

WOODEN STIRRUPS AND CHRISTIAN KHANS: BAR ‘EBROYO’S USE OF JUWAYNĪ’S “HISTORY OF THE WORLD CONQUEROR” AS A SOURCE FOR HIS “CHRONOGRAPHY”¹

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ABSTRACT

One of the sources used by Bar ‘Ebroyo in his Chronography was a “marvellous work” he consulted in the library of Maragha, in Azerbaijan, where “many volumes of the Syrians, Saracens, and Persians” were preserved. This book may be identified without any doubt as the History of the World Conqueror (Ta’riḫ-i jahān gušā), written in Persian by ‘Alā al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik Jūwaynī between 1252/1253 and 1260. This article aims at outlining Bar ‘Ebroyo’s approach to Jūwaynī’s work as his main source about the Mongols, through a close comparison of the chapters devoted to the beginning of Mongol history and the rise of Genghis Khan, and desultory parallel readings of other episodes. It must be acknowledged that Bar ‘Ebroyo is essentially true to his source and draws from it

¹ This paper is a revised version of my ‘Bar ‘Ebroyo and Jūwaynī’. Another relevant study about the topic has been published by Denise Aigle (Aigle, ‘L’œuvre historiographique’). In comparison with mine, Aigle’s work has a wider scope, as it also takes into account Bar ‘Ebroyo’s Arabic chronicle.

what is most relevant to his aims as a chronographer. The two works are in fact different in terms of aims as well as language. A detailed comparison allows for promising developments, shedding considerable light on both.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the Preface to his *Chronography*, Bar ‘Ebroyo states that the memory of past events, both good and bad, prompts man to admire what is excellent and to refrain from reproachable deeds. After having outlined this conception of history as *magistra vitae*, he points out how Syriac scholars had not bothered with history-writing for some eighty years after the work of Michael the Great (1166-1199).² Such a long period, dense with events relevant to the world as well as the Church, deserved being recorded in writing, and Bar ‘Ebroyo resolved to take on the task. 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 worthy of remembrance from many volumes of the Syrians, Saracens, and Persians which are preserved here”.³ In other words, he adapted for his people – in their classical language, Syriac – the updated chronicles that were already available to Arabic- and Persian-speaking audiences.

The main, if not the only, Persian source used by Bar ‘Ebroyo is easily identified as the work of ‘Alā al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik Juwaynī (1225-1283).⁴ Bar ‘Ebroyo himself declares it, soon after relating

² A statement that would imply that Bar ‘Ebroyo was not aware of the anonymous *Chronicon ad annum 1234*.

³ Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), p. 1; Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, p. 2. From Bar ‘Ebroyo’s 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, which Hülegü had entrusted to the learned Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī, and contained about 400,000 books (see Takahashi, ‘Simeon of Qal’a Rumaita’, note 90; Lane, ‘An Account’).

⁴ For information about Juwaynī and his work, see Barthold and Boyle, ‘Djuwaynī’, pp. 606–607; Juwaynī, *History of Chingiz Khan* (Qazwīnī), pp. XV–LXV; Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) I, pp. XV–XXXVIII.

the death of ‘Alā al-Dīn’s brother, the prime minister Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad Juwaynī,⁵ in 1284:

“Now his brother was ‘Alā al-Dīn, who was governor of Baghdad, and who two years earlier had well-nigh 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.”⁶

The “marvellous work” is the book known as *History of the World Conqueror* (*Ta’riḫ-i jahān gušā*), written by ‘Alā al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik Juwaynī between 1252/1253 and 1260.⁷ The conqueror is

⁵ Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad Juwaynī served as a vizier under the khans Hülegü, Abaqa and Arghun from 1263 to 1284 (Spuler, *Mongolen in Iran*, p. 238).

⁶ Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), p. 503; Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, p. 473. Bar ‘Ebroyo cites ‘Alā al-Dīn four times prior to this passage, in the entries for the years 1265 (he is nominated the governor of Baghdad), 1268 (he saves the catholicos Denḫa 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; Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), pp. 472, 474–475, 476, 496; Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, pp. 445, 447, 449, 446 respectively). In all the instances ‘Alā al-Dīn is referred to as the *ṣāḫib dīwān* or *ṣāḫib dīwān d-bagdad*. But in the passage where he is quoted as the author of the historical work, he is said to be the *šallīṭā d-bagdad* “governor of Baghdad”. This led Budge to wrongly assume that two distinct persons were referred to and to classify them separately in his index, as “Alā ad-Dīn, Master of the Dīwān” *vs.* “Alā ad-Dīn of Baghdād” (Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, p. 514).

⁷ ‘Alā al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik belonged to an ancient family from the Juwayn region in Khorasan (see Krawulsky, *Iran*, p. 88), 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). ‘Alā

Genghis Khan, whose ascent to power Juwaynī relates along with his conquest of the lands west of Mongolia, following it up with an account of his successors. Juwaynī's familiarity with the conquerors and the active role he played in some of the related events make his work one of the most relevant sources on the history of the Mongols.⁸

Our aim in this paper is to outline Bar 'Ebroyo's approach to Juwaynī's work. We shall limit our detailed analysis to a few passages.

