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Mongol loyalty networks: cultural transmission and Chinggisid innovation

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3. Actors and Objects of Loyalty

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter One we established, based on Welsford's work, our categories of loyalty, namely: charismatic, clientelist, inertial, communal, and idealistic loyalties. In Chapter Two we came to a better understanding of how the Persian source material understood Mongol loyalty. We must now determine to whom actors performed loyalty in the early Mongol world, what I have termed the 'objects of loyalty'. In this list, I include more than simply claimants to the throne as Welsford does, as I believe that to understand the complex issues at stake with regards to loyalty in the Mongol world, we must accept that there were many candidates for people's loyalties, whether they be people, institutions, or ideals. For objects of loyalty, I will rely on those established in my 2021 article, 'The Objects of Loyalty in the Early Mongol Empire (Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries)'.[1] This list is by no means comprehensive, and focuses specifically on political loyalties. For the pre-imperial Mongol world, in this article I selected three objects of loyalty: the rightful lord, the *törü*, and the khan. For the imperial Mongols, I chose eight objects: the *qa'an/qaghan*, Chinggis or Chinggis' legacy, the previous *qa'an*, the *jasaq*, the regent, the *quriltai*, the *aqa* and the lord/khatun of the *ulus*.[2]

For actors in the 13th century, loyalties were often expected to multiple of these objects simultaneously, so our examples will consider how and why a certain loyalty may have won out, and the different points of view which frame our understanding of these loyalty decisions. Given that some of the objects mentioned are more abstract, here I will focus on the personal objects of loyalty: the khan, *qa'an*, regent, *aqa, quriltai*, and lord or khatun of the *ulus*.[3] The other objects mentioned

[1]Jones, 'The Objects of Loyalty', pp. 1-25.

[2] The regional objects of loyalty will be dealt with in the next chapter.

[3] In this discussion, the institution of the *keshig* is not addressed, as it was not an object of loyalty itself, though naturally it was a key location where personal loyalties to specific Chinggisids was engendered. For more on this important institution, see C. Melville, 'The Keshig in Iran: The Survival of the Royal Mongol Household', in (ed.) L. Komaroff, *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan,* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 135-16; C.P. Atwood, 'Ulus Emirs, Keshig Elders, Signatures, and Marriage Partners: The Evolution of a Classic Mongol Institution', in (ed.) D. Sneath, *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 141-174; C. Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road: a history of Central Asia from the Bronze Age to the present*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); Favereau, *The Horde*, Chapter 3, pp. 102-6.

will be considered as part of idealistic loyalty decisions. In analysing these objects, we will come to a better understanding of the dynamics of Mongol politics. The cultural and societal framework which provide the backdrop for these loyalty decisions will also be illuminated through this consideration.

Before delving into our objects, let us consider an 'ideal' case study in the early Mongol period, where reasons for loyalty decisions are spelled out in our source material. This is the case of the Je'üriyet sub-group of Mongols, descended from another son of Chinggis' ancestor Tumina.[4] In an episode recounted by both Rashīd al-Dīn and the *YS*, the Je'üriyet, who were followers of Temüjin's relatives and rivals, the Tayichi'ut, complained about their masters' treatment of them and went over to Temüjin's side at some point in the late 12th century.[5] The issues in the source material notwithstanding, we are provided with a fascinating to and fro by our Persian and Chinese interlocutors which highlights the different loyalty considerations of the Je'üriyet.[6] The first mentioned by Rashīd al-Dīn was the Je'üriyet's fear of Temüjin after his defeat of the Tayichi'ut and his boiling of 70 enemies in 70 cauldrons.[7] Here we have their inertial loyalty to their previous masters being undermined. The danger to them from a resurgent Temüjin may have been greater than that represented by their masters should they decide to change their loyalties. At this point, the Je'üriyet moved their tents closer to Temüjin, already a significant social and political step.[8]

The subsequent event which highlighted Temüjin's suitability as a leader mentioned by both sources was a hunt in which Temüjin and his followers participated alongside the Je'üriyet. In the course of this hunt, Temüjin gave over a larger share of the game to his guests than they expected, as well as kettles and fodder. In this instance, Temüjin shows himself as a gracious and generous ruler,

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[4] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 106.

[5] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, pp. 161-2; The History of the Yuan, Chapter 1, (ed. and trans. C.P. Atwood), *Mongolian Studies*, Vol. 39, (2017/18) pp. 10-11. This incident is not mentioned by the *SHM*, which rarely mentions the Je'üriyet. Interestingly, however, the story in Rashīd al-Dīn and the *YS* about the Tayichi'ut attack on Temüjin appears in a very similar form in the *SHM* §129-130, though here it is Jamuqa who is the main aggressor, with the Tayichi'ut not mentioned. The similarities between the stories, e.g. the numbers of troops involved, Temüjin's location on hearing the news, who brought the news to him, and the boiling of 70 people in cauldrons after the battle, indicate these stories relate to the same incident. However, the differences are noteworthy. Most importantly, in Rashīd al-Dīn and the *YS*, Temüjin wins the battle, while in the *SHM* it is Jamuqa who is victorious. The *YS* and Rashīd al-Dīn accounts report the attack as by the Tayichi'ut *and* Jamuqa. The other major discrepancy lies in the perpetrator of the boiling. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, it was Chinggis who boiled 70 seditious enemies, while in the *SHM* it was Jamuqa who boiled 70 princes of the Chinos group, apparently a branch of the Tayichi'ut, though loyal to Temüjin according to RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 102. The boiling episode is not mentioned in the *YS*. The whole incident is a testament to the difficulties of constructing a consistent narrative using several different source traditions for this early period.

[6] According to Christopher Atwood, these two sources both relied on a Mongolian/Chinese text called the *Authentic Chronicles of Chinggis Khan*, a late 13th century production, Atwood, 'Ghazanid Chronicle', pp. 62-65.

[7] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 161. The *SHM*'s version of events sees groups such as the Mangqut and Uru'ut abandon Jamuqa after his boiling of the Chinos, so this type of cruelty could be viewed in very different ways.

[8] Take Temüjin's wife Börte's advice to Temüjin to move away from Jamuqa because he had become a false friend, SHM/de Rachewiltz, §118, p. 46.

playing up to the charismatic loyalties of a group he hoped to win over. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, 'he is a ruler who takes care of his subjects and knows how to command.'[9] In a much more practical sense, the Je'üriyet were given great rewards by Temüjin, while they stated that the Tayichi'ut 'often seize our soldiers and horses, and rob us of our food and drink'.[10] Temüjin therefore shows them the material rewards which would accrue to them should they join him, in the *YS* promising them all the plunder that their cart trails and footprints would reach.[11]

Finally, the Je'üriyet discussed the ethical grounds for deserting their rightful lords, the Tayichi'ut, and joining Chinggis. According to the *YS*, the Je'üriyet justified their abandonment of the Tayichi'ut by claiming that they are 'without any just measure between the people and their lords' and that Temüjin is the only one who keeps to this 'just measure'.[12] This 'just measure' seems to echo the *yeke törü* of the *SHM* or the *yeke yosun* of Rashīd al-Dīn, meaning 'great principle', which defined the relations between a lord and his subjects.[13] The lord's requirements in this view were the providing of protection and reward for one's faithful subjects. Before the introduction of the Chinggisid *jasaq*, it was the *törü*, customary law, which governed political actions. According to the *YS*, the Tayichi'ut's actions constituted a violation of this principle, and their leader Ülük brought his people en masse to submit to Temüjin.[14] At this stage the Je'üriyet could be seen as taking an idealistic standpoint; their masters had broken the great principle, and therefore should be abandoned. Rashīd al-Dīn, however, provides a dissenting voice. Apparently, Ülük (here called Ölüg Bahādūr) discussed the potential action with Maqui Yadana, another of the Je'üriyet, who did not believe the Tayichi'ut had breached this principle significantly, and that the Je'üriyet would be wrong to turn against their *aqa* and *ini* (elder and younger brothers) without just cause. This character was seemingly unable to convince anyone of this standpoint, and Ülük went over to Chinggis with the Je'üriyet leaders, perhaps indicating that whatever the disagreements, communal loyalties saw the whole group act together. Apparently having broken faith with the Tayichi'ut, the Je'üriyet saw no problem in doing so again, abandoning Temüjin at one stage, only to later return to him.[15]

This incident provides a sort of idealised case study in a political loyalty decision. Some of these themes may be tropes, but the dialogue certainly provides us with 'classical' examples of the considerations of the time, with reasons and justifications for actions provided. Many decisions such

[9] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 162.
[10] YS/Atwood, p. 10.
[11] Idem, pp. 10-11.
[12] Idem, p. 10.
[13] Jones, 'The Objects of Loyalty', p. 3; SHM/de Rachewiltz, 'Philological Commentary', Vol. II, pp. 727, 791, 919; Hope, *'El* and *bulqa*', pp. 2-7.
[14] YS/Atwood, p. 10.
[15] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 162; Hope, *El* and *bulqa*, p. 21.

as this were taken in the history of the Mongol Empire, and this snapshot will give us a reference point for further considerations of these loyalty categories.

3.2 The Khan

One of the most powerful narratives presented in the *SHM* was the abandonment of Yisügei's wife and children by his followers and relatives, leaving his young son Temüjin, with his mother Hö'elün, destitute and helpless. This allows for a portrayal of Temüjin as a betrayed khan predestined to greatness, and Hö'elün as the righteous heroine, fighting to win back her husband's supporters and to keep her young sons provided for and out of harm's way. Take the language of the *SHM* in §76: Hö'elün castigates her sons (Temüjin and Jochi Qasar) and stepsons (Bekter and Belgütei) for their bickering, saying 'when we ask ourselves how to take vengeance for the outrage committed by our Tayichi'ut kinsmen, how can you be at odds with each other [?]'.[16] Therefore, the action of the Tayichi'ut kin of Yisügei, by abandoning his children, committed an outrage worthy of vengeance.[17] However, it is important to consider the loyalty decisions of those who went their own way before or upon Yisügei's death, rather than simply accepting the *SHM*'s idea that Temüjin was their rightful lord.

The *SHM* makes a point that the Tayichi'ut moved away from Temüjin and Hö'elün upon Yisügei's death.[18] This is not what Rashīd al-Dīn or the *YS* state however. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, the Mongols under Yisügei and the Tayichi'ut were at times at war, at times at peace. One Adal Khan, a descendant of Ambaqai Khan (a previous leader of the Tayichi'ut), had supported Yisügei, but his son Tarqutai Qiriltuq did not.[19] This is roughly the story in the *YS* as well, saying that the two had at times been friendly, but under Tarqutai, they had no contact with each other whatsoever.[20] Even if we accept that the Tayichi'ut fought alongside Yisügei during his lifetime, then abandoned his family

[16] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §76, p. 20.
[17] As noted by Morris Rossabi however, loyalties on the steppe at this stage were quite personal, thus, one followed a leader until they showed themselves as ineffective or violating the bond between ruler and servant, or they died. There was no real abstract loyalty to a Mongol 'nation' at this stage, M. Rossabi, 'The Legacy of the Mongols', in (ed.) B. Manz, *Central Asia in Historical Perspective*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994), p. 31.
[18] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §70-73, pp. 17-18.
[19] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, pp. 100-1. However, in the section on Chinggis' life, Rashīd al-Dīn tells a story similar to that of the *SHM*, whereby the Tayichi'ut are friendly and obedient during Yisügei's life, but manifested hostility after he died, RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 153. See Atwood, 'Ghazanid Chronicle' for the discrepancies between the 'tribal' section and the life of Chinggis.
[20] YS/Atwood, p. 9.

after his death, this does not mean that they had elected Yisügei as their khan.[21] This is apparent in the titles that were used for Yisügei, *ba'atur* (the Mongolian term for brave or valiant) in the *SHM*, and *bahādur* in Rashīd al-Dīn.[22] Rashīd al-Dīn's terms for Yisügei's leadership are *ḥākim*, *sarvar*, *pīshvā*, *muqaddam* (all meaning something like leader or ruler), never *khan/qa'an*, though he states that Yisügei was 'firmly entrenched as *emperor* of his own *peoples*' (در پادشاهی اقوام خود متمکن بوده, *dar pādishāhī-yi aqvām-i khud mutimakkin būda*).[23] Rashīd al-Dīn elsewhere states that the Tayichi'ut chose their own rulers on the whole, and given that we have met a descendent of Ambaqai titled Adal *Khan*, there seems no reason to believe that the Tayichi'ut had made any formal commitments to Yisügei as their ruler or khan.[24]

Even if we were to accept that Yisügei was a khan, we certainly cannot expect Temüjin to have asserted a role like this at this juncture. There were periods where no khan was appointed, and previous successions had not been linear. Chinggis' ancestor Qabul Khan was succeeded by a lateral relative, Ambaqai Khan, forefather of the Tayichi'ut. Ambaqai himself was succeeded by a son of Qabul Khan, Qutula Khan (Figure 3). Apparently both of these transfers had been according to the will of the previous ruler, eschewing their own sons.[25] If Yisügei did become a khan, this position had previously been his uncle Qutula's. Temüjin himself was nine or thirteen when his father died.[26] None of our sources claim any sort of 'will' for Yisügei appointing Temüjin, as the SHM does for both Qabul and Ambaqai. Rashīd al-Dīn claims that when Yisügei's followers considered him a mere child, they left him.[27] While all of our sources speak of abandonment, rebellion and outrage, none of them go to any great lengths to portray Temüjin as the rightful successor of his forefathers, nor seek to make Yisügei a khan.

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[21] J. Holmgren 'Observations on Marriage and Inheritances Practices in Early Mongol and Yuan Society, with Particular Reference to the Levirate', *Journal of Asian History*, Vol. 20, (1986), p. 134.

[22] According to de Rachewiltz, this was a common epithet for those of noble lineage and tribal chiefs, SHM/de Rachewiltz, 'Philological Commentary', Vol. I, p. 292.

[23] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, pp. 152-3; RAD/Raushan, Vol. I, pp. 284-5. Thackston's translation with italicised words as my own interpretation. Rashīd al-Dīn was never recalcitrant with backdating the term 'khan' either, doing so for Chinggisid princes such as Tolui and Batu, see H. Kim, '울루스인가 칸국인가 — 몽골제국의 카안과 칸 칭호의 분석을 중심으로 —' ('*Ulus* or *Khanate*?: An Analysis of the Titles of *qa'an* and *khan* in the Mongol Empire'), in 중앙아시아연구 21권2호 (*Central Asian Studies,* Vol. 21, No. 2,) (December 2016), pp. 1-29.

[24] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, pp. 100-1.

[25] According to SHM/de Rachewiltz, §48-57, pp. 10-13, there are differing stories in Rashīd al-Dīn and the *YS*, though the point that sons were not chosen as successors holds.

[26] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §66-68, pp. 15-16 says 9; RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 144 says 13. L. Moses, 'Triplicated Triplets', p. 290 indicates that the *SHM* may be interjecting the symbolic number nine to make the events of Chinggis' life more momentous.

[27] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 144.

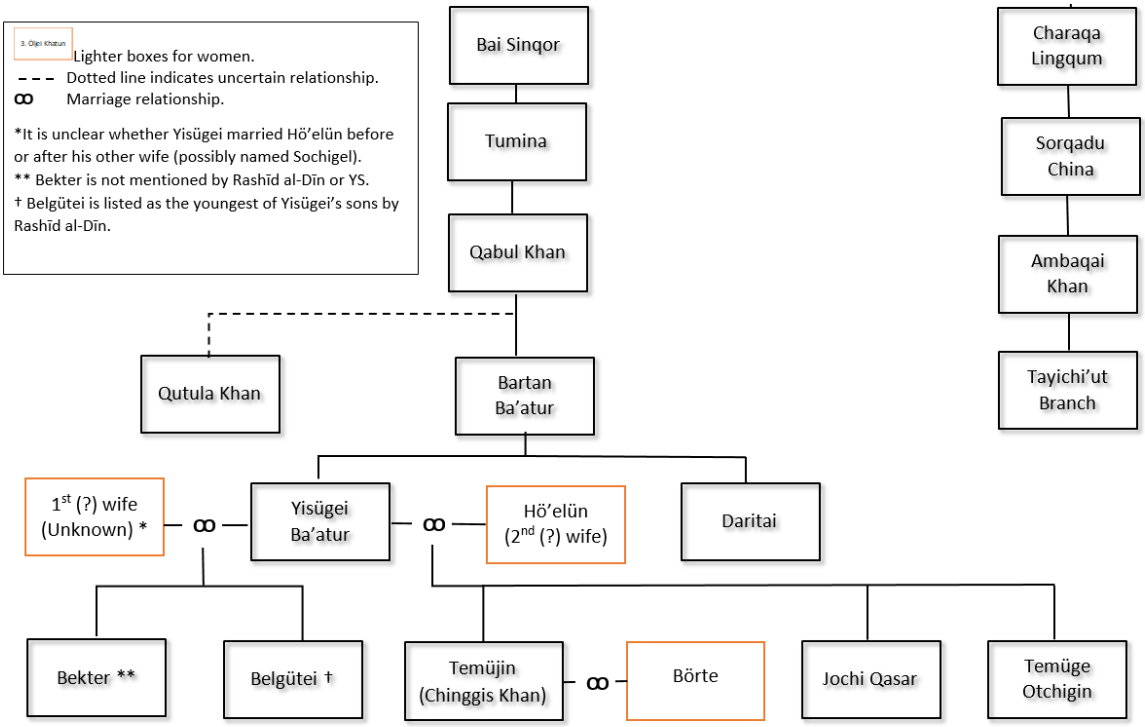

Figure 3: Temüjin's Ancestors © Tobias Jones

What does this mean for the loyalty choices of these characters? For starters, the Tayichi'ut look to have gone their own way during Yisügei's majority in any case. They were descended from a khan, Ambaqai, themselves, and at this stage felt under no moral obligation to remain with Yisügei's family.[28] His death and his children's youth at this time could not have improved these prospects. There would seem to be little benefit in following this child of a minor warlord, and indeed may have been dangerous, as other hostile groups in the area such as the Tatars may have capitalised on what would have been seen as weakness. There may have been some charismatic loyalty decisions, but this was based not on Temüjin's charisma, but rather on his mother Hö'elün's. It was she, according to all three sources, who commanded the loyalty of her husband's followers, and took up his standard and brought back half of those who had left.[29] It was Hö'elün who ensured that Temüjin

[28] From a more anthropological standpoint, Sharon Bastug in her study on 'Altaic' lineages states 'Groups "mass" on the basis of genealogical closeness as necessary to respond to specific challenges or threats and dissolve when no longer needed.' S. Bastug, 'Tribe, Confederation and State among Altaic Nomads of the Asian Steppes', in (ed.) K. Erturk, *Rethinking Central Asia: Non-Eurocentric Studies in History, Social Structure and Identity*, (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1999), p. 85. We can see this in action with both the Tayichi'ut here vis-à-vis the Tatar and Temüjin's closer blood relatives with regards to the Tayichi'ut below,

[29] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §73, p. 18; RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, pp. 144, 159; YS/Atwood, pp. 9-10.

had any followers whatsoever.[30] The Tayichi'ut had very few reasons, whether moral or opportunistic, to stand by Temüjin, let alone choose him as a khan, and he could hardly be described as their rightful lord, as we have shown above.[31]

For other relatives in Temüjin's immediate family, there may have been an expectation that they would be of greater support to Yisügei's family than the more distantly related Tayichi'ut, who had long been considered a separate ruling house. The most important of Temüjin's male relatives were his grandfather Bartan Ba'atur's brother's descendants, known as the Yürkin or Jürkin, Sacha Beki and Taichu[32]; a son of Qutula Khan, Altan; a son of Yisügei's older brother Nekün Taishi, Quchar; and Yisügei's younger brother Daritai. All of these family members were senior to Temüjin, and several of them had more noble blood, being descended from those senior to Yisügei himself. It is unclear whether these family members originally stayed with Temüjin or departed with the Tayichi'ut, but they seem to have been allied with him (though perhaps not yet his subjects) by the time of the above-mentioned confrontation with Jamuqa and the Tayichi'ut.[33] In the *SHM*, these characters are first mentioned as decamping from Jamuqa and joining Temüjin, who also departed from Jamuqa at this time on the advice of Börte.[34] At this point, the communal loyalty of the Kiyat Mongol family (descendants of Chinggis' ancestor Qabul Khan) seems apparent. They decided to stick together in opposition to Jamuqa and the Tayichi'ut. Doubtless their self-interest was also at stake, as the Tayichi'ut would clearly be in the ascendancy should the Jürkin and others have remained in their orbit.

The later actions of these relatives of Temüjin are somewhat more difficult to fathom. Despite their own seniority, Altan, Quchar and Sacha Beki apparently discussed and agreed to raise Temüjin as khan.[35] Perhaps this is a similar episode to the later dispute between Chinggis' sons Jochi and Chaghadai as to the succession, whereby they settled on a compromise candidate, their younger brother Ögödei. The elder Kiyat may have been unable to come to an agreement on which of them should lead, and therefore decided for the more junior Temüjin, who they may have hoped to

[30] For more on Hö'elün, see Broadbridge, *Women*, pp. 45-54; B. de Nicola, *Women in Mongol Iran: The Khatuns, 1206-1335* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), pp. 47-8.
[31] See pp. 79-80 of this thesis.
[32] For the issues with the descent of these two characters, see C.P. Atwood, 'Six Pre-Chinggisid Genealogies in the Mongol Empire', *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, Vol. 19, (2012), pp. 5-7.
[33] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 161; YS/Atwood, p. 11. This is the first major battle of Temüjin's career mentioned by these two sources. RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 133 says that Daritai was originally faithful when the Tayichi'ut deserted Temüjin, though after a while Daritai joined them.
[34] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §122, p. 48.
[35] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §123, p. 49; YS/Atwood, p. 19; RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 189. Atwood, 'Six Pre-Chinggisid Genealogies', p. 39 says that the title *beki* implied seniority, thus Sacha Beki was the most senior of the Kiyat Mongols.

control.[36] We can only speculate here, but all of these men at some point distanced themselves from Temüjin, backed other khans and were eventually killed for their actions.[37]

Sacha Beki and the Jürkin departed after a perceived insult by Temüjin's chief steward to Sacha Beki's father's wife Qu'urchin during a drinking ceremony. This incident led to a physical confrontation between the Jürkin and Temüjin's men, with Temüjin's half-brother Belgütei sustaining an injury in the fracas.[38] This was compounded by the Jürkin's failure to appear in a planned campaign against the Tatar. They then attacked and humiliated a group of Temüjin's soldiers sent to recruit them for a campaign against Naiman rebels. Temüjin at this point attacked the Jürkin and captured Sacha Beki and Taichu, who according to the *SHM*, admitted that they broke their oaths to Temüjin and accepted the need for their own execution.[39]

What is interesting about this event is that the *SHM* shows the Jürkin as taking a principled stand against a slight (intended or otherwise) against one of their khatuns. The significance of drinking ceremonies I have already discussed in Chapter Two and this incident seems to fit the pattern of the importance of the protocols behind these ceremonies and the great offence which was taken if precedence was ignored. The sequence of events is somewhat complex, but the meaning is clear. Qu'urchin, who was the chief wife of Sacha Beki's father Qutuqtu and possibly Sacha Beki's own mother, was served her *kumiss* after a junior wife or concubine of Qutuqtu's, Ebegei. Qu'urchin responded by having Temüjin's chief *ba'urchi* (steward) Shiki'ur beaten, who they saw as responsible for the insult. Temüjin's troops promptly seized Qu'urchin and another of Qutuqtu's wives. Though the khatuns were restored to the Jürkin, the insult was not forgiven, as the aforementioned incident with the Tatar shows.[40] The Jürkin seem to have been acting on their idealistic loyalties to the *yosun* which determined seniority in familial relations and rites. It may also be the case that Temüjin, aware of his own junior status, sought to provoke a conflict with rivals to get them out of the way.[41] In any case, the Jürkin are portrayed as betraying their oaths and joining rebels against Temüjin, justifying his execution of his family members.

