



CALIPH AL-MANSUR AND HULAGU KHAN AN
ANALYSIS OF THEIR POLITICAL STRATEGIES IN
THE LIGHT OF MACHIAVELLIANISM

BY

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the
degree of Master of Human Sciences in History and
Civilization

Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human
Sciences
International Islamic University Malaysia

SEPTEMBER 2016

ABSTRACT

This research discusses life and careers of the Mongol Khan Hulagu and the Abbasid Caliph Mansur in the light of the Machiavellian leadership theory. It aims to explore whether Machiavellianism is a necessary attribute in ensuring an undisputed rule or dominion. Although Machiavelli's advocacy of ruthlessness and deception promises a successful, unchallenged reign, it largely ignores the psychological aspect as well as the repercussions of suppressing the spiritual self. With reference to al-Mansur, who epitomized the Machiavellian prince, it can be deduced that this eventually leads to psychological trauma, as a result of guilt and fear of retribution, casting a shadow on one's political success. Thus, this questions the adequacy of *The Prince* as a practical philosophy, and shifts attention to the all-encompassing nature of Islam which secures political stability and success, without having to sacrifice moral consciousness. Hulagu, whose mission was to restore peace and justice (along with securing Mongol dominion) in the troubled lands of Persia and Iraq, leaned more towards Islamic principles than Machiavellianism in conducting his conquests. Though Hulagu's career eventually faltered as a result of military defeats, the foundations laid by him contributed to the prosperity of the Ilkhanid Dynasty, which only came to an end due to biological (not political) causes as the last Ilkhan died childless. Mansur's failure to leave a lasting impression on Abbasid governance and the very nature of its disintegration and humiliating defeat question his success as a consolidator of the Abbasid Empire. It also poses a question as to whether a successful reign is determined by economic or cultural attainment. This is discussed with reference to the *Khulafa Rashidun* to highlight that material prosperity, though necessary, is only temporal, and a ruler's ultimate triumph lies in contributing to the later generations by inculcating a sound ideology and establishing a strong moral foundation.

ملخص البحث

تناقش هذه الأطروحة حياة كلا من القائد المغولي هولوكو، والخليفة العباسي أبو جعفر المنصور ودورهما في ضوء نظرية القيادة عند ميكافلي، وتتساءل إن كانت الميكافلية شرط ضروري، ولازم لتأكيد استمرار الحكم المطلق. بالرغم من زعمها بأن القهر، والخداع يؤديان إلى الحكم القوي المستقر، إلا أنها تتجاهل العامل النفسي، وتداعيات قهر النفس البشرية. فبالنسبة للخليفة المنصور فإنه قد جعل محتوى وزبدة سفر ميكافلي "الأمير" هادياً ومرشداً له، إلا أن ذلك قد سبب له في نهاية المطاف قلقاً نفسياً نتج عنه شعور بالذنب، والخوف من العقاب مما ألقى بظلاله على أدائه السياسي. وهكذا فإن هذا التطور يُدحض مصداقية فرضية كتاب "الأمير" السياسية، وينقل الاهتمام إلى طبيعة الإسلام الشمولية التي تضمن النجاح، والاستقرار السياسي دون التضحية بالقيم والأخلاق. وعلى النقيض فإن هولوكو، الذي انحصرت مهمته بجانب تحقيق غلبة المغول، في استعادة السلام، والأمن في بلاد فارس، والعراق المضطربة، قد حرص على مراعاة قواعد الحرب الإسلامية خلال غزواته، وتعامله مع أعدائه أكثر من الافتراضات الميكافلية. نعم، لقد فشل هولوكو في نهاية المطاف عسكرياً، ولكنه نجح في إرساء حكم الأسرة الأخنادية، التي لم تفقد السلطة لاحقاً نتيجة لقصور سياسي بل لعوامل طبيعية تتعلق بأن آخر حكامها لم يرزق بوريث من صلبه، أضف إلى ذلك أن المنصور لم يترك بصماته على نظام الحكم العباسي، بل إن الهزائم التي مني بها والاضمحلال الذي لازم دولته يشير إلى إخفاقه في إرساء دعائم الخلافة العباسية، ويثير هذا التطور سؤالاً ملحاً حول العامل الرئيسي لتحقيق الحكم الراشد، أهو المكاسب الاقتصادية أم الإنجازات الثقافية. والدراسة تناقش هذا الموضوع في إطار تجربة حكم الخلفاء الراشدين - رضوان الله عليهم - التاريخية التي بلورت ورجحت القيم السامية العليا على الجوانب المادية.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, it is my utmost pleasure to dedicate this work to my dear parents and my family, who granted me the gift of their unwavering belief in my ability to accomplish this goal: thank you for your support and patience.

