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FROM COLLECTIVE SOVEREIGNTY TO AUTOCRACY: THE EVOLUTION OF THE MONGOL EMPIRE, 1227-1251

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BY

MICHAEL J. BECHTEL

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For Liv

When all of this began, she said to me,
“There is a reason men dedicate their work to women.”

Now I know.

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§1 Introduction

§1.1 Objectives

This dissertation is about collective sovereignty in the Mongol Empire. It examines the period of 1227 to 1251 to understand the transformation of Mongol rule from collective sovereignty toward autocracy. David Sneath explains collective sovereignty as "a common project of the ruling house, line or clan, represented by the sovereign as its head."[1] The head of collective sovereignty in the Mongol Empire was the qan or qa'an (after 1229). This technique of rule provided a rudimentary administration in the early Mongol confederation, sufficient for their limited needs through the reign of Činggis Qan (d. 1227). After 1227, diversification of administrative technologies and the implementation of bureaucratic institutions were instigated by growth of the Mongol polity and demands made upon the ruling house as a result of successful conquests. Collective sovereignty gave way to administration and bureaucratic institutions in a gradual transformation of the Mongol ruling structure, converting the qa'an into an increasingly autocratic office.[2] This reconfiguration was a gradual process which this

[1] David Sneath, ed., *Imperial Statecraft*: *Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries* (Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University for Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit, University of Cambridge, 2006), 7.

[2] The notion of the qa'an as an office is suggested by the work of Jack Goody. He describes that an essential element to an office is how the role is acquired; that is, as a "prerogative of a few." Thus, an office is "a superordinate role, entry to which is restricted, selective, i.e. . . . a scarce resource." Further description and the literature influencing his understanding of the title are provided in Jack Goody, ed., *Succession to High Office* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), Appendix I, 171.

dissertation argues took place 1227-51 as the consequence of the actions of several personalities not usually considered actors in the early Mongol Empire.

The basic premises found in this dissertation about collective sovereignty in the Mongol state derive from a 2006 collection of studies on steppe political practices, *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries*.[3] In this volume edited by David Sneath, scholars such as Christopher Atwood, Peter B. Golden, Michal Biran, Thomas Allsen, and others explore the expression of political authority in steppe states. As understood by these scholars, the tradition of collective sovereignty in steppe confederations preceded the advent of the Mongol Empire and continued in several variations through the seventeenth century.

Prerequisite to the examination of the transformation of ruling practices in the Mongol Empire is a coherent narrative of the period between 1227 and 1251, which comprises the 24 years between Činggis Qan's death in 1227 and the selection of his grandson, Möngke, to the office of qa'an in 1251. In this period, the tribal confederation—the Yeke Mongol Ulus—of Činggis Qan, characterized by collective sovereignty and militarized steppe society, transitioned to a state—the Mongol Empire—with standing armies, a complex bureaucratic organization, and an institutionalized administration marked by a trend that favored autocratic and centralizing rule. At the same time, demands of rule over geographically vast and culturally varied domains strained many of the mechanisms of control that had served the Mongols successfully in their rapid empire-building enterprise. By 1251, the office of qa'an, the unity of the Mongol state, and the mechanisms of collective sovereignty were already past their zenith. Thus, 1227-51 is a

[3] Sneath, *Imperial Statecraft*.

period critical to understanding the evolution of Mongol Empire and the nature of early Mongol administrative practices. The *quriltai* of 1228-29 created the office of qa'an, recognizing that management of conquered civilizations required discrete administrative techniques and bureaucratic apparatuses in order to sustain a supply of wealth for redistribution among stakeholders. From these premises, this dissertation proceeds with an analysis of early Mongol Empire.

This dissertation is intended to contribute to the body of scholarship on the Mongols and Mongol Empire by, first, filling a perceived gap in the literature concerning the person of Ögödei (1186-1241) and the impact of his reign as qa'an (1229-41). This is examined in §2, "Mongol Empire at its Apogee: the Reign of Ögödei Qa'an, 1229-1241." As the first qa'an, Ögödei was responsible for developing the infrastructure of collection and redistribution that would transform conquests of urban civilizations into steady sources of wealth. The want of any in-depth study of Ögödei and his role in the history of the Mongol Empire is an obstacle to a full understanding of the trajectory of Mongol dominance and the transformation of Mongol confederation toward an autocratic state. In order to assess Ögödei and the impact of his actions as qa'an, it is necessary to also give an account of his successors up to 1251. To this end, I devote §3, "End of the Empire: Upheaval, Reversal, and Overreach, 1241-1251," to the decade during which Töregene, Güyük, and Oghul Qaimiš held the office of qa'an—though I also revisit the years 1235-41 in the narrative of Töregene which overlaps with that of Ögödei in the previous section. Sections 2 and 3 fill a gap in the literature that does not usually treat Ögödei's reign and those of his successors as an interconnected period and, as a result, does not sufficiently consider the regencies of Töregene and Oghul Qaimiš despite their combined rule of more than eight of those ten years. One criticism of my treatment of the period 1227-51 is the

inattention to the short regency of Tolui from 1227-29. The reasons for this are explained in §2, but I will add here that Tolui's regency was unlike those that came later in both his duties and the nature of the administrative apparatuses he was assigned to oversee. Ögödei's impact upon the governing frameworks of the Mongol Empire were so extensive that the regencies of Töregene and Oghul Qaimiš, on the one hand, and Tolui, on the other, shared little in common besides their interstitial service before the election of candidates for qa'an. Tolui's most important contribution during the years after Činggis Qan's death and before Ögödei's enthronement was as the convener of the *quriltai*, discussed in detail in §2. Finally, my assessment of the years 1227 to 1251 is made more coherent by also presenting a section that outlines the transitional aspects of the period. Breaking from the chronological narrative of §§2 and 3, §4, "Transition to Autocracy: the Waning of Collective Sovereignty," is predominantly analytical, revisiting some of the events from the preceding sections and making connections between these events that support my arguments. The emphasis in §4 is upon the institutions and mechanisms of the evolving Mongol bureaucratic organization during the time of Ögödei that serve to connect the conquests of Činggis Qan with the entity of Mongol Empire. Section 4 deals directly with the transition from collective sovereignty before and during the reign of Ögödei, toward autocratic rule that followed his death and led to the so-called "Toluid Coup." The project concludes with §5, "Conclusion," an evaluation of the preceding sections and some thoughts on how they may contribute to a continued project of reassessment concerning the dissolution of the Mongol Empire.

§1.2 Methods

The methods employed in this dissertation vary by chapter but consist of two main approaches. First, sources have been synthesized to construct the narrative of Ögödei, Töregene, Güyük, and Oghul Qaimiš as presented in §§2 and 3. Second, analysis of events in the narrative based upon close reading of sources and literature is the primary approach to §4. The Persian sources are available in several editions and even in various translations. I have referred to translations only in the instances in which comments or differences of interpretation by the translators are germane to the discussion. The Chinese sources are also easily accessible in the original Chinese, though the chapter that concerns the biographies of Ögödei and Güyük had no translation available and my translation and use of this material is explained in §1.4, below. Finally, I have not used the Mongol sources in the original Mongolian. Instead, I rely upon Igor de Rachewiltz's translation of the *Secret History* accompanied by his extensive commentary. Further details about sources and my use of them are found in §1.4. While the composition of the story of Ögödei, Töregene, Güyük, and Oghul Qaimiš fills a gap in the literature on Mongol Empire, the sources used to do so are familiar to scholars and no new or under-utilized documents contribute to this project. Instead, I have sought to incorporate both the eastern (Chinese and Mongolian) and western (Persian) sources in the creation of a narrative for 1227-51.

Section 4 differs methodologically from §§2 and 3. Revisiting some of the events described in the preceding sections, §4 examines both previous scholarship as well as literature that is theoretically relevant to my arguments. Having established the narrative for 1227-51, I argue in §4 for a reconsideration of the Toluid coup and make a case for surveying the era of the

Ögödeids as the period in which the Mongol Empire reached its fullest potential. Section 4 draws on a variety of literature and is intended to instigate a reconsideration of our assumptions about 1227-51 and the significance of the period in our understanding of the Mongol Empire. The details of the literature and sources used are discussed in the opening paragraphs of §4, as they are for §§2 and 3.

§1.2.1 Transliteration: As with all works attempting to provide transliterations from a variety of languages, I have been faced with the dilemma of accuracy versus familiarity for commonly known words, titles, and names. In general, I have opted for accuracy over common usage, as is expected in a work meant for specialist readers. Where necessary for clarity, I have made references to the more commonly known spellings or forms of words in explanatory notes.

Place names have been a particularly thorny problem and I have tried to address this in various ways, aiming always for perspicuity over slavish reproduction of the sources. I have attempted to, first, make it possible for the reader to identify locations in relation to their modern place names; and second, to provide enough information that variations in spellings within sources—as well as differing names for the same places between sources—do not present obstacles to the reader. Except in the rare instances in which variations in place names are relevant to the narrative, I have placed most of the discussions, which include identifications of modern geographic references, in substantive footnotes.

For Chinese terms, I have used both characters and 漢語拼音 Hanyu pinyin transliteration where appropriate, using only Hanyu pinyin after the first instance in the text, as in this sentence. This practice follows the recommendations of the 17th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* and the Library of Congress recommendation for the use of Hanyu pinyin in all

writing about China or the Chinese Language.[4] I have not included tonal markers. Some pronunciations for Chinese characters from the *Yuanshi* may have differed significantly from the modern Chinese pronunciations, thus bringing the use of modern Hanyu pinyin into question. Though there are examples in which a more careful consideration of these issues is apposite, I have determined in all cases that taking up directly the philological considerations would not advance the historical narrative that I have chosen to present. The choice to provide the current Hanyu pinyin transliterations makes the use of modern dictionaries and references straightforward for the reader. I have provided only traditional (not simplified) characters, in keeping with the sources used for this project.

For Persian, I have followed the forms of transliteration suggested by the *International Journal for Middle Eastern Studies*. Thus, for the transliterated Persian terms and names that are used frequently, I have chosen, for example, to render Juvainī for جوینی; for رشیدالدین, Rashīd al-Dīn; جامع التواریخ as *Jāmi‘ al-tavārīkh*; and تاریخ جهانگشای as *Tārīkh-i jahān gushāy*. In Persian as with other languages, where I have found it necessary to quote non-English sources, I have done so in the source language, in accordance with the recommendations of the *Chicago Manual of Style*.[5]

For most Mongolian and Turkic transliterations, I have followed the forms used by Igor

[4] *The Chicago Manual of Style*, ed. University of Chicago Press, 17th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), §11.52, 651; *ALA-LC Romanization Tables: Transliteration Schemes for Non-Roman Scripts*, ed. Randall K. Barry (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1997). http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/roman.html.

[5] Except where quoting sources directly, I have only provided transliteration for Persian terms in contrast to providing the Chinese characters for all Chinese names and terms. Persian can be accurately represented by transliteration but Hanyu pinyin alone is not sufficient for conveying the meaning of Chinese terms. *The Chicago Manual of Style*, §11.72.

de Rachewiltz in his three-volume *Secret History*,[6] which is the form that appears in most all of his later work. Otherwise, any transliterations or transcriptions found within quotes or contained in block quotes follow the form used by the source or author referenced. Where I have made changes to a quoted text for reasons of lucidity, emphasis, or correction, I have included an explanatory note indicating so except where changes are minor and obvious, in which cases I have simply set them off with the customary brackets. All transliterations in citations and bibliographies are consistent with their Library of Congress cataloging entries; I have made no changes to these records and many of them are therefore not consistent with the transliterations used in the text.

§1.2.2 Dates and Calendars: I have chosen to express dates using only the common era throughout this dissertation, omitting era designations for CE but including BCE, where appropriate. The rationale for this is twofold. First, the main sources used in this project mainly follow four different calendars: Hijri, Chinese regnal, Chinese lunar, and Mongolian lunar. The latter two calendars are found in several variations throughout the sources. In addition to the necessity of providing dates in at least each of these calendaring systems, would have been the extensive explanations required by the frequent inaccuracy of the dates used in, especially, *Jāmi*ʿ *al-tavārīkh* and the *Yuanshi*.

Second, study of the Mongol Empire straddles several fields of inquiry, each with an established methodological approach and expectations concerning use of calendars—a

[6] Igor de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols: a Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, Brill's Inner Asian library, (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Igor de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols: a Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century (Supplement)*, Brill's Inner Asian library, (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

circumstance that is representative of one of the problems in the fields of Mongol studies that I wish this dissertation to help overcome. This is, namely, the isolation of each approach from the others. American research on Central Eurasia suffers from, among other things, a budgetary legacy of Title VI of the National Defense Education Act. The funding of students and programs according to languages studied has resulted in a practical obstacle for the training of many scholars in fields in which relevant languages fall into separate budget categories. My own experience is consistent with this and my inclination is to contribute to an end of this isolationism. I have confidence that, should said scholars find it necessary to convert the dates given in this dissertation to whichever calendar systems are pertinent for their work, they can easily do so by consulting referenced sources.

§1.2.3 Terminology: Consistent with my attempts to construct a new approach to the period of Mongol study in this dissertation, I have used some terms that require explanation. Frequently used—and probably grating for anyone accustomed to the terminology common in Mongol studies—is the term "stakeholder." This is employed as an inclusive term meant to include aristocracy, oligarchy, elites, military leaders, and all others who were recipients of the highest levels of redistributed taxes and booty and, thus, had an interest in the trajectory and decisions of the Mongol state. It is intentionally imprecise in order to reflect the fluidity of this group which may at times have included confederates and others such as non-steppe companions and those holding places in the inner circles of the Mongol hierarchy.

I occasionally use "elite" in this dissertation. Generally, I employ the word broadly to refer to an elevated segment of a particular group of people, in this case, usually Mongol. It includes but is not coterminous with other terms such as "aristocracy" or "nobility." I seldom use

these latter words in this work, as they come with a particular set of preconceptions—precisely the conceptions I am attempting to avoid, focusing as they do on the institutionalization of the Mongols' empire. Usually for my purposes, I intend for the term "elite" to be imprecise, and to convey a sense of a privileged class of Mongols and their constituents. The term is usually used in contrast to "administrators" or "bureaucrats." In such cases, I am intending to emphasize the characteristics that separate the administrative laborers from the inner circle (at whatever level) of Mongol stakeholders.[7] Finally, I have found it helpful to keep in mind Anatoly Khazanov's observation that the upper classes in nomadic states were only thus in relation to subject peoples.[8] I follow this usage throughout, usually only applying the word "elite" in juxtaposition to lower-ranking steppe peoples and conquered subjects—and usually only those conquered subjects who were conscripted or employed in the Mongol state apparatus. Class divisions among the steppe peoples, usually recognized by *aq-* (white) and *qara-* (black) prefixes are generally not relevant to the discussions in this dissertation.

§1.2.4 Conventions: A few mechanical and style comments will aid in clarity. First, when quoting directly from sources, I have done so in the original language. I have only made direct quotes from sources where I determined that doing so would reduce confusion, allow the reader to see the cause of some speculation, or when needed to support some assertion that I suspect

[7] This use and its rationale follows that of Nicola Di Cosmo as explained in *Nomad Aristocrats in a World of Empires*, ed. Jürgen Paul, Nomaden und Sesshafte, (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2013), 23.

[8] He is specifically referring, in this instance, to ancient Turkic peoples, but the observation is relevant for our usage, here. Anatoly M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, 2nd ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 256.

will be met with doubt. In general, quotes (“”) are only used around citations from sources when necessary for clarity or to avoid confusion; otherwise, the change in language indicates a quote from sources. Because the primary Chinese source for Ögödei and Güyük is not available in a reliable translation, I have provided both translation and original text (in some combination of text and notes) in all cases in which I make a direct reference. I have done this in order to aid the reader without knowledge of Chinese; several translations of *Tārīkh-i jahān gushāy*, *Jāmi‘ al-tavārīkh*, and *The Secret History* are readily available. All other conventions of form, mechanics, and usage adhere to the guidelines recommended by the seventeenth edition (2017) of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

§1.3 Theses

The theses that underlie this dissertation are formulations of issues that I have repeatedly encountered in my long study of Central Eurasia. Additionally, I am a historian in the discipline of the Humanities and this shapes my approach to the practice of history in ways that will be evident throughout my work. In the present project, my attempts to explore theses with due consideration for the intentions and motivations of the actors has been a determinative factor in my arguments. Endeavors to discern the thoughts and values of those long dead are accompanied by many perils, but I nonetheless believe that the efforts to understand historical events in this way—and not, necessarily, the results of those efforts—have the potential for valuable contributions to our ongoing collective ventures to understand human behavior and the past’s relationship to the present.

Two central theses of this dissertation concern the nature of Mongol rule. The first thesis

is that empire for the Mongols was achieved through the efforts of Ögödei's bureaucratic organization and was the result of the stakeholders' decision to create the office of qa'an at the *quriltai* of 1228-29. This empire of a single political body, incorporated in a cohesive Mongol state, was short-lived and did not survive the reign of Ögödei. The second thesis is a corollary of the first: as a consequence of the efforts of Ögödei's bureaucratic organization to meet the duties of the office of qa'an, the position accrued autocratic powers to the extent that, by the election of Möngke in 1251, there was a discernible shift toward centralization and an increase of invested authority in the qa'an. Though the qa'an never evolved into a fully absolute ruler, this dissertation specifically highlights the trend toward autocracy that is discernible in 1227-51. Such a development in the position of qa'an was facilitated by a simultaneous disintegration of the governing body of stakeholders who expressed their collective sovereignty through the *quriltai*. Because the Mongol state during the era examined here is routinely referred to as Mongol Empire, we cannot avoid the question of empire and its meanings in this project. I wish to provide a corrective to the practice that reference to empire is made with little real consideration for whether or not this appellation would have made sense to the contemporary Mongols.

Additionally, some of the questions adumbrated by this dissertation concern the meaning and notional structures of imperial authority and the sociopolitical formations that correspond to empires. The following discussions are an attempt to address how concepts of empire and the literature that endeavors to describe empire contribute to understanding the Mongol state before 1251. Because these issues run throughout the dissertation, I discuss them in detail in §§1.3.1 and 1.3.2.

§1.3.1 Collective Sovereignty vs. Autocracy: The relationship between pastoralism and agriculture remains a major theme in the study of Central Eurasian history. In the reign of Ögödei, this relationship played out on a continental scale wherein pastoral elite and urban administration were engaged in an ongoing negotiation concerning the governing and management of an incipient empire and expanding conquest polity. Ögödei was at the center and, around him, these constituencies revolved. The conflict, however, was not about methods of sustenance but, instead, the exercise of authority and the nature of rule. The reign of Ögödei was a pivotal phase in the political history of the Mongol Empire, as the period of Mongol conquest and rule reached its apex under Ögödei. Building upon the momentum of conquest under Činggis Qan, the Jin campaigns during the first half of Ögödei's reign were the crowning achievement of the cooperative steppe military. Still, the campaigns organized at the *quriltai* of 1235 were larger and more ambitious than any that had come before. Likewise, the acumen for utilizing human resources exhibited by Činggis Qan put capable bureaucrats at Ögödei's disposal and his own managerial aptitude extended the effectiveness of his administration even further.

With the success over the Jin, the Mongols were handed a new set of problems on a very large scale: they found themselves responsible for one of the largest and most complex agricultural societies in all of Eurasia. Chinese socio-political practices had evolved around the demands of agriculture and, at least in theory, had devised solutions for the myriad challenges of rule particular to that form of civilization. Agricultural cycles and the nature of the risks that were part of agricultural production required a conservative approach to the investment of resources and the need for a heavily bureaucratized system of oversight. Not only such factors as climate changes, weather, and other threats to the crop had to be addressed, but there was need for considerable investment in defense of immovable property. The infrastructure necessary for

irrigation and crop maintenance further obliged managing institutions to construct defensive infrastructure: walls, fortifications, standing military, costly policies of interference in the politics of potential enemies, and the trade of goods to keep potential threats satiated. Tax collection networks were put in place in order to ensure enough wealth and resources to provide these defensive measures and maintain agricultural infrastructure. The systems were multilayered, the participants each hoping to reserve as much as possible for themselves while giving as little as required. These factors all contributed to the development of centralizing government and the growth of institutions of management.

The varieties of pastoralism practiced on the Mongolian steppe, on the other hand, necessitated the immediate investment of available resources and wealth into the production cycle. Under ideal conditions, animal production increased exponentially and the holding back of available resources against the possibility of future difficulties was less beneficial than the potential gains, for example, of increasing the size of herds and flocks, or acquiring additional or improved grazing lands. All of which was facilitated by, or a consequence of, the necessity of movement. "The technique of pastoral economy is affected by the sovereign importance of movement," Owen Lattimore observed in 1940, "just as the crucial, privileged importance of the control of human labor in China limited the development of labor-saving devices."[9] Furthermore, pastoralism discouraged populous communities of people—especially in marginal lands such as the Eurasian steppe—because of the burden placed upon pasture lands when large numbers of

[9] Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1940), 67.

animals and people came together.[10] Decentralization of communities being the most productive model for successful pastoralism, the creation of centralized systems of management was inefficient and costly. Therefore, immediate collection and divvying out of wealth sources was the most efficient and suitable method for enrichment. One of the consequences of this, however, was that centralizing structures of rule were largely irrelevant except in the cases of preparation for military campaign—which is primarily why Činggis Qan was able to consolidate power. In order to keep the separate segments of this large confederation willing to participate in collective, outwardly directed efforts, military actions on a large scale were necessary. The amount of wealth distributed among the confederated peoples—along with a certain level of coercion—was enough of a motivator for them to continue participation in the Mongol enterprise.

From these two divergent forms developed the two manifestations of political control at issue: collective sovereignty and autocracy. The decentralization that was most conducive to ruling steppe peoples meant that decisions effecting many or all of those peoples could not be made by any one powerful individual—with few exceptions, there were no such rulers. Instead, those who would have a voice in matters of negotiated society made their decisions collectively in occasional assemblies, known as *quriltai*. The phenomenon of the *quriltai* will play an important role in this dissertation, reflecting its vital prominence in the expression of Mongol authority and, before the transitions that led to the increasingly powerful role of the qa'an, the only legitimate forum in which to decide matters of state. Stakeholders in the Mongol Empire practiced their collective rule through the institution of the *quriltai*.

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[10] Owen Lattimore, "The Geographical Factor in Mongol History," *The Geographical Journal* 91, no. 1 (1938): 4.

Autocracy, in contrast, was how agricultural society—particularly the Chinese—had evolved to most effectively rule large numbers of people living in close quarters who depended upon the uninterrupted cycle of agricultural production. The populous bureaucratic organizations developed to address the challenges of urban society were pyramidal with an emperor at the apex in whom all final decisions were entrusted. A single, powerful authority who could make immediate and binding decisions for the entire bureaucratic organization meant swifter actions addressing challenges to commerce, resources, external threats, and all other matters that impacted very large numbers of subjects. When the Mongols in 1229 placed Ögödei in the office of qa'an, it was an acknowledgement that combining these two very different structures of authority required a novel approach. What the Mongols did not know then—because it had never been attempted on such a scale before—was that the kinetic energy of the autocratic societies over which they ruled would exert an influence that would undermine their own practice of collective sovereignty. The bureaucratic organizations inherited and evolved from the conquered civilizations forced the office of qa'an toward autocracy, straining the qa'an's relationship with the Mongol stakeholders while the confederation's cohesiveness eroded. These are the phenomena at the center of this dissertation and its examination of the individuals who held the office of qa'an from 1227 to 1251.

§1.3.2 Empire and the Mongols: Much of the literature on Mongol Empire does not take the speculative leaps necessary to close the gaps left by the sources and the Mongols' silence concerning themselves. The results are oversimplifications of their ambitions and political goals, leaving us with a thin, flat image of who and what they were. Take, as a representative example, this from Paul Buell:

> During most, if not all, of its existence the Mongolian empire was a tribal empire comprised almost exclusively of either purely nomadic elements or of mixed societies in which pastoralism and agriculture coexisted. Bureaucratic rule had only the most limited applicability in a tribal context. This fact, coupled with the inability of the *qan*'s household and bodyguard establishment to provide more than cadres and a distrust by the Mongols of native bureaucracies in the areas ruled by them, severely circumscribed the political evolution of the Mongolian empire.[11]

Leaving aside the issues of what "purely nomadic elements" might be and ignoring the fact that "pastoralism and agriculture coexisted" everywhere in Central Eurasia (and most other places where pastoralism existed, at all), Buell unfortunately perpetuates the idea that Mongols were incapable of understanding their own state and that their political acumen was limited to the "tribal context." The persistence of this approach to the Mongols is pervasive even in the present. If anything is "severely circumscribed" it is our ability to understand political evolution of the Mongolian empire according to Mongol expectations instead of our own assumptions. This is not a trivial point. Restructuring our analysis of Mongol Empire from the point of view that the Mongol state functioned as the Mongols intended opens the door for us better to understand the political organization of the "nomadic empire" or the "tribal state" or whatever category we have created to explain the sense we cannot make of Mongol politics. As a counterpart to the biographical and narrative contribution of this dissertation, I also take some first steps toward an explanation of Mongol Empire that assumes acuity on the part of the Mongols themselves in §4.

Činggis Qan is regularly lauded as a singular historical figure, a man of exceptional acumen, the "great man" *par excellence*.[12] At the same time, the agency and sophistication

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[11] Paul D. Buell, "Kalmyk Tanggaci People: Thoughts on the Mechanics and Impact of Mongol Expansion," *Mongolian Studies* 6 (1980): 43. Buell would not likely make these same statements, today; his more recent work reflects his evolving concepts of the Mongols and their state.

[12] Joel Achenbach, "The Era of His Ways: in which we choose the most important man of the last thousand years," *The Washington Post*, 31 December 1995.

necessary to have conceived and built the cosmopolitan empire that rapidly evolved out of their conquests is denied the Mongols. Instead, their ingenuity is reduced to a romanticized idea of Mongols as superior judges of character and potential—a more palatable take on the *passé* "noble savage," close to the earth and in tune with man and nature—but not erudite masters of the machinations of economy, trade, and urban management. This passage from James Waterson illustrates the point:

> Occupying Chinese territory and becoming one of the settled, as opposed to one of those who fed off the settled, was always likely to be a dangerous policy for any steppe tribe, as it would strain its political system. The organisation of these steppe tribal confederations was based on a very simple principle of exploitation of a cowed state and not on conquest of that state per se, and certainly not on the careful management, administration and husbandry of a settled state. For a tribal confederation leader to demand that his followers give up the saddle and bow and take up the administrator's chair, as we will see, was always likely to cause dissent among his own people. Furthermore, a steppe tribe, being made up of nomadic cavalry capable of striking randomly and quickly and at multiple locations, was not suited to controlling a region, and if it did take on garrisoning and consolidation as military tasks it sacrificed its very essence. Indeed, great steppe politician that he was, Chinggis Khan's invasion of China was arguably one of history's greatest political blunders. Any chance of longevity for the khan's steppe empire was essentially destroyed when he embroiled his nascent state in the conquest of China.[13]

On the other hand, more careful scholars, Thomas T. Allsen among them, advocate for a sober and inclusive view of the Mongols. As with many things to do with Mongol Empire, however, the popular, oversimplified understanding of the Mongols does not yield willingly to suggestions that they were as complex and complicated as anyone else. The surprise is that this approach to the Mongols is just as difficult to pry out of the work of trained scholars as it is from the popular narrative, as Waterson's observations show. Leaving aside any critical look at the

[13] James Waterson, *Defending Heaven: China's Mongol Wars, 1209-1370*, ed. John Man (Barnsley, S. Yorkshire: Frontline Books, 2013), 2-3. See also endnote 3 on page 204 for further comments on "one of history's greatest political blunders."

reliability of most of the numerous popular publications, their existence signals a deep collective desire to understand these people who had so little say for themselves. In some cases, Mongol voices can be heard through non-textual sources more clearly than through text, as is the case when it comes to this problem of divining Mongols' intentions and self-conceptions. Examining the physical evidence of Qaraqorum's existence combined with the peripheral and prosopographical information available, for example, one could reconstruct a feasible model of Mongol rule and business—or, at least, such a model for the empire under Ögödei.

While we confidently refer to the Mongol territorial realm as "empire," this term deserves to be considered more carefully. In a work on Mongol Empire, the imprecision of the term demands clarification due to our incomplete understanding of Mongol political and imperial intentions. The inconsistencies apparent in the purpose and functions of Mongol instruments of government should at least give pause to assess the meaning and shape of empire. A generalization of so-called nomadic empires—in contrast to polities based upon agrarian, sedentary principles—is that, as a rule, there is a functional difference in the understanding of territory. The nomadic valuation of territory is of secondary importance in the registration of possession and in the accounting of what makes up holdings, wealth, or a polity, however understood. Livestock and human followers are of principle significance in determining the makeup of domain. In view of this, territory—or, more accurately, land and its resources—is a source of sustenance and support.

The Mongols' territorial possessions under Ögödei and his successors were predominantly utilized in two ways: first, urban settlements were seen as sources of taxes and production of goods for redistribution among the Mongol elite and for trade. These regions were administered by the qa'an, as this was one of the prime duties of the government, with extensive

delegation. In managing urban areas as tax sources, the qa'an could assign the profit and taxes collected from any region to one or another of the Mongol elite as reward or payment for services—or simply as their rightful share of the collective conquests. This led to stakeholders having assigned to them territories and people in lands they may have never been and that could be transferred to their heirs upon their deaths. For example, Tolui was given not only territories of the former Jin, which he helped to acquire, but also some of the Qipčaq spoils—all of which his descendants inherited.[14] Second, territory could be assigned as pasturage and usage was based upon the demands of population and livestock under the care of the stakeholder to which it was assigned. In some cases, it appears that the grants were directly managed by the grantee, but the arrangements were highly variable. Subject to reassignment, they do not seem to have been considered the permanent, personal possession of any group or individual. Instead, it was the prerogative of the qa'an to assign these sources of wealth and materials as needed. Again, the Mongols counted the population of settled peoples among their livestock and, thus, as an indication of wealth or, at least, prospective wealth based upon productive potential. This fact played a consequential and often overlooked role in the tension over what the empire was, how the wealth was to be collected and redistributed, and for whose benefit it was intended.

Opposing concepts of possession and wealth underlie some of the most detrimental and unsolvable problems of the empire in years 1227-51. The basic difference in worldview between

[14] اغارتهای شهر جِینْگ دِینْ فُو که از شهرهای بزرگ / خِتّایْ است و مُغولان آن را چَغَانْ بَلَغَسُون می گویند از آن تُولُوئ خان بوده، و اَغارتهای ولایاتی که تُولُوئ خان گرفته و به میراث و قسمت به اُورُوغِ او رسیده، در خِتّایْ و دشت قِپْچاق و دیگر ولایات تمامت معیّن است

Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-Tavārīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Rawshan and Muṣṭafá Mūsavī (Tihrān: Nashr-i Alburz, 1994 [1310]), 786; Peter Jackson, "From Ulus to Khanate. The Making of the Mongol State, c. 1220-c. 1290," in *The Mongol Empire & Its Legacy*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 22-23.

pastoralist and agrarian is evident in the discord between stakeholders in the Mongol enterprise and (mostly non-Mongol) bureaucrats. It appears in the struggle between the efforts of administrative institutions to create stable, homogenized tax structures and the stakeholders' insistence on direct collection from the urban settlements within and adjacent to their assigned pasturelands and production centers.

Despite the ease with which we can categorize the opposing viewpoints, however, the conflict was not about forms of food production but about the mechanisms of wealth, ownership, and access to resources. Ögödei's attempts to satisfy the demands of both the administrative empire and those of the corporation defined his reign and ultimately failed, as the challenges of the dual nature of empire were considerable. While Ögödei's solutions to these problems met with mixed results, they were responses to monumental conflicts in the practice of government neither new to Eurasia in the thirteenth century nor solved by the end of Ögödei's reign. These same problems were at the heart of the instability of the Yuan government and were eventually to contribute to its final collapse under Toghön Temür in 1368.[15] Describing Mongol collective sovereignty as it had evolved in Yuan China by 1333 as a "sort of semipublic, superficially bureaucratized business," John Dardess estimates the number of stakeholders supported by the Yuan at 33,000. Distribution of wealth to this number of people required complex institutions to count, manage, and collect—a burden that the subject peoples could barely support, leading

[15] See the chapters on the Yuan Dynasty in Denis Crispin Twitchett and Herbert Franke, *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, ed. Denis Crispin Twitchett and John King Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 414-664.

eventually to the Ming's rise.[16] Perhaps it was in recognition of these inherently antagonistic forces that the office of qa'an was created in the first place.

What of the peoples who made up the Mongol Empire? Were they conscious of belonging to an empire? Did they consider themselves a part of the greater Mongol nation? In his review on Russian sources, Allsen remarks that "it is not at all apparent that the Russian principalities were part of a much larger political entity stretching from Korea to Asia Minor."[17] Nor was it apparent in most other places that were part of the Mongol Empire. Given that the Mongols themselves had no interest in direct rule of the peoples under their control, and that they left little more than *darughačin* in former capital cities, the authoritative structures and even administrative personnel in most conquered regions remained relatively unchanged.

One of the pivotal questions that sources on the Mongol Empire do not answer is how the Mongols themselves conceived of empire. The lack of sources in the Mongols' own words—with the exception of the *Secret History* (see §1.4, below), which mostly deals with the conquests before the establishment of an administrative empire—constrains us to infer from often hostile or chronologically removed sources how and for whose benefit the Mongol elite envisioned their conquest and administrative ventures. These sources, however, do reveal that the Mongol elite seem not to have agreed amongst themselves how and for whom the conquests were meant to benefit. The intense conflict between the nomadic elite and the largely civilized bureaucracy

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[16] John Dardess, "Shun-ti and the End of Yüan Rule in China," in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, ed. Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 561-86.

[17] Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Grand Qan Möngke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251-1259* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 13.

reached a crescendo during the period under examination here. As we will see, the pressures of balancing administrative empire, ongoing military campaigns, and expectations of the Mongol elite contributed to the degeneration of the second half of Ögödei's reign (1229-41)and lasted through that of Oghul Qaimiš (1248-51).

In the study of empire, there appears a wide range of explanations applied to the case of the Mongols. Most persistent of these situates the Mongol Empire as a "nomadic" empire. The key characteristics of this type of empire are cavalry, confederation, and contempt for all things stationary. I question the concept of "nomadic" empire and its presumed distinction from other types of empire. The often-implied assumption and sometimes explicit observation is that the Mongols' empire was a unique phenomenon, the singular achievement of the brilliant military and political mind of Činggis Qan with assistance from his cleverly chosen companions, *sui generis*.

One apparently intractable problem is working out just what empire meant in the context of the first half of the thirteenth century. I take this issue up in more detail in §4, but some general comments here will help to set the stage for the narratives of §§2 and 3. There is no consensus among scholars on the nature of the Mongol state nor the imperial intentions of the Činggis Qanids. Egregious misunderstandings of Mongol Empire have led to some fundamental problems in the study of medieval Eurasia that have obstructed progress. Much is made of the atrocities, massacres, and destruction of the Mongols' military campaigns and is held up in contrast to the scale, effectiveness, and adaptability of the Mongols' state infrastructure during the so-called *Pax Mongolica*. An enduring conviction is that the Mongols—who were responsible for the lightning campaigns that subjugated Eurasia from Korea to Hungary in a matter of decades, reportedly causing catastrophic depopulation of the region through their

perceived violence and depravity—could not also have been the careful and capable administrators of what was, by any account, an extraordinary feat of state building and economic ingenuity. As in this passage from Jacques Gernet, it is assumed that the many experienced bureaucrats that entered Mongol service in the course of the first few decades of the empire were the architects of the state:

> In order to exploit the peoples and wealth of China, these conquerors with little aptitude for peace-time activities and little trust in the sedentary inhabitants were obliged both to copy Chinese institutions and to call preferably on the former Khitan and Jürchen subjects of the Chin empire and also on foreigners from central Asia, the Middle East or Europe. . . Under the influence of the conquered peoples the policy of the Mongols became less harsh and certain institutions of Chinese origin were gradually adopted.[18]

While these individuals were critical contributors to the successes of the empire, it is inaccurate to ascribe solely to them the formation of Mongol imperial rule. So, this is the first aspect of the problem: what was the contribution of the Činggis Qanids to the architecture of the state?

The second aspect of this problem of defining empire is one of typologies. As mentioned, most commonly the term "nomadic empire" is used to describe the Mongol Empire with highly varying levels of specificity among scholars. Nomadic empire, as it is employed in its least specific ways, is a euphemism indicating a state created by steppe peoples that was effectively conquered but badly managed. Or, as in the case of the Mongols, a state that was effectively

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[18] Jacques Gernet, *A History of Chinese Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 365. It is seldom assumed that the great numbers of career military men that similarly came into the service of the Mongols are to be credited for the success of the military. In all matters of military and administration, the Mongols—meaning all those who were allied with Činggis Qan at the beginning of the thirteenth century and those who descended from them—were far outnumbered by their subjected and allied peoples. As military successes are concerned, the pre-westward expansion military of the Mongols, which was made up of light cavalry with very few exceptions, is often conflated with the highly complex military of later periods. The cavalry of archers, by the time of Ögödei, was but a small component of a complex military.

conquered but managed by others. Alternatively, nomadic empire is often correlated with the absence of a fixed capital or institutionalized bureaucracy. Finally, it indicates a hierarchy defined by kinship.[19]

Meticulous contributions have been made to a more functional theoretical model of nomadic empire.[20] One thing seems obvious, even if not stated as such: nomadic empires are not like other empires. There is, however, nothing inherently nomadic about the empires described in this way. Associating the technologies of governance deployed by the Mongols with their modes of sustenance has an element of sense—it follows that the societal structures determined by pastoralism would transfer onto institutions of rule—but this does not, for the most part, seem to have been the case; at least, not as it pertains to the empire as a whole. Instead, it is apparent that the Mongols possessed a very nuanced understanding of the practices and institutions necessary to govern their rapidly growing state, and a sensitivity to the local conditions that demanded a varied repertoire of governing strategies. Their enthusiasm for conscripting experienced bureaucrats such as Yelü Chucai (1189-1243) and Maḥmūd Yalavač (fl. 1218-52) into their

[19] Anthropologists have mostly abandoned the kinship/lineage based models of hierarchy as structures of authority in modern and historic steppe societies. Instead, a greater understanding of the nature and functions of fictional lineages and use of kinship terms to describe power and cultural relations has led to more nuanced approaches. See David Sneath, ed., *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries*, Studies on East Asia, (Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University for Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit, University of Cambridge, 2006); Marshall Sahlins, *What Kinship Is—And Is Not* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013).

[20] Representative examples are: Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*; Thomas J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China*, Studies in social discontinuity, (Cambridge, Mass: B. Blackwell, 1989); Christopher I. Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road: a History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

service and entrusting them with critical pieces of administration is indicative of their awareness of what exactly these men could do and how they (the Mongols) could most rapidly formulate an efficient government.

Neither are the qualities identified as particular to nomadic empire necessarily restricted to states established by nomadic peoples. In this, I have found the work of David Sneath to be particularly helpful. In his introduction to the multi-authored volume, *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries*, Sneath argues for reconsidering so-called nomadic empire and outlines four characteristics apparent in steppe polities: aristocracy, heavenly mandate, collective sovereignty, and decimal military-civil administration. Of these four characteristics, the first and third—aristocracy and collective sovereignty—seem to me to be intertwined and the most important elements of Mongol government. I will not, however, attempt to create a new theoretical model of empire with which to examine the Mongol Empire. The purpose of challenging the status quo concerning our perceptions of the nature of Mongol Empire is to draw assumptions about the empire away from the oversimplified and essentialized typology that sustains outdated ideas about nomadic peoples and toward a more complex understanding that more plausibly engages the sources. This approach places the Mongols into the context from which they derived their ideas and methods and leaves behind tired concepts of Mongol Empire as being without precedent.

The Mongol Empire, like those across Eurasia that came before and after it, was a complex entity, neither superior because of its connections to its nomadic founders nor limited in its capacities for the same reason. Literature that differentiates complex, multicultural empires into categories based upon the means of production of their founders and, furthermore, describes imperial advantages and limitations based upon the same, obscures the simple fact that little was

different in the personnel, practices, goals, and functionality of these empires. Central Eurasians were not only pastoralists, but also urbanites, agriculturalists, merchants, and all combinations and gradations of those socioeconomic categories.[21]

Nevertheless, the binary representation of pastoral and agricultural practices and people persists in literature on Mongol Empire. In 1968, Bosworth indicted the *Shahname* for the pastoral *vs.* agricultural partition, situating Tūrān and Iran—often interpreted to mean Turks and Iranians—in an adversarial relationship that is fundamental to the narrative. The "Arabic geographers," Boyle says, provide plenty of evidence that the nature of the relationship was at least as complex as I am arguing: "They say that the economy of the pastoralist Turks from the steppe was complementary to and interdependent with the economy of the agricultural oases and towns of the Iranian Tajiks. . . It is likely, too, that some of the pastoralists remained in the market centres of the settled region and gradually settled down within its borders."[22]

Migration in the other direction—from sown to steppe—was also common. The problem was so pervasive for a succession of Chinese dynasties that many long walls—including what we now call the "Great Wall"—were built to mark the boundary and to keep urban citizens from leaving the all-important border towns which were necessary for trade and securing claim to

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[21] See Tamīm ibn Baḥr's description of Qara-Balghasun in the early ninth century for a representative sample of the complexity of medieval Central Eurasian society: "[The Uighur capital] is a great town, rich in agriculture and surrounded by *rustāqs* full of cultivation and villages lying close together. The town has twelve iron gates of huge size. The town is populous and thickly crowded and has markets and various trades." V. Minorsky, "Tamīm ibn Baḥr's Journey to the Uyghurs," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 12, no. 2 (1948): 283.

[22] John Andrew Boyle, "Ghazan's Letter to Boniface VIII: Where was it Written?," *Proceeding of the Twenty-Seventh International Congress of Orientalists (Wiesbaden)* (1971): 4-5.

territory.[23]

The official rhetoric of centuries of Chinese dynasties must also be considered in the origins of the dichotomy. In a letter to the Xiongnu ruler, known as the *Shanyu*, the Emperor of the Han Dynasty, 漢文帝 Han Wendi, wrote in 168 BC:

> According to the decree of the former emperor, the land north of the Great Wall, where men yield to the bow and arrow, was to receive its commands from the *Shanyu*, while that within the wall, whose inhabitants dwell in houses and wear hats and girdles, was to be ruled by us.[24]

The assumption that the long walls were built strictly for defense against the barbarians of the northern steppe probably originates in the seventeenth century when European visitors began to take notice of the structures at the end of the Ming and beginning of the Qing eras.[25] In Europe, walls were generally defensive and the newly decommissioned walls in China were assumed to be the same.[26]

Drawing from Robert Ekvall's study of Tibetan nomadism, *Fields on the Hoof*,[27]

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[23] Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, 68-73.

[24] Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, ed. Societies American Council of Learned (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 145-6.

[25] Endymion Porter Wilkinson, *Chinese History: a New Manual*, Fifth ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018), 356.

[26] A reading of any of the Chinese sources concerning the northern frontier reveals that the demonization of the steppe peoples was an important component of Chinese dynastic and military politics. Political careers, power-taking policies, and business all thrived during war—as they still doSima Qian himself was punished with castration for defending the actions of Li Ling, a general who had surrendered to a Xiongnu army in order to save his soldiers from slaughter. Chinese elite society was highly militarized and political and military titles, rewards, and promotion were closely linked. Thus, it was in the interests of contemporary chroniclers to emphasize and embellish the differences between steppe and sown.

[27] Robert Brainerd Ekvall, *Fields on the Hoof: Nexus of Tibetan Nomadic Pastoralism*, Case studies in Cultural Anthropology, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968).

Christopher Beckwith proposes three socioeconomic components of Central Eurasian empires analogous to those of peripheral civilizations: urbanites (those classes not engaged in primary food production including merchants, bureaucrats, artisans, etc.), proximal farmers/pastoralists, and distal farmers/pastoralists.[28] There were inequalities of mobility between the steppe peoples and those on the periphery,[29] as well as differences of ethnolinguistic identity between the urbanites and their proximal pastoralists, on the one hand, and the distal pastoralists, on the other, but these things were not deterministic in terms of empire. The mobility between socioeconomic components was unhindered—or, at least, far less obstructed than has been taken for granted.

Classifications of "nomadic," "post-nomadic," and "sedentary" applied to the stages of evolution of imperial administration distract one from what is evident in the sources: that the Mongol Empire—just like the Uighur, the Jin, Khwarāzmian—was made up of much the same types of personnel performing many of the same roles as other pre-modern empires. Isolating "nomadic empire" from other types of state formations perpetuates the ongoing misconception that somehow the steppe nomads were naturally capable warriors, fierce on horseback, and suited to continuous warfare and that, on the other hand, the agriculturalists and the non-laboring classes of artisans and bureaucrats they supported were militarily weak, unable to resist the extreme violence and barbarism of their nomadic neighbors, but remarkably equipped to count beans, manage institutions, and oversee complex irrigation systems. Thomas J. Barfield observes that it is "one of the most enduring stereotypes . . ., one who subsists entirely on meat, milk, or

[28] Based upon the categories proposed in Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road*, 342.

[29] These differences were largely due to issues of technology (horses, husbandry, and tack) and requirements of defense of production (mobile vs. immobile means of production).

blood, abhors farmers, farming, and grain, despises sedentary life in general, and never has contact with villages or cities except when he loots and burns them. Nothing could be farther from the truth."[30] If concept of the "pure nomad" endures, it does so only to provide scholars with a foil for claiming otherwise. Even Beckwith in 2009 found it necessary to attack these elusive scholars who are still making use of the concept.[31] When Owen Lattimore quite effectively destroyed the pure nomad in 1938, scholars were still deploying this naïve motif.[32] The resilience of Lattimore's work may be to blame for the continued indignation among scholars. Whoever might be guilty of this in more recent scholarship invites a stern rebuke. I have yet to see, however, anything other than refutations against a straw man who has long ago been laid to rest.

The tenacity of the "nomad as barbarian" is more enduring and has roots in pre-Toynbee theories of the development of human society. This issue is mostly irrelevant to the current study, but one aspect deserves to be mentioned, here. Throughout my study of not only Mongol Empire, but Central Eurasian history more broadly, the language of force and coercion is used in place of language of institutionalization: "extract" instead of "collect" when discussing wealth and taxes, for example. Consider also a description of Central Eurasian steppe nomad political organization from Barfield's *The Nomadic Alternative*: in tracing the evolution from "clan and

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[30] Thomas J. Barfield, *The Nomadic Alternative* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993), 4.

[31] Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road*, 22-25.

[32] "The steppe nomad can withdraw into the steppe, if he needs to, and remain completely out of contact with other societies. He can; but so rarely does he do so that this pure condition of nomadic life can fairly be called hypothetical. For every historical level of which we have any knowledge there is evidence that exchange of some kind, through trade or tribute, has been important in steppe-nomadic life." Lattimore, "The Geographical Factor in Mongol History," 12.

lineage organization" to empire, he says, "large empires went far beyond the needs of simple (or even complex) pastoralism. In fact, they were designed for something quite different: the permanent extortion of the world's great sedentary civilizations." No more so, I venture, than any other empire. He goes on:

> Large-scale political organization among steppe nomads was designed to deal primarily with external relations. Indeed, it could only be financed by bringing in revenue from the outside because the pastoral economy was too extensive and undiversified to support a sophisticated state structure. Rulers of steppe empires therefore did not expect to support themselves by extracting revenue from their nomadic subjects, rather the reverse. They used the military might of their nomad followers to extract revenue from outsiders which could not only pay for the administration of the empire but also could be redistributed among the potentially rebellious component tribes to keep them happy.[33]

While I agree with the sentiment that Mongol state-building efforts were primarily for the enrichment of stakeholders (an issue I will expand upon considerably in this dissertation), the assertion that steppe rulers were only good at military threat is a tired and misleading theme. Furthermore, it makes the unjustified assumption—not exclusively Barfield's—that pastoralists did not go to the trouble of "large-scale political organization" because they were incapable of doing so, rather than considering that, outside of conflict or diplomacy with peripheral political organizations, there was little demand. Instead, they made adroit use of existing bureaucratic institutions. They adopted complex political organizations, but contemporary and modern stereotypes and misconceptions seeded by our sources' biases have conspired to keep us from seeing it. The structures of collective sovereignty—the practice of which the authors of our sources did not have access—did not appear to be bureaucratically complex and, more damningly, seemed to oppose the autocratic mandate for reinvestment of state resources in the

[33] Barfield, *The Nomadic Alternative*, 149.

continuation of agricultural cycles and the accumulation of wealth.

