

# The “Nawrūz King”: the rebellion of Amir Nawrūz in Khurasan (688–694/1289–94) and its implications for the Ilkhan polity at the end of the thirteenth century

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## Abstract

In 688/1289 Nawrūz Aqa, a leading Mongol magnate, began a rebellion in Khurasan to resist the Ilkhan Arghun’s attempts to centralize power and loosen the Mongol aristocracy’s grip on provincial government. The rebellion of Nawrūz was significantly different from any Mongol uprising that had occurred in the Ilkhanate to that date: it was distinguished by the successful fusion of Chinggisid and Islamic traditions of political and spiritual authority to support Nawrūz’s challenge against the Hülegüid monarchy. This new hybrid political philosophy allowed Nawrūz to mobilize both the sedentary and nomadic populations of Khurasan to overhaul the power structure of the Ilkhanate. The present study of the early career and rebellion of Amīr Nawrūz will reveal how his movement forced the Turco-Mongolian leadership to reconfigure its political, social and religious relationships, among themselves and with the sedentary Muslim population they ruled.

**Keywords:** Nawrūz, Ghazan, Islamization, Rebellion, Ilkhan, Khurasan

The final two decades of the thirteenth century saw widespread social and political upheaval within the Ilkhanate of Iran (656–736/1258–1335). Between 1282 and 1295 no fewer than five rulers were crowned by rival factions at the Ilkhan court in Azerbaijan. This instability was fuelled by the growing power of the *noyat* (non-Chinggisid commanders), who were increasingly unwilling to accept the limitations imposed on their authority by the Ilkhan (Mong. *il-qan*, “viceroy”/deputy to the Great Khan in Mongolia). The independence of the *noyat* was demonstrated most forcefully in 683/1284 when a group of senior commanders successfully deposed the Ilkhan, Aḥmad Tegüder, and committed the first regicide to be recorded anywhere in the Mongol Empire. Thereafter, military strongmen, such as Buqa Chingsang (d. 688/1289) and Taghachar Noyan (d. 695/1296) seized control of the Ilkhan court and repealed the powers of both the khan and his *dīwān* (Persian bureaucracy). This contest between the khan and his ministers on the one hand, and the military aristocracy on the other, was one of the most important forces for political change within the Ilkhanate during the late thirteenth century.

Perhaps the most interesting manifestation of this conflict occurred in Khurasan where the military governor, Amīr Nawrūz Aqa, seized control of the province and led a five-year rebellion against the future Ilkhan, Ghazan, between 688/1289 and 694/1294. Yet the rebellion of Amīr Nawrūz was fundamentally different from previous challenges to the power of the Ilkhans made by Mongol commanders in Azerbaijan, Arab Iraq and Rūm. In the west of the Ilkhanate the military aristocracy had justified their attacks on the central government through reference to familiar Mongolian conventions of consultative government (*quriltai*) and the laws and customs (*jasaq* and *yosun*) of Chinggis Khan. This terminology resonated strongly with the Turco-Mongolian military elite, whose main objective was to impose control on the Ilkhan *ordo* (court).<sup>1</sup> Amīr Nawrūz, by contrast, initially showed very little interest in events at the *ordo*. His primary aim was to preserve his power in Khurasan against the incursions of the central government, and the rhetoric of his early movement reflected this comparatively parochial focus. Moreover, whereas previous conflicts between the Ilkhans and their commanders had typically involved only Mongol commanders and princes, Nawrūz sought to engage the help of the sedentary Muslim elite of Khurasan in his campaign. But the most significant distinction between the challenge of Nawrūz and those which had preceded it was the fact that he sought to legitimate his uprising through reference to Islamic, rather than exclusively Mongolian, political traditions. During his extended conflict with both the Ilkhan army and the Chaghadaï Khanate on the east bank of the Oxus River, Nawrūz claimed to be fighting a holy war to defend his Islamic amīrate of Khurasan from the heathen armies of the Mongol khans. He assumed the mantle of “Defender of the Faith”, countering the charisma of Chinggisid authority with his own appeal to the laws and traditions of Islam.

The importance of Amīr Nawrūz’s role in the Ilkhanate of the late thirteenth century, most notably during the reign of Ghazan Khan, has long been recognized by historians of the period. It was largely thanks to his military support that Ghazan was able to seize the Ilkhan throne in 694/1295 and he subsequently served as the chief minister in Ghazan’s government until his demise in 696/1297. Nawrūz is also widely credited with achieving the conversion of Ghazan Khan to Islam in 694/1295, an event which fundamentally changed the way the Mongols perceived their role in the Islamic World. Yet until now no independent study of Nawrūz’s early political career and rebellion has been undertaken, despite it being heavily documented by Ghazan’s chief minister (*wazīr/sāhib divan*) and court historian, Rashīd al-Dīn, and by the various regional chronicles of Khurasan.

1 ‘Abd Allāh b. Faẓl Allāh Waṣṣāf-i Ḥaẓrat, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, ed. ‘Abd al-Muḥammad Āyatī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Īrān, 1346/1967–68), 172; Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū’l Faraj, the Son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus Being the First Part of His Political History of the World*, tr. Ernest A. Wallis Budge (Oxford: University Press, 1932), 498; Rashīd al-Dīn Faẓl Allāh Hamadānī, *Jamī’u’l-Tawārīkh: Compendium of Chronicles*, tr. W.M. Thackston (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 614 (hereafter Thackston); Rashīd al-Dīn Faẓl Allāh Hamadānī, *Jām’i al-Tawārīkh*, ed. Bahman Karīmī (Tehran: Iqbāl, 1374/1995–96), 886 [hereafter *JT*]; Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, *Ẓafarnāma*, ed. Maṣūrah Sharīfzādah, Vols 7 and 10 (Tehran: Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies), 227.

The Nawrūzian rebellion is most often encountered in modern histories as an anecdote in the early life of Ghazan, holding only vague consequences for the latter's rule. Under these circumstances it is easy to forget that for most of his life Nawrūz was Ghazan's most dangerous political adversary. The pair held irreconcilable views as to the source of legitimate political authority and on how it should be exercised. Nawrūz asserted that piety and precedence in Islam, not hereditary succession, were the most important qualifications for political authority. As the self-proclaimed champion of the Islamic faith amongst the Mongols, Nawrūz claimed primacy over his Chinggisid puppets in the Islamic community, and it was ultimately this struggle for status that led Ghazan to destroy him in 696/1297. The present study will fill a significant gap in the historiography of the Ilkhanate by detailing the statecraft and philosophy Nawrūz employed to support his rebellion. In doing so, it will provide a greater understanding of the cultural, ideological and political transformation which accompanied the conversion of the Ilkhan court to Islam at the end of the thirteenth century.

### Towns, nomads and political authority in thirteenth-century Khurasan

In order to understand fully the source of Nawrūz's power it is necessary first to discuss his early career in Khurasan. His family had strong roots in eastern Iran as his father, Arghun Aqa, had been appointed governor of Khurasan in 1242 by the then regent of the Mongol Empire, Töregene Khātun.<sup>2</sup> Arghun Aqa retained this office throughout the subsequent reigns of Güyük Khan (r. 1247–48), and the latter's successor, Möngke (r. 1251–59), during which time his mandate was extended to include the whole of Iran. Under Möngke's rule, Arghun Aqa served at the head of one of the three regional secretariats responsible for administering the sedentary populations of the Mongol Empire and was entrusted with carrying out a census of Iran as well as implementing a new tax system over the territories under his jurisdiction. The appointment of Möngke's brother, Hülegü, as the first Ilkhan of Iran naturally resulted in a diminution of Arghun Aqa's powers. Nevertheless, he retained the governorship of Khurasan under the new regime and in 663/1265 Hülegü's successor, Abaqa (r. 663–680/1265–82), confirmed him as *muqta'-i mamālik* (tax-farmer general) and "wazīr of Khurasan", titles which he held until his death in 1275. Much less is known of Arghun Aqa's son, Amīr Nawrūz, who first appears in the sources as a senior commander of the Qaraunas, whose pastures lay on the banks of the Oxus River.<sup>3</sup> In 683/1284 Nawrūz led his troops in support of the Chinggisid prince, Arghun Oghul, who seized the throne of the Ilkhanate from his uncle, Aḥmad Tegüder, in the same year.<sup>4</sup> Shortly after Arghun seized the throne he appointed his thirteen-year-old son, Ghazan, as the viceroy of Khurasan and

2 For Arghun Aqa's career see George Lane, "Arghun Aqa: Mongol bureaucrat in Iran", *Iranian Studies*, 34/4, Fall 1999, 459–82.

3 Thackston, 553; *JT*, 792. For the Qaraunas see, Shimo Hirotoishi, "The Qaraunas in the historical materials of the Ilkhanate", *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, 35, 1977, 131–82; Jean Aubin, "L'ethnogenese des Qaraunas", *Turcica*, 1, 1969, 65–94.

