

CHAPTER 4

The search for a second front

... Between our older and younger brothers, there was conflict. Because of this we could not ride towards you.

Abagha, in a letter to Baybars, 667/1268¹

Early on in the war, both the Mamluk Sultans and the Īlkhāns began to devote considerable efforts to diplomatic activities with various third parties. Both sides hoped that this would lead to the opening of a second front against their enemy, bringing about its weakening and neutralization, if not its defeat. It is true that Mamluk–Golden Horde relations as well as Īlkhānid–Frankish contacts have been well studied by modern scholars. Considering the importance of this subject for the history of Mamluk–Īlkhānid war, however, it is impossible to dispense with a discussion on this topic. It may also prove useful to re-examine the diplomatic relations within the context of the Mamluk–Īlkhānid war.

The beginnings of the Mamluk–Golden Horde entente²

The relationship between Baybars and Berke Khan, ruler of the Golden Horde, originated in their mutual understanding that they shared a common enemy in Hülegü. Berke's conflict with Hülegü arose from the latter's occupation of the area south of the Caucasian mountains. It appears that prior to Hülegü's arrival the Jochids had enjoyed some type of vague sovereignty over all of Mongol Iran, which had now been denied them. The studies of Professor Ayalon³ and Dr. Jackson⁴ have shown that this question of

¹ *Rawḍ*, 340–1; see ch. 5, p. 121.

² Besides the studies cited in the following notes, see S. Zakirov, *Diplomatičeskie Otnosheniia Zolotoi Ordʹy s Egiptom (XIII–XIV vv.)* (Moscow, 1966).

³ Ayalon, "Yāsa," pt. B, 174–6.

⁴ Jackson, "Dissolution," 208–35; cf. Morgan, *Mongols*, 148–9. See above, ch. 1, pp. 13, 29.

sovereignty,⁵ along with the related matter of the control of revenues,⁶ were the fundamental reasons behind the Īlkhānīd–Golden Horde war.⁷

Other causes contributed to the escalation of tension which led to open conflict. Hülegü himself significantly contributed to the deterioration of relations by the execution of three Jochid princes who were leading contingents in his army.⁸ Tensions were also exacerbated by Berke's and Hülegü's support for Arigh-böke and Qubilai respectively for the succession to the Qa'anate.⁹ Some authors stress Hülegü's execution of the Caliph as arousing Berke, a convert to Islam, to action.¹⁰

Open warfare between Berke and Hülegü may have erupted as early as the winter of 660/1261–2,¹¹ although it appears that the war was carried out at a leisurely pace. Berke sent an army under Prince Noghai, who went through the Darband Pass (the "Iron Gate," on the eastern flank of the Caucasian mountains, next to the Caspian Sea), and took up position in the region of Shirvān. Hülegü himself left his *ordo* at Ala Tagh on 2 Shawwāl 660/20 August 1262. His advanced forces defeated Noghai on 29 Dhū 'l-hijja/14 November, who retreated into the Darband. Hülegü's forces advanced and defeated Noghai again, who withdrew back into the Qipchaq Steppe on 1 Šafar 661/15 December 1262. Under the command, probably nominal, of Abagha, Hülegü's son and future successor, the Īlkhānīd force advanced into the Steppe,

⁵ See especially the important evidence of 'Umarī, ed. Lech, 15; discussed in Ayalon, "Yāsa," pt. B, 174–5, and Jackson, "Dissolution," 209. Cf. 'Umarī, ed. Lech, 78–9, where the Jochid claims to northwest Iran are presented in a more ambiguous manner. Marco Polo, *The Travels* (Harmondsworth, 1958; rpt., 1986), 335, writes that the conflict was over boundaries.

⁶ Ibn Shaddād cited in Yūnīnī, 1:497–8, 2:161–2; Ibn al-Dawādārī, 7:92–3; Mufaḍḍal, 102–3; Ibn Kathīr, 13:234. Also Ibn Waṣīl, in W. de Tiesenhausen, *Recueil de matériaux relatifs à l'histoire de l'Horde d'Or*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1884), 70–1; Qirtay, fol. 79a. This evidence is discussed in Ayalon, "Yāsa," pt. B, 174; Jackson, "Dissolution," 226–7. Some type of revenues may have continued flowing for several decades from Iran to the Golden Horde, because we hear that the Īlkhān Ghazan (694–703/1295–1304) finally put a stop to this early in his reign; Šafadī, *A'yān*, MS. Aya Sofya 2968, fol. 4b; MS. Emanet Hazinesi (Topkapı Sarayı) 1216, fol. 129a. See also 'Umarī, ed. Lech, 78–9.

⁷ See B.G. Lippard, "The Mongols and Byzantium, 1243–1341," Ph.D. diss., Indiana Univ. (Bloomington, 1983), 188–90, where most of the reasons listed above and below are also mentioned.

⁸ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Djami el-Tēvarikh*, vol. 2, ed. E. Blochet (Leiden, 1911), 138–9; trans. in J.A. Boyle, tr., *The Successors of Genghis Khan* (London–New York, 1971), 122–3; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. 'Alizādah, 3:77; Grigor, 337–41; Kirakos, tr. Dulaurier, 504–5; cf. Ibn Shaddād, as cited in the previous note. See Jackson, "Dissolution," 232–3; Boyle, "Īl-Khāns," 353.

⁹ Abū Shāma, 220; cited in Yūnīnī, 1:497; Ibn al-Dawādārī, 8:91; Mufaḍḍal, 101–2. For Berke's support of Arigh Böke, see: 'Aynī, fol. 80a. Berke struck coins in Arigh Böke's name; Spuler, *Iran*, 55 n. 94. On Hülegü's support for Qubilai, which initially may not have been unequivocal, see Jackson, "Dissolution," 234.

¹⁰ Yūnīnī, 2:365; similar wording in Šafadī, *Wāṣṭ*, 10:118. Rashīd al-Dīn (ed. 'Alizādah, 3:87) adds this as a secondary reason for the estrangement between the two cousins. See also Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaqāt-i nāṣirī*, ed. 'A. Habībī (Kabul, 1964–5), 2:198; trans. in H.G. Raverty, *Ṭabaqāt-i-nāṣirī* (London, 1881), 2:1257; Vardan, tr. Thomson, 221. On Berke's conversion, see J. Richard, "La conversion de Berke et les débuts de l'islamisation de la Horde d'Or," *REI* 35 (1967):173–84. ¹¹ For this date, see Jackson, "Dissolution," 233–4 and n. 210.

crossed the Terek River, and came upon Berke's deserted but well stocked winter encampment (*qishlaq*). For three days the Īlkhānid troops indulged in merriment, until they were surprised by Berke's forces and completely routed (1 Rabi' I 661/14 January 1263). Retreating across the frozen Terek, Abagha's forces suffered another disaster, when the ice broke under their weight and many troops were drowned. Abagha himself escaped, and his surviving soldiers were pursued to the southern end of the Darband by Berke, who then returned to his own country.¹²

Of great interest are Berke's words, as reported by Ibn Wāṣil and later sources, upon surveying the carnage on the battlefield after Hülegü's army had been defeated. Bemoaning the large number of Mongol dead, he cursed Hülegü and said: "Mongols are killed by Mongol swords. If we were united, then we would have conquered all of the world."¹³ A contemporary Mamluk author, at least, believed that in spite of his emerging understanding with Baybars against Hülegü, Berke had not totally given up the traditional Mongol ideal of world conquest. Only political realities, about which he complains here, forced him to abjure this idea. Perhaps his renouncing of his plans to launch a renewed attack on eastern Europe, due to this conflict with Hülegü,¹⁴ lay behind this speech, or the record of it in Mamluk sources.

Rashīd al-Dīn writes that the following year there was a rumor that Noghai was intending to invade through the Darband. However, when this general learnt that Hülegü now enjoyed the recognition of Qubilai, he abandoned his plans. This same author also reports that Hülegü ordered the preparation of another army to avenge this defeat. These plans, however, were not realized before Hülegü's death (Rabi' II 663/February 1265), and it was only in the beginning of Abagha's reign that the war was to be continued.¹⁵

While the sources indicate the sundry causes that led Berke to send his army into the Caucasus, they are silent about the exact goals that he had in mind for his campaign. We can only assume that he intended that Jochid lordship over northern Iran would be recognized and that the flow of disrupted revenues would be restarted.

News of the incipient conflict began to reach the Sultanate some time in 660/

¹² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. 'Alizādah, 3:87–9 (summarized in Boyle, "Īl-Khāns," 353–4); Mustawfī, 59. A slightly different version is found in the lost part of Ibn Shaddād's biography of Baybars, cited in Yūnīnī, 1:535–6; 2:196; cf. shorter versions in Ibn Kathīr, 13:239; Dhahabī, *Ta'rikh*, MS. Laud 279, fol. 2a. A very different account of the events leading up to this battle, which was supposedly initiated by Hülegü at the instigation of a disgruntled Jochid princess, is found in Nuwayrī, 27:329–30 (= *Tuhfa*, 37); 27:357–9. The credibility of Nuwayrī's account is undermined by the writer's assertion that it took place in 653/1255–6, i.e. before Hülegü had even reached this part of Iran! Cf. the versions in Kirakos, tr. Dulaurier, 503–6; Marco Polo, tr. Latham, 335–9, who both claim that Hülegü's troops actually won this battle. They must have confused the final outcome with Hülegü's earlier victory; see also P. Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, vol. I (Paris, 1959–63), 94–5.

¹³ Ibn Wāṣil, in Tiesenhausen, 72; Ibn Kathīr, 13:239; Qirtay, fol. 80b. Cf. the version of this speech reported by Ibn Shaddād, cited in Yūnīnī, 1:535; translated and analyzed by Ayalon, "Yāsa," pt. B, 171 and nn. 2–3. ¹⁴ Jackson, "Dissolution," 236.

¹⁵ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. 'Alizādah, 3:89–90.

1262, evidently before mid-Ramaḍān/3 August.¹⁶ This information, together with knowledge of Berke's adherence to Islam, must have been the inspiration for Baybars's first letter to Berke, sent via a merchant (or merchants) from the Alan country. In this message, Baybars harps upon Berke's Islam, encouraging him to fight Hülegü. As a Muslim, Berke must wage the *jihād* against the infidels, even if they are his kinsmen, just as the Prophet Muḥammad fought the Quraysh. The letter continues that news has come that Hülegü had become a Christian and ends by describing Baybars's own *jihād*.¹⁷

More precise information on this conflict was brought by a group of 200 Mongol refugees (*wāfidiyya*), who fled to the Mamluk Sultanate and reached Egypt in Dhū 'l-ḥijja 660/November 1262.¹⁸ These had been part of the Jochid expeditionary force sent to Hülegü years before.¹⁹ Even prior to the open conflict, Hülegü had begun to massacre these troops.²⁰ At some point Berke had ordered these soldiers to return to him, and barring that, to make their way to Baybars's kingdom.²¹ This was the first band of Mongol *wāfidiyya* to reach the Sultanate, although it was the only known one to have originated from Jochid troops.

