

Juvaini's Account of Jalal al-Din Khwarazmshah and the Crossing of the Indus: Historiographical and Pictorial Aspects¹

Charles Melville

Professor Emeritus, Pembroke College, University of Cambridge

Introduction

‘Ata-Malik Juvaini’s *History of the World Conqueror* (*Tarikh-i Jahangusha*), completed in 1260, has long been recognized as a major source for the study of the formative period of the Mongol Empire in western Asia and as the first significant history to be composed under the Ilkhans in Iran (1258–1353). The various general appraisals of the work are numerous, from the introduction to the text edited by Mirza Muhammad Qazvini and the translation by J. A. Boyle,² to surveys

¹This research is supported by the Leverhulme Trust grant EM-2018-033\5.

²‘Ata-Malik Juvaini, *Tarikh-i Jahangusha-yi Juvaini*, ed. Mirza Muhammad Qazvini, 3 vols., EJW Gibb Memorial Series 16, pts. 1–3 (Leiden: Brill, 1912–37); I, *ya-sin*, trans. E. G. Browne, xix–xlvii; J. A. Boyle, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World-Conqueror*, with an introduction by David O. Morgan, 2 vols. in 1. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), xxvii–xlvii.

Charles Melville is a professor emeritus of Persian history at the University of Cambridge. He has published extensively on the history and culture of Iran in the Mongol to Safavid periods, the illustration of Persian manuscripts, and the *Shahnamah* of Ferdowsi. His recent publications include “Ghazan Khan’s Political Will and Testament: Further Light on the Mongol Household” (*Ming Qing Yanjiu*, 2018) and an edited volume, *Safavid Persia in the Age of Empires* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2021). He currently has a Leverhulme Trust Emeritus Fellowship on “Visualising Persian History.”

of the sources for Mongol history by David Morgan, Peter Jackson, and others,³ and more focused discussions of Juvaini's life and work.⁴ George Lane reviews at some length the nature of Juvaini's *History* and the context in which he was writing.⁵ More recently, both Jackson and Judith Kolbas have developed this discussion: the former in terms of the difficulties facing a bureaucrat writing for a royal patron and particularly in comparison with the later writer in the same position, Rashid al-Din,⁶ and the latter through a suggestive exploration of the way Juvaini wove into his account strands of "transfer, adoption and integration" of the Mongol incursion into Iranian culture and society—that is, through explanation of events, assessment of positive as well as negative aspects, and acceptance of the new order.⁷ Additionally, studies of Juvaini's literary style locate him in the intersection of history and literature, with his rhetoric employed in the service of his message, including a fresh analysis of his use of quotations from the *Shahnamah*.⁸

³D. O. Morgan, "Persian Historians and the Mongols," in *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds*, ed. D. O. Morgan (London: SOAS, 1982), 109–42, reference on pp. 113–18; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the Islamic World: From Conquest to Conversion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), 22–24; W. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol Invasion*, EJW Gibb Memorial Series 5, 4th ed. 1928. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, reprinted 2007 [with new maps]), 39–41; Shagdaryn Bira, *Mongolian Historical Writing from 1200 to 1700*, trans. John R. Kreuger, Studies on East Asia 24, 2nd ed. (Bellingham: Western Washington University, 2002), 84–94.

⁴C. C. Kappler, "Regards sur les Mongols au XIII^{ème} siècle : Joveyni, Rubrouk," *Dabireh* 6 (1989): 183–94; Charles Melville, "Jahāngošā-ye Jovayni," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. XIV, fasc. 4 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2008), 378–82.

⁵George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 177–212.

⁶Peter Jackson, "Mongol Khans and Religious Allegiance: The Problems Confronting a Minister-Historian in Ilkhanid Iran," *Iran* 47 (2009): 109–22. See also Beatrice Forbes Manz, "Juvayni's Historical Consciousness," in *Ferdowsi, the Mongols and the History of Iran: Art, Literature and Culture from Early Islam to Qajar Persia; Studies in Honour of Charles Melville*, ed. R. Hillenbrand, A. C. S. Peacock, and Firuza Abdullaeva (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 114–19, which explores Juvaini's multiple and ambivalent loyalties.

⁷Judith Kolbas, "Historical Epic as Mongol Propaganda? Juwayni's Motifs and Motives," in *The Mongols' Middle East: Continuity and Transformation in Ilkhanid Iran*, ed. Bruno De Nicola and Charles Melville (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 155–71. Quote on p. 157.

⁸E. A. Poliakova, "The Development of a Literary Canon in Medieval Persian Chronicles: The Triumph of Etiquette," *Iranian Studies* 17 (1984): 237–56, reference on pp. 244–47; A. S. Melikian-Chirvani,

While there is hardly a dearth of scholarship on Juvaini's *History*, therefore, few studies look at the treatment of specific episodes to underpin and inform more general conclusions, especially compared with their treatment in other historical accounts. One such study is J. A. Boyle's investigation of how the sources used by Juvaini and Rashid al-Din explain the differences in their reports;⁹ an earlier example is Vladimir Minorsky's examination of the description by both authors of the early Mongol campaigns in the Caucasus, refining the general proposition that in some sections at least, Rashid al-Din drew heavily on the work of the earlier historian.¹⁰

Comparing the two authors, Minorsky writes:

