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Barhebraeus and Juwaynī: A Syriac chronicler and his Persian source[1]

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1. *Introduction*

In the Preface to his *Chronography*, Abū l-Faraǧ Grigoriyos bar 'Ebrāyā, better known as Barhebraeus (1226-1286), declares his intention to revive through his work a "practical" discipline which, immediately following "theoretical" knowledge in order of importance, allows man to fully express his character as rational being. More specifically, it allows him to "know righteousness, so that it might glorify it, and goodness that it might find it". This is a reference to the memory of past events, both good and bad, which prompts man to admire what is excellent and to refrain from reproachable deeds. After having thus outlined his conception of history as a *magistra vitae*, Barhebraeus points out how Syriac scholars had not bothered with history-writing for some eighty years after the work of Michael,[2] a Syro-Orthodox patriarch and the author of a monumental chronicle – a veritable *summa* of historical knowledge in his time.[3] Such a long period of time, dense with events relevant to the world as well as the Church, deserved being recorded in writing, and Barhebraeus resolved to take on the task.[4] Consequently, in his words, "I, having entered the library of the city of Maragha, in Azerbaijan, have loaded up this my little book with narratives which are

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[1] This paper is a revised version of my *Barhebraeus e Juwaynī: un cronista siro e la sua fonte persiana*, "Egitto e Vicino Oriente" 27 (2004), pp. 121-144. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Laura E. Parodi (Dublin) for translating the Italian text into English. To my knowledge, after 2004 only another relevant study about the topic was published, by Denise Aigle (Aigle 2008). In comparison with mine, Aigle's work has a wider scope, as it extends its analysis also to Barhebraeus' Arabic chronicle.

[2] Also known as Michael the Syrian or Michael the Great (1166-1199). His chronicle, comprising twenty-one books, begins with the origins of the world and ends in the year 1195 (Syriac text and French transl. Chabot 1900-1910; Syriac text: Aygür 2006; see Brock 1979/80, pp. 312 ff.; Yousif 2002, pp. 123-204, with numerous French excerpts).

[3] Preserved to us is actually only an anonymous chronicle up to the year 1234 (Syriac text Chabot 1920; see Brock 1979/80, pp. 315 ff.; Yousif 2002, pp. 205-237, with numerous French excerpts).

[4] Barhebraeus' *Chronography* is divided into two parts, devoted respectively to secular and ecclesiastical history (a separation already found in the anonymous author of the chronicle *ad annum 1234*). We shall here examine the first part, often cited in scholarship as *Syriac Chronicle* (also *Chronicon Syriacum*, etc.). After Barhebraeus' death (1286), an unknown author (possibly Barhebraeus' own brother) continued it until 1288; it was then pursued episodically up to 1496.

worthy of remembrance from many volumes of the Syrians, Saracens, and Persians which are preserved here".[5] In other words, he adapted for his people – in their classical language, Syriac – the updated chronicles that were already available to Arab- and Persian-speaking audiences.[6]

The main, if not the only, Persian source used by Barhebraeus is easily identified as the work of ʿAlā al-Dīn ʿAṭā Malik Juwaynī (1225-1283) – an Iranian notable from a prominent family of officers.[7] Barhebraeus himself states it, soon after relating the death of the author's brother, the prime minister Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad Juwaynī,[8] in 1284:

> *Now his brother was ʿAlā al-Dīn, who was governor of Baghdad, and who two years earlier had wellnigh died a natural death in Mughan; and he was brought to the city of Tabriz and buried there. Now this man was exceedingly skilled in learned subjects, and he had an adequate knowledge of the poetic art. And he composed a marvellous work in Persian on the chronology of the kingdoms of the Saljuks, and Khwarazmians, and Ishmaelites, and Mongols; what we have introduced into our work on these matters we have derived from his book.*[9]

The "marvellous book" is none other than the work known as *History of the World Conqueror* (in Persian, *Taʾrīkh-i jahān gušā*), written by ʿAlā al-Dīn ʿAṭā Malik Juwaynī between 1252/1253 and 1260. The universal conqueror is Genghis Khan, whose ascent to power Juwaynī relates along

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[5] *Chronography*, p. 1; Budge 1932, I, p. 2. From Barhebraeus' statement, it would seem that access to the books preserved in Maragha did not only facilitate his job but actually prompted him to undertake it. According to a 14th-century Arabic source, the library was located close to the observatory in Maragha, which Hülegü Khan had entrusted to the learned Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, and contained about 400,000 books (see Takahashi 2001, note 90). Barhebraeus could easily access the public archives in Maragha – where the Mongols had been holding court since 1256 – because he resided there in his capacity as the vicar to the Patriarch for the Eastern territories of the Syro-Orthodox Church. Barhebraeus was on good terms with the Mongol court and the Arabo-Persian intellectual elite, partly as a result of the good offices of an influential Syriac priest and physician, Simeon of Qal'a Rumaita (see Takahashi 2001, including the extensive documentation and bibliography listed by the author; Lane 1999).

"By the 13th century, the use of Syriac had gradually shrunk among the Christians and was confined to liturgy and (alongside classical Arabic) to scholarship, having been replaced in everyday life by Arabic or by spoken forms of colloquial Aramaic. Barhebraeus, and with him other learned men of his time, were certainly prompted to vigorously resume the use of Syriac in their phylosophical and historiographical works by the political and cultural renaissance witnessed by Syriac Churches under Mongol rule, at least in its initial phase (1258-1304). In the instance under scrutiny, Barhebraeus' intense scholarly activity partly resulted from his activity as a preceptor to the children of Simeon of Qal'a Rumaita (Takahashi 2001). The latter also prompted him to write and publish an Arabic version, or reworking, of the *Chronography*, more specifically addressing the Muslim world and known as the *Tārīḫ muḫtaṣar al-duwal* (see Teule 1996).

[7] For information about Juwaynī and his work, see EI, II, pp. 606-607 (W. Barthold's entry updated by J.A. Boyle); Qazwini 1912, pp. xv-lxv; Boyle 1958, I, pp. xv-xxxviii.

[8] Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad Juwaynī served as a vizier under the khans Hülegü, Abaqa and Arghun from 1263 to 1284 (Spuler 1985, p. 238).

[9] *Chronography*, p. 503; Budge 1932, I, p. 473. ʿAlā al-Dīn is cited by Barhebraeus four times prior to this passage, in the entries for the years 1265: nominated the governor of Baghdad; 1268: saves the catholicos Denḥa from the enraged crowd besieging him in his residence; 1271: the "Assassins" ambush him and 1282; he is slandered and investigated and dies from the humiliation (*Chronography*, pp. 472, 474-475, 476, 496; Budge 1932, I, pp. 445, 447, 449, 446 respectively). In all the cited instances he is referred to as the *ṣāḥīb dīwan* (an administrative officer) or *ṣāḥīb dīwan d-bagdad*. Here, on the other hand, where he is identified with the author of the historical work, he is said to be the *šallīṭā d-bagdad* "governor of Baghdad". This led Budge, the English translator of the *Chronography*, to wrongly assume that two distinct persons are referred to and to classify them separately in his Index, as "Alā ad-Dīn, Master of the Dīwān" *vs.* "Alā ad-Dīn of Baghdād" (Budge 1932, I, p. 514).

with his conquest of the lands West of Mongolia, following it up with an account of his successors – more specifically of Hülegü, the founder of the Mongol (*Ilkhan*) dynasty of Iran. ʿAlā al-Dīn ʿAṭā Malik belonged to an ancient family from the Juwayn region in Khorasan,[10] which had come into the service of the Mongols after the conquest: his father Bahā al-Dīn had been the governor of Khorasan and his brother Šams al-Dīn had been a vizier of the Mongol rulers for over two decades (1263-1284). ʿAlā al-Dīn ʿAṭā Malik himself had accepted relevant offices in the Mongol administration, culminating in his appointment as the governor of Baghdad, and had accompanied Hülegü on the campaign against the Isma'ilis which led to the destruction of their stronghold, the Alamut fortress (1256). His familiarity with the conquerors and the active role he played in some of the related events[11] make his work one of the most relevant sources on the history of the Mongols.[12]

Our aim in this paper is to outline Barhebraeus' approach to Juwaynī's work. We shall limit our analysis to a few passages; a more detailed discussion will be included in the commentary to an Italian translation of the *Chronography* which we are hoping to publish soon.

