

Rashīd al-Dīn's Craft: Narrating Parallel Pasts in the Fourteenth Century

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Abstract and summary

Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 718/1318) has been called repeatedly 'the first world historian,' given that his historiographical oeuvre, the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* or *Compendium of Histories*, purports to present the histories (*tavārīkh*) of many if not all of the peoples inhabiting the Eurasian landmass known in his time. The term 'world history' (or 'world historiography') implies that a comprehension of the whole in a single narrative is possible or at least intended, and is therefore of limited utility to examine such sophisticated approaches to the past as Rashīd al-Dīn's who enacted the notion of parallel pasts of contemporary peoples in his historiographical oeuvre. This contribution introduces the notion of 'parallel histories' to account for Rashīd al-Dīn's method.

With this paper, conceived for a *History and Theory* issue on temporality in Islam ("Assessing the Islamic Past: Historical and Philosophical Interventions"), I would like to make three points, related to 1) terminology (language) and related to this, method; 2) temporality, and 3) epistemology (the latter largely, but not exclusively, related to the contemporary historian) by focusing on the early 14th century author Rashīd al-Dīn, whose *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* has been called repeatedly the 'first world history' and continues to be described as a "universal history." This paper argues that his was not a universal history, but a deeply pluralistic enterprise in a world with many centers, huge demographic change, high social mobility, and constantly shifting truth claims in an ever expanding cosmos, to which Rashīd al-Dīn's method and the shape of his history were perfectly adaptable.

The Historical Setting

In order to understand better why Rashīd al-Dīn adopted the method he did for his *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* or *Compendium of Chronicles*, it is useful to contextualize it in its historical setting as well as within his oeuvre as a whole.

In the course of the 13th century, the Mongols under Chinggis Khan and his successors established the largest contiguous land empire known in history. At the height of his career, Rashīd al-Dīn, a physician of Jewish background and native of the Iranian town of Hamadan, was the top vizier of the Mongol state in the Middle East, known as the Ilkhanate (1258 - ca. 1350), extending over much of the territory of today's Iran, Iraq, and parts of Anatolia, Syria, the Caucasus, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan.

Rashīd al-Dīn rose to power as a physician at the Ilkhanid court. In 1298 he was appointed deputy vizier and commissioned as court historian by the Ilkhan Ghazan Khan (r. 1295-1304). After this date, he continued to occupy important positions at the highest echelons of the Ilkhanid administration, and throughout his tenure he amassed an immense wealth, which he later used to found one of the largest endowments of the later Middle Ages, as evidenced by the extant 191 folio long autograph copy of his endowment deed,ⁱ and the fine execution of the extraordinary miniatures he commissioned for his *Compendium of Chronicles*.ⁱⁱ Rashīd al-Dīn was executed in 1318 by the Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd (1316-1335) under the suspicion of having poisoned the latter's father and predecessor Öljeytü (1304-1316).

Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* or *Compendium of Chronicles* is famously known as the first 'world' or 'universal' history ever written (more on this terminology below).ⁱⁱⁱ Completed under the Ilkhan Öljeytü, the *Compendium of Chronicles* contains the fullest account of the history of the Mongol Empire and of human history hitherto known, beginning with Adam and the Jewish Patriarchs, including the history of the Chinese, Franks (Europeans), Indians, Oghuz Turks, Seljuqs, and Islamic history from the pre-Islamic prophets down to the last Abbasid caliphs of the thirteenth century. The *Compendium of Chronicles* is a truly remarkable achievement. Not only does it present the most comprehensive history of the known world at the beginning of the 14th century, it also successfully transgresses the established stereotypes and *topoi* of its time by incorporating the 'indigenous' historiographical traditions of hugely diverse regions and peoples in a single narrative framework.

Therefore, it is not surprising to see that so many studies were devoted to understand Rashīd al-Dīn as a historian. Since Etienne de Quatremère's first attempt in 1836,^{iv} the entirety of the *Compendium of Chronicles* has been edited, re-edited, translated, and studied by scholars almost without interruption. After two centuries of scholarship on Rashīd al-Dīn, there is today an emerging consensus that it was precisely the cosmopolitan environment and the universal perspective of the Mongol Empire that have to be seen as the background and impetus for both the creativeness and the broad scope of Rashīd al-Dīn's historiographical *oeuvre*.^v

When investigating the latter, we need to keep in mind that Rashīd al-Dīn's historiographical *oeuvre* only constitutes one quarter of his overall literary output that also includes theological and philosophical epistles and works on medicine and medicinal recipes, and that Rashīd al-Dīn himself may have considered his history a less important part of his *oeuvre* than his metaphysical works. Interestingly, he employs a similar method both in his historiographical and his theoretical works, and we have touched on this issue in an earlier publication.^{vi}

The man and the work: Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* as we know it – or do we?

Coming to Rashīd al-Dīn the historian, even this, arguably best known, aspect of his intellectual persona, and his work, the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*, which has received an estimated 95 percent of the scholarly attention devoted to his work, has not received the attention it deserves.

Let me begin by saying that the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* is seemingly the easiest part of Rashīd al-Dīn's overall *oeuvre* to deal with, though it is also one of the most difficult, for several reasons. The historiographical work of Rashīd al-Dīn, known as the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*, is often translated as 'compendium of chronicles,' though a literal translation would have to render the active participle *Jāmi'* as 'gatherer' or 'compiler.' In an attempt to avoid the personification of a work, the translation 'compendium' is acceptable, though this is a much more 'passive' expression than what the original title evokes, for which it is difficult to find a truly appropriate equivalent in English. As for the second part of the title, *tavārīkh*, I personally would prefer to speak of 'histories' rather than 'chronicles,' as the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* is neither strictly chronologically organized, nor does it consist merely of narrative history.

Rashīd al-Dīn's own definition of what constitutes 'history' is much more widely conceived than its modern counterpart. As we shall see shortly, it comprises the visualization of history through geography (cartography) and genealogy as well as narrative history in prose. Hence, 'Gatherer of Histories' would be both a more grammatically accurate translation and would above all describe more appropriately what the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* is actually doing – namely, in large part, colporting earlier historiographical works as well as oral narratives about past events relating to various dynasties and people, visualizing them (through maps and genealogical charts), *and* permitting for parallel histories and parallel pasts of these dynasties and peoples to coexist side by side within one historiographical framework. However, for stylistic reasons the phrase 'Compendium of Histories' is acceptable.