I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to those who provided their time, effort and support for this project. To the members of my dissertation committee, thank you for sticking with me.

Finally, a special thanks to Associate Professor Dr Arshad Islam for his continuous support, encouragement and leadership, and for that, I will be forever grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Abstract | ii |
| Abstract in Arabic | iii |
| Approval Page..... | iv |
| Declaration | v |
| Copyright Page..... | vi |
| Acknowledgements | vii |
| List of Figures | x |
| | |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Background of The Study | 1 |
| 1.2 Statement of The Problem | 4 |
| 1.3 Research Objectives..... | 6 |
| 1.4 Research Questions..... | 7 |
| 1.5 Significance of The Study | 7 |
| 1.6 Literature Review | 8 |
| 1.7 Theoretical Framework..... | 15 |
| 1.8 Research Methodology | 16 |
| 1.9 Proposed Chapter Outline..... | 19 |
| | |
| CHAPTER TWO: THE ABBASIDS, MONGOLS & MACHIAVELLIANISM WITH REFERENCE TO <i>THE PRINCE</i> | 21 |
| 2.1 Prelude To The Abbasid Dynasty..... | 21 |
| 2.2 The Uniting of Opposition Forces Against The Umayyad Empire | 22 |
| 2.3 Origin And Emergence Of The Abbasids..... | 26 |
| 2.4 Abu Muslim And The Abbasid Revolution..... | 28 |
| 2.5 Chenghis Khan’s Rise To Power..... | 31 |
| 2.6 The Mongol Law | 33 |
| 2.7 The Mongol Army | 35 |
| 2.8 Introduction To Machiavelli And The Prince..... | 39 |
| | |
| CHAPTER THREE: AL-MANSUR AND HULAGU AND MACHIAVELLIAN IDEALS | 41 |
| 3.1 Al-Mansur & Hulagu Prior To Assuming Leadership Roles | 41 |
| 3.2 Al-Mansur As Machiavellian Prince In Annihilating His Rivals..... | 44 |
| 3.2.1 The Killing of Abu Muslim | 44 |
| 3.2.2 Treatment of Isa B. Musa & Dealing With Repercussions..... | 47 |
| 3.3 Hulagu’s Machiavellianism In Acquiring & Maintaining States | 49 |
| 3.4 The Importance of ‘Necessary’ Evil..... | 52 |
| 3.4.1 Al-Mansur | 52 |
| 3.4.2 Hulagu | 55 |
| 3.5 Other Strategies Adopted By Al-Mansur in Securing His Rule | 56 |
| 3.5.1 Al-Mansur As A Just Ruler..... | 56 |
| 3.5.2 Development in Art & Science | 58 |
| 3.5.3 Efficient Administration | 60 |
| 3.5.4 Thriftiness of Al-Mansur | 61 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 3.6 Hulagu’s Shortcoming In Living Up To Machiavellian Ideals | 62 |
| 3.6.1 Defeat At The Hands Of Mamluks | 62 |
| 3.6.2 The Loss of Christian Allies | 64 |
| 3.6.3 Rivalry With Golden Horde | 66 |
| 3.6.4 Lack Of Ambition | 67 |
| CHAPTER FOUR:THE ROLE OF ISLAM IN BRIDGING | |
| MACHIAVELLI’S SPIRITUAL ‘GAP’ | 69 |
| 4.1 The Importance of Religion..... | 69 |
| 4.2 Islam In Bridging The Gap in Machiavellian Prince..... | 71 |
| 4.3 Psychological Repercussions of Machiavellianism in Al-Al-Al-Al- | |
| Mansur | 74 |
| 4.3.1 The Burden of Guilt | 74 |
| 4.3.2 Fear for Personal Safety: The Construction of Baghdad | 76 |
| 4.4 Shariah in Providing Physical Security to The Ruler | 80 |
| 4.5 Hulagu as More of an Islamic Ruler Than A Machiavellian Prince..... | 81 |
| 4.6 Hulagu’s Limited Role in The Fall of The Abbasid Caliphate..... | 83 |
| 4.6.1 Political Tension & Waning of Centralized Rule | 83 |
| 4.6.2 Religious Intolerance | 85 |
| 4.6.3 Decadence | 86 |
| 4.7 The Theories of Al-Mawardi and Ibn Khaldun | 89 |
| 4.8 Sincerity & Trusting Nature of Hulagu | 91 |
| CHAPTER FIVE | 93 |
| DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION | 93 |
| REFERENCES..... | 98 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| <u>Figure No.</u> | | <u>Page No.</u> |
|-------------------|---|-----------------|
| 2.1 | (Please insert Caption And explain in text) | 26 |
| 2.2 | (Please insert Caption and mention this figure in the text) | 33 |
| 2.3 | (Please insert Caption and mention this figure in the text) | 34 |
| 3.1 | (Please inserts Caption, reference and explain in the text) | 44 |
| 3.2 | (Please insert Caption, reference and explain in the text) | 50 |
| 3.3 | (Please insert Caption, reference and explain in the text) | 63 |
| 3.4 | (Please insert Caption, reference and explain in the text) | 66 |
| 4.1 | (Please inserts Caption, reference and explain in the text) | 77 |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

