1 India, Iran, and Anatolia from the tenth to the sixteenth century

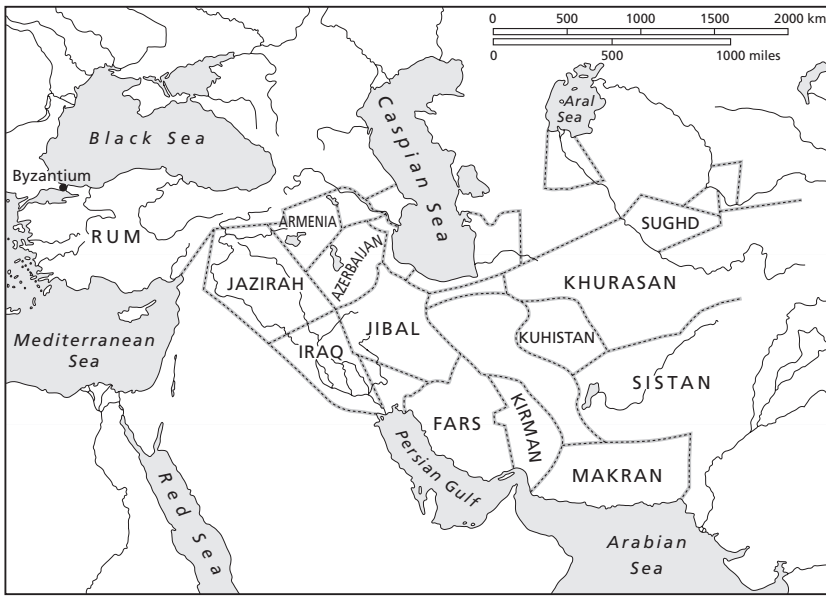
Introduction

Founders of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires established their states in territories long characterized by political fragmentation, religious distinctions, the flowering of Greco-Islamic philosophy, the pervasive influence of Iranian administrative traditions and cultural norms, and Turco-Mongol military dominance. It is impossible to comprehend either the continuity or the novelty of these three empires without both being aware of these legacies and also understanding how they affected the histories of northern India, Iran, and Anatolia in the centuries prior to the founding of the Ottoman state in the early fourteenth century and the Safavid and Mughal states two centuries later.

The decline and eventual destruction of the 'Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258) was the first of two fundamental, interrelated changes that altered the political landscape of these contiguous regions between the tenth and sixteenth centuries.[1] In the eighth century, Muslim rulers governed a vast multi-ethnic, religiously diverse empire stretching from Spain to Central Asia; by the tenth century 'Abbasid Caliphs had lost control of Baghdad, their capital, as well as more distant Muslim-ruled territories. While the 'Abbasids retained their status as the legitimate leaders of the Sunni Muslim world, in the mid-tenth century the Buyids (r. 945–1055), a Shi'i dynasty from northern Iran, occupied Baghdad and its adjacent territories, while independent Muslim dynasts, usually known as sultans, controlled most of the former provinces of the Caliphate.[2]

[1] Ira Lapidus provides a comprehensive political and religious history of the Islamic world in *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn. 2002).

[2] By the early tenth century this process was far enough advanced to stimulate Muslim scholars to produce political theories rationalizing the decline of the Caliphate and justifying the rule of independent Muslim sultans. One such individual, al-Mawardi (d. 1052) argued for the necessity of what already existed in the persons of Ghaznavid sultans of Afghanistan and Iran and other regional Muslim rulers. See Erwin J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 1968), 27–37 and 243, n. 2, where al-Mawardi is quoted as codifying the process by which Caliphs legitimized rulers like Mahmud of Ghazna by formally investing them with authority.



Map 2. The eastern provinces of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate

This political fragmentation is the second major political fact of the era. Sultans, an evocative term derived from the Arabic root signifying power, derived their authority solely from military prowess, lacking the legitimacy of the Caliphs as the hereditary political leaders of the Muslim *umma* or community. Nonetheless, the sanctity and prestige of the Caliphs' titular Islamic sovereignty prompted most of these regional sultans to seek legitimacy by portraying themselves as agents of the ‘Abbasids, petitioning for investiture by the reigning Caliph and demonstrating their loyalty and commitment to the greater Islamic cause by including his name on their coins. As self-proclaimed servants of the Caliphs, sultans usually characterized their wars against non-Muslims in ideological terms, either as *ghazas*, heroic warfare on the Muslim frontiers, or as *jihad*s, strivings or campaigns to expand the *dar al-Islam*, the zone of Muslim sovereignty. In Anatolia, Iran, and India most of these independent local rulers were Turks, although Iranians and Afghans also formed dynasties in these regions.

During these centuries the Islamic world was also characterized by religious complexity: two major sectarian divisions of Sunnis and Shi‘as, doctrinal differences within both Sunni and Shi‘i communities, and distinctly different attitudes toward salvation and the relative importance of orthodox practice and individual piety. Sunnis comprised the majority of

the Muslim population and the 'Abbasid Caliphs were Sunnis, as were most regional rulers. Sunnis ("traditionalists" in Arabic) recognized the legitimacy of the first four Caliphs, the "rightly guided" political successors to the Prophet Muhammad, and regarded these men and their successors – the Umayyad Caliphs of Damascus (661–750) and the 'Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad – as guardians of the political integrity of the Muslim world. In Sunni Muslim eyes *khalifa*s or caliphs were ordinary mortals and emphatically not individuals who possessed unique religious status or divinely inspired insight. Sunni worshipers usually adhered to one of four Islamic legal schools – sometimes the source of sectarian tension, but these differences paled in comparison with the distinction between Sunnis and Shi'as.[3]

Shi'as were found in the Yemen, Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran and controlled some territories, most notably Egypt, where the militantly Shi'i Fatimid dynasty had held sway since the late tenth century CE and ruled until 1171. Fatimid sultans, like other Shi'as, did not recognize the legitimacy of the first three Caliphs, the 'Abbasids, or other Sunni rulers, since they held that only descendants of 'Ali, the Prophet Muhammad's first cousin and son-in-law and the fourth "rightly guided" Caliph, could be authentic leaders of the Muslim *umma*. Shi'is' belief in the sole legitimacy of 'Ali and his descendents, known as Imams, reflected their belief that 'Ali's bloodline inherited the unique ability to interpret the esoteric meaning of God's final revelation, the Quran. The most important issue dividing Shi'i Muslims was the question of the number of legitimate Imams, with most Shi'as eventually agreeing there were twelve, while Isma'ilis, such as the Fatimids, asserted there were only seven.[4]

Between the 'Abbasid collapse and the rise of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires, a popular form of Islam, Sufism, spread throughout the Sunni and Shi'i Islamic world and profoundly influenced Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal societies.[5] Supposedly named after the *suf*, a woolen shift worn by some of its early ascetic practitioners, Sufis taught a form of Islamic "protestantism." It was protestant in the sense that Sufis deemphasized traditional public worship in *masjid*s or mosques in favor of individual study with a religious teacher, a *pir* or *shaikh*, who could guide

[3] Noel J. Coulson surveys Islamic legal history in *A History of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh University Press, repr. 2006).

[4] Farhad Daftary discusses the most important medieval Isma'ili societies in Egypt, Syria, and Iran in *Ismailis in Medieval Muslim Societies* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005).

[5] Of the many introductions to Sufism see William Chittick, *Sufism* (Oxford: One World Publications, 2000); Carl Ernst, *Teachings of Sufism* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1999); and Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975).

or inspire in them a passionate love for God, leading to spiritual union and personal salvation. This reciprocal love – of mankind for God and God for mankind – was the signature trait of Sufi worship. Many *pir*s or *shaikh*s offered their disciples a deeply satisfying piety they did not experience in mosque services, and Sufis' religiosity can be understood from their poems, which represent some of the most beautiful verses in the Islamic world. As many Sufis intended these poems to be sung, they collectively represent a kind of Muslim hymnal. Two of the most important Sufis, whose ideas and writings influenced Muslims in Anatolia, Iran, and India, were the Andalusian Muhammad Ibn al-'Arabi (1165–1240), generally known just as Ibn 'Arabi, and the Iranian Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi (1207–73). Ibn 'Arabi, also known as *al-shaikh al-akbar*, "the greatest master," was influential for his belief that God is the sole reality, summarized in the phrase *wahdat al-wujud*, "the unity of being," while Rumi was and is best known for his exquisite Persian-language devotional poetry.[6]

Some members of the clerical class – the theologians, mosque personnel, religious teachers and religious judges, collectively known as the *'ulama*, those 'learned' in Islamic knowledge and practice – were Sufis themselves. Many *'ulama*, however, viewed Sufism with distaste or even explicitly condemned it as un-Islamic, either because of the extraordinary veneration Sufis often showed to their teachers, which seemed to critics a form of polytheism, or simply because they used music in their devotions, which most *'ulama* held to be explicitly condemned in the Quran. In fact, the practice of individual Sufi orders ranged from conservative, restrained silent prayer to ecstatic, emotional song and dance. Yet despite orthodox criticism of various aspects of Sufism, this form of devotion spread rapidly throughout the Islamic world in the form of independent spiritual lineages or orders, many of whose leaders had close personal relationships with Muslim monarchs; it also exerted a powerful social and even political influence among both the rural and the urban Muslim populations. Sometimes, as in the Safavid case, these spiritual lineages evolved into political dynasties.

If many Muslim clerics were suspicious of or openly hostile to Sufism, most *'ulama* were also deeply opposed to philosophy that might, as in Christian Europe, implicitly or explicitly challenge the assumptions of revealed religion. Many Greek, Indian, and Iranian philosophical and scientific texts had been translated into Arabic during the reigns of the 'Abbasid Caliphs al-Mansur (r. 754–75), Harun al-Rashid (r. 786–809)

[6] For introductions to both men see William C. Chittick, *Ibn Arabi Heir to the Prophets* (Oxford: One World Publications, 2007) and Franklin Lewis, *Rumi Past and Present, East and West* (Oxford: One World Publications, 2005).

and al-Mansur's grandson, al-Ma'mun (r. 813–33). While medical and astronomical texts were often favored for their practical uses, many works of Plato, Aristotle, Galen, and others also were translated and Barmakids (Iranian ministers serving the 'Abbasids) were particularly influential in this effort.

Iranians had previously been exposed to Greek philosophy, especially after Christians closed the Platonic academy in Athens, prompting many Greek thinkers to migrate to Iran; and Iranian intellectuals also became the intellectual leaders in transmitting and advancing Greek philosophical thought.[7] Nearly all the principal intellectual lights of pre-Mongol Greco-Islamic philosophical and scientific thought were Iranians, and Iranians also used this intellectual inheritance in the Safavid period to create a sophisticated Shi'i theology. The principal exception to this Iranian dominance was the Spanish Muslim scholar Ibn Rushd (d. 1198), whose summaries of Aristotle's works were studied by the philosophical historian Ibn Khaldun.

