

## A STUDY OF AN UNKNOWN PRIMARY DOCUMENT ON THE FALL OF ABBASID BAGHDAD TO THE MONGOLS (WRITTEN BY THE DEFEATED SIDE)

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The present study aims to do a documental study of the Mongol invasion and the fall of Baghdad (the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate) in 1258 CE. It is a case study on a document and two comments on it, which were originally recovered from the burial shroud of a person killed during Hülegü's conquest of Baghdad. This document was later inserted by someone (possibly by one of its two commentators) in a section of a primary manuscript of *Kitab al-Wara'a* (written in 1147 CE). Then Oşman ibn Ğānim al-Hiti and Ṭahir ibn 'Abd-Allāh ibn Ibrahim ibn Aḥmad, as commentators, wrote their comments about the document. Although these documents are in the form of fragmentary notes, they are rare primary sources that depict the events and the conditions of the siege, the conquest of Baghdad and the collapse of Abbasid Caliphate. This article, while providing images, revised texts, and translations<sup>1</sup> of the documents, aims to introduce them and to explore the civil factors contributing to the fall of Baghdad.

**Keywords:** the fall of Baghdad, the Mongols, the Abbasid Caliphate

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## INTRODUCTION

Although the literature on the fall of Baghdad is relatively rich, there have been few archival document-based studies, to date. In 1900, Le Strange made a good research namely “The Story of the Death of the Last Abbasid Caliph, from the Vatican MS. of Ibn-al-Furāt.”<sup>2</sup> This was the start of a chain of research on the collapse of Abbasid Baghdad. In a more detailed study, Joseph de Somogyi in 1933 regarded the Arabic poetry sources and introduced “A Qasida on the Destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols”<sup>3</sup>, in which he reflexed the formal echelon of Abbasid court about its collapse. This poem is similar to a qasida about the same subject from Sa’di of Shiraz<sup>4</sup> (1210-1291 CE). He was the outstanding Persian poet of early Mongol period. The next research is a book entitled *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenl. Gesellschaft* by Berthold Spuler<sup>5</sup>, who in 1938 discussed the political and economic consequences of the event. He also studied Mongolian formal titles and letter writing styles, which can be compared with the late Abbasid style of the documents introduced in the current article. In 1978 Burchard Brentjes made an art history survey entitled “The Fall of Baghdad and the Caliph Al-Musta’sim in a Tabrīz Miniature”<sup>6</sup>, which completed the above research from the aspect of illustrated Persian manuscripts of 13-14 centuries. Then in 1985<sup>7</sup>, David Morgan, in his comprehensive book entitled *The Mongols*<sup>8</sup>, studied the causes of the collapse of the Abbasid caliphate. Later in 1991, Širin Bayāni in her voluminous book *Din wa Dawlat dar Iran-i ‘Abd-i Moğul (Religion et Government en Iran au Temps des Mongols)*<sup>9</sup>, discussed the regional political and legal consequences of

<sup>2</sup> Le Strange, G, “The Story of the Death of the Last Abbasid Caliph, from the Vatican MS. of Ibn-al-Furāt.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 32, no. 2 (April 1900): 293-300.

<sup>3</sup> De Somogyi, Joseph, “A Qasida on the destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1933, pp. 41-48.

<sup>4</sup> Saadi of Shiraz, *Saadi: The Divan*, revised trans. Paul Smith (New Humanity Books, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Spuler, Berthold, “Quellenkritik Zur Mongolengechichte Irns,” in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenl. Gesellschaft*, Jg. 92 (1938): 219-243.

<sup>6</sup> Burchard Brentjes, “The Fall of Baghdad and the Caliph Al-Musta’sim in a Tabrīz Miniature,” *East and West*, vol. 28, no. 1/4, December 1978: 151-154.

<sup>7</sup> i.e., the first edition.

<sup>8</sup> David Morgan, *The Mongols*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Širin Bayāni, *Din wa Dawlat dar Iran-i ‘Abd-i Moğul (Religion et Government en Iran au Temps des Mongols)*. (Tehran: Makaz-e Našr-e Danešgāhi, 1991).

the fall of Baghdad in detail. A few years later, Painan Rašid-wu<sup>10</sup>, in his doctoral dissertation entitled “The Fall of Baghdad,” made a comprehensive study based on the Chinese, Arabic, Persian and Mongolian sources. This is regarded as one of the most relevant studies in the literature on the present subject. In her article entitled “Al-Ḥawādiṭ Al-Gāmi’a: Contemporary Account of the Mongol Conquest of Baghdad: 656/1258”, Hend Gilli-Elewy<sup>11</sup> portrayed the dramatic psychological atmosphere of Baghdad during its fall to the Mongols.<sup>12</sup> Possibly the most recent work on the subject is Michal Biran’s article “Music in the Conquest of Baghdad: Ṣafī al-Dīn Urmawī and the Ilkhanid Circle of Musicians.”<sup>13</sup> She researched how Ṣafī al-Dīn, by securing a post in the Ilkhanid regime in Baghdad, “saved himself and his neighborhood” and transferred the Abbasid music culture to the Ilkhanid era.<sup>14</sup>

The present study follows this trend of researches, but like Ibn-al-Furāt’s manuscript, it is based on the documents written by the defeated side.

## HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MATERIAL IN THE DOCUMENTS ON THE FALL OF BAGHDAD

### The Socio-economic Landscape of Baghdad

Baghdad replaced the ancient Babylon and Ctesiphon in the Islamic era, and to date has maintained its centrality in Iraq (‘Irāq-i ‘Arab). There are many reasons for this. The first is that, geographically, it is located where the major rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, come closest to each other. Thus, given Baghdad’s population, the

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<sup>10</sup> Painan Rashid-wu. *Soqut-e Baġdād va ḥokmraṇā’ei-e Moġolān dar ‘Arāq* ( سقوط بغداد و حکمروایی مغولان در عراق “The Collapse of Baghdad and Mongol Rule in Iraq”), Persian translation by Asadullāh Āzād, Mašhad, Āstān-e Qods Razavi, 1997.

