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**LATIN EMPIRE OF CONSTANTINOPLE, THE JOCHIDS  
AND CRIMEA IN THE MID-THIRTEENTH CENTURY\***

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The aim of this paper is the analysis of relations between the Latin Empire of Constantinople and Ulus of Jochi (the Golden Horde). It is primarily focused upon the diplomatic mission of Baldwin of Hainaut, which took place approximately between 1249 and 1252. As a representative of the namesake Latin Emperor, Baldwin of Hainaut led negotiations with the Batu's son Sartak, and then, he traveled to the Far East, where he possibly met with the Great Khan Möngke. The aim of the mission was to secure the Mongol support for the defense of Constantinople against aggressive aspirations of the Empire of Nicaea. The immediate results of the Baldwin's mission are not known, but it is certain that they led to the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the Latin Empire and the Jochids. It is confirmed by the fact that the famous Flemish traveler William of Rubruck carried recommendations of the Latin emperor to a Tatar representative who governed the lands to the north of Crimea. Exactly these recommendations provided Rubruck safe passage through the Tatar territory.

Important factor that led to the Baldwin's enterprise were activities of Venetian and other Italian merchants. They served as primary intermediaries between the Frankish establishment of Constantinople and the Tatars, but they were not the only ones who played this role. Political and ecclesiastical elite of the Crimean cities, especially of its main port Soldaia, also had important place in these contacts. In the mid-thirteenth century, Crimea became a contact zone between the two civilizations. In Crimea, western and the Tatar political interests intermingled, as a result of the strategic location of the peninsula, commercial activities of its inhabitants and the cosmopolitan character of the local urban centers.

**Keywords:** Latin Empire of Constantinople, Jochids, Baldwin of Hainaut, William of Rubruck, Crimea, Soldaia, Venice, medieval travels.

On May 7, 1253 Flemish Franciscan William of Rubruck left Constantinople and sailed to the Crimean port of Soldaia. That was the beginning of his famous voyage and travel to the Mongolian court. In his possession were the letters of recommendation, given to him by Emperor Baldwin II of Courtenay (1227–1261), addressed to a Tatar representative who governed the lands to the north of Crimea. According to Rubruck:

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“there was in this territory a commander, related to Batu, named Scatatai, to whom the lord emperor of Constantinople was sending a letter requesting him to let me pass” [14, p. 98; 41, p. 188]<sup>1</sup>. These recommendations, whose purpose was to ensure the free passage to their bearer, reveal that diplomatic contacts between Latin Empire of Constantinople and Ulus of Jochi were already in existence at the time of the Franciscan’s departure from Bosporus.

It is usually assumed that the Latin Empire, during the last decades of its existence, constituted an empire in name only. Without adequate army or resources, it became an object of aspirations of neighboring powers – Bulgarian Empire of Tarnovo and Empire of Nicaea, the mighty successor-state of Byzantium. For contemporaries, it seemed that the days of the Latin Empire were numbered and it was the discord between its two stronger neighbors only, which prolonged the life of the Frankish rule in Constantinople. However, Baldwin II and the Frankish elite were not content to sit idly by and passively wait for the inevitable outcome and in an effort to secure their survival, they resorted to vigorous diplomacy. The most intriguing of the projects, created in hope to preserve the western foothold in the Greek lands, was an attempt to form an alliance with the Mongols.

This attempt is reflected in expedition undertaken by Rubruck’s compatriot, Baldwin of Hainaut<sup>2</sup>. Despite the fact that he and his mission left only vague traces in the sources, they became an object of some important studies [31; 44]. It is fortunate that William of Rubruck recorded the enterprise of his predecessor, albeit in two short notes. The first was related to the Franciscan’s meeting with Batu’s son Sartak. When the prince inquired who the chief ruler among the Franks was, Rubruck responded: “Emperor (Frederick II Hohenstaufen), if he held his territory unchallenged”. Much to his astonishment he was corrected: “no, it is the king (French king Louis IX)”. The explanation followed: “Sartak heard about the king from the lord Baldwin of Hainaut” [14, p. 115; 41, p. 201]. In Mongolia, while the traveler followed the yurt of the great khan Möngke on the way to Karakorum, he was amazed by some peculiarities of the local geography; but, as he admits, these were already mentioned to him “by the lord Baldwin of Hainaut who had been there” [14, p. 200; 41, p. 268]. The two short passages reveal important facts about the mission

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<sup>1</sup> All citations from Rubruck’s report are taken from the English translation by P. Jackson and D. Morgan [14], except in one respect: I decided to keep the original name “Scatatai”, instead of emended form “Scacatai”. There are several hypotheses related to the personality of “consanguineus Baatu, capitaneus nomine Scatatai” [14, p. 98; 26, p. 47]; most probable is his identification with Sartaktai, Batu’s nephew and son of his brother Orda-Ichen [55].

