17. The Mongols in the Thirteenth Century

18. The Mongols in the Fifteenth Century
In this chapter an attempt will be made to give a succinct but comprehensive picture of the relations that existed between the Mongols and western Europe, with particular emphasis on their effect upon the crusades. To achieve this aim it will be necessary to start with the period of the Second Crusade, and thus to go over ground partially covered—from a different point of view—in previous volumes. An effort has been made to avoid needless duplication and, by relating this material to relevant parts of the chapters contributed to this volume by other historians, to reconstruct the links established for the first time in recorded history between the eastern and western borderlands of the Eurasian continent.

The number of relevant primary sources is so great that an enumeration would be both impracticable and superfluous. Evidence can be culled from innumerable western and Iranian sources of the 13th and 14th centuries. The footnotes will show which chronicles or other documents yielded the principal data used.

The following collections of sources were particularly useful: Girolamo Golubovich, *Bibliotheca bio-bibliographica della Terra Santa e dell' Oriente francescano* (vols. I–V, Quaracchi, 1906–1927); Anastasius van den Wyngaert, *Sinica franciscana, I, Ithéra et relationes Fratrum Minorum saeculi XIII et XIV* (Quaracchi, 1929); *Recueil des historiens des croisades: Documents arméniens*, vol. II (Paris, 1906), which contains, among other sources, *La Flor des estoires de la terre d'Orient* by the Armenian Hayton, *Directorium ad passagium faciendum* by the Pseudo-Brocardus, *De modo Saracenos extirpandi* by William Adam, and *Les Gestes des Chiprois*. The appendix of Johannes Laurentius Mosheim, *Historia Tartarorum ecclesiastica* (Helmstadt, 1741) remains a useful collection of documents. There are no primary Mongol narrative sources of importance from the point of view of western-Mongol relations. Other Mongol documents, such as letters, will be quoted where necessary.

In the thirteenth century the immense military power of the Mongols was a decisive factor in Asian history, and hence could have exerted great influence on the Moslem-Christian confrontation. At that time no power capable of resisting a full-scale military onslaught by the Mongols existed anywhere in the world. Individual Mongol armies could sometimes be resisted, but only because they were operating without the full backing of Mongol power. It is highly doubtful whether the Great Khan Kubilai was even aware of the skirmishes which some of his lieutenants fought, and lost, in Anatolia. But it is certain that the forces which achieved the conquest of China and pushed far into Indochina could have conquered with much greater ease the small states of the Near East and even Byzantium.

It is important to bear in mind that from the very beginning of the


Special mention is due to the following: Abel-Rémusat, "Mémoires sur les relations politiques des princes chrétiens et particulièrement des rois de France, avec les empereurs mongols," *Mémoires... de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, VI (1882), 396–469; VII (1824), 335–438, still unsurpassed in many respects; and Paul Pelliot, "Les Mongols et la papauté," *Revue de l'Orient chrétien*, XXIII (1922), 3–30; XXIV (1924), 225–335; XXVIII (1931), 3–84, not, as the title would suggest, a comprehensive account of the relations but a masterly elucidation of several problems pertaining to the subject.


Mongol expansion, military operations in the west had a low priority in the eyes of the Mongol leaders. This is particularly true of the early military campaigns against the ‘Abbâsids and the later ones against the Selchûkids of Rûm. Thus the Mongol generals Jebe and Sübôtei, pursuing the fleeing Khorezm-Shâh Muḥammad, did not turn toward Baghdad after his death in 1220, but embarked on a rather superfluous military campaign against Georgia and the peoples of the Kipchak steppe. The caliph an-Nâṣir, well aware of the danger of being crushed in the fearful pincer of the advancing Mongol and Christian armies, asked for help that never came,¹ and indeed owing to the sudden northward push of Jebe and Sübôtei was not even needed. The crushing defeat inflicted on the joint Russian and Kuman forces in the battle of the Kalka in 1223 makes it abundantly clear that it was well within the capabilities of the forces commanded by Jebe and Sübôtei to achieve a victory over such forces as the caliph could have mustered against them. The fall of Baghdad at such an early date would have exerted a considerable influence on the crusades and would in itself have been an important victory. If no attempt was made at that time to conquer Baghdad, the reason must be sought in the east-oriented Mongol policy rather than in the short-sightedness of the Mongol rulers or in any presumed weakness of their forces. It is a revealing fact that the Secret History of the Mongols, a contemporary document of great importance, gives detailed descriptions of internal squabbles and of campaigns against China, while the militarily amazing western campaigns are dealt with in only a few lines.²

In assessing the Mongol role in the crusades it must be borne in mind that neither the Christians nor the Moslems possessed a military capability even approaching that of the Mongol main army, and that in the order of Mongol priorities the Anatolian theater followed not only the East Asian but also that of Mongol involvement in eastern Europe. Thus the campaign which culminated in the devastation of Hungary in 1241–1242 was led by Batu—possibly the second most powerful man in the Mongol empire—assisted by an impressive array of princes, whereas we do not even know the name of the Mongol general who, at the same time, commanded the operations on Selchûkid territory which led to the battle at Köse Dagh in 1243 and the subsequent collapse of the Selchûkid state.

1. See volume II of this work, p. 421.
Another aspect of Mongol involvement in the crusades deserves attention. It is well known that the line dividing friends from foes did not always coincide with that between Christians and Moslems. Yet, despite frequent internal dissensions in the ranks of both parties, the basic religious pattern remained, its outlines accentuated by racial and linguistic differences. At the time of the Mongols’ appearance on the Anatolian horizon neither of the opposing camps, Christian or Moslem, had a distinct, undeniable advantage over the other, and the possibility of outside help was the most realistic hope each party could entertain. In the “long chronicle of greed, stupidity, treachery, duplicity, and incompetence” so characteristic of the crusades, no single factor is more deserving of the last of these epithets than the obvious reluctance of each party to avail itself of Mongol power to achieve ultimate victory. Perhaps the most striking example of this unrealistic attitude is the permission given by the Franks of Acre to Kutuz to pass through their territory on his way to encounter—and defeat at ‘Ain Jalūt on September 3, 1260—the Mongol army led by the Christian Kitbogha. It is certain that a joint effort by Franks and Mongols could have checked Mamluk expansion. It would seem that for the Moslems and Christians of Outremer, accustomed to each other’s presence, the Mongols were unwelcome intruders, spoil-sports as it were, bringing a new, disquieting dimension to the old, familiar conflict, breaking the pattern of what had become routine warfare. It is important to note that attempts to seek an alliance with the Mongols were made by princes of France or England rather than by the rulers of the Latin states, entangled as these were in dissensions that clouded not only the real issues but also the means to solve them. History might exonerate the Moslems, the ultimate victors in the conflict. In the seven centuries that have elapsed since that time, no circumstances have been discovered that would mitigate the political short-sightedness displayed by the crusaders.

From the middle of the twelfth century it was common belief in Europe that a Far Eastern Christian prince, fabulously rich and powerful, was to assist the crusaders by attacking the Moslems from the rear. The news spread through Otto of Freising, who made himself the mouthpiece of bishop Hugh of Jabala in a desperate appeal for western aid. According to Otto, Hugh had reported that

3. See volume II of this work, p. xviii.
5. See volume I of this work, p. 466.
“one John, king and priest, who dwells in the Extreme Orient beyond Persia and Armenia and is a Christian and a descendant of the Magi who are mentioned in the Gospel, fired by the example of his fathers who came to adore Christ in the cradle, was proposing to go to Jerusalem to help the crusaders.”

Whether the victory of the Kara-Kitai over the Selchukid Sanjar in 1141 was the historical impetus giving rise to the Prester John legend is of relatively little importance. The theme of the story of a mighty potentate eager to help his western Christian brethren in conquering the Holy Land was so much in accordance with the general trends of medieval thought, it responded so completely to the material and moral expectations of the time, that it was given credence in all quarters. The objective evidence of the existence of Prester John, flimsy though it is in our eyes, was sufficient to induce pope Alexander III to write him a letter.