<sup>11</sup> Hend Gilli-Elewy, “Al-Ḥawādiṭ Al-Gāmi’a: Contemporary Account of the Mongol Conquest of Baghdad, 656/1258”, *Arabica* 58, (2011): 353-371.

<sup>12</sup> About the people of Baghdad during the conquest of the Mongols, she writes: “Their color had changed, their minds shocked by the sight of horrors that no words can describe. They were like dead emerging from their graves on the day of resurrection fearful, hungry and cold.” *Op. cit.*, pp. 367-368.

<sup>13</sup> Michal Biran, “Music in the Conquest of Baghdad: Ṣafī al-Dīn Urmawī and the Ilkhanid Circle of Musicians,” in *The Mongols’ Middle East: Continuity and Transformation in Ilkhanid Iran*, ed. Bruno De Nicola and Charles Melville, 133-154. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, 133.

extent of demand and supply, and as caravans needed to cross through Baghdad, many bridges were constructed by boats over the rivers. These were connected by chains and then covered and leveled using soil and brushwood, thereby linking the two quarters of the city with the roads coming from the four cardinal directions. Another reason for Baghdad's centrality was its moderate climate in comparison to other regions in Iraq. Both cold climate and tropical fruits could grow side by side. These included some species of date palms like maḥtoom and ḥastāwi, pomegranates and grapes along with rice, corn, cotton and beans. Such a climate attracted skilled and rich people from everywhere. The people of Baghdad, even in Chinese trade guidebooks, were famous for commerce and craftsmanship, cloth weaving such as silk weaving<sup>15</sup> and palm growing. Also, ranchers and possibly some Mongolian and Turk tribes were interested in the surrounding grazing lands. Ḥamdollah Mostawfi (1281-1349 CE) described the abundance in Baghdad, during the Abbasid caliphate, to the extent that prices were generally cheap and famine was rare.<sup>16</sup> However due to a vast massacre of the populace and the destruction of the areas surrounding Baghdad during the Mongol conquest,<sup>17</sup> Al-Qalqaṣāndī (1356-1418 CE) wrote that grain was scarce in Iraqi cities, except in "Nil" in the south, which was fertile in terms of grain yield.<sup>18</sup>

The circumference of the Baghdad ramparts was about 18 thousand feet and included the neighborhoods of the Wadi Al-Salām وادی السلام, the Shiite quarter of Karḥ كرخ, Roṣafa رصافه, al-Šarqiyyah الشرقيه (or the Eastern Quarter on the Tigris, as a religious endowment from the caliphate for religious scholars to settle), Jāneb al-Ṭāq جانب الطاق (the main bazaar area) and al-Ḥarīm الحريم (the enclosed security zone for the palaces of the Abbasid Caliphate). Nizamiye Bazaar بازار نظاميه, Suq at-Tamr سوق التمر (the bazaar of date wholesalers), a weekly fair named Suq al-Ṭholāṣā سوق الثلاثاء (the Tuesday Market) which later developed into Bazār-e Bazzāzān بازار بزّازان (Mercer Bazaar) which is perhaps the same as Nizamiyye Bazaar mentioned above, Bazaar-e R'as al-Ṭāq بازار راس الطاق and Suq al-Sultan سوق السلطان (King's Bazaar) were among the famous markets of Baghdad.<sup>19</sup>

The gates of Baghdad were as follows: Bāb Ṭariq Ḥorāsān (اب طريق خراسان),

<sup>15</sup> Chau ju-kua, 1965, pp. 102-110.

<sup>16</sup> Mostawfi, 2003, pp. 74-73.

<sup>17</sup> For a detailed report about the destruction, see: al-Ġassani, 1975, pp. 6, 17, 30, 41, 45, 78, 289, 337, 338, 382, 401, 425, 453, 500, 626.

<sup>18</sup> Al-Qalqaṣāndī, 2002, vol. 4, p. 48.

<sup>19</sup> Ibn Battuta, 1971, vol. 1, p. 242; Mustawfi, 2002, pp. 73-74.

i.e. the gate toward the Road of Ḥorāsān<sup>20</sup>), Bāb Ḥalaj (باب خلج the gate of the Turkic tribe Ḥalaj), Bāb al-Ḥelbah (باب الحلبه), Bāb Suq al-Sulṭān (باب سوق السلطان, i.e. the gate near the bazaar of the Sultan), Bāb al-Ḡorbah (باب الغربه, i.e. the gate of refugees) located on the banks of the Tigris toward India and China via the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, Bāb Suq at-Tamr (باب سوق التمر, i.e. the gate near the bazaar of date wholesalers), Bāb al-Badriyyeh (باب البدریه), Bāb al-‘Āmmah (باب العامه, i.e. people’s gate) or Bāb ‘Amūriyyah (باب عموريه, i.e. the gate toward the ‘Amūriyyah region in Syria) in the east, Bāb al-Bostān (باب البستان, i.e. Gate toward the Garden<sup>21</sup>), Bāb al-Baṣrah (باب البصره, i.e. the gate toward Basra) in the south, and Bāb al-Marātib (باب المراتب, the gate for official appointments), which showed the extensive international connections of this city. The markets were also located near these gates.<sup>22</sup> This highlighted the importance of exports and imports in Baghdad. The major trading centers were usually caravansaries near the gates of the city, many of which were administered by endowment income of the kings and the rich. Baghdadi as well as Baghdad-based foreign traders are named in some sources, suggesting that Baghdad was prosperous even after the fall of Baghdad.<sup>23</sup> Ibn Baṭṭuta, who visited Baghdad around 728 AH/1378 CE, wrote: “Today’s Baghdad, compared with the past when it had not sustained injuries, is for the most part in ruins.” However, around 1339 CE, the sum of its tax (Ṭamṣā) amounted to 800,000 dinars.<sup>24</sup> The above-mentioned situation illustrates a city intoxicated with wealth, abundance and prosperity, thus making it attractive enough to be attacked and invaded by the Mongols.