I stated that the topic is *seemingly* easy, because apparently so much is known about it, and so much has been written about it for several centuries by now, starting with Pétis de la Crois Junior's [fils] (1653-1713) translation into French of its first part as early as the seventeenth century possibly in response to the request by none less than the great Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-1683) to his father François Pétis (1622-1695), to write a history of Chinggis Khan based on the original sources,^{vii} a work that was greatly appreciated among the seventeenth century French *Republic of Letters*. The great bulk of all publications about Rashīd al-Dīn has been about his historiography (to the detriment of his theoretical works, as pointed out above). Just summarizing this scholarship alone would take more than the length of a full article. On the other hand, it was only five years ago that the complete 12-volume edition of the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*, which Muḥammad Rawshan and Mustafā Mūsawī began together in 1373/1994 and which Muḥammad Rawshan completed almost twenty years later, in 1392/2013, was seemingly completed.^{viii} (I say 'seemingly' and shall return to this point in a moment). All previous editions, of which there are many, were always partial, dealing with individual sections of this major historiographical work, such as, most prominently, the history of the Mongols, or the Oghuz, or the Israelites, and the like. At the same time, each of these editions relied on a different combination of various lead manuscripts. By contrast, the part on the pre-Islamic prophets had never been published previously. And yet, even this major effort by Rawshan-Mūsawī constitutes both only a quarter of the entire *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* in the form in which Rashīd al-Dīn had conceived of it, and it also suffers from major editorial problems.

This edition constitutes only a quarter of the entire *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* because like for his other works, Rashīd al-Dīn had planned to publish his history both in

a Persian and an Arabic version to reach the widest possible audiences (he stated so explicitly in his endowment deed and set stipends part especially for this purpose). Rawshan-Mūsavī's edition concerns the Persian version only, so only half of it. Only very small portions of the Arabic version have been published so far, namely as part of the efforts of art historians to publish the lavish images that accompanied the contemporary copies of the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*. To my knowledge, (1) nobody has attempted to establish a systematic overview of which parts of the Arabic version have actually survived and might offer themselves for a critical edition. (2) Secondly, nobody has, to my knowledge, attempted to edit the Arabic version: Fu'ād 'Abd al-Mu'ṭī al-Şayyād's publication of the volume on the Ilkhanids is a modern Arabic translation of Quatremère's partial edition of the Persian text (Volume 2, Part I on the Hülegüids), not a critical edition of the original Arabic version. (3) And finally, nobody has, to my knowledge, so far attempted to compare the Arabic and the Persian versions to assess whether the one is a true translation of the other, or whether one was rather an emended, altered, or updated version of the other, and which one was the original version for the different parts of the history. This much for the half that is missing.

As for the further quarter that is also missing, Rashīd al-Dīn, who appears to have changed his mind about the structure of the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* several times while the work evolved under his direction, ultimately conceived of the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* as consisting of four parts: two parts of narrative history (the Mongols on the one hand, and all other nations on the other), one part geography (lost) and one part genealogy (possibly surviving, but unpublished).

Hence, if we do the maths, two of these four quarters, namely the prose parts of narrative history, were published (and only in the Persian version), and two remain unpublished. In other words, the latest twelve (12 !) volume Persian edition of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*, while on the surface complete, constitutes only one quarter of the entire historiographical oeuvre of Rashīd al-Dīn. And this itself is only one quarter of the entirety of Rashīd al-Dīn's works, the *Jāmi' al-taṣānīf-i Rashīdī* ('The Compendium of the Entirety of the Works of Rashīd al-Dīn'), the overview of which is provided in the attached Table 1.

Above I have also stated that this latest, seemingly complete edition is problematic, and I will only support this by a single example, and then move on: The 2013 edition finally also includes the pre-Islamic prophets and the very beginning of the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*, together with the all-important theoretical

preface of the author – or so the reader might think. Unfortunately a comparison of the published preface with extant manuscripts has made me conclude that we are not dealing here with Rashīd al-Dīn's own words, but rather with the preface that the later Timurid historian Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū (fl. 830/1426) prefaced to one of his own works that included Bal'amī's (d. 363/973) Persian translation of Ṭabarī's (d. 923) *History of the Prophets and Kings* (*Tārīkh al-rusul wa al-mulūk*), Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*, and Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's own continuation. The evidence is not conclusive, as I have not seen the entirety of the seventy-odd copies of the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* that have come down to us, but I have yet to come across a contemporary copy of the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* that *does* contain this preface: All are preserved in Timurid and later copies that are part of or were copied together with Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's works. By contrast, the same theoretical introduction is also found prefaced to Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's geographical work. (with Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's *Geography* and Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* side by side).

Since the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* was later often copied as part of Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū's own historical compendia, this is not surprising. However, what this small example shows is that even the most recent edition of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* is possibly not an entirely reliable one, and that even in instances where we can draw on modern editions, we have to be alert at every step, and cannot rely on these editions blindly, but have to continue to take recourse to the extant manuscripts.

As we have seen above, Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* has been read by European scholars for several centuries, which has been closely linked to the interest in the Mongols and their military success. More recently, several voices have resuscitated Edgar Blochet's elaborate and well-supported doubts about Rashīd al-Dīn's single authorship of the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*. How could Rashīd al-Dīn, who, as a minister to the Mongol rulers of Iran, was busy with statecraft and so many other things at the same time, also write such a large history? Rashīd al-Dīn's contemporary Kāshānī's questions about plagiarism in particular have been adduced as well.

Blochet and subsequently several other scholars, including Mujtabā Mīnuvī, Muḥammad Rawshan, and others have demonstrated that Rashīd al-Dīn drew largely on the works of his predecessors in the preparation especially of Volume 2 of the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh* or 'History of Öljeytü' = 'History of the World' (*Tārīkh-i mubārak-i Öljeytü = Tārīkh-i 'ālam*), i.e., the part of his History that dealt with the nations other than the Mongols. Here Rashīd al-Dīn's main

contribution appears to have been that of a “gatherer and compiler” of previous histories, as Muḥammad Rawshan put it (*jāmi' va gird-āvāranda-yi tārikh-hā*).^{ix} While this part of the history was only published over the past decade or so, and the edition as such is based on a small and apparently not entirely systematic selection of surviving manuscripts and much work has therefore yet to be done to come to solid conclusions, the editor, Muḥammad Rawshan, has summed up the statements of Muḥtabā Mīnuvī and others as shown on the following table.

Part of the <i>Jāmi' al-tavārikh</i> , v. 2	Source	Reference
<i>Tārikh-i Sulṭān Yamīn al-Dawla Maḥmūd b. Sabuktigīn wa aslāf- wa akhlāf-i ū wa ānshi badān muta'allaq ast az tārikh-i Dayālīma wa āl-i Būya wa āl-i Sāmān</i>	<i>Tarjuma-yi Tārikh-i Yamīnī</i> (by Abū Sharaf Nāṣiḥ b. Ḍafar Jarfādhqānī)	Mīnuvī in his foreword to Ahmet Ateş's edition; Rawshan in vol. 1 of <i>JT</i> , p. xxi. <i>Majalla-yi dānishkada-yi adabiyāt; Dānishgāh-i Tih-rān</i> 4 (year 7).
<i>Tārikh-i Āl-i Saljūq</i>	<i>Saljūqnāma</i> (Ḍahīr al-Dīn Nīshābūrī) <i>Rāḥat al-ṣudūr</i> (Rāwandī)	Mīnuvī in the foreword to Ahmet Ateş's edition. Rawshan in vol. 1 of <i>JT</i> , p. xxi.
Tarikh-i Salāṭīn-i Khwārazm	<i>Jahāngushāy</i> (Juwaynī)	Rawshan in vol. 1 of <i>JT</i> , p. xxi.
Tārikh-i Salghūriyān	Ikhtīṣārī az <i>Tarikh-i Vassaf</i>	Rawshan in vol. 1 of <i>JT</i> , p. xxi and Rawshan “in the appropriate place” (his own foreword?)

