**Arrowheads of Hülegü Khan: Envoys and Diplomacy in his Invasion of the Middle East, 1255-1262**

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At the gathering near Kökö Naʾur, when Temüjin was named Chinggis Khan, four men were appointed to be his trusted envoys. According to the *Secret History* (hereafter, *SH*), he said to them, “Be my far-flying shafts, be my near-flying arrows!”[[1]](#footnote-1) Years later and miles away, as his grandson Hülegü rode at the head of his army to conquer the lands across the Oxus, diplomacy was used as the arrows in the quivers of his troops. Examining his campaigns against the Niẓāris of Alamut, the ʿAbbāsid Caliph, al-Nasir Ayyub in Syria and the Mamluk sultans of Egypt, this article will track the changing forms and effects of Hülegü’s diplomacy and delineate his larger diplomatic moves.

The first part of this article will focus on the war against the Niẓāris and the Caliph. Despite earlier contacts each had with the Mongols, an explanation will be offered for the destruction of these two powers in light of Hülegü’s diplomacy. The second section of the article will discuss Hülegü’s unfinished campaign to conquer Syria and Egypt. During its early stage (1258–1260) Hülegü’s diplomacy consisted of missives in Arabic that were heavily based upon Mongol imperial ideology. The death of the Great Khan and the eruption of inter-Mongol warfare will be the focus of the next section as it led to another shift in diplomacy—the overture further west to the king of France. New insights emerge when Hülegü’s letter to Louis IX is examined not as a part of Mongol contacts with Christendom but rather as a part of Hülegü‘s ongoing diplomatic efforts with western powers (Muslim and Christian alike). Based upon the analysis of these diplomatic efforts, the article’s conclusion will address the question of who directed Hülegü’s diplomacy and the part played by the advisers at his court in prompting his western policy.

**A. Kūhistān and Baghdad**

Hülegü’s Middle Eastern campaign brought a violent end to two very different powers in the region—the Shīʿite sect of the Niẓārī Ismāʿīlīs of Kūhistān (literally, “Land of Mountains”) in eastern Iran, and the ʿAbbāsid Caliph in his capital of Baghdad, the official center of a once-united Sūnni Muslim Empire. Many contemporary authors, Sūnni and Shīʿite alike, writing under Mongol rule as well as far beyond its borders, described the original target of Hülegü Khan as the land of the Niẓārīs. His campaign against the Caliph (whose actual authority had long faded) was seen as an unfortunate development, one that could and should have been prevented. For example, the eminent scholar Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī remarked that Hülegü set out to the “land of the heretics” (bilād-i malāḥida), while noting that it was the internal strife in the Baghdadi leadership that caused the eventual fall of the Caliph.[[2]](#footnote-2) ʿAtā-Malik Juwaynī, followed by Rashīd al-Dīn—both great historians and Il-Khanid administrators—claimed that Möngke Qaghan ordered Hülegü to destroy the Niẓārī strongholds, but not to harm the Caliph, “unless his heart and tongue are not one.”[[3]](#footnote-3) This might be discarded as pro-Hülegüid propaganda written by Il-Khanid court historians; yet Minhāj al-Dīn Jūzjānī, writing in the Delhi Sultanate, similarly observed that Hülegü set out against the Niẓārīs following Möngke‘s orders, while his war on Baghdad was the result of the intrigues launched by the ʿAbbāsid Vazir and the Christians of the city.[[4]](#footnote-4) The encyclopedist and administrator al-ʿUmarī, writing in the Mamluk Sultanate, agreed that the Niẓārīs were the primary aim of the Mongol forces (along with Kurdish highwaymen), while the campaign against Baghdad was Hülegü‘s own venture.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Yet claiming that the conquest of Baghdad was not intended is as problematic as stating that the Niẓārīs were the only aim of Hülegü’s campaign. According to the *Secret History*, composed in the mid thirteenth century, Baghdad was seen as a legitimate aim for conquest as early as 1221: “Here in the west there is one called the Qalibai Soltan of the Baqtat people,” noted the quiver bearers Qongqai, Qongtaqar, and Chormaqan in their conversation with Chinggis Khan. “Let us move against him!”[[6]](#footnote-6) Chormaqan would eventually be sent westward by Ögödäi Qaghan—not against the ʿAbbāsid Caliph, but against his enemy, Jalāl al-Dīn Khwārazm-Shāh. His forces remained in Iran long after Jalāl al-Dīn’s demise;[[7]](#footnote-7) following the rise of Möngke Qaghan in 1251, Baiju Noyan was sent to take over the command.[[8]](#footnote-8) After arriving in Iran, Baiju is claimed to have reported that Baghdad was not yet taken due to its vast army and the country’s difficult roads.[[9]](#footnote-9) It thus appears that the atmosphere between Baghdad and the Mongols was tense even before Hülegü’s arrival.

The situation with the Niẓārīs was also not as straightforward as historically recorded. They had maintained early contacts with the Mongol forces as well, and these were not at all negative. In a thorough analysis to the early Mongol-Muslim contacts, Peter Jackson counted them among the numerous Muslim elements who approached the Mongols long before Hülegü’s intervention. According to the Ismāʿīlī compendium of poems *Diwān-i qā’imiyyāt*, Niẓārī relations with Chinggis Khan were initially amiable;[[10]](#footnote-10) Juwaynī went as far as describing the leader of Alamūt, Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥasan (d. 1221), as the first ruler south of the Oxus to offer his submission to the Mongols.[[11]](#footnote-11) Ibn al-Athīr mentioned a later contact (ca. 1230) in which the Niẓārīs incited the Mongols against their bitter enemy, Jalāl al-Dīn Khwārazmshāh.[[12]](#footnote-12) They were not the only ones to do so; given the many local enmities, various elements could consider the Mongols an ally against foreign enemies or internal threats. Jackson thus concluded that Mongol activity could appear as a “welcome intervention” in existing local conflicts.[[13]](#footnote-13) It was against this explosive background that Hülegü, taking the same approach on a greater scale and more sharply, struck his first spark.

From his camp near Kish on the northeastern bank of the Oxus, Hülegü issued a single message distributed as many decrees (*yarlīgh’hā*), addressing “the monarchs and sultans of Iran.” Among the sources used in this study, this is the earliest mention of a diplomatic contact Hülegü initiated with the rulers southwest of the Oxus. Its contents are referred to by Tūsī and described by Rashīd al-Dīn:[[14]](#footnote-14)

We are on campaign to eradicate the strongholds of the heretics (*malāhadāt*) and to drive out that people, by the authority of the decree (*yarlīgh*) of the Qaghan.[[15]](#footnote-15) If you come yourselves and assist us with soldiers, weapons, and provisions, then your lands, troops, and homes will remain yours, and your efforts will be appreciated. If you ignore this command, then when we are finished with them, by the power of God the Most High (*bi-qovat-i khudā’i taʿāli*),[[16]](#footnote-16) we will head straight for you—and no excuse will be accepted—and your land and homes will meet the same fate as theirs.

