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The Mongol invasions of the Near East

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THE MONGOL INVASIONS OF THE NEAR EAST

A Thesis

Presented To

The Faculty of the Department of History

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Ryan James McDaniel

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ABSTRACT

THE MONGOL INVASIONS OF THE NEAR EAST

By Ryan James McDaniel

This thesis examines the four Mongol invasions of the Near East that were carried out between 1220 and 1260 C.E. It analyzes the primary sources in order to define the role of logistics in the Mongol strategy of conquest, evaluate the outcome of each campaign, the outcome of the Mongol invasions as a whole, and uses this analysis to determine the primary reason the Mongol advances into the Near East ended in 1260.

Due to the large number of horses used by the Mongol army, the fertility of Azerbaijan and Mughan played a dominant role in determining the movements and strategy of the Mongols in the Near East. The Mongols consistently used a strategy of capturing or organizing adequate pasture lands to use as a base of operations before campaigning in the Near East. Also, Hülegü postponed his campaign against Egypt in 1260 in part to protect this vital asset.

Each of the four invasion forces had objectives assigned by the Great Khan that were not fulfilled. Each time a subsequent force was dispatched to overcome these shortcomings until the dissolution of the Mongol empire at the death of Möngke in 1259. After this, the fractured Mongol Empire was no longer able to mount a new invasion to compensate for previous failures.

Dedicated to my wonderful wife, Amy

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Chapter 1 Introduction

On a hot summer day in the valley of Megiddo in what is today Israel, a general in the Mongol army, Ket Buqa, kneeled with his hands bound behind his back. His captor, Qutuz, the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, screamed and raged at him, “despicable man!” Ket Buqa calmly replied, “If I am killed by your hand I consider it to be God’s act, not yours. Be not deceived by this event for one moment, for when the news of my death reaches Hülegü Khan, the ocean of his wrath will boil over, and from Azerbaijan to the gates of Egypt will quake with the hooves of Mongol horses.”¹ A few minutes later the Sultan gave the order and a guard stepped forward and swiftly cut Ket Buqa’s head from his body. Yet Hülegü Khan, Genghis Khan’s grandson and ruler of the Near East, never came. Though Ket Buqa was his most trusted general and news of his death sent Hülegü into a rage, his horses never rode out to avenge his friend’s death, and his armies never threatened the gates of Egypt.

Ket Buqa was a Naiman and a Christian serving in the Mongol army and had served under Hülegü since the time Hülegü had been dispatched from Mongolia.² Though he was venerated in the Il-Khan kingdom, the authenticity of this conversation between Qutuz and Ket Buqa remains uncertain. The battle that Ket Buqa lost at Ayn Jalud was also elevated to legendary status and sometimes hailed by twentieth century scholars as the moment that Mongol expansion in the Near East was checked.³ Yet Mongol advances had been checked many times before. Every Mongol invasion of the Near East failed to accomplish at least one of its stated goals and particularly at Baghdad

¹ Rashiduddin Fazlullah *Jami 'u't-Tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles, A History of the Mongols*. Translated and Annotated by W. M. Thackston, Edited by Şinasi Tekin and Gönül Alpay Vol. 1-3. Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures 45, Central Asian Sources IV (Published at Harvard University, 1998-1999), 505-506.

² Rashiduddin, 479; Kirakos Gandzaketsi *History of the Armenians*. Translated by Robert Bedrosian (NY: Sources of the Armenian Tradition, 1986), 325.

³ For an example see J. J. Saunders *Muslims and Mongols: Essays on Medieval Asia* (Christchurch: Whitcoulls Limited, 1977), 67-68.

the Mongol armies were repeatedly defeated on the battlefield. The precise role of Ayn Jalud in halting the Mongol advance has been debated in scholarly circles for decades, yet Ket Buqa's last words indirectly hint at why the Mongol Empire failed to ever invade Egypt. Ket Buqa said that Hülegü would storm forth from *Azerbaijan*. The fact that Hülegü was in Azerbaijan instead of defending his recently acquired territory in Syria points to the two reasons the Mongol invasion of Egypt was never realized. First, for the second time the Mongol Empire was on the verge of civil war. Hülegü had abandoned his invasion of Syria and Egypt on word of his brother's death in China, and moved quickly to Azerbaijan. His remaining brothers, Kublai and Arik-Böke, were contending for the throne. Though the issue of succession was resolved by force, the unity of the Empire was at an end and the resulting political schism was to be permanent.⁴ The Qipchaq Khanate to the north, the Chaghatai Khanate in Central Asia, and Hülegü's Il-Khan Khanate in the Near East were to become independent states and had to campaign, and defend themselves, often against each other, without help from Mongolia. The second reason is the strategic importance of Azerbaijan. Hülegü quickly retreated to protect this prize possession of every Mongol invasion force sent to the Near East. When the Mongol army invaded, the earth indeed shook, as Ket Buqa boasted, but not if the horses were not fed and watered. The evidence proves that the Mongol strategy of invasion in the west was to first capture the prime pasturelands in a region in order to support the massive number of cavalry mounts their army required.⁵ Only with their headquarters established in the region's key pasturelands could they campaign freely. Egypt was a prize by any standard, but for a nomadic, cavalry-based army of over 200,000 men and well over half a million horse, the key to the Near East was Azerbaijan.

⁴ J. J. Saunders *The History of the Mongol Conquests* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 120.

⁵ D. O. Morgan *The Mongols* (Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishing, 1990), 144.

Hülegü's fears were not an overreaction, for in 1262 Bärkä did invade with the express intent of annexing this territory.⁶

Addressing all four campaigns together allows a comparison of their outcomes. Therefore, this thesis will examine the four invasion forces sent to the Near East and their campaigns in order to demonstrate that the Mongol strategy of regional conquest in the Near East was first to identify and capture the best pasturelands in the region as a base of operations before launching a general campaign. In other words, logistical necessity defined their invasion strategy. Second, it will show that the Mongols did not conquer the Near East by virtue of an unbroken string of victories that ended at Ayn Jalud. Rather, they conquered the Near East by overcoming repeated failures. This was accomplished by the dispatch of a series of compensatory invasion forces from Mongolia. After the death of Möngke Khan, the imperial unity required for this no longer existed. This transition halted the Mongol expansion southwestward toward Africa and northwestward to Constantinople.

The Mongol Empire Invades the West

The thirteenth century saw one of the greatest challenges to world civilization in human history. The Islamic world faced eradication, or at the least subjugation, by a non-Muslim empire. The century was a turning point that shaped most of Asia down to present times and had an indirect impact on the European continent. Though well experienced in dealing with barbarian invasions, both the Chinese and Islamic civilizations were devastated by the rise of the most significant nomad invasion ever seen. Initially the Mongols were merely one of the many nomadic groups of tribes in Inner Asia, but under the leadership of Genghis Khan and his descendants, they

⁶ David Nicolle *The Mongol Warlords* (London: Brockhampton Press, 1990), 119.

conquered more nations and territory than any other power in history.⁷ The Mongols flooded into China and subsequently into the heartland of Islam within a period of fifty years. Their invasions of western Asia also gave rise to other empires that further shaped Asia: the Mamluks in Egypt, the Moghuls in India, the short-lived empire of Tamerlane in Central Asia, as well as the Russian Empire.

In the course of the western campaigns Genghis Khan directly oversaw the conquest of Central Asia. This devastating invasion was the result of a collision between the expanding Mongol Empire in the East and the Khwarazm Empire in Central Asia. While systematically dismantling this neighbor, Genghis Khan dispatched an invasion force that swept through much of western Asia. The various Islamic powers of the Near East had been in a struggle with the Byzantines and Crusaders for control of Asia Minor and the Levant when this new army suddenly appeared. At first the Caliph and the Sultans of Egypt and Rum were ambivalent at the destruction of their eastern enemy, the Khwarazm Empire, and the Christians were hopeful of an anti-Islamic ally. However, Christians and Muslims alike soon struggled to cope with their mutual destruction at the hands of a people previously unknown to them.

Genghis Khan dispatched two generals, Jebe and Sübödäi, westward in 1220 C.E.⁸ They were sent to invade the Near East with 30,000 mounted troops. Over a period of three and a half years, they chased the Sultan of the Khwarazm Empire to his death, invaded northern Persia, Persian Iraq, and Azerbaijan, which are in modern Iran, Mughan, Arran, and Nakhchivan, which were located in the modern Republic of Azerbaijan, the Qipchaq Steppe and southern Russia, which correspond to modern Dagestan and Chechnya as well as parts of Russia and Ukraine. They defeated a major

⁷ Inner Asia refers to the area comprised roughly of Central Asia, Mongolia, and Tibet. Khan is a Turkic term meaning a tribal chief. Paul Ratchnevsky *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy*, Translated by Thomas Nivinson Haining (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), 274.

⁸ Sübödäi is better known for his stunning invasion of Russia and Eastern Europe in 1236.

Khwarazmian army, the Georgian army twice, mortally wounding the king of Georgia in the second battle, an army of Alans and an army of Qipchaqs, rode as far west as the Crimea, annihilated an allied army of Russians and Qipchaqs, and laid waste many towns and cities on the Russian-Qipchaq frontier. Edward Gibbon in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* described Jebe and Sübödäi's operation as, "an expedition, which had never been attempted and has never been repeated," and in similar terms by J. J. Saunders as "a feat never before attempted and rarely imitated since."⁹ Completely separated from the main Mongol army, which was campaigning in Central Asia, the expedition survived and conquered in hostile territory by means of superb logistics and superior strategy. Jebe and Sübödäi seized control of the key grazing territory of Azerbaijan and used it as a base of operations. When they moved north they likewise captured the Qipchaq Steppe. Jebe and Sübödäi's campaign is traditionally viewed as the first wave of Mongol conquests in the Near East. It was followed by a second campaign in early 1231, led by Chormaqan, and finally by the great invasion of Hülegü, Genghis Khan's grandson, and Kubilai Khan's brother, in 1253.

During the Mongol campaigns in Central Asia, Genghis Khan earmarked a trusted commander, Chormaqan, for a future campaign against the Caliph in Baghdad. Genghis Khan died in 1227, before the second invasion of the Near East could be launched. His son, and successor, Ögödäi, was faithful to his father's long-term strategy for the conquest of Asia and mobilized Chormaqan in 1228 with a new army of 30,000 troops plus levies from Central Asia.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the failures of the first invasion forced Chormaqan to first eliminate the rejuvenated Khwarazmian kingdom and re-conquer the territory supposedly captured by Jebe and Sübödäi. Chormaqan likewise seized

⁹ Edward Gibbon *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire Vol. III* (New York: The Heritage Press, 1946), 2218. J. J. Saunders *The History of the Mongol Conquests* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 59.

¹⁰ Rene Grousset *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970), 261.

Azerbaijan for a base of operations before campaigning against the regional powers. Chormaqan's invasion succeeded in permanently conquering Persia, the Caucasus, and under his successor, Baiju, the Sultanate of Rum in Asia Minor. Chormaqan and Baiju also made many destructive sorties into Northern Mesopotamia between 1231 and 1256, occasionally pushing as far south as the northern outskirts of the Baghdad region. The third Great Khan, Güyük, sent another army under Eljigitei in 1248 to replace Baiju and wage war on the radical Islamic sect of the Assassins and to compensate for the second invasion's ongoing failure to take Baghdad, but the attempt accomplished nothing due to the instability of the Mongol Empire. Despite the second and third invasions' two armies and twenty-six years of campaigning, the effort to conquer Asia Minor, the crumbling relations with the Assassins, and the stout defense of Baghdad caused them to never be successful in their bid to eliminate the Caliph, capture Baghdad, or subdue the Assassins.

Under the Mongol Empire's fourth Great Khan, Möngke, Genghis Khan's strategy of conquest continued. In 1252, Möngke dispatched his brother Hülegü with the goals of destroying the Assassins, the completion of the then twenty-two year effort to capture Baghdad, and invading Egypt.¹¹ Simultaneously Möngke put down a plot by the members and supporters of Güyük's family to overthrow him, in which Eljigitei was implicated and executed. The termination of Eljigitei, who had taken over most of Baiju's territory, and the dispatch of Hülegü mark the end of the impotent third invasion and the beginning of the fourth. It was to be the final imperial expansion effort in the Near East.

Hülegü dispatched a vanguard under Ket Buqa in 1252 to begin assaulting the fortresses of the Assassins in Khorasan, in modern eastern Iran, though Ket Buqa had accomplished little when Hülegü later arrived in Samarkand. His main army of over 100,000 troops slowly made their way through Central Asia, arriving in the Near East in

¹¹ Nicolle, *The Mongol Warlords*, 103.

1256. Hülegü systematically destroyed the fortresses of the Assassins ending with the famous assault on Alamut, the headquarters of the Persian branch of the sect. With the immediate threat of the Assassins eliminated and his headquarters established in Azerbaijan he proceeded toward Baghdad in 1257. Baghdad was taken in early 1258 and Hülegü next retired to Azerbaijan and then invaded Syria in 1259. When his brother Möngke died later that year the fragile unity of the Mongol Empire crumbled and the Mongol invasions of the Near East ended. Hülegü's occupation force in Syria quickly overstepped its grasp and was annihilated by a Mamluk army from Egypt at the battle of Ayn Jalud in 1260. Hülegü established the Il-Khan kingdom in the Near East and continued a local war to expand his territory but the Great Khan never again launched an invasion to expand Mongol gains in the Near East.

Secondary Sources

The first campaign into the Near East is usually overshadowed by Genghis Khan's conquest of the Khwarazmian Empire. Topical histories such as J. J. Saunders' *The Mongol Conquests* or Nicolle's *The Mongol Warlords* give good overviews of the expedition, but only as a side note to the main campaign in Central Asia under Genghis Khan and his sons.¹² Douglas Benson has perhaps the longest treatment of this campaign in his *The Mongol Wars in Asia*, however his access to the source material was limited, with a focus on Christian sources.¹³ Regional histories give only a partial explanation of the first expedition. For example, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, gives some detailed

¹² Saunders, *Conquests*; David Nicolle *The Mongol Warlords: Genghis Khan, Kublai Khan, Hülegü, Tamerlane* (London: Brockhampton Press, 1990).

¹³ Douglas Benson *The Mongol Wars in Asia* (Chicago, 1991). Benson relies primarily on the Russian, Armenian, and Georgian sources. He makes numerous errors in the chronology of the campaign and fills in some of the gaps in his narrative with speculation that contradicts other sources. For example he rejects the idea that the Mongols ever fought the King of Georgia on the battlefield because he confuses the two battles and erroneously has Jebe and Sübödäi returning to Khorasan after the Khwarazmshah's death before disembarking a second time under new orders. His account contains many such problems and ultimately presents an unsatisfactory account of the entire campaign.

information in a two-page summary on the first invasion, but focuses on the events in Iran with only a few sentences covering the period of the campaign in Russia. Various histories of Georgia or Russia give some details on the portion of the campaign in those regions but do not mention the expedition's activities in the Near East. Other historians have given a cursory account, but none have provided an detailed examination or satisfactorily reconciled the various sources. The primary sources on the expedition of Jebe and Sübödäi mostly supply exclusive portions of information. This thesis will attempt to synthesize an accurate chronology of the first campaign and represents the first such in-depth synthesis in English of these sources concerning the entire course of the first invasion. Developing a comprehensive, detailed history of the expedition also creates the possibility for a unique analysis of Mongol strategy and for drawing conclusions on the outcome of the campaign. It will show that although the Mongols won every battle they fought, they ultimately failed to successfully add any of the lands they invaded to the Mongol domain as their mandate dictated. Instead they created a weakened region ripe for conquest by the survivors of the defeated Khwarazmian Empire.

The second invasion is similar in the difficulty its sources present. The Armenian and Georgian sources play a central role in our picture of this invasion, while the Persian sources comment little on Chormaqan's campaigns. The second invasion is often overlooked entirely by modern scholars, though it has recently received some attention in the work of Timothy May.¹⁴ Some effort is required to piece together a chronology of Chormaqan's campaigns in the Near East, but the details of his conquests demonstrate that every inch of the first campaign's conquests had to be repeated as well as the

¹⁴ Timothy May "Chormaqan Noyan, the First Mongol Governor of the Middle East." (Master's thesis for the Department of Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University), http://radar.ngcsu.edu/~tmmay/Chormaqan_thesis.pdf. Last accessed 6/29/2005; "Chormaqan and the Mongol Conquest of the Middle East." *Military History*, April, 2004. Online Extras: <http://www.thehistorynet.com/mh/blchormaqan/>. Last accessed 8/27/2005.

Mongol's consistent strategic focus on logistical concerns. Further it will show that the second invasion failed to achieve its primary goal: the capture of Baghdad.

The third invasion failed to make any progress in its assigned goals. Eljigitei's mission against the Assassins was never realized due to the political turmoil within the Mongol Empire at the time. There do not appear to be any secondary sources that cover this invasion force with the exception of Rene Grousset's encyclopedic *The Empire of the Steppes: a History of Central Asia*.¹⁵ It is difficult to call Eljigitei's mission an invasion, since he never entered any new territory and his recorded mission was to subdue rebels within Mongol territory. Yet there is evidence that the Caliph was viewed as a rebel despite being outside of Mongol territory and Eljigitei's actions reveal that Baghdad was a key target of his assignment. We must judge the army's role by its goals, not its success. With this in mind I will refer to his mission as an invasion force in this thesis.

The fourth invasion was covered in detail by a number of primary sources and has already received such extensive attention from modern historians that a reconstruction of the historical record is not necessary. The fourth campaign, however, has rarely been analyzed in the context of all four invasions. Hülegü was forced to recapture many of the cities that Chormaqan and Baiju had purportedly added to the Mongol Empire and his campaign therefore sheds light on the successes and failure of the previous campaigns. Hülegü also ultimately failed to achieve one of his assignments: the conquest of Egypt. There are also aspects of Hülegü's logistical preparations that reveal the Mongol logistical strategy.

Primary Sources

A number of near contemporary historians that record the events of these campaigns and their context. Until recently only a small number of these sources had

¹⁵ Rene Grousset *The Empire of the Steppes: a History of Central Asia*. Translator: Naomi Walford (New Jersey: Rutgers, 1970).

been available in the English language. The sources vary in culture and time, some from within the Mongol empire and some from without. Each account of the first campaign is relatively brief, but together they allow us to synthesize an accurate record of the events. There is even less material on the second campaign. The main primary sources for the first and fourth campaigns, such as Juvaini and Rashiduddin, give only passing references to the second and third campaigns. Most of the second campaign centered on the Caucasus and northern Mesopotamia, and so it is the Armenian and Syriac sources that provide the most information on this campaign. The third campaign has the least information, half of which comes from Crusader sources. The fourth campaign, under Hülegü, enjoys the most coverage by both primary sources and modern historians.

The central document to any study of the Mongols is *The Secret History of the Mongols*. This anonymous poetic chronicle was originally written in Mongolian in the decades after Genghis Khan's death in 1227. Today's translations are taken from Chinese versions of the text.¹⁶ While *The Secret History of the Mongols* does not provide any details on the campaign of Jebe and Sübödäi into the Near East, it does give significant insight into the lives of two men themselves and their career in the service of the Great Khans. It also provides us with information about the origins of the second campaign, but does not mention the campaign itself. *The Secret History* ends in the reign of Ögödäi, and therefore does not include the later invasions.

The most vital and foundational primary source on the Mongol invasions of the Near East is the work of Ala-ad-Din Ata-Malik Juvaini. Juvaini was born in Azadvar, a town directly in the path of all four Mongol invasions, northwest of Nishapur in Khorasan. He was born in 1226, six years after the first Mongol invasion had passed through Khorasan. He was a small child when the Mongol's second invasion force

¹⁶ Francis Woodman Cleaves *The Secret History of the Mongols*, xx. These texts are in both the Chinese language and in the Mongol language written with Chinese characters.

passed through his homeland and he was a direct eyewitness to the fourth invasion under Hülegü in 1253. Juvaini's eminent work, *The History of the World Conqueror*, was written primarily to document the life and campaigns of Genghis Khan and the Mongols up through the invasion of Hülegü.¹⁷ His great-grandfather and grandfather both served the Khwarazmshahs. His grandfather continued to serve under Jalal al-Din and thus would have been able to pass on details to Juvaini's father about the first invasion, though not to Juvaini directly as he died in one of Jalal al-Din's campaigns in eastern Anatolia in 1229-1230. Juvaini's father, Baha-ad-Din, later lived in Nishapur and eventually entered the service of the Mongol overlords of Khorasan in the early 1230's. He was appointed *sahib-divan*, or Minister of Finance, the same post Juvaini's grandfather had under the Khwarazmshahs.¹⁸ Baha-ad-Din traveled to Mongolia to visit the Great Khan Ögödäi, who was pleased with him, confirmed him in his post, and gave him a *paiza* and a *yarligh*. A *paiza* was a Mongol "tablet of authority" and a *yarligh* was a stamp of approval on a post or office.¹⁹ The governor of Khorasan later made a second trip to Mongolia during which Juvaini's father served as deputy governor of the region.²⁰ With this master he made a second trip towards the Great Khan, this time with the twenty-two-year old Juvaini accompanying him. The trip was aborted while the party was in Kazakhstan due to the Great Khan's death in 1248. At news of the next Mongol council to elect a new Khan, the governor went to Mongolia from 1251 to 1253, again with Juvaini in the party. During this stay in Mongolia that Juvaini began work on his history of the Mongol conquests.

Möngke, the new Great Khan, was at this time sending his younger brother, Hülegü, to invade the Near East. Juvaini joined Hülegü and continued in the service of

¹⁷ Ata-Malik Juvaini *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*. Translated by John Andrew Boyle (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

¹⁸ Juvaini, xxviii.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, xvii.

²⁰ Baha-ad-Din continued in his office under the subsequent governor.

the Il-Khans until his death. He traveled with the main Mongol force as it moved into the Near East and later became the governor of Iraq under Hülegü. Juvaini had direct access to the Mongol court as well as an intimate knowledge of the Near East and the two previous invasions. He had direct access to historical sources within both worlds.

Though Juvaini's work is considered very reliable, he labored under the rule of the Mongols and his record must be understood in that light. The Mongols generally did not go to extensive lengths to control the histories written about them. However, while Juvaini constantly suffered under false accusations of corruption and treason, his enemies do not appear to have ever accused him of disloyalty to their Mongol rulers on the basis of his work. This alone demonstrates that he was careful to be respectful of Mongol sensibilities and should therefore be considered biased. Yet his work, when compared to other historians of the Mongols such as Marco Polo, Carpini, Rashiduddin, as well as Chinese sources, bears up very well in its accuracy.²¹ His history provides very good detail on the expedition of Jebe and Sübödäi, no information on the second campaign under Chormaqan, and little on the third. On the fourth invasion, however, it contains excellent detail up to the fall of Alamut, as Juvaini personally accompanied Hülegü from Mongolia.

Rashiduddin Fazlullah's *Compendium of Chronicles* is second only to Juvaini in its detail and accuracy concerning the Mongol invasions. Rashiduddin was a historian and philosopher in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. He was a vizier under the Il-Khans and was commissioned by Ghazan Khan (r. 1295-1304) to write a history of the Mongol and Turkish peoples and of the Mongol conquests, though its writing continued on into the reign of succeeding Il-Khans.²² Rashiduddin, like Juvaini, wrote for his Mongol overlords, yet his work has an honesty and an ability to subtly

²¹ Ibid., xxviii.

²² Rashiduddin, xi.

criticize the Mongols. He also experienced more freedom since the some of the Khans he worked under had converted to Islam and therefore were more open to an Islamic perspective of events. However, he was not as hostile toward the Mongols as those Muslim writers living outside of Mongol rule such as Ibn al-Athir or Juzjani. He utilized Juvaini's works as well as Ibn al-Athir's, but also sources to which neither had access.²³ He had access to the source material used in the writing of *The Secret History of the Mongols* as his work bears striking similarities to it, but is different enough to not have been taken directly from *The Secret History*.²⁴ Rashiduddin also had access to the *Altan Debter*, the official Mongol chronicle, which is no longer extant except indirectly through Rashiduddin's work and via a Chinese Chronicle, the *Sheng-wu Qin-zheng Lu*.²⁵ Rashiduddin provides more details about the invasion under Jebe and Sübödäi than any other single source and supplies information not found elsewhere. He provides little on the second invasion, but does mention the third and the execution of Eljigitei. He gives more detailed information on the fourth invasion than any other source, particularly on the taking of Baghdad and the murder of the Caliph. For these reasons his *Compendium* is invaluable to the study of the Mongol invasions of the Near East.²⁶

al-Maqrizi's *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt* is an essential source for the chronology of Mongol activity in the Near East during the first campaign.²⁷ He was a chronicler of the Kurdish Ayyubid dynasty in Egypt and is therefore primarily concerned with the affairs of the Sultans of Egypt. Al-Maqrizi's notes on the Mongol activities are therefore not central in his work, but are included as a side note to the events of each

²³ Ibid., xiv.

²⁴ Ibid., xiv-xv.

²⁵ D. O. Morgan *The Mongols* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1990), 11-12; Allsen, 17.

²⁶ Only a small, partial translation into English of *The Compendium of Chronicles* was available prior to 2000. The portions that had been translated did not include the passages relevant to this study. Only in 2000 did W. M. Thackston's new full translation into English make the vast majority of the work accessible in English: Rashiduddin Fazlullah *Jami'u't-Tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles, A History of the Mongols*. See note 1 above.

²⁷ Al-Maqrizi *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*. Translated by R. J. C. Broadhurst (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980).

year. His work shows the Mongols making their first appearance in the Near East in 1220.²⁸ His strictly chronological work includes a variety of vague references to Mongol activity in the Near East culminating in a more detailed account of the sack of Baghdad. His work mostly contributes to an understanding of the timeline of events and of the Ayyubid Sultan's and Caliph's activities during the thirteenth century.

Another Persian Muslim historian of the thirteenth century who recorded the Mongol invasions is Abu Umar-i-USman, commonly known as Juzjani. Juzjani was a contemporary of Genghis Khan and his history covers the period of 810 to 1260 C.E. As he had removed himself to India, he wrote his history, *A General History*, from outside the Mongol empire. Although he was a contemporary of the Mongol invasions of the Near East, his knowledge of the campaign of Jebe and Sübödäi is extremely limited and contains no information beyond the death of Muhammad Khwarazmshah.²⁹ He mentions the second invasion and gives a brief account, but adds little that cannot be found elsewhere. He gives greater detail concerning Hülegü's sack of Baghdad, but spends more time assigning blame to various individuals and groups than truly describing the assault itself. With respect to the three invasions that he mentions he confuses some events, exaggerates troop numbers, and reports spurious anecdotes.

Nasawi was the personal assistant and scribe of Jalal al-Din Khwarazmshah and wrote a biography of his sultan. The work has never been translated into English, but is available in a French translation by Houdas.³⁰ His narrative follows Jalal al-Din's career closely and has some useful information about the first and second Mongol campaigns,

²⁸ He gives a succinct, accurate, background on the origin of the Mongols and a brief account of their early conquests. He describes them as having no religion, but acknowledging "Almighty God." Al-Maqrizi, *History*, 182.

²⁹ Abu Umar-i-USman Juzjani *A General History*. Translated by Major H. G. Raverty (London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1881). Republished as Bibliotheca Indica Collection of Oriental Works, vol. 78, 1-3, Osnabruck, 1991. Raverty's translation contains almost more notes than text. Raverty includes several full pages of notes on the campaign of Jebe and Sübödäi, however his information is full of inaccuracies and he does not cite his sources. The nature of the information he provides seems to point primarily to Juvaini.

³⁰ O. Houdas *Histoire du Sultan Djelal ed-Din Mankobirti*. Ed. and Translation O. Houdas, 2 vols., (Paris, 1891-5).

but nothing beyond. Ibn-al-Athir was a native of Mosul who visited Baghdad and later lived in Aleppo and Damascus. His work *The Complete History* runs up to 1231, just two years prior to his death in 1233. He provides some details on the first Mongol invasion and on Jalal al-Din's activities after the first invasion up to his death in 1231. His description of the first invasion is available in the English translation of Berthold Spuler's *History of the Mongols*. And the rest of his work appears indirectly through a variety of secondary sources, such as J. A. Boyle's chapter on the Il-Khans in *The Cambridge History of Iran* or Barthold's *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*.³¹

Gregory Abu'l-Faragh is commonly called Bar Hebraeus. He was a Jew born in Meletine, a Greek outpost on the Euphrates in Northern Mesopotamia. He became a Christian and was consecrated as a bishop in his twenties. He was a lecturer in mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, religion and grammar. His *Chronography of the Political History of the World from Creation* was written in Syriac and his contribution to it ended in the year of his death in 1286.³² Bar Hebraeus relied on the chronicle of Michael the Great, but his details on the Mongols parallel several stories found in Juvaini's work. His information is minimal on the "Tartars," as he calls the Mongols, and focuses on reporting facts. He records some miraculous incidents, like most religious writers of the time, but never-the-less his work is considered a credible source. Most importantly he provides information concerning troop numbers and movements, as well as some details of key battles and sieges. His greatest contribution to the study of the Mongol invasions of the Near East is in providing a very thorough account of the

³¹ Berthold Spuler *History of the Mongols: Based on Eastern and Western Accounts of the thirteenth and Fourteen Centuries*, Translated by Helga and Stuart Drummond (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); J. A. Boyle "Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khans." In *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 5., J. A. Boyle, ed. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1968), 303-421; Vasily Vladimirovich Barthold *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion* (London: Luzac & Co., 1968). Ibn al-Athir's vivid paragraphs introducing the invasion of the Mongols have been translated into English and is often quoted for its rhetoric, but contains no hard facts.

³² Bar Hebraeus or Abu'l-Farah *Chronography*. Translation by Wallis Budge, 2 Volumes (Oxford, 1932). Another writer continued the work after his death.

political and military situation in the Near East at the time of the invasions. As a native of Northern Mesopotamia his information becomes more detailed and reliable in the second through fourth invasions. He gives information about Chormaqan, Baiju, and Hülegü's campaigns that is not found elsewhere.

The most important Armenian source was Kirakos of Gandja. Kirakos was born between 1200 and 1210 and was a boy or young man when the Mongols first invaded the Caucasus. He was Armenian and his work was written in Armenian. His *History of the Armenians* is generally considered very reliable especially concerning the later campaigns since he was an eyewitness. During Chormaqan's campaign in the Caucasus in 1238-1239 Molar captured a famous Christian leader the *vardapet* Vanakan, along with some of his students, including Kirakos. *Vardapet* is an Armenian term meaning "priest" or "church scholar." Vanakan was ransomed, but Kirakos was kept as a slave to do translation work for Molar. His work covers many aspects of Armenian history but focuses on the Mongol invasion more than any other subject. He only covers the first campaign's first battle between the Mongols and the Georgians by saying that they "came to the city of Tiflis."³³ His coverage of the second battle supports Rashiduddin's account and adds some details. He covers the second invasion in great detail, hardly mentions the third, except to say the Eljigitei never arrived in the Caucasus, and gives some information on the fourth invasion collected from a Georgian soldier who was a participant in the sack of Baghdad.

Another important, though generally unreliable, source for the Mongol's campaigns is Grigor of Akner. He was an Armenian monk in Cilicia and his *History of the Nation of the Archers (The Mongols)* was written in Armenian.³⁴ Blake and Frye,

³³ Kirakos Gandzaketsi *History of the Armenians*. Translated by Robert Bedrosian (NY: Sources of the Armenian Tradition, 1986), 166.

³⁴ Grigor of Akner *A History of the Nation of Archers*. Translation by Blake and Frye (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1954).

who translated his work into English, admit that, “much of what he relates is hearsay and is not derived from personal impressions, of the coming of the Mongols to the ‘lower countries’.”³⁵ Grigor’s account is brief and full of inaccuracies but he is a key primary source for the first battle between the Mongols and the Georgian army. A Georgian source is *The Georgian Chronicle* which dates from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. The original Georgian version is not extant, but a later abridged Armenian version is. It has been translated into French, but in English is available indirectly in Sir Henry Howorth’s *History of the Mongols*.³⁶

The central Russian source on Jebe and Sübödäi’s activities in the Qipchaq Steppe and in the Ukraine is *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle*.³⁷ The *Chronicle* is an anonymous official record of the Russian principalities of Galicia and Volynia and covers the period of 1205 to 1289. The prince of Galicia that led the Russian campaign to drive Jebe and Sübödäi out of the Qipchaq Steppe and it is clear from the account that the chronicler was himself an eyewitness of the campaign. *The Chronicle* is the only source we have concerning the first campaign to be written by an eyewitness and provides accurate dates for these events.

Alongside *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle* is *The Chronicle of Novgorod*.³⁸ This chronicle covers the period of 1016 to 1471.³⁹ Novgorod is one hundred miles (161km) south east of St. Petersburg. The prince of Novgorod did not participate in the campaign against Jebe and Sübödäi, so the account is less reliable than that of *The*

³⁵ Ibid., 1.

³⁶ Sir Henry Howorth *History of the Mongols, From the 9th to the 19th Century. Part III: The Mongols of Persia* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1888).

³⁷ Perfecky, George A. *The Hypatian Codex Two: The Galician-Volynian Chronicle*. Translated and Annotated by George A. Perfecky (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1973).

³⁸ Robert Michell and Nevill Forbes *The Chronicle of Novgorod 1016-1471*. Translated from the Russian (Hattiesburg, MI: Academic International, 1970).

³⁹ Novgorod was a prominent city-state in northwest Russia in the thirteenth century, though its real fame came just after the first encounter with the Mongols under its prince, Alexander Nevsky. Alexander’s father, Yaroslav, was elected prince of Novgorod in 1222. It was Yaroslav who choose not to participate in the campaign by the Russian princes to drive Jebe and Sübödäi out of the Qipchaq territory in 1223.

Galician-Volynian Chronicle. However, the chronicler was a contemporary and would have direct access to second-hand information. The account it gives of the battle between the Mongols and the Russians is rich in detail. Together, these two Russian chronicles give us our most detailed picture of any portion of Jebe and Sübödäi's campaign and provide an excellent description of one of their most significant battles.

After the first and second invasions, the Europeans and Crusaders began to take notice of the Mongols and this led to several accounts by western envoys. Pope Innocent IV sent Friar Giovanni Diplano Carpini as an ambassador to the Mongols in 1245. His two-year journey through Mongol lands resulted in his work entitled *The Story of the Mongols Whom We Call the Tartars*.⁴⁰ His work is not a history, but an intelligence report on the Mongol people and their army, giving detailed information on the Mongol army including armaments, tactics, and strategies. The Benedictine Monk, Matthew Paris, wrote a history covering European events from 1247 to 1250 call *The Chronica Majora*.⁴¹ Though he had no personal knowledge of events in the Near East, he had access to sources that did and recorded the communications of Muslims and Mongols with the courts of Europe and the arrival of Mongol envoys at the Vatican in 1248.

William of Rubruck was a French Franciscan monk and priest who was in the Near East in the early 1250's and was a friend of the King of France, Louis IX. Upon hearing that Batu's son, Sartach, had become a Christian and that the Mongols had a community of German Christians as captives in Batu's territory, he traveled as a missionary to Mongol lands visiting the Great Khan's camp for six months in 1254. Believing Louis was still on Cyprus he traveled south from Batu's lands in Russia through the Caucasus and Turkey only to discover that Louis had returned to France. His

⁴⁰ Friar Giovanni Diplano Carpini *The Story of the Mongols Whom We Call the Tartars*. Translated by Erik Huldinger (Boston: Brandon Publishing Company, 1996).

⁴¹ Matthew Paris *Chronicles of Matthew Paris: Monastic Life in the Thirteenth Century*. ed., translated and with an introduction by Richard Vaughn (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984).

descriptions of the Caucasus and his meeting with Baiju in Armenia are directly relevant to the invasions of the Near East. He wrote his sober and vivid account of the entire journey, *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, as a report to King Louis IX.⁴²

⁴² Friar William of Rubruck *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke 1253-1255*. Translated by Peter Jackson (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1990).

Chapter 2 “The Nation of Archers”

By 1218 Temüchin had conquered the heartland of Asia. Temüchin was later given the title of Genghis, or Chingiz, Khan.⁴³ Although he was only the son of a minor Mongol chieftain, he was able to mobilize a new movement to conquer the various Mongol tribes.⁴⁴ He brought these various tribes under his control and defeated the Tatar, Naiman, Uighur and Kara Khitai powers of Inner Asia. He then conquered the center of western Chinese power, the Xi-Xia state, and crippled the northern Qin Empire when he sacked Beijing.⁴⁵ Genghis Khan planned to finish his conquest of the Qin Empire and to invade the Song Empire to the south, but was soon compelled to conquer the Khwarazm kingdom in Persia and Central Asia.

Turnbull wrote of the Mongols that, “No armies in history have ever won so many battles or conquered so much territory. No army has ever provoked such justifiable terror and loathing in its victims, or slaughtered so many of its vanquished.”⁴⁶ Genghis Khan’s Central Asian campaign wrought a devastation that shocked the Islamic world.⁴⁷ Yet Turnbull’s description of the Mongols is extreme: for the modern loathing for the Nazis is just as significant as that of the Mongols in their day and the percentage of conquered peoples slaughtered was greater within the Third Reich. Even the terror of Tamerlane surpassed that Genghis Khan. His first assertion, however, is true. The Mongol army was one of the most feared and militarily successful armies in history and conquered more territory, measured by hectare, than any other power in history.

⁴³ Khan was an Altaic term for Lord or Ruler and was a common title perhaps equivalent to the western term King.

⁴⁴ He did this with the assistance of his father’s friend, Togrul Khan, chief of the Kerait.

⁴⁵ Hoang, 181. Beijing, or Peking, was called Zhongdu in the thirteenth century. The Chin dynasty escaped to the south to rule in exile from their capital.

⁴⁶ Turnbull, *The Mongols*, 3.

⁴⁷ See D. O. Morgan, *The Mongols*, 73-83 for an analysis of the devastation of the western campaign.

The Mongol army was not unique among its nomadic cousins and neighbors of Mongolia and Central Asia. Yet when it brought its particular type of army and warfare against the sedentary societies of Western Asia, the effect was dramatic. The makeup of their army, their archery and riding skills, and their nomadic-style strategies and tactics consistently resulted in overwhelming victory over their enemies. An overview of the Mongol style of army and warfare and those of the various lands the campaigns covered is imperative to understanding the Mongols' repeated advantage over the armies of the Near East, Caucasus, and Russia.

The Mongol Horse Archer

The horse, more specifically the Mongolian pony, is the central animal in Mongolian culture, as it was in the thirteenth century.⁴⁸ Mongol men began learning to ride as early as age three. They were known to sleep in the saddle and rotate among as many as four or five steeds in times of haste, riding each for as long as twenty-four hours at a time. These extraordinary equestrian skills were added to what must be acknowledged as the most extraordinary horse in the world. Mongol ponies are a hard working breed, useful as pack animals as well as a fighting steed. Therefore, it is likely that even without baggage the invasion forces were able to carry provisions. Mary Watson says that Mongols expect their ponies "to carry a man and baggage all day, over steep, rough terrain, often in deep snow and ice. It is extremely fast, and is raced over distances of up to 40 miles (64 km)."⁴⁹ Watson describes them as "probably tougher and hardier than any other breed, including the Arab. They are capable of surviving severe cold on frugal rations, yet have the speed and endurance to carry heavy loads over 100

⁴⁸ Today there are more horses and ponies per head of population in Mongolia than any other country in the world and this reflects the primacy of the horse in Mongolian culture.

⁴⁹ Mary Gordan Watson, Russel Lyon, Sue Montgomery *Horse: The Complete Guide* (New York, Barnes & Noble Books, 1999).

miles (161 km) in one day.”⁵⁰ The Mongol army was reported to have used their rotation of mounts to travel over 60 miles (97 km) in a single day.⁵¹ They grazed as they went, were used to rooting for food in snowy conditions, and were known to eat tree leaves in addition to the usual grains and grasses.⁵²

In Mongol culture boys began to learn the use of the bow at the age of four or five. It was a compound bow with a pull of 166 lbs. (72.3 kg.) and an effective range of 200 to 300 yards (183 m. to 274 m.). Each warrior carried two bows and two or three quivers with 30 arrows each.⁵³ Arrowheads were heated red-hot and dipped in salt-water, hardening them enough to pierce some kinds of armor.⁵⁴ Two Armenian writers, Grigor and Vardapet, both referred to the Mongols as “the nation of archers,” for perhaps even more than other nomadic armies they relied almost entirely on the bow with other weapons always being secondary.

The Mongols wore a long coat, extending to the calves or ankles, usually made of cotton. Extra padding and furs were used in winter, allowing them excellent performance in harsh winter climates such as Russia. They wore a conical cap made of cloth or fur with a long brim that could be raised or lowered in winter to protect the neck from the elements. Beneath the coat were trousers tucked into leather boots. The boots usually had heavy felt soles and were worn over heavy felt socks in cold weather. Together the coats and caps appear to have been fairly standard and gave the appearance of a uniform.

⁵⁰ Watson, 231. The Mongol Pony was the progenitor of the various modern breeds of Central Asia, such as the Turkomen Horse, the Karabakh Horse of Azerbaijan, and others. It was also related to many of its larger cousins in Iran and Iraq. However in the thirteenth century it is not known to what degree the horses of Transoxania were related to the Mongol Pony. The modern influence may be a result of the Turkic and Mongol invasions and did not become apparent until after centuries of interbreeding.

⁵¹ Turnbull, *The Mongols*, 18.

⁵² Watson, 54 and 60. This was a valuable asset as most grasses have their nutritional values in the spring and summer and are not nutritious in the autumn or winter months. Ideally a horse can obtain enough healthy fodder in spring and summer to last the rest of the year. The horse has a small stomach designed for constant light grazing on grass and other roughage. Above food requirements, the average horse requires adequate clean water.

⁵³ Turnbull, *The Mongols*, 18.

⁵⁴ Carpini, 89.

This was standard dress for men in the culture and can still be found in the nomadic cultures of Central and Inner Asia today.

Structure of the Army

The Mongol warriors were, at heart, nomads. They were trained for battle from their youth by the hunt and by clan warfare. The nomads of Inner Asia were familiar with sedentary societies through trade and warfare, thus the Mongols were not unfamiliar with the civilization of China, but their conquest of northern China in 1211 was their first experience conquering such a society.⁵⁵ They quickly incorporated warriors from every people they conquered as well as new tactical methods and skills. Their adoption of Chinese military and administrative methods was efficient, though it was some time before their strategy and tactics were to become “Sinicized” under the later Khan’s such as Kubilai.⁵⁶

Although the Mongols were primarily accustomed to nomadic warfare, they were quick to adapt to a more advanced military organization. By the time of the western invasions Genghis Khan organized the Mongol army into a decimal system of units comprised of tens, hundreds, thousands, and ten thousands.⁵⁷ The ten-man unit was called an *arban*, commanded by a *bagatur*. Ten *arbans* formed a *jagun* and ten *jaguns* a *mingghan*. The commander of a *mingghan* was called a *hazara*. Ten *mingghans* formed a *tumen*, which was the largest unit at ten-thousand men. The Mongol forces were often separated into multiple armies, each consisting of two or more *tumens*. This was useful in executing Mongol strategies, which often involved having several smaller armies flanking the enemy with the main body of *tumens* bringing up the center.

⁵⁵ D. O. Morgan, *The Mongols*, 34-35.

⁵⁶ Nicolle, *The Mongol Warlords*, 74-75.

⁵⁷ For a detailed treatment of Mongol military society see Nicolle’s *The Mongol Warlords*, 27-32.

