Persian Books from Mongol Baghdad: A Survey of Manuscript Evidence

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This article explores the presence of Persian literary activity in Baghdad under Mongol rule. It surveys surviving Persian manuscripts produced in Baghdad before, during, and after the Mongol conquest, highlighting their diversity in literary genre, authorship and scribal habits present in these codices. While some evidence points to isolated instances of Persian manuscript production before the conquest, the study shows that Persian literary activity significantly increased under Ilkhanid rule. The article emphasises the role of Mongol patronage and the integration of Persian-speaking elites into Baghdad's administration as key factors in this shift. It also considers the role of institutions such as madrasas in sustaining manuscript production in Persian alongside Arabic. Despite the profound disruption caused by the conquest, the manuscript record suggests that Baghdad's intellectual life recovered and was reshaped within the broader cultural and political networks of the Mongol Empire. Ultimately, the article argues that while Arabic remained the dominant scholarly language, Persian emerged as a flourishing medium of literary and intellectual expression, reflecting the city's incorporation into an increasingly Persianate cultural sphere under Mongol rule.

Keywords: manuscript production, scribal practices, Persian literature, patronage, Mongol rule, Baghdad, 13th-century Iran

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This article is part of the volume *Mongols' Baghdad. Knowledge Transmission Through Manuscript Cultures Before and After the Conquest*, guest editors: Bruno De Nicola and Nadine Löhr. To read all related articles, please access https://doi.org/10.1553/medievalworlds_no22_2025.

رگید طرش نآ است که بعد از ین متولی این نسخه ها را که تمام شود هر سال به شهری فرستد از شهر های اسلام، عربی به بلاد عرب، و عجمی به بلاد عجم، وابتدا به معظم ترین شهر ها کند. پس به معظم ترین به وفق مفتضای رای او تا وقف باشد بر اهل آن شهر به موجب مذکور، و در آن شهر در مدرسه ای که آن رامدرسی باشد به فنون علوم مشهور و مشارالیه وقضات و ائمه و علما اختیار کنند بنهند تا متعلمانی که رغبت نمایند پیش آن مدرس آن را می خوانند.[1]

> Another provision is that after [the production of] this [book], the custodian of these copies, when they are finished, will send them every year to the cities of Islam. Arabic [books] to Arab regions, and *ʿajamī* (or: Persian) [books] to *ʿajamī* countries, and first to the most important cities.[2] Therefore, it is most important, according to his (the custodian's) opinion, to endow the people of that city according to the aforementioned [provisions] and in that city, to a school (*madrasa*) where he will teach the techniques of famous sciences, and the judges, imams, and scholars, so that the educated people who desires [to learn] this book, read it to the teacher.[3]

Introduction

The above quotation is part of the famous religious endowment (*waqfiyya*) containing the financial provisions and specific commands left by the powerful Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Hamadānī (d. 1318 CE) for the management of his foundation in Tabriz. In this particular part of the endowment, the vizier provides specific instructions as to how and where copies of his books should be distributed across the Ilkhanate and beyond, specifying that those books written in Arabic should be sent to 'Arab regions' while those in Persian to 'Persian regions'. Unfortunately, nowhere in the document are we told which part of the Ilkhanate was considered 'Arab' or 'Persian' or whether these delimitations were based on linguistic, historical, or even ethnic characteristics of the region. The city of Baghdad is one of the few urban centres specifically mentioned in the endowment as a place of destination of the vizier's books but no specific reference to whether Arab or Persian books where to be sent there.

The city of Baghdad was a major centre of knowledge production in the Islamic world from its foundation in the year 750 CE. The production of manuscripts functioning as support for the dissemination of this knowledge is documented at least since the 10th century, with manuscripts copied in Baghdad during the 11th century surviving to our days.[4] However, the fall of Baghdad to the Mongol armies commanded by Hülegü in 1258 CE is often seen as a turning point in the history of the city. Although Baghdad was arguably already immersed in a long process of cultural decline by the time of the arrival of the Mongol armies,

1 Rashīd al-Dīn, *Waqfnāmah-i Rabʿ Rashīdī*, ed. Mīnuvī *et al.*, 239.

2 A footnote in the edition of this document mentions that some copies of the text have the actual word *Fārsī* rather than *ʿajamī*.

3 Translation by the author of this article.

4 See, for example, a manuscript dated 9 Dhū al-Qaʿda 487 AH [20 November 1094 CE] and containing a medical work by Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakarīyā al-Rāzī (d. 925 AH). The book is currently at the National Library of Medicine (Bethesda, Maryland, USA), MS NLM A17.

the conquest impacted greatly in terms of demographics, destruction of infrastructure, and a loss of the city's cultural and religious centrality.[5] The Mongol conquest of Baghdad and the execution of Caliph al-Mustaʿṣim (d. 1259), diminished the city's role as the political and spiritual centre of the Islamic world, but simultaneously, it became part of the expansive, interconnected Mongol Empire stretching from China to the Mediterranean. Recognising the city's symbolic significance, the Mongols protected local merchants and their properties, integrating Baghdad into their administrative framework so that it became one of the principal urban centres in Ilkhanid Iraq.[6]

Similarly to their practices in other regions of the Ilkhanate, the Mongols appointed new administrative staff to the newly conquered territories. The new Mongol rulers soon favoured officials proficient in both Arabic and Persian for administrative roles such as governor (*wazīr*), deputy governor (*nāʾib*), military commander (*shiḥna*), and judges (*quḍāt*) to administer justice in the region.[7] Among them, the influential ʿAlā al-Dīn ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī (d. 1282) was appointed governor of Baghdad in 1259 and, together with his brother, the *ṣāḥib dīvān* Shams al-Dīn Juwaynī, they became part of a new Persianate elite that oversaw the administration, revenues, and cultural activities of the Ilkhanate from Khurasan to Anatolia.[8]

The consolidation of Persian as the primary language for administration and diplomacy at the Ilkhanid court is well documented.[9] Following the establishment of Mongol power in the region of modern-day Azerbaijan and the integration of a Persian-speaking elite into Ilkhanid governance, Persian was firmly adopted as the preferred language for administering the western provinces of the empire – a practice that continued a precedent set earlier by the Great Seljuqs.[10] After the Mongol invasions, the use of Persian as a literary language became increasingly widespread, especially in Khurasan, Azerbaijan, and Anatolia, where it dominated genres such as history, poetry, and Sufi literature.[11] Arabic, however, continued to be widely used and retained its central role in scholarly and religious writing. When Hülegü added Iraq to the Mongol domains in 1258, Baghdad was incorporated into the Ilkhanid political and cultural framework. Yet the city differed from other regions under Mongol rule due to its long-standing Arabic literary tradition and distinct demographic makeup. While Persianate influence in Baghdad predates the Mongol conquest, the role of Persian as a literary language in the city remains less studied compared to its prominence in other Ilkhanid territories.

This article offers a preliminary survey of surviving Persian manuscripts copied in Baghdad during the Mongol period until the fall of the Ilkhanate in 1335. While acknowledging the limitations posed by manuscript survival and attribution, the study aims to present

5 Boyle, Dynastic and political history, 346-349; Biran, Baghdād under Mongol rule, 285-315.

6 Kennedy and Zaryāb, Baghdad.

7 This is based on the description made by Ibn Fuwaṭī quoted in Spuler, *Mongolen in Iran*, 339, n. 13.

8 The presence of a Persianate faction in the Caliphal court before the arrival of the Mongol to Baghdad has been discussed in the past. See Kennedy and Zaryāb, Baghdad; De Nicola, Ibn al-Alqamī; Gilli-Elewy, Mongol court in Baghdad, 168-181.

9 Lambton, *Continuity and Change*, 297-327; Aubin, *Émirs mongols et vizirs persans*.

10 Fragner, Ilkhanid rule, 68-82.

11 Morgan, Persian as a lingua franca.

a representative sample of Persian cultural activity in the city. It explores not only what was written, but also who was involved in the production, circulation, and, when it is possible to determine it, the consumption of these texts. By tracing the history of these manuscripts, this article considers whether Mongol rule of Baghdad in the 13th and 14th centuries, rather than leading to cultural decline as often believed, fostered the use of Persian as a literary language in the city, showcasing the integration of Baghdad into the wider Eurasian intellectual network provided by the Mongol Empire. Ultimately, the goal is to assess whether the rise in Persian manuscript production reflects broader processes of cultural transformation and Persianisation of Baghdad under Mongol governance.

Persian Manuscripts in Ilkhanid Baghdad Before the Mongols

While numerous accounts detail the Mongol invasion of Iraq and the sack of Baghdad in 1258, assessing the specific impact on the survival of pre-conquest manuscripts remains challenging. Dramatic stories explaining, for example, how the Mongols threw so many books into the rivers of Iraq during the sack of the city that book-bridges were created from shore to shore, or that this caused the Tigris River to turn black from the amount of ink, are common among some Muslim chronicles of later periods.[12] However, these references seem to be more allegorical than factual, reflecting the shock of the invasion among contemporary and later Muslim scholars rather that the real destiny of books in the city. These accounts are more illustrative of the impact that the capitulation of the Abbasid capital to a pagan 'barbarian' had in the mind of educated Muslims of the period, rather than providing any accurate description of the damage the Mongols inflicted on the literary heritage of the city. The idea of *barbarian* Mongols with a particular disdain towards books and knowledge became so ingrained in the pre-modern Islamic world that this association was recorded not only in narrative sources of the time, but also in marginal annotations of some Arabic manuscripts, possibly to increase the value of the book as a surviving object of the 'Mongol literary destruction' of Baghdad.[13]

Despite the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258 CE, a number of manuscripts copied in the city prior to the conquest have survived. Recent research has identified at least twenty-four manuscripts, now housed in collections across Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Europe, that were copied in Baghdad between 1200 and 1258. Additionally, several manuscripts produced in the late 12th century have also endured, offering valuable insights into the city's literary culture before and after the Mongol invasion.[14] More recent research has shown that after the initial sack of Baghdad, cultural activity in the city recovered, if not to its former glory, to a point at which books were being copied, read, and distributed in Baghdad only decades after the surrender of the city.[15] Further, an undetermined number of manuscripts are believed to have survived from the collection of the Abbasid caliphs, as some accounts suggest that these books were moved out of the city and later formed the library of the Maragha Observatory

12 For a selection of these accounts, see Biran, Libraries, books and transmission of knowledge, 464-502.

13 On this, see Gharib, From the banks of the Tigris.

14 The identification of these manuscripts has been done as part of the research conducted by members of the project NoMansLand (FWF Y-1232 G30).

