IN DEFENSE OF RAŠIĐ-OD-DIN AND HIS LETTERS

RÉSUMÉ

Une récente remise en cause de l'authenticité des Lettres Rašidiennes par A.H. Morton vient de susciter un vif intérêt chez les spécialistes de l'époque mongole. Cependant, un regard plus attentif aux problèmes soulevés par Morton révèle que les lettres sont conformes à la pratique des scribes de l'époque, et sont en accord avec les événements historiques. Le but de cet article est de rendre aux Lettres Rašidiennes la place qu'elles méritent parmi les sources les plus riches en information de l'époque mongole.

Mots clés : Rašid-od-Din ; Mongols ; Lettres Rašidiennes ; Solṭān 'Alā'-od-din de Dehli ; étude des textes ; faux.

SUMMARY

A recent questioning by A.H. Morton of the authenticity of the Rašidi Letters has attracted much support from the specialists of Mongol studies. And yet, a closer look at the issues seen as proof of forgery by Morton shows conformity with scribal practices of the day and concordance with historical events. The purpose of this essay is to reinstate the authenticity of the Letters and to show their importance as one of the most informative sources of the Mongol period.

Keywords : Rašid-od-Din; Mongols; Rašidi Letters; Solṭān ‘Alā’-od-din of Dehli; textual studies; forgeries.

INTRODUCTION

In his attack on Avicenna (981-1037), Ḡazzāli (1058-1111) wrote a refutation of Aristotelian Philosophy entitled Tahāfot-ol-falāsefa (Refuting the Philosophers) which, in turn, became the subject of a refutation by Averroes (1126-98), in a work entitled, Tahāfot-ot-tahāfot (The Refutation of the Refutal). Even though there was never to be a Tahāfot-ot-tahāfot-ot-tahāfot, the controversy didn’t stop there but continued endlessly. One
fears that, in the matter of the *Rašidi Letters*, the controversy about the authenticity of the work would be never ending as well, for each rebuttal seems to generate a new refutation. The latest condemnation of the Letters is one written by A.H. Morton,¹ which — long before its apparition in printed form — was heralded by David Morgan as the “conclusive evidence” that they were a fabrication of the Teymurid era.²

In a more recent study, Thomas Allsen joins the chorus and qualifies Morton’s arguments as “persuasive,” but marvels nevertheless at the precise information contained in one of the letters on the uncommon subject of sweet-lemons (*limu-šīrin*) of Chinese origin, and cultivation in the little known village of Ba’qubā situated “just to the north of Bağdād,” and in Ḫella.³ In a second remark, he finds corroborating evidence in between the claim contained in one of the letters about Chinese and foreign physicians teaching local “interns” at the Rab‘-e Rašidi hospital, and Rašid-od-din’s extensive “exposure to East Asia medicine.”⁴

The *Rašidi Letters* have been regularly relied upon for corroborating or comparative evidence in various studies of the period.⁵ While Morton may have judged them as irrelevant or inconsequential to his arguments, there is one — a very crucial one — that he refers to on page 195 of his article, the *Āşār-oš vozarā* of ‘Aqili, which he obviously considers to be of value. Written between 1470 and 1486,⁶ the *Āşār-oš vozarā* incorporates the complete text of four of the *Rašidi Letters*. In the section pertaining to these letters, its editor Moḥaddes-e Ormavi presents, in hefty footnotes, a detailed stylistic comparison between these four letters and the *al-Mo’jam fi tārikh-e moluk-el-’ajam* of Fażlollāh-e Monši-ye Qazvini, a work composed prior to 1334 (see discussion further below).⁷ Because of strong stylistic similarities, Moḥaddes argues that of the two authors, i.e., Rašid and Qazvini, one must have copied the other, and concludes that, since Rašid was a “busy vizier and had no time for such literary works” and so powerful that Qazvini should have been scared to “steal” from him, it must have been Rašid copying Qazvini!⁸ On the other hand, the editor of the most

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² Morgan 1997, p. 182. Jackson also refers to Morton’s forthcoming article, but favors the conclusion of Ruben Levy’s 1946 publication that the Letters were a forgery “emanating from 15th century India,” Jackson 1999, p. 154.
⁵ See for instance Rajabzadeh 2535/1876, in which the Letters are referred to on almost every other page, and Soudavar 1996-a, pp. 136, 151-152.
recent edition of the *Rašidi Letters*, Dânešpažuh, whose introduction Morton highly praises, firmly states the opposite: that Qazvini’s work was based on these letters and not vice versa. No matter which version Morton accepts, it was incumbent upon him to address this issue; for, one way or the other, it implied a composition date of no later than 1334 and a fatal negation of his Teymurid fabrication thesis.

The lack of recognition for the relevance of past studies notwithstanding, Morton’s article suffers — as I shall demonstrate — from an incomprehension of the motives of Persian scribes and history writers, wrong assumptions, and neglect of crucial evidence. Having recently warned researchers about the pitfalls of forgeries and semi-fakes, I now find myself in the awkward position of doing the opposite: defending the authenticity of a work against allegations of forgeries. The objective though, remains the same: that research should not be hampered by unwarranted allelagnations.

To gauge the negative impact of this recent concerted effort to discredit the *Rašidi Letters* on Mongol studies, one needs to look no further than the volume in which Morton’s article appears. For there, on an ending footnote, Rudi Paul Lindner remarks:

> The letters attributed to Rašid al-din discuss Mongol estates west of Ankara. One might make something of this, although in light of Mr. A.H. Morton’s paper in this volume it seems wiser to leave this particular “evidence” aside.

By the same token, the wholesale discarding of the fifty-four Rašidi letters as forgeries is, in effect, equivalent to a massive suppression of “evidence” with important consequences for Mongol studies.

In what follows, I shall not only try to negate Morton’s arguments but also show the historical relevance of the very letters that Morton saw as fictitious.

**FORGERY AND MOTIVE**

As in most criminal cases, proof of forgery hinges on establishing a valid motive. Absent the confession of the forger, the evidence is circumstantial in nature and can usually be interpreted both ways, i.e., both pro and con. The decisive factor for tilting the argument one way or the other, is the motive. Without a plausible motive, forgery does not make sense.

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9 Morton 1999, p. 159.
10 *Savâneh-ol-ajkâr-e Rašidi* 1979, p. (36).
Morton, of course, recognizes this and since he is unable to establish a material gain for any individual, he posits that “the only beneficiary is the reputation” of Rašid, and that the culprit would have been one of his descendants, although he cannot be sure that any of them survived the fourteenth century. He then tries to ease out of this dilemma by recasting the alleged forgery into a category that he qualifies as “playful” and “designed to bamboozle harmlessly, rather than to cheat.”\textsuperscript{13} This remark comes in the wake of a previously imagined scenario in which he explains that the alleged forger was so impressed with Teymur’s campaign in Anatolia that — somehow unconsciously — he modelled the events mentioned in the letters after it. And he did so without providing any concrete link to the Teymuroids, by which he could have solicited a reward for praising their dynasty.

Morton wants us to believe that his presumed Teymurid forger-scribe had extensive knowledge about the Il-Khânid era, and was in a position to be fully informed about Teymur’s campaign — therefore a Teymurid bureaucrat of high-rank — and yet, he had spent innumerable hours writing fifty four radically different letters, plus an introduction, each in an elaborate mix of prose and verse, to the glory of Rašid and the named compiler of the letters, Šams-od-din Moḥammad-e Abarquhi, \textit{just for the fun of it} and without any benefit whatsoever for himself. Such a possibility simply defies common sense.

More disturbing is the fact that Morton totally ignores Abarquhi’s stated goal and targeted audience for the compilation of these letters: that the compendium “was to be for the novice-scribe (\textit{mota‘allemān}) and the speakers (\textit{motakallemān}), a refined companion in travel and a witty friend at home.”\textsuperscript{14} Abarquhi further explains that each letter that had been copied in his presence was worthy of becoming a top copy model (\textit{sar-daftar}) for the speakers and the scribes (\textit{motarasselān}).\textsuperscript{15} It is thus self-evident that the \textit{Rašidi Letters} were compiled in the tradition of manuals for scribes such as the \textit{at-Tavassol ela-t-tarassol} (Manual for correspondence) comprising the correspondences of Bahā‘-od-din-e Bağdādi, the vizier of the Khārazmšāh ‘Alā‘-od-din Takeš (1172-1200),\textsuperscript{16} or the more contemporary \textit{Dastur-ol-kāteb} (Manual for scribes) of Moḥammad b. Hendušāh-e

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{13}] Morton 1999, p. 196
\item[\textsuperscript{14}] \textit{Savāneh-ol-afkār} 1979, p. 4.
\item[\textsuperscript{15}] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 3. Abarquhi also uses the Arabic expression \textit{mīn dālik} (as equivalent to \textit{sar-daftar}) which was a scribal expression referring to the heading of copy models (personal communication by Iraj Afsār).
\item[\textsuperscript{16}] Bağdādi, \textit{at-Tavassol ela-t-tarassol} 1936.
\end{itemize}
Nakhjavānī, dated 761/1360.\(^\text{17}\) Like templates and computer form-letters, the manuals provided the scribe with a source for a “cut and paste” operation in every given situation, a sample of which is provided here below.\(^\text{18}\)

As a tool of trade, each of these manuals was cherished by scribes and passed on from one generation to the other. In this chain of transmission, and in the process of recopying, scribes could deliberately alter some parts, extract excerpts as isolated modules, or recombine the modules into a new composition.\(^\text{19}\) More often than not, the name of the recipient of a letter was even replaced by a simple *folān* (i.e., so and so). In other words, the historical information contained in the letter was plainly of secondary value and often modified.

In the case of the correspondence of important personalities such as Bahā’-od-din-e Bagdādī or Rašīd though, chances are that, out of respect for the completeness of the document and the volume as a whole, scribes avoided major alterations. One cannot exclude, however, modifications due to the scribe’s in comprehen sion of events that occurred long before his time. In any event, such alterations cannot be qualified as forgery, for they were simple attempts to modify a tool to the liking of its user.

Abarquhi states that he compiled these letters in view of offering them to Rašīd’s son, Khājah Gīyās-od-din Moḥammad (d. 1336). His motive is quite clear: by compiling the letters into a manual for scribes, he would perpetuate Rašīd’s style, and fame, for many generations to come, and would place himself in a position to be rewarded by Gīyās-od-din Moḥammad. In addition, Abarquhi’s own name would be immortalized by association with that of Rašīd.

In this perspective, the added headings by Abarquhi, may exaggerate the rank of Rašīd’s sons or the importance of the sender of a letter, in order to enhance the prestige of Rašīd and his family.\(^\text{20}\) One must also expect Rašīd to exaggerate his and his family members’ political role and power in his letters, or to try to strengthen his position vis-à-vis his rivals. These forms of exaggerations or “truth” alterations are inherent to the type of work the letters purport to represent, and are not proof of forgery.

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\(^{17}\) The text was subsequently revised by its author in 767/1366, Moḥammad b. Ḥendušāh-e Nakhjavānī, *Dastur-ol-kāteb* 1964, vol. I, p. 23.

\(^{18}\) See note 157 *infra*.

\(^{19}\) Such may be the case for instance for some of the numerous short but anonymous entries in the *Dastur-ol-kāteb*, and in the *al-Mokhtārāt men ar-rasā‘el* (ed. 13788.).

\(^{20}\) One should also expect that letters containing references to issues no longer politically acceptable under the new regime of Abu-Sa‘īd, were wholly or partially censured by Abarquhi or Khājah Gīyās-od-din Moḥammad. But this I suspect, did not amount to any significant alteration, for the astute politician that Rašīd was, he would not commit to writing an opinion that could be criticized afterwards.
RAŠIDIAN PROPAGANDA AND IL-KHÂNID DOMINIONS

A cornerstone of Morton’s claim of forgery is the Rašidi Letters’ pretence of Il-Khânid control over domains that were never conquered by the Mongols, or if conquered, were lost again shortly after.

As a high level political administrator, Rašid would naturally try to emphasize the legitimacy of his king, enhance his prestige, extol his feats, praise his deeds, exaggerate his dominion and glorify him in every possible way. In sum, political propaganda was a prime motive for Rašid, and therefore an underlying theme for all of his correspondences. In the Jâme’-ot-tavârikh, Rašid did not refrain from fabricating stories in order to enhance the legitimacy of Uljâytu and polish the image of the Mongol dynasty. In the same vein, he would not hesitate in his Letters, to exaggerate the extent of Il-Khânid domains and follow a line of propaganda dictated by Mongol ideology and factional rivalry.

The core of this propaganda rested on the Mongol belief that they had a mandate from the Eternal Heaven to conquer the world. Thus, Mongol conquests are systematically termed as “deliverance” (estekhlâs) in Rašid’s Jâme’-ot-tavârikh, in the same way that the Chinese annals referred to visiting embassies as “tribute bearers.” In both cases, the truth is distorted to suit an ideology of world dominion; but neither the Jâme’-ot-tavârikh, nor the Chinese annals can be deemed forgeries.

