

**THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MONGOLIAN
CONQUESTS
AND HÜLÄGÜ'S WEST CONQUEST (1256-1260)**

Laura VENEGONI

Abstract

After the election of Möngkä Qan (1252-1259), he decided to expand the borders of the empire; consequently, Hülägü Qan was given the duty to invade the South West Asia. This paper examines the west conquest of Hülägü Qan in between the years 1256-1260 from the points of Mongolian conquests and the political background of the conquests.

Key words: Hülägü, the Mongolian empire, the Mongolian conquest, the political background of the Mongolian conquests, the South West Asia

**Moğolların Fetih Politikası ve Hülägü' nun
Batı Seferi (1256-1260)**

Özet

Möngke Han'ın (1252-1259) seçilmesinden sonra imparatorluğun sınırlarını genişletme yönünde verdiği karar neticesinde Güney-Batı Asya'nın fethine Hülägü Han memur edilir. Bu çalışmada, Hülägü Han'ın 1256-1260 yılları arasında gerçekleştirdiği Batı seferi, Moğol fütühat kalıbı ve işgal politikası bağlamında ele alınmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Hülägü, Moğol İmparatorluğu, Moğol Fütühat Kalıbı, Moğol İşgal Politikası, Güney-Batı Asya

The decision of Möngkä Qan (1252-1259) after his election in 1251¹ to expand the territorial borders of his kingdom was a clear sign of the strong will of new ruling house of Tului² to establish its power according to a precise political pattern of conquest. As a matter of fact, Hülägü took charge of the task to march towards the West, in order to conquer south-western Asia³, while his brother Qubilay was given an army of 70 000 men⁴ to proceed with the campaign of conquest in south China, which was started in 1211 by his grandfather Genghis Qan (1167 -1227).⁵

Möngkä himself held in 1256 an Empire Assembly (*quriltay*)⁶ during which he confirmed the conquering tasks that Qubilay and Hülägü were in charge of. In order to constitute the necessary army for Hülägü, Möngkä decided to give him one fifth of the Mongol army.⁷

This way, Hülägü could start his campaign in 1253; Ketboğas vanguard had already departed on the 24th August 1252.⁸ Together with Hülägü were his wives Doquz Khātun and Uljaï Khātun, his sons Abaqa and Yašmut.⁹

The official Order of the *quriltay* instructed Hülägü to *destroy the Ismailis fortresses, to bend the Caliph to Mongol submission and always to ask to Doquz Khātun for advice.*¹⁰

Hülägü moved forward from Mongolia stage by stage, up to Almaligh and Samarqand, where he arrived with his following in 1255.¹¹

¹ B. Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran*, 4th ed., Berlin 1985 p. 43: Erst am 1. Luili 1251 fand in Ködä'ä Aral unter den üblichen Förmlichkeiten die Wahl statt, aus der Möngkä endgültig als Gross-Chan hervorging.

² The youngest son of Genghis Qan. He had been regent after his father's death in the years 1227-1229. About his name see P. Pelliot, « Quelques mots d'Asie Centrale », in : *Journal Asiatique*, 1913, I, p. 460.

³ R. Grousset, *L'Empire des Steppes*, Paris 1939, p. 427 ; Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p. 44.

⁴ Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p. 44; Rašid ad-Dīn, II, 274.

⁵ See D. Martin, "Chinghiz Khan's First Invasion of the Chin Empire", in: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1943.

⁶ ...that is to say, the « Great Assembly »; cf. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l-Faraj (1225-1286)*, London 1932, I, p. 419. See also Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p. 212-17.

⁷ Rašid ad-Dīn/Quatremère, *Histoire des Mongols de la Perse*, Paris 1836, I, p.128-130 : "...on levât deux hommes sur dix, qui ne seraient point en ligne de compte, et formant le contingent particulier de Houlagou, l'accompagneraient dans son expédition". See also Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p. 44 a. 334.

⁸ Rašid ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 166; Wallis Budge, *Chronography.*, p. 419.

⁹ Rašid ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 146.

¹⁰ J. von Hammer-Purgastall, *Geschichte der Ilchane, das ist der Mongolen in Persien (1200-1350)*, *Textauszüge aus Wassaf u. anderen*, p. 86; cf. Rašid ad-Dīn/Quatremère I, pp. 140-44.