15 De Nicola, Manuscript witness, 70-108; Biran, Libraries, books and transmission of knowledge, 464-502.

founded by Hülegü and the polymath Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274) after the conquest of Baghdad.[16]

In this period prior to the Mongol conquest of the Jazira, royal patronage rested mainly on the shoulders of the Abbasid Caliphate or the local Iraqi dynasties such as the Zangīs (r. 1127-1234), both mostly Arabic-literary dynasties. Instead, the production of Persian manuscripts in the first half of the 13th century was concentrated in regions like Anatolia, Khurasan, and Central Asia, dominated by local dynasties such as the Seljuqs of Rūm (r. 1077-1308) or the Khwārazmshāh (r. 1190-1221), more inclined towards using Persian as literary language.[17] It is not surprising then, that the overwhelming majority of the surviving pre-Mongol Baghdadi manuscripts are written in Arabic language.[18]

Among the twenty-four identified manuscripts copied in Baghdad before the Mongol conquest, only one contains Persian works. This is the manuscript London, British Library, Or. 4118, dated 5 Dhū al-Ḥijja 601 AH (24 July 1205 CE), which has been clearly linked to the city (see figure 1), making it a rare example of Persian manuscript production in pre-Mongol Baghdad.[19] Its survival offers valuable insight into the presence of Persian literary culture in the city prior to the Mongol invasion. The manuscript contains a very early translation of a Sufi seminal work written originally in Arabic by Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī al-Nīshāpūrī (d. 465 AH / 1072 CE), often referred to as *Risāla al-Qushayrī fī ʿilm al-Tasawwuf.*[20] This work is considered one of the founding books of Sufism, offering the reader an introduction to different aspects of the 'Sufi path' in Islam.[21] The book is organised in different sections, including an introduction by the author, biographies of Sufi mystics, explanations on common expressions used by Sufis, and a dissertation about aspects of Sufi *ṭabaqāt*.[22]

The original Arabic work was composed during the 11th century in support of the idea that there is compatibility between Sufism and mainstream Islam, especially with regard to the respect for the *sharīʿa* and religious sciences like the study of hadiths. This work appeared at a moment when Sufism had not yet become popular in the Islamic world but had begun to

16 This idea is based on the words of, for example, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728 AH/1327 CE), who claims that Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī allowed the Mongols to destroy religious books (*tafsīr*s, hadiths, *fiqh*, etc.) but saved those dealing with medicine, astronomy, or philosophy. See Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, 193.

17 See for example the composition of the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr wa-āyat al-surūr* of Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Rāvandī (fl. 1202), who dedicated the work to Sultan Kaykhusraw I of Rūm (d. 1211); see Hillenbrand, Rāvandī, the Seljuq court. An early copy of the work has survived, possibly copied in the 13th century, at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Supplément Persan 1314; for a description, see Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits turcs*, 267.

18 For a codicological description of these Arabic manuscripts, see Ben Azzouna, *Aux origines*, 661.

19 A description of this manuscript can be found in Rieu, *Supplement*, 8-9.

20 The work has been translated into different European languages. See, for example, al-Qushayrī, *Al-Qushayri's Epistle on Sufism*, trans. Knysh.

21 It was a rather popular text in its original Arabic version, with copies found in different collections across the Islamicate world. See, for example, Kafadar and Karamustafa, Books on Sufism, 441.

22 The term *ṭabaqāt* is often used to refer to the literary genre within Islamic biographical literature which is usually arranged according to the century in which notable individuals (in this case Sufi shaykhs) lived. In the context of this work, the term is used to address how this text classifies Sufi mystics into hierarchical or generational layers, often reflecting their spiritual rank, historical period, or lineage within Sufi tradition.

spread among Muslims in different parts of Eurasia.[23] With the spread of Sufism in the 12th century, and especially during the 13th century, the book became a primary textbook among Sufi communities and a core reading for Muslims initiated in the mystical path.[24]

Although this copy of the translation of al-Qushayrī's book is mentioned in E.G. Browne's classic study on the *Literary History of Persia*, manuscript Or. 4118 has been mostly ignored by scholars in the field, with the exception of a brief note on the antiquity of its binding made in the 1960s.[25] The codex contains not only a unique early witness of the Persian translation of al-Qushayrī's work but also presents some codicological features worth highlighting in this survey. The colophon of Or. 4118 (figure 1) informs us that the original Arabic text was composed in the year 438 AH [1046 CE].[26] We know that the work circulated widely in the Islamic world during the 12th century because different copies of the original Arabic text have survived to this day. However, we do not know when the Persian translation was made nor how many other copies of the Persian translation were in circulation in this period, since no other copy of the Persian version seems to have survived. Even if copies of the text might have been available in different parts of West Asia at the time that Or. 4118 was copied, the singularity of this copy resides in the fact that it was reproduced not in its Arabic original but in its Persian version within the context of early 13th-century Baghdad, where Arabic was, according to the general understanding of the period, the dominant literary language. Hence, while we have evidence of Persian being used in manuscripts in this early period in regions relatively close to Baghdad, Or. 4118 is the only manuscript I was able to find with a clear specification that it was copied in the city before the coming of the Mongols.[27]

This raises the question of why this copy was produced in Persian in Baghdad when the general tendency in the city before the Mongols was to copy books in Arabic. There is always the possibility that this copy was the result of an individual initiative, with a Persian-speaking person having requested the copy to be made in Persian for his own use. This manuscript, however, does not reveal any specific patron who might have asked for this copy to be produced in Persian nor does it include any dedicatee that would reveal a particular preference for Persian rather than the substantial number of Arabic copies of the text that were in circulation in this period. The colophon identifies the copyist as Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Qazwīnī, whose *nisba* – a component of Islamic names indicating geographic origin, profession, or affiliation – suggests he (or his family) came originally from the region of Qazvin in present-

23 Mojaddedi, Legitimizing Sufism.

24 Al-Qushayrī, *Al-Qushayri's Epistle on Sufism*, trans. Knysh, xxv.

25 Browne, *Literary History*, vol. 2, 288; Gardner, Three early Islamic bookbindings, 28-30.

26 Or. 4118, fol. 279a. For other early copies of the work in Arabic, see MS University of Tehran, Central Library, no. 8204 M (dated 'end of Muḥarram 768' [October 1366]); another undated but possibly 13th-century copy can be found in MS Qom, Marʿashī 11824.

27 For example, a copy of the Qur'an that includes a Persian translation of the *Tafsīr* of Ṭabarī was copied between 607 and 622 AH (1210 and 1225 CE), possibly in Tabriz, for Abū al-Qāsim Hārūn b. ʿAlī b. Ẓafar Dindān, a vizier of the Atabeq of the Seljuq-Ildiguzid dynasty, Uzbek b. Muḥammad b. Ildeguz (d. 1225). See Bibliothèque nationale de France, Supplément Persan 1610; Ben Azzouna, *Aux origines*, 109-110. Another example is the Qur'an translation dating from 1209-1211, possibly copied in Khurasan, that is now at the library of the Golestan Palace in Tehran (Golestan number 55-60).

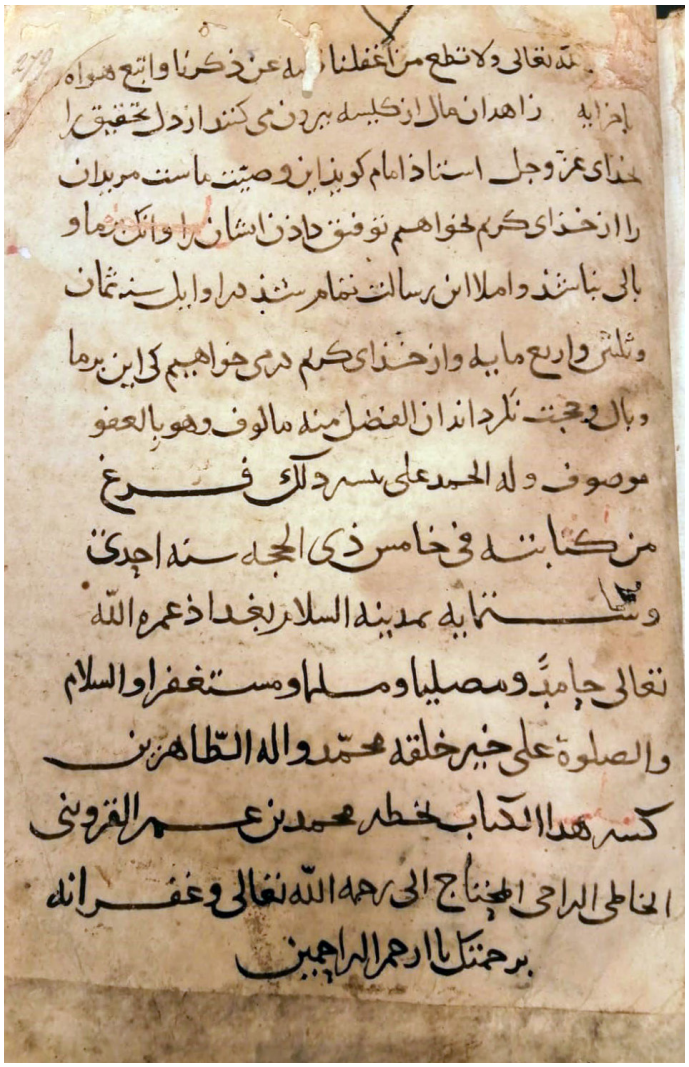

Figure 1: Colophon, Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī al-Nīshāpūrī, Risāla al-Qushayrī fī ʿilm al-Tasawwuf. London, British Library, Or. 4118, fol. 279a.

day Iran.[28] His ability to copy this text in Persian reinforces the possibility that the copyist was a Persian-speaking person who settled in Baghdad after coming from the central areas of the Iranian plateau. Unfortunately, we lack sufficient information from the manuscript to say with certainty whether this codex was produced on the copyist's own initiative or at the request of a patron – either from Baghdad or another part of the Middle East – who specifically wanted the book in Persian when Arabic versions of the text were available. Old ownership marks written in the title page of the manuscript mention that the book was acquired in the year 640 AH [1242-1243 CE] by a certain Abū Bakr b. Muʿāwiya b. al-Rashīd al-Isbāhanī (?),

28 Or. 4118, fol. 279a.

a person who thus far remains unidentified. Hence, the first recorded acquisition of the book occurred some sixteen years prior to the Mongol conquest of Baghdad, evidencing a perhaps limited, but still relevant, presence of literary activity in the Persian language happening in the city of Baghdad before the Mongol conquest of the city.

