GUMILYOV JOURNAL OF HISTORY
ISSN: 3080-129X. eISSN: 3080-6860
DOMESTIC HISTORY – ОТАН ТАРИХЫ – ОТЕЧЕСТВЕННАЯ ИСТОРИЯ

Research Article
IRSTI 03.20.00

https://doi.org/10.32523/3080-129X-2025-152-3-166-185

Reconstructing the Biography of Noyon Ket-Buga of the Naiman Tribe

A. Porsin
Independent Researcher, Magnitogorsk, Russia
porsinart@gmail.com

Abstract. This article examines the identity of Noyon Ket-Buga of the Naiman tribe and his affiliation with a specific Chinggisid ulus. The narrative concerning the death of Chinggis Khan's son Jochi, and the account of how Ket-Buga informed him of this event – preserved in Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Nogai folklore – emerged during the Golden Horde period. The most complete and earliest version of this story is the Nogai one. It displays direct parallels with the version found in Mirza Ulugh Beg's Ulus-i Arba-yi Chingizi, which suggests that the author had access to a Golden Horde historical source. While this written source did not name the individual or his tribal affiliation, the consistent mention of Ket-Buga in all three folkloric versions, and his identification as a Naiman in the version most closely aligned with Ulugh Beg's account (the Nogai version), supports the conclusion that there once existed a variant of the narrative in the Golden Horde wherein a Naiman named Ket-Buga informed Chinggis Khan of his eldest son's death. Genealogies of the Naiman indeed mention a figure named Ket-Buga, identified as either the son or grandson of the legendary tribal founder, Naiman. Based on generational estimates in various genealogies, this individual likely lived during the Golden Horde period. The only Ket-Buga of the Naiman tribe documented in written sources is the famous general who died in battle against the Mamluks of Sultan Qutuz at Ain Jalut in 1260. A central problem in identifying this military commander with the Ket-Buga of folklore and Naiman genealogies is that, according to Persian historians, this commander served under Hülegü. Given the deep hostility between Hülegü (a son of Tolui) and the Jochids – which led to war in the early 1260s – it is difficult to reconcile Ket-Buga's association with Jochi, implied in the folklore, with his alleged loyalty to Hülegü. However, analysis of written sources reveals that the tradition of Ket-Buga as Hülegü's loyal general was shaped by Ilkhanid historiography. These historians aimed to obscure the fact that Hülegü's territories were initially intended to be a collective Chinggisid domain, with the Jochids enjoying a dominant role. Only through an alliance with Khubilai and the physical elimination of Jochid princes, their armies, and vassals during the winter of 1261–1262 did Hülegü secure full control over Iran, Iraq, and Anatolia, which thereafter became hereditary Ilkhanid territory. On the other hand, a report from the History of Herat, along with a number of indirect references, suggest that Ket-Buga was a noyon subordinate to the Jochids. Further supporting this interpretation is the fact that Noyon Baidar, who served under Ket-Buga's command, was killed during the anti-Jochid purges of the winter of 1261–1262.

Keywords: Ket-Buga; Naiman; Ain Jalut; Jochi; Jochids; Hülegü; Iran; folklore; ulus; Mirza Ulugh Beg

© Porsin A., 2025

For citation: Porsin A. Reconstructing the Biography of Noyon Ket-Buga of the Naiman Tribe. *Gumilyov Journal of History.* 2025. T.152, no.3, pp.166-185. https://doi.org/10.32523/3080-129X-2025-152-3-166-185

Funding: The article has been prepared within the framework of the grant financing of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kazakhstan IRN AP23490261 “Historical biography of Nogai and his role in the history of Jochid statehood”

Реконструкция биографии нойона Кет-Буги из племени найман

А. Порсин
Независимый исследователь, Магнитогорск, Россия

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается вопрос о личности нойона Кет-Буги из племени найман и его подчиненности конкретному чингизидскому улусу. Сюжет о смерти сына Чингиз-хана Джучи и о том, как ему об этом сообщил Кет-Буга, сохранившийся в казахском, киргизском и ногайском фольклоре, сформировался в эпоху Золотой Орды. Наиболее полной и ранней является его ногайская версия. Она имеет прямые совпадения с текстом этого сюжета, отразившегося в «Улус-и арба-йи Чингизи» Мирзы Улугбека. Они объясняются тем, что в распоряжении автора находился какой-то золотоордынский исторический текст. В нём не были названы имя и племенная принадлежность нойона, сообщившего Чингиз-хану о смерти Джучи. Но упоминание Кет-Буги во всех трех вариантах этого фольклорного сюжета и то, что он назван найманом в самом близком к сообщению Мирзы Улугбека - ногайском, позволяет заключить, что в Золотой Орде существовал вариант этого текста, в котором Чингиз-хану о смерти его старшего сына сообщал Кет-Буга из племени найман. В генеалогиях найманов действительно фигурирует некий Кет-Буга, являвшийся либо сыном, либо внуком легендарного основателя коллектива - Наймана. Судя по количеству поколений, приведённых в разных генеалогиях, этот человек должен был жить в эпоху Золотой Орды. Единственным зафиксированным письменными источниками Кет-Бугой из племени найман был знаменитый полководец, погибший в битве с египетскими мамлюками султана Кутуза при Айн-Джалуте в 1260 году. Ключевой проблемой его соотнесения с Кет-Бугой фольклорного сюжета и найманских генеалогий всегда являлось то, что согласно иранским историкам, этот полководец подчинялся Хулагу. Учитывая крайнюю враждебность между этим сыном Толуя и Джучидами, которая в начале 60-х годов привела к войне, сложно допустить, что Кет-Буга, входивший в окружение Джучи, судя по содержанию фольклорного сюжета, и полководец, служивший Хулагу – это одно и тоже лицо. Но анализ письменных источников показывает, что традиция, согласно которой Кет-Буга был верным полководцем Хулагу, является результатом творчества историков Ильханата. Их основной задачей было сокрытие факта того, что изначально территории улуса Хулагу должны были стать коллективным чингизидским владением при сильном доминировании там Джучидов. Лишь благодаря союзу с Хубилаем и физическому уничтожению джучидских царевичей, их войск и вассалов зимой 1261-1262 года Хулагу получил полную власть над территориями Ирана, Ирака и Малой Азии, которая затем стала наследственной. С другой стороны, сообщение «Истории Герата» и ряд косвенных свидетельств говорят о том, что Кет-Буга был нойоном, подчинённым Джучидам. На это же указывает и факт того, что находившийся под его командованием нойон Байдар погиб в ходе антиджучидских репрессий зимы 1261-1262 года.

Ключевые слова: Кет-Буга; найман; Айн-Джалут; Джучи; Джучиды; Хулагу; Иран; фольклор; улус; Мирза Улугбек

Для цитирования: Порсин А. Реконструкция биографии нойона Кет-Буги из племени найман. *Gumilyov Journal of History.* 2025. Т.152, no.3, с.166-185. https://doi.org/10.32523/3080-129X-2025-152-3-166-185

Финансирование. Статья подготовлена в рамках грантового финансирования Министерства науки и высшего образования Республики Казахстан ИРН AP23490261 «Историческая биография Ногая и его роль в истории государственности Джучидов»