Within this global Mongol ideology, the descendants of Hulâgu (r. 1256-65) had to stake a claim on a territory that was never theirs. Indeed, as defined by the celebrated vizier and astronomer, Naṣîr-od-din-e Tusi (1201-1274), Hulâgu was entrusted by his brother to conquer the lands across the Oxus, from “Hendustân to the setting sun.” It was a land to be conquered under the leadership of Hulâgu with the participation of main branches of the Changizid dynasty, and not an assigned fiefdom. But in the succession rift that split the Mongols, following the death of Mungkâ Qâân (r. 1251-59), and in reward for his allegiance to the new qâân, i.e., Qubilây (r. 1260-94), Hulâgu was able to transform his mandated territories into a kingdom. Hulâgu’s westward advance was, of course, halted by the Mamluks at the battle of ‘Ayn-e Jâlut in 1260; and

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21 In one case, Rašid invented a story to whitewash the fact that Changiz’ wife, Borte Fujin, got pregnant while kidnapped by the Merkits, and that Jochi was a bastard; in another, Rašid falsely claimed that Gâzân had appointed Uljâytu as his successor five years before his death; see for instance Soudavar 1996-a, pp. 129-130, 175.

22 For a listing of references on this Mongol ideology see Amital-Preiss 1999, p. 62.

23 Boyle 1977, p. 246. Another sympathetic view about Hulâgu’s appointment is given in Grigor of Akânc’s History of the Nation of the Archers (The Mongols) (ed. 1949, p. 69), where in response to the concerns of seven Mongol commanders Mungkâ orders: “go and install my brother Khân of the Land, whosoever does not submit to him, impose him the yasaq by our command.”
since the Iranian lands constituted the bulk of the territories that he had managed to conquer, the old concept of Irānšahr or Irānzamin (Iranian Domains), traditionally proclaimed as the lands from the Oxus to the Nile, was gradually adopted for the definition of the Il-Khânid domain.24

In the Sasanid era, the memory of the Achaemenid occupation of Egypt had helped to formulate the concept of Iranshahr as territories stretching to the Nile. But the fact is that, except for a brief period (from 619-28), the Sasanians never occupied Egypt. And yet, that did not prevent them to claim Egypt as part of Iranshahr. The use of the expression “from the Oxus to the Nile” was thus a form of propaganda well rooted in Persian history. Although Morton reluctantly concedes that the Letters use of the “Oxus to the Nile” formula is “all found here or there in other Il-Khân sources,” he treats the fact that four of the Letters extend this definition to include Indian territories as an oddity25 He obviously makes abstraction of the fact that, according to Naṣīr-od-din-e Ṭūsī, “Hendustān” (India) was part of Hulāgu’s original mandate. But more importantly, with the adoption of the Islamic faith by Ėzān and the title of Pādsâh-e Eslâm (i.e., Emperor of Islam) that Rašid bestowed upon him, the Iranzamin formula had to be extended to include important Muslim kingdoms. Thus, the inclusion of Anatolia, India and Egypt — which were all governed by Muslim rulers — was the direct consequence of Ėzān being proclaimed Pādsâh-e Eslâm, and not a Teymurid forgery scheme.

In this perspective, the Mamluks, who had revived the ‘Abbasid Caliphate and posed as the champions of “legitimate” Islam, were the main spoilers of the Il-Khânid claim to Islamic leadership. Thus, the “Oxus to the Nile” formula acquired a new ring since it implicitly wiped out the Mamluks. Today, Israeli maps show the Golan Heights as part of Israel, and the Syrian maps as part of Syria. Depending on one’s point of view, one or the other of the maps might be seen as wrong. Neither of them however, can be labelled as forgery for they reflect the official political viewpoint of their respective governments. Similarly, the Letters’ claims of Il-Khânid control over Syrian territories that they never captured or only briefly occupied, simply follow the “Oxus to the Nile” line of propaganda against the Mamluks. They do not imply forgery.

In the same vein, some of the Il-Khânid propaganda was aimed at the Bāuids of the Golden Horde and the Chağātāyids of Transoxiana, who considered the Hulāguids as usurpers, and sought to recapture the Il-Khânid territories that they deemed as their hereditary domain, or ulus.26

24 Shahrestānihā i Erānshahr 2002, pp. 4-5.
26 Šabānkâre’i, Majma’-ol-ansâb 1363h./1984, p. 290.
Thus, the references to territorial control of domains in present-day Afghanistan and India were part of the propaganda against the Chaqáligaids and those of Armenia and the Caucasus against the Bátuids.

The cleverest propagandistic formula that Rašíd used in his Letters however, is one that has eluded Morton. In Letter 37, Rašíd qualified the domains of the Muslim rulers of Syria, Yemen and India as soyrğâls, i.e., royal grants of territory! It’s a formula that reflects political reality by acknowledging the independence of these rulers, but at the same time pretends that as recipients of soyrğâls, they fall under Il-Khanid suzerainty.

As a whole, the territorial claims of the Letters are very consistent with the Il-Khanid political ideology of the time and an administrator’s aim to project Il-Khanid hegemony over the widest possible area while portraying rivals and enemies as submissive vassals.

Finally, the problem of fictitious governorship that Morton raises in his article comes in contradiction to his supposed forgery motive (i.e., that the work was beneficial to the reputation of Rašid-od-din’s descendants). Such claim does not enhance the prestige of the Rašidi family but diminishes it. A forger would have been much safer to present Rašid’s sons as governors of provinces that were under secure Il-Khanid control, rather than contested areas.

ODDITIES AND OMISSIONS

Morton often treats odd and otherwise “unconfirmed” information provided by the Letters as proof of forgery. But, as evidenced by a study of the Safavid Šáh Táhmasb’s (r. 1524-76) interactions with his Mughal counterpart, the Emperor Homáyun (r. 1530-40, and 1555-56), in Persian sources, oddities are usually indicative of suppressed information and omissions are often more telling than lengthy statements.27

In one instance of that study, I had surmised that a lengthy entry on an insignificant event — in an otherwise concise narration of events — in the Tarikh-e jahân-ārâ of Qâzî Aḥmad-e Ġaffârî, namely the accidental death of Táhmasb’s standard-bearer Abol-Qâsem Khulafâ-ye Qâjâr during a hunt organized for Homâyun, was perhaps hinting at a stray shot from Táhmasb, whose failing eyesight had by then turned into a major handicap. Subsequent to the publication of that study, I discovered that a Mughal source, the Târikh-e alfî of Qâzî Aḥmad-e Tatavi, actually explained that Abol-Qâsem was shot by Táhmasb’s brother, Bahrâm Mirzâ, who wished to settle an old score.28

27 Soudavar 1999-b, pp. 50-52.
At the very least, this new information confirmed that the Safavid sources were not revealing the whole story. The question then was whether the information provided by Tatavi, half a century after the event, was correct or simply a cover-up fed by the Safavids to the Mughals? If Bahrām Mirzā had truly shot the standard-bearer, one can hardly find a valid reason for the contemporary historian Qāzī Aḥmad-e Ḡaffārī to suppress such crucial information and end up with an incongruent report on the death of a second rank standard-bearer, at par with kingly events. As for later Safavid historians who otherwise relied systematically on the Tārikh-e jahān-ārā, one would be at a loss to explain why they chose to suppress this whole episode.

Be that as it may, the preceding example shows how oddities and suppressed information can go hand in hand, and how they should be used as indicators of more complex events rather than proof of forgery. It also underlines the difficulty in deciphering Persian chronicles where the boundaries of truth, half-truth and falsification are never well delimited.

With the above generalities in mind, I shall now try to analyze some of the specific problems cited by Morton.

LETTER 53

In Letter 53, Rašīd, who is in Qandahar, relates to his son Ebrāhīm, his narrow escape from a treacherous trap, and how his other son Jalāl-od-din, who, accompanied by the mighty Anatolian army (lašgar-e ʿāzim-e rum), was attacking Kābol and Żābol, then joined Mongol commanders (omāra-ye mōgol) in pursuit of the enemy, stormed the fort of Lahore, and spear-headed the attack into Sind as far as the Indus. When the news of the successful pursuit reached the il-khān, he commended Jalāl for his bravery. Rašīd ends his letter with a list of arms and armors to be sent out from the Širāz arsenal.²⁹

To discredit this Letter, Morton first makes an assumption concerning the unnamed il-khān therein: by analogy with Letter 35 “in which Ġāzān is represented as intending an attack on India, it might be assumed that he is meant.”³⁰ Then observes that: “Ġāzān never went on campaign in the region of southern Afghanistan, and never attacked the Punjab and Sind. Nor did Uljāyту.” And since he believes that sources invariably reported military operations undertaken on such scale, he concludes that Letter 53 is fictitious.³¹

²⁹ Savāneh-ol-afkār 1979, pp. 295-96.
Unfortunately, wrong assumptions lead to wrong results. Morton wrongly assumes that the stated events occurred under Ġāzān, wrongly asserts that Uljāytu troops never went on campaign eastward, wrongly assumes a full reporting of campaign by the sources in all circumstances, and thus, reaches the wrong conclusion. Furthermore, his wrong analysis and conclusion for this letter becomes the basis of another unwarranted assertion later on: “Noticeable in the Letters is the complete absence of reference to relations with the Chağatāiyid Khânate.” 32 As a matter of fact, Letter 53 very much pertains to Uljāytu’s interaction with the Chağatāiyids, and to fully grasp its content and context, I will begin with a short recapitulation of the Chağatāiyid activity in the eastern borders of Il-Khânid territories.

Squeezed in between the Il-Khânids and the Yuan, the southward forays of the Chağatāiyids were generally confined to a corridor that stretched from the Oxus to the Sind and Punjab. 33 In this corridor also moved a formidable band of Mongols, the Neguderis that, at times, accepted the hegemony of the Chağatāiyids, but mostly acted independently. 34 They constantly harassed eastern Il-Khânid provinces and, in one instance, after devastating the province of Sistān and sacking Širāz, advanced all the way to Šuštar when Ġāzān’s main forces were engaged in the Syrian campaign. 35

In 1303 the Chağatāiyids and the Ogedāiyids recognized the suzerainty of the Yuan emperor, Teymur Qāān (r. 1294-1307), and the de facto rulership of the Il-Khânids over the Iranian territories. As a legitimated Mongol khān, Uljāytu could now intervene in the fraternal disputes of neighbouring Mongol hordes. Uljāytu first welcomed the Ogedāiyid Sarbān in 1306, who was being chased by his Chağatāiyid cousins, and then accepted the pleas of the Neguderi Teymur son of Abāchi, and his brother, Lakmir, to recover their grazing grounds from another Neguderi chieftain, Dāūd Khājah. 36 In 1312, Uljāytu’s forces, together with the Neguderis, routed Dāūd Khājah’s forces and sacked his headquarters of Tekinābād near Qandā-

32 Ibid., p. 195.
33 During Abāq’s reign, the Chağatāiyid Borāq would claim that the pastures of Bādgays down to Gāznayn and the waters of Sind, were the grazing grounds of my forefathers;’ Rašid-od-dīn, Jāme’-ot-tavārikh 1957, vol. III, p. 113.
34 For a synopsis of the Chağatāiyid raids into Indian territories see Jackson 1999, pp. 220-227.
35 Vaşṣaf, Târikh-e vaşṣaf-o-ḥārat 1338, pp. 367-371; Jackson 1999, p. 219. The Neguderi incursion seems to have paralleled a Chağatāiyid attack on Khorāsān that Kāšānī claims to have been repelled by Uljāytu (who is referred to as Pādšāh-e Eslām but was actually viceroy of Khorāsān at that time); Kāšānī, Târikh-e Uljāytu 1348, p. 18-19.
36 Kāšānī states that Teymur was the son in law of the Chağatāiyd khān Dua and therefore adds the honorific Gūrkān to his name (Kāšānī, Târikh-e Uljāytu 1348, p. 152).
hār.\textsuperscript{37} Teymur who had accepted Uljäytu’s suzerainty, sent the captured standards of the enemy to the il-khan and, in a further sign of submission, rendered a visit to the commander of the eastern Il-Khānid forces, Yasāūl.

The joint Il-Khānid and Neguderí victory proved to be short-lived, for soon after, Dāud Khājeh persuaded his cousin, the Chağatāyid khān Isanbuqā (r. 1309-18), to avenge his defeat. The Chağatāyid counterattack was led by Isan-buqā’s brother Kebek and the commander Jankeši, and was joined by a number of Chağatāyid princes, including Yesāūr who, later on, defected to the Il-Khānids. The most explicit description of this counterattack is to be found in Kāšānī’s \textit{Tārikh-e Uljāytu}, where he reports it twice: once under the events of the year 713/1313 and the other, under the events of the year 716/1316.\textsuperscript{38} As argued elsewhere, the first reporting was a normal entry in what was intended to be the continuation of the \textit{Jāme’-ot-tavārikh} for the period covering the reign of Uljāytu. The second reporting — which considerably overlaps the first one — was introduced as part of the schema to provide more possibilities for the Šahnāmeh project nicknamed \textit{Abu-Sa’idnāmeh}, whose illustrations were meant to represent both an episode of the Šahnāmeh and an event of Mongol history.\textsuperscript{39}

The differences between the two accounts are quite revealing. The first account — a regular yearly entry probably written soon after 1313, when the Chağatāyid threat had not fully dissipated, tried to portray the counterattack as an insurrection that was successful while Uljāytu and Yasāūl were feasting in Māzandarān, but was pushed back as soon as Uljāytu learned about the counterattack.\textsuperscript{40}

As in the case of the \textit{Tārikh-e jahān-ārā} and the cryptical account of the death of Tāhmās’b’s standard-bearer, the first reporting of Kāšānī incorporated enough elements for a keen reader to guess the extent of the catastrophe. Indeed, since the Chağatāyids had “the intention to capture all of the Iranian Lands” and because, upon hearing the news of their invasion, Uljāytu “ordered the protection and pacification of the Iranian lands,” one clearly gets a hint at how dangerous the situation had become.\textsuperscript{41}

The second reporting, probably inserted during the reign of Abu-Sa’id, when the \textit{Abu-Sa’idnāmeh} project was revived and the Chağatāyid threat had dissipated, provides a more explicit account of the Il-Khānīd debacle.

