

The Unity of the Mongol Empire and Continental Exchanges over Eurasia

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I. TWO DIFFERENT VIEWS

Today 'Pax Mongolica' is no longer an exotic term. It is easily found in scholarly works on Central Eurasia.¹ It emphasizes the positive aspect of Mongol rule in contrast to the term 'Tatar Yoke,' which highlights their oppressive aspect. Nowadays, many scholars are critical of this viewpoint which emphasizes the destruction brought about by the Mongol conquest. Instead, they tend to perceive 'Pax Mongolica' and 'Tatar Yoke' as two sides of the same coin.² T. T. Allsen aptly remarked, "[these] two visions of nomadic history, as Bernard Lewis points out, are not mutually exclusive alternatives; the nomads destroyed some cultural resources and at the same time created conditions in which long-distance cultural exchange flourished. There was, in fact, both a Pax Mongolica and a Tatar Yoke, inhering and coexisting in the very same polity."³ Now it is regarded as a commonly used historical terminology, and, according to P. D. Buell, "[this] term has been used to describe the freedom of travel and security occasioned by the Mongolian conquests, which brought much of Eurasia under a single political authority and fostered long-range commerce. Conditions continued to be favorable even after the breakdown of the Mongol Empire, and long-range contacts of

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every sort briefly flourished again after the end of the disturbances caused by the wars of Qaidu (q.v.) in the early 14th century.”⁴

However, the fact that *Pax Mongolica* has become a favorite, and even fashionable, term among scholars and writers does not necessarily guarantee that it has sufficiently been proven as an accurate term in history. *Pax Mongolica* is a concept modeled after *Pax Romana*, but we must admit that it is quite problematic to compare the historical conditions of the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries under Mongol hegemony with those during the *Pax Romana*. In this sense it is noteworthy that some eminent scholars in this field remain very skeptical about its adequacy as a historical term. H. Franke, pointing out the lack of political stability caused by frequent wars among the Mongols themselves, asserts that “it seems as if the *Pax Mongolica* is no more than one of those brilliant simplifications that can serve as chapter titles for world history books.”⁵ Although he admits that “there was a certain amount of cultural contact between China and the non-Chinese West under the rule of the Mongol emperors,” still “the fact remains that there was no Chinese Marco Polo, no Chinese Rubruck or Giovanni da Montecorvino.”⁶

Some other scholars concur with Franke’s skepticism. For example, D. Morgan pointed out the tendency to over-highlight the amazing prosperity and security under the Mongol rule, which can be found in the works of Marco Polo or Pegolotti, and quoted a sarcastic sentence from Tacitus: “They make a desolation, and call it peace.” Thus ‘peace’ (*pax*) brought by the Mongols, according to Morgan, is either an illusion or a gross exaggeration.⁷ P. Jackson, who wrote an excellent book on the contacts between Europe and the Mongols, also asserted that “[there] is little evidence to sustain the idea that the development of long-distance Eurasian trade was facilitated by a *Pax Mongolica*, stemming from the union of much of Asia under a single government.” He also added, “[few] historians now subscribe to the existence of a *Pax*, at least between the splintering of the empire in 1261-2 and the termination of a series of inter-Mongol conflicts in c. 1315.”⁸

The most important point brought up by these scholars is the absence of a unified empire, as found in the case of the Roman Empire. This resulted in the lack of peace and security facilitating political, economic and cultural contacts across the Eurasian continent. In other words, in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries there was nothing like *Pax Romana*, which existed for almost two centuries from the reign of Augustus (27 BC-AD 14) to the time of Aurelius (AD 161-180). According to critics, Mongol hegemony over much of Eurasia was not long enough to ensure the settlement and operation of such a system. The Mongols began to dominate the continent *circa* 1240,

around the end of Ögedei's reign, but after the death of Möngke Qa'an in 1259, they were no longer united. John Larner asserts, "if any Pax Mongolica had ever existed, by the 1260s it had ceased."⁹ Only after about half a century, around 1304, did the internecine wars finally end. In spring of 1304, "prince Chapar and Du'a [who had rebelled against the qa'an] dispatched envoys and submitted,"¹⁰ and according to an Islamic source, on September 19, 1304, Temür Qa'an's envoys, together with the envoys of Chapar and Du'a arrived in Maragha and informed the settlement of peace.¹¹ Thus a grand rapprochement among the families of the four sons of Chinggis Khan was finally achieved. However, that unity did not last long, and in the middle of the fourteenth century their rule began to fall apart all over Eurasia.

Nonetheless, we should take note of an irony. Even critics who deny the existence of Pax Mongolica acknowledge a wide range of cross-continental interchanges during the period under the Mongol hegemony. For instance, Franke explains the exchanges between China and the West, which were "in a broader sense than just European." These included the spread of technology, transcontinental activities of merchants, transmission of folklores, dissemination of Chinese bureaucracy and arts, etc. He fully appreciates Rashid al-Din's *Jāmi' al-tavārikh* ("Compendium of Histories") as "the first world history which deserves that name," and regards the inauguration of the age of maritime exploration, starting with the voyage of Columbus, as a result of the East-West contacts during the period of Mongol domination.¹² Later when he wrote a chapter entitled "Pax Mongolica," he admits the efflorescence of transcontinental trade under the aegis of the Mongol hegemony, even while disputing its comparison with Pax Romana.¹³

Morgan was more reserved in acknowledging the impact of the Mongol conquests on Asian knowledge or understanding of Europe, but concurred that "European knowledge of Asia, by contrast, did undeniably expand enormously, even if the full realization of this knowledge's potential had to await the great Age of Discovery."¹⁴ Jackson maintains a similar tone: "The journeys of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that were both stimulated and facilitated by the rise of the Mongol world-empire did not, perhaps, have as profound and widespread an impact on contemporaries as did those of their successors from the last years of the fifteenth century onwards."¹⁵

Notwithstanding the question whether it was "easier or not" to travel from Venice or Persia to China under the Mongols compared to some centuries earlier,¹⁶ there is no doubt that many more people moved across the continent and their movement covered much longer distances. During this period, long-distance travel and cross-continental interactions reached a level

that human history had never seen before. Most certainly *jam*, the Mongol communication system, made a crucial contribution.¹⁷ The network of *jam* covered a huge area¹⁸ and the manpower and material resources invested to maintain the system were enormous.¹⁹ According to records, a large number of Europeans visited East Asia,²⁰ which was certainly an unprecedented phenomenon. However, not only Europeans made such journeys. Rabban Sauma, a Nestorian priest of the Önggüt tribe in Inner Mongolia, traveled across Central Asia and reached the eastern Mediterranean in the 1270s, and he went as far as Rome and Bordeaux in the 1280s.²¹ Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan Muslim, traveled for almost thirty years (1325-1354) through the Eurasian continent, the Indian Ocean and Africa.²² And certainly there were also innumerable people, envoys, notables and merchants lesser known, who traveled far across the continent.

Whether one accepts the notion of Pax Mongolica or not, there seems to exist a wide consensus that the long-distance travel and extensive human movement of this period was the result of Mongol rule. As M. Biran asserts, it could be largely due to the imperial policy that “the formation of the empire, its continued expansion, and the establishment of its administration required a huge mobilization of people throughout the empire.”²³ As a result, there were as many “Westerners” in the East as “Easterners” in the West. Not only Europeans, but Alans, Armenians, Georgians, Nestorians of Iraq and Syria, Arabs and Persians were found in the East, and “Easterners” as Önggüts, Khitans, Uighurs, Tibetans, Tanguts, Mongols and Chinese were found in the West.²⁴ The movement and exchange of people was amazingly extensive in terms of scale, and equally diverse in terms of their ethnic and professional backgrounds. Rashīd al-Dīn was not just exaggerating when he wrote that “the wise and learned of Cathay, India, Uyghur, Qipchaq, and other nations... are in attendance at His Majesty’s imperial court.”²⁵

This paper does not intend to make an argument in defense of ‘Pax Mongolica.’ Nonetheless, it would be crucial to reflect upon the situation during the second half of the thirteenth century, i.e. the period when Pax Mongolica is considered to have unraveled and turbulence “threatened the East-West flow of goods, people, and information”²⁶ to find out whether or not the Mongol empire, divided into several mutually hostile regional states, could actually no longer promote cross-continental communication because of their hostilities and confrontations. If it was so, then we should be able to provide an explanation on how such extensive human, material and cultural exchanges could be possible. Otherwise we may need to revise our traditional views about the division and dissension of the Mongol empire.

II. TRAVELERS IN THE TIMES OF WAR

In this chapter we will investigate if there were any significant changes in long-distance travels during the period between 1260 and 1304, compared to the preceding or the following periods. In view of the scarcity of written sources, we can hardly expect quantitative results. At best we can get a rough idea about the conditions of travels, i.e., if there were any serious disturbances due to the confrontations among the Mongol lords.

