Post-Mongol States and Early Modern Chronology in Iran and China

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Abstract

In the aftermath of the Mongol occupations of the largest and most populous societies of Eurasia, greater visibility of popular religion, more widespread vernacular language use, rising literacy, and fundamental shifts in the structure of rulership and the relationship of state and society could all be observed. Many historians have related these changes to a broader chronology of early modernity. This has been problematic in the case of Iran, whose eighteenth-century passage has not been adequately explored in recent scholarship. Our comparative review of 'post-Mongol' Iran and China suggests that this period marks as meaningful a break between a schematic medieval and schematic early modern history in Iran as it does in China. Here, we first consider both societies in the post-Mongol period as empires with secular rulerships and increasingly popular cultural trends, and look at the role of what Crossley has called "simultaneous rulership"—rulership in which the codes of legitimacy of civilisations recognised by the conquest authority are given distinct representation in the rulership — in marking the transition away from religious-endorsed rule to self-legitimating rule as a mark of comparative early modernity.

For simplicity we might establish six post-Mongol cultural trends (others could be added), across Eurasia: 1) traditional elites gave way to new ones in government and education; 2) languages of the elites gave way to written vernaculars; 3) religious orthodoxies gave way to populist beliefs; 4) merchant and military elites challenged religious and government elites for high status; 5) regional political geographies were reshaped; and 6) the emergence of simultaneous rulership. These developments were in no way limited to areas dominated by the Mongols. They are also distinct in regions from Japan to Thailand to Anatolia, the Balkans and central Europe that were under pressure from the Mongol conquests, engaged in the trade networks of the Mongol realms, and generated conquest states as the Mongol appanages dissolved.

Before the Mongols: Ruling with Holy Endorsement

Many historians of Asia have suggested that there are characteristics of Europe in the 'medieval' and 'early modern' periods that are found roughly contemporaneously in other parts of Eurasia, and perhaps much farther afield. In this line of argument, the association of these qualities with Europe particularly is a product of historiography; phenomena identified in the European past and named by convention of historians of Europe are

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not, necessarily, exclusively European. We would suggest that looking at the ideological and cultural formations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Eurasia does permit us to see an 'early modern' shape. As in the case of 'medieval' Europe, the general experience of China and eastern Eurasia after the second century CE was framed by the fall of a long-lived empire (in this case, Han) that had exerted superficial but widespread influence over many facets of public life, including political terminology, legal concepts, and political institutions. In the ensuing centuries regional echoes of the imperial effect were evident in the forms and practices of many regional regimes.

During the last decades of the sixth century, China and parts of Central Asia were again united under Sui-Tang imperial rule. The empire was a novel entity, combining traditions of political legitimacy and expressions of rule from both Central Asia and from imperial China. The early Tang emperorship was dependent upon the sanction of both the aristocracy and the clergy (in this case the Buddhist sects who interwove their affairs tightly with those of the Tang aristocracy and court). Even the terrifically assertive emperor Tang Taizong did not dare to overtly legitimate himself, but was dependent upon mutually-legitimating relationships with the aristocracy, the Buddhist hierarchs, and traditional scholars which are today called 'Confucian'. The former relationship was, in practice, fractured in Tang Taizong's own time, the latter evaporated in the suppression of Buddhism in 840, and the last became stronger during each later decade of the empire. The result was that the Tang was within the spectrum of a style of leadership found in the largest and most influential orders of medieval Eurasia. For want of a more precise term one might call them dualistic. They tended to dichotomise secular and spiritual authority. They formed a sort of medieval complex of political and cultural structures.

The manifestations of this dualism throughout Eurasia in these centuries were each in its its way complex, but there was a basic similarity. The relationship in medieval Europe between Charlemagne, as the first emperor of the reconstituted Roman empire in the west, and Pope Leo III might at first glance appear to be the model, but it was only a variation on a continental theme. In tandem with the development of this dualism in western Europe was the evolving rivalrous partnership between *basileus* and *oikoumenikos patriarchus* in the Byzantine empire, particularly in the later twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. A similar pattern is also easily seen in the Islamic model of legitimacy prescribed for the *khalîfa* and *sultân*, during the devolution of military authority in the later Abbasid period and in the Ottoman period before the middle 1400s. It was also evident in the evolving Tibetan Buddhist doctrine of the 'two regimes' which underlay the relationship between the powerful (*danapati*) and the righteous (*bhikshu*), or collaboration between the material benefactor and the spiritual protector. These relationships occurred in circumstances of very wide-ranging religious conversion and robust standardisation of liturgical practices as well as theological concepts. At the same time, the political expansion and centralisation under the Abbasid caliphate, the Carolingian, Byzantine, Khazar, Tang empire, Tibetan empire, and Uigur empires created conditions in which growing political orders and pervasive religious systems needed either to destroy or to embrace each other. None of these societies was isolated from the others, and ideas about the relationship of political to spiritual authority would have spread as rapidly and as far as all the other ideas of medieval Eurasia are known to have done.