<sup>2</sup> In sources, his name is written as: Balduinus de Aino, Balduinus de Haynaco, Baldevinus de Hemmonia, Baldewinus de Hannonia [1, p. 950; 37, p. 215; 41, p. 201, 268].

of the noble of the Latin Empire: he conducted negotiations with Sartak and then traveled to Mongolia; upon return, he met with Rubruck in Constantinople.

Judging by his name, Baldwin of Hainaut belonged to the same family that gave counts of Flanders and Hainaut, as well as the first two Frankish rulers in Constantinople. Unfortunately, no records of his exact origin were preserved. Therefore, one can only guess whether he was cousin of the emperors, offspring of one of the minor family branches, or possibly born out of wedlock. It is not even known whether he came to Constantinople with the first wave of Crusaders in 1204, or, more probably, in the second decade of the thirteenth century. He is mentioned in the sources for the first time in 1219, as a witness in a document signed by Conon de Bethune, the then regent of the Empire [37, p. 215; 40, p. 259].

Twenty years later, Baldwin of Hainaut participated in a series of dramatic events that had profound impact on the destiny of the Frankish rule in Constantinople. In 1239 a large group of Cumans, driven away from the Pontic steppes by the Mongol onslaught, appeared in the Balkans. Led by their chiefs Saronius and Iona, the fugitives crossed the Danube, passed through Bulgaria and offered to enter the service of the Latin Empire. For Baldwin II and his men, hardly pressed by their bitter enemy – the Empire of Nicaea, the arrival of the Cumans seemed like providence. The unique way in which the alliance was concluded had no precedent in the western world. The ceremony involved mingling of blood between the western knights and the nomadic warriors, as well as sacrifice of a dog [1, p. 947, 949; 10, p. 95–96; 16, p. 270–273]. The agreement, thus made in accordance with nomadic customs, was strengthened by marital ties between baptized Cuman princesses and dignitaries of the Empire. According to well-informed Cistercian chronicler Alberic de Trois-Fontaines, Bailiff Narjot de Toucy married a daughter of “king” Iona, while two daughters of Saronius were taken by William, son of connétable Geoffroy of Merry and Baldwin of Hainaut respectively [1, p. 950]. This note from Baldwin’s personal biography is especially important, for it explains why he was later chosen to lead the negotiations with the Mongols; thanks to his wife he could have acquainted himself with the nomadic habits and he might have even learned her native language [31, p. 118; 35, p. 525]. Therefore, it is possible that he had advantage over other early European travelers in the Mongol empire; for them one of the most difficult challenges was to bridge the linguistic barriers (and in this aspect, Rubruck was not an exception) [57, p. 165–166].

The Franks put much hope and faith in their new allies and initially, it seemed justifiable. In 1240 Cumans indeed helped them to recover the Thracian fortress of Tzourulos (modern Çorlu) [8, p. 58; 46, p. 90]. However, their allegiance changed after Iona died in 1241; being a pagan, he was buried according to nomadic customs in the vicinity of Constantinople in a ceremony that involved horse (and allegedly voluntary human)

sacrifice [1, p. 950; 16, p. 272–275]. Not long after, the alliance was effectively put to an end, as Saronius, characterized by Alberic de Trois-Fontaines as a traitor, deserted with his men. According to Byzantine historian George Akropolites, in 1242 the Cumans were already present in the service of the Frankish main adversary – Nicaean ruler John III Vatatzes [1, p. 950; 8, p. 65–66; 42, p. 67–68; 49, p. 45]. It turned out that the decision of Baldwin II to give the refuge to the Cumans had even more severe consequences, as it probably served as a pretext for the forthcoming Mongol attack [13, p. 65].