The way in which Barhebraeus refers to Juwaynī's work is revealing of his approach, and not only because he fails to mention its title: Juwaynī's book is described as a *makthānut zabnē* "chronicle, annals", which literally refers to a work containing materials arranged in a chronological sequence, year after year; but this is not an accurate description of the structure of Juwaynī's work, though it certainly applies to Barhebraeus' procedure in compiling his *Chronography*. Indeed, the Syriac author follows the principle so strictly as to include in the sequence even those years that are devoid of entries.[13] Juwaynī's work, on the other hand, is built around the core theme of the Mongols, and its narrative occasionally deviates from linear chronology – for example, in order to incorporate the accounts of vanquished dynasties (such as the Uyghurs and, particularly, the Khwarazmshahs). The three parts which make up the *History of the World Conqueror* are devoted to I) the Mongols, II) the Khwarazm dynasty, III) the Isma'ilis – with understandable thematic overlaps. Barhebraeus' approach and his attitude towards Juwaynī – or perhaps better, his *forma mentis* – are revealed by his description of the source: his mention of "the Saljuk kingdom, the Khwarazm dynasty, the Isma'ilis and the Mongols" implies the adoption of a descriptive criterion based on a succession of dynasties in time, not a summary of the work described. Even if we understood the expression

[10] See KRAWULSKY 1978, p. 88.

[11] Hülegü also entrusted to him the examination of the books contained in the Isma'ili library at Alamut, and he accordingly selected what to save and what to destroy.

[12] The Persian text was edited by Mīrzā Muḥammad Qazwīnī (QAZWINI 1912, 1916, 1937). Only two translations into modern languages exist: the earliest one is in English, edited by John Andrew Boyle (BOYLE 1958); a second one, in Italian, is by Gian Roberto Scarcia (JUVAINI 1962). The latter, aimed at the wider public and therefore not accompanied by phylological and historical notes – at variance with BOYLE 1958 – is nonetheless very useful: despite being based on the English translation, it was revised on the Persian original and often proposes improvements (although they are not explicitly singled out). The Persian text was edited by Mīrzā Muḥammad Qazwīnī (QAZWINI 1912, 1916, 1937). Only two translations into modern languages exist: the earliest one is in English, edited by John Andrew Boyle (BOYLE 1958); a second one, in Italian, is by Gian Roberto Scarcia (JUVAINI 1962). The latter, aimed at the wider public and therefore not accompanied by phylological and historical notes – at variance with BOYLE 1958 – is nonetheless very useful: despite being based on the English translation, it was revised on the Persian original and often proposes improvements (although they are not explicitly singled out).

[13] "And in the years six hundred and eight and six hundred and nine of the Arabs, we find nothing to relate" (*Chronography*, p. 387; BUDGE 1932, I, p. 367); "And in the following year nothing remarkable happened in the countries round about us" (*Chronography*, p. 428; BUDGE 1932, I, p. 405).

maktbānut zabnē as a general reference to a historical work, Barhebraeus' description of its content would still appear inaccurate: the *History of the World Conqueror* does not devote specific attention to the Saljuks (if not marginally, insofar as they interact with the Isma'ilis, in its third section). Consequently, if Juwaynī's history had not been preserved, Barhebraeus' description would lead us to imagine it as a linear narrative, in the form of annals beginning with the Saljuks and ending with the Mongols – a very misleading impression of the actual work, both in form and in content.[14]

Approaching the *History of the World Conqueror* as a source of information suitable for inclusion in his *Chronography*, Barhebraeus deliberately selects excerpts of varying length from a narrative very different from his own, leaving out considerable portions of Juwaynī's work in the process. He almost invariably extracts only the basic sequence of events, while digressions, remarks and anecdotes are usually left out.[15]

Apart from the above quotation, Barhebraeus does not usually mention his sources explicitly in his narrative; his excerpts from Juwaynī are accordingly fully integrated into the text. The Syriac chronicler first introduces information derived from Juwaynī in the chapter titled "The beginning of the Kingdom of the Mongols, that is to say the Tatars", included in the section devoted to the "Kings of the Arabs", beginning in 1202.[16] Our analysis will focus on this section, following Barhebraeus' narrative sequentially and comparing individual instances with their source.[17]

2. *Barhebraeus' text compared with Juwaynī's*

Juwaynī's Foreword and the introductory paragraphs in its first chapter ("Of the condition of the Mongols before the time of Genghis Khan's rise to power") are entirely skipped by Barhebraeus, and understandably so, considering that they have no factual relevance but aim at illustrating

[14] Based on available information, it is extremely unlikely that Barhebraeus refers to a different work by Juwaynī, and even less likely that we are dealing with two different authors, regardless of the separate entries in the Index appended to Budge 1932 (see note 8).

[15] For instance, when dealing with the early stages of Genghis Khan's campaign in Transoxiana, Barhebraeus significantly resumes Juwaynī's account (which dwells for several pages on the occurrences which took place during the army's march) and reduces the accounts of the capture of the towns of Otrar and Bukhara to concise notices, separated by the addition of an extensive narrative of events in Syria and Egypt (Qazwini 1912, pp. 62-66; *Chronography*, pp. 337-338, 395-397).

[16] *Chronography*, pp. 370 ff.; Qazwini 1912, pp. 14 ff. The insertion of this notice is due to the fact that Juwaynī, who makes a far more sparing use of dates compared to Barhebraeus' annals, precisely situates the battle between Genghis Khan and Ung Khan in 599 *Hijrī* (= 1202/3) (Qazwini 1912, p. 27).

[17] The more obvious option – a thorough synopsis – would be unfeasible, considering that Barhebraeus sometimes extracts only a few phrases from a great number of pages in Juwaynī's work: a complete citation would take up an inordinate amount of space. On the other hand, in view of the difficulty in accessing copies of the few existing translations and printed editions of the texts in their original languages, it is our intention to provide as much information as possible, providing resumes where appropriate. Detailed geographical and biographical information will be omitted, except when relevant to our specific aim (on the subject of Genghis Khan's ascent to power, some good reference information may be extracted from Grousset 1944; Phillips 1979; Ratchnevsky 1991; Roux 1993, 2002). As regards the transcription of Persian words, which varies greatly in previous scholarship (ranging, for example, from *Juwaynī* to *Gioveini*, *Juvaini*, or *Joweyni* etc.), the one most closely approximating Arabo-Persian script will be used. Even greater problems are involved in the transcription of Turkic and Mongol toponyms and personal names that are only known to us from imperfect Arabo-Persian and Syriac consonant-based scripts. We have therefore adopted, wherever possible, the forms most usual in the English usage (e.g. Genghis Khan) and have generally uniformed and simplified translitteration. In this particular context, proper issues of ortography and phonetics will only be discussed in rare cases.

– with a number of parallels, images and verses – the importance of acquiring a knowledge of the Mongols' way of life before approaching their history.[18]

Barhebraeus

Now the first country of the Tatars, before they spread abroad in these exterior countries, was a valley, that is to say a great plain in the north-eastern quarter of the world, the lenght and width of which was a journey of eight months. On the east side their territory extended to the country of the Chinese kātāyē, that is Katai; and on the west to the country of the Uyghur Turcs; and on the north to the country which is called slpg'y; and on the south to India.

Juwaynī

The home of the Tatars, and their origin and birthplace, is an immense valley, whose area is a journey of seven or eight months both in lenght and breadth. In the east it marches with the land of Khitai, in west with he country of the Uyghur, in the north with Qirqiz and Selengei (slnk'y) and in the south with Tangut and Tibet.

Commentary

Reliance on Juwainī is immediately apparent, but a few stylistic variations emerge; for instance, the "homeland" concept is condensed by Barhebraeus in a single term. From the point of view of content there are differences which seem to be due to different reasons. The addition of "before they spread..." derives from the need to link this chapter – which sees the Mongols debut on the scene of history – to its appropriate chronological and geographical setting. The reasons for other differences are less easily identified. Juwainī's approximation ("seven or eight" – *hafṭ hašt*) is resolved in favour of the higher figure; more significant differences concern the notices on neighbouring peoples: that on the Chinese and the Uyghurs is slightly expanded, while the Southern border is defined differently. Barhebraeus knows, and elsewhere cites, Tangut;[19] it is therefore unclear why he decided to replace its mention (alongside Tibet) with India. Nothing accounts for his failure to mention Qirqiz (the Kirghiz territory), while the Syriac *slpg'y* clearly renders the Arabo-Persian *slnk'y*[20] with a misspelling, ascribable to the author himself or the copyist. Juwaynī here refers to "Selenga" – a geographical name that the (modern) reader easily identifies with the *river* Selenga/Selenge, in Mongolia, but the information is not provided by Juwaynī himself.[21] According to the critical edition, in all the Persian manuscripts the sound g is graphically rendered as a plain Arabic

[18] Barhebraeus' *Chronography* is cited according to the English translation by Budge (Budge 1932), while for Juwaynī's *History of the World Conqueror* Boyle's translation is adopted (Boyle 1958). Both translations have been checked against their original Syriac and Persian originals (*Chronography* = Bedjan edition, Paris 1890; Qazwini 1912 [1916, 1937]). We have consequently included minimal changes which aim at greater fidelity to the original text where the said translations would have otherwise led us astray. Individual words have occasionally been replaced with others in order to facilitate comparison.

[19] *Chronography*, pp. 412, 413, 421; Budge 1932, I, pp. 391, 398.