This was no occasional message; Arghun Aqa of the Oyirat, who was in charge of the Mongol administration of the lands west of the Oxus since 1243/4,[[17]](#footnote-17) arrived at Hülegü’s camp, accompanied with “all the grandees and nobles and ministers of Khorasan”; they paid homage to Hülegü and remained there for a month, during which time they issued these decrees.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Nor was the camp near Kish a mere rest stop. The pause near Kish served two purposes. Its public aim is thoroughly described by Lane: an interlude in Hülegü’s voyage to his new kingdom intended for the purpose of receiving tribute and pledges of loyalty from local nobility. In contrast with the terror tactics of Chinggis Khan and Tolui, Hülegü was able to command the deference of many of the Iranian nobility through a demonstration of grandeur.[[19]](#footnote-19) But a second and covert purpose was to make an intensive study of the area and its atmosphere. The decree issued by Hülegü near Kish made use of existing social fissures in the land he was about to invade. Using the “heretics” as the intended target of his campaign could create a common ground with every Sūnnī (and most Shīʿite) leaders in the area; Hülegü could thus attract local support and prevent the various forces from uniting against him. The reactions to his decree would also provide an outline of the political map of the land southwest of the Oxus: of the possible supporters and trouble makers; the lines between the loyal and the rebel; the *el/īl* and the *bulgha/yāghī*. As a part of the worldview of a divinely empowered universal Mongol Empire, *bulγa* people were all those who had not yet submitted to Mongol authority.[[20]](#footnote-20) The division of *il* and *yāghī* would henceforth underlie Hülegü’s contacts westward. From this perspective, the decree of 1255 resulted in the eventual definition as rebels of both the Niẓārīs—the obvious target—and the Caliph, who ignored the command to assist. The war against the Niẓārīs therefore formed not only the first stage of Hülegü’s campaign but an essential one—a basic step in his invasion of the lands beyond the Oxus.

At the beginning, all seemed to comply: dignitaries flowed to Hülegü’s camp in Kish to signal their acquiescence; the Caliph, according to Tūsī, reported his cooperation as well. Even the young leader of the Niẓārīs, Rukn al-Dīn Khūrshāh, sent word of his immediate submission.[[21]](#footnote-21) But he was less eager to come himself, and therefore a second stage of diplomacy began. For approximately a year, from the end of 1255 to November of 1256, envoys passed to and fro between Hülegü and Khūrshāh. Mentions of this activity are scattered among the texts of Juwaynī, Rashīd al-Dīn, and Bar Hebraeus;[[22]](#footnote-22) and despite Hülegü’s plain intention to “wipe out that people,” the nature of these contacts was surprisingly moderate. Hülegü’s demands turned out to be open to change, and Khūrshāh, on his part, never said no to them. The first four missions by emissaries from the Mongols demanded that Khūrshāh destroy his fortresses and come before Hülegü;[[23]](#footnote-23) yet in the message of September 22, Hülegü demanded Khūrshāh to come before him, but indicated that if he is delayed, he may send his son in his stead.[[24]](#footnote-24) A month later, Hülegü again demanded Khūrshāh’s appearance—but if he is unable, he may send his brother.[[25]](#footnote-25) The Niẓārīs, for their part, were mostly willing to accept these terms. As early as May, 1256 Khūrshāh sent one of his brothers to Yasa’ur, destroyed several strongholds and removed the gates of three major fortresses in Alamūt, Lamasār, and Maymūn-Diz.[[26]](#footnote-26) As to the demand for his arrival in person, he politely asked for more time;[[27]](#footnote-27) when his son was required to appear, he did send a son (although it was his father’s son).[[28]](#footnote-28)

All this might appear pointless, yet the repeated contacts served contrary ends for both sides. For Hülegü, it was possibly an attempt to subjugate a well-fortified enemy without a fight; while Khūrshāh’s attitude may be taken as a diplomatic form of *taqīya*[[29]](#footnote-29)—the cautious veiling of one’s true intentions or beliefs (in this case a false submission to a stronger foe). But above all, it seems that both sides used diplomacy as a distraction meant to gain time. For while the intermediaries passed to and fro, Hülegü’s armies were assembling, drawing nearer and nearer to Maymūn-Diz;[[30]](#footnote-30) at the same time Khūrshāh was waiting for the arrival of his strongest ally—winter.

But by November Khūrshāh had run out of time. Hülegü’s forces encircled him in his fortress at Maymūn-Diz, yet winter was already upon them, with its heavy rains and the threat of lack of fodder hovering over the Mongol army.[[31]](#footnote-31) Moderation was cast aside at once. In his next mission, in early October, 1256, Hülegü demanded that Khūrshāh come before him within five days. Although the Niẓārī leader sent both his own son and his brother, Hülegü stuck to his original demand.[[32]](#footnote-32) According to Rashīd al-Dīn (as well as in one version of Juwaynī’s text), this was enough to convince Khūrshāh to surrender. In Juwaynī’s second version, a battle erupted at the foot of Maymūn-Diz, after which the Niẓārī leader came before Hülegü Khan.[[33]](#footnote-33)

But his submission was only the first stage in a larger move. In September, 1257, with the smoke still rising over the Niẓārī lands, an envoy from Hülegü came to Baghdad with a message for the Caliph. Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī, who joined Hülegü’s entourage following the campaign in Kūhistān, described it thusly: “You have said, ‘I am *īl*’, [but] the sign that you are *īl* is that you help us with troops when we go to war against a *yāghī*.”[[34]](#footnote-34) As before, Hülegü demanded that the Caliph appear before him—and if not, he should send one of the three leading persons of Baghdad. These three held the true authority in the city—the Vazīr Muʿiz al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿAlqamī; the commander of the Caliphal army Sulīmanshāh Ibn Barjām; and the Davātdār Mujāhid al-Dīn Aybak—a senior official who was also the leader of the city mob.[[35]](#footnote-35) The Caliph sent none of them, and Hülegü, enraged, set out for Baghdad.

At this point, both Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī and Rashīd al-Dīn describe envoys passing back and forth between Hülegü and Baghdad, quite similar to the earlier contacts with Khūrshāh. This would last for six months, from September of 1257 to the beginning of 1258. Yet unlike his contacts with the Niẓārīs, this time Hülegü’s demands did not change at all. The Caliph was commanded to come himself, or send one of the three persons mentioned above—or else to prepare for bitter war.[[36]](#footnote-36) It also appears that the ongoing diplomacy was not intended to buy time but rather reinforce the content of the message; when more time was required to gather his forces, Hülegü camped for thirteen days in Hulwān, northeast of Baghdad, with no diplomatic activity involved.[[37]](#footnote-37) His use of diplomacy against Baghdad was aimed at fraying the nerves of the Caliph—to convince him or his people to submit and convince the city to abandon the fight. These contacts continued, like arrows shot again and again at the same target, during the Mongol army’s advance towards Baghdad, and throughout the siege and the battle for the city.[[38]](#footnote-38) There was even a brief pause in diplomatic exchanges between January 30 or 31, 1258, and February 7—at this time the battle was so harsh that Hülegü refused to receive the Caliphal emissaries, as if stretching the stamina of the Baghdadi leadership. On February 7, 1258, Hülegü consented to reply, demanding yet again that the Davātdār and Sulīmanshāh appear before him.[[39]](#footnote-39) That very day they went out to him, and three days later this long conflict came to an end when the Caliph submitted to Hülegü Khan.[[40]](#footnote-40)

That was one form Hülegü’s diplomacy took.

**B. Syria and Egypt**

Following the fall of Baghdad, Hülegü drew another diplomatic arrow from his quiver, this time with a different type of arrowhead. The target now was the Ayyubid Sultan of Aleppo and Damascus, al-Malik al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, the most powerful of the Ayyubid rulers of Syria at the time.[[41]](#footnote-41) As with the Niẓārīs, al-Nāṣir had prior communications with the Mongol forces. He had paid tribute to Baiju in 1241, and to Arghun Aqa in 1243/44; he maintained contact with Guyuk Qaghan in 1245/46, and with Möngke Qaghan in 1250. Yet according to Ibn al-’Amīd, al-Nāṣir ignored Hülegü completely, and no assistance came from al-Nāṣir to Hülegü in his campaigns;[[42]](#footnote-42) it was his *vazīr*, Zayn al-Dīn Hāfeẓī, who secretly submitted to Hülegü when he invaded Iran.[[43]](#footnote-43) He did, however, send envoys to Hülegü after the conquest of Baghdad.