## **Historical background to the fall of Baghdad: The Mongol invasion**

Halfway along the Silk Road, in 655 AH/1257 CE the Mongols invaded Iraq, looting Aqaba, Ḥolwan and around Baghdad. However, this resulted in the Mongols being

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<sup>20</sup> Some Iranian scholars like Manucherhr Sotudeh, believed that this was the start for the Jāddat Ṭariq Ḥoraāsān جاده طريق خراسان ‘Great Road of Khorasan’ as original and historical name of the Silk Road.

<sup>21</sup> Possibly it was a royal garden for Abbasid caliphs.

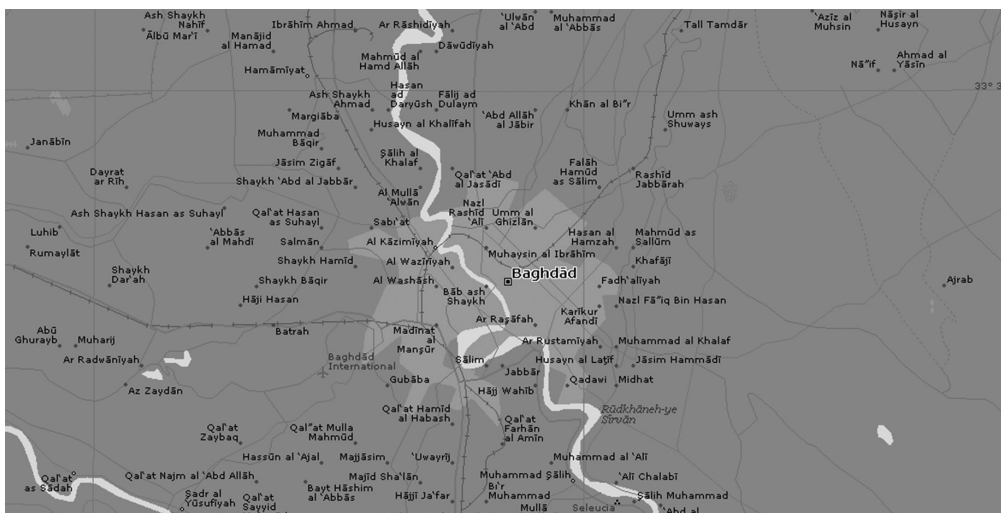
<sup>22</sup> Mustawfī, 2002, pp. 73-74; Al-Qalqaṣāndi, 2002, vol. 4, p. 47; Abu-al-Feda, 1971, pp. 330-332.

<sup>23</sup> Ibn al-Najjar al-Baḡdādī, undated, pp. 8, 90, 329, 235; Ibn al-Demiāfi, undated, pp. 27, 167, 235, 153, 261.

<sup>24</sup> Mustawfī, 2003, p. 75; Ibn Battuta, 1971, vol. 1, p. 240.

repelled by the Caliph al-Mustanşir's forces.<sup>25</sup> Coming from Karakorum and Almalix, Hülegü's<sup>26</sup> invasion path was parallel to the Silk Road caravan routes in Persia which included the following cities, Saraḥs, Tūn-Ḥāf-Toos-Rādkān-Ḥabušan (Quchān), Astu, Ḥaraqān, Qasrān, Šah-Diž, Abbās-Ābād, and Rey, and the Ismaili castles of Bis-kala Diž, Jamal-abad, Qazvin, Alamut, Meymūn-Diž, Gird-Kuh, Deylamān, Aškevar, Tārom, Ḥarkām, Rud-bār, Lamsar, and Šahrak (in Roubdār). Then he hit the Ḥorasan road to Hamadān-Kermānšāhān-Ḥolwān-Baghdad, and Levant (Šām, i.e. Syria). According to Jovani's accounts of Hülegü's expedition, in order to pass the waterways, roads were built and cleared, bridges were constructed, and ships were prepared.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, some Iranian local governors like the Qara-Khitai king of Kerman, Sultan Muḥammad ibn Ḥemitebur Tayingu (1252-1258), assisted Hülegü in the conquest of Quhistan castles on the Alborz ranges and Baghdad.<sup>28</sup>



The Tigris River dividing Baghdad into western and eastern quarters, and the roads going in all directions (“Baghdad” in *Encyclopedia Encarta*, 2009)

<sup>25</sup> Juzjāni, 2004, vol. 2, p. 158.

<sup>26</sup> Hülegü was a Mongol prince, a brother of Mōngke Qaan a grandson of Ghengiz-khan, who got the commission from his brother to continue the Mongol conquests in western Asia. After conquering Iran and Iraq and Anatolia, he founded the Ilkhanid dynasty as Mongol rulers of this realm. For more details, see the table in the main text of the current issue.

<sup>27</sup> Jovani, 2004, vol. 3, pp. 10-90, 102-300; Juzjāni, 2004, vol. 2, p. 158.

<sup>28</sup> Monši Kermāni (B), 1986, pp. 100-101; Šabānkāre'i, 1998, p. 197; Naṭanzi, 2004, p. 27; Monši Kermāni (A), 1984, p. 9-37.