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\textsuperscript{37} According to Jackson 1999, p. 224, the sack of Tekinābād is related by Sayfī. On a map of the region, Jackson presents Tekinābād and Qandahār as the same (\textit{ibid.}, p. 120). The Dehkhodā encyclopedia however situates Tekinābād some 16 farsakhs south-east of Qandahār (Dehkhodā, \textit{Loğat-nāmeh} 1373\textsuperscript{s}., vol. IV, p. 6062).

\textsuperscript{38} Kāšānī, \textit{Tārikh-e Uljāytu} 1348\textsuperscript{s}. pp. 201-202 and 208-209.

\textsuperscript{39} Soudavar 1996-a, pp. 173-75

\textsuperscript{40} The feast was in celebration of the wedding of the daughter of Yasāūl with the son of Pulād Ching-Sāng (Kāšānī, \textit{Tārikh-e Uljāytu} 1348\textsuperscript{s}. p. 154).

\textsuperscript{41} Kāšānī, \textit{Tārikh-e Uljāytu} 1348\textsuperscript{s}. pp. 153-154.
It not only describes the initial defeat of the local commanders, but also the routing of the army sent by Uljäytu and the plight of its ill-fated commanders. Among these, Bujáy b. Dānešmand Khâjeh was killed and Yasâul himself was hit by an arrow and only saved in extremis by a warrior who carried him out of danger on the back of his horse. The door for the Chağatâyid conquest of Khorásân and Mâzandarân was left wide open. If the Chağatâyid invasion was stopped, it was not due to Il-Khânid resistance, but to the fact that the enemy had exhausted its provisions, and Islam-buqâ had to recall his commanders to face the troops of the Qâân Bâyântu (r. 1311-20), who had attacked his eastern frontiers. Yesâur however, chose to stay and demanded the protection of Uljâytu against his own cousins.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 211.}

Against this background, we are now able to evaluate the content of Letter 53 and the veracity of the events described therein. Rašid was in Qandahar, within the territories recently wrested from Dâud Khâjeh. That he could suddenly find himself entrapped in a dangerous situation should come as no surprise to us, since we saw how rapidly the situation could change in these borderlands where Yasâul himself nearly perished in a counterattack. While the Chağatâyid counterattack of 1313 could well be the cause of the entrapment that Rašid alluded to in his letter, an earlier possibility also exists as will be explained further below.

Next, we must address the question of whether fiscal administrators such as Rašid and his son Jalâl, could be involved in a military operation. There is ample evidence to prove that, in the later Il-Khânid era, administrators took an active role in military campaigns and for obvious reasons: their organizational skills were needed for logistical support and their negotiation talents were necessary for wresting surrenders or finding a way out of an impasse. It was Rašid for instance, who negotiated a face-saving surrender with the commander of the Fort of Raḥba in the 1312 Syrian campaign of Uljâytu.\footnote{Eqlâb-e Aštîani 1347š., p. 324; Amitai-Preiss 1996-a, p. 29.} And, in one case, Rašid’s son, Khâjeh Gîyâš-od-din Mohammâd, personally led a wing of the imperial troops into the battlefield.\footnote{Khâjeh Gîyâš-od-din Mohammâd was in command of the left wing of Arpâ Kâun’s (d. 1336) army against ‘Ali Pâdsâh (Hâfez-e Abrû, 
\textit{Zayl-e jâme'-'ot-tavârikh-e rašidi} 1350š., p. 194.).}

For the situation at hand though, Kâšâni provides some pertinent information. First, he states that Uljâytu, after ordering a general mobilization for the protection of the Iranian Lands, ordered a “considerable
number of the fiscal administrators to get involved."\textsuperscript{45} It emphasizes once more the gravity of the situation following the Chagatāyid counterattack, and, at the same time, provides credibility to the participation of Rašid and his son in the eastern campaigns. Secondly, in describing the decisions taken in the aftermath of the Khorāsān army debacle, he states that Uljāytu appointed Jalāl to protect the Iranian heartland, ‘Erāğ-e ‘ajam. His sequencing of events though is such that one clearly gets the impression that Jalāl was pulled from the eastern front to protect the heartland.

More importantly, we have corroborating evidence in the form of one of the illustrations of the \textit{Abu-Sa‘īdānāmeh}; one which had previously eluded my search for the identification of its corresponding event of Mongol history. Said image (Louvre Museum, Paris, 7095) illustrates the \textit{Šāh-nāmah} episode in which Farāmarz attacks the Kābolis to avenge the murder of his father, Rostam, who was led by them into a death trap (fig. 1). Its common denominator with Letter 53 is the fact that in both events the son of a prominent Iranian figure is attacking the Kābolis in reprisal of their treachery. Even though in the \textit{Šāh-nāmah} episode, Farāmarz leads the Zābolis in an attack against the Kābolis, the presence of the two armies fighting each other provides a link to the attack on “Kābol and Zābol” mentioned in Letter 53, which is further strengthened by Ferdowsi’s narration that goes on to describe how the armies of “Hend” and “Sind” were annihilated as well.\textsuperscript{46} Furthermore, while the picture depicts Farāmarz (alias Jalāl) fighting the enemy, the corresponding heading of the episode simply mentions “The Journey of Farāmarz to Kābolestān” and minimizes the military role of Jalāl in the operation. Finally, the illustration depicts a vivid picture of the attack on the Chağatāyids and, at the same time, establishes the Rašidi Letters as an additional source for the rostrum of texts from which illustrations corresponding to \textit{Šāh-nāmah} episodes were extracted.\textsuperscript{47}

Morton question’s the “meteor-like” speed of the raids towards Sind, even though speed was the most important characteristic of Mongol units,

\textsuperscript{45} az šavāheb-e ‘ezām, ūtayefeh-yi az ahl-e divān-e bozorg (Kāšāni, Tārīkh-e Uljāytu 1348\textsuperscript{#}, p. 154).

\textsuperscript{46} The two couplets below the illustration read:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{l}
پرآکتهد شد هند و سنده سیاه  \\
که کل شد همه خک اوزدگاه  \\
هم از پرمنش نامداران سنند
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{47} The rostrum initially comprised the first volume of the \textit{Jāme‘-ot-tavārikh}, but was gradually expanded to include all the volumes comprised in the compendium of Rašid-od-din’s works entitled the \textit{Jāme‘-ot-tașānīf-e rašidi} in order to increase the chances for finding a suitable match (Soudavar 1996-a, pp. 172-176). The addition of the Rašidi Letters — after Abarqūhī presented it to Khájeh ǦiyāĞ-od-din Moḩammad who supervised the \textit{Abu-Sa‘īdānāmeh} project — to that expanding base of texts used for the project was thus very much in line with the natural progression of the project.
especially the Neguderies. The raids that took the Neguderies all the way to Suštar and back during Ġazān’s reign, was conducted in a mere two month period. The feat becomes even more impressive when we consider that their troops numbered 1 or 2 tumāns (10–20,000). What is important to note however, is the switch of terms by Rašid from the Kābol operation to the Sind one. In the first, he uses the term lašgar denoting Il-Khānīd troops, and in the second, he uses the term bā omarā-ye moğol, which clearly indicates an operation in conjunction with Mongol commanders not part of the regular Il-Khānīd army. It obviously referred to the Neguderies of Teymur son of Abâchî, whom Kâshâni evaluated as 20,000 strong. Year after year, they had conducted these kind of forays into Sind and India on their own. This time they were accompanied by Jalâl and some of his troops. For Rašid, it was a golden opportunity to shift the credit of the operation to his own family members.

Finally, the request for military gear from Ebrâhim stationed in Širāz seems to be the natural consequence of the general mobilization declared by Uljâytu in the wake of the Chağatâyids counterattack.

The sequence of events presented in the letter is not very clear: the raids of Jalâl can be read both as parallel events to Rašid’s entrapment or preceding it. In the latter case, one must perhaps assume that, the Neguderies who were split between the two camps of Teymur and Dâud Khâjah, were not steadfast in their alliances. At one point, some may have shifted their allegiance to the other side, and provoked the unexpected entrapment of Rašid.

The more important problem to probe, however, is the reason for Rašid’s presence in Qandahar. One suspects that Uljâytu’s decision to engage the Chağatâyids aimed for a higher goal than reestablishing Teymur’s grazing rights. According to Vaşşâf, two years earlier, Uljâytu had sent an embassy to Solṭân ‘Alâ’od-din of Delhi chiding him for not having acknowledged his enthronement with envoys and presents, and demanded the solṭān to send one of his daughters to reinstate the goodwill that his predecessors had expressed towards the Mongols. ‘Alâ’od-din’s response was to imprison the envoys and have eighteen of them trampled by elephants. Such affront could not be left unanswered. After all, a similar maltreatment of envoys had provoked Changiz’ invasion of Iran. It is therefore more than likely that Uljâytu’s alliance with the Neguderi splinter group was to create a base for military operations against India: if not

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48 Vaşşâf, Târikh 1338., pp. 367-368. At one point, 50,000 Neguderies were concentrated near Gaznayn (ibid.). Šabânkâre’i estimates the Neguderies at 20,000 (Šabânkâre’i, Majma’-ol-ansâb 1363., p. 205).
49 Kâshâni, Târikh-e Uljâytu 1348., p. 120.
50 Vaşşâf, Târikh 1338., p. 528
contemplating a full scale invasion, he certainly envisaged harassment and gradual encroachment upon ‘Alā’od-din’s kingdom. In that scheme of things, Rašid’s role in Qandahār must be viewed as the coordinator of reprisal efforts against ‘Alā’od-din. As we shall see, such role concurs with Rašid’s constant preoccupation with India.

Fig. 1: Farāmarz (alias Khājeh Jalāl-od-din) attacking the Kābolis. A page from the Abu Sa’īdnāmeh, c. 1330, from the Musée du Louvre, inv. 7095. [Photograph courtesy of the Musée du Louvre].
The Chağatayid counterattack of 1313 put an end to Uljaytu’s alliance with the Neguderis, and, in effect, turned the initial success into defeat. Thus, Mostowfī, whose Zafarnāmeh was to be a versified version of the Jāme’-ot-tavārīkh, preferred to scratch the earlier episode in order to avoid recounting the embarrassment of subsequent defeat. The only hint of the Chağatayid devastating counterattack comes in the form of some background information as to why Yesāur decided to stay in Iran: because he was a Muslim, he had refused to go along with the massacre of the Khorasanian people and had, thus, attracted the animosity of Kebek. Since the Yesāur story finally unfolded to the advantage of the Il-Khānid there was no harm in reporting it. As a result, Hāfez-e Abrū’s account of the reign of Uljaytu, which scrupulously follows the Zafarnāmeh of Mostowfī, is devoid of the Neguderi episode as well. Considering the high degree of concordance that we have established between Letter 53 and the Tārīkh-e Uljāyu, if one is to pursue Morton’s chain of reasoning, one must now accept that, unlike the most important of Teymurid historians, Hāfez-e Abrū, who never came into possession of Tārīkh-e Uljāyu, the presumed forger had a copy of it but never revealed the manuscript to anybody else and fashioned Letter 53 to suit its content!

LETTERS 6, 10, AND 44 ADDRESSED TO THE AMIR MAḤMUD “GOVERNOR” OF KERMĀN

In his analysis of the letters addressed to Rašid’s son Maḥmud, Morton first assumes Maḥmud to be the same as the Šaykh Maḥmud mentioned in the Mojmal-e Faṣihi to be born in 1309, then discovers that he was born after the date of the Vaqf nāmeh-ye Rabʿ-ī-e Rašīdī (The endowment document of the Rašīdī Quarters) which contains the name of Maḥmud, but avoids confronting this dilemma by stating that “for the sake of argument, it is here assumed that Maḥmud was not excluded by youth from acting as a governor.” Since his birth-date problem is treated inconclusively, I see no necessity to address the issue here and will discuss it further below in the context of Letter 37 and the list of Rašid’s children mentioned therein.

The above remark notwithstanding, the crux of Morton’s arguments against the authenticity of the above-mentioned three letters, is that Kermān was the dynastic fiefdom of the Qārā-Khetāyids up to 1304, when the last ruler of that lineage, Qoṭb-od-din Šāh-jahān (r. 1302-1303), was arrested and replaced by Malek Nāṣer-od-din-e Guri who remained gover-

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51 Soudavar 1996-a, p. 211.
52 Ibid., pp. 140-150.
54 Soudavar 1996-a, p. 175.
55 Morton 1999, p. 175.
nor of Kermān for the whole period of Uljaytu’s reign. The three letters were therefore “fictitious.” Once again, wrong assumptions generate a wrong conclusion.

