

The Relations of the Papacy with Mongol and Muslim Rulers in the Late Thirteenth Century*

Peter Herde

Whereas the thirteenth-century papacy's attitude towards Islam was generally hostile, the attitude towards the Mongols was rather ambivalent. After the end of the Mongol assault on central Europe, with all its atrocities, in the forties and fifties of the century, the mental position of the West with regard to the Mongols had slowly, but considerably, changed. This was partly due to the more balanced reports of the missionaries and the merchants travelling to the East, who henceforth served as important messengers in the negotiations between the Mongols and the West. The eschatological tribes of Gog and Magog, who were presaging the coming of Antichrist and the end of the world, had, from the sixties onwards, become potential allies of Christianity in its struggle with Islam, now represented by the Mamluk sultans of Egypt. This had particularly been the case since the Great Khan and other Mongol princes seemed to have established good relations with Christians of their retinue and were even considering conversion.¹

Starting with the first rather hesitant attempts by Innocent IV in 1245 and the following years, the popes had continued their contacts with the Mongols despite the fact that the newcomers from East Asia had always been strangers to the West.²

* I dedicate this article to Jane Sayers in gratitude for decades of cooperation and friendship.

¹ See especially Bezzola, Gian Andri 1974, *Die Mongolen in abendländischer Sicht (1220-1270): Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Völkerbegegnungen*, Bern / München, 66ff., 110ff., 198ff.; Sinor, Denis 1975, "The Mongols and Western Europe", in: *A History of the Crusades*, Kenneth M. Setton, gen. ed., vol. III: *The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, Harry W. Hazard, ed., Madison (Wisc.), 513-544; Richard, Jean 1969, "The Mongols and the Franks", *Journal of Asian History* 3, 45-57; repr. in: Richard, Jean 1976, *Orient et Occident au Moyen Age: contacts et relations (XIIe-XVe s.)*, (Variorum Collected Studies Series 49), London, XXVII; Fried, Johannes 1986, „Auf der Suche nach der Wirklichkeit. Die Mongolen und die europäische Erfahrungswissenschaft im 13. Jahrhundert“, *Historische Zeitschrift* 243,2, 287-332; Schmieder, Felicitas 1994, *Europa und die Fremden. Die Mongolen im Urteil des Abendlandes vom 13. bis in das 15. Jahrhundert*, Sigmaringen, 73ff.; Euler, Heinrich 1972, „Die Begegnung Europas mit den Mongolen im Spiegel abendländischer Reiseberichte“, *Saeculum* 23, 47-58; Paravicini Bagliani, Agostino 1996, *Il trono di Pietro: L'universalità del papato da Alessandro III a Bonifacio VIII*, Rome, 240ff.

² The basic edition of the correspondence is in Lupprian, Karl-Ernst 1981, *Die Beziehungen der Päpste zu islamischen und mongolischen Herrschern im 13. Jahrhundert anhand ihres Briefwechsels*, (Studi e Testi 291), Città del Vaticano, 48ff., 141ff., nos. 20ff. Of older comprehensive works, see Soranzo, Giovanni 1930, *Il papato, l'Europa cristiana e i Tartari*, Milano, 247ff.; Pelliot, Paul, ed. 1922-32, "Les Mongoles et la papauté. Documents nouveaux", *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* 3e sér. 3 (23), 3-30; 4 (24), 225-335; 8 (28), 3-84; Richard, Jean 1977, *La papauté et les missions d'Orient au Moyen Age (XIIIe - XVe siècles)*, Paris.

After the dissolution of the great Mongol empire, the popes concentrated their efforts on the Ilkhans of Persia.³ Ever since Urban IV, under the impact of Baybars's conquests in Palestine and Syria, had begun a distinctive anti-Mamluk policy and established contacts with Hülägü,⁴ his successors' relations with the Il-Khans Abaqa (1265-1282) and especially Arghun (1284-1291) were never discontinued.⁵ Later on, when the last strongholds of the Crusaders were approaching their demise, Nicholas IV intensified his activities. From the middle of the century onwards, papal policy with regard to the Mongols was a combination of missionary efforts and plans for alliances directed against Islam. Since, according to canon law and theology, Christians could fight only in alliance with other Christians, the conversion of the Tatars had to precede such alliances. When Innocent IV, in March 1245, sent the Franciscan Lawrence of Portugal to Qara-Qorum, he carried with him a letter asking the Great Khan to convert to Christianity;⁶ another Franciscan, Gian del Pian del Carpine, carried with him a further letter from Innocent IV of March 1245, addressed to the Great Khan and complaining about the cruelties the Mongols had committed in eastern Europe.⁷ Göjük answered in a letter of November 1246 written in Arabic script, the initial clauses in Mongolic and the text and the final clauses in Persian,⁸ ordering the pope and the Christian kings to come to his court for peace talks. As far as his conversion was concerned, the Great Khan responded that he did not understand why he should do so. The killing of so many Christians, especially Poles, Moravians and Hungarians, was, according to Göjük, the punishment for disobeying Djengiz Khan's orders and for killing Mongol envoys.

³ Still useful as a synthesis are: D'Ohsson, Constantin Mouradgée 1834-35, *Histoire des Mongols depuis Tchinguiz-Khan jusqu'à Timour Bey ou Tamerlan*, vol. 3 et 4, La Haye / Amsterdam, 3, 103ff.; 4, 1ff.; Hammer-Purgstall 1842-43, *Geschichte der Ilchane das ist der Mongolen in Persien*, 2 Bde., Darmstadt, 1, 195ff.; 2, 1ff. Of modern works, see Spuler, Bertold 1968, *Die Mongolen in Iran. Politik, Verwaltung und Kultur der Ilchanzeit 1220-1350*, 3. Aufl., Berlin; Boyle, John Andrew 1968, "Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khāns", in: *The Cambridge History of Iran*, John Andrew Boyle, ed., vol. 5, Cambridge, 303-421; idem, 1973, "The Il-Khans of Persia and the Christian West", *History Today* 23, 8, 554-563; and 1976 under the title "The Il-Khans of Persia and the Princes of Europe", *Central Asiatic Journal* 20, 25-40; the first version repr. in: idem, 1977, *The Mongol World Empire 1206-1370*, London, XIII; Saunders, J. J. 1971, *The History of the Mongol Conquests*, London, 126ff.

⁴ Richard, Jean 1949, "Le début des relations entre la papauté et les Mongols de Perse", *Journal Asiatique* 237, 291-297; repr. in: Richard, Jean 1977, *Les relations entre l'Orient et l'Occident au Moyen Age: études et documents*, (Variorum Collected Studies Series 69), London, XIV; Lupprian 1981, 67ff.

⁵ Howorth, Henry H. 1888, *History of the Mongols from the 9th to the 19th Century* III, London, 218ff., 312ff.; Spuler 1968, 228ff.; Lupprian 1981, 70ff.

⁶ Lupprian 1981, no. 20, 141ff.; 1245 March 5.

⁷ Ibid., no. 21, 146ff.; 1245 March 13.

⁸ Pelliot 1922-32 (see n. 2), 23, 17ff. (original with French translation); Lupprian 1981, no. 32, 182ff. (Latin translation).

The contacts that Nicholas IV established with the Mongols were traditionally dominated by missionary efforts.⁹ In 1287, Arghun, after an unsuccessful first attempt in 1285, sent a new delegation to “the Kings of the Ionians and Phrygians”, i.e. the Romans, headed by the Nestorian monk Barçuma (Rabban Sauma), a follower of the *katholikos* of the Nestorian Church, Mar Jhabalaha III (1281-1317).¹⁰ A report of this embassy is extant in the biography of Mar Jhabalaha and Barçuma, written in Syriac.¹¹ The envoys first travelled to Byzantium, where they held talks with the Emperor Andronicus II,¹² then went by ship via Sicily to Naples, where they arrived in March or April 1287. However, King Charles II of Anjou was in Aragonese captivity until October 1288 and the regents of the Kingdom of Sicily, Cardinal Gerard of Parma and Robert II of Artois, were occupied with internal problems and with military actions against the Aragonese on the island of Sicily and against Byzantium in the Balkans and were unable to stop the decline of Angevin rule in the remnants of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.¹³ Thus Barçuma, who

⁹ Ryan, James Daniel 1981, “Nicholas IV and the Evolution of Eastern Missionary Effort”, *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 19, 79-95.