Instead, what we call the Mongol Empire was an empire that fits Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper's typology—an empire that was composed of peoples and practices from cultural and societal traditions across Eurasia, that relied upon inherited and widely accepted symbols and languages of legitimacy, and strove to establish a stable and sustainable form of management of their peoples and territories.[34] Traditional steppe practices such as redistribution and military organization of society gave the Mongol Empire its particular characteristics. Mongol exceptionalism, uniqueness, whatever we call it, has some validity, however disproportionately it has been represented in the literature. The Mongols possessed some advantages over their adversaries, both military and, later in the process, economic. But these advantages were not due to their condition as nomads, nor did they have exclusive access to these advantages. The military dominance of the Mongols in the earliest periods under Činggis Qan—primarily in engagements with other steppe cavalry—were of those of numbers, strategy, tactics, and, most importantly, technology (weapons and tack). Whatever technological and practical edge the nomadic military had over their neighbors was limited to certain engagements and those advantages quickly became irrelevant and proportionally insignificant factors as the Mongol military became a complex amalgamation of cavalry, infantry, engineers, and many other components incorporated from their subject peoples and militaries.

Collective sovereignty and the dual nature of Mongol rule—a broad set of rules and regulations for the stakeholders and another for the subject peoples—was not idiosyncratic of the so-called nomadic empire, but, simply, of empire: "The concept of empire presumes that

[34] Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

different peoples within the polity will be governed differently."[35] These characteristics were variations on the common theme of empire rather than elements that made the Mongol Empire an exception.

We might venture that Mongol exceptionalism persists in the literature partly because of the lasting impact of their ways of ruling, their particular language of legitimation, and the pervasiveness of their military and cultural practices. Simply tracing one's bloodline back to Činggis Qan became and remained for centuries the first step to legitimacy in Eurasia.

> First, their ways of rule influenced politics across a huge continent—in China, as well as in the later Russian, Mughal, and Ottoman empires. Second, at a time when no state on the western edge of Eurasia (today's Europe) could command loyalty and resources on a large scale, Mongols protected trade routes from the Black Sea to the Pacific and enabled cross-continental transmission of knowledge, goods, and statecraft.[36]

Whether the Mongols conceived of their state as an empire remains an unanswerable question—as does the issue of whether it implies anything of consequence in our efforts to understand the Mongol enterprise. This leaves us at an empasse in deciding if Mongol Empire was an empire by any firm definition. Nevertheless, I wish to avoid Justice Potter Stewart's identification of pornography and simply trust that I will "know it when I see it."[37] In §4, I take up this issue again, but with the acknowledgement that "empire" is a category we cannot apply with specificity or certainty to the Mongol state.

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[35] Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 8.

[36] Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 4.

[37] "I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within [the First and Fourteenth Amendments] . . . But I know it when I see it, and the motion picture involved in this case is not that." Paul Finkelman and Melvin I. Urofsky, "Jacobellis v. Ohio," in *Landmark Decisions of the United States Supreme Court*, CQ Supreme Court Collection (Washington, D.C., United States: CQ Press, 2003).

§1.4 Sources

Particular matters that are relevant to each of §§2-4 are dealt with in those chapters. Some broad comments, here, pertain to the use of and approach to the sources that are applicable to the entire dissertation. Perhaps the most crucial aspect of sources and their relationship to themes and arguments I make throughout this project is that I have intentionally sought to integrate both the eastern and western sources in the creation of Ögödei's biography and that of his successors before Möngke. This is not an entirely novel approach but has had limited application to the examination of the years immediately following the death of Činggis Qan. If the result appears to be harmony between the Persian, Chinese, and Mongolian sources, it belies the challenges in this apparently simple task. Each of the sources express Toluid biases to some extent; this is less pronounced in the eastern sources, but still perceptible. These biases are a persistent issue throughout this dissertation and are discussed frequently. While the Persian sources can be critical of their subjects, neither the eastern nor western sources can be described as expository, thus limiting the support of my arguments in many cases to generalizations. Nonetheless, those generalizations do allow for the sorts of interpretations toward which I am inclined.

It is not, with few exceptions, possible to establish local economic, social, and political conditions on a scale useful for broad analyses of Mongol Empire. Sources on Mongol Empire are generally little concerned with the day-to-day functions of governmental institutions but relish the dramas among the ruling elite, providing us with comparatively detailed information about titles, duties, and status of many persons in the empire's hierarchy. There is no attention at all paid to the life of the empire's common subjects, nor to the nature of their relationship to the military and bureaucratic behemoth under which they lived. Details of women—even the women

in positions of authority—is limited, but not entirely absent. These characteristics are true for both the eastern and the western sources. For the period under examination in this study, few official documents exist, further frustrating our efforts to understand administrative and bureaucratic mechanisms. More specific characteristics of the four chief sources consulted in this dissertation follow in §§1.4.1-1.4.4.

§1.4.1 The Secret History of the Mongols (*SH*): The most potentially significant—and most problematic—source for any study of Ögödei or the early Mongol Empire is *The Secret History*. It is our only source for the political establishment of the Mongol Empire from their own point of view. *The Secret History* of the Mongols as we have it is not the original form of the text compiled by—probably, see §4.2—1241.[38] Instead, it has suffered the alterations expected for a politically charged document central to the identity of a powerful political entity. Thanks to the work of historians and philologists, we can approach the *SH* with a relative certainty about where interpolations appear in the manuscripts as we have them. While the early history of the text remains largely unknown, William Hung published in 1951 a history of the text, but it is primarily concerned with the last 200 years and so leaves many questions unanswered about its provenance and composition.[39] Little additional information has been

[38] For more on this debate, see Igor de Rachewiltz, "The Dating of the Secret History of the Mongols – A Re-interpretation," *Ural-Altaische Jahrbucher* 22 (2008); Igor de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols: a Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century,* Brill's Inner Asian Library, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), xxix-xxxiv; Igor de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols: a Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century (Supplement)*, Brill's Inner Asian Library, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 1-2.

[39] William Hung, "The Transmission of the Book Known as The Secret History of the Mongols," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 14 (1951).

uncovered in the intervening decades and those new data have been included in the introduction to the translation used for this project.[40]

The *SH* has survived in two separate manuscripts transliterated using Chinese characters with glosses of the meanings in Chinese in the margins.[41] That we have it at all is the result of a series of small miracles over the course of centuries and any reconstruction of the early history of the text is conjectural, at best.[42] A variety of translations of the *SH* have been made, but none surpass that of Igor de Rachewiltz. Published in 2003-06, it is the culmination of a long career of careful annotation and philological research. His two-volume edition, supplemented in 2013 with an additional volume of commentary and correction, is a boon to scholars of the Mongols. All references to the *SH* in this project are de Rachwiltz's translation.[43]

Most scholars readily refer to the *SH* as the single most important source on the early Mongol Empire—the Yeke Mongol Ulus. Its value is attenuated, however, by the challenges of using it as a historical record. The promise of accuracy and reliability is betrayed by a relative lack of attention to chronology and the utilization of rhetorical themes that bring into question the veracity of the episodes it describes. Its attention to only the domestic and inter-tribal

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[40] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, xxix-xxxiv.

[41] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, xlvii-xlviii.

[42] Hung, "The Transmission of the Book Known as The Secret History of the Mongols," esp. 433-44; de Rachewiltz, *SH*, xl-liii.

[43] I have cited the translated text according to the section numbers into which the *SH* is separated. Wherever I quote or make a direct reference to the text, I have indicated in a footnote one of the *SH*'s 282 sections in this way: "de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §000," where "000" is the section referenced. Additionally, I have made frequent use of de Rachewiltz's commentary which runs both concurrent to and follows the text of his translation. To designate a citation is referencing commentary instead of the translated text of the *SH*, the format for the citation is: "de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 000," where "000" is the page number at which de Rachewiltz's comments can be found (including footnote indicators, where necessary).

dynamics of the early years of Činggis Qan's life and career, as well the early conquests, are further limitations to its value for the study of the Mongol Empire, generally. It is not explicit who the intended audience of the *SH* was, but we can assume based upon its content that it was a document by and for the Mongol elite: those Činggis Qanid family and military leaders who were positioned to carry on the enterprise begun by Činggis Qan. For this dissertation, I have approached the *SH* as a normative document, primarily meant to canonize the episodes of Činggis Qan's life and career. It seems also to have been indirectly meant as a document of legitimization for Ögödei's authority and complex institutions he implemented. "Indirectly" since the *SH* never mentions any non-Mongol bureaucrats by name and seldom even acknowledges the details of campaigns beyond the domestic dynamics amongst the Mongols. Nevertheless, the careful reconstruction—probably fabrication, in some instances—of those inter-tribal episodes were no doubt meant to establish an ideological foundation for the then-current, post-Činggis Qan administration and to create an official history that defined the relationships and authoritative structures as desired by those who wrote or commissioned its writing.

Accurate dating of the *SH* has, so far, been elusive but not on account of a scarcity of scholarly attention. Ultimately, the dating is not a simple matter and several dates are most likely to be correct as a series of revisions, additions, and redactions are probable. Igor de Rachewiltz, pointing to a compelling bit of indirect evidence, has helped to narrow the range of possible dates considerably by noting that, throughout the *SH*, both Güyük (r. 1246-48) and Möngke (r. 1251-59) are referred to simply by their given names.[44] Ögödei is invariably referred to as

[44] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, xxxiv.

Ögödei Qa'an or just Qa'an. The contemporary convention would indicate that, had either Güyük or Möngke been elevated to the office of qa'an by the time of writing, they too would have anachronistically been referred to as Güyük Qa'an and Möngke Qa'an. Thus, de Rachewiltz makes a convincing argument that the text—or the major part of it, anyway—must have been composed after Ögödei's election to the office of qa'an in 1229 and before Güyük's election in 1246.

Further support for the accuracy of these dates is to be found in the issue of authorship. There is no agreement concerning the authorship of the *SH* among scholars, and there is nothing in the text clearly indicating the identity of the author. There are clues contained in the *SH* itself, but these only narrow the possible authors to members of the Činggis Qanid family or others close to Činggis Qan. De Rachewiltz has long argued[45] that Šigi Qutuqu (ca. 1180-1260) authored the *SH*. An adopted son of Činggis Qan, the literate Tangut is a likely candidate. Most recently, however, de Rachewiltz suggested that the author of the *SH* or a significant portion of it may be Ögödei himself:

> We know that Ögödei was literate, having been tutored together with his three brothers by the seal-keeper Tatar Toŋa after 1204. . . In any event, he could have been assisted in his task by a learned *bičēči* in his entourage. Indeed, I very much favour the idea that Ögödei relied also on information supplied by his own *noköt* and on the reminiscences of tribal elders besides his own recollections. Some of the epico-legendary elements incorporated in the composition were no doubt well-known stories already sung in the *qan*'s *ordo*.[46]

Following this intriguing suggestion, this dissertation accepts the possibility that Ögödei is the author of the *SH*. This assumption is unlikely to reveal anything of any significance

[45] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, xxxiv-xl; de Rachewiltz, *SH (Supplement)*, 2-5.

[46] de Rachewiltz, *SH (Supplement)*, 3.

concerning the *SH*, but it does offer some insights into the biography of Ögödei that contribute to a more complete understanding of the man and his narrative. For example, the *SH* shows some clear biases that are probably later interpolations by Toluid partisans but, as we can identify these, the interests and biases of Ögödei and his partisans become clearer. Furthermore, we will consider the suggestion by de Rachewiltz that the *SH* shows signs of deterioration of quality in writing that correspond with the deterioration of Ögödei himself.

> The section on his reign in the SH (§§ 269-281), although written by the same author, is decidedly inferior in quality: this obvious—and it is obvious—deterioration in the quality of the text may reflect the steady deterioration of the physical and mental state of Ögödei mainly due to his well-known drinking problem.[47]

In his earlier, 2006, attempt to establish the authorship of the *SH*, de Rachewiltz argues, instead, for Čingqai (ca. 1169-1252), "the author of the *Secret History* was not interested in foreign people and punitive campaigns abroad, witness the cursory treatment of *all* of them and the number of factual errors in his descriptions, his main concern being domestic matters and conflicts with the Mongolian heartland."[48] Ögödei would have had reason to be concerned in the *SH* with these matters, particularly because these domestic conflicts during the *quriltai* of 1228-29 and throughout his reign occupied much of his diplomatic and administrative energies. Paul Buell has expressed his agreement with de Rachewiltz that arguments for Ögödei's authorship are sound: "This makes the best sense of any authorship proposal yet. . . In a way, this has been staring us in the face all the time. . . [I]f he did not play a direct role in writing the SH, Ögödei managed the whole project although the text was tampered with later."[49]

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[47] de Rachewiltz, *SH (Supplement)*, 3.

[48] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, xxxviii. Emphasis in original.

[49] de Rachewiltz, *SH (Supplement)*, 5.

Thus, an important aspect of the *SH* addressed in this dissertation that previous scholarship does not consider derives from de Rachewiltz's argument that Ögödei himself was author. If this were true, what would have been the intended function of the *SH* in the time of Ögödei? Was it an attempt to formalize the origin story of the Yeke Mongol Ulus and Činggis Qan in order to build his own strategies of legitimacy upon it? The careful account of Činggis Qan's selection of Ögödei in the *SH* would seem to support this.[50] We know from other examples in the life of Ögödei that his election as qa'an did not go unchallenged and that he was concerned with the perception and security of his position.[51] Furthermore, is it productive to speculate how the *SH* may have been employed in the legitimizing efforts of the Mongol Empire under Ögödei? The extensive anecdotes of his magnanimity and clemency in both Juvainī and Rashīd al-Dīn seem calculated to show Ögödei as a steward of Mongol ideologies and values. In any case, they would have appealed to the traditionalists among the Mongol elite who were resistant to giving up the idea of the Yeke Mongol Ulus—a conquest enterprise, one of the primary goals of which was personal enrichment facilitated by a strong and successful qan—for that of a bureaucratic Mongol Empire.

[50] Though I use some caution, here, as the story of the naming of an heir is not without problems, the most damning of which is that the entire episode is probably a later interpolation by Toluid partisans, de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §§254-55.

[51] For example, before planning for the Jin Campaign, Ögödei seeks reassurance from his brother: "Ögödei Qa'an sent the following message to elder brother Ča'adai asking for advice: 'I have sat on the throne made ready by my father Činggis Qa'an. Will people not say of me, "By what merit has he sat on it?" If elder brother Ča'adai agrees, since our father the Qa'an did leave matters with the Altan Qan of the Kitat people unfinished, I shall now move against the Kitat people.'" *SH*, §271.

§1.4.2 Tārīkh-i jahān gushāy (*TJG*):[52] ʻAlā al-Dīn ʻAṭā Malik Juvainī (1226-83) was born into a family already long associated with serving the ruling elite, descending, they claimed, from Fadl bin Rabīʻ (757/58-823/24), the *vazīr* of Hārūn al-Rashīd (766-809), and having been bureaucrats under the Seljuqs. From the time of Juvainī's great-grandfather, his family had served the Khwārazmshāhs, following them into exile upon the Mongol invasion in the 1220s. Sulṭān Muḥammad Khwārazmshāh (r. 1200-20) appointed Juvainī's grandfather to the office of *ṣāḥib dīwān* and he continued to serve in this capacity under Jalāl al-Dīn (d. 1231). The family entered the service of the Mongols in 1232-33, when Bahā' al-Dīn (d. 1253), Juvainī's father, was handed over to the Mongols by the governor of Tūs during the Mongol siege of the city. The Mongols took Bahā' al-Dīn into their service gladly, giving him the role of *ṣāḥib dīvān*, a position in which he was confirmed upon Ögödei's election to qa'an in 1229.

Juvainī himself held a position in the *dīvān*, serving the Īlkhānids. It was in this capacity that he was present at the *quriltai* that elected Möngke as qa'an and where he began his *TJG*. In Qaraqorum, between May 1252 and September 1253, the 27-year-old Juvainī would have likely had access to some of the most senior and experienced Mongol elite. Boyle states that Juvainī's sources were "purely oral" for the early history of the Mongols, the *SH* being the "ultimate

[52] ʻAlā' al-Dīn ʻAṭā Malik Juvainī, *The Ta'rīkh-i-jahán-gushá of 'Alá'u'd-Din 'Aṭá Malik-i-Juwaynī*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī, 3 vols., E.J.W. Gibb memorial series, (Leyden, London: E.J. Brill; Luzac & Co., 1912 [c. 1260]).

authority for his information."[53] Juvainī began composing his *History of the World Conqueror* at a time in which the events it describes were memories his living sources could relate to him.

When Hülegü and his forces reached Khorasan in 1256, Juvainī joined him and was present at the destruction of Alamūt where he claims to have saved the library. After Hülegü captured Baghdad and executed the caliph in 1258, Juvainī was appointed the governor of all the caliph's lands, a position Juvainī held for twenty years. During his tenure as governor, Juvainī claims that the region was much improved and the lives of those who lived there enriched. Like his father before him—and, in part, because of his father—Juvainī had many enemies among other bureaucratic elite in Mongol service. After many dramatic turns and intrigues, the confiscation of his wealth, the torture and execution of his subordinates, and finally the exhumation of one of his agents, Juvainī died of "an apoplectic stroke" on 5 March 1283.[54]

Upon his death, the *TJG* remained incomplete—or so it can be surmised based upon the references to missing parts of the history in the text itself. Juvainī seems to have ceased work on the *TJG* in 1260 or soon after. The only persistent obstacle posed by the *TJG* is that Juvainī's reliance upon oral sources, as well as his own situation as court historian, in many cases amounts to a report of the opinions of a later generation on early Mongol history. This does not mitigate

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[53] John Andrew Boyle, "Juvaini and Rashid al-Din as Sources on the History of the Mongols," in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt, Historical writing on the peoples of Asia, vol. 4 (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 136. Boyle furthermore suggests that Juvainī received this information from the *SH* not directly, but "perhaps at second or third hand" since, for example, he dates Ögödei's election in 1228 as does the *SH*, and, while he relates the story of the bundle of arrows, he does so in connection to Činggis Qan and his sons rather than Alan Qo'a and her sons as in the *SH*.

[54] W. Barthold and J.A. Boyle, "Djuwaynī", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 04 October 2018 <http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2132>

the overall reliability of the details in the *TJG*. More importantly for our study of 1227-51, Juvainī himself was alive for all of it, even if he was young during Ögödei's early reign. His access to firsthand sources in this case puts the *TJG* foremost among our sources next to the problematic *SH*. For this dissertation, I have consulted Qazvīnī's edition of the text, in three volumes and Boyle's translation.[55]

§1.4.3 Jāmi' al-tavārīkh (*JaT*): Rashīd al-Dīn was born in Hamadān in 1247, and served the second Īlkhānid ruler, Abaqa (r. 1265-81). Rashīd al-Dīn was instructed by Ghāzān Qan (r. 1295-1304), whom Rashīd al-Dīn served as *vazīr*, to compile a history of the Mongol Empire. After Ghāzān's death in 1304, his task was expanded by his successor, Uljāytū (r. 1304-16), to include in the histories of all the nations who had contact with the Mongols. This latter part was accomplished with the help of scholars from those nations residing in the Īlkhānid court. The so-called universal history was completed in its first edition in 1306-07. In 1310, a second edition was completed, adding a fourth volume to the previous edition's three.[56] After a career marked by professional success and political peril, Rashīd al-Dīn was executed in 1317, which seems to have been the usual conclusion to a successful administrative career at the Īlkhānid court.[57]

The *JaT* was a broad project that is considered one of the first world histories. Of concern for us are the sections on the early history of the Mongols: Temüǰin's assembly of the

[55] 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvaynī, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror,* translated by J. A. Boyle. Manchester Medieval Sources Series, edited by Muḥammad Qazvīnī, John Andrew Boyle and David Morgan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).

[56] John Andrew Boyle, "Rashid al-Din: the First World Historian," *Iran* (1971): 21.

[57] Boyle, "Rashid al-Din: the First World Historian," 19-20.

confederation; the conquests in central and western Eurasia; his successors and the division of the empire into smaller states. Rashīd al-Dīn claims to have relied heavily upon eyewitnesses to many of the events of the early Mongol period he describes, individuals to which he would have had access as both court historian and Īlkhānid *vazīr*. Where Činggis Qan's successors are concerned, Rashīd al-Dīn follows Juvainī in both arrangement and content, with some important additions. Through a Mongol official, Rashīd al-Dīn had access to the *Altan Debter*, a record kept by the Mongols for the Mongols.[58] Even Rashīd al-Dīn in his capacity as court chronicler specifically assigned the task of writing the history of the Mongols was not given direct access to this non-extant archive. The *Altan Debter* allowed the historian to expand on the account given by Juvainī and to add details concerning events not mentioned in the *TJG*. The *JaT* covers far more than the history of the Mongols with which Rashīd al-Dīn was contemporary. Boyle says, "Volume I, the *Ta'rīkh-i Ghāzānī*, which, based as it is on native sources now lost, constitutes our chief authority on the origins of the Mongol peoples and the rise of the Mongol World Empire."[59] As such, it is usually considered a more reliable and complete account of the early Mongol period than *TJG* despite its later date. Rashīd al-Dīn's sources, in addition to Juvainī and the *Altan Debter*, were drawn from "books of the nations who had been invaded by the Mongols; of these he mentions the Chinese, Indians, Uighūrs, and Qipchāqs."[60]

More expansive and inclusive than *TJG*, *JaT* nonetheless suffers from internal

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[58] Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 45.

[59] John Andrew Boyle, "The Significance of the *Jami al-Tawarikh* as a source of Mongol History," in *Majmu'a-yi khitaba-ha-yi tahqiqi-i darbara-yi Rashid Din Fazl Allah-i Hamadani* (Tehran: 1971), 8.

[60] Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 45.

inconsistencies and factual inaccuracies that contribute to the overall problem of dating and particular details of events in the period under examination, here. Where possible, I give exact dates but in the cases where the sources do not make the reckoning of dates viable, I describe the textual conflict. More problematic are internal inconsistencies (prevalent in both *JaT* and *TJG*), particularly in the reports of campaigns and military matters—not an uncommon phenomenon, as our chroniclers were not military men and relied upon secondhand information about military matters. The separate biographical chapters on Ča'adai, Tolui, and Ögödei often present conflicting details concerning the same events. In the narrative told here, the particulars of, for example, who was sent where on which campaign is of special interest to us and the working out of these details takes more space than I would wish. However, the disagreements within the sources and between the sources sometimes lead to important observations concerning the politics of the time in question, the possible interpolations by later partisan scribes, and even about the chroniclers themselves. Such discussions are largely worked out in substantive footnotes where the narrative would be otherwise interrupted.

As it pertains specifically to the life of Ögödei, the *JaT* covers the period of enthronement in 1227 to his death in 1241 and is concerned mostly with the military campaigns during Ögödei's reign and with his family and chief officials. Except for a few mentions of his early life found in the sections concerning Činggis Qan and the military campaigns, in these chapters dealing with the Qa'an's reign is to be found most of what interests us, here. In this dissertation, I have used the 1994 edition of the *JaT* edited by Muḥammad Rawshan and Muṣṭafá Mūsavī, as

well as translations by Thackston and Boyle.[61]

§1.4.4 元史 *Yuanshi*: The final source is the official history of the Yuan Dynasty, the *Yuanshi*, compiled at the beginning of the Ming period, in 1369 and 1370 and covers the years 1206-1369. Written more than a century after Ögödei's death, the *Yuanshi* is a compilation of biographies, narratives, official documents, and other sources of which many are the products of a much earlier period. Many of the sources upon which the *Yuanshi* is based did not survive, adding additional importance to this chronicle for the study of the Mongol Empire.[62] The chief compiler was a Ming court historian by the name of 宋濂 Song Lian (1310-81) with assistance from other chroniclers. Fourteenth century Chinese historiographic tradition did not call for the faithful citation or reference of source material, however, and much of the content of the sources used in the compilation of the *Yuanshi* can only be inferred. Herbert Franke, urging caution, states that, "It is well known that the official dynastic histories of China are more or less influenced by traditional ways of thought. This calls for some criticism regarding their contents. All the information given by their authors must not be taken at its face value; on the other hand the reader must be careful to avoid a hypercritical attitude towards the texts."[63] The "largely

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[61] Rashīd al-Dīn and W. M Thackston. *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami`U't-Tawarikh Compendium of Chronicles,* Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures: Central Asian Sources: Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures: Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1998); Rashīd al-Dīn. *The Successors of Genghis Khan,* translated by John Andrew Boyle. Persian Heritage Series (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971).

[62] Wilkinson, *Chinese History: a New Manual*, 711.

[63] Herbert Franke, "Some Remarks on the Interpretation of Chinese Dynastic Histories," *Oriens* 3 (1950): 113.

political and ritualistic" reasons for the writing of the official histories,[64] including the *Yuanshi*, complicates the use of these materials for the historian, as one must also be alert to the biases and mythmaking efforts of, in our case, the Ming court for which it was produced. The ability to control what records were available concerning their predecessors and, thus, how their own rise to power could be interpreted was of utmost importance to the newly formed Ming dynasty. Moreover, some content of the *Yuanshi* is repetitive, internally inconsistent, and of varying quality. Endymion Wilkinson observes that the *Yuanshi* is "generally reckoned to be one of the weakest, if not the weakest, of all the *Histories*, *faute de mieux*." Nevertheless, he continues, it "is an essential source. It contains much material not elsewhere available. The fact that it is unpolished is a blessing in disguise in that many documents are preserved in their original or near-original state."[65]

These limitations notwithstanding, the *Yuanshi* remains a fairly reliable source on early Mongol Empire. Unlike the Persian sources, the *Yuanshi* was produced in a milieu free from the political pressures of the Mongol court by chroniclers of the Yuan's Ming successors. While this introduces another set of potential obstacles, it does allow for the inclusion of details which may have placed the Mongols in a negative light and, thus, omitted from other Mongol chronicles. The biographical chapters from which I have drawn for this project are included in the *Yuanshi* not because Činggis Qan, Ögödei, Güyük, and Möngke were Chinese emperors, but because the historiographic traditions of the Chinese histories approached dynastic lines in whole. Qubilai, who proclaimed the Yuan Dynasty in 1270, retroactively caused his forebears to become

[64] Wilkinson, *Chinese History: a New Manual*, 711.

[65] Wilkinson, *Chinese History: a New Manual*, 874.

members of the dynasty and, thus, important figures in the chronicles of Yuan rule. These first chapters "are, however, fragmentary at best, showing that the efforts to compile veritable records for their lives had not been fully successful in recovering the necessary historical information."[66]

There exists no single translation of the *Yuanshi*, which has hindered non-sinologists' use of the text in Mongol studies. Some chapters exist in western language translation, but they are sporadic and inconsistent. For this project, a colleague and I produced a full translation of chapter 2, the biographies of Ögödei and Güyük, with notes and annotations.[67] A German translation of this chapter was produced in 1976 by Waltraut Abramowski, but the problems with this translation are many and we determined the need for a more careful translation and commentary.[68] Throughout this dissertation, all references to the *Yuanshi* are my own translation.

Other well-known sources also contribute to the analysis in the following sections, though in minor ways. These sources will be discussed, where appropriate, in the sections in which they appear. Combined, our sources leave us with several lacunae in our understanding of the Mongol Empire, but one of the most difficult gaps to bridge is the lack of attention paid to regents and women. My understanding of the Mongol approach to leadership in the period under examination, here, leads me to believe that those who ruled as regents during the intervals following the death of a qa'an and before the election of the next were imbued with no less authority and had no less impact upon the Mongol Empire than did the elected qa'ans. The biases

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[66] Twitchett and Franke, *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, 691.

[67] Thank you to Carol Fan for her considerable contributions to our translation of Ögödei's biography.

[68] Waltraut Abramowski, "Die Chinesischen Annalen von Ögödei und Güyük: Übersetzung des 2. Kapitels de Yüan-Shih," *Zentralasiastische Studien* 10 (1976).

of our sources are most evident in their disinterest in Mongol political practice that fell outside of the traditional patriarchal systems of authority particular to the individual authors' cultural milieu. This is most evident, not surprisingly, in the fact that women serving as regents are not examined with the same attention to details—or, at least, not to the same details—as men. This is unfortunate, as it skews our understanding of the development of the Mongol Empire as occurring only when a male was actively serving as qan or qa'an. In the period relevant to this study, 1227-51, Ögödei and Güyük served as elected qa'ans, for an approximate total of almost 14 years. In the same period, regents Tolui, Töregene, and Oghul Qaimiš, served nearly 10 years. As far as the sources allow, I have made efforts to cast a balanced narrative of all Mongols who filled the office of qa'an, whether elected or not, male or female. Nevertheless, my contributions are only a nudge in the right direction; much more needs to be done.

§1.5 Foundations and Influences

Most historical literature on the Mongols is concerned with Činggis Qan, the formation of the Mongol confederation, the conquests, and the impact he had upon subsequent historical developments in Eurasia. There is comparatively little literature on Ögödei, but what does exist mostly addresses him by way of describing the succession and legacy of Činggis Qan, with little examination of Ögödei's reign. There is no shortage of monographic literature on Činggis Qan, nor has the final word on the topic been written as new publications, both for general audiences and specialists, continue to appear. The professional and amateur appetite for publications on the Mongols is voracious and the quality of literature varies widely.

Little of this literature, however, extends chronologically much beyond the death of

Činggis Qan in 1227. Other categories of historical literature that address overarching topics related to the Mongol Empire, such as the *yasa*, the military, legitimation and succession, and the *yam*/*jam* (to name but a few of the subfields of Mongol studies) are naturally narrowly focused. Few of these latter examples contribute directly to understanding the Mongol Empire generally, nor do they attempt to do so. Some efforts have been made to identify the structure and institutions that defined Mongol Empire—Thomas Allsen's *Mongol Imperialism*, foremost among them. Allsen's monograph was pioneering at the time but there is yet much need for examining the formation and intention behind the Mongols' own understanding of empire. This dissertation is positioned to both extend the work of Allsen by providing a prequel to his *Mongol Imperialism* as well as challenge existing assumptions represented in the same work but also present in much of the literature on early Mongol Empire.

Literature on the Mongols analyzed in this study does establish general trends that narrow the scope of the inquiry into the reign of Ögödei Qa'an and his successors before Möngke. In addition to the literature that is discussed in the opening paragraphs of §§2-4, some of the conceptual frameworks for this project have been shaped by indirectly related—sometimes unrelated—sources. For example, Burton G. Malkiel's *A Random Walk Down Wall Street*,[69] led me to reconsider the Mongols' incentive toward action in ways not obvious in the literature but perceivable in the sources: as people who had made a lifelong, multigenerational study of the complex and interdependent engines of wealth of which they were a small part. They saw the potential for economic success and understood the obstacles that prevented them from attaining that success. Moreover, they saw the potential to control the market and recognized their

[69] Burton Gordon Malkiel, *A Random Walk Down Wall Street: the Time-Tested Strategy for Successful Investing* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2019).

advantageous position for doing so. Accordingly, they made a bid to take control of the market—the entire system—and were, for a time, spectacularly successful. The evidence leads me to believe that they approached their imperial project more from the perspective of businessmen than from that of emperors or military leaders. Taking the metaphor too far, I began to perceive that the Mongols speculated in violence and invested in commerce. That their enterprise was perceived differently by contemporaries is no surprise but has, for the last eight centuries, set most studies of their reign slightly off course. Corresponding to my approach to the Mongol enterprise as a business venture, I use terms meant to invoke just this thinking: "stakeholders" and "investors," for example.[70]

Another unconventional contribution to the conceptual frameworks for this dissertation are conversations had over a decade with the writer and activist, Jamie Kalven. The modern urban street and police gangs and about which Kalven has written[71] are analogous to the early Mongol confederacy and have contributed to my understanding of collective sovereignty in action. Kalven's work shines a light upon a particular type of social construct that arises when local needs are unmet or denied by centralized power structures or that arise in the interstices where central power structures are impotent. Činggis Qan was successful among Mongolian peoples because he could offer solutions to immediate problems that won him the support and loyalty of, first, a local band of followers. In this way, he gained means of coercion which he

[70] This approach is not entirely without precedent: Owen Lattimore suggests as much in his survey of the mechanics of steppe/sown economics. See Lattimore, "The Geographical Factor in Mongol History." Though his subject is not the Mongols of our period, specifically, they are included in his wide-ranging study of the Chinese/Mongolian frontier relationship.

[71] See the website of the Invisible Institute, which Kalven directs: https://invisible.institute/view-from-the-ground

then employed against those who resisted becoming part of his confederation. The expansion of his purview, attendant of his successes, augmented both the scale of the services and support he supplied to his followers, as well as the scope of the problems his confederation was empowered to address. As in the political landscape of urban gangs, the destructiveness of the wars they waged contrasted with the civil and social services they brought to their conquered territories and subject peoples. Interconnected networks of business; military and social advancement; distribution of resources among the disenfranchised; isolation from outside threats; access to assistance and judicial systems—all were provided in some measure by Činggis Qan's confederation to its members. By Ögödei's time, these services were institutionalized on a grand scale.

These concepts have been given theoretical shape by a study of a successful network of services provided to populations not served by central government: Anton Blok's *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village*.[72] This dated but relevant study provides a thorough analysis of communities and their networks existing in the gaps between government provisions and local resources. Blok's unit of study is a village on the Mediterranean in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but it is a guide for understanding the need for service and support in marginal settlements and peoples occupying interstitial regions. A model of decentralized, collective authority might also be relevant in understanding Mafia and gang comparisons with the Mongols. Scholarship that frames urban street gangs as systems with hierarchies and channels of authority are not new but framing them in connection to the idea that what they represent is an archetypal power structure might lead us to something that sheds far more light upon both Mongols and urban gangs.

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[72] Anton Blok, *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, 1860-1960: a Study of Violent Peasant Entrepreneurs*, Pavilion Series, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974).

§1.6 Conclusion

A point of departure for this project was the repeated observation by Professor John Woods that there exists no serious study of Ögödei and his reign and that this leaves a considerable gap in the narrative and understanding of Mongol Empire.[73] In conjunction with this observation was the not-so-subtle suggestion that I address this problem—in response to which I, for many years, claimed to possess an inadequate set of skills. Whether or not this is the case is yet undecided. What is clear is that Ögödei is a pivotal figure in the history of the Mongols and their empire: he reigned during a period of transition but was not himself a transitional figure insofar as he did not advocate for a restructuring of the Mongol ruling apparatus. Even so, the conquest empire of Činggis Qan was transformed into an administrative empire during the reign of Ögödei, a fact that, while observed by many scholars, is not the subject of any serious study. This is a surprise, given the central importance of Ögödei as both heir to Činggis Qan's conquests and the founder of what would become known as the Mongol Empire. Ögödei's reign and the office of qa'an that began with him cannot be analyzed, however, without also considering the decade after his death in 1241 and understanding the events that unfolded before Möngke's election in 1251.

Ögödei and his officials responded to the conflicting challenges of administering urban and agrarian peoples along with the confederation, while also managing expansionist military

[73] As recently as 2013, Igor de Rachewiltz observed: "A good, although at times inflated picture of his rule, reforms and innovations, is given by Č. Dalaĭ in his ÖX which, unfortunately, lacks any critical apparatus, but which is nevertheless the only book on Ögödei written by a known scholar and historian. P.D. Buell is preparing a study on Ögödei in which his role and personality are duly re-evaluated and given the prominence they deserve." de Rachewiltz, *SH (Supplement)*, 131. Buell's study has not been published at the time of this dissertation's completion.

campaigns, by overseeing the creation of institutions that addressed the needs of the growing Mongol domains. Ögödei's efforts to maintain stable yet expanding empire provided the necessary conditions for the Mongol Empire to reach its greatest extent while remaining unified under a single uncontested qa'an. By the time of Ögödei's death in 1241, the transition from collective sovereignty to autocracy was, despite Ögödei's efforts, well on its way. The enmities that would lead to the fragmentation of the empire and the end of unified Mongol confederation had already begun, even as legitimizing principles and institutions of government propagated during his reign were finding secure footholds in the Central Eurasian socio-political milieu.

§2 Mongol Empire at its Apogee: the Reign of Ögödei Qa'an, 1229-1241

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§2.1 Introduction

This chapter is the biography of Ögödei (1186-1241), third son of Činggis Qan, and the only Mongol ruler (r. 1229-41) who reigned over a unified Mongol Empire. While the centrifugal forces that would eventually pull the empire into several smaller states were already affecting the Mongols' ability to govern their conquests, Ögödei and his administration actively sought out institutions and technologies of rule that would allow for the hybrid of steppe and sown traditions to function cooperatively. The stakeholders in the Mongol confederation continued to demand rule through collective sovereignty expressed by the *quriltai*, but the urban and agrarian societies over which they were new rulers required autocratic management if they were not to be wholly restructured. As discussed in §1, the Mongols were less interested in governing people than they were in enrichment, thus they left functional institutions in place and made some attempts to standardize bureaucracy at the highest levels. This, however, meant that the dissonance between collective sovereignty and autocracy had to be harmonized. Through the office of qa'an and the person of Ogodei, they attempted to do just that.

The biographical narrative of Ögödei is synthesized from Juvainī's *Tārīkh-i jahān*

gushāy,[1] Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tavārīkh*,[2] and the second chapter of the *Yuanshi*.[3] Following the suggestion of Igor de Rachewiltz, this chapter also makes use of the *Secret History* with the assumption that Ögödei was its author, even if not written by his own hand.[4] Ögödei seldom receives scholarly attention as the primary protagonist. Furthermore, he is rarely recognized as the innovator and adept manager that he was: only under Ögödei was Mongol Empire a unified polity that could conceivably have been an empire. Ögödei also played a leading role in its rapid collapse in the final years of his reign as qa'an. Much of Ögödei's story is martial, reflecting the content and interests of the sources. The sources' preoccupation with Ögödei's military career is reflected in the biography as it appears in this chapter.

A pivotal component of Ögödei's story, as well as that of the evolution of the Mongol Empire, is the establishment of Qaraqorum, the capital city. Qaraqorum was Ögödei's city and the two are inseparable in the narrative of Mongol Empire. The city's "founding" in 1235 coincides with the peak of Ögödei's reign and the culmination of his efforts to institutionalize elements of the Mongol state responsible for the rule over conquered civilizations and management of redistribution of wealth among stakeholders. Accordingly, I give considerable attention to the city, its functions, and Ögödei's role in its establishment.

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[1] 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvainī, *The Ta'rīkh-i-Jahán-gushá of 'Alá'u 'd-Din 'Aṭá Malik-i-Juwaynī*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī, 3 vols., E.J.W. Gibb memorial series, (Leyden, London: E.J. Brill; Luzac & Co., 1912 [c. 1260]).

[2] Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-Tavārīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Rawshan and Muṣṭafá Mūsavī (Tihrān: Nashr-i Alburz, 1994 [1310]).

[3] 宋濂 Song Lian, *元史 Yuanshi* (北京 Beijing: 中華書局 Zhonghua shuju, 1977 [1370]).

[4] Igor de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols: a Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century (Supplement)*, Brill's Inner Asian library, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 3.

This chapter will examine these aspects of Ögödei, his role in the conquests under Činggis Qan, his elevation to qa'an, the evolution of the office and the state under his leadership, and the unraveling in the final years of his life and reign. The next chapter (§3) will take up the years between Ögödei's death in 1241 and the election of Möngke to the office in 1251, a period during which the problems confronting the unified Mongol polity were compounded and rule by collective sovereignty gave way to the bureaucratic demands for autocracy. Finally, §4 will provide a closer analysis of the transitional aspects of Ögödei's reign and those of his successors.

§2.1.1 Periodization: The election of Ögödei to the office of qa'an marked a definite ideological shift in the development of the Mongol Empire and was the consummation of the conquest and administration efforts of Činggis Qan. Whether or not the stakeholders present at the *quirltai* of 1228-29 understood that such a shift was under way, it soon became clear that Ögödei's reign would differ significantly from that of his father and that the Yeke Mongol Ulus was rapidly evolving into something entirely new. Periodizing Ögödei's reign into two contrasting periods, it will sometimes be evident only in the later deconstructive period what had been accomplished in the earlier, constructive period.

The periodization according to which I have chosen to organize this chapter on Ögödei's life is divided into two parts, before and after his enthronement in 1229. This covers the sparsely documented early life (1186-1229) and, after 1229, the comparatively detailed accounts of the years of his reign (1229-41). The years after his election as qa'an until his death in 1241 are further divided in order to accommodate the relative abundance of details. The first of these subdivisions, 1229-35, I have conceptualized as a constructive period. The second, a deconstructive period, corresponds to the years 1235-41. The dividing event is the second and

last *quriltai* of Ögödei's reign, during which the Jin armies were redistributed among the Mongol military leaders and the campaigns to northwestern Eurasia were planned. The year 1235 also marks the official recognition of the end of campaigning for Ögödei himself. As necessary, some events before and after 1186-1241 will be explained, but only insofar as they are germane to the discussion of events within this range of dates.

§2.1.2 Sources: Juvainī and Rashīd al-Dīn serve as our primary Persian chroniclers for this chapter, along with the second chapter of Song Lian's *Yuanshi*. Ögödei's chapter in the *Yuanshi* also contains a short biography of his son, Güyük (r. 1246-48). Chinese chroniclers did not grant Güyük the full treatment of other Mongol qa'ans but, instead, recorded his reign as a kind of epilogue to Ögödei's. The Persian sources provide extensive descriptions of Ögödei's actions as qa'an, his family and descendants, and anecdotal accounts of his personality. Chapter two of the *Yuanshi* offers little in the way of details concerning his early life but is rich in information about his official actions as qa'an, especially as they pertained to China. The *SH*, despite its ongoing problematic application, is of particular interest in the biography of Ögödei, as already mentioned. The Ögödei's life before 1229 is not known in detail from any source, but *TJG* and *JaT* provide some elements that can be used to reconstruct a basic biography. Aside from a coincidental mention of him during his teenage years, we have nothing until approximately 1219, when Činggis Qan began his military campaigns in central Eurasia. At this juncture, however, details of his involvement and movements during these campaigns are rich. After his selection as qa'an, details of his life become abundant.

§2.1.3 Centrifugal Forces and Ögödei: The central conflict in the government of Mongol Empire during Ögödei's reign was between the confederacy's stakeholders and the mostly non-Mongol (specifically, non-pastoralist) urban bureaucrats. Throughout this dissertation, the aspect of this relationship most relevant to my analysis is the disagreement between models of authority in which the steppe confederates supported collective sovereignty and the bureaucrats promoted autocracy. This conflict originated in ways of production—pastoralism and agriculture—and the forms of management that each engendered. Among the bureaucrats, this conflict was evident in an ongoing anxiety over the future stability of the state and an inability to understand or accept the apparently short-sighted priorities of the Mongol elite. A few of those serving the Mongols were able to see both sides of this issue and were, in many cases, highly valued for their insight. Yelü Chucai (1189-1243), Šigi Qutuqu (c. 1180-c. 1260), and the Khwārazmian father and son, Maḥmūd Yalavač (d. 1254) and Mas'ūd Beg (d. 1289), are perhaps the most well-known. Others, such as Činqai (1169-1252) and 張柔 Zhang Rou (1190-1268), performed well in both the military and bureaucratic arenas, evincing an understanding of tensions between steppe redistributive systems and agrarian management. Examination of the events that transpired in 1229-35 show that the Mongol Empire under Ögödei was evolving from a conquest confederation constituted upon collective sovereignty into an administrative entity operating according to autocratic principles.

Ögödei's jurisdiction over the military was minimal, as his duties were to the maintenance, collection, and redistribution of the sedentary, agrarian streams of income. The military conquests carried out throughout his reign were planned and commanded cooperatively by Činggis Qanids, experienced military leaders, and other Mongol elites. Ögödei was certainly a qualified and experienced commander in addition to being qa'an, but he had no more control

over decisions in military matters than others who were represented at the *quriltai*. His role in matters concerning the bureaucracy primarily consisted of wealth distribution and administration of urban commercial and tax collecting institutions. In addition to this, he served in the role of "head of state" receiving envoys, accepting submissions, and representing the Mongols to other states.

The conquest of the Jin in 1234 forced the Mongols to adapt in order to meet their new responsibilities as rulers of a vast agrarian civilization. As conquerors of the oldest and most complex civilization in all of Eurasia, they were now in the position to have to restore and manage it. In one of the most spectacular examples of the Mongols' often mentioned adaptability and pragmatism, Ögödei was able to quickly organize a greatly expanded bureaucracy. Exhibiting some of his father's alleged leadership attributes—abilities to recognize those with useful talents and elicit loyal service from them—Ögödei was able to oversee the implementation and integration of complex institutions subject to Mongol rule in which few Mongols held offices. Most of this new bureaucracy of empire was made up of those who had served the same and similar roles under the Jin. Moreover, Ögödei did this while also restoring and rebuilding infrastructure devastated by the Mongols themselves. Despite this strong beginning to state building on a continental scale, Ögödei somewhat inexplicably did not follow through. In the pages that follow, I present a biographical account of Ögödei and build a case for understanding his reign and the office of qa'an as factors signaling the beginning of a transition from collective sovereignty and unity to fragmentation and autocracy in the Mongol Empire.

§2.2 Youth and Early Life, 1186-1229

Ögödei was born the third son of Börte and Temüǰin in 1186. His two older brothers, J̌oči and Ča'adai, were probably one and two years older than he, respectively. In addition, there was an adopted son, older than the others, that Temüǰin acquired from the defeated Tatars and raised in his and Börte's family as one of their own.[5] Šigi Qutuqu was this son's name, and he would come to be an important figure in the Mongol story, even if not treated as an equal of Temüǰin and Börte's four biological sons in matters of state. The conditions of Ögödei's birth and early upbringing are not known, though we can be sure that his father's career was an influential factor. Still twenty years from being confirmed as Činggis Qan, Temüǰin was already a powerful chieftain in the midst of building a confederation of Mongolian steppe peoples. It is impossible to determine the exact events of Činggis Qan's career at the time of Ögödei's birth (and, therefore, the location and circumstances of his birth). We can deduce, however, that Temüǰin was still struggling to build a following and in the midst of his long-lasting feud with the Ong Qan and J̌amuqa. From the *JaT*, we know the name of Ögödei's tutor: Ilügä, a Jalayir. The son of one of Činggis Qan's attendants, Qada'an, Ilügä was later assigned a military force and given to Ögödei. No details of the nature of Ögödei's instruction are known, but Ilügä would eventually become a military commander under Ögödei.[6]

Not until Ögödei was nearly seventeen years old do the sources mention him again: in 1203, following a battle with the Ong Qan's army in the days leading up to the event known as

[5] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 84.

[6] It is evident, if he wrote all or part of the *SH*, that Ögödei was literate, though it is unclear the languages at his command beyond Mongolian. The Oyirat, Amir Arghun, who would play a major part in the story of Činggis Qan and his conquests, was in the service of Ilügä as his *nökär*. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 68-9.

the "Balǰuna Covenant."[7] After retreating from battle, Temüǰin reassembled his forces for roll call where it was discovered that Ögödei and two of the "four steeds," Boroqul and Bo'orču, were missing.[8] Bo'orču eventually arrived alone with a story of his narrow escape.

> Then, a moment later, another man approached. He advanced and drew closer, his feet dangling under him; yet, when one looked, it seemed like a single person riding. When he came up and drew to a halt, it was Boroqul mounted double behind Öködei with blood trickling from the corners of his mouth.
>
> Öködei had been hit by an arrow in the neck vein; as the blood was clotting, Boroqul had sucked the wound-clogging blood, letting it trickle from the corners of the mouth: that's how he came.
>
> When Činggis Qan saw this, tears fell from his eyes and his heart was pained. He speedily ordered a fire to be prepared, had the wound cauterized, and drink sought for Öködei and given to him.[9]

In January 1211, Činggis Qan turned his forces on the Jurchen 金朝 Jin Dynasty, long an enemy of the northern steppe peoples and against which they were relatively powerless before the Mongol confederation had taken shape. Ögödei, in cooperation with his brothers Ča'adai and Tolui (or perhaps J̌oči—the sources disagree), took several cities and, in 1212, followed the Yellow River plundering Jin settlements along the way. Our sources' thin coverage of Ögödei's

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[7] This important event in the process of building Temüǰin's confederation occurred after Temüǰin and his companions defeated the Ong Qan despite unfavorable odds. Temüǰin and 19 of his closest companions drank the waters of Lake Balǰuna (or possibly Balǰuna River) and sealed their friendship and loyalty. Much speculation about this event has resulted in opposing opinions about both its location and authenticity. For a summary of the debate on its geographic possibilities, see Igor de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols: a Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, Brill's Inner Asian library, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), §182 and 655. Francis Cleaves argued for the event's authenticity (despite its absence in the *SH*) in Francis Woodman Cleaves, "The Historicity of the Baljuna Covenant," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 18 (1955).

[8] The "four steeds" of Temüǰin—four close and early companions—also included Čila'un Ba'atur and Muqali. See de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §§163 and 209.

[9] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §172.

actions during this campaign prevents us from knowing for certain beyond a few mentioned cities early in the campaign in which maneuvers he participated. Along with his brothers, he commanded important portions of the operation and is credited with much of the Mongols' success in taking 河北 Hebei from the Jin. Included in the conquests of Ögödei and his brothers were 雲內 Yunnei, 東勝 Dongsheng, 武州 Wuzhou, 朔州 Shuozhou, 寧州 Ningzhou, and 西京 Xijing (the modern 大同 Datong), all in the present-day 山西省 Shanxi Province.[10] From 1212 to 1216, when Činggis Qan returned to his own *ordo* and dispersed the armies, we know no more of Ögödei's involvement in the Jin campaign.