Al-Nāṣir’s emissaries received a letter in Arabic, written by Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī at the order of Hülegü, and were sent back on March 26, 1258.[[44]](#footnote-44) Thus a new phase of diplomacy began, mostly based upon written missives in Arabic embedded with Qur’ānic verses. The communication between Hülegü and al-Nāṣir left traces in numerous texts, and has been discussed by W. M. Brinner and thoroughly examined by Denise Aigle.[[45]](#footnote-45) In these communications, Hülegü calls upon al-Nāṣir to destroy his fortresses and come before him; but unlike the contacts with the Niẓārīs and the Caliph, al-Nāṣir is not accused of committing any offence. His submission is not required in order to fight a common foe or avenge past wrongs. The reason he should submit is simple—the Mongols are the rightful sovereigns of the land. “Submit before the Sultan of the land, the king of kings upon the earth,” said Hülegü (in a combination of Arabic and Persian terms) in the letter cited by al-Maqrīzī:[[46]](#footnote-46) “Mine are the two plains, the earth and the sea.”[[47]](#footnote-47)

Yet al-Nāṣir did not submit. The communication continued, and Hülegü’s tone became more and more intimidating. The tracks are hard to follow; as Aigle has pointed out, several of the sources jumbled the content of the various messages, while others—like al-Maqrīzī—merged them into one missive.[[48]](#footnote-48) This was the case in the version of the letters found in earlier texts by Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286) and Vassaf (d. 1323); in their description of events, from the conquest of Baghdad to the Battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt, only a single letter was sent by Hülegü.[[49]](#footnote-49) This one long missive may be divided into two parts: in Vassaf’s version, it begins by addressing al-Nāṣir in rather moderate tones, parallel to the first six lines of the letter in Bar Hebraeus;[[50]](#footnote-50) but then it opens again, taking off to new heights of wrath in addressing not only al-Nasir but now all the *amīr*s and soldiers of Syria.[[51]](#footnote-51) This portion is likely to be the contents of the last of Hülegü’s letters to al-Nāṣir; according to Vassaf, it was written by Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī at Hülegü’s order in a “spirited” tone “as an announcement of triumph” (*bi-rūḥ fatḥnāmeh*), intended to terrify the leaders of Syria.[[52]](#footnote-52) And indeed, the actual demand for al-Nāṣir’s submission is nearly lost in a sea of eloquent threats: “Allāh had torn all compassion out of our hearts. Woe, woe to him who is not on our side [*ḥizbnā*], for we have destroyed the lands and orphaned children, and filled the land with ruin.”[[53]](#footnote-53) Hülegü’s name is not mentioned; instead there is only a “we” that represents the character behind the words, apparently referring to the Mongols as a whole. The option to avoid the catastrophe remains: “whoever sought our protection (*amān*) remained safe; whoever sought war, met with regret.”[[54]](#footnote-54) Along with this distinction between the loyal and the rebel comes expressions of praise of the Mongols and offence to al-Nāṣir: “Your dignitaries for us are ignoble, and your multitude for us are few; disaster and fear to him who meets us with arrogance, and safety and grace to the humble.”[[55]](#footnote-55)

Despite such threats, Al-Nāṣir still did not submit. On the contrary, Vassāf described his defiant reply as expressing an eagerness to fight;[[56]](#footnote-56) but eventually, he did take fright. Leaving his cities behind to be conquered by Hülegü, he turned south and headed towards Egypt; he was later caught and killed.[[57]](#footnote-57)

Suddenly, far to the east the Great Khan died. While Hülegü was retreating north, evacuating most of his forces from Syria, he loosed another diplomatic arrow aimed backwards, at another foe—Sayf al-Dīn Quṭuz, the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt. The letter, carried to Cairo by four Mongol envoys,[[58]](#footnote-58) addresses Sultan Quṭuz along with “all of his *amīr*s and the people of his kingdom, in Egypt and around it.”[[59]](#footnote-59) Containing several phrases that are identical to those of Hülegü’s letter to al-Nāṣir, this letter likewise contains traces of the same problematic integration of several letters into one, but this may also hint that the same hand held the quill in both cases. Like in the last communication with al-Nāṣir (though more moderate in tone), this letter demanded submission in the name of “the Great Khan, king of kings in the east and the west.”[[60]](#footnote-60)

In contrast to the first diplomatic moves in Iran and Baghdad, the contacts with the rulers of Syria and Egypt illustrate a new phase of diplomacy—one based not on deceit and a feigned alliance against a common foe, but on Mongol imperial ideology and the superiority of Mongol leadership. Yet this type of arrow appears to be effective only when backed up by the whole force of the Mongol army. On September 3, 1260, at the battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt, this was not the case.

**C. The Far West**

The eruption of inter-Mongol struggle and the formation of different Mongol Khanates led Hülegü to change his diplomatic practice once again. The last arrow he loosed westwards was aimed farther—this time at Louis IX, the King of France. This letter is found in a single text, copied by the scribe Nicholaus on 26 April 1344 into a compendium of saints’ tales.[[61]](#footnote-61) This long and eloquent letter, written on April 10, 1262, plainly relates to the war against the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt (*Babilon*). Yet Hülegü’s main concern lay elsewhere; on August 20 he rode at the head of vast army against the forces of Berke, the Khan of Jochi Ulus, often named the “Golden Horde.”[[62]](#footnote-63) Here, as in his letter to the Mamluk Sultan Quṭuz in 1260, diplomacy served to deal with a lesser front, while Hülegü himself was galloping to another.

Since it was discovered in 1980, this letter has been studied by several scholars. Jean Richard saw it as revolutionary, emphasizing a friendly attitude, “that refrains from mentioning an explicit demand of submission.” Richard discerned in this letter a change in Hülegü’s policy, and the beginning of the Mongol search for an alliance with the west.[[63]](#footnote-65) Jackson, on the other hand, stated that, although it is different from the earlier Mongol ultimatums to European leaders, the letter still emphasizes Heaven’s mandate to Chinggis Khan, and expresses the hard imperious attitude that commands rather than requests.[[64]](#footnote-66) Aigle concluded that Hülegü presented himself in this letter as the friend of Christianity and the enemy of Islam, and as one to whom all should submit.[[65]](#footnote-67) Analyzing this letter in a broader context—not only as a part of the Mongol-European contacts but also as a part of Hülegü’s own western diplomacy—could aid in settling the tensions among these interpretations.

