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Research Article

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Two Qaraquyunlu and Aqquyunlu 'Turkmen' Decrees in the Great Mosque of Mardin

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Abstract: This contribution reconstructs and contextualizes two decrees abolishing specific imposts. Both were inscribed into the eastern entrance vestibule of the great mosque of Mardin connecting the mosque to the main market area of the town in the name of Qaraquyunlu and Aqquyunlu 'Turkmen' rulers in the mid-15th century CE. As argued in this article, the decrees pertain to the immediate context of the civil revolt of Mardin against Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu in 1450 CE. Accordingly, the inscription of fiscal decrees into highly visible and institutionally protected locations of the urban fabric emerges as a crucial interface negotiating civil (dis)content and the pragmatics of rule. Together with the exceptionally dense attestation of the history of Mardin during the first half of the 15th century CE in a variety of mediums and narrative and linguistic traditions, this enables an exemplary reconstruction of subaltern and non-rulerly agency during this period of frequently changing rulers. By historicizing the fiscal ordinances decreed in both inscriptions, fiscal imposts emerge as one of the strands along which civil (dis)content could be negotiated. In addition, the continued preservation of both inscriptions attests to the resilience and stability of the 'inscribed public sphere' of Mardin. Accordingly, inscriptions 853 and 854 Mardin are presented as the centerpiece of an exemplary micro-study of non-rulerly agency and the pragmatics of rule in the 15th century CE pre-industrial Middle East.

Keywords: Mardin; Arabic epigraphy; Qaraquyunlu; Aqquyunlu; inscribed public sphere

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1 Historical Context I: Female and Subordinate Agency during Changes of Rule in Mardin, ca. 1405–1445 CE

The town of Mardin lies on the slope of a steep hill overlooking the Mesopotamian plain, which is crowned by its famous citadel. During the first half of the 15th century CE, the citadel was very well fortified, while the walls defending the town were in an unclear state of disrepair, destruction and/or neglect (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: The town and citadel of Mardin (Photo: Georg Leube).

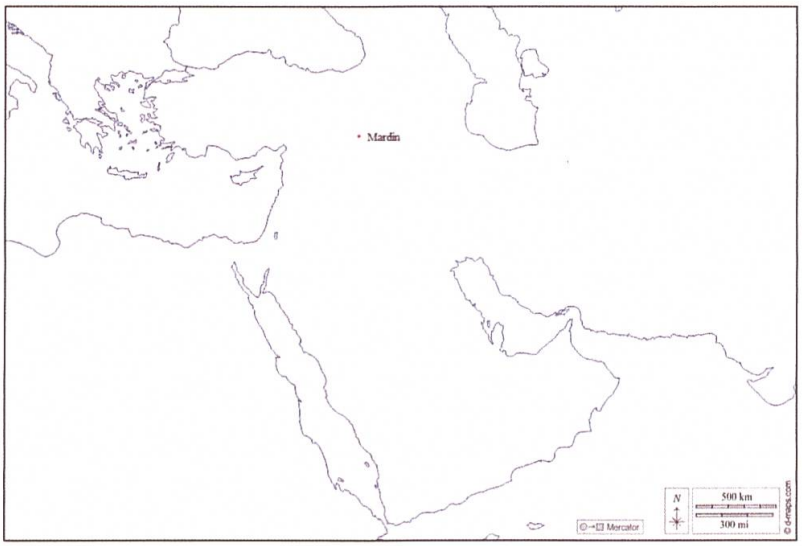

Figure 2: Mardin within the Near and Middle East.

Table 1: A genealogical overview of the 'Turkmen' dynasties in Mardin.

Qaraquyunlu		Aqquyunlu		
qara Yūsuf	(– Iskandar)	*qara* ʿUthmān	– Ḥamza	
	– Jahānshāh		(– ʿAlī)	– Jahāngīr
				– *uzun* Ḥasan

Between 1409 and 1457 CE, Mardin experienced the following conflictual changes of rulership involving rulers affiliated to the Qaraquyunlu and Aqquyunlu 'Turkmen' dynasties:

1409 CE: Surrender of the town from the last Artuqid ruler to *qara* Yūsuf Qaraquyunlu.

1432 CE: Surrender of the town to Ḥamza b. *qara* ʿUthmān Aqquyunlu.

1444 CE: Installation of Jahāngīr b. ʿAlī b. *qara* ʿUthmān Aqquyunlu.

1450 CE: Civil revolt in favor of the Qaraquyunlu general Rustam b. Tarkhān acting in the name of Jahānshāh b. *qara* Yūsuf Qaraquyunlu.

1452 CE: Re-installation of Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu.

1457 CE: Acceptance of the overlordship of Jahāngīr's brother *uzun* Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. *qara* ʿUthmān Aqquyunlu.

The genealogical relations between the different 'Turkmen' overlords and rulers of Mardin can be mapped as follows, indicating rulers not directly implicated in the events discussed in the present article with parentheses (Table 1).

To historicize the visibility and effectiveness of non-rulerly agency in Mardin during the civil revolt of 1450 CE, it is necessary to begin by tracing subaltern agency during earlier changes of rule in this town during the first half of the 15th century CE. After weathering several military encounters with Timur and his armies, over three centuries of rule exerted by the Artuqid dynasty in Mardin ended in the first decade of the 15th century CE.[1] Although the town was still held by the Artuqid ruler al-Ẓāhir Majd al-Dīn ʿĪsā during the battle between the 'Turkmen' leaders *qara* Yūsuf

1 See for the final decades of Artuqid rule in Mardin and its surroundings the authoritative work of Ilisch 1984: 131–158. Throughout this article, 'Turkmen' is used as a specific shorthand for the Qaraquyunlu and Aqquyunlu dynasties, as opposed to Turkmen without upper quotes, which as an ethnicizing label includes many other dynastic and non-dynastic configurations during the 15th century CE and during other times. All dates given without further indication pertain to the Islamic hijrī qamarī calendar. Dates according to the common era are indicates as CE, the Armenian era is indicated as AE, and the Seleucid era of Syriac sources as AS. Dates were calculated according to Spuler et al. 1961. For reasons of consistency, Ottoman and Persian text written in Arabic letters is transscribed in an Arabicising mode wherever possible. Armenian is transliterated according to the system proposed by the Revue des Études Arméniennes. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are by the present author. As a matter of personal taste, I omit the artificial honorific Şanlı from the name of the town of Urfa.

Qaraquyunlu and *qara* ʿUthmān Aqquyunlu near Mardin in 1406 CE,[2] the inclusion of al-Ẓāhir ʿĪsā among the followers of *qara* Yūsuf signalled the decline of Artuqid power in the region.[3] Faced with further Aqquyunlu raiding, al-Ẓāhir ʿĪsā's son and successor al-Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad handed over Mardin to *qara* Yūsuf in 1409 CE.[4] Not with standing recurring Aqquyunlu raids, the town remained under the control of Qaraquyunlu governors until it was taken over by the Aqquyunlu leader Ḥamza, a son of *qara* ʿUthmān, in 835/1432 CE.[5] After the death of Ḥamza in 1444 CE,[6] the town was taken over by Ḥamza's nephew Jahāngīr b. ʿAlī b. *qara* ʿUthmān Aqquyunlu,[7] in whose name the first of the two 'Turkmen' fiscal decrees in the great mosque of Mardin was commissioned in 853/1449 CE (see below).

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2 See the account of the battle in Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 57–59, as well as the detailed overview by Woods 1999: 44–45, and with a slightly different interpretation Ilisch 1984: 151–152.

The location of the battle, a toponym spelled Taqī in the edited text and explained by Ṭihrānī as „between Mardin and Hasankeyf (*ḥiṣn*), which has Hasankeyf to its East and Mardin to its West" (Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 58), should according to Sevan Nişanyan's *Index Anatolicus* (www.nisanyanmap.com) be identified with the current village of Havuzbaşı/Ömerli/Mardin. Cf. the alternative reading of the toponym as Teffi or Teffe proposed by Göyünç 1991: 11.

The citadel of Mardin (*mērdənay … berd*) is also mentioned in the context of *qara* Yūsuf's return from his Mamlūk exile in an Armenian rememorative note (*hišatakaran*) dated to 856 AE/December 10th 1406 until December 9th 1407 CE and written in Xizan, contemporary Hizan, see Xačʿikyan 1955–1967: 1:68. For the importance and restrictions of this type of Armenian sources, see Sinclair 2000.

3 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 57.

4 Ilisch 1984: 154–158, cf. Woods 1999: 46. Cf. for the subsequent rebuilding of the city walls of Mardin Nūḥ Patriarcha Jacobitarum 1721: 469. For subsequent Qaraquyunlu rule over Mardin, see the coins dated to 814 and 815 struck in the name of *pīr* Būdāq as the nominal overlord of *qara* Yūsuf (Album 1976: 128 and 155, as well as Ilisch 1984: 155–156), the undated coins following Artuqid precedent struck in Mardin in the name of *qara* Yūsuf without the nominal overlordship of his son *pīr* Būdāq, possibly in the period between the death of *pīr* Būdāq in 821/1418 CE and the death of *qara* Yūsuf in 823/1420 CE, described as A2481 by Album 2011: 269, as well as the coins struck in Mardin in the name of Iskandar b. *qara* Yūsuf between 823 and 835/1420 to 1432 CE, described as 2490B (cf. zeno.ru #132613, #225904, #276726, #276727, #276728, and #276730) and A2492 by Album 2011: 269. Cf. also the reference to *qara* Yūsuf as ruling over Mardin in an Armenian rememorative note dated to 866 AE/December 7th 1417 until December 6th 1418 CE (written in Hizan), Xačʿikyan 1955–1967: 1:200, and the three references to the rule of his son Iskandar over Mardin, dated to 875 AE/December 5th 1425 until December 4th 1426 CE (written in Mardin), Xačʿikyan 1955–1967: 1:354, as well as two notes dated to 877 AE/December 5th 1427 until December 3rd 1428 CE (written in Mecopʿ and Kołucʿ respectively), Xačʿikyan 1955–1967: 1:380–381.

An unnamed ruler of Mardin (*šlṭnā d-mrdīn*) is described as involved in choosing the successor of a deceased patriarch by the continuation of Barebraeus 1877: 537 and 539. *Pace* Carlson 2018: 51, I interpret this title as rooted in Syriac practices of referring to Muslim rulers, rather than as indicating that any specific ruler of Mardin necessarily assumed the title of *sulṭān*.

5 Woods 1999: 52.

6 Woods 1999: 71.

7 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 168–170.

Despite the regular focus of the extant sources on the activities of male rulers affiliated to one of several patrilinear dynasties, narratives of the Qaraquyunlu and Aqquyunlu 'Turkmen' occupations of Mardin between ca. 1405 and 1444 CE frequently assign a decisive role to women and female agency.[8] Arguably the first of these occasions is Ṭihrānī's narrative of how *qara* Yūsuf returned from his exile with the Mamlūk rulers of Syria after the death of Timur in 1405 CE and left his wife, pregnant with the future Qaraquyunlu ruler Jahānshāh, in the care of the Artuqid ruler of Mardin (*chūn ḥaram-i ū ḥāmila būd ū-rā dar madrasa-yi mārdīn gudhāsht tā zamānī ki jahānshāh mīrzā mutawallid gasht*).[9] A tantalizing glimpse of the negotiation of how personal names were selected at the intersection of gender and aspirations to political power surfaces in Jahānshāh's entry in the biographical dictionary of notables living in the 9th century/15th century CE written by the Mamlūk scholar al-Sakhāwī:

> He was born near Mardin at some time in the beginning of the [ninth] century. Therefore, as rumor has it (*wa-li-dhā qīla*), he was named Mardīnshāh (*king of Mardin*). But when his father was informed of this name, he became angry and exclaimed: This is a name for women (*hādhā smu li-l-niswati*)! Thus, he named him Jahānshāh (*king of the world*).[10]

The subsequent installation of *qara* Yūsuf as the ruler of Mardin by the last Artuqid ruler al-Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad in 812/1409 CE is curiously framed as something of a second-best

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8 For the political agency of female individuals affiliated to the ruling dynasty in early Ṣafawid Iran immediately following the period of 'Turkmen' rule, see Szuppe 1994–1995. As shown by Werner 2003: 94–109, female agency could successfully navigate multiple juridical and institutional frameworks in 'Turkmen' Iran. For the Mamlūk realms, see the special issue of *Mamlūk Studies Review* edited by Ghersetti 2018: for pre-'Turkmen' Mongol Iran, see de Nicola 2017 and Broadbridge 2018. As shown by the marriage between *qara* Yūsuf's father *qara* Muḥammad Qaraquyunlu and a daughter of Aḥmad Jalāyir, *e.g.* al-Ghiyāth 1970: 1, the political importance of marriage alliances in 'Turkmen' history certainly extends beyond the town of Mardin and the timeframe of the present study. Ilisch 1984: 259, note 21, suggests that the exceptional focus on the agency of female members of the family of the rulers of Mardin constitutes a characteristic feature of the historiographical work of Ibn al-Munshī.

9 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 57.

10 al-Sakhāwī 2003: 3:72–73. Cf. the parallel account as told by Ibn Taghrībirdī 1984–2009: 5:26. It should however be noted that *jhanšah* is attested as an Armenian Christian name before Jahānshāh Qaraquyunlu's rise to prominence, e.g. Xač'ikyan 1955–1967: 1:49 and 50 (written in Erevan in 854 AE/December 10th 1404 until December 9th 1405 CE), and Xač'ikyan 1955–1967: 1:122 (written in the village of Car in 860 AE/December 9th 1410 until December 8th 1411 CE), as well as for two persons of this name mentioned before Jahānshāh Qaraquyunlu's rise to power in the history of Timur, see the entries in the index of Yazdī 1387/1999: 2:1776. Accordingly, the intervention of *qara* Yūsuf negotiated preexisting and established personal names, rather than constituting an *ad hoc* innovation. The brother of *uzun* Ḥasan named Jahānshāh (cf. Woods 1999: 209, and his mentions in the index of Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 593) could conceivably already have been named after Jahānshāh Qaraquyunlu.

option in the 16th century CE early Ṣafawid biography of *khwāja shaykh* Muḥammad Kujujī[11] by Ibn Karbalāʾī.

> During his journey to the holy precinct in noble Mecca, may God, exalted be He!, guard her from epidemics and increase her renown and prestige, he [*khwāja shaykh* Muḥammad Kujujī] came to the town of Mardin in the region of Diyār Bakr. The king of this town was named Malik-i Ṣāliḥ. Due to the piety and religious perfection [of *khwāja shaykh* Muḥammad Kujujī], he proposed that he marry his daughter. Because he did not have a son, he asked his highness the *khwāja* to inherit his rule over these regions. However, his highness the *khwāja* turned down this proposal.[12]

Due to the death of *khwāja shaykh* Muḥammad Kujujī in 788/1386 CE,[13] this story as told by Ibn Karbalāʾī poses significant chronological problems. Nonetheless, it ties in with the overarching pattern of female agency or at least visibility during changes of rule in Mardin during the first half of the 15th century CE.

The factual change of rule over Mardin from the Artuqids to the Qaraquyunlu in 812/1409 CE is depicted as having been facilitated by a marriage of *qara* Yūsuf to a daughter of al-Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad, during which al-Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad gave *qara* Yūsuf the town of Mardin as dowry (*mahr*), while *qara* Yūsuf installed al-Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad as his governor in al-Mawṣil.[14] As in the earlier account of the circumstances of the birth of Jahānshāh Qaraquyunlu in the Arabic Mamlūk biographical dictionary of al-Sakhāwī and the Persian Aqquyunlu court chronicle by Ṭihrānī, these events are again narrated consistently by Ṭihrānī and the decidedly non-courtly Arabic historiographical work of al-Ghiyāth.

A similarly consistent picture of the takeover of Mardin from Qaraquyunlu governors to Ḥamza Aqquyunlu in 835/1432 CE emerges from the Arabic account of the towering Mamlūk scholar Ibn Ḥajar, the non-courtly Arabic chronicle of al-Ghiyāth, and one of the anonymous Syriac continuations of the Chronography of Barebraeus.[15] The version given by Ibn Ḥajar in his treatment of the events of the month of Shaʿbān 835/April 1432 CE is the most concise. According to him, the Qaraquyunlu governor of Mardin Nāṣir al-Dīn had imprisoned Ḥamza b. *qara* ʿUthmān due to the raiding of followers of his father. Fascinatingly, a missive sent to

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11 See for him, as well as the entire Kujujī family of scholars, mystics, and statesmen Werner 2017.

12 Ibn Karbalāʾī 1343–1349/1965–1970: 2:41. This is followed by two verses of poetry, which as suggested by the editor represent a very slightly adapted version of two verses by *shaykh* Aḥmad Ghazzālī.

13 Werner, 2017: 254.

14 See Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 67–68, as well as al-Ghiyāth 1970: 2–3.

15 See for the continuations of the Chronography of Barebraus Brock 1979: 20–21/307–306, as well as the detailed text-critical *prolegomena* of Pratelli 2020.
For the lacuna regarding events of the years 832–836 in Ṭihrānī's chronicle dedicated to the Aqquyunlu court of *uzun* Ḥasan see Woods 1999: 219.

the Ottoman ruler Murād II at this point by the ruler of Mardin (*mārdīn ḥākimī*), here called Nāṣir al-Dīn in the heading and Nāṣir in the response of the Ottoman ruler, has been preserved in the Ottoman archives.[16] This missive informs the Ottoman ruler of the capture of Ḥamza and one hundred of his followers.[17] However, as narrated by Ibn Ḥajar, Nāṣir al-Dīn fled after a successful Aqquyunlu siege and *qara* ʿUthmān sent an envoy with the keys of the citadel to the Mamlūk *sulṭān* in Cairo.[18]

This outline of events is fleshed out in the non-courtly Arabic chronicle of al-Ghiyāth:

> *Qara* Yūsuf (*al-amīr yūsuf*) appointed one of his followers named Nāṣir as his governor in Mardin. One day, when he went out to hunt, *qara* ʿUthmān (*ʿuthmān*) took this opportunity and invested the town without anybody to hinder him, as nobody was in the citadel (*al-qalʿa*) but the wife of this governor, whom he sent out to her husband.[19]

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16 See the edition in Farīdūn *bīk* 1274–1275/1858: 1:216–217.

17 Farīdūn *bīk* 1274–1275/1858: 1:216.

18 Ibn Ḥajar 1972: 3:473. The excerpts from Ibn Ḥajar's work relating to 'Turkmen' rulers by Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Bahādur al-Muʾminī (MS Topkapı III. Ahmet 3057, 62r–63r, the name of the writer and the date of 874/1469–1470 CE stand on fol. 106r) reproduce Ibn Ḥajar's text with very minor variants.