Baybars responded to the news brought by these *wāfidiyya* by dispatching ambassadors to Berke, who set out in Muḥarram 661/November–December 1262, carrying a letter from Baybars. As in his first letter, Berke was urged to wage *jihād* and Hülegü was vilified. The power of the Sultan and his army was described, and finally mention was made of the arrival of a group of Berke's followers and of how they had been well received. No less important was the verbal message which Baybars gave to the envoys, in which the soundness (*ṣalāh*) of Islam was expressed, along with the state and numbers of the Sultan's army, his attention to the holy war and his affection for Berke. The

¹⁶ Abū Shāma, 219; hence Yūnīnī, 1:487.

¹⁷ *Rawḍ*, 88–9; Dhahabī, MS. Laud 305, fol. 258b. Later sources write that this first letter was sent in 659/1260–1: *Zubda*, fol. 51a–b; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vatican, fol. 278a; Maqrīzī, 1:465; 'Aynī, fol. 81a. But as Jackson, "Dissolution," 237 n. 231, has stated, Baybars al-Manṣūrī's text (and by extension the others) is taken from Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir's *Rawḍ*, and therefore AH 660 is the correct date. On the Alans, a people living in the Caucasus mountains, see Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, 1:16–17. ¹⁸ *Rawḍ*, 137; cf. Thorau, *Baybars*, 130 n. 30.

¹⁹ In 656/1258–9, a contingent from Berke's army participated in Hülegü's campaign to take Baghdad; Ibn Waṣīl, MS. 1703, fol. 128a; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. 'Alizādah, 3:55–6. It is possible that elements of this contingent took part in Hülegü's campaign in Syria two years later. On the other hand, there is no evidence that this contingent was ordered to defect to the Mamluks before 'Ayn Jālūt, and thus contribute to Qutuz's defeat of Ketbugha, as suggested by D. Sinor ("The Mongols and Western Europe," in K. M. Setton, ed., *A History of the Crusades* [Madison, 1975], 528) and I. de Rachewiltz (*Papal Envoys to the Great Khans* [London, 1971], 149). Only in late 660/1262 did the first group of Jochid refugees arrive in Egypt.

²⁰ Jackson, "Dissolution," 232–3, citing Grigor, 339.

²¹ *Rawḍ*, 137; cf. Abū Shāma, 220, that these soldiers of Hülegü were a remnant of Hülegü's army defeated by Berke. Jackson, "Dissolution," 237 n. 230, is right in ascribing to the *Rawḍ* of Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, with his connections to Baybars, more authority in this case. In addition, there would have been little logic for Hülegü's troops to flee to Baybars. For the various later writers who derive their accounts from these two authors, see Jackson, as cited here; Ayalon, "Yāsa," pt. C1, 141–2; *idem*, "Wafidiya," 98.

embassy set out, and in Constantinople ran into envoys of Berke on their way to Baybars. One of the Mamluk envoys was forced to return to Egypt due to illness, but the embassy continued on its way.²² Eventually, it reached the Khan's *ordo*, was brought before Berke and handed over Baybars's letter, which was translated into Turkish for the Khan's benefit. All those present were delighted with the letter. Berke prepared an answer, and dispatched these envoys with his own. They arrived back in Egypt on 10 Dhū 'l-qa'da 662/4 September 1264 (see below).²³

Berke's first envoys had arrived in Egypt on 11 Rajab 661/22 May 1263 along with the Mamluk envoy who had become sick in Constantinople. They were accompanied by a retinue, and envoys from the Byzantine Emperor Michael Palaeologus and Genoa. When the Sultan returned from an expedition in Syria, he received Berke's letter. According to Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, Berke requested assistance against Hülegü, who had contravened the *yasa* (which may be translated here as either "a decree" or "the law") of Chinggis Khan and the law of his people (*wa-sharī'at ahlihi*), and had killed human beings. Berke added that he and his four brothers had become Muslims, and that he was ready to exact revenge for the murdered Caliph and the Muslim nation (*umma*). Getting down to specifics, Berke requested that Baybars dispatch an army towards the Euphrates to hold the roads against Hülegü.²⁴ In another version of this letter, transmitted by al-Yūnīnī and others, there is no mention of the *yasa*, but only of the Islamic basis for the enmity between Berke and Hülegü: Baybars is called upon to launch an attack from his direction, as Berke will from his, thereby trapping Hülegü in the middle; each ruler will keep whatever he has conquered.²⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir's position at court, however, leads to the conclusion that the reference to the *yasa* must have been in the original letter.

Berke's letter is important for several reasons. First, as Professor Ayalon has written, the initial argument given to Baybars to justify Berke's war with Hülegü was the latter's breaking of the *yasa* and it appears that "Islam is only a secondary factor in the rift."²⁶ It is not clear to what *yasa* is exactly referring here, but it has been suggested that the intention is to the contravening of a

²² *Rawḍ*, 139–40; *Zubda*, fol. 60a–b (who seemingly conflates this and Berke's subsequent mission; see p. 84 below); Ibn al-Furāt, fols. 7a, 11b–12a; Maqrīzī, 1:474–5, 479–80; Yūnīnī, 2:189–90, 418; Thorau, *Baybars*, 124, 259.

²³ *Rawḍ*, 214–18; Nuwayrī, MS. 2m, fols. 170b–171b; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fols. 51b–53a (whence summary in Maqrīzī, 1:517); Yūnīnī, 1:540–2; Ibn al-Dawādārī, 8:99–101. The last two sources, while containing some misleading information (Ibn al-Dawādārī mistakenly writes that the meeting with Berke was in AH 667; both have placed this report after the story of Aqqush al-Mas'ūdī's mission later this year), both contain material not found in *Rawḍ*, although the two cite Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir by name. For the dating of Baybars's embassy and its mission, see Thorau, *Baybars*, 125, 259–60.

²⁴ *Rawḍ*, 170–1; summarized in Nuwayrī, MS. 2m, fol. 165a–b; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 30a. See Ayalon, "Yāsa," pt. B, 167–72, for a translation and analysis of this passage. On the dating of Berke's first mission, see Thorau, *Baybars*, 125, and 131 n. 35.

²⁵ Yūnīnī, 1:533–4; 2:194–5; Mufaḍḍal, 110–11; Ibn al-Dawādārī, 8:97. A third version is found in Qirtay, fol. 79a. ²⁶ Ayalon, "Yāsa," pt. B, 176–7.

specific decree, namely Hülegü's not sending his share of spoils and occupying territory that Berke thought was his.²⁷ Secondly, this letter is the first serious attempt to move this budding alliance from the level of mere expressions of goodwill and vague encouragement to one of common strategy against their mutual enemy. As will be seen, however, neither this nor later attempts in that direction were to bear any tangible fruits. Finally, the letter indicates a major change in the way of thinking among at least some of the Mongol leadership. In Dr. Jackson's words: "It signifies the first occasion on which a Mongol prince was prepared to collaborate with an independent external power against fellow Mongols; and in this vital sense – remembering the claims to worldwide dominion that the Mongols had hitherto expressed – it may be said to signify the dissolution of their empire."²⁸

The factor of Islam, however, should not be completely discounted. If nothing else, it helped smooth the way for the rapprochement with Baybars. It may also have soothed some of the qualms the Mongols of the Golden Horde could have had about fighting their kinsmen to the south. Finally, the conviction of Berke and others in their new faith does not necessarily have to be doubted and it may well have contributed to the fervor with which they pursued the war against the Īlkhānids. Yet, it must be remembered that for the Golden Horde, the questions of sovereignty and revenues were the main underlying causes for both the Jochid–Īlkhānid war and the alliance between the Mamluks and the Golden Horde, as testified by the above letter and subsequent developments under the non-Muslim rulers of the Golden Horde.

As would be expected, Berke's envoys were well received, and Baybars prepared an embassy in return, along with a whole series of splendid gifts and a letter. Before being sent back, Berke's envoys heard a *khuṭba* delivered by the Caliph al-Ḥākim and later met with him. The Caliph encouraged them about the *jihād* and sent with them an oral message for Berke. Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir himself wrote the Sultan's letter, which contained the already standard exhortations to wage the *jihād*, incitements against Hülegü and boasts about the strength of the Sultan's army. This author adds that both Baybars and Fāris al-Dīn Aqṭay al-Mustaʿrib, the *atabeg*, made additions to the letter.²⁹ On the other hand, a second, more "business-like" response is found in other, slightly later sources. Here Baybars expresses his agreement to Berke's suggestion of launching a joint attack. Thereupon there follows a somewhat problematic phrase, that "the letter contained [Baybars's expression] of submission and loyalty" (*al-dukhūl fī 'l-īliyya wa-'l-īṭā'a*).³⁰ It is difficult to conceive of Baybars submitting to Berke; certainly the latter did not call for it and no additional similar statements or corroborating evidence have come to light. Thus, the phrase can only be understood in a more general sense as

²⁷ Jackson, "Dissolution," 235.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 237–8; see also the remarks of Spuler, *Mongol Period*, 23–4.

²⁹ *Rawḍ*, 171–2; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fols. 31a–b; Maqrīzī, I:497–8; Thorau, *Baybars*, 125–6. ³⁰ Yūnīnī, I:537, 2:197; Mufaḍḍal, 112.

agreement with Berke, perhaps couched in such terms that would be more appealing in his eyes, by the use of the Arabized form of a Mongol expression, *il* (< *el*) which had come to mean “to be submitted” but originally meant “to be in peace.”³¹ It is clear that Baybars sought ways to tighten his ties with Berke, as shown by the repeated references to Islamic themes in his letters. In the same vein, before the return of the envoys, Baybars ordered that Berke’s name be mentioned after his name in the *khutba* in Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem and that he be prayed for at this time.³²

Baybars’s envoys, the amir Fāris al-Dīn Aqqush al-Mas‘ūdī and ‘Imād al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Hāshimī, set off on 17 Ramaḍān 661/26 July 1263. Having reached Constantinople, their trip was unexpectedly brought to a halt. Envoys from Hülegü were also at Michael’s court, and so as not to antagonize the Ilkhān, the Emperor did not permit the Mamluk envoys to continue on their way. Al-Hāshimī returned to Egypt after fifteen months, but Aqqush al-Mas‘ūdī was to languish a total of two years before he could complete his mission. This was only after Aqqush interceded on Michael’s behalf with the Jochid general Noghai, who had invaded Thrace with a large army and was threatening Constantinople itself. Al-Mas‘ūdī convinced Noghai that since the Emperor was at peace with Baybars, the army of Berke, who was also the Sultan’s ally, should desist from attacking him. This brought about the desired effect, and as a reward al-Mas‘ūdī was able to continue on to Berke’s court. He returned to Egypt in 665/1267.³³

In Jumādā I 662/March 1264, Baybars sent another mission to Berke; its members were not named, and it is not mentioned again in the sources.³⁴ Several months later, as mentioned above, a second embassy from Berke arrived in Egypt on 10 Dhū ‘l-qa‘da 662/4 September 1264, along with Baybars’s first envoy. They also brought with them a refugee scion of the branch of the Ayyūbids which had ruled Mayyāfāriqīn, who provided an eye-witness account of the battle between Hülegü and Berke. The Mongol envoys delivered Berke’s letter, which stressed the Islamic basis of his war with Hülegü, and also contained a list of Mongol nobles who had converted to Islam.³⁵

³¹ On this original meaning, see Erdal, “Titel,” forthcoming.