Unfortunately, we have no references to the fate of this manuscript during or immediately after the Mongol conquest. The remaining ownership marks in the codex were made long after the Mongol domination of the city was over, reflecting that the manuscript changed hands on different occasions. Two isolated dates mentioning the years 866 AH and 98[?] AH were added to the title page, hinting that the book changed owners during the 15th and 16th centuries, before it possibly made it to the Ottoman Empire before being acquired by the British ambassador Thomas Fiott Hughes.[29]

Interestingly, al-Qushayrī's *Risāla* is not the only text included in Or. 4118. Three pages of another work were added at the beginning of the book and another two additional pages of the same text were copied after the colophon. All five pages are written in a different hand and the calligraphy is more cursive and less elegant than the copy of al-Qushayrī's *Risāla*. However, the added text is almost as old as that penned by the main scribe and the extra pages could have been added to the codex during the 13th century. Although the beginning of the text is damaged, it is possible to identify the work contained in these extra pages as the beginning of the famous *munājāt* of ʿAbd Allāh Anṣārī (d. 1088), also known as *Pīr-i Herat*.[30]

Similar to the main text in this codex, Anṣārī's work is considered a seminal Sufi text composed in the 11th century, and is even described as one of the jewels of Persian literature.[31] This work is a collection of invocations to God in Persian rhymed prose and became a very popular text among Sufis of the 13th century. The *munājāt* was originally composed in the Persian dialect of Herat and is the result of the selection made by students of ʿAbd Allāh Anṣārī from the teachings given by the *pīr* (master) at his *khānaqāh* (Sufi hospice) in Herat during the 11th century.[32] Clearly, both texts were not only composed contemporaneously during the formative period of Sufism but are also thematically complementary in terms of their content. They both represent teachings from early Sufi masters, they are both rendered in Persian, and they both belonged to the basic corpus used by Sufis in the pre-modern Middle East. The arrangement of these two works in a single codex suggests precisely that they were bound together for their thematic coherence.

Thus, while the scarcity of Persian manuscripts from this period limits our knowledge of Sufi communities in pre-Mongol Baghdad, the works in this unique manuscript provide rare evidence of Persian Sufi literature being copied in a city where Arabic was the dominant literary language. The codex Or. 4118 is a piece of very unique evidence that mystical

29 Another owner is also mentioned on the title page, albeit with an illegible part in the middle of the name, possibly from this later period: Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad b. Saʿīd b. Uthmān (…) b. ʿUmar b. Shaddād al-Khalāṭī. See Or. 4118, fol. 3a.

30 De Beaurecueil, ʿAbdallāh Anṣārī.

31 For translations of the *munājāt*, see al-Harawī, *Munājāt*, trans. Morris and Sarfeh; *idem*, *Cris du Coeur*, trans. de Beaurecueil.

32 Ravan Farhadi, *Abdullah Ansari of Herat*, chapter 8.

representations of Islam in Persian were present in pre-Mongol Baghdad and that the expansion of Sufism and Persian literary writing preceded the Mongol conquest even in urban centres where Arabic was the overwhelming preferred literary language. It is possible that this unique copy is the exception that confirms the rule that all manuscripts copied in Baghdad produced before the Mongol conquest were written in Arabic; nevertheless, it is evidence of an early literary presence of Persian in the city.

Persian Manuscripts Between the Fall of Baghdad and the Reign of Ghāzān Khān (r. 1295-1304 CE)

The second half of the 13th century is the period of Mongol permanent establishment in the Middle East and the time when the Mongol rulers of the Ilkhanate remained largely pagan rulers of Islamic lands.[33] For the city of Baghdad, this is a period of political instability, economic decline, and decrease of cultural centrality marked by the execution of the Abbasid Caliph, the transfer of the central ruling Mongol court to the region of Azerbaijan, and the incorporation of the city as just another administrative division of the Ilkhanate.[34] However, despite these circumstances, the city remained an important centre of cultural, scientific, and religious activities after the Mongol conquest. Under the short governorship of Ibn al-ʿAlqamī (d. 1259) and the longer term of ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī, Baghdad maintained its role as a cultural centre of the Islamic world and, arguably, increased its relevance by becoming integrated into the larger Eurasian cultural network of the Mongol Empire.[35]

Although the cultural diversity of medieval Baghdad allowed different communities of Christian, Muslims, and Jews to cohabit in the city and a variety of languages certainly were spoken in the streets of Baghdad, the institutional, educational, and cultural activities of the city were mostly conducted in Arabic, even after the Mongols took control of the city. Preliminary analysis on the production of manuscripts in both Persian and Arabic in the city suggests an initial decline in the copying of manuscript during the early years of the Mongol occupation, with an initial decade of no surviving manuscripts copied in Baghdad between 652 AH and 662 AH [1254-1263 CE].[36] Although these statistics should be taken with caution, it seems that either no manuscripts were copied in Baghdad in this ten-year period or, at least, none have survived to this day that can be clearly connected to the city. However, the same statistics show that only a few years after the Mongol conquest and occupation of Baghdad, manuscript production, circulation, and consumption recovered during the decades of the 670s and 680s of the Hegira.[37]

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33 With the exception of the short rule of Aḥmad Tegüder (r. 1282-1284), who had converted to Islam prior to his ascension to the throne, all other Ilkhans of Iran up to 1295 were non-Muslims.

34 Boyle, Dynastic and political history, 346-349.

35 De Nicola, Ibn al-Alqamī; Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, 194-196.

36 The last surviving manuscript I found from the years before the conquest is a copy of the work on *kalām* entitled *al-Risāla al-Mūḍiḥa* by Muẓaffar b. Jaʿfar al-Ḥusaynī (fl. 7th c. AH) made in 652 [1254 CE] in the Madrasa Niẓāmiyya of Baghdad and currently held at the library of the Madrasa al-Shubariyya in Najaf, Iraq, MS no. 147.

37 See also De Nicola, Manuscript witness, 70-108. The Mustanṣiriyya madrasa, for example, apparently reopened within a year and a half of the Mongol conquest of the city; see Biran, Libraries, books, and transmission of knowledge, 472.

Compared to later periods in the Mongol domination of the city, these early decades of Mongol rule show a lack of direct Ilkhanid royal patronage of books.[38] Therefore, this recovery in manuscript production after a decade or so of the conquest, as I will try to show below, was largely driven by two interconnected factors: first, the support of new local elites brought to Baghdad by the Mongols; and second, the re-establishment of long-standing institutions like the different Baghdadi madrasas, such as the Niẓāmiyya madrasa and the Madrasa Mustanṣiriyya, among others.[39] The interaction between these two factors is encapsulated in a later description left by an anonymous author of the 14th century (previously believed to be Ibn Fuwaṭī), who mentions that during the governorship of ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī, there was a government investment in the refurbishment of madrasas, mosques, and other institutions, an act that was emulated, not only by other wealthy Mongol officials and governors of the city that succeeded him, but also by his own wife, Shams al-Ẓuḥā Shāh Lubnī, who founded the Madrasa ʿIṣmaṭiyya just outside of Baghdad in the year 678 AH.[40]

Although in this early post-conquest period the majority of surviving manuscripts produced in Baghdad are in Arabic, when compared to the pre-conquest period discussed above, we find a substantial increase in the production of Persian manuscripts in Baghdad between 1258 and 1300 CE. So far, I have been able to trace five codices which include five Persian texts that can be dated to this period and that can be confidently linked to Baghdad as their place of copy. The increase in quantity of Persian manuscripts from the period before the conquest to that after the Mongol's took control of the city is accompanied by a growth in the variety of literary genres represented in these manuscripts. Of the five surviving Persian codices copied in this period, two are by the same author and contain works on philosophy and astronomy, another two are classical Persian works of literature, and finally there is one work on history written by the governor of Baghdad himself, ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī.[41]

The earliest Persian manuscript copied in this period is Afyon Gedik 18325, containing a copy of the *Akhlaq-i Nāṣirī*, a work on ethics composed in Persian during the year 633 AH [1236-1237 CE] by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, the famous polymath who became Hülegü's chief advisor after the conquest of Baghdad and the most influential intellectual of the Ilkhanate during this early period.[42] The original work was composed decades before the Mongol conquests, during the period in which Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī was under the protection of the Ismāʿīlī

38 Ben Azzouna, *Aux origins*, 10.

39 See, among other Arabic manuscripts copied in Baghdadi institutions in this period, Istanbul, Süleymaniye 1005 (copied at the Madrasa Niẓāmiyya on 25 Jumādā II 682 AH); Dublin, Chester Beatty Library 3286 (copied at the Madrasa Mustanṣiriyya in Dhū al-Qaʿda 682 AH).

40 Anonymous, *al-Hawādith al-Jāmiʿa*, trans. Āyatī, 245-246; Bosworth (ed.), *Historic Cities*, 40. The involvement of Mongol officials in supporting madrasas, mosques, and khanqahs is documented across the Ilkhanate. See, for example, Pfeiffer, Confessional ambiguity vs. confessional polarization, 129-168.

41 See works 2-6 in the table below.

42 On Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, see Lane, Ṭusi, Naṣir-al-Din; for an edition of the work, see Nasir al-Din Tusi, *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, ed. Mīnuvī and Ḥaydarī; *idem*, *The Nasirean Ethics*, trans. Wickens.

governor of Quhistan in present-day south-eastern Iran.[43] After the fall of the Ismāʿīlīs at the hands of the Mongol armies in 1256, Ṭūsī re-published this work with a new introduction that removed the name of the Ismāʿīlī ruler to whom the work was originally dedicated as an attempt to dissimulate the close connections he had with the now defeated Ismāʿīlīs. Due to the influence and popularity achieved by the *Akhlaq-i Nāṣirī* in the years to come, the work has often been defined as the 'single most important work on philosophical ethics in the history of Islam'.[44]

The work is divided into three discourses: the first and longest deals with ethical aspects in the life of individuals; the second considers aspects of economy and the management of family relationships; and the third discusses aspects of public life.[45] The colophon of the copy currently at the Afyon Gedik library tells us that the book was copied in Baghdad by a certain Muḥammad b. Suhayl b. ʿAlī al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ṭabarī during the last days of Shaʿbān 662 AH [July 1264 CE].[46] This manuscript is possibly the earliest copy of the text that has come to us, produced during the lifetime of the author and only six years after the Mongol conquest of Baghdad. Further, the colophon specifies that the manuscript was copied in the Madrasa Niẓāmiyya, anticipating the institutional role that madrasas played in early Mongol Baghdad in the production of manuscripts both in Arabic but now also in Persian. At least sixteen manuscripts in Arabic were also copied in this period in the Niẓāmiyya and Mustanṣiriyya madrasas alone and we have exemplars copied in lesser-known institutions like the Sharīfiyya madrasa or the Ṭūṭūsiyya madrasa, or in *ribāṭ* like the al-Ḥarīm or the al-Urdūwāniyya.[47] One copy of a commentary on the *Qanun fi al-Tib* of Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037 CE) even survives, copied in the al-ʿAḍudī hospital in Baghdad in 678 AH, a hospital that, according to most narrative sources, was destroyed by the Mongols in 1258; manuscripts like this one show that it continued to operate twenty years after the conquest.[48]

The other work in Persian authored by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and copied in Baghdad during this period is a reproduction of his famous work on astronomy entitled *Zīj-i Īlkhānī*. This is a compendium of astronomical tables of planetary movements produced by the author in the Maragha Observatory for his Mongol ruler and patron Hülegü in 1260, but only presented years later, to his son and successor, Abāqā Ilkhān (r. 1265-1282).[49] The work was composed in 1272, the year when the twelve-year cycle of planetary observations made by Ṭūsī and the astronomers in the observatory finished. Although later criticised by astronomers for

43 Madelung, Nasir al-Din Tusi's ethics, 85-101. The manuscript London, British Library, Add. 25,843 still contains the first version of the preface where Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī wrote eulogies to his Ismāʿīlī patrons with the new pro-Mongol preface copied in the margins. This manuscript was copied in Agra (India) in the year 1082 AH [1671 CE].