Admittedly, after the sudden death of Möngke Qa'an in 1259 and the rise of Qubilai in 1260, the Mongols experienced a long period of dissension and conflicts that ended only in 1304. Geographically there were largely two major areas of confrontation: one in Mongolia and Central Asia, and the other in Caucasus.²⁷ The succession struggle between Qubilai and Ariq Böke did not last long and ended with the capitulation of the latter in 1263. However, Qaidu, a young prince of the Ögedeid family, emerged and rallied anti-Qubilai forces.²⁸ All together the whole period of confrontation in Central Asia lasted more than four decades. In the meantime, a conflict between Hülegü and Berke erupted in Caucasus, which escalated with the succession struggle in the East.²⁹ Non-Mongol powers, including the Mamluks and the Franks, were also dragged into this fight and formed 'a second front.'³⁰

However, we should remember that the confrontation on these two inner fronts of the Mongol empire did not necessarily result in continuous armed clashes. Of course, a large number of soldiers was mobilized and stationed at border regions. Border raids and counterattacks were often reported, and sometimes battles developed to intensive wars.³¹ Nonetheless, neither side made serious plans to attack the capital area of the enemy. Mostly they lined their armies up along the border and displayed military power to prevent possible attacks. Sugiyama Masaaki, an eminent Japanese scholar in this field, even asserted,

“[in] fact, there was hardly any fighting. Although it is widely regarded that there were severe clashes between Qubilai and Qaidu, only once, in 1289, a battle developed into a war. ... It is exactly as Rashīd al-Dīn states [in his book], that ‘[In] this front, there was no fighting apart from one battle.’ ... Then, how about the north-south confrontation around the Caucasus between the houses of Jöchi and Hülegü? Here, when the conflict between Berke and Hülegü initially started in 1260, there were two wars. After that, however, they did not fight, and only dispatched an army to observe the opponents, in accordance with their customs, to the Caucasus region whenever a new lord of *ulus* was enthroned. There was hardly

any real combat. They deployed their troops as a sort of demonstration.³²

Therefore, if travelers could only avoid actual battles, they had a very good chance of reaching their destination. Let us take an example of Marco Polo, who traveled across Central Asia in the early 1270s. This was the period when the hostility between Qubilai and Qaidu was growing worse. In 1269 the representatives of three *uluses*, i.e., Qaidu from the Ögedeids, Baraq from the Chaghataids, and Berkecher from the Jöchids, met together on the banks of Talas.³³ To check this anti-Toluid alliance, in 1271 Qubilai dispatched his son Nomughan, who had been stationed in Qaraqorum region, to Almaligh in the north of Tianshan.³⁴ The threat of war was hanging very low in Central Asia but it did not yet flare up into an all-out war.

It was exactly during this period, i.e., the 1260s and the early 1270s, when the travels of the Polo family took place. Initially, Marco's father Nicolo and his uncle Maffeo departed Saray on the middle Volga in the early sixties and arrived, by way of Bukhara, at the court of Qubilai. There Qubilai requested the elder Polos to return to Europe with one of his 'barons' and bring back a hundred men skilled in the seven liberal arts, as well as some oil from the lamp in the Church of the Sepulcher of Christ in Jerusalem. They were equipped with a *paiza*, similar to a diplomatic passport, as a safe-conduct. The Mongol 'baron' died on the way, but the elder Polos succeeded in reaching the port of Layas (Ayas or Lajazzo in the Gulf of Alexanretta) around 1269, right after Pope Clement IV had died. According to Marco Polo, the travel from the court of Qubilai to the Mediterranean took three years, but most likely the length was exaggerated to give readers impression of great distance.³⁵

After a couple of years, during which they waited for a new pope to be elected, the elder Polos departed again from Layas around the end of 1271, this time with the young Marco. Spending three and a half years for the journey, Marco Polo finally reached Xanadu (Shangdu), the summer capital of Qubilai, in the middle of 1275.³⁶ The original plan of the three Polos was to go to Hormuz and cross the Indian Ocean. However, at Hormuz, they found the ships too fragile to cross stormy oceans and changed their minds to take the land route. Passing through Khurasan, they went over the Pamir and reached 'Cascar' (Kashghar), which was subject to the 'Great Kaan.' According to his description, it was a town flourishing with trade and handicrafts.³⁷ After 'Cascar' he mentions 'Samarcan.' Scholars generally agree that Marco himself did not set foot there, but most likely the two elder Polos had visited it several years ago.³⁸ His next stop was apparently 'Yarcan' (Yarkand), lying about 160 km south of Kashghar. That city, just like 'Samarcan,' belonged to the "nephew

of the Great Kaan,” i.e. Qaidu. Thence he entered again the realm of the Great Kaan in ‘Cotan’ (Khotan), located 275 km southeast of Yarkand. From there all the way to the capital in North China, it was the territory of the Great Kaan. From Marco Polo’s description it is apparent that his itinerary passed through the southern circuit of the Tarim Basin.

Although it is strange to find that among all the cities in the Tarim Basin only Yarkand was subject to Qaidu, this seems to reflect the political situation of Central Asia at the time when Marco Polo passed through the region. We know that Qubilai took active measures to respond to the ‘rebellion’ of Qaidu. As mentioned earlier, he dispatched his son Nomughan and minister Antong³⁹ to Almaligh. Taking advantage of Baraq’s death around 1271, he also extended his rule to the area south of Tianshan. We have a record confirming the utilization of this area’s postal stations in transporting jade produced in the area of Kashghar and Khotan already by the summer of 1272.⁴⁰ And *Yuanshi* writes that in the first month of 1274 the court ordered to establish thirteen waterborne postal stations (*shuiyi*) in Khotan and Yarkand.⁴¹

Trouble in this area seems to have started sometime around 1275. In that year Antong, who was staying in Almaligh to assist Nomughan, treacherously attacked the army of Hoqu, the son of Güyük and the cousin of Qaidu, and the enraged Hoqu responded by occupying the Hexi area as well as Khotan and Kashghar.⁴² We do not know how long he had occupied these areas, but in 1276 the northwestern defense line of the Yuan crumbled down as result of a more disastrous event, the rebellion of Shirigi, the son of Möngke. Shirigi, along with other Chinggisid princes, Tuq Temür and Yubqur, who were stationed with Nomughan, suddenly rose in revolt and took Nomughan and Antong as prisoners.⁴³ According to Waṣṣāf, about the same period of 1275-76, several Chaghataid princes plundered Bukhara.⁴⁴

In short, the political situation in Central Asia around 1275-76, whether it be the north, south or west of the Tianshan, appears to have been volatile and insecure. We cannot tell exactly when Marco Polo passed this area. His travel could have taken place just before the collapse of Qubilai’s rule in this region, but considering his statement that Yarkand was in the hands of Qa’an’s nephew, he may have passed when the situation was rapidly deteriorating. We should emphasize here that the Polos took their travels between the two ends of the Eurasian continent during a period when political and military tension was very high. Nonetheless, their travels were basically unhindered and they could cross the inland route not harmed by either camp. Probably Marco Polo and his two seniors acted as if they were merchants and were recognized as such. The fact that traders could move freely around warring states is

borne out in Marco Polo's description of Kashghar: "from this country, many merchants go forth about the world for the purpose of trading."⁴⁵

It was not only the merchants who enjoyed relative freedom of movement. Men of religion, who were not much concerned with political matters, were also considered to be more or less neutral and harmless in the partisan fighting among the Mongols. We have an interesting episode illustrating this point in Rashīd al-Dīn's work. During the intense confrontation between Ariq Böke and Qubilai in the early 1260s, Ariq Böke heard that Alghu revolted in Central Asia and decided to go in pursuit of him. Before he departed, he wanted to take the people of Qaraqorum with him. "But the *imams*, *bakhshis*, and Christians said, 'This order (*yasaq*) is harsh. What can we do?'" At this entreaty he said, "What ranks are these three groups going to break?" and "what good will they be in battle? Let them stay here and assist us with prayers. If the qa'an arrives, let them join him."⁴⁶

Politically harmless and militarily not intimidating, those belonging to a religious class could travel around with relative freedom. We find a good example in the case of two Nestorian ascetics of the Önggüt tribe in Inner Mongolia, who traveled across the continent to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. They were Rabban Sauma and his junior companion, Markos, who later became Catholicos Yahballaha III (r. 1281-1327). They departed Khanbaliq and passed through 'Kawshang,' which was their hometown,⁴⁷ 'Tangoth,' modern Yinchuan in Ningxia area, and reached 'Loton,' which is identified with Khotan. According to the biography of Yahballaha III, from Tangoth to Loton it was "a toilsome and fatiguing journey of two months," and when they arrived there was a war raging between the armies of Qubilai and a certain 'King Oko.'⁴⁸ This 'Oko' must be the aforementioned Hoqu, also known in Chinese source as "Daming Wang," who occupied Khotan and Kashghar for a short period of time.⁴⁹ Based on the information about Hoqu, P. Pelliot estimated that the two Nestorians stayed in Khotan around the end of 1274 or the beginning of 1275.⁵⁰ After six months in 'Loton' they traveled to 'Kashkar,' evidently modern Kashghar at the westernmost of modern Xinjiang, and then to 'Teleos,' i.e. Talas, where Qaidu was encamped. There they had an audience with Qaidu, and succeeded in obtaining "a written order so that no man in his country might do them harm."⁵¹ With this document they could safely pass through Qaidu's domain and entered Khurasan, which was under the rule of Hülegüids.