³² *Rawḍ*, 173–4; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 32a–b; cf. the version in Maqrīzī, 1:498, where Cairo and Fustat have been added to these cities. Prof. Ayalon (“Yāsa,” pt. C1, 136–40) has conclusively shown that this evidence could not be used as proof that the Mamluks were in some type of vassaldom to the Golden Horde, as suggested by A. Poliak, “Le caractère colonial de l’état mamelouk dans ses rapports avec la Horde d’Or,” *REI* 9 (1935):231–45; *idem*, “The Influence of Chingiz Khan’s Yāsa on the Mamlūk State,” *BSOAS* 10 (1942):862–72. See also Ayalon, “Wafidiya,” 95–6; *idem*, “Yāsa,” pt. C1, 143–5.

³³ *Rawḍ*, 174; Ibn al-Dawādārī, 8:97–8; Yūnīnī, 1:537–9, 2:196–9, 362; Mufaḍḍal, 112–15. See the detailed discussion in M. Canard, “Un traité entre Byzance et l’Egypte au XIII^e siècle et les relations diplomatiques de Michel VIII Paléologue avec les sultans mamlūks Baibars et Qalā‘ūn,” in *Mélanges Gaudefroy-Demombynes* (Cairo, 1937), 213–17; Thorau, *Baybars*, 127.

³⁴ *Rawḍ*, 194; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 43a; Maqrīzī, 1:511.

³⁵ Abū Shāma, 232; Ibn Kathīr, 13:242; Nuwayrī, MS. 2m, fol. 177b; Yūnīnī, 2:323; *Rawḍ*, 213; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 54b; Maqrīzī, 1:519; ‘Aynī, fol. 88b. The contents of Berke’s letter are found in *Zubda*, fols. 59b–60a (= Tiesenhansen, 77–8), but the chronology seems to be confused there.

There is no record of a subsequent mission from the Golden Horde for several years, and likewise it appears that between 663/1265 and 665/1266–7, Baybars did not dispatch any embassies. Only when news reached him of Berke's death in 665/1267 and Möngke Temür's subsequent accession to the throne was another embassy sent in Šafar 666/October–November 1267. Since Möngke Temür was not a Muslim, Baybars had no reason to harp on the previously used Islamic themes. Instead, he consoled him about the death of his great-uncle Berke and encouraged him to fight Hülegü.³⁶

At this point there is some confusion regarding various missions. In 667/1268–9, an envoy came from Michael Palaeologus saying that with news of Berke's death he had sent on the mission that he had previously delayed in Constantinople. The chronology is strange, since Berke had already been dead for about two years. It is also unclear which Mamluk mission is being referred to here. Perhaps this was the mission sent in 666/1267, mentioned above, since no other Mamluk mission is noted. Upon receiving this envoy from the Emperor, Baybars sent off Berke's ambassadors who had been waiting in Cairo, so Baybars must have been aware that Michael had again blocked the route to the Golden Horde. Yet, had he known this, why did he send the mission in 666/1267? It is also unclear when this mission from the Golden Horde had originally arrived in the Sultanate. This confusion must be left unresolved. In any case, the Sultan sent back a letter with these envoys, inciting Möngke Temür to fight Hülegü's family. In addition, he stressed the size of his army. Finally, he told him of the peace between himself and the Byzantine Emperor, encouraging the Khan to do the same.³⁷

It would seem that this second blockage did not greatly affect Mamluk–Golden Horde relations. By this time neither leader had any real reason to keep sending off envoys who had little more to do except deliver messages of mutual goodwill and vague encouragement. In fact, it would seem that this early contact and the resulting understanding were limited to two spheres. First, Berke and his successors permitted the export of young mamluks to the Sultanate. Without this constant influx of mamluks, the majority of whom came from the territory under the control of the Golden Horde, the military strength of the Sultanate would have eventually withered, and Baybars would not have been able to successfully withstand the Īlkhānids.³⁸ For the Mamluks, the maintenance of an open Bosphorus was of the greatest

³⁶ *Rawḍ*, 288; Nuwayrī, 27:362; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fols. 125b, 147b; Maqrīzī, 1:563; cf. Thorau, *Baybars*, 235.

³⁷ *Rawḍ*, 334–5; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fols. 149b–150a; cf. Qirtay, fol. 94a (s.a. 668). These envoys of the Golden Horde may be the envoys of Möngke Temür who passed through Syria in 667/1268–9; *Huṣn*, 143.

³⁸ On the slave trade and its importance, see A. Ehrenkreutz, "Strategic Implications of the Slave Trade between Genoa and Mamluk Egypt in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century," in A. L. Udovitch (ed.), *The Islamic Middle East, 700–1900* (Princeton, 1981), 335–43, esp. 341 and nn. 14–15; S. Y. Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens in Spätmittelalter* (Wiesbaden, 1965), 327–8. For the importance of mamluks from the Golden Horde, see Ayalon, "Yāsa," pt. C1, 126–7.

importance, because the Īlkhāns exercised control over the alternative land routes through eastern Anatolia and Iran.³⁹

While Michael at times put a crimp on communications between Berke and Baybars, it would seem that the slave trade between their two countries continued. These years witnessed an unparalleled growth of the military strength of the Mamluk Sultanate, and an interruption of the main source of military manpower could well have been reflected in the sources. Such a negative argument is far from conclusive, but taken together with the strong commercial interests of the Genoese merchants, allies of Michael Palaeologus and main purveyors of young mamluks, until shown differently, it can be assumed that this trade continued in some form even in times of diplomatic crisis.⁴⁰

The second sphere of understanding revolved around Baybars's and Berke's discovery that they had a mutual enemy in Hülegü and his followers. Beyond this, little else of substance was attained; certainly, no workable strategy was agreed upon.⁴¹ Thus, once Berke's intentions *vis-à-vis* the slave trade and the war with Hülegü were ascertained (and vice versa, Baybars's attitude towards Hülegü), there was little need continually to send envoys, particularly when Michael Palaeologus's attitude towards their passage was not a certainty. Perhaps then, part of the interruption in the movement of envoys was because both Baybars and Berke had decided to stop sending them so frequently. Later, when news of Berke's death reached Baybars, another embassy was organized to make sure that the "alliance" would continue in its previous form.⁴²

The continuing Īlkhānid–Golden Horde war

The Jochid–Īlkhānid conflict *per se* had little to do with the Mamluk–Golden Horde alliance. There is little doubt that the war would have broken out whether or not Berke and Baybars had reached an understanding, although the knowledge that the Mamluks were fighting their enemy may have led the leading elements of the Khans of the Golden Horde to pursue this struggle

³⁹ At the same time, the possibility of some mamluk trade via Anatolia, even at this early date, should not be totally discounted; see below, ch. 9.

⁴⁰ See the comments in Ayalon, "Yāsa," pt. C1, 126–7. Genoese relations with Michael had its ups and downs, and from 1264 to 1267 they were even expelled from Constantinople itself; see D.J. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West* (Cambridge, MA, 1959), 168–71; 204–9. There is no indication of how this rupture affected the Genoese trade in mamluks to Egypt.

⁴¹ The one incident in which Baybars tried actively to exploit the Īlkhānid–Golden Horde rift was in 663/1264–5, when he received news of the renewal of the war followed upon Hülegü's death. Baybars thought of invading Iraq, but he was unable to bring his plans to fruition, because his troops were split up among their *iqṭā'āt*; Yūnīnī, 2:322. Ibn al-Dawādārī, 8:114, tells the same story, but gives the fear of a Frankish attack against Syria as the reason that he did not exploit this opportunity.

⁴² Some possible explanations for this stoppage are offered by Khowaiter, *Baibars*, 49; Canard, "Un traité," 219.

with greater vigor. For the Mamluks, however, this ongoing conflict was of crucial importance, because the Īlkhānids were unable to concentrate all of their military strength against them. The knowledge that the Mongols of Iran were preoccupied elsewhere raised the morale of the Mamluks, and provided them with the interlude to organize their resistance, time which Baybars put to good use. The Mongols of Iran were aware of the impact of this conflict: Rashīd al-Dīn writes that after the defeat of Ketbugha, Hülegü had resolved to send another army to avenge his defeat, but because of Möngke's death and then the conflict with his relatives (i.e., the Jochids) he was unable to execute this plan for the time being.⁴³ A second example is Abagha's letter to Baybars from 667/1268, cited at the beginning of this chapter.

War with the Golden Horde erupted again in 663/1265, when Berke sought to exploit what he probably perceived as instability following Hülegü's death and Abagha's accession. He sent an army under Noghai, which, however, was defeated by an Īlkhānid army under Yoshmut, Abagha's brother, south of the Caucasian mountains some time in the summer of 663/1265. Subsequently, probably over a year later, Abagha himself advanced with the bulk of his army and encountered Berke just north of the Kur River. Abagha recrossed the river, and after two weeks of skirmishing Berke moved towards Tiflis (Tbilisi) to attempt a crossing, but died on the way, apparently early in AD 1267. His disheartened army dispersed, thus ending this round of the war. Before returning south, Abagha had a palisade (*sibe*) built along the southern bank, and stationed a garrison there.⁴⁴

The next foreign threat to the Īlkhāns was from the direction of the Chaghatai Khanate in Central Asia.⁴⁵ Already in 667/1268–9, its Khan, Baraq, had succeeded in rousing his kinsman Tegüder, who since Hülegü's time had commanded a Chaghatayid contingent in Iran. Tegüder sought to rejoin Baraq, by fleeing with his troops via the Darband Pass, but he was pursued by a force loyal to Abagha, was defeated and surrendered.⁴⁶ Baraq himself advanced across the Oxus River in the spring of 668/1270, with the connivance – at least initially – of both Möngke Temür and Qaidu, the Ögedeyid ruler of Central Asia. Abagha personally led his army eastward to

⁴³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. 'Alizādah, 3:77.

⁴⁴ Boyle, "Īl-Khāns," 356; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. 'Alizādah, 3:103–4; Mustawfī, 591 (the battle took place in AH 664). The Mamluk sources are somewhat confused: Nuwayrī, 27:361; Ibn al-Dawādārī, 7:114; Ibn Kathīr, 13:245; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 91b–92a; 'Aynī, fol. 94a; all these write that Noghai was victorious. On the other hand, s.a. 665, Yūnīnī, 2:363, gives a report that approximately corresponds to that found in the Persian sources (except that he wrote that this happened in Möngke Temür's reign and not Berke's); see also Ibn Kathīr, 13:249 (shorter version); Qirtay, fol. 89a. For the date of Berke's death, see B. Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde* (Wiesbaden, 1965), 51.

⁴⁵ For Hülegü's relations with the Chaghatayids earlier in the decade, see Jackson, "Dissolution," 234–5.

⁴⁶ Boyle, "Īl-Khāns," 357; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. 'Alizādah, 3:111–13; Grigor, 375–7. Interesting details are provided by some Mamluk sources, which generally corroborate the pro-Īlkhānid writers: Ibn al-Furāt, 7:9; Ibn al-Dawādārī, 8:140–1; Yūnīnī, 2:410–11. Some authors (*Zubda*, fols. 81b–82a; whence 'Aynī, fol. 106a) tell this story differently and place it in 672/1273–4.

repulse him. Near Herat, on 30 Dhū 'l-qa'ḍa 668/22 July 1270, the two armies met and Baraq was completely defeated; he himself escaped with just a small part of his army.⁴⁷ Throughout the remainder of Abagha's reign, the eastern borders of his kingdom remained secure.⁴⁸

While Baybars was at Ascalon in Ṣafar 669/October 1270, news reached him that the nephew of Berke had defeated Abagha in battle. The sources must be referring here to Möngke Temür, as was understood by Ibn Kathīr, who inserted this name in his version. The Sultan was quite happy to receive this news,⁴⁹ but his delight was gratuitous, because none of the Persian or other pro-Mongol sources mention this battle. The conclusion, then, must be that this news was only an inaccurate echo of the campaigns in Khurasān of the previous year.