The two nearly contemporary historians differ widely in their methods and views. Juvaynī is a true representative of the tradition elaborated in the Seljuk chanceries. His text is full of recondite Arabic words and verses making appeal only to highly trained scholars. Important hints and reflections are hidden away in flowery periods. The chapters are interrupted by lengthy dissertations on the helplessness of human initiative, on the terror of Divine wrath, on the inevitability of Fate. Juvaynī's mental field is the Islamic world, and he ventures into Outer Darkness with some reluctance.¹¹

I'm not sure that I agree with the last remark; certainly, compared with the other writers of his time, Juvaini had personal experience of the Outer Darkness, traveling several times to Transoxania and Turkestan and spending over a year at the Mongol court, giving him, in Barthold's opinion, a "vast superiority" over Rashid al-Din and Vassaf.¹²

"Le livre des rois, miroir du destin. II. Takht-e Soleyman et la symbolique du Shah-Name," *Studia Iranica* 20 (1991): 33–148, esp. 54–74; and more recently, Nasrin Askari, *The Medieval Reception of the Shāhnāma as a Mirror for Princes* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 68–70, 344–48.

⁹J. A. Boyle, "Juvaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn as Sources on the History of the Mongols," in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt (London: SOAS, 1962), 133–37, esp. 135.

¹⁰V. Minorsky, "Caucasia III: The Alān Capital *Magas and the Mongol Campaigns," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 14 (1952): 221–38.

¹¹Minorsky, "Caucasia III," 221.

¹²Barthold, *Turkestan*, 40; cf. Bira, *Mongolian Historical Writing*, 86.

Minorsky continues:

Rashīd al-dīn is primarily interested in *materia historica*, in solid facts, in men and tribes with their full names and characteristics. His style is greatly simplified with no abstruse Arabisms in it but with a number of administrative technicalities and new Turco-Mongol terms. [. . .] In Rashīd al-dīn's days, the early tragedies of the Mongol invasion culminating in the sacking of Baghdad were things of the past. The Islamic, and mostly Persian collaborators, had set the administration on a solid foundation and even succeeded in converting the new rulers to Islam. Instead of lamenting over man's sins and the retribution in the shape of "God's Horsemen", it was more appropriate to criticize the defects of the existing machinery and to devise the means of improving it. [. . .] In this respect, Rashīd al-dīn's history is perhaps a truer reflection of the *Pax Mongolica*, but both he and Juvaynī, whose work he used, are equally well informed statesman and keen observers. Both have preserved for us the particular atmosphere of their days.¹³

Put succinctly, "the text of Juvaynī has fewer facts, but more judgements."¹⁴ In this brief homage to our distinguished colleague, I thought I might concentrate on one particular episode in Juvaini's *History* as a window onto some aspects of his outlook and methods, to test these judgments, including a comparison with other records of the same events—both earlier sources and the later reception of his work by Rashid al-Din and others—as well as a discussion of the development of a visual realization of his account.

The episode in question is the well-known and most famous exploit of Jalal al-Din, who was the son of the last ruling Khwarazmshah and who almost alone defied the Mongol invasions and was one of the few people to inflict a major defeat on the Mongol armies, noticeably at the Battle of Parwan in modern-day Afghanistan in 1221. Following this,

¹³Minorsky, "Caucasia III," 221–22.

¹⁴Bira, *Mongolian Historical Writing*, 87.

Chinggis Khan pursued him from Ghazna down to the Indus, where he was hemmed in by the Mongols and escaped after throwing himself into the river and swimming to safety on the other shore. This escapade has the stuff of legend, and it was Juvaini who made the most of it.

Accounts of the Episode

The first thing to notice is that Juvaini describes these events in two different places in his work, once in his account of the Mongol invasions (vol. I) and secondly in his history of the Khwarazmshahs (vol. II). They both contain similar information, but there is no cross-referencing between them, and this is one example of many of the rather loose and disjointed construction of the work, which is usually considered not to have been completely revised. The first account is shorter and less detailed and can be summarized as follows:¹⁵ Chinggis Khan pursued Jalal al-Din to the Indus, cut him off on every side, and exhorted his troops to take the sultan alive. Chaghatai and Ögedei arrived from Khwarazm. Seeing that battle was unavoidable, Jalal al-Din dashed from side to side but was pushed back despite his repeated attacks. He fought like an angry lion (likened to a verse from the *Shahnamah*);¹⁶ the Mongols were sparing in shooting at him and the sultan was too quick; he took a fresh horse, made a final sortie, and then jumped into the river. Chinggis prevented the astonished Mongols from pursuing him and exclaimed that “a father should have such a son” (از پدر پسر چنین باید), followed by three *Shahnamah* verses.¹⁷ Jalal al-Din’s troops who were not drowned were slaughtered, as were his women and children, whether mature males or infants. Some of the wealth that had been thrown into the river was recovered. The date of this wonder of the age was Rajab 618 (August–September 1221).

¹⁵Juvaini, *Jahangusha*, I:106–8; Boyle, *Genghis Khan*, 133–35.

¹⁶Ferdowsi, *Shahnama*, vol. V, ed. D. J. Khaleghi-Motlagh (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1997), 181, v. 1094. This recounts Luhrasp’s fatal battle against the invading Arjasp. Not included by Rashid al-Din.

¹⁷Ferdowsi, *Shahnama*, V:391, vv. 1179–80 and V:391, var. n. 23. This recounts Isfandiyar watching Rustam’s retreat from their combat.