According to the biography of Yahballaha III, the war around the area of 'Loton' "destroyed thousands of men therein. The caravan roads and ways had been cut, and grain(?) was scarce and could not be found: and many

died of hunger and perished through want.”⁵² This makes a stark contrast with the report of Marco Polo, who probably passed the area just before the Nestorians and described the flourishing condition of Kashghar. However, in spite of the adverse condition, they succeeded in journeying through Central Asia, traversing areas where hostile powers were ruling. The hardship they encountered on the way was basically extreme weather, harsh terrain, the lack of provisions, and the danger of highway robbers and thieves. M. Rossabi is correct when he states that their travel “typifies the way East-West trade managed to persist despite the warfare that plagued Central Asia. Like the two monks, the predominantly Muslim merchants who led caravans along the Silk Road would generally portray themselves as apolitical (which they usually were), distancing themselves from Khubilai. More often than not, they probably received permission to enter Khaidu’s dominions and a guarantee of safe passage through them.”⁵³ The two Nestorians were religious figures and their travel had no political intention against either of the opposing camp, so, unless proven otherwise, they were able to travel.

Of course, traders and monks could not enjoy unconditional safety. They were also the target of suspicion and molestation. According to Waṣṣāf, when the war erupted in 1262 between Hülegü and Berke, Hülegü ordered the rich merchants in Tabriz working for Berke to be killed and their wealth to be confiscated. In retaliation Berke also killed merchants who came from the realm of Hülegü into his territory, and thus trade came to a stop. The suspension of trade continued until the time of Geikhatu and Noqai, when envoys and merchants finally began to visit each other’s country, and then the region of Aran again became crowded with carts, horses and merchandise.⁵⁴ However, this seems to be an extreme case, because Hülegü deemed it necessary to take a drastic measure to eliminate the roots of Berke’s power in Iran. Moreover, the massacred merchants were probably not “private traders selling wares on their own initiative” but “*ortoys* operating with princely capital and patronage.”⁵⁵ The famous massacre at Otrar, where Chinggis Khan’s envoys and merchants were treacherously killed and their goods were robbed, is another example showing the fate of *ortoy* merchants in times of war. According to the study of Allsen, they “received their operating capital from the imperial family and therefore functioned as its commercial agents.”⁵⁶

However, ‘private merchants’ did not seem to have been intentionally or systematically forbidden to pursue their commercial transactions. Unless their activities were deemed profitable to the enemy, there was no reason to obstruct them. So the condition was not exactly too dangerous to travel to or do business in enemy states, as we may imagine nowadays. The

aforementioned two cases of Marco Polo and Rabban Sauma are well-known examples of cross-continental travel during the war period under Mongol domination. We know their names because they left travel records. However, it is not difficult to imagine many other merchants and missionaries, not documented, crossing the borders in Central Asia.

In short, confrontation among various Mongol *uluses* from 1260 onwards did not suffocate human movement and cross-cultural interactions. There is no doubt that travel became more dangerous and was exposed to a greater uncertainty, and thus led to a greater appreciation of the Indian Ocean and maritime transportation. Nonetheless, private merchants and religious missionaries never stopped venturing into the inland routes and embarking on long-distance trips, sometimes provided with safety documents.

III. ENVOYS ACROSS THE BORDERS

Compared to merchants and missionaries, envoys endowed with diplomatic missions took greater risks in venturing into enemy territories, as they could easily arouse suspicion as spies. One classical example is the saga of Zhang Qian (d. 114 B.C.), who was dispatched to the kingdom of Yuezhi by Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty and detained twice by Xiongnu. In fact, gathering intelligence on one's opponent was sometimes a decisive factor in defeating the enemy, and the Mongols mobilized various means for this purpose.⁵⁷ Thus envoys were quite often commissioned not only to convey messages or negotiate on behalf of their sovereign, but at the same time to collect crucial intelligence of enemy states. For example, in 665/1266-67, Mas'ūd Beg, the famous Muslim *vazīr* and son of Maḥmūd Yalavach, was dispatched by Qaidu and Baraq to the court of Abaqa. The task of his mission, at least officially, was to settle the accounts of *inji*, i.e. 'princely demesne'.⁵⁸ However, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, he did not come "with good intentions" but "as Baraq's spy." Later Abaqa realized his intention and sent people to pursue him, but Mas'ūd Beg, who "had taken precaution and had arranged for post horses at every way station," safely escaped.⁵⁹

Yuanshi records another example of an envoy acting as a spy. Not long after Qaidu had risen in revolt, Qubilai ordered a certain Cheren to first go to Möngke Temür of the Jöchi Ulus for a meeting, and then visit the court of Qaidu. However, Cheren, although it is not clear whether by his own initiative or a confidential order of Qubilai, first went to Qaidu to determine the weaknesses of his camp. Qaidu prepared a banquet where he planned

to kill Cheren. Having noticed the plot, Cheren made a powerful speech at the banquet which made Qaidu give up his scheme. He decided to present Cheren with two suits of leather cloth and allowed him to return.⁶⁰ Thus it is not surprising that envoys from the enemy state were received with suspicion, and sometimes arrested or executed for the charge of espionage.⁶¹ Moreover, envoys traveling hostile countries in order to seek other allies would be, if discovered, stopped and put into custody. Again, when Zhang Qian was arrested, the Xiongnu complained, “[the] Yuezhi lie to the north of us, how can the Han send their envoys there? If I wished to send envoys to Yue [a state to the south of China], would the Han allow me to do so?”⁶²

It is interesting to note that, despite all these dangers, quite a few envoys crossed the borders during the time of wars. First of all, we can find evidence confirming the exchange of ambassadors between the realms of Qa’an and Batu. For example, the aforementioned Cheren is reported to have visited the Batu Ulus four times during the period of fourteen years, from ca. 1264 to 1278. His family belonged to the Naiman tribe and had a long history of serving the house of Jöchi: his grandfather was *wangfu*, ‘princely preceptor,’ of Batu. On one of these missions his junior associate unexpectedly encountered Qaidu’s scouts and was killed. After a while Cheren, who arrived there late, was arrested too. Thereupon he reproached them saying, “I am the envoy of the Son of Heaven. How dare you commit this insolence?” At these words they said “[the] earlier person was a fake envoy, but this is a genuine envoy!” and released him to return.⁶³

The relation between the two *uluses* of Qubilai and Batu seems to have deteriorated when Shirigi rose in revolt in 1276. Having taken Nomughan as a prisoner, Shirigi handed him over to Möngke Temür, the khan of Batu Ulus. Cheren’s last mission in 1278 may have been related with this incident. Nomughan remained in custody until Möngke Temür died in 1280. Töde Möngke succeeded him with the support of Noqai. And these two leaders, along with Qonichi who was the ruler of Orda Ulus, wanted to normalize the relation with Qubilai Qa’an and decided to return Nomughan. According to Rashid al-Dīn, they sent envoys and said, “[we] are all in submission. We will come to a *quriltai*.”⁶⁴

Diplomatic exchanges between these two *uluses* are not well documented. In the biography of Jöchi in *Yuanshi*, it is stated that “its land is extremely far, about several tens of thousands *lis* from the capital, and it takes more than two hundred days if one rides on express postal horses.”⁶⁵ Pegolotti, a fourteenth-century Florentine merchant who wrote *Pratica della mercatura*, a guide book for continental trade, records the days needed to travel stage by

stage across the Eurasian land route. If we add this to the total period of time to travel from Tana, at the mouth of the Don river, to Khanbaliq, the capital of Qubilai, it took around 338 to 353 days.⁶⁶ No doubt communication was difficult.

However, the story of Cheren's mission tells us a few interesting facts. First, although he was caught once by Qaidu's soldiers, three out of four times he travelled safely to reach the camp of Jöchid khans on the Volga basin. This suggests that he probably took a northerly route of the steppe, avoiding the territory under the control of Qaidu. And second, the authority of the Qa'an's envoy was respected even by the soldiers of Qaidu. As a matter of fact, Qubilai and Qaidu exchanged envoys several times. Around 1275 Qubilai sent Shibān to Qaidu and persuaded him to dismiss troops, establish postal stations, and come to court. *Yuanshi* states that Qaidu accepted this counsel and ordered to set up postal stations and his army to retreat, but when he heard the news that Antong, Qubilai's minister, made a surprise attack upon the Ögedeid prince Hoqu, he became apprehensive and fled.⁶⁷ And also there is a record showing that two envoys from Qaidu were given provisions due to their long stay in the Qa'an's realm.⁶⁸