In the decade after 'Ayn Jālūt, the Īlkhāns were confronted three times by serious threats from the outside (1262–3, 1265 and 1270) along with the incident with Tegüder (1268–9) and the general problems associated with the accession of a new khan and his consolidation of power. Thus, it is not surprising that during this decade neither Hülegü nor Abagha was able to make any serious attempts to invade Syria, and that they had to content themselves with raids over the frontier and diplomatic contact with the European leaders. With relative calmness finally achieved on the northwestern and northeastern borders, Abagha was able to turn his attention to the Mamluks and he launched a number of large-scale raids against the border. But for reasons unclear to us, he did not exploit this lull in the conflict with his northern neighbors to mount a major offensive. Later in the 1270s he was unable to profit from the instability in the Mamluk Sultanate in the years after Baybars's death (676/1277), because of an invasion by the Negüderi/Qaraunas Mongols into Fārs and Kirmān in 677/1278–9,⁵⁰ and a flare-up in the conflict with the Golden Horde (678/1279–80).⁵¹ Only at the beginning of the

⁴⁷ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. 'Alizādah, 3:105–30; summarized in Boyle, "Īl-Khāns," 357–60. Also Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, 357 (s.a. 665); Mustawfī, 591. Similar, detailed accounts are found in Ibn al-Dawādārī, 13:148–50; Yūnīnī, 2:434–6; Mufaḍḍal, 178–83; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fols. 184b–185a. Cf. *Zubda*, fol. 77a (whence 'Aynī, fol. 104a, where this battle is reported s.a. 670). Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 147b, mentions this conflict as also happening in AH 667; hence, it seems, 'Aynī, fol. 100a. A detailed comparison of Persian and Arabic sources is found in M. Pumpian-Biran, "The Battle of Herat (668/1270)" [Hebrew], unpublished M.A. seminar paper, Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem, 1991.

⁴⁸ On the reawakening of tension on the Chaghatayid front in the 1280s, see P. Jackson, s.v. "Chaghatayid Dynasty," *Elr*, 5:344; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. 'Alizādah, 3:207; cf. Boyle, "Īl-Khāns," 360. ⁴⁹ Yūnīnī, 2:443; Ibn Kathīr, 13:258; Ibn Taghrī Birdī, 13:149.

⁵⁰ Boyle, "Īl-Khāns," 362–3; J. Aubin, "L'ethnogénèse des Qaraunas," *Turcica* 1 (1969):84–6. Waṣṣāf, 203 (cited in Aubin, 86), states that the Negüderis also attacked the Persian Gulf area in winter 680/1281–2. As early as 670/1272, the Negüderis raided Kirmān; Aubin, 83. On the Negüderis/Qaraunas, see Aubin, 65–94; Morgan, *Mongols*, 95–6. Jackson, "Dissolution," 239–44; Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, 1:183–96.

⁵¹ Mustawfī, 592 (s.a. 678), writes that an invading army came over the Khazar Plain and was defeated by the Īlkhānid army led by Abagha's brother, Mengü Temür. Ibn al-Dawādārī, 7:239, and Mufaḍḍal, 321, report that news of two Golden Horde victories arrived in Egypt (s.a. 679).

subsequent decade was Abagha able to give his full attention to the Mamluks.

The quiet on the Golden Horde–Īlkhānid border belied the continuing desire of the Jochids to regain the territory they claimed as theirs. It is true that Abagha, in the above-cited letter sent to Baybars in 667/1268, asserted that all the Mongols were now united after a period of disunity. The implication here was that differences had been settled with the Golden Horde. There is some *prima facie* evidence for some type of accord. Rashīd al-Dīn writes that the Golden Horde was forced to make peace with Abagha in the aftermath of Berke's death. This author adds that the state of peace lasted until 687/1288 with the invasion by the Golden Horde.⁵² Rashīd al-Dīn ignores the above-mentioned hostilities on the border some ten years earlier. Elsewhere, Rashīd al-Dīn describes the mission Mōngke Temūr sent to Abagha after the latter crushed Baraq's invasion, congratulating him on his victory, although Mōngke Temur appears to have been involved in the dispatch of Baraq.⁵³ In a statement delivered by an Īlkhānid mission to the second Council of Lyon in AD 1274, it was claimed that Abagha was now at peace with some of his (apparently Mongol) neighbors after having defeated them in battle.⁵⁴

There thus appears to have been an agreement of some kind,⁵⁵ but it seems to have been merely an attempt to play for time on Mōngke Temūr's part, because in the subsequent years several embassies were sent from the Golden Horde to Egypt, some with the explicit intent of getting Baybars to launch a joint campaign against the Īlkhānids. Thus in 670/1272, Baybars sent a letter to Abagha in which he claimed that Mōngke Temūr had written him to call for a joint attack against the Īlkhān.⁵⁶ It might be claimed that this was mere bluster on Baybars's part. But at the beginning of Muḥarram 669/August 1270, a letter had arrived from the Jochid general Noghai, announcing his conversion to Islam, and reporting that he had heard of how Baybars pursued the *jihād*. He continued: "We are with you like the finger tips of the hand. We will agree with whomever agrees with you and oppose those whom oppose you." Baybars answered by congratulating Noghai on his becoming a Muslim and following Berke's example, especially in fighting the holy war. He added that he would attack from the west and the Golden Horde from the north, until the unbelievers were defeated.⁵⁷ This answer must have been sent with Noghai's envoys, since there is no record of Baybars sending his own envoys.

In 670/1272, envoys of Mōngke Temūr were captured in the Mediterranean Sea by pirates from either Marseilles or Pisa, along with a translator

⁵² Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Blochet, 2:140; tr. Boyle, 124. This information is repeated in Naṭanzī, 74.

⁵³ Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. 'Alizādah, 3:139.

⁵⁴ The passage is found in the letter reproduced in Roberg, "Tartaren," 300, and discussed on *ibid.*, 282. I am grateful to Dr. R. Ellenblum for his assistance in the translation of this text.

⁵⁵ G. Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia* (rpt. 1966 of New Haven, 1953), 165; Khowaiter, *Baibars*, 56; Thorau, *Baybars*, 178, all attribute too much importance to the treaty; cf. Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, 53–4, who correctly states that this conclusion of peace had little long-term importance. ⁵⁶ *Rawḍ*, 399–400.

⁵⁷ *Rawḍ*, 371–3; *Zubda*, fols. 74b–75b; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 187a–b; Maqrīzī, 1:590.

previously sent by Baybars to the Golden Horde. These prisoners were interned in Acre. The Sultan, who was afraid that they would be sent to Abagha, quickly forced the rulers of Acre to release them. They brought letters in Arabic and Persian to Baybars in which the Khan said he was the enemy of Baybars's enemy and he loved the Sultan as had Berke.⁵⁸ An alternative version to this letter stated that the Khan repeated an earlier offer by Berke giving the Sultan possession of whatever Īlkhānid territory he conquered and asking for help in exterminating Hülegü's progeny.⁵⁹ Be this as it may, the Sultan did not respond to this latter request, but rather reported to the Khan about the recent arrival of ambassadors from Abagha, who had called upon him to submit, and of the fresh Mamluk victory over the Mongols at al-Bīra. He sent them off with his envoys in Sha^cbān 671/February–March 1273, along with an expensive gift.⁶⁰

Baybars next sent off an envoy with a gift to Möngke Temür around Rajab 674/beginning of 1275.⁶¹ In 675/1277, before setting off to invade Seljuq Rūm, Baybars received unspecified Mongol envoys. The warm welcome they received leads to the conclusion that they were from the Golden Horde and not from Abagha.⁶² Mention is made of another mission from the Golden Horde, which arrived in Cairo in Rabī^c II 676/August 1277, after Baybars's death.⁶³ There is no further record of contact with the Golden Horde until after Qalawun's accession in 678/1280, when he wrote to Möngke Temür and Noghai to announce his accession and to encourage them to continue to fight the infidels. His envoys found that the Khan had just died and gave his successor, Töde Möngke, the letter and gifts.⁶⁴

Golden Horde–Mamluk relations as they developed under Baybars were of crucial importance because they made possible the continuation of the trade in young mamluks. No less significant was the hope that the Golden Horde would put pressure on the Īlkhānids, who would thus be deflected from attacking Syria.⁶⁵ In reality, the war between the Golden Horde and the Īlkhānids prevented the latter from devoting all their power against the Mamluks. On the other hand, as Professor Ayalon commented, the importance of the alliance between the Mamluks and the Golden Horde should not be exaggerated. The Golden Horde was far away, and the long journey there, part of which was through Byzantine territory, made constant contact between the two countries "tenuous and difficult."⁶⁶ Most tellingly, in spite of occasional efforts by the khans, no common strategy was ever developed

⁵⁸ *Rawḍ*, 400; *Zubda*, fol. 77a; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fols. 204b–205a (= ed. Lyons, 1:200).

⁵⁹ Ibn Shaddād, *Ta'rikh*, 35–6; Yūnīnī, 2:472–3; Mufaḍḍal, 207–8. See also Thorau, *Baybars*, 221.

⁶⁰ *Rawḍ*, 404, 411; Ibn Kathīr, 13:264; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fols. 213b, 217a; Maqrīzī, 1:607. ⁶¹ Ibn al-Furāt, 7:44; Maqrīzī, 1:621.

⁶² Ibn Kathīr, 13:271; Ibn Taghri Birdī, 7:166. ⁶³ Yūnīnī, 3:235.

⁶⁴ Nuwayrī, 27:364–5; *Faḍl*, fol. 27a; *Zubda*, fol. 124a; fol. 137a–b.

⁶⁵ See the comments to this effect in Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, 5:430–1.

⁶⁶ Ayalon, "Yāsa," pt. C1, 129.

against the Mongols of Iran. In addition, we have attempted to show that the Jochid–Īlkhānid conflict developed without Mamluk interference. In short, given the relatively limited scope of this alliance, perhaps the term understanding would be preferable to describe these relations.

The role of the Byzantine Empire

It is impossible to study early Mamluk–Golden Horde relations without taking into account the critical role played by the Byzantine Empire, which was reestablished in Constantinople by Michael Palaeologus (1259–82) in 1261.⁶⁷ Controlling the Bosphorus as he did, it is clear that without a sympathetic attitude on his part communications between Baybars and Berke, let alone the continuation of the vital slave trade from the Qipchaq Steppe to Egypt, would become difficult, as the alternative land route was now controlled by the Īlkhānids. At the same time, Michael had as neighbors the warring Mongol states of the Golden Horde and the Īlkhānids, and if he tilted too close to one, he was likely to incur the wrath of the other. Michael was thus forced to walk a very narrow path, a task which he managed to do with some success.