### Table of events leading to the fall of Baghdad

Date	Event	Source
655 AH/1257 CE	Hülegü marches toward his camp in Hamadan and blames Al-Musta'sim because he did not help the Mongols against the Ismailis (Assassins). (Quoted from the <i>Faṭḥ Nameh</i> "victory report", a work by Ḥwāje Naṣir al-Din Ṭoosi).	Jovānī, 2004, vol. 3, p. 280
The month of Šawwāl, 655 AH/ 1257 CE	Hülegü marches from Hamadan via Kermanšah and Holwan to Baghdad. He also sends Baiju and Suṣunjāy along the northern road (Kurdistan) via Šare-zur, Daqūqā, and sends Kitu-Buyā and Ankia from the Koreyt and Yabāt, to surround Baghdad.	Jovānī, 2004, vol. 3, p. 382-383
1257 CE	Dawāt-dār, the Abbasid general, defeats Suṣunjāy in Al-Anbār, but is defeated by Baiju and flees back to Baghdad	Juzjāni, 2004, vol. 2, p.158; Jovānī, 2004, vol. 3, p. 285
Mid-Muḥarram 656 AH/1258 CE	After reaching Baghdad and besieging it, the Mongols construct a wooden wall (čapar) around the city and install catapults. The caliph sends his finance minister Ibn Darboos with some presents to Hülegü to negotiate a peace treaty.	Jovānī, 2004, vol. 3, p. 286-287
22-26 Muḥarram 656 AH/1258 CE	The opening of Hülegü's six-day war during the siege of Baghdad. The 'Ajam towers fall. The Mongols capture the Baghdad walls and assisted by the people of Baghdad destroy it. Dawāt-dār, and Soleymān-šah surrender to the Mongols. The people of the city plead for their lives, mediated by Šaraf al-din Marāgi and Šahab al-Din Zangāni.	Jovānī, 2004, vol. 3, p. 288-290
4 Šafar 656 AH/ 258 CE	Caliph al-Musta'sim surrenders to Hülegü. Baghdad is looted for a week after Al-Musta'sim's surrender. Hülegü leaves Baghdad with the caliph (14 Šafar) and kills him in the village of Waqf. Ibn-al-'Alqami is reinstated as vizier in Baghdad, Fahr-al-din Dāmġāni is appointed finance minister, Ibn-Darboos chief of the craftsmen, and Astu-Bayatür Šahne شحنة "the tyrant" of Baghdad. Hülegü orders the reconstruction of the bazaars and the entire city.	Jovānī, 2004, vol. 3, p. 290-292
14 Šafar 1258 AH/1258 CE		Jovānī, 2004, vol. 3, p. 290-292



## THE MANUSCRIPT OF KITĀB AL-WARĀ'A

In April 1979, Dr. Moḥtār al-din Aḥmad (مختار الدين احمد), an Indian professor of Aligarh University, found a manuscript of a religious book entitled *Kitāb al-Warā'a* (كتاب الورع Book of Devoutness)<sup>29</sup> in a manuscript exhibition in the University of Ḥalab (Aleppo)<sup>30</sup>. The manuscript, compiled in 545 AH (1150 CE), belonged to Sa'ad Zaḡlul al-Kawākebi (سعد زغول الكواكبي).<sup>31</sup> In this book which was rewritten in later times (after the fall of Baghdad), there was inserted a will-letter of a Baghdadi scholar killed during the collapse of the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad. Furthermore, there are two marginal inscriptions from later readers of the book and the mentioned will-letter. It seems that the unknown rewriter of the manuscript or one of the writers of inscriptions inserted the will-letter among the book's pages. That is why the manuscript published in 1150 CE contains these documents from the 13<sup>th</sup> century about the Mongol invasion. Here, these three documents (the will-letter and the two marginal inscriptions) will be studied.

The first document is from an eyewitness reporter who wrote about the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in the year 1258 CE. This manuscript is a historical document on the Mongol conquest of Baghdad and the heinous crimes, murder and bloodshed they committed. The author wrote about everything he saw and heard about the fall

<sup>29</sup> Aḥmad, Moḥtār al-din, "Waṣiḡha 'Elmiyya Tariḡhiyya" (وثيقه علميه تاريخيه 'A Scholarly Historical Document') *The Journal of Indian Academy*, vol. 8, no. 1-2 (1983), Aligarh Muslim University, pp. 219 b-215a.

<sup>30</sup> Dr. Moḥtār al-Din Ahmad writes on the circumstances of the discovery of these documents: "I attended the Second International Symposium for History of Arabic Science, Aleppo, April 1979, at the invitation of Professor Doctor Ahmad Yousef Al Hassan, the President of the University of Aleppo. There was a scientific-historical fair with a section devoted to rare Arabic manuscripts where I found a number of important manuscripts including *Roṣṣ al-azḡar fi Ma'āni al-Ṣamār* (روض الازهار في معاني الثمار), a work by Mohammad ibn Hasan al-Tawāji (d. 1406 CE/809 AH) derived from al-Anṡākī's book entitled *Zaḡhirab* and another manuscript *Toḡfat al-Mojābedin fi al-'Amal li-al-Mayādin* (نام تحفه المجاهدين في العمل للميادين) written by Lajin al-Hesami known as Trabulsi from the Ahmadiya Library in Aleppo. I liked the two manuscripts. Another interesting thing to note was the manuscript of the book *Kitāb al-Warā'a* belonging to Professor Sa'ad Zaḡlul Kawakebi, President of the Al-'adyāt Society and Court of Appeal advisor in Aleppo, Halab Ṣahba. He is among the notables of the Levant, and a supporter of science and scientists. I was fortunate enough to meet him, and I found him to be so generous and good-natured. He honored me. May God preserve him! He provided me with a copy of this useful scientific document. I express my sincerest gratitude to him. I present this document to the readers. I hope it will be read and commented on by scientists and researchers. May God help us to regenerate Arab- Islamic cultural heritage! God is all-powerful."

<sup>31</sup> Aḥmad, 1983, pp. 215-216.



of the city and the Mongol conquest, so the manuscript is not only a historical document on the destruction of Baghdad but also has useful information such as the exact dates of events and the fall of Baghdad neighborhoods (quarters) to the Mongols not to be found in any official history book by the Mongols like *Tarih-e Jahān-gošā* (تاریخ جهانگشا). It is, therefore, a primary source on the events mentioned above.

