

# Journal of Medieval and Islamic History

## حولية التاريخ الإسلامي والوسيط

An Annual Peer-Reviewed Journal interested in Medieval,  
Byzantine, and Islamic History

Issued by Seminar of Medieval and Islamic History  
History Dept., Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University

**(JMIH)**

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*Journal of Medieval and Islamic History* (in Arabic حولية التاريخ الإسلامي والوسيط) is an annual peer-reviewed journal issued by Seminar of Medieval and Islamic History, History Dept., Faculty of Arts, Ain Shams University. It is founded in 2000 AD by Prof. Rafaat Abdul-Hamid, Prof. Ahmed Abdel-Raziq, and Prof. Tarek M. Muhammad. It is a scholarly print and open access on-line international journal, which aims to publish peer-reviewed original research-oriented papers and book reviews in the fields of Medieval History, Medieval Slavonic History, Crusades, Byzantine History, Byzantine Egypt, Islamic History, and the relations between East and West. *Journal of Medieval and Islamic History* encourages and provides a medium for the publication of all original research contributions of significant value in all aspects of Medieval History and Civilization are welcome. It aims to publish research that contributes to the enlargement of historical knowledge or the advancement of scholarly interpretations.

The certified abbreviation of the journal is JMIH. It is presided over by a distinguished board of Historians and Academicians and is backed by an international advisory board panel consisting of prominent individuals representing many well-known Universities. JMIH publishes high-quality papers and review papers, too. It gives the chance to the academics to publish their top papers, book reviews, and studies widely.

### **Aims and Scope (أهداف المجلة)**

*Journal of Medieval and Islamic History* aims to publish peer-reviewed original research-oriented papers and book reviews in the fields of Medieval History, Crusades, Byzantine History, Islamic History, and the relations between East and West. JMIH encourages and provides a medium for the publication of all original research contributions of significant value in all aspects of Medieval History and Civilization are welcome. It aims to publish research that contributes to the enlargement of historical knowledge or the advancement of scholarly interpretations, too.

### **Publisher**

Seminar of Medieval and Islamic History, History Dept., Faculty of Arts,  
Ain Shams University, Egypt.

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### **Duties of the Editorial Board (واجبات هيئة التحرير)**

#### **Editor-in-Chief**

The editor-in-chief oversees all the editors of a publication and ensures each issue is released on time. With the assistant editors, the editor-in-chief creates the editorial board, or outline, for each of the publication's editions or issues. The editor-in-chief reviews all articles, reviews, and photographs, and provides

suggestions, if needed, about any changes to make before the publication goes to press or is released digitally. Layouts and design need approval by the editor-in-chief. In the end, the editor-in-chief has the final word about which articles and reviews get published.

The editor-in-chief has the responsibility of drawing up budget proposals and any other information requested by the publishers. The editor-in-chief generates ideas for new ways of doing things, such as using new technology, implementing ways to increase readership, and how to call great scholars to write in the journal. Tough problems are often handled by the editor-in-chief, and advice about editorial issues is also provided. Whenever a social function happens, the editor-in-chief is the publication's representative, and some travel can be required.

### **Editors**

- Treating all authors with fairness, courtesy, objectivity, honesty, and transparency
- Establishing and defining policies on conflicts of interest for all involved in the publication process, including editors, staff (e.g., editorial and administration), authors, and reviewers
- Protecting the confidentiality of every author's work
- Making editorial decisions with reasonable speed and communicating them in a clear and constructive manner
- Being vigilant in avoiding the possibility of editors and/or referees delaying a manuscript for suspect reasons
- Establishing clear guidelines for authors regarding acceptable practices for sharing experimental materials and information, particularly those required to replicate the research, before and after publication
- Establishing a procedure for reconsidering editorial decisions
- Describing, implementing, and regularly reviewing policies for handling ethical issues and allegations or findings of misconduct by authors and anyone involved in the peer-review process
- Informing authors of solicited manuscripts that the submission will be evaluated according to the journal's standard procedures or outlining the decision-making process if it differs from those procedures
- Clearly communicating all other editorial policies and standards.

### **Co-Editors**

Under supervision of the editor-in-chief, they participate in all processes of editing, as editors, as a practice.

## **The Review Process for Papers (مراحل وآلية تحكيم البحوث المقدمة)**

### **Double-Blind Peer Review**

Journal of Medieval and Islamic History pays great attention to the role of peer review. Reviewers evaluate the article upon an assessment form includes the reviewing criteria of JMIH as follows:

- Importance / Originality
- Methodology
- Bibliography; both print and digital
- Language and the extent to which subjects of the paper are harmonic with one another
- Results

### **Procedures**

- 1- Two reviewers are selected for the paper; at least one is from outside the Journal's community (Faculty, Editorial board, and advisory board).
- 2- The researcher receives the response of the reviewers: the evaluation, the paper, and the attached report, (if applicable).
- 3- If the reviewers respond by accepting, the paper is accepted for publication and two letters of acceptance are extracted in Arabic and English.
- 4- If the reviewers respond by refusing, the paper will be rejected without a refund of the reviewing fees.
- 5- If one of the two reviewers refuse and the other accepts, a third reviewer shall be chosen to separate, considering the report of the third reviewer the editorial committee gives the final decision.

### **Submission**

- 1- The Author submits his research article through our journal's online submission system. He will need to register for an account to do this.
- 2- Once his account is set up, he will need to continue the submission process.

### **Journal check**

The paper will then be checked by the journal Editor to see if it fits with the aims and scope of the journal. If ok, it will enter it into a rigorous, double-blind peer-review process that considers the quality, originality, approach, and clarity of the paper.

### **Decision**

- 1- Once the reviewers (from two to three reviewers) have reviewed the manuscript, they will make one of the following recommendations:

2- Accept, minor revisions, major revisions, or reject. The final decision will be decided by the editorial committee.

3- Reviewer feedback on the paper will be provided to the corresponding author via e.mail.

### **Revision**

The author will receive an email from the Editor containing the final decision.

If the author is asked to make revisions, he has two weeks to resubmit for minor revisions, and three weeks resubmit for major revisions.

Once he has resubmitted his paper, it will be reassigned to the same reviewers if they to check whether their comments have been addressed.

If sufficient improvements have been made, the paper will be accepted. If not, he may be asked to perform multiple revisions or have his paper rejected.

### **Guidelines for Reviewers: ( إرشادات للمحكمين )**

Reviewers must ensure that all authors have equal opportunity to publish and their origin, nationality, ethnicity, race, religion, gender or political beliefs do not influence the peer review process.

