

1 Eurasia after the Fall

During the mid- and late fourteenth century, Eurasian courts shared a key reference point, the Mongol legacy. Even as the empire collapsed and a new world slowly emerged, remnants of the Mongol empire – from its bureaucratic and military institutions, ideas of legitimacy, and political culture to its physical manifestations such as architectural monuments, even seals of office and administrative papers – survived for decades, sometimes even longer.¹ People too were an invaluable asset. In the rapidly changing geopolitical landscape of the fourteenth century, aristocratic lineages and military units from the Mongol empire retained a recognizable coherence. They were potential allies that could provide military support and political legitimacy. The Mongol empire's remains coexisted with the emerging new order. In fact, they often made up its basic building blocks.

As individuals, families, and communities attempted to make sense of their worlds in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Mongol empire's legacy was never far from view or mind. The Mongols figure prominently in the genesis stories of many Eurasian courts established at that time. To these courts, their subjects, allies, and rivals, the Mongols and their empire formed an essential, often central, feature of identity. Courts from Nanjing to Samarqand to Sarai often found it difficult to explain their origins, legitimacy, and standing at home and abroad without extensive reference to Chinggis and his descendants. Rulers like Zhu Yuanzhang, Tamerlane, and Toqtamish (Tokhtamish) of the Blue Horde (1342–1406) tried their best to turn the Mongol legacy to their advantage. Writing in a different context, the South Asian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam observes, “ideas and mental constructs, too, flowed across political boundaries in that world, and – even if they found specific local expression – enable us to see that what we are dealing with are not separate and comparable, but connected histories.”²

¹ May (*Mongol Conquests*, pp. 81–97) reviews successors to the Mongol empire from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries.

² Subrahmanyam, “Connected Histories,” p. 748.

Since all major contemporary rivals claimed some connection to the Mongol legacy, any court that ignored the Chinggisids was conceding a valuable form of political legitimacy. Further, they all knew that their version of the past and its relation to the present would be contested at home and abroad. Put slightly differently, telling the tale of the Mongols' rise and fall was a competitive event. Some versions would triumph; others would fail. This is the broader context of the Ming court's Chinggisid narrative.

This chapter is organized into two sections. The first section sketches the Mongolian diaspora across Eurasia. It briefly traces, how as a result of the imperial enterprise, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Mongols left the steppe and settled in distant lands. Rather than attempt a comprehensive treatment of a two-century pan-Eurasian development, it focuses on the Mongolian diaspora in the Delhi and Mamluk sultanates and the travels of one group, the Oirats. It then outlines relocated Mongols' fate as the major Chinggisid houses collapsed in the fourteenth century. Courts that emerged in the wake of the Mongol empire's collapse actively recruited former imperial personnel. The second section reviews the ways the Timurid and Moghul courts told the story of the Mongol empire to enhance their legitimacy, attract supporters, and command obedience.

My objective in this chapter is threefold. The first is to show that the Ming court was part of a wider historical moment in Eurasia. To appreciate what was distinctive and what was common to the strategies of Zhu Yuanzhang and his advisors, it is necessary to first examine how his contemporaries navigated such challenges. The second is to make clear that reception of the Ming dynasty's Chinggisid narrative was shaped by other courts' stories of the Mongols. My final and overarching goal is to foreground Chinggisid influence's pervasive nature in east Eurasia in the late fourteenth century. Only when we see east Eurasia really as a Chinggisid world can we appreciate why Zhu Yuanzhang talked about the Mongols so much. The Chinggisid world in which he and his contemporaries lived presented both opportunity and constraint in the pursuit of power and legitimacy.

The Mongolian Diaspora

A defining characteristic of the Mongol empire is movement.³ To conquer and then to run their huge empire, the Mongols mobilized subjugated and allied populations, relocating them across the length and width of Eurasia. Chinese siege experts were deployed to West Asia, and Samarqand households settled

³ For long-term demographic and ethnic consequences of such movement, see Golden, "Migrations"; May, *Mongol Conquests*, pp. 211–31.

north of today's Beijing.⁴ One leading scholar, Thomas Allsen, calls the Mongols' collection of men of talent "a central theme in their imperial history."⁵ Diplomatic and commercial agents of the empire traversed Eurasia. The Chinggisid state invested in an ambitious transportation infrastructure of relay stations, organized personnel to staff such hubs, and structured revenue streams for their maintenance.⁶ It also worked to consolidate control of trading networks across the seas to pursue diverse diplomatic, military, and economic interests.

Less appreciated is the Mongolian diaspora. Continent-spanning campaigns propelled tens of thousands of men and women from the Mongolian steppe to North India, Eastern Europe, and West Asia. Between 1200 and 1300 (and beyond), Mongols were spread through much of Eurasia, from the Korean capital in Kaegyōng to the Mamluk court in Egypt, from the courts of Delhi Sultanate and Gujarat in India to Golden Horde court of Sarai in Russia and nearly everywhere in between. Even the Song court recruited Mongols into its military forces.⁷ Chinggis accelerated the diaspora with his famous division of conquered territories among his sons, who were to take up residence in their new and distant lands.⁸ In fact, Mongols migrated even beyond the empire's expansive borders.

Let's start at West Asia's far edge. The Mamluk Sultanate (1215–1517) controlled today's Egypt, Syria, and west Saudi Arabia. Its military is famous for defeating Mongol armies on several occasions in the late thirteenth century. The Mamluk Sultanate developed into an important rival to the Ilkhanate, the Chinggisid house that ruled much of today's Iran, Azerbaijan, and eastern Turkey. Despite acute tension with the Ilkhanate, waves of immigrant Mongols sought shelter with Mamluk Sultanate.⁹ Some Mongols had found themselves on the losing side in intra-Chinggisid house intrigue; some were victims of inter-Chinggisid house clashes. In other cases, the motive for flight is unclear.¹⁰

These newly arrived Mongols performed a variety of functions. Most served in the Mamluk military, which was the "main road to joining the upper caste."¹¹ The most famous instance was the 10,000 or 18,000 Oirats under the command of Turghay (son-in-law of Hülegü, the man who had founded the

⁴ Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters"; "Apportioned," pp. 185–86; "Mongols as Vectors," pp. 136–37; "Population Movements."

⁵ Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters," p. 4. ⁶ Shim, "Postal Roads."

⁷ In 1279, these men were incorporated into the Yuan army. *YS*, 98.8.2517.