The problem with Morton’s argument is his understanding of the word ḥākem — used in the headings added by Abarquhi — to mean an omnipotent governor with control over all other appointees to that province. Unfortunately, the hierarchy of power under the Il-Khānids constantly shifted and changed, and the word ḥākem, rather than defining a well-established title, usually referred to the person who actually held the reigns of power in that province. Thus, when Amir Suqunchāq was appointed to collect the tax arrears of Shirāz and pacify that region, his appointment was labelled by Vašṣāf as hokumat (governorship), despite the fact that the nominal ruler of Shirāz was the Solgorid Abaš Khātūn (d. 1286), who continued to strike coins in her name well after Suqunchāq’s intervention.

In the early years of the Il-Khānids, it was the Mongol warlords who held the reigns of power, but with the reforms of Gāzān, fiscal administrators became as important, if not more, as the local military commanders and each new military appointment was usually accompanied by that of an administrator or vizier. And the practice continued up to the reign of Abu Sa‘īd (r. 1317-36) when for instance, in conjunction with Amir Chupān (d. 1327) appointing his son Teymurtāš to Anatolia (Rum), Rašid-od-din appointed his own son Jalāl as the fiscal administrator of the province.

The balance of power between the two appointees shifted depending on who stayed on the spot and took effective control of the province, and who remained at large. In the case of high-ranking administrators such as Rašid’s sons for instance, Mostowfī relates that many remained with the Il-Khān (bar-e šāh). Same is true for military commanders. Amir Mobārez-od-din Moḥammad (the future founder of the Moẓaffarid dynasty, r. 1314-58) for instance, who was appointed in stead of his father to the province of Meybod, remained for four years at the court of Uljaytu.

More to the point is the situation in Kermān, under the last of the Qarā-Khetāyids. Upon his ascent to the throne, Gāzān confirmed Soltān

56 Vašṣāf, Tārīkh 1338š., pp. 195, 205. Moreover, for the fiscal year of 771H, Suğunčaḡ himself farmed out several of the provinces to members of his retinue with the stipulation that they would be ḥakem-e moṭlaq, full-power governors (ibid.).
57 Soudavār 1992, p. 32.
58 Rašid appointed his son to accompany Teymurtāš (Samarqandi, Matla‘-e sa‘dayn va majma‘-e bahrayn 1372š., p. 61).
60 Kotobi, Tārīkh-e al-e moẓaffar 1364š., p. 34. Aḥmad b. Ḥasan-e Kāṭeb alleges that the delay in the departure of Amir Mobārez-od-din Moḥammad was due to the fact that Rašid had an eye on his properties (Tārīkh-e jadid-e Yazd 1978, p. 81).
Mohammad Šāh (r. 1294-1302), and Qāži Fakhr-od-din of Herāt was designated as his vizier. Vying for absolute power, Fakhr-od-din provoked a crisis, after which both contenders headed for the Il-Khānid court. Upon the intervention of Rašid and with the approval of the grand vizier Sa’d-od-din-e Sāvaji, Fakhr-od-din was entrusted with all responsibilities (manāseb) except saltānat (i.e., kingly prerogatives such as striking coins). As a result, Hāfez-e Abrū, qualified Fakhr-od-din as “vizier and hākem” of Kermān. His successor to the vizierate is Khājeh Šadr-od-din-e Abhari, whom Mostowfi also qualified as hākem. Thus, both viziers were referred to as hākems, despite the fact that the nominal rulers of Kermān were the Qarā-Khātāyids.

Soltān Mohammad Šāh remained at the Il-Khānid court, and the vizier almost succeeded to replace him with his cousin Qoṭb-od-din Šāh-jahān before he was executed in a rebellion led by local commanders. Šāh-jahān ascended the throne of Kermān in 1302, and upon the death of Gāzān, ordered his “representative” Majd-od-din to be killed. Majd-od-din was obviously another administrator who had the upper hand in Kermān and paid a deadly price for it. Šāh-jahān’s removal put an end to the long rule of the Qarā-Khātāyids in Kermān. Consequently, Uljāytu appointed Malek Našer-od-din-e Guri as the new military commander for Kermān; and as usual, he was accompanied by an administrator, Nāšer-od-din-e Khāfī.

If an administrator could have the upper hand against a local Qarā-Khātāyid dynasty with deep roots in Kermān, then there is no reason to think that the same would not be true with Malek Nāšer-od-din who, like most other military commanders, must have been regularly asked to participate in military campaigns outside his domain. Furthermore, contrary to Morton’s assertion of uninterrupted “governorship” of Malek Nāšer-od-din in Kermān, we have Kāšānī’s testimony to the effect that, at least in one instance, he was superseded not only administratively, but also militarily. Indeed, in the aftermath of the 1313 Chağatāyid counterattack, and similar to Suqunchāq’s appointment in Šīrāz, ‘Alā’-od-din-e Hendu, “a fifth generation scion of administrative and military commanders,” was appointed

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61 Šabānkār ‘i, Majma’ol-ansāb 1363., p. 204
63 Mostowfi, Tārikh-e 1339., p. 535.
64 In his study of Mongol administration, Rajabzādeh equates hākem with motešarref i.e., the official in charge of administering the revenues obtained from each locality on behalf of the central administration (Rajabzādeh 2535/1976, p. 205).
65 Hāfez-e Abrū, Joğrāfiyā 1375-78., vol. III, p. 95.
66 The Qarā-Khātāyids ruled for 83 years.
to “pacify and protect Kermān and the Coastal Provinces.” Immediately after reporting this appointment, Kāšānī emphasizes that “and from Tāj-od-din ‘Ali-shāh’s side, Fakhroddin Aḥmad-e Tabrizi was appointed to the armies of Arrān and Āzarbāyjān.” The lack of mention of the name of ‘Alā’od-din-e Hendu’s mentor then becomes obvious: ‘Alā’od-din was — by default — the appointee of the grand vizier Rašīd-od-din. In addition, two of the Letters, no. 19, and no. 48 (that I shall discuss next), as well as the Žafarnāmeh of Mostowfi attest to the subordination of ‘Alā’od-din to Rašīd.

Finally, following the falling-out of Rašīd with his rival, Tāj-od-din ‘Ali-shāh (d. 1324), in 1315, Uljāyto split the vizierate between the two; and Kermān was among the provinces left for Rašīd. In that split, Rašīd lost territory to the new contender and it is only fair to assume that the provinces that were given to him were those he firmly controlled. Thus, from the reconfirmation of the vizier Fakhr-od-din, to the appointment of ‘Alā’od-din-e Hendu, to the split of the vizierate in 1315, we see that Rašīd exercised a high degree of control over Kermān that justified his boast in Letter 10 that the province “belonged” to him and his family (ta’aloq be mā dārad) since the time of Ğazān. It also makes sense that he would appoint one of his sons as full administrator or as his deputy to that province. And, given the effective power that this son would wield on behalf of Rašīd, it was justified for Abarquhi to call this son a ḥākem, in the same way that Ḥāfez-e Abrū called Fakhr-od-din a ḥākem, and Mostowfi called Ṣadr-od-din-e Abhari a ḥākem.

LETTER 48

According to its title, Letter 48 is sent by Malek ‘Alā’-od-din “from Hendustān” to Rašīd-od-din, “with accompanying gifts.” It’s an erroneous title that has led many to believe that the named person therein referred to its namesake, Solţān ‘Alā’-od-din of Delhi (r. 1296-1316). To Morton’s credit, he avoids falling into this trap, but then constricts its writer as a India, whom Rašīd could have not met there because he “was

68 Kāšānī, Tārīkh-e Uljāyto 1348š., p. 154
69 Ibid.
70 After the death of Sa’id-od-din-e Sāvajī, Rašīd acted as Grand Vizier.
72 Kāšānī, Tārīkh-e Uljāyto 1348š., p. 195.
73 Savâneh-ol-afkār 1979, p. 29; Morton 1999, p. 176.
never in India.” As for his alternative assumption that Malek ‘Alā’-od-din visited him in Iranian territory, it should also be disregarded because the “internal coherence” that it provides with other letters “is evidence, not of their authenticity, but of the fact that they are a conscious and deliberately forgery.”\footnote{Morton 1999, p.171.} Internal incoherence is generally a proof of forgery, and not the other way around!

We do not need here to refute every argument that Morton advances against the authenticity of this letter, for the negation of his very first assumption will provide a sufficient argument to the contrary.

The very tone of the letter clearly indicates that its author was a professional administrator with a literary style even more fluid than Rašīd’s, and that he was his subordinate. Indeed, the author first praises Rašīd’s benevolence to himself, and notes that it should not come as a surprise since “all powerful military commanders (moluk-e ‘ezām) and magnanimous administrators (sodur-e kerām)” of the realm have similarly benefited from his munificence;\footnote{Savāneh-o-afkār 1979, p. 253.} he obviously considers himself as one belonging to one of these two categories, if not both. And then concludes his letter with a scribal metaphor: “may the white sheet of days and the pages of passing years be marked by the official signet of the one whom I serve (makhdum).”\footnote{Savāneh-o-afkār 1979, p. 255. The author of the letter had previously addressed Rašīd as makhdum-e jahānīān which literary means “the one served by the whole world” (ibid., p. 253). That is too general a term to show specific subordinaion. On the other hand, the solitary use of the word makhdum in the above-mentioned sentence clearly refers to the person the author considered to be serving.}

Before we identify the author, some clarification is necessary on the meaning of the word malek (plural moluk) that I translated as military commander. In early Islamic times, the word malek invoked such high degree of power that the ‘Abbāsis caliphs repeatedly refused to bestow it as a title to even the most powerful of Muslim sultāns. By the Mongol era though, this epithet became debased and was regularly applied to local commanders, especial in the southeast of Iranian territories. The profusion of this debased epithet is nowhere better shown than in Mo‘in-od-din-e Naṭanzi’s Tārīkh-e moluk-e Šabānkāreh where most commanders are referred to as malek. One sentence therein is particularly revealing:

And Sevinch Noyān, who counted Šabānkāreh as one of his bolukāt (counties), issued an edict of maleki (i.e., malekmanship or captainship) in the name of Neẓām-od-din Hasan.\footnote{Naṭanzi, Extraits du Muntakhab al-tavarikh-i Mu‘ini 1335., p. 8.}
Firstly, it indicates that from the word *malek* a new function was derived called *maleki*, which referred to military command. Secondly, it confirms once more the division of authority in the appointment of local officials: *maleki* fell under the authority of a regional warlord such as Amir Sevinch (d. 1317), in the same way that fiscal administration, or vizierate fell under the authority of one of the Il-Khanid viziers.

Based on the above, the identity of the writer of the letter becomes obvious: he is the aforementioned ‘Alâ’-od-din-e Hendu, that Kâšâni had qualified as the scion of a long line of both commanders and administrators, and therefore one that could legitimately claim to belong to the two groups of *moluk* and *sodur*, as he did in his letter.\(^78\) Since, in the wake of the 1313 Chaqatayid counterattack, he was appointed by Uljaytu to pacify “Kermân and the Coastal Provinces,” Abarquhi naturally added the *malek* title to his name.\(^79\) We must then assume that a later copyist, seeing the name of Sołtân ‘Alâ’-od-din of Dehli within the text, thought him to be the author of the letter, and tried to make the Abarquhi title more explicit by changing “Hendu” to “from Hendustân.” Such supposition is not wholly unreasonable, for we have a clear example of an unwarranted modification in the heading of Letter 16, where a copyist has by mistake amalgamated the addressing sentence of Rašid-od-din with the heading of Abarquhi.\(^80\) In addition, several points included in this letter confirm our identification of its writer:

1. ‘Alâ’-od-din writes that he is sending his gifts to Rašid via the port of Basra. This ties in well with his jurisdiction that not only included Kermân but the “Coastal Provinces.” With the risk of Neguderis and other marauding bands of Mongols constantly attacking the eastern provinces, the Persian Gulf route was a more secure way to ship goods to the western provinces where the Il-Khanids exercised a higher degree of control.

2. The variety of goods enumerated in the letter attest to a provenance from a port with a broad import activity from South and Southeast Asia.

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\(^78\) One should note that Letter 47 is from another administrator, Mo’in-od-din-e Parvâneh, who is also qualified as “Malek.”

\(^79\) In Letter 19 (written by Rašid), Abarquhi simply refers to its recipient as ‘Alâ’-od-din-e Hendu (*Savâneh-ol-afkâr* 1979, p. 65). One must then conclude that said letter was written prior to ‘Alâ’-od-din’s mission to Kermân.

\(^80\) Part (A) obviously denotes the original Abarquhi heading and part (B) represents the opening sentence of Rašid’s letter (they are now amalgamated together in one heading):

(A) مکتوب که بر که پیامد حاکم می‌رسد و ستار سنجش (B) اسم پیامد حاکم از اقدامات اموری آزاد، وارد منابع تاریخی و سیاسی: امیر نصرت دین، ستار وداعات مالی و نهایی و نوبت اصلی لغت قبول و مصطفی
They include, not only goods traditionally associated with India such as spices and parrots (tuṭi), but also some specifically named as originating from India: *tamr-e hendi* (tamarind), *zāg-e hendi-ye sokhan guy* (myrna bird), *sāj-e hendi* (sage-wood). They also include goods from the Tibet, and goods from China, qualified as *šini*. As a whole, the list confirms once more ‘Alâ’-od-din’s control over the Coastal Provinces and southern trade routes.