¹⁰ Pelliot, Paul 1973, *Recherches sur les chrétiens de l'Asie centrale et d'Extrême-Orient*, Paris, 239ff.; Spuler 1968, 216ff.

¹¹ The Syriac text was edited by Paul Bedjan (Bedjan, Paul, éd. 1895, *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha, des trois autres patriarches, d'un prêtre et de deux laïques nestoriens*, Paris / Leipzig). A French translation (with the best commentary) can be read in: Chabot, J. B. 1893-1894a, “Histoire du patriarche Mar Jabalaha III et du moine Rabban Çuma traduite du syriaque”, *Revue de l'Orient latin* 1, 567-610; 2, 73-142, 235-304, esp. 80ff.; German translation: Altheim, Franz 1961, *Geschichte der Hunnen*, Bd. 3, Berlin, 3, 190ff.; complete English translation: Wallis Budge, Sir E. A., trans. 1928, *The Monks of Kublai Khan, Emperor of China*, London, 63ff., 165ff.; partial English translation with a good introduction in Montgomery, James A. 1927, *The History of Yaballaha III, Nestorian Patriarch and of his Vicar Bar Sauma, Mongol Ambassador to the Frankish Courts at the End of the Thirteenth Century*, New York, 51ff. There is a new German translation by Toepel, Alexander, Hg. 2008, *Die Mönche des Kublai Khan. Die Reise der Pilger Mar Yabballaha und Rabban Sauma nach Europa*, 2008, 46ff. On the journey, see Chabot, J. B. 1894b, “Notes sur les relations du roi Argoun avec l'Occident”, *Revue de l'Orient latin* 2, 566-629; Soranzo 1930, 260ff.; Petech, Luciano 1962, “Les marchands italiens dans l'Empire mongol”, *Journal Asiatique* 250, 549-574, esp. 561f.; Richard 1977, 105, 108f.; Franchi, Antonino 1990, *Nicolaus papa IV 1288-1292 (Girolamo d'Ascoli)*, Ascoli Piceno, 222ff.; Cardini, Franco 1991, “Niccolò IV e la Crociata”, in: *Niccolò IV: un pontificato tra Oriente ed Occidente*, (Atti del convegno internazionale di studi in occasione del VII centenario del pontificato di Niccolò IV, Ascoli Piceno 14-17 dicembre 1989), Enrico Menestò, ed., Spoleto, 135-155.

¹² The following details are given in the report (see n. 11). Soranzo 1930, 261f., (see n. 2) corrects Chabot, who dated the sojourn of the envoys at Naples to June 1287; instead he proposes March or the beginning of April 1287. See Setton, Kenneth M. 1976, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)*, vol. 1, Philadelphia, 146ff.

¹³ Herde, Peter 2005, „Die Legation des Kardinalbischofs Gerhard von Sabina während des Krieges der Sizilischen Vesper und die Synode von Melfi (28. März 1284)“, in: Herde, Peter, *Studien zur Papst- und Reichsgeschichte, zur Geschichte des Mittelmeerraumes und zum kanonischen Recht im Mittelalter*, (Gesammelte Abhandlungen und Aufsätze 2,2), Stuttgart, 469-525; Kieselwetter, Andreas 1998, „Die Regentschaft des Kardinallegaten Gerhard von Parma und Robert II. von Artois im Königreich Neapel 1285 bis 1289“, in: *Forschungen zur Reichs-, Papst- und Landesgeschichte*, Peter Herde zum 65. Geburtstag von Freunden, Schülern und Kollegen

seems to have suggested an alliance with Arghun to Robert of Artois,¹⁴ must have left Naples with the conviction that an Angevin intervention in the Holy Land was impossible.¹⁵

The next disappointment followed when Barçuma arrived in Rome, since Pope Honorius IV had died shortly before, on 3 April, 1287. The cardinals gave him and his companions a friendly welcome and were interested in information about the ecclesiastical and secular conditions in their native country. Barçuma, in the name of Arghun, demanded their support in the campaign in which the Ilkhan planned to conquer Syria and Jerusalem, but the cardinals were more interested in his creed, especially his attitude to the question of the procession of the Holy Spirit, the most controversial point in the dogmatical controversies between the Latin and the Greek Churches. Barçuma and his delegation must soon have realized that any further negotiations would be futile before a new pope had been elected. They visited the sacred places of the Holy City – the report contains good descriptions of the basilicas of Saint Peter, Saint Paul and the other important churches of Rome – and then continued their journey to France, with an intermediate stop at Genoa, the home of Thomas Anfossi, one of the envoys, where they were respectfully received. In Paris they met King Philip the Fair, to whom they presented a letter¹⁶ and gifts from Arghun and Mar Jhabalaha. The French king emphasized that, since the Mongols, who were not Christians, were to fight the Muslims to recover Jerusalem, the Christians were the more obliged to lead an army to the Holy Land, but he did not make any concrete promises.¹⁷ Thus the delegation, after visiting the churches of Paris, the royal tombs of Saint Denis and the locations of “30,000 scholars”, i.e. the university, left Paris empty-handed to meet King Edward of England in Gascony, probably at Bordeaux, to whom they also presented letters from the Ilkhan and the Nestorian *katholikos*.¹⁸ Edward also gave them a friendly welcome, boasted of his vow to go on crusade and pointed out that he was very pleased that Arghun planned to fight the Mamluks and occupy Jerusalem. “We, the king of these cities, have taken the sign of the cross upon our body, and have no other thought than this affair. My heart swells when I learn

dargebracht, Karl Borchardt und Emil Bünz, Teil 1, Stuttgart, 477-522; Kiesewetter, Andreas 1999, *Die Anfänge der Regierung König Karls II. von Anjou (1278-1295). Das Königreich Neapel, die Grafschaft Provence und der Mittelmeerraum zu Ausgang des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Husum, 166ff.

¹⁴ Kiesewetter 1998, 513.

¹⁵ See Holt, Peter Malcolm 1989, “Mamluk-Frankish Diplomatic Relations in the Reign of Qalāwūn (678-89/1279-90)”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2, 278-289.

¹⁶ Only the letter of the preceding delegation of 1285 has been preserved in a Latin translation; Chabot 1894b, 570f.; Lupprian 1981, no. 49, 244ff.

¹⁷ See Favier, Jean 1978, *Philippe le Bel*, Paris, 8; Poirel, Dominique 1991, *Philippe le Bel*, Paris, 67. On Philip’s attitude towards a crusade, see Schein, Sylvia 1985, “Philip IV and the Crusade: A Reconsideration”, in: *Crusade and Settlement*, P. W. Edbury, ed., Cardiff, 121-126.