In the beginning of 1242, while main Mongol army was engaged in western Pannonia, detachment led by prince Kadan, son of the great khan Ögedei, pursued Hungarian king Bela IV to the shores of the Adriatic Sea. The Hungarian monarch fortified himself in the maritime city of Trau (Trogir) and Kadan was not able to catch him, but the Mongols wrought havoc in Dalmatia and on their return, they devastated Serbia and Bulgaria. It was hardly a mere coincidence that various Cuman groups, considered by the Mongols as their main enemies and “fugitive slaves”, previously had found refuge in the two South Slavic states [6, p. 307; 8, p. 53–54; 17, p. 387; 50; 56, p. 542]. According to an unnamed source, whose text is preserved in several Austrian chronicles, the attackers then invaded Greece and clashed twice with Baldwin, “the king of Constantinople”; Franks were victorious in the first encounter, but in the second one they suffered defeat [5, p. 85; 31, p. 116; 42, p. 70]. The conflict was a brief, yet striking episode; in the same year, Kadan and his men retreated north of the Danube. Nevertheless, the rumors of the alleged victory of the Latin emperor spread in the East and famous Syrian chronicler Gregory Abulfaraj (Bar Hebraeus) recorded how Batu and his Tatars intended to attack Constantinople from Bulgaria, but were put to flight by “Frankish kings” [4, p. 398]<sup>3</sup>.

Despite the armed confrontation, the Mongol invasion inadvertently had a somewhat beneficial effect on the Frankish rule in Constantinople. A year before, probably upon learning the news of Batu’s advance into Europe, the two-year armistice was concluded between the Latin Empire and its neighbors Bulgaria and Nicaea [1, p. 950; 20, p. 183]. Still, the agreement provided only a temporary respite and in 1245, faced with renewed threats, Baldwin II was forced to embark on a long trip. He left his domains in the hands of empress consort Mary of Brienne, Narjot’s son Philip de Toucy and Anselm de Cayeux. During the next three years, he

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<sup>3</sup> More detailed report on these events is preserved in an Arabic manuscript of Bar Hebraeus’ “Chronography”, edited and translated into Latin by English orientalist Edward Pococke: “Batu autem, quae ad Sclavos spectarent peractis, ad partes Constantinopolis invadendas se accinxit: quod cum auditione accepissent Francorum Reges, illi unanimiter congregati Mogulensibus in Bulgariae finibus occurrerunt; ubi frequentium quae commiserunt praeliorum exitus fuit, ut victi Mogulenses terga darent, atque in fugam se converterent” [12, p. 310].

visited several European courts in an attempt to get support for the defense of his domains, but his attempts to secure help from the French king Louis IX, Pope Innocent IV and representatives of the Military order of Saint James, all proved to be in vain, partly because of the lack of interest or sympathy, but also due to the fact that his state treasury was empty [2; 20, p. 184–185].

In the meantime, Nicaean Empire solidified its position as the strongest military and political power in Southeast Europe. In 1246, John III Vatatzes attacked Bulgaria, weakened by the Mongol invasion and internal dissensions. He conquered Northern Thrace and Eastern Macedonia, and in addition forced his opponent to conclude peace and to officially recognize the territorial changes. He then subjugated Thessalonica, thereby openly announcing the plans to restore the Byzantine Empire [8, p. 72–79]. The next step in this direction soon came. During the summer of 1247, Nicaean forces, enjoying the support of Bulgarians and Cumans, attacked the possessions of the Latin Empire. The outcome was a total Frankish defeat. Despite the desperate efforts of Anselm de Cayeux to organize the defense in Thrace, their garrisons surrendered and several cities including Mydie, Vize and Tzourulos fell into the Greek hands. Their Cuman auxiliaries dragged more than twenty thousand prisoners to captivity [8, p. 85; 27, p. 270–271; 46, p. 93]. Disheartened by the bad news, Baldwin II returned to Constantinople, not long before October 1248 [18, p. 50, no. 5727]. In his hands remained only the imperial capital and the neighboring port of Selymbria (Silivri). Another heavy blow was struck in early 1249, when Innocent IV decided to open negotiations with the Greeks, estimating that the possibility to achieve long-desired union of the churches was worthy enough to renounce in turn his support for the Frankish rule in Constantinople. Papal envoys led by Franciscan John of Parma visited Nicaea and the talks progressed well until 1254, when both the Pope and Vatatzes died [11, p. 219–227; 33, p. 70–72; 48, p. 197–199].

