

= Toluid Civil War =

The Toluid Civil War was fought between Kublai Khan and his younger brother , Ariq Böke , from 1260 to 1264 . Möngke Khan died in 1259 with no declared successor , precipitating infighting between members of the Tolui family line for the title of Great Khan that escalated to a civil war . The Toluid Civil War , and the wars that followed it (such as the Berke ? Hulagu war and the Kaidu ? Kublai war) , weakened the authority of the Great Khan over the Mongol Empire and split the empire into autonomous khanates .

= = Background = =

The Tolui family successfully enthroned their candidate for Great Khan , Möngke , in the kurultais of 1250 and 1251 . The Ögedeid candidate for Great Khan , Shiremun , and his cousin Nakhu , were embittered by their loss and plotted a failed assassination of Möngke . Möngke took revenge by purging his opponents in the royal house , and members of both the Chagatai and Ögedei families .

Möngke handed control over the Caucasus region to the Golden Horde in 1252 . With the approval of Möngke , Berke succeeded his brother , Batu , as Khan of the Golden Horde in Russia in 1255 . Hulagu of the Ilkhanate seized control of the Caucasus from the Golden Horde , and his sacking of Baghdad in 1258 angered Berke , a convert to Islam . Möngke Khan died in 1259 without appointing a successor . He likely favored Ariq Böke , whom Möngke designated in 1258 as commander of Karakorum (then capital of the empire) , but he did little else to secure Ariq Böke 's claim to the throne .

= = Civil war = =

Kublai Khan was campaigning against the southern Song in 1260 when he received news that Ariq Böke was challenging him for the succession of the throne . Ariq Böke formed alliances with powerful members of the Mongol nobility to endorse him as a candidate for Great Khan . Most of Möngke 's immediate family supported Ariq Böke . Kublai withdrew from the Song and mobilized his troops to fight Ariq Böke . In China , Kublai summoned a kurultai at Kaiping , where he was elected Great Khan . This was the first kurultai to proclaim a Great Khan outside the Mongol homeland or Central Asia . Ariq Böke convened his own kurultai in Karakorum that proclaimed him Great Khan a month later , creating two rival claimants for the throne . Hulagu embarked for Mongolia to attend the kurultai , but the Mamluk defeat of the Mongols at the Battle of Ain Jalut forced him to retreat back to the Middle East . Berke capitalized on the Mamluk victory by invading the Ilkhanate , beginning the Berke ? Hulagu war .

Ariq Böke allied with Berke Khan of the Golden Horde and Alghu of the Chagatai Khanate . Hulagu of the Ilkhanate was the sole ally of Kublai Khan . Berke supported Ariq Böke because he was resentful of Hulagu , who had close ties with Kublai . Hulagu and Berke , however , became occupied with their own war and could not intervene in the Toluid Civil War .

Kublai had access to supplies from the fertile lands of China , while Ariq Böke had to import resources to Karakorum in the semi @-@ arid steppes . Kublai Khan depended on these supplies from China and therefore needed Chinese popular support to win the civil war . Kublai ingratiated himself to his subjects with the help of his Chinese advisers . He presented himself as a sage emperor capable of uniting the Chinese , and Ariq Böke as a destructive usurper . Kublai promised to reduce taxes , modeled his government institutions to resemble those of the Chinese dynasties , and adopted the era name of Zhongtong , which means " moderate rule " . His policies were popular in northern China , but had no impact on his relations with the Southern Song . The Song invaded while Kublai was preoccupied with the civil war , and recovered territory previously lost to the Mongols . Kublai dispatched a diplomat , Hao Jing , to discuss the prospects of a peaceful resolution to the war with the Southern Song . The Song , however , rejected Kublai 's overtures and imprisoned Hao for the next decade .

Kublai now controlled three of the four possible supply lines to Karakorum . Kadan , Kublai 's

Ögedeid ally , defended the territories of the former Western Xia from Ariq Böke and commanded the forces stationed in Gansu . Kublai 's troops guarded the area surrounding Yan (modern Beijing) . The only supply line still open to Ariq Böke was the Yenisei River valley in the northwest . When Kublai 's army advanced towards Karakorum in late 1260 , Ariq Böke retreated from Karakorum to a tributary of the Yenisei . The oncoming winter then compelled Kublai and Ariq Böke to encamp their armies and wait for spring .

