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### THE GOLDEN HORDE'S STANCE ON THE YUAN DYNASTY AS SEEN FROM BAYBARS AL-MANŞŪRĪ'S ACCOUNTS

*Yihao Qiu*

*Fudan University*

*Shanghai, China*

*kafka\_qiuyihao@yahoo.com*

**Abstract.** This article analyzes Baybars al-Manşūrī's chronicle, *Zubdat al-Fikra*, from the perspective of the Golden Horde's relationship with the Yuan Dynasty, combining Chinese and Persian sources with case studies to explore the Juchid Khan's stance toward the Yuan and the Golden Horde's role in facilitating Mamluk-Yuan diplomatic and commercial relations.

Research materials: Contemporary Arabic sources are utilized, including Baybars al-Manşūrī's chronicle, Ibn al-Shaddād's biography of Sultan Baybars, and al-'Umārī's encyclopedia. Additionally, official histories compiled during the Yuan Dynasty and the Ilkhanate are examined, including Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-Tavārīkh*, Vaṣṣāf's *Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf*, and Ibn Bībī's local history of Anatolia.

Results and novelty of the research: In this article, much attention is paid to the analysis of Baybars al-Manşūrī's *Zubdat al-Fikra*, particularly its previously overlooked accounts related to the Yuan Dynasty. Through meticulously examined case studies, the author aims to highlight the chronicle's unique and detailed records – verifiable yet absent from extant Chinese and Persian sources. Consequently, this study demonstrates that Baybars al-Manşūrī's accounts offer new insights into the internal affairs and diplomatic policies of the Golden Horde while shedding light on its stance toward the Yuan Dynasty.

**Keywords:** Baybars al-Manşūrī, Golden Horde, Yuan Dynasty, Mamluk Sultanate, Qubilai, *Jāmi' al-Tavārīkh*, *Khitai*

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## 1. Introduction

Until 15th century, there is no indigenous historiographical tradition in the Golden Horde; no written narrative chronicles or records of oral epics have survived. As Halperin concluded, this may be attributed internally to the absence of a local written tradition to emulate, or externally to the lack of political motivations

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stimulated by foreign models [11, p. 5]. As for the legends composed after the 16th century, such as Hājī Ötemish's *Chinggis-nāma* written in Eastern Turkic, they primarily reflect the assimilation of Mongol legendary motifs by non-Mongol peoples. The historical events in these works, usually, were reorganized and appropriated in accordance with the realities of the era in which their authors lived [11, p. 11; 34, pp. 15–33].

However, beyond its own borders, the Golden Horde found the chronicler and defender of its history. Beginning with the reign of the second Mamluk Sultan, Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Bunduqdārī (r. 1260–1277), an “Anti-Ilkhanid alliance” between the Mamluks and the Golden

Horde was successfully established. In the following decades, numerous diplomatic missions were exchanged regularly between both regimes, allowing Mamluk officials gathered valuable information on the various Mongol Khanates. Meanwhile, thanks to the generous patronage of the Sultans, Arabic-language historiography flourished throughout the Mamluk period [18, pp. 4–9]. Despite some-time chronological imprecision, Mamluk historical sources provide new insights into the internal affairs and the diplomatic policies of the Golden Horde, shedding light on its stance toward other Chinggisid Khanates, especially the Yuan dynasty.

Among the various Mamluk historians, Baybars al-Manṣūrī's (Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Dawādar al-Manṣūrī al-Khaṭā'ī, 645/1246–7–725/1324–5) chronicle stands out for his unique and detailed records, often containing information not found in the works of other contemporary Islamic authors. Thus, his works hold distinctive value among Mamluk sources for the in-depth study of the history of the Yuan Dynasty and Mongol Central Asia. Therefore, this article investigates several cases to explore the Juchid Khan's stance on Yuan China, as reflected – albeit often indirectly – through Baybars al-Manṣūrī's narratives.

## 2. Baybars al-Manṣūrī's Accounts

Baybars al-Manṣūr was a mamluk of Sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn (r. 1278–1290). He is renowned for his substantial contributions as both a participant in and a witness to significant events, is regarded as one of the most authoritative historians of the *Bahrī* Mamluk period (r. 1250–1382). As a military commander, Baybars al-Manṣūrī served successive Mamluk sultans, including Qalāwūn (r. 678–89/1279–90), al-Ashraf Khalīl (r. 689–93/1290–93), and al-Malik al-Naṣir (r. 693–741/1294–1341), and had participated in campaigns against the Crusaders and the Mongols. In 1287, he was appointed as the governor of al-Karak castle. During al-Malik al-Naṣir's reign, Baybars was appointed as chief of chancery (*dīwān al-inshā'*) and subsequently promoted to viceroy of the empire (*nā'ib al-saltāna*) in 711/1311–12.

According to several biographical dictionaries, his nisba was *al-Khitā'ī*, suggesting that his origin in the easternmost Muslim lands [2, v.1, pp. 509–510; 20, v. 2, pp. 531–534; 28, v. 26, pp. 79–80]. While the *nisba* “al-Khitā'ī” in 13th- and 14th- century Arabic sources was used flexibly – sometimes merely indicating the biographical subject's experience in the East, including China or Central Asia – at the Mamluk court, names and names-giving practices often reflected an effort to emphasize ethnic identity.

