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## RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MAMLUK STATE IN EGYPT AND “TATARS” IN 1252–1281

## RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MAMLUK STATE IN EGYPT AND “TATARS” IN 1252–1281

A. Filipau,

*PhD in Political Science  
Academy of Public Administration under  
the Aegis of the President of the  
Republic of Belarus*

A. Filipau,

*PhD in Political Science,  
Academy of Public Administration  
under the Aegis of the President  
of the Republic of Belarus*

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The article deals with the relations between the Mamluk State in Egypt and various “Tatar” state (the Ulus of Jochi, the Ilkhanate and the Mongol Empire) in 1252–1281. The quantitative analysis is implemented to evaluate the relations activities. The article proves that in general the parties had the parity with a small advantage in favor of the “Tatars”. Both parties were not able to inflict a complete defeat upon each other or to conduct a campaign, which would submit their rivalry. As a result, the major efforts were implemented against rivalry’s allies. The peak of interaction between the “Tatars” and Mamluks was in 1257–1260, it is connected with the military campaign of Hulagu, capture of Baghdad, further penetration into Syria and their defeat in the battle at Ayn Jalut.

*Keywords:* Mamluks, Tatars, Egypt, Golden Horde, Ilkhanate, foreign policy.

В статье рассматриваются отношения между государством мамлюков в Египте и различными «татарскими» государствами (Улус Джучи, Ильханат и Монгольская империя) в 1252–1281 гг. Применен количественный анализ для оценки отношений. В статье доказывается что, в целом, стороны имели паритет с небольшим преимуществом в пользу «татар». Обе стороны не могли нанести противнику решающее поражение или провести кампанию, в ходе которой противник был бы подчинен. В результате, основные усилия были направлены против союзников противника. Пик взаимодействия между «татарами» и мамлюками пришелся на 1257–1260 гг., что связано с военной кампанией Хулагу, захватом Багдада, дальнейшим проникновением в Сирию и их поражением в битве при Айн Джалуте.

*Ключевые слова:* мамлюки, татары, Египет, Золотая Орда, Ильханат, внешняя политика.

**The introduction.** The relations between the Mamluk State in Egypt and various Mongol states are discussed practically in any research, which deals either with the foreign policy of the Mamluk state or its comprehensive development. It is caused by the fact that in the discussed period it was the Mongols who represented the only competing force in the Middle East, while the Ilkhanate state was the Mamluks’s main enemy.

Rueven Amitai-Preiss, an Israeli scholar, is the author of the most comprehensive and famous research on the struggle between the Mamluks and the Ilkhanate – “Mongols and Mamluks: The Mamluk-Īlkhānīd War, 1260-1281” [3], where he in details discusses the military and political relations between the two states. Besides this fundamental research, R. Amitai-Preiss published a number of academic articles on this issue [1-2; 4]. However, the relations between the Mamluks and the

Golden Horde remained beyond the field of his study.

The monography by Salih Zakirov “The Diplomatic Relations between the Golden Horde and Egypt (XIII-XIV c.)” [12] belongs to the number of the most important researches on the history of the relations between the Mamluks State and the Ulus of Jochi. In spite of being rich in facts, the S. Zakirov’s monography needs some clarifications in the light of the current achievements in the Mamluk studies. For example, the author claimed that mainly Egypt had initiated the diplomatic relations (12, p. 4), while modern scholars doubt this thesis (for example, M. Favereau’s researches [7]). There is an opinion that such a perception could be formed due to the fact that the Mamluk sources had been for many years the primary sources on the diplomatic relations between Egypt and the Golden Horde. S. Zakirov also hesitates

to date the year of the first military clashes between Berke and Hulagu – either in 1262 or in 1266 (12, p. 7).

The article by Marie Favereau “The Golden Horde and the Mamluks” [7] is an interesting research where the author focuses on the three main reasons for rapprochement between the Mamluks and the Golden Horde: mutual interests in the struggle against the Ilkhanate; necessity to secure new trade routes for the stable supplies of new Mamluks when the previous trade routes via Sivas and Anatolia appeared under the control of the Ilkhanate; strengthening the legitimacy of Berke as a Muslim ruler [7, p. 96-98]. The article considers the history of the relations between the Mamluks and the Golden Horde from their establishment in 1261 till the end of the 14th century.