The help expected from Prester John did not materialize in the middle of the twelfth century and yet, almost eighty years later, and for the sake of the same cause slightly remodeled, the legend came once again to the fore of political activities. After the fall of Damietta in November 1219, James of Vitry “preached publicly that David, king of the two Indies, hastened to the help of the Christians, bringing with him most ferocious peoples who will devour like beasts the sacrilegious Saracens.” James of Vitry’s information was based on a report originally written in Arabic and then translated into French and finally into Latin, a *Relatio de Davide rege Tartarorum Christiano*. The terrible distortion of proper names notwithstanding—they are often unrecognizable—the *Relatio* contains a summary but not altogether inaccurate report of the Mongol campaigns between 1218 and 1221. In it the deeds of Chinggis (Genghis Khan) are attributed to a king David, “who is usually called Prester John,” a somewhat unexpected identification if we consider that the latter was thought of as an adult some eighty years earlier.

The Mongol conquest—known to Europe largely through James of Vitry and the legate Pelagius—raised considerable hopes, and in 1221 in an encyclical letter Honorius III announced in glowing terms to

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7. See volume II of this work, p. 669.
the archbishops of Gaul and to the English clergy that king David, commonly called Prester John, a God-fearing man, offered battle to the shah (called soldano Persidis) of Persia, occupied his land, and was only ten days’ journey from Baghdad. It is perhaps not too far-fetched to suggest that these rumors, widely circulated since 1219, were a decisive factor in Pelagius’s rejection of the extremely favorable peace offer made by al-Kāmil. In 1221 the identification of king David with Prester John and of his people with the Mongols was generally accepted. The fact that in the winter of 1220–1221 the Mongols attacked Georgia was conveniently ignored by Pelagius, who urged the king of Georgia, George Lashen IV, to send a contingent to Damietta.

The true nature of the Mongol menace was first realized in eastern Europe in 1236 when an important campaign was launched against the peoples living in what is now the European part of Russia. In the autumn of 1237 the flourishing empire of the Bulghars of the Volga was destroyed, together with a number of Russian cities. Though these countries were distant and barely known in western Europe, their plight somewhat changed the thitherto rosy picture painted of the Mongols. In the year of 1238 people everywhere in Europe became aware of the danger presented by this strange and apparently ferocious people. As Philip Mouskes put it in his rhymed chronicle:

Vint noviele que le Tatart
Une gent de tire lontaine —
Jhesus lor doinist honte proçainne! —
S’adrecierent parmi Roussie,
Si l’ont praeve et defroisie
Et ne sai quante autre cite
Dont pas ne me sont recordé
Li non, ne recorder nes sa;
Mais moult destruient sans asai.13

This is not the place to recount, however briefly, the development of Hungarian-Mongol relations which culminated in 1241–1242 with the terrible devastation of Hungary. The collapse of Hungarian resistance took the west European powers by surprise, and emperor Frederick II, blaming the Hungarians for the defeat, tried to capitalize on it for his own benefit. He used the imminence of the Mongol peril to urge the union of all Christian princes under his own

12. See volume II of this work, p. 415.
13. MGH, SS., XXVI, 815.
leadership. The harassed pope Gregory IX was unable to answer the desperate requests for help sent to him by king Bela IV of Hungary. The news of the Mongols' sudden withdrawal in the spring of 1242—for which no satisfactory explanation exists—was received with a sigh of relief in Europe, and the danger of a renewal of such an attack would probably have been disregarded had it not been for the far-sighted policies introduced by pope Innocent IV.

At this time the possibility of an alliance with the Mongols was completely lost from sight and attention was focused on the dangers of a renewed attack against Hungary. Only a few weeks after his election Innocent IV called upon Berthold, patriarch of Aquileia and an uncle of Bela IV, to induce the faithful in Germany to take up the cross against the Tatars,14 and in the encyclical summoning the Council of Lyons the task of finding relief against the Tatars was assigned to the coming council. Innocent IV did not intend to indulge in idle discussions; by the time the council opened, three papal envoys were on their way to the Mongols.

Two pontifical letters, Dei patris immensa dated March 5 and Cum non solum dated March 13, 1245, were prepared with the intention of being carried to wherever the ruler of the Mongols could be found. Of the three missions, that of the Franciscan John of Pian del Carpine is by far the most important, partly because it was the only one to reach the Great Khan in Mongolia but also because there is a detailed written account of it. However, from our present point of view the mission is of relatively small importance, as Pian del Carpine followed a northern route via Russia, probably suggested by the Hungarians. The other two, on the whole unsuccessful, missions took the road through the Holy Land and are thus of more immediate interest for the crusades.

The mission led by the Dominican Ascelin is known in some detail through the description given by one of its members, Simon of Saint Quentin, author of a Historia Tartarorum now lost, but from which large passages were incorporated in the Speculum historiale of Vincent of Beaumont.15 Ascelin took the southern route to the Mongols, which probably led him via Cyprus and Palestine—the country where Simon must have joined him—to Tiflis. Here another Dominican, Guiscard of Cremona, joined the party, which, after a journey that took about six weeks, reached the headquarters in territorio Sitiens

castri of the Mongol commander Baiju on May 25, 1247. The meeting between Ascelin and Baiju was far from friendly, both being equally obdurate. Simon of Saint Quentin records with complacency various proposals made in Baiju’s entourage. Some proposed putting only two of the envoys to death, others suggested flaying Ascelin and sending back to the pope his skin stuffed with straw.

Baiju, unwilling to accept the pope’s message to the Great Khan, wanted the friars to continue their journey to Mongolia, but Ascelin sternly refused and, curiously enough, had his way. So with the help of Greek and Turkish interpreters and the collaboration of the friars themselves, the Latin message was put first into Persian and then into Mongolian. Baiju then dispatched the original and its Mongolian translation to Karakorum and took to writing an answer to the pope. The dispatch of this reply, and the departure of the friars, were delayed to allow Baiju to consider a missive sent by the Great Khan Gıyūk and transmitted through the hands of Eljigidei, one of his familiars. The instructions of Gıyūk to Baiju were uncompromising even by Mongol standards; they demanded nothing less than total submission of all peoples, and instructed Baiju to carry out this supremely simple order. Accordingly, Baiju’s own letter sent to the pope was couched in terms equally harsh. It was this cheerless message that Ascelin and his companions brought back to the pope in the summer of 1248. However disappointing in its final result, Ascelin’s mission had one redeeming feature, perhaps not fully appreciated at that time. With him to Lyons came two Mongol envoys, Aybeg and Sargis (the former probably a Turk, the latter a Christian), the first of their kind to have peaceful contacts with any west European power.

The second mission requiring mention here was led by the Dominican Andrew of Longjumeau. On his way to the Mongols he paid a visit first to aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Isma’il in Baalbek, then to al-Manṣūr of Homs, both of whom were at that time on friendly terms with the Franks. In a letter dated December 30, 1245, and addressed to the pope, al-Manṣūr states that “for various reasons we have given, we have advised the said friars [Andrew of Longjumeau and his companions] against continuing their journey to the Mongols.” It is likely that in his discussions with Andrew of Longjumeau al-Manṣūr did not mention the most cogent among the various reasons he had against their traveling to the Mongols: his fear that an alliance between them and the Christians might endanger his own situation.

In spite of al-Manṣūr’s discouragement, Andrew of Longjumeau

pursued his journey and in the neighborhood of Tabriz met a Mongol army. He also encountered the Nestorian Simeon, better known under his honorific appellation Rabban Ata, described as “vicarius Orientis.” Rabban Ata, a familiar of the Great Khan Ögödei, had been sent to Cilician Armenia sometime between 1235 and 1240, and had exerted his not inconsiderable influence in favor of the Christians living under Mongol rule. Andrew of Longjumeau and Rabban Ata conferred for twenty days. When they parted, the Nestorian priest charged Andrew with a present, a stick of ebony, for the pope, and also with a letter in which he urged him to make peace with the emperor just when the most powerful king of the Tatars, “against whose power the whole Christian world cannot resist,” contemplated attacking them. The letter also refers to a document of unspecified content which Rabban Ata himself had brought “from the heart of the Orient, namely from China.”

Whether the word Si n, used in the text, refers to China proper or to Mongolia, the fact remains that through Rabban Ata and Andrew of Longjumeau a bridge of Christian solidarity was erected between east and west, spanning pagan Mongols and Moslem Mamluks. With all these messages in his charge, rich with the wealth of information acquired on a trip that lasted two years, sometime in the first half of 1247 Andrew of Longjumeau reached Lyons and reported to the pope.