During the 13th and 14th centuries, the term “Khitai” was used generally to refer to the people of Qidan (契丹), Qarakhitai (*halaqidan*, 哈刺契丹), and those

from northern China. Notwithstanding these ambiguities, in historical documents compiled during the 13th and 14th centuries, “Khitai” is distinctively different from “Qarakhitai”. “Khitai” was a concept related to a certain region, specifically the multi-ethnic populations living in northern China, rather than an exclusive ethnic identity. In contrast, “Qarakhitai” (and its Chinese translation, “Black Khitai,” *heiqidan*, 黑契丹) in Islamic and Chinese sources typically referred to both the Khitai people who moved westward [7, pp. 141–168]. I therefore tend to think Baybars al-Manṣūrī's *nisba* as related to the aforementioned regional concept of “Khitai.” In other words, he was likely a subject of Mongol rule who had moved far away from northern China.

Regarding Baybars al-Manṣūrī's personal experience, this is entirely plausible. Baybars was reported as a Mamluk accompanying a eunuch of the former ruler of Mosul, al-Ṭawāshī Mujāhid al-Dīn Qāymāz al-Mawṣulī, to Egypt in 659/1261 when he was around fourteen years old (i.e., born around 645/1247) [5, p. 71]. This reminds us that one of his contemporaries, Xū Ting (徐霆), an envoy from the Southern Song (r. 1127–1276) mentioned:

Ting: When I was on the steppe, I saw the commoner households under their chiefs, wagons loaded with supplies, their aged ones, youngsters, and livestock, traveling with their entire possessions for several days without cease. Also, there were many thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds among them. When I asked about this, they replied that all of them were Tatars being transferred to campaign against a Western kingdom. Since they would spend three years on the road, those who were now aged thirteen or fourteen would, when they got there, turn seventeen or eighteen and all, thus, would be capable of serving as soldiers. [21, p.193; 4, p. 126].<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Baybars al-Manṣūrī was most likely one of the juvenile soldiers recruited from Northern China or Central Asia to participate in the Mongols' westward expeditions. He was subsequently captured in a war and sold as a slave to Egypt. The background of Baybars al-Manṣūrī may explain his keen interest in the history and political affairs of the Mongols. Furthermore, compared to his contemporaneous Mamluk historians, his works exhibit a particular focus on Mongol affairs, likely to have benefitted from his personal social networks.

Baybars al-Manṣūrī's main works include: 1) *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta'rīkh al-hijra* (“Quintessence of Thoughts on the History of Islam,” hereafter cited as *ZF*) is a general history written by Baybars al-Manṣūrī, with the extant version concluding in 709/1309–10; 2) *Mukhtār al-akhbār* (“Selected Accounts”), a concise chronicle ending with the annals for 702/1302–3. According to A. Y. Sidarus, this work was likely to have benefited from the contributions of Baybars al-Manṣūrī's Coptic secretary and collaborator, Ibn Kabar, who composed a chronicle in Coptic and presented its Arabic translation to his master and patron [29, pp. 141–148]; 3) *al-Tuḥfa al-mūlikiyya fī al-dawla al-turkiyya* (“The Royal Offering on the Turkic State”), is a dynastic history of the Bahārī period, ending in 711/1311–12. Compared to the *ZF*, *al-Tuḥfa* focuses more on the internal affairs of the Mamluk Sultanate, providing fewer details on certain topics, particularly those concerning the Mongols.

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<sup>1</sup> “霆在草地見其頭目、民戶，車載輜重及老小、畜產，盡室而行，數日不絕，亦多有十三、四歲者。問之，則云，此皆韃人調往回國，三年在道，今之年十三、四歲者，到彼則十七、八歲，皆已勝兵。”

Among above three works, the *Zubdat al-Fikra* contains a considerable number of accounts related to the Golden Horde, the Ilkhanate, the Ögedei-Chaghatai Khanate, and the Yuan dynasty. Since Baybars al-Manṣūrī once served as chief of chancery, it is unsurprising that he had access to envoys' reports and diplomatic archives, which he quoted in his works. Meanwhile, with the assistance of his secretary, Baybars al-Manṣūrī was able to adapt the narrative style to cater to the popular taste in Cairo at that time. Additionally, Baybars al-Manṣūrī might have had private informants collecting information for him. For example, Mu'min Aghā, a Mongol refugee from the Ilkhanate, provided him with news on Mongol affairs in the Ilkhanate and the Golden Horde. His personal experiences, such as witnessing the battle against the Mongols in Syria (702/1302-3), were also reflected in his works [27, pp. 37–44].

Moreover, it is noteworthy that Baybars al-Manṣūrī had no access to the official histories being compiled at the Ilkhanid court, such as the *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*, and had no personal connection with Yuan China. Yet, his records can consistently be corroborated by Chinese sources, with very few inconsistencies in the text. Clearly, this accuracy could not have resulted from mere gossip or oral reports. Rather, it more likely reflects the general perspective and historical memory of the Yuan Dynasty as held by the Golden Horde. As a result, Baybars al-Manṣūrī's works had a lasting influence on later Mamluk historians. At least three prominent historians – Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (677–733/1279–1333), Ibn Khaldūn (732–808/1332–1406), and Badr al-Dīn al-'Aynī (762–855/1361–1451) – whom scholars initially believed to be firsthand sources, were, upon comparison with *the ZF*, found to have largely copied their content from Baybars al-Manṣūrī's work [1, pp. 23–36].

Baybars al-Manṣūrī turns his attention to events that have taken place in Yuan China even prior to Qubilai's enthronement. In the annals of year 655/1257-8, while reporting the mission of the Seljuk Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Kayqubād b. Kaykhusraw (r. 1249–1257) at the court of Möngke Khan, he unexpectedly inserts a short paragraph about Qubilai, the Khan's younger brother:

The next day, [Möngke Qān] received [news] from his brother Qubilai, whom he dispatched to the regions of China (*bilād al-Khiṭā*). The news vexed him and the words made him angry, therefore he decided to march toward there and prepared to raid them [5, p. 30].