[20] Qazwini 1912, p. 15 (cf. Boyle 1958, I, p. 21).

[21] Juwaynī's translations (Boyle 1958, I, p. 21: "*river* Selengei"; Juvaini 1962, p. 42: "*fiume* Selenga", our Italics) are misleading in their attempt to explicitate: while Selenga is indeed a river in Mongolia, Juwaynī's Persian text contains no explicit mention of a river, while a geographical treatise included in the encyclopedic work *Nuzhat al-qulūb* by Ḥamd-Allāh Mustawfī, completed in 1340, refers to "Selenga" as a *land* in the four instances when the term occurs – in two cases explicitly connecting it with Qirghiz/Qirqiz (Le Strange 1915, pp. 10, 212, 238, 260 [Persian text]; Le Strange 1919, pp. 10, 204, 231, 253 [Engl. transl.]). This possibly explains why Barhebraeus mentions a "*land* called *slpg'y*".

kaf with no diacritical marks.[22] Since Barhebraeus uses the Syriac letter *g*, we must presume that the manuscript available to him featured a more accurate spelling, or, alternatively, that the name and its spelling were known to him from another source, which allowed him to transliterate it accurately despite his source's imperfect spelling. If the latter is the case, then a later scribe should most probably be held responsible for the misreading of the *n* as a *p*. The comparison with Juwaynī disproves Budge's proposed interpretation of Barhebraeus' toponym as a reference to "Siberia" and demonstrates the relevance of a comparative analysis to the understanding and reconstruction of the Syriac text of the *Chronography*.[23]

y be held responsible for the misreading of the *n* as a *p*. The comparison with Juwaynī disproves Budge's proposed interpretation

Barhebraeus	*Juwaynī*
Before Genghis Khan, their first king, rose up, they were without a head, and they used to give tribute to the *kātāyē*, that is to say the Chinese. They dressed themselves in the skins of dogs and bears,[24] and they lived upon mice and other unclean beasts, and animals that had died, and they drank the milk of mares. And the sign of a great *amīr* among them was that when riding he had stirrups made of iron, whilst for every one else they were made of wood.	Before the appearance of Genghis Khan they had no chief or ruler. Each tribe or two tribes lived separately; they were not united with one another, and there was constant fighting and hostility between them. Some of them regarded robbery and violence, immorality and debauchery as deeds of manliness and excellence. The Khan of Khitai used to demand and seize goods from them. Their clothing was of the skins of dogs and mice, and their food was the flesh of those animals and other dead things; their wine was mares' milk and their dessert the fruit of a tree shaped like the pine, which they call *qusuq* [...] The sing of a great emir amongst them was that his stirrups were of iron; from which one can form a picture of their other luxuries.

Commentary

In this instance, too, Barhebraeus proceeds by excerpting a few sentences, omitting others and modifying some of the information. Juwaynī's main point in presenting the Mongols is to illustrate not only how "primitive" they were, but also how morally reprehensible their customs were before the advent of Genghis Khan. Judging from his omission of such information, Barhebraeus seems less concerned with this, or with where and how the fruit called *qusuq* grows (a passage omitted

[22] The Arabic alphabet was notoriously adapted to the requirements of Persian and Turkic, which both contain consonants not found in Arabic (such as *č*, *p*, *g*...) by providing letters indicating often phonetically close sounds with diacritical marks. However, the use of such additional marks is neither mandatory nor consistent in ancient manuscripts (and even in recent ones, when the writer has reason to suppose that his readers know the language enough to make up for their absence). This is also the case with Juwaynī's text (on whose characteristics see QAZWINI 1912, pp. LXVI-LXXIII). The Syriac script was similarly provided with diacritical marks to include Arabic, Persian and Turkic sounds not represented in the original language and alphabet. However, this happened only after Barhebraeus' time. In the 13th century, and actually up to 15th-16th, the practice prevails of employing consonants having a (sometimes tenuous) phonetic affinity: for example, the Syriac letter *š* for the Turkic and Persian *č* and *ǧ*. The subsequent introduction of diacritical marks is to be put in relation with the emergence of written forms of the spoken Aramaic dialects, phonetically richer than Classical Syriac – due, among other things, to the influence of Turkish, Persian and of the Kurdish dialects (cf. TSERETELI 1970, p. 9). Consequently, for instance, in the older manuscripts of the *Chronography*, Genghis Khan (= Mongolian *Čiŋgiz qan*) is rendered as *šyngyz k'n* (see for instance BUDGE 1932, II [= BM, MS Huntington 52, 14th c.?], 125*v*, col. a, l. 22 from top), but very often, in the later ones, as *kngyz k'n* or *gngyz k'n* (the initial *k* or *g* being provided with a diacritical mark: see *Chronography*, p. 370, n. 1).

[23] BUDGE 1932, I, p. 352: "Salapgây (Seber, Siberia)".

[24] The Syriac *d'b'* may be read both as "bears" (*debbē*) and as "wolves" (*dibbē*).

from our quotation for the sake of brevity). As in the previous instance, less conspicuous variations are not as easily explained: the "mice", for instance, become "bears" (or "wolves"). But, while not mentioned as the providers of fur,[25] mice appear among the victuals – Juwaynī only alludes to them indirectly in this connection. Possibly Barhebraeus amended the source of his own accord: mouse hide may have appeared to him as an unlikely material for the manufacture of clothing. Even the iron stirrups are presented differently: where Juwaynī provides an ironic remark aimed at showing how little luxury was afforded by the upper classes, following it up with an equally ironic detailed description of the Mongols' rudimentary dessert, Barhebraeus only includes a plain factual notice. It is hard to imagine that he had knowledge of the use of wooden stirrups: the information is probably based on his own speculation concerning the material most suitable for comparison with iron, which he must have regarded as the basest in the hierarchy of metals.[26]

Barhebraeus

In the year 1514 of the Greeks, and the year 599 of the Arabs [AD 1203], when Ung Khan, that is John, the Christian king, was reigning over a certain tribe of the barbarian Huns who were called kryt (Kereit), Genghis Khan was going about continually in his service. And when Ung Khan saw his superior intelligence, and that he progressed from day to day, he became jealous of him, and he wished to size him by deceit and put him to death. Then two of the young men of Ung Khan, becoming acquainted with the treachery, informed Genghis, and straightway Genghis made it known to his own men, and they removed themselves by night from their tents and hid themselves in ambush. And at daybreak when Ung Khan attacked the tents of the Tatars he found no one in them. And then the followers of Genghis leaped out upon him, and they met each other in battle by the

Juwaynī

[It is impossible to quote Juwaynī's passage in its entirety: from this point onwards Barhebraeus drastically resumes a far more elaborate and detailed narrative. This is introduced by several pages (of great ethnographical and historical interest) devoted to the laws established by Genghis Khan. We will accordingly quote only those sentences which have an echo in Barhebraeus, either as an excerpt or a paraphrase. Juwaynī begins his account of Genghis Khan's rise to power by celebrating the Mongol tribe to which he belonged; he then moves on without further ado and introduces him:]

Genghis Khan bore the name of Temürjin until the time when, in accordance with the decree of "Be, and it is" [*Qur'an*, II, 117], he became master of all the kingdoms of the habitable world. In those days Ung Khan, the ruler of the Kereit and the Saqiyat, surpassed the other tribes in strenght and dignity and was stronger than they in gear and equipment and the number of his men [...] Upon every occasion, by reason of the nearness of their confines and the proximity of their territories, he [Genghis Khan] used to visit Ung Khan, and there was a feeling of friendship...

[Ung Khan, Juwaynī continues, appreciated Genghis Khan's qualities increasingly, to the point that]

Day by day he raised his station and position, until all affairs of state were dependent upon him and all Ung Khan's troops and followers controlled by his discipline and justice. The sons and brothers of Ung Khan and his courtiers and favourites became envious of the rank and favour he enjoyed: they accordingly cast nets of guile...

[25] Perhaps the mention of "mouse" furs results from a distortion of the reported habit of using small fur animals, such as sables and squirrels.