The way in which Bar 'Ebroyo refers to Juwaynī's work is revealing of his approach. He fails to mention the book's title, so Juwaynī's work is described as a *maktbānut ḡabnē* "chronicle, annals", literally a work containing materials arranged in a chronological sequence. But this is not an accurate description of Juwaynī's book, which is built around the core theme of the Mongols, and whose narrative occasionally deviates from linear chronology – for example, in order to incorporate the accounts of vanquished dynasties (such as the Uighurs 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'īlis – with several overlaps. Bar 'Ebroyo's approach and his attitude towards Juwaynī are revealed by his

al-Dīn 'Aṭā 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'īlis which led to the destruction of their stronghold, the Alamut fortress (1256). Hülegü also entrusted to him the examination of the books contained in the Isma'īli library at Alamut, and he accordingly selected what to save and what to destroy.

⁸The Persian text was edited by Mirzā Muḥammad Qazwīnī (Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khān* (Qazwīnī), Juwaynī, *Khwarazm-Shāh Dynasty* (Qazwīnī), Juwaynī, *History of Mangū Qā'ān* (Qazwīnī). Only two translations into modern western languages exist: the earliest one is in English, edited by John Andrew Boyle (Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle); a second one, in Italian, is by Gian Roberto Scarcia (Juwaynī, *Gengis Khan* (Scarcia). The latter, aimed at the wider public and therefore not accompanied by philological and historical notes — at variance with Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) — 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).

description of the source: his mention of “the Saljuk kingdom, the Khwarazm dynasty, the Isma‘ilis and the Mongols”⁹ implies the adoption of a descriptive criterion based on a succession of dynasties in time, and does not correspond to the real content of the work described. In fact, 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, Bar ‘Ebroyo’s 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.¹⁰

Approaching the *History of the World Conqueror* as a source of information suitable for inclusion in his *Chronography*, Bar ‘Ebroyo deliberately selects excerpts of varying length, leaving out considerable portions of Juwaynī’s work in the process. Digressions, remarks, and anecdotes are usually left out.¹¹

Apart from the above quotation, Bar ‘Ebroyo 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 1202.¹² Our study will focus on this

⁹ See above, no. 5.

¹⁰ This would perhaps explain why Fiey considers the “marvellous book” an “ouvrage aujourd’hui perdu” (Fiey, *Chrétiens syriaques*, p. 99).

¹¹ For instance, when dealing with the early stages of Genghis Khan’s campaign in Transoxiana, Bar ‘Ebroyo drastically 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 (Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khān* (Qazwīnī), pp. 62–66; Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), pp. 337–338, 395–397).

¹² Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), p. 370; Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khān* (Qazwīnī), p. 14. The insertion of the notice in this place is due to the fact that Juwaynī, who makes a far more sparing use of dates compared to Bar ‘Ebroyo, precisely situates the battle between Genghis Khan and Onk Khan in 599 *Hijrī* (= 1202/3) (Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khān* (Qazwīnī), p. 27).

section, following Bar ‘Ebroyo’s narrative sequentially and comparing individual instances with their source.¹³

2. BAR ‘EBROYO’S NARRATIVE 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 Bar ‘Ebroyo, and understandably so, considering that they have no factual relevance but aim at illustrating the importance of acquiring a knowledge of the Mongols’ way of life before approaching their history.¹⁴

Bar ‘Ebroyo	Juwaynī
Now the first country of the Tatars, before they spread abroad in these exterior countries, was a valley, that is to say a [great] ¹⁵ plain in the north-eastern quarter of the world, the length and width of which was a journey of eight	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 length and in breadth. In the east, it marches with the land of Khitai, in west with the country of the

¹³ A thorough synopsis of the two narratives would be unfeasible. On the other hand, it is our intention to provide the reader with as much information as possible, using summaries where necessary. 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, *Le conquérant du monde*; Phillips, *The Mongols*; Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan*; Roux, *Histoire de l’empire mongol*; Roux, *Gengis Khan*).

¹⁴ Bar ‘Ebroyo’s *Chronography* is cited according to the English translation by Budge (Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge), while for Juwaynī’s *History of the World Conqueror* Boyle’s translation is adopted (Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle). Both translations have been checked against their Syriac and Persian originals (Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek) = Bedjan edition, Paris 1890; Juwaynī, *History of Chingiz Khan* (Qazwīnī) [Juwaynī, *Khwarazm-Shah Dynasty* (Qazwīnī); Juwaynī, *History of Mançū Qá’an* (Qazwīnī)). The changes aim at greater fidelity to the original text.