According to Ibn Bībī, an indigenous historian of Asia Minor origin, it is assured that between 1254 and 1258, the Rum Seljuk Sultan, forced by the pressure of the Mongol general Baiju, sent a mission to the court at Qaraqorum [12, p. 293]. This mission is likely that same one mentioned in the *ZF*. While the exact date of its arrival is not documented, Baybars al-Manṣūrī records it in the annals for 655/1257-8, providing the latest possible date for the completion of this diplomatic mission.

Undoubtedly, aforementioned anecdote refers to the incident known as “fiscal audit” (*goukao*, 鈎考) that occurred around 1257 [8, pp. 47–56]. This incident exposed a crisis of trust between Möngke and Qubilai and almost destroyed Qubilai's “New Policies” that experimented in his Chinese fiefs. As the imperial annals-biographies of Möngke records, while ascending the throne in 1250, “since [Qubilai] is the eldest and most capable among the brothers born of the same mother, the Great Khan entrusted him with all military and civil affairs of Chinese territories south of

the [Gobi] desert.” Consequently, Qubilai relocated to the south and established his base in the Jayutu region (爪忽都之地).<sup>2</sup> In 1253, he was granted the fiefs of Jingzhao (京兆, in today’s Xi’an); in 1256, again, he was further bestowed the Huaizhou (懷州, in today’s Henan) as fief [30, pp. 59–60].<sup>3</sup> Qubilai implemented his “New Policies” in these three regions with notable success, winning widespread support among the Chinese elites. However, these reforms inevitably infringed upon the interests of the other Chinggisid princes and the Mongol nobles. Additionally, from 1256 onward, Qubilai initiated the construction of a palace complex at Kaiping (later known as Shangdu) along the upper Luan River (灤河).

The growing influence of Qubilai raised Möngke’s suspicions. Some Mongol nobles accused him before the Great Khan, alleging that his growing popularity among the Chinese people posed a threat. They further claimed that his Chinese subordinates were secretly diverting tax revenues into his private treasury [32, pp. 152–153]. These accusations fueled the long-simmering conflict between Möngke and Qubilai over policies for governing the Chinese territories. In 1257, Möngke dispatched his grand *Bitikchi* (Left Chancellor) Alamdar (阿藍答兒) and Liu Taiping (劉太平) to Shanxi and Henan to “investigate” financial and grain records. They scrutinized and persecuted Qubilai’s subordinates, forcing the young prince to relinquish control of his Chinese fiefs. Meanwhile, Möngke deprived Qubilai of his military command and ordered him to “rest at home.” [26, v.2, p. 425] Instead, Möngke personally led the right wing of the Mongol forces to invade Sichuan Province, leaving his younger brother Ariq Böke to govern Qaraqorum in his absence.

The comparison between Chinese historical records and Baybars al-Manṣūrī’s accounts indicate that the events recorded in both sources correspond precisely. What the Seljuk missions witnessed at the Great Khan’s court was, in fact, Möngke’s reaction to the accusations against his brother Qubilai. Baybars al-Manṣūrī vividly captures this moment by stating, “The news vexed him, and the words made him angry,” reflecting Möngke’s fury at the time. According to the *Yuanshi* (Official History of the Yuan, hereafter mentioned as *YS*), there are no records of Möngke Khan personally leading military campaigns before 1257. However, in September 1257, after performing the “mare’s milk libation ceremony to the heavens,” Möngke set out to conquer the Southern Song Dynasty. By that winter, he had already reached a camp south of the Gobi desert and stationed at the *Yulong* (Mong. Ürüng) dwelling [30, p. 50].<sup>4</sup> Thus, when the *ZF* states, “he decided to march toward there and prepared to raid them,” it undoubtedly refers to Möngke’s campaign against the Southern Song.

In the annals of the year 658/1260, Baybars al-Manṣūrī records the death of Möngke Khan and the subsequent infighting between his two brothers. He reports:

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<sup>2</sup> “同母弟惟帝最長且賢，故憲宗盡屬以漠南漢地軍國庶事，遂南駐爪忽都之地。” The area Jayutu refers to the area around the Shandian River in Plain Blue Banner, inner Mongolia. Jin Emperor Shizong (r. 1161–1189) built an imperial palace as his summer encampment. Due to the abundance of golden lotus, this area was named “Jinlianchuan” (金蓮川, Golden Lotus Plain). It is located at the border between the steppe and Chinese territories, serving as a key passage for north-south transportation.

<sup>3</sup> “歲癸丑，受京兆分地。... (冬)憲宗命益懷州為分地。”

<sup>4</sup> 秋...醜馬乳祭天。九月，出師南征。...冬，帝度漠南，至於玉龍棧。

It [the death of Möngke] forced Hülegü to return to al-Shām ... that was because Möngke's brother Ariq-Böke (Arī-bukā), who was his deputy (*nā'ib*) of the state in Qaraqorum, wanted to seize the state when Möngke died. His brother Qubilai was disentitled (*mujarradan*) – as his brother Möngke Qān had sent him to the regions of China when he ascended the throne. Berke sent envoys to Ariq-Böke, saying: “You are the rightest one to be the Great Qān (*al-qāniyya*), because Möngke placed you on [the throne] during his lifetime. His cousin Qajī (< MJĪ, i.e. Qaidu) b. Ögedei and his brothers joined him. It occurred that Qubilai returned from China and Ariq-Böke set out to fight against him. Both sides met in battle. Qubilai was defeated by Ariq-Böke, [the latter] who took the spoils and captured them. But he kept everything to himself and did not distribute anything to his cousins. Furious at this, they ran away from him (i.e. Ariq-Böke) and joined [the side] of Qubilai. They fought back together, defeated and captured Ariq-Böke. Qubilai seized back the Khanate [throne] and poisoned his brother to death [5, p. 55].