[26] This notice might actually refer not to the limited luxury displayed by the Mongol nobility, but to the importance attributed to iron (*temür*) and metalwork in Turco-Mongol culture (see Roux 1990, pp. 92-94).

side of a spring[27] which was called *b'lšyh*. And the party of Genghis triumphed, and the party of Ung Khan was broken. And the two parties met together in battle on many occasions, and at lenght the party of Ung Khan perished entirely, and he himself was killed, and his wives, and his sons, and his daughters were made captives. And Genghis Khan magnified those two young men, and he passed a law of freedom for them, so that in every capture of prisoners in which they were present, no portion should be taken for the king from them and their sons for ever. And they were to enter the presence of the kings without a summons to do so. And however much they might offend, no one was to be set over them. And he promoted the other men who had been with him in that war, and made them nobles. And because there were with him men of the Mongol race, who were called Oirats,[29] and they exhibited more skill than the other in athletic exercises, and fought more strenuously, Genghis Khan paid them honour. An he passed a law concerning them that brides for the sons of kings[30] were to be selected among their daughters, so that children of the seed of Genghis might be propa-

[Over time, though, Ung Khan, instigated by his relatives and by the Kereit nobles,] became suspicious of him ans was doubtful a to what he should do [...] he thought to remove him by craft and guile and to hinder by fraud and treachery God's secret design in fortifying him. It was agreed, therefore, that at dawn, while eyes were anointed with the collyrium of sleep and mankind was rendered negligent by repose, Ung Khan's men should make a night attack upon Genghis Khan and his followers and thus free themselves from their fears. They made every preparation for the deed and were about to put their intention into action; but since his luck was vigilant and his fortune kind, two youths in Ung Khan's service, one of them named Kishlik and the other Bada, fled to Genghis Khan and informed him of the badness of their faith and the uncleanness of their treachery. He at once sent off his family and followers and had the tents moved away. When at the appointed time, in the dawn, the enemy charged down upon the tents they found them empty. Though the accounts differ here as to whether they then returned or whether they at once took up the pursuit, the upshot of the matter was that Ung Khan set off in search of him with a large force of men, while Genghis Khan had but a small force with him. There is a spring which they call Baljuna (b'ljwnh): here they joined battle and fierce fighting ensued. In the end Genghis Khan with his small army routed Ung Khan with his great host and won much booty. This event occurred in the year 599 [AD 1202/3], and the names of all who took part therein are recorded, whether base or noble, from princes down to slaves, tent-pitchers, grooms, Turks, Taziks and Indians. As for those two youths, he made them tarkhan.[28] Tarkhan are those who are exempt from compulsory contributions, and to whom the booty taken on every campaign is surrendered: whenever they so wish they may enter the royal presence without leave or permission. He also gave them troops and slaves and of cattle, horses and accoutrement more than could be counted or computed; and commanded that whatever offence they might commit they should not be called to account therefor; and that this order should be observed with their posterity also down to the ninth generation. To-day there are many people from there two persons, and they are honoured and respected in every country. and held in high esteem at the courts of kings.

[There follows a concise narrative of subsequent encounters.]

[27] Syriac *m'yn'*; Budge's translation, "wall", is an obvious mistake (for "well"?).

[28] Or *darqan*, "free man, man freed from tax imposition" (Buell 2003, *s.v.*; see Atwood 2004, p. 133).

[29] Syriac *'wyr'ṭ'y'*, wrongly read by Budge as "Awîrâthâyê" (p. 353).

[30] In Syriac, *bnay malkē* "children of the kings": the expression is probably a calque from the Mongolian *köbegüd*, a plural of "sons" used specifically for the rulers' children.

gated. And also that wifes from among the daughters of the sons of kings should be given to their sons.[31] And this law remaineth among them to this day.

Finally all the latter's [= Ung Khan's] family and retainers, even his wifes and daughters, fell into Genghis Khan's hand; and he himself was slain. [...] and all that came to tender sub mission, such as the Oirat and the Qonqurat, were admitted to the number of his commanders and followers and were re garded with the eye of indulgence and favour.
[The chapter ends with an account of the suppression of the "abominable" ancestral habits described earlier.]

Commentary

Barhebraeus omits mention of Genghis Khan's original name[32] and follows it up with an account of his falling out with Ung Khan, which is presented as a personal issue between them, without the involvement or instigation of the court and Kereit nobles. The issue is reduced to a jealousy affair between an old king and a young chief. To those familiar with the Bible, the reference to the story of David and Saul, as told in I Samuel, is immediately apparent. Although Barhebraeus himself will have made the connection, it must be emphasised that the essence of the story, as well as its details, are derived from Juwaynī, and bear no indication of an explicit and deliberate Biblical reference. We will shortly come across a similar, and perhaps even more revealing, instance.[33]

Barhebraeus alone specifies that Ung Khan was a Christian and went by the name of John (*Yūḥannan*). In addition, he elaborates on Juwaynī's account of an initial proximity soon followed by esteem, trust and admiration, and states that Genghis Khan was in Ung Khan's service. The two youths who save Genghis Khan from the treasonable attack are mentioned, but not their names; as usual, other details are also left out. In describing their reward, Barhebraeus omits mention of their Mongol title, which in itself would have accounted for the prerogatives he lists. The inclusion of exemption from tribute among the prerogatives of the *tarkhan's* descendants is erroneous: only impunity would actually have extended down to the ninth generation. Concerning the measures taken by Genghis Khan to escape the ambush, it must be noted that according to Juwaynī he "had the tents *moved away*",[34] while Barhebraeus has him ordering to *remove themselves* from the tents, obviously without moving them. That this occurred at night is not stated by Juwaynī, but is implied in his subsequent mention of the attack taking place "in the dawn". On the other hand, Juwaynī has Genghis Khan organising the flight of his people, while according to Barhebraeus he would only have "informed" them. Contradicting his prior statement, Juwaynī then writes that the enemy fell on the tents only to find them empty – implying that they had actually been vacated. Barhebraeus' account, therefore, is essentially true to its source, although the details are balanced off differently. Where the two texts disagree is on the moment when the battle took place, resulting in a significantly different account of events: Barhebraeus implies that the men, after leaving their tents, remained hidden in ambush nearby, the confrontation occurring soon afterwards. Juwaynī

[31] See previous note.
[32] As also, understandably, of the Qur'anic quotation used by Juwaynī to stress the divine rule over human events.
[33] As evidenced by Jullien (forthcoming), the text appears modelled on a Biblical canvas: the essay is of great relevance, as it provides a number of references to Western and Eastern Christian sources relevant to aspects only briefly touched upon in our discussion; among them is the identification, in contemporary sources, of Ung Khan / Yoḥannan with the "Prester John". I am indebted to Dr. Florence Jullien for allowing me to use her forthcoming article.
[34] Qazwini 1912, p. 27.

on the other hand writes that the precise sequence of events was unclear, but the fugitives were certainly pursued and the encounter took place later, near a spring called "Baljuna". The Syriac translitteration *b'lšwyh* for the Arabo-Persian *b'ljwnh* contains one erroneous letter, since the *n* is rendered as a *y*. As with the previous instance, this may have occurred either through a misreading of the Persian (where only diacritical marks differentiate between the two letters) or within the Syriac manuscript tradition (*nun* and *yod* closely resembling each other in the Syriac alphabet).

The more significant feature, besides the fact that Ung Khan is qualified as a Christian, is contained in the final passage. Juwaynī mentions the *submission* of various tribes, including the Oirats, saying that they obtained a treatment of favour, along with others. Barhebraeus not only presents the occurrence otherwise, treating the Oirats as first-minute *allies* and the most strenuous of fighters, but – unusually for him – he also adds other details: the family of the Oirats' sovereigns would have perpetually intermarried with the ruling dynasty as a reward. Juwaynī is not the source for this piece of information, and one wonders where Barhebraeus derived it from. The existence of this marriage alliance was so well known in Asia that even Marco Polo mentions it:[35] it was established by Genghis Khan to honour a people who had sided with him as early as 1203. These are, however, not the Oirats but the Önggüts.[36] Barhebraeus apparently confuses the two, and possibly introduces here a notice which may have been known to him through oral sources: an anonymous Syriac author who was Barhebraeus' contemporary alludes to the fact that the Önggüt rulers married the daughters of the Great Khan, and the catholikos of the Church of the East in Barhebraeus' time was of Önggüt origins.[37]

Barhebraeus

And it is right to know that this king John of the *kryt* was not rejected for nothing, but only after he had turned aside his heart from the fear of Christ His Lord, who had magnified him, and had taken a wife from a tribe of one of the Chinese peoples which was called *Qārākāṭā*. He forsook the religion of his fathers and worshipped strange gods, and therefore God took away the kingdom and gave it to one who was betetr than he: and his heart became right before God. (*Chronography*, pp. 371-372; BUDGE 1932, I, p. 353)

Commentary

This notice is exclusive to Barhebraeus, who – after stating that Ung Khan-Yoḥannan was a Christian – now finds himself understandably forced to justify before his Christian audience his defeat and killing at the hands of a heathen. At first glance, Barhebraeus would seem to reproduce a

[35] *Milione*, Tuscan version, Chapter 73 (describing the "Tenduc" province): "E de questa provincia è re uno discendente del legnaggio del Preste Giovanni [...] E sì vi dico che•ttuttavia lo Grande Kane à date di sue figliuole e de sue parenti a quello re discendente del Preste Gianni". ("The king of the province is of the lineage of Prester John [...] It is a custom, I may tell you, that these kings of the lineage of Prester John always obtain to wife either the daughters of the Great Kaan or other princesses of his family...", Translation by Yule; H. YULE - H. CORDIER, *The Travels of Marco Polo. The complete Yule-Cordier Edition 1903-1920*, New York s.d., I, pp. 284-285)

[36] As may be seen from the *Secret History of the Mongols* §§ 190, 202, 239; see BUELL 2003, pp. 206-207. This confederation of (partly) Christianised Turkic tribes was settled North of China and defended its borders. Soon enough, they formed an alliance with Genghis Khan, which paved the way for him once he decided to conquer China.