⁸ Juvaynī, *World Conqueror*, vol. 1, pp. 42–43, cited in Allsen, "Sharing out the Empire," p. 172.

⁹ Ayalon, "Wāfidiya"; Nakamachi, "Rank and Status of Military Refugees." In addition, an indeterminate number reached the sultanate through the slave trade or as war captives. See Amitai, "Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role," pp. 120–22. Halperin ("Kipchak Connection") discusses the slave trade that connected the Golden Horde, the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk sultanate.

¹⁰ Nakamachi, "Rank and Status of Military Refugees," pp. 61–62.

¹¹ Nakamachi, "Rank and Status of Military Refugees"; Ayalon, "Wāfidiya," p. 90.

Ilkhanate). They arrived in 1296 and were welcomed by Sultan Kitbugha, himself an Oirat.¹² Others played a role in diplomacy, serving in embassies to the Ilkhanate, translating Mongolian documents into Arabic, and providing intelligence.¹³ Treatment of these Mongolian immigrants varied. Early on, some received the esteemed rank of *amīr* or commander and were made cupbearers, armor bearers, and masters of the robe, that is, they gained direct and highly prestigious access to the person of the reigning Mamluk sultan Baybars (r. 1260–77). Further, they were initially settled in the capital rather than sent to the Syro-Palestinian coast, where non-Mongol immigrants had been relocated.¹⁴ The daughters of elite Mongol immigrants were attractive marriage partners for local families of standing.¹⁵ The activities of more humble Mongols, however, are poorly documented and little known. One Mamluk specialist concludes, “With so many Mongols on hand and such expertise among them, therefore, the Mamluks surely knew as much about the Mongols as did those regions that were actually under Mongol control.”¹⁶

Let us now turn to South Asia. From the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century, military conflict and political instability within the Mongol empire produced refugees who sought safety in India, home of the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526).¹⁷ “A whole quarter of the old city was assigned to asylum-seeking Mongol nobles in Delhi.”¹⁸ Some came to exercise influence over the young ruler Muqizz al-Dīn Kayqubād (r. 1287–90).¹⁹ Scholars have suggested that a later ruler, Sultan Tughluq (r. 1320–24), was an immigrant of Turco-Mongol origin who rose to supreme power through the support of officers who had previously served under him in Afghanistan.²⁰ In 1334, the son of Chaghadaid Khan, Darmashirin, took refuge with yet another sultan, Muḥammad b. Tughluq (r. 1324–52), after his father was overthrown in

¹² Amitai, “Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role,” pp. 122–23; Ayalon, “Wāfīdīya,” pp. 91, 99–101; Broadbridge, “Marriage, Family and Politics,” 132–33; Halperin, “Kipchak Connection,” p. 244; Landa, “Oirats in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate,” pp. 158–63. Many Oirat leaders were killed during an abortive coup in 1299–1300.

¹³ Amitai, “Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role,” pp. 124, 137; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, p. 19; Halperin, “Kipchak Connection,” p. 243.

¹⁴ Ayalon, “Wāfīdīya,” pp. 94–99. Landa (“Oirats in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate,” p. 180) notes that later much of the Oirat population seems to have been relocated to Atlit, Palestine, and northwestern Bilād al-Shām.

¹⁵ Ayalon, “Wāfīdīya,” p. 100; Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, p. 13; Halperin, “Kipchak Connection,” p. 244. At least three of Baybars’ wives were daughters of elite Mongol migrants. See Amitai, “Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role,” pp. 128, 135.

¹⁶ Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, p. 14.

¹⁷ Jackson, *Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 80–82, 108–10, 115–16. Mongols spread as far as the wealthy maritime state of the Sultanate of Gujarat on the Arabian Sea in western India. See Wink, *Akbar*, pp. 30–31.

¹⁸ Jackson, “Muslim India,” p. 103.

¹⁹ Jackson, “Muslim India,” p. 104; Kumar, “Ignored,” p. 51.

²⁰ Amitai, “Muslim India,” p. 109.

Central Asia.²¹ Darmashirin's son was part of a wave of people who fled to India at the time. Another influx arrived in the mid-1340s.²²

The Chaghadaid nobility's presence became a prominent feature of court life under Sultan Muḥammad. The sultan's long-term companion, Ẓiyā' al-Dīn Baranī (1285–1357) writes:

The second occupation of Sultan Muḥammad during those few years in which he stayed in Delhi consisted in favoring and rewarding the Mongols. Year after year at the onset of winter, numbers of amirs of *tūmens* and thousands, and princesses and princes of the blood kept arriving . . . For two or three months (each year) the sultan was engaged in nothing but granting favors and rewards.²³

Muḥammad insisted that his distinguished Chaghadaid guests first show homage to his decree of investiture from the Caliph and then agree to "written undertakings" and offer acts of fealty.²⁴ Ẓiyā' al-Dīn Baranī doesn't explain the Mongolian word *tūmen*, presumably because his readers, educated elites in the Dehli Sultanate, knew its meaning. *Tūmen* is a unit of ten thousand men, a standard element of Mongol governance that served both military and administrative functions. Ẓiyā' al-Dīn Baranī does not tell his audience whether these Mongol commanders traveled with large contingents of armed men, but his description shows that the Dehli Sultanate knew and respected the status of Chinggisid nobles and senior Mongol military commanders. Further, Ẓiyā' al-Dīn Baranī makes clear the sultan's desire to secure Mongol allegiance on mutually acceptable terms.

The aforementioned suggests that Mongol elites commanded respect beyond the Mongol empire, in fact even among enemies. Although their influence may have been disruptive, elite members of the Mongolian diaspora won some measure of acceptance. Sultan Muḥammad's high profile patronage was likely predicated on the belief that public recognition by Mongol elites, even when they were seeking asylum, generated valuable political capital. The arrival of outlanders of such elevated status challenged established notions of proper order and hierarchy in some quarters.²⁵ Scholars debate Mongol asylum seekers' status in Mamluk sultanate. One authority concludes they "were on the whole far from seats of power . . . [they] did not have entrée into the higher circles of the sultanate."²⁶ In contrast, one study highlights the incorporation of Mongols into the sultan's prestigious military units and examples of migrant officers who "reached the highest rank in the Mamluk military."²⁷

²¹ Jackson, "Mongols and Delhi," p. 132. ²² Jackson, *Mongols and Islamic World*, p. 396.

²³ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūshāhī*, cited in Jackson, "Mongols and the Delhi," pp. 149–50.

