

Hulegu Warns the Sultan

The Mongol Ilkhan Hugelū, a letter to Al Malek Annsar, Sultan of Aleppo, 1259 CE

We sat down before Baghdad in the 655th year (of the Hejra,) and took it by the sword of the most high God: and we brought the master of it before us, and demanded two things of him; to which he, not answering, brought deserved punishment upon himself. As it is written in your Koran, "God doth not change the condition of a people, till their own minds are changed." He took care of his wealth, and fate brought him to what he is come to. He chose to exchange precious lives for pieces of money made of vile metal; which is plainly the same that God says They found [the reward of] what they had done present with them. For we have attained by the power of God, what we desired; and by the help of the most high God we shall increase. Nor is there any doubt of our being the army of God upon his earth. He created us, and gave us power over every one upon whom his anger rests. Wherefore, let what is past be to you an example, and what we have mentioned a warning. Fortifications are nothing in our hands, nor doth the joining of battle avail you any thing; nor will your entreaties be heard or regarded. We have wasted countries, we have destroyed men, we have made children orphans, and the land desolate. It is your business to run away; ours to pursue; nor can you escape our swords, nor fly from our arrows. Our horses are racers; our arrows strike home; our swords pierce like lightning; our fortifications are like mountains, and our numbers like the sand. Whosoever surrenders comes off safe: whosoever is for war, repents it. If you will obey our command, and come to our terms, your interest and ours shall be the same; but if you be refractory and persist in your error, blame not us, but yourselves. God is against you, ye wicked wretches: look out for something to screen you under your miseries, and find somebody to bear you company in your affliction. We have given you fair warning, and fair warning is fair play. You have eaten things forbidden, you have been perfidious in your treaties. You have introduced new heresies, and thought it a gallant thing to commit sodomy. Prepare yourselves therefore for scorn and contempt. Now you will find what you have done; for they that have done amiss, will now find their state changed. You take it for granted, that we are infidels. We take it for granted, that you are villains; and He by whose hand all things are disposed and determined, hath given us the dominion over you. The greatest man you have is despicable among us; and what you call rich, is a beggar. We govern the world from east to west, and whosoever is worth any thing is our prey; and we take every ship by force. Weigh therefore what is fit to be done, and return us a speedy answer, before infidelity shall have kindled its fire, and scattered its sparks among you, and destroy you all from off the face of the earth. We have awakened you by sending to you: make haste with an answer, lest punishment come upon you unawares.

Source this document by writing a **SENTENCE OF SOURCING** and a **SENTENCE OF ANALYSIS** explaining the relevance of one of the following:

Historical Situation—**I**ntended **A**udience—**P**oint of View—**P**urpose—**wh**Y the sourcing affects your use of the document.