[37] Although Barhebraeus regards him as a "Uyghur", and as additionally testified by the confusion between the Oirats and the Önggüts, he does not seem to have been particularly interested in a precise identification of Turco-Mongol tribes. See P.G. BORBONE, *Storia di Mar Yahballaha e di Rabban Sauma*, Turin 2000, pp. 61, 149, 253-254; see also BORBONE 2008, p. 239.

well-known Biblical (or more precisely Deuteronomistic) theme,[38] and to take recourse to it independently, at variance with a previous instance, discussed above. There, the parallel established between Genghis Khan and Ung Khan on the one hand, David and Saul on the other, appeared to produce itself spontaneously rather than as a result of a deliberate decision. However, at a closer look, the explanation provided by Barhebraeus in this instance cannot be an independent Biblical reference, as it appears ultimately based on Juwaynī's account of Küchlüg – purportedly adapted and distorted. Initially in the service of the *gür khan* of the Qarakitai,[39] the latter rebelled against him and after various turns of fortune defeated him, made him prisoner and usurped his reign. In that circumstance

> *[Küchlüg] took one of their maidens to wife. Now the Naiman are for the most part Christian; but this maiden persuaded him to turn idolater*[40] *like herself and to abjure Christianity.*

Küchlüg in other words, having conquered the regions of Kashghar and Khotan, forces the Muslims to convert to Buddhism or Christianity, and destroys mosques and places of prayer. Juwaynī, as we have seen, states that Küchlüg was a Christian, since he belonged to the tribe of Naiman; however, while introducing his figure, he had earlier stated that he was a son of the Kerait ruler, Ung Khan, who had escaped the defeat.[41] This is clearly an error, which results in an incongruity in Juwaynī; but precisely this alleged connection between Küchlüg and Ung Khan could have inspired Barhebraeus to transfer Küchlüg's marriage details to Ung Khan.[42] Whatever the case, Barhebraeus here makes an improper use of his source; it is difficult to say whether this is due to a deliberate intention to distort its message, caused by the need to justify in Ung Khan's disgrace in terms of retribution, or to mere sloppiness on the part of Barhebraeus. As we shall see further, there is at least one other case where Barhebraeus certainly did not bother to read Juwaynī's text thoroughly or carefully. The replacement of [Küchlüg's] "turn idolater" with his "forsake the religion of the fathers and worship strange gods" has at all events an undoubted Biblical flavour.

Barhebraeus	*Juwaynī*
And at that time a certain man of the Tatars rose up, who in the depth of winter, in all the frost and cold	At this time there arose a man of whom I have heard from trustworthy Mongols that during the severe cold that prevails in those regions he used to walk naked through the desert and

[38] A member of the Syriac clergy – as for that matter any Christian reader – could not have helped being reminded of the great Solomon, ruined by "foreign" women (cfr. *1 Kings* 11).

[39] *Gür khan* "eternal khan" was the title of the Qarakitai rulers.

[40] The Persian term indicating "idolatry" has an etymological connection with Buddhism, a religion which could appear as idolatrous due to the presence of statues in Buddhist shrines. In the word *botparastī*, the first component, *bot*, is the Persian rendering of the name Buddha, to be understood for the said reasons as "image, idol".

[41] Qazwini 1912, p. 46.

[42] F. Jullien suggests that Barhebraeus may here have taken recourse to a different source, possibly the Arabic original (now lost to us), written around 1221, of a text which survives in its Latin version: the *Relatio de Davide*. According to a few precise clues, the text would seem to describe – under the garb of an Eastern follower of King David, the liberator of Christians from the Muslim yoke – the historical figure of Küchlüg, a Naiman ruler who converted to Buddhism and became a persecutor of Muslims in Central Asia. The *Relatio*, however, does not mention his conversion to "idolatry", that is to say, Buddhism (on this aspect see the discussion in Jullien [forthcoming], notes 27-34 and related text, with extensive bibliography). Since, as may be seen, Barhebraeus is following Juwaynī's account closely, it is easier to assume that the episode is derived from him; this is further supported by the explicit mention of the wife's being a princess of the Qarakitai. One should also add that an account of Küchlüg's marriage is also included in the Persian history written by Rašīd al-Dīn (1247-1318), which contains even further details (Smirnova 1952, p. 180). This testifies to its popularity among the literate circles of Mongol Iran, and to the different ways by which it may potentially have reached Barhebraeus.

which exist in that country, went about naked, and he walked through the mountains and hills for many days. And he used to come and say, "I have gone forth from God, and He said unto me: 'I have

God, and He said unto me: 'I have given the whole earth to Temürjin (*tmwršyn*) and his sons, and I have called him by the name of Genghis Khan' – now his original name was Temürjin (*tmwršyn*). The Tatars all this man Tubut Tangri (*twbwt tngry*). the mountains and then to return and say: "God has spoken with me and ha said: 'I have given all the face of the earth to Temürjin and his children and named him Genghis Khan. Bid him administer justice in such and such a fashion.' They called this person Bot Tengri, and whatever he said Genghis Khan used implicitly to follow.

[Juwaynī continues by giving a brief résumé of the story of Bot Tengri, the influential shaman who also aspired to rule, but lost his life in the struggle for power. Equally concise is the ending to his chapter, which only states that Genghis Khan subdued the tribes and even the Emperor of China, as further detailed in the book.]

Commentary

Barhebraeus' typical approach to his source is here well represented: Juwaynī is mostly followed closely, albeit more concisely and with slightly different shades in terminology – synonims or paraphrases, such as "Tatars" vs. "Mongols", "through the mountains and hills" vs. "through the desert and the mountains", "I have gone forth from God" vs. "God has spoken with me", and so on – and a few significant differences. Barhebraeus here mentions Genghis Khan's original name before his rise to power, cited by Juwaynī much earlier, when introducing the story of his early friendship with Ung Khan. Perhaps Barhebraeus would have omitted mention of it, as in the previous instance, had the literal quotation of the prophecy not obliged him to mention it. The form of the name is worth noting – *tmwršyn*,[43] which corresponds with that used by Juwaynī, Temürjin. It may be observed, however, that several variants are attested in the Persian manuscript tradition, and both translations consulted (English and Italian) actually suggest alternative readings as more probable (Qazwīnī, the editor of the Persian text, only provides them in the apparatus). Accordingly, the form chosen by the English translator, Boyle, and the Italian one, Scarcia, is Temüjin.[44] Both forms, the classical Mongolian temürčin "smith" (from *temür* "iron") and the more ancient *temüčin*, which recurs in the *Secret History* and in the dynastic Chinese chronicle, the *Yuan shi*, are plausible.[45] Since the latter form is the most ancient, Boyle prefers to reject the reading proposed by Qazwīnī and accept instead the reading Temüjin as original. However, in so doing, he rejects the evidence of the most ancient Persian manuscript which, we may now add, receives additional support from Barhebraeus.

The passage contains one more instance where Barhebraeus may be shown to assist in establishing the original form of a personal name as given in the Persian text. As mentioned, Juwaynī's Bot

[43] *tmwršyn* is the reading in both occurrences in MS Vatican Syriac 166 (before 1356/7), f. 166*v*, and Ms. Huntington 52 (14th c.?), f. 126*r*. The reading *tmwrkyn*, found for the second occurrence in *Chronoghraphy* (= Bedjan edition) and consequently in Budge's translation, derives from younger MSS and cannot be considered as the original.

[44] Boyle 1958, i, pp. 35, 39; Juvaini 1962, pp. 56, 59. For the first occurrence (Qazwini 1912, p. 26) the reading *tmrjyn* (ms. A) is at variance with MSS B and J: *tmwjyn*, H: *tmjyn* and W: *tmrjn*. For the second (the passage under scrutiny) (Qazwini 1912, p. 28), the same readings recur in A, B and J, whereas H and W both read *tmjyn*. MS A = Paris, BN, Suppl. persan 205 (dated to 8 December, 1290); MS B = Paris, BN, Suppl. persan 1375 (14th c.?); MS J = Paris, BN, Suppl. persan 1556 (13th-14th c.?); MS H = Paris, BN, Suppl. persan 1563; MS W = Paris, BN, Suppl. persan 207 (dated September 1818) (cf. Qazwini 1912, pp. lxvi-lxxix).

[45] Roux 1990, p. 94; Boyle 1958, i, p. 35.