Taking into account defeats on the battlefield, territorial losses and inability to secure military support in the West, it is easy to understand why the Franks turned their eyes to the mighty power on the northern shores of the Black Sea. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the very idea to secure Mongol support for the defense of Constantinople was not conceived on Bosphorus. It was born among the ecclesiastical circles in Rome, following the mission of Ascelin of Cremona. In 1247, he visited the camp of Mongol general Baiju, who previously inflicted a crushing defeat to the Sultanate of Rum. Despite the fact that Ascelin did not have much success in a rather naive attempt to persuade Baiju to recognize papal supremacy, the Mongol commander agreed to send his representatives to Rome [34, p. 95–117]. Thereafter, the rumors spread about the alleged Mongol proposal for joint attack on Nicaea [22, p. 37–38]. Chronicler Matthew Paris recorded this episode with due attention, but he was personally suspicious of its credibility. Later, he noted that the idea to attack Nicaea came in fact from the

Pope, only to be contemptuously refused by the Mongol envoys, because, according to their own words, they “did not want to contribute to the mutual hatred of the Christians” [23, p. 38–39]. It was probably the last attempt of Innocent IV to provide support for the Latin Empire before he entered into negotiations with Vatatzes.

Soon, another opportunity appeared on the horizon. At the end of 1248, while Louis IX was in Cyprus, dealing with the final preparations for the crusade in Egypt, he was visited by two Nestorian Christians, messengers of Baiju’s successor Eljigidei. They proposed alliance on behalf of their master and the great khan Güyük, offering aid for the capture of Jerusalem [16, p. 74–75]. The king’s emissary Andrew de Longjumeau then headed to Mongolia. It turned out that at the time of his arrival, the leadership in Karakorum was represented not by Güyük, but by his rigid widow Oghul Gaimish, who did not share Eljigidei’s ideas for the military cooperation. When the news of the failure reached Palestine, Louis IX bitterly regretted for believing the Mongol intentions at first place. More important than the well-known outcome of Longjumeau’s mission is the fact that the negotiations on Cyprus could not pass unnoticed in Constantinople. Namely, in another futile attempt to secure support of the crusaders, empress consort Mary of Brienne visited the island and met with the French king exactly at the time of the arrival of Eljigidei’s envoys [16, p. 76–79].

The mission of Baldwin of Hainaut took place shortly after the attempts of the Roman curia and the French king to establish closer contacts with the Mongols. Usually, it is dated in 1250–1252 [31, p. 115–116; 36, p. 427]. Exact dates are not recorded in the sources but it may be said with certainty that the Baldwin’s voyage to the East occurred between late 1248, following the Emperor’s return from the West and late 1252, when Rubruck departed from the Holy Land to Bosporus. By that time, Baldwin of Hainaut was undoubtedly back in Constantinople, for, as has long been noted, his successes decided both the mission of Rubruck himself as well as outward route of that mission [30, p. 321].

The threat of Nicaea was the main motive behind the Baldwin’s voyage to the East [31, p. 121]. Yet, it needs to be remembered that the Frankish noble decided to visit Sartak and Jochid leadership, rather than Mongols in Eastern Anatolia who were perceived by John III Vatatzes and his successors as more dangerous threat.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the first circumstance that needs to be discussed in order to understand aims and goals of Baldwin’s mission

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<sup>4</sup> Initially, Nicaea counted upon weakened Sultanate of Rum to serve as a buffer between their possessions and the Mongol sphere of influence, but the peril was too strong to be ignored. As a consequence, in 1254, Vatatzes sent his envoys to Karakorum. Byzantine sources are silent about this episode, but Rubruck duly noted their presence at the court of Möngke. Next year, a Mongol embassy in turn visited Nicaea. It was received by Vatatzes’ son and successor Theodore II who did his best to deter any eventual threat of the Mongol attack [14, p. 175, 186–187; 19, pp. 180–185; 41, p. 247, 255–256].