²⁴ Baranī, *Tārīkh-i Fīrūshāhī*, cited in Jackson, "Mongols and the Delhi," p. 150.

²⁵ Kumar, "Ignored," p. 49. ²⁶ Amitai, "Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role," p. 129.

²⁷ Nakamachi, "Rank and Status of Military Refugees," p. 75. For a chart of immigrant officers, see pp. 65–66.

As later chapters will show, Mongols and other Great Yuan personnel were incorporated into the Ming military. Some received prestigious titles and preferential treatment such as housing and gifts from the throne. They did not control the levers of supreme power, but then again few in the Ming polity did. At the risk of oversimplification, one can say that a few former Chinggisid personnel secured exceptional patronage and standing from their new lords. A larger proportion served as officers, who were in the middle to upper echelons of the military. The majority, and the least well documented, provided military expertise, especially as mounted archers.

More common than relocation to places like the Mamluk or Delhi Sultanate, however, was internal migration within the greater Mongol empire. The courts and armies of Chinggisid great houses and lesser nobles throughout Europe were composed of relocated men and women from the Ikires, Oirat, Qongirat, Kereyit, Merkid, Naiman, Kipchak and other lineages from the Mongolian steppe. They served as soldiers, commanders, translators, political advisors, envoys, religious specialists, and administrators. When interactions among the great Chinggisid houses were extensive, men like Arghun Aqa and Bolad did serial service at several courts from Persia to China.²⁸ In time, Mongolian migrants became more firmly settled within the sphere of a single great house, even while preserving varying degrees of ancestral identities as men and women of the Oirat, Önggüt, Qongirat, Kereyit and other communities.

One relatively well-studied example is the Oirat.²⁹ After forming an alliance with the Chinggisids in 1207, men and women from leading Oirat lineages were incorporated into the upper echelons of the expanding empire.³⁰ They married into the Chinggisid imperial family, served in the Great Khan's guard, and commanded military forces in campaigns throughout Eurasia. As a consequence, elite Oirat lineages ended up in China, Mongolia, the Ilkhanate, and the Mamluk Sultanate. Although in the long-term these Oirat lineages (and other less well-documented groups) assimilated into local society, in the short- and mid-term, they retained a clear sense of lineage identity and interests. One study concludes that preservation of Oirat identity depended on ties to the Ilkhanate ruling house, whose "support secured the high status of the Oirats and united them."³¹ As the Ilkhanate disintegrated in the 1330s, Oirat power networks became more fragmented and narrowly regional. Some offered their allegiance to the Timurid dynasty. Their new status there may have been more modest than what it had previously been in the Ilkhanate. However, "their

²⁸ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*; Lane, "Arghun Aqa"; Kim, "Unity of the Mongol Empire."

²⁹ Broadbridge, "Marriage, Family and Politics"; Landa, "Oirats in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate"; "Imperial Sons-in-Law on the Move"; Zhao, *Marriage*, pp. 143–64.

³⁰ Broadbridge, "Marriage, Family and Politics."

³¹ Landa, "Oirats in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate," p. 172.

presence is unmistakable and clearly points to the preservation of their tribal identity (even if only in terms of their tribal name) at least until the early-fifteenth century.”³² Elite Oirat lineages in some places seem to have maintained control over Oirat housemen well into the fourteenth century.

If we take a step back, we can see that the Oirats were part of a broader Mongolian diaspora across Eurasia.³³ These groups, whose self-identity varied widely and is seldom known in any detail, had left the Mongolian steppe and its environs as a result of the Chinggisid imperial enterprise.³⁴ By the early fourteenth century and sometimes earlier, many of these Mongolian communities in West and Central Asia had adopted Islam and had intermarried with local families. When Chinggisid houses collapsed in the early and mid-fourteenth centuries, members of the Mongolian diaspora faced questions about their allegiances and interests. Especially for elite clans, identity was rooted in relations with the local Chinggisid ruling house, such as the Ilkhanate, the Chaghadaid khanate, the Golden Horde, and the Great Yuan, which in turn provided ties to the broader Mongol empire. Yet, as the previous sections on the Mongol diaspora in the Mamluk and Delhi sultanates suggest, individuals (and often entire communities) were open to new patrons and new sources of power.³⁵

For men like Tamerlane, leaders of the Moghul khanate, and Zhu Yuanzhang, the diaspora was another facet of the Mongol empire’s inheritance. As living ties to a glorious past, “Mongols abroad” might be vilified as enemies, treasured as allies, or absorbed as the building blocks of new empires. They could not, however, be ignored. Polities that emerged as Chinggisid rule collapsed actively courted the Mongolian diaspora’s support. If skillfully exploited, Mongol elites could improve new regimes’ military and political standing. If they were ignored or pushed away, their talents could well end up in rivals’ hands. The diaspora and its incorporation into local regimes’ key political and military organs contributed to the further transmission of knowledge regarding the Mongol empire’s institutions and the special charisma of the Chinggisid line throughout Eurasia. The diaspora helped build and sustain the Chinggisid world.

³² Landa, “Oirats in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate,” p. 176.

³³ Cf. Kaplonski, “Mongolian Impact,” p. 252. Wink (“India and the Turko-Mongol Frontier,” p. 224) suggests “about 170,000 men, accompanied by 680,000 women and children and perhaps 17 million sheep in accompanying camps and herds, were involved in the conquest and occupation of Iran and adjacent areas.”

³⁴ Heywood (“Filling the Black Hole,” pp. 111–13) argues that the genesis of the Ottoman polity should be sought in the migration of Turkic elements following the instability ushered in by Noghai’s death circa 1299.

³⁵ For an Oirat man who sought service at the Mamluk court, subsequently traveled as an envoy to the Ilkhanate and eventually served twice as a Mamluk envoy to post-Ilkhanid Baghdad, see Nakamachi, “Rank and Status of Military Refugees,” p. 74.

Stories of the Mongols

With the exception of the Golden Horde, which controlled Russia and the Kipchak steppe, all great Chinggisid houses across Eurasia collapsed in the fourteenth century. Later chapters will explore the Great Yuan's fall and the Great Ming's rise. This section looks briefly at developments in West and Central Asia. The objective is to show how the Chinggisid legacy figured in new polities' emergence across Eurasia in the fourteenth century. Comprehensive consideration of the Mongols' impact would include everything from military institutions, transportation infrastructure, tax regimes, and diplomatic protocol to political ideology, religious patronage, ethnogenesis, and gender. The coverage here is more focused. It looks at how the Timurid and Moghul polities, which took shape in the second half of the fourteenth century, turned the Mongol legacy to their advantage in the wake of the collapse of the great Chinggisid houses. That in turn helps contextualize the Great Ming's efforts to come to terms with the Great Yuan.