### **Following General Guidelines of Elsevier How to Contact a Review**

#### **General Roles**

- A reviewer must carry the single-blind peer-review process
- Ensure proficient peer review process and submit reviews within the timeframe
- A reviewer will have to review a maximum of 2 in the same issue and of 10 manuscripts per annum
- Should contribute to the Journal with professional information representing their subject expertise
- Reviewers can suggest alternate reviewers with subject expertise relevant to the manuscript
- Reviewing process will be in light of JMIH assessment form via the online reviewing system, or the reviewer will send his report to the following e.mail:  
<https://jmih.journals.ekb.eg/>

**Guidelines for editors** (Based on Elsevier Legal guide for editors concerning ethics issues)

Responsibilities of the editor(s) of JMIH include the vetting and reviewing of articles submitted by authors. In most cases, this process will be straightforward. However, in some cases, ethical issues may emerge either during the vetting and reviewing process or after publication when a complaint is made. The most ethical problem that may encounter the editor(s) is plagiarism.

## **Plagiarism & JMIIH's Policy**

Plagiarism is strictly forbidden, and by submitting the article for publication the authors agree that the publishers have the legal right to take appropriate action against the authors if plagiarism or fabricated information is discovered. Plagiarism is condemned and discarded, and authors are blocked from future submission to JMIIH. Editors and Reviewers are urged to check for plagiarism using available online applications, such as <http://smallseotools.com/plagiarism-checker/> , <https://www.grammarly.com/plagiarism-checker>

**Publishing Ethics:** Ethical guidelines for authors (Based on Elsevier ethical guidelines for authors) (أخلاقيات النشر)

## **Reporting standards**

Authors of reports of original research should present an accurate account of the work performed as well as an objective discussion of its significance. Underlying data should be represented accurately in the paper. A paper should contain enough details and references to permit others to replicate the work. Fraudulent or knowingly inaccurate statements constitute unethical behavior and are unacceptable.

## **Data Access and Retention**

Authors are asked to provide the raw data in connection with a paper for editorial review, and should be prepared to provide public access to such data (consistent with the ALPSP-STM Statement on Data and Databases), if practicable, and should, in any event, be prepared to retain such data for a reasonable time after publication.

## **Originality and Plagiarism**

The authors should ensure that they have written entirely original works, and if the authors have used the work and/or words of others that this has been appropriately cited or quoted.

## **Multiple, Redundant, or Concurrent Publication**

An author should not in general publish manuscripts describing essentially the same research in more than one journal or primary publication. Submitting the same manuscript to more than one journal concurrently constitutes unethical publishing behavior and is unacceptable.

## **Acknowledgment of Sources**

Proper acknowledgment of the work of others must always be given. Authors should cite publications that have been influential in determining the nature of the reported work.

## **Authorship of the Paper**

Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made significant contributions should be listed as co-authors. Where there are others who have participated in certain substantive aspects of the research project, they should be acknowledged or listed as contributors.

The corresponding author should ensure that all appropriate co-authors and no inappropriate co-authors are included on the paper and that all co-authors have seen and approved the final version of the paper and have agreed to its submission for publication.

## **Disclosure and Conflicts of Interest**

All authors should disclose in their manuscript any financial or another substantive conflict of interest that might be construed to influence the results or interpretation of their manuscript. All sources of financial support for the project should be disclosed.

Examples of potential conflicts of interest that should be disclosed include employment, consultancies, stock ownership, honoraria, paid expert testimony, patent applications/registrations, and grants or other funding. Potential conflicts of interest should be disclosed at the earliest stage possible.

## **Fundamental errors in published works**

When an author discovers a significant error or inaccuracy in his/her own published work, it is the author's obligation to promptly notify the journal editor or publisher and cooperate with the editor to retract or correct the paper. If the editor or the publisher learns from a third party that a published work contains a significant error, it is the obligation of the author to promptly retract or correct the paper or provide evidence to the editor of the correctness of the original paper.

## **Guides for Authors (إرشادات للمؤلفين)**

*JMIH* publishes articles in Arabic, English, and French. Authors should submit the manuscript that has been carefully proofread and polished.

Authors are required to read carefully and follow the instructions for authors to *JMIH*. Acceptance or rejection notification will be sent to all authors through e-mail.

The submitted article is the final version. The manuscript should be submitted exactly according to the instructions for authors to *JMIH*.

The maximum number of illustrations, maps, plates, and figures is 12 per paper.

Submit your manuscript electronically.

If you have problems or difficulties uploading your files electronically, please contact the editorial board at <https://jmih.journals.ekb.eg/>

Send your manuscript as a pdf blind file (without the author's data) to <https://jmih.journals.ekb.eg/> for further peer-review process.

### **Important Dates**

JMIH is an annual journal, its print issue is published each December since 2000.

The deadline is July 31st for publication in December of the same calendar year.

### **Ain Shams University Contributions**

Authors from Ain Shams University expected to not exceed 25-50% percent per issue. Contributions over this percent will be delayed to the next issue considering the agreement of their authors. Priority depends on the submission date of the final article.

JMIH can publish a special issue (Monograph/supplement) any time of the year.

Please note that Review Papers/Articles are also acceptable.

Once a paper is accepted, authors are assumed to cede copyrights of the paper over to JMIH. Once the paper is accepted it will be published online even before the scheduled issue date.

Submit your paper along with a signed Copyrights Form, while submitting a paper to JMIH.

The Copyright Transfer Form submitted with us will become void in case the paper is not accepted in our Journal.

**Note:** In case manuscript accepted and Copyright Form and Payment received your paper will be published Online, even before the release date of Volume.

### ***Additional Instructions for authors for a manuscript for the annual peer-reviewed Journal Issued by the Faculty of Arts – Ain Shams University (JMIH)***

#### **Abstract**

This section should summarize the content of the paper and should detail the problems, experimental approach, major findings, and conclusion in one paragraph. Avoid abbreviation, diagram, and references in the abstract. It should be single-spaced and Try to keep the abstract below 150 words and should not exceed 250 words for full papers. Please make sure that the margins and layout explained below are followed as this will help us to maintain uniformity in the final print version of the journal. Both form and content of the paper have to be as per these

guidelines else your paper will not be published even though its content has been accepted.

### **Keywords**

Provide about 4-6 keywords that can identify the most important subjects covered by the paper. They must be placed at the end of the abstract.