¹⁵ In an old – perhaps the oldest – Ms. of the *Chronography* (Vat. Syr. 166, before 1356/7) the adjective “great” (*rabtā*) is absent; it occurs in Mss. Sachau 210 (14th century) and Hunt. 1 (ca. 1498).

months. On the east side, their territory extended to the country of the Chinese *kaṭāyē*, that is Katai; and on the west to the land of the Uighur Turks; and on the north to the land, which is called *špḡy*; and on the south to India.

(Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), p. 370; Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, p. 352)

Uighur, in the north with Qirqiz and Selengei (*šlnk’y*) and in the south with Tangut and Tibet.

(Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khán* (Qazwīnī), p. 15; Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) I, pp. 20–21)

Commentary

Reliance on Juwaynī is immediately apparent, but a few stylistic variations emerge; for instance, Bar ‘Ebroyo uses one single term (“first country” instead of “home”, “origin” and “birthplace”) to designate the home of the Mongols. From the point of view of content, differences seem to be due to various reasons. The addition of “before they spread...” links 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. Juwaynī’s approximation (“seven or eight” – *haft hašt*) is resolved in favour of the higher figure. Differences that are more significant concern the notices on neighbouring peoples: that on the Chinese and the Uighurs is slightly expanded, while the Southern border is defined differently. Bar ‘Ebroyo knows, and elsewhere cites, Tangut;¹⁶ it is therefore unclear why he replaced its mention (alongside Tibet) with India. Nothing accounts for his failure to mention Qirqiz (the Kirghiz territory), while the Syriac *špḡy* clearly renders the Arabo-Persian *šlnk’y*.¹⁷ Juwaynī here refers to “Selenga”.¹⁸ According to the

¹⁶ Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), pp. 412, 413, 421; Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, pp. 391, 398.

¹⁷ Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khán* (Qazwīnī), p. 15 (cf. Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) I, p. 21).

¹⁸ Juwaynī’s translations (Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) I, p. 21: “river Selengei”; Juwaynī, *Gengis Khan* (Scarcia), p. 42: “*fiume* Selenga”, our Italics) could be misleading: Selenga is indeed a river in Mongolia, but Juwaynī’s Persian text contains no explicit mention of a river, while a

apparatus of Qazwīnī's critical edition, in all the Persian manuscripts the sound *g* is represented by a plain Arabic *kaf* with no diacritical marks.¹⁹ We could presume that the manuscript available to Bar 'Ebroyo featured a more accurate spelling or, more probably, that the name and its spelling were known to him from another source. A later copyist should most probably be held responsible for the misreading of the *n* as a *p*.²⁰

Bar 'Ebroyo

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,²¹ 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 *amir* among them was that when riding he had stirrups made of iron, whilst for everyone else they were made of wood.

Juwaynī

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

geographical treatise included in the encyclopaedic work *Nuzbat 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 (Qazwīnī, *Geographical Part* (Le Strange), pp. 10, 212, 238, 260 [Persian text]; Qazwīnī, *Geographical Part* (Le Strange, tr.), pp. 10, 204, 231, 253 [Engl. transl.]). This possibly explains why Bar 'Ebroyo mentions a “*land* (𐤎𐤍) called *shḡy*”.

¹⁹ The orthographic features of the manuscripts of Juwaynī's text are described in Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khān* (Qazwīnī), pp. LXVI–LXXIII.

²⁰ The comparison with Juwaynī disproves Budge's proposed interpretation of Bar 'Ebroyo's place name as a reference to “Siberia” (Bar 'Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, p. 352: “Salapḡy (Seber, Siberia)”.

²¹ The Syriac 𐤎𐤍, may be read both as “bears” (*debbē*) and as “wolves” (*dibbē*).

(Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), pp. 370–371; Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge), I, p. 352)

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 sign of a great emir amongst them was that his stirrups were of iron; from which one can form a picture of their other luxuries. (Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khān* (Qazwīnī), p. 15; Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle), I, pp. 21–22)

Commentary

In this instance, too, Bar ‘Ebroyo 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 omissions, Bar ‘Ebroyo seems less concerned with this, and also with where and how the fruit called *qusuq* grows (a passage omitted from our Juwaynī’s 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”). However, while not mentioned as the providers of fur,²² mice appear among the victuals – Juwaynī only alludes to them indirectly in this connection. Possibly Bar ‘Ebroyo amended the source of his own accord: mouse skins 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, Bar ‘Ebroyo only includes a plain factual notice. In fact, the use of wooden stirrups is

²² Perhaps the mention of “mouse” furs results from a distortion of the reported habit of using small fur animals, such as sables and squirrels.

documented in Mongolia among reindeer people (Tsaatan), but what is more important for us, in 13th-14th century Syria.²³

Bar ‘Ebroyo

In the year 1514 of the Greeks, and the year 599 of the Arabs [AD 1202/3], when Onk²⁵ Khan, that is John, the Christian king, was reigning over a certain tribe of the barbarian Huns who were called *keryt* (Kereyit), Genghis Khan was going about continually in his service. And when Onk 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 Onk Khan, becoming acquainted

Juwaynī²⁴

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 Onk Khan, the ruler of the Kereyit and the Saqiyat, surpassed the other tribes in strength 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]

²³ See the picture of a wooden stirrup dating back to the 14th century (Bashir, *Muslim Knight*, p. 347). Besides, a search on the internet can show that the use of wooden stirrups is still in fashion.