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[36] Munkh-Erdene, 'Rise of the Chinggisid Dynasty', p. 52 suggests that it was primarily to oppose Jamuqa's growing power that Temüjin's elder relatives agreed on Temüjin, thinking that as the youngest of them, he could be easily manipulated.

[37] Again, see note 26 and Bastug's analysis of the fusion and fission of groups based on need, and her criticism of theories which assume that close family members naturally stick together in these societies, p. 78.

[38] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §130-2, pp. 54-56; YS/Atwood, p. 11; RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, pp. 163-4.

[39] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §136, p. 59.

[40] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §130, p. 55; YS/Atwood, p. 11; RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, pp. 163-4. I have chosen de Rachewiltz's version of names in this section.

[41] Munkh-Erdene, 'Rise of the Chinggisid Dynasty', p. 52 sees Temüjin's actions as regularly seeking to provoke mistrust and jealousy between his rivals.

Temüjin's other relatives, namely Quchar, Altan, and Daritai, maintained good relations with Temüjin for a while longer. The first sign that all was not well appeared in a campaign against the Tatars, wherein Temüjin, along with these three, issued a joint command not to stop for booty until the enemy were defeated.[42] These relatives then ignored their own command, and Temüjin had their plunder stripped from them, which according to Rashīd al-Dīn, angered them and drove them to side with the Ong Khan, To'oril of the Kerait.[43] At one stage, Temüjin complained to his relatives about their actions, saying that he had appealed to all of them to become the khan due to their superior lineages, but they had rejected this and chosen him instead, so they should follow him. These relatives apparently were not content to be mere liegemen of either Temüjin or Ong Khan, as they conspired against Ong Khan and held their own council with Jamuqa and leaders of the Tatars to become rulers themselves. However, their plots were found out, and Daritai was forced to submit to Temüjin, while Altan and Quchar joined the Naiman.[44] Interestingly, here the *SHM* and Rashīd al-Dīn's narratives diverge. According to the *SHM*, Daritai was punished but his life was spared.[45] However, according to Rashīd al-Dīn, his constant opposition to Temüjin's house saw him executed and his descendants made slaves of Eljigidei Noyan.[46] Altan and Quchar also were executed after Temüjin defeated the Naiman.[47]

While the actions of the Tayichi'ut and Temüjin's senior relatives have been discussed by a few scholars, it is important to consider *why* these characters may have acted the way they did.[48] As such, Temüjin's elder relatives clearly were happy to ally themselves with him and support him when it suited them. Bizarrely, they seem to have lent him greater support in an earlier period when he was less powerful and under attack. It seems that at this stage a communal loyalty to the greater house, which had already been in conflict with the Tayichi'ut, may have seen them take Temüjin's part, as well as their own vision of their ability to manipulate their younger relative for their own ends. However, as he came into his power, he limited the other Kiyat's own power to a significantly greater degree. His removal of their plunder and slights on their seniority may have been calculated

[42] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §153, p. 76; YS/Atwood, p. 15; RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 182. Only the *SHM* mentions the joint issue of the command, the other sources state that it was Temüjin who issued the command. This may have become a permanent law, as John of Plano Carpini says it was punishable by death in his time, a rule he believed European armies should also adopt, Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, p. 47.
[43] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 183.
[44] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 190, YS/Atwood, p. 19.
[45] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §154, 242, pp. 78, 167. See also 'Philological Commentary', Vol. II, p. 652.
[46] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 133.
[47] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 67. SHM/de Rachewiltz, §246, p. 174 mentions that these two were killed in the past, but the incident is not described.
[48] Holmgren 'Observations on Marriage', pp. 133-5; Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, pp. 26-41; P. Ratchnevsky, *Genghis Khan: His Life and Legacy*, (trans. and ed.) T.N. Haining (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1991), First Edition 1983, *passim*.

moves to antagonise his senior relatives. As they saw their chances of material reward decrease, their clientelist loyalties may have been rather given over to Jamuqa or Ong Khan, arguably stronger figures on the steppe at this point. Their inertial loyalty to stay with Temüjin was worn away by his actions that they perceived as targeting their own wealth and status. If they did indeed take oaths of loyalty and set up Temüjin as their khan, they certainly were prioritising their loyalties out of self-interest over their communal loyalties, but they may also have seen Temüjin's actions as contravening the *törü*, the set of divine principles which had governed social and political actions on the steppe for centuries, with relation to their claim of plunder, or communal rituals.[49] In considering above some of the language of the sources, we can understand this story beyond the *SHM*'s portrayal of the Kiyat's constant betrayals.

Once Chinggis had established himself of course, absolute loyalty to him was both expected and recounted by many of our sources. Christian writers and travellers heard tell of the famed discipline of Chinggis and the loyalty his people showed him. Simon of Saint-Quentin, the Dominican envoy of Pope Innocent IV in Anatolia in the 1240s, reported that the Tatars were all obligated to Chinggis until death, and that they have forever remained loyal.[50] The Armenian general known as Het'um the Historian, writing in the early 14th century, reports that once Chinggis assembled the seven Tatar peoples, he sought to test their loyalty, and thus ordered that the general of each people behead his own son, which each followed.[51] John of Plano Carpini said that the Mongols were more obedient to their masters than any other men in the world and that their emperor had remarkable power over everyone.[52] Marco Polo and Het'um both noted the Mongols' extreme obedience to their khan, comparing this obedience favourably to that of any other nation.[53] As we have seen, loyalty to Chinggis was much more nuanced than these examples suggest, but it was clearly part of the Mongol

[49]For more on the *törü* see C. Humphrey and A. Hurelbaatar, 'Regret as a Political Intervention: An Essay in the Historical Anthropology of the Early Mongols', *Past & Present*, Vol. 186, (2005), p. 25; R. Yu. Pochekaev, '*Törü*: Ancient Turkic Law 'Privatised' by Chinggis Khan and His Descendants', *Inner Asia,* Vol. 18 (2016), pp. 182-195; C. Humphrey and A. Hurelbaatar, 'The term *törü* in Mongolian History', in (ed.) D. Sneath, *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 265-293; L. Munkh-Erdene, 'The Rise of the Chinggisid Dynasty: Pre-Modern Eurasian Political Order and Culture at a Glance', *International Journal of Asian Studies*, Vo. 15, No. 1, (2018), pp. 39-84.

[50] Simon of Saint-Quentin, *Simon of Saint-Quentin: History of the Tartars*, (ed. and trans.) S. Pow, T. Kiss, A. Romsics, and F. Ghazaryan, www.simonofstquentin.org, Accessed November 25th 2020, Book XXX, p. 69.

[51] Het'um the Historian, *Flower of Histories*, p. 34.

[52] Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 14, 27.

[53] Marco Polo, *Travels*, p. 100; Het'um the Historian, *Flower of Histories*, p. 73.

propaganda machine to ensure that they presented a united front behind a single khan to the outside world.[54]

3.3 The Qa'an

This position has been separated from that of khan for two reasons. The first is that the adoption of the new title, qa'an/qaghan, mimicking the grander title of the earlier Kök Türk dynasty, was a significant step taken by Chinggis' successor Ögödei to convey a more imperial style, now that the Mongols truly ruled a vast empire.[55] The other is that during much of Temüjin's career, there were other choices one could make as to one's khan: we have already seen that his relatives threw their support behind others who had been appointed khans, Ong Khan of the Kerait, and Jamuqa of the Jajirat. Once Ögödei came to power, however, there was no 'alternative choice' for actors in the Mongol Empire. There may have been some dispute after Chinggis' death as to who was to succeed him, with Tolui perhaps using his position as regent to make a play for the throne.[56] Once these issues were settled however, this weakened actors' ability to make loyalty decisions. As Naomi Standen has observed, the power of those serving rulers was heightened when there were several possible rulers in their cultural orbit who they could choose to serve.[57] With only one well accepted ruler, loyalty was largely a matter of degree of compliance rather than of complete departure.[58]

The *qa'an* himself may not have had to be loyal to anyone else, but this did not mean he was free of idealistic loyalty obligations. Indeed, it was these considerations which were perhaps the strongest limitations on his power. Let us consider the first *qa'an* Ögödei in this regard. Firstly, it seems that Ögödei was required to maintain loyalty to the *törü* which his father had constantly reminded his subjects of, according to the *SHM*. In the *SHM*'s list of Ögödei's four faults, Ögödei admonishes himself for secretly injuring Doqolqu of the Mangqut, who had diligently observed the

[54] See for example, Öljeitü's 1305 letter to Philip the Fair of France indicating the unity of the Mongols behind the Great Qa'an, Temür, B. Baumann, 'Whither the Ocean? The *Talu Dalai* in Sultan Öljeitü's 1305 Letter to Philip the Fair of France', *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, Vol. 19, (2012), pp. 59-80.
[55] Jones, 'The Objects of Loyalty', p. 4; Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, p. 81; I. de Rachewiltz, 'Qan, Qa'an and the Seal of Güyüg', *East Asian History*, Vol. 43, (2019), p. 96.
[56] Atwood, 'Pu'a's Boast', pp. 266-273; de Rachewiltz, ''Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, Yeh-lü Chu, Yeh-lü Hsi-liang', in (eds.) I. de Rachewiltz, H. Chan, H. Ch'i-ch'ing and P.W. Geier, *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200-1300),* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993), p. 199.
[57] Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*, p. 46
[58] This would not have been the case in the frontier area between the Jīn state and the invading Mongols, where several characters were able to forge a career serving both states intermittently, and even the Sòng, eg. C.C. Hsiao, 'Yen Shih', in (eds.) I. de Rachewiltz, H. Chan, H. Ch'i-ch'ing and P.W. Geier, *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200-1300),* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993), pp. 60-74.

törü in service of Chinggis.[59] In so doing, Ögödei was himself in contravention of the *törü* by injuring a loyal servant. Whether or not the *SHM* is trying to condemn Ögödei in this 'faults' section is of lesser importance than the way it seeks to criticise him, i.e. by portraying him as betraying the ideals his father had adhered to. His other faults seem to be those of character, such as addiction to wine, greed and lust. However, there also seem to be criticisms of his failure to live up to his father's standards. In this, Ögödei had to consider his loyalty to his predecessor's legacy, and to the *jasaq* and *bilig*s (wise sayings) which this legacy consisted of.[60]

If we consider his fourth fault as ruler, this has to do with the construction of walls to herd game mentioned in Chapter Two. In the *SHM*, this action is one of greed, preventing game from reaching the domain of his brothers.[61] It is not stated, but this may have been in contravention of Chinggis' *jasaq*. According to Juvainī, Chinggis was greatly preoccupied with the hunt and its procedure, to the extent that those who failed in corralling the animals, even important army officials, could be beaten or even put to death for this failure.[62] Rashīd al-Dīn also mentions that Temüge Otchigin, Chinggis' younger brother, was punished by Chinggis for his failure to join the hunting circle on time.[63] This indicates that even the family of the ruler could not contravene norms and regulations with regards to the hunt. Both Juvainī and Rashīd al-Dīn mention Ögödei's construction of these walls, but no approbation is included in their accounts. If the hunt was so strictly regulated, Ögödei's actions seem to have contravened these regulations. In Juvainī's words, the hunt is part of preparing for warfare, suffering hardship and becoming used to the bow.[64] If Ögödei made this whole process much easier, it could be said to have undermined the army's overall effectiveness, making them more used to comfort and ease. Thomas Allsen has shown that the hunt, for many dynasties across Eurasia, and especially in the Turco-Mongol tradition, was of vital importance in showing the ruler's political dominance and military might, and it carried with it ritual significance as well as helping to form loyalty bonds between his troops, but also to their ruler.[65] So while the *SHM* merely criticises Ögödei's greed, there may have been some serious contravention of Chinggisid law and Turco-Mongol traditions. The lack of condemnation by the Persian historians for

[59] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §281, p. 218 and 'Philological Commentary', Vol. II, pp. 1036-7; Atwood, 'Pu'a's Boast', p. 242. Christopher Atwood has delved into the reasons behind Doqolqu's murder and it's cover-up in Chinese and Persian sources.
[60] See pp. 89, note 70 below for more details on the *bilig*.
[61] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §281, p. 218.
[62] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 28; de Rachewiltz, 'Philological Commentary', Vol. II, p. 1037.
[63] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 260-1; RAD/Raushan, Vol. I, p. 479; Allsen, *The Royal Hunt*, p. 205.
[64] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 27.
[65] Allsen, *The Royal Hunt*, pp. 8, 153, 205, 211, 219.

this action is interesting. Did they have a sufficient understanding of traditions surrounding the hunt, or was this action simply less problematic than the *SHM* would have us believe?

Nonetheless, we are elsewhere informed of incidents in which the contemporary sources claim that Ögödei seemed to have trouble remaining loyal to his father's actions and maxims. One of these involved Ögödei's reassignment of troops which had been allocated by his father. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Ögödei gave troops of the Sonit and Suldus who had belonged to Tolui and his sons to his own son Köten. This apparently angered key *noyan*s who had served Chinggis, such as Shigi Qutuqu, and protests were made to Tolui's widow, Sorqoqtani Beki.[66] Tolui's eldest son, Möngke, and his *aqa* and *ini*, stated 'The two *hazaras* of Suldus troops belong to us by virtue of Genghis Khan's *yarligh*. Now they are being given to Köten. How can we allow Genghis Khan's order to be changed?'[67] It is Sorqoqtani who quelled the dissent, responding that they all belonged to the *qa'an* for him to do with as he chose, 'whatever he orders is law, we will obey.'[68] Fascinatingly, Rashīd al-Dīn provides Sorqoqtani's self-contradiction in the same section, stating that Ögödei delivered a *jarligh* announcing that she was to marry his eldest son Güyük, in conformity with Mongol customs regarding widows. Sorqoqtani however rejected Ögödei's *jarligh*, and apparently for this reason she was preferred to Hö'elün, Chinggis' mother, who remarried Father Mönglik, Chinggis' advisor and father figure after Yisügei's death, according to Chinggis' wishes.[69] Rashīd al-Dīn here provides two examples of figures who ignore the *jarligh* of a *qa'an*, and ignore previous tradition, but one of them comes out of both examples with praise and the other with thinly veiled condemnation.

Notwithstanding the overtly Toluid stance of our primary sources and their keenness to denigrate Ögödei and his family to prepare the ground for the later Toluid takeover, these examples

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[66] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, 282.

[67] Idem, p. 387.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid. Father Mönglik was also the father of Chinggis' early religious ally Kököchü, alias Teb Tengri, who predicted Chinggis' rule over the steppe. He was later killed by Chinggis' brother Temüge in a staged wrestling match after he rebelled against Chinggis, see SHM/de Rachewiltz, §245, pp. 170-2. The marriage incident is *not* however mentioned in the *SHM*, though the dying Yisügei did entrust his family to Mönglik, saying he must take care of his 'widowed elder sister-in-law' SHM/de Rachewiltz, §68, p. 16. De Rachewiltz argues in his commentary that the terms in this section are figurative, and that Mönglik could very well have married Hö'elün, especially given that he refers to Temüjin as 'son', while Yisügei's children call him 'father', 'Philological Commentary', Vol. I, pp. 339-340. Broadbridge and Holmgren note that Hö'elün was not married through levirate to Daritai or Temüge Otchigin, perhaps given her poverty at the time. However, neither address Rashīd al-Dīn's claim that she was in fact remarried to Mönglik, Broadbridge, *Women*, pp. 51-3; Holmgren, 'Observations on marriage', p. 134. İsenbike Togan states that the treatment of Hö'elün and Sorqoqtani Beki in the Mongol world was indicative of the development of a 'mother cult' due to women being cut off from their emotional support networks by Chinggisid policy and forced to channel their energies into their sons, I. Togan, 'In Search of an Approach to the History of Women in Central Asia', in (ed.) K. Erturk, *Rethinking Central Asia: Non-Eurocentric Studies in History, Social Structure and Identity*, (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1999), pp. 180-1.

do show us some of the issues regarding loyalty to tradition and Chinggis' legacy for a sitting *qa'an*. This was most pertinent to Ögödei, who immediately succeeded his father and was surrounded by a retinue of people who knew Chinggis, had heard his words, participated in his government and fought alongside him. There was also great respect afforded to those who knew the *biligs* (wise sayings) of Chinggis.[70] Given this, there were many that could and apparently did question Ögödei when his policies did not match with what they expected or wanted. However, the fact that Ögödei reigned for 12 years in relative peace, without any serious attempts that we know of to undermine his rule, should indicate that on the whole he was able to placate his father's coterie.[71] A *qa'an* had to have some scope to manoeuvre with regards to both the *jasaq* and Mongol tradition, but if he pushed too far, he would undermine the ideal loyalties of his followers. To an extent, infringing ideals could be accepted as long as the *qa'an* was successful in ticking the boxes with regards to people's loyalties of self-interest. If plunder kept rolling in and military success continued, these idealistic loyalty infringements could be put to one side. They were not forgotten, as our primary sources indicate, but they were tolerated on the whole. We will see in later examples when such loyalties were undermined to the extent that it caused actors to cast off their loyalty obligations to their rulers.

For a case study of a *qa'an* who played a fine line with this sort of action, we turn to Möngke's reign. Möngke took power in 1251 after two regencies sandwiching the short reign of Güyük (1246-1248). His play for power has been well documented and much discussed, but there are some noteworthy loyalty considerations here. The Toluids and Jochids, represented by Sorqoqtani Beki and Batu, made use of a whole range of methods to attract support based on these different categories of loyalty. Assertion of Möngke's suitability for rulership, bribery, promise of advancement, threats, appeals to Mongol solidarity, and a raft of guarantees that they were in fact doing the right thing according to Chinggisid law and custom all make an appearance in our sources. We shall examine in what ways these were played out, and the actions of those who chose or chose not to align themselves with Möngke.

Our Toluid apologists provide us with explicit reasons for Möngke's accession, namely his charismatic leadership. Juvainī claims that it was Möngke's success in the western campaign of 1236

[70] The importance of knowledge of Chinggisid *bilig* has been noted in M. Hope, 'The Transmission of Authority through the *Quriltai*s of the Early Mongol Empire and the Ilkhanate of Iran (1227-1335)', *Mongolian Studies*, Vol. 34 (2012), pp. 87-115, *passim* and in G. Lane, 'Intellectual jousting and the Chinggisid Wisdom Bazaars', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 26, Nos. 1-2, (2016), pp. 246-7. Rashīd al-Dīn claims that it was the superior knowledge and recitation of the *bilig* that decided the succession of Temür Qa'an over his elder brother Kammala in Yuán China, RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 464.

[71] Hope, *Power, Politics and Tradition*, p. 53.

against the Qipchaqs and their leader Bachman, who Möngke captured and killed, that 'provide a reason for the transfer of power and the key of empire to the World-Emperor Mengu Qa'an such as requires no further demonstration.'[72] Immediately contradicting his statement that no further proof is necessary, Juvainī, in a longer passage that bears quoting in full, has the *aqa* (elder brother) of all the Chinggisid princes, Batu, say to the assembled princes in 1249 that the khanate can go to

> only such a person [...] as has known and experienced the *yasa* of Chingiz-Khan and the customs of Qa'an (Ögödei), and in the race-course of wisdom and the hippodrome of manliness has borne off the reed of excellence from all his peers and equals, and has in person supervised important affairs and been in charge of weighty matters, and in the overcoming of difficulties and the crushing of rebels has provided unanswerable proofs. Now of the lineage of Chingiz-Khan is Mengu Qa'an, who is famous for his shrewdness and bravery and celebrated for his sagacity and valour.[73]

Here we see Juvainī lending his eloquence to the suggestion that Möngke is the ideal charismatic ruler in a Mongol prince, highlighting his lineage, his knowledge of Chinggis' *jasaq*, his military successes, and his wisdom. Rashīd al-Dīn, who at this stage follows Juvainī, echoes many of these attributes, having Batu add at the *quriltai* a more comprehensive list of Möngke's military achievements and that Ögödei and the other commanders trusted him. Rashīd al-Dīn claims that Batu sent envoys to the Ögödeids and other key khatuns and commanders in the Mongol world to the effect that 'the one prince who has seen with his own eyes and heard with his own ears Genghis Khan's *yasaq* and *yarligh* is Möngkä.'[74] Despite the factual inaccuracy of this statement, we see that Rashīd al-Dīn is trying to frame Möngke as the right man to rule based on his closeness to Chinggis, which the other princes could not hope to match. This was perhaps a targeted attack on the Ögödeids, which Juvainī makes explicit, saying that when Batu heard complaints that leadership should stay in the line of Ögödei, he responded that 'the administration of so great an empire [...] is beyond the strength and knowledge of mere children.'[75] We later hear the Ögödeid response to this thinking in Vaṣṣāf, who was the continuator of Juvainī. Vaṣṣāf states that Qaidu, the grandson of Ögödei who was in opposition to the Toluid rulers of China and Iran, sent envoys to both Qubilai and Hülegü saying

[72] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 554.
[73] Idem, pp. 559-560.
[74] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 402.
[75] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 563.

pādshāh-i jahāngushā-y chingīz khān dar yāsā-yi khud ta'kīd karda ast ki tā az nasl-i ūktāy ṭiflī shīr-khvāra zinda bāshad ū dar khūr-i tāj va rāyat-i shāhī bāshad[76]

the world-conquering emperor Chinggis Khan in his *yasa* made clear that as long as of the lineage of Ögödei a suckling babe still lived, he would be deserving of the crown and royal standard.[77]

Both Juvainī and Rashīd al-Dīn, however, rejected the child-ruler idea, (somewhat ironically given their portrayal as the young Temüjin as the rightful ruler) and presented Möngke as the only logical choice as ruler, given that Batu supposedly refused the job himself.[78]

These claims about Möngke's suitability to rule were not the only arrows in the Toluid-Jochid quiver however. They also sought to play on the clientelist loyalties of the Chinggisids and their respective supporters. Sorqoqtani was the primary driver in this regard. It was she who 'began to cultivate strangers with all kinds of attention and favour and to win over kinsmen and relations with all means of courtesy and diplomacy.'[79] Rashīd al-Dīn uses very similar language, talking of her 'kindness' (تلطف, *talaṭṭuf*) to her relatives.[80] This type of language notwithstanding, this was clearly the same type of soliciting which Töregene Khatun had employed when seeking to become the regent after Ögödei's death, however in this case, Rashīd al-Dīn's phrasing shows his feelings on the difference between the two khatuns' actions:

توراگنه...به لطایف حیل به دل خود بی کنگاچ آقا و اینی ملک را در قبضه تصرف آورد و دل خویشان و امرا به انواع تحف و هدایا صید می کرد *Töregene […] bi laṭāyif-i ḥīyal bi dil-i khud bī-kingāch-i āqā va īnī mulk rā dar qabża-yi taṣarruf āvard va dil-i khvīshān va umarā' bi anvā'-i tuḥaf va hadāyā ṣayd mī-kard.* [81]

Töregene, through clever tricks and of her own volition, without consulting the *aqa* and *ini*, seized the kingdom, and through all manner of presents and gifts captured the hearts of her relatives and the commanders.[82]

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[76] Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 66; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 37.

[77] Qāshānī/Hambali, p. 235 indicates that Qaidu went so far as to claim the khanate himself, *qaidū ki daʿwayi qānī mī-kard*. I do not see, as Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, p. 80 does, any evidence that Qāshānī 'supported' Qaidu's claims apart from mentioning their existence.

[78] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 559.

[79] Idem, p. 562.

[80] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 402. RAD/Raushan, Vol. II, p. 731.

[81] RAD/Raushan, Vol. II, pp. 709-710.

[82] However, Juvainī does not portray Töregene's becoming regent as anything negative, even saying she went out of her way to get the support of the princes, and that Chaghadai, the only surviving son of Chinggis, supported this move, Juvaini/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 240. This discrepancy is the subject of an as yet unpublished article by Geoffrey Humble, 'Narrating Female Rule at the Mongol Court: Juwaynī and Rashīd al-Dīn on Töregene Qatun'. My thanks to Doctor Humble for sharing his work with me.

