

Album as Assemblage of Ethnographic Knowledge:

Representing the Others in Mongol and Post-Mongol Persianate Painting

The large assemblage of ethnographic knowledge during the Mongol period, manifested in written form in Rashīd al-Dīn' *Compendium of Chronicles*, has been extensively discussed, but its visual representations remain yet unexplored in previous scholarship. My preliminary analysis of the albums in the Topkapi Palace Library of Istanbul (Hazine 2152, 2153 and 2160) and the Berlin State Library (MSS. Diez A. Fols. 70-74) suggests that a unique corpus of painting preserved therein are the pictorial evidences of the first-hand experience of and observation with various ethnic groups in pre-modern Persianate context, and therefore formulates the ethnographic knowledge assembled during the Mongol and Timurid periods. Compiled folio-to-folio with images depicting the Mongols as well as local or "Persianate" figures, other represented ethnic groups include people from China, Europe, and the Turkic world of nomadic Central Asia. Their physiognomic verisimilitude helps them to be identified. The motivation of Persianate painters' praxis is particularly evident in their excessive depictions of the subalterns, with description of props and clothing, from these regions. In this paper, I will argue for the hitherto unnoticed function of the albums under consideration as the pictorial records of the ethnographic others in Persianate context.