Juvaini's second account, in his history of the Khwarazmshahs, is fuller and contains more verses in Arabic and Persian, including several further quotations from Ferdowsi's *Shahnamah*.¹⁸ Hearing of Chinggis Khan's advance seeking vengeance for the defeat at Parwan (followed by two *Shahnamah* verses),¹⁹ Jalal al-Din retreated to the Indus and tried to prepare boats for the crossing, but the rearguard positioned to slow the Mongol advance was defeated and Chinggis Khan hastened to hem the sultan in on every side. His right wing, under Amin Malik, was destroyed and Amin captured in flight and killed near Peshawar. The left wing was also defeated; the sultan stayed firm in the center with seven hundred men, charging left, right, and center, but the situation grew desperate and Akhash Malik pulled him back. Jalal al-Din tearfully bade farewell to his children, turned, discarded his armor, and jumped ten cubits (approximately thirty feet) into the river and reached the other shore. Chinggis came to the bank and prevented the Mongols from pursuit, but many were slaughtered in the water. The sultan arrived on the far shore with his sword, lance, and shield.²⁰ The heavens were amazed (*Shahnamah* verse: "No-one in the world has seen such a man, nor heard of any ancient hero [like him]"²¹), and everyone was astonished. Chinggis Khan remarked that every father should have such a son, who should not be underestimated (quoting two more *Shahnamah* verses).²²

¹⁸Juvaini, *Jahangusha*, II:139–43; Boyle, *Genghis Khan*, 408–11. For the Arabic verses, see Boyle's notes based on Muhammad Qazvini's identifications.

¹⁹Ferdowsi, *Shahnama*, vol. I, ed. D. J. Khaleghi-Motlagh (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1987), 347, v. 25, in which Manuchihir describes Afrasiyab to Rustam; and Ferdowsi, *Shahnama*, vol. IV, ed. D. J. Khaleghi-Motlagh (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1994), 194, v. 368, in which Kay Khusrau is told of Afrasiyab's crossing the Oxus. The substitution of *Shah* for *Turk* in the first verse is noted by Boyle, *Genghis Khan*, 409n49, and Melikian-Chirvani, "Le livre des rois," 65–66. For a more detailed analysis of the passage, see A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, "Conscience du passé et résistance culturelle dans l'Iran mongol," in *L'Iran face à la domination mongole*, ed. Denise Aigle (Tehran: IFRI, 1997), 135–78, reference on pp. 144–46; cf. Askari, *The Medieval Reception*, 69. Neither verse is repeated by Rashid al-Din.

²⁰Muhammad Qazvini notes an important variant here, Juvaini, *Jahangusha*, II:142n4; cf. Teresa Fitzherbert, "Portrait of a Lost Leader: Jalal al-Din Khwarazmshah and Juvaini," in *The Court of the Ilkhans 1290–1340*, ed. Julian Raby and Teresa Fitzherbert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 63–77, reference on pp. 67–68. See also fn. 44 below.

²¹Ferdowsi, *Shahnama*, V:319, v. 330. This recounts the tale of Rustam and Isfandiyyar (Bahman talking about Rustam), which is repeated by Rashid al-Din in both versions; see n41 below. All translations are mine.

²²Ferdowsi, *Shahnama*, V:302, vv. 119, 121, which refer to Rustam and Isfandiyyar (Gushtasp talking about Rustam). This is repeated by Rashid al-Din II; see fn. 40, fn. 42 below.

Many of the *Shahnamah* verses quoted by Juvaini here are taken from the story of Rostam and Isfandiyar. This is an episode that matches two outstanding champions, but also one in which Isfandiyar is at odds with his father, possibly reflecting Jalal al-Din's heroics when compared with the flight of his father, Sultan Muhammad, and his lack of resistance against the Mongols. The set of three verses in the first account are consecutive, although the third is a variant, whereas the next verse would also seem to be relevant:

گذر کرد با خستگی ها بر آب از آن زخم پیکان شده پرشتاب

He crossed over the water to dry land, hurrying from
those arrow wounds²³

They all refer to Rostam's retreat from Isfandiyar across the Hamun (Helmand) after their first encounter. As noted by Askari, Juvaini's use of the *Shahnamah* indicates his profound familiarity with the text, in contrast with authors such as Ravandi, who appear to have used epitomes designed for ready quotations.²⁴ Juvaini's examples are appropriate to his purpose in enhancing his narrative and tailored (as here) to the largely military contexts in which they are used.

Concerning Juvaini's style, therefore, we can see that he has produced a highly literary account, but in these passages at least, he is not employing a complex rhetoric; the aim seems to be to communicate clearly and narrate an exciting episode. There are many attractive images, such as this one:

چند حلقه در پس یکدیگر بایستادند بر مثال کمان و آب سند چون زه ساختند

They formed several circles behind one another like (the curve of)
a bow and made the river Indus like the bowstring.²⁵

The description of the morning of the battle and Jalal al-Din's predicament offers another evocative image:

²³Ferdowsi, *Shahnama*, V:391, v. 1181.

²⁴Askari, *Medieval Reception*, 68–69, noting that they are also consecutive (though see the exceptions at fn. 19 above); cf. earlier, Julie S. Meisami, "Ravandi's *Rahat al-sudur*: History or Hybrid?," *Edebiyat* n.s. 5 (1994): 181–215, and Melikian-Chirvani, "Conscience du passé," 137.

²⁵Juvaini, *Jahangusha*, I:106; Boyle, *Genghis Khan*, 134.