In the meantime, the Mongols in Jöchi Ulus maintained frequent contacts with the Ulus of Hülegü and the Ulus of Chaghatai. As mentioned above, when there was a great convention in Talas in the spring of 1269, Möngke Temür sent Berkecher as his representative and consulted with Qaidu and Baraq over the question how to divide the income from Transoxiana.⁶⁹ Later, Toqta, the son of Möngke Temür, also sent several envoys to Qaidu and Du'a to negotiate the matters related with the Orda Ulus.⁷⁰ Their diplomatic contacts with Hülegü Ulus were more frequent. In November of 1270 Möngke Temür dispatched envoys to Abaqa and presented him with a falcon, a gerfalcon and other gifts. He also congratulated Abaqa's victory over Baraq, who invaded Khurasan in the spring of that year but was defeated because of the desertion of Qaidu's army. Abaqa responded to this mission by sending his own envoy with presents (*beleg*).⁷¹ After Möngke Temür died, Noqai became powerful and began to send his own envoys to Iran. In April, 1288, Noqai's emissaries arrived at the banks of New Canal, where they presented Arghun with a *sharil*. This is a relic found in the remains of noble monks after cremation, known as *sheli* in Chinese. Rashīd al-Dīn writes, "when they brought it, Arghun Khan went out to meet them, scattered gold over it, and rejoiced."⁷²

Rashīd al-Dīn records some other diplomatic contacts. In July, 1293, envoys from Qonichi, khan of Orda Ulus, arrived to "express good will and

ask for an alliance.⁷³ In March 1294, emissaries came from Toqta (1291-1312), the son of Möngke Temür, and they were under the leadership of prince Qalintai and Bolad. They came to the court at Dalan Na'ur and proposed a truce and a treaty.⁷⁴ In May 1301, Toqta's envoys came to the court of Ghazan Khan.⁷⁵ And in January 1303, Qonichi's son and successor Bayan sent envoys to Ghazan. They came to the neighborhood of Baghdad and presented a falcon and other gifts and transmitted the message: "It is requested that you constantly send ambassadors with good tidings and wait until the emirs go to war in whatsoever direction is commanded and render service. For this year we have gone to war against Chapar, and Toqta is allied with us and has been sending troops."⁷⁶ In the same month of 1303 it is reported that Toqta's emissaries came with three hundred horsemen.⁷⁷ Toqta's other envoys, headed by a certain Nohdai, came in December 1304 to make peace and friendship.⁷⁸

Aforementioned examples demonstrate the fact that diplomatic contacts and communications were maintained in the second half of the fourteenth century despite the confrontation and hostility among the *uluses*. Although written sources do not adequately reflect the extent of such contacts, it is sufficient to prove that political and military confrontation was not a decisive factor in hindering diplomatic exchanges. Of course, it is beyond doubt that the exchange of envoys between two friendly *uluses*, that of Qubilai and Hülegü, was much more frequent. We do not need to prove the intimacy of their relations, which has been published in an excellent study by T. T. Allsen on their political, economic and cultural interactions.⁷⁹ It will be sufficient here to point out one important aspect of such diplomatic exchanges.

Admittedly, it became quite difficult to take the inland route from China to Iran because of the war with Qaidu; thus maritime routes were frequently used as an alternative. There are numerous written sources and scholarly research on this topic, so it would not be necessary to reiterate the development of overseas trade in the Mongol period.⁸⁰ However, what we usually overlook is the fact that navigation of the Indian Ocean was no mean task either. One well-known case records the delegation sent back by Qubilai to Arghun in the spring of 1290, which was headed by Uru'ud, Abishqa and Khwāja. They had come to the court of Qubilai as envoys of Arghun to ask for a lady to replace the deceased Bulughan Khatun. According to a Chinese source, this returning embassy was comprised of 160 people in total,⁸¹ but Marco Polo, who was on board, states that 14 ships and 600 people, not counting the crew, departed.⁸² They arrived in Iran sometime around late 1292 and, in the spring of 1293, Kökechin Khatun was handed over and wedded to Ghazan in Abhar.⁸³ However, we should not forget that this

mission took a heavy toll. It took the delegation almost three years to cross the India Ocean. And Marco Polo testifies that except for 18 people, the rest all died on the way, and of the three ambassadors, only Khwāja survived.⁸⁴

We have another example showing the danger of seafaring at that time. According to Waṣṣāf, a certain Fakhr al-Dīn Aḥmad was appointed by Ghazan as an envoy in 697/1297-98 and was ordered to escort Ṭaqāi Ilchi. The fact that he was entrusted with one hundred thousand *dinars* drawn from the royal treasury suggests that he was an *ortoy* merchant of the royal household. He stayed in China for four years and was sent back to the court of Ghazan. However, in 704/1304, Fakhr al-Dīn and Ṭaqāi Ilchi died on their way back, when their ship sank.⁸⁵

Probably one of the best testimonies about the danger of seafaring is found in Montecorvino's letter of January, 1305. In this letter he writes,

As to the road: I report that the way by the land of Cothay,⁸⁶ the emperor of the Northern Tartars, is safer and more secure, so that, travelling with envoys, they might be able to arrive within five or six months. But the other route is the most long and perilous since it involves two sea voyages, the first of which is about the distance of Acre from the province of Provence, but the second is like the distance between Acre and England,⁸⁷ and it may happen that the journey is scarcely completed in two years.⁸⁸

This is not a claim based on hearsay, as Montecorvino came to China by sea and had experienced the dangers and hazards of sea travel for himself.⁸⁹

Thus, considering the length of time and the danger involved in crossing the Indian Ocean, it is not surprising that the Mongols attempted to try the land route over and again in spite of its obvious hazards. Their lifestyle and mentality as nomads may have been a factor. Bolad Chingsang and 'Īsa Kelemechi were ordered to visit the court of Hülegü Ulus and departed China in the fourth month of 1283 taking the route passing through Central Asia.⁹⁰ They reached Saray Mansuriyya in the Arran plain and met Arghun Khan in the winter of 1284.⁹¹ So their trip took about a year and half. On February 23, 1285, another envoy, Ordu Qaya, arrived bringing the edict of Qubilai acknowledging the succession of Arghun.⁹² Although Rashīd al-Dīn did not mention which route he took, in all probability he followed the same route that Bolad and 'Īsa had taken. Following the order of Arghun, in 1285 'Īsa Kelemechi visited Pope Honorius IV in Rome.⁹³ We do not know when he came back to Iran, but a Chinese source shows that he was already in Khanbaliq before the third month of 1286.⁹⁴ According to the epitaph composed for 'Īsa, on his way back to China he escorted Bolad Chingsang

again, but when they were faced with danger, Bolad turned back to Iran while 'Īsa, "braving slings and arrows, emerged from this land of death and two years [later] finally reached the capital." Qubilai is reported to have said, "Bolad was born in our land, enjoyed our emoluments and yet is content to stay there; 'Īsa, born there, has his home there and yet is faithful to me. How different they are!"⁹⁵

The description of 'Īsa's hardship and Qubilai's statement seems to have been exaggerated to emphasize the meritorious act of 'Īsa.⁹⁶ Whatever the truth is, there is no doubt that Qubilai continued to dispatch his envoys to Iran over the inland route, and, accordingly, he devoted his utmost effort to keep it open.⁹⁷ The vital section of this route was the southern circuit of the Tarim basin connecting Hami and Khotan. As mentioned earlier, right after Hoqu took the town of Khotan and Kashghar in 1275-76, Qubilai attempted to regain them. In the tenth month of 1276 he dispatched two thousand Mongol and one thousand Hexi troops under the command of Besüdei and Qubilai Ba'atur to garrison in Khotan.⁹⁸ In 1278 a garrison force commanded by 'Ala al-Din arrived in Khotan, and in 1281 general Liu En was also there at station.⁹⁹ The next year prince Qaban and general Mangudai also arrived.¹⁰⁰ In the third month of 1283 *xinfujun*, "newly surrendered troops" from Ganzhou, were deployed in Khotan.¹⁰¹ At the same time, the court issued orders to improve the postal stations along the southern circuit of the Tarim Basin.

In this sense, the land route passing through the south of the Taklamakan desert and connected to Khurasan via Kashmir and Afghanistan was basically operating up to 1289, the year when the Office of Pacification in Khotan (*Hetian Xuanweisi*) was abolished.¹⁰² Already in 1288 Mongol troops in Khotan and Kashghar were ordered to retreat to the Hexi region.¹⁰³ The abandonment of the Tarim Basin was probably caused by the great offensive move by Qaidu and Du'a, who besieged and captured Turfan in 1285.¹⁰⁴ Thus the land route was finally closed in 1289. This is exactly why in 1290 the three envoys, whom Marco Polo escorted through the seas, had to give up their original plans to return to Iran by land, and also why Montecorvino, who left Tabriz in 1291, went to Hormuz and took the route crossing the ocean.¹⁰⁵ The Ulus of Qa'an did not seem to have succeeded in opening the inland route until 1304, when Du'a and Chapar agreed to submit to Qa'an and achieved the great rapprochement. Montecorvino, in his second letter, wrote that since he arrived in China at the end of 1293,¹⁰⁶ for twelve years he had "not received news of the Roman Curia, and of our Order and of the state of the West."¹⁰⁷ However, he made it clear that when he was writing that letter in 1305, "the way by land of Cothay, the emperor of the Northern Tartars, is safer and more

secure, so that, travelling with envoys, they might be able to arrive within five or six months.”¹⁰⁸ Thus except for about a decade when the situation was really bad, communication between the Ulus of Qa’an and the Ulus of Hülegü and Batu was not completely cut off.