Among the listed Chinese goods, there was the *šiniyeh* (i.e., Chinese porcelain) that interestingly included the *lājevardi* type (i.e., blue-and-white) in the form of trays, bowls, and ewers. The earliest archaeological evidence for the production of blue-and-white porcelain for the Yuan imperial household seems to be dateable to 1328 from the kilns of Zhushan. But sub-imperial and commercial grade production must have started earlier. Since I shall argue that this letter was written *circa* 1315, it provides the first evidence for blue and white production and export to the Iranian territories, albeit not of imperial grade. Considering that ‘Alâ’-od-din was in control of Kermân, which supplied the cobalt blue for Chinese blue-and-white production, he enjoyed a natural — and perhaps unique — access to the very traders who were exporting the cobalt blue and had partially reoriented the production of the Chinese kilns towards the Iranian markets.

The list of gifts sent by ‘Alâ’-od-din to Rašid-od-din, is an example of what Kāšānī qualified as “bribes and gifts (rošvat-o-khedmati) that he (Rašid) receives day by day from his agents and subordinates.” It constituted a main source of revenue for Rašid. And perhaps the letter that he first wrote to ‘Alâ’-od-din, to which the latter was responding through Letter 48, was a reminder that no gifts had been received.

‘Alâ’-od-din was appointed to his post at the end of 1313 and Rašid must have waited a while before sending him a reminder. Because of ongoing feud in between Rašid-od-din and ‘Ali-šāh, ‘Alâ’-od-din undoubtedly postponed the payment of his tribute pending the outcome of the feud. His letter was thus most probably written circa 1315, when Kermân was once again reassigned to Rašid.

In his letter, ‘Alâ’-od-din praises Rašid’s efforts in trying to bring about an understanding between Uljâytu and Solțân ‘Alâ’-od-din of

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81 Savâneh-ol-afkâr 1979, pp. 256-257.
82 Valenstein 1994, pp. 71-74, citing kiln-site archaeological evidence reported in Chinese publications.
83 Medley 1975, pp. 32-34.
85 Kāšānī, Tārīkh-e Uljâytu 13488., p. 197.
Delhi.86 ‘Alā’-od-din-e Hendu’s control of the coastal provinces made him an indispensable ally, and probably an active agent, for Raśid’s undertakings with India and the channeling of his gifts to the Delhi Court. If he writes about this subject it means that he was involved with Raśid’s endeavors in this respect.

Abol-fazl-e ‘Allāmi provides corroborating evidence that Raśid did indeed send gifts to India. In a passage of his Ā’in-e Akbarī where he lists the visits of dignitaries to India, and under a “Khājeh Raśid” heading, he writes:

Solṭān Uljaytu, sent as a goodwill message (be paygām-gozařī) the Jāme’-e rašidi to Solṭān Qoṭb-od-din, son of Solṭān ‘Alā’-od-din, and strengthened the bonds of friendship.87

The entry was misread by Morton, who understood it as referring to a visit of Raśid himself to the court of Solṭān Qoṭb-od-din, and therefore excluded.88 What was sent, of course, was a partial copy of the ten-volume Jāme’-ot-tašānīf-e rašidi (The Rašidi Compendium) that according to Vaṣṣāf was presented by Raśid-od-din to the il-khan in 1312. In an addendum to the endowment document of the Rab’-e Rašidi, dated 1313, Rašid-od-din left precise instructions for his works to be copied each year, and “sent to all cities of Islam, in Arabic to Arab cities and in Persian to Persian cities, beginning with the most important cities.”89 The city of Delhi was certainly a priority in Raśid’s vision of the Islamic world, especially after the failure of the joint military operation with the Chağatâyids in 1312. The gift of a colossal compendium that represented the height of erudition of that era, was perhaps the only means left for the Il-Khānīd vizier to buy respect for his patron. It is therefore quite possible that the gift was sent for Solṭān ‘Alā’-od-din but actually arrived in Delhi after his death and was thus given to his son Qoṭb-od-din Mobārak Šāh, who succeeded his father shortly after his demise in January of 1316.90 Alternatively, it could have been sent to Delhi, soon after Qoṭb-od-din seized power, and before Uljaytu’s death in mid-December 1316.

Even though Raśid sent his compendium in the name of Uljaytu, and in pursuit of a smoother relationship between the two kingdoms, he must

86 Savāneh-ol-afkār 1979, p.254.
89 Vaṣṣāf (Tārikh 1338, p. 538) mentions ten books presented by Raśid, but the latter left instructions in an addendum to his Vagfnāmeh for only seven to be copied each year (Raśid-od-din, Vagfnāmeh ye rab’-e rašidi 2536/1977, p. 239). For a change in the composition of the compendium see Soudavar 1996-a, p. 206, n. 11-12.
90 In the interim, there was a short-lived attempt by the courtiers to elevate an infant son of ‘Alā’-od-din to the throne.
have expected a hefty reward for himself as well. Rewarding authors of intellectual and literary works, even if attached to rival courts, gave sovereigns the opportunity to enhance their own intellectual credentials. Thus, some two centuries later, when the celebrated Sufi poet ‘Abd-or-Rahmān-e Jāml was at the Teymurid court of Herāt, the Ottoman Bāyazid II (r. 1481-1512), would send him 1000 gold florins, and Sołtān Ya’qub Āq-qoyunlu, 10,000 šāhrokhi gold coins in reward for his poems.91

LETTER 30

According to its heading, Letter 30 was addressed from the city of Mulkān to Qoṭb-od-din-e Mas‘ud-e Širāzī (d. 1310),92 and gave an account of Rašīd’s mission and journey to India during the reign of Sołtān ‘Alā’-od-din of Dehli. As the text now reads, Rašīd embarked on his mission by order of the Il-Khan Arğun (r.1284-91), whose reign ended before that of ‘Alā’-od-din commenced. To avoid this discrepancy A.K. Nizami proposed that Uļiaytu’s name should be substituted for Arğun’s. In reply, Morton argues that Rašīd’s “presence in Persia is mentioned every year during the period 703-08, and most other years of the reign, by Qāshāni.”93 In addition, he argues that had Rašīd been to India, he would have mentioned it in the India section of the Jāme’-ot-tavārikh and/or in his Āsār-o-ahyā where he discusses Indian plants and herbs.94 Without exploring other possibilities, he concludes that Rašīd was never in India, which in turn becomes the basis for other ill-founded arguments.95

As in previous cases, the best guide for understanding the letter is its internal evidence. The name of Arğun is followed by the Islamic wish formula: khallad Allāhu mulka-hu wa sulṭāna-hu (may God eternalize his reign and his kingdom) that obviously relates to one of his two Muslim

91 Asmād va mokātebēt-e tārikhiYE Irān 1341/8, p. 437. The text describes the gold coins as florins, i.e., the Florentine ducat used by the Ottomans (Minorsky 1957, p. 60).
92 His full name is Qoṭb-od-din Muhām b. Mas‘ud-e Širāzī. Thus, the reading of the letter title should include the Persian eżāfeh, which indicates a father and son relationship between the two portions of the name.
94 Ibid., pp. 168-169.
95 As Morton himself notes, the present edition of the Āsār-o-ahyā is a fragmentary document without a preface where general observations such as a previous trip to India would have been mentioned. Many entries however, show strong familiarities with the original environment or use of Indian plants. For instance, in the case of the pepper plant he mentions that “in the same way that people here plant vine in their yards and gardens, the Indians do the same with the pepper tree there” (Rašīd-od-din, Āsār-o-ahyā 1368/8, p. 80), or a certain type of rice that “only the elderly ate” in India (ibid., p. 147). Although the information contained in the extant text may have been relayed to him by a knowledgeable source, it offers no contrary evidence on the possibility of a previous trip to India.
sons, Ġāzān or Uljāytu. Supposing that Morton’s arguments for the whereabouts of Rašīd during the reign of Uljāytu are correct — which is far from obvious — one must still explore the reign of Ġāzān. As a matter of fact, there are two pointers to indicate that Rašīd’s expedition was on behalf of Ġāzān and not Uljāytu. First, the ruler is referred to as Pādšāh-e ‘Ădel (the Just Emperor) which, as demonstrated elsewhere, was Ġāzān’s distinctive epithet. Second, in parallel to his ambassadourial mission, Rašīd was ordered to bring back “useful spices and syrups unfound in Iranian territories,” which given Ġāzān’s interest in similar topics such as the medicinal herbs described in the Āsār-o-ahyā’, or the animals described in the Manāfe’-ol-hayavān of the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York (m.500), makes him a better candidate than Uljāytu for sending Rašīd to India.

That Rašīd would not mention his trip to India in the Jāme’-ot-tavārikh or any other official work is obvious since he had failed in his main mission to have the Indian ruler accept Ġāzān’s suzerainty. The Il-Khān would be better served if all allusions to such failure were suppressed. Moreover, his trip was hurried, uncomfortable and hazardous, and certainly not conducive to medicinal fieldtrips or information gathering sessions for a historical work on India. Indeed, early in his letter, Rašīd puts his journey into perspective: he complains that it was God’s will to take away his “comfort and security” and set him on the course of a most hazardous journey that brought him in contact with scary people whose “shirts were made of pitch and the fire covering their faces” (Qorān 14:50), and “turned his garden of fortune into a furnace of pain.” He was able to reach the outskirts of Delhi in a very short time (zāmān-e andak), and after meeting the solṭān, he hurried back through the land route, via Kābol and Khorāsān.

Morton then compares Rašīd’s mission to India with the embassy sent by Uljāytu in 1310, whose members were trampled to death by ‘Alā’-od-din’s elephants. If Vaşşāf reported the latter, why didn’t he or any other author report the less unsuccessful mission of Rašīd? In reply, one should bear in mind that the very fact that the dramatic 1310 incident was reported by Vaşşāf, and omitted by subsequent authors, proves that it was not

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96 One may even suppose that the name of the Il-Khān was initially written as Ġāzān (or Uljāytu) b. Arğun.

97 For the systematic use of this epithet for Ġāzān see Soudavar 1996-a, pp. 126-127.

98 This second mission may have been simply invented by Rašīd to de-emphasize the importance of his dealings with ‘Alā’-od-din, and on his way back from India.

99 Savāneh-ol-afkār 1979, p. 147

100 Ibid., p. 151.
reportable in the normal scheme of things. Vaşşâf’s reporting was, thus, an anomaly, and most probably purposeful.

The 1310 failed mission was certainly conducted under the aegis of the Grand Vizier Sa’d-od-din-e Sâvaji, who was killed in 1311 by the instigation of Rašid. The tragic end of the emissaries must have provided Rašid with a decisive argument to do away with his rival. Vaşşâf, who in 1312 presented his work to Uljâytu through the auspices of Rašid, most probably thought that such an entry would be a reminder of the failure of the executed vizier, and by comparison, would highlight Rašid’s diplomatic skills for not allowing a similarly unfavorable situation to get out of hand.

Moreover, Morton’s contention that no other source mentioned the visit is not exactly true, for we have to date, several sources that hint at Ĝâzân’s interactions with Soltân ‘Alâ’-od-din of Delhi. The first is the Bayâz-e Tâj-od-din Ahmed-e vazir, which reproduces the text of two letters: one dated 17th October 1329 and sent by Soltân Mohammad Šâh-e Toğloq (r. 1324-51) to the Il-Khân Abu-Sa’id, and the other, a reply letter from the latter dated end of October 1330. In his reply letter, Abu-Sa’id remarks how, despite the constant efforts of his uncle Ĝâzân and father Uljâytu to combat idolatry and promote Islam, “the doors of openness and friendship had remained closed between the kings of [our] two countries.” Abû-Sa’id’s letter clearly puts Uljâytu and Ĝâzân on the same footing in regards to relationship with the sultans of Delhi, and thus if Uljâytu had a failed mission to India, Ĝâzân must have had one as well.

The second is the Jâmî-‘ot-tavârikh, which mentions the arrival of foreign emissaries to Ĝâzân’s camp near Nahâvand in the year 1302, “bringing with them the Syrian commanders who had fled (Syria) and switched allegiance,” followed by the sentence: “the moqaddâm-e išân (the forerunner / most important of them) being ‘Alâ’-od-din Pâdšâh.” As the text now reads, said ‘Alâ’-od-din Pâdšâh is almost presented as a Syrian commander. But the text is obviously corrupted, for Rašid who called Ĝâzân “Pâdšâh-e Eslâm,” would not bestow the same title to a defecting Syrian commander. Furthermore, in a slightly earlier passage,

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101 Sâvaji who had been appointed as grand vizier in the year 1300 by Ĝâzân, had been entrusted with the Gold Seal that adorned the most important of Il-Khânid correspondence (Rašîd-od-din, Jâmî-‘ot-tavârikh 1957, vol.III, p. 342.

102 Vaşşâf, Târikh 1338â., p. 544.

103 Under the events of the year 728/1328, Faşhi-ye Khâfi confirms that the two rulers did indeed exchange ambassadors. Abu-Sa’id’s ambassador is named as Sayyed ‘Aţod-od-din (Faşhi-ye Khâfi, Majmal-e Faşhi 1339â., p. 39).