Here he was welcomed with great honours by his vassal Chems ad-Din Kert, the *melik* of Herat.¹² On the 2nd January 1256¹³ Hülagü stepped on the other side of 'Amu Darya in a triumphal and celebrative style together with the princes and kings who had decided to fight at his side: the Rūms monarchs brothers Iz-ad-Dīn and Rokn ad-Dīn, Sa'ad *-atabeg* of Fars- and many other princes from Iraq, Azerbaijan, Arran and Sirwan.¹⁴

From this moment onward, the real campaign could begin. Hülagü set his military diplomatic activity at work. Many letters were sent in which the diverse monarchs of territories that the Mongols were intended to conquer, were invited to surrender.¹⁵ The kingdoms of Asia Minor since the collapse of Ayyubid power (1171-1250) had had to deal with the Mongols and in several occasions they had already come to previous political agreements with them, for example in the case of Badr ad-Dīn Lu'Lu *atabeg* of Mosul who had allowed coins to be minted in Hülagüs honour before his arrival¹⁶ and the Shiites of Mesopotamia.¹⁷

Thereupon, Hülagü started to achieve his first goal: the destruction of the Assassins sect.

The master of the Assassins Order was Muhammad II Al ad-Dīn b. Hasan III, who was murdered (1221-1255).¹⁸ Soon after his death, Isma'ili's agitators were already at work in Ray, evidently looking towards winning a new popular following and perhaps arousing a new general revolt. After the death of Shah Jalal ad-Dīn of Khoresm (1231) the sentiment of revolt was aroused. Prophecies of how the Imam was going to conquer the world had long appeared in Isma'ili works, but we find an unusually detailed prophecy in one of Tusi's works of this period.¹⁹ The main Order's fortresses were situated chiefly in the region of Kuhistan, particularly in the mountains of Mazanderan. The best known fortification was 'Alamut, on a steep mountain

¹¹ Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p. 44.

¹² Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 148.,

¹³ Hethum d. G. (42), Wardan (182), Kirakos (217), Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 149, Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, I, p. 87.

¹⁴ Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 90; Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, p. 150.

¹⁵ Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p. 44.

¹⁶ British Museum VI, LIV; about this subject see D. S. Rice, "The Brasses of Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu'", in. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XIII/3 (1950), p. 627-634.

¹⁷ "Seit Hülagü, haben die Schiiten eine andere Richtung eingeschlagen und sind zu einer Zusammenarbeit mit den Mongolen gekommen", cf. Spuler, *Mongolen*, p. 196.

¹⁸ About the Isma'ili rule see, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V, p. 478.

¹⁹ *Cambridge History of Iran*, V, p. 478.

in the northeast of Qazwin, surrounded by thick walls.²⁰ Ketboğa broke into the Taliqan Mountains and decided to attack the fortress of Garde Kuh (named also Derigonbad).²¹ The meaning of *garde kuh* (pers.) is “turning mountain”, due to the fortification type of the citadel, which was surrounded by a triple system of thick walls.²² Ketboğa gave orders to dig a deep ditch near by the citadel surrounded by a high and resistant wall; the Mongol army encamped behind this safe construction, and the soldiers erected another wall behind their encampment, so that they could avoid any attack risks from all side.²³

The invading Mongols had brought with them many siege machines (*šahdiz*)²⁴ and many references had been made in chronicles to the function of Chinese engineers.²⁵ The moral effect of a particular engine certainly succeeded in shortening the siege at Garde Kuh. The *kamāni gāv* (pers. “ox’s bow”) appears to have been a large crossbow, mounted on a frame and shooting bolts dipped into burning pitch that could reach right into the caves. The *kamāni gāv* has been credited with a range of 2 500 paces (more than two kilometres). On this occasion, the weapon was used to stop communication between the various galleries.²⁶ The Ismaili’s Great Master, Khūr Šāh Rukn ad-Dīn b. Muhammad III (1255-1256), appeared to have lost his nerves and sent a message claiming that he had intended to surrender all along, but had been prevented by his own men, who had threatened to assassinate him. Khūr Šāh asked Hülägü to give him a years-time to dismantle the fortifications of the Ismaili’s kingdom and to submit his people to obedience, but the Il-Khān refused these conditions and marched from Bostam towards the Ismaili’s territories with his *ordu*. The right wing (*bara’unyar*)²⁷, led by Köke Ilka and Buğa Timur went down to Mazanderan; the left wing (*je’unyar*)²⁸ under the order of prince Tägüdär Aġul and of

²⁰ G. Altunian, “Die Mongolen und ihre Eroberungen in kaukasischen und kleinasiatischen Ländern im XIII. Jahrhundert”, *Historische Studien*, XCI, (Berlin 1911), p. 44.

²¹ Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 93.

²² Ibid.

²³ Cf. Qatremère/Rašid ad-Dīn, I, p. 170; Hammer Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 93

²⁴ Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 93; Rašid ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, 284-290.

