



BUSCARELLO DE GHIZOLFI

BUSCARELLO DE GHIZOLFI, Genoese merchant and diplomat who served the il-khan Arġūn (r. 683-90/1284-91). Buscarello belonged to a great family of Genoa that played an important role in the maritime trade of the city. He is mentioned for the first time in 1274 in connection with the arming of a galley; in 1279 he was with his brothers at Layas in Cilicia. Subsequently he seems to have entered the service of Arġūn of Persia, who conferred upon him the title *qūrčī* (quiver carrier).

In 1289 Arġūn sent him as his ambassador to the pope and to the kings of France and England. In November or December 1289, Buscarello presented to Philip IV a letter offering to collaborate on a campaign against the Sultan of Egypt, envisioned for 1291; in January 1290, he presented another to Edward I in London. Bearing the replies from these sovereigns, he returned to Rome in December 1290. In 1291, he was at Genoa, from where he set out for Iran accompanied by an envoy from the king of England, Sir Geoffrey Langley. Buscarello's nephew, Corrado de Ghizolfi, undertook to go from Samsūn on the Black Sea coast to seek a safe-conduct for the embassy, which reached Tabrīz in 1292. Buscarello was entrusted with a new mission by Ġāzān Khan, to whom he had carried a letter from the pope in 1301. He brought letters from the khan and the patriarch of the Nestorians, Yahballah III, to Edward I, who replied to them on 12 March 1303. Buscarello then disappears from the documents; he certainly died before 1317. To honor his patron, Arġūn, he named his son after him, but Argone de Ghizolfi does not seem to have visited Iran, which was closed to the Genoese in 1343. The Ghizolfis, nevertheless,



remained very active in the Genoese maritime trade on the Black Sea; one of them was lord of Matrega, in the Kuban, when the Ottomans invaded that region (1475).

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