Andrew of Longjumeau was the first of the papal envoys to return. His report was probably quite favorable when compared to those brought to the pope by Ascelin and by John of Pian del Carpine, who had met the Great Khan himself and returned with the alarming news that Güyük, supposedly favorable to Christians, “raised the flag against the church of God, the Roman empire and all Christian kingdoms and nations of the west.” Güyük’s letter to Innocent IV corroborated the friar’s account. The peremptory tone of the Mongol letters received, the demand expressed in them that the pope should come personally and pay homage to the Great Khan, were not likely to enhance the pope’s prestige had they become generally known. It is thus quite understandable that the two Mongol messengers, Aybeg and Sargis, were held virtually incommunicado, to the great chagrin of the chronicler Matthew Paris. To all evidence the

17. On Rabban Ata and all pertinent questions see Pelliot, “Les Mongols et la papauté,” II; on Andrew of Longjumeau see part III of the same article.
18. Wyngaert, Sinica franciscana, p. 94.
19. The letter has been preserved in Latin and Persian versions. The best study is by Pelliot, “Les Mongols et la papauté,” pp. 11–28 (reference is to the pagination of the offprint and not of the periodical).
20. Chronica majora, ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series), V, 37. For other relevant data, see also J. J. Saunders, “Matthew Paris and the Mongols,” in Essays in Medieval History
papal missions had achieved no other purpose than that of bringing back reliable, first-hand information on what Innocent IV must have considered a most dangerous foe. The pope’s reply to Baiju’s letter, \textit{Viam agnoscre veritatis}, dated November 22, 1248, and probably carried back by Aybeg and Sargis, simply stated that Innocent IV had acted out of a sense of duty to let the true religion be known to the Mongols, and that he regretted the Mongols’ perseverance in their errors and adjured them to cease their menaces.\footnote{Presented to Bertie Wilkinson, ed. T. A. Sandquist and M. R. Powicke (Toronto, 1969), pp. 116–132.}

The projects to establish friendly contacts with the Mongols, abandoned by the pope, were immediately taken up by Louis IX. Despite the gloomy picture painted for him by John of Pian del Carpine, specially sent by the pope to dissuade the French king from approaching the Mongols, Louis IX decided to continue the endeavors initiated by Innocent IV. He was to succeed in no small measure, and it is in his lifetime, and partly owing to his efforts, that the relations between the Mongols and the Occident took a new course. Was the king of France prompted only by the political advantages he could expect from friendly relations with a power in the rear of the Moslems, or did he aim primarily at the conversion of the Mongols? Probably both thoughts were present in his mind. A concurrence of unexpected circumstances came to lend support to what the pope, by then, considered a hopeless enterprise.

In December 1248 two Mongol envoys presented themselves to Louis IX in Cyprus. They came on behalf of Eljigidei, whose letter they handed over to the king.\footnote{\textit{Les Registres d’Innocent IV}, ed. É. Berger, II (Paris, 1887), no. 4682, pp. 113–114.} The ambassadors had Christian names, David and Mark respectively, and the message they delivered to Louis IX by letter and by word of mouth was truly astonishing. The general purport of their exposition was that Ghiyilk and a number of Mongol dignitaries, among them Eljigidei himself, had been baptized, and that Eljigidei had been sent to the west by the Great Khan so that he might help the crusaders to reconquer the Holy Land. The Mongols were eager to enter into an alliance with the king of France, for their intention was to move on Baghdad, and the French, by attacking the sultan of Egypt at the same time, could prevent his coming to the help of the caliph. This was the century-old dream come true, and the fulfillment of a hope which in spite of repeated, bitter disappointments lingered in the hearts of the cru-
saders set on their Danaidean task: the arrival of Prester John, the Christian potentate of the east, striking from the rear the Moslem forces.

All this was in such striking contrast to Mongol attitudes as experienced by the envoys of Innocent IV that the opinion was voiced that David and Mark were self-styled ambassadors and that their "embassy" was in fact an imposture. It seems that this idea can now be discarded. Andrew of Longjumeau had met David in the Mongol camp he had visited, and it is certain that Eljigidei’s letter transmitted to Louis IX by David was not a fake. In fact, this letter, though insisting on Christian solidarity, does not contain any blatantly false statements. These came only by word of mouth from the two ambassadors eager for the success of their mission. After a year spent in Anatolia, Eljigidei must have acquired a sufficient insight into the political and military conditions prevailing there to be aware of the advantages an alliance with the Franks could represent. One is probably entitled to the view that David and Mark were sent to Louis IX by Eljigidei acting on his own initiative. This policy of rapprochement was destined to fail. Between March 27 and April 28, 1248, about a month before David and Mark set out on their mission, Gıyık had died, and Eljigidei, the man who took upon himself to gain the confidence of Louis IX, was soon to lose his own life in the struggles which followed the passing of his sovereign.

David and Mark were again received by Louis IX on January 25, 1249, and two days later they sailed from Nicosia in the company of three Dominicans—Andrew of Longjumeau and his brother Guy, and John of Carcassonne. The king sent with them, records Joinville, “a chapel which he had caused to be fashioned all in scarlet; and in order to draw the Tartars to our faith, he had caused all our faith to be imaged in the chapel: the Annunciation of the angel, the Nativity, the baptism that God was baptised withal, and all the Passion, and the Ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost; and with the chapel he sent also cups, books and all things needful for the chanting of the mass.”

By the time the party reached Eljigidei—the political situation within the empire having considerably changed—he found it wiser not to negotiate personally with the envoys but to send them on to

23. Gıyık himself called David an impostor, but this does not necessarily mean that he really acted in bad faith; the Great Khan had valid reasons to repudiate the policy of which David was a representative. Wynaert, Sinica franciscana, p. 308.


Güyük’s widow, the regent Oghul Kaimish. Terrible tensions were building up in the struggle for Güyük’s succession. At the time Louis’s ambassadors reached the Mongol headquarters deep in Inner Asia, somewhere near the river Imil, Oghul Kaimish was still regent but the quriltay, the general assembly to elect the new Great Khan, had already been convened and Möngke, protégé of the powerful Batu, was a strongly favored candidate. There was no love lost between him and Oghul Kaimish, who endeavored to ensure the succession either for his son or for Siremün, Ögödei’s grandson. She was to be judged very severely by Möngke: “as to the affairs of war and peace and the welfare and happiness of a great realm,” he would write to Louis IX, “what could this woman, who was viler than a dog, know about them?”

In her precarious situation Oghul Kaimish tried to make the most out of the French embassy, which she presented to her subjects, as one “suing for mercy.” She also sent a letter to Louis IX which her own ambassadors, attached to the returning French, carried back to Caesarea, where they met the king, probably in April 1251. The content of this letter is known only through a paraphrase given by Joinville. It was an ultimatum in typical Mongol style, enjoining Louis IX to submit and send yearly tribute lest he and his people be destroyed like so many others before him.

For the French king the result of this embassy was a bitter disappointment. While his ambassadors were en route he was sorely tried by illness, captivity, and all the sorrow and concern of a most difficult political situation. Perhaps in the darkest moments of affliction Louis had the hopeful thought that the Mongols might wish to join forces with him against the common enemy. Now, although the worst of his ordeal was over, he had to realize the vanity of his hopes, his own loneliness. Soon Oghul Kaimish was to perish, and her death would create new opportunities, but there was nothing to portend this to Louis IX. So “you must know,” as Joinville summed up the situation, “that it repented the king sorely that he had ever sent envoys to the great king of the Tartars.”

It is generally, although mistakenly, assumed that approximately two years after the disappointment caused by Andrew of Longjumeau’s second mission, Louis IX deemed it worthwhile to make a fresh attempt to establish relations with the Mongols. The responsibility for the fabulous journey undertaken by the Franciscan William

27. See translation by Marzials, pp. 258–259.
of Rubruck is often attributed to the French king. This is not the place to refute in detail this widespread misapprehension; suffice it to say that the moving force behind the decision to make yet another attempt to establish friendly relations with the Mongols was Rubruck’s own missionary zeal.

Rubruck believed the rumors then current in certain circles that Sartak, son of Batu, had been converted to Christianity, and he felt that with the help of a protector so powerful, proselytism in the Mongol empire was a real possibility. There is no evidence to suggest that Rubruck worked for, or even envisaged the concluding of, a military alliance between the crusaders and the Mongols. “I have nothing to say on the part of any man ... I have only to speak the words of God,”28 declared Rubruck at Möngke’s court. Because of the missionary character of Rubruck’s journey a detailed examination of its multifaceted importance lies outside the scope of the present volume. The letter of Möngke which Rubruck had to carry, rather reluctantly, to Louis IX was yet another version of the by then customary orders of submission. The friendly, one might even say warm, reception accorded to the missionary Rubruck had in no way altered Möngke’s uncompromising attitude toward foreign powers, in this instance toward the west.

