

# Chinggis Khan's distribution of posts to his comrades-in-arms: Officials or courtiers?\*

TATIANA D. SKRYNNIKOVA



Traditionally scholars connect the radical transformations in Mongol *ulus* with the second enthronement of Chinggis Khan in 1206, when he distributed military divisions (thousands) between his *nukers* (comrades-in-arms) and gave the latter titles; this is interpreted as the creation of an administrative apparatus and birth of the Mongol state.<sup>1</sup>

However, the analysis of sources allows us to say that Chinggis Khan began to structure the entity as early as at his first enthronement in 1189<sup>2</sup> (after the incident with Jamukha and conflict with the Tayjiuts), when those who had elected him as khan vowed fidelity and took obligations to serve him.<sup>3</sup> Simultaneously

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<sup>1</sup> "A state, such as the one Chinggis Khan created in 1206 on the banks of the Onon River, is an objectively definable political entity led by government." H. C. Schwarz, "Mongolia at 800: The State and Nation since Chinggis Khan," *Inner Asia* 8:2 (2006), 151.

<sup>2</sup> "The dating of the first election remains doubtful and no exact year can be assigned to it ... The statement in On, 46, n.136, that the first election "ceremony took place in 1189 AD, when Chinggis Qahan was 28 years old is in line with the date adopted by official Mongol historians in China. ... The date (1189) as well as Temüjin's age at the time (28) are those given by Sayang Sēen and the later Mongol chronicles." I. de Rachewiltz, ed., tr. *The Secret History of the Mongols. A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the thirteenth century*. Leiden-Boston 2004, 458, in detail, see 457-460.

<sup>3</sup> "... for you / Fine-looking maidens and ladies of rank, / Palatial tents, and from foreign people / Ladies and maidens with beautiful cheeks, / And geldings with fine croups / / At the trot we shall bring ... / When in a battie we hunt ... / For you we shall drive the beasts of the steppe ... / In the days of war, / If we disobey your commands, / Deprive us of all our goods and belongings, and our noble wives, and cast / Our black heads on the ground ... " [Rachewiltz 2004, 49].

some of them received posts from him. The problem that the paper deals with is the following: whether it is possible to interpret Chinggis Khan's appointments as the creation of the administrative machinery, and is the latter a state institution?

The titles, which are interpreted by some scholars as forming the administrative body in 1206 and thus creating of the state, were marked as early as 1189:

§ 124. Having become *qa'an*, Činggis ordered the younger brother of Bo'orču, Ögölei Čerbi, to carry a quiver, Qači'un Toqura'un to carry a quiver, and the two brothers Jetei and Doqolqu Čerbi *each* to carry a quiver.

Önggür, Söyiketü Čerbi and Qada'an Daldurqan *then* spoke, saying,

"We shall not let you go without

Your morning drinks;

We shall not neglect your drinks

In the evening!"

And so they became stewards... Degei tended the sheep. His younger brother, Güčügür spoke: "...I shall manage the tent-carts!", he said. And Dödei Čerbi said, "I shall be in charge of the domestics and servants in the tent!"

Qubilai, Čilgütei and Qarqai Toqura'un together with Qasar *were ordered to* carry sword...

And he said, "Let Belgütei and Qaraldai Toqura'un

Be in charge of the geldings

Be *my* equeries!"

And he said, "Tayiči'uda, Qutu Moriči and Mulqalqu shall tend the herds of horses!"

And he said, "Let Arqai Qasar, Taqai, Sükegei and Ča'urqan

Be my far-*flying* shafts,

Be my near-*flying* arrows! (A simile for trusted envoys. – I. R.)"...

