Hulagu Khan Encyclopedia Article

Hulagu Khan

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Contents

Hulagu Khan Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Hulagu Khan.....3

Hulagu Khan

c. 1217-1265

Mongol ruler and founder of the Il-khanid dynasty who, while playing a major role in the destruction of medieval Iranian and Iraqi civilization, fostered learning through his assistance to al-Tusi and others. Grandson of Genghis Khan, Hulagu was sent westward by his brother Mangu, Genghis's successor as Great Khan. Hulagu broke the power of the Assassin sect (1256), executed the last of the Abbasid caliphs and destroyed Baghdad (1258), then, at the hands of the Mamluks in Nazareth, became the first Mongol leader to suffer a serious defeat (1260). Afterward he established the capital of his new dynasty at Maragheh, now in Azerbaijan, where he sponsored al-Tusi's creation of an outstanding observatory.