105 Rašîd-od-din, Jâmî-‘ot-tavârikh 1957, vol. III, p. 352. This ‘Alâ’-od-din is listed in the index by its editor ‘Alizâdeh as “one of the Syrian commanders” (ibid., p. 643).
Rašid had already announced the defection of the three Syrian commanders and had the mogaddam-e ışān named as ‘Ali-šir and not ‘Ala’-od-din.106 The second sentence must have originally announced a string of foreign emissaries starting with those of ‘Ala’-od-din Pādshāh who happened to arrive at Ġazān’s encampment at the same time as the defecting Syrian commanders. Indeed Rašid continues his narrative with the account of emissaries from the “Pādshāh of Istanbul (i.e., Byzantium),”107 which also confirms that stylistically, Rašid was using the title Pādshāh only for heads of state and not mere commanders.

The above reconstruction of text is supported by Mostowfi’s Zafarnāmeh, which relates that after the arrival of the emissaries of Teymur Qāān came “the emissaries of the King of Farang (i.e., Byzantium) and Soļān ‘Ala’-od-din of Sind.”108 Furthermore, under the events of the year 1303, Rašid himself mentions that Ġazān decided to ride “the elephants that had been brought to him as presents from India.”109 In sum, ‘Ala’-od-din did send emissaries and presents to Ġazān in 1302. The question then is: did he initiate it on his own or was it in response to a previous overture from Ġazān?

In 1298 ‘Ala’-od-din had wielded a crushing defeat against a joint Chağatāiyid-Neguderi expedition that was acclaimed by chroniclers in the following terms: “This victory raised the fame of the King’s arms, established his power at home, and overawed his foreign enemies.”110 Another Chağatāiyid-Neguderi invasion was thwarted the following year, circa 1300. Clearly, ‘Ala’-od-din’s fame and power rested on his victory over the Mongol forces. He had no incentive to dispatch an embassy to a Mongol court on his own initiative, since it would have been perceived — by both courts — as a sign of submission to Ġazān, and would have undermined ‘Ala’-od-din’s claim to fame. On the other hand, he had everything to gain in acknowledging the visit of Rašid as an embassy from Ġazān, and reciprocating it on an equal to equal basis. This, of course, is not what Ġazān had aimed for.

This second scenario also has the merit to fit the chronology at hand. Since ‘Ala’-od-din’s embassy arrived in 1302, Rašid’s mission must have taken place a year or two earlier,111 most probably after the failure of the

106 Ibid., p. 350.
107 The Byzantium Emperor is named “Fasīlyus” (Basileus, i.e., Andronicus II Palaeologus (r. 1282-1328)).
110 Njījār 1979, p. 49 (quoting the Tāriḵ-e ferešteh); Jackson 1999, p. 221.
111 The time span for instance between the two letters exchanged between Abu-Sa’id and Mohammad-e Togloq was one year. Adding the time for the journey from Iran
second Syrian campaign. Had Rašid gone right after the first successful Syrian campaign, when Ğazān sent envoys and “victory letters to Tabriz and neighboring countries” subsequent to the surrender of the Homs citadel, his mission would have been more assertive. The very hesitant tone of his letter indicates that his mission was undertaken at a time when the military potential of the Il-Khānids was in doubt, i.e., circa 1300, in between the second and third campaign. Rašid was hoping to achieve through diplomacy what was not possible militarily. He may have even tried to woo ‘Alā’-od-din into accepting Ğazān’s suzerainty by promising Il-Khānids support against the Chağatāyids, who were constantly harassing Sind and Punjab territories. The very fact that he came back overland and through Kabul indicates that he returned after the Chağatāyids’ pullback circa 1300.

Finally, even though he failed in his diplomatic mission, Rašid had success at a personal level. Traditionally, men of science were richly rewarded when visiting a foreign court, and Rašid had a knack for extracting such rewards. Mamluk sources for instance, accused him of receiving bribes from the governor of Rahba during the negotiations pertaining to the surrender of its citadel. Whether considered a bribe or an insurance policy, its purpose was to have an advocate in the opposite camp. For ‘Alā’-od-din, who was about to send an embassy to Ğazān, it would have made sense to buy the goodwill of the man who had the il-khān’s ear. The type of gifts and endowments that Rašid lists as having received in India were therefore very much in tune with the practices of the day.

LETTER 37

Morton begins to fault this letter for having a heading that claims it to have been written by Rašid when he had a “fatal” disease. The heading qualifies Rašid’s illness as hâlek, which in English can be translated as both deadly and fatal. The fact that Morton chooses the latter rather than the former is indicative of his biased reasoning in this matter. The presumed forger-scribe that Morton describes would have certainly known Rašid’s fate and would not have made the mistake that Rašid died from illness. In Persian, as in English, one can very well dramatize an illness by qualifying it as hâlek or deadly, without projecting fatal outcome.

to India, the total time span from the Indian perspective amounted to some 15-16 months.

114 It also highlights one other source of revenue for the immensely rich vizier, Rašid-od-din.
Moreover, in fairness to Rašid, he himself only used the term *makhowf* (scary) within the text of his letter to qualify his illness, and not *hâlek* as Abarquhi did in the heading.  

Morton next finds it odd that sources would not report a severe illness of Rašid. But Persian chronicles were written to praise the glory of the king and not to report the illness of a vizier. If they did report it from time to time, it was in conjunction with a kingly visit such as Uljaytu’s visit to Rašid in 1304, or with a political event such as Rašid’s refusal to come to court during the 1315 vizierate crisis. In both cases Rašid was supposedly suffering from a leg ailment that prevented him to be present at court, and one suspects that the present letter was also conceived to buttress a claim of ill health for not heeding a summon.

As Morton points out, the letter is conceived as a will letter with references to prior endowment documents (*vaqfnâmeh*); it was presumably written towards the end of Rašid’s life. In it, Rašid reconfirms the terms of his previous endowments and distributes the remainder of his wealth among his children. In addition, he emphasizes that one hundred copies of this letter are to be sent to various dignitaries at the four corners of the empire. Had this solely been a testament, a few copies would have sufficed. If Rašid went through the extra pain of sending one hundred copies out, chances are that he was feeling threatened and was trying to advertise his illness through the bias of this letter. All factors thus point to the time that after the death of Uljaytu, the commander in chief, Amir Chupân, summoned Rašid and the latter refused to comply. He was seventy years old, felt threatened, and tried to persuade Amir Chupân to appoint some of his children to the vizierate in his stead. To no avail, Amir Chupân insisted on his return and Rašid finally acquiesced, and suffered its consequences.

At the end of Letter 37, Rašid lists fourteen sons, and four daughters, as heirs to his fortune. On the heading above the list however, the number of the sons is given as thirteen. Morton finds the number of sons to be

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116 Savâneh-ol-afkâr 1979, p. 204
117 Kâshâni, Ṭârîkh-e Uljaytu 1348s., pp. 44 and 195.
118 According to Eqbâl, he probably suffered from gout (Eqbâl 1347s., p. 323). This theory may further be corroborated by the fact that Rašid himself avows that he had also chronic pain in his fingers, Rašid-od-din, Latâ’ef-ol-haqâeq 2535/1976, p. 69.
119 In the title of Letter 37, Abarquhi states that it was meant to be a *vašiyyat* (will-letter) for his children, with a list of *matrukât* (lit. "what is left behind," i.e., Rašid’s estate).
120 Savâneh-ol-afkâr 1979, p. 217.
121 Rašid probably suspected Abu-Sa’id to hold a grudge against him for not responding to his urgent fund requests when the young prince was stationed in Khorâsân (Eqbâl 1347s., p. 322).
erroneous and exaggerated in comparison to the Vaqfnāme, even though he admits that Ḥāfez-e Abur had also mentioned thirteen sons for Rašid. [123]

One must note that Ḥāfez-e Abur’s information is inserted within a section which is a word for word prose-rendering of the corresponding section in the versified Zafarnameh of Mostowfi. Ḥāfez-e Abur emphasizes that the Khājeh had thirteen sons “at the very time” that Amir Chupān was inviting Rašid to come back and he instead was proposing his sons to replace him. [124] This remark is presented as an interjection based on a source other than the Zafarnameh that Ḥāfez-e Abur was translating into prose. When dealing with a multitude of sons, historians are generally reluctant to commit to a number unless they have an authoritative document summing up the count. This document cannot be but Letter 37, which clearly provides the same information in the heading for Rašid’s list of sons, and was written a few months before his death. The number 13 in the heading is a mistake that the presumed forger who supposedly composed these fifty-four letters would have certainly avoided. If one hundred copies of this letter were sent out, it is obvious that — at most — only one copy was written by Rašid, and the rest by copyists. [125] Either Rašid inadvertently made a mistake in his count (and that can happen to fathers with numerous children), or the copyist misread and miswrote Rašid’s number (13 instead of 14). The copy of Letter 37 that Ḥāfez-e Abur had, in hand, probably bore the number 13 in its heading, because it’s almost impossible to find any other explanation for the appearance of the erroneous number 13 in both Ḥāfez-e Abur’s account and in the Rašidī Letters.

Morton contends that in Letter 37, the presumed forger treated a son named Şaykhi and a son named Maḥmud as two different ones even though according to the sources they are the same person. [126] Unfortunately, the references provided by the sources are conflicting and one must resolve their discrepancies before issuing a judgement on the validity of Letter 37.

Three names appear in the sources: Maḥmud, Şaykhi and Şaykh Maḥmud. As already mentioned, Faṣihi gives a precise date (13th of Jumādā I 709/19 October 1309) for the birth of Rašid’s son “Rokn-od-din Şaykh

[123] Morton 1999, p. 196. The Ḥāfez-e Abur number is then turned around by Morton who suggests that the presumed forger used the same (ibid.).
[125] Rašid confirms on several occasions his modus operandi for the writing of his works: that he would prepare a draft and then hand it out to fast-writing scribes (zud-nevis) for transferring it onto proper paper and format (bayāz); see for instance Rašid-od-din, Lātā’ef 2535/1976, pp. 61 and 69.
Mahmud,” in a location that Morton judges to be historically correct.\textsuperscript{127}

The latter is then construed as Faṣīḥi’s proof of precise knowledge about the event. Faṣīḥi’s information, though, presents two problems. The first is that Saykh Mahmud was born two months after the Vagfnâmeh which is dated Rabī’ I 709/August 1309 and which names Mahmud as one of Raṣīd’s sons. The second is that the “Saykh” in Saykh Mahmud’s name was obviously not an epithet, for neither Raṣīd nor any of his sons ever reached a religious status to be regarded a \textit{saykh}. It was rather an integral part of his name and reflecting the complete name of the Sufī \textit{saykh} after whom he was named,\textsuperscript{128} in the same way that Saykh Abu Eshāq-e Inju (r. 1344-56) was named after the celebrated Saykh Abu Eshāq-e Kāzeruni (963-1035), and his name was always mentioned with the epithet “Saykh” included.\textsuperscript{129}

Hāfez-e Abū, who is generally considered as a reliable source, names the vizier appointed by the Chupānīd Saykh Hasan (d. 1343) in 739/1338 as “Rokn-od-dīn Saykhī-ye Raṣīdī” (i.e., son of Raṣīd), and a few pages later, uses the name “Rokn-od-dīn Saykh Mahmud” to describe the abdication of the same man from the vizierate.\textsuperscript{130} Abd-or-Razzāq-e Samarqandi also names this Chupānīd vizier as “Rokn-od-dīn Saykhī-ye Raṣīdī.”\textsuperscript{131} The same person is next reported by Mahmud-e Kotobi, under the name “Rokn-od-dīn Mahmud b. Raṣīd” to have joined Mobārez-od-dīn Mohammad-e Możaffar in Moharram of the year 744/1343 in an attack on the citadel of Bam after which he comes back to Kermān.\textsuperscript{132} Furthermore, Aḥmad b. Ḥosayn b. ‘Alī-ye Kāteb, mentions that “Amir Saykhi” had married the daughter of Mobārez-od-dīn Mohammad-e Możaffar, and Faṣīḥi specifies that “Rokn-od-dīn Saykh Mahmud” died in 744/1343 in Kermān.\textsuperscript{133}

What can be deduced from the preceding information is that we have a son of Raṣīd whose activities are only reported for \textit{circa} 1339 and later

\textsuperscript{127} ibid., p. 175.

\textsuperscript{128} He may have been named after the contemporary sufi \textit{saykh}, Saykh Mahmud-e Shabastari (d. 1320), who resided in Tabriz and, even though very young at the time of birth of Raṣīd’s son, he had already established a following for himself. Another contemporary sufi \textit{saykh} was Saykh Mahmud-e Kojuji. It is highly unlikely that Raṣīd’s son was named after the wily administrator, Saykh Mahmud, whom Raṣīd accused to have undeservingly taken the title \textit{Saykh-ol-mašāyeḵh} along with Gaykhātu’s vizier Šadr-od-dīn who took the title Šadr-e Jahān (Raṣīd-od-dīn, \textit{Jāme‘-ot-tavārīkh} 1957, vol. III, p. 448).

\textsuperscript{129} Same is true for the names of other rulers and dignitaries of that period such as the Jalāyerid Saykh Hasan and the Chupānīd Saykh Hasan.

\textsuperscript{130} Hāfez-e Abū, \textit{Zayl} 1350\textdagger, pp. 204 and 208

\textsuperscript{131} Samarqandi, \textit{Matla‘-os-sa‘dayn} 1372\textdagger, p. 170.