It would be a mistake here to oversimplify any of these examples, or to suggest that they were exclusively balanced and dichotomous between secular and spiritual authority. There are many complications that appear to be excluded by this generalisation. For instance, the critical tensions between the *khalîfa* and the authority of the scholars and judges representing the *'ulema* are hardly able to be universalised to Europe and eastern Asia in the same period. The sharp political and occasionally military confrontations (often inspired by a wish of the leader of one sphere to subsume the other) between the patriarchs and the Byzantine emperors are not easily suggested by this characterisation of medieval dualism. Yet such peculiarities in some ways only suggest the strength of the characterisation of these conceptually dualistic polities as 'medieval.' All occur in the context of unprecedented consolidation of the cultural and political influence of formalised, universalist religion: Buddhism in Central Asia and Eastern Eurasia; Christianity in Europe, Anatolia and parts of Central Asia; and Islam in the Middle East, North Africa, Andalusia, parts of Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia. The emergence of formal and distantly-connected religious governance not only challenged locally-derived political authority, but also many local and ancient, minority religious communities. The association of declining religious plurality with the maturation of hierarchs as political legitimators suggests something about the transition to early modern rulership—to universalist rulership that could accommodate religious and cultural pluralisms that the medieval style had abhorred or ignored.

This medieval duality eventually broke down in all regions. In Tang China the emperors wearied of partnership with the Buddhist clergy and asserted complete and unfettered authority of the state form the middle ninth century. At roughly the same time in Tibet, the conflict between religion and the state was resolved in favour of religion. Later, the Holy Roman Empire foundered on the intractable ambitions of Frederick II and the factionalisation of the church. Islam split early between Shi'a and Sunni as the extent and nature of the *khalîfa*'s authority over society was debated, later escalating into doctrinal alliances that made unified political rule of all Muslims unlikely. Perhaps more important was the fact that as global conditions changed in such a way as to favour larger, more centralised, more standardised orders of social and economic discipline, the cultural systems that had produced the dualistic leaderships of the 'medieval' period produced the simultaneous rulerships[1] of an 'early modern' transition. The religions themselves provided the ideological fodder for the universalising rulerships that displaced them from their previous roles as legitimators, teachers, and judges of the state.

Conquest, Self-Legitimation and Simultaneous Rulership

Enduring effects of the Mongol empires tend to be associated with trade, economy, and the exchanges of scientific and technological knowledge. The age of Mongol rule, however, occurs in the interim between the decline of dualistic hierarch-endorsed rule and the emergence of centralised, self-legitimating rule in the fifteenth century and later.[2] With the possible exception of the history of the Muscovite Russia, political effects of the period of Mongol domination tend to be dismissed. Historians of Ming China, for instance, once took the virulently anti-Mongol propaganda of the Ming court seriously, imagining that the Ming had dismantled Mongol administration in China and re-invented self-consciously 'Chinese' government. But the Ming retained the profound Mongol redrawing of administrative geography, producing the basis of the modern Chinese provinces. They retained Beijing as a capital, they kept the Mongol academies for astronomy, mathematics, and medicine, and the retained the Mongol practice of decimal organisation for their armies. As Mongol influence continued in Mongolia and Manchuria, it also continued in Ming government until its end in 1644. And in the subsequent Qing era, Mongol influence continued in new and contemporary forms.

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[1] See P. K. Crossley,'The Rulerships of China', *American Historical Review*, 97, 5 (December 1992), pp. 1468-1483; P. K. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology (*Berkeley, 1999); G. R. Garthwaite, *The Persians* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 12-17; A. J. Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (London, 2008), pp. 30-32, 114, 148; G. R. Garthwaite, 'Transition: The End of the Old Order—Iran in the Eighteenth Century' in D. O. Morgan and A. Reid, (eds.), *The New Cambridge History of Islam: Volume* 3 (Cambridge, 2010); M. S. Kasrael, 'Simultaneous Rulership, Governance and Legitimacy in Ancient Iran', *Politics Quarterly: Journal of Faculty of Law and Political Science* 40, 2 (Summer 2010), pp. 209-228.

In terms of its rulership, Ming did not depend upon the legitimating partnership of a religious hierarchy. In that respect it resembled the Mongol rulership established a century earlier in China by Khubilai, and it also resembled a set of rulerships emerging across Eurasia—not only in the old Mongol-dominated zones but those areas that had been under threat by the Mongols, or had been connected to the Mongol empires by frequent trade. To transcend the need for legitimation from a religious hierarchy, rulers had to find some means to be self-legitimating. The most direct route was to assume it from the religious leadership, or its remnant—as happened in Russia, and in the Ottoman empire. But rulers also could claim to be self-legitimating as a result of the historical incorporation of multiple righteous persona within the rulership.

An early model for this was the Persian-derived *pâdishâh*. In meaning it seemed to parallel *shahanshah*, the 'king of kings' or the *primus inter pares* that was conceptually revived in the Mongol *khaghan* (as a *khan of khans*, or the Great Khan lineage exclusive to Chingiz). But where the *shahanshah* was king among kings of distinct localities or lineages, the *pâdishâh* was the ruler over different cultures and traditions, transcending them all. He was the elevated king, who stood above the confinements of religious judgment. The Seljuks used the term in the twelfth century, claiming the right to rule all their subjects, regardless of the religion, language or genealogy of the individual subject. The Ilkhanid Mongol rulers of Persia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries used the term in the same way, for the same reasons. The Yongle emperor of the Ming used the term to describe himself in the Jagadai translation of his letter to the Timurid ruler Shahrûkh in 1405,[3] so that there would be no doubt as the universality of his claims. And European signatories of treaties with the Ottoman empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries[4] demanded that the term be used in reference to themselves, for the same reason: Their absolute right to sovereign rule was not to be seen as limited by the geographical scope of their cultures or their beliefs.