During the fourteenth century, three great Mongol houses that ruled much of West and Central Asia fell into sharp decline. The survivors emerged transformed. In 1301, the House of Ögödei (Chinggis Khan's second son and first successor), centered in today's northeast Xinjiang and South Kazakhstan, fell. It had experienced vigorous expansion under Qaidu (1236–1301), but his death opened the way to renewed dominance of the House of Chaghadaï, which had been both his ally and rival.³⁶ The House of Chaghadaï (Chinggis' third son), which at its height ruled much of today's Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and parts of southern Kazakhstan and south Xinjiang, fell into a period of extended instability beginning in 1334, following Darmashirin's deposition.³⁷ In 1335, the sultan of the Ilkhanate, Abū Sa'īd, died without an heir. In retrospect, we may say that this ended the Ilkhanate's effective control of its territory. However, at the time, "many people in Persia . . . were convinced that Mongol rule would survive, for there was plainly no lack of influential Mongol leaders and politicians, nor of princes belonging to the most diverse lines of descent from Chinggis Khan."³⁸

In this twilight of empire, the Mongol legacy loomed large. Many leading military commanders had formerly served the Houses of Chaghadaï or Hülegü. Some wars were depicted as efforts to restore the Ilkhanate or Chaghadaïd khanate.³⁹ Chinggisid nobles were selected as puppet rulers to legitimate what

³⁶ Biran, *Qaidu*; "Mongols in Central Asia," pp. 49–54.

³⁷ Biran, "Mongols in Central Asia," pp. 54–60; Millward, "Eastern Central Asia," pp. 261–67.

³⁸ Roemer, "Jalayirids, Muzaffarids, and Sarbadārs," p. 2.

³⁹ Melville, "End of the Ilkhanate and After," pp. 323–26; Roemer, "Jalayirids, Muzaffarids, and Sarbadārs," pp. 5–10; Wing, *Jalayirids*.

usually proved to be short-lived regimes. A few sought to rule as well as reign. To bolster their standing, some polities seized control of places closely associated with Mongol rule. One scholar describes Tabriz, which had been an Ilkhanate capital, as “a locus of Ilkhanid political charisma, and thus . . . the primary goal for members of the fourteenth century post-Ilkhanid military elite.”⁴⁰ Even those with no interest in restoring Chinggisid houses still found the Mongol legacy useful. For instance, the Sarbadārs, who had no legitimist claims, recognized (albeit intermittently) the authority of a prominent Chinggisid aspirant. They also used military institutions such as the “little thousand,” previously a building block for political identity and organization in the Mongol empire.⁴¹ In 1351, one Chaghadaid commander skewered what he perceived as the ridiculous posing of the ruler of Herat. He wrote, “Of what descent is he that is making pretensions to the sultanate? . . . How can a Tāzīk (Tajik) pretend to be a king (*pādeshāh*)?”⁴² His point was that the ruler of Herat lacked Chinggisid descent and was therefore utterly unqualified to be a king.

Rather than attempt to trace the emergence of the dozens of regimes from the wreckage of the great Chinggisid houses in Central Asia, the following section explores two particularly influential instances, both of which developed ties to the Great Ming. These are the Timurid and Moghul polities, which came to control much of the territory of the three great Mongol houses noted earlier. As ambitious men capitalized on the collapse of Chinggisid houses, they pursued strategies closely associated with the Mongol empire. Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Mongol rulers were renowned and notorious for their brutal campaigns of conquest and ostentatious displays of patronage. Tamerlane used similar methods. His military campaigns secured new sources of food, wealth, and labor, which demonstrated his fitness as a ruler. They also kept his armies occupied. His dramatic use of terror – the sack of Khwārazm, the massacre at Isfahan, minarets built of severed heads – discouraged local resistance and foregrounded his singular determination.⁴³ At the same time, Tamerlane’s lavish architectural projects advertised his

⁴⁰ Wing, “Rich in Goods and Abounding in Wealth,” p. 313. For elaboration, see Wing, *Jalayirids*, p. 3.

⁴¹ Several Sarbadār leaders recognized Togha Temūr’s authority, casting coins in his name and vowing to pay him taxes. Jā’ūn-i Qurbān arose from a “little thousand” (*hazāracha*), a unit under the command of Arghūn Āqā. See Roemer, “Jalayirids, Muzaffarids, and Sarbadārs,” pp. 19, 23, 25, 27, 29. One thing that distinguished the Sarbadārs from nearly all contemporary rivals was the lack of a Mongol shadow khan. See Roemer, “Jalayirids, Muzaffarids, and Sarbadārs,” p. 35.

⁴² Potter, “Herat,” p. 194. As Potter (“Herat,” p. 195) notes, part of Tamerlane’s justification for attacking Herat was that “these lands have always belonged to the Mongol kings.” The local Herat lacked a legitimate claim on them.

⁴³ Clavijo (*Narrative of the Spanish Embassy*, p. 173) recalls tales of towers built of skulls located outside Danghan.

commitment to high culture and his prodigious wealth.⁴⁴ Mongols held no monopoly on terror and patronage, but they had pursued both strategies most recently and most spectacularly in Central Asia. One authority argues that Tamerlane deliberately emulated their example.⁴⁵

In conjunction with military campaigns and flamboyant display, Tamerlane and others appealed more directly to the Mongol legacy to demonstrate their superiority as sovereigns. These campaigns of persuasion seldom told a single story, because their audiences were diverse, which owed much to the consequences of Mongol rule in Eurasia. As noted, the Mongols' rise and rule had accelerated social and physical mobility. Their fall in the fourteenth century generated the dangers and opportunities. It also increased mobility. Rulers wooed diverse allies and oversaw complex populations.⁴⁶ Armies of fourteenth-century Iranian dynasties, such as the Karts of Herat and the Mozaffarids of Fars, incorporated Tajiks, Khalaj Turks, Baluch, Ghurids, Mongols, dervishes from the Sarbadārs, and Khorasanians among others.⁴⁷ Many ruling houses, including the Jalayirids in northwestern Iran and Iraq, the Injurid dynasty of Fars, the Mozaffarids, the Shabankara (based in a peripheral region of Fars), the Karts as well as families with bureaucratic traditions, were tied to Mongol rule through previous military alliances, administrative service, and marriage allegiances to the Ilkhans.⁴⁸ Manz observes, "In the society of 14th–15th century Iran and Central Asia, Turkic and Iranian alike, the events that had shaped the present most immediately were those of Mongol conquest and rule. The drama of the Mongol invasion, the administration of the great khans, and the rivalries of the Chinggisid *uluses* mattered to many people beyond the Chinggisid dynasty itself."⁴⁹