44 Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, *Arabic Version of Ṭūsī's 'Nasirean Ethics'*, ed. Lameer and al-Jurjānī. The quote comes from the blurb of this translation.

45 For a brief explanation of the work, see Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, *Nasirean Ethics*, trans. Wickens, 9-12.

46 Afyon Gedik 18325, fol. 112b.

47 See MS Istanbul, Köprülü, Fazil Ahmet Paşa 466, copied at the Ribāṭ al-Urdūwāniyya in Jumādā II 695 AH.

48 See MS University of Tehran, M 7815 work 1, copied at the al-ʿAḍudī hospital in 678 AH.

49 Boyle, Longer introduction to the Zij-i Ilkhani, 244-254. Another early copy of this work is London, British Library, Or. 7464, copied in the 13th century; see Meredith-Owens, *Handlist of Persian Manuscripts*, 24.

containing imprecisions in the operations, the work became very popular in the pre-modern Islamic world. Translations were made into Arabic and different copies have survived as parts of astronomical compendia dated well into the 15th century.[50] This copy, currently at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin in Germany (MS Sprenger 1853), is divided into four parts separated as different discourses (*maqālāt*), subsequently sub-divided into sub-sections in a similar way as in other extant copies of the work.[51] We can tell that this copy circulated widely in the pre-modern period since corrections and additions were made to the book and two seals located on the title page mark later ownerships of the manuscript.

The colophon tells us that this manuscript was copied in the city of Baghdad in 689 AH [1290 CE], only seventeen years after the death of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī.[52] The singularity of this copy does not reside in the fact that a work on astronomy was copied in Baghdad, because the city had been (and remained) a major centre for the transmission of scientific knowledge in the Islamic world. Instead, it is the fact that the work was copied in its original Persian language, evidencing the consolidation of Persian as a vehicle of knowledge transmission in Mongol Baghdad. But perhaps the most intriguing aspect of this manuscript resides not in the content of the text but in the identity of the person involved in its production. The name of the copyist of this manuscript is given as Nūyān ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Naṣrānī, suggesting, on the one hand, that the scribe was a Christian (*naṣrānī*) and, on the other, that he was possibly a member of the Mongol elite, given the reference to the noble Mongol title of *noyan* (*nūyān*) in his name.[53] The religious affiliation of the scribe would not be surprising since, as mentioned above, Baghdad was a multi-religious city during the final decades of the 13th century and other people carrying the same *nisba* are recorded in the contemporary sources as being close to the Mongol court.[54] However, the possible participation of a Christian Mongol prince in the copying of a Persian scientific manuscript such as this is rather unique in the literary history of the Ilkhanate, potentially revealing a major development in the process of transculturation between Mongol conquerors and native population in the Mongol-dominated Middle East.

50 Two interesting 14th-century copies survive of this work in the collection of the British Library. The first (Add. 7698) has no place of copy but could have been copied in Baghdad. The second (Add. 11,663) is an autographed copy of a recension of the *Zīj-i Īlkhānī* copied in Baghdad in Rabīʿ II, 796 AH [1393 CE] by al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḥasan Shāhanshāh al-Simnāni al-Munajjim (fl. 14th c.). See Rieu, *Catalogue*, 454-455.

51 For a description of this manuscript, see Pertsch, *Persischen Handschriften*, 357-358.

52 Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Sprenger 1853, fol. 140b.

53 On the use of the title *noyan* in Yüan China, see Ho Kai-lung, The office and noble titles, 151-152.

54 For example, there is Abū al-Karam al-Naṣrānī, executed by Arghūn Ilkhān in 1289, and the physician Ṣafī al-Dawlah al-Naṣrānī, who provided medical assistance to Ilkhān Geikhatu in September 1292. See Rashīd al-Dīn, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jamiʿuʾt-tawarikh*, trans. Thackston, 566 and 577 respectively.

The same year that this apparent Christian Mongol *noyan* finished copying the *Zīj-i Īlkhānī*, another scribe living in Baghdad, called Rashīd al-Khawāfī, completed on Saturday, 4 Dhū al-Ḥijja 689 AH [9 December 1290 CE] a copy of the *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā* (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Supplément Persan 205), the celebrated historical chronicle of the Mongol invasions authored by the already mentioned ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī, governor of Baghdad, who was executed by the Ilkhān Arghūn only eight years before this copy was made.[55] This is a famous copy, already acknowledged by E.G. Browne at the beginning of the 20th century and used by scholars on many occasions for being the earliest most complete surviving copy of the text.[56] The connection of this manuscript to the city of Baghdad is less certain than the other copies included in this article. There are no references to the city in either the colophon of the work or in other parts of the book. However, the analysis made of pictorial and stylistic characteristics of the illustrations contained at the beginning of the manuscript, including one allegedly representing ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī himself (figure 2), have convinced different art historians that the manuscript was illustrated in Baghdad.[57] The fact that the text could have been written somewhere else and then moved to Baghdad to be illustrated cannot be ruled out. However, there is documentary evidence of a close connection between the copyist of the text and the city of Baghdad that reinforce the idea that the codex was copied in the city.[58]

This copy of ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī's text can be considered a luxury manuscript, with two full-page illustrations with the strong Chinese artistic influence commonly found in luxury Ilkhanid books.[59] The calligraphy is clean and the beginning of the manuscript includes a decorated, albeit unnamed, *shamsa* (ornate medallion) that might have been produced for either a ruler or a wealthy official in the Mongol court. The original decorated *shamsa* most possibly included the name of the author, the title of the work, and possibly the original patron of the manuscript, but its contents were erased and then replaced by a later owner of the book, Sātilmish b. Aybak b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Malikī, who acquired this book in Tabriz in the year 724 AH [1324 CE].[60] The manuscript remained as a family possession, passing on to al-Malikī's son (Shaykh Muḥammad, born in 727 AH), and four of his grandsons, whose names and dates of birth were also added to the first page of this manuscript.[61] Different *ex libris* and seals show how praised this luxury copy of the work became when it was taken first into the Timurid court of Sultan Amīr Ḥusayn b. Bayqarā Mīrzā (d. 1506) and later entered the collection of the Ottoman Sultan Bayazid II.[62]

55 Juwaynī, *Kitāb-i tārīkh-i Jahāngushāʾī*, ed. Qazvīnī, trans. Boyle.

56 Browne, Note on the contents, 30.

57 Simpson, Role of Baghdad, 91-115; Richard, *Splendeurs persanes*, 41.

58 For the connections between Rashīd al-Khawāfī's scribal work and the city of Baghdad, see Kamola, Reconstructing Rashīdī manuscript production.

59 See, for example, the copy currently in the Khalili Collection in the United Kingdom. Blair, Compendium of chronicles; Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie*, 162-197.

60 Ben Azzouna, *Aux origins*, 199-201.

61 Supplément Persan 205, fol. 1a.

62 Ben Azzouna, *Aux origins*, 554.

Figure 2: Mongol prince [Abāqā Ilkhān?] standing near ʿAlā al-Dīn ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī (mentioned as ʿAlā al-Dīn ṣāḥib [al-] dīvān), who writes sitting on a cushion under a pomegranate tree. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Supplément Persan 205, fol. 2a.

As Baghdad recovered from the Mongol invasion thanks to the survival of its educational institutions and the financial support of a new ruling elite including figures such as the Juwaynī brothers, the production of the above-mentioned philosophical and scientific texts by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī or the chronicle of ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī – albeit in Persian – could be seen as obvious developments in a city that remained a centre for scientific and religious knowledge. However, rather surprisingly, manuscripts produced in this earlier period of the Mongol domination of Baghdad were not limited to scientific or historical works but included the copying of works often catalogued as classics of Persian literature. The first of these exemplars is the manuscript Bibliothèque nationale de France, Persan 376, which contains a very early illustrated copy in Persian of the compendium of fables known as the *Kalīla wa Dimna*.[63] This famous work, allegedly composed in Sanskrit and translated into Middle Persian during the Sasanian period, was only made available in New Persian through the Arabic translation of the Pahlavi made in the 8th century CE by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. ca. 757 CE).

63 Gray, Fourteenth-century illustrations.

The text was extremely popular among Persian elites in the Ilkhanate, as reflected by the many 13th- and 14th-century copies surviving from the period.[64] Although the colophon of the work mentions clearly that the text was written by Abū Ṭāhir b. Abī Naṣr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Widhkulī in the *madinat al-Salām* (Baghdad) in the year 678 AH [1279-1280 CE], there have been doubts about the date of composition of this text based on the fact that the illustrations included in the codex seem to have been added in the 14th or early 15th centuries.[65] However, later addition of images to an earlier text is not uncommon in medieval Islamic manuscripts, and in this case, there is no reason to doubt that the written part of the manuscript was composed in the 13th century as mentioned in the colophon.[66]

The other manuscript containing a literary work surviving from this period and copied in Baghdad is perhaps more surprising, since its circulation appears to be very much restricted to certain Persian intellectual circles of the Ilkhanate and the Seljuq Sultanate of Rūm. Manuscript 216 of the library of the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul contains a version of the *Marzubānnāma*, copied 'on the eastern shores of the river Tigris in Baghdad' by a certain al-Murtaḍā b. Abī Ṭāhir b. Aḥmad al-Kāshī on the 10th of the month of Ramaḍān 698 AH [11 June 1299 CE].[67] This is the oldest and only illustrated copy of this work composed by Saʿd al-Dīn al-Varāvīnī (lived ca. 1225 CE) for Abū al-Qāsim Hārūn, vizier of the Ildiguzid Atabeq Uzbek b. Muḥammad of Azerbaijan.[68] This work is often described as belonging to the genre of 'mirror for princes', including stories and fables that in a didactic manner guide the reader along the right and virtuous path.