Beyond these general attempts to win over support, there were more targeted attempts to solicit the support of members of the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid houses, who on the whole opposed the Toluid candidate. Qada'an and Malik, two of Ögödei's junior sons (Figure 4), as well as Chaghadai's son Mochi and grandson Qara Hülegü, however, threw their support behind Möngke.[83] For this support, the two Ögödeid princes were later awarded an *ordu* from those which had belonged to Ögödei, as well as a *tumen* each of his troops, and their pick of his wives.[84] As more junior sons, they may well have thought that their status and reward could only be advanced by the destruction or exile of their relatives of more senior lines, i.e. Güyük's sons Khoja and Naqu, or Ögödei's chosen successor Shiremün. We also have a confused narrative in both Juvainī and Rashīd al-Dīn where Köten (Ögödei's second/third son) gave support to Möngke. Apparently, because Sorqoqtani did not challenge the transfer of the Suldus troops to Köten, her family was able to maintain good relations with him, and thus when the rest of Ögödei's family rejected Möngke, Köten allied with Möngke. Möngke subsequently gave him lands in the region of Gansu, in the old Tangut kingdom, which was held by his sons after Köten's death under Möngke, Qubilai and Temür Qa'an.[85] However, in his section on the accession of Güyük, Rashīd al-Dīn follows Juvainī's narrative about Köten's death from Fāṭima's witchcraft during Güyük's reign in 1247.[86] Rashīd al-Dīn elsewhere states that Köten's sons were involved in the revolt of Nayan, a descendant of Temüge Otchigin, against Qubilai in 1287.[87] This contradictory narrative does not allow us to determine what actually took place, but if Köten was involved in Möngke's accession, this would have lent significant weight to his campaign, as Köten would have been Ögödei's only surviving son in 1251. It seems clear enough that Köten's sons at least managed to stay on Möngke's good side to hold large appanages in north-western China, so it is plausible that they or their father had lent some support to Möngke.[88]

[83] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, pp. 558, 573; Broadbridge, *Women*, p. 214.
[84] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 595.
[85] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 568; RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 387-8; V. Shurany, 'Prince Manggala- The Forgotten Prince of Anxi', *Asia*, Vol. 71, No. 4, (2017), p. 1173.
[86] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 391; Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 245. This discrepancy was pointed out in May, *Mongol Empire*, p. 241.
[87] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 138.
[88] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 403 lists Köten's son Möngetü as present at Möngke's enthronement in a later section.There seems to have been a division among Köten's descendants as to support for Qubilai or Ariq Böke. Köten's grandson Yesü Buqa was part of the *quriltai* which elected Ariq Böke, while Köten's son Jibik Temür seized Ariq Böke's envoys announcing his accession, was part of the *quriltai* which elected Qubilai, and also helped to try Ariq Böke after his submission, RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 427, 434.

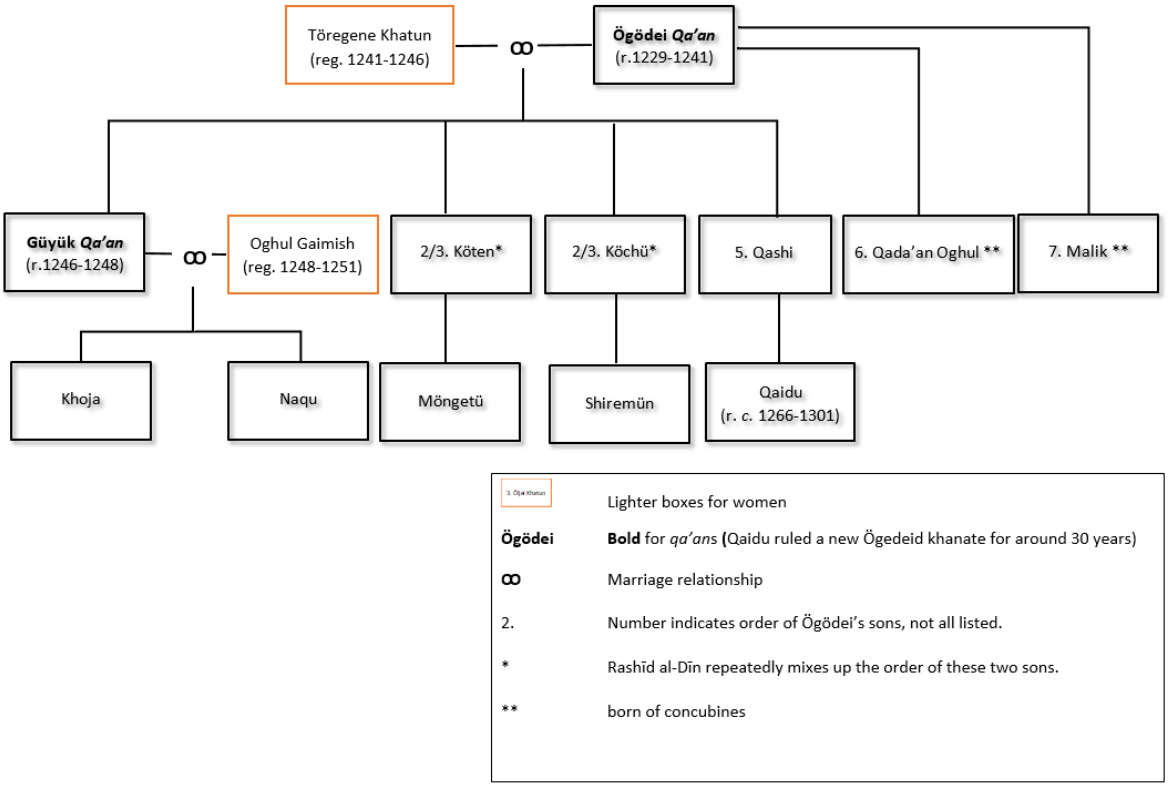

Figure 4: The Ögödeid Line © Tobias Jones

The support of the Chaghadaid prince Qara Hülegü emerged from a dispute over succession to the Chaghadaid *ulus* between himself, a grandson of Chaghadai via his favourite and eldest legitimate son Mö'etüken, and his uncle Yesü Möngke, Chaghadai's fifth son (Figure 5).[89] According to Juvainī, it was Chinggis himself who chose Qara Hülegü as Chaghadai's successor, a move which was confirmed by Ögödei and Chaghadai. Güyük removed Qara Hülegü, and instead chose his own friend Yesu Möngke as lord of the *ulus* based on the principle of seniority; a son should succeed before a grandson.[90] However, Rashīd al-Dīn claims that Güyük chose Yesü Möngke *because* he was opposed to Möngke.[91] Güyük's foreknowledge of Möngke's later usurpation of the throne seems unlikely, so we should perhaps reverse this statement. Qara Hülegü chose to support Möngke *because* Güyük had removed him from the throne and Yesü Möngke maintained his friendship with the Ögödeids.[92] Clearly Möngke promised Qara Hülegü the Chaghadaid *ulus* if he supported

[89] According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Chaghadai's eldest son was Mochi, mentioned above, but he was the son of a servant girl in Yesülün Khatun's camp, while Mö'etüken was born of Yesülün herself, RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 367-8.

[90] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 273. I have suggested elsewhere that this position may have been necessary for Güyük to take, given that he succeeded his father Ögödei, possibly ignoring Ögödei's wish that Shiremün, his grandson, succeeded him, Jones, 'The Objects of Loyalty', p. 8.

[91] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 372.

[92] This is made clear by Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 265.

Möngke's play for the throne. Qara Hülegü received this and further great rewards from Möngke for this support, also being allowed to execute his rival Yesü Möngke and Yesü's wife Toqashi Khatun, whom Qara Hülegü had beaten to a pulp based on an old grudge.[93] The Jochids and Toluids do not seem to have been able to encourage too many Ögödeids and Chaghadaids to their side in this manner, but those that did come over seem to have done so to get out from under overbearing relatives and to establish their own power. Their very attendance at Batu's '*quriltai*' of 1249 however, allowed the Toluid-Jochid alliance to portray all four Chinggisid houses as supporting Möngke's rule.[94]

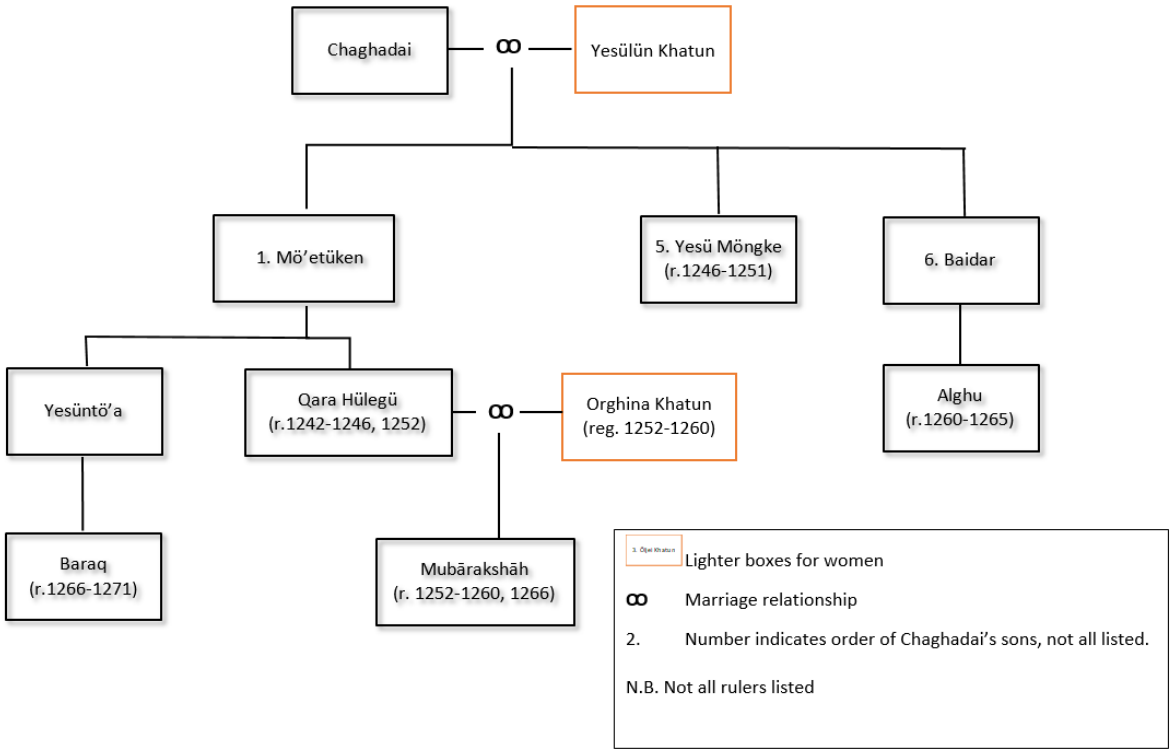

Figure 5: The Chaghadaid Line © Tobias Jones

What is also notable in the above case is the way that the arguments about Qara Hülegü and Yesü Möngke's rights to the throne are made. Both sides appeal to a sort of higher law or custom

[93] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 274, Vol. II, pp. 588-9, 595. Rashīd al-Dīn tells us that Qara Hülegü was unable to execute Yesü Möngke, as Qara died on the way back to his *ulus*, but his widow, Orghina Khatun, finished the job, RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p.372. Qara Hülegü was also responsible for the execution of Korguz, having his mouth stuffed with stones, Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 505.

[94] The location of this meeting, i.e. not in the Kelüren valley, and its lack of important participants rendered its status as a proper *quriltai* questionable.

when making their case. In Güyük's case, he appeals to the principle of seniority, which was a common deciding factor in Mongol succession in the past. The transfers of power from Qabul Khan to Ambaqai Khan, and from Ambaqai to Qutula seem to have operated on this principle, where succession went from cousin to cousin. But Möngke's support for Qara Hülegü is rather based on Qara Hülegü's selection as successor to Chaghadai by Chinggis, Ögödei and Chaghadai. If the founder of the Mongol Empire said it should be so, it should be so. It seems that here we have a clash between Mongol custom and Chinggisid innovation, notwithstanding the political reasons for Güyük and Möngke's choices. It was Chinggis who determined that his brothers and nephews should not be considered for succession, and forced them to swear to support his descendants for rulership.[95] However, this idea of 'ruler's choice' was regularly ignored by successive generations of Chinggisid princes and the ruling elite. It seems as if Chinggis' attempt to shift Mongol custom towards a more centralised system was not easily accepted.[96]

Returning to our case study, by way of Toluid-Jochid threats, we do not have too much evidence of specifics. Juvainī claims that Möngke and Sorqoqtani only turned to this resort after all other routes were worn out.[97] Eventually, a more specific threat emerges, apparently from the council around Möngke to Shiremün and Naqu, that if they delayed attendance on the *quriltai*, their input would be foregone and Möngke would be elected anyway.[98] This seems to have done the trick, or at least got them to depart their own *ordu*s. Rashīd al-Dīn says that Batu told Berke, 'Seat him (Möngke) on the throne! And any creature that disobeys the *yasa* will lose his head.'[99] The flip side of violent action as a threat was that it could also push people away. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, during the civil war between Qubilai and Ariq Böke, many of Ariq Böke's own commanders who had accepted his rule turned against him, saying 'he ruthlessly kills the Mongol soldiers that Chinggis Khan put together. Why should we not revolt and turn against him?'[100] Notice the language here; an appeal is made to Chinggis Khan's legacy, touching on an ideal loyalty, while the commanders desert Ariq Böke in fear of their own lives, showing their clientelist loyalty.

In the previous example we see the appeal to ideal loyalty as well, with Batu making it a violation of the *yasa* to not accept Mongke as the *qa'an*. What specific *yasa* this refers to is unclear. The Jochids and Toluids certainly would have a harder time trying to appeal to this aspect of Mongol

[95] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §255, p. 188.
[96] Michael Hope's analysis of the collegialist viewpoint of the Mongol ruling elite highlights this issue, *Power, Politics, and Tradition*, *passim*.
[97] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 563.
[98] Idem, p. 567.
[99] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 403.
[100] Idem, p. 431.

loyalty. All of them had given *möchelge*s to the effect that the rule would be kept in the line of Ögödei.[101] We do not know the contents of these pledges, and if there were any provisos attached, certainly none are mentioned. However, the arguments for the morality of a move against Ögödei's descendants are elaborated in our Persian sources. That most emphasised by Juvainī was the position of Batu as *aqa*, saying 'whatever he commands, his word is law.'[102] This, combined with the agreement of the *aqa-ini*, was sufficient for him as a reason to abandon the Ögödeids and support Möngke.

Rashīd al-Dīn's reasoning is more complex and based on both Mongol tradition and Chinggisid law. The argument is twofold.[103] The first is more recent, with Rashīd al-Dīn having Batu say that the Ögödeids went 'against their father's words' (خلاف سخن پدر *khilāf-i sukhan-i pidar*) when they enthroned Güyük instead of Ögödei's choice, Shiremün in 1246.[104] This statement damned the Jochids and the Toluids equally, as they had been full participants (except Batu) in Güyük's election, and were currently in the process of choosing Möngke while Shiremün was still alive. Perhaps in Rashīd al-Dīn's eyes, the contravention of a *father's* command was particularly egregious. Rashīd al-Dīn ignores the pesky issue of the Jochids' and Toluids' involvement on the whole, but he explains away the Toluid treatment of Shiremün by saying that while Ögödei had wished for Shiremün's father Köchü to succeed him, Köchü died before him.[105] He then goes on to state that Möngke raised Köchü's son Shiremün himself, and had it in mind that Shiremün be his successor, but Shiremün plotted against Möngke and was handed over to Qubilai, who killed him. This both shows Möngke's original respect for Ögödei's chosen heir, and his innocence regarding Shiemün's death. Rashīd al-Dīn then moves on to the second prong of his attack on the Ögödeids. This infringement was of 'the ancient *Yasa* and *Yosun*.'[106] According to the historian, the Ögödeids, after the accession of Güyük, had executed a daughter of Chinggis, Al Altan, for the suspected poisoning of Ögödei, without consulting the entire family. Here Rashīd al-Dīn appeals to deeply held societal beliefs and the sanctity of royal blood. It is these legal and societal misdeeds that explain why rulership should not stay in the Ögödeid line.

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[101] Idem, p. 409. It is Oghul Gaimish who points this out to Möngke, who flies into a rage. For more on the *möchelge,* see Chapter Two.

[102] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 557.

[103] Anne Broadbriage has already neatly summarised these issues, Broadbridge, *Women,* p. 206.

[104] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 361. RAD/Raushan, Vol. I, p. 657.

[105] RAD/Raushan, Vol. I, p. 562. RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 306 states that it was Möngke who chose Köchü as his successor, but this is clearly a mistake as the Persian text uses قاان on its own, which was Ögödei's posthumous title, while Köchü was dead before Möngke came to the throne.

[106] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 361.

What is interesting about these arguments is that none of them are mentioned by the earlier historian Juvainī. Rashīd al-Dīn often follows Juvainī for this period, but in this section, he brings in new claims. Broadbridge says that these claims were the basis for Toluid pretensions for power, but if so, why do they not make an appearance in Juvainī's work?[107] Perhaps Rashīd al-Dīn had more information, as we know he had greater access to Mongol documents than Juvainī, but if this was such a strut for Toluid rule it seems strange that no hint of it is to be found in Juvainī's work. Indeed, Juvainī never mentions Shiremün being chosen as Ögödei's successor, though he does say that he was a potential candidate in 1246.[108] This discrepancy should not be ignored. Rashīd al-Dīn may simply have honed arguments which had developed in the intervening thirty years since Juvainī's work. Atwood believes that a dearth of information on Al Altan was due to the Chinggisids' keenness to protect their most taboo secrets.[109] Whatever the case may be, Batu and his Toluid allies likely picked up on any point which would weaken the Mongols' ideal loyalty to the Ögödeids. They then had the ability to express shock when the Ögödeids resisted their choice of Möngke, apparently contravening the *jasaq* of Chinggis Khan, something that Sorqoqtani and her sons would never do.[110]

3.4 The Regent

Another key figure in the historical developments of the 13th century Mongol world was the regent. Regents ruled the Mongol Empire for most of the 1240s, and in some cases the regional *ulus*es also had regencies for a time.[111] The origins of this position are somewhat unclear, though we have some possible examples of its existence in the *SHM* and elsewhere.[112] The first is Hö'elün, who acted as the leader of Yisügei's household and peoples. It was she who took up his standard and

[107] Broadbridge, *Women*, p. 207.
[108] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 251.
[109] Atwood, 'Pu'a's Boast', p. 242.
[110] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol I, p. 255, Vol. II, p. 573.
[111] E.g. B. de Nicola, 'The Queen of the Chaghatayids: Orghīna Khātūn and the rule of Central Asia', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* Vol. 26, No. 1/2, (2016), pp. 107-120.
[112] De Nicola, *Women in Mongol Iran*, p. 74 believes that there was no specific Mongol tradition of women as regents until Töregene, but rather that this was a general nomadic tradition stemming from the Qara Khitai. As pointed out by Michal Biran, the Qara Khitai were ruled by two women with their own regnal titles in the mid-12th century with one of them, Yelü Pusuwan, nominated to rule by her brother Yelü Yilie in 1163. Biran also states that the Qara Khitai were involved in Mongol politics in the 12th century, and refugees such as Toghril and Küchlüg fled to their realms after defeats on the steppe. Given this, and the ready adoption of several other Qara Khitai institutions by the Mongols, female regency in the Mongol Empire may have been influenced by this policy as well, Biran, 'Qara Khitai', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia for Asian History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 6-9.

brought back many of those who left upon his death.[113] Though Yisügei apparently established Father Mönglik, a close friend of Yisügei's of the Qongqotat, to look after Hö'elün and her children, even marrying her according to Rashīd al-Dīn, it is clear that Hö'elün continued to make political decisions for the people she ruled over.[114] Her influence over her sons would continue into their adulthood as well. The fact that many of Yisügei's people preferred Tayichi'ut leadership to that of Hö'elün's brings us back again to the situation of loyalty with options. If they preferred an adult ruler to the youthful Temüjin, they also preferred a male leader to a female. While the Mongols held royal women in reverence and respect, their society still could be a very patriarchal one, shown further in the discussion of Gürbesü Khatun below.

Other examples of female rule known to the Mongols appear in the SHM, the first is Gürbesü Khatun. While it is unclear if she was the mother of the Naiman ruler Tayang Khan, or his stepmother and wife, she seems to have been considered the ruler in some regard.[115] Her rule is described as harsh, and her 'son' is described by his father Inanch Bilge Khan as 'a weakling', though Tayang certainly made his own political decisions.[116] Granted, these statements in the *SHM* are largely insults directed by the Mongols at a rival, but Gürbesü does seem to have had a degree of independence and power during Tayang Khan's rule. However, Tayang Khan's son and rival Küchlüg insults him by calling him a woman with no courage, and Gürbesü is described as 'only a woman'.[117] These views should make us wary of overstating the overall position of women in the Mongol world, as impressive as their individual roles often are. Another female ruler mentioned by the SHM is Botoqui Tarqun. Her husband, Daiduqul Soqor, had been the ruler of the Qori Tumat people, but he had died, and Botoqui was now the ruler. She was apparently very successful for a time, as her people killed or captured several of Chinggis' *noyat* sent to deal with them, such as Boroqul Noyan, Qorchi Noyan and Qutuqa Beki of the Oirat. It was only after Chinggis appointed Dörbei Doqšin of the Dorbet were the Tumat finally defeated. Botoqui Tarqun herself was given to Qutuqa Beki, whose family were *quda* (marriage-partners) of the Chinggisids.[118]

Jennifer Holmgren and George Zhao have provided us with another example of a Mongolian regent, in this case, Chinggis' third daughter, Alahai (Alaqa *SHM*, Alaqai Rashīd al-Dīn) Beki. Alahai

[113] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §73, p. 18.
[114] Idem, §68, p. 16; RAD/Raushan, Vol. I, pp. 533-4.
[115] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §189, p. 112 says she is the mother of Tayang Khan. RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 149, however has her as the wife. Broadbridge, *Women*, p. 90; De Nicola, *Women in Mongol Iran*, p. 45 accept the reasoning of de Rachewiltz, 'Philological Commentary', Vol. II, p. 679 that the term *eke*, or mother, was not literal, but represented her role as step-mother to Tayang Khan who he married through the levirate.
[116] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §189, 194, pp. 110-111.
[117] Idem, §194, p. 117.
[118] Idem, §240-2, pp. 164-6.

was married three times into the ruling family of the Öng'üt in order to cement their alliance with the Mongols. Over time however, she seems to have become a regent for her deceased husband Zhenguo (Baisbu) and young son Niegutai.[119] She was entrusted by Chinggis with control of northern China, based in Hebei, when he went west, and his general there, Muqali, reported to her. Her bronze seal was found in 1958, with her title 監國公主, *jiān guó gōngzhǔ*, meaning 'princess regent'.[120] The Sòng envoy, Zhao Gong, stated that 'she lives as a widow, managing the affairs of the White Tatar kingdom and reading the canons every day. She has several thousand lady-officials who serve her, but all the decisions about campaigning and executions come from her personally'.[121] Therefore, female regency, while not extremely common, was clearly not unknown to the Mongols, who made use of it when they saw the need.

While we have evidence for the independent, or semi-independent rule of women on the Mongolian steppe and in the Chinggisid family, the first regent of the Mongol Empire was not a woman, but rather Chinggis' youngest son Tolui.[122] However, it does not seem clear exactly how Tolui came to be in this position. The *YS* states that he took control after Chinggis' death, as Ögödei, the heir-apparent was away.[123] Tolui's agency here and the fact that no other names are mentioned, nor any discussion with family or the *noyat*, seems to indicate that Tolui simply filled a power void until Ögödei took over. Indeed the *YS* also claims that Tolui did not particularly want to relinquish power to Ögödei when convening the quriltai.[124] According to Igor de Rachewiltz, based on unspecified

[119] Holmgren 'Observations on Marriage', pp.162-3; G.Q. Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression: Mongolian Royal Marriages from World Empire to Yuan Dynasty*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), p. 28. For a comprehensive look at the Öng'üt relationship with the Mongols, see C.P. Atwood, 'Historiography and transformation of ethnic identity in the Mongol Empire: the Öng'üt case', *Asian Ethnicity*, Vol. 15, No. 4, (2014), pp. 514-534.