Dr. Moḥtār al-Din Aḥmad (مختار الدين احمد) might have been unable to read certain words in the documents due to the low quality of the black and white paper copy he had made. Some of the words have been rewritten in his article, yet some others remain unintelligible for him.

## TRANSLATION OF THE DOCUMENTS

### Document 1: The report of *Yusof ibn M'aāli* about the fall of Baghdad

The first document is a short but important and detailed report on the fall of the quarters of Baghdad, written by Yusof ibn M'aāli ibn Ša'abān al-Mo'addab in an Arabic calligraphy (نسخ Nash style) which was a common style during late Abbasid caliphate. This document reads:

1. The Mongol legions increased at the gates of Baghdad on Thursday night, the tenth of Muharram<sup>2</sup>  
‘Ašura day in the year six hundred and fifty six, when *Ibn al-Kor* (?)<sup>32</sup>
2. and other emirs (commanders) were killed in the event [battle] and the battle took place in the upper [part of the quarter of] Al-Šarqiyya
3. and spread toward the shore, to the river Dojail (Tigris), and to Bašir stream. Baghdad was besieged
4. on Tuesday in Muḥarram on the twenty-ninth day and, [in the margin: on the

<sup>32</sup> The word Dr. Moḥtār al-Din Aḥmad (مختار الدين احمد) was not able to read; was the name of one of the army commanders of the Abbasid caliph written something like “Ibn al-Kor” or “Ibn Kor”. While searching through books and sources of that time, especially “*Tarih-i Waṣṣāf*”, the name of Fath al-din ibn al-Kor was found close to “Mujahd al-din Ibaḳ Dawat Dar”, the commander-in-chief of the Abbasid caliph Al-Mustašim Billah. (Waṣṣāf al-Hazra Širazi, *Tarih-i Waṣṣāf al-Hazra*, ed. Mohammad Mehdi Esfahani, Tehran, Ibn Sina & Jafari Tabrizi Publications, 1960, p. 33). For details about the Baghdad conquest, see Painan Rašid-wu, *The Fall of Baghdad and the Mongol Rule in Iraq*, trans. Asad-Allah Azad, Mašhad, Astan Quds Razavi, 1990.

- morning of the thirtieth] of Muḥarram, they [Mongols] entered Baghdad, and
5. on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> of Šafar<sup>33</sup> killed all the dwellers of Baghdād, except those whose hour (of death) had not yet come.
  6. They also burnt the other streets. Their stay
  7. around Baghdad lasted for forty days.
  8. Yusof ibn M'aāli ibn Ša'abān al-Mo'addab,  
A weak servant of Allah, has written this
  9. who hopes for mercy of God. God may bless him and his parents and everyone who prays for him
  10. to reunite with his family and children before his death.
  11. In the name of the Prophet Muhammad and his descendants, peace be upon him and his descendants
  12. [In the margin] on the thirtieth day.

## Document 2: Oṣmān ibn Ġānem al-Hītī's will

The second script is in bold, semi-legible handwriting in Arabic Ta'aliq تعليق calligraphic style with some missing words. It is by the hand of Oṣmān ibn Ġānem al-Hītī, who after reading the above-mentioned document in the book *Kitāb al-Wara'a* wrote a comment on it, which reads as follows:

1. Has taken a look in this book [sic],
2. Oṣmān ibn Ġānem al-Hītī, may God forgive him and his parents
3. and all the Muslims and whoever reads this writing; and al-Muzawwer<sup>34</sup> said
4. [One line is missing]<sup>35</sup>
5. ... one sheet [of this document] is in my burial shroud on my chest,
5. I hope the holy and the most high God may forgive me and [may He] forgive<sup>36</sup> me my sins. [The narrator] Said

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<sup>33</sup> In the Iraqi and Arabic-speaking population of Khuzestan, people still consider Wednesdays and the month of Šafar as inauspicious.

<sup>34</sup> Possibly, it is a personal name or a title.

<sup>35</sup> It possibly happened when Sa'ad Zağlul was copying it for Dr. Ahmad.

<sup>36</sup> Dr. Moḥtār al-Din Ahmad read the word as “دمی” (my blood) while the writer combines it with the preceding word and reads it as لی يغفر لی (forgive me my sins).

6. When the man stopped crying, and passed away, a man, his neighbor, came in and asked for that sheet of paper
7. from the dead person's little daughter. Then he put it on his chest in the burial shroud.
8. Then (?) when the neighbor slept that night, saw him [the dead person] in a dream
9. as he was in the paradise (?). So asked him what did your god do with you [?] he said [the dead answered] He forgave and blessed me
10. and carried me into Paradise [three illegible words] about the forgiveness by god the most pure, the highest. The story has ended. Peace be upon the prophet of God and his pure descendants.

**Document 3: Ṭahir ibn 'Abd-Allāh ibn Ibrahim ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥarrāni's annotation on Oṣmān ibn Ġānem al-Hītī's will**

Ṭahir ibn 'Abd-Allāh ibn Ibrahim ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥarrāni, after reading the will of Oṣmān ibn Ġānem al-Hītī, wrote a comment on it. This comment reads as follows:

1. Having read all this [above manuscript] and understood some of it, the poor before God the most high, as the weakest servant of God, I Ṭahir ibn 'Abd-Allāh
2. ibn Ibrahim ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥarrāni, In the month of Ramadān in the year eight(?) hundred and fifty(?) and seven,<sup>37</sup>
3. may God forgive me and my parents and all the Muslims [two illegible words] He is the forgiving and the merciful.
4. I appeal to your kindness; Oh, the Kindest! Oh, the most Merciful! Whoever asks you for safety, make him dwell in safety.
5. Oh Allah, send your infinite peace and blessings upon our master and lord, Muhammad and his pure descendants, and tell [our] superabundant regards [to him and them], and all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

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<sup>37</sup> -AH 857/1453 AD

## ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL ATMOSPHERE OF THE FALL OF BAGHDAD ILLUSTRATED BY THE ABOVE DOCUMENTS

As the authors of the first two documents were witness to the social and psychological atmosphere brought about by the fall of Baghdad, from a formal analysis of the text content (surface hermeneutics) by considering the high frequency of words like Muḥarram (3 times), Šafar and ‘Ašura (2 times in the forms ‘Ašur and ‘Ašura) in such short texts, as well as a particular reference to the Ašhor al-Ḥarām (اشهر الحرام ‘war-forbidden months’), it can be inferred that the Mongol conquests were considered anti-Islamic, similar to crusades. Moreover, these dates (the months of Muḥarram and Šafar) refer to the anniversaries of two tragic events in the history of Islam: the martyrdom of Imam Hussein in Karbala in 10 Muḥarram AH 61/10 October 680 CE, and the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 28 Šafar AH 11/8 June 632 CE on a certain “Yaum al-Ḥamis” (يوم الخميس ‘the gloomy Thursday’). This “Yaum al-Ḥamis” is so intertwined with Layla al-Ḥamis mentioned in the present documents that one can deduce that the authors have likened the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad to those tragic events in early Islamic history. All these possibly were under the influence of the authors’ religious education, of which reading the *Kitab al-Wara’a* is an actual example.

On the one hand, it is not improbable that Yusof ibn M’aāli ibn Ša’abān al-Mo’addab<sup>38</sup> had a formal post in the court of the caliph, just like many other Shiites such as Ibn al-‘Alqami, the vizier.

On the other hand, the historian’s scrutinizing of the time of these events in the Islamic calendar indicates his knowledge of astrological horoscopy and the effects of the planets and signs upon nations and human affairs. This can be interpreted as explaining away the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate, instead of focusing on the real causes like the chaotic court of the caliph and his feeble army. This is a further proof of a belief in determinism and fatalism and the prevalence of superstition at a time when events were usually attributed to divine providence and retribution.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Yusof ibn M’aāli ibn Ša’abān al-Mo’addab who wrote his will (document 1) and was killed during the fall of Baghdad.

<sup>39</sup> As Waṣṣāf al-Hazra writes in the same vein: “During the Banu ‘Abbas (Abbasid) caliphate, Madinat as-Salam (the city of peace) has always been in the sanctuary of safety...and its houses intimately connected to the heavenly ether”. The Mongols also believed in the influence of stars and planets on the destinies of individuals, so they asked Ḥajeh Nasir al-din Tusi to determine a good omen time (sa’ad),

The high frequency of words like “Muḥarram,” “Ašura,” “qatl,” (killing), “al-waq’ah” (the event), “al-mašāf” (battle) as well as a reference to the number “forty”<sup>40</sup> is meaningful. In Shi’ite folklore, the number forty is a symbolic number of gradual and long-term of perfection process, and it also symbolizes the forty days during which the shadow of death or the spirit remains with the family of the deceased. As this number is equal to the days the Mongols stayed in Baghdad during the conquest, it can imply the long<sup>41</sup> and gradual process of the massacre in Baghdad and liken it to the above mentioned process of death. In other words, it is a reminiscence of “The 40<sup>th</sup> day after death ceremony”—traditional memorial service—and epitomizes the atmosphere of death in Baghdad. The context of documents 1 and 2 is similar to a contemporary source, i.e., Ibn Abi’l-Hadid in his commentary on Nahjul Balāḡa (compiled between 1246 and 1251 CE) offered to Ibn-al-’Alqamī, the Shi’ite vizier of the caliph. With his interpretative religious approach, Ibn Abi’l-Hadid considers the fall of Baghdad a resurrection and apocalypse and the Mongol invasion an invasion by Gog and Magog.<sup>42</sup> Jean-Pierre Fuiiu collected the signs of the end of the world or apocalypse from Islamic traditions. As he writes: “the Beast will then crawl out of the earth, followed by Gog and Magog, who will break through the wall that isolated them from the civilized world and run wild.”<sup>43</sup> In another place he describes their invasion: “the greatest catastrophe...will be the rupture of the barrier that holds back Gog and Magog. These accursed peoples will rush forth and break like waves over the *wretched Arabs* who face annihilation despite the virtue of faithful in their midst, for the iniqui-

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based on astronomical calculations, to invade Baghdad. There is a statement in Waṣṣāf suggesting that the Mongols were sent by God as a punishment against those who disobey him: “Those are my horsemen; through them shall I avenge me on those that rebelled against me.” (Waṣṣāf, 1960, p. 25, 30, 33)

<sup>40</sup> As Waṣṣāf al-Hazra writes in the same vein: “During the Banu ‘Abbas (Abbasid) caliphate, Madinat as-Salām (the city of peace) has always been in the sanctuary of safety...and its houses intimately connected to the heavenly ether”. The Mongols also believed in the influence of stars and planets on the destinies of individuals, so they asked Ḥajeh Nasir al-din Tusi to determine a good omen time (sa’ad), based on astronomical calculations, to invade Baghdad. There is a statement in Waṣṣāf suggesting that the Mongols were sent by God as a punishment against those who disobey him: “Those are my horsemen; through them shall I avenge me on those that rebelled against me.” (Waṣṣāf, 1960, pp. 25, 30, 33)

<sup>41</sup> In secure circumstances, 40 days is not such a long time, but when Hulegu let his army commit massacres in Baghdad for 40 days, psychologically it was felt by the Baghdadi people to be a very long time.

<sup>42</sup> Ibn Abi’l-Hadid, *Sharḥ Nahjul Balāḡa* (شرح نهج البلاغه) The Commentary on Nahjul Balāḡa ed. Mohammad Abulfazl Ibrahim, Qairo: 1964, vol. 8, 240-243.