Military service was required of all able-bodied males from at least fourteen to sixty. Once a position was assigned, transfer to another unit was not permitted. However, there are several examples of the Khan requiring each *tumen* or familial organization of *tumens* to contribute a percentage of its forces to a special campaign or new force, particularly a *tamma* force. The exact definition of a *tamma* force will be discussed later, but it was essentially an invasion force. Rashiduddin specifically defines it as such and says it was comprised of soldiers singled out from every family and contingent of the Mongol army to form a new unit. Chormaqan, Eljigitei, and Hülegü's invasion forces were formed in this manner. Each unit was made up of a variety of ethnicities and families to prevent factionalism within the army.⁵⁸ In his translation of Carpini, Erik Hildinger notes that neither Jebe nor Sübödäi were Mongols, and were among these distributed soldiers.⁵⁹ When Eljigitei became involved in a plot against Möngke, much of his army deserted to Batu's camp demonstrating the diverse familial and ethnic background of his *tamma* force.

The Mongol army was usually organized into three parts, which was consistent with Turko-Mongolian battle formation. The Army of the Left Wing (or *Junghar*), the Army of the Right Wing (or *Baraunghar*), and the Army of the Center (or *Gol*).⁶⁰ There was an imperial bodyguard, the *Kāshik*, which also served as a training unit for new high-level commanders. The *Kāshik* was one of the few units required to serve in times of peace and it enforced strict discipline.⁶¹ Floggings and even expulsion were punishments for being absent without leave. The *Kāshik* also had its privileges; they were automatically considered to have higher rank than any "soldier of the line."⁶² Chormaqan

⁵⁸ Turnbull, *The Mongols*, 22.

⁵⁹ Carpini, 25.

⁶⁰ The army camped facing south when possible, so the wings were also called "East" and "West."

⁶¹ Turnbull, *The Mongols*, 23.

⁶² *Ibid.* The *Kāshik* was expanded up to a full *tumen* in 1206, with one *mingghan* serving as the Khan's personal bodyguards of the field.

was one of the top three officers of the *Kāshik* when he was earmarked by Genghis Khan to lead an invasion of Baghdad.

The Great Khan or the Mongol princes usually issued general orders on the field of battle, but then relied on the judgment and skill of the *tumen* commanders to prosecute the battle. Although all of Genghis Khan's sons and grandsons were excellent strategists, battlefield commanders were selected by the Khan based on merit. Jebe and Sübödäi were two of Genghis Khan's most trusted battlefield generals and were given tactical freedom.

Mongol Logistics

The Mongols were accustomed to carrying their supplies with them and practiced hunting in groups as a way of life. They therefore had a basic understanding of logistics, strategies, and stratagem. As communities they were skilled at organizing the movement of supplies and men. Their food was light and convenient for traveling on horseback, their clothing was designed for extreme temperatures, and their housing was portable. Jebe and Sübödäi in particular demonstrated the high mobility of which the Mongols were capable in the first invasion.

The Mongol's logistical advantages were also added by their diverse diet. Their diet was intimately dependant on the horse in many ways, for in addition to relying on it for transportation, it was also a source of food. Mongols used horse milk daily, especially soured mare's milk, as a standard drink, as have other Mongol and Turkic tribes down to the present.⁶³ They also used a horse milk curd for food. Each day the dried milk curd would be mixed with water in a gourd. The act of riding would churn it into a yoghurt-like drink. Under extreme conditions Mongols would drain some blood

⁶³ Kumis, a popular Turkic and Mongol drink, is soured mare's milk. It is a strong, sour alcoholic drink and remains popular especially for its cultural symbolism among the Altaic nomadic peoples of Inner and Central Asia.

from the horse's neck and drink it.⁶⁴ The Mongols were also liberal in their choice of meat and were reported to have eaten animals such as dogs, wolves, foxes, horses, rats, and mice.⁶⁵ This frugal diet and the ability to derive sustenance from their steeds gave the Mongols a logistical advantage over armies that had cultural or religious limitations on their diet and had to obtain less available forms of liquid. The standard ration for the Mongols was 10 lbs. (4.5 kg.) of dried milk curd, 3.5 pints (2 l.) of *kumis*, millet meal, and cured meat.⁶⁶

The Mongol army did not typically maintain a supply line from Mongolia or Mongol-held lands. The distances were too great and the Mongol warrior was accustomed to living off the land whether by hunting or pillaging. Although some records show young Mongols traveling long distances to join the Mongol army, it is not clear whether they were bringing livestock or were serving as reinforcements. From 1220 to 1260 there is not one example of reinforcement from the Mongol homelands. The Mongol army mainly relied on conscripts from conquered lands to strengthen its forces when losses grew. Carpini indicates it was their custom to demand levies of one in ten able males from every conquered people or city.⁶⁷ While Jebe and Sübödäi used captives in battle, the primary sources do not provide any examples of them conscripting locals. Chormaqan, Eljigitei, and Hülegü all incorporated Central Asians, Near Easterners, and Caucasians into their forces. These conscripts were often used at the front of the battle, such as the Georgians at the Battle of Mayyafariqin.⁶⁸

Jebe and Sübödäi's expedition was under orders to conquer territories, but only after the capture of the fleeing sultan. With the chase being the first assignment of their mission, they were likely traveling relatively lightly. The Great Khan had specifically

⁶⁴ Ibid., 18.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁶⁶ The meat was cured under the rider's saddle.

⁶⁷ Carpini, 76.

⁶⁸ Nicolle, *Warlords*, 112.

stated that time was an issue, and that they needed to eliminate the Khwarazmshah before he could rally a defense of his western lands. The second, third, and fourth invasion forces had more time for logistical preparation and could call on the resources of Khorasan to support them.

The expedition force that conducted the first invasion was composed of 30,000 Mongol warriors, the second of 30,000 to 50,000, the third of 60,000 plus, and the fourth of well over 100,000. Each of these warriors had at least one, and probably several steeds. Reuven Amitai-Press, in his book *Mongols and Mamluks*, accepts the number of five steeds per warrior as normal.⁶⁹ Specifically for pursuit, Genghis Khan was known to advocate the use of multiple steeds per man for rotation. If we give an average of two to three steeds per warrior we can conservatively estimate that 60,000 to 90,000 ponies were used for Jebe and Sübödäi's expedition and for Chormaqan's, over 120,000 for the third, and at least 300,000 to 400,000 for the fourth. The Mongol pony was accustomed to grazing for one hundred percent of its sustenance, yet in some of the more arid areas of Khorasan, Iran, and Iraq, the Mongols were forced to rely on the grain stores of captured cities. Nonetheless, at every opportunity the Mongol force lingered at cities and areas with plentiful meadowlands, while moving quickly through arid regions. Based on standard requirements for the average horse, Jebe and Sübödäi would have needed an average of 120,000 to 180,000 lbs. (54,431 to 81,647 kg.) of fodder and 480,000 to 720,000 gallons (2,182,128 to 3,273,192 liters) of water per day. The second invasion would need the same, the third would need double the above amounts, while the fourth would need four to seven times as much.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Reuven Amitai-Press *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260-1281*, 226.

⁷⁰ These vast fodder and water requirements were perhaps slightly softened by the moderate needs of the Mongol breed of pony and the logistical expertise of the Mongol army, but even so the needs of such cavalry forces were still enormous.

The logistical, and therefore military, advantages of the frugal Mongols and their steeds were augmented by the Mongol's excellent intelligence system. The Mongol army used a vanguard to scout out enemy positions, but also to identify logistical resources.⁷¹ Jebe and Sübödäi used a vanguard and repeatedly conscripted local guides. They also tortured captured enemies to acquire intelligence. Chormaqan and Hülegü clearly demonstrate a foreknowledge of the terrain they invaded, showing that the intelligence collected by prior invasions was somehow being collected and disseminated in Mongolia.

Mongol Strategies

The Mongols made both political and strategic decisions at a great gathering of all Mongol leaders and khans called a *quriltai*. When appropriate the *quriltai* was also used to legitimize succession to the Mongol throne. In such cases every khan and every appointed leader from the entire Empire was required to travel to Mongolia. Prior to war, the *quriltai* was used for the *tumen* commanders and khans to plan an invasion. For example, Chormaqan called such a *quriltai* to plan his invasion of the Caucasus of 1238-1239. At a *quriltai* the details of battle or strategy of invasion would be set. Spies would be assigned tasks for sowing dissent within enemy territory or for spreading rumors about the size of the Mongol army. The rumors of the Mongol army that they intentionally fabricated and the actual massive size of the army combined to create a wave of fear and anxiety ahead of its advance. The *quriltai* decided what time of year to launch a campaign, the exact organization of the army, and the logistics for the campaign. The *quriltai* held prior to Hülegü's departure determined the make up of his army and sent out edicts to prepare the route for his army. Hülegü's massive army forced him to send an

⁷¹ Spies and scouts were often sent prior to an attack or battle to estimate enemy strength, identify defensive weak points or political rivalries that could be exploited, and check road and weather conditions. These spies and scouts at times would also engage in spreading propaganda by telling minorities and the poor of the Mongol's intent to liberate them as well as promising good commercial conditions under Mongol rule to the rich. Turnbull, *The Mongols*, 24.

advance message to move Baiju's army out of Azerbaijan to free up adequate grazing territory.⁷² During a *quriltai* horses were fattened, livestock and pack animals were organized, and the estimation of supplies available in the target region was made. Once these plans were set they were carried out with efficiency, as noted by Turnbull, "It is a point to the Mongols' credit that when such plans were agreed upon they usually happened, and on time."⁷³

The Mongol army marched in many widely dispersed columns. They were careful to maintain good communication between columns. Horses were always kept ready for sending messengers and smoke signals were used between camps. Most likely this open marching formation was to allow adequate grazing for each army. The armies were only brought together into close proximity as they neared the location of the battle. For example, Jebe and Sübödäi separated their forces after the submission of Nishapur and traveled up separate river valleys. They met together in northern Juvain and then again separated into two columns, one on either side of the Elburz range. They converged on Ray, which implies excellent long-distance communication. From Ray they again split up to approach Hamadan from two directions. Although the primary reason for this was most likely logistical, it also served to hinder enemy attempts to estimate Mongol strength and to corral the enemy; one column could drive the enemy into the hands of another.

Genghis Khan's most famous generals were his "four dogs," two of which were Jebe and Sübödäi. These four *tumen* commanders were not directly part of the main army, but were given the freedom to move ahead of it. Like Mongol hunters corralling prey, they would flank the enemy or attack and harass them in order to drive them to a desired location where the main Mongol force could annihilate them. This is exactly the

⁷² Juvaini, 609.

⁷³ Turnbull, *The Mongols*, 25.

strategy Jebe and Sübödäi employed whenever they were closing on the Khwarazmshah Muhammad. As Jebe headed to Hamadan, Sübödäi held back in Qazvin, guarding Muhammad's alternate escape route.

Scouts ventured up to seventy miles ahead of the main army. Scouts were also maintained on the flanks and in the rear. When the scouts encountered the enemy they would attack them to test their capabilities and defenses, but without fully engaging. For example, Taisu, Jebe and Sübödäi's vanguard commander, was sent in advance of the main army to hunt for Muhammad and most likely to search for grazing lands for the main army's logistical needs. He arrived at Nishapur significantly ahead of Jebe and Sübödäi.⁷⁴ At times the enemy would think that the small force they were facing was the entire Mongol army and that the rumors of the size of the Mongol armies were false. When the main force arrived a day later, many cities were astonished. Occasionally the scouts lure the pursuing enemy to their destruction such as the Battle of the Kalka.⁷⁵

Mongol Tactics

The standard Mongol formation of battle was five ranks deep. Each *jagun* (hundred-man unit) was separated apart by a wide interval. The first two ranks were heavy cavalry armed with lances, maces, or swords. The back three ranks were light cavalry with bows and javelins. When the battle began, the light cavalry moved forward through the well-spaced front ranks to fire volleys of arrows at the enemy. Light cavalry on the wings would sweep out to flank the enemy or circle to their rear. Once the light cavalry had attacked and withdrawn enough times to draw out the enemy and disorganize their formations, the heavy cavalry would charge. This tactic was called the *tulughma*, or "standard sweep."⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Juvaini, 172.

⁷⁵ *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle*, 29.

⁷⁶ Turnbull, *The Mongols*, 23.

Perhaps for psychological effect, the entire battle sequence was carried out in complete silence. Black and white flags, or lanterns at night, were used to issue commands. A large war drum was used to initiate the main charge and the Mongols were then free to let out a great war cry. The main assault was accompanied by surprise attacks on the flanks or rear. To give the impression of a larger force they would sometimes intentionally stir up large dust clouds, particularly around advancing flanks, or take spare mounts, set dummies on them in the rear, though there are no examples of either being used in the Near East campaigns. At night extra lanterns were lit for the same effect or lanterns or campfires were lit to cover a Mongol retreat as Sübödäi did against Muhammad and Jalal al-Din in 1218.⁷⁷

The most devastating tactic employed by the Mongol army was the stratagem of feigned retreat. Once the enemy was sufficiently disorganized and strung out in its pursuit of the fleeing Mongols, the Mongols would quite suddenly turn and attack. This stratagem was used on many occasions to great effect. Two examples of this were Jebe and Sübödäi's second battle with the Georgian army in 1222 and their battle at the Kalka River with the Russians and Qipchaqs in 1223.⁷⁸ At the Kalka, after nine days of fleeing, they suddenly turned and attacked. The Russians were widely dispersed their Qipchaq allies had advanced dangerously ahead of the Russian force. Rashiduddin says of Jebe and Sübödäi, "this was their custom in most battles."⁷⁹ Carpini said, "even if the Tartars retreat, our men ought not to separate from each other or be split up, for the Tartars pretend to withdraw in order to divide an enemy."⁸⁰ Even when the Mongols were actually fleeing a battle, they were skilled at turning in the saddle and firing arrows back at the pursuing enemy. Chasing a fleeing Mongol was a dangerous proposition.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Rashiduddin , 234.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 259; *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle*, 29.

⁷⁹ Rashiduddin , 110.

⁸⁰ Carpini, 91.

⁸¹ Turnbull, *The Mongols*, 24.

Early in the Great Khan's campaigns the Mongols were inexperienced at siege warfare, knowing little of fighting peoples in cities and fortresses. The Mongols ordinarily avoided such battles, and would usually try to destroy the field army first to demoralize the garrisons. Turnbull suggests the well-known practice of relentlessly executing the occupants of any city that resisted was to encourage subsequent cities and forts to surrender without having to lay siege at all.⁸² However, they soon recognized their weakness and compensated for it by incorporating captured siege engineers and their technology into the Mongol ranks. By 1211, well before the invasion of the Near East, they had adopted Chinese siege engineers and weapons.⁸³ Captives or recently conquered troops were used for the scaling assaults.⁸⁴ Chormaqan's invasion of the Caucasus in 1238-1239 consisted entirely of taking fortresses throughout the region and Chormaqan's army was extremely efficient in their siege warfare. Hülegü famously eradicated a large number of fortresses of the Assassins in Persia and later Syria as well as taking the heavily defended Baghdad.⁸⁵ The Mongol army had become very adept at taking cities by the time of the later western campaigns.

Garrisoning captured cities was another weak point for the Mongols. They appear to have trusted mostly in their might and the dread of their tactics to maintain the submission of conquered territories, at least in the first invasion. There are no examples of Jebe and Sübödäi establishing a garrison force or even a military commander in any region they "conquered," they only installed *shahnas*. A *shahna* was a Mongol governor installed to maintain Mongol rule over conquered cities and collect tribute from them. The *shahna* was not normally accompanied by a garrison force and on many occasions

⁸² Ibid., 31.

⁸³ In 1221 the Mongols laid siege to Nishapur. They forced captives to set up the siege works under enemy fire, but employed 3,000 ballistae, 3,700 catapults, 4,000 ladders, and 2,500 loads of rocks brought from the mountains for the operation. Turnbull, *The Mongols*, 30. After their invasions of Khwarazm and the Near East the Mongols also added Muslim siege craft to their army's skills.

⁸⁴ D. O. Morgan, *The Mongols*, 91.

⁸⁵ Nicolle, *Warlords*, 108-113.

was simply assassinated after the Mongol army had departed. Quite often this method of occupation failed and cities or regions rebelled shortly after the Mongols had captured them. The Mongols appear to have realized this problem after the first invasion and in the second Chormaqan was careful to appoint military generals throughout every corner of Armenia and Georgia in the aftermath of his invasion. Hülegü also took permanent control of most of the territory he conquered and garrisoned the cities. For example, he left an occupational force under Ket Buqa in Syria when he withdrew to Azerbaijan in 1260.⁸⁶

The massive cavalry army of the Mongols had already experienced dramatic success in Inner Asia against other nomads and in East Asia against sedentary societies. It had then reinforced its capabilities with the strengths of those armies. In the Near East it was to clash with the societies of western Asia. The region's dry deserts dotted with lush oases and armies of sedentary peoples reinforced with slave soldiers of nomadic origins, or mamluks, proved challenges for the Mongols, but were not their match. The following chapter will lay out the nature of the terrain of the lands the Mongols found upon their arrival as well as the basic nature of the armies those lands used to defend themselves against the Mongol invasions.

⁸⁶ Rashiduddin , 503.

Chapter 3 The Near East, Caucasus, and Russia in 1220

The Near East

The first region the Mongols encountered in the Near East was Persia. Central Persia is a high plateau bounded by the Zagros Mountain range in the southwest and south and the Elburz mountain range in the north. The Zagros Mountains separate the plateau from the Mesopotamian valley, and run southeast from the Armenian Knot Mountains in Eastern Anatolia to the Persian Gulf in the south. Hamadan and Isfahan lay along its base on the eastern side and are watered from streams from the range.⁸⁷ The Elburz Mountains run from the eastern corner to the western corner of the Caspian Sea, with Ray, near the modern Tehran, situated on the south side near the middle of the range. The lush regions between the Elburz Mountains and the Caspian Sea are called Gorgan in the east, Mazandaran in the middle and Gilan in the west. These regions are green and wet and receive a significant amount of rain, especially in the first half of the year.⁸⁸ From the southeastern corner of the Plateau to the northwest were Kerman, Fars, Khuzistan, Persian Iraq, and Azerbaijan. The today's post-Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan was then made up of several small Islamic khanates: Gandja, Shirvan, Arran, and the meadowlands of Mughan.

The pivotal region of the Near East throughout the Mongol invasions was Azerbaijan. Because of its plentiful pasturelands these massive nomad armies repeatedly concentrated their efforts on capturing this prime territory for a base. The region was then continually used as a base of operations in subsequent invasions and later was established as the headquarters of the Il-Khan kingdom. Indeed Azerbaijan has remained

⁸⁷ Harvey H. Smith *Area Handbook for Iran* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971).

⁸⁸ Mounsey, Augustus, H. *A Journey Through the Caucasus and the Interior of Persia* (London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1872), 95.

a key province of Iran in modern times and is known as “the breadbasket of Iran.”⁸⁹ Tabriz, Maragha, and Ardabil were the three chief cities of Azerbaijan and give a clear impression of the territory as a whole. The center of Azerbaijan was the city of Tabriz, which sits at the eastern end of a large plain rising up from Lake Urmiya and at an elevation of 3,800 feet (1,158m) is surrounded by high pasturelands. The city of Maragha, southwest of Tabriz, took its name from an Arabic word meaning “pasture land for horses.”⁹⁰ Ardabil, east of Tabriz, was located on a well-watered plain. Mughan was a region just to the north-east of Azerbaijan, on the western coast of the Caspian Sea to the north of Ardabil. Mughan technically lies in the Caucasus, but due to its close connection to Azerbaijan it will be discussed here. Today it is part of the Republic of Azerbaijan and is inhabited by a Shi’ite Persian people called the Talysh. It is a semi-tropical area with a great deal of water and vegetation, and stays relatively humid and warm through much of the year. The grasslands of Azerbaijan and Mughan were fertile territories from which the Mongols could launch their campaigns. Barthold says of the region that,

the [nomads] found here for their herds both elevated pasturelands and winter quarters sheltered from the winds. The winter quarters of the Mongol Khans was the valley of a stream called the Jaghatu, which flows into Lake Urmiya near Maragha, and especially the Mughan plain on the lower course of the Kur.⁹¹

Grigor explains the Mongol preference for Mughan as a base of operations in subsequent invasions by saying, “the land of Mughan, where the grass is always green in summer and winter from the fertility of the soil and the sweetness of the air.”⁹² Likewise Kirakos always refers to Mughan as, “the fruitful and fertile Mughan plain.”⁹³

⁸⁹ Smith, *Area Handbook for Iran*, 12. The Russian Czar followed by the Soviet Union attempted to annex this fertile region on a variety of occasions including an attempt as recently as the 1945, 95.

⁹⁰ Barthold, *Geography*, 214-215.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 218.

⁹² Grigor, 31.

⁹³ Kirakos, 192 and 196.

The territories of Azerbaijan and Mughan were so favorable to the pasturing of large herds that virtually every nomadic force that passed through Persia spent its winters in this region. As the “Turkomans” flooded the Near East in the eleventh century, the majority flocked to the pastoral terrain of Azerbaijan, and from this base of operations began their push into Asia Minor.⁹⁴ The Seljuk Sultans spent a significant amount of time and effort on controlling Azerbaijan and Arran and these pastures served as the base of operations of Tughril’s revolt against Sultan Mahmud in 1121. They were also the primary base for the Seljuks’ ongoing struggle with Georgia for control of the southern Caucasus.⁹⁵ In the second Mongol invasion under Chormaqan, the Mongols spent their winters in Mughan between campaigns and it became their base of operations.⁹⁶ In the fourth Mongol invasion under Hülegü, the Mongols sent specific instructions to Baiju to vacate Mughan and move into Asia Minor in order to set it aside for Hülegü’s vast horde of cavalry. Hülegü subsequently made Tabriz the capital of Persia and retired even farther north into Mughan for the winter months. The area became a disputed prize between the Il-Khan Mongols and the Golden Horde.⁹⁷ A hundred and fifty years later, Tamerlane also wintered in this region when campaigned in the Caucasus or Anatolia.⁹⁸

When the Prophet Muhammad died, a dispute arose over who would succeed him in leadership of the Islamic community, particularly in military matters.⁹⁹ The majority supported a selection of the best candidate regardless of familial relation to Muhammad and Abu Bakr was selected as the new Caliph. This majority are termed Sunni Muslims. The minority advocated a hereditary office and proposed Muhammad’s nephew and son-in-law, Ali. This minority are called Shi’ite Muslims. The role soon fell to the Omayyad

⁹⁴ J. J. Saunders *A History of Medieval Islam* (NY: Routledge, 1965), 148.

⁹⁵ Minorsky, V. “Caucasica II,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13, no. 4 (1951): 875.

⁹⁶ Kirakos, 197.

⁹⁷ D. O. Morgan, 144.

⁹⁸ Nicolle, *Warlords*, 158, 170.

⁹⁹ See Saunders’ *Medieval Islam* for a detailed treatment of the history of the Caliphate. Saunders, 41.

family, but in 747 a revolution began in Khorasan. A rival Caliph was proclaimed, a descendant of Muhammad's uncle, Abbas, and of Ali. Though the movement had support from at least one Shi'ite faction, the movement was primarily Sunni and focused on the stress between Persian Sunnis and Arab Sunnis. In 750, after a brief civil war, the last of the Arab Omayyads were defeated and the Abbasid Caliphate began.¹⁰⁰ It lasted until 1260 when the last Abbasid Caliph was killed by Hülegü.

The Shi'ites rejected the line of caliphs and instead established a belief that the Shi'ite community would be led by a series of twelve Imams. The Shi'ite community was subsequently split by controversies of succession on multiple occasions. In 765 the 6th Imam, Ja'far Sadiq died and a controversy developed over his successor.¹⁰¹ The majority claimed Ismail's candidacy was cancelled and became known as "Twelver" Shi'ites, while minority supported Ismail and became known as "Seveners" or "Ismailis." In the eleventh century Hasan-i Sabbah converted from Twelver to Ismaili Shi'ite Islam, and soon founded the order of the "Assassins," as Europeans later came to call them. He captured Alamut in 1090 and established it as the Assassins central fortress, the fortress which Hülegü famously captured. In 1094 the Ismaili Imam, al-Mustansir, died creating a new controversy. The majority of Ismailis accepted al-Mustansir's younger son, Abu'l-Qasim Ahmad, who was made Imam by a coup, however the Assassins maintained support for the eldest son and rightful heir, Nizar. The Assassins therefore became more correctly known as the "Nizari."¹⁰²

The Caliph, or the "Commander of the Faithful," was theoretically the successor of the Prophet Muhammad particularly in temporal matters, though the position largely deteriorated over time and became primarily symbolic. Eventually even the Caliph's

¹⁰⁰ Saunders, *Medieval Islam*, 101-102.

¹⁰¹ Bartlett W. B. *The Assassins: The Story of Medieval Islam's Secret Sect* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK: Sutton Publishers, 2001), 15.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 52.

limited temporal power was subordinated to others. The Caliphs became the puppets of the Buyids in 945, and subsequently of the Seljuks.¹⁰³ The Seljuk Empire, centered at Ray, had dominated the Near East and Central Asia since the eleventh century. At its height it controlled from the borderlands of China to the edge of the Byzantine Empire in Asia Minor. In the late twelfth century, the Seljuk state crumbled, particularly after the death of the Sultan Sanjar in 1157.¹⁰⁴ During the following decades the Khwarazmshahs began to expand their territory and threaten their former Seljuk masters. At the city of Ray in 1193 the Khwarazmshah Takash defeated and killed the last Seljuk Sultan, Tughril II. When Seljuk power collapsed, the Caliph seized the opportunity to become independent. The Caliph, Nasir (r. 1180-1225), raised an army and forced the remaining Turkomans from Iraq and seized Khuzistan. Despite this new independence the Caliph continued to be the commander of the faithful in title only. He had symbolic power over all Muslims, but this often translated into only limited influence over independent Islamic authorities. He had the power to invest someone as a Sultan, a title he refused the Khwarazmshah, especially since Takash wanted Nasir to recognize him as the Sultan of Baghdad. Nasir was not willing to accept a new overlord in place of the Seljuk Sultans. Instead he established his own direct control over central Mesopotamia from north of Baghdad to the Persian Gulf.¹⁰⁵ Though his territory was not vast, Baghdad was the largest city in the Near East in the thirteenth century and the Caliph had significant financial resources to draw on. He also had the symbolic power of the Caliphate which allowed him to plead assistance from the Ayyubid Sultans and other rulers, such as the lord of Mosul.

The armies of western Persia and the Islamic region of the Caucasus had taken their form under the Buyids and Seljuqs. They had shifted to a larger proportion of

¹⁰³ Saunders, *Medieval Islam*, 133.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 170.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 174-175.

cavalry during the late Middle Ages. The cavalry in their armies were heavily armored with a large shield. Their armor was known to be not especially effective against arrows, which would have been a significant weakness against the Mongols.¹⁰⁶ These troops carried javelins, spears, swords, and battle-axes. In an Arabian style their tactics involved a heavy infantry advance with close ranks while cavalry detachments repeatedly charged and retired. The later Seljuqs were of steppe-nomad origins and brought this influence to the armies of the area. Under the Seljuqs each governor was required to maintain a certain number of troops and to spend each summer training or campaigning.

Another significant influence on the militaries of the Near East in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the introduction of *mamluks*.¹⁰⁷ *Mamluks* were well-disciplined slave soldiers or professional soldiers or who formed the core of most of these forces. They usually wore heavy armor, used horse armor, and specialized in shower-shoot archery, or firing large volleys of arrows in a high arc towards the enemy. Kurdish warriors also became prominent in the late twelfth century and early thirteenth century. Their cavalry wore heavier armor than Arab armies and primarily used the sword.¹⁰⁸ In the regions of Hamadan, Qazvin, Tabriz, Azerbaijan and Mughan, the Mongol forces likely encountered these types of troops. The Mongol's fast-moving horse archery and well coordinated quick movements on the battlefield likely outmaneuvered these heavy cavalry on a consistent basis.

In Egypt the Isma'ili Fatamid dynasty had deteriorated and experienced a series of setbacks at the hands of the Crusaders in the twelfth century. Muslims and Crusaders contended for control of the rapidly disintegrating Isma'ili Caliphate. A Kurd whose

¹⁰⁶ Nicolle, *Arms and Armour*, 219-221.

¹⁰⁷ See Amitai-Preiss, Reuven *Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Ilkhanid War, 1260-1281* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995); David Ayalon *The Mamluk Military Society: Collected Studies* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1979); or J. B. Glubb *Soldiers of Fortune: The Story of the Mamluks* (NY: Stein and Day, 1973) for background on the *mamluks*.

¹⁰⁸ Nicolle, *Arms and Armour*, 219-251.

family was from Azerbaijan, Saladin (r. 1171-1193), took Egypt, and after being proclaimed the successor to the last ruler of the Fatimid dynasty in 1169 he rid the Sunni country of its Isma'ili lords and put an end to the Caliph in 1171. Saladin quickly established the most powerful Sultanate in all of Islam and a new dynasty named after his father Ayyub: the Ayyubids. His nephew, al-Kamil (r. 1218-1238), and the various Ayyubid princes throughout Lebanon and Syria were forced to respond to the increasing incursions of the Mongols.¹⁰⁹

The Seljuks had driven the Byzantine Empire out of eastern Anatolia and only a small portion in the northwest, centered in Constantinople, remained. The Seljuks continued to call the entire region after the “Romans” (i.e. the Byzantines), naming it the Sultanate of Rum. In southeast Anatolia the Armenians had established the Christian kingdom of Cilicia, and in the northeast corner the Georgians had created the independent Christian kingdom of Trebizond. East of Armenian Cilicia the Otoqid Turks had an independent state and there were some areas controlled by the Ayyubids. This region was the crossroads between Persia, the Caucasus, Anatolia, the Levant, and Egypt. The long and lush east-west valleys gave access from Armenia to Northern Mesopotamia and Syria, hence their strategic value to Chormaqan and Baiju as they pressed toward Baghdad via these routes. Central Anatolia, however, was still under the firm control of the Seljuk Sultan of Rum. Though the Sultans of Rum were eventually conquered by the Mongols, they outlasted their overlords and one of the ruling Turkish families from northwest Anatolia soon came to prominence giving rise to the Ottoman Empire.¹¹⁰

The Crusader kingdoms in the thirteenth century controlled only a thin strip of territory along the Mediterranean coast, the most significant being the kingdom of Jerusalem, and the Island of Cyprus. The most successful crusades were past and

¹⁰⁹ Al-Maqrizi, 215-217.

¹¹⁰ Justin McCarthy *The Ottoman Turks: An Introductory History to 1923* (NY: Addison Wesley Longman Limited, 1997), 35-39.

enthusiasm for crusades among Europe's royalty had waned. The Fifth crusade began in 1217 with attacks into Syria, but soon escalated with a bold invasion of Egypt by John of Brienne, King of Jerusalem. The Fifth Crusade was still being resolved in Egypt when Jebe and Sübödäi entered Persia. The paths of the two forces never crossed and the crusade ended in 1221 with defeat of the crusaders. Aside from the diplomatic success of gaining Jerusalem in 1229, the Crusades that followed saw limited success and more often outright failures. More important than the Crusader states were the Crusader knights themselves. The crusades of the thirteenth century were characterized by smaller politically motivated campaigns, often by the kings of the Crusader states themselves, rather than pan-European invasions. Far from a clear-cut line of Muslim against Christian, the wars in the Near East often found Crusaders fighting alongside one Muslim power against a second Muslim foe.¹¹¹

The Caucasus

The two Islamic Khanates of the southern Caucasus were Arran and Shirvan. Arran is a grassy valley area between the Kur and Araxes Rivers in the heart of the modern Republic of Azerbaijan. Many fruits and grains are grown there and sheep and goat herding is widespread. The southern highlands of Arran, or Karabakh, are considered an area rich in resources and it is especially well-known for the Karabakh Horse and the horsemanship of the natives.¹¹² The capital city of Arran was Barda, which was the main crossroads from Ardabil to Tiflis and from Shirvan and Derbent to

¹¹¹ The battlefield lines were often drawn by political expediency and not religious ideology. The result was crusaders often fighting for Muslims and vice versa.

¹¹² Nagorno-Karabakh is currently occupied by Armenians as the unrecognized Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Tabriz.¹¹³ Arran's other chief cities were Bailaqan, which was in Karabakh to the southeast of modern Shusha on the road southeast to Ardabil, and Gandja.

Shirvan lay on an east-west stretch starting from the eastern end of the Caucasus, running up a river valley north of the Kur along the southern slopes of the Caucasus mountains, and terminating half way to Tbilisi. The Shirvanshah had centers in Baku, on the Apsheron Peninsula, and Shemakha, at the southeast end of the Caucasus range, as well as a winter palace in Sheki, north of Gandja. Western Shirvan is grassy and punctuated by green on the foothills of the Caucasus range and along the rivers and tributaries of the region.

The strongest Christian kingdom in the Near East at the time of the arrival of the Mongols was the Kingdom of Georgia in the Caucasus. Georgia had risen to a place of significance in the region during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Georgians are a Christian people whose influence had rarely extended beyond the Caucasus previous to their "golden age" in the twelfth century. Medieval Georgia was essentially the same geographically as the modern Republic of Georgia and was situated on the eastern coast of the Black Sea. Its territory covered the more mountainous areas of the Caucasus range. Subtropical coasts and copious upper valleys make it a land relatively rich in resources. The upper Kur, along which both Jebe and Sübödäi, as well as Chormaqan's commanders, passed is bounded by arid brown hills with limited vegetation punctuated by green along the streams and rivers.

Despite the mountainous terrain, the Georgians preferred cavalry to infantry. Their cavalymen were very effective javelin throwers and were well armored. Through the late Middle Ages their cavalry had shifted from a focus on close quarters combat to horse archery. Marco Polo said they were expert archers and warriors on the

¹¹³ Barthold, *Geography*, 227-228. Today Gandja, which was at the heart of the Kur river valley, is the second largest city of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

battlefield.¹¹⁴ Their skills in horse archery were inferior to that of the Mongols, but their strong cavalry and archery skills made their military closer in its composition to the Mongols than most other armies in the region. In addition to archery and javelin throwing the Georgian cavalry wielded medium-sized double-edged straight swords. They wore mail hauberks for armor and used round shields. Many plates show the Georgians clad and armed in a fashion similar to the Byzantine army of the period.¹¹⁵

Georgia had developed a very strong military under its greatest Queen, Tamar (c. 1184-1212). Under her rule the monarchy increased its power over the Georgian nobles. With the kingdom firmly in her hand, she drove the Seljuk Turks, that is the Eldiguzid *atabegs* out of Armenia and established vassal states in the liberated regions. An *atabeg* was a governor under the Seljuk system of government. The Georgians proved their military prowess against the forces of the Sultanate of Rum and other smaller Muslim principalities.¹¹⁶ They established their control over Kars (modern eastern Turkey), Ani (the chief city of greater Armenia at the time), Shirvan (on the south side of the eastern Caucasus mountain range), struggled to conquer Gandja, and had loose control of Derbent (in Modern Dagestan, Russia).¹¹⁷

Tamar established the kingdom of Trebizond on the southeast coast of the Black Sea in 1210. By October of that year, the Georgian army was marching south to invade Azerbaijan. They subjugated Marand, and Tabriz and Miyaneh quickly paid tribute. From Azerbaijan, the Georgian army moved into Persian Iraq and took Zanjan and

¹¹⁴ Polo, 49.

¹¹⁵ Nicolle, *Arms and Armour*, 79-84 and 377-79.

¹¹⁶ Heinz Fähnrich *Geschichte Georgiens von den Anfängen bis zur Mongolenherrschaft* (Aachen: Verlag Shaker, 1993), 144-147. Tamar's armies twice defeated major Muslim armies: at the battle of Shamkhor in 1195 and at Basiani in 1203/4.

¹¹⁷ W. E. D. Allen *A History of the Georgian People: From the Beginning Down to the Russian Conquest of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., LTD., 1932), 107. In 1208 the Amir of Ardabil sacked Ani and massacred the Christians there. The next year a Georgian army was sent under Iwvane Mkhargrdzeli to destroy Ardabil. Iwvane was successful; he massacred or enslaved the people of Ardabil and killed the Amir.

Qazvin.¹¹⁸ Their control of these areas remained weak, however, and may have disintegrated altogether after Tamar's death in 1212. The kingdom passed to her son, Giorgi IV Lasha, who continued his mother's policies and was even considering launching a crusade to Palestine when news of the Mongols arrived in 1220.

At the northeastern corner of the Caucasus, to the north of Shirvan on the Caspian Sea, lies Derbent. Derbent is the central city of modern Dagestan, Russia. Derbent was home to the Alans, a Turkic people that still exist today in the Caucasus Mountains. In the thirteenth century the Mongols found that territory inhabited by "many people."¹¹⁹

Russia

To the north of the Alans were the Qipchaqs, a Turkic, nomadic people who lived in the Qipchaq plain to the north and northwest of the Caspian Sea. The nomadic Qipchaqs had driven out the Oghuz Turks from the steppe regions north of the Caucasus. Nicolle considers them "perhaps having greater influence on the arms, armor, and military styles of their neighbors than did the subsequent Mongols."¹²⁰ After being defeated by the Mongols in 1237, they became the backbone of the Golden Horde's forces.

The first major Russian kingdom was centered in Kiev. The power of the Russian royalty in the thirteenth century was extremely weak by western standards. The Rus people were ruled by a precarious balance of power between the noble princes and the boyar landowners. The principalities had been steadily limiting their princes' rights and possessions to the point that the princes were often relegated to the role of simply a military general.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Metreveli, 15 and Allen, 108.

¹¹⁹ Rashiduddin, 260.

¹²⁰ Nicolle, *Arms and Armour*, 274.

¹²¹ Moss, 62. In the northern province of Novgorod, the boyars were known to frequently fire their prince and send him packing, or at times the prince would abscond fearing an imminent termination of

At the turn of the thirteenth century, the Rus peoples were typically in a state of hostility with the Lithuanians, Poles, and Hungarians to the west, and the Qipchaqs to the southeast. The Qipchaqs were allies of the Khwarazmians with the Khwarazmians controlling the central land routes of the silk trade and the Qipchaqs profiting from the Venetian and Byzantine trade routes through the Crimea and northern land routes of Central Asia. The Qipchaqs also profited from constant raids into Russian lands. As late as 1203 they attacked Kiev itself and in 1210 made an incursion into Pereiaslav. In the early 1200's, the prince of Galicia, Mstislav the Daring (Romanovich), had allied the Qipchaqs to himself by recruiting them to fight against the Poles and Hungarians as well as by marrying a Qipchaq princess.

The Russian armies of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries were primarily focused on infantry. They were influenced by Scandinavian, Eastern European, Byzantine, and Eurasian military weapons and tactics. The infantry was well equipped and specialized in archery using longbows or semi-composite bows. They were known to wear lamellar armor, which they appear to have adopted from the steppe warriors, but mail armor was more common. The war-axe was common and the eastern Slavs were also known to use a curved saber as early as the tenth century.¹²²

In the Kievan region heavy cavalry came to dominate in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Swords and spears remained the main cavalry weapons. The archer cavalry of nomadic allies, however, often supported the Russian cavalry. The Russians had no sedentary societies on its eastern frontiers and were accustomed to battling steppe warriors. Nicolle describes their standard battle formation: "Kievan tactics largely evolved in response to the threat posed by horse-archery. The most common battle

employment. Novgorod was the traditional principality of the Kievan grand prince, who would someday rule Kiev, so the situation there is a clear example of the state of government at the time of the Mongol invasion.

¹²² Nicolle, *Arms and Armour*, 85.

formation placed foot-soldiers in the centre, with spearmen using a shield-wall to protect infantry archers, while cavalry held the flanks.”¹²³

The armies and kingdoms the Mongols encountered in the invasions of the Near East varied widely. The Seljuk and Mamluk armies bore the most resemblance to their own, with a backbone of nomadic professional soldiers augmented with advanced skills of a sedentary society, such as siege warfare. The armies of the Near East were ultimately able to moderate the Mongol success rate. The Persian and Arabic armies were able to drive off Mongol assaults on many occasions, though often by superior numbers. This was always in defense of a well-fortified city against a Mongol army operating a long distance from its camp. In open battle Jebe and Sübödäi never lost, though this was often due to their clever steppe-style stratagems and tricks. Chormaqan and Baiju were driven away by enemy armies, but always managed to escape without major troop losses. Like Jebe and Sübödäi, Hülegü never lost a battle, but won by overwhelming superiority of numbers. Only his Kara Khitai general, Ket Buqa, was soundly defeated, and that by being incautious in a battle with a desperate group of professional and highly experienced Mamluks and Khwarazmians. The Mongols achieved only limited success with each invasion, and in the end the Mongol Empire was not able to reinvade to overwhelm the Mamluks in Egypt. Yet despite the failure to take Egypt, the Mongol invasions of the Near East lasted for forty years, from 1220 to 1260, and had a powerful impact on the shape of the Near East for several centuries. It might never have happened except for an overly ambitious and foolish ruler in what is now the Republic of Uzbekistan.

¹²³ Ibid.

Chapter 4

The First Invasion: Khwarazm and Muhammad

When the base of Seljuk power in the Near East and Central Asia disintegrated throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Khwarazm Empire expanded into the resulting power vacuum. The Khwarazmians, who originated south of the Aral Sea in modern Uzbekistan, ruled over Western Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Eastern Iran by the time Genghis Khan was first campaigning in Mongolia. The Khwarazmshah, Ala al-Din Muhammad, was titled a sultan by most Islamic historians of the age. The title Khwarazmshah means “prince of Khwarazm,” though Muhammad had added to himself the name Iskender-i-sani, or “Alexander the Second,” to promote his military victories. He controlled the heart of the silk trade of Asia. The Khwarazmshahs had been at war with the Kara Khitai Empire in Central Asia ever since Seljuk power had waned. While his father had paid tribute to the Kara Khitai to maintain the peace, Muhammad had boldly refused and rebelled against the Kara Khitai ruler, the Gur-Khan Chi-Lu-Ku. Together with the Naiman prince, Kuchlug, he overthrew the Kara-Khitai kingdom. In 1218 Genghis Khan sent Jebe to attack Kuchlug. Jebe pursued him from Kashgar, in southeast modern Kyrgyzstan, to Badakhshan.¹²⁴ This brought Mongol operations into the borderlands with Khwarazm.

Juzjani says that when Muhammad heard of the Mongols’ success he became ambitious and was considering whether he could invade China.¹²⁵ He sent spies, posing as merchants, to gather intelligence on the strength of the Mongols. In 1218 Genghis Khan reciprocated by sending a trading caravan of 100 men to Khwarazm led by an Ambassador named Ukhuna.¹²⁶ The caravan arrived in Utrar, in Khwarazm territory.

¹²⁴ Kashgar is in modern day southeast Kyrgyzstan and Badakhshan is east of Balkh.

¹²⁵ Juzjani, 963.

¹²⁶ Khan, 152.