4 Thackston, 553; *JT*, 792.

Nawrūz was named as his “atabeg” (guardian) to “strive in matters of the army and the amirate”.<sup>5</sup> This mandate appears to have affirmed Nawrūz’s position as supreme commander of the government of Khurasan since the local histories of Harāt, Sīstān and Kirmān make almost no reference to Ghazan during the first six years of his rule there. Even the histories commissioned by Ghazan after he took the throne in 694/1295 tend to focus more on events at the *ordo* in Azerbaijan than on Khurasan during his time there. In all likelihood, this silence reflected the fact that the prince remained a peripheral figure in the east, which remained under the control of Nawrūz until 688/1289.

More than any other province in the Ilkhanate, Khurasan was geographically, economically and politically detached from the court in Azerbaijan; a fact which bred a separate political tradition amongst the military aristocracy of the region. Its topography was characterized by the prevalence of both mountains, extending from the Alburz Range and the Hindu Kush, and deserts, including the Dasht-i Kawīr, the Dasht-i Lūṭ and the Hilmand Basin.<sup>6</sup> These features contributed to the political autonomy of the region in relation to Azerbaijan, but also provided a series of unique challenges for the military governors of the province. Khurasan was far more arid than the Zagros range of western Iran and its population centres were confined to pockets of arable land which drew water from nearby mountains and aqueducts (*qanāt*).<sup>7</sup> As early as 675/1277 the *Tārīkhnāma-yi Harāt* reported that the chief minister (*ṣāhib dīwān*) Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī counselled Abaqa against sending armies to the region because it did not have the capacity to sustain a large force, saying that such a move would “cause grief to both the people of Khurasan and the army”.<sup>8</sup> The problem of provisioning the Mongol army became even more acute towards the end of the thirteenth century when, as Martinez has shown, the previously nomadic Mongol soldiers were invited to garrison towns and provinces, thereby disrupting their migration patterns and preventing them from joining lucrative raids on enemy territories.<sup>9</sup> Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī spoke at length about the unique economic and political challenges facing the commanders of Khurasan in his geographical treatise, the *Nuzhat al-Qulūb*. He stated that the Ilkhans sought to solve the problem of provisioning the Mongol army by granting the revenues of the region to the local military governors, who would use them to provide for their armies – something which Mustawfī complained caused widespread corruption.<sup>10</sup> This concession afforded the Mongol governors of Khurasan a high

5 Thackston, 594; *JT*, 850.

6 Elton L. Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan under Abbasid Rule, 747–820* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica), 14; W.B. Fisher, “Physical geography”, *CHIr*, I, *The Land of Iran*, ed. W.B. Fisher (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 60–76.

7 D.J. Flower, “Water use in north-eastern Iran”, *CHIr*, I, *The Land of Iran*, ed. W.B. Fisher (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 601.

8 Sayf al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ya’qūb Harāwī, *Tārīkhnāma Harāt*, ed. Ghulām Riżā Ṭabāṭāba’ī Majd (Tehran: Asāfir, 1383/2004–05), 367.

9 A.P. Martinez, “Some notes on the Il-Xanid army”, *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 6, 1986–88, 129–243.

10 Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, *The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat al-Qulūb Composed by Ḥamd-Allāh Mustawfī of Qazwīn in 740 (1340)*, ed. G. Le Strange (Leiden: Brill, 1919), 146.

degree of autonomy from the political centre in Azerbaijan. But it also encouraged them to interact more frequently with the urban population of the province, since Mustawfī goes on to say that the revenues of Khurasan were not collected by representatives of the Mongol commanders or the Ilkhan *dīwān*, but rather by local Khurasani elites who dominated the polities of the major market towns.<sup>11</sup> The dependence of the Mongol army on the supplies provided by the settled population meant that cultivating relationships with the urban elites was a vital task for any Mongol governor of Khurasan.

Nawrūz's ability to build strong networks and alliances among the local rulers of Khurasan afforded him unprecedented power over the region. He inherited many of these alliances from his father, Arghun Aqa, whose relationships with the urban elites of his province were mutually supportive arrangements in which the Mongol governor rewarded the tribute payments of the native office holders with both military and political support for their position within the towns they ruled.<sup>12</sup> The native princes soon recognized the potential benefits of a strong relationship with Arghun Aqa. In 1254, immediately after his appointment as ruler of Harāt, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Kart sped to Arghun Aqa and furnished him with a gift of 50,000 dīnārs to guarantee the latter's goodwill.<sup>13</sup> His investment paid dividends when the Kartid ruler sought to impose his authority over the lord of Garjistan, Malik Sayf al-Dīn, a move which was strongly supported by Arghun Aqa.<sup>14</sup> In many instances the relationship between Arghun Aqa and the native princes was affirmed through marriage alliances. The anonymous author of the *Tārīkh-i Shāh-i Qarākhītāyān* stated that first the lord of Kirmān, Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad, whom Möngke had placed under Arghun Aqa's command, and then his successor, Turkān Khātūn, worked strenuously to achieve a marriage alliance with Arghun Aqa. The proposed union between Arghun Aqa's daughter and Turkān's heir, Siyorghatmish, was agreed in 662/1264 after the latter had dispatched her son (the local Mongol *basqaq*, military governor), and even her *wazīr*, to discuss the proposal.<sup>15</sup> Arghun Aqa used his time as governor of Khurasan to build strong and lucrative alliances with the native princes of the province through which he hoped to entrench his control of the eastern Ilkhanate.

Following his appointment as governor of Khurasan in 683/1284, Nawrūz expanded the alliance network built by his father. The most detailed information on Nawrūz's relations with the native rulers of the Ilkhanate is provided by the chronicle of Harāt, a city which Nawrūz placed at the centre of his attempt to

- 11 Mustawfī, *The Nuzhat al-Qulūb*, 146. See also John Masson-Smith, Jr, "Mongol nomadism and Middle Eastern geography: Qishlaqs and Tümens", in Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (eds), *The Mongol Empire and Its Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 45.
- 12 George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 2003), 159; Jean Aubin, *Emirs Mongols et Vizirs Persans dans les remous de l'acculturation* (Studia Iranica, Cahier 15. Paris: L'Association pour l'Avancement des Études Iraniques, 1995), 53.
- 13 Harāwī, *Tārīkhnāma Harāt*, 203.
- 14 Harāwī, *Tārīkhnāma Harāt*, 220; Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran*, 163.
- 15 *Tārīkh-i Shāhī Qarākhītāyān*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Bāstānī Pārīzī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang, 1348/1969), 183.

dominate Khurasan. His relationship with the Kartid ruler of Harāt, Malik Shams al-Dīn II, got off to a poor start when the latter arrested a senior Qaraunas commander, Hindu Noyan, for murdering one of Arghun Khan's favourites in 684/1285–86. The Qaraunas were incensed and Nawrūz was obliged to send armies against the town in 687/1288 and 689/1290 to take retribution and mollify his supporters. The chronicle of Harāt states that these attacks led to the near complete depopulation of the town and the flight of Malik Shams al-Dīn II and his family to the fortress of Khaysār in Ghūr.<sup>16</sup> Yet after his rebellion, Nawrūz was quick to recognize the strategic importance of the city in relation to the Hilmand Basin and he cleared the Harāt River region of predatory nomad tribes in 1291.<sup>17</sup> He then sought to install a leader from the local Kartid dynasty on the throne of the liberated city. At that time Malik Shams al-Dīn II was in the midst of a feud with his second son, Fakhr al-Dīn, whom he had placed under house arrest in the citadel of Khaysār after charging him with treason. Nawrūz sent an envoy to Shams al-Dīn interceding on his son's behalf and requesting that the young prince be entrusted to his custody. After much protestation, Shams al-Dīn agreed to hand over his son to Nawrūz on the condition that he would not be held responsible for any trouble caused by the young prince; a suspicion which would prove to be well-founded. Nawrūz subsequently granted his daughter in marriage to Fakhr al-Dīn and installed him as the *malik* of Harāt in 692/1293–94.<sup>18</sup>

Fakhr al-Dīn owed both his life and his kingdom to Nawrūz, to whom he was quick to show his gratitude. Shortly after Fakhr al-Dīn's appointment to Harāt, Nawrūz ordered him to join his brother, Orda b. Arghun Aqa, in an attack on Khwāf to the west of his new patrimony. The lord of Khwāf, Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd Khwāfi, had refused to acknowledge Nawrūz's rule over his lands and had ignored his summons to proffer submission. The town was soon taken with a heavy slaughter of the population of the surrounding countryside. Nawrūz then sent Fakhr al-Dīn against Farāh, to the south of Harāt. Nawrūz had imprisoned Jalāl al-Dīn, the lord of Farāh and installed his own governors over the city, but Jalāl's brother, Malik Ināltegin, had entered Farāh and murdered the Nawrūzian agents and sympathizers.<sup>19</sup> The *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* records that the city was retaken by the "Nawrūzians", as his supporters had come to be known, and that Ināltegin was forced to flee to Iraq.<sup>20</sup> Nawrūz used the Kartid ruler of Harāt as a medium through which to impose his control over the entire Hilmand river basin.