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[2] See Beatrice Manz's section 'The fifteenth century and the creation of new models' in her contribution to this volume.

[3] J. F. Fletcher, Jr., 'China and Central Asia', in John King Fairbank and Ta-tuan Ch'en, (eds.), *The Chinese World Order Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge MA, 1968), pp. 214, 353.

[4] D. Kolodziejczyk, 'Khan, caliph, tsar and imperator: The multiple identities of the Ottoman sultan', in Bang Peter Fibiger and Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, (eds.), *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 175-193.

Such rulerships transcended religious authority by the specific means of subsuming and continuing to nurture the distinct functions and history of multiple religious and historical authorities. A signal episode in the evolution of this style of rulership was the destruction of the Abbasid caliphate by Mongols under Hülegü in 1258. Though Hülegü and his successors styled themselves *pâdishâh* and afterwards claimed the right to rule Muslims without the blessing of the *'ulema*, they did not arrogate to themselves the actual title of *khalîfa*. That innovation, the true threshold of early modern rulership in Eurasia, is usually credited to the Ottoman ruler Medmed II, the conqueror of Constantinople in 1453. Not only did he combine the *khalîf* and *sultân* in one political person, but after his conquest of Constantinople he was at the same time the *kayser i Rûm* and the *imparator*. His righteous rule over Christians was not impaired by his simultaneous roles as (self-proclaimed) head of the Muslim clerics and governor of all Ottoman territories.[5] No religious spokesmen provided his legitimacy; no religious tradition defined the content of his authority or confined his potency to any specific cultural space.

The Byzantine system was the direct source of important imagery for the Romanov and Ottoman courts. Cyril Mango's description of the forbidden precincts of the Byzantine emperors will sound familiar to those contemplating the Qing, Ottoman and Mughal periods particularly: "His palace was likewise sacred, a *domus divina*, and surrounded by a protective zone of 'apartness' (*nam imperio magna ab universis secreta debentur*). When he appeared in public, this was done through a medium of ceremony which was a reflection of the harmonious working of the universe and was itself synonymous with order (*taxis*). His subjects communicated with him by means of acclamations which were rhythmical and repetitive as in the divine liturgy, and when received in audience prostrated themselves on the ground".[6] Those entering the presence of the ruler were expected to proceed through a ceremonial channel, physically abasing themselves and in the process abnegating the status and individuality accorded them by their own cultures. The practice was ancient in China (*ketou*) as it was in Iran, was used derivatively in all the Mongol courts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and was energetically enforced by the Qing (*hengkilembi*). Closely related to it was the combined architectural and ceremonial concept of the occultation[7] of the imperial presence.

These ritual spaces and practices set the ruler as transcendent over cultural particularities. Many historians have associated their ubiquity across Eurasia to an Alexandrine legacy, but they are surely older than Alexander's age, which drew its own practices from precedents in Iran, Sumeria and Egypt. In the case of simultaneous rulerships, there is no need of particular precedent, since these rulerships were produced by the exigencies of overland conquest. The subjugation of established polities meant command over their histories, institutions, and ethics—most important, the code of state legitimacy. A narrative of endorsement of past conquests and participation in future conquests was imposed upon the narratives of subject cultures by means of the construction of imperial personae. Edicts, court diaries, and monuments were by conceit simultaneous imperial utterances in more than one language, expressing imperial intentions in multiple cultural frames.[8] By such gestures, the ruler pretended to incarnation of the subject tradition. These were not cosmopolitan rulerships—they did not extract elements and mix them with others, but put a premium upon the ability to conjure distinct if stereotyped traditions with fairly economical use of ritual, dress, religious curatorship and historical authority. Except in the case of the Ilkhans, this had not been the posture of Mongol rulership toward their domains. But it was commonly found among the conquest states emerging from the ruins of the Mongol appanages, or from states on their peripheral enjoying new frontiers of conquest after the dissolution of the Mongol regimes. Simultaneous rulership was the means by which new populations could be incorporated into the imperial project. To do this, the rulership had to be presented as transcendent over all cultural particulars, including religion. It was absolute, self-narrating and self-legitimating, the path of early-modern emperorship across Eurasia.

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[5] See also C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, 1995), pp. 151-154.

[6] C. Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of the New Rome* (London, 1980; Phoenix, 1994, Darby PA 2005), pp. 192-193, 219.

[7] For reflection of these ideas in Ottoman imperial architecture, see G. Necipoglu, *Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapi Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge MA, 1991).

Simultaneity in Post-Mongol Iran

Typically, the direct Mongol impact in Iran is seen to end with the Ilkhans in the fourteenth century with some carry-over into Iran's subsequent fragmentation, and possibly into the early fifteenth century with the Timurids, but certainly not into the sixteenth century. However indirectly, the Mongol impact has profoundly affected Iran to the present: first, through the process of nomadisation of society and economy and its political expression in tribalism— a process that began earlier with the eleventh century Seljuq Turks[9] — and second, Shi'ism itself, which emerged in the sixteenth century from heterodox Turkic tribes and as a consequence of fragmentation of the Iranian plateau and eastern Anatolia, although not institutionalised until 1640.[10] Elements of early modern Iran can be seen in the case of Shah 'Abbas I (1588-1629), and it can be argued that early modern patterns continue until the first quarter of the twentieth century, when the modern period of Iran's history begins under the Pahlavis. Continuity, or its modification through these changes precipitated by the Mongols is seen especially in eighteenth-century Iran, but earlier was well. The six factors are interrelated and affected political institutions and ideological expressions are our focus here. In the case of Iran, one can assume the vernacular language as a given, when and as a result of Mongol administration, Persian became dominant.