²⁵ “The Mongols mainly relied upon Chinese and later Moslems to manufacture and operate siege machines. There is no sign in the Secret History or elsewhere that the Mongols had koweledge of siege machines of every sort. They did, however, learn how to use catapults and organized catapult troops of their own and had not long after their invasion of North China had begun”, cf. Ch’i-ch’ing Hsiao, *The military Establishment of the Yuan Dynasty*, Harvard 1978, p. 12, n. 79, p. 133; see also Rašid ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 133.

²⁶ D. Nicolle, *The Mongol Warlords: Genghis Khan, Kublai Khan, Hülägü, Tamerlane.*, Plates by R. Hook, Firebird books: Pole 1990, p. 128.

²⁷ Ch’i-ch’ing Hsiao, *Military Establishment.*, p. 10; Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p. 331.

²⁸ Ibid.

Ketboga *noyan* descended on the way to Xwar and Semnan, while Hülagü rode in the middle (*töb* or *γol*)²⁹ with his *tümen*³⁰ towards Firuzkuh, striking the last great attack.³¹

On the 18th November 1256 the astronomer Nasr ad-Dīn Tusi, who had been held as a virtual prisoner in Maymun Diz, came down offering his surrender.³² On the 19th November 1256 the Great Master himself emerged.³³ The Mongols destroyed then the extraordinary cave-fortress of Maymun-Diz. One aspect that has puzzled archaeologists and historians is why the neighbouring Assassin garrison at 'Alamut made no effort to raid the besieging Mongols and thus taking the pressure off their comrades in Maymun-Diz.

The Imam chief of the Assassins, was captured by Hülagü and forced to give the order to surrender to the remaining resisting fortresses. Notwithstanding, the besieged Assassins didn't obey his order and 'Alamut capitulated on the 22nd November 1256.³⁴ Initially Khūršāh was treated with respect, received a *paīza*³⁵ and a *yarliġ*³⁶ and was even married to a Mongolian aristocratic woman,³⁷ but after the fall of 'Alamut he was sent to the Great Qan and was killed on the way to (or back from?) Qaraqorum.³⁸

²⁹ Ch'i-ch'ing Hsiao, *Military Establishment.*, p. 10; Spuler, *Mongolen*; see also Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 200, note 52.

³⁰ "Myriarchy"; cf. Ch'i-ch'ing Hsiao, *Military Establishment.*, p. 9-10; see also Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p. 330-38.

I basically agree with Mr. Morgan's opinion: "It has commonly been assumed that a part from the primary sense of "ten thousand" and more specifically "a unit of ten thousand men", it has the secondary sense of a district that provided ten thousand men for the Mongol armies", cf. D. O. Morgan, "The Mongol Armies in Persia", in: *Der Islam*, 1979, p. 90, note 49.

³¹ Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 192.

³² Hammer/Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 95. Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 176.

³³ Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 102; Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 212.

³⁴ Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p. 46; cf. Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, 182.

³⁵ The *paīza* was a golden, silver or bronze tablet, which was given to high-ranking persons or to anybody who was travelling under the protection of the Qan. For a detailed description of the *paīza* see Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p. 241 a. 244.

³⁶ The meaning of *yarliġ* (mong.) is "order". It was a text with the seal of the Qan's chancellery usually accompanying the *paīza*. For more details, see Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p. 245.

³⁷ Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 105; Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 216.

³⁸ Apparently in the Khangai mountains; see Cambr. *Hist. Iran*, p. 480. According to Wassaf, as the Qan Mōngkā was informed of Khūršāh's approaching to his court, he exclaimed: "Why send him here?", after that he sent him an embassy announcing he was condemned to death. Cf. Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 105; See also Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 218.

Before the Mongols attacked, Khūršāh was joined by the usual formal invitation to surrender, which he refused. After this event, some Assassins joined Hülägüs army.³⁹ At the time of the election of the Great Qan Güyük in 1246, an embassy of the Assassins came to his court, but the Qan refused to give them an audience.⁴⁰ This attitude of the Mongols was really unusual, always having being well disposed to those powers, which wanted to establish diplomatic relationships with them. Probably this hostility towards the Ismailis was due to an antecedent fact. The Ismailis are indeed reported to have sent envoys in 1238 to the court of France and England in Western Europe to try to arrange for joint actions by Christians and Muslims against the Mongols.⁴¹ The fierce Order of the Assassins, that had terrified the Seljuk Sultanate and the abbasid Caliphate, was in the end removed by the Mongols. That was an enormous favour, which the Mongols had done for the Islamic community.⁴² But the joy of the Caliph could not last any longer, because Hülägü's next target was the Caliphate itself! During the spring of 1257 Hülägü moved his headquarter from Qazwin to Hamadan, where he received Baidju *noyan* and reproached him for his laziness.⁴³