The production of these two literary works in Baghdad during the late decades of the 13th century cannot be a coincidence. It has already been pointed out that there is a close link between the *Marzubānnāma* and the *Kalīla wa Dimna*, with both works sharing similarities in their content, and the latter appears as one of the books that Varāvīnī recommends his readers to use as a literary model.[69] Further, the *Marzubānnāma* has already been shown to have circulated among Persian-speaking elites in Anatolia during this period. Surviving letters exchanged between middle-rank officials in 13th-century Anatolia commenting and sharing opinions about these works attest the wide circulation and consideration that Persian-speaking elites had for these literary works.[70]

The production of these Persian texts in this early period raises the question of the intended audience for these works in a predominantly Arabic-speaking city and mostly bilingual literate men. In the manuscripts, evidence for patronage in this period is scarce, but narrative sources such as those written by al-Dhahabī and others praised people like ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī

64 See Waley and Titley, An illustrated Persian text; O'Kane, *Early Persian Painting*.

65 Gray, Fourteenth-century illustrations, 134.

66 For a description of the images, see Blochet, *Inventaire et description des miniatures*, 33-35; Ben Azzouna, *Aux origins*, 554.

67 Simpson, Role of Baghdad, 91-116. See Archaeological Museum of Istanbul, MS 216; Ben Azzouna, *Aux origins*, 566.

68 Varāvīnī, *Marzbān-nāma*, ed. Qazvini; ed. Rowšan.

69 Crewe Williams, Marzbān-nāma.

70 De Nicola, Letters from Mongol Anatolia, 84-85.

for rebuilding institutions like the Niẓāmiyya madrasa, where *Akhlaq-i Nāṣirī* was copied, and for offering financial rewards to authors dedicating works and poems to him in the city.[71] Both actions, the rebuilding of educational institutions and the promotion of literary activity in the city, contributing to the cultural recovery of Baghdad and indicate the establishment of a growing Persian elite in the city during this period that generated a demand for Persian texts. Hence, the presence of these Persian literary works in Mongol-ruled Baghdad in this period seems to suggest that a similar Persianised elite settled in the city with the establishment of the Mongol governorship, and that the manuscripts produced in the Persian language in this period were not only the consequence of the city's prominent role in science, philosophy, and history, but also that works of literature were produced for the consumption of an established Persian upper class that consumed classical Persian literature.

A New Muslim Dynasty: Persian Manuscripts in Baghdad After the Conversion of Ghāzān Khān

The ascension to the throne of Ghāzān Khān (r. 1295-1304) and his conversion to Islam marks a new period in the history of the Ilkhanate. Although the depth and commitment of the Islamic conversion of Mongol rulers has been questioned and debated for some time among scholars, the official recognition of Islam as the religion of the ruler had an impact in the relationship between Mongol rulers and their subjects.[72] As was often the case among the Mongols, the coronation of Ghāzān Khān was not a straightforward process but the result of a violent power struggle between different contenders to the throne.[73] When Ghāzān Khān finally managed to secure the Ilkhanate for himself, he annihilated political opposition and re-organised the networks of alliances with Mongol factions, local rulers, and officials in his administration.[74] The changes also impacted the city of Baghdad, where city governors changed at the same time that different Ilkhāns and viziers occupied the central government during the years before Ghāzān Khān's ascension to the throne.[75] But despite ongoing instability, Baghdad appears to have benefited from Ghāzān Khān's conversion to Islam in 1295. This event helped restore some of the city's diminished prestige as a centre of the Islamic world following the Mongol conquest and gained it a degree of centrality within the Ilkhanate. For instance, Ghāzān Khān paid particular attention to the city by reorganising its administrative authorities and visiting Baghdad at least twice within the first three

71 Anonymous, *al-Hawādith al-Jāmiʿa*, trans. Āyatī, 221-221; Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, vol. 59, 80-83. As suggested by Michal Biran, the role of the Juwaynī brothers in the restauration of the city after the Mongol conquest might have been exaggerated by some sources, however, their role in the recovery of educational institutions in Baghdad appears to have been significant; Biran, Libraries, books and transmission of knowledge, 492.

72 On religious conversion and the Mongol engagement with the conquered populations, see Jackson, Mongols and the faith, 245-290.

73 This included the former Ilkhān Gaikhātū (r. 1291-1295), Ilkhān Baydu (r. 1295), and Ghāzān Khān (r. 1295-1304). See Boyle, Dynastic and political history, 372-379.

74 On the ascension of Ghāzān, see Boyle, Dynastic and political history, 379-386.

75 Kennedy and Zaryāb, Baghdad.

years of his rule.[76] The renewed interest in the city and the financial investment provided by Ghāzān Khān may well have accelerated the cultural recovery of the city started by ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī a few decades before.

In the last decade of the 13th century and the beginning of the 14th century, Baghdad became a new centre of calligraphy, book illumination, and manuscript production. Under Ghāzān and his successor Öljaitü, the city was integrated into an administrative region of the Ilkhanate that also included cities such as Mosul and Hamadan. This whole region became a centre for manuscript production where luxury Qur'ans, such as the famous Öljaitü's Qur'an and other copies of the Holy Book commissioned by Ghāzān Khān,[77] were crafted and books in Arabic and Persian were written for the new Mongol elite, many of whose members had recently converted to Islam.[78] The revitalisation of Baghdad as a centre for manuscript production and calligraphy is epitomised by the figure of Yāqūt al-Mustaʿṣimī (d. 698/1298), who resided in the city under Mongol rule. Renowned for his contributions to Islamic calligraphy, his work includes illuminated copies of the Qur'an and the copying of other works, some of which were commissioned by Ghāzān Khān, reflecting a new tendency in Mongol cultural patronage in Baghdad during this period.[79] This burst in manuscript production in the *madinat al-Salām*, like in the preceding periods, was mostly done in the Arabic language. Different works in Arabic were produced in the city during the early decades of the 14th century, including works on theology (*kalām*), qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*), and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*).[80]

Nonetheless, as we saw at the beginning of this article, Persian had already permeated into the madrasa scriptoria of Baghdad even before the Mongol conquest and the (re)production of Persian texts in the city expanded during the early 14th century. Up to ten different Persian works distributed across five manuscripts have survived from Mongol-dominated Baghdad in the early 14th century. In terms of the subject of the works, this period presents similarities and differences with the previous one. For example, we have no astronomical works in Persian (like the *Zīj al-Īlkhānī* mentioned above) being copied in this period, and the other copy of the *Akhlaq-i Nāṣirī* we have from 14th-century Baghdad was not copied until half a century after the end of the Ilkhanate (see table below).

76 During Ghāzān's first visit to Baghdad, he made a pilgrimage to the tombs of Abū Ḥanifa (d. 767 CE) and the Shia Imam Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar al-Kāẓim (d. 765 CE) before attending Friday prayers in the city. In his second visit in 1298, Ghāzān undertook fiscal reforms and financed new infrastructure in the city, such as a new canal in the river. See Kennedy and Zaryāb, Baghdad.

77 For a detailed description of the Qur'ans commissioned by Ghāzān and Öljaitü, see Ben Azzouna, *Aux origines*, 212-289.

78 De Nicola, The 'Kāmūsī Corpus', 439-461.

79 Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 242-260; Canby, Yāḳūt al-Mustaʿṣimī. For a description and analysis of all the surviving manuscripts copied by Yāqūt al-Mustaʿṣimī, see Ben Azzouna, *Aux origins*, 621-664.

80 See, as a few examples among many others, the *kalām* work by Ṣadr al-Sharīʿa (d. 747 AH), *Nihāyat al-hifāya Darāya al-Hadāya*, Manisa, Manisa Yazma Eserler Kütüphanesi, MS 526 work 1, copied in 715 AH; the *tafsīr* by Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar Zamakhsharī (d. 538 AH), *al-Kashshāf an ḥaqāʾiq jawāmiḍ al-tanzīl*, Istanbul, Süleimaniye Library, MS Laleli 216, copied 718 AH; or Jaʿfar b. al-Ḥasan Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī (d. 677 AH), *Sharāʾiʿ al-Islām fī masāʾil al-ḥalāl wa l-ḥarām*, Mashhad, MS Ferdowsi University 303, copied in Baghdad on 16 Jumādā II 735 AH.

However, similar to previous periods, we have a copy of a world history and the reproduction of a seminal work on Sufism being copied in Persian in the city. The former is a copy of the *Blessed History of Ghāzān Khān* (*Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghāzānī*) written by the Ilkhanid vizier Rashīd al-Dīn. This version of the dynastic section of his *Compendium of Chronicles* (*Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*) was copied in the city in 717 AH [1317 CE], only a year before the execution of its author.[81] This copy, currently held at the Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi in Istanbul, is among the most complete versions of the work that have survived to this day and has become one of the primary sources for modern editions of the work.[82]

As for the work on Sufism, the survival of Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Sprenger 742, copied in Baghdad by Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Makārim al-Mushkānī, marks a continuation of an interest in Sufi literature in the city. This work is an excerpt in Persian from an Arabic commentary by a certain Abū Ibrāhīm Ismāʾīl al-Bukhārī (d. 1043) on the *Kitāb al-taʿarruf li-madhāhib al-taṣawwuf*, composed in 380 AH [990 CE] by Abū-Bakr Muḥammad al-Kalābādī (fl. late 10th century).[83] The manuscript was copied in the city of Baghdad in Ṣafar 713 AH [June 1313 CE] and although it is damaged in the central part of the codex, it is a very early copy of this translation that was apparently done only three years before on Rabīʿ I 710 AH [August 1310 CE].[84] The manuscript's paratext does not add much information regarding the circulation or impact of the codex after its production. However, the survival of this work evidences a potential continuity of demand for texts on Sufism in Persian that, as we have seen above, was already present in Baghdad from the early 13th century.