Is the Baybars al-Manşūrī's account reliable? It seems that we rely on an integrated verification, including the Chinese and Persian sources. First, he states that during this time, “Qubilai was disentitled,” a claim supported by Chinese documents. In the biography of a Yuan official Tan Cheng (譚澄), it said that after 1257, “due to discord among the imperial kinsmen, [Qubilai's] military power was stripped and transferred to another prince [37, p. 370].”<sup>5</sup> It was not until November of the following year that Möngke Khan had to restore Qubilai's military authority and appoint him to command the Left-Wing Army given the intense situation on the Mongol-Southern Song front line [26, v.2, p. 425].

Furthermore, as the *YS* records, in November of 1259, Qubilai's chief wife, Chabi Khatun, sent an envoy to him, informing that Ariq-Böke had dispatched his trusted ministers, Alamdar and Dorji, to Chinese territories to conscript troops. Subsequently, Dorji was appointed as the chief judicial official (*jarjuči*) overseeing the civil affairs in Yanjing (today's Beijing). Identifying this as a clear indication of an intent to seize the khanate, Chabi, thus urged Qubilai to return swiftly [30, p. 60, p. 3086, p. 3743; 26, v. 2, pp. 425–426].

Baybars al-Manşūrī also mentions that Berke persuaded of Ariq Böke to seize the throne. His support was especially crucial. During the last years of Möngke's reign, Berke had become one of the most powerful persons in the empire, and his prestige in Central Asia and Iran had grown rapidly. According to a poetic adaption of the *yarliġh* addressed to Hülegü, Ariq-Böke said that his enthronement took place “after consulting with Barkāy, son of my uncle Jochi, who was the patriarch of the clan.” Moreover, in the *ZF*, Berke referred to Ariq-Böke as “rightest one” (*‘aḥaqq*) to be the Great Khan. This claim is supported by the coins minted in the Golden Horde, which bore Ariq Böke's name, indicating that Berke consistently regarded him as the legitimate successor of the Mongol Empire. [31, p. 55, note 94; 22, v.8, p. 177; 23, p. 55].

Besides Berke, only one Chinggisid prince appears in the *ZF* as Ariq-Böke's supporter: Qajī. This name can be identified with Ögedei's crown prince, Qashi. However, since Qashi passed away in his youth, in this context, it must refer to Qashi's son, Qaidu, the future ruler of the Ögedei *ulus*. Rashīd al-Dīn and Vaṣṣāf supply the additional names of the Mongol noble who participated assembly

<sup>5</sup> 歲丁巳，宗親間之，遂解兵權他王。

(*quriltai*) of Ariq-Böke's enthronement. Attendees included Möngke's widow, Qutuqutai, widow of Chagatai's son Qara Hülegü, Orghina Khatun, Chagataid prince Alghu; Ögedeid princes Dorji and Qaidu, Jochid princes Qurumish and Qarachar, and Külegen's son Oruqudai etc [26, v. 2, p. 427; 36, p. 11].

In contrast, Qubilai garnered the support from the princes of the left hand, namely the descendants of Chinggis Khan's brothers, including Ötchigen's son Tayachar; Jochi Qasar's son Yesüge; Qachi'un's grandson Hulayu'ur. Qubilai was enthroned in Kaiping, resulting in two Great Khans reigning simultaneously in opposition to each other. However, Möngke's widow and sons – influential figures within the imperial family – supported Ariq Böke, which may have given his claim to the throne greater legitimacy than Qubilai's.

Coinciding with the accounts of the *ZF*, the conflict between two Toluid Khans followed shortly thereafter. However, the only point worth noting is that Baybars al-Manšūrī's narrative compresses a series of events that unfolded over the subsequent years, making them appear as though they occurred within a much shorter time frame. According to the Chinese and Persian sources, Ariq Böke launched a two-pronged southward campaign in the autumn of 1260. He divided his forces into two wings: the eastern wing led by Hülegü's son Jumughur and Jochid prince Qarachar, advanced south from Qaraqorum across the Gobi desert; the western wing commanded by Alamdar, marched directly toward Liupan Mountain, the place located on the Sino-Tibetan border, aiming to assemble with Möngke's troops, which had retreated from Sichuan. But both wings were repelled separately by Qubilai's army and the Chinese warlords loyal to him. The Qubilai's side then eagerly dispatched envoys to various sub-rulers, announcing his victory.<sup>6</sup> Notably, this round of the battle is omitted in the *ZF*'s narrative.