In other words, this part of the *Jāmi' al-tavārikh* is doing precisely what its title says, and also what Rashīd al-Dīn says he did in his explanations about the composition of the *Jāmi' al-tavārikh*: It ‘gathers’ histories. In this instance it is doing so based on written sources; in the part related to the Mongols it is doing so based on oral narratives. In both cases we would speak of ‘plagiarism’ in modern times if the sources are not named; if they are named (as in the case of the history on the Mongols, where Rashīd al-Dīn does name his sources and informants), it would be called ‘quotation,’ except that very long ‘quotations’ are not really practiced and inadmissible at least in academic discourse. In the case of pre-modern Islamicate historiography, the aims and standards were obviously different. Indeed, if it were not for the wholesale ‘incorporation’ of

older material into later sources, some of this material would be entirely lost today. But judging pre-modern sources by modern standards would be missing the point: As Rashīd al-Dīn explains in his preface on the nature of history and the method of historiography (this time one that can be deemed reliably by Rashīd al-Dīn, as he repeats this elsewhere throughout the history), he relies on reliable histories just like *ḥadīth* scholars rely on sound chains of transmission.* Why should he alter a perfectly good source?

Nonetheless, regardless of the parts of Rashīd al-Dīn's history that are based on previously written histories or parts thereof, the entirety of his oeuvre (the 'Entirety of Rashīd [al-Dīn's] Compositions' or *Jāmi'-i taṣānīf-i Rashīdī*) projects such a structured, coherent, well thought-through unity that it is difficult to imagine for this to have been composed by one or more third parties on behalf of Rashīd al-Dīn, without him having the final say in the composition, arrangement, method and style of the whole, and his theoretical deliberations about the nature of history entirely confirm this view.

Turning now to the three points that I wish to make in this paper, let us first consider the crucial issue of terminology/language and related to this, method.

I. On Language and Method

The term for 'history' in Arabic whence it was borrowed into Persian, Chagatay and Ottoman Turkish as well as Urdu and other languages is "*ta'rīkh/tārīkh*." The form is a verbal noun of the Arabic verb *arrakha*, which means 'to date (a letter, and the like).' Literally, thus, *ta'rīkh* means 'dating,' though it has long assumed the meaning 'historiography' also, and thence 'history,' just as the verb *arrakha* has also assumed the meaning 'to write the history of something.'^{xi} *Ta'rīkh*, pl. *tawārīkh* can furthermore convey the notions of date; time; chronicle, annals; story, and tale.^{xii} The lack of distinction, at least in Arabic, between 'history' and 'historiography,' and the resulting ambiguity, needs to be kept in mind when dealing with pre-modern texts (in Persian and other languages *tārīkh-niwīsī* and the like were introduced in more recent times, but 14th century texts also in Persian don't seem to make that distinction, and "*tārīkh*" thus denotes both 'history' and 'historiography').

Coming to Rashīd al-Dīn's definition of the term '*tārīkh*,' we are lucky that he shares his thoughts on his philosophy of historiography readily in various places throughout his work.

As we have seen, Rashīd al-Dīn (and in his wake some of his contemporaries^{xiii}) explicitly proposed a fundamentally different notion of history from what most European historians of the 21st century would understand by the term: What the latter accept as either distinct sciences or sciences ancillary to historiography, namely geography and genealogy, is absolutely central for Rashīd al-Dīn's notion of historiography.

Methodologically speaking, the introduction of these two dimensions – the 'horizontal' dimension of space (geography) and the 'vertical' dimension of time for groups of people (genealogy) – is fundamental for Rashīd al-Dīn's enterprise, as it is the prerequisite for the explicit introduction and pursuit of the notion of parallel histories, and we shall return to this point below.

While the request to add an "atlas" and "gazetteer" was apparently his Mongol patron Ghāzān's idea, Rashīd al-Dīn fully adopted and integrated this idea into his own vision of history, even providing it a quasi-sacral theoretical basis, as we shall see below.

Since Rashīd al-Dīn prefaced extensive theoretical reflections on historiography to his history, and given this volume's interest in questions of method and given the magnitude of the enterprise, it is quoted here in its key parts.

After stating that he had originally begun writing the Mongol part of this history upon the order of the Mongol ruler (and convert to Islam) Ghazan, Rashīd al-Dīn explained that Ghazan's brother and designated heir to the Ilkhanid throne Öljeytü had ordered that the history be completed by including all the peoples of the then known world. Öljeytü commanded:

Until now no one at any time has made a history that contains the stories and histories of all inhabitants of the climes of the world and the various classes and groups of humans, there is no book in this realm that informs about all countries and regions, and no one has delved into the history of the ancient kings. In these days, when, thank God, all corners of the earth are under our control and that of Genghis Khan's illustrious family, and philosophers, astronomers, scholars, and historians of all religions and nations---Cathay, Machin, India, Kashmir, Tibet, Uyghur, and other nations of Turks, Arabs, and Franks---are gathered in droves at our glorious court, each and every one of them possesses copies of the histories, stories, and beliefs of

their people, and they are well informed of some of them. It is our considered opinion that of those detailed histories and stories a compendium that would be perfect should be made in our royal name, and it should be written in two volumes along with an atlas and gazetteer and appended to the [previously written] history [of the Mongols] so that the aggregate of that book would be peerless and include all sorts of histories. Inasmuch as the opportunity is at hand, and the composition of such a memorial, the likes of which no kings have ever possessed, is possible, it must be completed without neglect or delay so that it may cause our name and fame to endure.”^{xiv}

Rashīd al-Dīn then adds that indeed:

As ordered, all the learned and reliable people of the nations mentioned above did research, made extracts from the contents of their ancient books, and penned another volume on the histories of all inhabitants of the climes. Yet another volume of atlas and gazetteer was added and appended to this blessed history. The totality was entitled *Compendium of Chronicles*, and the details, stories, and legends it contains, as well as how they are arranged, are given in the table of contents, which will follow immediately after this preface.

[On the nature of history]

It is absolutely true that no historian has ever witnessed with his own eyes [all] the events and things of which he writes and reports. Furthermore, those who deal with events and incidents, which are the stuff of history, have not heard of these things directly but write and speak of them through the *tradition of transmitters* [emphasis added—JP].