Philosophy was only one aspect of Iranian influence that shaped the art, culture, and thought of the Islamic world in general and that of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals in particular. In the first century following the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Islam had been overwhelmingly an Arab and Arabic-language enterprise, but in different ways Iranians and Turks began to play important roles in the Islamic world following the "revolution" that brought the 'Abbasids to power in 750. Iranian Muslims, such as the Barmakids, who were legatees of the sophisticated pre-Islamic Sasanian empire (226–651), became a conspicuous presence as highly trained administrators at the 'Abbasid court after the 'Abbasids moved the Muslim capital from Damascus to Baghdad, the latter city being located in a region of historic Iranian imperial control and cultural presence. Later Iranians performed this critical bureaucratic function for many regional Turkic dynasties. Then, as the 'Abbasid Caliphs' power atrophied in the late ninth and tenth centuries, some Iranian families established independent dynasties.

One of the most influential of these early Perso-Islamic dynasties was the Samanids of Bukhara in Mawarannahr, the region of Central Asia known in Western sources as Transoxiana. The dynasty was founded by an Iranian Muslim land-owning family, whose members first served as governors under the 'Abbasid Caliphs during the early ninth century; by 892 they had become fully independent rulers. Their rule initiated a

[7] For a summary of the evolution of Greco-Islamic philosophical thought see Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 3rd edn. 2004), chapters 1 and 2.

period in Mawarannahr and Iran memorably characterized as the "Persian intermezzo," a period preceding the Turkic and Mongol invasions of Iran, during which there was a renaissance of Iranian culture produced by Muslims and expressed in "new Persian," that is Persian written in the Arabic script.[8] Prominent local Iranians, administrators, scholarly families, and Iranian poets and painters developed a new Perso-Islamic culture, and from the tenth to the sixteenth century Iranians and their cultural surrogates produced an influential corpus of political and historical literature, verse, art, and religious and scientific treatises that constituted fundamental legacies for Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals.[9] It is difficult to exaggerate the degree of Iranian prestige and influence in all aspects of intellectual and cultural life among Indian, Central Asian, and Ottoman Muslims. Even Mehmet II, the Ottoman conqueror of Constantinople, "showed his marked predilection for the Persian language and literature, and in general for the Persian spirit. … His preference for Persians, whom he distinguished with important government posts and who to the end were his favored associates at court, naturally aroused envy and dissatisfaction among native Turks."[10]

At virtually the same time that Iranians began reasserting themselves as Persian Muslims, Turks emerged as a third ethnic and linguistic presence in the Islamic world. As with Iranian influence in cultural and intellectual life, it is difficult to overstate the military and political importance of Turks in Muslim territories from the tenth century onward, for they ruled much of Anatolia, Iran, and India for centuries. In the view of the late sixteenth-century Ottoman bureaucrat and historian Mustafa Âli, "Turks and Tatars [Mongols]" dominated the third phase of world history, following the demise of the 'Abbasid Caliphate. Âli writes about this epoch:

> Herein is comprised the tale of the Tatar people,
> And all that concerns the affairs of the Oghuz,
> The Tîmûrid dynasty and the Cengizid house.
> Those sharp-headed plunderers
> Have all been described in this volume,

[8] "Persian Intermezzo" is a term coined by the Russian émigré scholar Vladimir Minorsky. See "La domination des Dailamites," Publications de la Société des Etudes Iraniennes, no. 3 (Paris, 1932), 21.

[9] The multi-volume *Cambridge History of Iran* discusses all aspects of pre-Islamic and Islamic Iranian history but, for the Safavid dynasty and its important Timurid predecessors see Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, *The Timurid and Safavid Periods* (Cambridge University Press, 1986). For a concise survey of pre-Islamic and Islamic Iranian history see Gene R. Garthwaite, *The Persians* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).

[10] Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, trans. Ralph Manheim, ed. William C. Hickman (Bollingen University Press, 1978), 472.

From the start of the story to its end;
From this garden, like a moist blossom,
Bloomed those praiseworthy ones who are the Ottoman House.[11]

As Ottomans they developed Ottoman Turkish into the third literary language of Middle Eastern Muslims after Arabic and new Persian.

Central Asian Turks had been absorbed into the Islamic world following the Muslim conquest of Mawarannahr in the eighth century, and many Turks converted to Islam over the next two centuries, but it was not until the later 'Abbasid period that they became a significant presence in the central Islamic lands. Turks entered the Islamic world in two ways: as military slaves and as pastoral nomads. As early as the ninth century Turkic slaves became a significant Muslim military force, when the future 'Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'tasim (r. 833–42) founded a corps of approximately 3,000 Turkish slaves in Baghdad, hoping they would form the nucleus of a loyal, disciplined army to complement and partly supplant the tribally organized and habitually unreliable Arab tribal forces, which had led the Arab-Muslim conquests. In later centuries Turkic slaves, known as either *ghulams* or *mamluks*, were frequently trained to perform the same function for local dynasties, whose rulers sought to organize a dependable army, loyal solely to the reigning sultan. Yet in every case where they were employed, such slaves eventually became a threat to the dynasties that trained them, and by the late tenth century military slaves of the Iranian Samanids established the earliest Muslim "slave" sultanate in the eastern Afghan city of Ghazna, using the city as a base for the Muslim conquest of north India.[12]

Simultaneously with the founding of the Ghaznavid state, Turkic nomads began migrating into the Middle East from Mawarannahr in large numbers as partly Islamized Turkic pastoralists. These tribes, comprising a sprawling, loosely knit confederation of semi-Islamized Oghuz Turks, began making inroads into Ghaznavid territories in northeastern Iran and quickly overwhelmed the Sultanate's defenses. During the late tenth and early eleventh century they poured on to the Iranian plateau, nominally led by one of their dominant tribes, the Saljuqs. Within a century Saljuq-led Oghuz tribes established a state in Iran, and descendants of these tribes were not only precursors of the Safavid state but provided the principal military forces of the Safavid dynasty. Some Oghuz tribes also began raiding the Byzantine borderlands as early as the tenth century, and in 1071 a Saljuq-led Oghuz light cavalry army defeated the Byzantine Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes. Afterwards,

[11] Quoted by Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 278.
[12] For an extensive discussion of this critical slave institution in Islamic Iran, India, and the Ottoman Empire see Halil Inalcık, "Ghulâm," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, II, Brill Online.

Oghuz Turks began settling in large numbers in Anatolia, where one of their families eventually founded the Ottoman Empire.[13]

Mongols also invaded, ravaged, and ruled parts of Iran and Anatolia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but it was the Turks – first Turkic slaves, then the Oghuz tribesmen, and later, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Turk Temür and his descendants known as Timurids – who ultimately had the most profound and lasting political influence in Iran, Anatolia, and India. If Iranians were important in the pre-imperial era for their administrative and cultural influence, various Turkic lineages constituted the dominant military and political elite in Anatolia, Iran, and India in the pre-imperial era and later. Turks, or in the Safavid case a partly Turkic dynasty, ruled Iran from the tenth century until 1921, Anatolia from the twelfth century to the present, and northern India beginning in the late tenth century and continuing intermittently until 1526, after which Turks, in the form of Timurids but commonly known in India as Mughals, ruled the north Indian heartland for a further two hundred years.[14]

The Ghaznavids and the origins of Muslim rule in India

The Ghaznavid dynasty (*c.* 998–1040) represents the earliest example of a Turkic sultanate whose Muslim rulers patronized Sunni Islam and Persianate culture. Its rulers, who originated as *ghulams* or military slaves, established a state covering parts of Mawarannahr, Iran, and India.[15] They were also responsible for the establishment of Muslim rule in northwestern India, five centuries before the founding of the Mughal Empire.

Mahmud, the founder of the Ghaznavid state, began his life as a Turkic *ghulam* serving the Perso-Islamic Samanid dynasty of Bukhara. As rulers in Bukhara, the Sunni Samanids straddled the boundary of the Iranian and Turkic worlds in Mawarannahr, where they obtained Turks as captives in military campaigns or purchased them in local slave markets. Their ability to control and tax these slave markets also gave them a substantial income. Samanid rulers converted these Turks to Sunni Islam, taught them their own language, Persian, and trained them as soldiers. Like the later

[13] John Andrew Boyle, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, V, *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods* (Cambridge University Press, 1968). See Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), for a well-annotated examination of the Ottoman Empire as an empire.

[14] "Mughal" or more accurately "Mughul" is the Persian word for Mongol. Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire was descended from Temür on his father's side and from Chinggis Qan through his mother. The Indian dynasty is thus often and more accurately labeled, "Timurid-Mughal."

[15] The definitive history of the dynasty is by Clifford Edmund Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran, 994–1040* (Edinburgh University Press, 1963).

Map 3. The Ghaznavid Empire in 1030

Ottoman slave troops, the Janissaries, Samanid *ghulams* soon became a powerful, semi-autonomous faction within the state.

In 962 Alptegin, one of the Samanid Turkic slave commanders, a Muslim but known by his typically Turkic heroic name meaning "bold champion," supported the losing candidate in a Samanid succession struggle, and then fled with his troops to the distant Samanid outpost of Ghazna, a half-day's march south-west of Kabul. At first he and his officers constituted a petty, *ad hoc* oligarchy of Turkic slave soldiers, but in 997 when Subuktegin, one of Alptegin's successors, died, he founded a dynasty by bequeathing power to his two sons. One of them, Mahmud, became the sole Ghaznavid ruler by 998, and he personally exemplified most of the trends of this period in the nominal 'Abbasid territories to the east of Baghdad. Contemporaries recognized him and his descendants as sultans, a title later Ghaznavid rulers used on their coins. Not only had these military slaves founded a dynasty, but the fact that the new ruler's name, Mahmud, was Arabic and Islamic also illustrates the importance of the Ghaznavids' Islamic identity to a dynasty whose members possessed little legitimacy beyond their military prowess.

While in political terms Mahmud (r. 998–1030) presided over what became a highly centralized Turkic military despotism, he regarded himself

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511818646.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in cultural terms as a Perso-Islamic heir to the Samanids.[16] After a Turkic nomadic confederation, the Qarakhanids, overran Mawarannahr and occupied the Samanid capital of Bukhara in 999, Mahmud focused his territorial ambitions on the agrarian and urban centers of northeastern and central Iran. He exploited the wealth of nearby India to fund his Iranian conquests by carrying out a series of plundering expeditions in the subcontinent in the late tenth and early eleventh century, ravaging the Punjab and, late in his life, penetrating as far as Kannauj in the western Gangetic valley. Even though Mahmud never exhibited a desire to do more than loot India, by the end of his life he had established a Ghaznavid garrison in the Punjabi city of Lahore, the first major Muslim settlement in north India.

Mahmud and his *ghulam* companions were professional warriors and conquerors, but they were also Muslims. Therefore Mahmud legitimized his conquests by presenting himself as a devoted Sunni Muslim servant of the 'Abbasid Caliph. He depicted himself as a *ghazi*, a Muslim frontier warrior, for his plundering expeditions in India against Hindu cities or temples, such as the famous Hindu temple at Somnath in Gujerat.[17] Mahmud also justified attacks on Buyid territories in Iran and Iraq by citing these Iranians' Shi'i faith and his own support for the Sunni 'Abbasid Caliph, whom the Buyids then controlled

Mahmud sought legitimacy not only as a devoted Sunni Muslim ruler, but also through his patronage of prestigious Iranian intellectuals, whether poets or other scholars. He had grown up in the culturally Persian Samanid world, and used Persian in his administration. Patronage of Iranians, whether poets or scientists, was an instinctual way for a Muslim ruler in a region long part of the Persian cultural sphere to demonstrate his civilized credentials. Mahmud, despite his dynasty's plebeian origins and the frigid isolation of his capital city, managed to coerce or attract to his court two of the most important Iranian scholars of his age: the scientist al-Biruni (973–1048) and the poet Firdausi (*c*. 940–1020).