### **Introduction**

*JMIH* publishes papers in Arabic, English, and French in all main fields of the Medieval and Islamic History papers must be divided into various sections starting with 'Introduction' and ending with 'Conclusion'.

Text of paper should be divided into - Introduction, Materials, and Methods, Results, Discussions, References, or suitable headings in Medieval History, Crusades, Byzantium, Slavonic Countries, Islamic History, and Civilization, and related theoretically oriented papers and reviews.

The paper must be presented into one text with figures and Tables in their proper place.

The text heading may have 12 font titles. The graph/figure may have 12 pt font titles with good resolution.

The table/figure heading must be in text form and should not form part of the image.

The manuscript should include a brief introduction stating the purpose of the investigation and relating the manuscript to similar previous research.

Only information essential to the arguments should be presented.

The paper must be in final form since we will publish it directly. The paper should be exactly in this format.

The manuscript should be prepared in Arabic, English, or French using “MS Word” with A4 page. “Times New Roman” font should be used. The font size should be 12 pt, but the main subheadings may be 13 pt.

The article can be up to 7500 words excluding references and abstract.

For proper referring and fast publication, all manuscripts should be grammatically correct.

### **Text Formatting**

The submitted article shall contain no tab or stylesheet. When necessary, the text shall be set in italic. Notes shall be put at the bottom of the page and automatically numbered from 1 to n. The basic structure of the submitted article shall be defined by unnumbered headings. Each table or illustration shall be provided in a high resolution in its proper place within the article. Illustration and table legends shall

include the source unless the element is published for the first time, the author (photographer, designer, etc.), if any, and his/her affiliation

Major headings are to be in a bold font of 13 pt uppercase letters without underline as above.

Subheadings: Subheadings should be as here "Subheadings:".

They should start at the left-hand margin on a separate line, followed by a colon ":" without space.

Text continues directly after the subheading in the same line. The beginning of this paragraph shows a sub-subheading.

Article's Title: The title should be centered across the top of the first page and should have a distinctive font of 13 points Times New Roman. It should be in a bold font and in lower case with initial capitals.

Authors' names and addresses should be centered below the title.

The name(s) should be 12 points Times New Roman, and the affiliation(s) is the same but 11 points.

### **Bibliographical references**

In the footnotes, bibliographical references should be 10 points Times New Roman and shall refer to the references provided at the end of the article. They shall contain the author's family name and a short version of the article/volume's title. The authors must use Chicago University Style on the following website: <https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

### **References**

References should be 12 points Times New Roman at the end of the article shall be drafted according to as the following:

Monograph: Muhammad, T. M., *Muhammad, his Ethics and Qualities*, Cambridge 2021.

Collective work: Muhammad, T. M. and Romer, C. (Eds.), *Thought, Culture, and Historiography in Christian Egypt, 284-641 AD*, Cambridge 2020.

Book, proceedings: Salem, N., "A Fragment of a Deed of a Surety, " in Muhammad, T. M. and Romer, C. (Eds.), *Thought, Culture, and Historiography in Christian Egypt, 284-641 AD*, Cambridge 2020, 191-195.

Article: Ameen, A., "Travelers' Works as an Important Source in Studying Archaeology in Light of the Hadji 'Ali Mosque of Athens," *Shedet 2* (2015), 6-22.

Chapter or article in a collective book: Grossmann, P., "Madinet Madi," in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. V, New York 1991, 1497-149.

Websites: Websites have to be written as a hyperlink with the last visit and time.

**Note:** IFAO or Dumbarton Oaks Abbreviations of the Journals must be used.

As for the Greek references and texts, they must be written in IFAO Unicode Greek font.

Quotations in the text must be written between converted commas with font 11pt.

### **Transliteration**

*JMIH* adopts the list of Transliteration of Arabic and Persian Characters published in *Encyclopaedia Islamica* (“System of Transliteration of Arabic and Persian Characters”, in *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, Editors-in-Chief: Wilferd Madelung and Farhad Daftary. Consulted online on 18 March 2017, First published online: 2013; First print edition: ISBN: 9789004246911, 20131209), published by Brill. Kindly download the list from this website: <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-islamica/system-of-transliteration-of-arabic-and-persian-characters-transliteration>

### **Conclusion**

The manuscript should have a relevant brief conclusion and should reflect the importance and future scope.

### **Arabic and English/French Abstracts**

The manuscript should end with Arabic and an English abstract summarizing the content of the paper.

A Message of Intimidation and Arrogance from Hulagu Khan to al-Nāṣir of Aleppo in the Muḥtaṣar of Ibn al-‘Ibrī (656/1258)

Ahmed Mohamed Sheir  
CNMS-Marburg University, Germany  
[ahmed.sheir@staff.uni-marburg.de](mailto:ahmed.sheir@staff.uni-marburg.de)

### **1- Abstract:**

This study aims to provide a general-examined understanding of a specific “source text,” or “sources excerpt,” explaining the context and content of that text and its sources. It also provides a piece of brief information about the writer or historian, his method, his works, and his life, analyzing the text and its contextualization in connection with other works or events. This article endeavours to study and analyze the letter of 656/1258 addressed from Hulagu Khan (r. 654/1256- 663/1265) to al-Malik al-Nāṣir of Aleppo (r. 633-34/ 1235- 658/1260). The Syrian cleric and scholar *Ibn al-‘Ibrī* (d.c.685/1286) was present at Aleppo during this time and had the precedence, among his Arab, Latin, Syrian and Persian contemporaries, to record such a letter in his unique Arabic chronicle *Tārīḥ Muḥtaṣar al-duwal*. Therefore, this article studies the discourse of the writings and life of Ibn al-‘Ibrī, provides an examination for the context and content of the said letter and in which historical context it was written. I propose to determine the Latin perception of Prester John in the figure of a Mongol ruler, especially Genghis Khan during the Fifth Crusade, and the late imagined perception in Hulagu Khan. Eventually, I analyze, contextualize, and interpret the letter and its historical context, comparing it with some (selective) contemporaneous and subsequent sources.