Найман руынан шыққан нойон Кет-Бұғаның өмірбаянын қалпына келтіру

А. Порсин

Тәуелсіз зерттеуші, Магнитогорск, Ресей

Аңдатпа. Мақалада найман руынан шыққан нойон Кет-Бұғаның жеке тұлғасы мен оның нақты бір Шыңғыс әулетіне бағыныштылығы мәселесі қарастырылады. Шыңғыс ханның үлкен ұлы Жошының қайтыс болуы және бұл туралы оған Кет-Бұғаның хабарлауы жөніндегі сюжет қазақ, қырғыз және ноғай фольклорында сақталған және Алтын Орда дәуірінде қалыптасқан. Бұл аңыздың ең ертедегі әрі толық нұсқасы – ноғайлық нұсқа болып табылады. Ол Мирза Ұлықбектің «Ұлус-и арба-йи Чингизи» шығармасындағы мәтінмен тікелей ұқсастықтарды көрсетеді. Бұл ұқсастықтар автордың қолында Алтын Орда кезеңіне тиесілі тарихи дереккөз болғанын білдіреді. Аталмыш деректе нойонның аты мен руы аталмаған. Алайда үш фольклорлық нұсқаның барлығында да Кет-Бұға есімі кездесетіні және ноғайлық – яғни Ұлықбек мәтініне ең жақын нұсқада оның найман екені атап өтілуі Алтын Ордада бұл оқиғаның бір нұсқасында Жошының өлімін Шыңғыс ханға найман руынан шыққан Кет-Бұғаның жеткізгенін болжауға мүмкіндік береді. Найман руының шежірелерінде Кет-Бұға есімді тұлға шынымен де кездеседі, ол шежіреде не Найманның ұлы, не немересі ретінде көрсетіледі. Әр түрлі шежірелердегі буын санын ескере отырып, бұл тұлға Алтын Орда дәуірінде өмір сүрген болуы керек. Жазба деректерде найман руынан шыққан Кет-Бұға ретінде жалғыз ғана тарихи тұлға белгілі – ол 1260 жылы Айн-Джалут шайқасында мәмлүктерден қаза тапқан әйгілі қолбасшы. Бұл қолбасшыны фольклорлық Кет-Бұғамен және найман шежірелеріндегі тұлғамен сәйкестендіру мәселесіндегі басты қиындық — ирандық тарихшылардың мәліметтері бойынша, ол Хулагуға бағынышты болған. Толұйдың бұл ұлы мен Жошы ұрпақтарының арасындағы өшпенділікті ескере отырып (олардың арасы 1260-жылдардың басында соғысқа дейін барған), фольклорда Жошының серігі ретінде көрінетін Кет-Бұға мен Хулагуға қызмет еткен қолбасшыны бір тұлға деп қарастыру қиын. Алайда жазба деректерді талдау Кет-Бұғаның Хулагудың сенімді қолбасшысы болғаны жөніндегі дәстүр – Ілханат тарихшыларының идеологиялық құралы екенін көрсетеді. Олардың басты мақсаты – Хулагу ұлусының бастапқыда бүкіл Шыңғыс әулетіне ортақ аймақ болып, онда Жошы ұрпақтары үстемдік етуге тиіс болғаны туралы шындықты жасыру болды. Хулагу тек Хубилаймен одақтасып, 1261–1262 ж. қыста Жошы ұрпақтарының ханзадаларын, олардың әскерлері мен вассалдарын жойғаннан кейін ғана Иран, Ирак және Кіші Азиядағы билікті

мұрагерлікке айналдыра алды. Екінші жағынан, «Херат тарихы» мен басқа да жанама деректер Кет-Бұғаның Жошы ұрпақтарына бағынышты нойон болғанын көрсетеді. Бұл тұжырымды оның қоластында болған нойон Байдардың 1261–1262 ж. қыстағы антижошылық репрессиялар кезінде қаза тапқаны да дәлелдей түседі.
Түйін сөздер: Кет-Бұға; найман; Айн-Джалут; Жошы; Жошылар; Хулагу; Иран; фольклор; ұлыс; Мирза Ұлықбек

Introduction

In Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Nogai folklore, a narrative has been preserved concerning the death of Jochi, the son of Chinggis Khan, and how his close associates were compelled to inform the ruler of this sorrowful news. According to the tale, Jochi died while hunting, killed by a kulan. Chinggis Khan's entourage did not know how to relay this tragic message to him. Eventually, Ket-Buga from the Naiman tribe took upon himself the task of informing the khan. He did so in the form of a poetic message, playing the dombra.

The question of the identity of this Ket-Buga from the Naiman tribe remains a matter of scholarly debate. In the genealogies of the Naimans, a certain Ket-Buga is indeed mentioned—he is described as either the son or the grandson of the legendary founder of the tribe, Naiman (Marghulan 1930: 330–331; Dzhumagaliyev 2024: 393). Judging by the number of generations listed in various genealogies, this individual would have lived during the era of the Golden Horde.

The only Ket-Buga from the Naiman tribe recorded in written historical sources lived in the 13th century. This refers to the renowned military commander who initiated the campaign against the Ismailis, participated in the capture of Baghdad in 1258, and perished in battle against the Egyptian Mamluks of Sultan Qutuz at Ain Jalut in 1260. There are two opposing viewpoints regarding his identification with the Ket-Buga from the folklore narrative about Jochi's death and from the genealogies of the Naiman tribe. Some scholars accept that they refer to the same individual (Jochi Khan 2020: 225–226). Others approach this identification with skepticism, believing them to be separate figures (Sabitov, Karatayev 2024: 66). It should be noted that there are sound reasons for such doubts. In the texts of Juwayni, Rashid al-Din, and Hamdallah Mustawfi Qazvini, Ket-Buga, who fell at Ain Jalut, is clearly identified as a noyon subordinate to Hulagu, who dispatched him on the campaign to Syria. In the late 1250s to early 1260s, relations between the Jochids and the Iranian Toluids were characterized by extreme hostility, which, less than two years after Ket-Buga's death, culminated in a fierce war in the Caucasus between the two uluses. In light of this, it is indeed difficult to assume that Ket-Buga, who, judging by the content of the folkloric tale, belonged to Jochi's circle, and the commander who served Hulagu, were one and the same person.

Methods and Materials

Thus, the story of Jochi's death during a kulan hunt is widely distributed in the folklore of peoples whose ancestors were part of the Ulus of Jochi. It is recorded among the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Nogais (Jochi Khan 2020: 249–253, 260–267, 268–271). The very fact of such a broad geographic spread of a single narrative suggests that it originated during the era of the

Golden Horde. This is also supported by the mention of the episode in the work of Utemish-Haji: "When Yudji Khan went to the vilayat of Desht-i Kipchak, he reached the well-known Ulugh-Tagh. One day, when he went hunting in the mountains, he encountered a herd of maral-kiyiks. He began to shoot arrows and pursue them but fell from his horse, broke his neck, and died" (Utemish-Haji 2017: 28).

Apparently, the most complete and earliest folkloric version of this narrative was recorded among the Nogais. B. Kebekova noted its direct connection with the text Ulus-i arba-yi Chingizi. The author rightly concluded that the often verbatim similarity between the folkloric narrative—especially its Nogai version – and the historical text gives reason to assume that the work had long existed in written form before it transitioned into oral tradition (Kebekova 1982: 159–164).

The resemblance is indeed striking. For example, in Ulus-i arba-yi Chingizi, the dialogue between Chinggis Khan and the noyon is rendered as follows:

The meaning of Jirchi's words was:

The surface of the sea is troubled – who will clear it, oh my padishah?

If the white poplar has fallen by the root – who will raise it, oh my padishah?

The great Sahib Qiran Chinggis Khan thus replied to Jirchi:

If the sea's surface is troubled,

My son Jochi is there – he will clear it!

If the white poplar has fallen by the root,

My son Jochi is there – he will raise it!

When Jirchi repeatedly recited his verse, tears flowed from his eyes. Seeing this, the great Sahib Qiran Chinggis Khan said:

Tears are falling from your eyes – can your heart be overfilled?

Your words burn the heart – has Jochi died?

At that time, there was an edict from the Sahib Qiran that whoever announced the death of Jochi Khan would be punished by the Sahib Qiran. Therefore, Jirchi replied to the great Sahib Qiran Chinggis Khan:

I have neither the strength nor the power to say it,

You yourself have spoken, oh my padishah!

Let your own command be upon you,

You have understood correctly, oh my padishah!

(Tulibayeva 2011: 85-86)

In the Nogai folkloric version recorded in 1968:

Ket-Buga entered the horde, never letting go of his dombra. Bowing to the khan and kneeling, he ran his fingers across the strings of the dombra, drawing sorrowful, mournful sounds. Then, looking at the khan with a questioning gaze, he said:

– The sea has grown murky from its source – who will clear it, oh khan?

The tree has fallen from its roots – who will raise it, oh khan?

Understanding the hint, the mighty khan replied:

– If the sea has grown murky from its source – my son Jochi will clear it!

If the tree has fallen from its roots – my son Jochi will raise it!

Ket-Buga began to play a mournful kui on the dombra. The conqueror of the world became absorbed in the sorrowful melody and, shedding tears, said:

– You have drawn tears from my eyes; my heart is filled with sorrow.

Your song torments the soul... Has Jochi died?..
Ket-Buga, without interrupting the kui, continued:
– It was not in my power to remain silent – you understood everything yourself, oh khan!
I did not utter a word, but you yourself reached the truth, oh khan!
(Jochi Khan 2020: 268–271)

Such a close resemblance between the folkloric version recorded in the second half of the 20th century and the medieval written source compels a closer examination of the content and origins of Ulus-i arba-yi Chingizi. Its author was Mirza Ulugh Beg (1394–1449), grandson of Amir Timur. In 1409, by order of his father Shahrukh, he became governor of Mawarannahr and Turkestan, which he ruled until his tragic death. Mirza Ulugh Beg's wife was Shakar-Bek, the daughter of Darwish, the thirty-fourth khan of the Golden Horde (Tulibayeva 2011: 79).

