

Intra-Mongol diplomacy and *Witch-hunt* during the dissolution of the Empire

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The different branches of the *Altan Uruq* interacted dynamically between each other and with the advancing dissolution of the Empire this process gradually formalized and entered the field of diplomatic activities. Among the many examples of such an Intra-Mongol diplomatic exchange can be pointed a famous episode which lies in the basis of the rift between the Jochids of the Golden Horde and their cousins from the Ilkhanate. The official Persian sources claim that the conflict was preceded by a scandal in the court of Hülegü, caused by accusation in sorcery. One of the Jochid princes who led the Golden Horde contingent in the Imperial campaign that established the Ilkhanate was charged with this outrageous crime. According to Rashīd al-Dīn the culprit was returned to the Kipchak steppe where his guilt was confirmed by Berke and was sent back to Hülegü to receive final justice. If this account reflects the reality, a very interesting case of interaction between the two rival royal branches could be observed. But Rashid al-Din actually gave two controversial accounts for the story. In addition, there are a number of other sources (Arabic, Armenian) that represent the events in a different light. Perhaps the key point in the whole episode is the charge in witchcraft. What was the nature of this charge, were there any other similar cases and was it possible for such an accusation to become a question of diplomatic exchange and even military conflict? The offered presentation will try to give answers of these questions.