Besides the analysis of various stories related to the development of the relations between Mamluk Egypt and various Mongol states, the historiography has demonstrated attempts to consider these relations on a deeper level. For example, Anne F. Broadbridge tries to discuss these relations in the frames of the Mamluks's search to legitimize their power [6]. In scholar's opinion, the main emphasis is made on legitimizing the Mamluks with the superiority of their Yassa over the Yassa of Genghis Khan [6, p. 91-92]. One should only welcome the attempts to reach a higher level of analysis of a traditional issue (Mamluks' relations with any Mongol state). However, in this case we face an apparent exaggeration of the role of external legitimization for the Mamluks, as well as the role of religious factor in formation of the foreign policy of the Mamluk State [6, p. 105]. For example, the Mamluks continued to maintain good relations with non-Muslim rulers of the Ulus Jochi as well (as in the case with Mengu-Timur) and were very cautious towards peaceful initiatives proposed by Muslim Ilkhan Sultan Ahmad Tekuder-khan.

As a conclusion to this brief historiographic review, we should point out the following:

- 1) There is no strong comprehensive academic perception of the Mongols as a group by the Mamluks, while this very perception dominates in the sources. Instead of that, the researchers use state-focused approach to characterize the foreign policy of Egypt as something separate towards the Golden Horde and the Ilkhanate State respectively. At the same time scholars practically ignore the fact that the Mamluk sources mainly use the term “Tatars”.
- 2) An important peculiarity of the contemporary Mamluk studies is a wide range of various texts implemented to analyze a certain local

issue. One of the consequences of this approach is a wide time range of processes discussed in academic papers. Narrow-time, local issues remain insufficiently studied. The selection of sources raises up questions as well. It is dubious that the authors who lived after 150-200 years after the described events, had wider and more detailed knowledge comparing to the witnesses of those events. More likely, the later chroniclers used certain examples from the alleged earlier history of Mamluks to illustrate or confirm necessary ideas [8], rather than to discuss the past impassionedly and objectively.

- 3) The third important peculiarity is a practically full absence of any attempts to make a quantitative analysis of the Mamluk history, while the quantitative methods are widely used in the historical science.

The chronological frames of the present article encompass the period from the complete Mamluks's ascent to power in Egypt (1252) to the major battle at Homs, which stopped the second large military campaign of the “Tatars” against the Mamluk State (1281).

*The main body.* The main source for the present research is the historical chronicle “Zubda(t) al-Fikra(t) fi Ta'rich al-Hijra(t)” by Baybars al-Mansuri al-Nasiri (d. 1325) [5]. The source database is intentionally limited to one chronicle since the quantitative re-coding of descriptive facts is implemented in the research. The mixture of information from various sources, which describe various events to different extent risks to change artificially the quantitative indicators to a wrong trend. Further verification of the received data would be possible only after the processing the whole source database for the described period.

Taking into consideration the specifics of the state administration in that period, the term “Mamluks” is understood in the research as a political one rather than a name for a social group.

Contrary to the term “Mongols”, widely used in historiography, we use the term “Tatars” based on the fact that this very term prevailed (more than 95 per cent cases of usage) in the considered sources towards the states established after the Genghis Khan's military campaigns. We believe that the usage of the term “Tatars” can contribute to better understanding of the Mamluks's policy, as well as to avoid any mixture between the terms “Tatars” and “Mongols”, both of which are used by the sources. The historiography operates mainly with the term “Mongols” what is clearly illustrated with

the following quotation by George Vernadsky: "What concerns the term "Mongols", it avoided oblivion due to an oddity of history – an occasional kinship of the future emperor Genghis Khan with one of the Mongol families. After his ascending to power all tribes of Mongolia had been united under his command and a new "nation" was created known as Mongols. For the sake of simplicity we should name all these tribes as Mongols, even speaking about the 12<sup>th</sup> century" [11, p. 74].

Rafael Hakimov points out numerous speculations about the terms "Tatars" due to the mixture between the names "Tatars" and "Mongols" [16, p. 303].