IV. THE SENSE OF AN IMPERIAL UNITY

The preceding discussions suggest that the political, economic and cultural exchanges over the continent were, contrary to our general assumptions, not seriously suspended even during the times of war among the Mongols. Envoys, traders and missionaries crossed the borders from one hostile *ulus* to another. If the envoys did not incur suspicion as spies, they were escorted to the court and well treated with a banquet and gifts. Some of them were even provided with safety documents and enjoyed the benefits of postal stations. Therefore, the movement and exchange of people and commodities continued during the second half of the thirteenth century, and its pace was certainly accelerated after 1304 when peace was finally achieved. This has already been discussed by Saguchi Tōru, who culled relevant data from *Yuanshi* and verified the intense diplomatic exchanges between the Ulus of Qa’an and the other three *uluses* after 1304.¹⁰⁹ Our question is, then, how could the Mongols open channels of exchange and interaction despite their mutual opposition in the second half of the thirteenth century? This question makes us reappraise the characteristics of the relation among the *uluses* and the structure of the Mongol empire as a whole.

Traditionally, the Mongol empire as a unified entity has been regarded as dissolved into four regional dynasties, or ‘khanates,’ around 1260, right after Möngke died. Due to the succession struggle between his two brothers, Qubilai and Ariq Böke, it was divided into (1) the domain of Qa’an in the East, usually known as the ‘Yuan Dynasty,’ (2) the ‘Chaghatai Khanate’ in Central Asia, (3) the ‘Ilkhanate’ in Iran and Iraq, and (4) the ‘Golden Horde’ or the ‘Qipchaq Khanate.’ Notwithstanding the validity of this theory of division, the names of these states are not only inaccurate but at the same time misleading and obscure historical reality.

First of all, the Mongols in the Qipchaq steppe would have been shocked to hear that their state is named after the Qipchaqs, the people they had subjugated.¹¹⁰ The term ‘Qipchaq Khanate’ was invented by modern historians, based on an expression commonly found in Islamic sources, *Dasht-i Qipchaq*, or ‘Qipchaq steppe.’ In Arabic and Persian sources all we

can find are phrases like “Toqta, king of Dasht-i Qipchaq” or “Berke, king of Dasht in the north,” etc.¹¹¹ In the meantime, the ‘Golden Horde,’ a translation of *Zolotaia Orda*, at first simply meant ‘the golden pavilion’ of Mongol rulers, as found in the writings of Carpini and Ibn Battuta. The first Russian source using this word as a political term was the *History of the Tsardom of Kazan* written around 1564. According to Vernadsky, this name was originally used to indicate the Khanate of Kazan.¹¹² It may be used as an alias, but not as a proper appellation for the Mongol regime over this region. This term has been established in historical literature but is obviously anachronistic.

The ‘Ilkhanate’ is also problematic. In Old Turkic, the word *il* or *el* meant ‘a political unit organized and ruled by an independent ruler,’ which is equivalent to the English usage of ‘realm.’¹¹³ But in the time of the imperial Mongols it is generally considered to have acquired another meaning: ‘submissive’ or ‘obedient,’ thus ‘il khan’ signifying ‘subject khan [to the great khan].’¹¹⁴ It seems that the term ‘il khan’ was used exclusively by the house of Hülegü. However, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, Toqta, the ruler of Batu Ulus, was also addressed by this title.¹¹⁵ Amitai regards it as “apparently of doubtful credibility” because “Rashīd al-Dīn was *a priori* unlikely to have known this information.”¹¹⁶ However, we may have another piece of evidence showing the use of the *il khan* title by non-Hülegüids. If Tizengauzen’s reading of al-Muhibbi’s text is correct, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalawun (r. 1293-94, 1299-1309, 1309-41) of the Mamluks, in his letter sent to Özbeg Khan (r. 1313-41), the successor of Toqta, addressed him by the title of *el khān*.¹¹⁷ It is true that the members of the Hülegü family consistently and consciously used that title from as early as 1259 down to the reign of Arghun (1284-91), but the title was no longer used after the reign of Geikhatu (1291-95).¹¹⁸ On the surface of coins they inscribed the titles *pādishāh-i Islām*, *pādishāh-i Jahān*, or *sultān al-Islām* in Arabic.¹¹⁹ Allsen found one exceptional case where the title ‘il khan’ was used by Öljeitü, but its original meaning was “much diminished, embedded as it is in such a lengthy catalog of Perso-Islamic formulas.”¹²⁰ In short, the title of *il khan* was used only in the first half of the dynasty, from 1259-60 to 1295.

If we examine the inscriptions of Hülegüid coins, we can find an interesting fact. A common Arabic expression found on the coins is “*qāʾn al-aʿzam il-khān al-muʿazzam*” (the great Qān, and the mighty Il Khan).” The corresponding Uighur phrase on the coins is “*qaghan-nu nere-ber Abaqayin deletgülgösen*,” which means “struck by Abaqā in the name of Qān.” However, from the time of Ghazan, the Uighur inscriptions were replaced with the phrase, “*tngrī-yin küchün-dür Qasan-nu deletgülgösen*,” i.e. “struck

by Qasan by the power of heaven.”¹²¹ It is significant to note that we cannot find any mention of *il khan* on the coins in the Uighur script. That title is found only in the Arabic inscriptions. No Chinese record has the title of *il khan*, either. This fact seems to suggest that the title of *il khan* was adopted primarily for the Muslim population under the rule of Hülegü and his successors. Therefore, numismatic data do not support the hitherto general assumption that this title signifies the ‘subordinate’ status of *il khan* to the *qān* in the East.¹²² Rather, it was a title utilized for the Muslims in Iran in order to show and emphasize the legitimacy of the Mongol rulers there.¹²³

Probably the most misleading term is the ‘Yuan Dynasty.’ For scholars studying the Mongol empire in China, the abundant literary sources written in Chinese are absolutely indispensable, and it is natural for them to be influenced by the perspective therein. Thus, the Mongols and their dynasty are portrayed through the eyes of the Chinese literati. As I have argued elsewhere, ‘Da Yuan,’ introduced in 1272 during the reign of Qubilai, was not a dynastic name for his ‘Sinicized’ state in China and Mongolia.¹²⁴ According to the Mongol usage at that time, ‘Da Yuan’ was invented exclusively for the subjects using Chinese language and script, as an equivalent to the term ‘Yeke Mongghol Ulus.’ This fact is evidenced by the expression “Dai Ön kemekü Yeke Mongghol Ulus,” which means “the Great Mongol Empire which is called ‘Dai Ön.’”¹²⁵ To the Han Chinese the name ‘Da Yuan’ was understood to designate the ‘dynasty’ founded by Qubilai, which succeeded the Tang and Song dynasties in China. However, the Mongols, and probably many *semuren* too, took it as a ‘Chinese-style’ name for the entire Mongol empire.

In addition to this question of nomenclature, the concept of an imperial structure that was divided into, or made of several regional regimes, raises more important problems. In general, the aforementioned theory of quadruple division is widely accepted: i.e., the unified empire was divided into ‘four khanates’ from around ca. 1260. Recently P. Jackson criticized this view and proposed a revisionist theory. His thesis consists mainly of two points. First, the ‘four khanates’ were not the result of Chinggis Khan’s allotment of his people to the four elder sons, but of the transformation and rearrangement of diverse *uluses* through the process of “administrative rationalization, a consolidation and concentration of resources in the hands of fewer princes.”¹²⁶ And second, this process ‘from *ulus* to khanate’ was completed only after the rebellion of Nayan, the leader of Eastern *uluses* dominated by the descendants of Chinggis Khan’s brothers, and their absorption into Qubilai’s regime in 1287.¹²⁷

Undoubtedly Jackson’s study has broadened our understanding on the

structural changes of the Mongol empire, and we are able to view *ulus* not as a solid political unit predestined to be transformed into *khanate*, but more as a fluid and evolving political unit. However, his view on the imperial formation is not fundamentally different from the traditional view in that he supports the theory of the 'four khanates.' Still it is pervasive that the unified Mongol empire was divided into four independent states, conventionally called 'khanates.' From this perspective the unity of the Mongol empire disappears, and the notion of Chinggisid unity is something that survived only nominally or in a vestigial form. This kind of paradigm hampers us in producing a holistic understanding of the Mongol empire.

A holistic approach¹²⁸ is necessary for several reasons. First of all, the Mongols themselves did not give up the notion of imperial unity until the 1330s and 1340s when regional *uluses* began to crumble down. For example, up to that time in the entire Mongol world there was only one *qa'an* or *qaghan*, and other rulers used the title of *khan* or *qan*. They were all well aware that one was the title of supreme sovereignty over the empire and the other was of a subordinate ruler under his authority.¹²⁹ This practice was basically unchallenged till 1364, when the empire ended with the collapse of Mongol power in China.¹³⁰ So it was not just a symbolic gesture but an institution that continued to exist for more than one and a half century. It was a reflection of the Mongol world order.