With the caravan Temüchin sent a greeting expressing his desire to establish safe trade with the Khwarazm Empire. Although he referred to the Khwarazmshah as “a dear son,” a diminutive phrase that the Khwarazmshah apparently took exception to, the Great Khan was otherwise extending a peace treaty. He suggested cooperation in maintaining the safe trade routes between their borders.¹²⁷

Inalchuq, the governor of Utrar and cousin to the Sultan, sent word to the Muhammad that he had captured Mongol spies and wanted to execute the entire Mongol caravan and seize their goods.¹²⁸ The Sultan, who was retreating from a failed invasion of Baghdad at the time, gave his consent and the caravan was massacred. In all probability the caravan included spies. Genghis Khan was a strategist and certainly wished to know the strength and deployment of his largest neighbor to the west. He might also have used the derogatory wording in an attempt to spark a conflict. However, it is possible that the message from Genghis Khan was unintentional in its condescending tone. Juzjani records the account of a man personally associated with the Great Khan who quoted him as saying many years later, “Khwarazmshah was not a monarch; he was a robber. Had he been a monarch he would not have slain my envoys and traders who had come to Utrar, for kings should not slay ambassadors.”¹²⁹

According to *The Secret History of the Mongols*, when word returned to the Great Khan that his envoys had been slaughtered, he said, “I’ll go to war with them to get satisfaction for this crime; to win revenge for their killing of Ukhuna and my hundred ambassadors.”¹³⁰ Juvaini says he went up to a hilltop and for three days prayed saying “I

¹²⁷ Rashiduddin , 234. The message, as recorded by Rashiduddin , appears to be very friendly. It does not suggest tribute or recognition of Mongol superiority or any other inflammatory expectation, only mutual cooperation. This also demonstrates Genghis Khan’s appreciation of diplomacy and the fundamental importance of trade and the role of merchants. Juzjani confirms this version of the Khan’s response to Muhammad claiming that he personally heard it from Muhammad’s chief spy after his return from the court of the Great Khan. Juzjani, 272.

¹²⁸ Juvaini, 79 and Rashiduddin , 234.

¹²⁹ Juzjani, 1041.

¹³⁰ Khan, 152.

was not the author of this trouble; grant me the strength to exact revenge.”¹³¹ Genghis Khan made a last attempt to resolve the matter diplomatically. He dispatched three envoys to the Khwarazmian Empire demanding the extradition of Inalchug for the slaying. The Khwarazmshah ordered the news envoys to be put to death.¹³² Genghis Khan sent a final message of warning to the Khwarazmshah announcing his intention to invade. Yet before he could launch an invasion he had to subdue the Khwarazmshah’s eastern allies.

Sübödäi and the Great Khan’s son, Jochi, were sent to subdue the remnants of the Merkit, who were the Naiman’s allies. The Merkit forces were in northern Yinsei, north of modern western Mongolia. Sübödäi and Jochi chased the Merkits all the way to Qipchaq territory, northeast of the Aral Sea, a distance of roughly a thousand miles. They eventually overtook the Merkits and defeated them. The Sultan heard that the Merkits were approaching Qipchaq territory and took a force to attack them. When he learned that the Mongols were pursuing the Merkits, he returned to Samarqand for more troops in order to attack both the Merkits and the Mongols. The Sultan found survivors of the defeated Merkit forces and obtained information on the Mongol force. He then pursued the Mongols seeking battle. When he caught up to them, Jochi diplomatically tried to avoid a premature battle with the Khwarazmshah by telling him they did not have authority to battle the Khwarazm kingdom, as their authorized mission was only to defeat the Merkit rebels. The Khwarazmshah forced a battle with the Mongols, which lasted a full day. The Sultan himself was nearly captured, but for the valor of his son, Jalal al-

¹³¹ Juvaini, 80-81. Nicolle indicates that a previous message from the Khan had addressed the Sultan as a vassal and that in the matter of the caravan the Khwarazmshah refused to punish the offenders; see Nicolle, *The Mongol Warlords*, 22. Rashiduddin, *The Secret History*, and Juvaini all indicate that upon hearing of the caravan’s fate, he immediately determined to invade and exact retribution. There is no mention of a request for the Khwarazmshah to punish the offenders. Nicolle suggests that the Khwarazmshah may have thought that the Mongols were too busy in China to attack Khwarazm, but the Great Khan spent less than a year fattening his cavalry horses in the Irtysh valley before invading in late 1219.

¹³² Boyle, *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 305.

Din. When darkness fell, there was no moon, and the armies withdrew to their camps. The Mongols lit their campfires and stealthily withdrew in the night. The next morning the Sultan found the Mongol camp deserted. Jochi and Sübödäi reported the valor of Jalal al-Din to Genghis Khan. Upon hearing of the battle the Great Khan stepped up his preparations for invasion.¹³³

This skirmish in what is modern day northern Kazakhstan was significant for several reasons. It appears to have turned the Sultan's attitude toward the Mongols from hostility to fear. Although the Sultan's army had fared well against Jöchi and Sübödäi, he must have grown fearful of a Mongol force that was significantly larger, for he never again faced the Mongols on the field of battle. The Sultan began to fear, even panic, for his empire and himself. The battle also gave Sübödäi direct experience on the field not only with Khwarazm forces, but also with Muhammad himself. Muhammad's first encounter against a Mongol commander was with the same commander that would drive him to his death two years later.

In early 1219 the Great Khan organized his army and appointed commanders for the campaign. He assembled his leaders for a *quriltai* to plan the invasion, and again sent a warning to the Khwarazmshah of the impending invasion. As Genghis Khan advanced he encountered only submission until he reached Utrar. The Sultan had reinforced the city with 60,000 men from his "auxiliary army."¹³⁴ By that time, the Great Khan's armies had been augmented with soldiers from the various kingdoms he had conquered. His total manpower was extraordinary: approximately 200,000, yet the Khwarazmshah had amassed an army of 110,000 to defend Samarkand.¹³⁵ Genghis Khan estimated it would take three years to take the city by siege, so he avoided it by dispatching his sons

¹³³ Rashiduddin , 235-36.

¹³⁴ Juvaini, 82 and Bar Hebraeus, 368.

¹³⁵ Saunders, 56. Juzjani says this included 60,000 cavalry, 274. While these numbers are probably accurate since his kingdom covered from Transoxania to Persia and his son was able to muster 30,000 in Persia alone, how loyal his more recently conquered subjects were to the Khwarazmshah is uncertain.

to other areas and attacking Bukhara himself. From the captured areas he obtained additional troops with which to attack Samarkand.¹³⁶ Genghis Khan's sons, Ögödäi and Chaghatai, laid siege to Utrar, Jochi attacked Jand and other commanders were sent to attack other towns. Bukhara, the religious center of Central Asia, surrendered after a three-day siege in February of 1220.¹³⁷

Genghis Khan entered the town for the first time on a Friday, the Islamic day of worship, and rode to the town mosque. Upon hearing that the building was a mosque, the Great Khan dismounted, stepped to the pulpit and said, "The countryside is empty of fodder; fill our horses' bellies."¹³⁸ The Mongol army appears to have not been relying on supplies from home. After only a brief siege, the Khan was seeking fodder for the tremendous number of horses his army required. The Khan's first thought upon his first major victory of the invasion was that of obtaining supplies. Furthermore it reveals that his concern was primarily for his horses, rather than his men. This is not because he valued horses over men, but because the Mongol army was comprised primarily of cavalry and each Mongol horseman had several steeds. This made for an army where the mounts outnumbered the riders. We must also consider that Mongol warriors lived off the milk (and when necessary the meat) of their horses and so feeding the horses would provide food for his troops for weeks to come. Bar Hebraeus records that the people responded by opening all their granaries and carrying the grain out to the Mongol horses. They then sat down and watched them eat the city's supply of food. The only mention of food being supplied for the Mongol soldiers was that the people of the city provided the Mongol troops with wine and entertainment.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Rashiduddin , 247. Rashiduddin says 60,000 of these troops were Turks and that they had 60 elephants.

¹³⁷ Boyle, *Cambridge*, 307.

¹³⁸ Juvaini, 104 and Bar Hebraeus, 376.

¹³⁹ Bar Hebraeus, 376.

By March 1220, less than a month later, the Great Khan's main force was besieging the Khwarazmian capital at Samarkand. Ögödäi and Chaghatai joined their father at Samarkand after the fall of Utrar. Although the Khwarazm forces were superior in number overall, they were widely distributed through the Khwarazmian kingdom in garrisons. The Khwarazmshah avoided pitched battles with the Mongols and retreated one city at a time. Surprisingly his capital, Samarkand, surrendered after only five days.¹⁴⁰ In addition to his concern for adequate fodder, the Great Khan also appreciated the need for financial resources. He ordered the city to bring forth, not the treasures in the vaults, but the treasure that was buried and hidden from invaders. He then expelled all the citizens and set the city on fire to kill any hidden rebels.

The Pursuit of Muhammad

As his capital fell, the Khwarazmshah fled to Khorasan and consulted his nobles and his son, Jalal al-Din. Genghis Khan learned of the Khwarazmshah's flight from Samarkand and said, "It is necessary to make an end of him and be well rid of him before men gather around him and nobles join him from every side."¹⁴¹ He therefore selected from among his best commanders, dispatching Jebe and Sübödäi "who were two of the great *noyans*, or military chiefs, and enjoyed his special trust, in pursuit of the Sultan together with 30,000 men."¹⁴² As Juvaini implies, the *Noyans* were the elite class of warrior in Mongol society. Although their immediate mission was to capture or kill the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 382. The Samarkand garrison troops actually fought fiercely. They captured Mongol warriors and executed them so brutally that the citizens of the city grew afraid of Mongol retribution. The judge of the city conspired with Genghis Khan to spare the citizen's lives in exchange for betraying the city and opening the gates. Fifty thousand citizens escaped the city by night and let the Mongols in to kill everyone else.

¹⁴¹ Juvaini, 143. We learn later that accompanying Muhammad Khwarazmshah were several of his sons, including Jalal al-Din, the son who was to continue the struggle against the Mongols after Muhammad's death. Therefore the mission had greater stakes than Genghis Khan realized.

¹⁴² Ibid., 118; Juzjani, 987, 1001. Juzjani gives a number of 60,000 troops assigned to the expedition, however this contradicts every other reference to the force's size. Raverty argues the force must have been this large to survive in hostile lands for as long as they did, however there is no other evidence that the force included more than three *tumens*. *Noyan* is a Mongol word meaning military chief, usually the commander of a *tumen*.

Khwarazmshah, we shall see from the sources that there was a much broader mandate given to these commanders. They were instructed to conquer as many nations as possible, a directive that initiated forty years of Mongol efforts to conquer the Near East.

Rashiduddin gives a more detailed account of the instructions the Great Khan gave to Jebe, Sübödäi, and ostensibly Toquchar. According to Rashiduddin the Great Khan first sent Jebe with one *tumen* in pursuit of the Khwarazmshah as a “*gajiga* after the Sultan” with another *tumen* under Toquchar “on Jebe’s heels.” *Gajiga* is a Mongol term meaning “rear guard.”¹⁴³ Jebe was sent as a rear guard to the sultan in the sense of closely shadowing his movements and pursuing him. He gave Jebe these instructions,

Go in pursuit of Sultan Muhammad Khwarazmshah, and wherever you find him, if he comes out with an army and you do not have the strength to contend, stop where you are and inform me. If he is weak, fight. Since constant reports tell of his weakness and fear, he will probably not have the strength to stand against you. With the strength of the great God, do not return until you have captured him. If he cannot withstand you and takes refuge with a few men on some steep cliff, or in a cave, or in some narrows, or if he hides himself from the sight of men like a fairy, you must be like the breeze and come out of his territory. Win over all who surrender, give them written assurance, and leave behind a *shahna* [governor]. Take by force any who contemplate resistance. As I charge you, you should complete this task in three years, return via the Qipchaq Steppe, and rejoin us in Mongolia, our ancient *yurt* [Mongol grazing land/camp]. By approximation it is plain that by that time we should have done with Iran and returned home triumphant and victorious. I am shortly going to dispatch Tolui Khan after you to take the cities of Khurasan, Merv, Herat, Nishapur, Sarakhs, and those territories¹⁴⁴; and I will send Jochi, Chaghatai, and Ögödäi with armies to conquer Khwarazm, which is the greatest of all the cities and capital of Sultan Muhammad Khwarazmshah. Through the strength of the great God, it should take us this same amount of time to accomplish these several tasks and reach home.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Rashiduddin , 249.

¹⁴⁴ Boyle, *Cambridge*, 313-316. Tolui attacked Merv in February 1221 and Nishapur in April 1221.

¹⁴⁵ Rashiduddin , 252. It is not clear what Rashiduddin ’s source was for this quote. However it appears to be genuine. It bears enough resemblance to the style Genghis Khan used for giving his generals directions on other occasions and the instructions were not carried out in the manner intended, so it is likely not a purely fictional account added by Rashiduddin after the fact. For instance, the forces under Jebe did not return directly to Mongolia, but met the Great Khan in northwest Central Asia.

These initial instructions highlight Genghis Khan's clear intention of sending a much larger force behind Jebe to complete the subjugation of Khorasan. Rashiduddin later gives an additional message that Jebe and Sübödäi sent back to Genghis Khan that reveals their understanding of their mission,

Sultan Mohammed has died and his son Jalal al-Din has fled in that direction. We are no longer worried about him, and in accordance with your command we will spend a year or two conquering as many lands as we can and then return via the Qipchaq Gates to the rendezvous point commanded in Mongolia. God willing and through Genghis Khan's fortune.¹⁴⁶

This clarifies the situation: Jebe and Sübödäi were under a command to conquer nations around the Caspian Sea after Muhammad was dealt with. Their mission clearly included conquest as a mandate from the beginning, not simple reconnaissance or the mere capture of Muhammad.

This understanding of their mission is demonstrated by their conduct in Khorasan. Ibn al-Athir as says that Jebe and Sübödäi "made no halts on their road, neither for plunder, nor for murder, and only redoubled their pace in pursuit, allowing him no rest," and Juzjani that, "in conformity with the orders the Chingiz Khan's commands, they did not inflict any injury on any of the cities and towns of Khorasan, and had nothing to do with them, except in the territory of Hirat, at a place which they call the To-I of Bushanj [Fushanj], where one of the chief men of the Mughal army, in a foray therein, went to hell. Bushanj was a small fortification; and they took it by storm, and martyred all the Mussalmans [Muslims] in the place."¹⁴⁷ However, more reliable sources show that they did in fact conquer many cities in Khorasan. They sacked the city of Zava and installed *shahnas*, or Mongol governors, in several places. Jebe and Sübödäi were extremely

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 258. Turnbull, *Genghis Khan*, 74; Turnbull claims that after Muhammad's death, Jebe and Sübödäi asked permission from Genghis Khan "to proceed north and reconnoiter the Western Lands," however this claim seems unsubstantiated.

¹⁴⁷ Barthold, *Turkestan*, 423. Juzjani, 989-992.

focused on the task of pursuing the Sultan, and their speed of movement was impressive, but they also took the time to secure supplies and install *shahnas* along their route. Juvaini mentions the expedition depositing baggage in captured cities, presumably to supply the *shahna* and garrison force.¹⁴⁸ Taking cities was also necessary because they needed to obtain information on the Sultan and, even more importantly, they had to obtain supplies.

Jebe and Sübödäi

Jebe, whose original name was Jirghogadai, was of the Besüt clan of the Tayichigud, a Mongol tribe that initially resisted Genghis Khan. Jebe had been a commander of the Tayichigud people and an enemy of Genghis Khan. *The Secret History* says that during an engagement between the Mongols and the Tayichigud, Jirghogadai shot an arrow at Genghis Khan himself and killed the Khan's favorite warhorse. After the Mongols won the battle Jirghogadai submitted to the Khan and offered to join his service. The Khan asked who had killed his favorite horse, and Jirghogadai confessed that he did. He propositioned the Great Khan saying that the Khan could kill him, but that would only fertilize a small patch of earth. If instead, the Great Khan let him live, he would devote his life to obeying him and fighting fiercely for his army.

Genghis Khan was impressed with Jirghogadai's fearless confession,

Usually a man who's fought against us is the last to admit it. He'll lie about what he's done or just hide out of fear. But this man doesn't deny that he's fought us; in fact he declares it! Here's a man who will tell you straight what he's done and here's a man that I'll have in my army. They say his name is Jirghogadai but I'll give him a new one. Since he's the man who shot my warhorse in the spine, the horse who'd been my finest

¹⁴⁸ Juvaini, 173.

weapon in war, I'll name him Jebe, 'the weapon.' From now on that's your name and you'll ride by my side.¹⁴⁹

Jebe was a general of harsh discipline. Jebe and Kubilai were once given the task of punishing other commanders for resting and dividing enemy spoils before the Great Khan had authorized it.¹⁵⁰ He was also an expert in reconnaissance and served, again alongside of Kubilai, leading a scouting force against the Naiman.¹⁵¹ It was during this encounter with the Naiman that we have our most memorable account of Jebe and Sübödäi, as members of Genghis Khan's "four dogs." An enemy commander asked who the generals were that were so easily herding his forces back and received this reply,

My friend, Anda Temüchin [Genghis Khan], has fed four dogs with human flesh, then held them back with iron chains. These are the people that charge at us, pursuing our soldiers. These four have helmets of copper, snouts like chisels, tongues like awls, hearts of iron, whips sharp as swords. These four dogs feed on the dew and ride on the winds. These four, when they fight an enemy, feed on his flesh. These four take human flesh as they share their spoils. Now he's cast off their chains and set them on us. He's let them loose and they charge at us, mad with joy, their hungry mouths foaming....These four are Jebe and Khubilai, Jelme and Sübödäi.¹⁵²

Certainly the description of cannibalism is an exaggeration, but the account comes from a Mongol historian, not from an enemy. The author wanted to describe the fear that the "four dogs" inspired in their enemies.

Jebe's expert use of stratagems is recorded as an example of the Mongols army's ingenuity in *The Secret History*. In 1211 Genghis Khan was invading China, and sent Jebe forward with an army to take the heavily defended fortress at Cyu-yong Guan. He

¹⁴⁹ Khan, 59-60. Rashiduddin tells a different version of the story saying that after the Tayichigud had already submitted, Jirhogadai stumbled into Genghis Khan's hunting party. Genghis Khan wanted to battle him, and another warrior, Borghochin, volunteered to fight him in personal combat. He rode out on Genghis Khan's horse, shot an arrow at him and missed. Jirhogadai fired back and killed Genghis Khan's horse. Jebe ran for his life, but then came and submitted himself to the Great Khan promising to replace the dead horse with "many such horses." Rashiduddin, 110.

¹⁵⁰ Khan, 65.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 97.

¹⁵² Ibid., 101-02.

determined he could not take the city by siege, and instead tricked the enemy into coming out by pretending to retreat until the Chinese force came out of the city in order to pursue him. He led them away from the city before suddenly turning and attacking them. He successfully took the city and then repeated the feat at the city of Dong-jing, with similar results.¹⁵³ Genghis Khan repeatedly sent him forward, ahead of the main army, to take out key cities and defensive positions of the enemy. Jebe was clearly an excellent strategist in his own right and Genghis Khan gave him significant freedom in to operate at his own discretion.

The other member of the “four dogs” that the Great Khan chose for the assignment was Sübödäi. Sübödäi and his brother Jelme were of the Urianqadai clan.¹⁵⁴ By age 25 he held a cavalry command and was soon had his own *tumen*. In 1206, Genghis Khan was fighting the Merkit. The Merkits had been defeated, but the surviving forces fled under the Merkit chieftain’s sons. Sübödäi was tasked with capturing them and the instructions Genghis Khan gave to Sübödäi about how to pursue and enemy are revealing. He commanded him to be relentless in his pursuit, reminded him of the great distances that would likely be involved, and of the need to spare the horses for the long journey, rather than to move to quickly and wear them out. He commanded strict discipline in logistical matters, expecting them to obtain their food by hunting, and said to set limits on when the men were allowed to hunt and how much they could kill. He told Sübödäi to arrest and beat any man who broke these rules, and if he was not an eminent person, to cut off his head.¹⁵⁵ The Khan was acutely aware of the logistical difficulties involved with such a long range pursuit and these instructions focused on the importance

¹⁵³ Ibid., 146-47. At Dong-jing he abandoned his camp and led his cavalry away the distance of a six day-march. He commanded his cavalry to take only one spare horse and raced back to the city in one night. He caught the enemy outside the city walls looting his camp, slaughtered them, and took the city.

¹⁵⁴ Rashiduddin , 26. The Urianqadai were a tribe of Mongols only distantly related to Genghis Khan’s tribe.

¹⁵⁵ Khan, 108-109.

of strict logistical practices. Adequate care for the horses was the first consideration, followed by the consideration of providing rations for the men themselves. It is clear that re-supply from the Mongol main army was not part of their logistical system. The expedition was responsible for obtaining its own food supplies as it went, by means of hunting and pillaging. Though the mission to pursue Muhammad was fourteen years later, it is certain that the instructions the Khan had given him were at the forefront of Sübödäi's mind.¹⁵⁶ This incident shows us that Sübödäi was an expert at pursuing a fleeing enemy over long distances into hostile territory.

The Secret History of the Mongols demonstrates that the Great Khan put great faith in both Jebe and Sübödäi. He gave them the exclusive right to command as many men as they could gather to themselves, rather than limiting them to the normal command of one *tumen*.¹⁵⁷ The two men Genghis Khan chose for this assignment were both experienced at pursuing a fleeing enemy, long range sorties, battlefield tactics and stratagems, and at conquest. In addition, Sübödäi had direct experience on the battlefield against both Muhammad and his son Jalal al-Din. The Near East therefore faced an invasion force commanded by the best generals the Mongol army had produced, each of which had twenty years of campaign experience.

Juvaini indicates that the number of troops assigned to the mission under Jebe and Sübödäi was proportional to the entire Mongol army. Based on other such "proportional" forces dispatched, this most likely indicates one tenth of the army.¹⁵⁸ Juvaini says this amounted to 30,000 troops or three *tumens*. Rashiduddin and Nasawi also say there were 30,000 troops.¹⁵⁹ Only Juzjani provides a different number of 60,000 being dispatched to

¹⁵⁶ It should also be mentioned that the chase of the Merkit was through nomad steppe territory, rather than the arid regions of Khorasan and the Near East where the food supplies might not be as readily available by hunting.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 128.

¹⁵⁸ Juvaini, 143.

¹⁵⁹ Rashiduddin, 250. Nasawi, 75.

chase the Khwarazmshah.¹⁶⁰ He may have been confusing Jebe and Sübödäi's 30,000 and the subsequent 30,000 troops under Tolui sent immediately behind them or the 30,000 later sent south after Sultan Jalal al-Din under the command of Shigi-Qutuqu.¹⁶¹

Juvaini, Jazjani, and Nasawi all report the force of 30,000 cavalry pursuing Muhammad though Khorasan as being under only Jebe and Sübödäi.¹⁶² However, *The Secret History of the Mongols* erroneously claims Jebe and Sübödäi were accompanied by a third commander named Toquchar. Most of the *Secret History's* account of the western campaign consists of a fictional story about the three commanders and their campaign in Khorasan, culminating in their participation in the famous battle of Parvan in 1221.¹⁶³ However, none of these commanders were at the battle of Parvan in India. Jebe and Sübödäi were in Azerbaijan at the time, and Toquchar had died at Nishapur the previous year.¹⁶⁴

Toquchar was a son-in-law of Genghis Khan and commanded Tolui's vanguard when he invaded Khorasan in the wake of Jebe and Sübödäi. The vanguard captured the city of Nasa, north of Nishapur, and then arrived at Nishapur, which had earlier surrendered to Jebe and Sübödäi.¹⁶⁵ Nishapur resisted and in the following siege Toquchar was hit by a stray arrow and killed.¹⁶⁶ Toquchar's second in command, Borkei, took command of the vanguard and subsequently captured Sabzavar in November,

¹⁶⁰ In his book *Genghis Khan and the Mongol Conquests 1190-1400*, Turnbull gives the number 3,000, but this is presumably a typographical error, 74. David Nicolle gives the number 20,000 but cites no source for this number; David Nicolle and V. Shpakovsky *Kalka River 1223: Genghis Khan's Mongols invade Russia* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2001), 14.

¹⁶¹ Juzjani, 987.

¹⁶² Juvaini, 143; Juzjani, 988, Nasawi, 75.

¹⁶³ Khan, 158. The account claims

¹⁶⁴ Juvaini, 174-175. The story in the *Secret History* is also contradicted by Saif b. Muhammad b. Ya'qub's *History of Herat*, as related by Boyle, *Cambridge*, 316.

¹⁶⁵ Juvaini, 174, n.11; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 425.

¹⁶⁶ Juzjani also says a son-in-law of Genghis Khan was killed at Nishapur, but erroneously places the attacks on Herat and Nishapur as part of Jebe and Sübödäi's campaigns, though Raverty notes this as anachronistic, 992.

1220.¹⁶⁷ When Tolui arrived with his main force of 30,000 on April 7, 1221, he destroyed the city and Toquchar's wife helped oversee the slaughter in revenge for her husband's death.¹⁶⁸

Rashiduddin attempted to reconcile the fictional story in the Mongol sources with the accurate record of Juvaini and consequently wrote a confused account. He lists Toquchar as being dispatched along with Jebe and Sübödäi.¹⁶⁹ However, in three other passages he lists the commanders as Jebe, Sübödäi, and Borkei.¹⁷⁰ He says that Borkei died "on the other side of the river [Oxus]" and that he "died along the way," apparently confusing Borkei with Toquchar, for there is no mention of Borkei's death in any source while Toquchar's death was a prominent event in the Mongol invasion of Khorasan.¹⁷¹

Jebe and Sübödäi Give Chase

Leaving Samarkand, the expedition force moved southeast through Sogdia and crossed the Oxus River at a well-known crossing point called the Panjab Ford in Vakhsh, southeast of modern Dushanbe in the Republic of Tajikistan. It is not clear why the Mongol force crossed the Oxus at this place, since this route was more mountainous than the lowland route, which would have put them on the south bank of the Oxus in the immediate vicinity of Balkh (near modern day Mazar-e-Sharif in northern Afghanistan). It is possible they wanted to cross downriver and approach by land, or that they preferred to drive the Shah west, rather than south into the Indus region, or that they did not gain

¹⁶⁷ Juvaini, 174-175.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 176-177; Juzjani, 1024; Boyle, *Mongol World Empire*, 619.

¹⁶⁹ Rashiduddin, 250. This model was accepted by Barthold, Raverty, and Hoang. Barthold, *Turkestan*, 420. Barthold based his conclusion directly on *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 423-424. Also see 46, n. 2; Raverty, 988, n. 3; Hoang, 230.

¹⁷⁰ Rashiduddin, 40, 41, 110.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 110 and 40.

information on the Shah's location until they had already crossed the Oxus to the southeast.¹⁷²

Their first stop was at Balkh, where the city sent out notables to meet the Mongol force and surrender.¹⁷³ The march was a brutal one through hot sands and winds. Even the water sources were relatively hot in the summer months.¹⁷⁴ Sogdia was inhospitable and the area from the Oxus to Balkh is a dry and arid one, however the Mongols were passing through in mid-spring of 1220, avoiding both the harshness of winter and the extreme heat of summer. Nevertheless, the dry terrain and the quick pace of their march put the force at Balkh in need of supplies.

The city of Balkh offered food to the Mongols. The region of Balkh lies along the Kunduz River valley, which Engels describes as "a rich, productive agricultural region when properly irrigated."¹⁷⁵ Balkh itself was the largest oasis in the region. The Mongols did not harm them, but assigned a *shahna*. This is a very important indicator that Jebe and Sübödäi were under a clear mandate to conquer territories and permanently add them to the Mongol empire, not simply a mission to capture Muhammad. Several times along the campaign the sources mention the installation of a *shahna*.¹⁷⁶ The conquest of Khorasan was not their primary mission, however, that was left to Tolui. They therefore obtained supplies from the city rather than take the time to live off the land and did not linger.

¹⁷² See Barthold, *Turkestan*, 420-21 for a discussion of this crossing.

¹⁷³ Juvaini, 144.

¹⁷⁴ Engels, 101. Alexander the Great's army made the same 46-mile march in the opposite direction from Balkh to the Oxus.

¹⁷⁵ Engels, 97.

¹⁷⁶ Boyle, *Cambridge*, 312. Juvaini, 130-31. The occupation of Balkh was short lived, for only a year later, in the early months of 1221, Genghis Khan himself crossed the Oxus and was forced to attack the city as part of his invasion of Khorasan. Genghis Khan disbelieved their professions of obeisance and had the city's inhabitants all killed.

Rashiduddin says that in Balkh the Mongols obtained a guide and “they sent Taisu Bahadur.”¹⁷⁷ Juvaini likewise says, “then taking a guide from amongst them, they sent forward Taisi by way of vanguard.”¹⁷⁸ Taisu was called *bahadur* and so was a respected commander. He was dispatched ahead of the main force to reconnoiter into Khorasan and toward Nishapur with the triple intent of obtaining information on the location of Muhammad, determining a route for the army to take west, and identifying locations for re-supply.

Unknown to the generals, the Sultan had crossed the Oxus at Tirmiz, 150 miles west of Vakhsh.¹⁷⁹ According to Juvaini it is at this time that he sent his mother, Terken Khatun, wives, sons, grandsons, and the women of his family to Mazandaran.¹⁸⁰ The Sultan took council at Balkh as to a course of action. His nobles advised that a defense might be rallied in Khorasan, but the Sultan maintained that his forces did not have the spirit to fight and the only viable option was to flee to India. Others suggested a retreat into Persia and Iraq.¹⁸¹ His son, Jalal al-Din, disagreed and advocated attacking the Mongols.¹⁸² In any event, when his scouts at the Panjab ford brought news of the fall of Samarkand, the Sultan fled from Balkh.¹⁸³ He headed west toward Persia and proceeded to Nishapur where he indulged in drinking and revelry, according to Rashiduddin. On the way he stopped at the fortress of Kalat near Tus and was advised to consider it as a

¹⁷⁷ Rashiduddin, 250. Juvaini mentions that a commander named Taisi had turned back from Jebe’s army and arrived in Merv when Tolui had finished assaulting the city.

¹⁷⁸ Juvaini, 144. For unspecified reasons Taisi later turned back and joined Tolui’s campaign in Khorasan. Juvaini, 163.

¹⁷⁹ This was the major crossing point immediately north of Balkh.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 466. According to Juvaini, Terken Khatun exercised a significant amount of power over her son, the Sultan. She had her own court and officials and had power over the kingdom’s finances and the Sultan’s officials. She also appears to have had control over all the hostages of conquered nations, which shows control over the kingdom’s international relations. When she fled she had the royal hostages of local rulers put to death and took the treasure with her to Mazandaran.

¹⁸¹ Juzjani, 276. Juzjani records a plot among the troops accompanying him to seize the Sultan and hand him over to Genghis Khan. One of the conspirators confessed. Muhammad escaped in the night and the army fell into confusion. Juzjani believed it was for this reason that Muhammad fled to Nishapur.

¹⁸² Bar Hebraeus, 383.

¹⁸³ Juvaini, 378.

defensive position. He could not come to a decision, however, and arrived in Nishapur on April 18, 1220. According to Barthold he sent two chests of treasure to the fortress of Ardahan for safekeeping.¹⁸⁴

To appreciate the panicked and indecisive state of mind of the Khwarazmshah, it is appropriate to give a description of the fortress he examined and his rejection of it as a feasible defensive position. Engels describes it as a natural fortress. The south wall is 1,500 feet high and the west wall is 2,000. The interior of the fortress is a grassy plain four to five miles in circumference with a pool of spring water fed by several perennial springs. The walls are 500 feet high from the inside of the formation, while on the exterior much of the walls are vertical cliffs. The western wall rises to a peak so narrow that a single man cannot walk on it. Though Alexander the Great was able to overcome these obstacles, it was successfully used to ward off many nomad armies and successfully resisted a siege by Tamerlane.¹⁸⁵ The fortress would clearly have been an ideal location to rally the Khwarazm forces and mount a defense against the Mongols. Its natural defenses would provide water and fodder while nullifying both the cavalry advantage of the Mongol army and the standard siege techniques they had adopted. Yet, Muhammad maintained a profoundly pessimistic and depressed outlook and rejected the stronghold as a possibility.

Juvaini says that upon arriving in Nishapur the Sultan initially frightened all the people with a fatalistic attitude and his complaints about the unstoppable Mongols.¹⁸⁶ When it was clear that the people were not going to listen to his advice to flee, he instead ordered them to strengthen the city walls and dispatched his son Jalal al-Din toward Balkh. More scouts arrived telling of the Mongol crossing of the Oxus at Panjab. The Sultan abandoned his drinking and fled. When he heard of the Mongol approach he told

¹⁸⁴ Barthold, *Turkestan*, 422.

¹⁸⁵ Engels, 87-88. Alexander's enemies had managed to man the natural fortress with 13,000 troops.

¹⁸⁶ Juvaini, 171.

his commanders he was going fishing in Isfarayin, in Juvain, but his real plan was to flee to Persia. When news of an approaching enemy force arrived, he officially cancelled the trip to Isfarayin and retreated further west.¹⁸⁷ Juvaini says that the Sultan left Nishapur on May 12, almost two weeks before the Mongol vanguard arrived. He intended to head past Ray to Persian Iraq to join the portion of the Khwarazmian army that was there.¹⁸⁸

When he arrived in Mazandaran he sent his mother, harem and family to the fortresses of Larijan and Ilal.¹⁸⁹ At Ray, a scouting patrol from Khorasan brought news of a “strange” army approaching. He then went to the fortress of Farrazin, southeast of Hamadan, the westernmost city in Khwarazmian territory. His son Rukn-ad-Din, who had counseled retreat to Iraq, was waiting at this fortress with 30,000 troops.¹⁹⁰ He took council from the Persian commanders who suggested retreat to another fortress. The Sultan inspected the fortress and deemed it unacceptable.

From Balkh the Mongol force moved west across the region of Juzjan. The region of central Juzjan between the Oxus and the Murghab Rivers was arid and sandy. The distance was not extreme, but a route following the agricultural regions along the Hari Rud River past Herat would have been preferable. Barthold says the waters of the Murghab and its tributaries were brackish and often so laden with salt as to be undrinkable.¹⁹¹ The road from Balkh to Merv headed southwest toward Talaqan, then curving northwest to Merv in order to avoid the desert in northern Khorasan.¹⁹² The region running between the Murghab and the Hari Rud is mountainous, dry, and not deemed worthy of irrigation. This is one reason the Mongols moved quickly and relied

¹⁸⁷ Rashiduddin , 250.

¹⁸⁸ Juvaini, 383. Boyle places his flight on May 15 and the arrival of the Mongol vanguard on May 16, but does not cite a source, *Cambridge*, 307.

¹⁸⁹ Juvaini, 466. Also see notes 9 and 10. Larijan is in the area of Amul and Ilal at the headwaters of the Sari River, high in the mountains south of the city of Sari on the Caspian Coast.

¹⁹⁰ Juvaini, 382. Barthold places this army and rendezvous at Qazvin instead of Hamadan, 422.

¹⁹¹ Barthold, *An Historical Geography of Iran*, 30.

¹⁹² Barthold, *Geography*, 35.

heavily on captured provisions. The city of Merv sent a letter of submission to Jebe and Sübödäi when they had arrived at Marachuq west of Talaqan.¹⁹³ Herat also tendered submission as Jebe and Sübödäi passed. If *The Secret History of the Mongols* is to be believed, the first recorded incident of resistance was at Zava, nearly four hundred miles west of Balkh. If so, the expedition was bypassing some major cities in Khorasan such as Talaqan and Herat, accepting letters of obeisance, but requiring little in the way of formal submission. Zava was roughly a five-day journey past Herat.¹⁹⁴ The main route to Nishapur was northeast through Jam, but instead the Mongols headed due west past Zava. Presumably they were attempting to arrive at Nishapur from an unexpected direction, or seeking supplies before they reached it.

As the Mongols passed Zava, they requested fodder for their horses.¹⁹⁵ The city refused them, which ordinarily would have meant a death sentence, but because of the urgency of their mission they did stop to attack it. Once the Mongols had passed the city, the people of Zava began to beat drums and call out insults to the Mongols, driving Jebe and Sübödäi to turn back and take the city. After three days of siege, the Mongols scaled the walls and killed everyone. Juvaini specifically mentions the use of scaling ladders. Although the ladders may have been fashioned quickly, it appears the expedition force included some siege engineers. At the very least they appear to have been prepared to lay siege when necessary. They burned the fortress and destroyed whatever they could before quickly resuming their pursuit of Muhammad.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Turnbull, in a map on page 22 of *Genghis Khan*, shows the force moving from Balkh to Herat, to Merv, and then directly southwest to Nishapur. The map also misrepresents their route from Samarkand to Balkh showing the crossing of the Oxus west of Tirmiz.

¹⁹⁴ Barthold, *Geography*, 47. Barthold says the travel time between Herat and Sarakhs was five days. Zava was roughly the same distance from Herat as Sarakhs.

¹⁹⁵ Rashiduddin, 250.

¹⁹⁶ Juvaini, 144.

The Sultan had arrived at Nishapur on April 18 and fled on May 12, while Taisi arrived with the Mongol vanguard on May 24.¹⁹⁷ The vanguard was approximately seventy-five miles north of Zava and the main army. Nishapur is protected from the northeast by a mountain range. The cavalry-based Mongol force likely had passed through Zava in order to approach Nishapur from the relatively flat grasslands to the south. Taisi learned that a small group belonging to the recently deceased governor was headed west from the city and dispatched a team that overtook them, killed one thousand men, and tortured the survivors for information on the Sultan. The city offered submission and supplied the vanguard with provisions.¹⁹⁸

On June 6, 1220, when Jebe and Sübödäi arrived at Nishapur, they immediately sent an envoy to the two ministers of Khorasan calling on them to submit to Mongol rule and to demand provisions. The expedition was continuing to rely on supplies from the region's cities. Juvaini says that wherever people submitted to Jebe and Sübödäi, they deposited baggage and a *shahna*.¹⁹⁹ Jebe sternly warned the people to submit to any Mongol force and gave them documentation concerning Mongol rule over their lands.²⁰⁰ Juvaini's account gives a subtle impression that the expedition was not only hunting the Khwarazmshah, but also driving a firm wedge between the Sultan and his nobles. The threats against resisting Mongol forces may specifically have been inspired by the Khan's orders to stop the Khwarazmshah from rallying his nobles.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 172.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 173.

²⁰⁰ As in many cases the city's officials were given a *yarligh*, or an imperial decree, of Genghis Khan. However, Juvaini also says they were given a letter with an *al-tamgha*, or 'vermillion seal' in the Uigher script. Ibid., 144 and 173.

²⁰¹ The submission of Nishapur must have been superficial at best, for the city served as the headquarters of ongoing Khorasani resistance throughout the following year. In November of the same year, Toguchar arrived at the city with a *tumen* of troops and fought the battle in which he was killed. In April 1221 Tolui again was forced to attack the city. Khorasan continued to feign submission to Mongol rule even after Muhammad's death, while really awaiting a revival of Khwarazm under Jalal al-Din. Boyle, *Cambridge*, 314.

From Nishapur Jebe and Sübödäi separated their forces. No mention is made of how the three *tumens* were divided. Jebe headed north into Juvain, the region of Juvaini's family, while Sübödäi went northeast to the city of Tus.²⁰² Rashiduddin says Jebe went by way of Jawhara and Juvaini states that Sübödäi traveled to Tus "by way of Jam."²⁰³ Jam was considerably out of the way between Nishapur and Tus. On their way to Nishapur, the Mongols had avoided the cities along the main road by going through Zava to the southwest. Now that Nishapur had surrendered, Sübödäi backtracked to the small cities they had bypassed such as Jam. He then moved up along the Hari-Rud and Atrek Rivers.

Sübödäi may have taken two *tumens* and Jebe one, and that Sübödäi therefore sought a route along the river while Jebe moved into less fertile areas to the north. However it is also possible that while Jebe moved forward to flush out Muhammad, Sübödäi moved around the longer, alternate route in case the Sultan tried to double back and escape. Such a maneuver was repeated when Jebe pushed toward Hamadan while Sübödäi swung around the longer, alternate route through Qazvin. In the second instance, Muhammad indeed fled toward Qazvin, but eluded the trap.

Tus did not submit to Sübödäi and he destroyed the city and its towns. In another passage Juvaini mentions that some months after Jebe and Sübödäi had passed through, the *shahna* they left behind in Tus attempted to convince Nishapur to submit to Mongol forces. A leader of the levies in Tus, Saraj-ad-Din, killed the *shahna* and sent his head to Nishapur.²⁰⁴ Juvaini also mentions that the city of Sarakhs, east of Tus, accepted a

²⁰² Jebe's route took him northwest along the south side of the Kuh-e Binalud mountain range, while Sübödäi appears to have headed to the southeast tip of the range and then northwest up the valley to the north of this range. Tus was the ancient city of Sousia, from which Alexander the Great launched his Bactrian campaign against Bessus at Balkh (Bactra).

²⁰³ Rashiduddin, 251.

²⁰⁴ Juvaini, 176. This happened sometime prior to November 26, 1220.

shahna and submitted to the Mongols. Yet before Tolui arrived in the area a band under the Sultan's former vizier, Mujir-al-Mulk, attacked the city and slew the city's *shahna*.²⁰⁵

Upon reaching Radkan, north of Tus, Sübödäi was so pleased with the green meadows and fresh water springs that he spared the local inhabitants and installed a *shahna*.²⁰⁶ This favor for Radkan was due to its logistical value. He was securing a key supply hub for the Mongol army. Sübödäi did not know how far west the chase for the Khwarazmshah would take them was securing the spot as a depot for their expedition or for Tolui's forces. Rashiduddin summarizes this period by saying, "in short, everywhere they went, they obtained the necessary food and clothing without stopping and passed through."²⁰⁷ He also says that, "In inhabited areas that lay on their path they rounded up whatever fine horses and good pack animals they found."²⁰⁸ This is the first mention of pack animals on the campaign though they had presumably left Samarkand with some. It could be that the aridity of Khorasan forced them to increase the amount of supplies they were carrying with them between cities, necessitating an increase in the number of pack animals they required. It shows a concern wherever they went for maintaining a strong number of mounts as well as maintaining their ability to pack provisions from one location to the next.²⁰⁹ However, they stayed focused on the mission at hand, "As was prudent, they marched or halted by day or night on the heels of information concerning Sultan Muhammad Khwarazmshah."²¹⁰

At the next city northwest of Radkan, Khabushan (Khucan), the people resisted and Sübödäi "wrought a great slaughter."²¹¹ The same occurred in Isfarayin and Adkan.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 155-58.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 146.

²⁰⁷ Rashiduddin, 251.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Juvaini, 146. Mazandaran is an east to west area between the Caspian Sea on the north and the Elburz mountain range to the south.

Sübödäi had now moved up the northeastern edge of Juvain and into northern Juvain along the Rud-e Atrak River. He then moved south through the pass between the Kuh-e Binalud and the Kuh-e Bargovein ranges, since Isfarayin is to the south of the Kuh-e Aladag range. The two commanders converged on Isfarayin and Juvaini says in “Isfarayin and Adkan also the Mongols carried out a great slaughter.”²¹²

As Jebe and Sübödäi passed out of Khorasan and into Persia, the Khorasani amirs were already throwing off the mask of obedience. Juzjani says,

After the [noyan] Yamah [Jebe], and the Bahadur Sahudah [Sübödäi], with 60,000 horse, passed through Khurasan, and proceeded toward Irak, disturbance and tumult arose on Khurasan, and sedition manifested itself. Each one of the Maliks, in accordance with the commands of Sultan Muhammad, was in some part or other, and they put the fortresses in repair, and surrounded the cities with ditches, and caused preparations to be made for war, and to defend the fortresses as far as lay in their power; for every part was entrusted, by the Sultan, to the charge of some Malik, who had been previously appointed thereunto.²¹³

Khorasan continued to prepare for the main assault as soon as Jebe and Sübödäi were gone. However Jebe and Sübödäi’s responsibility in Khorasan was only to warn them to submit to Tolui’s forces. Their primary goal lay ahead in Persia.

