretism when, in the room of Qutay, he saw a Christian silver chalice together with 'four swords half way out of their scabbards' around the lady's bed and a black stone hanging on the wall.⁷⁵ William of Rubruck's description indicates that Qutay was not committed to Christianity and it suggests that the *khātūn* incorporated Christian rituals into a set of ceremonies connected with her more syncretic set of beliefs.⁷⁶ Of course, one cannot generalise from this relationship to all Mongol women, nor even to the other wives of Möngke Khan.

The chief wife of Möngke at the time of his accession to the throne was Qutuqtay Khatun.⁷⁷ She gave him a son and a daughter and was a committed Christian in the court of her husband.⁷⁸ She frequently attended the Nestorian church and Buddhist temples which were in the court. Rubruck was present in the church when she

prostrated, placing their foreheads on the ground after the Nestorian custom, and then they touched all the statues with their right hand, always kissing the hand afterwards; and then they proffered their right hand to all present in the church, for this is the custom of Nestorians on entering church.⁷⁹

This woman was not only actively participating in religious rituals, but appeared to have a priori knowledge of the ceremonies. Inside the church, the lady removed her *boghtagh* and ordered everybody to leave while she was, presumably, baptised.⁸⁰ On another occasion, it was Möngke Khan himself who entered the church and sat next to his wife before the altar. Whether this was an act of religious compromise, a way to content the Christian community in his court, or simply an act of companionship towards his chief wife is not clear, but it seems that the queen's involvement in Christianity was such that she might have served as a broker between Christianity and the Mongols.⁸¹ Möngke's commitment to Christianity was ambiguous, but his wife's commitment to the Christian communities was such that she would stay with them after her husband, once he had distributed money, food and wine among the monks and priests, had left, until the lady, 'now drunk, got into a cart, while the priests sang and howled, and she went her way'.⁸²

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THE INTERACTION BETWEEN *KHĀTŪNS* AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN ILKHANID IRAN

Some of the women who accompanied the Mongol campaign under Hülegü to conquer Iran were Christians. They adapted tents into churches where priests, monks and Mongol *khātūns* could worship. Among those women who had a church in their *ordo* was Hülegü's wife, Doquz Khatun. Rashid al-Din links the favour showed by the Ilkhan to Christianity with the role of his wife. According to the Persian historian, 'a church was always made at the gate of Doquz Khātūn's ordu, and the *naqus* was sounded'.⁸³ The church was also noted by Christian sources, which add that 'she very much loved all Christians, Armenians and Syrians, so that her tent was a church, and a sounder travelled with her, and many Armenian and Syrian priests'.⁸⁴ Even non-Mongol Christian women were allowed to establish places of worship and to maintain their traditions. When Maria Palaiologina (Despina Khatun), the illegitimate daughter of the Byzantine emperor Michael III Palaiologos (d. 1282) came to Iran as part of a marriage alliance between the Mongols and Byzantium, she brought a Christian orthodox bishop with her and founded a bishopric in Tabriz.⁸⁵

Doquz Khatun's personal beliefs and Mongol political strategy in Iran seemed to go hand in hand: favouring the Christians was a way to extend control over mainly Muslim Iran. But, when the Ilkhanate's strategy changed, the personal religious attitudes of the women were no longer in line with the new political expedient. Although Qutui Khatun's son was deeply involved with Sufi shaykhs, and she herself developed a policy of proximity with Muslims when she ruled the kingdom on behalf of her son, a few years earlier she had not hesitated to support and join Christian rituals that had been stopped because of the rivalry between Islam and Christianity in Azerbaijan. In 1279, she went in person to the town of Maragha and encouraged the Christian community to restore the ritual of blessing water on the day of the Epiphany.⁸⁶ She 'commanded the Christians to go forth according to their custom with crosses suspended from the heads of their spears'.⁸⁷

The ritual syncretism that women seemed to follow in their personal relationship with Christianity was echoed when the Mongols came into contact with the majority Muslim population in Iran. Among the Turco-Mongol dynasties that ruled the Middle East prior to the arrival of Hülegü, women in the royal families were deeply engaged in Islamic rituals. The Saljuq dynasty saw women undertaking the pilgrimage to Mecca to fulfil the religious duty of the hajj, they recognised Islamic jurisprudence in

matters of family and divorce, as well as the political and religious authority of the caliph and the *‘ulamā’*.⁸⁸ At the same time, more popular forms of Islamic religious expression were emerging in Iran in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries with the mystical form of Islam (Sufism) already present among the women of the Saljuq court, as some of them appear mentioned in, for example, the hagiography of the Sufi Ahmad-i Jam (also known as Zhandah Pīl).⁸⁹ Similarly, among the Saljuqs of Rum in Anatolia, the growth of Konya as a meeting point for Sufis fleeing the first Mongol invasion created a pole of attraction for Turkish women in search of spirituality. Some examples are recorded in other hagiographical material of close interactions between Turkic women and Sufi leaders.⁹⁰ One of those women was *‘Esmati Khatun*, the wife of Malek Fakhr al-Din of Erzincan, who, after feeling the presence of Shaykh Baha’ al-Din Valad (father of Jalal al-Din Rumi) in the town near to where she was passing, ‘straightway she mounted a thoroughbred horse and set out in pursuit of Baha’-e Valad’.⁹¹

The arrival of the Mongols had prompted the rapid spread of Sufism in the region. Sources suggest that the interaction between rulers and their families with Sufi leaders increased after the establishment of the Ilkhanate. The execution of the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad in 1258 and the destruction of the Ismaili strongholds in the region a few years earlier removed from the political scene of the Middle East two strong religious actors, allowing different Sufi groups to move more freely across Iran and Anatolia. This change in religious authority did not mean that the Mongols allowed any religious group to freely preach or gain adepts in the Ilkhanate. Although the Mongols granted freedom of religion, the first decades of Mongol rule in Iran were marked by a hectic religious policy in which Christianity, Islam and Buddhism were in turn favoured or persecuted. However, the presence of Sufi shaykhs has been recorded among members of the Mongol royal family in all the territories occupied by the Mongols. Although their role in the Islamisation process undergone by the Mongols has recently been softened, they certainly played a role in bringing Islam closer to the Mongol conquerors, especially in Iran and the Golden Horde.⁹² Interaction between Mongols and Sufis even reached the Yuan dynasty, where we find specific mention of the involvement of Sufis in the Yuan court appearing in an anecdote involving Möngke Temür (r. 1294–1307) and his passion for wine. Möngke Temür spent a lot of time drinking with ‘a *danishmand* from Bukhara with the title of Raḍī, who laid claim to a knowledge of alchemy, magic, and talismans and by sleight of hand and deceit had endeared himself to Temür Qa’an’.⁹³ Allegedly, such practices annoyed

Qubilai Khan, who decided to send the Radi on a trip during which he would be killed.⁹⁴

In the period prior to Ghazan Khan's conversion to Islam, information regarding the involvement of Mongol women in Islamic religious rituals in Iran is scarce. One of the reasons for this seems to be that during the first thirty years of Mongol dominion in Iran the majority of influential women in the court – and therefore those who attracted the attention of the chroniclers – were either Christians, Buddhists or remained attached to their shamanic practices. Yet, Sufis were present in the court from at least the early 1280s when Tegüder Ahmad (r. 1282–4) allegedly spent more time in their company than ruling the Ilkhanate.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, references to men in the Mongol court engaging with Sufi leaders suggest that women may also have taken part in these practices in their *ordos*. In the case of Ghazan Khan (r. 1295–1304), his conversion seems to have occurred under the tutelage of the Kubrawiya order by Sadr al-Din Ibrahim Hammuya, the son of Saʿd al-Din Muhammad, one of the disciples of Najm al-Din Kubra. As Charles Melville has shown, sources suggest that Ghazan received a woollen coat from Sadr al-Din Ibrahim Hammuya as a clear indication of his affiliation.⁹⁶ As Amitai has pointed out, to what extent Ghazan was aware of the Sufi meaning of this cloth remains a mystery.⁹⁷ However, his involvement with Sufism is also mentioned by Rashid al-Din: '[Ghazan Khan] rewarded all the sayyids, imams, and shaykhs, giving them purses and alms, and he issued strict orders for the building of mosques, madrasas, khanaqahs, and charitable institutions. When the month of Ramadan came, he occupied himself with acts of devotion in the company of imams and shaykhs'.⁹⁸

The chronicles of the period reflect the increasing importance of the Sufi shaykh. For example, Banakati dedicated the end of his account of individual Mongol rulers to the enumeration of the deaths of some shaykhs who had passed away in this period. Shaykh Taj al-Din Abu al-Fazl Mahmud bin Mahmud bin Daʿud al-Banakati (maybe a relative of the author) was included among other shaykhs at the end of the description of Tegüder Ahmad's reign (1282–4).⁹⁹ In addition, Rashid al-Din makes sporadic mention of the role of Sufi dervishes in Iran as mediators in diplomatic enterprises between amirs, family members and royal women.¹⁰⁰ More specifically, he mentions a 'Shaykh Mahmud Dinavari, who had been named *shaykhu'l-mashāyikh* [head of religious activity] and was one of Bōlōghan Khātūn's [wife of Arghun] protégées' in her *ordo* in Iran.¹⁰¹

Apart from this case, clearer indications of interaction between Muslim religious leaders and Mongol *khātūns* do not emerge in the sources until later. This visibility might also have come about as a result of the

popularisation of hagiographies as a literary genre in the Islamic world in the late thirteenth century, and especially in the fourteenth century. Although many were composed at the end of the Mongol period or after the disintegration of the unified Ilkhanate in 1335, these works usually look back at the Mongol dynasty of Iran in the first half of the fourteenth century to find legitimisation of their respective Sufi orders. In so doing, they would include specific references to Mongol women in close contact to Sufi shaykhs who are mostly omitted from historical chronicles. For example, the *Safwat al-safa*, composed in c. 1357–8 by Ibn Ismaʿil ibn Bazzaz, narrates the miracles performed by Shaykh Safi al-Din Ardabili, who became the eponymous founder of the Safavid order based in the Iranian city of Ardabil and who was later regarded as the founder of the Safavid dynasty that ruled Iran from 1501 until 1736.¹⁰²

Some anecdotes contained in the *Safwat al-safa* report encounters between Sufi shaykhs and Mongol *khātūns*. For example, a meeting between Safi al-Din and Sultan Abu Saʿid's wife Baghdad Khatun is mentioned during a visit made by the Mongol ruler to the shaykh. One particular story tries to illustrate the purity of the master by recounting his pious behaviour, such as refraining from speaking to the Mongol lady directly or denying her the *sufria* (provisions given to visitors). When asked as to the reason behind the shaykh's apparently impolite attitude towards the *khātūn*, Safi al-Din argues that it was due to the fact that the Mongol lady was not veiled.¹⁰³ Non-veiling was characteristic of Mongol women, being also noted by Ibn Battuta when he visited the Golden Horde around the time that Baghdad Khatun was visiting Safi al-Din in Azerbaijan.¹⁰⁴ The anecdote contained in the *Safwat al-safa* has the clear pedagogical purpose of portraying the shaykh as someone who believes that women should have a greater degree of piety than that exhibited by Mongol *khātūns*. At the same time, the story indicates that – in the beginning of the fourteenth century, at least – Mongol women were in close interaction with Sufi shaykhs. In addition, Baghdad Khatun is also acknowledged by the hagiographer as an important political figure of the time.¹⁰⁵ Highlighting her political position helps to position the shaykh as a highly influential figure who is visited by members of the royal family for advice and religious counsel. On another occasion, the *khātūn* sends a group of women to the shaykh to greet him in her name, to which the Sufi master responds by sending her his blessing.¹⁰⁶ It is not clear whether this was a diplomatic or religious visit, since only a passing reference is made to the encounter, but, whatever the case, the *Safwat al-safa* emphasises a fluid relationship between Baghdad Khatun and Shaykh Safi al-Din Ardabili.

Relationships like that between Shaykh Safi al-Din Ardabili and

Baghdad Khatun were not circumscribed to a single woman of the Ilkhanate. Continuing with the same account, other anecdotes mention still closer relationships between *khātūns* and Sufi leaders. For example, both Sati Beg (r. 1339) and Kurdujin Khatun are recorded as exchanging messages with Safi al-Din from their *ordos* and inviting him to their camps to lead the Sufi rituals of remembrance (*dhikr*).¹⁰⁷ For Mongol-dominated Anatolia, there is richer documentary evidence of the close relationship between women and Sufis; hagiographic works on the lives of some Anatolian Sufis contain numerous examples of this interaction.¹⁰⁸ Similar references to shaykhs in the Iranian provinces under the Mongols appear in the *Tadhkirah-yi Hazar Mazar* by ʿIsa ibn Junayd Shirazi. For example, the regions of Yazd, Kerman and Shiraz under the reigns of Terken Khatun, Abesh Khatun and Kurdujin Khatun come up in numerous accounts of miracles performed by Sufis who occasionally interact with both male and female leaders. In one of these accounts, Terken Khatun goes to see a certain Shaykh Sadr al-Din Muzaffar on a summer's day. She finds him sitting on the floor wearing a very thin garment, with his turban in his hand. At her arrival, he proposes to go together to visit another shaykh and the *khātūn* is present throughout the conversation between the two men as if her company was a common event in the life of these dervishes.¹⁰⁹

Although it is hard to identify specific references to these shaykhs trying to bring the Mongols to Islam, the proximity between Sufi dervishes and members of the court might have been accompanied by proselytism. Rashid al-Din notes the existence of proselytising activities among the Turko-Mongol royal classes: 'Khwaja Saʿduddin the Sāhib-*ḍivān* immediately arrested Pir Yaʿqub's emissary who had come into the ordu to win converts by making promises to everyone, and sent word to the court'.¹¹⁰ The competitive proselytising of the shaykhs is reflected in the hagiographical material. When a daughter of Geikhātu by the name of Malika Qutlugh sent some provisions and gifts to Shaykh Zahid Ibrahim, he did not consume them nor distribute them among his disciples, arguing that they came from a military elite of Turkish origin.¹¹¹ Judith Pfeiffer has noted that this might reflect a post-Mongol ethos rather than a rejection of the *khātūn*'s presents, but also points to 'tensions between the piously minded Sufi circles, especially those around Shaykh Ṣafī of Ardabil and Shaykh Zāhid Ibrāhīm of Gilan, and the ruling Ilkhanid elite'.¹¹²

Overall, the image emerging of the relationship between women and religion is diverse. From the different cases found in the sources, Mongol women appear to have had an active individual approach to religious rituals and personalities from pre-imperial times up to the last years of

the Ilkhanate. Yet, our knowledge of their religious involvement varies depending on the time, place and availability of sources. In the court of Möngke Khan, there was an active participation of women in Christian practice, while in the Ilkhanate Sufi Islam seems to have been the main preference of Mongol women in the early fourteenth century. Further, participation in more or less syncretic religious rituals and their proximity with religious leaders do not tell us much about the beliefs of these women, nor to what extent they considered themselves part of the religious communities they encountered as they moved into the Middle East.

Adopting the Faith of the Other: Conversion among Women in the Mongol Empire

Research on religious conversion among pastoral societies in general and among the Mongols in particular is abundant. The generally accepted view is that, when the leading member of a group decides to adopt a particular religion, the majority of the population follow suit.¹¹³ Typically, the choice of religion is based on ‘mundane (rather) than spiritual considerations’ and motivated by the prospect of political reward.¹¹⁴ The nomads of the Altaic world are seen as lacking in a ‘great religious tradition’, preventing them from creating a universal religion that could be adopted by the conquered sedentary population.¹¹⁵ But, to characterise religion in the Mongol Empire in this way fails to give a complete picture, particularly of the process of conversion. As Melville has shown, at least in the case of the conversion of Ghazan Khan, the adoption of Islam was the consequence of an ongoing process of Islamisation among the Mongols that had started at least thirty years prior to the official date of conversion.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, though there seems to have been a political aspect to the conversion of Mongol rulers to different religions across Eurasia, when one focuses on women’s conversion such political motivation is not always apparent.