[120] Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy*, p. 37.

[121] Zhao Gong, 'A Memorandum on the Mong-Tatars', in (ed. and trans.) C.P. Atwood, *The Rise of the Mongols: Five Chinese Sources*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 2021), p. 78.

[122] Jones, 'The Objects of Loyalty', p. 14. Tolui's role is given in Ila Chucai's spirit-path stele as 監國, *jiānguó*, matching Alahai Beki's title, Song Zizhen, 'Spirit-Path Stele', p. 139, though Atwood states that there was no 'official' title for Tolui, Atwood, *Rise of the Mongols*, p. 139, note 36.

[123] YS, Chap. 119, 'Biography of Muqali', *The History of Yuan Dynasty*, Vol. II, (eds.) Q. Zhang and C. Yao, (Taipei: The National War College, 1966-7), pp. 1272-1286; G. Humble, 'The Biography of Yelu Chucai, Yuanshi, 146.3455-65', Unpublished, p. 3, note 17; YS, Chap. 146, *The History of Yuan Dynasty*, Vol. III, pp. 1553-1558; G. Humble, 'The Biography of Yelu Chucai, Yuanshi, 146.3455-65', Unpublished, pp. 3, 12. I am grateful to my colleague Nicholas Kontovas for assisting in the translation of the Chinese material. D. Krawulsky, *The Mongol Ilkhans and their Vizier Rashīd al-Dīn* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang AG, 2011), pp. 19, 25 questions whether Ögödei's position as heir was really so secure as the *YS* and Rashīd al-Dīn make out. It is possible that Tolui ruled on behalf of his deceased father, not his appointed brother, as he seemed not to wish to relinquish power. Christopher Atwood, meanwhile, argues that the Yuán era sources inflate Tolui's role in this period to establish precedent for his descendants' later seizure of power, Atwood, *Rise of the Mongols*, p. 139, note 36.

[124] G. Humble, 'The Biography of Yelu Chucai, *Yuanshi*, 146.3455-65', Unpublished, p. 4.

'Chinese sources', this was due to support for Tolui's own candidacy among the assembly.[125] In Ila Chucai's biography, Tolui's role as regent extends to appointing officials, law and order, and apparently also the convention of the *quriltai* itself.[126] Tolui's own biography in the *YS* claims that while regent, he dealt with bandits in the Yanjing region.[127]

Juvainī does not mention Tolui's regency, but Rashīd al-Dīn possibly confirms it, depending on how we interpret his meaning. After Chinggis' death, the princes and brothers had gone on to their own *yurt*s, and Rashīd al-Dīn states that 'Tolui Khan settled down based in the original *yurt*, which had been the royal residence and great *ordu*s of Chinggis Khan' and also that he 'settled in the original *yurt* and throne of his father, which was his right'(تولوی خان در یورت اصلی که تختگاه و اوردوهای بزرگ چینگیز خان بود متمکن شده بنشست...تمکن و استقرار در یورت اصلی و تختگاه پدر که حق او بود, *tūlūī khān dar yurt-i aṣlī ki takhtgāh va ūrdū-hā-yi buzurg-i chīngīz khān būd mutimakkin shuda binishast…tamakkun va istiqrār dar yurt-i aṣlī va takhtgāh-i pidar ki haqq-i ū būd*).[128] As we can see in the same section, Rashīd al-Dīn refers to Ögödei as the successor (*valī al-ʿahd*), so either this is Tolui simply taking possession of his inheritance (namely, his father's tents), or that he indeed occupied the throne (*takhtgāh*) of his father as a regent. We also should not forget the Toluid sources' strengthening of Tolui's claim to the throne to legitimate later khans; perhaps this is another instance of such efforts. Given that in this section of Rashīd al-Dīn, Tolui occupies the throne *after* his family members have returned to their own lands, if this did mean that Tolui became regent, he seems to have taken this role on himself, not 'was named' or 'was placed in charge'; De Rachewiltz says that Tolui 'had assumed the regency of the empire'.[129]

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[125] I. de Rachewiltz, 'Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai (1189-1243): Buddhist Idealist and Confucian Statesman', in (eds.) A. Wright and D. Twitchett, *Confucian Personalities*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962) p. 199. This is echoed in his biography of Ila Chucai in *In the Service of the Khan*, where de Rachewiltz states, 'We know from the Chinese sources that there was disagreement in the assembly, a section of which supported Tolui's candidature against Ögödei's', de Rachewiltz, 'Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, Yeh-lü Chu, Yeh-lü Hsi-liang', p. 148. However there seems to be no mention of such in YS 146 nor in Chucai's spirit-path stele, though the *YS* does mention disagreement in the assembly. Undoubtedly de Rachewiltz's status as a Sinologist is unquestionable, but we are left a little in the dark by these two passages, neither of which provide us with a reference as to which Chinese source states this. In the 14th century *Debter Marbo* (Red History), a Tibetan chronicle written by Gunga Dorje (1309-1264) of the Tsalba monastic order, it is said that while Jochi and Chaghadai presented letters to Chinggis promising not to contest the throne, Tolui had presented no such letter, and thus contested for the throne, Atwood, 'Six Pre-Chinggisid Genealogies', pp. 15, 52, quoting *Debter Marbo*/Demchigmaa, pp. 59-62.

[126] Humble, 'Biography of Yelu Chucai', pp. 3-4; De Rachewiltz, 'Dating of *Secret History*', p. 163 states that the convening of the *quriltai* was the job of the regent in lieu of a *qa'an*. Jones, 'The Objects of Loyalty', p. 14.

[127] G. Humble, 'The Biography of Ruizong 睿宗, *Yuanshi* 115.2885-87', Unpublished, p. 1.

[128] RAD/Raushan, Vol. II, p. 701.

[129] De Nicola, *Women in Mongol Iran*, p. 65; T. Allsen, 'The Rise of the Mongolian Empire and Mongolian Rule in North China', in (eds.) H. Franke and D. Twitchett, *The Cambridge History of China,* Vol. 6, *Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 367; De Rachewiltz, 'Yeh-lü Ch'u-ts'ai, Yeh-lü Chu, Yeh-lü Hsi-liang', p. 147.

According to the *YS* then, Tolui likely acted as regent in the two year gap between Chinggis' death and Ögödei's succession. However, the lack of consultation about this action seems jarring given the Mongols' tendency to establish rulership through an assembly. Even more telling perhaps, is that Rashīd al-Dīn says that before Ögödei was enthroned and after Chinggis' death, 'the princes and amirs who had remained in Chinggis Khan's camp' had launched an attack on an unknown territory. Everyone was arguing about this action, but Ögödei issued a *jasaq* which pardoned any crime or offence committed before his accession.[130] As noted by Jackson, this must have at least included Tolui.[131] The fact that he is not named, while both Güyük, an easy target for Toluid writers, and Eljigidei, who was later put to death by the Toluids, are mentioned by Rashīd al-Dīn seems very much as if he was seeking to cover up Tolui's involvement. If Tolui was indeed the regent at this time, his powers apparently did not stretch to sending out campaigns.[132] If Tolui's acting as regent was merely of his own initiative, it may be that this action itself was not considered legal by many in the Mongol world. Ögödei's pardon of Tolui may well have been a condition of Tolui's support at the *quriltai* of 1229.[133] In essence, this tale leaves us somewhat in the dark as to how a regent was chosen and what was expected of them.

3.4.1 Möge Khatun's Regency

The issues around Tolui's rule may have led to a change to female regency. As Holmgren states, it was much harder to displace a male regent once they were in power and thus the Mongols turned to women to glue the empire together until a successor could be established.[134] Again, however, it is unclear whether this was simply ad hoc or if it was planned by Mongol leadership. After Chinggis' successor Ögödei died in 1241, we have somewhat differing accounts of the regency. Juvainī states that, 'in accordance with precedent, the dispatch of orders and the assembling of the people took place at [...] the *ordu* of his wife Möge Khatun.' (برقرار ماضی تنفیذ احکام و اجتماع انام از خواص و

[130] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 313.
[131] P. Jackson, 'The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', First published in *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 22, (1978), pp. 186-244., Reprinted in (eds.) D. Sneath and C. Kaplonski, *The History of Mongolia,* Vol. 1, (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2010), p. 320.
[132] T. May, 'Commercial Queens: Mongolian Khatuns and the Silk Road', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* Vol. 26, (2016), p. 103; Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy*, p. 62 shows that regents' powers were different, in that they could issue their own decrees called in Chinese *yìzhǐ*, whereas imperial decrees were called *shěngzhǐ*, and princely decrees called *lìngzhǐ*.
[133] Krawulsky, *The Mongol Ilkhans*, p. 27 hypothesises that this was an agreement between Ögödei and Tolui, excluding Chaghadai, who could have expected to succeed as the eldest surviving son of Chinggis.
[134] Holmgren, 'Observations on Marriage', p. 161.

عوام بر در اوردو و بارگاه خاتون او موکا خاتون, *bar qarār-i māżī tanfīẕ-i aḥkām va ijtimāʿ-i anām az khvāṣṣ va ʿavām bar dar-i ūrdū va bārgāh-i khātūn-i ū mūkā khātūn*).[135] Möge had been Chinggis' wife and Ögödei had married her through the levirate, and she was apparently Ögödei's favourite.[136] Neither the *YS* nor Rashīd al-Dīn mention Möge's regency, but it should not be immediately discounted. Juvainī and Rashīd al-Dīn state that she died not long after Ögödei, so her short rule may have been glossed over by the later authors, who skip immediately to Töregene assuming power.[137] In certain respects, Möge was a better candidate for regency than Töregene.[138] As a former wife of Chinggis, she would likely have been considered senior to Töregene, whether or not she was in fact elder, and if knowledge of Chinggis' statements was important for rulers, then she would have been in a better position in this regard. She was also childless, which may have suited the Mongols as a more impartial influence on the succession. Even though Juvainī states that Töregene was able to outmanoeuvre Möge by sending messages to the Chinggisid princes getting them on her side, he also states that she only obtained full control of the affairs of state after Möge had died.[139]

Möge's regency, if we accept Juvainī's account, was based on established precedent in the Mongol world. If the examples of Hö'elün and Alahai are not enough, we should perhaps consider that it was quite normal for Chinggis' wives to run his camps, both on campaign and while he was away.[140] This idea looks to have been extended to the ruler's death as well. Take the statement of John of Plano Carpini for example, regarding the *ordu* of Jochi: 'It is ruled by one of his wives, for it is the custom among the Tartars that the courts of princes or nobles are not destroyed but women are always appointed to control them and they are given their share of the offerings just as their lord was in the habit of giving them.'[141] For Broadbridge, this wife was Sorghan, the mother of Orda, as the camp was in Orda's territory, and this by definition made her Jochi's chief wife, even though her son, Orda, was passed over for succession in favour of Oki's son Batu.[142] However, Carpini's

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[135] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 240; Juvainī/Qazvini, Vol. I, p. 195. Boyle's translation. The key phrase here is *bar qarār-i māżī*, 'according to what is past/has gone before'.

[136] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 218; RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 77. The order of Ögödei's wives is extremely difficult to pin down, as shown in I. de Rachewiltz, 'Was Töregene Qatun Ögödei's "Sixth Empress"?', *East Asian History*, No.17/18, (June/December, 1999), pp. 71-76.

[137] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 240; RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 390.

[138] Broadbridge, *Women*, pp. 168-170.

[139] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 240.

[140] Broadbridge, *Women*, pp. 19-20, 88. Chinggis' wives Qulan and Yisui both did this.

[141] Dawson, *The Mongol Mission*, p. 60.

[142] Broadbridge, *Women*, pp. 230-1. Something that has largely been discounted here is Orda's own desires. Rashīd al-Dīn states that he 'gave consent' to Batu becoming ruler, RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p.348. Perhaps he simply had no interest in ruling the larger *ulus*. According to Ötemish Ḥājjī's 16th century *Jingiz-nama*, Batu and Orda both advanced claims to the succession, and Chinggis settled on Batu for his knowledge of the *jasaq*, T.T. Allsen, 'The Princes of the Left Hand: An Introduction to the History of the *Ulus* of Orda in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries', *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, Vol. 5, (1987), p. 9.

statement sounds very much like that of Juvainī regarding Möge. What precedent is Juvainī speaking of here? The precedent of regency or the precedent of men's camps going to their wives? We know that Juvainī sometimes misunderstood Mongol customs, such as the position of the *otchigin*.[143] Whether or not Juvainī is confusing these two 'customs', Möge's assumption of this regency role throws into question Töregene's status as sole chief wife.[144]

[143] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 186. Juvainī confused the position of *otchigin*, whereby the youngest son of the ruler receives his father's *yurt* and lands, with the assumption of rule.

[144] Broadbridge, *Women*, pp. 168-9 shows this confusion, saying that Töregene was 'the senior wife', but then on the next page stating that Möge had greater seniority having been married to Chinggis and being favoured by Ögödei publicly, making her of greater status and the one expected to rule as regent. In my view, either we discard or mistrust Juvainī's information about Möge, or we assume that the later sources (Rashīd al-Dīn, *YS*) gloss over her short regency. If the latter, then this must make us question whether Töregene was in actual fact the chief wife, or whether the role of 'chief wife' was always exclusive.

3.4.2 Categorising Loyalty to the Regent

Whatever the case may be, it seems that the Mongols at this stage turned to women to rule once it was realised that giving a Chinggisid prince the regency was a dangerous ploy. Nonetheless, when Töregene became regent, our sources very much indicate this was through her own design. Naturally, we must be wary of our Persian authors here, for whom Töregene and Oghul Gaimish have two major downsides, they were Ögödeids and they were not men. However, as Juvainī states, Töregene was able to win over the key figures in the Mongol state, namely Chaghadai, the only surviving son of Chinggis by Börte, and the other princes to support her regency.[145] This directly contradicts Rashīd al-Dīn's claims that Töregene 'without consulting the *aqa-ini*s, seized control of the kingdom' (به دل خود بی کنگاچ آقا و اینی ملک را در قبضهٔ تصرف آورد, *bi dil-i khud bī-kingāch-i āqā va īnī mulk rā dar qabża-yi taṣarruf āvard*), even going so far as to describe her regency as *bulqaq*, or rebellion (در آن فترت و بلغاق, *dar ān fitrat va bulghāq*).[146] These disagreements are fundamental in understanding loyalty decisions not just for this period, but for Güyük and Oghul Gaimish's reigns as well.

From our analyses of the first three regencies of the Mongol Empire, it seems that the position was not one which was officially established, but rather emerged as a stop-gap, agreed upon by key players in the Mongol world. In the regencies of both Töregene and Güyük's widow Oghul Gaimish, we have the *aqa* (eldest prince) agreeing to their assumption of power.[147] Unlike the selection of a khan then, the regent's power was not established in a *quriltai*, but it did have the backing of another key figure between reigns, the *aqa*. Loyalty-wise, therefore, these periods were more uncertain.[148] From a charismatic loyalty point of view, we know that the Mongols regularly accepted women in positions of power. Hö'elün, Alahai, Sorqoqtani Beki, Töregene and Oghul Gaimish all were accepted as rulers or custodians of power.[149] Töregene in particular seems to have been able to win people over through her dominant personality. Even in Juvainī and Rashīd al-Dīn, she received begrudging respect, a sure sign that she was well thought of in the Mongol world. Juvainī calls her shrewd, wise, capable and cunning and able to show kindness when required also.[150]

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[145] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 240.
[146] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 390-1; RAD/Raushan, Vol. II, pp. 809-811. Thackston's translation.
[147] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 395.
[148] Jones, 'The Objects of Loyalty', p. 14.
[149] Not to mention women in the regional *uluses* (Orghina Khatun in the Chaghadaid *ulus*, Boraqchin Khatun in the Jochid *ulus* etc.)
[150] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 240.

Rashīd al-Dīn calls her 'totally domineering' (در طبیعت او تسلطی تمام بوده, *dar ṭabīʿat-i ū tasalluṭī tamām būda*), perhaps not intended as a compliment, but certainly a quality necessary for leadership.[151]

With regards to loyalties of self-interest, these were trying times. Mongol actors had to try and stay on the good side of both the regent and potential claimants to the throne. Key officials such as Chinqai and Maḥmūd Yalāvach, who had been favoured by both Chinggis and Ögödei, were removed by Töregene for example. Both turned to the Ögödeid prince Köten for refuge, and were restored to power by Güyük.[152] Clientelist loyalties were played upon by the regents and other actors, like Batu and Sorqoqtani, who plied their relatives with gifts and honours, as well as promise of future advancement. Töregene was able to not only encourage the Mongol ruling classes to support her own regency, but also her own candidate for succession, her eldest son Güyük. Her position as regent significantly aided this ability. Shiremün, Ögödei's chosen successor according to Rashīd al-Dīn and the *YS*, was young and unable to gain much support for himself without the resources of the empire at his disposal and his grandmother in full control of Ögödeid fortunes.[153] Interestingly, Güyük does not seem to have done much in his own 'campaign', relying on his mother to pull the strings on his behalf. Oghul Gaimish was able to gain support originally for her own regency, but was unable to gain support for a successor, as she seems to have been unable to choose between her own sons Khoja and Naqu, and Ögödei's grandson Shiremün.[154] Competing regional power bases, such as those of Batu and Sorqoqtani, together were able to stump up plenty of funds to bribe key figures to support their candidate, Möngke.[155]

If we consider inertial loyalties, naturally on the death of a ruler, some change must occur, and in this regard, those thoughts must have been centred on who could make the smoothest

[151] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 304; RAD/Raushan, Vol. I, p. 559. Thackston's translation.

[152] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, pp. 242, 257, 259.

[153] Shiremün's mother, Qadaqach of the Qonggirat, is rarely mentioned in our sources, but according to Juvainī, she was killed along with Oghul Gaimish after Möngke's enthronement, so she was likely an avid supporter of Shiremün's claim to the throne, Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 588. Her lineage is provided in RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 87.

[154] We have at least one piece of evidence that Güyük in fact named a successor. In Chapter 107 of the YS (the genealogy of the Mongols), Naqu is called 太子, *tàizǐ*, or crown prince. This is the same term used for Shiremün by this source as well, and was regularly used for the designated successors of Chinese emperors, L. Hambis, 'Le Chapitre CVII du Yuan Che', *T'oung Pao*, Vol. 38-Supplement, (1945), pp. 76, 85; Jackson, 'Dissolution', p. 322, note 70. The genealogy of this chapter elsewhere is highly suspect. Nonetheless, it is interesting that this Toluid source would confer this legitimising aspect on one of Güyük's sons. It is regularly argued that Chinese sources on the Mongols attempted to delegitimise Güyük by emphasising Shiremün's position as chosen successor of his father (eg. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 24; Kim, 'Reappraisal of Güyüg Khan', pp. 322, 325). However, this title given by the *YS* to Naqu seems to contradict this aim, in fact delegitimising Möngke's accession, though perhaps Naqu's selection by the usurping Güyük trumps this? If Naqu was named as successor, Khoja clearly did not accept this, perhaps because of his own seniority, and the fact that his mother seemingly never came out in open support of Naqu.

[155] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 402-3.

transition of power. The fact that the Ögödeids continued to have support, even when the Toluid coup was almost a *fait accompli*, indicates that many people were happy with Ögödeid rule until its end.[156] This extended to the regents, who seemed most likely to provide continuity of rule and a successor from within the Ögödeid house. According to Juvainī, Chaghadai and the other princes accepted Töregene's rule on the condition that 'the old ministers should remain in the service of the Court, so that the old and new *yasas* might not be changed from what was the law.'[157] As Geoffrey Humble notes, Juvainī here is setting Töregene up to show exactly that she failed to do this, targeting key ministers of Chinggis and Ögödei like Chinqai and Maḥmūd Yalāvach.[158] Notwithstanding this, those who assumed Töregene would provide continuity would be bitterly disappointed. She put many of her own people in power, and if Rashīd al-Dīn and the *YS* are to be believed, changed the succession from Shiremün to her own son Güyük. We also hear that this period saw many princes acting on their own, issuing their own *jarligh*s and *paiza*s, which Güyük had Arghun Aqa collect during his reign.[159] Clearly, there were some who saw this as an opportunity to advance their own ends, and to test their new regent's authority.

With regards to communal loyalties, to a large extent we see the expected actions from members of a similar group. The different lines largely backed power holders from their own lineages. However, the Toluids and Jochids were better able to pry away individual princes from the Ögödeid and Chaghadaid lines to support them, as we have already seen. The Ögödeids and Chaghadaids do not seem to have been able to win over any Toluids or Jochids to their cause, which suffered from divisions within it, as Oghul Gaimish was unable to settle on any one successor. Another interesting case here is that of the Uighurs. Their *idiqut*, Salindi, had been installed by Töregene Khatun, and he and his people continued to support the Ögödeids, as they came out in support of Oghul Gaimish and her sons Khoja and Naqu against Möngke. When Salindi and the Ögödeids were outmanoeuvred, Salindi was tortured to confession at the Mongol *jarghu*, then executed by his brother Ogunch, who was confirmed as *idiqut* by Möngke.[160] Communal loyalties, even to the regents, could therefore be very powerful. This communal loyalty to the Ögödeids was presumably strengthened by the Uighurs' inertial and clientelist loyalties to the regime which had greatly rewarded them and made them a key part of their empire.

[156] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 562.
[157] Idem, p. 240.
[158] Idem, p. 241; Humble, 'Narrating Female Rule', pp. 1, 8-10.
[159] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 509.
[160] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, pp. 48-53. For more on the institution of the *jarghu*, see I. Vasary, 'The Preconditions to Becoming a Judge (*Yarġuči*) in Mongol Iran', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 26, (2016), pp. 157-169.

On the last type of loyalty, namely ideal loyalty, the issue of regency is a tricky one. Considering the ad hoc nature of the position, how do we establish what one ought to do? Some arguments are lined up by our authors, in line with Mongol expectations on how things should be done. Rashīd al-Dīn, as we have seen, targets Töregene not because of who she is per se, but because she failed to consult the *aqa-ini* and the will of Chinggis.[161] Therefore she ignores Mongol custom in her seizure of power, and Chinggis' legacy by ignoring his choice for Shiremün as Ögödei's successor. This not only calls into question her rule as regent (though Rashīd al-Dīn proposes no other candidate), but it also delegitimises Güyük's reign. However, this reasoning only appears in the 14th century. In Juvainī's work, there is nothing wrong with Töregene's *assumption* of power, but rather in her failure to adhere to the conditions put on it.[162] Neither does Juvainī have any issue with Güyük's ascent to the throne, in fact marking his suitability as a ruler. He even gives it the full Toluid stamp of approval, by saying that Sorqoqtani and her sons were at one with Töregene in her support for Güyük.[163] Oghul Gaimish also seems to have followed procedure, consulting with chief ministers, Sorqoqtani and Batu, who confirmed her in her position.[164] Oghul Gaimish's right to rule similarly was frittered away, by her disputes with her sons and senior kinsmen, as well as her adherence to Mongol shamans.[165] Thus, ideal loyalty to the regent seems to depend on the regent's ability to gain support from the *aqa-ini*, and not lose it by overreaching their more limited powers. We have no information as to whether Chinggis, Ögödei, or Güyük made any provisions for a regent to take over, so consultation seems to be the deciding factor in a regent's legitimacy.

