

Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology
in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds*
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

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Broadbridge's book is a thoughtful analysis of the diplomatic relations between the Mamluks and the Mongols in Iran (and other contemporary forces, notably the Golden Horde) that concentrates on the ideologies of kingship expressed throughout these contacts. In this book, she discusses the period from the dissolution of the Mongol empire and the rise of the Ilkhanate (1260) up to the end of Tamerlane's rule (1370-1405). In fact the time span chosen here (1260-1405) is one of the book's most attractive features, since it covers the whole "Mongol period" in Iranian history, and does not stop with the fall of the Ilkhanate (1335) or the end of the Bahri Mamluk period (1380).

The book is based on a close reading in a wide variety of Arabic and Persian sources, and to a much lesser extent on the material evidence of coins, inscriptions and *waqf* documents. The main bulk of the sources is that written in the Mamluk Sultanate, mainly because the Mamluks ascribed much more importance—and space—to their contacts with their eastern rivals and hence left us a much wider body of sources about such exchanges. While Mamluk-Ilkhanid relations have already been expertly studied, mainly

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by Reuven Amitai and Charles Melville,¹ the book's most rewarding parts are those dealing with the post-Ilkhanid upheavals and with Tamerlane's invasions into the Middle East, where Broadbridge displays a highly complex picture of medieval international relations.

After a useful first chapter which reviews the basic ideologies of both sides and includes an illuminating introduction to the diplomatic norms of the period, the book is chronologically arranged. The different chapters follow the main shifts in Mamluk ideology of kingship, which was mostly shaped in reaction to Mongol ideologies. The mid-thirteenth century had been a fruitful time for ideological maneuvers: on the one hand it saw the rise of the Mongols and the Chinggisid principle, according to which only descendants of Chinggis Khan were eligible to rule as khans. While manipulations on this principle began already in the period that the book reviews (notably by Tamerlane but also by the Jalayirids and the Chobanids), it had an enormous effect on the Muslim world, and in parts of which, notably Central Asia, had remained valid up to the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the Mongols' annihilation of the Abbasid Caliphate in 1258 put an end to the main source of legitimation in the Muslim world and left a wide space for ideological reconstructions. In the first decades of their struggle with the Ilkhanate (1260-95), the Mamluks, and notably Baybars (r. 1260-1278), built their legitimization on their role as guardians of Islam against the infidel Mongols and Crusaders, on their rule in Hijaz and its holy cities, and on the establishment of a puppet Abbasid Caliph in Cairo since 1261.

Broadbridge claims that the Mamluks felt inferior to the Ilkhanids due to their slave origin despised by the Mongols and due to their lack of prestigious genealogy, but used the Islamic cards (and their victories in the battlefield) to compensate for it. The common religion was also the basis for a lasting friendly relationship between the Mamluks and the Golden Horde, the Mongol state in Europe, whose ruler Berke (1256-65) was the first Mongol prince to adopt Islam (an act not followed by his immediate successors).

Things became more complicated after the Ilkhanid Islamization in 1295. In the first phase, under the Ilkhans Ghazan (1295-1304) and Öljeitü (1305-16), relations between the two courts remained hostile, and they competed in the battlefield as well as in the diplomatic channels and in their commitment to Islam. The Ilkhans added Islamic trappings to their Chinggisid ideology, questioned the Mamluks' religious sincerity and their grasp of the diplomatic protocol, and stressed their low and servile origin. The Mamluks emphasized their seniority in Islam and the Caliph's backing and questioned Ilkhanid

Islam. In the battlefield, however, they were more convincing.

In the third phase (1317-35), under the last Ilkhan Abu Sa'id (1317-35) and the third reign of the Mamluk Sultan Muhammad b. Qalawun (1313-41), the two sides ceased to express themselves through hostile diplomacy and war. Especially after the signing of a peace treaty in 1323, they moved into covert struggle for power and prestige that was often manifested in the arena of the holy cities in Hijaz. Both sides accepted the other as "good" Muslims and limited their competition on Muslim supremacy mainly to the field of the Hajj. Ruled by Qalawun's descendants, the Mamluks at this stage had their own dynasty and were therefore less vulnerable to Ilkhanid mockery. Simultaneously the Mamluks revived their relations with the Golden Horde, whose ruler Özbek (r. 1313-41) had also by then adopted Islam, and even managed to secure a Chinggisid princess to marry the Sultan. Their abrupt divorce, however, left a considerable shadow on the bilateral relationship. Broadbridge mentions the wars that intervene with the diplomacy but devotes far less attention to the implications of the peaceful diplomacy (e.g. tightening of commercial and cultural relations; mutual migrations).