In 660/1261–2, Michael Palaeologus sent to Baybars an expression of his goodwill and support.⁶⁸ Baybars in turn dispatched an envoy, the amir Fāris al-Dīn Aqqush al-Masʿūdī, with a gift of captured Mongols from ʿAyn Jālūt, and the Melkite Patriarch of Egypt, who had been requested by Michael. It was probably during this mission, which returned to Egypt in Shaʿbān 660/July 1262, that a treaty was agreed upon giving Baybars free passage through the Bosphorus for slaves and envoys.⁶⁹ Michael's motivation for initiating this contact must have been a desire to establish as many allies as possible in order to strengthen his hand before what he considered as the likelihood of a Latin attempt to regain Constantinople.

Baybars's understanding with Michael, however, was short-lived, because the latter prevented the second Mamluk embassy to Berke (led by Aqqush al-Masʿūdī who had departed Cairo in Ramaḍān 661/July 1263) from leaving Byzantine territory. As mentioned above, when these envoys reached the

⁶⁷ As the Byzantine role has been studied in detail by Canard, "Un traité," 209–23; and Holt, *Crusades*, 159–63, in the following paragraphs, I will briefly survey the important points. See also G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, tr. J. Hussey (New Brunswick, NJ, 1957), 396, 404, 407–8; Sinor, "Western Europe," 529–31; Geanakoplos, *Emperor*, 290–3 and n. 59; Thorau, *Baybars*, 121–8; Ehrenkreutz, "Slave Trade," 341 and nn. 14–15; J.J. Saunders, "The Mongol Defeat at Ain Jālūt and the Restoration of the Greek Empire," in *idem*, *Muslims and Mongols* (Christchurch, NZ, 1977), 67–76.

⁶⁸ Thorau, *Baybars*, 122, suggests that this was an answer to an earlier mission sent by Baybars.

⁶⁹ Canard, "Un traité," 211–12, who mentions the treaty, which is reported only by the Greek historians; Holt, *Crusades*, 159; *Rawḍ*, 88, 129; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 4a; Maqrīzī, 1:471–2; *Zubda*, fol. 51a, but s.a. 659 (whence, ʿAynī, fol. 84a). According to Pachymeres (cited in Thorau, *Baybars*, 122), Michael's first mission to Baybars, sent after his conquest of Constantinople, requested the Melkite Patriarch would be sent and granted the Sultan freedom of passage through the Bosphorus.

Emperor, they found that ambassadors from Hülegü were also at his court. Actually, as early as the fall of 1261, Michael had drawn up a secret treaty of friendship with Hülegü, one of the provisions of which was that the exiled Seljuq 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwūs would be kept at his court.⁷⁰ One motive for this treaty would have been the common desire to pacify the Anatolian border.⁷¹ The Emperor himself explained to the Mamluk envoys that the reason he detained them was that his country was close to Hülegü, and he was afraid that if Hülegü were to hear that he had helped the envoys of Baybars, he would suspect that the state of peace (*ṣulḥ*) between Michael and Hülegü was over; thus Hülegü would attack Michael's country. Baybars's response, on being notified in Ramaḍān 662/July 1264 about his envoys' delay, was to convene a gathering of Orthodox prelates in Egypt and have Michael excommunicated for breaking an oath. Thereupon he sent off a strongly worded message to the Emperor, to which he added that if the reason for the detention of his envoys was the war between the Byzantines and the Golden Horde, he would send to the latter to mediate peace, which he subsequently did. Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir writes that upon receiving this message Michael sent al-Mas'ūdī on his way, a doubtful assertion, since only after two full years of waiting was this envoy permitted to go.⁷²

For several years there is no record of any communications between Michael Palaeologus and Baybars, and for that matter between Berke and Baybars, although Aqqush al-Mas'ūdī returned home after finally completing his mission, and must have passed through Constantinople on his way back to Egypt, probably in 665/1266. It is clear that during this time relations had not returned to the heights they had reached earlier in the decade, because in 667/1268–9, when Michael finally sent an envoy, the message he carried contained an announcement that he was discontinuing his chilly attitude which he had hitherto adopted and was returning to the earlier state of peace (*ṣulḥ*). He also sent on envoys of Baybars, whom he had detained until Berke's death that year. The fact that Berke died in 665/1266–7 raises some questions (discussed above). In his letter, Michael also tried to mediate between Baybars and Abagha, an offer which was spurned by the Sultan. Baybars was also unwilling to swear an oath suggested by Michael, which contained a provision that Baybars was to be a friend to Michael's friend, as this could be understood to be Abagha. On the other hand, Baybars expressed his willingness to mediate between the Emperor and Möngke Temür.⁷³ M. Canard suggested that Michael's rapprochement with Baybars was occasioned by his fear of Charles of Anjou, who had conquered Naples and Sicily in 1266 and the following year

⁷⁰ Spuler, *Iran*, 58–9; Geanakoplos, *Emperor*, 81. Knowledge of this treaty is based on Greek sources. ⁷¹ Lippard, "Byzantium," 198.

⁷² Canard, "Un traité," 213–15; *Rawḍ*, 202–3; Yūnīnī, 1:537–9, 2:197–8; Mufaḍḍal, 112–14; Ibn al-Dawādārī, 8:97–8 (last three sources s.a. 661); Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fols. 46b–47b (cites Ibn Shaddād, by name); Maqrīzī, 1:514.

⁷³ Canard, "Un traité," 219; *Rawḍ*, 334–5; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fols. 149b–150a; *Husn*, 143; cf. Thorau, *Baybars*, 195.

formed a coalition against the Byzantine Empire with the intention of conquering Constantinople.⁷⁴

The chill in Byzantine–Mamluk relations may have been related to Michael's developing closer contacts with the Īlkhāns. In 1265, he had sent an illegitimate daughter to marry Hülegü. But she arrived after Hülegü's death and instead was wedded to his son and successor Abagha.⁷⁵ As will be seen in the next section, there is some evidence in 1267–8 of a Mongol–Byzantine alliance against the Mamluks, which was to receive aid from James I, King of Aragon. Dr. Geanakoplos has suggested that Michael's motives may have been to forestall James's joining of an anti-Byzantine entente led by Charles of Anjou.⁷⁶ Although this possible Īlkhānid–Byzantine–Aragonese alliance slightly pre-dates Michael's renewed overtures to Baybars, it is difficult to know with certainty what Michael's plans were exactly. In any event, nothing was to come of all the anti-Mamluk diplomatic activity, and eventually Byzantine–Mamluk relations were to return to a relatively even keel.⁷⁷

In light of the above discussion, we might question the suggestion made by J.J. Saunders, who wrote that “by 1266 something like a Mamluk–Qipchaq–Byzantine alliance against the Il-khans and the Latins existed.” Later, he adds that “the expulsion of Baldwin II from and the entry of Michael Palaeologus into Constantinople greatly facilitated Baybars's defence of Egypt against the Il-khans,” since this enabled Baybars's communication with the Golden Horde.⁷⁸ These statements are contradicted by the evidence presented above; if anything, the Byzantine Empire was more closely allied with the Persian Mongols than with their cousins in the Qipchaq Steppe. It can certainly be seen that Michael was doing his best to play both sides. There is also the whole question of the Latin role in these relations. In the next section it will be shown that, at this stage at least, the Latin–Īlkhānid alliance was much less unequivocal than Saunders would have us believe. In addition, one group of “Latins,” the Genoese, were certainly instrumental in maintaining the Golden Horde–Mamluk connection alive. Finally, we might indulge in speculation over what might have happened had the Latins managed to maintain their grip on Constantinople. Perhaps the healthy commercial instincts of the Venetians, the major backers of the Latin rulers in Constantinople, might have led to a sympathetic view towards the Mamluk–Jochid connection even if Michael

⁷⁴ Canard, “Un traité,” 220; see also Spuler, *Goldene Horde*, 55. For the diplomatic struggle between Michael and Charles, see Geanakoplos, *Emperor*, 189–371; S. Runciman, *The Sicilian Vespers* (Harmondsworth, 1960), 152–312.

⁷⁵ Spuler, *Iran*, 59–61; Canard, “Un traité,” 214; Bar Hebraeus, 445 (= Ibn al-ʿIbrī, 497); Vardan, tr. Thomson, 222; Kirakos, tr. Dulaurier, 508; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. ʿAlizādah, 3:97 and n. 27; cited by J.A. Boyle, “The Il-Khans of Persia and the Princes of Europe,” *CAJ* 20 (1976):25, who notes that Rashīd al-Dīn makes no other mention of relations between the Īlkhānids and the Byzantines. ⁷⁶ Geanakoplos, *Emperor*, 220.

⁷⁷ There is, however, information on offers made in 1274 and 1276 by Michael to assist the Western Christians against the Mamluks; see Geanakoplos, *Emperor*, 287–91.

⁷⁸ Saunders, “Mongol Defeat,” 75, 76 and *passim*; a similar approach is adopted in Lippard, “Byzantium,” 233–4.

Palaeologus had not succeeded in reestablishing the Greek Empire on the Bosphorus.

Throughout the remainder of Baybars's reign, relations with Michael Palaeologus recede into the background. Only twice are Byzantine envoys mentioned coming to Baybars, in 671/1272–3 and 674/1275–6. In the former case, at least, Baybars sent the envoys back with his own embassy.⁷⁹ In the second half of his reign, the comings and goings of Genoese ships bringing fresh shipments of Turkish slaves from the Qipchaq Steppe, along with the occasional envoy to or from its Khan, must have become such accepted practice that the sending of additional envoys to the Byzantine Emperor became superfluous. Only at the beginning of Qalawun's reign in 678/1279 do we see a rekindling of serious diplomatic activity between these two kingdoms.⁸⁰

The Īlkhāns and the Franks

The traditional Mongol attitude to the Latin Christians, be they in Europe or the Levant, was identical to that shown to the Muslim princes: submit unconditionally or face destruction.⁸¹ This stance, however, began to change, albeit gradually, in the aftermath of ʿAyn Jālūt, and henceforth the Īlkhāns condescended to make advances to the Pope and European princes. This change was initiated by Hülegü, who surely desired to avenge the defeat at ʿAyn Jālūt and continue the Mongol conquest to the southwest. Yet, because of the ongoing war with Berke and the setbacks he there suffered, Hülegü was unable to commit a large proportion of his forces to Syria. It would appear that the Īlkhān must have felt that to effectively pursue his war against the Mamluks he had no choice but to turn to the West, with an offer of an alliance against their mutual enemy.

Some of the responsibility for Hülegü's decision to write to the West may be laid at the feet of a Dominican named David of Ashby. Late in AD 1259 or early in 1260, he had been the head of an embassy sent to Hülegü by Thomas Agni, then the papal legate at Acre. Presumably, the purpose of this mission had been to dissuade the Mongol ruler from attacking the Frankish possessions. David, who evidently remained for several years at the Mongol court, was well received, witnessed at least part of the Mongol campaign against Aleppo, and had Christian slaves freed. The presence of a respected clergyman

⁷⁹ Rawd, 404, 411; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fols. 213a, 217a; 7:44; Maqrīzī, 1:607, 621. Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, 408, writes that after 1272, "the exchange of embassies between Byzantium and Egypt grew more and more frequent," but this does not seem warranted by the Mamluk sources. ⁸⁰ See Holt, *Crusades*, 162–31; Irwin, *Middle East*, 69.