<sup>43</sup> Jean-Pierre Fuiiu, *Apocalypse in Islam*, trans. M.B. DeBevoise, London: University of California press (2011), p. 15.

ties will have become too many”.<sup>44</sup> These signs were likened by Ibn Abi'l-Hadid to the Mongol invasion of the caliphate's realm (the borders of Khwarizm-Shah<sup>45</sup>) two years before the fall of Baghdad. Therefore, the Abbasid bureaucrats like the authors of documents 1 and 2 possibly acknowledged the predictions of this book.

Semantic analysis of the texts reveals an atmosphere of crisis as we find frequent use of such terms as “the weak servant [of God]” signifying despair and a desperate desire to “reunite with his family” and to be saved from possible imprisonment. In addition to the weakness of the army and the corruption in the caliphate's court, such an atmosphere forced the majority of the population of Baghdad, including this *Diwan Salar* (bureaucrat), to submit to their destiny. Regardless of caliphate propaganda, the general tone of the text of document 1, especially the author's abundant greetings to the prophet and his descendants “Al-e Muhammad” (آل محمد), actually the Shiite imams), reveals how he (Yusuf ibn Ša'bān) relates the fall of the caliphate to religious considerations. A subtle attempt to remember the events of Karbala and the way he lays great emphasis on greeting the prophet makes the reader feel that the author was influenced by Shiite propaganda, reinforced by Ibn 'Alqami's activities, on the eve of the fall of the caliphate. With his emphasis on “Al-eMuhammad” while reciting *salavats* (greetings to the prophet and his descendants) at the end of the text, he tends more toward Shiite rituals of worship.

The story of Ošmān ibn Ġānem's will and the dream<sup>46</sup> of his daughter illustrate the trust in dream interpretation<sup>47</sup> and intensified superstition in the distraught atmosphere of Baghdad.

Yusuf ibn M'aālī's annotations filled with *salavats* to the prophet's descendants signifies the Shiite tendencies of one of the residents of Baghdad who makes no effort to show his sorrow for the fall of the Sunni caliphate. Instead, in the first line of the text, he slightly blames the (incompetent) caliphate army for the defeat.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Jalal al-Din Khwarazm-Shah (the king of Persia and Central Asia) alerted that he is the Alexander's dam which holds back Gog and Magog (the Mongols) from the caliphate's realm.

<sup>46</sup> Jung believes that dreams originates from the impact of impressive events on the collective unconscious. Carl Gostav Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz, *Man and His Symbols*, trans. and ed. John Freeman, New York: Dell, 1968, p. 42; C.G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, trans. R.F.C. Hull, London: Routledge, 1959. pp. 214-217.

<sup>47</sup> For more theoretical details about the relationship of dreams to waking life and its interpretation see: Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, New York: Basic Books, 1955. pp. 41-44.

It seems that these documents, especially the one by Oṣmān ibn Ġānem al-Hītī, were written in the Ruṣāfa quarter (al-Šarqiyyah) because, as can be understood from the style of text, the writers (authors) of the two first texts had religious, bureaucratic upbringings, and these kinds of people typically lived in Ruṣāfa.

## CONCLUSION

Historically speaking, the documents under study are valuable as two of them (documents 1 and 2) are written by the defeated side in Baghdad. Most documents and historical sources on the fall of Baghdad are written by either those who were in the Mongol army; or people such as Juvaini, who quotes in his *Jabāngoša* certain administrative authorities (such as Nasir-al-din Toosi) as well as Mongol commanders and army officers. Thus, the documents are similar to other sources like in Ibn-al-Forāt's manuscript, the mentioned Qasida studied by Gilli-Elewy, and Ibn Abi'l-Hadid's commentary on Nahjul Balāḡa. The authors of the first two documents, however, were in the midst of events and witnessed the terror, bloodshed, and violence that ensued. They therefore provide a more realistic, objective, unbiased view of the fall of the Abbasids and the fall of its populous capital, Baghdad, thereby making them unique first-hand documents. Even the place where the dead's will (document 1) was found, i.e., in the author's own burial shroud, which then was inserted in the manuscript of the book of al-Wara', is of archaeological significance. In addition, the content of the will, from a historical psychology perspective, represents human desire for immortality (eternity) in the lethal atmosphere of the Mongol era. Documents 1 and 2 also show the authors' desire to broadcast news (history) even surrounded by crisis, saving their memory and showing awareness of the practical and objective benefits of news dissemination.

The evidence presented in the documents under study (especially 1 and 2) and other primary sources of the Mongol period demonstrates the psychological factors which led to the fall of Baghdad. The prevalence of death and the spirit of fear and frustration caused by the siege of Baghdad forced people to believe in fatalism and pessimistic determinism, and even intensified superstitious belief in star reading, mystic predictions by *abjad* numerals and even dream interpretation. This led to a psychological atmosphere culminating in a loss of motivation to defend Baghdad, and ultimately the fall of the city.