It is unclear whether this was the key to the extant lock that was published by Etem 1936: 141–147, cf. the brief overview over the transition to Qaraquyunlu and Aqquyunlu rule given by Artuk no date given [1938]: 11–14. The reading proposed by Etem and Artuk contains the names and titles of *qara* ʿUthmān and Ḥamza, as well as a reference to a deceased individual named 'master Naṣr b. Rasūl' (**ʿamala l-muʿallimu naṣruni bnu rasūlin ghafara llāhu lahū*: Note the doubts expressed by the author by the inclusion of a question mark after 'Rasūl'). Although it is tempting to revisit this reading in the context of the detailed reconstruction of the history of events surrounding the Aqquyunlu occupation of the town suggested above, this must depart from a detailed investigation of the lock, currently held in the Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, and cannot be undertaken in the present article.

Altun 1971a: 22 and 169, has suggested that two large stones displaying three lines of Arabic text each that continue to be held by the Mardin Müzesi and which are supposedly derived from the citadel should be identical to the inscription formerly displayed in six lines above the entrance of the citadel and tentatively assigned to Aqquyunlu patronage by Sauvaget 1940: 291. As indicated by Sauvaget, however, and confirmed by the drawing by Gabriel 1940: 1:14, this inscription must have been written on several smaller stones, some of which had been turned upside-down at some point.

Pace the suggestion of Altun 1971a: 22, that the text on the large stones in the Mardin Müzesi was illegible (*okunamadı*), enough remains of the text on photographs taken on site in 2018 CE to reconstruct the recurring structure of *jamīʿ … wa-jamīʿ …* or 'and the entirety of … and the entirety of …' It also appears likely that the current setup of both stones in the Mardin Müzesi as displaying three consecutive lines of text is correct. Accordingly, the text must be interpreted as an endowment inscription (*waqfiyya*) that was almost certainly not originally displayed at the entrance of the citadel, cf. the similar structure of another Artuqid *waqfiyya* in Mardin edited by Sauvaget 1940: 298–299.

19 al-Ghiyāth 1970: 3.

Here as in the other accounts, the governor is named Nāṣir, which, however, is a common abbreviation of the Nāṣir al-Dīn of Ibn Ḥajar.[20] Slightly more problematic is the year subsequently given as 813,[21] which has to be emended due to the agreement of the details of al-Ghiyāth's account with the other narratives describing this episode and the chronological consensus of Ibn Ḥajar and Barebraeus who give the year 835/1743 AS/1432 CE. If any doubt remained, the year 813 as the beginning of Aqquyunlu rule is conclusively refuted by an Armenian rememorative note (*hišatakaran*) written in Mardin itself in 875 AE/December 5th 1425 until December 4th 1426 CE/Muḥarram 23rd 829 until Ṣafar 3rd 830 and referencing the governorship of Nāṣir (*amir nasr*) over Mardin in the name of Iskandar Qaraquyunlu (*amirzay skʿantarin*).[22] From a narratological perspective, the counterfactual shortening of the interval between the Qaraquyunlu takeover of Mardin in 812/1409 CE and the Aqquyunlu occupation of the town in al-Ghiyāth's account serves to better motivate the following anecdote commenting on these events. "It is said that Ḥajjī's father stole a shirt. He gave it to his son Ḥājjī to sell, however, it was stolen from him. When Ḥajjī returned home, his father asked for how much he had sold the shirt. Ḥājjī replied: 'For our initial investment!' (*bi-raʾs mālihī*)."[23]

In any case, the reference to the wife of the Qaraquyunlu governor is further fleshed out in the account given by one of the Syriac continuations of the *Chronography* of Barebraeus.

> In the year 1743 [AS], Mardin was taken from the hands of Naṣir, the governor (*amīrā*) of the Qaraquyunlu (*d-bīt qrā yūsf*), as *qara* ʿUthmān (*ʿūtmn tūrkīā*) and his sons Ḥamza and ʿAlī came against this Naṣir and took Mardin. Thus, Naṣir the governor came after *qara* ʿUthmān and took his son Ḥamza prisoner […] in the citadel of Mardin (*b-qlʿā d-mrdīn*). When *qara* ʿUthmān came again with a great army and surrounded Mardin, Nāṣir (*nāṣr*, sic) again came out and went after the army of ʿUthmān. While Naṣir had gone out to fight against the army of ʿUthmān, the women (*nšē*) who were with Naṣir saw that Ḥamza b. ʿUthmān was a handsome youth and of noble stature. Thus, while Naṣir was out to fight against the army of ʿUthmān, his women and servants favored Ḥamza and exclaimed together in the citadel of Mardin 'Long live *sulṭān* (*sūlṭān*) Ḥamza

20 See the Armenian rememorative note written in Mardin in 875 AE/December 5th 1425 until December 4th 1426 CE, Xačʿikyan 1955–1967: 1:354, which gives the governor's name as *amir nasr* (possibly pronounced with a *shva* as *nasər*?), as well as one of the continuations contained in Barebraeus 1932: 195r, col. ii, which introduces him as *nṣr amīrā d-bīt qrā yūsf*, while subsequently also spelling his name *nāṣr*, see below. The excerpts of Ibn Ḥajar's historiographical work by Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Bahādur al-Muʾminī have *nāṣir*, see MS Topkapı III. Ahmet 3057, 62v.

21 al-Ghiyāth 1970: 3.

22 Xačʿikyan 1955–1967: 1:354.

23 al-Ghiyāth 1970: 3.

> b. ʿUthmān!' When Naṣir and his followers wanted to return to the citadel of Mardin, they closed the gate before him and did not open it for him. As *qara* ʿUthmān (*amīr ʿūtmn*) stood in front of the western gate, Naṣir and his followers broke the gate of the New Gate (*bāb gdīd*, cf. Arabic *bāb jadīd*) and fled.[24]

The unconnectedness and non-courtly setting of both the *Taʾrīkh* of al-Ghiyāth and this continuation of the *Chronography* of Barebraeus suggest that both sources independently preserve narratives that circulated orally in the area of Mardin during the second half of the 15th century CE.[25] Nonetheless, the isolation in which both works have survived makes a further investigation of the transmission and textual interdependency of both narratives difficult if not impossible.

While the transmission of rule over Mardin after the death of Ḥamza Aqquyunlu in 1444 CE to his nephew Jahāngīr b. ʿAlī is also briefly mentioned by al-Ghiyāth,[26] it is described exemplarily in the Persian court historiography dedicated to Jahāngīr's brother *uzun* Ḥasan Aqquyunlu by Ṭihrānī.

> After the death of Ḥamza, […] Jahāngīr *mīrzā* was the first to come to Diyarbakır (*āmid*) and occupy the town. […] The rule of Jahāngīr became universally accepted among the Aqquyunlu. However, in the citadel of Mardin (*dar qalʿa-yi mārdīn*), a daughter of *sulṭān* Ḥamza named *shāh* Sulṭān resided. […] Jahāngīr *mīrzā* wanted to obtain both the citadel and the daughter, as she had earlier been promised to him. […] Due to their prior engagement, the daughter also was very eager to marry Jahāngīr *mīrzā* (*dukhtar nīz chūn nāmzad-i jahāngīr mīrzā būd maylī-yi ʿaẓīm ba-tazawwuj-i ū dāsht*). Thus, Jahāngīr *mīrzā* moved toward the town of Mardin. […] The daughter of *sulṭān* Ḥamza sent a message to Jahāngīr *mīrzā* to tell him that he should come to take possession of us and our castle. When the daughter had finished mourning her father, they handed over Mardin, organized a bridal convoy, and held a huge feast (*ṭūy-i ʿaẓīm sākhtand*).[27]

Taken together, several observations can be made regarding the narrative depiction of change of rule in Mardin during the first half of the 15th century CE. The first concerns the absence of any report describing the inner-dynastic transmission of rule from *qara* Yūsuf to Iskandar Qaraquyunlu after the death of *qara* Yūsuf in 823/1420 CE. This arguably reflects the regional focus of accounts describing the events of these years on the region between Sulṭāniyya, where *qara* Yūsuf died, and the area west of Lake Van, where the army of Iskandar and Ispan Qaraquyunlu fought the

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24 Barebraeus 1932: 195r, col. ii–195v, col. i.

25 See for the reconstruction of the travels of al-Ghiyāth to Mardin and elsewhere the commentary of Schmidt-Dumont, al-Ghiyāth 1970: page 7 in the German introduction, as well as the suggestion originally voiced by Ephrem Barsaum that this specific continuation of Barebraeus was written by two priests from Basabrina, modern Haberli/İdil/Şirnak, see Brock 1979: 21/306.

26 al-Ghiyāth 1970: 51. Cf. the independent attestation of Jahāngīr's leadership over southeastern Anatolia in 894 AE/November 30th 1444 until November 29th 1445 CE, Xačʿikyan 1955–1967: 1:590 (written in Arłni/Ergani).

27 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 168–170.

Timurids and their Aqquyunlu allies. Even in the continuation of the Chronography of Barebraeus that was likely written in the area of Mardin, possibly in the village of Basabrina, modern Haberli/İdil/Şirnak,[28] this battle, explicitly characterized as occurring on the shores of Lake Van (*ʾl myʾ d-spnā*), is the only event recorded for the year 1731 AS/October 1st 1419 until September 9th 1420 CE.[29] In this case, the ready availability of several sons of *qara* Yūsuf who could be put forward as his heirs also enabled claims of continuity without including female members of the ruler's household.

The second observation concerns the function of the agency and/or visibility of female and subaltern members of the ruler's house in the transferrals of power presented in greater detail above. From a narrative point of view, the cases in which rule over Mardin was transferred together with a marriage to a daughter of the previous ruler suggest some sort of continuity of interpersonal networks. Even if the predominant dynastic affiliation of the masculinized ruler was according to the patrilinear side, this argument suggests that the marriage alliances between the daughter of the last Artuqid ruler and *qara* Yūsuf or between *shāh* Sulṭān bt. Ḥamza and her cousin Jahāngīr extended the heritage of the prior incumbent to the next generation. In the case of *shāh* Sulṭān bt. Ḥamza, this suggestion is borne out by the choice of the name Ḥamza for her son Ḥamza b. Jahāngīr.[30]

Nonetheless, this interpretation of the visibility of female members of the former ruler's family as performative claims of continuity cannot explain the stories told by al-Ghiyāth and the continuation of Barebraeus regarding the independent agency of the wife and subaltern members of the household of the governor during the transfer of rule from Iskandar Qaraquyunlu and his governor Nāṣir to the Aqquyunlu Ḥamza and *qara* ʿUthmān. In addition, the account of the installation of Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu as the ruler of Mardin as told by Ṭihrānī also assigns a large amount of agency to *shāh* Sulṭān bt. Ḥamza, who is even claimed to have disobeyed the wish of her father in choosing Jahāngīr instead of other potential spouses. It may certainly be conceivable that in both cases the female members of the ruler's household did independently perform public political acts that represented their personal choice and wishes. Nonetheless, the interlacement of 'proper' rule with normative concepts of masculinity is pervasive in the narrative sources produced in the 'Turkmen' realms of the 15th century CE and beyond. This interlacement is encapsuled in terms like Arabic *muruwwat*, literally male-ness, but commonly used to designate 'proper princely conduct' in the Aqquyunlu courtly chronicle of Ṭihrānī and elsewhere.

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28 Brock 1979: 21/306.

29 Barebraeus 1932: 195r, col. i. It should be noted that this date is off by one year, as the battle occurred in 1421 CE, cf. Sümer 1967: 119–123.

30 See the genealogical table Woods 1999: 93.

According to this argument, it may be worth considering whether the bodily qualities of Ḥamza and Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu that are presented as having been put forward by female and subaltern members of the former ruler's household to install them as rulers of Mardin should be understood as transcending their handsomeness. Instead, the 'strong build and stature' of Ḥamza or the eagerness of *shāh* Sulṭān bt. Ḥamza to marry Jahāngīr may well reflect the expectation that both would be 'proper' rulers over this town. As explicitly indicated in the reference to the 'servants' of the Qaraquyunlu governor Nāṣir and implied in the successful implementation of the plan of *shāh* Sulṭān b. Ḥamza, this evaluation of the 'public body' of the ruler extended beyond the circle of his immediate potential spouses. According to this reading, the narratives of female agency in changes of rule over Mardin reflect a more inclusive consensus among non-rulerly interpersonal networks at the court and in the town.[31] In this regard, the comparison of the body of one potential ruler to the body of another implies a holistic evaluation of the relative suitability of both claimants to rule over this town. Accordingly, the subaltern agency of the town of Mardin is narratively vested in the female figure of the wife(s) or daughter of the incumbent ruler. While it is difficult to proceed much further for the cases so far examined, the change of rule from Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu to the Qaraquyunlu general Rustam b. Tarkhān between 1450 and 1451 CE is documented by a wealth of different sources that are examined in the following parts of this article.

2 Historical Context II: The Revolt of the Town of Mardin Against Jahāngīr in 854/1450 CE

During his campaign in the area of Erzincan in northeastern Anatolia, the Qaraquyunlu ruler Jahānshāh dispatched his general Rustam b. Tarkhān against the southeastern Anatolian area of Urfa and Mardin in 1450 CE.[32] The subsequent events are described in extraordinary detail by a short historiographical note (*taregrowt'yown*) written in Armenian by an otherwise unknown individual commonly

31 For consensual non-rulerly agency exerted from towns in the 15th century, see Paul 2004: who underlines the decisive role of the main *qāḍī* and the *shaykh al-islām* in his analysis of the description of five sieges of Herat by Samarqandī (Paul 2004: 185–186). As shown below, neither functionary appears in any of the descriptions of changes of rule over Mardin analyzed in the present article. For the general context of urban history and agency in Iran during the pre-Ṣafawid period, see the special issue of *Eurasian Studies* edited by D. Durand-Guédy, R. P. Mottahedeh, and J. Paul 2018.

32 Woods 1999: 74–75.

The brief reference to these events in the continuation of Barebraeus 1932: 195v, col. ii–196r, col. i, dates them to 1761 AS/October 1st 1449 until September 30th 1450 CE. As shown by comparison with the text of Davit' of Mardin and the Mamlūk sources discussed below, this date is off by one year.

called Davitʿ of Mardin[33] and the later Aqquyunlu court chronicle written in Persian for Jahāngīr's brother and rival *uzun* Ḥasan by Ṭihrānī. An initial battle near Mardin (*bar sar-i mārdīn*)[34] is dated by Davitʿ of Mardin to Nawasard 1st 900 AE/November 29th 1450 CE/Shawwāl 23th 854.[35] Six days later, the town was handed over to the Qaraquyunlu general on Nawasard 6th 900 AE/December 4th 1450 CE/Shawwāl 28th 854, while the citadel was still held by followers of Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu.[36]

The next dependable date is given by Davitʿ of Mardin as the Sunday of the Apparition of the Holy Cross (*i yerewman xačʿi kirakin*) or 28 days after Easter Sunday (*z-kni čʿapki iə awowr*), when Jahāngīr attempted to relieve the citadel but the inhabitants of Mardin refused to submit to him.[37] As Easter Sunday fell on April 25th 1451 CE, this is equivalent to Aracʿ 26th 900 AE/May 23rd 1451 CE/Rabīʿ II 21st 855. For the period between the rendition of the town of Mardin to Jahāngīr's failed attempt of restoring his rule in Mardin, no firm dates are available.

If we accept the relative chronological sequence in which the events are presented by Ṭihrānī, Rustam b. Tarkhān initially continued to oversee the siege of the citadel in Mardin while dispatching a body of troops against Urfa.[38] As narrated by

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33 The author gives his name as Davitʿ *ērēcʿ* or the priest (Xačʿikyan 1955–1967: 2:29), his designation as Davitʿ of Mardin follows Hakobyan. His historiographical note is included in a miscellany. The colophon of the miscellany, which contains his name in the form of Davitʿ *ērēcʿ*, is dated to December (*dektəmberi*) 29th 901 AE, which should be equivalent to 1451 CE, as the year 901 AE began on November 28th 1451 CE, *pace* the straightforward rendering of 901 AE as 1452 CE by the editor, see Xačʿikyan 1955–1967: 2:29. The historiographical note edited by Hakobyan and translated below also includes a preliminary ending at some time in Nawasard 901 AE/December 1451 CE, see Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:210, between lines 33 and 34, blurred by the imprecise rendering of 901 AE as 1452 CE by the editor. Accordingly, the historiographical note was originally written at the same time as the colophon of the miscellany. As shown by the subsequent continuation of the course of events in his historiographical note, Davitʿ of Mardin must have retained access to the manuscript for some more years. As far as indicated in the index of Xačʿikyan 1955–1967: 2, no other colophons or rememorative notes written by Davitʿ of Mardin appear to have been preserved.
The selective English translation of Armenian rememorative notes ('colophons') by Sanjian includes a partial translation of both the colophon of the miscellany and the historiographical note, see Sanjian 1969: 221–224. Although Sanjian's translations were regularly used in the authoritative work of Woods 1999 and others, however, his almost exclusive reliance on the Armenian editions of Hakobyan and Xačʿikyan led to imprecisions that must be resolved through a re-reading of the original Armenian text together with the pertinent non-Armenian sources. His rendering of the historiographical note of Davitʿ of Mardin is additionally misleading due to Sanjian's reliance on the misleading conversion of dates AE to CE by the editors.

34 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 180. The place is described with the otherwise unattested toponym of *tnisay* by Davitʿ of Mardin, see Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:210.

35 Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:210.

36 Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:210, cf. Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 181 (translated below).

37 Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:210.

38 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 181–182.

Ṭihrānī, *uzun* Ḥasan first lifted the siege of Urfa[39] before Rustam b. Tarkhān moved against him with the greater portion of his troops, having left a sufficient body of troops to continue the siege of the citadel of Mardin. Nonetheless, Ṭihrānī's indication that Rustam b. Tarkhān had at this time already moved into winter-quarters with those troops not needed to continue the siege of the citadel of Mardin suggests that Rustam b. Tarkhān had left the town of Mardin some time before hearing of *uzun* Ḥasan's victory near Urfa.