During the Abbasid Caliphate (750CE-1258CE) Baghdad was the centre of Islamic art and learning, ushering in the Golden Age of Islamic civilization. The reign of Caliph Abu Ja'afar al-Mansur (r. 754-775 CE) was the consolidation of Abbasid power as he washed away resistance from all quarters, firmly establishing the Abbasid rule. Al-Mansur, the founder of Baghdad, was also one of the major patrons to foster Greek learning on a large scale.¹ Scholars from all over the world flocked towards the centers of learning in Baghdad, especially *Bayt al-Hikmah* (House of Wisdom) and one of the greatest achievements that came out from this scholarly atmosphere was the translation of the Greek works. Trade and commerce also flourished under the Abbasids as they witnessed a large influx of foreigners from all frontiers.² In spite of this flourishing culture and civilization, Caliph al-Mansur in the initial years of his rule faced several significant challenges and oppositions. He managed to overcome them with “swift response” and “relentless resolution”,³ leading to the securing and establishment of his unprecedented Abbasid rule. Unlike his brother al-Saffah (r. 750-754CE) who in fear of being deposed, bribed the rightful claimants to the Abbasid throne, al-Mansur assuming the grandiosity of a Caliph refused to cower down to their demands and adopted a hard-line in uprooting all oppositions.⁴

¹ Ruth Stellhorn Mackensen. “Four Great Libraries of Medieval Baghdad,” in *The Library Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1932), <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4301906?origin=JSTOR-pdf>> (4 May 2014).

² Jason Goodwin. “The Glory That Was Baghdad,” in *Wilson Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (2003), <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40261181>> (17 February 2014).

³ Jane D. McAuliffe, trans., *The History of Al-Tabari*, vol. 28 (Albany: University of New York Press, 1995), xiv.

⁴ Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh-i-Baghdad*, vol. 10 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khanji, 1931), 59-60.

However towards the end of the Abbasid Caliphate, Baghdad started to lose its importance and vitality as its political influence waned. This was brought about by internecine conflict, decadence and weak leadership, eventually culminating in the fall of Baghdad in February 1258. While Caliph al-Mansur can be termed as the consolidator of the Abbasid Empire, the Mongol invader and founder of the Ilkhanid dynasty Hulagu Khan (1218- 1265CE) is notoriously known for its nemesis. The Mongol conquest of Central Asia in the early thirteenth century was significant in altering the course of Islamic history. It opened the way for the advance of Mongol hordes into the Muslim world and Europe, leading to the fall of Baghdad and the end of Caliphate.⁵The first Mongol attack in Central Asia is believed to be a counter-attack. In 1218, when Chenghis Khan (1162-1227) sent a caravan of merchants to Otrar in Kazakhstan to establish trade relations with the Khwarezm Shah Ala ad-Din Muhammad (r.1200-1220) - the latter being misinformed that they were spies under cover, butchered them. This initiated the Mongol attack in Central Asia resulting in the fall of great cities like Samarqand, Bukhara and the annihilation of the Khwarezm Empire cities.⁶Chenghis Khan's descendants continued this tradition of conquest and his grandson the Great Khan Mongke (r.1251-1259), assigned his brother Hulagu with the expedition of Persia and the deposition of the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad. However, after the demise of Mongke in 1259, Hulagu Khan whose "judgment, which radiates like the sun and is the mirror of the essence of things and the elixir of wisdom"⁷ found himself overwrought with the impending doom of losing his conquered territories to Berke Khan (1257-1266)- the ruler of the Golden Horde.