Al-Biruni was an Iranian from Mawarannahr, who was one of the three or four most important scientists in the pre-industrial Muslim world. Like his contemporary, the Iranian philosopher and physician Ibn Sina (*c*. 980–1037), the slightly later mathematician and poet 'Umar Khayyam (1048–1123), and the thirteenth-century Iranian Shi'i theologian and scientist al-Tusi (1201–74), al-Biruni was a Greco-Islamic scholar whose conception of and approach to science was derived from

[16] Mahmud in Arabic means "praised" or "laudable." By taking an Arabic name, Mahmud emphasized his Islamic rather than his Turkic identity.

[17] Regarding Somnath and the various stories regarding Mahmud's expeditions, see Romila Thapar, *Somanatha* (London and New York: Verso, 2005).

Aristotle's natural philosophy.[18] He wrote more than a hundred treatises, some in Persian but most in Arabic, the first scientific language of Muslims, on subjects ranging from astronomy to mineralogy. Once, while resident in the Punjab, al-Biruni used trigonometric functions to estimate accurately the circumference of the earth. As a result of long stays in India, where he learned Sanskrit, al-Biruni wrote the single most accurate and sympathetic portrait of India and its Brahmanical, upper-caste culture that was available before the nineteenth century.[19]

His literary contemporary, the poet Firdausi, was an equally important individual, for his Persian-language poem, the *Shah-nama* or "Book (*nama*) of Kings (*shah*)," had an incalculably profound impact on the Persianate world, which then included Mawarannahr, Iran, Afghanistan, and the Punjab.[20] Firdausi was a native of Sabzawar in the region of northeastern Iran known as Khurasan, and studied in the nearby town of Nishapur, later the home of 'Umar Khayyam. His verse epic, which was based on pre-Islamic Persian language Sasanian written sources and oral traditions, relates the battles, personal conflicts, and infatuations of pre-Islamic Iranian monarchs, some legendary, some verifiably historical. The *Shah-nama* almost immediately became the revered cultural memory of the Iranian peoples and the model for later verse tales of monarchs, heroic and otherwise, in Mawarannahr, Iran, India, and Anatolia. Iranian names from the *Shah-nama* appear in later dynastic lists throughout these regions as legitimizing titles, and later writers commonly mined the text for aphorisms, whose cultural authority was second only to that of the Quran.

Subsequent Ghaznavids also patronized Iranian literati. These included the influential Sufi poet Sana'i Ghazanavi (1045–1131), the court panegyrist Mas'ud-i Sa'd Salman (1046–*c*.1121), and the historian Bayhaqi (995–1077), whose history of the later Ghaznavids was influenced by, among others, the Greek physician and philosopher Galen.[21]

[18] His full name was Abu Rayhan al-Biruni. Ibn Sina, known generally as Abu Ali Sina, is famous in the West (primarily for his medical text) as Avicenna. 'Umar Khayyam, or Ghiyas al-Din Abu'l Fath 'Umar ibn Ibrahim Khayyam Nishaburi, a mathematician, became famous in nineteenth-century England from Edward Fitzgerald's renditions of his four-line poems known as "rubaiyat." Nasir al-Din Tusi was a Shi'i polymath, who wrote treatises on Greco-Islamic science and Shi'i theology, and practiced astronomy under the patronage of the Mongol rulers of Iran.

[19] Ainslee Embree has edited an abridged version of this massive treatise. See Muhammad ibn Ahmad Biruni, *Târikh al-Hind*, ed. Ainslee Embree (New York: Norton, 1971).

[20] An excellent recent translation is Dick Davis's *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2006). The poet's given name was Abu'l Qasim Mansur Tusi. "Firdausi" was a pen-name, in Persian, "firdaus" means garden or vineyard.

[21] J. T. P. de Bruijn analyzes Ghaznavi's work in *Of Piety and Poetry*: *The Interaction of Religion and Literature in the Life and Works of Hakîm Sanâ'î of Ghazna* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), while Salman's verse is discussed by Sunil Sharma, *Persian Poetry at the Indian Frontier: Mas'ud*

These latter three writers were Iranians and their work contributed to the increasing prestige of Perso-Islamic culture and, in the case of Salman (whose family emigrated from the Iranian town of Hamadan to Lahore in the Punjab), helped to establish Persian as a prestigious lingua franca in northwestern India. A further example of a major Persian-language writer who settled in Lahore in Ghaznavid times is the scholar Hujwiri, whose history of Sufis, the *Kashf al-Mahjub* (ca. 1120), represents the first extant Sufi treatise written in the Persian language.[22]

The increased presence of Iranian literati and religious scholars in Lahore is one sign of the degree to which Ghaznavid political fortunes deteriorated after the mid-eleventh century. Thus, although Mahmud still controlled territories stretching from southeastern Iran to the Punjab when he died in 1030, his hold on the rich, strategic Khurasan region of northeastern Iran was threatened by the inroads of Oghuz Turks, disparate bands of tribesmen many of whom were only nominally loyal to the leading Oghuz tribe, the Saljuqs. When Saljuq forces defeated a Ghaznavid army in 1040 it forced the Ghaznavids out of Khurasan and back on their Afghan and Indian possessions, and in 1163 the Saljuqs seized Ghazna itself, leaving the Ghaznavids with little more than the Punjab.[23] The later Ghaznavid monarchs' residence in Lahore attracted more Iranian intellectuals there who might previously have settled in Ghazna, and this date when Lahore became the capital of a weakened Ghaznavid dynasty marks the foundation of the first north Indian-based Muslim state.

It was, however, a state which indigenous Indian rulers initially identified as Turushka or Turkic, rather than Islamic. This was the Indian perception, despite the Ghaznavids' Muslim faith and multi-ethnic army, which by the end of Mahmud's reign may have included as many Iranians, Indians, and Afghans as Turks. The inscriptions in which the word *Turushka* appears offers a revealing hint at the dual identities of Ghaznavid rulers: one an obvious and proudly held ethnic and linguistic self-image, and the other a sincere faith but also a calculated legitimizing presentation made to the 'Abbasid Caliphs and the wider Islamic world.[24] No Indians, apparently,

Sa'd Salman of Lahore (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2000). For Bayhaqi see the unpublished MA dissertation by Ranin Kazemi, "Morality and Idealism: Abu'l-Fazl Bayhaqi's Historical Thought in Tarikh-i Bayhaqi," Ohio State University, 2005.

[22] R. A. Nicolson, *The Kashf al-Mahjúb*: *The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism* (London: Luzac, 1976).

[23] See C. E. Bosworth, *The Later Ghaznavids. Splendour and Decay: The Dynasty in Afghanistan and Northern India 1040–1166* (Edinburgh University Press, 1977).

[24] Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*: *A Political and Military History* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 125 and 130. Jackson's work is the definitive political and military history of the succession of dynasties collectively known as the Delhi Sultanate.

believed they were being invaded by Iranians, despite the increasing numbers of Persian-language poets gathering in Lahore.

Ghaznavid rule in Lahore initiated a series of chronically unstable Muslim dynasties in north India, collectively known as the Delhi Sultanate, whose early rulers are known as the Slave Sultans of Delhi. The instability of these dynasties reflects their failure to establish the kind of charismatic, enduring legitimacy that later gave dynastic stability to the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals. The Delhi Sultans perpetuated the administrative and cultural traits of the Ghaznavid state as a centralized military despotism whose members used Persian as one of their principal administrative languages. These rulers patronized Persian-language literati, constructed mosques and other public buildings associated with Islamic piety and social welfare, and sought legitimacy from the 'Abbasid Caliphs, at least until the last Caliph was murdered by the Mongols in 1258. While the Ghaznavid dynasty's immediate successor and nemesis was an Iranian-Muslim dynasty (the Ghurids, who overran Lahore in 1186), it was another Turkic Muslim slave dynasty that firmly established Muslim power in the north Indian heartland at Delhi in 1206.

The "Slave Sultans" of Delhi

The Ghurid army was commanded by a Turkic *ghulam*, Aibak, an Ilbari Turk, and it was Aibak and his son-in-law Iltutmish (r. 1211–36), both generally known by their Turkic names, who firmly established Muslim power in the north Indian heartland. Iltutmish, who with his father built some of north India's first mosques, was formally recognized by the 'Abbasid Caliph al-Muntasir, who awarded the Turk the *laqab*, or honorary Muslim title, of Nasir Amir al-Mu'minin, the "Defender of the Commander of the Faithful."[25] Iltutmish arranged to have his children succeed him, thus founding the new dynasty, but, lacking any legitimacy beyond this distant caliphal recognition and an unstable kind of military camaraderie, his descendants were constantly threatened by shifting coalitions of Turkic and Afghan officers. These men first recognized and then deposed four of his successors before settling on a fifth descendant, who is known by a noticeably non-Turkic Arabic Muslim *laqab* of Nasir al-Din, the "Defender of Religion" (r. 1246–66).

Nasir al-Din briefly stabilized the regime between 1256 and 1266, and with the aid of his deputy and eventual murderer, Balban (r. 1266–87),

[25] Robert Hillenbrand, "Political Symbolism in Early Indo-Islamic Mosque Architecture: The Case of Ajmir," *Iran* 26 (1988), 105–17. The Ajmir mosque may have been built on the site of a Jain monastery.

Map 4. The Delhi Sultanate in 1400

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511818646.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

another *ghulam*, campaigned relentlessly to hold the Turkic Muslim bridgehead in north India against their most formidable Hindu opponents, various Rajput rajas, whose descendants would later offer fierce initial resistance to Mughal rule. Nasir al-Din and his *ghulam* Balban also successfully defended India's northwest frontier against the Mongols, who by then ruled Mawarannahr, Iran, and Afghanistan and periodically sent detachments into the subcontinent, raiding even as far as Delhi. However, despite its military success this first true Indo-Muslim dynasty succumbed to the factional infighting of Turkic officers and members of the Khalji family, who usurped control of the state and founded a new dynasty in 1290.[26]

By this time the rule of Turks in north India had persisted long enough to give them a form of collective legitimacy, for when the Khaljis overthrew the Ilbaris some of the Delhi population apparently resented the new rulers because they thought they were not Turks. In fact the Khaljis were probably Turks who had been long settled in Afghanistan, but the confusion about their identity accurately reflects the lack of verifiable information about this family and their supporters. Turks or Afghans, the Khaljis began their short-lived dynasty with the bloody infighting that marked the history of the Delhi Sultanate. The new sultan, Jalal al-Din Khalji, was murdered by his nephew, 'Ala al-Din; in 1296; the latter then blinded, imprisoned, or executed all of Jalal al-Din's male relatives. 'Ala al-Din's initial ferocity, while not qualitatively different from that of many previous Delhi Sultans, foreshadowed a military dictatorship of exceptional brutality, vitality, and military success. 'Ala al-Din successfully repulsed a series of threatening Chaghatai Mongol attacks in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and extended Turkic Muslim paramountcy west into Rajasthan and Gujerat and south into the central Indian region known as the Deccan.[27] He also foreshadowed later Mughal policy toward Rajput chiefs by marrying the daughters of defeated Hindu rajas and allowing these men to rule as his tributary vassals.