[...]

It is therefore certain that the histories of so many different peoples and long periods of time cannot be verified absolutely, and the traditions that have been and still are being handed down are neither equal nor in agreement. As a matter of course, every one recounts a thing as it has come to him through uninterrupted [widely spread] tradition or as he has heard it, and it often happens that a transmitter adds to or subtracts from his report according to whim. If he does not tell an absolute lie, he colors his expression in a way that leads to

variance. Since the implementation of the divine way is as has been mentioned, and human nature has been fashioned in this manner, then anyone who thinks he can report otherwise is muddle-headed and wrong-thinking.

This being so, if a historian tries to write only what is verifiable and incontrovertible, then he can introduce absolutely no story whatsoever, for anything he introduces has been narrated by some group or other of great men who witnessed it, heard it related by others, or read it in old books—in any case, as has been mentioned, it will be subject to controversy. If for this reason they give up writing and speaking, thinking, 'God forbid, people might object or disapprove,' then of course all tales, narratives, and incidents in the world will be abandoned, and the generality of people will be deprived of the benefit they might derive therefrom. Therefore, it is the duty of historians to take the stories and narratives of every nation and group, however those people have recorded and reported them in their own books, and to relate and rewrite them from the well-known and current books of those nations based on accounts of the most reliable people—and "the responsibility be upon the narrator."^{xv}

Now that it has been explained that every group and class of people relate and hand down accounts of their history according to their own beliefs, and that they will naturally prefer their own beliefs to anyone else's and will exaggerate the truth thereof, it is not possible for all people to be unanimous in all cases. This is obvious to everyone. When a historian narrates from different peoples, there will doubtlessly be a difference in his words and some people in some places and stories will differ, but the good and bad, or the fault and virtue, will not rebound upon him, for he, as has been said, is recounting the history of others. As a matter of course a real verification is impossible to make, as has been said. Inasmuch as all are agreed that uninterrupted [widely attested—JP] tradition is given weight and accepted---and although Muslim uninterrupted tradition is the most reliable of all---nonetheless, the basis of the accounts of various peoples cannot be laid on that. Therefore, perforce everything that is related by any group must be considered reliable, for we have said over and over that it carries weight either with the generality of people or

with a particular group, and that which is related periodically [attested through a single witness—JP] may possibly be true or false.

A historian's duty, as we have said, must be to extract and write from what reliable people have said and from reliable standard books. If he makes any change therein according to his own imagination, it will become positively worthless and incorrect.

We shall return to Rashīd al-Dīn's explanations on method after introducing the next concept, temporality, as a key aspect of Rashīd al-Dīn's life world and historiography, before re-visiting these points together in part iii, dedicated to epistemology.

II. Temporality

Parallel calendars: The concurrent use of different calendars for different (and sometimes identical) purposes

i. The Islamic lunar calendar^{xvi}

As for the accounting of parallel times, in a very practical manner Rashīd al-Dīn and his contemporaries had to deal with different calendars on an everyday basis.

First of all, they had to consolidate and negotiate between the lunar (*qamarī*) and the solar (*shamsī*) calendars, as a strictly lunar calendar had been put in place in the region in the year 642 C.E. for the Islamic religious year, whereas for purposes of the fiscal administration the solar calendar was used, as it was stable with regard to the seasons, harvest times, and hence apt for use in taxation.^{xvii} In fact, several countries in the Middle East today do use these two calendars side by side, whereby the lunar calendar used today is roughly the same as in the early days of Islam,^{xviii} whereas the solar calendar in use in the pre-modern period (which was then possibly based on pre-Islamic Seleucid and Sasanian era models),^{xix} was with some exceptions and at different times in most countries replaced by the Julian calendar starting with the Common (Christian) Era, reflecting the role of European countries in world economics in more recent centuries.^{xx}

ii. The Jalālī (Islamic solar) calendar used for tax purposes

In the pre-modern period, and in Iran specifically, several pre-Islamic calendars, in particular the Sasanian *kharājī* calendar, offered themselves for use for administrative purposes. In 471/1079, during the reign of the Seljuq sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Malik-Shāh (465-85/1072-92), the so-called Jalālī calendar was introduced, which was a solar calendar and also the calendar in use during

Rashīd al Dīn's time, as attested by his contemporary Waṣṣāf's testimony (see below). Reza Abdollahy, who has worked on the history of Islamic calendars extensively, has pointed out that through the establishment of the observatory at Marāgha under Mongol rule in the second half of the 7th/13th century, such significant advances were made in astronomy (including the calculation of the length of the true solar year, which “was found to differ from the length of the year in the Jalālī calendar”) that a modification of the intercalation system of the Jalālī calendar became necessary.^{xxi}

As the lunar year is roughly eleven days shorter than the solar year, it moves through the year more swiftly, and thus the lunar century is approximately three years shorter than the solar century, leading to a growing gap when converting the years.

Already the tenth century Buyid astronomer and secretary Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Hilāl al-Ṣābī (d. 384/994) had dealt with this issue in an elaborate treatise,^{xxii} and so did again Rashīd al-Dīn's contemporary and protégé Waṣṣāf (fl. 728/1328), who, indeed, refers explicitly back to al-Ṣābī's earlier treatise: While Ṣābī had resolved the problem for his own time, now he, Waṣṣāf, had to re-engage with the same issue three centuries later in a treatise titled “*Risāla fī ikhtilāf al-tavārīkh*,” ‘Epistle on the divergence of the dates [arising from the difference between the lunar and solar calendars]’.^{xxiii} This by itself is an indication of the awareness of the moving gap between calendars that historians and accountants alike had to come to terms with. As Waṣṣāf explicitly states, he inserted al-Ṣābī's epistle – in Persian – in his history in order to explain not only the time difference between the Muslim lunar and solar calendars applied in Iran during his time, but also the differences between the accounting in Baghdad and that of the rest of Ilkhanid Iran, where in one area one counted the year 701 and in the other the year 702 of the lunar calendar (an issue which would lead to potential over-taxation and unrest among the population). When discussing this matter with the educated men in the chancery (*dīvān*), they mentioned that al-Ṣābī had written an epistle explaining the reasons of this difference during the reign of the Caliph Abū al-Faḍl al-Muṭī' li-'llāh, which Waṣṣāf now presents in a Persian summary, adapting the text to his own time.^{xxiv}

This much for a practical example of the issues that scholars and ordinary people alike had to deal with when it came to the accounting for time: It was an everyday issue. But these two, al-Ṣābī and Rashīd al-Dīn's contemporary Waṣṣāf, were engaging ‘only’ with *two* different calendars.