The accounts concerning Jochi found at the beginning of the fifth part of his historical work are entirely unique. They form a single information block composed of three narratives: (1) the circumstances of Jochi's birth; (2) the circumstances of Jochi's death; (3) Jochi's conquest of Desht-i Kipchak.

The story of Börte's abduction and Jochi's birth resembles the version found in Rashid al-Din's writings but also includes a number of significant differences (Porsin 2023: 180). The most important among them is the explicit indication of the duration of Börte's captivity—less than four months. Clearly, this clarification was necessary to prove the legitimacy of Jochi's lineage. This is confirmed by the author himself: "Because of this event, Jochi Khan was always reproached; Chagatai and Ögedei constantly slandered Jochi Khan to the great Sahib Qiran Chinggis Khan. Thus, this great lie found its way into the chronicles of Chagatai scholars. However, in the opinion of most just and truthful chroniclers…"

Mirza Ulugh Beg belonged to the Timurid dynasty, which had come to power in the Ulus of Chagatai. Therefore, the opposition between the "just and truthful chroniclers" and the "Chagatai scholars" is especially significant in this context.

Next follows the already mentioned narrative of Jochi's death, which occurred six months before the death of Chinggis Khan. It also casts the father–son relationship in a light favorable to the Jochids. First, the vast majority of current scholars believe that Chinggis Khan's eldest son died significantly earlier (Bartold 1900: 495–496; Qu Dafeng, Liu Jianyi 1998: 289–290; Uskenbay 2013: 66–67; Jackson 2017: 458; Porsin 2023: 355). This view is based on the account of Rashid al-Din, who states that by the autumn of 1225, Jochi was already deceased. Al-Qarshi also reports that Jochi died in 1225 (Rashid al-Din 1952b: 229; The History of Kazakhstan in Persian Sources 2005b: 119). Most importantly, Ulugh Beg's description of Chinggis Khan's reaction to the news of Jochi's death completely omits the well-known conflict between them during that period. Reports of Jochi's murder are found in the writings of Juzjani and al-Umari (Tabakat-i-Nasiri 1881: 1101; The History of Kazakhstan in Arabic Sources 2005a: 181). The true cause of Jochi's death remains unknown. However, even Rashid al-Din, while acknowledging that Chinggis Khan was deeply saddened by the news of his eldest son's death, notes that it effectively prevented an armed conflict between them (Rashid al-Din 1960: 78–79; Thackston 1998–1999: 259–360).

One of the unique messages of Mirza Ulugh Beg concerning Jochi is the account of the conquest of the Dasht-i Qipchaq by the eldest son of Chinggis Khan. According to the source, he "was given Khwarazm and the Dasht-i Qipchaq from the borders of Kayalyk to those places where the

[hooves] of the Tatar horses reached, including Aqsay Sakin, Jarrar, Bulgar, Alan, Bashgird, Urus, and Cherkes." Jochi subdued these peoples and began to rule there. However, after his death, the subjugated peoples rebelled. They had to be reconquered by Jochi's son Batu (Tulibayeva 2011: 79).

This account is fundamentally different from how the Toluid historiography describes Mongol military actions in the Dasht-i Qipchaq in 1222–1223. For example, The Secret History of the Mongols contains two versions of the conquest of the Dasht-i Qipchaq. According to the Yuan chao bi shi variant, the Qipchaqs and other western peoples were conquered by Sübe'etei, and Batu was later sent to assist him (De Rachewiltz 2004: 194, 201; Kozin, 1940: 188–189, 192). In the Altan Tobchi version, the western peoples were also conquered by Sübe'etei, and Jochi was sent there by Chinggis Khan as a darughachi, that is, a governor, with a strict prohibition against continuing conquests. At the same time, Rus' and the Circassians, according to the source already subjugated by 1224, were subordinated to separate noyans by Chinggis Khan's order (Lubsan Danzan 1973: 228, 229–234; Porsin 2023: 135–175).

According to Rashid al-Din, Jochi was ordered by his father to launch a campaign to the west but refused to comply, which led to a conflict between them (Rashid al-Din 1960: 78–79; Thackston, 1998–1999: 259–360). Here we will not go into the question of how the events actually unfolded. It is well known that for Mongol imperial historiography, the real or constructed fact of which of Chinggis Khan's four sons was chosen to conquer the western lands – and how he carried out this order – was of paramount importance (Jackson 2017: 57–69; Atwood 2017: 35–36; Porsin 2024: 234–235).

Obviously, both variants of The Secret History of the Mongols and Rashid al-Din's version undermined the legitimacy of the Jochid authority in the West. In contrast, Mirza Ulugh Beg presents a narrative favorable to Jochi's descendants. In this version, Chinggis Khan's order was given to and fulfilled by his eldest son. Only later did the western peoples rebel, and Batu, by the order of Ögedei, had to reclaim his father's domains.

Given Ulugh Beg's references to "just and truthful chroniclers," whose position was opposed to that of the Chagataid historical tradition, it can be concluded that he had access to some kind of Jochid historical work. It is quite possible that he gained access to it through his wife, who was a daughter of the khan of the Golden Horde. Unfortunately, Mirza Ulugh Beg fully incorporated into his narrative only three episodes from this work. Among them, only the most important and, from his point of view, unique one – the description of Chinggis Khan's reaction to the news of Jochi's death – remained intact. This narrative combines prose with extensive fragments of poetic text.

All three surviving episodes concern matters of utmost importance for the Jochids in the 13th century: the origin of Jochi, the circumstances of his death (more precisely, Chinggis Khan's attitude toward it), and the status of the western territories. Judging by their themes, this work resembled The Secret History of the Mongols (Porsin 2023: 191–194). It may have served as its Jochid counterpart. That texts similar to The Secret History existed not only among the Toluids is confirmed by the contents of The Golden Legend, a 17th-century Mongolian historical monument (Istoriia v trudakh uchenykh-lam 2005: 19–61). Its author was clearly familiar with the written tradition of The Secret History, as evidenced by textual similarities in certain episodes. At the same time, he used a different version of the text that shares some features with the one that has come down to us. In it, most of the unique stories focus on the affairs of the central ulus (Mongolia) and revolve around Chinggis Khan's brothers Belgütei and

Jochi-Qasar. This supports the hypothesis that multiple texts stylistically and thematically akin to The Secret History once existed. It is likely that each major branch of the ruling dynasty possessed such a text.

The existence of such a Jochid text clarifies the textual similarity between the folklore narrative and the account by Mirza Ulugh Beg. The latter does not mention the name or tribal affiliation of the person who informed Chinggis Khan of Jochi's death. He calls him "Ulugh Jirchi," meaning "Great Storyteller." However, first, the name "Ket-Buga" appears in all three variants of the folklore narrative – Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Nogai. Second, the fact that he was a Naiman is stated in the version closest to Ulugh Beg's account and based on the Jochid written tradition—the Nogai version. These two facts allow us to conclude that in the Golden Horde, there existed a version of this text in which Chinggis Khan was informed of his eldest son's death by Ket-Buga of the Naiman tribe.

Results

The earliest mention of Ket-Buga in written sources close in time to the events is found in the "Yuan Shi": "In the spring of the first month [the emperor] proceeded to the region of Shi-hui. He sent Qi-tu-pu-hua (Ket-Buga) to attack the fortress of Chi-er-tu-ch'ie (Girdkuh) in Molay" (Abramowski 1979: 20; Khrapachevskiy 2009: 187). This refers to the conquest of the Ismaili state in Iran.

At the 1251 kurultai, the khan of the Mongol Empire was elected as Möngke, the son of Tolui. He was brought to power by the Jochids and the Toluid factions. This was followed by large-scale repressions against their main rivals—the Ögedeids and Chagataids. A key issue at the kurultai, aside from electing Möngke, was the discussion of an invasion of Iran. For this reason, the participants remained in Mongolia until early 1252 (Kostyukov 2005: 282-289; Kostyukov 2009: 210-239). The campaign was planned as a joint enterprise; however, the interests and representation of the Jochids clearly predominated. Its main objective was the destruction of the Ismaili state. Yet, after coming to power, Möngke decided to alter the terms of the agreement and attempted to deprive the Jochids of leadership. Therefore, in 1252 two armies were sent to Iran instead of one. The first force was subordinated to the Jochids and set out at the beginning of 1252, led by Ket-Buga. Only in the autumn of 1252 did Möngke make the final decision to send Hulagu to Iran. His appointment as commander and leadership of the army met opposition from the Jochids, who reasonably feared this would weaken their influence in Iran (Jackson 2017: 57-69; Kostyukov 2005: 282-289; Kostyukov 2009: 210-239).