Yet, *ZF* recorded that “Qubilai was defeated by Ariq-Böke, [the latter] who took the spoils and captured them,” a question emerged: what exact time did the confrontation occur? Rashīd al-Dīn records that it occurred in the next autumn of 1261. Ariq Böke regrouped his forces and marched eastward from his encampment on the side of Altai Mountains. He first sent envoys to Yesüge, fraudulently claiming he intended to submit. Yesüge was tricked. This enabled Ariq Böke to launch a successful surprise attack and recapture the city of Qaraqorum. Qubilai's reinforcements arrived one month later. In October, both sides clashed in the region of Shimu'ultai. Ariq Böke's right wing was disintegrated, but his left and center wings fought Qubilai's forces fiercely until nightfall. Eventually, both armies withdraw with their armies [26, v. 2, p. 430]. Given that Rashīd al-Dīn consistently avoids mentioning the military failure of the Yuan army, even distorting their defeats into victories, the «*Zubdat al-Fikra*»'s accounts seem more reliable. We can therefore confirm that Qubilai was indeed defeated in this second round of battle.

Ariq Böke spent the year of 1262 in Qaraqorum, suffering from a shortage of provisions. Meanwhile, Alghu, the ruler of Chaghatai *Ulus*, refused to obey his orders and intercepted Ariq Böke's supplies. Infuriated, Ariq Böke redirected his

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<sup>6</sup> According to the *Koryōsa*, in the April of 1261, Qubilai's envoy delivered an imperial decree to Wang Sik (王禕, r. 1260–1274), King Wonjong of the Koryō Kingdom, stating, “The Emperor (i.e., Qubilai), due to the pacification of the norther affairs (i.e., Ariq Böke's rebellion from the Yuan perspective), has ordered one person from his envoys to inform your King.” (皇帝以北方平盪事，令行李內一人歸諭國王) [41, v. 2, p. 797].

forces westward to campaign against Alghu. The continuous conflicts led to a devastating famine among the local population, and the morale of Ariq Böke's army deteriorated further. Finally, Möngke's son Ürüng Tash and other nobles abandoned Ariq Böke and defected to Qubilai's side [26, v. 2, p. 432]. As for Ariq Böke himself, he was forced to submit to Qubilai in 1264, thus bringing an end to the five-years civil war over the Mongol Empire.

In the «*Zubdat al-Fikra*», the above events are abridged as Ariq Böke “kept everything to himself and did not distribute anything to his cousins. Thus, they, angered by this, ran away from him.” It reminds us the poem in *The Secret History of the Mongols*: “By whom will they let govern your people, who are like a flock of birds?” [25, v.1, p. 171] Togan elaborates on the meaning of this sentence, explaining that “the flock of birds seems to refer to the *nökör*, who initially had volition and could decide for themselves whom they would serve. This is how they formed the retinue of a would-be leader. But they could also leave the leader in the same fashion. The *nökör*, ... attached themselves to a leader as long as it was beneficial for them” [34, pp. 42–43]. Therefore, Baybars al-Manṣūrī's narrative reflects a causal inference consistent with the values of steppe society: a ruler who refuses to share wealth with subordinates or fails to fairly oversee the distribution of resources will inevitably be abandoned by his subjects.

The *Zubdat al-Fikra* claims that “(Qubilai) poisoned his brother to death,” of course, no corresponding record can be found in Chinese or Persian sources, as such assertion would have been excessively detrimental to Qubilai's reputation. That said, Rashīd al-Dīn's account confirms that Ariq Böke survived only one year and six days after submitting to his brother [26, v. 2, p. 435, 460]. While Rashīd al-Dīn asserts that he died of illness, he notably emphasizes Ariq Böke's brief survival following his surrender – perhaps subtly hinting at an unnatural death, as he likely could not state this outright. Moreover, since the contemporary Mongols avoided executing nobles by shedding blood, “being poisoned” thus became a rhetorical device used to describe victims of political murders or coups d'état. Similar accusations can be seen in the cases of Fatima, who was accused of poisoning Köden, or Berke, who was alleged to have poisoned Sartaq [16, p. 245; 17, v. 2, p. 1292].

Despite Baybars al-Manṣūrī significantly compressing the timeline of the entire event, when compared with Chinese and Persian sources, the sequence of the key battles, the crucial figures, the division within the Ariq Böke's camp and his eventual fate, without exception, remain consistent across the three accounts. Furthermore, we may infer that this was not merely a collection of casually gathered oral rumors by Baybars al-Manṣūrī but rather a systematic record reflecting the official perspective of the Golden Horde.

This comes as no surprise. The core of the “Anti-Ilkhanid alliance” consisted of the Mamluk Sultanate, the Chagatai Khanate, and Qaidu's *Ulus*, whose primary target was attacking the Ilkhanate from three directions. Despite the alliance's limited success, the Golden Horde acted as a mediator, and adopted a somewhat unfriendly attitude towards the Yuan Dynasty, the Ilkhanate's major ally. Although the succession to the throne of the Golden Horde was unstable, making it difficult to implement a coherent foreign policy on Far Eastern affairs, the Jochid rulers' stance nevertheless influenced Mamluk historians. As a result, they often openly gloated over Qubilai's military failures – a sentiment that undoubtedly reflected the attitude of the Golden Horde.

Therefore, the negative portrayal of Qubilai Khan runs throughout the «*Zubdat al-Fikra*». For instance, around the year 687/1288–9, a general of the Yuan garrison on the Mongol steppe, Ṭurdughā, defected to Qaidu and urged him to launch an incursion against Qubilai.<sup>7</sup> He instigated Qaidu by declaring, “He (i.e., Qubilai) had been aged and no longer capable of managing his kingdom, while his sons who take care of the affairs (of the state), are still young boys.” [5, p. 262] These words convey an undisguised sneer toward Qubilai’s frail and ailing final years. Following the death of his crown prince, Jimgim, in 1286, Qubilai’s health deteriorated rapidly [30, p. 2893; 26, v. 2, p. 454]. His excessive alcohol consumption and over-indulgence in rich foods led to severe gout. At the same time, he was burdened with the difficult task of selecting a suitable successor. Most of his sons had predeceased him, and the seemingly viable candidate, Temür, Jimgim’s son, was known for his excessive drinking [26, v. 2, p. 256]. Baybars al-Manṣūrī likely learned of Ṭurdughā’s remarks from Mongol captives brought to Egypt, and this detail undoubtedly reflects the political perspective of the Golden Horde. Likewise, influenced by the stance of the Golden Horde, until the 14th century, Mamluk historical accounts continued to recognize Ariq Böke as the legitimate ruler following Möngke and preceding Qubilai until the 14th century [35, p. 104].