In general, the very fact of use of the term "Tatars" in the considered sources is very significant. According to Rashid al-Din, originally Tatars were one of the Turk tribes but because of its power a lot of tribes started to claim to be Tatars [14, c. 151]. The same process occurred to the term "Mongols" during the military campaigns of Genghis Khan [9, p. 530]. However, the term "Mongols" (very occasionally) is mentioned in the discussed sources to denote a tribal group among "Tatars". We can assume that domination of this term illustrates the Mamluks's perception about political, rather than ethnic communities as actors on the international arena. In particular, such terms as "Franks" and "Turks", which prevail in the sources, also belong to the same group. A more complicated question concerns the widely used term "Islamic Kingdoms" and "Islamic army / troops" (which oppose the "Franks" and "Tatars"), since they have an apparent religious nature.

In the discussed period we assume the following political and state entities as "Tatar" ones:

1. The Golden Horde (the Ulus of Jochi; according to the terminology of Baybars al-Mansuri – "the countries of North" or "the Kingdom of Northern Countries"). The rulers were Jochi [1224-1227], Batu [1227-1255/1256], Sartak [1255/1256], Ulaghchi [1256-1257], Berke [1257-1266], Mengu-Timur [1266-1282], Tode Mongke [1282-1287]. The Ulus of Jochi did not have shared borders with the lands under the Mamluks's control [13].
2. Ilkhanate. The rulers were Hulagu Khan [1261-1265], Abaqa Khan [1265-1282], sultan Ahmad Tekuder Khan [1282-1284], Arghun Khan [1284-1291]. The state had shared borders with the lands of the Mamluks and had claims for the lands of Bilad al-Sham and Egypt [13].

3. The Mongol Empire (the Great Kaan). The rulers were Ogedei Khan [1227-1241], Guyuk Khan [1246-1249], Monghe Khan [1251-1260], Kublai Khan [1260-1294]. The Great Kaan sanctioned the war against Egypt and other "Islamic Kingdoms" [15].

In 1253-1258 the military and political situation became more complicated for the Mamluks because of the military campaigns of Hulagu and his conquest of Iraq. This campaign was sanctioned by the kurultai of 1253 [15, p. 224].

After the battle at Ayn Jalut (September 3, 1260) the Golden Horde became a counterbalance to the military power of Hulagu. Its ruler, Berke, in 1252 adopted Islam. Baybars al-Mansuri points out that the main reason of the conflict between Hulagu and Berke was Hulagu's desire to take the throne of the "Kingdom of the Northern countries" [5, p. 46]. According to Rashid al-Din, Berke was a senior kinsman for Hulagu (Berke was the third son of Jochi, the eldest son of Genghis Khan, while Hulagu was the fifth son of Tolui, the fourth son of Genghis Khan). Hulagu, however, enjoyed a privileged status as a brother of the Great Kaans Monghe and Kublai. Almost all Chingissids, including Berke, were against the rule of Kublai Khan while Hulagu provided him with a full support [15, p. 311].

In historiography the reason of the conflict is found in territorial disputes between the two states for the lands in Transcaucasia and Asia Minor [10, p. 42-43].

The Mamluk sources are quite clear about the "Tatars's" goals concerning the Mamluk territories, as well as the Mamluk State itself – the supremacy of the Great Yassa of Genghis Khan, while the Mamluks's goals towards the "Tatar" states are not identified clearly. The intension to establish the great Yassa as the final goal of the military campaign is clearly formulated in the letter of Abagha Khan to the sultan al-Zahir Baybars (667 / 1269) [5, p. 144].

"Tatars" played a special role in the concept of history developed by the Mamluks. They were considered as embodiment of the God's punishment to lead Turks from unbelief to Islam. Correspondently, Turks received a greater Yassa than the "Tatars" what is clearly written in the answer of al-Zahir Baybars to the Abagha's letter (667 / 1269): "... from what you requested from us we did not understand, what agreement can we make if our Yassa is greater than the Yassa of Genghis Khan. The God made us the malik over forty mulks" [5, p. 149].

The taqlid granted to the sultan al-Zahir Baybars by the caliph al-Mustansir clearly defines the territories which should be under the sultan's

control; "The God granted you the power over the Egyptian lands, Bilad al-Sham, Diyarbakir, Hijaz, Yemen, the lands of Euphrates, as well as over new conquests in Hawran and Najd" [5, p. 67].