Status of non-Muslim subjects

This seemingly conciliatory policy toward indigenous Hindu rulers, by a man known for his ferocity, reflected the reality of the thickly populated Indian countryside, replete with thousands of well-ensconced local rulers

[26] Jackson, *Delhi Sultanate*, 82–5.

[27] Chaghatai Mongols reached the environs of Delhi during his reign. Peter Jackson gives details of their later incursions in "The Mongols and the Delhi Sultanate in the Reign of Muhammad Tughluq (1325–51)," *Central Asiatic Journal* 19, nos. 1–2 (1975), 118–57.

of varying importance posing a formidable problem for Muslim conquerors who commanded relatively small numbers of Muslim troops. No South Asian government prior to the British Raj was capable of eradicating the many autonomous or independent rulers and effectively disarming the Indian countryside. Both Delhi Sultans and their Mughal successors had to make innumerable compromises in order to dominate north India, or at least to control the cities and the major transportation arteries and overawe rulers in the countryside. Predominantly Hindu India was never overrun and overwhelmed by masses of Muslims, something that did happen to the relatively small Greek Orthodox population of Anatolia, which had been experiencing waves of Oghuz Turkic migration since the Saljuqs defeated the Byzantine army in 1071.

Both the Delhi Sultanate and the later Mughal Empire represented military occupations. Compared with the Hindu population and that of other indigenous non-Muslim Indians, the combined total of Turkic, Afghan, and Iranian Muslims who invaded India or settled there during Ghaznavid or Sultanate rule comprised fairly small numbers of soldiers, bureaucrats, literati, *'ulama*, Sufis and merchants. The fourteenth century Indo-Persian historian and sometime courtier Zia al-Din Barani acknowledged this reality when he irritably complained in his unemployed, embittered old age about the number and prosperity of "idolators" (by his description, Hindus) living in Delhi – the capital, from his perspective, of a Muslim rather than a Turkic state.

Writing as a Muslim trained in the traditional religious sciences and in the belletristic knowledge of Islamic history and Persian literature known as *adab*, Barani criticized a number of aspects of Delhi society in a 1358/59 "mirror for princes" text. His critique included objections to bestowing offices on lowborn Muslims and to tolerance of philosophers, who were, he remarked in tones of pious orthodoxy, "enemies of correct religion and enemies of the Prophet." However, the number of Muslim philosophers on the streets of fourteenth-century Delhi undoubtedly paled in comparison with the population of prosperous Hindus, Barani's primary target. He complained that Delhi sultans taxed Hindus, but otherwise left them in peace – in his eyes, a policy that demonstrated their lack of commitment to Islam:

> The desire for overthrowing infidels and knocking down Idolators and Polytheists does not fill the hearts of the Muslim kings (of India). … Out of consideration for the fact that infidels and polytheists are payers of Tribute and protected persons (*zimmi*s) the infidels are honoured, distinguished, favoured and made eminent … and in their Capital Delhi … Muslim kings not only allow but are pleased with the fact that infidels, Polytheists, idol-worshippers and cow dung (*sargin*) worshippers build Houses like palaces, wear clothes of brocade and ride Arab horses

Caparisoned with gold and silver ornaments. … They are called *rais* (great rulers), *rana*s (minor rulers), *thakur*s (warriors), *sahah*s (bankers), *mehta*s (clerks) and *pandit*s (priests).[28]

Beyond revealing the continued existence of substantial Hindu rulers and indigenous warrior, commercial, and religious classes, Barani's complaint illustrates that the Delhi sultans were monarchs first and Muslims second when it came to realistic politics and taxation policy. Most Mughal, Ottoman, and even the fervently Shi'i Safavid rulers also preferred to tax their non-Muslim subjects rather than trying forcibly to convert or eradicate them – a ruinously expensive idea for Indo-Muslim monarchs especially, with their enormous non-Muslim populations. There was textual (that is Quranic) justification for this policy regarding Jews and Christians who were *dhimmis* (Persian: *zimmi*s), "protected persons" and *ahl-i kitab*, "people of the book," that is, people with a revealed scripture in the Mosaic prophetic tradition. In India this category more often than not was extended, without concern for textual consistency, to Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and other non-Muslims. Apart from simply sanctifying a realistic practice, the special tax levied on non-Muslims, known as *jizya*, brought in substantial sums to the Delhi Sultans and later rulers with substantial non-Muslim communities. This was particularly true of the Ottoman Empire, whose rulers Barani would also have found wanting as Muslims, but who badly needed the income realized from taxes on their substantial non-Muslim, predominantly Christian, religious communities.

Economy and administration

In addition to the income generated by taxing non-Muslims, engaging in commerce, and plundering wealthy Hindu principalities, land revenue provided most of the funds that were used to support the Delhi Sultans' army, the largest single state expense. As was true of so many pre-modern agrarian states, the sultans financed their military through a form of military feudalism, known in Muslim Iran, India, and Anatolia as the *iqta'* system.[29] *Iqta'*s were grants of agricultural land, or even whole provinces, whose revenue would be assigned to pay the expenses of Turkic or Afghan, Iranian, or other troops. Lacking administrative records from the period, it is impossible to say how the system actually

[28] Mohammed Habib, *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate* (including a translation of Ziaud Din Barani's *Fatawa-i Jahandari* of *c.* 1358–9 AD) (Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1961), 48.

[29] "Military feudalism" refers here and later to the practice of granting theoretically temporary military fiefs to soldiers, bureaucrats, and others to support them in lieu of salaries. It is not meant to imply a contractual relationship as in European feudalism.

functioned or evolved over time. In theory, as in all such military-feudal systems, the reigning sultan controlled these grants or assignments and could transfer governors and officers at will from one district to another. In practice, energetic sultans such as ʻAla al-Din Khalji are said to have taken back the grants, collected the land revenue themselves, and paid troops in cash, but these reports may offer more insights into the centralizing ambitions of the rulers than the actual functioning of their financial administration. At the other extreme, less attentive or less powerful rulers allowed *iqtaʻdars*, the *dars* or holders of these grants, to evolve into autonomous tributaries or independent regional dynasts.

The Delhi Sultans administered a military occupation, whose territories they constantly endeavored to expand into wealthy regions on their borders. Beyond supporting the critical military institution, these men also sought to build the administrative infrastructure of the state as well as to support what the seventeenth-century Mughal emperor Jahangir later referred to in his memoirs as the "army of prayer." One of the ways they attempted to achieve these goals was to encourage the immigration into India of talented and prestigious foreign Muslims who could also be assumed to have no troublesome local ties. The itinerant Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta (1304–68) described how enthusiastically one of ʻAla al-Din Khalji's successors, Muhammad bin Tughluq, welcomed such migrants in 1334 when they arrived at India's northwestern frontier border towns: "The king of India … makes a practice of honouring strangers … For he prefers them to the people of India."[30]

Foreigners flocked to India, then and later, partly because of the structural contrast between India's agricultural and mercantile wealth and the relative poverty of the adjacent Afghan, Iranian, and Central Asian regions. The devastating Mongol invasions and rapacious Mongol administration of these neighboring regions in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries also drove many inhabitants to take refuge in India or Anatolia. Finally, the use of Persian by the Delhi Sultans encouraged Persian-speaking literati and religious classes from Iran, Afghanistan and Mawarannahr to market their literary talents or to find employment as administrators or religious officials, such as *qadi*s – judges of the *shariʻa*, Muslim religious law. Persian was not the sole language used by the Delhi Sultans. Apart from speaking Turkic dialects, they sometimes used Hinduvi, the precursor of Hindi, or other indigenous regional languages such as Bengali. Persian, nonetheless, steadily gained in popularity as the prestigious Muslim lingua franca of north India, setting the stage for its

[30] H. A. R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta: A.D. 1325–1354* (Cambridge University Press for the Hakluyt Society, 1971), 595 and 671.

flowering as the sole bureaucratic and aristocratic Indo-Muslim cultural language of the Mughal Empire.

Perso-Islamic culture

Perso-Islamic culture, the pre-Islamic and Islamic culture of Iran expressed in Persian, was firmly established among the urban, literate Muslim population of fourteenth-century Delhi, and is exemplified by two Indian Muslims, the Persian-speaking Sufi *pir* Nizam al-Din Auliya (1242–1335) and one of his disciples, the prolific Persian-language poet and musician Amir Khusrau Dihlavi (1253–1325). Nizam al-Din Auliya was a member of the Chishti Sufi order that had originated in Ghur, the isolated mountainous district just east of Herat, the region now in western Afghanistan that was home to the Ghurid destroyers of the Ghaznavid dynasty. Nizam al-Din, who spent much of his life in Delhi, exemplified the personalized version of Islam as a spiritually compelling, socially engaged faith, but not one whose representatives normally sought to convert the non-Muslim Indian population. In fact, Chishtis, despite their popular reputation for bridging the gap between Muslim and Hindu communities, did not actively proselytize, and some Chishtis accompanied the sultans' armies to legitimize campaigns when they attacked Hindu states. Nonetheless, within their own society the Chishtis tried to serve as moral exemplars and often functioned also as social and political critics. Chishti *pirs* routinely refused to serve as government-appointed *qadis*, believing that such legal appointments were inherently corrupting, although disciples of the order, such as Zia al-Din Barani, were not always so circumspect.

Nizam al-Din was typical of many other Sufi *pir*s in India and elsewhere, as he elevated the importance of Sufism over orthodox practice, the power of love over that of reason. His devotional practices paralleled those of the fourteenth-century *pirs* or *shaikhs* of the Safavid order in northwestern Iran, whose descendants founded the Safavid state in 1501.[31] "The 'ulama," he wrote, " are the partisans of reason; dervishes [Sufis], the partisans of love … Prophets are equally strong in love or reason." Nizam al-Din and his *murid*s or disciples sought to generate intense emotional piety in their communal musical performances. "In

[31] See especially Kiswar Rizvi, "Transformations in Early Safavid Architecture: The Shrine of Shaykh Safi al-din Ishaq Ardebeli in Iran (1501–1629)," unpublished PhD dissertation, Department of Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2000. This dissertation is not limited to architecture but is partly a history of the Safavi Sufi order and a study of its *shaikhs*' ritual practices.

our practice of Qur'an recitation and listening to music," Nizam al-Din continued, "the devotee experiences a state of spiritual bliss, which may be manifest in celestial lights, mystical states, and physical effects."[32] Most orthodox *'ulama* condemned music as a means of worship as well as rejecting the poetry that Nizam al-Din also believed to possess a spiritual value. Nonetheless, the popularity of emotion-charged Sufi devotions survived such criticism. The *'urs* or birth commemoration that is still celebrated at Nizam al-Din's Delhi shrine in the twenty-first century features musical renditions of the mystical Persian verse of the important thirteenth-century Sufi Jalal al-Din Rumi, as well as that of the Delhi poet Amir Khusrau Dihlavi.[33]

Even more than Nizam al-Din Auliya, the panegyric and Sufi poet Amir Khusrau Dihlavi personifies the flowering of Perso-Islamic culture during the Delhi Sultanate.[34] The son of a Turkic father who had fled Mongol rule and an Indian-Muslim mother, Amir Khusrau was a native of India who composed an astonishing variety of inventive and accomplished panegyric, lyrical, narrative, and Sufi verse in Persian that made him famous throughout the Persianate world. He is to this day, even among the culturally chauvinistic Iranian literati, an acclaimed poet. His mystical *ghazal*s, or lyrical poems, which are sung at Nizam al-Din's Delhi shrine, typically exploit the imagery of profane love as a spiritual metaphor, as in the following lines from one of his *ghazal*s in which the beloved is God:

> O wondrous ecstatic eyes, o wondrous long locks,
> O wondrous wine worshipper, o wondrous mischievous sweetheart.
> As he draws the sword, I bow my head in
> prostration to be killed.
> O wondrous is his beneficence, o wondrous my submission.[35]

Amir Khusrau also wrote many panegyric poems praising both the Khaljis and their successors the Tughluqs, and in these poems he lauded his homeland, India, as a "paradise on earth" – made more so by these rulers – in contrast to the Persian province of Khurasan, where, unlike

[32] Bruce Lawrence, trans. and ed., *Nizam al-Din Awliya: Morals for the Heart* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 233 and 121.

