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makes fun of the fact that his friend has written a serious book about what he had talked about just for fun. Other anecdotes deal with sometimes unconventional behaviour. Both Dai Liang and Sun Chu are characters that amuse others by braying in imitation of donkeys. While Dai restrains himself from braying at his mother's funeral (she was keen on the sound), Sun Chu does not desist from doing so at his patron's funeral, startling but amusing all the mourners. The latter's unconventional behaviour has to be understood in the context of a society where norms imposed by conventions are, in fact universally comprehended.

The anecdotes can highlight subtle aspects of social behaviour quite distinct from those of a Western perspective. An example is where insults are considered. Xie An's wife insults Sun Chou and his brother but they are not present to hear the insults. That does not greatly matter because the real purpose of the insult is to harm their public reputation, over which they have no control. That dispels the Western notion that the hearing of the insult by the person and his reaction to it is its most important characteristic.

Although many anecdotes are drawn from daily experience, it does not mean that as a body of commentary they ignore classical sources, such as Confucianism. Confucius's teaching on rituals, honesty, harmonious balance, discernment and many other subjects are absorbed in these anecdotes but given their own particular twist. Nor are historical references to real events absent: for example stories about the military exploits of Emperors are present but the evaluation of those exploits may be different from that recorded elsewhere in 'serious' histories.

Jack Chen's book is a highly learned guide to *Shishuo*, backed by detailed scholarship throughout. The only drawback for the current reviewer is that for that very reason, the reader can be diverted from the charming simplicity and directness of the tales themselves.

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Making Mongol History: Rashīd al-Dīn and the Jami' al-Tawarikh. By Stefan Kamola. Edinburgh Studies in Classical Islamic History and Culture. pp. 309. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2019.
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Rarely has the exploration of a literary masterpiece produced such insights into Iranian cultural and political history as has Stefan Kamola's scholarly yet dramatic presentation of the life and work of Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh (1247–1318) in *Making Mongol History: Rashid al-Din and the Jami' al-Tawarikh.* Kamola has approached this complicated task with clarity and thoroughness to provide unexpected revelations and new understanding of the Mongol impact on Iran, of the region's literary development and of its theories of statehood. He accomplishes this by examining literary activity and styles in Iran from the beginning of the Mongol conquest in the 1220s through the influences of Islamic, Chinese, Christian and European movements to the first presentation of Rashīd al-Dīn's historical treatise in 1304 and its subsequent changes through the fifteenth century. Rashīd al-Dīn's pre-eminent position during the height of il-Khānid power in the courts of the brothers, Ghāzān (1295–1304) and Öljaytū

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(1304–1316), allowed him to establish an academy that researched various scientific, religious and especially historical topics as well as to form a bureau that published the material. Both of these activities, composing and publishing, have given posterity an extremely rich legacy of the actual events and the effect Mongol steppe culture had on Iranian society and on historiography itself. There are 82 full or partial manuscripts remaining of his historical material that are located in 29 institutions from Toronto to Tashkent. Many of these Kamola has consulted and analyzed in Appendix B. They are products of a system Rashīd al-Dīn established first in Tabriz in 1309 to copy Qur'ans and *ḥādīth* material; but by the next year, he had expanded his efforts to make one copy every year in Arabic and one in Persian of each of four of his books. Later, by 1314, two more of his titles were added while he specified that dictation to the scribes should be increased to 500 words a day. The copying was performed not only at his scriptorium in Tabriz but also at 21 other foundations across the empire to be distributed to *madrasa*s for teaching.[1] Without this material, there would be little knowledge of Mongol history, so Kamola is correct to entitle his book as he does.

First, he reports the dramatic end of Rashīd al-Dīn and his son, who were beheaded in 1318. This event is compared with the demise of the other great historian of the Mongol period in Iran, ᶜAṭā' Malik Juvaynī (1226–83), who had the same fate. These two Iranians flew close to the flames of power, giving us information no one else could have provided, and eventually suffered for their efforts. It is in the first chapter, 'Mongols in a Muslim world, 1218–1280', that Kamola stresses the importance of eastern Iranians in the establishment of Mongol control and legitimacy, particularly citing Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūṣī (1201–74), the Juvaynī family from father to both sons, ᶜAṭā' Malik and Shams al-Dīn, and others educated in Khurasan. Their literary efforts, sometimes highly lyrical as with Juvaynī's *History of the World Conqueror* or grounded in philosophy, as with the *Nasirean Ethics* (still studied today), appeared without any royal patronage. Nevertheless, Hülāgü's (1254–65) capital at Maragha brought together many intellectuals that moved activity from the east and south to northwestern Iran.