Nawrūz's skilful manipulation of the rivalries among the native princes of Khurasan was a strong theme of his reign. He played a similar game with the local dynasty of Sīstān, where the ruling monarch Malik Naṣir al-Dīn had fallen out with his son Rukn al-Dīn. The latter was captured by Nawrūz's soldiers in

16 Harāwī, *Tārīkh-nāma Harāt*, 402 and 405; Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Faṣīḥ Khwāfi, *Majmal Faṣīḥī*, ed. Muḥsin Nāji Naṣr Ābādī (Tehran: Asāfir, 1386/2008) 844 and 847.

17 Harāwī, *Tārīkh-nāma Harāt*, 407–9.

18 Harāwī, *Tārīkh-nāma Harāt*, 421–3; Thackston, 639; JT, 931; Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 208.

19 Harāwī, *Tārīkh-nāma Harāt*, 424.

20 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, ed. Malik al-Shu'arā' Bahār (Tehran: Farīdīn, 1314/1935), 407.

Bākharz before being taken to his camp. Nawrūz held Rukn al-Dīn in captivity for one year before assigning him a position in his court, where he was educated and received military instruction for a further year before being granted an army. Nawrūz gave Rukn al-Dīn control of the fortress of Dāwari in 693/1293–94 before ordering him to join his brother, Hājji Narin, in an attack on the stronghold of Qūhistān in central Khurasan. One year later Rukn al-Dīn was permitted to return to his native Sīstān to rule the oasis town of Nih.<sup>21</sup> Nawrūz was also reported to have given shelter to the Atabeg of Yazd, 'Alā al-Dawlah b. Yūsufshāh, who had temporarily cast off Ilkhan rule in 690/1291.<sup>22</sup> Nawrūz entered a marriage alliance with Yūsufshāh, which he subsequently used to claim the revenues of Yazd.<sup>23</sup> Such alliances were a critical pillar of Nawrūz's rule in Khurasan and ensured a steady supply line to his armies.

The local chronicles of Khurasan also illustrate the importance which Nawrūz assigned to nurturing the productivity of the towns under his control. Nawrūz realized from a very early stage that his political survival depended on the revenues of these towns, which led him to take a close interest in their administration and wellbeing. This interest caused Nawrūz to adopt innovative new policies aimed at encouraging the expansion of agriculture and increasing urbanization. Shortly after he had cleared the Harāt river region of bandits, Nawrūz dispatched edicts summoning the refugees who had fled the city to return and resume their former work.<sup>24</sup> These edicts included incentives to increase agricultural production, such as the promise of tax exemptions to anyone who would cultivate the arable land of the surrounding countryside. This innovative policy resulted in such a speedy recovery that the chronicler Sayf al-Dīn Harāwī made the exaggerated claim that Harāt rivalled Baghdad and Samarqand in terms of its size and sophistication.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, when Nawrūz appointed Rukn al-Dīn Sīstānī as governor of Nih, the *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* reported an identical revival of agriculture and urbanization in that city.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, Nawrūz's favourable treatment of his sedentary populations brought unreserved praise from his contemporary Waṣṣāf-i Ḥaḍrat, the author of the *Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, who stated that the atabeg had "made Shabūrghān and the other villages prosper, and he pushed the denizens to farm and in a short time, corn became so cheap that one *kharvār* (300 grams) of grain was sold for four silver dirhams".<sup>27</sup> Nawrūz's programme of restoring the agrarian economy of Khurasan won him influence with both the sedentary and nomadic populations of the province.

The relationship between Nawrūz and the sedentary population of Khurasan was also improved by the fact that he shared the Islamic belief of the majority of his subjects. There are signs that this shared religious identification between the nomadic and sedentary elites of Khurasan had already begun to emerge during the rule of Nawrūz's father, Arghun Aqa. The Armenian historian, Kirakos,

21 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, 409–11.

22 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, 406.

23 Thackston, 617; *JT*, 899.

24 Harāwī, *Tārīkh-nāma Harāt*, 410.

25 Harāwī, *Tārīkh-nāma Harāt*, 410.

26 *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, 411.

27 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 191.

claimed that Arghun Aqa had converted to Islam shortly after his arrival in Iran in order to cultivate relationships with the native Persian bureaucracy.<sup>28</sup> The degree to which Arghun Aqa genuinely believed in, or even understood, the major doctrines and rites of Islam remains a mystery. Yet the very public devotion which his son Nawrūz expressed for the faith certainly strengthened the political bonds he had established with the urban elites of the province. Mīrkhwānd highlighted the extent to which Nawrūz used his religion to identify with his sedentary subjects, saying, “he raised the banner of Islam and the pennant of the *ra'īyyat* (common people) as a warning to the *kāfir* (unbeliever) and the *zālim* (oppressor)”.<sup>29</sup> Nawrūz seems to have promoted the idea that he was the protector of the urban Muslim population against pagan nomads from outside of Khurasan. At least one source gives Nawrūz the title of “*ghāzī*” (holy warrior) in view of the fact that he had defended Harāt from the incursions of the supposedly heathen Chaghadaids.<sup>30</sup> Waṣṣāf also stressed the trouble that Nawrūz had taken to promote and defend the Faith, “through courage and valour and the elevation of Islam he controlled everywhere. He suffered much to strengthen Islam”.<sup>31</sup> The extent to which Nawrūz succeeded in identifying with his sedentary population’s religion was demonstrated during his rebellion against Ghazan when the *quḍāt* (judges) spoke on his behalf in the major towns of Khurasan.<sup>32</sup> Their support helped Nawrūz retain his influence over Khurasan even in the face of heavy military defeats.

Nawrūz’s success in building relationships with the urban leaders of his province should not mask the fact that he remained a member of the nomadic military elite which dominated the Ilkhanate. He understood the enduring importance of Chinggisid political traditions among the Turco-Mongol military aristocracy. Indeed, he initially proclaimed his rebellion in the name of two Chinggisid princes, Kingshū and Hūlejū, in order to win support from the senior commanders of Khurasan.<sup>33</sup> Nawrūz also drew on the support of the Chaghadaids of Transoxiana, a group whose aggression and unpredictability, the Syrian encyclopaedist al-ʿUmarī (d. 1349) claimed, inspired fear in the hearts of the Khurasani townspeople.<sup>34</sup> Nawrūz was capable of incredible cruelty towards the sedentary population of his province when it served his purposes. Nawrūz had a vicious streak which was evidenced during his recapture of Khwāf, when the people of the surrounding countryside were massacred indiscriminately.<sup>35</sup> Waṣṣāf even claimed that animals would flee from their own reflections, such was the

28 Kirakos Ganjakets’i, *Kirakos Ganjakets’i’s History of the Armenians*, tr. Robert Bedrosian (New York: Sources of the Armenian Tradition, 1986), 327.

29 Mīr Muḥammad b. Sayyid Burhān al-Dīn Khwāndshāh Mīrkhwānd, *Tārīkh-i Rawzat al-Ṣafā*, vol. 6, ed. Riżā Qulī Khān (Tehran: Markazī-yi Khayyam Pīrūz, 1338/1959–60), 378.

30 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 195.

31 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 191.

32 Thackston, 605; *JT*, 865.

33 Thackston, 596; *JT*, 852; Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 190.

34 Aḥmad ibn Yaḥ ibn Faḍl Allāh ʿUmarī, *Das Mongolische Weltreich: Al-ʿUmarī’s Darstellung der Mongolischen Reiche in seinem Werk Masālik al-Aḥṣār fi Mamālik al-Amṣār*, ed. Klaus Leich (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1968), 118.

35 Harāwī, *Tārīkh-nāma Harāt*, 424.



fear that the Nawrūzian army inspired in the native population of Khurasan.<sup>36</sup> Nawrūz remained very much a part of the Mongol military aristocracy. His support for the agrarian economy was simply a means to sustain his army, not to assimilate them to sedentary lifestyles and customs.

### The fight for Khurasan

Nawrūz retained undisputed control over Khurasan until Dhū al-Ḥijja 688/January 1289 when Arghun Khan executed his chief minister, Buqa Chingsang, and sought to impose his control over the previously autonomous provinces of the Ilkhanate.<sup>37</sup> These goals posed a direct threat to Nawrūz, who had been a close personal friend of Buqa Chingsang and ruled Khurasan as a semi-independent amirate.<sup>38</sup> Conflict between Arghun and Nawrūz was inevitable and when the Ilkhan dispatched an army eastwards to restore central control over Khurasan, Nawrūz led a surprise attack against both the Ilkhan army and his former ward, Ghazan. The Ilkhan forces suffered a heavy defeat in which their senior commander, Tegine Yarghuchi, was captured and Ghazan was forced to flee to Māzandarān.<sup>39</sup> This initial confrontation was the beginning of a five-year war for ascendancy over Khurasan which lasted until 694/1294. During this time Nawrūz suffered several serious reverses at the hands of the Ilkhan army, yet he managed to retain control over Khurasan through the networks he had built with the urban rulers of the province. The inability of Ghazan and his Ilkhan generals to create their own alliances with the sedentary elites of Khurasan prevented them from either supplanting Nawrūz or imposing their own rule over the region. Ghazan was finally forced to make peace with Nawrūz in 694/1294, having failed to restore Ilkhan control over the province.