Tengri (bt tngry) becomes *twbwt tngry* (Tubut Tengri) in Barhebraeus. The Mongol name is Teb-tenggri: this is the nickname of the shaman Kököchü, and approximately means "the very celestial", "the very divine"[46] – or in other words, someone with divine powers, considering that Tengri is, for the Turco-Mongol peoples, the Sky as a deity.[47] In this respect neither translation is really appropriate. In Persian, moreover, the word bot means an "idol", and consequently the name lends itself to misunderstanding. In the Arabo-Persian script, the difference between *bot* and *tob* consists simply in the positioning of diacritical marks, the basic form of the letters being identical. Consequently, the misreading is easily explained as a *lectio facilior*: the Persian scribe was far more acquainted with the word *bot* than with the Mongolian *teb*, and the term "idol" did not seem out of place in the context. Barhebraeus' reading is also blatantly erroneous compared to the Mongol, but it appears more of a conflated reading of *tob* and *bot*. This may possibly result from Barhebraeus' initiative, but in his apparatus Qazwini signals, among the attested variants, the reading *tbt tnkry*, found in two manuscripts.[48] It is consequently far more probable for the conflated reading to have originated with the Persian manuscript consulted by Barhebraeus. Our suggestions regarding the

[46] Roux 1990, pp. 85-87; Buell 2003, p. 264: "something like 'high Heaven'";

[47] On Teb-tenggri and his role in Genghis Khan's rise to power, see the essays cited in note 17

[48] Qazwini 1912, p. 28. These are MSS H and W. MS A reads *th tnkry* with an undotted *nun*: a correct reading, if we assume the Mongol name to be a model, to which Qazwīnī prefers in his text *bt tngry*, presumably from MS G. MS B simply reads *tnkry*; MS D (= Paris, BN, Ancien Fonds Persan 69 [dated 16 August, 1531]) once more has *tbt tnkry*, but with an undotted *b*. Qazwīnī's choice to consider original a reading which does not reflect the actual Mongol name has no grounds, when we consider, as noted by O. Smirnova in her Russian translation of Rašīd al-Dīn's *Collection of Chronicles*, that "in Persian language documents [the name is] invariably *but-tangrī*" (Smirnova 1962, p. 150 n. 4; clearly Smirnova does not take into account the variations in Juwaynī's text, which would temper her statement). The name could have been interpreted as "idol of the Sky" or "[divine] image of the Sky": a meaning ultimately compatible with the semantic field of the Mongolian Teb-tenggri. It is therefore possible for *bot tengri* to be Juwaynī's original rendering, later variously amended based on the Mongol either by omitting *bot* (MS B), by reading *th* (MS A), or by producing a conflated reading *tbt* (MSS H, W and D). The Persian manuscripts which contain the latter reading are dated between the 16th and 19th centuries, but Barhebraeus testifies that the reading was already current by the 70s or 80s of the 13th. With specific reference to Barhebraeus' account, F. Jullien noted – here as elsewhere (Jullien [forthcoming], notes 47-48 and related text) – several Biblical echoes, among which are Teb-tenggri's nakedness (cf. *1 Samuel* 19:14) and the use, in Syriac, of the verb *bdq* which brings to mind *Isaiah* 52:7. However, Barhebraeus did not weave an original narrative based on the Bible, but merely followed Juwaynī's account. The issue could be further textured were we to take into account the Islam's considerable Biblical background – but Juwaynī's account of Teb-tenggri derives from Mongol sources and is previously found in the *Secret History* (§§ 244-246): if there ever was some Biblical influence on the Mongol conception of rule, this should be sought further back in time, possibly at the time of the "Nestorian" mission in Central Asia, around the 8th-9th centuries. We personally support the answer given by Alessandro Catastini, whose research provides surprising comparisons between ancient Hebrew prophetism and the shamanic aspects of Turco-Mongol religions: "The answer to our problem... must be situated within the polygenetic structures which are likely to favour multiple influences between two cultures precisely on the basis of their phaenomenological similarities" (Catastini 1990, pp. 131-143, cit. p. 142, our translation). This appears to us as a step in the right direction, especially considering the existence of other ritual and ceremonial aspects that are documented both in the Bible and among Turco-Mongol peoples, such as the custom of dividing up the bodies of slaughtered animals on the occasion of the stipulation of important treaties (cf. *Genesis* 15:9-11, 17-18 and *Jeremiah* 34:17-19 with the *Secret History*, § 141, bearing in mind the observation of numerous instances in the Turco-Mongol milieu documented by Sinor 1992, esp. pp. 302-303; cf. also Roux 1993, p. 110). The nudity of the "man of God", moreover, is not explainable only in terms of Biblical parallels, being a widespread feature of shamanic practice (see Roux 1990, p. 85) which, along with the theme of resistance to low temperatures, is documented even in Tibetan culture, in the practice of *gtum-mo*, psycophisical warmth (Stein 1986). In conclusion, the stereotype of the "heavenly mandate", as also other cultural features, is best interpreted in terms of a very deep layer shared by numerous ancient cultures even if geographically distant, rather than as an influence of one upon another, while its literary expression may well have been textured to suit specific contexts through the conscious adoption "foreign" expressive modes, depending on the source and the audience of the account. "In Arabic 'the craving of the pathic'", according to Boyle (Boyle 1958, I, p. 59 n. 24); "bramosia omosessuale", according to Scarcia (Juvaini 1962, p. 78).

names Temü(r)jin and Teb-tenggri could be the starting point for a further inquiry aimed at establishing which of the surviving manuscripts from Juwaynī's work most closely resembles the one used by Barhebraeus.[49]

The following chapter is devoted by Juwaynī, and accordingly by Barhebraeus, to the sons of Genghis Khan. Once more, Barhebraeus significantly resumes Juwaynī. The latter continues with an account of the conquest of the Uyghur land and the submission of their *idiqut* (title of the Uyghur sovereign), which is skipped by Barhebraeus entirely. He similarly ignores the following passage, where Juwaynī inserts an account of Uyghur history before their submission to the Mongols, following it up with an excursus on the origins of the title of the Uyghur sovereign – the *idiqut* – a description of their land and, finally, of their beliefs. This chapter, a long passage virtually independent from its context, is only echoed in Barhebraeus through a rather peculiar feature, as we shall see below.

The limited space available does not allow a detailed discussion of Barhebraeus' chapters on the "Sons of Genghis Khan" and the "Laws which Genghis Khan made"; suffice to say that they are, even more than usual, significantly more concise than their source – particularly in the case of the regulations, which are described by Juwaynī at length, taking recourse to technical terminology, as a sign of the high and noble civilization introduced by Genghis Khan among the Mongols, whereas Barhebraeus reduces them schematically to nine laconic points or articles. Nonetheless, in these instances, Juwaynī is clearly Barhebraeus' only source.[50]
A particularly interesting comparison is provided by the chapter which in Barhebraeus immediately follows the one on regulations, titled "How the Mongols cleaved to the worship of images".

Barhebraeus
Formerly the Mongols had no literature and no religion of their own, but they knew one God, the Creator of the Universe, and some of them confessed that heaven was God, and they called it so. [And this they did] until they ruled over the people of the Uyghur Turks, and they found that there were among them certain men who were sorcerers and who were called *qams* (*q'my'*). We have

[49] A topic which would be out of scope within the present study, and whose investigation will present great difficulty: suffice to say that none of the known manuscripts, judging from Qazwīnī's edition, contains both the readings found in Barhebraeus. One will also have to bear in mind potential variations in the Syriac tradition. The possibility of a contamination of the Syriac text with the Persian in the subsequent manuscript tradition of the *Chronography* appears, on the other hand, wholly improbable.

[50] By way of example, Barhebraeus' second article may be cited, due to its relevance to a Christian chronicler: "Let [the Mongols] magnify and pay honour to the modest, and the pure, and the righteous, and to the scribes, and wise men, to whatsoever people they may belong, and let them hate the wicked and the men of iniquity. And having seen very much modesty and other habits of this kind among the Christian people, [the Mongols] loved them greatly." [Here ends the text written by Barhebraeus; the following phrase, translated in BUDGE 1932 but absent in MS Vat. Syr. 166, was added by a later scribe] (*Chronography*, p. 373, BUDGE, 1932, I, p. 354). Barhebraeus clearly had an interest in this aspect. Nonetheless, Juwaynī's text – resumed and, more importantly, modified by Barhebraeus – remains far more detailed: "Being the adherent of no religion and the follower of no creed, he eschewed bigotry, and the preference of one faith to another, and the placing of some above others; rather he honoured and respcted the learned and pious of every sect, recognizing such conduct as the way to the Court of God. And as he viewed the Muslims with the eye of respect, so also did he hold the Christians and idolaters [i.e. the Buddhists] in high esteem. As for his children and grandchildren, several of them have chosen a religion according to their inclination, some adopting Islam, others embracing Christianity, other selecting idolatry and others again cleaving to the ancient canon of their fathers and forefathers and inclining in no direction; but these are now a minority. But though they have adopted some religion they still for the most part avoid all show of fanaticism and do not swerve from the *yasa* of Genghis Khan, namely, to consider all sects as one and not to distinguish them from one another" (QAZWINI 1912, pp. 18-19, BOYLE 1958, I, p. 26).

heard many who testified concerning them, saying, "We heard the voice of the devils who held converse with them through the openings of the tents. And the secret conversation with devils was not made complete until after they had been defiled by other men, because the great number of them were women-men." And these men were wholly abominable, for when they wished to perform some act of their sorcery, every one who met them they seized by force that he might defile them. Therefore when the Mongols saw them, they also turned aside after them in their simplicity.