Invading Persia: Summer 1220 – Autumn 1220

Jebe’s precise activities in Juvain are not specified, but after meeting in Isfarayin both forces headed west into Persia proper. Juvaini says Jebe entered Mazandaran on the south coast of the Caspian Sea and killed many people “especially in Amul.”²¹⁴ To reach this area he must have moved due west from Isfarayin and stayed to the north of the large Kuhha-ye Alborz (Elburz) mountain range passing through the region of Gorgan.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Juzjani, 1002.

²¹⁴ Juvaini, 146.

Rashiduddin says he proceeded on the road of Juvain into Mazandaran where “he killed many people, particularly in Darulmulk and the city of Sarabad.”²¹⁵

As Jebe passed from Khorasan to Mazandaran he moved from an arid region marked by oases to a forested land rich in supplies. Barthold describes this change in regions: “In terms of climatic conditions, the area between the Elburz, Gorgan, and the Caspian coast differs fundamentally from Khurasan; here, as in other Caspian regions of Persia, precipitation is very high, so the region has luscious vegetation.”²¹⁶ The houses changed from mud and brick to wood. With the majestic Elburz mountain range on his left, and the great landlocked sea on his right, Jebe entered the Near East. While Jebe moved west along the north side of the Elburz Mountains, Sübödäi moved along the south side of the range on the ancient Silk Road. Sübödäi first headed to Qumis, a small region on the eastern edge of the Elburz mountain range. Barthold also mentions that the main road from eastern Persia to western Persia ran from Isfarayin through Shahrud to Damghan, the primary city of Qumis.²¹⁷ From the region of Herat to Qumis is roughly 500 miles (805 km.). Engels describes the Silk Route between Nishapur and Qumis saying, “this corridor of land has adequate water and agricultural resources to support a large army and strong Zoroastrian traditions indicate that it was the most densely populated region of Khorasan.”²¹⁸

In one passage Juvaini says that when Jebe attacked Amul, he left a force to lay siege to the fortress of Larijan while continuing on in pursuit of the Sultan and that this force was eventually successful in their task. Then, in a later passage, he claims that it was Sübödäi who laid siege to both fortresses, Larijan and Ilal, and captured the Sultan’s

²¹⁵ Rashiduddin , 251. Barthold describes a road running from Isfarayin to the banks of the Gorgan, and this is likely the route Jebe took. Barthold, *Geography*, 114.

²¹⁶ Barthold, *Geography*, 115.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 114.

²¹⁸ Engels, 85-86.

mother and harem.²¹⁹ As Juvaini is the only source that gives any detail on the capture we are left with his contradiction.

Jebe was in Amul assaulting the fortress of Ilal when Sübödäi was arriving in Damghan on the south side of the Elburz Mountains.²²⁰ Barthold describes the area around Shahkuh, on the path to Damghan as a “fertile stretch along the river Shahrud, which flows from the snowy mountains of Shah Kuh.” As Sübödäi entered Qumis, he found patches of adequate supply along the base of the Elburz Mountains. At Damghan the citizens fled to a fortress in the mountains called Girdkuh. This was a known fortress of the Assassins.²²¹ From Damghan, Sübödäi continued southwest along the mountains to Samnan.

The region Sübödäi was now entering is particularly barren with water only available in specific locations near well established cities. Western Qumis was separated from fertile Khuvar, near Ray, by a salt desert.²²² In contrast, Jebe was entering Gorgan and Mazandaran, known in ancient times as Hyrcania, which was renowned for its fertility. Juvaini indicates that Sübödäi continued west into Khuvar, southeast of Ray, killing many people. After passing through the desert region between Qumis and Khuvar, Sübödäi needed to restock his provisions. This pragmatic need determined his focus on attacking cities, rather than moving on to Ray to pursue the Khwarazmshah. Ray was central on any route to Persian Iraq or Azerbaijan and Muhammad had in fact

²¹⁹ Juvaini, 466-7 has Sübödäi assaulting both fortresses when he “came to Mazandaran in pursuit of the Sultan,” while on 146 has Jebe leaving behind a force in the vicinity of Amul to attack the fortress where the Sultan’s harem, which they later captured. Larijan was in the district of Amul, while Ilal was on the southern side of the Elburz Mountains in the vicinity of Sübödäi’s path. It is likely that Jebe’s force captured Larijan and Sübödäi captures Ilal and that Juvaini’s account is confused. Barthold also noted Juvaini’s confusion and added that Nasawi supports Juvaini’s timing of the capture, while Ibn al-Athir has it prior to the Mongols first reaching Ray; *Turkestan*, 430-431.

²²⁰ Juvaini, 146.

²²¹ The Nizari are commonly called the “Assassins” in the west.

²²² Barthold, *Geography*, 121.

passed through it. To get to Ray, Sübödäi passed through the deep and narrow gorge through a southern spur of the Elburz range called “the Caspian Gates.”²²³

Ray was a strategic site for controlling movement through the main pass in the range. The city sat on a flat area on the south side of the western end of a small mountain range.²²⁴ It appears that Jebe and Sübödäi approached the city from the northeast and southeast simultaneously in a pincer movement. Jebe would be approaching from the road to Tehran, while Sübödäi would have approached from the road to Damghan to the southeast. This coordination shows that they were in communication despite being separated by the mountain range, and that their intelligence about the new region they were entering was excellent. We know from Juvaini that Jebe was significantly ahead of Sübödäi in their movements westward, so it is also possible Jebe arrived north of Ray and sent scouts to await Sübödäi to the south for a coordinated attack.²²⁵ The movement was a success and the city of Ray immediately sent out a representative to offer submission to the Mongols.²²⁶ They also readily gave the location of the Khwarazmshah, telling the Mongols he had been in Ray and had moved on to Hamadan, nearly two hundred miles to the southwest.

Meanwhile, the Sultan sent a summons for a well-respected strategist from the Karakalpak region.²²⁷ Malik Nusratuddin Hazarasf arrived and suggested retreat to Tang-

²²³ It had been called “The Caspian Gates” since Alexander the Great’s day when he marched in pursuit of Darius through the same pass. Engels, 83. At the west end was a fortress to protect the opening, though we do not know if the fortress was in use in the thirteenth century.

²²⁴ Aerial photographs taken by Erich F. Schmidt in 1936 reveal the outline of the city walls and the remains of its citadel. The government buildings were beneath the citadel and encompassed by walls which formed a diamond shape, with the end of the mountain intersecting the northern portion of the diamond, and the southern tip cut by a concave wall which terminated in a large tower. The citadel sat on a flat area on the south slope of the hill and the base of the hill itself was walled. Past the top of the small mountain was a large east-west valley, which now holds the center of Tehran, with the towering Elburz Mountains in the distance. Erich F. Schmidt *Flights over Ancient Cities of Iran* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1940), plates 31-34.

²²⁵ Khuvar is separated from Ray by the southern Caspian Gates, through which Alexander famously passed in the other direction.

²²⁶ The city of Ray was later devastated by Hülegü and never recovered its centrality in the region.

²²⁷ In modern Uzbekistan on the Oxus River.

i-Balu, a fertile region in the mountains between Fars and Lur. He said from there they could muster 100,000 troops from Luristan, Fars, and Shulistan.²²⁸ The Sultan rejected the plan and decided to make his defense at the fortress of Farrazin. News suddenly came that the Mongols had already taken Ray and were on their way to the region of Hamadan.

Jebe moved quickly toward Hamadan, while Sübödäi moved northwest toward Qazvin.²²⁹ The primary route from Ray to Hamadan was actually northwest from Ray to Qazvin, then southwest to Hamadan. However, there was a minor route south through Sawa (Saveh), and then west to Hamadan. This route was less used and passed through mountainous regions, but in Barthold's estimate, it presented no major difficulties to pack animals or even to wheeled carts, except in winter.²³⁰ Augustus Mounsey traveled this route on his way from Tehran to Isfahan in the spring of 1867 and describes the route as desolate. Twenty miles south of Tehran there is a region the Iranians called "the Valley of the Angel of Death," a parched volcanic area crossed on a path of rock and sand.²³¹ There is no water and no vegetation or grass. Further south are added abundant salt deposits, brackish water, and sand devils. While Barthold may consider it as presenting no difficulties, it certainly was not a route convenient to a 10,000 man cavalry force. It is likely that Sübödäi moved along the major route towards Hamadan via Qazvin, while Jebe took the lesser route through Sawa. This is consistent with the typical two-pronged strategy of Genghis Khan's four dogs, and with Sübödäi and Jebe's strategies in the expedition thus far. It served the twofold purpose of a pincer attack on the target city and preventing the Sultan from fleeing by one route while the Mongols approached from another.

²²⁸ Juvaini, 383.

²²⁹ Ibid., 147.

²³⁰ Barthold, *Geography*, 128.

²³¹ Mounsey, 173-174.

At Sawa, Jebe found some relief from the harsh terrain on his journey from Ray. Along with the conquests of Khwar (Khuvar), Simnan, and Ray was the capture of Qum. Qum lies southeast of Sawa and must have been part of Jebe's movements in that area while pursuing the Sultan.²³² Engels mentions that Qum sits south of the Great Salt Desert and many of the water sources in the region of Qum are salt heavy, though Mounsey found the city itself irrigated and green in 1867.²³³ Qum is considered a holy city by Muslims and is home to the tomb of Fatima, the sister of Imam Riza, therefore holding great significance especially to Shi'ites. It is likely Jebe did not stay long in Qum after its capture, but returned to the more fertile region of Sawa and on to Hamadan. This detour to Qum would mean leaving the Sawa route to Ray open to the Sultan. It is probable that Jebe would have left a rearguard behind in Sawa to guard against the Sultan's escape while he invested Qum.

Hamadan: The Sultan Abandons His Last Defense

Hamadan was ancient Ecbatana, capital of the Median kingdom. It lies on a slope at the base of Mount Elvend in the Zagros range, which runs from Eastern Anatolia to the Persian Gulf. The hills at Hamadan and the fertile plain below were heavily watered from the mountains and Mounsey describes its "never-failing supply of water" and copious environment.²³⁴ When Jebe arrived at Hamadan, the city immediately offered submission. Juvaini says they offered horses, clothing, food, drink, and captives and the governor of the city, Ala-ad-Duala, accepted a *shahna*.²³⁵ As a well-watered oasis after the dry and salty regions of the central Iranian plateau, Jebe was certainly intent on seizing control of Hamadan for the Mongol's long-term interests in the region. Bar Hebraeus says that when the Mongols arrived in Hamadan in pursuit of the Sultan, he

²³² Rashiduddin , 258.

²³³ Mounsey, 174.

²³⁴ Ibid., 302.

²³⁵ Juvaini, 147.

fled to the mountains opposite Mazandaran.²³⁶ The army of 30,000 Khwarazmians was not fully prepared for battle when news of the Mongol approach arrived.²³⁷ The Sultan fled for his life to the fortress of Quran toward Baghdad and the army dispersed. Juvaini says that the Mongol army encountered the Sultan as he fled, but they did not recognize him.²³⁸ Although they wounded his horse with arrows, he escaped them. Rashiduddin says the Mongols did recognize him and struck the ventilator in his armor several times.²³⁹ The main force of Mongols proceeded to the fortress believing the Sultan to still be inside. The Sultan, meanwhile, stayed only a day at Quran before heading on to Baghdad two hundred and fifty miles to the southwest of Hamadan.

The border between the territories under direct control of the Caliph and the Khwarazmshah ran between Baghdad and Hamadan.²⁴⁰ The Sultan had never had good relations with the Caliph, as he had assaulted Baghdad and tried to establish his own Shi'ite anti-Caliph in 1217. The Sultan was at last fleeing his territory and heading toward the mercy of the Commander of the Faithful, a symbolically powerful man who might likely imprison him if he were to show his face in Baghdad. It is a clear indication of the Sultan's desperation.

The Mongols soon realized their mistake and set off in pursuit. They captured some of the guides that the Sultan had dismissed in his flight and learned of his intentions. This again shows a careful eye for intelligence gathering by the Mongol generals. At every turn of the trail they were methodical in taking captives and questioning them carefully. The Mongols were in such close pursuit that the Sultan turned north instead and headed for the fortress of Sarchahan, between Zanjar and Tarum,

²³⁶ Bar Hebraeus, 383.

²³⁷ Juvaini, 384.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Rashiduddin, 252.

²⁴⁰ *Atlas of Islam*, 24.

due north of Hamadan. The Mongols lost his trail and, perhaps thinking they had been deceived, put the captured guides to death.

Barthold cites the historian Nasawi as recording a battle between the Sultan and the Mongols in the vicinity of Hamadan subsequent to his stay at Sarchahan.²⁴¹ However a return to the vicinity of Hamadan at this point in the sultan's flight seems unlikely. None of the other sources mention this battle, but rather specifically trace the Sultan's continued flight north. They also clearly indicate that the Sultan was fleeing with only a very small retinue, having abandoned even his guides. It is therefore probable that Nasawi confused the skirmish on the road outside Hamadan, where the Sultan was wounded but escaped, and the subsequent battle between Jebe and the Sultan's generals at Sujas.

Sübödäi was still near Qazvin only a moderate distance southeast from where the Sultan was hiding. The main road north from Hamadan went directly to Qazvin without a single town between. However, a second road split off half way and headed to the northwest of Qazvin directly to Zanjar.²⁴² We must assume Sübödäi was actively sending out patrols and reconnoitering for the Sultan. This close proximity of Sübödäi led the Sultan to remain in the castle for only one week before crossing the mountains into the province of Gilan. Both Gilan and the fortress of Sarchahan lay in the mountains west of Mazandaran and this is most likely what Bar Hebraeus meant by the "mountains opposite Mazandaran." Juvaini indicates that "when the Sultan had been put to flight, [Jebe] turned back to Hamadan."²⁴³ Jebe returned to Hamadan most likely for further provisions and to wait for coordination with Sübödäi on their next move.

²⁴¹ Barthold, *Turkestan*, 425.

²⁴² Barthold, *Geography*, 208.

²⁴³ Juvaini, 147.

The amir of Gilan, Su'luk, offered his help to the Sultan, but the Khwarazmshah stayed only a week before moving on to Ustundar, a region north of Qazvin.²⁴⁴ Here, Juvaini says, the last of his treasure was lost or depleted. The details are not given, but it might have been in buying back support from the amirs of Mazandaran who had already been defeated by Jebe. The Sultan headed further east to Dubaye in the area of Amul. He had managed to pass Sübödäi's forces near Qazvin and arrived successfully in Mazandaran. His success was probably due to the fact that he had completely abandoned his royal retinue and was fleeing with only a very small number of companions. He had clearly discarded any clothing or other indications of his royalty as the Mongols failed to recognize him at Hamadan. Here the Mongols reacquired Muhammad's trail for Juvaini says that whenever the Sultan stopped, the Mongols were immediately behind him.²⁴⁵

The amirs of Mazandaran did offer assistance and suggested he retreat to the islands of the Caspian Sea.²⁴⁶ When the Mongols pursued him to Mazandaran he did just that. He hid on an island in the Caspian Sea, but Jebe sent a detachment that learned of his location.²⁴⁷ When the Mongols discovered him, he fled to a second island, the

²⁴⁴ The famous fortress of Alamut, which Hülegü destroyed 30 years later, was in this area.

²⁴⁵ Juvaini, 385.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ None of the primary sources supply the name of the island to which Muhammad fled to, however we know that he departed to the Island from the region of Gorgan (called Astarabad in the nineteenth century) at the southeast of corner of the Caspian Sea, east of Amul. We also know that immediately after his death, Jalal al-Din and two of his brothers met with the Khwarazmian amirs at Gorgan, as will be discussed below. Today there are two minor islands in Gorgan bay and two major islands far to the north off the coast of modern Turkmenistan, Ogurchinsky Island (previously called Oghurtshali or Orghurtjali) and Mikhailov Island to the south and north of the Cheleken Peninsula respectively. In 1873 Arminius Vambery concluded that Muhammad fled to Ogurchinsky Island, yet records show that the water level of the Caspian Sea is in constant fluctuation which can, and has, dramatically altered the topography of the Sea, particularly in regard to its islands (Vambery, 135.). In 1825 James Fraser published a map of Persia that shows a significantly more islands in the Caspian Sea and shows the Cheleken Peninsula as a series of islands separated from the mainland by a wide channel (James B. Fraser *Narrative of a Journey to Khorasan in the Years 1821 and 1822*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.). It also shows some small islands off the coast of Gilan, near Resht, one large island close to the coast near Amul, several more islands at Gorgan Bay, and a different mouth to the Atrek River, which historical travelers say had several small islands. None of these islands exist today, and may not have existed in Amerty's time in 1873. Compounding this complication is the fact that sometime between the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries the Oxus and Jaxartes Rivers both changed their courses from flowing into the Caspian Sea to flowing into

detachment lost his trail and turned back to assist in the siege of the castles in Mazandaran.

Jebe allowed Sübödäi, who was to the north in Qazvin, to pick up the trail of the Khwarazmshah while he himself returned to Hamadan. While in Hamadan, Jebe heard that “a considerable portion of the Sultan’s Army had assembled in Sujas.”²⁴⁸ Sujas was two hundred miles north of Hamadan, but only one hundred miles northwest of Qazvin, where Sübödäi presumably remained. It is surprising that Jebe’s force is pictured so central and active in the pursuit, with one of his detachments remaining behind to assault the castles in Mazandaran and another following the Sultan to the Caspian Sea, while Sübödäi’s activities are unclear. It seems reasonable to conclude that Sübödäi’s primary role was laying in wait for the fleeing Sultan while Jebe herded him. However, Rashiduddin seems to indicate that both generals participated in wiping out the Sultan’s force in Sujas.²⁴⁹ We know for certain that Muhammad Khwarazmshah was not present to lead his army. Juvaini says it was led by two commanders, Beg-Tegin Silahdar and Kuch-Bugha Khan.²⁵⁰ Nasawi noted a battle between the Mongols and the Sultan’s army and he may have been referring to this battle. If so, the size of 20,000 troops for this force may be accurate. Juvaini says Jebe wiped out the Khwarazm force, “utterly destroying them.”

After destroying the army in Sujas, the Mongols attacked Zanjan, to the northwest.²⁵¹ They killed everyone, plundered for supplies, and then returned to Qazvin.

the Aral Sea. The rivers may have flowed into the Caspian Sea or into both seas at various times over the last three thousand years. Today, eighty percent of the influx to the Caspian Sea is provided by the Volga River and the addition of two major rivers would have resulted in a higher water level. Therefore the Caspian Sea conceivably had many more islands on its coastline in the thirteenth century than in even the early eighteenth century when Fraser mapped it. This makes the task of identifying the island to which Muhammad fled impossible, aside from concluding that it was in the general vicinity of Gorgan.

²⁴⁸ Juvaini, 147. Sujas was a smaller town near Sultaniya.

²⁴⁹ Rashiduddin, 258.

²⁵⁰ Juvaini, 147. Boyle speculates this Kuch-Bugha Khan was the same commander that died fighting under Jalal-ad-Din against the second invasion of the Mongols in the 1230s. Juvaini, 147 note 23.

²⁵¹ Rashiduddin, 258.

They battled the Qazwinis and took the city by force. The fighting continued into the city and Rashiduddin says 50,000 men were killed. This number seems high, except that Rashiduddin mentions the citizens fighting house-to-house with only knives. It is possible most of these deaths were common men fighting with only daggers. After the Battles of Sujas and Qazvin, Jebe and Sübödäi moved back to Ray and coordinated the pursuit of the Khwarazmshah.²⁵²

The Death of the Khwarazmshah

Jebe had left a detachment to lay siege to the castles where the Sultan had hidden his family and treasure during his first pass through Mazandaran.²⁵³ Jebe's second detachment, which departed from Ray and missed the Sultan on the island in the Caspian, returned to the siege and the castle fell within days.²⁵⁴ When word of his family's fate reached the Sultan he fell ill and died. Saunders places his death in December 1220 and Barthold concludes it was in January 1221.²⁵⁵ At this point in almost every source we suddenly learn that Jalal al-Din was at his father's side during the entire flight from Nishapur to the islands in the Caspian. It seems surprising that Jalal al-Din accompanied his father in his pathetic flight since he was an outspoken advocate of resistance. However, Juvaini explains that though they continued to have disputes along the journey, Muhammad requested that his son remain by his side. In fact both Jalal al-Din and his two younger brothers, Uzlaq and Aq, accompanied Muhammad in his flight.²⁵⁶ Jalal al-

²⁵² Ibid., 259.

²⁵³ Juvaini, 146.

²⁵⁴ See note 208 above. The Mongols moved up to the fortress and encamped outside. The garrison and women quickly ran out of water and after just "ten to fifteen days" they attempted to escape. They were captured and sent east to Genghis Khan. Juvaini says they were not sent to Genghis Khan until the year 1221-1222. When they reached the Khan he tortured the vizier that had been with the Shah's wife. He put all the males to death and sent the women into captivity. Juvaini says the castle had never suffered a water shortage before and the timing of the lack of rain was abnormal. He attributed it to an act of fate. Of the Shah's women, one of his daughters was given to Genghis Khan's son Chaghatai and one he took as his own concubine. The rest were given to various viziers and amirs. Juvaini, 466-468.

²⁵⁵ Saunders, 59; Barthold, *Turkestan*, 422.

²⁵⁶ Juvaini, 399.

Din was not the heir to the Sultan's throne. Though younger than Jala-al-Din, Uzlaq was the favorite of Muhammad's mother, Terken Khatun, and had therefore been appointed the heir apparent. Rashiduddin says that during his dying hours, Muhammad demoted Uzlaq and appointed Jalal al-Din as his successor.²⁵⁷

After the Sultan's death, Jalal al-Din surreptitiously returned to Gorgan and met with some Khwarazm amirs. Rashiduddin says that due to Jalal al-Din's "audacity" several of the amirs plotted to murder him.²⁵⁸ Juvaini adds that the amirs thought that if Jalal al-Din were allowed to become the Sultan "each would have a rank and station assigned to him beyond which it would be impossible to advance one step, and offices would be allotted solely in accordance with merit."²⁵⁹ One amir informed Jalal al-Din of the plot and he fled towards Nishapur, crossing the Qara Qum desert to Shadyakh. On the way he clashed with a small force of Mongols, but escaped safely. His brothers, Uzlaq and Aq, fled by the same route when the Mongols attacked Gorgan, encountered the same Mongol detachment, but both were killed.²⁶⁰ Though some scholars have assumed these Mongol units were operating from Khorasan, this seems unlikely. Gorgan was in Persia at the southeast corner of the Caspian, while Genghis Khan and Tolui had not yet even begun their famous invasion of Khorasan. Therefore we can conclude that it was a detachment from Jebe hunting for Muhammad or his sons that encountered Jalal al-Din followed by his brother. When they killed Jalal al-Din's brothers they may have captured some of their retinue and this is likely when they learned of Muhammad's death

²⁵⁷ Rashiduddin, 252. Juzjani alone records a different version of the Khwarazmshah's death. He erroneously claims that in his final hours Muhammad requested that Jalal al-Din take him back to Khwarazm saying "for from thence was the commencement of our dominion," and that he subsequently died on the road (Juzjani, 279). This account should be dismissed because a variety of other sources relate that Muhammad did indeed die on an island in the Caspian. Rashiduddin specifically relates that it was not until many years later that Jalal al-Din gave order for his father's bones to be removed from the island in the Caspian and to be re-interred at the fortress of Ardahin (Rashiduddin, 252). Raverty, Juzjani's translator also rejects the notion that Muhammad left the island alive.

²⁵⁸ Rashiduddin, 252.

²⁵⁹ Juvaini, 401.

²⁶⁰ Boyle, 317.

and Jalal al-Din's flight east. Jalal al-Din stayed in Shadyakh for three days making logistical arrangements. On February 10, 1221, he left Shadyakh for Ghazna, where an amir had gathered a sizable army. From here he moved to India where he eventually fought the Battle of Parvan against Genghis Khan.

Jebe and Sübödäi dispatched a messenger with a report to Genghis Khan,

Sultan Mohammed has died and his son Jalal al-Din has fled in that direction. We are no longer worried about him, and in accordance with your command we will spend a year or two conquering as many lands as we can and then return via the Qipchaq Gates to the rendezvous point commanded in Mongolia. God willing and through Genghis Khan's fortune.²⁶¹

Jebe and Sübödäi had accomplished their first mission objective, but their campaign had just begun for they were to campaign independently for the next three years. They had already captured many cities during the pursuit. al-Maqrizi's summarizes the Mongol conquests when they burst upon the political landscape of the Islamic world. He lists their victories in geographic order rather than chronological, "The Tatars won Samarkand this year; they also routed the Sultan Ala-al-Din [Khwarazmshah Muhammad], and they subdued al-Rayy [Ray], Hamadhan, and Qazwin. They waged war with the Georgians, and conquered Farghanah, Tirmidh, Khwarazm, Khurasan, Marw, Nisapur, Tus, Herat, and Ghaznah."²⁶²

Jebe and Sübödäi were now transitioning to an exclusive focus on conquest and with that transition their first task was to capture adequate grazing land for a campaign headquarters. According to Engels, in his analysis of the Macedonian army's movements through what was later known as Persian Iraq, the region is extremely frigid and barren in the winter: "this region has the most severe winters in any part of Persia and as late as March, snow covers the entire area, often to a depth of three or four feet." He also

²⁶¹ Rashiduddin, 258.

²⁶² Al-Maqrizi, 182.

mentions several armies that were historically immobilized by being caught in Hamadan (Ecbatana) when winter arrived, such as Antiochus Sidetes in 130 BC, Darius, king of Persia, not to mention Muhammad Khwarazmshah himself in 1218.²⁶³ Jebe and Sübödäi had such an extraordinary number of horses to feed and needed to be able to strike out into more arid regions during the summer months, so their wintering and base of operations were determined solely by logistical considerations. Therefore, their first order of business after the death of Muhammad was to seize control of the best pasture lands they could find and establish a base of operations that would provide adequate fodder for their horses. Once this logistical goal was accomplished, they would be free to conduct operations from this base. This pattern was to be followed in their invasion north of the Caucasus and by the second and third invasions as well. Jebe and Sübödäi's intelligence indicated that to the northwest was the region's best pastures, and as winter was approaching they made their way towards Azerbaijan and Mughan.

²⁶³ Engels, 75.

Chapter 5 The First Invasion: The Campaign of Conquest

North for the Winter: 1220

Juvaini says the Mongol's ultimate destination was the region of Mughan and that during that particular winter the roads were blocked up with a great deal of snow.²⁶⁴ He is presumably referring to the roads and passes in Northern Persia and Persian Iraq and was providing it as the reason the Mongols remained in Mughan for the winter before continuing their campaign in the spring of 1221. Even in the 1800s during a strong winter the ground could be covered in an unbroken blanket of snow from Tehran to Armenia.²⁶⁵

The Mongol force "plundered and massacred" throughout Persian Iraq and from there passed Tabriz to Ardabil in Azerbaijan, which they took by siege and plundered.²⁶⁶ From Ray, the route to Tabriz was back to the northwest through Qazvin. They had already devastated Qazvin and so the plundering in Persian Iraq must have been among the smaller cities along the way, such as Abhar, Zanjar, and Miyane. After the city of Qazvin they continued through the fertile plain of Qazvin with low hills to the right and the higher Elburz range beyond. After Zanjar, they moved over a high mountain pass and down into the Azerbaijan region where they likely passed Turkmanchai, where the Russians and Persian Shah settled the current border between Iran and the Soviet Union in 1828.²⁶⁷ From there, the Mongols entered Azerbaijan and came to its capital of Tabriz. As they approached Tabriz, the Eldiguzid *atabeg* of Azerbaijan, Özbeg, sent a messenger asking for peace and sending money and many animals to the Mongols. The Mongols accepted the gift, turned back from approaching Tabriz, and instead headed to Ardabil. If

²⁶⁴ Juvaini, 147; Rashiduddin, 259.

²⁶⁵ Mounsey, 126

²⁶⁶ Juvaini, 147.

²⁶⁷ Mounsey, 110.

the Mongols were placated prior to actually reaching the city of Tabriz, as the sources indicate, then they likely took the southerly route to Ardabil through Sarab. Juvaini places a brutal siege of Ardabil during this march north to Mughan in late 1220, but Rashiduddin places it between their invasions of Nakhchivan and Arran in late 1221.²⁶⁸ Due to its proximity to Jebe and Sübödäi's winter quarters in Mughan, it seems reasonable that Ardabil would have been secured in 1220 as Juvaini says. However, Juvaini does misplace the taking of Tabriz and Maragha in late 1221 along with Ardabil, which we know from Rashiduddin's detailed account were secured in early 1221. Though Ardabil was directly south of Mughan, Rashiduddin makes it clear that they took a route through Tabriz when coming and going from Mughan. When they set out south for campaigns each year they most likely headed southwest from Mughan, through Ahar and past Tabriz, thereby bypassing Ardabil. Rashiduddin provides much greater detail throughout Jebe and Sübödäi's campaigns in Azerbaijan and the Caucasus and it appears that he had access to considerably more information on the campaign than Juvaini. Therefore Rashiduddin's record is preferable over Juvaini when there is a discrepancy in this campaign.

The First Georgian Battle

The closest and most significant threat to the Mongol's new headquarters was Georgia. Mughan was under the indirect control of the Kingdom of Georgia and Boyle concludes that it was during their first stay in Mughan that the Mongols first encountered the Georgian army.²⁶⁹ The king's *atabeg*, Iwvane Mkhargrdzeli, and Iwvane's brother, Varham of Gagi, sent word of "the arrival of a strange people, speaking a strange tongue,

²⁶⁸ Juvaini, 147; Rashiduddin, 259.

²⁶⁹ Boyle, *Cambridge*, 311.

who were devastating Armenia.”²⁷⁰ The Mongols had already moved into Azerbaijan, which Georgia had dominated only ten years previously, but now the Georgian vassals of Armenia and Shirvan were clearly threatened by the incursions into Mughan and demanded a response from the king. According to Bedrosian’s translation of Vardan Arewelc’i, Jebe and Sübödäi had moved northwest into the meadowlands of Gugark and the Georgian army had to pursue the Mongols catching up to them at Kotman. This would seem to imply that the battle was not a preemptive strike by the Georgians but a response to a clear incursion into their territory.²⁷¹

Grigor records that Iwvane and Varham together raised 60,000 cavalry and led the Georgian forces out to attack the Mongol invaders.²⁷² Rashiduddin says that 10,000 Georgian troops battled the Mongols at that time while Allen places the number at 90,000 horsemen and reference a hasty levy by the King.²⁷³ Due to Grigor’s unreliability in dates and facts we must remain skeptical of his number, but Suny’s number of 90,000 seems excessively large.²⁷⁴ Fähnrich also considers an uncited report of 80,000 an exaggeration and favors the lower 60,000.²⁷⁵ Georgia was in the aftermath of its “golden era” under Queen Tamar and had a strong military organization, and the king’s contemplations of a crusade would certainly mean the kingdom was in a state of military readiness. It was known for its cavalry, so Grigor’s assertion of a force of 60,000 cavalry may be closer to reality than Rashiduddin’s meager 10,000, or Suny and Allen’s massive 90,000.

²⁷⁰ Allen, 110. Allen quotes from Brosset’s French translation of *The Georgian Chronicle*. As *atabeg*, Ywvane (John) was general over the king’s armies, a role he inherited from his brother in 1211. His son, Varham, was master of the royal estates. Gagi, or Gag as Grigor names it, was possibly a region between Tiflis and Ganja, according to Allen, map III. Grigor incorrectly names Varham as the son of Ywvane’s brother Plu Zakare, 25.

²⁷¹ Bedrosian, *Turko-Mongolian*, n164.

²⁷² Grigor, 25.

²⁷³ Rashiduddin, 259; Allen, 110.

²⁷⁴ Not only was Grigor extremely confused about the relationships of the key Georgians involved in this battle, but he was incorrect about when the King of Georgia died and placed the battle itself in the Armenian year of 663, which corresponds to 1214, 6 years before the Mongols came to the Near East.

²⁷⁵ Fähnrich, 167.

Suny has the king himself leading the Georgian forces. Grigor first says the King of Georgia led the forces out, but then immediately claims that King Lasha (Giorgi) was already dead and that Rusudan was on the throne with Ywvane as guardian of the kingdom.²⁷⁶ However it is well established that King Giorgi did not die until 1223 after his second battle with the Mongols, and was only then succeeded by his sister Rusudan. In any case, the forces met at the plain of Kotman.²⁷⁷ Kotman appears to be modern Khunani, just 25 miles south of Tiflis. Iwvane commanded the left wing and Varham the right. Grigor favors both Georgian commanders and blames their defeat on the chief of the Manasa stables. He accuses this man of hamstringing Iwvane's horse and thereby sabotaging the battle.²⁷⁸

Varham was winning on the right, while Iwvane was losing on the left. Their communication collapsed and Varham was unaware of Iwvane's situation. He pursued the Mongol left to Gardman. Upon hearing of the defeat on the left, Varham withdrew from the field of battle and returned to his fortress called Karherdz.²⁷⁹ Iwvane escaped the battle, for he survived to fight Jalal al-Din's invasion in 1226. It was the first major loss by the Georgian army in one hundred years. The Georgians lost the battle, but because the rough terrain was not favorable to the Mongol cavalry the Mongols did not invade Georgia. Grigor places this battle in 1214, which is clearly false. In all probability it occurred in very early 1221 and Boyle concludes it occurred in February 1221.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁶ Grigor, 25. Grigor also incorrectly calls Rusudan the King's daughter, when in fact she was his sister.

²⁷⁷ The exact location of Kotman is not certain. It is most likely Khunani, south of Tiflis towards Ganja in modern-day Azerbaijan. See Grigor note 11 or Allen, 110.

²⁷⁸ Grigor, 25.

²⁷⁹ Ibid..

²⁸⁰ Boyle, *Cambridge*, 311.

Consolidation: Spring 1221 – Winter 1222

The initial Mongol conquests in Azerbaijan were the first outside out of Khwarazm territory. The region had been under the suzerainty of the Georgian king and the Khwarazmians only conquered this area under Jalal al-Din subsequent to the first Mongol invasion.²⁸¹ With winter over and their horses well fed for another year of campaigning, and with their largest threat in the region decimated, the Mongols headed southwest out of Mughan to conquer the region of Azerbaijan more thoroughly, which they had only passed through on their way to winter pastures. They next headed south toward Maragha (south of Tabriz).²⁸² As the Mongols passed Tabriz a second time, the governor again sent tribute to satisfy them. They laid siege to Maragha, where Rashiduddin says they forced Muslim captives to fight against the walls of the city and killed any of them that tried to flee.²⁸³ This is the first and only mention of Jebe and Sübödäi using levies from captured territories. Although it proves they did conscript troops as they conquered, it does not appear that the practice was used as extensively as it was during subsequent invasions. They captured Maragha and plundered everything they could carry and burned or destroyed the rest. After departing they quickly returned to catch those who had emerged from hiding.²⁸⁴ From Maragha they headed toward Diyarbekir and Irbil. Diyarbekir (Amid) lies in Modern Turkey to the southwest of Lake Van, several hundred miles west of Tabriz. Irbil is southeast of Mosul (ancient Nineveh) in Northern Iraq. When the Mongols heard that the governor of Irbil, Muzaffar-ad-Din Kok-Bori, had numerous troops, they abandoned the attack.²⁸⁵

²⁸¹ *Atlas of Islam*, 24

²⁸² Allen simply says that after the victory, the Mongols headed back to Hamadan. Allen, 110.

²⁸³ Rashiduddin, 259

²⁸⁴ Saunders, 214 note 24.

²⁸⁵ In *Genghis Khan*, Turnbull separates the two battles with Georgia only by saying that the Mongols “returned to Azerbaijan and were on the point of marching against Baghdad to destroy the Abbasid Caliphate, but instead returned to Georgia, defeating another Georgian army,” 74. In addition to skipping over a period of almost two years between Georgian battles, he adds the incorrect notion that Jebe and

Juvaini next recounts the rebellion in Hamadan. While the Mongols were in Mughan, a leader named Jamal-ad-Din Ai-Aba led a rebellion that killed the *shahna* Jebe had installed in the city. In the spring when the snows in central Persia melted Jebe rode south to avenge the slaying of the *shahna*. It seems that the rebels believed the Mongols had moved on and would not come back, since when they learned that the Mongol force was returning they gave up their rebellion without a fight and their leader, Jamal-ad-Din, tendered submission. However, the Mongols generally made examples of those who resisted or rebelled, and they showed no mercy to the rebels in Hamadan. Jebe executed Jamal-ad-Din and the other ringleaders carried out a general massacre of the inhabitants.²⁸⁶

Juvaini then states that the Mongols again left Iraq for the north and subjugated Tabriz, Maragha and Nakhchivan. He has misplaced the capture of Tabriz and Maragha, since Tabriz was paying tribute and Maragha had already been taken by force.²⁸⁷ Rashiduddin adds that the departure from Persia towards Nakhchivan occurred in August-September of 1221.²⁸⁸ Therefore during 1221 they campaigned in Persia returning towards the Caucasus at the end of the summer. They spent another winter in Mughan and launched their invasion of Nakhchivan and Armenia at the end of the winter in early 1222.

Nakhchivan is on the direct route from Azerbaijan to Armenia and they would have ridden up to it along the dark mustard-colored Araxes River. The valley is normally

Sübödäi planned an invasion of Baghdad. He is perhaps confusing the planned attack on Irbil with an assault on the Caliph, however Muzaffar-ad-Din Kok-Bori was only an ally of the Caliph and not under his direct control. The planned assault was against Irbil and the Sultan of Rum, not the Caliph, nor Baghdad.

²⁸⁶ Juvaini, 148; Rashiduddin, 259.

²⁸⁷ Juvaini, 148-149. Nakhchivan is a mountainous region west of Mughan, northwest of Tabriz toward Armenia.

²⁸⁸ While al-Maqrizi says that the Mongols conquered Maragha, Hamadan, Azerbaijan, and Tabriz in 1222, both Juvaini's and Rashiduddin's chronologies place these conquests during 1221 after their first winter in Mughan, and it is unlikely they would have left Mughan unsecured for more than a year. Al-Maqrizi, 189.

brown and arid, but as the snow was melting the hills were likely green with new grass.²⁸⁹ In Nakhchivan the *atabeg* offered submission and received authority from the Mongols to rule his province under their control.²⁹⁰ From there Rashiduddin says they headed back to Azerbaijan and sacked Sarab and Ardabil.²⁹¹ From eastern Azerbaijan they headed north through Mughan to Arran. As they passed from Mughan, which is watered by the Araxes River, into the Kur River Valley, the terrain became steadily more dry and dun. In the distance to the north was the massive Caucasus mountain range. The Mongols killed old and young alike in Barda, before doing the same in Bailaqan and Gandja. Gandja was on the northern edge of Arran.

The Second Georgian Battle

According to Juvaini, after the Mongol force took Arran they moved northeast into Shirvan on the coast of the Caspian.²⁹² However, Rashiduddin, al-Maqrizi, and Grigor add that they first attacked Georgia a second time.²⁹³ Grigor places this battle three years after their first (1223), al-Maqrizi in 1223, Fahrnich concludes it was only two years later (1222), and Allen in late 1222 with the resulting death of the Georgian king on January 18, 1223.²⁹⁴ After this more thorough ransacking of Georgia, Grigor said the

²⁸⁹ Mounsey describes the harsh winter conditions, 85.

²⁹⁰ Juvaini, 148, and Rashiduddin, 259, record that the *atabeg* was Khamush, the deaf son of atabeg Oz-Beg. Boyle's note (148:29) which says Rashiduddin claims that Özbek himself bought off the Mongols from attacking Nakhchivan, is clearly confusing the previous encounter between the Mongols and Oz-Beg at Tabriz with the invasion of Nakhchivan. It would appear Özbek's son was ruling over Nakhchivan under his father in Tabriz.

²⁹¹ Rashiduddin, 259.

²⁹² Juvaini, 148-149.

²⁹³ Rashiduddin, 259-260.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*; Grigor, 25; Allen, 110; Al-Maqrizi, 190. Howorth, II.23. The first battle was fought in early 1221, and the second battle certainly occurred prior to the spring of 1223 when the Mongols were already battling the Russians. If the death of King Giorgi was truly in January 1223, then the battle likely took place in December 1222 or early January 1223. From February 1221 to December 1222 is roughly a difference of two years. The discrepancy could possibly be explained by Grigor's use of the Armenian calendar, which begins its year in August rather than in January, depending on precisely how Grigor was counting years. Otherwise Grigor's three years would be inaccurate. Grigor's erroneous placement of the first battle in 1214 and the second battle three years later, therefore in 1217, indicate Grigor's unreliability for dates for these events.

Mongols then “returned to their own land.”²⁹⁵ Grigor maintains that it was due to a specific order from the Great Khan that Jebe and Sübödäi invaded Georgia.²⁹⁶ Although Sübödäi and Jebe were in Persia long enough to communicate with the Great Khan, who was north of Transoxania in the winter of 1222, the other sources do not support this claim. Both Sübödäi and Jebe were expert strategists and could have easily made the decision based on their general mandate of conquest recorded by Rashiduddin , to target Georgia and Arran.

Yet we should not be hasty in attributing the second battle with the Georgians to keen strategy. As in the first battle it appears to be the Georgians’ attempt to raise an army to meet the Mongol threat instigated the battle, not an overtly aggressive move by the Mongols into Georgia proper. Rashiduddin says that the Georgians “had assembled an army and were ready for battle,” and implies that the Mongols headed to Georgia because of this.²⁹⁷ This time the Georgian king himself was leading the Georgian forces. The Mongols moved into the battle area. As they did so Jebe split off with five thousand troops and concealed them behind the main Mongol force under Sübödäi.²⁹⁸

The Mongols must have expected to need a stratagem to defeat the Georgians, as they intentionally hid Jebe before reaching the battlefield. They had faced the Georgian army before and knew of its basic size, composition, and tactics. If Grigor is correct, the Mongols were successful in their first encounter because of some treachery within the Georgian ranks, and not entirely because of Mongol superiority. Mongol intelligence must have reported a significantly superior force in this second engagement. Upon reaching the battlefield they discovered that the Georgians outnumbered them to the point

²⁹⁵ Grigor, 25.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Rashiduddin , 259.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 110.

that with little more than a skirmish, Sübödäi instantly put the first phase of the stratagem into action and fled. It does not appear to have been a fighting retreat, but a hasty flight.

The location of this battlefield is not clear, but it was certainly between Gandja and Tbilisi (Tiflis). The Mongol force fled southeast along the Kura river valley on the southern side of the Caucasus mountain range. They did not attempt to flee south toward their base of operations in Mughan or Azerbaijan, but northward toward Derbent instead. For this reason the main force rode all the way to Shemakha and, with the Georgians still trailing some distance behind, attacked the town, killed many, and took captives.

Derbent was known as the “Iron Gates,” a name dating from Alexander the Great’s time. In 1222 it was a vassal to the Georgians. In 1255, William of Rubruck passed through Derbent and described its layout, which explains the problem Jebe and Sübödäi were facing.²⁹⁹ The Caucasus range and the Caspian Sea both run northwest in parallel, with only a small strip of passable land between them. Derbent lies on one of the narrowest sections of this strip on a mile-wide plain between the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus mountains. William says the stout city walls ran from the edge of the water to the first peak along the mountains, a mile in length. In the middle of the city was a gateway and a walled channel through the city from north to south. The only way past the city was through the gates. At the mouths of the passage were two towers on either side of the opening. Alexander built this fortification as a choke point to keep the nomadic forces from the north out of Persia, and he found it very effective. Just a few years after Jebe and Sübödäi traversed the area Jalal al-Din gained control of Derbent, and even though he had 50,000 Qipchaq allies to aid him, he was able to take the city only by bribing its prince with land grants.