### **2- Letter of Hulagu Khan to al-Malik al-Nāṣir of Aleppo**

“Al-Malik al-Nāṣir knows that we have attacked Baghdad in 656/1258 and took control of the city by the sword of God. We brought its king and asked him two matters/issues, but he could not respond to our command so that he deserved the torture, as reported in your Qur’ān; ‘God does not change the state of a people until they change themselves (*sūra* 13:11, *al-Ra’d*).’ He safeguarded the fortune so that the time turned on him to reach what he became and replaced precious souls with frivolous metal inscriptions. This was the meaning of God’s Words; “And they found all that they did confront them” (*sūra* 18:49, *al-Kahf*). We have reached the strength by the

power of God. Also, we will get further strengthened with the aid of God. Undoubtedly, we are the soldiers of God, who created us and gave us the power over those who evoked his wrath. You must learn and take an example from the past and from what we have stated. The fortresses could not restrain us; no troops can fight us. Your prayers against us will not be heard and will not avail against us. You should consider what happened to others and deliver us your affairs/yourselves before we reach you, and then your mistakes will turn against you. We do not have mercy to those who complain; we will not be influenced by weeping. We demolished the countries and exterminated people. Sons became orphans, and we devastated the land. You have to escape. You must submit to our demand. You have no salvation, neither from our swords nor from our arrows. Our horses are swift, our arrows are sharp, our swords are thunderbolts, our minds are like the mountains, and our soldiers are as numerous as the sand. Whoever asks us for peace will be safe and whoever demands a war will regret. If you obeyed our command and accepted our condition, you will then have your won rights and for us ours. If you declined our orders and continued in your perversion, then do not blame us, but blame yourselves...<sup>1</sup>

### 3- Author & Works

Abū l-Faraġ Ibn al-‘Ibrī (d. 685/1286) is a Syriac cleric and scholar, known in Latin Gregorius Bar Hebraeus or Abulpharagius, his Syriac name being *Bār Ebraya* (ܒܪ ܗܒܪܝܐ). There are some Syriac sources that gave him the full Arabic name *Ġamāl al-Dīn Abū l-Faraġ Ġrīġūriyūs bin Tāġ al-Dīn Hārūn bin Tūmā al-Malaṭī*. He was chief bishop of Persia of the Syriac Orthodox Church in the thirteenth century. He studied medicine with other branches

<sup>1</sup> Abū l-Faraġ b. al-‘Ibrī, *Tārīḥ muḥtaṣar al-duwal*, ed. Anṭūn Ṣāliḥānī, Beirut: al-Maṭba‘a l-kāṭūlīkiyya lil-ābā’ al-Yasū‘iyyīn, 1890, pp. 484-85.

"يعلم الملك الناصر اننا نزلنا بغداد في سنة ست وخمسين وثمانئة وفتحناها بسيف الله تعالى واحضرنا مالها وسألناه مسئلتين فلم يجب لسؤالنا فلدلك استوجب منا العذاب كما قال في قرآنكم ان الله لا يغير ما بقوم حتي يغيروا ما بأنفسهم. وصان المال. فال دهر به إلي ما آل. واستبدل النفوس النفيسة بنفوس معدنية خسيصة. وكان ذلك ظاهر قوله تعالى: وجدوا ما عملوا حاضراً. لاننا قد بلغنا بقوة الله الإرادة. ونحن بمعونة الله تعالى في الزيادة. ولا شك ان نحن جند الله في ارضه خلقنا وسلطنا علي من حل غضبه. فليكن لكم في ما مضي معتبر. وبما ذكرناها وقلناه مزدجر. فالحصون بين ايدينا لا تمنع. والعساكر للقائنا لا تضر ولا تنفع. ودعاؤكم علينا لا يستجاب ولا يسمع. فاتعظوا بغيركم. وسلموا الينا اموركم. قيل ان ينكشف الغطاء. ويحل عليكم الخطأ. فنحن لا نرحم من شكنا. ولا نرق لمن بكنا. قد اخربنا البلاد. وافيينا العباد. وايتمنا الاولاد. وتركنا في الارض الفساد. فعليكم الهرب. وعلينا بالطلب. فما لكم من سيوفنا خلاص. ولا من سهامنا مناص. فخيولنا سوابق. وسهامنا خوارق. وسيوفنا صواعق. وعقولنا كالجبال. وعدنا كالرمل. فمن طلب منا الامان سلم. ومن طلب الحرب ندم. فان انتم اطعتم امرنا وقبلتم شرطنا كان لكم ما لنا وعليكم ما علينا. وان انتم خالفتم امرنا وفي غيركم تماديتم فلا تلومونا ولوموا انفسكم (...)"

of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> He wrote several works on history, philosophy, language, theology, and poetry. Most of his books were written in Syriac, and few produced in Arabic. Ibn al-‘Ibrī’s father was a Jewish physician named Aaron (*Hārūn bin Tūmā al-Malaṭī*).<sup>2</sup> His Syriac nickname *Bār Ebraya* refers to his Jewish background and means “the Hebrew’s Son.” This nickname might also refer to his place of birth in the village of ‘Ebrā near Malatya on the old Eastern road of Malatya towards Kharput (*Elaziğ*) and Amida (*Diyarbakır*) across the Euphrates.<sup>3</sup> Ibn al-‘Ibrī was also named “Abū l-Farağ,” an Arabic name, and there is no mention regarding why this name was attributed to him. Some have argued that al-‘Ibrī had a son called “Farağ,” but it is known that he never got married, having taken the vows of monasticism.<sup>4</sup> Budge proposes that Abū l-Farağ might mean “Father of what is pleasing.”<sup>5</sup> However, the Arabic word “al-Farağ” does not mean happiness but rather means “dismissing or removing grief or worries.”<sup>6</sup> When the Mongols invaded Malatya, Ibn al-‘Ibrī’s city, in 1243, his father was appointed as a physician at the Mongol Khan's court. In the following year, Ibn al-‘Ibrī moved with his family to Antioch (*Anṭākiya*), which was still under the Franks’, i.e. crusader rule. At the age of seventeen, he started his hermit life and became a monk.<sup>7</sup>

At Antioch and Tripoli (*Ṭarābulus* in modern-day Lebanon), Ibn al-‘Ibrī became knowledgeable of Syriac, Arabic, and Hebrew, and studied theology, medicine, and rhetoric “‘ilm al-balāga”. After three years of being a monk, he was appointed Jacobite bishop of Gubos (*Gūbbāš*), in the region of Malatya, in September 1246. A year later, he was transferred to Laqabbīn, in the vicinity of Gubos and stayed there for seven years. In 1253, Ibn al-‘Ibrī became Metropolitan of Aleppo. However, he was not able to manage its affairs well given that a certain Ṣalībā, who had been his

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<sup>1</sup> Wallis Budge (ed.), *The Chorography of Gregory Abu'l Faraj, the Son of Aaron, The Hebrew Physician Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus Being the First Part of his Political History of the World*, vol.1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), introduction.