Mongol rulers did not adopt any universal religion whilst the empire continued to be a unified entity.¹¹⁷ In the early 1260s, it divided into four khanates following the civil war between two Toluid candidates to the throne. In each of the resulting territories, religious preferences took a different form. In China, Lamaist Buddhism was favoured over Taoism and led to the development of Neo-Confucianism.¹¹⁸ To what extent Qubilai Khan himself adopted Buddhism is not clear and the conversion of Mongol khans in China to the Tibetan branch of Buddhism would have to wait another generation.¹¹⁹ In Russia and Iran, Christianity gained some favour initially, but the ruler was never converted. Islam had some success to start with in the mid-thirteenth century, but did not consolidate its posi-

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tion until the beginning of the fourteenth century.¹²⁰ Finally, Central Asia seems to have been the place where the adoption of Islam as an official religion took longer to materialise. The conversion of the Chaghataids to Islam, apart from a few initial short-lived cases, did not take place until the mid-fourteenth century.¹²¹

When turning our attention towards women's adoption of new religion, it should be remembered that studying female conversion among the Mongols is particularly difficult because of the nature of the sources. This is not the case with male leaders, but with women we lack specific narratives dealing with their conversion.¹²² Some chroniclers of the Mongol period do, however, include women in their general accounts of the conversion of the newcomers. For example, Juvayni, when describing Chinggis Khan in the thirteenth century, mentions that

as for his children and grandchildren, several of them have chosen a religion according to their inclination, some adopting Islam, others embracing Christianity, others selecting idolatry and others again cleaving to the ancient canon of their fathers and forefathers and inclining in no direction; but these are now a minority.¹²³

Similarly, the Nestorian Rabban Sauma told the Vatican Curia in Rome that

many of our Fathers have gone into the countries of the Mongols, and Turks, and Chinese and have taught them the Gospel, and at the present time there are many Mongols who are Christians. For many of the sons of the Mongol kings and queens have been baptized and confess Christ. And they have established churches in their military camps, and they pay honour to the Christians, and there are among them many who are believers.¹²⁴

Presumably, these accounts were trying to portray the Mongols as allies of either Islam or Christianity depending on the predisposition of the author. However, they also reflect the fact that in the thirteenth century the Mongols were progressively adopting universal religions but the mechanisms by which they did it are less evident.

ADOPTING BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY: FEMALE CONVERSION IN THE UNITED EMPIRE

Many Mongol men and women were already attached to Buddhism by the time of the occupation of China. Anatoly Khazanov has noted that the religious context of China was significantly different from that of the other territories occupied by the Mongols. In the Far East, the nomadic conquerors had to face the 'dichotomy of religious confrontation versus religious

adjustment' when formulating their attitude towards the 'Chinese religions'.¹²⁵ Early in the Mongol Empire, a singular story emerges in this context, originated by the exile of Güshlüg, the Naiman ruler who found refuge in Central Asia after being defeated by Chinggis Khan.¹²⁶ Güshlüg fled to the Qarakhitai Empire after the being defeated in battle in 1204 and married the Gur Khan's stepdaughter.¹²⁷ Rashid al-Din specifically mentions that 'she had converted him to Idolatry' when he arrived in Central Asia.¹²⁸ The account is also confirmed by Juvayni, who suggests that the refugee might have been a Christian, as many Naimans were. He continues by saying that his wife made him into an 'idolater like herself and to abjure Christianity'.¹²⁹ There appears to have been a clear political motive behind Güshlüg's conversion to Buddhism: it would have been a way of gaining legitimacy among the Qarakhitai elite in order to gain the throne. However, the fact that the Muslim sources underline the role of this particular woman in facilitating his conversion is open to a twofold interpretation. The influence of women is portrayed in a negative light perhaps because of the ferocity with which Güshlüg had treated the Muslim populations in Central Asia, this being linked to his conversion to Buddhism in the Persian sources.¹³⁰ However, the story also reveals a more 'domestic' environment for religious conversion within the family household, with women directly influencing the faith of their husbands.¹³¹

In China, after the Mongol conquest, Chabui Khatun's role in the promotion of Lamaist Buddhism is well known.¹³² We do not know if she had been Buddhist from birth or if she became one before leaving Mongolia to follow her husband Qublai to China. What seems to be certain is that she was already a Buddhist when she arrived in China, as she is described as being an 'ardent' believer in the teachings of Buddha.¹³³ Her role in influencing her husband Qubilai Khan in promoting Lamaism in Yuan China underlines the role that these women had in promoting religion within the empire.¹³⁴ Qubilai followed the pattern of other nomadic dynasties that had conquered China when he adopted Buddhism as the main religion of the dynasty.¹³⁵ But, in his espousal of Lamaism, he drove the ruling elite into the 'Buddhist denomination that was most alien to Chinese'.¹³⁶ This certainly allowed him to establish a distinction between the rulers and the ruled population, if we frame the evidence from a political point of view. However, cases such as that of Chabui's personal involvement in Buddhism and the documented existence of Mongol Chinggisid monks in the thirteenth century support the idea that personal conviction went hand in hand with political gain among members of the Mongol elite.¹³⁷

Both Christianity and Islam expanded in China under Mongol rule with different degrees of success. Scholars have noticed the presence of

an important number of Muslim officials in the Yuan court in the past, but to what extent these individuals managed to attract either Mongols or Chinese to their faith is difficult to assess.¹³⁸ There is nonetheless the paradigmatic case of Prince Ananda, a grandson of Chinggis Khan by his son Mamqala, who received special attention in Persian sources for being 'always in the mosque, praying, fasting, and reading the Qur'an; ... he had circumcised the children of most of the Mongols; and ... he had converted the greater part of the army to Islam'.¹³⁹ According to the same Persian sources, the main influence for his commitment to Islam came from a Central Asian Muslim nurse called Zulayka and her husband, who were instrumental in Ananda's following the Pillars of Islam and engaging in religious rituals in adulthood to such an extent that he incurred the opposition of his grandfather Qubilai and his cousin the Great Khan Temür Khan (r. 1294–1307).¹⁴⁰ Interestingly, many of Ananda's Muslim supporters were attached to the *ordo* of Temür Khan's mother Kökejin Khatun, who opposed Ananda in favour of her son in the dispute.¹⁴¹ Yet, the Chinese sources are less explicit regarding not only Ananda's conversion to Islam but also the motives behind his adoption of Islam. Eastern accounts suggest the possibility of obtaining political and military support from the influential Muslim community that lived in Ananda's appanage as a more realistic motivation for the conversion rather than Rashid al-Din's more romantic version.¹⁴²

Christians, on the other hand, seem to have exercised a more active approach to proselytising, albeit with similar limited success. John of Montecorvino, a Franciscan missionary who travelled to China at the end of the thirteenth century, arrived in the Yuan capital in 1294 just after the death of Qubilai Khan. He immediately went to see the new ruler and 'summoned the Emperor himself to receive the Catholic faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ with the letters of the Lord Pope, but he was too far gone in idolatry'.¹⁴³ As Jackson has suggested, the Catholic Church developed a strategy of conversion from above among the Mongols, which proved fruitless in China where none of the khans embraced Christianity.¹⁴⁴ With regard to women, those Nestorian Christian members of the Chinggisid family like Sorghaghtani Beki acquired important positions in China despite their religious affiliation. But, conversion to Christianity among women in China seems to have been rare, judging by the available material. There is a confusing account of the conversion of a woman in the Yuan court contained in a Syriac manuscript at the Vatican Library commissioned by 'Sara the believer ... famous among queens, sister of George, the glorious king of the Christians'.¹⁴⁵ She was identified as the wife of Altan Buqa, grandson of Qubilai Khan, and the daughter of

the Öngüt king named 'George' by Montecorvino.¹⁴⁶ She had a 'Turkic name at birth but assumed the name Sara after baptism. She is included in the Yüan shih under the name Yeliwan'.¹⁴⁷ This is an isolated and poorly documented case but does suggest, as with the case of Ananda, the rather testimonial impact of both Islam and Christianity among the Mongols in China.

The conversion of the Kerait people, the Naimans and the Oyrats was done by Christian missionaries before the establishment of the Mongol Empire. Attempts to convert the nomads once they had built empires beyond their traditional heartland were fruitless for missionaries visiting the steppes in medieval times. Khazanov has suggested that this failure was 'connected with their claims [Christian] on the supremacy over temporal and ecclesiastical authorities of the converts. The nomadic rulers were afraid that the conversion to Christianity would put their independence in danger'.¹⁴⁸ Christian chroniclers often mentioned the conversion of Mongol rulers to their faith, but these were mostly false claims aiming to generate propaganda about Christian expansion to their audience in Europe. Güyük Khan and Möngke Khan are both mentioned as having converted to Christianity, but the veracity of these accounts looks very doubtful when weighed against information from other sources, where there is no indication that any Great Khan or ruler of a khanate ever adopted Christianity.¹⁴⁹ Unfortunately, we lack any reliable conversion narrative among Mongol women either converting to Christianity or abandoning Christianity. This is especially relevant in the case of Iran, where the large number of influential Christian *khātūns* who lived in the Ilkhanate in the thirteenth century had become Christians only before arriving in Iran.

In the territories of the Golden Horde, Christian travellers who visited Russia in the thirteenth century evince frustration at their unsuccessful attempts to baptise the nomads, often blaming other Christian sects, whether Nestorian or Orthodox, for ruining their proselytising.¹⁵⁰ Yet, it is in these territories where we find the highest-ranking Christian convert in the Mongol court. Batu's son Sartaq, who ruled the Golden Horde for a short time in 1255, 'loved the Christian religion and was baptized'.¹⁵¹ But, beyond the case of this short-lived local ruler, attempts to bring the Mongols to Christianity were largely unsuccessful. Individual cases of women adopting the Christian faith are scarce and it seems that most of the women of the Golden Horde who were Christian had belonged to the religion before the Mongols came to the region, similar to those who had gone to Iran. The cases analysed in the previous section suggest that those women who were not Christian might have turned to Nestorian and

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Catholic priests to perform rituals of healing, but their strict conversion to Christianity (baptism) was not the general rule. Christianity was the religion of women belonging to Mongol groups that had adopted it in Mongolia before the rise of Chinggis Khan. From the fifteenth century onwards, the interaction between the Mongols of the Golden Horde and the Christian Russian principalities generated contradictory accounts which highlight the religious tension between these two political entities. The rise of Muscovy as the chief bulwark of Christian opposition to the Muslim Mongols triggered a topos of forced conversion of the Mongols to Christianity and the Russians to Islam, a theme often repeated in the Russian sources, including fables of Russian women as agents to bring Christianity to the Muslim Tatars.¹⁵²

Before turning our attention to the Islamisation of the Ilkhanate, it is worth mentioning that, despite the favourable treatment that Christianity had initially received from the Mongols in Iran, there are no accounts of women being converted to that religion in the Ilkhanate.¹⁵³ Certainly, Christian women were politically, socially and economically important in the area, but even when Christianity played a fundamental role in the political strategy of the Ilkhanate, conversion to Christianity was not fashionable in the Mongol *ordos*.¹⁵⁴ It has been argued that 'the rivalries between Christians, the intrigues and litigations between Jews, and the religious liberalism of the Mongols, who allowed the Muslims to continue professing their religion freely, made the non-Muslim communities extremely vulnerable'.¹⁵⁵ Thus, despite the presence of Christian priests in ladies' *ordos* in Iran, conversion to Christianity among women in the Ilkhanate did not occur, and new generations of Mongols in Iran would mostly adopt Islam as their religion despite the Nestorian affiliation of their mothers and wives and their fruitless attempts to bring their children to Christianity.¹⁵⁶

LEFT OUT OF THE RECORDS: SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON ISLAMISATION AMONG WOMEN IN THE ILKHANATE

In the case of conversion to Islam in the Middle East after the Arab conquest, Richard Bulliet has suggested that the principal reason for the early conversion of individuals to Islam was the maintenance of the social status enjoyed under the previous ruler and even the possibility of rising socially under Arab patronage. According to this argument, there was no effort at systematic conversion by the government, no spiritual experience and no Muslim charisma to attract non-Muslims.¹⁵⁷ Islam was not defined in the first century *hijra* and the non-existence of sacramental conversion

rites such as baptism among Muslims makes it difficult to establish who changed religion and who continued practising the old one. Paying heed to the notion formulated by Michael Cook and Patricia Crone of a 'misunderstanding' of Islam in the early Islamic period,¹⁵⁸ Bulliet concludes that conversion to Islam would have been motivated by social considerations rather than religious belief, particularly in a society divided between 'rulers' and 'others', with the latter divided into different minorities.¹⁵⁹ Bulliet's theory has been criticised. For example, Richard N. Frye has argued that this notion of individual conversion cannot apply to the entire population and is only representative of the Persian upper class.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, Michael G. Morony has pointed out with reference to the distinction made by Bulliet between individual and group conversion (tribes converting en masse) that one can also be made between the specific modes of conversion of men, women, children and so on. Morony adds that Bulliet's theory implies that the tribe was the only kind of social group to convert en masse.¹⁶¹ More recently, Bulliet has revised his initial ground-breaking study, adding new particularities to the 'conversion curve' he drew for the adoption of Islam in Iran in the early period of the Islamisation of the Middle East.¹⁶² It is difficult to extrapolate Bulliet's theory to the whole of the Mongol Empire, where the process of Islamisation responded to a variety of factors.¹⁶³ However, his Islamisation curve, based on the bell curve, does seem to represent, to a certain degree, the process of Islamisation of Mongol *khātūns* in Iran: a slow start in the initial decades after the arrival of Hülegü; a gained momentum in the middle portion of the curve, which would correspond to the 1280s up to the years around the conversion of Ghazan Khan in 1295; and then a more steady increase as the population of possible adopters became saturated.

There were, nonetheless, certain specific characteristics of the Mongol Empire that facilitated the proximity between Islam and the new conquerors. Different from Bulliet's case study of Persian aristocracy in the early centuries of Islam, the nomadic character of the Mongols has been seen as the key element in their conversion to Islam. This nomadic element meant that conversion to Islam did not put at risk Mongol political independence, because the loyalties of the Mongol elite were based on tribal ties that preceded their conquest of the Islamic lands. Further, with the removal of caliphal authority from the political scene in 1258, the possibility of a religious class (especially the *ʿulamāʾ*) influencing the policies of the Mongols was also reduced. In addition, adopting Islam did not mean becoming affiliated to an ethnic group in the way that adopting Confucianism or Taoism would have implied in China, thus allowing the Mongols to retain their identity vis-à-vis the conquered populations.¹⁶⁴

The general view is that the conversion of the Mongols in Iran was not a mass conversion triggered by the conversion of a ruler, but was, on the contrary, a situation in which the leader's conversion was, in 1295, essential to his rule being legitimised.¹⁶⁵ It would seem, therefore, that conversion to Islam was a rather individual enterprise leading to a majority Muslim population eventually 'convincing' the ruling elite to adopt Islam through a variety of channels.¹⁶⁶ Among these channels or vectors was the influence of the Sufi leaders and institutions that mushroomed in Iran under Mongol rule. Whilst their importance to the conversion process is still being debated among scholars, it does not seem implausible to suggest that they played a role in bringing the Mongols to Islam.¹⁶⁷

However, in this context, references to women converting to Islam are almost non-existent. One exception is the case of Chickek Khatun, a wife of Berke Khan (r. 1257–66) in the Golden Horde, who apparently converted to Islam at the same time as her husband in the mid-thirteenth century.¹⁶⁸ However, her conversion is not described in detail and is only mentioned in a limited number of sources. She is portrayed as a committed Muslim, who had a portable mosque in her *ordo*, similar to Doquz's portable church mentioned above.¹⁶⁹ Among the first generation of Mongol women that migrated from Mongolia to Iran, Central Asia and the Golden Horde, no other examples of this kind exist. One has to wait a generation to see another female conversion to Islam that the chroniclers considered worthy of mention. Once again, in the Golden Horde territories, the conversion of Qiyaq Khatun to Islam is mentioned by Rashid al-Din, but is not without problems.¹⁷⁰ According to Rashid al-Din, Qiyaq Khatun was given in marriage to a son of the powerful amir Saljīdai Gūragan of the Qonqirat people, who was called Yailaq in the Golden Horde and was most probably a Buddhist. After the marriage,

Qiyaq Khātūn became a Muslim. Yailaq, being a Uighur, could not accommodate himself to this and there were constant disputes and quarrels because of their religion and beliefs. They treated Qiyaq with contempt, and she told her father, mother, and brothers.¹⁷¹

The mistreatment of the *khātūn* might be connected, on the one hand, to the political background of intrigues and power disputes within the Golden Horde.¹⁷² On the other, it shows that the faith of the Mongols was shifting, not only among rulers, but within other strata of society as well. We can only speculate here because of a lack of evidence, but it does not seem plausible that this *khātūn* converted only for 'political reasons' in view of the political problems and instability that it caused her relatives. Her conversion might, therefore, have been based on a sincere personal

attachment to Islam, an attachment that would put at risk her marital relationship with another powerful family.