The Baghdad Caliphate had become a decadent reign, territorially restricted to Baghdad and to the region of Iraq 'arabi.⁴⁴ Since 1242 the Caliph Musta'sim bi'llā (1242-1258) ruled in Baghdad.⁴⁵ From Hamadan, Hülägü sent him a legacy of four people who handed him over an Ultimatum.⁴⁶ In the beginning the Caliph seemed willing to recognise Hülägü's rule and to perform the *hutba*⁴⁷ in his name, but he was then convinced by his entourage⁴⁸ to send an embassy to Hülägü reminding the Mongol Khan that all the previous attempts to take Baghdad had failed.⁴⁹

³⁹ Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p. 46.

⁴⁰ Ibid; see also Cambr. *Hist. Iran*, p. 478: The breach with Mongols became when the Mongols refused to recognise the Isma'ilis envoys in Mongolia.

⁴¹ Cambr. *Hist. Iran*, vol. V, p. 479.

⁴² "And by the means of these blessed captures God had mercy on all the kings of the Arabs and Christians who lived in terror and trembling through the fear of the Ishmaelites who were carriers of daggers and were shedders of innocent blood", Cf. Wallis Budge, *Chronography.*, p. 423.

⁴³ Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 224; Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, pp. 107-8.

⁴⁴ G. Soranzo, Il Papato, *l'Europa cristiana e i Tartari*, Milano 1930, p. 170.

⁴⁵ Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 226: *...le khalife Mostasem était un prince sans capacité, sans talent pour l'administration, et d'un esprit faible*; Grousset, *Empire.*, p. 485.

⁴⁶ Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 118; Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, p. 231.

⁴⁷ Politic speech held on every Friday in the mosque.

⁴⁸ At the head of the „war party“ was the little dewadtdar (porte-écritoire) Mujahid ad-Dīn-Aibeg; cf. Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 226.

⁴⁹ Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 144; Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 250.

From then on, Hülägü started to make preparations for the siege of the town. He ordered all his military forces to congregate and to march towards the Abbasid capital from different sides. Baidju and others had to block the west approach to Baghdad and to guard the west side of the river so that nobody could enter or escape. After a five days siege, the Mongol army took Baghdad. The destruction of the Abbasid army was also due to the lack of help on the part of other Muslim princes. The assault of Baghdad had long been planned. The Round City, built for the Caliph al Mansur on the West bank of the Tigris, had crumbled into ruins. The city, and the small state that the Caliphs had managed to re-establish since the decline of the Saljuqs, had a small army of professional slave-recruited Mamluk soldiers, plus Arab tribes from southern Iraq. To this could be added a citizen militia of dubious reliability and very little training.⁵⁰

Hülägü and his central wing left Hamdan in November 1252, ransacking the city of Kerman Shah on their way down to the Tigris plain; by that time Ketboğa had already taken the left wing down through Luristan towards Baghdad while the right wing under Baiju marched south from Irbil crossing the bridge of Mosul, establishing his headquarter on the west side of the Tigris river.⁵¹ Here, they were joined by the Princes Bulgha, Kuli, Kotar (Batu's nephew) and by Buqa Timur and Suqundjaq *noyan* who had come from Schehsor and Daku.⁵²

After threats and counter threats going between Hülägü and the Caliph, the Mongol army set on a camp on the banks of Hulvan river while Baiju, Suqndjaq and Buka Timur led his men across the Small Tigris, wanting to attack Bagdad from the rear. Suqunjaq with permission from Baidju to be the leader of the vanguard of the western army marching towards Baghdad.⁵³ When the Caliph's little *dawadtar*, heard of this threat coming from the rear, he led the Caliph's army across the west bank of the river and attacked Suqunjaq near Anbar, nine parasangs⁵⁴ west from Baghdad.⁵⁵ The Mongols were at first driven back until rallied by Baiju himself. The Caliph's army was lured into marshy terrain where they were trapped when the Mongols opened a dyke.⁵⁶ There the Caliph's men were cut to pieces, only their

⁵⁰ Nicolle, Warlords., p. 130. See also map p. 131.

⁵¹ Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf p. 146; Rašid ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 262.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Rašid ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 280.

⁵⁴ 1 parasang is 5.25 kilometres.

⁵⁵ In the nearabouts of Dudjel; Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. cfr. Rašid ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 280.