<sup>2</sup> Butin, "Bar Hebraeus," *The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 2* accessed on 23 Aug. 2019 <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02294a.htm>

<sup>3</sup> “Ibn al-‘Ibrī”, in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., accessed online on 23 August 2019 [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_3209](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3209).

<sup>4</sup> Budge, *The Chorography*, vol. 1, p. xvi; Ibn al-‘Ibrī: *Makḥṭūṭiat Tārīḥ al-Azminah*, trans., Shādiat Tawfīq Hafez (Cairo: al-Markaz al-qawmī li-Tarjamah, 2007), p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Budge, *the Chorography*, vol. 1, p. xvi.

<sup>6</sup> Ibn al-‘Ibrī, *Makḥṭūṭiat Tārīḥ al-Azminah*, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Budge, *The Chorography*, vol.1, intro.

schoolmate in Tripoli, received a decree ('*ahd*) from al-Nāṣir of Aleppo that put him in charge of the affairs of the bishopric of Aleppo.<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-‘Ibrī was an eyewitness of the Mongol invasion of Aleppo in January 1260 and, in this context, asked Hulagu Khan to show sympathy toward the Christian people. Later, he served as a physician at the Mongol court in 1263 and became the head of the Jacobite church in Persian territories in 1264. He died in Maraga (*Marāgheh*), Persia, in c.685/1286, and was buried at the Mar Mattai Monastery in Mosul.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn al-‘Ibrī wrote and collated about thirty-one works on theology, philosophy, history, grammar, and science as well as poetry. Ibn al-‘Ibrī’s knowledge and his political intelligence enabled him to play an important role in the cultural exchange between the Christians and Muslims. Influenced by the Arabic culture and language, he promoted Syriac culture in the Arabic tongue by producing an Arabic version of his history *Tārīḥ Muḥtaṣar al-duwal* or *Muḥtaṣar Tārīḥ al-duwal* in 1285-86. Ibn al-‘Ibrī wrote down the Arabic version during the last month of his life as in response to the request of Arab friends who wanted to read his universal history in their Arabic tongue.<sup>3</sup> There are copies of *Muḥtaṣar*’s manuscripts in Florence, Paris, London, and Oxford. The *Muḥtaṣar* constitutes the abbreviated Arabic version of Ibn al-‘Ibrī’s Syriac chronicle *Ktābā dMaktbānut Zabnē* (“The Chronography of Gregory Abū l-Faraǧ”) which contains a history of the world from the creation to his own time.<sup>4</sup> An Arabic excerpt from the Arabic chronography first became known to European scholars under the name *al-Muḥtaṣar fī l-duwal* (“Compendious History of the Dynasties”), published by Edward Pococke (1604-1691) in his *Specimen Historiae Arabum* at Oxford in 1650. From page three to thirty-one in the *Specimen Historiae*, Pococke quoted the first eleven pages of the history of the Arabs in the ninth part of the *Muḥtaṣar*.<sup>5</sup> In 1663,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-‘Ibrī, *Tārīḥ Muḥtaṣar al-duwal*, p. d.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn al-‘Ibrī, *Tārīḥ Muḥtaṣar al-duwal*, p. d-h; Budge, *The Chorography of Gregory Abu'l Faraj*, p. 433.

<sup>3</sup> Budge, *The Chorography of Gregory Abu'l Faraj*, xxxix.

<sup>4</sup> French Translation see, Talon (trans.), *La Chronographie de Bar Hebraeus: ktābā dMaktbānut zabnē: L'histoire du monde d' Adam à Kubilai Khan*, 3 Vols, Paris: 2011; And Syriac Text with English Translation see: Ernest Budge, *The Chorography of Gregory Abu'l Faraj, The Son of Aaron*, 2 vols., (Oxford, 1932).

<sup>5</sup> Compare Pococke, *Specimen Historiae Arabum* (Oxford, 1650), pp. 3-31; Ibn al-‘Ibrī, *Tārīḥ Muḥtaṣar al-Duwal*, pp. 158-168.

Pococke published a complete Arabic version of *al-Muḥtaṣar fī l-duwal* with a Latin translation under the title of *Historia Compendiosa Dynastiarum*.<sup>1</sup>

The first full Arabic edition of Ibn al-‘Ibrī’s *Muḥtaṣar* was published under the name of *Tārīḥ Muḥtaṣar al-Duwal* by Anṭūn Ṣāliḥānī, Beirut in 1890. Ṣāliḥānī produced his book relying on the Latin-Arabic edition of 1663 that he founded in the Library of the India Office in London. He did compare it with other copies in Oxford and British museum, National Library of France. He had also examined the events that Ibn al-‘Ibrī mentioned in *Muḥtaṣar* with the other writings of his contemporaries and other sources of the same period and same occurrences, such as the *Tārīḥ al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* of al-Ṭabarī, the *Kitāb al-Kāmil fī l-tā’rīḥ* by Ibn al-Athīr, the works of al-Mas‘ūdī, and others. Eventually, he compared *al-Muḥtaṣar* with the Syriac Chronography and added some comments and correction in the footnotes of the Arabic publication in 1890.

Ibn al-‘Ibrī wrote two works dealing with what we may term an archaic form of “psychology” based on and presenting the opinions of the older philosophers Aristotle and Ibn Sīnā/Avicenna, among others. Among his principal works, we also have to count the book “the Butter of Wisdom” (Syriac: *Hē’wath hekkmathā*), which is a philosophical encyclopaedia that includes comments on the various fields of human knowledge in the Aristotelian tradition.<sup>2</sup> He also wrote laughable stories (*Kethābhā dh’Thunnāyē m’ghahh’khāne*), which represents a collection of anecdotes of Arabic-Muslim literature that only survived through this Syriac text. To some extent, some works of Ibn al-‘Ibrī could be classified as a reproductive compilation of earlier works.

#### **4- Content & Source Context**

*Tārīḥ Muḥtaṣar al-Duwal* is a shortened Arabic version of the Syriac chronography of Ibn al-‘Ibrī. However, *al-Muḥtaṣar* did not include a summary for the Eastern Jacobite and Nestorian churches in the second and third parts of the Syriac book.<sup>3</sup> In both the Syriac and the Arabic version,

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Pococke (ed.), *Historia compendiosa dynastiarum auctore Gregorio Abul-Pharajio* (Oxford, 1663).