Thus, leaders needed to explain their connections to the Chinggisids. Written between 1357 and 1362, the verse chronicle *Tale of Ghāzan* (*Ghāzan-nāma*), was dedicated to Sultan Shaikh Uvais, the Jalayirid ruler (1356–74). In it, the author speaks of "the daulut-i Ghāzan Khāni," or Ghāzan Khan's charismatic good fortune. Ghāzan (1271–1304) had reigned over the Ilkhanate from 1295 to 1304. According to *Tale of Ghāzan*, Shaikh Uvais was direct heir to Ghāzan's special fortune.⁵⁰ In other words, Shaikh Uvais and his dynasty were legitimate successors to Ghāzan and the Ilkhanate; they deserved the respect and obedience the Mongols had commanded.

⁴⁴ Lentz and Lowry, *Timur*, pp. 17–49.

⁴⁵ Manz, "Mongol History," p. 138; "Tamerlane and the Symbolism," pp. 118–19; "Tamerlane's Career," pp. 4–5; "Empire of Tamerlane," p. 287.

⁴⁶ Manz, "Military Manpower," pp. 48–52. ⁴⁷ Manz, "Military Manpower," pp. 50–51.

⁴⁸ Manz, "Military Manpower," pp. 44–47; "Mongol History," pp. 132–34.

⁴⁹ Manz, "Mongol History," p. 132. She also notes (p. 133), "For the local rulers of Iran in the late-fourteenth century, the history of the Mongols was also the history of their dynasty, and to ignore the Mongol system was to sacrifice some part of their past and their legitimacy."

⁵⁰ Melville, "History and Myth," p. 142.

Tamerlane and his court forged ties to Chinggis Khan's charismatic legitimacy with even greater energy. He encouraged stories of his youth that resembled those of Chinggis Khan.⁵¹ He periodically used a title, "Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction," which was associated with Chinggis and Alexander the Great.⁵² Tamerlane married a Chinggisid princess and thus acquired the title Imperial Son-in-law (*M. güregen*; *P. kūrkanlgürgān*).⁵³ He established a Chinggisid ruler (from the Ögödeid line), in whose name and authority, he ostensibly ruled.⁵⁴ Tamerlane issued coins inscribed with his titles (either *amīr* or Imperial Son-in-law) and his Chinggisid ruler's name.⁵⁵ He acted as patron to several Chinggisid nobles. He first offered refuge to a claimant to the Blue Horde, Toqtamīsh (who became khan of the Golden Horde) and later to a refugee from the Great Yuan court (who eventually became Great Khan in eastern Mongolia).⁵⁶ Tamerlane stood as a staunch defender of Mongol customary law.⁵⁷ Court-commissioned illuminated manuscripts from the early Timurid dynasty portray court members as Mongols.⁵⁸ Tamerlane's court-sponsored genealogies purported to show a shared common ancestry with Chinggis.⁵⁹

Genealogy and history often walked hand in hand. The *Mu'izz al-ansāb fī shajarat al-ansāb* is an anonymous Timuro-Chinggisid genealogical history compiled circa 1426–27 by order of Shāhrukh (1377–1447), one of Tamerlane's early successors. It is another example of keen early Timurid interest in Chinggisid nobility. History was personalized rather than abstract. Timurid chroniclers stressed that Tamerlane's ancestor, Qarachar Barlas, was both an influential commander in Chaghadaï's army and his lord's personal advisor.⁶⁰ In different terms, the Chaghadaï khanate and other Mongol groups originated in the Chinggisid imperial structure and drew on its imperial

⁵¹ Subtelny, "Tamerlane and His Descendants," p. 171.

⁵² Chann ("Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction," p. 99) notes that only with the popularity of Yazdi's *Zafar-nāma* (completed in 1425) was the connection between Tamerlane and the title solidified for posterity.

⁵³ Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," p. 102; Subtelny, "Tamerlane and His Descendants," p. 171. The Chinggisid woman was Sarāy Mulk Hānūm, daughter of Qazan Hān, last khan of the Chaghatai khanate and wife of Amīr Ḥusayn. See Blair, "Timurid Signs," p. 558; Manz, "Temür," p. 184.

⁵⁴ Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," pp. 101–2; Manz, *Rise and Rule*, pp. 14–15; "Temür," p. 184. Tamerlane's first Chinggisid khan was Soyurghatmīsh.

⁵⁵ Komaroff, "Epigraphy of Timurid Coinage," pp. 213, 215; Blair, "Timurid Signs," p. 558.

⁵⁶ Manz, "Temür," pp. 185, 187. On Toqtamīsh's rule and his war with Tamerlane, see Vásáry, "Jochid Realm," pp. 81–85. The Great Yuan refugee was Bunyashiri (Punyaśrī). See Honda, "On the Genealogy," pp. 239, 243–44.

⁵⁷ Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," pp. 100–1. ⁵⁸ Shea, "Mongol Cultural," p. 36.

⁵⁹ Mano, "Amīru-Teimūru," p. 111; Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," pp. 99–100.