Secondly, the Mongol rulers shared and kept a sense of solidarity that they belonged to the same family of Chinggis Khan. Of course, this did not mean that Chinggisid solidarity overrode all other political interests of *ulus*: for example, the clash of the two *uluses* of Jöchi and Hülegü led them to seek non-Chinggisid allies, the Mamluks and the Europeans. In spite of these regional confrontations and rivalries, however, they never stopped dispatching envoys nor ceased to exchange gifts and tributes. The spirit and the mode of diplomatic relations among the *uluses* were not quite the same as we usually see among independent states. The envoys from other *uluses* were received and treated as if they were representatives of the family of one's own brother, and their statements were full of family rhetoric as if they were dealing with some kind of family business. Quite often they preferred to call their senior colleagues or lords *aqā*, literally meaning 'elder brother.' They also called themselves collectively *aqā ini* (or *aqā de'ü* in Mongolian: 'elder and younger brothers').¹³¹ Moreover, the *uluses* were economically interconnected not only through trade relations but also by the collectable shares (*qubi*) in other *uluses*.¹³²

In short, the Mongols were deeply aware of their unity. The portrayal of

the Mongol empire as if it were divided into four independent states does not faithfully reflect historical reality. There is no doubt that there were four big *uluses*, each ruled by descendants of Chinggis Khan, but they thought that their *uluses* were parts of a larger political unit called ‘Yeke Mongghol Ulus,’ which embraced all the great and small *uluses*. In this sense, I cannot but agree with Sugiyama Masaaki’s observation:

In reality, within the Mongol empire there existed a number of regional powers at various levels. It is in fact difficult to clearly distinguish which of these powers was a ‘state’ or a ‘regime.’ They formed one system in its entirety. Traditionally, the Mongol empire has been regarded to have ‘dissolved’ into ‘four khanates,’ including Dai Yuan Ulus, under the great *qa’an*. However, in fact, all we can say is, at best, that it was divided into four loose groups. If someone claims that it was ‘dissolved,’ one should also count Orda Ulus, Ariq Böke Ulus and Otchigin Ulus among them. The idea of the ‘division into the four khanates’ seems to be a reflection of a [preconceived] image.¹³³

The Mongols regarded conflicts and fighting between themselves as family feuds contending for the rights over border areas or more economic wealth, rather than full-fledged wars to destroy and conquer the enemy. The nature of the confrontation between Qubilai, supreme ruler of the empire, and Qaidu, the rebel leader in Central Asia, should be understood in the light of these facts. Qubilai never attempted to annex the domain of Qaidu, i.e. the *ulus* of Ögedeid, while Qaidu never claimed himself to be *qa’an*, nor attempted to enter China proper.¹³⁴ Qubilai wanted his cousin Qaidu to come to court and, by paying homage, to accept his authority as *qa’an*. However, Qaidu was not only reluctant to do so, but he also wanted to regain the rights of his family that had been unlawfully usurped after the Toluid *coup d’état*. Also, the conflicts between the two *uluses* of Jöchi and Hülegü were not aimed to exterminate the opponents, but rather to claim the hereditary right over the territory around the Caucasus. Therefore, their alliance with non-Chinggisid outsiders like the Mamluks or the Franks does not mean that they became completely alienated.

We can find numerous instances demonstrating the sense of Chinggisid unity. For example, there is an interesting episode recorded in *Yuanshi*. When Qaidu rose against Qubilai, the courtiers argued for a military campaign to punish him, but Qubilai said, “[we] will deal with him with the sentiment of kindred, so the best way is to embrace him with benevolence and to select as an envoy someone who is sincere and careful and fit for the task.”¹³⁵ Certainly Qubilai’s speech could be mere political rhetoric and should not be taken

at face value, but still he could not ignore the fact that they belonged to the same family.

The following description by Marco Polo aptly reflects the sentiment of the Mongols about the antagonism between Qubilai and Qaidu.

You must know in very truth that Caidu has constantly claimed from the Great Kaan a share of the lands conquered by the Tartars; above all, he asks for parts of the province of Cathay and of the province of Manji. And the Great Kaan has always answered him, that he was quite willing to give him his share, as to his other heirs, on condition, however, that like the others, he should come to his court, and take part in his councils... But Caidu, who in no way trusted the Great Kaan his uncle, said he would not go to him... Certainly, terrible was the Great Kaan's wrath against this Caidu, who constantly did such damage to his lands and his peoples. And he said to himself that, were Caidu not his nephew, nothing would keep him from putting him to an evil death. But the ties of blood kept him from destroying him and his land.¹³⁶

In other words, the fighting of these two Mongol lords was viewed as similar to a family feud: a self-confident but obstinate prince defying his powerful and tolerant uncle. Thus, when the grand rapprochement was achieved after Qaidu died and his son Chapar expressed his wish to submit to Temür Qa'an, it is no surprise that in 1305 Ilkhan Öljeitü sent a letter to Philip the Fair of France and made the following statement.

We, elder and younger brothers (*bida aqanar degüner*), because of the calumnious talks of evil commoners, let our affection fall out with each other. Now, gratified with the inspiration of heaven, beginning with Temür Qaghan, Toghtogha, Chabar and Dugha, we, descendants of Chinggis Qaghan, from forty or fifty years ago up to this time recriminate against each other, but now by the protection of heaven all the elder and younger brothers made a mutual peace and from the land of Nangghiyas where the sun rises to the sea of Talu, we have joined each other and let the postal stations be relayed.¹³⁷

In this letter Öljeitü declares that although Mongol unity had been challenged for the last 'forty or fifty years,' it was now re-established in its full extent from the land of Southern China (*nangghiyas*) to the Ocean Sea (*talū dalai*), i.e. the western limit of the continent.¹³⁸ He also emphasizes that within this vast realm the communication network based on the *jam* station had been reconnected.

Thus, preceding discussions make us reconsider the traditional view on the unity and the division of the Mongol empire because it is quite probable

that contemporary Mongols did not consider the imperial unity as completely dissolved or the empire as divided into several independent states. Unity of the Mongol empire, in reality as well as in mentality, continued to exist among the Mongols, although it was transformed in terms of its geographical extent as well as its political structure. The unified nomadic empire of Chinggis Khan was transformed into a federal world empire encompassing the whole Eurasian continent, the steppe as well as the sown, and as the size of empire expanded the old *uluses* were changed into more or less state-like polities. The conflict of interests among themselves and the reluctance to be dictated by a central authority led to internal disputes and weakened the level of unity. Nonetheless, they never completely gave up the idea that they belonged to the 'Yeke Mongghol Ulus' created by Chinggis Khan. It was this sense of Mongol unity that contributed to the continuation of cross-continental interactions in forms of human movement, long-distance trade, and missionary activity, even during the period of dissension and confrontation during the second half of the thirteenth century.

NOTES

¹ For example, see R. S. Lopez, "European Merchants in the Medieval Indies: The Evidence of Commercial Documents," *The Journal of Economic History*, vol. 3, no. 2 (1943): 181; V. Minorsky, "Caucasica III: The Alān Capital *Magas and the Mongol Campaigns," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 14, pt. 2 (1952): 222; L. Petech, "Les marchands italiens dan l'Empire Mongol," *Le Journal Asiatique*, tom 250, fasc. 4 (1962): 549-574; J. A. Boyle, "The Last Barbarian Invaders: the Impact of the Mongol Conquests upon East and West," *Memoirs and Proceedings of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society* 12 (1970), 1-15; Saguchi Tōru, *Mongoru Teikoku to Seiyō* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1970); J. J. Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 69, 123, 188; Sugiyama Masaaki, *Dai Mongoru no sekai* (Tokyo: Katakawa Shoten, 1992), 280-288; F. W. Mote, "Chinese society under Mongol rule, 1215-1368," *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 6: *Alien regimes and border states, 907-1368* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 643; Claus-Peter Haase, "Von der 'Pax Mongolica' zum Timuridenreich," in *Die Mongolen in Asien und Europa*, ed. S. Conermann & J. Kusber (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997), 139-160; D. Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-cultural influences on the steppe frontier, 1304-1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 131, 149.

² For example, see B. Lewis, "The Mongols, the Turks and the Muslim Polity," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., vol. 18 (1968): 49-68.

³ T. T. Allsen, *Commodity and exchange in the Mongol empire: A cultural history of Islamic textiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4-5.

⁴ P. D. Buell, *Historical Dictionary of the Mongol World Empire* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2003), 210.

⁵ H. Franke, "Sino-Western Contacts under the Mongol Empire," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Hong Kong Branch), vol. 6(1966): 50.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ D. Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 83.

⁸ P. Jackson, *The Mongols and the West* (Harlow, England: Longman, 2005), 309-310.

⁹ J. Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 28.

¹⁰ *Yuanshi*, 21/460. Here for *Yuanshi* (hereafter YS) the punctuated critical edition, published by Zhonghua Shuju, is used.

¹¹ Abū'l Qāsim 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Alī Qāshānī, *Tārīkh-i Ūljāitū*, ed. M. Hambly (Tehran: Ilmiva Farhangi, 1969), 31-32.

¹² Franke, "Sino-Western Contacts," 59-71.

¹³ W. Heissig and C. C. Müller ed., *Die Mongolen* (Innsbruck: Pinguin, 1989), 54-57.

¹⁴ Morgan, *The Mongols*, 195.

¹⁵ Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*, 349.

¹⁶ Franke, "Sino-Western Contacts," 50.