The tensions between religious and secular rule—between an imamate and a sultanate—could be accommodated and negotiated by simultaneous rulership, but modern polities struggle to tame the residual contradictions between between diverse sources of legitimacy. The difference is illustrated in the various titles that eighteenth century rulers appropriated for themselves; most significantly, Karim Khan Zand's use of both *Vakil al-Daulah-i Iran* (regent/deputy of the Government of Iran) and *Vakil al-Ra'ya* (regent/deputy of the people). Distinct authorities were represented as distinct personae within the rulership—distinctions which in nineteenth-century Iran produced disadvantages for the rulership in attempting to adjust its relationship to society. While such representation was within the Shi'i framework of rituals and belief, national ones linked to Iran's pre-Islamic past assumed new importance and ultimately in the twentieth century led to nationalism, even a kind of secularism. Last, the Persian language continued its domination in culture and administration—Arabic was relegated to the religious classes—despite the political success of the Turkic-speaking Qajars at the century's turn. Nadir Shah dominated the eighteenth century to stand as the archetypal early modern ruler. Here there is both continuity, with earlier roots going back to the Mongols—reinforced by Timur—and profound changes that have reached into the twentieth century through the Qajars. In terms of political institutions and ideological expression, titles used by Iran's rulers from the Safavids to the Qajars, are indicative of both continuity and change in governing ideology, including the bases for institutions. *Shahanshah* was used first by the Safavids, which has a very ancient lineage; *pâdishâh*, too; and *khan* from the Seljuqs and *khaghan*, from the Mongols. Titles were self-affirming and legitimating, such as *Qibla-yi 'alam*, Pivot of the Universe,[11] and even religious ones like *Zill Allah fil'alam*, the Shadow of God in the World. The ideological expressions of rulership were recognised in the titles that contained the word, '*qutb*, ' the axis, to which additions such as *'alam*, universe, were made. This was re-enforced in the well-established Persian literary tradition known as the 'Mirrors for Princes' that continued through the Qajar period.

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[8] See also Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, pp. 9-43.

[9] D. T. Potts, *Nomadism in Iran: From Antiquity to the Modern Era* (Oxford, 2014).

[10] A. J. Newman, *Twelver Shiism: Unity and Diversity in the Life of Islam, 632 to 1722* (Edinburgh, 2013).

The movement of peoples (connected to our trends 1, 4 and 6 enumerated at the top of this essay) typified Iran's eighteenth century and is emphasized by the Ghilzai Afghans' conquest and deposition of the last Safavid ruler, Shah Sultan Husain (1694-1722). Nader Quli Khan Afshar, from another Turkic tribal base and from a non-elite family, consolidated his power to emerge as shah (1736-1747), and yet another Turkic tribal confederation, the Qajars, would bring the century to its close under Agha Muhammad Khan, then shah (1779/1796-1797). In addition to the Afshars and the Qajars, there would be the short-lived dyarchy of two other tribal leaders Karim Khan Zand and 'Ali Mardan Khan Bakhtiyari. Moreover, throughout the eighteenth century there was forced movement of peoples such as Nader Shah's often-cited transfer of Bakhtiyari and others from the Zagros to Khorasan, who after his death returned to their own territory.

With respect to the movement of peoples and of great tribal confederations, Potts argues that pastoral nomadism came to Iran in two separate historical periods. The first marked the arrival of the Iranians themselves during the first millennium BC. It was the second movement in the eleventh century, with first the Turks and then both Mongols and Turks, that resulted in the pastoral nomadism that became associated with Iran. Potts notes that before the Turkic-Mongol impact, Iran was characterised by an agrarian economy. And he continues on to make the following arguments: nomads/tribes are both political and ideational; they describe complex relationships that are flexible and situational.[12] Essentially, Potts asserts that Iran's economy was agrarian and that agriculturalists also practiced animal husbandry with variations depending upon geography; the two forms cannot be distilled one from the other and that they shared the same social and political spaces.

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[11] A. Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831-1896* (London, 1997).

[12] Similar arguments are to be found in A. Porter, *Mobile Pastoralism and the Formation of Near Eastern Civilizations: Weaving Together Society* (Cambridge, 2012).

Pastoral nomadism that we commonly associate with the Iranian plateau, and its tribal manifestation, such as the Bakhtiyari and the Qashqa'i, is not only a post-eleventh-century, but essentially a post-Mongol, phenomenon. While the Qashqa'i and the Qajars were Turkic in origin, sound references to their origins date only from the end of the fifteenth century. There are relatively few references to the Bakhtiyari before the eighteenth century, when they began to play much of a political role. Tribal confederations, too, were composites of various groups that did not necessarily share the same ethnicities and languages. Tribalism was an important political manifestation of pastoral nomadism, and under dynamic leaders reshaped Iran's political, even social geography.[13] Tribal confederations directly affected political institutions and ideological expressions, giving rise to all of Iran's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century governments. They were also a factor in shifting elites and can be seen in instances such as the Afghans defeat of the Safavids, Nadir Shah, Bakhtiyari-Zands, and Qajars in the eighteenth century.