²⁴ It is impossible to quote Juwaynī’s passage in its entirety: from this point onwards Bar ‘Ebroyo drastically resumes a far more elaborate and detailed narrative. Several pages (of great ethnographical and historical interest) devoted to the laws established by Genghis Khan introduce this. We will accordingly quote only those sentences, which have an echo in Bar ‘Ebroyo, 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.

²⁵ As known, this was the title (*wang* “king”) awarded by the Chinese (Jurchen) emperor to the Kereyit ruler. The Syriac spelling ܡܢܟܝܐ reproduces Juwaynī’s Persian spelling *’wnk* (so all the MSS: Juwaynī, *History of Chingiz Khan* (Qazwīnī), p. 26). Rubruk’s (Latin: Unc) and Marco Polo’s (Old French: Unc) identical spelling seem to support the Persian one (hinting perhaps to a *written* tradition underlying the spelling adopted by the two European travellers).

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 Onk 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 side of a spring which was called *b'lyb*. And the party of Genghis triumphed, and the party of Onk Khan was broken. And the two parties met together in battle on many occasions, and at length the party of Onk 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

used to visit Onk Khan, and there was a feeling of friendship...

[Onk Khan 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 Onk Khan's troops and followers controlled by his discipline and justice. The sons and brothers of Onk Khan and his courtiers and favourites became envious of the rank and favour he enjoyed: they accordingly cast nets of guile... *[Over time, though, Onk Khan, instigated by his relatives and by the Kereyit nobles,]* became suspicious of him and was doubtful as 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, Onk 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

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,²⁶ 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 kings²⁷ were to be selected among their daughters, so that children of the seed of Genghis might be propagated. And also that wives from among the daughters of the sons of kings should be given to their sons.²⁸ And this law remains among them to this day.

(Bar 'Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), p. 371; Bar 'Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge), I, pp. 352–353)

his luck was vigilant and his fortune kind, two youths in Onk 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 Onk 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 Onk 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

²⁶ Syriac 'nyr'ł'y', wrongly vocalized by Budge as "Awîrâthâyê" (p. 353).

²⁷ In Syriac, *bnay malkê* "children of the kings": the expression is probably a calque from the Mongolian *köbegüü*, a plural of "sons" used specifically for the rulers' children.

²⁸ See previous note.

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*.²⁹ *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 therefore; and that this order should be observed with their posterity also down to the ninth generation. To-day there are many people descended from these 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.] Finally all the latter's [= Onk Khan's] family and retainers, even his wives and daughters, fell into Genghis Khan's hand; and he himself was slain. [...] and all

²⁹ Or *darqan*, “free man, man freed from tax imposition” (Buell, *Historical Dictionary*; see Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia*, p. 133).

that came to tender submission, such as the Oirat and the Qonqurat, were admitted to the number of his commanders and followers and were regarded with the eye of indulgence and favour.

[*The chapter ends with an account of the suppression of the “abominable” ancestral habits described earlier.*]

(Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khān* (Qazwīnī), pp. 25–28; Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle), I, pp. 35-38)

Commentary

Bar ‘Ebroyo omits mention of Genghis Khan’s original name³⁰ and follows it up with an account of his falling out with Onk Khan, which is presented as a personal issue between them, without the involvement or instigation of the court and Kereyit 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 Bar ‘Ebroyo 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.³¹

³⁰ As also, understandably, of the Qur’anic quotation used by Juwaynī to stress the divine rule over human events.

³¹ As evidenced by Jullien, ‘La notice syriaque’, 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 Onk Khan / Yoḥannan with the “Prester John”. I am indebted to Florence Jullien for allowing me to use her forthcoming article.

Bar ‘Ebroyo alone specifies that Onk Khan was a Christian and went by the name of John (*Yūḥannan*).³² 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 Onk 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, Bar ‘Ebroyo 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*”,³³ while Bar ‘Ebroyo 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 Bar ‘Ebroyo 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. Bar ‘Ebroyo’s 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: Bar ‘Ebroyo implies that the men, after leaving their tents, remained hidden in ambush nearby, the confrontation occurring soon afterwards. Juwaynī 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”.³⁴

³² As suggested by Giorgio R. Cardona, the phonetic passage from (Chinese) *wang* + (Mongolian) *qan* should have produced a Mongolian spelling *oŋqan*, from which the interpretation of a personal name as “Yohannan” derived (Cardona, ‘Indice ragionato’, p. 700).

³³ Juwaynī, *History of Chingiz Khān* (Qazwīnī), p. 27.