[33] See among other sources Desidero Pinto, "The Mystery of the Nizamuddin Dargah: The Accounts of Pilgrims," in Christian W. Troll, ed., *Muslim Shrines in India* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1989), 112–24, and for an overview of Indian Sufism, Muhammad Ishaq Khan, "Sufism in Indian History," ibid., 275–91.

[34] Sunil Sharma has written an introduction to this important Indo-Persian poet: *Amir Khusrau: The Poet of Saints and Sufis* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005). See also the outstanding literary biography by Muhammad Wahid Mirza, *The Life and Works of Amir Khusrau* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, repr. 1974).

[35] Translated by Regula Burkhardt Qureshi, Sufi *Music in India and Pakistan* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), 23–4.

India, there were extremes of both hot and cold. He was also a musician who performed with Hindu players, and he favorably compared Hindu pantheism to Islamic monotheism as well as praising Sanskrit as an elegant language equally as beautiful as Persian. In his case, perhaps, Chishti Sufism may have sensitized him to not only the beauty of his Indian homeland, the only land he knew, but also to the vitality of non-Muslim Indian culture.

The collapse of the Sultanate

Unlike Amir Khusrau's memorable verse, the Delhi Sultanate he praised so eloquently did not long survive. During the poet's lifetime it continued to suffer from fratricidal succession disputes and bloody usurpations. In 1320, for example, a Hindu convert to Islam murdered the last Khalji ruler, only to be deposed a few months later by yet another Turk, an officer in Khalji service, Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq (r. 1320–5). Ibn Battuta characterized Ghiyas's son and successor, Muhammad bin Tughluq, whom he met in Delhi, as a king "most addicted to the making of gifts and the shedding of blood." He illustrated his comment by describing the sultan's lavish presents to his favorites and the draconian punishments he visited on anyone who questioned his authority, including members of the *'ulama*. Yet, while he sometimes tortured recalcitrant Muslim religious scholars, Muhammad bin Tughluq was also known for his ostentatious piety, including encouraging monumental religious architecture and enforcing orthodox Sunni practice. During his rule he even welcomed to Delhi a student of the conservative Arab theologian Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328), a Quranic literalist and advocate of *jihad* whom twentieth-century Muslim fundamentalists revere.[36] Like earlier sultans he also sought caliphal investiture, but since the Mongols had murdered the last 'Abbasid Caliph in 1258, he sent a gift to the caliphal pretender in Egypt, who obligingly repaid him with a grant of authority.

Ibn Battuta witnessed the brutality and splendor of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign. He was impressed with the man, who in his early years was probably the most powerful ruler in the history of the Sultanate. His draconian rule included, however, an order in 1327 to move the capital – together with its commercial, religious, and administrative elite to Deogir or Daulatabad in the Deccan region of central India. The order caused enormous disruption and jeopardized his control over other regions of the subcontinent; more than a dozen serious revolts erupted during his reign.

[36] H. Laoust, "Ibn Taymiyya, Taki al-Din Ahmad," *Encyclopaedia of Islam* II, Brill Online.

Disenchantment with his rule and his rigid Sunni orthodoxy may have contributed to the decision by a group of Shi'i Muslims from the Deccan, the Bahmani, to proclaim the new Muslim Sultanate there. Its Shi'i rulers later established close relations with the Shi'i Safavids of Iran after the latter came to power in 1501, prompting many Iranian scholars to migrate to the Bahmani Sultanate in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The establishment of the Bahmani Sultanate also began the development of a group of independent Muslim states in the Deccan, whose independence later challenged Mughal imperial ambitions in this region.

The remaining years of the Delhi Sultanate are memorable for their dismal history of constant military campaigns and repeated usurpations, unleavened by memorable writers or influential religious thinkers. The late fourteenth century might well be termed Muslim India's dark age. Tughluq progeny continued to reign in Delhi following Muhammad bin Tughluq's death, but none of them were capable of enforcing Delhi's authority, allowing many *iqtadar*s to attain the status of independent rulers. This period climaxed in the devastating 1398 invasion of India and sack of Delhi by Temür, the Turkic conqueror otherwise known in Persian as Timür-i leng, Temür the Lame, or in English, Tamerlane. When Temür appeared on the northwestern Indian horizon, the later Tughluqs were incapable of defending India's frontiers, in contrast to earlier sultans' success in repulsing the Mongols. Within a decade of Temür's precipitous withdrawal from India, the Delhi Sultans lost control of major provinces, including Gujerat in the west and Jaunpur in the central Ganges plain.

In the first half of the fifteenth century the Sultanate ceased to exist as a coherent state, and in 1451 an Afghan, Bahlul Ludhi, the son of a Tughluq governor of the Punjab, seized power and established yet another ephemeral dynasty in Delhi, an unstable coalition of Afghan tribes. Afghan tribal infighting was as damaging to the nascent Ludhi state as military factions had been to the Sultanate, and disputes among Afghan tribes and clans gave one of Temür's descendants, Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur, the opportunity to invade north India in 1526 and establish Timurid sovereignty in the subcontinent: the Mughal dynasty.

The Great Saljuqs of Iran: Turkic Muslim rule and Persian culture

Shortly after Mahmud of Ghazna began systematically plundering northern India, Oghuz tribes and clans spread southeastward from Mawarannahr towards Khurasan, the relatively well-watered and prosperous region that comprised territory now included in northeastern Iran and

Map 5. The Great Saljuqs of Iran and the Saljuqs of Rum and Kirman in 1092

western Afghanistan. Initially many Oghuz had taken service with the Samanids in Bukhara and other sedentary dynasties as military auxiliaries, a recurring phenomenon of nomadic employment in Central Asian and Middle Eastern history. Gradually, however, their migration became a kind of inchoate invasion led but not controlled by the Saljuqs, one of the dominant Oghuz tribes.

In 1029 Mahmud of Ghazna tried to stem the tide of pastoral nomads in search of wealthy pasturage in Iran, and defeated a Saljuq-led contingent of Oghuz horsemen. His victory was, however, a pyrrhic one, for it had the effect of scattering various Oghuz clans throughout Khurasan and northern Iran. During the following decade Saljuqs first petitioned Ghaznavid rulers for permission for Oghuz nomads to graze their herds and flocks in Khurasan, even as largely independent Oghuz tribesmen spread further over the Iranian plateau. Like most nomadic peoples, they both ravaged agriculture with their animals and also plundered defenseless villages and towns. When Mahmud's son Mas'ud confronted an emboldened Saljuq-led Oghuz force in 1040, he lost the battle, and the Ghaznavids were left

https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511818646.004 Published online by Cambridge University Press

only with their Afghan and Indian possessions, while the Saljuqs and their allied Oghuz tribes migrated into Iran in even greater numbers. By the mid-eleventh century Oghuz tribesmen were pressing against Byzantium's eastern frontiers, and in 1055 the Saljuqs occupied Baghdad for the first time, where they were welcomed by the captive 'Abbasid Caliph, eager to free himself of Shi'i Buyid domination.[37]

When the Saljuqs defeated the Ghaznavids in 1040, they altered the history of India, Iran, and Anatolia in a number of fundamental ways. First of all they transformed the later Ghaznavids into a largely South Asian dynasty, rather than a Central Asian and Iranian one. Second, the victory had the effect of reinvigorating Sunni Islam in Iran and Anatolia at a time when the 'Abbasid Caliphs were hostages of the Shi'i Buyids and during years when the Isma'ili Shi'i Fatimids of Egypt were aggressively marketing their faith by sending out missionaries throughout the Islamic world. By the time they entered Iran most Oghuz seem to have become at least nominally Muslims and adherents of the Hanafi *madhhab* or school of Islamic law that prevailed in Mawarannahr, Afghanistan and Iran at this time.[38] While the Shafi'i school was also important in Iran, the Hanafi, Sunni variant of the Islamic faith became the dominant version in Iran, Anatolia and North India in these centuries and later the officially recognized school of the Ottoman Empire and Mughal India. Third, the influx of Oghuz tribesmen substantially increased the numbers of pastoral nomads in both Iran and Anatolia, with important long-term consequences for the military, economic, social, and political history of these two areas. Finally, the Saljuq conquests began the Turkification of Iran and Anatolia, causing a fundamental change in the ethnic composition of Iran, northern Syria, and Anatolia that was to continue and intensify during the Mongol invasions and occupation of Iran, Iraq, and eastern Anatolia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The Saljuqs represent an alternative example to the Ghaznavids of how Central Asian Turks became Islamized and Persianized. In the early tenth century, when the Arab traveler Ibn Fadlan visited Oghuz camps in Mawarannahr, he found them to be uncouth barbarians, but by the time they entered Khurasan in the early tenth century their leaders at least had

[37] For a lucid, often witty survey of the history of the political and administrative history of Iran from the Ghaznavids to the collapse of Safavid rule, see David Morgan, *Medieval Persia* 1040–1797 (London: Longman, 1988).

[38] The geographic distribution of Muslim legal schools in the late tenth century is plotted on the map prepared by Heinz Halm and Angelika Schefter, "The Islamic Law Schools up to the end of the Samanid Dynasty," in *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients* (*TAVO*) (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1977), vol. VII, 7.

become Muslims.[39] In fact Saljuq leaders no longer identified themselves as Turkic *khans*, which they were socially and politically, but as Sunni Muslim rulers. When Tughril, the first Saljuq leader (r. 1038–63), entered Nishapur in 1038, two years before shattering the Ghaznavid army, he legitimized his occupation of this important Iranian city by having his Arabic (and therefore Islamic) *laqab* or title announced in the *khutba*, the Friday prayer, as Sultan al-Mu'azzam, "Exalted Ruler." He had previously been in contact with the captive 'Abbasid Caliph who now recognized him, as he earlier had the Ghaznavids, as a legitimate Muslim monarch. Later when Tughril entered Baghdad in 1055 the Caliph conferred an impressive list of honorific titles on him, glorifying the Turk's service to the 'Abbasid ruler, thus giving the Saljuq a far broader legitimacy in Islamic lands than he would have enjoyed as an Oghuz chieftain.