§2.2.1 The Western Conquests, 1219-21: Dating the series of events that make up what we know of the early Mongol military actions in central and western Eurasia is difficult to do precisely, though we have some general confidence in approximate dating and sequence. Determining Ögödei's role in the campaigns is likewise difficult but we have enough material to help us understand something of his actions. The *TJG* and *JaT* have been given close attention and the accumulated scholarship gives us somewhat of a consensus on the timeline. The *Yuanshi*, while providing more detail concerning dates, must be used with caution as its temporal and geographic remove from the events is considerable. More importantly, its authors were little concerned with events beyond the region of Chinese influence. They, like Rashīd al-Dīn, probably made use of the Mongol *Altan Debter*, the non-extant source compiled and held for the private use of the Mongol elite and considered to be possibly the most authoritative record of the

[10] These details appear in *JaT* and closely follow the narrative of events from the *Yuanshi*, indicating that both had access to the same source, probably the *Altan Debter* (see §1.4.3). Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 443 and 763.

early Mongol Empire. Though having little to say concerning his involvement in Činggis Qan's early military actions outside of China, the authors recognize Ögödei's importance to the western conquests: "When [Činggis Qan] attacked Jin and brought the Western Regions under his control, the Emperor [Ögödei] contributed greatly in the conquest of cities and seizing of territories."[11]

The *SH* also shows little interest in the western conquests. As a document apparently intended for the Mongol ruling elite, the *SH* is occupied with the confederacy and the expression of collective sovereignty. Where campaigns are concerned (and most of the major maneuvers up through the reign of Ögödei are at least mentioned) the specifics are often confused. For example, in the case of the campaigns during Ögödei's reign in which he did not directly participate, the order of events and even the people involved are so confused as to be no help in deciphering the narrative.[12]

We can, however, describe the general series of events that lead to the Mongols' campaigns to the west. The *shāh* of the Khwārazmian empire, 'Ala' al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Tekish (1169-1220), known as Sultan Muḥammad Khwārazmshāh (r. 1200-20), repeatedly antagonized Činggis Qan in the years leading up to the Mongols' march west. Well known and often recounted is the story of the execution of the Mongol delegation of envoys and merchants in 1218, in which the Khwārazmshāh was, if not responsible, at least complicit. Perhaps the Khwārazmshāh, who had since his first conflict with the Mongols in 1209 increased his

[11] 太祖伐金, 定西域, 帝攻城略地之功居多. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 二九.

[12] Further support, perhaps, for the theory that the *SH* was penned by Ögödei himself. As de Rachewiltz points out, there is an apparent deterioration the later part of the text, evinced by a lack of the formal style and an increase in factual errors compared to the beginning of the narrative. *SH (Supplement)*, 3.

territorial holdings, believed that eliminating the trade caravan would send a message to the Mongols to stay away. They had, after all, made gains in the territories bordering Khwārazm and were poised to advance. If so, it was a terrible miscalculation, to say the least.[13] Ögödei's role in the military maneuvers serves a clear sign that he had already had both training and experience as a military commander and was no newcomer to siege warfare. Already 32 or 33 years old by 1219, he had a great deal of experience in the Jin campaigns of six and seven years earlier.

The sequence of events that culminates with the attack on Khwārazm began with a dilemma for the Mongols that followed Činggis Qan's success in subduing or driving away most of the Mongolian tribes. Previously in a near constant state of conflict amongst themselves that, among other things, provided a mechanism for the exchange of goods, the tribes making up the confederation were now forced to look elsewhere for sources of wealth and goods. Textiles were highly valued by nomadic steppe peoples and they were eager to establish trade relations in order to acquire them. This was a well-known state of affairs by contemporaries, for Juvainī explains that three merchants from Khwārazm—Aḥmad of Khujand, Aḥmad of Balčikh, and a son of an Amir Ḥusayn—journeyed to the camp of Činggis Qan with a caravan of trade goods. Once brought before Činggis Qan, Aḥmad of Balčikh angered the qan by demanding an unreasonable price for his fabrics. Činggis Qan had his wares seized as plunder and distributed them according to the proportions set forth by the *yasa* for the proper apportioning of goods seized in warfare.

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[13] Timothy May, "The Mechanics of Conquest and Governance: The Rise and Expansion of the Mongol Empire, 1185-1265" (Doctor of Philosophy Doctoral Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004), 246; Abu 'Umar Minhāj al-Din 'Uthmān ibn Sirāj al-Dīn, Jūzjānī, *Ṭabaḳāt-i-nāsiri, a General History of the Muhammadan Dynastics of Asia, including Hindustān, from A.H. 194 (810 A.D.) to A.H. 658 (1260 A.D.) and the Irruption of the Infidel Mughals into Islām*, ed. H. G. Raverty, Bibliotheca indica, (London: Printed by Gilbert & Rivington, 1881), 268.

The other two Khwārazmian merchants wisely refused to name a price for their merchandise and so were paid fairly. The *TJG* relates that, in the end, Aḥmad of Balčikh was recalled and paid an equitable amount for his confiscated textiles.[14]

Responding diplomatically and with an eye toward establishing regular trade relations, Činggis Qan sent a return delegation made of two or three representatives each from the retinues of his sons, commanders, *noyans*, and others with funds to travel to Khwārazm and purchase goods. Led by one Uquna,[15] there were 100 people—or 450 Muslims according to Juvainī—in the caravan.[16] Rashīd al-Dīn adds the detail that Činggis Qan appointed one Khwārazmian and two Turkistanis to accompany the caravan and represent the Mongols' interests to their compatriots.[17] They bore the credentials of envoys from Činggis Qan's court and set out for (from the Mongols' point of view) a subservient or vassal state.

The qan's caravan arrived in Otrar, a Khwārazmian city on the right bank of the Syr Darya, located south of the city of Turkestan in present-day Kazakhstan. The city was a recent annexation to the Khwārazmian territories and governed by a relative of Sultan Muḥammad

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[14] For the full accounts, see Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 59-60; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 473.

[15] Uquna is not mentioned elsewhere in connection with any other event in the *SH*. The name means "Billy-Goat" according to de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 923.

[16] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 181, §254. Yelü Chucai also agrees with this latter number. As de Rachewiltz observes, two contemporary independent chroniclers (Yelü Chucai and Ögödei) should be considered more reliable than Juvainī's later, though more detailed account: de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 923. Yelü Chucai only has this to say of the Otrar incident: "[F]ive hundred *li* north-west of K'u-chan is the city of O-ta-la (Otrar). It has more than ten cities as dependencies. The chief of this city once killed several official envoys of the Great Court (i.e., the Mongol court) and more than a hundred merchants taking possession of all their goods. This was the only reason for the western campaign." Igor de Rachewiltz, "The Hsi-yu lu by Yeh-lu Ch'u-ts'-ai," *Monumenta Serica* 21 (1962): 21.

[17] Rashīd al-Dīn's account of these events otherwise closely follows Juvainī. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 473.

Khwārazmshāh by the name of Īnālǰūq.[18] As it happened, Īnālǰūq was already acquainted with one of the members of the caravan. This man—an Indian, according to *TJG*—embarrassed and insulted Īnālǰūq's sense of importance through his familiarity and lack of formality in greeting his old friend. Furthermore, it seems that this Indian behaved with a sense of his own qan's (i.e., Činggis Qan's) superiority, further insulting Īnālǰūq. Finally, Īnālǰūq—and this may be the real reason behind this series of events—coveted the goods of the caravan and could not (or preferred not to) pay for them. He had them arrested, imprisoned, and sent a messenger to the Khwārazmshāh to "inform" him, though this probably meant that Īnālǰūq was seeking permission or approval for what came next.[19]

What came next was in hindsight the *casus belli* of the Mongols' expansion to the west: Īnālǰūq executed all, or nearly all, of the detained delegation. The news of this slaughter was brought to Činggis Qan by a member of the caravan who had devised an escape and fled to inform the qan. The *JaT* tells us that Činggis Qan was so angry at the news that he climbed a

[18] Otrar was taken by the Khwārazmshāh in 1218 after Činggis Qan removed the Naiman Güšlüg Qan, the son of Ong Qan. Güšlüg had fled to Turkistan with the few Mongol tribes still resisting Činggis Qan and his confederation on the death of his father and taken the territory from the Qarakhitain Gür Qan. Following Güšlüg's ousting by Činggis Qan, the Khwārazmshāh seized all of Turkistan, including Otrar. This, along with the execution of his envoys and merchants, goes some way to explaining Činggis Qan's vengeful efforts against the Khwārazmshāh. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 297; V. V. Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 4th ed ed., E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, (London, Philadelphia: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 1977), 369.

[19] The decision to execute the caravan is usually credited to Īnālǰūq, but Juvainī gives two versions of the story. The first, as I have presented it in the text, is that Īnālǰūq made the decision himself. In the chapters concerning Sultan Muḥammad, however, *TJG* states that, when the Khwārazmshāh received news that the Mongol caravan had arrived at Otrar and, furthermore, were laden with desirable goods, he ordered the execution and seizure of their wares. 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvainī, *The Ta'rīkh-i-Jahán-gushá of 'Alá'u 'd-Din 'Aṭá Malik-i-Juwaynī*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī, E.J.W. Gibb memorial series, (Leyden, London: E.J. Brill; Luzac & Co., 1912 [c. 1260]), v. 2, 99.

mountain and, for three days, sought the advice of god. Eventually he perceived that he had been given a solution and returned to mobilize the Mongol nation for war.[20] After sending messengers to the Khwārazmshāh to reprimand him for his transgressions and warn him of his impending doom, he commenced the march west. The year was 1218.[21] The way to Khwārazm would bring the army into contact with other rebellious would-be vassals, so Činggis Qan first sent contingents to settle those matters. While carrying out these orders, one of the Mongol armies was spotted by a Khwārazmian patrol. Sultan Muḥammad dispatched an army and confronted the Mongol force, who refused to engage the Khwārazmshāh on the grounds that Činggis Qan had not authorized them to fight the Khwārazmians, just then; so they withdrew to avoid conflict.

Sultan Muḥammad's persistence, however, eventually forced the Mongols to battle. In this first conflict, the Mongols met Jalāl al-Dīn, Muḥammad's son. Jalāl al-Dīn would continue to be a problem for the Mongols until he was finally vanquished during the reign of Ögödei. After a long day of battle with the Khwārazmian army commanded by Jalāl al-Dīn, the Mongols withdrew and made camp. Lighting fires to deceive their adversaries, they then decamped and returned to Činggis Qan. This final offense by Sultan Muḥammad was the third against Činggis Qan (after the seizure of the region of Otrar and the execution of the delegation). The *JaT* claims that the Mongols attempted to avoid outright conflict yet were forced to action.[22]

In May or June of 1219, Ögödei set out with his brothers, father, and all of the amassed Mongol armies, as well as those of their allies, on a nominal campaign of vengeance.[23] The army

[20] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 474.

[21] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 62.

[22] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 477.

[23] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 61-2.

made its summer camp on the Kara Irtysh and continued on toward Khwārazm in October of 1219. When they arrived, the combined armies of the Mongols and their allies encircled the city of Otrar. The city was prepared for siege: walls had been fortified and machines of war brought in anticipation of the Mongols' arrival. The city's guard were reinforced with 60,000 additional soldiers sent by Sultan Muḥammad but so great was the number of forces brought by Činggis Qan that Īnālǰūq quailed at the sight.

Instead of attacking the city with the full strength of the Mongol forces, Činggis Qan split the army into several groups.[24] He assigned each of these groups to quickly take the cities and towns of Khwārazm and prevent the consolidation of forces that Sultan Muḥammad—in yet another instance of underestimating Činggis Qan—had failed to do, fatally impairing Khwārazm's ability to resist the Mongols. J̌oči was sent to besiege neighboring regions and others were sent to Khojend and Fanakat. After giving his orders, Činggis Qan himself advanced toward Bukhara.[25]

Ögödei and Ča'adai (perhaps Tolui, as well) were assigned the important task of taking Otrar and exacting a punishment equal to Činggis Qan's wrath.[26] There is a notable disagreement

[24] Rashīd al-Dīn says Činggis Qan "arrived in Otrar" February 1220 and that Ča'adai, Ögödei, and J̌oči were still laying siege to other cities. He also states that Tolui accompanied Činggis Qan from Otrar to Bukhara. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 492. This probably includes the princes' conquest of Gurgānǰ and Kalif in addition to Otrar, which took place before the conquest of Samarqand. Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 96-101.

[25] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 64.

[26] The importance of this siege is, however, overstated in the literature, perhaps even in the sources. While the murder of the trade caravan sent by Činggis Qan was no doubt a critical event in the Mongols' western conquest, the primary target of the Mongols' aggression was Sultan Muḥammad and not Īnālǰūq. From Činggis Qan's point of view, Īnālǰūq was incidental; the real offender was the Khwārazmshāh. Thus, it was the pursuit of Sultan Muḥammad, and not the siege of Otrar, that was the primary response to killing of the trade delegation.

between *TJG*—which is the account I have primarily followed, here—and the *JaT*, wherein Rashīd al-Dīn places Ča'adai and Ögödei in charge of the siege of Otrar while Tolui was sent to J̌and in his section on the history of the western campaigns in Činggis Qan's biography. No mention is made of J̌oči in these assignments.[27] Further internal inconsistencies confuse the account: in *JaT*'s biography of Ča'adai, Ögödei and Ča'adai are sent to besiege Otrar along with Tolui.[28] In J̌oči's biography, however, *JaT* has J̌oči attending to the siege of Otrar along with Ča'adai and Ögödei. No mention of the other two brothers appears in the account of the siege. Instead, J̌oči took Otrar and then conquered the territories between Otrar and Samarqand, joining Činggis Qan there. From Samarqand, Činggis Qan sent J̌oči, now in the company of Ča'adai and Ögödei, to attack Khwārazm where the inability of J̌oči and Ča'adai to get along resulted in Ögödei being given full command—and this agrees with *JaT*'s account in the biography of Ča'adai. Following their success, Ögödei and Ča'adai rejoined Činggis Qan at Ṭālaqān while J̌oči set out for his own camp, then on toward the Qïpčaq steppe.[29]

Already a veteran of the wars to build the confederation, Ögödei was no newcomer to leading troops into battle. Ögödei had probably participated in siege actions during the campaign against the Jin. Thus did the siege progress immediately, the geographic situation of Otrar—in the middle of a great, flat plain—allowing for cavalry to operate on all sides of the city. Nevertheless, five months passed before the conditions inside the walls deteriorated to a

[27] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 488-89.

[28] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 762.

[29] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 731; Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 407-09.

sufficient stage to cause a break in their resistance.[30] Considering his own role in the events that led to Mongol invasion of Khwārazm, Īnālǰūq understood that there would be no mercy shown him by the Mongols and so refused to surrender.

Wishing to spare his own life and others', Qarācha Khāṣṣ-Ḥājib, who had been sent to Īnālǰūq with 10,000 men from Sultan Muḥammad, gathered his troops and made a raid outside the city gates. Later that evening, the Mongols entered by the same gate and took Qarācha prisoner. Ögödei and Ča'adai interrogated Qarācha and his officers, determining that they were guilty of disloyalty to Īnālǰūq in conducting the raid that allowed the Mongols access to the city. Having no use for a seditious officer, Ögödei and Ča'adai had him and his men executed instead of incorporating them into the Mongol armies.[31] Afterward, Ögödei and Ča'adai had all of those in the city driven out onto the plain and allowed the Mongol army to pillage Otrar. Īnālǰūq and 20,000 men, according to *TJG*, retreated into the citadel and defended themselves until there was no one left save for Īnālǰūq himself, who had resorted to throwing bricks down on to the Mongols. When he had exhausted his supply of bricks, they bound him and destroyed the citadel. Finally, they took Īnālǰūq to Činggis Qan in Samarkand where he was executed.[32]

This was not the first time Ögödei had been assigned to lead an important component of a campaign, but it is the first instance for which we have details concerning his actions during such a maneuver. From *TJG*—and, subsequently, *JaT*—as well as what is related in the *SH*, it is clear

[30] There were probably no siege engines in the Mongols' caravan and no local resources—namely, forests—with which to build them. The Mongols were attempting to keep the city intact due to its importance as a trade center.

[31] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 63-5.

[32] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 66.

that Činggis Qan relied on his sons as much as his *nököt* in leading the confederated armies into battle. Even at this stage, Činggis Qan was preparing his sons to lead the Mongol confederation after him. He placed them in positions of authority but also assured that there were more experienced and trusted military advisors working closely with them. Činggis Qan knew, perhaps, that there would be controversy concerning the leadership of the Yeke Mongol Ulus in his absence and that placing his sons in prominent positions of authority would provide them with both the educations they needed to succeed and respect from those who would be casting their votes at the *quriltai*s that would determine the leadership of Činggis Qan's confederation. If that did not work, they would have at their commands large numbers of the Mongol military force.

What of the fact that Činggis Qan assigned Ča'adai and Ögödei together upon their portions of the campaign and yet sent J̌oči off in command of his own? There were two possible reasons for this. First, the ongoing conflict between J̌oči and Ča'adai precluded the possibility of the two working together and keeping the brothers separated was a necessity. Second, J̌oči had more experience than his brothers—far more, perhaps, as he was already conducting portions of military campaigns in the early stages of Temüǰin's formation of the confederation. He was known as a skillful military strategist and could be trusted to carry out his orders and accomplish the tasks assigned to him. Moreover, it seems that J̌oči's forces were particularly capable and committed to their commander.

Likewise, pairing Ögödei and Ča'adai was no accident. Known for his severity, fierce traditionalism, and strict adherence to the *yasa* of his father—all probable factors for which he was passed over as heir by Činggis Qan—Ča'adai was a natural foil for Ögödei's lenient and charitable disposition. Ča'adai's deep loathing of his older brother, J̌oči, further made him a poor

choice to keep the forces united in the absence of the qan. If Ča'adai was, indeed, paired with Ögödei so that their opposing and complimentary characteristics would result in some balance, it was both an insightful and cautious move by Činggis Qan. It may also indicate that, despite having already designated him as his heir (see §2.2.2, below), Činggis Qan did not think that Ögödei was yet prepared for command. Whatever the reasons behind it, Ögödei continued to operate with Ča'adai—and sometimes, Tolui, though the sources disagree on this—throughout the Khwārazm campaign. During Činggis Qan's lifetime, there was only one recorded instance of Ča'adai operating independently.[33]

The next major siege was at Gurgānǰ, the Khwārazmian capital, long abandoned by the Khwārazmian court before Činggis Qan's forces assembled outside its defensive walls. Sultan Muḥammad was on the run but left a contingent to protect his capital city. Still, Bartol'd calls the siege and capture of Gurgānǰ (end of 1220-April 1221)[34] "one of the most noteworthy events in history."[35] Činggis Qan himself was not directly involved in this, one of the most infamous sieges undertaken by the Mongols. Instead, Ča'adai and Ögödei, after leaving the successful conquest of Bukhara, converged with J̌oči's forces on Gurgānǰ. The vanguard drove off the cattle, rounded up civilians outside the city walls to fill in the ditches, and lured some of the city's defensive troops outside the gates and into an ambush. Attempting to save as much of the

[33] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 112.

[34] The timing of this siege is not agreed upon by the sources, but Bartol'd proposes that Nasawī's account is most likely to be correct, September 1220 to April 1221. Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 437. Rashīd al-Dīn gives five months from the beginning of the siege of Otrar to Ča'adai and Ögödei rejoining Činggis Qan at Samarqand in January or February 1221, and that it was taken "in the summer" of 1221. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 504.

[35] Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 433.

city as possible, they left off firebombing and shifted to flooding parts of the city, during which operation the city's defenders were able to win a victory, killing 3,000 Mongols. Bartol'd observes that the city and regions surrounding it would become part of J̌oči's appanage and that it was he who wished the city to be taken intact. This led, not surprisingly, to conflict with Ča'adai as the siege wore on. Once Činggis Qan received word of the dispute, he placed Ögödei in charge of all the forces belonging to J̌oči and Ča'adai.[36] Possibly aware of the conflicts in Mongol command, the defenders doubled down on their resistance and the Mongols' attempts to save the city became immaterial. When they gained control, they drove the people out onto the plain, separated more than a hundred thousand artisans, and carried off the young women and children.[37]

A massacre followed the successful siege of Gurgānǰ, assuring the long-lasting memory of the Mongols there. The city's population that remained were distributed amongst the army and each fighting man was assigned the execution of 24 prisoners. The number of slain was so large, as reported to Juvainī, that he refused to record it, arguing it would not be believed. Sometime after the siege and massacre, the city of Gurgānǰ and the surrounding regions were inundated, thanks to the collapse of the dams that held back the Amu Darya. With no one left to attend to the maintenance that kept the dams and irrigation systems in place, they had quickly failed. The inundation was so extensive that the Amu Darya changed course, its waters spilling into the Caspian.[38]

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[36] Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 435. Only *TJG* does not place J̌oči at Gurgānǰ.

[37] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 100.

[38] Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 436-7.

Leaving J̌oči to sort out this devastated new addition to his holdings, Ča'adai and Ögödei moved their forces to join Činggis Qan at the siege of Ṭālaqān, taking the town of Kalif in a matter of days along their way and passed through the region of Khorasan. During this march, Ögödei encountered Jalāl al-Dīn. Knowing that Ča'adai and Ögödei would be moving through unsecured regions, Činggis Qan sent out a contingent of frontier guards to observe the area. These horsemen encountered a small but determined force led by Jalāl al-Dīn and were put to flight, thus beginning the long and problematic conflict with him.

Ögödei, Ča'adai, their armies and levies, all rejoined Činggis Qan at Samarqand, the largest and most influential trade city in central Eurasia, in May or June 1220.[39] The Mongols' strategy for the conquest of Khwārazm centered on Samarqand, having heard upon arrival in Otrar that the city would take years to conquer due to the size of its army and the strength of its fortifications. The *TJG* reports that Sultan Muḥammad Khwārazmshāh had assigned 110,000 soldiers (which included 60,000 Turks—the "elite" troops—and the rest Tajiks) and 20 elephants to the defense of the city before he himself fled. He further ordered the fortification of the existing walls, building of additional walls, and filling of the moat with water.[40] The recombined Mongol army, having laid waste to the surrounding area and driving large levies of people from the conquered cities, especially Bukhara, set to planning for the reduction of Samarqand.[41] The city was marooned, surrounded by devastated land, conquered or destroyed cities, with no one

[39] Juvainī's date is Rabī‘ I, 618, which is a mistake for 617. See comments on this dating in ‘Alā' al-Dīn ‘Aṭā Malik Juvainī, *Genghis Khan: the History of the World Conqueror*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī, John Andrew Boyle, and David Morgan, trans. J. A. Boyle, Manchester Medieval Sources Series, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 122, fn. 22.

[40] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 91-92; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 500.

[41] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 500; Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 83.

left to send reinforcements.

As it turned out, either the strength of Samarqand's defenses had been exaggerated or the Mongol strategy worked better than expected. Činggis Qan came to the city after the successful and devastating siege of Bukhara, in which 30,000 men had been executed, the women and children taken into slavery, and the remaining young men conscripted into the levy and driven on to serve as siege labor.[42] Ögödei and Ča'adai, driving their own levies from Otrar, Gurgānǰ, and other cities along the way, arrived to make the forces surrounding Samarqand overwhelming in number. For two days, no offensive was undertaken as they inspected the fortifications and planned the siege. After one day and night of fighting, during which the Mongols choked off most of the attempts to send out troops from within the city, discord began to develop amongst the city's elite and defenders. The elephants, considered a powerful and dangerous weapon, had been relatively easily turned back, trampling Samarqand's own troops in the process. Seeing that the Mongols could prevent the sizable number of troops within the city from mounting any successful defense—effectively preventing them from leaving the city gates—Samarqand's leadership surrendered the city. The Mongols set to destroying all defensive structures, driving out the population, and preparing to take the citadel—which they did in a matter of days. Following victory, Činggis Qan sent Ögödei and Ča'adai with reinforcements from J̌oči to pacify the rest of Khwārazm[43] while he himself followed Sübe'etei in the pursuit of the Sultan Muḥammad.

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[42] Not until Ögödei appointed Maḥmūd Yalavač to manage the region after his selection as qa'an did Bukhara begin to recover from the devastation wrought by Činggis Qan. Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 84.

[43] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 97. Rashīd al-Dīn puts J̌oči himself with Ögödei and Ča'adai in the conquest of the rest of Khwārazm. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 505.

§2.2.2 Designation as Činggis Qan's Heir: In the latter half of August 1227, on the way to quell rebellion by the Tanguts, Činggis Qan died, probably from injuries or complications of a fall from the saddle, in the 六盤山 Liupan Mountains on the northeastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau, what is nearly the geographic center of the present day People's Republic of China.[44] By this time, he was probably around 65 years old, an old man by contemporary Mongol standards.[45] Old age, a hard-lived life and, presumably, the strain of ongoing military campaigns could have all contributed to his death. In any case, it seems that Činggis Qan's death was not dramatic, despite some of the more fantastic reports otherwise. The *SH* gives little detail: "Having destroyed the Tangut people, Činggis Qa'an came back and in the Year of the Pig (1227) ascended to Heaven."[46]

Some scholars, however, have attributed his death to lingering injuries sustained in the winter of 1226, taking this passage for evidence:

> In the winter, Činggis Qa'an, riding his steed J̌osotu Boro, on the way hunted the many wild asses of Arbuqa. When the wild asses passed close by them J̌osotu Boro took fright. Činggis Qa'an fell off the horse and, his body being in great pain, he halted at Čo'orqat.[47]

The *SH* describes a slow, fevered recovery—the fact that it is recorded at all may be enough to argue that this was, indeed, the cause of his death. Whatever the case, Činggis Qan

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[44] The cause of his death is unknown and obscured somewhat in the *SH*. de Rachewiltz points out that his death was simply "in the course of the campaign" against the Xi Xia. de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 979.

[45] For a complete explanation of the debate over the possible birthdates of Činggis Qan, see de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 411.

[46] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §268.

[47] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §265.

died in 1227 after two punitive military actions against the Tangut.[48]

Činggis Qan had identified Ögödei, possibly as early as 1218, as his preferred heir. Passing over the two elder sons, J̌oči and Ča'adai, it is reported in the *SH* that Ögödei was selected for his fairness and mild temperament. In a scene that exhibits elements of probable later Toluid additions, Činggis Qan was advised by Yisüi Qatun, a Tatar and one of the qan's principal wives,[49] to think about the future of the Mongol people and leadership of the confederation instead of rashly rushing off on a punitive expedition against the Khwārazmians who had massacred a party of Mongol envoys.[50] It was she, Yisüi Qatun, who was the first to mention the appointment of a successor, thereby opening the way for the only instance in which succession in the Mongol Empire transpired via designation. Praising Yisüi Qatun for her good advice, Činggis Qan asked each of his four sons to respond, beginning with the eldest, J̌oči:

> But before J̌oči could utter a sound, Ča'adai said, "When you say, 'J̌oči, speak up!', do you mean by that that you will appoint J̌oči as your successor? How can we let ourselves be ruled by this bastard offspring of the Merkit?"[51]

This begins an argument between Ča'adai and J̌oči which results in Ča'adai suggesting that their father should look to Ögödei as a successor:

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[48] For description of the Tangut campaigns, see de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §§265-68. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, however, the issue with the Tangut was still unresolved at the time of Ögödei's enthronement. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 638.

[49] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §155.

[50] This term refers broadly to the entire Turkestan region, but probably means the Khwārazmians, here. de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §152, 562.

[51] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §254. For a discussion of J̌oči's legitimacy, see Qu Dafeng and Liu Jianyi, "On Some Problems Concerning Jochi's Lifetime," *Central Asiatic Journal* 42, no. 2 (1998).

> "The eldest sons are J̌oči and I. We shall, in cooperation with each other, serve our father the Qan.
>
> Whichever of us evades his duty
> Shall have his head split open
> Whichever of us lags behind
> Shall have his heels cut across.
>
> But it is Ögödei among us who is steady and reliable: let us, therefore, agree on Ögödei. As Ögödei is close to our father the Qan, if the Qan instructs him on the great array of the 'teachings of the hat', this will be fine!"[52]

Whether a later Toluid interpolation or not, it does seem that there existed a written document in which the sons of Činggis Qan attested to their agreement of Ögödei as heir.[53] The apparent unconventionality of such a document notwithstanding, it appeared again at the *quriltai* in 1229 to help settle the choice for qa'an. Bartol'd extolls Činggis Qan's judgement in the selection of Ögödei:

> Chingiz-Khan clearly realised that the qualities possessed by these two brothers were excellent for executive purposes but insufficient for ruling a vast empire and for ensuring unity amongst the members of the clan, an essential condition for preserving the integrity of a nomad state. Unity within the clan could be ensured either by the influence of a powerful personality of genius like that of Chinghiz-Khan, or by that of a man whose milder nature would draw to him the members of the clan as well as the rest of the population, and make him an object of general affection and devotion. Ogedey alone fulfilled this condition.[54]

Until a *quriltai* could be organized, Tolui was selected to manage affairs of the Yeke Mongol Ulus, thus becoming its first regent. No doubt it was a time of apprehension as the

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[52] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §155.

[53] That such a written document existed is attested in other sources, at least one of which does not appear to have been based upon the *SH*: 劉祁 Liu Qi, *歸潛志 Gui qian zhi*, ed. 崔文印 Cui Wenyin, 第1版 ed., 元明史料筆記叢刊 Yuan Ming shi liao bi ji cong kan, (北京 Beijing: 中華書局: 新華書店北京發行所發行 Zhonghua shu ju: Xin hua shu dian Beijing fa xing suo fa xing, 1983 [c. 1250]), 卷 juan 11.

[54] Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 463.

confederacy was entering into unprecedented times without the central figure of Činggis Qan.

§2.3 Qa'an, 1229-35: the Constructive Years

This period begins with assembly of the *quriltai* in 1228 that resulted in Ögödei's selection as qa'an. It concludes with the end of the second *quriltai* of Ögödei's reign in 1235. This latter date corresponds with the commencement of the Qïpčaq campaign and Ögödei's decision to cease his own participation in military action. During this period of approximately six years—half of his reign as qa'an—Ögödei was at his best as manager of wealth distribution for the Mongol Empire. This constructive phase was characterized by the inception of innovative institutions of government, the planning and realization of the largest and most important military conquests to date, and a territorial and political unity that would not be seen again in the Mongol Empire—collective sovereignty working at its greatest extent, not yet overwhelmed by the centrifugal forces of the complex and massive state. During this period, the geneses of decay can be perceived, eventually to be actualized in the latter half of Ögödei's reign and in the decade following his death in 1241.

The qa'an himself, the military, and the administration were active in this first half of Ögödei's reign. One major military campaign was planned and completed during the period in question: the Jin Campaign, 1229-1234; and the largest campaign conducted by the Mongols was planned: Qïpčaq Campaign, 1236-1242. The absorption of the Jin territories and governmental personnel provided a challenge to the Mongol administrative apparatus. Ögödei responded by implementing dramatic changes to existing administrative institutions and establishing new ones. His solutions for the administration of the complex urban societies in Mongol control had the

potential to evolve into stable, long-lasting government. For a number of reasons, however, this was not to be. Ögödei's own decline during the second half of his reign as well as the increasing effect of the centrifugal forces acting to obstruct centralizing momentum of Mongol Empire proved to be too much of a challenge for the rapidly developing administrative institutions.

§2.3.1 Quriltai, 1228-29: The decisions made at the *quriltai* convened in 1228 set the course for the future of the Mongol enterprise. The real transformation from Yeke Mongol Ulus—a calque on 大金國 *Da Jin Guo*, "Great Jin Nation"—to Mongol Empire began with the decisions made and actions taken at this assembly. The Mongol elite were responsible for deciding not only who was to be supreme qan, but also for choosing to either confirm or overturn the forces set in motion by the late Činggis Qan. Was the confederacy still in each of their best interests? Would the confederation be led by a single, powerful qan or would they disassemble and pursue regional interests? In the end, the answers to these questions would reflect the many compromises necessary for the continued expansion and growth of the Mongol state. Their final decisions exhibit an awareness of the changing nature of their empire and evince an understanding that adaptations were necessary in order to maintain hold over their diverse conquests and keep the corporation in order. Of those adaptations, one that would deeply impact the future of the empire was the selection of Ögödei and the creation of the office of qa'an to address the new and particular needs of the growing Mongol Empire.

After the death of Činggis Qan on 18 August 1227 and the installation of Tolui as regent, the Mongols dispersed to their respective *ordo*s, encampments, or returned to the few continuing military campaigns with the intention of reconvening in the new year. Time was needed to recall troops from distant campaigns—probably a significant amount of time, as moving large numbers

of troops through friendly territory required careful advanced planning and logistical support to avoid devastating the food supplies and resources in the regions through which the contingents marched. Additionally, time for political maneuvering in preparation for the debate over succession was needed. Finally, the *quriltai* had to be assembled at a time corresponding to the demands of the pastoral cycle. Thus, in the spring of 1228, messengers were sent to call everyone to assemble at Činggis Qan's *ordo* at Ködö'e Aral on the Kerulen River, which they did beginning in the late summer and early autumn.[55]

Ča'adai, Ordo, and Batu, the "princes of the right hand," came with their families and retinue: Ča'adai from Qayalïq, northeast of Almaty in modern Kazakhstan; Batu and Ordo from J̌oči's appanage on the Qïpčaq Steppe. From the east came the "princes of the left," Temüge Otčigin, Činggis Qan's brother, and Belgütei, his half-brother. Tolui, who was the youngest son of Činggis Qan and, thus, heir of his home yurt and regent, was waiting for them at Ködö'e Aral.

When all had assembled at the end of 1228, they gave several days to celebrations. They soon turned to other affairs, the election of qa'an among them. Chinese sources indicate that there was disagreement at the *quriltai* concerning who should be selected to fill the office.

[55] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 435-36. De Rachewiltz indicates that Tolui visited Ögödei at the "region of the three Sübci(t)" in the summer of 1229 while he was "regent of the empire." This would mean that the *quriltai* took place (and Ögödei was elected) in the fall of 1229 and not 1228 as in SH§269, nor the spring of 1229, as both *TJG* and *JaT* indicate. Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 144-45. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 635. The *Yuanshi* seems to indicate that Ögödei visited Tolui at the *ordo* of Činggis Qan, though the phrasing of the sentence is unclear. It is probable that Ögödei traveled to Tolui who was yet regent and, therefore, held the position of authority. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 二九.

Interestingly, neither the Persian sources nor the *SH* make mention of any sort of contention.[56] It seems from these sources that the election of Ögödei was a certainty and that the written attestation by Činggis Qan and his sons establishing Ögödei as heir was accepted and ratified in an act of official procedure rather than by election.[57] On the other hand, the description of a contested election in the Chinese sources may have been the result of Chinese historians' misinterpretation of the formality of refusal by the selected officeholder.

Aside from the likely apocryphal scenario provided in the *SH*, *TJG*, and *JaT* of Činggis Qan's selection of Ögödei as the heir in concert with J̌oči and Ča'adai and resulting from their unresolved feuding, we have only circumstantial evidence as to why the pragmatic Mongols would have selected Ögödei. The *Yuanshi* states most candidly in the opening lines of the chapter on Ögödei that he was key in both the Jin conquests of Činggis Qan's time as well as the western conquests.[58] In the *TJG*, Činggis Qan is made to say of Ögödei that the army and people should be ruled by Ögödei's good counsel and that this was why he was made heir.[59] The *JaT* says that he was known for intelligence, competence, and his knowledge of tactics and strategy.[60] Činggis Qan entrusted Ögödei with some of the most important—and certainly the most

[56] In *TJG* and *JaT*, Ögödei is made to state the arguments in favor of Tolui as qa'an, rather than any sector of Mongol elite. In this version of the retelling, those at the *quriltai* are able to dismiss the arguments as the ritualized demurral expected of Ögödei. More to the point, this reinforces later Toluid partisans' claims of legitimacy, as Ögödei is made to say that Tolui is qualified to serve as qa'an. Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 146; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 635.

[57] "The term used for 'installed (= elected)' is, literally, 'raised, lifted up' (*ergübei*), which derives from the ancient Altaic custom of enthroning the elected qan by actually lifting him up on a felt carpet." de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 985, nn. 269.

[58] 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 二九.

[59] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 143.

[60] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 618.

symbolic—maneuvers of the western conquests. Only Ögödei's prowess as a military planner and leader could explain why, for example, Činggis Qan entrusted him with the siege of Otrar and the capture of Īnālǰūq or the responsibility to take Gurgānǰ.

Choosing a qan was less a process by which succession was decided through election than one by which those who supported or rejected the decisions of the majority made known their positions and proclaimed their acceptance of the resolution. Arguments were made, support or opposition expressed, and long discussions—sometimes over a period of months—were held in order to establish a critical mass of opinion one way or another on many issues of importance to the confederation, including who would be the new qan. Those who had the strongest counter claims to the office of qan were made to most obviously state their support of the chosen qan.

At this critical juncture, there were three other candidates who could viably claim a right to the office of qa'an. Ča'adai, Ögödei, and Tolui were the most powerful participants in the *quriltai*, yet they were not the elders. Činggis Qan's brother, Temüge Otčigin (Otčigin Noyan in the *SH*), and a few of Činggis Qan's original *nököt* were also in attendance, having come "from the east." Except for Činggis Qan's designation of him as heir, Ögödei would have had a weak argument in the running. In the *SH*, however, Činggis Qan is made to say that only among his own descendants will be found his successors,[61] thus diminishing Temüge's claim—though this didn't prevent him from pressing his case. The second in line was Ča'adai, the eldest son of Činggis Qan, though none of the sources indicate that any faction at the *quriltai* presented him as a viable candidate. Finally, Ögödei's most serious competition would have been Tolui. As the youngest son of Činggis Qan and consistent with steppe custom, Tolui had inherited the home

[61] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §255 and commentary, p. 935-6.

yurt and his father's personal belongings (which included his guard and troops). Tolui was a respected leader among the Mongol elite, an experienced military commander, and had, in addition to the forces inherited from his father, his own substantial military force. Additionally, he had already been regent for the better part of a year before the *quriltai* began. Had Tolui employed his considerable coercive resources in his claim to the office, he would have been in a favorable position.

Some segment of those in attendance did support Tolui as a rightful candidate over Ögödei. We do not know if Tolui himself voiced his claim, but a large contingent of those representatives at the *quriltai* did so. This issue was not easily resolved: the existence of a written affirmation of support for Činggis Qan's designation of Ögödei as heir signed by Ča'adai and J̌oči complicated matters. It magnified the already unique nature of all things related to Činggis Qan, particularly what to do in his absence. Tolui remained regent throughout the nearly 18 months of the *quriltai* and served as its convener. In this latter role, he moved to postpone the date of the election until it could be decided. The *Yuanshi* claims that Yelü Chucai insisted that the date already set was auspicious and the decision must be made without delay. Since we do not know what the preset, auspicious day was, we do not know if the election took place then.[62] Whatever the case, Ögödei was, indeed, selected and raised to office.

The condensed explanation of events in Ögödei's biography of the *Yuanshi* follows the brief account of his raising up with this: "The court etiquette was initiated. The imperial family and the nobles testified their loyalty [to the Emperor]."[63] According to de Rachewiltz, this

[62] Though the *Yuanshi* records the day on which he was "enthroned" as 秋八月己未 "The eight month, [the day] Jiwei." 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 二九.

[63] 始立朝儀, 皇族尊屬皆拜. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 二九.

cryptic reference refers to an extra measure that was enacted at the *quriltai*, presumably in response to the contentious issue of who was to be selected Činggis Qan's heir. It set a precedent that would continue through the election ceremonies of Güyük, Möngke, Qubilai, and beyond. In the Chinese tradition, this was an important element in the enthronement ritual in which all of the elite knelt before the newly placed sovereign, publicly proclaiming their fealty. The function of this gesture was probably to reduce the likelihood of challenges from those who opposed the majority position. Such a ritual was unknown in the raising of qans in steppe tradition. Furthermore, Ča'adai, as eldest son of the deceased qan and, therefore in the Chinese tradition, the most authoritative member of the imperial clan, was persuaded by Yelü Chucai to enact the process of obeisance to the new qan as well as insisting that the election date remain firm.[64] It is impossible to determine if Yelü Chucai had the degree of influence on the Mongol elite, or Ča'adai, at least, with which the Chinese sources credit him. Nonetheless, on 11 or 13 September 1229,[65] Ögödei was proclaimed qa'an.[66]

Ögödei was not the sole heir to Činggis Qan and assuming otherwise does not accurately reflect either Činggis Qan's apparent intentions nor the actual state of affairs in the time of Ögödei. The responsibilities of Činggis Qan in relation to the confederation, as well as his duties as manager of wealth streams from sedentary states, was intentionally divided between his sons after his death. This is generally understood in both the sources as well as literature as a

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[64] Igor de Rachewiltz, "Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, Yeh-lü Chu, Yeh-lü Hsi-liang," in *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200-1300)*, ed. Igor de Rachewiltz, Hok-lam Chan, Hsiao Chi-ch'ing and Peter and Geier (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993), 148.

[65] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 624.

[66] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 635.

territorial and military division. It does not, however, accurately embody whatever concepts of empire Činggis Qan had, as can be shown from both his actions and the attempt to assign his heirs to particular duties. Činggis Qan, according to *JaT*, thought a reasonable division of duties was assigning the government to Ögödei and the military to Tolui.[67] Ögödei did not function as a qan over the combined confederation and empire in the same way as his father. In many of the anecdotes in the *TJG*, Ögödei responds to the indignation of his urban bureaucrats by admonishing them about their miserliness. Ögödei reallocated the empire's resources not as a territorial emperor but as a pastoral quartermaster, tasked with managing the correct distribution of wealth and resources extracted from urban conquests to his confederation of stakeholders. Juvainī himself seems not to have understood this and, instead, saw it as a mark of Ögödei's magnanimity and generosity, as well as his amenable recklessness.

Ögödei's first official action as qa'an was to empty the treasuries—which he would do several more times over the next decade.[68] Redistribution of wealth—one of the primary responsibilities of the steppe qan—was an important mechanism for the maintenance of power and a material channel for the qan to assure his legitimacy. In light of the controversy over his selection as qa'an, it was probably necessary for Ögödei to buy the support of the Mongol elite. Not only was distribution of the treasury a way to reassure those who had doubted Ögödei's suitability for the office, but probably also signaled to those who had opposed his candidacy that they need not fear reprisal. Ögödei took no punitive actions against anyone who had opposed him—the only time that the election of a qa'an was not followed by elimination of rivals. An

[67] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 617.

[68] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 149.

important aspect of this act reflects the primarily fiscal responsibilities of the qa'an. It was Ögödei's specific duty to distribute the wealth of the Mongol Empire to the stakeholders.

Next on the agenda was seeing to the proper memorial for the late Činggis Qan. Ögödei ordered a three-day feast prepared for the spirit of the qan in accordance with Mongol tradition. He had forty girls selected from the families of the commanders in attendance at the *quriltai*. He ordered them, along with selected horses, to be killed—a sacrifice for the soul of Činggis Qan.

Ögödei then set to the business of ordering the empire, confirming officeholders in their positions, assigning new duties, and planning military campaigns. Immediately, Ögödei reconfirmed the *yasa* of Činggis Qan in its entirety.[69] In *TJG*, *JaT*, and the *Yuanshi*, much attention is given to the details of the decrees and confirmation of the *yasa* that Ögödei issued immediately upon being raised to office. The *SH* pays no attention to the administrative decrees and immediately details the military campaign planning (though with considerable confusion).

Persian and Chinese sources agree on the details of only one of the many decrees issued by Ögödei after his election. In essence, it was a blanket grant of amnesty for unpunished crimes at the time of its issue.[70] A closer reading, however, suggests that it was also a frustrated response to reports brought before Ögödei by officials seeking justice or hoping to change balances of power in their local regions.[71] The *JaT*—and no other source—explains that a debate about the actions of Ejigidei and Güyük during Tolui's regency were at issue. The two had been

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[69] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 637.

[70] The *TJG* (repeated by *JaT*) places this decree at the *quriltai* of 1229; the *Yuanshi* dates the decree in the spring of 1230, though this is likely when Song Lian's Chinese sources recorded receiving the notice. Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 149.; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 637-38.; 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三〇.

[71] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 149.

assigned to conquer an unnamed territory and, having done so, left an officer there in command of a garrison. This apparently was contentious and there were many complaints to Ögödei upon his enthronement.[72]

During the general hiatus in campaigning that followed the death of Činggis Qan, there was no apparent reduction in the capacity nor readiness of the Mongol military, despite their inactivity. Once he had accepted and dispensed with domestic affairs, the delegation turned its attentions to military conquest. Though it was administration that would be the primary day-to-day occupation of Ögödei during his reign, especially after the successful conclusion of the Jin Campaign, military conquest on an unprecedented scale would be the concern of the Mongol Empire at large.

Ögödei sent troops to the empire's frontiers to secure the borders.[73] Business left unfinished at the time of Činggis Qan's death was next to be addressed. Foremost, the son of the Khwārazmshāh, Jalāl ad-Dīn, was still active in Khorasan and Iraq. To deal with this problem, Ögödei sent Čormaqan with some 30,000 horsemen. They moved rapidly in the hopes of taking Jalāl ad-Dīn by surprise. They engaged him but he escaped into the mountains in Kurdistan, where he was killed, probably by a native Kurd. Čormaqan remained in northwest Iran, administering the region until he became deaf in 1241.[74] Ögödei sent Sübe'etei and 30,000 cavalry to the Qïpčaq Steppe, Saqsin, and Bulghar where they gathered the information that would make the Qïpčaq Campaign beginning in 1235 a success. Their own military actions there,

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[72] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 638.

[73] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 638.

[74] Christopher Pratt Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*, Facts on File library of World History, (New York: Facts On File, 2004), 109.

however, were not successful due to the small size of the Mongol forces committed to the region. After the 1235-36 *quriltai*, overwhelming forces were assigned to the Qïpčaq steppe.[75]

In September 1231, Ögödei sent Sartaq toward Korea, then ruled by the Koryŏ dynasty.[76] The Koryŏ were tributaries of the Jin, controlled by the military family, Ch'oe. In 1224, a Mongol envoy had been executed by the Koreans and Ögödei was set upon avenging this diplomatic transgression. The Mongols were familiar with the geography and political situation in Korea and Sartaq was quickly able to overcome them. They submitted and the Mongols left a *darughači* in place to oversee them. As soon as the Mongols withdrew, the Ch'oe ordered the murder of the *darughači* and moved the capital to an island, safe from the cavalry of the Mongols. The situation remained at an impasse for the rest of Ögödei's reign.[77]

In 1215, 蒲鮮萬奴 Puxian Wannu, a general in the service of the Jin, established his own kingdom in the 辽宁 Liaoning region of Manchuria. In March or April of 1233, Ögödei sent Güyük and Alčidai (a maternal cousin) to destroy this regime. This they did easily, returning victorious in a matter of months.[78]

This massive mobilization of the Mongol military in every direction was a welcome beginning to Ögödei's reign for stakeholders. After two years of relative quiet, the new qa'an promised to continue the expansion and conquest of his father's time. As it would turn out, the largest and most successful campaigns, pushing the Mongols far to the edges of the Eurasian

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[75] Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*, 455.

[76] 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三一.

[77] Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*, 319.

[78] 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三二.

continent, would be planned and carried out under Ögödei. The coordination and unified vision of these years and these campaigns represent the Mongol Empire at its height. Mongols would not again function with such unity of purpose and cooperation on so large a scale.

§2.3.2 The Jin Campaign, 1229-34: In the most consequential order of this *quriltai*, Ögödei directed the majority of the military toward the Jin and elected to lead the campaign himself.[79] The steppe peoples north of China had long and complicated relationships with the Jin as well as the dynasties that preceded them. When 金世宗 Jin Shizong (r. 1161-1189) became the emperor, he immediately set about putting domestic and international business in order, strengthening borders, suing for peace with the Song, and preserving Jurchen customs against sinicization.[80] He sought to reinvigorate the Jin *esprit de corps* and consolidate the state in preparation for the growing threats from both the Mongols to the north and Song in the south. His own successor was a well-meaning but, nevertheless, weak ruler. Under 金章宗 Jin Zhangzong (r. 1189-1208), the Jin faced its most serious disaster: the Yellow river flooded in far greater extent than its usual cycle in 1194, changing course and causing all manner of economic havoc, devastating Jin's most prosperous and important agricultural regions. Having already observed the growing power of Temüjin in the north, vast resources were committed to the northern borders. The flooding brought about further strain on Jin economy, eventually forcing Zhangzong to confiscate Chinese land along the border and transfer it to Jurchen possession in

[79] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 638; Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 150.