> [*Uzun* Ḥasan's victory near Urfa.] Rustam b. Tarkhān (*rustam*) sieged the citadel of Mardin (*ba-muḥāṣara-yi qal'a-yi mārdīn mashghūl shud*). At this time, he had left a body of troops sufficient for the siege of the citadel and gone into winter-quarters with [the remainder of] his army (*ba-urdū-yi khwīsh ba-qishlāq tawajjuh namūd*). From there, he moved toward the fortress of Birecik to attack *uzun* Ḥasan (*ṣāḥib qirān*).[40]

Subsequently, Rustam b. Tarkhān is mentioned to have manoeuvred against *uzun* Ḥasan and his followers in the area of Birecik and Çermik, before engaging in sustained fighting in the vicinity of Ergani.[41] After thinking about moving against Mardin, *uzun* Ḥasan and his followers were notified of the failed attempt of Jahāngīr to restore his rule over the town, which is securely dated by Davitʿ of Mardin to Aracʿ 26th 900 AE/May 23rd 1451 CE/Rabīʿ II 21st 855.[42]

To reconstruct an approximate absolute chronology of these events, we must first take into account the indication of Ṭihrānī that Rustam b. Tarkhān left Mardin after its capture on Nawasard 6th 900 AE/December 4th 1450 CE/Shawwāl 28th 854 while the winter season was still ongoing. The second indication of absolute chronology can be derived from the Mamlūk historiographical works which mention that news of the rendition of Mardin to Rustam b. Tarkhān reached Cairo by Dhū l-Ḥijja 18th 854/January 22nd 1451 CE,[43] or exactly seven weeks after the occupation of the town. Subsequently, news of *uzun* Ḥasan's relief of the citadel of Urfa became known in Cairo in early Rabīʿ I 855/April 1451 CE.[44] If we assume a slightly shorter time of about six weeks for the transmission of these news from the northeastern frontier of

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39 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 183–184.

40 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 185. According to Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 191, the troops continuing the siege of Mardin were commanded by the Ayyūbid ruler of *Ḥiṣn-i Kayf*/Hasankeyf, *malik* Khalaf.

41 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 186. Woods 1999: 78, erroneously follows the misleading conversion of the dates AE by Hakobyan and dates these fights to early 1452 instead of 1451 CE.
The village of Mālān mentioned in this context should according to Sevan Nişanyan's *Index Anatolicus* (www.nisanyanmap.com) be identified with the current village of Pınarkaya/Ergani/Diyarbakır.

42 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 192, cf. for the date Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:210.

43 Ibn Taghrībirdī 1990: 302, cf. al-Sakhāwī 2002–2007: 3:49.

44 Ibn Taghrībirdī 1990: 322–323; al-Sakhāwī 2002–2007: 3:88, and Ibn Iyās 1982–2008: 2:290. It should be noted that none of the Mamlūk sources mention the name of the town of Urfa in this context, but only speak of a victory of *uzun* Ḥasan over his uncle *shaykh* Ḥasan b. *qara* ʿUthmān.

the Mamlūk realms to Cairo, an approximate date of late Muḥarram 855/mid-to-late February 1451 CE can be postulated for *uzun* Ḥasan's relief of the citadel of Urfa.[45] As Rustam b. Tarkhān had by then already left Mardin for winter-quarters with the majority of his troops and taking into account the exceptionally severe winter (*chūn barf wa-bārān bisyār būd wa-zamastān dar ghāyat-i ṣuʿūbat* [*būd*]),[46] we may accordingly suggest that Rustam b. Tarkhān likely left Mardin before the end of Nawasard 900 AE/Decmber 1450 CE/Dhū l-Qaʿda 854.

This chronology is important due to the date postulated for one of the two 'Turkmen' decrees in the great mosque of Mardin (inscription 854 Mardin), which I suggest attributing to Rustam b. Tarkhān. Building on prior readings and the extant remains of the much-deteriorated decree, as well as the chronology of Rustam b. Tarkhān's sojourn in Mardin reconstructed above, I suggest reconstructing its concluding date as the month of Dhū l-Qaʿda 854 (see below). Before turning to the text and materiality of both decrees, however, it is necessary to compile the information regarding the civil revolt and discontent in Mardin in 1450 CE that is contained in the historiographical sources.

Notwithstanding its focus on *uzun* Ḥasan and recurring bias against his brother and rival Jahāngīr, the historiographical work of Ṭihrānī contains a description of the civil revolt that ties in well with the other narrative sources.

> [The initial military confrontation between Qaraquyunlu and Aqquyunlu troops near Mardin, dated by Davitʿ of Mardin to Nawasard 1st 900 AE/November 29th 1450 CE/Shawwāl 23th 854. Heavy losses among the troops of Rustam b. Tarkhān.] Accordingly, he [Rustam b. Tarkhān] turned back while Jahāngīr *mīrzā* believed that he had remained in control of the ordinances of Mardin (*jahāngīr mīrzā-rā dāʿiyya-yi aḥkām-i mardīn shud*) and returned to the town. However, Rustam b. Tarkhān had sent a raiding party (*sariya-yī*) to the environs of Mardin. When [Jahāngīr] met this raiding party during his return, the soldiers of Jahāngīr *mīrzā* were assailed from all sides. Because they arrived bit by bit, they were all killed and Jahāngīr *mīrzā* fled utterly defeated to Diyarbakır (*āmid*). Therefore, the inhabitants of Mardin (*ahl-i mardīn*) despaired of the Aqquyunlu and handed the town over to the followers of Rustam b. Tarkhān (*az āqqūyunlū nawmīd gashtand wa-shahr-rā ba-rustamiyyān taslīm kardand*), while the citadel came under siege (*wa-qalʿa dar muḥāṣara uftād*).[47]

While the narrative focus of Ṭihrānī's account follows the actions of the various 'Turkmen' leaders, the subsequent siege is briefly described by the non-courtly Arabic chronicle of al-Ghiyāth.

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45 This stands *pace* the later date of Ṣafar 855/March 1451 CE suggested by Woods 1999: 77, likely based on a misreading of the Mamlūk chronicles.

46 Ṭihrānī 1999: 181.

47 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 181.

> [Jahāngīr marries the daughter of his uncle Ḥamza Aqquyunlu and makes Mardin his capital (*wa-jaʿala mārdīna takhtahū*, cf. Persian *takht*, throne, capital).] However, Rustam b. Tarkhān came against him, sieged him, and occupied the town (*wa-akhadha l-balada*), while the citadel held out. Therefore, [Rustam b. Tarkhān] built a second castle opposite of it and remained in Mardin for some time (*wa-aqāma muddatan bi-mārdīn*).[48]

The ideological justification of the military intervention in southeastern Anatolia by the Qaraquyunlu is partially preserved in Mamlūk chronicles that record the speeches and letters of envoys sent by the Qaraquyunlu leaders Rustam b. Tarkhān and Jahānshāh. According to Ibn Taghrībirdī, a letter was sent by Rustam b. Tarkhān to the Mamlūk governor of Birecik, who informed the Mamlūk *sulṭān* about this message in another letter that arrived in Cairo on Dhū l-Ḥijja 14th 854.[49] Due to the time of about six to seven weeks necessary for a message from southeastern Anatolia to reach Cairo in this winter (see above), this message was likely sent by Rustam b. Tarkhān shortly before his occupation of Mardin on Nawasard 6th 900 AE/December 4th 1450 CE/Shawwāl 28th 854. This is confirmed by the indication that the letter was written while the Qaraquyunlu general was in the vicinity of Ergani (*arghūniyya bi-diyār bakrin*).[50] According to one of the two versions, Rustam b. Tarkhān also requested permission to go on pilgrimage to Mamlūk-controlled Mecca „in this year" (*fī hādhā l-ʿām*).[51] As the letter arrived in Cairo by mid-Dhū l-Ḥijja 854 and the *sulṭān* is explicitly stated to have granted the request,[52] the intended year must have been 855. Accordingly, it appears that Rustam b. Tarkhān did not expect to become involved in a longer occupation of formerly Aqquyunlu territory in southeastern Anatolia.

The ideological programme cited by Rustam's overlord Jahānshāh to justify his military presence on the Mamlūk border is preserved in several Mamlūk accounts describing the reception of his delegation, which arrived in Cairo on Ṣafar 9th 855/ March 13th 1451 CE.[53] The importance of this delegation was underlined by the inclusion of a son of Jahānshāh's brother Ispan (*iṣbahān*) among Jahānshāh's

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48 al-Ghiyāth 1970: 51. The fortification from which the Qaraquyunlu troops conducted their siege of the citadel of Mardin is likely the same that is mentioned as *qalʿa-yi dār al-kahf* by Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 192.

49 Ibn Taghrībirdī 1990: 302, and Ibn Taghrībirdī 2005–2006: 15: 431–432. The events connected to the letter of Rustam b. Tarkhān to the Mamlūk governor of Birecik are told differently by Ibn Iyās 1982–2008: 2:287.

50 Ibn Taghrībirdī 1990: 302.

51 Ibn Taghrībirdī 1990: 302.

52 Ibn Taghrībirdī 1990: 302.

53 Ibn Taghrībirdī 1990: 320; Ibn Taghrībirdī 1984–2009: 5:28; Ibn Taghrībirdī 2005–2006: 15:432-433; al-Sakhāwī 2002–2007: 3:87–88, and Ibn Iyās 1982–2008: 2:289.

envoys,[54] as well as acceptable presents.[55] The letter sent with this delegation by Jahānshāh is described in most detail in Ibn Taghrībirdī's *Ḥawādith*.

> The letter of Jahānshāh was in Persian, so it was translated into Arabic. It concerned his love for the Mamlūk *sulṭān* (*al-tawaddud ilā l-sulṭān*), and proclamations of his [Jahānshāh's] subordination under him. The letter also excused his invasion of southeastern Anatolia (*diyār bakr*) and conquest of Erzincan and the town of Mardin from Jahāngīr b. ʿAlī *bīk* b. *qara* ʿUthmān (*qara yuluk*), claiming that he only did all this due to Jahāngīr's revolt against the Mamlūk *sulṭān*, as well as due to his bad treatment of the subject population (*li-sūʾ sīratihī fī l-raʿiyyati*). Therefore, he [Jahānshāh] aimed to lift the hand of Jahāngīr from the lands of southeastern Anatolia, installing in his stead his uncle *shaykh* Ḥasan b. *qara* ʿUthmān, so he might rule as a subject of the Mamlūk *sulṭān*.[56]

As described in the parallel account contained in Ibn Taghrībirdī's biography of Jahānshāh in his biographical dictionary, the letter also contained further allegations against Jahāngīr and accused him of terrible things (*wa-dhakara ʿan jahāngīra umūran wa-ramāhu bi-ʿaẓāʾima*).[57] Although no further details appear to be available regarding the precise nature of Jahānshāh's allegations against Jahāngīr, it appears likely that his intervention in southeastern Anatolia included performative measures intended to resonate with specifically Islamic normativities of governance. From a non-Muslim perspective, some of these Islamic normative prescriptions concerning the discriminatory treatment of non-Muslim subjects appear in the narrative of Davitʿ of Mardin.

> In the year 899 AE/November 29th 1449 until November 28th 1450 CE, Jahānshāh *mīrzā* left the land of Tabrīz and took Erzincan. From there, he sent a commander (*awraglowx*) to Mesopotamia (*miǰaget*), who was named *tʿrxan awłli* (Turkic *tarkhan-oğlu*, son of Tarkhān, namely Rustam b. Tarkhān). […, Rustam b. Tarkhān approaches Mardin]. The inhabitants of Mardin (*mertincʿikʿn*) were frightened and some took refuge in the citadel (*amrocʿ*) of Mardin.
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> On the first Sunday of the month of Nawasard the year 900 AE/November 29th 1450 CE/Shawwāl 23th 854,[58] *tʿrxan awłli* came and fought against the inhabitants of Mardin (*ənd mertncʿocʿn*). […] Six days later, on Friday, the inhabitants of the town (*kʿałakʿacʿikʿ*) revolted (*apstambecʿan*) against Jahāngīr *mīrzā* and recommended (*apsparecʿin*) the town to *tʿarxan-awłli* [*sic*]. As he saw fit, he imposed fines on some and robbed others (*əst arǰanacʿn nocʿa z-omans towganecʿ ev z-omans tʿalaneacʿ*). He also began to open the subterranean passages (*daranern*), which some of the inhabitants of Mardin possessed, and whatever he liked, he pillaged, taking one fifth of [the

54 According to Ibn Taghrībirdī 1990: 320, Jahānshāh asked that his nephew be raised under the guardianship of the Mamlūk ruler.

55 Ibn Taghrībirdī 1990: 320, and Sakhāwī 2002–2007: 3:87–88.

56 Ibn Taghrībirdī 1990: 320, cf. the parallel accounts of Ibn Taghrībirdī 1984–2009: 5:28, and al-Sakhāwī 2002–2007: 3:87–88, as well as the summary by Ibn Iyās 1982–2008: 2:289.

57 Ibn Taghrībirdī 1984–2009: 5:28.

58 Indeed, Nawasard 1st 900 AE/November 29th 1450 CE/Shawwāl 23th 854 fell on a Sunday.

> value of] that which remained. He put a blue sign (*kapowt nšan*: If this is not a dialectal or graphemic variant, one should emend *kapowt*, plunder, to *kapoyt*, blue, see below) on the Christians and did many evil deeds (*bazowm čʿaris*), which, if they were written down in detail, would form a book like the anthology of Isaiah (*esayi kʿałowacs*) and bigger. Beginning on Nawasard 6th of the year 900 AE/December 4th 1450 CE/Shawwāl 28th 854 and later, the inhabitants of the town (*kʿałakʿacʿikʿn*) and the Qaraquyunlu sieged (*xsaril*, cf. Arabic *ḥiṣār*, siege, military blockade) the citadel (*z-berdn*).
>
> On the Sunday of the Apparition of the Holy Cross (*i yerewman xačʿi kirakin*) or 28 days after Easter Sunday (*z-kni čʿapki iə awowr*: As Easter Sunday fell on April 25th 1451 CE, this is equivalent to Aracʿ 26th 900 AE/May 23rd 1451 CE/Rabīʿ II 21st 855), Jahāngīr came from Diyarbakır (*yamtʿay*, cf. the common designation of the modern town of Diyarbakır as Āmid) to Mardin, however, the inhabitants of Mardin (*mertncʿikʿn*) did not submit to him. [..., battle near Diyarbakır.]
>
> On the first Monday of the year 901 AE/Nawasard 1st 901 AE/November 29th 1451 CE/Dhū l-Qaʿda 5th 855,[59] they released from the citadel the ailing subjects (*z-ṙałiatʿn i xatēn amēkʿn hiwand*: I fail to understand the second and third word), who were starved and in miserable condition (*kisovn i vayr kowoṙēin ev hap owtēin ev kʿan z-kotoracn kowmnayin*: I again fail to understand all words and translate *ad sensum*). The subjects (*əṙałiatʿn*) remained under siege (*kacʿin ... i xsarn*) for one year minus five days.[60]

As attested by Ibn Taghrībirdī, the citadel of Mardin continued to be held by troops sympathetic to the Aqquyunlu until the peace concluded between Jahāngīr and Jahānshāh.[61] This peace treaty is dated by the continuation of the historiographical note of Davitʿ of Mardin to Easter Sunday, Kʿałocʿ 13. 901 AE/April 9th 1452 CE/Rabīʿ I 19th 856.[62] As attested by Ṭihrānī, Rustam b. Tarkhān continued to siege the town of Diyarbakır (*āmid*) from the beginning of winter in 1451 CE until the beginning of spring in 1452 CE and returned to Jahānshāh during the time of the spring equinox.[63]

From a chronological perspective, a specifically Armenian significance of these events as framed by Davitʿ of Mardin should be noted. Although some of these dates are corroborated by other sources, the first appearance of Rustam b. Tarkhān near Mardin is explicitly dated to the first day of the 10th century AE by Davitʿ, while the release of the non-combatant population from the citadel is dated to the first day of the year 901 AE. This specific resonance of the course of events as structured by Davitʿ with the Armenian Christian calendar also extends to the date of Jahāngīr's failed attempt to lift the siege of the citadel on the Sunday of the Apparition of the Holy

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59 This date is corroborated by the following reference to the siege having gone on for one year less five days, *pace* the calculation in an endnote by the editor, Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:214.

60 Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:210.

61 Ibn Taghrībirdī 1990: 363.

62 Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:210.

63 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 213.

Cross 900 AE, as well as his subsequent suggestion that the treaty between Jahāngīr and Jahānshāh was concluded on Easter Sunday 901 AE.

A second general observation can be made regarding Davitʿ of Mardin's account about the interpersonal networks that structured the 'civic agency' displayed in the town of Mardin, which is unambiguously described as a revolt of the inhabitants (*kʿałakʿacʿikʿ apstambecʿan*). Significantly, it appears that Christian inhabitants were both among those who remained in the town and among the defenders of the citadel. The presence of Christians in Mardin immediately after Rustam b. Tarkhān's occupation of the town is necessitated by the reference of a 'blue sign' which the new ruler forced them to display. Nonetheless, the inhabitants of Mardin who took refuge in the citadel also likely included Christians, as suggested by the sympathetic description of their destitute state during their release almost one year later, as well as by their description with the term *ṙaɫiatʿ* or *əṙaɫiatʿ* (cf. Arabic *raʿīyya*, subject population), which commonly included both Muslim and Christian subjects. Therefore, the civil revolt of the town of Mardin was not structured along religious affiliation, as is commonly claimed in contemporary sources describing the rendition of Diyarbakır to the Aqquyunlu ruler Ḥamza some years earlier.[64]

Although they are presented as a biblical calamity by Davitʿ of Mardin, the measures introduced by Rustam b. Tarkhān after the capitulation of the town of Mardin resonate with Islamic normativities. In this way, the suggestion that the goods taken by Rustam b. Tarkhān upon his occupation of the town included some sort of a fifth (*i hngicʿ z-mēkn*) may resonate with the share of one fifth of the spoils that is reserved for the leader of a victorious Islamic army. A relatively early and commonly quoted definition of this share (*fay'*) is contained in the *Kitāb al-Kharāj* of Yaḥyā b. Ādam (d. 203).

> Spoils (*al-ghanīma*) is everything that is taken by the Muslims in battle (*bi-l-qitāl*), until they take it by force (*ʿanwatan*). […]
>
> One fifth of all spoils is reserved for God […] for those whom God names as 'the prophet, his relatives, orphans, those who are poor, and travellers' (Qurʾān 59, 7). Nobody else may profit from this, for the leader of the Muslim community (*al-imām*) shall distribute this among those from these groups who come to him. […] Everything that remains after this fifth has been taken belongs to the Muslim soldiers who obtained it.[65]

Although it is not clear to which extent the Qaraquyunlu forces would have been concerned with these legal normativities, the mere suggestion that a fifth was confiscated by Rustam b. Tarkhān arguably frames the new rulers as agents of the

64 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 136–137.

65 Yaḥyā b. Ādam 1384/1964–1965: 18.

just *imām* or leader of the Muslim community. Notwithstanding the more pervasive confiscations which Davitʿ describes, this fifth must have been particularly clearly communicated to be so recognizably described in a non-Muslim source. In addition, the imposition of one fifth as the share administered by the Qaraquyunlu general arguably suggests that the civil agency of the inhabitants of Mardin who decided to turn their town over to Rustam b. Tarkhān was not necessarily perceived as a legally protected capitulation of the town (*ṣulḥ*). Instead, the reservation of one fifth (at least from a normative Islamic point of view) implies that the properties concerned were treated as spoils that had been obtained through armed conflict.