Additionally, in the narrative of the «*Zubdat al-Fikra*» about the conflict between Qaidu and Qubilai in 687/1288–9, the author said, “When Qaydū came close to the kingdom (*al-qawm*) [of Qubilāy]” [5, p. 262]. It is worth noting that Baybars al-Manṣūrī used the term “*al-qawm*” (tribe), rather than *mamālik* (state) or *bilād* (territories), which frequently appeared in the contemporary Arabic-Persian historical works. Clearly, the author employs *al-qawm* to refer to Qubilai’s territories on the Mongolia steppes. This term was frequently used by Rashīd al-Dīn to describe various Turco-Mongolian social groups, ranging from nations and kingdoms to sub-branches of specific Mongol lineages [3, p. 228]. A parallel case also can be found in the Chinese sources. For instance, the *YS* records that in 1325 (the 3rd year of Taiding), Yuan Emperor, Yisūn-Temür (r. 1323–1328), dispatched Huan-chi (Qōnchi) and other envoys to the “three tribes of Kepek, Özbek and Abū-Sa‘id,” respectively [30, p. 673].<sup>8</sup> This case suggests that even by the second decade of the 14th century, some Mongol-Turkic people still regarded a certain Chinggisid Khanate as equivalent to a “tribe” under the rule of a particular clan.

Given that in the annals of the same year, Baybars al-Manṣūrī mentioned that “They (Qaidu’s armies) plundered the place and captured a lot of women and young men. Many of these [captives] were brought to Egypt as slaves” [5, p. 262], he probably wrote this passage based on the Mongol envoys or slaves he encountered in Egypt, most of whom came from the Golden Horde. This also explains why some passages in the «*Zubdat al-Fikra*» exhibit a colloquial style. It appears that Baybars al-Manṣūrī’s initial information primarily came from oral reports of eyewitnesses, with the colloquial style retained [9, p. 50].

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<sup>7</sup> The name Ṭurdughā can be identified with “Dordoqa” in the *Jāmi‘ al-Tavārīkh and Do-er-duo-huai* (朵兒朵懷) in the *YS*. [30, p. 300, 479, 2908-9, 3133, 3209, 4657; 26, v.1, p. 54]

<sup>8</sup> “命歡赤等使於諸王怯別、月思別、不賽因三部。”

### 3. The Role of the Golden Horde in Shaping the Mamluk–Yuan Relationship

As a founder of the “Anti-Ilkhanid alliance” and an active mediator, the ruler of the Golden Horde facilitated direct diplomatic contacts between the Mamluk Sultan and the Chinggisid rulers in Central Asia. This was likely to have stemmed from the friendship between Qaidu and the Jöchid princes, which was established during Mengü-Temür's reign (r. 1267–1280) [26, v. 2, p. 307; 22, v. 2, p. 1151]. Meanwhile, the Mamluk Sultan sought to communicate with the independent Mongol rulers in Central Asia through the territory of the Golden Horde. However, the succession to the throne of the Golden Horde was unstable, and consequently it was difficult for them to implement a coherent foreign policy on Far Eastern affairs.

Through the medium of the Golden Horde, the diplomatic relationship between the Mamluk Sultanate and Qaidu reached its peak, during Sultan Qalāwūn's reign. Baybars al-Manṣūrī and other Mamluk chronicles mention at least three missions to Qaidu. In 680/1281–2, a mission was dispatched to Qaidu along with envoys heading to the encampment of Möngke-Temür, the Khan of the Golden Horde [5, p. 209].<sup>9</sup> After Möngke-Temür's death, Qalāwūn sent two more missions to his successor, Tuda-Mengü (r. 1280–1287), in 682/1283–4 and 683/1284–5, respectively. These missions brought gifts from the Sultan and sought to persuade Qaidu to support the Sultan's allies and oppose his enemies [5, p. 239; 38, p. 55; 13, v. 3, p. 1]. According to Biran, formal diplomatic relations between the Mamluks and Qaidu seemed to cool down after 1284 [6, p. 376]. Nonetheless, the Mamluk chronicles indicate that the Sultan's court maintained its interest in Mongol Central Asia. For instance, Baybars al-Manṣūrī recorded the conflict of 1290 between Qaidu and the Yuan army in detail. Similarly, ‘Abd al-Zāhir's chronicle, presented to Sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl, mentions Qaidu's western incursion towards Ilkhanid Khurasan in 690/1291–2 [39, p.43].