The war with Nawrūz was a chastening experience for Ghazan who was present during all of the major Ilkhan incursions into Khurasan. These campaigns often brought victory on the field of battle, yet the inability of the Ilkhan commanders to establish permanent relationships with the urban elites of Khurasan meant that they were unable to hold their conquests for more than a few months at a time. Soon after fleeing to Māzandarān, Ghazan rallied his forces to retake Khurasan and marched to the meadows of Rādkān, between the Kūh-i Bīnālūd and Kūh-i Hazār Mašjid ranges, where he met Nawrūz for a second time. The battle, though favouring Nawrūz, was inconclusive, but it turned into a defeat for Ghazan when his army was unable to establish a base near any of the towns along his march. He initially tried to build a camp outside the town of Juwayn, but the town elders refused to shelter or provision the Ilkhan army and, faced with starvation, he was forced to withdraw to his initial base of Jājarm in Māzandarān. News of this failure caused Arghun to dispatch a new army to assist his son in retaking his eastern patrimony. This army, led by the fervently loyal Nurin Aqa and supported by Baidu Oghul, arrived in Khurasan during the Autumn of 688/1289.<sup>40</sup> This time the Ilkhan army heavily outnumbered Nawrūz's forces and the latter was forced to fall back on the

36 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 191.

37 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 141.

38 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 190.

39 Thackston, 595: *JT*, 852.

40 Aubin, "L'ethnogenese des Qaraunas", 54.

holy town of Jām before fleeing across the Oxus into the Chaghadaid Ulus. Ghazan and Nurin Aqa moved their armies triumphantly to Rādkān, where they determined to establish their base in the former heart of Nawrūz's territory. Once again, however, the failure of the Ilkhan generals to build local supply networks forced them to surrender their gains. Rather than relying on the resources of the Khurasani towns, Nurin Aqa established an impossibly long supply-line back to Azerbaijan. When the winter of 1289–90 arrived, the severe cold caused communications with the west to be cut, thereby depriving the army of its main source of provision. To make matters worse, Nawrūz had cleared the territory from Jām to Harāt of animals during his flight from Khurasan in an attempt to discourage his enemies from remaining in the region. The threat of starvation forced half of the imperial army to return west under the leadership of Baidu Oghul in 689/1290 whilst the other half began to desert and raid towns in the hope of finding sustenance. One troop led an attack on Juwayn, another moved on Sarakhs, and a third group attacked Marw in the hope of feeding their soldiers. These unauthorized raids forced Ghazan to send two of his most senior commanders, Mulay, Ghazan's maternal uncle, and Uladu, to defend the towns against these attacks. The coming of spring inaugurated the new campaign season and Nawrūz recrossed the Oxus River with fresh reinforcements to reclaim his territory. Unable to control his army, Ghazan was forced to return to Māzandarān and concede control of Khurasan to Nawrūz once more.<sup>41</sup>

Nawrūz had spent his brief exile in the Chaghadaid Ulus where he sought support for his rule in Khurasan. In 689/1290 the Chaghadaid Ulus was under the control of the Ögödeid prince, Qaidu, an enemy of Qubilai Qa'an who had successfully resisted the latter's attempt to expand his power into Central Asia.<sup>42</sup> Nawrūz could claim a loose connection with Qaidu since his father had served in Ögödei's household and it was not long before Qaidu welcomed Nawrūz as an ally in his campaign against the Toluid rulers of Iran and China. He promised Nawrūz a contingent of 30,000 soldiers, drawn from the Ögödeid forces stationed in Transoxiana, to reclaim his former patrimony.<sup>43</sup> Yet Nawrūz had no intention of becoming Qaidu's puppet and the two groups were soon to come to blows after Nawrūz returned to Khurasan in 690/1291.

Much of the tension between Nawrūz and his Ögödeid backers arose from disagreements concerning the nature of their mission to Khurasan. Nawrūz wanted to move into the heart of Khurasan to seize control of Nīshāpūr, one of the four main cities of the region, in 618/1221 as described by Juwaynī.<sup>44</sup> The siege proved costly to the Ögödeid army, which simply wanted to raid the city's outskirts and did not see the value in imposing direct control over the town. Thousands of Ögödeid soldiers were killed during the attack and their commanders vented their anger against Nawrūz, whom they lashed

41 Thackston, 595–9; *JT*, 853–6.

42 Michal Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997), 21; John Dardess, "From Mongol Empire to Yüan Dynasty: changing forms of imperial rule in Mongolia and Central Asia", *Monumenta Serica*, 30, 1972–73, 141.

43 Thackston, 600; *JT*, 857; Biran, *Qaidu*, 57.

44 'Alā al-Dīn 'Atā Malik Juvaynī, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World-Conqueror*, tr. J.A. Boyle, vol. I (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 151; Thackston, 602; *JT*, 860.

severely for having ordered the operation. The Ögödeids then separated from Nawrūz and moved to fulfil their primary objective, namely, looting the countryside of Khurasan.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, Nawrūz withdrew to his strongholds in Harāt and Sīstān, where Waṣṣāf states that he resumed his former policies of expanding agricultural cultivation and urbanization.<sup>46</sup> Nawrūz's philosophy of nurturing the wealth of sedentary communities to support a Turco-Mongolian military elite was strongly opposed by his former Ögödeid allies, who sought temporarily to gorge themselves on the loot of Khurasan before returning to their own patrimonies on the east bank of the Oxus River.

The dispute between Nawrūz and his one-time Ögödeid allies was not restricted to disagreements over the role of urban populations in the khanate. The conflict was also fuelled by differences concerning the relative status of the *noyat* (commanders) and Chinggisid princes in Mongol society. Nawrūz had become deeply unpopular during his stay at Qaidu's court and at one point it seemed as if he might be murdered by a band of Ögödeid nobles. Rashīd al-Dīn attributed their animosity to the fact that Nawrūz had behaved in an exceedingly arrogant manner and refused to acknowledge the seniority of his Chinggisid hosts.<sup>47</sup> As the hereditary governor of Khurasan, Nawrūz considered himself to be the equal of any prince in either Turkestan or Iran. He had sought the temporary assistance of the Ögödeids to reimpose his own authority over Khurasan, not to exchange one Chinggisid master for another. It was this inordinate sense of pride which alienated Nawrūz's Ögödeid allies and informed his sense of authority after he returned to Khurasan in 690/1291.

Shortly after his split with the Ögödeids, Nawrūz sought to assert his personal authority over Khurasan through a new brand of political symbolism. Despite the fact that Nawrūz continued to acknowledge the enduring importance of Mongol traditions of authority, he refused to subordinate himself to a Chinggisid ruler. Nawrūz proclaimed his new government in the name of an Ögödeid prince, Ürüṅ Temür, to rally support from amongst the nomadic military elite. Yet his claims to rule the region were made on the basis of Islamic rather than simply Chinggisid principles. Nawrūz donned the mantle of a champion of the Faith, promising both to defend and to "spread Islam" in Khurasan. In aid of this mission, he announced his intention to launch a holy war against the heathen armies of Qaidu and the Ilkhanate, promising to expel them from the region.<sup>48</sup> What ever power Ürüṅ Temür retained was subordinated to this broader religious mission. Indeed, Ürüṅ Temür was himself made to convert to Islam shortly after his marriage to one of Nawrūz's daughters.<sup>49</sup> By staking his claim to authority upon a combined Islamic-Chinggisid symbolism, Nawrūz ensured that Ürüṅ Temür would hold a much smaller share in the rule of their state.

The imposition of Islamic rule over Khurasan brought a new political hierarchy upon the region. This hierarchy ignored Chinggisid bloodlines and

45 Thackston, 602; *JT*, 860; Aubin, "Emirs Mongols", 56.

46 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 191.

47 Thackston, 600; *JT*, 857; Aubin, "Emirs Mongols", 56.

48 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 192.

49 Biran, *Qaidu*, 58; Aubin, "Emirs Mongols", 56.

hereditary claims to authority in favour of virtues (*manāqib*) and precedence in the Islamic community (*sawābiq*) as the main criteria for political authority. The significance of religious hierarchies in the Ilkhanate was first discussed by Judith Pfeiffer in her analysis of the diplomatic relationship between the Ilkhan Aḥmad Tegüder and the Mamluk Sulṭān, al-Manṣūr Sayf al-Dīn Qalāwūn. She demonstrated that, far from bringing peace and acceptance between the Mamluks and Ilkhans, the conversion of Aḥmad Tegüder to Islam led the Mamluks to adopt a new political discourse in which the recently converted Ilkhan was treated as a spiritual novice. In his correspondence with Aḥmad, Qalāwūn sought to stress that he had converted to Islam first and, therefore, held a superior position to the Ilkhan in the Muslim *‘umma* (community): “we thanked God for making us among the predecessors and first ones to this station and rank”. Indeed, his religious seniority gave Qalāwūn the right to advise Aḥmad in his new religion, thereby emphasizing “Qalāwūn’s superior knowledge of kingly behaviour”.<sup>50</sup> In this new order, the Mamluks claimed a political seniority based upon their superior knowledge of, and service to, the Islamic faith. A similar hierarchy emerged in Khurasan where Nawrūz assumed a spiritual primacy over Ürüng Temür on the basis of his claim to defend Islam.