[80] Herbert Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," in *The Cambridge History of China: Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, ed. Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 243-45.

the hopes that it could be better defended. Additional disasters—locusts, drought—along with opportunistic offensives by the Song, further weakened the Jin.[81]

By 1211, the Jin had suffered a war with the Song, were in the midst of a famine, and were under the damaging rule of 衛紹王 Wei Shaowang (r.1208-11), who had insulted Činggis Qan (then Temüǰin) in some past diplomatic exchange. Sensing that the Jin were ripe for attack, Činggis Qan mobilized his forces and advanced on the Jin border fortifications. By 1214, the Mongols under Činggis Qan had pushed the Jin out of their northern territories, forcing them to abandon their capital, 中都 Zhongdu, what is now Beijing. On 31 May 1215, the Jin surrendered Zhongdu to the Mongols, giving Činggis Qan his first victory over a populous city.[82]

Even though Zhongdu was still firmly in the hands of the Mongols in 1229 and would remain so until the end of Yuan Dynasty,[83] the Jin court continued to govern in 开封 Kaifeng, in what is now 湖南省 Hunan Province. Internal disputes among the steppe peoples under the Mongol banner, as well as the campaigns in western Eurasia, had conspired to prevent Činggis Qan from completing his conquest of the Jin when they had been ousted from Zhongdu in 1215. When Ögödei was raised to qa'an in 1229, the last stronghold of the Jin was Hunan, bounded on the north by the Yellow River, the south by the Song, and west by mountains and the formidable fortress of 潼關 Tongguan. But it was the border with the Song that Ögödei and his planners sought to exploit. And so, in 1229, they turned their attention southward, intending to finish what

[81] Herbert Franke, "The Chin Dynasty, 245-50.

[82] Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," 243-59. See also the *SH* for Činggis Qan's withdrawal after Tenggeri's (the Altan Qan's son) submission. This would mean that the rebellion—from the Mongols point of view—deserved a severe punishment, thus adding to the urgency and gravity of the Jin Campaign under Ögödei. de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §253.

[83] Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo* (Paris: Impr. nationale, 1959), 357.

Ögödei's father had begun.

Once he had organized the empire's new administration—issuing ordinances, sending princes and *nököt* on various military projects, and confirming the *yasa*, among other things—Ögödei began planning for the conquest of the Jin, committing the greater part of the empire's resources toward the campaign. The task of simply governing the vast territories already under Mongol control would have been enough to occupy Ögödei and his administration. The new qa'an, however, instead moved to continue the scale of military conquest and expansion set by Činggis Qan. Ögödei, in a sign of respect for his elder brother and perhaps aware of the limits of his office, wrote to Ča'adai:

> I have sat on the throne made ready by my father Činggis Qa'an. Will people not say of me, "By what merit has he sat on it?" If elder brother Ča'adai agrees, since our father the Qa'an did leave matters with the Altan Qan of the Kitat people unfinished, I shall now move against the Kitat people.[84]

Ča'adai curtly responded, "What obstacles are there? Place a capable man in charge of the main base camp and set forth. I shall send out troops from here."[85] Ögödei followed his brothers' advice and mobilized an army, placing the smaller part of the army under Tolui and separating their forces for a two-pronged attack on the Jin.

Tolui was sent in advance of the main forces to open the way, later to rejoin Ögödei. According to *JaT*, Tolui was sent with two *tumen* toward Tibet in January 1230. The *Yuanshi*, however, places Tolui near the Orkhon River, hunting with Ögödei in the spring of the same

[84] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §271.

[85] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §271.

year, while unspecified troops were sent to attack 京兆 Jingzhao (the modern 西安 Xi'an).[86] Also according to the *Yuanshi*, Ögödei was accompanied by Tolui and Möngke, setting out together in autumn of 1230 (after Dolqolqu Čerbi's defeat, described below). Juvainī makes no mention of Tolui and Ögödei separating their forces, saying only that Ögödei was "accompanied by his brother Chaghatai and Ulugh-Noyan and the other princes."[87] Finally, the *SH* says that, "Having put Oldaqar Qorči in charge of the Great Palaces, . . . Ögödei Qa'an set out against the Kitat people. He sent forth J̌ebe as vanguard."[88] It is not obvious in any of our sources whence Tolui and Ögödei set out, nor whether or not they set out from the same place.

The *JaT* further complicates the matter by saying that Ögödei took Tolui, Kölgän, and some of his sons and nephews, sending Tolui and his army of 20,000 to Tibet while he took his contingent "to the right."[89] This must be a mistake for the left, as the right, if consistent with the Mongols' general orientation to the south, would have been toward the west where we know that Tolui was sent. The only way that Ögödei could have gone to the right and also toward territory held by the Jin is if they were setting out from the south. We have no evidence that this could have been the case, nor is there any reason to believe that Ögödei would have circled around to the west then south of Tibet and then moved east, which would have taken them through Song territory. We know from the *Yuanshi* that in the summer of 1231 the Mongols had not yet

[86] 是春, 帝與拖雷獵于斡兒寒河, 遂遣兵圍京兆: In the spring, the Emperor and Tolui went hunting on the Orkhon River. Then he sent out troops to besiege Jingzhao. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三〇.

[87] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 150. See also Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 638.

[88] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §271-2

[89] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 639.

secured the cooperation of the Song in their campaign against the Jin, so this seems unlikely.[90] Nevertheless, in the summer of 1230, Doqolqu Čerbi and his contingent were defeated in a battle against Jin forces.[91] Completely routed, Doqolqu Čerbi pulled back and sent a message to Ögödei and the qa'an was incensed.[92]

The *JaT* suggests that Tolui was biding his time while Ögödei's forces took a longer route to their place of meeting, as he moved his forces slowly for a year.[93] That Tolui's route through Tibet was shorter than Ögödei's (according to *JaT*) leads me to believe that they must have been in the personal *ordo* of Ögödei upon commencement of the campaign, located in what is now the Xinjiang-Kazakhstan border area—whence Ögödei set out to the left.

In the year it took to join again with Ögödei's forces, Tolui and his 20,000 troops either did not attempt to bring Tibet into the fold or were unsuccessful at doing so. No mention is made of the actions undertaken during this part of the campaign, only that Tolui made "excursions along his way."[94] Tolui's forces met with some hardship near the end of their roundabout journey, in 1231, however. The *JaT* relates that supplies ran out and the soldiers began to starve,

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[90] 遣搠不罕使宋假道, 宋殺之. "He sent Shuobuhan to the Song with the request to allow the passage of the army, but the Song killed him." 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三一.

[91] According to the *Yuanshi*, Ögödei sent Sübe'etei to Dolqolqu Čerbi's assistance in response. This conflicts with both *TJG* and *JaT* which have Sübe'etei in the Qïpčaq steppe at this time. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三〇; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 638; Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 150.

[92] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 635.

[93] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 788.

[94] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 639. Known Tibetan sources do not mention the movement of Tolui through the region, though Mongol, Chinese, and Tibetan sources all record both earlier and later encounters between Tibetans and Mongols. See Luciano Petech, *Central Tibet and the Mongols: the Yüan Sa-Skya period of Tibetan history*, Serie orientale Roma, (Rome: Instituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1990, 1990), 5-16.

eating human flesh and any animals they could find.[95] The *Yuanshi* corroborates the predicament of the Mongol army: in the summer of 1231, a request for supplies was sent to the Song, possibly for Tolui's beleaguered forces.[96] Nonetheless, Tolui's starving *tumen*s were able to take Khojanfu (the modern 蒲州 Puzhou in Shanxi Province) after a 40-day siege. Some number—10,000 claims Juvainī—of the Jin troops escaped the city in boats down Yellow River. The citizens who engaged in fighting were executed by the Mongols and the rest of the population taken into captivity.[97]

The Mongol forces moved next upon Tongguan,[98] a few days' march across the Yellow River and the floodplain south of Khojanfu. The *TJG* records that Ögödei sent Tolui and Güyük with 10,000 men on to Tongguan, in advance of the main body of the army. In Rashīd al-Dīn's version Tolui acts alone, not yet having rejoined Ögödei (and no mention at all of Güyük). Tongguan—meaning "High Pass"—is located in the 秦嶺 Qinling mountain range, where the Jin had a fortress guarding one of the most important strongholds of the 陝西 Shaanxi and Hunan regions, a crucial strategic objective in the Mongols' campaign against the Jin.[99] The Qinling range served as a natural boundary, keeping the Jin protected from the northern steppe and

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[95] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 639.

[96] 復遣李國昌使宋需糧. Li Guochang was again sent to the Song as an envoy to request provisions for the troops. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三四.

[97] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 150-51; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 639.

[98] 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 二八; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 640.

[99] The present-day city of Tongguan is located in Shaanxi Province on a bend on the southwest/right bank of the Yellow River in the floodplain. It lies east of the iconic 華山 Hua Shan and the city of Xi'an. The pass itself is southwest of the city of Tongguan, high in the Qinling range. The Qinling are bordered on the north by the 渭河 Wei River valley, the south by the 漢江 Han River, west by the Tibetan Plateau, and join the 大別 Dabie Mountains to the east.

marking the line between north and south China. The Mongols had destroyed the Altan Qan's forces near here in 1214 and, two years later, briefly conquered and held the fortress itself.[100] Taking control of this pass would have been key to whatever campaign plans Ögödei had laid out and, if the forces had indeed been divided, would have been a probable place to reunite.

When Tolui reached Tongguan, according to *JaT*, the Jin were ready, ensconced in the narrow rocky pass behind the barricade they had constructed on the plain at the foot of the mountains. Tolui made the call that the pass could not be taken and chose instead to join (or rejoin) Ögödei. Frustrated at the Mongols' unwillingness to engage, the Jin troops left their stronghold and went in pursuit of the retreating Mongols. The Jin successfully attacked the rear guard under the command of Doqolqu Čerbi and forty Mongols were killed.[101]

Upon receiving report of the incident, Tolui ordered a man with the knowhow to use stones to bring rain down on the Jin behind them—which soon turned to snow and hail more severe than winter weather. For three days and nights, the blizzard raged. The Mongols hid from the storm in the villages from which the residence had fled. When the freezing and exhausted Jin were finally attacked by the well-rested and fed Mongols, they were soundly defeated. In a final, miserable insult, Tolui ordered his men to sodomize those Jin who had survived in retribution for the taunts they had shouted down when safely barricaded on Tongguan.

Sending the good news on to Ögödei, Tolui subsequently ran into trouble trying to find a crossing for his forces over the Yellow River which had flooded that season. He had to search far from his intended route to find suitable crossing. Because Tolui and the party he had taken had

[100] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §251 and 911-16.

[101] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 641.

apparently disappeared after news of the victory was sent, Ögödei thought him lost and grieved. Rejoining with Ögödei's forces, they made quick work of the remaining Jin. Though conflicting accounts exist, it seems that the Altan Qan, the Jin emperor, denied the Mongols the satisfaction of executing him by hanging himself. Subsequently, the palace in which he had done so was burned.

Sometime during the summer of 1232, in the final stages of the campaign in Hunan, Ögödei contracted a serious illness.[102] This was in a place called in the *SH* Šira Degtür, where Činggis Qan had camped during his attack on the Jin in 1211.[103]

> When he lost his speech and was in great distress, various shamans and soothsayers were ordered to divine the cause of the illness. They said, 'The lords and rulers of the land and rivers of the Kitat are raging violently against the Qa'an now that their people are plundered and their cities and towns are destroyed.'[104]

The diviners declared to these sprits of "land and rivers" that they would sacrifice "as substitute for the Qa'an, people, gold and silver, cattle and food" but the illness became worse. Finally, the "shamans and soothsayers" asked the spirits, "Could a person from the Qa'an's family serve as a substitute?" whereupon Ögödei awakened, requested water, and asked, "What has happened?"[105]

After an explanation of what had passed during his illness, Ögödei asked who of the princes were among his party and was answered by Tolui:

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[102] Juvainī makes no mention of Ögödei's illness. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 643-44.

[103] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §247.

[104] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §272.

[105] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §272.

> Even though there were elder brothers above you and younger brothers below you, our fortunate father Činggis Qa'an chose you, elder brother the Qa'an, as one would choose a gelding, feeling you as one would feel a wether to make sure it is fat. To your person he showed the great throne upon you he placed the burden of many people for you to govern. As for myself, I was told by him, "Being at the side of your elder brother the Qa'an,
>
> Do remind him of what he has forgotten,
> Do wake him up when he as fallen asleep."
>
> Now, if I lose you, my elder brother the Qa'an,
>
> Whom shall I remind of what he has forgotten,
> Whom shall I wake up when he has fallen asleep?
>
> In truth if my elder brother the Qa'an dies,
>
> The numerous Mongol people
> Would be left orphans;
> The Kitat people
> Would rejoice at their good fortune.
>
> I shall take the place of my elder brother the Qa'an. . . Shamans, cast your spells and make your incantations![106]

Ögödei's reaction to this, whether it be acceptance or resistance, is not recorded in the *SH*. The entire scene is probably a later addition to the text by Toluid partisans, meant to bolster their claims as rightful holders of the office of qa'an. Both the elegance of this episode and its detail are similar to that in which Ögödei is designated Činggis Qan's heir. Both stand out for their formality and correctness of their language.

The dating of this significant event is unclear. The *SH* indicates that Ögödei's illness and Tolui's death occurred in 1231, but the *Yuanshi* dates these events to the latter half of September or the first half of October 1232 in the narrative of the Jin Campaign. Under the section on Tolui's biography, however, the *Yuanshi* gives a different account, stating that Ögödei fell ill in May or June of 1232, deteriorated in June/July, but recovered and returned with Tolui to the north where Tolui died in the same year. The *JaT* indicates 1233, but it is probably a mistake for

[106] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §272.

1232.[107] Regardless, Ögödei never campaigned again after the successful conquest of the Jin.

The death of Tolui as result of consuming the infected waters at Ögödei's sickbed whilst on campaign in China[108] can be disregarded as Toluid interpolation. Even Rashīd al-Dīn sets the story found in the *SH* off as hearsay, first explaining that, after the victory at Tongguan, Tolui requested permission to continue the campaign, but died unexpectedly.[109] Only *TJG* relates the end of Tolui's life in the manner that it most likely happened. After the successful conclusion of the Jin Campaign, Tolui returned to his *ordo*, and drank himself to death.[110] The *Yuanshi* states simply, "In the ninth month [of 1232], Tolui died and the emperor returned [to Qaraqorum]."[111]

The Persian and Chinese sources are mostly in agreement that the death of Tolui and Ögödei's illness marked the end of Ögödei's direct participation in the Jin Campaign. The *Yuanshi* dates Ögödei's retirement from the campaign in the third month of 1232.[112] Rashīd al-Dīn sends Ögödei on his way home after the death of Tolui and a summer camp in "Āltān-kere" in Jin territory.[113] The *TJG* places Ögödei's triumphant return after the defeat of the Jin, but it is

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[107] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 1000-1.

[108] Igor de Rachewiltz, *Yüan ch`ao pi shih: Index to the Secret History of the Mongols*, Indiana University publications. Uralic and Altaic series, v. 121, (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1972), §272.

[109] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 643.

[110] 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvainī, *The Ta'rīkh-i-Jahán-gushá of 'Alá'u 'd-Din 'Aṭá Malik-i-Juwaynī*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī, vol. III, E.J.W. Gibb memorial series, (Leyden, London: E.J. Brill; Luzac & Co., 1912 [c. 1260]), 4.

[111] 九月, 拖雷薨, 帝還龍庭. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三二.

[112] 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三一.

[113] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 644. The location is unidentified, according to Boyle: Rashīd al-Dīn, *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, trans. John Andrew Boyle, Persian Heritage Series, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 39, fn. 124.

not clear that he intended to suggest that this was the order in which the events took place.[114]

§2.3.3 Quriltai, 1234-35: The second *quriltai* of Ögödei's reign[115] was dominated by the task of integrating the Jin into the Mongol military and governing apparatus and for planning further military conquest. The decision to recall nearly all the commanders on campaign for the *quriltai* was made because the defeat of the Jin brought new men and materials into the Mongol military. The incorporation of the remaining Jin territories into Mongol empire freed the main forces of the military for conquest elsewhere, as well as infusing the already imposing Mongol military machine with a supply of Jin engineers, troops, and experienced leaders. The Mongols had reached the limits of conquest in the east, pacifying Korea and north China. A campaign against the Song, though certainly in the plans, was not possible until the Jin territories could be consolidated and brought firmly under control which was not to happen until the reign of Qubilai, 1260-94.

Though many details concerning the commitment of resources to the conquest of northwestern Eurasia planned at this *quriltai* are not available to us, what is certain is that Ögödei and Ča'adai called upon Mongol elite to send their first sons to support this campaign, a strategy previously untried by the Mongols or, in any case, unrecorded. In light of the fact that the qa'an's primary responsibilities were overseeing the equitable distribution of wealth, we can observe that sending senior members from among the confederate families was collective

[114] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 154.

[115] The *Yuanshi* reports that Ögödei put out the call for the *quriltai* in the Spring of 1234, well before they assembled in the "Year of the Sheep," which was 1234-35. See 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三三. The *JaT*'s dates are consistently incorrect by a year, all corresponding to one year later than the events they describe: Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 670.

sovereignty in action and intended to ensure that all stakeholders were satisfied that they were receiving their allotted portion. Now at the midpoint of Ögödei's reign, the Mongols were reaching the limits of what was possible in relation to conquest: few civilizations were left to them that had not already been acquired and the campaign to the northwest was one in which every stakeholder had a keen interest. Ögödei was probably also fulfilling an overdue promise made by Činggis Qan to the sons of J̌oči to secure the northwest for their appanage. He placed Batu (d. 1255) nominally in charge of the operation, for he was senior among the princes as the eldest son of the eldest of Činggis Qan's sons. He would be the recipient of the newly conquered territories. Ögödei assigned Sübe'etei as his second-in-command, though it was understood that it was Sübe'etei's direction that should be followed. Ögödei's own son, Güyük, was sent along as a commander.

The northwest campaigns were quite successful: not only were the Rus', their territories, and those surrounding them brought under the command of J̌oči's heirs—securing a long-lasting polity for the Golden Horde—but the Mongol forces made their deepest, most devastating forays into Europe. Rumors of distant nomadic conquerors became fact as the Mongols reached as far as present-day Germany by 1242. Crippled by factionalism, disorganization, feudal inefficiencies, and unpreparedness, European forces were unable to turn the Mongols back.

Many of the *yasa*s and *bilik*s Ögödei issued at the 1235 *quriltai* appear to be redundant orders, stating already well-established military regulations. The large numbers of new troops, with no prior experience with the Mongol military organization and conduct, were the intended audience. The *Yuanshi* reports these orders in detail.[116] The Mongols either slaughtered or

[116] 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三三.

appropriated enemy forces, never leaving them to simply disband or to disperse, minimizing the chance of future threats from reformed military contingents. As a result, many Jin military leaders had been accepted into the Mongol army with their forces. With the conquest of the Jin, Ögödei was faced with integrating the largest numbers of new, non-steppe soldiers the Mongols had ever acquired. Organized, well-equipped, trained, and relatively disciplined, the Jin troops presented a challenge to incorporate into the Mongols' already diverse military. By the time Ögödei was issuing these orders, most of the military was not comprised of Mongols or even steppe nomads. A review of some of these orders make clear Ögödei's efforts to absorb the Jin military and keep the rigid hierarchical system already in place.

First, the sacrosanctity of the *quriltai* was addressed in no uncertain terms: "Anyone who is called to a gathering but does not come and, instead, arranges a private feast will be beheaded."[117] The role of the *quriltai* in the business of government and military was probably alien to most of the Jin commanders who were used to orders coming to them from a central source. At lower ranks, the expectation of obedience to commanding officers was likely stricter than they had experienced before, as well as more standardized across the military than under the Jin, who relied upon soldiers' loyalties to their direct commanders. Thus, Ögödei ordered that "Among every ten men in the army shall be placed an officer whose commands are to be obeyed; those who act on their own authority will be tried."[118] Decimal organization was not a new contrivance in 1235 for anyone but the Jin soldiery. Regardless, the incorporation of large numbers of former Jin troops and others recently conscripted must necessarily have required a

[117]凡當會不赴而私宴者, 斬. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三三.

[118]軍中凡十人置甲長, 聽其指揮, 專擅者論罪. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三三.

reiteration of the military order.

Maintaining discipline was also explicitly addressed: “During the time when a Decurion is serving at the palace, he shall appoint a man to temporarily take his place and [also] a man who does not belong [to the ten]. These two men are not allowed to communicate with one another without permission; those who violate [this order] will be punished.”[119] Also: “Every Chiliarch who supplants [the orders of] a Myriarch is to be shot with a wooden arrow. If Centurions, Decurions or soldiers commit these violations, their punishments will be the same. Those who do not comply with these laws will be discharged.”[120]

One of the Mongols’ most effective weapons was intelligence. Throughout the period beginning with Činggis Qan’s rise, the Mongols were adept at collecting information about adversaries, geography, commerce, and resources. They were likewise proficient at communication and coordination over long distances. Crucial to these operations was secrecy: “Everyone who discusses official matters they should not, receives a twist of the ear; for the second violation, they are whipped with bamboo; for the third violation, they are caned; for the fourth violation the are sentenced to death.”[121]

Additionally, Ögödei issued commands pertaining to the maintenance of institutional structures throughout the empire. The *SH* provides details concerning Ögödei’s orders for the nightguards—the section of the military assigned to accompany, provision, and protect the qa’an

[119]其甲長以事來宮中, 即置權攝一人, 甲外一人, 二人不得擅自往來, 違者罪之. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三三.

[120]諸千戶越萬戶前行者, 隨以木鏃射之. 百戶, 甲長, 諸軍有犯, 其罪同. 不遵此法者, 斥罷. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三三.

[121]諸公事非當言而言者, 拳其耳; 再犯, 笞; 三犯, 杖; 四犯, 論死. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三三.

and the mobile court, but also responsible for general logistical concerns. Aside from explaining the specifics of duties and their execution and appointing new commanders over every sector of the nightguards except for one—in which he confirmed a commander in place who had served Činggis Qan—Ögödei made no changes to the structure nor functions of the important division.[122] Nonetheless, the functions and duties are laid out in detail, apparently as much for those who would encounter the nightguards in the qa'an's camp as for the nightguard personnel. Ögödei reiterated the ranking relationships between his nightguards and the regular military who would encounter them by issuing clear procedural processes. For example:

> My guards are of higher standing than the outside commanders of a thousand; the attendants of my guards are of higher standing than the outside commanders of a hundred and of ten. If outside leaders of a thousand quarrel with my guards We shall punish those who are leaders of a thousand.[123]

Ögödei enacted important changes to several other administrative institutions. First, he attempted to standardize collection of in-kind taxes across the Mongol domain by normalizing the remission of taxes to the qa'an and a plan for the redistribution of those taxes to stakeholders. His reasoning for this, as stated in the first lines of *SH* §279, were "so that the people do not suffer," and was meant to rectify the widespread *ad hoc* collection of goods and taxes by stakeholders. In order to make this regulation of wealth collecting palatable—it was probably perceived as an unwelcome constraint upon stakeholders' rightful access to their collective possessions—Ögödei emphasized that "when the Qa'an's brothers gather together We shall give them gifts and rewards. Conveying satins, gold and silver ingots, quivers, bows, breastplates,

[122] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §278.

[123] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §278.

weapons and the land-tax grains into the storehouses."[124] In Yelü Chucai's funerary inscription, he is credited as the architect of these tax reforms—additional circumstantial evidence that the stakeholders were not enthusiastic about the institutionalization of their booty-taking.[125]

The *yam* was a network of postal-relay stations that was vital to rapid communications and intelligence that enabled the Mongols to operate with efficiency and coordination.[126] At the *quriltai*, Ögödei implemented major expansions and reorganization of the *yam* while also addressing abuses and mismanagement.[127] The network of communication and intelligence was so crucial to the Mongols that those traveling in an official capacity were given free rein to commandeer horses, provisions, and quarters as they traveled. There was widespread abuse of this concession and it had become an obstacle to the regulation and collection of goods and taxes from settlements throughout the Mongol domain. To correct these problems, he made provisions to unburden the localities in which relay stations were located by assigning their maintenance to nearby military units of 1,000. He ordered the creation of both "post-station masters" and "post-horse keepers" to each station and forbade messengers from interacting with the settlements through which they passed unless their business required them to do so, thus institutionalizing the *yam* and placing it under bureaucratic oversight: "If we have post stations set up and provide post-station masters and post-horse keepers to manage them there will be peace for the many

[124] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §279.

[125] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 1031.

[126] There is extensive literature concerning the *yam* and its functions in the Mongol Empire. See, for example, Peter Olbricht, *Das Postwesen in China Unter Der Mongolenherrschaft Im 13. Und 14. Jahrhundert.* Göttinger Asiatische Forschungen (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1954).

[127] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §279 and 1031.

peoples, and for the messengers in particular convenience in traveling."[128] This act was received favorably in the urban Mongol domains and both Ča'adai and Batu organized the *yam* in their own *ordo*s in the same manner. Ča'adai, in a message to Ögödei, said, "From here I shall have post stations connecting with yours. Also, from here I shall send messengers to Batu, and Batu shall have his post stations connected with mine. . . Of all the measures the one concerning the establishment of post stations is the most appropriate that has been proposed."[129]

Ögödei made motions to prepare himself to accompany the military toward the northwest but was relieved of the journey that he probably could not have survived by his nephew, Möngke, who suggested that Ögödei had earned his right to busy himself with the pleasures and amusements of the court. Following the conclusion of the *quriltai*, the main body of the Mongol military set out upon the Qïpčaq Campaign, functionaries of the qa'an went about seeing through the decrees and changes of the congress, and Ögödei himself commenced with a sort of retirement that took him out of the sphere of military campaigns as well as the day-to-day operations of rule.

Möngke's suggestion that he refrain from setting out with the army toward the northwest, then, represents an official acknowledgement of Ögödei's military "retirement" but is also an indicator that his contemporaries recognized his physical unfitness for such an undertaking. He was around 50 years old in 1235 and not too old for military action. Additionally, there is no evidence that Ögödei had been involved personally in any military actions since his illness

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[128] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §280.

[129] In the process of approving these changes to the *yam*, Ögödei did not finalize the orders until he had received Ča'adai's endorsement, saying, "Let elder brother Ča'adai decide. If these measures under discussion are appropriate and he approves them, let the decision come from elder brother Ča'adai." de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §§279-80.

during the Jin Campaign in 1232. De Rachewiltz suggests that Ögödei's sudden and final withdrawal from the Jin Campaign was prompted by the fear of the hostile spirits mentioned in the story of his illness in the *SH*, but he did not again campaign in any capacity.[130] Instead, he embarked at the conclusion of the 1234-35 *quriltai* on what would be a more-or-less permanent hunting and carousing expedition where he dealt with decreasing proficiency in administrative matters and began the process of drinking himself to death.

§2.4 Qa'an, 1235-41: the Destructive Years

In this final phase of Ögödei's reign and life, the Mongol Empire reached its apex—not in territories or peoples conquered by Mongol armies nor, even, in the size and complexity of its military. In this period, the Mongol Empire came as close to a singular, centrally administered state as it was ever to come. Ögödei's efforts of the preceding years to institutionalize the management of urban regions of the empire and simultaneously keep them out of the destructive sphere of the stakeholders matured. Parallel to these efforts, however, was the precipitous deterioration in his physical health—and apparently also in mental health—that resulted in mismanagement and failure to meet his responsibilities. We can perceive devolution and fatigue in Ögödei's leadership that undermined the progress toward stability and centralization that characterized the beginning of his reign. In a larger context, centrifugal forces drew power away from a unified collective sovereignty to better serve regional need. Simultaneously, the institutions that Ögödei had established to manage settled domains in the first half of his reign gained traction in the second half. Once the Qïpčaq Campaign had given the J̌očids a firm hold

[130] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 1000-01.

over their appanage, the momentum of military conquest slowed. The empire was reaching a practical limit of geography and distance with powerful military leaders in command of large armies and newly acquired peoples far from Qaraqorum. The technologies of empire—the *yam*, the wealth distribution system, the bureaucracy—were unable to meet the demands of the expanding Mongol Empire. What was needed was a strong qa'an with a keen sense of control over the complexities and factionalisms at work in the empire. Instead, Ögödei failed to meet the basic responsibilities of his office, leaving his wife, Töregene, and his ministers to manage affairs. Inattention and self-absorption led to the final failure of his own health and that of the empire.

Some of the momentum of the productive first half of his reign carried through—for example, the building of Qaraqorum reached completion during this period—but the dismantling of governmental institutions through Töregene's policies progressed apace. By the time of his death, Ögödei's mental and physical health had declined so extensively that he no longer had any effective control over his government. Instead, a "crowd of fools," as Rashīd al-Dīn put it,[131] had been entrusted with the operations of the empire at Töregene's bidding. Stalwart advisors including Maḥmūd Yalavač, Mas'ūd Beg, Yelü Chucai, and Činqai were sidelined. Under the influence of Töregene, perhaps (see §3), Ögödei allowed changes to institutions at odds with the efforts of the first half of his reign. For example, he approved the appointment of 'Abd al-Raḥmān to farm the taxes of north China, who doubled the burden on the people there,

[131] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 800.

expanding his role to manage all tax collection soon afterward.[132] Nonetheless, Ögödei's vigorous efforts in the first half of his reign bore fruit—briefly—in this second half.

§2.4.1 Qaraqorum: In 1235 Ögödei ordered the building of an administrative capital to be located near the ancient site of the Türk and Uighur empires, Ötüken yïš or Qara Balghasun, perhaps one of the most consequential undertakings by Ögödei.[133] The city would be home to an audience hall designed by Chinese architects, Nestorian churches, Buddhist temples, Daoist temples, a thriving artisan quarter, and extensive diplomatic residences and halls. All of this was encircled by a rammed earth wall. William of Rubruck, who arrived on 17 May 1254, observed that there were two main sections of the city. The first was for the Muslims,

> where there are bazaars and where many traders gather due to the constant proximity of the camp and to the great number of envoys; the other is the quarter of the Cataians, who are all craftsmen. Set apart from these quarters lie large palaces belonging to the court secretaries. There are twelve idol temples belonging to different peoples, two mosques . . . where the religion of Mahomet is proclaimed, and one Christian church at the far end of the town.[134]

The city served as meeting place of subject peoples, the fixed court of Ögödei but,

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[132] 十二月, 商人奧都 剌合蠻買撲中原銀課二萬二千錠, 以四萬四千錠爲額, 從之. 十二年庚子春正月, 以奧都 剌合蠻充提領諸路課稅所官. In the twelfth month [27 December 1239-25 January 1240], the merchant 'Abd al-Raḥmān leased the right to collect taxes in silver that had previously been established at 22,000 *ding* at the price of 44,000 *ding* in North China; [the Emperor] allowed it. In the spring, in the first month of Year 12, *Gengzi* [26 January-24 February 1240] [the Emperor] appointed 'Abd al-Raḥmān as chief administrator of the tax offices of all routes. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三六.

[133] The building of Qaraqorum must have begun before this date, as the city was nearly completed a short time after.

[134] Willem van Ruysbroeck, Peter Jackson, and David O. Morgan, *The mission of Friar William of Rubruck his journey to the court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253-1255*, Works issued by the Hakluyt Society, (London: Hakluyt Society, 1990), 221.

significantly, never his residence. It was also the location of the treasury and home to the officials who managed the administrative institutions of the empire. Rubruck, John Plano Carpini, Benedict the Pole—all were forwarded on to Qaraqorum from the appanages in which they encountered Mongol princes. Levies from conquests throughout the reigns of Ögödei, Töregene, Güyük, Oghul Qaimiš, and Möngke were marched to Qaraqorum where they filled the ranks of artisans and producers of luxury and trade goods that kept the gears of Mongol commerce turning.[135] Across the Mongol Empire and beyond its domains, Qaraqorum was recognized as the administrative heart of the empire. Yet, it was barely two decades prior that the Mongol confederation under Činggis Qan laid siege to the first of their urban conquests. Only 50 years had passed since the young Temüǰin was building his coterie of trusted followers and just beginning to consolidate his hold over the contentious factions of Mongolian steppe peoples. The emergence of a capital city is a key element in understanding the otherwise nearly silent Mongols' intentions and perceptions of their political goals and ambitions.

A further contribution to our understanding of Qaraqorum as capital is Nicola Di Cosmo's article "Aristocratic Elites in the Xiongnu Empire as Seen from Historical and Archeological Evidence." In this article, he observes that studies of nomadic societies focus excessively on "trade or raid" and conquest dynamics with little attention paid to the formation and emergence of elites within pastoral societies as a result of internal forces.[136] The general assumption, according to Di Cosmo, is that complex societal and political hierarchies only

[135] S. V. Kiselev, *Drevnemongol'skie goroda* (Moskva: Nauka, 1965), 173-82.

[136] Nicola Di Cosmo, "Aristocratic Elites in the Xiongnu Empire as Seen from Historical and Archeological Evidence," in *Nomad Aristocrats in a World of Empires*, ed. Jürgen Paul (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2013), 23.

developed as result of forces exerted upon them by sedentary societies. Recent archaeological evidence increasingly adds support for arguments against this assumption. Instead, he argues that an accurate understanding of long-term development of nomadic cultures is to be found by examining such archaeological records as *kurgans* in the stratification of (as in his example) the Xiongnu in ninth and eighth centuries BC. We can similarly employ the archaeological records of Qaraqorum to aid in attempts to understand the development of the Mongol state and to divine the Mongols' own concepts and intentions. In our case, the archaeological record of Qaraqorum is unusual in that the city was built by Mongols in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, was occupied by Mongols and served as a capital until it was abandoned by Mongols. Almost immediately in archaeological terms, it fell into ruins and was never again occupied. The remains of the city show very nearly what Ögödei built and how the city was arranged in his time.

Furthermore, there have been several archaeological expeditions in the last century of considerable scope and for which there are excellent published results. The two most thorough expeditions were those led by S. V. Kieselev who carried out extensive excavations in Qaraqorum in the late 1940s and was able to identify the layout of the city and several important structures.[137] His thorough expedition was well documented and his methods careful. Most importantly, Kiselev left the excavations intact and created detailed records, maps, and drawings that have served as the foundations for later expeditions. More recently, the Mongolian-German Karakorum Expedition, a joint project that began in the late 1990s between researchers at the

[137] The results of Kiselev's expeditions are published in several separate works, but see especially: Kiselev, *Drevnemongol'skie goroda*; S. V. Kiselev, "Drevnie goroda Mongolii," *Sovetskaya arkheologiya* 2 (1957); S. V. Kiselev, "Iz rabot mongol'skoi arkheologicheskoi ekspeditsii instituta istorii material'noi kul'tury AN SSSR," in *Mongol skii sbornik ekonomika, istoriia, arkheologiia*, Uchenye zapiski Instituta vostokovedeniia (Moskva: Izd-vo vostochnoi lit-ry, 1959).

University of Bonn and the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, has conducted ongoing fieldwork at Qaraqorum. Some of their findings have been published but most have yet to be fully utilized by historians of the Mongol Empire.[138]

Igor de Rachewiltz points out that Ögödei's establishment of Qaraqorum was a signifying event in the development of the confederation and reveals some insight into their imperial intentions:

> Ögödei's transfer of the centre of Mongol power from the *yeke ordo* of Kökö'e (Köde'e) Aral on the Kerulen in the east to the Orkhon area in the west, with the establishment in 1235 of a walled capital with permanent buildings, represents a momentous event in Mongol history as it coincides with the onset of Mongolian imperialism in the true sense of the word.[139]

It was momentous for several reasons—one of which was not simply that nomads built a city. Though it would help to know what de Rachewiltz seemed to understand of the "true sense" of imperialism, 1235 is a definite benchmark in the trajectory of the Mongol Empire's narrative as well as of Ögödei's life.[140] There was already a long tradition of so-called nomadic empires building capital cities. Urbanization, as pointed out by Isabelle Charleaux in her chapter, "The

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[138] Jan Bemmann, Ulambayar Erdenebat, Ernst Pohl, U. Ėrdėnėbat, eds., *Mongolian-German Karakorum Expedition*, Forschungen zur Archäologie Aussereuropäischer Kulturen, (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2010); Christina Franken, *Die "grosse Halle" von Karakorum*, Forschungen zur Archäologie Aussereuropäischer Kulturen, (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2015).

[139] de Rachewiltz, *SH (Supplement)*, 225.

[140] That Ögödei retired from campaigning and also seems to have withdrawn from his duties as qa'an around 1235 could indicate that he viewed this as an accomplishment that relieved him of duties in some sense. It is certainly true that Qaraqorum was the physical manifestation of the extent to which bureaucratic institutions had evolved under Ögödei's leadership. I find it difficult to consider explanations other than alcoholism for his neglect and apathy during the period 1235-41, but the coincidence of the establishment of the capital city with Ögödei's seemingly abrupt withdrawal is notable.

Khan's City" in *Imperial Statecraft*,[141] was common among steppe nomads if we understand the term "urbanization" to include any kind of settlement, whether temporary or permanent. Large tent settlements, seasonal or for festival gatherings, are not fundamentally different in function or purpose as we examine them in the context of Central Eurasian history. As one of the myriad ways in which the Mongols employed governing strategies, the building of a *capital* city was momentous because it was a clear sign that Ögödei was claiming a particular place for the Mongol polity in the Eurasian political sphere, one that was meant to resonate beyond the steppe.

There is an apparent paradox in the construction of a capital, especially considering that doing so appears to contradict Činggis Qan's *yasa* that Mongols should not settle in cities.[142] However, Qaraqorum was never intended nor served as a place of residence. Instead, the city was a permanent location for the display of state power and the performance of state ritual in addition to locus of trade and manufacturing. Their own sense of legitimation was exhibited in the location, design, and functions of their new city, revealing insights into their imperial identity and intentions that the textual sources do not. These symbols are our evidence that the Mongol state was speaking to both their subjects and their contemporaries in an international language of politics.

There is little to lead us to believe that the building of Qaraqorum had any impact upon Ögödei's authority over the nomad elite or that it was intended to do so. The city was a tool for

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[141] Isabelle Charleaux, "The Khan's City: Kökeqota and the role of a capital city in Mongolian state formation," in *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries*, David Sneath (ed.), Bellingham (WA.): Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University & Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit, University of Cambridge, 2007 (Studies on East Asia, vol. 26), Chapter 6, p. 175-206.

[142] Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 461.

governing the conquered, served as a central location for the collection and redistribution of the wealth to the stakeholders, and displayed Mongol might. According to Allsen, "Möngke, as had Güyüg before him, required dependent rulers to come in person to court [at Qaraqorum] to renew their investiture,"[143] indicating that the city served as a showpiece for Mongol power meant to be seen by representatives of subject peoples. By Möngke's time, Qaraqorum was firmly established as the administrative seat of the empire, acknowledged by even the next most powerful man in the hierarchy, Batu. When the king of Lesser Armenia went to Batu to offer his submission, Batu refused to accept him and ordered him to travel to Qaraqorum and submit himself to Möngke.[144]

More than just an administrative hub, Qaraqorum was a production center where artisans from all reaches of the empire were sent.[145] So important was this to the Mongols that when general slaughters were ordered of resistant or rebellious settlements, it was only the artisans who were spared. These the Mongols sent to the capital where both Kiselev and the Mongolian-German Karakorum Expedition discovered ample evidence of vibrant artisan quarters.[146]

But Mongols building a city less than a generation removed from their steppe origins

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[143] Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Grand Qan Möngke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251-1259* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 65-6.

[144] E. Bretschneider, *Medieval researches from eastern Asiatic sources: fragments towards the knowledge of the geography and history of central and western Asia from the 13th to the 17th century*, ed. E. Bretschneider, 2 vols., Trübner's Oriental series, (London: Trübner & Co., 1888), 165-66; John Andrew Boyle, "The Journey of Het'um I, King of Little Armenia, to the Court of the Great Khan Mongke," *Central Asiatic Journal* 10 (1965).

[145] Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, 213.

[146] For the details of excavations in the craftsmen's quarter of Qaraqorum, see Bemmann, *Mongolian-German Karakorum Expedition*.

indicates that something significant was happening. The physical possessions and personnel of the government—the detritus of bureaucracy—must be kept somewhere and administrators must have a place to meet and conduct business. The mobile apparatus that made up the traditional form of steppe government was insufficient to support the proliferation of officials under Ögödei and ill-suited to the management of civilized societies. Empire also benefitted from having a symbolic and literal center. The Mongol bureaucratic organization was learning the language of legitimation as understood by the civilizations they had conquered and negotiating the evolution of their hybrid state. Through the location, architecture, and monuments at Qaraqorum, Ögödei was conveying a message. We come up against, once again, the fundamental problem of our attempts to understand the Mongols: they do not speak for themselves—at least, not directly. In Qaraqorum, however, we find some hints about how the Mongols understood their enterprise. The geopolitical scholar Geoffrey Parker states the "nature of the power being wielded and what those who wield it wish to convey" can be read in the "stones they pile up."[147]

The location Ögödei chose for his capital was in the Orkhon River valley, on the right bank of the river. Twenty-seven kilometers north were the ruins of the city of Qara Balghasun, the ancient capital of the Uighur state that was incorporated into the Mongol holdings early in

[147] Geoffrey Parker, *Power in Stone: Cities as Symbols of Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 16.

Činggis Qan's career.[148] This was no coincidence, for the Mongols early on adopted Uighur administrative technologies: Činggis Qan had employed Uighur scribes to create a written language for Mongolian as early as 1204.[149] The Mongols considered themselves and their nascent state successors to the Uighur nation, as Ögödei's order to build a capital in this particular location shows. Early in the march west, Činggis Qan made his basecamp south of Qara Balgasun, probably at the exact spot where Ögödei set up his main camp soon after his election and where, in 1235, he built his audience hall. The capital was not located in what we usually consider the Mongol heartland, the Onon-Kerulen area, nor Burkhan Khaldun, the mountain of such importance to Činggis Qan and the early confederation. In fact, Ögödei's choice of location would have impinged upon Tolui's personal appanage, then in the possession of Sorqaqtani Beki—evidence that the site was probably already designated a capital of sorts or had the symbolic importance necessary for it to be used as a capital region without apparent complaint from the Toluids.[150] Furthermore, there is some evidence that Činggis Qan may have

[148] Qaraqorum is located in Övörkhangai Aimag in central Mongolia at 47°12'30.3"N, 102°50'50.7"E. It sits a little over one mile east of the right bank of the Orkhon River, which flows north to Baikal. Across the river and 27 kilometers north is the ancient Uighur capital of Ordu Baliq/Qara Balghasun. The land of the Orkhon Valley is flat and Qaraqorum is surrounded by open plain where any who approach can be observed long before they reach the city. Today, the village of Kharkhorin surrounds the west and south sides of the site of Qaraqorum. Past its prime but not in ruins, the famous monastery Erderne Zuu is in the southwest corner of what was the city of Qaraqorum, probably on the site of Ögödei's "Great Hall," called by the Chinese name of 萬案宮 Wan'an Gong. The Orkhon Valley corresponded with administrative division of left (east) and right (west), approximately at the center of the Mongol domain in Ögödei's time.

[149] After the first successes over the Jin in 1218-19, the Mongols may have even begun producing official documents in Chinese, as well. Ruysbroeck, Jackson, and Morgan, *The mission of Friar William of Rubruck his journey to the court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253-1255*, 19-21.

[150] See the discussion in Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, 167.

designated Qaraqorum the site of the capital (though he does not seem to have acted to build one) as early as 1220, as attested by both the *Yuanshi*[151] and a stele erected there in 1346.[152]

The city was not a natural nexus of any trade routes, a center of agricultural production, nor the seat of powerful political or military leaders aside from its association with the Uighur. While located on an important river, the Mongols had no waterborne transportation or trade network. "The geopolitical term 'core region,'" says Parker, "means the historical centre or heart of a state or nation. In most cases the state will have been formed by expansion from this region." True for the Mongols, in a way, but not because of the evolution of the agricultural community and the need to protect their immovable wealth. "Its location is the result of a variety of factors, important among which are centrality and ease of communication. It can be thought of as being the brain in the body of the state. It may also be the economic centre of the state. . . It may also be seen as being the home of a nation or people and so will be vested with a special place in their affections."[153] For the Mongols, this "core region" was the spiritual home of the empires that preceded, and its sacral importance would have been understood by all.

The choice of the Orkhon Valley for the capital of the Mongol Empire was an equivocal statement of the kind of state that Ögödei wanted to emulate. He could have chosen to build his capital in the former Jin territories, laying claim to the prestige and symbols of legitimation in the long tradition of Chinese empire (as Qubilai was to do late in the century). Instead, Ögödei appealed to Uighur and Türk precedents and traditions. In Arnold Toynbee's *Cities on the Move*,

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[151] 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, Chapter 58.

[152] Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, 167.

[153] Parker, *Power in Stone: Cities as Symbols of Empire*, 230, fn. 2.

he observes "A government that rules from a seat in a city that possesses prestige in its own right will stand to benefit by this. . . The psychological advantage may be worth the price of drawbacks in the matters of supply, administrative convenience, and strategy."[154] Toynbee is referring to well-established cities that have grown up out of a long tradition of agriculture along trade routes and nexuses of agricultural regions. Qaraqorum was none of these things but, like Qara Balghasun before it, was in the geographical heartland of the empire without consideration for the agricultural productivity of the region in which it was located. We can understand this type of city as being significantly different from important cities that were long established before becoming the political locus of their respective polities. Qaraqorum was a performance space, a kind of permanent camp, where the theatre of government was acted out. Qaraqorum certainly faced drawbacks in, particularly, the matter of supplies, most of which were imported by long caravans of wagons. Ögödei attempted to encourage agriculture by rewarding those who were successful at cultivating the uncooperative soil around Qaraqorum, even reportedly rewarding one successful gardener 100 *balish* for growing a few radishes.[155]

Nevertheless, according to Toynbee, "the awe in which the imperial government's and people's country and capital will be held by their subjects will be recognized by the rulers as being a valuable political asset."[156] The desirability of the Orkhon Valley for the Mongol capital was considerable. Prestige comes in many forms, but the most important is historical:

> If the state has been brought into existence through the conquest of a number of smaller local states by one of their number, the previous capital of the empire-building state will

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[154] Arnold Toynbee, *Cities on the Move* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 79.

[155] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 169-70.

[156] Toynbee, *Cities on the Move*, 79.

> automatically become the capital of the new empire unless and until the once local but now imperial government decides to shift its seat to some other city that suits it better in the new circumstances.[157]

Ögödei's decision to build a capital city was, more than anything else, pragmatic. Until the establishment of Qaraqorum, the only functional capital city, such as it was, of the Mongol Empire was the qa'an's *ordo*. The qa'an migrated seasonally—more often than required by the rhythms of pastoralism—except for the long periods in which he was encamped at *quriltai*. As the empire grew, so did the physical stuff of administration and governmental personnel:

> Thus the administrative inefficiency that was due to sheer loss of time will have been considerable; but a more serious cause of inefficiency in the working of a migratory government will have been the difficulty, and in fact the impossibility, of transporting, not only the migratory administrators' personal belongings, but the public records relevant to current public business. Administration cannot be conducted efficiently if the administrators do not have constant access to the documents that have an immediate bearing on the business in hand.[158]

Some outward symbols of dominance, according to Toynbee, take the form of monuments and architecture. The Mongols, if they differed in this regard, did so only in their utilitarian approach to the theater of empire. Ögödei commissioned a city meant to impress conquered peoples and envoys, but he was little interested in the city as a place of residence nor in enjoying the luxuries and conveniences of living there. Ögödei never utilized Qaraqorum as

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[157] Toynbee, *Cities on the Move*, 79. Though Toynbee describes Qaraqorum in his examples of capital cities built with a strong link to prestige, he does so without knowing that the Uighur capital—or the ruins, anyway—were nearby, or even that the Mongols may have been seeking the legitimation that came with the prestige of a previous empire. He does, however, mention that "An existing city that has not previously been even a local capital may be made into one in virtue of its having acquired prestige through having played an heroic part at some crisis in a people's history." (See pages 82-84 of the same work.) Qaraqorum was located in consideration of both Toynbee's theory of prestige as well as a location of crisis. He, however, is also unaware of the connection to Činggis Qan's camp on the site of the future Qaraqorum in 1220. See Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo*, 167.

[158] Toynbee, *Cities on the Move*, 123-24.

the seat of the qa'an. We know from travelers' accounts that the structure that was thought by the first Soviet archaeologists in 1933 to be a palace was instead an audience hall and administrative center. The excavations carried out by the Mongolian-German Karakorum Expedition between 2000 and 2006 confirm that the "Great Hall" was eventually turned into a Buddhist temple.[159] The hall was constructed according to Chinese models, an important fact in light of its function as a place to greet subjects and diplomats in the heart of the Mongol Empire. A roof covered in glazed red and green tiles supported with painted timbers are indicative of Chinese influence, but it was further revealed that the spatial configuration of the hall corresponded to pre-Mongol Tibetan concepts of sacred space and cosmic perceptions.[160]

Capital buildings were no afterthought for Ögödei and the ruling Mongols—they would have undoubtedly understood the symbolic gravity of placing the head of the Mongol state under a Chinese roof. Ögödei was making a deliberate appeal to legitimacy lent the Mongol Empire as result of having subjugated north China in addition to their position as heirs to steppe empire. There was no higher language of imperialism and civilization. Ögödei was making a bold statement that this symbolism, authority, and legitimacy now belonged to the Mongols by right of their successful conquest of the Jin and subsequent occupation of their lands, products, and subjects. Qaraqorum was Ögödei's statement that the Mongol Empire was built upon the prestige of the civilizations that it had conquered—and had fully subsumed the characteristics and accomplishments under the Mongol banner. The Mongol Empire, as one could see in Qaraqorum's edifices, was here to stay.

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[159] Franken, *Die "grosse Halle" von Karakorum*, 177. My descriptions of Qaraqorum's ruins are based upon fieldwork as reported by Franken.