Sübe'tei Ba'atur spoke:

"...I shall hoard up *goods for you*;

...I shall gather *for you*

All that is *found* outside;

...I shall try to make a cover *for you...*"

Thereupon, when Činggis Qa'an became *qa'an*, he said to Bo'orču and Jelme, ... "You two, who stood by me from the beginning, will you not be at the head of all these *here*?"<sup>4</sup>

I. de Rachewiltz supposes that "in view of the considerable lag of time between the original appointment (1189 – T. S.) and the later confirmation (1204 – T. S.), it is possible (and, perhaps, more likely) that those four personages are called *čerbi* retrospectively in §§ 120 and 124, the appointment of 1204 being the original one".<sup>5</sup> More true, I think, is his assertion that: "Since we know that Dödei, Doqolqu, Ögöle (~ Ögölen ~ Ögölei) and Söyiketü were made chamberlains at the time of Činggis Qan's election as tribal chief..., it seems that the 'appointment' of 1204

<sup>4</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 50–52.

<sup>5</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 691.

was merely a confirmation of these four personages in their position, with addition of two more *čerbin* as part of the reorganization".<sup>6</sup> In fact it is known that the events of 1189 brought an appreciable increase of the entity led by Chinggis Khan and, accordingly, his persons of attendance. In this historical context, the polity of the Mongols ("Ours") was modelled by the circle of persons, the heads of tribes, who were present at the election of Temüjin and who received from him the title of *khan*:

§ 120. They travelled all that night. At daybreak they saw Qačı'un Toqura'un, Qaraqai Toqura'un and Qaraldai Toqura'un, the three Toqura'un brothers of the *Jalayir*<sup>7</sup> tribe, drawing near to join them after having travelled throughout the night together. Then Qada'an Daldurqan of the Tarqud and his brothers – *five Tarqud in all* – also drew near. Then the son of Möngetü Kiyan, Önggür and the others, with their *Čangši'ud* and *Baya'ud* followers drew near too. From the Barulas came the brothers Qubilai and Qudus. From the *Mangqud* came the two brothers Jetei and Doqolqu Čerbi. The younger brother of Bo'orču, Ögölen Čerbi, left the *Arulad* and also came to join his elder brother Bo'orču. The younger brothers of Jelme, Ča'urqan and Sübe'etei Ba'atur, left the *Uriangqan* and came to join Jelme. From the *Besüd* also came two brothers Degei and Küčügür. From the *Suldus* also came the brothers Čilgüyei, Taki and Tayiči'udai. Seče Domoy of the *Jalayir* also came with his two sons, Arqai Qasar and Bala. From the *Qongqotan* also came Söyiketü Čerbi. Sükeken Je'un, the son of Jegei Qongdaqor of the *Sükeken*, also came. Čaqa'an U'a of the Ne'üs came too. There also came Kinggiyadai of the *Olqunu'ud*, Seči'ür from the *Qorolas*, and Moči Bedü'ün from the *Dörben*. Since Butu of the *Ikires* had made his way here as a son-in-law, he also came. From the *Noyakin* also came Jungso, and from the *Oronar* also came Jirqo'an. From the *Barulas* also came Suqu Sečen with his son Qaračar. Then Qorči, Old Üsün and Kökö Čos of the *Ba'arin* together with their Menen Ba'arin followers also came as one camp... § 122. The *Geniges*, with Qunan at their head, also came as one camp. Then came *Daridai Odčigin* – also one camp. From the *Jadaran* came also Mulqalqu. And the *Ünjin* and the *Saqayid* came – also one camp. When *Temüjin* had parted company in this way from Jamuqa and had moved further on, setting up camp at Ayıl Qaraqana by the Kimurqa Stream, *there came*, also separating from Jamuqa, the sons of Sorqatu Jürki of the *Jürkin*, Sača Beki and Taiču – one camp; then the son of Nekün Taisi, Qučar Beki – one camp; and the son of Qutula Qan, Altan Odčigin – one camp.<sup>8</sup>

As we can see from this list of the tribes and their chiefs, not only those who were included in his genealogy, but also unrelated tribes went over to Chinggis Khan. Certainly, this called for necessary actions that would be directed at the structural organization of both a new entity and headquarters, i.e. his court.

<sup>6</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 691.

<sup>7</sup> The *Jalayir* and other tribes marked by italic belonged to "alien" tribes. The *Arulad* and other tribes marked by bold type belonged to kinship's tribes.