¹⁸ See Prestwich, Michael 1988, *Edward I*, London, 330.

that what I am thinking is also being thought by King Arghun.”¹⁹ But he did not indicate when he would start the crusade that he had so often postponed; instead he gave “a big carouse” in honour of his guests. On its way back to Rome the embassy stopped again at Genoa and spent the winter there, then continued its journey with Cardinal John Boccamazza, who had returned from an unsuccessful legation in Germany.²⁰ In Rome, Nicholas IV had been elected pope on 25 February, 1288, shortly before their arrival. Apparently the then Cardinal Jerome of Ascoli, a Franciscan and an expert on Oriental matters, had been a knowledgeable interlocutor during their first sojourn the year before, so Barçauima must have been very pleased that he had ascended the papal throne, and he praised him in terms that could have been regarded as a recognition of papal supremacy.²¹ He presented Arghun’s and Mar Jhabalaha’s letters²² and offerings. At Lent the Nestorians celebrated Mass as they had already done before Philip the Fair and Edward I. The report states: “The language is different but the rite is the same”, thus simplifying the differences, and it offers a detailed description of the Latin liturgy and of the papal ceremonial of the Holy Week from Palm Sunday to Holy Thursday and from Good Friday to Easter with the great festivities at Santa Maria Maggiore. On Holy Thursday Barçauima stood with Nicholas IV on the loggia of the Lateran. Cardinal Benedict Caetani, later Pope Boniface VIII, certainly participated in the talks with the Nestorians and so must have become acquainted with the situation in the Levant and in Persia. It is noteworthy that of all the dogmatic controversies only the difference between the Latin and Greek Churches concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit seems to have been discussed. The fierce Christological disputes of the fifth to the seventh centuries, concerning Mary’s characterization as *Christotokos* or *theotokos*, and the Nestorian conception of Christ’s two natures, two hypostases and one person, seem to have been forgotten. They obviously played no role in the negotiations.

On 2 April, 1288, the pope issued several letters addressed to Arghun and to women of his court,²³ which the envoys carried with them when they started their return journey shortly afterwards. These letters again emphasized the missionary aspects: the Ilkhan was asked to receive baptism.²⁴ Abaqa’s widow, Nuqdan

¹⁹ McLean, Norman 1899, “An Eastern Embassy to Europe in the Years 1287-8”, *The English Historical Review* 14, 54, 299-318; Chabot 1894a, 110.

²⁰ Herde, Peter 1994, “I papi tra Gregorio X e Celestino V, il papato e gli Angiò”, in: *Storia della Chiesa XI: La crisi del Trecento e il papato avignonese*, Diego Quaglini, ed., Milan, 23-91, at 64f.

²¹ See Richard, Jean 1957, “La mission en Europe de Rabban Cauma et l’union des églises”, in: *Convegno di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche: Oriente ed Occidente nel Medio Evo* (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Atti dei convegni 12), Rome, 162-167.

²² See n. 16.

²³ *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, Ernest Langlois, ed., Paris 1886-1905, nos. 571ff.; Lupprian 1981, nos. 50-53, 247ff.

²⁴ *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, no. 571; Lupprian 1981, no. 50, 247ff.

Khatun, and Arghun's wife Olgatai, who supposedly had already adopted Christianity, were encouraged to propagate the Christian faith.²⁵ Arghun himself was asked by the pope to convert and receive baptism immediately in order to set an example to others, and not to wait until he had conquered Jerusalem to be baptized there, as he had promised.²⁶ But Nicholas did not pledge himself to send any military support, and thus the embassy, which left Rome, probably accompanied by envoys of Philip the Fair,²⁷ about the middle of April 1288 and arrived in Persia some months later, returned with little more than vague promises, although the Ilkhan seems to have considered the answers of the pope and of the French and English kings to be equal to an alliance.

He therefore did not give up his hope of receiving aid from the West. In April 1289 a new delegation led by the Genoese Buscarello de Ghisolfi left Arghun's court for Europe.²⁸ They arrived at Rieti in the summer of the same year, where Nicholas had taken residence, and handed over a letter from Arghun addressed to the pope, which unfortunately has not been preserved. Probably shortly before the arrival of this new embassy the pope had sent envoys of his own, Franciscans headed by John of Montecorvino, to the Great Khan Qubilai, to the Ilkhan Arghun, to Qaidu, the Mongol ruler of central Asia, to King Het'um II of Little Armenia and to the Christian patriarchs of the region.²⁹ They carried with them a number of papal letters,³⁰ the contents of which were still dominated by missionary efforts encouraging Qubilai in his assumed intention to convert to the Roman Church³¹ and asking Qaidu and Arghun to receive baptism.³² Arghun in his letter

²⁵ *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, no. 575f.; Lupprian 1981, no. 51f., 251f. See Ryan, James Daniel 1998, "Christian Wives of Mongol Khans: Tartar Queens and Missionary Expectations in Asia", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* (Third Series) 8,3, 411-421.

²⁶ *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, no. 577; Lupprian 1981, no. 53, 253f.

²⁷ See Haenisch, Erich 1948, "Zu den Briefen der mongolischen Il-Khane Argun und Öljeitü an den König Philipp den Schönen von Frankreich (1289 u. 1305)", *Oriens* 2,2, 216-235, at 220; Schmieder 1994, 331.

²⁸ Chabot 1894b, 592ff.; Soranzo 1930, 272ff.; Petech 1962, 562f.; Spuler 1968, 229f.; Boyle 1976, 560; Lupprian 1981, 80; Schmieder 1994, 95.

²⁹ Wyngaert, Anastase van den 1924, *Jean de Mont Corvin O.F.M., premier évêque de Khanbaliq (Pe-king) 1247-1328*, Lille, 17ff.; Moule, A. C. 1914, "Documents Relating to the Mission of the Minor Friars to China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 533-599, at 536ff.; Soranzo 1930, 273ff.; Troll, Christian W. 1966-67, "Die Chinamission im Mittelalter", *Franziskanische Studien* 48, 109-150.; 49, 22-79; Franchi 1990, 235ff.; Reichert, Folker E. 1992, *Begegnungen mit China. Die Entdeckung Ostasiens im Mittelalter*, Sigmaringen, 76ff. and passim. That John of Montecorvino had arrived from Persia with Buscarello (see Lupprian 1981, 80, 286, with some hesitation) seems to me unlikely due to chronological considerations; see Nicholas IV's letter of July 15, 1289, *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, no. 2240; Lupprian 1981, no. 56, 261ff.

³⁰ *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, nos. 2218ff., 2240; Lupprian 1981, nos. 54-56, 255ff.

³¹ *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, no. 2241; Lupprian 1981, no. 54, 255ff. On Qubilai's attitude towards Christianity, see Rossabi, Morris 1988, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times*, Berkeley / Los Angeles / London, 147ff. and passim; Reichert 1992, 76 and passim.

to Nicholas IV promised to lead an army to the Holy Land, to liberate Jerusalem and to be baptized there, if the West would start a new crusade.³³ Buscarello left Rieti about the end of September or the beginning of October 1289 with a papal letter of recommendation addressed to King Edward I. As Barçauima had done before, the Genoese first visited King Philip the Fair, to whom he presented a letter from Arghun written in the Mongol tongue and in Uighur script, in late 1289.³⁴ The Ilkhan had interpreted the statement that Philip had made in his meeting with Barçauima as a promise to lead a French army together with the Mongol forces in an attack against the Mamluks. According to an accompanying note by Buscarello, Arghun planned to make a donation to the French king of 20,000-30,000 knights, or to sell them at a reasonable price.³⁵ He now proposed to proceed to Damascus in early 1291. If Philip intended to carry out his promise and send an army to the Holy Land at this time, the Christians and the Mongols would attack the Mamluks and Arghun would hand over Jerusalem to the French king. The Ilkhan urged the king to observe the deadline. But even if the King of France had seriously intended to send an army to the Levant, it would have taken many months of preparations to assemble such an army and many more months for the knights to arrive in Palestine. All this could not be achieved in a year, as the Ilkhan suggested. It is therefore evident that all these proposals were mere rhetoric. It is very unlikely that Philip was seriously considering going on crusade. And the same is true of Edward I of England, the most expert among the kings of Europe on crusades due to his campaign of 1271-1272.³⁶ He had returned to England from Gascony in 1289, but was fully occupied in the following years with his efforts to bring Scotland under his control.³⁷ Buscarello and his companions arrived in London on 5 January, 1290, and stayed at the royal court for 13 days. Edward gave them a friendly welcome and paid for their expenses. Buscarello handed over another letter from Arghun to the king, which is also no longer extant but which was probably similar in

³² *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, no. 2240, 2242; Lupprian 1981, no. 55f., 258ff.; Chabot 1894b, 595ff.