3.5 The Aqa

To move on to a character who has been mentioned several times, the *aqa* seems to have been another figure who demanded loyalty in this period. I have discussed elsewhere the hazy role of the *aqa*, and the uncertainty which surrounds what powers the position entailed.[166] In essence, the

[161] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 304, 390.
[162] Humble, 'Narrating Female Rule', p. 13.
[163] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I. p. 251.
[164] Idem, p. 263.
[165] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 265. While this may seem a reflection not of Mongol preference, but of Juvainī's own religious beliefs, William of Rubruck reported that Möngke said she was a witch who had destroyed her whole family, Dawson, *The Mongol Mission*, p. 203. The accusation of witchcraft was often turned on women who gained too much power, such as Töregene's advisor, Fāṭima.
[166] Jones, 'The Objects of Loyalty, pp. 15-17. There is relatively little discussion of the term in modern dictionaries and encyclopaedias. It is either not mentioned: Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia*, or dealt with cursorily: P. Buell, *The A to Z of the Mongol World Empire*, (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2003), p. 107; T. May,

aqa was the person recognised as the eldest male member of the Chinggisid house. Thus, when Chaghadai died in 1242, Batu, the second son of Jochi, is described as the *aqa*, even though Chinggis' younger brother Temüge Otchigin was still alive at this point. Batu also had an elder brother, Orda, and it is not altogether clear why Batu became not only the ruler of the Jochid *ulus*, but also the *aqa*. Broadbridge has hypothesised that this may have had to do with their mothers, with Batu's mother Oki being Börte's niece, and thus of higher status.[167] However, we should not discount Toluid manufacturing of this position for Batu. After all, it is Batu's position as *aqa* which is the crux upon which Juvainī's, and Rashīd al-Dīn's following him, arguments for Möngke's succession are almost entirely based.[168] Even Rashīd al-Dīn admits that Orda's name had precedence over Batu's in Möngke's decrees.[169] The anonymous Tartar Relation states that Orda was held in higher honour than Batu among the generals because of his seniority.[170] John of Plano Carpini also noted that Orda was 'the eldest of all the chiefs'.[171] This is not to dispute Batu's control of the Jochid *ulus*, or the great power he held in the realm, but to question his position as *aqa*, and the loyalty obligations owed to

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The Mongol Empire: A Historical Encyclopedia, Vol. I, (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2017), p. 47; D.O. Morgan, 'Aqa', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Online, https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/aqa-or-aca, Accessed 12th November 2021. Gerhard Doerfer analyses the term more precisely, but largely from a philological perspective, focusing on it as a term of respect or a title, though he does at some point translate it as '*Sippenhaupt*', or head of the clan, Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente,* Band I, pp. 134-140. F.W. Cleaves, '*Aqa Minu*', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 24, (1962-1963), pp. 64-81 discusses this role further, noting that the term could be widely applied to uncles, brothers, fathers, and as a term of respect. Kaare Gronbech went even further, stating that in Turkic languages 'another special term cutting into the generations is the very common *aqa*, which primarily means "head, chief, elder", but is secondarily (and not vice versa, as is often assumed) used for eldest brother','The Turkish System of Kingship' *Studia Orientalia Ionna Pedersen dicata*, (Copenhagen: Eingar Munksgaard, 1953), pp. 124-129. (p. 127), quoted in Cleaves, *'Aqa Minu*', p. 80.

[167] Broadbridge, *Women*, p. 231.

[168] Thus the Toluid historians' editing of Jochi's role in the Mongol world could not go too far, as opposed to Atwood, 'Early Western Campaigns', pp. 35-56. This is a question that needs to be reconciled. Without Batu's status as *aqa*, the Toluids' coup could not be shown as anything more than a barefaced power grab. In order to show Batu as the *aqa* therefore, Juvainī does not mention Jochi's possible bastardy. Rashīd al-Dīn explicitly states that Börte was pregnant *before* being captured by the Merkit, but does allude to the fact that Tolui never considered him illegitimate, RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 347-8. One might think that mentioning it at all was unnecessary, but as Atwood points out, by Rashīd al-Dīn's time, the Jochids had long been enemies of the Ilkhanids and the Yuán. However, if, as Atwood implies (p. 55), the bastardy claims are simply made up by the Toluid historians in the 14th century, then why is Batu himself not the prime contender for the throne in 1248? He complained about his illness, but he lived for another nine years after this, and regularly asserted his own power, even against Möngke himself. We also must consider the meaning of Jochi's name, 'guest, visitor'. Rashīd al-Dīn puts this down to him being born unexpectedly, RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 347, but it also could have been intended to remind Jochi of his place in the Chinggisid family. Another more prosaic possibility is the tendency in the Mongol world to name sons after the person or thing seen first after the child's birth.

[169] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 348.

[170] *The Vinland Map,* p. 76.

[171] Dawson, *The Mongol Mission*, p. 26; 'The long and wonderfull voyage of Frier John de Plano Carpini, Anno 1246', (ed.) R. Hakluyt, in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation In Twelve Volumes, Volume I*, (London: MacMillan and Co., 1903), Online Edition, (Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 108. '*Ordu verò omnium Ducum senior*.'

him because of the position. Anne Broadbridge has described the attempts to portray the necessity of attending on Batu's word as 'retroactive whitewashing'.[172]

It is indubitable that the Mongols held great respect for age and seniority, as we have seen on several occasions. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the Toluid apologists use this cultural value to explain Batu and the Toluids' actions. However, it was in fact Batu's position as lord of the Jochid *ulus* which allowed him to encourage the coup against the Ögödeids. The charisma he derived from this position certainly helped him to become the khanmaker he later was. As lord of the western *ulus*, he was put in charge of the campaign to the west under Ögödei, in which he performed quite well, at least according to Juvainī. Apparently his fervent prayer and encouragement of Muslims in his entourage to do the same contributed to the Mongols' defeat of the Hungarians.[173] At the siege of Közelsk however, Batu was unable to take the city for two months, and it only fell when Qada'an, a son of Ögödei, and Büri, a son of Chaghadai, arrived.[174] His great power described by later European and Armenian sources stemmed from his support for Möngke and virtual independence in his western *ulus*.[175] Batu also seems to have chosen his allies well, as Sorqoqtani and Möngke were held in high regard. This would have conveyed to him a great deal of charisma. The fact that he was also possibly chosen specifically by Chinggis as lord of the *ulus* would have lent him further support.[176]

Of course, we cannot gloss over the issues with Batu's lineage either. If the allegations about his father Jochi's illegitimacy were well-known at the time, it is likely that many would not have seen his son as a true elder brother.[177] The *SHM* relates an incident where this viewpoint was shown. In the western campaign of the late 1230s and early 1240s, a feast with all the commanders took place. Batu, as the eldest among those princes, was the first to drink of the ceremonial wine.[178] Büri, a son

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[172] Broadbridge, *Women*, p. 203.

[173] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 270.

[174] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 327.

[175] E.g. William of Rubruck, Dawson, *The Mongol Mission*, pp. 136, 155, or Kirakos, *History of the Armenians*, pp. 263, 293.

[176]Allsen, 'Princes of the Left Hand, pp. 8-9 states that while Bar Hebraeus (p. 389) says that Ögödei chose Batu, and our other sources don't mention how Batu was chosen, we have it from Jūzjānī (pp. 1164-6) that Chinggis chose Batu. This is followed by later sources such as Naṭanzī, Abū'l Ghāzī, and the *Jīngīz-nāma* of Ötemish Ḥājjī. While Allsen is convinced by the veracity of these sources, Jūzjānī's credibility for Mongol history is often extremely suspect, and the other three sources are from centuries later (Naṭanzī 15th century, Ötemish Ḥājjī 16th century, and Abū'l Ghāzī 17th century). It seems strange that none of the 'official' Mongol histories mention this, but in the absence of evidence to the contrary, we can tentatively accept this claim.

[177]This is most clearly shown in SHM/de Rachewiltz, §254, p. 183, where Chaghadai complains about Jochi's possible succession saying 'How can we let ourselves be ruled by this bastard offspring of the Merkit?', referring to the Merkit's abduction of Börte before Jochi's birth. Rashīd al-Dīn has a lighter touch, but states that Tolui always had a good relationship with Jochi and considered him legitimate, RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 348.

[178] As mentioned in Chapter Two.

or grandson of Chaghadai, and Güyük, Ögödei's eldest son, refused to partake in the feast and rode off, but not before levelling insulting words at Batu. Batu reported the event to Ögödei, who was furious with his son, originally planning to put him in the vanguard of his forces for the most dangerous missions, before being talked down by the princes and commanders to commute the punishment to Batu, the head of the campaign.[179]

This feast has been discussed by Hodong Kim and Istvan Zimonyi, who point out that even if this event did happen, the punishment scene would have been impossible given that Güyük returned to Mongolia after Ögödei's death and both princes fought alongside Batu for some time after the supposed feast.[180] While the *SHM* and the *YS* highlight Batu's cowardliness during the western campaign, it is notable that the princes were angry about seniority here.[181] This could hardly have been in doubt unless they are referring to Batu's descent from the illegitimate Jochi. Even if this event's veracity is questionable, the rumours about Jochi were no doubt in circulation at the time, and thus there may well have been many people who did not accept Batu's claim to the position of *aqa*.[182]

3.5.1 Categorising Loyalty to the *Aqa*

From a clientelist loyalty perspective, Batu's power, standing and wealth put him in good stead to both encourage and threaten. His move to hold a convocation of the princes in his own *ulus* in 1249 surely carried an implicit threat to participants to go his way regarding succession. If our

[179] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §275-277, pp. 206-7.

[180] H. Kim, 'A Reappraisal of Güyüg Khan', in (eds.) R. Amitai and M. Biran, *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 315-317; I. Zimonyi, ''The Feast After the Siege of the Alan Capital in the Western Campaign of the Mongols', *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, Vol. 22 (2016), pp. 241-256.

[181] SHM/de Rachwiltz, §275, p. 206, has Büri comparing Batu to 'old women with beards', while the *YS* puts the criticism in the mouth of the general Subedei, who is angry at Batu's performance against the Hungarians, saying 'If you, sire, want to return, go back alone!', YS 121/2977-8, quoted from Kim, 'A Reappraisal of Güyüg', p. 318. The generally negative picture of Batu in the SHM seems to indicate that at least those sections must have been composed after Batu's death. A very different picture is given in John of Plano Carpini, where Batu is the saviour of the Hungarian campaign, through his valour encouraging the Mongols who would have left otherwise, *Mongol Mission*, p. 30.

[182] The narrative concerning Jochi has been challenged in Atwood, 'Early Western Campaigns', *passim*, who shows how Jochi's role was reduced in various Chinese sources, the SHM, and the Persian historians. Indeed, Atwood posits based on RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 53 where Chinggis tells Jochi 'I have stored up all these realms, armies, and peoples for you', that Jochi was Chinggis' heir, 'Early Western Campaigns', p. 45. This is taken up by Marie Favereau, who states that Jochi was demoted based on his poor performance in the Khwarazmian campaign, *The Horde*, p. 61. However, as I show, Batu's position as *aqa* is crucial to the Toluid takeover itself, and thus I believe that this analysis must be taken into account regarding Toluid attitudes to the Jochids.

sources are to be believed, he himself may have been considered by some as a candidate, in which case his potential to reward and punish was heightened. Indeed, even after it was made clear that Möngke was Batu's favoured choice and subsequently was enthroned, Batu was used by Möngke as his executioner, with 'being sent to Batu' almost a euphemism for extrajudicial murders.[183] While it is known that Mengeser Noyan was Möngke's *jarghuchi* (chief judge),[184] it may be that the preservation and enforcement of the *jasaq* was also expected of the *aqa*. It is well known that Chaghadai was seen as the strict enforcer of the *jasaq*, even upon himself, and our sources state that he was assigned as preserver of the law.[185] Juvainī speaks of the legendary 'fear of his *yasa* and punishment' (بیم یاسا و سیاست او, *bīm-i yāsā va siyāsat-i ū*) and that he enacted 'minute *yasa*s' (یاساهای باریک, *yāsā-hā-yi bārīk*).[186]

Batu also is portrayed by various sources as a strict upholder of the *jasaq* and Mongol custom. Carpini shows Batu enforcing Mongol ritual and marriage standards on Rus' Christians such as Duke Michael of Chernigov and the younger brother of Andrew of Chernigov, and on Carpini himself.[187] Juvainī also tells us that Batu was more firm in carrying out the law than Ögödei. In the case of Edigü-Temür, a rival administrator to Korguz for the territory of Khurasan, we are told that Ögödei tried him and found him guilty of breaking the *jasaq* of Chinggis Khan against lying informers. However, Ögödei spares Edigü-Temür, a servant of Batu, with Juvainī saying 'had the case been sent to Batu, even had he been his dearest friend, what mercy would he have shown him?' (اگر آن سخنها بنزدیک باتو رسانیدندی, اگر او خود عزیزترین کسی بودی, برو چه ابقا رفتی *agar ān sukhan-hā bi-nazdīk-i bātū rasānīdandī, agar ū khud ʿaziztarīn kasī būdī, bar ū chi ibqā' rafti?*).[188] A much later source, the 16th century *Tārīkh-i Dūst Sulṭān* by Ötemish Ḥājjī, claims that Chinggis chose Batu for succession to the Jochid *ulus* because his words were in accordance with the *jasaq*.[189] Admittedly, we have a very small

[183] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, pp. 588-90; Kirakos, *History of the Armenians*, p. 294. Büri, Yesü Möngke, Eljigidei were all dealt with by Batu according to Juvainī, though Rashīd al-Dīn states that Orghina Khatun, the widow of Qara Hülegü, killed Yesü Möngke, RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 376.

[184] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 409.

[185] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, pp. 205, 272; BH/Budge, p. 353; RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 304, 374-5.

[186] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 272; Juvainī/Qazvini, Vol. I, p. 227. Boyle's translation.

[187] Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 10-11, 56.

[188] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, pp. 498-9; Juvainī/Qazvini, Vol. II, p. 235. Boyle's translation.

[189] I. Vásáry, '*Yasa* and *Sharīʿa.* Islamic Attitudes towards the Mongol Law in the Turco-Mongolian World (From the Golden Horde to Timur's Time)', in (eds.) R. Gleave and I.T. Kristo-Nagy, *Violence in Islamic Thought from the Mongols to European Imperialism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018) pp. 70-1. Ötemish Ḥājjī was a historian of the 1550s, whose work was dedicated to the Chinggisid ruler Dūst Muḥammad Khan of the Khwarazmian Uzbek Arabshahid dynasty, and is the first 'internal' history of the Jochid Khanate. It emphasises the Shibanid lineage of Ḥājjī's patron, and is, as stated by the author, a reproduction of stories he was told and were not set down in any chronicle. His account does share many similarities with Mamluk and Persian histories of an earlier period however, D. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition*. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), pp. 144-9.

sample size for the actions of the *aqa*, so it is not clear that the *jasaq* was totally within the *aqa*'s remit. It may be that as ruler of an *ulus*, Batu was expected to handle matters of law within his own realm. However, in his khanmaker role, he does seem to have had extra powers of punishment until Möngke's accession, as we see from the quote from Rashīd al-Dīn above.[190]

With respect to inertial loyalties, many Mongol political players may have seen a transition to Jochid and Toluid power as a smoother option than remaining with the Ögödeids. Given the significant military might the two houses contained between them, it certainly would have looked to some an easier transfer of power than to the divided Ögödeids. Indeed, the Jochids and Toluids do not appear to have been divided in any way as to their choice of ruler, unlike the Ögödeids and their supporters. Continued support of the Ögödeids could have led to a civil war between the three candidates, Khoja, Naqu and Shiremün. Naturally, this also occurred with the shift away from the Ögödeids, but the joint forces of the Toluids and Jochids were quickly able to snuff out the Ögödeid response to their coup, without great warfare.[191] It was probably not possible to foresee this, but some may have been hedging their bets that the Ögödeids were less united and more likely to cause a full-scale civil war. There is also a fascinating titbit mentioned by Juvainī which has not received much attention in previous studies. According to him, many people flocked to pay homage to Chaghadai after Ögödei's death.[192] This likely was a case of inertial loyalty, assuming that power would naturally transfer to another son of Chinggis, and the *aqa* of the princes, rather than to Ögödei's sons or his chosen successor, his grandson Shiremün. If Juvainī's information is accurate, the seniority principle was still very strong in this period, and strengthens the image of the *aqa*.

3.5.2 Loyalty Obligations to the *Aqa*

The issue of idealistic loyalty to the *aqa* is a complex one. Certainly, we are on solid ground in saying that the Mongols generally respected seniority, and age was often a determinant of one's social status. However, the idea of the *aqa*'s unquestioned authority vis-a-vis other loyalty objects in the Mongol world, like the regent, is one that perhaps needs further investigation. Juvainī, who is happy to use this term for Batu, does not use it for Chaghadai for example. One instance where he

[190] See p. 95.

[191] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, pp. 578-9; RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 405-6.

[192] Juvainī/Boyle. Vol. I, p. 272. If we accept Chaghadai's death after Ögödei's, I have shown elsewhere that Rashīd al-Dīn put Chaghadai's death before that of Ögödei, Jones, 'The Objects of Loyalty', p. 15. This may also explain why Temüge Otchigin made an attempt to take the throne in 1246, considering that Chinggis' sons were all dead, and he was the most senior of the Borjigin Mongols, now by two generations, but naturally, not of the Chinggisid house.

does use it is particularly interesting. Having established in his chapter on Möngke's accession that Batu is the *aqa*, later in the same chapter, he relates that Khoja, the son of Güyük, had received an envoy from Möngke, and flew into a rage and wanted to kill the envoy. One of his junior wives warns him against such an action, and advises Khoja to respect the position of envoys and to go to Möngke, saying 'Mengu Qa'an is the *aqa* and in the position of a father: thou must go to him and submit thyself to his command, whatever it be.'[193]

We are left somewhat perplexed by this statement, and its potential social and political implications. Why was Möngke now considered the *aqa*? The major change since Juvainī proclaimed that Batu was the *aqa* of all the princes is that Möngke has now been made *qa'an*. Möngke's accession to the khanate then, makes him the symbolic *aqa*. If Batu's status as *aqa* leant him weight in the choosing of the *qa'an*, then presumably this transfer of the position to the elected leader is to ensure loyalty to the *qa'an* himself, otherwise Batu as *aqa* could continue to demand allegiance in this role. Another aspect of the quote from Khoja's wife is the statement that Möngke takes the position of a father. Thus, Möngke, now as *aqa* and *qa'an*, has taken the position of Güyük, Khoja's actual father. In this, the social position of the *aqa* seems to represent a familial authority in the absence of a father figure.[194] Thus Juvainī here is laying on thick the obligations Khoja has to Möngke. To disobey him is not just to disobey his elder brother, but his father figure.

3.5.3 The *Aqa* as Khanmaker

Perhaps then the *aqa*'s position only held compulsive power during an interregnum. In the biography of Ila Chucai, it is notable that Chucai, after telling the regent, Tolui, to call the *quriltai* in 1229, then approaches Chaghadai and tells him that though he is the elder brother, he must act as a servant to the realm. Should Chaghadai accept Ögödei's leadership, none would dare oppose him, whereupon Chaghadai duly leads his entire family and the officials in a salute to the troops.[195] Naturally, this biography's aim is to show Chucai as the only one with the wherewithal to ensure a smooth succession, but it is interesting nonetheless that it highlights Chaghadai's role in this potentially tricky time, as well as his ability to decide matters for the entire Mongol world. We may

[193] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 586.
[194] It also seems that once a senior lineage had been established, all members of that line would have been *aqa* to members of junior lineages, thus Ögödei's descendants could always have been *aqa* to Tolui's, even with generational or age differences, see B. Krader, *Social Organization of the Mongol-Turkic Pastoral Nomads*, (The Hague: Mouton & Co, 1963), pp. 72-3 and this work, pp. 122-3.
[195] Humble, 'Biography of Yelu Chucai', p. 4.

wonder why Chaghadai did not simply seize the throne himself if his status was as high as the *YS* would have us believe.

For another example of an *aqa* who did not become ruler but did influence the choice of successor, we can turn to the Tayichi'ut and one of their leaders, Tödö'en Girte. This character appears in the *SHM*, the *YS* and Rashīd al-Dīn.[196] Only Rashīd al-Dīn gives his lineage, saying that he was either a son of Qada'an Taishi, or a younger brother, making him either a grandson or son of Ambaqai Khan.[197] It was Qada'an Taishi who, along with Qutula, Temüjin's ancestor, was considered for succession by his father Ambaqai, with the rule being settled on Qutula after a *quriltai* of the Mongols and the Tayichi'ut.[198] According to Rashīd al-Dīn, Tödö'en should have been chosen as the ruler of the Tayichi'ut, but was robbed of this by the indecision of his cousins, who failed to agree on a leader, leading to the Tayichi'ut's demise.[199] However, elsewhere Rashīd al-Dīn contradicts himself, saying that the great rival of Temüjin, Tarqutai Qiriltuq, was the *pādshāh*, and that he had been chosen by Tödö'en and the leaders and amirs of the Tayichi'ut.[200] Several times, Rashīd al-Dīn mentions the status of Tödö'en, and his role as a decision maker and influence on his relatives. Firstly, he calls Tödö'en 'their (the Tayichi'ut's) elder', (مهین ایشان, *mihīn-i īshān*), saying that though he did not become ruler himself, he was well-respected as the son of a ruler (either Ambaqai or Qada'an.) and he had sons of his own.[201] It was to Tödö'en that two contenders for the Tayichi'ut leadership, Tarqutai and Baghachi, turned to for mediation of their dispute, and Tödö'en was part of the council that decided for Tarqutai, forcing Baghachi to submit. It is unclear why Tödö'en did not succeed himself, but nevertheless, he maintained an influential role among the Tayichi'ut.

Tödö'en appears again in the course of Mongol history, playing a role in the 'betrayal' of Temüjin by Yisügei's followers. This is captured most emotively by the *YS*: 'Töde'en Qorčin, [...] was also going to rebel, and the emperor (Temüjin), in tears, detained him. Töde'en said, "The deep pool has already dried up, the hard stone is already broken, so what is the use of bringing us back?" and

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[196] Here I have chosen the *SHM*'s version of his name, though in Rashīd al-Dīn he is called Todo'an Qamurchi, or Today/Toda'a, while in the *YS* he is called Töde'en Qorčin. SHM/de Rachewiltz, §72, p. 18; RAD/Thackston, Vol. I pp. 101, 159; YS/Atwood, p. 9. De Rachewiltz explains that these are to be seen as all the same person, 'Philological Commentary', Vol. I, p. 346.

[197] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, pp. 101, 123.

[198] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §57, pp. 12-13. Rashīd al-Dīn contradicts this statement, saying that Qada'an Taishi succeeded to his father's place, RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 123; RAD/Raushan, Vol. I, p. 223. قدآن تایشی به جای او بنشست, *qadān tāshī bi jā-yi ū binishast*.

[199] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 123.

[200] Idem, pp. 121, 131.

[201] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 101. RAD/Raushan, Vol. I, p. 174. Vol. I, p. 175 تودای اگرچه به پادشاهی ننشست, لیکن پادشاه زاده بود و معتبر و پسران داشته, *tūdāī agarchi bi pādshāhī nanishast, līkin pādshāhzāda būd va muʿtabar va pisarān dāshta*.

led a great number to speed away, leaving Temüjin astonished.'[202] This story is told in Rashīd al-Dīn and the *SHM* as well, in each case with Tödö'en responding with a Mongolian proverb to explain his departure.[203] However, in order to understand this exchange properly, Rashīd al-Dīn's version must be taken into account. The story is much the same, but Rashīd al-Dīn adds the detail that Tödö'en was 'the *aqa* of all', (اقای همه بود*, āqā-yi hama būd*).[204] Thus, Tödö'en is the *aqa* not just of the Tayichi'ut, but of both the Tayichi'ut and the Kiyat Mongols, who had long been united. Therefore, the young Temüjin is a supplicant to his *aqa*, pleading with him to maintain the unity of the groups, and presumably to support his own leadership. Tödö'en's refusal, and the subsequent attack on him by Hö'elün now should be seen in a different light, if Juvainī and Rashīd al-Dīn's claims as to the position of the *aqa* are to be believed. Hö'elün taking up Yisügei's *tugh* (standard) and fighting to 'gain back' Temüjin's people may in fact have been a grave social misdeed, as the *aqa* had made his decision.