iii. The Chinese-Uighur twelve-animal calendar

By the thirteenth century, however, not only did these two calendars continue to grow apart in an ever opening gap, which must have looked confusing, if not absurd, to outside observers, such as the Mongols, who had only recently arrived in the region. The Mongols, moreover, arrived with their own calendar and way of accounting for time, that is, the luni-solar Chinese-Uighur twelve-animal calendar, which followed a twelve year animal cycle.^{xxv}

This calendar, which originated in China and underwent several changes in Turco-Mongol practice, was introduced to Iran under Mongol rule in the thirteenth century. Charles Melville, who has scrutinized the use of this calendar for the accuracy of the date conversion, has established 77 instances of its use in Ilkhanid narrative sources alone, including by Rashīd al-Dīn, in addition to its use in more than a dozen surviving chancery documents of the time.^{xxvi} Apparently, “the basic twelve-year animal cycle continued to be employed, with an important modification, until it was abrogated in March 1295, on the eve of the new Pahlavi era.”^{xxvii}

As well as marking a change of dynasty, the introduction of the Chinese calendar system into Iran can be located in the context of the impetus given to Islamic astronomy in the Turco-Mongol world of the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries. This impetus was driven by a deep interest in astrology on the part of royal patrons, who gave support to scientists in a field that was to some extent frowned on by orthodox Islamic opinion. The creation of *vaqf* (endowment) funds for the maintenance of the observatories at Maragha, Tabriz and Samarqand is evidence of the commitment shown by Mongol rulers, which permitted teams of astronomers to work over the long periods required for their observations to be completed.^{xxviii}

Thus, in addition to the Islamicate lunar and solar calendars, Rashīd al-Dīn was also interweaving the Mongol calendar in his history, which he often used to specify dates, especially for the Ilkhans before their conversion from Buddhism to Islam, which appears to point to a lively and active use of this calendar among the Turco-Mongol elites of the early Ilkhanate to commemorate important dates.

iv. The *khānī* era introduced in the Middle Ilkhanid period

And fourthly, during the Middle Ilkhanid period, at the height of Rashīd al-Dīn's career and shortly after the Mongols' conversion to Islam, the first of the two Mongol patrons for whom Rashīd al-Dīn composed his history, the Ilkhan Ghazan Khan (r. 694-703/1295-1304), undertook a conscious effort to establish a new era, by introducing the so-called “*khānī*” era (era of the Khan). It started

from 12 Rajab 701/13 March 1302 and was based on a solar calendar, beginning with Nawrūz (the vernal equinox) and used the Turkish names for the months. While Rashīd al-Dīn does not appear to have used it in his *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*, some other historians of the Ilkhanid era, such as Waṣṣāf (fl. 728/1328) and Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī (fl. 740/1340), who were both also officials in the administration, did use it in their histories. As the *khānī* era was also used on coins, at times concurrently with hijrī dates, the *khānī* calendar appears to have been mostly an administrative and fiscal tool, which is possibly indirectly supported by the fact that Rashīd al-Dīn did not use it in the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*, even though he is said to have been one of its architects. In addition to marking a new era of Mongol rule, and marking the concerted efforts by Rashīd al-Dīn in the service of Ghazan Khan at reforms, it appears to have been aimed at providing a remedy to an utterly corrupt administrative system.^{xxix}

Coins with *khānī* era dates were still struck during the Ilkhan Abū Sa'īd's reign (r. 717-736/1317-1335) for the years 31 through 35 khānī (1332-1336 C.E.), but the calendar does not appear to have been long lived.^{xxx} Nonetheless, this has to be counted as one more calendar system Rashīd al-Dīn had to deal with, at least mentally.^{xxxi}

There was apparently also a consciousness that a new era had begun with Chinggis Khan, though this remained a consciousness rather than the start of a calendar enacted and thus did not bring with it any practical implications expressed via coinage, documents, or an actual calendar.^{xxxii}

v. The era of the Greeks

As if this was not enough, there were further calendars in use at the time, including the so-called Greek calendar that started in the Seleucid period, and which was used by both the Christians and Jews of the Ilkhanate.^{xxxiii} From an ownership mark on one of the books produced and copied in Rashīd al-Dīn's vicinity and during his lifetime, we know for certain that some of his contemporaries actively used the Greek calendar for everyday dating purposes. Thus, the Syriac Maphrian Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), whom Rashīd al-Dīn almost certainly met in person, used the years of the Greeks in order to date the acquisition of one of his manuscripts which dealt with astronomy and had been produced in nearby Marāgha.^{xxxiv} While Rashīd al-Dīn may not have actively used this calendar in his history to date events, he was nonetheless almost certainly aware of the existence of this calendar and of the fact that different people(s) were using different calendars and accounting systems with different starting points in time in the same way that they were using different

languages and different scripts and adhered to different religions etc. – his was a multi-faceted world, a world of pluralism in several different aspects.

vi. Calendars in use outside of the Nile-to-Oxus region

And lastly, Rashīd al-Dīn in particular also had to deal with, i.e., try to understand, describe, and explain in an accessible language, the different notions of time in those parts of his history that treat peoples outside of his immediate geographical context and time. For instance, he begins his *History of India* by explaining the notions and accounting of time and space related to India (“*dar maʿrifat-i ḥisāb-i qurūn wa adwār [...] wa kammiyyat-i zamīn ʿumūman wa aʿdād-i kūh-hā wa rūd-hā wa shahr-hā wa qurā wa jazāʾir-i zamīn-i Hind khuṣūṣan*”).^{xxxv} In this context, not only did he have to explain a different terminology, but above all, he had to understand and explain “the framework of a constantly recurrent process of periodic reorganization and dissolution of the universe,”^{xxxvi} a cyclical framework that differs fundamentally from that of Islamic notions of time, which in the *moyenne durée* are essentially linear rather than cyclical.

vii. Juggling different calendars: Unity in diversity?

Thus, there were at least four to six different calendars, ways of accounting for time, in place and used, at times by the same persons, in different instances for taxation, historiography, organizing the religious year and religious duties, remembering and planning for important dates, such as the commemoration of birth and death dates of individuals of public interest, and the day-to-day dating and planning of other events, such as predicting future events by interpreting the stars, both for personal and political purposes, including for enthronement ceremonies.^{xxxvii} Thus when it came to the calendars they used on the very practical level of day-to-day life, Ilkhanid officials like Rashīd al-Dīn were living, exposed to, and implementing a ‘diglossia of time,’ so to speak, a ‘poly-chronia’ of sorts. As the term (Polychronie in German, chronemics in English^{xxxviii}) was already applied in the 1960s in the area of anthropology, it will be difficult to introduce it to the area of historiography, as it may be confused with the term already in use.

The point of the above recounting of various concurrent and active calendars in Iran during Rashīd al-Dīn’s life time is: Rashīd al-Dīn did not have to come up with a theory of multiple temporalities – he was already living it. And, as we have seen above, and shall see with further examples, he also let each narrator tell his people’s history in his own terms, including by applying the appropriate calendar, by using the technical terminology for eons and eras, by explaining and applying apposite notions and directionalities of time (linear and circular) etc.