The subordination of Ket-Buga's corps to the Jochids is confirmed by the sources. It is known that from the Ulus of Jochi in the conquest of Iran and Iraq participated the Shibanids, Buvalids, and Orduids. Apparently, they arrived there while Batu was still alive, that is, before the second half of 1255. There are grounds to believe that the troops of Balakan and Tatar arrived first, followed by the corps of Kuli. Rashid al-Din indicates that the latter moved through Khwarezm, Dehistan, and Mazandaran, while Balakan and Tatar passed through Derbent (Rashid al-Din 1960: 80, 69; Thackston 1998-1999: 350, 361).

According to Juwayni, Balakan and Tatar "went ahead" of Hulagu. This report indicates that the Jochids arrived in Iran earlier than the Toluid army. These same two names are mentioned by Juwayni in describing Mongol actions at Alamut (De Rachewiltz 2004: 443). In 1255, before

Hulagu's army crossed the Amu Darya, a conflict arose between Shams ad-Din Muhammad Kart and the Jochid princes over tax payments from Herat. Only Balakan and Tatar were involved in this conflict as well (History of Herat 2024: 106-114; Jackson 2017: 67-68). Kuli, the first of the princes mentioned by Rashid al-Din, appears only in 1256 when Hulagu's army was stationed near Hamadan (Rashid al-Din 1960: 33).

According to al-'Umari, the initial goal of Hulagu's army was the Ismailis. However, Hulagu convinced Möngke of the necessity to conquer the Baghdad Caliphate. When Berke learned of this, he reminded Batu that the Caliph was their ally. Batu agreed and forbade Hulagu from crossing the Amu Darya. For this reason, Hulagu did not launch an offensive with his large army for two years and only moved west after Batu's death (History of Kazakhstan in Arabic Sources 2005: 182-183; Lech 1968: 102). It appears that it was the tumens of Balakan and Tatar that enabled Batu to hold back Hulagu's army's westward advance until his death at the end of 1255. According to Rashid al-Din, Ket-Buga of the Naiman tribe crossed the Amu Darya with his army in March 1253 and began military operations in Kuhistan (Rashid al-Din 1946: 26; Thackston 1998-1999: 481). Obviously, Batu's prohibition did not apply to him.

Ket-Buga's subordination to the Jochids during this period is directly confirmed by the "History of Herat." On this basis, P. Jackson and V.P. Kostyukov concluded that he was a Jochid noyan. According to the source, the conflict between the Jochids and the malik of Herat, Shams ad-Din Muhammad Kart, occurred before Hulagu's army crossed the Amu Darya. The camps of Balakan and Tatar were located in Badghis, where Batu's governor Jijgai also resided. After Shams ad-Din Muhammad Kart refused to pay tribute to the khan of the Ulus of Jochi, the Jochid noyan Dubday was sent from Badghis to Herat, accompanied by Batu's envoy. By order of Balakan, Ket-Buga was to assist the Jochid representatives in this conflict (History of Herat 2024: 33).

In 1256, following the deaths of Batu and Sartaq, the position of the Jochids changed drastically. According to Jamal al-Qarshi, "the rule passed to the Khakans" (History of Kazakhstan in Persian Sources 2005b: 120). The throne of the Ulus of Jochi was taken by the minor Ulachchi, whose regent was Batu's senior wife, Borakchin. From this time until the death of Möngke, the Ulus of Jochi remained under his control (Myskov 2003: 64-65; Kostyukov 2007: 184-185; Kostyukov 2008: 62; Sabitov 2015: 52; Porsin 2020: 264-267).

Apparently, relations between Hulagu and the Jochid units in the region were quite tense. At the time of Hulagu's arrival in Iran, alongside the forces of Balakan and Tatar, there was also the army of Tama, originally dispatched by Ögedei under the command of Chormagan. His successor in the early 1240s, the noyan Baiju, remained subordinate to the Jochids throughout his military career, starting from the Mongol-Khwarazmian war (Jackson 2017: 65-66; Kostyukov 2009: 216; Porsin 2020: 267-271; Porsin 2023: 302-303).

Almost immediately after Hulagu's army arrived, Baiju's corps moved from Transcaucasia to Rum. Baiju's forces were initially stationed in Transcaucasia. Sebastatsi notes that Hulagu "ordered all his troops, whose commander was Baju, to withdraw from their position in Mugan so that he could take this place himself, and they withdrew and marched toward the land of Rum, while the sultan fled to Alaiyan" (Galstyan 1962: 26-27). Baiju's departure to Rum dealt a serious blow to the Golden Horde's position in the region, if only because it severed their connection through the Caucasus with the main Jochid domains (Porsin 2020: 270-271).

Of particular interest are the accusations Hulagu made against Baiju in 1257, according to

Rashid al-Din: "Churmagun-noyan has died. What have you done in his place in the land of Iran? What army have you defeated, what enemies have you subdued, other than frightening the Mongol troops with the splendor and grandeur of the caliph?" Baiju was forced to defend himself on his knees: "I am not guilty. What was within my power, I have fulfilled: from Ray to the borders of Rum and Syria, I have settled all matters except the case of Baghdad, because it is impossible to lead an army to those regions due to the numerous population, abundance of troops, weapons, equipment, and difficult roads that would lie ahead…" (Rashid al-Din 1946: 32-33; Thackston 1998-1999: 486-487). Essentially, Baiju was accused of sabotaging his duties regarding the conquest of the Caliphate. It is likely that he was acting as an agent of Jochid policy, which ran counter to the intentions of the Toluid faction. The fact that the Jochids regarded the caliph as their ally is further confirmed by the above-mentioned report of al-'Umari and by Juzjani's accounts of Berke's regular diplomatic contacts with the caliph. The Jochid prince received honorary robes from the caliph several times even during Batu's lifetime (Tabakat-i Nasiri 1881: 1285).

Rashid al-Din hints at a conflict between Hulagu and the Jochid princes, which surfaced during the siege of Baghdad in early February 1258. Mongol detachments had already occupied the fortress walls, but "on the side of Bazaar Sultan stood Bulga and Tutar and had not yet climbed the walls," for which Hulagu reproached them and demanded an acceleration of the assault (Rashid al-Din 1946: 42; Thackston 1998-1999: 496).

However, the sources apparently do not report any tension between Hulagu and Ket-Buga during this period. Together with the Ilkhan, Ket-Buga actively participated in the defeat of the Ismailis in 1256 and the siege of Baghdad in 1258. His status seems to have been quite high since Hulagu ordered the caliph and his sons to be housed in Ket-Buga's camp after the city's capture (Rashid al-Din 1946: 29-32, 36-44; Thackston 1998-1999: 497).

Then, in 1259, Hulagu's army invaded Syria, with Ket-Buga leading the vanguard. In the summer of 1260, Hulagu learned of the death of his brother Möngke. He decided to return to his primary eastern domains, leaving Ket-Buga in charge of the military command in Syria. After this, the famous Battle of Ain Jalut took place. The Mongol army under Ket-Buga's command was defeated, and he himself was killed. Subsequently, the Mamluks under Qutuz expelled the Mongols from Syria. Ket-Buga's family was taken captive (Rashid al-Din 1946: 48-54; Thackston 1998-1999: 502-506).

Rashid al-Din provides a vivid account of Ket-Buga's threats to Qutuz even in the face of death. However, R. Amitai noted that this narrative was largely fabricated by Rashid al-Din or his informants. Its content directly contradicts Ket-Buga's biography found in the work of al-Yunini — an early Mamluk-period historian, a contemporary of the events, and a person who personally saw Ket-Buga during his stay in Syria. According to this source, the Mongol noyan died in battle. Ket-Buga's body was identified by his son, who was captured by the Mamluks (Amitai 2007: 219-230; Amitai 2021: 229).

For the purposes of this study, it is important that Rashid al-Din portrays Ket-Buga as a commander loyal to Hulagu, whose death the Ilkhan grieved deeply. Ket-Buga's subordination to Hulagu subsequently became the official version for historians of the Ilkhanate. This is confirmed by the presence of his name in the list of Hulagu's noyans, which also includes Baiju, in the Shu'ab-i Panjgāna, and by Wassaf's reports (Khamidova 2018: 175; Geschichte Wassaf's 1856: 88-91).