⁵Arshad Islam. "The Mongol Invasions of Central Asia," *International Journal of e-Education, e-Business, e- Management and e-Learning* (2014): 158-159.

⁶George E. Lane. "The Mongols in Iran," in *The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History*, ed. Touraj Daryaee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 247-248.

⁷Ata-Malik Juvaini, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World-Conqueror*, trans. & ed. J.A. Boyle(Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 624.

Taking advantage of the status quo- the death of Mongke and the tension between the two khans- the Mamluk Sultan Saif al-Din Qutuz (r. 1259-1260), in a bid to regain the lost glory of the Muslims, gathered his forces and attacked Hulagu's Syrian army. This resulted in the first win over the Mongols, thus ending their expansion in Central Asia.⁸ The defeat at the Battle of Ayn Jalut in 1260 was a turning point in the career of Hulagu, who was also embroiled in a war with the Golden Horde. Left with no superior to advise Hulagu's ambition to conquer and subjugate Egypt came to an end along with his failure to claim back Syria, as the boundaries of his Ilkhanid Empire were set within fixed frontiers.⁹

Machiavelli's *The Prince* which is considered the first work of Western philosophy or modern political philosophy essentially argues how "princes" or rulers can secure their position and prevent impending danger through "ruthless and amoral means".¹⁰ Machiavelli's Prince therefore lacks the embodiment of virtues such as honesty and mercy and when he does exhibit them it is only a means to achieve the desired objectives of securing power and dominion. *The Prince*— a treatise dedicated to the governor of Florence in the early 16th century on "how a prince might gain and keep supreme power in a state"¹¹ -can be studied in relation to al-Mansur and Hulagu, serving as a check and balance to their respective rules. The aim of the study, therefore, is to critically analyze the life and career of al-Mansur and Hulagu in the light of the Machiavellian principles in *The Prince*, and explore the inadequacy of his

⁸ Amitai-Preiss. *Mongol and Mamluks: the Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260-1281* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 47.

⁹ Michael Prawdin, *The Mongol Empire: Its Rise and Legacy* (New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction, 2006), 370.

¹⁰ Lucille Margaret Kekewich, introduction to *Machiavelli: The Prince*, trans. C.E. Detmold (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1997), xii.

¹¹ Ibid.

philosophy which advocates abandonment of moral conscience for an unchallenged rule that eventually results in a fragmented self.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this research is to discuss the political strategies adopted by al-Mansur and Hulagu in the light of *The Prince*. The study would also dwell on their personality to show how it influenced their political decisions, thus delineating the extent of their Machiavellianism. For instance al-Mansur, even before his accession and during the reign of his brother al-Saffah, the founder of Abbasid Caliphate, exhibited the spirit of Machiavellianism as he alerted al-Saffah of the growing power and high-handedness of Abu Muslim which was eclipsing his position as a Caliph. Abu Muslim who led the Abbasid Revolution considered himself the founder of the Abbasids. Being stationed in Khurasan before the installation of the Abbasids, he therefore did not deem necessary to consult the Caliph on any matter regarding Khurasan.¹² Al-Mansur since the beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate remained suspicious of Abu Muslim, especially after his killing of Sulaiman bin Katheer- the oldest, loyal member of the Abbasids. However when Abu Muslim slighted al-Mansur, the latter was quick to inform this to al-Saffah warning him that Abu Muslim's removal was essential for the Caliph's own survival - "I fear that if you do not breakfast on him [Abu Muslim] today, he will dine on you [al-Saffah] tomorrow."¹³ Al-Mansur was therefore a "sagacious prince"¹⁴ and was prudent enough to perceive Abu Muslim as a threat as the latter even tried to establish his own influence in Hijaz and Iraq in order to raise forces against the Abbasids. Thus following his ascension, al-Mansur killed Abu

¹² Akbar Shah Najeebabadi, *The History of Islam*, vol. II (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2001), 284.

¹³ John Alden Williams, trans., *The History of Al-Tabari*, vol. 27 (Albany: University of New York Press, 1985), 210.

¹⁴ C.E. Detmold, 68.