Changing elites also enters into our third characteristic of early modern Eurasia in the tension between 'orthodoxies' or official religion and religious populism. Mongol leaders had not only played one religion against another, but within Islam favoured sufis, for example, over and against the *'ulema*s. This is seen dramatically in the rise of the Safavids (1501-1736) to power and in the continuing challenge to the Shi'i '*ulema,* especially by extreme Shi'i populism.[14] Safavid shahs themselves were caught between the two and derived legitimacy from both— and of necessity they provided critical patronage to both institutionalised and popular Shi'ism. Throughout the Safavid period, despite competing factions within it,[15] *'ulema* official power increased to the extent that royal authority itself was challenged.[16] Moreover, the emergence of increased *ʿulema* authority also meant greater political, economic, and social power for them within and outside Iran. For example, after the loss to the Ottomans of the Shi'i shrine cities—the 'A*tabat,* of Iraq, notably, Najaf and Karbala— they became vital centres of Shi'ī learning and authority independent of Iranian governments. In addition, the collection of *khum*s, the fifth, by the *ʿulema* helped to make them economically independent of government as well.

The *'ulema*, aside perhaps from the great tribal confederations such as the Qajars, was the institution that continued into the nineteenth century. And in the nineteenth century, *'ulema* influence even increased in theory and practice when *mujtahid* domination— the Usulis— surmounted all challenges, notably from the Akhbaris, in the Iraq shrine cities. This process, however, began in the eighteenth century under the leadership of the great *mujtahid*, Agha Muhammad Baqir Whahid Bihbahani (ca. 1705–1791). At this same time, popular Shi'ism found expression in the *taz'iya* and other forms that focused on the observances of the martyrdom of the early Imams. Religious dissent, including populist forms, would play out throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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[13] Garthwaite, 'Transition: The End of the Old Order.'

[14] K. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran* (Cambridge, MA, 2002).

[15] Newman, *Safavid Iran*.

[16] Zackery M. Heern, 'Usuli Shi'ism: The Emergence of an Islamic Reform Movement in Early Modern Iraq and Iran.' University of Utah, PhD. dissertation, 2011.

Just as these religious tensions had roots in the Safavid era,[17] so did the issue of merchant and military elites challenge religious and government ones for high status. A. K. S. Lambton argued: "The old social structure was modified during the eighteenth century... apart from the changed position of the tribes and the temporary decline in the influence and bureaucracy, the religious classes no longer enjoyed the power and influence which they held under the Safavids. Whereas in earlier times it was frequently the *qazi*s (*sic.*) (judges) and other members of the religious classes who came forward as local leaders in times of crisis, in the eighteenth century it seems rather to have been the local officials, such as the *kalantar*s (*sic.*) and the *kadkhoda*s (*sic.*) of the cities and towns who emerged as such when the central administration broke down".[18]

Given these fractures in religious and social power structures, what is especially important in examining simultaneous rulership in Iranian history is that many of the other categories of early modern change come together with it to challenge age-old notions of government in which the ruler's authority combined religion and 'secular' ideas—justice and the sword. This monism gave way to rivalry between these ideas and roles and the emergence of not just competing ideas but the very basis for new institutions was laid. In Iran in particular, the traditions of ancient, agrarian Iran, of Islamic, Turkic nomadism, and of Mongol ambivalence toward sectarianism were played out in the ruling culture and imperial representation. For the Middle East in general we find a fundamentally similar pattern is also easily seen in the Islamic model of legitimacy prescribed for the imamate and sultanate during the devolution of military authority in the later Abbasid period and in the Ottoman period before the middle 1400s.[19] Gustave E. von Grunebaum had reached that same conclusion regarding the collapse of the 'Abbasid caliphate in his *Medieval Islam*, when he wrote, "The *civitas Dei* had failed, and the Muslim community had accepted its failure".[20]

Simultaneous rulers narrated identities that were sometimes complementary, sometimes contradictory. These identities were what Crossley has called "constituencies" — legally defined, educationally performed and historically narrated cultural identities that could have little or no relationship to living communities, but were essential to legitimation of the rulership.[21] Such rulership expressed itself within Iran's political culture through interactions of the ruler, his government and institutions, with ascribed constituent identities within a framework of shared values, culture, and economy. Here, representation of the ruler to the ruled was a matter of legitimacy, or multiple legitimacies, or simultaneous rulership. Most successful rulers of Iran have also sought to legitimise their rule to preceding rulers and have seen themselves as the rightful heir of a tradition of rulership even in the face of— or especially because of— the discontinuity that has so characterised Iranian history. Legitimacy is not just the representation of the ruler to the ruled, or the interaction between them, but between the ruler and the tradition, to history. Clearly, precedence in found earlier in Iranian history as well in such rulers as Timur (1336-1405), Shah 'Abbas I and others. Moreover, the ruler created, or could destroy, imperial constituencies. He ruled over an ethnically and geographically complex society. Iranian rulership represented a form of imperial expression in which the ruler transcended the realms, or more typically, the empire's parts, to create a historical reality, and congruent images and symbols that could accord with actual institutions—in Nadir Shah's case, with his military and in religion.

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[17] S. Babaie*, et al., Slaves of the Shah: New Elites of Safavid Iran* (London, 2004).

[18] A. K. S. Lambton, 'The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of the Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century', in Thomas Naff and Roger Owen, (eds.), *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History* (Carbondale and Edwardsville IL, 1977), pp. 120-121.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[20] G. E. von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam: A study in Cultural Orientation* (Chicago, 1961).