The sea lay to the right side of the city, and on the left side the wall ran up to a small fortress at the top of the first hill. One might assume the city could be bypassed by

²⁹⁹ William of Rubruck, 260.

going around the city via the mountains, but within a matter of two miles from the water the first mountain peak rises to over 3,000 feet, and within fifty miles rise to 13,000 feet. With these terrific mountains to the west and the sea to the right the fortified city of Derbent was a formidable barrier and worthy of its nickname as “the Iron Gates.” Jebe and Sübödäi clearly had deployed scouts to Derbent or had gathered intelligence on the route, as they knew without arriving at Derbent that they could not possibly get through. In any case, the city could not be passed without being taken or by finding an adequate guide to find a route through the mountains.

The other problem with heading to Derbent was that the Georgians’ allies were already assembling an army north of Derbent, for when Jebe and Sübödäi eventually arrived there, an alliance of Alans (Ossetians) and Qipchaqs awaited them. Kirakos says it was this build up of Qipchaqs and Alans near Derbent that caused Jebe and Sübödäi to pursue a different route, though he erroneously believed this Mongol force had entered the Caucasus from the north via Derbent, rather than through Persia.³⁰⁰ The Qipchaqs were close allies of the Georgians, having fought under Queen Tamara as recently as 1203 against the atabeg of Azerbaijan. The Alans were even closer allies of the Georgians, for Georgian king’s maternal grandmother was an Alan princess and the Georgians sometimes used them as mercenaries.³⁰¹

The Mongols were unable to “get through Derbent,” as Rashiduddin puts it.³⁰² It does not seem surprising that Shemakha was unable to provide what the Mongols demanded, for though it lies on the southeast foothills of the Caucasus range, it is nearly a hundred miles due south of Derbent and not a suitable place to cross the mountains if one wishes to exit north of Derbent. The range was considered virtually impassable from

³⁰⁰ Kirakos, 167.

³⁰¹ Allen, 103 and 99. David II (r. 1089-1125) had married a Qipchaq princess and used both Ossetian and Qipchaq mercenaries. King Giorgi III (r. 1156-1184) married the Ossetian princess who was Tamara’s mother.

³⁰² Rashiduddin , 260

Arran. In winter the roads to the high villages are frozen over and the villages in the mountains are completely isolated. Even today, with four-wheel drive vehicles many villages cannot be reached in winter. In order to cut through the range, one would need to enter the mountains seventy miles to the northwest, near Sheki, which now presumably was behind the approaching Georgian army. It is unlikely anyone in Shemakha would even have known a route through the mountains as the city was not near the region with a suitable pass. Furthermore, the people of the region do not normally pass through the portion of the range in question, as the Caucasus Mountains run between 11,000 and 17,000 feet from south of Derbent to northwest modern Georgia. In the region that would need to be passed it averages around 11,500 feet.

Knowing the route north was blocked at Derbent and a pass through the mountains was not readily apparent, the reason the Mongols were not willing to retreat south is a significant mystery. None of the sources shed light on this odd timing of their drive north. Perhaps they had heard of the superior pasturelands to the north, and needed to restock their supply of horses. After the two battles with the Georgians, and the large battle with the Sultan's army in Sujas, as well as countless sieges through a period of two years, the Mongol force of 30,000 troops had to have been significantly reduced. Carpini says the Mongol custom was that when a city of people was captured it was required to contribute one in every ten boys or men to the Mongol forces.³⁰³ However, none of the sources mention this practice during Jebe and Sübödäi's campaign. In fact we must assume their numbers were reduced to at least 25,000, most likely fewer. Even the latter number assumes numerous levies from conquered cities. The campaign in the Qipchaq Steppe and in Russia included continued victories, but at the same time reveals desperation in the Mongol strategy and reliance on stratagems by the two generals. Their reduced force may have not been enough to cope with any forces of the Caliph in Central

³⁰³ Carpini, 79.

Iraq, the Sultan of Rum in western Iraq, or with the rebounding Jalal al-Din in India. They may have not been able to return south at the time, and so pressed north to take their chances finding their way back to Central Asia. However, the Caliph and the Sultan of Rum had proved no threat to their presence in the Near East thus far and Jalal al-Din did not move from India to the Near East until Jebe and Sübödäi were well gone. The Mongol force certainly encountered larger enemy forces to the north than they would have by remaining in the Near East. Therefore this possibility does not seem sustainable.

Another possibility for their move north is that they were scouting for additional hunting and grazing territory for later campaigns. They had clearly identified the Mughan region, and Azerbaijan in general, as an adequate base of operations for their massive herd of horses. This was a key location for Mongol operations in the Near East and the Caucasus. In the subsequent invasions of 1231 and 1252, the Mongols again set up their base of operations in Azerbaijan, where the later Il-Khan kingdom centered. Yet to the north was an even larger region of steppe lands similar to those in Mongolia. It may have been the immediate logistical needs of Jebe and Sübödäi or reconnaissance for future logistical needs that drove them north into new territory. Either way it proved excellent reconnaissance work, for the steppe lands they identified to the north served as the launching point for the later Mongol invasion of Russia by Batu and Sübödäi and became the headquarters of the Golden Horde.

Lastly, Rashiduddin 's account of the two generals' instructions was that they were commanded to return "via the Qipchaq Steppe," and that their campaign should be completed within three years. The year 1222 was at a close, and the allotted time for the mission was expiring. However, given the circumstances, that of a numerous enemy in pursuit, it still seems that at least a temporary retreat south would have been an option, yet the two generals seemed inexplicably driven to have moved north despite the imminent threat. Rashiduddin indicates that the invasion of Nakhchivan and Arran

occurred in late 1221 and places their rendezvous with Genghis Khan in the autumn of 1224.³⁰⁴ If the expedition rejoined Genghis Khan in Central Asia in mid to late 1224 and invaded Russia in the spring of 1223, this most likely places the defeat of the Georgians in late 1222. A December date for the battle is consistent with the Georgian king's subsequent death in January 1223. This means that the Mongol forces remained in the Azerbaijan and Mughan area for one full year, from late 1221 to late 1222, campaigning only in the immediate vicinity. Therefore the generals were obeying their command to head north, even though the Caucasus had not been successfully annexed to the empire, only temporarily neutralized.

When the captives they had taken at Shemakha were not able to provide a route through the mountains that would allow them to bypass Derbent, and the Caucasus range was therefore deemed to be impassable, Jebe and Sübödäi were forced to go through with Jebe's ambush. It is likely that Sübödäi turned to face his pursuers while Jebe attacked the Georgians from the rear. The Georgian army was probably somewhat disorganized as most pursuing forces become and was caught unprepared. Rashiduddin records that when Jebe sprung his trap, "in an instant 30,000 Georgians were killed."³⁰⁵ If this number is accurate, then the entire Georgian army may have been considerably larger and the estimated 60,000 cavalry is substantiated. The Georgian army was devastated, and the Georgian king was mortally wounded, dying shortly after the battle in January 1223.³⁰⁶

After the defeat of the Georgian force, however, the Mongols did not make any further attacks on the Georgian kingdom, or attempt to follow up on their victory in battle. They captured no Georgian cities and installed no *shahnas*. Instead of

³⁰⁴ Rashiduddin , 260.

³⁰⁵ Ibid. Rashiduddin generally shows reliability in his number estimates, so this number should be considered accurate.

³⁰⁶ Allen, 110.

capitalizing on the destruction of the Georgian army and its moribund king, the Mongols continued to head north past Derbent toward Qipchaq territory. Again we must recognize the efficiency of the Mongol intelligence apparatus, as they knew what lay at Derbent and it appears that they anticipated a battle north of Derbent. They therefore required a guide to lead them through the formidable mountain range and allow them to come out north of Derbent. The attempt to find a guide in Shemakha during the battle with the Georgians being unsuccessful, they employed another strategy. They headed to Shirvan, the region at the southeast end of the Caucasus range on the coast of the Caspian, and sent a message to the Shirvanshah requesting that he send representatives for truce talks. In order for the Shah to have taken this request seriously, he must either have been a fool, or the Mongol force had been so reduced that he believed they might have lost their ability to pose a serious threat. In either case, the Shah sent ten nobles. Rashiduddin says Jebe and Sübödäi immediately killed one and seized the others, demanding of the captives “show us the way through Derbent, we’ll spare your lives; otherwise we’ll kill you too.”³⁰⁷ The captives guided them through. We learn elsewhere that the key to their impressive passage of the mountain was in their ingenuity. Even on pain of death, the guides were unable to provide a suitable route, for the path they took encountered a gorge that Kirakos called an “impassible” spot. Jebe and Sübödäi were not to be stopped by a mere gorge, however, and had all their men pour rocks and dirt into the gorge until it was filled and they were able to cross it. Thus Jebe and Sübödäi passed through the “impassible” Caucasus Mountains and bypassed the heavily defended Derbent.³⁰⁸

Though Jebe and Sübödäi had captured the crucial grazing territory of Azerbaijan and Mughan, defeated the Georgians, and made successful raids into Persia and Persian Iraq, they had not effectively conquered any of the Near East or the Caucasus. They

³⁰⁷ Rashiduddin , 259-60.

³⁰⁸ Kirakos, 167.

received momentary tribute from various cities to themselves, but failed to establish a permanent tributary relationship between any of those cities and the Mongol Empire. They installed *shahnas* in some cities, but these *shahnas* were all killed immediately after Jebe and Sübödäi's departure, for they are not present when Jalal al-Din was to arrive on the scene in 1225. Jebe and Sübödäi had had the opportunity to establish direct control of these areas, but instead maintained control of the plains of Mughan and made only pillaging raids into the surrounding areas. Even when the Georgian army was routed, the Mongols made no effort to exploit their victory and take actual control of Georgia. Jebe and Sübödäi, therefore, left a swath of destruction in their wake in the Near East and Caucasus, but not a trail of truly conquered cities and states. The remainder of their campaign was to show a similar lack of results.

The Qipchaq Steppe and the Russian Response: Winter 1222 – Summer 1224

North of Derbent, the Alans had been preparing for a Mongol incursion, for there were two armies present in Derbent: a force of Alans and one of allied Qipchaqs. Sübödäi and Jebe used a new strategy: divide and conquer. They sent a message to beguile the Qipchaq force saying, "We and you are one group and of one sort. The Alans are aliens to us. We have made a pact with you not to harm one another. We will give you whatever gold and clothing you want. Leave them with us."³⁰⁹ The Mongols were appealing to ethnic sensibilities in order to divide the enemy. They were also bribing an enemy by offering money and clothes. This behavior was rarely seen by any Mongol force and reveals that although they were still rich in the booty they had captured over the previous two years, they were running dangerously low on manpower. They were facing a force they could not numerically overwhelm, and they had the mountains and Derbent

³⁰⁹ Rashiduddin, 260. The Alans and Qipchaqs were in fact both of Turkic origin, however the Qipchaqs had more recently migrated from the eastern steppes and may have been more familiar in language and in culture to the Mongols than the Alans.

at their back, so they could not re-use the false flight ruse. The offer of bribery was successful. The Qipchaqs withdrew and the Mongols engaged and defeated the Alans, massacring and looting “as much as they could.”³¹⁰ Once separated, both the Qipchaqs and Alans must not have been extremely numerous since the Qipchaqs took the opportunity to avoid a conflict and the Alans were devastated.

Rashiduddin says “the Qipchaqs, in hopes of peace, dispersed to their own territory.”³¹¹ However, as soon as the Alans were defeated the Mongols attacked the Qipchaqs. The Mongols had given the promised bribe to the Qipchaqs in Derbent, but now they recaptured it “taking back many times over what they had been given before turning back.”³¹² *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle* reveals that the Qipchaqs attempted to mount a resistance under their chief prince, Jurij Koncakovic, but were unsuccessful. Many of the surviving Qipchaqs fled to the Dnieper River south of Kiev.

Another group of surviving Qipchaqs moved south into the Caucasus region, which the Mongols had recently vacated. They raided and looted in Derbent and Georgia, and the city of Gandja permitted them to settle in Arran. This influx of militant refugees from Jebe and Sübödäi’s campaigns in the north merely prevented the Georgian and Armenia nobility from rebuilding their defenses.³¹³ Therefore the Georgian general, Iwvane, attack them. He failed, but later in 1223 Iwvane formed an alliance with the Lezghians, Azerbaijanis, and others and killed and enslaved the entire camp of Qipchaqs.³¹⁴

The Mongols wintered in “that area [the Qipchaq Steppe], which was all pasture lands.”³¹⁵ *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle* places the Mongols in southern Ukraine by

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle*, 28. Rashiduddin, 260.

³¹³ Kirakos, 206-7.

³¹⁴ The Lezghi are a Muslim Caucasian people who today live in the Eastern Caucasus Mountains in the Republic of Azerbaijan and in Dagestan, Russia.

³¹⁵ Rashiduddin, 260.

April of 1223, so if Rashiduddin is correct he must be referring to the winter months of January and February 1223. From the long year of battles in Georgia, Derbent, and the Qipchaq plains, the Mongols needed to restock and recuperate. The horses needed to be fattened and the Mongols could hunt their food as they had in Mongolia, living off the land rather than off captured goods.

Jalal al-Din Rebounds

Jebe and Sübödäi departed from the Near East and were resting on the Qipchaq Steppe when Jalal al-Din received word in India that his brother, Ghiyas-ad-Din, had established himself as the ruler of Iraq. The Khwarazmian nobles of the region supported Jalal al-Din over his brother and asked the Sultan to come to Iraq. At the same time Mongol forces in India were pursuing him, so he headed to Iraq.³¹⁶ He avoided Mongol controlled Khorasan and headed west along the Gulf of Oman through Markan into Fars, to Shiraz and thence to Isfahan. In Isfahan, Jalal al-Din learned that his brother was in Ray with the leaders of the Khwarazmian army. Jalal al-Din took the small force at his disposal and dressed them as Mongols. When he suddenly approached Ray, his brother and the generals fled in alarm. The Sultan then sent word to his brother and his advisers to come submit themselves to his leadership and they consented. This incident clearly shows that while Jebe and Sübödäi were on the Qipchaq Steppe, they had already lost control of Ray and Mazandaran. The Mongols had not lost the ability to intimidate the region, as evidenced by Ghiyas-ad-Din's alarm at the arrival of just a small Mongol force. However, the Khwarazmian leadership was regrouping in the wake of Jebe and Sübödäi's departure.³¹⁷ The *shahnas* and garrisons might have been enough to hold some

³¹⁶ Juvaini, 417.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 420. In the early part of 1224, as Jebe and Sübödäi were campaigning in Kievan Russia, Jalal al-Din went to Tustar in Khuzistan and from there to Baghdad seeking an alliance with the Caliph. Due to past hostility between the Caliph and Muhammad, the Caliph rejected Jalal al-Din's request for an alliance

towns, but was clearly not adequate to maintain control of an entire region such as Mazandaran and Persian Iraq.

Kievan Russia

During March of 1223 Jebe and Sübödäi moved on from the central Qipchaq Steppe. They did not remain close to the Caspian Sea, nor did they head east to rendezvous with the greater Mongol forces in Central Asia, but instead headed into the western parts of Qipchaq territory north of the Crimea and south of Kievan Russia.³¹⁸ Their purpose of moving west was to explore the reach of the new grazing territory they had acquired and to take control of all the territory controlled by the Qipchaqs.

According to Rashiduddin, while the Russians considered the best course of action, the Mongols entered the Crimea and attacked the city of Sudak on the coast of the Black Sea.³¹⁹ This was the first attack, minor though it may have been, by the Mongols against the Sultan of Rum.³²⁰ After the fertile steppes of the Qipchaq plains, Crimea would have been a ripe area for plunder and booty since it was the hub of several trade routes. The rich port of Sudak would have been a valuable prize and given the Mongols the opportunity to re-supply.

Jebe and Sübödäi's invasion of the Qipchaq Steppe and the Crimea provoked a reaction from the Russians. After the devastation of Qipchaq territory, one of their

against the Mongols. He sent troops to kill the new Sultan, but Jalal al-Din narrowly defeated them and returned to Persian Iraq.

³¹⁸ Al-Maqrizi, 192. Al-Maqrizi records the Mongol invasion of Russia in 1224. Two Russian chronicles place the invasion in 1223, including a date of April by an eyewitness in *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle*. Al-Maqrizi's date must therefore be discounted. Turnbull claims that the Mongols were leaving the Crimea for Mongolia when the Russians attacked, but does not give a source, *Genghis Khan*, 74.

³¹⁹ Rashiduddin, 260. Thackston ties this to William of Rubruck's account of a city called "Soldaia" in footnote 1. Boyle, *Iran* 311. *The Cambridge History of Iran* identifies this city as the Genoese port of Soldaia. While the attack on Sudak is widely accepted by modern scholars, we must question the authenticity of this account for the simple reason that only Rashiduddin mentions it and the Russian chronicles do not.

³²⁰ The Sultan of Rum had seized Sudak from the Genoese in 1221. Ibn-al-Bibi records the city surrendered without a fight and joined the Sultan against the Russians and Qipchaqs. A Russian and Qipchaq allied force of ten thousand attempted to dislodge the Seljuks and failed. Vernadsky, 236.

surviving leaders, Korian, had sent word to his son-in-law, Mstislav, the Russian prince of Galicia, “Today the Tartars [Mongols] have seized our land, tomorrow it will be yours.” Along with his note he gave many treasures, camels, horses, and girls. His persuasion and the Russians’ desire to maintain the Qipchaqs as a buffer against other enemies moved Mstislav to appeal to the other princes, “If we, brothers, do not help these, then they will certainly surrender to them, then the strength of those will be greater.”³²¹ The princes quickly met in Kiev. They debated the issues and ultimately decided to act. The northern provinces of Novgorod and Suzdalia did not contribute to the effort, but otherwise in the words of *The Chronicle of Novgorod* the “whole of Russian Land” went out against the Mongols. *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle* clarifies that the princes of Kiev, Kozel’sk, Chernigov, and Halych all participated as did many younger princes without principalities. Each province mustered its forces and then they all gathered together at the Dnieper River south of Kiev at Zarub. They had an allied force of Russians and Qipchaqs, which Nicolle estimates at 80,000-100,000 with perhaps 15,000 to 20,000 professionally equipped.³²²

The main forces of Kiev set out together in the month of April 1223. They arrived at Varangian Island on the Dnieper and “were joined by the entire [Qipchaq] nation,” and “by the men of Cernigov, Kiev, and Smolensk, and by other nations.”³²³ Presumably these were the foot troops and *boyar* manpower joining the nobles, their cavalry, and the more professional soldiers. The identity of the “other nations” is unclear. It is possible the Russians had mobilized allies or hired mercenaries from the west. At this crossing the force was joined by the nobles and their men of Galicia on horseback. The *boyars* of Galicia took boats down the Dniester from Galicia to the Black

³²¹ *The Chronicle of Novgorod*, 65.

³²² *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle* mentions that one of the great Qipchaq princes was baptized during these events. It is possible he converted to Christianity as part of a compact of aid by the Russians. Nicolle, *Kalka River*, 60.

³²³ *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle*, 28.

Sea and then proceeded up the Dnieper River to join the Russian forces and stopped “at a ford of the river Xortica, near Protolcha.”³²⁴ *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle* claims they used 1,000 boats to transport their troops and says that, “all of us crossed the Dnieper without getting wet so that the water was completely covered by the multitude of people.”³²⁵ This demonstrates that the chronicler was trying to emphasize the truly massive size of the allied force. It also suggests that the chronicler himself was an eyewitness to the events and the subsequent battle.³²⁶

When the Mongols learned of the size of the Russian and Qipchaq force they dispatched three envoys to the Russian princes in an attempt to avoid conflict. It is possible that the Mongols had been able to re-enforce their troops with Qipchaq conscripts, who would have fit well into the nomadic cavalry army of the Mongols. Whether they had or not, their encounter with the Russians reveals a continued reliance on stratagems, rather than open battles against the Russians. In fact their use of the mock retreat was the most significant example of its kind, which points to the degree the Russian forces outnumbered or intimidated Jebe and Sübödäi.

The Mongols claimed to have no intention of invading Rus,

Behold, we hear that you are coming against us, having listened to the Polovets [Qipchaqs] men; but we have not occupied your land, nor your towns, nor your villages, nor is it against you we have come. But we have come sent by God against our serfs, and our horse-herds, and pagan Polovets men, and do you take peace with us. If they escape to you, drive them off thence, and take to yourselves their goods.³²⁷

The Russian princes were wise to not listen to the specious promises so similar to the lies Jebe and Sübödäi had told to the Qipchaqs themselves at Derbent. However, they unwisely killed the envoys and approached the Mongol’s vanguard at Oleshe, on the

³²⁴ Ibid., 29.

³²⁵ Ibid. The translator discounts this number as an exaggeration.

³²⁶ Ibid., 29. See note 46 for analysis on the use of “us” by the chronicler.

³²⁷ Ibid.

Dnieper. The Mongols sent a second set of envoys: “Since you have listened to the Polovets men and have killed our envoys, and are coming against us, come then, but we have not touched you, let God judge all.”³²⁸ The Mongols then came to the Dnieper River to see the boats of the Russians.³²⁹ The Mongol envoys had been killed, so the Mongols had not been able to obtain direct intelligence on the enemy force. Jebe and Sübödäi therefore sent their vanguard to the Russian position. When the Mongol vanguard neared, some of the Russian princes, with their cavalymen, went out to spy on them and see what kind of soldiers they were. One prince, Jurij Domamerich, observed that the Mongols were archers. Others said that the Mongols were a simple people, more simple than the Qipchaqs, but Jurij insisted that they appeared to be fighting men and brave warriors. The scouting party returned to the Russian camp and reported to Mstislav. The princes counseled a quick offensive against the Mongol force.³³⁰

Rashiduddin simply claims that when the Mongols discovered the size of the Russian force they retreated, but the Russian chronicles record the exact details.³³¹ *The Chronicle of Novgorod* says simply that Mstislav crossed the Dnieper with 1,000 men and chased off the Mongol vanguard.³³² *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle*, however, says that three princes led their forces across the River and engaged the Mongols on a Tuesday, thus it seems that the Russians crossed the Dnieper River on May 23, 1223.³³³ *The Chronicle of Novgorod* says that leader of the Mongol force they encountered was a general named “Gemya-Beg.”³³⁴ *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle* says the Russian

³²⁸ *The Chronicle of Novgorod*, 65. Both quotes.

³²⁹ *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle*, 29.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ Rashiduddin, 260.

³³² The size and identity of the Mongol force is not mentioned, however the simple fact that only a thousand Russian men were able to chase it off indicates it was a Mongol vanguard or outpost separate from Jebe and Sübödäi's main forces.

³³³ This date is derived from the date *The Chronicle of Novgorod* says the subsequent Battle of the Kalka occurred: May 31, 1223. See note 327 below.

³³⁴ Gemya-Beg could be a corrupted version of Jebe, which has also been spelled *Yeme*. However, the chronicle seems to show Gemya-beg as the commander of the Mongol vanguard. It further claims the

bowmen successfully drove off the Mongols. However, *The Chronicle of Novgorod* clarifies that the Mongol force retreated to a Qipchaq fort and that there the Russian army again chased off the Mongol force. Not only did the Russians pursue the Mongols into the Qipchaq steppe, killing more Mongols in the process, but they also captured a large number of cattle from the Mongol force. This is the second evidence that the Mongol expedition was bringing livestock along with its army. The livestock may very well have been captured from the Qipchaqs in the previous months. There were enough cattle for each man in the Russian force to have “more than his share.”³³⁵

After Mstislav and the other princes had chased off the Mongol vanguard, the rest of the Russian and Qipchaq force moved across the river. The main body of Mongols retreated without engaging the enemy. Sübödäi and Jebe fled a remarkable ten-day distance.³³⁶ Retreating for such a long distance may indicate the Mongols were outnumbered and needed the Russian force to be exceptionally spread out. After several days of hasty pursuit the Russians were spread out. The Mongols turned suddenly and attacked. Rashiduddin says the Mongols attacked “before they could assemble themselves, and many were killed.”³³⁷ He also says the entire fight lasted for a week and that in the end the Russians and Qipchaqs were routed. This “one-week” length for the battle supports the conclusion of eight days for the actual pursuit derived from the Russian Chronicles. The flight of Jebe and Sübödäi was a “ten-day distance,” but this

Mongols buried Gemya-Beg in the ground to hide him “wishing to preserve his life,” and that Mstislav then killed him. The story is not very plausible, whether the commander of the force was Jebe or not. If the story is true, then Gemya-Beg must have been a commander of 1,000 who was wounded and could not be transported in the hasty flight. However, the abundance of horses available makes the abandonment of any Mongol warrior, even if wounded, unlikely at best.

³³⁵ *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle*, 29.

³³⁶ While Rashiduddin says the chase was for ten days, *The Chronicle of Novgorod* says the Russians pursued them for nine days before arriving at the Kalka River and *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle* says eight days. *The Chronicle of Novgorod* further places the subsequent Battle of the Kalka on May 31, 1223. This date would fall on a Wednesday in 1223. The preceding Tuesday on which the crossing of the Dnieper took place must therefore fall on May 23, 1223. May 31 is eight days after May 23 and therefore *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle*'s eight days of pursuit is correct.

³³⁷ Rashiduddin, 260.

statement allows that it was covered in a much shorter time period. The Russian chronicles are less dramatic and give considerably more detail about the battle of the Kalka. The two chronicles do not agree on the specific cause for the Russian loss, though they both generally attribute it to confusion within the Russian force.

The Galician-Volynian Chronicle says the Russian prince, Danilo Romanovich, was sent across the river by Mstislav Mstislavich. He was sent with his own Volynian army supported by several other units. Danilo soon discovered the Mongol forces and reported to Mstislav commanded the main army to prepare for battle immediately. The Mongols must have been nearby and were clearly not retreating any longer.³³⁸

The Chronicle of Novgorod places the Battle of the Kalka on May 31, 1223. On the eastern bank of the River the Russian forces were engaged and several generals were wounded, including Danilo. Danilo was soon forced to flee and the Mongols forded the river soon after. They struck the main Russian camp which had been thrown into confusion by the fleeing Russian and Qipchaq forces. The Mongols killed several princes, pursuing some all the way back to the Dnieper River. The chronicler says the allied force was decimated placing the survivors at only one in ten, meaning that between 70,000 to 90,000 men were killed.³³⁹

³³⁸ *The Chronicle of Novgorod* records a simplified version in which the Russians sent the Qipchaqs across the Kalka River under a leader named Yarun to establish outposts on the far side of the river. Although Yarun was willing to fight, the rest of the Qipchaqs panicked and fled without a battle. They crossed the river and in their haste tramped through the Russian camp causing confusion. Before the Russians could organize themselves the Mongols had also forded the river and were upon them. As has been established, an eyewitness who participated in the campaign wrote *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle*. However, his explanation of the Russian loss must remain suspect because of the accusation he makes in favor of the prince of his own province, Galicia. The chronicle accuses Mstislav Mstislavich of intentionally not informing Mstislav Romanovich (Prince of Galicia) or Mstislav Svjatoslavich (Prince of Chernigov) of the Mongol onslaught out of jealousy. The chronicle claims that it was this act of betrayal that caused a significant portion of the Russian force to be unprepared for the Mongol attack. *The Galician-Volynian Chronicle*, 29.

³³⁹ *The Chronicle of Novgorod*, 66. Large casualty numbers are normally suspect when reported by the victor, but here the defeated Russians are estimating the losses.

After the Russian and Qipchaq allied force was destroyed, the Mongols entered the Ukraine region and slaughtered indiscriminately. Rashiduddin says they killed from town to town so that most cities were “empty of human beings.”³⁴⁰ After scouting the land for future invasion, the two generals brought their campaign to a close. From Russia, Jebe and Sübödäi finally headed east to Central Asia. The Great Khan and the majority of his forces had moved east to the Irtysh valley by the summer of 1224 and were in Mongolia by the summer of 1225.³⁴¹

Aftermath: Jalal al-Din and the New Khwarazmian Kingdom

As was shown above, Mazandaran was already slipping from Mongol control by 1223, though its proximity to Khorasan drove Jalal al-Din west to Azerbaijan. After Jalal al-Din’s rebuff by the Caliph in 1224, the Sultan took Hamadan and then headed to Tabriz and on to Arran and Azerbaijan, where the *atabeg* who had tendered submission to the Mongols, Özbek, was still sovereign. No mention is made of *shahnas* or Mongol garrisons. The Sultan took Maragha without a fight, and no Mongol presence is mentioned. The *atabeg* fled from the Sultan to Tabriz, so the Sultan laid siege that city. The *atabeg*’s wife, Malika, organized a betrayal of her husband and, with divorce papers in hand, promised to marry the Sultan. The amirs of the city followed her advice and surrendered to the Sultan. Jalal al-Din entered the city on July 25, 1225, ending the dynasty of the Eldiguzid *atabegs*. He quickly followed this invading Arran, Armenia, and Nakhchivan.³⁴²

³⁴⁰ Rashiduddin, *Compendium*, 260.

³⁴¹ Al-Maqrizi, 192. Al-Maqrizi indicates that the Mongols brought Qumm [Qom], Qasham, and Hamadan under their control in 1225. This date must be dismissed. The expedition had rejoined Genghis Khan in 1224 in Central Asia. It is possible that a subsequent force was sent to follow up the initial invasion, but this is not mentioned by any other sources. Tolui’s operations focused on Khorasan but did not enter Mazandaran or Persian Iraq.

³⁴² Kirakos, 187.

Juvaini makes no mention of any concern by the people of Azerbaijan over breaking from Mongol control, only whether to support the *atabeg* or the Sultan. The controlling influence of the Mongols in Azerbaijan and Arran departed along with the Mongol army. Within a year of the Mongol's departure the nobles of those regions had put aside all submission to the Mongols. Georgia also displayed a lack of concern for further Mongol threats. They were only concerned with the growing power of the Sultan. After the Sultan had taken control of *atabeg* Özbek's territories and invaded Armenia, the Georgians mustered 30,000 troops and invaded Arran and Azerbaijan. Juvaini claims their ambition was not only to drive the Sultan out of the region, but also to overthrow the Caliph of Baghdad and set up a "*Catholicos*" in his place and convert all the land's mosques into churches.³⁴³ The Georgians assembled in Armenia, but the Sultan made a preemptive strike. In late 1225 he defeated the Georgians and captured Iwvane, the Georgian general who had fought against the Mongols in their first, and most likely second engagements. Over the next several years the Sultan ravaged Georgia more severely than the Mongols had. He not only defeated their forces multiple times, but he devastated Tiflis.

Juvaini states that the Sultans of Rum, Armenia, and Syria assembled an army of Georgians, Armenians, Alans, Qipchaqs, and others, which Jalal al-Din defeated.³⁴⁴ In 1227-28 the Sultan returned to consolidating his control over the Caucasus, for as soon as the Sultan left the Caucasus to quell a break-away group in Kerman, the Georgians revolted. The Georgian rebels escaped and while in Gandja an agent of the Assassins killed one of the Sultan's trusted advisors. The Sultan moved to attack the Assassins in north central Persia.³⁴⁵

³⁴³ Juvaini, 426. Though the aspirations to overthrow the Caliph may be overstated by Juvaini, the Georgians certainly appear to have had an ambition to conquer Azerbaijan. *Catholicos* is an ecclesiastical title of Nestorian and Armenian patriarchs.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 438-439.

³⁴⁵ Boyle, *Cambridge*, 330.

Ibn al-Athir indicates that before his death Genghis Khan sent orders to the governor of Khorasan, Chin-Temur, to send troops to invade Persia.³⁴⁶ While Jalal al-Din was still beginning his campaign against the Assassins, a Mongol detachment from Khorasan, under Taimas and Tainal, arrived in Mazandaran hunting for him. The Mongol commanders presumably commanded two or three *tumens*. As the Sultan consolidated his forces to face the new threat the Mongols struck Ray and Damghan and drove out the Khwarazmian garrisons.³⁴⁷ During 1227 and 1228 Jalal al-Din fought several battles with Mongol forces in Persia. Ibn al-Athir and Nasawi are the only sources that mention these battles and Ibn al-Athir himself was not sure how many of them occurred. He says that Jalal al-Din won the initial confrontation near Damghan and chased the Mongols past Ray, where he stopped to await developments. An unknown number of battles were won by the Mongols, but ultimately Jalal al-Din was to fend off the Mongols at the final battle of Isfahan on August 26, 1228. The armies met on August 20, 1228, but Jalal al-Din refused battle for six days. A sortie of 2,000 Mongol troops was routed and some captured in Lur by 3,000 of Jalal al-Din's forces. 400 of the captives were taken to Isfahan and publicly executed. On the 26th the battle began. Jalal al-Din's right was victorious and must have chased the Mongol left for some distance, since they did not return to the battlefield for two full days. However, Jalal al-Din's left and center collapsed and he barely escaped with his life to hide in the mountains of Luristan, many thinking him dead. Meanwhile the Mongols showed themselves before the city walls as victorious, but then hastily retreated to Ray, to Nishapur, and thence to beyond the Oxus.³⁴⁸ This path of retreat clarifies that Taimus and Tainal were not operating from Mazandaran or even Khorasan, but from further east.

³⁴⁶ Timothy May, "Chormaqan Noyan: The First Mongol Military Governor of the Middle East." May takes his material from Ibn al-Athir, *Al Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, XII, (Beirut: Dar Sadr, 1979): 306-307.

³⁴⁷ Juvaini, 436.

³⁴⁸ Boyle, *Cambridge*, 331.

Conclusions on the First Invasion

Each of the sources on Jebe and Sübödäi's expedition provides only pieces of often unique information, yet with careful analysis a clear picture of the campaign can be constructed. Most of the three and a half years of the campaign then come into focus and the several conclusions become evident. One is that Jebe and Sübödäi were ultimately successful at every engagement they attempted. The Mongol's tactical methods and logistical advantages allowed them to soundly defeat every enemy they engaged and to thrive among overwhelming odds in foreign territory without reinforcements for three and a half years. Another is that within the context of this success, analysis of Jebe and Sübödäi's campaign reveals the logistical focus of their strategy of conquest. During their pursuit of Muhammad, they relied on goods from captured cities and frequently demanded provisions from the regions they passed through. After their mission to capture or kill Muhammad was complete, Jebe and Sübödäi's main task was to capture and control adequate feeding grounds for their army. The major political and military threats of the regions were only addressed as the enemy threatened the captured grazing territories. The minor conquests they conducted were either to suppress rebellions in areas they had conquered during the pursuit of Muhammad, such as with the Hamadan rebellion, or to raid and subdue the cities on the edges of their grazing grounds, such as with Tabriz and Ardabil.

They displayed little interest in conquering the significant kingdoms of the region, such as the Caliphate of Baghdad or the Sultanate of Rum, though they launched one aborted sortie against the latter. The kingdom of Georgia was one of the most significant nations in the Near East region that the Mongols defeated, yet the generals made no attempt to invade Georgia proper or to possess the kingdom after their defeat of its army. They looted in Kievan Russia, but did not invade or possess any part of it. As they did

against the Georgians, they only defended the valuable steppe regions they had captured from an advancing attacker.

Jebe and Sübödäi invaded each new territory by first seizing control of the best grazing territory for their massive herd of horses. This territory became the headquarters for operation in the region. The next stage was securing the immediate threats to these grazing territories. Once this was accomplished, they began to make long distance raids against the more significant political entities in the region, as their manpower allowed. This strategic focus on securing the necessary supply grounds appears to have served Jebe and Sübödäi well. It was copied during the second invasion of the Near East in 1231, and by Batu and Sübödäi when they later invaded Russia. Certainly the intelligence provided by Jebe and Sübödäi helped in the planning of the second invasion, allowing Chormaqan to know where the key territory lay and what targets he would face.

Finally we must also consider whether the Great Khan's overarching strategic purpose for the campaign was a success or not. The extraordinary nature of the expedition's accomplishments has caused many historians to count their mission as a success. Jebe and Sübödäi enjoyed numerous victories and following their orders they added territory to the Mongol possessions and finished off what was left of Khwarazm possessions in the Near East. His exact purpose for commanding Jebe and Sübödäi to "[conquer] as many lands as we can" is unclear.³⁴⁹ However, the outcome is apparent: after their departure there is no hint of Mongol control of the Near East or Russia. They left behind no garrison forces, only lone *shahnas* to ensure submission of the defeated cities.³⁵⁰ As soon as Jebe and Sübödäi were on to the next region, the *shahnas* were killed and the pretense of submission was thrown off. Furthermore, the Khwarazmian

³⁴⁹ Rashiduddin , 258.

³⁵⁰ Grigor, 25-27.

kingdom survived; in fact the Mongol devastations in the Near East created a weakened region, in which the Khwarazmians established a new kingdom.

Chapter 6

The Second and Third Invasions: Chormaqan and Eljigitei

Chormaqan and the Second Mongol Invasion: 1230

After Jebe and Sübödäi's first battle with Georgia, Grigor and Kirakos are silent about the Mongols for the rest of the 1220's. Rather they jump directly to 1231 and the second invasion of the Near East by the Mongols under the Great Khan's chief bowman, Chormaqan. Like al-Nasawi and Ibn al-Athir, al-Maqrizi mentions a Mongol assault on the Khwarazmshah Jalal al-Din in 1228 that ultimately failed, but he does not mention the Mongols in terms of an occupational force in the Near East until after the second invasion. In 1231 he says "the Tartars were on the move this year."³⁵¹ During the intervening years he does mention the advance of the "Khwarazmians," but not of the Mongols.

This absence of Mongol presence in the Near East, other than one incursion from Khorasan hunting for Jalal al-Din, demonstrates that the first invasion left no lasting presence or influence, other than destruction and desolation. Yet the Mongol Empire was far from finished with their long-term plans for conquest. These plans were more than the momentary quest for glory of a single leader, such as Alexander the Great, whose vision died with him. Rather it was a vision and ideology that was passed to Genghis Khan's successors. Over the next three Great Khans, the plans for the conquest of the Near East continued. The inhabitants of the Near East often thought the Mongol invasions were mere raids, like those of other nomadic people of the past, and for this reason often failed to make adequate long-term defensive preparations. Though the Mongols often engaged in such short-term raids, they also were patiently pursuing the foundation of a lasting empire.

³⁵¹ Al-Maqrizi, 215. Various versions of Jalal al-Din's death exist, but al-Maqrizi's is the version accepted by most historians. Jalal al-Din fled a major battle with the Mongols and was killed by Kurds in a small village in Asia Minor. The Kurds were unaware of his identity, and so ended the Khwarazmian Empire.

By the time Genghis Khan died and passed the throne to his son, Ögödäi, Bar Hebraeus says Jalal al-Din Khwarazmshah was “leaping all over the countries of Khorasan like a stag, [so the Khan] sent Chormaqan *noyan* with 30,000 men to that quarter of the world,” to re-conquer Persia.³⁵² Ögödäi appears to have been respecting his father’s wisdom, for Genghis Khan had tapped Chormaqan for a campaign against Baghdad while he was campaigning in Central Asia and indeed *The Secret History* indicates that the Caliph of Baghdad was the other target of this invasion.³⁵³ Rashiduddin says that Ögödäi “outfitted Chormaqan with four *tumens* of *tamma* troops and dispatched them here (a *tamma* troop is one singled out, detached from units of a thousand and a hundred, and sent to a region where they are stationed). Several great *hazara* and *tumen* commanders came with him.”³⁵⁴ Chormaqan either had three or four *tumen*, and

³⁵² Bar Hebraeus, 398.

³⁵³ Khan, *The Secret History*, 160.

³⁵⁴ According to Rashiduddin most of the leaders of this force were of the Sönit tribe, a Turkic-Mongolian tribe closely related to the Mongols, and Rashiduddin’s description of important commanders from this tribe consists almost entirely of commanders sent with Chormaqan. These include Chormaqan, Yäkä Yasa’ur, Malik-Shah, and both Chaghatais. The sources vary on the names of the commanders sent with Chormaqan. Chaghatai and Baiju stand out as his top commanders in the course of the entire campaign, however, they do not appear to have been the *tumen* commanders over his three or four *tumens* at the beginning. Rashiduddin names two *tumen* commanders as Yäkä Yasa’ur (Yissaur), a maternal uncle of Genghis Khan and was a commander in Genghis Khan’s time, and Malik-Shah. Malik-shah may be a name or a title so it is difficult to identify him, but he was over a *tumen* of “Uighers, Qarluqs, Turcomans, Kashgharis, and men from Kucha.” Rashiduddin, 42. Rashiduddin also names some of the *hazara*, or thousand-unit commanders including: the senior Chaghatai, Qorchi, who was assassinated during the campaign, and the lesser Chaghatai, who was called Sönitai because he was of the Sönit tribe and later played a key role in Hülegü’s conquest of Baghdad. Grigor names three commanders over the campaign, Chormaqan, Chaghatai and Benal, while The Georgian Chronicle lists the three main commanders as Chaghatai, Yissaur, and Baiju. Grigor, 29. The only other source besides Grigor which attests to this Benal is the nineteenth century Armenian historian Chamchean. Howorth, II.14. Chamchean lists both Baiju and Benal as commanders in Chormaqan’s force. Tainal and Taimas led the attack on Isfahan in 1228, but while Tainal is not mentioned as taking part in Chormaqan’s invasion, Taimas was chosen for the crucial mission of killing Jalal al-Din. He therefore stands out as a key commander and may have been the third *tumen* commander. After the pursuit of Jalal al-Din we never hear of him again, indicating that he was killed sometime prior to the invasion of Armenia and Georgia in 1238. In 1238 we get a clear picture of Chormaqan’s commanders: his top commanders were Chaghatai and Molar. Two of his lesser commanders in 1238 were Yissaur and Jula, Chormaqan’s brother. Chormaqan’s son, Shirämün, was also part of this force and sometime later commanded a *tumen*, perhaps under Baiju. He went on to serve as Hülegü’s vanguard commander in the war with Bärkä in 1262 in the Caucasus and was made governor of Georgia by the Il-Khan Abaqa. Rashiduddin, 137, 367, 511, 518. For more on this see Timothy May, “Chormaqan Noyan.”

additional forces assigned to him from Central Asia. Bar Hebraeus places the dispatch of Chormaqan in his account of the year 1228 and it represents the second invasion of the Near East by the Mongols.

Rashiduddin says of Chormaqan that “He [Ögödäi] outfitted Chormaqan with four *tumen* of *tamma* troops and dispatched them here,” and elsewhere says that by definition a *tamma* force was conscripted from every Mongol family and army in order to form a new army that would occupy a designated region.³⁵⁵ The proportional contribution was to prevent the new region targeted for conquest from falling under the direct sway of a particular Mongol family and altering the balance of Mongol politics and allowing it to fall under the direct purview of the Great Khan. Indeed Chormaqan and Baiju both made their status reports directly to the Great Khan.³⁵⁶

When Tolui had finished his conquest of Khorasan, Jöchi appointed Chin-Temür as *basqaq* over Khorasan and Mazandaran.³⁵⁷ The word *basqaq* and the Mongolian word *tamma* were both used for a military governor (the term *tamma* described both the commander as well as of the troops he commanded), though they do not appear to represent precisely the same role.³⁵⁸ The *tamma* had a stronger focus on border control and expansion and was often higher in authority than the *basqaqs*.³⁵⁹ The territories of Chormaqan, as *tamma*, and Chin-Temür, as *basqaq*, often overlapped and resulted in

³⁵⁵ Rashiduddin, 41-42. The term *tamma* was often used interchangeably of both the unit's troops and the leader who commanded them. Also 478.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 323.