It seems certain that by the mid-1250’s contacts between westerners and Mongols had multiplied and that among the former not everyone was as indifferent as Rubruck to the political implications of such contacts. Thus we know that Baldwin of Hainault, a knight in the service of emperor Baldwin II, had preceded Rubruck to Karakorum, although unfortunately nothing is known of his journey. Baldwin had married a Kuman princess and through her had excellent contacts with leaders of the western parts of the Mongol empire. He obviously used his influence to boost French prestige: when Rubruck was asked by Sartak’s entourage who was the greatest lord among the Franks and he replied that it was Frederick II, he was rebuked by Sartak, who, referring to Baldwin’s judgment, thought that this honor should belong to Louis IX.29

It is worth noting that both Pian del Carpine and Rubruck, the only early travelers known to have reached Mongolia, used the northern route, the one leading through Kuman territories. The role of the Kumans, acting as intermediaries between the Mongols on the one side and the Latins and Hungarians on the other, must have been a very important one; it has not yet been sufficiently examined. The

29. On Baldwin of Hainault see ibid., p. 102.
Kumans lived in territories under either Mongol or Hungarian control and had many personal contacts with the Latins of the Levant. Sometime before 1254 Bela IV, king of Hungary, married his son, the future Stephen V, to a Kuman princess, and a few years later Berke, khan of the Golden Horde, made him an offer of alliance against the western powers. While rejecting this offer Bela IV was able to avert Mongol punitive action, a result that could be achieved only through constant vigilance and by keeping open the channels of communication.

In the south the principal champion of a rapprochement with the Mongols was Hetoum I, king of Cilician Armenia, whose efforts in this direction have already been described. The diplomatic activities of the Armenian king were directed principally toward the establishment of an alliance between the Christians and the Mongols of Iran, whom he quite rightly thought to be more interested in his project than were the Mongols ruling north of the Caucasus, the Golden Horde. The Great Khan Möngke, who received Rubruck, died in 1259; Batu, the strong man of the Golden Horde, had died in 1256. Things were rapidly changing within the Mongol empire, and these changes considerably affected the Mongols' relations with the west.

The Golden Horde—the westernmost part of the Mongol empire—had, from the time of its formation, always enjoyed an independence greater than that of the other parts of the empire. The principal reason for this was the exceptional status of Batu, its first ruler and the second most important person in the Mongol world. William of Rubruck quotes the Great Khan Möngke comparing himself and Batu to "two eyes in the head, which, though they are two, they have but one sight." Under the rule of Batu's successor Berke (1257–1266), the Golden Horde gained greater autonomy, an evolution partially caused by Kubilai's ever-increasing engagements in distant China. Contacts between the Great Khan Kubilai and the il-khans of Iran were closer not only on account of the relatively shorter distance separating the two but also as a result of the maritime communications between China and Persia. Although very slow and fraught with dangers, the sea route was considered sufficiently convenient for Kökächin—a young lady consigned to Arghun but destined to become the wife of his son Ghazan—to be sent by ship to Persia in the company of Nicholas, Matthew, and Marco Polo.

30. See volume II of this work, pp. 652–654.
While links between the Mongols of Iran and those of East Asia were thus maintained and even strengthened, the Mongols of Russia under the leadership of Berke were not only becoming increasingly independent, but were also gradually sliding into an area of civilization which was to set them apart from their kin. Socially, linguistically, and religiously, the populations living on lands controlled by the rulers of the Golden Horde were mixed. The forest-dwelling Finno-Ugrrians notwithstanding, the Mongol conquerors had found, in what is geographically known as European Russia, predominantly Slavic and Turkic populations—the former Christian, the latter Moslem. On the south Russian steppe the Mongols met with the Turkic tribal confederation of the Kipchaks (Kumans, Polovtys, etc.), while farther north they put an end to the Bulghar empire of the Volga, a Turkic state with century-old traditions of trade with both Baghdad and Egypt. For centuries prior to the Mongol conquest these very regions had constituted a manpower reservoir both of Byzantium and of the Aijubid sultans of Egypt. The Mamluk soldiery recruited among Kipchak (Kuman) slaves gained increased importance under sultan aš-Šāliḥ Aiyūb, who organized them into an elite bodyguard. Many of the Kipchak Turks were, to use modern terminology, political refugees, displaced by the conquering Mongols to whom, quite understandably, they were hostile. After 1250, when the first Mamluk dynasty was established, the Kipchak Turks wielded decisive influence in Egypt and Syria as well as in south Russia, where they outnumbered the native Mongols. It is a fact of crucial importance that the Mamluks of Egypt and the “Mongols” of the Golden Horde were natural allies, not only because of historical tradition reaching far back into the times of the Volga-Bulghar empire, but simply because the ruling class in Egypt and an important and influential segment of the Golden Horde’s society belonged, in fact, to the same ethnic group. The Turkic dialect spoken by the Mamluks was the same as that used by the majority of Berke’s Turkic subjects, and to this day the Turkic populations of the middle Volga region speak Kipchak-Turkic languages. Mamluk antipathy against the Mongols focused not on the Golden Horde but on the Mongols of Iran, while tension was building up between the two Mongol states.

Antagonism between the Golden Horde and the Mongols of Iran exerted so important an influence on events in Asia Minor, and hence on the crusades, that it may not be superfluous to examine here briefly its causes as well as its effects. Berke’s conversion to Islam was an act of personal faith.\textsuperscript{32} His attitudes were still much too

\textsuperscript{32} For the general background on Berke, see Bertold Spuler, \textit{Die Goldene Horde: Die
Mongol to allow for the persecution of other religions or for him to impose on his subjects his own religious beliefs. But his faith was sincere, and he was a reluctant partner in the campaign waged by his cousin Hulagu (Hülegü), which in 1258 culminated in the sack of Baghdad and the demise of the last ‘Abbāsid caliph. Indeed, Berke’s disapproval of these actions was so strong that he ordered his troops engaged in the campaign to join the Egyptian army. It is thus possible, though no documentation to this effect has come to light, that at the battle of ‘Ain Jallūt contingents detached from Berke’s army fought against the il-khanid Mongol forces of Kitbogha.33

Tension between the successors of Batu and the il-khanids was not caused solely by religious differences; it continued to exist under Berke’s successor Möngke Temür, who was no Moslem. As a matter of fact the final adoption of Islam by the khans of the Golden Horde came only during the rule of Jānī Beg (1342–1357), later than the conversion of the il-khanids to that religion.

As so often in history, subjective, personal feelings had their role to play. The first il-khan, Hulagu, was the brother of two successive Great Khans, Möngke and Kubilai, of whom Berke was a mere cousin. The relationship between Hulagu and Möngke was a very close one—Rashid-ad-Din records the former’s affliction on learning of the Great Khan’s death34—whereas Berke was cast in the role of a poor relative. While it is always dangerous to speculate on motives, it seems probable that the personal sympathy linking Möngke to Hulagu was the principal factor in the former’s decision to assign the Caucasus region to the latter. Berke’s repeated attempts to wrest from Hulagu what he considered—not without reason—his rightful appanage, and to push south of the Caucasus, met with failure. The chasm separating the Golden Horde from the rest of the Mongol world was further widened after the death of Möngke, during the struggle for the succession from which Hulagu’s candidate Kubilai emerged victorious against Berke’s protégé Arīq Böge. Nor did tension cease with the deaths of the protagonists of this conflict (Hulagu in 1265 and Berke in 1266); it continued under their respective successors Abagha and Möngke Temür. The initiative was on the side of the ruler of the Golden Horde, and to defend the Caucasian border Abagha was compelled to create a system of fortifications


which consisted of palisades and moats and more or less followed the river Kura. It also incorporated the steppe of Mughan, a favorite resting place for migratory birds, who played their part in the defensive strategy of the il-khan: flushed by the enemy advancing through the steppe, the birds gave the alert to his forces.

Temporary lulls notwithstanding, the basic political interests of the Golden Horde on the one hand and of the il-khans on the other were so incompatible that both powers were permanently in search of allies who would enable them to outflank the other party. Looking for allies located on the northeastern flank of the Mongols of Iran, both Berke and Möngke Temür linked forces with Kaidu, a grandson of Ögödei. Kaidu had first rallied to Ariq Böge but after Kubilai’s accession had established himself on his own account, and controlled a territory which probably centered on the Ili and Chu valleys and incorporated also the northern parts of present-day Afghanistan.  