In a sense, what Reinhart Koselleck did, e.g., for the notion (Begriff) of democracy, Rashīd al-Dīn did for the notion of time – but his explanation was not and could not be as (comparatively) linear as the explanation would look for ‘democracy’ where the term is of Greek origin and European culture sees itself highly indebted to Greek culture anyway. Rashīd al-Dīn could not and would not invent Greek roots for China, or Frankish roots for Islam, or Jewish roots for the Mongols, or Chinese roots for the notion of the Indian eons. His was a wider world that required more complex – and at the same time more simple – answers and methods, and to these we shall now turn.

III. Epistemology, old and new: Rashīd al-Dīn's theory of historical times

III.i. *The Ethos of the Historian: He does not interfere*

As we had seen above, Rashīd al-Dīn proposed that the trusted narrators of each people whose history he narrated were to be held responsible for the accuracy of the contents of this narrative, with which the later historian and overall ‘editor-compiler’ Rashīd al-Dīn was not to tamper. By contrast, it was he who provided a consistent structure, by either starting out with the earliest times of each history and providing a time conversion to the hijri calendar of his times, or, in the absence of a dated historical narrative for ‘the beginnings’ of a given people (e.g., in the case of the Chinese), he would point this out explicitly and reflect on it.

As for a theory of history, he provided one as well, but what modern historians such as Reinhart Koselleck have arrived at through theorization, the “Zeitschichten” of “several layers of time of differing duration and differentiable origin, which are nonetheless present and effectual at the same time,” was offered to Rashīd al-Dīn on a silver platter, and was simply part of day-to-day business. For instance, Rashīd al-Dīn was not defying periodization, but just calmly accepted and appreciated it as a heuristic tool to understand the past or present of various peoples.

Thus, Rashīd al-Dīn states laconically in his preface to the history of the Jews that they organized their past into three eras, that these were called the Yaṣīra, Yaḍiyā, and the calendar of the Greeks, and that at the present day (i.e., when Rashīd al-Dīn was writing, namely the year 705/1305 of the hijra) they were counting the year 1617 in the third and still current era of the Greeks.^{xxxix} Similarly lapidarily, he narrates the conception of the division of the history of the world into circular ages (*adwār*) as held by the inhabitants of India (including the Yugas and Kalpas), stating that they believed in a gradual decline

(*fasād; naqḍān*) from eon to eon.^{xi} And equally calmly and poisedly, he tells us that since the inhabitants of China (*ahl-i Khatāy*) were idol worshippers and belonged to various groups of unbelievers, and therefore believed in the eternity (*qidam*) of the world, they gave very ancient dates (unspecified by Rashīd al-Dīn) for the beginnings of history, and as a consequence, Rashīd al-Dīn claims, none of their scholars ever bothered to go back to the beginning when they wrote history, and they also did not receive encouragement in this matter from their rulers, and therefore specifics about very old dates were not known by the Chinese. In the case of the Chinese, Rashīd al-Dīn simply leaves the matter at this and then turns to the history of the future, so to speak, namely the establishment of the observatory at Marāgha built at the behest of the Mongol ruler of China Möngke Khan.

Thus, Rashīd al-Dīn was fully aware and also conveyed in a very clear manner that each people had their own ways of periodization and accounting for time past, present, and future, and he was also aware that there were therefore obviously 'parallel times' in different geographies, as he thought of the different peoples of the world as different 'branches' of humanity. And he was equally aware that not each periodization had the same directionality: some moved in a linear direction, rather similar to the notions of periodization known in Europe, some were circular, with loops through time, as in the case of India, and that was fine as well.

By organizing his history in the way he did, Rashīd al-Dīn actually did nothing else but address "different layers of conceptual meanings with different chronological origins,"^{xii} or "the synchronicity of the nonsynchronous" (*Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*).^{xiii}

On the one hand he was juggling with cyclical time, as represented by the twelve year calendar used by the Mongols, or at a much larger scale, the cyclical eons of temporalities in the Indian context, and on the other hand he tried to incorporate and explain genealogical thinking, people being linked in time vertically through genealogies, dynasties, and the like. Rashīd al-Dīn was juggling them all, integrating them in a single narrative framework, projecting the impression of unity when in fact, he left the sources to speak with their own voice and internal logic. If this is not a methodological achievement, someone else should propose a better way of narrating the temporalities of so many peoples of different religions, cultures, and philosophical backgrounds in such a vast geography.

III.ii. On structure: The four elements of history in Rashīd al-Dīn's definition of History

As for Rashīd al-Dīn's method to let the narrators of each tradition speak for their own people he repeated this principle several times throughout his history at several instances – it is something like a red thread. In one instance, he writes:

[...] we had pointed this out [already] in several other instances- saying that it is a condition for the historian that he write the history of each people according to its own claims [*ba za'm-i ishān navīsad*], and that he does not add or remove anything according to his own opinion [*ba ra'-yi khwud dar ān ziyādat wa naqzān nakunad*] regardless of whether it is accurate or invalid, in accordance with the premise that he records/transmits [*naql*] the claim or statement of each group [*da'wā wa za'm-i har t̄āyifa'ī*], so that [*tā*] the responsibility for each addition or removal and the accuracy or inaccuracy of it be on them [the narrator of each group], not on the historian [*na bar mu'arrikh*].^{xliii}

Then he adds a personal note:

And here [this weak one] once again repeats the same statement, that whatever he refers to that is unintelligible/unacceptable [*nā-ma'qūl*] or *bī wajh*, that they don't make him [*īn dā'if-rā*] responsible for it, and don't extend the tongue of reprehension on him, and that that they excuse him from this, if the one and dear God will.^{xliv}

He repeats this principle at several instances throughout the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*, at times with cross-references. For instance, in the history of the Franks, Popes, and Kaisers, he reminds the reader at the end that what has been related are not his words, but those of the historians of that tradition, and that he should not be blamed or be called unbeliever for it, no less so than that the Qur'ān itself is blamed for narrating/evoking the stories of the pharaohs and Nimrod.

This seems to indicate that in his time, even by narrating other peoples' histories in their own words he could run the danger of being taken as propagating and defending their views, when he was only reporting them.

These words have been adduced (*īrād karda shud*) based on the report (*taqrīr*) of the narrators of this history (*ruwāt-i īn tāvārīkh*), and the responsibility is on the narrator. Surely the wise men (*buzurgān*) who will be reading this history, if they find words [in it] that are contrary to the intelligible (*mukhālīf-i ma'qūl yāband*), they won't ascribe it to the weakness of the faith of the historian (*dā'f-i mu'taqid-i mu'arrikh*), since (chi) his attention is not directed towards the adulteration (*tazyīf*) of [this or that] confession or the preferential treatment of [this or that] people; he is obliged to transmit the story of each group according to their own tradition, not according to his own [the historian's—JP] beliefs [...]