³⁵⁷ Juvaini, 482. Since it was Tolui who conquered Khorasan while Jöchi was in Jand east of the Aral Sea, and further was in a row with his father during this time, it seems possible Juvaini made a mistake in attributing Chin-Temür's appointment to Jöchi. Rashiduddin clarifies that initially he was appointed as a *shahna* when the Mongols first conquered Khorasan, 322.

³⁵⁸ Donald Ostrowski has demonstrated that the Persian term *shahna*, and its Mongolian equivalent, *daruga*, represented a civil governor. Ostrowski, Donald “The *tamma* and the Dual-Administrative Structure of the Mongol Empire,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 61, no. 2 (1998): 262-277. Genghis Khan had captured and employed the Kara-Khitayan administrator, Yelü Chucai, among others when they invaded China in 1211-1215. Through these administrators the Mongols adopted the dual civil and military method of governance, especially in conquered territories.

³⁵⁹ Chormaqan initially had authority over the *basqaq* Chin-Temür and appointed of other *basqaqs* in Khorasan. Juvaini, 482-83.

conflict. Chin-Temür's original appointment did not include Azerbaijan, Persian Iraq, or any part of the Caucasus. When Chormaqan was dispatched to the west and given authority over "the fourth clime," a region spanning from Tibet through the Near East to the Mediterranean, Chin-Temür was one of the many amirs ordered to lend troops and assistance to Chormaqan's mission. He called on all the territories under his control to submit to Chormaqan and those that refused to lend assistance he subdued by force. Chormaqan initially had control over Khorasan, for Juvaini is careful to note that Chormaqan had done a poor job of establishing order in Khorasan before heading west to campaign on the frontier.³⁶⁰ As he conquered the new territory was shifted to the administration of *basqaqs*.³⁶¹ The responsibility of the *tamma* was on the border lands which were moving westward due to Chormaqan's and Baiju's successes.

The Death of Jalal al-Din

By late 1228 Sultan Jalal al-Din was campaigning in eastern Turkey and in early 1229 he captured Ahlat from the Sultan of Rum, Ala al-Din.³⁶² His assaults into eastern Turkey were beginning to arouse concern from the other Muslim Sultans and Sultan Ala al-Din offered temporary alliance to his enemy, the Sultan of Egypt. The Ayyubid Sultan of Egypt, al-Kamil, had moved his army into northern Mesopotamia because of the Khwarazmian activity. He was in al-Raqqah, in northeast Syria, with his army when he received word from Sultan Ala al-Din that he had sent 25,000 troops to Arzinjan (modern Erzincan), and 10,000 to Meletine and that "he himself was ready to go wheresoever the Sultan willed. Al-Kamil was much affected by this, for he was greatly troubled by the menace of the Khwarazmians."³⁶³ In August of 1230, Ala al-Din defeated Jalal al-Din at

³⁶⁰ Juvaini, 483.

³⁶¹ Rashiduddin, 333.

³⁶² Juvaini, 438.

³⁶³ Al-Maqrizi, 213.

Agshahr (modern Akshchir) and Jalal al-Din retired to Khoi (modern Khvoy, north of Lake Urmia in Northern Iran).

That same year word reached Jalal al-Din that the Mongol army under Chormaqan had crossed the Oxus on its way towards Azerbaijan. The Sultan went quickly to Tabriz and dispatched messengers to the Caliph and the Sultans of Rum and Syria to warn them that the Mongols were approaching. He argued that he was the barrier between them and the Mongols and they ought to send him troops to resist the Mongols' army. Neither the Caliph, nor the Sultans, were impressed with his arguments and they did not send help.

Jalal al-Din was not the only one obtaining intelligence. According to Ibn al-Athir the Assassins dispatched messengers to Chormaqan informing the Mongols of Jalal al-Din's defeat at the hands of the Sultan of Rum and urged Chormaqan to strike Jalal al-Din while he was still weak.³⁶⁴ Therefore Chormaqan's crossing of the Oxus occurred sometime after Jalal al-Din's defeat in August. Chormaqan arrived in Ray in late 1230 and dispatched a force toward Tabriz to hunt for the Sultan. Jalal al-Din received a report of a Mongol force in Sarab, just east of Tabriz. The Sultan fled northeast to Mughan, staying one night in the town of Ahar. He had been in Mughan five days when the Mongols arrived and drove him deep into the mountains of southeast Armenia. The Mongols found his camp deserted and returned to Chormaqan, who rebuked them severely for giving up their pursuit.

Chormaqan spent the winter in Ray and then, in 1231, dispatched Taimas with a Mongol force and a band of Turks. Nasawi records that when Taimas pushed into Arran after Jalal al-Din, he sent an envoy to the governor of Bailaqan. The governor turned the envoy over to Jalal al-Din who interrogated him. When Jalal al-Din discovered

³⁶⁴ Timothy May "A Mongol-Isma'ili Alliance? Thoughts on the Mongols and Assassins*." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Series 3, 14, no. 3 (2004): 239.

Chormaqan's troop strength he executed the envoy to hide the enemy's numbers from his men. At Gandja, the Sultan had to flee from Taimas' forces. From there he went to Akhlat and then to Manzikirt. The Sultan eventually fled to Diyarbakr and had sent his commander, Buqu Khan, back to Azerbaijan to reconnoiter the activities of the Mongols. Buqu-Khan found the Mongols had departed from Azerbaijan and Iraq and reported the good news to Jalal al-Din. The Sultan and his followers engaged in revelry and drinking and even the guards of his camp became intoxicated. Taimas and his force arrived in the night and crept silently into the camp, but one of the Sultan's aides became aware of their presence and woke the Sultan. The Sultan instructed the aide to pretend to be him and resist, while the Sultan himself escaped. The ruse worked and the Sultan survived.³⁶⁵

Bar Hebraeus says that the Sultan fled toward Syria, but the Mongols overtook him and destroyed his army near Amid.³⁶⁶ He fled again, deep into the mountains of Eastern Asia Minor where it appears a group of Kurds killed him, though even Juvaini admits there was some confusion over precisely how he came to his death.³⁶⁷ The remaining Khwarazmians, which Bar Hebraeus numbers at 10,000, fled to the Sultan of Rum and were given refuge.³⁶⁸ The Mongols had achieved their goal of killing Jalal al-Din and taking Mughan, the key grazing land in the region. However, the Khwarazm army was to continue to cause problems for the Mongols, the Sultans of the Near East, and the Crusaders. Ultimately the surviving Khwarazm commanders played a significant role in the Mongol defeat at Ayn Jalud twenty years later. However, they ceased to be a threat for the time being and Chormaqan could focus on conquest.

³⁶⁵ Juvaini, 456-457.

³⁶⁶ Bar Hebraeus, 396.

³⁶⁷ Juvaini, 459. Bar Hebraeus and Juvaini both tell a tale that in 1249 (Bar Hebraeus) or 1254-55 (Juvaini) a man was crossing a river in Persia (Bar Hebraeus) or the Oxus (Juvaini). He was dressed plainly, but told the boatmen he was Jalal al-Din. He claimed the man killed by the Kurds was his keeper of his apparel. He said he had been living peacefully in disguise since that time. The boatmen, fearful of the local Mongol lords, seized him and turned him in. The Mongols tortured him, but to his death at their hands he insisted he was Jalal al-Din. Regardless of whether Jalal al-Din died in 1231 or not he was no longer a ruler of men or a threat to anyone. Juvaini, 460 and Bar Hebraeus, 421-422.

³⁶⁸ Bar Hebraeus, 397.

Some historians seem to place Chormaqan in Persia while Taimas was campaigning in Armenia and Eastern Rum. Juzjani places him taking Arran, Azerbaijan, Mughan, and Derbent. He also says that Baghdad was forced to drive off the Mongols on several occasions. Further he says that Chormaqan camped between Qum and Hamadan and dispatched forces into Kerman and Fars, which both submitted. Juzjani appears to place this all in the year 1231, but he is really only doing so for the conquest of Azerbaijan and then summarizing the major events of Chormaqan's campaigns throughout the period. Juzjani's work is not organized in strict chronological order of events. He was also more directly familiar with events in India and Central Asia and often confused timelines and details of the more western campaigns. For example, he erroneously places Chormaqan's total manpower at 100,000.³⁶⁹ The campaigns in Persia may have been by a smaller force dispatched by Chormaqan, however, the more reliable sources show the Mongols using the remainder of 1231 to focus on Northern Mesopotamia. Bar Hebraeus says that year the Mongols campaigned against Zaid, "as far as the Euphrates," and "crossed the plain of Hanazit."³⁷⁰ al-Maqrizi records that they reached Irbil and massacred many people there and that in late 1231 and 1232 they regained and strengthened their control of Azerbaijan, Shaaur (a region west of Azerbaijan in Kurdistan), and of the Georgians. He summarizes saying "this year the Tatars [Mongols] completed their conquest of the territories of Armenia, Khalat, and all that lay in the hands of the Khwarazmians."³⁷¹ However, al-Maqrizi's claims were exaggerations. Chormaqan did not engage in a major invasion of Georgia or northern Armenia until 1238. At the end of 1231, after the defeat of Jalal al-Din, Chormaqan most likely focused on reestablishing Mongol control of Mughan and its immediate vicinity. This would necessitate the subjugation of Ardabil, Tabriz, and Maragha, or in other

³⁶⁹ Juzjani, 1117.

³⁷⁰ Bar Hebraeus, 398.

³⁷¹ Al-Maqrizi, 215.

words, Azerbaijan. It might also have involved some raids on southeast Armenia, Georgia, or Arran. However, the purpose was not the conquest of the Caucasus, but rather the securing of their supply grounds in Mughan. As soon as Mughan and the surrounding areas were secure, they established control to the west of Azerbaijan, in Shaharzur (the region surrounding Kirkuk), and southern Armenia, so that they could begin to make raids into Persian Iraq, eastern Turkey, and northern Mesopotamia. Armenia was politically part of Georgia in the thirteenth century, so al-Maqrizi's comments about the Georgians may have been a misunderstanding of the Mongol activity in southern Armenia, south of Lake Sevan.

The Response of Sultans and Caliph

The incursions of the Mongols into northern Mesopotamia alarmed the Sultans of the Near East even more than the recent activities of the Khwarazmians. The Caliph in particular was apprehensive at these developments and began a program of strengthening his defenses. No doubt the Caliph had heard that he was a central target of Chormaqan's campaign and the Mongol raids into northern Mesopotamia confirmed this. He requested assistance from the Ayyubid princes, Bedouin Arabs, and others, disbursed defense funds liberally, and sent troops to all his cities to prepare for a Mongol invasion. In June of 1233 Mutafar al-Din, the ruler of Irbil, died and the Caliph sent an army to capture the city and add it to the territory he directly controlled. In late 1232 or early 1233, the Caliph promoted the ruler of Mosul, Badr al-Din Lu'lu, and declared him a Sultan. Both his capture of Irbil and the promotion of the ruler of Mosul may have been to strengthen his northern frontier with the Mongols.

The Mongol threat was also taken seriously in Egypt. The Ayyubid Sultan, al-Kamil, had territory in Northern Mesopotamia and moved to protect his interests there. When al-Kamil heard the Mongols had entered Ahlat, he quickly moved his army from

Damascus to Salamyah, in western Syria. However, al-Kamil was not the equal of the Mongols in his logistical planning. While the Mongols were consistently methodical in identifying adequate sources of provisions before proceeding, al-Kamil hastily moved into a region that could not sustain his army. The city soon proved too small to support his army, so in late July, 1232, he moved them east, into the desert. The move was a logistical disaster as al-Maqrizi notes, “because of their great number, the soldiers were dispersed over many roads, and many of them died, with their beasts, from want of water.”³⁷²

Ambassadors arrived from the Caliph, from the surviving Khwarazmians, the Georgians, the ruler of Spain, and various atabegs, all urging war on the invading Mongols.³⁷³ Al-Kamil moved his army north to Harran, in modern southeast Turkey. The Mongols abandoned their siege of Ahlat and quickly retreated, perhaps due to al-Kamil’s approach. Al-Kamil could not resist the temptation to capture ground for the Ayyubids and instead of pursuing the Mongols he removed to Edessa and sent his army against Amid and captured it before returning to Egypt. The Mongol incursion into eastern Turkey was not a total loss, however, as the Sultan of Rum ostensibly made peace with the Mongols and offered to pay tribute. It is not clear how long this lasted, for in 1240 the Mongols invaded Rum.³⁷⁴

In 1232 the Mongols attacked parts of Persia. It appears that after retreating from eastern Turkey at the approach of al-Kamil, the Mongols instead invaded an area less defended. Kirakos specifies that they campaigned in Iran, Azerbaijan, and the region of Ray before they settled for the winter in Mughan.³⁷⁵ He explains that this was the pattern of Mongol campaigning that was emerging, “Pitching their tents, they encamped

³⁷² Al-Maqrizi, 217.

³⁷³ Al-Maqrizi does not specify which of the various kingdoms in Spain this ambassador was from, though it was presumably the Muslim kingdom.

³⁷⁴ Bar Hebraeus, 405.

³⁷⁵ Howarth places the capture of Gandja in 1233, II.21.

there, remaining the entire winter. In springtime they spread out in various directions, looting and destroying, and again returned [to Mughan] and settled.”³⁷⁶

Chormaqan Campaigns in Northern Mesopotamia: 1235-1238

The activities of the Mongols in 1233 and 1234 are unclear as we do not have any account of their whereabouts during this time. Timothy May theorizes that Chormaqan moved from Ray to Mughan until 1233 and then was resting his herds and army for a full year, though it would appear to be a full two years, 1233 and 1234. After this period of inactivity they renewed their control of the immediate vicinity, for May indicates they also took Gandja by force in the winter of 1234-1235.³⁷⁷ The Mongols then invaded northern Mesopotamia again in 1235. They attacked Irbil and Mosul and from Mosul they entered the region of Sinjar (a plain and city in northern Iraq on the Syrian border) and massacred a large camp of merchants headed to Syria.³⁷⁸ Chormaqan was expanding into northern Iraq and the territory of the Caliph, and part of his strategy appears to have been disrupting trade in the region, though he may have been simply looting.

In late 1235 or early 1236 messengers from the city of Isfahan came to the Mongol governor of Mazandaran and Khorasan, perhaps Chin-Temür, inviting the Mongols to take the city. The city was in a state of civil conflict between two religious factions, the Hanafis and the Shafi'is. The Shafi'is sought to win the conflict by offering to betray the city to the Mongol forces. In exchange, the Mongols were to kill the Hanafis. The news was sent all the way to Ögödäi Khan for the effort would require a force larger than Chin-Temür or Chormaqan could spare. The Great Khan dispatched a force from Mongolia which joined a contingent from Chormaqan, probably in Ray. Together they surrounded the city while fighting erupted between the city's two factions.

³⁷⁶ Kirakos, 196-197.

³⁷⁷ May, "Chormaqan Noyan," 38.

³⁷⁸ Bar Hebraeus, 402.

The Shafi'is killed the Hanafis' commander and opened the gates to the Mongols. The Mongol betrayed the agreement, massacred both factions, and burned the city.³⁷⁹

In 1236 the Mongols again attacked Mosul looting, killing, and taking slaves. In 1237 they again attacked Irbil and captured it, though one source, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, says the Mongol siege of Irbil was lifted and the Mongols retreated to Tabriz when the Caliph sent an army in their direction.³⁸⁰ While the earlier incursions had met a strong resistance from al-Kamil, he was no longer able to mount such an effort. His relationship with the princes of his own family in Syria had seriously deteriorated, such that the princes unified and sent an envoy to al-Kamil warning him not to come to Syria again. The Ayyubid Empire was experiencing another period of internal conflict that left the region fractured and vulnerable to Mongol raids.

The previous alliance between the Sultans of Rum and Egypt to confront the Mongols was over. Between 1234 and 1237 the two Sultans struggled to control Northern Mesopotamia, particularly Amid, Edessa, and Harran. Ala al-Din's last attempt to conquer Amid was called off in June 1237 when he suddenly died.³⁸¹ He was succeeded by Giyath al-Din. The new Sultan married a princess of Georgia, who brought Christian priests and her son David to Anatolia, but she soon converted to Islam and her priests and son were imprisoned. David remained captive until the Mongols assaulted the fortress where he was imprisoned and rescued him in the mid 1240's.

Ala al-Din's invasions of Syria and upper Iraq may have been with the authorization of Chormaqan, but it is more likely that he was attempting to take advantage of the disruptions created by the Mongols to gain ground. The struggle for

³⁷⁹ Woods, John E. "A Note on the Mongol Capture of Isfahan." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 36, no. 1 (Jan., 1977): 49-51. In his article on the dating of the capture of Isfahan, Woods provides a translation of a passage from the contemporary Ibn Abi'l-Hadid's *Nahj al-Balaghah*, which provides the details of Isfahan's capture.

³⁸⁰ Woods, *Isfahan*, 50.

³⁸¹ Bar Hebraeus, 400-404.

control over Amid and the Otoqid regions was not a new endeavor for the Sultans of Rum. He also used Armenian and Georgian troops, but that does not imply a direct relationship with the Mongols, since the Mongols themselves had only raided those kingdoms in a limited fashion and did not subjugate them and incorporate their armies into their own until 1238-1239. Therefore the Sultan's campaigns against Amid should be seen as expansion independent of Mongol influence. In fact, it is possible his persistence in attempting to capture Amid may have been because he feared it would fall into Mongol hands. In 1241 Ögödäi indeed tried to sway the Otoqids to join the Mongol cause as an outpost for Mongol activity into Rum and Mesopotamia.³⁸²

In 1238 the Mongols pressed into Northern Mesopotamia again. They looted through the region of Irbil. Their main army headed to Baghdad and looted Zangabad, while a detachment attacked Surmanrai (Samarra). While the Caliph had been supporting the Ayyubid princes of Syria against al-Kamil, desperation again led to a temporary alliance. The Caliph sent money to al-Kamil requesting troops for the defense of Baghdad against the Mongols. Al-Kamil refused the money, sent 3,000 cavalry to aid the Caliph, and proceeded with his war against the Ayyubid princes.³⁸³

When the Mongol force arrived at the northern frontier of Baghdad they were defeated by the army of Baghdad, under the command of Mujahid al-Din Dawithdar and Sharaf al-Din Ekbal Sherabi. The city of Baghdad was then fortified in preparation for their return, and in November of the same year the Mongols indeed returned. Again they came to the frontiers of the Baghdad region, to a place called Khanikin. This time the Mongols defeated the Caliph's forces and looted in the area. They did not, however, press south nor lay siege to the city of Baghdad. After their success on the battlefield, and the customary pillaging, they departed. These attacks on the immediate region of

³⁸² Al-Maqrizi, 266.

³⁸³ Ibid., 228.

Baghdad represent a clear attempt by Chormaqan to fulfill his mission of destroying the Caliph. The failure to take the city itself indicates that his forces were inadequate for laying siege such a large fortified city. Baghdad was the largest city in the Near East in the thirteenth century with a population of over one million.³⁸⁴

In 1238 the Sultan al-Kamil died and the political landscape of the Near East became even more fractured. Constant changes of loyalty and military strikes by one faction against another were the continuous. The surviving Khwarazmians continued to be a factor in the affairs of Syria, though they had become little more than a mercenary army. Under their leader, Amir Husam al-Din Barakah Khan, they swapped loyalties regularly. But concerns over the Mongol threat persisted and at least one Muslim faction sought an alliance with England against the Mongols, sending envoys all the way to Britain.³⁸⁵

The Conquest of Armenia and Georgia Completed: 1238-1239

Having probed northern Mesopotamia and finding his forces inadequate to deal with Baghdad, Chormaqan turned his attention to closing the gap between his forces and the forces of Batu in Russia. Chormaqan held a *quriltai* to plan the invasion of Armenia and Georgia. He launched his invasion of the southern Caucasus at the same time that Batu was campaigning in the northern part of the region. Batu took the Volga region in 1237 and much of Russia in 1238. He returned to Qipchaq territory in late 1238 or early 1239 and subdued everything north of the Caucasus Mountains. Minorsky, in his article on the identification of Magas, has Batu operating against the Alans in the northern Caucasus in 1239.³⁸⁶ Chormaqan timed his invasion to be when any northern allies of the Georgians would be otherwise occupied or even already devastated and unable to be

³⁸⁴ Bar Hebraeus, 404.

³⁸⁵ Rubruck, 15.

³⁸⁶ Minorsky, V. "Caucasica III: The Alan Capital of *Magas and the Mongol Campaigns." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 14, no. 2 (1952): 221-238.

sources of aid. Timothy May concludes that the invasion was planned to coincide with Batu campaigns to the north.³⁸⁷

The Georgians had been weakened by the first Mongol invasion, which was followed by the Qipchaq incursion. They were then devastated by Jalal al-Din's conquest. After the death of King Giorgi, his sister Rusudan assumed the throne. As queen she was entirely ineffectual and Georgia was completely incapable of mounting any organized resistance. They had been unable to rebuild their defenses and remained incapable of launching an army against the new Mongol threat. The Mongols did not face a single army on the field of battle in the invasion of 1238. The entire campaign consisted of sieges of towns and the many small fortresses. Grigor says the Mongols took many cities in Armenia and Georgia and Kirakos adds that they were very successful against the castles of the region by employing various types of siege machinery and by attacking swiftly before the defenders could bring in supplies. Kirakos adds that, "it was summertime and extremely hot, and provisions had not been gathered in, for the Mongols came upon them unexpectedly. Therefore many men and beasts suffered from thirst and, willingly or unwillingly, fell into the hands of the enemy because of the danger facing them." Chormaqan's timing of the campaign in summer seems intentional as the autumn harvest had not yet come in and water was less available to the besieged. Many of the fortresses surrendered quickly.³⁸⁸

Chormaqan helped prevent a central resistance by dividing up his forces into five columns. He had at his disposal the three *tumen* given to him at his dispatch from Mongolia as well as the additional troops supplied by the governors of Khorasan, such as Chin-Temür. Three columns were "large" armies, and two were "small" armies.³⁸⁹ This most likely represents three *tumen* and two small forces of one or more *mingghan*.

³⁸⁷ May, "Chormaqan and the Mongol Conquest," 2.

³⁸⁸ Grigor, 296 and Kirakos, 202-203.

³⁸⁹ May, "Chormaqan and the Mongol Conquest," 2.

Chormaqan moved the entire army from Mughan to Lake Sevan in modern Armenia. He probably camped in the large valley at the southeastern tip of the lake based on the distribution of the armies he sent out. The two large armies under Chaghatai and Molar were sent to the areas controlled by the chief Georgian princes, showing that Chormaqan had strong intelligence on the Georgian princes and their territories. According to Grigor, the target of each commander was the territory he would rule over after the conquest, so each commander had a vested interest in the territory he was conquering.³⁹⁰ Shahnshah and Awag were the sons of the brother Generals Zak'are and Iwvane (John), who had battled Jebe and Sübödäi in 1221 and 1223. Together these four, along with Varham, a Kurdish noble in the service of the Georgian throne, were the chief princes under Queen Rusudan at the time of Chormaqan's arrival in the Near East, though Iwvane had died just prior to the 1238 invasion of Georgia.³⁹¹ Chaghatai was sent to the territories of Shahnshah, Awag, and that of Queen Rusudan, Tiflis itself. Molar attacked Varham's territory in the Kura river valley in southeast Georgia. Most likely he rode through the Karabakh region and along the south side of the Kur river valley. In the higher altitudes there are juniper and hardwood trees among sharp hills with bold rock formations, but these give way to rough rocky roads and arid hills as one moves down into the Kur river valley.

Chaghatai and his lieutenant, Toghta, were sent with a *tumen* towards northern Armenia and Tiflis. He went to the northwest tip of Lake Sevan and from there into the north-central Armenia. The region is characterized by high rocky terrain and deep ravines. In spring the hills are green, though there are few trees, but as the attack was carried out in summer the grassy hills were brown and the river ravines were empty. He first assaulted the fortress of Lori Berd, the central fortress of Shahnshah. Lori Berd sits

³⁹⁰ Grigor, 303.

³⁹¹ Kirakos, 200.

on a precipice with river ravines on the south and eastern sides, and its ruins are still visible today. Shahanshah fled the city, which was soon captured. Chaghatai dispatched Toghta to assault Awag's fortress of Kayan. Kayan was built in 1233, perhaps as a stronghold against the Mongols. It sits atop a steep hill between Sanain and Hakhpat to the northeast of Lori Berd.³⁹² Toghta demanded Awag's presence, and though Awag did not resist openly, he also did not issue forth from the fortress. Instead he sent his daughter and various goods as a gift to Toghta. The Mongols were not satisfied and the fortress was running out of water, so Awag surrendered all his horses and livestock in exchange for water, but again the Mongols were not placated. Though they did not kill anyone, they blocked the garrison's access to water when they came out. They insisted Awag at least surrender the civilians of the fortress, which he did. The Mongols left the civilians unmolested, except when they found a woman they desired, in which case they killed the husband and took the woman.

Awag was a compassionate ruler and to avoid further suffering of his subjects he shrewdly sent a messenger to Chormaqan saying he intended to surrender. He seems to have not trusted Toghta to honor an agreement, particularly after the way the surrendered families had been treated. Chormaqan was delighted and ordered Toghta to escort Awag safely to Chormaqan's headquarters at Lake Sevan and to stop his attacks in the Kayan region. Awag surrendered in the name all of Georgia agreeing to pay tribute and to have his troops join the Mongol army. Chormaqan chastised Awag for not immediately coming to him and surrendering, and Awag's reply is interesting. He said "While you were far away and my father was still living, he served you with many gifts. As soon as my father died, I served you according to my capability."³⁹³ This implies the Georgian nobility had been publicly taking a conciliatory approach prior to the invasion, though in

³⁹² The walls were destroyed on order from the Mongols, but the rest of the fortress still exists today.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 219.

reality the fortress of Kayan itself had been built as a defense against the Mongols. Chormaqan was much impressed with Awag, as many Mongol rulers were also to be in the years to come, and honored him with a banquet.³⁹⁴

Toghta discontinued his assault on Awag's lands and rejoined Chaghatai. Together they headed northwest of Lori Berd to Dunamis (modern Dmanisi in south central Georgia). A road runs north-northwest from Lori Berd to Dunamis, which sits at the head of a long east-west valley. Chaghatai must have come down into the valley from this southerly road. He took the city before heading east along the river valley to modern Bolnisi and then cut north on the road to modern Ts'karo and struck Samshvilde, southwest of Tiflis. Samshvilde was called the "mother-fortress" in the eleventh century and was the largest fortress in the Georgian province of Kvemo Kartli. The city-fortress lay at the strategically important confluence of the Ktsia and Chavchava Rivers. He took the fortress and from there headed down the river valley, east, and then northeast to Tiflis. Upon his approach Rusudan fled west with her son, David, the heir apparent. Much of the city was burned by some of the defenders, but the majority of nobles surrendered before Chaghatai even reached the city borders.³⁹⁵

Chormaqan took his own force west to the ancient capital of Armenia, Ani, and Awag accompanied him. The city was under the authority of Shahنشah and the leaders hesitated to surrender. A mob killed the Mongol envoys, and as was their custom in such circumstances, the Mongols relentlessly assaulted the city. Some of the princes surrendered in exchange for a promise of clemency, but after they came out the Mongols divided them up and killed them all. The survivors in the city were enslaved. The destruction was so fierce that the city of Kars surrendered without a fight, hoping to avoid Ani's fate. The Mongols massacred many of the city's inhabitants and enslaved many

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., 216.

others. The Mongols gained intelligence that the Sultan of Rum was gathering an army to oppose their incursion into western Armenia and they withdrew.³⁹⁶ Tragically, the Sultan of Rum took advantage of the Mongol departure and attacked Kars as well, causing more devastation than the Mongols had.³⁹⁷

The nobles of Armenia and Georgia surrendered and agreed to pay tribute and contribute their cavalry to the Mongol campaigns. Chormaqan agreed to the terms and returned to Mughan, leaving a commander, Qara Buqa, behind to dismantle the fortresses of the land.³⁹⁸ Queen Rusudan alone remained in rebellion, though she represented little threat to the establishment of Mongol rule. She was active in seeking to resist the Mongols and sent a plea to Pope Gregory IX for aid, but the Pope declined. Rusudan remained in seclusion with her son as her only bargaining chip for continued influence. Meanwhile in Iraq, the arrival of the Mongols in Azerbaijan alarmed the ruler of Arbil, Mutafar al-Din, and he obtained reinforcements from the Caliph under the command of Jamal al-Din Qosh-Temür.³⁹⁹

Baiju Invades Rum: 1240-1243

In 1240 the Mongols pillaged through the region from Georgia to Arzenan (Arzan ar-Rum or Erzurum in eastern modern Turkey). It is unclear if the Sultan's earlier raid on Kars had resulted in this attack or if it indicates the Sultan had rebelled in some other way. The Sultan mobilized his army and went to Armenia to prevent the Mongols from invading Rum, and Bar Hebraeus wrote that the Mongols retreated to what he calls the land of the Scythians.⁴⁰⁰ This may indicate that this Mongol force was from Batu's territory in the Qipchaq Steppe north of the Caucasus, rather than from Chormaqan's

³⁹⁶ Bar Hebraeus, 405.

³⁹⁷ Kirakos, 223

³⁹⁸ Grigor, 297.

³⁹⁹ Rashiduddin, 397.

⁴⁰⁰ Bar Hebraeus, 405.

forces in Azerbaijan, but this seems unlikely as we never hear of Batu interfering in Near Eastern campaigns.

In 1241 the Sultan of Rum appointed one of his most successful commanders, Sinan, to rule in Arzenan in order to strengthen it against the Mongols. Almost as soon as he had settled in Arzenan, Chormaqan's army arrived and destroyed the fortress there. He killed most of the population, including Sinan, and enslaved the youth. In late 1241 or early 1242 the ruler of Mayyafariqin (modern Silvan in southeastern Turkey) received a letter from Ögödäi Khan. Mayyafariqin, which along with Mardin and Amid was a center of the independent Otoqid dynasty, was an important city in the region of Amid and lies half way between Khalat and Amid. Its significance was due to its strategic location on the main road from Armenia to Northern Mesopotamia.⁴⁰¹ The letter announced that Ögödäi had appointed Mayyafariqin's ruler, al-Malik al-Muzaffar Shihab al-Din Ghazi, as his *Silah Dar*, or "commander of the arsenal." He bade al-Muzaffar to tear down the walls of his city. Al-Muzaffar replied that he was only a minor prince and that such a letter should be addressed to the major Sultans, of Rum, Egypt, and Syria, and that he would follow whatever course they chose. The Otoqids were constantly attacked and their land fought over by the Sultans of Egypt, Rum, and Syria, so al-Muzaffar's reply was deceptive in that he was not particularly loyal to any of the Sultans he claimed he would follow. The Mongols were attempting to seduce the Otoqid Turks to their side and establish a base of operations in southeast Turkey. This attempt reveals that the Mongols were well informed on the geopolitics of the region and on the infighting of the Islamic Sultans and princes. Chormaqan was clearly reporting to the Great Khan and his campaigns were being monitored from Mongolia.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰¹ Minorsky, V. "Caucasica in the History of Mayyafariqin." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13, no. 1 (1949): 27.

⁴⁰² Al-Maqrizi, 266.

The letter from the Great Khan coincides with another major change in Mongol operations in the Near East. By 1242 Chormaqan had become deaf and could no longer effectively lead the Mongol military. While some modern accounts have him dumb as well, and others say that he died that year, Kirakos says merely that he was deaf. His wife, Elt'ina Khatun, assumed some governing responsibilities, but in late 1242 an edict arrived from the Khan that Baiju was to take Chormaqan's command.⁴⁰³ Since Chormaqan still lived, his wife ruled alongside of Baiju in matters of civil affairs. Perhaps out of respect for Chormaqan's accomplishments the army continued to be referred to as "Chormaqan's" army, even after his death.⁴⁰⁴

During the period when Chormaqan was deaf, the Mongols began to abuse the Georgians. Kirakos writes that the taxation was extreme and the Mongols simply confiscated livestock and horses at their whim. The Mongols would brand each horse with the name or mark of each commander. At times a Mongol would sell a horse to a local, but then another Mongol would later claim the horse on the basis of its branding and punish the owner for stealing it.⁴⁰⁵ This lawlessness was due to Chormaqan's disability and general lack of administrative skill. The situation grew worse after the Assassins killed Chaghatai, one of Chormaqan's commanders.⁴⁰⁶ Kirakos says Chaghatai favored Awag, and after his death the other Mongol commanders began to mistreat Awag and the populace in general. Awag went into hiding, but word arrived from the Great Khan that Awag was to be honored and not mistreated. Along with this a new tax officer

⁴⁰³ Rashiduddin says Baiju was a relative of Jebe. He was a *hazara* commander at the time of the dispatch and later made a *tumen* commander. Rashiduddin, 42.

⁴⁰⁴ Juvaini, 609 and Rashiduddin, 493

⁴⁰⁵ Kirakos, 226.

⁴⁰⁶ Boyle notes that the word *mulhed* that Kirakos used to describe the killers of Chaghatai is a form of the Arabic word *mulhid* which was commonly used to refer to the Nizari Ismailis, or Assassins. *Mongol World Empire* XIX. 211-212, Note 99. However, his own translation of Juvaini explicitly says Chaghatai was stabbed to death by Assassin agents. Juvaini, 723-724. Chaghatai appears to have been a *tumen* commander in the invasion of Georgia in 1238-1239.

arrived, Tonghus-agma, who instituted Güyük's tax policies and, by Kirakos' account, finally convinced Queen Rusudan to submit to the Mongols.⁴⁰⁷

As soon as Baiju assumed command he began raids against the Sultan of Rum. Kirakos writes that he "immediately mustered troops from all the peoples under his domination and went to the land of the Armenians which was under the domination of the Sultan of Rum."⁴⁰⁸ He invaded the region of Zaid (Xarberd in southern Armenia) and Arzengan and looted throughout the area before returning to Azerbaijan. Kirakos quotes the Sultan of Rum's threats to Baiju,

You consider that by destroying one city you have conquered me and my power. Well, my cities are without limit and my troops are innumerable. So stay where you are and I shall come to battle against you.' Greatly puffed up, [the ambassadors] said many similar things, including [the information that] 'Next winter the sultan shall come to the Mughan plain with his women and soldiers to winter here.' When [the Mongols] heard this, in no way did they become aroused or boast [to the ambassadors]. Baiju-noyin, their head, merely replied: 'You speak grandly; however, the victory will go to whomever God grants it.'⁴⁰⁹

Baiju also appears to have invaded Northern Mesopotamia in the summer of 1242. Rashiduddin summarizes the period from 1242 to 1246, saying that "at the beginning of this period the Abbasid caliph was al-Mustansir-bi'llah. The Mongols were advancing upon Baghdad in droves under the command of Baiju noyan, and they laid siege to Irbil and took it by force."⁴¹⁰ Mustansir died in 1242 and as Irbil's water supply was quickly depleted during the siege, this raid likely occurred in the summer of 1242. Baiju must have only sent a small detachment to attack Irbil, since the Caliph dispatched a force of only 3,000 cavalry, who were able to drive off the Mongols and lift the siege.

The Caliph took immediate action. He assembled the leaders and amirs of Baghdad and inquired whether it was better to contemplate theology, or declare a jihad

⁴⁰⁷ Kirakos, 228.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 241.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 243.

⁴¹⁰ Rashiduddin, 397.

against the Mongols. The leaders unanimously chose jihad. The Caliph began a massive program of training the citizens in combat skills. He repaired the city walls, erected catapults on the walls, and repaired the city's moat. The preparations were not in vain, for Baiju sent another force later in the year, attacking Irbil and then pushing south down the Tigris to Daquq, on the northern frontier of the Baghdad region. The army of Baghdad defeated Baiju at Jabal al-Hamrin. After this defeat, Baiju recognized that he did not have the manpower for a two-front war. In 1243 he set his forces fully against Anatolia and did not return his attention to Mesopotamia until after Anatolia was conquered.

In December of that year the Caliph, Mustanser, died and was succeeded by his son, Mustasem. al-Maqrizi notes that during the former's reign Baghdad was threatened by the Mongols. In response Mustanser had raised an army that exceeded 100,000 troops for the defense of his lands. Bar Hebraeus says that, unlike his father, the new caliph was a foolish man because he ignored the concerns of his advisers, who warned him that the Mongols were preparing to capture Baghdad. He naively believed himself to be indomitable and did not believe the Mongols could ever enter Baghdad unless he granted them permission to do so.⁴¹¹ al-Maqrizi, however, claims that he "made peace with the Tartars, sending sums of money to them."⁴¹² While Bar Hebraeus was geographically closer to Baghdad, he was a Christian and therefore perhaps less knowledgeable about the political intrigues at the Caliph's court. While the various sources agree as to Mustasem's incompetence, it appears he was at least pursuing a policy of bribery to keep the Mongols at bay for the time being.

In the spring of 1243 the Mongols ravaged Arzengan. The Sultan of Rum gathered a large army, including mercenaries from Aleppo, Byzantine, and some

⁴¹¹ Bar Hebraeus, 409.

⁴¹² Al-Maqrizi, 270.

unidentified Crusaders, and moved to Sivas. The Mongols also had a multinational force with troops from their territories in the Near East. Kirakos says Baiju organized his army and “the foreign troops, comprised of many nationalities, were divided up among [the loyal troops] so that they not work any treachery.”⁴¹³ The Sultan then took his army to Arzengan to attack the Mongols. The armies met at Kawsatagh (Kosedagh or modern Tura Mesanta). The battle began and almost immediately, before a single Mongol was killed, the Sultan’s army fled en masse. The Sultan himself took refuge in Ankara. The Mongols were surprised by how readily the Sultan’s army had taken flight and were concerned that it was a ruse. They did not enter the deserted enemy camp for a full day to ensure it was not an ambush and deployed scouts to search for the enemy before they allowed their troops to pillage the enemy camp. The main army either moved south and took Ahlat and Amid or it dispatched a second force to those places.⁴¹⁴

The main Mongol army then proceeded to the city of Sivas (Sebastia). The city capitulated without a fight. The Mongols looted the royal treasury, burned all the weapons in the city, reduced the height of the city wall, and installed a *shahna*. From Sivas they went to Kayseri (Caesarea). Kayseri resisted the Mongols, and so the Mongol army brought its siege engines, breached the walls, sacked the royal treasuries, burned much of the city, and took any money they could find. According to Bar Hebraeus they killed “many tens of thousands” and enslaved the youth.⁴¹⁵ Upon hearing of the Sultan’s defeat and the sacking of Sivas, the Sultan’s mother fled with his sisters and other female relatives to the Kingdom of Cilicia. However, the Mongols dispatched a messenger demanding Cilicia hand over the Sultans relatives and “Baron Constantine” quickly complied.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹³ Kirakos, 244.

⁴¹⁴ Bar Hebraeus, 406-407.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 407.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid. and Grigor, 319.

These were serious calamities for the Sultan of Rum, for as al-Maqrizi says the Mongols invaded, “putting him to flight and subjugating the land of Rum, Ahlat, and Amid. Giyath al-Din became their vassal and paid them tribute.”⁴¹⁷ He was losing the battle for his eastern frontier; his army had been put to flight, and his mother and sisters taken into captivity by the Mongols. When word of these calamities spread, many of the Sultan’s subordinates began to desert. In Meletine, the Sultan’s commander, Rashid al-Din, looted the royal treasury and went to Aleppo. The city’s leaders fled, though they were overtaken by a detachment of Mongols who killed most of them and enslaved their youth. With the city leaders having abandoned the citizens, the situation was so desperate that Bar Hebraeus writes that the Muslims and Christians united themselves under the Christian Metropolitan, and established a town militia to defend the city. However, the Mongol army never came to Meletine. The Mongols returned to Arzenan to complete the attack that had been interrupted by the Sultan’s army. The Mongols destroyed the city, and the Sultan sent ambassadors suing for peace and offering to again pay tribute. The tribute was in gold, horses, cattle, sheep, and slaves.⁴¹⁸

In 1243 a new Mongol *basqaq* of Khorasan and the Near East was appointed.⁴¹⁹ His territory included Khorasan, Georgia, Rum and at least claimed dominance over Mosul, though the evidence shows that Mosul was far from under Mongol control. Arghun Aqa arrived in Khorasan in 1243-44 and immediately headed to Azerbaijan to tour the western conquered territories. When he arrived in Tabriz he received embassies from the Sultan of Rum and the Ayyubid princes of Aleppo and Damascus.⁴²⁰ Chormaqan had seniority as *tamma*, or military governor, but as he conquered new

⁴¹⁷ Al-Maqrizi, 271.

⁴¹⁸ Bar Hebraeus, 409.

⁴¹⁹ Chin-Temür had been succeeded in 1236 by Nosul, who was succeeded in 1239 by Körgüz. Körgüz governed until 1243, when he was executed in Mongolia. He had publicly insulted the memory of Chaghatai, Chormaqan’s commander who had been assassinated. He was replaced by Arghun Aqa.

⁴²⁰ Boyle, *Cambridge*, 338.

territory it was added to the civil governorship of the *basqaq* of Khorasan and Mazandaran. When Arghun Aqa's predecessor had arrived in Iraq, Azerbaijan, and Arran in late 1239, Juvaini says,

When they arrived in those regions they had many disputes with Chormaqan's commanders, and finally they took over those territories from them and fixed the taxes. For [until then] each province had been held by a *noyan*, and every town by an emir, and they had been content to levy but a small portion of the taxes for the Divan and used to seize the remainder for themselves.⁴²¹

Juvaini also says that when Arghun Aqa arrived in Azerbaijan he, "restored order to the affairs of that region which had been disturbed by the proximity of the great amirs such as Chormaqan, Baiju and others, who regarded that territory as their own property."⁴²²

Baiju Campaigns in Northern Mesopotamia 1244-1245

With Anatolia mostly subdued, Baiju was free to again focus his main efforts against Baghdad, though some minor campaigns into Anatolia continued. In 1244-1245 Baiju dispatched Yissaur, also called Yäkä Yisa'ur, with an army to Northern Mesopotamia and Syria. He captured Mayyafariqin, Mardin (another city of the Otoqid Turks near in southeast Turkey), Harran, and Edessa. He then crossed the Euphrates and attacked Aleppo and Meletine. When he came to the vicinity of Aleppo, he found the terrain incapable of sustaining the army's horses, for he had arrived in summer and the ground was extremely dry. Though he was unable to approach the city, he demanded gold from the lord of Aleppo, who readily acquiesced. When Yissaur arrived at Meletine he burned the crops and killed everyone outside the city's walls. The city's lord, Rashid al-Din, collected virtually all the gold he could find in the city, looting the city's

⁴²¹ Juvaini, 501.

⁴²² Ibid., 507. As a side note on the centrality of meadowlands to the Mongols, Arghun Aqa regularly set his camp at the meadows of Radkan, which Sübödäi had so appreciated when he passed through in 1220. Arghun Aqa continued to enjoy these meadowlands for the rest of his life and died and was buried in Radkan in June 1275. Juvaini, 510, 616 and Rashiduddin, 537.

churches, in order to offer a tribute of 40,000 *dinars* of gold to the Mongols. Yissaur was satisfied and departed, though a terrible plague broke out in the city after their departure.⁴²³

Kirakos also claims the Mongols returned to conduct more campaigns against the Sultan of Rum in the spring of 1244. So although Rashiduddin places the Sultan's submission in 1243 at the end of the first invasion of Anatolia, it is possible this submission did not come until 1244 after subsequent raids. Another possibility is that portions of the Sultan's kingdom were still rebelling despite his surrender.