⁵⁶ Rašid ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 280

commander and a few troops escaped back to Baghdad, while other survivors fled south into the desert.

As was Mongol practice, a palisade and a ditch were built around the entire besieged eastern city from riverbank to riverbank.⁵⁷ The Mongols used the stones taken from the mountains of Hamrin and Djelula and even palmwood pieces as projectiles for the siege machines.⁵⁸ On January 29th the Mongol final attack began and by the 4th February a breach had been opened in the southeastern corner of the defences, near the Persian tower (*burj 'ajami*).⁵⁹ This appeared to have been a key position for Hülägü's army. On the 5th February the Mongols attacked again and by dawn next day they controlled a stretch of the defensive wall from the Persian Tower to the neighbouring Bab al Tillism (Racecourse Gate). On the 10th February 1258 the capital of the Abbasids fell in Hülägüs hands, who promised to spare the God's erudite, the scheïkhs, the descendants of 'Ali (the *sajids*), the merchants and all of them who had not borne arms against him.⁶⁰ On the side of the Sultan's market on which were encamped Bulgha and Tutar,⁶¹ the Mongols had difficulties in seizing the defensive walls. As Hülägü reproached them, they tried a new assault which was successful and by the night on the same day the Mongols had occupied the entire eastern defensive fortification of the town. The Mongols had blocked the water ways of the Tigris by building up boat-bridges on which were set siege machines and check-points.⁶² Some times after the capitulation of Baghdad Hülägü let bring the Caliph before him, he judged him and condemned him to death. He was put in a sackcloth which was sewed up around him and with kicks of their feet they killed him.⁶³ On their return from Baghdad Badr-ad-Dīn from Mosul bought the fortress of Irbil from the Mongols for seventy thousand dīnārs and he placed his guards therein.⁶⁴

Hülägü then prepared for the third part of his task: the conquest of the Zajira (upper Mesopotamia), Syria and a part of Egypt.⁶⁵ Before his start of the concluding part of his campaign, Hülägü asked his vassal Badr ad- Dīn

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Hammer/Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 150; Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 282.

⁶⁰ Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 282; cf. Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p.47.

⁶¹ Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 149: *Enkel Dschudschi's, mit Schiramun und Arktin.*

⁶² Rašīd ad-Dīn/Quatremère, I, p. 282.

⁶³ Wallis Budge, *Chronography.*, p. 431. Rašīd ad-Dīn does not mention the way the Caliph was executed. About this subject see also Boyle, "The death of the last Abbasid Caliph: A contemporary Muslim Account", in: *Journal of Semitic Studies*, VI Nr. 2 (1961).

⁶⁴ Wallis Budge, *Chronography.*, p. 431.

⁶⁵ Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 167.

Lu'Lu', from Herat to send to the battlefield his son Ssalih. The *Atabeg* obeyed Hülägü's order, sending him his son. This fact gave Hülägü great joy and rewarded Ssalih by giving him the hand of the daughter of the last great sultan of Choresm.⁶⁶ After that, the Mongols started the war on the 12th September 1259.⁶⁷ The generals Baidju and Šiqtur were in charge of the right wing, other Emirs were leading the left wing, while Hülägü was riding in the centre.⁶⁸ The Kurdish tribe of the Hakkjari, settled in the territory of Aqlat, were wiped away by the passage of the Mongol army.⁶⁹ The Lord of Mayyafariqun, Melik Al Kamil Muhammad had allowed the crucifixion of a Syriac priest who had been sent as a Mongol's envoy with a *yarliġ* from Baghdad.⁷⁰ At the time Hülägü's massive invasion force is said to have numbered 120 000 men.⁷¹ It included Turkish, Georgian and Armenian contingents and once again marched in four separate divisions. The Armenian military contingent for the conquest totalled 12 000 cavalymen and 40 000 infantrymen.⁷² They first struck Mayyafaraqin, in the mountains west of lake Van. In light of his recent refusal to take part in the conquest of Baghdad Al Kamil Muhammad, notwithstanding his official submission to Hülägü, made preparations for the defence of the town.⁷³ Badr ad-Dīn Lu' Lu's son Ssalih was sent to besiege the town of Amid, known today as Dyarbakir. Hülägü himself rode to Roha -the old Edessa- while other Mongol units seized Nisibin, Harran and Urfa.