To reconcile the Islamic normativities of the share of one fifth of spoils won in battle with the course of events of the Qaraquyunlu takeover of Mardin reconstructed above, two possible reconstructions of Rustam b. Tarkhān's performative agency emerge. The first interpretation would be that he argued that the town had not been surrendered peacefully by its inhabitants, but rather won in battle during his annihilation of the army of Jahāngīr. Alternatively, the subterranean passages (*daranern*) described by Davitʿ of Mardin may have exclusively stored the property of those inhabitants of Mardin who had taken refuge in the citadel at the news of the Qaraquyunlu advance. Accordingly, Rustam b. Tarkhān would have implicitly accepted the peaceful surrender of the town only concerning those inhabitants of Mardin who remained in Mardin when the gates were opened. Significantly, either of these two possible interpretations contradicts the suggestion of consensual agency exerted by the collective body of the inhabitants of Mardin that is presented by Davitʿ of Mardin: If Rustam b. Tarkhān did lay claim to one fifth of spoils taken in the town as the share that was to be centrally administered (*fayʾ*), the civil agency of the inhabitants of Mardin is either disregarded entirely or at least as far as those who had joined the defenders of the citadel were concerned.

The 'blue sign' (**kapoyt nšan*) imposed upon the Christian inhabitants remaining in the town of Mardin after the Qaraquyunlu takeover resonates with the Islamic normativities of discriminatory sartorial distinctions imposed upon non-Muslim subjects in the (urban) public sphere. While similar measures aimed at limiting the display of wealth and power through the clothes of non-Muslim elites were also imposed in the Mamlūk realms during the 15th century CE and elsewhere,[66] 'blue signs' are mentioned several times by Armenian rememorative notes written inside the Qaraquyunlu and Aqquyunlu 'Turkmen' realms.[67] Crucially, these sartorial distinctions were not imposed uniformly, but should rather be interpreted as highly visible performative interventions of specific Muslim rulers in the public sphere of

66 See e.g. Ibn Taghrībirdī 2005–2006: 14:81–84.

67 See the brief discussion of Woods 1999: 106, cf. Carlson 2018: 41–70.

specific localities at specific times.[68] Accordingly, the indication of Davitʿ of Mardin that Rustam b. Tarkhān imposed sartorial distinctions upon the Christians who had participated in the surrender of the town to him resonates with an overarching interpretation of his occupation of the town as a performative implementation of civil order rooted in Islamic normativities.

As indicated by the letter of Jahānshāh to the Mamlūk ruler in Cairo discussed above, the Qaraquyunlu intervention against Aqquyunlu rule in southeastern Anatolia was explicitly justified as an attempt to free the homogenized subject population from 'oppression'. As indicated by Davitʿ of Mardin's description of the performative measures resonating with Islamic normativities implemented in Mardin by Rustam b. Tarkhān, this overarching programme motivated specific interventions engaging the subject population on a local level. Another mode in which Rustam b. Tarkhān performatively framed the Qaraquyunlu takeover of the town of Mardin as resonating with Islamic normativities that concerned the entirety of the inhabitants of the town is exclusively attested in epigraphic sources. These are presented in the following section.

3 Two Fiscal Decrees in the Great Mosque I: Sequence

The ideological justification of the Qaraquyunlu takeover of Mardin following the civil revolt of 1450 CE discussed so far is attested in the emic discourse of a diplomatic missive, as well as in the highly visible public acts of Rustam b. Tarkhān in Mardin that were described in the contemporary and likely eye-witness account of Davitʿ of Mardin. While the performative interventions in the urban sphere introduced by Rustam b. Tarkhān may have been directed against specific subsets of the population, a homogenizing address of the entire populace of specific towns was possible in the medium of highly visible inscriptions regulating imposts that concerned all inhabitants of a town. While a more extensive contextualization of this epigraphic genre in Mardin and elsewhere is undertaken in later sections of this article, I argue that one fragmentarily preserved Arabic decree whose date in particular has almost completely vanished (henceforth 'inscription 854 Mardin') was commissioned by Rustam b. Tarkhān immediately after his takeover of the town in Dhū l-Qaʿda 854/ December 1450 CE. This decree was written into the ashlar masonry of the wall facing the main entrance of the great mosque of Mardin leading to the market. The walls of the great mosque facing this crucial passage visible to the entirety of the (Muslim) population of the town are discussed and contextualized as an already established

68 See Carlson 2018: as well as the explicit indication that distinctive garments had to be worn by Christians only in specific towns, Ambrosius Zeebout 1998: 337.

interface between the non-ruling urban sphere and the ruler in another section below. Nonetheless, inscription 854 Mardin was inscribed immediately below another partially deteriorated decree (henceforth 'inscription 853 Mardin') in the name of Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu, which engaged with the same subject matter of imposts levied from sheep slaughtered in the town. Unfortunately, the date of inscription 853 Mardin was originally crammed into a portion of the last line of this text that also has almost entirely vanished. Accordingly, the sequence of both inscriptions is of paramount importance to any reconstruction of their significance.

Likely due to their visibility in a highly accessible location at about eye level in the entrance wall of the great mosque, both inscription 853 Mardin and inscription 854 Mardin are partially illegible due to deterioration. Nonetheless, a close reading of photographs of the remaining parts of the inscriptions together with earlier published readings going back to the late 19th and early 20th century CE and a comprehensive reconstruction of the original historical context and established epigraphic structure enable the confident edition given below. While inscription 853 Mardin unambiguously continues to display the name of Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu, however, the name of the patron in inscription 854 Mardin has almost entirely vanished.

Based on a reading made on site in 1932 CE, Jean Sauvaget has suggested reading the name of the patron of inscription 854 Mardin as *taghrī warmish*,[69] a current Turkic name that corresponds to Arabic Wahballāh, Greek Theodore, or similar forms literally translatable as 'present of God'. Although Sauvaget had not been aware of this, a governor (*ḥākim*) of Mardin of this name (here spelled *tangrī warmīsh*) is indeed attested in Mardin by Ṭihrānī as a former follower (*nawkar*) of *qara* Yūsuf governing the town.[70] Due to the explicit indication of Ṭihrānī that the events in which this governor was involved took place during the rule of Iskandar Qaraquyunlu after the death of *qara* Yūsuf,[71] this attestation should be dated to a *terminus post quem* of *qara* Yūsuf's death in 823/1420 CE. As shown above, however, a governor named Nāṣir al-Dīn or Nāṣir is attested as governing the town since his appointment by *qara* Yūsuf and until the Aqquyunlu takeover of the town in 835/1743 AS/1432 CE. This is mutually corroborated by the independent accounts of Ibn Ḥajar, al-Ghiyāth, one of the continuations of Barebraeus, an Armenian colophon written in Mardin and dated to 875 AE/December 5th 1425 until December 4th 1426 CE/Muḥarram 23rd 829 until Ṣafar 3rd 830, and a missive sent by Nāṣir himself to the Ottoman ruler Murād II to inform the latter of the (shortlived) capture of Ḥamza Aqquyunlu.

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69 Sauvaget 1940: 295. His reconstruction is followed by Altun 1971a: 36, and Sözen 1981: 47–49.

70 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 77 and 79. Cf. the attribution of the decree to this governor by Göyünç 1991: 13 and 107, followed by Altun 1971a: 36, and Ilisch 1984: 156.
It is unclear whether he should be identified with the homonymous follower of *qara* Yūsuf who Sümer suggests was affiliated to the Bayramlu network, see Sümer 1967: 31, 83, and 85.

71 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 77.

It may, of course, be conceivable that this governor was referred to alternatively with his *laqab* of Nāṣir al-Dīn or his *ism* of *Tanrıvermiş.[72] Nonetheless, I suggest that the Arabic letters reconstructed by Sauvaget, an expert in Mamlūk epigraphy, according to the established Mamlūk form of *Tanrıvermiş (*taghrī warmish*) may possibly also represent the Turkic form of *Tarhanoğlu,[73] which may have been written in Arabic letters as **tarkhānawghlī*. This Turkic form of the name of the Qaraquyunlu general Rustam b. Tarkhān appears in the forms of *tʿrxan awłli* (twice) and *tʿarxan-awłli* (once) in the Armenian historiographical note by Davitʿ of Mardin.[74] Rustam b. Tarkhān is subsequently referred to as *ṙowstam* and its determinated form *ṙowstamn*,[75] as well as under the partially Armenian forms of *ṙowstʿam pakn tʿrxani ordin*/Rustam *bīk* b. Tarkhān, and *ṙowstamn tʿərxani ordin*.[76] As reconstructed above, Davitʿ of Mardin's historiographical note was originally concluded at some point between Nawasard 1st 901 AE/November 29th 1451 CE/Dhū l-Qaʿda 5th 855 and Kʿałocʿ 13th 901 AE/April 9th 1452 CE/Rabīʿ I 19th 856 and subsequently continued. Accordingly, the different forms of **Tarhanoğlu*, **Rustam*, and **Rustam, the son of Tarkhān* arguably represent different times during which Davitʿ returned to the historiographical note contained in his miscellany concluded on December (*dektəmberi*) 29th 901 AE, equivalent to 1451 CE. Therefore, his rendering of the name of Rustam b. Tarkhān as *Tarhanoğlu in the original historiographical note concluded at some time between late 1451 and early 1452 CE demonstrates that this form of the name was current in the town at this date.

This certainly does not prove that Rustam b. Tarkhān would have used some rendering of the Turkic form of *Tarhanoğlu in Arabic epigraphy commissioned in Mardin at this time, as opposed to the alternative Arabic of *rustam b. tarkhān* or the Persian *rustam-i tarkhān* which regularly appears in the historiographical work of Ṭihrānī. Nonetheless, we can attribute inscription 854 Mardin to either the hypothetical Qaraquyunlu governor *[Nāṣir al-Dīn] Tanrıvermiş, or to the attested Qaraquyunlu governor Rustam b. Tarkhān, giving his name in the form

72 I use the modern Turkish orthography of his name as a deliberately ahistorical placeholder for the different versions in which the original Turkic form of the name has been written.

73 Once again, the modern Turkish orthography stands as a deliberately ahistorical placeholder for the different renderings of his name by Davitʿ of Mardin.

74 Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:210.

75 Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:210. The continuation of Barebraeus 1932: 195v, col. ii, refers to Rustam b. Tarkhān as *ʾmīrā br trkān rstmn bāg*. As the other manuscripts give his name as *rstm* and this form also appears elsewhere in manuscript *Huntingdon 52* that was reproduced by Wallis Budge, the final *n* should be explained as a slip of pen and not as a reflection of the Armenian determinative suffix *-n*. I thank Simone Pratelli for sharing the dispersion of forms based on his forthcoming critical edition of the *Chronography* of Barebraeus and discussing the matter with me via email.

76 Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:211.

of *Tarhanoğlu. Until the end of Aqquyunlu rule over Mardin in the early 16th century CE, no further possible candidates appear to exist. Even if the identification of Nāṣir/Nāṣir al-Dīn with the *tangrī warmīsh* mentioned by Ṭihrānī is accepted, however, no information appears to exist regarding the administrative policy of Nāṣir al-Dīn *Tanrıvermiş during his tenure as Qaraquyunlu governor of Mardin. By contrast, the subject matter of inscription 854 Mardin resonates with the performative acts of Rustam b. Tarkhān described by Davitʿ of Mardin reconstructed above.

The attribution of inscription 854 Mardin to Rustam b. Tarkhān is strongly suggested by the sequence of the two 'Turkmen' inscriptions. The interpretation of inscription 854 Mardin as reacting to and thereby postdating inscription 853 Mardin is plausible due to the following three arguments:[77]

1) Position: Inscription 854 Mardin stands below and indented to the left of inscription 853 Mardin. As suggested by common scriptural practices and attested in at least one extant contract issued within the 'Turkmen' realms of the 15th century CE, this location could be used for later supplements to a given text.[78] Accordingly, the relative position of both texts suggests that inscription 854 Mardin reacts to and therefore postdates inscription 853 Mardin.
2) Materiality: Inscription 853 Mardin is written in four lines of text in letters that rise to the original level of the ashlar masonry. These are framed by carefully preserved courses where the original level of the masonry is preserved both between the lines and around the entire text. As indicated by extant portions of inscription 854 Mardin, this frame of untouched stone surrounding inscription 853 Mardin was infringed upon by the inscription added below and indented to the left. By contrast, the careful layout of inscription 853 Mardin suggests that it would have been positioned further above inscription 854 Mardin if the latter had already existed when inscription 853 Mardin was commissioned. Accordingly, inscription 854 Mardin infringed upon and therefore postdates inscription 853 Mardin.
3) The subject matter of inscription 853 Mardin only concerns imposts levied from the heads of sheep, while inscription 854 Mardin nullifies all imposts paid by the butchers. Accordingly, inscription 854 Mardin expands upon and therefore postdates inscription 853 Mardin.

77 I thank Anne Dunlop and Elizabeth Kassler-Taub for commenting on the materiality of both inscriptions as a possible indication of their sequence based on their expertise in epigraphic cultures of the 14th to 16th century CE Western Mediterranean. As both suggested that the question remained unresolved when posed in this overarching context, I proceed to make the following three arguments for the sequence of both decrees.

78 Pʿapʿazyan 1968: 559.

To be sure, these arguments only concern the relative sequence of both decrees and not their absolute date. Nonetheless, the arguments given for the sequence of both inscriptions justify the confident assessment that inscription 854 Mardin postdates inscription 853 Mardin. Accordingly, the name of the patron of inscription 854 Mardin is given as *tarkhān awghlī*/*Tarhanoğlu in the edition suggested below.

As argued in greater detail in the textual commentary to both texts, the years of 853 and 854 suggested for both inscriptions largely rest on earlier published readings of uncertain reliability, as well as on probabilities derived from the historical context reconstructed above. Accordingly, the relative sequence of both inscriptions is suggested with much greater confidence than the tentative dates assigned to both inscriptions. Nonetheless, I argue that both inscriptions have been commissioned shortly before and immediately after the civil revolt of 1450 CE.

4 Two Fiscal Decrees in the Great Mosque II: Materiality and Layout

Inscription 853 Mardin is written in letters that rise to the original level of the ashlar masonry from an incised field at roughly eye level in the rear wall of the prayer hall of the great mosque of Mardin facing the court, to the left of a visitor entering the court through the eastern entrance.[79] The letters are written in a careful *naskhī* ductus in a rectangular frame and arranged in four lines, which are separated by three continuous bands of stone that rise to the original level of the masonry. The written area of inscription 853 Mardin originally included parts of six stones of the pre-existing ashlar masonry.[80] The stone to the upper left of the decree, which originally displayed the end of lines 1) and 2), has lost the entirety of its inscribed front. As these passages are confidently represented in the notes of von Oppenheim and Sauvaget dating to 1899 and 1932 CE,[81] this part of the inscription must have been lost after 1932 CE (Figure 3).[82]

79 See Gabriel 1940: 1: 20–24, and Altun 1971a: 29–41, for the general layout of the great mosque of Mardin, cf. the analysis of its (pre-'Turkmen') architectural decoration in its local context by Beyazit 2016.

80 This holds *pace* the assertion of Amīrī 1331/1912–1913: 25, that the entire inscription stood on one large block of stone.

81 See the editions by van Berchem 1913: 68–69, and Sauvaget 1940: 294.

82 Additional photographs of both inscriptions have been published by Altun 1971a: 177, and Beyazit 2016: 262. While the poor quality of the reproduction of the photograph published by Altun makes it difficult to confidently evaluate the text shown, the photograph published by Beyazit shows the general layout of the inscriptions preceding the presently visible restorations. However, no additional passages of the text remain that would go beyond what is visible on the photograph taken in 2018 CE.

Figure 3: The ensemble of the 'Turkmen' inscriptions facing the entrance of the great mosque of Mardin (Photo: Georg Leube).

Inscription 854 Mardin is inscribed in smaller and more cursive letters rising from an incised field below and slightly to the left of inscription 853 Mardin. The lines of this inscription are much less carefully arranged and not separated by untouched courses of the original stone as in inscription 853 Mardin. This inscription is also much more deteriorated than inscription 853 Mardin. Although fragments of letters or ornamentation appear to remain on the small stone to the left of the main field of inscription 854 Mardin, I cannot at present confidently say whether the inscription originally extended across the border of both stones, or whether it was exclusively displayed on the large stone to the right. Below inscription 854 Mardin, a large round piece of black natural glass is set into the wall, commented upon by a recent plate. Both are discussed in greater detail below.

The location of inscription 853 Mardin and inscription 854 Mardin at the eastern entrance of the great mosque ensures their prominent visibility to visitors moving between the mosque and the adjacent main market area of the town. As discussed in greater detail in a later section of this article, several extant Artuqid decrees similarly inscribed into the pre-existing walls of the mosque facing this passage to the market attest to the pre-'Turkmen' establishment of this epigraphic interface between ruler and homogenized urban subjects. Nonetheless, no traces remain of prior decrees written in the rear wall of the prayer hall facing the eastern entrance hallway. Accordingly, this location was chosen by the patron of inscription 853 Mardin and followed by the patron of inscription 854

Mardin. No subsequent 'Turkmen' or Ottoman decrees appear to have been inscribed in the walls facing the eastern hallway linking the great mosque to the main market.

In the introduction of his edition based on notes taken on site in 1932 CE (see below), Sauvaget suggested that inscription 854 Mardin was partially covered by paint (*En partie recouverte par un badigeon*).[83] His subsequent edition includes the first three lines of this inscription and notes a *lacuna* only in the concluding fourth line. Based on the photographs that have been accessible to me, I accordingly believe that any passages of inscription 854 Mardin that may indeed have been obscured by paint (or plastering?) during Sauvaget's visit must have been restricted to (parts of?) the lower fringes of this inscription. Nonetheless, I cannot exclude the possibility that the remarkably bad preservation of inscription 854 Mardin could be due to damage caused while trying to scrape secundary plaster from the incised field surrounding the letters of this text. In this case, the plastering over of the entire text of inscription 854 Mardin should be interpreted as a conscious attempt to hide this decree without interfering with the material body of the text. However, one would expect that such a deliberate plastering over would have covered the entire inscription including the name and titles of its patron and the content of the decree and not, as suggested by Sauvaget's edition, exclusively the (likely unproblematic) date formerly displayed in the final line. As the edict was noted by von Oppenheim in 1899 CE (see below) and edited by Sauvaget, this hypothetical removal of (equally hypothetical) paint or plastering from the first three lines of the inscription would have to be dated to a *terminus ante quem* of 1899 CE. The aftermath of the restitution of Jahāngīr's rule over Mardin after Easter Sunday, Kʿałocʿ 13th 901 AE/April 9th 1452 CE/Rabīʿ I 19th 856[84] may conceivably be suggested as an occasion during which there may have been reason to hide inscription 854 Mardin under paint or plaster (see below). However, I see no subsequent date during which this hypothetical plaster should have been removed. Accordingly, I believe Sauvaget's reference refers exclusively to the plaster surrounding the piece of natural glass immediately below inscription 854 Mardin, which may have covered parts of the final line of this inscription during the time of Sauvaget's visit.