صبح گاهی که نور شب از عذار روز دمیده بود و شیر صبح از پستان آفاق جوشیده
سلطان میان آب و آتش بماند

when the light of day appeared upon the cheek of night and the milk of the morning poured forth from the breast of the horizon, the sultan was left between water and fire.²⁶

The elemental metaphor of fire (the Mongol army) and water (the Indus) is a running motif through Juvaini's account. In general, the immediacy of the language helps the author's aim to create a memorable scene, rather than one muddled by superfluous verbiage, as does the invention of Chinggis Khan's purely apocryphal exclamation about the sultan as the ideal warrior son—a key element of his account and recognized as such in later sources.

Before turning to the use made of Juvaini by Rashid al-Din and later authors, we must consider other and especially earlier reports of the same events; a look at Juvaini's possible sources tells us what he contributed to enhance the narrative.

The earliest account is in the celebrated Arabic universal history, *al-Kamil fi'l-ta'rikh* by Ibn al-Athir of Mosul (d. 1233).²⁷ It comes toward the end of his annal for 617/1220 under the heading The Tatar Conquest of Ghazna and the Ghurid Lands. His account recognizably concerns the same events, with dissension within the Khwaramzshah's coalition over the spoils taken at Parwan and details of the sultan's unsuccessful efforts to bring back the defectors. When he saw the weakness of his troops in the face of Chinggis Khan's advance, he retreated toward India and reached the river (Indus), where he found no boats for a crossing. Having no option but to stand and fight, the Muslims realized that all previous battles they had fought (and won) were like a game.

²⁶Juvaini, *Jahangusha*, II:140 (and cf. fn. 4 of the critical apparatus); Boyle, *Genghis Khan*, 409. The Persian text seems accidentally (?) to reverse night and day unless the sense is that the light of night *left* the cheeks of the day. But the same wording is found in Rashid al-Din II; see fn. 40 below.

²⁷Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fi'l-ta'rikh*, 12 vols. (Cairo: Idarat al-Tiba'ah al-Muniriyyah, 1303/1886), XII:153–54.

After three days, Amin Malik (of Herat) was killed and the slaughter was enormous, but the number of dead and wounded on the side of the unbelievers was greater and they retired some distance away. When they saw the doubling of their own casualties and the impossibility of reinforcement, the Muslims sought boats, which arrived, and by God's decree, they crossed the river. The next day, the unbelievers returned to Ghazna.

The remainder of the account concerns further conquest, slaughter, and pillage in India.²⁸ Ibn al-Athir's information was gathered from far and wide and the length and breadth of the Islamic world and recorded as it reached him in Mesopotamia, greatly removed geographically from the events concerned but close in time. News of Jalal al-Din's individual heroics perhaps became more current in Iraq following his activities in northern Syria and the Caucasus, when they were tarnished by his violence and savagery toward infidels and Muslims alike; according to Ibn al-Athir's received version of events on the Indus, though, the Mongols generally came off worse in the encounters with the Khwarazmian allied forces. Juvaini was presumably unaware of Ibn al-Athir's work, which he does not refer to.²⁹ The most notable disparity between the two versions is Ibn al-Athir's report that the "Muslims" crossed to safety in boats and the lack of any reference to the sultan's dramatic leap.

In contrast to the wide and much admired scope of Ibn al-Athir's chronicle, the close focus on the deeds of Sultan Jalal al-Din by his secretary, Nasawi (writing shortly afterwards, ca. 1241–42), provides a more immediate and personal view of these events.³⁰ Juvaini mentions Nasawi more than once without, however, referring to his work directly.³¹ Nasawi's account is closer to Juvaini's second version and quite substantial, based at least in part on a named eyewitness

²⁸For these subsequent events, see Peter Jackson, "Jalāl al-Dīn, the Mongols, and the Khwarazmian Conquest of the Panjāb and Sind," *Iran* 28 (1990): 45–54.

²⁹On Ibn al-Athir as a source on the Mongol invasions, see recently Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, 16–18, and esp. 17 and 23 on Ibn al-Athir's attitude to Jalal al-Din.

³⁰Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, 18–19.

³¹Juvaini, *Jahangusha*, II:153, 177.

report (he himself joined the sultan's service after Jalal al-Din's return from India in 1223).³² The sequence of events is not dissimilar, though the details differ: Chinggis Khan reached the Indus before the sultan could regroup his forces (many of which had deserted him) and heavy fighting ensued, at the outset of which, Jalal al-Din's furious charge on the Mongol center caused the accursed Chinggis to turn in flight; but an elite force of ten thousand men kept in reserve then fell on the sultan's right wing, commanded by Amin Malik, which was put to flight and in retreat broke up the sultan's ranks. Slaughter ensued and many fled to the river and jumped in without expectation of surviving. The sultan's seven- to eight-year-old son was captured and killed. Following this defeat, the sultan came to the riverbank, where he found his womenfolk and children, who implored him to kill them rather than let them fall into the hands of the Mongols, which he did. As Nasawi exclaims, this was a marvellous disaster and rare calamity³³ (و هذه من عجائب البلايا ونوادير المصائب).

After reporting events elsewhere, Nasawi starts a new section describing Jalal al-Din's crossing of the Indus, about which he merely says that, having no other means of escape, the sultan was not prepared for flight and, sword in hand, jumped into the river fully armed, and he and the horse made it to the other shore, thanks to God's protection. He never rode the horse again but kept it until the siege of Tbilisi (in 1226). Nasawi says the sultan was joined by four thousand men who successfully crossed the river and others who caught up with him later, and then goes on to recount subsequent events. He gives the date of the battle by the Indus as Wednesday 8 Shawwal 618 (Thursday 25 November 1221).³⁴

³²Barthold, *Turkestan*, 39. Boyle, *Genghis Khan*, xxviii, notes that Nasawi was the executor of the will of Shams al-Din Muhammad, grandfather of Juvaini; a closer connection between the two historians appears more likely than is suggested above.