Another situation that has been largely previously ignored is the statement by Rashīd al-Dīn concerning Berke as the inheritor of the position of *aqa*.[205] This is partly due to a translation issue. Thackston, when translating the section on Hülegü and Berke's conflict, twice translates the term *aqa* in different ways, saying 'Because Berke was an elder relative, Hülägü Khan tolerated him' and 'even if he is an elder [...] he knows nothing of shame or modesty and addresses me (Hülegü) with threats and violence.'[206] However, if we look at the original Persian, it states:

> هولاگو خان از راه آنکه برکای آقا بود تحمل می نمود. او اگرچه آقا است ... از راه حیا و آزرم دور است و با من به تهدید و عنف خطاب می کند '*hūlāgū khān az rāh-i ānki barkāy āqā būd taḥammul mī-namūd*' and '*ū agarchi āqā ast […] az rāh-i ḥayā va āzarm dūr ast va bā man bi tahdīd va ʿunf khaṭāb mī-kunad*'.[207]

It seems as if Thackston is conveying properly the anti-Jochid sentiment of the Ilkhans, regarding Berke as simply one of several older relatives. However, there seems to be no reason to translate the term *aqa* here as indefinite.[208] Berke was the younger brother of the previous *aqa*,

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[202] YS/Atwood, p. 9.

[203] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 159; SHM/de Rachewiltz, §72, p. 18.

[204] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, p. 159; RAD/Raushan, Vol. I, p. 295.

[205] This was noticed by Peter Jackson in his work, 'The Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', pp. 330-1.

[206] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 511.

[207] RAD/Raushan, Vol. II, pp. 925-6.

[208] Jackson, relying on Boyle's translation of Rashīd al-Dīn, *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, pp. 59-60, sees Berke as *the aqa*, my italics, Jackson, 'Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', p. 331. This view is also taken by George Lane, who states 'Hülegü's assumption of power in Iran and Azerbaijan was seen as not only a usurpation of power by the Tuluids at the expense of the House of Jochi but was, in addition, seen as a direct challenge to Berke in his role as *aqa*', Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, p. 39. Jackson also notes that the Mamluk historian Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir refers to Berke as *kabīr mulūk al-tatār*, 'the greatest/eldest of the kings of the Tatars'. The geographer Abū al-Fidā' echoed this, saying he was *aʿẓam mulūk al-tatār*, with the same meaning, Van den Bent, 'Mongols in Mamluk Eyes', p. 199. Van den Bent sees this as simply an inflation of Berke's

Batu, who had passed away c. 1255.[209] According to Thackston's translation, Rashīd al-Dīn also mentions that after Möngke's accession, the princes convened to make a *jasaq* to establish precedence. In this discussion 'it was unanimously agreed that Berke should sit because of his gout, [and] that Qubilai should sit beneath him.'[210] Thus, even during Batu's life, it appears that Berke's precedence was firmly established when his brother was absent.[211]

It was not only Rashīd al-Dīn who noted Berke's status as elder of the Chinggisid family. According to Qiu Yihao, the 14th century historian and geographer Ḥamd-Allāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī in his *Ẓafarnāma* reproduces a *jarligh* sent by Ariq Böke to Hülegü. In it, Ariq Böke claimed 'after consulting with Barkāy, son of my uncle Jochi, who was the patriarch of the clan', that he accepted enthronement.[212] As Jackson noted, Berke later struck coins in the name of Ariq Böke during the struggle between him and Qubilai. Ariq Böke then was clearly relying on Toluid precedent, in which the *aqa*'s backing determined who should be the successor, while Berke looks to have been following Batu's lead in attempting to decide the rulership.[213] In addition to Möngke's sons' support for Ariq

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position given the Mamluk sources' favourable view of him, but it may also reflect a tradition of respect for Berke's social seniority, rather than his political power.

[209] It is unclear when Orda died. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, he was alive in 1252/3, as he ordered his eldest son Tuli to join Hülegü's campaign to the Middle East, but we do not hear of him again after this, Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 361; Allsen, 'Princes of the Left Hand', p. 18. See Favereau, *The Horde*, p. 336, endnote 2 for the issues with the timing of Batu's death.

[210] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 404; RAD/Raushan, Vol. II, p. 733 however tells a different story. The Persian text is بیکی معین کرد که {برکای} به چوک گون بسبب درد پای بنشیند به جای خود, و قوبیلای نیز بنشیند *bīkī muʿayyan kard ki (barkāy) bi chūk gūn bi-sabab-i dard-i pāī binishīnad bi jā-yi khud, va qūbīlāī nīz binishīnad.* Thackston reads the first word as *bi-yikī*, however, the spelling of this word and the structure of the sentence would prefer *bīkī*, which is how Sorqoqtani's title is regularly represented. Thus we have the Toluid matriarch establishing precedence at the *quriltai*, another string to Sorqoqtani's bow, and another indication of elite women's power in the Mongol world. The exclusion of Berke's name in some manuscripts may be an indication of later attempts to reduce his role. Berke sits upon a *chowk-gūn*, which Thackston leaves untranslated. A *chowki* is a Hindi term for a high seat, or platform or bench, while the addition of the suffix *-gūn* meaning '-like', indicates that Rashīd al-Dīn himself was not quite sure of what Berke was sitting on. It is unclear how this term came to be used in Rashīd al-Dīn's work. Thackston also indicates that Qubilai was sitting 'beneath' Berke, naturally indicating his junior status, but the Persian text only says that 'Qubilai should also sit', and then goes on to say that everyone should heed Qubilai's words. The control of the Toluids is emphasised throughout, with Sorqoqtani deciding precedent, Qubilai ordering things, Möngke's brother Möge controlling the entry of the princes and amirs, and Hülegü regulating the *ba'urchi*s (cooks) and *qumuzchi*s (*kumiss* servers).

[211] Interestingly, Jūzjānī claims that after Möngke's death, the *khuṭba* was read out in Berke's name in the lands which would become the Ilkhanate, Jūzjānī/Raverty, p. 1292. Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, pp. 64, 72, accepts Jūzjānī's claim, as well as saying that this was done in recognition of his role of *aqa*. However, it seems highly unlikely that Hülegü would allow such a thing. The *khuṭba* was read for rulers, thus Jūzjānī is making a claim that Berke was the ruler of these regions. As this chapter shows, the *aqa* could not be assumed to be the next ruler.

[212] Q. Yihao, 'Independent Ruler, Indefinable Role: Understanding the History of the Golden Horde from the Perspectives of the Yuan Dynasty', *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée*, Online, Vol. 143, (2018), DOI : https://doi.org/10.4000/remmm.10237, Accessed 4th April 2022, 34, quoting *Ẓafarnāma*, Tehran, Vol. 8, p. 177. This consultation must have been via an intermediary if it took place, as Berke was not present at Ariq Böke's *quriltai* in Mongolia.

[213] See also Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, p. 73.

Böke, he also was backed by the ruler of the Chaghadaid *ulus*, Orghina Khatun, which should make us question the narrative that Qubilai was the rightful ruler, and Ariq Böke the usurper.[214]

3.5.4 The Status of *Aqa*

We have other incidents reported in Rashīd al-Dīn's work that deal with the status of the *aqa*, and especially its association with rulership. The first is the accession of Abaqa to the Ilkhanate. Abaqa, already chosen by both Hülegü and a *quriltai* to be the successor, goes through the customary protests of his unsuitability for the throne. One of his complaints is that Qubilai Qa'an, the *aqa*, is not present, and therefore Abaqa could not be crowned.[215] The princes and amirs ignore this plea, and assert the many other reasons why Abaqa cannot wait to accede to the throne. Interestingly, this complaint by Abaqa seems no mere form, as while he accepts the arguments of the *quriltai* attendees, he refuses to take the actual throne, but rather sits on a plain chair until such a time as Qubilai sends a decree for him.[216] What is notable here is that Abaqa does not refuse because of Qubilai's status as the *qa'an*, but because of his status as *aqa*. Again, what does Abaqa mean here? Is Qubilai the *aqa* because he is simply Abaqa's elder within the Toluid branch of the family? The possessive pronoun in Persian is 'my *aqa*', perhaps indicating the personal relationship of Qubilai to Abaqa.[217] Berke was still alive when Abaqa was enthroned (enchaired perhaps?), though he would have been an unlikely decider in Ilkhanid succession. Perhaps we are seeing here the division in Mongol thinking, where an *aqa* of a Toluid could only be a Toluid.[218] It may be that Qubilai's status as *qa'an*, however questionable that may have been for most of the Mongol world, renders him the symbolic *aqa* to Abaqa, as well as his literal elder relative. The addition that Abaqa needs a *farmān* (decree) from Qubilai to be enthroned, however, suggests that it was Qubilai's official standing as ruler that was important.

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[214] Jackson, 'Dissolution of the Mongol Empire', p. 332 and note 183. This point is also made in May, *The Mongol Empire*, p. 20.

[215] RAD/Raushan, Vol. II, p. 937, آباقا خان گفت: آقای من قوبیلای قا آن است, بی فرمان او چگونه توان نشست, *ābāqā khān guft: āqā-yi man qūbīlāī qā'ān ast, bī-farmān-i ū chigūna tavān nishast*.

[216] RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 517.

[217] This is translated by Thackston as 'our *aqa*'. Perhaps this is a manuscript discrepancy.

[218] The amirs' and princes' response is quite telling in this regard. RAD/Raushan, Vol. II, p. 937, با وجود تو که آقای تمامت پسرانی, *bā vujūd tū ki āaā-yi tamāmat-i pisarānī*. The term *bā vujūd* is used here, 'nevertheless, notwithstanding', then addressing that Abaqa is the *aqa* of all the sons, meaning the sons of Hülegü. The potential Abaqaid bias of Rashīd al-Dīn is one thing, but this narrowing to the lineage of Hülegü is a statement by the princes and amirs that they are choosing their own ruler, Qubilai be damned.

We are also provided another highly informative exchange by Rashīd al-Dīn regarding the later ruler of the Jochid *ulus*, Toqto'a, and his relationship with the Jochid prince and famous commander and kingmaker Noghai. After the death of Möngke Temür (r. 1266-1280), the grandson of Batu through his second son Toqoqan, his younger brother Töde Möngke (r. 1280-1287) took the throne. A group of Jochid princes including Möngke Temür's sons Alghui and Toghrilcha, and Töle Buqa (a nephew of Möngke Temür) deposed him and ruled by council for some five years. Another son of Möngke Temür, Toqto'a, was apparently threatened by the council, and thus he turned to Noghai for support (Figure 6). Noghai was the grandson of Boqal (Bo'al/Bo'ol) and had led armies under Batu and Berke, and had his own *ulus* between the Danube and the Dniester.[219] Noghai had been influential in seeing both Töde Möngke and Töle Buqa established as rulers, but he apparently lacked the lineage to take control himself, though he regularly acted independently.[220] Toqto'a, therefore, was going to the right place to organise a coup.

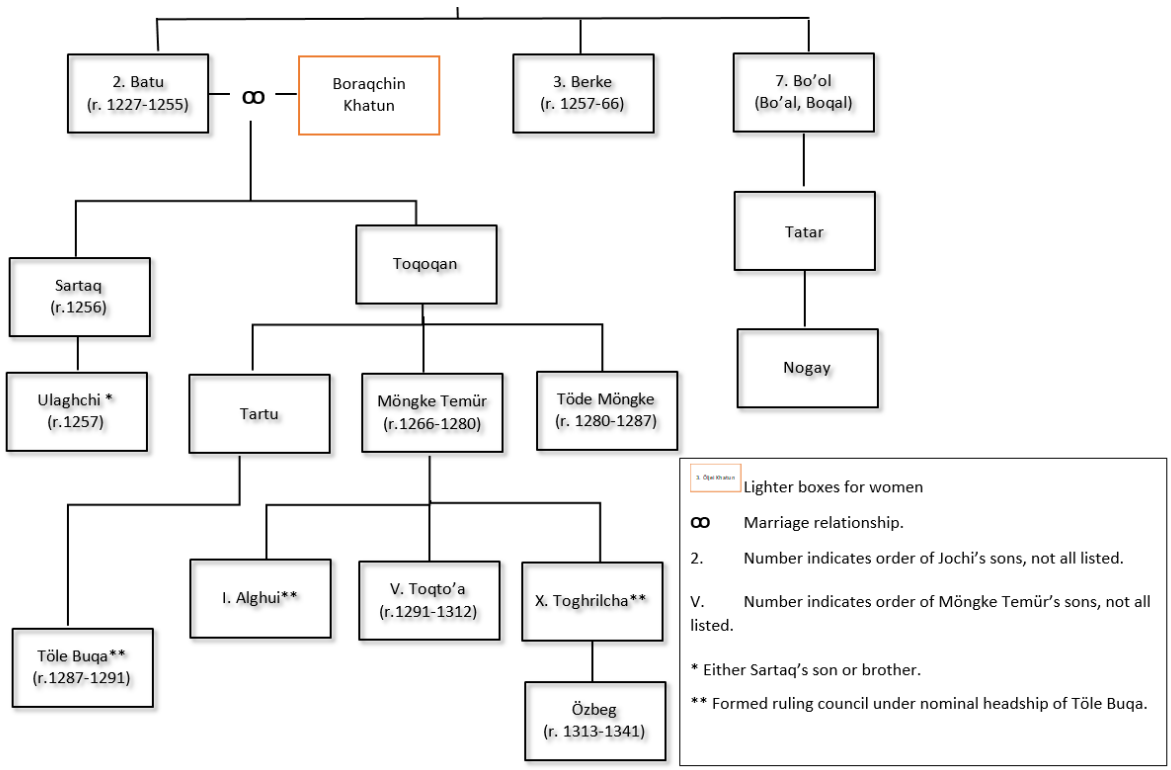

Figure 6: The Jochid family, with specific focus on the line of Batu © Tobias Jones

[219] Favereau, *The Horde*, p. 154.

[220] Idem, pp. 192-4. Favereau posits that Noghai's inability to become ruler was simply because he was not a descendant of Batu, though Berke had shown this could be ignored. John Andrew Boyle notes that Noghai's grandfather's name could be Bo'ol or Bo'al, which both meant slave, or non-Chinggisid, Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 266, note 2. This, added to the fact that we do not have information of the mothers of Bo'ol, his son Tatar, or of Tatar's son Noghai, may indicate that these were concubines. Broadbridge, *Women*, pp. 229-234 emphasises that almost all of the Jochid rulers were of Qonggirat women, so this may have been decisively against Noghai.

The terminology of Toqto'a's approach to Noghai is the most relevant to our study of the *aqa*. In it he states:

> عمزادگان قصد خون من می کنند و تو آقای! التجا بدو می آرم که آقا است تا مرا بر دارد و دست تطاول خویشان از من کوتاه گرداند
> ʿ*amzādigān qaṣd-i khūn-i man mī-kunand va tu āqā-ī*! *Iltijā bi-dū mī-āram ki āqā ast tā marā bar-dārad va dast-i taṭāvul-i khvīshān az man kūtāh gardānad, tā jān dāram maḥkūm-i āqā bāsham va az riẓā-yi ū tajāvuz na-jūyam*.[221]
>
> My cousins are after my blood. You are the *aqa*! I take refuge with him who is the *aqa*, so he can support me and shorten the oppressive reach of my relatives. As long as I live I am subject to my *aqa* and will never do anything to earn his displeasure.[222]

Thus we have here the young prince appealing to the elder statesman for support against his bloodthirsty relatives. However, what is notable is that Toqto'a's own lineage was significantly greater than Noghai's. He was the son of a previous khan, Möngke Temür, and a descendant of Batu. He was also the grandson of Kelmish Aqa Khatun, a granddaughter of Tolui who was influential in Jochid politics.[223] Toqto'a's descent then, was one that Noghai could only aspire to. However, Noghai's age and service to the Jochid *ulus* were seemingly the determining factors in his position as *aqa*, irrespective of his lower birth. This is perhaps also telling for both Batu and Berke's own roles, as their father's possible low birth yet did not prevent them from acting the part of the *aqa*. Noghai was not only seen in this light by Toqto'a. After his sponsorship of Toqto'a, he subsequently called on every *hazāra* of troops and all the Jochid princes to attend him while he doled out wisdom and sought to make peace amongst the Jochid family by convoking a *quriltai*. Even the nominal khan, Töle Buqa, who had no love for Noghai, was forced by his mother to attend to the *aqa*.[224] Noghai thus made use of his position and feigned illness to lure the princes, then Toqto'a arrived with his troops and put to death his princely rivals.[225]

Rashīd al-Dīn later provides a denouement to the relationship between Noghai and Toqto'a. Once Toqto'a had taken the throne, a dispute arose between Noghai and Toqto'a's father-in-law, Salji'udai Güregen over a marriage alliance. Noghai demanded Salji'udai from Toqto'a, but was rejected on several occasions. This led to Noghai declaring himself as khan, and issuing coins with his

[221] RAD/Raushan, Vol. I, p. 661.
[222] For Thackston's slightly different interpretation, see RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 363.
[223] Broadbridge, *Women*, pp. 233-4.
[224] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 363.
[225] For a comprehensive look at Noghai, see Favereau, *The Horde*, Chapter 5.

tamgha, before his defeat by Toqto'a after his amirs deserted him.[226] Again, the language of Rashīd al-Dīn here should be specified. In Noghai's message to Toqto'a requesting Salji'udai, he states:

> معلوم عالمیان است که چه مایه زحمت و مشقت کشیدم و خود را به بی وفایی و بدعهدی منسوب کردم تا با حیلت تخت صاین خان تو را مستخلاص گردانیدم این زمان بر آن تخت سالجیدای قراچو حکم می کند. اگر فرزند توقتای می خواهد که قاعدهٔ پدر فرزندی میان ما ممهد باشد سالجیدای را به یورت خود باز فرستد که بنزدیک خوارزم است *maʿlūm-i ʿālamīyān ast ki chi māya zaḥmat va mashaqqat kishīdam va khud rā bi bī-vafāyī va bad-ʿahdī mansūb kardam tā bā ḥīlat takht-i ṣāyin khān tu rā mustakhlaṣ gardānīdam; īn zamān bar ān takht sāljīdāi qarāchū ḥukm mī-kunad. agar farzand tūqtāi mī-khāhad ki qāʿida-yi pidar farzandī mīyān-i mā mumahhad bāshad, sāljīdāi rā bi yūrt-i khud bāz-firistād ki bi-nazdīk-i khvārazm ast*.[227]
>
> 'All the world knows how much trouble I went to, making myself known for faithlessness and breach of promise, in order to obtain Sayin Khan's (Batu) throne for you through treachery. Now Salji'udai *qarachu* (non-Chinggisid elite) rules on that throne! If my son Toqta wishes the *father-son rule* to continue between us, let him send Salji'udai Güregen back to his own *yurt* near Khwarazm.'[228]

What are the emphases here? Again, we see that, at least in Rashīd al-Dīn's eyes, the *aqa*'s role was that of a father figure, standing in place of Toqto'a's own deceased father. The use of the word *qāʿida* to describe the father-son roles here is noteworthy.[229] It usually means rule, custom, or even institution and thus Noghai is appealing to time-honoured ideas about the relationship between a junior Chinggisid in the ruling position, and an elder in the position of *aqa* who should be respected and consulted, as had existed between Ögödei and Chaghadai, Möngke and Batu, and even Berke and Ariq Böke. Noghai then references a tradition of support and advice that had existed for some time in the Mongol and Jochid realms. He also drives home the point that Salji'udai is a *qarachu*, a word that regularly is translated as commoner, but in fact usually means something like non-Chinggisid elite.[230] Salji'udai has thus usurped the position of not just a Chinggisid, but the *aqa* of the Jochid *ulus*. Tellingly, Toqto'a responds with his own view, saying that, 'He [Salji'udai] is like a father to me, a *patron/tutor* and an *elder amir'* (او مرا چون پدر است و مربی و امیر پیر *ū marā chun pidar ast va murabbī va amīr-i pīr*).[231] Thus Toqto'a is symbolically replacing Noghai in this role with his own father-

[226] Favereau, *The Horde*, pp. 200-202.
[227] RAD/Raushan, Vol. I, p. 663.
[228] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 364. My own additions are in italics, and the word *qarachu* substituted for Thackston's *güregen*.
[229] Thackston translates this as 'relationship', but I believe that this word is not strong enough.
[230] Skrynnikova, 'Relations of Domination', pp. 104-114.
[231] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 364, again with my additions in italics. RAD/Raushan, Vol. I, p. 663.

in-law, a Qonggirat *güregen*, which in Rashīd al-Dīn's eyes was rending the social fabric of Mongol rule.[232] This snub of Noghai's perceived status was also a slap in the face to Chinggisid superiority over their non-Chinggisid amirs, which paved the way for greater control of the *ulus* by these amirs.[233]

A comparable incident emerges from the Chaghadaid *ulus*, and the death of its ruler Baraq in 1271. Baraq had been Qubilai's choice for the Chaghadaid throne, because of his opposition to Qaidu, Qubilai's Ögödeid rival. Baraq and Qaidu had a complicated relationship, at first fighting each other, but eventually coming to terms and even becoming *anda*, or blood brothers. However, their relationship was strained by Qaidu's troops' desertion of Baraq in his campaign against the Ilkhan Abaqa, leading to Baraq's defeat and Qaidu's friendship with Abaqa. Qaidu then sought to rid himself of Baraq, encircling his camp, but Baraq did him the favour of dying first. This allowed Qaidu to show himself as mourning his *anda*.[234] The upshot of all this was that Baraq's people went over to Qaidu. Rashīd al-Dīn states:

> و امرا و شهزادگان که در اوردوی او بودند پیش قایدو آمدند و زانو زدند که تا غایت براق حاکم ما بود. این زمان قایدو آقا پادشاه است, چنانچه فرماید کوچ دهیم *va umarā' va shahzādigān ki dar ūrdū-yi ū būdand pīsh-i qāīdū āmadand va zānū zadand ki tā ghāyat barāq ḥākim-i mā būd. Īn zamān qāīdū āqā pādshāh ast, chinānchi farmāyad kūch dahīm*.[235]
>
> The amirs and princes who were in his camp came to Qaidu, knelt, and said, "Until now Baraq has been our ruler. Now Qaidu is our *aqa* and ruler. We will fight as he commands".[236]

And elsewhere: بعد از امروز قایدو آقا آقای ما است و به هر آنچه فرماید مطیع و منقاد باشیم, *ba'd az imrūz qāīdū āqā āqā-yi mā ast va har ānchi farmāyad muṭī' va munqād bāshīm*.[237]

After today, Qaidu Aqa is our *aqa*. We will obey anything he commands.[238]

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[232] We also cannot ignore that Noghai and Toqto'a were both active in asserting Jochid rights and claims against the Ilkhans, so Rashīd al-Dīn may be wishing to tar them both with breaches of Chinggisid custom. The irony of Noghai announcing his own treachery, then telling Toqto'a to be faithful to his own agreement is not lost.

[233] Favereau, *The Horde*, pp. 204-5.

[234] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 377-8; Biran, *Qaidu*, pp. 25-31.

[235] RAD/Raushan, Vol. I, p. 687.

[236] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 378, though perhaps 'fight' is a loose translation of *kūch dahīm*, a term used for nomadising.

[237] RAD/Raushan, Vol. II, p. 971.

[238] RAD/Thackston, Vol. III, p. 535.