Otherwise, no evidence remains to suggest that either inscription 853 Mardin or inscription 854 Mardin have ever been covered or obscured. In Islamic (and other) epigraphic traditions,[85] the names of patrons tend to be most susceptible to later

83 Sauvaget 1940: 295.

84 Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:210.

85 See the exemplary discussion for ancient Roman epigraphy by Hedrick 2000.

effacement. The name of Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu continues to be clearly readable as the patron of inscription 853 Mardin, while enough of the patron of inscription 854 Mardin remained visible in 1932 CE to enable the reading of Sauvaget. By contrast, the deteriorated portions of both decrees represent contiguous areas that are located toward the borders of the inscriptions, and which were particularly exposed to mechanical deterioration. In addition, the deteriorated portions of both inscriptions include segments of multiple lines. Accordingly, I believe the losses are due to purely material deterioration, at the most aided by general neglect, and have not been caused by any type of content-driven effacement. The significance of this is discussed in greater detail below.

5 Two Fiscal Decrees in the Great Mosque III: Prior Editions

Several misidentifications and confusions with other inscriptions in the great mosque of Mardin mar the representation of inscription 853 Mardin and inscription 854 Mardin in the great databases of Islamic epigraphy and architecture, such as the *Thesaurus d'Epigraphie Islamique*[86] or the online database of *Archnet*.[87] Nonetheless, three readings of one or both inscriptions have been published in modern editions that include passages that have been lost since.

The first of these readings is contained in the footnotes added to the edition of an early Ottoman history of the Artuqids of Mardin by a certain Kātib Fardī, which were added by the editor of the manuscript, ʿAlī Amīrī.[88] In his preface, Amīrī describes how he spent three years in Mardin as an adolescent between 1292 and 1295/1875 and 1878 CE.[89] During this time, he copied (*istinsākh eylemish idim*) a short history of the Artuqid rulers of Mardin in Ottoman Turkic composed by Kātib Fardī in the first half of the 16th century CE.[90] In the edition based on this handwritten copy published some 40 years later,[91] he complemented the text of Kātib Fardī with additional information in footnotes. While some of this additional information is drawn from other published works which Amīrī likely added later,[92] he also added readings of some monumental inscriptions and excerpts from endowment deeds

86 http://www.epigraphie-islamique.uliege.be/Thesaurus.

87 https://www.archnet.org.

88 For the general unreliability of the original text and the value of Amīrī's notes, see Ilisch 1984: 10.

89 Amīrī 1331/1912–1913: 3.

90 Amīrī 1331/1912–1913: 9–10.

91 Amīrī 1331/1912–1913: 12.

92 See e.g. the reference to the historiographical work of Abū l-Fidāʾ, Amīrī 1331/1912–1913: 20–22.

which cannot, as far as I see, be traced to earlier publications. While he does not make any explicit references to having read endowment deeds during his sojourn in Mardin,[93] Amīrī explicitly remembers his engagement with epigraphy in Mardin in the preface to his edition of Kātib Fardī's short chronicle as follows: "During my sojourn in Mardin, I became interested in the inscriptions on the mosques and other monuments of the Artuqids and other rulers. Accordingly, I deciphered them and wrote them down."[94]

According to this brief remark, the inscriptions edited in Amīrī's footnotes to the text of Kātib Fardī are based on notes in which Amīrī had documented his readings of monumental inscriptions in Mardin as an adolescent. While this may explain some of the misreadings contained in Amīrī's editions of monumental epigraphy in Mardin,[95] Amīrī noted passages of inscriptions that had vanished by the time of the visits to Mardin of von Oppenheim in 1899 CE and of Sauvaget in 1932 CE. Accordingly, Amīrī's readings must be interpreted as not quite dependable notes that may, nonetheless, preserve traces of original text that vanished between 1878 and 1899 CE.

Amīrī includes some passages of inscription 853 Mardin in an extended footnote to the reference of Kātib Fardī to the foundation of the great mosque of Mardin by the Artuqid ruler Quṭb al-Dīn Īlghāzī b. Najm al-Dīn Alpī as follows:

> The entire endowment deed of the great mosque (*jāmiʿ-i kabīriñ tammam waqfiyyasi*) is written on one big stone. Although the endowment deed was composed at the behest of the already mentioned Quṭb al-Dīn in the year 573, it was written on this stone forty years later in 713 [*sic*, read 613][96] and begins as follows:
>
> 'barraza l-marsūma wa-l-amra al-ʿāliya l-sulṭānu l-muwaffaqu l-muẓaffaru …'[97]
>
> The date given at the end is as follows:
>
> 'dhālika fī niṣfi shahri shawwālini l-muʿaẓẓami fī sanati thalāthaʿashara [*sic*, without *Tā' marbūṭa*] wa-sittumiʾatin'[98]

93 See for an overview over the endowment deeds for the social history of Mardin the exemplary work of Göyünç 1991.

94 Amīrī 1331/1912–1913: 9.

95 See the corrections of Amīrī's editions suggested by Sauvaget, e.g. Sauvaget 1940: 291, which rejects an emendation suggested by Amīrī 1331/1912–1913: 25.

96 This correction is already suggested by Gabriel 1940: 1:24.

97 Amīrī's text is unvocalized. *Faute de mieux*, I read the introductory verb as stem II, *barraza*, and vocalize the phrase accordingly.

98 Amīrī 1331/1912–1913: 25.

On the following page, Amīrī continues his note with some excerpts from the *incipit* and *excipit* of the endowment deed of the great mosque of Mardin.[99] As shown by Amīrī's partial misreading of the extant beginning of line 1) of inscription 853 Mardin, his misinterpretation of the text as a later copy of the endowment deed, his misleading suggestion that the entire text of this inscription was written into one single stone, and his misreading of the date as pertaining to the seventh instead of the ninth century, his reading needs to be evaluated critically. Nonetheless, his suggestion that the date ended in the number „three" represents the only available reading of the single-digit or unit number of this inscription. As it fits into the historical frame between Jahāngīr's assumption of rule in Mardin in mid-848/late 1444 CE and the civil revolt on Shawwāl 28th 854/December 4th 1450 CE/Nawasard 6th 900 AE reconstructed above, I largely follow Amīrī's reading of the month, as well as the general structure of the date and retain his reading of „three" at the unit position to tentatively suggest the date of 853.

Although Amīrī's reading is based on notes taken in the 1870s CE, the first published edition of inscription 853 Mardin is van Berchem's reading of the text that is based on notes taken by von Oppenheim in 1899 CE.[100] He presents the decree as displayed „inside the court, near the gate" (*im Hofe, nahe dem Tor*), and correctly identifies the genre as a decree nullifying imposts (*Steuererlassdekret*) and its patron as Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu.[101] While correctly deciphering most of the text, however, this reading does not include any text beyond *wa-l-nāsi ajmaʿīna* in line 4) and does not indicate that any date may have concluded this edict. Therefore, it appears that von Oppenheim did not copy the second half of line 4) during his visit in 1899 CE, likely due to the deterioration of this area of the inscribed surface. According to van Berchem's edition, von Oppenheim also made a brief reference to inscription 854 Mardin: "[The text, translation, and commentary of inscription 853 Mardin.] In the same location, there is another decree, supposedly in the name of a certain Malik ʿĀdil Ṣāliḥ (?) [*sic*, question mark in the original], according to a fleeting note (*nach einer flüchtigen Aufzeichnung*)."[102]

While the location described by van Berchem based on von Oppenheim's notes clearly suggests that some parts of this description do indeed pertain to inscription 854 Mardin, I see no way of reconciling his reading of **al-malik al-ʿādil al-ṣāliḥ* with the titles of the patron of inscription 854 Mardin as read by Sauvaget. Therefore, I believe the doubts expressed by the question mark of van Berchem signal an

99 Amīrī 1331/1912–1913: 26.

100 van Berchem 1913: 68–69. His brief reference „Kopie; unediert." is explained as indicating a handwritten copy of the inscription as read on site by Max von Oppenheim in the introduction, van Berchem 1913: 1.

101 van Berchem 1913: 68–69.

102 van Berchem 1913: 69.

ambiguous passage in the notes taken in Mardin in 1899 CE by von Oppenheim. The only other monument in Mardin to which inscriptions edited by van Berchem based on the notes taken by von Oppenheim pertain is the madrasa of *sulṭān* ʿĪsā, referred to by van Berchem as the *madrasa rashīdiyya*.[103] Based on a comparison of van Berchem's edition of the epigraphic fragments noted by von Oppenheim with the edition of the inscriptions at this monument by Sauvaget, I tentatively suggest that the patron noted by von Oppenheim as **al-malik al-ʿādil al-ṣāliḥ* should be interpreted as deriving from an inscription on a fountain on the southern façade of this madrasa. According to Sauvaget's edition, this fragmentarily preserved inscription includes the titles of *al-ʿādilī* (*sic*), as well as *al-malik al-ṣāliḥ* (given only in the French translation).[104]

The edition of Sauvaget published in 1940 CE is based on notes taken on site during his visit in 1932 CE (*établir le texte aussi rigoureusement que possible* par lecture directe).[105] As indicated in his preface, this edition was completed in 1934 CE.[106] Likely due to his later elaboration of hand-written notes taken on site, Sauvaget mistakenly suggests that the missing portions of the date of inscription 853 Mardin stood in an additional line 5),[107] which is clearly impossible based on the layout of the surviving portions of this inscriptions. Accordingly, the missing parts relegated to line 5) in his edition must be reassigned to the end of line 4).

Sauvaget's edition of inscription 854 Mardin is also based on notes taken on site during his visit in 1932 CE. Due to the subsequent deterioration of the text, Sauvaget's reading is the main extant source enabling the reconstruction of this inscription presented below.

6 Two Fiscal Decrees in the Great Mosque IV: Critical Edition

Based primarily on photographs taken on site in 2018 CE and taking into account the historical context and prior editions described above, as well as the general structure of 'Turkmen' fiscal epigraphy displayed in the great mosques of specific towns, I suggest the following edition of inscription 853 Mardin:

103 van Berchem 1913: 70–71.
104 Sauvaget 1940: 301, no. 17.
105 Sauvaget 1940: 289, the final three words are italicized in the original.
106 Sauvaget 1940: 290.
107 Sauvaget 1940: 294.

1) برز المرسوم العالي من السلطان العادل العالم المجاهد المرابط
2) السلطان جهانكير خلد الله ملكه وابد سلطنته بابطال ما كان يؤخذ
3) من القصابين من رؤوس الغنم واعادة ذلك الى اربابه فمن تعرض لاخذ شيء من ذ
4) لك فعليه لعنة الله والملائكة والناس اجمعين وذلك في نصف شهر شوال المعظم في سنة ثلاث وخمسين وثمانمئة

1) baraza l-marsūmu l-ʿālī mina l-sulṭāni l-ʿādili l-ʿālimi l-mujāhidi l-murābiṭi
2) l-sulṭāni jahāngīra khallada llāhu mulkahū wa-abbada salṭanatahū bi-ibṭāli mā kāna yuʾkhadhu
3) mina l-qaṣṣābīna min ruʾūsi l-ghanami wa-iʿādati dhālika ilā arbābihī fa-man taʿarraḍa li-akhdhi shayʾin min dhā-
4) lika fa-ʿalayhi laʿnatu llāhi wa-l-malāʾikati wa-l-nāsi ajmaʿīna wa-dhālika fī niṣfi shahri shawwālini l-muʿaẓẓami fī sanati thalāthin wa-khamsīna wa-thamānimiʾatin

1) The high edict went forth from the just and learned *sulṭān*, who wages holy war and guards the frontiers of Islam,
2) *sulṭān* Jahāngīr, may God make his kingdom eternal and his rule everlasting!, with the nullification of that which was commonly taken
3) from the butchers from the heads of the sheep and the order to return this to its owners. If anybody opposes the taking of any of th-
4) is, may the curse of God, the angels, and all people be upon him. This was in the middle of the month of Shawwāl the mighty in the year eighthundred and fifty-three.

Pace the editions of van Berchem and Sauvaget, I edit the titles *al-ʿādil al-ʿālim al-mujāhid al-murābiṭ* at the end of line 1) as Arabic participles, instead of *nisba*-adjectives derived from these participles.[108] As this part of the inscription has since vanished, this reading cannot be conclusively verified. Nonetheless, I do not see any reason due to which these titles should here have been rendered in the *nisba*-form, instead of as Arabic participles which regularly occur in Qaraquyunlu and Aqquyunlu 'Turkmen' epigraphy. Accordingly, I emend the reading of van Berchem and Sauvaget, who in any case translate the *nisba*-forms suggested by their editions as Arabic participles.[109] This reading of the titles as Arabic participles also resonates with their occurrence in earlier Artuqid epigraphy in Mardin, particularly in the titles of *al-sulṭān al-malik al-muẓaffar al-ʿālim al-ʿādil al-mujāhid al-murābiṭ*, which were displayed on the minbar of the great mosque and attributed to *al-malik al-muẓaffar* Dāwud by Sauvaget.[110]

108 Cf. van Berchem 1913: 68, and Sauvaget 1940: 294: *al-ʿādilī al-ʿālimī al-mujāhidī al-murābiṭī*.

109 Cf. van Berchem 1913: 68: *des gerechten, weisen, kämpfenden, auf Vorposten stehenden*, Sauvaget 1940: 294: *équitable, instruit dans les sciences musulmanes, le champion de la guerre sainte, celui qui combat pour la foi.*

110 Sauvaget 1940: 294. Cf. the suggestion of Amīrī 1331/1912–1913: 24, that the titles *al-malik al-ṣāliḥ al-ʿālim al-ʿādil al- muẓaffar al-mujāhid al-murābiṭ* appeared in a *waqfiyya* of Īlghāzī b. Alpī.

Within Sauvaget's readings of line 4), the text beyond *wa-l-nāsi ajmaʿīna* is rendered as „*wa-ḥudūd dhālika fī taʾrīkh khāmis*" with the missing portions of the date mistakenly assigned to line 5).[111] The almost entire deterioration of this part of the inscription makes it impossible to conclusively reconstruct the end of line 4). Nonetheless, the small size of this final portion of line 4), which must have contained an indication of the year in which this decree was issued, argues against Sauvaget's suggestion that the day of the month should have been named. His suggestion that the date should have been explicitly indicated as approximate (*wa-ḥudūd dhālika*) also appears improbable in light of Jahāngīr's reign in Mardin during the time in which the decree was issued and this inscription was commissioned. Accordingly, I suggest reinterpreting Sauvaget's day of the month as ending in five (*khāmis*) as the decade of the year (*khamsīn*), which fits the historical frame of between mid-848/late 1444 CE and Shawwāl 28th 854/December 4th 1450 CE/Nawasard 6th 900 AE reconstructed above. I also follow the reading of the remainder of the date suggested by Amīrī as indicating the middle of the month of Shawwāl (*fī niṣfi shahri shawwālini l-muʿaẓẓami*) as more current than Sauvaget's suggestion that this passage should have indicated some uncertainty regarding the factual date on which this decree was issued. Due to the deterioration of this part of the text, however, this hypothesis can again not be conclusively verified.[112]

Amīrī mistook the subject matter of inscription 853 Mardin as a copy of the endowment deed (*waqfiyya*) of the great mosque.[113] As indicated above, van Berchem correctly identified the genre of the decree nullifying imposts (*Steuererlassdekret*) and its patron as Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu.[114] He also suggested a comparison with the contemporary decrees inscribed in mosques in Egypt and Syria by Mamlūk patrons,[115] which are discussed in a later section of the present article. According to his interpretation, the decree had either abolished a prior lease of taxes (*ibṭālu ḍamānin*), which had been abused by its prior lessees and was now to be directly administered by his own officials. Alternatively, he suggested that the authority previously granted by the ruler of Mardin concerned a monopoly to sell, likely the heads of sheep.[116] This interpretation turns decisively on van Berchem's suggestion that a *ḍamān* may have been mentioned or implied in the end of line 2),[117] which has

111 Sauvaget 1940: 294.

112 It should be noted that Sauvaget and his colleagues erroneously included Amīrī's reading of the beginning and the end of inscription 853 Mardin as no. 3795 in *Répertoire Chronologique d'Épigraphie Arabe X*, 137, under the year 613.

113 Amīrī 1331/1912–1913: 25.

114 van Berchem 1913: 68–69.

115 van Berchem 1913: 69.

116 van Berchem 1913: 69.

117 van Berchem 1913: 68–69.

now vanished, as well as his understanding of *arbābihī* in line 3) as referring to the fiscal administration of Jahāngīr himself.

In contrast, I follow Sauvaget's reading of the decree according to which the nullification concerned a monetarized impost on the heads of sheep formerly taken by the fiscal administrators from the butchers (*de ne plus percevoir des bouchers un droit*).[118] This interpretation is strongly suggested by the order to 'return what has been taken to its owners' (*iʿādati dhālika ilā arbābihī*), which makes no sense in the context of a non-monetarized provision of a highly perishable good such as the heads of slaughtered sheep. While also leaving open the question of whether the money taken from the butchers should be returned to the butchers, the owners of the sheep, or arguably the customers of the butchers, Sauvaget interpreted those to whom the money should be returned as those who had originally paid it (*à ceux qui les ont versées*).[119] In contrast, I believe the Arabic *ilā arbābihī* should be taken more literally as *to its (rightful) owners*, as I see no direct reference to the prior payments made. While a more extensive contextualization of this subject matter of imposts levied and abolished on slaughtered sheep and other urban goods follows below, it should be noted for now that inscription 853 Mardin nullifies a monetarized impost formerly levied on the heads of sheep. A more general nullification of all imposts levied from sheep slaughtered and presumably eaten either by the butchers or their customers in Mardin was decreed in inscription 854 Mardin.

Based primarily on the edition of Sauvaget, while taking into account photographs taken on site in 2018 CE and the historical context, as well as the general structure of 'Turkmen' fiscal epigraphy displayed in the great mosques of specific towns, I suggest the following edition of inscription 854 Mardin:

1) برز المرسوم الشريف من الامير الكبير
2) ترخان اوغلي بابطال الراتبة عن جماعة
3) القصابين وملعون بن ملعون من بدل ذلك بتاريخ
4) ذي القعدة سنة اربع وخمسين وثمانمئة

1) baraza l-marsūmu l-sharīfu mina l-amīri l-kabīri
2) tarkhān awghlī bi-ibṭāli l-rātibati ʿan jamāʿati
3) l-qaṣṣābīna wa-malʿūnuni bnu malʿūnin man baddala dhālika bi-taʾrīkhi
4) dhī l-qaʿdati sanati arbaʿin wa-khamsīna wa-thamānimiʾatin

1) The noble edict went forth from great commander
2) Tarkhān-oğlu with the nullification of the imposts from the community of

118 Sauvaget 1940: 294.
119 Sauvaget 1940: 294.

3) the butchers. Whoever replaces this shall be cursed together with their father. On the date of
4) [the month of] Dhū l-Qaʿda of the year eighthundred and fifty-four.

