

Reconsidering the Chinggisids’ Sons-in-Laws: Lessons from the United Empire¹

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This paper discusses an important aspect of the Chinggisid matrimonial relations during the United Empire period (1206–1259), namely the phenomenon of the “sons-in-law” (güregens/küregens) of the Golden lineage. The paper provides an overall analysis of all the matrimonial ties with different tribal, ethnic, and political entities from the Mongolian plateau to the Caucasus and suggests that we consider the establishment of such ties as a thought through strategic policy. The güregens of the Golden lineage will, therefore, be analysed as one of the institutions of the Mongol power hierarchy, highlighting its rather unique position vis-a-vis the other power groups in the Mongol political architecture, such as nökers and keshig.

Dealing with the history of Chinggis Khan’s rise to power, one not only has to pay attention to the question of how this rule was established, but also by what means it was successfully preserved and transmitted. This is not a new question; many scholars have taken up different aspects of this issue over the years. Thus, when debating the major mechanisms underlying Chinggis Khan’s power establishment, one cannot ignore the crucial importance of the personal relations of the Khan with several of his retainers and followers (*nökers*), who were dedicated to serving him and being loyal to him. In fact, the *nökers* became an institutionalised form of service based on their personal loyalty to the Khan.³ A somewhat similar phenomenon were the *ötegü bö’öl*, the “hereditary

¹ The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007–2013) / ERC Grant Agreement 312397. The first version of this paper was presented at the *Sixth International Conference on the Medieval History of the Eurasian Steppe*, Szeged, Hungary, November 23–25, 2016.

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³ For more on this institution see G. Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung älterer neupersischer Geschichtsquellen, vor allem der Mongolen- und Timuridenzeiten*, Wiesbaden 1963–1968, 1, 521–526, §388.

slaves" of the Khan and his clan, such as the Jalayirs, whose loyalty to the lineage was based not on personal loyalty to a specific person, but on their dependency on the lineage, originating from an old Steppe tradition.⁴ Yet another institutionalised form of obedience and service to the Golden lineage, in place from the very early decades of Mongol rule in Eurasia, was the *keshig*, the personal guard of the Khans and, in a sense, a "stud farm" for the future generations of retainers and high standing servants of the royal house.⁵ The governors appointed in the conquered areas under the direct auspices of the Great Khan (similar to the Kitan institution of *shaojian* 少監) almost complete this picture.⁶

Chinggis Khan made good use of all these types of political relations and mechanisms in order to establish his power networks. There was, however, one more way of binding important people to his clan: the establishment of matrimonial relations between them and the Golden lineage, elevating those lucky ones to the status of *güregens*, the "imperial sons-in-law". Even though there are plenty of references to them in the sources, there has been no broader systematic attempt to approach this phenomenon.⁷ In this paper, which I see as a

⁴ See T.D. Skrynnikova, "Boghol, a Category of Submission at the Mongols," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung.* 58:3 (2005), 331–319. On the Jalayirs as the *bö'öl* of the Chinggisids see Xie Yongmei, *Meng Yuan shiqi Zhalayier bu yanjiu*, Shenyang 2012, 124–127; and elsewhere.

⁵ On the general role of the *keshig* in the Mongol political structures, see E. I. Kychanov, "Keshigteny Chingis Khana (o roli gvardii v gosudarstvakh kochevnikov)," *Mongolica: k 750-letiyu "Sokrovennogo skazaniya"*, Moscow 1993, 148–156; T. T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Grand Khan Möngke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251–1259*, Berkeley 1987, 99–100; C. P. Atwood, "Ulus Emirs, Keshig Elders, Signatures and Marriage Partners: The Evolution of a Classical Mongol Institution," In: *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth - Twentieth Centuries*, ed. D. Sneath, Bellingham 2006, 143–159.

⁶ For this policy, see Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, 100–113; for the Khitan *shaojian* see M. Biran, *The Empire of Qara Khitai in Eurasian History*, Cambridge 2005, 119–123. For a general discussion of the Mongol imperial ideology and the political institutions of the United Empire's period see T. T. Allsen, "A Note in Mongol Imperial Ideology," In: *The Early Mongols: Language, Culture and History: Studies in Honor of Igor de Rachewiltz on the Occasion of his 80th Birthday*, ed. V. Rybatzki et al., Bloomington 2007, 1–8; P. D. Buell and J. Kolbas, "The Ethos of State and Society in the Early Mongol Empire: Chinggis Khan to Güyük," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 26: 1–2 (2016), 43–64.

⁷ Striking as it is, until now there has been little research on this topic. One outstanding exception is the Chinese research, which concentrates almost exclusively on the marriages inside the Yuan dynasty's realm (for several examples, see Zhang Daiyu, "Yuanshi zhuwang biao" bu zheng ji bufen zhuwang yanjiu, PhD dissertation 2008; Cui Mingde, "Meng Yuan hongjila, woyila, yiqiliesi bu lianyin jian biao," *Journal of Yantai University* 17:1 (2004), 103–115; Hu Xiaopeng, "Menggu hongjila Chiku fuma xi zhuwang yanjiu," *Journal of the Northwest Normal University* 35:5 (1998), 67–73). One also has to mention the recent book by George Qingzhi Zhao, which shows the complexity of the Chinggisid matrimonial policies, but unfortu-

prologue to the research into this institution, I suggest that we see the establishment of the matrimonial relations between the Golden lineage and the representatives of different tribes not only as an additional mechanism for strengthening Chinggis Khan's rule, but first and foremost as a specific form of the dual administration of Mongol rule, which tried to put under control very specific tribal groups of primary importance for the royal clan.⁸ As opposed to the direct administration of the Chinggisids over most of the submitted areas and peoples, the Golden lineage also practiced an indirect rule over a number of large tribal bodies, whose political structure remained in most cases untouched, and whose military commanders, different from the *nökers*, controlled not ethnically-mixed patchwork-like armies, but monolithic tribal military units.