I shall therefore discuss several points in this letter, beginning with the worldview found in its overture:[[66]](#footnote-68)

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken[[67]](#footnote-69) unto our grandfather Chingischan by his relative Teptemgri—meaning prophet of God—miraculously revealing future events to him through the words of Teptemgri, saying in effect: “I alone am the Almighty God on high, and I have set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms to be king of all the world, to root out and to pull down and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.[[68]](#footnote-70) I tell you to announce *of my commission* (*mandatum*)[[69]](#footnote-71) to all the nations, tongues and tribes of the east, the south, the north and the west . . so that those who have ears can hear, those who can hear can understand, and those who understand can believe. Those who do not believe will later learn what punishment will be meted on those who did not believe my commands.”[[70]](#footnote-72)

The world view that divides the *il* and the *yāghī* appears in the very beginning, as a story that goes back to the days of Chinggis Khan and his ally and enemy, the shaman Kököchu Teb Tengri.[[71]](#footnote-73) These are not the words of Hülegü, but of God, announced through the prophet Tebtengri to Chinggis Khan, and now to Louis IX. Yet indirect as it is, the elements of the Mongolian world view are there to be seen. Chinggis Khan had received a heavenly right to rule over the world, and all the nations, tongues, and tribes are divided to two: those who believe so (the *il*) and those who do not (the *yāghī*) and are therefore destined to be punished. The term *mandatum* may be translated as a commission, charge or order; yet in Carpini’s text, noted Jackson, *mandatum* is a possible reference to the *Yasa*, therefore allowing for a wider sense to this term.[[72]](#footnote-74) When it appears as singular, I tend to see “commission” or “authority” as the meaning of *mandatum*, for it is a wide, all-encompassing declaration, and the mere “command” would later follow.

Alongside the Mongol world view, the use of the addressee’s language and belief is very apparent; whereas Hülegü’s earlier letters to Muslim rulers used pure Muslim language, this letter attempts to create a “common language.” This is done both in direct translation (as in “Teptemgri, meaning prophet of God”) and indirectly through the correlation of terms by combining Christian and Mongol contents (as in the changes to the quote from the *Epistle to the* *Hebrews*—where Chinggis Khan is named instead of the Son of God).[[73]](#footnote-75) Slightly altered verses are used as well to carry the Mongol content (as in the quote from Jeremiah[[74]](#footnote-76)), similar to those in Hülegü’s earlier letters.

The letter continues with the speaker finally introducing himself:

Through the virtue of Mengutengri, that is the living God, we, Huleyu cham, leader of the army of the Mongols, avid destroyer of the perfidious Saracen peoples, friend and supporter of the Christian religion, energetic fighter of enemies and faithful friend of friends, send Barachmar – that is greetings[[75]](#footnote-77) –

to Louis, the illustrious King of the Franks, and to the princes, dukes, counts, barons, knights, and all and sundry in the kingdom of France.

By the announcement of this revelation we inform you *that you should obey us without doubt, for we claim the authority of the living God,*[[76]](#footnote-78) particularly when you consider that our power was transmitted by Mengutengri himself, i.e. the living God.

Only now does Hülegü presents himself—this time with no mention of a Qaghan, as would be expected in the circumstances of 1262. Despite the use of “we,” this time Hülegü addresses his target by his own name, and does not speaks for all the Mongols (compare the meaning of “we” in his earlier messages to the kings of Iran, al-Naṣīr and Sultan Quṭuz). This may reflect not only the internal lack of Mongol unity, but a possible intention of Hülegü to differ himself from Berke Khan of Ulus Jochi, who was operating at the time against Eastern Europe. At the same time Hülegü’s intended addressee is not one man, but the King of France along with all his nobles and subjects, similar to the earlier letters to Quṭuz and al-Naṣīr.

Immediately following the introduction is the demand for submission, clear and bereft of any stories or intermediates. The threat facing those who do not submit will now be described through a long and detailed list of Mongol victories over the peoples who refused to believe the divine mandate, and therefore encountered a terrible fate. Some, however, chose to support the Mongols, and remained safe and protected. This list of conquests encompasses events dating back to the days of Chinggis Khan, and up through (in even more detail) the actions of Hülegü himself.[[77]](#footnote-79) The letter’s rhetoric reached its zenith in the description of the conquest of Baghdad:

He [the Caliph] ridiculously boasted that as a descendant of Machomet, the unspeakable pseudo-prophet of the Saracens, he was the pope and head of the world, and he did not hesitate to insist that the Almighty Creator had created the heavens, the earth, and everything in it for the said Machmet [sic] and his people only. Trusting hugely in his own high magnificence, his countless wealth, castles, and troops he chose to join battle with us rather than *amicably*[[78]](#footnote-81) obey our order. We defeated him just like all the other *rebels*[[79]](#footnote-82) in open combat, killing two thousand thousands of his men and a host of others, too many to count. In the city of Baldach lived the patriarch of the Nestorians with his bishops, monks, priests, clerics, andChristians; we separated all of them from the Saracens, enriched them, and ordered them to live safely and peacefully with their possessions.[[80]](#footnote-83)

This part the letter not only uses the addressee’s language but also his worldview, slandering the Caliph and Islam in general. This rhetoric of praise and offence echoes Hülegü’s last messages to al-Naṣīr and Quṭuz. Here, though, the insults are not intended for the addressee but for a third party—a mutual enemy. This element draws the letter to Louis IX closer to Hülegü’s first contact with the west, which called upon the kings of Iran to join his cause against the *mulahida*. The description of the fate of Baghdad’s Christians is parallel to the earlier description of those who chose to follow the Mongols; this correlation, and the emphasis on the separation between the rebels and the followers, practically defines the Christians of Baghdad as *il*.

The letter then continues to describe the conquest of Syria, with a remark about the Latin slaves released by John of Hungary on Hülegü’s order.[[81]](#footnote-84) Then Hülegü returns from the far lands to Louis himself:

You should also know that our excellence is cognisant of the fact that although many kings rule in Western Christendom, you have made yourself preeminent by means of the splendor of your energy, because of all who are considered to be most diligent in protecting the faith in the name of Christ you took the trouble to send as a sign of particular friendship, in honour of the Almighty Living God, although we had yet to send you our envoys, your chapel in a special cloth, with a dedication to the Divine Name. You sent this through your envoys to our predecessor Crinizcham. As we said, if you were so considerate when you had not yet been contacted by us, henceforth since we have taken care to address your majesty by letter and by faithful Envoys, we believe you will wish to renew the aforementioned friendship with us *by an even stronger bond.*[[82]](#footnote-85)

Hülegü’s intention becomes clearer here—not a demand for submission, but a renewal of an existing contact. He searched thirteen years in the past to find one: the mobile chapel sent as a gift by Louis IX to the court of Guyuk Qaghan in 1249. Jean de Joinville, who was present at Louis’ court when his envoys returned with the Mongols’ reply, described that the gift was referred to as a tribute, evidence of Louis’ submission.[[83]](#footnote-86) Yet here the contact is referred to as “friendship”(*amicitie*)—and should be understood as *il*, based on the overall worldview of this letter.

It is worth noting that the emissaries Louis sent were not of his own initiative, but as a reply to an earlier Mongol contact by the envoys of Eljigidei, the commander of the Mongol forces in Iran. This omission may hint that Hülegü was unaware of Eljigidei’s act, and that only Louis’ envoy at the Qaghan’s court was known to him. That might support the surmise made by Jackson that Eljigidei had contacted the Franks on his own accord during the complicated days following Guyuk’s death.[[84]](#footnote-87)

From Louis himself, Hülegü then turned to describe another party—the Pope:

Furthermore, we wish to admit to your lordship that at first we thought the chief bishop, the pope, was the king of the *Franks*[[85]](#footnote-88) or the Emperor, but after more intensive enquiries we discovered that he is a man of religion who prays to God continually on behalf of all the nations, *tenant of the place of Misicatengrin, that is the son of the living God,[[86]](#footnote-89) on earth; and he is* head of all those who believe in Christ and pray to him.[[87]](#footnote-90) With this knowledge we gave orders for the Holy City of Jerusalem, which had been long held by the profane, to be restored to him, together with all the appurtenances of the kingdom, by our aforementioned faithful and devoted John, who practices the Christian religion, something we firmly believe has more than once been related to you.[[88]](#footnote-91)