This edition follows the reading of Sauvaget except for minor details, while also emending the name of the patron to *Tarhanoğlu and restoring the date according to the historical context as reconstructed above.

By contrast, Sauvaget's translation reads the impost abolished as rations of meat (*rations de viande*) in light of the usage of the word *rātib* in the slightly later Mamlūk historiographer Ibn Iyās. He explicitly signals doubts concerning this reading with a question mark and notes the reading of **R-ʾ-B-H* as equally feasible in light of the preserved letters.[120] If the attribution of inscription 854 Mardin to Rustam b. Tarkhān and the immediate aftermath of the surrender of the town to the Qaraquyunlu discussed above is accepted, however, it is unclear to whom these previously established rations should have been payable. Accordingly, and in light of the spatial layout of inscription 854 Mardin, I therefore suggest restoring the word in question as *rātiba* and interpreting it in the wider sense of 'established payments'. While from a philological point of view these may have included payable rations of meat, I believe the context of this decree as an immediate answer to inscription 853 Mardin strongly suggests that these imposts were at least partially monetarized. Accordingly, the civil revolt of the town of Mardin against Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu in 1450 CE would have been directly rewarded by the rescission of all imposts on animals slaughtered in Mardin, as opposed to the partial nullification of the monetarized imposts on the heads of sheep decreed in inscription 853 Mardin.

7 Context I: Fiscal Decrees Inscribed in the Great Mosque of Mardin

Beside the two 'Turkmen' decrees edited above, three additional fiscal decrees have been preserved in the great mosque of Mardin. The first of these is 'dated to the Friday in the last decade of the month of Muḥarram 582' (*bi-taʾrīkhi l-jumʿati fī/l-ʿushri l-ākhiri min muḥarrami*[121] *sanati ithnayni wa-thamānīna wa-khamsimiʾatin*).[122] As

120 Sauvaget 1940: 295.

121 *Pace* the edition of Sauvaget 1940: 292, the photographs taken on site in October 2018 CE clearly show that no definite article *al-* preceded the name of the month Muḥarram, which instead should be read in the *status constructus* depending on the genitive of the following *sana*, year (*in the month of Muḥarram of the year* etc.).

122 Sauvaget 1940: 292, checked against photographs taken on site in October 2018 CE.

the following month of Ṣafar 582 began on a Wednesday, the only Friday in the last ten days of Muḥarram 582 is Muḥarram 26th 582/April 18th 1186 CE.[123] This decree is written into two large panels structuring the preexisting masonry of the external eastern wall of the mosque, facing the passage connecting the mosque to the main market. Accordingly, coming from the market, one passes this inscription before reaching the eastern entrance hallway of the great mosque, in the left-hand wall of which the two 'Turkmen' decrees are inscribed.

According to Sauvaget's reading, this decree is formulated in the name of Abū l-Manṣūr Albqush b. ʿAbdallāh,[124] who acted as guardian under the formal authority of the Artuqid ruler, also named in the same decree, Ḥusām al-Dīn Yūluq Arslān b. Īl-Ghāzī b. Alpī. In addition to Sauvaget's authoritative edition, this decree has been partially edited several times by van Berchem and others.[125] Compared to the two 'Turkmen' decrees edited above, it is much longer and nullifies many different imposts levied from various markets (including one from the *sūq al-daqīq* or flour-market) and other dues. By contrast, it does not appear to address imposts levied from the butchers or slaughter-animals.

Apart from its location on the passage connecting the great mosque to the main market to its east, this inscription resonates with the two 'Turkmen' decrees in two crucial aspects. Firstly, this Artuqid decree includes a curse formula on those who attempt to replace or change its content that is identical to the curse formula of inscription 853 Mardin, where it is directed at those who may oppose the implementation of the measures declared (*ʿalayhi laʿnatu llāhi wa-l-malāʾikati wa-l-nāsi ajmaʿīna*). This resumption of the curse formula in inscription 853 Mardin is certainly a conscious intertextual reference to the Artuqid decree that must have been visible on the same urban axis when Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu had his decree inscribed in the eastern entrance hallway of the great mosque of Mardin.[126] A similar if somewhat

123 Sauvaget 1940: 293, converts to Friday, April 17th 1186 CE: According to Spuler et al. 1961: 13, this is off by one day.

124 For him, see van Berchem 1913: 68.

125 See van Berchem 1913: 67–68 (partial and misinterpreted as a *Bauinschrift* or construction inscription), Amīrī 1331/1912–1913: 25 (partial and misinterpreted as the construction inscription of the great mosque, *jāmiʿ-i madhkūruñ tārīkh-i bināsı*: His suggestion that the first six lines were illegible is contradicted by the continued legibility of most of these lines, his own later edition on page 30 of passages standing in these lines, and by Sauvaget's edition) and 30 (fragmentary and misinterpreted as a construction inscription; containing parts of lines 1–6 claimed to be illegible on page 25), as well as twice in *Répertoire Chronologique d'Épigraphie Arabe IX*, 84–85 (no. 3323) and 148–149 (no. 3409). As suggested by Sauvaget 1947: 14, no. 3323 in *Répertoire Chronologique d'Épigraphie Arabe IX*, 84–85, should be deleted. The bibliographical references given in both entries of the *Répertoire Chronologique d'Épigraphie Arabe IX*, 85 and 149, are also partially repetitive and unsystematic.

126 The same curse formula also occurs in a Qaramānid inscription dated to 874 in Niğde, see Hinz 1949: 756.

weaker intertextual link concerns the titles of the factual patron of the Artuqid decree, Abū l-Manṣūr Albqush, who referred to himself as *al-amīr al-isfahsalār al-kabīr* or the general and great commander. This is likely deliberately taken up in the titles given for Rustam b. Tarkhān in inscription 854 Mardin, who referred to himself as *al-amīr al-kabīr* or the great general. Arguably, this intertextual reference counters Jahāngīr's claim to independent rule voiced in inscription 853 Mardin, as Rustam b. Tarkhān's commission as a commander of Jahānshāh may implicitly suggest that Jahāngīr also had been a regional governor within the fringes of the Mamlūk realms. By contrast, the Artuqid decree uses the term *isqāṭ* for nullification, as opposed to the synonymous *ibṭāl* occurring in both 'Turkmen' decrees. According to Sauvaget, *isqāṭ* represents a Mesopotamian usage as opposed to the Syro-Egyptian *ibṭāl*.[127]

While this Artuqid decree dated to 582/1186 CE stands on the wall leading to the eastern entrance of the great mosque of Mardin, I have photographed two fragmentary decrees written into the rear wall of the prayer hall facing the western (!) entrance of the mosque during my visit in 2018 CE, which are inscribed at an easily accessible height for a visitor entering the mosque. Accordingly, both fragmentary decrees are inscribed in the exact same location as the 'Turkmen' decrees but facing the covered passage of the other entrance to the court of the great mosque of Mardin. As far as I see, neither of these two decrees has been edited so far.[128]

The layout of these two decrees resembles the layout of the two 'Turkmen' decrees, as the one on the top is written in larger and more carefully arranged lines, while the second one stands below it and is indented to the left. Provisorily, I suggest that the upper one, arranged in eight lines, again preceded the lower one, which appears to have been arranged in four lines. The extant portions of the upper decree do not contain the name of its patron. Based on the titles *al-sulṭān al-malik al-muẓaffar al-murābiṭ* readable at the end of line 3), I tentatively propose attributing this decree to the Artuqid ruler al-Muẓaffar Dāwud (r. 769–778/1368–1376 CE), who is introduced with the same titles in an inscription at the mosque of ʿAbdallaṭīf in Mardin.[129] Based on the occurrence of the phrase *wa-lā taʿāraḍa*, may no[body] oppose [this], readable at the end of line 5), and the preceding word possibly reading *al-shaʿīr*, barley, I tentatively interpret this inscription as another fiscal decree abolishing specific imposts that resonates with the *sūq al-daqīq* or flour-market named in the Artuqid decree dated to 582/1186 CE. By contrast, I see no immediate parallel among the epigraphically preserved decrees inscribed into the walls of the

127 Sauvaget 1940: 292.

128 Cf. the reference to them as largely unreadable (*besmele ile başlar, sonu okunamadı* and *okunamadı* respectively) by Altun 1971a: 37.

129 Sauvaget 1940: 296. Cf. the fragmentary inscription at the *minbar* of the great mosque of Mardin attributed to Dāwud by Sauvaget based on the occurrence of the title *al-malik al-muẓaffar*, Sauvaget 1940: 294.

great mosque of Mardin to the conclusion of this fragmentary decree tentatively assigned to the Artuqid ruler Dāwud with *wa-li-llāhi l-ḥamdu waḥdahū*, and God alone be praised for this!, in line 8).

Below and indented to the left relative to this fiscal decree tentatively assigned to the Artuqid ruler Dāwud, the final halves of lines 1) and 2) of another decree have been preserved together with some fragments of lines 3) and 4). I infer its subject matter of annulling imposts from a passage in line 2) which I read as *khallada llāhu mulkahū wa-sulṭānahū bi-ibṭāli*. According to the structure underlying the two better preserved 'Turkmen' decrees, this was likely preceded by a text similar to *baraza l-marsūmu … min* or *the edict went forth … from*, followed by the name and titles of the patron. Subsequently, this would have been followed by a list of the annulled imposts, a curse formula, and the date in lines 3) and 4). The location of this decree suggests that it reacted to and therefore postdates the decree of the Artuqid ruler al-Muẓaffar Dāwud (r. 769–778/1368–1376 CE). I tentatively also do not believe that the same ruler would have inscribed another decree below an earlier inscription in his name. Accordingly, I suggest a *terminus post quem* of 778/1376 CE for this second decree written in the external façade of the rear wall of the prayer hall facing the western entrance hallway of the mosque.

Finding a definite *terminus ante quem* for this second decree at the western entrance is more difficult. I doubt it postdates either of the 'Turkmen' decrees, as I believe inscription 854 Mardin consciously referenced the location of this second decree relative to the one by al-Muẓaffar Dāwud in its positioning below and to the left of inscription 853 Mardin, which is composed in the name of Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu. Once again, I also do not believe Jahāngīr would have commissioned two fiscal decrees abolishing imposts to be inscribed in the great mosque of Mardin in his name. Accordingly, the transition of rule over Mardin from Ḥamza to Jahāngīr in 1444 CE emerges as a confident *terminus ante quem*.

Nonetheless, it may be possible that the inscription of both fragmentary decrees in the vestibule of the western entrance of the great mosque indicates a shift in the urban structure of Mardin relative to the time of the inscription of the first Artuqid decree inscribed in the eastern wall of the mosque facing the passage that today connects the mosque to the main market. According to this hypothesis, the shift of the inscriptions from the eastern to the western entrance was influenced by a shift of the main market relative to the great mosque. As argued in greater detail below, I believe the location of the extant fiscal decrees inscribed in the walls of the great mosque of Mardin and other towns was crucially determined by the movement patterns between the great mosque and the addressees of the decrees. As the first Artuqid decree dated to 582/1186 CE facing the eastern entrance and the second Artuqid decree tentatively attributed to Dāwud nearly 200 years later in the western entrance both reference a trade in grain, the shift from eastern to western entrance also cannot be

explained by a stable location of two different areas of the market relative to the mosque.

If this argument is accepted, the renewed practice of inscribing fiscal decrees in the eastern entrance of the great mosque under the 'Turkmens' should reflect a reconfiguration of the mercantile urban structure surrounding the mosque relative to the urban structure at the end of the 14th century CE. By contrast, we should expect that the urban structure did not dramatically change between the inscription of the upper to the lower decree inscribed in the western entrance of the great mosque. Arguably the only event that could have motivated a comprehensive shift of the main market of Mardin away from its hypothetical location to the west of the great mosque between the end of the 14th and the middle of the 15th century CE is the complete destruction of the entire townscape of Mardin during the occupation of the town (but not the citadel) by Timur in 803/1401 CE.[130] As reconstructed by Ilisch, Timur ordered that the walls, markets, and lodging places of Mardin be pulled down, before the remainder of the town was burned.[131]

According to this argument, the original orientation of the urban structure with the main market of Mardin located to the east of the great mosque is reflected by the first Artuqid decree dated to 582/1186 CE. This orientation shifted for unknown reasons at some point before the inscription of another fiscal decree in the name of Dāwud, whose death in 778/1376 CE therefore is not only the *terminus ante quem* of the inscription of the decree, but also of the shift of the main market to the west of the great mosque. Although this orientation had remained unchanged at the time when the second Artuqid decree was inscribed in the western entrance below and indented to the left of the first, this changed with the rebuilding of the town following its destruction by Timur in 803/1401 CE. As sketched above, members of the Artuqid dynasty managed to sustain their position in Mardin until 1409 CE. Accordingly, the *terminus ante quem* of the hypothetical (and quite possibly gradual) reconfiguration of the urban structure of Mardin after its destruction in 803/1401 CE necessitates an attribution of both fragmentarily preserved decrees inscribed in the vestibule of the western entrance of the great mosque of Mardin to Artuqid rulers.

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130 See Ilisch 1984: 145. Göyünç 1991: 11, converts Ramaḍān 803 to April (*nisan*) 1402 CE, which is off by one year according to Spuler et al. 1961: 18.

131 Ilisch 1984: 145, cf. the suggestion of Amīrī 1331/1912–1913: 26–27, that the (otherwise unattested) western minaret of the great mosque was pulled down at this occasion. This question has been discussed by Altun 1971b; Erdal 2017: 437.

Cf. for later architectural patronage directed at the market area of Mardin by the Aqquyunlu ruler Qāsim Sözen 1981: 160–161. However, the market hall he describes is located to the North of the great mosque and clearly postdates the reestablishment of the urban fabric following the destructions incurred during the war(s) with Timur.

As shown above, the two 'Turkmen' decrees intertextually relate to the first Artuqid decree inscribed in the external wall facing the passage linking the mosque to the main market to its east. They also likely reference the position of the two other Artuqid decrees in their location at an easily accessible height in the rear wall of the prayer hall and facing the entrance vestibules linking the great mosque to the mercantile heart of the town. Nonetheless, it should be noted that none of the preserved passages of the Artuqid fiscal decrees regulate imposts on butchers or slaughter-animals. Accordingly, I contextualize the subject matter of inscriptions 853 and 854 Mardin within a regional framework in the following section of this article.

8 Context II: Imposts on Slaughter-Animals in Early Ottoman Eastern Anatolia

As shown in the preceding section, none of the extant Artuqid decrees inscribed in the great mosque of Mardin is concerned with imposts levied from butchers or slaughter-animals. By contrast, similar imposts on slaughter-animals are attested in the 16th century CE codifications by the Ottoman fiscal administration of the public ordinances in eastern Anatolia ascribed to the Aqquyunlu ruler *uzun* Ḥasan. Accordingly, I first discuss the Ottoman ordinances ascribed to *uzun* Ḥasan in Mardin, before contextualizing the imposts levied on butchers and slaughter-animals in different towns across eastern Anatolia.

The ordinances (*qānūn*) ascribed to the Aqquyunlu ruler *uzun* Ḥasan in eastern Anatolia should be considered an index of the abiding importance of the 'Turkmen' rulers in Ottoman and Ṣafawid cultural memory. While occasionally also mentioned in post-'Turkmen' historiographical sources,[132] the ordinances of several eastern Anatolian towns have been edited by Ömer Lütfi Barkan as represented in early Ottoman archival sources.[133] These Ottoman texts should be interpreted as using the name and renown of the Aqquyunlu ruler *uzun* Ḥasan as a short-hand label to bring together and codify the local administrative and fiscal ordinances that were confirmed by the Ottoman provincial administration, immediately following the establishment of Ottoman rule in these areas.[134] Subsequently, these ordinances explicitly marked as inherited from Aqquyunlu fiscal practice could be complemented by additional ordinances directly issued by Ottoman rulers, frequently replacing the earlier ordinances with the common regulations of the Ottoman

132 See the survey by Minorsky 1955: 449–450.

133 Barkan 1941. Cf. the inclusion of many of these texts in the monograph by Barkan 1943.

134 See the comprehensive evaluation by Hinz 1950.

realms.[135] Although the ordinances of Mardin ascribed to *uzun* Ḥasan had been edited twice by Barkan,[136] a corrected and commented version was prepared in an annex to her study of Mardin during the 16th century CE by Göyünç.[137] This version is used in the following discussion.

The Ottoman codification of the fiscal ordinances of the district (*liwā'*) of Mardin is entitled 'codification of the current ordinances of the district of Mardin' (*daftar-i yasāhā-yi liwā'-i mārdīn*) and dated to 924/1518 CE.[138] This codification is explicitly stated to represent the ordinances of *uzun* Ḥasan (*bar mūjib-i qānūn-i ḥasan pādishāh*) and traced to the report of the fiscal administrator, the (chief?) judge of Diyarbakır and Mardin, and local notables.[139] The first section concerns the imposts paid by the inhabitants of the villages (*qurā*),[140] while the second section presents the different mercantile imposts paid by the town of Mardin (*bāj wa-tamghā wa-sā'ir jihāt-i mārdīn*).[141] While incidentally attesting to the circulation of various numismatic denominations in Mardin, these imposts include payments made on the transportation of goods to the urban market,[142] different types of textiles,[143] various goods traded on the market by weight,[144] specific imposts on goods brought from Baalbek and Aleppo,[145] various goods possibly traded on the market by volume,[146] imposts on the pack animals used to transport goods to the urban market,[147] dried fruits and nuts and other foodstuffs measured by volume,[148] melons, soap, and dry goods measured by volume,[149] and slaughter-animals,[150] before concluding with specific imposts levied on goods and people who entered the town either from specific surrounding villages or from other localities.[151]

Within this list, the imposts on slaughter-animals are presented as follows:

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135 Hinz 1950: 177–179.
136 Barkan 1941: 99–103, and Barkan 1943: 158–160.
137 Göyünç 1991: 157–161.
138 Göyünç 1991: 157.
139 Göyünç 1991: 157.
140 Göyünç 1991: 157–158.
141 Göyünç 1991: 158–161.
142 Göyünç 1991: 158.
143 Göyünç 1991: 158–159.
144 Göyünç 1991: 159. This somewhat arbitrary container includes goods as diverse as sugar, glass, naphta, soap, etc.
145 Göyünç 1991: 159.
146 Göyünç 1991: 159. These include honey, fat, dates, pitch, etc.
147 Göyünç 1991: 159.
148 Göyünç 1991: 159–160.
149 Göyünç 1991: 160.
150 Göyünç 1991: 160.
151 Göyünç 1991: 160–161.

