

Anne Broadbridge
(U-Mass Amherst)

A Series of Migrations: The Case of the Oirats in the Ilkhanate

Many of the Mongol invasion forces, especially those sent out after Chinggis Khan's death, brought with them families, flocks and herds in a mass migration to the lands that the invasion army conquered. Other families stayed behind in Mongolia, but then migrated into the new region once the conquest was completed. Hülegü's invasion of Iran during the 1250s provides an excellent example of conquest-driven migration practices. This paper will focus on the story of one elite family and the nomadic warriors they controlled, as they first participated in the Iran campaign, then settled permanently in the Ilkhanate. These were the descendants of Chechiyegen, the second daughter of Chinggis Khan and Börte, who had married into the Oirats in 1207-08. First Chechiyegen's daughter Güyük Khatun became Hülegü's first senior wife; then Öljei, the daughter of Chechiyegen's husband (with another woman) married Hülegü as a secondary wife, and finally their brother was sent with Hülegü to Iran in command of a tumen of Oirat soldiers. The offspring of these three siblings formed the senior line of the Oirat consort house in the Ilkhanate, while a junior line emerged from lower-ranked commanders in the Oirat regiment. The paper will not only chart the migration of Chechiyegen's descendants from Mongolia to Iran, but will also follow the family's vicissitudes over time until the final migration (or flight) of many Oirat soldiers to Egypt in 1295 for political reasons, leaving behind one final branch of the Oirat consort family.