Notwithstanding these few individual accounts of female conversion to Islam occurring in the Russian Steppe and the maintenance of their Christian affiliation by women in the early period of Mongol rule in Iran, women who were born and raised in the Ilkhanate became Muslims at the turn of the fourteenth century. In the later decades of the Ilkhanate, the religious affiliations of the Mongol rulers' wives are generally not mentioned. It seems that many of them were already Muslims, such as Baghdad Khatun, Kurdujin Khatun and Sati Beg, whereas others such as Qutlugh Malek were involved in patronising shaykhs even though neither of her parents was Muslim.¹⁷³ The question that remains is how did a majority of women affiliated to either Christian, Buddhist or shamanist beliefs in thirteenth-century Iran become a majority Muslim group by the fourteenth century?

The lack of female conversion narratives suggests that women progressively adopted Islam in a similar way to their male counterparts, that is to say through a variety of channels of conversion that progressively brought Islam closer to women in the court. Following the conversion curve mentioned above, the key period seems to have been the decades of the 1280s and 1290s in Ilkhanid Iran, when a new generation of Mongol elite was being raised in Iran and the Muslim territories controlled by Hülegü's successors. Among the limited cases we have in the sources for this period, we can highlight that of the Jalayir Mongol Aisha, wife of the later Ilkhan Geikhatu (r. 1291–5). Her name denotes a clear attachment to Islam, though her father was a Mongol *noyan* in Geikhatu's army who does not seem to have converted to Islam. She had no Muslim relatives except her two brothers, who were called Hasan and Husein, and grew up in Muslim Anatolia, where she spent some time while her husband was governor of the region in the 1280s.¹⁷⁴ It is perhaps risky to interpret conversion to Islam simply by a change in name, yet the lack of any further information on the life of this woman makes it impossible to go further into her beliefs, commitment to the faith or the moment of her conversion.

The presence of Muslim shaykhs in the *ordos* and the increasing interaction between Mongol rulers and Persian amirs might also have contributed to the spread of Islam among the Mongol nobility in general, and among women in particular.¹⁷⁵ As we have seen in the previous section, women closely interacted with religious leaders including Sufi shaykhs. However, this proximity did not necessarily mean conversion in the majority of cases. Apart from some notable examples such as the allusion by Shams al-Din Ahmad Aflaki to the active role of Jalal al-Din

Rumi in bringing about the conversion of Princess Tamar of Rum to Islam, hagiographies say little about the actual moment of conversion of noble women to Islam in the Mongol territories.¹⁷⁶ Generally, the Sufi shaykh is portrayed in the hagiographic anecdotes as being in the company of the *khātūn*, performing ritual acts with them or giving them blessings, but these women were generally already Muslims by the time they interacted with them.¹⁷⁷ This is even more surprising if we take into consideration the sense of propaganda that this literature has, and it is puzzling that acts of conversion among women were not included more often. We can assume that the author of a hagiography would not have missed the chance to attribute to a given shaykh the credit for the conversion of a *khātūn*. Yet, we lack any specific reference to the conversion of a woman by a Sufi shaykh beyond the example mentioned in Aflaki's work.

So, in the absence of specific references to women's conversion, we can not, at this point, go further than extract some partial conclusions. On the one hand, we could side with DeWeese and Amitai here in claiming that perhaps Sufi shaykhs were not such an important agent of conversion, but rather personalities that became close to these ladies after they had converted or were raised as Muslims.¹⁷⁸ On the other hand, most of these hagiographies were written decades after the events they narrate and during the fourteenth century. Perhaps by the time these authors were writing the conversion of the Mongols (both men and women) was no longer an issue. In fact, the stories in some of these hagiographies reflect a deeper concern of the shaykhs in instructing these new Muslim-Mongol women into proper Islamic practices such as wearing the veil or eating pure (halal) food, rather than their being responsible for their conversion.¹⁷⁹ Either way, the presence of Sufi shaykhs among Mongol-Muslim women does not offer a clear answer to the question of their conversion. As in the case of Mongol men, there seems to have been a close relationship between them both, but to what extent these Sufis were agents of conversion for these women is difficult to say with the available evidence.

Overall, it is not possible to provide a conclusive answer to the question of how Mongol women converted to Islam. There are some cases of direct conversion in the Golden Horde or of women who allegedly converted to Islam by the direct action of a Sufi shaykh in Anatolia. However, these are isolated cases that can hardly be verified by multiple sources. In general terms, it seems that the religious transformation of the group of noble women from being a Christian majority in the thirteenth century to a mostly Muslim majority in the fourteenth century happened through different channels and that it was not a monocausal phenomenon. The continuing incorporation of Turco-Muslim women from subject dynasties

and the presence of Sufi shaykhs in the *ordos*, and a majoritarian Muslim context in which a new generation of women had grown up, might have caused a change in the religious affiliation of Mongol women from one generation to another.¹⁸⁰ Further research is needed on this particular aspect of Mongol women's relationship with religion, but the transition period of the final decades of the thirteenth century, albeit poorly documented, does suggest that women followed a similar chronological path to that of their male counterparts.

Religious Patronage and Cultural Activities of Mongol Women in Ilkhanid Iran

In the pre-Mongol Middle East, patronage of Islamic buildings and leaders was carried out by court members and served to legitimise the Saljuq dynasty that had recently converted to Islam.¹⁸¹ As Michael Chamberlain has noted in his study of Ayyubid Damascus, this patronage was also present among women, where 'between 1159–60 and 1223–4, according to Nu^caymī, five of the major foundations were established by women from the military households'.¹⁸² As with their Ayyubid counterparts, some Saljuq women actively participated in the financial support of Muslim institutions and individuals. For example, the unnamed wife of Toghril and mother of Sultan Arslan is mentioned as having great influence in the government and as being very generous in her donations to the *ʿulamā*.¹⁸³ Similarly, Arslan Khatun (not related to Arslan Sultan) is mentioned as performing important charitable acts and financing religious buildings for the Muslim community in Yazd.¹⁸⁴ Another Saljuq woman, Zahideh Khatun, is mentioned in a local chronicle as financing the building of a madrasa in Shiraz:

at the time there was not a bigger and more laborious/elaborate monument in the entire Fars.¹⁸⁵ And in the place at the top of the palace of the king, she ordered [to replace] the tall minaret. And she assigned many pious bequests for that purpose.¹⁸⁶

More references can be found to female patronage during the Saljuq period in Anatolia. However, it is worth mentioning that the extensive references to women as patrons of Islamic institutions and personalities in this region have puzzled some scholars. In her study of the *waqfiyas* (pious foundations), Ethel S. Wolper observes that

women are rarely mentioned as custodians of property or managers of pious foundations. Given the lack of references in *waqfiyas*, the large number of

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times that women's names appear in building inscriptions required a more elaborate explanation than that they were patrons.¹⁸⁷

It is beyond the scope of this book to elucidate the role of women in Saljuq Anatolia, but it should be stressed that many of them seem to have been involved in religious patronage according to the epigraphic evidence.¹⁸⁸

Religious patronage has generally been interpreted as a political tool that the Mongols used to control the conquered populations. It is considered part of 'the general Mongol attitude towards different world religions in the conquered countries [which] was characterised by political and spiritual pragmatism'.¹⁸⁹ However, an important distinction has been made by Atwood:

The policy of allowing various religions to practise freely should be distinguished from the policy of granting state recognition and exemptions to favoured clergy. The practice of Judaism, for example, was never prohibited, yet Jewish clergy were rarely exempted from the payment of taxes or granted state patronage.¹⁹⁰

The Mongols seem to have adapted to and incorporated patronage as an aspect of their rule.

In fact, with regard to the role of women as patrons of religion, Mongol *khātūns* can be seen as another phase in a tradition that not only preceded them to Iran but that continued after the establishment of the Mongol dynasty there in 1335. Indeed, among the local dynasties such as the Jalayirids, Muzaffarids, Sarbadars and Kartids that emerged from the collapse of the Ilkhanate, the patronage of religious buildings and Islamic art continued as an important way of legitimising the rulers.¹⁹¹ Similar practices have been highlighted for the Muzaffarid, Timurid and Safavid periods in Iran, and especially among women in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹² However, the particularities of the Mongol Empire allow us to note some differences between it and the other dynasties. First, the fact that the Mongols were not Muslims at the time they arrived in Iran triggered greater diversity in religious patronage, with Christianity and Buddhism being seen as potential allies ahead of the Muslim majority kingdoms. Second, in the process of the Islamisation that occurred among the Mongols, the dichotomy between the centre of Mongol rule in north-western Iran and the subordinate Muslim dynasties of the south meant that patronage of Islam developed first in the periphery and progressively moved to the centre as the Mongols Islamised, and Muslim women from these dynasties were incorporated into the royal family.

But if religious patronage existed among women in the Islamic world before the arrival of the Mongols, the new nomadic conquerors also had

a tradition of religious patronage by the time they settled in Iran and the Middle East. Any exploration of how religious patronage functioned in pre-imperial Mongolia is limited by the fact that *The Secret History of the Mongols*, our only contemporary source for the period, does not provide much information about it. The only material concerning it is provided via accounts of the relationship between Chinggis Khan and Teb-Tengri. The picture that emerges is one where a political leader had given personal support to an individual who occupied the position of a religious leader. At this point in the history of the empire, it seems more appropriate to speak of personal favour being bestowed rather than an established policy of patronage of religions in general and of shamanism in particular. In fact, religious patronage as a characteristic of the Mongol Empire emerged only once the Chinggisids had begun to control and administer territories where religions other than shamanism were predominant. The two main religions (or teachings) that the new Mongol ruler had to deal with were Buddhism and Taoism, which were competing for supremacy in Northern China and Central Asia. In the early days of the empire, patronage of religions was characterised by the Mongol khan granting tax exemptions and allocating money for the construction of religious buildings. Such measures characterised Chinggis Khan's dealings with Buddhism and, especially, Taoism. Some of the policies adopted by the Mongols are recorded in a work drafted by the famous Yelü Chucai (d. 1243) against the favouritism showed by the Mongol ruler towards the Quanzhen sect of Taoism.¹⁹³ In this important Chinese contemporary account, it is mentioned that a 'Buddhist monk or any other man who cultivates goodness, they are exempted from taxes and corvée'.¹⁹⁴ Critical of the impression made by Changchun on Chinggis Khan, Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai denounces the Taoist master for asking the emperor to exempt only members of his sect from levies without mentioning the Buddhist monks.¹⁹⁵ In this way, this source portrays the competition between Buddhism and Taoism for the Khan's favour, a situation that would persist until Qubilai Khan and his wife Chabui set their preferences for Lamaist Buddhism in the second half of the thirteenth century, giving it great sums of money for temples and monks.¹⁹⁶

Tax exemption was granted not only to religious leaders, but also to certain of the Khan's subjects as a sign of his magnanimity towards them. An account of Chinggis Khan commanding that a certain old man should be exempted from taxes because he was providing water to travellers by using a windlass is one example.¹⁹⁷ However, as Juvayni clearly mentions, religious leaders especially benefited from this fiscal treatment. In explaining the taxation system implemented by the Mongols, he says that pay-

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ments were made according to the circumstances of the individual, except for those who were specifically exempted by Chinggis Khan, such as

the Moslems the great sayyids and the excellent imams, of the Christians, whom they call erke'un the monks and scholars (*aḥbār*) and of the idolaters the priests whom they call *toyin*, the famous *toyins*; and of all these classes of people, those who are advanced in years and no longer capable of earning a living.¹⁹⁸

Christian sources too record the financial support given by Chinggis Khan to Christian communities in Central Asia and his granting of freedom of worship to all members of the community.¹⁹⁹

The Mongols also invested in the development of religious buildings. This helped to win the hearts of their subjects, but it also had another significant consequence. Religious buildings were an indelible part of the landscape, testifying to the magnanimous character of the ruler, gaining him prestige in the eyes of his new subjects and helping to legitimise his rule. Thus it was shown to the sedentary population that the nomad conquerors were present in the cities even if they were camping far outside them or campaigning in distant lands. Successive Mongol khans commissioned and paid for the construction of religious buildings in Northern China and in their own capital of Qaraqorum, where religious buildings belonging to different cults of the empire mushroomed.²⁰⁰

While tax exemption seems to have been a policy of male rulers towards religion, women in the early Mongol Empire became involved in religious patronage simultaneously with their accession to the throne in the 1240s. The most famous female religious patron in the formative period of the empire was Sorghaghtani Beki, who gave 1,000 silver *balish* to build a madrasa in Bukhara under the administration of Shaykh al-Islam Saif al-Din of Bakharz.²⁰¹ This endowment is also mentioned in later sources such as the *Tarikh-i Banakati*, which states that the money was given to the shaykh in order to build a *khāniqāh*, and adds that she also gave money to poets in a difficult situation and expended money on charity (*ṣadaqah*), presents and land for Muslim shaykhs. These later sources continue to emphasise the fact that she gave this financial help despite being a believer 'of the sect of Jesus'.²⁰² The open Christian confession of the *khātūn* and her patronage of Islamic institutions impressed the Muslim chroniclers of the time. It is difficult to assess whether this was simple charity or part of a conscious political strategy. Whatever the case, these acts certainly brought her prestige, eventually gaining her support when she put her son Möngke forward for the throne in 1250. Her reputation transcended the confines of the Islamic accounts and the Mongol frontiers and was praised

by Middle Eastern Christian chroniclers like Bar Hebraeus, and remembered by the anonymous Christian author of the *Tatar Relation*.²⁰³

One significant act of religious patronage occurred during the regency of Töregene Khatun (r. 1241–6). Her support for religion seems to have been in accordance with the policy initiated by Chinggis Khan and continued by Ögetei, namely supporting Taoism. At the same time, it should be remembered that female patronage of this religion existed before the arrival of the Mongols. Arthur Waley, in his introduction to *The Travels of the Alchemist*, says: 'In 1207, the Jin princess Yüan Fei presented the T'ai-hsü Kuan, the temple where Ch'ang-ch'un was living, with a complete copy of the Taoist Canon'.²⁰⁴ So, in accordance with the official policy of the Mongols, on the one hand, and in keeping with a tradition of royal women patronising eastern religions on the other, Töregene authorised the printing of the Taoist canon.²⁰⁵ However, as we have seen above, women's relationships with religion did not automatically correspond with what was politically convenient. The personal beliefs of these women influenced the religious milieu of the Mongols and were strongly reflected in female religious observance. On this point, de Rachewiltz has suggested that the favouritism shown towards Taoism and the patronage of the canon were also due to the particular circumstances of Töregene Khatun.²⁰⁶ The personal involvement of the empress in patronising Taoism can be seen even earlier than the promulgation of the edict. Before taking control of the empire, during the last days of her husband, Töregene had been in close contact with members of the Quanzhen sect. In 1234, while her husband was sending military expeditions to Russia and consolidating Mongol control over Northern China, she donated 'a complete set of Taoist scriptures' to the leading master of the sect, who had replaced the famous old master Changchun.²⁰⁷ In doing so, Töregene was not only following the tradition of the previous Jin queen Yüan Fei and acting in keeping with the religious policy of the Mongols, but she was also consolidating the position of women as patrons of religion in the Mongol Empire.