The establishment of the *güregen*-type of relations corresponds to major changes in Chinggis Khan's career. The first, and rather unsuccessful, attempt to use matrimonial relations was Temüjin's suggestion to marry his elder son Jochi to Cha'ur Beki, the granddaughter of Ong Khan, in 1202.⁹ Temüjin tried to establish this connection after his decisive defeat of the Tatars, during which most of the male population of the tribe was annihilated. This victory entailed a change in the power balance in the Steppe between the Kerayit and Temüjin, as the latter then controlled all of eastern Mongolia.¹⁰ It was then that Ong Khan and Temüjin proclaimed themselves officially sworn father and son. It was also on that occasion that Temüjin attempted to strengthen the relations between the two sides by using matrimonial bonds. Aside from this suggestion, Chinggis Khan also proposed to give Fūjin Beki, his daughter by his main wife Börte, to Ong Khan's grandson, brother of Cha'ur Beki and son of Senggüm, Ong Khan's elder son. Due to the enmity of Senggüm, the marriages did not take place, but this was the only known case in early Mongol history when a Mongol Khan attempted to establish equal relations with the other side.¹¹

nately fails to provide a convincing analysis (*Marriage as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression: Mongolian Royal Marriages from World Empire to Yuan Dynasty*, New York 2008).

- ⁸ For other examples and discussions of the dual administration under the Mongol rule in Eurasia, see, e.g., D. Ostrowski, "The "Tamma" and the Dual-Administrative Structure of the Mongol Empire," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 61:2 (1998), 262–277.
- ⁹ *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, transl. and ed. by I. de Rachewiltz, Leiden 2006 (thereafter *SH*), 1, 76–78, §§153–155; *Rashiduddin, Fazlullah, Jami'u't-Tawarikh, Compendium of Chronicles: A History of Mongols*, transl. and comm. W.M. Thackston, Harvard 1998 (thereafter *JT*), 2, 158–159; cf. *Yuan sheng wu qing zheng lu* (thereafter *SWQZL*), In: *Wang Guowei quan ji*, Hangzhou 2009, 11, 456–457.
- ¹⁰ On the (partial) annihilation of the Tatar tribe see *JT*, 1, 45–46; on the changes in the Steppe as the result of this defeat see M. Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, Oxford 2007, 38–39.
- ¹¹ *SH*, 1, 83–84, §164.

Following the defeat of the coalitions of the Kerayit Ong Khan in 1203 and that of the Naiman Tayang Khan in 1204,¹² as well as the subsequent expanding of the Khan's power in the Mongolian steppes, a number of Chinggisid women were given to outer partners. Already in the Kerayit case, one can see a typical characteristic of the establishment of matrimonial relations, namely the fact that they aimed to bind not a specific person, but a group, in that case the Kerayit lineages under the rule of Ong Khan, to the Golden lineage.¹³ Starting in the mid-1200s, the establishment of matrimonial relations became one of the major features of Mongol political architecture. Par. 202 of the *Secret History of the Mongols* provides a list of several commanders of thousands who bore the title *güregen*.¹⁴ The identity of two commanders (Qadai and Ashiq) remains unclear; the others belong to five major tribes: the Olqunu'ut, Baya'ut, Qonggirad, Ikires, and Önggüt. Importantly, the source deliberately stresses the amount of the thousands of warriors under the independent control of those in-laws in the three cases, that of the Qonggirad, Ikires and the Önggüd, while others of the more than seventy commanders are listed only with their names (most of them belonging to Temüjin's *nökers*).¹⁵ What united these tribes and why was their nobility, and not that of other tribal groups, honoured by the right to obtain a Mongol princess?

First of all, it is important to mention that it would be wrong to understand the tribes as one unified body during the incorporation process in the Mongol military. At least in the cases of the Qonggirad, the Ikires and the Önggüd, we are aware of several tribal lineages that did not accept Temüjin and waged war

¹² For the Chinggisid campaign against Ong Khan see *SH*, 1, 106–108, §§ 185–186; *JT*, 1, 191–192, for that against Tayang Khan see *SH*, 1, 115–123, §§ 193–196; *JT*, 1, 68–69, 201–203.

¹³ In this case the establishment of the matrimonial relations suggested “horizontal” relations between the two sides, which aimed to stabilise the power relations in the Steppe.

¹⁴ This list apparently more or less accurately reflects the composition of the Chinggisid army at the moment of the Great Quriltai. Note that for more than seventy commanders of the thousand mentioned there, the sons-in-law provide a very small part, but one controlling a rather significant number of warriors (for the whole list see *SH*, 1, 133–134, §202).