[160] Franken, *Die "grosse Halle" von Karakorum*, 178-79.

§2.4.2 The End: The Mongol Empire, as it turned out, was not around for long. By the time that Qaraqorum's grandeur was on display, it was a façade for a state that no longer functioned according to the dictates of collective sovereignty and had never fully accomplished a transition to autocracy. Ögödei spent his final years constantly on hunting expeditions, drinking excessively, and having little to do with duties for which he was responsible. Ögödei's narrative as reported in the sources falters in these final years, as there was presumably less to relate. Very little is said of Ögödei and his activities after the second *quriltai* ending in 1235. It is also the case that the Persian sources, favorable to Ögödei, avoid criticizing him, probably difficult to avoid when reporting on these later years. Where mentioned in the *Yuanshi*, Ögödei's decline is stated matter-of-factly, little detail given.[161] Ögödei was evidently an alcoholic who exhibited all the hallmarks of a dedicated and addicted drinker. No one has explained this more thoroughly and convincingly than Allsen in his 2007 paper, "Ögödei and Alcohol."[162] Yet, the direct connection between Ögödei's gradual abandonment of his duties and his alcoholism is not evident in the sources. His death, on the other hand, is clearly understood as the (inevitable) result of overindulgence.

In these final years, Ögödei seems to have been satisfied that he had achieved what the stakeholders expected of him and was confident in the institutions he had established. With an abruptness obvious in the sources, Ögödei had set off on the hunt in 1235 and did little else until

[161] For example, the *Yuanshi* records an illness in the spring of the year he died: 十三年辛丑春二月, 獵于揭揭察哈之澤. 帝有疾, 詔赦天下囚徒. 帝瘳. In the spring, in the second month of Year 13, Xinchou [March 14 – April 12, 1241], the Emperor hunted in the marshes of Jiejiechaha. The Emperor became ill, and decreed grants of amnesty to all prisoners in the realm. He recovered. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三七.

[162] Thomas T. Allsen, "Ögedei and Alcohol," *Mongolian Studies* 29 (2007).

he died. Leading up to this end, Ögödei's drinking had been of increasing concern to his officials and family members. Yelü Chucai's attempts to curb his consumption went unheeded, but Ögödei cheerfully appreciated his efforts.[163] Ča'adai had assigned a minder to Ögödei's court whose task was to limit the qa'an's daily intake by monitoring the number of cups he drank. Ögödei found himself a larger cup.[164] On 10 December 1241, Ögödei returned from a three-day hunt to Ötegü Qulan, on the northern perimeter of the Gobi.[165] This was the location of the *quriltai* of 1235 and had been a summer camp for the Kereit during the reign of the Ong Qan.[166] That night was a celebration of his thirteenth year as qa'an and he was attended by Ibaqa Beki, the sister of Sorqoqtani Beki, Tolui's widow, who annually came from her *yurt* in China for the occasion.[167] Alternately, he may have been attended by 'Abd al-Raḥmān who "incited him to drink," according to the *Yuanshi*.[168] Either way, it was unlikely Ögödei needed much encouragement. By dawn the next morning, he was dead. He was 55 or 56 years old.

§2.4.3 Ögödei's Final Words: Our most interesting source on these last years of Ögödei's life is the *Secret History*. While not providing a great number of details—and those few details

[163] Allsen, "Ögedei and Alcohol," 4.

[164] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 673.

[165] 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三七.

[166] John Andrew Boyle, "The Summer and Winter Camping Grounds of the Kereit," *Central Asiatic Journal* 17 (1973).

[167] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 673-74.

[168] Though it should be kept in mind that the *Yuanshi* is particularly harsh on 'Abd al-Raḥmān who was the archenemy of Yelü Chucai. Holding 'Abd al-Raḥmān responsible for Ögödei's death while extolling the efforts of Yelü Chucai to curb his drinking is suspiciously serendipitous. 奧都剌合蠻進酒, 帝歡飲, 極夜乃罷. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三七.

are confused and misleading—the *SH* closes with a short section in which Ögödei himself gives a succinct and candid review of his years as qa'an. These few lines constitute a rare gem for the scholar of the Mongol Empire and of Ögödei, especially. He enumerates four "deeds" and four "faults" that serve as a review of his reign. It is remarkable that of all that Ögödei accomplished during his tenure in office, most of those successes he chose to mention here should have concerned the management of settled peoples: of Ögödei's four "deeds" in §281, three relate to his institutional duties. First, and not related to these duties, is his conquest of the Jin, arguably the greatest of all his accomplishments. "I campaigned against the [Jin] people and I destroyed them."[169] The significance of the Jin campaigns have already been discussed in detail.

Second, "I had post stations set up so that our messengers could ride in haste all along the way; and for that purpose I had all necessities conveyed to the post stations." The homogenization and regulation of the *yam* enabled rapid communication with distant domains and expedited large military operations. Additionally, this seems to have been a serious improvement in the lives of settled people along routes and in post station locations. The widespread abuses were really a barely disguised pillaging by those using the *yam*.

Ögödei's third deed is expressed in this way: "I had wells dug in places without water and had the water brought forth, thus providing the people with water and grass." This refers to his orders, during the second *quriltai* in 1234-35, to make regions of the Gobi habitable and

[169] This and all subsequent references to Ögödei's "deeds" are found in de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §281.

usable for the grazing of livestock.[170] He had assigned two officials to "dig wells in the [Gobi] for people to live in this rather vast area, and they shall build brick walls around the wells to protect them from wild animals."[171] This well-building project foreshadowed the efforts by later Chinese officials—even into the modern era—to make arable land at the edges of the Gobi. Presumably, Ögödei's undertaking was successful in some measure. The demands for pasturage must have been a growing concern for Ögödei and his administrators as they attempted to regularize the management and use of territory for both the pastoral and agricultural components of the state. As the tax bases of agricultural lands provided steady income, they would have prevented the seizure of such land for grazing.[172]

Finally, "I established scouts and garrison troops among the people of cities everywhere and so let the people live in peace." This oblique reference could concern not only the garrisoning of troops, but also the installation of officials in urban centers which allowed for stakeholders to have representatives of their own on site to assure fair collection of taxes and to discourage the stakeholders from collecting taxes themselves. There was little outside threat to the cities of the Mongol Empire and few outright rebellions were recorded. The Mongols in Ögödei's time did not readily separate the military and administrative duties of their regional officials, so this "deed" remains open to interpretation. The representative officials facilitated the augmentation of the administration by giving the stakeholders a share in the form and

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[170] This was probably in "the desert region between the Naiman territory and the Tangut/Qašin (Hsi Hsia) country." de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §188 and 676-77. Recall, also, the episode mentioned above in which Ögödei rewarded the radish grower 100 *balish* for successful agriculture in Qaraqorum's unyielding soil. Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 169-70.

[171] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §279.

[172] Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 467.

management of taxation practices.[173] It would have been a welcome innovation at a time when the bureaucratization of the Mongol administrative apparatus was resisted by stakeholders. From the perspective of the subject cities' residents, these representatives—and probably even the garrison troops—were an acceptable trade for the *ad hoc* collection of taxes and goods to which they had been subjected by stakeholders.

Contrasting the positive accomplishments are also enumerated four "faults."[174] Unlike his "deeds," these offenses are somewhat more difficult to classify except that they are all moral or personal failures, involving interpersonal conflict or offense. Ögödei first states that "I was at fault to let myself be vanquished by wine. This was indeed one fault of mine." Though "vanquished" sounds like something that would have been written posthumously,[175] there is not much mystery in this statement. He was indeed vanquished by wine and Ögödei's alcoholism takes center stage in analysis of his reign, particularly the later period. This passage specifically refers to grape wine, *bor darasun*, and not to steppe products, such as kumis or *ayiragh*, as one might expect.[176] Persian and Chinese sources frequently mention his love of wine and the frequency with which imbibed.[177] As Allsen indicates, Ögödei probably developed an inclination

[173] Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 465.

[174] All "faults" in this section can be found in de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §281.

[175] De Rachewiltz supported the notion that Ögödei himself wrote or dictated these final words of the *SH*, reversing his earlier conclusions that the entire presentation of deeds and faults was a posthumous composition. For his final assessment, see de Rachewiltz, *SH (Supplement)*, 137. For his earlier remarks, see de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 1032 (commentary on §281).

[176] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 1034.

[177] See Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 147; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 673.

to grape wine in 1218 or 1219 during the Turkestan campaign.[178] Alcoholic drinks indigenous to the steppe were less intoxicating, with *kumis* probably no more than 2-3% alcohol by volume assuming that it was allowed to ferment to dryness, a necessary part of the procedure for preservation of the final product.[179] The Mongols' successful military campaigns and seizure of produce and routes of commerce across Eurasia brought many forms of more potent alcoholic beverages to their lips, including grape wine from north China, Turkestan, and western Eurasia.

A few words concerning the circumstances of Ögödei's drinking are worth mentioning, here. Contributing to his consumption of alcohol, Ögödei spent the greater part of the years between 1235 and 1241 in the field hunting. Not to be confused with the modern notion of the activity in which a solitary individual or small group stalks quarry for the purpose of trophy or sustenance, the "royal hunt" of the steppe was a campaign against game animals, a "court out of doors," military training maneuver, display of grandiosity, and—most of all—a mobile party.[180] The Mongols were passionately devoted to all the activities of the hunt. For Ögödei and many of the Mongol elite, hunting on such a scale may have been the greatest reward of the whole Mongol enterprise. Both the Persian and Chinese sources show a marked lack of interest in Ögödei's peregrinations of this period, only occasionally mentioning more than his location from

[178] Allsen, "Ögedei and Alcohol," 4.

[179] Fermentable sugars in mare's milk can vary based upon time of year the milk is acquired or what the mare consumed. However, it is not found at levels beyond 3% alcohol by volume unless fortified or distilled. Distillation of *kumis* produces *ayiragh*.

[180] Thomas T. Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), esp. 201-08. It is also important to note that, in the absence of a full *quriltai*, the assembly of leaders and stakeholders during these roving parties would also have served as a venue for the exchange of information and decision-making—the "court out of doors."

time to time. Yet, much of the business of government must have been conducted while on the hunt. As I will discuss in the following chapter, the day-to-day operations of Qaraqorum were left in the care of his officials and, especially, his second wife, Töregene.

The second fault to which Ögödei admits in the *SH* is possibly related to an incident so horrific that even *TJG*, *JaT* and the *Yuanshi* are compelled to report the details.[181] While the circumstances that precipitated this event are unclear, it seems that some kind of rumor was circulating that involved women in Temüge Otčigin's *ordo*. It is uncertain the nature of the rumor, but there are at least two possibilities. First, the rumor was one that sprang up within the *ordo* that young women would be requisitioned for some use in the service of the empire, maybe to be married off to another group for political reasons. In fear of this, the people of the *ordo* instead affianced their unmarried women and girls within their own clan, thus sparking the ire of Ögödei. Or, second, it could have been a rumor at court that the young women were being married to men within their own clan (without having been requisitioned) and this then angered Ögödei, as exogamous marriages were usual practice among steppe peoples in the Mongol confederation. He ordered all the unmarried or recently married girls and women over the age of seven and their families to be gathered up and brought to court. Once there, he separated the daughters of emirs and had his men rape them in front of the gathered crowd, at the conclusion of which two of them were dead. He then sent some of them to the harem, gave others to low-ranking men in his military, and finally allowed those present to take whichever of the girls who remained.

Ögödei's entry in the *SH*, however, does not make it certain that the "rape of the Oirat

[181] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 190-91; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 705; 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三五.

girls,"[182] as the event is sometimes referred, is the event in question: "To have the girls of my uncle Otčigin's domain brought to me was surely a mistake. Even though I was the Qa'an and lord of the nation, to participate in wrong and unprincipled actions, this was indeed one fault of mine." Anne F. Broadbridge believes that the two events are separate, though she does not disclose her thinking on the matter.[183]

Ögödei's regret seems to have been more about the transgression as it related to his uncle, Temüge, than it was about the offense against the women, support for Broadbridge's conclusion that this is a separate incident. If so, it does correspond to the fourth "fault" confessed by Ögödei, as it is also admission of overreach and the unlawful—or, at least, uncivil—expropriation of territory and resources (see below). Ultimately, it does not matter for our analysis whether the "rape of the Oirat women" and Ögödei's confessed seizure of women from Temüge's *ordo* are the same event or not. What is pertinent is that, of only four faults that he found compelled to confess in his final words, that this one should be concerned with what amounts to an abuse of the powers of office, a violation of the responsibilities that Ögödei seems to have taken seriously. Ögödei's sense of his obligation to subject peoples was strong and paternal. Juvainī's anecdotes of Ögödei's munificence evince a sensitivity to his role as a provider and protector of both stakeholders and suppliants and it is consistent that misuse of his powers may have weighed

[182] Though, as observed by de Rachewiltz and others, these could not have been Oirats, despite Rashīd al-Dīn's implication (and Boyle's and Thackston's translation of this implication into "Oirat"). See de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 1035; Anne F. Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 187; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-tawarikh = Compendium of chronicles*, ed. W. M. Thackston, Sources of Oriental languages and literatures, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1998), 345; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Successors*, 93.

[183] Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire*, 187.

heavily on him.

The third transgression confessed by Ögödei has no corroborating evidence from other sources:

> To secretly injure Doqolqu was also a fault of mine. And why was it a fault? Because to secretly injure Doqolqu who strove fiercely in the service of his rightful lord, my father the Qan, was a fault and a mistake. Who will now strive so fiercely in my service? Therefore, I have myself acknowledged the fault of having secretly harmed, without discernment, a person who diligently observed the principle of loyalty in the service of my father the Qa'an and in the service of all.[184]

Doqolqu (also Doqolqu Čerbi) had long served the Mongols, was a key commander in the Jin campaigns alongside Ögödei himself in the 1230s, and went on to command the armies that eventually prevailed over the Jin in 1234.[185] The failed attack on Tongguan Pass, described above, was led by Dolqolqu.[186] He had also been in command of a unit of 1,000 day guards under Činggis Qan.[187] A Mangqut, he joined Temüǰin in 1204 as one of his first *nököt* and was given the title *čerbi* which corresponds to "chamberlain" and seems to have involved responsibilities related the qan's domestic staff.[188] In this role, he served Činggis Qan until his death in 1227, when, presumably, he passed into the service of Tolui or Ögödei, eventually to lead soldiers on campaign. Little speculation can be made about why Ögödei would have killed Doqolqu.

Ögödei's final fault as confessed is somewhat enigmatic, if only because it also is not

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[184] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §281.

[185] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 647.

[186] 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三〇.

[187] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §§226-27.

[188] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §120 and 445-46.

corroborated by other sources:

> Further, being greedy and saying to myself, "What if the wild animals born with their destiny ordained by Heaven and Earth go over to the territory of my brothers?," I had fences and walls built of pounded earth to prevent the animals from straying. As I was thus confining them, I heard resentful words coming from my brothers. That, too, was a fault of mine.[189]

There is some confusion about to what Ögödei is referring, but *TJG* mentions Ögödei and Ča'adai building walls to enclose game—though does not indicate any conflict.[190] Why this should be listed as a fault is unclear, but likely has to do with one of two issues. The first possibility is that it my have been a bad faith seizure of territories from Ča'adai, albeit in a situation where defined borders did not exist—or, at least, were undefined until a wall was built. As de Rachewiltz indicates, this is consistent with the general problem of boundaries in the Mongol Empire, an issue that plagues the Mongols throughout their long domination of Eurasia.[191] Second, it may have been the unsportsmanly entrapment of game animals. The Mongols treated game with the utmost respect and their treatment bordered on reverence.[192] However, the enclosure of game animals and the subsequent killing of them had a long tradition in Eurasia before the time of the Mongols. Of the many forms of royal hunt described in Allsen's *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History*, those conducted in enclosed parks "was not held in high

[189] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §281.

[190] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 21.

[191] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 1038.

[192] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 19-20; de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 1037.

esteem by classical authors" and was equated to killing unarmed prisoners of war.[193] It is conceivable that, for the Mongols, this sort of "hunt" would have been less than honorable, regardless of its historicity.

It does, however, allude to the ongoing tension between Ča'adai and Ögödei. Their conflicts over administrators and resources does not appear to have negatively impacted their close personal relationship, one based upon a mutual respect underpinned by Ögödei's careful consultation with his elder brother on matters of importance. When it came to the execution of Ögödei's duties as qa'an, however, Ča'adai's conservatism prevented him from embracing the flourishing of the administrative organization and came to outright obstructionism in some cases, precipitating a challenge of authority. It happened that during the latter half of Ögödei's reign, Ča'adai seized a portion of Transoxiana that had been granted to Maḥmūd Yalavač. Upon Yalavač's complaint, Ögödei demanded an explanation from Ča'adai who admitted his fault but offered no explanation. Instead of pressing the issue, Ögödei conceded to the seizure, transferring the land to Ča'adai permanently, dispossessing Maḥmūd Yalavač who was eventually transferred to administer north China.[194] Negotiating the complicated roles of those who shared power in the unprecedented arrangements of Mongol authoritative structures could have led to far more destruction—and after the death of Ögödei, destruction had its day.

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[193] Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History*, 35. Though, it should be noted, the Mongols did not generally balk at slaughtering unarmed prisoners if they were residents of rebellious or problematic cities such as Balkh, Gurgānǰ, or Baghdad.

[194] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 775.

§2.5 Conclusion

This chapter concludes here, with the death and final words of Ögödei, and sets the stage for the following 10 years that saw the end of collective sovereignty and the unified Mongol state. The accession of Möngke in 1251 was the result of entirely different kind of political processes, one that had surrendered to the reality that the Mongol Empire was not a unified polity and that had relinquished efforts to make it so. In this biographical study of Ögödei, the conquest state built by Činggis Qan was briefly and deftly organized into a tax-collecting and wealth sharing state that was the product of unprecedented combinations of steppe and sown approaches to the government of peoples. This hybrid state could not succeed but the reasons for its failure were a complex assortment of centrifugal forces and a lack of shared vision.

Overburdened institutions; Ögödei's declining health; impracticalities of geography and distance; and the opposed philosophies of autocracy and collective sovereignty all conspired to bring about the ebbing of Mongol unity. Instead, stakeholders began to coalesce around smaller polities, abandoning the inefficient central *quriltai* and group of decision-makers in favor of smaller collectives that could more readily address stakeholders' concerns. Yet, an opposing development was also underway that was equally damning for the future of collective rule of the Mongol Empire: increasing centralization of the management institutions in place to govern the settled domains relied upon the authoritative figure of the qa'an. In the next chapter, the political forces and powerful figures set free after Ögödei's death assured that the transformation from collective sovereignty toward autocracy centered upon the office of qa'an continued.

§3 End of the Empire: Upheaval, Reversal, and Overreach, 1241-1251

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§3.1 Introduction

In the early morning hours of 11 December 1241, Ögödei met his death in an inglorious fog of drunkenness, gluttony, and poor decisions. He had neglected his responsibilities in his later years, preferring to indulge his favorite pastimes—drinking and hunting—to the active participation in the execution of the duties of his office. His advisors, Činqai chief among them, and his wife, Töregene (r. 1242-46), minded the day-to-day operations of the qa'an's administration even as the institutions and processes that Ögödei had put in place slowly unraveled. In the decade after Ögödei's death, the Mongol Empire continued this devolution from order and regularity toward a state of entropy that none of his successors were able or inclined to reverse. Instead, the deterioration accelerated, alienating stakeholders and undermining the basis of collective sovereignty. Töregene and Güyük (r. 1246-48), though working at odds with one another, both attempted to sustain the office of qa'an and, by doing so, revive devotion to collective sovereignty among stakeholders. Neither succeeded. Finally, the disastrous regency of Güyük's widow, Oghul Qaimiš (r. 1248-51), compounded the misfortunes of the Ögödeids. In response to ten years of mismanagement, Möngke (r. 1251-56) was selected for the office of qa'an. It was a final bid by the Mongol elite to restore a unity that the confederation had already outgrown. Weary of maintaining a collective sovereignty that did not function to serve their interests, the stakeholders chose to abandon the project and direct their efforts elsewhere.

This chapter examines the decade from Ögödei's death in 1241 through the beginning of

Möngke's purges of the Ögödeids beginning in 1251. The importance of Töregene's regency in this period and in the transformation from collective sovereignty to autocracy have been understudied. The impact her actions had upon the decay of confidence and commitment to the confederation was exacerbated by the enervating policies implemented by Güyük—policies that only further undermined confidence in the office of qa'an when he died shortly after taking office. Oghul Qaimiš did nothing to alleviate the strain upon the office of qa'an but, instead, made further missteps that antagonized stakeholders, precipitating a crisis and a reckoning. This chapter ends with the election of Möngke, who found himself head of a fractured state, only part of which he could claim to rule, as Batu had devised to have his independent rule over the Golden Horde formalized. Far from the zenith of Mongol Empire, Möngke's reign illustrates that the Mongol confederation established by Činggis Qan could no longer viably function as the ruling body of a unified Mongol state.

§3.2 Sources and Literature

One persistent issue in the study of Mongol Empire is that the sources were overwhelmingly written by chroniclers who were products of a very different kind of society than that about which they wrote. These men were accustomed to absolute patriarchal authority, meant to insure continuity and stability in the succession of office and maintenance of governmental institutions. As such, the focus of their scholarly attentions was the monarch—nearly always a male to which they attributed more authority than he probably had. On the other hand, women who held high office were represented in ways that reduced and obscured the power they held. Women of the Mongol elite were stakeholders with military and material

interests in political developments and often served in offices of supreme authority. Thus, our sources, consistent with most pre-modern historical works, are "great man histories," especially as concerns the Mongols.

Consequently, we cannot construct an accurate history of the Mongol Empire without piecing together the narratives of the women at the top of Mongol hierarchy. Ögödei's reign, for example, cannot be fully understood without including the reign of his widow, Töregene. Even Güyük, because he was both an elected qa'an and male, is given more scholarly attention for his short, largely ineffective reign than the long regency of his mother—not to mention that of his widow, Oghul Qaimiš. So it was that for more than 8 of the 10 years between the end of Ögödei's reign and the beginning of Möngke's, the Mongol Empire was headed by powerful women who seldom receive the attention necessary to understand the period accurately. The sources are parsimonious, but it is easily discerned that their policies and actions had an impact upon the state that was comparable to those of Ögödei, Güyük, and Möngke.

Juvainī, as in the previous chapter on Ögödei, is our primary guide as we set out to understand more clearly the period of 1241-51. As before, Rashīd al-Dīn often provides us with alternate or additional information that is not available in *TJG*. In the discussion of Töregene, Güyük, and Oghul Qaimiš in particular, however, *JaT*'s Toluid partiality is evident. By Rashīd al-Dīn's time, the narrative of the events leading up to Möngke's election had been worked out to the satisfaction of the Toluid powerholders. Rashīd al-Dīn's chronicle reflects this emended view, recasting the election of Möngke as a necessary and legal step in the preservation of Mongol dignity and fortune. In §4.7, I will take up the issues surrounding Möngke's election and the so-called "Toluid coup." The *Yuanshi*, somewhat immune from Toluid biases because it was written by Ming officials, nonetheless shares some of the Persian sources' contempt for the

regencies of Töregene and Oghul Qaimiš. Güyük, perhaps due to his short tenure in office, does not rate a chapter of his own but a few lines about him are appended to the chapter on Ögödei. Likewise, Töregene's regency is sandwiched between the accounts of Ögödei and Güyük. Finally, the *SH* has little to offer us beyond some mention of the early lives of the three main characters in this chapter, as the Mongol chronicle comes to an end with Ögödei.

The scholarly situation concerning Mongol women has been improved thanks to important work produced in recent years. Anne F. Broadbridge and Bruno De Nicola, along with some other contributors, have shaped the state of the field concerning the period after Ögödei's death.[1] Broadbridge and De Nicola both provide an overview of women in Mongol society of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and address the elite women of the period of our analysis. Broadbridge, whose study of Mongol women is important to this chapter, situates women in the political and administrative spheres of Mongol society, showing that any argument that women were full participants in imperial and confederate politics should come as no surprise. Her deconstruction of the biases in the Persian sources is a helpful corrective to our misunderstanding of what is left unsaid in the accounts of Töregene and Oghul Qaimiš. Broadbridge describes women's role in the Mongol military and makes the important observation that the reorganization of Mongol confederation under Činggis Qan at the beginning of the thirteenth century was less important for the military than it was for society.[2] The restrictions upon

[1] Anne F. Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Bruno De Nicola, "Regents and Empresses: Women's Rule in the Mongols' World Empire," in *Women in Mongol Iran: The Khātūns, 1206-1335* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017); George Lane, *Daily Life in the Mongol Empire*, The Greenwood Press "Daily Life Through History" Series, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006); Thomas T. Allsen, "Ögedei and Alcohol," *Mongolian Studies* 29 (2007).

[2] Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire*, 102-03.

congregations of military officers, as well as strict regulations about the free interactions between soldiers within units, might also have contributed to the increase of the importance of the *quriltai*, which was the only circumstance in which military and social leaders met *en masse*. This being the case, the push and pull over assembling the *quriltai* and the rush to maneuver support for the decisions and elections that would be debated once all were gathered would have been a delicate political game. Töregene was adept at this particular kind of campaigning, and she was able to use the years of her regency to accomplish many of her policy goals.

Bruno De Nicola's research focuses on women in the Mongol Empire between 1206 and 1335 with a particular emphasis on Iran.[3] I agree with his insightful analysis of Töregene's reign, as his reading through the masculine biases of the Persian sources is careful and reveals the limitations of their accounting of the period. Though he presents circumstances of women holding high office as disruptive, nothing in our sources indicates to me that, for the Mongols, women holding high office was out of the ordinary. This is an important point as it is precisely because women in high office were a natural part of the Mongol leadership apparatus that the regencies of Töregene and Oghul Qaimiš demand serious consideration. De Nicola concedes that Töregene's rule was not just a matter of seat warming while the politics of Güyük's election were negotiated, but a "full political endeavour with a pre-established agenda and legitimised by an important section of the Mongol nobility."[4]

Michael Hope's *Power, Politics, and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate*

[3] Bruno De Nicola, *Women in Mongol Iran: the Khātūns, 1206-1335* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017).

[4] De Nicola, *Women in Mongol Iran: the Khātūns, 1206-1335*, 20.

of Iran[5] includes a discerning summary of the issue of succession among the Mongols after Činggis Qan. His attention to the stakeholders—to whom he refers as *aqa-nar*—and their expectations help to situate Töregene's policies and official activities in relation to them. Hope's analysis of the succession conflicts in the years following Ögödei's death are the most cogent and sensible I have yet encountered. Some of his analyses, particularly those concerning the goals of Töregene's actions, do not correspond to my own findings, however, as I will show, below.

Other scholarship on Töregene and Oghul Qaimiš scarcely goes beyond an introduction to them and their regencies. George Lane's short chapter is remarkable for his balanced understanding of the place of women in Mongol society and how this translated into the expectations of women in office.[6] Bartol'd only briefly mentions Töregene and Oghul Qaimiš in *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, but offers little in the way of analysis, allowing Rashīd al-Dīn and Juvainī to speak for him.[7]

§3.3 Töregene (c. 1186-1247? / r. 1242-46)

Töregene's *de facto* supervision during the latter half of Ögödei's reign, from approximately 1235 to the end of 1241, and *de jure* regency from the beginning of 1242 to Güyük's enthronement in 1246 mark a decade during which she had significant influence upon

[5] Michael Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate of Iran* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[6] Lane, *Daily Life in the Mongol Empire*, 227-56.

[7] V. V. Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 4th ed ed., E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, (London, Philadelphia: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 1977), 475-86.

the policies and management of the Mongol Empire. This fact alone indicates that she should be given proper scholarly attention, but more attention is paid to the short reign of Güyük (during which it is possible Töregene continued to exert her influence). Her birthdate is unknown, but she was probably close in age to Ögödei.[8] Töregene was known as六皇 "Sixth Empress"[9] in most of the Chinese sources, and her name was transcribed as Turākina Khātūn in Persian texts. Her origins are unclear, confused between sources, and contradictory within sources. She seems to have been given to Ögödei as a second wife by Činggis Qan in 1204 or 1205[10] and may have been the wife of Dayir Üsün of the Merkits: Dayir Üsün submitted, gave Činggis Qan a daughter

[8] Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire*, 170.

[9] The misleading title 六皇 "Sixth Empress" appears consistently throughout the *Yuanshi*. Töregene was Ögödei's second wife and not the sixth empress by any accounting. Igor de Rachewiltz has had much to say about this over nearly 20 years. His final word on the matter is that Töregene's erroneous title of "Sixth Empress" is connected to her misidentification as Naiman in the Chinese sources (乃馬真氏 *naima zhenshi*). Ögödei did have a wife—the sixth wife, as it happens—who was Naiman: Küčülder Qatun. The title could also be further confused by a simple scribal mistake, "六" for "大," which would be "Great Empress," a title by which she is referred in other official documents, including the 1240 edict, discussed in the main body of the text, below. Some combination of this error has resulted in the perplexing title and appellation of "Sixth Empress." This error seems to have originated in a source older than the *Yuanshi*. Igor de Rachewiltz, "Was Töregene Qatun Ögödei's 'Sixth Empress'?," *East Asian History*, no. 17/18 (1999).

See also Igor de Rachewiltz, "Töregene's Edict of 1240," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 23 (March 1981). Here, de Rachewiltz reverses his previous views on the name as expressed in Igor de Rachewiltz, "The Secret History of the Mongols: Chapter Eight," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 21 (March 1980). Finally, de Rachewiltz's 1999 article would modify somewhat the section on Töregene in Thomas Allsen, "The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China," in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, ed. Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 382, fn. 81.

[10] Amitai, R., "Töregene Khātūn", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 17 February 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1239>

by which Kölgan was born. Dayir Üsün later rebelled, was captured, and Töregene was carried off by Činggis Qan's soldiers.[11] The *JaT* relates another version of her origins that claimed she was Merkit but not the wife of Dayir Üsün.[12] In this version, Ögödei takes Töregene by force from one of the Uhaz Merkit Toqto'a's three sons, Qodu, Chibuq, or Chila'un. Ča'adai did not approve of this, but it was later upheld by Činggis Qan. The *SH* states that she was the widow of Qodu, eldest son of Toqto'a of the Uduyit-Merkit.[13] The *Yuanshi*, as explained, incorrectly identifies her as Naiman.[14] She had either four or five sons by Ögödei, including the eldest, Güyük, and the second, Köten, both of whom played important roles during her regency.[15] Nothing is known of her life with Ögödei before approximately 1235, when she began to play an active role in the government of the empire.

Sources are unfortunately niggardly concerning Töregene despite the length of her regency. The focus upon male figures in both the Persian and Chinese sources obfuscates the important role Töregene played during 1235-46, but especially from 1235-41. Much of the devolutionary period of Ögödei's reign corresponds with Töregene's active role in the

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[11] Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-Tavārīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Rawshan and Muṣṭafá Mūsavī (Tihrān: Nashr-i Alburz, 1994 [1310]), 96.

[12] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 620.

[13] Igor de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols: a Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, Brill's Inner Asian library, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), §198.

[14] 壬寅年春, 六皇后 乃馬真氏始稱制. 宋濂 Song Lian, *元史 Yuanshi* (北京 Beijing: 中華書局 Zhonghua shuju, 1977 [1370]), 三七.

[15] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 96. Here, *JaT* says Töregene had four sons with Ögödei. This is probably a mistake for five, or possibly not taking into account Qaši, who died young, but fathered Qaidu (625). Elsewhere, the count given in *JaT* for Ögödei's sons is seven, five of whom are also Töregene's (622):
اُوگِتَایْ قاآن هفت پسر داشته، ومادر پنج بزرکتر از ایسان تُورَاگِنَه خاتون [بوده]؛ و دو دیگر هریك از / قُمایی بوده اند.

transformation from collective sovereignty to autocracy, though her efforts were directed toward undermining the bureaucracy for the reinvigoration of collective sovereignty. The administrative institutions put in place by Ögödei in his efforts to maintain the steady supply of wealth from the Mongols' urban and agrarian possessions had introduced several layers of management between the office of qa'an and wealth sources—or, from the point of view of stakeholders, between them and their wealth. The bureaucracy under Ögödei expanded rapidly, raising the ire and suspicions of many of the stakeholders. By 1235, there were manifold bureaucrats—nearly all from the populations of conquered peoples—involved in the redistributive processes. The well-known incident of Yelü Chucai's efforts to prevent the depopulation of northern China in order to graze Mongol herds was not anomalous: many stakeholders were not interested in the confederation ruling an empire nor in maintaining the civilizations they had conquered. Töregene, no doubt seeing an opportunity for her own and Güyük's advancement, undermined the institutions of agrarian and urban management by removing or disenfranchising bureaucrats responsible for the supervision of tax collection systems—and, by extension, the cycles of harvest, storage, and infrastructure upkeep necessary for continued agricultural production. Töregene played political games that won her a few allies but interrupted many streams of income and cost her the support of dissociated stakeholders.

Michael Hope reviews the same series of events but comes to the opposite conclusion: that Töregene was attempting to centralize administration and consolidate power in her own hands through a direct attack upon collective sovereignty.[16] Hope interprets the removal of Ögödei's officials and their replacement by those loyal to her as efforts toward autocracy. To the

[16] Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate of Iran*, 61.

contrary, it makes more sense to interpret these actions as efforts to restore confidence and function in collective sovereignty, which meant that the office of qa'an or the regent holding the office would become more authoritarian within the realm of the office's expected duties in order to deliver wealth to stakeholders. In many cases, she granted the rights of wealth collection directly to stakeholders. In others, the newly appointed officials secured access to wealth and goods that she then distributed to stakeholders, buying their support in an arrangement that was more akin to the foundations upon which Činggis Qan built the confederation than it was to the institutions that Ögödei had overseen. She attempted to reinvigorate Mongol collective sovereignty by strengthening bonds that brought together the confederation the first place. Echoing *JaT*'s Toluid fidelity, Hope argues:

> Rashīd al-Dīn was indignant at the fact that Töregene had squandered the treasury upon gifts made to leading members of the aristocracy. He argued that these gifts had won the support of the appanage princes for the candidacy of her son, Güyük, and allowed Töregene to rule 'without the counsel of the *aqa* and *ini* of the realm'. That this was the case is beyond doubt.[17]

Rashīd al-Dīn's criticism of Töregene in this aspect reflects his own biases in favor of centralization and the subsequent political and administrative evolutions of the Mongol Empire of which he was a product.[18] But the network of redistribution, which had at its nexus the office of the qa'an, was fundamental to the continued existence of the Mongol Empire and was the

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[17] Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate of Iran*, 62. Hope does note that Sorqaqtani Beki also engaged in the distribution of the state's wealth without Rashīd al-Dīn's criticism.

[18] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 801.
در آن فترت و بُلْغاقْ هر کس اِیلْچِیان را به جوانب روانه کردند و بروات و حوالات پران؛ و از اطراف هر کس به جانبی توسّل می جست و بدان حمایت متمسّك می گشت، و هر کس به نوعی دست آویزی می کردند مگر از جانب سُورْقَقْتَنی بِکی و پسران او که بر جادهٔ یاساق مستمر بودند و به سر مویی از یوسون بزرگ تجاوز ننمودند.

raison d'être of the corporation. Ögödei had regularly emptied the treasury into the hands of stakeholders and anyone else who came to him with an entreaty.[19] The point of conflict in the Mongol administration and the cause of confusion in the literature is that the Mongols, as de Rachewiltz notes, "were not concerned with the administration in its more technical aspect, but rather with the material advantages that it provided."[20] That is, until they perceived that the "technical aspect" was limiting the amount of wealth they received. While Ögödei's efforts had been in the service of wealth sharing and redistribution, those to whom he had entrusted its oversight were trained in an altogether different approach to collection and use of products of urban and agrarian societies. Conservative saving and withholding of the wealth generated by the Mongols' subject peoples was antithetical to collective sovereignty's fundamental need for distribution. Töregene appears to have understood these points and had already seen the effects of the powerful bureaucrats upon the confederation in her years as Ögödei's proxy.

Both *TJG* and *JaT* begin Töregene's story after the death of Ögödei, acknowledging her political astuteness and framing her administrative restructuring in terms of vendetta and conflict with bureaucrats. Calling her shrewd and capable, Juvainī tells us that she obtained control of affairs through cunning and artifice, using favors and bribery to win over stakeholders. Moreover, she attracted the loyalty and obedience of not only the Činggis Qanids, but also

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[19] For examples of Ögödei's largesse—and the horror of his officials at his apparent disregard for the wealth requirements of the bureaucracy—see Juvainī's ذكر صادرات أفعال قاآن in 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvainī, *The Ta'rīkh-i-Jahán-gushá of 'Alá'u 'd-Din 'Aṭá Malik-i-Juwaynī*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī, E.J.W. Gibb memorial series, (Leyden, London: E.J. Brill; Luzac & Co., 1912 [c. 1260]), v. 1, 158-91.

[20] Igor de Rachewiltz, "Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 9 (1966): 136.

strangers and anyone who came into her sphere of influence.[21]

Already during the latter half of Ögödei's reign, as he occupied himself with hunting and drinking, affairs of state were managed by Töregene. Ögödei's efforts to institutionalize the collection and redistribution of wealth were largely neglected after 1235 when he not only retired from campaigning, but also began forsaking his duties as qa'an. Töregene carried out the day-to-day business while implementing her own policies, consolidating power, and undermining much of the work of Ögödei by, at first, obstructing officials including Činqai, the Yalavač family, and Yelü Chucai.

Evidence that Töregene was actively managing imperial business throughout the second half of Ögödei's reign is circumstantial, but some important clues indicate her high-level involvement during Ögödei's absences from 1235-41. For example, one of the earliest known inscriptions in the Uighur-Mongol script is an edict issued by Töregene in 1240 as she was carrying out the duties of qa'an.[22] The edict orders the production of printing blocks for the Daoist canon and the construction of a building in which the long project could be carried out. The content of the edict is not germane for our purposes, but this observation concerning it by de Rachewiltz is:

> Now, we know that although Ögödei was still alive in 1240 (he died on 11 December 1241), he was no longer actively involved in administration; and Töregene was then already managing the business of government, assisted by her protégés—mostly Central and Western Asian officials whom she had promoted to key position in the administration in the previous years. . . This explains why our edict, even though bearing the emperor's

[21] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 196.

[22] de Rachewiltz, "Töregene's Edict of 1240." In the inscription, she is referred to correctly as 大皇, or "Great Empress."

seal, actually proceeds from her and not from Ögödei.[23]

Administrative expansion in Ögödei's time was meant to allow the qa'an to take firm control of the sources of production in urban holdings, essentially ending the unchecked rule over sedentary holdings by military elite and stakeholders. In this way, the qa'an could effectively and fairly oversee the collection and redistribution of wealth according to the precise expectations of collective sovereignty and assure that all parties received their allotted due. To make such centralized management palatable to the military elite, it was imperative that Ögödei offer them something in return, primarily confidence that his oversight would guarantee more wealth over a longer period. To this end, he made attempts to assure the steady and reliable collection of taxes and its fair redistribution among the stakeholders by putting an end to *ad hoc* levies, plunder, and the misuse of local resources—all of which resulted in the expansion of bureaucracy against which Töregene was struggling.

Not all Ögödei's bureaucratic expansion was detrimental to stakeholders, however. The appointment of *darughačin* (s. *darughači*)[24] and the stationing of stakeholders' representatives at court helped to keep checks on the system, as they were there to monitor that distributive networks were carried out fairly—or, at least, to the benefit of those they represented. By the end of Ögödei's reign, regional elite were installing their own representatives in major administrative divisions, adding a further degree of confidence in the system. Paul Buell first referred to these

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[23] de Rachewiltz, "Töregene's Edict of 1240," 42.

[24] The form of these terms used here follows that in Elizabeth Endicott-West, *Mongolian Rule in China: Local Administration in the Yuan Dynasty*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series, (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1989), 17-18.

representative arrangements as "joint satellite administrations,"[25] and pointed out that the arrangement probably evolved from the attempts to solve the conflicting administrative interests of Ögödei and Ča'adai. Though not free of vitiating problems, institutions put in place by Ögödei and his administrators before 1235 had made considerable strides. Yet, abuses and corruption of these new practices continued, contributing to the already considerable reluctance to allow administrative institutions to limit access to wealth collection—despite promises and even proof that the long-term returns would be greater. Ögödei's declining health, waning interest in his duties, and the resulting increase in the power wielded by bureaucrats initially made the apparently conservative policies of Töregene welcome to many stakeholders, who were not appeased by Ögödei's attempts to create fair monitoring of taxes and their collection.

After Ögödei's death in December 1241, Möge Qatun, whom Ögödei favored above the other women of his house, made a bid for the regency.[26] Acquired by Ögödei through the levirate, she had been a wife of Činggis Qan which probably gave her some authority in state affairs. This challenge was quickly overcome by Töregene who was more politically savvy than Möge Qatun, according to *TJG*. She appealed to the princes, making an argument that someone—namely, Töregene, herself—would have to oversee the affairs of state until the *quriltai* could be assembled. Ča'adai and others supported her regency but admonished her to leave Ögödei's officials in their offices, alluding to the possibility that her conflicts with them were already known.[27] They furthermore made public their support and ordered that, until a

[25] Paul D. Buell, "Sino-Khitan administration in Mongol Bukhara," *Journal of Asian History* 13 (1979).

[26] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 174.

[27] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 196.

quriltai could be held, Töregene would retain the regency. The *JaT* is less generous concerning her advance to the regency, saying that she acquired the office by cunning and bribery, implying she worked around the accepted channels of authority.[28] Möge Qatun, perhaps not surprisingly, died shortly thereafter.

As Broadbridge observes, Töregene had already risen from "conquered woman" to the acting head of state by the time of Ögödei's death.[29] Several fortuitous things happened in a short few months at the end of 1241 and the beginning of 1242 that helped Töregene consolidate her authority. First, the death of Ögödei on 11 December 1241 and Töregene's quick seizure of the regency from Möge Qatun secured her place. The attestations from the princes—Ča'adai, most crucially, for he was now the senior male descendant of Činggis Qan—assured that her bid for the regency was successful. When Ča'adai died soon after,[30] Töregene found herself in the position of being one of the senior members of the Činggis Qanid family. The only real challenges to her could have come from Sorqaqtani Beki, Tolui's widow, or from Temüge Otčigin, Činggis Qan's brother who did mount a challenge that will be described below. Having resisted pressure to remarry after her husband's death in 1232, Sorqaqtani Beki had fortified her

[28] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 799.

[29] Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire*, 166.

[30] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 210. Bartol'd and Boyle point out that Rashīd al-Dīn dates Ča'adai's death to May 1241, before Ögödei: Barthold, W. and Boyle, J.A., "Čaghatay Khān", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 12 May 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1579>. Referencing Qarshī, Michal Biran places his death in 1244: Michal Biran, "The Mongols in Central Asia from Chinggis Khan's invasion to the rise of Temür: the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid realms," in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age*, ed. Allen J. Frank, Nicola Di Cosmo, and Peter B. Golden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 48.

position in the Mongolian homelands and retained the loyalty of Tolui's troops along with the respect of Tolui's brothers and nephews, all of which gave her a latitude to rule Tolui's *ordo* with unchallenged sovereignty. She was careful and conservative in the exercise of her powers, however, and the Persian sources praise her for her strict adherence to the *yasa* and proper conduct as related to Mongolian and Činggis Qanid tradition.[31] The Toluid biases of these same sources have probably overstated the reality of the situation, but it nonetheless is clear that she did not openly challenge Töregene's rapid consolidation of authority.

Other factors also contributed to reinforcing Töregene's position. In addition to her previous experience managing the qa'an's office, there was no obviously popular choice for Ögödei's successor which meant, at the very least, a lengthy regency for her as the members of the *qurilati* jockeyed and campaigned before and during the congress to promote a successor. As it happened, her regency was further extended by the enmity between Batu and Töregene over the issue of succession. Batu's resistance to her promotion of Güyük had the effect, among others, of prolonging the time she was in office. The distance of Batu's *ordo* and his failing health did nothing to check Töregene's exercise of mostly unchallenged authority.

Temüge Otčigin perhaps sensed that Töregene's supporters were far away and lacked loyalty. He may also have wagered that his own seniority and the equivocal support of Töregene's disruptive policies meant that an overt act of aggression would withstand stakeholder scrutiny. If Töregene was to be removed from office, he may have believed it was up to him to do so. Temüge mobilized his forces and set out toward Qaraqorum from his *ordo* in Manchuria, which was interpreted by the sources (and apparently also by Güyük) as a play for the office of

[31] See, for example, Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 3, 6-7; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 822-24.

qa'an. He was later tried and executed at the *quriltai* of 1246, but it is nonetheless possible that it was not in an attempt to secure the office for himself, nor in opposition to Güyük, that Temüge marched on Qaraqorum. Instead, it may have been to challenge Töregene's rule, suggesting that the power she held and exercised exceeded the tolerance of at least some of the Mongol elite.[32]

Finally, it is apparent that Töregene and Güyük were not allies despite her efforts to secure the office for him. Güyük, arriving at Töregene's court some time in 1242, made no attempt to interfere in her administration of affairs for the empire. There is some confusion concerning a comment made by Juvainī that Güyük did not attempt to influence matters of state.[33] I concur with most scholars who seem to understand that Güyük did not interfere in Töregene's regency. Yet, the *Yuanshi* clearly indicates that Töregene's authority continued through the reign of Güyük.[34] If so, this would be an important factor to consider, as it extends the period during which Töregene was a key political actor. More importantly, it would be an indication that the authority she exercised was considerably greater than has been imagined. The *TJG* makes the comment immediately upon describing Güyük's return after the death of Ögödei. No other sources suggest she continued to act as head of state following Güyük's enthronement. Finally, this position might need reconsideration if it can be shown that Töregene outlived Güyük and, thus, continued to be a political actor throughout and after his death. Even after he

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[32] De Nicola, *Women in Mongol Iran: the Khātūns, 1206-1335*, 70. De Nicola's juxtaposition of observations implies this, but he does not state it outright.

[33] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 200.
و چون کیوک بنزدیک مادر رسید در کار مصالح ملک هیچ شروعی ننمود

[34] 帝雖御極，而朝政猶出於六皇后云. Even though the Emperor [Güyük] had ascended the throne, the political affairs of the imperial court were still [decided] by the Sixth Empress. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三八.

ascended to the office, his conflicts with his mother are evinced by her refusal to hand over her advisor, Fāṭima, for trial (about which more, below).

At first—but not for long—Töregene followed the advice of Ča'adai and left Ögödei's officials in their offices. Hinting at unresolved conflicts from the years 1235-41 during which Töregene's purview was limited, she fully deployed the increased powers of the regency to reorder the administration as she wished. De Nicola observes that she was soon imposing her vengeance upon those with whom she had some unexplained political rivalries.[35] Töregene's advisor, Fāṭima, also contributed by deftly undermining the authority of bureaucrats such as Činqai and Maḥmūd Yalavač, replacing them with officials that were loyal to her and Töregene. It seems just as likely, though, that Töregene was using her position to remove bureaucrats who had been problematic for other Mongol elites from whom she needed support in order to remain in power herself and secure support for Güyük.

In 1243-44, Arghun Aqa (by whom Juvainī was employed) was appointed "Beg of the Empire of the Great Mongols" after Körgüz was imprisoned.[36] Töregene appointed as his lieutenant Sharaf al-Dīn Khwārazmī. He was detested by his colleague, Juvainī, who showers pages of acerbic insults on him.[37] Together, Arghun and Sharaf al-Dīn were given license to collect taxes as they wished in an area that stretched from the Oxus to Fars in addition to

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[35] De Nicola, *Women in Mongol Iran: the Khātūns, 1206-1335*, 70.

[36] Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Grand Qan Möngke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251-1259* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 176; George Lane, "Arghun Aqa: Mongol Bureaucrat," *Iranian Studies* 32, no. 4 (1999): 461.

[37] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 2, 262-68.

Georgia, Rum, and Mosul.[38] After Arghun was called to the *quriltai* that would elect Güyük, he hastily abolished the ponderous taxes they had imposed and recalled all *paiza*s and *yarliq*s they had issued since Ögödei's death. Evidently knowing that Güyük's administration would see Töregene's policies overturned, he judiciously brought the recalled *paiza*s and *yarliq*s to Güyük. Having thus curried the new qa'an's favor, Arghun Aqa not only retained his post, but was placed over the affairs of all other officials in his region.[39]

Yelü Chucai, who had been serving the Mongols since appointed by Činggis Qan, continued to function in the Mongol government, but was stripped of all influence over important matters of state. As early as 1236, Yelü Chucai's advice was being ignored by Ögödei, perhaps due to Töregene's influence as manager of the empire's affairs at that time.[40] After a census was taken in 1235-36, Ögödei disrupted the institutional processes and directly appanaged parts of north China to courtiers, military leaders, and others in a prelude to the appointment of the merchant 'Abd al-Raḥmān to oversee the collection of taxes in north China in 1239—actions that Yelü Chucai vehemently opposed. This opposition led to his marginalization during Töregene's regency. He never regained his position and died in June or July 1244.[41]

Töregene's apparent vendettas against Činqai, the Yalavač family, and Yelü Chucai did not end with simple dismissal from office. The first target was Činqai, Ögödei's trusted advisor

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[38] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 2, 243.