The post Ilkhanid order (1335-82) was a period of ideological experimentation of both sides. Many of the competing Ilkhanid successors (in Iran, Iraq and Anatolia) addressed al-Nasir Muhammad and were ready to acknowledge his supremacy in return for his recognition and military assistance. Al-Nasir Muhammad therefore built his image as a regional Muslim sovereign, a patron to lesser kings (whose relative inferiority was manifested by the small size of paper used for their correspondence). His Islamic credentials were also reinforced by reusing the Abbasid Caliph's authority, and the Caliph's banners were sent side by side with Muhammad's to the new vassals. Muhammad's descendants shifted the expressions of kingship into the dynastic idea, enshrined in the Qalawunid dynasty, and sought to preserve the notion of Qalawunid sovereignty over the Ilkhanid successors that they had inherited. As for the post-Ilkhanid rulers, they either followed Ilkhanid models and protocols, combining Chinggisid and Muslim elements, but having to modify them due to their non-Chinggisid descent (the main contenders—Chobanids and Jalayirids—were related to the Ilkhanate due to former marriage alliances through the maternal side, but none—except the Golden Horde—had paternal relation to Chinggis like the Ilkhans). Alternatively, they turned into different models such as reviving Sassanian or Seljuq symbols. Some of them even began to challenge Mamluk ideology, i.e., either their regional supremacy or the older notion of their patronage of the Hijaz.

Tamerlane's rise to power and his invasions into the Middle East (1386-8; 1392-6; 1399-1404) coincide with the fall of the Qalawunids and the rise of the Circassian Barquq (r. 1382-99) and his son Faraj (1399-1405) among the Mamluks. This opened a new and creative period in the Middle Eastern ideological contest. Tamerlane, a non-Chinggisid Muslim, used means similar to those of the Jalayirids and Chupanids to portray himself as defender of both the Chinggisid and Islamic orders. Unlike them, his brilliant military career added a new dimension of personal charisma to his ideological stock, and reinforced his claims to be the Chinggisids' successor. Tamerlane shifted between different Chinggisid models, mainly Ilkhanid and Chaghadaid, but especially during his second campaign made full use of Ilkhanid precedents. This included the emphasis of the Mamluk servile origin (in his letter to the Ottomans, who were Mamluk allies at that time, he called the Mamluks "little Circassian slaves") and even the more peculiar means of resending Hulegu's 1260 letter to Qutuz and (the Ayyubid) al-Nasir Yusuf as his own. Barquq, however, was quick to react to the Timurid challenge (including the Huleguid letter, to which his chancellery replied by quoting al-Nasir Yusuf's response to the original post, and pointing out the outcome of the battle that followed this correspondence, which ended in a clear Mamluk victory), and used it to strengthen his own legitimacy. Barquq also reverted to the older Mamluk models of fighting the non-Muslim Ilkhans, displaying Tamerlane as infidel, despite the latter's pronounced Islamic rhetoric. Simultaneously Barquq portrayed himself a regional kingly patron who could lead Muslim opposition to Tamerlane, and indeed during Temür's first two invasions into the Middle East, embassies of lesser rulers, including the Qara Qoyunlu, Jalayirids and even the Ottomans, flocked into Barquq's court to ask for his protection. Barquq brought his troops into Syria, but while Temür had already retreated before his troops arrived, the journey enabled him to strengthen his relations with the local rulers: Ahmad Jalayir who in 1395 re-conquered Baghdad from Temür did so as Barquq's vassal. Temür returned to the Middle East after he had heard about Barquq's death. Barquq's minor son Faraj, led by conflicting factions of advisers, lost first his position as the regional sovereign and, after Temür's conquest of Syria, his independence, as he had to accept Temür's supremacy. Temür's death, which also opened a new period in Turkish ideology in the Middle East, enabled the Mamluks to reissue their kingship ideals, but it was the Ottoman force that made the best out of the Timurid weakness after 1405.

The book enables one to get a good glimpse of the political and diplomatic culture of both sides, displaying both differences and similarity. A

reference also to the internal images that each side tried to create for its own subjects could have added much to this complex picture. Yet, Broadbridge's solid book will be of value to anyone interested in Mamluk history, the Mongol empire and Tamerlane, as well as in medieval diplomacy and political culture in general.

NOTE

¹ See especially R. Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Reuven Amitai, *The Mongols in the Islamic Lands* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007) and his forthcoming book: *Holy War and Rapprochement: Studies in the Relations between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Mongol Ilkhanate (1260-1335)*; Charles Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate 1327-37* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999) and his many articles.