¹⁵ *SH*, 1, 133–134, §202. Note that Olar Güregen of the Olqunu'ut, Buqa Güregen of the Baya'ud, and Chigü Güregen of the Qonggirad appear without any hint at the number of troops under their control. What concerns the latter was that he was still part of the Qonggirad military (cf. Rashid al-Din counting him as a commander of four thousand warriors in *JT*; 2, 278). For more on Chigü and for discussions of his identity, see C. P. Atwood, “Chikü Küregen and the Origins of the Xiningzhou Qonggirads,” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 21 (2014–2015), 7–26; I. Landa, “Imperial Sons-In-Law on the Move: Oyirad and Qonggirad Dispersion in Mongol Eurasia,” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 22 (2016), 165, fn. 18 and passim. It is not clear how strong the Baya'ud and the Olqunu'ut units were in Chinggis Khan's army (cf. *JT*, 2, 275, 277). The reasons for them marrying into the Golden *urugh* might lie more in their loyalty and familial closeness to Chinggis Khan (see below).

against him, while others supported him against their own “tribesmen”. In fact, one should understand the “Qonggirads” in the Chinggisid sources primarily as one of the lineages, that of Dei Sechen, Temüjin’s father-in-law, which the sources synonymise retrospectively with the tribe in general.¹⁶ Similar processes are also plausible in other cases.¹⁷ This means that matrimonial relations were established first and foremost with a specific lineage (clan). Different from the *nökers*, the importance of a specific personality for the Golden *urugh* was less relevant than the importance of the clan. Similarly, the primary reason for honouring a lineage in this way was its military potential, namely its ability to provide military manpower for the Chinggisid army, followed by the importance and loyalty of the particular son-in-law and his achievements.

Why were those five tribes mentioned? Firstly, they apparently provided a significant number of warriors. However, even if we only think about large tribes, there were still more than five (the Kerayits, Naimans and Hushin, for example). Another reason was the way those tribes and lineages positioned themselves towards Temüjin. Similar to the famous principle of the Mongol army, according to which the free submission of the city spared the lives of its inhabitants,¹⁸ many of those tribes (lineages) whose relations to Temüjin were friendly and supporting or showed peaceful submission from the very beginning were granted the right to become part of the extended blood family of Temüjin. Thus, the Olqunu’ut were of Temüjin’s motherly clan from the very

¹⁶ For this discussion, see Atwood, *Chikü Küregen*, 21–23, according to whom the Bosqur clan of Dei Sechen (in previous times even possibly separate from the major Qonggirad tribal body) has been identified by later sources as the Qonggirad tribe itself. Although I would be careful in completely separating these two groups, the general pattern analysed by Atwood seems to be of crucial importance for our understanding and the analysis of the early composition of the Mongol armies in the early 13th century.

¹⁷ We do not possess any (or almost any) valid information on the previous history of the specific tribes before the Mongol historians started writing about them. Thus, one should indeed be very careful in talking about “the tribes” while talking about the tribes in the Chinggisid service, as in fact we mean a very specific nobility lineage. At the same time, it is plausible to suppose the existence of different opinions and different factions inside those tribal bodies before their entering the service of the Khan. See, e.g., the information about Önggüd Alaqush Tegin Quri following his decision to betray the Jin dynasty, his previous masters, and support Temüjin (cf. *SH*, 1: 164, §239; *JT*, 1, 64; Song Lian et al., *Yuanshi* [The History of Yuan, thereafter *YS*], Beijing 1976, 118, 2924). There is also unclarity concerning the real status of Botu of the Ikires before his submission to Chinggis Khan, namely as to what his position among the Ikires nobility was and for what reason he was expelled from his tribe following his submission to Chinggis Khan (cf. *JT*, 2, 154; *SH*, 1, 46–47, §120). Note also that at least some parts of the Ikires under the command of Tüge Maqa supported the enthronement of Jamuqa in 1201 (*SH*, 1, 62–63, §141).

¹⁸ On this warfare strategy, see Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 60.

beginning,¹⁹ the Qonggirads belonged to the lineage of Dei Sechen, father of Börte Fūjin, the Baya'ut and the Ikires pledged alliance very early,²⁰ and the Önggüd submitted peacefully and provided important resources and areas to be controlled by Temüjin on their own initiative without a war.²¹ Loyalty and accessible manpower were, thus, the two main factors in the choice of matrimonial partner in the first years until the Great Quriltai of 1206.²²

Following the consolidation of his power in the Mongolian steppes, Chinggis Khan began his expansion, and his choice of the following matrimonial partners shows his expansion priorities. One of the first directions was the vast mixed steppe-forest zone in Southern Siberia to the north of the Mongolian plateau, occupied by the so-called forest tribes.²³ It seems that adding these areas to his realm had been planned by Chinggis Khan from the period of the Great Quriltai, as he mentioned them and their future submission in his enthronement speech.²⁴ The campaign troops, consisting of the units under the overall command of Jochi Khan, proceeded deep into the northern and north-western areas until at least the sources of the Yenisei, subjugating a number of forest tribes.²⁵ Of primary importance in this context are the Oyrads, the ances-

¹⁹ What concerns the Olqunu'ut, according to the mythological genealogies provided by Rashīd al-Dīn, is that they (and the Ikires) belonged to the same broader ancestry-related family as the Qonggirads (*JT*, 1: 84-87). The origins of this mythology as well as the time of its appearance are not clear. These three tribal groups were separate entities at the time of Chinggis Khan's rise to power.