And the narrator (*rāwī*) should not [be accused of] being an unbeliever because of the story that he reports [literally: through the reporting of the story] [just as] God most high was pleased to narrate (*farmūda*) the stories of Nimrud and Pharaoh and other unbelievers in the Holy Qur'ān qua tales and stories (*akhbār wa qiṣaṣ*).^{xlv}

Rashīd al-Dīn tried to deal with a conceptually exceedingly complex task, namely to narrate the history of all the peoples of the then known world. As for his philosophy of history, he claimed that history was based on the four principles of time, place, actors, and motion:

Genuine (or perfect: *tāmm*) history is that which becomes apparent (or known: *ma'lūm*) through a known action (*fi'l ma'lūm*) by a known person (*shakhṣī ma'lūm*) in a known place (*dar makānī ma'lūm*) at a known time (*dar zamānī ma'lūm*). (*wa tāriḫ-i tāmm ān ast ki fi'l ma'lūm az shakhṣī ma'lūm* (genealogy) *dar makānī ma'lūm* (geography) *dar zamānī ma'lūm* (*tāriḫ* qua 'date') *ma'lūm shawad*).^{xlvi}

He then proceeds to the exegesis of a sentence that he claims to have found in the holy books: "*awwal mā khalaqa Allāhu al-samawāt wa al-arḍ*." 'The first [thing] that God created was the heavens and earth.' For this sentence Rashīd al-Dīn claims that it incorporates everything that is important for history, grafting onto this word by word his fourfold plan of history: [The] "first" [thing] (*awwal*) stands for 'time' (*zamān*); "created" (*khalaqa*) stands for an 'action/a verb' (*fi'l*); "God" (*Allāh*) stands for 'noun/name' (*ism*), and "the heavens and earth" (*āsmān wa zamīn* – n.b., "*al-samawāt wa al-arḍ*" is here translated into Persian) stand for 'place' (*makān*).

"*Awwal mā khalaqa Allāh al-samawāt wa al-arḍ*."

'The first thing that God created were the heavens and earth.'^{xlvii}

<i>Awwal</i> ('first')	<i>mā khalaqa</i>	<i>Allāh</i>	<i>al-samawāt wa al-arḍ</i>
Time (<i>zamān</i>)	Action (<i>fi'l</i>)	Name (<i>ism</i>)	Place (<i>makān</i>)

He then starts over again to explain the concept of history: Thus, he explains, "time" is "history/a date (?)" ("*pas, zamān tāriḫ ast*"),^{xlviii} and "place" (*makān*) is "location" (*mawḍi*), and "action" (*fi'l*) is predicated upon such individuals who are identifiable and also named ("*wa fi'l mansūb ast ba ān kasānī ki asāmī-yi īshān dhikr karda bāshad wa ta'yīn-i ashkhāṣihim 'alā al-sawā*").^{xlix}

<i>Awwal</i> ('first')	<i>mā khalaqa</i>	<i>Allāh</i>	<i>al-samawāt wa al-arḍ</i>
Time (<i>zamān</i>)	Action (<i>fi'l</i>)	Name (<i>ism</i>)	Place (<i>makān</i>)
History (<i>tāriḫ</i>)	Action (<i>fi'l</i>) related to and predicated upon specific, named individuals ¹	individuals (<i>kasānī</i>)	Location where history takes place (<i>mawḍi</i>)

Elsewhere, Rashīd al-Dīn defines *tārīkh* as being dependent on *akhbār*, individual news items (usually confirmed through a chain of transmission) of which it is made.

Perfect history (<i>tārīkh-i tāmm</i>)	a known person (<i>shakhṣī ma'lūm</i>)	a known action (<i>fi'lī ma'lūm</i>)	a known name (<i>zamānī ma'lūm</i>)	a known place (<i>makānī ma'lūm</i>)
	noun/name (ism)	Action (<i>fi'l</i>)	Time (<i>zamān</i>)	Place (<i>makān</i>)
[Tārīkh] [history]	Asāmī-i kasān/ta'yīn-i ashkhāṣ [genealogy]	Fi'l mansūb ast ba ān kasānī ki asāmi-i īshān dhikr karda bāshad [action predicated upon people]	Zamān=tārīkh [time=date/ history]	Makān= mawḍi' [geography]

Conclusions: Rashīd al-Dīn and the accounting of time in Western Asia at the turn of the 14th century

If time is a construct of narrative ordering, then the early fourteenth century historian, statesman and intellectual Rashīd al-Dīn (executed in 718/1318) was deliberately, systematically, and methodically breaking this order in his magnum opus (the *Compendium of Chronicles* or *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*) by constructing *parallel pasts* for different peoples in the different geographies of the then known Eurasia.

He did so by using a format – the tree format also deliberately employed in the title of one of his works, the *Shu'ab-i panj-gāna* or 'fivefold branches' – that was so familiar to his Mongol patrons who ruled as a corporate dynasty in a tribally driven society in which exogamous marriage was as important for the planning the future as knowledge about a genealogically organized past was for assessing the present.^{li} In order to come to terms with and be able to narrate in a single narrative the history of a suddenly greatly expanded world, Rashīd al-Dīn used parallel strings of historical accounts for narrating the pasts of the different peoples who had rapidly become incorporated into the Eurasian geography that the Mongols had swiftly come to rule in the course of the thirteenth century. Rashīd al-Dīn's *Compendium of Chronicles* is not a linear enterprise teleologically leading up to himself and his own time; nor is it a universal history that attempts to superimpose its own values and judgments

over the entire world. Rather, with his history Rashīd al-Dīn consciously narrates the pasts of different peoples in a pluralistic mode, permitting the past of each people to stand next to the pasts of the others and to develop concurrently, each following a distinct narrative that was at times not compatible with the narratives of the other 'branches' of humanity.

The method with which Rashīd al-Dīn achieved this was firstly and explicitly to allow the "trusted narrators" of the past (the historians) of each people to speak in their own voice, assuming that they were capable of conveying the most trustworthy narrative of that past from the perspective *within*, but also by putting the responsibility for the accuracy and truth claims of that narrative on the historians of *that* people, not on the later, contemporary historian (contemporary to Rashīd al-Dīn, that is). In other words, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, it was not his responsibility or that of his collaborators to judge those narratives or to assess whether they were accurate or not. Rather, in his explicit view and method, the later historians' role was solely to summarize and perhaps restructure, but "not to add or remove anything" of the essence of the narrative of each people.

Secondly, and this Rashīd al-Dīn did, to the best of my knowledge, without explicitly explaining it as his method, but we can deduce it from his practice, he used the method of calculating the time elapsed according to the narrative of each people in order to understand roughly where their pasts actually tallied and where they were -or were not- in synch with each other. In other words, whereas there is left space for mythical time, notions of cyclical time and the like, Rashīd al-Dīn also attempted to do the maths and scientifically locate the history of each people within a mathematically verifiable temporal grid, thereby achieving unity in diversity.