The extent to which Nawrūz came to dominate his Chinggisid ally was demonstrated by a *yarliq* (decree), proclaimed in the name of Ürüng Temür but containing the prefatory statement “*Nawrūz sözinden ...*” (“Nawrūz says that ...”).<sup>51</sup> The fact that the words of an amir had come to replace those of a Chinggisid prince on a *yarliq* was a dramatic innovation. It reflected a new type of political relationship in which religion served as an alternative source of political legitimacy to simple Chinggisid descent. Indeed, the pervasive dominance of Nawrūz proved too much for Ürüng Temür to bear and he fled from his ally, claiming that he feared Nawrūz would soon kill him and seize absolute power for himself.<sup>52</sup> His desertion robbed Nawrūz of an important source of legitimacy among the Turco-Mongol military elite and forced him to search for a new ally among the Chinggisid princes. He did not have to look far, since circumstances at the Ilkhan *ordo* would soon force Ghazan to accept a rapprochement with his former protector.

Ghazan’s position had become untenable in the time since his flight from Khurasan in 690/1291. His failure to establish working alliances with the towns of Khurasan and Māzandarān meant that he was unable to provision his armies. These soldiers led a steady stream of defections to join the Nawrūzians in the east, severely undermining Ghazan’s strength. Nawrūz commanded strong support amongst the Qaraunas of Khurasan, the majority of whom abandoned Ghazan as early as 688/1289, after his second defeat to

50 Judith Pfeiffer, “Aḥmad Tegüder’s second letter to Qalā’ūn (682/1283)”, in Judith Pfeiffer and Sholeh A. Quinn (eds), *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 1996), 178; Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 41; Asma Afsaruddin, *Excellence and Precedence: Medieval Islamic Discourse on Legitimate Leadership* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 52–8.

51 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 192.

52 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 192; Aubin, “Emirs Mongols”, 56.

Nawrūz. Other senior Khurasani *noyat*, fearful that their pastures, families and animals had been left to the mercy of Nawrūz's army, began to desert Ghazan shortly afterwards.<sup>53</sup> Included in this group were some of Ghazan's most senior commanders, such as Dānīshmand Ba'atur, Chardu Noyan and Uighurtay-Ghazan. The last of these three *noyat* went so far as to announce his allegiance to Qaidu after Nawrūz returned to Khurasan with his Ögödeid army in 690/1291.<sup>54</sup> The significance of these losses began to show after Rabī' I 690/March 1291 when Arghun died, thereby removing the possibility of reinforcements being sent from Azerbaijan. Indeed, the young prince was doubly unlucky insofar as the new Ilkhan, Geikhatu, nurtured a boyhood rivalry with Ghazan and refused to respond to his appeals for assistance until 1292, when an army was briefly sent to Māzandarān. Yet these forces spent most of their time scavenging for provisions before returning to Azerbaijan without having fought a single engagement with Nawrūz.<sup>55</sup> Ghazan remained pinned down in Jājarm, to the west of Khurasan, with little hope of advancing his position.

It was at this point that Nawrūz spotted an opportunity for rapprochement with Ghazan. By the end of 694/1294 Nawrūz was worn down by his campaign against his former Ögödeid allies who had fought him to a standstill.<sup>56</sup> An alliance with Ghazan would not only augment the number of his soldiers but also provide some much-needed legitimacy to his regime after Ürüng Temür's departure. For his part, Ghazan had very few alternatives. He could either remain in Māzandarān while his support atrophied, or accept an alliance with his former protector in the hope of regaining a modicum of control over his old patrimony.

The two sides met late in 694/1294 between Marw al-Jūq and Shabūrghān, where Nawrūz had established his winter camp. Rashīd al-Dīn described the meeting as the unconditional submission of Nawrūz to Ghazan. He wrote of Nawrūz seeking spiritual and political absolution after having sinned against God and his rightful sovereign through his rebellion.<sup>57</sup> Yet Rashīd al-Dīn's interpretation should be viewed with scepticism, coming as it does from Ghazan's *wazīr* and official historian. Ghazan was in no position to demand the submission of Nawrūz, whose armies had repeatedly resisted his attempts to drive him out of Khurasan, nor does the idea of a chastened Nawrūz fit with Rashīd al-Dīn's earlier characterization of him as a proud and arrogant aristocrat.<sup>58</sup> He remained in command of a large army, which prompted Rashīd to reflect that "if God forbid, he had any thought to mutiny or treachery, much damage could have been wrought by his might".<sup>59</sup> Moreover, the ease with which Nawrūz had discarded a series of Chinggisid allies prior to his meeting with Ghazan (Kingshū, Hülejū, Qaidu, Ürüng Temür) suggests that he had a low opinion of the young prince's claim to hereditary authority. Nawrūz was

53 Thackston, 598–9; *JT*, 854; Aubin, "L'ethnogenese", 88.

54 Hirotohi, "The Qaraunas", 151 and 153; Thackston, 602; *JT*, 861.

55 Thackston, 603–4; *JT*, 859–66; Aubin, "Emirs Mongols", 55.

56 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 192; Thackston, 608; *JT*, 878.

57 Thackston, 607–8; *JT*, 873–5.

58 Thackston, 600; *JT*, 858.

59 Thackston, 609; *JT*, 879.

Ghazan's atabeg and his rapprochement with the future Ilkhan at Marw al-Jūq should be seen as a strategic alliance, not a political capitulation. Support for this view is provided by Waṣṣāf, who gives an interesting variation to the story told by Rashīd al-Dīn. According to Waṣṣāf, Nawrūz offered to enter Ghazan's service permanently, on the condition that the latter convert to Islam.<sup>60</sup> Superficially such terms would appear to have favoured Ghazan, yet it is revealing that Waṣṣāf did not record Ghazan's reply, suggesting that the prince did not accept Nawrūz's terms. Indeed, no other history records Ghazan's conversion to Islam at the council of Marw al-Jūq and very little is said of their interactions until Jumādā I 694/March 1295, when they joined forces to seize the Ilkhan throne. Waṣṣāf himself later confirms that Ghazan refused Nawrūz's conditions, stating that Nawrūz was forced to repeat his proposal during the prince's conflict with the Ilkhan Baidu later in 694/1295, at which point Ghazan did in fact convert.<sup>61</sup> The terms of Nawrūz's submission seemed favourable for Ghazan, but the example of Ūrūng Temūr's brief career in Khurasan suggests that the Atabeg had more than simply pious motives for demanding the prince's conversion.

By making his submission conditional upon Ghazan's conversion, Nawrūz had already transgressed the limits of a commander's authority. Rashīd al-Dīn said as much in his own account of Nawrūz's ultimatum, which he recorded as occurring in Rajab 694/May 1295.<sup>62</sup> Rashīd sanitizes Nawrūz's ultimatum to appear as "advice", targeted at winning the support of unnamed Muslims. Nevertheless, he still felt the need to have Nawrūz confess that "it is not customary for a *qarachu* (commoner) to give *biliks* (advice) to an *uruq* (member of the Chinggisid clan) . . .".<sup>63</sup> Nawrūz owed Ghazan his allegiance as his rightful sovereign and he had no right to make such demands. By making his submission contingent upon Ghazan's conversion to Islam, Nawrūz implied that his fealty could be withdrawn and, presumably, transferred to another candidate if the prince failed to uphold his side of the bargain. Such a loose conception of royal authority was alien to Ghazan's court, which was dominated by his household staff who warned Ghazan not to trust Nawrūz.<sup>64</sup> Acceptance of Nawrūz's religious convictions would have entailed a diminution of Ghazan's authority and the recognition of his former atabeg's spiritual primacy. The young prince was not willing to compromise his political convictions so easily until circumstances in Azerbaijan forced him to reconsider.

## The kingmaker

In Rabī' I 694/March 1295 news reached Ghazan that his uncle, the Ilkhan Geikhatu, had been deposed and murdered by a group of senior commanders in Azerbaijan. Unsure of how to respond, he summoned a council of his leading commanders to determine his next move.<sup>65</sup> Since their meeting at Marw al-Jūq

60 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 192.

61 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 193.

62 Thackston, 620; *JT*, 897.

63 Thackston, 620; *JT*, 897.

64 Thackston, 620; *JT*, 897.

65 Thackston, 608; *JT*, 878.

in late 1294, Nawrūz and Ghazan had been busily working to expel the Ögödeid raiders from Khurasan, during which time it appears that Nawrūz's influence over Ghazan's court had grown. Rashīd al-Dīn described Nawrūz as playing a leading role in the ensuing council. Ghazan had already heard reports that he would receive strong support in the west of the Ilkhanate in the event that he sought the throne, and Nawrūz joined the other *noyat* in advising the young prince to march west to stake his claim. Nawrūz may have hoped that by pushing Ghazan out of Khurasan he would finally win independent control over the province, or perhaps he saw the opportunity to expand his influence beyond Khurasan by helping Ghazan take the throne. In any case, the ambitious young prince liked what he heard and ensured Nawrūz's support by granting him the title of "Governor of Khurasan" before departing for the west.<sup>66</sup> Nawrūz accepted the office and reciprocated Ghazan's goodwill by joining the future Ilkhan on his march westwards.