The Mongols rapidly understood the political advantage that patronage of religion had to offer. They granted tax exemptions to religious leaders and institutions in the territories they conquered and built places of worship which lent legitimacy to their rule and acted as physical reminders for the sedentary population of the presence of a nomadic empire in their territories. Geographical circumstances meant that the new empire favoured Taoism, especially the Quanzhen sect of Taoism that was strong in Northern China from the end of the twelfth century. Women also participated in the process once they had assumed real power in the empire by issuing edicts to support the Taoist canon in China and by paying

for the establishment of a madrasa in Central Asia. Similarly, when the Mongols came to Iran, women adapted to the religious circumstances they encountered.

Reflecting the general attitude of the Mongols towards religion, patronage in Iran was characterised by the gaining of political advantage by supporting one religion over another. During the early period of Ilkhanid Iran, the Mongols favoured Buddhism and Christianity in addition to Islam. Favouritism towards Christianity in the Mongol court was not new in the empire. As we have seen, during the reign of Güyük Khan (r. 1246–8), Christian officials were promoted in the court, which generated tension between Muslims and Christians in the central *ordo*.²⁰⁸ Möngke Khan, being the son and husband of Christian women, had a more ambiguous approach. He seems to have favoured Christianity without personally converting, whilst preventing a confrontation with Islam. Möngke occasionally attended mass in the company of his wife, but this did not prevent him from financing Muslim festivals and being highlighted in the Persian chronicles for 'his generosity towards the Moslems', which was 'great and boundless'.²⁰⁹ Some of his wives exercised a certain influence in his court. Aside from her regular participation in Christian rituals, one of Möngke's wives (Qutuqtay Khatun) also felt the need to financially support members of Christian communities, who were constantly around her. William of Rubruck recalled her habit of distributing gifts among Nestorian monks and Christian priests.²¹⁰ She made further gifts when William and his companions were about to depart, consisting mostly of silk tunics and furs.²¹¹

Once the Mongols had arrived in Iran, patronage no longer consisted of personal gifts, but became more elaborate in accordance with the tradition of previous dynasties. Scholars have underlined the fact that, during the reign of Hülegü Ilkhan, Christianity flourished in Iran as it had not done since the Arab invasion more than 600 years earlier.²¹² Hülegü is praised in the Christian sources as being 'pro-Christian' and who allied with the kingdoms of Armenia, Georgia and the Syrians in his campaigns to the west. He granted freedom of worship to Christians in Iran and gave to Christian princes a 'vast amount of gold, silver, horses, and herds without measure or number'.²¹³ The part played by Doqуз Khatun in this has already been mentioned. Her benefaction towards Christians is widely stressed in the sources, although the veracity of one such reference is disputed because of the nature of the source. In Frère Hayton's *Fleur des étoiles d'Orient*, the ruling couple is said, at the capture of Baghdad, to have changed the whole city by favouring the Christians. According to this account,

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Hulegu divided the districts among his generals and administrators as he saw fit. He decreed that kindness be shown to Christians everywhere and that the maintenance of fortresses and cities be entrusted to them, while the Saracens were thrown into the meanest servitude. The wife of Hulegu, named Dukos saron [Doquz Khatun], was a Christian descended from the line of those kings who had come from the East, guided by the Star, to be present at the birth of the Lord. This woman, an extremely devout Christian, [caused all the Christian churches there to be rebuilt] and all the Saracen mosques demolished.²¹⁴

There is obvious exaggeration in this account, with its references to the slavery of Muslims, the destruction of mosques and the link between the queen and the biblical kings of the East, all serving as propaganda aimed at the Western kingdoms. Interestingly, though, the rebuilding of churches and the role of the *khātūn* are linked, testifying to the female patronage of religious buildings. Doquz's promotion of church construction is also noted in Muslim sources when they specify that it was 'for her sake [that] Hülegü Khan also favoured them [the Christians] and held them in honour, so much so that they built churches throughout the realm'.²¹⁵ The promotion of religious buildings by Doquz Khatun in Baghdad is also confirmed by another, less-contested, source. Rabban Sauma refers to the takeover by the Muslims at the time of Amir Nawruz of the 'Church which the Catholicus Makikha (1257–63) built in Baghdad by the command of Hulahu [Hülegü], the victorious king, and Tukos Khātūn [Doquz Khatun], the believing queen',²¹⁶ so verifying that, at the time of the sacking of Baghdad, the churches were championed by the wife of Hülegü.

Doquz Khatun was not the only Ilkhanid woman to favour Christianity. At least some of Hülegü's female offspring also participated in this endeavour. One daughter named Todögach Khatun, who married Tanggiz Gūragān and was to become the grandmother of Sultan Abu Sa'id (d. 1335) through his mother Haji Khatun, is recorded as having a close relationship with the leader of the Nestorian Church in Iran. 'She paid him great honour and also sent men with him to the Camp. When he arrived he went straightway to visit the great Amir Djopan [Chopan].'²¹⁷ This favouring of Christianity by Hülegü's daughters lasted into the fourteenth century and the reign of the last Ilkhan.²¹⁸ The pattern of religious patronage found in the early period of the Mongol Empire was repeated in Iran. While it was Hülegü who granted the exemptions and freedom of worship, women were directly involved in the construction of churches and the protection of religious leaders.

The reign of Abaqa (r. 1265–82) was also marked by a policy of rapprochement with Christianity spurred on by the enmity of the Mamluk

dynasty of Egypt and the recent conversion of Berke Khan to Islam in the Golden Horde.²¹⁹ There was still a good number of Mongol women who were Christians, but, in addition to this, the political context fostered the establishment of marriage alliances with Christian kingdoms. The arrival of Despina Khatun at the Mongol court as a wife of the Mongol ruler of Iran was an opportunity for other branches of Christianity to benefit from female patronage. According to some sources, she founded a church in her *ordo* and so provided a place of worship for the Jacobite Christians who lived in the court of Abaqa Ilkhan.²²⁰ This Byzantine princess returned eventually to Constantinople in the late thirteenth century, where she continued her patronage activity by rebuilding the still-standing Church of St Mary of the Mongols in Constantinople.²²¹

This intricate relationship with Christianity continued in the reign of Tegüder Ahmad (r. 1282–4). Despite his affiliation to Islam and his recurrent visits to Sufi shaykhs, Christianity was not abandoned. His mother Qutui appears to have ruled from behind the scenes and she seems to have perpetuated somewhat the characteristic Mongol religious patronage. She was a Christian herself and, when a dispute broke out between the court and the Nestorian Catholicos, she interceded with her son to save the religious leader from execution, who gave thanks to the queen and other Christian members of the court for ‘mercy in the sight of the king’.²²² However, we were not able to find any specific reference to the building of churches by Qutui, which might be because it was just for a short period that she was in charge of the administration of the kingdom. However, if we consider her position in the court and her protection of Christians, it may be plausible to suggest that she might have had something to do with the policies that Tegüder adopted towards Christians. He ‘wrote for them [Christians] Patents which freed all the churches, and the religious houses, and the priests (elders), and monks from taxation and imposts in every country and region’.²²³ Nevertheless, while she may have influenced the adoption of these fiscal policies, the exemption from taxes is presented in the sources, as in the cases mentioned above, as a measure taken by the male ruler of the realm.

During the reign of Arghun (r. 1284–91), Christianity once more gained momentum after the brief approach to Islam made by his predecessor. Like his father, Arghun tried to bring together Christian supporters both in the Middle East and in Western Europe.²²⁴ In light of this attitude, it is not surprising that the Christian sources regard him as a supporter of Christianity, focusing on the role of his Christian wife Örug Khatun.²²⁵ But, despite the influence of his wife and his political proximity to Christianity, Arghun remained a committed Buddhist²²⁶ and this faith shaped Örug’s patronage

policies. It is well known that Buddhism flourished in Iran in this period, when the Mongols financially supported important Buddhist buildings.²²⁷ It is interesting that Buddhist patronage in Iran was almost contemporary with the support of Empress Chabui in China for the construction of Tibetan temples.²²⁸ In addition, Arghun's Buddhist environment could be also observed in the Buddhist monks present in the entourage of his son Ghazan and in his support for Buddhist personalities as attested in the Persian sources, and the presence of Buddhist temples in Iran is confirmed by claims concerning their destruction after 1295.²²⁹ All this calls for a deep re-examination of the influence of Buddhism in Mongol Iran, where women appear not to have been that present, judging by the available sources, but whose involvement in the patronage of Buddhism might become apparent from the appearance of new evidence in the future.

After the peak in support for Buddhism under Arghun, Geikhatu's (r. 1291–5) accession to the throne heralded the beginning of a slow but steady decline in Mongol affection for both Christianity and Buddhism. The new Ilkhan had been governor of Anatolia before taking office, which might have influenced his views on religion. As we have seen, patronage of Islam and especially of Sufism in Anatolia was a widespread practice among the local rulers, and the incorporation of Muslim women such as Padshah Khatun in the king's court might have played a part in diminishing the status of Christianity among the Mongols. However, this did not mean the end of Christianity as a favoured religion in the Ilkhanid court. At the time of Geikhatu, the Mongol court moved mostly in the regions of what is now north-western Iran and Azerbaijan. So, it is not surprising that Geikhatu 'promulgated an order for him [the Catholicos] to build a church in the city of Maragha, and to place therein the vessels and the vestments for the service of the church, which the dead King Arghon [Arghun] had set up in the Camp'.²³⁰ Geikhatu's religious policies during his short reign are confusing, but one of his wives was a particularly committed political and religious person. The Qutlughkhanid Padshah Khatun has already been mentioned as a Muslim woman who acquired an important position in the court and fought for the control of her motherland in Kerman after her husband ascended the throne. Her patronage of Islam, which is examined below, does not seem to have prevented her from having a high representative of the Nestorian Church in her province, as was observed by Marco Polo during his travels.²³¹

The short reign of Baidu (r. 1295) did not provide much chance to develop a patronage strategy, but he did try to bring the Christians to his side in his struggles against Ghazan Khan.²³² In a reference to Baidu, Rashid al-Din illustrates the importance of religion as a political tool in the

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Mongol Empire: 'Inasmuch as Baidu patronised Christians like bishops, priests, and monks, Shaykh Mahmud was in total support of Prince Ghazan on account of his having converted to Islam'.²³³ The latter's victory and conversion to Islam marked a turning point in Mongol policy. From now on, most financial patronage would be directed towards different sects and interpretations of Islam:

An edict was given that all the bakhshis' temples and houses of worship, as well as Christian churches and Jewish synagogues, were to be destroyed in Tabriz, Baghdad, and other Islamic places, and for that victory most of the people of Islam rendered thanks since God had not seen fit to grant this wish to past generations.²³⁴

The accuracy of this statement is disputed, but it does at least reflect the intentions of the Persian elites of the new Ilkhanate who appeared after Ghazan's conversion. His successor went further and, at least temporarily, decided to abolish the tax exemption for the followers of all religions apart from Islam.²³⁵

However, if the official policy had changed, this nevertheless did not mean that individual women were prohibited from patronising Christianity. As late as 1310–11, some of the Mongol lords and *khātūns* who still professed the Christian faith continued to support the Nestorian Church. Rabban Sauma mentions that Amir Irinjin passed at this time through Tabriz together with his wife Konchak²³⁶ and one of his daughters.²³⁷ They all went to see the Nestorian representatives in the city:

the amount of money which the Amir Irnadjin [Irinjin] and his wife gave to the Catholicus was ten thousand [dinars], which are [equal to] sixty thousand *zuze* and two riding horses. And the Amir also gave a village to the church Mar Shalita, the holy martyr, for his dead father was laid therein, and his mother and his wives were buried therein.²³⁸

This anecdote firstly shows that individual female patronage of Christianity continued after the official conversion of the Mongols, probably because of personal attachment to this religion. At the same time, the rarity of cases like this one indicates that patronage of Christianity and Buddhism was fading away in Iran in the early fourteenth century. The internal struggles between the different Mongol *noyans* might also have been a factor in the diminishing number of patrons for Christianity, as a more homogeneous Mongol and Persian elite gradually came into being with a preference for Islam.²³⁹

The fact that during the first period of Mongol dominion in Iran Buddhism and especially Christianity attracted most female religious

patronage does not mean that Islam, the majority religion in the region, was neglected.²⁴⁰ With the expansion of the Mongols in the early 1250s, Central Asian Muslims also enjoyed the benefit of Mongol female patronage. Information is scarce, but, during the regency of Orghina Khatun (r. 1251–60) in the Chaghataid Khanate, some references to her support for Islam are recorded.²⁴¹ Although no specific reference to her personal beliefs can be found in the sources, some authors hold that she was a Muslim.²⁴² She is alluded to as a benefactor who wished well towards the Muslims, but there is no specific mention of her supporting religious building or granting money to Muslim religious leaders.²⁴³ Yet, if references to Mongol patronage in Central Asia are slim, some scattered examples of female patronage of Islam can be found in the early period of the Ilkhanate.

As we have seen, one of Hülegü's daughters is credited with supporting the Islamic community. In addition, although Arghun had been a Buddhist, Mustawfi mentions that his daughter 'Öljei Khatun'²⁴⁴ decided to found a *khāniqāh*, or Dervish convent, in the place where the grave of her father stood.²⁴⁵ Some authors have interpreted this act as a 'violation of the *qoruq* by a Muslim convert, Arghun's daughter, involving not only the indignity of the "secret" place's exposure, but the specific intrusion into that inviolate site of the bearers of Islamic-style sanctity'.²⁴⁶ However, such 'violation' of Mongol tradition may also be thought to have occurred in the patronage of Sufi buildings by this *khātūn* and in the Islamisation process that was occurring in the Mongol court. The daughter of a Buddhist king did not just build a place of worship for a religion other than that followed by her father, but she did it on the mountain where her father's body rested, which, according to Mongol tradition, would have been a holy place because of the grave. This represents, in my view, a good example of the amalgamation of Mongol tradition with local religiousities of Iran. As previously mentioned, the relationship between Mongol *khātūns* and Sufism, and its closeness to the *ordo*, might certainly have led to such patronage. Yet examples of this link during the early period of Mongol rule in Iran are limited. The case of Bulughan Khatun 'Bozorg', the wife of Abaqa and Arghun, is well known. Melville has noted that she was associated with shaykhs and was a protector of Muslims despite the favouring of Christians and Buddhists by her husbands.²⁴⁷

Apart from these examples, the majority of Islamic foundations in this early period were created by women who, although connected to the Mongol royal family by marriage, belonged to the regions of southern Iran and Anatolia. This is interesting since it might shed some light on the acculturation of the Mongols, underlining the prominent role that Turkic

women from the periphery of the realm had had in the Islamisation of the Mongol court.²⁴⁸ In the province of Kerman, the long reign of Terken Qutlugh Khatun (r. 1257–83) saw the development of Islamic patronage in the form of buildings become common in the region. Although it is not clearly specified in the local chronicles if this Turkic woman was a Muslim from an early age, she certainly grew up as a slave in a Muslim environment.²⁴⁹ Once she made it to the top of the political ladder of the region of Kerman, she hurried to reform the Jami^c Mosque in the city, personally financing the installation of a new door.²⁵⁰ This financial support given to Muslim institutions contributed to the view that *'la vielle dame [Terken Qutlugh] est un modèle de vertus islamiques, protectrice des sheikhs et autres religieux, multipliant les dotations en main-morte et les oeuvres piés'*.²⁵¹ In addition to her donation for the restoration of the door of Kerman's main mosque, she contributed to the construction of some other buildings in her city. For example, we know that after she died in Tabriz, her daughter Bibi Terken took her mother's body back to Kerman, where she buried her in a madrasa which had been commissioned by Terken Khatun and which carried her name at the time.²⁵²