As in the previous period, there is an increasing demand for more literary Persian texts in this period, documented in the survival of two further manuscripts dated to the early 14th century, as the ruling Persianised elite in the city seems to consolidate its cultural activities in the city. This increase is documented mostly in manuscripts containing works in Arabic, but there are two remaining examples of manuscripts in Persian produced in Baghdad, dating from the time of the last Ilkhanid ruler Abū Saʾīd (r. 1316-1335).[85] Both coincide thematically with the manuscripts produced in previous periods of Mongol domination of the city mentioned in this article. The first is another copy of the *Kalīla wa Dimna*, which seems to have been the most popular piece of literature in Persian-speaking Baghdad if we consider not only the other copies produced in the 13th century but also the extensive allusions to the text made in other texts produced in this period (as we will see below).[86] This copy is currently in the Marʿashī Library in Qom (no. 11888), and its colophon mentions that it was finished on the

81 On Rashīd al-Dīn, see Blair, Compendium of chronicles; Kamola, *Making Mongol History*; Brack, *Afterlife for the Khan*.

82 Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi R.1518. For a detailed description of this manuscript, see Kamola, Reconstructing Rashīdī manuscript production.

83 An edition of this Persian exert was published as Bukhārī, *Khulāṣah-ʾi Sharḥ-i Taʿarruf*.

84 Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Sprenger 742, fol. 4b.

85 Some examples of Arabic manuscripts produced in this period are given in Ben Azzouna, *Aux origins*, 588-600.

86 See references to Zangī Bukhārī in his *majmūʿa* in this article.

1st day of the month of Muḥarram in the year 723 AH [10 January 1323].[87] The manuscript is transcribed in a neat script with titles and words underlined using red ink. However, the manuscript lacks all signs of ownership and marginal annotations, suggesting that this copy might have been produced for a restricted circle of readers, possibly kept in the personal library of a wealthy owner and not circulating very widely. The second is a copy of the story of *Humāy wa Humāyūn* by Khwājū Kirmānī (d. 1349?), composed originally in Baghdad in 1331 CE for Ilkhān Abū Saʿīd (r. 1316-1335).[88] The copy made in Baghdad (Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Revan Köşkü 1045) is illustrated and has been dated to only a few years after its composition.[89]

Perhaps the biggest development in terms of literary production in Mongol Baghdad lies in the fact that in this period of the first half of the 14th century, there is evidence of the first newly composed texts in Persian produced in the city. These texts are all included in a multiple-work manuscript (*majmūʿa*) including six autographed works by Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd Zangī Bukhārī, copied in a short period of time and finished in the month of Ramaḍān 713 AH [January 1314], at the peak of the reign of Öljaitü Ilkhān and his influential vizier Rashīd al-Dīn.[90] The codex is currently held at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Or. Quart. 1675); perhaps because it has changed location several times in the 20th century, this manuscript has received very limited scholarly attention.[91]

The texts authored by Zangī Bukhārī included in this codex are often referred to as the *Zangīnāma*, a title used by Īraj Afshār in the edition of these texts.[92] There is very limited information about the life of Zangī Bukhārī. Apart from his *nisba*, which suggests a personal or ancestral origin in Central Asian, information about his life comes only from what he relates in his writings. We know that prior to the composition and copying of the *Zangīnāma*, he had accumulated some experience as scribe, and it is possible that he made a living out of copying books during his lifetime. This is suggested by the fact that in 709 AH [1309 CE] he copied a work by another author that is now in the Lala Ismail collection in Istanbul. This manuscript contains an anonymous piece entitled *Sharḥ-i Kalīla wa Dimna,* a Persian translation of an originally Arabic commentary on the classic work mentioned above.[93] In fact, it is possible that the inspiration to write at least some of the works in the *Zangīnāma* might have come from his knowledge of classical Persian works, including the commentary on the *Kalīla wa Dimna* he copied and other copies of this classical text that, as we have seen, were circulating

87 MS Qom, Maraʿshi no. 11888, fol. 180b.

88 De Bruijn, Ḵ̲ʿāju Kermāni.

89 The manuscript has no date but has been dated as belonging to the 14th century. Since I was unable to see this manuscript, I only refer to it for further research.

90 On Rashīd al-Dīn, see Kamola, *Making Mongol History*; on the role of Rashīd al-Dīn and the Ilkhān Öljaitü, see Brack, *Afterlife for the Khan*, 79-95; on his role as a patron of book production, see Ben Azzouna, *Aux origins*, 367-377.

91 The manuscript was kept temporarily at the library of the University of Tübingen to be protected from the bombardments of World War II, but was returned to the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin in 1968. For this article I have used both the original manuscript and the facsimile currently held at the Islamic Research centre in Qom (Islamic Republic of Iran).

92 Zangī Bukhārī, *Zangīnāma*, trans. Afshār.

93 See MS Istanbul, Lala Ismail 516. For an edition, see Anonymous, *Sharḥ-i akhbār*, ed. Īmānī, 333-340.

among the Persian elite of his time.[94] Although this earlier copy produced by Zangī Bukhārī does not specify its place of transcription, the brief interval of merely four years between the copying of the two manuscripts suggests a strong likelihood that his earlier copy was also copied in Baghdad.[95]

Returning to Or. Quart. 1675, the six works included in this manuscript deal mainly with fables and didactic stories with a strong mystical component.[96] Although this is not the place to offer a full explanation of these works, it is relevant to explore briefly their content and some characteristics of the production of this collection in the context of Mongol Baghdad.[97] The first of these six compositions (fols. 2b-118b) is the *Bustān al-ʿuqūl fī tarjumān al-manqūl* (The Garden of Intellects in the Interpreter of the Transmitted [Knowledge]),[98] a Persian translation and reformulation of specific sections dealing with animals extracted from the famous Arabic encyclopaedic work known as the *Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ* composed during the 10th and 11th centuries.[99] We know that copies of the *Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ* in its original Arabic were widely available and circulated among intellectual networks of Ilkhanid Baghdad, with an illustrated copy dated Shawwāl 686 AH [November-December 1287 CE].[100] In the introduction to the work, we are informed that this Persian translation was completed in Baghdad during the reign of Ghāzān Khān. The translator, Zangī Bukhārī, frames the endeavour as an attempt to bridge two intellectual traditions – linking the *Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ*, which he describes as a product of the western Islamic world, with the *Kalīla wa Dimna* of Indian origin – thus reflecting the broader cultural horizons opened to these intellectual elites since the establishment of the Mongol Empire.[101] Further, he tells us that he composed this text to make Arabic works more accessible to the Persian-speaking elite in Mongol Baghdad because '[when] seeing this honourable book (*nuskh-i sharīf*), [decided to] translate [it] into Persian and remove the veil (*niqāb*) of Arabic of the beauty of its meanings, so it can benefit the common people (*hamginān*).'[102]

94 Another copy of the *Kalīla wa Dimna* was also penned by Zangī Bukhārī in 697 AH [1297-8 CE], in what seems to be the earliest evidence of his scribal skills. There is no mention of where this manuscript was copied, but Baghdad cannot be ruled out. See Bursa, İnebey Library, Hüseyin Çelebi 763.

95 In addition, another work entitled *Nuzhat al-ʿāshiqīn* and authored by Zangī Bukhārī has survived to our days in another manuscript copied in the mid-14th century. See Istanbul, Köprülü Library, Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1589, fols. 380-387 (margins). There is a microfilm copy of this manuscript in Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Microfilm 204. The work has also been edited by Iraj Afshar in Zangī Bukhārī, *Zangīnāma*, 121-145. This copy appears to have been copied in Shiraz, but it is possible that the work was originally composed in Baghdad by Zangī Bukhārī, despite no surviving copies having been made in Baghdad. For a description of Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 1589, see Savant and Montazer Mahdi, History of Iranian cities.

96 For titles and location of the stories in the manuscript, see the table at the end of the article.

97 Seyed-Gohrab, The rose and the wine.

98 For an edition of this text based on MS Or. Quart. 1675, fols. 2b-118a, see Zangī Bukhārī, *Bustān al-ʿuqūl*, ed. Afshār.

99 Netton, *Muslim Neoplatonists*; De Callataÿ, *Ikhwan al-safaʾ*.

100 On this copy, see the recent article by Qurboniev and Van Den Bossche, 'A scholarly copyist'.

101 Or. Quart. 1675, fols. 4a-5a.

102 Or. Quart. 1675, fol. 4a. The Persian reads:
'نانچ دید که این نسخ شریف را به پارسی کند و نقاب عربیت را از پیش جمال شاهدان معانیش بر اندازد تا سبب فایده ه . ددرگ'.

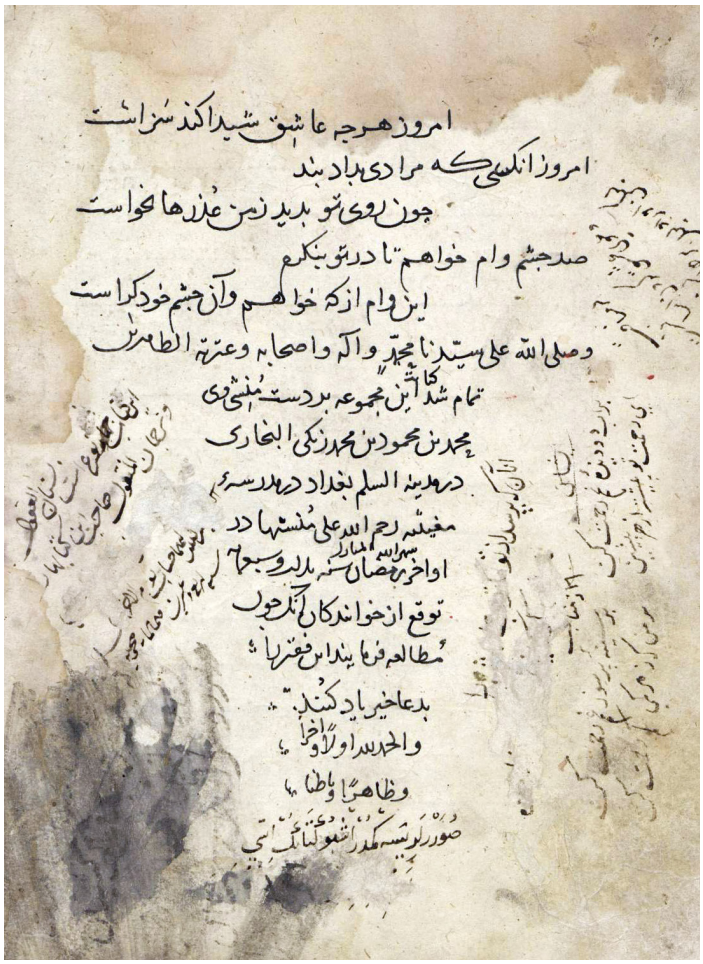

Figure 3: Colophon of MS Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Or. Quart. 1675, fol. 181b.