In the interim , Kublai acquired more supplies and men . He fortified Yan and the border defenses of northern China . Kadan defeated and executed Alandar , a general sent to secure the vital Central Asian trade routes for Ariq Böke . Lian Xixian , one of Kublai 's Confucian advisers , commanded soldiers for the khan in western China . He won a victory against Ariq Böke 's ally , Liu Taiping , in northwestern China , seizing food supplies intended for Ariq Böke 's army . Lian also drove supporters of Ariq Böke out of the towns of Liangzhou and Ganzhou . In southwestern China , his forces protected Sichuan from Ariq Böke 's encroaching troops . Kublai paid Kadan and Lian Xixian handsomely for their military service in gifts and promotions . He rewarded Kadan with 300 packs of silk and 300 taels of silver , and appointed Lian Xixian to the position of Prime Minister of the Right in the Secretariat .

Kublai 's victories left Alghu as Ariq Böke 's only standing ally . Ariq Böke convinced Alghu to take control of the Chagatai Khanate in Central Asia . Chagatai 's khan , Qara Hülëgü , had recently died . Alghu fought and killed Abishkha , a rival claimant to the throne endorsed by Kublai as ruler of the khanate . Alghu was one of Ariq Böke 's strongest supporters and he appointed him khan of Chagatai . The khanate became an important source of Ariq Böke 's provisions . Ariq Böke gave Alghu complete control over tax revenues in the region .

In 1261 , Kublai and Ariq Böke engaged in battle at Shimultai . Ariq Böke lost the battle and retreated . He returned to the region ten days later to challenge Kublai 's forces near the Khingan Mountains of eastern Mongolia . The troops that Ariq Böke attacked were not personally led by Kublai , and made up only a small portion of Kublai 's army . Even so , the battle ended in a stalemate . Meanwhile , most of Mongolia was now under the control of Kublai , threatening Ariq Böke 's control of the Yenisei Valley supply line . A weakened Ariq Böke entreated Alghu for help . Alghu refused , and executed the envoys sent by Ariq Böke , who had demanded a share of Alghu 's tax revenues .

At this time , a rebellion in China distracted Kublai from the civil war , and he departed for Kaiping instead of further pursuing Ariq Böke . Ariq Böke went to war with Alghu after the threat of an attack by Kublai receded . Alghu defeated Ariq Böke 's commander , Khara Bukha , near the Ili River in Xinjiang , but lost his headquarters at Almalikh to Ariq Böke . He withdrew to the oasis cities of the Tarim Basin .

Ariq Böke was now left with few allies , and several of his supporters deserted from his side . Ürüng Tash , son of Möngke , defected , taking his father 's tamga seal from Ariq Böke and giving it to Kublai as a symbol of his loyalty . Alghu then returned to the Ili River to remove Ariq Böke from Xinjiang . Ariq Böke lacked the resources or the allies to defend himself . He surrendered to Kublai in 1264 , ending the civil war .

= = Aftermath = =

Kublai imprisoned Ariq Böke , but did not immediately punish him . Kublai 's supporters wanted retribution , so Kublai ignored Ariq Böke for a year as punishment . He conducted a purge to eliminate officials in the Mongol government who sympathized with Ariq Böke . Kublai accused Bolghai , an important Mongol official who served under Möngke , of treachery for conspiring with Ariq Böke . Kublai authorized the execution of Bolghai and other Ariq Böke supporters . Kublai summoned a kurultai to decide a punishment for Ariq Böke and solidify his own claim to the throne . Kublai was reluctant to punish his brother without public support of the Mongol nobility . Ariq Böke died mysteriously in 1266 while still imprisoned , leading to speculation that Kublai had secretly poisoned him .

Ariq Böke 's defeat by Kublai could not stop the fracturing of the empire . When Kublai convened

his kurultai to confirm his status as Great Khan , none of the three other khans attended . Berke and Hulagu continued fighting , until Hulagu died in 1265 . The Ögedei line sought to exploit the disunity to advance the interests of their own family . They held a grudge against the Tolui family for the kurultai of 1251 and the subsequent purge of the Ögedeids after the assassination plot . Kaidu , from the Ögedei family , believed that a member of the Ögedeids deserved the title of Great Khan and started an insurrection in 1269 against Kublai that lasted for decades .

Most of the western khanates did not recognize Kublai as Great Khan . Although some of them still asked Kublai to confirm the enthronement of their new regional khans , the four khanates were functionally independent sovereign states . The Ilkhanate based in Persia and the Yuan dynasty based in China had close diplomatic relations , and shared scientific and cultural knowledge , but military cooperation between all four Mongol khanates would never occur again ? the united Mongol Empire had disintegrated .