

"In Ger" and "Outer" Diplomacy – Il-Khanid Contacts with the Mongol and the Outside Worlds

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Shooting arrows and words, Hülegü (d. 1265) rode into the Middle East, devastating the Nizāri Ismā'īlīs in north-eastern Iran, destroying the 'Abbāsid Caliphate in Baghdad, and establishing a Mongol state in the area stretching from Afghanistan to Anatolia. This move sent a shockwave through the Muslim world – and through the Mongol side as well, since Hülegü's right for a khanate of his own in the area was not a common understanding. When the Mongol Empire dissolved into several different states, tension burst into war - between Hülegü Ulus and the brethren-state from north-west, the Jochid "Golden Horde". Ripples of this struggle reached Hülegü's eastern frontier as well, inciting the Mongol forces in eastern Afghanistan, the Negüderis. Hülegü's son and successor, Abaqa (d. 1282), faced the development of the same confrontations – without giving up the attempt for further expansion westwards.

What part played the diplomacy in their effort to expand and defend their rule? How did their contacts change over time – before and after the Mongol official unity dissolved? And how did the nature of their diplomacy differed - when dealing with Mongol powers, and when addressing other, outer powers?

Tracing specific points in Hülegü's and Abaqa's diplomatic moves, aimed towards foreign nations and Mongol powers, this paper attempts to line an answer.