is the enigmatic personality of Sartak. Unlike other Chingisids, Batu's son was a Christian, albeit Nestorian. As it is well-known, in the tradition of Eastern churches he was remembered as a man who showed great respect to fellow Christians and their staunch protector [4, p. 398; 29, p. 1291; 39, p. 217; 47, p. 217–219]. It is not surprising that Rubruck also put high hopes in the Jochid prince. They were probably fuelled by the experience of Baldwin of Hainaut and his previous meeting with Batu's son, but also by the advices and recommendations given to the Flemish traveler by the orthodox bishop of Soldaia [14, p. 68; 41, p. 169]. Despite the fact that Rubruck's meeting with Sartak led to his own disappointment, the Mongol prince nonetheless became a popular figure in the West, perhaps owing this to none other than Baldwin of Hainaut. In 1254, a certain Armenian named John, who presented himself as emissary of Sartak and his personal confessor, arrived in Italy. Whether he was authentic Mongol representative or just an adventurer is not clear, but Innocent IV received him with full honors and sent to his alleged master a lengthy letter, praising him for receiving the Christian faith [3, p. 169; 24, p. 592].

The importance of Sartak did not lie only in his religious affiliations; one should not forget that he was one of the most powerful persons in the Mongol Empire. Due to Batu's commitment in the East, where he actively supported the claims of Möngke to the title of a great khan, his son had received extraordinary authorities. Also, at the end of his life, Batu was suffering from severe rheumatism and it is not impossible that his illness also played part in this transfer of power [52, p. 275]. Be that as it may, it is certain that from 1248/49 Russian princes headed not only to Batu, but to his son as well, to show their obedience [51, p. 69; 53, p. 322]. At that time Sartak's influence spread well beyond Russian principalities, encompassing other Christian lands on the fringes of the Jochid domains. According to Rubruck, he "had to be found on the route taken by Christians – Russians, Blac (Wallachians), the Bulgars of Little (i.e. Danubian) Bulgaria, the people of Soldaia, the Kerkis (Circassians) and the Alans – who all visit him when making to his father's court and take presents for him with the result that he gives them a warmer welcome" [14, p. 126; 41, p. 209].

Not long after the disastrous events of 1242 Bulgaria recognized Tatar overlordship. The mention of its dependent status can be found in a letter of Hungarian king Bela IV sent to the pope in 1247 [32; 38, p. 231]. However, it is again Rubruck's report that provides the invaluable insight into contemporary Bulgarian-Tatar relations. Flemish traveler not only recorded the travel of Bulgarian envoys to Batu and Sartak, but also the nature of their obligations, including regular tribute and extraordinary requisitions in metal and tools. In addition he noted that the power of Bulgarian ruler Michael Assen, who started another war against Nicaea in 1254, "had been eroded by the Tartar yoke" [14, p. 66, 277; 41, p. 167–168, 331]. Extension of the Tatar sphere of influence south of the Danube and Sartak's political role in the region may have been the important fac-

tors that influenced the decision of Baldwin of Hainaut to go to the Mongol prince.

Another, no less important circumstance that must have influenced the policies of the Latin Empire and its aspirations to secure the Jochid support, was the fact that some indirect contacts between Constantinople and the Pontic steppes were established even before the voyage of Baldwin of Hainaut, via the Crimean peninsula and its main port of Soldaia (Sudak). First Mongol appearance on the territory of Crimea took place as early as in 1223, when Soldaia was sacked by the forces of Jebe and Subedei and its inhabitants fled to the neighboring mountains and over the sea to Asia Minor [56, p. 26]. During Batu's military campaign in Eastern Europe, Crimea was subjugated and Chingisid supreme authority was established in 1239 [45, p. 597; 54, p. 39]. Ten years later, citizens of Soldaia discontented against the Tatar rule [45, p. 611], but the order must have been quickly restored, since Rubruck recorded that the representatives of the city were on good terms with the neighboring Tatars. The obligations of Soldaia consisted of regular yearly tribute, collected by the local officials who carried it to Batu [14, p. 67; 41, p. 168]. At the time, the Jochid contingents maintained only the occasional presence in Crimea and it was limited to its northern steppe part. It is noteworthy that Rubruck encountered first group of Tatars three days after he left Soldaia, noticing that "when he came among them, he felt as if he was entering some other world" [14, p. 70–71; 41, p. 171].