Tughril and his Saljuq kinsmen entered the Islamic world through the same Iranian cultural portal as the Ghaznavids. From the first, Saljuq rulers with their Turkic personal names used Persian as the principal language of their administration. It would be more accurate to say that they used Persian administrators to run their embryonic governments, as both Tughril and his son, Alp Arslan, were probably illiterate in any language. The individual who personified the Persian influence in Saljuq affairs was their famous, wealthy, and vastly influential minister who is known by his *laqab* as Nizam al-Mulk, the "Regulator of the State" (1018–92). An Iranian from Tus in Khurasan, whose father had served the Ghaznavids, Nizam al-Mulk worked for the same dynasty for a short time before joining the Saljuqs, and he became influential after joining Alp Arslan, sometime following the latter's appointment as governor of Khurasan in 1060. During the next thirty years he functioned as the de facto ruler of the Saljuq kingdom, which he modeled on its Ghaznavid predecessor.

Nizam al-Mulk and Saljuq administration

Nizam al-Mulk composed a treatise titled the *Siyasat-nama*, the "Book of Government," for the unlettered and inexperienced Saljuq sultans, Alp Arslan (r. 1063–73) and his successor, Malik Shah (r. 1073–92).[40] While instructing these men in the finer points of autocratic Iranian administration, Nizam al-Mulk played the same role for the Saljuqs as the Iranian

[39] Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, 216–18.

[40] Nizam al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings: The Siyar al-Muluk or Siyâsat-nâma of Nizâm al-Mulk*, trans. Hubert Drake (London and Boston: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1969), 102.

Jewish convert to Islam, Rashid al-Din, was to perform for the Mongol rulers of Iran in the late thirteenth century. In one famous passage Nizam al-Mulk pointedly advises the Saljuqs to conciliate their still largely uncivilized distant relatives and allies, despite the Oghuz tribesmen's disruptive behavior. His advice illuminates the difficulties that any tribal dynasty had when it attempted to transform itself into a sedentary, centralized state. The later Saljuqs, their Mongol and Ottoman successors and the Safavids also found it difficult to control tribal allies who prized their independence. Saljuq rulers never fully solved the problem, and the Safavids were only partly successful in doing so. Nizam al-Mulk observed about the Oghuz, all of whom, including the Saljuqs, were theoretically descended from a common ancestor:

> Although the Turkmans have given rise to a certain amount of vexation, and they are very numerous, still they have a long-standing claim on the dynasty, because at its inception they served well and suffered much, and also they are attached by ties of kinship. … When they are in continuous employment they will learn the use of arms and become trained in service. Then they will settle down with other people and cease to feel that aversion to settled life.[41]

Apart from his administrative role, Nizam al-Mulk is famous in Islamic history for vigorously condemning Shi'i Islam and strengthening the institutional basis of Sunni Islam, partly in response to Fatimid Egyptian Isma'ili missionary activities. He had reason to be concerned about militant Shi'as. He was eventually assassinated on the orders of a Fatimid agent in Iran, Hasan-i Sabbah, who in 1190 had seized the castle of Alamut near the Caspian Sea. Nizam al-Mulk was instrumental in founding a number of *madrasa*s or theological colleges in Khurasan, northern Iran, and Iraq in order to systemize Sunni Muslim religious training. The most famous of these colleges, known as *Nizamiyya*s, was consecrated in Baghdad in 1047.

Similar institutions had existed earlier in Iran and the Arab world, but they were greatly expanded with Saljuq patronage, and in later centuries, rulers in Anatolia, Iran, and Muslim India commonly built *madrasas* as part of the pious foundations they established in major cities to support not only religious colleges but also *masjid*s and *hammams*, mosques and public baths, as well as public kitchens. The staff of most *madrasas* devoted themselves solely to religious subjects: studies of the Quran, *hadith* (reports of Muhammad's actions or sayings), Arabic grammar and *shari'a* or Islamic law. In some cases, however, particularly when rulers had broader interests, the colleges became centers of philosophical

[41] Nizam al-Mulk, *The Book of Government*, 41.

or scientific study. The governor of Samarqand during the first half of the fifteenth century, Ulugh Beg, a descendant of Temür, was one such individual whose interest in astronomy and mathematics led him to patronize a *madrasa* devoted to these subjects; indeed, with Ulugh Beg's support, Samarqand became the last important astronomical center in the pre-industrial Islamic world.

Sufis and theologians in Iran

Ironically, just at the time Nizam al-Mulk was giving orthodox Sunni Islam a strong institutional base, a free-spirited Sufi, Abu Sa'id ibn Abi'l Khair (967–1049), not only popularized an important Sufi institution, the *khangah*, the "chapter-house" or gathering place for Sufis, but also stimulated the popularity of Islamic mysticism that flourished outside of and criticized *madrasa* and *masjid*-centered education and worship.[42] A resident of Nishapur in Khurasan, Abu Sa'id did not found a *silsila* or spiritual lineage; but in the Persian-speaking world of Iran, Mawarannahr, Afghanistan, and northern India he came to personify the mystical tradition in which *pirs* or *shaikhs* strictly guided the devotions of their *murids* or spiritual disciples to enable them to achieve spiritual union with God. In the first known Sufi biography compiled by one of Abu Sa'id's disciples, he is portrayed as a man who, like Nizam al-Din Auliya in fourteenth-century Delhi, decried "intellectual" or rational knowledge – theology and Islamic law – in favor of ecstatic spiritual communion with God. Abu Sa'id preached a pantheistic doctrine that rejected the importance of the *hajj*, the Meccan pilgrimage, preferring instead an inner, spiritual journey.

Like some later Sufis, the Chishti Nizam al-Din Auliya in Delhi and Shaikh Safi, the founder of the Safavid Sufi order in northwestern Iran, Abu Sa'id used musical renditions of Persian devotional poetry to achieve the desired mystical state.[43] He also argued, favoring his own self-indulgent tastes, that asceticism was a proper discipline for a novice disciple but that a person like himself, who had achieved an advanced spiritual state, could indulge in sumptuous meals and take pleasure in the unrestrained dancing of his *murids*, activities that shocked neighboring members of the orthodox *'ulama*.[44] In fact, Abu Sa'id claimed he preached a doctrine that represented the eight-seventh of the Quran, that is, the mystical meaning of the Quran known only "by vision and not by hearsay," known to the heart and not to the mind – known, that is, to Sufis and not to theologians.[45]

[42] R. A. Nicolson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge University Press, repr. 1967), 2.
[43] Ibid., 23 and 29. [44] Ibid., 29–37. [45] Ibid., 59–60.

If Abu Sa'id's doctrines and practice outraged some *'ulama* in Khurasan, he exemplified aspects of the mystical tradition that became popular as well as socially and political influential in Iran, Mawarannahr, India, and Anatolia before and after the founding of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires. One individual who made Sufism more broadly respectable by integrating mysticism into the mainstream of Islamic thought was Muhammad al-Ghazali (1058–1111), another Khurasani Iranian, one more example of the spiritual and philosophical dynamism of the Iranian population, and especially of the Khurasani Iranians, whose thinkers played Greece to the Ottomans' Rome as well as to the far less philosophically engaged Mughals.[46] As frequent references to important thinkers from Khurasan have shown, there was a group of influential philosophers, scientists, literati, theologians, and Sufis who came from Nishapur, Tus, Sabzawar, and other towns and villages in the region over the course of many centuries prior to the Mongol invasions. This "Khurasan cluster" illustrates how deeply rooted intellectual traditions can persist in one region, giving rise to important scholars and writers from one generation to the next.

A native of Tus, the home of Nizam al-Mulk, and also a long-time resident of Nishapur, the native city of his contemporary 'Umar Khayyam as well as Abu Sa'id a half-century earlier, al-Ghazali moved to Baghdad and was eventually chosen by Nizam al-Mulk to teach in the Saljuq minister's Nizamiyya *madrasa*. He is best known as the formidable theologian who, in his essay *Tahafut al-falasifa*, used Aristotelian logic to attack the *falsafa* or philosophy of Greco-Islamic intellectuals, the class of Muslim intellectuals decried by Zia al-Din Barani in Delhi. From this time forward, Muslim theologians commonly used Aristotle's syllogistic reasoning in their disputations. Later in life, though, al-Ghazali became disenchanted with theology – or more accurately with the materialism of the professional *'ulama* – and recognized restrained Sufi mysticism as a valid path to salvation. Unlike Abu Sa'id and other Sufis who dismissed the importance of communal prayer and other aspects of orthodox practice, al-Ghazali argued that such external expressions of faith and observance of the *shari'a*, the "straight path" of Islamic law, were essential aspects of a virtuous Islamic life. Al-Ghazali's theology became the accepted orthodoxy for most subsequent Sunni Muslim thinkers.[47]

[46] Majid Fakhry, "The Systematic Refutation of Neo-Platonism: Al-Ghazali," and "Synthesis and Sytematization – Al-Ghazali and Ibn 'Arabi," in his *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 223–39 and 253–62.

[47] "The Ottoman ulema recognized him [al-Ghazali] as their master": Halil Inalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300–1600* (London: Phoenix Press, repr. 1988), 175.

The Great Saljuqs: tribe and state

Al-Ghazali's theology, Abu Sa'id's Sufism and Nizam al-Mulk's *madrasas* exerted a profound and lasting influence on the Islamic societies that Tughril and his descendants conquered in Mawarannahr, Iran, Iraq, and, after 1071, Anatolia. Two dynasties emerged as the Oghuz overran these regions. The first, known as the Great Saljuqs, represented the Oghuz conquests in Mawarannahr, Iran, and Iraq, territories the dynasty dominated but did not always directly control, until the death of Malik Shah in 1092. Despite Nizam al-Mulk's attempt to transform the Saljuq family and their nominal Oghuz allies into something resembling a Ghaznavid centralized military despotism, the somewhat misleadingly titled Great Saljuqs never completed the transition from a Turkic tribal oligarchy to an Iranian imperial dynasty. The very fact that they never established a permanent capital reflects the persisting, semi-nomadic character of their enterprise.

Two problems bedeviled the dynasty: their tribal tradition of collective sovereignty and the sheer numbers of Oghuz tribesmen, whom the Saljuq family never effectively controlled. Collective sovereignty typified Central Asian pastoral nomadic dynasties such as the Saljuqs and later the Mongols. It meant two things in practice. Male members of the ruling family had communal rights to the conquered territories, and when the leader of the family died, while seniority often was preferred, each male member of the family had an equal right to contest the succession. The Great Saljuq sultans parceled out many of their conquests as semi-autonomous appanages, known (as they were later in Delhi) as *iqta'*s, to family members. These appanages always had the potential of becoming, as they so often did, the nuclei of miniature courts for ambitious princes. The early Saljuqs successfully established a kind of ad hoc primogeniture going from the childless Tughril to his nephew Alp Arslan and to Alp Arslan's son Malik Shah, so that they were able to establish a dynastic line, but uncles or brothers often contested the succession none the less, and after Malik Shah's death the claims of rival family lines tore the Great Saljuq state to pieces.