³³Thus echoing his subheading of the chapter on the sultan's defeat: هذه من معظمت الحروب و معظلات الخطوب. The second phrase, for which I can find no meaningful translation, is omitted in the fourteenth-century Persian translation by Khurandizi, *Sirat Jalal al-Din Mingbirni*, ed. M. Minovi (Tehran: Bungah-i tarjuma va nashr-i kitab, 1965), 110.

³⁴Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Nasawi, *Sirat al-Sultan Jalal al-Din*, ed. and trans. O. V. Houdas, as *Histoire du Sultan Djelal ed-Din Mankobirti, Prince du Kharezm*, 2 vols. (Paris: E. Leroux, 1891–95), text 83–85, trans. 139–42. This is the account followed by Barthold, *Turkestan*, 446. The correct identification of the places, personalities, and chronology of the Mongol campaigns in the region, as discussed by Barthold and Boyle, is not material to the point of this paper.

Nasawi's account includes one Arabic verse and is also in a refined literary style, with the pathos of the death of the sultan's young son, the sacrifice of his family, and his care for his heroic horse (none of which is mentioned by Juvaini); the firsthand account of his eyewitness crossing the river with the help of a young boy whom he initially intended to drown to save himself also brings color and interest to the narrative, but the drama is not exaggerated. The fact that some details contradict Juvaini's account—the fate of the sultan's family, his escape in full armor whereas Juvaini has him throw it off, the difference in date—suggests that either Juvaini was unaware of this source or chose not to follow it, making the story very much his own.

The independence of Juvaini's narrative is reinforced by the fact that the version by Minhaj al-Din b. Siraj al-Din Juzjani (*Tabaqat-i Nasiri*), also written in 1260, is very different but like Juvaini's is recorded in two places: first in his section (*tabaqa*) on the Khwarazmshahs (*tabaqa* 16) and again in his account of the Mongol invasions (*tabaqa* 23).³⁵ The latter is extremely brief: Juzjani merely states that Chinggis Khan gave battle to the sultan and Malik Khan of Herat (i.e., Amin Malik) and those with them on the banks of the Indus. Jalal al-Din and the army of Islam were defeated, and they threw themselves into the river. Some of the Muslims were drowned, some martyred, and some taken captive, while a few came out of the river (safely). There is no specific mention of the sultan's dramatic leap and even less eulogizing of his victory at Parwan. The Mongols are stated to have been defeated more than once.³⁶ The longer account mentions the adherence of Amin Malik and the victory at Parwan and in three other encounters. Chinggis Khan, hearing of these defeats, came upon Jalal al-Din, who was retreating to the region of Peshawar and gave battle on the banks of the Indus. The sultan was defeated and escaped to Hindustan.³⁷

³⁵Minhaj al-Din Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, ed. 'Abd al-Hayy Habibi, 2 vols. (Kabul: Historical Society of Afghanistan, 1963–64). On Juzjani, see Morgan, "Persian Historians," 110–13. The fullest analysis of Juzjani is by Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, *Indo-Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century* (New Delhi: Primus, 2010), 93–157.

³⁶Juzjani, *Tabaqat*, II:119.

³⁷Juzjani, *Tabaqat*, I:316.

We therefore see that Juvaini's version of these events minimizes the setbacks suffered by the Mongols (compared with the independent accounts by Ibn al-Athir, Nasawi, and Juzjani), although the flight of Chinggis Khan recorded by Nasawi was probably a deliberate tactical feigned retreat to bring his pursuers up to the forces waiting in ambush.³⁸ Through the eloquence of his rhetoric and literary skills, drawing on verses from the *Shahnamah* to make the narrative more vivid, Juvaini—with his family background of service to the Khwarazmshah Dynasty—is the one who really creates the image of Jalal al-Din as a legendary hero and of the awe and respect in which he was held by his opponents.

In this, he is followed by Rashid al-Din, who also provides two accounts of the episode, one in his history of Chinggis Khan in the *Tarikh-i Mubarak-i Ghazani*,³⁹ and one in the section on the Khwarazmshahs in the “world history” volume of the *Jami' al-tavarikh*.⁴⁰ The first is closer to Juvaini's first account but amalgamated with elements of his second version also, including the quotation of a single *Shahnamah* verse.⁴¹ Rashid al-Din also draws on “another reliable historian,” who can be identified as Nasawi, to report that Jalal al-Din drowned his women and female attendants to save them from falling into the hands of the Mongols, his treasure was thrown into the river, and all his troops were killed. Rashid al-Din then reverts to “another version” (*qauli digar*)—Juvaini again—to report that all the sultan's children, male and infants, were slaughtered and divers were sent down to retrieve what they could of his treasure. He also repeats Juvaini's reports of Chinggis Khan's sentiments about the repeated troubles (*fitna-ha*) to be expected from such a hero while omitting the concluding *Shahnamah* verses quoted by his source.

³⁸H. G. Raverty, *Ṭabakāt-i Nāsirī: A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia*, 2 vols. (Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica, 1871–81), 1021, in his extensive notes to his translation of Juzjani, accuses Juvaini of flattering his Mongol masters by exaggerating the numbers of their enemies and concealing their defeats (fn. 8).