¹⁷ For the Mongol *jam* system, P. Olbricht's *Das Postwesen in China unter der Mongolenherrschaft im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1954) is classical but much outdated now. Recently we have very detailed studies by Tang Baohai, *Meng-Yuan yizhan jiaotong yanjiu* (Beijing: Kunlun Chubanshe, 2006); Mo Shumin, *Meng-Yuan youyi yanjiu* (Ph.D. dissertation, Jinan University, 2004); A. Silverstein, *Postal Systems in the Pre-Modern Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹⁸ For example, see Alberto E. Minetti, "Efficiency of equine express postal systems," *Nature*, vol. 426, no. 18 (2003): 785-786, and compare with W. L. Westermann, "On Inland Transportation and Communication in Antiquity," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 3 (1928): 364-387; A. M. Ramasy, "The Speed of the Roman Imperial Post," *The Journal of Roman Studies*, vol. 15 (1925): 60-74; Silas H. L. Wu, *Communication and Imperial Control in China: Evolution of the Palace Memorial System, 1693-1735* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

¹⁹ In China the total number of *jam* households is estimated to have been about 750,000. This is approximately 6% of the entire population. See Chen Gaohua and Shih Weimin, *Zhongguo jingji tongshi: Yuandai jingji jian* (Beijing: Jingji Ribao Chubanshe, 2000), 525-526.

²⁰ Saguchi Tōru, *Mongoru Teikoku to Seiyō* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1970); Igor de Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971); Jackson, *Mongols and the West*, 329-330.

²¹ M. Rossabi, *Voyager from Xanadu: Rabban Sauma and the First Journey from China to the West* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1992).

²² *The Travels of Ibn Battūta, A.D. 1325-1354*, 5 vols. translated with revisions and notes from the Arabic text edited by C. Defrémery and B. R. Sanguinetti, by H.A.R. Gibb (Cambridge: published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1958-2000).

²³ M. Biran, *Chinggis Khan* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 85.

²⁴ T. T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 5-7.

²⁵ W. M. Thackston tr., *Jami'u't-tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), I, 18-19.

²⁶ Rossabi, *Voyager from Xanadu*, 55.

²⁷ Of course, one can add another area of confrontation: the border region around Amu Darya.

²⁸ As for the rise of Qaidu and his conflicts with Qubilai, see M. Biran's *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1997).

²⁹ P. Jackson, "The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire," *Central Asiatic Journal*, vol. 22, pt. 3-4 (1978): 186-244.

³⁰ R. Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 78-105.

³¹ The course of confrontations in Central Asia is well described in Liu Yingsheng's *Chahetai Hanguoshi yanjiu*, 247-309. For the war between Hülegü and Berke, and their successors, see G. Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran: A Persian renaissance* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 58-78.

³² Sugiyama Masaaki, *Dai Monggoru no sekai*, 220-221.

³³ On the Talas convention, see Liu, *Chahetai Hanguoshi*, 180-193 and Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State*, 26-32.

³⁴ YS, 13/265.

³⁵ Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World*, 187.

³⁶ On Marco Polo's itinerary, see L. Olschki, *Marco Polo's Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 12-38; J. Larner, *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 39-41; S. G. Haw, *Marco Polo's China: A Venetian in the Realm of Khubilai Khan* (London: Routledge, 2006), 48-51.

³⁷ A. Ricci tr., *The Travels of Marco Polo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1931), 62-63.

³⁸ H. Yule tr., *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1926), 186; Olschki, *Marco Polo's Asia*, 21.

³⁹ The name of Antong is written as 'Hantun' or 'Hantum' in Rashid al-Din's work. His name is not a transcription of 'Anton' (← Antonius) because the names of his brothers were 'Dingtong' and 'Huotong', all ending with the same Chinese character of 'tong.' There is no doubt that it is a Chinese-style name. Cf. P. Pelliot, *Recherches sur les Chrétiens d'Asie central et d'Extrême-Orient* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1973), 271-272, note 2.

⁴⁰ *Zhanchi* (Taipei: Gwangwen Shuju, 1972), vol. 2, 7.

⁴¹ YS, 8/153.

⁴² YS, 134/3247.

⁴³ On the rebellion of Shirigi and its aftermath, see Muraoka Hitoshi, "Shirigi no ran," *Tōyō shien*, vol. 24/25 (1985): 307-344.

⁴⁴ Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State*, 151-152.

⁴⁵ Ricci tr., *The Travels of Marco Polo*, 62-63.

⁴⁶ Rashid/Thackston, I, p. 431; Rashid/Boyle, 258.

⁴⁷ 'Kawshang' or 'Koshang' has been identified as Hezhongfu by J. B. Chabot, and Gongchang by W. Budge. However, P. Pelliot identified it as Dongsheng (Toqto) in the northeastern bend of the Yellow River in the Ordos region. According to Pelliot, 'Koshang' should be a scribal mistake of 'Tōshang': in Persian 'k' and 't' could be easily confused. In Odoric's travelogue it was transcribed 'Tozan' or 'Cozan.' That area was also known by the name of 'Tenduc' as found in Marco Polo and Rashid al-Din's works. See P. Pelliot, *Recherches sur les Chrétiens d'Asie central*, 251-252, 259.

⁴⁸ E. A. Wallis Budge tr., *The Monks of Kublai Khan Emperor of China* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1928), 138.

⁴⁹ YS, 134/3247.

⁵⁰ P. Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1959), p. 423. Thus it is difficult to accept Rossabi's estimation that the year of their departure was between 1275 and 1278. See his *Voyager from Xanadu*, 46.

⁵¹ Budge tr., *The Monks of Kublai Khan*, 139.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Rossabi, *Voyager from Xanadu*, 57.

⁵⁴ 'Abd Allāh ibn Faḍl Allāh (Vaṣṣāf al-Ḥaḍrat), *Tajziyat al-amṣār va tazjiyat al-a'ṣār* (hereafter *Tāriḫ-i Vaṣṣāf*) (Bombay: 1269 H./1852-3. lithograph), 51; *Tahrir-i tāriḫ-i Vaṣṣāf*, ed. by 'Abd al-Muḥammad Āyatī (Tehran: Bunyād-i Farhang-i Īrān, 1967), 28-29.

⁵⁵ T. T. Allsen, "Mongolian Princes and Their Merchant Partners, 1200-1260," *Asia Major* (3rd series), vol. 2, pt. 2 (1989): 113.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁵⁷ For a general description, see F. Dvornik, *Origins of Intelligence Services* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1974), 262-299. R. Amitai-Preiss gives a detailed description of this kind of “secret war” in *Mongols and Mamluks*, 139-156.

⁵⁸ On the term *injū*, see G. Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*, II (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1965), 220-225. This word seems to be etymologically related with the Mongol word *emchū*, which, according to Murakami Masatsuku, denotes ‘private property.’ Cf. his “Mongoru jō chika no hūyūsei no kigen,” *Mongoru teikokushi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kazama Shoten, 1993; the article originally published in 1962), 186ff.

⁵⁹ Rashid/Thackston, III, 519.

⁶⁰ YS, 134/3248.

⁶¹ Another example of an envoy kept in custody is Shi Tianlin, who was dispatched to Qaidu in 1256 by Möngke. He was detained in the camp of Qaidu for 28 years and returned to Qubilai when Nomughan was allowed to return in 1284. YS, 159/3619.

⁶² Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 197.

⁶³ YS, 134/3248.

⁶⁴ Rashid/Thackston, II, P. 438. Cf. YS, 13/265.

⁶⁵ YS, 117/2906.

⁶⁶ H. Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, vol. 3 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1914), 146-150.

⁶⁷ YS, 134/3247.

⁶⁸ *Zhanchi*, 60.

⁶⁹ Liu Yingsheng, *Chahetai Hanguoshi yanjiu*, 180-193.

⁷⁰ Rashid/Boyle, p. 102; Rashid/Thackston, II, 349.

⁷¹ Rashid/Thackston, III, 535.

⁷² Rashid/Thackston, III, 566-567.

⁷³ Rashid/Thackston, III, 583.

⁷⁴ Rashid/Thackston, III, 583.

⁷⁵ Rashid/Thackston, III, 649.

⁷⁶ Rashid/Boyle, p. 103; Rashid/Thackston, II, 350.

⁷⁷ Rashid/Thackston, III, 654.

⁷⁸ *Tārīkh-i Ūljāitū*, 42.

⁷⁹ Allsen, *Commodity and exchange in the Mongol empire*.

⁸⁰ See Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250-1350* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 185ff; L. Petech, “Les marchands italiens,” 549-574; Chen Dezhi, “Yuandai haiwai maoyi,” *Lishi yanjiu*, 1978, no. 3 (reprinted in Chen Dezhi, *Yuanshi yanjiu lungao*, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991): 99-112; Bai Xiaoxia & Zhang Qifan, “Yuanzhao yu Yindu de haishang maoyi,” *Neimenggu Daxue xuebao* (Renwen shehui kexue ban), no. 6 (2005): 73-78; Ma Jianchun, “Yuandai Xiyuren de shangye huodong,” *Jinan xuebao* (Zhexue shehui kexue ban), no. 3(2006): 171-176.

⁸¹ *Zhanchi*, 75.