³³ According to the pope in his letter of recommendation to Edward I of 30 September, 1289, Chabot 1894b, 614. The contents of Arghun's lost letter to Nicholas IV were probably principally the same as those of his letter to Philip the Fair (see following note). On the promise to receive baptism in Buscarello's note, see Chabot 1894b, 612.

³⁴ The best translation and analysis with a detailed commentary and bibliography is in Mostaert, Antoine and Cleaves, Francis Woodman 1962, *Les lettres de 1289 et 1305 des il-khan Argun et Öljeitü à Philippe le Bel*, Cambridge, 18ff. See also Chabot 1894b, 601ff.; Soranzo 1930, 280f.

³⁵ Chabot 1894b, 610f. The note contains further proposals by Arghun concerning the campaign.

³⁶ Runciman, Steven 1954, *A History of the Crusades*, vol. III: The Kingdom of Acre and the Later Crusades, Cambridge, 335ff.; Prestwich 1988, 66ff.

³⁷ Stones, E. L. G. and Simpson, Grant G. 1978, *Edward I and the Throne of Scotland, 1290-1296: An Edition of the Record Sources for the Great Cause*, 2 vols., Oxford, esp. 1, 1ff.; Barrow, G. W. S. 1976, *Robert Bruce and the Community of the Realm of Scotland*, 2nd ed., Edinburgh, 42ff.; Prestwich 1988, 330ff., 356ff.

content to the letter sent to the King of France. He gave Edward an additional note similar to the one he had handed over to Philip in Paris.³⁸ Edward responded in a letter to the Ilkhan.³⁹ He started by praising the friendly attitude towards the Christians shown by Arghun's father Abaqa, who had been married to a natural daughter of Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus;⁴⁰ he also applauded the Ilkhan's alleged desire to become a Christian and his plans to start a campaign against the Sultan of Babylon, i.e. the Mamluk Sultan of Cairo,⁴¹ in support of the Holy Land and of the Christian faith. He expressed his gratitude in advance for the help Arghun had offered to give to his knights and promised to leave with an army for the Levant as soon as the pope had granted him permission. Again, these were little more than vague promises, and Buscarello probably returned to Rome, where he seems to have joined the Ilkhan's new embassy.

For Arghun had not given up his hopes. Already in May 1290 he sent a fourth delegation to the West with another letter dated May 1290 and issued at Urmiya (Rezaiyeh) in Azarbaijan, written in Mongolic and in Uighur script, of which only a fragmentary version is extant.⁴² In this letter the Ilkhan responds to the requests of the pope as expressed in his letters of 2 April, 1288, and 15 July, 1289, that he should accept Christianity and receive baptism. He does not comment on the allusions of the papal envoys that his father Abaqa and his grandmother Doquz Khatun had been Christians,⁴³ apparently in order not to disappoint the pope by pointing out that this was true only of his grandmother, but he emphasizes that the successors of Djengiz Khan are free to decide whether or not to become Christians. He also relativizes the claim of the Christian religion to be solely in the possession of truth by stating that if one prayed to Eternal Heaven this was as good as converting to the Christian faith, thus indicating that he does not want to get baptized. The embassy was headed by the nobleman Zagan who, together with his relative Kourji (Gorgi), was baptized in Rome by the Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, Latino Malabranca; Zagan accepted the Christian name Andrew, Kourji the name

³⁸ Chabot 1894b, 614f.

³⁹ Ibid., 615f. The letter lacks a date.

⁴⁰ His Byzantine wife does not seem to have had great influence on his behaviour, and his relations with Christians were probably less cordial than those of his father Hülägü; see Spuler 1968, 214f.

⁴¹ Babylon is al-Fustat (Old Cairo).

⁴² Mostaert, Antoine and Cleaves, Francis Woodman 1952, "Trois documents mongols des Archives secrètes vaticanes", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 15, 3/4, 419-506; Lupprian 1981, no. 57, 265f. The extant part of this letter does not mention the names of the envoys, which we know only from Nicholas IV's letter to Edward I of 2 December, 1290 (Chabot 1894b, 617). Among these we find again Buscarello, who, as we mentioned before, had still been in London in January 1290. It is very unlikely that he had been back at the Ilkhan's court in Persia in May 1290, when the new Mongol embassy left. It is therefore probable that he had returned to Rome from London and joined the embassy there.

⁴³ Abaqa had never become a Christian, but Hülägü's main wife Doquz Khatun had been a pious Nestorian Christian; see Spuler 1968, 208f., 214f.

Dominicus. Buscarello, as we mentioned above, joined the delegation together with another companion called Moracius.⁴⁴ The group had probably also received orders to proceed to Paris and London and to hand over additional letters from Arghun to the French and English kings. Two letters of recommendation issued by Nicholas IV, addressed to Edward I and dated 2 and 31 December, 1290, are extant in which the pope asks the king to give the envoys an honourable reception, listen to what they have to say in the name of the Ilkhan and fulfil their proposals, if they serve the will of God and the Christian faith and are consistent with the honour of the king.⁴⁵ Since the delegation proposed a common campaign in Syria and the Holy Land, the wording of the papal letter seems to have indicated that Nicholas supported Arghun's plans. Bad news arriving from Palestine seems to have caused the pope to soften his missionary efforts towards the Mongols and to tolerate common military actions against the Mamluks even if the Ilkhan had not adopted Christianity. On 26 March Qalawun had occupied Tripoli.⁴⁶ Henry II, King of Cyprus and Jerusalem, had sent Jean de Grailly to Europe.⁴⁷ He was welcomed by Nicholas IV, who preached a new crusade in Italy. Starting in March 1290 numerous Crusaders left Venice for Acre by ship, without, however, bringing much help to the remnants of the Crusader states. Instead, by attacking and massacring Muslim merchants and peasants at Acre⁴⁸ they helped increase the tensions between Christians and Muslims, and Qalawun decided to resort to arms.⁴⁹ The War of the Sicilian Vespers still paralyzed Italy and the western Mediterranean. In order to strengthen their position in the eastern Mediterranean and to break their isolation in this war, the Aragonese rulers, King James of the island of Sicily and Alfonso of Aragon, concluded a treaty with Qalawun on 25 April, 1290, thus

⁴⁴ *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, no. 7578; Chabot 1894b, 617 (2 December, 1290); *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, no. 7583; Chabot 1894b, 618, for Sabadin Archaon, who possibly left Rome later than Zagan (Andreas), Kourji (Dominicus), Buscarello and Moracius. See also Soranzo 1930, 284f.; Richard 1977, 105f.

⁴⁵ See especially the second letter of 31 December, 1290, issued for Sabadin Archaon.

⁴⁶ Runciman 1954, 407; Northrup, Linda S. 1998, *From Slave to Sultan: The Career of al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678-689 A.H./1279-1290 A.D.)*, (Freiburger Islamstudien 18), Stuttgart, 151ff.

⁴⁷ Hill, Sir George 1972 [1948], *A History of Cyprus II: The Frankish Period 1192-1432*, repr., Cambridge, 184; Edbury, Peter W. 1991, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades 1191-1374*, Cambridge, 98f.

⁴⁸ *Gestes des Chiprois, Recueil de chroniques françaises écrites en Orient au 13e et 14e siècles* (Philippe de Navarre et Gérard de Montréal), Gaston Raynaud, ed., (Publications de la Société de l'Orient latin, série historique V), Geneva 1887, 238f.; new edition: *Cronaca del Templare di Tiro (1234-1314). La caduta degli Stati Crociati nel racconto di un testimone oculare*, Laura Minervini, ed., Naples 2000, 200ff.; Hill 1972, 184; Runciman 1954, 410f.