The same fate occurred to the Syrian Latin city of Antioch (March 1260),⁷⁴ who's prince Bohemond VI hurried to surrender to Hülägü, most likely wisely counselled by his father-in-law Hethum, King of Lesser Armenia. Bohemond's decision later cost him an excommunication from St. Peter.⁷⁵ In Aleppo Nasser Yūsuf's son was beaten on the battlefield and the town surrendered in less than a week, although the huge citadel held out until 25th February. The Mongol's Armenian allies burnt down the Great

⁶⁶ Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 173; Wallis Budge, *Chronography.*, p. 427.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 173.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 174.

⁷⁰ Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 174, Grousset, *Empire.*, p. 434.

⁷¹ Nicolle, *Warlords.*, p. 112.

⁷² Bar Haebreus ch. 28; Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf; Soranzo, *Papato.*, p. 171.

⁷³ See Amedroz, *History of Mayyafariqun*, p. 805 f and 805, note 1.

⁷⁴ Aleppo's and Antioch's siege took place almost at the same time; see R. Röhrich, *Regesta Regni Hierosolimitani* (MXCVII-MCCXCI), Innsbruck 1891, p. 337; Soranzo, *Papato.*, p. 174.

⁷⁵ About this event, see Soranzo, *Papato.*, note 2, p. 175; P. G. Golubovich, *Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente Franceseano*, Quaracchi Firenze 1913, vol. I, p. 253-4.

Mosque in the city.⁷⁶ Hims and Hama were deserted by their rulers who fled to Egypt. Al Nasir Yusuf, Sultan of Damascus, fled towards Gaza leaving the city without defence. Hülägü's general Ketboğa entered Damascus on the 1st March 1260,⁷⁷ but the citadel continued to resist for one more month. Nasir Yusuf was captured eventually in the Jordan and sent to Hülägü.

The Mongol army was near by Gaza, when news reached Hülägü of the death of his brother, the Great Qan Möngkä.⁷⁸ Hülägü hurried immediately back to Tabriz, from where he could safely watch the events in Mongolia, taking the main part of the army with him. He left the supreme command to his general Ketboğa who had a reduced army of 20 000 or 10 000 troops.⁷⁹ His task was to round up the remaining resistance and establish an administration in the conquered parts of Syria.

In the same period and because of Qan Möngkäs death, Qubilay interrupted his campaign against the southern Song.⁸⁰ The election of the new Great Qan was now to be made between Qubilay and his younger brother Ayriq Boğa, governor of Mongolia, both stemming from the house of Tului to which also Hülägü belonged. Qubilay promptly arranged his own irregular election at Shang-du by Dolon-nor on the Luang-he river, where on the 4th June 1260, a *quriltay* composed of his own army acclaimed him as Qan of the Khans.⁸¹

In April 1260⁸² a papal embassy led by a man named David was sent to Hülägü.⁸³ The decision to send an embassy to the Mongol ruler was taken by Thomas d'Agni – Bishop of Bethlehem and *Legatus Apostolicus* in the Holy Land- together with the Regent of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.⁸⁴

That was the first diplomatic attempt the Crusader States made to get in contact with the new-founded Il-khanid kingdom of Persia. As we have seen

⁷⁶ Grousset, *Empire.*, p. 436.

⁷⁷ See the letter of Thomas d'Agni dated 1st March 1260 in: Röhrich, *Regesta.*, p. 337, n. 1288.

⁷⁸ He probably died in 1259 during the siege of the chinese town Ho-chow, affected by a disease; cf. Grousset, *Empire.*, p. 351; Rašid ad-Dīn, I, 340; see also Soranzo, *Papato.*, p. 173, Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p.51.

⁷⁹ Grousset, *Empire.*, p. 437, note 4.

⁸⁰ He made a temporary truce on the river Yang zi and hurried north; cf. Grousset, *Empire.*, p. 352.

⁸¹ Grousset, *Empire.*, p. 352; Soranzo, *Papato.*, p. 177.

⁸² See B. Roberg, «Die Tartaren auf dem 2. Konzil von Lyon 1274 » in: *Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum*, V, 1973.

⁸³ J. Richard, « Le Début des Relations entre la Papauté et les Mongols de Perse », in: *Journal Asiatique*, CCXXXVII, Paris 1949.

⁸⁴ Roberg, *Tartaren.*, p. 274.

before with Bohemond of Antioch, the Latin Christians of Outremer did not see the Mongols as potential allies. At that time, it seemed to be unclear how the alliance pattern in Syria was going to develop.