⁶⁰ Manz, "Development and Meaning," p. 39. The *Mu'izz al-ansāh*, an expansion of Rashid al-Dīn's chronicle, includes a "full genealogy of the Barlas tribe, beginning with Qarachar." See Manz, "Development and Meaning," p. 40.

ideology after the empire's fall.⁶¹ Tamerlane's forefathers in the Barlas family had served the Chinggisid state since the early thirteenth century, holding posts in the imperial guard, the *keshig*. Generation after generation, the Barlas family maintained an enduring alignment with the imperial guard, the general staff of the military, and key administrative posts in the palace and central government in Daidu.⁶² Even when Mongol power failed, imperial Chinggisid institutions remained as important as family memory and established normative expectations. It functioned as a link to the past and a guide for the future. Tamerlane adopted the *keshig* structure to organize his military resources, expand his political control, and showcase his commitment to shared values and memories of his supporters, who came "of age within the web of Chinggisid sovereignty and Mongol political culture."⁶³ Tamerlane's standing army leaned heavily on Turco-Mongolian Chaghataid soldiers, "who had originated as the nomad population of the Ulus Chaghatay."⁶⁴

Seizure of key Ilkhanid sites strengthened Tamerlane's claims on Chinggisid authority. In 1384, Tamerlane seized Sulṭāniyya, the location of the mausoleum of Öljeitü (r. 1305–16), an Ilkhanid ruler. Later Ilkhanids were enthroned there. One Timurid specialist suggests, "from this time on, Tamerlane implicitly laid claim to the Ilkhanid inheritance."⁶⁵ Early Timurid historians themselves were often embedded within a Chinggisid world, depending on Mongolian commanders for details of military institutions or gleaning information when serving as tutors to Chinggisid princes.⁶⁶

Tamerlane's extensive ties to the Chinggisid legacy struck non-Timurid visitors to his court. In his explanation of the background of Tamerlane and "the Tatars," the Arab historian and career official, Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406), rehearses the genealogy of Chinggis and his descendants (including Qubilai) through the mid-fourteenth century. He identifies Tamerlane as "an emir of the house of the Banū Jaghaṭāi," noting that that he "was the guardian of a boy who was also related to him by descent from Jaghaṭāi through male ancestors, all of them kings, and this one Timūr ibn Tūghān, was their cousin on the father's side. He became guardian of one them, the heir to the throne named Maḥmūd, whose mother Şurghatmish he married."⁶⁷ Jaghaṭāi is the Persianized version of Chaghadaï, one of Chinggis khan's sons and founder of the Chaghadaï House

⁶¹ Manz, "Development and Meaning," p. 29. Munkh-Erdene ("Where Did the Mongol Empire Come From?") argues more broadly for state formations' importance for steppe identity, stressing the transformative impact of the Chinggisid imperial enterprise for both Mongols and subjugated peoples. Kramarovsky ("Culture of the Golden Horde," pp. 256–57) similarly highlights the "state-bound" nature of identity and culture in the context of the Golden Horde.

⁶² Grupper, "A Barulas Family Narrative in the Yuan Shih," esp. p. 37.

⁶³ Grupper, "A Barulas Family Narrative in the Yuan Shih," esp. p. 96.

⁶⁴ Manz, *Power*, p. 15

⁶⁵ Manz, "Temür," p. 185.

⁶⁶ Woods, "Timurid Historiography," pp. 90, 92–93, 100.

⁶⁷ Fischel, *Ibn Khaldun*, pp. 45–46.

noted previously. Likewise Ibn ʿArabshāh (1389–1450) writes that he has seen a genealogy of Tamerlane “traced without a break to Chinggis Khan through females.”⁶⁸ He further notes, “after conquering Transoxiana and rising above his companions, he married princesses and therefore they gave him the surname Kurkan, which in the Mongol language means son-in-law, since he had gained affinity with kings and enjoyed the highest authority in their courts.”⁶⁹ A bitter critic of Tamerlane, Ibn ʿArabshāh begrudgingly acknowledges Tamerlane’s skill in exploiting Chinggisid connections to forge alliances. Through a marriage tie to the Moghul king, Tamerlane “gained their friendship and brought them to peace and tranquility . . . and became safe from their onslaughts and attacks.”⁷⁰ Through his observation of *yasa*, “the law of Chinggis Khan,” Tamerlane again “was safe from their enmity and repelled their wiles and power to injure.”⁷¹ Among the non-Timurid observers just noted, Ibn ʿArabshāh was the most critical of Tamerlane but also the most diligent in gathering information, even if many were second-hand accounts.⁷² He grasped Tamerlane’s use of the Chinggisid legacy to advance his interests.

Tamerlane and his court historians repeatedly turned to the Chinggisid past to justify Tamerlane’s actions and ambitions abroad. Whatever traction these appeals gained grew from the fact that neighbors were often just as much a product of the Mongol empire as was Tamerlane. He legitimated his claims to control over revenue from Khwārazm cities by saying that Chinggis had granted the territory to the House of Chaghadaï, whose rights Tamerlane was now restoring. Similar justification was offered for seizure of former Ilkhanate lands such as Khurasan in 1381.⁷³ In communications with the Ottoman sultan Yıldırım and the Mamluk sultan of Egypt and Syria al-Malik al-Zahir Barquq (r. 1382–99), Tamerlane denounced one Chinggisid house (the Toluids) for their abuse of authority and betrayal of Chinggis’ wishes. Tamerlane was trying to explain why his seizure of lands outside Chaghadaïd territory was right and necessary.⁷⁴

Tamerlane’s Chinggisid-inflected rulership traveled well. Early Ottoman leaders were familiar with Chinggis Khan’s political legacy, which had figured prominently in their own formation.⁷⁵ In a letter to one of Tamerlane’s immediate successors (Shāhrukh), the early fifteenth century Ottoman sultan Mehmed (r. 1413–21) repeatedly refers to the Ilkhanids, mentions Ilkhanid-Mongol terms like *quriltai* (lineage conclave), *yarligh* (decree), and uses Tamerlane’s title

⁶⁸ ʿArabshāh, *Life*, p. 4. ⁶⁹ ʿArabshāh, *Life*, p. 4. ⁷⁰ ʿArabshāh, *Life*, p. 18.

⁷¹ ʿArabshāh, *Life*, p. 18.

⁷² McChesney, “Note on the Life”; Manz, “Johannes Schiltberger and Other,” pp. 56–57.

⁷³ Woods, “Timur’s Genealogy,” pp. 104–5. ⁷⁴ Woods, “Timur’s Genealogy,” pp. 106–8.

⁷⁵ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, p. 195. For other ties between the early Ottomans and the Mongols, see Lindner, “How Mongol!”; “Forging of Ottoman”; Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, p. 195; Golden, “Migrations,” pp. 117, 119.

güregen (Chinggisid son-in-law).⁷⁶ Previously, when Tamerlane campaigned in Ottoman territory, he sought local Turco-Mongol groups' allegiance. He appealed to recent history, writing: "We have the same ancestors . . . you are therefore truly a shoot from my stock . . . your last king was Artana who died in the Faith [that is, Islam] and the greatest king in the realms of Rum was your servant . . . why should you be slaves of a man who is a son of slaves set free by Al-i Saljuk."⁷⁷ The Ilkhanate had appointed the king of Artana (or Eretna) as governor. In the wake of the Ilkhanate's collapse, he declared himself sultan and ruled his own principality in central and eastern Anatolia until his death in 1352. Here Tamerlane invokes recent historical memory of Mongol rule to undermine Ottoman legitimacy and forge a bond of common descent.