It is worth mentioning that, although the sources see Terken as a model of Islamic womanhood, she had not hesitated in marrying her Muslim daughter Padshah Khatun (d. 1295) to the 'pagan' Abaqa Khan in 'the Mongol fashion'.²⁵³ The marriage solidified a strategic alliance between her line and the Mongol rulers of Iran in mind, while serving as a reflection of her more flexible observance of Islamic practices. It shows the personal nature of religious belief, which was more than just a matter of individual pragmatism or sectarian loyalty. Terken's political pragmatism and faith did not prevent her daughters from continuing her legacy of religious patronage. Padshah Khatun might have contributed to the Islamic milieu while she was in Anatolia, and it has been suggested that she helped finance the construction of a domed mausoleum at the 'Çifte Minaret' Madrasa of Erzurum.²⁵⁴ When she returned to Kerman, she continued her patronage activity and 'established law, justice and fairness [to the point] that the Sultans of the world seemed insignificant and she gave many pensions and allowances to scholars and she ordered [the construction] of extraordinary madrasas and mosques'.²⁵⁵ Padshah Khatun performed acts of religious patronage both in Anatolia and Kerman. Perhaps she gained confidence from her years among the Saljuqs of Anatolia, where female patronage was an established practice and where she may have been shown the political potential of financing Islam when she returned to Kerman.²⁵⁶

In fact, the Qutlughkhanids of Kerman were not the only Mongol

subject dynasty to contribute to Islamic patronage. Even before the establishment of the Mongol Empire in the second half of the twelfth century, the province of Fars under the Saljuq dynasty had seen a woman called Zahideh Khatun gather all the money she had inherited from her ancestors after the death of her husband and dedicate these resources to the acquisition of a *vaqf* (pious foundation) for a madrasa she had built in Shiraz.²⁵⁷ During the Ilkhanid period, the province of Fars had three women who acted as regents for the region and at least two of them followed the tradition of participating in the foundation of religious buildings. The first was Turkan Khatun, wife of Saʿd II Atabeg of Fars and then of Saljuq-Shah.²⁵⁸ As mentioned previously, she reigned for a short time and was one night brutally killed by her second husband when he was drunk. But, before this tragic episode, she had allocated resources for the construction of a mosque in the capital of her province (Shiraz) within the complex of the Atabeg's palace.²⁵⁹ Her fame was celebrated in the historical chronicles of the period and also by the famous Persian poet Saʿdi, who considered that while the Salghurid dynasty ruled the region no harm would be done to religion.²⁶⁰ We also hear about the mosque from Rashid al-Din, who mentions that, after the death of her daughter Abesh Khatun, 'her body was taken to Shiraz and buried in the *Madrase-ye ʿAḍudiya*, which her mother had built in honour of ʿAḍud al-Dīn Muḥammad'.²⁶¹

Finally, the case of Kurdujin Khatun is interesting since she belonged to the 'new generation' of Mongols which had grown up in Iran, but she also had family connections to the Mongol royal family by her father, the Salghurids of Fars through her mother and to the Qarakhitids of Kerman by her marriage to Soyurghatmish.²⁶² She was constantly involved in the struggle between these dynasties and the process of centralisation that began in the Ilkhanate after Ghazan's conversion to Islam. However, under Abu Saʿid (r. 1317–35) she was granted the administration of the revenues of Fars's capital city and with those resources she undertook the construction of 'many public buildings in Shiraz, including mosques, madrasas and a hospital'.²⁶³ The Islamic school is specifically referred to as 'the madrasa of Kurdujin' in one of the local histories of Shiraz, which notes that it was also a burial place for local princes and princesses in the city.²⁶⁴

If the legacy of women's patronage of religious buildings can be traced back to the original sources and the architecture of certain parts of Iran and Anatolia, less can be said about their intellectual attainments. Whereas there is evidence available showing that elite women served as librarians, calligraphers or teachers in, for example, Islamic Spain, we do not have evidence to suggest that there was a similar widespread phenomenon in

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the Ilkhanate.²⁶⁵ Mongol *khātūns* are certainly not mentioned in the available sources as participating directly in any cultural activities of this sort. However, this obviously does not mean that Mongol women were not involved in cultural activities or that they did not occupy certain positions in the development of Ilkhanid intellectual life. As we have seen thus far, they showed an active interest in new ideas, be they religious or secular, they were eager to buy and store products from afar and to put under their protection people with a myriad of ideas in their *ordos*. Yet, they do not appear in the sources as artists, scholars or cultural facilitators themselves. Perhaps the nomadic milieu of the Mongol Empire had something to do with this silence in the sources and perhaps Mongol women played a cultural role in the interior Mongol setup that was not accessible to the non-Mongol chroniclers upon whom we rely to reconstruct the history of Ilkhanid Iran.

However, once we distance ourselves from a strict Mongol *khātūn* scenario and open the floor to a broader group of women in the Mongol court, such as those Turkic women from Fars, Kerman or Anatolia, the picture becomes richer. For example, Padshah Khatun, originally a member of the Qutlughkhanid dynasty of Kerman and the wife of two Ilkhans (Abaqa and Geikhatu) is mentioned in some sources as having been a prolific poetess who dedicated her time at the Mongol court to religious endeavours. Different sources make reference to her writings and her passionate interest in religion. For instance, Shabankara³i mentions that, while she was in the company of her husband in Anatolia, 'she herself was a good scholar and wrote her own lines on the Holy Qur³ān'.²⁶⁶ And, it was based on the inspiration she obtained from Hadiths and Islamic texts that she composed several poems that would be reproduced in some of the local chronicles of Kerman.²⁶⁷ Similarly, some scattered poems were written by women in Anatolia during the Mongol period and nowadays remain mostly unpublished in manuscript form, such as the poem attributed to Ervugan Khatun, a woman who lived in north-western Anatolia in the thirteenth century and whose poems survived in a letter she wrote to her husband.²⁶⁸ Likewise, immediately after the death of Abu Sa^cid, the last Ilkhan, in 1335, another women of mixed Mongol and Persian background left some poems of her own creation. The life and work of Jahan-Malik Khatun (d. c. 1382) has recently been described by Dominic P. Brookshaw, who also highlights the connection between this woman and her predecessor Padshah Khatun.²⁶⁹

The picture of female patronage that emerges from Mongol Iran is twofold: for a period of forty years, the *khātūns* of the central court were involved in the patronage of Christianity and to some extent Buddhism,

while, in the provinces of southern and western Iran, Islam continued to benefit from the tradition of female patronage established by the Saljuq dynasty.²⁷⁰ While Doqуз Khatun was paying for churches in Baghdad, Turkan Khatun of Shiraz was financing the construction of mosques, endowments by Despina Khatun were benefiting the Jacobites in Azerbaijan and, in Kerman, Terken Qutlugh Khatun was founding madrasas. The picture is by no means homogeneous and patronage of a single religion only begins to take shape after the conversion of Ghazan Khan, when the central court actively backed Islam and support for Christianity was slowly abandoned.²⁷¹ Rashid al-Din states that Ghazan Khan built a *khāniqāh* in Buzinjird in the province of Hamadan, which continued to be supported by his brother and successor Öljeitü.²⁷² Patronage of Islamic buildings by Mongol *khātūns* appeared as a post-1290s development in the central lands of the Ilkhanate. In addition, a tradition of women financing Sufi lodges, mosques or madrasas originally from the Saljuq period remained present in areas of the Ilkhanate under the rule of the local dynasties in Kerman and Fars. The patronage activity of women in Ilkhanid Iran not only illustrates the resources at the disposal of these women, but also shows them to have been in a similar position to perform pious acts traditionally reserved for male figures such as sultans, bureaucrats and amirs. More problematic to evidence is their involvement in the production of cultural and intellectual activities, but the appearance of some remarkable contributions to poetry and religious literature opens the field for future research in this field.

Notes

1. See, for example, M. Gronke, 'La religion populaire en Iran mongole', in D. Aigle (ed.), *L'Iran face à la domination mongole* (Tehran, 1997), pp. 205–30; A. Bausani, 'Religion under the Mongols', in J. A. Boyle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 538–49; J. Calmard, 'Le chiisme imamite sous les Ilkhans', in D. Aigle (ed.), *L'Iran face à la domination mongole* (Tehran, 1997), pp. 261–92; H. Cordier, 'Le Christianisme en Chine et en Asie Centrale sous les Mongols', *T'oung Pao* 18:1/2 (March–May 1917), pp. 49–113; P. Jackson, 'Mongol Khans and Religious Alliance: The Problems Confronting a Minister-Historian in Ilkhanid Iran', *Iran* 47 (2009), pp. 109–22; A. M. Khazanov, 'The Spread of World Religions in Medieval Nomadic Societies of the Eurasian Steppes', *Toronto Studies in Central and Inner Asia* 1 (1994), p. 12; J. P. Roux, *La religion des Turcs et des Mongols* (Paris, 1984), p. 20.
2. Jackson argues that this realpolitik is behind the description of 'religious tolerance' found in the sources and overstated by scholars in the field. See

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- P. Jackson, 'The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered', in R. Amitai and M. Biran (eds), *Mongols Turks and Others* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 245–90; for a similar perspective on the Qarakhitai, see M. Biran, 'True to Their Ways: Why the Qara Khitai Did Not Convert to Islam', in R. Amitai and M. Biran (eds), *Mongols Turks and Others* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 175–99.
3. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', pp. 16, 21.
 4. °Ala° al-Din °Ata Malik Juvayni, *Tārīkh-i jahān-gushā*, ed. M. Qazvini, 3 vols (Leiden and London, 1912–37) (hereafter, *TJG*), I, pp. 28–9/Juvayni, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J. A. Boyle, 2 vols (Manchester, 1958; reprint 1997 with foreword by D. O. Morgan) (hereafter, Boyle), I p. 39. See also *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. I. de Rachewiltz, 2 vols (Leiden and Boston, 2004) (hereafter, *SH*), §245.
 5. *TJG*, I, pp. 103–5/Boyle, I, pp. 80–1; Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jāmi° al-tawārīkh*, ed. M. Rawshan and M. Mūsavī, 4 vols (Tehran, 1373/1994) (hereafter, *JT*), I, pp. 499–500/*Jāmi°u°t-tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*, ed. S. S. Kuru and trans. W. M. Thackston, 3 vols (Boston, 1998) (hereafter, Thackston), pp. 246–7.
 6. See C. P. Atwood, 'Validation by Holiness or Sovereignty: Religious Toleration as Political Theology in the Mongol World Empire of the Thirteenth Century', *The International History Review* 26:2 (June 2004), p. 254.
 7. On this matter, see Jackson, 'Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered', pp. 245–90; Atwood, 'Validation by Holiness', p. 238; D. O. Morgan, *The Mongols* (Cambridge, MA, 1986; rev. edn 2007), p. 199.
 8. See P. R. Katz, 'Writing History, Creating Identity: A Case Study of Xuanfeng Qinghui Tu', *Journal of Chinese Religions* 29 (2002), p. 165. On the Quanzhen sect, see P. Marsone, 'Accounts of the Foundation of the Quanzhen Movement: A Hagiographic Treatment of History', *Journal of Chinese Religions* 30 (2002), pp. 95–110; also L. Ts'un-Yan and J. Berlina, 'The "Three Teachings" in the Mongol-Yuan Period', in H. L. Chan and T. de Bary (eds), *Yuan Thought: Chinese Thought and Religion under the Mongols* (New York, 1982), pp. 479–509. A similar story is mentioned during Hülegü's campaign; see *JT*, II, pp. 1013/Thackston, p. 496. On the court of Qubilai at the end of his reign, see *JT*, II, p. 951/Rashid al-Din Tabib, *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, trans. J. A. Boyle (New York and London, 1971) (hereafter, *Successors*), pp. 302–3; Ts'un-Yan and Berlina, 'Three Teachings', pp. 508–9. See also M. Rossabi, 'Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty', in J. D. Langlois (ed.), *China under Mongol Rule* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 257–95. On Güyük, see Fakhr al-Din Banakati, *'Tārīkh-i Banākātī': A General History from the Earliest Times to the 14th Century A.D.*, ed. J. She°ar (Tehran, 1378/2000) (hereafter, *TB*), p. 393, and H. Kim, 'A reappraisal of Güyük Khan', in R. Amitai and M. Biran (eds), *Mongols, Turks and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*

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- (Leiden and Boston, 2005), p. 312. Marco Polo also noted the presence of a Christian governor in Manchuria; see M. Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo, the Venetian: Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*, trans. H. Yule, 2 vols (London, 1903) (hereafter, MP), II, p. 177.
9. See J. A. Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khans', in J. A. Boyle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 369–70.
 10. The term Tenggerism is used 'to refer to the fact that state formations among the Turco-Mongol societies of Inner Asia had the notion of "sky" (heaven) as a privileged ideological support'. See R. N. Hamayon, 'Shamanism in Siberia: From Partnership in Supernature to Counter-Power in Society', in N. Thomas and C. Humphrey (eds), *Shamanism, History, and the State* (Ann Arbor, 1994), p. 87, fn. 13; A. A. Znamenski, *Shamanism: Critical Concepts in Sociology* (London and New York, 2004), p. 176, fn. 14.
 11. M. Eliade, *Shamanism: archaic techniques of ecstasy* (Princeton, 1964).
 12. C. Humphrey, 'Shamanic Practices and the State in Northern Asia', in N. Thomas and C. Humphrey (eds), *Shamanism, History, and the State* (Ann Arbor, 1994), pp. 191–2.
 13. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 12.
 14. See I. Togan, *Flexibility and Limitation in Steppe Formations: The Kerait Khanate and Chinggis Khan* (Leiden and New York, 1998), pp. 60–2; D. M. Dunlop, 'The Keraits of Eastern Asia', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 11:2 (1944), pp. 277–8. The failure (or limited success) of Christianity in bringing nomads under the control of the Catholic, Orthodox or Nestorian creed has been connected to the 'fear' that the conversion to Christianity would put their independence in danger. See Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 24.
 15. On the origins of the Quanzhen sect, see Marsone, 'Accounts of the Foundation', pp. 95–110; D. Hawkes, 'Quanzhen Plays and Quanzhen Masters', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 69 (1981), pp. 153–70; T. C. Yao, 'Ch'iu Ch'u-Chi and Chinggis Khan', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46:1 (June 1986), pp. 204–5.
 16. Chih-ch'ang Li, *The Travels of an Alchemist: The Journey of the Taoist Ch'ang-Ch'un from China to the Hindukush at the Summons of Chingiz Khan, Recorded by His Disciple Li Chih-Ch'ang*, trans. A. Waley (London, 1931) (hereafter, TA), p. 51.
 17. See TA, p. 70.
 18. On the sources dealing with the Buddhist–Taoist debate in the Yuan dynasty, see N. Kubo, 'Prolegomena on the Study of the Controversies between Buddhists and Taoists in the Yüan Period', *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 26 (1968), pp. 40–2. On the debates, see Kubo, 'Prolegomena', pp. 43 and 45.
 19. M. Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 144; Ts'un-Yan and Berlina, 'Three Teachings', p. 479.