Nevertheless, Rashid al-Din's account contains several details corroborated by other sources.

First, there is the embassy of Hulagu to Qutuz, after whose arrival the Mamluks decided to strike Ket-Buga's forces. According to the source, Hulagu effectively declared war on Egypt as he was leaving Syria (Rashid al-Din 1946: 48; Thackston 1998-1999: 504). This step can be regarded at least as imprudent, considering that most of the Mongol army was departing eastward with him. Nevertheless, Egyptian sources confirm the arrival of Hulagu's embassy to Qutuz. Their message contained references to Mongol doctrines of world domination, demands for immediate submission, and insulting remarks directed at Qutuz. According to al-Nuwayri, the embassy was sent by Ket-Buga (Amitai 1995: 36). This contradiction is resolved by Kazvini's report, which states that Hulagu ordered Ket-Buga to send the embassy to Egypt (Zafar-Nāmah 1983: 162). It is likely that the mission was joint.

Secondly, the clear unpreparedness of Ket-Buga's corps for a full-scale Mamluk invasion draws attention. He commanded a tumen consisting of 12,000 men. Under his command were also a small Armenian contingent and some local Syrian troops (Amitai 2021: 227). It is difficult to say whether Baidar's detachment, stationed in Gaza and the first to face the Mamluk assault, was part of Ket-Buga's tumen. The course of the Battle of Ain Jalut indicates that Ket-Buga's tumen was highly combat-effective. Nonetheless, the forces available to him were clearly insufficient even to hold Syria, let alone launch an invasion of Egypt. Thus, by leaving Ket-Buga behind with most of his army, Hulagu placed him in a very precarious position, and the hostile embassy sent to the Mamluks only exacerbated it.

Rashid al-Din explains Hulagu's return by stating that he received news of Mangu's death. However, P. Jackson noted a clear chronological inconsistency. Mangu died on August 11, 1259 (Abramowski 1979: 33; Khrapachevskii 2009: 202). According to Rashid al-Din, Hulagu learned of his death in the spring of 1260, since by June 6 he had already arrived in Ahlat (Rashid al-Din 1946: 49; Thackston 1998-1999: 503). It is unlikely that this news would have reached Hulagu only eight or nine months later, considering that Kublai, who was in southern China, learned of Mangu's death on September 19 (Franke 1948: 324; Jackson 2017: 72).

P. Jackson concluded that initially Hulagu had no hereditary rights to the conquered territories of Iran and Iraq. First, the Jochids who participated in the invasion numerically outnumbered other relatives. The Ugedeids were not represented at all. Among the Chagataids, only the prince Nekuder with his tumen took part. Hulagu was accompanied by his brother Subedei, who died en route. In contrast, on the Jochid side, three princes participated — Balakan, Tatar, and Kuli. Second, even the extremely loyal Rashid al-Din reported that although Mangu secretly wished to transfer these territories to his brother's possession, he publicly ordered him to return to Mongolia after the campaign. Third, according to al-Umari, Hulagu was initially only Mangu's representative and only after the campaign did he rebel and declare independence. Fourth, according to Tarikh-i Ujaitu, in 1312 Khan Uzbek claimed these territories belonged to the Jochids by Mangu's yarlik (Jackson 2017: 67). R. Amitai agreed with this viewpoint. The researcher suggested that Hulagu might have gone to Azerbaijan out of fear of escalating tensions with Berke after Mangu's death (Amitai 1995: 29).

Discussions

Subsequent events fully confirm this perspective. Moreover, they clarify Hulagu's real attitude toward Ket-Buga and his entourage. Baydar, who brought Ket-Buga news of the Mamluk advance, unlike his commander, managed to escape and return to Hulagu. It is unclear whether

he participated in the failed Mongol attempt to suppress the Aleppo emirs' uprising at the end of 1260. Egyptian sources name Baydar as the leader of a Mongol detachment of 6,000 men defeated near Homs. On the other hand, Rashid al-Din states that this corps was commanded by Elkay-noyan, probably identical with the active participant in the conquest of the Ismailis and the Baghdad Caliphate, Koke-Elkey (Rashid al-Din 1946: 54; Thackston 1998-1999: 507; Amitai 1995: 50–52).

In any case, Baydar died somewhat later. His death is described in detail by Hamdallah Mustawfi Kazvini, who completed his historical work Zafar-nameh in 1334–1335. According to the source, some time after the defeat at Ayn Jalut, Baydar's son Buruldai turned to Hulagu. His message was a denunciation of his own father, whom Buruldai accused of hostility toward Ket-Buga and the Mongol defeat. He offered to execute his father himself and, having received permission, beheaded Baydar. The source then reports that Hulagu ordered a kurultai to be convened at Ala-Tag, inviting leaders from all territories under his control. Bayju was at that time in Rum. Upon receiving the invitation, he became very worried. Summoning his relatives, Bayju announced that Hulagu intended to accuse him at the kurultai. Bayju's alleged guilt, he said, was that when Hulagu "led his army to war from Turan to this country," the Jochid noyan summoned the local rulers and called them to war: "We should not call him khagan in Iran, and everyone should raise an army against him. We will not allow him to enter this land but will gird our loins to fight him." Although Bayju explained his actions as a test of his subjects' loyalty to the Ilkhan, it was clear this excuse was unconvincing. Bayju took poison to spare his relatives from repression. Judging by Kazvini's vague indication, his sacrifice did not particularly help them (Zafar-Nämah 1983: 162–173). Rashid al-Din confirms that Bayju's death was connected to accusations against him by Hulagu: "Bayju conquered Anatolia [Rum] and boasted and bragged that he, they say, conquered Anatolia! Hulagu-khan summoned him [to himself], accused him, and executed him" (Rashid al-Din 1952a: 195).

Importantly, the author chronologically links Baydar's execution and Bayju's death to the kurultai at Ala-Tag. It appears to be the winter kurultai of 1261–1262, at which the Jochid princes were killed and which effectively marked the beginning of the war between the Golden Horde and Hulagu's ulus. The most coherent account of the events comes from Caucasian sources. Kirakos Gandzaketsi reports that the war began due to Berke's and Hulagu's support for different claimants to the khan's throne. The Chagataid Alghu allied with Hulagu against Berke. Hulagu ordered the killing of "noble and famous rulers from the line of Batu and Berke: Gula, Balakhai, Tutkhar, Megan, son of Gula, Gatakhan, and many others along with their army." Only a few managed to escape and flee to Berke. Learning of what had happened, the ruler of the Golden Horde gathered an army to avenge the deaths of his relatives and subjects. Hulagu also assembled an army, dividing it into three parts. One, under his son Abagai, was sent to Khorasan to aid Alghu; another was left in the Darial Gorge (the Alan gates); and Hulagu himself led the army through Derbent, ravaging the Golden Horde's territory, reaching the Volga (Kirakos Gandzaketsi 1976: 236–237; Bedrosian 1986: 395; Brosset 1870: 193).

Another important source is the work of Grigor Aknerci. According to this source, seven "khan's sons" ravaged the conquered regions and recognized no authority above them. Hulagu sent a message to Mangu, stating that "the old cavalry" had been removed (the Bayju corps had been transferred to Rum) and that the territories to be conquered were already taken. At the same time, Hulagu noted the anarchy in governing the region. Mangu sent his yaghurchi, that

is judges, with orders to make Hulagu khan and "subject to yasak anyone who opposed him." When the yaghurchi arrived, they convened a kurultai and invited the "khan's sons." Before the assembly, the Georgian king David arrived with an army. When the Chinggisids attending the meeting learned that Hulagu was to be elevated to the throne, their opinions diverged. The Chagataid Tekuder and a certain Bora-khan agreed, but Balakan, Tutar, Mingan, and Gatagan strongly opposed. When it became clear they could not be convinced, Balakan, Tutar, and Gatagan were executed by strangulation with a bowstring on the yaghurchi's orders. Mingan, due to his youth, was spared and sent to exile on an island. Afterward, the yaghurchi ordered the Armenian and Georgian troops to attack the Jochid garrisons. Grand-scale repressions began. Only two leaders survived — Nuha-kuun and Aratamur. Having foreseen the attack, they took treasures and horses and fled through the Caucasus to the Jochid ulus. They convinced Berke to start a war against Hulagu and fought for ten years. After the internal opposition was crushed, the yaghurchi proclaimed Hulagu khan (Patkanov 1871: 30–33; Bedrosian 2003: 338–339).