This book's focus is use of the Chinggisid legacy, thus the previous description has hewed to Tamerlane's efforts to create ties to Chinggis Khan, the house of Chaghatai, and their descendant to advance his interests. However, Tamerlane strove to "build an imperial image and character from a widely disparate set of sources and models across the region of his conquests."⁷⁸ The next section considers another example of how an important Central Asian ruling elite put its multifaceted inheritance to work.

Moghul Khanate or Ulus-i Moghul

Although far from unified in a political sense, the lineages that comprised the Moghul Khanate considered themselves to be part of the Chaghatai Khanate. Many lineages were part of the extended Mongolian diaspora with long histories of service to the Chinggisids.⁷⁹ Centered in the Ili region, the lineages of what scholars sometimes identify as the Moghul Khanate were active in much of the area that today includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang of the People's Republic of China.⁸⁰ In the first half of the fourteenth century, the Chaghadaid khanate included a mix of urban and rural sedentary Iranian populations with various Turco-Mongolian communities.⁸¹ Long after the Chaghadaid khanate politically imploded in the mid-fourteenth century, the Moghul khanate retained key features of Mongol governance. It issued written documents in the Mongolian language. It valued

⁷⁶ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, pp. 204–5.

⁷⁷ 'Arabshah, *Tamerlane*, p. 178. Cited in Kadafar, *Two Worlds*, p. 186, fn. 22.

⁷⁸ Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire*, p. 4.

⁷⁹ Mano ("Moghūlistan," pp. 49–52) identifies fourteen Turco-Mongolian lineages whose histories predated Chinggis' rise and seven groups that seem to have formed in the fourteenth century.

⁸⁰ These paragraphs draw heavily from Kim Hodong, "Early History of the Moghul Nomads." See also Tian Weijiang, "Shisi shijichu," pp. 80–82; Millward, "Eastern Central Asia," pp. 262–63; Biran, "Mongols in Central Asia," pp. 58–60.

⁸¹ Golden, "Migrations," p. 116.

Chinggisid law (*yasa*). Its members called themselves the Mongol Empire (*Mongghol ulus*). Members of the Moghul khanate sometimes expressed disdain for their Timurid rivals. Tamerlane, in their eyes, was a usurper, who, lacking proper qualifications to rule, had been forced to put a Chinggisid puppet on the throne to provide an appearance of legitimacy. Tamerlane's people were dismissed as *Qara'unas*, people of mixed ancestry, lacking a proper Chaghadaid pedigree.⁸²

The importance of Chaghadaid descent was violently revealed in 1365. That year, the head of one Moghul lineage, Qamar al-Dīn, seized power and arrogated the title of khan. It sparked immediate resistance among the khanate's lineages, in large part because he was not of Chinggisid descent. The ensuing succession weakened the Moghul khanate and opened the door to Tamerlane, who sensed an opportunity to expand his realm. The struggle between the Moghul Khanate and Tamerlane was also a competition for the Mongol empire's mantle. One historian suggests, "the war between the Timurids and the Moghuls in the latter half of the fourteenth century was waged not simply for booty or conquest but for the unification of the Chaghatai Khanate."⁸³ Put differently, despite political upheaval and the lack of a single dominant khan, the Chaghatai khanate remained a broadly accepted political, military, and social entity of unquestioned legitimacy. Modern historians regularly speak of the Chaghatai khanate's collapse in the mid-fourteenth century, but as we saw with the Ilkhanate's fall, contemporaries did not perceive a clear rupture.⁸⁴ Restoration remained within reach.⁸⁵

Haydar Dūghlāt's sixteenth century chronicle *Tārīkh-i rashīdī* provides one of the only surviving narrative sources for the Moghul khanate. It offers several clues about the place of the Chinggisid legacy in the fourteenth century. He provides a brief genealogy of Tughlugh-Temūr Khan, the first ruler to appear in his history of the Moghuls. It traces Tughlugh-Temūr's ancestry to Chaghatai, son of Chinggis, and back to Alan Qoa or Alan the Fair.⁸⁶ Mongols traced their ancestry back to Alan the Fair, the woman whose five sons were believed to be ancestors of the major Mongol aristocratic lineages. Dūghlāt refers several times to a letter of patent issued by Tughlugh-Temūr Khan to Amir Bolaji. The patent renewed nine privileges originally granted by Chinggis Khan to Amir Bolaji's forbear.⁸⁷ The patent

⁸² Manz, "Development and Meaning," p. 38; Golden, "Migrations," p. 117. In turn, the Timurids called the Moghuls, "robbers" (*jätälchete*).

⁸³ Kim, "Early History of the Moghul Nomads," p. 318.

⁸⁴ Kim, "Early History of the Moghul Nomads," p. 317. For one articulation (among many) of the dissolution, see Mano Eiji, "Jūgo seiki shotō," pp. 1–2.

⁸⁵ Reunification efforts circa 1360–65 failed but suggest a sense that restoration was possible.

⁸⁶ Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 3).

⁸⁷ Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 9).

was a valuable artifact and legal instrument that was passed down in Dūghlāt's family. He notes that it was "written in the Mongol language."⁸⁸ These details show the Chinggisid legacy's importance within the Moghul khanate after the Mongol empire's collapse.

In contrast to early Timurid chronicles and genealogies that systematically linked Tamerlane to Chinggis, Haydar Dūghlāt's account of the fourteenth century does not foreground the Mongol legacy. In part this may result from the extreme paucity of sources available for his use.⁸⁹ He went so far as to supplement his history with materials created at the rival Timurid court. Another factor may be Dūghlāt's understanding of sovereignty, which he links to Tughlugh-Temür's conversion to Islam and God's will.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, evidence of Turco-Mongolian political culture appears throughout his account. Archery, hunting, and falconry are listed among things important to administrative affairs and running the kingdom.⁹¹ In the face of a larger Timurid army, Moghul forces resort to use of the rain stone.⁹² Mongols believed that the rain stone could summon rain, snow, and sleet, whose sudden appearance could dramatically alter the balance of battle. The rain stone, thus, was an important part of Mongol culture and lore. Dūghlāt notes the "ancient Mongol custom" of the khan's wife's broad discretionary powers, the use of the *tümen* as a military/fiscal unit, and "the ancient Mongol" custom of holding a great feast when the new *koumiss* (fermented mare's milk) arrived in spring.⁹³ Dūghlāt felt all these Mongol practises were important to understand the Moghul khanate's history, but unlike the Timurid court, he does not invoke the Chinggisid legacy to explain political change or justify seizure of power.