²⁰ In fact, they were one of the first supporters of Chinggis Khan and their military was included in one of the thirteenth *güre'ens* (encampments) of Chinggis Khan's army during the latter's conflict with the Tayichi'ut and Jamuqa (*JT*, 1, 96, 161). Note, however, that the Baya'ud military commander mentioned in the context of this *güre'en* and who is later referred to as a commander of the Baya'ud *hazara* is not Buqa Güregen, but Önggür, apparently a representative of another power group of the tribe (*JT*, 1, 161; *JT*, 2, 277). The reasons for Buqa Güregen's rise in power and in honour are not clear. On the submission of the Ikires, see *YS*, 118, 2921; note that Botu was with Chinggis Khan already during the Baljuna event (*SH*, 1, 46-47, §120). Moreover, Botu's father Nekün (or Botu himself) informed Temüjin about the plans of Jamuqa to attack him (*JT*, 1, 160; cf. *SWQZL*, 417-418 and *YS*, 188, 2921-2922).

²¹ On the submission of the Önggüd, see *JT*, 1, 70-71; cf. the conflicting version in the *YS*, 118, 2924.

²² One also has to keep in mind that there were other powerful tribal and ethnic groups that submitted peacefully or at least without any significant bloodshed and still never entered the ranks of the *güregens*. One also must think about the Jalayirs, whose military presence in the Chinggisid military is very impressive (cf. *JT*, 2, 274-277), but whose position as *ötegü bö'öl* prevented them from intermarrying with the Golden *urugh* at this stage (cf. the examples of the Ba'arin and Hushin).

²³ The exact definition of the forest tribes remains unclear; that a certain tribe is called such does not necessarily reflect a specific type of semi-nomadic agriculture. See Landa, *Imperial Sons-In-Law*, 174, fn. 69.

²⁴ *SH*, 1, 139, §207.

²⁵ *SH*, 1, 163-165, §239.

tors of today's Kalmyks. Aside from the Qonggirad, Ikires, and Önggüd, the Oyirads should be seen as one of major son-in-law-tribes of the Golden *urugh*. This tribe was most active in this role in the Yuan realm during the second half of the 13th century and in the Ilkhanate.²⁶ In the period preceding 1206, the Oyirads participated twice in anti-Chinggisid coalitions.²⁷ However, faced with the necessity of dealing with the Mongol armies in 1207/8, one of the Oyirad chieftains, Qutuqa Beqi, not only peacefully submitted to Jochi, but also provided help in conquering the northern forest areas in the border zone.²⁸ This Realpolitik decision was possibly strengthened by the strong charisma of Chinggis Khan, as seen from the successes of the latter in the consolidation of the Mongolian steppes, about which the Oyirads without doubt were well informed. Be this as it may, Chinggis Khan knew how to value submission and cooperation. Qutuqa Beqi was included in the right wing of the Khan's army as a commander of a thousand and matrimonial relations were established between the two sides.²⁹

Two more "in-law" partners are to be mentioned, namely the Uyghurs and the Qarluqs, both groups being under the control of the Qara Khitais at the beginning of the 13th century.³⁰ Facing the rising taxation burden from the side of their masters, and witnessing the constantly growing power of Chinggis Khan in eastern Mongolia, the leaders of both groups deliberately chose to turn their backs on the Qara Khitais and submitted to a new ruler. This was Barchuq Art Tegin (八兒出阿兒忒), the Uyghur *idūq qut*³¹ of the Uyghur statelet Qocho, who rebelled against the Western Liao, killed their governor, and submitted his areas to Chinggis Khan,³² who not only honoured him and called him "his fifth

²⁶ On this tribe, its dispersion across Eurasia in the aftermath of the Mongol conquests, and its importance for the Chinggisids in the 13th-14th centuries see Landa, *Imperial Sons-In-Law*, 174-192.

²⁷ I.e. in the coalition of Jamuqa's supporters and in that of Tayang Khan (*SH*, 1, 62-63, *JT*, 1, 182, 202, cf. Landa, *Imperial Sons-In-Law*, 177, fns. 81-83). It is important that in both cases the activities of the Oyirads were undertaken under the leadership of the same Qutuqa Beqi who later submitted to Jochi.

²⁸ *SH*, 1, 163-164; cf. *SWQZL*, 491.

²⁹ For more on this see Landa, *Imperial Sons-In-Law*, 177-178.

³⁰ On the Uyghur history before the early 13th century, see P. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, Wiesbaden 1992, 155-172; regarding the Qarluqs, see *ibid.*, 196-199.

³¹ The meaning of the title is "good fortune", "luck". See more on the meaning of *qut* in G. Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente*, 3, 551-554, §1568. For the whole phrase *idūq qut* 'he sacred favour of Heaven' see G. Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish*. Oxford 1972, 46, for *qut* *ibid.* 594. Recently scholars consider it as a technical term and translate it as 'regal charisma'.