Thus the Mongols of Iran were all but encircled by a chain of alliances linking the Mamluks to the Golden Horde and this power to Kaidu. Contacts in the form of correspondence and exchange of embassies multiplied between the Golden Horde and the Mamluks. For geographical as well as for political reasons the European powers could not remain unaware of or indifferent to the creation of this north-south axis linking two powers established respectively on the banks of the Volga and the Nile.

Not unnaturally, Byzantium could not avoid being involved in the triangular relationship of the Mamluks and the two Mongol states. Recently installed in Constantinople, Michael VIII Palaeologus paid particular attention to his contacts with the Mongols. He maneuvered skillfully between the two antagonistic Mongol powers, both capable of helping him, both jealous of seeing the other’s influence grow in Constantinople. With the Mongols of Iran, from whom only the weak Selçukid buffer states separated Byzantium, Michael VIII was compelled to seek a modus vivendi which would secure him a relatively peaceful southeastern border. Even before his accession to the throne, when still in Nicaea, he concluded an alliance with Hulagu which, despite passing tensions, remained effective even after the khan’s death. Michael’s illegitimate daughter Maria, betrothed to Hulagu, after her fiancé’s death married Abagha, his son and successor.

Increased tension with the Golden Horde was the corollary of friendly relations with the il-khans. In 1265 Berke and his Bulghar

allies attacked Byzantium’s northern border. The Mongol armies were under the command of Noghay, a Chingsid prince himself and a perennial candidate for the throne of the Golden Horde. For many years he had been the de facto ruler of the south Russian steppe bordering on Byzantium, and in 1273 he was given for wife Euphrosyne, another of Michael’s illegitimate daughters. The emperor was thus linked through family ties with the rulers of both the il-khanid state and the Golden Horde, and with skillful diplomacy secured peace for his country wedged between the contending Mongol states. Moreover, toward the end of his reign Michael Palaeologus succeeded in establishing friendly relations with the Mamluk sultan Kalavun. The maritime road through the Bosphorus, linking the Golden Horde to Egypt, was thus in the hands of a ruler on friendly terms with both of these powers. The result was an increased flow of commerce through Byzantine territory and the multiplication of diplomatic contacts between the Mamluks and the Golden Horde.

The desperate situation of the Frankish possessions in the late 1260’s prompted the west to seek outside help; Abagha (1265–1282), son-in-law of Michael VIII and well known for his Christian sympathies, was an obvious target for their political overtures. The initiative was shared by pope Clement IV and king James I of Aragon, already engaged in the preparation of his crusade. Their envoy James Alaric of Perpignan was well received by Abagha, probably in 1267, and returned to the west accompanied by two Mongol emissaries. Contacts between Clement IV and Abagha were apparently quite frequent. In one letter sent to the il-khan the pope complained that he had received a letter from him which no one could read, and he expressed his regrets that Abagha had not written in Latin as on previous occasions. A safe-conduct issued by Abagha in 1267 or in 1279 for the benefit of envoys traveling to the pope has been preserved in the Vatican archives. Abagha kept in touch with several European powers, and these contacts resulted in a number of projects of collaboration, all of which came to naught. The Aragonese crusade, which set sail under the leadership of James I but after his early return was led by his two bastard sons, failed to

37. The history of these diplomatic relations is treated in great detail in Salikh Zakirov, *Diplomaticheskie otnosheniya Zolotoy Ordy s Egiptom* (Moscow, 1966).
achieve coördination with Abagha, who at the crucial time was engaged in defending Khurasan against the Chagatai prince Barak. At the time of Louis’s ill-fated Tunisian venture Abagha would have been ready and willing to attack Baybars. Such a coördination of eastern and western forces had been the plan of Clement IV; had it been realized, it could have redressed a balance already fatefully tilted in favor of the Mamluks. But Louis IX failed to perceive the possibilities offered by an il-khanid alliance, and preferred to undertake the Tunisian expedition.

More perspicacious, Edward of England, as soon as he disembarked at Acre on May 9, 1271, sought to obtain Abagha’s help and dispatched a delegation of three to discuss the modalities of coöperation. As a result of these negotiations an army of about ten thousand horsemen, part of the Mongol force stationed in Anatolia, invaded Syria, where it achieved some local successes but withdrew before engaging Baybars’s principal army. Although of limited importance, this first case of effective coöperation between Mongol and western forces justified, in Abagha’s view, further efforts to strengthen his alliance with England. On his side Edward, after his accession to the throne, remembered his personal experiences, hopes, and disappointments and endeavored to maintain relations with Abagha and his second successor, Arghun (1284–1291).

The reign of Arghun marks the apogee of Mongol-western relations. It is interesting to note that it was the Buddhist Arghun—under his rule Buddhism was declared the official religion of the il-khanid state—who was more eager to establish friendly relations with the Christian princes than had been some of his half-Christian predecessors. Arghun’s first embassy to the west was sent to pope Honorius IV in 1285 and carried a letter dated in May of that year still extant in a Latin translation. In it, by way of captatio benevolentiae, Arghun pointed to the special favors accorded to Christians by

40. This is the correct form of this proper name, usually spelled Borak or Burak. See Paul Pelliot, Notes sur l’histoire de la Horde d’Or (Paris, 1949), p. 57.
41. See volume II of this work, p. 582.
42. See Grousset, Histoire des croisades, III, 659.
43. See volume II of this work, p. 582.
44. The Latin text has been published often, perhaps most recently by Chabot, “Notes sur les relations . . .” pp. 570–571. The embassy which carried Arghun’s letter included two westerners, a Thomas Banchrinus and an interpreter whose name is spelled Ase. The name is probably a distorted form of Jesus, and Ase was a Syrian Christian “versed in all tongues of the west” and probably also of the east. He was a valued adviser of the Great Khan Kubilai and by him was put in charge of the Office of Western Astronomy and Medicine. A’Hsiüeh, to use the Chinese form of his name, was obviously a widely traveled man, familiar with Tabriz and Rome as well as with Peking, where he died in 1320. Ase’s life exemplifies well that of a distinguished scholar and civil servant in the multi- and supra-
himself and his ancestors, with the notable exception of his predecessor Ahmad (1282–1284), who adopted Islam and who was de-throned by Arghun. The truthfulness of Arghun’s message was confirmed by some Franciscan and Dominican monks, recently returned from Outremer. Neither here nor in his later correspondence with the west is there any mention of Arghun’s own conversion to Buddhism. In replying to exhortations that he should become a Christian Arghun’s main argument was—as in his letter of May 14, 1290, to pope Nicholas IV—that for anyone recognizing God Eternal and behaving properly, there was no need to join the church. In the same letter Arghun also pointed out that his subjects were free to adopt the religion of their choice.

Arghun’s boldest attempt to establish an alliance with the western powers was his dispatch of the Nestorian monk Rabban Mar Šaumā on a mission to which the il-khan attached considerable importance. A native of China but an Uighur by birth, Rabban Šaumā was appointed in 1280 visitor-general of the Nestorian church in Mongol territories. Thoroughly familiar with the internal conditions of the Mongol empire and himself a Christian, he was ideally suited for the task. He left early in 1287 and reached Rome on June 23 of that year, some two months after the death of Honorius IV, at a time of a papal interregnum. He was received with signs of great respect by the cardinals, whose eagerness to discuss religious questions he countered by affirming the political character of his mission. From Rome, by way of Tuscany and Genoa, he went to Paris, where he was received by Philip IV the Fair, and thence to Bordeaux to meet king Edward I. The king of England, a champion of long standing of an alliance with the Mongols, received Rabban Šaumā and his companions well and treated them generously. It is unlikely that he seriously envisaged effective armed co-operation with the Mongols, since his interest focused on other matters, and since he was probably quite realistic about the future of the whole crusading enter-

prise. From Bordeaux Rabban Šaumā proceeded to Genoa, where he spent most of the winter of 1287–1288. The choice of this city for such a long stay has not, it seems, awakened the curiosity of scholars, and yet it could hardly have been fortuitous. Its explanation lies in the close commercial and diplomatic ties linking Genoa to the il-khans and in the fact that many Genoese were actually in the latter’s service. In Rabban Šaumā’s own party there was at least one of them, Thomas Anfossi, a member of a distinguished Genoese family of bankers.\textsuperscript{47}