Nawrūz accompanied Ghazan's suite until their progress was abruptly halted at the town of Rayy on the south-western fringe of the Alburz Mountains. It was here that Ghazan's uncle, Mulay Noyan, brought the news that Geikhatu's cousin, Baidu Oghul, had seized power in a coup, supported by a clique of Iraqi commanders, and that they had no intention of surrendering the throne to Ghazan. With a mixture of shock and perplexity, Ghazan summoned a second council of his leading followers to discuss their next move.<sup>67</sup> Several of Ghazan's most senior companions advocated that he return to Khurasan and gather a larger force, but once again Nawrūz successfully convinced Ghazan to continue his westward march in the hope that they would be able to catch Baidu's fledgling government off-guard.<sup>68</sup>

Baidu was well aware of Ghazan's intentions and after a brief skirmish between the advance guard of both armies Ghazan was confronted by the full might of the Ilkhan's force outside the town of Qazwīn. Seeing that Baidu held a clear numerical superiority over his Khurasani contingent, Ghazan decided to negotiate a peace through which he hoped to extricate himself from the potentially deadly confrontation. The two leaders met in a tent erected at a midway point on the battlefield and agreed to a provisional truce on the basis that Ghazan recognize Baidu's sovereignty in return for the revenues of Fārs and Kirmān. But the treaty had still not been ratified when Ghazan, doubting Baidu's sincerity, fled east with his army under cover of night.<sup>69</sup>

Retreating into Māzandarān, Ghazan found himself in a precarious position. He quickly realized that his success hinged upon the support of Nawrūz. In the event that Baidu's forces pursued him, Ghazan would have to rely on the latter's armies and supply networks to defend his position. Ghazan also understood that his only chance of defeating Baidu was to undermine his support among the Iraqi *noyat*, who had determined the fate of the last three Ilkhans. Ghazan and his allies commanded very little respect among the *noyat*, but his rival Nawrūz did. Not only was he the governor of one of the largest provinces in the Ilkhanate, but he was descended from one of the most important aristocratic

66 Thackston, 610; *JT*, 882.

67 Thackston, 610; *JT*, 882.

68 Aubin, "Emirs Mongols", 57.

69 Thackston, 613; *JT*, 891–5.

families in the realm. More than that, Nawrūz was a consummate politician and possessed well-established marriage ties and friendships with many of the leading Iraqī *noyat*, a group which included none other than his own brother Lakzi Güregen.<sup>70</sup> Only Nawrūz had the necessary influence to break up Baidu's support base and Ghazan desperately needed his help.

Nawrūz was aware of his value to Ghazan and made it clear that his support would not come cheaply. Presenting himself to Ghazan at their camp in Fīrūzkūh, Nawrūz told the prince that "if the *Pādshāh* [Ghazan] becomes a Muslim, at once the Muslims will pray for and praise [his] fortune and count assistance and aid [to him] as incumbent [upon them]".<sup>71</sup> The extent to which these sentiments genuinely reflected the mood of the broader Muslim community on the verge of Ghazan's conversion is highly dubious. There is little reliable information pertaining to the Islamization of the Mongols in Iran during the thirteenth century and it is therefore difficult to gauge the impact that Ghazan's conversion might have had on his support among the military aristocracy. Individual members of the Mongol military elite, such as Ghazan's uncle, Mulay Noyan, are described as holding Islamic sympathies prior to Ghazan's conversion.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, the account of Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Ḥammūya, who witnessed Ghazan's profession of faith, states that the prince was mobbed by joyful supporters who "began picking him up, and kissing the king's hands and feet" after his conversion.<sup>73</sup> This testimony has led Charles Melville to the conclusion that Islam had become "widespread in his army, and in that of his opponent, Baidu" at the time of their confrontation in mid-1295.<sup>74</sup> While this conclusion is no doubt correct, it would be a mistake to assume that Ghazan's conversion transformed his dispute with Baidu into a religious war, as Ghazan's court historians argued. There is no detailed information on what proportion of the Mongol army had converted to Islam by 694/1295, nor should it automatically be assumed that these Mongol Muslims would prioritize loyalty to religion over loyalty to their ethnic and political traditions.

Indeed, there is little evidence to suggest that the "Muslims" mentioned by Nawrūz were anyone other than himself and his supporters. Ghazan's conversion was not followed by the emergence of a Muslim faction in favour of his cause. Several of Baidu's commanders did join Nawrūz's army during his march against Azerbaijan, among them Taghachar, Chupan and Qurumshi, but these defectors listed personal disputes with the Ilkhan as the reason behind their change of heart, not a sense of religious solidarity.<sup>75</sup> In fact the spiritual convictions of these commanders are not mentioned, and it is highly probable

70 Thackston, 615–7; *JT*, 898.

71 Thackston, 617; *JT*, 898.

72 Dāvūd b. Muḥammad Banākāfī, *Tārīkh-i Banākāfī: Rawzat Ūlī al-Albāb fī Ma'rifat al-Tawārīkh wa al-Ansāb*, ed. Ja'far Shi'ār (Tehran: Society for the Appreciation of Cultural Works and Dignitaries, 1378/2000), 453.

73 Charles Melville, "*Pādshāh-i Islām: the conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān*", *Pembroke Papers* 1, 1990, 163.

74 Melville, "*Pādshāh-i Islām*", 161.

75 Thackston, 621; *JT*, 905; Banākāfī, *Tārīkh-i Banākāfī*, 455; Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 196; Marie F. Brosset (trans.), *Histoire de la Géorgie: depuis l'Antiquité jusqu'au XIXe siècle* (St Petersburg: l'Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1849), 613.



that most of them were not Muslims at all. Other defectors, such as Irinjin Noyan, whose Tibetan name suggests a Buddhist connection, were described by the Nestorian Catholicos Mar Yahballaha III as strong supporters of the Nestorian Church during the religious persecutions initiated by Nawrūz after Ghazan's coronation.<sup>76</sup> Their decision to join Ghazan was solely for pragmatic political reasons.

A slightly less credible explanation for the Muslim groundswell predicted by Nawrūz is that he envisioned the native Persian rulers rising to assist Ghazan's campaign.<sup>77</sup> Again, there is little evidence to suggest that Ghazan's conversion prompted his Persian subjects to sympathize with his power-grab. News of his conversion was received with blunt scepticism by the Mamluk rulers of Egypt, who claimed that he had merely assumed the title of a Muslim while still adhering to the patently non-Muslim practices prescribed by the *jasaq* of Chinggis Khan.<sup>78</sup> It is highly likely that a similar sense of caution informed the opinion of the native Persian princelings shortly after Ghazan's conversion. Rashīd al-Dīn clearly states that several Muslim kings joined the young prince's ranks immediately after he announced his new faith, yet he fails to mention who they were. Moreover, even if Ghazan did receive verbal assurances from his leading Persian subjects, it is doubtful whether their words translated into tangible support since the army Nawrūz led to confront Baidu shortly after Ghazan's conversion consisted of a paltry 4,000 men.<sup>79</sup> If the native provincial rulers of the Ilkhanate were happy with Ghazan's conversion their mood was certainly not translated into military assistance.

These considerations suggest that the only group to promise direct military support for Ghazan if he converted to Islam was Nawrūz and his army. His appeal for Ghazan to adopt the Faith was much more than an innocent piece of advice. It was the repetition of an earlier ultimatum made in 694/1294 at Marw al-Jūq. He was giving Ghazan a clear choice between accepting a shared authority, under Nawrūz's spiritual primacy, or defeat. This ultimatum was presented in far more explicit language by Waṣṣāf, who had it that Nawrūz promised that, "if the Prince would accept Islam, I will remove Baidu and seat the Prince upon the imperial throne".<sup>80</sup> Fearing the collapse of his enterprise Ghazan accepted Nawrūz's terms, saying that he would agree to convert to Islam if Nawrūz's god were to "free him from this fearful peril", in other words, to defeat Baidu.<sup>81</sup>

His proselytizing work complete, Nawrūz sought to place his new disciple on the throne. He set out from Māzandarān for Baidu's *ordo*, which had progressed to Rayy and was threatening an attack on Ghazan's position. Nawrūz entered the enemy camp under the guise of an ambassador, but Baidu suspected his motives

76 E.A. Wallis Budge (trans.), *The Monks of Kublai Khan, Emperor of China* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1928), no. 20, 257.

77 Shīrīn Bayānī, *Mughūlān va Hukūmāt-i Īlkhānī dar Īrān* (Tehran: Sāzmān-i Muṭāl'ah-i va Tadvīn-i Kutub-i 'Ulūm Insānī Dānishgāhha, 1385/2006–07), 210.