[39] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 2, 245.

[40] Igor de Rachewiltz, "Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, Yeh-lü Chu, Yeh-lü Hsi-liang," in *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200-1300)*, ed. Igor de Rachewiltz, Hok-lam Chan, Hsiao Chi-ch'ing and Peter and Geier (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993), 155.

[41] 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三八.

who had also served Činggis Qan. Hearing that Töregene meant to have him arrested, he fled to Köten, Güyük's younger brother. The details of the conflict are uncertain, but it is not difficult to imagine that Ögödei's chief advisor and Töregene, jointly carrying out the duties of qa'an during Ögödei's declining years, may have clashed over matters of state. Taking their cues, both Maḥmūd Yalavač and his son, Mas'ūd Beg, also sought refuge from Töregene; Maḥmūd with Köten and Mas'ūd Beg with Batu.[42]

More intriguing is the part played by the mysteriously sinister character of Fāṭima, who was the confidant of Töregene and privy to all her secrets.[43] The Persian sources vilify her not least because she was a woman but also because she was considered a witch—and was charged and executed in accordance with this belief.[44] Her role as Töregene's advisor was combined with that of a general procurer for the elite, a function that would have put many secrets and personal details at her disposal.[45] In fact, *JaT* situates Fāṭima in the midst of the decisions of which officials to dismiss and which to appoint in Töregene's administration. In this account, for example, Fāṭima is made responsible for Maḥmūd Yalavač's arrest and the appointment of 'Abd al-Raḥmān in his place, an act ascribed to a grudge Fāṭima held against Yalavač.[46] Though she is not mentioned before the death of Ögödei, she was already a factor in court politics during the latter years of Ögödei's rule when 'Abd al-Raḥmān was first appointed to farm taxes across

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[42] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 197.

[43] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 799.

[44] Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire*, 192.

[45] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 200: در فنون ذکا و زیرکی دلّاله محتاله شاگردی او را شایستی and Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 799-800: و بزرگان اطراف او را وسیلت ساخته مهمّات ساختندی

[46] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 800.

north China to disastrous effect.[47]

Töregene's political actions suggest attempts to reform methods of wealth collection rather than reform methods of rule. That she removed from office those officials who were most directly responsible for the transformation of Mongol taxation systems into more sustainable processes based upon lighter payments and government reinvestment in agriculture, commerce, and transportation suggests that Töregene's agenda coincided with traditional forms of steppe collection and redistribution. The subsequent (re)appointment of aggressive tax farmers like 'Abd al-Raḥmān further supports this. Not explicitly acknowledged by sources, it is nevertheless possible that Töregene was attempting to draw the fracturing confederation together by eliminating or reducing the influence of the contested institutions developed during Ögödei's time in office. Broadbridge remarks that some scholars have suggested Töregene was concerned with minimizing the impact of Chinese administrators.[48] Instead, her more apparent goal was to restore a system of distribution over which she had more direct control and, thus, was subject to any *ad hoc* demands for wealth she required to produce gifts and wealth streams for those she sought to win over.

Although military campaigns were largely curtailed during her regency, a significant military event was the defeat of the Seljuks in a Mongol campaign led by Baiju at Köse Dagh in

[47] 十二年庚子春正月, 以奥都 剌合蠻充提領諸路課稅所官. In the spring, in the first month of Year 12, Gengzi [January 26-February 24, 1240]: [the Emperor] appointed 'Abd al-Raḥmān as chief administrator of the tax offices of all routes. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三六.

[48] Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire*, 176.

1243.[49] Trebizond and Lesser Armenia submitted as a result of the defeat of the Seljuks, who could no longer protect them from the Mongol advance. Töregene also ordered campaigns against the Song led by Zhang Rou, commencing within months after she was installed as regent. The *Yuanshi* is only concerned with these military operations and from this source we learn that Zhang Rou campaigned in northerneastern Song territories. At the end of 1245, with the help of Čagan and 30,000 cavalry, Zhang Rou forced the Song into a settlement.[50]

The Persian sources criticize Töregene most harshly over her apparent obstruction of Ögödei's order that his grandson, Shiremün, should succeed him.[51] The severity of their judgments correspond to their general support of dynastic succession and their assumption that the qa'an's decree should have been incontrovertible. Torgene's breach of Ögödei's command was later interpreted as contributing to the fall of the Ögödeids. Her manipulations seem to have been less directed at preventing the elevation of Shiremün (her grandson through Köchü) than they were at promoting Güyük by expanding her political powers through the increase in fungible wealth to which she had access. There is no indication why she was so set on Güyük's

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[49] Cahen, Cl., "Köse Dagh", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 11 May 2020 http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4437. On Rashīd al-Dīn's confusion of the date for this battle with the Battle of Aksaray (14 October 1256), see Rashīd al-Dīn, *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, trans. John Andrew Boyle, Persian Heritage Series, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 304, fn. 244.

[50] 乙巳年秋, 後命馬步軍都元帥察罕等率騎三萬與張柔掠淮西, 攻壽州, 拔之, 遂攻泗州, 盱眙及揚州. 宋制置趙葵請和, 乃還. In the autumn of Year Yisi [c.1245], [the Empress] ordered Chief Commander of the Cavalry and Infantry, Cha Han, to lead 30,000 riders and, together with Zhang Rou, plundered the area west of the Huai. They attacked Shouzhou and captured it, then attacked Sizhou, Xuchi, and Yangzhou. Commissioner Zhao Cai of the Song sued for peace, so they returned. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三八.

[51] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 793.

candidacy, but it she may have viewed succession to Ögödei from a more traditional perspective, in which designation played little or no part. Ögödei had been designated by Činggis Qan as his successor but the decision was fully made by the *quriltai* of 1228-29. Despite the fact that Ögödei "commanded" that Shiremün was to be his successor, the *quriltai* did not seem to have given it much consideration, either because of concerns over his young age or thanks to Töregene's lobbying. Ögödei's designation of Shiremün was later used by the Ögödeids themselves to argue against Möngke's candidacy, but it was rejected as a weak argument, further support that the command was either not binding or that Ögödei's orders and laws died with him.[52]

If Töregene felt that Shiremün was ineligible due to his age or that he was a grandson and Ögödei yet had living sons, then perhaps Güyük was the best candidate. He was Ögödei's eldest son and had considerable campaign experience. She was attempting to appease the stakeholders and show that the office of qa'an could again serve collective sovereignty. To do this, she made motions to put them at ease: removing the bureaucrats most directly responsible for the institutionalization of wealth collection and promoting Ögödei's eldest son as a viable candidate—and one who would continue the return to traditional ways. She was not, however, so committed to the ideals that she wanted other Činggis Qanids' lineages to be considered.

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[52] و چون قاآن او را از همگنان دوسترمیداشت پسر بزرگتر او را شِیرَامُون که بغایت مقبل و عاقل بود [و] در اوردوی خود میپرورد؛ و فرمود که او ولی العهد و قایم مقام باشد

Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 804. This aspect of Mongol law should be explored further, as it seems apparent that the deaths of both Činggis Qan and Ögödei also meant the end of at least some of their decrees and orders. Upon the enthronement of a new qa'an, much is made in all relevant sources of the reconfirmation or replacement of officials; the recalling or issuing of *paiza*s and *yarligh*s; and the affirmation or revocation of *yasa*s issued by predecessors. There are several versions of the episode in which the argument concerning Shiremün is made and a variety of Toluids refute it, including Qubilai Qa'an. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 68-9.

Töregene spent the four years of her regency assuring the outcome of the *quriltai* would be certain. Sources describe Batu's opposition to Töregene, attributing her long regency to his efforts to delay a *quriltai* that would put Güyük in the office of qa'an.[53] Rashīd al-Dīn indicates that Batu suffered from an unspecified illness or condition and could not travel. Because he was the eldest of the Mongol descendants of Činggis Qan, this delayed the *quriltai* during which time Töregene lobbied for Güyük's candidacy. When it was clear that Batu posed a threat to her desired outcome, she moved to quickly cut her losses and risked offending some of the stakeholders by convening the gathering without Batu. His boycott could have undermined the legitimacy of the gathering but Töregene wagered that enough stakeholders would support the *quriltai* and her decision to convene that Batu would be forced to comply in order to avoid suffering his own political troubles. Florence Hodous notes that "a feature of *quriltais* was the requirement for all concerned parties to be present for decisions to be taken in a collegial manner; it was full attendance at a *quriltai* which guaranteed the legitimacy of its decisions."[54] Since the *quriltai* was the highest political expression of the state, Batu decided that he could not risk exclusion of his lineage from the confederation and sent six of his brothers, including Orda and Berke.[55]

Neither *TJG* nor *JaT* report much debate concerning the election of Güyük when the *quriltai* did finally convene. The only other candidates both had weak claims, at best, and there is

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[53] Amitai, R., "Töregene Khātūn", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 12 May 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1239>

[54] Florence Hodous, "The *Quriltai* as a Legal Institution in the Mongol Empire," *Central Asiatic Journal* 56 (2013): 88. The institution of the *quriltai* is taken up in more detail in §4.3.

[55] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 805.

no record of serious deliberation concerning them. The first, Güyük's younger brother, Köten, seems to have thought that Činggis Qan made a favorable though vague reference to his suitability to rule when Köten was a child, but he was in poor health and was rejected on this account. Shiremün, Ögödei's designated successor, was dismissed because of his age.[56] More importantly, it seems that, in addition to Töregene, Güyük was preferred by Sorqoqtani Beki and "most of the amirs."[57] Accordingly, Güyük was literally placed on the throne by two senior representatives of the Ča'adaids and J̌očids, Yesü Möngke and Orda, respectively.[58] This took place on 24 August 1246.[59]

While Töregene fought for her own policies as regent, her campaign in support for Güyük's enthronement was lackluster for ambiguous reasons. There is ample evidence that Töregene was in no hurry to hand over the office to Güyük, as implied in the conflicts between the two that intensified after Güyük's selection. Töregene's agents pursued Körgüz during her reshuffling of Ögödei's officials and Činqai again found himself caught up in the conflict and

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[56] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 203; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 805-06.

[57] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 203; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 806. *JaT* omits mention of بیکی و پسران او in his enumeration of Güyük's supporters.

[58] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 207. For "Yesü Möngke" in place of lacuna in text, see 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvainī, *Genghis Khan: the History of the World Conqueror*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī, John Andrew Boyle, and David Morgan, trans. J. A. Boyle, Manchester Medieval Sources Series, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 251, fn. 15.

[59] 秋七月[August 13-September 11]，即皇帝[Güyük]位於汪吉宿滅禿裏之地 .宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三八. Carpini corroborates this date: "We stayed there until the Feast of Saint Bartholomew [24 August 1246] . . . while they returned to the tent and placed Cuyuc on the imperial throne." Giovanni da Pian del Carpine, Archbishop of Antivari, *The Story of the Mongols Whom we call the Tartars = Historia Mongalorum quos nos Tartaros appellamus: Friar Giovanni di Plano Carpini's Account of his Embassy to the Court of the Mongol Khan* (Boston: Branden Pub. Co., 1996), 109. Rashīd al-Dīn is incorrect, citing Rabī' II, Year of the Horse (643 A.H.) which corresponds to 16 September-13 October 1245. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 806.

sought refuge from her with Güyük.[60] After enthronement, Güyük immediately set about restoring the officials appointed by Ögödei and removing those placed in office during Töregene's reign. Though these actions suggest that Güyük and his mother were not working together, it has not been considered in the analysis of the period following Ögödei's death. Many of the details of Töregene's terrorization of Ögödei's government officials and the vigorous attempts by Güyük to reinstate officials and repair institutions point to a deep rift between the two, at least as it concerns administrative policies. Nevertheless, the exact nature of their discord remains undetermined.

Töregene's story does not end with Güyük's enthronement. According to at least one source, she may have outlived Güyük, but this was probably not the case. The *JaT* states that Töregene ruled after Güyük died near Samarqand in 1248.[61] Though I cautiously take this as a mistake for "Oghul Qaimiš ruled," the matter is further confused by Rashīd al-Dīn who again mentions Töregene after the death of Güyük when she and Ögödei's family oppose Batu's request that the *quriltai* be held near him because of his gout.[62] Finally, Rashīd al-Dīn (following *TJG* this time) contradicts himself in Güyük's biography, claiming she died two or three months after Güyük's enthronement:

برقرار تُورَکِنَه خاتون تنفیذ احکام می کرد تا به وقتی که قاآنی برپسرش مقرّرشد؛ بعد از دو سه ماه تُورَاگِنَه خاتون

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[60] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 196-97; Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 2, 241; Louis Hambis, *Le chapitre CVII du Yuan che; les généalogies impériales mongoles dans l'historie chinoise officielle de la dynastie mongole*, ed. Sung Lien and Paul Pelliot, T'oung pao, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1945), 71.

[61] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 735.
و باز مدّتی تخت از پادشاه خالی ماند. و دیگر باره تُورَاگِنَه خاتون حکم می کرد

[62] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 794.

نماند[63]

The concurring *TJG* describes it thus:

و چون ماهی دو سه بر آن بگذشت و سبب فاطمه پس را از مادر اندك کوفتگی بود حکم خدای عزّ و جلّ دررسید و توراکینا نیز روان شد[64]

The *Yuanshi* says nothing of her death but also indicates that Töregene continued to play an active role during Güyük's reign.[65]

The Persian sources agree that Güyük's earliest tasks as qa'an were concerned with reversing his mother's policies or reinstating his father's. For Töregene personally, Güyük's trial and execution of her advisor, Fāṭima, seems to have had the greatest impact. Ostensibly acting upon information that Köten's ill health and death were caused by Fāṭima's sorcery, Güyük demanded that his mother surrender her for trial. Töregene resisted this for some time but was eventually forced to hand her over.[66] If Töregene did not outlive Güyük, it appears that her death followed shortly after Fāṭima was beaten, had all her orifices sewn closed, was rolled in a carpet, and thrown into a river. It is likely that the real reasons for the ferocious torture and execution of Fāṭima were related to the enmities she accumulated as the executor of Töregene's policies at court. Moreover, her role as a procuress for the elite at the Mongol court would have made her a

[63] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 802.

[64] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 200.

[65] 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三八.

[66] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 201.

dangerous repository of personal information, secrets, and intrigues.[67] No doubt, many of the court officials were glad to be rid of her. So eager were the elite to carry out their case against her that they were able to make it the first act of Güyük's reign. The indignation at having been dismissed by Töregene—along with the vindication of their reinstatement in office—could not be expressed toward Töregene, the mother of the qa'an. Fāṭima, instead, suffered the repercussions of their rage.

§3.4 Güyük (1206-48 / r. 1246-48)

Güyük was born in 1206, the year that Temüǰin was invested with the title of Činggis Qan. We know nothing of his early life, but by Ögödei's reign as qa'an, Güyük was an active part of the military, serving in the Jin campaign where, it is noted, he captured a "royal prince."[68] Along with Möngke (the two of them were close in age), he was a commanding officer in the Qipčaq campaign whence he was summoned by Ögödei on his deathbed. His father died before he returned[69] but, upon learning of Temüge Otčigin's advance, he hastened his arrival.[70] Temüge wisely retreated. Güyük took up residence near Qaraqorum, where he appears to have remained

[67] Broadbridge points out that the report that she was a procuress may have been a matter of slander against Fāṭima, a manifestation of the loathing that the sources and/or their informants had for her. Whatever the case, their intense dislike for her led to an especially violent death. Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire*, 175.

[68] 太宗嘗命諸王按只帶伐金，帝以皇子從，虜其親王而歸. 又從諸王拔都西征，次阿速境，攻圍木柵山寨，以三十餘人與戰，帝及憲宗與焉. Taizong [Ögödei] had ordered Prince Alčidai to campaign against the Jin; the Emperor [Güyük] joined [the campaign] as an imperial son, captured a royal prince and returned. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三八.

[69] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 804.

[70] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 203.

until the *quriltai* in 1246.[71]

During Töregene's regency, Güyük seems to have done little to either support his case for the office of qa'an or to participate in the affairs of state. Once Güyük was confirmed in office, he turned his attentions to redressing the disarray caused by Töregene's policies. After executing Fāṭima, Güyük had to publicly attend to the matter of Temüge Otčigin's perceived bid to take the office of qa'an by force. Whether or not this is what Temüge had intended, there was apparently enough evidence that Güyük ordered a swift and severe response. In the first test of his reign, Güyük did not shy from the delicate task of putting the brother of Činggis Qan on trial. To maintain the integrity of the tribunal, Güyük assigned Möngke and Orda to examine Temüge alone. After their findings, he was executed.[72] Next, Güyük removed Qara Hülegü (r. 1244-46, 1251-52) as qan and successor to Ča'adai, and replaced him with Yesü Möngke (r. 1246-51). Yesü Möngke was a son of Ča'adai but, more pertinent, a friend of Güyük.[73]

Next, Güyük began the reversal of Töregene's policies. He first set about the reigning in of independent regional leadership. The *TJG* presents the recalling of *paiza*s and cancellation of orders as though their issuing during Töregene's regency had been acts of sedition or rebellion.[74]

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[71] Ögödei's personal *ordo*, given to him by Činggis Qan, corresponds to the area on either side of the modern Kazakhstan and Xinjiang border. It was given to Güyük sometime around 1229, upon Ögödei's enthronement. Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 192-93, 203.

[72] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 210. Referred to as Qara Oghul in Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 806.

[73] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 210-11; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 806-07.

[74] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 211.
بعد از قاآن هرکس از پادشاه زادگان اقدامی نموده بودند وهرکس از بزرگان بیکی توسّل جسته و بر ملك براتها نوشنه بودند و پایزه داده باز خواست آن می فرمود . . . و چون خارج یاسا و آذین ایشان بود خجالت می یافتند و از تشویر سردرپیش افکنده داشتند و پایزه و یرایغ هرکس که بود باز می ستدند و در پیش هریك می نهادند که اِقْرَأ کِتَابَك، یَکّی
JaT closely follows *TJG* for this period: Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 807.

On the contrary, these measures taken by local rulers were necessary in order to maintain the functioning of Mongol rule during interruptions in administrative processes and upheavals in the court. Töregene had dismissed the high level officials responsible for reviewing and overseeing the issuing and control of, for example, the *paiza*s that allowed free movement of those on official business. With centralized control in disarray, the "princes" and "nobles" had little choice but to fulfill these responsibilities. Güyük's restoration of Ögödei's administration went further. He issued his own orders that all laws and decrees by Ögödei were to be upheld as they were and did not require his own seal.[75]

Large scale, cooperative military operations were the livelihood of the confederation and Güyük turned next toward planning several military expeditions. The Qipčaq campaign had continued less vigorously under Batu, becoming a project of the J̌očids; the sources do not mention that further campaigns in the northwest were discussed at the *quriltai*. Most concerning was the rebellion in former Jin territories. Zhang Rou had been conducting military campaigns under Töregene with some successes, but Güyük assigned some of the most experienced generals to secure the mutinous regions. Sübe'etei and Jaghan Noyan[76] were assigned to subdue the rebellion in the region of what is now 江苏省 Jiangsu Province with a large army. Likewise, armies were sent to Korea and the Tangut, both of whom had rebelled in the absence of a qa'an. Toward the west, Elǰigidei was sent to subdue the Ismailis, along with two of every ten troops

[75] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 211; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 807.

[76] This is the same Jaghan adopted by Činggis Qan as "a fifth son" and was the leader of his highest-ranking *tumen*. Under Ögödei, he both commanded the forces that conquered northern China and also remained there to govern them. Juvainī, *Juvainī/Boyle*, 256, fn. 26.

levied from every prince and from "the Persians."[77]

In an attempt to reign in the disorder of redistribution networks, Güyük first ordered a census to audit what sources of wealth there were after Töregene's dismantling of the bureaucracy.[78] Güyük also delegated the governing of the western regions to Elǰigidei, including Rum, Aleppo, Georgia, and Takavor.[79] Tellingly, Güyük assigned such a large region to Elǰigidei in order to assure that collection of wealth could be brought under control.[80] Güyük continued his restoration of Ögödei's officials, executing 'Abd al-Raḥmān and returning Maḥmūd Yalavač to his position over north China and the former Jin territories. His son, Mas'ūd Beg was given Tranoxiana and Turkestan. To Arghun were assigned Khorasan, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Shirvan, Lur, Kerman, Fars and the southern regions that bordered on India. Furthermore, Güyük formalized their subordinates' offices, issuing *paiza*s and *yarliq*s to designate them as sanctioned officials.[81] Finally, Güyük restored Činqai to his position as *vazīr*.[82]

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[77] Juvainī, *TJG,* v. 1, 211-12. The *Yuanshi*, in its report on Elǰigidei's campaign, states that Güyük ordered one of every 100 men to serve in the military, but it is unclear if this is specifically for Elǰigidei's army: 是月，詔蒙古人戶每百以一名充拔都魯. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三八. Allsen takes this to be the consolidation of Güyük's forces in preparation for an advance on Batu, though the evidence is ambiguous. Allsen, "The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China," 389.

[78] 冬十月，括人戶. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三八.

[79] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 212; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 807. For the confusion of Diyar-Bakr with Takavor, see Juvainī, *Juvainī/Boyle*, 257, fn. 29.

[80] According *TJG*, these regions were especially entrusted to Elǰigidei so that:
تا کسی دیگر دران مداخلتی نپیوندد و مال آن را سلاطین و حوکمات آن مواضع با او جواب دهند
Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 212.

[81] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 212; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 807-08. Juvainī does not mention the execution of 'Abd al-Raḥmān.

[82] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 808.

The next stage of Güyük's attempts to rehabilitate the confederation was to stimulate trade and restore the waning notion of the qa'an as the distributor of wealth. Following the example of Ögödei, Güyük lavishly overpaid merchants for goods brought to court and freely gave those goods away to any who wanted them. Juvainī does not relate anecdotes of characterization for Güyük as he does for Ögödei, but one revealing incident is included in the course of his short biography in the *TJG*. As the goods flowing to Güyük's court accumulated, they were piled about, and the ministers complained that it would be a challenge to transport the cache. Güyük ordered it given away to the soldiers and courtiers. Days later, after even the residents and envoys from other lands had taken all they could, there was still much left. Güyük admonished his ministers for not distributing it amongst the people and ordered everyone nearby to carry it away.[83]

The final aspect of Güyük's reign and policies on which the sources comment is the fateful campaign—or maybe it was simply a relocation—toward the northwest. After wintering at Qaraqorum until the spring of 1247, he set out, according to *TJG*, to fulfill his earlier promise to follow Elǰigidei on campaign.[84] The *JaT* reports, however, that Güyük let it be known that his health required the restorative air of the Emil region (his *ordo*, formerly Ögödei's) and mobilized a large contingent to accompany him, raising the suspicions of Sorqaqtani Beki. She sent a messenger to Batu, warning him that Güyük was headed his way with a large army.[85] Whatever

[83] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 214-15.

[84] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 215.

[85] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 809.

his motivations, Güyük died in March or April 1248 before he reached Batu.[86] His body was returned to his appanage and buried with Ögödei at the orders of his widow, Oghul Qaimiš.[87]

Hodong Kim makes the argument that Güyük's conduct and character deserve reconsideration: that Toluid biases and manuscript interpolations have obscured his reign and have limited our understanding of his goals and policies. I agree but believe that there is more to consider than Kim has suggested.[88] The military action that was cut short by Güyük's sudden death—generally understood to be a punitive move against Batu in response to his obstruction of Güyük's selection as qa'an—should also be reexamined. An alternative explanation that more readily harmonizes with the analysis here is that Güyük set out to convince or coerce Batu into holding up his responsibilities as they related to the corporation, not (only) in response to his lack of political support. Even if the issue of political support was apropos, it was not a simple matter of Güyük's wounded pride. Batu's refusal to attend the *quriltai* and his later rejection of its decisions were affronts to the legitimacy of the *quriltai* as a governing body. As the new qa'an and convener of the *quriltai*, it fell to Güyük to bring Batu back into the fold—or, perhaps,

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[86] There is some confusion in the sources about the location of Güyük's death. Juvainī/Qazvīnī says that he died in Samarkand, and "from that place to Besh Baliq was the journey of a week" (از آنجا تا بیش بالیغ یك هفته راه باشد). Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 215. As Pelliot says, "le nom de Samarqand est indéfendable," and he suggests that this should be "*Qum-sängir" since it appears in some manuscripts—still incorrectly—as "قمسنکی." Paul Pelliot, *Les Mongols et la papauté* (Paris: A. Picard, 1923, 1923), 196-97. Following Pelliot, Boyle observes that the "سمرقند" of Qazvīnī is incorrect. Juvainī, *Juvainī/Boyle*, 261, fn. 42. Pelliot's "*Qum-sängir" concurs with the *Yuanshi*'s transliteration,横相乙兒 Hengxiangyi'er. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三八.

[87] Allsen, "The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China," 389; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 810.به فرمان اُغُولْ قَیْمِش مرقد گُیُوكْ خان را به جانب اِیمِل كه اُوردُوِ او آنجا بود نقل كردند

[88] Hodong Kim, "A Reappraisal of Güyüg Khan," in *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran, Brill's Inner Asian library (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2005).

excise him and his branch.

During the first half of the 1240s, the J̌očids were establishing firm control over the Rus'. As the rest of the Mongol military slowed activities, this was the front most actively pursuing conquest and so an important potential source of income for the Mongol corporation. Other sources of income constricted or became unevenly distributed in the wake of Töregene's unsuccessful attempts to reorder administration and the booty collected by the J̌očids became critical. There were likely many who stood to gain from Güyük's move against Batu. Without steady sources of enrichment that flowed to, and then were distributed out from, the qa'an, the stakeholders had little incentive to remain loyal to the corporation. Instead, they would have been forced to implement policies and pursue alternate sources of wealth to keep their own clans united. An attempt by Güyük to bring Batu to heel—paralleling his efforts to restore order to the institutions of tax collection and redistribution—makes sense when we consider that not only had senior constituents begun to withdraw from the *quriltai* (Batu foremost among them), but Töregene's actions had reordered the channels of wealth among the stakeholders. Instead of the slow, steady supply of taxes that had been the general goal of Ögödei's policies, Töregene allowed the *ad hoc* collection to reward her allies. In a bid to appeal to the vacillating stakeholders and reassure them of his ability to restore the proper order of things, Güyük extended his authority over all aspects of the confederation—in a return to the language of legitimation expressed by his father and grandfather.

Also calling for further examination is the execution of the younger brother of Činggis

Qan, Temüge Očigin,[89] read by the authors of our sources as a bold and unprecedented move, one meant to eliminate any opposition to Güyük's rule. On the contrary, it seems to me Güyük had little choice in this matter if he was to prove to the stakeholders that he was capable of restoring faith in the office and himself. Temüge's alleged attempt to secure the position of qa'an by marching his army toward Qaraqorum soon after Ögödei's death was a breach of both tradition and of the authority of the *quriltai*. If he was, instead, taking military action against Töregene's regime, it still demanded a severe response since Töregene reigned by permission of the senior princes, Ča'adai most importantly. Because of these reasons and his opposition to the policies of Töregene, Güyük was eager to affirm himself as a reliable and powerful qa'an by making an unmistakable statement that he intended and was able to uphold the responsibilities of the qa'an as established with the 1228-29 *quriltai*.

Kim argues that Güyük was attempting to "centralize" by disenfranchising powerful princes, thereby consolidating their authority into the office of qa'an.[90] This is a sound argument, but Kim does not make the connection what the above rereading of the sources makes clear: a powerful qa'an was essential to effective collection and distribution of wealth, as per the duties of the office. All Güyük's overt actions seem to point to an attempt at restoration of Ögödei's powers in the office of qa'an. Allsen observes that "restoration of the collegial principle in the governance of the empire, most certainly a concession wrung from the Ogodeids by other princely lines as the price for their support of Güyüg's candidacy, appears to have been honored

[89] Although Möngke and Orda were ordered to examine the case during the 1246 *quriltai* and it was they who found Temüge guilty, he was executed by a group of emirs. Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 210; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 806.

[90] Kim, "A Reappraisal of Güyüg Khan," 326.

in both spirit and practice by the new khaghan."[91] Allsen does not make the connection that the collegial principle was partially dependent upon the redistributive powers of the qa'an. Kim is correct that "Güyüg was not a feeble ruler overwhelmed by centrifugal forces."[92] Güyük, instead of being unwillingly forced into "showering his supporters, from princes of the blood to lowly scribes, with an array of costly gifts — jewels and finery, as well as grants of money,"[93] was doing just what his father and grandfather had done. Perhaps this consistent expectation that the Mongols were after something greater—the assumption that there was something more abstract, more idealistic, than the simple pursuit of enrichment—has prevented chroniclers and scholars alike from recognizing what is apparent in the sources: that the Mongol administration and government existed for the purpose of collecting and redistributing wealth.

§3.5 Oghul Qaimiš (d. 1251 / r. 1248-51)

Upon Güyük's death, Batu readily advocated for Güyük's widow, Oghul Qaimiš, to take over the regency. Having learned his lesson at the hands of Töregene, Batu made sure to order

[91] Allsen, "The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China," 386-87.

[92] Kim, "A Reappraisal of Güyüg Khan," 326.

[93] Allsen, "The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China," 386. It appears that much of Allsen's harsh judgment of Güyük is taken from Rashīd al-Dīn's final words in Güyük's biography (Karīmī's edition). Allsen, "The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China," 386, fn. 96. This epilogue does not appear in *TJG*—and Rashīd al-Dīn follows nearly word-for-word Juvainī's account of Güyük—and reflects the later, more coherent narrative promoted by the Toluids for whom Rashīd al-Dīn wrote his history. Notably, this passage does not appear in the edition of Muḥammad Rawshan and Muṣṭafá Mūsavī. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 811.

that Oghul Qaimiš leave the ministers in their offices.[94] Despite their efforts, the momentum of disintegration that began with Ögödei's decline around 1235 and accelerated during Töregene's regency was scarcely alleviated by Güyük's efforts. The vitriol of the sources on Oghul Qaimiš is extensive, but it is obvious that Oghul Qaimiš's regency was disastrous by any measure—perhaps for the Mongol Empire as a whole, certainly for the Ögödeids. The Mongol confederation that began with Činggis Qan's careful formation was poised for partitioning by 1248 and the dismal mishandling of affairs by Oghul Qaimiš and her two sons did nothing to perpetuate rule by collective sovereignty. Though we cannot attribute the end of unified empire to her regency, it was nonetheless the final days of anything that might have become a Mongol world empire.

It is not certain when Oghul Qaimiš was born but we can reasonably assume that it was around the time of Činggis Qan's massacre of the Merkits in the first two decades of the thirteenth century.[95] The fact that she descended from the persecuted Merkits is evidence enough that her marriage to Güyük was not politically advantageous for him. Töregene was, at least, married to Dayir Üsün when she was taken by Činggis Qan, giving her some cachet among the Mongols as a trophy. Oghul Qaimiš's low status may have had something to do with the extreme loathing she seems to have elicited from the Mongol elite as well as their chroniclers. Beyond this, nothing about her can be gleaned from our sources until after Güyük's death.

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[94] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 217; Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 810. According to *JaT*:
[بٰاتُو] می گفت مصالح ممالك را اُغُولْ قَيْمِش بر قرار متقدّم به مشورت چِينْقٰاىْ و اركان دولت می سازد

[95] After the rebellion by Dayir Üsün, Činggis Qan ordered all the Merkit men killed. Oghul Qaimiš was either a child at the time of the executions or born soon after. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 96-7.:
[چِينِنْگٗگِيزْ خان] يٰاسٰاق فرمود كه از [قوم مِرْگِيت] كسی را زنده نگذارند و جمله را بكشند. و اندكی كه بماندند يا در شكم مادر بودند يا بعضی خويشان ايشان را پنهان داشتند.

Immediately upon news of the death of her husband, Oghul Qaimiš sent orders that all armies should halt their advances and activities, and that Güyük's body should be taken to his *ordo* on the Emil. According to Juvainī, Oghul Qaimiš herself also set out for Güyük's *ordo*. Beyond Batu's recommendation that Oghul Qaimiš be installed as regent, he showed her no deference. He was now indisputably the most senior of Činggis Qan's descendants and had no interest in entertaining the delusions of others in this matter. The selection of the next qa'an was an urgent issue, as the confusion and disorder of policy reversals and turnarounds since the latter years of Ögödei's reign had eroded the ability of the office of qa'an to act effectively. Accordingly, he forthwith called the Mongol elite to convene at his location to discuss candidates for the office of qa'an.[96]

Batu must have recognized that Ögödei's failure to maintain his duties, followed by Töregene's disruptive regency and Güyük's short period of reversals, had led to instability and apathetic commitments to the ongoing project of collective sovereignty. He was not leaving the selection of the next qa'an to chance and intended to preempt the debate at the *quriltai* by securing written attestations supporting Möngke. Batu dismissed the gathering with instructions

[96] The exact location is uncertain; for a summary of the debate, see Juvainī, *Juvainī/Boyle*, 263, fn. 3. In addition to Boyle's comments, Bar Hebraeus concurs that the *quriltai* was held at Ala-Qamaq. Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abû'l Faraj, the son of Aaron, the Hebrew physician, commonly known as Bar Hebraeus: being the first part of his political history of the world*, ed. E. A. Wallis Sir Budge, 2 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 416.

to prepare for the *quriltai* in the next year.[97] Perhaps Batu thought that the delay would give him time to coax or coerce the Ča'adaids and Ögödeids into attending—where, presumably, they would not be able to change the decision on Möngke. Until the time of the *quriltai*, they elected to leave the regency to Oghul Qaimiš and her sons.[98]

Oghul Qaimiš may or may not have come to Batu's gathering. The *TJG* does not reveal her whereabouts while *JaT* implies that she was occupied with her shamans and superstitions for the entire period of the regency.[99] Only Bar Hebraeus explicitly mentions that Oghul Qaimiš responded to the summons, leaving after only two days (though he seems to conflate the two separate gatherings).[100] Oghul Qaimiš's sons, Quča and Naqu—who come across in the sources as buffoons, bickering amongst themselves and with their mother when the office of qa'an and the fate of the Mongol Empire is at hand—answered Batu's summons, but left before the meeting was under way, according to *TJG*. Before they departed, they may have left a representative, Temür Noyan.[101] Or, if Rashīd al-Dīn in his capacity as Toluid apologist is

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[97] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 219. There is some variation in how the two gatherings are understood. Rashīd al-Dīn presents the first meeting as a *quriltai* during which Möngke was elected and the stakeholders present performed the ceremonial loosening of belts and swearing of allegiance. The second meeting, according to *JaT*, was an enthronement, when Möngke would officially begin his tenure as qa'an. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 825-26. I have chosen to follow Juvainī because he was present at the gathering during which Möngke was raised to qa'an.

[98] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 218.
پادشاه زادگان مراعات جانب پسران را برقرار حکم را در قبضهٔ ایشان بگذاشتند چندانك قوریلتای باشد

[99] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 810.

[100] Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abû'l Faraj, the son of Aaron, the Hebrew physician, commonly known as Bar Hebraeus: being the first part of his political history of the world*, 416.

[101] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 218. In Bar Hebraeus, Oghul Qaimiš is included in the decision to leave Temür Noyan as representative.

credible, they did not go at all, but instead set up rival courts in opposition to one another as well their mother.[102] Broadbridge comments that their refusal in *JaT* "reads as an attempt to portray them as unsuitable for rule on the grounds that they had disrespected Batu (their elder) by failing to respond to his summons."[103] The trend in the *JaT* is that the Ögödeids are portrayed as more obviously ill-suited to the office of qa'an and commit more outrageous offences as the narrative approaches the moment of Möngke's selection. If, on the other hand, it was true—the Ögödeids, after all, made some abysmally bad choices during the reign and after the death of Ögödei—it was more than disrespect. If the other Mongol elite elected to respond to Batu's call, the Ögödeid's decision not to attend his initial gathering or the *quriltai* would have put the very legitimacy of its decisions in jeopardy, the same as Batu's absence had done at Töregene's *quriltai*. Aspects of authority and legitimacy of the *quriltai* as the governing body of the Mongol Empire will be discussed in §4.3.

There are many disagreements between sources as to the details of how Oghul Qaimiš and her sons acted during this period, including questions about what Temür Noyan was instructed to do in his duties as the representative of Quča and Naqu. The *TJG* states the he was left with instructions to agree—in writing—to whatever the majority of the *quriltai* decided.[104] Leaving Temür Noyan as their representative may have been equivocatory, meant to give them some say if the *quriltai* chose to go on without them—which is exactly what happened. Oghul Qaimiš and her sons never recovered from the loss of stature among the stakeholders that their

[102] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 810.

[103] Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire*, 204.

[104] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 218.

obstinacy cost them. Instead, they compounded their losses by indignation and ongoing disputes amongst themselves and by obstructing the assembly of the *quriltai* that would place Möngke in office.

In her time, Töregene had been able to make a reasonable justification that she and Güyük were viable power holders and did not rely on their relationships to Ögödei to carry their argument. Oghul Qaimiš, based on what little we know of her, does not appear to have had the political acuity nor the stakeholder support to maintain the Ögödeid hold on the office. Her ongoing affront was to behave as though she possessed the right and political weight to dictate events. In a tactic reminiscent of Batu's obstruction of Töregene, the Ögödeids and Ča'adaids wagered that the *quriltai* could not convene without them and could not come to legitimate decisions without their participation. Oghul Qaimiš imprudently overplayed her hand and it cost the Ögödeids more than just the office of qa'an.

The *quriltai* convened under Batu's direction in 1251 when it became clear that neither the Ča'adaids nor the Ögödeids would be enticed to cooperate. This time it was held in the "traditional" location along the banks of the Kerulen River. Oghul Qaimiš and her sons were probably not in attendance. Reportedly at Oghul Qaimiš's direction, the Ögödeid envoy, Bala, made an argument for Shiremün's candidacy, since Ögödei had designated him heir to the office during his lifetime.[105] It does not seem likely that this is an argument that any Ögödeid would have made and one that was so weak that it was not likely to have been recorded if they had. Nonetheless, some version of it appears in both Persian and Chinese sources. It was reportedly countered with the obvious: that the Ögödeids themselves had already defied the order of Ögödei

[105] Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire*, 206, fn. 56.

with Güyük's promotion and subsequent election.[106] Whether true or not, it established a precedent favorable to the Toluids of Ögödeids being the first to breach the orders of Ögödei.

If this was the best argument the Ögödeids had against the selection of Möngke for the office, it is little wonder they failed. Once again impeded by the sources, discerning what Oghul Qaimiš's real goals or strategies were is not possible. She does not seem to have promoted either of her own sons for the office, perhaps the source of her conflicts with them. If she did support Shiremün, there are a couple of explanations that are possible. First, the rapid decline of the Ögödeids may have been a factor in the promotion of a candidate that had at least some viability. If the argument Bala presented was Oghul Qaimiš's best bet, it reflects their bleak political prospects. Second, Oghul Qaimiš may have had a close relationship to Shiremün's mother, Qadagač. At the time of Güyük's death, Shiremün was likely to have been old enough not to face the same challenges he had at the *quriltai* in 1246. Perhaps these factors point to the sincere support of Shiremün for the office, however poorly or unsuccessfully Oghul Qaimiš conducted his political campaign. The evidence in our sources is ambiguous and we can only cautiously speculate. Whatever happened during the *quriltai* called by Batu, those who did attend honored their written pledges supporting Möngke for qa'an.[107] He was duly enthroned and remained in the office until his death in 1259.

Möngke's enthronement marked the end of the Ögödeid and Ča'adaid fortunes while Möngke found himself a qa'an without the support of the full Mongol confederation. Furthermore, the cohesiveness of the confederation was on shaky ground, the prior decade

[106] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 825.

[107] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 3, 18.

having produced few benefits for the stakeholders. Möngke needed to be decisive and tenacious to win the confidence of the wary collective if he hoped to restore the office of qa'an to the status of respect and authority it had under Ögödei. The reality of Möngke's situation was worse than it seemed: the only one of the four original appanages that Möngke securely ruled was his father's—though, by 1251, it would be more appropriate to call it his mother's appanage, for she had ruled it far longer than Tolui. Batu had secured for himself an independence that no one had the political clout to deny him. What Möngke needed was a free hand to coerce or crush his enemies. Oghul Qaimiš and her allies provided him just the excuse.

Details are confused, but all versions agree that Shiremün and Naqu were involved in a plot to assassinate Möngke after he had already been enthroned. As the crown jewel in a decade of self-destructive moves by the Ögödeids, this one assured their complete ruination. Shiremün was exiled. Quča was exiled to Korea (despite no record of his direct involvement) and Naqu was sent on a campaign or to a military camp in China from which he was not expected to return. All three somehow avoided the executions that Möngke handed out liberally.[108] The investigation into the plot was extensive and an unknown number of people were executed, exiled, dispossessed, or otherwise punished for their suspected involvements.[109] The executed included Činqai, long time servant and minister to the Mongols.

Oghul Qaimiš, rebuffing Möngke's order that she come to court to defend herself and

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[108] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 3, 65. Boyle questions Korea as the location for Quča's exile, saying it "seems out of the question," though I do not see why. Juvainī, *Juvainī/Boyle*, 592, fn. 138. Ögödei had ordered several campaigns in Korea and left a detachment there. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三一. Allsen seems to have followed Boyle's lead and places Quča in exile in the Selenge River region in Mongolia. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, 31.

[109] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 3, 38-71.

explain her involvement in the plot, was forcibly brought to Sorqaqtani's court, her hands stitched together. No defense could have saved her. According to Rubruck, she was beaten with "burning brands"[110] until she confessed. She was stripped naked, wrapped in felt and drowned, an extreme sentence for one who had sat upon the seat of the qa'an, however poorly she may have conducted herself.[111] While Ögödeids continued to play minor parts in the politics of the Mongol Empire, never again did they achieve anything close to their former status. They were decimated along with any hope that the confederation could be restored. Möngke's enthronement, the event that confirmed that collective sovereignty had outgrown its ability to manage the confederation, was the result of the Ögödeids' failure to restore order in the Mongol Empire and will be examined in this context in §4.7.

§3.6 Conclusion

Despite conciliatory attempts by Güyük (r. 1246-48) during his brief tenure in office, stakeholders increasingly diverted their attentions and support away from the centralizing office of the qa'an and toward local leaders, effectively creating smaller states that roughly coincided with the appanages Činggis Qan granted to his sons. Töregene (r. 1242-46) and Oghul Qaimiš (r. 1248-51) were unable or uninterested in continuing Ögödei's project of building effective

[110] Manuel Komroff et al., *Contemporaries of Marco Polo consisting of the travel records to the eastern parts of the world of William of Rubruck (1253-1255); the journey of John of Pian de Carpini (1245-1247); the journal of Friar Odoric (1318-1330) & the oriental travels of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela (1160-1173)*, The black and gold library, (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1928, 1928), 169.

[111] Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 839. *TJG* has no account of Oghul Qaimiš's trial nor her execution.

imperial institutions, directly undermining the bureaucratic organization in apparent attempts to win back the support of the steppe traditionalists. Their heavy-handed and self-serving efforts, however, resulted in stakeholders' withdrawal of support and participation, thus making the office of qa'an increasingly dependent upon the income that the bureaucratic organization could collect from urban domains. As the prominence of the office of qa'an receded in the face of the centrifugal forces leading toward fragmentation of the Mongol Empire, the survival of the office relied upon support of urban wealth collection—part of the original duties of the office—resulting in an increasingly autocratic office. At the end of Oghul Qaimiš's regency, there was little unity left. Whatever Mongol Empire Möngke could have been said to rule upon his enthronement in 1251, it was only a shard of the shattered state that reached its apogee under the leadership of his uncle, Ögödei.

§4 Transition to Autocracy: the Waning of Collective Sovereignty

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§4.1 Introduction

The demands of managing agrarian and urban possessions had a transformative influence on the Mongol Empire during and immediately following the reign of Ögödei. The scale and size of the empire, the challenges of maintaining agricultural production in the face of succession struggles, and the ever-growing number of claimants to high offices contributed to the increasing influence of personnel engaged in management of subject civilizations. As the corporation evolved and segmented, this transformation played out in each of the appanages in various ways, but the changes to the office of qa'an remain our focus, here. From the time of confederation under Činggis Qan to the reign of Qubilai (1260-94), there were two major trends that contributed to the end of the short-lived, unified Mongol state. First, there were decreasing incentives for shareholders' continued participation in the corporation as the size and complexity of bureaucratic institutions reached a level at which inefficiencies cost a great deal. The stakeholders therefore turned their attentions and resources toward local power structures—both smaller-scale steppe confederations and the institutions of their subject peoples. Second, in a process that had begun as a consequence of empowering bureaucrats in Ögödei's waning years and reached its apex during Töregene's reign (in direct opposition to her attempts to undermine it), institutions under the purview of the office of qa'an continued to press the empire toward more stable and predictable autocracy. This was an effort born of necessity by the bureaucracy as it tried to maintain the steady functions of agrarian production and the commerce that

accompanied it. This transition in the unified state during the second half of Ögödei's reign further drove segmentation as some streams of income were redirected to stabilize and invest in urban and agricultural infrastructure.

To turn the success of the early conquests under Činggis Qan into effective revenue-producing sources of wealth for the stakeholders under his heirs required considerably more than military prowess. The Mongols' competence in managing and exploiting resources was evident in the governing practices of their conquest state and, after Činggis Qan, continued to characterize the political evolution of the Mongol Empire. Wherever the Mongols encountered proficient managerial techniques or experienced bureaucrats, they incorporated them into their administrative organization. The Mongols recognized the value of expertise and relied on a team of bureaucrats to recommend and implement administrative solutions that were the stimulus for the strong centralizing tendency evident in the early administration of the Mongol Empire, particularly under Ögödei. They experimented openly with government, entrusting the devising of administrative technologies to those functionaries from conquered civilizations that included Persians, Chinese, Turks, and Arabs, as well as Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists in addition to Mongols. Despite this varied and accomplished team of advisors, the Mongol Empire until the second half of Ögödei's reign continued to operate according to the principles of collective sovereignty in which those who had an ongoing investment in the Mongol enterprise—the stakeholders—cooperatively made decisions and directed policies for the confederation.[1] The primary mechanism for this body to collectively express their sovereignty was the intermittent *quriltai*, a gathering of the stakeholders to discuss, debate, plan, and

[1] The importance of collective action and cooperative rule is given theoretical shape in Peter Turchin, *War and Peace and War: the Rise and Fall of Empires* (New York: Plume, 2006).

celebrate.

Building upon the narrative of the Mongol Empire from 1229 to 1251 as covered in §2 on Ögödei and §3 on Töregene, Güyük, and Oghul Qaimiš, I will in this chapter describe the characteristics of Mongol collective sovereignty and consider some of the factors that signaled it was giving way to autocracy in the office of qa'an. Decisive in that transformation was the successful completion of Jin conquest. During Ögödei's reign, the incorporation of former Jin peoples and institutions had a significant impact upon the governing structures of the Mongol Empire. Efforts by Ögödei's successors to overturn his institutionalization of the administration led to a series of destructive reversals. From the time of Töregene's *de facto* rule beginning around 1235 until the enthronement of Möngke in 1251, Mongol elites steadily undermined carefully created administrative institutions to serve themselves and their rivalries. The turmoil they caused during this period eventually led to the ousting of the Ögödeids from all positions of rule in the Mongol Empire, including the office of qa'an, in the series events known by scholars as "Toluid coup." In a turn from previous literature on the matter, I will argue against the prevailing view of Möngke's enthronement as a coup in which one dynastic line replaced another. I allege that Möngke's election to the office of qa'an did not represent a dynastic shift of power, nor was there a self-conscious Toluid usurpation of Ögödeid dynastic rule. Recasting the narrative to justify the "seizure" of the dynastic line was a later Toluid interpolation, necessary for the support of an evolving mythos of Toluid sovereignty in which rule by inheritance was a key factor. I argue that Möngke's election represented an attempt to salvage some pretense of unified Mongol Empire ruled on the principles of collective sovereignty and to restore the redistributive networks supervised by the office of the qa'an.

§4.2 Sources and Literature

This chapter relies upon the sources familiar from §§2 and 3 to examine Mongol governance and its transformation, but we should note some aspects that challenge our ability to reconstruct Mongol ideology in this chapter. Rashīd al-Dīn was a powerful and successful *noyan* whose existence was made possible by an autocratic Īlkhānid government—an autocracy that, in turn, owed much to Rashīd al-Dīn's counsel. His histories were written under the patronage of Ghāzān (r. 1295-1304) who was sovereign over a centralizing state and, according to Petrushevsky, the agent of reforms that favored the bureaucratic aristocracy over the "supporters of an unlimited rapacious exploitation of the settled peasants and town dwellers" who cared little if their approach was "antagonistic to a settled life, to agriculture and to towns."[2] Rashīd al-Dīn's obligation to the system that enriched him and indebtedness to his patron deeply shaped the narrative of the Mongol history he was commissioned to write: he was appointed to the office of deputy *vazīr* under Ghāzān in order to carry out reforms of the Īlkhānid bureaucracy in support of "a centralized feudal form of government, and in connexion with this the curbing of the centrifugal proclivities of the nomad tribal aristocracy."[3] In fact, according to Petrushevsky, Rashīd al-Dīn's ideas formed the basis of the reforms.[4] It should come as no surprise that *JaT* emphasizes bureaucracy and the imperial power of Mongol rulers all the way back to Činggis Qan.