The Chaghadaids with Baraq accept Qaidu as their *aqa* and their ruler, relating Baraq's tyranny and confiscation of their wealth as reasons for their willingness to accept Qaidu, though they waited until Baraq's death to go over to Qaidu. This would certainly make a strong case for the position of *aqa* and that of ruler going hand in hand. However, the immediate departure of Baraq's eldest son Beg Temür and Alghu's sons to Qubilai, as well as the previous ruler Mubārakshāh's flight to Abaqa indicates that most of the prominent candidates for the Chaghadaid Khanate did not recognise Qaidu's status as *aqa* and his right to determine succession to Baraq. Going back to their ancestors of course, Mubārakshāh's line (from Chaghadai, Chinggis' second son) was senior to that of Qaidu (from Ögödei, Chinggis' third son). Qaidu was forced to turn to more marginal descendants of Chaghadai as his client khans until he was able to form a partnership with Du'a, another son of Baraq.[239]

We are also given a perplexing statement by the historian Vaṣṣāf, talking about the situation in the Ilkhanate. The recently crowned Ilkhan, Aḥmad Tegüder, in 1282 sent an official called Tash Möngke to govern in Shiraz, which had experienced several uprisings against Ilkhanid rule.[240] Tash Möngke arrived and set about his task, however, according to Vaṣṣāf, 'he used to write at the top of his correspondence 'Ahmad *aqa*' and in the *yasa* of the Mongols, it has never occurred that the name of the khan should be written in this way'.[241] What this meant for Aḥmad's authority will be discussed in the following chapter, but for the purposes of this discussion, what is interesting is that Vaṣṣāf sees this move as a contravention of Mongol law. The usage of the title *aqa*, while recognising that Aḥmad was indeed the most senior Hülegüid, is a step down from that of khan, which was granted in a full *quriltai* of the Ilkhanid realm. The first recognises a social relationship, but seems to deny the political implications of rule. The term *aqa* itself devalued over time, whereby it came to be used as a generic term for Chinggisids, or even high ranking amirs and officials. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa noted that in the late Ilkhanid period, all relatives of the Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd (r. 1316-1335) were called *aqa*.[242]

Therefore, we are left in somewhat of a quandary regarding ideal loyalty to the *aqa.* There seem to have been times where his input and cooperation were vital to the success of the Mongol enterprise. However, the creation of a new institution, that of female regency, seems to have

[239] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 378; Biran, *Qaidu*, pp. 32-3.
[240] For these uprisings, see Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, pp. 126-136.
[241] Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 123; Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 211, او بر سر مکتوبات احمد آقا می نوشت و در یاساء مغول نیامده که اسم خان بر این منوال نویسند *ū bar sar-i maktūbāt aḥmad āqā mī-nivisht va dar yāsā-yi mughul nayāmada ki ism-i khān bar īn minvāl nivīsand*.
[242] Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Travels*, p. 433.

confused things somewhat.[243] In an ideal world, presumably with the *aqa* and the regent's cooperation, everything ran smoothly, such as between Chaghadai and Töregene. However, once these two figures were in opposition rather than in concert, Mongol actors now had a choice to make between which object of loyalty trumped the other, if they were only thinking of the 'right' thing to do vis-a-vis Mongol custom and the Chinggisid legacy. Certainly things do not seem as black and white as Juvainī would have us believe regarding the *aqa*'s status. For historians more accustomed to male dominance and who saw women's rule as insidious, perhaps they did believe it to be a simple decision, however, as we have seen in Mongol history, women's rule or management of their late husband's affairs was very common. Even if we hypothetically accept that the *aqa*'s position was as powerful as the Persian historians made out, Jochi's potential illegitimacy clearly rendered both Batu and Berke's position as *aqa* as tenuous. For members of other lines, they may well not have accepted this claim, though this position is only hinted at in the sources. It seems that in these instances of a clash between regent and *aqa*, other types of loyalty were more powerful in swaying decision-making, though this did not prevent our sources from attempting to justify people's actions through an appeal to Mongol custom or Chinggisid law.

If we consider the social structures of later Turco-Mongol people groups, we can see that the position of *aqa* (or its equivalent) continued to play a vital role in the family and more broadly in society. Benjamin Krader in his study on these structures shows this for different groups. Among the 17th century Volga Kalmuks for example, a village of 10-12 families, called a *xoton*, was led by the *xotoni aqa*, whose job it was to adjudicate disputes among the *xoton*, whose members all paid respect to him.[244] In the 18th century, among the Great Horde Kazakhs, elders called *bii*s, whose seniority was unquestionable, were responsible for managing conflicts. Villages had their own *bii*s or *aksakal*s (white-beards), regarded by Russian contemporaries as judges who regulated pasturage and marriage.[245] According to a Buriat Mongol genealogy of 1847, a common ancestor was one Sagan, whose three sons, Bushal, Botoi and Abagan created different lineages among the Buriats. The descendants of Botoi continually called the descendants of Bushal, *mani axa* (our elder brother) for generations.[246] What we see here and in many other nomadic groups of the pre-modern/modern era

[243] For example, George Lane claims (based on Jackson, 'Dissolution', p. 322) that it was the 'recognised right' of the *aqa* to summon the *quriltai*, *Early Mongol Rule*, p. 66. However, as I have shown elsewhere (Jones, 'Objects of Loyalty', p. 15) in fact the two previous 'election' *quriltai*s, for Ögödei and Güyük, had been summoned by Tolui and Töregene respectively, the regents at the time. Interestingly, in the Salghurid client state of Shiraz under Ilkhanid rule, the regent Terken Khatun was also responsible for calling the notables of the country together to decide on a successor to Atabeg Muḥammad in 1263, Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, p. 127.
[244] B. Krader, *Social Organization of the Mongol-Turkic Pastoral Nomads*, (The Hague: Mouton & Co, 1963), pp. 134, 148, 164.
[245] Idem, pp. 208-210. *Bii* is the Turkic *bey* or *beg*.
[246] Idem, pp. 72-3.

is no surprise, namely, a great respect for seniority. Such sentiments were also common in many other societies around the world. However, what is of interest here is the special position of the *aqa* with regards to dispute settlement. This echoes the cases of Tödö'en, Chaghadai and Batu. The Buriat example also shows that the recognition of seniority also could continue even when lineages had become separate elements, though admittedly their political proximity was much greater than those of the distinct Mongol khanates.

3.6 The *Quriltai*

Our next object of loyalty is a little trickier to understand, as it was a body rather than a single person, and it included within it all the previously mentioned figures. The *quriltai* also only met occasionally, perhaps twice a year, so it was not always 'present' as an object of loyalty. However, there were political and legal decisions taken at the *quriltai*, and these decisions were considered binding.[247] Charismatic loyalty is not exactly easy to define with this regard, but the presence of the entire family of Chinggis and his most successful generals and officials certainly imbued the gathering with the charisma of the entire nation. The elective function of the *quriltai* also rendered the chosen successor with the charisma of the approval of all such powerful figures in the Mongol world. In addition, the *quriltai* was established by the *jasaq* of Chinggis, giving the convocation a powerful symbolic nature.[248]

With regards to loyalties of self-interest, it apparently was worth a shot in attending a *quriltai*, for good or for ill. The *quriltai* was where appointments were made, but also where judicial decisions, trials and punishments took place. Let us take here the example of Chinggis' younger brother Temüge Otchigin. Temüge had been a participant in the Mongol Empire and was given significant lands by Chinggis, while he took part in the enthronement ceremony of Ögödei in 1229. However, in the interregnum before Güyük's accession, during the regency of Töregene, he apparently made a play for the throne. He was faced down by Malik Oghul, another son of Ögödei, and this action forced Güyük to return more speedily to his father's *ordu*. Temüge thus repented of

[247] F. Hodous, 'The *Quriltai* as a Legal Institution in the Mongol Empire', *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 56, (2012/2013), pp. 91-3.

[248] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 573. This I believe is what Juvainī is trying to say when he says that the members of the 1251 *quriltai* electing Möngke could not imagine 'that the *yasa* of the World-Emperor could be changed or altered, and there had been no disagreement amongst them'. Thus, if a *quriltai* agreed on something unanimously, it could not be questioned, see Hodous, '*Quriltai*', p. 92.

his action.[249] Despite this, not long after, Temüge attended, along with his children, the very *quriltai* which elected Güyük to the throne. At this *quriltai,* Temüge was questioned by Möngke and Orda, then put to death by a group of amirs in accordance with the *jasaq*.[250] Temüge seems to have gambled in attending the *quriltai*. Perhaps he hoped that his excuse of mourning a disaster would be accepted, or that he would be treated leniently given his seniority. We do note that his sons were active in later years, supporting Möngke's claim to the throne and later coming to prominence in a rebellion against Qubilai.[251] It may have been for their benefit that he accepted the decision of the *quriltai*. What is notable is that Temüge did not try to flee or avoid the *quriltai*.

At some stage however, Mongol actors lost trust in the process of the *quriltai*, and began avoiding it to save their own skin. The actions of the Ögödeid princes during the Jochid-Toluid coup indicates that they were entirely aware of what could occur to them and their hopes of success if they attended. Only after a failed counter-coup did the Ögödeid princes realise that non-attendance would surely seal their fate. For some, like Güyük's eldest son Khoja, there was a chance for mercy, and he was apparently not sent on dangerous campaigns, but rather given lands near Qara Qorum. Others, like his brother Naqu and his nephew Shiremün, were put on the front lines of Mongol campaigns, with Shiremün being killed by Qubilai.[252] Möngke's struggles to get his recalcitrant relatives to join led to him having his *jarghuchi*, Mengeser Noyan, issue a decree stating that non-attendance and holding one's own *quriltai* was punishable by decapitation.[253] Despite the legal obligation to attend, the pattern was now set. Qubilai and Ariq Böke were wise enough to steer clear of each other's *quriltai*s, while Qaidu repeatedly refused to attend Qubilai's various *quriltai*s.[254] The Ögödeid ruler Chapar in the early 14th century also rejected numerous summons to a *quriltai* by the Chaghadaid ruler Dua despite their previous allegiance.[255] Attending the *quriltai* organised by a rival in their own territory was essentially a signal that you were submitting to that person and their judgement. Essentially, it became a last resort for Chinggisid princes, hoping to be spared because of their blood. For non-Chinggisids, there was little hope of escaping with one's life. The long standing

[249] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, pp. 244, 248.
[250] Idem, pp. 249, 255.
[251] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 568; RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 454.
[252] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, p. 592; RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 306, 409.
[253] YS, 2:33, 124:3055, referenced in Hodous, *'Quriltai*', p. 91.
[254] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 307.
[255] Qāshānī/Hambali, pp. 33-5.

servant of the Mongol Empire, Chinqai, was executed for his non-attendance at Möngke's *quriltai* at the age of 83.[256]

From a communal loyalty aspect, the first *quriltai*s represented the gathering of all significant players in the Mongol world, so their legitimacy was not questioned, though naturally there would have been different factions which supported different candidates or programmes. However, these early *quriltai*s seem to have been largely successful in achieving full support. By the 1240s however, loyalty to specific Mongol houses seems to have caused some tension in even the time and location of the *quriltai*. Batu's excuse of illness to delay Töregene's *quriltai* may have been a more personal reaction given his animosity to Töregene's eldest Güyük, the most likely successor. The presence of Batu's brothers at Güyük's enthronement *quriltai* and involvement in the trial of Temüge seems to indicate that the Jochids on the whole had no issues with attending the gathering itself.[257] However, with Batu's assembly at Ala Qamaq in 1249, the location of the *quriltai* began to be relevant to the outcome.[258] To attend meant to put oneself in the power of the convenor of the *quriltai*, and Batu's swaying of the whole Jochid and Toluid lines to his support meant that other attendees were put in a precarious position. The *quriltai*s of Ariq Böke in the Altai region and Qubilai in Shàngdū represented a communal division, whereby those in Mongolia supported Ariq Böke, and those in northern China supported Qubilai. Even Jumghur, a son of Hülegü, supported Ariq Böke, though as noted by Rashīd al-Dīn, there was likely little choice for Jumghur given that he was in Mongolia near Ariq Böke at the time.[259]

The territorial choices of *quriltai*s and their convenors has caused some scholars to put forward the idea of a 'traditionalist' party that represented the Mongols of Mongolia and their preference for a nomadic lifestyle. Take for example David Morgan, author of one of the most comprehensive overviews of the Mongol world, who says:

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[256] P.D. Buell, 'Činqai', in (eds.) I. de Rachewiltz, H. Chan, H. Ch'i-ch'ing and P.W. Geier, *In the Service of the Khan: Eminent Personalities of the Early Mongol-Yüan Period (1200-1300),* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993), pp. 108-9.

[257] May, *The Mongol Empire,* pp. 11-12; Allsen, 'The Princes of the Left Hand, p. 14; Favereau, *The Horde*, p. 97 indicates that there was a division between approaches of Orda and Batu, where Orda supported the empire as a whole, while Batu sought to promote Jochid independence. However, the presence of five of Batu's other brothers (Shiban, Berke, Berkecher, Tangqut, and Toqta Temür) and leading *noyan*s and amirs, all sent by Batu, seems to indicate a personal issue (animosity or illness, depending on the sources) rather than a policy, Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 249; RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 392.

[258] De Rachewiltz, 'Dating of *Secret History*', pp. 163-7 shows that some *quriltai*s were labelled great (大, *dà/tà*) in Chinese sources or *buzurg* in Rashīd al-Dīn, while others were not. The Ala Qamaq meeting is not called *buzurg* by Rashīd al-Dīn, and Juvainī does not use the term *quriltai* for it, while the 1251 *quriltai* in the Mongol homeland was called a *qūrīltā-yi buzurg* by Rashīd al-Dīn.

[259] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 428, 431, 473.

> Ariq Böke can be seen as representing an influential school of thought among the Mongols, which Qubilai through his actions and attitudes after 1260 opposed. Some Mongols felt there was a dangerous drift towards softness, typified in those like Qubilai who thought there was something to be said for settled civilization and for the Chinese way of life. In the traditionalist view, the Mongol centre ought to remain in Mongolia, and the Mongols' nomadic life be preserved uncontaminated. China ought merely to be exploited. Ariq Böke came to be regarded as this faction's figurehead.[260]

There was indeed at least one *quriltai* which apparently explicitly condemned Qubilai's Sinification, that at Talas in 1269, attended by Baraq, the Chaghadaid ruler, Qaidu, the Ögödeid ruler, and Berkecher, the representative of Möngke Temür, the Jochid ruler. According to the *YS*, they sent an envoy to Qubilai to announce their displeasure with his adoption of Chinese practices, such as building cities and adopting Han laws.[261] Rashīd al-Dīn also mentions this *quriltai*, though in his account the princes largely complain about Qubilai's large appanage compared to their own, especially considering their descent from prestigious Chinggisids.[262] As Michal Biran has noted, it is only in this single mention by the *YS* that there was any opposition to Qubilai's policies, while the location and limited attendees of the Talas *quriltai* itself was a departure from Mongol tradition.[263] There does seem to have formed around Qaidu a steady growth of princes fleeing China. For the Ögödeid descendants who joined Qaidu, this was largely out of communal loyalty to their own house, rather than a desire for a more nomadic way of life. For the descendants of Ariq Böke and Möngke who rebelled against Qubilai, their own houses had notable grudges against Qubilai's rule and may have thought they would prosper more in Qaidu's territory. The *quriltai*s of the successor khanates were limited affairs, those not from that regional khanate or the relevant Chinggisid line were not included, and the communities involved were closed off.

Respecting ideal loyalty, the *quriltai* could have a claim to represent the highest standard of earthly authority. Its participants usually included the foremost political and spiritual figures in the Mongol Empire, including the *qa'an*/khan himself.[264] As noted above, it also looks to have been supported by Chinggisid law. Consultative assemblies were ubiquitous in steppe tradition, found among the Xiongnu, Kök Turks, and Khitans, and practised by the Mongols as far back as their oral

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[260] D. Morgan, *The Mongols*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 118.
[261] Biran, *Qaidu*, pp. 26-8.
[262] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 521.
[263] Biran, *Qaidu*, p. 28. Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, p. 94 argues that the main purpose of this *quriltai* was to check the ambitions of the Chaghataid khan Baraq.
[264] De Rachewiltz, 'Dating of *Secret History*', p. 164 believes that the attendance of the right people was what made the *quriltai* 'great' or not.

tradition went.[265] Therefore the *quriltai* was supported by the Chinggisid *jasaq*, Turco-Mongol custom, and the living ruler himself, while shamans and holy men of other religious traditions also participated in order to ensure its success.

However, what was the *quriltai*'s status with regards to the *qa'an*? Michael Hope has argued that under Chinggis, the *quriltai*s were simply a venue for him to assert his authority by issuing decrees there, but that under his successors the *quriltai* had a more consultative function.[266] Thomas Allsen also claims that major appointments were supposed to be collegial decisions, but that *qa'an*s such as Möngke ignored this.[267] On the whole, it seems as if the *quriltai*s which took place while there was a *qa'an* in power tended to be consultations, followed by the issuing of the *qa'an*'s decrees. However, in a later instance, we are told that the *quriltai*'s decisions did not always simply confirm the *qa'an*/khan's wishes. According to Vaṣṣāf, Aḥmad Tegüder, the ruling Ilkhan (r. 1282-1284), disagreed with the *quriltai*'s decision to pursue war with the Mamluks, which he announced to the Mamluk Sultan Qalawun (r. 1279-1290).[268] Naturally, we do not have the proceedings from this *quriltai*, nor is this incident mentioned by Rashīd al-Dīn. Was Aḥmad simply appeasing his grandees and agreed to something he later repented of, or did the *quriltai* take an independent decision without the khan's approval? The answer is unclear, and without further examples it is impossible to determine whether a *quriltai* could in theory act against the wishes of the ruling *qa'an*/khan with him present.

As precedent for *quriltai*s without certain Chinggisid figures involved had already been set, dissenting *aqa-ini* could simply set up their own without the person present, and make decisions thus. Vaṣṣāf and Rashīd al-Dīn claim that Arghun, the other Chinggisid princes, and the key amirs took counsel where they discussed Aḥmad's succession and his failures as a ruler.[269] According to Qāshānī, a *quriltai* was held in the Jochid *ulus* by dissenting amirs to the rule of Özbek (r. 1313-1341), who had forced them to convert to Islam. At this *quriltai*, Özbek was not present, and the amirs chose a son of the previous ruler, Toqto'a (r. 1291-1312), as a successor, then invited Özbek to a *toy*, or feast,

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[265] Hope, '*Quriltai*', in May, *The Mongol Empire*, p. 32; E. Endicott-West, 'Imperial Governance in Yüan Times', First Published, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 46, No, 2, (1986), pp. 523-549, in (eds.) D. Sneath and C. Kaplonski, *The History of Mongolia*, *Vol I: The Pre-Chinggisid Era, Chinggis Khan and the Mongol Empire* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2010), pp. 479-480. Aḥmad Ibn Fadlān mentioned them taking place amongst the Bashghird and Bulghar also, Aḥmad Ibn Fadlān, *Mission to the Volga* (trans.) J.E. Montgomery, (New York: New York University Press, 2017), pp. 10, 18-19.

[266] Hope, 'The Transmission of Authority', p. 88.

[267] Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, p. 105.

[268] Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 113; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 70.

[269] Vaṣṣāf/Iqbal, p. 132; Vaṣṣāf/Ayati, p. 78; RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 558. Neither author however uses the term *quriltai*. Rashīd al-Dīn uses *kīngāch*, while Vaṣṣāf says that Buqa 'took counsel with the princes and some of the amirs', (*bā shāhzādigān va barkhī umarā' ba mushāvirat pardākht*). با شاهزادگان و برخی امراء به مشاورت پرداخت

plotting to kill him. Özbek was made aware however, and turned the tables on these amirs, having them executed.[270] The previous system was clearly no longer in operation, as the earlier *quriltai*s had relied on having all key members present, but in the breakdown of the empire, it became much more common for *quriltai*s to exclude more than include, leaving them open to criticism as illegitimate. This did not prevent some from seeking to protect this tradition. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa related the tale as he heard it of the deposition of the Chaghadaid Khan Tarmashirin by his amirs. The traveller states that Tarmashirin's subjects and amirs held a council (*al malā*[271]), choosing one Buzan as the new khan, as Tarmashirin had broken the *jasaq* of Chinggis by failing to hold a *toy* once a year.[272] Though Ibn Baṭṭūṭa calls this a *toy*, thus more a ritual feast or festival, it is clear from his description of the elective, legal and judicial proceedings of this event that this also represented the *quriltai*, which of course had a festive aspect as well. Thus, in at least one part of the former Mongol Empire, there was a strong reaction to the abandonment of an effective *quriltai*, even though those fighting for its maintenance themselves contravened its traditions by holding a council without Tarmashirin present. Even the supposed 'traditionalists' represented here, and in the Talas *quriltai*, undermined their own position by weakening the perceived legitimacy of these events.

3.7 The Lord/Khatun of the *Ulus*

The Mongol Empire, as we well know, was not the domain of the *qa'an* only, but rather was considered a family project, parcelled out among the key family members of the Chinggisid house. The lands, property and people given out to Mongol princes and khatuns were theoretically their own private property, while these figures were still under the power of the *qa'an* and *quriltai*. As Hodong Kim has put it, 'these lords were politically two-faced: they were subordinates to Chinggis Khan and his successors, the lords of the Center *ulus* (*ghol-un ulus*), but at the same time they were the lords in their own *ulus*es.'[273] In my previous article, I unreservedly termed the lords of *uluses* who were also Chinggis' sons as khans, however, this looks to be in need of review.[274] Timothy May has

[270] DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion*, pp. 107-9 referencing Qāshānī/Hambly, pp. 144-5.
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[272] Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Travels,* p. 560; M. Biran, 'The Chaghadaids and Islam: The Conversion of Tarmashirin Khan', *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* Vol. 122, No. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 2002), pp. 748-9; P. Jackson, 'Reflections on the Islamization of Mongol Khans in Comparative Perspective', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient,* Vol. 62 (2019), p. 371.
[273] H. Kim, 'Formation and Changes of *Ulus*es in the Mongol Empire', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 62, (2019), p. 282.
[274] Jones, 'The Objects of Loyalty', pp. 2, 17-18.

questioned whether the lords of the *ulus* were called khans in their own lifetime, an issue that certainly needs clarification.[275] The European travellers who met Batu during Güyük and Möngke's reign for instance, do not use the word khan for him, despite all of the power they attribute to him. Rather they use the terms 'chief' or 'prince', withholding their 'Cham' for the rulers of the whole empire.[276]

Hodong Kim in a recent article also questions whether any of Chinggis' sons were actually called khan while they lived. Chinese sources regularly referred to the rulers of Iran as *kö'ün*, the Mongol word for son, matching the Turkic *oghul* as a term of respect for a royal prince.[277] Judith Kolbas has shown that Hülegü did in fact mint coins with the titles Möngke Qa'an and Hülegü Qan in 659 AH (1259-60).[278] However, Kim mentions that while the Ilkhans, Jochids and Chaghadaids did use this term within their own realms, they did not do so when dealing with the Yuán.[279] The last word on this can be given to Juvainī, who in praising the Chinggisids' lack of flowery titles (ironic given his own predilections for such), states:

> هر کس که بر تخت خانی نشیند یک اسم در افزایند خان یا قاان و بس زیادت از آن ننویسند و دیگر پسران و برادران او را به همان اسم موسوم به هنگام ولادت خوانند *har-kas ki bar takht-i khānī nishīnad yik ism dar afzāyand, khān yā qā'ān, va bas zīyādat az ān nanivīsand va dīgar pisarān va barādarān ū rā bi-hamān ism mawsūm bi-hingām-i vilādat khvānand.*[280]
>
> Whomsoever sits on the throne adds one name, khan or *qa'an*, they do not write more. The other sons and brothers they call by the names they were given at the time of their birth.

Juvainī himself uses specific terms of respect for Chinggisid princes such as Jochi (*ulush-idi*[281]) or Tolui (*ulugh-noyan*[282]), which were used in place of their original names, which became taboo for a

[275] May, *The Mongol Empire*, p. 47.
[276] Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 10-11, 55. *Dux* or *princeps*.
[277] H. Kim, '*Ulus* or *Khanate?*', pp. 8-10. I believe however, that the term *oghul* when used for a Chinggisid prince, may indicate that the prince was born of a concubine. I hope to analyse this in a further article.
[278] J. Kolbas, *The Mongols in Iran: Chingiz Khan to Uljaytu, 1220-1309*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 161. Kirakos, *History of the Armenians*, p. 313 says that everyone honoured Hülegü *like* a khan while Grigor of Akanc' states that Möngke ordered that the judges make Hülegü a khan, Grigor of Akanc'/Blake and Frye, p. 339.
[279] Kim, '*Ulus* or *Khanate?*', pp. 12-13.
[280] Juvainī/Qazvini, Vol. I, p. 19.
[281] Lord of the *ulus*.
[282] Great commander.

time.[283] It seems as if by Rashīd al-Dīn's time, the term khan had been applied to princes such as Batu and Chaghadai as an honorific, leading to our confusion. Juvainī also calls Chaghadai a khan however, so this trend may have begun early.[284] Therefore, perhaps this term should be amended for the more accurate *ejen*, or 'lord' of the *ulus*, at least until Hülegü and his descendants began using the term khan for themselves.