On February 20, 1288, pope Nicholas IV was elected and Rabban Šaumā hastened to Rome to terminate a diplomatic mission unduly protracted because of the vacancy on the papal throne. In April of that same year Rabban Šaumā was on his way back to Arghun, carrying with him several papal letters and accompanied by a number of Italians and Frenchmen. It seems certain that his party was joined by that of Gobert of Hélleville, ambassador to Arghun of Philip IV, which included the clergymen Robert of Senlis and William of Bruyères and a crossbowman, and whose expenses were paid for by the Templars, more anxious than most to see an alliance with the Mongols concluded.\textsuperscript{48} By that time a whole colony of westerners was firmly ensconced in Tabriz. It included merchants, mainly from Venice and Genoa,\textsuperscript{49} and missionaries from the great mendicant orders. Dominican presence is attested there in the 1250’s,\textsuperscript{50} and Franciscans were active in Tabriz by 1286–1287, if not earlier.\textsuperscript{51} One can surmise that the lobbying power of such a strong western colony was considerable, its involvement in Arghun’s endeavor to establish friendly relations with the west great. European names appear again and again among those listed as having taken part in the embassies traveling to and from the court of the il-khan. In their understandable eagerness to achieve their aim, these westerners were sometimes less than candid, and were quite willing to distort or even invent facts. From one of the letters sent by Nicholas IV to Arghun and dated April 2, 1288, it appears that the pope had been led to believe that Arghun intended to receive baptism in Jerusalem once this city had been delivered from the Moslems.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{47} Petech, “Les Marchands italiens . . .,” p. 561.
\textsuperscript{48} See Moule, Christians in China, p. 109.
\textsuperscript{50} See Bertold Altaner, Die Dominikanermission des 13. Jahrhunderts (Habelschwerdt, 1924), p. 140.
\textsuperscript{52} See Moule, Christians in China, p. 114.
Misunderstandings, intentional or not, combined with insufficient linguistic ability of interpreters and translators, certainly had their share in the painfully slow process of harmonizing western and il-khanid interests. Arghun's next ambassador, the Genoese Buscarel de' Ghisolfi, brought to Philip the Fair a firm proposal for a joint military undertaking. The offer, still extant in the French national archives, was written in Mongolian and dated the summer of 1289.\textsuperscript{53}

In it Arghun, planning far ahead, notified the French king of his intention to set out on a campaign against the Mamluks in 1290, so as to reach Damascus on the fifteenth day of the first spring moon in 1291. Arghun urged Philip IV to send his own army in time, and stated that, following the victory of the allies, Jerusalem would become a French possession. Technical details were dealt with in a separate memorandum prepared by Buscarel and written in French.\textsuperscript{54} Among the points covered it is interesting to note Arghun's offer to provide the French king with twenty to thirty thousand horses, either free of charge or at a reasonable price. Buscarel brought letters and messages not only to Philip IV but also to pope Nicholas IV and to king Edward I. He arrived in London on January 5, 1290, and spent thirteen days at the court and a total of twenty days in England, where he was well entertained. Edward, as it appears from his reply to Arghun, declared himself willing to undertake a joint campaign with the Mongol ruler, subject only to the pope's approval. It is difficult to ascertain whether Buscarel himself returned to Arghun or whether he prolonged his stay in the west. In December 1290 he was certainly in Italy, as his name appears in papal letters recommending yet another of Arghun's embassies to Edward I.\textsuperscript{55}

That spring of 1291, which should have witnessed the triumph of the Mongol-western alliance and the recovery from the Moslems of the city of Jerusalem, saw the fall of Acre and the death, on March 10, of Arghun. The il-khan succumbed to a long illness which, one may assume, would in any event have prevented him from fulfilling his pledge. So neither the il-khans nor the kings of France or England were present with anything but token forces when the sultan al-Ashraf Khalil liquidated the last remnants of Frankish presence in Outremer.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{53} The best edition is Antoine Mestaert and Francis Woodman Cleaves, Les Lettres de 1289 et 1305 des ilkhan Arrun et Ohejti à Philippe le Bel (Scripta Mongolica Monograph Series, I; Cambridge, Mass., 1962).


\textsuperscript{55} Chabot, "Notes . . . ," pp. 617–618.

\textsuperscript{56} See volume II of this work, p. 595.
Emboldened by his success, al-Ashraf Khalil declared a holy war against the Mongols, now ruled by Arghun's brother Gaikhatu (1291–1295). Hostilities led to the capture of Hromglia by Mamluk forces but did not develop into a full-scale war. Gaikhatu and al-Ashraf Khalil, equally dissolute, were soon to meet violent deaths at the hands of their own subjects. Baidu, Gaikhatu's cousin and successor, ruled but a few months. He was put to death on October 4, 1295, by the followers of Arghun's son Ghazan, the next ruler of the Mongols of Iran.

Ghazan (1295–1304), probably the most gifted il-khanid ruler, came to power committed to a program of Islamization. His accession to power was marked by excesses committed against Christians. Nevertheless, in religious matters he proved to be fairly moderate. His own religious feelings, whether sincere or dictated by political expediency, did not cloud his political judgment, and he rightly recognized the Mamluks as his principal external enemies. Several small-scale clashes and betrayals, in both camps, eventually led to Ghazan's invasion of Syria. On December 22, 1299, a few miles north of Homs the Mongols inflicted a crushing defeat on the Mamluks. Homs and Damascus soon surrendered, and by the end of January 1300 there were no Mamluk forces left in Syria.

In Europe, Ghazan's success gave rise to over-optimistic expectations. News was abroad to the effect that Ghazan had conquered the whole of the Holy Land and even Cairo, that he had given back their former holdings to the Templars and the Hospitallers and was to entrust the Dominicans with the guard of the Holy Sepulcher. It was even rumored that Ghazan had coins struck with a representation of the Holy Sepulcher on them and the legend *In nomine Patris, Filii, et Sancti Spiritus*, and that his standards carried the sign of the cross. Some sources ascribed the deliverance of the Holy Land to the joint action of the Tatars and the kings of Greece, Cyprus, and Armenia. The part attributed to western help might have been exaggerated, but it had some basis in reality. In 1300–1301 a Cypriote flotilla dispatched by Henry II de Lusignan, with the help of Templars and Hospitallers, attacked Rosetta, where some skirmishes took place. Coördination of Mongol and Cypriote action was achieved through Zolus Bofeti, commonly referred to as Isol the Pisan, a man of some status in Ghazan's entourage and his ambas-

58. See the references assembled in Pálfy, *A Tatárak*, p. 58.
sador to Henry II. Isol the Pisan was, astonishing as it may seem, Öljeitü's godfather—for Ghazan's brother was baptized—and participated in the naval expedition just mentioned. Isol was not the only Italian to bask in the reflected glory of Ghazan's victories. In 1300 in St. John Lateran, Boniface VIII received the Florentine Guiscard Bastari, ambassador of the il-khan, accompanied by a retinue of one hundred men, all clad in Tatar garments. For reasons that today cannot be determined, Ghazan did not try to consolidate his hold on Syria, which by the end of May 1300 was again in Mamluk hands. The evacuation of Syria was certainly not due to a lack of interest on the part of Ghazan. He returned there in the fall of the same year and then, in February 1301, without having engaged in any major battle, he once again retraced his steps. It is possible that Ghazan did not feel strong enough to engage the Mamluks single-handed. Be that as it may, he sought to secure European collaboration for the projected campaign, and did his best to keep up the friendly relations which had been established by his predecessors.