The *SH* exhibits, in contrast to the *JaT*, a bias that strongly idealizes collective

[2] I. P. Petrushevsky, "Rashīd al-Dīn's Conception of the State," *Central Asiatic Journal* 14, no. 1/3 (1970), 148-49.

[3] Petrushevsky, "Rashīd al-Dīn's Conception of the State," 149.

[4] Petrushevsky, "Rashīd al-Dīn's Conception of the State," 151.

sovereignty. The dating of the *SH*, of particular importance here, has been remarkably elusive. It has been argued that it was completed in 1228, 1240, 1252, or 1264 because, as stated in §282, it was finished in the year of the Rat.[5] If the *SH* was completed by Ögödei as discussed in previous chapters, then 1240 is the only date that works for us. If, on the other hand, it was written whole or in part by any of the other suggested authors, the latter two dates would explain the lengths to which it goes to emphasize the collective responsibilities, accomplishments, and expressions of loyalty by those who were affiliated with Činggis Qan and Ögödei, as this would have served as a revival of the corporate structures of authority during a time when they were waning.[6] Moreover, 1252 and 1264 correspond to times at which autocratic transformations were changing the shape and dynamics of the Mongol confederation.[7] Thus, the *SH*, whichever of the proposed dates is correct, is our most accurate source for contemporary Mongol views on the nature of authority and for discerning the expressions of those ideas.

The *TJG*, even though it is the basis for much of *JaT*, is more detailed concerning the period after the death of Činggis Qan and before the succession of Qubilai, but especially 1229-51. Juvainī was a member of Möngke's court, present at his enthronement and had access to those who participated in the events of the period. The descriptions of collective versus

[5] See discussion in §1.4.1 for a summary of this debate.

[6] This is my observation based upon Hope's research: Michael Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate of Iran* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2016), 12-14.

[7] The Toluid bias of the *SH* is far too developed and assertive for 1252 to be a viable date for its completion—unless a major revision of the text came later. In those early months of Möngke's reign, there was not yet the sophisticated sense of Toluid self-awareness that is evident in the *SH*. Nonetheless, the Toluid biases can be attributed to interpolations to later editions.

autocratic authority upon which my concepts of this period are based are primarily supported by the narrative of these years according to Juvainī. Nevertheless, Juvainī himself was, like Rashīd al-Dīn, a product of autocracy: he was patronized by Möngke's court which was developing a language of dynastic monarchism during the years that Juvainī was composing his history.

The literature that shapes frameworks in this chapter include two studies that take on different aspects of collective authority. The first is David Sneath's *The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, & Misrepresentations of Nomadic Inner Asia*, which has had great influence upon my thinking about Mongol Empire and the more general concept of Central Eurasian states.[8] Of particular interest to this chapter, Sneath dismantles the myth of kinship society in steppe political constructs and reveals the importance of aristocratic power that employs fictional kinship relations as an organizing mechanism expressing the corporate, collective relationship among stakeholders ("aristocrats," in Sneath's terminology) through the language of blood relationships. This language is useful in reframing the concept of dynastic coup in the Mongol Empire. Though his book is as much a criticism of 19th and 20th century colonialist scholarship as a study of steppe political structures, it nonetheless provides us with a functional scheme for reconsidering the real power relationships among Mongols. It provides the foundations to my understanding of how shared structures of power can be stable and adaptable while at the same time undergoing steady transformation.

The second important study is Jeffrey A. Winters' *Oligarchy*.[9] Winters explores the idea of shared authority from another, more theoretical angle than that of Sneath. Winters does not

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[8] David Sneath, *The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, & Misrepresentations of Nomadic Inner Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

[9] Jeffrey A. Winters, *Oligarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

directly address steppe polities but, instead, analyzes typologies of oligarchic authority. His analyses of oligarchy help to conceive of empire without an emperor, as well as to understand how stakeholders participate in governmental corporation. While neither *The Headless State* nor *Oligarchy* are directly referenced in the arguments I make in this dissertation, both have fundamentally shaped my approaches to Central Eurasian political power and state formation and their influence is discernible in this chapter more than any other.

Concepts of empire, and scholarship that attempts to define and categorize it, are important not only to this project, but also to the ongoing work by other scholars of the Mongol Empire. As I discussed in §1.3.2, comparative work of this type on the Mongol Empire is challenging, as the early Mongol state does not easily fall into any category of empire as found in the work of historians, political scientists, and others. Literature on empire is vast and varied, but there are some studies that are directly relevant to our analysis of early Mongol Empire and provide some assistance in rendering discussion of the Mongol state in terms of the language of empire. Recent literature on empire is dominated by typologies of state that derive from notions of nationalism, identity, and concepts of authenticity—much of which is not applicable to the understanding of Mongols' practices of collective sovereignty. These notions are, in many ways, the results of colonial preconceptions that entitle a privileged portion of an empire's people to enhanced access and participation based upon their claims to cultural, linguistic, or ethnic identities. Another category of empire studies specifically approaches nomadic empire as a separate phenomenon with characteristics that make Eurasian steppe empires distinct from other

forms of empire.[10] Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, in a monograph that Kenneth Pomeranz called "the single best book about the relationship of empires and nations,"[11] present a study of empire that includes modern notions of identity and authenticity but also tries to account for all constructs of empire. In doing so, Burbank and Cooper provide a set of frameworks to understand empire as political construct beginning with: "Empires are large political units, expansionist or with a memory of power extended over space, polities that maintain distinction and hierarchy as they incorporate new people."[12] Proceeding from this nebulous prototypical description, they engage a series of case studies that lay groundwork to understand when a state—a polity, a confederation, etc.—can be called an empire. They further explain empire as flexible, adaptable political and institutional conglomerations exercising a repertoire of imperial power, a description that serves well when applied to Mongol Empire.[13] The difference between empire and nation is that the former "declares the non-equivalence of multiple populations," whereas the latter, "is based on the idea of a single people in a single territory constituting itself

[10] This trend is due in part to the fact that much of this literature is the work of Central Eurasianists and not, as in the case of modern empire, the work of theorists in the fields of political science or global history. Refer, for example, to the canonical study of steppe empires, René Grousset, *l'Empire des steppes: Attila. Gengis-Khan. Tamerlan. Avec 30 cartes et 20 figures dans le texte*, Bibliothèque historique, (Paris: Payot, 1939). More recently, Christopher I. Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road: a History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[11] Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), back cover.

[12] Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 8.

[13] Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 16.

as a unique political community."[14]

Burbank and Cooper argue that maintenance and control of multiple non-equivalent populations calls for the acquisition and utilization of local intermediaries throughout the empire.[15] Mongols of the early empire addressed this in many ways, usually by simply absorbing entire power structures of subjugated civilizations, leaving most of the officeholders in place.[16] Over these, they installed representatives of the qa'an and other elite—known broadly as *darughačin*—to ensure that the central government's interests were being met, that policies were being enforced, and to remind regional civil servants that, despite the relatively unmolested continuation of their civil and administrative institutions, they were subjects of the Mongol

[14] Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 8. In this respect, it would be incorrect to consider even the units of fragmented Mongol Empire to have been nations. They would have also been empires.

[15] Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 181.

[16] For an exploration of this idea, see Paul D. Buell and Judith Kolbas, "The Ethos of State and Society in the Early Mongol Empire: Chinggis Khan to Güyük," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26, no. 1-2 (2016). Buell claims policies were uniform and I agree that this was the case at the highest levels of the Mongol administrative institutions. Local conditions of taxation and collection, however, varied according to regional customs and practices. The strength of the system was that it could all be funneled upward toward a generally standardized system that could feasibly be managed by the Mongol bureaucratic organization.

Empire.[17] Ögödei's administration was a pyramidal organizational hierarchy: at the top was the qa'an, himself, advised by a small number of powerful bureaucrats who, in turn, each presided over a number of administrators and institutions all formed to address the challenges of maintaining multiple non-equivalent populations.[18] Ögödei's administration and their applied solutions recognized "the multiplicity of peoples and their varied customs as an ordinary fact of

[17] The concepts, definitions, and functions of the poorly understood and variable institution of the *darughači* are dealt with in a variety of literature but many questions remain. The *SH* discusses the establishment of the office in §§273 and 274. The best of the available scholarship on the topic are: Elizabeth Endicott-West, *Mongolian Rule in China: Local Administration in the Yuan Dynasty*, Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series, (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1989); Francis Woodman Cleaves, "Daruga and Gerege," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 16 (1953). Many of these problems are addressed by Carol Fan, "The Great Mongol Empire: Fragmentation, Unity, and Continuity (1206–C.1300)," Doctor of Philosophy Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, The University of Chicago, 2021. See also Christopher Pratt Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*, Facts on File Library of World History, (New York: Facts On File, 2004), 134.

[18] The problem with defining Ögödei's administrative institutions in detail is that the source materials come from a much later period and are based upon the structures of what can only be described as successors to Ögödei's Mongol Empire. The detailed records of the Yuan bureaucratic organization, for example, reflect the evolution of Qubilai's administration into a hybrid Chinese-Mongol structure. I have therefore chosen to avoid particularizing the institutions under Ögödei in favor of a more generalized approach. I recognize the shortcomings of this method, but we cannot expect the later sources to accurately reflect the situation as it was under Ögödei and his successors before Möngke. Applying them to his period implies a rigidity and complexity that is untenable for the years 1227-51. Furthermore, much of our misunderstanding of this period comes from applying these later sources too rigidly to earlier eras, a mistake I do not wish to repeat, here. For excellent examples of scholarship on the Mongol administrative structures and distillations of source material concerning Mongol governing practices, see David M. Farquhar, "Structure and Function in the Yüan Imperial Government," in *China Under Mongol Rule*, ed. John D Langlois (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1981); David M Farquhar, *The Government of China Under Mongolian Rule: a Reference Guide*, Münchener Ostasiatische Studien, (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1990); Elizabeth Endicott-West, "The Yüan Government and Society," in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, ed. Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Donald Ostrowski, "The "*Tamma*" and the Dual-Administrative Structure of the Mongol Empire," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 61, no. 2 (1998).

life. . . an assemblage of peoples, practicing their religions and administering justice in their own ways, all subordinated to an imperial sovereign."[19] During Ögödei's reign the "imperial sovereign" was still the *quriltai* of Mongol collective sovereignty and not yet the qa'an.

Consistent with the variegated makeup of the Mongol Empire, rule was executed through a variety of administrative styles and institutions. For the Mongols of Ögödei's period, there was little contradiction or friction in the diversity of governing techniques over which they presided. "Inner Asian statecraft," Sneath observes in *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries*, "was a diverse repertoire, not confined to mobile pastoral techniques alone, but open to the wider field of governmental strategies in Eurasia."[20] This diverse repertoire of techniques was key to the Mongols' ability to swiftly bring new peoples into the administrative and economic sphere of their growing empire with minimal disruption to local institutions. The implementation of those diverse techniques has led to scholars' misinterpretation of the Mongols' practice of incorporating existing structures of government, along with their personnel, as evidence that they were ignorant concerning the ways of urban and agrarian societies. Instead, it reveals the means by which they turned conquests into continued sources of steady enrichment.

Thomas Allsen describes how the complex frameworks developed in Ögödei's time were

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[19] Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 11-12.

[20] David Sneath, ed., *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries*, Studies on East Asia, (Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University for Mongolia and Inner Asia Studies Unit, University of Cambridge, 2006), 20.

deployed during Möngke's reign in *Mongol Imperialism*.[21] Möngke's administration was highly organized and sought to restore an authority that deftly incorporated elements of both steppe and sedentary policies, even if the results necessarily tended toward autocracy. By this period, however, the polity that could be effectively managed by a centralizing administration, whether the qa'an or *quriltai*, was considerably smaller in both area and peoples than it had been under Ögödei thanks to the steady process of regionalization centered upon the appanages. The fragmentation of the Mongol Empire was well advanced in 1251-59. The inflow of administrative experts from conquered and subjugated peoples had deeply affected the Mongol governmental framework, forcing the office of qa'an toward autocracy in a process driven by the needs of the agricultural cycles and its demands for accumulation and infrastructure maintenance. The bureaucratic resources on which they drew included not only the most advanced civilizations in the world, but also the specialized forms of government of the empires that preceded them.

Michael Hope's *Power Politics, and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate of Iran*[22] provides this chapter with some of the language with which to discuss the transition in Ögödei's time. Hope describes a parallel transformation that took place in the Īlkhānate culminating in the reign of Ghāzān from 1295 to 1304. Hope's study gives us reason to consider that the transformation, as both he and I understand it, is more accurately conceived of as an ongoing process in which the collective/corporate and autocratic forces staged a long and

[21] Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Grand Qan Möngke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251-1259* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 221-22.

[22] Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate of Iran*.

shifting struggle to shape Mongol government.[23] Hope's analysis shows that precisely the transformation he examines was happening in the other Mongol polities—which he acknowledges—and this process was long in the making. Observed over time, it evinces an ebb and flow that eventually gave way to autocratic forms of rule under the Īlkhāns and Yuan.

§4.3 Collective Sovereignty and the Mongol State

To appreciate the transformation of the Mongol Empire from collective sovereignty to autocracy, it will serve us to first map out how collective sovereignty was expressed and shaped the Mongol state prior to the transformation I am attempting to describe, here, building upon the foundations laid in §1.3. Despite the scarcity of details concerning the actual activities and processes of the *quriltai*, there is little doubt that the *quriltai* was the highest expression of collective sovereignty: it was the primary mechanism through which the corporation made decisions and negotiated their cooperative enterprise. According to Hope, "These councils were intended to represent the entire Mongol Nation and, as such, they served an important constitutive role, defining the character of the Mongol polity after Chinggis Khan's death and regulating relations between its various groups."[24] Thus, the answer to "Who ran the Mongol Empire?" in the time of Ögödei and his father is: the *quriltai*.[25] We are only able to form a

[23] Hope uses "collegial" and "patrimonial" in place of my corporate/collective and autocratic, respectively, but they are equivalent for the purposes, here.

[24] Michael Hope, "The Transmission of Authority through the Quriltais of the Early Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate of Iran (1227-1335)," *Mongolian Studies* 34 (2012): 89.

[25] For an exploration of other possible answers to this question, see D. O. Morgan, "Who Ran the Mongol Empire?," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 1 (1982).

general understanding of who was allowed to attend the *quriltai*, who was permitted a voice or vote, nor do we have insight into the proceedings and rules of order that governed the council.[26] The stakeholders—used here to refer to those empowered with both a voice and, probably, a vote—could only have been those wealthy enough to leave their herds and flocks in the care of others and attend the *quriltai*.[27] Based upon what we know of the outcomes, the *quriltai*s of 1228-29 and 1234-35 show the collective decision-making of the Mongols at its most functional.

The institution of the *quriltai* has received some scholarly attention, but much is left to explore.[28] A broadly comparative study is needed to illuminate the opaque aspects of this important component of Mongol governance. Seasonal or occasional gatherings for wealth sharing, feasting, competitions, trade, decision making, and campaign planning have been a common feature among pastoral peoples globally. In the early nineteenth century, for example, the Lakota confederacy in the western half of lower North America had become pastoralist as their empire expanded to include the vast grasslands of the region. The confederates were allied through their shared seasonal rhythms and were drawn to cyclical gatherings where trade, military campaign, and politics were negotiated:

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[26] Hope, "The Transmission of Authority through the Quriltais of the Early Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate of Iran (1227-1335)," 88.

[27] Despite a lack of recognition in the sources and scarcity of scholarship on the matter, we have no reason to assume that women were not participants in the decisions of the *quriltai*. Certainly, women were powerful economic and political players (Sorqaqtani, for example) and the types of decisions debated during the *quriltai* could scarcely have been finalized without their direct involvement. Their command of peoples, livestock, and resources would have made many women some of the most important attendees. Anne F. Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 2.

[28] See especially Florence Hodous, "The *Quriltai* as a Legal Institution in the Mongol Empire," *Central Asiatic Journal* 56 (2013).

> For much of the year that alliance lay loose as individual bands sought pasture, game, and goods in different corners of their massive domain. But every spring they came together in trade rendezvous that doubled as political meetings where the decisions and disputes of the year were exposed to public scrutiny. During those crucial days and weeks, oyátes [allied peoples] shared resources, pooled information, identified threats and opportunities, and smoked the calumet, reaffirming their shared identity as the Seven Council Fires.[29]

Like the Mongols, the Lakota's conquests outpaced the ability of their congresses to maintain control:

> Conquest had a shattering effect. The [Seven Council Fires] had always been a headless polity—there were no institutions for overall governance—and expansion threatened to push decentralization to a point where key elements of effective foreign policy—sharing of information, face-to-face deliberation, coordination of diplomatic and military action—became unfeasible.[30]

The Mongols, recognizing the threats to their ruling structure resulting from successful conquests, attempted to address these problems in 1229 by making Ögödei qa'an. Like the Lakota, the growing Mongol Empire was threatened by its own successes and a unified identity was a challenge to maintain. Clearly, there is much to be explored, here, but the important points are that the Mongols' *quriltai* were subjected to the same centrifugal forces as the Lakotas' Seven Council Fires: overextension based upon rapid expansion and the challenges of, in Burbank and Cooper's terminology, administering multiple non-equivalent populations.

During the era of Činggis Qan's emerging state—that period after the steppe peoples were united and their attentions turned outward—the collective sovereignty of the Mongols faced its first challenges in the management of conquests that operated under autocratic systems. Upon Činggis Qan's death, the personal relationships that bound the *nököt* to the office of qan were

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[29] Pekka Hämäläinen, *Lakota America: a New History of Indigenous Power*, Lamar Series in Western History, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 125.

[30] Hämäläinen, *Lakota America*, 57.

dissolved and the future of the confederacy was uncertain. As the power of the corporation waned, that of the centralizing administrative apparatus waxed, even as its purview diminished. By the time Qubilai established the Yuan Dynasty in 1271, the corporation that had its apex under Ögödei was no longer a reality. Constituent members had turned toward their own concerns, seeking positions of power and sources of enrichment on a smaller scale over which they would have had more direct control and which would eliminate the cost in time and wealth of participating in the unified corporate enterprise.

The *quriltai* of 1228-29 had as fundamental tasks, then, to lay out how the corporation would proceed, determine how duties would be delegated, and decide how their growing polity would be managed. What happened at this *quriltai*, as addressed in §2, was a discussion about how Činggis Qan's successor—if we can so call the new office of qa'an—was to function in the evolving Mongol polity. Instead of selecting a new Činggis Qan, they opted for creating the position of qa'an to manage the institutions necessary for channeling the resources and wealth of subject civilizations to the shareholders, but expressly not meant to take up the mantle of charisma that made Činggis Qan the central figure. I will examine this in more detail, in §4.4. They must have recognized that their major sources of enrichment were management and conquest, for they planned for the ongoing support and expansion of both. In the end, they chose Ögödei to fill the new office, but his selection was not a matter of formalizing the late qan's

wishes.[31]

All the same, the late qan's wishes are impossible to know. Because of Činggis Qan's legendary charisma, delineating the shape of collective sovereignty of the Mongol confederation in his time is difficult to do with any certainty. There is no denying that Činggis Qan was the catalyst for steppe confederation nor that his role in that enterprise was appropriately recognized by his contemporaries. Modern Mongolian scholars have put forward the idea that Činggis Qan was, first, attempting to unite all steppe people in the Mongolian regions under one banner to bring an end to inter-tribal warfare so that their position *vis-à-vis* their peripheral neighbors, especially the Jin, would improve. Divine mandate has also been identified in relation to the Mongols' justification for forcibly uniting the steppe tribes as well as the conquest of peripheral civilizations. The reasons for the invasion of central and western Eurasia were, according to these scholars, not for the purpose of acquiring new territories or for the conquest of the civilizations there, but instead commenced in pursuit of those steppe peoples who had fled the Mongol confederation. This seems to be an accurate explanation for the early confederation—Činggis Qan's efforts to seduce or coerce reticent steppe peoples into his confederation were extensive.

At the same time, a language of legitimacy was of utmost importance for the future of the

[31] In understanding the 1228-29 *quriltai* as a gathering at which the election of Ögödei was but one part, I agree with Hope, *Power, Politics, and Tradition in the Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate of Iran*, 44-56. I disagree with the conclusions that electing a successor to Činggis Qan was the singular reason for the *quriltai* as expressed in David O. Morgan, *The Mongols*, The Peoples of Europe, (Oxford, UK, New York, NY, USA: B. Blackwell, 1986), 112. I also find Saunders' similar conclusions on this matter to be inaccurate: John Joseph Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1971), 75.

Mongol enterprise, and they did not want for precedent.[32] According to Michael C. Brose,

> The Mongol tribes, especially the more nomadic ones in the steppe, had absorbed significant Turkic and Persian social and political ideas through neighboring nomadic groups. Ancient Turkic imperial ideology had been known and shared for centuries among a host of steppe tribes, while Mesopotamian-Persian religious influences from further west, transmitted via the Sogdians, were passed on to the Mongols by tribes such as the Naiman and Uyghurs. Temüjin drew freely from these various traditions as he refashioned the traditional Mongol tribal system into a confederation.[33]

By Ögödei's reign, these early officials had contributed to the development of Mongol institutions that were effective in subsuming the Jin, Uighur, Khwarāzmian, and other institutions that had preceded them, as they had derived directly from those institutions. The need for both the expertise of professional bureaucrats and the administrative systems they devised was explicitly acknowledged by the *quriltai* that enthroned Ögödei in 1229. By aligning Ögödei's new duties to take on the responsibility of maintaining, collecting, and redistributing the wealth resources of conquered civilizations, the stakeholders attempted to provide for stability and flexibility in the growing Mongol Empire.

But signs that stakeholders were to cease participating in the unified Mongol enterprise were already apparent in the latter half of Ögödei's reign. The challenges of ruling vastly differing societies had stressed the limits of the permissive and diverse repertoire of governing strategies employed by the Mongols. To cope with these challenges, Ögödei liberally empowered bureaucrats to manage the complexities, delegating so many of the responsibilities of his office

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[32] For a discussion on the Mongols' early uses of divine mandate and the development of their language of legitimacy along those lines, see Shagdaryn Bira, "Mongolian Tenggerism and Modern Globalism: a Retrospective Outlook on Globalisation," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 14, no. 1 (2004).

[33] Michael C. Brose, *Subjects and Masters: Uyghurs in the Mongol Empire*, Studies on East Asia, (Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 2007), 23.

that he was to be found away from his duties during his last few years. As we saw in the two previous chapters, he was out of touch with the mechanisms of collection and redistribution, as well as the intrigues and shifting power dynamics of the administration, all of which were aggravated by Töregene's management. When streams of income and access to booty constricted after Ögödei's death, stakeholders became more intent on finding other sources of enrichment. Consequently, lines of Mongol Empire were redrawn into roughly four large polities formed upon differing strategies of governance and coinciding with the appanages that Činggis Qan had assigned his four sons by his principal wife, Börte. Some of the regions formerly constituting the empire became autocratic states in the traditions of their respective subjugated societies (the Yuan and Īlkhān, for example). Others reorganized into smaller confederacies that functioned more or less as had the Mongol confederacy from which they were descended (Ča'adaid and J̌očid Khanates). Despite later Toluid insistence upon maintaining the fiction that they represented an ongoing collective, any notion of a single Mongol state was effectively defunct—with some important exceptions.[34] During Ögödei's reign this transformation toward segmentation and autocracy was just beginning and the shared sovereignty structure of authority still played the leading role. According to Allsen, "Ögödei's major innovation in the system that he inherited was to reduce the administrative responsibilities of the theater commanders, . . . and

[34] While political frameworks of unity had collapsed, the Yuan long maintained the redistributive infrastructure, even continuing payments to factions with whom they were simultaneously engaged in conflict. Fan, "The Great Mongol Empire: Fragmentation, Unity, and Continuity (1206–C.1300)," 2021. Continuing to maintain apportionment and redistributive practices was crucial to the Yuan claims that they represented the collective sovereignty and were rightful successors to Činggis Qan and Ögödei. The fiction came at great cost and was abandoned in all but honorifics and ceremony by the mid-1300s.

to turn over these tasks to full-time 'civilian officials.'"[35]

§4.4 Collective Sovereignty and the Office of Qa'an

Because Činggis Qan was a title and not a name, it suggests that the body of leaders that elected Ögödei as qa'an had no intention of making him the new Činggis Qan in his duties or in their relationship to him, nor that they understood his role to be the same as that of his late father. The non-Mongol sources situate Ögödei at the peak of autocratic hierarchy, at odds with the reality of Mongol shared rule. From certain perspectives, like that of a Mongol subject not acquainted with the workings of collective sovereignty, it was an understandable misinterpretation: in most cases, the Mongols simply lopped off the heads of the ruling administrative structures and left functioning institutions in place, installing a Mongol manager, the *darughači*, to supervise the new acquisitions and redirect the accumulated taxes and goods to the qa'an for redistribution among the empire's stakeholders. For those not directly exposed to the relatively few conflicts between the Mongols and the armies of their soon-to-be conquests, the new emperors were much like the old. They did little at first that impacted the day-to-day lives of the populations.

According to Lawrence Krader, the title "qa'an" has been, following the lead of our sources, interpreted in an overly rigid sense.[36] While this is strictly Ögödei's name in the Persian

[35] Thomas Allsen, "The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China," in *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, ed. Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 374.

[36] Lawrence Krader, "Qan-Qagan and the Beginnings of Mongol Kingship," *Central Asiatic Journal* 1 (1955).

sources, the title seems to have been used either carelessly in other cases (as an honorific that did not bestow a set of specific qualities) or, more probably, in a complex way that had both formal and honorific meanings, complicated by a difference in written and spoken forms. “Qa’an” or some version of it may have been used for Činggis Qan in his lifetime—but probably as an honorific, verbally expressed. The issue is further confused by the imprecise use of “qan.” Krader refers to *SH* §123 in which it is stated “they made Temüjin the qan, calling him Činggis qahan.” I understand the use of qan, in this case, to be descriptive, as in: “they made him the *leader*” or “*head*.” “Činggis qahan,” would then be an honorific (although combined with another honorific, as “Činggis Qan” could be described), such as the “Lord God of Hosts.”[37] How he came to be almost exclusively referred to as “Činggis Qan” in nearly all sources except for the *SH* is not clear in this context, but there seems to be no reason to assume that either was used exclusively or with any kind of formal application. De Rachewiltz dismisses the use of “Činggis Qa’an” in the *SH* as later scribal interpolation.[38] Krader agrees with Pelliot, before him, who seems to have argued (in opposition to Bartol’d) that his name/title was Činggis Qan, but that “qa’an” could have been applied to him as an honorific to the extent that it was the standard

[37] Krader, "Qan-Qagan and the Beginnings of Mongol Kingship," 23. Use of formal titles as honorifics in direct address was a common feature of titles in the early Mongol Empire. For a description of another example—*aqa*, and its companion, *ini* (“elder” and “junior,” respectively)—applied in this way, see Hope, "The Transmission of Authority through the Quriltais of the Early Mongol Empire and the Īlkhānate of Iran (1227-1335)," 90-4.

[38] Igor de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols: a Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, Brill's Inner Asian Library, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), xliii, 222. See also Igor de Rachewiltz, "Qan, Qa'an and the Seal of Güyüg," *East Asian History*, no. 43 (November 2019).

form for addressing him directly.[39]

In the case of Ögödei, however, the use of "qa'an" as the only title or name by which Ögödei is called is quite consistent in the Persian sources, at least. In these texts, it is clear that "Qa'an" was specifically used as Ögödei's name or title and that, while it did refer to an office, it was simultaneously used as a proper name, even during his lifetime.[40] The *TJG* and *JaT* make it fairly certain this term was applied to him upon being raised to the position in 1229, but others, including the authors of the *Yuanshi*, seem to indicate that "qa'an" was a posthumous title. In both the Mongol and Chinese traditions, his proper name would have become taboo upon his death. The *Yuanshi*, in accordance with Chinese custom, refers to Ögödei sometimes by his temple name, 太宗 Taizong; occasionally by his dynastic name, 英文 Yingwen; but usually uses the general title, "Emperor": 皇帝 Huangdi.[41]

Further confusion of the title comes, again, from the *SH* where Ögödei seems to have been referred to personally as the qa'an, but was enthroned as qan. The formulae describing Ögödei's enthronement are nearly identical to Činggis Qan's, but qa'an/qan are reversed in §269: "Elder brother Ča'adai installed his younger brother Ögödei Qa'an as *qan*." The formalization of both terms, along with a differentiation in their application, came during the Yuan period, according to Krader.[42] Though, by that time, any use of formalized terms likely differed from one

[39] V. V. Bartol'd, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 4th ed ed., E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, (London, Philadelphia: E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 1977), 382; Paul Pelliot, "Notes sur le 'Turkestan' de M. W. Barthold," *T'oung-pao* 27 (1930): 25.

[40] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 986.

[41] For an overview of the literature on the issue of qan and qa'an, see Igor de Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols: a Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century (Supplement)*, Brill's Inner Asian Library, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 130-33.

[42] Krader, "Qan-Qagan and the Beginnings of Mongol Kingship," 27.

appanage to the next. One final and notable point is made by Krader concerning the title "*dalai-yin qahan*" that appears in *SH* §280 and means "universal ruler." In this passage Ögödei is referred to by this term—only occurring once—that moves him to "the very highest possible level of imperial power that the Mongols had devised."[43] That such a position of honor was generally acknowledged by the Mongols would seem to be borne out by the fact that Ögödei and no other is referred to as simply, "Qa'an," which de Rachewiltz observes is evidence that the Mongols conceived of him as the "Qa'an *par excellence*."[44]

Ögödei's duties, whatever the case, differed significantly from those of his father as was recognized by the stakeholders who confirmed his selection for the office in 1229. Support for the idea that Ögödei's office was fundamentally different than Činggis Qan's is to be found in *SH* §255, though de Rachewiltz cautions it could be a later Toluid interpolation. In this section, Činggis Qan proposes that the proper way to pass on the empire to his descendants is to divide it amongst them with Ögödei, in de Rachewiltz's estimation, to be in charge of some notion of a state: "Instead of bringing them together, he will keep them apart by giving them separate domains or principalities (*qari*) to rule over, while the state will be managed by Ögödei."[45] The *SH* also relates the occasion in which J̌oči and Ča'adai agree to recognize Ögödei as successor. J̌oči makes a promise to his father to cooperate with Ča'adai in their service to Ögödei. In response, the Činggis Qan replies:

> Why should you two go so far as to cooperate with each other? Mother Earth is wide: its rivers and waters are many. Extending the camps that can be easily divided, We shall

[43] Krader, "Qan-Qagan and the Beginnings of Mongol Kingship," 31.

[44] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 986; de Rachewiltz, "Qan, Qa'an and the Seal of Güyüg," 96.

[45] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 933.

> make each of you rule over a domain and We shall separate you. . . Formerly, Altan and Qučar had pledged their word like that, but because they failed to keep their word, how were they dealt with? What happened to them? Now, with you, We shall separate also some of the offspring of Altan and Qučar: seeing them, how can you be remiss in your duties?[46]

The reference to Altan and Qučar, Činggis Qan's brothers, concerns an incident that he wished to avoid in the future—one that a division of responsibilities could have prevented. In §123 of the *SH*, Altan and Qučar, among others, are explicitly mentioned pledging their loyalty to Temüǰin to the effect that, when he should become qan, they would obey him. Later in 1202, however, the brothers disobeyed an order to refrain from plundering the conquered Tatars until the campaign was complete.[47] In response, Činggis Qan had them forcibly stripped of all they collected. While this seems like an unequal comparison, at issue here is that they "had pledged their word" but "failed to keep their word." For the little we can say with certainty about Činggis Qan's concept of state and government, we know that he placed a high value on loyalty and obedience. To prevent what he seems to have considered a promise from J̌oči that could not be kept, he makes clear that the Mongol state after his death will not require their loyalty to Ögödei as absolute ruler. Instead, he proposes to them a division of his own conquests in a condominium arrangement, with Ögödei as manager over the functions of state.

As in §2—especially §§2.3.1 and 2.3.3—much of the state as it took shape under Ögödei nullified the necessity of person-to-person fealty that was so crucial to Činggis Qan's form of authority. Beginning with the qa'an himself, the systematization of the entire complex structure of Mongol authority moved the enterprise toward a self-sustaining and impersonal organization

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[46] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §255. This passage is also noteworthy as one of the few that does not promote Toluid views.

[47] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, §123 and §53.

in which individuals occupied offices with set duties that could also be carried out by other qualified officeholders. From the top tiers of administration down to the decades of troops in the military, regulations that would regularize and depersonalize all sectors of Mongol administration were implemented while attempting to preserve the edge that rapid and unquestioning obedience gave them. The goal was to make collection and distribution of wealth and resources as effective as possible.

If the qa'an was meant to be merely one of the condominium qans with additional administrative, judicial, and convening responsibilities, it means that our Persian and Chinese sources have to be read carefully, as they clearly did not understand nor represent Ögödei in this way. Regardless, we can still find ample evidence that, though misrepresented, the office of qa'an was not meant to be an emperor or any kind of monarchical office. That our sources—and much literature based upon those sources—considered Ögödei the Mongol monarch has obfuscated much that would allow us to better understand the empire and its functions.

A close reading of the Mongolian terms used in the *SH*, however, challenges my argument that Ögödei was not recognized as a monarch by Mongols in his own time. Igor de Rachewiltz notes that the formation of "*yeke Mongγol ulus-un qan*," used in the *SH* to refer to Ögödei, can be interpreted no other way than "ruler of the great Mongol nation."[48] The title becomes common in later periods, beginning with Güyük's reign. It can perhaps be explained by revisiting the ongoing issue with the time of the *SH*'s composition and the interpolations and revisions to which it was subjected in later editions. Nonetheless, it presents a cause for caution in my argument that autocracy was a later innovation in the Mongol administrative approach.

[48] de Rachewiltz, "Qan, Qa'an and the Seal of Güyüg," 97-98.

Where our sources hint at the particulars of Ögödei's leadership style—which could reveal details about the nature of his office—several characteristics are evident. First, Ögödei assiduously recognized the seniority of his fellow Mongol elite, not least of all his brother Ča'adai. That recognition, however, stopped short of deference. On at least one recorded occasion, he sought the blessing of his older brother before acting.[49] Tolui, too, was consulted on major decisions and his death seems to have been one of the most influential events in the later part of Ögödei's life, as described in §2.3.2. The sources, even where later Toluid alterations can be dismissed, indicate that Ögödei and his younger brother were close, working together in accordance with the expectations of the aristocratic elite and the tenets of collective sovereignty. Juvainī relates the cause of Ögödei's decline into alcoholism was caused by grief over Tolui's death, putting the words into Ögödei's mouth that his drinking was caused by Tolui's passing.[50]

Notwithstanding that Juvainī was writing for a Toluid audience and had reason to embellish Tolui and Ögödei's relationship, we can assume Juvainī was not engaging in hyperbole too extreme. After the death of Tolui, Ögödei ordered that decisions of empire would be made in counsel with Sorqaqtani Beki, Tolui's widow and mother of Möngke, Qubilai, Ariq Bökö, and Hülegü.[51] If she was the new head of the Toluid *ordo*, then this was to be expected. He placed under her command large military forces and gave her control of portions of former Jin

[49] Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-Tavārīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Rawshan and Muṣṭafá Mūsavī (Tihrān: Nashr-i Alburz, 1994 [1310]), 775.

[50] 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvainī, *The Ta'rīkh-i-Jahán-gushá of 'Alá'u 'd-Din 'Aṭá Malik-i-Juwaynī*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī, E.J.W. Gibb memorial series, 3 vols. (Leyden, London: E.J. Brill; Luzac & Co., 1912 [c. 1260]), v. 3, 4.

[51] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 3, 4-5.

territories.[52] Ögödei's favor and the pathways to position and authority that he gave her were a crucial element to her subsequent success in placing her own sons in places of power.

Thus, Ögödei as qa'an seems to have approached his responsibilities as a first among equals, convener, and manager. Whatever transitions were under way during his watch, he was not a proponent of autocracy over collective sovereignty. He did not abandon steppe traditions nor did he intentionally implement policies to turn the Mongol Empire into an autocratic administrative state. The series of anecdotes following Juvainī's account of Ögödei's reign, whether they describe actual events or not, make it evident that the bureaucracy were especially confounded by what they perceived as his injudicious magnanimity. This was particularly true when it involved opening the treasury to those in need—to the extent of emptying it on several occasions. Ögödei "took his generosity to extremes, developing a reputation for reckless prodigality," according to Christopher Atwood:

> Ögedei and his successors hoped such generosity would encourage the empire's warriors, draw able men from all over the world to the court, circulate back to the people the booty seized in conquest, and give the emperor a glorious reputation among his subjects and foreigners and in heaven.[53]

Open-handedness with those Ögödei viewed as dependents of the Mongol Empire was in accordance with the values of steppe collective sovereignty: accumulating wealth in the hands of qan—or qa'an, in this case—was contrary to his duty to acquire and distribute wealth among his followers.

The *SH* does not provide a foil to the Persian and Chinese sources' partiality to urban

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[52] It is worth noting, however, that the *Yuanshi*, comparatively meticulous in its recording of the assignment of Jin territories under Ögödei, makes no mention of lands assigned to Sorqaqtani Beki personally.

[53] Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*, 367.

autocratic authority as we might expect it to do as the voice of the Mongol elite. It is possible, however, to deduce its steppe bias in its nearly complete silence about all things concerning administration of urban settlements. This is remarkable if the *SH* was written by Ögödei. On the other hand, it gives much attention to the issues of acquisition and redistribution of wealth since this was, in many ways, the purpose of steppe tribal confederation. Allsen observes in his study on pearls in the Mongol Empire, in which he examines the material apportioning of not only pearls but also gems, clothing, and other precious goods, that "without the regular redistribution of this specific combination of rewards, steppe armies soon became disaffected and disintegrated."[54] The Mongol elite continued to view Činggis Qan's enterprise with an eye toward their own and their confederated peoples' enrichment. Instead of emperor, it is more accurate to understand Ögödei's role as sort of chairman: he was not the head of an autocracy and should not, in most important matters, act alone. He could convene the *quriltai* but was subject to that body's decisions. He superintended the troublesome urban administration, but should not dispose of the empire's wealth entirely as he wished nor accumulate it for himself—it seems to have been the opinion of at least some of the stakeholders that he was not to accumulate it for the purposes of administration, either. All of these factors contributed to an ongoing tension with his bureaucratic administration for whom the emperor was a singular authority with the responsibility to both tax the Mongol Empire's possessions and to ensure their ongoing productivity.

The persistent image of Ögödei as an emperor is therefore due to our sources presenting him this way. The *Yuanshi* uses the title Huangdi for Ögödei and the other Mongol sovereigns

[54] Thomas T. Allsen, *The Steppe and the Sea: Pearls in the Mongol Empire*, Encounters with Asia, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 97.

even in reference to the period before the establishment of the Yuan dynasty, a title which corresponds exactly with “emperor” and the same title by which the traditional Chinese dynastic sovereigns are referred. The demands of administration of territorial empire and the accretion of bureaucratic framework across the reigns of the regents and qa’ans succeeding Ögödei eventually led to the evolution of the office of qa’an becoming homologous with this understanding of emperor. But during Ögödei’s reign, particularly the first half of it, this was not yet the case.

§4.5 Origins of Imperial Design

The creation of the office of qa’an in 1229 signaled the Mongols’ intentions to institutionalize rule over conquered civilizations. Concern about wealth and possession was brought to the forefront with the growing number of non-Mongol bureaucrats placed in Mongol service once Ögödei began to carry out his duties. The rapid expansion of the Mongol bureaucratic organization was accomplished through flexibility in administrative methods, sometimes challenging steppe practices of wealth distribution. The Mongols readily took in artisans, bureaucrats, engineers—anyone with expertise in the areas they required. As Allsen observes:

> The Mongols lacked not only numbers but also specialists of all kinds. In a nomadic society, which requires the wide dispersal of the human and animal populations, culture is encapsulated in the individual; that is, everyone is a generalist, versed in a variety of

> skills. Consequently, nomads, especially when founding states, depended heavily on their settled subjects for the technical specialists they could not supply from their own ranks.[55]

These specialists were necessarily placed into positions of power and influence—but not all Mongol stakeholders accepted their presence willingly due to diverging ideas about how the empire's wealth was to be divvied and invested.

§4.5.1 Practice and Precedent: The Mongol Empire under Ögödei was a polity turning attention to new solutions for the governance of multiple peoples in multiple ways. The Mongols nevertheless made a conscious effort to appeal to preexisting forms of legitimacy and took deliberate steps to situate themselves and their evolving state according to the terms of previous steppe and sedentary polities. The Mongol enterprise had taken form in the wake of polities dominated by Khitan Liao, Jurchen Jin, Uighur, and Qarākhānid pastoralist corporations. For the Mongols, the evidence must have led to the conclusion that steppe peoples were naturally masters over sedentary civilizations. To efficiently administer their urban, agrarian, sedentary possessions, Ögödei made extensive use of the existing models of authority already understood throughout conquered civilizations. Namely, these were symbols, institutions, and even the personnel of their Khitan, Uighur, and Jurchen predecessors. Činggis Qan had already placed both Uighurs and Khitans in the highest positions of his own circle.

The Mongols also very early positioned themselves as inheritors or continuators of the Uighur Empire. The Uighurs voluntarily submitted to Činggis Qan early in 1209 and many

[55] Thomas T. Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters: the Appropriation of Culture and the Apportionment of Peoples in the Mongol Empire," *Journal of Early Modern History* 1, no. 1 (1997): 5-6.

important and influential Uighur officials were taken into the evolving administration.[56] The impact these Uighurs had on the development of the Mongol state is widely acknowledged but, nevertheless, underestimated.[57] They provided immediate authority and legitimacy to institutions that would persist through Činggis Qan's reign and on through those of his heirs. Beyond the crucial development of a written script for the Mongolian language, Uighur officials provided administrative experience for the institutional apparatus of the evolving empire. Their form of administrative management was sensitive to the wealth-sharing foundations of order and authority crucial to the functioning of steppe confederation. Perhaps the most important contribution was a bureaucratic organization with the experience of overseeing a multiplicity of local customs and integrating them into an effective ruling hierarchy. To the two pillars of Mongol organization under Činggis Qan's confederation—that of military and of society—was added the third pillar of administrative framework.

Uighur officials took immediate initiative and contributed to making the Mongol confederation into an effective ruling contingent, applying their experience managing civilizations under their control. No doubt part of this was to ensure the preservation of Uighur society and to seize opportunities to expand their commercial and trade networks, a legitimate motivation for joining the Mongol confederation. In addition to military might and administrative expertise, the Uighurs delivered to the Mongol Empire the ideological ingredients

[56] Brose, *Subjects and Masters*, 83.

[57] Detailed examination of the Uighurs and others in Mongol service is found in work by Allsen and Michael C. Brose: Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters: the Appropriation of Culture and the Apportionment of Peoples in the Mongol Empire."; Michael C. Brose, "Uyghur Technologists of Writing and Literacy in Mongol China," *T'oung Pao* 91, no. 4/5 (2005); Brose, *Subjects and Masters*.

necessary to create a language of political legitimacy according to its established grammar in Central Eurasia.

But it was not only the Uighurs who provided the Mongols with frameworks for legitimacy and prestige—or, at least, the language they employed to claim legitimacy. As early as 1210, Činggis Qan was assigning Jin titles to military and administrative positions in addition to adopting the title Yeke Mongol Ulus for the confederation. This title for the nation of Mongols was probably directly derived from, and calque on, 大金國 *Da Jin Guo*, or "Great Jin Nation."[58] The impact of the Chinese and especially the Jin upon the evolution of Mongol governance and political practice was at least as significant as that of the Uighurs upon the Mongols.

The Mongols under Činggis Qan at the end of the twelfth century and the first decade of the thirteenth acquired several influential bureaucrats from the Jin. These men played a key role in the shape of evolving Mongol government and provided Činggis Qan intimate details of the Jin ruling structure. Seeking capable and experienced personnel to head parallel administrative apparatuses in his own government, Činggis Qan placed many of these captives and defectors in positions from which they were able to advise and direct the Mongols in matters of administration and strategy against the Jin.[59] Most of them were given the title of *bičēči*,[60] and could serve in many roles including secretary, astrologer, scribe, or other advisory duties. Some of the longest serving administrative personnel of the Mongol Empire, including Yelü Chucai,

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[58] de Rachewiltz, *SH*, 760-61.

[59] Igor de Rachewiltz, "Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 9 (1966).

[60] For a description of this term and its transliteration, see de Rachewiltz, "Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period," 100, fn. 3.

came into their employ as *bičēči* around the turn of the thirteenth century. By 1204, under the influence of these bureaucrats, Činggis Qan was issuing his orders in writing, affixing a seal to prove their authenticity. His cadre of scribes, secretaries, and administrators were made up of Han Chinese, Uighurs, Khitans, Jurchens, and a few literate steppe peoples such as Šigi Qutuqu who had a long and influential career in the Mongol Empire. Still, the administration in the time of Činggis Qan was a complex organization despite Chinese sources' assessment otherwise.[61]

The Mongols were able to engage in diplomatic relations with the administratively well-developed agrarian empires of Eurasia—primarily the Jin and, later, the Song. According to de Rachewiltz, "Since these advisers and secretaries were educated men who enjoyed the emperor's confidence, they could, and did in fact, play an important role as cultural intermediaries between the Mongol ruling elite and the civilized world of the time."[62] Presumably, too, Činggis Qan hoped that it would not be long before the Mongols themselves would preside over the Jin and inherit their complex administrative structure. Činggis Qan was preparing not only for the conquest of the Jin, but for Mongol rule over Chinese sources of wealth.

The Jin who entered Mongol service before 1234 are credited with enabling the Mongols to rapidly create an effective administration to follow their conquests. Igor de Rachewiltz, in a study of these early representatives of the bureaucracy under the Mongols, says, "They combined purely scribal and secretarial duties with more responsible advisory functions, and in this

[61] de Rachewiltz, "Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period," 93.

[62] de Rachewiltz, "Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period," 102-03.

capacity formed an integral part of the emperor's brain-trust."[63] That there was no separation between the military and administrative branches of government in these early years meant these secretary/advisors were often part of Činggis Qan's personal guard or, under Ögödei, had combined military and civilian duties.[64]

De Rachewiltz periodizes the development of the Mongol administration before the time Ögödei as a two-phase process: the first, 1211-15, covers the period from the beginning of Činggis Qan's incursion into Jin territories to the fall of Zhongdu. In this first phase of Jin conquest, the Mongols were able to rapidly take cities of north China and to besiege the capital, finally taking it in 1215. During this period, the Mongols were faced for the first time with two major complications in the attack and conquest of urbanized peoples. First, the Mongols had little experience in the task of besieging fortified towns and cities and the early conquests were conducted by a military that was still primarily cavalry. Their cavalry—the foundation of the steppe military's strength and advantages on the battlefield—was of little use against an unmoving and unyielding city wall. The Jin defectors and collaborators were able provide the Mongols intelligence and the engineering expertise to construct the necessary machines for besieging Jin cities. More important to our study here, was the second complication in the conquest of agrarian civilizations, namely, the organization and management of conquered civilizations. What to do with conquered peoples was no small problem, especially since the Mongols themselves had disrupted the highest levels of administrative management over these new constituents and needed to restore order to the system to keep them functioning as parts of

[63] de Rachewiltz, "Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period," 101.

[64] Brose, *Subjects and Masters*, 3.

complex trade and taxation networks. If they were to be of any ongoing use to the Mongols, they must be able to continue their methods of production in order to provide wealth in the form of taxes, products, etc. The non-Mongol *bičēči* were an integral part of the multifaceted management of their new conquests in north China.

The *bičēči* also helped to foster good relations between local chieftains and the Mongols. These local leaders were a disparate group who, as always in times of crisis or trouble, appeared in order to provide the services and protections the central government was not providing. They were responsible for considerable numbers of people and, in some cases, military forces. Moreover, the *bičēči* in the service of the Mongols were able to restore order quickly in conquered territories thanks to their understanding of Jin administrative customs and latitude given them by Činggis Qan. The question so often rhetorically posed in the literature—how did the Mongols go from pastoralists to world rulers in such a short period and do so successfully?—is partially answered by understanding the role that non-steppe personnel in the Mongol government played in these early years.

The practice that began to emerge in early forays into the administration of conquered civilizations was that local structures of authority remained unmolested and only the highest levels of leadership were changed. This was thanks to both the presence of defectors in Činggis Qan's inner circle who understood those existing structures of authority, as well as to the Mongols' desire to retain those alternative forms of rule and minimize the burden on administrative institutions. The conditions of the peoples on the northern edge of the Jin territories had been poor for some time, as the Jin had turned their attentions and their dwindling resources inward, addressing natural disasters; and southward, toward the threat of the Song. In many cases, the Mongols presented a better option for the northern Jin subjects, particularly their

non-Jurchen subjects.