³² *YS*, 122, 3000; *SH*, 1, 163, §238; Juwainī, Ala-ad-Din 'Atā-Malik, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J.A. Boyle, Seattle 1997, 45-46; *JT*, 2, 200. There is a contradiction in the sources concerning the exact order of the events. According to the *Secret History*, Rashīd al-Din and Juvaynī, the Uyghur ruler sent his emissaries first, Chinggis Khan reacting on the suggestion of submission (*SH*, 1, 163;

son",³³ but also apparently gave him his own daughter in marriage (some sources claim it was Barchuq Art Tegin's son, Kesmes, who *de facto* became the son-in-law).³⁴ Much has been said about the importance of the Uyghurs for the administrative machine of the Golden lineage; such close relations certainly cemented the position of this ethnic group vis-à-vis the royal clan.³⁵ Similar to the Uyghurs, the Qarluqs, a newly-Muslim Turkic tribe, also submitted to Chinggis Khan in at least two of their statelets – Qayaliq and Almaliq – around 1210/11, with their rulers Arslan Khan and Ozar Khan marrying into the Golden lineage.³⁶ Surely, there were other Uyghur and Qarluq rulers in the numerous statelets of the Inner Asian regions westward of Mongolia at that time, but the sources clearly select those of primary importance for the Golden lineage only. Most probably, they were the first ones, and all others, whatever way of submission they may have chosen later on, would automatically have been judged to be lower than those who married into the Golden *urugh*.

Looking at the map of Mongolia and North China in the first decade of the 13th century, one can see two major entities that were excluded from the estab-

JT, 1, 199; Juvaynī/Boyle, *Genghis Khan*, 45). This is different from the version supported by SWQZL and the *Yuanshi* claims that Chinggis Khan sent the envoys to the Uyghur ruler first, the latter reacting positively to this contact, as he was himself at that time preparing a delegation to Chinggis Khan's court (SWQZL, 493–495; *YS*, 122, 3000). According to Allsen, the solution of this contradiction can be that the *Secret History* and Juvaynī simply mention the Uyghur return embassy only (T. T. Allsen, "The Yuan Dynasty and the Uighurs of Turfan in the 13th Century," In: *China among Equals: the Middle Kingdom and its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*, ed. M. Rossabi, Berkeley 1983, 271, fn. 22). In fact, both versions are plausible.

³³ The meaning of the "fifth son" should not be understood literally, Chinggis Khan had more than four sons. However, the number of his sons from his major wife Börte was indeed four. Note also the remark of de Rachewiltz, that "to become a son" meant in the Mongol and Chinese medieval terminologies "to become a vassal" (*SH*, 2, 847).

³⁴ There is much confusion concerning her in the sources. *The Secret History* calls her Al-Altun (*SH*, 1, 163, §238), *Yuanshi* calls her Yeli Andun 也立安敦 in the biography of Barchuq Art Tegin (*YS*, 122, 3000) and Yeli Kedun (Khatun?) 也立可敦 in the list of the princess of Gaochang (*YS*, 109, 2760). Cf. Juvaynī/Boyle, *Genghis Khan*, 47–48; *JT*, 1, 69–70; *SH*, 1, 163, §238; *YS* 122, 3000.

³⁵ Note the importance of the Uyghur language and the Uyghurs for the establishment of the bureaucratic machine of Mongol rule, as well as the fact that the preliminary acquaintance of the Mongols with the Uyghur administrative knowledge started before 1206, whereas the final submission of the Uyghurs under Barchuk Art Tegin took place only after Chinggis Khan's defeat of the Merkid and the Naiman around 1209 (see M.C. Brose, "Uyghur Technologists of Writing and Literacy in Mongol China," *T'oung Pao, Second Series* 91: 4–5 (2005), 396–435 and cf. Biran, *The Empire of Qara Khitai*, 74–75).

³⁶ See *SH*, 1, 162, §235; *JT*, 1, 71; Juvaynī/Boyle, *Genghis Khan*, 74–76 on Arslan Khan, the ruler of Qayaliq and Juvaynī/Boyle, *Genghis Khan*, 75–76 on Ozar Khan, the ruler of Almaliq. On these events cf. also Jamāl al-Qarshī, *Al-mulḥaqāt bi al-ṣurāḥ*, Almaty 2005, clxii-clxiii and Biran, *The Empire of Qara Khitai*, 75–76.

lishment of the “in-law” relations during Chinggis Khan's lifetime: the Tangut Xi Xia (西夏, 1038-1227) and the Jürchen Jin (金朝, 1115-1234) dynasty. Even though Chinggis Khan seems to have served the Jin at the end of the 12th century,³⁷ relations between him and the Jürchens became hostile from the early 13th century, and the main aim of Chinggis Khan was then to exterminate the Jin (only Ögedei Khan [r.1229-1241] was able to fulfil this task). The Western Xia were theoretically an ally of Temüjin, but they were unreliable and rather hostile, and only once did Chinggis Khan demand that the Tanguts send him their princess as a gift. The establishment of *güregen* relations was out of the question, and in fact, the elimination of the dynasty became the last conquest aim of the aging Khan.³⁸

The rather simplistic picture given above becomes much more complicated with the death of Chinggis Khan in 1227. Firstly, the Golden lineage preserved almost all the “in-law” relations established during Chinggis Khan's lifetime, and only a few new ones were established by the Great Khans until 1259, the death year of Möngke (r. 1251-1259). Secondly, matrimonial relations with the Golden lineage were not only preserved, but often expanded, so that during the decades between 1227 and 1259 we see ever-growing matrimonial networks of the Golden *urugh*, not least due to the appearance and consolidation of a new power group: the newly established lineages of powerful sons-in-law. The situation becomes even more complex because of the split of the Golden lineage between multiple clans of Chinggis's relatives and descendants. The formation of the “in-law” lineages (and their representation or even simple mentions in the sources) was influenced, or even determined, by their relation to the various Chinggisid subgroups.