[21] Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, pp. 44, 81, 105, 245.

Gustave von Grunebaum's first important book, *Medieval Islam: A Study in Cultural Orientation*—whose subtitle is mostly ignored if not forgotten altogether—was followed later by his *Modern Islam: The Search for Cultural Identity*.[22] The former examined Islamic culture from the seventh century through the thirteenth century, with several forays back to the classical world of the Mediterranean and with comparisons with Christendom. The latter analyzed the period of the western impact on the Middle East, basically the twentieth century, under such topics of self-image and identity, nationalism, and acculturation and adaptation, but its first chapter goes back to the first Islamic centuries. These studies were 'medieval' and 'modern' in relation to what? Some years after von Grunebaum's study invoked this chronology, Marshall Hodgson took on this issue directly, marking what we would now call a Eurasian early modernity: "The three centuries after about 1500 CE are most obviously important for us because they form the immediate background of our own age. The Islamdom that entered into Modern times was that which took shape in these centuries... and it is the Islamdom of just these recent centuries which, historically, has been most relevant to their present posture". And Hodgson continues: "At the start of the sixteenth century, a general realignment of political forces among all Muslim peoples afforded an opportunity for extensive political and then cultural renewal".[23] In our view, the extension of a structural chronology for early modernity from Europe to the Islamic world by Hodgson was a necessary step on the way to what is now a developing structured chronology for Eurasian early modernity.

Qing Simultaneity and Overland Conquest

Qing (1636-1912) construction of earlier empires (most by means of thorough and systemic revision of their histories), particularly the Tang (618-907), the Jin (1121-1234) and the Yuan (Mongol, 1272–1368), became important elements in the imperial ideology of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. China's imperial Confucianism[24] and Central Asia's traditions of khanal selection and rule were important. But perhaps the most complex element was contributed by Buddhism. Like imperial Confucianism, Buddhism provided kings and emperors with missions. As the Confucian monarch was to bring human-mindedness under the control of moral-mindedness, to transform all through himself, and to pacify the world, the Buddhist monarch was to effect change in human destiny by spreading the doctrines of enlightenment and bringing the temporal age to a close. For the ruler to have such pure intentions, he was unlikely to be understood as remaining in a rude human state. It was soon part of Buddhist imperial ideology that the ruler was, in addition to his peculiar spiritual mission, also in a peculiar spiritual condition: He was a 'wheel (or center)-turning king (*čakravartin*)', and possibly also an 'enlightened one' (*bodhisattva*), himself ready for bliss, but postponing it to aid in the salvation of mankind. This *bodhisattva* imagery for the ruler was politically complex. In the early Tang period imperial *bodhisattva*-hood became a necessary though not sufficient, element in the imperial ideology.[25]

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[22] G. E. von Grunebaum, *Modern Islam: The Search for Cultural Identity* (Los Angeles, 1962).

[23] M. G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (Chicago, 1971), pp. 3-4.

[24] Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror,* pp. 224-230. This discussion is eliding other Buddhist personae within the Qing rulership, including the imperial consciousness transmitted through the Mahâkâla cult, for which see E. S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley, 1998), pp. 251-258 and Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, pp. 218-241.

Chinese observers of the middle seventeenth century who saw the fall of the Ming and very soon afterward the seizure of Ming territories by the Qing empire were inclined to associate the Manchus who led the Qing invasion with the Mongols who had conquered China and established the Yuan empire three four centuries earlier. As it happened simultaneity in the Qing rulership had a very large Mongol component, but it related only distantly to the Mongols of the Yuan period or earlier. The Qing empire was created, between 1634 and 1636, through the merging of the Jin khanate of southwestern Manchuria with the Chakhar Khaghanate—the surviving khaghanate most intimately connected to Chingiz— in eastern Mongolia. Among the legitimating themes of the Chakhar Khaghanate was not only descent from Chingiz but also the role as patron of the Dalai Lama. Spiritual companionship between the 'teacher' (*lama*) and the *čakravartin* remained intertwined with the right to rule the Mongols of the Chakhar (Northern Yuan) federation. When the Qing emperorship was created in 1636 through a merging of the rulerships of the old Jin khanate and the Chakhar khaghanate, the *čakravartin* persona became an essential link in Qing claims to legitimate rule over Mongols (and a century of wars to secure that rule). Subsequent Qing rulers proved generous patrons of many Buddhist sects. But they continued to show a strong interest in lamaism particularly. The intimacy of lamaist doctrines to the imperial lineage was vividly expressed in the practice of draping the coffins of emperors and empresses, exclusively, with red silk covers in which Sanskirt prayers were stitched in gold.

The Chakhar khaghanship, the civil emperorship of China, and the traditional khanship of Northeast Asia were all resident in the Qing rulership until at least the end of the eighteenth century. They were performed in rituals at various locations: Traditional Chinese rulership at the Temples of Heaven, Earth and Moon, and at the temple of Confucius, in Beijing; Manchu shamanism at the Kunning Palace in the Forbidden City, as well as at locations in the Northeast; Mongol *khaghan* reception feasts at Chengde, in Inner Mongolia, at hunting expeditions in Beijing, Mongolia and western Manchuria; and as patrons of the lamas at various lamaseries and inner temples. Imperial edicts appeared simultaneously in Manchu, Mongolian and Chinese. Imperial architecture paid homage to all three styles. And the emperors were curators—at times even active authors or editors— of the histories of the Manchu, Mongol and Chinese peoples. When the conquests spread to Xinjiang, which had been eastern Turkestan, Arabic-script Uighur language became part of the imperial presentation, select lineages of the Uighurs were awarded imperial recognition and brought into the imperial harem, but the Qing were forced to represent the Uighurs on the basis of a emblematic Central Asian, nomadic profile; the Qing never succeeded in occupying the moral center of Islam—whether with respect to the Hui of China proper of the Uighurs and Kazakhs of Xinjiang— and never made Muslims as a group part of the narrative of conquest.