⁴⁹ The most detailed account of these events is still to be found in Röhrich, Reinhold 1898, *Geschichte des Königreichs Jerusalem (1100-1291)*, Innsbruck, 1000ff.; Grousset, René 1936, *Histoire des croisades et du royaume franc de Jérusalem*, vol. 3: La monarchie musulmane et l'anarchie franque, Paris, 743ff.; Runciman 1954, 408ff.; Bratianu, G. I. 1945, "Autour du projet de croisade de Nicolas IV. La guerre ou le commerce avec l'infidèle", *Revue historique du sud-est européen* 22, 250-255. For the Arabic sources, see Northrup 1998, 156ff.

counteracting the policy of the pope and the King of England. Besides protecting their commercial interests and the free access of Aragonese and Sicilians to Jerusalem and denouncing all military actions against the Muslims planned by the pope, the kings of England and France, the basileus or the Mongols, the articles of the treaty even provided for Alfonso's support for the Mamluks in the case of their being attacked by a "Frankish" prince. On 29 January, 1293, James renewed this treaty with al-Ashraf.⁵⁰ Genoa, in order to maintain its leading role in the slave trade between the Black Sea and the Mamluks, also played an ambivalent role and concluded a treaty with Qalawun in May 1290.⁵¹ Nothing is known about the fate of Arghun's embassy, whether it had left Rome and again met Philip the Fair and Edward I, or the possible reactions of the kings.⁵² If they had departed from Rome, they must have been in France or England when the catastrophe began in Palestine. On 4 November, 1290, Qalawun started a new campaign at Cairo, but he died suddenly five days later.⁵³ His son and successor al-Ashraf postponed the campaign until the following spring and proceeded to Acre, beginning the siege of the Crusaders' capital and last stronghold in April 1291. On 18 May the sultan started his final attack, and by the night of the same day the city was in his hands. The next day the Mamluks occupied Tyre without meeting any resistance. In the following weeks Sidon, Beirut, Haifa, Tortosa and Atlit fell. Thus the Crusaders' rule in the Holy Land ended after a little less than 200 years.⁵⁴

When these events became known at the Papal Curia, they considerably influenced Nicholas IV's attitude towards the Mongols. He no longer hesitated to accept Arghun's offer of a military alliance. At the end of August 1291, while resid-

⁵⁰ The Arabic text of the treaty of 1290 was published in Amari, Michele 1857, *Biblioteca arabo-sicula ossia raccolta di testi Arabici che toccano la geografia, la storia, le biografie e la bibliografia della Sicilia*, Leipzig, 339ff.; an Italian translation in idem, 1880, *Biblioteca arabo-sicula, versione italiana*, vol. 1, Turin / Rome, 552ff. See Herde 1994, 75, 84; Amari, Michele, 1969 *La guerra del Vespro Siciliano*, Francesco Giunta, ed., 2 vols., Palermo, 1, 465f.; 2/1, 316ff. no. XXXIII, 383ff. no. LXXII.; Schein, Sylvia 1991, *Fideles crucis: The Papacy, the West and the Recovery of the Holy Land 1274-1314*, Oxford, 72f.; Northrup 1998, 155f.; Holt, Peter Malcolm 1992, "The Mamluk Sultanate and Aragon: The Treaties of 689/1290 and 692/1293", *Tarikh* 2, 105-118.

⁵¹ Holt, P. M. 1980, "Qalawun's Treaty with Genoa in 1290", *Der Islam* 57, 101-108; Northrup 1998, 155f. For the economic background, see Ashtor, Eliyahu 1983, *The Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages*, Princeton (N.J.), 10ff.

⁵² Chabot 1894b, 618f., suggests that the embassy might not have left because the news of al-Ashraf's occupation of Acre had arrived in Rome; however, he erroneously dates the fall of the city to 4 March (instead of 18 May), 1291; and, although bad news travels fast, it certainly took several weeks to reach Italy. It is unlikely that Arghun's ambassadors waited four months in Rome or elsewhere in Italy before deciding whether to continue the journey. Lupprian 1981, 81, believes that the delegation travelled to England.

⁵³ Northrup 1998, 158.

⁵⁴ Röhrich 1898, 1014ff.; Runciman 1954, 411ff.; Northrup 1998, 156ff.; Little, Donald P. 1986, "The Fall of 'Akka in 690/1291: The Muslim Version", in: *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization in Honor of Professor David Ayalon*, Moshe Sharon, ed., Jerusalem / Leiden, 159-181.

ing at Orvieto, he sent two Franciscans, William of Chieri, papal penitentiary, and Matthew of Chieti, to the Ilkhan with a number of letters issued between 13 and 23 August, 1291.⁵⁵ It is possible that the papal embassy was joined by Arghun's envoys, who had either returned from England or had stayed in Italy.⁵⁶ In one of the letters that the Franciscans carried with them, addressed to two unnamed Mongol princesses,⁵⁷ the missionary efforts are still evident: the pope expresses his joy about the great zeal with which they are working for the Christian faith and asks them to support his plans to persuade two of Arghun's sons – one was his successor Ghazan – to receive baptism. Two of the papal letters were directly addressed to the Ilkhan's sons, another one to the high official and commander Taghachar.⁵⁸ Nicholas reminded Arghun's sons that their father's attitude towards the Christians was friendly and that their brother Öljeitü had already become a Christian and accepted the name Nicholas in reverence for the pope; his godfather was an Italian adventurer in Mongol service, Isol of Pisa, who later played a role under Boniface VIII. He, too, received a separate letter as did other Western and Oriental courtiers of the Ilkhan.⁵⁹ In another letter addressed to Öljeitü/Nicholas, the pope expresses his joy at his conversion and asks him to encourage others, by his behaviour, to do the same, but also recommends that he not cause any scandal by changing his diet or style of clothing, and that he observe the same customs as he did before becoming a Christian. The pope included the text of the Creed that his predecessor had sent to Michael VIII Palaeologus. Here again the procession of the Holy Spirit seems to have been the essential dogmatic question of interest to Nicholas. In conclusion he asked Öljeitü/Nicholas to support his envoys William of Chieri and Matthew of Chieti.⁶⁰ Two separate papal letters were addressed to Arghun. The first one⁶¹ is again dominated by the pope's missionary efforts. Nicholas IV expresses his gratitude for the Ilkhan's letter brought to him by Za-

⁵⁵ *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, nos. 6806ff.; Chabot 1894b, 621ff.; Lupprian 1981, nos. 58ff., 267ff. See Soranzo 1930, 290ff. Some of these letters are simple recommendations addressed to spiritual and secular authorities from Byzantium to Persia.

⁵⁶ Lupprian 1981, 82. Buscarello was in Genoa in August 1291: Desimoni, Cornelio 1877-1884, "I conti dell'ambasciata al Chan di Persia nel MCCXCII", *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 13 (1877), 539-698, at 555; (1884), 598-669; Petech 1962, 563.

⁵⁷ *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, no. 6815; Lupprian 1981, nos. 58f., 267f. They were probably Uruk Khatun (or Armani) and Tudai Khatun: see Chabot 1894b, 623, n.1; Richard 1977, 104.

⁵⁸ *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, nos. 6817ff.; Lupprian 1981, nos. 63f., 277ff. Saron, the other son of Arghun (or the son of a Mongol prince?), is only mentioned in this papal letter. See Chabot 1894b, 628. On Taghachar, see Spuler 1968, 351, 354, 384 and passim.

⁵⁹ *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, nos. 6820ff. See Chabot 1894b, 628f.; Richard, Jean 1970, "Isol le Pisan: Un aventurier franc gouverneur d'une province mongole?", *Central Asiatic Journal* 14, 186-194; repr. in: Richard, Jean 1976, *Orient et Occident au Moyen Age: contacts et relations (XIIe-XVe s.)*, (Variorum Collected Studies Series 49), London XXX; Richard 1977, 104.

⁶⁰ *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, no. 6833; Lupprian 1981, no. 61, 272f.