In the second chapter, 'The Likely Course of an Unlikely Life; 1248–1302', the author introduces Rashīd al-Dīn; but surprisingly little is known about his background and career. He belonged to a Jewish family of highly respected physicians from Hamadan and enjoyed practicing for some years in Yazd before migrating to Maragha. There, he seems to have been in charge of the ruler's diet, supervising the kitchen, sometimes at his own expense when state provisions ran out, and later was at the birth of Öljaytū Khān. There was no pre-ordained rise to power; in fact, at all times, he shared the vizirate with another person, and who was responsible for what tasks is still unclear. Apparently, being a long-term and close family physician gave Rashīd al-Dīn an unassailable position. Indeed, eventually, he even stated that he and Öljaytu were integrated, almost that each was the better half of the other: the older man with wisdom and foresight and the younger with the will and power to rule justly. Much of this theory or emperor complex countered the views of the military aristocracy or *qarachu,* who were not of royal blood but claimed their power as descendants of the closest companions of Chinggis Khān. In spite of Rashīd al-Dīn's efforts, the struggle between the two concepts eventually brought down the Il-Khānate.

The subject of the third chapter, 'Mongol Dynastic History, 1302–1304' charts the course of changing attitudes to historical writing. Basically, it was the unsuccessful attempt in 1301 to conquer Mamlūk territory in Syria that prompted Ghāzān to look for a new, non-military, tactic to proclaim his authority. In doing so, he drew not only on Mongol but also Islamic and Iranian traditions and chose to spread the message by commissioning a history of his dynasty. As a result, the work portrayed Ghāzān not only as a Mongol warrior but also as a true Muslim, an important point since Ghāzān had

[1]Nourane Ben Azzouna, 'Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh al-Hamadānī's Manuscript Production Project in Tabriz Reconsidered', in (ed.) Judith Pfeiffer, *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th – 15th Century Tabriz* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 187–200, especially pp. 195–196.

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converted only a few years earlier, and as having royal charisma similar to that of Sassanian monarchs. However, it was the effect of Ibn al-Ṭiqtaqā's treatise, the *Fihkrī,* which set the style for Ghāzān's history. Ibn al-Ṭiqtaqā was opposed to the florid style of Juvaynī, perhaps a reasonable reaction since his father had been executed after working for Juvaynī, leading Rashīd al-Dīn to write clear and simple prose. Still, Ibn al-Ṭiqtaqā also took to task Mongol rulers because they were not interested in history, thereby showing their unfulfilled role as sovereigns. They were not educated, an image Ghāzān decided to change. This was important more than ever since Ghāzān tried three times to take Syria and desperately needed a new ideology. Moreover, as a convert to Islam, he had to justify his rule even as his great grandfather, Hülāgü, had killed the last caliph. There were other influences on the nascent project, such as the works of al-Badāwī (d. 1316?) from Shiraz and Qutb al-Dīn Shirazī (1236–1311). The latter had a short dynastic history after 1282 while Qāshānī (d. 1335) and Wāṣṣāf (1265–1328) also wrote limited histories. Kamola spends considerable time describing the background and contributions of these writers and others to the growing demand by Ghāzān to qualify the Mongols as legitimate sovereigns of Greater Iran. In particular, Kamola agrees that Rashīd al-Dīn incorporated Qāshānī's work, but Rashīd al-Dīn's best contribution to these movements was the organisation of the material into discrete areas with subject headings and the systemic movement through long spans of time and geography, sometimes leaving space on the pages for later additions. This chapter is a thorough review of the awakening of literary activity in the Il-Khānate and also the change from Arabic to Persian as the literary language.