⁸¹ For general discussions on Mongol–European relations before ʿAyn Jālūt, see K-E. Luprian, *Die Beziehungen der Päpste zu islamischen und mongolischen Herrschern im 13. Jahrhundert anhand ihres Briefwechsels* (Vatican, 1981), 47–63; Sinor, "Western Europe," 518–26; de Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys*, 76–143; Boyle, "Princes of Europe," 25–40; Jackson and Morgan, introduction to William of Rubruck, tr. Jackson, 25–39.

at Hülegü's court, at a time of some soul-searching and strategic rethinking, may have contributed to the Mongol leader's final decision to turn to the West.⁸²

In AD 1262, Hülegü sent an embassy to the West. It is clear from an extant letter from Hülegü to Louis IX that one of the embassy's goals was to reach the French King. The envoys, however, never fulfilled their mission, since upon reaching Sicily they were ordered to return by its ruler, Manfred, then at odds with the Pope. Hülegü's letter mentions one John the Hungarian. This John is named in Urban IV's letter to Hülegü, evidently from AD 1263 (see below), as the source of the information that Hülegü was about to convert to Christianity, as well as his appeal for assistance against the Muslims. It might well be, then, that John the Hungarian had been a member of Hülegü's mission, and perhaps managed to slip past Manfred's officials and make his way to the Pope's court, reporting the general tenor of Hülegü's message. Hülegü's letter, which seemingly did not reach its destination, urged Louis's forces to take up a defensive position along the (Syrian and Egyptian) coasts using naval vessels, so when the Mongols attacked the Egyptians would have no refuge.⁸³

An appeal of this type from a Mongol prince was still somewhat of a novelty in AD 1262. But it did not mean that the Mongols were ready yet to give up the ideological underpinnings of their empire. P. Meyvaert has written of this letter, that despite its friendly tone, it "can be seen as an impressive instance of the Mongolian perspective on the world . . . Louis IX was not exempt from the duty of obeying a divine order. Behind the request for military help one discerns the threat that if this help is not forthcoming, the French king will one day also experience the fate meted out to the disobedient." Hülegü further strengthens his plea by providing an account of the divine revelation given to Chinggis Khan and recites his and other Mongol conquests.⁸⁴

Whether or not John the Hungarian was a member of Hülegü's mission of 1262, he is credited by Urban IV with bringing news to the papal court of Hülegü's request for aid and his inclination towards baptism. In response to this information, the Pope sent off, evidently in AD 1263, the short letter, *Exultavit cor nostrum*, in which he expressed his joy at Hülegü turning towards

⁸² Most of our information on David's activities is derived from the letter published by Roberg, "Tartaren," 298–302; see the discussion in *ibid.*, 273–6. See also C. Brunel, "David d'Ashby auteur méconnu des Faits des Tartares," *Romania* 79 (1958):43–5; J. Richard, "Une ambassade mongole à Paris en 1262," *Journal des Savants*, 1979, 299–300; *idem*, "Debut," 295–7; Boyle, "Princes of Europe," 28–9. David must have been with the Mongols for several years after 1260, at least until the early days of Abagha's reign, and then he returned to Palestine. Subsequently, he would have been the chaplain to Thomas Agni, now Patriarch of Jerusalem (see Brunel, 44 n. 2; Jackson, "Crisis," 505 n. 1). In 1273–4, David was sent back to the west as representative of the Patriarch and King Hugh III of Jerusalem and Cyprus, together with Abagha's ambassadors. I am grateful to Dr. Jackson for helping me clarify David's career.

⁸³ Roberg, "Tartaren," 300; Boyle, "Princes of Europe," 28–9; Meyvaert, "Letter," *passim*; Richard, "Ambassade," 298–301, suggests that the mission and letter actually made it to Louis; but cf. Morgan, *Mongols*, 183; Meyvaert, "Letter," 247; Jackson, "Crisis," 236 n. 228.

⁸⁴ Meyvaert, "Letter," 249.

Christianity, and his desire for a missionary to instruct and execute his baptism. With his baptism effected, Christendom would help Hülegü in his struggle against the Saracens, including the dispatch of soldiers. The Pope concluded by telling Hülegü that he had instructed the Patriarch of Jerusalem to make inquiries of his intentions, as John had not provided any authorization of these.⁸⁵

While Hülegü may have had pro-Christian sympathies, his real intentions towards embracing the Christian faith are unknown.⁸⁶ There is no mention of such in the letter to Louis IX. This claim may have been wishful thinking on John's part, or a deliberate ploy by him, with or without Hülegü's connivance, in order to cultivate support among the Latins. As will be seen below, this is not the last time that Christian envoys of the Īlhkhāns were to convey such information in the West.

Nothing concrete came of this letter. While, perhaps, the European Christian leaders were now willing to see the Mongols in a less negative light and to consider them as partners in the anti-Muslim struggle,⁸⁷ this did not bring about a willingness to undertake a concerted joint effort. Evidently, the reality of the intra-European struggle, especially between the papacy and its supporters against the House of Hohenstaufen, prevented a new crusade. It is also possible that the Pope did not want to commit himself until he had received a more official message from the Īlhkhān. It seems, however, that Urban's insistence on baptism before any assistance could be offered was just an excuse not to give a substantial reply to Hülegü's interesting offer. There were no additional diplomatic contacts between Hülegü and Latin Christendom.

By late 1266, Abagha must have felt secure enough on the throne to initiate diplomatic contacts with the West, in the hope that this would lead to military cooperation which would help decide the war against the Mamluks. Abagha's repeated missions show the great importance he attached to this idea. In late 1266 or early 1267, the Īlhkhān sent a mission with letters to the West. Abagha's envoys reached both Pope Clement IV and King James I of Aragon, arriving at the latter's court in the early months of 1267 and bringing convincing assertions of Abagha's friendship and assistance. James, in turn, sent James Alaric to Abagha as an envoy. On his way eastward, James met the Pope, who commissioned him to act as his envoy as well. Clement also gave an answer to Abagha's now lost letter, whose general contents can be reconstructed from the reply: Abagha had suggested that the Western forces should join with his and Michael Palaeologus's armies, in order to trap the Mamluks between them. He then enquired about which route the western armies would take to

⁸⁵ Lupprian, *Beziehungen*, 216–19 (no. 41); partial translation in D'Ohsson, *Histoire*, 3:410–12. See also Boyle, "Princes of Europe," 28–9.

⁸⁶ See, e.g., Vardan, tr. Thomson, 220; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. Quatremère, 94. It would seem from Vardan, tr. Thomson, 222, that he never became a Christian.

⁸⁷ Richard, "Debut," 297.

Palestine.⁸⁸ In his reply, dated 20 August 1267, Clement first expressed his consternation that Abagha's letter was in Mongolian, and there was no one at his court who could translate it for him. The envoy, however, was able to give a rendition of it. The Pope proceeded to express his joy that Abagha had seen the true faith,⁸⁹ and at reports that the Kings of France and Navarre, followed by a great number of nobles and soldiers, had taken the cross and been joined by many lords from other countries. The Pope added, however, that he did not yet know the route they intended to follow, but would send word to Abagha when he learnt this.⁹⁰

Encouraged by this seemingly positive response, Abagha wrote another letter in the summer of 1268 and dispatched it with James Alaric and two of his own envoys. In it, he confirmed that he had received the Pope's letter and explained that he had written his previous letter in Mongolian because his Latin scribe was not present. Abagha had sent his brother Hegei [= Ejei] with an army to help the Christians; Hegei would hurry to join up with the Christian army promised by the Pope. Together with the King of Aragon [James I] and the Byzantine Emperor, they would destroy the Egyptians. To negotiate this joint campaign, Abagha sent the custodian of the Church at his court, Salomon Arkaoun [= *erke'un*, "oriental Christian"], and a certain Nekpei (Negübei?).⁹¹

James Alaric, accompanied by envoys of Abagha and Michael Palaeologus, met with the Pope. Subsequently, he made his way to King James, to whom he delivered a letter from the Īlkhān. James himself recorded the contents of this missive in his diary: if James were to come to Ayās or another port, in order to recover the Holy Land, Abagha would provide supplies and other assistance.⁹² James's nascent plans for a crusade thus received a boost, and he went about fervently making preparations for his departure. In September 1269, he set out with a large flotilla, but soon after leaving port most of the force was scattered by a sudden storm, and was compelled to turn back.⁹³ Only James's

⁸⁸ R. Röhrich, "Der Kreuzzug des Königs Jacob I. von Aragonien (1269)," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung* 11 (1890):372–95; Boyle, "Princes of Europe," 29.

⁸⁹ Actually, Abagha was probably a shamanist with strong Buddhist sympathies; see P. Jackson, "Abagha," *Elr*, 1:63.

⁹⁰ Lupprian, *Beziehungen*, 220–2 (no. 42); trans. in D'Ohsson, *Histoire*, 3:540–2; Boyle, "Princes of Europe," 29.

⁹¹ Lupprian, *Beziehungen*, 71, 223–5 (no. 43; summary on p. 223); Boyle, "Princes of Europe," 29–30, who in n. 20 notes (following Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. 'Alizādah, 3:11) that Ejei died in 1265, ten days after Hülegü. But Ejei was active in Seljuq Rūm, ca. 669–670/1271; see below, ch. 7, pp. 161–2. He was also found in the consultations after Abagha's death in 1282; Rashīd al-Dīn, ed. 'Alizādah, 3:168.

⁹² *The Chronicle of James I of Aragon*, tr. J. Forster and P. de Gayngos (London, 1883), 599–600; Röhrich, "Jacob I.," 374.

⁹³ Röhrich, "Jacob I.," 373–8; Geanakoplos, *Emperor*, 220; Boyle, "Princes of Europe," 30; J. Abel-Remusat, "Mémoires sur les relations politiques des princes chrétiens, et particulièrement, des rois de France, avec les empereurs mongols," *Mémoires de l'Institut Royal de France*, 7 (1824):341–2. The Mamluk sources have some knowledge of these relations, and report the destruction of the Aragonese flotilla; *Rawḍ*, 361–2. Nuwayrī, MS. 2m, fol. 247a–b

two bastard sons, accompanied by a small body of troops, eventually made their way to Acre. Their impact on developments there was minimal, and they returned soon afterwards without having achieved anything.⁹⁴

In the summer of 1270, Louis IX finally launched the crusade about which Pope Clement IV had written to Abagha in 1267. Yet, instead of taking the forces at his disposal to Syria or Egypt, and attempting to realize the potential of a joint campaign with the Mongols, Louis attacked Tunis. Louis's exact motives and the fate of his crusade are not our subject here.⁹⁵ What would have happened had he taken his army and landed on Mamluk soil remains only speculation. The chances are, however, that he would have fought Baybars alone. No matter how interested Abagha was in an anti-Mamluk alliance, at this time he was personally involved in a fierce war with Baraq in Khurasān.⁹⁶ The Mamluk sources report that Baybars received word that Louis had set out to invade his territory, and made the necessary arrangements. Subsequently, he learnt that the French King had gone to Tunis instead and died there. Unlike James's would-be crusade, the Mamluk sources have no information that Louis's expedition had been preceded by negotiations with the Mongols.⁹⁷

The Mamluks were more aware of the contacts the following year between Edward of England and the Mongols. Edward and his men arrived in Acre in the spring of 1271, having been with Louis IX in Tunis. Upon reaching the Holy Land, Edward sent an embassy to Abagha.⁹⁸ The Ilkhān sent back the following reply: "After talking over the matter, we have on our account resolved to send to your aid Cemakar [= Samaghar]⁹⁹ at the head of a mighty force; thus, when you discuss among yourselves the other plans involving the afore-mentioned Cemakar be sure to make explicit arrangements as to the exact month and day on which you will engage the enemy."¹⁰⁰

(s.a. 667/1268–9); Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 179a (= ed. Lyons, 1:173); cf. Maqrīzī, 1:584. See R. Amitai-Preiss, "Mamluk Perceptions of the Mongol–Frankish Rapprochement," *MHR* 7 (1992):53–4.