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[25] The relationship between čakravartinism and patronage of the Tibetan hierarchs was itself a simultaneity. The *čakravartin* ideal was old, and usually linked to Mauryan king Asoka. In his own time he expressed himself in terms of solidarity with Buddhist community, but never characterised himself as their instrument, or as a monarch devoted— in his political person— to any individual religion. See R. Thapar, *A History of India, Vol.* 1. (London, 1966), pp. 70-75. The lineage of Dalai Lamas was a novelty dating to 1588, when a ruler of eastern Mongolia instituted patronage of the Dalai Lamas as a fundament of his legitimacy as *khaghan*.

Essentialied Identities and the Sources of Nationalism

Conquest regimes must distinguish between conquerors and the conquered. The distinction must be plastic, subject to arbitrary alteration by the state as its burden changes from conquest to occupation to governance (should that sequence be completed). In addition, the arbitrary alteration of identities must be legitimated by an axiomatic assertion that lines of identity— or 'difference'— are in fact not arbitrary, but are given by nature or by God. The state does not invent culture, but it controls the political meaning of cultural identities; yet, in the imperial ideology the state must appear to merely discover identities and enforce distinctions, whether that requires it to engage in war, in the inequitable distribution of privilege and resources, or segregation of groups within territorial, economic or cultural limits. We would argue that the ultimate significance of simultaneous rulership is to fulfill this ideological function in conquest regimes, which are in need of ostensibly natural lines of identity in order to give an aspect of futurity— or at least of permanence— to their enterprises.[26]

In the same way that languages and religions were made into emblems and icons in the presentations of imperial simultaneity, so were the peoples of the empire. In comparison to the number of cultural communities actually resident in either Safavid Iran or Qing China, the number of constituencies encoded in simultaneous rulership was small, and always coincided with a narrative of imperial conquest. It was the ruler's job to represent the traditions that provided the moral authority under which the empire conquered and ruled. It was the job of his subjects, particularly the imperial elites, to perform the scripts of personal identity that reified the centrality of the rulership. In that capacity the representations were not 'peoples', generating their own cultures and histories, but constructed roles in the production of rulership. This point of interface between the rulership and its subjects reminds us that simultaneous rulership was not merely a way to find broader sources of legitimating language, symbol and ritual. It was an articulation point for the histories, current identities and performed loyalties of the regions and cultures that came under imperial control. The more particular the cultural communities of the empire could be represented to be, the more universal was the rulership as it embodied and ultimately transcended their particularisms.

Cultural curatorship was an indispensable part of the imperial business. Histories had to be collected, scrutinised, edited, enhanced, published, distributed and sheltered. Religious buildings, scholarly institutes, publishing offices, and libraries had to be sponsored by the ruler personally. Peoples and cultures had to be defined, and their attributes assigned; homelands had to be verified through onomastics and great mapmaking projects, genealogies collected and sorted, oral histories written down. Languages had to be represented in public monuments and in imperial literature. Classical and religious literature had to be preserved, vernaculars disciplined and represented, grammars, dictionaries, primers all published for the various languages that support the rulership. Language, religion, ritual, ancestral geography must be woven together to compose the tapestry of empire. Cultural ambiguity, popular acculturation, disregard of the past, and indifference to ritual, were all the enemies of empire.

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[26] Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror*, p. 31.

But conditions of the early modern period had created cultures all over Eurasia in which economic livelihoods, religions, languages and in many cases gene pools were distributed according to the common routes of commerce and pilgrimage, and mixed as the flow of goods and people determined. This was particularly true in areas that remained nomadic, whether in Iran, Mongolia or Xinjiang. Many of these cultures existed in environments of exclusively local political organisation. Over the course of the past five hundred years, virtually all these areas came under the control of one empire or another. In this process, identities in these regions were aggressively clarified by the dynamics of conquest and the administrative practices of occupation. Very often, this produced a glamorisation of genealogy, both as a genre of social or political documentation, and as a metaphor. In imperial settings association with a written genealogy meant that an individual's antecedents (real or fictive) have been clarified, subjected to the processes of regularisation that are generally connected to some status (whether land owning or military command or access to bureaucratic office) that the court endorses. Genealogy is objectification of the individual's social and political identity through the imperial documentary process. The case of Iran strongly suggests this interplay between rulership and ascribed identity. Three major themes emerge. First pastoral nomadic confederations and their leaders shaped Iran's eighteenth century political map at every level, with consequences that persisted until after World War I. Second— related to Hodgson's Islamic renewal themes cited above—is the *'ulema* conflict among the Usulis and Akhbaris, the roles of philosopher-mystics and religious populism, and the victory of the Usulis in the nineteenth century that continues to affect Iran down to the present day. Third is the legacy of rulership in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Simultaneity in the early-modern rulership was reflected in Iran's administrative practice in the division between civil and military— often overlapping— both of which were based on land grants in return for service and seen as extensions of the ruler's personae. Tribal confederations in reality were composites of various groups that did not necessarily share the same ethnicities and languages. Yet individuals and groups of ambiguous identity were constructed as part of constituent tribal confederations by—as one example— Nassir al-Din Shah in the nineteenth century. The khans, even the Bakhtiyari, were, through his awards of titles, land grants, and tax exemptions, ascribed identities by the rulership. The Turcoman of Northeastern Iran may represent the clearest case of essentialisation through this practice. On the military side, similar cases can be made for Shah 'Abbas and Nadir Shah. The movements of peoples such as the Kurds to Kuchan are a different example. In the nineteenth century, however, such groups, despite strong ethnic identities, did not develop into national identities, save for the Kurds, Azeri's, and Baluchs. And all three of these examples are located on Iran's peripheries with the same peoples across Iran's borders, where nationalist leadership for each was an important factor. Importantly, too, the pre-modern political institutions and ideologies of rulership encompassed Iran's heterogeneous population.