\textsuperscript{132} Kotobi, \textit{Tārīkh-e al-e možaffar} 1364\textdagger, p. 46.

\textsuperscript{133} Ahmad b. Ḥosayn b. ‘Alī-ye Kāteb, \textit{Tārīkh-e jadīd-e Yazd} 1978, p. 162
(which concurs with the information that he was born in 1309), was in Kermān in 1343 and died there, and that, with the exception of Kotobi, all chroniclers name him as either Šaykh Maḥmud, or Šaykhi which is a well attested nickname for those who are named after a Sufi Šaykh. It makes a lot more sense to treat Kotobi’s reporting of the son of Rašīd’s name as erroneous — an error that may also be imputed to scribal inadvertence or lack of knowledge — than to try to identify the Šaykhi (alias Šaykh Maḥmud) of the sources with the Maḥmud of the Vaqfnāmeh, whom Rašīd names without the epithet Šaykhi.

Rašīd thus had two similarly named sons, one Maḥmud and one Šaykhi Maḥmud. This was not the only instance that he had named his sons similarly, for as we shall see he had named his eldest son Amir-‘Ali, and two other sons as ‘Ali-šāh and ‘Ali.

We may also note that in the Vaqfnāmeh, Rašīd had envisaged the possibility of sons that would be born later on. It therefore seems logical that the name of Šaykhi, who was born two months later than the compilation date of the Vaqfnāmeh, should not appear in the latter document but instead emerge in Letter 37, which was written at a much later date.

Another mystery name alluded to by Morton is Sa’-od-din to whom two of the Letters are addressed. For the reasons provided below, it seems that Sa’-od-din should be identified with Amir-‘Ali, whom Rašīd presents as the eldest of his sons in the Vaqfnāmeh:

1. Sa’-od-din’s name appears at the top of the list of Rašīd’s children in Letter 37, i.e., the very logical place for the name of the eldest son.

2. Rašīd states in the 1309 Vaqfnāmeh that in a prior version of it, he had designated his most valiant son (aršad) as the main trustee (towlīat) and his second most valiant son (aršad-e sānī) as the trust controller (ešrāf), but had to revoke his decision because they had proved to be unworthy. Implicitly, he faults his two sons for their lack of piety and a behavior that had aroused the animosity of the rest of the children and had put them in conflict with him. Rašīd doesn’t give us the name of the two rejected sons but provides a clue to the identity of one of them when he specifies that the children of his eldest child (farzand-e mahin) Amir-

134 Dehkhodā, Loğtnāmeh, vol. IX, p. 12919.
135 In Letter 35, one of the quarters is named Roknieh which must relate to Maḥmud’s laqab. It therefore seems likely that Rokn-od-din was first the laqab of Maḥmud, and upon his death was adopted by his namesake Šaykh Maḥmud al-šāh Šaykhi.
136 In listing his sons, Rašīd foresees an expansion of the group of sons by giving the same privileges to new additions (من يتواجد بعدهم ); Rašīd-od-din, Vaqfnāmeh 2536/1977, p. 119.
137 Savāneh-ol-afkār 1979, p. 216.
‘Ali were eligible to participate in the rotation of trustees but not Amir-‘Ali himself. Since arşad is commonly understood as the “eldest male” rather than the most valiant, we must assume that the initial main trustee that Raṣid had appointed was Amir-‘Ali. Raṣid used the literal meaning of arşad to extricate himself from the first appointment by arguing that it is truly difficult to find out who the most valiant is and one can make mistakes (Raṣid-od-din, Vaqfnāmeh 2536/1977, p. 118). Interestingly, in Letter 11, Sa’d-od-din is accused of being immersed in wine and music (i.e., impiety), and bringing ruin and depopulation to the territories assigned to him. Sa’d-od-din must have persisted in his debauchery for Raṣid to denounce his behavior in an open letter. His behavior certainly made him unfit for the trusteeship of a pious foundation such as the Rab’.

3. In the Vāqfnāmeh, which is supposed to be a testimony of the donor’s piety, the names of eight of Raṣid’s sons are reduced to a bare minimum, devoid of titles and epithets. Since Raṣid refers therein to his eldest son as Amir-‘Ali, we must accept the word “Amir” to be an integral part of his name (like “Solṭān” in Solṭān-‘Ali or “Ṣāḥ” in ‘Ali-Ṣāḥ). Thus, Amir-‘Ali is distinct from ‘Ali, and this ties in well with the mention of ‘Ali’s name in Letter 37, after that of Ahmad (i.e., in a subordinate position) as inheritor of a palm-plantation near Ḵella. If ‘Ali was the same as the eldest son, no matter how much he had slid into disfavor, his name, if mentioned, would be written prior to any of his brothers. ‘Ali (without Amir) is also mentioned in seventh place in the announcement that Raṣid made through Letter 24 for the marriage of his sons.

In comparing the list of names in the Vaqfnāmeh with the one in Letter 37, Morton makes the implicit assumption that the former presented a complete list of all the surviving sons at that time. To the contrary, a will letter such as Letter 37 may include all sons because according to Islamic laws, the sons of concubines inherit at par with those from regular wives, whereas vaqf documents, generally name only the most important or the most trustworthy of the sons, or those the donor favored. By his own avow, Raṣid eliminated two of his sons from trusteeship. One of them was Amir-‘Ali, but the second is unnamed in the Vaqfnāmeh. Because of the Letters, one can argue that the second removed son is Pir-Solṭān. Indeed, as a son of Raṣid, Pir-Solṭān’s identity is attested by Ḩāfeẓ-e Abrū and most other historians writing about the defeat of Arpā Kāun (r. 1335-36) and the subsequent murder of the vizier Khājeh Ġiyās-od-din Moḥammad. Six days later, the latter’s brother Pir-Solṭān was also

139 Savāneḥ-ol-afkār 1979, p. 33
140 Ibid., p. 211.
141 Ibid., p. 120.
killed. The sources provide no more information on him. But according to Letter 45, he was the ḥākem of Georgia during the reign of Ġazān,\footnote{Hāfez-e Abru, Zayl 1350, p. 196} and in Letter 39, one of the walled districts on the shores of a canal that Raṣid had ordered to be dug near Mosul, was named after him.\footnote{The expression “Pādshāh-e sâ’id” was exclusively used by Raṣid in reference to Ġazān, and same is true of Abarquhi who uses it in the heading of this letter (Savâneh-ol-afkâr 1979, p. 240). The allotment of Georgia to Pir-Soltân continued until the very last days of Raṣid, for according to Letter 37, the revenues from that province were to be obtained through the deputies (novvâb) of Pir-Soltân (Savâneh-ol-afkâr 1979, p. 209).} Thus, with the additional information provided by the Letters, one can readily see that the only senior son of Raṣid not to be named in the Vaqfnâmeh, is Pir-Soltân. He is probably the aršad-e sâni that Raṣid removed from trusteeship.

As for the three other names in Letter 37 that are not included in the Vaqfnâmeh, i.e., Homâm, ‘Ali, and ‘Ali-šāh, like Šaykhī they may have been born after the compilation of this document, or alternatively, they were considered by Raṣid as unfit (perhaps due to lineage problems)\footnote{Savâneh-ol-afkâr 1979, pp. 222-223.} to hold a trustee position. The fact that their names appears in Letter 24 in which Raṣid announces the simultaneous marriage of nine of his sons, does not necessarily vouch for maturity and advanced age. In 1304, Uljây-\textit{tu} married two of his sons, Bastân and Bâyazid (aged seven and four respectively), on the same day.\footnote{That may be the case of ‘Ali who is named as governor of Bağdād in two of the letters.} That Il-Khānid double-wedding must have inspired Raṣid to organize a multiple wedding for his sons as well.\footnote{Kašâni, Tārīkh-e Uljâytu 1348, p. 42}

As for the other sons mentioned in Letter 37, their names, responsibilities and rank certainly agree with what is known from other sources. Jalâl-od-din, for instance, who is named in the Vaqfnâmeh as the new main trustee, who was important enough to be attacked independently by the vizier Tâj-od-din ‘Ali-šāh in his quest to secure the vizierate for himself, who was appointed administrator of Rum along with Teymurtâs son of Amir Chupān, and stands out as the most prestigious son of Raṣid in all of the sources, is also portrayed by the Letters as the most powerful of Raṣid’s sons.

\footnote{Especially since the same subject offered a link to a Šahnâmeh episode for the Abu-Sa’îdânâmeh project (Soudavar 1996-a, pp. 135-136.)}
LETTER 35

Whereas the Jāmeʿ-ʿot-tavārikh was written after the fact, and with an eye on posterity, Letter 35 gives us a glimpse of the propaganda that Rašid was generating in the heath of interactions with different neighbors.

In this letter, Rašid mentions that Gāzān had the intention to winter on the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea (Daryā-ye Rum) but decided to go to Qarabāḡ instead. He gives four sets of reasons for Gāzān’s change of plans, the first three of which are simply preludes to the fourth one. First, he mentions that the rulers of Cyprus and other principalities of Rum (i.e., former Byzantium principalities) and warlords of Syria and Egypt came to pay their respects. Second, they were followed by all the dignitaries and nobles of the European islands and coastal cities (jazāyer-e afrānij) such as Istanbul, who undertook paying the Islamic poll-tax for non-Muslims (jezya), and a tribute similar to what was paid to the ‘Abbāsid Caliphs, Hārūn-ar-Rašid, Maʿmūn, etc. Third, with ambassadors arriving every day, came envoys from Sīstān and Kābol who claimed that the warlords of Sind were ready to submit to Gāzān. As a result, Gāzān is said to have planned to winter in Qarabāḡ, go to Neyšābur the next summer, and attack India the following winter.

Because of an emphasis on the multitude of foreign visitors, especially from Istanbul and Syria, the time frame of the letter must be circa 1302, the year in which — as we saw — the Jāmeʿ-ʿot-tavārikh and the Žafarnāmeh had reported the arrival of numerous foreign emissaries. But whereas both of these sources underlined the arrival of ambassadors (ilchi), in Letter 35 Rašid switched the focus of attention to the accompanying nobles and dignitaries, and presented their gifts as a payment of the jezya. It was a clever ploy to portray Gāzān — in his capacity of receiver of the jezya — as the real Pādšāh-e Eslām, and successor to the most famous of the ‘Abbāsid Caliphs, in opposition to the puppet ‘Abbāsid Caliph that the Mamluks had established in Cairo.

One can also read in between the lines that the proclaimed decision not to winter near the Mediterranean Sea was made to dissimulate Gāzān’s retreat from the west (perhaps because of the deteriorating position of the Il-Khānid troops in the Syrian campaign) under the pretense of preparations for a forthcoming Indian campaign. Since Gāzān died the following year and such a campaign never took place, it is hard to ascertain whether he had really harbored the thought of an Indian invasion. Chances are that he did not. For if he did, he would have certainly avoided publicizing it
fifteen months in advance. At the same time, since he was not going to stay in the west, it was good propaganda to claim that Gazan had originally set plans to winter in Donguzlu on the Aegean Sea, in order to boast how far his dominion extended.

The stated purpose of Letter 35 was to present Rashid’s son Majd-od-din, with the list of imperial requirements for the coming winter. As these requests were to be copied and dealt with in different stations of the Il-Khânid administration, Rashid saw in them a vehicle for spreading official propaganda throughout the empire. He would cleverly find excuses for Il-Khânid retreats and setbacks, and subtly twist reality in order to project an image of power and success, and tuck them in a routine letter addressed to one of his sons or subordinates. Letter 35 is a sample of the sophisticated and artful political propaganda that Rashid was able to generate.

PROBLEMS OF METHODOLOGY

In Letter 20 Rashid provides a list of fifty one learned men to his son ‘Ali who, according to its heading, is the “governor” of Bagdad, with detailed instructions on goods to be sent to each of them. Morton picks one name out of this list, that of “the peerless Indian Mathematician Šams-od-din-e Hendi, resident at Delhi,” claiming that his existence is otherwise unconfirmed and construes that as part of the presumed forger’s scheme to sprinkle the Letters with various references to India which “seem to tally with those in others” but when “the Letters come under serious suspicion the opposite is true.”

That of course is one way to look at the record. A less biased approach (with less “suspcion”) would be to notice that Šams-od-din-e Hendi is not the only hitherto unknown name of the list. As a matter of fact, the late Danešpažuh with his encyclopedic knowledge of names could only cross-reference twenty five of the names with other sources, two with names that appear elsewhere in the Letters, and one whom he surmised to belong to a prominent family of learned men. What’s interesting though, is that none were found to be unreal or anachronistic, and for many that were cross-referenced, Danešpažuh provided life dates that overlapped with Rashid’s.

Four judges (qâžis) were included in the list (those of Kermân, Fâm, Âmol and Tabriz), the identity of the latter two can be ascertainment, since

149 On the other hand, in a pattern that may recall Uljaytu’s dealings with the Neguderis, it is possible that some contacts were initiated with them, and it is the Neguderis that Rašid is referring to when talking about the envoys from Sistân and Kâbol.
they had written letters in praise of Raśid.\textsuperscript{152} The information about qāẓīs, though, was not of a type readily available in the Teymurid era. And, yet, we see that the names of half of the listed qāẓīs are corroborated through independent means, and the other half are not contradicted by any other source. Thus whether looked upon as a whole or at group levels, the list has the same consistency throughout, and the case of Sāms-od-dīn-e Hendī is no different than half of the other persons mentioned in this letter.