In late 1244 or early 1245 the prince of Mosul sent a letter to Damascus establishing their financial contribution to resisting the Mongols. Later that year the prince of Mosul read a public announcement of the amount Damascus had contributed to the war effort. So while the Mongols considered Mosul to be in their possession, the prince of Mosul was openly organizing his resistance to their incursions.⁴²⁴ In 1245 Baiju again pressed south towards Baghdad along the Tigris. The attack was a two-pronged assault with a second force of Mongols pressing west from Hamadan into Kermanshah.⁴²⁵ Baiju was again defeated by the army of Baghdad and the force from Hamadan was also driven off by forces in Kermanshah. Though the Sultan of Rum was finally securely subordinate to the Mongols, another attempt to take Baghdad had failed. In 1246 the Sultan of Rum, Giyath al-Din, died and was succeeded by his son Izz al-Din. Upon his ascension the Mongols required him to go and present himself to the Great Khan in Mongolia. Izz al-Din replied that if he departed the Armenians and Byzantines would surely attack his kingdom and he sent his brother, Rukn al-Din, to Mongolia in his

⁴²³ Bar Hebraeus, 409. This Yissaur was a *tumen* commander according to Rashiduddin and in the Armenian and Georgian campaign in 1238-39. Meletine's lord, Rashiduddin, had previously fled with the royal treasury, but had since returned to the city. Meletine was Bar Hebraeus' home town and he was an eyewitness to this campaign and the events in Meletine.

⁴²⁴ Al-Maqrizi, 273, 276.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 277.

stead. On May 19th of 1247 the Khwarazmians were defeated by the Himsan and Aleppan armies at the Battle of Hims. Their leader was killed and the survivors scattered. Interestingly some of the survivors went to serve the Mongols. al-Maqrizi says, “after it [the battle of Hims] they had no significance.”⁴²⁶ He was mistaken, for the surviving commanders later played a role in the Mamluk defeat of Hülegü’s forces in 1260.

Baiju communicated with both King Louis IX of France and Pope Innocent IV. In 1247 Louis received an ultimatum from the Mongols, presumably from Baiju. That summer envoys from the Pope arrived at Baiju’s summer camp in Armenia. They were with him from May 24 to July 25. The mission’s leader, Ascplin, reported that Baiju was very interested in the strategic plans of the crusaders, though it appears he was mostly interested that they not have any designs on Aleppo, Anatolia, or Syria. Some Mongols were overheard discussing the possibility of a temporary or feigned alliance with the crusaders in order to make gains against the Muslims.⁴²⁷ This demonstrates that Baiju was still very active in attempting to make advances in Syria on the eve of his replacement by Eljigitei.⁴²⁸ Baiju sent them back to Rome with a Mongol envoy who had a private audience with the Pope, though no alliance came of these meetings.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 281.

⁴²⁷ Rubruck, 38.

⁴²⁸ Baiju was also trying to keep the Georgian Queen, Rusudan, under his control. Rusudan’s nephew, David, who was the son of King Giorgi and the rightful heir to the throne, had been betrayed to the Sultan of Rum and imprisoned in a dungeon. Varham went with a force of Mongols and rescued David and Baiju installed him as king of Georgia. In 1247 or 1248 Queen Rusudan sent envoys to Batu, ruler of the Qipchaq Khanate, and offered to submit to him. Batu ruled the northern side of the Caucasus mountain range all the way to Derbent. Batu refused and sent her back to Tiflis, but soon Baiju and Batu began to vie for control of her. Both dispatched messengers seeking to gain her submission. She chose Batu and enthroned her son David as king of Georgia. The two Davids were sent to the new Khan by Baiju and Batu respectively for a decision. Güyük enthroned Giorgi’s son, but named Rusudan’s son as his heir. Kirakos, 250-252 and 262-264.

⁴²⁹ Matthew Paris records the arrival of the envoy, though he says there were two of them. The meeting with the Pope was secret and any records of its contents have never been disclosed by the Vatican. Paris, 155.

The Dispatch of Eljigitei: 1248

In 1241 Ögödäi died. His son, Güyük, and his nephew, Batu, had quarreled in the European campaign and had become bitter enemies. When Ögödäi died, Batu and Güyük prepared for a struggle over the election of a successor. Batu abandoned his European campaign that had left Eastern Europe in ashes and retreated. The contention over the throne persisted for nearly five years, but eventually Güyük was elected on August 24, 1246 at a *quriltai*.

The ruler of every kingdom in the Mongol empire was obligated to personally attend the *quriltai*.⁴³⁰ Other lands who wished to maintain peaceful relations with the Great Khan, or desired to enter Mongol service also attended. Bar Hebraeus' list of the nobles that traveled to Mongolia from the Near East in 1246 gives us an accurate picture of the lands that had either been acquired or who were concerned about the presence of the Mongols in the Near East. He includes Arghun Aqa from Khorasan, Rukn al-Din from Rum, Hetum, king of Cilicia, David the Great and David the Lesser from Georgia, two brothers of the Lord of Aleppo, Fakr al-Din from Baghdad, called "the Judge of Judges," unidentified ambassadors from the Crusaders and from the leader of the Assassins, Ala al-Din.⁴³¹ Rashiduddin adds that Arghun Aqa was accompanied by amirs from his territories of Khorasan, Persia, Luristan, Azerbaijan, and Shirvan, and that ambassadors from Mosul were present.⁴³²

Güyük appointed Eljigitei over frontier regions in the Near East including Rum, Georgia, Assyria, Mosul, Syria, Aleppo, and Cilicia, and the lands which had previously been administered by Masud Beg.⁴³³ Persia, Khorasan, Hamadan, Azerbaijan, Shirvan,

⁴³⁰ In some rare cases a representative from among the ruler's kin was acceptable.

⁴³¹ Bar Hebraeus, 411.

⁴³² Rashiduddin, 392.

⁴³³ Ibid., 392-393 and Juvaini 249-250. Juvaini promised an entire chapter devoted to Eljigitei, but either never wrote it or it has been lost. Juvaini, 590.

Lur, and Kerman were reconfirmed as under Arghun Aqa.⁴³⁴ The Khan sent all the leaders home in peace, except to the Caliph he sent “threatenings as concerning rebels” and drove away the assassins with insults.⁴³⁵ These appointments show us that the Mongols were either in control of these lands, such as Cilicia and Rum, or that they were operating under the assumption that they were in de facto control of these territories, such as northern Mesopotamia and Syria.

Eljigitei was a nephew of Genghis Khan through Qachi’un. He was assigned a large army comprised of two out of every ten troops from every Mongol prince, all of the mounted soldiers “from that region,” as well as two out of every ten “Tajiks.”⁴³⁶ Rashiduddin clarifies this by saying he was sent with a large army and ordered to take two out of every ten Taziks “in Iran.”⁴³⁷ We do not know the total size of the Mongol army at this time, but based on the proportional army of one in ten that gave Jebe and Sübödäi 30,000 troops, we can estimate Eljigitei’s army at 60,000, not including Baiju’s 30,000 troops, the mounted troops of the Caucasus and Rum, or the Tazik conscripts. Therefore Eljigitei’s manpower appears to have been approximately 100,000 to 120,000.

Part of the purpose of Eljigitei’s dispatch was to replace Baiju.⁴³⁸ Why Baiju was being replaced is not entirely transparent, aside from his problems with the Assassins and his continued failure to take Baghdad. In addition Güyük may have wanted his own supported to the south of his rival, Batu. Eljigitei was ordered to take his army “and beginning with the Heretics, subdue all areas in rebellion.” This vague mandate to

⁴³⁴ Rashiduddin clarifies the roles of Eljigitei versus Arghun Aqa by saying that the soldiers and peoples were given to Eljigitei, but the administration of the territory was given exclusively to Arghun Aqa and that he was to be “free from any interference” and that the regional tribute was to go to Arghun Aqa and not Eljigitei. This confirms that a dual model of administration was being used in southwestern Asia. Rashiduddin , 394.

⁴³⁵ Bar Hebraeus, 411. Rashiduddin states that Güyük’s warnings to the Caliph were due to “a complaint Chormaqan’s son Shirämün had made against them.” Rashiduddin , 394.

⁴³⁶ Juvaini, 256.

⁴³⁷ Rashiduddin , 394. This demonstrates that the term *Tazik* was not being used exclusively of the Persian people in Central Asia who today are called Tajiks, but of Persians and the inhabitants of Persia in general.

⁴³⁸ Kirakos, 294.

subdue rebels can be explained in that Güyük had sent the Caliph's envoys away with "threatenings as concerning rebels." Güyük viewed the Caliph as a rebel within Mongol territory, rather than as a foreign sovereign power. He does not appear to have had any legitimate reason to view Baghdad in this way, other than his royal prerogative. Based on these comments, coupled with Eljigitei's actions when he arrived in the Near East, we can conclude that the Caliph was one of Eljigitei's assigned targets. Another interesting point Juvaini and Rashiduddin make is that Güyük intended to go to the west after Eljigitei.⁴³⁹ The Great Khan had his eyes on the Near East and after his position was secure wanted to personally campaign there.

Eljigitei was still en route to the west when word arrived that Güyük had died.⁴⁴⁰ Eljigitei stopped at Taraz (on the modern Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan border), and awaited further developments.⁴⁴¹ He then continued west, stopping in Badghis in Khorasan to organize his support among the existing governors, and from there went to Iraq. During this time Eljigitei seems to have focused on strengthening his political position in terms of Mongol imperial politics, rather than expanding Mongol positions in the Near East. Eljigitei accomplished nothing between his dispatch in 1248 and 1252, when he was arrested and executed for participating in a conspiracy against Möngke Khan. He had used the vast manpower at his disposal towards overthrowing Möngke rather than making gains in the Near East.⁴⁴²

The one effort he made to advance Mongol interests in the Near East never came to fruition. On December 14, 1248 envoys from Eljigitei arrived at Cyprus on a mission

⁴³⁹ Juvaini, 256 and Rashiduddin , 394.

⁴⁴⁰ Kirakos, 294.

⁴⁴¹ While on his way to Mongolia over a territorial dispute, Amir Arghun passed Eljigitei. He went out to meet Eljigitei and was instructed to return to Khorasan and prepare the Khorasani army and provisions for the Mongol army that was approaching that region. The needs of the new army included more than fodder and clothing, for Juvaini tells us that Arghun Aqa, at the direction of Eljigitei, raised taxes and levies, collecting in a single year what normally would have been the regions revenue over several years. After Eljigitei had passed through Khorasan, Arghun Aqa proceeded to the court of the Great Khan. Juvaini, 512.

⁴⁴² Bar Hebraeus, 417.

to King Louis IX of France.⁴⁴³ The two envoys were Christians from Mosul and brought a message from Eljigitei asking for a strategic alliance against the Caliph of Baghdad. Eljigitei took a radically different tact with the Crusaders by suggesting alliance. Peter Jackson explains Eljigitei's stated plan "to attack the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad during the summer and thereby avenge the injuries Christ had suffered at the hands of the Khwarazmians: for this reason, Louis was asked to direct his operations against Egypt, in order to prevent assistance reaching the Caliph."⁴⁴⁴ Louis sent envoys back to Eljigitei on January 27, 1249, who eventually reached Güyük's camp, which was then in the hands of his widow, Oghul Qaimish. Apparently without further consultation with Eljigitei, Louis launched his invasion of Egypt. Though he initially captured Damietta, on June 6, 1249, his campaign was a catastrophic loss as Louis was routed in battle and taken captive by the Mamluk general Baybars. Möngke was elected the new Khan when Louis' envoys were still in Central Asia and they did not return to the Near East until the winter of 1250-51.⁴⁴⁵

When Eljigitei abandoned his plans for Baghdad to focus on Mongol politics, an unknown portion of Eljigitei's army deserted him as he began to plot against Batu and Möngke. They fled to Batu and informed him of Eljigitei's treachery. Batu sent a force to arrest him. Eljigitei was in Iraq when his pursuers arrived and he quickly fled east to Badghis. They caught him and took him back to Batu, who had him tried and executed. Eljigitei never arrived in Azerbaijan or the Caucasus according to Kirakos.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴³ Some individuals, even contemporaries, speculated as to whether the envoys from Eljigitei were frauds or not, especially since Möngke's administration termed them liars and reversed the conciliatory attitude of Eljigitei towards the crusaders. However, one of Louis' men recognized one of the envoys from Baiju's camp and since they successfully escorted Louis's envoys to Güyük's camp we should conclude that they were indeed legitimate. Their denunciation was a result of the internal political feud that caused Möngke to denounce the policies of his predecessor, Güyük, his widow (whom Möngke also insulted), and particularly the activities of Eljigitei, who by the time of Möngke's statements had been executed for treason by Batu.

⁴⁴⁴ Rubruck, 34.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Kirakos 294.

al-Maqrizi claims that in 1250 the Mongols made a surprise attack on Baghdad.⁴⁴⁷ We have no details of this assault, but it appears that they pillaged and killed near Baghdad without laying siege to the city itself. It is also possible that Eljigitei did attempt to fulfill his agreement with Louis and assault Baghdad or that Baiju attacked Baghdad at Eljigitei's directions. In any case, the attempt was not successful and without more information or confirmation from another source who was a closer contemporary to the events, such as Bar Hebraeus, we cannot draw many conclusions on whether this assault even occurred or not.

While Mongol relations with the crusaders saw a brief glimmer of positive diplomatic relations, their relationship with the Assassins had taken a decided downturn. Timothy May has argued that prior to this period there may have even been an official, or at least unofficial, alliance between the Khan and Alamut.⁴⁴⁸ At Chormaqan's crossing of the Oxus, the Assassins came and offered intelligence on Jalal al-Din's situation, however relations had clearly disintegrated since then. May argues that the murder of Chaghatai, Chormaqan's commander, was the instigating event in this change. What is certain is that at Güyük's enthronement, the Assassins sent a conciliatory letter in the hands of emissaries to the Great Khan and that Güyük replied with a letter "written in the harshest of terms," and declared war on the assassins dispatching a large army to begin subduing the sect, though Eljigitei failed to even begin this task.

Baiju was not dormant in the period from Eljigitei's death in 1252 to Hülegü's arrival in 1256.⁴⁴⁹ Having failed at direct assaults on several occasions, Baiju attempted a

⁴⁴⁷ Al-Maqrizi, 307.

⁴⁴⁸ May, "A Mongol-Isma'ili Alliance," 231-239.

⁴⁴⁹ Baiju had also been dealing with a rebellion in Georgia and in 1249 almost reinvaded Georgia. King David and his princes boasted of their strength while intoxicated at a party, asking why they shouldn't throw off the Mongol yoke and rebel. A Mongol spy overheard the brash comments and immediately reported it to the Mongol commanders. Awag realized the words were conspiratorial and quickly went to the Mongol commander. Kirakos calls him "Chaghatai, Awag's friend" who was in "command of the whole army." Awag pleaded with this Chaghatai and he relented, but only in restricting the Mongol retribution. The Mongols rounded up David and the princes and tortured them for three days. They

new approach at attacking Baghdad. Sometime between 1252 and 1255 the Mongols backed a Kurdish amir to spearhead a rebellion. Husam al-Din Khalil, from Luristan, rebelled with a force of Kurds. An unidentified number of Mongol warriors were sent to join him and fought under his command. Khalil attacked Najaf, to the southwest of Baghdad, and then moved north of Baghdad, perhaps to weaken the northern defenses and soften a route for Baiju to approach. One of the chief amirs of Baghdad, Sulaymanshah, was sent at the head of the Baghdad army and defeated Khalil.⁴⁵⁰ Around the same time a Mongol army of 15,000 troops moved west from Hamadan to attack Baghdad, but the Caliph successfully raised an army and the Mongols were driven away. Rashiduddin is the only source that mentions these events, and he does not give the impression that the Kurdish rebellion and the assault from Hamadan were coordinated.⁴⁵¹ If Baiju had coordinated the rebellion with the Hamadan assault, and especially if he had invaded from Anatolia simultaneously, it seems he might have had a reasonable chance of laying siege to Baghdad, but his reasons for not capitalizing on these events are unclear.

In July 1255 Baiju sent Yissaur, the same commander who had attacked the region in 1244, to raid Meletine. Bar Hebraeus was bishop of the area and was present when the Mongols attacked a monastery demanding provisions. We cannot know whether this was just another raid for booty, or whether Baiju was attempting to strengthen the northern route to Baghdad in anticipation of Hülegü's arrival.⁴⁵²

attacked various regions of Georgia, to remind the people of their might and prevent any notions of rebellion. Kirakos, 268.

⁴⁵⁰ Rashiduddin, 417.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 417-418. Woods concludes that Rashiduddin has misdated this assault. Woods, *Isfahan*, 50.

⁴⁵² Bar Hebraeus apparently was confused about the timing of the previous Mongol raid on Meletine. In the 1244 account he names it as occurring in the Greek year 1555 (1244), and then says that the same Yissaur returned in the Arab year 653 (1255). He then says that Yissaur "had come eight years previously." There was either another attack on Meletine by Yissaur in 1247 that Bar Hebraeus failed to mention, a possibility that is hard to accept as Meletine was Bar Hebraeus' home town, or he miscounted the years. Bar Hebraeus, 409 and 418.

Conclusions on the Second and Third Invasions

Only in 1231 was the last Khwarazmshah finally killed and it was not until 1239 that the Mongols completed their conquest of Georgia, Armenia, Khalat, and the remaining lands of the Khwarazmians. The unmet goals of the first invasion were finally achieved. Though the surviving Khwarazmian army was driven into Rum and then Syria, much as the surviving Qipchaqs had been driven into Georgia by the first invasion, this time it served to sow chaos among their enemies, rather than assist them. Though the Khwarazmian mercenaries played a key role in taking Jerusalem from the crusaders in 1244, which served to strengthen the Ayyubid position, they otherwise weakened the Sultans and princes by their raids and sieges to various cities up until their destruction at the battle of Hims. The primary reason for the invasion's success was that Chormaqan's army did not depart after only a couple of years, but was rather a long-term occupational force. It was also successful because it conquered the main military forces of the area and then enlisted them, while the first invasion had not capitalized on the defeats of the Georgian army.⁴⁵³

Aside from an entirely new expedition of Mongols from Khorasan hunting Jalal al-Din in 1228, there is no mention of a Mongol presence or any sign of Mongol control in any of the lands Jebe and Sübödäi passed through prior to Chormaqan's arrival. The absence of Mongol activity during the intervening years between Jebe and Sübödäi's campaign and the 1231 campaign of Chormaqan must be seen as an indication of the ineffectual conquest accomplished by Jebe and Sübödäi. Instead of capturing Baghdad, Chormaqan had to recapture Mazandaran, Persian Iraq, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Nakhchivan. He made some progress in this front, for during Chormaqan's campaigns the Caliph of Baghdad became concerned about a Mongol invasion for the first time and

⁴⁵³ However, even this campaign was not successful in its primary goal, the conquest of the Caliph. The Caliph was not defeated until the third invasion under Hülegü.

began defensive preparations.⁴⁵⁴ However, Chormaqan and Baiju found the route from Hamadan to Baghdad to be impassable, and that eastern Anatolia and northern Mesopotamia had to be subdued to open a more passable one. The effort to overcome the first invasion's failures, to secure eastern Anatolia and northern Mesopotamia as a route to Baghdad, and to occupy all the territories they had conquered left Chormaqan's army insufficient to actually take Baghdad.

During the second campaign the Mongol empire was already exhibiting the instability that would eventually lead to the cessation of Mongol expansion into the Near East. The feud between Batu and Güyük led to civil war and in 1248 Güyük mobilized his armies and headed west to attack Batu, but then suddenly died in April.⁴⁵⁵ Güyük had established his close ally, Eljigitei, in the Near East possibly as much to strengthen his position on Batu's southern flank as to make real progress in the Near East campaigns. For while Eljigitei accomplished almost nothing in the Near East, he was hostile to Batu and his camp and played a key role in the coup attempt against Batu's choice of Möngke as the next Great Khan, as shall be shown below. Güyük compensated by sending a third invasion force much larger than the first or second. Chormaqan had been able to permanently secure the grazing lands of Azerbaijan, Mughan, and Armenia as a base of Mongol operations and Baiju was able to add the alternate pasturelands of Anatolia. If Eljigitei had been able to capitalize on these key achievements, the fourth invasion may not have been necessary or would not have needed to be five times the size of the original invasion and would have been able to focus on the Mamluks in Egypt rather than on the unfulfilled goals of the previous invasions. After Eljigitei's death, Baiju again attempted to make gains toward Baghdad but was unsuccessful. The target originally identified by Genghis Khan's court, remained unconquered. This failure and the rising threat of the

⁴⁵⁴ Al-Maqrizi, 215.

⁴⁵⁵ Rashiduddin, 395. Juvaini, 261 n. 42.

Assassins, led the next Great Khan to launch a final massive, fourth force to subdue the them, take Baghdad, and push on to Egypt.

Chapter 7 The Fourth Invasion: Hülegü Khan

The fourth Mongol invasion was by far their largest and most effective. It has also traditionally received the most attention by historians since it all but ended the existence of the notorious sect of the Assassins and essentially ended the Abbasid Caliphate. Many detailed examinations of Hülegü's invasion exist and so it is not in the scope of this work to duplicate those efforts.⁴⁵⁶ Rather by a brief outline of the campaign it will be demonstrated that Hülegü was free from the strategic primacy of capturing grazing territory only due to previous gains and that he was forced to engage in many battles that were due to the failures of the second and third invasions. Further we shall see that, like the first three invasions, the fourth invasion had goals that were never realized. Hülegü had not only been tasked with the conquest of the Assassins and the Caliph, but of Egypt as well.

In 1251 the Mongols elected Möngke, the son of Tolui, to succeed Güyük as the Great Khan. This meant a shift in the throne from the family of Ögödäi to the family of Tolui and as soon as Möngke had been elected a massive conspiracy by the sons and widow of Güyük to overthrow him was exposed.⁴⁵⁷ An empire-wide investigation was launched to uncover all the conspirators. Eljigitei was implicated in the plot, as was discussed above, and many of the troops for the coup attempt were sent from him. He was arrested in Iraq, taken to Batu in the north for trial, and executed.⁴⁵⁸ Möngke then sent Baiju from Asia Minor to Persia to secure Eljigitei's territory. Baiju quickly reported that the biggest outstanding areas of resistance in Persia were that of the

⁴⁵⁶ Nearly every book on the Mongols gives some coverage of Hülegü's campaigns. Some of the best are David Nicolle's *The Mongol Warlords*, 96-141; D. O. Morgan's *The Mongols*, 145-158; J. J. Saunders' *The Mongol Conquests*, 107-118; J. A. Boyle's chapter "Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khans." In *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Volume 5. ed. J. A. Boyle (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1968), 303-421.

⁴⁵⁷ Juvaini, 573-596, Rashiduddin 405-410, and Bar Hebraeus, 417.

⁴⁵⁸ Juvaini, 590.

Assassins and the Caliph of Baghdad. With Eljigitei dead, and never having begun his mission to deal with the Assassins, a new force needed to be raised to compensate for the continuing failure of the second and third invasion forces to take Baghdad and confront the new threat of the Assassins.

Möngke determined to further the vision of Genghis Khan by dispatching his brothers with large armies to expand the Mongol Empire in the East and West, while he himself would remain in Mongolia and govern. In 1252, he sent his brother Kublai against China and his brother Hülegü to the west to maintain control over Persia, Syria, Asia Minor, and the Caucasus, and conquer Iraq and Egypt.⁴⁵⁹ Hülegü was given two out of every ten warriors, which presumably equaled six *tumens*, or 60,000, and 1,000 siege engineers.⁴⁶⁰ This, combined with the troops at his disposal in the Near East, put the army at Hülegü's disposal was over fifteen *tumens*, or 150,000 cavalry troops.⁴⁶¹ The army being sent from Mongolia alone would have had perhaps 180,000 to 300,000 horses and once his army converged on the Near East and joined the *tumens* there he would have at least 450,000 horses and as many as 750,000.

Unlike the first three invasions of the Near East, the Mongols already controlled the key grazing territories of the region. This key difference is the reason we do not see the first step of the Mongol strategy of invasion as the capture of grazing territory. However, the centrality of logistical concerns is clearly seen in the orders issued in

⁴⁵⁹ Arghun Aqa had arrived at the quriltai on May 2, 1252. The regions he governed were confirmed and expanded. He was given Khorasan, Mazandaran, India, Iraq, Fars, Kerman, Lur, Arran, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Mosul, and Aleppo. This comprised virtually the entire kingdom given to Hülegü, so we must understand Arghun Aqa to have been in administrative authority under Hülegü. It is also the first time we see Mosul included in Mongol territory. Rashiduddin, 417.

⁴⁶⁰ Bar Hebraeus, 419.

⁴⁶¹ In addition to the troops from Mongolia there were already roughly six *tumens* in the Near East: the three or four *tumens* under Baiju and the six *tumens* sent under Eljigitei, which had been sent only four years prior. Juvaini shows that there were *tumens* stationed at Nishapur, Isfahan, Qum, and Kashan. Juvaini, 518. Hülegü was also given control of the *tumens* in India, though we do not know whether he utilized them in his invasion of the Near East or not. A significant contingent from Batu was sent south through the Caucasus to join Hülegü (Kirakos, 310). An unknown number of levies from conquered territories, such as Armenia and Georgia also participated in Hülegü's campaigns.

preparation for Hülegü's transit and arrival in the Near East. Orders were sent in advance of the army to secure every meadow and grassland from Mongolia to the Oxus in anticipation of the fodder requirements of Hülegü's massive army. Orders were also issued to build bridges over every major canal and river. Every land through which the army would pass was ordered to provide about three months rations in the form of a *taghar* of flour, a portion later fixed at 183.6 lbs. (83.3 kg.), and a skin of wine for each soldier. Though Möngke had instructed Baiju to remain in Persia to keep matters under control, logistical concerns took precedence. Hülegü knew that the best pastureland was in Azerbaijan and Mughan and therefore ordered Baiju to vacate that land and move his herds further west into Rum.⁴⁶² Even the fertile pastures of Azerbaijan and Mughan could not sustain the entire army and a redistribution of forces was required.

When Baiju relocated to Rum on Hülegü's orders, the Sultan of Rum rebelled.⁴⁶³ Baiju was forced to recapture Arzengan, Sivas, Konya, and Kayseri. His armies then began general raids throughout Anatolia. It appears that the Sultan had submitted to him in 1243-44 in order to keep the Mongols out of his territory, but as soon as the Mongols wanted to actually occupy Anatolia the deal was nullified. The terms of their submission were changing from tribute to occupation.

After receiving his orders from Möngke, Hülegü returned to his own camp in 1253. He set matters in order and departed for the Near East in the autumn of 1254.⁴⁶⁴ Provisions had been prepared along the army's path and placed at regular stations. The roads were cleared of all debris and boats readied for all rivers where bridges had not been built. Hülegü spent a year going from Mongolia to Central Asia and arrived in the vicinity of Samarkand in September 1255. When Hülegü entered the territory of Arghun Aqa, in southern Uzbekistan, all the amirs of Khorasan came to pay homage. Hülegü

⁴⁶² Juvaini, 609; Rashiduddin , 478; Kirakos, 310.

⁴⁶³ Kirakos, 310-312.

⁴⁶⁴ Rashiduddin , 479.

camped for a month in order to make final logistical preparations. He issued a decree to every governor within Mongol territory informing them that due to their orders to eradicate the fortresses of the Assassins, the amirs would be required to contribute provisions, soldiers, weapons, and homes. He warned that the army would come for them next if they failed in their contributions.⁴⁶⁵ Presumably the army swelled even more from this levy of Khorasan. Meanwhile Batu had sent his contribution of troops south through the Derbent gates to Azerbaijan. Kirakos says these troops also began to improve the roads through their route since they were bringing supplies and arms by wagon.⁴⁶⁶ On January 1, 1256, Hülegü finally crossed the Oxus River. He promptly went sight-seeing and tiger hunting. On the January 10, a blizzard set in and many animals perished, but Hülegü remained for the rest of the winter in a state of relaxation.⁴⁶⁷

The Assassins

Rashiduddin says that Möngke gave Hülegü advice to take from the Oxus River to Egypt and to begin by destroying enemy fortresses in Khorasan and Quhistan, which indicates the presence of the Assassins in those regions. In August of 1252 Hülegü's famous commander, Ket Buqa, was sent in advance of the main army with a vanguard of 12,000 troops. He was to subdue any resistance and begin attacking the Assassins. He arrived in Khorasan in March 1253 and began attacking enemy fortresses in Quhistan, southwest of Khorasan in modern Afghanistan. It was to be three years before Hülegü arrived. In May of 1253 Ket Buqa took 5,000 troops and laid siege to the key Assassin fortress of Gird Koh. He stationed a commander over the siege, while he went on to assault other Assassin fortresses in the area. After almost three years of resistance, Gird

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 480.

⁴⁶⁶ Kirakos, 310.

⁴⁶⁷ Juvaini, 614-615.

Koh fell to the Mongols on January 26, 1256. It is perhaps one of the most successful resistance efforts against the Mongols on record, surpassed only by a subsequent Assassin resistance against the Il-Khans at Gird Koh which lasted for 20 years.⁴⁶⁸

In 1256 Hülegü arrived in the region and campaigned in Quhistan against the Assassins and other rebels. From there the army moved through Juvain, stopping at Radkan to enjoy the meadows, as Sübödäi had done. That summer he began sending threats to the leader of the Assassins, Rukn al-Din, at Alamut. Rukn al-Din soon agreed to surrender, promising to tear down many of his fortresses; however, he asked to keep some and to be excused from coming in person to Hülegü for one year. These terms were not satisfactory and on September 2, 1256, Hülegü set out for Persia. He sent the right wing of the army on the northern route through Mazandaran, the left army through Khwar and Simnan with the center tumen under his own command. Like Jebe and Sübödäi, he divided his forces on either side of the Elburz mountains, presumably in order to feed such a large army.

Rukn al-Din sent further letters requesting to keep two castles and a respite on coming in person to Hülegü. Hülegü began assaulting various Assassin castles and moved to Ray to await developments. Rukn al-Din sent two sets of envoys in October. Hülegü's response sheds light on why the Mongol-Assassin relations had deteriorated. Hülegü said "we have pardoned the offences of your father and those attached to him. During this period no offenses on the part of Rukn al-Din himself, who is seated in his father's place, has been committed. Let him raze the fortresses, and on all counts he will be safe from our might."⁴⁶⁹ Clearly Rukn al-Din's father, Ala al-Din, had been guilty of some specific set of crimes and offenses that resulted in Mongol retribution. The Mongol

⁴⁶⁸ Rashiduddin, 481-482. The second resistance at Gird Koh lasted into Abaqa's reign. Ibid., 485.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 484.

campaign was not based on the potential threat of the Assassins, but actual assassinations, such as that of Chaghatai.⁴⁷⁰

On November 8 Hülegü set up camp at Maymin Diz, one of the key Assassin castles. Many of his commanders advised calling off the attack because there was not adequate fodder for the horses and winter was approaching. Fodder was being brought in from Armenia in the north, but when the worst of winter arrived and the roads would freeze over, transportation of the fodder would become impossible. Hülegü continued the siege, however, and on November 17, Rukn al-Din surrendered. He accompanied Hülegü to the last great stronghold of the Assassins, Alamut. Though Rashiduddin notes that the fortress of Lammasar held out for another year, and the Assassins regained and held Gird Koh for another twenty years, the main strength of the Assassins in Persia was broken when Alamut surrendered on December 15, 1256.

Hülegü moved the army to Qazvin. He celebrated the new year, gave a Mongol wife to Rukn al-Din and sent emissaries to the Assassins of Syria advising them to surrender when he arrived there. Hülegü kept Rukn al-Din alive to assist in making the Assassins of Syria surrender. He later sent him to the Great Khan, who had Rukn al-Din assassinated during his return journey.⁴⁷¹ In March of 1257, Hülegü headed to Hamadan on the eastern slopes of the Zagros range.

Baghdad

Hülegü encamped his army at a meadow near Hamadan, and Baiju arrived from Azerbaijan. Hülegü chastised him severely for his failure to complete the goals of the second invasion. He shouted, “Since Chormaqan died, what have you done in Iran in his place? What battle line have you broken? What rebel have you brought into submission?”

⁴⁷⁰ In fact when Hülegü captured the final Assassin stronghold, Chaghatai’s son was given two or three of Rukn al-Din’s sons to kill in vengeance for his father’s murder. Juvaini, 723-724.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 724. Rukn al-Din’s escorts pretended to give him a banquet on his return journey and then “he and his followers were kicked to a pulp” and then killed him with a sword.

Other than frightening the Mongol army with tales of the Caliph's might and grandeur, what have you done?" Baiju apologized saying, "It is my fault. I did what I could. I have taken from Ray to the border of Anatolia and Syria. The only thing I haven't done is to take Baghdad because there are too many people and soldiers with too many arms, and the roads are too difficult to get the army there. It is the padishah's to command, whatever he orders I will obey."⁴⁷²

Hülegü's anger shows that the second invasion had failed to make the advances in Iraq that had been expected of it. Hülegü did not blame Chormaqan for failing to take Baghdad, even though that had been part of his original mission. Hülegü understood that the grazing territories and the immediate threats to them had to be addressed first. The issue was what had been accomplished after Azerbaijan, the Caucasus, and Anatolia had been conquered. Baiju's response is misleading. Of the accomplishments he names, some were really the accomplishments of Chormaqan, such as the taking of Ray, and those he had done under Chormaqan's command, such as taking to the borders of Anatolia. Baiju could realistically claim only his conquest of Rum and the taking of much of Syria. It is possible Rashiduddin misrepresents the conversation, though there certainly was animosity between Hülegü and Baiju, especially concerning Baiju's accomplishments or lack thereof. Baiju was to be instrumental in the capture of Baghdad. However, during one of Hülegü's later campaigns Baiju was summoned by Hülegü, found guilty of some crime, and executed. Rashiduddin seems to imply his crime was boasting of his conquest of Rum. His *tumen* was given to Shirämün, Chormaqan's son.⁴⁷³ In the meantime, Hülegü seemed to not want Baiju to mix with his army. Perhaps part of Hülegü's hostility was designed to ensure that the troops in the Near East quickly transferred their loyalty to himself. Hülegü dispatched Baiju with

⁴⁷² Rashiduddin, 486-87.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 111.

orders to “take from the lands from the edge of the western sea from the hands of the sons of the Roi de France [King of France] and the infidels,” though in reality he was assigned a role in the assault on Baghdad. Baiju departed with his army to Anatolia.⁴⁷⁴

On April 26, 1257 Hülegü arrived in Dinawar, northeast of Kermanshah on the road towards Baghdad. However, Hülegü’s ambitions and expectations of the ease of taking Baghdad soon crumbled. He suddenly withdrew to Tabriz in Azerbaijan and was to spend the better part of the year in further negotiations and preparations. Hülegü likely called off the assault because the roads and supplies were proving more problematic than he expected. He also may have obtained better intelligence on Baghdad’s defenses, since he was willing to delay the assault to negotiate and to augment his forces. He also may have cultivated agents in Baghdad and was awaiting developments. What we know for certain is that he went to Tabriz returning to Hamadan on July 26 and September 21 to send messages to Baghdad.⁴⁷⁵ He sent a message which reveals that the Caliph had previously claimed submission to Hülegü,

When the Heretics’ fortresses were conquered we sent emissaries to request assistance from you. In reply you said that you were in submission, but you did not send troops. Now a token of submissiveness and allegiance is that you assist us with troops when we ride against foes. You have not done so, and you send excuses.⁴⁷⁶

The Caliph had previously feigned submission and made excuses as to why he could not contribute troops. Hülegü ordered him to destroy all his defenses, turn the kingdom over to his son, and come submit in person. In an unusual move Hülegü permitted the Caliph to send his three chief administrators in his place. Further he offered to let the Caliph keep his domain if he would submit. The Caliph sent an arrogant reply, though his emissaries only escaped the angry mobs of Baghdadi citizens with a military escort. It

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid., 487. The coastlands belonging to the “Roi de France” presumably means the Crusader states on the Mediterranean coast. The word “infidels” is Dr. Thackston’s guess at an unidentified word, see note 1.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 488.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

appears the citizens had heard of the massive army arrayed against them and did not trust the Caliph to save them. The Caliph was only narrowly maintaining control of the city. He managed to avoid a coup by one of his chief viziers, the Dawatdar, Mujahid al-Din, but only by placating him. The Dawatdar and chief vizier continued to play against each other and off the naive Caliph. The vizier was also incompetent at military matters. Raising an army, he then failed to pay them as he had promised. This was not from lack of funds, since Hülegü found a vast treasure room filled with gold when he finally entered the Caliph's palace. The chief court officials began to lose any hope of the Caliph making a successful stand against the Mongols.⁴⁷⁷

It is not clear how he got them, but Hülegü had intelligence assets within the Caliph's court or among the courts of his regional governors. Hülegü began taking the fortresses controlled by the Caliph and started with Dartang. The governor of Dartang, Husam al-Din Akka, surrendered readily, but soon sent a secret message to the governor of Irbil to the effect that if the Caliph would provide troops, he would betray Hülegü and ride against him. The message went from the governor of Irbil, to the Caliph's vizier in Irbil, to the Caliph, who attributed the offer to a rumor. The entire story soon reached Hülegü's ears and he sent Ket Buqa to kill Husam al-Din and his entire family and retinue. Hülegü obviously had informants in Irbil or in Baghdad and was intimately aware of the on-goings of the Caliph's plans of defense.⁴⁷⁸

By late autumn Hülegü was ready to launch his assault. He ordered Baiju to ride to Mosul through Irbil, which indicates Baiju was in Azerbaijan at the time. Hülegü called the troops "Chormaqan's and Baiju Noyan's soldiers, whose yurt [camp] is in Anatolia."⁴⁷⁹ Out of deference for the great Chormaqan, and perhaps dislike for Baiju, the unit was still called by his name. Also it is clear that Baiju had been permanently

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 490-491.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 492.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 491.

moved to Rum, by Hülegü's orders, and was no longer based in Azerbaijan as he had been prior to Hülegü's dispatch. From Mosul, Baiju was to cross the Tigris and ride south along the western bank to approach Baghdad and camp to the west of the city and await Hülegü. Another army of Hülegü's troops, under Chormaqan's commander, Sönitai, was to come south along the east side of the river, also as part of the right wing of the army. Portions of the left wing of the army, under Ket Buqa, Qudusun, and Elgai were to approach from southern Persia, from Luristan and Khuzistan. Clearly Hülegü had his forces widely dispersed throughout Persia from Azerbaijan to the Persian Gulf. This allowed him to keep any regions of Persia from breaking away to join the defense of the Caliph and allowed Hülegü to have his army approach the city from every direction, but most importantly it allowed adequate provision for each force.

When Hülegü reached Dinawar for the second time, word came from the Caliph that he would pay tribute if the Mongols would turn back, but it was too late to dissuade Hülegü from taking Baghdad. On December 6, 1257, Hülegü arrived in Kermanshah and allowed his troops to begin pillaging. The city of Kermanshah, from which the region takes its name, is well watered by three large streams and the famous spring of Shireen four miles to the north.⁴⁸⁰ The forces of the right wing under Baiju and Sönitai, and the Mongol vanguard, under Su'unchaq, were commanded to come south. Baiju's forces alone numbered near 80,000, a much larger force than he had ever attacked Baghdad with before.⁴⁸¹ This massive force allowed him to move freely around the Baghdad region and gave him the manpower to finally defeat the Caliph's army. The forces passed Baghdad, and met at Ctesiphon, south of Baghdad on the Tigris. They used a pontoon bridge to set an underwater fence with iron hooks across the entire river to prevent anyone from fleeing down river to Ctesiphon or Basra.⁴⁸² At Ctesiphon the Mongols captured enemy

⁴⁸⁰ Mounsey, 294.

⁴⁸¹ Juzjani, 1237.

⁴⁸² Kirakos, 315.

scouts and sent them to Hülegü, who was still moving west out of Kermanshah. They defected and became agents of the Mongol vanguard. He sent them back to the region west of Baghdad to start spreading Mongol propaganda.⁴⁸³

Hülegü moved to Hulwan, which is just west of the modern Iran-Iraq border, near Khanaqin. Hülegü stayed there until the end of December. He camped on the banks of the Diyala, which runs southwest to feed the Tigris just south of Baghdad. Hülegü wanted to keep his forces near the rivers as he entered Mesopotamia, most likely to find adequate fodder for his horses. Meanwhile, Ket Buqa was conquering his way through Luristan, heading for the Tigris. On January 16, 1258, Baiju entered Nahr Isa, north of Baghdad, and his vanguard commander, Su'unchaq, asked to approach Baghdad from the northwest. Baiju agreed and the vanguard moved just northwest of the outskirts of the city.⁴⁸⁴

The Caliph's army attacked the vanguard and drove it off near Midrafa that same day, killing three thousand Mongols. The vanguard retreated to Bashiriyya where it was joined by Baiju. Baiju broke a nearby dam flooding the plain behind the Caliph's forces. The next day, on January 17, he attacked and defeated them, killing 12,000 Baghdadis.⁴⁸⁵ Saturday evening, on January 22, Baiju entered western Baghdad and captured the un-walled portion of the city on the west bank of the river. Ket Buqa arrived with a large army and joined him, encamping southwest of the city. Hülegü, having left his baggage in Khanaqin, arrived the same. On the 29th, the entire Mongol army began its assault from various directions. The Caliph soon agreed to send out his chief court official, but Hülegü demanded all three come: the Vizier, the Dawatdar, and Sulaymanshah. Hülegü clearly had excellent intelligence on the political structure of the Caliph's court, as these

⁴⁸³ Rashiduddin , 494.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 495.

⁴⁸⁵ Kirakos tells us there was a Georgian contingent that participated in this victory. Kirakos, 316.

three were the real power behind the Caliph's throne. The next day the Caliph sent the vizier, but Hülegü was not satisfied and sent him back.⁴⁸⁶

The fighting continued for six days. The most interesting aspect of the siege is that Hülegü employed a propaganda war to foment factionalism within the city. Every day he had archers fire arrows over the city walls in large numbers, from all sides of the city, with messages attached. The message promised amnesty for the "cadis, scholars, shaykhs, Alids [Shi'ites], and Nestorian priests, and persons who do not combat against us are safe from us."⁴⁸⁷ Hülegü's intelligence had showed him the perilous political position of the Caliph, and he wished to win the populace to his side.

On Monday, February 1st, the Mongols destroyed the southeast tower, but were unable to push through the breach. The next morning Hülegü rallied his troops and made a major assault. The fighting lasted through the day, but by the early hours of February 3rd they had taken control of the tops of the city walls on the eastern side of the city.⁴⁸⁸ The Caliph finally realized he could not win and sent gifts and a message of surrender on February 4th. It was refused. The next day he sent his son with more gifts, but again they were refused. The next day on February 6th, the eldest son, the vizier, and many others went out to ask Hülegü to accept the surrender. Hülegü refused, but sent envoys back with them to the Caliph. The events that follow show that Hülegü's intelligence on the politics of Baghdad was extremely accurate and his perception of the situation was shrewd. He already possessed the *Sahib-divan*, Fakhr al-Din Damghani, and several other city leaders, who had come out as envoys for the Caliph. He sent word to Sulaymanshah and the Dawatdar that he did not care if the Caliph came out, rather the

⁴⁸⁶ Rashiduddin , 496.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid. Bridges were constructed on the Tigris on the north and south of the city and boats commandeered. Catapults were installed on the river banks and one *tumen* patrolled on the river south of the city to prevent anyone from escaping. The Dawatdar attempted to escape down river by boat and his group of boats were struck by catapult stones, arrows, and naphtha vials. The Dawatdar was turned back.