<sup>8</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 46–48.

Inauguration marks and fixes the borders of the multiplicity, and this is presented in the text of *The Secret History of the Mongols* by listing the tribal chiefs who went over to Chinggis Khan as a successful military leader. Reorganization consisted in replacing the tribal structure (for example, *kuren/güre'en* was more than merely camp<sup>9</sup>) by new techniques of organizing and managing: the thousand, courtiers who were assigned duties to serve Chinggis Khan's court and simultaneously to exercise military functions.

One cannot but notice the military character of this coalition: Chinggis Khan was elected as a leader in war. This is shown in the description of mutual obligations between Chinggis Khan and those who elected him. At the time of Chinggis' break with Jamuqa, Chinggis began to reorganize his military forces according to the system of decimal classification known among the nomadic tribes of Inner Asia. *The Secret History* records that Ong Qan of the Kereyit divided his army into the units of ten thousand (*tümet*, pl. of *tümen*) before the joint campaign against the Merkit to rescue Börte began (§ 104).<sup>10</sup> Chinggis Khan gave the commanders of thousands the title *noyon*.<sup>11</sup>

It was at this time that importance of the *Nökör-ship* was emphasized, the term *nököt*<sup>12</sup> is used as a generalized word for those people, who served Chinggis Khan. This inauguration marked the formation of a new wider polity and accordingly an expanding court. It was necessary to maintain and protect the headquarters and the main palace *yurta*. This required the duties to be distributed, i.e. the nomenclature of court ranks had to be created. To mark the court ranks, terms that were well-known and widely spread in the region were used: *čerbin* (chamberlain)<sup>13</sup>, *qorčın* (quiver-bearer)<sup>14</sup>, *ba'určın* (steward),<sup>15</sup> *aktačın* (equerry), *adu'učın*

<sup>9</sup> Rachewiltz translates lit. "They arrived at a circular camp people (*güre'en irgen*)" [ibid., 387]. In *The Secret History*, the word *irgen* often denotes a tribe. This permits to I. de Rachewiltz to write: "These large camps eventually came to designate tribal units which, in the Mongol military system, were assimilated to sections or wings of the army. The term *güre'en* (*küriyen*) has therefore different connotations to the social economic and military organization of the semi-nomadic tribes of Mongolia as these evolved in the time of Činggis Qan in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries" [Ibid.].

<sup>10</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 35.

<sup>11</sup> Chinggis said to Qorči: "I will make you a commander of ten thousand (*tümen-ü noyan*)" (§ 121). Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 48.

<sup>12</sup> Rachewiltz "used 'friend' and 'companion' interchangeably (whereas the Mongolian text has *nökör* throughout) not only for stylistic purposes, but also because both concepts are implied in the Mongol term and cannot be rendered by a single word in English." Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 387. I. de Rachewiltz, *Index to the Secret History of the Mongols*. Bloomington 1972, 53.

<sup>13</sup> "These chamberlain, who are already mentioned in § 120, were important officials whose main function was, apparently, the management of the qan's household and property, including the serving of food and control of the domestic staff, and the safety of the qan, i.e. with security in general." Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 690. Scholars interpret this Mongolian word in different way: "chamberlains (CI, 119: 'stewards'; On, 95: 'commanders')." Ibid.

(horse-herder). Military functions of all these persons were combined with prestigious functions of service to the khan inside and outside his court.

We have already mentioned that between his first and second enthronements Činggis khan undertook the next reorganization of the Mongol *ulus*, caused by the confrontation with the Naimans in 1204.

§ 191. Činggis Qa'an...counted his troops and on the spot formed units of a thousand *men*, appointing the commanders of a thousand, the commanders of a hundred and the commanders of ten. Thereupon he appointed as chamberlains Dödei Čerbi, Doqolqu Čerbi, Ögölei Čerbi, Tolun Čerbi, Bučaran Čerbi and Söyiketü Čerbi. Then, having appointed these six chamberlains, he formed units of a thousand, a hundred, and ten *men*, and he chose and recruited eighty *men* to serve on roster as nightguards and seventy men to serve as dayguards. He recruited them from the sons and younger brothers of commanders of a thousand and of a hundred, as well as from the sons and younger brothers of mere ordinary people, choosing and recruiting those who were able and of good appearance.