⁶¹ *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, no. 6722; Lupprian 1981, no. 60, 269f.

gan,⁶² adds that he has issued a letter of recommendation to Edward I for the Mongol envoy and again asks Arghun, ignoring his refusal, to follow his son's example and receive baptism. The second papal letter is dated 23 August, 1291, and is addressed to the Ilkhan⁶³ and, in similar versions, to the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus II, to King Het'um II of Little Armenia, to John II, Emperor of Trebizond⁶⁴ and to Oriental rulers.⁶⁵ Undoubtedly, the pope planned to establish a common front against the Mamluks from western and southern Europe and from Byzantium to Persia. In the second letter, he dramatically describes the catastrophic situation that has developed in the Holy Land after the fall of Tyre and Acre and his efforts to organize a crusade, asserting that the King of England is about to leave with a strong army – news that would certainly have surprised Arghun had he still been alive to read it.⁶⁶ The pope again asks the Ilkhan to receive baptism and to start the reconquest of the Holy Land with the support of the people he has subjugated.

We do not know any details about the journey of William of Chieri and Matthew of Chieti. They probably travelled to Persia via Byzantium and Trebizond. When they arrived, Arghun was no longer alive; he had died on 10 March, 1291 (9 March, 1291, according to Spuler: see n. 67), months before the fall of Acre and the departure of the papal embassy.⁶⁷ Thus, all the papal plans to recover Jerusalem and the Holy Land came to nothing. The West was still weakened by the War of the Sicilian Vespers, and Arghun was too much engaged in repelling the attacks of the Golden Horde in 1288 and 1290 and threatened by the rebellion of Nauruz, the military governor of Khurasan, which lasted from 1289 to 1294.⁶⁸

On 23 July, 1291, Arghun's brother Geikhatu was elected his successor at a quirltai near Akhlai. He was, however, overthrown by Arghun's cousin Baidu and strangled with a bowstring in March 1292.⁶⁹ Under the influence of Abaqa's wife Despoina, the natural daughter of Michael VIII Paleologus, Baidu had shown a

⁶² See n. 42; Chabot 1894b, 623; Lupprian 1981, 269, n. 1, points out that Zagan possibly handed over several letters from Arghun to the pope.

⁶³ *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, no. 6814; Lupprian 1981, no. 62, 274ff. See Ryan 1981, 90ff.; Franchi 1990, 228ff.

⁶⁴ John II (1280-1297), see Fallmerayer, Jac. Ph. 1827, *Geschichte des Kaiserthums von Trapezunt*, München, 152ff.; Miller, William 1968 [1926], *Trebizond: The Last Greek Empire*, repr., Amsterdam, 30f.; Janssens, Emile 1969, *Trebizonde en Colchide*, Brussels, 91. In 1292 Geoffrey of Langley was in Trebizond travelling with a message from Edward I to the Ilkhan; see Desimoni 1877-1884, 598ff.; Miller 1968, 31; Prestwich 1988, 313. He must have started his journey later than the papal embassy.

⁶⁵ See the letters *a pari* mentioned in the papal registers: *Les registres de Nicolas IV*, nos. 6820-6823.

⁶⁶ Prestwich 1988, 330ff., believes that Edward was determined to go on crusade, especially since he sent Geoffrey of Langley to the Ilkhan in 1292.

⁶⁷ Spuler 1968, 85; Boyle 1968, 372.

⁶⁸ Spuler 1968, 85; Boyle 1968, 370ff.

⁶⁹ Howorth 1888, 357ff.; Spuler 1968, 86ff.; Boyle 1968, 372ff.

pro-Christian attitude. But he, too, was killed by order of Arghun's son Ghazan in a garden outside Tabriz on 4 October, 1295. Ghazan thus became the new Ilkhan.⁷⁰ His father, as we have seen, had not become a Christian, but had favoured Buddhism. His predecessor, Tegüder, had already adopted Islam and accepted the Arab name Ahmad, obviously with the intention of establishing closer relations with the Mamluks at Cairo, however without success. Further, Berke, the ruler of the Golden Horde, had become a Muslim.⁷¹ On 19 June, 1295, influenced by the former rebel Nauruz, Ghazan, who had so far also favoured Buddhism, professed the *kalima*, the Muslim Creed.⁷² When he was enthroned as khan on 3 November, 1295, he assumed the name Mahmud and the title of sultan.⁷³ From that moment on, Persia became part of the Islamic world. The example of his brother, who had adopted Christianity, and the pope's requests to get baptized had been in vain. However, already under Tegüder/Ahmad, and now again under Ghazan, it was evident that the Mongols still had, as far as the maintenance of their traditions was concerned, strong reservations with regard to Islam. Ghazan, following the Mongol custom of a son marrying his father's widows other than his own mother, married one of Arghun's wives, a union explicitly condemned by the Qur'an (Sura 4, verse 22). Ghazan's and other Mongol leaders' motives in adopting Islam were probably mainly political: to underline their separation from the Great Khan and their integration into their religious environment.

Thus all papal plans for an anti-Islamic alliance of the Roman Church and the rulers of the West with the Mongols had turned out to be futile. But it soon became evident that Ghazan separated politics from religion. The four years between Arghun's death in 1291 and the beginning of Ghazan's reign in 1295, during which all Mongol activities against the Mamluks had to be suspended, were also lost years in the history of the papacy. After the death of Nicholas IV (4 April, 1292) there followed a two-year vacancy in the Holy See and the short pontificate of Celestine V (August to December 1294),⁷⁴ when most of the international activities of the Papal Curia were interrupted. Ghazan's rule began less than a year after the election of the new pope Boniface VIII (24 December, 1294). It was almost coterminous with Boniface's pontificate; the Ilkhan died on 11 May, 1304,⁷⁵ only seven months after the death of the Caetani pope (12 October, 1303). Both of them had full information about the preceding embassies and negotiations. Benedict Caetani had observed them at close range and participated in some of them;

⁷⁰ Howorth 1888, 393ff.; Spuler 1968, 91ff.; Boyle 1968, 379ff.

⁷¹ Spuler 1968, 78f.; Spuler, Bertold 1965, *Die Goldene Horde. Die Mongolen in Rußland 1223-1502*, 2. Aufl., Wiesbaden 40; Boyle 1968, 364ff.

⁷² Spuler 1968, 90; for the religious situation, see 182ff.; Boyle, 1968, 378.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 380f.

⁷⁴ See Herde, Peter 1981, *Cölestin V. (1294) (Peter vom Morrone): Der Engelpapst*, Stuttgart; rev. Italian ed.: Herde, Peter 2004, *Celestino V (Pietro del Morrone). 1294: Il papa angelico*, L'Aquila.

⁷⁵ Boyle 1968, 396.

Ghazan, as we have seen, had received a personal letter from Nicholas IV.⁷⁶ But Boniface was occupied with other problems: the struggles with the Colonna and with Philip the Fair.⁷⁷ Dante therefore accused him, in the words of Guido da Montefeltro, of waging war against rival Christians “near the Lateran” instead of going on crusade against the Islamic foe and his merchant supporters:

*Lo principe d'i novi Farisei,
avendo guerra presso a Laterano
e non con Saracin né con Giudei,
ché ciascun suo nimico era cristiano,
e nessun era stato a vincer Acri
ne mercatante in terra di Soldano...*⁷⁸

The Caetani pope was realistic enough to see that all negotiations with the Ilkhan had been futile and that there was little chance of re-conquering the Holy Land.⁷⁹ Since Ghazan had meanwhile adopted Islam, an alliance with him was impossible and would have further encouraged the pope's enemies to suspect him of heresy, although there was obviously much confusion about the Ilkhan's conversion in Europe.⁸⁰ Ghazan's reluctance to start military actions against the Mamluks in the first three years of his reign was caused by “a chaotic confusion of internal and external fights that were in many cases not connected with each other and were devoid of a coherent political line”.⁸¹ The revival of military actions by Ghazan against the Mamluks was a reaction to their attack on Little Armenia in 1298 and the defection of Sülemish, Ghazan's commander-in-chief in Rum, events which the Ilkhan brought to an end in April 1299.⁸² It was evident that his adoption of Islam, which he emphasized by the construction of mosques, participation in prayers, organization of Qu'ran lectures and other pious acts⁸³ had produced little effect at Cairo; some Muslim voices suspected that he was an opportunist.⁸⁴ When he informed al-Malik al-Nāṣir of his conversion, the sultan was unimpressed and continued his military preparations. Early in the summer of 1299 al-Malik al-Nāṣir invaded Upper Mesopotamia, captured Mardin and attacked Ras

⁷⁶ See n. 58.