Muslim becoming the Caliph in effect. It is important to note here that though al-Saffah wanted to rid himself of Abu Muslim, he feared that the latter's popularity might lead to a rebellion. However, al-Mansur in line with the principle that "men in general are ungrateful and fickle...[s]o long you shower benefits upon them",¹⁵ provided wealth and important positions to Abu Muslim's advisors and supporters which enabled him to prevent any major uprising.

While the fall of Alamut is a great testament of Hulagu's perseverance with the Assassins refusing to surrender, his political skills and tactics during the siege of Baghdad can be discussed in the light of *The Prince*. Though a nomad invader, Hulagu showed great statesmanship in responding to the Abbasid Minister Ibn Alqami when he pleaded him to attack Baghdad, promising Hulagu assistance. In line with the Machiavellian prince who should be slow to believe and act,¹⁶ Hulagu questioned the truth of his pledge, "What Ibn Alqami promises has no guarantee. How could we believe him?"¹⁷ Thus to prove his allegiance, Ibn Alqami disbanded the Baghdad troops, making the city vulnerable to foreign attacks and hence paved the path for Hulagu's conquest. It is worth mentioning that regardless of Ibn Alqami's effort, Hulagu would have had to carry out Mongke's order of attacking Baghdad; hence he was only using him to ensure the success of his mission. However unlike al-Mansur, whose career reflected a steady stream of his political ingenuity, Hulagu fell short of Machiavellian shrewdness. This is clearly seen in his condescending letter to Mamluk Sultan al-Din Qutuz, prior to the Battle of Ayn Jalut, which not only lacks diplomacy but also divulges his plan of attack.

¹⁵Ibid., 65.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷ Najeebabadi, 583.

We have conquered vast areas, massacring all the people. You cannot escape from the terror of our armies... At present you are the only enemy against whom we have to march.¹⁸

The furious Sultan responded by killing Hulagu's envoys and later annihilated his Syrian army in Ayn Jalut- a crushing defeat which sounded the death knell for Hulagu's ambitious conquests. Al-Mansur on the other hand, in spite of his lofty rank of an Abbasid Caliph, entreated and even begged Abu Muslim- the governor of Khurasan to pay him a visit.¹⁹ Al-Mansur realized that with Abu Muslim still alive, he could only be a figurehead Caliph. Thus in conjunction with the Machiavellian principle of how "[a] prince should be a fox, to know the traps and snares",²⁰ he duped Abu Muslim into seeing him after which he was murdered. Not only that al-Mansur was also very prudent in keeping a watchful eye over his empire, unlike Hulagu who left behind a small army in Syria before setting out for Mongolia in 1259 which cost him dearly the battle of Ayn Jalut.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- 1- To assess the extent of al-Mansur and Hulagu's conforming to Machiavellianism.
- 2- To assess the spiritual disillusionment with the Machiavellian principle that the end justifies the means.
- 3- To assess the extent of Machiavellianism required in ensuring political success.

¹⁸David W. Tschanz. "History's Hinge: 'Ain Jalut," *Saudi Aramco World*, no. 4 (August 2007): 58, 24-25.

¹⁹Najeebabadi, 290.

²⁰Detmold, 67.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1- To what extent did al-Mansur and Hulagu live up to Machiavellian ideals?
- 2- What is the justification and applicability of the Machiavellian philosophy that the end justifies the means?
- 3- Is it necessary for a ruler/conqueror to adopt Machiavellian traits in order to ensure political success?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Al-Mansur's religiously observing the Machiavellian ideals caused him to experience emotional turmoil, later in his life. In accordance to the Machiavellian principle that a wise prince should never be idle in times of peace and look for oppositions to crush them,²¹ he endeavored to annihilate the entire lineage of his 'possible' rivals. This "stone-heartedness [of al-Mansur] is very shocking"²² and it later caused him great unrest. This is seen in the construction of his palace in *Madinat al-Salam* or The City of Peace where he completely isolated himself from the inhabitants as well as his own sons, with the palace having access only to security guards.²³

The inadequacy of *The Prince* therefore lies in its disregard of the psychological aspect which has been addressed and taken into consideration by Islam, making it obligatory for the ruled to obey the ruler- the act of disobedience being a punishable offence. This allows a ruler to have successful reign without the burden of guilt for punishing the innocent or fearing the wrath of those wronged. Islam maintains a stern position in exacting retribution to deter crime and evil, thus permitting a measure of firmness which is required to establish peace and justice. For

²¹ Detmold, 58.

²² Najeebabadi, 300.