Showing favour to Arqai Qasar, he then ordered: "Let him choose himself his brave warriors and form a unit of a thousand to fight before me in time of battle; in the many other days of peace they shall serve as my dayguards." He also said, "Ögöle Čerbi shall be the commander of the seventy dayguards, acting in consultation with Qudus Qalčan." (i.e., sharing command with him).

§ 192. Činggis Qa'an further ordered: "The quiverbearers, the day guards, the stewards, the doorkeepers and the grooms are to go on roster duty in daytime. Before the sun sets they shall retire to make way for the night guards; they shall go out to their geldings and spend the night there. At night, the night guards shall see that those of their men whose duty it is to lie all around Our tent do so, and they shall put on roster those of their men whose duty it is to stand at the door to guard it. The following morning, when We eat soup, the quiver bearers and the day guards shall report to the night guards; the quiver bearers, the day guards, the stewards and the doorkeepers shall all carry out their respective tasks and take their appointed place. When they have completed their days of service, consisting of a three-day and a three-night turn of duty, and have passed the three nights exactly in the same manner, they shall be relieved, but the night after their relief, they shall still be on duty as nightguards, and shall spend the night lying down all around." So he ordered.

In this way Činggis Qa'an, having formed the units of a thousand, appointed the chamberlains, recruited eighty men to serve on roster as night guards and se-

<sup>14</sup> The function of a quiver-bearer was indefinite. The evidence suggests that a duty to bear a quiver was placed on persons who already had the title *čerbi*.

<sup>15</sup> "After proclaiming their diligence, the three are appointed 'cooks' or rather stewards (*ba'určïn*, mo. *bayurčïn*). ...As pointed out by Ratchnevsky, the office of *ba'urči* was more than that of a simple cook: the holder was in charge of the administration of victuals and was also the chief cup-bearer." Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 463.

venty men to serve as day guards; he let Arqai Qasar choose the brave men, and set out against the Naiman.<sup>16</sup>

We can see that the transformations concerned two structures that were considerably increased; the military forces and the court yard (his protection and service). The growing size of the polity dictated the next reorganization of the army by counting the forces and dividing them into units of one thousand, one hundred and ten men, appointing a commander (*noyon*) in charge of each unit. It was indicative that the appointment of Dödei Čerbi, Doqolqu Čerbi, Ögölei Čerbi, Tolun Čerbi, Bučaran Čerbi and Söyiketü Čerbi as chamberlains was accompanied by the formation of military units. This allows us to assume that *čerbin* held the supreme military rank at the headquarters. This proves to be true from other evidence. Čerbi were vested with special powers, and this is shown in the following context that relates to a later time (1206):

Further, Činggis Qa'an said, "If We Ourselves do not go on a military campaign the night guards must not take the field without Us." So he said, and gave the following order: "After being thus instructed by Us, the chamberlains in charge of troops who transgress the order and, out of jealousy for the night guards, send them out on campaign, shall be guilty and liable to punishment."<sup>17</sup>

This gives us evidence to conclude that *čerbi* were given a free hand in sending the military groups, except the night guards. Rashid-ad-din mentions that Bala-čerbi (*noyon* – commander of thousand) who fought in India, was in Chinggis Khan's retinue.<sup>18</sup> All *čerbi* were the commanders of a thousand.