The fourth chapter discusses 'New Projects of Faith and Power, 1304–1312'. Although the *Blessed History* was written between 1302 and 1304, it was not Ghāzān but Öljaytū who received it. Since the new khān followed many of his brother's policies, Rashīd al-Dīn continued in his post and finished the manuscript. However, this was just the beginning; Rashīd al-Dīn started collecting more histories, those of the Chinese, the Turks, the Indians and the Europeans (Franks) as well as pre-Islamic dynasties in the Middle East and the later regimes up to the Mongols, using any source he could, whether interviews with foreign and local scholars or incorporating material from well-respected older texts, such as that of al-Ṭabarī (839–923). After this, the formative *Blessed History of Ghāzān* became the *Collected Histories (Jāmiᶜ al-Tawārīkh)* as Rashīd al-Dīn continued to add material until his death. Then later writers added even more information about new events and rulers. Since the first history was well received, Rashīd al-Dīn also expanded his fields of composition into theological and miscellaneous topics along with more and more histories. This produced the *Collected Writings*.

There was a sense of grandeur in the realm at this point with massive architectural projects such as the new complex of Sultaniyya and the Rashīdī Quarter in Tabriz. With dedicated buildings, the Rashīdī Quarter became an intellectual and artistic centre for producing manuscripts that Rashīd al-Dīn composed. In this fever, there was also a change of ideology about political power that moved from the earlier method of incorporating the three cultural themes of Mongol, Islamic and Iranian authority to one of reaching the apogee of social and political progress for the entire world. Interconnected trends culminated into a new form of universal kingship exemplified by Öljaytū taking the title of *sulṭān*. At the same time, Rashīd al-Dīn changed the focus of previous narrations from the theme of Islam being the cumulative end of man's actions on earth to advocate that Öljaytū was the ultimate result of the historic process. This advancement of the theory of kingship required a deep knowledge of the past and a masterful manipulation of previous philosophies. He succeeded.

The fifth chapter, 'Remaking Mongol History, 1307–1313' discusses the evolution of Rashīd al-Dīn's work, starting with *The Blessed History of Ghazan*, which Kamola has deciphered from various recensions. As mentioned, as Rashīd al-Dīn sought more information, the work changed and grew. In particular, he stressed genealogy. Originally, he had inserted the Mongols into the Turkic tribes, all of whom were descendants of Noah, thereby providing a framework familiar to Christian, Jewish and

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Islamic readers. In other words, he brought Central Asia into a Middle Eastern format. Through pages 124 to 128, Kamola graphically charts the development of the tables so that, eventually, Rashīd al-Dīn placed his patrons in the centre of a long, historical process of secular and sacred dynasties based on broad biological lineages. In short, he accomplished through these diagrams the same message he conveyed in his written texts. Although Arabic writers had long devoted attention to written genealogies, the use of charts was new. Perhaps he was influenced by the development of tables in Europe, especially Italy. The many Italian merchants and ambassadors in Tabriz could have brought these to Rashīd al-Dīn's attention.

Another form of non-verbal messaging appeared during these years as Rashīd al-Dīn began to have new copies of the histories illustrated. At the time, the Middle East had illustrated works of al-Balʿamī (d. 940), who had translated al-Ṭabarī into Persian, and al-Bīrūnī (973 – after 1050); but, originally, the *Blessed History* probably did not have any paintings. A decade later, however, the scriptorium in the Rashīdī Quarter was producing numerous lavish copies of all of his works. Although Rashīd al-Dīn was enthusiastic about Chinese block printing, it did not develop in Iran even though various aspects of Chinese painting did. Rather, the European atelier method, with each person having a special task, provided the numerous copies that emerged after 1314. Nevertheless, the pace was hectic and too demanding since several copies of the *Collected Histories* were left unillustrated at his death. The type of activity is represented by an early copy of one of the recensions that had space for 75 images, but subsequent copies had many fewer ones. Most depicted enthronements, battles or commanders and rulers in genealogical trees.