²³ Nezar AlSayyad, *Cities and Caliphs: On the Genesis of Arab Urbanism* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 120.

instance, during the *Khulafa al-Rashidun*(the Rightly-Guided Caliphs) period Caliph ‘Ali, regardless of the petition of some *Sahabah* (companions)to show clemency, dealt decisively with heresy by burning the heretics in trenches.²⁴Though a Muslim ruler enjoys considerable freedom in exercising his authority, justice and accountability are key concepts in Islamic rule which limit his actions. This allows the ruler to experience a degree of self-contentment and although the fear of deposing lingers in the mind of every ruler, he would at least not experience al-Mansur’s paranoia.

This concept of justice is also applicable to the pagan, nomad Hulagu Khan as Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328) issued a fatwa declaring that “Allah will support the just state even if it is led by unbelievers, but Allah will not support the oppressive state even if it is led by believers.”²⁵ Though Islamic Renaissance flourished in Baghdad, prior to Hulagu’s invasions, the Muslim World was on the brink of collapse from political havoc and moral decline. With the Assassins being a constant threat to the rulers and notables, and the Abbasid Caliphate rife with corruption and inefficiency, Hulagu’s conquest was imperative in bringing law and order. In spite of the savagery that was conducted to uproot these institutions, “Hulegu, came with justice and vision”²⁶ and this was reflected in the corruption-free administration that he established.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

Al-Mansur’s dealing with Abu Muslim is important in exhibiting the former’s Machiavellian attributes. Najeebabadi’s *History of Islam* (vol. 2) and J.A. William’s

²⁴ Baber Johansen, “A Perfect Law in an Imperfect Society” in *The Law Applied: Contextualizing the Islamic Shari’a*, eds. P. Bearman, W. Heinrichs and B.G. Weiss (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 270.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 273.

²⁶ George Lane, preface to *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), ix.

translation of *The History of Al-Tabari* provide detailed accounts on how the conflict between Abu Muslim and al-Mansur emerged and escalated. It also shows that al-Mansur was compelled by necessity and not personal grudge to weave the plot of killing Abu Muslim. During the reign of al-Saffah, Abu Muslim conducted all affairs without consulting the Caliph which al-Mansur unlike his brother “found it difficult to tolerate”.²⁷ Al-Mansur’s potential as a ruler, during the reign of al-Saffah, is extensively discussed in these two sources. They also provide insight into the characters of al-Mansur and Abu Muslim which is important in understanding their conflict and the fact that two major powers can never survive in a single region. Correspondences between these two and al-Mansur’s conversation with al-Saffah in direct speech are also provided which shed further light into al-Mansur’s strategy. For instance, al-Mansur’s coaxing of Abu Muslim²⁸ and his instruction to Abu Muslim’s advisors and ministers²⁹ to convince him to pay a visit have been lengthily discussed.

However these detailed correspondences have been largely left out in William Muir’s *The Caliphate* and K. Ali’s *A Study of Islamic History*. As a result their interpretation of al-Mansur’s dealing with Abu Muslim has been deemed as one arising out of jealousy and hatred. Although K. Ali acknowledges that with Abu Muslim still in the picture, al-Mansur was only a figurehead Caliph,³⁰ Muir goes to the extent of calling al-Mansur a “thankless Caliph”³¹ who “owed his all to him [Abu Muslim]”³² and that the latter was none other than a loyal supporter of the Abbasids. Najeebabadi however gives a detailed account of the ambitious nature of Abu Muslim who strove to gain support from the people of Hijaz in order to expand his Khurasan

²⁷ Najeebabadi, 284.

²⁸ Najeebabadi, 290.

²⁹ McAuliffe, 27.

³⁰ K. Ali, *A Study of Islamic History* (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1950), 230.

³¹ William Muir, *The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall*, vol. III (London: Routledge, 2000), 444.

³² *Ibid.*, 446.

army and raise a rebellion against the Abbasids; hence al-Mansur did not miscalculate in perceiving him a threat.

Although Tabari refrains from making any authorial comment, he mentions Abu Muslim's killing of about 600,000 people while Najeebabadi elaborates on how he conducted the mass annihilation of the Umayyads (Arabs) as he killed all Arab-speaking people along with non Arabs who supported the Umayyads, which is essential in delineating his ruthless nature. Thus Muir's sympathizing with Abu Muslim clearly shows a lack of understanding of his character, since had he only the Abbasid interest on mind he would not have killed Sulaiman bin Katheer, an invaluable member of the Abbasid family, out of personal grudge. Nevertheless Muir correctly highlights al-Mansur's fear of Abu Muslim as he was under no illusion of the latter's growing power in the empire. Najeebabadi and Tabari's reflection on the characters, especially their correspondences, provides a justification for al-Mansur's actions which if considered in isolation, would result in a different interpretation.