The higher status of *čerbi* in relation to other courtiers was emphasized when Tulun-čerbi took the central position in ritual distribution of food and wine, and the two stewards (*ba'určün*) Önggür and Boro'ul, were disposed to the right and left sides of the khans' seat.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, *čerbi* simultaneously could be given other court titles. For example, Ögölei-čerbi and Doqolqu-čerbi, as early as in 1189, were appointed as quiverbearers (*qorčün*), and Söyiketü-čerbi received the rank of *ba'určün* (cook, or rather steward). Dodai-čerbi was directly responsible for the household budget of the court. Simultaneously, as we saw, Ögölei-čerbi appointed in 1189 as quiver bearer (*qorčün*) became in 1204 the head of the day-guard (70 *turqa'ut*).

Formed as early as 1204, Chinggis Khan's bodyguard (*keshig/keshigten*), which became the most important military institution, was connected to the reorganization of the polity's structure. The guard was divided into night guard (*kekte'ül*) and day guard (*turqa'ut* + *qorčün*). In addition to 70 *turqa'ut*, a unit of one thou-

<sup>16</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols* 113–114.

<sup>17</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 161.

<sup>18</sup> Rashid-ad-din, *Sbornik letopisei*. [The Collected Chronicles] Moscow–Leningrad 1952, 97.

<sup>19</sup> "During feasts sit on the right and left sides of the Great Vessel with Kumis (or milk wine) and supervise the distribution. May Tolun sit with you in the centre" (my translation. – T. S.). In fact, it is not related to the actual distribution of food to satisfy everyday biological needs. This text is evidence of their ritual functions.

sand was formed to fight standing before Chinggis Khan on the battlefield. Still the main changes concerned the military structure and organization: strengthening of the institution of *Nökör-ship* when the nearest comrades-in-arms are appointed as *noyon*-commander of thousand/hundred (*minqad-un ja'ud-un noyad*). The increase of Chinggis Khan's court required re-structuring of the court staff. As special military units were present at the court, the headquarters possessed the features of a military camp. That is why a notable place in the hierarchy of court ranks belonged to *čerbün* (chamberlain), and *qorčün* (quiver-bearer). Service of the court yard required confirmation of the former court ranks - *ba'určün* (steward), *aktačün* (equerry/groom), *adu'učün* (horse-herder) - and the creation of new ones like *e'ütenči/e'üdenči* (doorkeeper).

Though an attempt was undertaken at organization, still it is impossible to speak about the creation of a hierarchically-built structure. On the one hand, Chinggis Khan demanded that the courtiers should perform their duties directly: "to carry out their respective tasks and take their appointed place". On the other hand, all of them, as well as the guard, had to carry out functions of protection.<sup>20</sup>

The closing stage in reorganization of the Mongol *ulus* occurred in 1206. If the first inauguration represented the election of a Khan (a leader in war), then the second one (1206) was related to the need to extend the structure of authority over a considerably broader community. It is both remarkable and important to note that the repeated enthronement was connected not only with the victory over the Naimans and Merkits but also with the defeat of the coalition ruled by the Tayichi'uds and led by Jamukha. Since that time the term *Mongol* has been understood not only as ethnophor (ethnofania) but also designated larger potestarian-political units and testified to a process of mongolization (in the political sense) of the groups that joined the Mongol *ulus*.

The description of the events of 1206 begins with the assertion that the Mongol *ulus* became a large polity and from the next stage of its structural reorganization:

...the people of the felt-walled tents had been brought to allegiance, [...] Having thus completed the task of setting the Mongol people in order, Činggis Qa'an said, "To those who sided with me when I was establishing our nation, I shall express my appreciation and, having formed units of a thousand, I shall appoint them commanders of a thousand."<sup>21</sup>

To strengthen his power over the widened Mongol *ulus*, Chinggis Khan used a range of traditions and practices that had been elaborated in the previous stages. The reorganization kept the militaristic character of the entity's structure. Ching-

<sup>20</sup> Rachewiltz did not translate the word *qorcin*. I think that the phrase "...qorcin turqa'ut kesikten bawurci e'ütenci aqtaci üdür kesik orojū." Rachewiltz, *Index to the Secret History of the Mongols*, 100, can be translated more exactly: "kesikten (the quiver bearers and the day guards) and also the stewards, the doorkeepers and the equeries/grooms are to be on duty as the day guards".