³⁹Rashid al-Din, *Jami' al-tavarikh*, ed. M. Raushan and M. Musavi, 4 vols. (Tehran: Alborz, 1994), I:256–57 (Rashid al-Din I).

⁴⁰Rashid al-Din, *Jami' al-tavarikh: Tarikh-i salatīn-i Khwarazam*, ed. M. Raushan (Tehran: Miras-e Maktoob, 2010), 38–40 (Rashid al-Din II).

⁴¹Ferdowsi, *Shahnama*, V:319, v. 330; see fn. 21 above.

By contrast, Rashid al-Din's second account, in his history of the Khwarazmshahs, follows Juvaini's parallel version in volume two quite closely, repeating once more the same *Shahnamah* verse, "No-one in the world has seen such a man, nor heard of any ancient hero [like him]," and this time including Juvaini's two final verses.⁴²

Despite the fact that the context in which Rashid al-Din was writing and his attitude toward his Mongol masters—now converted to Islam—were very different from Juvaini's, he was content in both versions to echo Juvaini's narrative and repeat (along with his source) Chinggis Khan's admiring remark that "a father should have such a son."

Illustrations of the Episode

The perception of this story and its singular position as the key element in the history of Sultan Jalal al-Din are witnessed by the fact that it was chosen for illustration in a number of Persian manuscripts and indeed is generally one of the few scenes of his career to be depicted. The choice of subject and the placement of the pictures in the text combine to emphasize not only this determining image of the sultan's fame but also the key moment in the story, when Chinggis Khan turns admiringly to his sons to praise the young hero.

As far as I am aware, there are no pictures of the episode at the Indus in any copies of Juvaini's *Tarikh-i Jahangusha*, which was written at a time when the illustration of Persian manuscripts was in its infancy. However, due to the legendary nature of Jalal al-Din's action, as glorified first by Juvaini, the scene was illustrated in Rashid al-Din's history, no doubt under his personal supervision. The earliest surviving example is in the unfinished manuscript of 714/1314.⁴³ It shows the sultan sitting calmly on the Indian shore drying his equipment, while

⁴²This version is translated by Fitzherbert, "Lost Leader," 65–66, from the text in Rashid al-Din, *Jami' al-tavarikh*, 1314, MS H. 1653, fol. 335r, Topkapi Palace Museum Library, Istanbul; cf. Rashid al-Din, *Salatin-i Khwarazm*, 40; Ferdowsi, *Shahnama*, V:302, vv. 119, 121; see fn. 22 above.

⁴³Rashid al-Din, MS H. 1653, fol. 335r; this is one of three pictures of Jalal al-Din's deeds, though of widely differing exploits. See also Mohamad Reza Ghiasian, *Lives of the Prophets: The Illustrations of Hafiz-i Abru's "Assembly of Chronicles"* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 306.

Chinggis Khan turns back to his troops to comment on the bravery of his deed. As Teresa Fitzherbert has demonstrated, the artist actually depicts a fuller version of the story, one found not in the text of Rashid al-Din but in one manuscript of the *Tarikh-i Jahangusha* and recorded in the critical apparatus of the printed edition.⁴⁴ A second painting from another early copy (the text is dated 717/1317, but most paintings, including this one, were added in the fifteenth century), also in Istanbul,⁴⁵ though of inferior quality, depicts the sultan drying his sword, as mentioned in both versions of Rashid al-Din. In both cases, the painting is inserted in the text after Chinggis Khan's "quotation" from the *Shahnamah* noted above: "No-one in the world has seen such a man, nor heard of any ancient hero [like him]."

An early but undated manuscript of the *Jami' al-tavarikh* now in the Biruni Institute in Tashkent contains a large blank space (219 x 219 mm) reserved for a painting of this scene, located at the same place in the text, after Chinggis Khan's utterance, but (like almost all the paintings in this codex) the painting was never executed; it is therefore impossible to be sure how the scene would have been depicted.⁴⁶

A fourth early scene is found in the undated manuscript of the *Jami' al-tavarikh* in Kolkata,⁴⁷ very badly damaged, also showing the sultan drying his saddle, bow, and arrows and wiping his sword, while staring

⁴⁴Ata-Malik Juvaini, *Tarikh-i Jahangusha-yi Juvaini*, n.d., MS Supplément persan 1556, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; see fn. 20 above. See Fitzherbert, "Lost Leader," 63–69 and figs. 1 and 2 for a discussion of this and other examples.

⁴⁵Rashid al-Din, *Jami' al-tavarikh*, 1317, MS H. 1654, fol. 232v, Topkapi Palace Museum Library, Istanbul; this is one of three pictures as in H. 1653.

⁴⁶Rashid al-Din, *Jami' al-tavarikh*, n.d., MS 1620, fol. 84r (the foliation given as 84b is confused), Abu Rayhan Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies, Tashkent. For the well-known pictures heading the genealogies of some Mongol khans, see A. M. Ismailova, *Oriental Miniatures* (Tashkent: Gafur Gulyam Literature and Art, 1980), plates 1–2, and for the manuscript, Stefan Kamola, *Making Mongol History: Rashid al-Din and the Jami' al-Tawarikh* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 133, 223.