The text contains one significant inaccuracy. The khan who issued the yarlik to Hulagu could not have been Mangu. The reference is undoubtedly to Kublai (Jackson 2017: 72; Kostyukov 2008: 64–65). Nonetheless, the text provides extremely valuable information about the events that took place.

First, the source places responsibility for the execution of the Jochid princes and destruction of their troops not on Hulagu but on the Great Khan, i.e., Kublai. It was his yaghurchi who ordered the executions of Balakan, Tutar, and Gatagan. They also commanded the Armenian, Georgian, and Mongol forces that exterminated the Jochid contingents.

Second, the source reports that Nuha-kuun and Aratamur fled through the Caucasus with twelve thousand horsemen. K. P. Patkanov suggested that Nuha-kuun was Prince Nogai, a future hero of the war with Iran. He linked Aratamur to Al-Timur of the Georgian Chronicle. The researcher noted that kuuns in this source corresponds to "khan's sons" in Grigor Aknerci, i.e., Chinggisids (Patkanov 1871: 91–92). V. P. Kostyukov agreed with the possible identification of Nogai and Nuha-kuun (Kostyukov 2008: 71).

According to F. V. Cleaves, the Turkic anthroponym "Ar-Tamur" (Ardamur-Ardamir) is etymologized as "Ar" — "man," and "damur-tamur" — "iron." The anthroponym "Nuha-kuun" he read as "Nogai Koun" (Noqai Koun): "Noqai" — "dog," and "Koun" — "son" (Cleaves 1949: 406, 225). Thus, Nuha-kuun is Prince Nogai. This is confirmed by the identity of the names and his role in the later conflict. According to the source, having received Berke's support, he waged war against the Ilkhanate for ten years. It is well known that until the early 1270s, Nogai led the Jochid troops in the Caucasus and participated in battles in 1262–1263 and 1265.

According to the anonymous 14th-century Georgian Chronograph, the troops subordinate to the Jochids, "stationed in Greece," learned of the execution of the Jochids and the seizure of their possessions. Their leader was Ala-Temur. They, "together with their households and belongings," decided to break through into the Jochid Ulus via the Caucasus. Hulagu's forces attempted to stop them but were defeated. After twelve clashes, Ala-Temur's corps reached the Kura River. There, the Armenians subordinate to Hulagu tried to halt them but were also defeated. Ala-Temur's corps crossed the Kura and retreated into the Jochid Ulus. Following this, Berke began preparations for war against Hulagu (Kartlis Tskhovreba 2008: 372-373).

Ala-Temur of the Chronograph and Aratamur of Grigor Aknerci are undoubtedly the same individual. The source does not classify him among the "children of the khans," i.e., the Chinggisids. Presumably, Ar-Temur belonged to the tribal aristocracy of the Jochid Ulus. The

Chronograph's "Greece" refers to the Sultanate of Rum. The onset of the war between the Jochid and Hulagu uluses is dated to the winter of 1261–1262 (Jackson 2017: 72–73; Kostyukov 2009: 69; Favero 2018: 50). Based on Caucasian sources, the events can be reconstructed with reasonable accuracy. In the winter of 1261–1262, representatives of Kublai arrived in Iran bearing a yarlik granting all conquered territories as hereditary possession to Hulagu. A kurultai was convened upon their arrival, at which this decision was proclaimed. The outraged Jochid princes and noyans were killed, and their troops were either annihilated or fled. The only surviving Jochid who managed to return to the Golden Horde was Nogai. He was in Rum together with Ar-Temur. Most likely, Nogai represented Jochid interests there, substituting for his father Tatar, who had gone to the kurultai. Subsequently, Berke was compelled to declare war on Hulagu (Porsin 2020: 325–326).

It is important to consider that for Ilkhanate historiography, the question of how and under what circumstances Hulagu and his descendants inherited jointly conquered territories was very sensitive. The official narrative of these events developed in at least two stages.

The Egyptian author al-Mufaddal relays a report from Ala ad-Din ibn Abdallah al-Baghdadi. According to his own account, he was captured by the Mongols during the conquest of Baghdad and served them for some time before escaping. The source reports that Berke sent envoys—Balagiya and Tatarshe-to Hulagu demanding the Jochids' rightful share of the loot acquired during the campaign. The embassy initially harbored hostile intentions, as it included magicians tasked with killing Hulagu. The magician Yaksha, serving Hulagu, was bribed by the envoys. However, the plot was uncovered thanks to the Chinese sorceress Kamsha, whom Hulagu had assigned to oversee the envoys. Thereafter, the envoys and Yaksha were executed, sparking the war (History of Kazakhstan in Arabic Sources 2005a: 147–148). Scholars agree that these individuals correspond to Balakan and Tatar (Jackson 2017: 70; Kostyukov 2008: 67; Sabitov 2015: 54).

This version, which the informant acquired while serving the Mongols, likely originated in the 1260s. Several features stand out. First, only Balakan and Tatar are mentioned, which is natural since, according to Aknerci, Kuli died of illness before these events (Patkanov 1871: 24–27; Bedrosian 2003: 12). Second, it recognizes the Jochids' claims to a share of the spoils as the cause of the conflict. Third, by this time, the narrative about accusations of the princes' use of magical practices against Hulagu emerges. Fourth, it indirectly acknowledges the involvement of people from China in the purge, aligning with Aknerci's description of the kurultai.

At the beginning of the 14th century, Rashid al-Din's work reflected the second stage of this official narrative. The author provides two variants of the story concerning the death of the Jochids. According to the first, Tatar killed Balakan using sorcery. Hulagu sent him to the Golden Horde. After trial, Berke sent Tatar back to Hulagu, granting him authority to decide the criminal's fate. Tatar was executed, and afterward, Kuli died. The second variant differs in that Balakan, who attempted to kill Hulagu, was executed, and Tatar and Kuli died subsequently. As for the fate of the Jochid contingents, Rashid al-Din vaguely reports that most fled—some to Khorasan, then to Ghazni and Bamiyan, others through the Caucasus to the Jochid Ulus (Rashid al-Din 1946: 54; Rashid al-Din 1960: 81–82; Thackston 1998–1999: 362).

Comparing this version with Caucasian sources and the account of Ala ad-Din ibn Abdallah al-Baghdadi reveals that it bears no relation to reality. It is a propagandistic narrative intended to legitimize Hulagu's wholly unlawful actions by framing them as conforming to the Yassa of

Chinggis Khan.

P. Jackson noted that Rashid al-Din's description of the early war between Kublai and Arig-Buga is highly confusing and biased. He depicts Kublai as the legitimate ruler and Arig-Buga as a rebel. However, cross-referencing independent sources indicates that Arig-Buga was the lawful heir of Möngke, a fact Rashid al-Din sought to conceal. Even his own narrative shows that Arig-Buga was supported by Orghina Khatun, then head of the Chagatai ulus, and Berke as leader of the Jochid ulus and senior member of the ruling dynasty. Rashid al-Din's account of the fate of the Jochid princes in Iran is also contradictory and imprecise, significantly less informative than Grigor Aknerci's description. The researcher concluded that the killings of Balakan and Tatar, along with the destruction of Jochid troops in Iran, occurred in 1261–1262. At the same time, Berke's subordinate Bayju was executed. These events corresponded with Hulagu's final alignment with Kublai. Meanwhile, Alghu struck at Berke's positions in Central Asia. Hulagu's and Alghu's actions fully corresponded to Kublai's interests, who sought to weaken Berke as Arig-Buga's main supporter (Rashid al-Din 1960: 159–163; Thackston 1998–1999: 427–430; Jackson 2017: 68–75).

According to Kirakos Gandzaketsi, the actions of Hulagu and Alghu were coordinated (Kirakos Gandzaketsi 1976: 236-237; Bedrosian 1986: 395; Brosset 1870: 193). It appears that their cooperation was facilitated by the diplomatic activity of Kublai Khan. Rashid al-Din's account of Alghu's rebellion against Ariq Böke is quite detailed; however, its chronology is rather confused. According to the source, upon arriving in Transoxiana, Alghu's representatives killed all of Berke's subjects, and Chagatai troops invaded Khwarezm. Nevertheless, the text does not clarify whether these events occurred before or after Alghu received the patent (yarligh) from Kublai (Rashid al-Din 1960: 96-98, 159-163; Thackston 1998-1999: 376-377, 427-430). A more precise dating can be established based on the biography of Yelü Chucai in the Yuan shi. According to this source, by mid-1262 Alghu was already in open warfare with Ariq Böke and, in the latter half of 1262, retreated to Transoxiana as a subject of Kublai (Bretschneider 2018: 37-38). Vassaf reports that during the first confrontation between Berke and Hulagu, the Khan's representatives conducted a census in Bukhara, after which 5,000 townspeople, subjects of the Ulus of Jochi, were executed (Geschichte Wassaf's 1856: 94). Although the source does not name the Khan, it is clear that during this period such actions could only have been carried out by Alghu on behalf of Kublai.