³⁴ The Syriac transliteration *b’lšnyh* for the Arabo-Persian *b’lḡnḡh* contains one erroneous letter, since the *n* is rendered as a *y*. This may have occurred either through a misreading of the Persian (where only diacritical

The more significant feature, besides the fact that Onk Khan is qualified as a Christian, is found in the final passage. Juwaynī mentions the *submission* of various tribes, including the Oirats, saying that they obtained a favourable treatment, along with others. Bar ‘Ebroyo 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.³⁵ The informant about the marriage privilege is indeed Juwaynī: we may find the information in the thirty-third chapter of the *History*, devoted to Emir Arghun. The cue for the information is provided by the emir’s Oirat ancestry.³⁶ Thus Bar ‘Ebroyo introduces here a detail which in fact is found in a later section of Juwaynī’s work.³⁷

marks differentiate between the two letters) or within the manuscript tradition. Syriac *š* usually corresponds in Near Eastern Syriac scribal use to Arabo-Persian *j* and Turkic and Mongolian *č* and *ǰ*; in texts from Central Asia, Syriac *ṣ* is used.

³⁵ The existence of such intermarriage alliance (*anda-quda* in Mongolian) between Genghis Khan’s family and the ruling clan of other Mongol tribes was so well known in Asia. Even Marco Polo mentions it, but in connection to the Önggüt tribe: “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 (Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo* (Yule & Cordier), I, pp. 284–285). About the Önggüt tribe see the *Secret History of the Mongols* §§ 190, 202, 239; also Buell, *Historical Dictionary*, 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.

³⁶ “The Oirat are one of the best known of the Mongol tribes, and to that tribe belong most of the maternal uncles of the children and grandchildren of Genghis Khan, the reason being that at the time of his first rise to power the Oirat came forward to support and assist him and vied with one another in their alacrity to tender allegiance, and in recognition of their services an edict was issued concerning that tribe to the effect that the daughters of their emirs should be married to the descendants of Genghis Khan” (Juwaynī, *History of Činggič Khán* (Qazwīnī), p. 242; Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) II, pp. 505–506).

³⁷ In the corresponding passage of the *Arabic Chronicle*, there is no mention of this intermarriage alliance.

Bar ‘Ebroyo

“And it is right to know that this king John of the *kyt* 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 *Qārākātā*. 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 better than he; and his heart became right before God.” (Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), pp. 371–372; Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, p. 353)

Commentary

This notice is exclusive to Bar ‘Ebroyo, who – after stating that Onk 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, Bar ‘Ebroyo would seem to follow a well-known Biblical (or more precisely Deuteronomistic) pattern.³⁸ However, at a closer look, the explanation provided by Bar ‘Ebroyo in this instance appears ultimately based on Juwaynī’s account of the Naiman leader Küchlüg – purportedly adapted and distorted. Initially in the service of the *gür khan* of the Qarakitai,³⁹ Küchlüg rebelled against him and after various turns of fortune defeated him, made him prisoner and usurped his reign. In that circumstance, says Juwaynī,

“[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 [i.e. Buddhist] like herself and to abjure Christianity.” (Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khān* (Qazwīnī), p. 48; Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle), I, p. 64)

After his conversion Küchlüg, having conquered the regions of Kashghar and Khotan, forces the Muslims to convert to Buddhism or Christianity, and destroys mosques and places of prayer.

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.

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 Kereyit ruler, Onk Khan, who had escaped the defeat.⁴⁰ This is clearly an error, which results in an incongruity in Juwaynī; but precisely this alleged connection between Küchlüg and Onk Khan could have inspired Bar ‘Ebroyo to transfer Küchlüg’s marriage details to Onk Khan.⁴¹ Whatever the case, Bar ‘Ebroyo 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 Onk Khan’s disgrace in terms of retribution, or to mere sloppiness on the part of Bar ‘Ebroyo. As we shall see further, there is at least one other case where Bar ‘Ebroyo 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.

Bar ‘Ebroyo	Juwaynī
And at that time a certain man of the Tatars rose up, who in	At this time there arose a man of whom I have heard from

⁴⁰ Juwaynī, *History of Chingiz Khān* (Qazwīnī), p. 46.

⁴¹ F. Jullien suggests that Bar ‘Ebroyo 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*. 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, the 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, ‘La notice syriaque’, notes 27–34 and related text, with extensive bibliography). Since, as may be seen, Bar ‘Ebroyo 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 (Rašīd-al-Dīn, *Sbornik letopisej* (Smirnova), 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 Bar ‘Ebroyo.

the depth of winter, in all the frost and cold 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 given the whole earth to Temürjin (*tmwrşyn*) and his sons, and I have called him by the name of Genghis Khan’ – now his original name was Temürjin (*tmwrşyn*). The Tatars call this man Tubut Tangri (*twbwt tngry*). (Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), p. 372, Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, p. 353)

trustworthy Mongols that during the severe cold that prevails in those regions he used to walk naked through the desert and the mountains and then to return and say: “God has spoken with me and has 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, *History of Chingiz Khán* (Qazwīnī), pp. 28-29, Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) I, p. 39)