78 Denise Aigle, "The Mongol invasion of Bilād al-Shām by Ghāzān Khān and Ibn Taymīyah's three 'anti-Mongol' fatwas", *Mamluk Studies Review* 11/2, 2007, 100.

79 Thackston, 624; *JT*, 912; Mustawfī, *Zafarnāma*, X, 268.

80 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 192 and 193.

81 Banākātī, *Tārīkh-i Banākātī*, 453; Thackston, 620; *JT*, 897

and had him cast into prison.<sup>82</sup> The Iraqi *noyat*, perhaps surprised that one of their most dangerous rivals had fallen into their hands so easily, were divided in their view of what to do with Nawrūz. The latter had made several enemies among Baidu's supporters, chief among them being Tūkel Noyan, the governor of Georgia, who demanded that the Ilkhan execute Nawrūz immediately. This position was opposed by Taghachar Noyan, who, like Nawrūz, commanded a contingent of Qaraunas and had worked closely with the latter to appoint Ghazan's father Arghun to the throne in 1284.<sup>83</sup> Taghachar's faction managed to convince Baidu that Nawrūz would be far more useful to them alive and he pushed the Ilkhan to release the Amīr of Khurasan, against the advice of Tūkel. In a private interview with Baidu, Nawrūz swore that he would betray Ghazan into the Ilkhan's hands in return for official recognition of his rule over Yazd.<sup>84</sup> Baidu needed little further convincing and naïvely accepted the false promise of his captive to send Ghazan to him in chains.<sup>85</sup>

Unknown to Baidu, Nawrūz had been using his time in the Iraqi *ordo* to swing the support of the leading *noyat* in favour of Ghazan's campaign. He did not have to push hard as Baidu's ineptitude and lack of conviction had alienated many of his former supporters. In the weeks after Baidu's coronation, the new Ilkhan had showed an increasing dependence on the advice of his wife, Tödächü Qatun, who sought to reduce the influence of Taghachar's faction at the *ordo*.<sup>86</sup> Aqşarāyī claimed that Taghachar felt frustrated and excluded from the government of the realm which he had only recently won for Baidu.<sup>87</sup> It did not take Nawrūz long to persuade Taghachar that his interests would be best served by an alliance with Ghazan.<sup>88</sup> Taghachar was joined by a group of officials who had suffered demotion since Baidu's rise to power, chief among them being the former *ṣāhib dīwān*, Şadr al-Dīn Aḥmad Khālādī. Nawrūz's brief visit to the *ordo* had served its purpose: to undermine the Iraqi *noyat*'s support for Baidu's rule. Now, some time in June 1295, Nawrūz returned to Ghazan's camp at Fīrūzkūh in Māzandarān and informed him that victory was theirs for the taking, if the prince would fulfil his side of the bargain.<sup>89</sup>

Ghazan's conversion to Islam marked his tacit acceptance of Nawrūz's religious authority over his court. Far from strengthening the future Ilkhan's control of his Muslim subjects, Ghazan's public profession of faith (*shahāda*) confirmed his religious subordination to Nawrūz, who would serve as his spiritual guide. It is not surprising that Rashīd al-Dīn failed to document the conversion ceremony in any detail. Indeed, Rashīd denies any mention of Nawrūz in his account,

82 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 195; Thackston, 616; *JT*, 898; Mustawfī, *Zafarnāma*, 245.

83 Thackston, 552; *JT*, 792; Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 75.

84 Thackston, 618; *JT*, 899.

85 Thackston, 618; *JT*, 895; Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 195; Banākātī, *Tārīkh-i Banākātī*, 454.

86 Thackston, 617; *JT*, 894.

87 Karīm al-Dīn Maḥmūd Aqşarāyī, *Musāmarat al-Akhhbār*, ed. Osman Turan. Second edition (Tehran: Asāfīr, 1362/1984), 190.

88 Thackston, 617; *JT*, 894; Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 195.

89 Thackston, 619; *JT*, 901.

which stresses Ghazan's intuition and divine inspiration as the main reasons for his adopting the new religion. Virtually no information is provided on the *shahāda* itself in his account, save the claim that Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm Ḥammūya witnessed his profession.<sup>90</sup> Both Mustawfī and Waṣṣāf's timeline for the conversion are confused and provide very little detail for the ceremony itself.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, neither makes any mention of Ṣadr al-Dīn, who is replaced by Shaykh Qultuq Khwājah Khālidī Qazwīnī in Mustawfī's account.<sup>92</sup> Fortunately, the rather vague descriptions provided by the main sources have been supplemented by the account of Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm himself, who related his experiences at the *ordo* to the Syrian historian al-Birzālī in Damascus later in 1295, and whose account was transcribed by al-Jazarī.<sup>93</sup> This highly revealing account not only stresses the important role of Nawrūz in pushing for Ghazan's conversion, but also the heavy influence which he exerted over the young prince during and after the conversion ceremony.

Ḥammūya's account of Ghazan's conversion touches on the high degree of control that Nawrūz had come to exercise over the prince's court. The Shaykh himself had suffered from Nawrūz's domineering personality, saying that "he began to impede me from making the journey [i.e. the *hajj*]" when he visited the latter's camp outside Rayy. Nawrūz also gave signs of his strong independence from the Ilkhan, stating that "I want [to go on] the *hajj* with you, regardless of whether the king [Ghazan] permits it or not". Ḥammūya had very little personal contact with Ghazan, since he remained in Nawrūz's camp for the duration of his stay. Yet on 17 June, Nawrūz summoned the Shaykh and informed him that "he [Ghazan] has given his promise today; so come and sit with me". After some time had passed Ghazan emerged from the baths and "Nawrūz talked to him about Islam, and the king said, 'I have given my promise on this, and now is the time...'" As the ceremony commenced it became increasingly apparent that Ghazan had very little information about the rituals he was performing. At times the Prince made errors in his profession, which caused him to be "overcome with bashfulness and embarrassment, being only a youth and not yet thirty years old". During these lapses, the prince turned to Nawrūz to seek guidance on what was expected of him. After being asked to affirm that "Muḥammad is the Messenger of God", Ghazan turned to Nawrūz and asked "[should] I bear witness once more?" to which "Nawrūz said yes, and he pronounced it". With the *shahāda* complete, Ḥammūya also provided evidence that Nawrūz's overbearing influence continued well after the conversion ceremony. He reported hearing that "Nawrūz came in to him [Ghazan] early every morning to instruct him" in the laws and prayers of Islam. Ghazan had made a lifelong commitment to

90 Thackston, 619; *JT*, 900; Peter Jackson, "Mongol khans and religious allegiance: the problems confronting a minister-historian in Ilkhanid Iran", *Iran*, 47, 2009, 116.

91 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrū-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 193; Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Navā'ī (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1362/1983), 602; Mustawfī, *Zafarnāma*, 261–3.

92 Mustawfī, *Zafarnāma*, 262. His attempt to attribute the conversion to Qazwīnī is explained in Aubin, "L'ethnogenese", 60.

93 Melville, "*Pādshāh-i Islām*", 165.

the religion of his atabeg, which would have ongoing consequences for both his future government and his own conception of religious authority.<sup>94</sup>

After witnessing Ghazan's profession of faith, Nawrūz set out with a modest army of 4,000 soldiers in the direction of Azerbaijan. As he entered Qazwīn, Nawrūz spread the word that he was expecting 120,000 soldiers to reinforce him from Khurasan. This boast seems to have been given credence by Baidu's loyal supporters, who remembered Nawrūz's former alliance with Qaidu and scattered before his army's arrival at Tabrīz. The Ilkhan's position was further weakened by the defections of several leading commanders to Nawrūz's camp. With his army evaporating before his eyes, Baidu had no other choice than to flee north in the hope of receiving sanctuary from one of Nawrūz's rivals, Tūkel Noyan. In his absence Nawrūz entered Tabrīz in triumph before speeding north to apprehend the Ilkhan. Baidu was subsequently betrayed to Nawrūz by members of his own household and was put to death shortly before Ghazan's coronation.<sup>95</sup>

Soon after Baidu's flight from Azerbaijan, Ghazan moved to the city of Tabrīz, where he was given a warm reception by the population.<sup>96</sup> It was here, according to Waṣṣāf, on 11 Dhū al-Ḥijja 694/22 October 1295, that Ghazan was crowned in the presence of the town's senior *quḍāt* and 'ulamā'.<sup>97</sup> Yet it was immediately apparent that Ghazan had acceded to a shared authority. Shortly after taking the throne, Ghazan named Nawrūz as the "representative" (*nā'ib*) of the Ilkhan, with supreme control over both the civil and military administration of the realm.<sup>98</sup> In case there was any doubt as to the extent of Nawrūz's power, Ghazan confirmed that he had entrusted all the territory from the Oxus River to Shām to his atabeg's control.<sup>99</sup> Nawrūz would not tolerate any rival to his position, and when Ghazan's chief minister (*ṣāhib dīwān*), Ṣadr al-Dīn, sought to impose his own influence over the bureaucratic staff of the realm, Nawrūz overruled the Ilkhan and had him removed from office.<sup>100</sup> The ruler of Kirmān, Sulṭān Muẓaffar al-Dīn Muḥammadshāh, summed up the extent of Nawrūz's influence over the Ilkhanate shortly after Ghazan's enthronement in a complaint addressed to the *ordo*:

In all the lands of Fārs and 'Irāq and Kirmān it is declared and widely known that the key to office and status within the government lies with the favour and good-opinion of Nawrūz, and [that] the reins of all decrees and prohibitions are in his powerful hands, and he has sat his brothers, sons in law (*dāmādān*), agents and companions over the kingdom, and this has been the cause of all trouble in the business of the realm.<sup>101</sup>

94 Melville, "Pādshāh-i Islām", 162–4.

95 Thackston, 626; *JT*, 907–14; Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 1346/1967–68, 196; Mustawfī, *Zafarnāma*, 268–73; Aubin, "Emirs Mongols", 61.