Yet, we know from this and other sources that Chinggisid charisma did figure in contemporary perceptions of Moghul khan's authority. After Esen-Buqa Khan died without a clear successor, "chaos made its way among the nation." Bolaji (who was Dūghlāt's ancestor) then "decided to locate a khan so that order might return to the kingdom." After an arduous search, a potential successor was located. Bolaji then "raised Tughlugh-Temür to the khanate, and he secured all Moghulistan, indeed the entire territory of Chaghadaï."⁹⁴

⁸⁸ Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, pp. 4, 20).

⁸⁹ Aubin ("Le Khanat," p. 16) adduces relative geographic isolation and lack of strong historiographical traditions as reasons for the documentary famine.

⁹⁰ Earlier in the fourteenth century, the Chaghadaid khan Darmashirin had converted and attempted draconian enforcement of Islamic law. See Biran, "Chaghadaids and Islam."

⁹¹ Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 2). Dūghlāt is describing his own skills here.

⁹² Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 12).

⁹³ Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, pp. 3, 8, 19). Mano ("Moghūlistan," pp. 52–55) notes the Moghul khanate's use of units of 100 and 1,000 men and military forces organized into a right wing, a left wing, and a center. Tamerlane's titles included Amīr Timūr[-i?] Tūmān.

⁹⁴ Aubin ("Le Khanat," p. 54) suggests that *tūmān/tümen* here functioned like a name.
⁹⁴ Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, pp. 3–4).

A similar search for a hidden-away Chinggisid adolescent occurred after the death of Qamar al-Dīn, the non-Chinggisid tribal leader noted earlier whose reign brought Moghul lands into “chaos.”⁹⁵ Yazdi’s *Ẓafar-nāma* (written at the Timurid court) has Tughlugh-Temür showering “inestimable favor” on Tamerlane, including the governorship of Kish “along with his hereditary *tūmen* and all its appurtenances and privileges.”⁹⁶ The khan relinquished “control of affairs of the realm to the Sahib-Qiran’s good judgment.”⁹⁷ Yazdi’s account was written early in the fifteenth century, and we may hesitate to conclude that it accurately reflects late fourteenth century views. Yet, it strongly suggests that the Chaghadaid khan’s approval mattered enough to have him mouth words of praise for Tamerlane. We do know that marriage alliances to the Moghul khan held appeal for contemporaries. When the late fourteenth-century Moghul khan, Khiḏr Khwāja, concluded a truce with Tamerlane, he granted Tamerlane a woman from the khanly harem.⁹⁸ Decades later, the ambitious Oirat leader Esen demanded that the reigning Moghul ruler, Ways Khan (r. 1417–32), turn over his sister as ransom.⁹⁹ She wed Esen’s son, Amāsānji.¹⁰⁰ Indeed before coming face-to-face with the defeated Ways Khan, Esen (in Dūghlāt’s retelling) reflects to himself, “If he really is a descendant of Chinggis Khan, he will certainly not bow to me but will look upon me as a liege man.”¹⁰¹ For the people of the Moghul khanate, there was no doubt that Chinggisid descent was a *sine qua non* for rulership. They were equally convinced that their political world – indeed their entire culture – was firmly rooted in Chinggisid ways.

Concluding Comments

“Having returned to their native steppes after expulsion from China,” observes one scholar, “the Mongols seemed isolated from the external world, having forfeited all links with their kinsmen, who became scattered across Eurasia in the period of military expansionism.”¹⁰² As noted, the Mongolian diaspora did result in the relocation of men and women from the steppe. Less clear is the degree of isolation after the empire’s fall. First, many – perhaps even the majority – of Mongols did not return to the steppe. Instead, they became influential political and military actors in new lands. Some returned to the

⁹⁵ Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, pp. 13, 18–19).

⁹⁶ Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 8).

⁹⁷ Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, pp. 8–9).

⁹⁸ Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 18).

⁹⁹ Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 23).

¹⁰⁰ Mano Eiji, “Jūgo seiki shotō,” p. 23

¹⁰¹ Dūghlāt, *Tārīkh-i-Rashīdī* (Thackston, vol. 1, p. 23).

¹⁰² Bira, *Mongolian Historical Writing*, p. 113.

steppe, but ties to Daidu, Samarqand, or Baghdad did not vanish. Newly ascendant powers like the Timurids, Moghuls, and Ming dynasty actively sought the allegiance of Mongols on the steppe and beyond. Lineages, clans, and individuals reconsidered their interests in light of new sources of patronage, power, and prestige. Transfers of allegiance might involve physical relocation but did not necessarily sever old ties. Indeed, the ability to exploit such connections, which often transcended dynastic borders, was one reason newly ascendant courts recruited former Chinggisid personnel.¹⁰³ This chapter has also shown that institutions such as military/fiscal units of 100, 1,000, and 10,000 remained in use throughout Central and West Asia. In a word, the Mongol legacy remained a shared reference point across Eurasia.

To secure the loyalty of those tied to the Chinggisid enterprise, all parties crafted tales of the Mongol empire and their relations to it. The early Timurid court strongly appealed to the Chinggisid legacy, linking Tamerlane to Chinggis Khan and his descendants every way it could. Tamerlane incorporated wholesale institutions and lineages from the Mongol empire. The same was even truer for the Moghul khanate. Mongol nobles enjoyed privileged status even beyond the empire in places like Cairo and Delhi. Bearing all this in mind, one can begin to imagine the staggering difficulties confronting Zhu Yuanzhang when he tried to persuade Moghul and Timurid rulers that he – a non-Chinggisid, not even a Chinggisid son-in-law – was qualified to tell the story of the Mongol empire, including its irreversible demise. More outrageous still was his claim that he was the Great Yuan's sole legitimate successor.

¹⁰³ Amitai ("Mamluks of Mongol Origin and Their Role," pp. 132–33) notes family reunions among Mongols who transferred their loyalty to the Mamluk sultanate.