During the era of Batu and Sartak, Tatar interests in Crimea were primarily of economic nature, but they were not limited to the extraction of tribute.<sup>5</sup> They were receiving immense income from salt-springs in Northern Crimea. According to Rubruck, these were exploited by Russian traders, but also by merchants who were regularly coming from over the sea and paid the tax [14 p. 70; 41, p. 171]. Activities of these merchants were also recorded by another famous Franciscan traveler, John of Plano Carpini. As early as in 1247, he encountered in Kiev several traders who came from Constantinople, moving freely across the Tatar domains. The most influential among them were certain Michael of Genoa, Jacob Revery of Acre and Venetians Bartholomeus Manuel and Nicholas Pisani [9, p. 332; 41, p. 129]. They obviously conducted their businesses via the Crimean ports, and it is noteworthy that Rubruck received a valuable piece of advice from some merchants who came from Constantinople to Soldaia how to behave in order to stay on the friendly terms with the Tatars [14, p. 67; 41, p. 168].

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<sup>5</sup> In the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, the Tatar presence in Crimea was sporadic. It was strengthened only during the next decade, as a consequence of the policies of khan Berke. A clear indication of the changes is the fact that a certain Tuk-Bugha, a commander of 10.000 men (tumen-noyon), was attested as the lord of Crimea in 1263/4, while his subordinate Tayuk is mentioned as the governor of the region of Soldaia [56, p. 192].



Although Plano Carpini mentions the presence of traders from various Italian and Levantine communes in the Jochid lands, it is reasonable to suppose that most of them were Venetians. The Republic of Venice was directly involved in the government of the Latin Empire and after the Franks lost papal support, she remained their sole protector; her influence prevailed over other Italian maritime city-states in the Black Sea trade at that time. The first appearance of Venetian merchants in Soldaia is recorded as early as in 1206 [28, p. 10]. While their activities in the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century were modest, there are indications that the scope of their operations was not on such a small-scale, as it is sometimes supposed. In a Genoese source, it is recorded that when Constantinople fell in 1261, “all Venetian merchants who were in the Great Sea” tried to escape on a merchant ship and three war galleys, which indicates that their number was not insignificant [25, p. 43–44]. Those traders, who frequently visited or settled in Crimea towards the end of the first half of the thirteenth century, provided much needed first-hand information about the Tatars in the Pontic steppes to the Frankish government in Constantinople. Nonetheless, they were not the only middlemen between the westerners and the Jochids. As it is evident from Rubruck’s report, important role in the establishment of their mutual contacts also belonged to the members of local Crimean ecclesiastical and political elite (bishop of Soldaia and the city officials).

In the middle of the thirteenth century, the territory of Crimea thus became a contact zone where Tatar and western political and economic interests influenced and overlapped each other. It was a consequence of the strategic disposition of the peninsula, commercial activities of its inhabitants, but also of cosmopolitan character of Crimean urban centers. Majority of the residents of Soldaia until the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century must have been Greek speaking, but Turkic ethnic element was also prominent; in the second half of the century, the Orthodox Cumans (Tatars) evidently constituted significant part of the city population [43]. According to Rubruck, nearly every settlement between Kherson and Soldaia had its own dialect and their population included many Crimean Goths [14, p. 69; 41, p. 170]. Heterogeneous ethnic picture of Crimea is also provided by contemporary Arabic sources, who mention the Cumans, Russians and Alans as inhabitants of the peninsula in the beginning of the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century [56, p. 63, 192].

The outcome of the mission of Baldwin of Hainaut is not recorded in the sources (considering the timespan of his travel, it is not even known whether in Mongolia he conducted talks with Oghul Gaimish or Möngke). Nevertheless, the imperial letter of recommendation that Rubruck carried to Scatatai is important testimony of the fact that the relations between the Franks and the Jochids were successfully established. It was written in Greek language; not a surprising fact considering that the imperial court in Constantinople had a Greek chancery and the language was widely used

in the Black Sea region [15, p. 61–62]. However, when Rubruck arrived at Scatatai's camp, it turned out that that the Tatar commander had no one at his disposal able to understand the language and to translate the emperor's words for him. Therefore, he had to send the letter back to Soldaia. Three days later, his messenger returned with the translated content and Scatatai allowed Rubruck to enter further into the Tatar territory; he also gave provisions to him and his followers, as well as guides who eventually led them to Sartak [14, p. 100–101; 41, p. 190–191]. Despite all the difficulties, the recommendations were respected and the emperor's letter had proved useful to the Flemish traveler.