⁷⁷ Boase, T. S. R. 1933, *Boniface VIII*, London, 157ff.; Paravicini Bagliani, Agostino 2003, *Bonifacio VIII*, Turin, 119ff.

⁷⁸ Alighieri, Dante, *La Commedia*, vol. 2: Inferno, Giorgio Petrocchi, ed., (Edizione Nazionale a cura della Società Dantesca Italiana), Verona 1975, Inf. XXVII 85-90, 463.

⁷⁹ See especially Ligato, Giuseppe 2006, “Bonifacio VIII, la Terra Santa e la Crociata”, in: *Bonifacio VIII.: Ideologia e azione politica*, (Atti del Convegno organizzato nell'ambito delle Celebrazioni per il VII Centenario della morte, Città del Vaticano-Roma, 26-28 aprile 2004), Rome, 241-291.

⁸⁰ See *Ibid.*, 255ff.

⁸¹ Spuler 1968, 97; see 93ff.; Boyle 1968, 379ff.

⁸² Spuler 1968, 97; Boyle 1968, 386.

⁸³ Spuler 1968, 187.

⁸⁴ Ligato 2006, 254f.

al-ʿAyn.⁸⁵ The sultan had thus entered Mongol territory, and war was therefore inevitable. The deep hostility between the Ilkhan and the Mamluk sultan was in no way mitigated by their common religion. Ghazan took vows in the holy sites of Mesopotamia to pursue his campaign against the Egyptians.⁸⁶ In November 1299 he assembled an army partly consisting of Georgian troops at Diyarbakr after obtaining a *fatwa* justifying the campaign as a war of retaliation, and proceeded by way of Mosul to Aleppo, where he arrived on 12 December. In alliance with King Hetʿum II of Little Armenia, he totally defeated the Mamluks at Majmaʿ al-Murūj (Wādā al-Ḥaznadār) near Hims on 23 December. The city surrendered, as did Damascus on 30 December. Ghazan received the homage of the population and reinstated the former Egyptian governor Qipchaq, who had changed sides, as military commander of Damascus. There followed some reconnaissance trips further south – Hetʿum is said to have proceeded as far as the suburbs of Cairo – but the main campaign ended at Damascus. The conquest of Cairo was out of the question, but Hetʿum apparently spent some time in Jerusalem visiting the Holy Places. The Ilkhan left Damascus on 3 February, 1300; his commanders Qutluḡ Shah and Mulai followed in April and May. Qipchaq changed sides again, and by the end of May Sultan al-Nāṣir had re-occupied Damascus and the whole of Syria.⁸⁷ But Ghazan did not give up. In the autumn of 1300 he started a new campaign, crossing the Euphrates at the end of December and arriving at Aleppo on 3 January, 1301, which, as in 1293, he did not take. He stopped his advance a little further south due to torrential rains and reports of rebellion in Persia; meeting no Mamluk resistance, he withdrew in February, crossing the Euphrates again in an easterly direction. The conquest of the Holy Land had not been his intention.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, the news of these events was received with rejoicing in Europe, and Ghazan’s successes were greatly exaggerated. It gave rise to new hopes and rumours. One story was that the Ilkhan had been persuaded by an Armenian

⁸⁵ Spuler 1968, 98f.; Boyle 1968, 387; Amitai-Preiss, Reuben 1999, “Mongol Imperial Ideology and the Ilkhanid War against the Mamluks”, in: *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, Reuben Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan, eds., Leiden, 57-72.

⁸⁶ See Rashid al-Dīn, the main Mongol source for these events: Rashid al-Dīn, Faḍl Allah, *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*, A. A. Alizade, ed., Baku 1957, 246-571 (with a Russian translation, 140ff.). I am grateful to Professor Irfan Shahid of Georgetown University and Dumbarton Oaks for his help with the Persian text.

⁸⁷ The most detailed treatments of these events are Röhrich, Reinhold 1881, “Études sur les derniers temps du royaume de Jérusalem”, *Archives de l’Orient latin* 1, 617-652, esp. 642ff.; and Schein, Sylvia 1979, “Gesta Dei per Mongolos 1300. The Genesis of a Non-Event”, *The English Historical Review* 94, 805-819, at 810ff.; see also Spuler 1968, 98f.; Boyle 1968, 387ff.; Amitai, Reuben 2002, “Whither the Ilkhanid Army? Ghazan’s First Campaign into Syria (1299-1300)”, in: *Warfare in Inner Asian History (500-1800)*, Nicola Di Cosmo, ed., Leiden / Boston / Cologne, 221-264; Amitai-Preiss, Reuben 2004, “The Mongol Occupation of Damascus in 1300: A Study of Mamluk Loyalties”, in: *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni, eds., Leiden, 21-41; Ligato 2006, 248ff.

⁸⁸ Röhrich (see preceding note); Boase 1933, 222ff.; Schmieder 1994, 105ff.

bride to receive baptism, had conquered Jerusalem, visited the Holy Sepulchre with great reverence and was going to attack Cairo and destroy the power of the Mamluks; other rumours had it that he had been baptized after the miraculous healing of a son.⁸⁹ After a long time Mongol envoys appeared again at the courts of Charles II of Anjou in Naples⁹⁰ and of Philip the Fair in Paris, where in 1303 they were offering the king an alliance with the Ilkhan and allegedly the adoption of the Christian faith by Ghazan despite his conversion to Islam in 1295.⁹¹ Boniface VIII began to pay lip service to the organization of a new crusade shortly after his election, promising to take part personally in a campaign to the Holy Land;⁹² he also planned a reorganization of the Hospitallers and the Templars who, after the loss of the Crusader states, were expected to play a decisive role in a reconquest.⁹³ The pope also did his best to reconcile the western and southern European powers,⁹⁴ a necessary condition for starting a new crusade. But his own struggle with the Colonna and with Philip the Fair made any serious preparations for a new crusade impossible.⁹⁵ Although Mongol envoys kept arriving in the West, most notably a delegation led by the Florentine Guiscardo Bustari, who was in Rome in 1300 during the Jubilee, and another headed by Isol of Pisa, who contacted the pope at the same time,⁹⁶ and although it was suggested that an attack be started via Armenia, after the loss of Syria and Palestine,⁹⁷ neither Boniface VIII nor Philip the Fair nor Edward I seriously began preparations for military action. Boniface, who in 1301 still regarded Ghazan as “pagan”,⁹⁸ apparently not knowing that the Ilkhan had become a Muslim years before, considered him a

⁸⁹ Giovanni Villani, *Cronica l. VIII c. 35*, Francesco Gherardi Dragomanni, ed., Florence 1845; repr., Frankfurt 1969, 36f.; Ligato 2006, 254ff.

⁹⁰ Minieri Riccio, Camillo 1883, *Saggio di codice diplomatico formato sulle antiche scritture dell'Archivio di Stato di Napoli*, Supplemento II, Naples, 23.

⁹¹ According to the “Chroniques de Saint-Denis, depuis 1285 jusqu'en 1328”, *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France* 20, Paris 1840, 654-724, at 673; “Continuatio chronici Guillelmi de Nangiaco”, *ibid.*, 583-646, at 588. It is highly doubtful whether an offer of conversion was made.