Terminology aside, it is clear that the rulers of these *uluses* commanded loyalties of their own, which could be at odds with the demands of the centre, though their own loyalties were ideally given to the *qa'an*. With regards to charismatic loyalty, these rulers could command plenty. They were family members of Chinggis himself, often hardened battle commanders, or in the case of the women, able administrators who had long managed *ordu*s.[285] Presumably this charisma would be secondary to that of the *qa'an*, however in several cases this may have been unclear. Chaghadai's status as *aqa* during Ögödei's reign, as well as Batu's own role during Möngke's, would likely have put a doubt in the minds of actors who had to choose between regional lord and central *qa'an*. According to the *SHM*, Ögödei consistently referred decisions to Chaghadai during his reign, even allowing his elder brother to set imperial policy at times.[286] William of Rubruck noted that it was customary for Batu and Möngke's men to applaud each other's envoys upon receiving them, but that Batu's men were proud and did not do so at times.[287] For Batu's men at least, they were unwilling to concede Möngke's superior charisma.

If we think of the loyalties of self-interest, these were most potent for actors in the individual *ulus*es. The lord of the *ulus* was both much closer, and more likely to be aware of their actions, depending on their status. If we consider the above example given by Rubruck about the envoys, it is unlikely that Möngke would punish any of the specific men involved in their non-committal applause. It is more likely that he would rather take up the case with Batu directly. Batu however, may have remembered such a powerful assertion of his primacy and rewarded his men in some way. This localised loyalty was guaranteed by two linked principles. The first was that the *ulus* of these lords meant primarily the people who were given them to rule in perpetuity, not necessarily any land itself. In Rashīd al-Dīn's account of Chinggis' dispensations to his relatives, it is people and

[283] J.A. Boyle, 'On the Titles Given in J̌uvainī to Certain Mongolian Princes', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1/2, (June 1956), pp. 146-154; Kim, 'Formation and Changes of *Ulus*es', p. 272.
[284] Juvainī/Qazvini, Vol. I, p. 226, چغاتای خانی بود, *chaghātāī khānī būd*.
[285] De Nicola, 'Queen of the Chaghatayids', pp. 107-120 shows that Orghina Khatun had such sway in the Chaghadaid *ulus* that contenders for the throne fought to get her onside.
[286] Eg. SHM/de Rachewiltz, §269-271, §276-279, pp. 201-2, 207-215.
[287] Dawson, *The Mongol Mission*, p. 136.

commanders given to them who are listed, not the lands they were supposed to control.[288] The second principle was a military one, to remain fixed to one's unit. Juvainī states that any soldier who tried to move to another would be executed in front of the others, and that no commanders or princes were allowed to accept any refugee from another unit.[289] This installation of military discipline created a chain of command, in which an individual soldier had to follow the commander of 10, the commander of 10 to follow the commander of 100 etc. Naturally, troops assigned to a certain *ulus ejen* were thus more bound to this lord than to the *qa'an* himself.[290]

3.7.1 Limitations on Regional Lords' Power

Of course the *qa'an*s realised that this could lead to overly puissant regional lords, so there were limits on such grants. Firstly, the overall numbers of people dispensed to the princes and khatuns was not enormous, usually around 3,000-5,000, meaning that no single ruler had an overwhelming number of troops.[291] If one went rogue, like Chinggis' younger brother Temüge in 1246, there were enough supporters of other princes and khatuns who could be mustered to counter any single regional ruler. Chinggis was also sure to provide a larger number of forces to the *qa'an* himself; both the guard corps (*keshig*) and the troops of the centre (*ghol-un ulus*).[292] The *qa'an*s could also establish garrison troops (*tamma*) which operated within or on the fringes of the princely *ulus*es.[293] They also had some degree of control even over the troops which had been given to the princes/khatuns. During campaigns for example, the *qa'an*s took a ratio of each family member's troops to bring with them, though representatives of that family member were sent as these troops' leaders. Reassigning troops which had already been handed out was possible also, though it seemingly caused an uproar. Ögödei famously moved 1,000 Sonit and 2,000 Suldus troops from

[288] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 279-281.
[289] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 32; BH/Budge, p. 355.
[290] Khazanov, *Nomads and Outside World*, p. 218 states 'The dual loyalty of nomadic leaders, to their unit and to the state, if the appropriate conditions arose, could easily turn into disloyalty to the state'.
[291] RAD/Thackston, Vol. I, pp. 278- 282.
[292] H. Kim, 'A Re-examination of the 'Register of Thousands (*hazāra*)' in the *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*', in (eds.) A. Akasoy, C. Burnett and R. Yoeli-Tlalim, *Rashīd al-Dīn. Agent and Mediator of Cultural Exchanges in Ilkhanid Iran*, (London: The Warburg Institute, 2013) p. 108 has shown the potential power of Tolui as regent if he did indeed have control of the troops of the centre as the regent until 1229. Ögödei as ruler could not have accepted Tolui controlling some 100,000 troops.
[293] Jackson, 'Dissolution', p. 318.

under the control of Tolui's sons to his own son Köten, which had many great commanders protesting to Sorqoqtani Beki of Ögödei's actions. Interestingly, Rashīd al-Dīn states that the problem with this (beyond violating Chinggis' will) was that Ögödei had not consulted the princes and commanders.[294] Apparently, if he had got this action approved by a *quriltai*, it may have been more acceptable.

This final example brings us closer to the ultimate question, did the *qa'an*s have the power of appointment/removal with regards to the regional *uluses*? As they were by and large created by Chinggis, he certainly had some say in the appointment of their rulers. At least in the instance of the Jochid *ulus*, it was supposedly he who decided on Batu as Jochi's successor.[295] Given that he appointed his sons as head of *ulus*es, this arguably set a precedent for the khan/*qa'an* to decide who should rule the *ulus*. However, we cannot forget that in this instance, this was a father apportioning his patrimony to his sons, and thus part of the social structure of the Mongol world. It is not clear if this should hold for successive *qa'an*s who did not hold this patriarchal position. With regards to the *uluses* held by those other than Chinggis' sons, according to the *SHM*, when appointing *ulus*es to his brothers and nephews, Chinggis told them and their descendants to choose their own rulers from within those lines.[296] This seems to set a precedent for the Chinggisids of that particular *ulus* to decide upon their own rulers. However, again we are confronted with the vagaries of Chinggisid succession practice. Were these rulers to be chosen by a sort of localised *quriltai*, or by the previous ruler, or based on principles such as primogeniture or seniority? As far as we know, the empire-wide *quriltai*s do not seem to have been involved in succession issues in the *ulus*es, though regional *quriltai*s continued to do so.[297] While Tolui died during Ögödei's reign, it is unclear how or even who succeeded to control of the *ulus*. From Rashīd al-Dīn's account, it would appear that it was Sorqoqtani Beki who took control on behalf of Möngke, but there is no solid confirmation of this.[298]

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[294] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 282; Jones, 'The Objects of Loyalty', p. 7.

[295] As mentioned above however, this information is largely indebted to the much later account of Ötemish Ḥājjī. Favereau, *The Horde,* pp. 95-6, states that a new ruler of the *ulus* in fact *had* to be confirmed by both the *qa'an* and a *quriltai*. But it is unclear to me if she means a regional *quriltai*, or one involving the entire empire. Jochi himself apparently either accepted his father's decision on succession, or simply never decided on a successor.

[296] SHM/de Rachewiltz, §255, p. 188.

[297] Allsen, *Policies of Möngke*, p. 105 claims that major appointments were supposed to be collegial, but I have found no evidence of a *quriltai* deciding on leadership of an *ulus*. Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, p. 65 also states that there was a dichotomy among the wishes of the *ulus* heads, who wanted to bequeath what they chose to their favoured successor, and the empire-wide *quriltai*s, however, Chinggis' statement to his relatives to decide their own leaders seems to contradict this.

[298] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 386-7. Atwood notes that Möngke was not raised by Sorqoqtani, but in fact grew up in the *ordu* of Ögödei, Atwood, 'Ghazanid Chronicle', p. 79.

The next clear succession to one of the princely *ulus*es was that of Chaghadai. During the interregnum, he was succeeded by his grandson Qara Hülegü, apparently according to the wishes of Chinggis, Ögödei, and Chaghadai himself.[299] Thus with no sitting *qa'an* at the time, the choice of the previous ruler of that *ulus* (backed up by the support of the dynastic founder and the previous *qa'an*) determined succession. However, as I have discussed elsewhere, the next *qa'an*, Güyük, was unhappy with this choice and appointed his own ruler of the *ulus*, Chaghadai's 5th son, Yesü Möngke, who Güyük said was senior to Qara Hülegü.[300] So here the *qa'an* not only asserts his right to make decisions about succession after the previous *ulus* ruler has died, but even deposes a sitting ruler. This policy was reversed by Möngke, who also appointed successors to the Jochid *ulus*, who may even have had to travel to Mongolia to receive their appointment from him, as Batu's son Sartaq did.[301]

This treatment of appointment to regional *ulus*es came to a head during the Toluid civil war of the 1260s, when both Qubilai and Ariq Böke appointed their own heads of the Chaghadaid *ulus*, desperately seeking to control the key area. This was possible when a ruler was young, a woman, or had only tenuous control of the area. It seems highly unlikely that Ögödei could have deposed Chaghadai, even if he had wanted to, nor Möngke Batu. Rashīd al-Dīn certainly believed that it was Qubilai's right to appoint regional rulers, but also asserts that some consultation was expected. The Chaghadaid ruler Alghu says 'I sat in Chaghatai's place without consulting the qa'an or Hülägü Aqa', before requesting that the *aqa-ini* assemble and decide whether this move was right or wrong.[302] Rashīd al-Dīn goes on to say that Qubilai appointed Abaqa to Hülegü's *ulus* and Möngke Temür to Jochi's after their predecessors died.[303] However, neither of these successions were in fact organised by Qubilai, though he did confirm them. In the Chaghadaid *ulus*, the regent Orghina Khatun had supported Alghu's claim by marrying him, but when Alghu died, Orghina consulted with the amirs of the Chaghadaid *ulus* to establish her own son Mubārakshāh as the ruler, thought Qubilai established his own candidate, Baraq, who eventually overthrew Mubārakshāh.[304] As Lane has noted, Qubilai

[299] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. I, p. 255.

[300] Jones, 'The Objects of Loyalty', p. 8.

[301] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 361. Though Sartaq was apparently chosen by Batu also. Kirakos, *History of the Armenians*, p. 309 says that Sartaq was already on his way to Möngke when he heard of Batu's death, so travelling to Qara Qorum may not have been the norm. There is disagreement among scholarship as to the prerogatives of the *qa'an* in deciding Jochid succession. Favereau, *The Horde*, p. 140 states that it was a statement of independence that Berke was not confirmed by the great khan, while Kamola, 'The making of history', p. 58, describes Möngke's decisions on Sartaq and Ulaghchi's successions as 'intervening in Jochid dynastic politics'.

[302] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 435.

[303] Ibid.

[304] Ibid. and p. 371.

would have been well aware of Orghina and Mubārakshāh's support for his rival Ariq Böke, so it was imperative for him to install someone more amenable.[305] However, it is unclear whose rights were being trampled: the *qa'an*'s right to appoint *ulus* heads by Orghina and her amirs, or the regional *quriltai*'s right to decide their own succession by the overbearing and unrecognised Qubilai.[306]

3.7.2 Communal and Ideal Loyalties to the Regional Ruler

Naturally, communal loyalty to a more local ruler was quite strong in the Mongol Empire. Groups of people given in perpetuity as property of that ruler were often of one people/nation/unit, such as a thousand of the Suldus. This kept them as cohesive entities under their regional lord/khatun. Jackson notes that Rashīd al-Dīn mentions Kölgen, a son of Chinggis by another wife, Qulan Khatun, receiving a *kārkhāna* (group of artisans) in Tabriz, held by Kölgen's descendants even in Rashīd al-Dīn's own day.[307] Such groups of people were regularly given to Chinggisid princes and khatuns as rewards, as well as fiefs and revenue streams from certain areas far from their own centre of power. Even the Ögödeid, Qaidu, received revenues from within Qubilai's territory during their rivalry, though these were cut off by Qubilai in the 1280s.[308] Given that these lands and the people in them were within another sovereign prince's realm, it is unlikely that when pushed they would still side with their nominal overlord, though there were instances of this too. Upon Hülegü's assassination of the three Jochid princes who had accompanied him on his western campaign, groups of the Jochids' forces chose different loyalty paths. Some accepted Hülegü's overlordship under duress, while others fought or fled either back to the Jochid *ulus* itself, or to their allies, the Mamluks.[309] One group, under the Jochid commander Negüder, moved to the area around Ghazni and formed a force called the Negüderis or Qara'unas, who would constantly be a thorn in the side of the Ilkhans, with their regular raiding of Khurasan.[310] Whether this was out of any loyalty to the

[305] Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, p. 79.
[306] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 369 states that the eldest son of Büri, Abishgha, was a supporter of Qubilai, and was sent to rule Ulus Chaghatai and arrest Orghina Khatun.
[307] Jackson, 'Dissolution', p. 317; RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 280-1.
[308] Biran, *Qaidu*, pp. 22, 43.
[309] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, pp. 367, 513-4; Grigor of Akanc', *Nation of Archers*, p. 341; K. Golev, 'Intra-Mongol Diplomacy', p. 354, note 85 states that various Mamluk authors claimed that Berke ordered his troops with Hülegü to flee to the Mamluks if they could.
[310] For more on the Negüderis/Qara'unas, see P. Jackson, 'The Mongols of Central Asia and the Qara'unas', *Iran*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (2018), pp. 91-103; M. Bernardini, 'The Mongol puppet lords and the Qarawnas', in (eds) R.

Jochids, or that Negüder simply saw an opportunity to carve out his own personal fiefdom is not exactly clear.

If we consider a family or lineage a community, there were many instances of loyalty and disloyalty during the Mongol period. The Ögödeid princes flocking to Qaidu from Qubilai's realm indicate that this draw could be quite powerful. In another instance, Tegüder, a grandson of Chaghadai who accompanied Hülegü's campaign to the west and settled in the Ilkhanate, received a letter asking for support from Baraq, the Chaghadaid khan in 1267. Tegüder 'rebelled' against Abaqa, the Ilkhan, and waged a guerrilla war in the mountains of Georgia for some three years, until he was captured in 1270 and his amirs executed by Abaqa.[311] Of course, as the numbers of descendants of the original *ulus* rulers grew, family ties to distant cousins were weakened, and these loyalties became more strained. Notwithstanding, as Mongol history has repeatedly proven, even full blood brotherhood was no impediment to rivalry for power or a guarantee of loyalty. Jochi and Chaghadai could not be trusted to support each other, while Güyük's sons Khoja and Naqu also were unable to come to any agreement as to who should succeed their father.[312]

In the realm of ideal loyalties, we are in somewhat of a quandary as to who a subject of a regional lord should be loyal to. Naturally, both the regional lord and the *qa'an*, but in practice it was regularly difficult to maintain one's obligations to these two loci of allegiance. Juvainī tells the story of Edigü-Temür, an official appointed to the region of Khurasan by Batu, who was in conflict with Korguz, the governor of the region, who had been confirmed by both Batu and Ögödei. Edigü-Temür brought charges of mismanagement against Korguz, and physically attacked him and his servants. The separate cases were brought to the *jarghu*, where Ögödei had both men and their supporters investigated, and attempted to reconcile the two men by forcing them to sleep in the same tent. After many months, the *jarghu* finally found in favour of Korguz and found Edigü-Temür guilty of being an *ayqaq* (lying informant). Ögödei himself passed judgement, and ordered that Edigü-Temür be sent to his lord, Batu, for punishment. However, Edigü-Temür appealed this verdict, arguing that Ögödei was Batu's superior, and thus he should be sentenced by Ögödei. Ögödei then spared Edigü-

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Hillenbrand, A.C.S. Peacock and F. Abdullaeva, *Ferdowsi, the Mongols and the History of Iran: Art, Literature and Culture from Early Islam to Qajar Persia*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), pp. 169-176. Peter Golden also highlights that it was from the Mongol period that many groups came to be named after military commanders, showing the personal loyalty of military units, which then intermingled with local people to form new ethnic groupings (the Uzbeks, the Noghai etc.), P.B. Golden, '"I will give the people unto thee": The Činggisid Conquests and Their Aftermath in the Turkic World', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 10, No. 1, (2000), pp. 38-9.

[311] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 367, Vol. III, pp. 522-3. For more on this incident, see Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, pp. 87-8.

[312] See above p. 104, note 153.

Temür's life, assuring him that Batu would not have done so.[313] This incident is instructive in many ways, not least showing that Batu had a great deal of control of appointments in the region of Khurasan, which were on the whole approved by the *qa'an* Ögödei.[314] According to Sayfī's *Tārīkhnāma-yi Herāt*, Majd al-Dīn, the *malik* of Kalyun, was in no doubt as to where his loyalties should lie. Majd al-Dīn applied directly to Batu for permission to rebuild his city's fortifications, and honoured Batu's envoys more than Ögödei's, giving superior gifts to the regional lord.[315]

Ögödei looks to have struggled to impose himself on these regional lords. The above incident with Edigü-Temür looks to have been an attempt to make Korguz 'Ögödei's man', but even if this was successful, Batu's tax official in the region, Sharaf al-Dīn, continued to further his own lord's interests. This struggle would outlast Ögödei's own life, with Sharaf al-Dīn causing problems for Töregene's appointee for the region, Arghun Aqa. Even Arghun Aqa, one of the most powerful imperial officials in Mongol history who served Töregene, Güyük and Möngke, had obligations to the Jochids, and regularly reported to Batu.[316] Even when the official was clearly the *qa'an*'s man, like Maḥmūd Yalāvach, he trod on dangerous ground when challenging a regional ruler's authority. As I have shown elsewhere, when there was a clash between Ögödei and Chaghadai over misappropriated lands in the Chaghadaid *ulus*, the regional ruler nominally backed down, but in fact kept the lands, and the imperial official who reported it, Yalāvach, was hastily appointed to a position far away.[317] The regional ruler's rights were regularly asserted against those of the centre. The division of appointments was one way in which the power balance was decided. According to Christopher Atwood, the *qa'an* would appoint tax officials, while the *jarghuchi*s and *darughachi*s were chosen by the appanage holder, though this is contested by Iver Neumann and Qiu Yihao.[318]

The personal nature of service in the Mongol world contributed significantly to a moral obligation to one's lord. Thus, oaths of fealty (*üge baraldu*) were given to specific lords, and heavy moral obligations attended these oaths. Punishments sworn to upon violation of these oaths were

[313] Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, pp. 493-9.
[314] Lane, *Early Mongol Rule*, p. 64 shows that these rivalries were kept on simmer, with disputes only coming to the boil with Güyük's appointment of Eljigidei to govern Anatolia.
[315] Jackson, *Mongols and the Islamic World*, pp. 120-1.
[316] RAD/Thackston, Vol. II, p. 413; Juvainī/Boyle, Vol. II, pp. 514, 521; Kirakos, *History of the Armenians*, p. 298; Jackson, 'Dissolution', p. 327.
[317] Jones, 'The Objects of Loyalty', pp. 16-17.
[318] Atwood, *Encyclopedia of Mongolia*, p. 18. Neumann states that the appointment of *darughachi*s was in fact one of the key powers of the *qa'an*, and that Möngke appointed a *darughachi* called Kitai to the Jochid *ulus* in 1257, perhaps seeking to show the new ruler of that *ulus*, Berke, that Möngke was still in charge, I.B. Neumann, 'Europeans and the steppe: Russian lands under the Mongol rule', in (eds.) S. Suzuki, Y. Zhang, J. Quirk, *International Orders in the Early Modern World: Before the Rise of the West* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 16, 19. Qiu Yihao also shows that Ögödei appointed Sayyid Ajall as *darughachi* to Jochid and Chaghadaid lands in Taiyuan and Pingyang, Yihao, 'Independent Ruler, Indefinable Role', 20.

regularly the acceptance of death, but also the ending of one's line and destruction of family and property.[319] Thus, for those political actors below the regional lord, their service was owed to that particular lord, rather than to the *qa'an* or to the state more generally. As Naomi Standen has shown, this was prevalent in Chinese society also, meaning that retainers regularly stood by their ministers even when the minister was in rebellion against the state.[320] One such incident in the later Ilkhanate is of interest. The amir Chupan revolted against the Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd in 1325 after Abū Saʿīd executed Chupan's son, Dimashq Khvāja. However, in this revolt he twice had his own amirs swear personal oaths of loyalty to him before facing Abū Saʿīd. Eventually, Chupan seemingly struggled with his own oaths, realising that he could not draw a sword against the house of Hülegü. Subsequently, his amirs deserted him to Abū Saʿīd.[321] Chupan's nervousness about his own amirs' loyalty may have been due to these amirs' obligations to the Ilkhan, as they may have been included in those who also had to swear loyalty to the Ilkhan on his accession. These double obligations seem to have given actors some latitude in their decision-making; they could sense which loyalty oath was more likely to cause them problems and adhere to the other.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter we have elucidated the key objects of loyalty in the Mongol Empire as it developed over the 13th century. As the empire grew, new intermediaries were created between actors and objects of loyalty. Therefore, a local *malik* would usually have to signify his submission in person to the qa'an himself, but subsequently, the *malik* would now have to report first to the Mongols' regional official, perhaps a *darughachi* or a governor. Another layer could also be the regional ruler, if the area was in one of the *ulus*es of a prince or khatun. It was these rulers who were expected to deal with the large majority of issues in their own realms, as indicated by John of Plano Carpini, who states 'everything is settled according to the decision of the Emperor without the

[319] Hope, '*El* and *bulqa*', pp. 15-18.

[320] Standen, *Unbounded Loyalty*, p. 45.

[321] *Ta'rikh-i Shaikh Uwais*, pp. 55-6, Persian text, p. 154; C. Melville, 'Wolf or Shepherd? Amir Chupan's Attitude to Government', in (eds) J. Raby and T. Fitzherbert, *The Court of the Il-khans, 1290-1340*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 87-9; C. Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate, 1327-37: A decade of discord in Mongol Iran*, Papers on Inner Asia, No. 30, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1999), p. 20.

turmoil of legal trials' and that 'the other princes of the Tartars do the same in those matters concerning them'.[322] Thus with administrative complexity came stratification of loyalties, though all subjects of the Mongol Empire were theoretically loyal to the qa'an. These new positions were added to the more compact system of political loyalties in the 12th century Mongol world: khan, *quriltai* and rightful lord. The major change was to introduce the Chinggisid family structure as a ruling stratum between the qa'an and the steppe aristocracy. Their influence was felt in the *quriltai* as well as in their own realms, where imperial control was not always so evident, and the princes and khatuns often had great license to govern as they saw fit.

This situation created powerful communal loyalties, where the inhabitants of an *ulus* were more likely to follow their regional lord in a pressure situation, particularly if he was a powerful Chinggisid prince himself. The division of forces and the great distances involved in the Mongol Empire meant that these regional actors had a great deal more to fear from the Mongol representative close by than from the qa'an himself. This is, in effect, what occurred in the 1260s, as Ariq Böke in Mongolia and Qubilai in China were supported by the princes, amirs and khatuns in their regional orbit, while for the most part those further afield remained neutral or noncommittal in their support of their chosen candidate. This division also presented an opportunity for the Chinggisids out of the reach of the potential successors to Möngke to assert their own independence, and reformulate Mongol loyalties. Those such as Berke of the Jochid *ulus* and Hülegü of the newly-created Ilkhanate were responsible for redefining how their subjects would express their loyalties, with only members of the specific branch of Chinggisids now eligible for rulership, and those who served the wrong type of Chinggisid seen as fair game in their conflict.[323] It is to Hülegü and his successors that we now turn.

[322] Dawson, *Mongol Mission*, pp. 67-8.
[323] Favereau, *The Horde*, pp. 140-9.