<sup>2</sup> “Bar Hebraeus,” *Encyclopedia Britannica* (July: 2019), accessed on September 02, 2019; <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bar-Hebraeus>

<sup>3</sup> J. B., “Ibn al-‘Ibrī,” in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*

Ibn al-‘Ibrī relied on several Arabic and Persian historical sources and especially quoted the Persian history of the important Mongol administrator (*ṣāhib al-dīwān*) Šams al-Dīn al-Ġuwaynī (d. 683/1284) for the Mongol era. In *Muḥtaṣar*, Ibn al-‘Ibrī aimed to present a brief history of the world and concentrated on Islamic history, the history of the caliphs, the Mongols, and biographies (*tarāğim*) of essential scholars and physicians. He, therefore, added annexes to the *Muḥtaṣar*, which did not form part of the original Syriac version. The quoted text above represents one of these additions that cannot be found in the original Syriac chronicle. In the mid-thirteenth century, as a physician and Christian clergyman, Ibn al-‘Ibrī followed a friendly and tolerant policy vis-à-vis the Arabs, and promoted harmony between Muslims and Christian groups. He also dedicated about half of the eighth chapter of his *Muḥtaṣar* to the history of Franks in the Levant and their conflict with the Muslims. After the Mongol invasion of Baghdad and Aleppo, he followed a conciliatory policy to promote the relations between the Mongols and Christian groups and played a role in the negotiations between the Mongols and the Muslims as well.<sup>1</sup>

The above-quoted text, dated in 657/1259, is a part of a letter addressed by Hulagu Khan (d. 663/1265) to al-Malik al-Nāṣir of Aleppo (d.658/1260). This letter was written after the Mongols had devastated Baghdad, the capital city of the Abbasid caliphate, in 656/1258, an event that produced a massive panic among the Muslims. This gave Hulagu further power and confidence to warn other cities in Syria as well as the newly established Mamluk state in Egypt from the impending Mongol conquest by sending out messengers. Most of Hulagu’s messages to Muslim rulers emphasized his sovereignty and supernatural power. This also applies to his letter to al-Nāṣir, who, at this time, maintained a struggle both with the crusaders and other Ayyubid princes. Thus, at the beginning of the letter, Hulagu consciously refers to his incursion of Baghdad, a reference that serves to emphasize his strength and to act as a deterrent. Since no-one, he claims, can resist his power and his countless army, he urges al-Nāṣir to surrender Aleppo to him. Hulagu claims that he conquered Baghdad and killed the Abbasid caliph by the sword of God. He gloriously defines his

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<sup>1</sup> Lawrence I. Conrad, “On the Arabic Chronicle of Bar Hebraeus,” in *Parole de L'Orient*” *revue semestrielle des études syriaques et arabes chrétiennes: recherches orientales: revue d'études et recherches sur les églises de langue syriaque*, vol. 19, pp. 319-378 (1994), p. 322.

army as “the forces of God” that were empowered against the people by God’s wrath. Hulagu describes himself as a supernatural king sent by God to rule the world and punish the Muslims. It is noteworthy that Hulagu, who never professed Islam, does not only repeatedly claim that he is executing the divine will but even goes as far as citing several verses of the Qur’ān. This might be explained by the fact that Hulagu employed counsellors who were either Muslims or – as in the case of various Eastern Christians at his court – at least knowledgeable about Muslim religious traditions.<sup>1</sup>

It seems that Hulagu was aware of the internal discord among the Muslims themselves at this time. Some Ayyubid rulers allied with the Franks, as al-Şāliḥ Ismā‘īl of Damascus 637/1239-643/1245) did a few years before.<sup>2</sup> Hulagu states that fortifications, armies, and even prayers could not protect al-Malik al-Nāşir and his Muslim subjects from his forces. He warns al-Nāşir to deliver Aleppo before destroying him with his ferocious and commanding troops. Since the Mongol forces made efforts to build up a reputation of being excessively brutal, a reference to this brutality also features in this letter with the aim of terrorizing al-Nāşir.

Hulagu’s letter to al-Nāşir ties in with a particular facet of Christian-Muslim-Mongol relations in the crusading period, i.e. the so-called “legend of Prester John.” At the beginning of the thirteenth century, many Latin and other Christians believed that the Mongols were in some way connected with the legendary Prester John, the alleged Christian king approaching from India and the Far East to assist the crusaders against the Muslims and to restore Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> The beginnings of this belief date back to the mid-twelfth century, when the rumour circulated among crusaders in the Levant and Latin Christians in Europe that a Christian King called “Prester John”

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, vol. 1 (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1998). pp. 421-430; Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Harvard: University Harvard University Asia Center, 1996). p. 234; Sir Thomas Walker Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam: a history of the propagation of the Muslim faith* (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1896), p. 342.

<sup>2</sup> Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-ma’rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, vol. 1, ed. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘lmyah, 1997), p. 407; Matthew Paris, *English History*, vol. 1, trans. J. A. Giles, D. C. L. (London: 1852), p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> Ahmed Sheir, “From a Christian Saviour to a Mongol Ruler: The influence of Prester John's Glamor on the Muslim-Crusader Conflict in the Levant, 1140s-1250s,” *RiMe. Rivista dell'Istituto di Storia dell'Europa Mediterranea*, vol. 3, n. s. (December 2018), pp. 27-43; Roman Hautala, “Early Latin Reports about the Mongols (1221): Reasons for Distortion of Reality,” *Golden Horder Review* No. 1 (2015), pp. 50-66.

lived in the Far East and would join the crusaders in the Levant to exterminate the Muslims. Otto of Freising (1111-1158) was the first Latin-Christian writer to record this legend in his *Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus*. According to Otto's report, Prester John was the person who triumphed over the so-called *Semiardi*.<sup>1</sup> This description seems to represent a mutilated report of the ferocious battle of Qatwan of 536/1141-42 in Central Asia, in which—according to Ibn al-Aṭīr—Gūr Khan (Yelü Dashi), the ruler of the Qara Khitai, defeated the Seljuq Muslim sultan Sanğar (514/1119-552/1157).<sup>2</sup> Li Tang argues that the title “Gūr Khan” may have been transliterated as “*Gianni* or *Iohan (Iohannis)*,” i.e. an obviously Christian name, in Christian sources, thus producing the identification of a non-Christian Central Asian ruler with a Christian monarch in the East.<sup>3</sup> This perhaps illustrates how the idea of a Christian monarch named *Presbyter Iohannes* and ruling in a territory behind the Muslim in Asia and India, came into being. When the Mongols later invaded and controlled the Qara Khitai territory, they were duly associated with Prester John's polity.