Afterwards when Genghis Khan heard that che Chinese, that is to say, the *kātāyē*, had images and priests who were lords of wisdom, he sent ambassadors to them, and asked them for priests, and promised them to hold them in honour. And when the priests came, Genghis Khan ordered them to make a debate on religion and and inquiry into it with the *qams*. And when the priests spake and read extracts from their book, which they call Nawm (*nwm*) in their language, the *qams* failed and they were unable to reply because they were destitute of knowlegde. And from this time the rank of the priests increased among the Mongols, and they were commanded to fashion images, and to cast copies of them as [the priests] did in their owm country, and to offer to the full sacrifices and libations according to their custom.

And although they honoured the priests greatly, the Mongols at the same time did not reject the *qams*. And both parties remained among them, each to carry on its own special work, without despising or holding the other in contempt. It is the reverse with the peoples who have the Scriptures and the Prophets, for every one is ready soundly to revile his fellow, and judgeth him [to be] an unbeliever. Now in the book of the priests which is called Nawm, together with the pagan proverbs which resemble those which St. Gregory Theologus brings to our memory, there are also good laws, as for example, an admonition agaist oppression and the infliction of injuries, and we must not return evil for evil, but good, and a man must not kill any small creature such as a louse or a gnat. And like Plato they confess the transmigration of souls from body to body [saying] that the spirits of just men, and righteous men, and well-doers when they die migrate to the bodies of kings and nobles, and the souls of evil and wicked men into the bodies of evil-doers who are tortured, and beaten and killed, and also into the bodies of irrational creatures, and reptiles and birds of prey. And when flesh is brought unto those men to eat, they ask the bringer of it, "Didst thou slay this beast on account of us, or didst thou buy it in the market?" And if he saith, "On your account", they will not taste it.

Juwaynī

The above passage derives from Juwaynī, but in rather complex ways, so that it would be misleading to present it as a parallel. Indeed, Juwaynī's text that underlies Barhebraeus' passage describes *Uyghur*, not *Mongol*, religion. It does, nonetheless, mention the Mongols, and this, coupled with his direct knowledge of Mongol beliefs, probably appeared sufficient to Barhebraeus, who applies the description to the latter.

> The reason for the idolatry [i.e. Buddhism] of the Uyghur is that in those days they knew the science of magic, the experts in which art they called *qams*. Now there are still to this day among the Mongols people that are overcome with *ubna*,[51] and speak vain things, and claim that they are possessed by devils who inform them of all things. We have questioned certain people regarding these *qams*, and they say: "We have heard that devils descend into their tents by the smoke-hole[52] and hold converse with them.

[51] "In Arabic 'the craving of the pathic'", according to Boyle (Boyle 1958, I, p. 59 n. 24); "bramosia omosessuale", according to Scarcia (Juvaini 1962, p. 78).

[52] The opening on top of the tents of Turco-Mongol nomads, located above the hearth; its felt covering may be removed by means of ropes when necessary.

> And it is possibile that evil spirits are intimate with some of them and have intercourse with them. Their powers are at their strongest just after they have satisfied their natural lust in an innatural way". In a word, these people we have mentioned are called *qam*; and when the Mongols had no knowledge or science, they had from ancient times yielded obedience to the words of these qams; and even now their princes still believe in their words and prayers, and if they engage upon some business they will conclude nothing until these astrologers have given their consent. And in a similar manner they heal their sick.
>
> Now the religion of Khitai was idolatry. Buqu dispatched a messenger to the Khan [of that country] and summoned the *toyins* to him. When they arrived he confronted the two parties so that they might choose the religion of whichever party defeated the other. The *toyins* call a reading from their book *nom*. Now the nom contains their theological speculations and consists of idle stories and traditions; but excellent homilies are likewise to be found in it such as are consonant with the law and faith of every prophet, urging men to avoid injury and oppression and the like, to return good for evil and to refrain from the injuring of animals, etc. Their dogmas and doctrines are manifold; the most typical is that of reincarnation. They say that the people of to-day existed several thousand years ago: the souls of those that wrought good deeds and engaged in worship attained a degree in accordance with their actions, such as that of king, or prince, or paesant, or beggar; while the souls of those who had engaged in debauchery, libertinism, murder, slander and injury to their fellow-creatures descended into vermin, beasts of prey and other animals; and so they are punished for their deeds. But the ignorance is [everywhere] in the ascendant: "They say that which they do not".
>
> When they had read certain *noms*, the *qams* were completely dumbfounded. For this reason the Uyghur adopted idolatry as their religion, and most of the other tribes folowed their example. And there are none more bigoted than the idolaters of the East, and none more hostile to Islam. As for Buqu Khan[53]...

Commentary

While Juwaynī deals with the Uyghurs' religion, he soon afterwards states that *qams* (whom we would define as shamans) are also found among the Mongols, and the description he provides is derived from a Mongol source. This connection probably prompted Barhebraeus to refer the whole account to the Mongols, ascribing the summoning of Chinese "priests" not to the Uyghur sovereign Buqa but to Genghis Khan himself. It is worth noting that, just as Barhebraeus had previously avoided the use of the Mongol term *tarkhan*, so here he refrains from the use of the technical term *toyin*, which refers to Buddhist monks. On the other hand, he retains the word *qam*, probably as

[53] That Barhebraeus applied (a portion of) Juwaynī's the chapter on the Uyghurs to the Mongols has surprising implications, as it reveals the approach of the Syriac author, otherwise quite accurate in his use of the source, in this section of Juwaynī. This part of the *History of the World Conqueror* was possibly less interesting to Barhebraeus, the subject being an Eastern population outside the scope of his immediate interests. Further corroborating this are other instances. For example, at the end of his account on the origins of the Seljuks, which depends on the Michael's *Chronicle*, Barhebraeus writes: "Now the story of the dog which the blessed old man [i.e. Michael the Great] said led them when they wnet forth from their country we have not found anywhere. It is possible that he wrote it down from hearsay, or from some book which we have not read, for we have not met with it in any book" (*Chronography*, p. 203; Budge 1938, I, p. 196. Michael includes the "story of the dog" in the fourteenth book of his *Chronicle*, which is entirely devoted to the Turks). But the story of the dog which led the Turks from their homeland to the West is indeed found in Juwaynī, precisely in the chapter dealing with the Uyghurs and just a few lines after the passage dealing with their religion. As certainly Barhebraeus had read this passage, one wonders why he overlooked the story of the dog, next to it. Probably he, having reached the words "As for Buqu Khan...", realising that the following passage was not relevant to his ends, ceased to read and moved on, since it appears unlikely that the text available to him was different from that transmitted by the whole manuscript tradition of Juwaynī's work. Another explanation might be that Barhebraeus become aware of the presence of story of the dog in Juwaynī's narrative some time after completion of the chapter about the Saljuks, and simply forgot to correct his previous statement.

the only term suitable for describing a religious experience that was alien to his cultural milieu. In describing the *qams*' activities, Barhebraeus says "We have heard many who testified concerning them..." – using, as is customary for him, the first person plural. In this instance, however, he simply quotes from Juwaynī ("We have questioned..."), boasting as his own an inquiry that was never conducted personally: all the information he provides derives (with the usual omissions) from a single source.

On the other hand, traces of direct experience on the part of Barhebraeus may possibly be traced in his description of the beliefs of the "priests", that is to say, of Buddhist monks. Within the narrative sequence, he leaves an assessment of their doctrines to the end – at variance with Juwaynī, who places it before the end of the dispute. The usual borrowings from Juwaynī are here complemented by some additional remarks. Among these is the mention of "Gregory the Theologian"[54] and Plato as recommended readings that will help clarifying the beliefs which characterize the Buddhists – more specifically, their emphasis on the refusal to kill even the smallest living beings and to be indirectly responsible for the death of animals in case they had been purposedly killed to be offered to them. These features would seem to derive from a direct knowledge of Buddhist monks, whom Barhebraeus may easily have met in Iran under Mongol rule. A knowledge based on direct experience rather than readings seems supported by the rather lax prohibition of meat consumption: from Barhebraeus' description, one gains the impression that meat was actually quite commonly eaten.[55]

Returning now to the paragraph which in Barhebraeus precedes his assessment of Buddhist doctrines, his observation regarding the role of such monks in the introduction of statues in the temples where they practised their cult must also be derived from direct experience. This is even more probable of his observation that *qams* and Buddhist monks live under the Mongols without friction, each of them managing their own sphere of beliefs and activities. Rather surprising for a churchman and theologian such as Barhebraeus is his liberal recurse to an ironic tone – with perhaps a hint of sadness – in his description of what differentiates the "religions of the Book" from the *qams* and Buddhists: in the religions grounded in scriptures and prophecies, factionalism soon takes root. Accordingly, once the Mongol rulers converted to Islam, Buddhist temples and monks were the first to pay a price: the former were destroyed and the latter converted or killed.[56]

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[54] On the basis of his epithet, this should be Gregory of Nazianzus, but we are unable to further specify the work where he purportedly deals with these subjects.