Kamola continues the chapter by tracing the recensions and then the manuscripts that contain them, a daunting task. One revelation concerns two early deluxe copies in Paris that, in particular, have influenced European studies of Mongol history. Even though their examination prompted a rediscovery of the value of the work, there are still pitfalls. As Kamola notes "Edgard Blochett's partial edition of the *Blessed History,* which contains material unique…. was for much of the twentieth century the standard edition of the portion of the work dealing with the Mongol rulers from Ögödei to Timur Qā'ān and so this version of the work informed generations of scholarship on this period of Mongol history. Karl Jahn's edition of the history of Ghazan Khan, meanwhile, made use of the illustrated Paris manuscript which contains part of Qashani's alternate text but which suffers from a significant lacuna for most of it". Jahn's careful notes recording differences in the two texts were removed in Karimi's edition of a unified text. "As a result, Qashani's version of the history of Ghazan has gotten mixed up in the main text and footnotes of Wheeler Thackston's translation of the *Blessed History*" (p. 148). A masterpiece that is copied over and over and treasured for centuries develops its own convoluted history.

Although Rashīd al-Dīn's many works stopped being published after his death, his legacy started to form almost immediately. Kamola follows that trail in the sixth chapter, "Creating the Image of Rashid al-Din, 1312–1335". In it, he covers late Il-Khānid historiography, noting the way ,Hamd Allāh Mustawfi (1281–1349) reshaped the *Shāhname* through a continuation to correlate it with Rashīd al-Dīn's life and work. In the end, Rashīd al-Dīn became a great and wise vizier in the mould of Ni,zām al-Mulk (1018–92) with his maxims for rulers. This contrasts with the divergent views of Rashīd al-Dīn shortly after his death put forward by Wāṣṣāf and Qāshānī, the first favourable and the second the opposite.

However, Kamola spends most effort on the influential activity of the Timurid scholar, Ḥāfiẓ,-i Abrū (d. 1430) as the focus of the 'Epilogues: Rashid al-Din at the Court of Shahrukh'. A century after Rashīd al-Dīn's death, the Timurids at Heart were engaged in their own historical writing. Foremost among the compilers was, Ḥāfiẓ -i Abrū, who created a new framework for understanding Iranian history. His *Totality of History* combined al-Ṭabarī's *History of Peoples and Kings* with Rashīd al-Dīn's *Collected Histories* and Shamī's history of Timur. Then he added some material of his own to provide

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a smooth narrative of the history of the world from its beginning to his own time. It was a grand undertaking, one which had serious scholarship and care for accurate sources. Ḥāfiẓ -i Abrū also copied original manuscripts of Ghāzān's history that had been damaged, even those with different recensions. For the *Collected Histories*, there are at least eight copies and perhaps a ninth made in his own hand (p. 180). Kamola concludes that "Rashīd al-Dīn's historical writings had become a source both for universal history and the subject of antiquarian interest, to be reproduced, refurbished and revised according to new historical tastes" (p. 181).

In 'Appendix A: The *Collected Histories* and its Illustrations', Kamola has noticed, for example, the difference in the programme of illustrated scenes between Arabic and Persian copies even though the text is almost the same. Also notable is the fact that many illustrations in original manuscripts, even a 1317 Persian one, were completed in the Timurid period, indicating to Kamola that Rashīd al-Dīn's atelier could not latterly keep up with the pace set by its founder. In the appendix, Kamola also discusses the reason some early manuscripts omit or include local histories, say of the Salgurids, the Khwarazmshāhs and the Ismāʿīlīs. Perhaps these copies were gifts to people not necessarily interested in regional dynasties. This idea can also be applied to manuscript treatment of blocks of major areas, such as China and the Oghuz Turks: some manuscripts have extended information, others have divergent or reduced comments, apparently geared to the recipient of the volume. This section of the book details effectively the complex nature of even the early work of Rashīd al-Dīn.

In 'Appendix B, A Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts of the *Collected Histories*', Kamola does not try to present a full description of each manuscript but does identify the recensions, creating for the first time a Greek signage method for different recensions. He also dates and cites the major themes of the folios to conclude with two full pages listing all known manuscripts with the city and institution that hold them (bottom of pp. 266 to 268). He also cites recent publications of the manuscripts and, especially helpful, those on-line. For example, in Tashkent, MS 1620 was probably made in Rashīd al-Dīn's lifetime at his atelier in Tabriz. Also, the single manuscript in Toronto at the Aga Khan Museum (p. 517) is one of the finest extant copies of the *Blessed History* and was made in the late fourteenth century with almost correct chapters and folio order, only four folios are missing. Unfortunately, it has not been studied so far. Kamola devotes almost seventy pages to this analysis so that any future evaluation of Rashīd al-Dīn's historical writings must consult this pains-taking analysis.