In general, the Chinggisids continued their relations with the Baya'ut, Ikires, Olqunu'ut, Önggüd, Qarluqs, Qonggirad, and Uyghurs. The Ikires, Oyirads, Qonggirads, and Önggüds can be clearly traced throughout the whole period. All four groups clearly married into more than one Chinggisid house, and even though all of them had Ögedeid wives, they were also connected with other lineages, primarily the Toluid, but also the Jochid and Chaghadaid.³⁹ This seems to have been the reason for their survival during the bloody

³⁷ *SH*, 1, 57-58, §134; *SWQZL*, 432.

³⁸ The territories of the Western Xia were of crucial importance for Chinggis Khan to conquer the Jin, not only due to their geographical location to the west of the Jin, but also since both states were allies (see *SH*, 1, 196-198, §265; Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 48-49).

³⁹ On the Qonggirads in the last decades of the United Empire see Landa, *Imperial Sons-In-Law*, 167-173; on the Oyirads see *ibid*, 179-181; on the Ikires see *YS*, 118, 2922; Zhang Daiyu, “Yuan dai Yiqiliesi bu fengjian lingdi zhidu tantao,” *Nei Menggu shehui kexue* 29:2 (2008), 45; cf. Cui Mingde, *Meng Yuan hongjila, woyila, yiqiliesi bu*, 111-114 and cf. Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy*, 119-126; on the Önggüd see *YS*, 118, 2924-2925; *JT*, 1, 71-72; cf. Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy*, 149-162.

Ögedeid-Toluid power transition of 1250-1251 and for the preservation of the high position of the "sons-in-law" both under Ögedeid and Toluid rule.⁴⁰

This seemingly was not the case with others. The Uyghurs, for example, suffered more. In general, their area remained under the control of their ruling lineage, and seemingly was not included in any of the four *uluses* in the beginning, but the Great Khan controlled it directly.⁴¹ Their major matrimonial partners, however, were the Ögedeids. Therefore, the Uyghurs were strongly affected by the events of 1250-1251, when Salindi, brother of Kesmes, was dismissed, tortured and executed, accused of planning to kill all Muslims in Besh Baliq.⁴² The matrimonial relations were resumed only after a few decades, when the Uyghurs became crucial for Qubilai Khan (r. 1260-1294) during his war with Qaidu.⁴³ Slightly different was the case of the Olqunu'ut, whose commanders married into the Toluids during the United Empire, but partly created relations with the Ögedeids (Qaidu) later, and thus apparently lost the support of the Toluids in general, and of Qubilai's lineage in particular.⁴⁴ The Baya'ut became an important part of the Hülegüid, thus Toluid, military in the second half of the 13th century.⁴⁵ There is still almost no information about their matrimonial relations with the Chinggisids during the times of Ögedei, Güyüg (r. 1246-1248), or Möngke. The reason for this (be it the intended silence of the sources or an abrupt decline of the tribe's status) is not clear.⁴⁶ One also

⁴⁰ On these events see Juvaynī/Boyle, *Genghis Khan*, 48–53.

⁴¹ About this see Allsen, *Uighurs of Turfan*, 248–250, also cf. *JT*, 2: 342 and *JT*, 2: 404 about the Uyghur lands administrated directly by Mahmud Yalavach and Mas'ūd Beq, the famous Mongol administrators of Khwarazmian origin.

⁴² Juvaynī/Boyle, *Genghis Khan*, 48–53 and cf. Baybars al-Mansuri, *Zubdat al-fikra fi tārikh al-hijrah*, Berlin 1998, 7.

⁴³ For the following relations between the Mongols (Yuan) and the Uyghur nobility lineages see, e.g. the famous bilingual *Yiduhu Gaochang wang shixun bei* tomb stele, which was erected in 1334 in Gansu province (*Yuan wenlei*, 26, 325–328; Geng Shimin, "Huige wen yiduhu Gaochang wang shi xun bei yanjiu," *Kaogu xuebao* 4 (1980), 515–529).

⁴⁴ The *List of Princesses* of the dynastic history includes an unnamed section, while the persons included there might indeed be seen as members of the Olqunu'ut lineages (*YS*, 109, 2762). See *JT*, 2, 383 for a remark concerning the matrimonial relations between a member of the Olqunu'ut nobility and the clan of Qaidu. Due to the scarcity of information, the final conclusion is difficult to make, but it seems that the Olqunu'ut princes were included in the *Yuanshi* records as an expression of the legitimacy of Qubilai's lineage to rule, even though they seem not to have been related to the Qubilaidas at all.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., *JT*, 1, 97; *JT*, 3, 516.