In the decade following Qaidu's death, Mamluk historians continued to focus on the affairs of Mongol Central Asia. In the annual accounts for the years 701/1301–2 and 709/1309–10, they reported that Qaidu's descendants were involved in the civil war among the left wing of the Jöchi *Ulus* (i.e., Orda's *Ulus*). With the decline and disintegration of the Ögedeid princes' regime, the Mamluk Sultans shifted their interest to Orda's *Ulus*. Notably, in the early 14th century, Mamluk chronicles began to refer to Orda's descendants, rather than Qaidu's sons, as the “Malik of Ghazna and Bāmiyān.” [15, v. 3, p. 751, 922]

The timing of the Mamluk missions appears to be significant, coinciding with crucial events in Central Asia involving the Golden Horde, Qaidu, and the Yuan dynasty. The first Mamluk mission to Qaidu, documented as sent in 680/1281–2, was possibly related to the changing relationship between the Golden Horde and the Yuan emperor. Since just three years earlier, “following the pacification of the Jiangnan regions (i.e. the Southern Song Dynasty), a grand imperial assembly convened with all imperial clans, vassal princes, marquises, and regional lords in at-

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<sup>9</sup> Möngke-Temür died in 1280, however, Baybars al-Manṣūrī incorrectly chronicled the date of his death in 681/1282–3 [5, p. 229]. Probably when the Mamluk mission set out from the Sultan's court, they did not know about Möngke-Temür's death and the new Khan's enthronement.

tendance. Gifts and honors were bestowed upon them in accordance with their ranks and contributions.”[19, p. 681]<sup>10</sup> It is evident that after overcoming the final resistance of the Southern Song, Qubilai sought to improve relations with his cousins. As a goodwill gesture, Qubilai ordered the establishment of thirty postal stations from the Caucasian Mountains (*Taiheling*, 大和嶺) to Besh-Baliq, passing through the territories of the Golden Horde and Qaidu's *Ulus*. The mission of 682/1283–4 coincided with the end of Shiregi's rebellion. This year, Nomuqan was released from the Golden Horde, and through Tuda-Mengü's mediation, Hantun was also sent back by Qaidu [26, v.2, p. 438; 23, pp. 57–58].

Another factor worth noting is that all these envoys to Qaidu were sent together with emissaries to the Golden Horde. These envoys showed the latter's antagonism toward the Yuan court and would promote such an attitude upon their return to Egypt. Influenced by the envoys' reports, Mamluk historians, following their Jöchid allies, often glorified the victories of the rebellious Mongol princes and reveled in the failures of the Yuan army in their writings.

Besides political purposes, commercial interests played a significant role in the Mamluk–Qaidu relationship. In Mongol diplomatic practice, it was common for missions to bring a number of merchants, who typically possessed the linguistic skills and necessary knowledge of the targeted countries [24, p. 208]. The distinction between envoys and merchants was sometimes blurred. Mamluk Sultans, likewise, appointed merchants as their ambassadors to the Golden Horde; or in most cases, merchants sponsored by and serving the Mamluk Sultanate were dispatched to the Golden Horde and Central Asia alongside diplomatic envoys. Their primary purpose was to purchase slaves as *mamluks*. As al-Şafadī recorded, in 1315, a mission from “Qaidu” arrived in Egypt with a large number of slaves, both male and female. In addition to the diplomatic mission, the ongoing wars among the Central Asian Mongol khanates and their conflicts with the Yuan and the Ilkhanate provided a supply of captives, who were sold to Egypt by slave traders.

Moreover, Mamluk merchants were even able to travel further into the Yuan Empire, passing through the territories of the Golden Horde and Qaidu's *Ulus*. As Ibn Shaddād recorded:

The merchants who traveled back and forth (*al-mutaraddidīna*) to the lands of Qipchaq held his (i.e., Sultan Baybars) signature, which granted them exemption from taxes on exports and imports wherever they settled in the territories of Berke and Möngke-Temür or in the lands of Fārs and Kirmān.

Sultan Malik al-Zāhir (i.e., Sultan Baybars) provided a merchant with a sum of money to purchase *mamlūks* and female slaves from the Turkic regions. Yet, driven by his greed for the money, he took it with him to Qaraqorum and settled there, believing that the Sultan would neither be able to reach nor apprehend him. Nevertheless, Sultan al-Malik al-Zāhir continued to inquire about him through other merchants until he eventually discovered his whereabouts. He then sent word to the household of Möngke-Temür regarding the matter, who, in response, dispatched someone to Qaraqorum to seize the merchant and send him back to the Sultan under custody [14, pp. 307–308].

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<sup>10</sup> See “Epitaph of the Grand Master for Thorough Counsel, Commissioner of Pacification and Commander-in-Chief of the Guangdong Circuit” (中奉大夫廣東道宣慰使都元帥墓誌銘): “至元十五年江南既平，大朝會宗藩侯甸，咸在頒物有差。”

Merchants usually set off from Constantinople, traveling by sea to Sūdaq, a crucial trading hub on the Crimean Peninsula. Then they journeyed to Saray, the capital of the Jochids on the Volga River. Continuing their travel eastward, they chose one route leading to Yuan China via Urgenj, Otrar, and Almaliq, and another route heading toward Qaraqorum and eventually North China. According to al-'Umarī, the journey began from Afikūn, crossing Sibr-Ibir and Julmān, locations within Orda *Ulus*, before proceeding east [35, p. 123]. Typically, travelers spent around nine months on their journey from the Black Sea to China. For envoys traveling via the official staging posts (Mongolian *jam* and in Persian *yām*), the trip would take approximately 200 days [30, p. 2906].

It is challenging to estimate the extent of Mamluk merchants' involvement in espionage activities against the Yuan government. However, in 1281, the Central Secretariat of the Yuan issued a prohibition "banning Muslims from the northwestern border regions from crossing the border for trade." [30, p. 231]<sup>11</sup> This prohibition suggests that the Yuan government was already aware of potential espionage activities by these merchants.