The remaining five works included in Or. Quart. 1675 are of the genre of debates (*munāẓarat*), using stories and fables to convey mystical and moral lessons, that became popular in the Ilkhanate. The second work (fols. 120b-146a), *Dāstān-i pādshāh-yi zindah-yi shahr-i Ḥama* (Story of the King of Ḥama),[103] is a fictional story that delves into the life and reign of the ruler of Hama, a city in present-day Syria, using the story of the king as ethical and spiritual lessons to the reader. This is followed (fols. 146b-156a) by the *Munāẓara-yi gul va mul* (The Debate between the Rose and the Wine), a text written in the form of a debate that exposes the virtues and dangers of wine consumption.[104] The story had been in circulation among the Ilkhanid Persianised elite during the 14th century, with a version of this debate surviving in

103 This work has no title, but because it includes a section entitled "Story of the King of Ḥama" (*dāstān-i pādshāh-yi zindah-yi shahr-i Ḥama*), that is the title I use to refer to this work. The work also includes poems by Saʿdī Shīrāzī (d. 1298).

104 On this topic, see Seyed-Gohrab, The rose and the wine.

the famous miscellaneous work known as the *Ṣafina-yi Tabrīz* copied in Tabriz on Saturday, 14 Ṣafar 727 AH [10 January 1327] by Abū al-Majd Muḥammad ibn Masʿūd Tabrīzī.[105] Although in the version rendered in the *Ṣafina* the text is attributed to Sirāj al-Dīn Qumrī Āmulī (d. 1228), scholars argue that, until further evidence emerges on this attribution, we should consider Zangī Bukhārī as the author of the work.[106]

Two of the remaining three works in this compendium present different perspectives on spiritual or esoteric topics by personifying objects that exchange opinions on different issues, often concerning Sufi ideas and emphasising mystical dimensions of Islam. For example, the fourth work (fols. 156b-160a) is entitled *Munāẓara-yi mavīzāb va fuqqāʿ-i ʿajamīyān* (*The Debate between the Grape Juice and the Foreign/Persian Fizzy Drink*). This work is an interesting short debate between these beverages with clear references to Sufi intoxication that not only deals with aspects of Sufism but hints at the life of Persian migrants living in Baghdad in this period.[107] Similarly, the sixth work (fols. 168b-181b), the *Munāẓara-yi chishm va dil* (The Debate between the Sweet Eye and the Sad Heart), offers a dialogue between these two parts of the body symbolising the inner conflict between external perception and internal spiritual experience. The eye represents the outward senses that perceive the material world, while the heart embodies the inner, spiritual faculty that apprehends deeper truths beyond sensory perception. Finally, the remaining, fifth work (fols. 160a-168a) is also a debate, but has some characteristics that differ from the other two. While the previous two were authored by Zangī Bukhārī, this work is a continuation or explanation (*dhayl*) of an existing work known as the *Maqāmāt-i Ḥamīdī*, written in the 12th century by Ḥamīd al-Dīn Abū Bakr ʿUmar ibn Maḥmūd (d. 1163-1164).[108] Ḥamīd al-Dīn's original story mixes prose with poetry to tell the adventures of an anonymous hero travelling between the visible and the spiritual world.[109] The commentary composed by Zangī Bukhārī only concentrates on a single section out of the twenty-four chapters of the original work. His intention, as mentioned in the preface, was to write this short explanation to correct some of the mistakes he found in a copy of the original *Maqāmāt-i Ḥamīdī*, showcasing that his professional activities as a scribe were combined, as with other men of letters of this period, with an active engagement in the intellectual production of his time.[110]

In addition to the diverse content found in manuscripts from this period, these texts indicate a revival of manuscript production in 14th-century Baghdad. This resurgence appears to be influenced by two interconnected factors previously discussed in this article: the active

105 See MS Tehran, Majlis 14590, work 199, fols. 719-721.

106 Seyed-Gohrab, The rose and the wine, 74; ʿAzīzābādī, Manāẓarat-i gul.

107 This work has recently been translated in Rugiadi *et al.*, Mavīzāb and Fuqqāʿ, 449-476.

108 ʿUmar ibn Maḥmūd, *Maqāmāt-i Ḥamīdī*, ed. Nizhād.

109 Massé, Ḥamīdī. The work quickly became famous in the Persianate world, and different manuscripts of this work have survived from this period. For example, a copy of this text, like the above-mentioned *Debate between the Rose and the Wine*, can be found in the *Ṣafina-yi Tabriz*. See MS Tehran, Majlis 14590, fols. 220-227, dated 18 Shawwāl 722 AH [6 November 1322 CE].

110 MS Or. Quart. 1675, fols. 160a-b. Illustrious examples of 13th- and 14th-century scribes famous for their literary, historical, and scientific productions are Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Rāvandī (fl. 1202) and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 1311), to mention only two. See Hillenbrand, Rāvandī, the Seljuk court; Pourjavady and Schmidtke, The Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī.

participation in cultural endeavours of a new elite of Persian origin, both individually and through their significant involvement in the cultural activities within Baghdadi madrasas. Their engagement not only facilitated the production of manuscripts but also contributed to the broader cultural and intellectual revitalisation of the city during this era.[111] Whereas in the previous period we observed a lack of individual patronage in the production of Persian manuscripts in Baghdad, the situation in this regard is rather different in the 14th century. For example, the autographed works left by Zangī Bukhārī reflect not only an awareness of the literary milieu of his time and a proficiency in the art of copying books but also a close proximity between the author and the Mongol administration of the Ilkhanate.

Individual patronage of books is more clearly evidenced in this period. For example, the first work of Zangī Bukhārī is dedicated to the *ṣāḥib dīvān* Saʾd al-Dīn Muḥammad bin Tāj al-Dīn [Savājī] (d. 1312),[112] the political rival of the vizier Rashīd al-Dīn and the dedicatee of various works in the early 14th century like the *Tuḥfa al-Saʾdiyya* of Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 1311) or a number of works by the polymath Niẓām al-Dīn al-Nīsābūrī (d. 1338), among others.[113] The remaining five works in the manuscript Or. Quart. 1675 are not all dedicated to Mongol officials, but also to members of his own intellectual class. For example, the second work of the *Zangīnāma*, *The Story of the King of Ḥama*, was written as a request to create an illustrative story on generosity (*jawānmardī*) and the request was accepted because Zangī Bukhārī found that this quality in humans was something valued not only in Islam but praised by all religions (*bi jamiyat-i dīn*).[114] Further, the third work in this compendium (*The Debate between the Rose and Wine*) is dedicated to a possible Mongol official addressed with the title of *amīr* and named as Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Tarkhānī.[115] Finally, the fifth work in the compendium, the *dhayl* written on the *Maqāmāt-i Ḥamīdī*, is dedicated to a certain Shams al-Dīn Jājarmī, to whose name the laudatory epithet *bahīr al-islām wa al-muslimīn* is added.[116]

A final point should be made about the links between Zangī Bukhārī and the Ilkhanid court through the above-mentioned **copy of the** *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghāzānī*. This manuscript was copied in Baghdad a year before Rashīd al-Dīn's execution, but the name of the copyist is not mentioned in the codex. However, Īraj Afshār has speculated that it might have been copied by Zangī Bukhārī, the author and copyist of the *Zangīnāma*.[117] Although this

111 For example, the appointment of professors at madrasas in Baghdad was a prerogative of the *ṣāḥib dīvān* of Iraq. See Wu, *The Fall of Baghdad*, 158.

112 MS Or. Quart. 1675, fol. 5b.

113 On Saʾd al-Din Muḥammad Savājī (d. 1312), *ṣāḥib dīvān* of Ghāzān Khān, see Boyle, Dynastic and political history, 386-402.

114 MS Or. Quart. 1675, fol. 120b.

115 MS Or. Quart. 1675, fol. 169a.

116 I was unable to identify this person. Another Shams al-Dīn Jājarmī is mentioned by Barthold, but in the context of mid-15th-century Samarkand. See Barthold, *Four Studies*, 161.

117 See Taqī and Afshār, *Fihristvārah-ʾi kitābkhānah-i Mīnuvī*, 102. Afshār suggests a connection between a Baghdadi manuscript of the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* and the scribe Zangī Bukhārī, though he does not specify which manuscript he refers to. The copy housed at the Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi (R.1518) emerges as a plausible candidate, particularly since a facsimile of this codex was part of the Mīnuvī collection. However, to confirm Zangī Bukhārī's role as the copyist of Rashīd al-Dīn's text, further comparative analysis of his known manuscripts and Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi R.1518 is necessary.

connection is speculative, I have shown how Zangī Bukhārī was a well-trained scribe who made a living out of copying Persian manuscripts in Baghdad and had close connections with officials in the Mongol court. His status as a well-known Persian scribe and close relationship with the Persianised elite of Baghdad make him a serious candidate to be the copyist of the manuscript Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi R.1518, adding another potential close connection to the Mongol court.

Finally, the second factor contributing to the recovery of manuscript production in 14th-century Baghdad, and connected to the role of the elite, is the institutional role that Baghdadi madrasas played in the production of Arabic, but also Persian, manuscripts in this period. The reconstruction of madrasas and centres of learning initiated in the period following the Mongol conquest continued in the 14th century, partially reinforcing the copying of books on religious sciences and Islamic law in Arabic. Evidence suggests that not only large madrasas such as the Mustanṣiriyya or the Niẓāmiyya continued producing manuscripts in this period, but other educational centres in the city also increased the production of Persian books. For example, the manuscript containing the six works that make up the *Zangīnāma* was copied at the Madrasa Maghīsiyya in Baghdad (figure 3), an educational institution that survived the Mongol conquest and was later repaired under the governorship of ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī.[118] Similarly, the copy of the *Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Ghāzānī* discussed above was part of Rashīd al-Dīn's efforts to distribute copies of his works across a network of scriptoria set up in different cities of the Ilkhanate and to secure the production and circulation of his works.[119] According to Ibn Fuwaṭī, the Persian vizier established a scriptorium within a madrasa he himself founded in Baghdad (referred to as the Madrasa Sulṭāniyya) where scribes and historians were hired to supervise and produce copies of his works.[120] Therefore, although there is no specific mention of the place where MS R.1518 was copied, it is most likely that this manuscript was copied at the Sulṭāniyya madrasa, a school established in the city by Rashīd al-Dīn specifically for this purpose.