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20. For the use of this kind of propaganda in the Caucasus, see P. Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (Harlow and New York, 2005), p. 49.
21. Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l-Faraj 1225–1286*, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1976; reprint, New Jersey, 2003) (hereafter, *Chronography*), p. 382; *TJG*, I, p. 81/Boyle, p. 104.
22. On the fortress of Alamut, see L. Lockhart and M. G. S. Hodgson, 'Alamūt', *EI2*; M. G. S. Hodgson, 'The Ismā'īlī State', in J. A. Boyle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 422–82; F. Daftary, *Mediaeval Ismā'īlī History and Thought* (New York, 1996); N. E. Jamal, *Surviving the Mongols: Nizari Quhistani and the Continuity of Ismaili Tradition in Persia* (London, 2002); B. Lewis, *The Assassins: A Radical Sect in Islam* (London, 2003).
23. Boyle, 'Dynastic and Political History', pp. 303–35; T. May, 'A Mongol–Ismā'īlī Alliance?: Thoughts on the Mongols and Assassins', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 14:3 (2004), p. 239; Muhammad Nasawī, *Sīrat al-Sultān Jālāl al-Dīn Mankobirīti (Histoire du Sultan Djelal Ed-Din Mankobirīti)*, ed./trans. O. Houdas, vol I (Paris, 1891–5), p. 262.
24. G. Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance* (London and New York, 2003), p. 23.
25. Minhaj Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, ed. °A. Habibi, 2 vols (Kabul, 1342–3/1963–4), III, pp. 181–2/'*Tabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*': A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia, Including Hindustan, from A.H. 194 (810 A.D.), to A.H. 658 (1260 A.D.) and the Irruption of the Infidel Mughals into Islam, trans. H. G. Raverty (London, 1881) (hereafter, Raverty), pp. 1189–96; *TJG*, III, p. 106/Boyle, pp. 617–18; *JT*, II, p. 974.
26. A similar interpretation could be made about defeating and executing the caliph in 1258. J. A. Boyle, 'Death of the Last 'Abbasid Caliph': A Contemporary Muslim Account', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 6:2 (1961), pp. 145–61. For a discussion on the sources for the fall of Baghdad, see G. M. Wickens, 'Nasir ad-Din Tusi on the Fall of Baghdad: A Further Study', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 7 (1962), pp. 23–35. On Tusi's rescue from Alamut and on his religious beliefs, see F. Daftary, *A Short History of the Ismailis: Traditions of a Muslim Community* (Princeton, 1998), p. 148.
27. A. Khanbaghi, *The Fire, the Star and the Cross: Minority Religion in Medieval and Early Modern Iran* (London and New York, 2006), p. 64. Rashid al-Din mentions that 'Arghun Khan was highly devoted to the *bakhshis* [Buddhist priests] and followed their path'. See *JT*, II, pp. 1177–8/Thackston, pp. 573–4; also Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, p. 176.
28. L. Lewisohn, 'Overview: Iranian Islam and Persianate Sufism', in L. Lewisohn (ed.), *The Heritage of Sufism: The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150–1500)* (Oxford, 1999), p. 33; H. Nasiri, 'Islam and the Encounter with Other Religions', in S. H. Nasr (ed.), *Sufi Essays* (London, 1972), pp. 123–51.

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29. See the case of the Safawiyya order as an example. See Gronke, 'La religion populaire', p. 226.
30. R. Amitai, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Īlkhānid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 104.
31. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 12.
32. For an explanation of this female deity, see E. Lot-Falck, 'A propos d'Ätügän, déesse mongole de la terre', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 149:2 (1956), pp. 157–96.
33. T. T. Allsen, 'Princes of the Left Hand: An Introduction to the History of the Ulus of Orda in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries', *Archivum Eurasiae medii aevi* 5 (1985–7), p. 31. See MP, I, pp. 256–60; M. Polo, *The Description of the World*, trans. A. C. Moule and P. Pelliot, 2 vols (London, 1938) (hereafter, MP2), pp. 170–1.
34. *JT*, I, p. 150/Thackston, p. 81.
35. See *SH*, §63, and the comments on pp. 328–9; §174 and p. 629.
36. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 12. See examples of these practices in *SH*, §63; also C. Dawson, *The Mongol Mission: Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London and New York, 1955), p. 12.
37. See C. P. Atwood, 'Buddhism and Popular Ritual in Mongolian Religion: A Reexamination of the Fire Cult', *History of Religions* 36:2 (November 1996), p. 123.
38. *SH*, §70.
39. On the role of shamans in Altaic societies, see T. Gibson, 'Notes on the History of the Shamanic in Tibet and Inner Asia', *Numen* 44:1 (January 1997), pp. 39–59; E. Lot-Falck, 'A propos du terme chamane', *Études mongoles et sibériennes* 8 (1977), pp. 7–18; *JT*, I, pp. 643–4/*Successors*, pp. 38–9; *TJG*, III, pp. 3–4/Boyle, II, p. 549; *SH*, §272. W. Heissig, 'New Material on East Mongolian Shamanism', *Asian Folklore Studies* 49:2 (1990), p. 223. There is a reference in Bar Hebraeus which describes the shamans as 'women-men'; see *Chronography*, p. 366.
40. See the story of Töra Qaimish in Chapter 1.
41. See *SH*, §189, p. 110. On the ritual, see P. Kahn, 'Instruction and Entertainment in the Naiman Battle Text: An Analysis of §189 through §196 of *The Secret History of the Mongols*', in M. and W. Schlepp Gervers (eds), *Cultural Contacts: History and Ethnicity in Inner Asia* (Toronto, 1996), p. 98.
42. See, for example, the participation of a male shaman in the description of the 'rain magic' ritual mentioned by Rashid al-Din during Tolui's campaign in China. *JT*, I, p. 641/*Successors*, pp. 36–7. On the ritual, see 'Jadāmishī' (جدامیشی) in G. Doerfer, *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen: Unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung älterer Neupersischer Geschichtsquellen, vor Allem der Mongolen- und Timuridenzeit*, vol. I (Wiesbaden, 1963), pp. 286–9.

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43. *JT*, II, pp. 802–3/*Successors*, p. 179; *TB*, p. 393.
44. *Chronography*, p. 411.
45. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 203.
46. Rashid al-Din does not accuse Oghul of sorcery but mentions that she suffered a nasty death in the *ordo* of Sorghaghtani Beki. *JT*, II, p. 839/*Successors*, p. 215. The punishment is also mentioned by Marco Polo in *MP2*, I, pp. 362–3.
47. *JT*, I, pp. 738–9/*Successors*, pp. 122–3.
48. *JT*, II, p. 1179/Thackston, p. 574.
49. *JT*, II, p. 1180/Thackston, p. 575.
50. See E. Hunter, 'Conversion of the Kerait to Christianity in A.D. 1007', *Zentralasiatische Studien* 22 (1989–91), pp. 142–63; Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 24. For an overview of Eastern Christianity, see M. Dickens, 'Nestorian Christianity in Central Asia' (2001), available at: www.oxuscom.com/Nestorian_Christianity_in_CA.pdf (accessed 24 February 2016), pp. 1–19.
51. See *TA*, p. 134. Another instance of women having direct involvement with the Taoist master is recorded when some former consorts of the Jin emperor of China went to welcome Changchun to the Mongol court; see *TA*, p. 73.
52. *TA*, p. 71.
53. *JT*, II, p. 865/*Successors*, p. 242.
54. M. Rossabi, 'The Reign of Khubilai Khan', in H. Franke and D. Twitchett (eds), *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 416; P. D. Buell, 'Some Royal Mongol Ladies: Alaqa-Beki, Ergene-Qatun and Others', *World History Connected* 7:1 (February 2010), available at: <http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/7.1/buell.html> (accessed 24 February 2016).
55. For translations of Chabui's biography in the *Yuan Shih*, see F. W. Cleaves, 'Biography of Empress Čabi in the *Yüan Shih*', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3/4:1 (1979–80), pp. 138–50; G. Q. Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression: Mongolian Royal Marriages from World Empire to Yuan Dynasty* (New York, 2008), pp. 239–41.
56. S. Bira, 'Qubilai Qa'an and 'Phags-Pa Bla-Ma', in R. Amitai and D. O. Morgan (eds), *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy* (Leiden, 1999), p. 242.
57. L. Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols: The Yüan Sa-Skya Period of Tibetan History*, Serie Orientale Roma, v. 65 (Rome, 1990), pp. 139–40.
58. Dunlop, 'Keraits of Eastern Asia', pp. 276–89.
59. See Figure 4.1.
60. *Chronography*, p. 435; Kirakos of Gandzakets'i, *Kirakos Gandzakets'i's History of the Armenians*, trans. R. Bedrosian (New York, 1986), p. 327. On occasion they also promoted trusted religious figures to the ecclesiastical hierarchy; see E. A. Wallis Budge (trans.), *The Monks of Kublai Khan*,

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- Emperor of China* (London, 1928) (hereafter, BS), p. 3; *JT*, II p. 963/Thackston, p. 472.
61. *Chronography*, p. 398. There is a clear intention here to connect this Mongol woman with two adherents of medieval Christianity; see L. Olschki, *Marco Polo's Asia: An Introduction to his Description of the World Called 'Il Milione'* (Berkeley, 1960), pp. 381–97; J. Pirenne, *La légende du Prêtre Jean* (Strasbourg, 1992).
 62. *JT*, II, p. 823/*Successors*, p. 200; *TB*, p. 400.
 63. *MP*, I, p. 242.
 64. The story is quoted by Yule in his translation of Marco Polo's travels. See *MP*, I, p. 243, fn. 2.
 65. G. G. Guzman, 'The Encyclopedist Vincent of Beauvais and his Mongol Extracts from John of Plano Carpini and Simon of Saint-Quentin', *Speculum* 49:2 (April 1974), pp. 287–307.
 66. See *JT*, I, pp. 196–7, 303/Thackston, pp. 104, 148–9; also *JT*, II, pp. 673–4/*Successors*, pp. 65–6. As suggested by Anne Broadbridge in a personal complication, it is possible that the story is referring to the marriage of Chinggis Khan to Ibaka Beki, niece of the Ong Khan of the Keraites.
 67. Frère Hayton, *The Flower of Histories of the East*, trans. R. Bedrosian, <http://rbedrosian.com/hetumint.htm> (accessed February 2011) (hereafter, *FO*), ch. 24. See G. Lane, *Daily Life in the Mongol Empire* (Westport and London, 2006), p. 192.
 68. *JT*, I, p. 100/Thackston, p. 55. She was the mother of Shirin Khatun and Bichqa Khatun by Möngke; see *JT*, II, p. 820/*Successors*, p. 198.
 69. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 154; William of Rubruck, *The Journey of William of Rubruck to the Eastern Parts of the World, 1253–1255, as Narrated by Himself, with Two Accounts of the Earlier Journey of John of Pian de Carpini*, trans. W. W. Rockhill (London, 1900) (hereafter, *WR2*), p. 172.
 70. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 166; *WR2*, pp. 190–1.
 71. One example of this is the visit made to another royal wife in Möngke's court, a woman called Qutay Khatun (her name appears as *Cota* in Rubruck's account). Apart from Rubruck, the only reference we have found to her is in Rashid al-Din, where she is mentioned as one of Möngke's wives; see *JT*, II, p. 853/*Successors*, p. 228.
 72. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 165; *WR2*, p. 190.
 73. For *iascots*, see Glossary; see also L. V. Clark, 'The Turkic and Mongol Words in William of Rubruck's Journey (1253–1255)', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 93:2 (1973), p. 186. The full story can be found in Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 167–8; *WR2*, pp. 192–4. The ritual is compared by Yule with one narrated by Melchisédech Thévenot in the seventeenth century among the Barbary corsairs. See *MP*, I, pp. 242–3.
 74. *WR2*, pp. 194–5.

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75. The black stone was believed to bring fortune and prosperity; see WR2, p. 195 and fn. 1.
76. A similar case is mentioned regarding the Golden Horde in the fourteenth century when a wife of Ozbek Khan (r. 1312–42), one Taydula Khatun, received a Christian metropolitan named Aleksei to cure her illness. See D. Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences in the Steppe Frontier, 1304–1589* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 22.
77. See *JT*, I, pp. 161–2/Thackston, p. 87; *JT*, II, p. 820/*Successors*, p. 197; *SH*, §120.
78. *JT*, II, p. 820/*Successors*, p. 197.
79. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 161; WR2, p. 184.
80. M. Rossabi, 'Khubilai Khan and the Women in his Family', in W. Bauer (ed.), *Studia Sino-Mongolica: Festschrift Fur Herbert Franke* (Wiesbaden, 1979), p. 167. Rubruck is not sure if she was baptised or not, but he saw 'a silver bowl being brought' for the lady. See Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 161; WR2, p. 184.
81. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 161–2; WR2, pp. 184–5.
82. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 162–3; WR2, pp. 185–6. She often came to give presents to the Christian clergy and she joined them for a week of fasting. See Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 174.
83. *JT*, II, p. 963/Thackston, p. 472. The naqus was a clapper used instead of bells in Eastern Christian churches to summon worshippers.
84. Grigor of Akanc', 'History of the Nation of Archers', ed. and trans. P. Blake and R. Frye, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 12:3/4 (December 1949), p. 343 (hereafter, NA), p. 341.
85. J. Richard, *La papauté et les missions d'Orient au Moyen Age (XIIIe–XVe siècles)* (Rome, 1977), p. 102; E. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), p. 143; A. M. Talbot, 'Empress Theodora Palaiologina: Wife of Michael VIII', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992; reprinted in *Women and Religious life in Byzantium* [Aldershot, 2001]), p. 296; I. Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars: Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185–1365* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 95.
86. For the early development of the Epiphany in Christianity, see P. M. Bassett, 'Epiphany', in E. Ferguson, M. P. McHugh and F. W. Norris (eds), *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, vol. I (A–K) (New York, 1999), pp. 381–2.
87. *Chronography*, p. 460.
88. The lady (Khalataita Khatun) was intending to go on hajj, but was prevented from doing so and returned to Baghdad to marry Caliph Nasir (r. 1158–1225). After her death, her sepulchre became a place of worship. See *Chronography*, p. 388. For the acceptance and use of *fatāwā* by Malika Khatun on divorce, see *TJG*, II, p. 156/Boyle, II, p. 424.
89. See, for example, the role of Terken Khatun in Sadid al-Din Muhammad Ghaznavi, *Maqāmāt-i Zhinda Pīl*, ed. H. Mu'ayyad Sanandaji (Tehran,

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- 1967), pp. 35–9, translated in *The Colossal Elephant and His Spiritual Feats: Shaykh Ahmad-e Jam: The Life and Legend of a Popular Sufi Saint of 12th Century Iran*, ed. H. Moayyad and trans. F. Lewis (Costa Mesa, 2004), pp. 105–9.
90. R. Shukurov, 'Harem Christianity: The Byzantine Identity of Seljuk Princes', in A. C. S. Peacock and S. N. Yildiz (eds), *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East* (London, 2012), pp. 115–50; B. De Nicola, 'The Ladies of Rūm: A Hagiographic View on Women in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Anatolia', *Journal of Sufi Studies* 3:2 (2014), pp. 132–56; B. De Nicola, 'Patrons or Murids? Mongol Women and Shaykhs in Ilkhanid Iran and Anatolia', *Iran Studies* 52 (2014), pp. 143–56.
 91. Shams al-Din Ahmad Aflaki, *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn*, ed. T. Yazıcı, 2 vols (Ankara, 1959–61) (hereafter, *MR*), I, pp. 24–5/Shams al-Din Ahmad Aflaki, *The Feats of the Knowers of God: Manaqeb al-ʿArefin*, trans. J. O'Kane (Leiden, 2002), pp. 19–20. See G. Schubert, 'Sulṭān Walad, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad-i Walad', *EI2*.
 92. R. Amitai, 'Sufis and Shamans: Some Remarks on the Islamization of the Mongols in the Ilkhanate', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42:1 (1999), pp. 27–46. See also C. Melville, 'Padshāh-i Islam: The Conversion of Sultan Mahmud Ghazan Khan', *Pembroke Papers* 1 (1990), pp. 159–77. In the case of the Golden Horde, DeWeese has noted that the presence of Sufis in the court might be more significant in the conversion of Berke than in that of Uzbek; see D. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tukles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, 1994), p. 86. Some Mamluk sources also point to Sufi influence in the conversion to Islam of Töde Möngke (r. 1280–8) in the Golden Horde. See Baybars al-Mansuri, *Zubdat al-fikrah fi taʾrikh al-hijrah*, ed. D. S. Richards (Beirut, 1998), pp. 227–8; E. Ashtor, 'Some Unpublished Sources for the Bahri Period', *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 9 (1961), pp. 11–30. On the new and more cautious approach to the role of Sufis in the Islamisation of the Mongols, see R. Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement: Studies in the Relations between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Mongol Ilkhanate (1260–1335)* (Turnhout, 2013), pp. 66–8.
 93. *JT*, II, p. 929/*Successors*, p. 301.
 94. *JT*, II, pp. 929–30/*Successors*, p. 302.
 95. *JT*, II, pp. 1129–30/Thackston, p. 551.
 96. Melville, 'Padshāh-i Islam', p. 168.
 97. Amitai, 'Sufis and Shamans', p. 34.
 98. *JT*, II, p. 1256/Thackston, pp. 620–1.
 99. *TB*, p. 439.
 100. Rashid al-Din Tabib, *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*, ed. B. Karimi, 2 vols (Tehran, 1367/1988–9) (hereafter, *JTK*), II, p. 801/Thackston, p. 560.
 101. *JTK*, II, p. 905/Thackston, p. 622.
 102. For an overview of Safavid rule in Iran, see H. R. Roemer, 'The Safavid