The mention of Diyarbakir and the lands of Euphrates which presumably were not under the sultan's control is very important. However, after the withdrawal of the Hulagu's troops, internal clashes in the Mongol Empire and "Tatars's" defeat in the battle at Ayn Jalut, the status of the "lands of Euphrates" became unclear.

The taqlid granted in 662 / 1264 to the sultan's son and heir al-Said Barakat-khan describes the following territories under the sultan's control: "... Yemen, Hijaz, Egypt, Gharb (West), the Coast and what is beyond the horizon". In this text the "lands of Euphrates" are omitted [5, p. 98].

The taqlid granted in 679 AH (1280/1281) for the sultan al-Mansur Qalawun's son and heir malik al-Salih Ala al-Din Ali significantly expanded the territories which were allegedly under the sultan's control: "The Egyptian lands, their Harbors, regions and countries; what is included into the Kingdom of Hijaz; what is included into the Kingdom of Nubia; what is included into the Sefed conquests; the Coastal Islamic lands; what is included into the Kingdom of al-Sham, its castles, fortresses, cities, regions, countries; [what is included into the Kingdom of Homs]; the Kingdom of Hisn al-Akrad; the Jabal Kingdom; [what is included into the Kingdom of Haleb], its harbors and countries; what is included into the Kingdom of Euphrates; other Islamic fortresses – on the land and sea, in valleys and mountains, in al-Sham, Egypt, Yemen, Hijaz, in East and West, far and close" [5, p. 167].

Quantitative dimension can give us a better understanding of the relations between Mamluks and "Tatars". The present paper proposes several categories of events, each event gets one point: a) "Tatars's" offensive activities in the region; b) "Tatars's" offensive activities in the territories under the Mamluks's control; c) Mamluks's defensive activities against the "Tatars's" attacks; d) Mamluks's offensive activities; e) Diplomatic missions exchange and other non-military relations; f) Internal conflicts among the "Tatars". The quantitative analysis gives the following results:

Category A – 24 points: rumors about Hulagu's campaign against Iraq (650 / 1252); start of the Hulagu's campaign against "infidels and neighboring countries" (651 / 1253); Hulagu's attack on the country of Ismailites, their fortresses and castles (652 / 1255); conquest of new Ismailite fortresses by Hulagu (653 / 1256); invasion into al-Rum (654 / 1256); capture of Caesarea and its

provinces (654 / 1256); invasion of Beiju and "Tatars" into al-Rum (655 / 1257); division of al-Rum by Monghe (655 / 1257); clashes between the troops of Beiju and sultan Izz al-Din (655 / 1257); capture of Baghdad by Hulagu (656 / 1258); start of the siege of Miyafarakin by "Tatars" (656 / 1258); arrival of the ruler of Mosul to Hulagu (656 / 1258); "Tatars's" attack on Erbil (656 / 1258); Hulagu's call to the rulers of al-Rum (657 / 1259); capture of Haleb by Hulagu (658 / 1260); capture of Mosul by "Tatars" (659 / 1261); invasion of "Tatars" into al-Rum (659 / 1261); capture of the lands of Muhammad-bek in al-Rum by "Tatars" (660 / 1262); the alliance between "Tatars", Cilician Armenia and sultan Rukn al-Din for the campaign against the "Islamic countries" (662 / 1264); Mengu-Timur's campaign against Constantinople (668 / 1270); capture of al-Rum military commanders, who started negotiations with al-Zahir Baybars (672 / 1273–1274); Abagha sent military troops to al-Rum to weaken pro-Egyptian party (674 / 1275); Abagha's arrival in al-Rum and assassinations of supporters of Egypt (675 / 1276); capture by Abagha two Georgian fortresses (678 / 1279–1280).

Category B – 11 points: start of the "Tatars's" campaign against Egypt and the battle at Ayn Jalut (658 / 1260); the ruler of Hama re-sent the envoys with firman to the sultan Rukn al-Din Baybars (660 / 1262); capture of two spies with firman for the amir Faris al-Din Aktay (662 / 1264); Darbay's attack on al-Bireh (663 / 1264–1265); "Tatars's" attempt to attack al-Rabha (665 / 1266–1267); news on the alliance between "Tatars" and Franks and their attack on Sunjur (668 / 1269); the attack on Ayn Tab (670 / 1271); Derbe's attack on al-Bireh (671 / 1272); Abtay's attack on al-Bireh (674 / 1275); the start of the Mengu-Timur's campaign (679 / 1280); the second stage of the Mengu-Timur's campaign (680 / 1281).