Many Crusader States seem to have held a kind of neutrality among the fights between the Saracens and the Mongols. Ketboğa did try to avoid a clash with the Crusaders, but on the 17th August 1260, his troops ransacked the port of Sidon. The reasons for this attack remain unclear. It seems that the Sidon incident was provoked by Julian of Sidon, a Frankish baron who went out of his way to annoy the Mongols. From his castle in Beaufort he led a wide-ranging foray into the Marj Ayun and brought back considerable spoils. The newly appointed keeper of the frontier over against Sidon was Ketboğa's nephew, who had no intention of putting up with such a violation of Mongol territory. He took a small group of men and pursued Julian, but was defeated and killed. Greatly angered, Ketboğa sent his men to attack the Lordship of Sidon. The Mongols pillaged the town, razing the walls and killing everyone they found, but they did not attack the landward or the seaward castle, which seems to show that they did not mean to annex the coastal colonies. From that time onwards Ketboğa ceased to trust the Franks, perpetrators of an act of aggression, which had touched him personally, and the Franks could never forget the ransacking of Sidon.⁸⁵ After this event some barons of the Latin Kingdoms probably adopted a kind of neutral policy towards the Mamluks, who were led at the time by the Sultan Sayf ad-Dīn Qutuz. This policy allowed them to pass through Frankish territory and even to enter Acre.⁸⁶ In 1260 Egypt was threatened by a Mongol attack after Sultan Qutuz had rejected Hülagü's demand of an unconditional surrender and had the Mongol ambassadors executed.⁸⁷ Despite the opposition of several Emires, Qutuz and his Emire Baybars decided to forestall attack by moving their troops up into Syria.⁸⁸

Meanwhile Ketboğa had gathered his forces, crushed a rising by the Muslims of Damascus and marched down into the Jordan valley. The

⁸⁵ Grousset, *Empire.*, p. 438; Hammer-Purgastall/Wassaf, p. 197; J. Richard, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, Amsterdam, New York, Oxford 1979, p. 390.

⁸⁶ *Jestes des Chiprois, Documents arméniens*, I, 753; *Manuscrit de Rothelin, Historien des Croisades*, p. 637. About the safeconduct obtained by Qutuz through Frankish territory see also Richard, *Kingdom Jerusalem.*, p. 390; P.Thorau, *Sultan Baybars I von Ägypten*, Wiesbaden 1987, p. 92, note 10.

⁸⁷ Qirtāy, *Ta'rih*, fol. 59 and 59; Baybars al-Mansūrī, *Tuhfa*, fol. 8 v, and *Zubda*, fol. 38 r. Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, I2, p. 427-429 (Quatremère I A, p. 101-103); cfr. Qualqašandī, *Subh VIII*, p. 63 f; Rašīd ad Dīn/Quatremère p. 341-47.

⁸⁸ Ibn Wāsil, *Muffarrij al-kurūb fi akhbar Banī Ayyūb*, Paris MS. Bibil. nat., fonds arabe 1703, fol. 159 v.-fol. 160 r.; Qirtāy, *Ta'rīkh al-nawādir mimma jarā li'l-awā'il wa'l*.

Mamluks struck inland from Acre, and the two armies moved towards each other until they met in 'Ain Jalut. According to Rashid ad-Din, Qutuz laid an ambush with the greater part of his army while he himself led only a small detachment. The Mongols attacked immediately Qutuz's force; they overwhelmed it with a shower of arrows and then, emboldened by their success, rushed their opponents, killing a large number of Egyptians. Suddenly in their wild pursuit they reached the place where the main part of the Mamluk army laid in ambush. The future Sultan Baybars al-Bunduqdāri was particularly outstanding due to his personal commitment and military leadership.

According to Ibn al- Dawadari, as soon a Ketboğa discovered that the Mamluk army was camping on the plain before Acre, he moved down to the Jordan valley. Sultan Qutuz sent a scouting party under Baybars to approach the Mongols. Baybars skirmished repeatedly with the Mongol vanguard, attacking them again and again only to retreat on each occasion.⁸⁹ In this way, he lured the Mongols to the very place the Mamluks wanted: them 'Ain Jalut, an ideal battlefield with its wooded ridges, water supply and adjacent plain.

The Mongols nevertheless fought valiantly, but when they could no longer hold their own, they turned in retreat. Ketboğa himself refused to quit the battlefield and continued fighting until he was taken prisoner. Brought before Qutuz he fell into a vehement argument with the Mamluk Sultan who had him beheaded on the spot. It has been generally assumed that the Mongols forces were fewer than the Mamluk's, but recent studies show that this was probably not the case. The Mamluk army was large, from 15 000 to 20 000 men, but the majority were Turcoman or Arab tribal auxiliaries and poorly equipped cavalry of very mixed origins. The Mamluks themselves formed a small elite of well-armed and highly trained professional warriors.⁹⁰ Ketboğa's army equally numbered from 10 000 to 20 000, including Georgian and Armenian auxiliaries. The two armies met in 'Ain Jalut (Spring of Goliath)⁹¹ on the 3rd September 1260, where the Mongols suffered a heavy defeat. Ketboğa himself was captured and beheaded. As soon as Hülägü was informed of the death of his general, he had the Sultan of Damascus and other ayyubid princes executed.⁹² One of Ketboğas

⁸⁹ Ibn al-Dawādāri, *Kanznal-durar*, ed. U. Haarmann, Freiburg 1971 Viii, 49.; Ibn al-Furat, M.S. *Vatican Arab.* 726, fol. 245 v.