[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

Bar ‘Ebroyo’s typical approach to his source is here well represented: Juwaynī is mostly followed closely, albeit more concisely and with slightly different shades in terminology – synonyms 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. Bar ‘Ebroyo here mentions Genghis Khan’s original name before his

rise to power, cited by Juwaynī much earlier. Perhaps Bar ‘Ebroyo 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: *tmwrjyn*, which corresponds with that used by Juwaynī, Temürjin.⁴² Both forms, the classical Mongolian *temürjin* “smith” (from *temür* “iron”) and the more ancient *temüjin*, which recurs in the *Secret History* and in the Chinese chronicle if the Mongol (Yuan) dynasty, the *Yuan shi*, are plausible.⁴³ Since the latter form is the most ancient, Boyle prefers to reject the reading *tmrjyn* proposed by Qazwīnī and to 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 Bar ‘Ebroyo.

The passage contains one more instance where Bar ‘Ebroyo’s text may help in establishing the original form of a personal name in the Persian text. As mentioned, Juwaynī’s Bot Tengri (*bt tngry*) becomes *twbnt tngry* (Tubut Tengri) in Bar ‘Ebroyo. The Mongol name is Teb-tengгри: this is the nickname of the shaman Kōkōchū, and approximately means “the very celestial”, “the very divine”⁴⁴ – or in other words, someone with divine powers, considering that

⁴² Several variants are attested in the Persian manuscript tradition: for the first occurrence (Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khān* (Qazwīnī), p. 26) the reading *tmrjyn* (ms. A) is at variance with MSS B and J: *tmwryjn*, H: *tmjyn* and W: *tmrjn*. For the second (the passage under scrutiny) (Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khān* (Qazwīnī), 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. Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khān* (Qazwīnī), pp. LXVI–LXXIX). Both translations consulted (English and Italian) actually suggest alternative readings as more probable: accordingly, the form chosen by the English translator, Boyle, and the Italian one, Scarcia, is Temüjin. Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) I, pp. 35, 39; Juwaynī, *Gengis Khan* (Scarcia), pp. 56, 59.

⁴³ Roux, *La religione dei Turchi*, p. 94; Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) I, p. 35.

⁴⁴ Roux, *La religione dei Turchi*, pp. 85–87; Buell, *Historical Dictionary*, p. 264: “something like ‘high Heaven’”.

Tengri is, for the Turco-Mongol peoples, the Sky as a deity.⁴⁵ 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 in the positioning of diacritical marks. Consequently, the misreading is easily explained as a *lectio facillior*: 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. Bar ‘Ebroyo’s 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 Bar ‘Ebroyo’s initiative, but in his apparatus Qazwīnī signals, among the attested variants, the reading *tbt tngry*, found in two manuscripts.⁴⁶ It is consequently far more probable for the

⁴⁵ On Teb-tenggri and his role in Genghis Khan’s rise to power, see the essays cited in note 17.

⁴⁶ Juwaynī, *History of Chingiz Khān* (Qazwīnī), p. 28. These are MSS H and W. MS A reads *tbt tngry* with an undotted *num*: 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 *tngry*; MS D (= Paris, BN, Ancien Fonds Persan 69 [dated 16 August, 1531]) once more has *tbt tngry*, 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 Rašid al-Dīn’s *Collection of Chronicles*, that “in Persian language documents [the name is] invariably *but-tangr*” (Rašid-al-Dīn, *Sbornik letopisej* (Smirnova), 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 tngri* to be Juwaynī’s original rendering, later variously amended based on the Mongol either by omitting *bot* (MS B), by reading *tbt* (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 Bar ‘Ebroyo testifies that the reading was already current by the 70s or 80s of the 13th. With specific reference to Bar ‘Ebroyo’s account, F. Jullien noted – here as elsewhere (Jullien, ‘La notice syriaque’ [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, Bar ‘Ebroyo did not weave an original narrative based on the

conflated reading to have originated with the Persian manuscript consulted by Bar 'Ebroyo. The mss. evidence regarding the 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 Bar 'Ebroyo.

The following chapter is devoted by Juwaynī, and accordingly by Bar 'Ebroyo, to the sons of Genghis Khan. Once more, Bar

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 any 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 phenomenological similarities" (Catastini, *Profeti e tradizione*, 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, 'Taking an Oath' esp. pp. 302–303; cf. also Roux, *Histoire de l'empire mongol*, 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, *La religione dei Turchi*, p. 85) which, along with the theme of resistance to low temperatures, is documented even in Tibetan culture, in the practice of *gtum-mo*, psychophysical warmth (Stein, *La civiltà tibetana*). 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 of "foreign" expressive modes, depending on the source and the audience of the account.