Category C -11 points. All attacks and campaigns of the "Tatars" faced the response from the Mamluks's side.

Category D – 6 points: the proclamation of jihad against the "Tatars" (659 / 1261); the failed campaign by the caliph al-Mustansir in Iraq (659 / 1261); the failed attack of Shams al-Din Aqqush al-Barli from al-Bireh (659 / 1261); the attack against Armenians on Sis and capture a large group of "Tatars" (664 / 1266); the attack against Armenians on Sis (673 / 1275); the successful battle at Elbistan (675 / 1277).

Category E – 12 points: the letter of al-Zahir Baybars to Berke with the proposal to start war against Hulagu (659 / 1261); the arrival of the "Tatars" who left Hulagu after the beginning the

war against Berke (661 / 1263); arrival of one more group of the "Tatars" (662 / 1264); mediation by Armenians from Sis between the Mamluks and Abagha (666 / 1268-1269); Mengu-Timur's envoys to al-Zahir Baybars (667 / 1269); Abagha's envoys to al-Zahir Baybars (667 / 1269); unsanctioned negotiations between the al-Zahir Baybars' envoy in Constantinople with the troops of Mengu-Timur (668 / 1270); the letter of Pensu-noyon about his conversion to Islam (669 / 1271); Samghar's envoys to al-Zahir Baybars on the situation in al-Rum (670 / 1271); Mengu-Timur's envoys to al-Zahir Baybars (670 / 1271-1272); Abagha's envoys to al-Zahir Baybars (671 / 1272); the attempt of Sunqur al-Ashqar to call for Abagha's assistance (679 / 1280).

Category F – 6 points; Hulagu organized the assassination of Beiju (656 / 1258); internal struggle in the Mongol Empire because of the death of the Great Kaan (658 / 1260); the battle between the troops of Berke and Hulagu (661 / 1263); Abagha sent troops against Berke (663 / 1265); Abagha defeated Baraq Khan (667 / 1270); the battle between the troops of Abagha and Boraq (670 / 1273).

*The conclusion.* The quantitative analysis demonstrates that in general the parties had the parity with a small advantage in favor of the "Tatars". Both parties were not able to inflict a complete defeat upon each other or to conduct a campaign, which would submit their rivalry. As a result, the major effort were implemented against rivalry's allies. In these frames the Mamluks tried to weaken the Crusade States and Cilician Armenia and to make an alliance with the Sultanate of al-Rum and the Golden Horde. The "Tatars" had much less opportunities: the Sultanate of al-Rum preserved

the obedience practically only because of the military campaigns; the Crusade States were too weak to implement a mutual offensive strategy. All "Tatars's" attempt to make an alliance with the Ayyubids or renegades from the Mamluk amirs failed, while the Mamluks attracted a large number of the "Tatars" al-Wafidiya.

Even from the logistical point of view "Tatars's" penetration into Egypt was very complicated. Actually, starting a military invasion into Syria was possible via al-Bireh and al-Rabha. These routes were under effective control and defense by the Mongols. The third possible route lied from Asia Minor via Ayn Tab (Entebba), Baghras, al-Derebsak, al-Rawandan, Abu Kbeis and Shayzar into Northern Syria. During the Mamluk campaigns into al-Rum such cities of al-Sham as Damascus, Hama or Haleb were used as stop points. So, Syria served as a transit region for both Mamluks and "Tatars" military campaigns because of the supplies issues.

The fact of envoys exchanges between the Mamluk state and Ilkhanate proves the idea of parity between the parties and assume non-diplomatic goals of these missions. The sources mention no mission, which resulted in concluding any concrete agreements. Contrary to that, envoys exchange between the Mamluk state and the Golden Horde strengthened significantly the parties, including coordination of the war against the Ilkhanate.

The peak of interaction between the "Tatars" and Mamluks was in 655-659 / 1257-1260 (19 points from 70), what is connected to the military campaign of Hulagu, capture of Baghdad, further penetration into Syria and their defeat in the battle at Ayn Jalut.

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