<sup>21</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 133.

gis Khan began with the appointments of the commanders of a thousand, and this is understood as decimal military-civil administration.<sup>22</sup> Of ninety-five *nukers*, who in 1206 received from Chinggis Khan the title *noyon* – the commanders of a thousand (Mong. *minqad-un noyat*)<sup>23</sup> – twenty-eight had participated in the first enthronization.

A detailed analysis of the practices that were used in 1206 allows us to define the character of the decimal military-civil administration in Chinggis' time. When appointing ninety-five commanders of a thousand, Chinggis Khan ordered: "Now, Bo'orču will be in charge of the ten thousand of the right wing; and I put Muqali in charge of the ten thousand of the left wing, giving him the title of *gui ong*. Now, Naya'a will be in charge of the ten thousand of the centre".<sup>25</sup> Changes in the structure of the guard (*keshigten*)<sup>26</sup> became the main result of the reorganization. The *keshigten* grew in number up to ten thousand<sup>27</sup> and was marked as the institution of four three-day shifts.<sup>28</sup> In contradistinction to 1189 and 1204, when granting the comrades-in-arms with titles and the description of their functions was especially marked, in 1206 such granting was occasional and was connected to military appointments.

Činggis Qa'an, bringing the number of day guards who had formerly enrolled with Ögele Čerbi up to a full thousand, said, "Ögele Čerbi from the family Bo'orču shall be in charge of them ... Dödei Čerbi shall be in charge of one thousand day guards and Doqolqu Čerbi shall be in charge of one thousand day guards... Arqai Qasar shall be in charge of one thousand day guards – one thousand chosen brave warriors – who, in the many days of peace shall serve as day-guards, and in the days of battle shall stand before me and be brave warriors."

Thus, there were eight thousand day guards chosen from the various thousands; there were also two thousand night guards with quiver bearers. Altogether there were ten thousand guards. Činggis Qa'an ordered, "The ten thousand guards attached to Us shall be strengthened and become the main body<sup>29</sup> of the army".<sup>30</sup>

<sup>22</sup> D. Sneath, "Imperial Statecraft: Arts of Power on the Steppe," in *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries*, ed. D. Sneath, Cambridge 2006, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Rachewiltz, *Index to the Secret History of the Mongols*, 114.

<sup>25</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 151.

<sup>26</sup> "Mongolian *keshig* stems from Old Turkish *kezik*, from the verb *kez-* 'to tour' with the primary meaning of 'tour of duty'" C. P. Atwood, "Ulus Emirs, *Keshig* Elders, Signature, and Marriage Partners: The Evolution of a Classic Mongol Institution," in *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries*, ed. D. Sneath, Cambridge 2006, 143.

<sup>27</sup> 1000 *kebt'e'ül*, 1000 *qorč'in*, 8000 *turqa'ut*.

<sup>28</sup> Atwood, "Ulus Emirs, *Keshig* Elders," 143.

<sup>29</sup> Mong. *yeke qol* – lit. the great centre. Rachewiltz, *Index to the Secret History of the Mongols*, 130.

<sup>30</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 155.



As we can see, three *čerbi* became the heads of guard divisions and this proves that this was mainly a military title. Ten thousand *kesbigten* did not enter the ninety-five army thousands; Chinggis Khan emphasized their exclusiveness:

§ 228. Further, Činggis Qa'an ordered, "My guards are of higher *standing* than the outside commanders of a thousand; the attendants of my guards are of higher *standing* than the outside commanders of a hundred and of ten. If outside leaders of a thousand, regarding themselves as equal to and a match for my guards, quarrel with them, *We shall* punish the persons who are leaders of a thousand." So he ordered.<sup>31</sup>

They were in a special position and arranged themselves around the headquarters:

When the quiver bearers and day guards have reported on the establishment of the encampment, the quiver bearers such as Yisün Te'e and Bükidei, and the day guards such as Alčidaı, Ögöle and Aqutaı, shall take up duty on the right side of the Palace. ...The day guards such as Buqa, Dödei Čerbi, Doqolqu Čerbi and Čanai shall take up duty on the left side of the Palace. ...Arqa's brave warriors shall take up duty in front of the Palace. ...The night guards, having taken care of the tent-carts of the Palace, shall take up duty in the proximity of the Palace, on the left side.<sup>32</sup>

This definitely speaks about the security functions of the guard. The position of Dödei Čerbi is interesting. On the one hand, as the head of thousand of the day guard (*turqaut*) he settles down on the left side. On the other hand,

Dödei Čerbi shall constantly supervise the Palace: all the guards who are day guards, and, round about the Palace, the "sons of the household" of the Palace, the horse-herders, shepherds, camel-keepers and cowherds. ...Dödei Čerbi shall take up duty and be constantly present, at the rear (i.e., at the northern side) of the Palace.<sup>33</sup>

In the given context the horse-herders, shepherds, camel-keepers and cowherds were not simple nomads who were grazing livestock. This is testified by the mention below of the "shepherd" Degei, which was appointed as the head of a thousand. These terms act as the titles that designate the heads of corresponding services.

It is impossible to answer the question whether *čerbi* who entered different structures - both the guards and the structure of commanders of thousands - had different rights and duties. This concerns also the persons who received other titles or posts from Chinggis Khan. In connection with this military reorganization of Mongol *ulus*, *The Secret History* mentions also the names of other "officials".

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<sup>31</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 157.

<sup>32</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 162.

<sup>33</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 157.

§ 222. Further, Činggis Qa'an made the shepherd Degei bring together the unregistered households and put him in charge of a thousand. § 223. Further, Činggis Qa'an said, "As the carpenter Güčügür lacks subjects to form a unit of a thousand, let these be collected from here and there and given to him. Since, from among the Jadaran, Mulqalqu has been a perfect companion to me, you two – Güčügür and Mulqalqu – be jointly in command of a thousand and consult with one another."<sup>34</sup>

Both Degei and Güčügür are mentioned among the ninety-five *noyons* – commanders of a thousand. In addition to them, there are Söyiketü-čerbi and Bala-čerbi, *ba'urchi* Önggür and Boro'ul in this list of the commanders of thousand. Though they had titles, they did not belong to the guard. But it is possible to assume that the titles marked their special position, as follows from Rashid-ad-din's mention that Bala-čerbi was in Chinggis Khan's retinue. A Söyiketü-čerbi, as early as in 1189 was appointed *ba'urči*, i.e. was responsible for drink for the person of Chinggis Khan.

*Nokers*, who were appropriated to these ranks, alongside with their main military function, fulfilled various official duties at Chinggis Khan's court (*ordo ger*).<sup>35</sup> Most likely, necessity to regulate the course of collective meals determined the posts, which were marked with these court ranks. Certainly, every collective meal turned into a feast, which had both social and sacral functions when a new social space was being modelled. The collective meal acted as one of the forms of prestigious material reward for service to Chinggis Khan. The court character of their service is, first, proved by the fact that even *qorčın* (a rank that was given to one of elite groups of guards), as well as *ba'určın* (steward) were engaged in the distribution of drinks and foods.<sup>36</sup> Second, this fact testifies to the absence of a precise hierarchy. Incompleteness of the social reorganization of the Mongol *ulus* is confirmed by uncertainty in distribution of powers between courtiers and nightguards (the *kebte'ül*).

Sacral functions that were performed by the *kebte'ül* were the reason for their exclusive position: "It is the nightguards that watch over my (Chinggis Khan – T. S.) golden life. When I go falconing or hunting, they toil with me."<sup>37</sup> The *kebte'ül* were responsible for safety of the sacral insignias of power: "The nightguards shall take care of the standards and drums, and the spears arranged beneath them. The nightguards shall also take care of the bowls and vessels. ... Two from the nightguards shall enter into the tent and oversee the large *kumis* pitchers."<sup>38</sup> All *kebte'ül* had the highest status: "No one is to sit in a place above the

<sup>34</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 152.