⁴⁶ Later on, the Baya'uds appear shortly in the Yuan history, as the famous Empress Buluhan (卜魯罕) of Chengzong was of this tribe. As the Empress was involved in the political factional war after the death of her husband in an unsuccessful attempt to enthrone Prince Ananda as the next Yuan Emperor in 1308 and was executed later together with her protégé (see, e.g., Hsiao Ch'i-ch'ing, "Mid-Yuan politics," In: *Alien Regimes and Border States, 907 – 1368*, ed. H. Franke, D. Twitchett,

has to mention the marriages of Yesü Buqa [?]⁴⁷ and Signaq Tegin, the sons of the two Qarluq rulers, Arslan Khan and Ozar Khan respectively, to two Chinggisid princesses.⁴⁸ While the origin of Yesü Buqa's wife is unclear, the wife of Signaq was a daughter of Jochi Khan. All in all, these matrimonial relations seem not to have been of any great significance to the Great Khans and the influence of these sons-in-law seems to have been limited to their respective areas.⁴⁹

The sources do not often name the Chinggisid woman given to a commander or they do not mention her origin. Thus, it is often difficult to trace the changing positions of the sons-in-law in the Chinggisid clan hierarchy or to understand the "sudden" disappearances of several important tribes or families from the list of the "sons-in-law". It appears to be a rule, however, that the levirate-style marriage of a princess to another member of the same clan in the case of her husband's early death (levirate) or the marriage of a Chinggisid woman to the same clan member after the previous wife's death (sororate), both typical intermarriage traditions of the nomadic societies, indicate the continuing high position of the *güregen* clan vis-à-vis the royal court.⁵⁰ Another interesting fact should be mentioned, namely that towards the end of the

Cambridge 1994, 505–506), one wonders whether the lack of information on the Baya'ud in the Chinese sources might hint at an attempt to eradicate the memory of the factions that stood behind the losing side.

⁴⁷ I.e. Yexian Buhua 也先不花, this is a name given by the *Yuanshi* (YS, 109, 2761).

⁴⁸ YS, 109, 2761; Jamāl al-Qarshī, *Al-mulḥaqāt bi al-ṣurāh*, clxxix.

⁴⁹ While it seems that the lineage of the Almaliq rulers continued matrimonial relations with the Chinggisids, the identities of the princesses are not clear (cf. YS, 109, 2761 and note that Qayaliq changed hands between Qaidu and the Qubilaid [M. Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia*, Richmond 1997, 22–23]). Apparently the matrimonial relations of Ozar Khan's line with the Jochids or any other Chinggisid lineage were not continued after the death of Signaq in 1251/1252 [Jamāl al-Qarshī, *Al-mulḥaqāt bi al-ṣurāh*, clxxix]. A partial explanation might be the fact that Qayaliq appeared under the Ögedeid control after the split of the United Empire and at least the Jochid relations with the area were broken (Biran, *Qaidu*, 20 and passim).

⁵⁰ Note, e.g., the Ikires (YS, 118, 2922–2923), the Olqunu'ut (JT, 1, 87) and the Önggüd (YS, 118: 2924, cf. JT, 1, 71) cases; also see I. Landa, "Oirats in the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate in the Thirteenth to the Early Fifteenth Centuries: Two Cases of Assimilation into the Muslim Environment," *Mamluk Studies Review* 19 (2016), 156–157 for the levirate and sororate marriages on the example of the Oyirads in Mongol Eurasia. For further discussion on the levirate and sororate marriages under the Mongols (and primarily later under the Yuan), see P. Ratchnevsky, "The levirate in the legislation of the Yüan-Dynasty," In: *Tamura Hakushi shōju Tōyōshi ronsō*, Kyoto 1968, 45–62; J. Homgren, "Observations on Marriage and Inheritance Practices in Early Mongol and Yüan Society, with Particular Reference to the Levirate," *Journal of Asian History* 20:2 (1986), 127–192; cf. B. Birge, "Levirate Marriage and the Revival of Widow Chastity in Yuan China," *Asia Major* 8:2 (1995), 107–146; H. Ser-ryus, "Remains of Mongol Customs in China during the Early Ming Period," *Monumenta Serica* 16:1–2 (1957), 171–190.

United Empire period, and especially after the Ögedeid-Toluid transition of power, new tribal partners were chosen by the Golden *urugh*. For example, the Kerayit Choqbal Güregen, a supporter of Möngke in his war against the Ögedeids, suddenly became a son-in-law of the Great Khan.⁵¹ At the same time, another *güregen* from the Hushin, Tuqchi, appears, who was seemingly closely related to the Toluids.⁵² Both these marriages exemplify the need for the newly established Toluid rule to consolidate itself in the early 1250s.⁵³

To complete the picture, we have to mention the three known cases in which the Chinggisids raised non-Mongolian or non-submitted Turkic rulers to the status of *güregens* after 1227, and thus formally included them into their extended blood clan: the Tibetans, the Armenians, and the Rus. Marriage relations with the Tibetans were still created under Güyüg and with the Ögedeids (Köden, second son of Ögedei) during the Mongol invasion of Western Tibet, when Köden promised to give his own daughter to the younger brother of Phags-pa, the powerful Tibetan mentor of Qubilai, and apparently fulfilled the promise.⁵⁴ Following the Ögedeid-Toluid transition and the civil war inside the Toluid camp, the reestablishment of this Tibetan lineage's status as "son-in-law", which entailed the status of princes, took place around 1265.⁵⁵ The very fact that this strategy was applied is interesting, as the Mongols did not use it everywhere.⁵⁶ The two other peculiar cases, which occurred during the United Empire, involve the Armenians and the Rus. While in the second case the mar-

⁵¹ *JT*, 2, 406.