Of particular interest to readers of this review in the *Journal* is that the Royal Asiatic Society has held two manuscripts of the *Collected Histories* or the *Jāmiᶜ al -Tawārīkh*. One was copied in the Rashīdī Quarter in 1314 during Rashīd al-Dīn's lifetime, then found its way to the court of Shāhrukh (1405–47) and reached the Society by 1841. It is a partial history of 59 folios, which contains most of the history of China, all of India and the Jews with seven partial folios from earlier sections of the *Histories*. It was sold in 1980 at the time the Royal Asiatic Society needed more funds for a new premise, leaving the country for Geneva to enter the Nasser Khalili Collection. It made £852,500 minus costs for the Society.[2] It has been well published by Sheila Blair (*A Compendium of Chronicle*s, Oxford University Press, 1995). Morley, in his1841 catalogue of manuscripts in the Royal Asiatic Society stated in a footnote that Duncan Forbes had noticed a similar manuscript in the collection of the Orientalist Colonel John Baillie, an East Indian agent residing near Lucknow from 1807 to 1815 (1772–1833), who had bequeathed it to the University of Edinburgh. That manuscript is also dated to 1314 from the Rashīdī Quarter. Morley's hint that this manuscript and the one at the Society were part of the same work has been confirmed by Blair.[3] The Edinburgh manuscript has 151 folios dealing with pre-Islamic, early Islamic and Ghaznavid, Saljūq and Khwarazmshāh history. It also has been well

[2]Information November 2019 from Nancy Charley, archivist at the Royal Asiatic Society.
[3]My appreciation to Barbara Brend for bringing this information to my attention.

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published by Rice and Gray in *The Illustrations of the World History* (Edinburgh University Press, 1976). These manuscripts are the Arabic version of the *Collected Histories*. Kamola discusses this important recension from pp. 243 to 245, noting that this combined material is one of only four Arabic manuscripts dating from the Rashīdī Quarter that have survived.

The other manuscript in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society is a later Arabic copy that has been translated back into Persian between the Arabic lines. It was probably copied near Lucknow in India before 1823. Kamola did not study this manuscript but relates from the catalogue that there are 33 folios dealing with the history of India. It was in the Society by 1854.

Original production and subsequent copying of Rashīd al-Dīn's work have provided a medieval legacy treasured today by many institutions. For example, there are 19 manuscripts in the United Kingdom, most at the British Library, but that number is rivaled by 14 in Iran, 11 in St Petersburg and 8 in Istanbul among other locations.

Although many re-evaluations occur during the reading of this book, not all necessarily relate to the *Compendium of Histories* itself. An unexpected one might be to consider the role of 'capital' cities in the establishment of nomadic power in a sedentary environment. For example, an economic problem seems to have existed with Maragha, situated on the plain south of Tabriz, that was Hülāgü's capital; yet it struck no coins under Hülāgü or Abāqā. Not until the reign of Arghūn in 1287 and 1288 did limited pictorial copper coins emerge that were unable to circulate much beyond the city itself. Then copper appeared again briefly under Gaykhatū. Indeed, the city did not enter the mainstream until 1298 at the start of Ghāzān's monetary reform and then did so with a gold issue that was more celebratory than functional. Two years later, at the very height of Ghāzān's reform, it finally started to mint silver, the main metal of the Il-Khānate. Finally, under Öljaytū, it struck all three metals of gold, silver and copper to fit into the full monetary structure of the realm.[4] In other words, the city, the former capital of a small dynasty, was never an economic hub for the Mongols. Instead, Tabriz was the financial and administrative centre from the beginning of Mongol control, perhaps because of its defensible position. Therefore, why was it chosen as Hülāgüs capital and how did Maragha and its intellectual groups function? Did they rely heavily on payments in-kind rather than a market economy or did they receive money regularly from Tabriz in guarded convoys? If the latter, how fluid was monetary circulation in the early years of the Il-Khānate? Would this problem be one reason why Abāqā moved to Tabriz? Some later rulers also established their headquarters in northwestern Iran on plains, erecting numerous building complexes. However, Sultaniyya, Öljaytū's capital, is the only other one that struck coinage, starting in 1309 and issuing rather regularly from then on. What had changed in the half century regarding court structure and central administration? Did every ruler feel he had to create a new city, and how did he perceive a 'capital'? The constant moves of the royal ürdü as detailed for Öljaytū by Charles Melville[5] may suggest the need for different political capitals as distinct from administrative centres. If so, then what was the relationship between sedentary Persian bureaucrats and intellectuals and mobile commanders at the peripatetic court? It was not unusual for medieval courts to travel around the realm nor is it unusual, even today, for the economic centre to be distinct from the political centre. However, this situation has not been studied yet for the Il-Khānate. Considering these points might help to explain better the revolt of the *amir*s in the last stages of the Il-Khānate. These are some questions underneath the main points of the book because Kamola has so carefully detailed the trends surrounding the creation of the *Jāmi*ᶜ *al-Tawārīkh*.