> On any sheep (*koyun*) that enters the town through the gate, a monetarized impost (*pul*) is levied. This is called the fee of the gate-keeper (*rasm-i bawwāb*) and comprises one silver coin (*ʿuthmānī*) for every twelve sheep. In addition, from every slaughtered sheep, the skin is taken [without compensation] for the tannery (*dabbāgh-khāna*) and the [head and] feet are taken for the institution using these parts of the sheep (*baş-khāna*).[152]

As suggested by Hinz, the unpaid delivery of the skins, heads, and feet of slaughtered animals should be interpreted as an additional source of revenue for the fiscal administration of the town, which apparently processed and sold these materials.[153] As shown below, other parts of sheep could also be requisitioned in this way. As suggested by practical reasons, as well as by implicit evidence transmitted in the Ottoman codification of pre-Ottoman ordinances in other towns and the wording of the two pre-Ottoman 'Turkmen' decrees inscribed into the great mosque of Mardin, these non-monetarized imposts were conveyed to the fiscal authorities by the butchers.

Compared to the two 'Turkmen' decrees inscribed into the great mosque of Mardin, the unpaid confiscation of the heads and feet of slaughtered sheep immediately resonates with the nullification of (monetarized) imposts on the heads of sheep decreed by inscription 853 Mardin. As the early Ottoman ordinances translated above are explicitly presented as pre-Ottoman ordinances going back to Jahāngīr's brother *uzun* Ḥasan, this attestation of renewed imposts levied on the heads of the sheep calls into question the factual impact of the nullification of these imposts decreed in this type of inscriptions. This point is taken up below.

As has been argued above, it is unclear whether the imposts (*rātiba*) that had formerly been paid by the community of the butchers (*jamāʿat al-qaṣṣābīn*) before they were nullified by inscription 854 Mardin were monetarized or not, even if the spatial layout of this decree immediately below and responding to inscription 853 Mardin suggests that at least some of them were monetarized. Due to the unspecific terminology of these imposts, it is also difficult to see to which extent these are reflected in the Ottoman codification of pre-Ottoman ordinances in Mardin. However, the indication that these imposts had been levied from the butchers suggests that these imposts were not those which are presented as dues payable upon driving

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152 Göyünç 1991: 160. *Pace* the suggestion of Hinz 1950: 195, I see no indication that the delivery of the specified parts of the slaughtered animals replaced the gate-tax payable upon driving the sheep through the gate in Mardin.

153 See Hinz 1950: 194–195, as well as the exemplary calculation of the income derived from the production of bowstrings from requisitioned guts in Diyarbakır, Hinz 1950: 188. While the skins were clearly processed to leather, Hinz suggests that the heads and feet were used by the *baş-khāna* to produce some sort of aspic (*Sülze*). Conceivably, they could also have been cooked in a stew, cf. the popular market-soup of *Kelle Paça*, literally head and feet, made from these parts of sheep within the former Ottoman sphere and served in public soup-kitchens in Anatolia and the Balkans until today. Cf. for the attestation of this type of establishments in 15th century CE Istanbul Beldiceanu 1973: 199, as well as for Bursa (Beldiceanu 1973: 225–226) and Edirne (Beldiceanu 1973: 253).

the sheep through the gate of the town in the Ottoman codification of the *qānūn* of *uzun* Ḥasan. Therefore, I tentatively propose interpreting the term *rātiba* in inscription 854 Mardin as including all monetarized and non-monetarized payments levied from the butchers on sheep after they had been slaughtered. Accordingly, inscription 853 Mardin suggests that the impost on the heads of slaughtered sheep had been monetarized before this decree, while inscription 854 Mardin nullified the entire possible range of monetarized and non-monetarized payments that may have been levied from the butchers after the sheep had been slaughtered.

As the critically revised edition of Göyünç only contains the early Ottoman codification of the local ordinances ascribed to *uzun* Ḥasan in Mardin, I draw on Barkan's edition of ordinances similarly ascribed to *uzun* Ḥasan for other localities. As already noted by Hinz,[154] these ordinances continue the pattern reconstructed above for Mardin of levying monetarized imposts on slaughter-animals when they are driven into the town and non-monetarized imposts to be delivered by the butchers after the animals have been slaughtered. From the Ottoman ordinances, it is not clear whether these imposts on slaughtered sheep that were made in kind could also be monetarized. As non-monetarized imposts, the pre-Ottoman ordinances of Diyarbakır call for the requisition of the guts, heads, feet, and skins of the sheep slaughtered in town.[155] In Harput, only a portion of the skins of the sheep appears to have been requisitioned together with the guts. If, however, the rent of the butcher's store (*dukkān*) went to a pious endowment (*waqf*), a price for the guts had to be paid to the endowment.[156] This compensation of the butchers' facilities that were owned by a pious endowment strongly suggests that the non-monetarized imposts were generally collected from the butchers and not from their customers.[157]

Within the early Ottoman codification of local ordinances attributed to *uzun* Ḥasan, imposts levied at the gate on slaughter-animals driven into town are attested under various terms in Arapgir,[158] Çermik,[159] Diyarbakır,[160] Ergani,[161] Erzincan,[162] Harput,[163] and Urfa.[164] According to the exemplary overview published by Hinz for

154 Hinz 1950: 194–195.
155 Barkan 1941: 99.
156 Barkan 1941: 193.
157 Cf. the suggestion of Hinz 1950: 193, that the turnover taxes levied from the markets were shared by the seller and the buyer.
158 Barkan 1941: 197.
159 Barkan 1941: 195.
160 Barkan 1941: 99, cf. Hinz 1950: 187.
161 Barkan 1941: 185.
162 Barkan 1941: 191.
163 Barkan 1941: 193.
164 Barkan 1941: 187.

Diyarbakır, these imposts, here called *tamghā-yi aghnām*, made up about 2½ % of the total fiscal imposts levied in this district in the year 924/1518 CE.[165] As calculated by Hinz, this equates an average number of 230 sheep slaughtered in Diyarbakır every day or 84 000 sheep slaughtered per year.[166] As argued above, however, it appears likely that the subject matter of inscriptions 853 and 854 Mardin was limited to monetarized and non-monetarized imposts levied from the butchers and that the imposts levied at the gate on sheep driven to the urban slaughterhouse were not affected by the nullification declared by Jahāngīr and Rustam b. Tarkhān.

9 Context III: Epigraphically Inscribed Fiscal Edicts in the Pre-Industrial Near East

The five extant fiscal decrees abolishing specific imposts and inscribed in the great mosque of Mardin pertain to a larger tradition of fiscal edicts that have been preserved in highly visible locations at the main mosques of specific towns. While some Christian Armenian parallels may also be found, particularly in and around Ani,[167] and the entire tradition may well go back to pre-Islamic habits of public visibility through epigraphy, the following survey is focussed exclusively on fiscal edicts inscribed in Arabic and Persian in the Islamicate Middle East. Within this tradition, the inscriptions commonly exhibit three characteristics that enable their description as one internally coherent epigraphic tradition. Firstly, the decrees are formulated as reflecting the agency of a specific ruler. Secondly, the decrees name specific imposts which are abolished. By contrast, there appear to be no epigraphically inscribed decrees within this tradition which positively purport to name all imposts levied from a specific location. Thirdly, these decrees are prominently displayed in highly visible and accessible locations that presumably enabled the people profitting from their content to effectively demonstrate to anybody contesting this that the imposts in question had indeed been abolished. The resulting balance between fiscal impact and the public representation of the ruler that characterizes the decrees within this epigraphic tradition is discussed in greater detail below for the two 'Turkmen' decrees in the great mosque of Mardin. Instead, the present section is concerned with the general context of this epigraphic tradition.

The best known and most copious strand of such epigraphically inscribed decrees is formulated in Arabic and in the name of Mamlūk rulers. According to the

165 Hinz 1950: 189.

166 Hinz 1950: 187.

167 See *Divan Hay Vimagrowt'yan I: Ani K'ałak'* 1966.

comprehensive overview given by Wiet for Syria,[168] this strand comprised at least 167 decrees and (at least in its dated examples) began with al-Malik al-Kāmil Shaʿbān in 746/1345 CE and continued until a decree dated to 922/1516 CE in the name of the last independent Mamlūk ruler Qānisawh al-Ghawrī. Although some of these decrees were concerned with the administration of pious foundations and questions of public order (*ḥisba*), such as the public visibility of personal likenesses or the sale of wine, the vast majority of these inscriptions name specific imposts which they abolish.

By contrast, the tradition of non-Mamlūk fiscal decrees displayed epigraphically in the main mosques of towns in Anatolia and Iran is preserved in much smaller numbers. As suggested by Hinz,[169] the extant decrees are commonly formulated in Persian. As the first extant epigraphically inscribed examples name the Īlkhānid ruler Abū Saʿīd (r. 1316–1335 CE), this Īlkhānid tradition of 'negatively worded' decrees appears to predate the more numerous Mamlūk decrees abolishing specific imposts in particular locales. As already suggested by Bartol'd' in 1911 CE, this epigraphically attested practice may well resonate with measures of administrative reform attributed to Īlkhānid rulers in historiographical sources.[170] Bartol'd' specifically suggested that a decree in the name of Abū Saʿīd's uncle Ghāzān and dated to 703/1304 CE as described by the Īlkhānid historiographer and statesman Rashīd al-Dīn should be directly linked to the epigraphically attested decrees inscribed in Anatolian and Iranian mosques in the name of later Īlkhānid and non-Īlkhānid rulers.

> We [Ghāzān] have ordered that the lists of payable imposts (*sharṭnāmahā*) should be put in the hands of the fiscal authorities, as well as the taxable subjects (*dar dast-i arbāb wa-raʿāyā nahāda farmūdīm*). In this way, the amount payable by each village and place should be written on a wooden board, a stone, a plate of brass or iron, or whatever else they may want to use, either by cutting the text into the surface or, if this should be preferrable, by writing the text in plaster. This should be prominently displayed at the entrance of the village, the mosque, the minaret, or any other location they may choose. Jews and Christians should display this at the entrance of the village, in their places of worship, or any other place they may choose. Similarly, the nomadic population should erect a pole at a location they deem fit.[171]

However, the suggestion of Rashīd al-Dīn that the epigraphically inscribed decrees should be 'positive' or describing the imposts payable by each community does not fit

168 See Wiet 1939.

169 Hinz 1950.

170 Bartol'd' 1911: 1. Cf. the commented German translation of Hinz 1951.

171 Bartol'd' 1911: 2. The translation follows Bartol'd's edition of the pertinent passage as given in Persian in the original.

in well with the 'negative' wording of the extant epigraphically inscribed decrees abolishing specific imposts.

Although there appear to have been no fiscal decrees preserved in Syria, Anatolia, or Iran dating to the period between the beginning of the 13th century CE and the reign of the Īlkhānid ruler Abū Saʿīd in the early 14th, negatively formulated fiscal decrees have been preserved from Syria and Anatolia dating to the second half of the 12th century CE.[172] While it may accordingly be possible that the extant Mamlūk decrees that were epigraphically inscribed from 746/1345 CE onward constitute a reimport from the formerly Īlkhānid realms, the earliest attestations of negatively worded decrees come from Damascus and Harput during the second half of the 12th century CE. This resonates well with the incidental attestation of a similar decree in an episode contained in the anonymous Syriac chronicle describing events until 1234 CE, in the context of how a nephew of Nūr al-Dīn b. Zangī reintroduced imposts abolished by his uncle in Nusaybin after the death of Nūr al-Dīn in 1174 CE:

> [Nūr al-Dīn's nephew Sayf al-Dīn Ghāzī comes from al-Mawṣil, occupies Nusaybin, and reintroduces imposts his uncle had nullified.] There was a tablet of stone (*lwḥ' d-k'p'*) that had been written by Nūr al-Dīn and affixed above the door, which displayed his ordinances (*pwqdn-h*), so that nobody might disobey, together with different curses [on those who might disobey] (*w-'m ḥrm' w-lwṭṭ'*). He [Sayf al-Dīn] took this down and smashed it.[173]

As indicated by this story, as well as by the large number of extant epigraphically inscribed decrees, the public visibility of these texts extended to non-Muslim inhabitants of the town. The specific intersection of urban structure, urban patterns of movement, and institutional and normative frameworks characteristic for this genre of epigraphy is discussed in greater detail for the two 'Turkmen' decrees extant in the great mosque of Mardin in the next section of this article.

10 Context IV: Public Epigraphy as an Urban Interface

Although a large number of fiscal decrees nullifying specific imposts in the name of named rulers were inscribed in prominent mosques across the Middle East, the exceptionally dense attestation of the history of Mardin around 1450 CE sketched

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172 Four of these decrees are reconstructed by Sauvaget 1947: cf. the detailed discussion of the earliest of these decrees dating to 544/1149 CE by Heidemann 2007.
An undated fragment of such a decree from Silvan/Mayyafāriqīn has been edited by van Berchem 1907: 15–16.

173 Chronicon ad Annum Christi 1234 Pertinens 1916: 2:171.

above enables an exemplary close reading of the different urban, social, institutional, and normative frameworks that intersect in this type of inscription. Before we proceed to the reconstruction of the negotiation of civil (dis)content and sovereign representation in Mardin during these years in the next section, this section offers a theoretically sustained interpretation of this type of epigraphy that should be applicable to many of the inscriptions written in this epigraphic tradition.

'Negatively' worded fiscal edicts inscribed in the main mosques of Islamicate towns should be understood as interfaces that operate on multiple intersecting levels. While ostensibly being derived from the responsibility of Muslim rulers of upholding 'proper public order' (*ḥisba*), such a decree abolishing specific imposts certainly had immediate financial implications for the upkeep of the apparatus sustaining rule over the affected locality. Seen from the point of view of the ruler and her court, this financial drawback must have been compensated for by the advantages of favorable public visibility granted to the ruler who issued such a decree. In this regard, the epigraphic inscription of the decree in the walls of the main mosque evidently constituted a highly favorable location guaranteeing the continued visibility of the ruler responsible for this generous act resonating with normative views of Islamic governance. As suggested by the regular preservation of such inscriptions, this stability of decrees epigraphically displayed in the great mosque was conditioned by the materiality of the stones in which the decree had been inscribed. However, the frequently poor state of preservation and the regular misreading of these decrees highlights the limits of a derivation of the stability of epigraphically inscribed decrees from their materiality alone. Accordingly, the social dimension of public visibility to those who presumably profitted from such decrees emerges as the third dimension along which this type of inscriptions must be understood.

Before we return to the performative agency of the ruler and its entanglement with civic networks in Mardin during the middle of the 15th century CE in the following section, I explore the material and social dimension of epigraphically inscribed fiscal decrees from a more theoretical perspective. Evidently, text written into the masonry of a mosque partook of the protected status of mosques, which were seen as endowments ultimately owned by God (*waqf*). However, the inscription of text into a mosque risked being interpreted as an interference with the protected materiality of the endowment. The commission of additional architectural patronage at a preexisting mosque could be framed in the terminology of renovation.[174]

174 See in addition to the general observations regarding the verb *ʿamara*, to renovate, to make flower, by Blair 1992: 5, the exemplary case study of the contested appropriation of properties formerly held by other endowments by the early Ottoman foundation complex of Ibrāhīm al-Kulshanī in Cairo, Behrens-Abouseif 1988.

Similarly, the inscription of fiscal edicts nullifying imposts that are presented as having formerly been levied in the affected locality may also resonate with the normative framework of an additional endowment. In this case, the ruler would present herself as expressing her commitment to upholding the nullification decreed in these inscriptions by endowing the materiality of the inscribed text to God. Seen from this point of view, the epigraphic inscription of a fiscal decree into the walls of a mosque normatively ruled out any possibility of subsequent interference not only with the text, but also with its content by the incumbent or any future ruler.

This protection granted to the text of a fiscal decree due to its inscription in the walls of a mosque resonates with the Qurʾānic citations and curses that commonly conclude such a decree. Although it does not occur in either of the 'Turkmen' decrees inscribed in the great mosque of Mardin, the most prominent Qurʾānic verse that is used in this type of fiscal decrees is Qurʾān 2, 181: 'If anybody changes this after hearing it, they will bear the sin of changing it: Verily, God is Allhearing and Allknowing.' (*fa-man baddalahū baʿda mā samiʿahū fa-innamā ithmuhū ʿalā lladhīna yabaddilūnahū innā llāhu samīʿun ʿalīmun*).[175] In addition to this specifically Islamic practice, the conclusion of formal documents with curse formulas is not only attested across the epigraphic tradition of 'negatively' worded fiscal decrees, but also in Christian Armenian and Syriac texts. While the curses in Armenian Christian epigraphy commonly resonate with specifically Christian scripture,[176] Armenian Christian inscriptions commonly also include blessings conveyed upon those who act in accordance with their stipulations.[177] As far as I see, this is much less current in comparable Islamic inscriptions.

According to this line of argument, the materiality of a decree epigraphically inscribed in the walls of a mosque interlocks with the curses and citations included in its text to guarantee the continued preservation of such an inscription. Significantly, the content of the curses is commonly directed both against those who change or replace (the materiality of?) the decree (Arabic *baddala* and *taghayyara*) and against those who oppose the implementation of its stipulations (Arabic *taʿāraḍa*). Accordingly, the act of

175 In its original context, Qurʾān 2, 181, confirms the regulation of inheritances given in the preceding verse Qurʾān 2, 180. As this verse was commonly held to have been abrogated by Qurʾān 4, 11, this resulted in the paradoxical situation that the confirmation was much more widely cited that the verse that had originally been confirmed. See for the abrogation of Qurʾān 2, 180, by Qurʾān 4, 11, al-Jalālayn 2010: 27.

176 See for example the 'curse of Judas' (*anēckʿn owdayin*) pronounced on anybody who does not act according to the stipulations of the inscription ostensibly voiced in the name of the Qaraquyunlu ruler at Arcowaber near Erciş, cf. Ter-Stepʿanyan 2013: 20.

177 E.g. the conclusion of the inscription at Arcowaber as edited by Ter-Stepʿanyan 2013: 20: 'and whoever consents is blessed by God and all saints' (*ew or kamakicʿ lini awrhnin yastowcoy ew yamenayn srbocʿ*).

inscribing a decree into the walls of a mosque interlaces the materiality of the text with the pragmatic implementation of its ordinances in a highly nuanced and effective way.