⁵² *JT*, 1, 93; *JT*, 2, 273, 461.

⁵³ This pattern also continued after 1260 and is to be found throughout Mongol Eurasia. Thus, under the Yuan one suddenly finds Merkid and the Qipchaq sons-in-law, while in the Ilkhanate the Jalayirids were awarded the position of one of the major son-in-law clans of the Hülegüids. For the Yuan case see, for example *YS*, 32: 721 and *YS*, 34: 763 (the Merkid), as well as *YS*, 128: 3133–3134 and the *Tomb Inscription of the Achievements of the Prince of the Second Degree Jurong's Family* 句容郡王世績碑 (the Qipchaq) (*Yuan wenlei*, 26, 328–335); for the Jalayirs under the Hülegüids see, e.g., P. Wing, *The Jalayirids: Dynastic State Formation in the Mongol Middle East*. Edinburgh 2016, esp. 63–73.

⁵⁴ L. Petech, "Tibetan Relations with Song China and with the Mongols," In: *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and its Neighbors, 10th–14th Centuries*, ed. M. Rossabi, Berkeley 1983, 182.

⁵⁵ On the Mongol-Tibetan marriages, see L. Petech, "Princely Houses of the Yüan Period Connected with Tibet," In: *Indo-Tibetan Studies: Papers in Honour and Appreciation of Professor David L. Snellgrove's Contribution to Indo-Tibetan Studies*, ed. T. Skorupski, Tring 1990, 257–269; for a general discussion on the Mongol-Tibet relations see K.-H. Everding, "The Mongol States and their Struggle for Dominance over Tibet in the 13th Century," In: *Tibet, Past and Present*, ed. H. Blezer, Leiden 2002, 109–128.

⁵⁶ The discussion of this issue is beyond the limits of this paper. Nevertheless, this usage of the continuous "in-law" policy in the Tibetan case possibly reflects the strategic importance of these marriages for establishing control of the Tibetan areas.

riages were established with the Jochids, not the Toluids (and in the first one this is disputable but not impossible), these marriages should probably be seen more as tools used by the Sarai authorities, and not by the Qaraqorum authorities, in order to achieve the specific strategic aims of the Jochids in the western areas. Thus, we are not going to delve further into this matter.⁵⁷

The status of the imperial sons-in-law at the Chinggisids' courts and in the history of Mongol Eurasia should be reconsidered. The *güregens* remained mainly in control of their own tribal armies; they obtained their own appanages and held positions on the same level as the princes of blood, the born Chinggisids, in the Mongol political and military hierarchy. From the very beginning of the Chinggisid's rise to power, the establishment of matrimonial relations was in use, but it was mainly regarding the enthronement of Temüjin as the Great Khan that the *güregens* appear in the sources on the same level as his *nökers* and his *keshig*. Of the utmost importance is the fact that the *güregens* (almost) never appear to be *nökers*, a part of *keshig*, or a part of the imperial administration.⁵⁸ They were clearly a semi-autonomous part of the military with their own mainly hereditary transmitted rights to marry into the Golden lineage. With time, and especially after the disintegration of the United Empire, the sons-in-law became one of the most powerful political institutions of Mongol rule in Eurasia, from Iran to China, the history of the Chinggisid *uluses* in many cases becoming the history of the rises and falls of the *güregen* lineages.

⁵⁷ These issues are again beyond the scope of this paper. Two major marriages still have to be mentioned: that of Smbat, brother of the Cilician king He'um I, who apparently married a Chinggisid princess during his visit of the Mongols in the late 1240s (for this see, e.g., *History of the Nation of the Archers (The Mongols) by Grigor of Akanc' Hitherto Ascribed to Mazak'ia the Monk*, transl. by R. P. Blake, R. N. Frye, Cambridge 1954, 45–47), and the marriage of *knyaz* Gleb Vasilkovich of Belozero and Rostov, who married a daughter of Sartaq in 1257 (for this see, e.g., M. D. Priselkov, *Troitskaia letopis*, Moscow 1950, 325–326). Note the discussion among the researchers whether Smbat indeed ever reached Qaraqorum (see the discussion in B. Dashdondog, *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220–1335)*, Leiden 2011, 81–83). Note also the marriage of the Armenian nobleman Awag, who was given a “Mongol wife” by Ögedei himself following his submission to Chormagan in 1236. It is not clear, however, whether this wife was a princess, but it does not seem so from the Armenian sources (cf. Dashdondog, *Mongols and Armenians*, 74).

⁵⁸ Cf. Atwood in his *Ulus Emirs, Keshig Elders*, 160–161 on this principle. There is, however, a very strange case of Subedei Bahadur, the famous Mongol commander of the Uriangqai tribe, who was, according to the *Yuanshi*, given a princess by Ögedei in 1229/1230 (YS, 121, 2977). The name of the princess is given as Tumiegan 秃滅干, but neither her origin nor any other details can be found. This marriage, if it did take place, certainly indicates an extremely special standing of Subedei at that time at the court of the Great Khan. At the same time, this could also indicate that the sources might have “ignored” a number of important marriages for multiple reasons.

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Moreover, the *güregens* played one of the crucial roles in the crisis of the mid-14th century, as a result of which two of the four Chinggisid Khanates collapsed and two others went through earth-breaking transformations. This issue remains, however, beyond the limits of this short paper.