The promise of a reward—Jerusalem—is made by Hülegü not to Louis, but to the Pope. According to Richard, this is part of the change of Hülegü’s policy. The Frankish-Mongol cooperation against Egypt will be based from now on from a new viewpoint—Hülegü’s understanding of the role played by the papacy in the political structure of the west and the necessity of restoring Jerusalem to the Pope.[[89]](#footnote-92)

Yet it should be noted that the Pope at the time of the letter—Pope Urban IV (August 1261–October 1264)—ruled during a period of intense internal tumult within Christianity.[[90]](#footnote-93) Describing the Pope as the head of *all* Christians is perhaps as far from reality as addressing Quṭuz in the name of the Great Khan in a letter written shortly after the death of Möngke. It may serve a diplomatic purpose, for the words were intended for the King of France; the praise for the Pope and the declared intention to restore Jerusalem to the papacy may justify contact with Hülegü. Such justification was needed, for the very spring when Hülegü’s letter was written, Pope Urban IV called for a crusade against the Mongols threatening Eastern Europe.[[91]](#footnote-94) It may also be possible that Richard’s surmise is correct, and that Hülegü truly believed that the pope is the key figure in Europe, which perhaps explains the ultimate failure of this Mongol policy.

Hülegü then described the defeat of “a few of our men” by the treacherous “Babylonian dog mice”—i.e., at the Battle of ʿAyn Jālūt[[92]](#footnote-95)—and concluded:

Although revenge on these recreants would please us somewhat, and they have not caused any real harm, it is nevertheless our intention shortly to complete our plan against the said infidel Babylonians of the canine race, *as well as against the rest of the rebels.*[[93]](#footnote-96)

Apart from the colorful usage of the addressee’s language and culture—“canine” is an unlikely insult in Mongol terms, judging from the names of Mongol commanders such as Noghai and Baraq—this part of the letter contains an interesting change in the description of the Mongol power. Instead of ignoring the defeat at September 3, 1260, Hülegü chose to plainly describe it, framing the Mongol forces in somewhat human colors. The Mongols are now described as a powerful army divinely destined to rule the entire world, yet humanly capable of defeat and not omnipotent. He continued his letter with an open call for assistance in light of these limitations:

According to our information, having been driven from their lands, the sea remains their only refuge, so we alert your might who exercise dominion on the shores in your part of the territory to the utility of patrolling the sea with armed vessels in order to prevent the aforementioned infidel dogs, our mutual enemies, from finding refuge there, so that they cannot escape us through any shortcomings in our maritime forces.[[94]](#footnote-97)

The letter concludes with a blessing, by the name of *Mangutengri* and with the date and location of writing—Maraghe, April 10, in the Year of the Dog.[[95]](#footnote-98)

**D. Conclusion**

The purpose of Hülegü’s letter was twofold. The first was a plain call for naval assistance against a common foe, and the second, as noted by Jackson, concerned the situation in Eastern Europe—the attempt to counter the activity of Berke, Khan of Ulus Jochi.

Since 1259, Berke had repeatedly demanded under the threat of attack that King Bela IV of Hungary establish a marriage alliance and provide assistance in Berke’s campaigns. The pressure went beyond mere words. In 1259, a force under Boroldai attacked Krakov and Sandomir, and in 1259–60, Mongol forces assaulted Lithuania and Prussia.[[96]](#footnote-99) Hülegü’s aspiration to acquire a formal recognition of his authority from the king of France stems from his desire to block the expansion of his Jochid rivals into Europe. Yet this aspiration remained hidden, for the Mamluks were seen as the obvious enemy.

Although Hülegü had the historical and contemporary grounds to identify Berke Khan as a Muslim enemy of Latin Christendom and a military threat to Europe—and thus incite France against his Jochid rival (parallelling Berke’s contacts with the Mamluk sultan against Hülegü himself)—it appears he did not do so. The only remark in the letter that hints of the existence of another enemy is found in the context of the intention “to complete our plan” against the Mamluks “as well as against the rest of the rebels.” This tendency to leave the internal Mongol struggle unmentioned in Hülegüid contacts with Europe outlived Hülegü himself, as is evident in the words and deeds of his son and successor, Abaqa Khan (r. 1265–1282).[[97]](#footnote-100)

Whether Hülegü’s letter reached its destination remains uncertain,[[98]](#footnote-101) yet there is no dispute about the actual outcome: a Mongol-Frankish alliance did not come to pass. Yet sending the letter had long term diplomatic outcomes, triggering a new diplomatic move that would outlive Hülegü, and develop during the reigns of his successors.[[99]](#footnote-102)

By considering this letter in the flow of the contacts between the Mongols and the West, beginning with the Papal embassies sent by the Council of Lyons in 1245, Richard argues that Hülegü’s letter to Louis IX marks a change in the Mongol policy—asking the king of France to join in the Mongol war against the Mamluks and promising Jerusalem to the Pope without abandoning the idea of the Chinggisid right to rule the world. This change he claimed was prompted by the Christian advisers in Hülegü’s court—David of Ashby, Johannes the Hungarian, and others.[[100]](#footnote-103)

Yet placing this letter in the context of Hülegü’s overall westward contacts illustrates its similarity to the first move initiated by Hülegü in December 1255. As in that older decree, Hülegü presented a common enemy to his addressee in their cultural terms—“the treacherous nations of the Saracens,” and especially “these infidel dogs of Babilon.”[[101]](#footnote-104) His demand, though concealed in the verbiage, is ultimately the same: submission (“you should obey us without doubt“) and military assistance (“patrolling the sea with armed vessels”). As before, this demand reaffirms the Mongolian world view that distinguishes between the loyal subject and the rebel, and is presented as supported by God—the god of the addressee, identified as the Mongol supreme power (“Mengutengri, that is the living God”). Compliance with this demand would reward the addressee, both in general terms regarding the benefits that flow to all the supporters of the Mongol side (“[we] ordered them to live safely and peacefully with their possessions”) and specifically Jerusalem.

The order to restore Jerusalem and adjacent areas of the kingdom to the Pope has no parallel in Hülegü’s earlier contacts. It did, however, occur in a similar communication: that of Berke Khan and the Mamluk Sultan Baybars. In a detailed study of these contacts, Anne Broadbridge remarked that, according to one source, Berke had promised to grant Baybars “the land that your horses reach in Ilkhanid territory.”[[102]](#footnote-105) The granting of land emphasizes Berke’s superiority, as in the relations between a sovereign and a loyal subordinate. Thus Broadbridge concluded it is evident that Berke Khan saw Baybars according to the old Mongol view—a submissive ruler who can be sent against a foe or be rewarded in land as the Khan wishes. This inequality, as Broadbridge pointed out, was ideological rather than practical;[[103]](#footnote-106) this was true of the relations between Berke and Baybars just as of those between Hülegü and Louis. Thus, the core of Hülegü’s letter to Louis, including the military cooperation and the promise of land, corresponds to the core of his earlier contacts. While the eloquent language has been developed and expanded upon, the Mongolian world view at its core remains unchanged.