Jurji Zayadan gives a detailed account of al-Mansur's betrayal and deception in order to consolidate his empire. His treachery is well-attested as he granted pardon and then violated it as seen in the instances of Abu Muslim, Abdullah 'ibn Ali and Ibn Hubairah who were all promised protection only to be slain. Zayadan also reveals al-Mansur's devious plot in making Abu Muslim fight his uncle and Abbasid rival, Abdullah 'ibn Ali- "thus using one of his two enemies to overthrow the other, so that it might afterwards be easier for him to deal with the survivor".³³ Not only that, he even commanded Isa bin Musa, the next in line to the Abbasid throne (whom al-Mansur later removed from the line of succession by nominating his son in his place), to slay

³³ Jurji Zayadan, *History of Islamic Civilization*, trans. D.S. Margoliouth (New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan, 1994), 157.

his uncle Abdullah hoping that with the latter's relations later demanding justice, he would hand Isa over to them and thus be rid of his two rivals without being directly involved. However Zayadan's claim that in matters other than sovereignty al-Mansur was "exceedingly just and merciful",³⁴ vindicates him from the notorious 'blood-thirsty tyrant' epithet.

Mas'udi also testifies this, narrating how al-Mansur freed a prisoner on learning he was unjustly imprisoned by his governor, as he showered him with gifts and money and even offered him the governor's position as compensation.³⁵ Contrary to the Abbasid spirit, which relentlessly pursued the extermination of *Banu Umayyad* and those associated with it, al-Mansur was large-hearted enough to look beyond petty rivalry (as long as it did not threaten his rule). A true admirer of the universal values of valor and gratitude, al-Mansur even rewarded an Umayyad general who showed unflinching loyalty to his late Caliph.³⁶ Nevertheless it is important to note that Zayadan's work should be examined carefully and studied in relation to other texts as Shibli Nomani (1857-1914) severely condemned it, accusing him of presenting arguments deceitfully in a way that portrays Islam and Muslims negatively.³⁷

Mustaufi's *Zafarnamah* though written in verse, elaborates on Hulagu's personality traits. It presents his exchanges with Mongke Khan in direct quote, along with Hulagu's correspondences with other rulers, who are ordered to join the Mongols and assist in the conquests. It also provides invaluable information in documenting every step that Hulagu took after embarking on his mission. The righteousness of Hulagu is also affirmed by Mustaufi - "[i]n wisdom was his guide, and in state matters

³⁴ Ibid., 160.

³⁵ Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Husayn al-Mas'udi, *The Meadows of Gold: The Abbasids*, trans. & ed. Paul Lunde and Caroline Stone (London: Kegan Paul international, 1989), 29-31.

³⁶ Ibid., 26-27.

³⁷ Shibli Nomani, *Maqalat Shibli*, vol. 4, ed. Saiyid Sulaiman Nadavi (Azamgarh: Maarif Press, 1956), 133-277.

his wisdom became his guide”³⁸ further adding that “[t]hrough him, the bonds of Islam have been strengthened”.³⁹ This claim is attested in Hulagu’s instruction to his general to kill only the enemies in the battlefield, to spare the elders and avoid oppression which echoes the Islamic ruling on war. Similarly Ata-Malik Juvaini mentions how Hulagu’s dispatching messengers to warn rulers before attacking, is in line with Islam as Allah [SWT] never destroys a nation, before sending an apostle first.⁴⁰ These arguments are important in countering the popularized view of Hulagu as the destructor of Islam and Islamic civilization.

Unlike Mustaufi’s flowery words of praise, George E. Lane critically analyzes Hulagu’s career and conquests, presenting him not only as just and foresighted, but also as one who marked a new beginning in the lands of Persia. In “Whose Secret Intent?” and “A Tale of Two Cities”, Lane argues that prior to Hulagu’s conquest “Iran for the most part had continued in a state of political and economic chaos”⁴¹ and that his establishment of the Ilkhanid dynasty “opened the way for the ascendancy of Iran and the spread of Persian culture”.⁴² He also vindicates Hulagu as the destroyer of Baghdad and blames it on “the Caliph and his irresponsible ministers”⁴³ and this has some credibility as prior to the siege of Baghdad, Hulagu asked the last Abbasid Caliph al-Mustasim (r.1242-1258) to surrender, warning him of the dire consequences of confrontation. However Lane’s claim that the severity of the destruction of Baghdad has been exaggerated, stating that it is unlikely that Hulagu’s Iranian

³⁸ L.J. Ward, “The Zafar-Namah of HamdAllah Mustaufi and the Il-Khan Dynasty of Iran” (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 1983).