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

The space available does not allow a detailed discussion of Bar ‘Ebroyo’s 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. The regulations, which are described by Juwaynī at length, with recourse to technical Mongolian terminology, as a sign of the high and noble civilization introduced by Genghis Khan among the Mongols, are reduced by Bar ‘Ebroyo to nine laconic points or articles. Nonetheless, Juwaynī is clearly Bar ‘Ebroyo’s only source.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ By way of example, Bar ‘Ebroyo’s second article of Genghis Khan’s laws 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 Bar ‘Ebroyo; the following phrase, translated in Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) but absent in MS Vat. Syr. 166, was added by a later scribe] (Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek) p. 373, Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, p. 354). Bar ‘Ebroyo clearly had an interest in this aspect. Nonetheless, Juwaynī’s text – resumed and, more importantly, modified by Bar ‘Ebroyo – 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 respected 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

A particularly interesting comparison is provided by the chapter which in Bar 'Ebroyo immediately follows the one on regulations, titled "How the Mongols cleaved to the worship of images".

Bar 'Ebroyo

"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 Uighur Turks, and they found that there were among them certain men who were sorcerers and who were called *qams* (مامانان). We have 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 the Chinese, that is to say, the *katāyē*, had images and priests who were lords of wisdom, he sent ambassadors to them, and asked them for priests,

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" (Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khān* (Qazwīnī), pp. 18–19, Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) I, p. 26).

and promised them to hold them in honour. And when the priests came, Genghis Khan ordered them to make a debate on religion and an inquiry into it with the *qams*. And when the priests spoke 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 knowledge. 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 own 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 judges 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 against 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 says, ‘On your account’, they will not
 taste it.” (Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), p.
 374, Bar ‘Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, pp. 355-
 356)

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 Bar ‘Ebroyo’s passage describes the religion of the Uighurs, not the Mongols. It does, nonetheless, mention the Mongols, and this, coupled with his direct knowledge of Mongol beliefs, probably appeared sufficient to Bar ‘Ebroyo, who applies the description to the latter.

Juwaynī

“The reason for the idolatry [i.e. Buddhism] of the Uighur 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*,⁴⁸ 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-hole⁴⁹ and hold converse with them. And it is possible 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 unnatural 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

⁴⁸ “In Arabic ‘the craving of the pathic’”, according to Boyle (Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) I, p. 59 n. 24); “bramosia omosessuale”, according to Scarcia (Juwaynī, *Gengis Khan* (Scarcia), p. 78).

⁴⁹ 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.

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 peasant, 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 Uighur adopted idolatry as their religion, and most of the other tribes followed their example. And there are none more bigoted than the idolaters of the East, and none more hostile to Islam. As for Buqu Khan..." (Juwaynī, *History of*

Chingiz Khán (Qazwīnī), pp. 43-45; Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) I, pp. 59-60.)⁵⁰

Commentary

While Juwaynī deals with the Uighurs' 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 Bar 'Ebroyo to refer the whole account to the Mongols, ascribing the summoning of Chinese "priests" not to the Uighur sovereign Buqa but to Genghis Khan himself. It is worth noting that, just as Bar 'Ebroyo had previously avoided the use of the Mongol term *tarkhan*, here he refrains from the use of the technical

⁵⁰ That Bar 'Ebroyo applied (a portion of) Juwaynī's the chapter on the Uighurs 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 Bar 'Ebroyo, 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*, Bar 'Ebroyo writes: "Now the story of the dog which the blessed old man [i.e. Michael the Great] said led them when they went 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" (Bar 'Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), p. 203; Bar 'Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) 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 Uighurs and just a few lines after the passage dealing with their religion. As certainly Bar 'Ebroyo 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 Bar 'Ebroyo became aware of the presence of the story of the dog in Juwaynī's narrative some time after completion of the chapter about the Saljuks, and forgot to correct his previous statement.

term *toyin*, which refers to Buddhist monks. On the other hand, he retains the word *qam*, probably as the only term suitable for describing a religious experience that was alien to his cultural milieu. In describing the *qams*' activities, Bar 'Ebroyo 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, evidence of direct experience on the part of Bar 'Ebroyo 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. Bar 'Ebroyo complements the borrowings from Juwaynī by some additional remarks. Among these is the mention of "Gregory the Theologian"⁵¹ 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 purposely killed to be offered to them. These features would seem to derive from a direct knowledge of Buddhist monks, whom Bar 'Ebroyo 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 Bar 'Ebroyo's description, one gains the impression that meat was actually quite commonly eaten.⁵²

⁵¹ Because of his epithet, this should be Gregory of Nazianzus, but we are unable to specify further the work where he purportedly deals with these subjects.

