

Lesson Objective: Students will learn about a primary source by investigating the *Jami'-al-Tawarikh* as a manuscript and learning its content, history, and illustrations.

Homira Pashai 5-19-2020

Studies on Persianate Manuscripts, Arts, and Literature

Illustration: Courtesy of Topkapi Palace Museum, Edinburgh University Library, The Khalili Collection

Source: Charles Melville. The illustration of History in Persian Manuscripts. *Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, 2018. Stefan T. Kamola. *Rashid al-Din and the Making of history in Mongol Iran*. University of Washington, 2013. Dorothea Krawulsky. *The Mongol Ilkhāns and their vizier Rashīd al-Dīn*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2011.

Rashid al-Din and the Making of history in Mongol Iran

In the early 1260s, the grandson of Genghis Khan چنگیز خان, Hulegu هلاکو, instituted the Ilkhanid ایلخانی dynasty in Persia, which ruled for about three-quarters of a century. Hulegu's great-grandson, Ghazan Khan غازان خان, appointed Rashid al-Din رشیدالدین as the vizier of the Ilkhanate around 1298 CE. Rashid al-Din (1247-1318), a physician, historian, and the powerful vizier of Ghazan Khan and Oljaito الجایتو, is the author of *Tarikh-i Ghazani* تاریخ غزانی, or *Tarikh-i Rashidi* تاریخ رشیدی or *Jami'-al-Tawarikh* جامع التواریخ. Ghazan commissioned Rashid al-Din to complete his dynastic history, but Ghazan did not live to see the *Tarikh-i Ghazani*, which was completed in 1304. Rashid al-Din then presented the complete history to Ghazan's brother and successor, Sultan Oljeitu. On the order of Oljeitu, the work was called *Tarikh-i Mubarak-i Ghazani* تاریخ مبارک غزانی. Oljeitu further ordered the continuation of the historical writing of his time to Rashid al-Din. Thus, two other volumes were added by Rashid al-Din, in which all three volumes are known as *Jami'-al-Tawarikh*. *Jami-al-Tawarikh* comprises science, state, faith, and philosophy during Ghazan and Oljeitu. It also includes parts of the history of China and Europe, the history of the prophets from Adam to Muhammad, geography, culture, and Mongol history.

During Rashid al-Din's life, *Jami'-al-Tawarikh* was copied in Persian and Arabic and distributed to all cities around the Ilkhanate.

Rashid al-Din depicts the reign of fifteen Mongol rulers, from Genghis to Ghazan, in the form of stories. He also elaborates on Perso-Islamic universal history with the summary histories of the Turks, Chinese, Jews, Franks, and Indians. A significant portion of his work covers the reign of Oljeitu, while the last volume covers the plan of the regions (suwar al-aqalim) صور اقاليم and charts the lands and territories during his time.

Rashid al-Din was also the founder of Rab'-i Rashidi ربيع رشیدی, a school with its workshop, which was the gathering center of intellectuals, scientists, physicians, artists, and philosophers. But In 1318, Rashid al-Din, who aroused the jealousy of the other powerful vizier, Alishah Gilani تاج الدین علیشاه جیلانی, was condemned and charged with the poisoning of Oljeitu. He was executed along with one of his sons. After his execution, Rab'-i Rashidi was ransacked and started to decline.

As Charles Melville notes, "just as the Mongols may have felt the threat of a loss of identity through their absorption into the Muslim world (and China), the trauma and destruction caused by the Mongol invasions (1216–1221) and half a century (1258–1295) of their alien and pagan rule no doubt left contemporary writers anxious for the survival of their civilization. As Ghazan Khan brought the Mongols into the fold of Islam, the work also celebrates the continuity of Persian and Islamic civilization after the massive but temporary shock of the conquests." Thus, Rashid al-Din's *Jam'-al-Tawarikh* is a manuscript of paramount importance.

See the link below for an exhibition on Rashid al-Din's *Jam'-al-Tawarikh*.

<https://persianconference2014.wordpress.com/rashid-al-din-13142014/>

<https://www.khalilicollections.org/collections/islamic-art/khalili-collection-islamic-art-the-jami-al-tawarikh-of-rashid-al-din-mss727-folio-14b/>

Jami'-al-Tawarikh, **Battle of Badr**



Jami'-al-Tawarikh, Joseph and His Brothers



Jami'-al-Tawarikh, Birth of Prophet Muhammad



Jami'-al-Tawarikh, The Death of Moses on Mount Nebo



Jami'-al-Tawarikh, Jonah and the Whale



Jami'-al-Tawarikh, The Saljuq King



You are entrusted with writing your family history in connection with the city you grew up in, what tenets do you choose to add in writing the history? Consider writing the history of your town and your family in two to three pages and sharing it with the class. In your writings, you are free to add illustrations, charts, clip art, etc.

Terms:

Ilkhanate

Vizier

Rab'-i Rashidi

Hulegu Khan Mongol