According to Rashid al-Din, Hulagu and Alghu received patents (yarlighs) to govern their uluses simultaneously from Kublai: "At that time the Khan sent the following message to Hulagu Khan and Alghu: 'In the lands of turmoil—from the banks of the Jayhun to the gates of Misr—you, Hulagu, shall command and vigilantly guard the Mongol army and territories, defending the glorious name of our ancestors. From the Altai Mountains to the Jayhun, Alghu shall govern and oversee the ulus and tribes'" (Rashid al-Din 1960: 159-163; Thackston 1998-1999: 427-430). The biography of Yelü Chucai, which confirms that by mid-1262 Alghu recognized Kublai as Khan, along with the arrival of Kublai's envoys in Iran bearing the patent for Hulagu, corroborates this account.

Notably, events in Iran under Hulagu's control and in Transoxiana under Alghu's authority unfolded similarly. In both regions, supporters of Berke were eliminated, followed by direct warfare against the Ulus of Jochi. It seems that by 1262 Kublai had successfully forged a highly effective military alliance. He guaranteed Alghu and Hulagu their governing powers over their

uluses by issuing patents, simultaneously directing them against Berke, the principal ally of Ariq Böke (Porsin 2020: 335).

It can be concluded that the execution of Baidar, as well as the execution or suicide of Baiju, occurred amid the anti-Jochid repressions in Hulagu's ulus. The very fact of Baidar's elimination during this period indicates that Hulagu regarded him as a Jochid noyan, which aligns with the fact that he was subordinate to Ket-Buqa.

It is unlikely that Hulagu, when sending a message to Qutuz and departing Syria with his army, deliberately provoked the Mamluks to attack the Jochid forces in this region. Such a move would have been too risky. Rather, he likely aimed to restrict the mobility of a combat-capable and potentially dangerous unit. According to the Caucasian sources, the 12,000-strong corps of Aratmur and Nogai stationed in Rum was highly effective. The Jochid forces in Syria and Rum posed a serious threat to Hulagu. Thus, the actual outcome of the Battle of Ain Jalut for the Ilkhan was the strengthening of his position in the critical conflict over the territories of Iran and Iraq. Had such an experienced Jochid commander as Ket-Buqa been alive at the outbreak of the war, and had his tumen not been destroyed by the Mamluks, the situation in the Caucasus might have evolved quite differently.

Sources preserve limited information about Ket-Buqa's personality. According to Kirakos Gandzaketsi, he was a Christian (Kirakos Gandzaketsi 1976: 156; Bedrosian 1986: 324; Brosset 1870: 234). This is corroborated by al-Yunini, who further notes that Ket-Buqa did not discriminate against Christians, adhering to the norms of Chinggis Khan's Yassa. The author, who personally saw Ket-Buqa in Baalbek in 1260, describes him as follows: "He had a rare beard under his chin, braided like a rope because of its length. Sometimes he tucked its end into a ring on his ear, sometimes it hung on his chest, reaching down to his navel... He was an old man who had lived during the times of Chinggis Khan." The latter detail indirectly supports the hypothesis that he was identical to the noyan who reported Jochi's death to Chinggis Khan in 1225. Al-Yunini characterizes Ket-Buqa as an outstanding administrator and commander who enjoyed unquestioned authority among the Mongols. To confirm his military capabilities, he provides an interesting description of the capture of a Syrian fortress. Usually, Ket-Buqa employed the tactic of hashar, driving captured prisoners to storm the next fortification. However, one fortress proved too resilient. Ket-Buqa resorted to trickery: he informed the defenders that he knew the fortress was short of water and that the siege would continue. The townspeople replied that he was mistaken. Ket-Buqa wished to verify this, and the inhabitants, hoping the Mongols would depart, consented. A group of warriors was sent into the city with spears hollowed out and filled with poison. The warriors ostensibly tested the wells' depths while poisoning them. Soon, the fortress fell. At the same time, al-Yunini notes that Ket-Buqa was faithful to his word, and if he had given a written guarantee of safety, the recipient of the patent truly had certain protections (Amitai 2007: 224-227). It is noteworthy that such flattering characteristics were given to Ket-Buqa by a Syrian historian who was generally hostile to the Mongols.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that throughout his political career, Noyan Ket-Buqa of the Naiman tribe was subordinate to Jochi and his descendants. His status within the Mongol Empire was already significant in the 1220s, considering he became the protagonist of the account regarding how

Chinggis Khan learned of his eldest son's death. Ket-Buqa retained his position during Batu's reign. He led the first Jochid army sent to conquer the Ismailis in 1252. With the arrival of the tumens of Balakan and Tatar in Iran, Ket-Buqa was subordinate to them. The deaths of Batu and Sartaq, alongside Hulagu's army's arrival in Iran, significantly altered the position of Jochid units in the region. Sources do not preserve evidence of any conflict between Ket-Buqa and Hulagu. Moreover, in the official Hulaguid historiography, the Naiman noyan is depicted as a commander subordinate to the Ilkhan. However, the fact that his 12,000-strong corps was left in Syria to confront a vastly superior Mamluk army suggests that Hulagu did not particularly care about his fate. The death of Ket-Buqa's subordinate noyan Baidar during the anti-Jochid repressions of 1261–1262 indicates that his circle was perceived by the Ilkhan as hostile and oriented toward the Golden Horde. Overall, the key consequence of Ket-Buqa's death and the defeat of his corps at the Battle of Ain Jalut was the further weakening of the military capabilities of the Jochids in the region.

Acknowledgments

We express our gratitude to the editors and reviewers for their support and valuable input on this article.

References

Abramowski W. Die chinesischen Annalen des Möngke: Übersetzung des 3. Kapitels des Yüan-shih. *Zentralasiatische Studien.* 1979. Vol.13, pp.8-71.

Amitai-Preiss R. *Mongols and Mamluks: the Mamluk-Īlkhānid War, 1260–1281.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1995. 272 p.

Amitai R. An Arabic Biographical Notice of Kitbughā, the Mongol General Defeated at `Ayn Jālūt. Jerusalem *Studies in Arabic and Islam*. 2007. Vol.33, pp.219-234.

Amitai R. «Back to ʿAyn Jālūt, Again». *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*. 2021. Vol.50, pp.225-254.

Atwood C. *Jochi and the Early Western Campaigns.* How Mongolia Matters: War, Law, and Society. Leiden. Brill. 2017. Pp.35-56.

Bartold V. *Turkestan in the era of the Mongol invasion.* Research. St. Petersburg: V. Kirshbaum Printing House. 1900. Part II. p.

Bedrosian R. *Grigor Aknerts'i's. History of the Nation of Archers.* Long Branch. New Jersey. 2003. 22 p.

Bedrosian R. *Kirakos Gandzakets'i's. History of the Armenians.* New York. 1986. 335 p.

Bretshneyder E. *Asia and Europe in the Medieval Era: Comparative Studies of Sources on the Geography and History of Central and Western Asia in the 13th–17th Centuries*. [Afterword by I.V. Kuchumov]. M.A. Usmanov Center for the Study of the Golden Horde and Tatar Khanates, Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan; Regional Branch of the Russian Geographical Society in the Republic of Bashkortostan. St.Petersburg: Svoe Publ. House, 2018. 280 p.

Brosset M. *Deux Historiens Armeniens Kiracos De Gantzac.* St.-Pétersbourg. 1870. 351 p.

De Rachewiltz I. *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century.* 2 vols. Leiden: Brill. 2004. 1479 p.

Dzhumagaliyev D. *Genealogical Tables. Materials on Kyrgyz (Kazakh) Land Use.* Astana. 2024. 388 p.

Favero M. How the Mamluk Sultan Addressed the Golden Horde's Khan. The Form of Letters and Rules for Their Compilation. *Golden Horde Review.* 2018. Vol.6, no.1, pp.41–84.

Franke O. *Geschichte des Chinesischen Reiches.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co. 1948. Vol.4. 595 p.

Galstyan A. *Armenian Sources on the Mongols: Extracts from 13th–14th.* Century Manuscripts Translated from Classical Armenian, with introduction and commentary by A.G. Galstyan. Moscow: Publ. House of Oriental Literature. 1962. 155 p.