Moreover, his exploration supports some already published concerns about Rashīd al-Dīn's narratives. An excellent example is that of Christopher Atwood in 'Mongols, Arabs, Kurd, and Franks:

[4]Correspondence from Yigit Altay, November 2019; also consult Altaycoins.com and chart in Judith Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran: Chingiz Khan to Uljaytu, 1220 to 1309* (London, 2006), Table 10.2 (Greater Arran), p. 334.

[5]Charles Melville, 'The Itinerates of Sultan Öljaytū 1304–16', *Iran* 28 (1990), pp. 55–70.

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Rashīd al-Dīn's Comparative Ethnography of Tribal Society'.[6] Atwood disagrees with some modern social historians who accept Rashīd al-Dīn's presentation of nomadic tribes, especially 'clans' and genealogies from the steppe. The thesis that ancient kin-based tribal society gave way to a proto-state is mis-interpreting the text. Atwood stresses that the clans Rashīd al-Dīn discusses "were not something that had existed once and were now fading away in the imperial state; rather, they were noble houses which had been created in the founding of the empire and were sustained by the belief that such noble houses were important for the stability of Mongol rule" (pp. 224–225). Using Arab genealogies especially, Rashīd al-Dīn wanted to emphasise that the clans who conquered territory claimed them though patrimonial descent in perpetuity, just as existed in the Mongol Empire. Atwood insists that Rashīd al-Dīn chose his groups carefully to show the actual situation in the empire, that its genealogies were not ancient but formed at the creation and initial expansion of the Mongol Empire. Atwood's careful study exposes these portions of the histories to be projections of the present onto the past. They should not be considered in terms of modern state-formation but seen as part of Rashīd al-Dīn's particular message to ensure Mongol glorification.

Precautions for today's historians in reading the *Collected Histories* occur in other studies as well. One of these concerns is Ghāzān Khān's famous monetary reform. Rashīd al-Dīn highlights in Sections 20 and 21 many points that do not bear scrutiny.[7] These include the 'failure' of Arghūn's reforms, that the Georgians had never issued money with the Muslim profession of faith, they held that the gold of Hormuz was so debased it was like brass, it had very high purity, that all areas of the Il-Khānate struck coins in Ghāzān's name, the Bagratids in Tiflis and the Artuqids in Mardin did not, that the reform coinage cited the twelve *imams* of the Shi'a faith, it did not but reflected events much later in Öljaytū's reign and several more important mis-statements. Moreover, the titles of the sections were in reverse to the actual content within them. In effect, whoever wrote these sections had only some basic knowledge of the changes, but he certainly glorified Ghāzān for making them. There are so many problems with the text that Kamola's study has reinforced the need for a new perspective on Rashīd al-Dīn's masterpiece. As he has indicated, several generations of Mongol historians have relied on a few recensions, but much more analysis is now contributing to a better perspective of the text.