The idea that Prester John was waiting in the East to assist the Christians was perpetuated in an anonymous letter sent to the Byzantine Emperor, Manuel I (r. 1143-1180), between 1165 and 1170.<sup>4</sup> This letter was purportedly sent by the said Prester John, who described himself as “Lord of Lords, by the power and virtue of God and our Lord Jesus Christ” in the letter.<sup>5</sup> During the Fifth Crusade (1218-1221), Latin Christians interpreted the military activities of the Mongols against the Muslim Khwarazmian

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<sup>1</sup> Otto Frisingensis, *Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus*, in *Monumentis Germaniae Historicis*, lib. VII, XXXIII, ed. Adolf Hofmeister (Hanover: Lipsiae: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1912), pp. 363-67.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn-al-Athīr, *Kītāb Al-Kāmil Fī Al-Tārīkh*, vol. 9, ed. Muhammad Yūsuf (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmyah, 2003), p. 319; Reuven Amitai and Michal Birn, *Mongols, Turks and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World* (Leiden. Boston: Brill, 2005), pp. 175-200.

<sup>3</sup> Li Tang, *East Syriac Christianity in Mongol-Yuan China* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Epistola Presbyteri Iohannis, Date: c.1165-1170’, in *Prester John: The Legend and Its Sources (PJLIS)*, ed. Keagan Brewer (London & New York: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 46–66; Zarncke, Friedrich: “Der Brief Des Priesters Johannes an Den Byzantinischen Kaiser Emanuel,” in *Prester John: The Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes*, ed. Charles F. Beckingham and Bernard Hamilton (UK & USA: Ashgate, 1996), pp. 40–102.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Epistola Presbyteri Iohannis, Dtae: c.1165-1170,’ pp. 46, 68; Zarncke, ‘Der Brief Des Priesters Johannes,’ pp.77-68.

state as feats of the King-Priest John and his son, King David. Jacques de Vitry (d. 1241), the bishop of Acre, referred to the same Christian King, claiming that Prester John was a Nestorian ruling over Nestorian Christians' population.<sup>1</sup> Jacques de Vitry's letter of 1221<sup>2</sup> and his *Relatio de Davide* (1220-early 1221)<sup>3</sup> depicted this king as a Nestorian and Jacobite Christians who had freed the Christian captives sent by the "Sultan of Babylon," i.e. the Ayyubid sultan al-Kāmil of Egypt, to Baghdad. The letter *Relatio de Davide* presents the conquests of Genghis Khan (r. 1206-1227) as the feats of a Christian King called David, identified here once again as the son of Prester John.<sup>4</sup>

Ibn al-ʿIbrī's *Muḥtaṣar* represents a unique non-western source that also mentions the story of Prester John, describing Genghis Khan as a subordinate to Prester John, who was identified in turn as the Mongol Ong Khan (Toghrul) whose people called him King John.<sup>5</sup> This interpretation concords with Ibn al-ʿIbrī's description of the Mongol Khans, especially Hulagu, as "the Kings of Kings or Lords of Lords and owner of the earth in East and West,"<sup>6</sup> given that this was the same title Prester John allegedly gave himself in the letter written to the Byzantine Emperor in 1165.<sup>7</sup> All lands associated with Prester John in the Latin texts by Jacques de Vitry were Turkish areas that have been subjugated subsequently by Mongols. Latin sources of the period believed that Hulagu had converted to Christianity, an interpretation that probably resulted from the fact that Hulagu's army comprised some Christian soldiers: Kitbuqa Noyan, for example, one of the leaders of Hulagu's forces, was a Nestorian belonging to the Turkic group of the Naiman.<sup>8</sup> Hulagu's invasion of Iraq and various

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<sup>1</sup> Jacques de Vitry, Epistola II, in *Prester John: The Legend and Its Sources*, ed. Keagan Brewer, pp. 98-99; Jacques de Vitry, *Lettres (1160/1170-1240)*, ed. R.B.C.Huygens (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1960), pp. 95-98.

<sup>2</sup> Jacques de Vitry, "Epistola VII," in *Prester John: The Legend and Its Sources (PJLIS)*, ed. Keagan Brewer, pp. 126-29, 133-34; Jacques de Vitry, *Lettres*, pp. 134-53.

<sup>3</sup> *Relatio de Davide*, '(Prima Carta),' in *Prester John: The Legend and Its Sources*, ed. Keagan Brewer, pp. 105-106, 112-113.

<sup>4</sup> *Relatio de Davide*, '(Prima Carta),' pp. 105-106, 112-113.

<sup>5</sup> al-ʿIbrī, *Tārīḥ Muḥtaṣar*, pp. 394-95

<sup>6</sup> al-ʿIbrī, *Tārīḥ Muḥtaṣar*, pp. 394-95

<sup>7</sup> See the letter in Reinhold Röhrich, ed., *Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani (MXCVII – MCCXCI)* (Oeniponti: Libreria Academica Wageriana, 1893), 67: no. 264; 'Epistola Presbiteri Iohannis, Dtae: c.1165-1170', pp. 46-66.

<sup>8</sup> René Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia*, trans. Naomi Walford (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press: 1970), pp. 361, 363.

cities in the Levant contributed to spreading stories about his army and his atrocities. Hulagu's self-portrayal as a supernatural king invested with irresistible power and presiding over a countless army who had been sent by God to rule the world and to punish the Muslims revived the crusaders' hope that Prester John was coming to help them.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the crusaders' situation in the 1250s was not exactly rosy. The Mamluks were slowly building up their forces, Louis IX had only managed to revive Acre, and the crusaders' power in the Levant was significantly reduced. Hulagu's glamour thereby might have supported the interpretation that a Mongol Khan represented the much longed-for saviour figure of Prester John. This interpretation, however, was short-lived and lost its validity in the eyes of the Latins as soon as Mamluk forces had defeated the Mongols in the Battle of 'Ayn Ğālūt in 658/1260.<sup>2</sup>

##### **5- Contextualization, analysis & interpretation**

Ibn al-'Ibrī did not only draw on Arabic writings in his historiographical works. His philosophical and theological writings were also strongly influenced by earlier Muslim scholars such as the Sufi scholar al-Ğazālī (d. 505/1111). For his contemporary Aṭīr al-Dīn al-Mufaḍḍal al-Abharī (d. 662/1264), he translated the book of *Zubdat al-Asrār* from Arabic into Syriac. Besides, Ibn al-'Ibrī wrote a Syriac interpretation of the *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* and the *'Uyūn al-ḥikma* by Ibn Sīnā.<sup>3</sup> The *Muḥtaṣar* and other Christian-Syriac collections of Ibn al-'Ibrī illustrate the mutual influence between Eastern Christians and Muslims in the Orient. The *Muḥtaṣar* and other works of Ibn al-'Ibrī demonstrate the extent to which he and the Eastern Christians mediated between Muslim, Latin, and Mongol interpretations of contemporary events in the period of the late crusades and the Mongol impact. The quoted text above illustrates the connections between political events, reasons, reflection, and outcomes. The Mongols had invaded Baghdad in 1258 and killed the Abbasid Caliph, and this was the reason of further trauma and fears to the Muslim world, including the Christians among them, even the Latins who were looking to establish an alliance with the Mongols against the Muslims.

