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Marital Diplomacy on the Periphery - Nogai and the Southeastern Europe

During the last three decades of the thirteenth century Nogai, a member of the side branch of the Juchid ruling lineage, became undisputed ruler of the region between the Lower Dnieper and the Lower Danube. De facto independent from the central power of the Golden Horde, he gradually extended his sphere of influence within the Juchid domains, but also over its borders, primarily in the Carpathian-Danubian region and the Medieval Balkans.

During his career, Nogai actively pursued establishment of the marital relations between his family and other branches of the Chingisids in Central Asia and Persia. He also established close ties with the ruling dynasties in Byzantium and Bulgaria. Around 1273 Nogai took Euphrosyne, illegitimate daughter of Byzantine emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos as his wife. Between 1285 and 1290 his oldest son Chaka married a Bulgarian princess, daughter of George I Terter. Her brother, Bulgarian prince Theodore Svetoslav, married a cousin of Nogai who converted to Orthodox faith and eventually became the empress of Bulgaria. Evidently, Nogai's marital diplomacy served to actively and simultaneously promote the elevation of his prestige in the Mongol world and the spread of his power over the Christian states on the borders of the Golden Horde.