Ghazan sent several embassies to the pope, to Philip IV, and to Edward I. Members of an embassy received by Boniface VIII in 1302 were said to have been baptized in Rome and given a golden crown to be carried from the pope to Ghazan "for the forgiveness of his sins and because he had reintroduced Christian worship in the Holy Land." In April 1302 Ghazan sent a letter to Boniface VIII in which, referring to previous correspondence, he urged the pope to prepare his troops for an attack on the Mamluks, and to keep the date agreed upon for this operation. The letter, still extant in its original Mongolian version, was brought to the pope by three envoys with Moslem personal names. It mentions Buscarel de’ Ghisolfi, who is referred to as having been attached to a previous embassy. The clever Genoese had weathered well the troubled years that followed the rule of his former master, Arghun, to whom he was so devoted that he named his son Argone after him. Buscarel’s name appears also in a letter written by Edward I and dated March 12, 1302. In it the king, replying to a request made by Ghazan and transmitted by Buscarel, expressed his regrets at not being able to pay due attention to matters involving the Holy Land, and blamed this on wars raging within Christendom. The counter-embassy carrying Edward’s reply

included Geoffrey of Langles and Nicholas of Chartres, traveling presumably in the company of Buscarel. In 1303, at Eastertime, Mongol ambassadors visited Paris, repeating the by then usual offer of alliance. Ghazan also kept in touch with James II of Aragon, who in May 1300, expressing his joy over the alleged recovery of the Holy Sepulcher, made what seemed a generous offer of help. Ghazan maintained friendly relations too with Andronicus II. The alliance, more profitable to the harassed Byzantine emperor than to Ghazan, was to have been sealed by the marriage of the il-khan with a bastard daughter of Andronicus, but the project came to naught because of Ghazan’s death.

Öljeitü, Ghazan’s brother and successor (1304–1316) followed the same friendly policy toward the western powers. In a letter written in the summer of 1305 to Philip the Fair the il-khan recalled, perhaps not without some exaggeration, the friendly relations that according to him had always existed between his ancestors and the Franks, and offered in very general terms an alliance against those who would wish to destroy international understanding. “Verily,” reads Öljeitü’s letter, “what is better than concord?” A contemporary Italian paraphrase written on the back of the Mongol original leads us to believe that more precise information, and perhaps also some concrete proposals, were to be transmitted by word of mouth through the ambassadors carrying the letter. It has been suggested that Öljeitü envisaged an all-embracing alliance with a view to securing peace for the world. According to other opinions, behind the general terms of the letter the specific purpose of an alliance against the Mamluks must be seen. This is a distinct possibility, yet there seems to be no evident reason why such a concrete proposal should have remained unmentioned in the original Mongolian letter as well as in its Italian paraphrase. In all probability the letter was intended as a general gesture of goodwill toward the west, written at a time when there was a temporary lull in the internecine warfare which for almost half a century had so much weakened the Mongol empire. To this newly won internal peace Öljeitü refers in his letter to Philip IV. No answer by the French king to Öljeitü’s letter has come to light, but it seems likely that, if sent, such a letter was couched in very general terms.

63. Moule, Christians in China, p. 123.
64. Continuatio chronici Guillelmi de Nagiaico, in RHGF, XX, 588.
67. In a not very convincing but often quoted article: W. Kotwicz, “Les Mongols, promoteurs de l’idée de paix universelle au début du XIIIe siècle,” La Pologne au VIIe Congrès international des sciences historiques (Warsaw, 1933), I, 199–204.
Once more we find that one of the “Mongol” ambassadors was an Italian, Thomas Ugi of Siena, who with his companions visited and was well received in a number of European courts, including that of England. Edward II had already replaced his father, who died on July 7, 1307. The king of England is known to have sent at least two letters to Öljeitü. From the first of these, written in Northampton on October 16, 1307, it is possible to conclude that Edward II had before him a letter essentially identical to that received by Philip IV. Edward’s second letter, dated from Langley on November 30, 1307, is a rather surprising document and clearly shows that whoever transmitted Öljeitü’s letter to the king deliberately distorted some of the basic political realities of the il-khanid empire. Edward’s letter is a venomous attack on “the abominable sect of Mohammed,” which Öljeitü is asked to extirpate, thus completing the task already undertaken to this effect. It is inconceivable that, had Edward II been informed that Öljeitü was a pious Moslem, he would have committed a diplomatic gaffe of such magnitude. Suspicion is easily cast on Thomas, but in his dealings with the pope he certainly did not give the impression that Öljeitü was a Christian. In a letter written by Clement V in Poitiers and dated March 1, 1308, no anti-Moslem references are made. Instead, the pope acknowledges Öljeitü’s very concrete offer of help. If one can believe the facts referred to in Clement’s reply—that is, if these are not the product of Thomas’s misapplied zeal and imagination—Öljeitü had offered 200,000 horses and 200,000 loads of corn to be put at the disposal of the Christian armies when these disembarked in Cilician Armenia, where they would be joined for the purposes of an attack against the Mamluks by an army of 100,000 horsemen led by the il-khan.

The interest shown by Clement V in establishing a military alliance with the Mongols was quite genuine. He had commissioned the Armenian Hetoum, known as the historian “Hayton,” nephew of king Hetoum I of Cilician Armenia, to prepare a memorandum on the feasibility and desirability of an alliance with the Mongols. Hayton presented his work, which constitutes Book IV of his *La Flor des estoires de la terre d’orient,* to the pope in August 1307, well before the time of Clement’s reply to Öljeitü’s real or imaginary offer. Hayton, as could naturally be expected of a member of the Armenian royal family, was a vigorous advocate of a Mongol alliance.

68. Th. Rymer, *Foedera,* I (1816), 8.
69. ibid., p. 18.
and in general of a western presence in Outremer. Outlining plans to reconquer the Holy Land Hayton states: "As for me, who know quite well the Tatars’ intentions, I firmly believe that they would willingly, without any dispute and without asking for taxes or any other type of vassalage, hand over all the cities and the land conquered to the Christians, since because of the great heat obtaining there during the summer, the Tatars would not stay in those regions, and would readily agree that the Christians should receive and hold them. For the Tatars do not wage war against the sultan of Egypt for territorial gains—since the whole of Asia is already subject to them—but because the sultan is their principal enemy who has done them more wrong than anyone else."\(^{72}\)

Clement V was not the only western statesman to envisage seriously the possibility of regaining Outremer with the help of the Mongols. James II of Aragon also established contacts with Öljeydii and, probably in 1307, sent his ambassador Peter Desportes to the il-khan. In his letter the Aragonese king tried to clarify the conditions under which his army to be sent overseas could be supplied, and also asked that Christians should have free access to the holy places.\(^{73}\) The general tone of this letter makes it quite clear that other missives must have preceded it. Neither these nor further correspondence between James II and Öljeydii have come to light. It would be most interesting to have additional information on James's political conceptions concerning the Mongols, particularly in view of his dealings with their arch-enemy, the Mamluks. In the correspondence of James II with the sultan Muḥammad an-Nasir there seems to be no reference to the Mongols.\(^{74}\) It is possible, even likely, that James’s approach to Öljeydii was prompted by the sudden deterioration of his relations with the sultan. Between 1306 and 1314 diplomatic contacts between Aragon and Egypt were suspended.

A word should be said on the gradual increase in commercial relations between the il-khanid empire and the west, particularly marked during the reign of Öljeydii. Trade was almost entirely in the hands of Italian merchants, but their effect on the issues here examined was small, manifest mainly in the broadening of western knowledge of the internal conditions of the il-khanid state and also of China, which for many merchants remained the most desirable

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72. RHC, Arm., II, 245, 357.
74. This remark is based on the correspondence published by Aziz S. Atiya, Egypt and Aragon: Embassies and Diplomatic Correspondence between 1300 and 1330 A.D. (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, XXIII, 7; Leipzig, 1938).
market. Most of the time commercial activities remained apolitical, and it can safely be stated that the greatest influence trade exerted was toward the maintenance of peace. The trade routes had to be kept open, and to ensure this, commercial treaties and consular agreements linked some of the Italian republics to the Mongol states. There was even machinery to settle private commercial litigations, as is shown by the case of one Hajji Sulaiman Tabi, a citizen of Tabriz, who in 1322 was awarded an indemnity of 4,000 bezants to be paid by Venice for damages caused, so it seems, by unruly Venetians.75

Many of the trade links survived the fall of the il-khans and continued even to the time of Timur. Development of maritime links notwithstanding, the transcontinental trade routes remained the fastest and most reliable way to reach East Asia. This is expressly stated by John of Monte Corvino, well acquainted with the sea-route: "As for the road hither [to China] I may tell you that the way through the land of the Goths [Crimea], subject to the emperor of the northern Tatars, is the shortest and safest; and by it the friars might come along with letter-carriers in five or six months. The other route again is very long and very dangerous, involving two sea-voyages . . . . And it is possible that it might take more than two years to accomplish the journey that way. But, on the other hand, the first-mentioned route has not been open for a considerable time, on account of wars that have been going on."76 John of Monte Corvino was unduly pessimistic; the overland road was still practicable in 1338, when it was used both by the envoys of the Great Khan Toghan Temür on their way to Avignon and by the counter-embassy headed by John de’ Marignolli.77 The “heavenly horse” presented by this embassy, which caused a considerable sensation in the Sino-Mongol court, could hardly have survived transportation by sea.78

In his letter dated November 30, 1307, and already referred to, Edward II recommended some missionaries to Öljeitü, among them the Dominican William, bishop of Lydda. As this city was in partibus infidelium, and no longer under Latin jurisdiction, William was only

75. See Petech, “Les Marchands . . . ,” p. 568. The standard work on trade remains W. Heyd, Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen âge, trans. Furcy Raynaud (2 vols., Leipzig, 1885–1886, reprints available). It should be stated emphatically that in this chapter only a few cursory remarks are made on both commercial and missionary activities.
76. Yule, Cathay, III, 48.
77. Yule, Cathay, III, 179–183.
its titular bishop, and his principal aim was proselytism among the Moslems living in il-khanid territory.\textsuperscript{79} We have mentioned earlier the presence of Dominican and Franciscan missionaries in Tabriz. At the end of the thirteenth century the Franciscans had a fairly strong foothold in the il-khanid state, but there seems to be no reason to believe that their activity was anything but spiritual. They do not seem to have made efforts to bring about a military alliance between the west and the Mongols.