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- Period', in P. Jackson and L. Lockhart (eds), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. VI (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 189–350; see also A. J. Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (London, 2006).
103. Ibn Bazzaz Ardabili, *Şafwat al-Şafā: dar tarjumah-i aḥvāl va aqvāl va karāmāt-i Shaykh Şafī al-Dīn Ishāq Ardabīlī*, ed. G. R. Tabataba'i Majd (Tabriz, 1373/1994) (hereafter, *SS*), p. 912.
 104. Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325–1354*, ed. and trans. H. A. R. Gibb (London, 2005) (hereafter, *IB2*), p. 147.
 105. *SS*, p. 357.
 106. *SS*, p. 792.
 107. These women were, respectively, the sister of the last Ilkhan Abu Sa'id and the daughter of Möngke Temür and Abesh Khatun. On the anecdote, see *SS*, p. 1062. On *dhikr* (ذکر) as a ritual of healing, see A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, 1975), p. 237.
 108. De Nicola, 'Ladies of Rüm', pp. 132–56.
 109. 'Isa ibn Junayd Shirazi, *Tadhkirah-i Hazār Mazār*, ed. N. Visal (Shiraz, 1364/1985–6), pp. 300–1.
 110. *JT*, II, pp. 1320–1/Thackston, p. 660.
 111. *SS*, pp. 1102–3.
 112. J. Pfeiffer, 'Reflections on a "Double Rapprochement": Conversion to Islam among the Mongol Elite during the Early Ilkhanate', in L. Komaroff (ed.), *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden, 2006), p. 379.
 113. P. B. Golden, 'The Conversion of the Khazars to Judaism', in P. B. Golden, H. Ben-Shammai and A. Róna-Tas (eds), *The World of the Khazars: New Perspectives* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 123–62.
 114. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 15.
 115. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 13. For a comparative approach to the development of religion in different nomadic societies, see A. M. Khazanov, 'Muhammad and Jenghiz Khan Compared: The Religious Factor in World Empire Building', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35:3 (1993), pp. 461–79.
 116. Melville, 'Padshāh-i Islam', pp. 176–7. He also suggests that the process of conversion was a bottom-up rather than a top-down phenomenon; see C. Melville, '"The Year of the Elephant": Mamluk–Mongol Rivalry in the Hejaz in the Reign of Abu Sa'id (1317–1335)', *Studia Iranica* 21:2 (1992), pp. 197–214.
 117. On the idea of political motivation behind the conversion of nomadic empires, see T. May, 'Attitudes Towards Conversion among the Elite in the Mongol Empire', *Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast* (Bellingham, 2002), <http://micel.pacificu.edu/easpac/2003/may.php3> (accessed in February 2011).
 118. See Ts'un-Yan and Berlina, 'Three Teachings', pp. 479–509; on the relation between Confucianism and the Mongols, see B. Birge, 'Women and Confucianism from Song to Ming: The Institutionalization of Patrilineality',

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- in P. J. Smith and R. Von Glahn (eds), *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History* (Cambridge, MA, 2003), pp. 212–40.
119. See, for example, the reign of the committed Buddhist emperor of the Yuan dynasty, Shidibala Khan (r. 1320–3). H. Ch'i-ch'ing, 'Mid Yüan Politics', in H. Franke and D. Twitchett (eds), *The Cambridge History of China: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907–1368* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 490–560.
 120. See J. Richard, *La papauté et les missions d'Orient au Moyen Age (XIIIe-XVe siècles)* (Rome, 1977), pp. 173–84; R. Amitai, 'Conversion of Tegüder Ilkhan to Islam', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 25 (2001), pp. 15–43; DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, pp. 67–158; Melville, 'Padshāh-i Islam', pp. 159–77.
 121. M. Biran, 'The Chaghadaids and Islam: The Conversion of Tarmashirin Khan (1331–34)', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122:4 (October–December 2002), pp. 742–52.
 122. The best study of the narratives of conversion in the Mongol Empire is DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*; see also J. Pfeiffer, 'Conversion Versions: Sultan Oljeitu's Conversion to Shi'ism in Muslim Narrative Sources (709/1309)', *Mongolian Studies* 22 (1999), pp. 35–67.
 123. *TJG*, I, p. 18/Boyle, I, p. 26.
 124. *BS*, p. 174.
 125. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 23.
 126. *SH*, §194–6.
 127. Eventually he would overthrow the Gur Khan, take the title for himself and, in 1211, come to rule the Qarakhitai Empire. See *SH*, p. 1048.
 128. In Persian it reads *دختری او را به بت پرستی الزام کرد*; see *JT*, I, p. 464/Thackston, p. 230.
 129. *TJG*, I, pp. 48, 52–3/Boyle, I, pp. 64, 70; Haydar Mirza, *A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia: Being the 'Tarikh-i-Rashidi' of Mirza Muhammad Haidar, Dughlat*, ed. N. Elias, trans. E. D. Ross (London, 1970), p. 290. Khwandamir reverses the story and suggests an unrealistic scenario in which Gūshlūg converted the Qarakhitaid princess to Christianity; see Ghiyath al-Din Khwandamir, *Tārīkh-i ḥabīb al-siyar*, 4 vols (Tehran, 1333/1954) (hereafter, *THS*), III, p. 26/Ghiyath al-Din Khwandamir, 'Habibu's-Siyar': *The Reign of the Mongol and the Turk*, trans. W. M. Thackston, vol. III (Cambridge, MA, 1994) (hereafter, Khwandamir), p. 14. Rubruck also mentions this conversion; see Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 122.
 130. *TJG*, I, pp. 52–3/Boyle, I, p. 70.
 131. In addition to this influence over the beliefs of their husbands, women in their roles as mothers, nurses or tutors in the Mongol court tried to influence the religion of the Mongol children. Not always successful in their attempts, they nevertheless functioned as channels or vectors that brought non-Mongol religions closer to the new generation of Mongol leaders. B. De Nicola, 'The Role of the Domestic Sphere in the Islamisation of the Mongols', in

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- A. Peacock (ed.), *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History* (Edinburgh, forthcoming).
132. On her, see Figure 4.1. *JT*, I, p. 161/Thackston, p. 86.
 133. Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan*, p. 16, and 'Reign of Khubilai Khan', pp. 416–7.
 134. Rossabi, 'Khubilai Khan', p. 168.
 135. For example, the Liao and Chin dynasties; see J. Tao, *The Jurchen in Twelfth-Century China: A Study of Sinicization* (Seattle, 1976), pp. 106, 114; T. C. Yao, 'Buddhism and Taoism under the Chin', in H. C. Tillman et al. (eds), *China under Jurchen Rule: Essays on Chin Intellectual and Cultural History* (New York, 1995), pp. 145–80; K. A. Wittfogel and J. Feng, *History of Chinese Society: Liao (907–1225)* (Philadelphia, 1949), p. 29.
 136. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 30.
 137. I am referring here to the son of Ibaqa Beki, mentioned above. Rashid al-Din states that she 'had a son who was a ba'urchi [of Ögötei]'. See *JT*, I, p. 673/*Successors*, p. 65.
 138. On the Muslim population in China before the Mongols, see Rossabi, 'Muslims in the Early Yüan Dynasty', p. 289.
 139. *JT*, II, p. 951/*Successors*, p. 324.
 140. *JT*, II, p. 951/*Successors*, p. 324. On nurses and other 'domestic' elements in the conversion of the Mongols, see De Nicola, 'Role of the Domestic Sphere', forthcoming.
 141. *JT*, II, p. 952/*Successors*, pp. 324–5.
 142. R. W. Dunnell, 'The Anxi Principality: [Un]Making a Muslim Mongol Prince in Northwest China during the Yuan Dynasty', *Central Asiatic Journal* 57, Special Tangut Edition (2014), pp. 190–1.
 143. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 224.
 144. Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, p. 263.
 145. T. Halbertsma, 'Nestorian Remains of Inner Mongolia: Discovery, Reconstruction and Appropriation', doctoral dissertation (University of Leiden, 2007), p. 33.
 146. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 225–6. Also mentioned by Marco Polo; see *MP*, II, p. 460.
 147. Halbertsma, 'Nestorian Remains', p. 33, quoting P. Pelliot, *Recherches sur les Chrétiens d'Asie Centrale et d'Extrême-Orient*, vol. 3: *Màr Ya(H) Bhallâhâ, Rabban Šaumâ et les princes Öngüt chrétiens*, eds J. Dauvillier and L. Hambis (Paris, 1973), p. 281.
 148. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 24.
 149. On Güyük, see *Chronography*, p. 411. On Möngke, see *FO*, ch. 19; Lane, *Daily Life*, p. 192.
 150. A good anecdote occurs in Rubruck's account of a Mongol approaching him to be baptised. Before taking the step forward, though, he decides to go home 'to discuss the matter with his wife'. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 111. On the relationship between Christianity and the Islamisation of the Mongols,

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- see also D. Bundy, 'The Syriac and Armenian Christian Responses to the Islamification of the Mongols', in J. V. Tolan (ed.), *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam* (New York, 2000), pp. 33–54.
151. *Chronography*, p. 398; also in Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 190, 209.
 152. Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols*, p. 150.
 153. Despite this, the tale of the conversion of Mongol rulers was used by Mongol emissaries to attract the allegiance of European powers. See Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, p. 169; J. B. Chabot, 'Notes sur les relations du roi Argun avec l'Occident', *Revue de l'Orient latin* 10 (1894), p. 584.
 154. Halbertsma, 'Nestorian Remains', p. 36.
 155. Khanbaghi, *The Fire, the Star and the Cross*, p. 87.
 156. On mothers and the faith of their children, see De Nicola, 'Role of the Domestic Sphere', forthcoming; the story of Despina Khatun's attempt to convert Baidu to Christianity should be seen in the light of the biased Christian sources. See MP, II, p. 476; *Chronography*, p. 505.
 157. R. W. Bulliet, 'Conversion Stories in Early Islam', in M. Gervers and R. J. Bikhazi (eds), *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1990), p. 128.
 158. P. Crone and M. Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 3–78.
 159. Bulliet, 'Conversion Stories', pp. 125–9.
 160. Quoted in M. G. Morony, 'The Age of Conversions: A Reassessment', in M. Gervers and R. J. Bikhazi (eds), *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1990), p. 138.
 161. Morony, 'Age of Conversions', pp. 138–9.
 162. R. Bulliet, 'The Conversion Curve Revisited', in A. Peacock (ed.), *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History* (Edinburgh, forthcoming).
 163. D. DeWeese, 'Islamization in the Mongol Empire', in N. Di Cosmo, A. J. Frank and P. B. Golden (eds), *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 120–34.
 164. Khazanov, 'Spread of World Religions', p. 21.
 165. Melville, 'Padshāh-i Islam', pp. 159–77.
 166. Pfeiffer, 'Reflections', pp. 372–6; DeWeese, 'Islamization', pp. 120–34; De Nicola, 'Role of the Domestic Sphere', forthcoming.
 167. See, for example, M. F. Köprülü, *Influence du chamanisme turco-mongol sur les ordres mystiques müsülmans* (Istanbul, 1929), pp. 5–19; V. L. Ménage, 'The Islamization of Anatolia', in N. Levtzion (ed.), *Conversion to Islam* (New York, 1979), pp. 52–67; J. Fletcher, 'The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46:1 (1986), pp. 11–50; Roux, *La religion des Turcs*; Amitai, 'Sufis and Shamans', pp. 27–46.

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168. I. Vásáry, 'History and Legend in Berke Khan's Conversion to Islam', in D. Sinor (ed.), *Aspects of Altaic Civilization, Three: Proceedings of the Thirtieth Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference, Bloomington, Indiana* (Bloomington, 1990), p. 256.
169. For example, Ahmad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab al-Nuwayri. *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. M. M. Qumayhah and I. Shams al-Din (Beirut, 2004–5), vols 26–7, pp. 244–5. Also mentioned by DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, pp. 84–5, who refers to an edition of Nuwayri from 1986 published in Cairo; V. G. Tizengauzen (ed./trans.), *Sbornik Materialov, Otnosiashchikhsia k istorii Zolotoi Ord, 2, Izvlecheniia iz Persidskikh Sochinenii Sobrannye V.C. Tizengauzenom i Obrabotannye A. A. Romaskevichen I S. L. Volinym* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1941; trans. into Turkish by I. H. Izmirli as *Altınordu devleti tarihine ait metinler*, Istanbul, 1941), pp. 249–50; V. G. Tizengauzen (ed./trans.), *Sbornik Materialov, Otnosiashchikhsia k istorii Zolotoi Ord, 1, Tizvlecheniia iz Sochinenii Arabiskikh* (St Petersburg, 1884), pp. 130–1. See DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, p. 84, fn. 28.
170. She was the daughter of Nogai (d. 1299–1300), son of Tatar, a grandson of Jochi by his seventh son Bo'al. See *JT*, I, pp. 736–7/*Successors*, p. 113.
171. It is not clear in Rashid's account where he is defined as an 'Uighur'; see *JT*, I, p. 644/*Successors*, p. 126. The story is also mentioned in *TB*, pp. 396–7.
172. For the Golden Horde in this period, see A. F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge and New York, 2008), pp. 59–61.
173. *SS*, p. 899. She was the daughter of Geikhatu Ilkhan and Dondi Khatun, the daughter of Aq Buqa, son of Elgai Noyan. See *JT*, II, pp. 1189, 1215/*Thackston*, pp. 580, 593.
174. See *JT*, II, p. 1189/*Thackston*, pp. 579–80. For her stay in Anatolia, see the reference to her return to the Ilkhanid court in 1293 in *JT*, II, p. 1196/*Thackston*, p. 583.
175. See Pfeiffer, 'Reflections', p. 374.
176. Some close interaction between Christian princesses in the court of the Saljuqs of Rum and Sufi shaykhs has been, nonetheless, documented. See De Nicola, 'Ladies of Rūm', pp. 148–9.
177. Pfeiffer, 'Reflections'.
178. Amitai, 'Sufis and Shamans', pp. 27–9; on the Islamisation of the Mongols in general, see DeWeese, 'Islamization', pp. 120–34.
179. See *SS*, p. 912; on unveiled Mongol women, see *IB2*, p. 147.
180. De Nicola, 'Role of the Domestic Sphere', forthcoming.
181. See O. Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry* (Chapel Hill, 2006), pp. 93–104; D. Durand-Guédy, *Iranian Elites and Turkish Rulers: A History of Isfahan in the Saljuqid Period* (London, 2009), pp. 123–9; B. Finster, 'The Saljuqs

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- as Patrons', in R. Hillenbrand (ed.), *The Art of the Saljuqs in Iran and Anatolia* (Costa Mesa, 1994), pp. 17–28; during the Fatimid period see D. Cortese and S. Calderini, *Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam* (Edinburgh, 2006), p. 176.
182. M. Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 53.
 183. A. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia: Aspects of Administrative, Economic and Social History* (New York, 1988), pp. 270–1; Rashid al-Din Tabib, *The History of the Saljuq Turks from the 'Jāmi' al-Tawārikh': An Ilkhanid Adaptation of the 'Saljūq-nāma' of Zāhir al-Dīn Nishāpurī*, ed. C. E. Bosworth and trans. K. A. Luther (Richmond, 2001), pp. 169–70.
 184. She was the wife of the Caliph al-Qa'im (d. 1075) and then married to °Ala° al-Dawla °Ali, the Kakuyid of Yazd. See Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 271; C. E. Bosworth, 'Political and Dynastic History of the Iranian World (A.D. 1000–1217)', in J. A. Boyle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V (Cambridge, 1968), p. 48; Ahmad ibn Husayn Katib, *Tārīkh-i jadīd-i Yazd*, ed. I. Afshar (Tehran, 1966; reprint 1978), pp. 60, 67–9.
 185. On her see Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 271.
 186. Abu al-°Abbas Zarkub Shirazi, *Shirāz-nāma*, ed. I. V. Javadi (Tehran, 1350/1972) (hereafter, *SRN*), p. 45.
 187. E. S. Wolper, 'Princess Safwat al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn and the Production of Sufī Buildings and Hagiographies in Pre-Ottoman Anatolia', in D. F. Ruggles (ed.), *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies* (New York, 2000), p. 49.
 188. I. M. Rogers, 'Waqf and Patronage in Seljuk Anatolia: The Epigraphic Evidence', *Anatolian Studies* 26 (1976), p. 92.
 189. Khazanov, 'Muhammad and Jenghiz Khan', p. 468. A reference to the status of the Jews was made by Juvayni; see *TJG*, III, p. 78/Boyle, II, p. 599.
 190. Atwood, 'Validation by Holiness', p. 247.
 191. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, pp. 99–137.
 192. I. W. Limbert, *Shiraz in the Age of Hafez: The Glory of a Medieval Persian City* (Seattle, 2004), p. 43; L. Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders: The Architectural Patronage of Hadice Turhan Sultan* (Aldershot, 2006); Ü. Bates, 'The Architectural Patronage of Ottoman Women', *Asian Art* 6:2 (1993), pp. 50–65. For the Safavid period, see, for example, Newman, *Safavid Iran*, p. 108. On female patronage among Timurid women, see P. Soucek, 'Timurid Women: A Cultural Perspective', in G. R. Hambly (ed.), *Women in the Medieval Islamic World: Patronage and Piety* (New York, 1998), pp. 199–226.
 193. On Yelü Chucai, see I. Rachewiltz *et al.*, *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200–1300)* (Wiesbaden, 1993), pp. 136–71.