Cleaves F. The Mongolian Names and Terms in The History of The Nation of The Archers by Grigor of Akanc. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*. 1949. Vol.12, no.3/4, pp. 400-443.

History in the Works of Scholar Lamas. Compiled and edited by A. Zheleznyakov, A. Tsendina. Moscow: KMK Scientific Publ. Association. 2005. 275 p.

History of Herat. Translated from Persian by Zh. Zhenis. Almaty. 2024. 567 p.

History of Kazakhstan in Arabic Sources. Vol.I. Almaty: Daik-Press. 2005a. 416 p.

History of Kazakhstan in Persian Sources. Vol.I. Almaty: Daik-Press. 2005b. 410 p.

Jackson P. *The Mongols and the Islamic World: From Conquest to Conversion.* New Haven. Yale University Press. 2017. 614 p.

Kartlis Tskhovreba: *Anonymous 14th-Century Chronicle Translated from Old Georgian by G.V. Tsulaya.* In History of Georgia, edited by L. Abuashvili. Tbilisi: Artanuji Publ. House. 2008. 152 p.

Khamidova Ch. Rashid al-Din, Shu'ab-i Panjganah. 2. Mongols and Turks (4). *Golden Horde Review.* 2018. Vol.6, no.1, pp.168–180.

Kebekova B. *Kyrgyz-Kazakh Folkloric Connections*. Frunze. 1982. 260 p.

Kirakos of Gandzak. *History of Armenia.* Translated from Classical Armenian, with introduction and commentary by L.A. Khanlaryan. Moscow: Main Ed. Office of Oriental Literature. Nauka Publishing House. 1976. 357 p.

Kozin S. *The Secret History: Mongolian Chronicle of 1240.* Vol.1. Moscow: Publ. House of the USSR Academy of Sciences. 1941. 611 p.

Kostyukov V. "On Sartaq, or Where the Fate of Iran Was Decided." *Questions of History and Archaeology of Western Kazakhstan.* 2005. No.4, pp.279–282.

Kostyukov V. "The Ulus of Jochi and the Syndrome of Federalism." *Questions of History and Archaeology of Western Kazakhstan.* 2007. No.1, pp.169–207.

Kostyukov V. "The 'Iron Dogs of the Batuids': Shiban and His Descendants in the Wars of the 13th Century." *Questions of History and Archaeology of Western Kazakhstan*. 2008. No.3, pp. 43–98.

Kostyukov V. "The Iranian Campaign of Hülegü: Prehistory." *Golden Horde Civilization*. 2009. Vol.2, pp.69–89.

Lech K. *Das mongolische Weltreich. Al-'Umari's Darstellung der mongolischen Reiche in seinem Werk Masalik al-absar fi mamalik alamsar.* Asiatische Forschungen. Wiesbaden. Harrassowitz. 1968. 475 p.

Lubsan Danzan. *Altan Tobchi. Translated from Mongolian, with commentary and appendices by N.P. Shastina.* Moscow: Nauka Publ. House, Main Editorial Office of Oriental Literature. 1973. Series: Monuments of Eastern Writing, Vol.10. 441 p.

Margulan A. "The Naimans." *In: Kazakhs: Collection of Articles by the Anthropological Unit of the Kazakh Expedition of the USSR Academy of Sciences.* 1927. Leningrad. 1930. Pp.329–334.

Myskov E. *Political History of the Golden Horde (1236–1313).* Volgograd: Volgograd State University Press. 2003. 175 p.

Patkanov K. *The History of the Mongols by Monk Magakii. St. Petersburg.* 1871. 106 p.

Porsin A. *Berke: A Muslim on the Mongol Throne.* Nur-Sultan: Gylym Publ. House. 2020. 424 p.

Porsin A. *Jochi: The Failed Heir. Astana: International Scientific Complex "Astana"*. 2023. 392 p.

Porsin A. "Political Censorship and Historical Propaganda in the Mongol States of the 13th – Early 14th

Centuries: A Case Study of the Capture of Urgench." *Stratum Plus.* 2024. No.5, pp.233–248.
Qu Dafeng, Liu Jianyi. On Some Problems Concerning Jochi's Lifetime. *Central Asiatic Journal.* 1998. Vol.42, no.2, pp.283-290.
Rashid al-Din. *Compendium of Chronicles.* Vol.3. Moscow–Leningrad: Publ. House of the USSR Academy of Sciences. 1946. 316 p.
Rashid al-Din. *Compendium of Chronicles.* Vol.1. Book.1. Moscow–Leningrad: Publ. House of the USSR Academy of Sciences. 1952a. 197 p.
Rashid al-Din. *Compendium of Chronicles.* Vol.1. Book.2. Moscow–Leningrad: Publ. House of the USSR Academy of Sciences. 1952b. 281 p.
Rashid al-Din. *Compendium of Chronicles.* Vol.2. Moscow–Leningrad: Publ. House of the USSR Academy of Sciences. 1960. 214 p.
Sabitov Zh. Political History of the Ulus of Jochi in 1256–1263. *Golden Horde Review.* Kazan. 2015. No.2, pp.51–64.
Sabitov Zh., Karataev A. On the Origin of the Kazakh Tribe Naiman. *Turkic Studies Journal*. 2024. Vol.6, no.1, pp.64–78.
Tulibayeva Zh. "Ulus-i Arba-yi Chingizi" as a Source for the Study of the History of the Golden Horde. *Golden Horde Civilization*. Kazan. 2011. Vol.4, pp.79–100.
Tabakat-i-Nasiri: A General History of the Muhammedan Dynasties of Asia, including Hindustan, from 194 [810 A.D.] to A.H. 658 [1260 A.D.] and the Irruption of the Infidel Mughals into Islam by Maulana, Minhaj-ud-Din, Abu-'Umar-i-'Usman Jawzani. London: Gilbert and Rivington. 1881. Vol.2. 1296, XXVI, VI p.
Thackston W. *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-tawarikh, Compendium of Chronicles. A History of the Mongols.* Massachusetts: Harvard University. 1998–1999. 819 p.
The Golden Horde in Historical Sources. Volume III: Chinese and Mongolian Sources Compiled and translated by R. Khrapachevsky. Moscow: Center for the Study of Military and General History. 2009. 336 p.
The History of Vaṣṣāf (Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf) By ʿAbd Allāh ibn Faẓl Allāh Vaṣṣāf al-Ḥaẓrat. Translated and edited by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall. Wien. Hofund Staatsdruckerei. 1856. 586 p.
Zafar-Nämah Il-Khan. *Dynasty A thesis of submitted for Hamd Allah Mustaufi. Iran. 1983*. Vol.2, 426 p.
Zhoshy Khan. A Collection of Historical Records, Archaeological Findings, and Folkloric-Musical Sources. International Turkic Academy. 2020. 424 p.
Uskembai K. *Eastern Dasht-i Qipchaq in the 13th – early 15th centuries: Problems of the ethnopolitical history of the Ulus of Jochi.* Kazan: Fän. 2013. 288 p.
Utemish-Haji. Kara Tavarikh. *Transcription by I. Mirgaleev, E. Saifetdinova, Z. Khafizova; Russian translation by I. Mirgaleev, E. Saifetdinova; general and scholarly editing by I. Mirgaleev*. Kazan: Sh. Marjani Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan. 2017. 312 p.

Information about authors

Artem A. Porsin – Candidate of Historical Sciences, Independent Researcher, Magnitogorsk, Russia, https://orcid.org/0009-0008-4517-5265, porsinart@gmail.com

Автор туралы мәліметтер

Артём Александрович Порсин – тарих ғылымдарының кандидаты, тәуелсіз зерттеуші, Магнитогорск, Ресей, https://orcid.org/0009-0008-4517-5265, porsinart@gmail.com

Сведения об авторе

Артем Александрович Порсин – кандидат исторических наук, независимый исследователь, Магнитогорск, Россия, https://orcid.org/0009-0008-4517-5265, porsinart@gmail.com

Conflict of Interest Statement: the author declares no conflicts of interest***. Мүдделер ақтығысы туралы мәлімдеме:*** автор мүдделер қақтығысының жоқ екенін мәлімдейді***. Заявление о конфликте интересов:*** автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов***.***

Мақала туралы ақпарат / Информация о статье / Information about the article.
Редакцияға түсті / Поступила в редакцию / Entered the editorial office: 23.06.2025.
Рецензенттер мақұлдаған / Одобрена рецензентами / Approved by reviewers: 01.08.2025.
Жариялауға қабылданды / Принята к публикации / Accepted for publication: 10.09.2025.