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1 Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, vol.1, pp. 499-500; Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Tarikh Mokhtasr*, pp. 482-483.

2 Abū-al-Fidā, *al-Mukhtaṣar Fi Ākhhbār Al-Bashar*, Vol. 3, ed. Muhammad Zenhom, pp. 305-306.

<sup>3</sup> J.B., "Ibn al-'Ibrī", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

Discussing other samples of contextualization of relevant contents, al-Dwādāry (d. 1335/ 736 AH) in *Kanz al-Durar* reported that Hulagu conquered Aleppo in 658/1260 but no remarks about a letter sent to al-Nāṣir at this time. However, he recorded a letter addressed to Sayf al-Dīn Quṭuz of Egypt (d. 1260) from Hulagu Khan in 658/1260. It bears the same meaning and almost the same contents of the above-quoted text from Ibn al-‘Ibrī. Another distinction, Hulagu defined his army as the troops of Heaven's God and not the army of God, describing (Mongols) as disbelievers (Kafāra) and the Muslims or Mamluks as licentious people (*Fajarat*).<sup>1</sup> Al-Maqrīzī (845/ d.1441) said that al-Malik al-Nāṣir sent his son to Hulagu and then returned carrying a message (Kitab). Hulagu asked al-Nāṣir to hasten with his people to declare their loyalty and to submit their properties to the Sultan of the Earth “Shānshāh Ruūy zamīn” (Kings of Kings); the same tone mentioned in Ibn al-‘Ibrī’s text but a different context and words.<sup>2</sup> The Mamluk historian Ibn Taghrī-Birdī (d. 874/1470) in *al-Nuḡūm al-zāhirah fī mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira* recorded in details the Mongol Invasion of Aleppo. In 657/1259, the Mongols attempted to collapse the city, which was ruled by Al-Mu‘āzīm, son of al-Malik al-Nāṣir, but they could not break it down. In 658/1260, the Mongols returned and controlled Aleppo. Ibn-Taghrī-Birdī mentioned that al-Malik al-Nāṣir was in Damascus at this time, and he received “*Farāman*” (a Letter or decree) from the King of Tatar (Hulagu), promising the safety to the People of Damascus and its countryside. The Tatar then entered Aleppo and al-Nāṣir headed to Egypt, but eventually, he was captured by the Mongol forces and killed later. Ibn-Taghrī-Birdī did not state something about the content of the Mongol letter to al-Nāṣir, mentioning that Hulagu dispatched a letter to al-Nāṣir at Damascus in 658/1260, and not in 657/1259 at Aleppo as recorded by Ibn al-‘Ibrī, who was present at Aleppo at that time. Although these differences and similarities, it is a clear indication that Ibn al-‘Ibrī was the first to record Hulagu’s letter to al-Nāṣir, and the subsequent writers might quote from him adding some additions. It also seems that Hulagu used the same “Kitab” in his negotiations with Ayyubid princes in Syria as well as Quṭuz in Egypt.

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<sup>1</sup> Abu Bakr Ibn Aybak al-Dwādāry, *Kinz Al-Durar wa Jāmi‘u Alghurar*, Vol.7, ed. Saeed Ashour (Cairo: Dār Eahīā alkitub, 1972), pp. 470-471.

<sup>2</sup> al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb Al-Sulūk*, vol.1, pp. 514-517.

Regarding the connection between the Mongols and the legend of Prester John in the Latin sources, several scholars argue that the Syriac Christians and Jacobites contributed to propagate certain legendary notions about Christianity in Persia, India, and the Far East. However, there exists no concrete evidence that a certain Syriac or Jacobite might have transferred the story of Prester John to the Latin Christians. Pope Honorius III received a letter from Pelagius, the Papal Legate of the Fifth Crusade on Egypt, informing that “King David, who is ordinarily called Prester John, a Catholic and God-fearing man, has entered Persia with powerful forces, has defeated the Sultan of Persia on the battlefield.”<sup>1</sup> Bernard Hamilton argues that this letter was initially written in Arabic and was an updated rewrite of “the work of the ninth-century Persian Nestorian scholar, *Hunayn Ibn Ishak or Hannan son of Agab?*.”<sup>2</sup> Christian Tyerman, on the other hand, believed that this prophecy was a product of an Egyptian Nestorian interpretation from around 1220.<sup>3</sup>

He considered a unique eyewitness of the Mongol invasion to Apleop, who recorded the letter mentioned above, the message that no one of his contemporaries did report. Regarding Prester John, When Ibn al-‘Ibrī said that Ong kan is the king Prester John, he did not seem to be astonished by this name. This might mean that Prester John was well-known to him and, therefore, to the Syriac Christians of his time. He, therefore, had the precedence to Ibn al-‘Ibrī being the first non-Latin or contemporary European writer, who appended the name of Prester John to a Mongol ruler or a Mongol ancestor, Ong Khan. Overall, one could say that the Syrian orthodox people did play a role in the promotion for Mongols as well as the promotion of Prester John. They might act as a bridge of imagination, marvels, and Oriental Christin-Muslim culture between East and West.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Pope Honorius III, "Letter Date 12th March 1221" in *Prester John: The Legend and Its Sources*, pp. 123-124; F. Zarncke, ‘Zur Sage von Prester Johannes’, *Neues Archiv* II (1887), pp. 612-13.

<sup>2</sup> Hamilton, “The Impact of Prester John,” 59; Bernard Hamilton, ‘Continental Drift: Prester John’s Progress through the Indies’, in *Prester John, the Mongols, and the Ten Lost Tribes*, ed. C. F. Buckingham and B. Hamilton (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), 243.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Tyerman, *God’s War: A New History of the Crusades* (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 642