

when Egyptian envoys saw him at the age of 56 (BLOCHET, *Moufazzal*, 118-119; cf. also QUATREMÈRE, *Hist. des Sultans Mamlouks*, I, 1, 214-215) : «Bärkä had a scarce beard, a big face of yellow colour, and his hair was made up in braids close to his ears. He wore at each ear a golden ring set with a stone of very great value. He was dressed in a gown of Chinese silk and wore on the head a Mongol cap. He was girt with a golden belt set with precious stones, from which hung a purse in green Russian leather (*bul'yārī*). He had put on boots of red velvet. No sword hung at his side; his belt was adorned with black curved horns set in gold.» Bärkä, having at his side his principal wife, was «sitting on a throne, his two feet softly resting on the dais on which a cushion had been placed, since he suffered from a fit of the gout».

Bärkä's daughter married the Mamluk Sultan Baibars and bore him the son who succeeded him Sa'id Khan Muḥammad, also named Nāṣiru-'d-Dīn Bärkä after his grandfather (BARTHOLD, *12 Vorlesungen*, 175-176).

The coins called *asperi barichati*, which appeared towards the end of the 13th cent., seem to derive their name from Bärkä (cf. G. I. BRĂTIANU, *Actes des notaires génois*, 112, 126; *Recherches sur le commerce génois*, 238).

The main Polian problem connected with Bärkä is Bärkä's war with Hülägü, because that war was directly or indirectly the cause of the journey of the elder Polos to Bukhara and of the Polian journeys that followed. But deficient and contradictory sources make it difficult for us to arrive at the real dates and the true facts of the conflict. To the bibliography of Y, II, 495, we must add QUATREMÈRE, *Hist. des Sultans Mamlouks*, I, 1, 180, 187-188, 190, 211-218; BROSSET, *Hist. de la Géorgie*, I, 565-573; *Hist. de la Siounie*, 233; *Deux historiens arméniens*, I, 192-194; *Oh*, III, 377-394; PATKANOV, *Istoriya Mongolov*, II, 104-108; *Istoriya... Magakii*, 32, 92; *Bl.* II, 139, 549, and App. 54, 56; RAVERTY, *Ṭabaḳāt-i-Nāṣirī*, 1283-1292; BLOCHET, *Moufazzal*, 103 sq.; HOWORTH, II, 113-124; III, 193-201.

Despite minor uncertainties, we may take it for granted that the war between Bärkä and Hülägü broke out in the middle of 1262, that the main battles were fought at the end of 1262 and the beginning of 1263, and that Hülägü's armies never advanced to the north beyond the basin of the Terek; the statement in Kirakos (BROSSET, *Deux historiens arméniens*, I, 193; PATKANOV, *Istoriya Mongolov*, II, 106) that Hülägü's armies devastated Bärkä's territory in the region of the Volga is contradicted by all other sources and cannot be sustained. But then Polo's account is difficult to explain. The chapters descriptive of the battles are mere rhetoric and we need not attach too much importance to the fact that Polo says that Hülägü was the victor when in fact his troops were actually beaten. But Polo ought to have known the facts about his uncle and his father when he says that they went on from the Volga to Bukhara because the route was free in that direction, while they could not retrace their steps towards the Crimea and Constantinople for fear of being captured on account of the war with Hülägü. Now a war waged in the basin of the Terek and to the south of it would leave undisturbed the line of communications between the Volga and Constantinople. Moreover Bukhara itself was not so safe : there Hülägü took revenge for the death of some of his merchants in Bärkä's dominions by massacring the men of the five chiliarchies who were stationed in Bukhara and who belonged to the house of Bärkä (*Ha*², 94). I wonder whether Polo's statement is as explicit and complete as it appears to be at first sight.