And thirdly, by explicitly including the horizontal and vertical dimensions of geography and genealogy in what he defined as "history," Rashīd al-Dīn managed to interweave connections between these different narratives and to achieve the impression of cohesion in a highly pluralistic enterprise.

On terminology: universal history, periodization, and temporality

It is our, twentieth and twenty-first centuries', conceptions of what 'universal history' is, and what 'author' means etc. that have led to such misconceived approaches as the claim that Rashīd al-Dīn committed plagiarism (the title is *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*, 'gatherer of histories' – and Rashīd al-Dīn says explicitly that

this is what he was doing: the gathering of histories....), or that his history was a “universal history.”^{lii} Nothing is farther from accurate: His history was an exercise in pluralism, not universalism.

In the field of Islamic Studies and Islamic History, we often use the terms ‘world history’ and ‘universal history’ interchangeably, thereby blurring quite distinct enterprises. Usually these terms are employed to denote a historiography that is distinct from and wider if not more comprehensive in scope than local and dynastic histories. We thereby obscure the fact that not all of these historians have a ‘universal[istic]’ outlook. In the case of Rashīd al-Dīn this is certainly not the case: His outlook and engagement in his history is pluralistic, not universal[istic]. And yet, his history continues to be called ‘universal’ by some of the foremost experts in Iranian Studies.

I could not agree more with Helge Jordheim, who has challenged Hayden White’s statement, echoed by other historians, that history “can only exist as a discipline if it develops a theory of periodization.”^{liii} Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmi’ al-tavārīkh* is a case in point coming from a different time and geography, and writing from a very different angle. In his *Jāmi’ al-tavārīkh*, Rashīd al-Dīn very calmly and almost in a detached manner develops a theory of historiography that stands above and outside of periodization without giving up the notion of ‘deep time,’ and is accompanied by a very succinct theory of the definition of historiography. This permits him to narrate, quite calmly, the various attempts at periodization by various peoples, side by side, and in succession, overlapping, splitting apart and petering off, without the need to engage more with the one or the other, and yet conveying an exceedingly complex and interconnected past of the widest possible geography of the world.

As Jordheim also suggested, we need a more complex approach to history and historiography than periodization, and I could not agree more that the work of Koselleck offers the foundations for different approaches. But I also believe that in order to do justice to historians writing from a substantially different vantage point from our own – and here geography comes in, in addition to the vantage point of time – we do need to first engage with their own notions and definitions of historiography before we start imposing concepts developed in a European or North American context for an essentially European and largely Christian past. I also believe that Rashīd al-Dīn, who sought to precisely do this, is able to provide if not a solution but at least a fresh and important impetus for self-reflection: I believe that by including space, geography, in his definition

of history, he was able to approach the complexities of writing history through one further dimension, and one step removed.

Jordheim has convincingly argued that Koselleck, rather than being a the proponent of periodization that he is often made to be, defied periodization, and has identified the following key passage as capturing Koselleck's "real theory of historical times:"

In analysing the interplays between repetition and uniqueness, it is possible to pluralize the temporalities, without recurring to the empty and not very illuminating periodizations in referring to something as 'old,' 'new,' and 'middle.'^{liv}

In another instance, and in his own words, and expressed even more lucidly, Jordheim describes his notion of historical times as follows:

Koselleck developed his theory of multiple temporalities, organized in the form of temporal layers that have different origins and duration and move at different speeds, as an alternative to the linear and empty time of periodization.^{lv}

This sounds like an excellent definition, and yet it may be possible to top it: If we wanted to turn the tables (just for good measure), and approach the topic of multiple temporalities with Rashīd al-Dīn's eyes, gauging it by his standards, definition, and execution of historiography, the dimension of space (geography) as well as direction (e.g., the kind of circularity of time found in the Indian context that Rashīd al-Dīn explained in great detail) are missing and not accounted for in this model, betraying essentially its European context and roots. There is nothing wrong with this, but it does highlight the limitations of a "Theoriebildung" that is, essentially, European, if not Eurocentric. Thus, the initiative at Brown University lead by Shahzad Bashir and supported by *History and Theory* is a most welcome step in a most promising direction, and that it is being done *in concert with* scholars of European history does give it the special edge that someone like Rashīd al-Dīn would have known to appreciate.

Table 1

Table

Table: The *Jāmi' al-taṣānīf-i Rashīdī*

		-- <u>Bāb 1:</u>	<i>al-Majmū' a al-Rashīdiyya</i> (4 books)
	!	!	1) <i>Kitāb al-tawdīhāt</i> (705/1305)
	!	!	2) <i>Miftāḥ al-tafāsīr</i> (707/1307)
	!	!	3) <i>Kitāb al-sulṭāniyya</i> (710/1310)
	!	!	4) <i>Laṭā'if al-ḥaqā'iq</i> (after 708/1308)
<u>Qism 1</u>	--	!	
!	!	!	
!	!	! -- <u>Bāb 2:</u>	"2 books" (eventually 4 books)
!	!	!	1) <i>Bayān al-ḥaqā'iq</i> (709-10/1309-11)
!	!	!	2) <i>al-Āthār wa al-ahyā'</i> (712/1312?)
!	!	!	3) [<i>al-As'ila wa al-ajwiba</i> (ca. 712/1312?)]
!	!	!	4) [<i>Tahqīq al-mabāḥith</i> (713/1313?)]
<u>Jāmi' al-taṣānīf-i Rashīdī</u>	---	!	
!	!	!	
!	!	! -- <u>Bāb 1:</u>	<i>Jāmi' al-tavārīkh</i> (4 books)
!	!	!	1) <i>Ta'rīkh al-Mughul</i>
!	!	!	2) <i>Tārīkh al-'ālam</i> (710/1310)
!	!	!	3) <i>Masālik va mamālik</i> (not extant.)
<u>Qism 2</u>	--	!	4) <i>Nasabnāma-yi anbiyā' va mulūk va salāṭīn</i> [<i>Shu'ab-i panj-gāna</i>]
!	!	!	
!	!	! -- <u>Bāb 2:</u>	"4 books"
!	!	!	1) <i>Kitāb-i ṭibb-i ahl-i Khatā</i> or <i>Tānksūq-nāma-yi ilkhānī</i> (before 704/1304)
!	!	!	2) <i>Kitāb-i adviya-yi mufrada-yi khatā'ī</i> (before 704; not extant?)
!	!	!	3) <i>Kitāb-i adviya-yi mufrada-yi Mughūlī</i> (before 704; not extant?)
!	!	!	4) <i>Kitāb-i siyāsāt va tadbīr-i pādshāhī</i> (before 704; not extant?)