⁴⁷Rashid al-Din, *Jami' al-tavarikh*, n.d., MS D 31, fol. 86r, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Kolkata; reproduced (with the text trimmed) by Basil Gray, "An Unknown Fragment of the 'Jāmi' al-tawārīkh' in the Asiatic Society of Bengal," *Ars Orientalis* 1 (1954): 65–75, reference on pp. 68–69 and plate 5, fig. 10.

at Chinggis Khan across the river. This is placed much earlier in the text, at the point where the sultan is making his frenzied assaults up and down the Mongol line and before his final sally, prior to jumping into the Indus. This copy is unusual in also depicting the massacre of Jalal al-Din's family on the verso of this folio (fol. 86v), introduced where other copies place the previous scene, after *az pedar pesaran bayad kih chonin ayad* ("a father must have sons like this") and before the *Shahnamah* verse mentioned. The Kolkata manuscript also depicts the Battle of Parwan on the folio before (fol. 85r).⁴⁸ The significance of the whole episode is reflected in the fact that three pictures are devoted to it in this admittedly incomplete copy, perhaps indicating a similar cycle of now-missing pictures from other manuscripts.

Three later paintings are also worth noting, one in an early-sixteenth-century manuscript of the *Jami' al-tavarikh* in Saint Petersburg (dated 935/1529).⁴⁹ This contains an oddly constructed double-page composition. Jalal al-Din is wiping his sword, while Chinggis Khan turns back to his entourage to praise the sultan. The first picture is out of sequence with the text, but the second, of the sultan drying his sword, is again placed immediately after the usual *Shahnamah* verse. As the only double-page painting in the manuscript, this painting underlines the popularity of the story and the ready audience for its reproduction.

A later illustrated copy of the *Jami' al-tavarikh*, commissioned in India for the Mughal emperor Akbar and completed in 1596 under the title *Chingiznameh*, also contains a magnificent double-page painting of this episode. The text here closely follows Rashid al-Din's original account in the history of Chinggis Khan, and the picture on the left-hand

⁴⁸As noted by Gray, the fifteenth-century MS of *Jami' al-tavarikh*, c. 1420–30, MS Supplément persan 1113, fol. 72r, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, has a generic battle scene at the almost identical position; see "Ġāmi' al-tavārīḫ. Rašīd al-Dīn Fazl-ullāh Hamadānī," Bibliothèque nationale de France, gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8427170s/f155.item.r=supplement%20persan%201113 (accessed 18 June 2021).

⁴⁹Rashid al-Din, *Jami' al-tavarikh*, 1529, MS Dorn 289, fols. 125v–126r, National Library of Russia, Saint Petersburg, brought from Ardabil. Published in Charles Melville, "The Illustration of History in Persian Manuscripts," *Iran* 56 (2018): 47–63, reference on pp. 55–57 and in fig. 3.

side is inserted immediately after the verse from the *Shahnamah*.⁵⁰ Unlike earlier depictions, the sultan is shown emerging from the river on the left bank, with his parasol, sword, and banner (*'alam*), while Chinggis Khan turns to address his followers on the right bank, who are seen approaching unhurriedly in a very organized manner on the right-hand page, accompanied by a military band.

Finally, the *Tarikh-i Abu'l-Khair Khani* by Mas'ud b. 'Uthman Kuhistani (ca. 1550), which is a "universal" history up to the collapse of the Timurid Empire and the rise of the Shaibanids, has a long account of the campaign, illustrated with a large almost full-page painting.⁵¹ The text draws on both versions of Juvaini's narrative, amplified by elaborating on its language and imagery and adding more verses. Thus, Mas'ud b. 'Uthman gives his own description of the dawn, evidently inspired by his model: "When the sky drew back the pitch-colored veil of dark night from the heart-warming face of day." While Juvaini and Rashid al-Din say the Mongol army surrounded the sultan like a bow with the river Indus as the bowstring, Mas'ud b. 'Uthman adds, "and the sultan was like the notch in the arrow for the string of the bow." And again, after quoting the *Shahnamah* verse, "On every side where you spurred on your horse, you mixed the dust with blood,"⁵² he adds:

اگر دیدی آن جنگ را پور زال زدی بوسه بر دست سلطان جلال

If that battle were seen by [Rustam] the son of Zal, he would kiss the hand of Sultan Jalal

⁵⁰Rashid al-Din, *Chingiznameh*, 1596, MS 1980,0512,0.9, British Museum, London. I am grateful to Firuza Melville for drawing my attention to this picture; see British Museum, www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/W_1980-0512-0-9 (accessed 4 August 2021). For the manuscript, widely dispersed, see Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court*, rev. and expanded edition (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art; Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2012), 80–82. The painting was purchased from the Sotheby's sale of 22 April 1980, lot 33. The painting on the right-hand folio, the subject of which was previously unidentified, is in the Chester Beatty Library, In 60.2.

⁵¹Mas'ud b. 'Uthman Kuhistani, *Tarikh-i Abu'l-Khair Khani*, n.d., MS 9989, fols. 137v–138r, Abu Rayhan Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies, Tashkent. Reproduced (with text trimmed) in Ismailova, *Oriental Miniatures*, plate 23.

⁵²Mas'ud b. 'Uthman, *Tarikh-i Abu'l-Khair*. Cf. fn. 16 above.

This is presumably a verse of his own composition. Similarly, after the verse “No-one in the world has seen such a man, nor heard of any ancient hero [like him],” he adds:

بصحرا چو شیرست فیروز جنگ بدریا دلیرست همچون نهنگ
In the plains he is a lion victorious in war, in the sea he
is bold as a crocodile

This is a verse not in the *Shahnamah* but highly appropriate to the occasion.