Despite the inherent problems of the Saljuq confederation, the first three rulers – Tughril, Alp Arslan, and Malik Shah – were able to establish a measure of control over the principal agricultural regions and major cities in western Mawarannahr, Khurasan, and Central Iran. One of the ways they did this was increasingly to rely on *ghulam* or slave troops instead of their habitually unreliable tribesmen: a reprise of earlier 'Abbasid policies. Malik Shah, whose very Arab-Persian name connotes a degree of imperial ambition in its meanings of "ownership" (*malik*) and

"imperial rule" (*shah*), made a serious effort to realize Nizam al-Mulk's goal of transforming the Turkic Saljuq tribal oligarchy into a Perso-Islamic, Ghaznavid-style state. During the eleventh century at least, the Great Saljuq territories enjoyed a measure of prosperity that rulers themselves fostered with their construction of *caravansarais* along major trade routes.

While Saljuq cities, like those in other regions of the Islamic world, did not enjoy legal autonomy, major urban centers in Khurasan and Central Iran such as Herat, Nishapur, Tus, Isfahan, and Shiraz seem to have prospered, although they were sometimes plagued with outbursts of sectarian violence between Sunnis and Shi'as, or even among members of different Sunni legal schools. Nishapur particularly, the important Khurasan city of pre-Mongol times, functioned as the principal Saljuq mint town and major commercial emporium of this northeast Iranian region well into the late twelfth century – perhaps a contributing factor to its role as a native city to so many prominent Iranian intellectuals. Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians also continued to live in relative peace under the Great Saljuqs, and members of these communities sometimes served in Saljuq administrations, as indeed did Shi'as. Christian communities gradually declined in the Saljuq era in Mawarannahr and Iran – to be virtually annihilated by Temür in the fourteenth century. Both Jews and Christians survived in larger numbers in Baghdad, but even there they always constituted small minorities, and their position never resembled that of the majority Hindu population in the Delhi Sultanate.

Less than three-quarters of a century after they had defeated the Ghaznavids, the "Great" Saljuq enterprise fragmented and dissolved into a chaos of competing family factions and Oghuz revolts. When Malik Shah died in 1092 CE various Turkic *atabeğ*s (a Turkic title meaning literally "father of a *beğ*" or princely guardians) fought for provincial control, triggering a downward spiral of weakening central government and declining revenues.[48] By the early twelfth century Malik Shah's state, or more accurately Nizam al-Mulk's government, split into two major sections: the eastern territories of Mawarannahr together with Khurasan, and the western region of northern and western Iran and Iraq, and these sections were themselves plagued by internecine family conflicts. In 1153 an Oghuz uprising against Sanjar (d. 1157), the last effective Saljuq ruler of Mawarannahr and Khurasan, precipitated the final collapse of the

[48] The Turkic word commonly written "beg" is pronounced, as it is sometimes written, as "bey." In modern Turkish, the soft Turkish *g*, which elongates the sound of the preceding vowel, is written as *ğ*. The other unfamiliar Turkish letter and sound is the undotted i, written as ı and pronounced like the syllable "uh" in American English.

dynasty's authority in the east, ravaging the economy of this strategic region in the process. The Khwarazm Shahs then filled the vacuum in Mawarannahr, Khurasan, and central Iran for roughly three-quarters of a century. Based in Khwarazm, the fertile estuary of the Amu Darya River where it flows into the Aral Sea, the Khwarazm shahs began dynastic life as Turkic governors for the Saljuqs. In different circumstances the dynasty might have survived longer, but in 1219 the reigning monarch fell foul of Chinggis Qan and between 1219 and 1223 the Mongols invaded and destroyed the Khwarazm shah state and leveled the principal cities of Mawarannahr and Khurasan.

In the west, succession disputes among the sons of Muhammad ibn Malik Shah produced a state of perpetual civil war among contending clans within the Oghuz confederation. By the middle of the twelfth century Saljuq rule in the west evaporated in the chaos of competing family members and assertive local rulers including, remarkably, the 'Abbasid Caliphs, who used the opportunity to reassert their authority in Iraq during the final two decades of the century. Saljuq military dominance of Syria and Palestine had evaporated even earlier. Shortly after Malik Shah seized Aleppo in 1086 and appointed governors in Antioch and Jerusalem, Europeans from the First Crusade began attacking coastal fortresses and captured Antioch from its Turkic *ghula*m commander late in the eleventh century. In the following years violent quarrels between Saljuq princes and their *ghulam*s gave way to a patchwork of Fatimid, Crusader, and Turkic rulers in the Fertile Crescent, sometimes allied, sometimes at war with one another.[49] By 1123 the Great Saljuqs lost control of Syria, bequeathing as their legacy (as in Iran) a new Turkic ethnic element in the population.

The Saljuqs of Rum (Rome) and the Il-Khanid Mongols of Iran and Anatolia

In contrast to the Saljuq's chaotic, ephemeral rule in Syria, members of the Saljuq family, cousins of the Great Saljuq Malik Shah, founded the important Saljuq Sultanate of Rum at Konya in central Anatolia, not long after Alp Arslan defeated the Byzantine army at Manzikert (Malazgird) in 1071.[50] Even before the Saljuq victory, however, independent bands of

[49] An engaging autobiography offers intriguing insights into the reality of this warfare. See Phillip H. Hitti, trans., *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades: Memoirs of Usamah Ibn Munqidh* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

[50] For an Iranian Mongol historian's interesting take on Saljuq history see Rashîd al-Dîn ibn Tabîb, *The History of the Seljuq Turks from the J̌âmi' al-tawârikh: An Il-Khanid Adaptation of the Saljûq-nâma of Zâhîr*, trans. Kenneth A. Luther and Clifford Edmund Bosworth (Richmond, UK: Curzon, 2001).

Oghuz tribesmen had raided Byzantine, that is, Eastern Roman, territories in Anatolia. Now in the eleventh century they reached the shores of the Aegean and the Sea of Marmara, the beginning of the Turkification of Asia Minor that culminated in the formation of the Ottoman state and, in 1453, the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople.

The embryonic Saljuq state at Konya initially represented but one of a number of Turkic *beğlik*s, small Turkic principalities that emerged in central and western Anatolia as Byzantine defenses crumbled before the onslaught of Saljuq armies and Oghuz raiders. The Ottomans originated as one of these *beğliks*, but in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries the Saljuqs represented the most formidable Oghuz kingdom in Anatolia. They defeated a Byzantine counterattack on Konya in 1147 and in 1176 repulsed a Crusader army. With these victories the Saljuqs consolidated their power in Konya and effectively ended any semblance of Byzantine control over central and eastern Anatolia.

After defeating the Crusader army, the Saljuqs led a series of campaigns southward to reach the Mediterranean. Frederick Barbarossa's sack of Konya with another Crusader force in 1190 did not irreversibly damage Saljuq fortunes, and in 1207 they seized Atalya, putting them in touch with influential Venetian merchants. By 1214 they had also conquered Sinope on the Black Sea, enabling them to begin profiting from the lucrative sea-borne commerce linking Anatolia with the Crimea in the north, and with Alexandria in Egypt. Commerce in Turkic slaves sent from the Crimea to Syria and Egypt comprised part of this lucrative north–south trade: men who became military slaves and who, like other *ghulams* and *mamluks*, eventually rebelled against their masters and founded the Mamluk slave dynasty in Egypt (1250–1517).

The importance of the north–south commerce as a whole was reflected in the number of *caravansarais* the Saljuqs or their feudatories constructed – more than 200 by the end of the thirteenth century. Most of these *caravansarais* – secure, sometimes elaborately constructed halting posts for merchants' caravans – were built along north–south routes, many of them well-established Byzantine trade networks that linked the capital, Konya, with Black Sea and Mediterranean ports.[51] Wealth derived from profitable overland commerce provided much of the revenue that Saljuq rulers used to build impressive Muslim religious complexes and palaces in the early thirteenth century. They were aided in this by a peace treaty with Byzantium, which gave them four decades of peace on their western frontiers.

[51] D. E. Roxburgh, ed., *The Turks, A Journey of a Thousand Years*, (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2005), 108–9.

The last independent Saljuqs of Rum had pre-Islamic Iranian names taken from Firdausi's *Shah-nama*, such as Kai Kaus I (r. 1211–20), Kai Kubad I (r. 1220–37), and Kai Khusrau II (r. 1237–46): one superficial sign that this branch of the Saljuq family was just as much part of Perso-Islamic culture as the Ghaznavids and their Great Saljuq relatives. Iranian influence can be seen in their administration and court life and in the religious and literary texts produced during the period of Saljuq rule, although Turkish would have been used for many purposes, most importantly in military affairs and in dealing with the population in the countryside, both agrarian and nomadic. At this time some of the leaders of the Turkic *beğliks*, such as the Karamanids, used Turkish in their administration, and Arabic was a necessary skill for diplomatic relations with the Mamluks and lesser rulers in Syria, apart from its everyday use by religious scholars and scientists.[52] The Saljuqs of Rum also echoed their Iranian cousins in their support for Hanafi Sunni Islam in Anatolia. Whether or not elements of the Oghuz population retained traces of their Central Asian shamanist beliefs, in religious terms Saljuq Anatolia became an extension of the state-supported Sunni Islam that the Oghuz brought with them from Mawarannahr and had reinforced as they occupied Iran. The religious infrastructure of Sunni Islam in Anatolia was also strengthened as the Mongols drove Muslim scholars into Saljuq territory.

Sufism and popular Islam in Saljuq Anatolia

One of these refugees was Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207–75), who accompanied his father, an influential Iranian Sunni scholar, to Konya when the latter left Balkh in northern Afghanistan to escape the Mongols. Konya had earlier been home to the influential Andalusian Sufi Ibn 'Arabi, for a few years between 1205 and 1211. Jalal al-Din, who personifies one strain of Perso-Islamic religious influence in Anatolia, became a Sufi in 1240, although for several years afterward he continued to function as a public preacher and Sunni scholar. In 1244 he met a wandering mystic, Shams al-Din of Tabriz, whose ecstatic mysticism profoundly influenced Jalal al-Din's thought and led him to devote his life to an intensely devotional form of Sufism.[53] Rumi wrote what is probably the single most influential *diwan* or collection of Persian mystical verses, most of which, like other verses of later Sufi poets such as Amir Khusrau Dihlavi, were meant to be

[52] Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, *The Saljuqs of Anatolia: Their History and Culture According to Local Muslim Sources*, trans. and ed. Gary Leiser (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992), 32.

[53] A. J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature* (London: George, Allen & Unwin, 1967), 222.

sung. He is especially remembered for the stately, twirling dance his disciples, the Mevlevis, performed to the lute as a means of stimulating the mental state that culminated in the annihilation of the self as it merged in spiritual union with the divine. As he wrote:

> Death's Angel Cries,
> When the lute is played
> Our hearts arise
> Living from the dead.
> These passions deep
> That were drowned and died
> Like fishes leap
> From the boiling tide.[54]

Rumi's "passions deep" were his love for God, the "divine beloved," whom he described in another poem.

> He comes, a Moon whose like the sky ne'er saw, awake or dreaming,
> Crowned with eternal flame no flood can lay.
> Lo, from the flagon of Thy love, Lord, my soul is swimming,
> And ruined all my body's house of clay.[55]

Rumi personified the aristocratic, urban Sunni face of Persian devotional practice, but the Turkic inhabitants of the countryside were prone to more inchoate if no less emotional piety.[56]

While Saljuq rulers are known to have supported restrained, urban, upper-class Sunni orders such as Jalal al-Din Rumi's, they feared and suppressed ecstatic, popular religious challenges that threatened their tenuous stability. One of the most serious socio-religious uprisings was the Baba'i revolt of 1240, in which Oghuz tribesmen responded to the extreme Shi'i doctrines of a Syrian Muslim named Baba Ishak, who preferred to be known as Rasul Allah, the Messenger of God. Illiterate Oghuz tribesmen did not usually debate theological fine points of Sunni and Shi'i Islam, but were often attracted to such charismatic religious figures, perhaps because they resembled familiar Central Asian *shaman*s.