To trace the social dimension of decrees inscribed in prominent locations of the main mosque, a theoretically sustained understanding of the mosque within the urban sphere is needed. As suggested by Lefèbvre, space is produced as a public commodity by human and non-human agency.[178] Accordingly, public space is structured and hierarchized, shared and contested by specific agents and interpersonal networks.[179] As suggested by Grabar for the great mosque of Iṣfahān, the main mosque of a given town ideally functioned as a heart, regulating the flow of people across the urban tissue.[180] Taken together, these theoretical concepts suggest that the pre-human topography, the human-made structure of architectural monuments, and the flow of people moving through the urban fabric overlap to constitute the meaningful urban structure of Islamicate towns.

As suggested by Macdonald for imperial Roman architecture, the recurring structural feature enabling an intuitive understanding of Roman towns across the wider Mediterranean can be described as an armature.[181] This armature constitutes a system of urban axes and open and covered spaces that is jointly produced and negotiated by the pre-human topography, the human-made architecture, and the patterns of movement of people across the urban fabric. Crucially, such an armature is neither ordained *ex nihilo* by a single and unified urban authority, nor the result of acephalous and unorganized agency. Instead, the armature of Roman imperial towns arguably manifests the (shared and contested) cultural habitus of a given town which is 'structuring [individual] agency' (*importans ordinem ad actum*).[182] Due to the focus of Macdonald's 'armature' on urban axes, turns and larger open or covered spaces situated along these axes emerge as the focus of architectural decoration and public visibility.[183]

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178 Lefebvre 2000.

179 For the importance of interpersonal networks in understanding pre-industrial Islamicate societies, see the pathbreaking scholarship represented by such works as Mottahedeh 2001: Paul 1996: or specifically for the integration of non-urban groups in interpersonal networks focussed on towns Franz 2007.

180 Grabar 1990. Cf. the study of the townscape of Iṣfahān and other towns by Herdeg 1990.

181 MacDonald 1982–1986: 2:5–31 and *passim*.

182 The original phrase stands Thomas Aquinas 1980: 2:416–423 (= *Summa Theologiae, Prima Secundae, Quaestiones* 49–54). Cf. the subsequent development of this concept in social theory by Panofsky 1976: and its French translation by Bourdieu 1967.

183 Macdonald 1982–1986: 2:9–13. Cf. the similar findings concerning urban axes in Ottoman Istanbul by Cerasi et al. 2004.

One of the most influential concepts of a 'public sphere' in the study of Islamicate societies was advanced by Eisenstadt and Hoexter.[184] Focussing specifically on the role of Ottoman (private) foundations in North Africa, this concept suggested the existence of an 'official sphere' shaped by the agency of the state and a 'private sphere' of individual families. Between these, this concept suggested that a 'public sphere' should be defined as a domain in which matters concerning the public good were carried out by groups that did „not belong to the ruler's domain."[185]

While this concept is very much attuned to the normative autarchy of acephalous and independent Islamic endowments, it is, however, less suited to analysis of the interlacement of the agency of multiple (groups of) courtly and non-courtly actors that jointly creates the meaningful urban structure of an Islamicate town. Instead, the overlapping agency of individuals interacting within and with a given urban fabric along a continuum of appropriations ranging from architectural patronage to more or less regular patterns of movement suggests a concept of public visibility that can explain the privileged position and power of public epigraphy. In the following, I refer to this concept as an 'inscribed urban sphere'.

If we return to the nullification of imposts on slaughter-animals decreed by inscriptions 853 and 854 Mardin, the concept of an inscribed public sphere enables a detailed analysis of the different levels of visibility that structure these interfaces. Due to their subject matter, imposts on slaughter animals served to construct a paradigmatic opposition of the ruler and her fiscal apparatus and a homogenized body of urban subjects. By contrast, non-urban groups most likely did not normally procure their food staples from the urban market and were therefore not affected by the nullification of imposts on animals slaughtered in the town. Within this opposition, the city-dwelling subjects were likely affected proportionally to their wealth and social status, as they purchased meat in smaller or greater quantities. Nonetheless, the public inscription of these decrees by means of architectural patronage in the name of the ruler reinforced this paradigmatic opposition of the ruler commissioning the epigraphic text and the homogenized body of subjects to whom it was visible. Accordingly, it is to be expected that the richest and most influential inhabitants of Mardin stood to gain most from the continued visibility and enforcement of both decrees.

Although Macdonald's analysis of Roman imperial urban structure can certainly not be directly applied to pre-industrial Islamicate towns,[186] the main mosque of a

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184 See Eisenstadt 2002: as well as the contribution to the same volume by Hoexter 2002. The concept had originally been proposed by Eisenstadt/Schluchter 1998. Cf. the nuanced discussion and development of this concept by Tayob 2008.

185 Eisenstadt 2002: 140.

186 See for the urban structure of Islamicate towns in particular the work of Wirth 2000.

given locality can be understood as one of the focal points of an 'armature' of urban materiality and collective patterns of movement within a given town. As in Macdonald's 'armature', the commission of epigraphy in the name of the ruler in walls facing turns and liminal areas within the main corridors of movement accordingly simultaneously served to highlight these zones of transition and contribute to a special visibility of the architectural patronage directed at these points. In this way, the location of the Artuqid and 'Turkmen' fiscal decrees inscribed in the external walls and entrance hallways of the great mosque of Mardin can be characterized as structuring the patterns of movement into and out of the mosque in the direction of the main market area. In addition, their liminal location on the external walls of the mosque and the prayer hall may also have contributed to their accessibility to non-Muslim subjects and Muslims that did not regularly attend prayer or the *khuṭba* in the main mosque of Mardin.

This theoretically sustained analysis of the meaningful urban structure surrounding the extant epigraphically inscribed decrees allows us to sketch the social dimension of these inscriptions. Accordingly, the resilience and stability of epigraphically inscribed decrees nullifying specific imposts is held up by an interlacement of the prestigeous materiality and subject matter of the inscriptions themselves with the interpersonal and urbanistic dimension of the 'inscribed public sphere'. Accordingly, any attempt to interfere with the materiality or enforcement of a given decree, and thereby with its patron, would have caused the discontent of the homogenized subjects profiting from the decree. As the richest and most influential inhabitants of Mardin likely profitted most from the nullification of imposts on slaughtered sheep, this civil discontent would have been disproportionally located among precisely those interpersonal multipliers who had most influence among the inhabitants of Mardin.

According to this model, the financial and other incentives to any given ruler to marginalize epigraphically inscribed decrees after their commission by themselves or their predecessors were counterbalanced by the civil discontent that could be expected from any visible interference with these crucial interfaces embedded in the inscribed public sphere. At the same time, there was little intrinsic incentive to follow ordinances once they had been established, thereby incurring financial losses while also forgoing the opportunity to inscribe one's own claim to rightful authority in this pivotal medium of public visibility. Therefore, the common clustering of multiple successive fiscal decrees abolishing 'unjust' imposts at one location can be explained as the logical outcome of the most rational strategy available to rulers over a given town. In a nutshell, this strategy can be formulated as 'prominently inscribing one's own name while more or less actively hoping for the marginalization and/or deterioration of prior epigraphically inscribed edicts'. Thereby, a given ruler could hope for the positive effects of her own decree in convincing her subjects to support her

continued rule while more or less actively attempting to minimize the visibility and enforcement of prior decrees. With this theoretical framework in mind, we can now return to the contextualization of inscription 853 and 854 Mardin in their historical context.

11 Context V: Representation of Rule and the Negotiation of Civil (Dis)Content

By now, we have contextualized inscriptions 853 and 854 Mardin within the extant epigraphy at the great mosque of Mardin, as regards their subject matter abolishing imposts on slaughter-animals, within the general tradition of Islamic 'negatively worded' decrees in the main mosques of towns in Syria and Anatolia, and within a theoretically sustained concept of the interlacement of materiality and social context constituting an 'inscribed public sphere'. On this basis, we can return to the history of events in Mardin around the year 1450 CE to reconstruct the intersecting agencies and networks shaping and preserving both inscriptions.

As argued above, the epigraphic inscription of fiscal decrees abolishing specific imposts must be understood as intended to create some sort of collective civic positive response both to the decree and the ruler in whose name it had been commissioned. Dynamics of collective 'civic' agency are notoriously difficult to trace in pre-industrial Islamicate (and other) history. Nonetheless, it has been suggested above that the pronounced visibility and agency ascribed to female and subordinate members of the household of a given ruler in narratives of change of rule over Mardin may reflect some sort of civic agency influencing the stability or instability of rule.

Certainly, bodies of troops raiding the countryside were nothing exceptional in mid-15th century CE southeastern Anatolia. Accordingly, the readiness of the inhabitants of Mardin to either abandon their houses and take refuge in the citadel or open the gates for the Qaraquyunlu general Rustam b. Tarkhān likely indicates some prior discontent with the rule of Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu. Keeping in mind that the nullification of imposts constituted a fiscal concession curtailing the income of the ruler, it is therefore likely that inscription 853 Mardin was commissioned by Jahāngīr in an effort to win back the same urban networks that had facilitated the original occupation of the town during his marriage with *shāh* Sulṭān bt. Ḥamza in 1444 CE. In this context, it is interesting that he did not attempt to mobilize specific interpersonal networks to support him at the expense of others, such as his uncle Ḥamza may have done following his occupation of Diyarbakır some years earlier by showering favors

on Christian at the expense of Muslim inhabitants of this town.[187] Instead, the terminology of the likely eyewitness report by Davitʿ of Mardin consistently describes a collective and consensual agency of a homogenized body of 'inhabitants of the town' or 'inhabitants of Mardin' (*mertincʿikʿn, kʿałakʿacʿikʿ*, and similar forms: See above). As becomes clear from the following events described by Davitʿ, these 'homogenized inhabitants of Mardin' included people with significant wealth and Christians, as did those who had taken refuge in the citadel, later described as equally homogenized 'subjects' (*ṙaɬiatʿ*).

This resonates with the social dimension of epigraphically inscribed decrees postulated above, which similarly constructed an opposition of the ruler with her homogenized subjects, who stood to profit from the imposts that had been abolished relatively to their consumption of the foodstuffs concerned. By contrast, nothing suggests that the abolition of imposts levied from the butchers should be interpreted as a measure aimed at currying favor with this specific professional group at the expense of other trades and networks.

As has been suggested above, committing to the abolition of specific imposts forced the ruler in question to strike a balance between her financial interests and the necessity of avoiding alienating her subjects to such a degree that the town might revolt at the first suitable occasion. As shown by the events of 854/1450 CE, the nullification of monetarized imposts levied from the heads of sheep in the name of Jahāngīr in inscription 853 Mardin failed to assuage civic discontent with his rule. Because Qaraquyunlu rule over Mardin after this revolt never included the citadel and ended with the reinstatement of Jahāngīr as the local ruler some two years later,[188] it is difficult to say whether the new administration of the town was able to cater more successfully to the interests of the inhabitants of the town. Nonetheless, it is tempting to consider whether the commission of inscription 854 Mardin during the six weeks immediately following the opening of the gates for the Qaraquyunlu raiders should be interpreted as a direct response of Rustam b. Tarkhān to the failure of Jahāngīr's commission of inscription 853 Mardin. Due to the similarity of the subject matter of both inscriptions, it therefore appears that inscription 854 Mardin implicitly is predicated upon the claim that Jahāngīr's too narrow definition of the imposts he nullified may have been a contributing factor leading to the civil revolt.

Notwithstanding the ongoing military conflict and raiding between Qaraquyunlu and Aqquyunlu forces, however, the patron of inscription 854 Mardin did not in any visible way interfere with inscription 853 Mardin commissioned in the

187 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 136–137: Note that this source was written at the behest of Ḥamza's ousted nephew *uzun* Ḥasan and accordingly is slanted polemically against Ḥamza Aqquyunlu.
188 Woods 1999: 78.

name of the ousted ruler Jahāngīr. In light of the protection of decrees epigraphically inscribed in highly visible locations of the great mosque by the material and textual devices and institutions reconstructed above, this resonates with the programmatic justification of the Qaraquyunlu intervention in southeastern Anatolia as described both in the missives of Jahānshāh and reconstructed from the account of Davitʿ of Mardin. Accordingly, the undisturbed preservation-cum-abrogation of inscription 853 Mardin by inscription 854 Mardin emerges as part of a holistic promise to govern the town according to Islamic normativities by the Qaraquyunlu general Rustam b. Tarkhān.

Similarly, the continued preservation of inscription 854 Mardin and its implicit commemoration of the civil revolt after the reinstatement of Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu likely should be understood as a powerful message of commitment to reconciliation and general pardon. Although Davitʿ of Mardin only remarks that Jahānshāh and Jahāngīr reconciled (*haštecʿan*) on Easter Sunday, Kʿałocʿ 13th 901 AE/April 9th 1452 CE/ Rabīʿ I 19th 856, and that [the town of] Mardin was returned to Jahāngīr,[189] Ṭihrānī once again suggests that female agency was crucial in leading to this reconciliation. According to his report, the initial suggestion to reconcile was formulated by the Qaraquyunlu general Rustam b. Tarkhān in a terminology of being related (*dar miyān-i mā qarābatī hast*). As explained by Ṭihrānī, this relationship was constituted through the paternal grandmother of Jahāngīr Aqquyunlu, who was a niece of Rustam b. Tarkhān's father.[190] Subsequently, Ṭihrānī suggests that the terms of this reconciliation were negotiated by Jahāngīr's mother Sarāy *khātūn* together with Jahānshāh's wife *khātūn* Jān *bīgum*.[191] In this case, however, no collective ageny of subordinate or non-courtly groups is recorded in any of the parallel descriptions of this settlement.

That the civil revolt against his authority had indeed not resulted in a longer lasting resentment of the civil elites of Mardin with Jahāngīr is suggested by a later episode in the continuation of Davitʿ of Mardin's historiographical note. The conclusive acknowledgement of the leadership of his younger brother *uzun* Ḥasan by Jahāngīr in 861/1457 CE[192] is described in this account as follows:

> [Due to the cowardice of Jahāngīr, his troops are decisively defeated in battle by *uzun* Ḥasan.] But when the inhabitants of Mardin (*mertncʿikʿn*) saw all this, they agreed, both the great and the small (*miabanecʿan mec ev pʿokʿrn*), speaking to Jahāngīr: 'May you obey your brother and give him your son to serve in his armed retinue (*hecelkʿaš*).' [Cf. the alleged demand of *uzun* Ḥasan as cited by Ṭihrānī, *Diyārbakriyya*, 280: 'My brother Jahāngīr *mīrzā* must send one of his sons to

189 Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:210.
190 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 208.
191 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 208–209.
192 See Woods 1999: 84–85.

serve in my retinue!', where the *hecelkʿaš* of Davitʿ likely echoes the *mulāzamat* demanded by *uzun* Ḥasan. Jahāngīr assents and peace is concluded.][193]

In this passage, it is striking how Davitʿ explicitly remarks on the agreement of all inhabitants of Mardin, explicitly designated as 'the great and the small' (*mec ev pʿokʿr*), likely relative to the different social influence and material wealth of the subjects. While continuing the earlier pattern of ascribing collective agency to the homogenized inhabitants of Mardin, the agreement of Jahāngīr to subordinate himself under his younger brother rather than attempt to punish his subjects for speaking out of place confirms the suggestion that Jahāngīr did not want to risk alienating the civil elites of Mardin again. Considering the reading of visible female agency as signalling a more inclusive non-rulerly consensus suggested above, it is interesting that the description of this settlement between Jahāngīr and *uzun* Ḥasan in the Aqquyunlu court chronicle of Ṭihrānī is attributed to the decisive influence of their mother Sarāy *khātūn*.[194] In any case, this settlement conclusively ended any aspirations of Jahāngīr to contest the leadership of *uzun* Ḥasan.[195]

Unfortunately, the exceptionally dense description of events in the continuations of his historiographical note by Davitʿ of Mardin ends here. Likely due to Jahāngīr's acceptance of serving as a subordinate governor over Mardin in the name of his brother, he also vanishes almost entirely from the historiographical work by Ṭihrānī, which focusses on the activities of the sovereign rulers *uzun* Ḥasan and Jahānshāh.[196] Accordingly, we know little to nothing about the subsequent history of civic (dis)content and fiscal administration in Mardin until the incorporation of the town into the Ottoman realms during the second decade of the 16th century CE.

12 Conclusion and Outlook

This contribution has suggested that non-rulerly agency can be traced and analyzed over several decades notwithstanding the focus of many of the extant narrative and diplomatic sources on the agency of commonly masculinized sovereign individuals. The case study of Mardin between ca. 1400 and 1460 CE is attested in an exceptionally

193 Hakobyan 1951–1956: 2:212.

194 Ṭihrānī 1962–1964: 280.

195 See Woods 1999: 85.

196 Due to its narrative focus on the succession of individual rulers presented in an almost biographical format and its inclusion of Jahāngīr in this sequence, the non-courtly historiographical work of al-Ghiyāth describes Jahāngīr's subsequent presence in Mardin in broad terms and without specifically referring to any further events taking place during this time. See al-Ghiyāth 1970: 51.

dense network of narrative sources that bear upon the urban history of this town from different linguistic and narrative traditions. Nonetheless, I argue that the inclusion of the epigraphic evidence of the two 'Turkmen' decrees that have been preserved in the great mosque of Mardin is crucial in reconstructing the quotidian dimension of *Herrschaftspraxis* or practical implementation of rule. In this regard, this contribution argues that epigraphic evidence should be seen as a unique source that complements other narrative and non-narrative sources.

On a theoretical level, this contribution has suggested the concept of an 'inscribed public sphere' to analyze the interplay of materiality, normative and institutional frameworks, and public visibility that sustains Islamic and Islamicate public epigraphy. In this regard, the abiding prominence of the location of inscriptions 853 and 854 Mardin on the left wall of the eastern entrance of the great mosque of Mardin as a crucial interface between the town and its rulers is coincidentally extended to the 21st century CE by a contemporary plaque affixed to the right of the black stone below both inscriptions. While spending some time in the court of the mosque in 2012 CE, 2014 CE, and 2018 CE, I witnessed visitors who touched this black stone with their hands, forehead, or lips. The plaque, likely commissioned by the custodians of the mosque appointed by the ministry of (Islamic) religious affairs of the Republic of Turkey, features the following text printed in copper letters and set within an ornamented frame on a polished golden background: „The black stone that is located in our mosque has no religious or cultural value or significance whatsoever."[197] It is deeply fascinating to see how this highly visible interface embedded in the armature of the town of Mardin continues to be actualized in negotiations of 'proper' rule between the administrative apparatus of the ruler and subordinate networks and groups to this day. Even within the configuration of the centralized national state, rulerly agency is exerted by supplementing (but not effacing) existing artefacts as they are stabilized by their prominent visibility within the 'inscribed public sphere' (Figure 3).

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197 *Camimizde Bulunan Siyah Taş, Dini ve Kültürel Herhangi Bir Değer veya Özelliğe Sahip Değildir.* Edited based on a photograph taken on site in 2018 CE, see Figure 2.

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