Mongol troops stationed on the walls would remain “until they come out.”⁴⁸⁹ Hülegü knew that the people and army followed these two and not the Caliph, especially the Dawatdar.

On February 7th, both men came out, and Hülegü ordered them to go get their retinue of followers, supposedly in order to send them on missions to Syria and Egypt. When these two leaders surrendered, the entire Baghdad army and many citizens surrendered as well. They hoped for mercy, but the Mongols divided them into units and massacred them all. A group of city leaders came out to Hülegü and asked for clemency, but as they were negotiating an arrow flew from the city and hit a Mongol commander in the eye. Hülegü was enraged and renewed the assault on the city immediately. The next day, on the 8th, he had the Dawatdar and his followers killed and Sulaymanshah was interrogated and then decapitated. Both their heads were sent to Mosul and Badr al-Din Lu’lu was ordered to hang them in public.⁴⁹⁰

On Sunday, February 10th, the Caliph came out and surrendered. Hülegü ordered him to call the citizens of the city to come out to be counted. When the people came out the Mongols killed them all. On the 13th, the army entered the city and pillaged and burned all but the houses of a few Nestorians and foreigners.⁴⁹¹ On February 15th, Hülegü himself entered the city and held a banquet in the palace. The next day the Mongols burned most of the city’s Mosques, shrines, and tombs. After these atrocities, the people petitioned Hülegü for clemency and he agreed to end the pillaging. On February 20th, Hülegü withdrew from the city because of the stench of the fires and the dead, and dispatched a force to subdue Khuzistan. That evening he had the thirty-seventh, and last, Abbasid Caliph executed. Every Abbasid who could be found was

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., 497.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁹¹ Kirakos says it was the intervention of Hülegü’s Christian wife, Doquz Khatun, which saved the Christians of the city. Kirakos claims that he had his narration from an eye-witness, a Georgian prince who participated in the campaign. Kirakos, 318-320.

soon killed. Only the Caliph's youngest son was spared. He was given a Mongol wife and sent to Maragha in Azerbaijan.⁴⁹² This privilege may indicate that Hülegü was pleased with the man, or may suggest that this son was the informant of the Caliph's court.

Hülegü appointed a *shahna* over Baghdad and withdrew to his baggage camp at Khanaqin on the 23rd.⁴⁹³ Other cities in the region, notably the Shi'ite city of Hila, surrendered and asked for *shahnas*. Wasit resisted when a Mongol force arrived and reportedly 40,000 inhabitants were killed. Emissaries from Aleppo had come to Hülegü when he marched on Baghdad, and on March 19th Hülegü sent them home with a warning that all should surrender. Hülegü then returned to Hamadan, arriving there in mid April.⁴⁹⁴

Hülegü had all the treasures and loot captured from the Assassins and from Baghdad sent to Azerbaijan. A fortress was built to hold the treasure on Mount Talas on the east side of an island in the center of Lake Urmia.⁴⁹⁵ He had already determined that only Azerbaijan could sustain his army and had to be the headquarters of his new empire. The chief amirs of the Near East were soon arriving in Tabriz. Fars surrendered, and soon the Sultan of Rum, Izz al-Din. Hülegü was displeased with Izz al-Din for resisting Baiju. His brother Rukn al-Din arrived a few days after him. Hülegü sent word to Möngke of his victory and his intentions to go to Syria and Egypt.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹² Rashiduddin , 499.

⁴⁹³ Juzjani claims that after Hülegü departed to Azerbaijan, a force of 10,000 Muslims lead by unnamed servants of the Caliph rode to Baghdad and killed the Mongol *shahna* and the governor Hülegü had appointed. Hülegü dispatched a force to Baghdad, but the Muslims escaped. This story is not reported by Rashiduddin . Juzjani 1260-1261.

⁴⁹⁴ Rashiduddin , 499-500.

⁴⁹⁵ Schmidt, plates 80-82.

⁴⁹⁶ Rashiduddin , 501.

Northern Mesopotamia and Syria

When Hülegü went to Baghdad, he did not commit all his forces. At least one unit, under Uruqtu, of perhaps a *tumen*, had been dispatched to take Irbil. The city surrendered but a force of Kurds continued to hold the citadel. The lord of the city was executed for failing to secure their surrender. The Kurds impressed the Mongols with their stout defense and bravery, even making a night sortie out of the citadel killing many Mongols and destroying many of the Mongol catapults. Mosul contributed troops to the Mongol force and Badr al-Din Lu'lu suggested waiting until summer to press the siege. Uruqtu left Badr al-Din in charge and went to Tabriz. When summer arrived the Kurds escaped into the mountains and the citadel was taken.⁴⁹⁷

The ruler of Aleppo had secretly pledged allegiance to Hülegü when the latter came to Persia, but his secret was exposed and he was nearly assassinated. He fled to Hülegü as the Mongol army was setting out for Aleppo. Ket Buqa commanded the vanguard, Shiktür and Baiju commanded the right wing, and Su'unchaq the left. Mosul again was required to contribute troops under Badr al-Din's son, Malik Shah. The army had levies of Turkish, Armenian, and Georgian troops and numbered at around 120,000 troops.⁴⁹⁸ The army set out on September 12, 1259. He took the army up into Armenia and into eastern Anatolia. They passed through Akhlat and Diyarbekir. He conquered modern Cizre, detached a force to lay siege to Mayyafariqin, and Malik Shah was sent to lay siege to Amid. The force that took Mayyafariqin was lead by Hülegü's son, Yoshmut and had the Armenian and Georgian contingents at its front. The city held out until 1260. Hülegü captured Dunaysir and Harran, before laying siege to Aleppo. Aleppo fell on

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid., 500-501.

⁴⁹⁸ Nicolle, *Warlords*, 112.

December 17, 1259 and a *shahna* was installed. Damascus sent word that it surrendered and Ket Buqa arrived there and gave them a Mongol *shahna*.⁴⁹⁹

Hülegü spent the next five months in Syria tightening his control of the region and receiving the submission of parts of Anatolia. The Sultan of Syria, Malik Nasir, was captured by Ket Buqa and sent to Hülegü at Aleppo. He was promised that when Egypt was conquered, he could rule Syria.⁵⁰⁰ While at Aleppo, emissaries from Mongolia arrived with word that Hülegü's brother, Möngke, had died on August 12, 1259 while campaigning in China against the Sung dynasty. Hülegü knew that a war would soon develop between his older brother, Kublai, and his younger brother Arik-Böke, over the succession to the throne. Since Hülegü supported Kublai, and Bärkä to the north supported Arik-Böke, Hülegü needed to protect his northern flank and be prepared to intervene.

Hülegü's letter to King Louis IX in 1262 has sometimes been used to say that Hülegü withdrew due to Syria's inability to sustain his army and that this problem permanently hindered the Il-Khans from successfully conquering Syria.⁵⁰¹ Hülegü did say Aleppo and Damascus provided inadequate provisions and vegetation and that he had chosen to remove his larger herds to Armenia, but clearly says this was a temporary move and that he continued to have ambitions in Syria. Certainly he may have found the summer months especially inhospitable, but he does not at all indicate the area presented a permanent logistical obstacle.⁵⁰² He may have emphasized the logistical issue to not hint at the instability of the Mongol empire and weaken his position before the French King. In the very year of the letter Bärkä invaded Hülegü's territory. In any case,

⁴⁹⁹ Rashiduddin , 503. Kirakos says Hülegü went to Damascus in person, 324.

⁵⁰⁰ Rashiduddin , 503.

⁵⁰¹ For an example see D. O. Morgan, *The Mongols*, 156-157.

⁵⁰² Meyvaert, Paul "An Unkown Letter of Hülegü, Il-Khan of Persia, to King Louis IX of France." *Viator* 11, (1980): 258, lines 94-97.

Hülegü placed Ket Buqa in charge of Syria with a force of two *tumens* and a contingent of Armenian and Georgian knights, and withdrew to Akhlat on June 6, 1260.⁵⁰³

Ket Buqa had several victorious skirmishes with Crusaders, particularly a group of Templars, and even took the Crusader port of Sidon.⁵⁰⁴ In his letter to King Louis IX in 1262, Hülegü implies his forces had overrun the Kingdom of Jerusalem. A later letter from the Il-Khan in 1274 explicitly says Hülegü's forces had captured Jerusalem and had set free the Christian slaves they found there.⁵⁰⁵

The Mamluks overthrew the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt in 1250 and eventually the throne was seized by a Mamluk named Qutuz in 1258. Qutuz received the surviving Khwarazmian commanders who had fled from Syria when Hülegü arrived.⁵⁰⁶ When he departed, Hülegü sent emissaries to Egypt warning the Mamluks to request a *shahna* or prepare for an invasion. When the emissaries arrived, Qutuz asked the Khwarazmian commanders their advice on how to proceed, realizing that only the death of Möngke had given them a respite from Hülegü invading and conquering Egypt. The commanders knew that they were no match for Hülegü's army, but pointed out that surrender was foolish, since several times Hülegü had promised amnesty to leaders and then crucified them. They rejected fleeing west as the Berbers were their enemies and would kill them. They concluded that fighting to the death was the only available option, since they would at least die while bravely defending their land. Qutuz killed the emissaries and mobilized his army. The emissaries were not the only Mongols in the region. Ket Buqa's vanguard was far to the south of Syria, monitoring the Egyptians. They sent word to Ket Buqa of the Egyptian mobilization. With this intelligence, Ket Buqa decided to move south and meet the Mamluks in battle.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰³ Rashiduddin , 503 and Kirakos, 324-325. Bar Hebraeus says it was only one tumen, 436.

⁵⁰⁴ Nicolle, *Warlords*, 114.

⁵⁰⁵ Meyvaert, 257, lines 72-74 and n.76.

⁵⁰⁶ Rashiduddin , 504.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 505.

Qutuz destroyed the Mongol outpost at Gaza on July 16, 1260. Ket Buqa brought his army south from modern Lebanon and met the Mamluk force at Ayn Jalud in the valley of Meggido on September 3rd. The Mamluks and their Khwarazm allies used an ambush. A force was placed in hiding while another engaged Ket Buqa and then retreated, leading Ket Buqa into the trap. The Mongol army was annihilated. A group of Mongol soldiers fled and hid in a reed bed in a nearby river. The Mamluks set fire to the reeds and the Mongols were burned alive. As the Mongols were overwhelmed, Ket Buqa refused to flee and supposedly sent messengers to Hülegü to report his brave stand and ask for vengeance for his impending death. Ket Buqa was soon captured. After boasting that Hülegü would avenge his death, an ironic boast since this is exactly what Hülegü failed to do, he was then executed. The Mamluks pushed north into Syria taking much of what Hülegü had captured.

Hülegü sent a “large army” under Elgäi *Noyan* to Syria. They pillaged in Syria briefly, but soon heard the new Mamluk ruler of Egypt, Buduqdar, was mobilizing to repulse them. They retreated to Anatolia, taking the remaining Mongols from the Syrian garrison with them. Rashiduddin says that “Hülegü Khan wanted to lead his army back to Egypt and Syria in revenge for Ket Buqa, but on account of Mänggü Qa’an’s death and the dispute that had sprung up between him and his relatives, time and circumstance would not allow it. Therefore he put it off.”⁵⁰⁸ In July the Mongol army in China had declared Kublai the new Great Khan, but Arik-Böke had done the same at Qaraqorum, the Mongol capital and war broke out. The next year hostilities began between Hülegü and Bärkä (1261-1266), which outlasted Hülegü himself (d. 1265).

Hülegü was focused on these developments and dispatched a meager force of 6,000 to meet the Mamluk threat.⁵⁰⁹ Though this force outnumbered the Mamluks, it was

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 506.

⁵⁰⁹ Hülegü also soon developed problems in the Caucasus. In 1261, the Georgian King fled from the Mongols because he could not afford the exorbitant taxes placed upon him. Argun Aqa attempted to have

defeated at the battle of Hims in December of 1260. This pathetic attempt to stop the Mamluk advance and the Mamluk victory over a larger force was the end of Hülegü's immediate efforts to control Syria and the Mongols did not attempt to deal with the Mamluks again until 1281. Despite his intentions, Hülegü never made an effort to take Egypt as his mandate dictated.

Conclusions on the Fourth Invasion

The chief difference between the fourth invasion and the first three campaigns was that there was no subsequent follow-up effort by the Great Khan to achieve the failed goal of conquering Egypt. Hülegü told King Louis IX that his withdrawal to Azerbaijan was temporary, that he intended to continue his war in Syria and demanded the King of France assist by not aiding the enemy via the crusader states.⁵¹⁰ However, the Mongol civil war prevented Hülegü from continuing his operations in Syria. That effort was left to his successors. The Il-Khan's made efforts to retake Syria that were either temporary victories, or outright failures for various reasons, but these failures could not be reversed by more help from Mongolia. With the death of Möngke the Mongol empire was fractured and the Il-Khans established what was, in effect, an autonomous state. Oversight of the strategy of expansion of the Mongol Empire no longer existed. Therefore there was no subsequent invasion from Mongolia with fresh troops and adequate manpower for the task at hand. Hülegü's massive army was soon tied up in border posts and had to be kept in the north because the Mongols there were now an enemy. The Mongol loss at Ayn Jalud was not unique, for the Mongols had been defeated before, and the defensive force under Ket Buqa was relatively small. The factor that differentiates Ayn Jalud from the Mongol loss at Isfahan or the previous failures at

him arrested, but the Georgian nobles protected him and a general rebellion erupted. Hülegü crushed the rebellion and killed many of the Georgian princes. Kirakos, 325-332.

⁵¹⁰ Mayvaert, 258-259.

Baghdad was that the Mongols never made a serious effort to follow up on the loss. The Great Khan could not mount a subsequent invasion capable of driving back the Mamluk gains permanently or taking Egypt.

Chapter 8

Conclusions on the Mongol Invasions

The result of the first invasion of the Near East was to weaken the nations west of Khwarazm to the extent that they were ripe for the surviving Khwarazmshah, Jalal al-Din, to exploit to his advantage. Even with a devastated Khwarazm infrastructure and army, he was easily able to cow the khanates of Azerbaijan and the surrounding areas and establish a new Khwarazm kingdom to reign over. Perhaps if Genghis Khan himself had not abandoned the chase of Jalal al-Din into India, or if he had commanded Jebe and Sübödäi to conquer and occupy the western borders of the Khwarazm Empire rather than just conquer and return, the emasculated nations to the west would not have become a base of operations for continued Khwarazmian resistance. The Mongols may then have correctly estimated that the Sultan of Rum and the Caliph in Baghdad were too engaged in the war against the Crusaders and against one another to be able to overrun the extraordinarily weak or symbolic occupation force they would be leaving behind in the defeated territories.

Independent of direct supply from the main Mongol forces in Central Asia, Jebe and Sübödäi not only survived, but rampaged freely in hostile territory for over three years. Although they avoided the occasional fight, they won every battle they engaged in. Though Jebe and Sübödäi's campaign was astonishing by any measure, it fell short of being a successful conquest. The mandate given to Jebe and Sübödäi was to conquer nations, yet virtually none of the nations they defeated in battle were effectively annexed to the Mongol Empire.

Saunders concludes, "this astonishing raid, which defeated twenty nations and achieved a complete circuit of the Caspian, produced no immediate political consequences."⁵¹¹ On their encroachment into Russian territory, and the reason Batu and

⁵¹¹ Saunders, 59.

Sübödäi had to re-invade Russia in 1236, he says, “the raid of Jebe and Sübödäi into Russia had no lasting effects.”⁵¹² In fact Batu and Sübödäi had to re-conquer every portion of the Northern Caucasus, Qipchaq territory, and Russia that Jebe and Sübödäi had supposedly conquered. Boyle likewise cannot concede to call Jebe and Sübödäi’s campaign a “conquest” but rather terms it only a “reconnaissance raid without parallel in history.”⁵¹³

Jebe and Sübödäi’s invasion of the Near East, Caucasus, and the Qipchaq steppe reveals a clear focus on logistical concerns in the path and strategy of their expedition. Their logistical and tactical advantages gave them victory in battle and their strategy of controlling key supply regions allowed them to campaign successfully in enemy lands for three and a half years. Neither of these factors resulted in a successful attempt to add any nations to the Mongol Empire. They served only to create a debilitated region that allowed the Khwarazmians to continue resistance against the Mongols. If measured as a “reconnaissance raid,” as Saunders calls it, it might be measured as a success, for it provided intelligence information for the subsequent invasion into the Near East by Chormaqan and into Russia by Batu and Sübödäi. However, the mandate the commanders were given was not to gather intelligence, but to conquer nations. The manpower they were provided with was insufficient to both make a circuit of the Caspian and to satisfactorily garrison the conquered territories. Essentially there was no occupation force. These strategic failures necessitated a subsequent invasion.

The Great Khans had a vision of bringing the entire world into permanent subjection to Mongolia. When the first invasion failed to eliminate the Khwarazmians, or to add any of the Near East, Caucasus, or Russia to the Empire, the Mongols launched a second campaign. Chormaqan was assigned the task of re-conquering the Near East and

⁵¹² Sübödäi served under Batu as a general in the later invasion of Russia.

⁵¹³ Boyle, *Cambridge*, 311. Turnbull also titles the campaign “the reconnaissance mission ‘to the western lands.’” *Genghis Khan*, 74.

Caucasus and was given a new target, the Abbasid Caliph. A simultaneous invasion was sent under Batu to re-invade the Northern Caucasus, Qipchaq territory, and Russia. They both succeeded where the first invasion failed. Chormaqan's success was due to establishing a permanent occupation force and incorporating the defeated military forces into his army.

Like the first invasion, Chormaqan employed a strategy of first seizing the territory necessary to supply his army. Once Azerbaijan and Mughan were secure, the army steadily expanded its sphere of operations from those headquarters. Batu and Sübödäi did likewise to the north, again seizing the Qipchaq Steppes and pressing their invasion from there. Both Güyük and Möngke, the next two Great Khans, served as commanders on this campaign and learned the art of invasion strategy from the great general Sübödäi.

While the second invasion succeeded where the first invasion failed, by finally eliminating the nobility of the Khwarazmians, taking Persia and the Caucasus, and also adding the Sultanate of Rum to the Empire's possession, Chormaqan and Baiju failed in their mission of taking Baghdad. Baiju was chastised heavily for this failure when Hülegü arrived. The chastisement was perhaps unfair for Chormaqan and Baiju were given insufficient resources to occupy Persia, the Caucasus, and much of Anatolia, and to sack Baghdad as well. When Baiju was finally given a sufficient force, he routed the Baghdad army and occupied western Baghdad. Reasons aside, however, the mission Ögödäi had sent them on remained incomplete. In addition the Mongol presence in the Near East caused relations with the Assassins to sour. The result was that the next Great Khan was compelled to dispatch yet another force to subdue the Assassins and abrogate the second invasion's failures at Baghdad. Eljigitei was sent to subdue the Assassins and capture Baghdad, a mission he completely failed to accomplish since he rerouted his efforts towards overthrowing Möngke. He had time to actualize his mission in Khorasan

and made it at least briefly to Persia, but spent what time he had there conspiring to oppose the enthronement of the clan of Tolui. Güyük intended to go to the west himself to finish the invasion of the Near East and perhaps to strengthen his control over Batu in Russia, but he died before his plans were realized.

Ögödäi and Güyük had invested roughly 100,000 troops in the missions of Chormaḡan and Eljigitei, yet their chief assignments had not been accomplished. This prompted the next Great Khan, Möngke, to deploy a fourth invasion force. Hülegü was assigned the task of succeeding where the second and third invasions had failed, and of conquering Syria and Egypt as well. The Mongols already controlled the best pasturelands in the Near East, therefore Hülegü was not forced to start by capturing suitable grasslands like the previous campaigns. However, he spent a patient three years in transit in order to make adequate logistical preparations. Only with these preparations complete could he move into Khorasan and Persia and begin his operations. Even then he could only approach Baghdad by widely distributing his forces and carefully approaching, not because of the strength of the enemy, but because of the logistical delicacy of campaigning in the southwestern Persian plateau and Mesopotamia.

Hülegü, indeed, devastated the Persian branch of the Assassins, though the order lived on in Syria even beyond Hülegü's invasion of the region. It was, in fact, the Mongols' enemies, the Mamluks and Khwarazmians, who finally eliminated the Syrian Assassins. The Persian Assassins had lost their independent state, but went back to the underground existence they had practiced previously and eventually moved their operations to India. They still exist today in small pockets throughout the Near East and India.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹⁴ Nicolle, *Warlords*, 107. Today they are led by the *Aga Khan* and have established a charitable foundation with offices in Switzerland and France: <http://www.akdn.org/>.

Hülegü invaded Syria once, but due to the development of a civil war in the Mongol empire he failed to leave an adequate defense force to protect his new conquest from the Mamluks. Hülegü had removed his army to Azerbaijan, as a base of operation where his horses could be fed and ready to ride north or east to restrain Bärkä, defend his headquarters in Azerbaijan, or support Kublai against Arik-Böke if necessary. Further, the first three invasions' failure to eliminate the Khwarazmian military leadership coupled with Hülegü's reputation for a lack of diplomatic integrity drove the Mamluks to rule out surrender and choose what they believed to be a suicide mission against the Mongols. The Mamluks quickly rode north and caught the Mongols unprepared. They annihilated the impetuous Ket Buqa's forces and retook Syria. The Mamluks and Mongols struggled for control of Syria for decades, but Hülegü was unwilling or unable to commit adequate forces to the re-conquest due to the Mongol civil war and the logistical difficulties of campaigning in the Levant with a large cavalry force. He sent less than a *tumen* to respond to the Mamluk threat. He did not have the manpower to take on a civil war with Bärkä and occupy Syria, much less take Egypt. The fourth invasion failed to ever enter Egypt as Hülegü had been commanded to do.

The defeat of Ket Buqa and the recapture of Syria by the Mamluks have sometimes been hailed as the point when the expansion of the Mongols was checked. However, the advance of the Mongols had been halted before this. Jalal al-Din drove off Taimas and Tainal at Isfahan and the army of Baghdad drove off Chormaqan and Baiju's force on multiple occasions, thereby checking the second invasion. The loss of Syria was a serious setback, but the Mongols had repeatedly lost ground due to stationing inadequate defense forces, such as all of the gains from the first invasion. This was often realized in the form of rebellions, rather than battles, and the Mamluk use of a Mongol style ambush against the incautious Mongol commander was a significant development. Yet battlefield losses and even the loss of captured territory were not new to the Mongols.

What changed was that Möngke's successors were unable to mount a fifth invasion to compensate for previous failures as their predecessors had done. When Möngke died, the invasions into Europe suddenly ceased and Hungary and Poland were permanently lost to them as well, though there was no Mongol defeat in Europe comparable to Ayn Jalud. Therefore, the force that checked the Mongol conquests in the west was not the Mamluks, or any battlefield defeat, but the disintegration of the Great Khanate. Even after the immediate succession issue was resolved the new Great Khan lacked the power or will to resolve the ongoing hostilities between the Il-Khan and Qipchaq Khanates. A second factor also prevented Mongolia from compensating for previous failures with a new invasion force. After Kublai had defeated his brother, Arik-Böke, and secured the throne, he invested all his efforts into completing the conquest of the Sung Empire, which he and Möngke had begun together. He then set his eyes on Southeast Asia, which resulted in a failed and costly attempt to take Vietnam, and on Japan, which resulted in the most disastrous set of campaigns in Mongol history. The manpower losses of these three invasions were near 200,000.⁵¹⁵

Each of the three fully realized invasions of the Near East succeeded in its first mission and failed at its second. The second invasion was mounted to compensate for the failures of the first, with a new objective added. The new objective was not met, and a third invasion was therefore mounted to compensate for the second. The third invasion failed and a fourth invasion was mounted to compensate for the second and third with yet more objectives added. The fourth invasion also failed at its new objectives. Therefore, the Mongols made gains in the Near East not by consistent success, but by persistence of strategy over the Khanates of the first four Great Khans and the continued ability of the Great Khan to dispatch new invasion forces. However, the empire could not continue to indefinitely mount subsequent invasions to compensate for previous failures.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid., 65-68.

Manpower was not the problem as the Mongol army could infuse its ranks with conquered peoples. Despite Kublai's disasters in Southeast Asia he gained the vast Sung Empire from which to draw new soldiers, though replacing lost Mongol warriors with conscripts from China would undoubtedly change the basic composition of the Mongol army and weaken its battlefield advantages. Indeed Kublai was often criticized by his contemporaries for the sinicization of the Mongol Empire. The primary problem was that the political structure of the Mongol Empire fractured and shattered over a dispute of succession.

A war almost erupted as a result of Möngke's ascension, as the sons of Güyük opposed the transfer of the Great Khanate to the sons of Tolui and this dispute caused Eljigitei's mission to be aborted. On the death of Möngke, Genghis Khan's grandsons waged war over the throne of the Mongols and the empire never recovered a unified strategy of conquest. The battle to control the prime pasturelands of Arran, Mughan, and Azerbaijan also fueled the civil war between Hülegü and Bärkä, Batu's successor to the Qipchaq Khanate (later known as the Golden Horde). Hülegü was able to keep Bärkä out of Azerbaijan, and almost captured the Qipchaq Steppe. In 1261 Bärkä forged an alliance with the Mamluks of Egypt against the Il-Khans, an alliance that was then joined by the Byzantines and the Genoese. The fractured Mongol Empire that emerged, with the Il-Khans, Qipchaq Khanate, and others operating independently and at war with one another, precluded any fifth invasion to compensate for previous failures. With this change Mongol expansion in the Near East ended.

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Appendix A: Maps

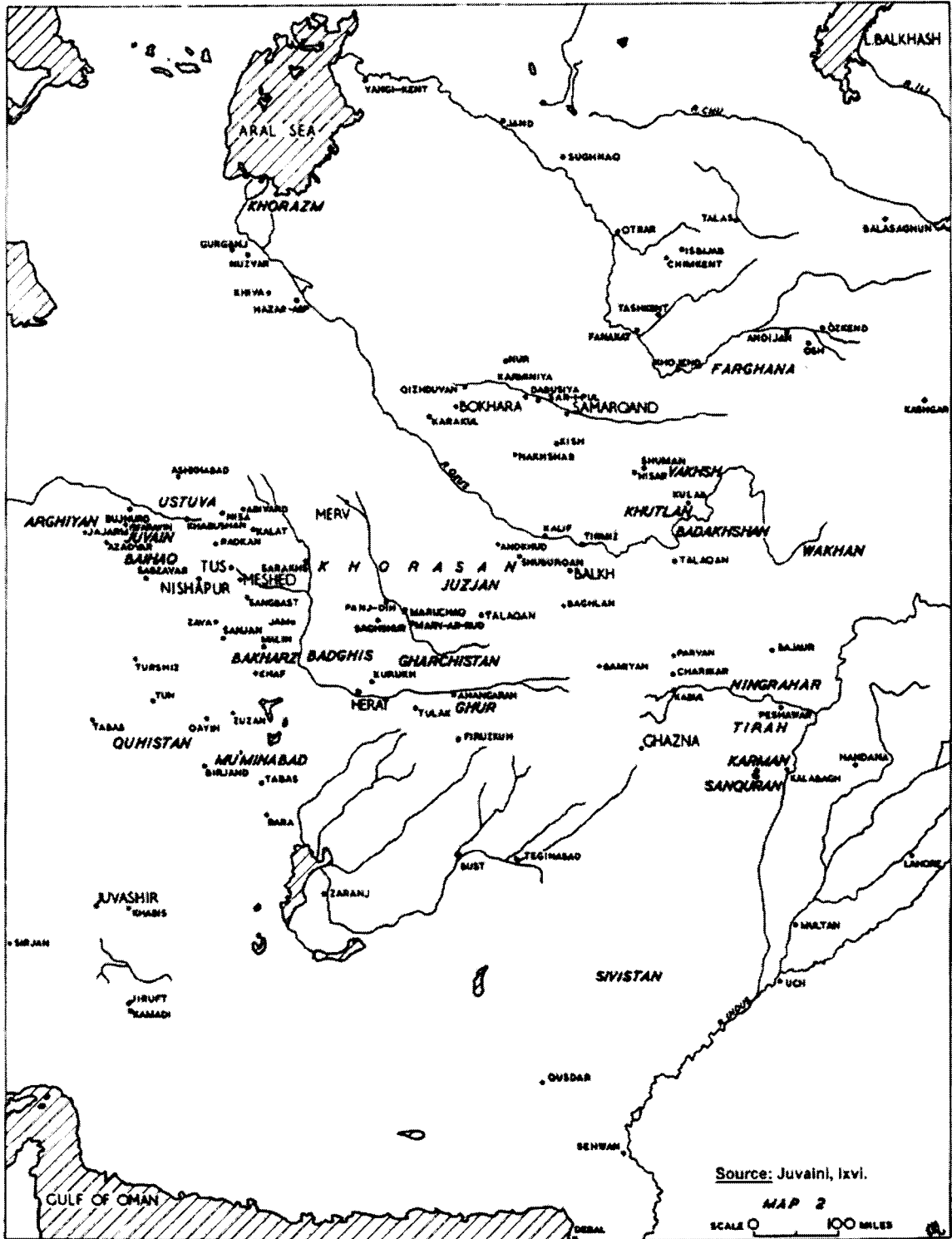


Figure 1: Khorasan

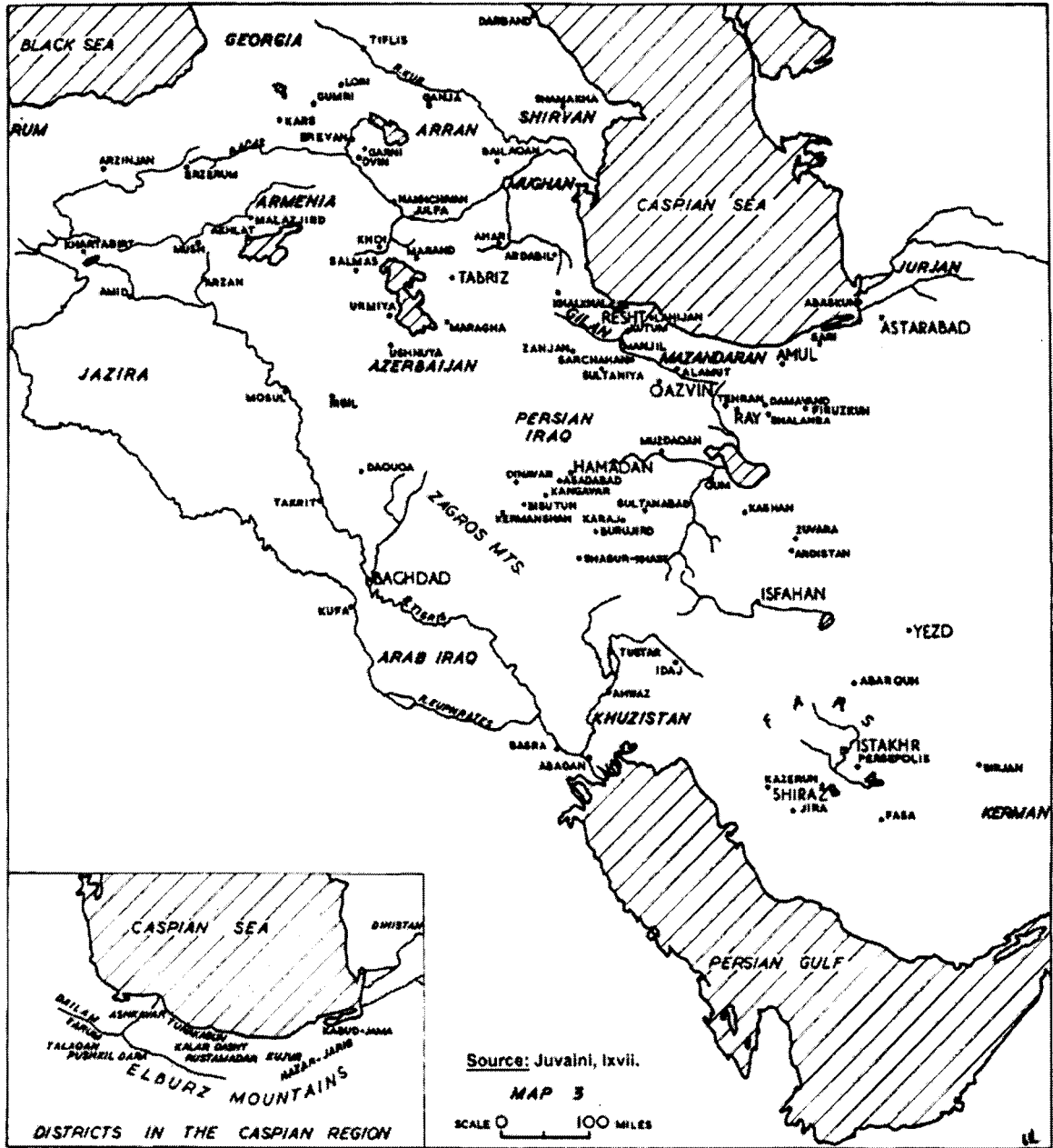


Figure 2: Persia

Appendix B: Timeline

First Invasion

1218		Mongol caravan massacred in Utrar
1219		Genghis Khan prepares for invasion of Khwarazm
1220	February	Bukhara surrenders to Mongols
	April 18	Muhammad arrives at Nishapur
	Spring	Expedition arrives at Balkh
		Muhammad flees to Ray and on to Farrazin (near Hamadan)
	April-June	Jebe and Sübödäi sack Zava
	May 24	Jebe and Sübödäi's vanguard arrives at Nishapur
	June 6	Jebe and Sübödäi arrive at Nishapur
	Summer	Jebe and Sübödäi campaign in Juzjani
		Jebe and Sübödäi campaign in Qumis and Mazandaran
		Muhammad flees to Hamadan
		Sübödäi takes Khwar and Simnan
		Jebe and Sübödäi arrive at Ray
		Jebe conquers Sawa and Qum while Sübödäi goes to Qazvin
	Autumn	Jebe arrives at Hamadan
		Muhammad flees to Sarchahan (stays one week)
		Muhammad flees to Gilan (stays one week)
		Muhammad flees to Ustundar
		Jebe battles Khwarazm army at Sujas
		Muhammad flees to Dubaye (near Amul)
		Jebe and Sübödäi sack Qazvin
		Jebe and Sübödäi move to Ray (possible battle at Ray)
		Muhammad flees to islands in the Caspian Sea
		Mongol detachment from Ray almost captures Muhammad
		Mongol detachment captures Muhammad's harem and mother
		Muhammad dies
		Jebe and Sübödäi invade Azerbaijan, Tabriz submits
	Winter	Jebe and Sübödäi winter in Mughan 1220-1221
	Winter	Hamadan kills <i>shahna</i> and rebels
1221	February	Jalal al-Din flees from Nishapur to Gazna
		Jebe and Sübödäi report to Genghis Khan
	Spring	First battle with Georgians at Kotman
		Genghis Khan attacks Balkh
		Tabriz submits a second time
		Jebe and Sübödäi sack Maragha
	Summer	Jebe and Sübödäi campaign in Persian Iraq
		Jebe and Sübödäi's aborted attack on Diyarbakr and Irbil
		Jebe and Sübödäi sack Hamadan
	Aug-September	Jebe and Sübödäi leave Persian Iraq for Nakhchivan
		Jebe and Sübödäi invaded Nakhchivan

		Jebe and Sübödäi sack Saraw and Ardabil (east of Tabriz)
1222	Winter	Jebe and Sübödäi winter in Mughan
	Spring	Jebe and Sübödäi invade Arran
		Jebe and Sübödäi sack Bailaqan and Gandja
	Summer	Jebe and Sübödäi campaign in Arran and Armenia
	December	Second battle with Georgians
1223	January	Jebe and Sübödäi attack Shirvan
		Georgian king dies of battle wounds
		Jebe and Sübödäi cross Caucasus Mountains
		Invasion of Derbent, battle with Alans
		Surprise attack on Qipchaqs
		Jebe and Sübödäi maraud in Qipchaq Steppe
		Jebe and Sübödäi sack Sudak
		Russian allied force sets out for the Dnieper River
		Russians attack the Mongol vanguard at the Dnieper
		Battle of the Kalka
	Jebe and Sübödäi raid Russian cities in Kiev region	
1224	Winter	Jebe and Sübödäi winter in Qipchaqs plain 1223-1224
	Spring	Jebe and Sübödäi rendezvous with Genghis Khan in Transoxania

Second Invasion

1227		Chin-Temür sends Taimas and Tainal to attack the Khwarazmians
		Genghis Khan dies
		Battles at Ray and Damghan
1228		Battle of Isfahan
1229		Ögödäi elected the Great Khan
1229?	August	Jalal al-Din defeated at Akshahar
1230		Chormaqan crosses Oxus River
		Chormaqan arrives in Ray
		Jalal al-Din evades Mongol force in Mughan
1231		Taimas attacks Jalal al-Din's camp
		Jalal al-Din killed
		Chormaqan campaigns in Northern Mesopotamia
1232?		Chormaqan invades central Persia (Fars and Kerman)
		Tabriz submits
1232		Chormaqan relocates to Mughan
		Caliph captures Irbil
1233/1235?		Chormaqan invades Arran, Gandja captured
1235		Chormaqan campaigns in Northern Mesopotamia
		Chin-Temür dies
		Isfahan captured
1236		Mongols attack Mosul

1237		Mongols attack Irbil Batu captures Volga region
1238	November	Mongols defeated by the Army of Baghdad Mongols defeat Army of Baghdad Ayyubid Sultan al-Kamil dies Chormaqan launches Caucasian campaign Batu invades Russia, Möngke campaigns in north Caucasus
1239		Chormaqan campaigns in Caucasus
1240		Mongols invade eastern Turkey
1241		Mongols capture Arzengan Chormaqan relieved of command (due to deafness)
	December 11	Ögödäi dies
1242		Baiju campaigns in Northern Mesopotamia Mongols siege Irbil, Caliph's force drive off Mongols
	Winter	Baiju given official command
	December	Caliph dies
1243		Battle of Kosodagh Rum conquered Argun Aqa appointed <i>basqaq</i> of Khorasan, Persia, & Azerbaijan
1244	Summer	Baiju campaigns in Rum
1244-45		Baiju campaigns in Northern Mesopotamia
1245		Baiju assaults Baghdad, two Mongol armies defeated Khwarazmians capture Jerusalem
1246		Güyük elected Great Khan
1247	May	Battle of Hims, Khwarazmians defeated
	Summer	Papal envoys (Asclin) visit Baiju in Armenia

Third Invasion

1248		Eljigitei dispatched by Güyük Güyük dies
	December 14	Eljigitei's envoys arrive at Cyprus
1249	January 27	King Louis IX sends envoys to Eljigitei
	June 6	Louis captured Damietta
1250		Possible Mongol assault on Baghdad
1251	February	Möngke elected Great Khan
1252		Eljigitei arrested and executed

Fourth Invasion

1252	July	Hülegü sent to the Near East Ket Buqa sent to Khorasan
1253	December 2	Ket Buqa lays siege to Gird Koh
1254	Autumn	Hülegü departed for Near East
1252-55		Husam al-Din Khalil rebels against Caliph

		Mongols assault Baghdad from Hamadan
1255		Baiju sends Yissuar to raid Meletine
	September	Hülegü arrives at Samarkand
	December 31	Ala al-Din assassinated
1256	January 1	Hülegü crosses Oxus
	January 6	Gird Koh falls
	November 8	Hülegü lays siege to Maymin Diz
	November 17	Hülegü Rukn al-Din surrenders
	December 15	Alamut surrenders
1257	March	Hülegü goes to Hamadan
	April 26	Arrives Dinawar, then retires to Tabriz
	July 26	Visits Hamadan to communicate with Caliph
	September 21	Visits Hamadan to communicate with Caliph
	December 6	Hülegü invades Kermanshah
1258	January 16	Baiju enters Nahr Isa and Su'unchaq approaches Baghdad
		Mongol vanguard driven back and Baiju breaks a levy/dam
	January 17	Battle of Baghdad; Baiju routes the Army of Baghdad
	January 22	Baiju occupies western Baghdad
		Ked Buqa arrives at Baghdad
		Hülegü arrives at Baghdad
	January 29	Assault on Baghdad begins
	February 1	Southeast tower destroyed
	February 3	Mongols control eastern wall
	February 4	Caliph offers to surrender: refused
	February 5	Caliph offers to surrender and sends out his son
	February 6	Caliph offers to surrender and sends out his eldest son
	February 7	Sulaymanshah and Dawatdar surrender and come out of city
		Baghdad's defense forces surrender, exit city, and are killed
	February 10	Caliph comes out of city; citizens come out and are killed
	February 13	Mongol army enters Baghdad to pillage
	February 15	Hülegü holds banquet in Caliph's palace
	February 20	Hülegü kills the Caliph and his family and departs from Baghdad
	Summer	Irbil's citadel captured
1259	August 12	Möngke dies
	September 12	Hülegü departs for Syria from Azerbaijan
	December 17	Aleppo captured
1260	June 6	Hülegü departs for Azerbaijan from Syria
	July 16	Qutuz destroys Mongol outpost at Gaza
1260	September 3	Battle of Ayn Jalud; Mongols defeated, Ket Buqa killed
	December	Battle of Hims; Mongols defeated
1261		Bärkä and Mamluk alliance
1262		Mongol civil war breaks out
1264	February 19	Hülegü dies

Appendix C: Glossary

Amir	(Arabic) Governor. Originally a military commander.
Atabeg	(Turkish) Governor. Literally “father lord.” A type of governor under the princes in the Seljuk system of government. Similar to an amir.
Arban	(Mongolian) A Ten-man unit.
Bagatur	(Mongolian) Commander of a ten-man arban.
Bahdur	(Mongolian) Ba’adur, “valiant man.”
Basqaq	(Turkic) “Govern or Direct.” Governor in occupied territories.
Darugha	(Mongolian)
Gajiga	(Mongolian) Rear guard.
Jagun	(Mongolian) A hundred-man unit.
Kāshik	(Mongolian) Personal guardsmen of the Great Khan.
Kumis	(Mongolian) Drink of soured mare’s milk.
Mingghan:	(Mongolian) A thousand-man unit.
Noyan	(Mongolian) “Official” or “Military Chief.” Usually the commander of one tumen.
Paiza	(Mongolian) Tablet granting authority or office given by a Khan.
Quriltai	(Mongolian) Assembly of the leaders of the people.
Sahib-divan	(Persian) Minister of Finance.
Shahna	(Persian) “The representative of the conqueror in conquered territory responsible in particular for the collection of tribute.” ⁵¹⁶ A Persian term whose Mongolian equivalent was “daruga.”
Taghar	(Mongolian) A weight measurement later fixed at 183.6 lbs. (83.3 kg.).
Tamma	(Mongolian) (1) A special force assigned to border regions for the expansion of Mongol territory and subduing of rebels. Force comprised of troops proportionally singled out from every unit in the Mongol army. (2) The military governor over a tamma force. A Mongolian term whose rough Persian equivalent was “basqaq.”
Tumen	(Mongolian) A ten thousand-man unit.
Yarligh	(Mongolian) Official stamp of approval on a person’s post or office.
Tulughma	(Mongolian) Standard sweep. A battlefield tactic of the Mongols where the light cavalry was used on the ends of the battle line to out-flank the enemy and in the battle line itself to draw the enemy ranks out into disarray in preparation for the heavy cavalry’s attack.
Vardapet	(Armenian) “priest” or “church scholar.”
Yurt	(Mongolian/Altaic) A grazing territory or camp.

⁵¹⁶ Juvaini, 44, note 3. This is the definition given by Boyle.