⁸² Yang Zhijiu regards these 160 as those who received provisions from the state. See his “Guanyu Make Boluo lihua de yiduan hanwen jizai,” *Wenshi Zhazhi*, vol. 1, no. 12 (1941); reprinted in *Yuanshi sanlun* (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1985), 89-96.

⁸³ Rashid/Thackston, III, 605-606.

⁸⁴ Ricci tr., 16-17.

⁸⁵ *Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 505-508; *Tahrir-i tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, 283-285; Allsen, *Commodity and exchanges in the Mongol empire*, 34.

⁸⁶ This is an error for Toqta, the khan of Batu Ulus.

⁸⁷ According to H. Yule, the first section is from Hormuz to Malabar, and the second from Malabar to China. See his *Cathay and the Way Thither*, vol. 3, 49.

⁸⁸ Quoted from C. Dawson ed., *Mission to Asia*, repr. (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1980), 226. Yule erroneously gives a slightly different translation under the heading of “first letter.” See *Cathay and the Way Thither*, vol. 3, 48-49. For Latin text, see Van den Wyngaert ed., *Sinica Franciscana*, vol. 1 (Ad Claras Aquas, Quaracchi-Firenze: apud Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1929), 345-351.

⁸⁹ As for Montecorvino’s itinerary, see J. Richard, *La papaute et les missions d’Orient au moyen age* (XIIIe-XVe siècles) (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1998), 145-146.

⁹⁰ Cheng Jufu, “Fulin Zhongshanwang shendaobei,” *Quan Yuan wen*, vol. 16 (Nanjing: Jiangsu Guji Chubanshe, 2000), 324-326.

⁹¹ Rashid/Thackston, III, 565.

⁹² Rashid/Thackston, III, 566.

⁹³ For more detailed research on Īsa Kelemechi’s activities, see Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 27, 149-151; Kim Hodong, “Mong-Won jegug’gi han saegmogin kwanli eui chosang: Isa Kelemechi eui saeng’ae wa hwaldong,” *Chung’ang Asia Yon’gu*, vol. 9 (2004): 29-66; S. V. Dmitriev, “Samiy vliiatel’nyi khristianin mongol’skoi imperii: Probelmy rekonstruktii biografii inozemtsa na mongol’skoi sluzhbe,” *XXXV nauchnaia konferentsiia “Obshchestvo in gosudarstvo v Kitae* (Moscow, 2005), 66-104.

⁹⁴ *Mishujian zhi*, critical text by Gao Yongsheng (Nanjing: Jiangsu Guji Chubanshe, 1992), 74.

⁹⁵ Cheng Jufu, “Fulin Zhongshanwang shendaobei,” 324-326. For a translation of the relevant paragraph, see Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 72.

⁹⁶ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 72.

⁹⁷ On this subject, we have Saguchi Tōru’s pioneering study, “Gendai Tārimu nanben jidai,” *Kita Asea Gakuhō*, vol. 2 (1943), 313-349.

⁹⁸ YS, 99/2539.

⁹⁹ YS, 166/3896-97.

¹⁰⁰ YS, 133/3230.

¹⁰¹ YS, 12/252.

¹⁰² YS, 12/325.

¹⁰³ YS, 15/316.

¹⁰⁴ There exist two different opinions on the date of Qaidu and Du’a’s attack on Khara Khocho: 1275 and 1285. For more detailed information, see Dang Baohai, “Yuandai Huozhouzhizhan niandai bianzheng,” *Ou-Ya Xuekan*, vol. 3 (2002): 217-229. Saguchi states that the Office was abolished because the center of Qaidu’s military operation had moved to Almaligh, Altai and Uighuristan and, thus the danger of his attack on the area of Khotan was decreased (“Gendai Tārimu nanben jidai,” pp. 328-329). However, his assumption is hard to accept if we consider a series of events, all indicating an overall retreat of the Yuan force in the Tarim area. See Jia Congjiang, “Guanyu Yuanzhao jingying Xiyu de jige wenti,” *Xiyu yanjiu*, no. 4 (1998): 4-13; Liu, *Chahetai hangushishi*, 280-281.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*, 310.

¹⁰⁶ Richard, *La papaute et les missions d’Orient*, 146.

¹⁰⁷ *Mission to Asia*, 226.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Saguchi Tōru, “Juyon seiki Genjo daihan to saiho san oka tonu rendaisei nit suite,” *Kita Asea Gakuhō*, vol. 1 (1942): 151-214.

¹¹⁰ On the Qipchaqs and their interaction with the Mongols, see P. B. Golden, “The Qipchaqs of Medieval Eurasia: An Example of Stateless Adaptation in the Steppes,” in *Rulers from the Steppe: State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery*, ed. G. Seaman and D. Marks (Los Angeles:

Ethnographics Press; University of California Press, 1991); reprinted in *Nomads and their Neighbours in the Russian Steppe: Turks, Khazars and Qipchaqs* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

¹¹¹ V. L. Egorov, *Istoricheskaia geografiia Zolotoi Ordy v XIII-XIV vv.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1985), 151.

¹¹² G. Vernadsky, *The Mongols and Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), 140. Also cf. P. B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), 297.

¹¹³ G. Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 121-122.

¹¹⁴ M. Quatremère, *Histoire Mongols de la Perse* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1836); J. A. Boyle, "Dynastic and political history of the Īl-Khāns," *The Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 5: The Saljuq and Mongol Periods*, ed. J. A. Boyle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 345, note 4.

¹¹⁵ Rashid/Boyle, 128 and note 12.

¹¹⁶ "Evidence for the Early Use of the Title *ilkhān* among the Mongols," *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd series, vol. 1, pt. 3 (1991): 360 and notes 36 and 37. Also cf. his *Mongols and Mamluks*, 13-14.

¹¹⁷ V. Tizengauzen, *Sbornik materialov, otnosiashchikhsia k istorii Zolotoi Ordy*, vol. 1 (St. Peterburg, 1884), 334, 343. For some more information on al-Muhibbi, see p. 331.

¹¹⁸ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 29.

¹¹⁹ J. Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran: Chingiz Khan to Uljaytu 1220-1309* (London: Routledge, 2006), 293ff.

¹²⁰ Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 36.

¹²¹ Ö. Diler, *İlhanlar: İran Moğollarının Sikkeleri* (Istanbul: Turkuaz, 2006), 221ff; B. Nyamaa, *The Coins of Mongol Empire and Clan Tamgha of Khans (XIII-XIV)* (Ulaanbaatar: n.a., 2005), 211ff. Diler consistently reads the initial phrase of the coins as "Hakanu ariba," but it is apparently wrong.

¹²² In this sense, it is interesting to note that there exists another interpretation of the title. For example, M. Erdal, as Amitai has remarked, regards *il khan* as a equivalent of a Turkic word *elkhan*, being a contraction of *elighkhan*, meaning simply 'ruler.' In the meantime, P. D. Buell explains this title as qan of a pacified area. See Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 14; Buell, *Historical Dictionary*, 165.

¹²³ The title of *il khan* was also used by the Mamluks and the Europeans. It seems that they simply accepted the title commonly used by the Muslims in West Asia.

¹²⁴ See Kim Hodong, "Mongol jeguk kwa Dae-Won," *Yeoksa Hagbo*, vol. 192 (2006): 221-251.

¹²⁵ F. W. Cleaves, "The Sino-Mongolian Inscription of 1362 in Memory of Prince Hindu," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1-2 (1949): 30, 62, 83.

¹²⁶ P. Jackson, "From Ulus to Khanate: The making of the Mongol states c. 1220-c. 1290," *The Mongol Empire and its Legacy*, ed. R. Amitai-Preiss and D. O. Morgan (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 31.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 32-36.

¹²⁸ This term was first used by T. T. Allsen in his book, *Mongol Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 11.

¹²⁹ Igor de Rachewiltz, "Qan, Qa'an and the Seal of Güyüg," *Documenta Barbarorum: Festschrift für Walther Heissig zum 70. Geburtstag* (Veröffentlichungen der Societas Uralo-Altaica, Band 18; Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), 272-281.

¹³⁰ Sugiyama Masaaki, *Dai Monggoru no sekai*, 222-224. He also notes the different usage of *jarligh* and *üge* (or *farman*).

¹³¹ On various meanings and usages of *aqā*, see F. W. Cleaves, "Aqā Minu," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 24 (1962-63): 64-81.

¹³² For example, see Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 41-50.

¹³³ Sugiyama Masaaki, *Dai Monggoru sekai*, 229.

¹³⁴ Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongols State in Central Asia*, 55-56.

¹³⁵ YS, 134/3248.

¹³⁶ Ricci tr., 359-360, 365.

¹³⁷ A. Mostaert and F. W. Cleaves, *Les Lettres de 1289 et 1305 des ilkhan Arjun et Öljeitü à Philippe le Bel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 55-57.

¹³⁸ On the meaning of 'Talu Sea,' see D. Sinor, "The Mysterious 'Talu Sea' in Öljeitü's letter to Philip the Fair of France," *Analecta Mongolica Dedicated to the Seventieth Birthday of Professor Owen Lattimore*, Mongolia Society Occasional Papers 8 (Bloomington: Mongolia Society, 1972), 115-121; reprinted in D. Sinor, *Inner Asia and its Contacts with Medieval Europe* (London: Variorum, 1977).