[54] Ibid., 222. [55] Ibid., 233.

[56] Mehmet Fuat Köprülü outlines the dichotomy between the urban and rural population in his 1922 work written in Ottoman Turkish, *Islam in Anatolia after the Turkish Invasion*, trans. and ed. Gary Leister (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983), 11. Note that urban Turks, like the later Ottomans, distinguished between themselves and their country cousins. A thirteenth-century sultan in Konya referred to the urban Turks as "Rumis" and Turkic nomads as "turks," a word which when used as an adjective meant simple or rustic (Köprülü, *The Saljuqs of Anatolia*, 60). Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, made a similar distinction between the sedentary population of villages and cities and the steppe inhabitants of Central Asia in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century.

Baba Ishak's movement, which in social terms pitted impoverished nomads against relatively prosperous urban Muslims, seems to have anticipated in certain respects the confederation of Anatolian Turkic tribes that the Safavids inspired with their mixture of Sufi and Shi'i doctrines in the late fifteenth century. The parallels extend not only to the doctrines, leadership, and tribal followers of both movements, but also to their red turbans, which caused Safavid supporters to be known as Qizilbash, Turkish for "Redheads."

Saljuq rulers put down the Baba'i movement with great difficulty and the military help of "Frankish" mercenaries. Nonetheless it is generally believed to have survived in the later Bektashi Sufi order, whose founder, Haji Bektash, came to Anatolia, like so many other Sufis, from Khurasan, the locus not only of Iranian philosophy and science in the pre-Mongol era but of many popular Islamic sects as well. Haji Bektash arrived in Anatolia sometime in the thirteenth century and preached a doctrine similar in many respects to that of other Iranian Sufis; he was especially dismissive of orthodox practices.[57] His teachings did not, however, pose a threat to the Saljuqs, as his followers only slowly coalesced into an institutionalized order during the fourteenth century and did not become prominent for another two centuries.

The Bektashis, like their Baba'i predecessors, resembled the later Safavid order in certain respects. They preached a form of Shi'i Islam focused on 'Ali, the fourth Caliph and first Imam, and appealed particularly to the rural Oghuz population. They also wore a distinctive turban, with either four or twelve folds, the latter designed to commemorate the twelve Imams revered by the largest Shi'i community. They were nonetheless distinguished by their adoption of Christian elements, including monasteries and rituals such as communion. They also played a special role in Ottoman history as the exclusive Sufi order of the Ottoman slave troops, the Janissaries, most of whom in the early days of the empire had been Christians before they were drafted and converted to Islam. They had an even broader significance as a popular Sufi order in the Ottoman Empire, where in the seventeenth century they built thousands of the Sufi hospices known as *tekkes* or *khangahs*, and retained a devotional following estimated to have been 20 percent of the Ottoman Muslim population two centuries later.[58]

Just as the Saljuqs began enjoying their dominance of central and eastern Anatolia, they came under threat from Iran, where in 1194 the Khwarazm Shah had defeated the last of the Great Saljuqs, thus

[57] Köprülü, echoing the German scholar Goldziher, notes the similarity between Sufi movements and basic Shi'i beliefs: *Islam in Anatolia after the Turkish Invasion*, 64 n. 22.
[58] Inalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age*, 199.

extinguishing the dynasty. While these eastern Turkic rulers subsequently occupied most of the Iranian plateau, they were too preoccupied with Mawarannahr to attempt to extend their rule into Anatolia, especially after the Mongols arrived on their doorstep in 1219. The Mongols not only destroyed the Khwarazm Shahs' dynasty, but also altered the history of Iran and Saljuq Anatolia. Apart from driving refugees into Anatolia, the Mongol invasion had a major impact on the history of those regions and on the Islamic world at large, but much less so on north India, a refuge, like Anatolia, for Muslim refugees.

Chinggis Qan and the Il-Khanid Mongols of Iran

Mongols represented a completely different and vastly more destructive nomadic force than the Oghuz. Originating as raiders typical of a pastoral nomadic tribe, the Mongols under Chinggis Qan, or in Persian spelling Chingiz Khan, transformed the inter-tribal raid into an imperial principle sanctioned by the shamanistic deity Tengri, the overarching blue sky. Unlike the Oghuz who had preceded them, the Mongols were not acculturated to and respectful of either Islamic culture or the religious or ethical culture of any other civilization, and even more than the Oghuz, they were unfamiliar with and even hostile to cities. While their first series of raids into western Mawarannahr appear to have been a minor diversion from their goal of subjugating China, after a clash with the Khwarazm Shah the Mongols subjugated Mawarannahr and Khurasan with the destructive ferocity that characterized their warfare.

In the first wave of conquests that largely concluded in 1223, cities whose defenders refused to surrender were leveled and their inhabitants, apart from useful craftsmen, slaughtered. Great urban centers such as Samarqand in Mawarannahr, Balkh in northern Afghanistan, and Herat and Nishapur in Khurasan were destroyed, and the agrarian economy of Khurasan was at least temporarily ruined. It was in 1243, between this onslaught and the return of the Mongols in force in 1255–6, that a Mongol commander in northern Iran invaded Anatolia and defeated the Saljuqs; but unlike their earlier campaigns in Iran, in Anatolia the Mongols did not devastate Saljuq territories but were content to govern the region through Saljuq feudatories until 1277, when they took direct control of the state.

The first phase of the Mongol invasion devastated Iran, destroying the vitality of the Khurasanian cities that had been home to so many important scholars and scientists, as well as driving both urban Iranian and Oghuz refugees eastward into Anatolia. In ending the independence of the Saljuq sultanate, the invasion also gave more freedom for maneuver to many Turkic *beğliks*, particularly those in western Anatolia which were located

on the margins of Saljuq and Mongol power in Konya. The second phase of Mongol conquests, which were led by Hulagu Khan, one of Chinggis Qan's grandsons, had other but equally significant consequences. Hulagu first attacked and destroyed the Isma'ili Shi'i stronghold of Alamut in 1256 and then moved on to Baghdad to murder the last 'Abbasid Caliph, thus eliminating the symbolic political center of the Islamic world. After other campaigns in Syria, where the Mongols were finally repulsed in 1260 by the new slave dynasty of Egypt, the Mamluks, Hulagu and his successors settled down in northwestern Iran as a regional Mongol dynasty, the Il-Khans, contemporary with the Mongol dynasty of China, the Yüan, whose best-known ruler was Qubilai Khan.

The history of the Il-khans falls into two periods. At first, the Mongols conducted themselves not as typical rulers of a predominantly sedentary society but as plunderers, ravaging the Iranian urban and rural economy in what amounted to a sustained, decades-long tribal raid. In 1295, however, Ghazan Khan (r. 1295–1304) came to power as a recent Muslim convert and began the process of transforming the Mongols into a sedentary dynasty that relied for its income on systemized taxation rather than indiscriminate looting. Ghazan's principal minister was Rashid al-Din (1247–1318), who performed a function similar to that of Nizam al-Mulk with the Saljuqs – and to that of Yeh-lü Ch'u Ts'ai, the Chin advisor to the Yüan dynasty in China.[59] Once again an Iranian administrator helped to train nomads with little knowledge of or training in government administration. Ghazan Khan, his successor Uljaitu, and Rashid al-Din apparently were able to end the worst excesses of Mongol rule, but it is impossible to know how thoroughly their reform policies were implemented. And having converted to Islam, the Muslim Il-Khans began a religious persecution of Buddhists, Christians, and Jews that never occurred under their theologically laissez-faire, shamanist predecessors. Ultimately, however, neither Ghazan Khan nor his successors were able to transform the Il-Khans into a long-lived sedentary dynasty, and in 1336 these Mongols dissolved into the same kind of tribal internecine warfare as had destroyed the Saljuqs.

The positive legacies of Mongol rule in Iran were limited to individual scholarly achievements. Three Iranians, who enjoyed the benefits of Mongol employment, produced important works during this time. They included two historians, Rashid al-Din himself and Ata Malik Juvaini

[59] See Rashîd al-Dîn ibn Tabîb, *The Successors of Genghis Khan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971); Igor de Rachewiltz, "Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 9, no. 1-2 (November 1966), 88–104; Reuven Amitai Preiss and David Morgan, *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); and Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

(d. 1285), both of whose works were informed by their intimate knowledge of Mongol administration and, in Rashid al-Din's case, exceptionally detailed information about the entire Mongol Empire, including China. The third individual was Nasir al-Din Tusi (1201–74), the Shi'i theologian, scientist, and astronomer for whom Hulagu erected an observatory at Maragha, near the Mongol capital in Azerbaijan in northwestern Iran. Tusi was another Iranian scholar from Tus in Khurasan, who studied Shi'i thought as well as Greco-Islamic philosophy in Nishapur, just prior to the Mongol invasions. Later residing in Baghdad and at Alamut, he became a Shi'i emissary to the Mongols and eventually joined Hulagu's entourage. The single most prolific scholar of the age, his Shi'i theological works, which were informed by the Neoplatonic doctrines of his Khurasani predecessor Ibn Sina, were especially influential in Shi'i Safavid Iran.

The Mongols left in their destructive wake a series of ephemeral provincial dynasties in Iran that were incapable of resisting the next devastating Central Asian onslaught, the invasion of the Turco-Mongol Temür (d. 1405), who began ravaging Iranian lands in 1381 from his base in Samarqand, and in 1402, just three years before his death, stunned but did not destroy the nascent Ottoman state at the Battle of Ankara. Temür's successors ruled Mawarannahr and Iran during much of the fifteenth century, and, in contrast to their ancestor, patronized Perso-Islamic culture to the extent that the last fifteenth-century Timurid ruler, Sultan Husain Baiqara of Herat (r. 1469–1506), came to epitomize an Islamic golden age of art, literature, and historical writing that influenced all three Muslim empires. These Timurids, however, while great aesthetes, were politically inept, and in the second half of the century fought one another for control of Mawarannahr and Iran. As a result of their disunity the two other Muslim empires ultimately emerged alongside the revived Ottoman state that conquered Constantinople in 1453.

In Iran two new Oghuz semi-nomadic dynasties in the west filled the vacuum left by the declining Timurids. Memorably named the "Black Sheep" (Qara Quyunlu) and "White Sheep" (Aq Quyunlu), they demonstrated once again how difficult it was for tribal dynasties to make the successful transition to long-lived sedentary states, and by the late fifteenth century they were pushed aside by the Safavids, relatives of the Aq Quyunlu but a family whose leaders offered the unifying appeal of a charismatic Shi'i Sufi order to the Oghuz tribes of eastern Anatolia. Then, just three years after Shah Isma'il founded the Safavid state in Tabriz in 1501, Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur emerged from the chaos of fratricidal late-Timurid politics in Mawarannahr to occupy Kabul and eventually use it as a base for his 1525–6 invasion of north India and the founding of the Mughal Empire.