⁵² See now Bertozzi, 'Precisazioni'. 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 abinentie; multum orant et multum ieiunant. Religiosi eorum et episcopi et archiepiscopi et patriarche in perpetuum non comedunt carnes nec condimenta carnum

Returning now to the paragraph which in Bar ‘Ebroyo 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 Bar ‘Ebroyo is his liberal recourse 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.⁵³

3. CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this partial 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 Bar ‘Ebroyo 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

nec etiam pro infirmitate mortali. [...] In quadragesima tam Nestorini quam Iacobini omnes tam religiosi quam seculares nullo modo comederent pisces nec biberent unum” (Riccoldo di Monte Croce, *Pérégrination* (Kappler), pp. 148–150).

⁵³Cf. 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” (Khāndamīr, *Habibu’s-Siyar* (Thackston), 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).

the two authors, it must be acknowledged that Bar 'Ebroyo 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 aims as well as language: on the one hand we have a history having with literary pretensions and aiming explicitly at a celebration of Genghis Khan; on the other, a "small" annalistic treatise.

Bar 'Ebroyo's excerpts preserve little of Juwaynī's flowery language, frequently embellished (when not overburdened) by images and poetic quotations.⁵⁴ On occasion, the source is indeed trivialised, significantly reducing the impact of the original argumentation and anecdotes.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ 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, Onk 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..." (Anonymous, *Storia di Mar Yabballaba* (Borbone), 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..." (Juwaynī, *History of Chingiz Khan* (Qazwīnī), p. 145; Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) I, p. 184).

⁵⁵ 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 suhtand wa koštand wa burdand wa raftand*). Men of understanding who heard this description were all agreed that in the Persian language there could not be nothing anything 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" (Juwaynī, *History of Chingiz Khan* (Qazwīnī), p. 84; Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) I, p. 107). In Bar 'Ebroyo's 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!" (Bar 'Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), p. 397; cf. Bar 'Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, p. 376. Budge's

Bar 'Ebroyo's reading of Juwaynī appears careful but, as shown by the episode of the dog leading the 'Turks,⁵⁶ occasionally hasty, particularly in the case of those chapters that were less relevant from his point of view.

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

Lying somewhere between translation and paraphrase, Bar 'Ebroyo's quotations nonetheless remain essentially true to the Persian original, with some logical and literary nuances that bear witness to an excellent understanding.⁵⁷

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.⁵⁸ Another consequence is the temporal contractions, by which complex sequences of occurrences are reduced to instant events. This is the case, for instance, with the battle following Onk Khan's ambush; a further example is provided by the account of the siege of the Otrar citadel.⁵⁹

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 Bar 'Ebroyo's text (besides, the English translation provided by Bar 'Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, p. 376, ignores the verb "to kill" and proposes unnecessary integrations interpretations which harmonise the answer with previously narrated events). Regarding the divergence toward the end, perhaps Bar 'Ebroyo 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.

⁵⁶ See note 50.

⁵⁷ An example is the account of Genghis Khan's flight from the encampment before the ambush plotted by Onk Khan.

⁵⁸ Consider for example the falling out of Genghis Khan and the Kereyit court, which is reduced to a dispute between two individuals.

⁵⁹ Bar 'Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), p. 388: in his account of the defenders who took shelter in the citadel, Bar 'Ebroyo fails to mention that the battle "went on for a whole month" (Juwaynī, *History of Chingīz Khān* (Qazwīnī), p. 65; Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) I, p. 85); one

Even when Bar 'Ebroyo modifies the information provided by Juwaynī, by varying them or adding to them, he does 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,⁶⁰ 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 Bar 'Ebroyo's religion such as the account of Onk Khan's apostasy. The same holds true for several omissions: Qur'anic quotations are expunged, and so are certain characteristically Islamic expressions.⁶¹

Bar 'Ebroyo appears to have little interest in exoticism: whenever possible, he readily omits many of the Mongol and foreign terms that recur in Juwaynī.⁶²

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 Onk Khan's threat most probably results 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.⁶³

consequently gains the mistaken impression that the events took place in a very short period of time.

⁶⁰ A case in point is the information on the territories bordering on the Mongol homeland.

⁶¹ For example, while Juwaynī has "They [i.e. the Mongols] caused him and all his companions to attain the degree of martyrdom" (Juwaynī, *History of Chingiz Khan* (Qazwīnī), p. 65; Juwaynī, *World Conqueror* (Boyle) I, p. 84; Juwaynī, *Gengis Khan* (Scarcia), p. 106), Bar 'Ebroyo only has "And they commanded, and he and all those who were with him were killed" (Bar 'Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), p. 388; Bar 'Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, p. 368).

⁶² However, sometimes they occur in his Arabic Chronicle (*Muhtaşar ta'rih al-duval* – also depending on Juwaynī's work, s. Aigle, 'L'œuvre historiographique'), where in the narrative of Genghis Khan's rise to power we find the title *tarkhan* which was omitted in the Syriac *Chronography* (Bar 'Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek)).

⁶³ Bar 'Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Çiçek), p. 369, Bar 'Ebroyo, *Chronography* (Budge) I, p. 376: only "the famous captains Sewinj Khan e Keshli Khan", rather than "Kök Khan and other officers such as Khamid Bur, Sewinch

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

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