Unlike prominent theologians like Ḥasan b. Moṭahhar-e ᴇḤelli and Ḍāṯod-od-dīn-e Ḥi, the men in the list may have been famous in their own time, but the fame of many never reached the following century. It was not an easy task for a Teymurid researcher to dig through the names of the learned men of the past in order to come up with such a wide-ranging list of scholars that included mathematicians, astronomers, theologians, judges, and hadīs experts.

Besides Sāms-od-dīn-e Hendī, there was at least one other prominent figure from India, namely Zakaryā of Multān. In addition, Sayf-od-dīn of Egypt who lived in Antioch, Jamāl-od-dīn Eslīm of Tarsmaż and Šekār-lab of Sayrām,\textsuperscript{153} came from regions outside Il-Khānīd domains, and Ḥojjat-od-dīn Musā of Mārdīn, Kahf-od-dīn of Ṭarsus and Fāzēl of Ḥasankeyf from the fringes or contested areas.\textsuperscript{154} Overall, the list was to show the extent of Raśid’s prestige in the community of scholars and scientists whose members came from a domain even wider than the one defined by “from the Oxus to the Nile” slogan. At the same time, it gives us a clue of how Raśid built up — or actually bought — support for himself: by being magnanimous towards important communities such as that of the scholars and the learned. To have lived as long as he did, with the power and wealth that he enjoyed, in a hostile environment where every associate or subordinate was ready to stab him in the back, he certainly needed solid support from all those who counted, that is, from the pillars of the state and the supports of the realm.

**STYLISTIC COMPARISON**

The arguments presented so far show how the contents of the Letters concur with the sources, follow the normal progress of events in that period, and give complementary information that make sense. These can still be regarded by the sceptics as circumstantial evidence and not proof of authenticity. The one undeniable proof, however, of early compilation of these letters (i.e., about the time that Abarquhi claims to have presented his


\textsuperscript{153} Sayrām is situated to the north of Tashkent and 12 km. from Chimkent, on the right bank of the Syr-daryā river, in today’s Kazakhstan.

\textsuperscript{154} *Savāneh-ol-afkār* 1979, p. 72-73.
work to Khājeh Ġīyās-od-dīn Moḥḥammad) is provided by the comparison of the text of the aforementioned al-Moʿjam of Fāzllollāh Monšī-ye Qazvini with the Rašīdī Letters. For what we have in the al-Moʿjam is not a case of discreet plagiarism from the Rašīdī Letters, but wholesale plagiarism of almost unparalleled magnitude. Because of the importance of the argument, I thought it best to reproduce in the Appendix the corresponding passages of the two works as first noticed by Moḥaddes-e Ormavī, especially in view of his erroneous conclusion regarding the question: who copied whom?

A simple comparison of the two texts clearly shows that sections of Rašīd’s letter that were part of a lengthy discourse addressed to his son Saʿd-od-dīn, have been selectively chosen to be used in various parts of a work in praise of Atābak Noṣrat-od-dīn Aḥmad (r. 1295-1334) of the Lur-e Bozorg principality. A series of advices listed for Saʿd-od-dīn as the administrator in charge of a province, have been turned into a list of merits for the Atābak Aḥmad, which at times does not make sense. For instance, the subject of the return of the lands unjustly confiscated for the benefit of the Divān (the central administration) — i.e., essentially for the benefit of the Il-Khān — was not a decision for a local ruler to make; it was the responsibility of the administrator representing the Il-Khān in that province. Thus Rašīd could advise Saʿd-od-dīn to be just and return these lands to their rightful owners, but Qazvini shouldn’t have listed such returns among the accomplishments of the Atābak.

It also seems rather obvious that the plagiarist is the one who takes apart an almost continuous text and uses its different parts in various sections of his work rather than the other way around, since it is much more difficult to reassemble a disparate text into a congruent flow. Furthermore, if Rašīd’s modus operandi was to search provincial chronicles as copy models for his writings, one wonders where he would have found the time to produce such an important body of work and why further cases of his plagiarism have not been detected.\(^\text{155}\) In a provincial milieu, where competition was scarce, Qazvini could get away with massive plagiarism but at the Il-Khānīd court where Rašīd had many enemies, each trying to expose his slightest mistakes, the vizier could not.

Moreover, the accomplishments that Qazvini lists for the Atābak Aḥmad project the image of a ruler with many years of rule behind him, which, in all probability, places the work past the death of Rašīd.

\(^{155}\) Rašīd’s style, like that of many other writers, is clearly affected by classical Persian works such as the Qābusnāmeh (see Šavāneh-ol-afkār 1979, introd. p. 51, where Dānešpāzhuh quotes Falīna), or the Golestān of Saʿdī (compare for instance p. 75, with the preface of the Golestān).
Finally, as Ornavi reluctantly concedes, Qazvini not only copied a hefty part of his introduction (where he praises the Atābāk Aḥmad) from another work, the *al-Moʾjam fi maʿayir-e ašʿār-el-ʿajam* of Šams-e Qays-e Rāzi (see Appendix), but also formulated the title of his own work after it.\(^{156}\) Interestingly, where his plagiarized text differs from the Rašidi original, it is due to a “cut and paste” from the Șams-e Qays-e Rāzi text.\(^{157}\)

If Qazvini used the Letters for wholesale plagiarism, other contemporaries did it more subtly. Kāšānī for instance used them in several passages of his *Tārīkh-e Uljāytu* which were added within the context of the Abu-Saʿīdānāmeh project in order to create new links between episodes of the *Šāhnāmeh* and events of Mongol history.\(^{158}\) As in the case of Qazvini, Kāšānī’s integration of Rašid’s compositions into his own was not always successful. Whereas, Rašid’s vast Qorānic knowledge allowed him to incorporate verses into his prose in a fluent and congruent manner, Kāšānī’s adoption of the same was incongruent and ill-advised. For example, Rašid used the verse “like scattered locusts” (*Qorān* 54:8) to describe enemy troops,\(^{159}\) while Kāšānī used the same to describe Il-Khānīd troops.\(^{160}\)

The above examples provide a confirmation that in the latter years of Abu-Saʿīd’s reign, the Letters were used indeed as a copying source by scribes, just as Abarquhi wanted it to be.

**CONCLUSION**

After the death of the vizier and his sons, Kāšānī accused him of stealing the fruit of his labor.\(^{161}\) It cast a cloud on the statesman’s writings and set the stage for further accusations so much so that Moḥaddes even accused him of copying the arch-plagiariist Qazvini. And today, Morton is obstinately trying to discredit his Letters.

There is a popular saying that if a bird walks like a duck, quacks like a duck and looks like a duck, it must be a duck! In looking at the *Rašidī Letters* as a whole, one cannot escape the conclusion that if its author:

- had a detailed fiscal administrative knowledge of various province as Rašid did,

\(^{156}\) See Șams-e Qays Rāzi, *al-Moʾjam fi maʿayir-e ašʿār-el-ʿajam* 1981, p. xxv. This work was composed for the Solţgorid Atābāk Abu-Bakr b. Saʿīd (r. 1231-60); see also footnotes of ʿAqtī, *Aṣār-ul-vozarā* 1958, pp. 321-322.

\(^{157}\) See for instance Qazvini’s first paragraph in the Appendix in which he has inserted the following sentence from Sams-e Qays:

\(\text{بمايامن} \text{شهمت و دها و محاسن حساسه رای ائر خدادیکنتی} \)

\(^{158}\) Soudavar 1996-a, pp. 173-176.

\(^{159}\) Kāšānī, *Tārīkh-e Uljāytu* 1348ς., p. 131.

\(^{160}\) Kāšānī, *Tārīkh-e Uljāytu* 1348ς., p. 63.

\(^{161}\) See for instance Soudavar 1996-a, pp. 174-175, 207.
- had medicinal knowledge about various ingredients to be ordered for the Tabriz hospital and described a program of “intern” training that only a physician with Rašid’s experience can devise,
- had a command of Qorānic verses that only a commentator of the Qorān such as Rašid would have,
- was able to quickly respond to intricate philosophical and religious questions asked by prominent theologians, as Rašid had done on numerous occasions, 162
- had a vast knowledge about geography that only a much traveled official such as Rašid would have,
- was in contact with so many scholars and learned men as Rašid was, 163
- had detailed information about agriculture and agricultural products that only an important landowner such as Rašid would have,
- and finally, possessed literary skills comparable to Rašid,

then he must be Rašid himself. For it is a tribute to the genius of Rašid that no other statesman of that period, or perhaps even in the entire history of Iran, ever accumulated so much power, knowledge and wealth in order to be able to write such a varied set of letters.

The existing editions of the Rašidi Letters certainly suffer — as many texts from that period do — from inaccuracies that may be attributed to traditional factors such as scribal inadverentence, author’s exaggerations or intentional alterations of truth, that may render the text partly incomprehensible or suspect at first glance. But as the few examples presented above demonstrate, in most cases, it’s possible to reconstruct the events and obtain, through the information provided by the Letters, a more detailed picture than traditional sources permit. Because of the unusual type of information that they offer and the variety of topics that they cover, the Letters must be considered as one of the most important sources of Iranian studies in general, and Mongol studies in particular. The condemnation of such a valuable source of information cannot be taken lightly. Rather than pursue a futile exercise in condemning the Rašidi Letters, it is perhaps time to fully explore the vast potential that they offer for all spheres of Persian studies.

162 See for instance ibid., pp. 116-119; also, one of the volumes of the Jāme‘-ot-tašā-nif-e Rašidi, is entirely devoted to such questions and answers and is thus entitled Asvela va ajveba (Questions and Answers), and another, the Laṭā‘ef-ol-haqā‘eq, contains a fair amount of them.

163 Dānešpažuh provides a proof of the independent circulation of Letter 38 also addressed to Şadr-od-din Mohammad Torkeh, by invoking its inclusion, albeit in a modified version, in Hāfez Hosayn Karbalā’i’s Rowżat-ol-janān va jannāt-ol-janān written in 975/1569 (Savāneḥ-ol-afkār 1979, introd. p. 37).
| Excerpts from Letter 37 | Excerpts from Mo'jam fi-tārikh.  
| after 'Aqīl 1958, editor’s notes pp. 288-322 |}

| انشغال طاقه لشکر و حضور که از قانون اخلاق و دولت‌خواهی متحرک گستردگان بی‌صاحب تدبیر از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و | مزارع طاقه لشکر و حضور که از قانون اخلاق و دولت‌خواهی متحرک گستردگان بی‌صاحب تدبیر از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و |}

**APPENDIX**

| مزارع طاقه لشکر و حضور که از قانون اخلاق و دولت‌خواهی متحرک گستردگان بی‌صاحب تدبیر از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و | مزارع طاقه لشکر و حضور که از قانون اخلاق و دولت‌خواهی متحرک گستردگان بی‌صاحب تدبیر از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و |}

| و از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و | و از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و |}

| و تا بر سطح شهروند با استقلال تمکین یافت و بر | و تا بر سطح شهروند با استقلال تمکین یافت و بر |}

| صبر داشته و شیک که از قانون اخلاق و دولت‌خواهی متحرک گستردگان بی‌صاحب تدبیر از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و | صبر داشته و شیک که از قانون اخلاق و دولت‌خواهی متحرک گستردگان بی‌صاحب تدبیر از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و |}

| و از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و | و ازいたらت استقلال تمکین یافت و بر |}

| و تا بر سطح شهروند با استقلال تمکین یافت و بر | و تا بر سطح شهروند با استقلال تمکین یافت و بر |}

| و از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و | و از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و |}

| و تا بر سطح شهروند با استقلال تمکین یافت و بر | و تا بر سطح شهروند با استقلال تمکین یافت و بر |}

| صبر داشته و شیک که از قانون اخلاق و دولت‌خواهی متحرک گستردگان بی‌صاحب تدبیر از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و | صبر داشته و شیک که از قانون اخلاق و دولت‌خواهی متحرک گستردگان بی‌صاحب تدبیر از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و |}

| و از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و | و از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و |}

| و تا بر سطح شهروند با استقلال تمکین یافت و بر | و تا بر سطح شهروند با استقلال تمکین یافت و بر |}

| و از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و | و از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و |}

| و تا بر سطح شهروند با استقلال تمکین یافت و بر | و تا بر سطح شهروند با استقلال تمکین یافت و بر |}

| و از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و | و از حال احتلال بیان آن، قلم بر سطح حکومت و |}

| و تا بر سطح شهروند با استقلال تمکین یافت و بر | و تا بر سطح شهروند با استقلال تمکین یافت و بر |}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excerpts from Mo'jam fi ma'āyi</th>
<th>Excerpts from Mo'jam fi tārikh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

جماهیر متمردان که بمعنای شعاف و مضایق شاب احتمال و فقدان و پای از دارایی فرمائیه‌های باارزش‌تر ایستا خواهد شد و دها و محاصر در برابر قدرت ایستادگان طرفدار آنها خواهد شد و رقاب طاعت، را گردن داده و دست تطلول را در آستان خویش داری کرده‌اند.

* page numbers are after 'Aqili 1958, editor's notes pp. 287-322

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