In the Qing case, determination to invent coherent if formulaic cultural identities for its historical constituencies of Uigurs, Mongols, Manchus, Tibetans and Chinese produced histories of the origins of them as homogeneous peoples, as well as grammars and dictionaries of their ascribed 'ancestral' languages. All other peoples were restricted to vague and demeaning accounts in the imperial catalogues of barbarians, hardly sufficient to fuel movements for national pride and dignity. And the Qing valuation of genealogy produced a nineteenth-century sense of glamour associated with certain lineages. National leaders of the early twentieth century, whether oriented toward 'China', 'Mongolia' or 'Manchuria', were always acute in stressing their own pure and distinguished heritages. This Qing identity programme has left us with mountains of history on the ostensibly unique origins of the Manchus, and the Mongols, and the Chinese themselves. We have exhaustive primers and lexicons of the newly standardised Mongolian, Manchu, Tibetan, Uigur and Chinese languages. We have centuries of imperial legislation prescribing identity-correct dress, religious practice, place of residence, rights of marriage, language performance and occupation.

What is striking here is that so long as the identity programmes generated by the simultaneous rulership of the Qing were actively promoted by the state—that is, basically, through the eighteenth century— they failed. But in the nineteenth century, as the Qing emperorship attempted unsuccessfully to associate itself with Confucianism and with Chinese identity, the cultural content of its identity programs began showing up in nationalist movements in China, Manchuria, Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang. Why was it that in the first decade of the twentieth century, when the end of the Qing empire was imminent (as were the ends of all the land-based empires of Eurasia), only the populations of the empire who identified with the Qing imperial constituencies mounted 'nationalist' movements? There was no movement for national independence among the Dai, or the Yi, or the Lolo. None among the indigenous Taiwanese (who were now under Japanese colonial rule). None among the Chinese-speaking Muslims of China. The contours of nationalism in China corresponded exactly to the contours of the Qing constituent identities.

The simultaneous qualities of the Qing rulership suggest strong comparisons to other rulerships of the period, many of which are indispensable to our narrative of a global 'early modern' passage. The functioning of the Qing as an empire in parts, united in a rulership transcending cultural particularities, has strong parallels not only with Safavid Iran but also in the Ottoman and Russian instances. The Ottoman impersonation of the *khalîfa*, the *sultan* and the *imparator* was fundamental to legitimate rule over all Muslim sects and over non-Muslims. The Russian cooptation of some elements of Louis XIV emperorship together with elements of Muscovite tsarship and the Byzantine *basileu*s established a universal style that legitimated rule over Christians of all sects and non-Christians; over Germans, Russians, Ukrainians, Tartars, Turks and Siberians. In the same way that the rulerships were made symbiotic within these emperorships so were the historicised peoples of the empire, or the constituencies of the emperorship itself.[27] The processes of legal definition, historical narrative and symbolic representation made real cultural histories formulaic and standard. The Russian court promoted pan-Slavism, the Ottoman court pan-Turkism, and the Qing court instituted a documentary prospect that made a single historical block of all of China and all of Mongolia.

But in the nineteenth century none of these simultaneous rulerships succeeded in reversing the traditions of separation between the rulership and imperial constituencies, or the transcendence of the rulership over particularities of culture and identity. They failed in each instance to align themselves with the emerging nationalist movements. The very power of the rulership to ascribe and enforce pluralistic criteria of identity made it inimical to the requirements of nationalist political participation, in which an overwhelming— perhaps even coercive—unanimity of values and expression was critical. The emperorships themselves had marked the destruction of the medieval Eurasian pattern of dualistic cultural and political authorities. They framed an 'early modern' period of rulerships transcending cultural particularism through the ascription of present and past coherence on imperial constituencies, and for that reason could not survive the transition to nationality-based governance in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Gene.R.Garthwaite@Dartmouth.edu; crossley@dartmouth.edu

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[27] For reflections of these ideas in the treatment of other early modern monarchs see also M. Rodriguez-Salgado, *The Changing Face of Empire: Charles V, Philip II and Habsburg Authority 1551-1559* (Cambridge and London, 1988); Necipoglu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power;* P. Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven, 1992); S. Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (Oxford, 1993); T. N. Corns, *The Royal Image : Representations of Charles I* (Cambridge and London, 1999); J. Watkins, *Representing Elizabeth in Stuart England: Literature, History, Sovereignty* (New York and Cambridge, 2002).