<sup>35</sup> Rachewiltz, *Index to the Secret History of the Mongols*, 133.

<sup>36</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 160.

<sup>37</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 157.

<sup>38</sup> It was discussed above that this was a prerogative of Tolun-čerbi and two *ba'urči*; Önggür and Boro'ul. Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 160.

nightguards.<sup>39</sup> No one, is to enter the precinct without permission from the nightguards".<sup>40</sup> These were the *kebte'ül* from whom serving around drinks and meals began in collective meals:<sup>41</sup> "When the quiverbearers distribute drink and food, they must not distribute them without permission from the supervising nightguards. When they distribute food, they shall first distribute it beginning with the nightguards".<sup>42</sup>

We cannot but notice that the *kebte'ül* duplicated the functions of the especially close retinue-nukers who received their court ranks from Chinggis Khan. For example, some of the nightguards had to take care of the tent-carts of the court;<sup>43</sup> doorkeepers from the night guards were mentioned too. "The camp masters from the night guards shall go before Us and set up the Palace tent. ...Some of the night guards shall decide on juridical matters together with Šigi Qutuqu".<sup>44</sup>

This detailed schedule of duties of the most elite military division of Chinggis Khan is, perhaps, the most indicative. It shows the character of all services that are obligatorily executed: service to Chinggis Khan and his economy, as well as the collective economy of the Khan's headquarters to which both the members of his household and retinue-nukers from military leaders and *keshigten* belonged. And in this context it is possible to take into account the information from the source about priority of the *kebte'ül* in management of the headquarters or in other words, Chinggis Khan's court yard, though proceeding from available materials it is practically impossible to differentiate the court functions of the *kebte'ül* and *nukers* who received court ranks. It is also practically impossible to reveal distinctions in the statuses of the courtiers that are considered in the article: on the one hand, the persons who have the same rank exercise different duties, and on the other hand, identical duties are attributed to different ranks.

In my opinion, the evidence of the source shows that the transformations in the extending Mongol *ulus* were not a single action of 1206. It was a long process in which two sides are marked. First of all was the creation of an efficient army that was caused by the challenge of conquering the neighbouring polities. While in the beginning (1189) the army had been organized according to *kurens*, thus reflecting the clan and tribal social structure, in 1204 the army was already organized according to a decimal system; thousands, hundreds, and tens. In turn, the forming of elites and increasing of their number promoted the widening of the circle of persons around the ruler, i. e. forming of the court yard. This conse-

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<sup>39</sup> The same privilege - to sit higher than the rest - was granted by Chinggis Khan to his nukers - *noyons* - commanders-of-thousands Mүнлик-еңиге (he was the husband of Chinggis-khan's mother) and Bo'orču.

<sup>40</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 158.

<sup>41</sup> S. A. Kozin, *Sokrovennoe skazanie: Mongol'skaya khronika 1240 g.* [The Secret History: the Mongolian chronicle of 1240] Moscow and Leningrad 1941, 173.

<sup>42</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 160.

<sup>43</sup> To care for the tent-carts was a duty of Güčügür too: "Küčügür - Güčügür ...appears with the epithet moči 'carpenter' because of his appointment as manager of the tent-carts." Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 445.

<sup>44</sup> Rachewiltz, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, 160-161.

quently required the organization of the headquarters and the appointment of courtiers. The duties of those who received the posts founded by Chinggis Khan included both military functions (they were commanders of thousands and hundreds), and service of his court yard/headquarters.

The three stages of the transformation were rather long and took seventeen years, however we still cannot say that they led to the creation of an administrative structure as a state institution. It is impossible to present as an organized structure even the distribution of court functions. Also there are no evidences that those leaders who received the titles performed administrative functions over the whole Mongol *ulus*; therefore there is no evidence about the creation/presence of the administrative apparatus or government. The available materials allow us to conclude that the titles or posts mentioned in the sources can be considered as marking court ranks but not as officials who are responsible for certain functions of management which could be termed a state's government.