So it was, as early as 1213, that the Mongols were able to deploy large numbers of northern Chinese forces, commanded by their own leaders, against the Jin. In many cases, the Mongols gave these weakly connected powerholders, as well as Jin officials, new administrative appointments or reconfirmed them in their previous roles. De Rachewiltz gathered names, origins, and the years when they entered Mongol service for "the most important defectors of this period." Of the thirty-five that he lists, twenty-two were Chinese, nine Khitan, and only four Jurchen.[65] More telling, perhaps, are the categories into which de Rachewiltz assigned the defectors based upon the motivations for doing so: opportunists (who could see the fate of the Jin and chose to ally with the Mongols); those who considered the Jin hereditary enemies (this was primarily the Khitan); defectors in authoritative positions who were attempting to protect their dependents; and those who had relatives already in Mongol hands.[66] The administrative appointees were generally granted control of territorial units instead of the decimal allotment of military personnel. Under the Mongols, they held Chinese titles such as 留守 Protector of the Capital, 元帥 Regional Military Commander (or Marshal), and 長官 Senior Officer.[67]

The fact that defectors were left in positions of authority meant that "these officials enjoyed the esteem of the local population and on the strength of their authority could carry out

[65] One problem to note in de Rachewiltz's analysis is the absence of explanation of what he means by the classification of "Chinese." It appears that he means non-Jurchen Jin subjects, but does not state this explicitly.

[66] de Rachewiltz, "Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period," 106-07.

[67] Farquhar, *The Government of China Under Mongolian Rule: a Reference Guide*, 3.

the Mongols' orders of requisition of men and goods more effectively."[68] The locals in Mongol service could use their connections, networks, knowledge of local conditions, and sympathies to conquer by diplomatic means. So it was that the Jin administrative apparatus was quickly brought back into order following Mongol conquests in north China. The Mongols ruled in this period from Zhongdu using a mostly Khitan administration and Jin institutions, establishing the importance of both to the future of the Mongol enterprise.

In de Rachewiltz's "second phase" of the evolution of Mongol administration in China, 1216-29, Činggis Qan left both conquest and government of conquered Jin territories under the command of Muqali (1170-1223), elevating him in military rank and administrative office. As the Mongols' attention turned to western Eurasia, Muqali was left with minimal resources and had to rely on his Tangut, Chinese, and Khitan underlings and the conscription of new forces.[69] Thus, Muqali was responsible for further infusing the Mongol military and administrative organizations with even greater numbers of Chinese and Jurchen personnel who in turn further shaped methods by which agrarian subjects were managed. Of the twenty-three administrative and military defectors de Rachewiltz identifies during this phase of development, all but one are Chinese.

The transition from collective sovereignty to autocracy was accelerated by the 1234 conquest and subsequent absorption of Jin governmental institutions and personnel. The Jin themselves had experienced much the same transition during their long domination of north

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[68] de Rachewiltz, "Personnel and Personalities in North China in the Early Mongol Period," 107.

[69] Luc Kwanten, "The Career of Muqali: a Reassessment," *Bulletin of Sung and Yüan Studies*, no. 14 (1978): 33-34.

China. Originally a forest and steppe people from Manchuria near the Siberian and Korean borderland, they ruled as collective sovereigns up until the reign of 海陵王 Hailing Wang, 1150-61. His violent rule strengthened the central office of emperor—in no small part because he executed all potential rivals. Herbert Franke describes Hailing Wang's purges as an attempt to eliminate the supporters of the corporate structure of the Jurchens and to secure dynastic succession for his line.[70] Thus, by the time the Mongols began to take Jin administrators into their service, autocracy was firmly in place and was, in turn, to contribute significantly to the transformation of the Mongols.

The final victory over the Jin, planned and executed with Ögödei's direct involvement, was a critical event, impacting the trajectory of his administration more than any other factor. Establishing a firm control over north China—an actual as well as powerfully symbolic home of urbanized civilization—required a formalization of administrative institutions and processes that affected the entire Mongol enterprise. For the first time in their decades-long string of conquests, the Mongols were in possession of an intact agrarian, urbanized, bureaucratically centralized state. Among steppe peoples, Jin luxury items were highly desired and served as markers of wealth and status and the sources of production were now in Mongol control. In order to address the security of the northern borders, a succession of Chinese dynasties had pursued a policy of involvement in steppe affairs to both prevent unification of tribes leading to a military threat, as well as to provide a source of steppe military allies to use against threats from other steppe militaries. The centuries of Chinese interference in steppe politics was long an irritant against

[70] Denis Crispin Twitchett and Herbert Franke, *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, ed. Denis Crispin Twitchett and John King Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 239. Hailing Wang was a descendant of Jin founder, A-ku-ta (r. 1113-23).

which the Mongols were mostly powerless. Furthermore, Činggis Qan had failed to complete the conquest of the Jin in his lifetime, adding a particular urgency to the task for Mongol confederation.

Professional Jin statesmen were inducted at all levels by the Mongols, along with their institutions. Their relatively efficient and effective administrative apparatuses provided a steady stream of wealth and materials to the Mongol ruling organization and quickly rectified the destruction to land, commerce, and society caused by the long conquest. Not all of the Mongol elite saw the potential or the advantages in becoming emperors of the Chinese state in place of its conquerors and plunderers. By the efforts of some of the Jin bureaucrats in cooperation with Ögödei, however, a complex administrative system was created in an attempt to turn north China into a stable and steady source of revenue and resources and combine elements of Jin autocracy with Mongol shared sovereignty.

§4.5.2 Compromises and Diverse Ruling Strategies: At his election in 1229, Ögödei confirmed most of Činggis Qan's officials still in their posts and so the foundations of Jin institutions were already in place when the behemoth of Jin government was seized in 1234. In 1235, the frameworks for empire were further expanded: more Jin institutions were absorbed, more Chinese titles were given to those in the Mongol ruling structures, and the expansion of administration to enhance dominion over subject peoples according to their own traditions was augmented. In a census conducted in 1207, the population of the Jin territories was calculated at 53.5 million.[71] Even taking into account the natural disasters that plagued the Jin just after this

[71] Twitchett and Franke, *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, 278.

census, the loss of life connected to the conflicts leading up to Mongol victory, and the flight of peoples attempting to avoid both, it is still safe to assume that the numbers of people for which the Mongols suddenly became responsible was greater than all their other subject peoples combined. Moreover, the Jin infrastructure was in turmoil, having just suffered the Mongol wars and, more devastatingly, the several floods and broken agricultural cycles that had destabilized the state. Thus we can see that what the Mongols acquired in 1234 was an immense challenge—one they met through adaptability, flexible forms of governance, and the integration of existing institutions and the experts that managed them. All of this, it should be clear by now, involved recognizing, understanding, and adopting various idioms of legitimacy—which Ögödei managed to great effect.

The exercise of power relations by the Mongols over their subjects was diverse, but therein was the strength of the system, enabling the mechanisms by which they were able to integrate new conquests rapidly and relatively effectively into their existing governing structures. Instead of further attempts to delineate the particular use of titles and functions of institutions to understand Mongol administrative practice, it may well serve us better to look at principles and techniques of government. The Mongols' own concerns of state or empire building were few except as they served to secure channels of trade, taxation, and the maintenance of wealth streams. The Mongols gave little attention to state power for its own sake—apparently unfathomable to Persian and Chinese chroniclers—but rather pragmatically employed whatever tools necessary to ensure their continued enrichment, including the language of legitimacy and authority as understood by their subject peoples and those they wished to bring under their dominion. The state building in which they engaged brings the purpose of razing of rebellious cities and massacres of resistant populations into somewhat clearer focus. The Mongols were not

interested in loyal subjects, but in compliant taxpayers. If cultivating loyalty among subjects was necessary for steady streams of wealth, then the Mongols communicated in the language of state according to the concepts applicable to each of their diverse peoples. Their practice of retaining local power structures after absorption into the Mongol polity corresponded with their concerns for enrichment and supports the argument that they were not much interested in changing the ideological tenets of loyalty and service in the minds of their subjects.

In forming an understanding of the Mongol Empire that more plausibly explains the seeming contradictions in their abilities as conquerors and rulers, concerns about how the Mongols managed the civilized societies under their dominion will only tell us part of the story. Subjugated civilizations were not participants in the Mongol state—they were resources to be managed in support of the Mongol state. The Mongols before the evolution of Toluid dynastic ideology had no interest in being emperors of dynasties, sultans, etc. They cared little for the regional peculiarities of the peoples under their authority so long as they did not cause problems or withhold taxes (in forms of currency, produce, resources, service) demanded of them. The confederation of steppe tribes as it evolved from the time of Činggis Qan through the end of Mongol dominion is synonymous with the Mongol state, whether or not it constituted an empire, *per se*. If a state existed, it was not inclusive; meaning, there was only state structure insofar as it was necessary to ensure the qa'an's ability to collect taxes and apportion them efficiently.

The events that unfolded at the end of Ögödei's life, caused by increasing centrifugal forces and his decreasing ability to meet those challenges, changed the balance of the Mongol enterprise. They allowed previously disenfranchised agents to accelerate the trend toward centralization, directly undermining the collective sovereignty that defined Mongol practice up to that point. These trends were not caused by attempts to overthrow Mongol leadership nor by

notions of rebellion. Instead, they were the consequences of successful efforts to stabilize and regularize Mongol practices of succession and decision-making. While collective sovereignty enriched many aristocratic shareholders, autocracy allowed for the most consistent and predictable transfer of power, expectations of taxation, and security of property and person for all, ruler and subject alike. Even if the Mongols had no interest in ideological rule, they still had to acquire a thorough understanding of their peoples and their principles to implement effective managing policies—or procure the services of those who did understand. Thus, as the Mongol elite struggled over successions and made slow progress in *quriltai*, the bureaucrats tasked with management of steady streams of income were compelled to expand the influence of their offices in order to meet those expectations. Yet, their purview was comparably small, and they had little to no authority over the distant reaches of the Mongol state, where military elite ruled their conquests outside the reach of the bureaucrats' meagre powers of coercion. These bureaucrats, servants of the Mongols, often in spite of the Mongols themselves, safeguarded channels of support and infrastructure demanded by the agricultural cycles upon which subject civilizations depended. The capricious violence and unpredictability of Mongol expressions of authority directly contradicted the responsibilities of the administrative institutions that were put in place over the sedentary, agrarian, urban sources of tax meant to enrich the Mongols.

§4.6 Centrifugal Forces and Internal Conflicts

Stabilization of administrative institutions came at a price that the Mongol elite were not unanimously willing to pay. Despite signs that they recognized that conquered civilizations should be governed by autochthonous means, the Mongol confederates nonetheless remained

suspicious of the bureaucrats engaged in creating and managing those systems, not least of all because of the bureaucrats' insistence that a full treasury was necessary to successfully meet their responsibilities. Furthermore, his officials lobbied the qa'an that the way to accomplish those goals was to transfer the management of distributed conquests to administrative institutions instead of the stakeholders to which they were assigned. This was a divide between those for whom collective sovereignty provided the means to authority and those for whom autocracy was the operative mode of rule. In the early conquest of north China, acquisitions were parceled out according to traditions of distribution and the expectations of collective sovereignty. The stakeholders themselves managed the collection and, if so inclined, reinvestment in their assigned territories.

The conflict over taxes, wealth, and possession was just one of many forces that counteracted centralization of power in the Mongol Empire. Ögödei had to contend with the significant challenges of centrifugal forces inherent in steppe confederations and the practice of collective sovereignty. The Mongols' light touch on their subject peoples— along with the vast distances that gave field commanders a certain degree of independence—was an enticement to rebellion in the cities and an occasional temptation to break away from the confederation among the steppe peoples. The centralized system of distribution acted in some ways to counter these forces, placing the qa'an at the source from which wealth flowed, but it depended upon the cooperation of military commanders to assure that wealth reached the capital, in the first place. Činggis Qan had taken bold steps to undermine some of the centrifugal forces that drew power away from him toward the tribal elites united under his banner, but he was only able to make these changes thanks to his record of success and the steady enrichment of his supporters. His reorganization of clan-based tribal units into military decimal units was not unprecedented, but

Činggis Qan was able to do it on a scale previously unknown, as Owen Lattimore observes:

> To assume for instance that the imperial centralization achieved by Chingghis Khan was something entirely new is to distort the earlier history of the succession of steppe peoples to which the Mongols belonged. The truth is that the dispersion and disorder of the Mongols and related peoples just before the time of Chingghis was a repetition of previous periods of the same kind; while the success of Chingghis in uniting the nomads created an empire greater than previous nomad empires, but not different from them in kind.[72]

As early as the 3rd century BC the Xiongnu, Modu, attained a level of success in military matters that led to the voluntary submission of the elites. This submission signaled centralizing efforts by a combined group of elites as result of, or for the purpose of, imperial growth, according to Nicola Di Cosmo.[73] Modu established what Di Cosmo calls a "supratribal elite" that answered directly to the qan but also worked in cooperation with the pre-existing tribal elites.[74] This arrangement of combined forms of Xiongnu governance was precedent for the development of the Mongols' large scale political construct. Like Modu, Činggis Qan took great care to break up traditional structures of authority that could pose challenges to his personal control and to redistribute clans over newly formed socio-military divisions. Conflict between confederated peoples was reduced and their allied coercive force turned outward. For a brief time after 1227, the balance of power that had been concentrated in Činggis Qan shifted to the *quriltai*. Ögödei continued the fight against centrifugal forces but both the scale of the challenges and the kinds of

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[72] Owen Lattimore, "The Geographical Factor in Mongol History," *The Geographical Journal* 91, no. 1 (1938): 11.

[73] Nicola Di Cosmo, "Aristocratic Elites in the Xiongnu Empire as Seen from Historical and Archeological Evidence," in *Nomad Aristocrats in a World of Empires*, ed. Jürgen Paul (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2013), 27-28.

[74] Di Cosmo, "Aristocratic Elites in the Xiongnu Empire as Seen from Historical and Archeological Evidence," 29.

authority he could bring to bear upon them differed from those in Činggis Qan's time, for his responsibilities as qa'an differed significantly from those of his father. The confederation of steppe peoples was a separate body from subject peoples and the qa'an's purview was not meant to include the Mongol military elite nor the military as subjects of his policies—though this division was complicated when the Jin were absorbed *en masse* into the Mongol military. The *quriltai* remained the locus of ultimate authority. Our sources' perceptions of Ögödei's authority are that it extended over all parts of the Mongol enterprise, since, from their point of view, he was as good as an emperor, as his task was to collect taxes from agrarian, sedentary subjects. The evidence, despite our sources' assumptions, indicates that this was never the case. At the heart of the issue was the problem of how to utilize and parcel out the immovable spoils of conquest—which included cities, pasturage, and peoples—among the stakeholders.

The Mongols, much to their benefit, were able to rely upon the experience and ruling apparatuses of the Jin to meet the challenges to nomadic wealth sharing that conquest of civilizations presented. The Jin model differed significantly from Mongol practice, as land tenure, nobility, and peasantry described a permanent arrangement in which the hierarchical tendency was vertical, with the emperor at the top, nearest to heaven. Territorial occupation was a fundamental building block for the Jin and they parceled out precisely defined units of occupation in quantities according to the ranks of their subjects. Defensive boundaries, walls, and borders were essential to the continued and uninterrupted production of agricultural products. Likewise, protection of the immovable wealth that accompanied agriculture was one of the most important services provided by the Jin to their subjects. Assessment of wealth and extent of polities were, as a result, largely measured by geographic area under firm control—essentially the measure of immovable wealth that could be protected and utilized. In the case of

the Mongols, the threats to their agrarian holdings were minimal.

Yet, the Jin had started their dominion over north China as a steppe confederacy much like the Mongols. According to Herbert Franke, it was the influence of the Chinese bureaucratic organization—including that of their contemporaries, the Song[75]—and the practical need for a solution to governing agrarian production that led the Jurchens to become the autocratic society encountered by the Mongols of the thirteenth century: "The gulf that existed in Chinese hierarchical thinking between an emperor and his subjects was unknown under the early Chin rulers, and the growing autocracy under Hsi-tsung [r. 1135-49] and Hai-ling wang [r. 1149-61] was, in a certain respect, nothing but an adoption of Chinese ways."[76]

The process was parallel in Ögödei's time, but differed in a notable way: not only were the Mongols exposed to the autocratic bureaucracies of the Chinese traditions, but also to those of other peoples they encountered through their habit of drafting officials from subject civilizations such as the Uighurs into their own management structures. Furthermore, both the Jurchens and the Uighurs were, like the Mongols, steppe peoples who had acquired their dominion through the military and societal practices consistent with pastoralist production and had learned to successfully combine institutions of rule into their administrative practices. This granted the Mongol bureaucratic organization a rich repertoire of strategies for governing the diverse peoples and productive practices under their control, bringing us back to Burbank and Cooper's description of empire. While there were certainly problems in the implementation of

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[75] Herbert Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, ed. Denis Crispin Twitchett and John King Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 269-70.

[76] Franke, "The Chin Dynasty," xxv, 266.

institutional policies on the scale of the Mongol Empire—eventually fatal to the unity of the state—it was a vast and unprecedented experiment that led to the innovation of solutions that would be inherited by both the polities that grew out of the early Mongol Empire and the states that evolved from the ruins of those Mongol polities in later eras. The final failure of the Yuan Dynasty, partly due to the Mongols' inability to find a workable solution for the functional integration of both steppe and sown traditions of rule and authority, did not mean the end of Mongol practices in China. Even the concept of "China" and which peoples were feasibly part of the Chinese sphere of civilization were permanently altered by the Mongols and their hybrid rule that included agrarian and pastoralist in a single state—a concept that would come to dominate definitions of polities and peoples at a much later time.

In 1229, Ögödei took the first steps toward large-scale integration of steppe and sown practices of rule: regularizing the collection of wealth across the Mongol Empire. Acknowledging the need for diverse institutional practices in north China and Central Eurasia, he appointed Yelü Chucai over the collection of taxes based upon household in China, and Maḥmūd Yalavač over the collection of taxes based upon headcount in Central Eurasia.[77] The *Yuanshi* records the apportionment of former Jin territories directly to a variety of Mongol stakeholders

[77] 河北 漢民以戶計, 出賦調, 耶律楚材主之; 西域人以丁計, 出賦調, 麻合沒的滑剌西迷主之: [The Emperor] ordered that the Han population in Hebei pay taxes according to the number of households, to be overseen by Yelü Chucai; the population in the Western Regions should pay taxes according to the number of individuals, to be overseen by Maḥmūd Khwarāzmi. 宋濂 Song Lian, *元史 Yuanshi* (北京 Beijing: 中華書局 Zhonghua shuju, 1977 [1370]), 三〇. For a detailed handling of these two major divisions in the Ögödei's institutional structure, see Ostrowski, "The "*Tamma*" and the Dual-Administrative Structure of the Mongol Empire."

after the final conquest.[78] Under the influence of Yelü Chucai, however, Ögödei implemented an administrative layer in order to prevent the irregular collection of taxes and to aid in the officials' attempts to manage continued production, but still allowed stakeholders to be directly represented in their apportioned territories. Yelü Chucai protested that direct collection by stakeholders "was not beneficial," so Ögödei "ordered that each royal house should assign only *darughačin*, that officials employed by the court should collect the shares and distribute them, and that, without an imperial order, no one could collect taxes nor levy personnel."[79] It took until the Mongols finally conquered the Song in 1278 for the bureaucratic organization to succeed in firmly transferring control of production and territory to administrative institutions—and this only in the Yuan territories. The stakeholders, now receiving their distributed shares through payments, were removed from direct management of production and territory.[80]

As related in §3, restoring stakeholders' direct access to sedentary sources of wealth and

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[78] 詔以眞定民戶奉太后湯沐, 中原諸州民戶分賜諸王, 貴戚, 斡魯朶: 拔都, 平陽府; 茶合帶, 太原府; 古與, 大名府; 孛魯帶, 邢州; 果魯干, 河間府; 孛魯古帶, 廣寧府; 野苦, 益都, 濟南二府戶內撥賜; 按赤帶, 濱, 棣州; 斡陳那顏, 平, 灤州; 皇子闊端, 駙馬赤苦, 公主阿剌海, 公主果眞, 國王查剌溫, 茶合帶, 鍛眞, 蒙古寒札, 按赤那顏, 圻那顏, 火斜, 朮思, 並于東平府戶內撥賜有差: [The Emperor decreed] Zhending's civilian population be given to the Empress Mother as an appanage; the population of the provinces of northern China should be divided among the princes and imperial relatives [as follows]: Orda and Batu should receive Pingyang Fu; Ča'adai receives Taiyan Fu; Güyük receives Damingfu; Beiludai receives Xingzhou; Kölgen receives Hejianfu; Belgütei receives Guangning Fu; and for Yekü are to be set aside the two prefectures of Yidou and Ji'nan; Alčidai receives Bin and Dizhou; Očigin Noyan receives Ping and Luanzhou; Imperial Son Köden, Imperial Son-in-law Čikü, Imperial Princess Alaqai, Imperial Princess Goǰin, Princes of the State Čila'un, Ča'adai, Dönǰin, Mönggü Qalǰa, Alǰin Noyan, J̌ebe[?] Noyan, Huoxie, and Shusi should each be assigned portions of Dongping Fu according to their rank. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三五.

[79] 耶律楚材言非便, 遂命各位止設達魯花赤, 朝廷置官吏收其租頒之, 非奉詔不得徵. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三五.

[80] Brose, *Subjects and Masters*, 4.

production was a sure method through which Ögödei's successors won stakeholders' allegiance but the cost to stability and long-term viability of the taxes collected from those sources was threatened. Ögödei's primary administrative problem as qa'an came in the struggle to maintain a smoothly functioning administration that combined a fair and efficient redistribution of wealth with the careful accumulation of wealth and resources necessary to effectively manage the agricultural infrastructure. He was aided in facing these challenges by the capable and experienced men that his father had selected for high offices in addition to the officials acquired during his reign. The administrators in Mongol employ at the beginning of Ögödei's reign, for example, were faced with the challenge of restoring order to north China at the expense of Mongol military elite who had been exploiting the region. In one instance, Maḥmūd Yalavač and his son, Mas'ūd Beg, were charged with restoration and rehabilitation of the devastated region around Bukhara, a task for which they were praised for having accomplished thoroughly.[81] The efforts of former Chinese bureaucrats to restructure the elements of Mongol military government by which the elite were enriched was highly unpopular and met with resistance even at the highest levels of Mongol elite when Ča'adai interfered in Ögödei's appointments.[82]

Ögödei had inherited an *ad hoc* system of trusted personal advisors, regional overseers appointed by Činggis Qan himself, and bureaucrats procured from conquered peoples—all of whom reported directly to him. These officials included Šigi Qutuqu, Yelü Chucai, the Yalavač

[81] Juvainī, *TJG*, v. 1, 84-85.

[82] See §2.4.3 for the episode in which Ča'adai dismissed Maḥmūd Yalavač from his post and seized territory which been assigned to him by Ögödei. Rashīd al-Dīn, *JaT*, 775.

family, 張柔 Zhang Rou, and Čormaqan.[83] This system had been dependent upon Činggis Qan—the man, not the position—and was, thus, highly personal and subject to his whim. Also, it must be noted, that the scale of administrative demands was significantly smaller than that which faced Ögödei. Under Činggis Qan, the leaders of confederate peoples, either through genuine loyalty or fear of reprisal, seldom (after 1206) challenged his authority or raised objections to innovations or reforms to steppe tradition. The successes that all allied with Činggis Qan and the Yeke Mongol Ulus enjoyed during this period no doubt served a strong incentive to find an ongoing solution.

Thus, the management crises at the time of Ögödei's enthronement are clear: no longer were stakeholders bound to the confederacy by their commitment to Činggis Qan. With his death came a stutter in the pace of military conquest and, for a period of nearly two years, the rate of expansion slowed. During this time, questions about the continued existence of the Yeke Mongol Ulus would have revolved around the shape and nature of new leadership. Would they continue to build upon the successes of Činggis Qan as a unified confederacy? Would they reorganize into smaller groups to more efficiently pursue wealth and conquest as appropriate in the various regions into which they had expanded?

Ögödei was supported by a bureaucratically-minded coterie made up of Mongols who had been educated in the traditions of the settled peoples they had overcome (such as Čormaqan); the bureaucrats and other leaders from conquered and allied territories entrusted to positions of leadership (among them, Maḥmūd Yalavač, Mas'ūd Beg, and Yelü Chucai); those

[83] These and others are examined in Igor de Rachewiltz, Hok-lam Chan, Hsiao Chi-ch'ing and Peter and Geier, eds., *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200-1300)*, Asiatische Forschungen (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993), 75-207.

who held composite military and administrative roles and excelled at both (Zhang Rou, foremost); and those of Činggis Qan's family and inner circle who understood the complexities and possibilities of an autocratic empire (Šigi Qutuqu, for example). This imperialist faction wanted to see the Mongol destruction and despoiling reigned in and, instead, the inception of processes that would both encourage the redevelopment of devastated territories and ensure the maintenance of steady streams of revenue needed to support imperial government institutions.

Genuine concern for subject populations can also not be dismissed. Zhang Rou, for example, had been born a peasant under the Jin and had made his career by building up an insurgent enclave in the Jin state that won the loyalties of locals who enabled him to become a powerful rebel and, later, a valuable acquisition by the Mongol confederation. He already had investment in people and land in former Jin territories and continued to use his position as a myriarch in the Mongol hierarchy to improve conditions in his domains.[84] In one often-reported instance, Yelü Chucai allegedly convinced Ögödei to refrain from turning vast swathes of former Jin farmland into pasturage and annihilating the Chinese population who lived there.[85] Moreover, the stabilization of the succession to high office and the smooth transfer of power was of utmost importance to this system and its underlying subservience to the cycles of agricultural production. In the bureaucratic worldview, the stabilization of succession was made possible

[84]癸卯年春正月, 張柔分兵屯田於襄城: In [January 22-February 20, 1243, Zhang Rou divided his troops and assigned a part of them to farm in Xiangcheng. 宋濂 Song Lian, *Yuanshi*, 三八; C. C. Hsiao, "Chang Jou (1190-1268)," in *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200-1300)*, ed. Igor de Rachewiltz, Asiatische Forschungen (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993).

[85] Igor de Rachewiltz, "Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, Yeh-lü Chu, Yeh-lü Hsi-liang," in *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200-1300)*, ed. Igor de Rachewiltz, Hok-lam Chan, Hsiao Chi-ch'ing and Peter and Geier (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993), 149.

partly through the concentration of power by the few.

Concentration of power in the office of qa'an, however, alienated the stakeholders and undermined the authority of the *quriltai*. When Töregene held the office and attempted to reverse Ögödei's administrative policies, she set off a process of destruction that further weakened collective sovereignty. The bureaucratic organization, in order to withstand Töregene's attacks, was forced to double down on their efforts to strengthen the state institutions if administrative rule was to survive. The result was, to an extent, a success: as the elite dithered and squabbled over divisions of power, administrative institutions survived and the bureaucrats who persevered through Töregene's reign managed to be reinstated. In the end, however, they could do little to prevent the deterioration of collective sovereignty. Batu and Möngke, nevertheless, thought they had the solution.

§4.7 Toluid Coup

The division of rule over the Mongol Empire between Batu and Möngke in 1251 marked an overt acknowledgement that the Mongol state was not to be ruled by a single qa'an and that a single *quriltai* could not adequately address the wide-ranging concerns of the stakeholders. Batu's success in officially extricating his appanage from the purview of the office of qa'an was the institutionalization of a trait that we have observed throughout this and previous chapters: that the Mongol state could no longer function as a single polity. This important fact, however, has long been overshadowed by misconception that the installment of Möngke in the office of qa'an represented a dynastic coup. The so-called Toluid coup would be better interpreted as an attempt by the only Činggis Qanid line with both the interest (the J̌očids were already becoming

less invested in the politics of Central Eurasia) and the political/military might (the Ča'adaids lacked the resources of other appanages) to impose order on a decomposing administrative network.

Instead of accepting Möngke's selection for the office of qa'an as a Toluid coup, we can more accurately make a study of Töregene's regency, Güyük's reign, and Oghul Qaimiš's regency to find explanations for how the Toluids—with the crucial support of Batu and the J̌očids—were able to install Möngke in the office without the full support of the *quriltai*. Not as simple as this—there were claims that authority should remain with the descendants of Ögödei—it is, nonetheless, a viable alternate view of the period of "civil war" and "coup." The disruptions of Töregene's prolonged regency hold the first clues to the impetus for the expansion of bureaucratic purview that reached its climax during Möngke's reign. In the long run, the slow and steady strategies of autocracy eventually overcame the tactical advantages of collective sovereignty precisely because the weaknesses inherent in collective sovereignty could only be countered by autocratic practices. Meaning that, when the office of qa'an was threatened by the fracturing of the unified Mongol Empire, the bureaucratic organization stepped up to provide wealth and to leverage power in the form of policy implementation and resources for payments to stakeholders. As a single, central confederacy became less relevant to stakeholders, the qa'an held waning influence upon the *quriltai* and, thus, less power over matters of confederacy. For officials in the bureaucratic organization who were responsible for the maintenance of agrarian domains, this favorable turn meant that the office of qa'an was more readily bent toward the autocratic position preferred for the central oversight of such matters as taxes, disaster relief, accumulation for future shortages, the stabilization of prices, and distribution of products.

Despite the successes of 1229-35, the Ögödeids had made a real mess of things by

1251.[86] Möngke's purges—in which entire lines of Ögödei's descendants were executed—are evidence of this. Certainly, these purges were meant to secure Möngke's place, but it is going too far to assume that this was motivated by conscious acknowledgment of shifting dynastic lines. That Köten—Ögödei's relatively powerful and apparently well-liked son—was not only left alive but given shares of the troops, lands, and peoples belonging to his executed relatives should give us pause to reconsider the goals of Möngke's policies. Allsen's thorough study of Möngke's reign overstates the orderliness of the empire in this period but clearly illustrates that his administration's primary concerns were the securing of trade networks, restoration of channels of taxation, stability of urban territories, and the continuation of conquest. The arguments made in this dissertation challenge Allsen's by suggesting that the developments in the Mongol Empire before Möngke's reign precluded the possibility of rule by a single sovereign ruler—or that it was Möngke's intention to do so. Furthermore, Möngke reinstated many of the administrators that had been put in place by Ögödei, or reconfirmed those that Güyük had reappointed thus furthering the corrective measures that resulted in the restoration of many of Ögödei's institutions. Instead of exterminating Ögödeids, it is possible that Möngke was eliminating troublemakers—most of whom happened to be Ögödeids. Everyone wanted a piece of the pie and the Ögödeids had received a greater portion of it for a very long time; they were not giving it up easily. In their own time, the Toluids held on tenaciously and with more success than the Ögödeids, to the authority and political power they had acquired. This was, in no small part, thanks to their recasting of the Ögödeids and their disenfranchisement narrative as one of conflict

[86] See especially Oghul Qaimiš's edict in 1250 raising the *qubčur* to one in ten as a precipitating event in Allsen, "The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China," 389-90.

over dynastic legitimacy.

The conflicts between Oghul Qaimiš and Batu concerning the timing and location of the *quriltai* to elect a successor to Güyük were discussed in §3.5. Here, however, I will revisit this issue in relation to the "Toluid coup." Batu argued that "the geographical spread of the empire mitigated against a single sovereign, in favor of two rulers working in cooperation."[87] Along with the failure of the *yam*, inefficiencies of wealth distribution, lack of confidence in administrative institutions, and the frustration with the ongoing inability from 1235 to alleviate these problems, a condominium between Batu and Möngke was a viable solution to the empire's problems.

Part of the conflict over Batu's *quriltai* concerned its location. "Rather than set it in the region of the Kerülen and Onon rivers as tradition demanded," Broadbridge says, "he summoned the Chinggisids to attend him two-thousand-odd miles [away] . . . arguing variously that his gout, or the state of his horses, kept him from riding as far as the Mongol homeland."[88] Whether or not a tradition had been established by this time in the short decades of the Mongol Empire—in 1234-35, the *quriltai* was held near Qaraqorum—the location could have signaled a shift in the center of authority that Ča'adaids and Ögödeids did not welcome. Each election proceeded under different circumstances and it doubtful a pattern concerning how qa'an's were selected can be established, much less determine which of the expected outcomes were thwarted by plot and intrigue. Maybe Töregene campaigned so forcefully for Güyük because it was known that neither Shiremün nor Köten would be selected. As regent, she was an incumbent, of sorts, and the candidate she chose to endorse would enjoy an advantage over others. The plot to assassinate

[87] Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire*, 205.

[88] Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire*, 203.

Möngke may not have been in response to the obstruction of a proper *quriltai* but, instead, a case of retaliation by the disaffected losers. Likewise, Möngke's purges may not have been the final stages of a dynastic overthrow but a radical response to a threat by the holder of an unstable office. Draconian measures taken by insecure leaders in the hopes of fortifying tenuous holds on offices to which they were not elected by a clear majority are not unknown. I do not share some scholars' opinions, expressed here by Broadbridge, that Batu's insistence that the *quriltai* be convened near him "was actually a conspiracy, hatched among Sorqoqtani, Batu, and Möngke," nor the idea that the Toluids willingly accepted this "since they were there expressly to help usurp power from the Ögedeyids, and the whole purpose of the rump quriltai was to allow Batu to orchestrate a coup."[89]

Instead, real power, experience, and seniority lay with Batu. Oghul Qaimiš was a relatively weak regent and she did not represent a viable candidate for the office of qa'an. If collective sovereignty was still the mode of governance that the stakeholders realistically expected, then it follows that, besides impeding the dreams of Oghul Qaimiš and her sons, Batu's right to convene the *quriltai* is not likely to have been out of order. Except—and this is the key point—when these events were later recast in the interest of the party in power to legitimize their own desires to monopolize the high offices of empire.

Making one last bid to secure the full participation of the stakeholders, Batu moved to postpone Möngke's enthronement for a later date. Presumably, Batu still wanted the full participation of the Ögödeids and Ča'adaids in the decision to place Möngke on the throne. Despite attempts to plead, cajole, and finally force them to attend, key people from both lines

[89] Broadbridge, *Women and the Making of the Mongol Empire*, 203.

remained obstinate.

§4.8 Conclusion

Much of the scholarly attention paid to Mongol Empire is concerned with its end—that period of time, it goes, when the emperor no longer held power over the empire's distant parts; when the descendants of Činggis Qan's sons no longer acknowledged a single qa'an; and the vision for the expansion of the empire was not a shared vision. This is Jackson's "dissolution," a time of fracture, devolution, and collapse of unity.[90] Nonetheless, consensus on when the end of the Mongol Empire came remains elusive. If my arguments have found any purchase, this view of the dissolution of the Mongol Empire in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is ill-suited to explaining the narrative.

In previous chapters, I have tried to present a reassessment Mongol rule in the reigns of Ögödei and his successors that adequately considers the division of responsibilities and the corporate makeup of the Mongol government. Consistent with the notion of collective sovereignty, it is more accurate to understand the ever-expanding Mongol state and its subsequent fracture into smaller polities as a consistent progression—one that functioned to maintain regional stability and efficiency instead of preserving centralizing authority. This concern with keeping subjugated people productively contributing to commerce (and thus taxes) was consistent with the Mongols' custom of retaining the leaders of the peoples they conquered, sometimes elevating them to the command of troops and entrusting them with the collection and

[90] Peter Jackson, "The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire," *Central Asiatic Journal* 22 (1978).

submission of revenues in their home regions. Even the appanaging of territories by Činggis Qan hints that this subdivision should not be viewed as deterioration, but as the desirable outcome of the Mongol enterprise. It is surprising that the inheritance customs—based upon a practice of division of possessions—often discussed in Činggis Qan's act of appanaging the conquests are not scaled up to apply to the increasingly decentralized Mongol Empire in its "waning" years.

Instead, many scholars—Peter Jackson foremost among them—view the ascendancy of Möngke to the office of qa'an as the result of a plot to unseat the Ögödeids from their dynastic hold over the office. I maintain that the Mongol state was not set on a course toward Ögödeid empire only to be impeded by Toluid putsch, as both our sources and literature generally assume. The prevailing view of the so-called coup relies upon the assumption that Činggis Qan intended and arranged for the line of Ögödei to maintain the position of supreme authority, essentially setting up an Ögödeid dynasty.

Despite the often-mentioned fact that naming a successor was a break from steppe tradition, its novelty is not sufficient to deduce that Činggis Qan was establishing a dynastic line for Ögödei, especially considering the above discussion that Činggis Qan intended a division of responsibilities among his heirs. The *quriltai* that elected Ögödei in 1229 still debated his fitness for the office and may have given serious consideration to other candidates, as explained in §2.3.1. That, in the end, they chose to vote in accordance with Činggis Qan's wishes says more, perhaps, about Činggis Qan's foresight and ability to perceive the needs of the evolving state than it does about the extent to which the Mongols were bound by the late qan's orders. Furthermore, Ögödei never possessed the absolute power necessary to assure dynastic succession. Even his own family disregarded his wish to raise Shiremün to qa'an. As I have discussed in §4.4, Ögödei held a special position of power over the management of urban

holdings but was not a monarch over the empire.

The Mongols did not at any time during the reigns of Činggis Qan and Ögödei sacrifice local stability of their subjugated territories in favor of obeisance to centralizing authority. That local conditions relating to the circulation of wealth and goods were of great concern to the Mongols is evident in all our sources. The decrees issued by Ögödei at both of the *quriltai*s during his reign and discussed in §2 concern the maintenance of order, the proper channels to ensure remission of taxes, and directives meant to prevent the impediment of production and trade by entities of the state. The period of Töregene's deconstruction of administration that followed the death of Ögödei (which Güyük futilely attempted to reverse during his short reign) resulted in degeneration of some crucial institutions of government and the loss of key bureaucrats. The destructive processes set in motion by Ögödei himself as he descended into impassivity and alcoholism in the latter half of his reign were fully realized in Töregene's rivalries and poorly advised policies that crippled the institutions of the empire.[91] Güyük's attempts to repair the damage were, like Güyük himself, short-lived. Finally, Oghul Qaimiš and her disastrous regency contributed nothing to the longevity of Mongol Empire. Thus was the way open for Batu and Möngke to divide what was left of the state between them and to deprive Ögödei's heirs of a place among the ruling elite.

[91] In both sources and literature, it is implied that Töregene's goal was to place her own descendants in power, but this depends upon the assumption that her goal was securing the dynasty for Ögödeids. The evidence points more toward a simpler explanation: she was interested in her own aggrandizement. The fact that she delayed the *quriltai* necessary to select the next qa'an for so long and that Güyük immediately removed from office and tried most of those who had been elevated during her reign are further evidence.

§5 Conclusion

§5.1 Review

In this dissertation, I have attempted to show that 1227-51 was a transitional time for the Mongol Empire: a period during which the traditional Central Eurasian steppe technologies of rule came to be ineffectual in addressing the demands of the Mongol Empire as it grew in geographic size; institutional complexity; and numbers of people, both elites and subjects. In §1, I outlined the underlying factors crucial to understanding this era as one in which the propriety of collective sovereignty gradually abated in a process that resulted in the fragmentation of the unified Mongol state and the increase in bureaucratic control over administrative functions and institutions. In §§2 and 3, I constructed a narrative of the ruling elite from 1227 to 1251, both to address a gap in the scholarship of the period as well as to lay a foundation for arguing for the need to reconsider the period. These mostly biographical chapters were synthesized from Persian, Chinese, and Mongolian sources and presented the reigns of Ögödei, Töregene, Güyük, and Oghul Qaimiš as coherent and interrelated; an era that should be examined as a whole and in which there are discernable characteristics that make it distinct from what came before 1227 and after 1251. This is an approach not taken before and one, I maintain, that is vital to developing a better understanding of the transitional processes in the early Mongol Empire.

Finally, §4 comprised my arguments that, first, the elements that began the transition from collective sovereignty toward autocracy were evident in the reign of Ögödei and were, in some cases, the direct result of policies put in place by Ögödei himself. I attempted in this chapter to tie together several themes to make a case that fragmentation of the Mongol Empire,

conceived in negative terms such as "dissolution" by many scholars, was not necessarily viewed with distress by the Mongol ruling elite. Instead, I offered evidence that fragmentation was a natural—possibly even intended—outcome of the political process that delivered benefit to stakeholders. Applying this alternative view of the fragmentation of the unified empire, I examined the issue of "Toluid coup" and offered an alternative view of the series of events that placed Möngke—and thus, the Toluids—in the office of qa'an. This alternate view suggests that later Toluid bureaucrats attributed qualities of a dynastic coup to the events of 1250-51 that resulted in Möngke's selection.

§5.2 Implications

If this project is groundbreaking, it is only a gentle turning of the soil for the planting of a few seeds. Revolutionizing Mongol studies is unlikely at this stage barring the uncovering of Činggis Qan's tomb, discovery of a manuscript of the *Altan Debter*, or some other such large-scale revelation. What is more urgently needed is a reconsideration of the approaches that have been previously taken in interpreting the Mongols as rulers and administrators. This includes reevaluating many of the conclusions that have been reached by scholars on the nature of their state and the intentions of the Mongols concerning what we now call the Mongol Empire. Much of the work on Mongols remains mired in archaic approaches that rehash tired tropes of steppe pastoralists as violent savages and brilliant military strategists who surprised themselves by having an empire to rule.

The appeal of Mongol history to a general audience should not be underestimated in the call for reevaluation—they did impact an expanse of the habitable planet that continues to resonate for many people—and their role in the subsequent formations of national identities,

ethnic mythmaking, and storytelling is considerable. All the more, then, that we should be carefully reassessing the now obsolete methodologies upon which much of the canon of historical research on the Mongols was generated. For many people who have a stake in the history of Mongol Empire, how professional historians interpret these events is of concern. This dissertation contributes to the community of scholars' efforts to scrutinize not only the history of the Mongols, but also to the ongoing efforts of reevaluation that defines the practice of historians. I hope that this dissertation has offered some alternatives to the existing interpretations and assumptions about the nature of Mongol Empire and their ruling techniques. Some specific implications of the research I have done that I want to emphasize follow.

First, I hope it has been made clear in the previous chapters that I understand the Mongol Empire to have been founded and to have continued to exist for one primary purpose: acquisition of wealth. Desire for enrichment was the causal agent that brought the peoples of the Mongolian steppe into the confederation of Činggis Qan. It was the motivation behind their subsequent military conquests. The "common project of the ruling house"[1] (see §1.1) was an economic project: to control the channels and production of wealth with the purpose of enriching themselves and their supporters. Thus, it was the primary concern of collective sovereignty to collect and redistribute wealth. However this was interpreted, justified, or legitimized, it is the only consistent explanation that makes sense of the actions, decisions, and events of the early Mongol Empire.

This does not (necessarily) mean that the entire Mongol enterprise should be understood as one vast plundering expedition. Yet, we should not dismiss the idea, completely: *ad hoc* collection was the foundation of the enterprise and they—even Ögödei—only reluctantly

[1] Sneath, *Imperial Statecraft*, 7.

tolerated the suggestions of bureaucrats to restrain themselves and only so long as the money collected by their suggested alternatives was judged sufficient. That the process became increasingly complex did not change the underlying reason for their continued dedication to expansion and collection of wealth. The entrenched interpretation of the Mongol Empire as constructed around any other ideology has been one of the consequences of relying upon sources with an interest in making the qa'an a king for their own purposes (Persian) or recasting the early empire to fit historiographic traditions (Chinese). Burdening Ögödei and his successors with the responsibilities and expectations of kingship is a fallacy. Perhaps the matter is partly their fault for using this language in diplomacy and as a tool to bend others to their desires. Only with the later Toluids do we find an intentional language of sovereignty that seems to have been reflected in the actual practice of kingship.

Finally, the conclusions of this dissertation may have some implications for our understanding of empire and the variable political constructs that make up that understanding. If the Mongols had an empire before 1251, perhaps it can only be perceived as an economic empire. If my argument that the Mongols' intentions in the era studied here have been misinterpreted, then it compels us to rethink several aspects of Mongol Empire, including the name, itself.

§ 5.3 Next Steps

In the course of this project, I have taken up and (temporarily) abandoned several lines of research that could serve to expand and contextualize the conclusions I have reached. Some of these related areas of research found their way into the previous chapters as incongruous interludes in what may have otherwise been more succinct discussions. Some of those possible next steps are described below.

§5.3.1 Nomadic Councils: Perhaps the lowest-hanging fruit in the array of further research topics suggested by this dissertation is a study of the occasional assemblies that were a feature of pastoralist political organization. I refer to what was known among the Mongols as the *quriltai*. While I addressed this in a limited way in §4.3, preliminary research into this political mechanism promises that there is much more to be revealed by a broad comparative study. The phenomenon appears to be common among pastoralists across a profound breadth of time and distance. Little study of the nomadic congress as a distinct practice has been done at all, so there is much that can be gained by an initial foray into its defining properties and features.

§5.3.2 Collective Sovereignty as Family Business: The practice of collective sovereignty among the elite Mongols has persistently suggested comparisons to corporate structures and characteristics—and I refer here to the corporate in the sense of having characteristics of a for-profit business. This is more than just a fanciful association, as there are some quite specific aspects of collective sovereignty and the early Mongol Empire that resonate with the management of a particular kind of modern business practice: the family business. In a previous edition of my professional life, I worked for a top-tier business school that, as a service of its executive training sector, offered programs specifically directed at family-run businesses that were in transition from first to second or third generations. The factors that played decisive roles, the challenges the businesses faced, and the nature of the businesses with which we worked all have parallels to the Mongols in 1227-51. When later I found myself married into a family whose business was undergoing this same transition—essentially from small family business to big business, and from first generation to second—the connections were obvious. I was compelled to

write the better part of a chapter about it which did not find its way into the finished dissertation. Nonetheless, some of the terminology did: “enterprise” and “stakeholders,” for example. It has been particularly useful for me to conceptualize the Mongols and their enterprise as a family business when understanding the redistribution networks and approaches to shared decision-making. The period of 1227-51 is the period of a transition in the Mongol family business in which Ögödei, the son of the founder, took on management of an enterprise that was built around the personality of his father. Ögödei was charged with turning that project into a sustainable business that did not rely upon on an individual but, instead, management defined by offices. I am doubtful that my father-in-law is the Činggis Qan of bakers of organic, whole-grain breads but my brother-in-law certainly faces many of the same administrative and organizational challenges that confronted Ögödei. Mongol Empire as family business needs further investigation.

§5.3.3 Jin Conquest: During my research, it became quite clear to me that the most influential event for the Mongol Empire in 1227-51 was the 1234 conquest of the Jin. The reverberations of the subsummation of Jin military and administrative personnel; the challenges of administering the Jin civilization; and the nearly doubling in size of the territorial holdings had deeply transformative effects upon all aspects of the Mongol enterprise. If the conclusions I have reached in this dissertation are to be challenged or expanded in a significant way, further research into the effects of the Jin conquest upon the Mongol Empire is the avenue to doing so. Examination of this event may even provide us with that elusive moment when collective sovereignty reached the limits of its ability to maintain control over the Mongol state.

§5.4 Final Words

Though I am tempted here to enumerate my deeds and faults (see §2.4.3), I trust that it is not yet time for me to do so. The urgency of the issues that arise in this story have been dulled to bluntness by the passage of eight centuries. With some effort, we can sense the violence and political machinations that shaped events in the years 1227-51, but it remains a distant, removed story. As I complete this project at the end of 2020, the events in my present denote a desperate flailing of society and politics that so closely parallel this narrative of the Mongols that the compulsion to turn it into a comparative study has been constant. The Mongols about which I have written here were a cadre of self-centered jerks who spent their energies and political currency tearing down carefully built bureaucratic institutions to fill their pockets and serve their own petty squabbles over power and wealth. They were a people so removed from the realities of those over whom they ruled that they fell into fantasies of conspiracies, deadly ideological battles, and inhuman cruelties that reveal the vacuity of those in whose hands the power over life and death for millions of subjects rested. I am not certain whether I write here about Mongols in the thirteenth century or Americans in the twenty-first, but it seems not to matter which. The dreary repetitiveness of it all is demoralizing. As a result of that resonance with current events, a biting cynicism has accompanied the final stages of this project. Overused and misunderstood is the axiom about history repeating itself, yet it remains true. In this modern United States—as in most times and places—the present is overshadowed by a disrespect for those who came before and an absolute certainty that "It can't happen here!"

I am more surprised than anyone that a work of this kind by one as apolitical as I imagine myself to be should conclude with a hackneyed pronouncement about how the product of this niched research is the key to understanding the present. It is not. I have long taken pleasure in

discomfiting students and colleagues by being the first to say that the Mongols and their history do not matter to us in the present. Study of the Mongols is useful only insofar as the questions we ask and the answers we devise serve to expand our intellectual experiences and make us better judges of the present and better informed designers of the future.

Part of what we historians do, and what we train our students to do, is question the sources of our knowledge and think critically about how we know what we know. In that respect, the conclusions drawn from my research do have some currency. There remain more questions than answers about the Mongol Empire, even in the narrow period and topics I have examined, here. Those I have not addressed will be taken up by others. It is my hope that the subjects I have explored in the previous pages will attract talent greater than my own; that my search for solutions to these puzzles will incite others to purse them, as well; and that I have opened pathways for other researchers to contribute to our ongoing, collective effort to make sense of the past. If I have done my task well, this dissertation will soon be made obsolete by the further contributions of other scholars.

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