At this point the question of the policymaker emerges. Meyvaert, Richard, and Aigle all agree that the letter was written by a Christian hand,[[104]](#footnote-107) and according to both Richard and Aigle, the Christian advisers were also those responsible for the policy expressed in this letter. Richard in particular devotes a detailed discussion to the question of whether the Dominicans or the Eastern Christians were the power behind the policy.[[105]](#footnote-108)

It is true that in the Frankish-Muslim contacts of that time, the envoys of both sides had (in certain cases) a major influence on the contents of agreements,[[106]](#footnote-109) but the Mongol case was different. The Christian writer of the letter to Louis IX has striking parallels to the correspondents Hülegü’s employed earlier: Arghun Aqa, who composed alongside Hülegü the decrees to the kings of Iran in 1255, with the presence—and possible advice—of “all the grandees and nobles and ministers of Khorasan”; and Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī, who wrote by the Khan’s command the letter to al-Naṣīr Yūsuf at 1259 (and probably the one to Sultan Quṭuz at 1260). The similar method apparent in the messages and the parallel elements in their contents leads to the conclusion that Hülegü’s Christian advisers drafted the policy expressed in the letter to Louis in the same way as his Muslim advisers who wrote the earlier messages. Their effect was invaluable in the linguistic field, the metaphors they chose and their use of Holy Scripture—as well as in the even more important aspect of the understanding the addressee’s state of mind. But the core message remained Mongolian, and the diplomatic moves which the letter sought to create were those of Hülegü himself.

As many shafts bearing various arrowheads, diplomacy served Hülegü in changing forms—to divide, distract, stun with fear, or lead an attack, and at different distances—but with his constant aim of further expanding the range of Mongol rule.