The book is complimented by Kamola's *Journal* article in 2015, 'History and Legend in the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh:* Abraham, Alexander and Oghuz Khan'.[8] In it, he expands some specific topics, notably Rashīd al-Dīn's manipulation of the Oghuz Khān legend, in which Rashīd al-Dīn claims that Oghuz had previously conquered Iran and Syria and then returned to Central Asia. In this narration, the Mongols were part of an historical process, even following Oghuz Khān's implementation of the same type of political and administrative institutions (p. 568), such as the *yasa* and *keshig*. Rashīd al-Dīn also suggested that Oghuz Khān was a proto-Muslim, a monotheist, who supported Rashīd al-Dīn's programme of making the Mongols Muslims of sorts (p. 563). Kamola outlines the Oghuz legend and its relation to the Saljūqs in order to explain the spin Rashīd al-Dīn put on that 'history'. These points are not as thoroughly detailed in the book. Another interesting addition is the curious twist Rashīd al-Dīn gave to the genealogy of Arghūn Aqā, the long-serving governor of Iran. Juvaynī, who was the personal assistant to Arghūn, noted that he was an Oyrat, whereas Rashīd al-Dīn, perhaps concerned with split loyalties to the Toluids half a century later, made him the descendent of a servant, a role that was hereditary. The position of groups who submitted to Chinggis Khān and those bound to him and the family through gift or conquest was an instrumental factor in Rashīd

[6] *Rashīd al-Dīn, Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchanges in Ilkhanid Iran*, (eds) Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett and Ronit Yoeili-Tlalim (The Warburg Institute, London, 2013), pp. 223–250.

[7] Judith Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran*, Chapter 10, 'Ghazan and Uljaytu: a secure but decentralized realm' (pp. 310–374), translated sections on pp 313–321, consult especially p. 321, translation using mostly Jahn's edition.

[8] *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 25 (2015), 555–578.

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al-Dīn's promotion of his genealogical foundation for Il-Khānid universal rule. The change of Arghūn Aqā's status from Juvaynī to Rashīd al-Dīn is a striking case for scholars to be aware of Rashīd al-Dīn's motives and truthfulness. Manipulating legends to benefit his patrons was one thing, but to alter Il-Khānid history itself was another.

This book broadens Stefan Kamola's PhD dissertation for the University of Washington in 2013 entitled 'Rashīd al-Dīn and the making of history in Mongol Iran' that is now available on Academia.edu. Notably, he completed his degree the same year that a book emerged on *Rashīd al-Dīn. Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchanges in Ilkhanid Iran.*[9] Individual essays in it, such as that already mentioned by Christopher Atwood, also compliment this current book and emphasise the growing scholarship about the person, his reaction to and his influence on a vibrant period of world events. Perhaps nothing better illustrates this point than the twenty-two editions and translations cited in the bibliography that make Rashīd al-Dīn's work accessible for ever more detailed analysis.

Kamola's book progresses through the evolution of Rashīd al-Dīn's role in and vision for elevating his era beyond a local perspective to a universal one fulfilling all of destiny's goals, the two themes being the backbone of Kamola's study. Both themes require the reader to make a thorough and slow consideration of the material in order to comprehend the vast impact that the historical writings have had over the centuries in the Middle East, India and Europe. Historians need Rashīd al-Dīn's many treatises, and Stefan Kamola has studied them closely to identify their means and thrust. There are many cautionary warnings in this book, but they do not detract from a magnificent publishing corporation headed by and whose works were named after a unique individual, Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh. Overall, Kamola's book will lead many to re-evaluate their conception of Mongol history and the contemporary material that emerged from the Il-Khānate.

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MONGOLIA: A POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE. By MICHAEL DILLON. pp. 223. London, I. B. Tauris, 2020.
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While the study of the Mongol Empire is flourishing in both specialised monographs as well as several introductory books on the history of the empire, the study of modern Mongolia often seems neglected. A quick glance at available books reveal numerous travel accounts and several studies, particularly in anthropology, but much less on the history of the Mongolia. While the monographs are excellent studies, they are rather daunting to those who are just beginning to enter the study of Mongolia. Furthermore, the lack of accessible (and in print) books on post-Mongol Empire Mongolian history makes it all the more difficult to teach the history of Mongolia. Thus, the publication of Michael Dillon's *Mongolia: A Political History of the Land and its People* is most welcome.

[9]Edited by Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett and Ronit Yoeili-Tlalim, (London, 2013).

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