96 Thackston, 627; *JT*, 916.

97 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 1346/1967–68, 198; Rashīd al-Dīn places the quriltai at Qarābāgh, the traditional site of previous Ilkhan coronations (Thackston, 627; *JT*, 916).

98 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 198; Mustawfī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, 602.

99 Thackston, 629; *JT*, 918.

100 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 199; Aubin, "Emirs Mongols", 61.

101 Ḥāfīz Abrū, *Jughrāfiyā Ḥāfīz Abrū*, ed. Ṣādiq Sajjādī. Vol. III (Tehran: Āyaniyi Mīrāth, 1378/1999), 86.

Muḥammadshāh's statement is supported by both Rashīd al-Dīn and Waṣṣāf's description of Ghazan's *ordo*, which was dominated by Nawrūz's family. His younger brother, Ḥājī Nārīn, was given the task of supervising the *dīwān* and provisioning the army, whilst another brother, Lakzi Küregen was posted to the royal *ordo* to keep a watchful eye on the young Ilkhan. Nawrūz also awarded the imperial seal to one of his amirs, Satalmish, who was required to validate every official *yarliq*.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, when Ghazan sought to address Muḥammadshāh's concerns by ordering the eviction of the Nawrūzians from Kirmān, Nawrūz violated the Ilkhan's orders and dispatched two of his agents to claim the tax of the province on his behalf.<sup>103</sup> Nawrūz's authority covered every corner of the Ilkhan state, over which Ghazan held only limited power.

Having won control of the Ilkhan court, Nawrūz sought to replace the old symbols of Mongol–Chinggisid authority with those of Islamic power. He began by issuing his own *yarliqs*, independent of Ghazan, shortly after Baidu's flight from Azerbaijan. These *yarliqs* announced Islam as the official faith of the Ilkhanate and proclaimed an end to the tolerance afforded to minority religions under previous rulers.<sup>104</sup> He ordered the destruction of all pagan buildings and the conversion or expulsion of all *kāfir* (non-Muslims) from the realm, which in turn resulted in a wave of persecutions against the religious minorities of the realm. René Grousset argued that these persecutory *yarliqs* were a sign that Ghazan remained "a prisoner of his adherents" shortly after he assumed the throne.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, they were an assertion of Nawrūz's religious primacy over the political legacy of Ghazan's predecessors, chief among them being his father, Arghun. The latter's reign coincided with the ascendancy of the Sa-Skya sect of Tibetan Lamaism at the Yuán court in China. The leader of this sect, 'Phags-pa bLa-ma bLo-Gros rGyal-mTshan, penned at least seven epistles supporting Chinggisid authority through reference to Buddhist cosmology.<sup>106</sup> He developed a pseudo-historical basis for Chinggisid power by tying the dynasty into the line of universal Buddhist emperors, the *cakravartin*.<sup>107</sup> 'Phags-pa's epistles recast the Chinggisid dynasty as originating from the line of Tibetan kings, by which method Qubilai (and Arghun) became the direct blood descendants of Sakyamuni himself.<sup>108</sup> By virtue of this new lineage the Chinggisids assumed a vital role within the Buddhist world order. It is highly likely that the ideas of 'Phags-pa held similar sway at the court of the Ilkhans, Abaqa (r. 1265–82) and Arghun, which contained several highly

102 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 199; Thackston, 630; *JT*, 919.

103 Ḥāfiẓ Abrū, *Jughrāfiyā Ḥāfiẓ Abrū*, III, 87.

104 Thackston, 626; *JT*, 914; Banākātī, *Tārīkh-i Banākātī*, 455; Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj*, 506; Wallis Budge, *The Monks of Kublai Khan*, 210; Stéphanos Orbélian, *Histoire de la Sioumie* (tr. Marie F. Brosset. St Petersburg: l'Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1864), 262.

105 René Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*, tr. N. Walford (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 379.

106 Sh. Bira, "Qubilai Qa'an and 'Phags-pa bLa-ma" in Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (eds), *The Mongol Empire and Its Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 244.

107 David Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 125.

108 Henry H. Howorth, *History of the Mongols from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*. Vol. 1 (New York: B. Franklin, 1964), 33.

influential Buddhist monks and theologians from Yuán China.<sup>109</sup> Indeed, it may have been Arghun's attempt to publicize 'Phags-pa's ideas in Iran that led Waṣṣāf to accuse him of claiming a form of prophethood.<sup>110</sup> The intimate relationship between the Buddhist clergy and the Ilkhan court during Arghun's reign meant that Nawrūz's attack on the religious minorities of the *ordo* had serious implications for the Ilkhan monarchy as well. Buddhist temples were targeted particularly heavily by Nawrūz's agents who were under strict orders to either destroy or convert all pagan temples into mosques.<sup>111</sup> In doing so, the iconoclastic Nawrūzians tore down the buildings which housed painted effigies and statues of Abaqa and Arghun.<sup>112</sup>

Nawrūz's Islamizing reforms also resulted in a change to the imperial seal of the Ilkhanate. Shortly after his appointment as the khan's *nā'ib*, Nawrūz informed Ghazan that, in light of his conversion to Islam, the *tamgha* (imperial seal used for validating *yarliqs* and official correspondence) should be replaced with a circular stamp bearing the Islamic profession of faith.<sup>113</sup> The *tamgha* was one of the most salient symbols of royal Chinggisid authority and represented not only the sovereign's supreme control over the policy of his government, but also the political primacy of the Chinggisid dynasty. Until that time, the *tamgha* had acted as a symbol of investiture from the *qa'an*, Qubilai, who dispatched the imperial seal to each successive Ilkhan after he had come to office.<sup>114</sup> The *tamgha* also bore the formula of Chinggisid authority through which the khan claimed to rule. For example, the inscription on the seal of Güyük read, "We, by the power of Eternal Tengri, universal Khan of the great Mongol Ulus – our command ...".<sup>115</sup> The fact that Nawrūz was now responsible for fashioning Ghazan's seal was a dramatic illustration of the former's primacy over the Ilkhan. Instead of the claim to universal Chinggisid sovereignty, the royal *tamgha* now bore the profession of Islamic faith, to which Nawrūz's *yarliq* ordered all Mongols to submit: "it was decreed that all Mongols and Uighurs should favour Islam and pronounce the profession of faith".<sup>116</sup> The Nawrūzian concept of spiritual primacy posed a direct challenge to the hereditary Chinggisid authority which Ghazan had only just claimed.

The alliance of Nawrūz and Ghazan, and their triumph over Baidu in 694/1295, brought about the most significant change in the way political authority was conceived in the Ilkhanate since the death of Möngke Qa'an in 1259. Their triumph resulted in the imposition of Nawrūzian models of social,

109 Thackston, 664; *JT*, 966.

110 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 145.

111 Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l Faraj*, 506; Mustawfi, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah*, 602.

112 A. Bausani, "Religion under the Mongols", *CHIr*, V, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*, ed. J.A. Boyle (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 542.

113 Thackston, 630; *JT*, 918.

114 Thomas Allsen, "Changing forms of legitimation in Mongol Iran", in Gary Seaman and Daniel Marks (eds), *Rulers from the Steppe: State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery* (Los Angeles: Ethnographics Press, University of Southern California, 1991), 227.

115 Christopher Dawson, *The Mongol Mission, Translated by a Nun of Stanbrook Abbey* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1955), 86.

116 Waṣṣāf, *Tahrīr-i Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf*, 1346/1967–68, 199.

religious and political identification upon the west of the realm. These ideas included the efficient exploitation of the Ilkhanate's sedentary subjects to sustain the Mongol army, a realization which would find its fullest expression through the land reforms initiated during the final years of Ghazan's reign. Moreover, the alliance of Ghazan and Nawrūz introduced the revolutionary concept of religious primacy to the Ilkhan realm. Nawrūz's successful manipulation of this new political formula won him a clear ascendancy over the Ilkhan government during the first two years of Ghazan's reign. It was not until 696/1297 that Ghazan finally felt strong enough to topple his over-mighty ally and assert his own conception of Islamic–Chinggisid authority over the Ilkhanate.