1. Igor de Rachewiltz, ed. and trans., *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 1:51n3. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī, *Kaifīyat Wāqi’at Baghdad*, ed. M. W. Qazvīnī (London: PUBLISHER, 1911), as an annex (APPENDIX?)to the third volume of his edition of Juwaynī, 3:280–92 at 280–81 (hereafter “Tūsī/Qazvīnī”); for an English translation, see J. A. Boyle, “The Death of the Last ‘Abbasid Caliph: A Contemporary Muslim Account,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 6, no. 2 (1961): 145–61, esp. 151–61, here 151–53 (hereafter “Tūsī/Boyle”). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ʿAtā-Malik Juwaynī*, Tārīkh Jahān-gushā*, ed. M. Qazvīnī (London: PUBLISHER, 1329/1911), 3:275 (hereafter “Juwaynī/Qazvīnī”); for an English translation, see J. A. Boyle, ed. and trans., *The History of the World Conqueror, by Ata-Malik Juvaini* (Seattle: PUBLISHER, 1997), 2:723 (hereafter “Juwaynī/Boyle”); Rashīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allah, *Jāmī’ al-tavārīkh*, ed. D. Karīmī (Tehran: PUBLISHER, 1338/1959), 2:687 (hereafter “Rashīd/Karīmī”); for an English translation with notes, see Wheeler M. Thackston, trans., *Rashīduddin Fazlullah’s Jami‘u’t-tawarikh – A History of the Mongols* (Cambridge, MA: PUBLISHER, 1998–1999), 479 (hereafter “Rashīd/Thackston”); [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Minhāj al-Dīn Jūzjānī, *The Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, eds. W. N. Lees and K. Hosain(Calcutta: Calcutta College Press, 1864), 414 (for the Niẓārīs) and 424–25 (for Baghdad) (hereafter “Jūzjānī/Lees”); for an English translation, see H. G. Raverty, trans., *Tabaḳāt-i-Nāsirī, a General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia, including Hindustan, from 810 to 1260 AD, and the Irruption of the Infidel Mughals into Islam* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1995; first published London: PUBLISHER, 1881), 2:1193–96 (for the Niẓārīs) and 2:1232, 1234–35 (for Baghdad) (hereafter “Jūzjānī/Raverty”). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-ʿUmarī, *Das Mongolische Weltreich: Al-umari’s Darstellung der Mongolischen Reiche in seinem Werk masalik al-absar fi Mamalik al-amsar*, ed. Klaus Lech (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1968), 17 (hereafter “ʿUmarī/Lech”). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Shortly after the fall of Gurganj in April 1221; see *SH*, vol. I, 193. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. John Andrew Boyle, “Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khans,” in vol. 5 of *The Cambridge History of Iran*, ed. J. A. Boyle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 303–422, esp. 334–35. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:684–85; Rashīd/Thackston, 477–78. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. In Mustawfī Qazvīnī’s *Ẓafarnāmeh*, Baiju’s report reached Mongke’s court in or shortly after HJ 648 (1251–2); see Ḥamdālla b. Abu-Bakir Mustawfī Qazvīnī, *Zafarnameh of Mustawfi*, ed. and trans. L. J. Ward (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 1983) 4, 9–10 (hereafter “Mustawfī/Ward“). Rashīd al-Dīn included this remark in a conversation between Baiju and Hülegü when the latter left Hamadan, in March 1257; see Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:697; and Rashīd/Thackston, 486–87. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The *qaṣīda*s of Ḥasan Maḥmūdī Kātib; see Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the Islamic World: From Conquest to Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Juwaynī/Qazvīnī, 3: 248; Juwaynī/Boyle, 2: 703; see also Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Following Jalāl al-Dīn’s defeat in Yasi-chemen; see Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:688; this translation slightly differs from Thackston’s (cf. Rashīd/Thackston, 480). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. cf. Thackston: “by command of the Qaan.” [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. cf. Thackston: “by God’s grace.” [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Arghun Aqa was sent west before 1241. He remained an important administrator under Hülegü and Abaqa until his death in 1275. See Peter Jackson, “Argun Aqa,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, (London: 1986), 2:401–402. I WOULD CITE HERE THE ONLINE VERSION, NOT THE PRINT: P. Jackson, “Argun Aqa,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, originally published 15 December 196, last updated 12 August 2011, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/argun-aqa-a-mongol-administrator-in-iran-d-1275>, [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Rashīd/Karīmī, 2: 688; and Rashīd/Thackston, 480. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. G. Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth Century Iran: A Persian Renaissance* (London: Routledge-Curzon, 2003), 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Mongolian *el*/*il* means “peace,” “in peaceful relations,” as well as “in submission,” as opposed to *bul*γ*a*, which means “in revolt.” In the Persian texts, *bul*γ*a* is commonly referred to by the term *yāghī.* See A. Mostaert and F. W. Cleaves, “Trois documents mongols des Archives secrètes Vaticanes,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 15, no. 3 (December 1952): 454, 492–93. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Rashīd al-Din described emissaries coming from Herāt, Fārs, Anatolia, Georgia, and other lands (see Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:688 and Rashīd/Thackston, 480; for the Caliph, see Tūsī/Qazvīnī, 3:280 and Tūsī/Boyle, 151). Khūrshāh sent his reply to the Mongol commander Yasa’ūr (see Juwaynī/Qazvīnī, 3:260; and Juwaynī/Boyle, 2:712–13). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. It should be noted that the contacts with the Niẓārīs are described by Juwainī in two slightly different versions: once in the description of Hülegü’s campaign, and again in Khūrshāh’s biography. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The first sent by Yasa’ur, sometime before May 27, 1256 (see Juwaynī/Qazvīnī, 3:260 and Juwaynī/Boyle, 2:713); the second sent by Hülegü, reaching Khūrshāh during June (see Juwaynī/Qazvīnī, 3:261–62; Juwaynī/Boyle, 2:713; also mentioned in Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:692; and Rashīd/Thackston, 483); the third sent by Hülegü at the end of August or early September 1256 (see Juwaynī/Qazvīnī, 3:262–63; Juwaynī/Boyle, 2:714; also mentioned in Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:693; and Rashīd/Thackston, 483); the fourth sent by Hülegü on September 2, 1256 (see Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:692 and Rashīd/Thackston, 483). The last mission is possibly mentioned twice by Rashīd al-Dīn, who remarked that envoys were sent again following the departing of his forces in September 2, 1256 (see Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:693 and Rashīd/Thackston, 483). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. This message was sent on September 22, 1256 (see Juwaynī/Qazvīnī, 3:264 and Juwaynī/Boyle, 2:715). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. This message was sent on October 13, 1256 (see Juwaynī/Qazvīnī, 3:264–65 and Juwaynī/Boyle, 2:716). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. The brother was sent to Yasa’ur, the gates were taken down in Alamūt, Lamasar, and Maymūn-Diz, and several strongholds were destroyed. See Juwaynī/Qazvīnī, 3:260, 262; Juwaynī/Boyle, 2:713–14; Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:693; and Rashīd/Thackston, 483. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Juwaynī/Qazvīnī, 3: 262–63 and Juwaynī/Boyle, 2:714. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The boy arrived at Hülegü’s camp on October 8, 1256. Juwaynī remarked that he was the son of a concubine and Khūrshāh’s father, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn; but Bar Hebraeus claimed that he was a poor man’s son. See Juwaynī/Qazvīnī, 3:264; Juwaynī/Boyle, 2:715; and Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abu’l-Faraj [..] 1225–1286*, trans. E. A. Budge (Amsterdam: Apa Philo Press, 1976; first published London, 1932), 1:423 (hereafter “Bar Hebraeus/Budge”). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Francis J. Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2007; FIRST PUBLISHED?), 317. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Hülegü approached from the Alamūt river, and Köke Ῑlgei led a force from the side of the Caspian sea. See Juwaynī/Qazvīnī, 3:265–66; Juwaynī/Boyle, 2:716. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:694–95 and Rashīd/Thackston, 484. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:694–95 and Rashīd/Thackston, 484–85. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:695 and Rashīd/Thackston, 484. See also Juwaynī in his version of “Hülegü’s campaign” (Juwaynī/Qazvīnī, 3:113 and Juwaynī/Boyle, 2:622). The battle is described in Juwaynī’s version of “the life of Rukn al-Dīn” (see Juwaynī/Qazvīnī, 3:266–67 and Juwaynī/Boyle, 2:717). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Tūsī/Qazvīnī, 3:280 and Tūsī/Boyle, 152. The date of this contact is mentioned by Rashīd al-Dīn as September 12, 1257; Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:699 and Rashīd/Thackston, 488. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Tūsī/Qazvīnī, 3:281 and Tūsī/Boyle, 153. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the coming of all three was required, as well as the destruction of the city’s defenses; see Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:699 and Rashīd/Thackston, 488. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Tūsī/Qazvīnī, 3:281–82; Tūsī/Boyle, 153; see also a detailed version in Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:700–708; and Rashīd/Thackston, 491–95. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:709 and Rashīd/Thackston, 495. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Tūsī/Qazvīnī, 3:280–81; Tūsī/Boyle, 153; in more detail, Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:704, 707–10; and Rashīd/Thackston, 491, 493–95. One mission is mentioned in Bar Hebraeus/Budge, 1: 430. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. The Vizier al-ʿAlqamī visited his camp earlier, on January 29, as an envoy of the Caliph. See Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:710 and Rashīd/Thackston, 494. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:711–12 and Rashīd/Thackston, 497. For the surrender of the Caliph, see also Tūsī/Qazvīnī, 3:290 and Tūsī/Boyle, 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. He ruled Aleppo since 1248, adding Damascus and Banyas to his domains in 1250. Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ῑlkhānid War, 1260–1281* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 19–20. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 20–21. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:718 and Rashīd/Thackston, 502. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:715 and Rashīd/Thackston, 500. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. W. M. Brinner, “Some Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Documents from Non-Archival Sources,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972): 117–43; and Denise Aigle, “Hülegü’s Letters to the Last Ayyubid Ruler of Syria: The Construction of a Model,” in *The Mongol Empire between Myth and Reality* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 199–218. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. *Sultan al-‘arḍ, shāhnshāh ru-ye zamīn*. See Taqi al-Din al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-ma’rifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. M. M. Ziyāda (Cairo, 1970), 1:415 (hereafter Maqrīzī); for French translation see E. M. Quatremère, trans., *Histoire des Sultans Mamlouks de l’Égypte* (Paris: Oriental Translation Fund, 1837), 1:84. This letter was sent in 1259 (see Maqrīzī, 1:414). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Maqrīzī, 1:416. A nearly identical version appears in the text of the later Al-Suyūṭī, *Tārikh al-Khulafa*, ed. M. R. al-Ḥalabī (Beirut, 2004), 408; for an English translation see H. S. Jarrett, *Jalalu’ddin a’s Suyūṭi (‘Abd al-Kahaan ibn Abi Bakr) History of the Caliphs* (Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1970), 499. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Aigle, “Hülegü’s Letters,” 208–209. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Bar Hebraeus (Ibn al-‘Ibrī), *Tārikh mukhtaṣar al-duwal* , ed. Ḥ. Al-Manṣūr (Beirut, 1997), 242 (hereafter “Bar Hebraeus/Manṣūr”); and ‘Abd Allāh Shīrāzi (Vassāf), *Tajziyāt al-Amṣār va Tazjiyāt al-A’ṣār*, ed. M. Ḥ. Kashānī (Bombay: PUBLISHER, 1852), 43–44 (hereafter “Vassāf/Kashānī”). This part is incomplete in the summarized Persian version by ‘A. M. Ayātī, *Tahrīr Tarīkh-i Vassāf* (Tehran: PUBLISHER, 1993), 24. I wish to express deep thanks to Dr. Amir Mazor for his assistance with the Arabic texts. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Vassāf/Kashānī, 43 and Bar Hebraeus/Manṣūr, 242. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Vassāf/Kashānī, 43–44; parallel in content to the seventh line onwards, in the letter in Bar Hebraeus/Manṣūr, 242. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Vassāf/Kashānī, 43; Aigle translated *fatḥnāmeh* as “a Book of Conquest,” parallel to the tale of the conquest of Baghdad (“Hülegü’s Letters,”, 205n35), yet since the focus of the content is a future conquest, I prefer the above translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Vassāf/Kashānī, 43; nearly identical version in Bar Hebraeus/Manṣūr, 242. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Vassāf/Kashānī, 43; identical to Bar Hebraeus/Manṣūr, 242. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Vassāf/Kashānī, 44; Bar Hebraeus/Manṣūr, 242, phrased as “your dignitaries for us are ignoble, and your wealthy for us are impoverished.” [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Vassāf/Kashānī, 44; and Ayātī, *Tahrīr Tarīkh-i Vassāf*, 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. TheAleppo fort fell in February 14, 1260, and Hama and Homs submitted. See Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 26–27. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Maqrīzī (citing Ibn al-Furāt), 1:429. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Maqrīzī, 1:427; for English translation see Bernard Lewis, *Islam: From the Prophet Muhammmad to the Capture of Constantinopole* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 1:84. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. *Al-Qān al-ā*‘*ẓam*; see Maqrīzī, 1:427 and Lewis, *Islam*, 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Paul Meyvaert, “An Unknown Letter of Hulagu, Il-Khan of Persia, to King Louis IX of France,” *Viator* 11 (1980): 245n2). The text of the letter on 252–59 will be hereafter referred to as “Hülegü/Mayvaert.” It has been translated twice: Jean Richard, *Au-dela de la Perse et de l’Armenie* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2005), 175–82 (hereafter “Hülegü/Richard”); and Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate, *Letters from the East: Crusaders, Pilgrims and Settlers in the 12th–13th Centuries* (Farnhaim: Ashgate, 2010), 156–59. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. For the date of the letter see Hülegü/Meyvaert, 259; Hülegü/Richard, 182; and Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 159. Hülegü attacked Berke on August 20, 1262, according to Rashīd/Karīmī, 2:732 and Rashīd/Thackston, 511. Jackson, based upon Abu-Shāma, Kirakos, and Gregor of Akanc, set it earlier, at the end of 1261. Peter Jackson, “The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 22 (1978): 233. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
63. Hülegü/Richard, 11, 13–14, 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
64. Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West 1221–1410* (London: Pearson-Longman, 2005), 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
65. Denise Aigle, “The Letters of Eljigidei, Hulegu and Abaqa: Mongol Overtures or Christian Ventriloquism?” *Inner Asia* 7 (2005): 155. In a later study, the aggressive attitude of the letter was further emphasized; see Denise Aigle, “De la ‘non-négociation’a l‘alliance inaboutie: Réflexions sur la diplomatie entre les Mongols et l‘Occident Latin,” *Oriente Moderno* 88, no. 2 (2008): 418. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
66. The basis for this part is the translation of Barber and Bate; the points where a different reading is suggested will be brought in italics. I wish to warmly thank to Dr. Jonathan Rubin for his assistance in dealing with the Latin text. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
67. Meyvaert notes Hebrews 1:1 (Hülegü/Mayvaert, 252n35) [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
68. Meyvaert notes Jeremiah 1:10 (Hülegü/Mayvaert, 252n37); for these quotes, see the discussion below. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
69. Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 156, translated as “command”; Richard as “commandment” (Hülegü/Richard, 176); Jackson as “decree” (see Peter Jackson, “World Conquest and Local Accommodation: Threat and Blandishment in Mongol Diplomacy,” in Judith Pfeiffer and Sholeh A. Quinn, eds., *History and Historiography of Post Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2006), 8. For this term see the discussion below. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
70. Hülegü/Meyvaert, 252–53 and Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 156–57. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
71. For Teb Tengri and his words to Chinggis Khan, as cited by Rashīd al-Dīn, see Rashīd/Karīmī, 1:127 and Rashīd/Thackston, 89–90. For the problematic nature of the story that is missing in the *Secret History*, see the note of deRachewiltz in *SH*, 2:869; for the importance of Kököchu and its obliteration, 761. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
72. Jackson, “World Conquest,” 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
73. The original quote is “God. . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son.” [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
74. The original verse is “I have [missing: this day] set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms [added: to be king of all the world], to root out.” [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
75. For this Syriac greeting see Pier G. Borbone, “Syro-Mongolian greetings for the King of France: A note about the Letter of Hülegü to King Louis IX (1262),” *Studi Classici e Orientalli* (2015): 479–84. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
76. This sentence follows the translation of Richard (see Hülegü/Richard, 176), which is closer in my opinion to the original. Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 157, translated: “By the announcement of this revelation, we inform you that *we demand that you agree to abide by the command of the living God,* particularly when you consider. . .” The text in Hülegü/Meyvaert, 253, reads: “Nunciando predictam revelationem notificamus ut nobis mandatum dei vivi exegentibus eo indubitancius acquiescere velitis quo potestatem nostrum ab ipso Mengutengri (id est deo vivo) collatam diligencius consideretis.” [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
77. This part stretches over 46 lines in Meyvaert’s edition; see Hülegü/Meyvaert, 253–55; Hülegü/Richard, 176–78; and Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 157–58. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
78. “*Bnigne*”; see Hülegü/Meyvaert, 256; Barber and Bate translated it as “meekly” (*Letters*, 158), yet Richard’s “amiablement” (see Hülegü/Richard, 179) is in my opinion closer to the point. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
79. “*ceteros rebelles*”; see Hülegü/Meyvaert, 256; omitted in Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 158. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
80. Hülegü/Meyvaert, 256; Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 158; and Hülegü/Richard, 179. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
81. “*Iohannes Ungareus*”; see Hülegü/Meyvaert, 256–57 and Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 158. Richard surmised these were prisoners taken during the crusade of Louis IX, 1249–52; see Hülegü/Richard, 180n18. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
82. *Vinculo forciori”*; see Hülegü/Meyvaert, 258; this translation follows Richard (Hülegü/Richard, 181), and is perhaps closer to the point; Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 159, translated it as “stronger terms”. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
83. Jean de Joinville, *La vie de Saint Louis*, paragraph 490; for English translation, see E. K. B. Wedgwood, *The Memoires of the Lord of Joinville* (New York: E. P Duton, 1906), 258. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
84. Jackson, “World Conquest,” 13; for Eljigidei’s emissary, see Aigle, “Letters of Eljigidei,” 145–50. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
85. Follows Hülegü/Richard, 181; Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 159, translated “French.” [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
86. *Misica* (messiah) and *engri* IS THIS CORRECT??(heaven), yet here in the meaning of God (see note by F. W. Cleaves in Meyvaert, 258n79). Richard notes that is the way Christ was referred to in the correspondence between the khans and the papacy; see Hülegü/Richard, 181n19. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
87. Partly follows Hülegü/Richard, 181. Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 159, translated “of all the nations of Misicatengrin (that is the sons of the living God), representing Him on earth.” [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
88. Hülegü/Meyvaert, 258; Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 159; and Hülegü/Richard, 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
89. Hülegü/Richard, 184. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
90. For the fall of Latin Constantinople, the rise of Byzantium, and the threat of Manfred Hohenstaufen, see Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, 118–19. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
91. On May 15, 1262; see Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, 119 and 131n41. Moreover, Bohemod VI of Antioch, who supported Hülegü, was excommunicated by Thomas Agni, legate of Pope Alexander IV, in 1260, a status that remained unchanged in 1263 as well; see Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
92. Hülegü/Meyvaert, 258; Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 159; and Hülegü/Richard, 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
93. Hülegü/Meyvaert, 259 (here following Hülegü/Richard, 182). Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 159, translated “exactly as we did against other rebels,” yet there is no past tense here. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
94. Hülegü/Meyvaert, 259; Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 159; and Hülegü/Richard, 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
95. Hülegü/Meyvaert, 259; Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 159; and Hülegü/Richard, 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
96. Jackson, *Mongols and the West,* 123–24. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
97. For this see N. O. Arom, “‘In-Ger’ and ‘Outer’ Diplomacy: Il-Khanid Contacts with the Mongol and the Outside Worlds, 1260–1282,” *Eurasian Studies* 14 (forthcoming). [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
98. Compare Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, 166 and Hülegü/Richard, 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
99. Richard includes among the consequence of this letter the presence of Latin Christians in the courts of Hülegü and Abaqa—missionaries, mercenaries and others (see Hülegü/Richard, 191–92). But whether it was a revolution or a continuation is open to discussion. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
100. Hülegü/Richard, 9–14; a similar conclusion was suggested by Aigle, in more moderate terms; see “Letters of Eljigidei,” 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
101. Hülegü/Meyvaert, 253, 259; Barber and Bate, *Letters*, 157, 159; and Hülegü/Richard, 176, 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
102. According to al-Yūnīnī; see Anne F. Broadbridge, “Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols: The Reigns of Baybars and Qalāwūn,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
103. Broadbridge, “Mamluk Legitimacy,” 101–102. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
104. Meyvaert, 250; Hülegü/Richard, 182; and Aigle, “Letters of Eljigidei,” 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
105. Hülegü/Richard, 11, 185–86; and Aigle, “Letters of Eljigidei,” 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
106. For example, in 1192 between the envoys of Richard “Lionheart” and Salaḥ al-Dīn; see Y. Friedmann, “Peacemaking: Perceptions and Practices in the Medieval Latin East,” in Conor Kostick, ed., *The Crusades and the Near East: Cultural Histories* (London: Routledge, 2011), 240. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)