In an unexpected episode in Mamluk–Yuan relations during the 14th century, products and animals from the Mamluk Sultanate were presented as diplomatic gifts to the Yuan emperor, earning high acclaim in Yuan China. In 1353, Janibek Khan (r. 1342–1357) sent to the Yuan emperor, Toghan-Temūr (r. 1333–1370) diplomatic gifts including Arabian horses (*tupjāq*) and a knife produced in Miṣr, i.e., Egypt (*mi-xi-er dao*, 米西兒刀) [30, p. 911]. The "knife of Miṣr," in particular, became a highly coveted imported commodity among Chinese literati circles. A Yuan poet, Zhang Xian (張憲), even composed an ode to one of these knives, which had been obtained by his friend Xuan Yuanjie (宣元傑):

Once upon a time, the Tang people cherished the precious knife from *Dashi* (Tajik), Yet nowadays, this is the most costly collection, the sharp sword produced in *Mixi* (Miṣr).

Over the passing decades, rolling in the dust, pine patterns now emerge on the hungering sword, It recalls that that night, the moon was eclipsed, while the barbarian King was forging his flowing blade [40, p. 176].<sup>12</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

Despite the inaccuracies in his work, Baybars al-Manṣūrī provides a valuable case study for examining the mutual relations among the Mamluk Sultanate, Mongol Central Asia, and the Yuan dynasty. It gives evidence to the Mamluk Sultans' keen interest in the internal affairs of all four independent Chinggisid Khanates. Baybars al-Manṣūrī's works also prompt a reappraisal of the importance of the Mamluk sources. For a deeper understanding of Mongol history, the intelligence channels maintained by Mamluk historians offer distinctive and unique insights. The comparison between the Chinese sources compiled during the Yuan dynasty and the Mongol affairs recorded in the Mamluk sources allows us to conclude that the latter not only provides supplementary information, but also offers a new per-

<sup>11</sup> “禁西北邊回回諸人越境為商。”

<sup>12</sup> See, “Ode to the western barbarian Knife belongs to Xuan Yuanjie of Beiting” [北庭宣元傑西番刀歌]: “唐人寶刀誇大食，於今利器稱米息。十年土澗松紋生，戎王造時當月蝕。”

spective on the Mongol Empire as a whole. Political considerations aside, Mamluk historians did not consider discussing the military failures of the Yuan or the question of the Tuleid's legitimacy as taboo.

Furthermore, as Marie Favereau has noted regarding the Mamluk – Golden Horde alliance, the relationships and interactions between the Mamluks and Mongol Central Asia – and, arguably, the Yuan dynasty as well – remain insufficiently explored [10, p.8]. However, this is by no means a marginal topic. Ibn Shaddād's records (as discussed earlier) suggest that active connections with Central Asia and the Yuan, via the land route, began during Sultan Baybars' era. Therefore, leveraging the abundant Chinese sources to introduce the Yuan dynasty's perspective into the Golden Horde studies, and integrating a comprehensive view that spans from the Black Sea to China, is a promising area for further exploration.

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## ПОЗИЦИЯ ЗОЛОТОЙ ОРДЫ ПО ОТНОШЕНИЮ К ДИНАСТИИ ЮАНЬ В СВЕТЕ СООБЩЕНИЙ БЕЙБАРСА АЛ-МАНСУРИ

Ихао Цю

Университет Фудань

Шанхай, Китай

*kafka\_yihaoqiu@yahoo.com*

**Резюме.** В данной статье анализируется хроника Бейбарса ал-Мансури «Зубдат ал-Фикра» с точки зрения отношений Золотой Орды с династией Юань, с привлечением китайских и персидских источников и на основе конкретных примеров изучается позиция джучидского хана по отношению к Юань, а также роли Золотой Орды в содействии мамлюкско-юаньским дипломатическим и торговым отношениям.

Материалы исследования. Используются современные издания арабских источников, включая хронику Бейбарса ал-Мансури, биографию султана Бейбарса, написанную Ибн аш-Шаддадом, и энциклопедию ал-‘Умари. Кроме того, рассматриваются официальные династийные истории, составленные в период Юань и Ильханата, включая «Джами ат-таварих» Рашид ад-Дина, «Тарихи Вассаф» и локальную историю Анатолии Ибн Биби.

Результаты и новизна исследования. На основе тщательно изученных примеров автор стремится подчеркнуть уникальные и детальные сведения хроники – проверяемые, но отсутствующие в дошедших до нас китайских и персидских источниках. Таким образом, исследование демонстрирует, что сообщения Бейбарса ал-Мансури предла-

гают новые представления о внутренней жизни и дипломатической политике Золотой Орды, проливая свет на её позицию по отношению к династии Юань.

**Ключевые слова:** Бейбарс ал-Мансури, Золотая Орда, династия Юань, Мамлюкский султанат, Хубилай, Джамии ат-таварих, Китай

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### ИНФОРМАЦИЯ ОБ АВТОРЕ

**Ихао Цю** – доцент кафедры истории, Университет Фудань (220, ул. Ханьдань, район Яньпу, Шанхай, Китай); ORCID: 0009-0007-2604-9004. E-mail: [kafka\\_qiuyihao@yahoo.com](mailto:kafka_qiuyihao@yahoo.com)

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Yihao Qiu** – Associate Professor at the Department of History, Fudan University (Handan Road 220, Yanpu District, Shanghai, China); ORCID: 0009-0007-2604-9004. E-mail: [kafka\\_qiuyihao@yahoo.com](mailto:kafka_qiuyihao@yahoo.com)

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