⁹⁴ Röhrich, "Jacob I.," 378; Prawer, *Histoire*, 2:494–6; Grousset, *Croisades*, 3:649–51; Thorau, *Baybars*, 199–201; cf. Runciman, *Crusades*, 3:331.

⁹⁵ See Prawer, *Histoire*, 2:496–9; Runciman, *Sicilian Vespers*, 157–61; cf. R.S. Lopez, "Fulfillment and Diversion in the Eight Crusades," in B.Z. Kedar *et al.* (eds.), *Outremer* (Jerusalem, 1982), 25–6. ⁹⁶ See above, pp. 87–8.

⁹⁷ Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 184a (= ed. Lyons, 1:177–8; cf. shortened version in Maqrīzī, 1:587–8); Yūnīnī, 2:455–6; *Tuhfa*, 69. Information on this expedition is mistakenly repeated s.a. 661 by Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 36b; hence Maqrīzī, 1:502. See the fuller discussion in Amitai-Preiss, "Mamluk Perceptions," 54–5.

⁹⁸ R. Röhrich, "La croisade du Prince Édouard d'Angleterre (1270–1274)," in "Études sur les derniers temps du royaume de Jérusalem," *AOL* 1 (1881):622–7; L. Lockhart, "The Relations between Edward I and Edward II of England and the Mongol Il-Khans of Persia," *Iran* 6 (1968):23–4; Riley-Smith, in Ibn al-Furāt, ed. Lyons, 2:242–3; Grousset, *Croisades*, 3:659–60.

⁹⁹ Samaghar was the Mongol commander in Rūm at this time. The Mamluk sources name him as leading the Mongol force into northern Syria this year. See ch. 7, p. 160.

¹⁰⁰ Röhrich, "Études," 623 n. 35, citing *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, ed. T. Stapleton (London, 1846), 143; translation from Sinor, "Mongol Strategy," 244.

The result of these contacts was that in mid-Rabīʿ I 670/ca. 20 October 1271, a Mongol corps under Samaghar and the Pervāne raided north Syria, advance elements reaching as far south as the environs of Hārim and Afāmiya. Baybars, already in Syria, quickly organized his forces, sent for reinforcements from Egypt, and began to move north. Probably alerted by his intelligence service, the Sultan had gained advance warning that both the Mongols and the Christians were planning attacks. It was thought, however, that the latter would attack Safad. The Mongol forces, nonplussed by the approaching Mamluk army, withdrew, ending any prospect of Mongol–Frankish cooperation at this time. On 12 Rabīʿ II/17 November, Baybars entered Aleppo.¹⁰¹

About two weeks later, while Baybars was still at Aleppo, he received word that Edward had raided Qāqūn. Even before Baybars could return south, Edward was chased back to Acre by Mamluk amirs stationed in Palestine. Edward, it would appear, was merely taking advantage of what appeared to him as a momentary tactical advantage, Baybars’s preoccupation elsewhere. Ibn ʿAbd al-Zāhir reported that Edward’s attack on Qāqūn was in agreement with the Mongols, but in reality there was no effective coordination between Edward and Abagha, and the latter’s above quoted letter occasioned no effective response by the Christian leaders. Edward’s “crusade” brought about no change in the balance of power in Syria, even in the short run. After surviving a severe wound sustained during an assassination attempt inspired by Baybars, he returned to England in September 1272.¹⁰²

In 1277, envoys of Abagha delivered a message to Edward, now King of England, apologizing for not providing sufficient aid (in 1270); no explanation, however, was offered. For what it is worth, the message implies that in the future Abagha would be more forthcoming.¹⁰³ While the reason for Abagha’s failure to mount a serious campaign in 1270 remains a mystery,¹⁰⁴ it is clear that he had missed a real (and perhaps the only) opportunity for a joint campaign with the Franks.

After a hiatus of three years, Abagha again tried to establish contact with the West. News had reached him of an impending council of Christian leaders. Abagha thus sent a delegation to call for a concerted effort against the common enemy. In May 1274, a council of Church and lay leaders was

¹⁰¹ *Rawḍ*, 395; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 202a; Maqrīzī, 1:599–600. See ch. 5, p. 125, for this raid.

¹⁰² *Rawḍ*, 396–7; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 202b–203a (= ed. Lyons, 1:197; see Riley-Smith’s detailed remark in *ibid.*, 2:243); Maqrīzī, 1:600. See Amitai-Preiss, “Mamluk Perceptions,” 55–6; Thorau, *Baybars*, 221–2; Runciman, *Crusades*, 3:337–8; Prawer, *Histoire*, 2:499–505.

¹⁰³ Grousset, *Croisades*, 3:693; Röhrich, “Prince Edouard,” 626 n. 57. On the mission see below.

¹⁰⁴ Both Lockhart, “Relations,” 24 and Boyle, “Princes of Europe,” 30–1, write that Abagha was unable to send a larger force to aid Edward because he was preoccupied on the Chaghatayid front. This suggestion, however, is mistaken: the war with Baraq was in 1270, while Edward arrived in Syria in 1271.

convened in Lyon by Pope Gregory X, who was greatly concerned about the fate of the Holy Land. The Council was called to discuss Church reform, the union of the Latin and Greek Churches and a crusade to the East. In the end, decisions were taken only on the second topic, although in the long run nothing was to come of these.¹⁰⁵

The Mongol delegation included Abagha's translator, the Dominican Richard, and numbered sixteen in all. It was accompanied by David of Ashby, who had been at the Īlkhānid court for several years, had evidently returned to Palestine, and had now come to the Council as an envoy of the Patriarch of Jerusalem (Thomas Agni) and the King of Jerusalem (Hugh III).¹⁰⁶ The Mongol delegation was introduced to the Council at the beginning of July. The original letter, which they brought from Abagha, has not come down to us, but there exists a memorandum written by Richard for the edification of the Council participants. It begins with an account of Mongol-Christian relations, in which are described David of Ashby's mission ca. 1260, Hülegü's attempt to send envoys to the West and the Īlkhāns' concern for the Christians in their realm. It then tells of Abagha's wish for peace and an alliance with the Latins. Previously, Abagha could not set out against the Mamluks, who were the adversaries of the Christians, because he was threatened by other enemies around him (that is, other Mongol states). He had, however, been victorious, and then made peace with his former enemies. Abagha had been in the midst of preparations against the Egyptians¹⁰⁷ when he heard of the Council and decided to inform it of his plans.¹⁰⁸

Gregory's answer, dated 13 March 1275, was couched in general terms. After the reading of his letter to the Council and the hearing of the envoys, the Pope had prayed that Abagha would be shown the way to the true faith. The Pope would send envoys before the setting out of a crusading army, as early as the situation would allow. These envoys would bring Abagha a full answer (to the proposals made in his letter of the previous year), and would speak of spiritual matters of interest to the Īlkhān and his family.¹⁰⁹ This response was not due to Gregory's lack of enthusiasm for a crusade. From the beginning of his papacy, he had been concerned with the Holy Land and the possibility of organizing a new crusade. Even if the crusading spirit was not on the wane, it could not be translated into an effective plan of action for a campaign to the Levant, not least because the various European rulers had their own pressing interests and problems. Gregory's death in 1276 brought to a formal end these

¹⁰⁵ For the second Council of Lyon, see: S. Schein, *Fideles Crucis* (Oxford, 1991), 22–50; Runciman, *Crusades*, 3:341; *idem*, *Sicilian Vespers*, 166–86; Roberg, "Tartaren," 283–6.

¹⁰⁶ See above, p. 95, n. 82; also: Brunel, "David," 39–46, esp. 44. David prepared a memorandum for the Council, *Faits des Tartares*, but the MS of his tract was lost in a fire in Turin in 1904; see also de Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys*, 153.

¹⁰⁷ In August 1273, Baybars heard of an impending Mongol campaign into Syria, although this offensive never materialized; see ch. 5, pp. 132–3.

¹⁰⁸ Roberg, "Tartaren," 298–302 (see discussion in 289–94); Lupprian, *Beziehungen*, 226–32 (no. 44). ¹⁰⁹ Lupprian, *Beziehungen*, 75, 231–2 (no. 45).

incipient crusading efforts, and with it the hope for Christian–Mongol cooperation in Abagha's reign.¹¹⁰

After the Council, David of Ashby continued on to England and delivered Abagha's message to Edward I. Edward wrote back at the beginning of 1275, first noting Abagha's affection for the Christian religion and the resolution that he had "taken to bring help to the Christians and the Holy Land against the enemies of Christianity." He prayed that the Pope would execute his plan for the crusade. But, he himself would be unable to say when he could arrive in the Holy Land, because the Pope had yet to order an expedition. As soon as Edward gained some more certain information about this crusade, he would inform Abagha.¹¹¹ Edward was clearly hiding here behind formalities, and it is doubtful whether he harbored any desire to return to the Holy Land, especially after his experiences there at the beginning of the decade.

At the end of 1276 or beginning of 1277, two new envoys – John and James Vassalli – arrived in Rome, during the papacy of John XXI. They brought a letter, now lost, calling on the Christians to launch a campaign to the Holy Land, and promising free passage, logistical help and Abagha's personal intervention if such an expedition were to set out. No less important in Christian eyes, the envoys reported that Abagha's uncle, Qubilai Qa'an, had converted and had requested missionaries for instruction. Thereupon these two envoys continued on to both the courts of Philip III of France and Edward I of England, conveying the same message. To Edward they brought an additional missive offering apologies for Abagha's inability to effectively intervene in Syria in 1270 (see above).¹¹²

This entreaty engendered no political or military response. In his answer, the Pope – now Nicholas III – echoed Abagha's offer for aid, but made no further comment. As for the news of Qubilai's conversion, the Pope was beside himself with joy. He wrote that he would send five friars to administer the baptism to those Mongols who requested it; they were then to continue on to Qubilai. Abagha was then requested to receive them well, to protect and provide for them and to listen to what they had to say.¹¹³ The Pope also sent a letter for Qubilai with these friars, in which he congratulated him on his conversion and enjoined him to receive the friars well.¹¹⁴ For the time being, at least, the diplomatic activity of the papacy with the Īlkhāns was reduced to a policy of religious propaganda.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Schein, *Fideles Crucis*, 44–50; Runciman, *Sicilian Vespers*, 168, 186–90; Lopez, "Fulfillment," 20; Grousset, *Croisades*, 3:693.

¹¹¹ Abel-Remusat, "Mémoires," 7:345; D'Ohsson, *Histoire*, 3:543–4; Lockhart, "Relations," 24; Boyle, "Princes of Europe," 30–1.