[55] The Buddhists' abstinence from meat could not have distinguished them significantly from the Syriac clergy and – during certain periods of the year, even the Syriac laity. A sympathetic but critical observer such as the Dominican missionary Riccoldo of Monte Croce, who was in Mesopotamia between 1289 and 1291, thus writes of them: "Sunt enim magne abstinentitie; multum orant et multum ieiunant. Religiosi eorum et episcopi et archiepiscopi et patriarche in perpetuum non comedunt carnes nec condimenta carnium nec etiam pro infirmitate mortali. [...] In quadragesima tam Nestorini quam Iacobini omnes tam religiosi quam seculares nullo modo comederent pisces nec biberent uinum" (KAPPLER 1997, pp. 148-150)

[56] Cf. the account given by the Persian historian Khāndamīr (d. 1535): "The stipends that had been paid previously to Christian and Jewish physicians and astrologers were cut off, and an amount equal to their stipends was transferred from the divan to the ministers of state. Orders were given to prepare caravans for the pilgrimage, and much effort was made to collect the amounts due from properties left in trust to the two holy shrines of the Hejaz. Idol temples, churches and synagogues were destroyed, and in their place rose mosques" (THACKSTON 1994, p. 67) – possibly an anachronistic reference to the time of the khan Tegüder-Aḥmad (1282-1284) which would more accurately suit Ghazan Khan's time (r. 1295-1304).

3. Conclusions

At the end of this preliminary comparison, it is worth summarising some of the most significant outcomes, which will have to be further verified on the basis of a full comparison of the two works.

The impression gained from a reading of Juwaynī soon after Barhebraeus is that of a reconstitution of the logical and consequential flow of events. These often appear clearer and more organically described – but, considering the widely differing aims of the two authors, it must be acknowledged that Barhebraeus is essentially true to his source and draws from it what is most relevant to the aims of a chronography. The two works are in fact completely different in terms of objectives as well as language: on the one hand we have a history having literary pretentions and aiming explicitly at a celebration of Genghis Khan; on the other, a "small" annalistic treatise.

The structure of the latter results in the excerpted materials' interpolation with occasionally extensive accounts of unrelated events in different parts of the Near East, undermining thematic continuity as well as narrative tension.[57]

Barhebraeus' excerpts preserve little of Juwaynī's flowery language, frequently embellished (when not overburdened) by images and poetic quotations.[58] On occasion, the source is indeed trivialised ,significantly reducing the impact of the original argumentation and anecdotes.[59]

Barhebraeus' reading of Juwaynī appears careful but, as shown by the episode of the dog leading the Turks,[60] occasionally hasty, particularly in the case of those chapters that were less relevant from his point of view.

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[57] This aspect is not too evident in the section under scrutiny, since we have limited ourselves for the most part to the chapter where Barhebraeus introduces the Mongols on the background of world history – a chapter which is characterised by a relatively broad scope and coherence in content.

[58] Sentences such as this are typically ignored: "It was agreed, therefore, that at dawn, while eyes were anointed with the collyrium of sleep and mankind was rendered negligent by repose, Ung Khan's men should make a night attack upon Genghis Khan and his followers". It would seem, on the other hand, that another Syriac author – who remained anonymous – appreciated Juwaynī's style and occasionally imitated him. Compare one of his incipits: "Now when the sun had descended into the sign of Aries, and creation was warmed a little..." (*Storia di Mar Yahballaha e di Rabban Sauma*, cit. note 47, p. 104) with one by Juwaynī: "And when the world had begun to smile because of the alighting of the Sun at the house of Aries and the air to weep through the eyes of the rain-clouds..." (Qazwini 1912, p. 145; Boyle 1958, i, p. 184).

[59] Besides the mention of wooden stirrups, in comparison with the ironic tone of Juwaynī, we may cite the case of the sentence purportedly uttered by a refugee from Bukhara: "Now one man had escaped from Bukhara after its capture and had come to Khorasan. He was questioned about the fate of that city and replied: 'They came, they sapped, they burnt, they slew, they plundered and they departed (*amadand wa kandand wa suḫtand wa koštand wa burdand wa raftand*)'. Men of understanding who heard this description were all agreed that in the Persian language there could not nbe nothing more concise than this speech. And indeed all that has been written in this chapter is summed up and epitomized in these two or three words" (Qazwini 1912, p. 84; Boyle 1958, i, p. 107). In Barhebraeus' version, "For certain men asked a man of Bukhara on his coming to Khorasan, 'How did it fare with them?', and he said, 'Why do ye weary me? The Tatars came, and they killed and dug up and burnt and plundered and departed.' He that hath ears let him hear!" (*Chronography*, p. 397; cf. Budge 1932, i, p. 376. Budge's translation incorporates the last sentence as part of the direct speech by the Bukharan man; this is possible on the basis of the Syriac text alone, but less probable if we take into account the original Persian). The sequence of deeds committed by the destroyers of the city is altered in Barhebraeus text (besides, the English translation provided by Budge 1932, i, p. 376, ignores the verb "to kill" and proposes unnecessary integrations which harmonise the answer with previously narrated events). Regarding the divergence toward the end, perhaps Barhebraeus wanted to avoid mentioning the Persian language, not so much because this would have revealed his debt toward Juwaynī, but because he probably considered this linguistic reference of little interest to his audience.

[60] See note 53.

The reading of individual personal and place names yields relevant clues which shed light on the textual history, and possibly the textual critique, Juwaynī's work.

Lying somewhere between translation and paraphrase, Barhebraeus' quotations nonetheless remain essentially true to the Persian original, with some logical and literary nuances that bear witness to an excellent understanding.[61]

Despite this, the content is subject to significant changes, which may mislead the reader as regards the sequence of events or the motivations thereof. These usually result from drastic summarising.[62] Another consequence are the temporal contraptions, by which complex sequences of occurrences are reduced to instant events. This is the case, for instance, with the battle following Ung Khan's ambush; a further example is provided by the account of the siege of the Otrar citadel.[63]

Even when Barhebraeus modifies the information provided by Juwaynī, by varying them or adding to them, he would not seem to rely on a written source. In all the instances examined, it appears clear that these are his own deductions or assumptions; although the reason for these is not always clear,[64] the use of information obtained from oral sources and direct experience seems very probable.
Some of the additions, moreover, may be explained in view of Barhebraeus' religion: witness for example the account of Ung Khan's apostasy. The same holds true of several omissions: Qur'anic quotations are obviously expunged, and so are certain characteristically Islamic expressions.[65]

Barhebraeus appears little interested in exoticism: whenever possible, he readily omits many of the Mongol and foreign terms that recur in Juwaynī.

The details he chooses to include are not always easily accounted for. For example, while his omission of the names of the youths that warn Genghis Khan of Ung Khan's threat most probably result from his intention to shorten the account, it is less clear why he would choose to name only two of the four commanders of the troops defending Bukhara – and why those particular two.[66]

Finally, we hope to have demonstrated that a detailed comparison of these two strongly related works allows for promising developments, shedding considerable light on both.

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[61] An example is the account Genghis Khan's flight from the encampment before the ambush plotted by Ung Khan.
[62] Consider for example the falling out of Genghis Khan and the Kereit court, which is reduced to a dispute between two individuals.
[63] *Chronography*, p. 388: in his account of the defenders who took shelter in the citadel, Barhebraeus fails to mention that the battle "went on for a whole month" (Qazwini 1912, p. 65; Boyle 1958, I, p. 85); one consequently gains the mistaken impression that the events took place in a very short period of time.
[64] A case in point are the information on the territories bordering on the Mongol homeland.
[65] For example, while Juwaynī has "They [i.e. the Mongols] caused him and all his companions to attain the degree of martyrdom" (Qazwini 1912, p. 65; Boyle 1958, I, p. 84; Juvaini 1962, p. 106), Barhebraeus only has "And they commanded, and he and all those who were with him were killed" (*Chronography*, p. 388; Budge, 1932, I, p. 368).
[66] *Chronography*, p. 369, Budge, 1932, I, p. 376: only "the famous captains Sewinj Khan e Keshli Khan", rather than "Kök Khan and other officers such as Khamid Bur, Sewinch Khan and Keshli Khan" (Qazwini 1912, p. 80; Boyle 1958, I, p. 103; Juvaini 1962, p. 126).

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