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194. I. de Rachewiltz, 'The *Hsi-Yu Lu* by Yeh-Lü Ch'u-Ts'ai', *Monumenta Serica* 21 (1962), (hereafter, *HYL*), p. 29.
195. *HYL*, p. 29.
196. *MP*, I, p. 319.
197. *TA*, p. 92.
198. *TJG*, II, pp. 77–8/Boyle, II, p. 599.
199. *MP*, I, p. 186. See Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, pp. 100–1, for the benefits granted by Mongol rulers to Christian clerics in the early empire.
200. For example, the endowments made by Chinggis Khan and Ögetei to build temples for the monks of the Quanzhen sect; see *TA*, pp. 135–7, 18.
201. *JT*, II, 823/*Successors*, p. 200; see also *TJG*, III, pp. 8–9/Boyle, II, pp. 552–3.
202. *TB*, p. 400.
203. *Chronography*, p. 398; R. A. Skelton *et al.*, *The Vinland Map and the Tartar Relation* (New Haven and London, 1965), p. 76.
204. *TA*, p. 16. On female patronage of Taoism in Jin China, see Yao, 'Buddhism and Taoism under the Chin', p. 159. Marco Polo saw an idol of the Buddha in a temple that was founded by a Tangut lady in 1103; see *MP*, I, p. 221.
205. The edict is discussed in F. W. Cleaves, 'The Sino-Mongolian Inscription of 1240', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 23 (1960–1), pp. 62–75, and I. de Rachewiltz, 'Some Remarks on Töregene's Edict of 1240', *Papers in Far Eastern History* 25 (1981), pp. 38–63.
206. De Rachewiltz, 'Some Remarks on Töregene's Edict', p. 49.
207. De Rachewiltz, 'Some Remarks on Töregene's Edict', p. 45.
208. *JT*, II, p. 808; *JTK*, p. 573/*Successors*, pp. 184, 188.
209. *TJG*, III, p. 80/Boyle, II, pp. 600–1.
210. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 162.
211. Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 172.
212. Morgan, *The Mongols*, p. 135.
213. *NA*, pp. 341, 343.
214. *FO*, ch. 27.
215. *JT*, II, p. 964/Thackston, p. 472.
216. *BS*, p. 223.
217. *BS*, pp. 303–4.
218. Another case of personal protection being given to the Nestorian Catholicos by a woman is mentioned in *BS*, p. 37.
219. For an interpretation of the accounts of Berke's conversion, see DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, p. 86.
220. Anonymous, *Histoire de la Géorgie: depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'au XIXe siècle*, trans. M. Brosset (St Petersburg, 1849), p. 573.
221. Known in Byzantium as Maria Palaiologina, she was the daughter of Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos. J. Herrin, *Unrivalled Influence: Women and Empire in Byzantium* (Princeton, 2013), pp. 313–14. She is also

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- mentioned as a wife of Geikhatu in Abu al-Qasim °Abd Allah ibn °Ali Kashani, *Tārīkh-i Ūljāytū*, ed. M. Hambly (Tehran, 1384/2005), p. 8.
222. BS, p. 163.
 223. *Chronography*, p. 467.
 224. BS, p. 165.
 225. The mother of the future ruler Öljeitü (r. 1304–17), who was responsible for baptising him at an early age. See BS, p. 283.
 226. *JT*, II, pp. 1179/Thackston, p. 574.
 227. I. Vaziri, *Buddhism in Iran: An Anthropological Approach to Traces and Influences* (New York, 2012), pp. 111–34; A. Azad, ‘Three Rock-Cut Cave Sites in Iran and their Ilkhanid Buddhist Aspects Reconsidered’, in A. Akasoy et al. (eds), *Islam and Tibet: Interactions Along the Musk Routes* (Farnham, 2011), pp. 209–30; Y. Kadoi, ‘Buddhism in Iran under the Mongols: An Art-Historical Analysis’, in T. Gacek and J. Pstrusińska (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth Conference of the European Society for Central Asian Studies* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2009), pp. 171–80.
 228. See Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan*, p. 16.
 229. *JTK*, II, p. 914/Thackston, p. 626; *JT*, II, pp. 1177–9/Thackston, pp. 573–5.
 230. BS, p. 203.
 231. MP, I, p. 92.
 232. *Chronography*, p. 505.
 233. *JTK*, II, p. 906/Thackston, p. 622.
 234. Thackston, p. 626, fn. 3.
 235. Khanbaghi, *The Fire, the Star and the Cross*, p. 72.
 236. One of the daughters of Tegüider Ahmad; see *JT*, II, p. 1123/Thackston, p. 547; Kamal al-Din °Abd al-Razzaq Samarqandi, *Maṭla‘-i sa‘dayn va majma‘-i baḥrayn*, ed. A. Nava‘i (Tehran, 1372/1993), p. 75. She allegedly died fighting side by side with her husband in June–July 1319. See C. Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Il-Khanate, 1327–1337: A Decade of Discord in Mongol Iran* (Bloomington, 1999), pp. 105–6; B. De Nicola, ‘Women’s Role and Participation in Warfare in the Mongol Empire’, in K. Latzel, S. Satjukow and F. Maubach (eds), *Soldatinnen: Gewalt und Geschlecht im Krieg vom Mittelalter bis Heute* (Paderborn, 2010), pp. 103–4.
 237. She was Qutlughshah Khatun, the daughter of Irinjin by a woman called Saridjeh (Hafiz-i Abru, *Ẓayl-i Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh-i Rashīdī: shāmil-i vaqā‘i‘-i 703–781 hijrī-i qamarī*, ed. K. Bayani (Tehran, 1350/1971) (hereafter, HA), p. 72/Hafiz-i Abru, *Chronique des rois mongols en Iran*, ed. and trans. K. Bayani, 2 vols (Paris, 1936) (hereafter, HAB), p. 51) and she was married to Öljeitü. See Melville, *Fall of Amir Chupan*, pp. 104–7; L. J. Ward, ‘*Zafarnāmah* of Mustawfī’, doctoral dissertation (Manchester University, 1983), pp. 637–8; HA, p. 100/HAB, p. 77.
 238. BS, p. 213.
 239. For example, the defeat of the Christian Amir Irinjin by the forces of the

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- pro-Muslim Amir Chohan in 1319 deprived Christians of a powerful ally in the Mongol court. See Melville, *Fall of Amir Chupan*, p. 11.
240. For example, the financial support given by Hülegü to Nasir al-Din Tusi – mostly for scientific research – shows that Muslims were by no means left out of court patronage. See M. Minovi and V. Minorsky, 'Nāṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī on Finance', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10:3 (1940), pp. 755–89.
 241. B. De Nicola, 'The Queen of the Chaghatayds: Orghina Khātūn and the Rule of Central Asia', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26:1–2 (2016), pp. 107–20.
 242. V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, 4 vols (Leiden, 1956–63), I, pp. 46–7.
 243. °Abd Allah ibn Fazl Allah Vassaf, *Taḥrīr-i tārikh-i Vaṣṣāf*, ed. °A. M. Ayati (Tehran, 2004) (hereafter, *TV*), p. 15.
 244. Probably Oljatay.
 245. Hamd Allah Mustawfi Qazvini, *The Geographical Part of the 'Nuzhat al-Qulūb' Composed by Hamd Allah Mustawfi of Qazwin in 740 (1340)*, trans. G. le Strange (Leiden and London, 1915–19; reprint 2008), p. 69; R. Zipoli, 'The Tomb of Arghūn', in *Primo Convegno Internazionale sull'Arte dell'Iran Islamico* (Venice and Tehran, 1978), pp. 7–37.
 246. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, p. 192.
 247. C. Melville, 'Bologān (Būlūgān) Kātun', *Elr*.
 248. On the process of 'Persianisation' among the Mongols, see C. Melville, 'History and Myth: The Persianisation of Ghazan Khan', in É. M. Jeremiás (ed.), *Irano-Turkic Cultural Contacts in the 11th–17th Centuries* (Piliscsaba, 2003), p. 143. On Islamisation, see Melville, 'Padshāh-i Islam', p. 171; De Nicola, 'Role of the Domestic Sphere', forthcoming.
 249. For a discussion of this, see K. Quade-Reutter, "'Denn Sie Haben Einen Unvollkommenen Verstand" – Herrschaftliche Damen Im Grossraum Iran in Der Mongolen – Und Timuridenzeit (ca. 1250–1507)', doctoral dissertation (Albert-Ludwig Universität, Freiburg, 2003), p. 119.
 250. Anonymous, *Tārikh-i Shāhī-yi Qarā-Khitā'iyān*, ed. M. I. Bastani Parizi (Tehran, 1976–7) (hereafter, *TSQ*), pp. 235, 333.
 251. J. Aubin, 'Émirs mongols et vizirs persane dans les remous de l'acculturation (Paris, 1995)', pp. 34–5; B. Üçok, *Femmes turques souveraines et regents dans les états islamiques*, trans. A. Çamali (n. d.), pp. 64–5. A useful table summarising Terken's charitable foundations can be found in Quade-Reutter, 'Denn Sie Haben', pp. 145–53; De Nicola, 'Patrons or Murids?', pp. 143–56.
 252. The name of the madrasa is given as 'Madrise-ye terkani'; see *TSQ*, pp. 315–16. Also *THS*, III, p. 269/Khwandamir, p. 155.
 253. In 'the Mongol fashion' is specifically referring to her marriage to Geikhatu; see Hamd Allah Mustawfi Qazvini, *The 'Ta'rikh-i-Guzida': or 'Select History' of Hamdu'llah Mustawfī-i-Qazvini*, ed. and trans. E. G. Browne, 2

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- vols (Leiden and London, 1910–13), p. 133; also Lane, *Daily Life*, p. 245. For her marriage to Abaqa, see *JT*, II, p. 934/*Successors*, p. 305; B. Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran: Politik, Verwaltung und Kultur der Ilchanzeit 1220–1350* (Leipzig, 1939), p. 154.
254. Shabankaraʿi, *Majmaʿ al-ansāb*, ed. H. Muhaddith (Tehran, 1363/1984) (hereafter, *MA*), p. 201; Üçok, *Femmes turques*, p. 78; D. P. Brookshaw, ‘Odes of a Poet-Princess: The Ghazals of Jahān-Malik Khātūn’, *Iran* 43 (2005), pp. 173–95; Rogers, ‘Waqf and Patronage’, pp. 76–7; Mahmud b. Muhammad al-Karim Aqsaraʿi, *Mosāmerat al-akhbār* (Ankara, 1944), pp. 146–7, quoted in C. Melville, ‘Anatolia under the Mongols’, in K. Fleet (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. I (Cambridge, 2009), p. 76; De Nicola, ‘Patrons or Murids?’, pp. 149–50.
 255. *MA*, p. 202.
 256. The involvement of women in the patronage of Sufi leaders can also be found in the hagiographical material. See, for example, the role of ʿEsmati Khatun in financing a mosque for Rumi’s father Bahaʾ al-Din Valad in Anatolia. See *MR*, I, pp. 24–5/Aflaki, *Feats of the Knowers of God*, pp. 19–20.
 257. *SRN*, p. 45; Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, p. 150; Limbert, *Shiraz*, p. 64.
 258. *JT*, II, pp. 935–6/*Successors*, pp. 306–7; *SRN*, p. 62.
 259. Limbert, *Shiraz*, pp. 16, 63.
 260. Brookshaw, ‘Odes of a Poet-Princess’, pp. 187–8, fn. 44.
 261. ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar Baidawī, *Niẓām al-tawārīkh*, ed. M. H. Muhaddith (Tehran, 1382/2003), p. 125; *JT*, II, pp. 936–7/*Successors*, p. 307.
 262. See D. Aigle, *Le Fars sous la domination mongole: politique et fiscalité, XIIIe–XIVe s.* (Paris, 2005), pp. 131–2.
 263. Q. Ghani, *Tārīkh-i ʿaṣr-i Ḥāfiẓ*, vol. I, in *Bah̄s dar āṣār va Afkār va Ahvāl-i Ḥāfiẓ* (Tehran, 1380/2001–2), pp. 64–5, quoted in Brookshaw, ‘Odes of a Poet-Princess’, p. 188, fn. 45.
 264. *SRN*, p. 93. Also mentioned in *TV*, p. 345, and Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, pp. 275–6.
 265. On women’s intellectual presence in Al-Andalus, see, among others, M. J. Viguera Molins, *La Mujer en Al-Andalus: reflejos históricos de su actividad y categorías sociales* (Madrid, 1989), and ‘Asluhu Lu’l Ma’ali: On the Social Status of Andalusī Women: The Legacy of Muslim Spain’, in S. K. Jayyusi and M. Marín (eds), *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* (Leiden, 1992), pp. 709–24; A. Schippers, ‘The Role of Women in Medieval Andalusian Arabic Story-telling’, in F. de Jong (ed.), *Verse and the Fair Sex: Studies in Arabic Poetry and in the Representation of Women in Arabic Literature* (Utrecht, 1993), pp. 139–52.
 266. *MA*, p. 201; Nasir al-Din Munshi Kirmani, *Simṭ al-ulā lil-Ḥaẓrat al-ʿulyā dar ʿTārīkh-i Qarā-khitāʾiyyān-i Kirmānʾ*, ed. ʿA. Iqbal (Tehran, 1362/1983–4) (hereafter, *SU*), pp. 70–9; *JT*, II, pp. 934–5/*Successors*, pp. 305–6.
 267. *MA*, pp. 201–2. Also in *SU*, p. 70; Üçok, *Femmes turques*, pp. 81–5.

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268. Suleymaniye Library, Istanbul, ms. Fatih 5046, ff. 123a–124a; O. Turan, *Türkiye Selçukluları hakkında resmî vesikalar: metin, tercüme ve araştırmalar* (Ankara, 1958), pp. 168–71.
269. Brookshaw, 'Odes of a Poet-Princess', pp. 173–95.
270. A continuation of this practice has also been noted among Timurid women. See M. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 156–8. For a comparison of female patronage in Anatolia between the Saljuq and the Ottoman dynasties, see Ü. Bates, 'The Architectural Patronage of Ottoman Women', *Asian Art* 6:2 (1993), pp. 50–65.
271. For the continuation of the patronage of religious buildings under the Timurid dynasty, see L. Golombek, *The Timurid Shrine of Gazur Gah* (Toronto, 1968), pp. 13–20.
272. *JT*, II, p. 1218/Thackston, p. 597.