¹¹² Abel-Remusat, "Mémoires," 7:345–50; D'Ohsson, *Histoire*, 3:544–6; Roberg, "Tartaren," 296 n. 311; Lupprian, *Beziehungen*, 75, 233; Lockhart, *Relations*, 24–5; Boyle, "Princes of Europe," 31; Grousset, *Croisades*, 3:693. It is unclear if there were two separate missions to England, one in 1276 and the other in 1277, or if these are different accounts of the same mission. The latter possibility seems more likely.

¹¹³ Lupprian, *Beziehungen*, 76; 233–6 (no. 46); trans. in D'Ohsson, *Histoire*, 3:546–8.

¹¹⁴ Lupprian, *Beziehungen*, 76, 237–41 (no. 47). ¹¹⁵ De Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys*, 154–7.

An interesting addendum to this episode is a safe conduct pass issued by Abagha for his territory (in Mongolian), and dated November 1279. The pass was made out for one Baracirgun, who can be identified with Gerhard of Prato (frère Gerard), and other Church officials. Gerhard was one of the five friars mentioned by name in the above letter to Abagha, who had been sent as missionaries to both Abagha and Qubilai.¹¹⁶ It is clear that Nicholas's envoys reached as far as Iran, although whether they went any further is unclear.¹¹⁷ This is the last record of any contact between Abagha and the Latin West.

Although the main Īlkhānid diplomatic effort in opening a second front was directed towards the rulers of Latin Europe, the Mongols also had contact with the Franks of the Levant. There is ample evidence in the Mamluk sources that Baybars was aware of these relations. Thus, after the Mongol withdrawal from al-Bira in 663/1265, Baybars complained to the Castellan of Jaffa about the Frankish leaders: "This people have committed many offences against me, such as their writing to the Mongols to attack my territories."¹¹⁸ Frankish-Īlkhānid relations were affected by the arrival of European crusaders, as in 668/1269, when the remnants of the Aragonese crusade reached Acre, and "the Franks of the coast made common cause with the Mongols to attack Muslim territory."¹¹⁹

Some idea of the Mamluk apprehension of a joint European-Mongol attack may be seen in the following passage by Qirtay al-Khaznadārī, who reported s.a. 670/1271–2 that Baybars had heard of an impending crusade called by the Pope. Qirtay writes: "[Baybars] was frightened for himself, for Egypt, for Syria and for his armies. He said to himself, 'If the Franks come to me by way of Alexandria, Damietta and Acre, I am afraid that the Mongols will attack me from the East. My position will be too weak to deal with these two parties.'"¹²⁰ Baybars thereupon sent an envoy to the King of England (Edward), and won over his friendship. The English King subsequently refused to participate in the crusade, which thus does not get off the ground.¹²¹ While this particular passage is surely apocryphal,¹²² it does provide an indication of Baybars's fear, or at least the perception of this fear by a writer in the next generation, of having to deal with a war on two fronts. It is well

¹¹⁶ A. Mostaert and F.W. Cleaves, "Trois documents mongols des archives secrètes vaticanes," *HJAS* 15 (1952):430–45; Lupprian, *Beziehungen*, 242–3 (no. 48).

¹¹⁷ Lupprian, *Beziehungen*, 76; de Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys*, 157.

¹¹⁸ *Husn*, 87–8; trans. in P.M. Holt, "Some Observations on Shāfi' b. 'Alī's Biography of Baybars," *JSS* 29 (1984):127, who writes that the Castellan was presumably John d'Ibelin, Count of Jaffa. The continuation of this passage shows that Baybars is referring to the Frankish princes of Syria and not those of Europe.

¹¹⁹ *Rawḍ*, 361–2; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 179a–b (= ed. Lyons, 1:172); Maqrīzī, 1:584 (abridged version); 'Aynī, fol. 100a. See ch. 5, p. 124, for this Mongol raid.

¹²⁰ Qirtay, fol. 98a; see fols. 96a–97b for the Pope's call for a crusade, as a result of the defeat of Baybars's navy at Cyprus in 670/1271. ¹²¹ *Ibid.*, fols. 98a–99a.

¹²² R. Irwin, "The Image of the Byzantine and the Frank in Arab Popular Literature," *MHR* 4 (1989):237–40; Amitai-Preiss, "Mamluk Perceptions," 63–4.

possible that Mamluk aggression towards the Franks of Outremer was at least partly motivated by this apprehension.¹²³

Throughout this period, the Italian cities of Venice and Genoa played a certain, if ambivalent, role in the war between the Mamluks and the Īlkhānids. Genoa exercised effective control of the important trade in young mamluks from the territory of the Golden Horde, via the Bosphorus to Egypt.¹²⁴ Genoese embassies are known to have come to the Sultan's court in 661/1263, 663/1265 and 674/1275,¹²⁵ and doubtless the Genoese traded regularly with the merchants of the Sultanate.¹²⁶ At the same time, at least from the 1270s onwards, the Genoese also traded inside Īlkhānid territory, and subsequently individual Genoese were highly favored in the Īlkhān's court.¹²⁷ Merchants from Venice, Genoa's bitter rival, found fertile ground for their activities in the Īlkhānid state, and as early as 1264 there is an example of a Venetian trading in Tabriz.¹²⁸ This did not prevent them from engaging in trade with the Mamluks.¹²⁹ In fact, the Italian trading cities do not seem to have been too troubled by the Mamluks systematically taking apart the crusader states of the Levant, nor were the Mamluks overly perturbed by the Italian support of these states and their commercial links with the Īlkhānids. In the interest of trade and profit, other considerations were put aside. This explains why later Church interdictions against trade with the Mamluks, especially of strategic goods, were generally ignored by the Italians.¹³⁰

In *The Sicilian Vespers*, Sir Steven Runciman has written: "The Mongol alliance [with the West] was particularly advocated by the Genoese, who had a practical monopoly of the Mongol trade in the Black Sea and in northern Syria. It was therefore opposed by the Venetians, and by Charles [of Anjou], who also had no wish to see Genoa enriched."¹³¹ While there is no questioning the point that Charles had little interest in an alliance with the Īlkhānids, it must be admitted that Runciman has confused the issue here. He does not distinguish between the Mongols of the Golden Horde and those ruled by the dynasty of Hülegü. It does not necessarily follow that because the Genoese enjoyed a predominant role in trade with the former, that they would have advocated an anti-Mamluk alliance between the West and the Īlkhānids, as understood here. In fact, from the Genoese point of view, such an alliance would have been quite detrimental to their very profitable position as middlemen in the Golden Horde–Mamluk slave trade.

¹²³ This point is further developed in Amitai-Preiss, "Mamluk Perceptions," 62–5.

¹²⁴ See above, pp. 85–6.

¹²⁵ *Rawḍ*, 171; Ibn al-Furāt, MS. Vienna, fol. 30a; 7:44; Maqrīzī, 1:495 (addition by editor from Ibn Wāsil), 1:621; *Husn*, 101; Thorau, *Baybars*, 163; Irwin, "Supply of Money," 77, 83.

¹²⁶ E. Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1983), 10–11.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 57; L. Petech, "Les marchands italiens dans l'empire mongol," *JA* 250 (1962):560–1.

¹²⁸ Petech, "Marchands," 560. ¹²⁹ Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, 9–10.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 17–18; Canard, "Un traité," 210 n. 1. ¹³¹ *Sicilian Vespers*, 201.

A number of observations can be made about the nature of Īlkhānid–European relations during the reigns of Hülegü and Abagha. First, throughout this period, the Īlkhāns were presented in Europe as having inclinations towards Christianity (usually of an unspecified variety), if not being on the verge of undergoing baptism. This, however, is not evident from the extant Mongol letters, where we only find expressions of the Īlkhāns’ friendliness to Christianity and Christians, be they in their kingdom or elsewhere, and the desire for an alliance with the Christian West against the Muslims. Rather, it seems that this information, or more accurately disinformation, was conveyed verbally by the envoys themselves. Whether this was because of orders from the Īlkhān or the envoys’ own initiative (or both) is difficult to say, but the recurrence of this disinformation indicates that there were at least some guidelines from above. The obvious intent of such a ploy was to increase sympathy among the Western leaders for the Mongols and their proposal for a joint campaign against the Mamluks. As we have seen, such a device had no real impact.

Second, a change in attitude can be discerned among both the Mongols and the papacy towards each other. In his 1262 letter to Louis IX, Hülegü adopted a fairly haughty tone, in which he essentially ordered the French King to join him in a joint military operation against the Muslim enemy. We see here the traditional Mongol approach to diplomatic relations at work, albeit perhaps in a more moderate form than before. Abagha adopted a different tack and turned to the various European rulers, be they popes or kings, as equals. The final dissolution of the united Mongol empire, successive Īlkhānid defeats and Mamluk success in the border war may have brought him to eschew the supercilious approach, at least in his diplomatic dealings with the West. At the same time, the papacy was also adopting a more flexible approach. Urban IV had conditioned Western assistance to the Mongols on their becoming Christians. Later popes, at least during the period under discussion here, dropped this demand, limiting themselves to attempts to convince Abagha of the advantages, spiritual and otherwise, to be gained if he were to convert. Perhaps the popes had arrived at a more realistic understanding of the religious inclinations of the Īlkhān, or, in some cases, were so desirous of an alliance that they became less fastidious.¹³²

Why did these diplomatic contacts not bear fruit? First, Īlkhānid–European negotiations suffered from the vast distances that envoys had to travel. The long duration of each mission clearly made difficult the coordination of a common strategy, let alone the planning of a joint campaign, against the Mamluks. This “objective” condition, however, does not free the European rulers, including popes, of the responsibility for the failure of these exchanges.

¹³² De Rachewitz, *Papal Envoys*, 153–4, makes this point about Gregory X’s response to Abagha after the Council of Lyon. See also Roberg, “Tartaren,” 279–80.

The European princes were unable or unwilling to heed the repeated Mongol calls for a joint campaign of some sort. Of course, there was no *a priori* reason why any ruler had to be interested in a crusade or the fate of Outremer. But the actions of most of these rulers (Charles of Anjou being the apparent exception) demonstrate that many of them did evince such an interest, at least during one stage of their lives. The one time a large multi-national crusading force did set out, under Louis IX in 1270, its strength was dissipated at Tunis. It must be remembered, however, that during that particular year Abagha was in no position to extend much help, had it actually reached the Levant.

Yet, Abagha must bear a certain amount of blame himself. In 1271, he sent only a large raiding party at Edward of England's request, even though the war in Khurasān had been concluded the previous year. A larger Mongol army, with clear objectives, could well have caused Baybars much worry, particularly with the Franks, still a sizeable force and reinforced by a small but not insignificant contingent under Edward, found in his rear. This was the closest Abagha came to realizing his goal of a common campaign and he essentially let the chance go by. Abagha's behavior that year is inexplicable, especially in view of his subsequent requests for an alliance against the Mamluks.

Be that as it may, the fact is that throughout his reign Abagha sent at least four embassies to the West. Each visited more than one court, including that of the Pope, and carried a letter calling for a joint anti-Muslim campaign. This phenomenon, perhaps more than any other, indicates the importance which Abagha attributed to the war with the Mamluks, and the extent to which he wanted to extend his sway into Syria and perhaps beyond. Most of his successors shared these goals, and in order to realize them they attempted, like him, to interest the Christian West in a common venture. They were all equally unsuccessful in achieving this goal.