



ELJIGIDEI

ELJIGIDEI (Īlčiktāy, Īljīkdāy), the name of two Mongol generals.

1. An army commander under Čengīz Khan (q.v.), responsible for the destruction of Herat. Upon hearing that the people of Herat had rebelled and killed the governors recently appointed by the Mongols, in Šawwāl 618/November-December 1221 Čengīz Khan dispatched Eljigidei from Ġazna with 80,000 men to raze the city and exterminate its inhabitants. Following a siege of seven months' duration, Herat fell in Jomādā I 619/June-July 1222. The slaughter of the inhabitants, set by the local chronicler Sayf Heravī at the incredible figure of over one million lasted for eight days with no regard for age or sex; the buildings were destroyed and the walls were leveled. After Eljigidei's withdrawal, a detachment of 2,000 horsemen was sent back to kill those who had hidden from the conquerors. According to Waṣṣāf (p. 12), when Čengīz Khan nominated a general to command a *hazāra* on behalf of each of his four sons in northeastern Persia and the Indian borderlands, Eljigidei was appointed to represent the eldest, Tūšī (i.e., Joči, the ancestor of the khans of the Golden Horde).

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Habīb al-sīar, Tehran, III, pp. 42-44.

Sayf b. Moḥammad Heravī, *Tārīk-nāma-ye Herāt*, ed. M.-Z. Şeddīqī, Calcutta, 1944; repr. Tehran, 1352 Š./1973, pp. 76-81.

Tārīk-e Waşşāf, p. 12.

2. Mongol general in Persia (d. 649 or 650/1251-52). Of unknown tribal affiliation, he is probably identical with the person of that name appointed by the great khan (*qāḡan*) Ögödei (*qā'ān* Oktāy) to command the guards (*Secret History*, par. 278). Following the election of Ögödei's son Güyüg in 644/1246, Eljigidei was given the command of a force raised for a fresh campaign in western Asia. He was especially entrusted with the affairs of Rūm, Georgia, Aleppo, Mosul, and Takrūr (Cilician Armenia) in order that nobody else might interfere with them (Jovaynī, ed. Qazvīnī, I, p. 212). His appointment was apparently designed to counter the influence of the *qā'ān*'s cousin Batu (Bātū), the ruler of the Golden Horde, in northwestern Persia. Eljigidei was given command over the forces at one time headed by Čormāḡun (Čormāḡūn, q.v.) in that region (Abramowski, 1976, p. 152) and currently under the authority of Baiju (Bāyjū, q.v.). Eljigidei's arrival at Talas (Ṭarāz) in Turkestan coincided with the death in April 1248 of the *qā'ān* Güyüg, who had himself begun to move west against Batu. He appears to have halted in eastern Iran. Upon arrival in Khorasan, he encamped in the Bādḡīs region, where his army made heavy demands on the inhabitants (Jovaynī, II, p. 249). When Möngke (Mankū) was elected *qā'ān* in 649/1251 after a three-year interregnum, Eljigidei, as an adherent of Güyüg's family, fled but was arrested by agents of Batu and sent to their master, who ordered his execution; a Chinese source of the Mongol era, the *Yüan Shih*, dates his death in the winter of 1251-52 (Abramowski, 1979, p. 20). His son Harḡasun (Arḡāsūn), an old enemy of Batu (*Secret History*, par. 275), was also put to death (Jovaynī, III, p. 58).

It was probably from Khorasan (*in finibus Persidis a parte Orientis*) that Eljigidei wrote in Moḥarram 646/May 1248 the celebrated letter which reached Louis IX of France in Cyprus in September and sought to ensure that the king led his crusade against Egypt rather than countries within the Mongol sphere of influence, also expressing concern for the treatment of non-Latin Christians in Frankish territory; his envoys assured Louis that Eljigidei himself was a Christian and that the *qā'ān* had been baptized (D'Achery, p. 627). Regrettably,



Jovaynī apparently never wrote the chapter on Eljigidei promised in his *Tārīk-e Jahān-gošā* (III, p. 62); as a result, there exists some confusion regarding the general's movements. He has been identified incorrectly with the high-ranking adviser (*magnus consiliarius*), 'Angutha,' whose arrival at Baiju's encampment in the summer of 1247 is reported in Simon de Saint-Quentin's account of the papal mission to Baiju (Richard, p. 110) ; but this person was in all likelihood the fiscal official Arḡūn Āqā (q.v.). At this time Eljigidei was still in the far east, for the *Yüan Shih* dates his departure from Mongolia in September 1247.

(for cited works not given in detail, see "Short References"):

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