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ata-Malik Juvaini, 623-624.

⁴¹ George Lane, “Whose Secret Intent?” in *Eurasian Influences on Yuan China*, ed. Morris Rossabi, (Singapore: ISEAS, 2013), 5.

⁴² George Lane, “A Tale of Two Cities: The Liberation of Baghdad & Hangzhou and the Rise of the Toluids,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 56 (2012/2013): 132.

⁴³ Ibid., 115.

subjects would have supported a violence that would jeopardize the very existence of Islam, is a fallacy. He clearly fails to take into account the Sunni-Shia rivalry and the numerous Shia attempts since the time of *Khulafa al-Rashidun* to scrape off the Caliphate and establish their own Imamate.

Amitai-Preiss and David Ayalon are invaluable in exploring the shortcomings of Hulagu, largely ignored by Lane and Mustaufi. They elaborate on Hulagu's lack of ingenuity in stationing a small army in Syria, underestimating the prowess of his Egyptian opponents which proved "to have disastrous consequences for the Mongols".⁴⁴ Hulagu's rashness in his immediate withdrawal from Syria, on receiving the news of Mongke's death, proved to be a costly one, resulting in the defeat of Ayn Jalut which ended all his future plans of conquering Syria and Egypt. Contrary to the portrayal of a just, righteous Hulagu, David Ayalon presents the dark side to his nature, showing how he withheld his cousin Berke from his rightful share of the spoils of conquests⁴⁵ and also his ruthless slaughter of Berke's envoys which further soured their relationship. This enmity which Hulagu himself fostered had a more severe repercussion than he anticipated as Berke Khan later formed an alliance with the Mamluks to drive out the Mongols from their conquered regions.

Hulagu's relationship with the Christians which is important in showing his statesmanship skills has been elaborately discussed by Peter Jackson and David Morgan. While Morgan is of the opinion that the Christians should have allied with Hulagu since he was more akin to their faith⁴⁶ (his wife being a Nestorian Christian), Jackson argues that the Mongols did not show "[f]avouritism towards any particular

⁴⁴ Amitai-Preiss, 29.

⁴⁵ David Ayalon, *Outsiders in the Lands of Islam: Mamluks, Mongols and Eunuchs* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1988), 174-176.

⁴⁶ David Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 136.

faith or religious group”⁴⁷ unless it was compatible with their imperial mission. He thus cites examples of how in spite of his preference for the Armenian and Georgian troops (because of their bravery), Hulagu did not flinch from issuing an order to slaughter King Hetum’s Armenian troops after they committed vandalism during the capture of Aleppo on January 25, 1260.⁴⁸ However following the defeat at Ayn Jalut on September 3, 1260, Hulagu desperately sought an alliance with the Christians in an attempt to re-conquer his territories. Using quotations from the New Testament in his letter to the Pope,⁴⁹ Hulagu even appealed to the spirit of Crusades by alluding to Berke’s favoritism of the Muslims and his own preference of the Christians.⁵⁰ Thus Jackson is an important source in showing that Hulagu was not partial towards Christians and only negotiated out of political necessity in an attempt to bring down the Mamluks and occupy Syria and Palestine.

Regarding al-Mansur, the sources primarily discuss his diplomatic relations which can be studied to comprehend the significance of his political tactics. Though this sheds light into his character and personality, majority authors limit their study of al-Mansur till his consolidation of power. The upheavals of his psyche which caused him great unrest in the latter end of his life however remain unexplored. Though only Tabari gives an account of al-Mansur’s psychological plight, he does not explore its origin which is what this study would aim towards. With regard to Hulagu, Juvaini and Mustaufi mention the kind and forgiving nature of Hulagu and his affinity towards Islam only as a passing comment; however this study would elaborately discuss and analyze this aspect. Also Hulagu’s lack of diplomacy would be examined

⁴⁷ Peter Jackson, *Studies on the Mongol Empire and Early Muslim India* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 204 (III).

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 211.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 210.