Sources do not provide information about the mutual Frankish-Tatar contacts in the following years, but there are strong indications that their relations remained cordial. The trade route from Bosphorus to the Pontic steppes remained open and was frequently used by Venetian traders until the downfall of the Latin Empire. The striking example is provided by uneventful, yet lucrative travel of brothers Niccolò and Maffeo Polo, who, in 1260 sailed from Constantinople to Soldaia and then traveled to the shores of Volga. They were warmly received by Berke and their trading activities in Bolghar, Sarai and Ukek brought them a great profit [21, p. 74–75].

The expedition of Baldwin of Hainaut, which took place approximately a decade before the travels of the brothers Polo, serves as an important testimony of the vitality of the Latin Empire. Although it was abandoned by the powers in Western Europe and almost confined to area within the walls of Constantinople, the emperor and the Frankish elite were nonetheless able to organize ambitious diplomatic mission, similar to those sent by the Pope or the King of France. On the other hand, it is not necessary to emphasize that this venture did not have far-reaching consequences on the fate of the Empire; it did not reverse inevitable sequence of events, which lead to the fall of the city on the Bosphorus on 25 July 1261 into the hands of the Nicean commander Alexios Strategopoulos (it was a bitter irony that his military contingent mostly consisted of former Frankish allies – Cumans) [7, p. 190–191]. However, that fact does not diminish the historical value of the Baldwin's enterprise. Besides being a great personal achievement, experience and counsels of his predecessor facilitated Rubruck's travel and thereby had an important impact on European discovery of Asia. Known details from the personal biography of Baldwin of Hainaut – his marriage with the Cuman princess, the impressions he left on Sartak, his voyage to the Far East and the important role he played in the establishment of Frankish-Tatar relations – reveal that he was a remarkable and talented man, almost unique among the early Western travelers in the Mongol Empire. Undoubtedly a gifted diplomat, he was able to achieve more in dealings with the Chingisids, than members of the mendicant orders and faithful sons of the Roman church.

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## ЛАТИНСКАЯ ИМПЕРИЯ, ДЖУЧИДЫ И КРЫМ В СЕРЕДИНЕ XIII в.

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Данная статья посвящена анализу дипломатических связей между Латинской империей и Золотой Ордой в середине XIII века. Основное внимание, в первую очередь, отведено дипломатической миссии Бодуэна де Эно. Приблизительно между 1249 и 1252 гг., в качестве представителя Латинского императора он провел переговоры с Сартаком, сыном Бату; а затем отправился на Дальний Восток, где он, возможно, встретился с великим ханом Мункэ. Целью этой миссии было обеспечить поддержку Чингизидов в защите Константинополя от устремлений Никейского империи. Непосредственные результаты поездки Бодуэна де Эно неизвестны, но очевидно, что они привели к завязыванию дипломатических отношений между Латинской империей и Джучидами. Об этом свидетельствует тот факт, что в 1253 г. знаменитый путешественник Гильом де Рубрук вез с собой рекомендации правителя Латинской империи, Бодуэна II (1227–1261), адресованные татарскому темнику Скататаю (Сартактай?), чьи земли были расположены к се-

веру от Крыма. Эти рекомендации позволили фламандскому францисканцу безопасно передвигаться через территорию Джучидов.

Предприятию Бодуэна де Эно способствовала деятельность венецианских и других торговцев, которые были первоначальными посредниками между франками в Константинополе и татарами. Важное место в этих контактах и роль посредников также принадлежит политической и церковной элите крымских городов, особенно, его главного порта Судак. На самом деле, в середине XIII века, Крым стал контактной зоной двух цивилизаций. На территории полуострова переплетались татарские и западные политические и экономические интересы. Это было следствием стратегического расположения полуострова, коммерческой деятельности его жителей и космополитического характера крымских городских центров.

**Ключевые слова:** Латинская империя, Джучиды, Бодуэн де Эно, Гильом де Рубрук, Крым, Судак, Венеция, средневековые путешествия.

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