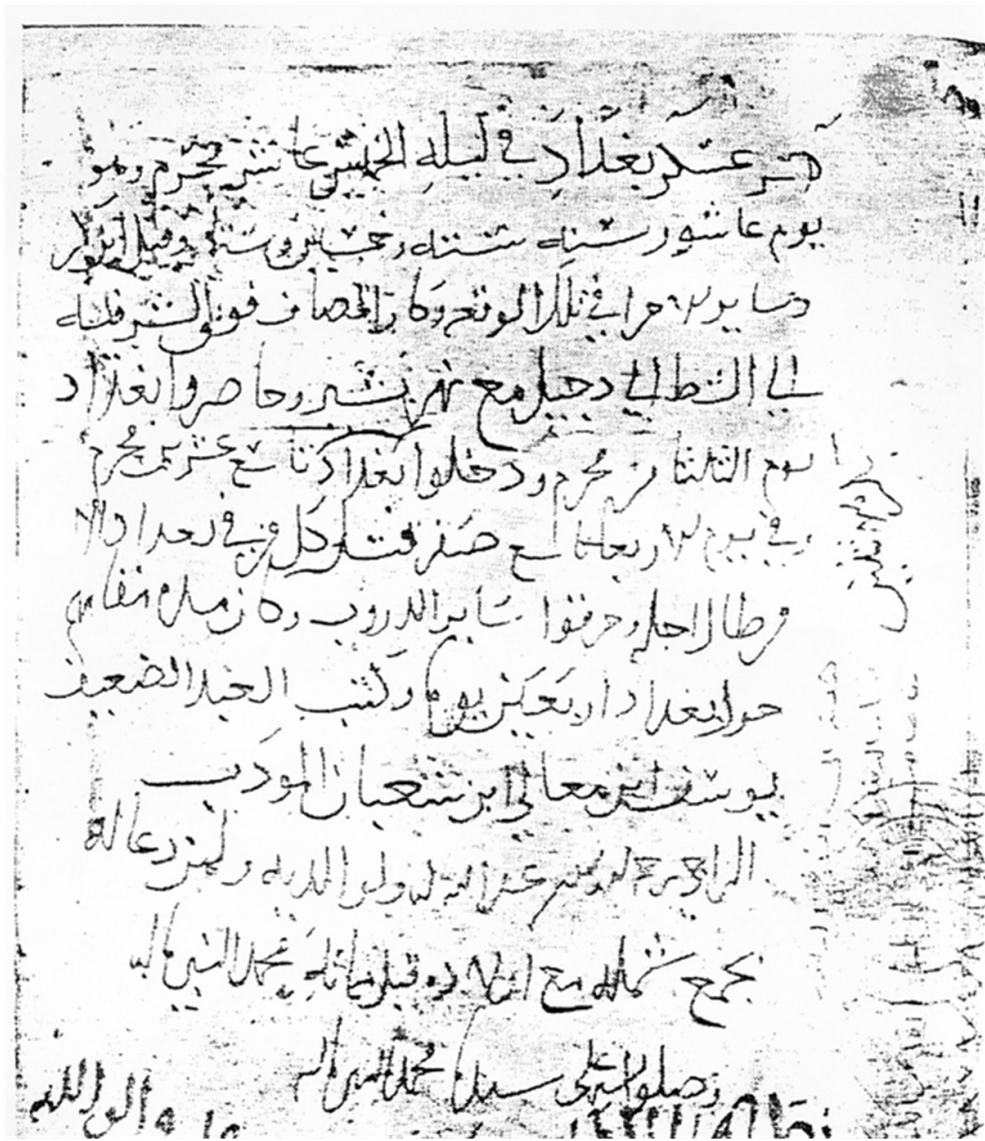
The question of whether these psychological factors were causes or effects of the



fall of Baghdad is a problem still open for more studies in the future.

### DOCUMENT IMAGES

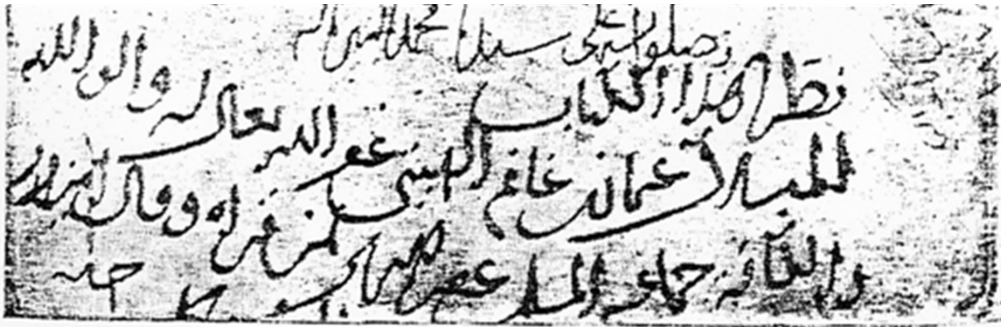
Document 1: the original document of an eyewitness to the Mongol invasion of Baghdad



**Rewrite:**

كثُر [كسر] عسكر بغداد في ليلة الخميس عاشر محرم و هو يوم عاشور سنه سته و خمسين و ست منه، و قتل ابن الكر و سائر الامراء في تلك الوقعه، و كان المصاف فوق الشرقيه الي الشط الي دجيل مع نهر بشير(?) و حاصروا بغداد يوم الثلاثاء من محرم و دخلوا بغداد تاسع عشرين محرم. و في يوم الاربعاء تاسع صفر قتل كل من في بغداد الا من طال اجله، و حرقوا سائر الدروب، و كان مده مقامهم حول بغداد اربعين يوما.

و كتب العبد الضعيف يوسف بن معالي بن شعبان المؤدب، الراجي رحمه ربه تعالي، غفر الله له و لوالديه، و لمن دعا له بجمع شمله مع اولاده قبل مماته، بمحمد النبي و اله، و صلواته علي سيدنا محمد النبي و آله {حاشيه:} بكره ثلاثين «.

**Document 2:****Rewrite:**

«نظر في هذا الكتاب المبارك عثمان بن غانم الهيتي غفر الله تعالي له و لوالديه و لكافه جماعه المسلمين غفر الله تعالي لمن قرأه و قال المزور(?) ... .. الورقه في كفني علي صدري ... عسي الله سبحانه تعالي ان يرحمني و ... دمي. قال فلما قضي الرجل نحيبه، و لحق ربه، حضر الرجل جاره و طلب تلك الورقه من ابنة كانت له، ثم وضعها علي صدره داخل ... و ... الرجل فبات جاره تلك الليله فراه في المنام لذلك الرجل(?) و هو في الجنه(?) فقال له : ما فعل الله بك؟ قال: عفي غفر(?) و رحمني و ادخلني الجنه و ... يحدث عن كرم الله سبحانه تعالي. تمت الحكايه و صلوه(?) علي رسول الله(?) و اله الطاهرين(?)»



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