If the Franciscans were not involved in the pursuit of an illusory alliance to recover Syria, they certainly took advantage of the opening up of Asia to widen their missionary field. The earliest and most successful effort was made in the territories controlled by the Golden Horde, to which they had easy access through Hungary and through the Kuman contacts. In the il-khanid state the missionaries availed themselves of the links existing with China to expand their field of activity. The formidable friar John of Monte Corvino was sent to the east about the year 1280 and must have lived some time in Persia before returning to Rome in 1289. The information John was able to provide on conditions prevalent in the Mongol empire was sufficiently detailed to cause pope Nicholas IV to send him back to Arghun so that he should proceed further to China. Among the letters given to the Franciscan there was one for Arghun, and another dated July 13, 1289, addressed personally to the Great Khan Kubilai, whose name was known to the pope.\textsuperscript{80} The texts of these missives make it sufficiently clear that, while illusions on the willingness of the Mongol rulers to embrace Christianity might have persisted, information available on the internal conditions and basic geography of the Mongol empire was quite up-to-date and reliable.

John of Monte Corvino left Tabriz in 1291, never to return; he was to die as the first Catholic archbishop of Peking. His departure, however, did not spell the end of Franciscan and Dominican activities in Persia. The Friars Minor had three vicariates established within the Mongol empire: of the north (\textit{vicaria aquilonis}) situated on the territory of the Golden Horde; of Cathay; and of the east, with centers in Constantinople, Trebizond, and Tabriz. It is interesting to note that the pope, well aware of the fact that the principal seat of Mongol power was in distant China, subordinated to the archdiocese of Khanbaliq (Peking) all the priests active within the


\textsuperscript{80} Moule, \textit{Christians}, pp. 168–171.
Mongol empire, even those working in lands as close to the west as the Crimea or Persia. It was only in 1318 that John XXII created a new archiepiscopal see in imperio Tartarorum, that of Sulţānīyeh, the new capital city of the il-khans. Its first incumbent, the Dominican Francis of Perugia, was succeeded in 1323 by William Adam, a vigorous advocate of a new offensive against the Mamluks.  

In 1317, shortly after Öljeytü's death, William Adam submitted a voluminous memorandum, De modo Sarracenos extirpandi, to cardinal Raymond William of Farges, a nephew of Clement V. In Adam's view the reconquest of Constantinople by the Latins was a prerequisite to any successful military operation against the Mamluks, but in his plans to extirpate the latter, the Mongols were assigned a considerable part. Adam's project consisted in a blockade of Egypt to be achieved through two distinct undertakings. The first of these would be to have a Christian fleet stop the flow of supplies from the Golden Horde to Egypt. William Adam was fully cognizant of the ties between those whom he called the northern Mongols and Egypt, inter hos duos amicicia est tam grandis, and he voiced the opinion that this alliance was directed against the Mongols of Persia. His second proposal was to block the southern maritime route leading to Egypt, which by geographical necessity would involve the cooperation of the Mongols of Persia. The idea of establishing a fleet manned by western, preferably Genoese, sailors in the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf was not new. William Adam himself supported his suggestion by recalling that in 1291 two Genoese galleys built on il-khanid territory had descended the Euphrates toward the Indian Ocean. The expedition failed, he said, not for navigational reasons but because the Genoese seamen, embroiled in political strife, killed one another. While according to Bar Hebraeus at one time some nine hundred Genoese seamen were employed by Arghun, it is not known what ultimately prevented the creation of a Mongol fleet, manned by Genoese, on the Indian Ocean. In 1324 the Dominican Jordan of Sévérac still deplored the absence of such a fleet: "If our lord the pope would but establish a couple of galleys on this sea [the Indian

81. In 1318 William Adam, together with some of his fellow Dominicans, was appointed suffragan of Sulţānīyeh. Afterward, for a short while, he was bishop of Smyrna, and on October 6, 1322, he was nominated to the see of Sulţānīyeh. Two years later, on October 26, 1324, he was transferred to the archiepiscopal see of Antivari. William Adam's pastoral zeal was not on a par with his other preoccupations. On January 25, 1337, pope Benedict XII had to remind the absentee archbishop of Antivari in no uncertain terms of his duties. This is the last secure date we have on his life; he probably died soon after but certainly before December 1341, when a successor was appointed to the archiepiscopal see he had held. See RHC, Arm., II, pp. CLXXVII–CLXXXIX.
82. RHC, Arm., II, 519–555.
Ocean] what a gain it would be! And what damage and destruction to the Sultan of Alexandria!" The idea was taken up later by the Portuguese, in altered circumstances, using Persian bases in their operations against the Turks.

Possibly the last detailed plan for a crusade involving Mongol help was that set forth in the Directorium ad passagium factendum prepared in 1332 for Philip VI of France. Its author, William Adam or (more probably) Raymond Étienne, advocated an attack upon the Turks as a preparatory move to an assault on Egypt. The memorandum gives in a nutshell the history of the antagonism between the il-khans and the Mamluks and concludes that the Mongols of Persia will certainly be ready to ally themselves with the Christians.

In this assumption the author of the Directorium was completely mistaken. By the time his memorandum was submitted to the king of France, an alliance of the il-khanid state with the west directed against the Mamluks had become inconceivable. Ending a feud that had lasted all too long, a peace treaty was concluded in 1323 between the Mamluk sultan an-Nāšir and Öljeytī’s son and successor Abū-Sa‘īd. In spite of some sensitive issues the treaty was honored by both parties until the il-khan’s death in 1335. As we have seen, peace with the Mamluks did not entail on the part of Abū-Sa‘īd the severing of all relations with the west or the interdiction of missionary activities in il-khanid territories. But it cannot be cause for surprise that a letter addressed to Abū-Sa‘īd by pope John XXII and dated July 12, 1322, remained, as far as we know, unanswered. In it the pope, in terms that recall those of Öljeytī in his letter to Philip the Fair, encouraged the il-khan to follow the example set by his ancestors in sending embassies to the pope and renewing friendship with the king of France.

Within a few years after Abū-Sa‘īd’s death the Mongol empire of Persia collapsed in a bellum omni contra omnes. But the power vacuum created by the disappearance of this remarkable state, a unique bridge between east and west, was soon to be filled. Over the smoldering ruins of the il-khanids’ Mongol state rose the pale crescent of Turkish Ottoman power.

As the whole crusading pattern changed to meet this powerful

84. RHC, Arm., II, 368–517.
85. Mosheim, Historia, appendix no. 61, pp. 145–146.
threat, a new conqueror claiming Chinggisid descent made his bid for the domination of the Near East. In Anatolia, Timur's conquests culminated in his victory at Ankara in 1402 over Bayazid I, and the ejection of the Hospitallers from Smyrna. Ephemeral as the incident was from the Inner Asian point of view, it was of major importance to western Europe and Constantinople, as has been pointed out in previous chapters of this volume. So in effect, though unwittingly and without any collaboration, a turkicized Mongol ruler—the Moslem Timur rather than a Christian "Prester John"—did assist Christendom by attacking the primary Turkish and Moslem foe from the rear, and by leaving a Timurid state in Iran to divide subsequent Ottoman military efforts between two distant frontiers.