The death of Abū Saʾīd and the dissolution of the Ilkhanate in 1335 did not stop the production of Persian manuscripts in Baghdad. The members of the Jalayirid dynasty that succeeded the Mongols in Iraq and Baghdad were active patrons of the art of the book during the central decades of the 14th century.[121] The advance westward of the Timurid armies, who conquered Baghdad in 1401, might have affected once again the production and survival of manuscripts in the city. However, manuscripts continued to be copied in generous quantities in Baghdad, albeit mostly in Arabic, during the 14th and 15th centuries.[122] For their part, the

118 Mohsin, King Alla al-Din al-Juwaini, 1674.

119 Ben Azzouna, Rashīd al-Dīn's manuscript production, 187-200.

120 Ben Azzouna, Rashīd al-Dīn's manuscript production, 197.

121 Duda, Buchmalerei der Galāʾiriden; Çağman and Tanindi, Selections from Jalayirid books.

122 Between the death of Abū Saʾīd in 1335 CE and the year 1400, we only found three Persian texts copied in Baghdad. First, there is another copy of the *Akhlaq-i Nāṣirī* of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (MS Tehran, Majlis ibrary, no. 1424/18422), on 12 Ṣafar 786 AH [5 April 1384 CE]. Second, a *majmūʿa* containing different Persian and Arabic works (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 3365) copied at least partially in Baghdad in 793 AH [1390-1391 CE]. Finally, a copy of the *Tāj al-Māthir* (Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya 2847), an account of the events of the Delhi Sultanate at the turn of the 13th century written by Ḥasan Niẓāmī (fl. 12th-13th centuries), copied at the Mustanṣiriyya madrasa in Baghdad in 795 AH [1392-1393 CE].

number of Persian manuscripts in the second half of the 14th century from Baghdad seems to have diminished (or at least there is a decrease in the survival rate) until the final decades of the 14th century.[123]

Conclusion

This article has offered a preliminary survey of Persian manuscript production in Mongol Baghdad, drawing on a representative – though necessarily limited – corpus of surviving codices. While Arabic remained the dominant literary and scholarly language throughout the 13th and 14th centuries, the increased presence of Persian texts during the Mongol period marks a significant shift in the city's cultural landscape. Even before the conquest of 1258, Persian had begun to circulate in Baghdad as a vehicle of literary expression, but it was under the Ilkhanate that its use expanded considerably. This expansion coincided with Baghdad's integration into a broader Eurasian network and its repositioning from the intellectual capital of the Islamic world to an important node within the Mongol Empire.

The flourishing of Persian manuscript production in Baghdad appears to have been driven by the arrival of a Persianised administrative elite under Mongol patronage. This elite, including governors like ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī, played a crucial role in revitalising Baghdad's educational infrastructure. Madrasas such as the Niẓāmiyya, the Maghīsiyya, and the Sulṭāniyya were not only restored but became key centres for the copying of Persian works across a wide range of genres, including philosophy, literature, science, and history. The role of individual authors and scribes, such as Zangī Bukhārī, further highlights the importance of both institutional and personal agency in this cultural transformation.

The surviving manuscripts also illustrate the 'glocal' dynamics of Mongol rule, where local traditions of learning and manuscript production coexisted with new demands favoured by imperial integration. These texts confirm certain details found in narrative sources – such as the continuity of madrasa activity after the conquest – while also revealing patterns of literary patronage and linguistic adaptation that are not explicitly discussed in contemporary chronicles. For example, the diffusion of works like *Kalīla wa Dimna* and the *Marzubānnāma* and the composition of new Persian works like those included in the *Zangīnāma* suggest that Persian literary works were not merely tolerated but increasingly demanded as a medium of knowledge and entertainment by a new ruling elite.

In sum, the case of Mongol Baghdad demonstrates that the city did not experience cultural decline after 1258 but rather underwent a process of adaptation and renewal. Persian manuscripts from this period reflect a dynamic scholarly environment shaped by imperial power, administrative reforms, and local intellectual resilience – offering valuable insight into the complex multicultural nature of the Mongol world.

123 On the decline and end of the Ilkhanate, see Melville, End of the Ilkhanate, 307-335.

List of Persian Manuscripts from Mongol Baghdad

(in chronological order of copying)

#	Title	Author	Date of composition	Date of copy	Name of copyist	Place of copy	Subject	Shelfmark	Library
1	*Risāla al-Qushayrī fī ʿilm al-Tasawwuf*	Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī al-Nīshāpūrī (d. 1072 CE)	11th c. CE	5 Dhū al-Ḥijja 601 AH [24 July 1205 CE]	Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Qazwīnī	Baghdad	Sufism	Or. 4118	British Library, London (UK)
2	*Munājāt*	ʿAbd Allāh Anṣārī al-Harawī	11th c. CE	Possibly early 13th c.	Unknown	Possibly Baghdad	Sufism	Or. 4118	British Library, London (UK)
3	*Akhlaq-i Nāṣirī*	Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274 CE)	633 AH [1236-1237 CE]	662 AH [1263-1264 CE]	Muḥammad b. Suhayl g. ʿAlī al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ṭabarī	Niẓāmiyya madrasa (Baghdad)	Ethics	Afyon Gedik 18325	Gedik Ahmet Paşa İl Halk Kütüphanesi, Afyonkarahisar (Turkey)
4	*Kalīla wa Dimna*	Abū al-Maʿālī Naṣr Allāh Munshī	1143 CE (New Persian translation)	678 AH [1279-1280 CE]	Abū Ṭāhir b. Abī Naṣr b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Widhkulī	Baghdad	Fables	Persan 376	Bibliothèque nationale de France
5	*Zīj-i Īlkhānī*	Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274 CE)	1272 CE	689 AH [1290 CE]	Nūyān ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Naṣrānī	Baghdad	Astronomy	Sprenger 1853	Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Germany)
6	*Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā*	ʿAlā al-Dīn ʿAṭāʾ Malik Juwaynī	1260 CE	Saturday, 4 Dhū al-Ḥijja 689 AH [9 December 1290 CE]	Rashīd al-Khawāfī	Most probably Baghdad	History	Supplément Persan 205	Bibliothèque nationale de France
7	*Marzubānnāma*	Saʿd al-Dīn al-Varāvīnī	Early 13th c.	10 Ramaḍān 698 AH [11 June 1299 CE]	al-Murtaḍā b. Abī Ṭāhir b. Aḥmad al-Kāshī	Baghdad	Fables	MS 216	Istanbul Museum of Archaeology (Turkey)
8	*Bustān al-ʿuqūl fī tarjumān al-manqūl*	Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd Zangī Bukhārī	Early 14th c.	10 Jumādā I 713 [2 September 1313]	Autograph	Probably Madrasa Maghīsiyya (Baghdad)	Various	Or. Quart. 1675/1	Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Germany)
9	*Dāstān-i pādshāh-yi zindah-yi shahr-i Ḥama*	Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd Zangī Bukhārī	Early 14th c.	Not after end of Ramaḍān 7(1)3	Autograph	Most possibly Madrasa Maghīsiyya (Baghdad)	Allegorical debate	Or. Quart. 1675/2	Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Germany)
10	*Munāẓara-yi gul va mul*	Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd Zangī Bukhārī	Early 14th c.	Not after end of Ramaḍān 7(1)3	Autograph	Most possibly Madrasa Maghīsiyya (Baghdad)	Allegorical debate	Or. Quart. 1675/3	Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Germany)
11	*Munāẓara-yi mavīzāb va fuqqā-i ʿajamīyān*	Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd Zangī Bukhārī	Early 14th c.	Not after end of Ramaḍān 7(1)3	Autograph	Most possibly Madrasa Maghīsiyya (Baghdad)	Allegorical debate	Or. Quart. 1675/4	Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Germany)
12	*Dhayl Maqāmāt-i Ḥamīdī*	Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd Zangī Bukhārī	Early 14th c.	Not after end of Ramaḍānn 7(1)3	Autograph	Most possibly Madrasa Maghīsiyya (Baghdad)	Allegorical debate	Or. Quart. 1675/5	Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Germany)

13	*Munāẓara-yi chishm va dil*	Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd Zangī Bukhārī	Early 14th c.	End of Ramaḍān 7(1)3	Autograph	Madrasa Maghīsiyya (Baghdad)	Allegorical debate	Or. Quart. 1675/6	Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Germany)
14	*Kitāb al-taʿarruf li-madhāhib al-taṣawwuf*	Abū-Bakr Muḥammad al-Kalābādī (fl. late 10th c.); commentator: Abū Ibrāhīm Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī (d. 1043 CE)	ca. 11th c.	Ṣafar 713	Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Makārim al-Mushkānī	Baghdad	Sufism	Sprenger 742	Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Germany)
15	*Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*	Rashīd al-Dīn	First decade of the 14th century	717 AH [1317 CE]	Unknown (Possibly Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd Zangī Bukhārī)	Baghdad (Madrasa Sulṭāniyya?)	History	R.1518	Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul (Turkey)
16	*Kalīla wa Dimna*	Abū al-Maʿālī Naṣr Allāh Munshī	1143 CE (New Persian translation)	1 Muḥarram 723 AH [10 January, 1323]	Unknown	Baghdad	Literature	11888	Marʿashī Library, Qom (Iran)
17	*Humāy va Humāyūn*	Khwājū Kirmānī	1331 CE (in Baghdad)	Possibly 14th c	Unknown	Baghdad	Literature	Revan Köşkü 1045	Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul (Turkey)
18	*Akhlaq-i Nāṣirī*	Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 1274 CE)	633 AH [1236-1237 CE]	Thursday, 12 Ṣafar 786 AH [5 April 1384]	ʿAbd al-Majīd ibn Najīb al-Dīn ibn Ḥājjī ʿAbd Allāh Sārbān	Baghdad	Ethics	1424/18422	Majlis Library, Tehran (Iran)
19	*Different*	Anonymous (work 1) / remaining works by Muḥammad ibn Badr al-Jājarmī (fl. 14th c.)	Unknown	793 AH (work 1)	Fatḥ Allāh ibn ʿUbayd Allāh Qazwīnī	Baghdad (work 1)	Poetry	Arabe 3365	Bibliothèque nationale de France
20	*Tāj al-Māthir*	Ṣadr al-Dīn Ḥasan Niẓāmī-i Arūzī (fl. 1229 CE)		795 AH	Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Fārizī	Baghdad		Ayasofya 2847	Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul (Turkey)

Acknowledgements

Financial support for the research and writing of this article was provided by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF-Start, Nomads' Manuscripts Landscape project, Y-1232 G30).

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