⁹² *Les registres de Boniface VIII*, Georges Digard, Maurice Faucon and Antoine Thomas, eds., 4 vols., Paris 1884-1939, nos. 868, 870 (1295 May 28).

⁹³ See Schein, *Fideles crucis*, 153ff.

⁹⁴ Boase, 203ff.; Paravicini Bagliani, *Bonifacio VIII*, 119ff.

⁹⁵ Schein 1991, 147ff., and, in great detail, Ligato 2006, 241ff. See also the negative evaluation of Boniface's crusading plans by Setton 1976, 163.

⁹⁶ Petech 1962, 566; Richard 1970, 187, 193; Ligato 2006, 266f. After the conquest of Damascus, Ghazan sent envoys to the King of Cyprus and others asking for support; see the letters in Finke, Heinrich, Hg. 1922, *Acta Aragonensia: Quellen zur deutschen, italienischen, französischen, spanischen, zur Kirchen- und Kulturgeschichte aus der diplomatischen Korrespondenz Jaymes II. (1291 - 1327)*, Bd. 3, Berlin, 89ff. James II of Aragon congratulated Ghazan on his victories on 13 May, 1300, and offered his support; *ibid.*, 91ff. See Schein 1991, 162f.; Ligato 2006, 279.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 261ff.

⁹⁸ *Les registres de Boniface VIII*, nos. 868, 870 (1295 May 28).

“divine instrument”⁹⁹ and, influenced by Ramon Llull,¹⁰⁰ developed a programme of converting the Tatars.¹⁰¹ But the results were meagre. Despite intensive communications and some minor campaigns against the Mamluks,¹⁰² Ghazan’s efforts to obtain the support of the Christian West in his struggle with the Mamluks produced no results. Neither the pope nor the French and English kings were willing or able to intervene, and Charles II of Anjou, despite his claims to the title of “King of Jerusalem”, was entirely occupied by his struggle with the Aragonese and not very much interested in Near Eastern affairs; from 1287 to 1302 there had been almost no contacts between the King of Sicily and the Ilkhans.¹⁰³ When in 1302/03 the veteran Buscarello once more visited the pope and the King of England as Ghazan’s envoy, both again avoided any clear commitment concerning a new crusade.¹⁰⁴ When Boniface VIII and Ghazan died shortly afterwards, almost a decade of planning and negotiation had ended without any action.

Summing up the results of our investigation, we must point out that all efforts by the papacy to establish close alliances of the Christian powers with the Ilkhanid Mongols to fight Islam were destined to be futile from the very beginning, since they were based on false suppositions. The canon law and theology of the Latin Church allowed only alliances between Christians so that the Mongols would have had to adopt Christianity before common military campaigns could begin. Therefore, missionary efforts had priority in all negotiations between the popes and the Ilkhans. And although some members of the ruling Mongol families, especially women, did receive baptism, Arghun and Ghazan rejected the idea of accepting the Christian faith, the latter finally adopting Islam in 1295. Although the West apparently lacked detailed information about this act of far-reaching historical importance – Boniface VIII, as we have seen, still believed in 1301 that Ghazan was “pagan” – and although even after 1295 Ghazan through his envoys seems to have nourished hopes that he might adopt Christianity, joint military action between Crusaders and Muslim Mongols against Muslim Mamluks was henceforth impossible. In any case, Mongols who intended to become Christians were to adopt the Nestorian Creed, and the Nestorians, under Mongol

⁹⁹ *Les registres de Boniface VIII*, no. 4383 (1301 August 9); Ligato 2006, 257ff.

¹⁰⁰ Kedar, Benjamin Z. 1984, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches toward the Muslims*, Princeton, 189ff., esp. 195.

¹⁰¹ Richard, Jean 1983, “Le discours missionnaire: l’exposition de la foi chrétienne dans les lettres des papes aux Mongols”, in: *Prédication et propagande au Moyen Âge: Islam, Byzance, Occident*, Paris, 257-270, at 263f.; Ligato 2006, 257f.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 284f.

¹⁰³ Kiesewetter 1999, 369f.; *idem*, 2003, “Bonifacio VIII e gli Angioini”, in: *Bonifacio VIII*, (Atti del XXXIX Convegno Storico Internazionale, Todi, 13-16 ottobre 2002), Spoleto, 171-214, esp. 200ff.; Ligato 2006, 281.

¹⁰⁴ Soranzo 1930, 333ff.; Petech 1962, 564; Balard, Michel 2001, “Sur les traces de Buscarello de’Ghisolfi”, in: *Dei gesta per Francos: Crusade Studies in Honour of Jean Richard*, Michel Balard, Benjamin Z. Kedar and Jonathan Riley Smith, eds., Aldershot, 71-78, at 73; Ligato 2006, 286.

rule, enjoyed many years of relative freedom and peace.¹⁰⁵ Apparently the dogmatic differences between the Latin Church and the Nestorians were not adequately dealt with in the negotiations between the popes and the Ilkhans. The only opportunity of discussing the dogmatic controversies was the presence of the Mongol embassy in Rome in 1287/88, headed by the theologian Barçauuma. As we have seen, he was questioned by the cardinals and by Nicholas IV about the procession of the Holy Spirit. Concerning this point, the Nestorians' teaching was identical with that of the Greeks, i.e. that the Holy Spirit proceeded from God the Father alone, and not from the Father and the Son (*filioque*), as the Latins taught.¹⁰⁶ Since this had always been the most important point at issue in all negotiations about a union of the Latin and the Greek Churches, it is understandable that Barçauuma tried to avoid any detailed discussion of the matter.¹⁰⁷ The differences in Christology do not seem to have been touched on at all. The Nestorians had preserved the tradition of the Antiochian School of Diodorus of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius and had not accepted the Chalcedonian dogma to which the Greek and Latin Churches adhered, although the differences were more terminological than substantial.¹⁰⁸ According to the Syriac report, the pope and the cardinals, as well as the French and English kings, attended Barçauuma's Mass, and even received Holy Communion from his hands, which indicates that the Nestorian liturgy was tolerated by the Latins.

The Ilkhans' main failure to recruit the rulers of the West for common campaigns against the Mamluks was caused by their involvement in various internal and external struggles. The War of the Sicilian Vespers prevented Charles II of Sicily and the Aragonese kings from getting engaged in the Levant; Alfonso and James II of Aragon even cooperated with the Muslim foe. Philip the Fair was fully occupied with his struggle against England, Flanders, the Empire and Boniface VIII, while Edward I of England was kept engaged by the Scots. Thus, the frequent embassies travelling between Persia and Europe and the various negotiations ultimately remained no more than a brief episode in the history of the eastern Mediterranean in the late thirteenth century.

¹⁰⁵ See Tisserant, Eugène 1931, art. "L'Église nestorienne. Relations avec Rome", in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, vol. 11, Paris, cols. 221ff.; Kawerau, Peter 1983, *Ostkirchengeschichte I: Das Christentum in Asien und Afrika bis zum Auftreten der Portugiesen am Indischen Ozean*, Löwen, 51f.; Hage, Wolfgang 1978, „Der Weg nach Asien: Die ostsyrische Missionskirche“, in: *Die Kirche des früheren Mittelalters*, Knut Schäferdiek, Hg., (Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte II/1), München, 360-393, at 371ff.; Wetzell, Klaus 1995, *Kirchengeschichte Asiens*, Wuppertal / Zürich, 138. On the union of the Roman Church and the Nestorians in the 16th and 17th centuries, see De Vries, Wilhelm 1963, *Rom und die Patriarchate des Ostens*, Freiburg / München, 74ff.

¹⁰⁶ Heller, Friedrich 1971, *Die Ostkirchen*, München / Basel, 309.

¹⁰⁷ See the Syriac report quoted above, n. 11; also n. 21; Franchi 1990, 222f.

¹⁰⁸ Heller 1971, 309f.

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