⁹⁰ Nicolle, *Warlords.*, p. 116.

⁹¹ A village between Baysan and Nablus; see, *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd edition), I, 786-87; see also A.S. Marmadji, *Textes géographiques arabes sur la Palestine*, Paris 1951, p. 152; Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems*, London 1890, p. 386 and 461.

⁹² Rašid ad-Dīn/Quatremère, p. 353-59.

lieutenants, Ilqa noyan, managed to rally together the rest of the Mongol contingent that remained in Syria and led them to Anatolia. The battle of 'Ain Jalut has a considerable significance for the political and military strategy, which the Mamluks subsequently adopted. Having re-conquered only a small part of the Muslim territory formerly occupied by the Mongols, the Muslim troops could quickly convert the cities of Syria back to Ayyubid or Mamluk control, without that Hülagü could never attempt to avenge the death of his general. This battle represented the high-water mark of Mongol expansion in the Near East. But why did they not stay? Probably because the territory of Syria offered insufficient grassland to sustain the horses necessary for a permanent occupation. The Mongol armies habitually campaigned with several horses for each man. Various figures are given in the sources, but a fair average would be around 5 horses per man;⁹³ moreover, we must count an average of two slaves and thirty sheep and goats for every horseman.⁹⁴ But this matter of logistics regarding the provision of food for the horses and camels does not explain everything. We must always keep in mind that at the time of King Hülagü the organization of the military system was not precisely regulated by a salary for each warrior, on the contrary, we know exactly that the main income for each of them consisted of profits coming from the spoils that they had gathered during the campaigns.⁹⁵ We think that these continuous "extraterritorial" incursions were due to the structural need of the military-based form of Mongol political system to maintain itself and to provide for the warriors a satisfactory reward after the struggles of war.

After a few months after the facts of 'Ain Jalut, the Il-khanid King could only afford to send some 6 000 men to retake Aleppo. The Mongols then marched south, but outside Hims they met a small defensive army of local ayyubid and ex-ayyubid forces. There, on the 10th December 1260 they suffered once again a defeat, despite apparently outnumbering the Muslim defenders by almost four to one.⁹⁶

⁹³ According to Wassaf, during Ghazan Khan's invasion of Syria in 1299-1300 each man had five horses; see *Ta'rih-i Wassaf*, ed. M.M. Isfahani, lithograph, Bombay, 1852-3 (=Wassaf), p. 273. The same is reported by al-'Umarī for the Army of the Golden Horde; see, *Das Mongolische Weltreich*, ed. and tr.K. Lech, Wiesbaden, 1968, arabic text p. 79, tr. p. 145. I completely agree with Mr. Morgan's opinion about the subject, see his article "The Mongol Armies in Persia", in: *Der Islam*, 1979, pp. 85-86.

⁹⁴ K. Lech, *Mongolische Welt.*, p. 145.

⁹⁵ Hōdamir, III, 61; Rašīd ad-Dīn/Wien 314; Ohsson IV-429; see also Spuler, *Mongolen.*, p. 253; Lech, *Mongolische Welt.*, p. 154-5. It seems that by Hülagü's time started a sort of "reform" for the soldier's salary, a sort of 'iqta without much success.

⁹⁶ Nicolle, *Warlords.*, p. 117; J. J. Saunders, "The Mongol Defeat at 'Ain Jalut", in: *Muslims and Mongols*, (ed. by G.W.Rice), p. 69.

The last defeat of Hims determined the end of the Mongol expansion in southwest Asia and at the same time it marked the territorial borders within which the Il-khanid Mongol power would act as a sovereign state. From then on, the Mamluks would fight the Il-Khanids mainly *per procura* thanks to the alliance with the “rebel cousin” Berke Khan, heir of Batu’s Golden Horde. The next decade of was to be determined by an exhausting conflict around the Caucasus region, without the successors of Hülügü being able to forget their Syrian dream, regularly organizing a new campaign to conquer it.