Interestingly, after mentioning his safe crossing, the text incorporates the passage found uniquely (so far) in the Paris manuscript of Juvaini, noted above and translated by Fitzherbert,⁵³ describing in more detail how the sultan hung out his saddle and saddle felt, and his cloak and arrows to dry in the sun (which the accompanying painting does, to some extent, depict, though the horse remains saddled). Chinggis prevented the Mongols from following him, and the sultan took out his sword and wiped it. Chinggis turned to his amirs and companions and said, “he [the sultan] says [i.e., by this action] that the sword still remains between us and you,” before turning to his sons with the key words in praise of such a son. The picture is located at this iconic moment in the story, the text continuing with Chinggis explaining how Jalal al-Din had survived two seas, the sea of the fire of Chinggis’s army and the sea of water. In short, Mas‘ud b. ‘Uthman takes the received narrative even further, no doubt as an example of bravery to be emulated by the new Shaibanid ruler.

Conclusion

It is well known that Juvaini was an admirer of Jalal al-Din, as noted by several authors, particularly with repeated reference to his exploits in the idiom of the *Shahnamah* and the traditional framework of the motif of Iran vs. Turan.⁵⁴ George Lane dismisses this focus on the sultan as a

⁵³See fn. 44 above. This indicates that Mas‘ud’s source text was Juvaini rather than Rashid al-Din.

⁵⁴Boyle, *Genghis Khan*, xliii–xliv. See a more nuanced reading in Melikian-Chirvani, “Conscience

sort of “private joke for his educated friends,” who knew better about the truth of the rapacious, destructive, and unprincipled Khwarazmian forces and their “politically insignificant” leader, the “leaping prince.”⁵⁵ This certainly misses the point. Not only was the Khwarazmian regime one of the main powers that stood in the path of the Mongols and its demise therefore had to be addressed, but some sort of hero was needed to balance the unmitigated catalogue of deaths and defeats. Jalal al-Din had the potential to fill this role, at least in his early career in Khurasan.⁵⁶ Whether or not Juvaini’s account is just a colorful fancy or an echo of a popular image, our interest here is the way he achieved his aim.

In this short essay, I have tried to show how Juvaini created a hero out of Jalal al-Din the Khwarazmshah and provided a completely individual account of his exploits against the Mongols. Only Nasawi previously recorded the fact of Jalal al-Din’s jumping into the Indus; other sources merely refer to his escape briefly and without comment. For Juvaini, caught in the balancing act of loyalty to his background and history, it was important for his Iranian audience that he portray an Iranian hero fighting the invaders, while at the same time showing that his Mongol masters also appreciated this heroism, despite their brutality and while recording their final victory. The more redoubtable the foe, the more glorious the triumph. And the greater the defeat of the sultan, the more remarkable his recovery to fight on: Juvaini reports that only five or six men joined him in a pitiful state after crossing the Indus, though another fifty and a few more trickled in later, whereas Nasawi mentions that four thousand troops made the crossing and another three hundred or

du passé,” 144–49, who suggests that to associate Chinggis Khan with Afrasiyab is in fact to honor him in terms of Iranian epic tradition rather than to equate him simply with a hated enemy.

⁵⁵Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, 209–10. Lane overlooks the facts that Nasawi devoted a whole book to Jalal al-Din’s career and Rashid al-Din had the opportunity to recast his image but refrained from doing so.

⁵⁶It is true that other sources, such as Ibn al-Athir, are more ambiguous, at least regarding his later exploits in the northwest, as noted above. Siddiqui, *Indo-Persian Historiography*, 123, writes that Juzjani considered the sultan a great warrior but one who “became unpopular for his ruthlessness,” without a citation from the text.

so arrived three days later.⁵⁷ In other words, there is gross exaggeration in Juvaini's account of both triumph and disaster—a common enough hyperbole that glorifies the hero, whether victor or vanquished.

Juvaini's literary skills created an attractive story and one that was taken up by the later historian-cum-bureaucrat Rashid al-Din, who followed Juvaini's two accounts in the appropriate places in his own narrative, retaining and simplifying some of the language but implicitly questioning some factual details by referring to information found elsewhere. In Juvaini's narrative, Jalal al-Din said goodbye to his women and children, allowing the Mongols to slaughter them afterwards, whereas in Rashid al-Din's, following that of Nasawi, it was Jalal al-Din himself who drowned them in the river to save them from the horrors of Mongol captivity. Nevertheless, Rashid al-Din does give the denouement of the story a similar emphasis, thereby essentially endorsing Juvaini's reading and ensuring its acceptance.

This in turn generated a visual image of the episode of Jalal al-Din confronting Chinggis Khan across the river even though it was not, of course, a realistic depiction of the scene, nor one that followed closely all the details of the accompanying text. It is interesting to note nevertheless that it is not the moment of the leap into the river that is depicted, but the moment of cool defiance by the sultan and the impressed admiration of Chinggis Khan. The artists got the message, a measure of Juvaini's success.

⁵⁷Juvaini, *Jahangusha*, II:143; Nasawi, *Sirat*, text 85, trans. 141. Rashid al-Din, *Salatin-i Khwarazm*, 41, gives ten survivors and a further fifty later.

IRAN A Quarterly of
Iranian Studies
NAMAG

Volume 5, Number 3, Fall 2020

Special Issue Dedicated to Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak for
his lifetime Service to Iranian Studies

